ACQUISITIONS FOR THE CLOISTERS

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A selection of over thirty recently acquired works of medieval art in metal, textile, and other materials is being shown in a special exhibition at The Cloisters. Additional pieces, including large sculptures, tapestries, and paintings, are being prepared for installation in relation to our other exhibits and will be published in the future. Some of the newly purchased objects are works of art of great beauty; others are important as accessories to our knowledge and understanding of the period that produced them; and a few are masterpieces. This continued enrichment of The Cloisters has been made possible by the generous funds provided by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., for the purpose.

Among the most distinctive acquisitions is

ABOVE: A peddler asleep under a tree, robbed by monkeys. Left, tinted German woodcut in the Gotha Museum. Right, detail of a Florentine engraving in the British Museum. Late XV century. OPPOSITE PAGE: One of a pair of iron door knockers, European, late XV century

the painted enamel beaker with silver-gilt mounts illustrated on the cover of this issue. This rare and beautiful object, which has been carefully preserved in great collections for generations, is usually referred to as the “Monkey Cup.” It is generally believed to have been made by a Flemish artist about 1460 for the Burgundian court. Accepting the many international cross currents of the Burgundian court in the fifteenth century, some scholars have preferred to describe it as Netherlandish or Franco-Flemish. Several French writers have considered the beaker a forerunner of the painted enamels produced at Limoges, famous for its champlevé enamels since the twelfth century. But the late J. J. Marquet de Vasselot, who was preparing further studies on the subject, in his publication on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Limoges enamels ascribed the Monkey Cup and a few related pieces (discussed by Heinrich Kohlhaussen in “Niederländisch Schmelzwerk,” Jahrbuch der Preußischen Kunstsammlungen, vol. 52, Berlin 1931) to a Rhenish workshop. The Rhenish attribution is not mentioned in
Front and back of an enameled spoon. Burgundian, about 1460. In technique and design it is very similar to the cup shown on the opposite page; the monkey riding the stag corresponds to the hunting scene on the interior of the cup (page 268), and the stylized foliage on the back of the spoon resembles that on the exterior. The two pieces are from the same workshop, and they may easily have belonged to the same set. In the Victoria and Albert Museum.
The “Monkey Cup,” probably made about 1460 for the Burgundian court. Enamel on silver with silver-gilt mounts; the bottom of the base is of the xix century.
any of the twenty publications which discuss and frequently illustrate the beaker.

It is possible that the Monkey Cup is the one listed in the 1464 inventory of Piero de’ Medici as “uno bicchiere col pie et coperchio d’ariento dorato et smalta d’azzuro dentro et di fuori chon la fiera delle bertuccce, smaltata di bianco” (a beaker with foot and cover of silver-gilt and blue enamel inside and out with the monkey fair, enameled in white). This does not accurately describe the colors of our cup as seen in a strong light, but to a hasty cataloguer the bluish white and gray-blue monkeys and foliage against a luminous dark ground may have appeared differently.

The beaker has another association with Italy. The silver-gilt Italianate plaque now placed in the bottom of the cup was derived from a medal made by Antonio Abondio in 1572. From the obverse of the medal the artist adapted the scene of Minerva at the forge of Vulcan, though changing slightly the inscription ARTIBUS QAESITA GLORIA. The Monkey Cup was in the Arundel collection until the end of the nineteenth century. It is significant that Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, was actively collecting in Italy in the first half of the seventeenth century. A family inventory of 1655, listing 799 objects, many of which the earl collected in Italy, mentions “a beaker” as number 605.

The recent history of the piece is a matter of more precise record and less conjecture. When it was exhibited in Paris in 1900 and in Düsseldorf in 1902 it belonged to Karl The-walt, a burgomaster of Cologne. It was sold at auction in 1903 for 97,000 gold marks, approximately $25,000, and was acquired by J. Pierpont Morgan. It was in the loan exhibition of his collection at the Metropolitan Museum in 1914. Thereafter it was an important piece in the collection of Alfred Rütschi in Zurich and became known as the Rütschi Cup. In 1931 it was offered in an auction of his collection in Lucerne, but it was later withdrawn from the sale. The Rütschi family permitted it to be included with other historical objects shown in 1951 in Dijon, Amsterdam, and Brussels in the exhibition “Le Siècle de Bourgogne” just after negotiations had been commenced for its return to New York about forty-five years after its first arrival on these shores.

It is interesting to speculate on the use to which the cup might have been put. As the enamel applied to the silver is virtually brittle glass, so delicate a vessel could hardly have been intended for everyday drinking. It may have been used for only one festive occasion. A silver beaker that is comparable is to be seen at a feast in a painting by Gerard David, illustrated on pages 270 and 271. Could it have been used at one of the banquets for the wedding of Charles the Bold of Burgundy and Margaret of York in Bruges in 1468? A contemporary document describing the staging of the banqueting festivities, which lasted six days, tells of playful dancers dressed as monkeys who “found a merchant sleeping in the gallery near his wares, which he had put there previously in order to sell them near the gate, and they disrobed him and took from him baubles, mirrors, needles, veils, and the like, and made merry with them, and one took the flute and tambourine of the merchant and played, while the others all danced the morris dance in and along the length of the gallery.”

As yet no one has found the original literary
The upper and lower sections of the Monkey Cup separated. The monkeys in the tree are playing with the peddler's hat and shoes.
source of the story of the sleeping peddler robbed by monkeys, represented on the Cloisters beaker. The subject is found frequently in art, appearing as early as 1375 in wall paintings in the castle of Valenciennes. It appears on misericords in Manchester (1508) and Beverley Minster (1526), and on a table painted in 1515 for Hans Baer of Basel by Hans Holbein the Younger. It was a favorite theme in the North.

The use of the scene in Italy is shown in the engraving dated about 1470-1490 illustrated on page 265. Possibly our beaker, if it is the one mentioned in the Medici inventory, inspired prints like this. H. W. Janson in his *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, published in London last year, traces every conceivable story connected with the representation in art and literature of the simians, and the book should be read by anyone interested in pursuing the innumerable drolleries based on the monkey.

Two monkeys are on the interior of the cup, one with a bugle and one with a bow and arrow, hunting stags which are pursued by dogs. But there appears to be no particular connection between the hunt on the interior and the thirty-five monkeys on the exterior.

The survival of the unique pair of silver-gilt ewers, each twenty-six inches high, is extraordinary. Even the cold enamel covering the silver figures of wild men surmounting the lids and the ears, teeth, and fangs of the dragons forming the handles has remained virtually intact. These vessels, probably used on state occasions for wine to be served at a feast, were cared for in the treasuries of the Order of the Teutonic Knights from 1525 or earlier until 1937.

The power and wealth of the Teutonic Knights were felt in Europe for centuries. The Teutonic Knights of Saint Mary’s Hospital in Jerusalem was one of the twelve religious orders established between 1100 and 1300. Originating about 1118, the Teutonic Order was raised to an Order of Knights in March 1198. With the Templars and Hospitalers, it was one of the three important military and religious orders that sprang from the Crusades. Its first headquarters were at Acre (1191-1291); after a brief sojourn in Venice the seat of government was transferred to Marienburg on the Vistula (1309-1457), and then to Koenigsberg (1457-1525) in East Prussia. With the secularization of the territories of the Grand Master, the Hohenzollern Albert of Brandenburg, the Order changed its headquarters to Mergentheim in Württemberg, where it remained until it moved to Vienna in 1890 to become a semi-religious order connected with the Hapsburgs. The present Grand Master of the Order, Dr. P. Marian Tumlter, published a handbook in 1948 and hopes soon to bring out a larger work.

The treasures of the Teutonic Order were published by the Order in 1865 with Dr. Beda Dudik as author. This book, based on original inventories dating back to 1526 in the central archives of the Order at Vienna, is so inaccessible that we are grateful that a copy could be borrowed for study and microfilming through Dr. Torsten Lenk, the director of the Royal

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Armory in Stockholm. The earliest inventory was made in 1524, on the occasion of the transfer of the silver treasure of the Order to the German Master for his personal use.

The treasure was never more magnificent than under Maximilian, Archduke of Austria (Grand Master, 1590-1615) and Leopold Wilhelm (1641-1662). The inventories taken after their deaths are records of extraordinarily sumptuous and precious objects. Maximilian’s castle at Innsbruck, where he preferred to sojourn, was crowded with “carvings in ebony and ivory; paintings on wood, cloth, linens, and parchment; etchings; pierced, engraved, or cast metalwork objects; arms and armor in the European and Asiatic taste; mathematical and astronomical instruments; ecclesiatical vestments and furnishings for the chapel; tapestries and artfully woven textiles; even books and illuminated manuscripts, etc.”

The Cloisters ewers are surely those described many times in the inventories of the Order. They are first mentioned in the inventory of 1526 as “two silver presentation ewers with the coat of arms of Stokheim.” The arms, which are now missing from the shields held by the wild men, were not mentioned in the inventories of 1606 and 1619, suggesting that for one reason or another they had already been removed. As Hartmann von Stockheim was the German Master between 1499 and 1510, it may be assumed that the ewers were presented to the Order toward the end of the fifteenth century. The inventory of 1619, made after the death of Archduke Maximilian, mentions “two silver, highly gilt, ewers, on each of these a wild man.” An inventory taken in 1632 adds “in black cases.” The inventory of 1757 first specifically mentions the green enamel paint of the wild men, perhaps to differentiate them.
from another ewer surmounted by a wild man which was damaged, repaired, and later melted down.

Fortunately the Cloisters ewers escaped the fate of a large table service belonging to the Order, which was melted down in 1684 to provide some three hundred pounds of metal for a service in the "new style." This treasure, consisting of a wide variety of objects including beakers, bottles with chains, bowls, plates, and knives, had been in constant use since the time of Reinhard von Neuperg, Grand Master of the Order from 1479 until 1489. Several times objects were sold from the treasuries, notably when Grand Master Anton Viktor, Archduke of Austria, had to provide funds for the Order following the difficult Napoleonic period. The Cloisters ewers remained in the care of the Order until shortly before the War, when, at the threatening approach of Hitler, they were sold in Vienna. They went into a private collection, and, except for a brief showing together with many other items in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, their existence has not been generally known, even to specialists.

No ewers exist with which these can be compared. The brass ewers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are much simpler and smaller; the large ewer of 1477 with a dragon-like handle in the City Hall in Goslar is somewhat larger and much more elaborate. A parcel-gilt silver ewer which bears a striking resemblance to ours is depicted in a painting in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Its shape is comparable; the top is surmounted by a castellated finial which might be a painter's hasty recollection of the turrets and wild men surmounting the Cloisters ewers; and the handle with a dragon's head and the body of an elongated dog with curling tail is almost identical. Whether the Master of Saint Severin knew our ewers or only a similar one when he painted the Boston picture is pure speculation. When the Boston painting was published by Karl Woermann in the Weber Sale Catalogue (1912) he dated it about 1510 and said that it came from a castle near Düsseldorf, whereas Alfred Stange in a recently published work on German Gothic painting says that it may have come from the Cologne Order of the Knights of St. John and dates it early in the 1490's. Even if the Boston painting comes from one or the other of these towns on the Rhine, neither the history of the Teutonic Knights nor our present knowledge of German metalwork permits us to assign the ewers to a specific German province.

A number of important liturgical objects are included in the Cloisters exhibition. One of the most unusual is the eleventh-century reliquary box illustrated on page 277. The pierced bone carvings, with some of the incised lines painted in red, green, and black, were silhouetted against gold foil, some of which still remains, and mounted on a wooden core. A hinged door at the back can be opened. The carvings show the combined influence of Byzantine and Ottonian manuscript styles and were probably executed in Salzburg.

The bone box and the miter shown on the same page have a long history. They were for many years in the treasury of the Benedictine abbey of Saint Peter, from which they were pur-
A pair of silver-gilt ewers. German, about 1500, from the Treasury of the Order of Teutonic Knights. The figures on top are wild men, and animals with dragon heads form the handles.

chased in the early 1930's by Oskar Bondi of Vienna. For the past twenty unsettled years they were in Vienna or in "safe-keeping" during the second World War. As some of the members of the Bondi family had migrated to America, they wanted to see a few of their most important treasures exhibited and cared for at The Cloisters. These are celebrated objects, fully described in the official Topography of Austrian Art, vol. xi, prepared by Hans Tietze in Vienna in 1913.

The first mention of this miter occurs in the oldest surviving Salzburg inventory (1462) as "Item three: miter of the old Father [abbot], which no one uses now, because of our pride or our fault." As the abbots of Saint Peter did not have authority from the archbishop to wear the miter between the years 988 and 1231, ours is believed to have been made after 1231, of twelfth-century textiles. Sometime between 1913 and 1930 the ten silver-gilt ornaments, beaded with coral, were shifted, and a slight
Detail of the panel on page 272, showing a ewer in the background like those at The Cloisters
Detail of one of the Cloisters ewers. The handle is very like one in the painting opposite.
The wild man from one of the Cloisters ewers. The figure is silver, painted in cold enamel.

piece of the frayed top edge was cut away. Fortunately the gold paint used to delineate the vines and leaves on the yellowish white silk and the black and gold orphreys were not restored. The inscription on the borders, in Leonine verse, praises the Virgin.

Other vestments in the exhibition but not illustrated here come from the heirs of Leopold Iklé, the Swiss lace manufacturer, who in 1901 gave all but a few of his rarest pieces to the Textile Museum in Saint-Gall, Switzerland. Among them are a late Gothic cope of opus Anglicanum, two fifteenth-century chasubles (one exceptionally rich with gold), and a finely woven strip of Cologne work with a Crucifixion scene.

Another cope in the exhibition, embroidered with the arms of Don Alfonso de Cartagena, Bishop of Burgos from 1435 to 1456, belonged to a series of over forty vestments in the treasury of Burgos cathedral. They are believed to have been presented to the cathedral upon the return of the bishop from the Council of Basel in 1437. This cope was in an American private collection for years and was recently brought back to this country from South America.

The silver-gilt cross on page 278 was described and illustrated in 1927 in Giovanni Seregni's *Don Carlo Trivulzio e la Cultura Milanese dell'età sua, 1715-1789*. It was probably given to the monastery of Santa Maria di Pozzolo (Gorgonzola) by its founder, Cardinal Pietro Petrigrossi, who died in 1295. Don Carlo formed a famous library and established the Trivulzio Museum. The procession cross, which could also have been placed on an altar, is embellished with filigree of the type developed in the North during the thirteenth century. The figures in the medallions were, like the filigree, cast in silver and then worked over with tools.

The dorsal, or altar frontal, on page 281 came from the collection of the Marquis de Dos Aguas de Valencia. At each side of this fine piece are the arms of Don Enrique II, Infante of Aragon, Duke of Segorbe, and Count of Ampurias, who was a first cousin of Ferdinand the Catholic and was at one time nominated to succeed him on the throne. Altar frontals rich with gold are mentioned in the inventories taken during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella (1474-1516). A marble altar frontal with instruments of the Passion in the museum of the cathedral of Barcelona bears a striking resemblance to this piece in composition and design.
Reliquary box, bone and gold foil on wood, xi century, and a miter, xiii century. From the abbey of Saint Peter in Salzburg
Silver-gilt processional or altar cross, probably made for Cardinal Pietro Petrigrossi. Italian, late thirteenth century, from the collection of Prince Trivulzio. In the center is God the Father, with the inscription EGO SUM; at the ends are the evangelists’ symbols: an angel and the heads of an ox, a lion, and an eagle on human bodies; Mary and John are on the reverse. Filigree work was extensively used in the Middle Ages for decorating secular and liturgical objects.
LEFT: Volute and upper part of the staff of an ivory crosier. Gilded, with red and black outlines. North Italian, early xiv century. Total height 5 feet 1 inch. This crosier belongs to a group of objects all probably made in North Italy. The form of the Lamb of God in the volute and the trefoil leaves painted on two plaques of the knop, on the leaves of the volute, and on the part of the staff not shown represent the final Gothic development of stylized patterns in the oriental manner which flourished in Sicily and Italy in the xiv century.

RIGHT: Silver-gilt tower ostensory. North Italian, about 1400. Height 1 foot 10 inches. From the Victor Rothschild collection, England. The form of this reliquary imitates late Gothic architecture by its verticality and such details as the pinnacles, flying buttresses, arches, and windows. The relic was contained in the rock-crystal chamber below the tower. Six plaques of translucent enamel on silver, depicting saints, are mounted on the base, which resembles that of a chalice. The ostensory may have been placed on the altar on special feast days.
Two purses of the late Middle Ages. The one at the left has its original leather pouch, the one at the right is covered with XV century velvet. Each of the iron mounts conceals an intricate locking device that can only be opened by the release of one of the turrets and a pin. Purses are shown in medieval illustrations hanging from the belts of men of means, but few have survived.
Flemish tapestried altar frontal or dorsal with instruments of the Passion woven on a millefleurs ground. Made in Brussels, late XV century. This tapestry, rich with silver-gilt threads, bears the arms of Don Enrique II (1445-1522), a cousin of Ferdinand the Catholic.
ABOVE: Tapestry, made in the mid xvi century, which was probably used as an altar frontal and is representative of a type popular in South Germany and Switzerland. Queen Esther is standing before the enthroned king Ahasuerus. The inscription reads: “O king, let me have mercy from you so that not all of my people should die. Esther, whatever your heart desires shall be granted.”

OPPOSITE PAGE: Wall hanging with wool and silver-gilt threads. Possibly Burgundian, made in the xv century. Such pieces are shown in Northern paintings, but few have survived. Richer tapestries with human or animal figures exist in far greater quantity.
Engraved box, copper-gilt with champlevé enamel plaques. Austrian, probably Viennese, first half of the xiv century. This example is rare in having the plaques still in place. They include Bible scenes; the Annunciation and Nativity are on the front.
Inside of the lid of a box. Embossed and incised leather, painted and gilded. Italian, xv century. The principal scene is the Death of the Virgin surrounded by Apostles; above is a scene of her Coronation. Lent by A. B. Martin