

# THE JOURNAL OF THE WALTERS ART GALLERY



1950-1951

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

PUBLISHED BY THE TRUSTEES

# THE JOURNAL OF THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

VOLUMES XIII - XIV  
1950 - 1951

---

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
PUBLISHED BY THE TRUSTEES

COPYRIGHT 1952  
BY THE  
WALTERS ART GALLERY  
BALTIMORE  
MARYLAND

THE JOHN D. LUCAS PRINTING COMPANY  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

# THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

## TRUSTEES - 1950-1951

HON. THOMAS D'ALESSANDRO . . . . .	Mayor of Baltimore, Ex-Officio
HON. ARTHUR B. PRICE . . . . .	President of City Council, Ex-Officio
LAURA F. DELANO	ROBERT GARRETT, President
A. R. L. DOHME	PHILIP B. PERLMAN, Vice-President
JACK S. EWING	ELEANOR P. SPENCER
D. LUKE HOPKINS	
EDWARD S. KING	FREDERICK B. ADAMS, JR.
Secretary	Assistant Secretary

SAFE DEPOSIT AND TRUST COMPANY  
Treasurer

## COMMITTEE ON THE GALLERY

MESSRS. GARRETT, PERLMAN AND KING

## ADVISOR IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

LYNN D. POOLE, Director of Public Relations, The Johns Hopkins University

## THE STAFF

EDWARD S. KING . . . . .	Director
JOHN CARROLL KIRBY . . . . .	Assistant to Director
MARY M. COONEY . . . . .	Secretary to Director
DOROTHY KENT HILL . . . . .	Curator of Ancient Art
MARVIN CHAUNCEY ROSS . . . . .	Curator of Medieval & Subsequent Decorative Arts
GLENN M. WOODWARD . . . . .	Secretary to Curator of Medieval Art
EDWARD S. KING . . . . .	Curator of Paintings and Far Eastern Art
DOROTHY E. MINER . . . . .	Librarian and Keeper of Manuscripts
IRENE M. BUTTERBAUGH . . . . .	Assistant to Librarian
*LOUISE M. MOTTU . . . . .	Assistant to Librarian
CHRISTINE T. BROWN . . . . .	Assistant to Librarian
WINIFRED KENNEDY . . . . .	Registrar
JEANNETTE DAUPLAISE . . . . .	Secretary to Registrar
THEODORE L. LOW . . . . .	Director, Department of Education
VALERIE M. BARROLL . . . . .	Assistant, Department of Education
HELEN PATRICIA COWLES . . . . .	Assistant, Department of Education
DAVID ROSEN . . . . .	Technical Advisor
ELISABETH C. G. PACKARD . . . . .	Assistant to Technical Advisor
JOHN CARROLL KIRBY . . . . .	Assistant to Technical Advisor
SHERLEY B. HOBBS . . . . .	Photographer
RUTH E. SILK . . . . .	Assistant to Photographer
MARY R. POE . . . . .	Information and Sales
WILLIAM H. SMITH . . . . .	Building Superintendent
ANDREW BRILL . . . . .	Assistant to Building Superintendent
FORREST C. BUCKLEY . . . . .	Engineer
CHARLES H. OWINGS . . . . .	Carpenter and Construction

\*Resigned during 1951

Editor of the JOURNAL . . . . .	DOROTHY E. MINER
	Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Md., U.S.A.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLS. XIII-XIV

1950-1951

CLEMENS SOMMERS— <i>The Prophets of Saint Antoine en Viennois</i> . . . .	9
STEPHEN V. GRANCSAY— <i>A Late Medieval Helmet (Sallet)</i> . . . . .	21
JOAN PRENTICE VON ERDBERG— <i>Early Work by Fra Xanto Aveli da Rovigo in the Walters Art Gallery</i> . . . . .	31
CURT F. BÜHLER— <i>The Walters 'Polycronicon' of 1495</i> . . . . .	39
DAVID ROSEN— <i>The Preservation of Wood Sculpture: the Wax Immersion Method</i> . . . . .	45
MARCELLE BRUNET— <i>Two Sèvres Vases with Portraits of King Louis Philippe and his Queen</i> . . . . .	73
DAVID ROSEN AND JULIUS S. HELD— <i>A Rubens Discovery in Chicago</i> . . . .	76

(The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery is indexed in ART INDEX)



FIGURE 1

*The Virgin and Saint John*  
Polychromed stone

WALTERS ART GALLERY



FIGURE 2

*Christ in Judgment*

SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

## THE PROPHETS OF SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

BY CLEMENS SOMMER

*The University of North Carolina*

AMONG THE MANY SMALL, late gothic sculptures in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore there is a two-figure group of Mary and Saint

John,<sup>1</sup> in all probability part of a Calvary group from a stone retable, ascribed to the Burgundian School of the fifteenth century (fig. 1). This attribution has doubtless been made because of its similarity to the Sluter school and the tombs of the Burgundian dukes in Dijon. Any sculpture

<sup>1</sup> No. 27.274. Polychromed stone. Height: 16¾ inches (.428 m). Acquired 1925.



FIGURE 3                      SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS  
Central Portal  
Sculptured Archivolts

within a certain range of Dijon has always been connected in some way with Claus Sluter or his followers. Although there is no doubt that this great Netherlandish master had taken over the leadership and determined the development of the stagnating French sculpture throughout the fifteenth century, an intimate knowledge of the existing monuments of this period in Burgundy reveals an astonishingly rich and varied material of Netherlandish extraction. Some definite personalities seem to take shape who are independent of Sluter, but closely related to the Netherlands nonetheless. One of these outstanding masters is the sculptor who created the decor-

ation of the west façade of the Collegiate Church at Saint Antoine en Viennois. The above-mentioned group in the Walters Art Gallery seems to be in close relation to the archivolt sculptures at Saint Antoine.

The Collegiate Church of the Antonites at Saint Antoine en Viennois, situated in the mountains of the Dauphiné, exhibits one of the most magnificent façades built during the first half of the fifteenth century. It was never entirely completed and is today in a deplorable state of deterioration. The façade was built at the beginning of the fifteenth century, probably between the years 1411-1425. It has three portals, of which the central one is strongly accented. Steeply pitched, free-standing gables serve as superstructures. These are, unfortunately, partially demolished today. Of the thirty-four large figures which decorated the lower part of the façade, particularly the jambs of the portals, only one has been preserved and even this is badly mutilated. Thus, for an evaluation of the sculptural decoration we are restricted to the archivolts of the central portion which have remained almost intact (figs. 3 and 4). Only in the lower ranges are the heads of the figures missing. The rather unusual program shows the following arrangement: the two outer archivolts have pairs of singing and praying angels, seventy-two in all (figs. 5 and 6). There are several types of angels, clearly differentiated, not only by the number of wings, which vary from one to three pairs, but also by their raiment. Some are dressed in long, billowy, abundant draperies. Some wear deacon's garb, while others are clad in a scant wreath of leaves around the hips. They represent the different ranks of the celestial host. At the vertex of the middle row of archivolts Christ appears, His right hand blessing, His left hand holding the orb (fig. 2). The innermost row contains twelve sitting men, probably representing the major



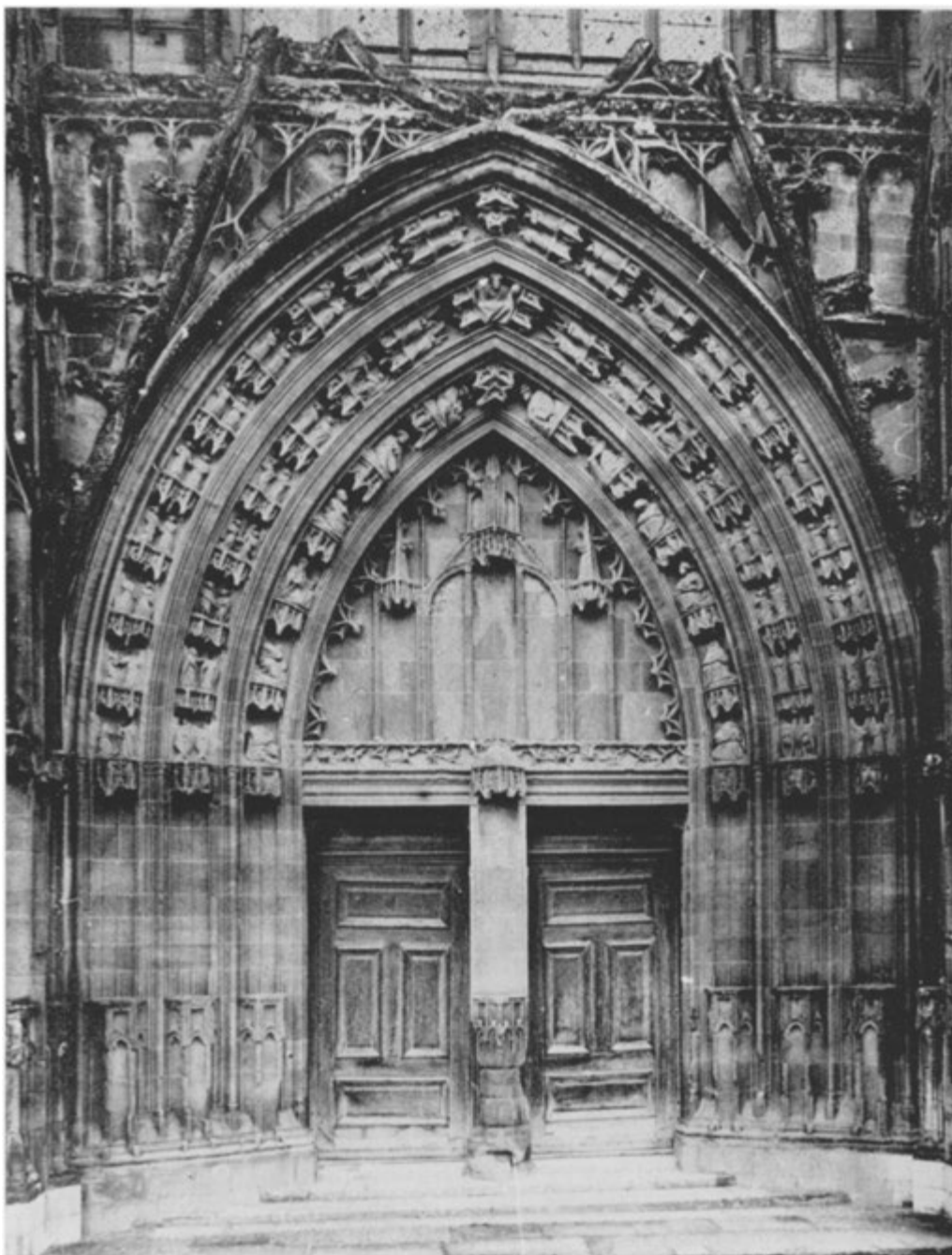


FIGURE 4

SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

*Collegiate Church of the Antonites  
Central Portal*

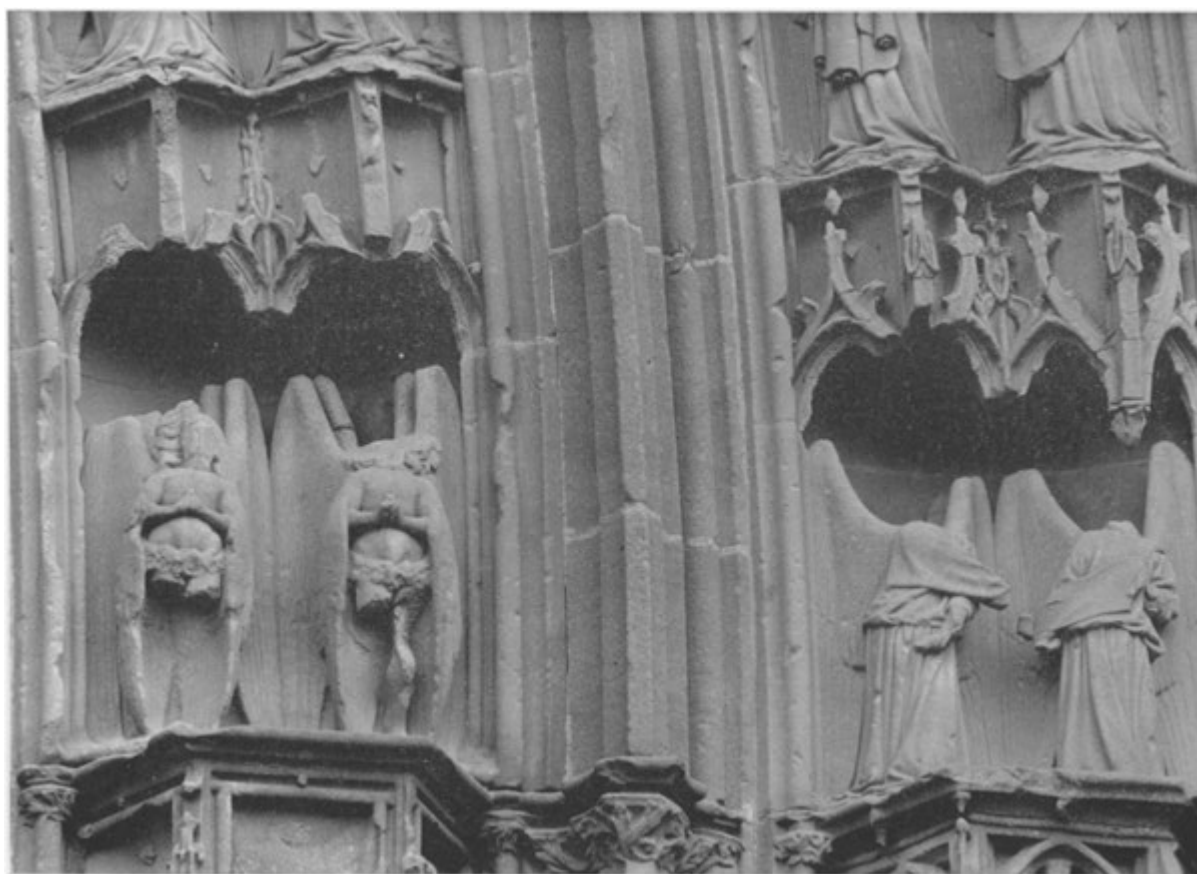


FIGURE 5

SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

*Outer Archivolts: Angels*

prophets, though only Moses is clearly recognizable (figs. 7, 8, 10, 11). Thus, it is evident that the program of the sculptural decoration was an abbreviation of the old theme of the Last Judgment.

In spite of the extraordinary quality of the work at Saint Antoine, only a few French scholars have paid attention to its sculptural importance. One of them in 1890 connected the name of Antoine le Moiturier, nephew and pupil of the Avignon sculptor, Jacques Morel, with the façade sculptures.<sup>2</sup> Le Moiturier's name appeared in a local archive as having worked at

Saint Antoine between 1461 and 1463, without specifying the part of the church on which he worked. Since it seems that the façade was

<sup>2</sup> Abbé Requin, *Antoine de la Moiturier in Mémoires de la réunion des sociétés des beaux-arts et des départements* (1890). Other literature includes: (L'Abbé) A. Petit, *Souvenir de Saint Antoine* (Grenoble, n.d.) (1893); Marcel Raymond, *Caractère italien de la façade de Saint Antoine (Isère) et sculpture de la Moiturier in Bulletin de l'Académie Delphinale*, 4me serie, X (Grenoble, 1896); Marquet de Vasselot, *Deux oeuvres d'Antoine le Moiturier in Fondation Piot, Monuments et Mémoires*, III (1896), pl. XXVI; Lucien Begule, *L'église Saint-Maurice ancienne Cathédral de Vienne* (Paris, 1914): fig. 60; Abbaye de Saint-Antoine—pl. XXXIV: Église Saint-Antoine (Isère) Portail Central de la Façade.



FIGURE 6

SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

*Outer Archivolts: Angels*

finished in 1425 and as there is no evidence that Antoine le Moiturier worked on it, there is no reason to connect his name with the sculptures. Those works which can reasonably be attributed to le Moiturier, such as the tomb of Jean sans Peur, now in the museum of Dijon, show an entirely different style.

The sculptor of St. Antoine does not belong to any of the groups of epigones of the great Claus Sluter who faithfully and with little imagination repeat the realistic formulae of their master. His style and interpretation of the Last Judgment is entirely unusual. With real musical

feeling the sculptor composes thirty-six variations on the one central motive of the angel-pair. Some of the pairs simply stand side by side, joined in an identical gesture of prayer (fig. 5). Others are joined by tenderly expressed inclination towards each other or by an active grasping of the hands (fig. 6). Each pair is a new and charming variation on the original motive of joining two angels in spiritual or active relationships. Folds and arrangements of the soft and floating garments are another factor in the rhythmical interrelation and activation of the cycle in which the groups are forever moving.



FIGURE 7

SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

*Inner Archivolts: Prophets*

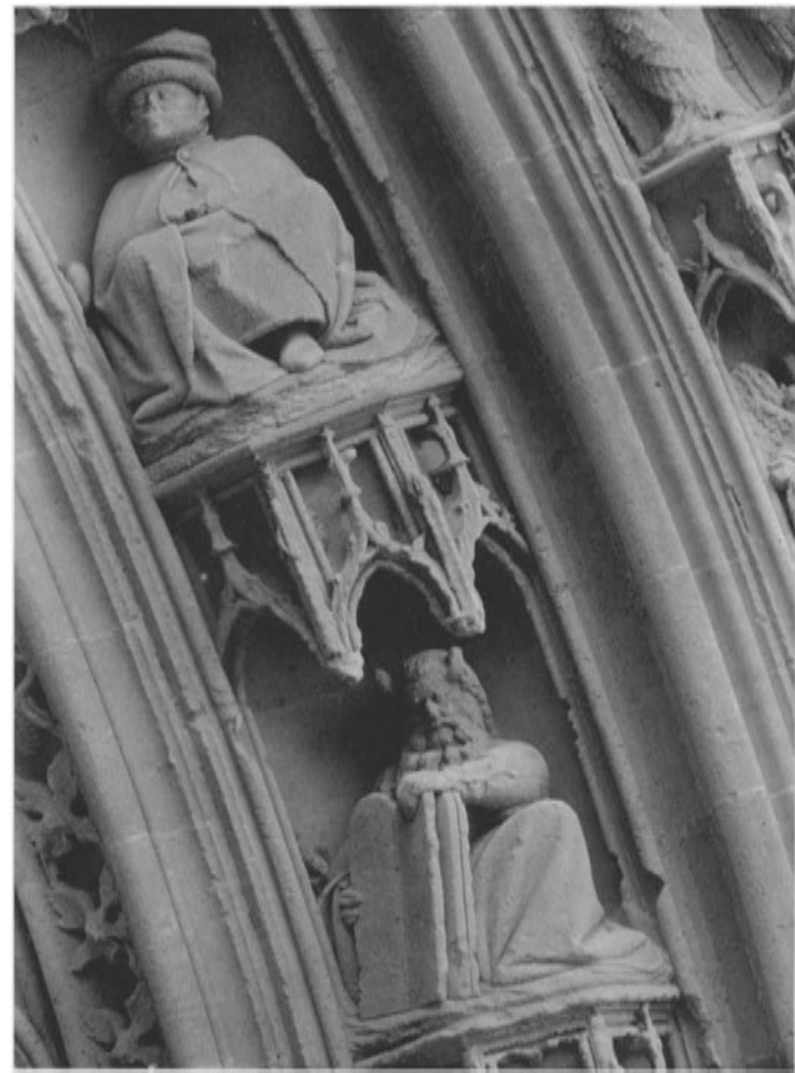


FIGURE 8

SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

*Inner Archivolts: Prophets*

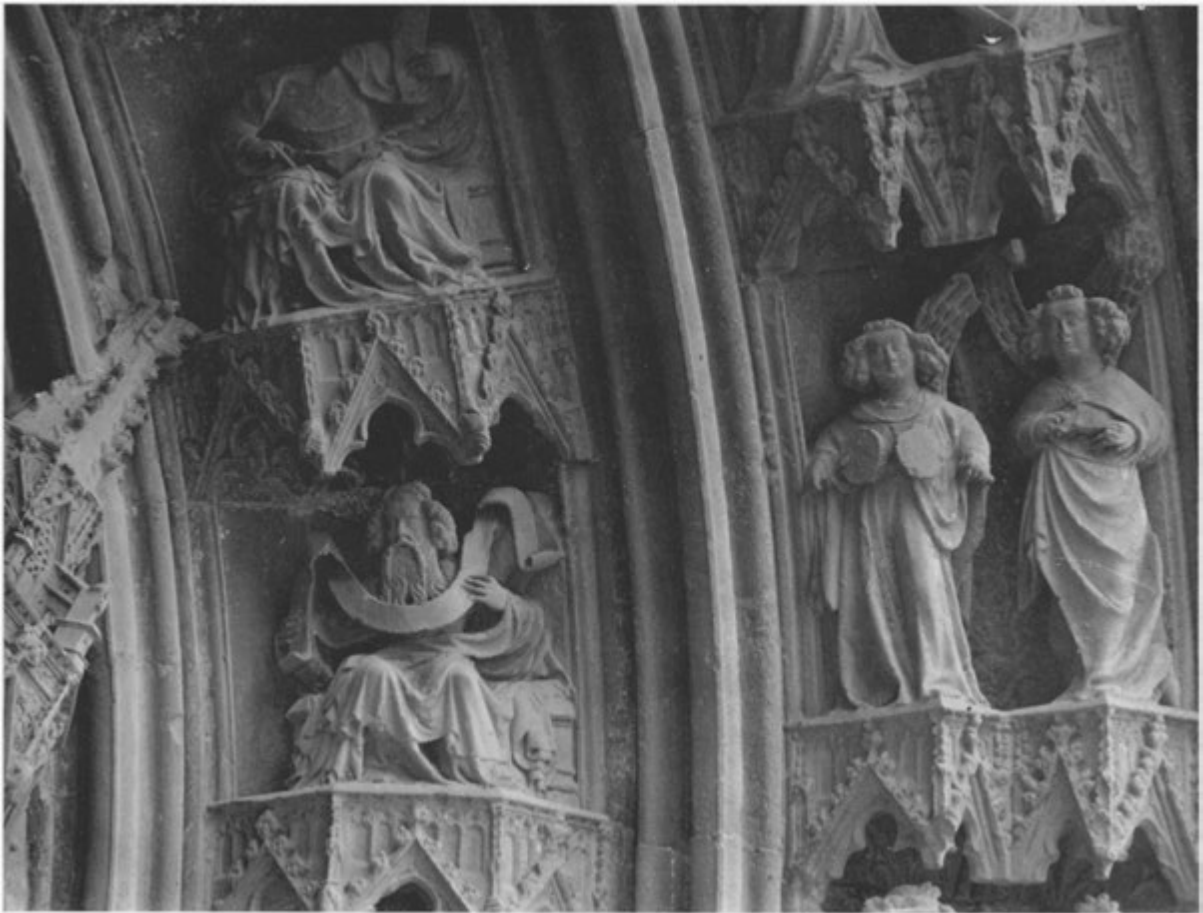


FIGURE 9

VIENNE-SUR-RHÔNE

*Cathedral  
Archivolts of South Portal*

The gentle melody of this celestial circle is violently broken at the vertex of the second rich where the figure of the Judging Christ plunges forward with a startling intensity. This surprising sculpture leads us immediately to the figures of the prophets in the innermost arch. In contrast to the serenity of the celestial beings, these representatives of the human mind, bent with the burden of their prophetic gift, are bound to the weight and shape of the stone out of which they are formed. Each one again is different in age and attitude. Each one accepts

his task in a different spirit: in stolid submission, ecstatic inspiration or in scornful subjection. The expressionistic intensity of these carvings is due to the expert mastery of expressive action in the seated figure. Compared with the representative forms of the prophets on Sluter's *Puits de Moïse* in Dijon they show an emotional quality which makes the Sluter figures appear almost lifeless.

The unusual program of the portal of Saint Antoine shows a close connection with another work in the vicinity: the west façade of the



FIGURE 10                      SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS  
*Inner Archivolts*

Cathedral of Vienne-sur-Rhône. The three portals of this façade, together with the one of Saint Antoine, have not so far been recognized as most significant and characteristic examples

of Netherlandish sculpture, which thrived in Burgundy for almost a century after Claus Sluter. As almost every evidence of medieval sculpture has vanished through war and iconoclasm in the Netherlands and Flanders, these magnificent testimonials to this vanished art in southern France are well worth knowing.

The sculptures of the south portal in Vienne (fig. 9), originating shortly before the beginning of the fifteenth century, bear a strong resemblance to the earlier works of the Pilgrims' Church at Hal in Belgium. The central portal, however, shows such a close relation to the sculptures connected with Roger van der Weyden that it can be dated between 1450-1460. The north portal probably is one or two decades later.<sup>3</sup>

The program of the portal of Saint Antoine obviously repeats that of the southern portal in Vienne. It reveals the same organization: pairs of angel musicians in the outer row of the archivolts, and eight seated prophets in the inner row. The figure of the Judging Christ was also there, but, whereas at Saint Antoine its position is very conspicuous, at Vienne it was over the apex of the portal. A comparison of the two portals reveals the tremendous boldness and emotional intensity of the Master of Saint Antoine. There is at Vienne no spiritual nor formal relation between the pairs of angels or in the figures of the prophets, who are holding their scrolls without even an attempt at an emotional interpretation of their spiritual significance. The similarity in program between the two portals is an additional factor in the dating of the sculptures of Saint Antoine. It is very unlikely that around 1460, or seventy years after the early

<sup>3</sup> While this was in press, Robert A. Koch published an article in the June 1950 issue of the *Art Bulletin*, p. 151, in which he sets the date for the sculptural decoration of the Central Portal in Vienne at around 1480.



Vienne portal was finished, this rather insignificant and (for such a late date) old-fashioned portal would have been chosen as model, especially since the far more elaborate central portal had in the meantime been erected at Vienne.

The Master of Saint Antoine must rank as an important personality of the first half of the fifteenth century. His flowing garment-style and soft curves may still remind us of Sluter, but his emotional, almost dramatic quality and the singularly expressionistic treatment of the seated figure point in another direction. Stylistically, he can be compared with some of his Netherlandish countrymen who worked on the blue-stone reliefs in Tournai—such as the epitaph of Fiefvés of 1420 (fig. 14) with two crouching figures before the bier, the stele of Marie de Quinghien of *circa* 1427 (fig. 12), and a fragmentary relief in the Cathedral of Tournai (fig. 13). But an even closer relation is revealed in a comparison with the small stone group in the Walters Art Gallery (fig. 1). The broad and heavy folds, the equally broad surface of the faces with minute features, the block-like outline of the group, all add up to the same intensity which was felt in the Saint Antoine prophets. The group of Mary and Saint John also shows the same passionate emotion underlined by the antithetical movement of the heads. Although of inferior quality compared with the works of Saint Antoine, these common stylistic characteristics make the Baltimore group an important link between the so far unknown Master of Saint Antoine and certain artists of the same time. It is significant of his own broad painterly style that most of his next of kin are painters. In the Netherlands they are Robert Campin and the Master of the *Heures de Turin*; in Germany, Konrad Witz and Lucas Moser, and the sculptor-painter Hans Multscher. Determined individualists who seem to be in opposi-



FIGURE 11

SAINT ANTOINE EN VIENNOIS

*Inner Archivolt*

tion to convention, they prepare the way for the new painterly style, which is the contribution of the Netherlands. In painting this supremacy has always been accepted, but in sculpture the







FIGURE 14

BRUSSELS, MUSÉE DU CINQUANTENAIRE

*Epitaph of Fiefvés*

scarcity of monuments in the Netherlands has led to sad guess-work around two great names in the fifteenth century: Claus Sluter and Nicolaus van Leyden. Monuments such as Saint Antoine and Vienne (and more may probably be found on French soil) can complete our more

than fragmentary knowledge of Netherlandish sculpture. We know of its widespread influence in late gothic sculpture, but so far we have not been able to follow this influence back to its sources.



FIGURE 1A, B WALTERS ART GALLERY

Visored Sallet. Innsbruck, 1490

Helmets of this type were originally either polished like a mirror, painted with ornamental motifs, or covered with rich textiles. While practically no medieval armor retains its original surface, it is known that it was highly polished. For example, the reflection of landscapes in armor is shown not only in contemporary paintings, but even in tapestries. This helmet weighs 76 ounces; the American World War II helmet weighs 50 ounces.

# A LATE MEDIEVAL HELMET (SALLET)

BY STEPHEN V. GRANCSAY

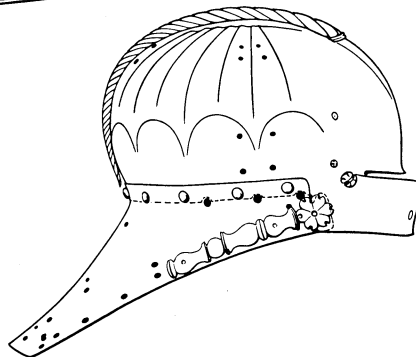
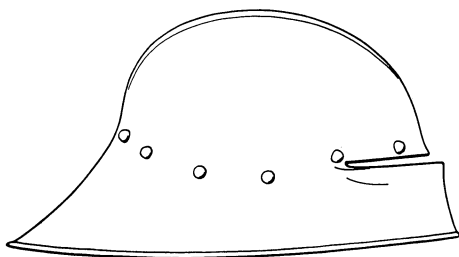
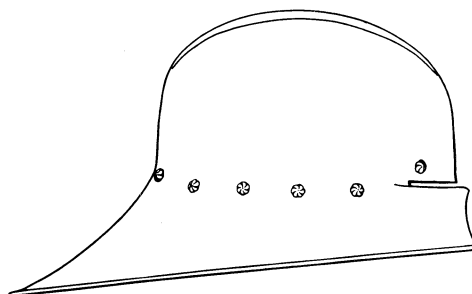
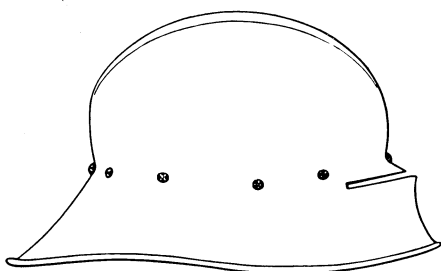
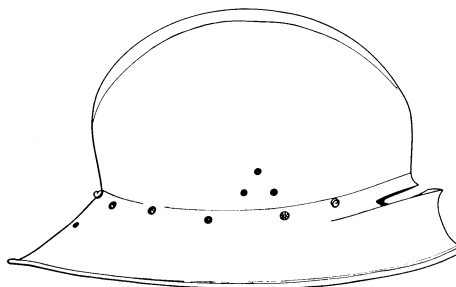
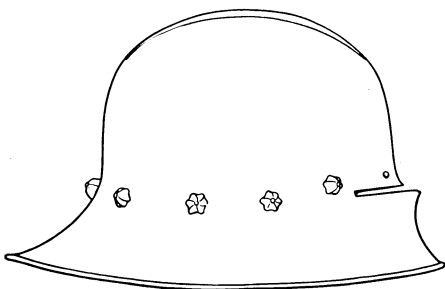
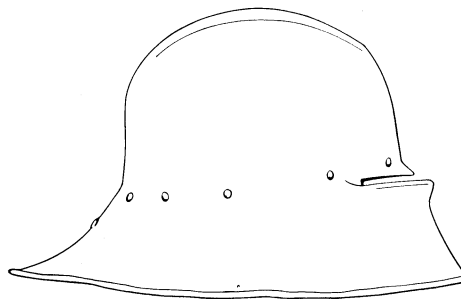
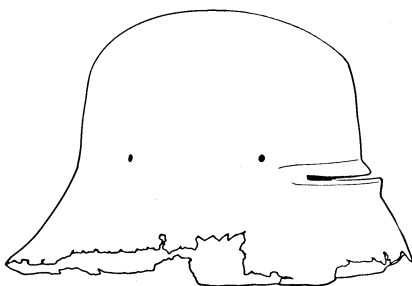
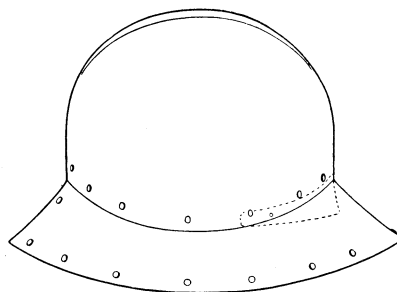
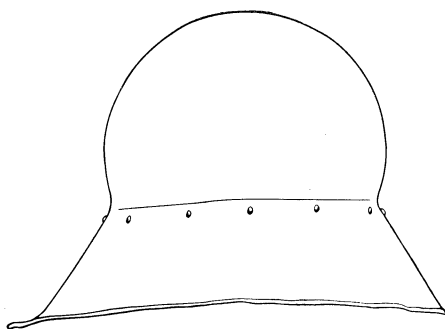
*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

IT IS MUCH more difficult for the visitor to an American art museum to see a medieval helmet than it is for him to see a helmet that dates back to Greek and Roman times. For many museums exhibit helmets of classical antiquity, while outside of the Metropolitan Museum, the Boston and Cleveland Museums, the Harding Museum in Chicago, and the Higgins Museum in Worcester, I believe no medieval helmets are exhibited except the visored sallet which is the subject of this article. This deficiency is apparently due to the fact that medieval helmets are rarely available for purchase, and when they are available the competition is keen, and they find their way into the collections of wealthy connoisseurs or into the European national collections. For example, but a few years ago an English collector acquired for 2730 pounds sterling the only fourteenth-century helmet (visored basinet with camail) that had come into the auction room in practically half a century. It was ultimately bequeathed to the Tower of London. The possession of this single helmet would have given especial significance to any American art museum in the opinion of experienced students of medieval armor the world over.

These introductory remarks are intended to remind the reader that the late Henry Walters had a keen appreciation of medieval metalwork and therefore included in his collection a few

fine pieces of armor. He was not interested in obsolete military equipment, but he was interested in iron and steel work of quality and of historical significance.

The characteristic headpiece of the fifteenth century was the sallet which, with the *armet-a-rondelle*, replaced the basinet. There were three principal types of sallet: the Italian *celata* apparently in origin a modification of the basinet, and the Spanish *celada* and the German *Schallern*, the tailed sallet with a slit for the eyes, in their origin related to the iron war hat (*chapel-de-fer*). The Italian *celata* or *barbuta* is close fitting with a T-shaped opening for the face like the bronze helmet of classical times. Worn in Italy, particularly in Venice, this type, however, was not exclusive to Italy. Nor was the German type made and worn exclusively in Germany. The Milanese sallet (D 13) in the Royal Armory in Madrid is of the "tailed" German fashion. This helmet is overlaid with silver gilded and punched with arabesques and intricate strapwork. It bears the mark (crossed keys surmounted by a crown) of the Missaglia-Negroli atelier and dates about 1500. The tail piece is a separate plate riveted to the bowl, and the decorated borders are applied. In workmanship it is the same as the Negroli sallet of the Italian form (D 12), also in Madrid. Both of these sallets were worn abroad, for they belonged to Philip the Fair,



Archduke of Austria (b.1478—d. 1506).

The *barbuta*<sup>1</sup> got its name from the fact that it lacked protection for the lower part of the face and therefore exposed the beard ("barbuta"). The *celata* (concealed) has a similar descriptive derivation, for the *barbuta* became the *celata* when it protected and concealed the entire face. Both terms are used today to describe the Italian visorless headpiece which in contour is similar to the Corinthian casque of the Greeks. The Italian *celata* became the Spanish *celada*, and *salade* in France and England.

The Spanish *celada* is a tight-fitting skull-cap with a wide slit on each side in the ear region

nomenclature of the principal element of a helmet is still bowl, shell, or skull. In contemporary documents the spelling of *Schallern* varies greatly, i.e., *Salaren*, *Salair*, *Schaleren*, *Tschalaren*, *Zalaren*, *Zelärenn*, etc. Like the *celata*, the long tailed visored sallet is illustrated frequently in contemporary art. It appears on dated coins for example, the silver thaler, dated 1486, of Sigismund, Archduke of Austria, who is represented on horseback galloping, pennon in hand, wearing heavy war gear including a deep sallet. At a comparatively late date it is worn by the knight in the famous print *Knight, Death and the Devil* engraved in 1513 by Albrecht Dürer.

FIGURE 2

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

War Hats and Sallets (opposite page): top left, German War Hat, 1450, which originally had a vision slit in the brim; top right, Spanish Cabacete, 1480, which was worn with a long beaver with vision slit. The remaining examples are German sallets with vision slit in the bowl and date 1460-1480, except the lower right sallet for tilting which was made about 1545 by the Nuremberg armorer, Kunz Lochner.

to facilitate hearing. It is an abbreviated form of the typical Spanish broad-brimmed war hat (*cabacete* or *capacete*) which was similar to the *chapel-de-fer* and the sallet. Like the sallet, the *cabacete* had a beaver (*barbote*) but it was longer than the German type. It was made of several pivoted plates reaching from the eyes and extending down well over the chest. In this case, the visor was independent of the sallet, the vision slits being in the upper plate of the beaver.

The German form, which is long tailed and with which we are principally concerned in this article, is called *Schallern*, from *Schale*, a shell or bowl. This derivation is logical, for the modern

The Walters helmet<sup>2</sup> is a long-tailed visored sallet, the characteristic German headpiece of the last third of the fifteenth century. It is notable for its elegant silhouette, the ovoid bowl, with ridge of keel form with three round holes for attaching plume or crest holder, extending over the back of the neck in a fluent curve. The sallet was sometimes surmounted by a crest, a bouquet of plumes, a wreath, even a royal crown. Medieval crests are of the greatest rarity, but they are represented frequently in contemporary documents. For example, in the Cottonian Manuscript (Julius E IV), drawn about 1480 (the period of the Walters sallet), which portrays the chief events in the life of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, the Earl is several times represented wearing a visored sallet surmounted by his crest of the bear and ragged staff. The surface of our sallet is smooth and brightly polished, the only decoration being file

<sup>1</sup> "*Barbuti*, sono una sorte di morione usato avanti le celate; e così chiamavansi perchè lasciavano la barba scoperta a differenza delle celate le quali tutta la faccia celavano; onde ne trassero il nome" (*Museo Cospiano*, Bologna, 1677).

<sup>2</sup> The museum number is 51.470. The weight is 4 lb. 12 oz. The bowl has a tail 6½ inches long. The length from tail to visor is 15½ inches. The width is 8 inches.

lines and steel brass-capped rivets, the latter also serving the practical purpose of securing the interior leather strap to which the lining was sewn. At the back of the lining strap is sewn a leather loop for suspending the helmet when not in use. The lining is lacking. A study of the few extant sallets with linings shows that the latter were sometimes made of wadded segments adjusted by strings at the center. Thus the lining did not come in contact with the top of the helmet, for the space between the lining and the helmet aided ventilation and shock absorption.

the visor is held closed by a spring pin. The polished surface is in contrast to the rough and unfinished surface of some sallets which were originally either painted or covered with a textile. For state occasions sallets were covered with cloth of gold, had silver and gilded latten borders, and even were richly jeweled. The page of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, had a sallet that was valued at a hundred thousand gold crowns.

The Walters sallet is similar in style to the sallet of Count Gaudenz of Matsch in the Castle

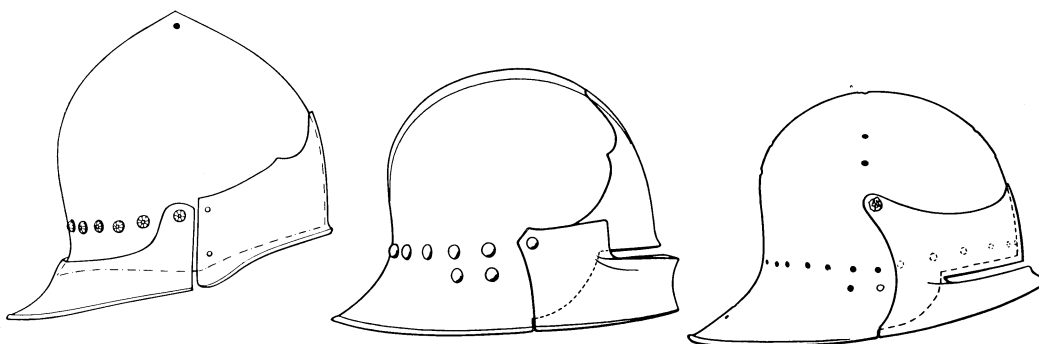


FIGURE 3

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

*Short-Tailed Sallets of French Type, 1450-1490*

*Left, visorless with reinforcing brow plate and nape defense pivoted at sides; center, reinforcing brow plate and separate pivoted visor; right, pivoted visor combined with reinforcing forehead plate.*

Sometimes an independent padded cap was worn in addition to the lining. Originally a strap on each side of the sallet was buckled under the chin and served to stabilize the helmet. The upper part of the visor is flanged forward, and the space between the bowl and the upper border of the visor forms the vision slit. The knight could hold up the visor by means of a fork (lacking) which was pivoted to the right side, the fork fitting into one of the three nicks in the beveled edge of the visor. He could also close it quickly when he was ready for action, and

of Churburg (Cat. No. 62). Like the Churburg sallet, it has above the outward rolled lower border, which gave strength to the edges, a series of paired holes for sewing the brim lining. The Churburg sallet bears on either side of the tail the armorer's mark (a shield enclosing a wheel surmounted by the initials I W). There was an armorer named Jörg Wagner working at Innsbruck at this date, and the initials and the rebus of a wagon wheel agree so well with his name that the sallet may be attributed to him. Both the Walters and the Churburg sallets have

filed invected edges on the visor arms and this ornament, too, may be considered to represent the spokes of a wheel, thus referring to the armorer's name. The Walters sallet came from the armory of Prince Liechtenstein at Vaduz<sup>3</sup> which is no great distance from Innsbruck, its probable place of origin.

One has a more thorough appreciation of medieval armor when one is familiar with the methods used in modeling it. For example, the helmet under discussion, while extremely simple in outline, presents features which are not immediately obvious on casual examination. It represents above all how skilfully hard metal may be worked. Our helmet is made of billets of iron and steel welded together. The laminated material is of the best quality, for it has a surface which takes a finish as smooth as glass. The bowl is forged from a single piece of metal, an important feature when one considers the vast difference in the degree of skill required to make the bowl of a helmet in one or in two or more pieces. Norman and earlier helmets—like the sixth-century Spangenhelm in the Metropolitan Museum of Art—were built of several pieces of iron and they required much less skill to make than a helmet that was forged from a single piece of metal. The latter type of headpiece was developed by the armorers only after a long period of experiments, and it was developed because a stronger type of helmet was needed to protect against the formidable weapons in use, *i.e.*, crossbow bolts, stout pointed lances, maces, and heavy swords. Much of the work in making a helmet is done cold over anvils, or stakes, of various forms suited to developing curved surfaces or ridges. One of the features of the sallet is the curved surface which, in addition to its pleas-

ing effect, is of great practical value, for it caused the weapon to glance off, thus making the blow relatively ineffective.

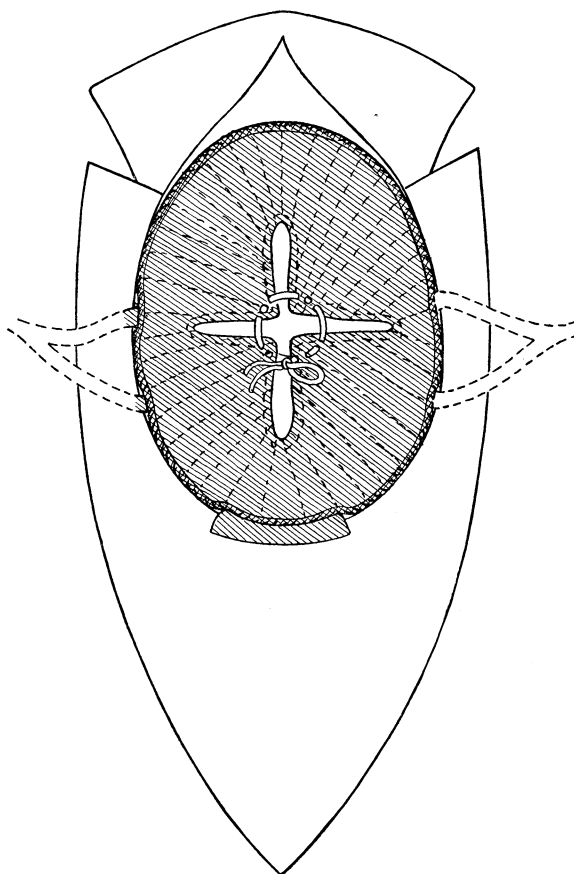


FIGURE 4

*Drawing Showing the Lining of a German Sallet*

Like all authentic medieval armor, the metal of the Walters sallet is graduated in thickness, being strongest where needed; it varies from 0.040" to 0.045". The front of the bowl and the front of the visor are the thickest areas, ranging from 0.085" to 0.145". The bowl is thinned out in the direction of the lower edge. In connection with this study, the hardness was

<sup>3</sup> *European Arms and Armor, mainly XV, XVI and XVII centuries, including artistic and rare specimens from Princely Provenience* (New York, American Art Association, Inc., Nov. 19-20, 1926), lot 232, pl. XXVII.

recorded with Shore's Standard Scleroscope. The bowl at the rim registers 28-30; in front, 45; inside, 22; the visor registers 60-65. These measurements indicate that the interior is cold worked wrought iron; the bowl is cold worked

medieval helmet was sufficiently hard to resist penetration in most cases; the tough iron inner layer yielded, preventing the steel from shattering and thus usually producing a dent rather than a hole.

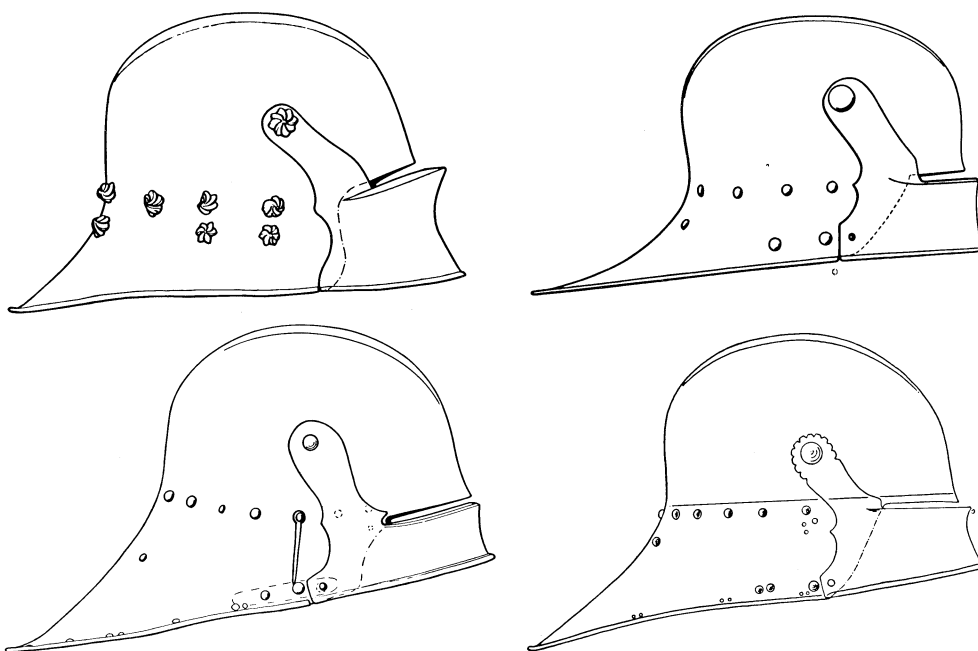


FIGURE 5

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART AND WALTERS ART GALLERY

#### German Sallets

With vision slit formed by the space between the bowl and visor. These are all in The Metropolitan Museum except lower right which is the Walters Art Gallery sallet described in this article.

steel (1 per cent carbon); the visor is equivalent in hardness to cold worked high speed steel. At the back on the right side near the edge of the ridge is a long narrow break, probably caused by a blow from a sword, which has been filled by soldering, indicating a modern repair. An ancient repair would have been accomplished by brazing. The blow must have been a formidable one, for the steel on the outside of a

The details of sallets varied considerably. There were visorless sallets—and these sometimes had a reinforcing forehead plate. There were sallets with vision slit in the bowl, with vision slit in visor combined with reinforcing forehead plate, or with vision slit between the bowl and the visor. Both the visored sallet and the sallet with vision slit in the bowl could be worn tilted back or with the vision slit oppo-



site the eyes. The bowl and long tail are usually forged in one piece, but sometimes the tail is made of articulated plates to enable the wearer to move his head back.

There is a representative collection of long-tailed sallets in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and most of these are shown here in a series of line drawings made to scale, so that one may compare at a glance the various contours and structural details. The drawings are arranged in series and show all the types mentioned above, as well as the development of the separate visor and beaver into a combined visor and beaver in one piece, also the short-tailed sallet which was worn in France.

The sallet was worn preferably by mounted knights, for it was less inconvenient than when worn on foot. It was worn with a plate chin defense (beaver),<sup>4</sup> which was strapped around the neck. Sometimes the beaver had a projecting stem, or tab, at the base which fitted into a socket on the breastplate. In addition to its protective value, the beaver served as a support for the sallet and prevented it from being knocked askew by a blow. In fact, in order to cover the face entirely and leave no interstice between the sallet and the beaver, it was necessary to lower the head forward slightly, and this was also the natural movement when charging with the lance. The sallet with beaver gave protection equivalent to that given by the basinet, and it was a more practical headpiece. It was worn like a hat and could be readily removed by the wearer; it allowed complete freedom of movement; it was lighter, more easily adjusted, and allowed better vision and respiration than the

basinet. The sallet when worn without beaver had the advantage of being light in weight, but it also had the grave defect of leaving the lower part of the face and the neck exposed. In such

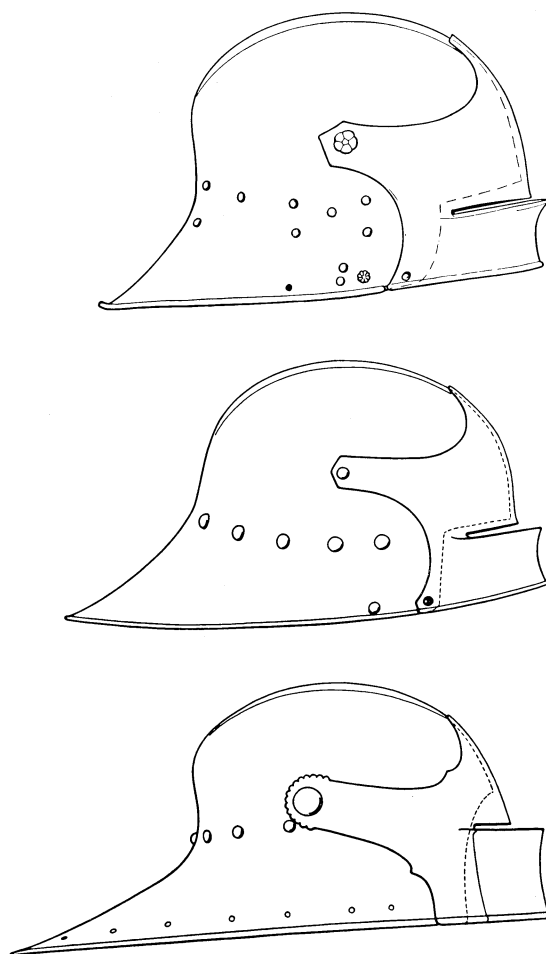


FIGURE 6 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
German Sallets with Pivoted Visor Combined with Reinforcing Forehead Plate

<sup>4</sup> The steel gorget as already worn in Florence in the fourteenth century. The novelist Franco Sacchetti (*Novella CXV*) relates that the poet Dante wore a gorget ("*portanto una gorgiera*").

<sup>5</sup> "Il estoit armé d'une petite salade ronde et avoit la visiere couverte et armée d'un petit hausse-col de maille d'acier" (Olivier de La Marche, *Mémoires*, livre I, p. 299).

cases one employed a small collar of mail (*hausse-col de maille*) which encircled the neck and protected the chin.<sup>5</sup> These mail face defenses are extraordinarily rare today, but the Metropolitan Museum of Art has four of them, all of which

came from the collection of Prince Radziwill of Castle Nieswiez in Eastern Poland.

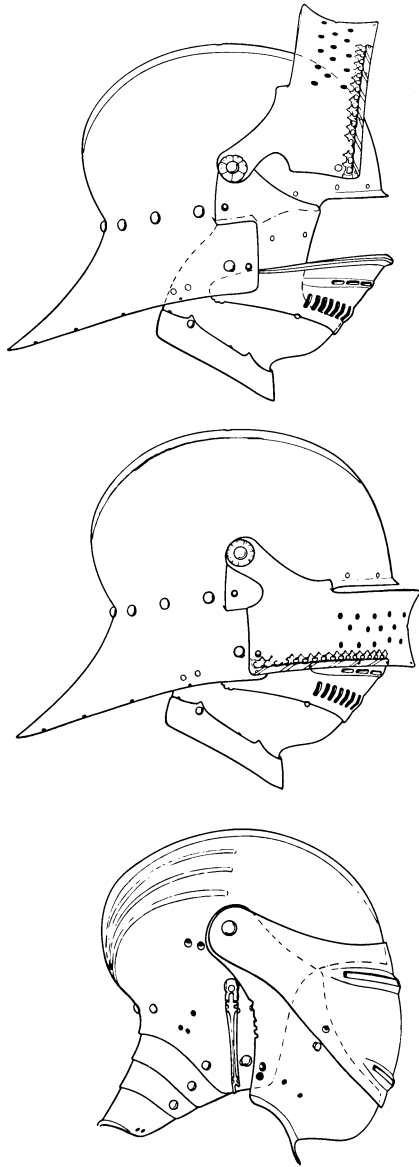


FIGURE 7 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

German Sallets, Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries

The two upper figures represent two views of the same sallet. Visor and beaver are secured by the same pivots. This construction is the prototype of the visor and beaver in one piece. The lower sallet is a transitional form from the open sallet to the close helmet (armet).

The point of contact of visor and beaver was a weak area in the sallet. To remedy this vulnerable area, the visor and beaver were secured to the same pivot. Later, the visor and beaver were combined in one piece. While this construction protected the face adequately, it still left the neck exposed. The neck was adequately protected only when the plate colletin and the close helmet (armet) were developed early in the sixteenth century. The neck opening formed by the lower borders of bowl and beaver is perfectly circular and has an internal groove, in order that the helmet may be turned about the angular border of the colletin. Under normal conditions, when the weight of the body armor was supported on the shoulders, the helmet functioned efficiently. The wearer could turn his head from left to right or move it up and down, as the colletin lames were flexibly articulated. An opponent could not strike the helmet askew, as can be done in most types of close helmets, and so cause the vision slit to become worse than useless.

The sallet was not only the favorite helmet for use in battle for nearly a century, but was also often employed in the military sport of jousting. These jousts were full of color and excitement, and of big moments. They could be more dangerous than war, for the opponents were highly trained and the encounter took place in a prescribed area which practically made opposing riders targets of one another. Therefore, added protection was worn. The long-tailed sallet was usually worn in the *Rennen* course and it is called a *Rennhut*. In the typical *Rennen* course—there were many varieties—the object was to break lances and to unhorse the opponent. *Rennen* originally referred to practice for field combat. Therefore the knight in the fifteenth century still wore his field armor with sallet, but in modified form. To the forehead area of the sallet was secured a reinforcing plate,

or a movable target plate which could be dislodged by the point of a lance. The lower part of the face was protected by a beaver which also fitted over the chest and was bolted to the

breastplate. The latest form of German visored sallet with a long tail was bolted to its beaver which in turn was bolted to the breastplate. On its right side is a small hinged door, which could be opened for facility in speaking and for air. The jousting sallet with its accessories and accompanying equipment may best be studied in the contemporary colored tournament books, a number of which have been reproduced in facsimile, notably the *Tournament Book of Hans Burgkmair the Elder*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Turnierzug Hans Burgkmair des Älteren*. Herausgegeben von Dr. Hans Stöcklein (München, Verlag für Historische Waffenkunde, 1924), 16 hand colored plates.

For a description of an original Nuremberg tournament book in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, see Bashford Dean, *An Early Tournament Book* in *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, XVII (1922), pp. 124-126, fig.



FIGURE 8 SCHLOSS WOLFEGG,  
COLL. PRINCE VON WALDBURG-WOLFEGG-WALDSEE

Arms with Crest Surmounting a Sallet  
Drawing from manuscript of the "Mittelalterliche Hausbuch"



FIGURE 1

WALTERS ART GALLERY

FRA XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO  
*Perseus and Andromeda*  
*Majolica Plate—1528 or earlier*

# EARLY WORK BY FRA XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO IN THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

BY JOAN PRENTICE VON ERDBERG

LITTLE MAJOLICA earlier than 1530 has thus far been assigned to Fra Xanto Avelli da Rovigo, an Urbino artist whose working period lasted apparently until 1542, the latest date, as far as we know, to appear on signed pieces.<sup>1</sup> He has usually been exclusively associated with Urbino, for there are numerous plates with his signature which bear the name of this town, and it is further known that in 1541 he was attached to the Urbino workshop of Francesco de Silvano.<sup>2</sup> No other majolica painter of the time has left to posterity so many signed and dated pieces, and the evolution of his style can therefore be traced without much difficulty. His earliest work is strongly under the influence of Nicola Pellipario, who came from Castel Du-

rante but was in Urbino in 1528, as is proved by the inscription and date on a dish in the Bargello which represents the "Martyrdom of St. Cecilia."<sup>3</sup> Whether or not Fra Xanto could have come in contact with Pellipario earlier—even possibly at Castel Durante—remains uncertain,<sup>4</sup> although a lustered plate in the Turin Museum dated 1526, and believed to be of Castel Durante origin,<sup>5</sup> strongly suggests his hand.

At any rate, an unmarked plate attributable to Fra Xanto representing "Perseus and Andromeda" (fig. 1) seems to have been made about 1528 or perhaps a year or two earlier.<sup>6</sup> It was probably inspired by the woodcut of the same subject in the illustrated edition of Ovid's *Meta-*

<sup>1</sup> For example: "Aeneas and Anchises," Schloss Museum, Berlin, illustrated in Faenza Fototeca, no. 612; "Anthony and Cleopatra," Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Faenza Fototeca, no. 594. The "Faenza Fototeca" is a collection of photographs of ceramics assembled by Comm. Dott. Gaetano Ballardini, founder and Director of the Museo della Ceramiche in Faenza. The dated examples of Italian majolica have been chronologically assembled to form his well known *Corpus della maiolica italiana*, the first two volumes of which appeared in 1933 and 1938. The third volume, covering the period after 1535, awaits publication.

<sup>2</sup> The inscription on a signed and dated piece representing "La Presa della Goletta," from the collection of James de Rothschild, reads "M.D.XXXXI. In Urbino nella boteg—di Francesco de Silvano X." Fototeca, no. 582.

<sup>3</sup> G. Ballardini, *Corpus della maiolica italiana*, I: *Le maioliche datate fino al 1530* (Rome, 1933), pl. XXIX. This volume is cited hereafter as Ballardini, *Corpus*, I. See B. Rackham,

*Victoria and Albert Museum, Guide to Italian Maiolica* (London, 1933), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> All attempts to assemble details about the life of Fra Xanto, or to find in this country a copy of G. Vitaletti, *F. X. Avelli* (Urbino, 1914), have failed.

<sup>5</sup> Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, pl. XXIV.

<sup>6</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1366 (*Cat.* no. 47); diam. 10 $\frac{3}{8}$  in.; ex-coll. McGarel. The "*Cat.* no." cited refers to a forthcoming *Catalogue of the Italian Majolica in the Walters Art Gallery*, recently completed by the writer of this article and Marvin C. Ross. The numbers are here inserted for future usefulness. Compare two other representations of the same subject: one by Pellipario about 1520, B. Rackham, *Victoria and Albert Museum, Catalogue of Italian Maiolica* (London, 1940), no. 549, reproduced in J. Chompret, *Répertoire de la majolique italienne* (Paris, 1949), vol. II, fig. 124; and another example, possibly by Fra Xanto, dated 1527, Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, fig. 185.



FIGURE 2

WALTERS ART GALLERY

FRA XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO  
*Hercules and Deianira*  
 Majolica Plate—about 1528; signed X



FIGURE 3

WALTERS ART GALLERY

FRA XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO  
*Vulcan Forging an Arrow for Cupid*  
 Majolica Plate—1528-1530; signed X



FIGURE 4

MARCANTONIO RAIMONDI (ca. 1480—ca. 1534)

*The Man with Two Trumpets (Engraving)*

*morphoses* Venice, 1497.<sup>7</sup> At first glance it might be mistaken for a plate by Pellipario, and there is a repose about the composition conspicuously lacking in the artist's later work. However, the heads of Andromeda and Medusa are of Fra Xanto's early type, each with small mouth and very marked chin, and the hair is dressed in the same general way as may be seen in two bowls dated 1530 in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Correr Collection, respectively.<sup>8</sup> An-

other interesting comparison can be made between the head of Andromeda and that of Venus as it appears in the Bargello fragment marked F.L.R.<sup>9</sup> discussed in the next paragraphs. Also in this plate round, bushy shrubs are introduced, such as occur in the pieces illustrated in figures 2, 3 and 10, all of which we believe belong to the period between approximately 1528 and 1530.

A signed plate representing "Hercules and

<sup>7</sup> Woodcut reproduced by B. Rackham in *Burlington Magazine*, LII (1928), p. 231, pl. I, E.

<sup>8</sup> Rackham, *Catalogue*, no. 629; Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, figs. 228, 229.

<sup>9</sup> B. Rackham and G. Ballardini, *Il pittore di maiolica 'F.R.'* in *Bollettino d'arte*, XI (March, 1933), pp. 393-407, fig. 16. This article is cited hereafter as Rackham and Ballardini, *F.R.*



FIGURE 5

GIAN JACOPO CARAGLIO (ca. 1500-1565)  
 Mercury Conducting Psyche to Olympus  
 (Engraving after Raphael)

Deianira''<sup>10</sup> (fig. 2) can also be dated as early as 1528. The figures appear to be derived from the two persons supporting a globe in an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi known as "The Man with Two Trumpets" (fig. 4) (Bartsch, XIV, 356; Delaborde, Raimondi, 181). The bodies except for arms and heads are in similar positions, and the arrangement of the hair in both cases is approximately the same. A figure closely akin to that of Deianira was used by Fra Xanto in the signed plate in Milan dated 1530 and 1531.<sup>11</sup> A close comparison is offered by a lustered dish in the Museo Civico at Arezzo<sup>12</sup> which is signed X. and dated 1528.<sup>13</sup> The same subject is represented, and the two Hercules are

nearly identical. In their well illustrated article on the Faenza painter "F.R." <sup>14</sup> Messrs. Ballardini and Rackham have erroneously attributed to him (undoubtedly due to a mistaken reading of the sketchy signature) this plate and three others likewise signed X and dated the same year.<sup>15</sup> The article is based on a few principal pieces having on the face the two letters F R, and with these pieces have been grouped a number of others, several of which we believe are in reality by Fra Xanto. One excellent proof lies in the fact that on one of the plates signed X there is a nude figure brandishing a wine skin.<sup>16</sup> This same figure is used again by Fra Xanto on one side of a bottle formerly in the Boulton Collection and now in the Walters Art Gallery (fig. 6);<sup>17</sup> on a plate in the Metropolitan Museum, signed and dated 1532; and on a plate in the Wallace Collection signed and dated 1535.<sup>18</sup> The other side of the Walters bottle, showing "Mercury conducting Psyche to Olympus" (fig. 7),<sup>19</sup> is from an engraving of the same subject by G. J. Caraglio (fig. 5), (Bartsch, XV, 50).

The undeniable closeness of the early work of Fra Xanto to the work of the Faenza painter using the initials F.R. leads one to inquire whether possibly the earliest of all the pieces ascribed to this artist (a plate in the Victoria and

<sup>10</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1344 (*Cat.* no. 48); diam. 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. For comment on the title, see Rackham, *Catalogue*, no. 997, note.

<sup>11</sup> Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, pl. XXXIV.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. XXVII and Rackham and Ballardini, *F.R.*, frontispiece and fig. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Compare inscription and signature reproduced in our figure 8 with Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, fig. 339.

<sup>14</sup> *Bollettino d'arte* article cited in full in note 9 above.

<sup>15</sup> Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, figs. 203, 206, 207.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 203.

<sup>17</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1373 (*Cat.* no. 51); height: 14 5/16 in.; ex-coll. Boulton.

<sup>18</sup> The two latter reproduced in G. Ballardini, *Corpus della maiolica italiana*, II: *Le maioliche datate dal 1531 al 1535* (Rome, 1938), figs. 44 and 179. This volume is cited hereafter as Ballardini, *Corpus*, II.

<sup>19</sup> Also reproduced in Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, fig. 225, and Chompret, *op. cit.*, II, fig. 959.





FIGURE 6  
WALTERS ART GALLERY  
FRA XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO  
*Hurling a Wineskin*  
*Majolica Bottle—signed F.A.R.; dated 1530*

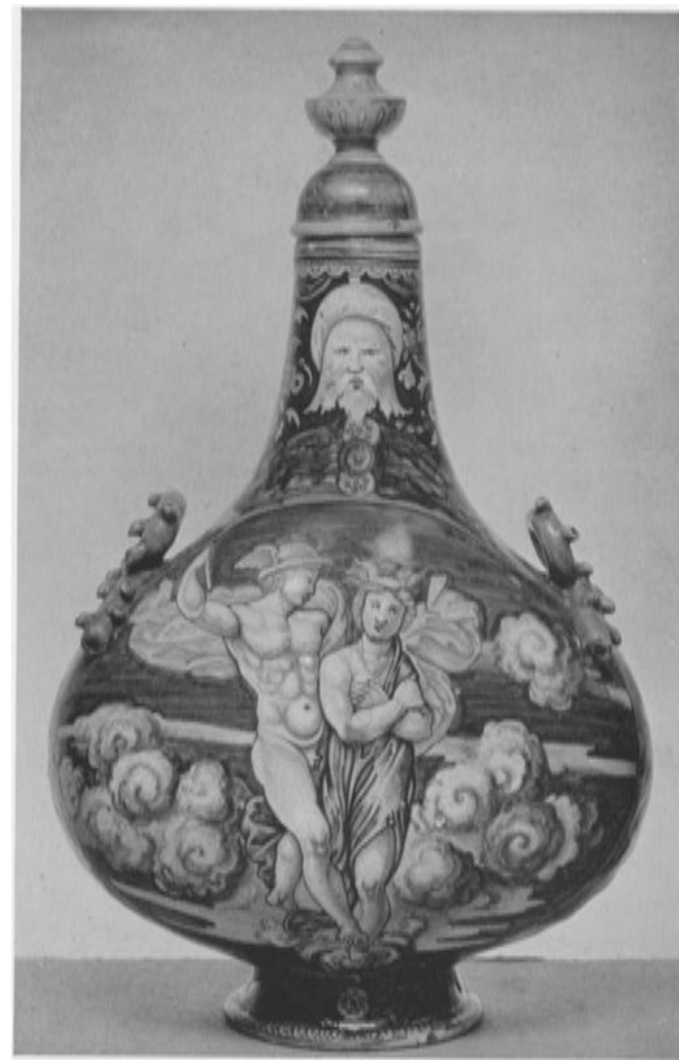


FIGURE 7  
WALTERS ART GALLERY  
FRA XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO  
*Mercury Conducting Psyche to Olympus*  
*Majolica Bottle (other side of figure 6)*



FIGURE 8 WALTERS ART GALLERY  
Title and Signature on Back of Plate shown in figure 2

Albert Museum depicting "Hercules and Deianira")<sup>20</sup> might actually be by Fra Xanto at the very beginning of his career. The only evidence to support this conjecture is that the subject of the Victoria and Albert Museum plate is apparently the same as that of the Arezzo plate and of figure 2, and the representations of Hercules are so similar as very likely to be by the same artist. The Victoria and Albert plate is dated 1522 and inscribed on a block in the fore-

ground "Omnia Vincit Amor"—a common enough phrase, but used we know by Fra Xanto in a cartouche, likewise on the front of a signed plate dated 1537 which represents "Hypermetra, Lynceus and Danaus." It is in the collection of the Walters Art Gallery.<sup>21</sup> The outstretched finger of the woman's hand and the reclining Cupid at the left<sup>22</sup> in the 1522 plate also suggest Fra Xanto's early manner.

On the basis of style one is led further to believe also by Fra Xanto at least two of the three plates inscribed with the letters F.L.R. which were included among "F.R." pieces in the same article by Rackham and Ballardini: the Budapest plate entitled "Jupiter and Semele," dated 1529; and the Bargello fragment showing "Venus and Cupid."<sup>23</sup> In a third example from the Berney Collection, Brancon Hall, which represents "Alexander and Thalestris,"<sup>24</sup> the kin-

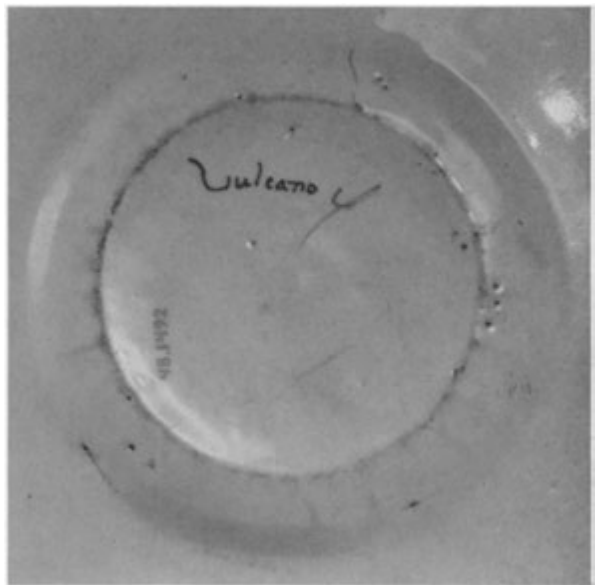


FIGURE 9 WALTERS ART GALLERY  
Title and Signature on Bottom of Plate shown in figure 3

<sup>20</sup> Rackham, *Catalogue*, no. 793; reproduced in Rackham and Ballardini, *F.R.*, fig. 2. The title of "Hercules and Omphale" has been given to this plate although in all probability the artist intended the figures for Hercules and Deianira as in the two plates so marked (the Arezzo plate and fig. 2). This confusion in the story has been mentioned in the note to Rackham, *Catalogue*, no. 997 (referred to in note 10 above).

<sup>21</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1324 (*Cat.* 52); diam.: 10 1/16 in.; ex-coll. H. Wencke, Hamburg.

<sup>22</sup> Compare our figure 3.

<sup>23</sup> Rackham and Ballardini, *F.R.*, figs. 7 (reproduced also in Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, fig. 205), 16, 17.

<sup>24</sup> Rackham and Ballardini, *F.R.*, fig. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Rackham, *Catalogue*, nos. 628, 630.

<sup>26</sup> Reproduced in Rackham and Ballardini, *F.R.*, p. 398, and Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, fig. 345.

<sup>27</sup> Ballardini, *Corpus*, I, fig. 355.

ship is not quite so striking, but the head of the bearded man at the extreme right shows considerable similarity to those represented in two pieces in the Victoria and Albert Museum which Rackham in his *Catalogue* has assigned to Fra Xanto, the first being dated 1528, the second signed and dated three years later.<sup>25</sup> One argument used in support of the attribution of the Bargello fragment to "F.R." is that the letter F is noted to be similar in shape to the first letter of the signature F.R.; on the other hand, on the reverse of the "Jupiter and Semele" plate<sup>26</sup> the F is written differently, and here

entirely similar in shape to a signature by Fra Xanto.<sup>27</sup>

Whether Fra Xanto could have been the author of any other of the pieces attributed to "F.R." in the Ballardini and Rackham article, such as those reproduced in figures 4, 5, 14 or 15, is more difficult to say. Certainly he could not have been responsible for the pieces shown there in figures 1, 12 or 18 or three of the pieces marked F.R., figures 10, 11 and 13—the last three being surely by one hand as comparison of the bearded heads occurring in all clearly show.

(Continued on page 75)



FIGURE 10

WALTERS ART GALLERY

FRA XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO

*Apollo and Daphne*

*Majolica Plate—about 1530*

EARLY WORK BY FRA  
XANTO AVELLI DA ROVIGO

(continued from page 37)

In the period between 1528 and 1530 we place the signed plate representing "Vulcan Forging an Arrow for Cupid" (fig. 3).<sup>28</sup> There is a static quality about the figures recalling the "Perseus and Andromeda" plate (fig. 1) and the stray locks of hair on either side of the head of Venus, falling forward and loosely knotted to form a faint V below the throat, are the same as those of Deianira and Psyche (cf. figs. 2 and 7). Further points of resemblance with the Deianira plate are the treatment of the tree boles, and rendering of low bushy shrubs in the background. The formation of clouds and trees is still of Pellipario derivation, and the clear coloring and form of the signature (fig. 9) also point to an early date. The seated group of Venus with Cupid suggests the two figures in a Louvre plate dated 1531 which Fra Xanto repeated later, in a more sophisticated way together with other figures on a plate in the Dutuit Collection dated 1538.<sup>29</sup>

Without date or mark of any kind is a small brilliantly colored plate (fig. 10) of the well-known series bearing a shield of arms—azure, three crescents addorsed argent<sup>30</sup>—some of which are dated 1530, and one or more signed X.<sup>31</sup> The subject, "Apollo and Daphne," is rendered with considerable charm in a manner still influenced by Pellipario. The head of Daphne invites comparison with heads shown on the piece illustrated as No. 629 in the majolica catalogue of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the similar bowls there listed.

The collection of the Walters Art Gallery also includes two later plates by Fra Xanto: "Polemon enters the School of Xenocrates," lustered at Gubbio, signed and dated 1533;<sup>32</sup>

and "Hypermetra sees Lynceus threaten her father Danaus," signed and dated 1537.<sup>33</sup>

The seven pieces here discussed, five of which have never been published, add considerably to our knowledge of the artistic achievement of Fra Xanto, particularly at the beginning of his career. Among them the "Hercules and Deianira" plate (fig. 2) is especially important in view of the others like it, and because it enables us to establish a remarkably fine production by this well known artist earlier than has hitherto been thought likely.

<sup>28</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1492 (*Cat.* no. 49); diam.: 10 7/16 in.

<sup>29</sup> Both plates reproduced in Chompret, *op. cit.*, II, figs. 773, 775.

<sup>30</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1326 (*Cat.* no. 50); diam.: 10 5/16 in.; ex. coll. Mme. Yvon.

<sup>31</sup> See Chompret, *op. cit.*, I, p. 188. It is, however, open to question whether the arms represented are those of the Strozzi family. Additional pieces of the same series are there listed. See also T. Borenius, *Catalogue of a Collection of Italian Maiolica belonging to Henry Harris* (London, 1930), no. 40, ill., and various others mentioned; for an example formerly in the W. R. Hearst Collection see W. Suida, *Maiolica. A Distinguished Collection of Plates in The Compleat Collector* (Gimbel Brothers, New York, ca. 1940).

<sup>32</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1362 (*Cat.* no. 53); diam.: 10 3/8 in.; ex-coll. J. Fau. Reproduced in Ballardini, *Corpus*, II, no. 93.

<sup>33</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 48.1324 (*Cat.* no. 52), described in note 21 above.



Wh the tyme that the grete & myghty toure of babylone was bylded men haue spoken with dyuerse tonges. So luche wyle that dyuerse men be strange to other and vnderstode not others speche. Speche is not knowen but yf it be lerne. so myn lernynge of speche is by heyrng / & so alwaye he that is deef is alwaye dombe / for he maye not here speche for to lerne. So men of fer countrees and londes that haue dyuerse speches yf neyther of hem haue lerne others langage. nether of of hem wote what other meneth / though they mete and haue grete nede of informacyon and of loo: to talkynge & of speche be the nede neuer soo grete neyther of hem vnderstondeth others speche no more than gagelyng of gees. for Jangle þ one neuer soo fast that other is neuer the wyser / though he shewe hym in stede of good morowe. This is a grete mylchref that foloweth now men kynde. But god of his mercy & grace hath ordeyned double remedye. One is that somme may lerneth and knoweth many dyuerse speches. And bytwene strange men of the whiche neyther vnderstondeth others speche. Suche a may may be meane and tell eyther what other wylle meane. That other remedye is / that one langage is lerneþ vñd and knowen in many nacyns and londes. And soo latyn is lerneþ knowen and vñd speccally on this halfe grece in alle the nacyns & londes of Europa. Therfore clerkis of her goodnes and curtoise make and wyrtyn theiþ boke in

latyn. for her wyrtynge & boke shold be vnderstode in dyuerse nacyns and londes. And soo Ranulphus monke of Chetre wote in latyn his boke of Cronycles that desayneth the worlde aboute in lengthe and in briede. And maketh mencyon & mynde of doynges and dedes of metuayles and of wondres. and rekeneth the yeres to his last dayes / fro the fyrste makinge of heuyn and of erthe. And soo there is grete and noble Informacyon & loore to hem that can thei in rede and vnderstande. Therfore I wolde haue theiþ boke of Cronycles translated out of latyn in to Englyshe / for the moo men sholde hem vnderstande & haue therof conynge informacyon & loir. The derke answereth. Boke of cronycles be wyrtyn in latyn. And latyn is vñd & vnderstanden on this halfe grece in alle the nacyns and londes of Europa. And comynly Englyshe is not so wyde vnderstode vñd ne knowen. And the englyshe translatioun sholde nomay vnderstande but Englyshe men allone. Thenne how sholde the moo men vnderstande the Cronycles though they were translated oute of latyn that is so wyde vñd & knowen. in to Englyshe that is not vñd & knowen but of englyshe men allone. The Lorde. This questioun and doubte is easy to asswe. For yf thei Cronycles were translated oute of latyn in to Englyshe / thenne by þ soo many the moo men sholde vnderstande hem. as vnderstande englyshe & no latyn. The derke. ye can speche in rede & vnderstande latyn / thei it nedeth not to haue luche an englyshe



Wh the tyme that the grete & myghty toure of babylone was bylded men haue spoken with dyuerse tonges. So luche wyle that dyuerse men be strange to other and vnderstode not others speche. Speche is not knowen but yf it be lerne. so myn lernynge of speche is by heyrng / & so alwaye he that is deef is alwaye dombe / for he maye not here speche for to lerne. So men of fer countrees and londes that haue dyuerse speches yf neyther of hem haue lerne others langage. nether of thei wote what other meneth / though they mete and haue grete nede of informacyon and of loo: to talkynge & of speche be the nede neuer soo grete neyther of hem vnderstondeth others speche no more than gagelyng of gees. for Jangle þ one neuer soo fast that other is neuer the wyser / though he shewe hym in stede of good morowe. This is a grete mylchref that foloweth now men kynde. But god of his mercy & grace hath ordeyned double remedye. One is that somme may lerneth and knoweth many dyuerse speches. And bytwene strange men of the whiche neyther vnderstondeth others speche. Suche a may may be meane and telle eyther what other wylle meane. That other remedye is / that one langage is lerneþ vñd and knowen in many nacyns and londes. And soo latyn is lerneþ knowen and vñd speccally on this halfe grece in alle the nacyns & londes of Europa. Therfore clerkis of her goodnes and curtoise make and wyrtyn theiþ boke in

latyn. for her wyrtynge & boke shold be vnderstode in dyuerse nacyns and londes. And soo Ranulphus monke of Chetre wote in latyn his boke of Cronycles that desayneth þ worlde aboute in lengthe and in briede. And maketh mencyon and mynde of doynges and dedes of metuayles and of wondres. And rekeneth the yeres to his last dayes / fro the fyrste makinge of heuyn and of erthe. And soo there is grete and noble Informacyon & loore to hem that can thei in rede and vnderstande. Therfore I wolde haue theiþ boke of Cronycles translated out of latyn in to Englyshe / for the moo men sholde hem vnderstande and haue therof conynge Informacyon and loir. The derke answereth. Boke of cronycles be wyrtyn in latyn. And latyn is vñd & vnderstanden on this halfe grece in alle the nacyns and londes of Europa. And comynly Englyshe is not so wyde vnderstode vñd ne knowen. And the englyshe translatioun sholde nomay vnderstande but Englyshe men allone. Thenne how sholde the moo men vnderstande the Cronycles though they were translated oute of latyn that is so wyde vñd & knowen. in to Englyshe that is not vñd & knowen byt of Englyshe men allone. The Lorde. This questioun and doubte is easy to asswe. For yf thei Cronycles were translated oute of latyn in to Englyshe / thenne by þ soo many the moo men sholde vnderstande hem. as vnderstande englyshe & no latyn. The derke. ye can speche in rede & vnderstande latyn / thei it nedeth not to haue luche an englyshe

FIGURE 1

PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY

FIGURE 2

WALTERS ART GALLERY

Higden, Polycronicon  
Westminster, Wynkyn de Worde, 1495

Higden, Polycronicon  
Westminster, Wynkyn de Worde, 1495

# THE WALTERS 'POLYCRONICON' OF 1495

BY CURT F. BÜHLER

*The Pierpont Morgan Library*

THE WALTERS ART GALLERY, in acquiring its first English incunable, has obtained a most interesting example of a fifteenth-century printed book. The new acquisition is an early printing of the well-known English version of the *Polycronicon* by Ranulf Higden (died 1364), as translated into the vernacular for the fourth Baron Berkeley by his chaplain, John of Trevisa (1326-1412). This book was put into print three times by the earliest English printers:<sup>1</sup> the first edition was produced at Westminster by William Caxton in 1482; the second by Caxton's ex-foreman and the successor to his business, Wynkyn de Worde, in 1495; and the third at Southwark (a suburb of the City of

London famous even then for its ale)<sup>2</sup> by Peter Treveris in 1527. The Walters copy of the De Worde edition, recently added to the Gallery's library, is an exceptional example in that it differs materially from the eighteen other copies<sup>3</sup> with which the present writer is acquainted.

The De Worde edition of this famous chronicle is a work of 398 leaves and these are gathered into 52 quires (2a<sup>8</sup> 2b-2h<sup>6</sup>a-y<sup>8</sup> z<sup>6</sup> A-S<sup>8</sup> T<sup>6</sup> V-X<sup>8</sup>).<sup>4</sup> The text of the volume as it appears in the usual copy is printed throughout with De Worde's type 4, with his second type appearing in the headlines. While the new Walters incunable seems to agree with the other copies<sup>5</sup> cited above for some 376 leaves, the first three

<sup>1</sup> The editions are listed in the *Short-title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640* (London, The Bibliographical Society, 1926), nos. 13438-13440.

<sup>2</sup> See for example the Miller's Prologue in the *Canterbury Tales* [F. N. Robinson, *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Boston and New York, 1933), p. 56]. By 1665 we find the couplet:

The nappy strong ale of Southwirke  
Keeps many a gossip fra the Kirke.

Compare Käte Heidrich, *Das geographische Weltbild des späteren englischen Mittelalters mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Vorstellungen Chaucer's und seiner Zeitgenossen* (Freiburg, 1915), p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> London, British Museum; Manchester, John Rylands Library; Cambridge, University Library and King's College Library; Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland; Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek; New York, Pierpont Morgan Library and New York Public Library; Washington, Library of Congress; San Marino, Henry E. Huntington Library; Chicago, Newberry Library; New Haven, Yale University Library; Boston, Public Library; Chapel Hill, University of North Caro-

lina Library; Los Angeles, Clark Library; and the private libraries of the Duke of Devonshire, Phyllis Goodhart Gordan-Howard L. Goodhart, and Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach. Five copies are sometimes listed as belonging to the De Worde edition but actually belong to the Treveris printing; they are: Chichester Cathedral Library; Hereford Cathedral Library; Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique; Boston Athenaeum; and the Library Company of Philadelphia. The Treveris edition may be easily distinguished from De Worde's by the fact that Treveris printed 44 lines to the column; in addition, the headline of the 1527 edition includes the word "Fo." before the folio number, while the De Worde edition simply prints the number.

<sup>4</sup> A full bibliographical description of this edition will be found in E. Gordon Duff's *Fifteenth Century English Books* (London, The Bibliographical Society, 1917, no. 173).

<sup>5</sup> As in most fifteenth-century books, "stop-press" corrections may be found in the several copies. Thus the Morgan example has "couutree" on sign. kl, col. 1, last line, while "countree" is correctly printed in such copies as NYPL, BM, LC, HEH, Yale, BPL, Clark, Gordan-Goodhart, etc. Similarly on sign. El verso, col. 2, line 1, Morgan has "cfter" where the other copies cited above read "after."

four was fyue myle and almoost two  
hondred pass hyghe and foure myle  
broad. ¶ Arabia is sette by south Cal  
dea / and hath to the east hyde Persi  
da / and to the west the reed see. In  
Arabia is stoo; myrre and Canell /  
and a byrde that is called Phenix.  
The northerly porcion of Arabia is  
named Haba / and is called Haba af  
ter Haba Chus lone. This Haba is  
bedcapped to thre hydes with the reed  
see. ¶ Josephus libro primo. In this  
Arabia is the contree of Madyan is  
the mount of Syna / the mount Sier  
to a partye of the mount of Syna /  
is hyghe and hath grete plente of  
gras and of leese. But it is harde to  
come therto / for hyghe Rocks and  
scarres. Moyses was the first man  
that ladde thider beestes / hit is na  
med also the mount of Couenaunt  
and of drede. For god almyghty ther  
vpon made thondyrng and lychte  
nyng and gaf the lawe to the folke  
of Israell that were at the hyll for  
te / so that noman durst approche to  
it but he were purgfyed and made cle  
ne. ¶ Treusa. Fenix is a wonder byr  
de / for of all that kynde is but one / a  
pye. ¶ R. In the contree of Arabye  
toward Cyrcus is the hyll that is  
called mons Libani / that hyll depar  
teth thre londes a sonder. Arabia Ju  
de / and Fenix / that hyll is full hygh  
soo that snow lyeth alwaye in some  
hyde of that hyll. And it is a certayn  
marke and tokye to shypmen that  
sapples in the grete see and ledeyth  
hem to dyuerse mowthes and hauens  
hit is a hyll of helthe and plente.  
For Cypresse Cedre trees and herbes  
growen theron that droppen gome &

smelle swete / by the whyche trees gos  
me and swetnes like men ben helde /  
and benyn destroyed. ¶ Syria hath  
the name of Cyrus Abrahams neww  
And lyeth bytwene the water Eufra  
tes to the east hyde / and the grete see  
to the west hyde / and hath to the north  
hyde Armenia and Capadocia / and  
to the southe hyde the see that is na  
med Arabicus / and conteyneth many  
prouynces / that ben Comagena. Pas  
setina. Fenys. Chanaan. Jouma. &  
Judea / that is the Jure. Damal  
cus was somtyme the chyef Cyte of  
that prouynce. Eleazar Abrahams  
seruaunt bylded and made that Cy  
te Damalcus. Ralys hyng of Das  
malke helpe awaye the ten lyngages  
of Israell the hynges of Judea.  
Damalcus as moche to save as hes  
dyng of blood. For there Charyn  
flowe Abell and bydde hyu in the  
londe.

De Regione Judee. Caplin. xliii.

**J**udea is a kyngdome of Si  
ria / a parte of Palestina and  
hath the name of Judas Ja  
cobs lone / and was somtyme called  
Cananea of Chaynos lone / cyther  
of the ten maner of people that the  
Jewes put out of that londe. ¶ Pe  
trus. Judea is taken in many maner  
otherwhyle for the londe of byhell.  
And thence it hath the name of the  
Jewes and of Judas. And soo it is  
taken in this speche. The grete Pom  
peus made Judea tributarye. And  
otherwhyle it is taken for the Ropa  
me of Judea / and soo it is wryten of  
Joseph / that whay he berde that  
b iii

four was fyue myle and almoost two  
hondred pass hyghe and foure myle  
broad. ¶ Arabia is sette by south Cal  
dea / and hath in the east hyde Persi  
da / and in the west the reed see. In  
Arabia is stoo; myrre and Canell / and  
a byrde that is called Phenix. The nor  
therly porcion of Arabia is named Ha  
ba / And is called Haba after Ha  
ba / Chus lone. This Haba is bedcapped  
in thre hydes with the reed see.  
¶ Josephus libro primo. In this A  
rabia in the contree of madyan is the  
mount of Syna / The mounte Sier  
is a partye of the mount of Syna /  
and is hyghe and hath grete plente of  
gras and of leese. But it is harde to  
come therto / for hyghe Rocks and  
scarres. Moyses was the first man  
that ladde thider beestes / it is named  
also the mount of Couenaunt and of  
drede. for god almyghty there vpon  
made thondyrng and lychtenyng  
and gaf the lawe to the folke of Is  
raell that were at the hyll for / so that  
noman durst approche to it but he  
were purgfyed and made cleane.  
¶ Treusa. Fenix is a wonder byrde  
for alle that kynde is but one / a pye.  
¶ R. In the contree of Arabye toward  
Cyrcus is the hyll that is called mons  
Libani / that hyll departerly thre lons  
des a sonder. Arabia Jude / and Fenix  
that hyll is full hyghe soo that snow  
lyeth alwaye in some hyde of that  
hyll. And it is a certayne marke and  
tokye to shypmen that sapples in the  
grete see and ledeyth hem to dyuerse  
mowthes and hauens it is a layre  
and a plenteuous hyll and a holome.  
For Cypresse Cedre trees and herbes  
growen theron that droppen gome &

smelle swete / by the whyche trees gos  
me and swetnes like men ben helde /  
and benym destroyed. Syria hath  
the name of Cyrus Abrahams neww  
And lyeth bytwene the water Eufra  
tes in the east hyde / and the grete see  
in the west hyde / and hath in the north  
hyde Armenia and Capadocia / and in  
the southe hyde the see that is named  
Arabicus / and conteyneth many pro  
uynces / that ben Comagena. Passeti  
na. Fenys Chanaan. Jouma and Ju  
dea / that is the Jure. Damalcus  
was somtyme the chyef Cyte of that  
prouynce. Eleazar Abrahams ser  
uaunt bylded and made that Cyte  
Damalcus. Ralys hyng of Damal  
ke helpe awaye the ten lyngages of Is  
raell the hynges of Judea. Damal  
cus as moche to save as lychtynge of  
blood. For there Charyn flowe his  
broder Abell and bydde hyu in the  
londe. ¶ De Regione Judee. Caplin. xliii.  
**J**udea is a kyngdome of Syria  
/ a parte of Palestina and has  
the name of Judas Jacobs lone /  
and was somtyme called Cananea of  
Chaynos lone / cyther of the ten  
maner of people that the Jewes put  
out of that londe. ¶ Petrus. Judea  
is taken in many maner wyse other  
whyle for the londe of byhell.  
¶ And thence it hath the name of the  
Jewes and of Judas. And soo it is  
taken in this speche. The grete Pom  
peus made Judea tributarye. And  
otherwhyle it is taken for the Ropa  
me of Judea / and soo it is wryten of  
Joseph / that whanne he berde that  
b iii

FIGURE 3

PIERPONT MORGAN LIBRARY

FIGURE 4

WALTERS ART GALLERY

Higden, Polycronicon  
Westminster, Wynkyn de Worde, 1495

Higden, Polycronicon  
Westminster, Wynkyn de Worde, 1495



gatherings of text<sup>6</sup> in this copy (save for the innermost sheet of the third quire) differ entirely from those found in the "standard" copies. Thus, with the exception of sheet c4.5, all the leaves of gatherings a-c in the Walters example are printed from different settings of type than those which were composed at the printing office of Wynkyn de Worde during the spring of 1495. This edition, as the colophon informs us, was "Ended the thyrteenth daye of Apryll the tenth yere of the regne of kyng Harry the seuenth. And of the Incarnacyon of our lord: M. CCCC. lxxxv. ¶ Enprynted at Westmester by Wynkyn Theworde /". This very explicit statement, as we shall shortly discover, is not entirely true of the Walters copy.

Although quire a in the Walters *Polycricon* is printed with the same fount of type (De Worde 4) as the normal quire a of the "standard" (fig. 1) copy,<sup>7</sup> it is certainly printed from different settings of that type. The outermost sheet (a1.8) (fig 2) in the Walters incunable was composed with 42 double-column lines to the page while all the other leaves (a2-7) contain but 41 such lines; in the standard example, all the pages of this gathering have 42 lines. In the reprint the compositor normally shortened the text of one column from 42 lines of his prototype to 40 lines, brought over one line from the other column (thus creating 41 lines for his column) and retained for his second column the

remaining 41 lines of the original. The outer sheet (a1.8) of the reprint,<sup>8</sup> although it has the same number of lines as the first setting and agrees with it page-for-page, does not agree with it line-for-line, as figures 1, 2 make evident. Thus it is obvious that it too was printed from different formes of type than the comparable sheet of the "standard" issue.

While quire a of the Walters copy thus shows a close visual correspondence to the comparable quire in the other copies, this is not true of the two succeeding gatherings.<sup>9</sup> Here b and c (except sheet c4.5) are not printed with De Worde's type 4, but with his type 8 as modified after 1500 (cf. figs. 3 and 4).<sup>10</sup> The state of the type, in turn, indicates that these sheets were probably printed in the first decade of the sixteenth century.<sup>11</sup> The innermost sheet (c4.5), on the other hand, was produced with type 4; since it corresponds completely with that found in the standard copies, one may safely assume that this sheet belongs to the original issue.

The conclusions that may be drawn from the Walters *Polycricon* are most interesting since they give us an insight into the publishing methods of the earliest English printers. The marketing of the volume from the De Worde printing office apparently proceeded along these lines: after having completed the printing of his book, the printer placed the volume on sale in the spring of 1495 and continued to offer it

<sup>6</sup> The text proper is, of course, preceded by the "Tabula," an alphabetical index to the eight books. It was normal practice to print such a table last, since it would only be possible to determine on which folio the reference appears after the whole text had been printed; in many cases, however, the table would be bound before the text.

<sup>7</sup> The Library of Congress copy is the only other copy known to me which also contains the reprinted gathering a.

<sup>8</sup> Both because of the differing number of lines and because the proportion in the surviving copies indicates this, it seems reasonably certain that the gathering a represented by the Walters copy is the re-issue and not the original setting. Furthermore one must also note that this setting is found in the same volume which contains the reprinted quires b and c, a further

strong argument against the assumption that the Walters quire represents the first issue.

<sup>9</sup> The Library of Congress copy here has the quires of the first setting and thus represents a state between the "standard" copy and that of the Walters volume.

<sup>10</sup> The headlines in the reprint are in the type listed by Frank Isaac, *English & Scottish Printing Types 1501-35\*1508-41* (London, Bibliographical Society, 1930), as "Textura 116 mm." This was in use in 1508-10 and again in 1513-15.

<sup>11</sup> The lower-case s found in the volume is Isaac's second sort (s<sup>2</sup>), used from 1503 until 1518; w<sup>2</sup> (small) is the usual lower-case letter, this being employed from 1506 onwards. Other characteristic sorts found in the Walters *Polycricon* include v<sup>3</sup> and y<sup>2</sup>.



as still "in print" for at least a decade thereafter. It is self-evident that the books were not bound directly after the completion of the printing, but that the sheets were stored separately and not as complete copies. It is likely that the books were bound "to order"; possibly De Worde kept on hand a few copies in a simple leather binding for immediate sale.

At some unknown time after the printing of gathering a had been completed (and the type had been distributed) and before the year 1503 (this is predicated upon the fact that the use of type 4 was discontinued in that year),<sup>12</sup> Wynkyn de Worde discovered—for one reason or another<sup>13</sup>—that he did not have enough leaves of the first gathering to complete the copies he had on hand. He was, therefore, obliged to reprint these leaves, thus creating the variant settings resulting in the issue represented by the Walters and the Library of Congress copies. Then, towards the middle of the first decade of the sixteenth century, our printer was once again faced by such a shortage and was compelled to reprint the entire gathering b and three of the four sheets of quire c.<sup>14</sup> Since by this time he had discarded his fourth type, it was necessary for him to use a different fount and he thus employed the modified type 8, by that time his favorite. Fortunately for our printer, this fount was of a tolerably similar appearance to that

found in the rest of the book and both types were of almost exactly the same size, each measuring 95 millimetres for twenty lines of print.

For no very good reason, as we shall see, it is often assumed that a reprint (a second issue or edition, as the case may be) will be more correct than the original. This belief is apparently based on the erroneous notion that a later compositor would benefit from the mistakes of his predecessor and, by correcting the slips of the earlier printer, he would arrive at a purer text. This, alas, seems to be the exception rather than the rule. While it is quite true that the second compositor often corrected the misprints found in his original, he frequently—with regret one must say, usually<sup>15</sup>—contributed an even greater number of slips of his own.

If my eye chanced to note all such instances, at least 132 misprints (excluding turned letters) are found in the two states of gatherings a–c of the *Polycricon*. Of this total, 34 are found in the original issue, as represented by the copy in the Pierpont Morgan Library,<sup>16</sup> and 98 in the reprint, of which the Walters copy is the only recorded example. If these slips are tabulated according to their position in the book, one notes a progressive deterioration in the quality of the text belonging to the second settings. In quire a, the number of misprints in

<sup>12</sup> The state of the type is exactly the same as that in plate XIV of Duff (*op. cit.*). Isaac (*loc. cit.*) states that type 4 "lasted only a short time and is found in no dated book after 1502."

<sup>13</sup> This most perplexing problem still requires a satisfactory explanation. It is, however, familiar knowledge that not only De Worde and his predecessor Caxton, but also such skilled Italian printers as Aldus Manutius were compelled to reprint certain leaves in order to complete the copies on hand. It seems difficult to believe that the piles of printed sheets were miscounted time and again—yet no other likely solution presents itself. On this point, compare my notes: *Variants in English Incunabula in Bookmen's Holiday, Notes and Studies Written in Tribute to Harry Miller Lydenberg* (New York, 1943), pp. 459-474, and *Notes on two Incunabula Printed by Aldus Manutius in Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*,

XXXVI (1942), pp. 18-26. Whatever the correct explanation may be, this is certain evidence that all the copies of the *Polycricon* were not bound as soon as they had been printed, since shortages were only discovered after a lapse of several years following the completion of the original printing.

<sup>14</sup> At least one headline, characterized by a peculiar capital L (showing damage in the lower left corner where the foot meets the right perpendicular stroke) appears in both quires b and c, proving that they were printed at the same time.

<sup>15</sup> For a further discussion of this problem, see my paper *Observations on Two Caxton Variants in Studies in Bibliography* (Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia), III (1950-51), pp. 97-104.

<sup>16</sup> Ada Thurston and Curt F. Bühler, *Check List of Fifteenth Century Printing in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York, 1939), no. 1805.

each issue is fairly equal (21 in the original and 25 in the reprint). The compositor of the reprint of quire b was, however, very much more slipshod and about two-thirds of the total errors in this gathering are found in the later setting (9 in the original and 20 in the reprint). Though only 12 pages of gathering c were reset (as against 16 in the other two quires), the number of misprints is much the greatest here, 57 instances being recorded for this quire (4 in the first issue and 53 in the second); in this gathering, the second compositor contributed no less than 93 percent of the slips. Thus it will be seen that, so far as accuracy is concerned, the first issue was more dependable than the reissue.

One may further note that, in addition to these misprints, there are 67 cases where the text of the reprint departs from that of its original.<sup>17</sup> Mostly this disagreement represents no more than a change in tense, number, preposition or type of pronoun; in some few cases, the divergencies are material from a literary point of view; in no case, however, does the alteration in the text affect the facts (or supposed facts) set forth in this chronicle. It will be found both interesting and instructive to discuss these variant readings in connection with the text as found in the third edition (that of 1527).

The third edition of the *Polycronicon* was printed, as we have had occasion to record, by Peter

Treveris; it may further be remarked that this edition was quite obviously set up from the one printed by De Worde and not from that produced by William Caxton. Oddly enough, however, it is equally certain that in 1527 Treveris obtained for his compositor a copy of the first issue (that of 1495) and not a copy representative of the state in which the book was offered for sale some ten years or more later. In 65 of the 67 recorded instances, Treveris has exactly the same wording as that found in the Morgan *Polycronicon*, while the Walters copy offers a different reading. The two instances where Treveris agrees with the text as found in the Walters example do not require one to believe that Treveris also consulted the later issue. The first example will be found in line 17 of the second column of signature a2 verso; here the Morgan copy has: "The epystle syr of Johan Treuysa" while Treveris and the Walters *Polycronicon* print: "The epystle of syr Johan Treusia." Clearly these are identical, though not necessarily interdependent, emendations of a compositor's slip. Again (b4<sup>v</sup>, second column, line 31), the Walters copy and Treveris have "the holy wrytte" where the Morgan example merely prints "holy wrytte." In such a case as this, it is not difficult to conceive that two compositors might independently arrive at the same reading. There are, however, no fewer than eight cases where Treveris perpetuates the misreading we find in the Morgan copy.<sup>18</sup> This can hardly be coincidence!

It is occasionally quite obvious that the compositor of the second De Worde issue miscalculated the amount of his text; he was thereupon obliged either to drop a word or two or to expand the text in order to bring his page into agreement with his original. Only one such emergency has left its own impress on the text;

<sup>17</sup> In a few cases, not counted in the summary, Treveris agrees with the reprint by having "Plinius" and "Priscianus" where the Morgan copy consistently uses "Plenius" and "Prescianus." It is uncertain whether these are misprints or orthographical variants of their day—in any case, it is likely that Treveris agrees with the reprint merely by accident. This situation is further compensated for by the several instances (also not counted) where Treveris agrees with the Morgan copy by printing "ocean" against the "occian" of the reprint.

<sup>18</sup> Thus, for example, the Morgan *Polycronicon* has "shouto" instead of "shoute" (a4, col. 1, line 9) and "transmygurycion" (a6, col. 1, line 14) for "transmygracion." In both cases Treveris has the identical misreading as the first printing.

(Continued on page 74)

These particularly well executed and costly vases (the painting of the figures alone accounted for more than half the cost of manufacture)<sup>6</sup> were delivered to the Queen January 8, 1845, on the verbal order of the King.<sup>7</sup> They are in a way faithful witnesses not only of the porcelain of Sèvres at the peak of its perfection, but also of the history of France. In this two-fold guise they convey permanently a message of understanding from their native land to a great country, a friend worthy of preserving these royal treasures in the Walters Art Gallery, the collections of which are so rich in the porcelain of Sèvres.

<sup>6</sup> Their selling price was set at 2000 francs in 1844. The history of the two vases may be traced through the volumes of the *Archives de la Manufacture de Sèvres* as follows:

*Registre Vj 51—1844*, fol. 20vo: "Paiement au peintre Moriot en Novembre sur 2 vases carafe étrusque, 2<sup>e</sup> grandeur, fond bleu—portraits coloriés du Roi et de la Reine, riche décor et attributs en or et platine. Pour portrait de la Reine . . . 275 fr. Pour portrait du Roi . . . 250 fr."

When each piece was finished, the details of its fabrication were always noted on a *feuille d'appréciation d'entrée au magasin de vente*. Our vases appear on:

*Feuille d'appréciation* no. 83 du 31 decembre, 1844: "2 vases 'étrusque carafe,' 2<sup>e</sup> grandeur, fond bleu—portraits coloriés du Roi et de la Reine, riche décor et attributs en or et platine, rentrés à prix connu, semblables à ceux portés sur la feuille no. 46 de 1837 à 675 fr. Prix de vente, chacun 1000—2000 fr." The detail on folio 46 of 1837 to which reference is made in this entry is as follows: "2 vases 'étrusque carafe,'" etc. . . .

"fond. . . . .	24. fr.
dorure des ornements, M. Vaubertrand. . . . .	175. . .
or et platine . . . . .	14.50
Peinture figures par M. Ducluzeau. . . . .	262.50
Brunissage et traits du cadre en couleurs. . . . .	18. . .
Brunissage a plat. . . . .	10. . .
Total des frais directs. . . . .	504. . .
Faux frais . . . . .	126
Valeur de la pièce en blanc. . . . .	30
Montage garniture en bronze. . . . .	15
Prix de fabrication [i.e., "prix d'entrée"] . . . . .	675
Prix de vente. . . . .	800

Evidently the work on this earlier pair of vases was essentially the same as for the Walters pair, except that the portraits on the latter were by Moriot and the selling price was set higher.

Our "2 vases 'carafe étrusque'" appear on the *Registre d'entrée au magasin de vente*, Vv 4, fol. 35, no. 2, (described in detail as in the other entries): entrée du 31 decembre 1844 (fol. 83), prix de vente, 1000—2000."

<sup>7</sup> *Archives de la Manufacture: Registre de livraison—Vbb 11*, fol. 1: Livré à la Reine, sur l'ordre verbal de S.M., le 8 janvier 1845: no. 35.2. Deux vases 'carafe étrusque,' " etc., described as before . . . "1000 fr.—2000 fr."

## THE WALTERS 'POLYCRONICON'

(continued from page 43)

it will be seen fully illustrated in figures 3, 4. By the time the compositor had reached line 39 (column 1) of the folio numbered "xii," he found that he was left with a line and a half of space to accommodate but a single line of the original text. He handled this difficulty with the easy freedom characteristic of the early printer: he simply expanded "hit is an hylle of helthe and plente" into reading "it is a fayre and a plenteuos hylle and a holsome."

With its first English incunabulum, the Walters Art Gallery has acquired a book not only of significant literary and historical value but also a volume of the greatest typographical interest.<sup>19</sup> Though this copy of the *Polycronicon* may not belong to the (often so wrongly prized) first issue of its edition, it represents to the bibliographer a noteworthy and important new discovery. The Walters volume provides the historian of books with some further details as to the problems which confronted the early printer and publisher, in those days still one and the same person, and the means whereby he overcame the difficulties with which he was beset. However one may want to view this point, it is obvious that the Walters *Polycronicon*, as the only recorded copy, can certainly lay claim to the distinction of belonging to the very rarest issue of this historic work.

<sup>19</sup> A further point of interest is noted by the *Catalogue of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books . . . now Forming Portion of the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan* (London, 1907), III, 206: "this is the first book printed in England which contains musical notes. These occur here in the form of a small diagram relating to the consonances of Pythagoras. In Caxton's edition the space was left blank."



FIGURE 1

MUSEUM OF ART, RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

*Detail of Sieneese Angel, polychromed wood (before treatment)*

# THE PRESERVATION OF WOOD SCULPTURE\*

## THE WAX IMMERSION METHOD

BY DAVID ROSEN

*Walters Art Gallery*

WHILE A GOOD DEAL of attention and study has been given to the preservation of paintings executed on wooden supports, very little real progress has been made in devising means of treating wood sculpture, and especially, polychromed wood sculpture. The reason for this lack of progress is not far to seek. While panel paintings and flat wood reliefs of shallow depth can be treated from the back in various ways, the three dimensional object presents far greater difficulties. These difficulties increase when solid objects have been covered with a gesso ground and painted. It is the purpose of this article to describe the method developed at the Walters Art Gallery for the preservation and reconstruction of such wooden objects.

In 1935, after I had experimented for several years with wood impregnation, a set of nine panels of the Aragonese and Hispano-Flemish paintings belonging to the George Blumenthal collection<sup>1</sup> were brought to me for treatment (fig. 6). The wood of the panels and crosspieces, which held the boards of the panels together,

had been largely eaten away by worms (fig. 2), leaving practically no support for much of the gesso and paint film. The powdery condition and losses are illustrated in figure 4. As mentioned in a previous article in *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*,<sup>2</sup> transposition of a thin layer of paint to a new support has many disadvantages. It was clear that no amount of local treatment would serve to hold the painted surface unless extensive reconstruction of the panel itself were undertaken. It was therefore necessary to use a fluid material which, by means of immersion, could be absorbed through the openings of partially disintegrated wood to act as a filler. We experimented with thermoplastics (e.g. waxes) which are more or less solid at normal temperatures, but are applied in the molten state. They not only have bulk strength and adhesive properties, but are chemically inert and moisture repellent. Beeswax was finally selected as the best material for the purpose. As an experiment, two wood samples were taken from one of the crosspieces of the panels. As

\* This article has been prepared in collaboration with Henri Marceau, Associate Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and my assistants in the Conservation Department at the Walters Art Gallery, Elisabeth Packard and John Carroll Kirby, to whom I wish to express my gratitude.

<sup>1</sup> Chandler R. Post, *Spanish Painting*, VIII, pp. 402-404, fig. 182; IV, p. 462, fig. 176. Now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>2</sup> David Rosen, *Notes on the Preservation of Panel Pictures* in *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, IV (1941), pp. 123 ff.



FIGURE 2

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE MORATA MASTER  
*Detail of Reverse of Coronation Panel*  
(showing worm-eaten crosspiece before treatment)



may be seen in figure 5 one of these samples is in its original condition, wormeaten and disintegrated in places to fine powder, while the other is another section of the same crosspiece after immersion in melted wax. In the latter sample the wax has entered the structure of the wood, filled the holes and coated and permeated the fibers. By making cross-sections of the treated wood it was found that the wax absorption extended to the center of the piece. Samples that before treatment could not have been cut into cross-sections without falling apart, were safely sawed after treatment, indicating the greatly increased strength resulting from the process (fig. 10).

The next step was to increase the adhesive quality of the wax in order to hold the weak

FIGURE 3

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE MORATA MASTER  
*Detail of Coronation Panel*  
(showing condition before treatment)

areas of gesso and paint film in position. Figure 3 shows how prolonged exposure to extremes of moisture and dryness, the extensive tunnellings of wood beetles and other causes of decay have resulted in a widespread weakening of the bond between paint film and support. It was found that the tackiness of the beeswax could be increased by the addition of gum elemi or resin. A mixture of eighty per cent beeswax and twenty per cent gum elemi was melted and kept fluid in a shallow pan of galvanized iron specially made to accommodate the large panels. The face of the picture was protected by a layer of paper and muslin and the crosspieces (fig. 8) which held the boards of the panel together were removed in small sections. They were replaced by metal strips<sup>3</sup> attached to the back of the panel with small screws half the thickness of the wood (fig. 9). The screw holes in these metal strips are actually slots which have sufficient play to provide for any possible expansion or contraction of the wood. The panel was then floated face up

<sup>3</sup> Aluminum channel irons have been found most satisfactory.



FIGURE 4 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
THE MORATA MASTER  
Detail of Coronation Panel  
(showing powdery condition before treatment)



FIGURE 5  
Samples of wood taken from crosspiece of Coronation Panel  
(right: untreated; left: treated by wax immersion)





FIGURE 6

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE MORATA MASTER, SPANISH, FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Retable, detail: Coronation of the Virgin  
(before treatment)





FIGURE 7

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

THE MORATA MASTER  
*Coronation of the Virgin*  
(after treatment)



FIGURE 8 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
THE MORATA MASTER  
Reverse of Coronation Panel  
(before treatment)

in the bath of beeswax and gum elemi. When it had been removed and the wax had hardened, examination showed that the wax had penetrated through the panels and spread under the gesso and paint film so that it was supported upon what was substantially a panel reinforced by wax. This procedure resulted in the preservation of the paint film in an undisturbed condition which is preferable to a transposition, no matter how skilfully done. Figure 7 represents the painting in its final state.

A twelfth-century Italian painting of the Virgin Mary in the Walters Art Gallery presented

<sup>4</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 37.1155. Size: 34" x 10 1/4" (0.86 x 0.26 m.). Published: Evelyn Sandberg-Vavala in *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, II (1939), pp. 9 ff.

an even more complicated restoration problem (fig. 11).<sup>4</sup> It is painted in tempera on parchment stretched over wood. Due to the disintegration of the wood panel, the parchment had buckled and detached itself; areas of paint film were loose or missing. In order to preserve this important example of late Romanesque painting, it was decided to use the wax impregnation method. Transposition to a new support was out of the question for the following reason: as may be seen in figure 11, the circular depressions to the left of the figure of the Virgin follow corresponding depressions in the wood support, which is therefore an integral part of the composition and should be retained at all costs. The wood was therefore solidified with wax and the parchment was firmly attached. Finally the

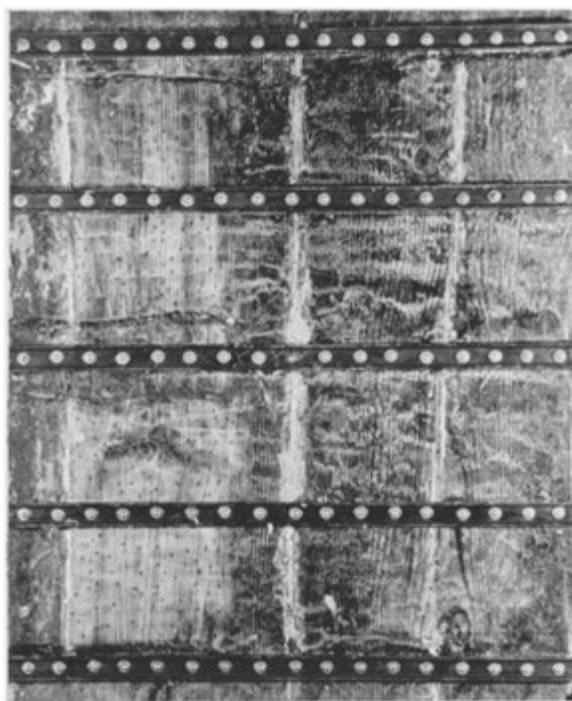


FIGURE 9 METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART  
THE MORATA MASTER  
Reverse of Coronation Panel  
(showing metal strips attached, after treatment)

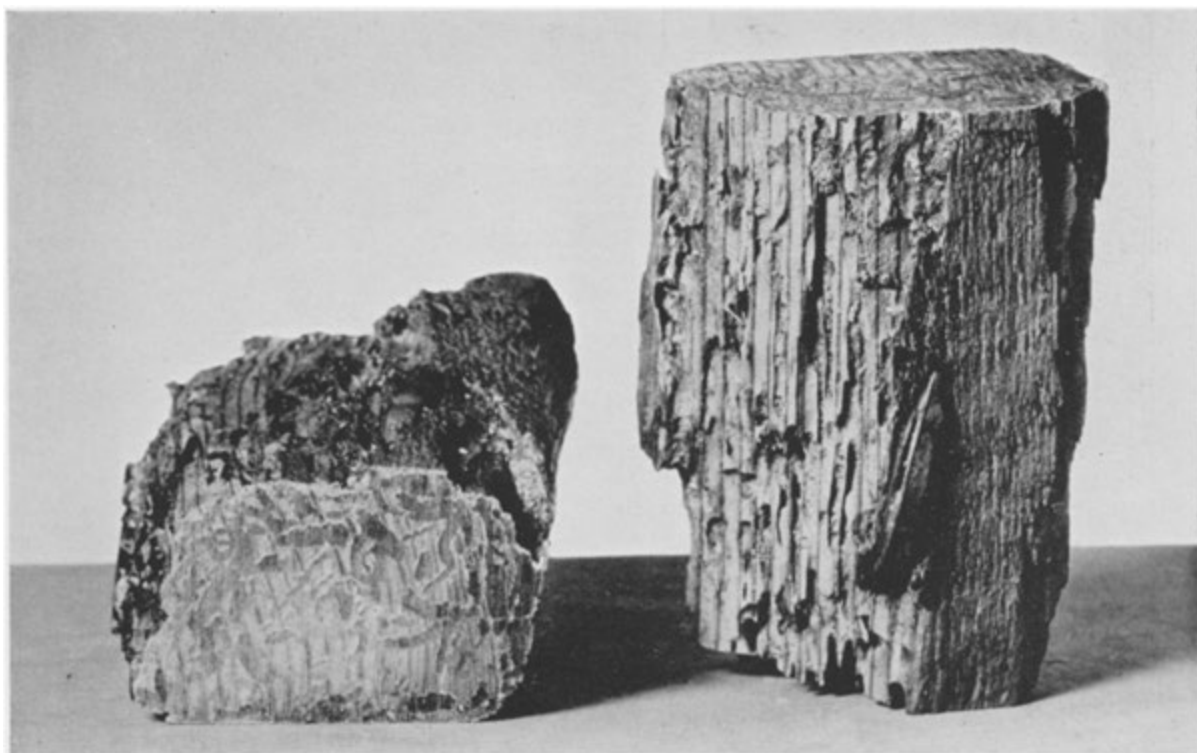


FIGURE 10

*Samples of wood taken from crosspiece of Coronation Panel  
(cross-section after wax immersion)*

loose paint particles were laid down with wax. Cleaning of the surface revealed hitherto unsuspected boldness of design and brilliance of color (figs. 12, 13).

The effective reconstruction of these panel paintings led us to try to adapt the same method to the treatment of polychromed wood sculpture. In the late Gothic and early Renaissance period, especially in northern Europe, most of the wood sculpture was decorated in bright colors or "polychrome." It was customary for the figure to be carved by sculptors, while the elaborate painting and gilding were done by artists who specialized in this work. It was only in the nineteenth century that it became a fad to strip many of these earlier sculptures of their polychrome, thus creating the false idea that all

Gothic and Renaissance woodcarving should have a natural wood finish.

Like the painted panel, the wooden figure shrinks and decays, causing the gesso and paint film to become detached as is illustrated in a photographic detail of a large fourteenth-century Sienese angel in the Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design (fig. 1). Difficult as is the problem of reconstruction where panels are concerned, it becomes almost insurmountable in carved wood objects. A panel support is created to receive and hold a film of gesso. Although it does contribute to the optical effect of the paint film through the smoothness and whiteness of its gessoed surface, it plays very little part itself in the artistic character of the work. In the case of solid polychromed wood sculpture, however,



FIGURES 11, 12 WALTERS ART GALLERY

SPOLETAN MASTER

Virgin Mary

left: before treatment; right: after treatment



FIGURE 13

SPOLETAN MASTER  
*Virgin Mary: detail*  
(after treatment)

WALTERS ART GALLERY

the support or core is an art object in its own right and its design and form is an integral part of the whole. It follows that, when the need arises, the treatment or reconstruction of such a support must preserve the artist's conception in all of its details. Unlike the panel, it cannot be treated by cutting away and replacing decayed areas with extraneous reinforcing materials. The reconstruction of the core must be accomplished without disturbing sound areas of gesso and

double boiler in principle (fig. 14). The outer wall is of quarter-inch sheet iron and the tank proper of galvanized iron. The heating elements consist of coils of pipes, which are connected with the steam-heating system of the building. The outer tank is covered with a three-inch sheathing of asbestos fiber insulation, the purpose of which is to cut down heat loss through the metal walls and thus also to reduce the temperature rise which a large amount of melted wax would otherwise produce in the room. Manually operated control valves were provided to supply and shut off steam and to control temperature during operation. Beeswax has a melting point of between sixty-three and seventy degrees Centigrade. It was found that a fairly constant tank temperature of about seventy degrees Centigrade could be maintained and was both safe for the paint film and adequate to provide fluid wax of the proper consistency to penetrate wood thoroughly.

To test our tank immersion process we decided to experiment first with a relatively simple problem. We selected a large wood statue of St. Anne with the Blessed Virgin and the Christ Child by Tilman Riemenschneider (fig. 15)<sup>5</sup> which showed dryness and decay, but since it had been stripped of its polychrome at some previous time it presented no problem of reattachment of loose paint. Having acquired much valuable experience from this and similar non-polychromed statues, we were ready to attack a slightly different problem. A French fifteenth-century head (fig. 17)<sup>6</sup> so badly worm-eaten that it was like a sponge, was held together by a modern coat of white lead paint. In order to solidify the wood and to remove the

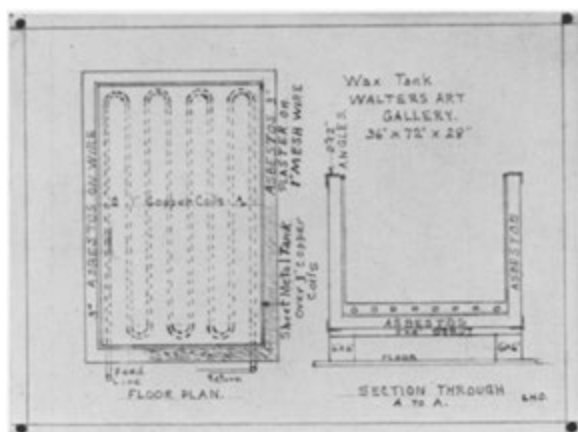


FIGURE 14 WALTERS ART GALLERY  
Wax Tank. Drawing by C. H. Owings

paint film and without destroying the artist's shapes and forms, while at the same time the flaking paint must be reattached firmly to the wood.

In order to achieve complete penetration of large wood sculptures it was necessary to devise a way to immerse them totally and, if the rate of penetration were slow, to maintain them in a bath of molten wax for hours or even for two or three days. For this purpose a tank was constructed in 1937 at the Walters Art Gallery. The tank, which measures three feet by six feet and has a depth of twenty-eight inches, is a large

<sup>5</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 27.294. Size: H. 39½" (1.0 m.). Published: Justus Bier in *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, VII-VIII (1944-45), pp. 10 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 61.105. Size: H. 13¾" (0.335 m.).



unsightly modern paint, it was necessary to provide a harder surface than would be obtained by using beeswax and gum elemi. A mixture of sixty per cent beeswax and forty per cent carnauba, which is harder and has a higher melting point than beeswax, was used at a temperature of eighty degrees Centigrade. During immersion the oil paint had softened so that it could be easily removed afterwards, and the wood was solidified (fig. 16).

As it retained no traces of original polychrome, the head just discussed may be grouped with non-polychromed wood sculpture which requires no special preparation before immersion. Such objects are weighed before immersion, and when they are removed. A check can thus be kept on the amount of wax absorbed. Some statues have doubled in weight; others have gained thirty to fifty per cent. Normally objects, when placed in the tank, will float, and air and moisture confined within the cavities will be expelled as the wax flows in. The length of immersion time will, of course, depend on the kind of wood being treated and its condition. Soft, badly tunnelled woods will absorb greater amounts of wax more quickly than denser woods, but all will be penetrated if sufficient ports of entry are present in the object. As the process advances, the object sinks deeper into the bath, until it becomes submerged. This usually indicates that wax will no longer enter, and the object may then be removed.

It must be indicated at this point that certain safeguards for shop workers must be provided for. In the case of large pieces of considerable weight, it is necessary to provide proper rigging prior to immersion in order that the piece may be easily and safely removed from the tank. Objects which can be safely handled prior to immersion will be difficult to manage at a temperature of seventy or eighty degrees Centigrade. Their increased weight will also become



FIGURE 15

WALTERS ART GALLERY

TILMAN RIEMENSCHNEIDER  
*Saint Anne with the Virgin and Christ Child*  
(after treatment)



FIGURE 16 WALTERS ART GALLERY

FRENCH, FIFTEENTH CENTURY  
*Head of a Man*  
(after treatment)

a factor. An overhead trolley with a chain block or other similar arrangement is desirable.

Polychromed wood sculpture is treated in much the same manner as wood sculpture without polychrome. It is advisable to use the bees-

wax-gum elemi mixture with its great adhesive strength and low melting point and to keep the temperature at a maximum of seventy degrees Centigrade to prevent any danger of softening of the original paint film. Also the object must first



FIGURE 17 WALTERS ART GALLERY

FRENCH, FIFTEENTH CENTURY  
*Head of a Man*  
(before treatment)



be prepared, to avoid loss of the portions of paint film which have become detached from the surface. The detail of a fourteenth-century Sienese angel (fig. 1) illustrates the condition of many polychromed wood sculptures which require precautionary measures before immersion. To prevent loose areas of paint from floating away during immersion, the statue was protected with layers of cotton batting attached by means of twine, care being taken to pack the batting into deeply undercut sections. The whole was then wrapped with strips of gauze held in place with twine. After the immersion was completed, the statue was raised and suspended over the tank to drain off excess wax. While this was running off, the wrappings were quickly removed to prevent adherence of the cotton fibers when the wax congeals. The same statue is shown in figure 18 after treatment. Its weight, which before treatment was 113½ pounds, had increased to 154½ pounds—a gain of forty-one pounds, or about thirty-five per cent.

The few operations just described concluded the treatment proper. The figure was then set aside to cool, after which a rather long and delicate process was undertaken. This consisted of firmly securing loose areas of paint by covering the area to be worked with paper and expressing excess wax with a tacking iron. This accomplished, the entire figure was cleaned with carbon tetrachloride,<sup>7</sup> and wooden modelling tools were used to remove excess wax from the

<sup>7</sup> Carbon tetrachloride, although not inflammable, is highly toxic. Contact with the skin should be avoided and ventilation by the use of a powerful exhaust fan should be provided.

FIG. 18 MUSEUM OF ART, RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN

SIENESE, FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Angel, polychromed wood  
(after treatment)



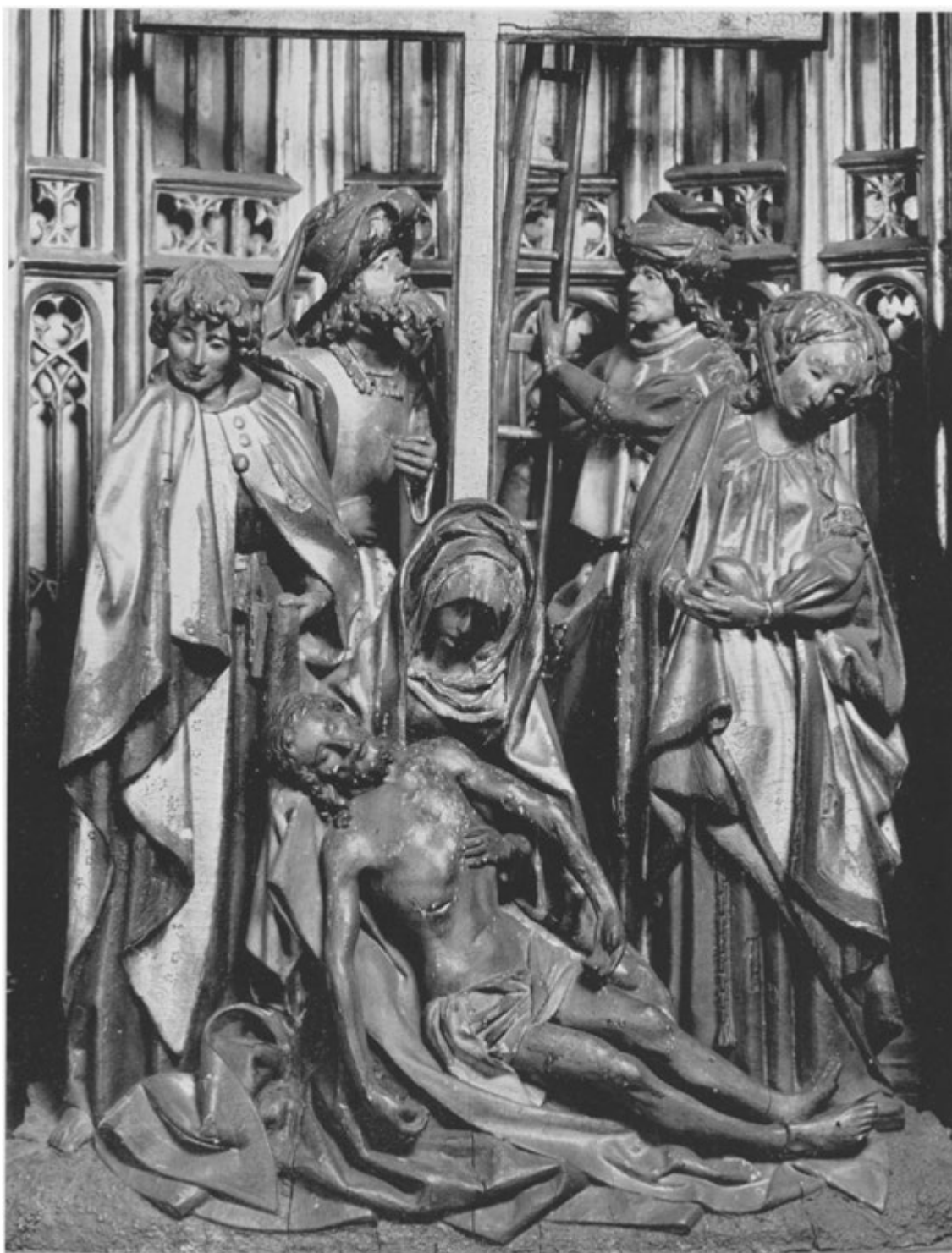


FIGURE 19

FLEMISH, FIFTEENTH CENTURY  
Triptych, detail: center, polychromed wood  
(before treatment)

WALTERS ART GALLERY

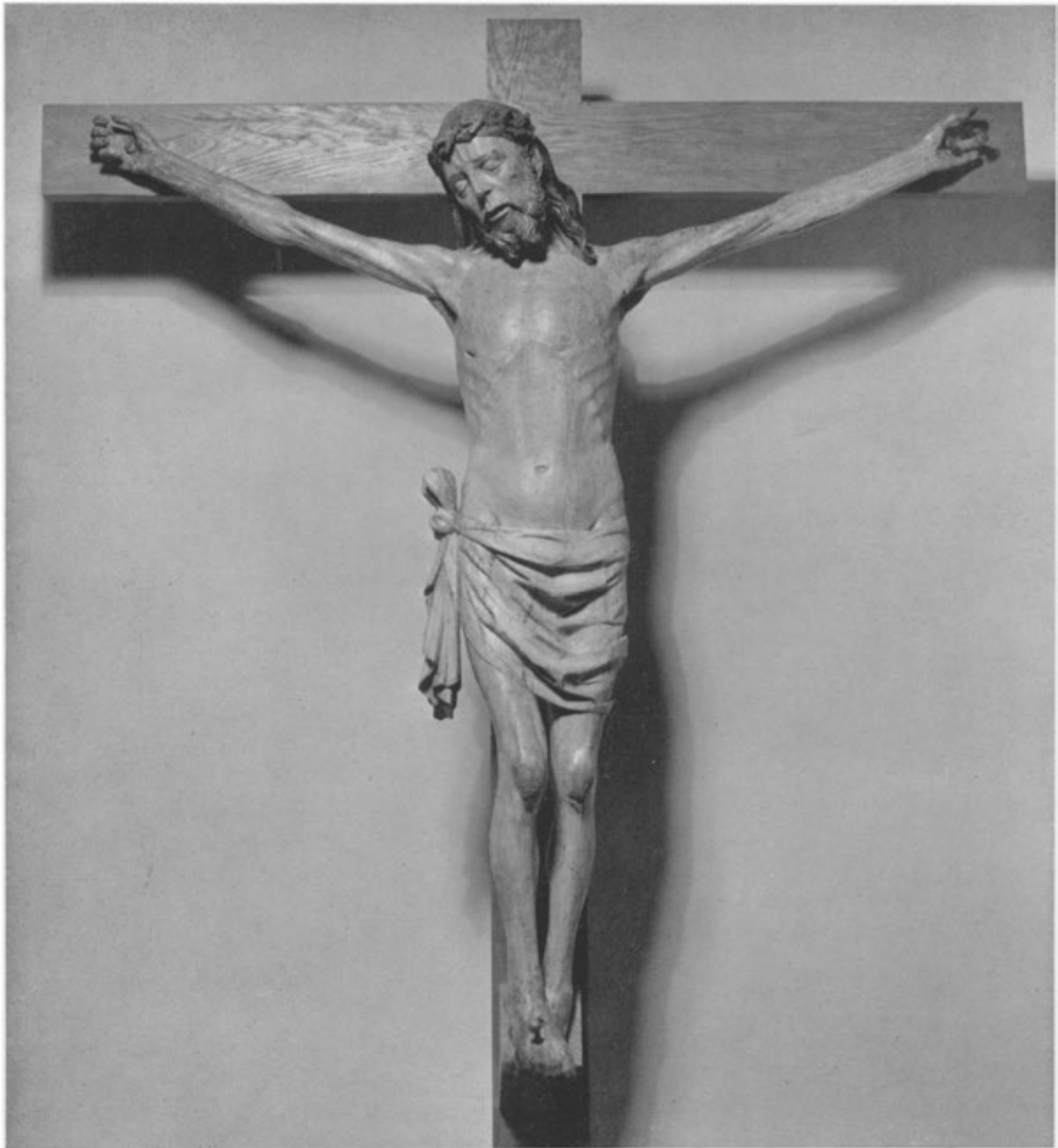


FIGURE 21

WALTERS ART GALLERY

FLEMISH (?), LATE FIFTEENTH OR EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

*Crucified Christ, polychromed wood  
(after treatment)*



FIGURE 20

FLEMISH, FIFTEENTH CENTURY  
Triptych, detail: center, polychromed wood  
(after treatment)

WALTERS ART GALLERY

figure, especially in undercut areas. It is interesting to note that the heated wax does not affect the original polychrome, but will often soften more modern layers. The carbon tetrachloride thus acts as a solvent to remove excess wax and softened repaint, as well as accumulations of surface grease and grime.

If there are several layers of repainting, it is sometimes necessary to lift off the upper layers by mechanical means or *décapage*. This is a long and tedious process whereby layers of repainting which are too hard and old to be dissolved by a solvent have to be removed with sharp instruments until the original paint is uncovered. During the centuries, as the altarpieces and statues in the churches became dingy, they were given successive coats of new paint which not only often departed from the original color scheme, but also clogged up the forms of the sculpture. A small Flemish triptych with central composition of polychromed wood sculpture presented a problem of this kind. The top layer of paint was peeling off, as may be seen in figure 19.<sup>8</sup> Although we suspected that this and other layers were later repaintings, the sculpture was wrapped with special care so that there would be no danger of the top layer carrying off any of the original paint during immersion. After the sculpture had been solidified and cleaned in the same manner as described above, it was found necessary to remove these layers of later paint by *décapage* before the original surface was revealed. The recovery of the

original incised gold and delicate color, as well as the removal of the clogging which obscured the planes of the carving, transformed a drab, clumsy sculpture group into one of the most glowing and expressive works of art in the Walters Art Gallery (fig. 20).

Sometimes the later repaintings are removed before immersion. This was done to a polychromed wood figure of the Crucified Christ which was brought to me for treatment many years ago before the development of the wax immersion method. To solidify the wood with various fillers and to reattach the paint as the upper layers were removed by *décapage* was a slow and delicate job and not completely satisfactory. Recently the statue became part of the collections of the Walters Art Gallery. At that time it was immersed in the wax tank, with the result that the wood is solid and the paint is no longer flaking off (fig. 21).<sup>9</sup>

The successful treatment of a number of polychromed items<sup>10</sup> led us to undertake the preservation and cleaning of the large Flemish carved and polychromed altarpiece in the Walters Art Gallery (fig. 22).<sup>11</sup> This elaborate ensemble representing the scenes of the Passion is in an architectural framework which measures about seven feet seven inches high and about eleven feet nine inches wide. The sculpture consists of eight carved blocks of oak, each a separate unit, its size probably having been determined by the diameter of the logs of wood available to the sculptor. The large central scene of the Crucifixion is composed of two separate blocks, one in front of the other. The necessary width for these more complex groups was obtained by piecing. It required several years to accomplish the reconstruction of the altarpiece, as each section had to be prepared, immersed and cleaned as described above. In some instances it was possible to recover the original polychrome by *décapage* as may be seen by a comparison of the

<sup>8</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 37.242. Size of the center section: 27 $\frac{5}{8}$ " x 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (0.70 x 0.36 m.).

<sup>9</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 27.544. Size: H. 4' 10" (1.47 m.); W. 4' 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.44 m.).

<sup>10</sup> Among the objects referred to may be mentioned Walters Art Gallery nos. 61.147 and 61.148, published by Robert Koch, *Two Sculpture Groups after Rogier's Descent from the Cross in the Escorial* in *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, XI (1948), pp. 39 ff., and no. 27.286, the treatment of which was discussed by Elisabeth Packard, *A Polychromed Wood Statue* in *Bulletin of the Walters Art Gallery*, II (March, 1950).

<sup>11</sup> Walters Art Gallery, no. 61.57. Size: H. 7' 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "; W. 11' 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".



FIGURE 22

FLEMISH, SIXTEENTH CENTURY

*Altarpiece: Scenes from the Passion, polychromed wood  
(after treatment)*

WALTERS ART GALLERY

before and after photographs of the Entombment group (figs. 24 and 25). In other scenes the original painted surface was gone and it was necessary to leave the later painting and gilding. A few losses in gesso, gold and paint, which were disturbing, have been replaced, but minor losses were allowed to remain. The discovery of individually modelled faces, as well as details of elaborate, brocaded costumes hidden under heavy coats of dirt and repaint made this restoration a notable achievement. For it is rare in this country to find a complete altarpiece such as this and the one at the Philadelphia Museum of Art which will be described below.

As a result of the experience gained at the Walters Art Gallery, an improved tank (fig. 23) was designed by Henri Marceau, Associate Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In this instance, the inner tank is made of quarter-inch sheet steel with welded seams. The outer wall is of galvanized iron. Between the two, four inches of rock wool insulation have been provided on four sides and bottom. Bridging the inner and outer walls around the top, two-inch slabs of ebony asbestos board have been used to seal the insulated space. The heating units in this case consist of forty chromalox heater resistance units attached to the bottom. Two additional heater strips have been installed on one long side of the tank. These latter were provided to melt the crust of wax along the side and thus provide air escape at the surface when the tank is first heated. The current is controlled by two thermostats. The one at the right is set at the desired temperature, i.e. 150 F. (65 C.) and the other at 160 F. (71 C.). This second thermostat is the safety control. It remains sealed and oper-

ates only on failure of the manually controlled thermostat.

The tank just described was constructed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in order to preserve a great masterpiece acquired in the purchase of the George Grey Barnard collection.

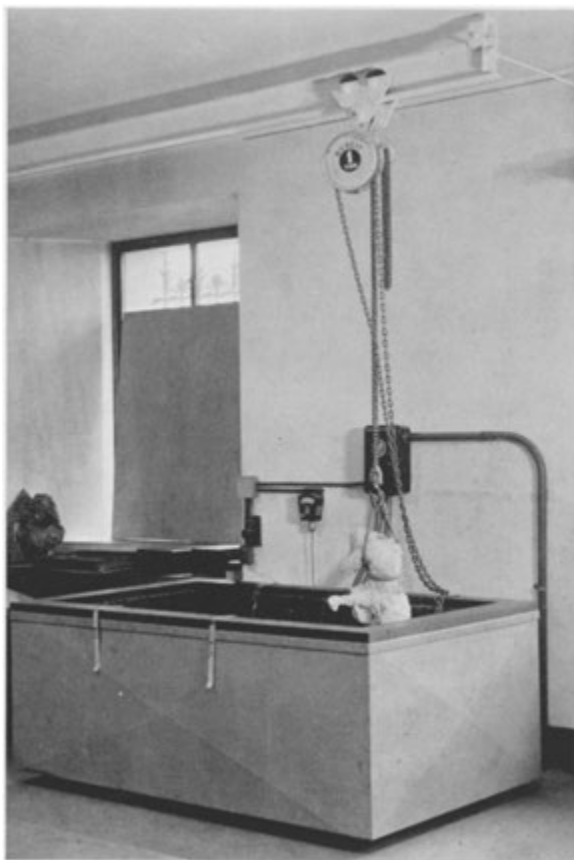


FIGURE 23

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART  
Wax Tank

The Antwerp altarpiece<sup>12</sup> with painted wings and central section of polychromed wood, measuring nine feet eight inches high and fourteen feet wide with the wings open, was in a very precarious condition due to neglect (fig. 26). Areas of gesso were loose or missing,

<sup>12</sup> Altar of the Passion, Antwerp, ca. 1530-1535, George Grey Barnard Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Published: *The George Grey Barnard Collection*, catalogue by Martin Weinberger (New York, 1941), pp. 26 f., no. 117, pls. XXXIII-XXXVI.





FIGURE 24

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Detail of Polychromed Wood Altarpiece: Entombment  
(before treatment)*





FIGURE 25

*Detail of Polychromed Wood Altarpiece: Entombment  
(after treatment)*

WALTERS ART GALLERY

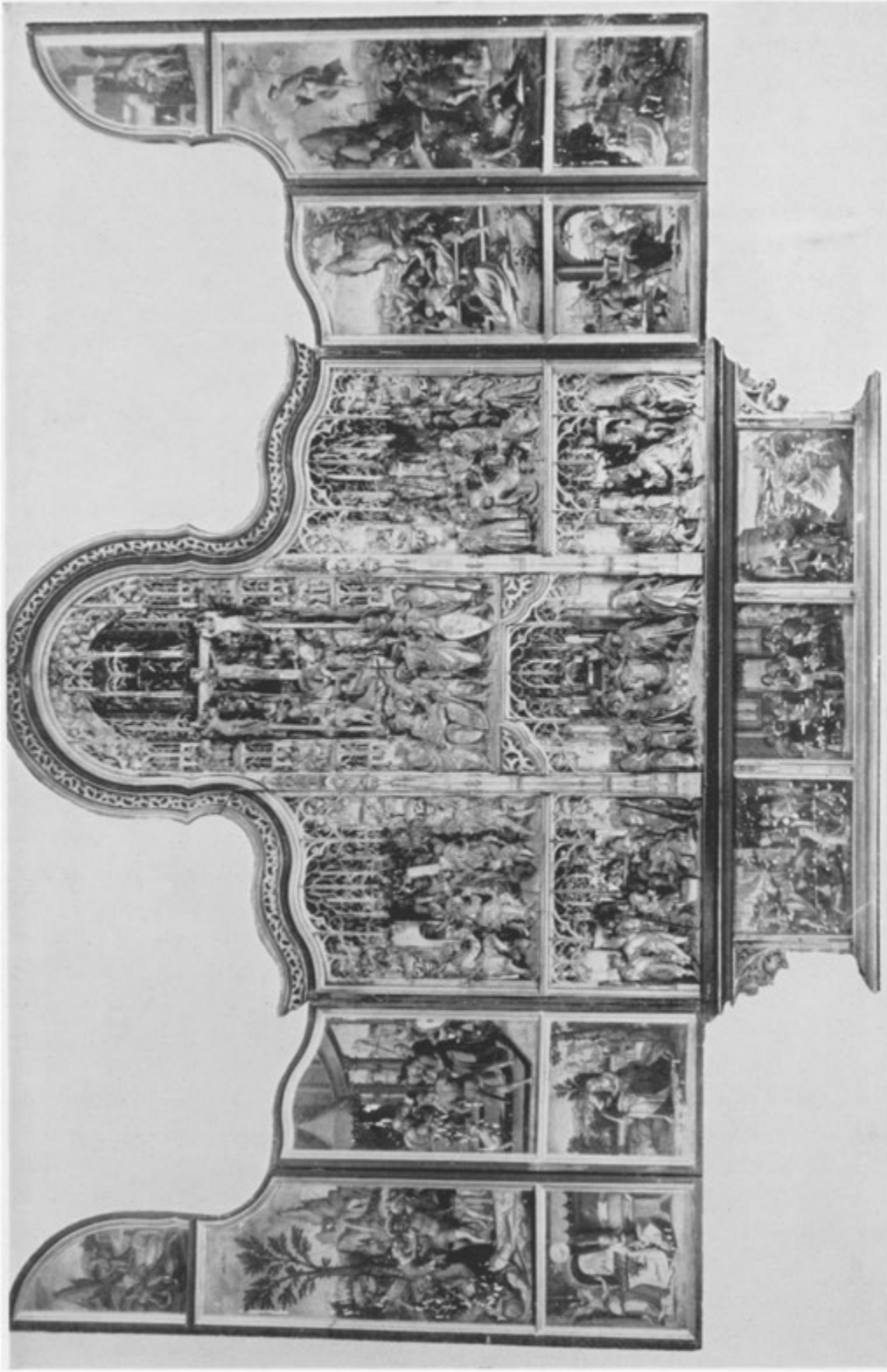


FIGURE 26

ANTWERP, CIRCA 1530-35  
*Altar of the Passion*  
 (before treatment)

sections of polychrome had been crudely repainted, and the original gold had been overpainted with bronze paint. This latter material had darkened to a greenish black and had hardened to the extent that its safe removal presented a difficult problem. The complicated treatment of this elaborate sculpture was undertaken in the Laboratory at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in close collaboration with Mr. Marceau. The work was done section by section and each unit was cleaned after immersion. We found that the heated wax had softened the bronze paint to such an extent that careful scraping with a scalpel was successful in removing it. As suspected, the bronze repainting had extended over large areas of original gold and this was fortunately recovered. Most of the original polychrome had been coated with repaint and could also be recovered. The removal of thick coats of later paint as well as surface dirt brought to light that the sculpture was of extraordinary expressiveness and individuality (fig. 29). Compare especially the views taken before and after the work (figs. 27 and 28). As in the case of the altarpiece belonging to the Walters Art Gallery, only a few losses were replaced. Small losses in polychrome were not restored, but were allowed to remain.

In all cases involving intricate carving and construction similar to the two altarpieces discussed, it is wise to provide some protection against deposits of dust over the years. In these two instances we sealed the back and sides of the frame and provided a tightly-fitting plate glass covering over the entire opening. A length of black weather-stripping fabric was fitted between the glass and the frame. Over a period of years no detectable dust has penetrated these sealed frames.

We have been asked whether the action of wax on polychrome has any darkening effect on the color. In our experience, the darkening effect

has not been perceptible and conforms to the experience of restorers using the wax method of relining paintings. Indeed we have found that the old polychrome is restored to much of its original brilliance after treatment. The result is somewhat similar to producing brilliance in an old paint film through varnishing. In the case of natural wood finishes, i.e., non-polychromed sculpture, there is a slight darkening of the wood color. If this is undesirable, the surface wax can be readily flushed out with carbon tetrachloride.

After the wax tank was installed it was found that it could also be used in the impregnation of heavy painted panels similar to the Blumenthal paintings described at the beginning of this article. Moreover, larger panels could be handled than was possible in the shallow pans which had to be individually constructed for each painting, and the temperature of the wax could be more satisfactorily controlled. Since 1937 about seventy paintings on panel supports have been treated in this manner at the Walters Art Gallery. The surface of the painting is protected with paper and the panel is floated in the wax bath on an adjustable rack which allows the back of the panel to come in contact with the wax. If, as in the case of the Blumenthal paintings, the panel is composed of several boards, it must be given mechanical support by the attachment of metal strips to the back before it is placed in the tank, lest the heat should weaken the glue which usually joined the boards to each other. Since the panel cannot be allowed to become submerged, experience is the only guide as to the length of time the painting should be suspended in the tank. This will depend, of course, on the size and thickness of the panel and whether the wood is soft and porous or hard and dense. When the panel is lifted on its rack from the tank, the excess wax is scraped from the back

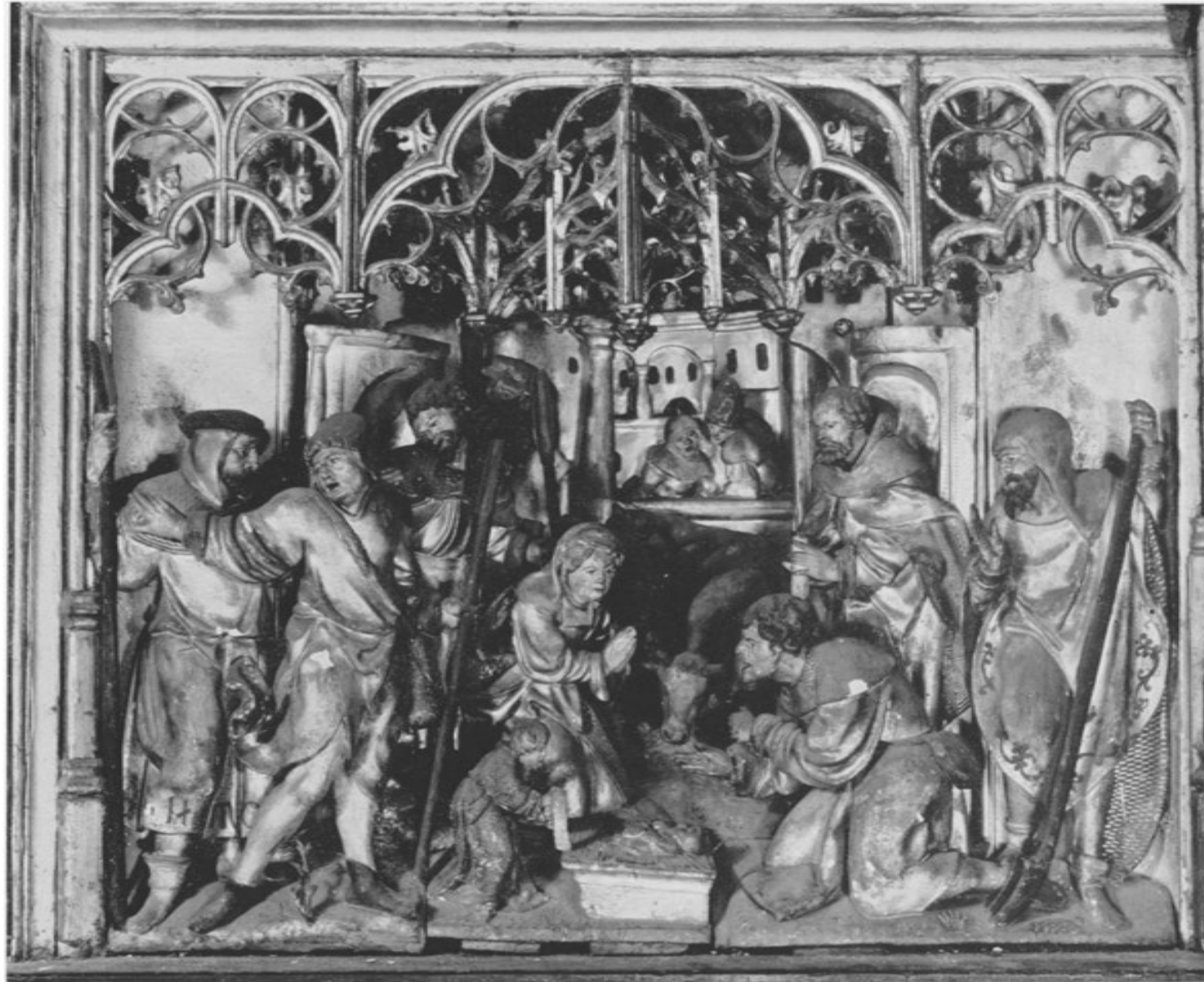


FIGURE 27

*Altar of the Passion: Adoration of the Shepherds  
(before treatment)*

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART



FIGURE 28

*Altar of the Passion: Adoration of the Shepherds  
(after treatment)*

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART



FIGURE 29

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

*Altar of the Passion: Crucifixion, detail  
(after treatment)*

and sides. The paper is not removed from the painted surface until the panel is cool.

Since 1937 about thirty pieces of polychromed wood sculpture have been treated at the Walters Art Gallery in addition to those described in this article. We have also immersed about fifty non-polychromed decorative wood panels and one large Chinese Buddha of wood and dry lacquer. Some objects have had a trial period of close to fifteen years since treatment and none has developed blisters or suffered other damages. The great advantage of wax as a

preservative agent in the treatment of wood is its permanence or chemical inertness. It also has the property of repelling moisture and thus arresting or greatly reducing the expansion and contraction so ever-present in untreated panels or objects made of wood. The wax immersion system has now passed its experimental stages and has been found extremely useful in restoring objects for which no other treatment seems adequate. We feel that the method is safe and can be recommended to others for their use if desired.





FIGURE 1

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Pair of Vases for King Louis Philippe and Queen Marie-Amélie*



# TWO SEVRES VASES WITH PORTRAITS OF KING LOUIS PHILIPPE AND HIS QUEEN

BY MARCELLE BRUNET

*Bibliothécaire-Archiviste à la Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres*

THE TRANSFORMATION of porcelain shapes at the end of the eighteenth century was due to an official whose initiative was often of great service to the royal Manufactory of Sèvres—the Comte d'Angiviller, *Directeur des Batiments du Roi*. He purchased, in the name of King Louis XVI, a series of Etruscan vases that had been collected by Baron Denon,<sup>1</sup> and he arranged for a part of this collection to be deposited at Sèvres. The artists of the establishment found in these ancient vases a source of inspiration which they studied with profit. The new shapes, which could be executed the more easily because of the technical progress of hard-paste porcelain, attained to such a perfection that they were tirelessly repeated during a large part of the nineteenth century.

Among these models, the type of vase described as “*carafe étrusque*,” was perhaps one of the most graceful—as can be seen in the pair of vases with portraits of King Louis Philippe and Queen Marie-Amélie, now in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> These two pieces, which were executed in 1844, perpetuate not only traditions of shape but of color

and decoration. Their blue ground *de grand feu*—one of the glories of Sèvres which was noted in the ancient registers by the charming names of “*beau-bleu*,” “*bleu-royal*,” or, later on, “*bleu de four*”—in itself constitutes a marvellous decoration. The rich ornamentation of palmettes, rosettes and flower-forms, painted in gold and platinum and burnished, recalls the imperial grand style, almost unchanged, and by its brilliance forms a sumptuous frame for the portraits.

The likenesses of the King and Queen—precious miniatures executed by the delicate brush of the painter Moriot<sup>3</sup>—were borrowed from the official painting of the reign, being derived from a pair of celebrated pictures painted by Winterhalter. These portraits, exhibited at the Salons of 1839<sup>4</sup> and 1842,<sup>5</sup> respectively, may be seen in the *galerie historique* of the chateau at Versailles. The Sèvres artist has skillfully conveyed not only the delicate coloring but the character of the faces and of the costumes: the melancholy sweetness of the Queen and the transparent delicacy of her lace; the serene good nature of the King and the soberness of his uniform.

<sup>1</sup> Dominique Vivant, Baron de Denon (1747-1825): artist and art collector. He was on the staff of the French Ambassador to Italy before the Revolution. Later he accompanied Napoleon Bonaparte to Egypt. Under the Empire he became Director of Art and of the Imperial Museum.

<sup>2</sup> Nos. 48.555 and 48.556. Height of each, including gilt bronze base, 17½ in. (.444 m).

<sup>3</sup> Nicolas-Marie Moriot: figure-painter at the Manufacture de Sèvres from 1828 to 1848.

<sup>4</sup> No. 2126 in the catalogue of that year.

<sup>5</sup> No. 1876 in the catalogue of that year.

These particularly well executed and costly vases (the painting of the figures alone accounted for more than half the cost of manufacture)<sup>6</sup> were delivered to the Queen January 8, 1845, on the verbal order of the King.<sup>7</sup> They are in a way faithful witnesses not only of the porcelain of Sèvres at the peak of its perfection, but also of the history of France. In this two-fold guise they convey permanently a message of understanding from their native land to a great country, a friend worthy of preserving these royal treasures in the Walters Art Gallery, the collections of which are so rich in the porcelain of Sèvres.

<sup>6</sup> Their selling price was set at 2000 francs in 1844. The history of the two vases may be traced through the volumes of the *Archives de la Manufacture de Sèvres* as follows:

*Registre Vj 51—1844*, fol. 20vo: "Paiement au peintre Moriot en Novembre sur 2 vases carafe étrusque, 2<sup>e</sup> grandeur, fond bleu—portraits coloriés du Roi et de la Reine, riche décor et attributs en or et platine. Pour portrait de la Reine . . . 275 fr. Pour portrait du Roi . . . 250 fr."

When each piece was finished, the details of its fabrication were always noted on a *feuille d'appréciation d'entrée au magasin de vente*. Our vases appear on:

*Feuille d'appréciation* no. 83 du 31 décembre, 1844: "2 vases 'étrusque carafe,' 2<sup>e</sup> grandeur, fond bleu—portraits coloriés du Roi et de la Reine, riche décor et attributs en or et platine, rentrés à prix connu, semblables à ceux portés sur la feuille no. 46 de 1837 à 675 fr. Prix de vente, chacun 1000—2000 fr." The detail on folio 46 of 1837 to which reference is made in this entry is as follows: "2 vases 'étrusque carafe,'" etc. . . .

"fond. . . . .	24. fr.
dorure des ornements, M. Vaubertrand . . . . .	175. . .
or et platine . . . . .	14.50
Peinture figures par M. Ducluzeau . . . . .	262.50
Brunissage et traits du cadre en couleurs . . . . .	18. . .
Brunissage a plat. . . . .	10. . .
<hr/>	
Total des frais directs . . . . .	504. . .
Faux frais . . . . .	126
Valeur de la pièce en blanc . . . . .	30
Montage garniture en bronze . . . . .	15
<hr/>	
Prix de fabrication [i.e., "prix d'entrée"] . . . . .	675
Prix de vente . . . . .	800

Evidently the work on this earlier pair of vases was essentially the same as for the Walters pair, except that the portraits on the latter were by Moriot and the selling price was set higher.

Our "2 vases 'carafe étrusque'" appear on the *Registre d'entrée au magasin de vente*, Vv 4, fol. 35, no. 2, (described in detail as in the other entries): entrée du 31 décembre 1844 (fol. 83), prix de vente, 1000—2000."

<sup>7</sup> *Archives de la Manufacture: Registre de livraison—Vbb 11*, fol. 1: Livré à la Reine, sur l'ordre verbal de S.M., le 8 janvier 1845: no. 35.2. Deux vases 'carafe étrusque,' etc., described as before . . . "1000 fr.—2000 fr."

## THE WALTERS 'POLYCRONICON'

(continued from page 43)

it will be seen fully illustrated in figures 3, 4. By the time the compositor had reached line 39 (column 1) of the folio numbered "xii," he found that he was left with a line and a half of space to accommodate but a single line of the original text. He handled this difficulty with the easy freedom characteristic of the early printer: he simply expanded "hit is an hylle of helthe and plente" into reading "it is a fayre and a plenteuos hylle and a holsome."

With its first English incunabulum, the Walters Art Gallery has acquired a book not only of significant literary and historical value but also a volume of the greatest typographical interest.<sup>19</sup> Though this copy of the *Polycronicon* may not belong to the (often so wrongly prized) first issue of its edition, it represents to the bibliographer a noteworthy and important new discovery. The Walters volume provides the historian of books with some further details as to the problems which confronted the early printer and publisher, in those days still one and the same person, and the means whereby he overcame the difficulties with which he was beset. However one may want to view this point, it is obvious that the Walters *Polycronicon*, as the only recorded copy, can certainly lay claim to the distinction of belonging to the very rarest issue of this historic work.

<sup>19</sup> A further point of interest is noted by the *Catalogue of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books . . . now Forming Portion of the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan* (London, 1907), III, 206: "this is the first book printed in England which contains musical notes. These occur here in the form of a small diagram relating to the consonances of Pythagoras. In Caxton's edition the space was left blank."



FIGURE 1

*The Capture of Samson*  
(final state after treatment)  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE

# A RUBENS DISCOVERY IN CHICAGO

BY DAVID ROSEN

*The Walters Art Gallery and Chicago Art Institute*

AND JULIUS S. HELD

*Barnard College, Columbia University*

AMONG THE MAJOR TREASURES of the Chicago Art Institute is a sketch of the "Capture of Samson," which was acquired in 1923<sup>1</sup> (fig. 2). The painting was attributed by some scholars to Peter Paul Rubens,<sup>2</sup> while others thought it might be by Van Dyck.<sup>3</sup> It has been exhibited several times,<sup>4</sup> but has never been subjected to a thorough scientific examination. Recently, since it seemed to be in need of attention, it was decided to make an exhaustive study of the work and to take whatever steps were necessary for its preservation.<sup>5</sup>

The painting was found to have been done on an oak panel which, probably because of

warping, had been planed down to a thickness of slightly more than one-sixteenth of an inch (fig. 5). In addition, a heavy cradling had been attached in an attempt to hold it straight. The panel, being thus harnessed and unable to contract and expand, cracked in many places horizontally and each section warped by itself, giving to the panel a wash-board effect. The shrinkage caused the paint to blister and, in time, a number of small losses were suffered.<sup>6</sup> To prevent further deterioration, the cradling had to be removed and it was necessary either to transfer the paint film to another support<sup>7</sup> or to reinforce the panel. The latter course was

<sup>1</sup> The picture came from the collection of F. T. Sabin, London, and was purchased by the Chicago Art Institute with the Robert Alexander Walter Memorial Fund. It measures  $19\frac{3}{4} \times 26\frac{3}{8}$  inches.

<sup>2</sup> It was attributed to Rubens in its first publication, Arundel Club, Eleventh Year's Publication, London, 1914, no. 14 (with reproduction). Scholars who have agreed with this attribution include L. Burchard, *Skizzen des jungen Rubens*, Kunstgeschichtliche Gesellschaft, no. 20, Berlin, 1926; E. Tietze-Conrat, *Van Dyck's Samson and Delilah* in *Burlington Magazine*, LXI (1932), p. 246; H. Tietze, *Meisterwerke europäischer Malerei in Amerika*, Vienna, 1935, p. 154; W. R. Valentiner, Catalogue of the Rubens Exhibition in Detroit, Detroit, 1936, no. 37; H. G. Evers, *Rubens und sein Werk*, Brussels, 1943, p. 162; W. R. Valentiner in *The Art Quarterly*, IX (1946), no. 18; and J. S. Held, *Rubens in America* (with Jan-Albert Goris), New York, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> The attribution to Van Dyck was proposed by R. M. F. in *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago*, XVIII (1924), p. 35.

It was exhibited under that name also in The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1929, in an exhibition dedicated to Van Dyck (no. 10). Recently, F. Lugt supported this theory in *Inventaire général des dessins des écoles du nord, écoles Flamandes*, Paris, 1949, vol. I, p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the Van Dyck exhibition in Detroit of 1929 and the Detroit Rubens exhibition of 1936, the picture has figured in the Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago in 1933 (no. 77); and the Rubens exhibition held at Wildenstein's in New York, 1951 (no. 3).

<sup>5</sup> The work and study was initiated by Mr. Daniel C. Rich, Director of the Chicago Art Institute. The authors are grateful to Mr. Rich for his kind permission to publish the results.

<sup>6</sup> For comments on the effects of cradling see D. Rosen, *Notes on the Preservation of Panel Pictures* in *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, IV (1941), pp. 123 ff.; *idem*, *Preservation vs. Restoration* in *Magazine of Art* (Nov. 1941), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> D. Rosen, *Transfer of a Delacroix Sketch* in *Technical Studies*, III (1935), pp. 157 ff.



FIGURE 2

*The Capture of Samson*  
(before treatment)  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE



FIGURE 3

*The Capture of Samson*  
(after cleaning)  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE



FIGURE 4

*The Capture of Samson*  
(photographed with infra-red light)  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE



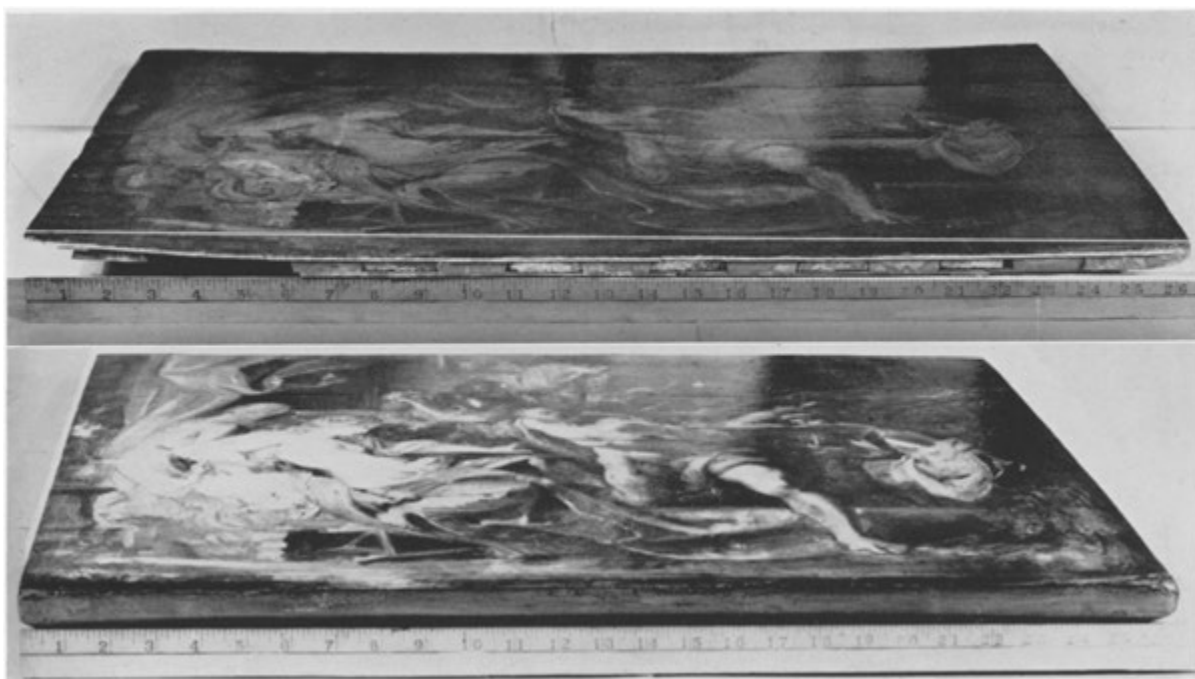


FIGURE 5

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE

*The Capture of Samson*

a) Side view of panel before treatment; b) after treatment

PETER PAUL RUBENS

adopted. After the warped sections had been straightened, they were mounted on a specially constructed seven-ply panel of quartered English oak, resulting in a nine-ply arrangement, counting the picture and its counterply. A moisture-proof plastic resin glue was used for this operation.

On close study it was evident that the picture had been repainted in many areas, chiefly in the right background. Also, particularly under raking light, some thickly painted parts were observed which had no meaning in the design of the surface. Infra-red photographs reinforced the impression that the picture had a complex and somewhat bewildering structure (fig. 4). When the cradle was removed and x-rays were taken and examined it was possible to explain the many apparently contradictory shapes. The x-rays, indeed, proved to be a

great surprise (fig. 6). By turning the shadowgraphs upside down, it was clear that the strange forms which had seemed to interfere with the surface patterns were actually parts of a preliminary and completely different sketch underneath, for which the artist had used the panel in the other direction. The newly revealed sketch showed parts of an "Adoration of the Magi," with the Virgin standing at the left presenting the Child to an old king, who was kneeling. Other heads appeared above, while a dog and a sword were visible in the foreground.

Before proceeding further, it was necessary to reattach the flaking paint film to the support. This done, the panel was cleaned of its later repaints (fig. 3). Most of these repaints had been prompted by a desire to cover up the elements which were parts of the original



FIGURE 6

*The Adoration of the Magi*  
 (x-ray showing sketch beneath "Samson." Latter picture is upside down.)  
 PETER PAUL RUBENS

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE

sketch of the "Adoration," but they also had altered the shape and the color of legitimate parts of the Samson sketch in many places. These retouchings came off fairly easily, revealing a picture of a most exciting pattern of color and light. A strong blue, originally belonging to the Virgin's dress in the "Adoration," appeared at the right as an important, and previously invisible, coloristic accent of the Samson composition. Many other parts of the earlier sketch had been lightly glazed over and were in this manner made use of in the later composition.

In reconditioning the painting there were also found, however, a few areas where the paint had been abraded and thus a few minor compensations had to be made. In some places the thickly painted parts of the lower sketch interfered too much with the clarity of the upper one and it seemed advisable to subdue them slightly. One of these was the head of a man which appeared through the left leg of Samson. Another head, that of a man with a turban, was visible through the crimson drapery of Delilah's dress, between Samson's legs. The oval shape of the cover of a vessel in the king's hands conflicted with the shape of Samson's left elbow. Except for the few corrections necessary in these parts and the compensation of a few abraded areas and of the large crack that runs roughly across the middle of the picture, no additions were made. It was quite evidently the master's intention to utilize the earlier sketch as far as possible for the later one and it seemed improper to interfere with this inten-

tion. Indeed, the strange, apparently unsubstantiated glitter which fills the background and which consists largely of elements from the earlier design, adds to the feeling of excitement and violence which the "Capture of Samson" was to evoke (fig. 1).

The discovery of another sketch below the "Capture of Samson" is of considerable importance. It helps to establish beyond doubt the correctness of the attribution of the Chicago sketch to Rubens, even to the extent of fixing its date with a fair degree of certainty. It also throws an interesting light on Rubens' working methods and it adds, though recognizable only in a shadowgraph, a new work to his *oeuvre*.

It is easy to see that the sketch that lies below the "Capture of Samson" is closely connected with Rubens' painting of the "Adoration of the Magi" in the Prado<sup>8</sup> (fig. 7). This painting was done for the Chamber of State of the Town Hall of Antwerp, probably during the year 1609. In that year a frame-maker and gilder by name of David Remeus was paid for the frame of the "Adoration," and when Rubens received his first payment on April 29, 1610, the picture was already in the *Staten-camere*.<sup>9</sup> The large canvas remained in the Town Hall for only a short period; it was given by the city of Antwerp to Don Rodrigo Calderon, Count of Oliva, after whose premature death (by beheading) in 1621 it was acquired by the King of Spain.

A sketch for this "Adoration" is in the museum of Groningen in Holland, first published by Hofstede de Groot<sup>10</sup> (fig. 8). A comparison of this sketch with the shadowgraph of the one in Chicago shows such close similarities that no other theory is possible than that the Chicago "Adoration," too, was made in preparation for the Madrid painting. Indeed, the two sketches must have been painted in

<sup>8</sup> No. 1638. Canvas, 3.46 x 4.88 meters.

<sup>9</sup> M. Rooses, *L'oeuvre de P. P. Rubens*, Antwerp, 1886-92, vol. I, p. 205.

<sup>10</sup> *Eine Unveroeffentlichte Farbenskizze aus der Fruehzeit des P. P. Rubens* in *Pantheon* (1928), p. 36. This sketch was included in the Rubens exhibition in Amsterdam (Goudstikker) 1933, no. 4, and in Van Puyvelde's *Les Esquisses de Rubens*, Basel, 1940, no. 6.



FIGURE 7

MADRID, PRADO

*The Adoration of the Magi*  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

quick succession and the only question that needs some study is which of them came first.

The most striking similarity consists in the presence of a dog in practically identical pose, next to the sword which the old king has unbuckled before presenting his gift. These details do not occur in the finished version in Madrid. The main difference between the Groningen and the Chicago sketches concerns the pose of the Virgin who was painted in a slightly three-quarter profile in the Chicago version, while she shows a strict profile in the Groningen sketch. Above the Virgin's head in the Chicago panel there was a figure with a

torch and another head (Joseph?) still higher up (fig. 12). The man with the torch seems to have been originally in the Groningen picture also, but he was painted over by Rubens with a piece of architecture; his raised hand and torch are visible there only as *pentimenti* and have been noticed as such by Hofstede de Groot.

A consideration of all the facts makes it practically certain that the Chicago sketch preceded the one in Groningen and is to be considered as a discarded study. It was apparently never carried beyond the left half of the composition; except for the king's robe, all the design elements visible in the right half of the



FIGURE 8

*Sketch for "Adoration of Magi"*

PETER PAUL RUBENS

GRONINGEN, MUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN

x-ray photograph can be identified with the forms of the "Capture of Samson." The man with the torch whom Rubens had included originally in both the Chicago and the Groningen sketches and who was painted out by him in the latter, does not occur at all in the Madrid picture. It makes little sense to assume that Rubens should have painted this figure into his Chicago sketch *after* he had decided against its presence in the one in Groningen. Even the Virgin, whose three-quarter profile on the Chicago panel may speak at first for a closer connection of this sketch with the finished picture where she appears in the same

way, helps on closer study to support the chronology which is suggested by all other evidence. Taken as a whole, her position in the Chicago sketch is considerably at variance with that in both the Groningen and the Madrid pieces. In the latter two works she stands fairly straight, while in the Chicago one she leans over forward and appears even to be in an almost kneeling position.

Thus, we have in the Chicago sketch a preliminary study for the "Adoration" which was abandoned by Rubens when only partly worked out. He may have been dissatisfied with some of its features, though it is useless to



FIGURE 9

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE

*The Capture of Samson (detail)*  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

speculate on what prompted him to discard it. When Hofstede de Groot published the Groningen sketch, he commented also on the sequence which Rubens might have followed in painting it, and he said: "*Offenbar hat der Kuenstler angefangen die Hauptgruppe, die Heilige Familie und den anbetenden Koenig auf das Brett zu werfen.*" The Chicago sketch, which was done prior to the Groningen one, and which contains just this group mentioned by de Groot, is

the finest confirmation which the Dutch scholar could have ever hoped to find for a theory which, when he wrote, was hardly more than an inspired hunch.

The identification of the Chicago sketch of the "Adoration of the Magi" as one discarded by Rubens is of prime importance for the consideration of the "Capture of Samson" which was painted on top of it. As soon as Rubens had painted the Groningen sketch, he no longer



FIGURE 10 GRONINGEN, MUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN  
*Sketch for "Adoration of Magi" (detail)*  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

had any need for the earlier and discarded one. It is not likely that it stayed around in the studio for any length of time. Indeed, there is internal evidence that the "Capture of Samson" was painted very soon after.

It has not been pointed out yet, to our knowledge, that the heads of the Virgin and of the kneeling boy with torch in the Groningen sketch (figs. 10, 11) have surprising physiognomic and stylistic analogies with that of Delilah in the "Capture of Samson" (fig. 9). Except for the chastely lowered eyelid and the veil which Rubens gave to the Virgin, in contrast to the apprehensive glance and the loosely arranged hair of Delilah, the heads of both women

are very similar. The conclusion is inescapable, not only that they were painted by the same hand, but that they must have been conceived in closest chronological proximity. Nor are these similarities the only ones. The treatment of the head of Samson as well as of his body finds very close analogies in the Groningen "Adoration," as do the rendering of light, the use of torches, and the general love for strong, sparkling highlights. It should, finally, be noted



FIGURE 11 GRONINGEN, MUSEUM VAN OUDHEDEN  
*Sketch for "Adoration of Magi" (detail)*  
PETER PAUL RUBENS



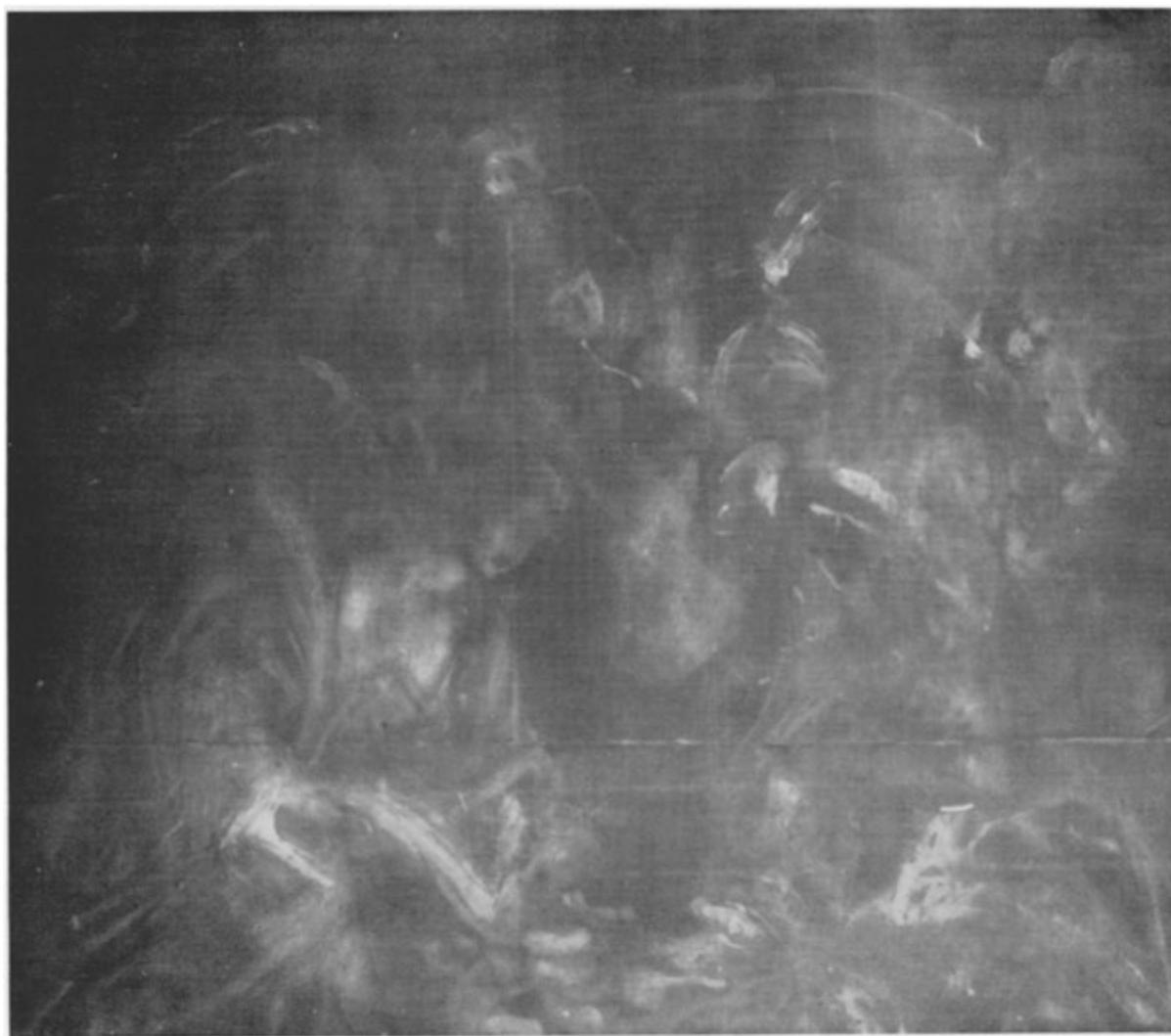


FIGURE 12

THE CHICAGO ART INSTITUTE

*Detail of underlying "Adoration of the Magi" showing figures with torch  
and with turban to right of Virgin*

PETER PAUL RUBENS

that the brushwork of the two superimposed compositions of the Chicago panel appears in the shadowgraphs so similar that only a painstaking comparison with other photographs enables one to distinguish between the strokes that belong to the lower or the upper layer.

Since the discarded sketch for the "Adoration" was almost certainly painted in 1609, the "Capture of Samson," which was painted

on top of it, and which is so intimately linked with it, must date either from the same year or the year after. This but confirms the dates which have generally been assumed for it.

These observations should also dispose once and for all of any doubts about Rubens' authorship of the Chicago sketch. The study for the "Adoration" which is underneath can only have been done by Rubens, as it is not copied

from any other work, but represents an early and discarded stage in the master's preparation for the Madrid painting. It is highly unlikely that someone other than Rubens himself should have painted over one of his sketches, even though it was a discarded one. The skill with which this was done, the imaginative use that was made of some of the earlier coloring so as to play a part in the later sketch,—to the careful beholder one of the real delights offered by the picture in its new state—all these aspects admit only Rubens' own authorship for the "Capture of Samson."

This attribution rests of course not only on a study of the strange origin of the picture. The "Capture of Samson" is closely linked up with Rubens' sketches of about 1610, as, for instance, the Philopoemen sketch in the Louvre<sup>11</sup> (fig. 13, detail). Moreover, the composition is an indispensable part of the various treatments of the Samson story which occupied Rubens shortly after his return from Italy. These compositions have been carefully studied by Evers and it may suffice to summarize his finds.<sup>12</sup>

One finished painting of the Samson story from this early period is in the Neuerburg Collection in Hamburg. It shows the "Cutting of Samson's Hair"<sup>13</sup> (fig. 14). This painting belonged originally to Rubens' friend, Rockox, the Burgomaster and patrician of Antwerp. That Rubens was charged with the "Adoration of the Magi" of the Prado may have been largely



FIGURE 13 PARIS, LOUVRE  
Sketch for "The Recognition of Philopoemen" (detail)  
PETER PAUL RUBENS

due to the intervention of Rockox, who was then *Buitenburgemeester* of Antwerp. Thus, the two compositions which have entered such a close and curious alliance in the Chicago sketch have also in common a historical link through their kinship with works made for, or at the suggestion of Nicolas Rockox. Whether Rubens considered simultaneously the idea of a "Cutting of Samson's Hair" and of a "Capture of Samson," or whether one followed the other is hard to decide. We are inclined to follow Evers, who considered the "Cutting of the Hair," and its sketch in the collection of Van Regteren-Altena, earlier than the studies in which Rubens dealt with the more dramatic incidents of the "Capture" and the "Blinding of Samson."<sup>14</sup> Yet, the time interval between the various pieces of this group can not have been great.

<sup>11</sup> Van Puyvelde, *op. cit.*, no. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Rubens und sein Werk, Neue Forschungen*, Brussels, 1943, pp. 158 f.

<sup>13</sup> Reproduced Evers, *op. cit.*, fig. 54; a sketch for this composition, in the collection Van Regteren-Altena, see Evers, fig. 51.

<sup>14</sup> Besides the sketch in Chicago which shows the "Capture of Samson" there is a drawing in the Louvre (Lugt, *op. cit.*, no. 603) which is either by Rubens, or a copy after him, and which shows the "Blinding of Samson." A sketch of the same subject is in the Robert von Hirsch collection in Basel (*cf.* Burchard, Catalogue of the Rubens exhibition at Wildenstein's, 1951, p. 13).



FIGURE 14

HAMBURG, NEUERBERG COLLECTION

*The Cutting of Samson's Hair*

PETER PAUL RUBENS

Some features, as, for instance, the large candelabra at the left and the placing of the maid-servant, occur in them all. Delilah herself, as she appears in the Chicago sketch, is very similar to her counterpart in the Neuerburg painting. It should be noted, however, that her face in the latter picture is turned more in a three-

quarter profile, which recalls the position of the head of the Virgin in the "Adoration" that lies hidden below the surface of the Chicago panel!

The Chicago sketch, as is well known, was not made use of immediately, but in keeping with the economical procedures of the Rubens

studio provided the chief model for a "Capture of Samson" that was executed by assistants a good many years later.<sup>15</sup>

The case of the Chicago panel demonstrates once again the great benefits which may be derived for the history of art from the evidence of x-ray photography, if properly interpreted. It has not only borne out the findings of those scholars who considered the sketch as a characteristic work of Rubens, but it has helped to fix its date pretty safely at about 1609-10. It has added to our knowledge of the genesis of one of the master's major works, the Madrid "Adoration" (which itself, however, should be

subjected to an x-ray study, since it is known that Rubens repainted it during his stay in Madrid in 1628). It finally provides a most valuable insight into Rubens' working methods, by acquainting us with a sketch which Rubens clearly discarded, but whose forms and colors he skilfully blended into another composition that he painted on top.

<sup>15</sup> P. P. Rubens, *Des Meisters Gemälde, Klassiker der Kunst*, Berlin and Leipzig, n.d., p. 235; Munich. The Munich painting, formerly accepted as a Rubens, has been attributed to Van Dyck in part or whole by Bode, Glueck, Oldenbourg, and Lugt, while Burchard probably more correctly considers it a work of Rubens' studio.