# THE JOURNAL OF THE WALTERS ART GALLERY


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# THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

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human Savior," we wonder whether Duccio hadn't simultaneously "forgotten," when painting the Madonna in that altarpiece, the tall Virgin of the Rucellai Madonna—just as Picasso in the 'twenties often "forgot" the tall, gaunt figures of his "blue" period. Finally Professor Schapiro adds: "Where Duccio once followed the tradition that the column . . . was a free-standing member in the praetorium of Pilate . . . he conceived it later according to another tradition as a supporting column in the temple at Jerusalem." Granted that this is true, is it all? Whatever the ultimate iconographic sources, don't the two compositions conform perfectly to our expectations: a freestanding column in the Frick panel, as in contemporary and earlier Tuscan paintings of the scene, but a building in the *Maestà*, like those in other passion scenes on this altarpiece? Aren't we confronted, in the two representations of the Flagellation, with a perfectly consistent *artistic* change, rather than an inexplicable *iconographic* one that could point to two different masters? Doesn't "style" often affect iconography?

FIGURE 21 ROME, S. MARIA IN PALLARA

ITALIAN, TENTH CENTURY
*Fragment of a Flagellation*

FIGURE 1

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*The Parable of the Prodigal Son*
*(Part II of the Set)*

# THE TAPESTRY OF THE PRODIGAL SON*

BY PHILIPPE VERDIER

*The Walters Art Gallery*

THE DIRECTOR of the Walters Art Gallery announced in the *Annual Report* for 1953 an extremely important accession which had that year enriched the collection of medieval tapestries. This was the gratifying outcome of "a most unusual inter-museum exchange"—to use the words of James Rorimer, Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mr. Rorimer discovered that a fine Brussels gothic tapestry previously known as "The Triumph of Christ," which had been in the collections of the Walters Art Gallery since 1921, was in fact the central portion of a great tapestry dismembered perhaps a century or more ago, and of which the Metropolitan Museum had come into possession of the remaining two sections. In order to enable the Metropolitan Museum to reconstitute this splendid hanging, the Trustees of the Walters Art Gallery asked the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore to authorize the negotiation of an exchange.[1] In return for the central fragment, the Metropolitan Museum purchased and presented to the Walters Art Gallery a superb complete gothic tapestry, also of Brussels and in date approximately the same or a little earlier than that of the panel surrendered (fig. 1). The dimensions of the new tapestry thus happily acquired are not less impressive than the pristine state of its preservation and the brilliant range of its colors. It measures 27 feet 10 inches by 14 feet 8 inches.[2] Pending the long-hoped-for expansion of our building, the hanging will be exhibited on the main staircase as a pendant to two fifteenth-century tapestries of Tournai.

The new tapestry illustrates the story of the Redemption of Man by the parable of the Prodigal Son. It develops in an allegorical fashion the episodes of the second part of the parable, starting with the penitence of the Prodigal Son after his former life of dissipation and scandal.

The sequence of the scenes on the tapestry is rather confusing at first glance. Groups of figures in two zones, the lower larger in scale than the upper, are imposed so as to suggest an effect of recession, enhanced by the strip of landscape and bluish horizon at the top of the composition. Only at the left center do we have a single scene developed to the full height of the hanging: the reconciliation of the son with his father. The overlapping of narrative representation and of symbolism, as well as the break between the sequence of parable episodes on the left half of the tapestry and the interpretation of the parable on the right, would bewilder our eyes, except for the unity imparted to the whole by the vigorous and rhythmic opposition of large red, blue and beige patches set off against the foliated and flowered background. On the right, the greenish light and the golden reflections shimmering over the leaves are partly absorbed in the pale browns and the buff color of the hillocks and open rocky caves.

The unsymmetrical balancing of the parable from St. Luke XV: 11-32, and of its interpre-

*Notes will be found at end of article.

FIGURE 2

*The "Nativity" Tapestry*

NEW YORK, THE CLOISTERS

tive counterpart deriving from the third chapter of Genesis reads as follows:

Left half of the tapestry: The Prodigal kneels before a citizen of the country where he had wasted his substance (lower left); above, he feeds the swine and craves their food; he then comes to himself and weeps in repentance; to the right of these scenes, his father clothes him in "the best robe," the "prima stola" of the Latin Vulgate, which the Rheims version of the New Testament translates literally as "the first robe."

Right half of the tapestry: The chief character is now Adam, an Adam who has been given the features of the father of the Prodigal and—in the last two scenes—even his garments. The allegorical comment on the parable develops this way: upper left, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden become aware of their nakedness; lower left, Adam, Eve and their offspring dwelling in the Vale of Tears; lower right, the promise of mercy toward the salvation of the souls of the first parents of humanity in Limbo; upper right, the advent of Christ, who reinstates Adam in his primitive innocence and immortality by giving him back—like the father to the Prodigal—his "first robe"; while Adam says, in the words of the Prodigal: "I am not worthy to be called thy son" (Luke XV:21).

Thus, notwithstanding many confusing details in the involved allegorical treatment, the meaning is clear. The story of the Prodigal runs parallel to the story of Adam. This story is, through and beyond Adam, symbolical of the transcendental progress of Man in general, from its departure from God to its reconciliation with God.

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Anyone familiar with the Brussels tapestry of the "Nativity" at the Cloisters (fig.2) and that of the "Redemption of Man" in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (fig.4) which both once belonged to Burgos Cathedral,[3] will immediately recognize a similarity—almost an identity—of symbolical and decorative patterns, pointing to the same program and indicative of the same workshop for all three hangings. Moreover, the tapestry of the Prodigal Son is to be more broadly included in a series of tapestries traditionally referred to as the tapestries of "The Seven Deadly Sins." From the point of view of composition and style it bears especially close analogies to the tapestries of this group known as the "Raising of Lazarus," the "Ascension and Glorification of Christ," and "The Last Judgment."[4]

Among these tapestries, the "Nativity" and the "Ascension and Glorification of Christ" are unique specimens, whereas a number of replicas are recorded in the case of the others. The tapestry of the Walters Art Gallery, illustrating the second part of the parable of the Prodigal Son in conjunction with the story of Adam, seems to be the only surviving example of this sort.[5] However, the parable was exceptionally popular both in literature and art at the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the Renaissance, as compared to the period of the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries, when it was more scantily drawn upon. About the time when the parable was woven in Brussels, Dürer made his engraving of the subject and Hieronymus Bosch painted on the reverse of "The Hay Wagon" panel in the Escorial a rendering of the Prodigal Son, which was the prototype of his later version now in Rotterdam. Inventories of tapestries drawn up in the sixteenth century contain numerous entries of this theme: fifty are listed in the inventory taken after the death of Henry VIII in England.[6] This popularity is echoed in the great number of dramas of the Prodigal Son played in Germany from the beginning of the Renaissance, especially as a topic of the Reformation.[7]

Late gothic tapestries of the Prodigal Son (or parts of them) are in the possession of the Cluny Museum, Paris,[8] the J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky,[9] and of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.[10] In fact, the first panel of the very set to which our Prodigal Son tapestry belongs is to be found in the Satterwhite Collection now in the J. B. Speed Art Museum in Louisville (fig.3). It was formerly in the collection of Leo Nardus, Suresnes, Belgium, and was exhibited in Brussels in 1905.[11] The Walters Art Gallery panel, also once in the Nardus Collection, was displayed with the Flemish Primitives in Bruges in 1902. Both passed into the Lowengard Collection and were sold in Paris in 1910.[12] They were purchased by French and Co., New York, from which the first of the pair was acquired by Mr. Satterwhite. The second tapestry of the Prodigal Son set was purchased by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in order to effect the exchange with the Walters Art Gallery alluded to earlier.

### THE LOUISVILLE TAPESTRY

Before we analyze further the Walters tapestry, we wish to give a description of the Louisville companion piece with more elaboration than has been accorded so far.[13]

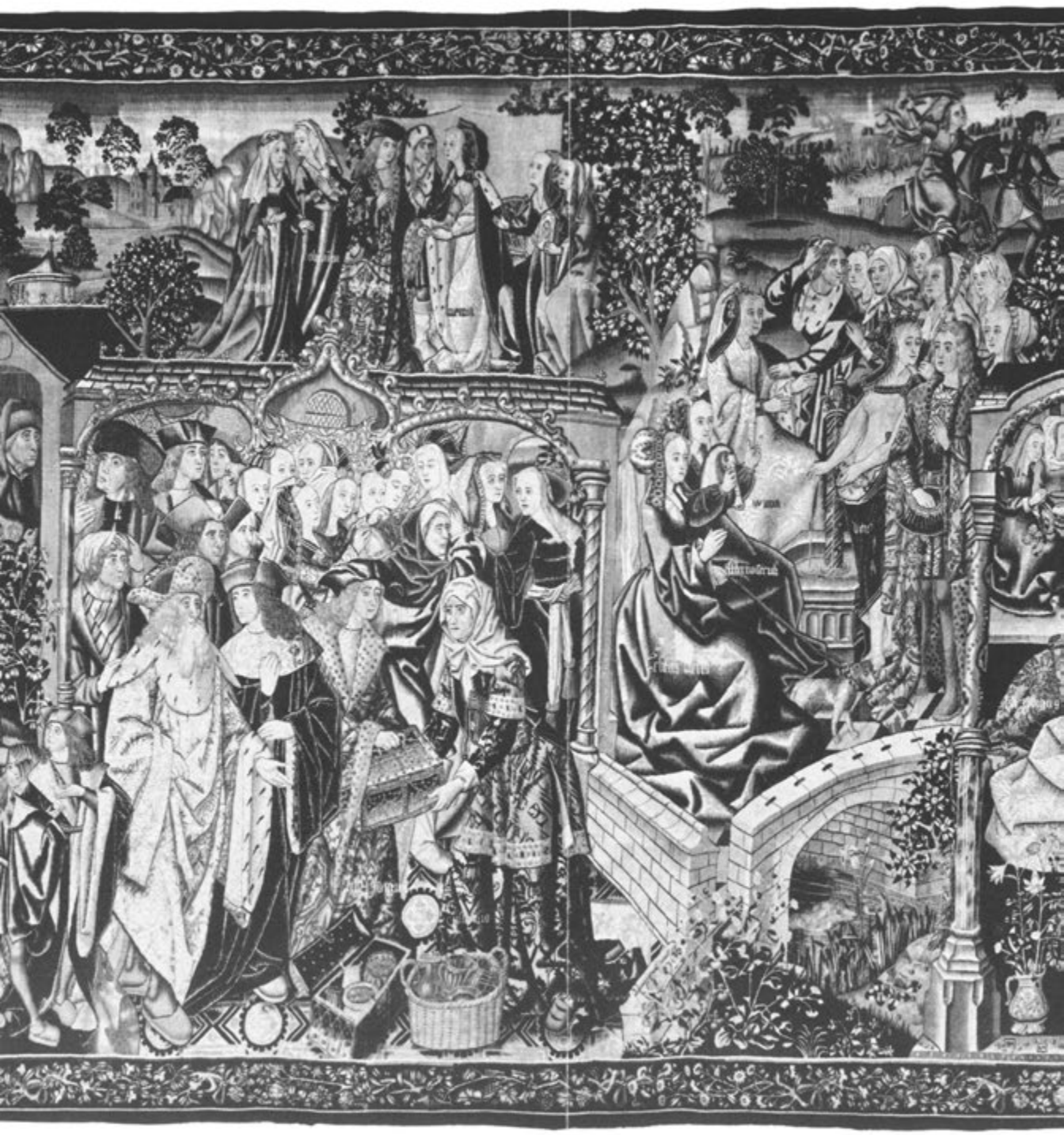
Left half of the tapestry: In a red damask robe with fur collar, the Prodigal kneels before his father, a bearded figure wearing a two-toned damask robe lined and collared with tailed ermine and a red velvet hat with an upturned jewelled brim. The youth is asking for his portion of the goods that should fall to him. The father, whose elder son stands beside him, raises his hands in a gesture of sorrowful consent, while *Mundus* (Worldliness) whispers his enticing propositions into the ears of the Prodigal. Pride presents a mirror to him, in which we can see the reflection of his face. This outdoor scene is connected with an indoor one where, in the presence of his father, who is again accompanied by his elder son, the Prodigal receives his patrimony from the hands of *Dissipatio* (Extravagance). At his feet are a casket full of purses and bags of money and a basket overbrimming with rich ewers and cups. Allegorical figures, *Mundus* and the Seven Sins (or Vices)[14] loom in the background, together with the family and attendants. Immediately above these two major scenes, aloof and dwarfed so as to indicate subsequent episodes and commentary, we see first, on the left, the Prodigal bidding his father farewell on starting his journey "into a far country," then, to the right of this, deliberately choosing a life of dissipation as he turns his back upon *Castitas* (Chastity) and *Obediencia* (Obedience) to meet *Luxuria* (Wantonness) who is introduced to him by *Mundus*.[15] *Temperancia* (Temperance) kneeling with another cardinal Virtue tries in vain to cool his mood.

Right half of the tapestry: The Prodigal pays a visit to the Garden of Terrestrial Delights. Water spouts from the Fountain of Love or of Youth—the antitype to the Fountain of Life in the Garden of Eden.[16] Venus stands beside it, nude save for a blue velvet cloak and a red velvet bonnet matching in color the red robe and the blue tunic of the Prodigal, who reaches into his purse to acquit her favors. A retinue of young ladies, very attractive, but with something uncanny in their attire, are supposed to represent *Cecitas Mentis* (Blindness of Mind), *Affectio Seculi* (Worldliness) and *Inconstancia* (Flirtation), the latter carrying a sceptre with a cock finial,[17] besides our previous acquaintances, *Luxuria* and *Dissipatio*. A second indoor scene shows the crude realization of the bargain struck with Venus in the Garden of Delight. Prompted by the chorus of the Vices, the Prodigal undoes the bodice of *Luxuria*, while a young attendant nam-

FIGURE 3

LOUI

*The Parable of the Prodigal Son*
*(Part I of the Set)*



LOUISVILLE, KY., J. B. SPEED ART MUSEUM

*gal Son*

FIGURE 4

*The Redemption of Man*

NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

ed *Amor sui* (Self-Love or Love of Oneself) points to the bed in the alcove.[18] In the background, canopied under a jewelled arcade, two maids are preparing wreaths of flowers.[19] But in the end, the money is spent and there arose "a mighty famine in that country" (Luke XV:14). Above the house of ill fame, *Ira Dei* (Wrath of God) sets fire to the grain standing in the fields; he is followed by *Fames* (Hunger), a hag riding on a camel,[20] brandishing a scimetar (perhaps an allusion to the devastating inroads of the Turks at that time). In the upper corner at the right, the Prodigal has already been robbed of his rich robe and his jacket by the harlots. The Vices hustle to drive him out, while *Avaricia* (Covetousness) empties the coins remaining in his green velvet almoner. Powerless to help him, a Virtue, who is probably Hope, witnesses the hold-up and the unhappy results of self-love.

The composition of the Louisville tapestry differs from that of the Walters hanging in that it alternates indoor and outdoor scenes, instead of employing only bowers of foliage as a system of concatenation between the episodes. It seems slightly earlier than the Walters piece. The arcadings, (reminiscent of the houses or mansions[21] used in the "simultaneous" staging of the Mystery or Morality plays)—with their spiraled shafts, bases of precious stone or crystal, their gem-studded ogee arches crisply cusped and crocketed—are still redolent of Tournai productions of around 1475 and eschew the new manner of the Brussels weavers, who were dominated, probably as early as about 1485, by the personality of the rather enigmatical figure who goes by the name of Jan of Brussels or Jan van Roome.[22] As became customary with the school of Brussels, the set of the Prodigal Son arranges the general distribution of the subject matter in two long friezes—a series of "close-ups" below, a recessed and diminished one above—and employs characteristic motives, such as the group of chatting page-boys.[23] The borders of the Louisville and Walters tapestries, composed of daisies, pansies, grapes and roses, are very similar to those of the "Glorification of Charles VIII" in New York.[24] But here and there the design and style of the tapestries themselves differ to a considerable extent. The "Charles VIII" tapestry of New York is articulated like a complex polyptych, of a type intermediate between that of Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Mystical Lamb" and that of the Isenheim altarpiece of Grünewald. The compartments are hinged on the very columns of the arcadings. The effect of crowding in the groups is toned down by a gradation of the perspective, as in oil painting. Furthermore, it belongs, like the Mazarin Tapestry (fig.11), to a series of tapestries described in the inventories of the fifteenth century as "rich in gold"[25]—that is that the wool was interwoven with metal thread, with the modelling delicately softened by a certain amount of silk.

There are obvious connections, on the other hand, between the Prodigal Son set and the tapestries which are attributed to a so-called "anonymous Master of the Combat of Virtues and Vices,"[26] who has been tentatively identified with Jan van Roome. If such is the case, the Prodigal Son set could have been woven about 1485 at the earliest and the date of the birth of Jan van Roome—or of the anonymous master—generally put at about 1465, should be pushed back still earlier in the fifteenth century.[27] To go into detail, in the upper left corner of the Louisville tapestry, for instance, *Obediencia* brandishes a huge key turned upward (fig.3); in the tapestry of the "Nativity" *Temptator* holds a key turned downward (fig. 5).[28] Furthermore, the Prodigal robbed by the harlots and driven out by the Vices in the upper right corner of the Louisville tapestry reproduces the disarming of Man on the tapestry of the "Redemption" in the Metropolitan Museum (fig.4): *Mundus* carry-

FIGURE 5 NEW YORK, THE CLOISTERS

*"Homo" in Fetters*
*(Detail from the "Nativity" Tapestry)*

ing a flute and uplifting his right arm in the former duplicates the gesture of *Luxuria* attacking Man with a spear in the latter; the female clutching the throat of the Prodigal repeats the gesture of Avarice on the New York piece, while on the Louisville tapestry Avarice snatches the almoner of the Prodigal in the same way that Gluttony tears at the stomach of Man.[29]

A feature which appears on both panels of the Prodigal Son set, namely, a brook dividing the left half from the right half of the composition, is a motive taken from the Arras and Tournai tapestries in which the stream of water usually ripples along a low battlemented wall. Here a

FIGURE 6 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*The Impoverished Prodigal Seeks Employment*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

bridge[30] leads into the depth of the tapestry, connecting materially as well as spiritually the two compartments: the departure of the Prodigal from his father and his years of dissipation, in the first hanging (fig.3); and on the second the reconciliation with the father, and its allegorical interpretation—the story of the disobedience and of the redemption of Adam.

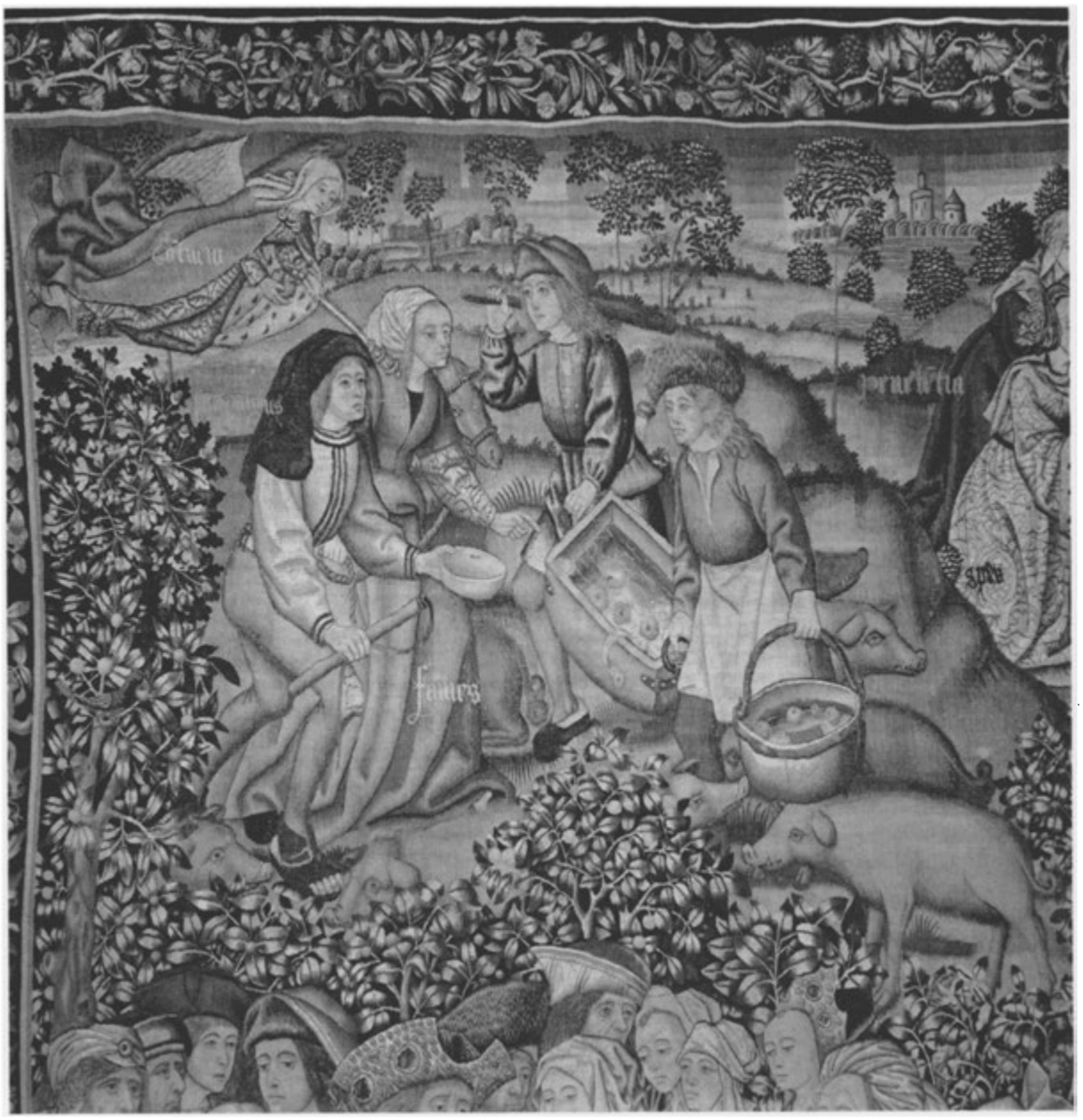


FIGURE 7

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*The Starving Prodigal Begs for Swine's Food*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

THE WALTERS TAPESTRY

The second panel of the set shows the sequel to the adventures of the Prodigal: his repentance and his return. "He began to be in want," so he went and "cleaved to one of the citizens of this country" (Luke XV:14-15). Spoiled of his rich garments, except for an orange doublet and red hose, the Prodigal is kneeling before an affluent citizen, in humble petition for employment, urged on by *Fames* (Hunger) in a red dress with light golden brocaded undersleeves, and rose scarf, who is mounted on a bi-horned monster (fig. 6). The citizen wears a two-toned red damask gown lined and collared with a brown spotted fur, and a blue velvet hat with a jewelled brim. Between him and *Fames* stands *Contricio* (Contrition), pointing to the Prodigal Son with her right hand, while she lifts two fingers of her left one, in a gesture of blessing, encouragement and wonder.[31] She is a tender and delicate woman clad in a blue velvet cloak bordered with a cusping of golden embroidery, over a two-toned blue damask gown; her head is shrouded in a rose veil. The Prodigal receives from the citizen a strange twisted crook, the emblem of his new function as a swine-herd, and a whip, the symbol of penance. Three figures of Virtues attend *Contricio* and a retinue of eight men, both old and young, witnesses the scene. One Virtue wears a lavender robe and a white bonnet; a second one a blue dress with red cuffs, a yellow and lavender changeable veil on her head; the third a red gown of pointed neckline and a blue velvet hat with upturned and jewelled brim. Noticeable at the right hand of the affluent citizen is his chamberlain, a bare-headed elderly man, dressed in blue velvet with a tailed ermine collar. On his left is a man in a blue coat over a violet velvet tunic and a violet Milan bonnet atop his yellow cap. Beyond him towers the head of some other rugged and positive character dressed in a red velvet hat faced with yellow taffeta bordered with red stripes. The stooped and aging man on the extreme left, with perceptive glance and flabby cheeks, is garbed in a sumptuous violet cloak lined with a yellow and white damask, loosely draped with an aristocratic carelessness evoking the "negligé" of the Near East. His rose turban reminds one of the fluted caps traditionally given to the Jewish Prophets during the Middle Ages. Beside him are ranged a profile head, also aging and intense, with a blue hat, then a youth with a red Milan bonnet, and a young man in a violet and white damask cloak with a red hat faced with blue. In the corner, buttressing the composition of the group, stands the smart figure of a man in his late twenties, his upturned left hand on his hip. He has donned a red cap—probably a painter's cap[32]—a short coat of green and yellow changeable stuff lined with a blue and yellow damask, red skin-tight hose and heelless shoes.

Above this scene is depicted the touching moment when the Prodigal "would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat" (fig. 7). But instead of husks we see, remarkably enough, a trough and a bucket filled with apples floating in a sort of swill—one apple is peeled and the skin hangs in spirals over the rim of the trough.[33] The Prodigal, clad as before, except that his hose, torn at the right knee, are now shaded into a violet tinge[34] and his head is covered with the dark blue hood of a peasant, holds out his bowl to beg for a portion of the pigs' swill. The apples allude to the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge, represented in the scene of the Fall on the other half of the tapestry; they connote the spiritual hunger in the "shadow of death."[35] *Fames*, beside the Prodigal, wears the same dress as before, but now her rose turban has paled into a lavender shade. Behind her crouches the twisted form of her steed,

no more the bi-horned creature (or oryx) of the scene below, but the camel she rode behind Wrath of God in the Louisville tapestry (fig.3). The pattern of the beast's knotted tail is echoed by the apple peel spilling from the trough, the crook of the unfortunate swine-herd and the twisted tails of the pigs—seven in number, as the Deadly Sins. As an embodied state of mind rather than an allegory, *Contricio* (Contrition) hovers above the Prodigal; she is a winged creature in a red mantle lined with tailed ermine over a dress of golden and blue brocade, a yellow and green changeable kerchief on her head. She holds a heart in her right hand[36] and in her left what appears to be a sceptre, but will turn out, as we shall see, to be a pestle. The varlets of the farm are, the one, in a blue tunic, violet hose, blue shoes, rose almoner and red hat, the other, in a red tunic and hose, white apron, pink-violet felt bonnet. The group is enframed and unified by the swell of ground behind. The curve of the hill is fringed with a sort of fern, which has the quality of a hem contributing to the flat, decorative design required by the pattern of space and color. However, the space admits of an intimation of recession. A bluish-white atmosphere gives a gradation of perspective to the green tufts interspersed with thin trees, and the twinkling of the golden light on the leaves. Floating above the horizon, clusters of trees and castles are diluted by the morning air. Wefts alternately blue and white hang from the rim of the tapestry like a lambrequin and propagate a subtle vibration all along the border.[37]

Next to the scene of the starving Prodigal and in contrast to its realistic and psychological rendering, comes an episode which is completely allegorical (fig.8). Seven Virtues—the counterparts of the Seven Deadly Sins—are gathered around the Prodigal—*Penetentia* (Penitence) being repeated twice (with a change in the spelling— *-tia* or *-cia*). Prominent among them is *Spes* (Hope) wearing a crown on her green cap, in a rose and yellow damask robe lined with tailed ermine. She wipes the eyes of the Prodigal or, rather, she collects his tears in a linen—according to a stage convention to which we shall presently refer. This scene of consolation is symmetrical with the Fountain of Life in the third upper scene of the tapestry (fig.12). According to Revelation (VII:17) it is near to the "fountains of the waters of life" that "God shall wipe away all tears" from the eyes of those "who are come out of great tribulation," when "they shall no more hunger nor thirst" (VII:14, 16). *Penetencia* displays a cloth on which is figured a woman in a blue dress holding the lily of pity, as the mirrored image and symbol of promise: *Maria Aeterna*,[38] the *Mater Misericordiae*, conceived from all eternity in the counsels of God to be the mother of the Redeemer. As will become increasingly clear, the ultimate sense of the parable points toward the redemption of Man through his own penitence and the infinite pity of God. Here, however, the theological thought expresses itself in a language much more allegorical than symbolical. The exegesis adopts the conventions of the literature of the "pilgrimages" and of the Mysteries or Morality plays and the interest is shifted to the conveying of a strong moral impression. Allegorical figures are used as a means of analysis to describe the moment when the Prodigal "returned to himself" in a fit of self-pity, channelled, thanks to the impulses of Hope and Remorse, into a flow of conversion and love. The *Penetentia* at the left wears a grayish prune-color dress with a rose veil shaded in folds of red. Her junior partner—actually *Misericordia*, but mislabelled *Penetencia*[39]—has a blue cloak over a rose and yellow damask dress and, on her head, a lavender scarf. To the right of *Spes* stands probably *Compassio* (Compassion) in a two-toned blue damask dress

FIGURE 8

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Aided by Virtues, the Prodigal Comes to Himself*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

with a velvety maroon veil. On the figure beyond Compassion, a bit of a red dress and a red bonnet are visible, the locks of hair gathered in a net. Then come a woman in a red cape over a green and yellow changeable dress, the cape pulled up over a brown hood, another showing a red head-scarf with a bit of a blue cloak, and finally a figure in a red cloak over a green and yellow changeable dress, with a white head kerchief.

When the Prodigal began to come to himself, he was in misery as he remembered the house of his father, where the servants had "bread enough and to spare" (as the King James version phrases it), while he himself was perishing with hunger (Luke XV:17). The father's house dominates the central composition of the tapestry, where the parable is concluded with the Prodigal's return (fig. 9).[40] The artist has avoided the stirring moment when the father, seeing his son "when he was yet a great way off," ran to him, "fell upon his neck, and kissed him" (Luke XV: 20).[41] In its stead, we have a repetition in form of the scene immediately to the left, when the Prodigal had knelt before the affluent citizen begging for employment (fig. 6). He has already delivered on his knees his confession: "*Pater peccavi*"—"Father, I have sinned (against Heaven and before thee)"—according to the inscription on the red scroll under him. The pardon extended by the father and his royal generosity are exemplified by the robe—"the first robe" of the Gospel—which is being adjusted upon the shoulders of the Prodigal by a page. A green and white damask mantle lined with velvet, studded with pearls and collared with tailed ermine, conceals the rags of his recent wretchedness. The page, clad in a red tunic with a green and yellow changeable hat, places a ring on the Prodigal's hand at the same moment as he robes him.[42] The two moments recorded in the text—Confession and Pardon—are telescoped into one, and a third one, the moment of the total reconciliation, is also fused here since, next to the attendant dressing the Prodigal, stands the elder son of the parable. He holds a pitchfork to indicate that he had been working in the field, when, drawing nigh to the house, he heard "music and dancing."[43] The music is represented as the flourish of two trumpets, hung with rose banners, and crossed in a gable motive that echoes the roof of the father's house. The last words of the father—"We should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found" —have obtained their fulfillment (Luke XV: 32). In the ascending orchestration of the last and main theme of the parable, the designer of the tapestry has achieved a concentration of impulses and a triumphant peace which is no foregone conclusion. Exegesis and medieval iconography take for granted the reconciliation of the two sons.[44] Four Virtues are grouped, like the clustered pier of a church, on the right of the Prodigal: *Spes*, now in a blue dress lined with red, and a green and yellow changeable scarf held at the nape of the neck by a crown, denoting that she is the "key-noter" in this drama of redemption; *Humilitas* in the praying attitude of the Virgin Mary, dressed in a violet cloak over a green and yellow changeable garment, her head hooded in the white veil of a nun; *Contricio* in a red velvet cloak lined with rose, and a pale blue head kerchief of matching rose; and a fourth unnamed Virtue, of whom we can glimpse only her head and lavender scarf.

The elder son wears a blue velvet mantle with a two-toned yellow damask collar and a violet hat. The father is regally clad—is he not a figure of God the Father Himself?—in a two-toned red damask surcoat patterned with the pomegranate design[45] (of which we observe variations on the dresses of the Virtues, as well as on the cloak of the Prodigal and the garments

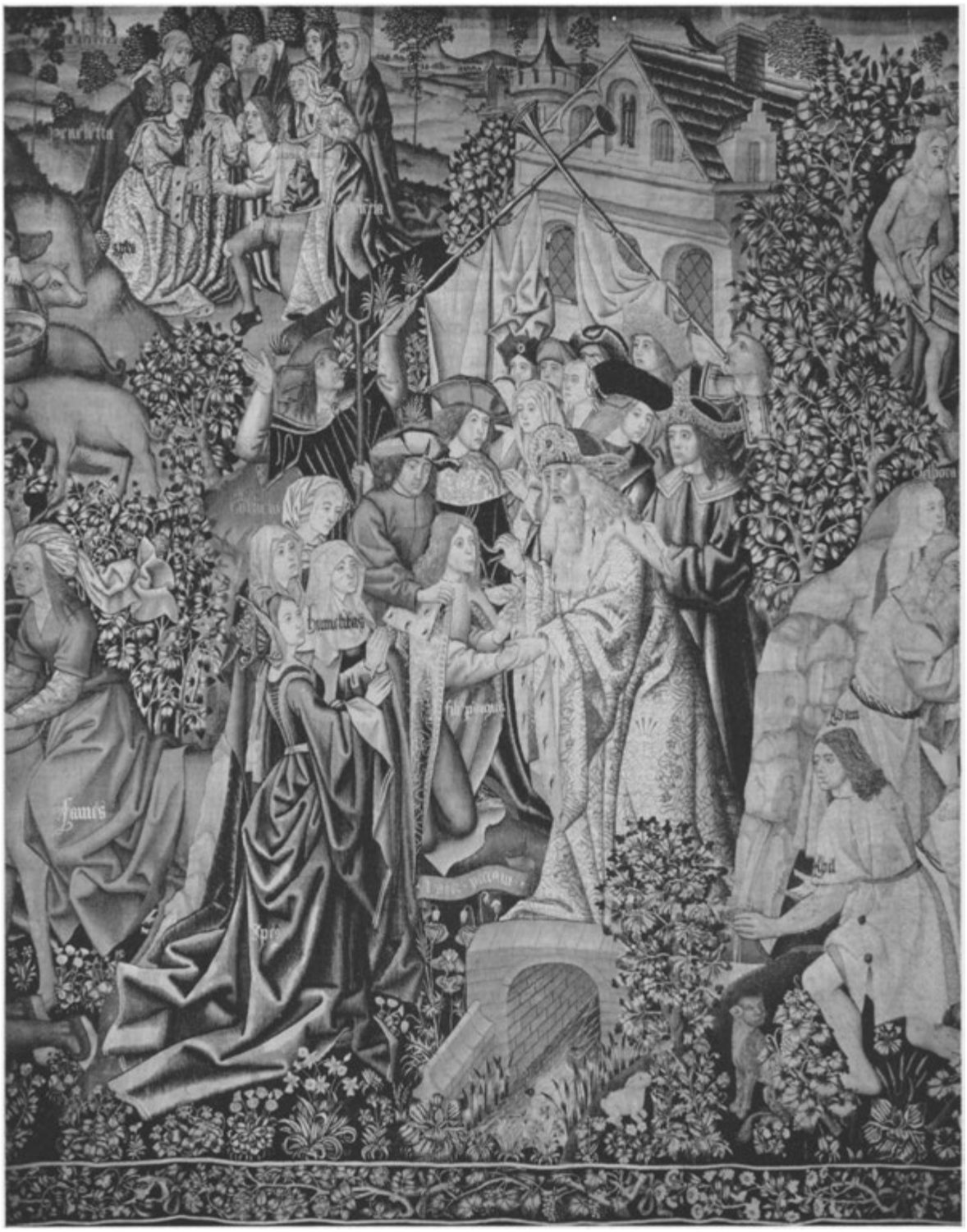


FIGURE 9

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*The Return of the Prodigal to his Father's House*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

of *Luxuria* and the other Vices on the Louisville tapestry), lined and collared with tailed ermine, and a red velvet hat with an arched and jewelled brim. Beside him we see the inconspicuous mother in a pale rose and white damask dress, on her head a white scarf. She has two ladies in waiting (or two relatives?) at her side, one squeezed by the crowd to a three-quarter view, the face of the other curiously half hidden by the hat of the elder son. Six men of the father's entourage are gathered around: one, the chief officer of the house wearing a rather subdued cloak with a yellow collar red striped, but signalling his rank by the three-pointed cusped and jewelled brim of his blue velvet hat; an absent-minded youth peeping through the gap between the father and his chief officer, clad in a green and yellow changeable cloak and a dark blue Milan bonnet on a red cap; finally, set off against the banners hanging from the two trumpets, four heads—respectively under a heavy gray bonnet shadowed by a streak of blue, a yellow and red changeable hat, another red one and a last one of a brownish color with a badge in the middle—are all that we can see of the tiptoeing rank of the remotest spectators. The façade of the father's house would indicate a church—which symbolically it is[46]—because of the treble aperture of stained-glass windows and the precious polished stone of the "bifora" in the pediment, but the shutters of nailed boards, the brick chimney straddling the roof, the stepped dormer window are features redolent of more mundane associations. A bird perches on the roof, leading the eye toward the gleaming slates of a crenellated tower on the upper left, and beyond to a stream, a covered bridge, the tower of a manor on the river — obliquely struck by the sun which also casts a reddish glare on the nearby roof-tiles—and on to some hillocks in the distance.

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SOURCES AND INTERPRETATION

In the two tapestries comprising the set of the Prodigal Son, the sequence of the episodes is obscured by the admixture of adventitious elements and commentaries derived from the time-honored exegesis of the parable, as well as by supplementary allegorical figures enacting stage conventions derived from the Mystery and Morality plays. These latter sources depend in their turn upon the very abstruse and refined theological thought expounded in the visionary poems of the various *Pélerinages* or *Pilgrimages* from the fourteenth century and even earlier. Thus, the Prodigal Son tapestry is literary, symbolical and abstract in the extreme, it being often difficult to decide whether a theological commentator, a sophisticated and prolix poet, or the daring imagination of a dramatist conceived the cast and the plot. The happy correspondence between religious concept and allegorical figures, the logic of the exegesis no less than the broad scale of colors—vivid blues, greens, red immersed in a sunny light, as in the best stained glass of the fifteenth century—and the capacity of the artist for characterization and psychological implication, all contribute to the grandeur, and despite all the intricacies, to the unity of the whole.

The parable of the Prodigal Son, so direct in its story-telling simplicity, was shredded into the most minute particles of symbolical interpretation by the Fathers of the Church and by medieval exegesis, beginning with Tertullian (*De Pudicitia*, 8, 9), St. Ambrose (*Expositiones in Lucam, lib. VII*) and the letter of St. Jerome to Pope Damasus.[47] According to the interpretation of practically all the commentators, the "certain man" of St. Luke is God the Father, his "two sons" the two peoples, the Jews and the Nations, the elder son being the Jew because it was to the Hebrews that the Law was

first given. The "substance" divided between the two sons signifies this life on earth with the freedom of choice and liberty of action given by God to Mankind. The pilgrimage "abroad into a far country" of the Prodigal represents the long journey of Mankind far from God; the riotous living of the Prodigal connotes the wasting in vice and sinful conduct of the riches originally belonging to the human soul. The "mighty famine" occurring in that far country indicates the spiritual hunger of Man separated from God. The pity which moved the father when he saw his returning son while still "a great way off" is the charity of God which is climaxed in the Incarnation and Sacrifice of His Son. With his "first robe" given back to the Prodigal, Adam recaptures the gift of immortality lost in the Garden of Eden. The redemption of the brother who "was dead and is come to life again" symbolizes the revival of Mankind through the waters of baptism (which means the death of the old Man and the raising of the new one),[48] the final redeeming being insured by the "killing of the fatted calf," that is by the Crucifixion on Calvary, which is perpetually renewed on the altar at Mass. As an undercurrent running throughout the interpretation of the parable, stress is laid constantly on the parallelism between the Old and the New Testament, on the opposition and ultimate conciliation between the Jewish people living in the observation of the Law and the Nations which were "lost and found"—that is, saved, thanks to the free dispensation of the Grace of God. This final synthesis of the two people is the goal of and imparts its supreme sense to the story of Mankind. When achieved, it will be celebrated, in "music and dance" (*symphoniam et chorum*) expressing the consonance of the Prophecies and of the Gospels—the "concordia duorum Testamentorum" or absolute concordance and reconciliation between the two Testaments. Thus, the parable was essentially interpreted or deciphered in two ways at a time—"tropologically," since the Prodigal is assimilated to Adam and to Mankind in general; "allegorically" by the light cast on the convergence of the two Testaments.[49] To the elder son pertains the dispensation of the Law, to the younger the gift of Mercy which opens a new chapter in the history of Mankind by integrating all the Nations in the People of God.

The designer of the tapestry, or rather his theological advisor, has selected from the parable only a few significant episodes. He was not primarily interested in the sequence of events step by step, nor in their moral implications (it was up to the cartoonist to work that out to a certain extent). The images retained and magnified are those which are impressed with the deepest symbolical significance, such as the depiction of the Prodigal returning to himself through Penitence and Hope in the pity of God, or the final scene of pardon and reconciliation between the two brothers. But the author of the tapestry was also conversant with a more recent literature: the first Moralities of the Prodigal in a vernacular language,[50] the various versions of the drama of the Virtues or of the so-called Four Daughters of God,[51] the pilgrimage poems especially the *Pélerinage de vie humaine* and the *Pélerinage Jhesucrist* of Guillaume de Deguileville —and a host of late allegorical poems or plays composed on the theme of the Story of Man, of which the *Mystère du bien avisé, mal avisé* seems to be one of the most direct known sources connected with the tapestry.[52] The literature expatiating on the attributes of the Virtues and the Vices and on their conflict was also largely (though more indirectly) drawn upon, and this affords precious evidence of a relationship between our tapestry and the sets of eight tapestries generally titled the "Seven Deadly Sins" or the "Redemption of Humanity."[53] We can-

not single out a text which might be the immediate inspiration of our tapestry—and probably such a text does not exist. The designer of the two Brussels tapestries of the Louisville museum and of the Walters Art Gallery appears to have had an eclectic talent and to have concocted a blend from various literary sources which had in common their appeal to his taste for the allegorizing and abstract. Nevertheless, the suspicion is strong that he was dependent on a lost —or still to be discovered—Mystery play of the Prodigal Son in closer contact with the parable and its exegesis than the allegories of the *Bien Avisé* or *L'homme juste et l'homme mondain* which escaped oblivion.

Such a medley of literary influences is obviously at work in the first panel of the Prodigal set in Louisville, the treatment of which is hardly religious at all, but reflects the ideals of court life current in the fifteenth century (fig.3). The figure of *Mundus*[54]—a substitute for the "Nature" of the poems of Guillaume de Deguileville —takes the place of the *Temptator* in the tapestries of the "Redemption of Man" and of the "Nativity" in New York (figs.2, 4). The contests between *Obediencia* and *Castitas* on the one hand, *Mundus* and *Luxuria* on the other, to which the Prodigal is submitted, reenact the trial of Hercules at the crossroads.[55] His life of dissipation is exposed first in an allegorical way: as he pays homage to the Fountain of Venus; then, more realistically, as he fondles *Luxuria* in the house of ill fame. The Fountain of Venus being the "antitype" of the Fountain of Life in the Garden of Eden,[56] the Prodigal's descent into the harlot's lair is to be considered as the "figure" of the descent of Adam and his offspring into Hell. Seated at the foot of the Fountain of Venus, *Affectio Seculi* plays the bagpipe, a musical instrument which, due to its shape, is a reference to lust (fig.3). The sin of the flesh numbs or blinds the mind, which explains why *Cecitas Mentis* has a dog for an emblem and as a guiding companion. It is also a dog which swims under the tiny bridge connecting the Fountain of Venus with the house of ill fame—probably an allusion to the dog "that returneth to his vomit" (Proverbs XXVI:11) and to "the pollutions of the world" (Second Epistle of St. Peter, II:20), as the vault of the bridge is shaped after a sewer. But at the same time, a bridge was a part of the stage-setting of the Miracle plays, as it is stipulated on a miniature in the *Castell of Perseverance*.[57] The headdress of *Cecitas Mentis* repeats the obscene outline of the bagpipe of *Affectio Seculi*. The two maids who are wreathing roses and English daisies in the background of the harlot's house are not mentioned in the Gospel, which says bluntly: "devoravit substantiam suam cum meretricibus": "he wasted his substance living riotously with whores." The stained glass windows of the thirteenth century introduce the motive of the Prodigal entertaining the harlots only to be ultimately robbed and driven away by them. At Bourges and Sens, medallions show him crowned by the courtesans in a way which still is symbolical (fig.10). Exegesis saw in the "meretrices" of the parable the pagan nations adoring and serving idols.[58] The sculptures of the central doorway of the Cathedral of Auxerre, three-quarters of a century later (they were carved around 1300), transform this part of the parable into a love story. At Auxerre we see the Prodigal not only at table and in bed, but also attended by the women in his bath. This introduction of intimate and scandalous elements is due to the *Jeu* of Courtois d'Arras, written in the dialect of Picardie, possibly by Jean Bodel,[59] at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The theme of the bath is taken over, but allegorically this time, by the Louisville tapestry[60] (fig.3).

In general, an abstract trend of thought gets the upper hand in the Prodigal set, as a reaction

against a more realistic vein—an observation which can be confirmed by other works of art at the end of the Middle Ages. Symbols are rediscovered by means of allegories. For instance, the maids preparing the crown of daisies and roses for the Prodigal have their counterpart in the two figures of the second scene on the left above, where the Prodigal, at the crossroads like a Christian Hercules, is attended by *Castitas*, crowned with thorns, the emblem of divine and sacrificial love. The scales were tipped in favor of the allegorical element by fresh literary sources, very different in spirit from the *Jeux* and Moralities of the thirteenth century. The last miserable scene of the Prodigal with the harlots reproduces the disarming of Man (the Christian knight) on the tapestry of the "Redemption of Man" in New York (fig.4). The pattern of both scenes follows the passage in the *Pèlerinage de vie humaine* where the pilgrim is attacked by Venus, Gluttony and the other Deadly Sins while a youth plays a musical instrument. The miniature of the *Pèlerinage* could serve as a model for the tapestries of New York and Louisville except for one detail.[61] Gluttony tears at the stomach of the Christian knight (an equivalent of Man, or of the Prodigal), while Avarice (instead of Gluttony in the text) clutches his throat.[62]

In the Mortality play *Bien avisé, mal avisé* (written about 1475-80) Penance holds a switch and disciplines the reluctant "*bien avisé.*" In the first scene on the left of the Walters tapestry the Prodigal receives from the citizen a whip in the presence of *Contricio* (fig.6).[63] The literary reference is still more obvious in the scene above, where the same Contrition, hovering above the Prodigal, dubs him with a pestle while she is holding in her hand a rent and bleeding heart (fig.7). In the play, Contrition uses a mortar and pestle to prepare the "meat" of good actions.[64] On the tapestry, the pestle

FIGURE 10 BOURGES CATHEDRAL

*Window of the Prodigal Son (after Cahier and Martin)*

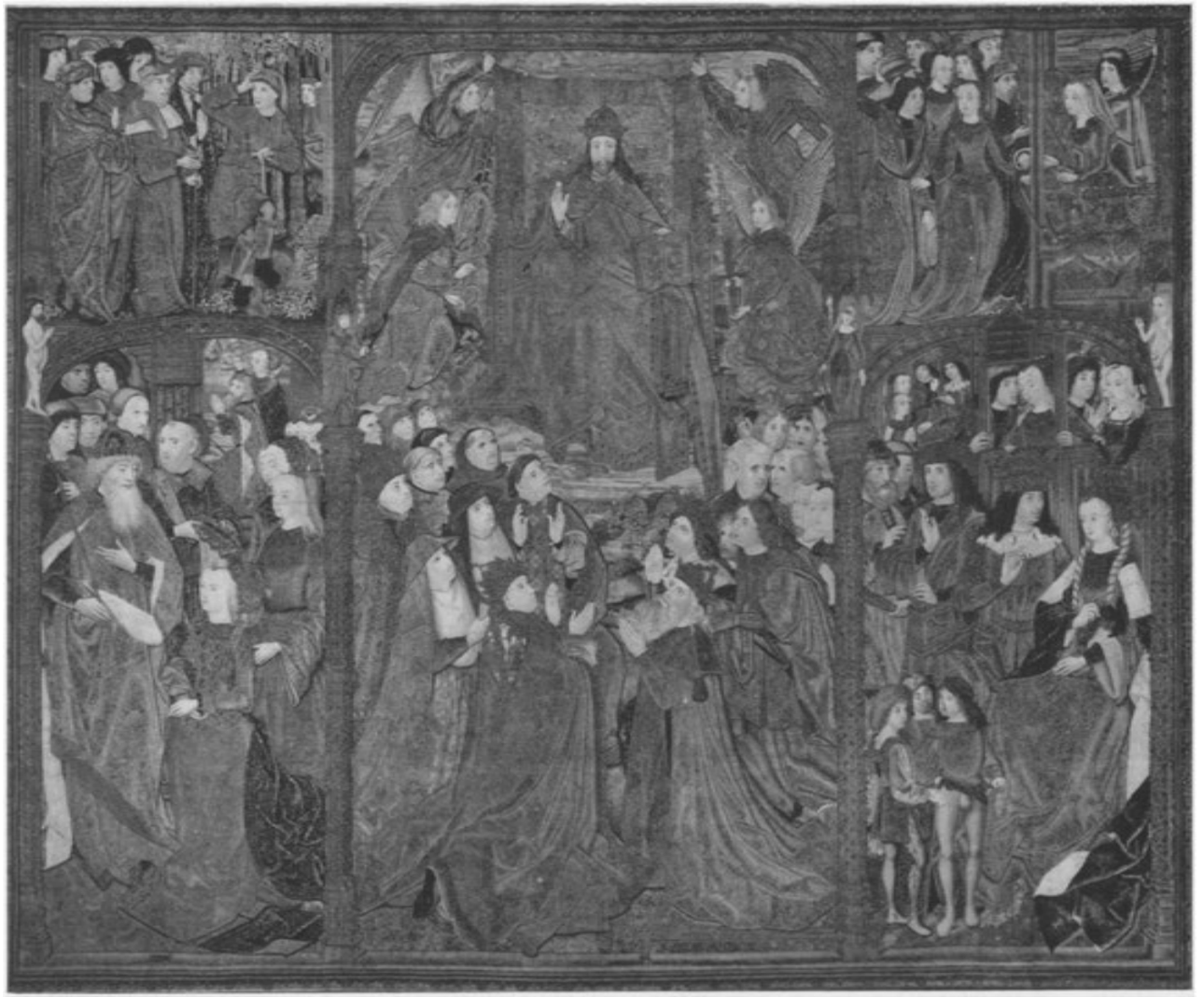

FIGURE 11

WASHINGTON, NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

*The "Mazarin" Tapestry of the Triumph of Christ*
(Widener Collection)

has two finials like the one described in *Bien avisé*. Nearby, to the right, the Virtues are collecting the tears which will serve to concoct a gravy for the "contrite and humbled heart" (fig. 8).[65] The Prodigal "would fain have filled his belly with the husks" the swine did eat. But "no man gave unto him." We have seen that instead of husks—or, as in some miniatures, acorns[66]—the designer has filled a trough and a pail with apples. The apples have a definite sexual symbolism. They were considered as suggesting a woman's breasts. On the tapestry Eve holds the apple after the Fall in such a way that it exactly takes the place of her left breast. We become aware of an ingenious correlation not only between the field where the Prodigal herds the swine (fig. 7) and the Garden of Eden (fig. 12), but also with the scene immediately beneath the Temptation (fig. 14), in which Adam, after having eaten the apple and fallen in Hell, exclaims (as indicated by the banderolle): "Ego autem hic fame pereo," using precisely the words of the Prodigal: "And I here perish with hunger" (Luke XV:17). Only by theology could this surprising equivalence be dictated to the designer of the tapestry. The *Fames* with which he was dealing is not a hunger for food; it is a hunger interpreted as the hunger left from insatiable carnal appetite—the hunger caused by the absence of God, the hunger of the Nations before the advent of the reign of Divine Grace. In order to explain *Fames*, St. Bruno of Asti, abbot of Monte Cassino, quotes the Prophet Amos: "I will send forth a famine into the land: not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord" (Amos VIII: 11), a verse which closely applies in a figurative way to the burning of the standing grain in the Louisville tapestry. Thus, we have a four-fold repetition of the motive of spiritual hunger, two pertaining to the parable of the Prodigal and two to the story of Adam—the Prodigal and Adam being the same figure of Mankind in general.

The Prodigal is rather representative of the Nations, as his elder brother is an exponent of the Jewish people, so that this opposition will be embodied in the two sons of Adam, Abel and Cain. It has already been pointed out that the pardon extended by the father and the reconciliation of the two sons is focussed under the gable motive of the two flourishing trumpets, which echoes the pitched roof of the house of the father. In spite of the lack of inscriptions here, we may be sure that the two trumpet-bearers represent the "music and dancing" of the parable, which, according to the exegesis, signals the final unison of the Prophecies and the Gospels. The Mass on the Saturday after the second Sunday of Lent is designated by liturgy for the reading of the Parable of the Prodigal Son in connection with that of the twenty-seventh chapter of Genesis, relating the blessing given by Isaac to Jacob, his younger son, instead of to the elder, Esau. The idea of shifting the rights granted by primogeniture from the elder son, that is the Jews, to the younger, that is the Nations, and of superseding Law by Grace, Justice by Pity, is put forward by Tertullian, St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Augustine.[67] On the Mazarin Tapestry in the Widener Collection (woven after 1490), which proclaims the reign of Christ over both ecclesiastical and civil society through the mystical compensation of Justice by Charity, the Synagogue stands in a niche of the arcading on the left hand of God and near the sword of Justice; the Church is on God's right side, close to the angel holding the lily of Pity (fig. 11).

It is worth pointing out that if, from the eleventh century on, medieval iconography stresses heavily the conflict between the Church and the Synagogue to the increasing confusion of the latter, the commentators as well as the

illustrators[68] of the Parable of the Prodigal Son never lost sight of the doctrine first formulated by St. Paul on the final reconciliation of the Jews and of the Nations in the fulfillment of the destiny of Mankind (Romans IX:11-12). The gist of the doctrine of reconciliation is that the elder descent of Abraham, the descent according to the flesh, will be deprived only for a time of its inheritance to the benefit of the younger son—the non-Jewish branch of Mankind. In due time, the reunion of Israel with the Church will sum up the whole process of the Redemption of Man.[69]

The Gospel remains silent on the effect of the words of the father to his elder son when the rejoicing over the return of the younger is under way. But the stained glass windows of the Prodigal Son at Bourges and Sens leave no doubt as to their success. At Bourges the final harmony reestablished by the father between his two sons tops the composition (fig.10). At Sens the two sons enter the house together. In the Evangelarium of Goslar the banquet is represented.[70] In front of the table, the fatted calf is slaughtered and one musician plays the tambour, another the oliphant. Seated at the table, with the elder son on his left, the younger on his right, the father makes a gesture of blessedness and blessing. In a different but corresponding context in a *Biblia Pauperum* manuscript from the south of Germany, to be dated about 1425,[71] the Prodigal and his brother kiss each other in performance of the words which are the key to the drama of the Virtues: "Misericordia et Veritas obviaverunt sibi, Justitia et Pax osculatae sunt—" "Mercy and Truth have met each other; Justice and Peace have kissed," Psalm 84:11 (85:10). We have literary evidence for this iconographical interpretation in the comment added to the parable of the Prodigal by Guillaume de Deguileville in his *Pèlerinage Jhesucrist*,[72] which is derived from St. Peter Chrysologus. Here is the translation of the remarkable passage taken from his fifth sermon: "*The Father ran to his son. . . :* "because when as yet we were sinners . . . Christ died for us (Romans V:8-9). He ran, that is he came into his Son, through Him he did quit Heaven and went to this world. *And he kissed him.* That is the time when mercy and truth met each other, justice and peace have kissed. *He gave him his first robe,* that is the robe of immortality lost by Adam . . . *And he let the fatted calf be killed for him,* according to the Apostle: "God has spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."[73]

So the keystone of the intricate meanings which make up the spiritual framework of the tapestry is not just a moral one—the remission given to the individual sinner as such through penitence and the Grace of God, in such a way that "when sin abounded, grace did more abound" (Rom. V:20)—although that sense does exist. There is place for penitence in the counterpart of the parable on the tapestry: the Fall and Redemption of Adam (or of Man) and a stress on the consequences of sin "reigning to death" so that grace might reign, according to St. Paul, "unto life everlasting." But the inspirer of the cartoon adhered closely to the recurrent preoccupation of Christian exegesis: the parallelism and reciprocal implementation of the two Testaments. At the climax of the parable the two figures expressing *symphoniam et chorum* lift up their trumpets (fig.9). On a tapestry from the same workshop representing the "Crucifixion of the Redeemer" amid the strife of Virtues and Vices, these figures are replaced by allegorical trumpeters standing, one on Mt. Sinai, the other on Mt. Calvary, and designated by inscriptions as the Synagogue and the Church.[74] This "allegorical" interpretation of the tapestry affords an illuminating link with the story of Adam and the Redemption of Man on the second half of the Walters tapestry—its

"tropological" counterpart. It is in keeping with the bringing together of Chapter Three of Genesis (which relates to the fall of Adam) and the parable of the Prodigal from St. Luke, for instance in Rabanus Maurus.[75] But in earlier iconography the bridge between Genesis and St. Luke seemed apparently to be over-wide, so that it was usual to take the easier way by illustrating side by side the parable of the Prodigal and that of the Good Samaritan (Luke X:30). In this latter the "certain man coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho" is understood as Adam or Mankind itself on its journey far from the eternal kingdom, and the Samaritan as Christ Himself.[76] The connection between the two parables is illustrated not only in the stained glass of thirteenth-century cathedrals, but was already established in a woven dossal of the abbey of St. Albans as early as the first third of the twelfth century.[77]

In the Walters tapestry Adam is given the features of an old man, not only because he is to be reincarnated as the father of the parable, but primarily because he is the "old Adam"—*vetus Adam*—as opposed to the new Adam, who is Christ.[78] The Prodigal lends his semblance to Abel and the elder son reappears in the shape of Cain. On the other hand, in the last scene on the upper right of the tapestry, Christ clad as a king triumphant over death bears a physical similarity to the Prodigal—in fact He looks like the Prodigal but bearded (fig.20). Conversely, the Prodigal who "was dead and is come to life again" is to be considered as a "type" of Christ who, risen from the tomb, raises Adam and the forbears of Mankind from Hell (fig.15).

The Sin in the Garden of Eden (fig.12) parallels the Fall of the Prodigal in the garden of Venus on the first panel of the tapestry (fig.3). It initiates the pilgrimage of Mankind bound for Hell. In both, the Fountain and the Vices are present. The scene shows the moment when the eyes of Adam and Eve "were opened and they knew that they were naked" (Gen. III:7) and follows stage conventions[79] as well as allegorical interpretations. Near Eve *Culpa* (Sin) plays the part of *Luxuria*. She wears a dark blue dress and a rose turban. Adam is surrounded by a triad of Vices. At the foot of the Tree of Knowledge is *Superbia* (Pride) in a red dress and violet bonnet with a blue velvet veil. The others are *Avaricia* (Covetousness), in a violet dress with a rose head scarf, and *Gula* (Gluttony) in a green velvet cloak with a white collar and a changeable lavender turban. *Culpa* strips the garment of innocence (*Vestis innocentiae*) from Eve, the other three Vices snatch Adam's cloak of immortality (*Vestis immortalitatis*)[80]—the first *Vestis* being red as the roses of chastity, the second *Vestis* being blue as the vault of heaven. The garment of innocence and the cloak of immortality are the symbolical ingredients of the "first robe" of the Prodigal, as becomes evident in the last scene (upper right), where two angels bring forth to Adam the first robe of Mankind, a dress of red damask and a cloak of dark blue studded with golden embroidered stars. Next to Eve as she stands pertly by the Fountain of Life, Adam seems a hoary, wrinkled and flabby old man, in antithesis to the radiant New Son of Man, Christ, the *Novus Adam*.

In the various texts dealing with the drama of the Four Virtues, Daughters of God, the Sin is synthesized as *Culpa*.[81] In a treatise attributed to Hugh of Saint Victor (the Pseudo-Hugonian: *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, second quarter of the twelfth century) the Vices are conceived as a tree growing out of the figure of Pride (*Superbia*) and blossoming, after six knots of Deadly Sins, into the supreme fruit of Wantonness (*Luxuria*). Adam, grafted on *Luxuria*, shivers in his nakedness and crosses his arms over his chest at the summit of the tree—which bears, among other names, the one of *Vetus Homo* or *Vetus*

*Adam*.[82] When the theologians raised the question of the primary motivation of Adam's sin, the answer arrived at was that the cause was either his lust or his gluttony,[83] but most of all, his pride. Next to *Superbia* on the tapestry and, with her, snatching at the cloak of immortality of Adam, is *Avaricia* since, according to St. Gregory (*Moralia in Job*, XXVI,31), Pride and Covetousness bring forth all other evils. The designer of the tapestry seems to have had knowledge of the descriptions and representations of post-Carolingian and romanesque date which locate Pride at the root of the genealogical tree of Vices. The red skirt of Superbia coils around the base of the Tree of Knowledge as if to initiate the spiral of the snake culminating in a female head.[84] The primacy of Pride among the Deadly Sins is recognized by St. Thomas Aquinas (who, however, puts Pride on the same level as Covetousness, in accordance with Ecclesiastes X:9-10,14).[85]

We have to consider that in the scene depicted on the tapestry the Sins are systematized in two couples: two "spiritual" sins: Pride and Covetousness; and two "carnal" ones: Wantonness (*Culpa*) and Gluttony. We are induced, therefore, to trace the ultimate source of the artist to the aftermath of scholasticism, namely to writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, who were both more mystical and more social-minded than their predecessors. The classification of the Vices according to Roger Bacon differs from the order adopted first by St. Gregory and maintained (at least tentatively) by St. Thomas Aquinas. It reads: Covetousness, Pride, Wantonness and Gluttony, for the four on the list, as against the order: Pride, Covetousness, Wantonness and Anger, as in the heyday of scholasticism. Later on, Antoninus of Florence (d. 1459) and the preachers eager to scourge the appetite for riches manifested by the ascending bourgeoisie will insist in their own turn on the sin of Covetousness.[86] We may imagine that the wealthy patron who ordered the Brussels set of the Prodigal had lent ear to their admonitions and was ready to embark on a spell of self-punishment. However, the primacy of *Superbia* was supported in a work which exerted an enormous influence: the *Speculum Morale* of the pseudo-Vincent of Beauvais, written in the first decades of the fourteenth century.[87] It is in the *Speculum* that for the first time we remark that the Vices are likened to thieves attacking and wounding different parts of the body, a source of great interest not only for the *Pilgrimages* of Guillaume de Deguileville, but for the related scenes we have noted on the Louisville tapestry and on the two tapestries of New York. The same attitude in regard to the order of sins is adopted by Bonaventura in his *Commentary on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard, a work which considers the Vices as "pronitates respicientes conditiones boni apparentis"—as "promptings dealing with the production of what apparently seems good" (Liber II, Dist. XLII). What seems good for the inward satisfaction is Pride, for external display is Covetousness, for self-maintenance is Gluttony, for the maintenance of the species is Wantonness, and so on and so forth, the author shuttling constantly between the consideration of the false interior good and the false exterior good.

Thus the Louisville and Walters tapestries rank remarkably among the tapestries using the theme of the Seven Deadly Sins to the extent that in the exposure of the Vices they follow a dialectical order, not far from Bonaventura. The Prodigal, when he is about to leave his father, begins by looking at himself in a mirror, so that he commits the sin of *Superbia* (or *Vana Gloria*), from which, spiritually, the other Vices will derive. Then he indulges in a complacent display of treasure caskets and chests, which are the ordinary attributes of *Avaricia* in late medieval

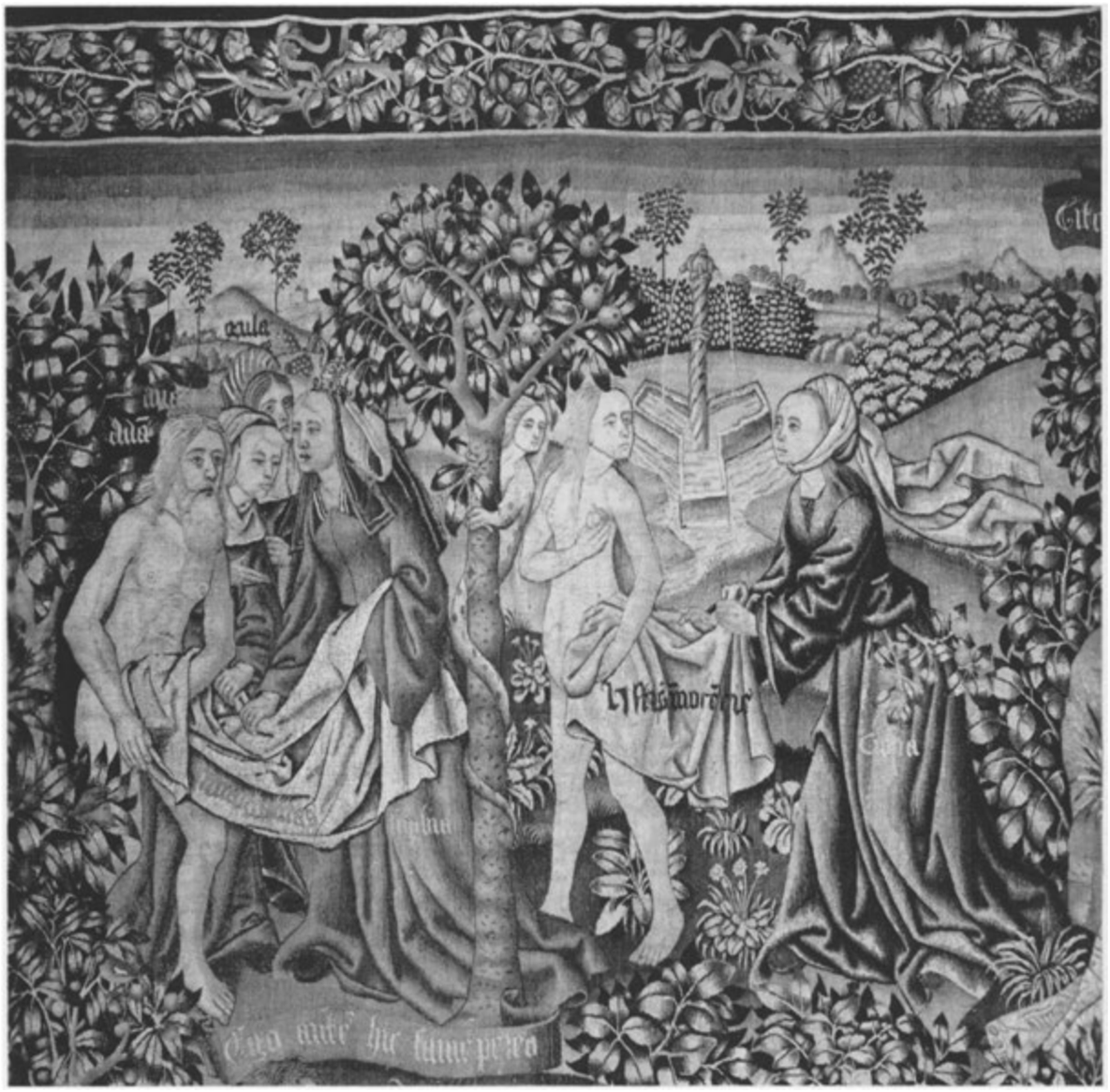

FIGURE 12 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*The Fall of Adam and Eve*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

English literature. The conjunction of *Superbia* and *Luxuria* is stressed and made effective by *Amor Sui*, who points the way to the alcove in the house of ill fame. In the final assault of the harlots, the Prodigal loses his cloak and dress, that is, his garments of innocence and immortality, according to the homily assimilating the Prodigal to Adam composed by Haymo of Halberstadt, whose metaphors seem to have been literally rendered in the scene of the Fall on the tapestry.

The Fountain of Life in Paradise exhibits an

FIGURE 13 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Hercules at the Crossroads*
*Woodcut from Brandt, "Stultifera Navis," Basle 1497*

unusual shape (fig.12). Instead of being drawn as a rotunda with four branches (or spouts) symbolical of the Four Rivers, it is designed like the letter Y—the Pythagorean letter which is at the base of allegorical compositions concerning *Liberum Arbitrium*, Freedom of Judgment. We must recall here that when the Prodigal claims from his father the portion of his substance, this "substance" means, according to the Fathers of the Church and to the exegetes, the faculty of Judgment, so inebriating that Man, in his desire to act all by himself, wildly embraces his liberty to the point of voluntarily segregating himself from his Creator. The knowledge of the esoteric meaning of the *littera pythagorica* was fairly wide-spread in the Middle Ages. Its pattern is imparted to literary and artistic compositions.[88] Its significance is essentially based on a quotation of Lactantius[89] which fits exactly the parable of the Prodigal, since the diverging of the two branches of the letter begins immediately after adolescence, the left branch pointing to the practice of Vices, the right one to the purpose of abiding with the Virtues (fig.13). We have already met the Prodigal at the crossroads on the Louisville tapestry, where he stands in the center of the two diverging ways of conduct represented on the one hand by *Obediencia* and *Castitas*, on the other by *Mundus* and *Luxuria*. It is to be noted that this scene and the one of the Fountain of Life are exactly symmetrical on the first and the second part of the set. As it pertains to the essence of symbolism to superimpose various layers of interpretation, all legitimate in their own right, it is possible that we are here concerned also with another connotation of the *littera pythagorica*. The Y could be considered as a hieroglyph of three types of life: the contemplative one, the active one, and the voluptuous one.[90] The elder son lives in the fields (as did Cain). His mind is not bent toward the deciphering of the Scriptures, but only to the tilling of the earth and material benefits. At least he represents the Jewish people which was entrusted with the deposit of the Law. His faith is not an enlightened one, but he is the Faithful. The younger son, the sensuous and riotous one, never lost Hope. It is under the guidance of this Virtue that he is, through the Grace of God, reinstated in the privileges of a beloved son. In the scene to the right of the Fountain of Life and the last one of the Walters tapestry (fig.20), two Virtues march at the sides of Christ: *Compassio* and *Misericordia*, who are a subdivision of Charity, either humanly considered (the compassion of the father for the Prodigal) or mystically transposed in the scheme of Redemption (*Misericordia* being equivalent to the Incarnation of God).[91] Thus we have now in the Fountain of Life an emblem of the three theological Virtues, or rather a symbol of their dialectical movement through the parable, as was stated by Zacharias Chrysopolitanus, the Premonstratensian monk

at St. Martin of Laon in the middle of the twelfth century. The Prodigal as Adam—as Mankind—is the "choice" of Charity which finally supersedes the Law of Justice rewarding actions, and thus saves forever what the "choice" of the free will indulging in a *vita voluptuaria* divorced from God had jeopardized at the beginning of the story of Man.

Adam, as a type of Christ, was created on Friday afternoon at the ninth hour and expelled on the same day of the week and at the same hour from Paradise.[92] He was banished through the gate of Repentance. Eve, the type of the Virgin as the "mother of all living" (Genesis III:20), left through the gate of Grace. Texts and illustrations materialize the image of the Fall. According to legendary traditions, including the Syriac book of the *Penitence of Adam*, they lived in a cave of Hebron, in the Valley of Tears; it was a long, low, narrow crevice cleft in the ragged rock. The garments which had fallen from them after the Sin were replaced by coats of skin made by God to cover them (Genesis III:21). The commentators concur in recognizing in those new garments the sign of mortality, as skins are flayed from the bodies of dead animals.[93] The inhabitants of the cave, which in the tapestry is dug as a pit exactly under the Garden of Eden, are all clad in tunics of hides: Adam, Eve, their elder son Cain with his twin sister Calmana, Abel and his twin sister, Delbora (fig.14). The scene follows—probably through the actuation of a Mystery play—the *Revelations* of Methodius the Younger, the Bishop of Patara, who died in 311:[94] "Be it known that Adam and Eve when they left the Paradise were virgins. But the third year after the expulsion from Eden they had Cain, their first born, and his sister Calmana; and after this next year, they had Abel and his sister Delbora. But in the three-hundredth year of Adam's life Cain slew his brother, and Adam and Eve wailed over him a hundred years" (Chapter III). In his *Historia Scholastica*, Petrus Comestor contributed to the fortune of this story by endorsing it, not without some mix-up in his computation of the birth dates.

The scale of colors in this part of the tapestry has become dim and subdued.[95] The robes with their dull monochromy give the key-note; earthen, buff and beige tones prevail, with some brilliant flashes here and there on the tunics. The one worn by Adam is of a light violet, lined and collared with rose; that of Eve is whitish and lined with red; those of Abel and Cain are yellowish with a bit of rose. Calmana wears a skin coat of lavender; Delbora a brown one. But two figures present a vivid contrast with the rest of the shadows strangely performing "in the region of the shadow of death." They are the allegorical characters whom we have met before in the scene of the Prodigal begging for employment: *Fames* (Hunger), recognizable thanks to her red turban, and *Penetencia* (Penitence), designated by an inscription, in a blue cloak over a rose and yellow damask dress with a lavender head scarf. *Fames* wears a red gown over a green kirtle highlighted in yellow. Both, erect at the gate of Hell—or Limbo—call attention to the ominous cry of despair uttered by the Prodigal: "Ego autem hic fame pereo"—"and I here perish with hunger," woven in gold on the red banderolle fluttering on top of the cave.[96]

Adam is leaning wearily on the usual implement for his task, the tilling of earth, to which he was condemned by God (Genesis III:17-19). With his free hand he gestures in supplication toward Hunger and Penitence. The iron of the spade glitters at his foot, casting a bluish reflection on the hand of Eve, who stoops to pick a spray of hemp—an allusion to her work of weaving; or perhaps we have here a confused reflection of the action of Eve in the *Queste del Saint Graal*, when, after her expulsion from

Eden, her first care was to plant a twig covered with fruit.[97] We are in the first stage of the Fall, when misery and toil, fear and death, maintain command. These grim conditions were embodied by allegorical figures in the Adam plays of the so-called "non-cycle Mysteries." Hunger especially is introduced here as a reference to the spiritual hunger of the Prodigal, that is of Adam or of Man. But we are concerned in this scene with a concentration of motives which, if partly inspired by stage conventions and their pattern of simultaneousness, derive essentially from sources both legendary and theological. The proud Cain is holding a basket filled with the fruits of the earth. He is the inhabitant of the fields, whose very name signifies "possession"—the peasant's covetousness. He is not depicted here as the fierce first murderer, but as the stubborn elder son of the parable, as a figure of the Jewish people dwelling not at home, with the father, but "in the field." The interpretation is that if the Jews did not go to the extreme of adoring idols—like the younger brother, whom the harlots "crowned with flowers"—nor forget the true God, they satisfied themselves with the exterior or terrestrial aspects of the Law, unable to proceed to the core of Life which is charity.[98] The *Liber Vitae*, the Book of Life, is proffered by Delbora, the twin sister of Abel, who is acting here as a priestess of Hope. We are told that in Paradise Adam was instructed in that book by Raphael; it escaped his hands after the Fall, but the pity of God restored it to him.[99]

As for the representation of Abel, he announces the shedding of blood and water by Christ on the Cross, the regeneration through the water and the Spirit (John II:5; XIX:34). He is shown filling up the iron head of an axe[100]—strangely used a chalice—with the water splashing from the rock. At his feet are animals symbolizing the two offshoots of *Superbia*, the self-love of Adam—his lust: the hare, and his gluttony: the wild cat.[101] Abel, whose name means "suffering" and "given to God," had his blood, as that of the first victim, linked to and contrasted with the blood of Christ (Hebrews XII:24). St. John Chrysostom associated him with John the Baptist.[102] St. Augustine, in his *De Civitate Dei*, XV, 1, writes that, while Cain was to found a city on earth after his crime, Abel remained until his untimely death, a "stranger and a pilgrim," looking forward (like ultimately the erring Prodigal) to the city of the Saints which is Heaven. The sacrifice offered by Abel, the firstlings of the flock and their fat, to which God had respect, and by Cain, the fruits of the earth, to which God did not have respect, (Genesis IV:3-5), find their mystical parallelism in the fatted calf of the parable, which represents Christ Crucified, and the kid, which the elder son complains was never given him by his father so he might make merry with his friends (Luke XV:29).[103]

Calmana, the twin sister of Cain, presses against her bosom a skull—the skull of Adam when he will be dead, as no attention is paid here to the unity of time or of space. Successive moments are blended in order to anticipate and illuminate the sequence of events. We are no more in the cave of Hebron, but—mystically—in the pit at the summit of Golgotha where the Cross is to be erected "at the expiration of five long days and a half," that is, five thousand and five hundred years after the death of Abel. "Golgotha" is the Syriac name for ὁ τόπος τοῦ κρανίου, "calvariae locus" or "Calvaria," the place of the skull, of St. Matthew XXVII:33. The Jewish tradition to the effect that the first man was buried on the very spot of the Cross of Christ, was admitted by Origen, St. Basil of Seleucia, and in a treatise attributed to Tertullian.[104] In one of his letters, Origen states that the sepulchre of Adam was located directly

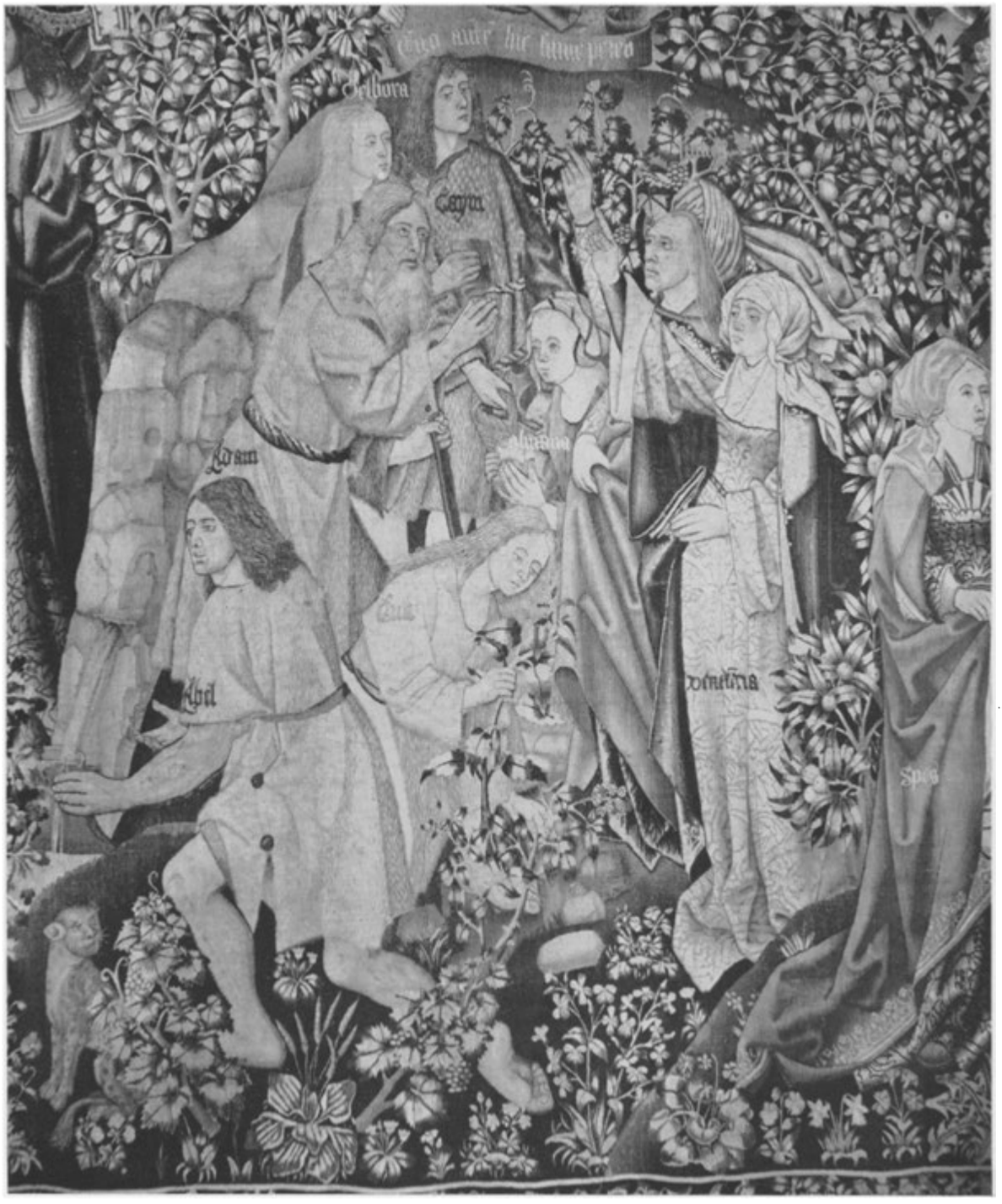

FIGURE 14

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*The Family of Adam in the Vale of Tears*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

under the Cross, so that he should be the first to be raised from the dead by Christ, and so that "where we all are buried with Adam, there also we should have our resurrection in Christ" (*Epist.*, LXXI,10). A further elaboration supposed that the Cross or Tree of Life grew from a mystical seed taken from Paradise and placed by Seth under the tongue of the dying Adam.[105] Current literature, such as the *Golden Legend* of Jacopo de Voragine, as well as encyclopedias like the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais, contributed to the popularity of the Legend of the Cross. There still is more to be said. The skeleton of Adam represents the members of Mankind which Christ will gather and bring back into Heaven, but his head is a symbol of the "Messiah who was to regenerate the world."[106] Faithful to his almost surrealist imagination, the inspirer of the tapestry evokes the Crucifixion through images fantastically assembled—the skull of Adam, the axe of Abel, the water spouting from the rock—all connoting the prophecy that God "will descend into the abode of death . . . after my blood has flowed upon thy head, O Adam, upon Golgotha."[107] In such a context, the link between the doctrine of the Redemption (or Reconciliation) and the parable of the Prodigal Son is not passed by. According to St. Jerome, to St. Epiphanius, and to St. Paula in her letter to Marcella, when the blood of Christ, the second Adam, dripping from the Cross, will have washed away the sin of the first Adam lying dead under it, then will be fulfilled the passage of St. Paul: "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephes. V:14). This quotation is found on medieval crosses representing the tomb of Adam or his skull under Christ Crucified.[108] St. Bruno refers it specifically to the very words of the Prodigal: "I will arise and go to my father" (Luke XV:18). There was a tradition received in the Mystery plays that after the Fall the Holy Ghost comforted Man in the name of Faith and of the Gospel (*i.e.*, the Book of Life held on the tapestry by Delbora).

> Take owte of the Gospell that yt the requyre,
> Fayth in Chryst Ihesu and grace shall ensewe . . .
> Gyve eare unto me, Man, . . .
> Thou shalt kyll the affectes that by lust in the reygne. . .[109]

If the Prodigal was assimilated to Abel, it was because "by faith Abel offered to God a sacrifice exceeding that of Cain . . . and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews XI:4).

In the next scene (fig.15), *Spes* (Hope) accompanies *Penetencia*, just as when the Prodigal had his tears wiped away by the Virtues. The "five days and a half" have elapsed. The background remains the rocks of the Vale of Tears and the figures stand against their neutral foil (the tops of the heads happen to be blended with it) in a way that, incidentally, recalls the manner in which Hugo van der Goes integrates figures into a landscape.[110] All, however, are clad in the garments of daily life and no longer in the hides prepared for the dwellers of the "region of the shadow of death." The light of Redemption, of which St. Matthew spoke, is dawning.[111] Adam and his posterity are emerging from the mouth of the cave, as, on the Cloisters tapestry, the Patriarchs step into it under the guidance of *Spes* and *Misericordia*, to unshackle the fetters of Mankind (fig.5).[112] On the Walters tapestry, *Spes*, in a red cloak over a two-toned blue damask gown and a pale blue bonnet, and *Penetencia*, in a changeable green and yellow dress with a head scarf of orange shadowed with red, are exhibiting to Adam and to the forbears an image of *Misericordia*, which signifies the Incarnation and Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. On the Cloisters tapestry the Nativity is depicted twice in connection with the Drama of the Four Virtues

FIGURE 15 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Adam and his Descendants Emerge from the Vale of Tears*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

and with the allegorical story of the Redemption of Man—first on a mirror which *Veritas* presents to *Humilitas* at the foot of the throne of God (fig. 16); secondly, as an Adoration of the Shepherds in a Van der Goes style, allegorized by the presence behind the Virgin of *Humilitas* and *Castitas* (fig. 18). Here, in our Walters tapestry, on the white cloth exhibited to Adam by *Spes* and *Penetencia*, *Misericordia* is crowned and she holds a lily.[113] She reminds one immediately of the figure on the emblematic piece of cloth proffered the Prodigal by the same characters in the typological scene on the left half of the tapestry (fig. 8). Now she wears a red dress instead of a blue one, in order to denote the imminence of the sacrifice of the Savior. *Miseri-*

FIGURE 16

NEW YORK, THE CLOISTERS

*The Virtues with the Image of the Nativity*
*(Detail of the "Nativity" Tapestry)*

*cordia*, being at the same time the Mercy of Psalm 84:11 (85:10) and also a figure of the Virgin, keeps the virginal white head-veil as she kneels before an enthroned King, who wears a green and yellow irridescent cloak over a red robe. The subject matter of this representation of Pity is taken from the story of Esther. Esther, petitioning for the salvation of her people, pleases the eyes of the king. The same scene is depicted in the background of the right side of the Mazarin Tapestry in the Widener Collection, where it balances the Sibyl showing the Virgin and Child to Augustus in the background on the left (fig. 11). On the "Parement du Cardinal de Bourbon," a French tapestry of about 1485 in the Cathedral of Sens, the story of Esther is the counterpart of the Coronation of Bathsheba by Solomon.[114] The meaning of the cloth—a "tapestry on tapestry"—with *Misericordia* in the parable of the Prodigal is made more explicit in the comments and illustrations of the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, for example in the miniatures accompanying Chapter XXXIX of a fourteenth-century Italian example, where the prayer of Esther for the salvation of her people is linked with the Virgin showing her breasts to her Son for the pardon of sinners.[115] The sin of Man is expounded in an identical manner on the New York "Redemption of Man" tapestry, where Virtues are arguing the case of a man represented on a piece of cloth—anew a "tapestry on tapestry"—in the process of drawing to his bed a naked woman (fig. 17).

On the Walters tapestry (fig. 15) Adam, Eve and their lineage lift up their hands in the same attitude of rapture as that of the Emperor Augustus and his retinue as they discover in the skies the apparition of the Virgin and Child, on another tapestry of the same workshop and date (fig. 19). Adam, adorned with the costume of the father of the parable, patterned with pome-

FIGURE 17 NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

*The Virtues Dispute the Lustful Man*
*(Detail of the Redemption of Man)*

granate designs,[116] is kneeling at the head of the group thirsting for redemption. His hands are open and quivering in surprise and supplication. Beside him Eve wears a blue velvet dress, the color of which equates her to the *Misericordia* shown to the Prodigal. She is transformed into an ecstatic *Virgo orans*.[117] Abel has a blue robe fastened by a belt, with a collar of yellow silk bearing a lattice and quatrefoil pattern in green and red. Behind him, and separated by an unspecified character, is Cain in a blue cloak over a violet doublet and a red hat, the same costume —only made slightly plainer—that the elder son wore in the scene of reconciliation with the father.[118] At the threshold of Limbo, as well as

FIGURE 18 NEW YORK, THE CLOISTERS

*The Nativity*
*(Detail of the "Nativity" tapestry)*

under the gable of his father's house, precedence is emphatically given to the younger son.

Two names in the otherwise anonymous crowd of kneeling forbears deserve comment. Above and between Adam and Eve one may discern, clad in a red doublet, the handsome figure of Seth. Seth, according to the *Little Genesis*, had inherited much of the loveliness of man before the Fall, and was instructed by the angels that the Messiah would come.[119] Born one hundred years after the murder of Abel and to replace him, he was begotten in the very likeness of Adam (Gen. V:3), which during the Middle Ages was interpreted as if Seth were a reproduction of the unfallen Adam of Paradise.[120] The children of Seth were termed the sons of God, just as the Christians are called Children of Christ.[121] His name was made to derive from the Greek θέσις, in Latin *positio* (placing or replacing), because Seth was "placed" or substituted for the slain Abel. Rabanus Maurus wrote: "Some people are of the opinion that Seth must be interpreted Resurrection of Christ, so that out of those two, Abel, who means *luctus* (bereavement) and his brother Seth, who means *Resurrectio*, we conjure up the figure of the death of Christ and of His life after He rose from the dead."[122] As for Japhet—the character on the tapestry clad in a green and yellow changeable cloak lined with rose damask and a blue-green hat faced with white—he is the third son, begotten by Noah when he was five hundred years old (Gen. V:32; VI:10) and the duplicate of Cain, as Seth was a substitute for Abel. "Japhet, whose name means *latitudo* (expansion) is the father of the Nations, while Sem, his elder brother, is he from whom the Patriarchs, the Prophets and the Apostles descend."[123] Rabanus Maurus, in writing this had in mind that the passage of Genesis IX:27, "May God enlarge Japhet and may he dwell in the tents of Sem," implied that the right of primogeniture was to be shifted in favor of the second son, who might be indifferently the son of Noah, or the Prodigal or the Church. In his exegesis Rabanus Maurus was closely following St. Jerome.[124]

FIGURE 19 PRIVATE COLLECTION

*The Tiburtine Sibyl*
*(after Demotte)*

The liberation of Adam was actually accomplished either at the ninth hour of Good Friday, the hour being the same as the time of day when Adam was created and also when he was ejected from Paradise—or at midnight on Easter Day, at the instant of the Resurrection, according to the Gospel of Nicodemus. The last scene on the top and at the extreme right of the tap-

estry is a transformation of the Harrowing of Hell in such a way as to make it fit into the context of the allegorized parable of the Prodigal (fig.20). "The King of Glory stretched out his right hand and took hold of our forfather Adam . . . come all with me as many as have died through the tree that he touched for, behold, I again raise you up through the tree of the Cross."[125] There are important departures from the usual Descent into Hell. The event happens in broad daylight, not in the illuminated cave. The figures still stand out against encompassing rocks, but instead of having the unreality of ghosts, as in the first episode after the Fall, or having some heads fused with the stone as in the previous scene, the silhouettes are here sharply outlined against the edge of the cave and technically isolated from it by "slits" in the weaving. The personages have fully emerged from their troglodithic slumber to meet a Christ conceived as the Pilgrim ending His pilgrimage on earth by restoring Mankind to its pristine destiny of immortality.[126] As in the poem of Guillaume de Deguileville, He is assisted and prompted by *Compassio* and *Misericordia*. The tree of the Cross through which He raises up Mankind, represented in Adam and the descendants of Adam, is the staff-cross, the "croix vermeille" of the Mystery plays. The confession of the Prodigal "I am no more worthy to be called thy son" is put this time in the mouth of Adam. Christ pronounces the royal pardon of the father: "Bring forth the prime robe." The Latin quotations from Luke XV:21 and 22 are woven in golden letters against red scrolls. It must be noted that again Adam wears the garment of the father of the Prodigal and has been given the same features, since the father of the Parable was interpreted as a symbolical figure of God, in order to recall that God "created Man to His own image." The prime robe, already given back in the previous scene below, would seem redundant, if it were not brought here by angels as the symmetrical counterpart of the *vestis immortalitatis* of Adam and of the *vestis innocentiae* of Eve, both stripped from Mankind after the Fall in the Garden of Eden and now mystically restored. We have already explained why the robe of the Prodigal is here divided into two parts: a cloak of dark blue embroidered with golden stars and presented by an angel clad in a yellow tunic shaded in red; and a garment of red damask folded on the left arm of an angel in a yellow and red damask cloak fastened by a morse over a pale blue tunic.

Christ clasping the hand of Adam, while *Misericordia* proffers the ring,[127] is clad in the Resurrection cloak of red velvet with jewelled orphreys and a morse made of a crystal. His damask robe is also red. His crown of precious stones is wrought in a floral design recalling the lily of pity.[128] It is closed and topped by a cross, and rests upon a blue cap from which hang *infulae* studded with pearls. *Compassio* wears a yellow and red damask cloak, lined with green and red irridescent silk, over a violet dress, and has a pale blue veil on her head. *Misericordia* has a blue dress and a red and orange changeable head scarf. The dress of Eve is violet, like that of *Compassio*. The pattern of colors, pale and wistful, is reminiscent of the paintings of Van der Weyden or of Quentin Metsys.

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Every detail of the scenes depicted on the Prodigal Son tapestry is imbued with exegetical comparisons and symbolism, inherited from the past. But the wonderful decorative concatenation which ties together the episodes and their allegorical interpretations—the trees, the bushes, the sprays of flowers which convert the background into a garden of paradise—all this floral outgrowth seems to be free from the rule of symbolism and to be there only in its own right of

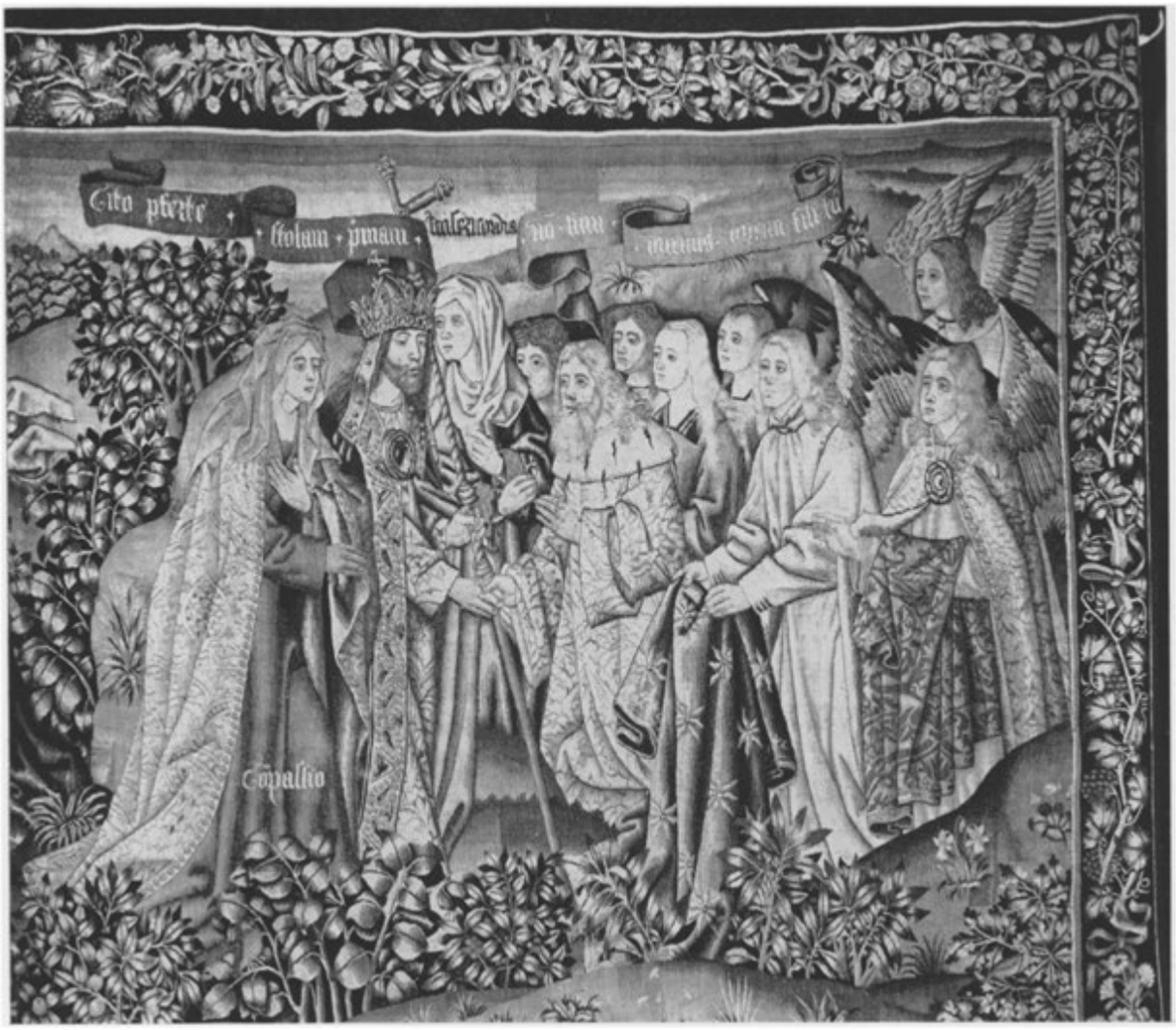

FIGURE 20 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*The Redemption of Adam*
*(Detail of the Prodigal Son, part II)*

happy, colorful exhuberance. The passage from the lower row of figures to the upper tier is articulated by means of the trees. Toward the top of the composition they become less tight and dense, so as to manage a quiet transition into the airy and expanding horizon. Saplings of oak, cherry, blue plum, medlar, and of pomegranate are conspicuous. The implications of immortality invested in the pomegranate have already been alluded to. In this connection, we may observe in passing that in the scene of the Temptation (fig. 25), the Tree of Life (on the left) is represented as a blossoming pomegranate, and the Tree of Knowledge—a "figure" of the Cross of Redemption—is laden with fruit. It may be added that cherries (on account of the symbolical significance of their red coloring) were also considered as the heavenly fruit brought by Jesus to Mankind.[129]

Among all the flowers interspersed in the

foreground, like a botanical predella, we might, by virtue of far-fetched symbolism, propose a specific intention in the introduction of the poppies (emblems of spiritual slumber or death) beneath the scroll inscribed with the "Pater peccavi" murmured by the Prodigal on his knees before his father—as if their drooping heads symbolized dissipation recoiling forever and sin humiliated under the sway of Grace (fig.16). Not far from the right corner, the spikes of the veronica (an emblem of the Passion) are encompassed by the folds of the robe of Adam, as he lifts his hands toward the vision of the Incarnation and death of Christ (fig.29). But that is all. When the weaver introduced the woad-dyer's weed (at the extreme right), he was following a fancy derived from the preoccupations of his craft.[130]

It would be fantastic to attempt to recognize in the location of the other flowers any scheme except one dictated by a love of ornament and by a delicate *horror vacui* which, at the same time, was a pretext for displaying ingenuous virtuosity in rendering the marvels of nature rich in color. No doubt the curiosity of late fifteenth-century artists was aroused by the medicinal, even the magical virtues of the plants, as well as by their shapes and their hues.[131] It would be, however, hard to deny a status of poetical innocence to the carnations, the pinks, the English daisies and the corn-marigold, the strawberries, dandelions, daffodils, elecampanes and soap-worts, the ox-eyed daisies, the violets, pansies, stocks and plantains, which concur to pry open the rigid symbolical frame of the Prodigal Son tapestry. Just such a gust of fresh air pervades the dry allegorical poetry of the fifteenth century. It wafts across the lines of even the abstruse poems of Guillaume de Deguileville. Is it not "Nature" who, in the *Pélerinage de vie humaine*, proudly asserts:

Oncques ne vesti Salomon
Tel robe com vest un buysson. (vv.1579-80)

The *chambres de verdure* imagined by the weavers of Tournai before the middle of the fifteenth century and the *menues verdures* or *mille-fleurs*, the *grandes verdures* imitated by the workshops of Brussels and of the Loire in France,[132] all bear witness to an identical aspiration on the part of the artists to slip away from concentration on the time-honored theological dictations.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] The Walters Art Gallery, *Twenty-first Annual Report of The Trustees to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore for the Year 1953* (Baltimore, 1954), p. 10. For illustration of the "Triumph of Christ" panel, Walters Art Gallery, *Handbook of the Collections* (Baltimore, 1936 and 1944), p. 84. It was formerly no. 82.15 and entered the Walters Art Gallery in 1921 from the Paris auction of the collection Engel-Gros. Before that it had been in the Chateau de Bazoches du Morvan (Nièvre).

The newly reconstituted tapestry has been rechristened by Mr. Rorimer "The Glorification of Charles VIII": see *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,* new series, XII (1953-54), pp. 281-299. It is now one of the foremost attractions at the Cloisters.

[2] Its area even exceeds that of the "Glorification of Charles VIII" at the Cloisters, which has the unusual length of 30 ft. 2½ in., but is only 11 ft. 1 in. in height. The tapestries of the Julius Caesar series in the Historical Museum of Berne (usually considered to be of exceptional magnitude) measure only 20 ft. 8 in. to 23 ft. 5½ in. in length by 13 ft. 5½ in. in height (6.30m. to 7.15m. by 4.10m).

[3] J. J. Rorimer, *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,* XXXIII (1938), no. 5, sect. II, p. 19, fig. 15; *Idem, The Cloisters* (New York, 1944), pp. 99-101; W. H. Forsyth, *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,* XXXIII (1938), pp. 148-152, figs. 1-3.

[4] See D. T. B. Wood, *Tapestries of "The Seven Deadly Sins"* in *Burlington Magazine,* XX (1911-12), I, pp. 210-222; II, pp. 277-289. Two panels of the "Raising of Lazarus" are recorded: a) Collection Erlanger, 1880, b) Collection Marques of Anglesea, 1912; *vide* Wood, pt. I, pl. II, 4. The "Ascension and Glorification of Christ": Collection of the Baron de Zuylen de Nyevelt de Haar; *vide* Wood, pt. I, pl. III, 7. Of the "Last Judgment" three examples are recorded: The Louvre, the Vatican, and Schutz Collection, Paris, 1912; *vide* Wood, pt. I, pl. III, 8.

[5] Seven scenes of the Prodigal from a Tournai tapestry are preserved in the J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, in addition to the Brussels panel to be discussed here. Tapestries of this subject are mentioned in inventories in the monastery of Michelsberg, near Bamberg, in 1483, and in Selestat, Alsace, in 1487. Variants still exist in the Cathedrals of Burgos and Palencia, Spain.

[6] W. G. Thompson, *A History of Tapestry* (London, 1906), pp. 265-268, 269, 272, 276. *Cf.* p. 256 for the inventory of Cardinal Wolsey (seven panels of the Prodigal Son) and p. 288 for the inventory of the tapestries of James V, King of Scotland: "the story of the tint barne" (Prodigal Son). In these inventories the panels are referred to as "peces."

[7] H. Holstein, *Das Drama vom verlorenen Sohn* (1880); Spengler, *Der verlorene Sohn in Drama des XVI Jahrhunderts* (1888); Johannes Bolte (ed.), Georgius Macropedius, *Rebelles und Aluta* in *Lateinische Litteraturdenkmäler des XV und XVI Jahrhunderts,* XIII (Berlin, 1896); for the Latin version of the parable written by Macropedius (Langheveldt), see note 52; A. Schweckendick, in *Theatergeschichtliche Forschungen v. B. Litzmann,* XL (Leipzig, 1930).

[8] Jules Guiffrey, *Les Tapisseries du XII^e à la fin du XVI^e siècle* (Paris, n.d.), p. 74, fig. 40, p. 76.

[9] Helen Comstock, *The Satterwhite Collection of Gothic and Renaissance Art* in *The Connoisseur,* CXXVIII (1951), pp. 132-136.

[10] *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts,* XXVII (1938), pp. 26-30. A complete set from the same cartoons exists in the Cathedral of Vigevano: Mercedes Viale, *Arazzi fiaminghi del duomo di Vigevano* in *Bolletino della Società piemontese di archeologia e di belle arti,* N.S., IV-V (1950-51), pp. 137ff., figs. 1-3. An analogous tapestry of the first part of the parable of the Prodigal Son was exhibited in the Winnipeg Art Gallery, *Exhibition of the High Art of Tapestry Weaving* (Oct.-Nov., 1954), no. 12; it belongs to Duveen Brothers, New York.

[11] J. Destrée, *Tapisseries et sculptures Bruxelloises à l'exposition d'art ancien Bruxellois* (Brussels, 1906), pl. VII, pp. 8-9, 21-22.

[12] Succession Lowengard, *Catalogue des tapisseries,* Galerie Georges Petit (vente du 10 Juin, Paris, 1910), nos. 10, 11.

[13] A description was given (with some errors in the deciphering of the inscriptions) by J. Destrée, *op. cit.,* pp. 21-22, and repeated by H. Göbel, *Wandteppiche* . . . (Leipzig, 1923), Teil I, Bd. 1, p. 126. The best interpretation so far proposed is that of Helen Comstock in *Connoisseur, op. cit.*

[14] The allegorical dispute between the Virtues and the Vices is dramatized on the tapestries of the late Middle Ages, just as was the *Psychomachia* in romanesque art. As early as 1385, a set depicting their conflict had been woven by Jean Cosset of Arras for the Duke of Burgundy. The subject becomes so widely spread in the fifteenth century that J. Destrée has coined the personality of "The Master of the Virtues and Vices," active *ca.* 1490, who is identical with the designer of the "Seven Deadly Sins" tapestries discussed by D. T. B. Wood, *op. cit.* See J. Destrée, A. J. Kymeulen, A. Hannotiau, *Les Musées Royaux du Parc du Cinquantenaire et de la Porte du Hal à Bruxelles* . . . (Brussels, n.d.), vol. II, livr. XXVI. *Cf.* the discussion of the works attributed to this master in J. J. Marquet de Vasselot, *Catalogue raisonné de la collection Martin le Roy* (Paris, 1908), fasc. 4. *Cf.* also Hermann Schmitz, *Bildteppiche: Geschichte der Gobelinwirkerei* (Berlin, 1919).

[15] The custom of introducing allegorical characters as competitors in the story is evidently to be traced back to the drama: A. Jeanroy and H. Teulié, *Mystères provençaux du quinzième siècle* (Toulouse, 1893); E. Müntz, *Tapisseries allégoriques inédites ou peu connues* . . . in *Fondation Eugène Piot, Monuments et mémoires,* IX (1902), pp. 95 ff. Certain allegorical poems might even have been written with a view to being woven on the looms, as the two "tapestry poems" of John Lydgate (1370-1450), *The Life of St. George* and *The Falls of Seven Princes* (ed. E. P. Hammond, E. S. XLIII, 1910-1911, pp. 10-26); see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Michigan State College Press, 1952), p. 412, n. 107. The drama of the *Les Sept Vertus et les Sept Péchés mortels* was performed at Tours in 1390. In the Louisville tapestry, *Mundus* plays the same part as does *Natura* in the New York tapestries once in the Cathedral of Burgos (fig. 2, 4). In the Morality plays *Le Monde* is a key figure in ushering the Vices to Mankind. The prototype seems to be *The Castell of Perseverance* (*ca.* 1440-1450), where *Stultitia* (like *Cecitas Mentis* or Blindness of Mind in the first panel of the Prodigal Son set at Louisville), *Voluptas* (Wantonness) and *Detractio* (Slander) are agents between Mankind and the Deadly Sins introduced by *Avaritia.*

[16] On the relation of the Fountain of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, see Phyllis Ackerman, *The Rockefeller McCormick Tapestries, Three Early Sixteenth-century Tapestries with a Discussion of the History of the Tree of Life* (New York, 1932), p. 29. On the popularity of the Fountain of Youth in tapestries, see *idem, Tapestry the Mirror of Civilization* (New York, 1933), pp. 59, 319 ff. Compare the Fountain of Venus and the Fountain of Paradise in the "Credo" tapestry of the Fernand Schutz Collection, Paris, in *Burlington Magazine,* LXXIV (1913-14), pl. IV, op. p. 315.

[17] Lechery carries a symbolical rooster in the *Bilderhandschrift* 438 of Heidelberg (*ca.* 1400), fols. 95*vo* ff.; *cf.* Johannes Geffcken, *Der Bildercatechismus des Fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts* . . . (Leipzig, 1855), Beilage I. A cock may be the emblem of Wrath (or Discord) as in the marriage procession of the Seven Daughters of Sin in the *Mirour de l'omme* of John Gower (1330-1408).

[18] The "murk image" of sin or of the first Adam arises from love towards oneself in *The Scale of Perfection* of W. Hilton (d. 1396). The *"Chastiau bordel"* (or brothel) was a hackneyed theme in the Pilgrimage poems since the *Songe d'Enfer* of Raoul de Houdenc, who was writing at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

[19] This scene is a development of the stained glass window of the Prodigal Son in the Cathedral of Sens (beginning of the thirteenth century), which has the caption: "Hic coronatur a meretricibus." Our example, however, has lost the connotation of idolatry which the scene possessed in accordance with earlier exegesis and in the iconography of this parable during the high gothic period.

[20] Wrath rides a camel in the *Lumen Animae* of the Viennese Carmelite, Matthias Farinator, written about 1425. Farinator interprets the Bestiaries in terms of the messengers of I Sam. XIX:14 ff. and Esther I:10; II:1 ff. *Cf.* the Titulus 75 of his *Lumen Animae: "De Septem Apparatoribus"* (i.e. Vices). The text of Farinator, who is the only source for the camel of the Louisville tapestry (as well as for the antelope or "oryx" of the Walters tapestry), is given by Otto Zöckler, *Das Lehrstück von den sieben Hauptsünden* (Munich, 1893).

[21] These mansions, distributed along the stage, like the sequence of episodes in a set of tapestries, were called *estals, mansions* or *lieux* in the French texts. As a striking example of the similarity between the spatial conception and enframing of scenes in the tapestries (and especially the tapestries of Tournai) and the conventions of stage setting, we may cite a miniature illustrating *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame:* Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 374, fol. 99; *cf.* L. Dubech, J. de Montbrial, M. Horn-Monval, *Histoire générale illustrée du théâtre* (Paris, 1931), vol. II, p. 44. *Cf.* the remarks of F. H. Taylor on the theatrical layout of fifteenth-century tapestries: *A Piece of Arras of the Judgment* in *Worcester Art Museum Annual,* I (1935-36), pp. 1-15.

[22] Jean de Bruxelles—or Jan van Roome—is unmistakably designated as the painter of the project of the "Judgment of Herkinbald" tapestry (1513) in the Musées du Cinquantenaire, Brussels, for which a master Philippe is recorded as the cartoonist and a master Léon as the master-weaver: E. Van Even, *Louvain Monumental* (Louvain, 1860), p. 181, nn. 2, 3, 4. It seems that Jan van Roome should be entitled to credit for the invention of tapestries given until some twenty years ago to a so-called Maître Philippe—a name which actually covers not one personality but two artists by that name, the first one the cartoonist of the Herkinbald tapestry, the second the master-weaver or head of the workshop which executed tapestries so different in design as the series of the "Seven Deadly Sins" (or allegorical history of Christianity) on one hand, and, on the other hand, the "Life of the Virgin" in the Royal Collection at Madrid or the Mazarin Tapestry in the Widener Collection, National Gallery, Washington (fig. 11). See P. Ackerman, *The Final Solution of Maître Philippe* in *Apollo,* XIV (1931),

pp. 83-87; Marthe Crick-Kuntziger, *Maître Knoest et les tapisseries signées des Musées royaux du Cinquantenaire* (Liège, 1927); F. H. Taylor, *op. cit.,* pp. 8 ff.

23 Compare the two saucy boys or pages engaged in chatter at the left of the scene showing the Prodigal taking his inheritance (fig. 3) with a group of three boys at the foot of Ahasuerus in the tapestry of the "Glorification of Charles VIII" in the Cloisters, or similar groups in the "Triumph of Christ" of Brussels and the Mazarin Tapestry in the Widener Collection (fig. 11): J. Destrée, *Tapisseries et sculptures Bruxelloises . . .,* pls. IV, V; Destrée, Kymeulen and Hannotiau, *Les Musées royaux . . . à Bruxelles,* livr. XXVI.

24 And to those of the Brussels tapestry, "Episodes de l'Histoire de David," ascribed to Jan van Roome by J. Destrée, Kymeulen and Hannotiau: *Les Musées royaux . . . à Bruxelles,* livr. XIX. This tapestry, in its turn, is very close to the "Triumph of Christ" mentioned in the preceding note, which presents the motive of the little pages as in the first part of the Prodigal set in Louisville.

25 The technique of tapestries enriched with gold was employed as early as the end of the eleventh century. Compare the description of a tapestry in a princely apartment given by Baudri de Bourgueil, in a Latin poem dedicated to the daughter of William the Conqueror:

*Aurea* precedunt, *argentea* fila sequuntur
Tercia fila quidem *serica* semper erant vv. 211-212

quoted by E. Müntz, *La Tapisserie* (Paris, n.d. [1882]), p. 90. Compare also the inventory drawn up in 1420 of the hangings in the storerooms of the palace of Philip the Good at Dijon: *ibid.,* English edit. (1885), pp. 135-138.

26 J. Destrée and P. van Den Ven, *Les Tapisseries* (Musées royaux du Cinquantenaire); *cf.* J. J. Marquet de Vasselot, *Catalogue Martin le Roy, op. cit., Tapisseries et broderies* (Paris, 1908); J. Destrée, *Tapisseries et sculptures . . ., op. cit.,* p. 9; D. T. B. Wood, *op. cit.* in *Burlington Magazine,* XX (1911-12).

27 In the productions of the Brussels weavers two groups have been distinguished: A group including the "Story of the Virgin" in the Royal Collection of Madrid, the Mazarin Tapestry in Washington (fig. 11), the enigmatical tapestries of Baron Hunolstein [these last signalled by E. Müntz, in *Fondation Piot, Monuments et mémoires,* IX (1902), pp. 101-102, pls. VII, VIII]; and a second group comprising various tapestries (including the sets of the "Seven Deadly Sins" and the "Prodigal Son"). Concerning the latter group, it is far from clear whether we have to deal with Jan van Roome or with a rather less eclectic Master of the Combat of the Virtues and the Vices. In order not to confuse the issue further, let it be simply pointed out that the first group presents us with a mellow painterly style and a serene mood, while the others are more monumental and hold to the wall. Furthermore, exchanges between the two groups may be noted. For instance, the design of the "Triumph of Christ" in Brussels [*Catalogue des tapisseries faisant partie de la collection de Somzée* (Brussels 1901), pl. XX; J. Destrée in *Bulletin des Musées royaux des arts decoratifs et industriels* (Oct., 1905), fig. p. 2; Destrée, Kymeulen and Hannotiau, *op. cit.,* livr. XXVI] or of the central part of the Cloisters' "Glorification of Charles VIII"—both of which belong to Group II—is also to be found in the Mazarin Tapestry (fig. 11), which is in Group I. On the other hand, the Prophets seated at the right and left corners—a characteristic feature of the Master of the Combat of the Virtues and Vices (for example, in the "Coronation of the Virgin" formerly in the de Somzée Collection, the "Passion" in the G. Petit catalogue, Paris, May 25, 1892, the New York tapestries of figures 2 and 4, which are of Group II)—are also integrated into a few episodes of the "Life of the Virgin" in the Spanish Royal Collections, which belong to Group I. In the case of the Prodigal Son set, the layout does not depend on polyptychs, as in the case of the first group. For the construction of our set two devices were used, either the simultaneous display of backdrops with their pavilions and mansions—as in stage sets—or the *verdures* and *parterres* of *mille-fleurs* of Tournai ascendency transformed into bowers of foliage.

It seems that one of the first adaptations of a triptych composition in a tapestry is used in the "Vierge Glorieuse" of 1486 in the Louvre. There, the triptych scheme is derived from woodcuts illustrating the block-books of the *Biblia Pauperum,* themselves influenced by painting on panels and on glass: *cf.* the xylographies of the Wolfenbüttel *Biblia Pauperum,* edited by W. L. Schreiber and Paul Heitz (Strassburg, 1903), which are dateable 1475-80. The iconographical study of the Prodigal Son tapestry presented in the course of this article will show that its exegetical pattern follows tradition closely and owes little to the far-fetched similitudes ushered in during the late Middle Ages by the *Biblia Pauperum* or the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis.* Composition, spiritual content, details of costume, combine to locate its conception—if not its actual execution—at about 1485 at the earliest. It compares at its best with the earliest productions of the master of Group II of the tapestries, for which J. Destrée (*Les Musées royaux . . . de Bruxelles,* tome II, livr. XXVI) suggests 1490 or even earlier. The date of 1520 given by H. Göbel in *Wandteppiche,* Teil I, Bd. II, no. 118, to the "Coronation of the Virgin" formerly in the Collection de Somzée is obviously beside the point.

28 The symbolism of the key, turned upwards to unlock, downward to bolt, is found in the fresco of the Crucifixion attributed to Giovanni da Modena in the Church of S. Pietro, Bologna, where arms issue forth from the top and bottom of the Cross, respectively, to open the lock of Paradise and to rivet the gate of Hell. The only literary source where Temptation is made into a character is the *Mirour de l'omme* by John Gower (1330-1408). Elsewhere when we have to deal with temptations, they are concepts and not personalities.

29 In the *Pélerinage de vie humaine* of Guillaume de Deguileville, Gluttony seizes the Pilgram by the throat, vv. 10,507 ff. (ed. Stürzinger, printed for the Roxburghe Club, no. 124, London, 1893), p. 326.

30 Compare the motive of the bridge and rippling brook with daffodils and iris, as found in other tapestries akin in style and allegorical content to the Louisville tapestry: the "Redemption of Man" of the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 21), the fragment of a Brussels tapestry representing Emperor Augustus and the Sibyl (fig. 19) and the "Adoration of the Magi": Göbel *Wandteppiche,* I, pt. 2, pl. 126.

31 Allegorical figures, repetitious as they are in the Mystery plays and in the tapestries inspired by them, are used to convey nuances in psychology. The first intimations of remorse sting the Prodigal with the bite of necessity. "And he began to be in want." Then he came to himself or "returned to himself," as the Rheims Vulgate phrases it, and we have the scene with the herd in the fields. The determination to "arise and go to my father" will be taken when the first stages of dejection and self-pity are overcome. On those successive impulses of contrition and the resulting partition of the episodes in medieval stained glass windows depicting the parable, see A. Cahier and C. Martin, *Monographie de la Cathédrale de Bourges,* Pt. I, *Vitraux du XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1841-44), Text, ch. IV, pp. 178-188.

32 The painter's cap being an allusion to a profession, the figure may have the function of a self portrait. Represented as it is, detached from any interest in the action, it should be taken as the signature of the designer of the tapestry. The man on the Walters tapestry, proudly unconcerned and self-asserting, is not a neutral observer, but bears a striking similarity to a comparable figure in the central part of the "Glorification of Charles VIII" in the Cloisters. J. J. Rorimer identifies the latter one with Jan van Roome himself; see Rorimer in *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,* N.S. XII (1954), pp. 295-299.

33 We have here probably the first appearance in art of a motive due to become a favorite in the still-life painting of the seventeenth century in Holland.

FIGURE 21 NEW YORK, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

*The Redemption of Man (detail)*

[34] It should be noted that in the upper row of the tapestry the artist employs a scale of colors somewhat toned down, as if by the atmosphere, so as to impart an effect of recession and to suggest a more subdued mood.

[35] Adam vit l'arbre delictable,
Plaisant lui fut et agréable
Dont tantost la main y tendi
(A. Gréban, *Mystère de la Passion,* 1452, vv. 34,340/2)

[36] "A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise," Psalm 50:19 (51:17).

[37] Compare the same device of alternating blue and white fringes to give a vibration to the horizon line on tapestry no. 12 in the Lowengard sale (see note 12 above) entitled "Composition tirée d'un roman," where the landscape of towers and gables interspersed with thin clusters of trees looks like the top of the Walters tapestry—however, somewhat more coarsely rendered.

[38] On the representation of *Maria Aeterna* in the central panel of the Isenheim polyptych by Grünewald, *cf.* H. Koegler, *Zu Grünewalds Isenheimer Altar, Erklärung des Doppelbildes der Madonna und des Engelskonzertes,* in *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft,* XXX (1907), pp. 314 ff.

[39] It is due to negligence on the part of the weaver that *Penetencia* is repeated twice: to the left of *Spes* and to the right of the Prodigal. The second *Penetencia,* associated with the emblem of Mary which she presents on a piece of cloth like the coat-of-arms of Pity, should be *Misericordia,* the same as the figure in blue standing near Christ in the last scene of the tapestry (fig. 20).

[40] The house is almost identical with the Temple of Jerusalem on the "Adoration of the Magi" tapestry (Göbel, *op. cit.,* I, pt. 2, pl. 126) and it resembles the house in which Jesus appears to His disciples after His death (John XX:19) in the xylography of the Wolfenbüttel *Biblia Pauperum,* which links this event with the return of the Prodigal to his father: ed. W. L. Schreiber and Paul Heitz, *op. cit.,* fol. 42 (fig. 22).

[41] On the "basse lisse" tapestry in the church of St. Sebaldus in Nuremberg (1447-1484), the father stretches out his arms from the top of his house, to denote that he was willing to meet his son when he was still a great way off: Betty Kurth, *Die deutschen Bildteppiche des Mittelalters* (Vienna, 1926), vol. III, pls. 295-6; vol. I, pp. 269-170 (fig. 24).

[42] A detail is omitted here, as the father also orders shoes to be put on the feet of the Prodigal. On the stained glass of Bourges, as on the tapestry of St. Sebaldus of Nuremberg, the Prodigal is represented barefoot in the scene of the reconciliation with his father (figs. 10, 26). Byzantine iconography stresses the giving of the shoes no less than the investing of the best robe and of the ring (*cf.* Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Gr. 74, fol. 143, eleventh century: H. Omont, *Évangiles avec peintures byzantines du XI^e siècle,* Paris, n.d. pl. 125). It inspired Byzantino-German illustrations of the early thirteenth century, for example the Evangeliary of Goslar: Adolph Goldschmidt, *Das Evangeliar im Rathaus zu Goslar* (Berlin, 1910), pl. 9. In the Goslar Evangeliary a scroll issuing from


FIGURE 22 PARIS, BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE

*Biblia Pauperum from Wolfenbüttel*
*(After Schreiber)*

the hand of the father quotes the entire passage from St. Luke: "Cito proferte stolam primam et induite et date anulum in manum eius et calceamenta in pedes eius . . ." The *Bible Moralisée* depicts the Prodigal as already dressed and shod, while his father puts the ring on his finger, and the text interprets the "stola prima" as "innocentia baptismalis," the "anulus" as "fides," and the "calceamenta" as "doctrina bona sumpta de exemplis sanctorum." Accordingly, in Harley Ms. 1527 of the British Museum, a baptism and a sermon delivered by a Dominican friar are represented: de Laborde, *La Bible Moralisée conservée à Oxford, Paris et Londres* (Paris, 1911-27), vol. III, pl. 506. The interpretation of the *Bible Moralisée* follows St. Ambrose: "calceamentum autem Evangelii praedicatio est": *In Lucam Libri VII,* in *Patr. Lat.,* XV, col. 1846-54. *Cf.* Haymo of Halberstadt: "Calceamenta autem in pedes officium evangelizandi denuntiant": *Homiliae de tempore XLI: Sabbato post Reminiscere,* in *Patr. Lat.,* CXVIII, 247-53. The Walters tapestry, although it presses the parallelism between the two Testaments in a purely medieval exegetical manner, shows some indifference toward emphasizing allegorical features which would refer to the church as an institution set above the believers; by such a restraint at least it anticipates the Protestant interpretation of the parable, where only the sinner as an individual and the Grace of God are left face to face. Rembrandt, attentive to the spiritual values of vulgar objects, omits the ring but retains the shoes and gives them prominence in his etching of the Prodigal Son (1636).

[43] Since the elder son is a figure allegorical of greediness or avarice likened by the commentators to the Jews and to Cain (according to Petrus Comestor, Cain means "possessio," "ut avaritiae consuleret suae primus terram incoluit": *Historia Scholastica, Liber Genesis,* in *Patr. Lat.,* CXCVIII, 1076), it is of some interest to note that on a tapestry of the "Triumph of Christ" by the anonymous Master of the Combat of the Virtues and the Vices, *Avaricia,* riding an oryx, is holding a similar pitchfork, "as an allusion to the peasants who leave nothing for the poor gleaners to pick up": J. Destrée, *Tapisseries et sculptures . . . ,* pl. VIII, p. 22.

[44] The teaching of the Church Fathers is summed up in this manner by the *Bible Moralisée,* in the commentary upon verses 25-28 of the parable: "Quod pater rogavit filium ut intraret, significat quod in fine mundi convertet Dominus Judaeos ad fidem" (fig. 23). *Cf.* the texts brought together and brilliantly digested by Cahier and Martin, *Monographie de la Cathédrale de Bourges, op. cit.,* I, ch. IV, pp. 178-188. This exegesis is reflected in the *Pélerinage Jhesucrist* of Guillaume de Deguileville, and also in a precious Italian Morality play of the Prodigal Son, where the elder son answers the father in a benevolent way,

Volo nelle mie bracchia anch' io tenere
Ch'un grande amor non si ferma alle mosse.

The *Figliuol Prodigo* of Castellano Castellani was played at about the time of our tapestry and was printed in Florence at the beginning of the sixteenth century: A. d'Ancona, *Sacre*

*rapprezentazioni dei secoli XIV, XV e XVI* (Florence, 1872), vol. I, pp. 357-389, esp. pp. 384f. The reconciliation of the two sons as symbolical of the reconciliation of the Jews and the Nations is discussed on pp. 29ff. above.

45 Since antiquity the pomegranate—which tops the capitals of the two bronze pillars of the Temple of Solomon [Liber III Regum (I Kings) VII:18; IV Regum (II Kings) XXV:17] —has connoted an implication of immortality: K. Schefold, *Pompejanische Malerei, Sinn und Ideengeschichte* (Basle, 1952); H. S. Jacob, *Idealism and Realism, a Study of Sepulchral Symbolism* (Leiden, 1954); *cf.* H. Friedmann, *The Symbolic Goldfinch,* Bollingen Series VII (Washington, 1946), p. 33. The pomegranate entails also an idea of fecundity and riches. It adorns the cloak of the Prodigal on the tapestry in Louisville. The surcoat of the father on the Walters tapestry recalls the chasubles of velvet brocaded in gold which were produced in Spain at the time.

46 "Venire ad Patrem, est in Ecclesia constitui per fidem": Haymo of Halberstadt, *op. cit.*

47 All subsequent expositions repeat these authors with some variants: Eusebius Vercellensis (*Patr. Lat.,* XII, 593), Haymo of Halberstadt (*Patr. Lat., op. cit.*), the abbot of Monte Cassino, St. Bruno (*Patr. Lat.,* CLXV, 414-420), St. Peter Chrysologus (*Sermones I-V, Patr. Lat.* LI), Zacharias Chrysopolitanus (*Patr. Lat.* CLXXXVI, 305-310). Even more readily at hand were W. Strabo, *Glosa ordinaria (in Lucam XV)* and Hugo of St. Victor, *Alleg. in Nov. Testament, lib.* IV, cap. XXII.

48 On the connection between death and resurrection in baptism and the symbolism of this sacrament, *cf.* texts quoted by R. Krautheimer in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* V (1942), pp. 20-33 and esp. 26 ff.

49 In contrast, the Fathers of the Greek Church—followed in Byzantine iconography—retain the moral aspect and the directly human suggestions of the parable, an approach which in the west of Europe was ignored until the Renaissance and Reformation.

50 According to Jean Chartier, *Histoire de Charles VII,* when the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, made his entry into Ghent in 1458, the mime of the Progidal Son was performed. A stage representation can even be traced back to as early as 1420 at Dendermonde in Flanders: Te Winkel, *Ontwikkelingsgang,* I (1908), p. 195.

51 Hope Traver, *The Four Daughters of God* (Philadelphia, 1907); Samuel C. Chew, *The Virtues Reconciled* (Toronto, 1947).

52 The Morality *Bien avisé, mal avisé* was performed at Rennes as early as 1439: L. Petit de Julleville, *Histoire du théâtre en France: Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au moyen âge* (Paris, 1886), p. 329; but it is not likely that it dates to 1396, as asserted in *Histoire litteraire de la France,* XXIV (Paris, 1862), p. 453 (*cf.* Petit de Julleville, *op. cit.,* p. 40). *L'Homme juste et l'homme mondain,* by Bougoin, a varlet of Louis XII, and *L'Homme pécheur* (played at Tours before 1494) follow more or less the same pattern of abstract plot and allegorical figures. But *L'Enfant prodigue* played at Laval in 1504 shifts back to the scurrilous realism of Courtois d'Arras while heralding the strictly moral interpretations of the drama of the Prodigal during the sixteenth century. On these three Moralities, see Petit de Julleville, *op. cit.,* pp. 67-69, 72-73, 57-60. Macropedius (Langheveldt) cast the theme into a rewording redolent of Plautus in his *Asotus,* performed *ca.* 1510 and edited in Cologne in 1537 under the title *Asotus Evangelicus* (also published in a French translation in Antwerp, 1564, entitled *L'Histoire de l'enfant prodigue*). The *Acolastus* of Guglielmus Fullonius, played at The Hague in 1529, is closer to Terence and at the same time to the exegetical tradition of the Middle Ages. Fullonius assimilates the departure of the Prodigal from the house to the rebellion of man against God, the pardon of the father to the Pity of God, the reintegration of the Prodigal to the salvation of Man "per Spiritus charismata." See his peroration in P. L. Carver, *The Comedy of Acolastus, translated from the Latin of Fullonius by John Palsgrave,* E.E.T.S. Orig. Ser. 202 (London, 1937), pp. 179-182. (The translation was composed by Palsgrave in 1540.)

FIGURE 23 LONDON, BRITISH MUSEUM

*Bible Moralisée: Luke XV:25-28 and Commentary*
*(Harley Ms. 1527, fol. 36vo)*
*(after de Laborde)*

53 The subject of the conflict of the Vices and Virtues makes a simultaneous appearance in the theatre and in the weavers' workshop. *Les Sept Vertus et les Sept Péchés mortels* were performed at Tours in 1390 (Petit de Julleville, *op. cit.,* p. 324). A set of tapestries fashioning the drama of the "Seven Deadly Sins" is mentioned in the inventory of Philip the Bold which was drawn up after his murder in 1404: A. Pinchart, *Tapisseries flamandes* (Paris, 1878), p. 15. They were woven by Jean Cosset of Arras in 1385.

54 *Mundus* bears the collective name of the temptations which assail the young man in the Morality *Mundus et Infans* (or *Everyman*), which derives from an allegorical poem written before 1430, treating of Man's life disputed between Virtues and Vices. This was entitled by F. J. Furnivall *The Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life;* see his *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, the Parliament of Devils and Other Religious Poems,* Early English Text Soc., Orig. Ser. 24 (London, 1895), pp. 58-78; *cf.* H. N. MacCracken, *A Source of Mundus et Infans* in *Papers of the Modern Language Association,* XXIII (1908), pp. 486-496. *Le Monde* recurs as a character in *L'Homme juste et l'homme mondain* and in *L'Homme pécheur,* and is the protagonist in the Morality *Mundus, Caro, Daemonia,*


FIGURE 24

NUREMBERG, ST. SEBALDUS

*Basse-lisse Tapestry of the Prodigal Son*
*(after Kurth)*

played at Nancy in 1520: Petit de Julleville, *op. cit.,* p. 85. E. Fournier, *Le théâtre français avant la renaissance* (Paris, 1872), pp. 199-200, dates this Morality as of 1506. In the *Castell of Perseverance* (1440-1450) *Mundus* introduces Mankind to three allegorical figures embodying the distortions of the mind, *Stultitia,* of the flesh, *Voluptas,* of the heart, *Detractio,* which play as agents between Man and the Deadly Sins. *Mundus* turns his back on *Consciencia* on the tapestry of the "Last Judgment" seen one century ago in the Vatican by X. Barbier de Montault, *Annales archéologiques,* XV (1855), p. 241.

55 *Bien avisé, mal avisé* and *L'Homme juste et l'homme mondain* play up the idea of the crossroads by staging a split personality exhibiting in Man the opposition of two natures. The pilgrimage or journey motive combined with the combat of Vices and Virtues is treated in a twofold way by Raoul of Houdenc [see A. Scheler, *Trouvères belges* (nouv. sér.) (Louvain, 1879), pp. 176-248] at the beginning of the thirteenth century, in his *Songe d'Enfer* and his *Songe de Paradis* (perhaps the work of a follower) and in the *Voie d'Enfer et de Paradis* by Jehan de la Mote (1340). The visual scheme renounces the parallelism and shifts to the diverging roads in the first *Pélerinage* of Guillaume de Deguileville.

56 As mentioned in note 16 above, there is the same antithesis between the Fountain of Venus and the Fountain of Paradise on a "Credo" tapestry in the collection of Fernand Schutz, Paris: D.T.B. Wood, *"Credo" Tapestries* in *Burlington Magazine,* XXIV (1913-14), pl. IV, op. p. 315. The set of the "Credo" tapestries is stylistically akin to the set of the "Seven Deadly Sins." Compare the tapestry of "Music" at Hampton Court [H. C. Marillier, *The Tapestries at Hampton Court Palace, Official Guide* (London, 1951), no. 1036, p. 15, pl. VI] and the *Voluptas* of the woodcut in Sebastian Brandt's *Stultifera Navis* printed at Strassburg in 1497: E. Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege,* in *Studien der Bibliothek Warburg* (Leipzig, 1930), fig. 39. Stylistically the Hampton Court tapestry is intermediate between the Louisville one and the Prodigal Son tapestries of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and of the Cathedral of Vigevano.

57 A ring of water encompasses the "Castle." It has the inscription: "This is the watyre a bowte the place, if any dycke may be mad, ther it shal be pleyed." The drawing is reproduced by Thomas Sharp, *A Dissertation on the Pageants or Dramatic Mysteries Anciently Performed at Coventry . . .* (Coventry, 1825), op. p. 23, and by O. Fischel, *Art and the Theatre,* pt. I, in *Burlington Magazine,* LXVI (1935), pp. 4 ff. *Cf.* F. J. Furnivall and A. W. Pollard, *The Macro Plays,* Early Eng. Text Soc. Ext. Ser. 91 (London, 1904), frontispiece, p. xxvii, p. 76; A. W. Pollard, *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes* (Oxford, 1923), p. 197.

58 St. Peter Chrysologus has a more elaborate and tripartite explanation, which anticipates such dialectical stunts of scholasticism, when he comes to comment upon St. Luke's "vivendo luxuriose" (XV:13) in his fifth sermon (*Patr. Lat.,* LII, 198-9). The luxurious life—or the good life with the harlots—can be interpreted as mundane eloquence, the brothels of schools (*scholarum lupanaria*), or the crossroads of heresies. The sacrifice to the idols is represented in the *Bible Moralisée,* British Museum, Harley Ms. 1527, folio 34*vo* (de Laborde, *op. cit.,* III, pl. 505) as the antithesis of the departure of the Prodigal from his father (identified with Christ by his nimbus) on the first pair of the miniatures.

59 A. Pauphilet, *Jeux et Sapience du Moyen Age,* pp. 107-132. One of the spiciest treatments of the adventures of the Prodigal Son may be found on a casket in the Blumenthal Collection, which dates in the first half of the fourteenth century and connects the parable with purely mundane scenes of love and romance: S. Rubinstein-Block, *Catalogue of the Collection of George and Florence Blumenthal* (New York, 1926-30), vol. III, pls. VII-VIII.

60 It is still realistically treated on the tapestry of St. Sebaldus of Nuremberg, which is contemporary with our Prodigal Son set, and also shows the bed in the background (fig. 24).

61 *Pélerinage,* ed. Stürzinger, fig. op. p. 326. The comparison was indicated by W. H. Forsyth, *A Tapestry from Burgos Cathedral* in *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,* XXXIII (1938), pp. 148-150.

62 As was indicated in note 55 above, the source of Guillaume de Deguileville is Raoul of Houdenc (or his follower, if the *Songe de Paradis* was not composed by Raoul). In the *Songe* the hero is attacked by a crowd of thieves (the Temptations and the Vices); Humility, Obedience and Chastity fight in his defense. That the combat for Man was actually enacted on the stage, we know through later evidence, such as the Norwich Play, which presents striking similarities with the first *Pilgrimage* of Guillaume de Deguileville. For instance, in the *Pilgrimage* Grace of God arms the pilgrim with the helmet of discretion and temperance, the gorget of sobriety, the coat of mail of fortitude; in the Norwich Play the Holy Ghost arms Adam and Eve after their sin with the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation: O. Waterhouse, *The Non-cycle Mystery Plays,* Early Eng. Text Soc., Extra Series, 104 (London, 1909), p. 18, vv. 137-143.

63 Compare the whip presented to *Peccator* (Sinner) by *Consciencia* (Conscience) on the allegorical tapestry of the Pilgrimage of Man in the possession of Gallery L. Bernheimer, Munich, reproduced in *Pantheon,* III (1929), p. 197, and in the tapestry exhibition catalogue, *Bildteppiche aus sechs Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 1953), no. 14, fig. 5.

64 This pestle and this mortar—says Contrition—are used to prepare the "good deeds," a meat-dish on which "Good End" feeds. Not without a bit of sarcastic humor, *Bien Avisé* finds that such an allegorical meat of good deeds is a poor fare:

> Pour Dieu dittes m'en plus à plain
> Bonnes oeuvres l'avez nommée
> Cette viande bien savourée
> L'on mourrait bien emprès de faim.

See Migne, *Dictionnaire des mystères* (Paris, 1854), col. 204.

65 The piteous heart tenderized by a gravy of tears is called in *Bien avisé, mal avisé* "cette viande bien savourée" (a savory meat). This fantastic idea comes in a direct line from the *Pélerinage de vie humaine,* where Penitence (who terms herself the "charwoman" and the "laundress" of God) gives to the pilgrim this advice in the form of a housewife's recipe:

> . . . quant lermes sont (hors) venues
> Et de cuer (bien contrit) issues,
> Requeil les sans demourée
> Et (puis) en fas une buée (a sort of a rinse)
> Pour mettre dedens et buer
> Toutes ordures et laver

66 The illumination models are followed by the sixteenth-century tapestry of the Prodigal described by Gaignières with the caption: "les porciaux gardez, le pauvre malheureux/de par famile il menge avecques eux/au bacquet": H. Bouchot, *Inventaire des dessins exécutés pour Roger de Gaignières* (Paris, 1891), I, pp. 498-499, no. 3754.

67 Tertullian, *On Modesty,* VIII-X, pp. 74 ff.: Anti-Nicene Christian Library, vol. XVIII (Edinburgh, 1870); *cf. idem, Five Books in Reply to Marcion,* Book II, *"Of The Harmony of Old and New Laws," ibid.,* p. 330; St. Cyril of Alexandria: *Glaphyra in Genesim,* Lib. III-IV, *Patr. Graec.* LXIX; St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei,* XVI, 42.

68 Two German tapestries are exceptions to the rule. On the first one woven about 1425, in St. Elizabeth in Marburg, the depiction of the parable ends with the reproach of the elder son to his father: B. Kurth, *op. cit.,* III, pl. 223. On the second one, at St. Sebaldus in Nuremberg, dating in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, the elder son refuses to

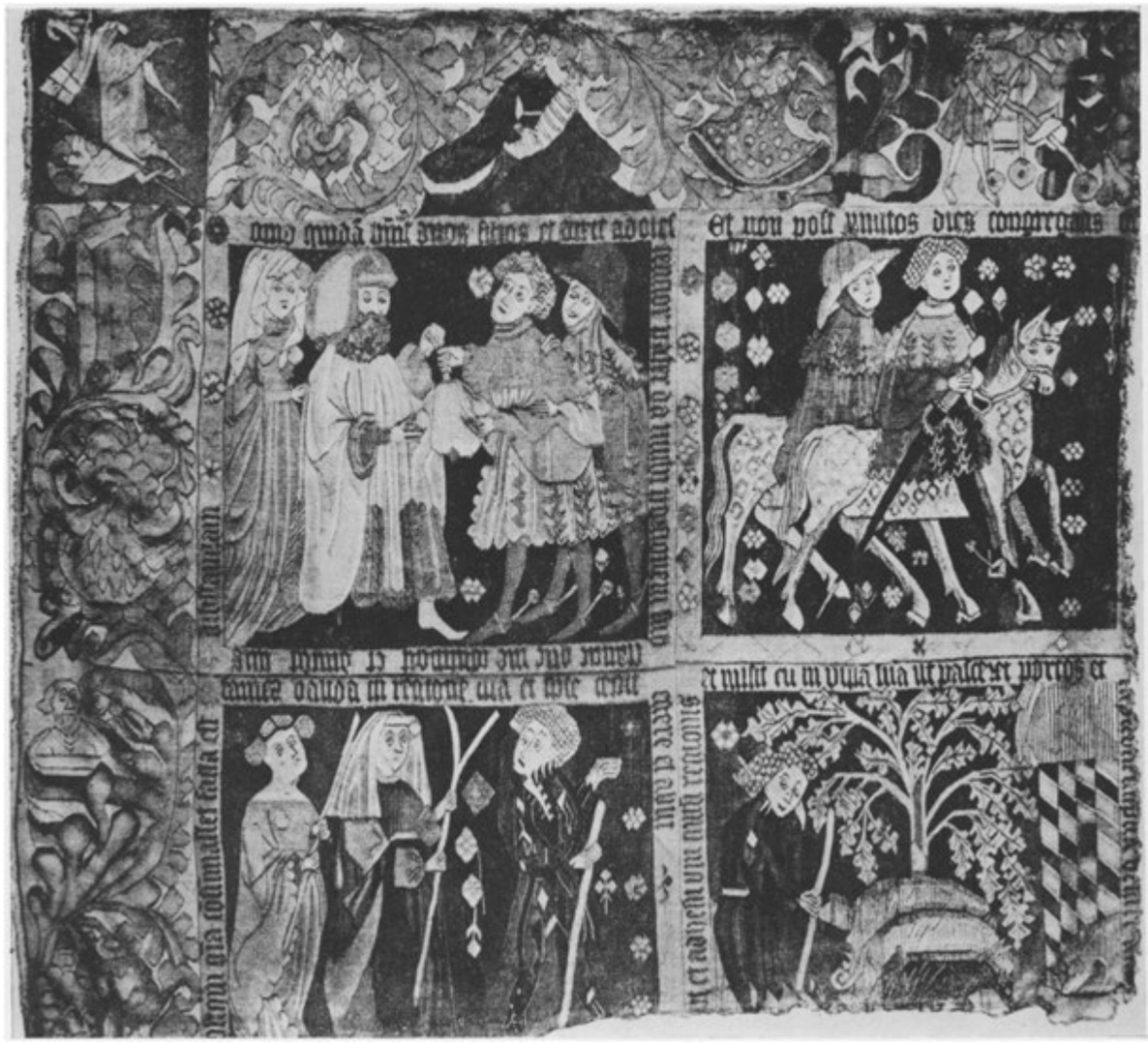

FIGURE 25 MARBURG, ST. ELIZABETH

*Fragment of Prodigal Son Tapestry*
*(after Kurth)*

yield to the supplication of his father and mother and ostentatiously leaves the banqueting hall (fig. 24). Surprisingly enough, this bit of stubbornness—or of German antisemitism—is repeated on the tapestry described by Gaignières, which may follow a German cartoon like the one in the Cluny Museum: J. Guiffrey, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 76, fig. 40.

[69] This is the comment of Haymo, bishop of Halberstadt in the ninth century, on verse 28 of the parable, "his father came out and entreated him (the elder son)": "Erit enim quandoque aperta vocatio Judaeorum in salutem Evangelii, quam manifestam vocationem tanquam egressum patris appellat (Evangelista) ad rogandum majorem filium. *Cum ergo plenitudo gentium intraverit, egredietur opportuno tempore pater ejus, ut etiam omnis Israel salvus fiat" (Homeliae de Tempore XLI, Sabbato post Reminescere), op. cit.* In the Prodigal Son window of the Cathedral of Chartres, in the banquet scene the elder son is seated at the father's right, but the father proffers the cup to the younger son with his right hand—a gesture recalling the crossed blessing extended by Jacob to Ephraim and Manasses: Y. Delaporte, *Les Vitraux de la Cathédrale de Chartres* (Chartres, 1926), Planches vol. II, no. CLIII.

[70] A. Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, pl. 9.

[71] *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Oesterreich* (ed. F. Wickhoff), vol. II: H. Tietze, *Die illuminierten Handschriften in Salzburg*, pp. 23-24, fol. 11. In this *Biblia Pauperum* the reconciliation of the brothers parallels the reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers. Both scenes are

pendants to the central theme of Christ appearing to His disciples after His Resurrection and bestowing to them His Peace.

72 Verses 6965-68.

73 This mystical interpretation is the only one in which the Prodigal is identified with Christ. It will be pointed out below that in the last scene of the Walters tapestry, Christ is shown as a crowned and victorious pilgrim while exhibiting the very features of the Prodigal.

74 D. T. B. Wood in *Burlington Magazine,* XX (1911-12), p. 216, pl. II, no. 5. One of the four examples of this composition formerly was located in the Cathedral of Burgos.

75 Rabanus Maurus, *Commentaria in Genesim,* I, XIX: *Patr. Lat.,* CVII, col. 499.

76 "Adam, homo sive terrenus": St. Jerome, *Liber de nominibus hebraicis, Patr. Lat.,* XXIII, col. 818. "Homo quidem descendebat ab Ierusalem in Iericho (Luke X:30) ipse Adam intelligitur in genere humano . . . Samaritanus Christus est": Eusebius Vercellensis, *Patr. Lat.,* XII, col. 593. "(Samaritanus id est Christus) dum de coelis in hunc mundum venit, *misericordia movetur";* these words, from the *Hortus Deliciarum,* could be applied verbatim to the father of the Prodigal Son parable. On the stained glass of the Good Samaritan in the Cathedral of Bourges, see Cahier and Martin, *op. cit.,* pp. 191 ff. and F. Quiévreux, *Le Mystère du Christ et de l'Eglise dans les vitraux du déambulatoire de Bourges* in *Dieu Vivant,* no. 5, pp. 101 f. On the north wall of the ambulatory the stained glass windows of the Good Samaritan and of the Prodigal Son are next to those of the "Nouvelle Alliance" (New Covenant between God and Man) and of the Last Judgment, and they are symmetrical with the windows on the south wall of the "Passion of Christ" and the "Apocalypse." Quiévreux correctly interprets the relative location of the six windows according to II Ephesians XIV:6.

77 According to Matthew Paris, *cf.* Daniel Rock, *Textile Fabrics,* South Kensington Museum (London, 1870), p. cxi. On the Prodigal Son tapestry in the church of St. Elizabeth in Marburg, a commentary to the parable is rendered in the borders by the depiction of the ages of Man, from his swaddling clothes to his shroud among emblems of the sacrifice of Christ: Betty Kurth, *op. cit.,* pp. 255-256, pls. 222-225 (and our fig. 25).

78 On a stained glass window of the Crucifixion at Chalons-sur-Marne an inscription reads "quod *vetus* intulit, *alter* Adam tulit in cruce fixus" (Cahier and Martin, *op. cit.,* Plates, Etude XII, B).

79 Medieval actors performed naked on the stage in the representation of the Adam plays. The famous nude statues of Adam and Eve on the tower of the façade of the Cathedral of Rouen reproduce an actual performance by the same characters in the mysteries played with the cathedral as the setting. At verses 1242 ff. of the *Mystère du vieil Testament* (Société des anciens textes, ed. James de Rothschild) a stage direction specifies: "doit Adam couvrir son humanité faignant avoir honte; icy se doit semblablement vergogner la femme et se musser (protect) de la main." It is typical of the tapestry designer that he takes advantage of the gestures of shyness of Adam and Eve to add plausibility to her "vestis innocentiae" and his "vestis immortalitatis" which still half cover their nakedness, but are being stripped from them after the Fall.

80 According to Moslem tradition, the heavenly garments of Adam and Eve fell from them after the original sin: S. Baring-Gould, *Legends of Old Testament Characters,* I (London and New York, 1871), p. 34. The "vestis innocentiae" is assimilated to the "stola prima" of the parable by Haymo of Halberstadt. The "tunica immortalitatis" is referred to the Good Samaritan (a figure both of Christ and Mankind) in a sermon of Henry, bishop of Parma in the eleventh century: Angelo Mai (ed.), *Scriptorum Veterum Nova Collectio e Vaticanis Codicibus,* VII (Rome, 1833), pp. 271 ff.

81 This pattern is followed by the tapestries depending on the drama. The tapestry entitled "Music" in Hampton Court (no. 1036 in H. C. Marillier, *op. cit.*) has a strip at the bottom which reads:

Ante Judicem in Virtutum presencia
Arguunt Justicia et Misericordia
Minatur *Culpa* a Justicia
Sed reconciliatur a Misericordia

Music here embodies a Vice, which explains certain features of the Prodigal tapestries in Minneapolis and Vigevano.

82 Migne, *Patr. Lat.* CLXXVI, cols. 997-1006. Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art* (London, 1939), pl. XL.

83 Gloutonnie Adam fort tenta
car du fruit défendu gouta
(*Mystère de la Passion* of Gréban, vv. 34,349-50).

Gluttony is represented as prompting Lust in the *Pélerinage de vie humaine* (vv. 10,501-4).

84 *Cf.* the woodcut of the *Hortus Sanitatis,* Mainz, J. Meydenbach, 1491: *De Herbis,* cap. XLIII (Arbor Paradisii).

85 *Summa Theologica,* IV, 2, quaest. 84.

86 On Bacon and Antoninus of Florence, see Bloomfield, *op. cit.,* pp. 89-90. On the primacy obtained among the sins by Avarice or Covetousness in the new economic pattern of the waning Middle Ages, see R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism,* Holland Memorial Lectures (1922).

87 W. Geist, *Geschichte der Christlichen Ethik,* I (Berlin, 1881), pp. 352-8. The passages referred to in the *Speculum* (Strassburg, 1476) are in III, ii, 20, p. 586.

88 E. Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege,* pp. 64 ff., figs. 30, 38. *Cf.* Charles de Tolnay on the "Prodigal Son" of Jerome Bosch, *Hieronymus Bosch* (Bale, 1937), pp. 46 f. and, according to Panofsky, the *Voie de Paradis* de Ruteboeuf, as early as 1270. The *littera pythagorica* is illustrated as early as the mid-thirteenth century on fol. 191 of Cod. X A 11 of the Narodni Museum, Prague, *cf.* H. W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London, 1952), pl. XII a, and p. 111. Humanism paid special attention to the myth of Hercules at the crossroads and its symbols, see Theodor E. Mommsen, *Petrarch and the Story of the Choice of Hercules* in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,* XVI (1953), pp. 178-192.

89 Lactantius, *Divin. Inst.* VI, 3, 1 ff. (*Cf.* scholion to verses 55-6 of the third Satire of Persius).

90 The captions of such a scheme are taken from the *Judicium Paridis . . . de triplici hominum vita . . . ,* a drama of Jakob Locher (1471-1528) which was played at Ingolstadt about 1500 (*cf.* Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres,* Paris, 1862, III, 1136-7).

91 The "misericordia motus est" of the parable means "misericordia Incarnationis Verbi" according to Zacharias Chrysopolitanus (*In Unum ex Quatuor,* III, 97, *op. cit.*).

92 *Annales* or *Contextio Gemmarum* of Eutychius, Patriarch of Alexandria, edit. in Arabic and Latin (Oxford, 1858-9); excerpts in *Patr. Graec.,* CXI, 910-12; *cf.* G. Weil, *Biblische Legende der Muselmanner* (Frankfort a/M., 1845).

93 Petrus Comestor, *Historia Scholastica, Liber Genesis,* ch. XXIV (*Patr. Lat.* CXCVIII, col. 1074).

94 The *Revelations* were printed four times between 1470 and 1498: *Dialogus inter Militem et Clericum. . . . and Methodius, The Bygynnyg of the World and the Ende of Worldes,* tr. by John Trevisa, ed. A. Jenkins Perry, Early Eng. Text Soc. no. 167 (London, 1925), p. liv.

95 The gamut of drab tones in this part of the tapestry reflects the mood analyzed by St. Hildegard of Bingen, Honor-

ius of Autun and Alexander Neckam, according to whom the effects upon Man from the Fall included melancholy, together with sexual desire and hunger; *cf.* H. W. Janson, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

[96] It is typical that their gesture of solemn admonition should be repeated by the "citizen" of the tapestry of Burgos Cathedral, when the Prodigal begs for employment in his plight. The cartoonist of the Burgos piece had only to re-use the figures of *Fames* and of the kneeling Abel in the Walters tapestry, thanks to a few inversions, to establish the pathetic design of his scene.

[97] *La Queste del Saint Graal,* ed. Pauphilet (Paris, 1923), pp. 211-218. Eve at the foot of the Madonna holds a twig on a painting by Paolo di Giovanni Fei (1342-1410) in the Robert Lehman Collection, now on loan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. *Cf.* A. Pauphilet, *La Vie terrestre d'Adam* in *Revue de Paris* (1912).

[98] Cain means "possession," Abel "given to God": A. Levene, *The Early Syrian Fathers on Genesis* (London, 1951), p. 79. The commentary of Haymo of Halberstadt on: "erat autem filius eius senior in agro" (Luke XV:25) reads: "Filius senior populus Israel est qui, quamvis in longinquam regionem non abierit, *non tamen domi sed in agro* dicitur esse immoratus. Quia populus idem neque usque ad colenda idola Creatorem deseruit, neque legis quam acceperat interiora penetravit, sed litterae solum custodia contentus, exteriora magis et terrena operari simul et sperare solebat." This interpretation derives verbatim from St. Jerome: "Israeliticus populus qui . . . domi non erat, quia *interiora legis et prophetarum* non intellexit, sed litterae terrena exspectando adhaesit," as quoted by Zacharias Chrysopolitanus. As to the equivalence of "interiora legis" and love and charity, we have the contention of St. Augustine: "Cain gave God a part of his good, but he did not give Him his heart" (*City of God,* XV:7). St. Augustine was under the spell of the translation of Genesis IV:7 as given by the Septuagint: "If thou didst offer well but divide badly, hast thou not committed sin?"

[99] Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum* ([Frankfort], 1700), I, pp. 376-7.

[100] Abel is a figure of the killing of the calf (and so of the sacrifice of Christ). The axe is all the more suggestive in this context in that the Fathers do not agree on the weapon which killed Abel. An axe is mentioned by Irenaeus. On the more common symbolism of the jaw-bone as a weapon in fifteenth-century iconography, see Meyer Schapiro in *Art Bulletin*, XXIV (1942), pp. 205-212.

[101] On the hare, Philostratus, *Imagines* I, 6: see note p. 27 in the edition of the Loeb Classical Library (London, 1931). On the wildcat, Farinator; *cf.* the wildcat on the tapestry of pl. 2 in Phyllis Ackerman, *The Rockefeller McCormick Tapestries, op. cit.*

[102] *Adversus Judaeos,* VIII, 8.

[103] On the antithesis *haedus-agnus:* St. Ambrose, *op. cit.:* "Judaei haedum mali odoris sacrificium requisierunt"; St. Bruno: "[Vitulus saginatus] Christus, omni virtute et gratia plenus. 'Jam non moritur et mors illi ultra non dominetur' [Rom. VI:9] et toties tamen occiditur et a fidelibus comeditur quoties in hoc altaris sacramento immolatur."

[104] Origen, *In Matth. 122,* tract. 35, *Origenii Adamantii Operum pars secunda* (Basle, 1571), p. 197; S. Basil, *Orationes* XXXVIII; Pseudo-Tertullian *Carm. Adv. Marcian., Libri II.* Even St. Jerome admitted the legend of the burial of Adam on Mount Golgotha because of its symbolical demonstration of the triumph of Christ over death: Horst W. Janson, *The Putto with the Death's Head* in *Art Bulletin,* XIX (1937), p. 425. *Cf.* Ferdinand Piper, *Adams Grab auf Golgotha* in *Evangelischer Kalendar Jahrbuch für 1861* (Berlin).

[105] Jacobus Gretser, *De Cruce;* A. d'Ancona, *La leggenda d'Adamo ed Eva, Testo inedito del secolo XIV* (Bologna, 1870), pp. 11 f. The description of Adam "molto stanco e lasso di vivere . . . avea diradicato un grandissimo buscione . . . per lo molto travaglio s'apoggiava in sulla zappa ed era stanco e lasso di vivere" admirably applies to the corresponding scene on the Walters tapestry. *Cf.* an analogous illustration in the *Mysterium Sanctae Crucis* in Dutch (1483): *The Legendary History of the Cross,* a series of sixty-four woodcuts, ed. J. Ashton (New York, 1887), p. cxiii.

[106] On the tradition of the members, for instance, the poem of Notker Balbulus, *In Fer. II Pasch.* [ed. Dom Pez, *Thesaurus Anecd. Noviss.* I (1721), 25]:

[Christ, on the day of Resurrection]
Ducens secum primitiva
Ad coelos membra,

and the similar concept in the Brussels tapestry of the "Deposition from the Cross," J. Destrée and P. van Den Ven, *op. cit.,* pl. 19, with the caption "Cum exaltatus fuero omnia ad me traham." On the tradition of the head: Moses bar Cephra, *Commentarius de Paradiso,* Pars I, cap. 14, *Patr. Graec.* CXI.

[107] According to the Syriac apocryphal *Book of the Penitence of Adam,* quoted by S. Baring-Gould, *op. cit.,* I, p. 53.

[108] Cahier and Martin, *op. cit.,* text, p. 206, n. 4.

[109] O. Waterhouse, *op. cit.,* vv. 130-131; 134-135.

[110] Compare the right wing of the Portinari Altarpiece in Florence or "The Feeding of the Ten Thousand" in Melbourne by a follower of Hugo van der Goes, the Master of the Legend of St. Catherine: M. J. Friedländer, *Altniederländische Malerei* (Leiden, 1934), vol. IV, pl. XLVII.

[111] "Sedentibus in regione umbrae mortis, lux orta est eis" (Matt. IV:16). In the current of oriental tradition, "Jesus the Light" awakes Adam from his slumber in the cave, during which he had been attended by characters personifying the Sins: A. W. Jackson, *Researches in Manichaeism* (New York, 1932). *Cf.* A. Dillmann, *Das christliche Adambuch des Morgenlandes* (Göttingen, 1853); S. C. Malan, *The Book of Adam and Eve* (London, 1822); E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Cave of Treasures* (London, 1927). On the connection of this legend of Adam with the myth of the hero asleep in a cave, see Alexander C. Soper in *Artibus Asiae,* XII (1949), pp. 314-30.

[112] The scene on the Cloisters tapestry is obviously copied from an Adam play. In the *Jeu d'Adam,* an Anglo-roman drama of the twelfth century (ed. Luzarche, Tours, 1854), the devils plant thorns and thistles behind the back of Adam and Eve after they have tilled the soil, and finally they put them in fetters and iron collars. This action on the stage materialized metaphors such as the "vincula dirae captivitatis" used in sermons like that of Leo the Great, in his *Sermo LXVI, de Passione Domini,* as commentary on: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death" (Rom. V:12).

[113] Since the Venerable Bede, and especially since Cistercian mysticism of the twelfth century, the lily denotes the purity of the soul and body of Mary and is usually associated with the Annunciation. But in the fifteenth century the lily received more eschatological connotations in keeping with a new emphasis on apocalyptic visions in art. In the Last Judgment as painted by the Netherlands masters, the lily is the counterbalance to the sword, the "sharp two-edged sword" coming out of the mouth of Christ on the Lord's Day (Revelation, I:16). It contrasts with the emblem of pity the symbol of the Wrath of God. In this connection, Isaiah XXXV:1 on the future kingdom of Christ may be quoted: "the wilderness . . . shall flourish like the lily." To a certain extent the lily in late fifteenth-century iconography of the Last Judgment is a substitute for the Virgin of the Deisis.

[114] The central subject is the Coronation of the Virgin. S. Reinach and G. J. Demotte, *La tapisserie gothique* . . . (Paris, 1921-24), pls. 28-30.

115 M. R. James and B. Berenson, *Speculum Humanae Salvationis* (Oxford, 1926), ch. XXXIX. On the symbolism of Esther and the clemency of Ahasuerus, see J. Destrée, *Tapisseries et sculptures,* p. 19; Destrée, Kymeulen and Hannotiau, *Musées royaux . . . de Bruxelles . . .,* vol. II, livr. XXVI. On its connection with the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis,* see the excellent digest of Margaret B. Freeman in *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,* N.S. XII (1954), pp. 300-301.

116 It might be well to remember that the tree of the Fall on the tapestry is a pomegranate or "Arbor vel lignum vitae paradisi," of which the author of the *Hortus Sanitatis* (Mainz, 1491) writes: "Hanc naturaliter habet virtutem ut qui ex ejus fructu comederet perpetua soliditate firmaretur et beata immortalitate vestiretur, nulla infirmitate vel anxietate vel senii lassitudine vel imbecillitate fatigaretur" (*Tractatus de Herbis,* cap. XLIII). The twofold overtones of the Tree of Knowledge, death and revival into immortality, are reflected in the symbolism of the pomegranate summed up by Walter Pater in so masterly a manner: "The mystical fruit which, because of the multitude of its seeds, was, to the Romans, a symbol of fecundity . . . to the Middle Ages became a symbol of the fruitful earth itself; and then of *that other seed sown in the dark underworld;* and at last of the whole hidden region which Dante visited . . . Botticelli [in the tondo of the Uffizi] putting it into the childish hands of Him Who, *if men went down into hell, is there also";* quoted by E. Haig, *Floral Symbolism of the Great Masters* (1913), pp. 262-3.

117 Adam and Eve were re-used by the master cartoonist—with some changes in their relative positions—for the figures of the Emperor and the Queen in the fragment called the "Triumph of Christ," now reintegrated into the "Glorification of Charles VIII" at the Cloisters. Compare also the figures on the right side of and above Eve, and the one between Abel and Cain on the Walters tapestry (fig. 15) with the figure next to the crozier of the bishop and the man holding a sword on the same section of the "Glorification of Charles VIII": Rorimer in *Bulletin of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,* N.S., XII (1954), p. 292, figure. Like the theme of the pages on the Louisville tapestry, the comparison establishes the date of the Prodigal Son set as anterior to the related tapestries of New York and of Brussels ("Triumph of Christ," formerly in the de Somzée Collection).

118 In the Talmud God pardons Cain because he made confession of sin and repented; *cf.* S. Baring-Gould, *op. cit.,* I, p. 73.

119 *Ibid.,* p. 82.

120 Anastasius Sinaita, Ὁδηγός, ed. Gretser (Ingolstadt, 1906), p. 269.

121 Theodoret, *Quaestiones in Genesim LXVII.*

122 Rabanus Maurus, *op. cit.,* II, 2, col. 509.

123 *Ibid.,* II, 9, col. 525-6.

124 "De Sem Hebraei, de Japheth populus gentium nascitur. Quia igitur *lata est multitudo credentium,* a latitudine quae Japheth dicitur, latitudo nomen accepit . . . (et habitet in tabernaculis Sem) . . . de nobis prophetatur qui in eruditione et scientia Scripturarum, ejecto Israele, versamur": St. Jerome, *Liber-Hebraicarum questionum in Genesim* (on: Gen. IX:27), *Patr. Lat.* XXIII, 998-9.

125 Gospel of Nicodemus in Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh, 1870), vol. XVI, pp. 206 f., pt. II, Chap. 8. There is an indication on the tapestry that the Harrowing of Hell takes place ideally at midnight, as an owl is perched at the top of the cave, on the left, immediately under *Compassio.* The Gospel of Nicodemus (in the Greek form) establishes a distinction between the two moments of the descent of Christ into Hell: a) Chap. 2 [*ibid.,* p. 170] the light in Hades at midnight "and straightway our father Abraham was united with the patriarchs and the prophets" . . . [which is the theme of the "Redemption of Man" tapestry in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 4)]; b) Chap. 8 of the first Latin version [*ibid.,* p. 206] the definite liberation of Adam. The distinction between the two moments is observed in a different way in *Le Pélerinage Jhesucrist* and in the *Mystère de la Passion* by A. Gréban. In both sources, after Christ had given up the Ghost, His soul rescues Adam and the forbears, and He leads them into a provisional place until the final reunion of bodies and souls in Heaven on the day of Ascension (*Pélerinage,* vv. 9551-64; Gréban, vv. 26,283-92). On a tapestry of La Chaise Dieu [A. Jubinal, *Les anciennes tapisseries historiées* (Paris, 1838), vol. II, pl. 29] in the meadow lighted by Easter dawn, Christ snatches Adam and Eve from the jaws of Hell, built of monstrous muzzles, while the Latin inscriptions from Psalm 106:16, Zach. IX:11, and Osee XIII:14 hail the rescue.

126 In the Brussels tapestries of the end of the fifteenth century the allegory of the pilgrimage of man and the parable of the Prodigal Son run parallel to each other and even overlap. The Prodigal Son as the symbolical "Pilgrim," a figure of Mankind in its terrestrial peregrination, was considered also a "figure" of Christ Who out of pure mercy started on His earthly pilgrimage to save Man. The idea was not forgotten when the story of the Prodigal was dealt with, in art as well as in literature, no longer from an exegetical point of view, but simply from a moral one. There is in the Walters Art Gallery a boxwood sheath (71.315c) for a knife and fork, dated 1618, of Dutch or Flemish workmanship, showing six scenes of the Prodigal story with a commentary of six scenes illustrating the works of Mercy. Prominence is given to the charity and hospitality to be accorded to pilgrims and foreigners—in brief, to the "homo peregrinus et advena" of Thomas à Kempis.

127 Adam was said by the Easterners to have received a magic ring from Raphael; see Stephanus Le Moyne, *Varia sacra* . . . (Lyon, 1685), p. 863. Compare the scene with the father meeting the Prodigal, while an attendant behind him exhibits the ring on the tapestry of St. Sebaldus of Nuremberg (fig. 26).

FIGURE 26 MUNICH, BAYERISCHES NATIONALMUSEUM

*The Return of the Prodigal*
*(A fragment belonging to the St. Sebaldus tapestry)*
*(after Kurth)*

[128] This crown looks exactly like the one worn by David in the tapestry of the "Presentation in the Temple" of the Martin le Roy Collection (J. J. Marquet de Vasselot, *op. cit.*). But Christ is reminiscent of the Second Person of the Trinity on the "Credo" tapestry [Wood, *op. cit.,* in *Burlington Magazine,* XXIV (1913-14), pl. III, op. p. 310]. On the other hand, the cartoon of Adam as he appears on the last two scenes of the tapestry was re-used on the tapestry of the Virtues and Vices of the Hunolstein Collection: E. Müntz, *op. cit.* in *Fondation Eugène Piot, Monuments et mémoires,* IX (1902), pl. VII. The Walters tapestry is anterior to these three tapestries, the evidence being that its model served for patterning details of works connected not only with the early style of Jan van Roome (or of the Master of the Virtues and Vices) but also with the more sumptuous sequence represented by the Hunolstein and Mazarin tapestries, and the ones in the Royal Collection in Madrid.

[129] H. Friedmann, *op. cit.,* pp. 95, 120. Even the cherry tree in exceptional instances takes the place of the Tree of Life; *cf.* the panel of the Annunciation in the Staufener Altar: Elisabeth Wolffhart, *Beiträge zür Pflanzensymbolik* in *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft,* VIII (1954), p. 178.

[130] Before the introduction of indigo into Europe in the seventeenth century, the leaves of the woad-dyer's weed were crushed to give a blue dye. I am indebted to Mrs. J. Cookman Boyd, Jr., of Baltimore, for very kindly supplying the identification of this plant, as well as that of the soap-wort.

[131] However, the notion of "disguised symbolism" in the depiction of still-life objects has been rightly reinstated by Erwin Panofsky in the chapter, "Reality and Symbol," in his *Early Netherlandish Painting* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), and by Ingvar Bergström, *Disguised Symbolism in 'Madonna' Pictures and Still Life* in *Burlington Magazine,* XCVII (1955), pp. 303-8; 342-9. Floral symbolism (derived from the Song of Songs II:1-2, and Ecclesiastes XXIV:18) remains in close connection with the poetical and pictorial metaphors applied to the Virgin; see E. Wolffhart, *op. cit.,* and Anselm Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder und Beiworte Mariens in der deutschen Literatur und lateinischen Hymnenpoesie des Mittelalters* (Linz, 1893). It has much less to do with other religious compositions, even those whose symbolism—as in the case of the Prodigal Son tapestry—seems to be ubiquitous. Rolf Fritz, *Aquilegia, die Symbolische Bedeutung der Akelei* in *Wallraf Richartz Jahrbuch,* XIV (1952), pp. 99-110, traces the columbine (*aquilegia*) as a symbol of love and fecundity in eighty-five paintings executed around 1500 in the Flemish countries, the north of France, the Rhineland and Germany, and yet remarks that this flower is absent—without an exception—from the tapestries. The columbine ("aglei" in Flemish) was, as an anagram, the mystical substitute for the Jewish invocation, "*A*tha Gibbor *L*eolam *A*donai," which, according to H. Otte [*Handbuch der kirchlichlichen Kunstarchäologie,* I (Leipzig, 1883), pp. 400, 410 n. 1], corresponds to the invocation of God concluding Psalm 88:53 of the Vulgate.

[132] A good digest, *Les Trois ages de la tapisserie mille fleurs,* was recently given in *Connaissance des Arts,* no. 45 (1955), pp. 30-45. Apart from the classical work of Eugène Soil, *Les Tapisseries de Tournai* in *Mémoires de la Société historique et littéraire de Tournai,* XXII (1891), important sources on the state of botanical knowledge at the end of the Middle Ages, as well as descriptions of *verdures* in the inventories, have been published by J. von Schlosser in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerh. Kaiserhauses,* XVI (1895), pp. 166 ff.

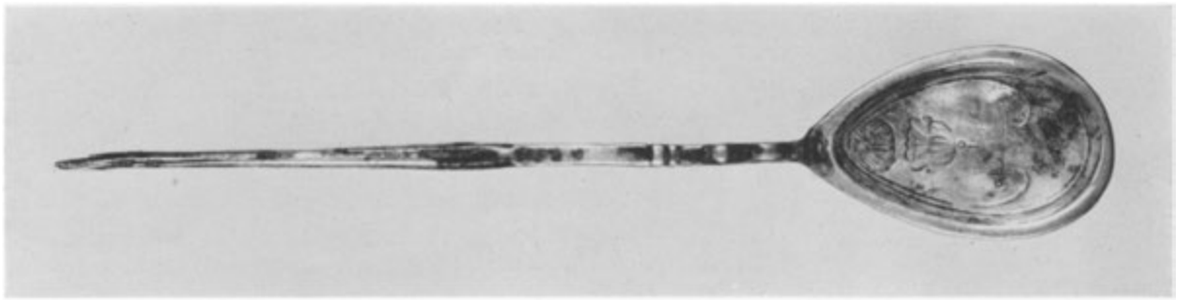

FIGURE 1 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Spoon*

# NOTES ON BYZANTINE GOLD AND SILVERSMITH'S WORK

BY MARVIN CHAUNCEY ROSS

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY of silver hoards of the fourth to the sixth century has grown in the last thirty years and continues to increase. Some of the finds, such as those of Sutton Hoo and Mildenhall in England, County Limerick in Ireland, and Ballana and Qustul in Egypt, have given us large groups of very significant items. This great addition to the amount of known silver objects will increase the possibility of dividing the material into schools, as had already been attempted, although not too successfully.[1] Because of such a possibility it seems important at this time that all silver objects of the period should be published. The following notes on several objects in the Walters Art Gallery are a contribution toward that end.

I

A fragment of a silver dish in the Walters Art Gallery, while not of the finest quality, has considerable interest (fig. 3).[2] It is said to have come from the collection of Borelli Bey of Alexandria.[3] It is the remnant of a broadly fluted

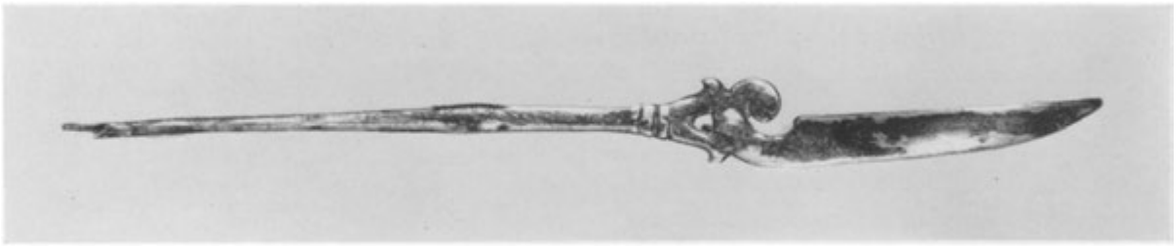

FIGURE 2 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Spoon from side*

FIGURE 3 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Fragment of a Silver Dish*

bowl, on the central disk of which is a chrysanthemum framed in an undulating line, surrounded by swimming fish—including shellfish and a jelly-fish—rudely incised in the silver. The foot consists of a ring of silver soldered on to the dish. There are no hall-marks.

Fluted silver dishes from the late fourth or fifth century have been found in several treasures. There is one in the Esquiline Treasure[4] now in the British Museum, and one complete dish and three fragments in the Treasure of Traprain in Scotland,[5] both treasures dating from the end of the fourth century. This list could easily be increased. In these one notes that the fluting is outlined at the base as on the Walters fragment. However, the workmanship is rather better in the examples cited. It is a curious phenomenon that in fourth to fifth-century silver one finds at times pieces with skilful workmanship alongside workmanship which is very rough. This variation in execution corresponds generally to a difference between elements which are the traditional stock-in-trade models handed down from Graeco-Roman times, and new motifs that are added.[6] This difference exists in the Walters fragment—the fluting and the chrysanthemum are from Graeco-Roman models. The roughly engraved fish, suggesting patterns found on Early Christian lamps[7] from Carthage, perhaps represent a new motif in silverware added to satisfy a patron with a new religion, because of the use of the fish in Early Christian symbolism.

Although the fragment is of a fluted dish—a stock silver design from Graeco-Roman times, like those of the Esquiline and Traprain treasures which Brett would place in the western Mediterranean world[8]—it does not fit in with these at all stylistically. The fact that it came from an Egyptian collection suggests that it may have been made in Egypt, although this suggestion can only be advanced tentatively since the silver found in Egypt has not yet been very well studied. However, the discovery of fourth to sixth-century silver at Luxor (now in the Cairo Museum) and in the tombs in Nubia (the latter containing objects mostly imported from Egypt) indicates that the whole question of whether a school of silversmiths existed in Egypt in the fourth to sixth centuries needs to be more thoroughly investigated.

[1] G. L. Brett, *Formal Ornament on Late Roman and Early Byzantine Silver* in *Papers of the British School at Rome,* XV (1939), pp. 33-41.

[2] No. 57.1829. D. 7¼".

[3] *Part II of the Notable Art Collection Belonging to the Estate of the late Joseph Brummer,* New York, Parke Bernet Galleries (May 11-14, 1949), lot 311, with list of exhibitions.

[4] O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the British Museum* (London, 1901), no. 310.

[5] A. O. Curle, *The Treasure of Traprain* (Glasgow, 1923), pp. 36-40, nos. 30, 31, 32 and 33, plates XVII-XIX.

[6] See *Roman Britain in 1944* in *Journal of Roman Studies* (1945), p. 91, pl. III, where a fragment found in County Limerick shows such differences.

[7] R. P. Delattre, *Lampes Chrétiennes de Carthage* (Lille, 1890), pp. 10-11.

[8] *Op. cit.,* p. 36.

FIGURE 4 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Eucharistic Box*
*(side)*

FIGURE 5 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*(Eucharistic Box)*
*(side)*

II

A silver eucharistic box, formerly in the Aboucassem collection of Byzantine silver, was not originally part of the Hama Treasure with which it came to the Gallery (figs. 4-6, 8).[9] Hayford Peirce and Royall Tyler pointed out that the box has been acquired by Aboucassem on the Syrian market apart from the treasure from Hama.[10]

Apparently because of the association with the Hama liturgical objects, this box has been attributed to the sixth century. This date is entirely too late for the box, which must be attributed to the fourth or early fifth century on the basis of comparable material in the hoards of silver found at Traprain in Scotland and at two places in Ireland, Coleraine and Balline.

In the Traprain find are a number of items having similar decoration: the all-over pattern of four-petalled elements or the large single acanthus motif composed of four large and four

FIGURE 6 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Eucharistic Box (top)*

[9] No. 57.638. H. 2⅜"; W. 2½"; L. 2½" (0.07 x 0.068 x 0.068 m). Walters Art Gallery, *Exhibition of Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (Baltimore, 1947), no. 377.

[10] H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *L'art byzantin* (Paris, 1934), II, p. 109, pl. 124 (b and c).

FIGURE 7 LONDON, BRITISH MUSEUM

*Fragment of Silver Dish*
*(Coleraine Hoard)*

small ribbed leaves.[11] The same motifs are found combined on a single fragment in the Coleraine hoard (fig. 7),[12] and again on one in the Balline hoard.[13]

The Traprain Treasure contained three coins, the latest of Honorius (395-432 A.D.); the objects have been compared for the most part with fourth-century work from elsewhere. The Coleraine hoard, on the basis of coins found with it, is likewise thought to have been buried in the early fifth century. Thus the box in the Walters Art Gallery must be placed in the same period, due to its close affinity with so many items in these two treasures.

The Mediterranean character of many items of silver in the Traprain Treasure has already been pointed out. The Walters box, acquired in Syria, gives the first indication that possibly the group of items related to it may have come originally from the eastern Mediterranean.

## III

A silver spoon[14] can also be added to the list of fourth to fifth-century spoons known to us (figs. 1,2). It is of the type with a pointed handle which is thought to have been used for eating certain shellfish. The handle joins the bowl with a scroll-like decoration, while the bowl itself is finely engraved with a design showing a two-handled vessel with a shell above it.

Spoons of this type, and having a scroll-like or bird-like motif at the base of the handle, have been found with treasures that are attributed

FIGURE 8 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Eucharistic Box*
*(side)*

[11] A. Curle, *op. cit.*, no. 31, p. 39, pl. XIX; no. 32, p. 40, pl. XIX; no. 45, p. 50, fig. 27; no. 87, p. 60, fig. 39; no. 107, p. 71, fig. 54; no. 110, p. 75, fig. 58; no. 136, p. 82, fig 62; no. 137, p. 83, fig. 63; no. 139, p. 83, fig. 65.

[12] H. Mattingly, J. W. E. Pearce and T. D. Kendrick, *The Coleraine Hoard* in *Antiquity*, XI (1937), pl. V, p. 42 for date.

[13] W. Grünhagen, *Der Schatzfund von Gross Bodungen* (Berlin, 1954), pl. XIVc and p. 61 (with bibliog.).

[14] No. 57.897. L. 5½" (0.14 m). *Exhibition of Early Christian and Byzantine Art*, no. 386 (there attributed to the sixth century).

to the fourth or early fifth centuries.[15] There are two in the Traprain Treasure which, as we have seen, is thought to have been buried by the early fifth century A.D.[16] There is another one in the fourth-century treasure found on the Esquiline Hill in Rome and now in the British Museum,[17] while seven examples are in the more recently discovered fourth-century Mildenhall Treasure also in the British Museum.[18] Rohault de Fleury illustrated one that was in the Bianchini collection,[19] the present whereabouts of which is not known to me, and also one in the museum at Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

The presence of spoons of this type in three treasures which can be attributed to the fourth or very early fifth centuries—those of Traprain, the Esquiline and Mildenhall—enables us to date the Walters spoon in the same period. No pieces of this type have been found with later silver. The Esquiline Treasure was found in Rome, while the objects found at Traprain and Mildenhall are considered to be of Mediterranean origin. It is probable that the Bianchini spoon also was found in Italy. This would indicate a possible origin in Rome, if not for all the examples, at least for the type.

[15] F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1914), III, pt. II, cols. 3172 ff. The authors list 108 spoons dating from the fourth to the seventh centuries, which are known to them through literature or otherwise. Many more have come to light since 1927—the Traprain, Mildenhall, Hama (three finds), Qustul treasures, and others greatly increase the list.

[16] A. Curle, *op. cit.*, p. 64, nos. 97-98.

[17] O. M. Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 73, no. 328.

[18] [J. W. Brailsford], *The Mildenhall Treasure* (London, The British Museum, 1955), pp. 14-15.

[19] C. Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe* (Paris, 1883-1889), IV, pl. 339, pp. 185 ff. and fig. on p. 186.

[20] No. 57.526. D. 3¾″ (.095 m). Mentioned in S. P. Noe, *Bibliography of Greek Coin Hoards* in *Numismatic Notes and Monographs,* no. 78 (New York, 1937), p. 14, no. 6.

[21] C. Seltman, *Greek Coins* (London, 1955), p. 221, pl. XLIX, fig. 9.

[22] H. Dressel, *Fünf Goldmedallions aus dem Funde von Aboukir* in *Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie* (1906).

FIGURE 9 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Gold Disk*

## IV

A gold disk in the Walters Art Gallery is an object unusual among the goldsmiths' work surviving from the fourth century (fig.9).[20] In repoussé in the center is the profile head of Alexander the Great, wearing the ram's horn of Ammon and derived probably from the coin by Lysimachus.[21] The head is encircled by two rows of beading flanking a plain band. The wide rim of the disk is embellished with a beautiful punched design—a rinceau embracing a shell motif—and edged again by beading. This rim is partly broken away.

When acquired, the disk was said by the dealer to have been found at Aboukir. This suggests a connection with the gold medallions, thought by some to be of the third century, found together at Aboukir and now scattered among several museums and collections. The repoussé disk is exhibited at the Walters Art Gallery along with several of the Alexander medallions from the Aboukir treasure.[22] This juxtaposition makes it obvious that there is no

connection stylistically between the disk and the medallions. The former may have come from another find at Aboukir or the similarity of the subject may have led someone to suggest Aboukir as a possible place of origin.[23]

Stylistically, the head can be related with silverwork from a number of fourth or early fifth-century treasures. Most recent is the treasure found in 1946 at Mildenhall, which includes two flanged bowls in the bottoms of which are pseudo-classical heads in medallions.[24] These profile heads are similar in general style and are surrounded by beaded borders. A fragment of a bowl[25] found with the treasure of Traprain Law has in the bottom a profile head of Hercules likewise surrounded by a beaded border, the whole in a similar pseudo-classical style. Finally there is a bowl in the National Museum at Belgrade found at Viminacium which again has a pseudo-classical head in the center.[26]

The punched-work border of our gold disk recalls that this technique also was popular in the fourth century. In the British Museum is a gold panel showing on a pierced ground a female rider hunting a lion. This was part of a small treasure found in Asia Minor together with six coins of Constantius (337-361).[27] The head of Alexander the Great wearing the horn of Ammon, copied from a coin, also appears on an onyx cameo in the British Museum, which is dated by Dalton in the fourth to sixth century.[28] A brooch probably of the fourth century, formerly in the Marc Rosenberg collection, had a relief of the head of Alexander.[29] Another brooch with a coin of the Emperor Honorius (395-423) is set in a beaded border similar to that on the Walters disk.[30]

All the above comparisons would suggest a date in the second half of the fourth or very early fifth century for the gold disk. The treasure of Traprain Law was buried by the early decades of the fifth century and a date before 367 has been suggested for the Mildenhall Treasure.[31] The punched-work plaque in the British Museum was found with the coins of Constantius (337-361) and a coin of Honorius (394-423) is set in a brooch with a beaded edging such as is imitated in the disk and the silver bowls. Alföldi[32] in another connection thought that the most probable period in the fourth century to find a representation of Alexander the Great would have been during the reign of Julian (361-363).

Aside from the fact that the Walters gold disk is an important object from a fourth-century goldsmith's workshop, it may serve to point up other things. It indicates a close connection between those who worked in silver and gold. In fact, the same workman might have worked in both materials. Naturally, fewer large items have survived in gold than in silver, and so the art historian in studying the great hoards of silver should take into consideration the objects in gold. Not only does the Walters gold disk point to a close relationship with the silver bowls, but the gold buckles found in Asia Minor together with the pierced panel

[23] For another treasure found near Aboukir, see R. Mowat, *Trésors de Karnak et Aboukir* in *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de France* (1902), pp. 281 ff. (treasure of the times of the Tetrarchy).

[24] J. W. Brailsford, *op. cit.*, nos. 9 and 10, and plate IV.

[25] A. Curle, *op. cit.*, no. 36 and pl. XXI.

[26] M. Vassits, *Le vaiselle d'argent du Musée National de Belgrade* in *Revue archéologique* (1903), part I, p. 26.

[27] O. M. Dalton, *op. cit.*, no. 252 and pl. IV.

[28] *Ibid.*, no. 103.

[29] M. Rosenberg, *Studien über Goldschmiedekunst in der Sammlung Figdor* in *Kunst und Kunsthandwerk,* XIV (1911), figs. 4 and 5.

[30] F. H. Marshall, *Catalogue of the Jewellery, Greek, Etruscan and Roman . . . in the British Museum* (London, 1911), no. 2860, pl. LXIII.

[31] J. M. C. Toynbee, *Some Notes on the Mildenhall Treasure* in *Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und Christliche Archäologie,* II (1953), p. 54.

[32] A. Alföldi, *Insignien und Tracht der Römischen Kaiser* in *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts,* L (1935), p. 154, note 3.

now in the British Museum feature engraved and nielloed heads recalling those on a silver flask in the Traprain Law Treasure. These buckles, likewise, display an engraved foliate motif frequent on objects in that treasure, and on others of the same period. We have documented find-spots for the goldsmith's work which help to confirm the assumed Mediterranean origin of much of the silver. Furthermore, those pieces found with coins will assist us in dating the silver treasures, as the Asia Minor gold pieces related to the Walters gold disk and to the Traprain Law hoard seem to confirm Toynbee's suggested date for the Mildenhall Treasure. They must all be studied in conjunction with each other in order to confirm the localization and dating of both the silversmith's and goldsmith's work.

## V

A massive gold ring in the Walters Art Gallery is probably one of the most remarkable of its type (fig. 10).[33] The shape is nearly triangular and two almost free-standing leopards support a very heavy bezel. The latter is set with a stone in two layers cut in intaglio with the figure of a Nike walking to the right. Rings with this odd shape appear to have been made to wear on the little finger and the present example, in spite of the awkward size and weight (over three ounces or 89.95 grammes), shows evidence of considerable wear.

Long ago C. W. King[34] identified these rings probably correctly as badges of military rank.[35] He tells how the Emperor Valerian ordered a ring weighing one ounce for Claudius Gothicus

FIGURE 10 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Gold Ring*

when he was made tribune to the Fifth Legion —the total gift consisted of "two brooches in silver gilt, one brooch in gold with a copper pin, one double-gemmed ring of one ounce, one neck-collar of a pound."[36] The Walters ring would have been designed for an official of even greater importance.

Rings of this shape have generally been dated in the third century. They were certainly popular then because a number have been found set with coins of third-century emperors or in treasures with coins of third-century emperors.[37] However, such a ring in the British Museum is set with a coin of Diocletian, which dates about 300 A.D. Furthermore, rings in jet of much the same shape were found at Bonn with coins of Gratian, Valens, and Valentian, confirming their continued popularity in the fourth century.[38]

The two leopards supporting the bezel re-

[33] No. 57.542.

[34] C. W. King, *Antique Gems and Rings* (London, 1872), I, p. 347.

[35] *Loc. cit.*

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 345.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 344. Rings from Tarsus now in the British Museum, found with coins of Gordian (d. 238). F. H. Marshall, *Catalogue of the Finger Rings, Greek, Etruscan and Roman . . . in the British Museum* (London, 1907), nos. 188, 268, and 801 (all from Tarsus), no. 263 with coin of Caracalla (215 A.D.) and no. 265 with coin of Elagabalus of 219 A.D.

[38] H. Lebner, *Ausgrabungs- und Fundberichte des Provinzialsmuseum in Bonn* in *Bonner Jahrbücher*, CX (1903), p. 181 and pl. VIII. Also, Marshall, *Finger Rings . . .*, no. 1627: amber ring called fourth century, engraved with Venus and Cupid on either side.

mind one of another ring with a leopard's head on either side of the bezel found at Brigetio in a hoard which A. Alföldi dates about 292/3.[39] The motif of two animals, one on either side of the bezel, occurs also on a ring in the British Museum found in the Seine near Rouen, which is set with a coin of the Emperor Marcian (450-457).[40] Actually the two leopards on the Walters ring resemble even more closely two silver handles, one a leopard, the other a panther, found with the fourth-century treasure at Traprain Law.[41] I would suggest a fourth-century date for the Walters ring, midway perhaps between the time of the Brigetio ring and the ring with the coin of Marcian, and close to that of the Traprain Law silver handles, found with other fourth-century objects.

The size indicates that the ring was made for a person of great importance. The Nike suggests that it might have been made in connection with a victory. I believe we may assume with considerable chance of being correct that the ring was imperial in origin and probably given to some victorious general. Again this piece of jewellery shows us how close could be the relationship between the work of the goldsmith (goldsmith and jeweller was often synonymous) and the silversmith in ancient times.

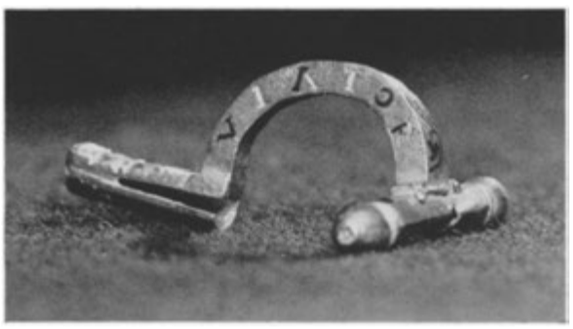

FIGURE 11 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Cross-bow Fibula*

## VI

A crossbow fibula in the Walters collection may also have been an imperial gift (figs. 11, 12).[42] Is is of the usual shape found particularly in the fourth century, but it is in gold and decorated in niello. Along the back of the curved section of the fibula is a vine scroll with dart-shaped leaves. On either side of the same curved section is an inscription in niello—VIVAS and VIATOR.

It is well known that fibulae were frequently given by princes, particularly emperors, to officers when they were invested with rank.[43] Two gold ones with the name Constantine, one in Vienna[44] and one in Turin,[45] have been connected with the Emperor Constantine, while another in Vienna is inscribed Julian and is thought to have been given as a present by the emperor of that name.[46] The ivory of Stilicho[47] shows him wearing a fibula which is almost exactly like one in gold now in the British Museum.[48] The Walters fibula is doubtless another

[39] A. Alföldi, *Trésor de la fin du III^e siècle trouvé à Brigetteo* in *Numizmatikai Közlöny,* XLVIII-XLIX (1949-50), p. 61 and pl. I, figs. 14-15.

[40] O. M. Dalton, *op. cit.,* no. 210, pl. IV.

[41] A. Curle, *op. cit.,* no. 123, p. 79 and pl. XXXI.

[42] No. 57.562. L. 2″; W. 1¾″ (0.05 x 0.045 m.).

[43] Mowat, *Note sur des bijoux antiques ornés de devises* in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de France* (1888), pp. 21 ff. Also *cf.* Gustav Behrens, *Römische Fibeln mit Inschrift* in *Reinecke Festschrift* (Mainz, 1950), pp. 1-12; Rudolf Noll, *Römerzeitliche Fibelninschriften* in *Germania,* XXX (1952), p. 395.

[44] Mowat, *Notice de quelques bijoux d'or au nom de Constantin* in *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de France* (1889), pp. 329 ff.

[45] *Idem, Notice . . .,* pp. 322 ff., and F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1923), V, part II, cols. 1489-90.

[46] A. Riegl, *Die Spätrömische Kunst-Industrie* (Vienna, 1901), fig. 55.

[47] H. Peirce and R. Tyler, *L'art byzantin* (Paris, 1932), I, pl. LII.

[48] *Ibid.,* pl. LIV.

[49] M. Rosenberg, *Niello bis zum Jahre 1000 nach Chr.* (Frankfurt, 1924), pp. 63 ff.

[50] *Idem, Der Goldschmiede Merkzeichen* (Berlin, 1928), IV, p. 679; and L. Matzulewitsch, *Byzantinische Antike* (Berlin, 1929), fig. 12.

example of a gift, possibly even an imperial one. The word *Viator* occurs infrequently, but I cannot connect it with an individual. The Walters fibula would seem to be closer in style to those connected with Constantine the Great, rather than to the later type of the Julian fibula in Vienna or the fibula in the British Museum.

These fibulae are again of interest in the study of silverwork. The one of Constantine in Vienna is decorated with a series of connecting hearts in niello, a motif that is found again and again in silver niello work and as late as the seventh century on the Fieschi-Morgan enamelled and nielloed reliquary in the Metropolitan Museum.[49] The vine motif with dart-shaped leaves of the Walters fibula is one that is found revived on a series of silver dishes or patens dating from the reigns of Phocas and Heraclius[50] (of which there is also a fine example in the Walters Art Gallery). Whether these motifs actually were continually in use by gold-and silversmiths or were revived by them from time to time is not known. But it again demonstrates the importance of studying gold- and silversmith's work as a whole rather than separately as we are sometimes inclined to do.

FIGURE 12 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Cross-bow Fibula*

FIGURE 1

WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Model for a Jewel-cabinet for Marie-Antoinette*

FIGURE 2 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Model for a Jewel-cabinet*
*(Detail of top ornament)*

# THE JEWEL-CABINET OF THE DAUPHINE MARIE-ANTOINETTE

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THE YOUNG ARCHDUCHESS Marie-Antoinette of Austria was scarcely fifteen years old when she arrived at the French Court in 1770 to marry the Dauphin. On the occasion of her marriage the princess received a number of very important gifts, among which was a jewel-cabinet presented by the King, Louis XV. This piece of furniture, which is now lost, was executed in an unusual manner technically, as we shall see.

The model of a jewel-cabinet which is now in the collection of the Walters Art Gallery[1] preserves for us another design for a jewel-cabinet—doubtless the first conceived—which was presented to the future Dauphine on the same occasion, but never carried out. Both its somewhat exceptional polychromy and its ex-

FIGURE 3 PARIS, BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE

BELLANGER

*Project for a Jewel-cabinet for the Dauphine, Marie-Antoinette*

quisite and especially rich design give it a character which is quite out of the ordinary—and one which unfortunately we know little about (fig. 1).

These two pieces of furniture conceived during the reign of Louis XV, four years before his death, already display all the characteristics of the style which we customarily call "Louis XVI." We find the restraint of line, the absence of curves, and the use of decorative motives influenced by the contemporary excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum. One may recall that in this same year, 1770, the Comtesse du Barry had shown a similar infatuation

with designs inspired by the antique in the furnishing of her summer-house at Louveciennes. The royal favorite contributed in large degree to the spreading of the fashion for these "formes nouvelles," as they were called, the success of which endured for a quarter of a century.

* * * * * *

The jewel-cabinet which Louis XV offered to his granddaughter-in-law was designed by the architect, Bellanger. We know the arrangement of this piece, thanks to a very large drawing in Chinese ink and wash which is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale (fig.3).[2] This bears a very precise inscription: "Projet de meuble destiné à serrer les bijoux de Mme la Dauphine executé d'apres les dessins de M. Bellanger architecte dessinateur des Menus Plaisirs du Roi." On the lower part of the document is the signature of the duc d'Aumont, preceded by the words "approuvé pour être exécuté."

A long table, the eight legs of which are connected by a stretcher carrying three ornamental motifs, supports a massive rectilinear cabinet. The front of this is composed of three doors, the middle one of which is ornamented with an antique brazier surmounted by a head of Apollo accompanied by the radiation associated with the sun god. The two lateral panels display the respective armorials of the young couple. The escutcheon with the quarterings of the Dauphin displays: 1 and 4 of France, 2 and 3 or, a dolphin hauriant embowed azure, finned and langued gules.[3] These emblematic dolphins reappear in quantity and in a much less stylized manner on the upper part of the cabinet. Two groups of four of these marine creatures, tied together by their trefoil-tipped tails, are placed on top of the *armoire.* They flank a plump cushion ornamented with ribbons and fringe on which is ostentatiously placed the crown of the heir presumptive, of which the arches are composed of dolphins, as dictated by heraldic rule. Finally, in relief on the entablature are two affronted dolphins flanking a conch, surrounded by aquatic plants.

The duc d'Aumont, First Gentleman of the Bedchamber, peer of France and a great patron of the arts, superintended the execution of this great cabinet, which preserved its original aspect for no more than four years. In 1774, the death of Louis XV brought to the young couple the royal crown, which was to become so burdensome. The jewel-cabinet remained in the service of the queen, but she hastened to remove all the emblems proper to the heir apparent and replace them with royal insignia. The groups of dolphins were taken away, the crown became royal and the armorials of the Dauphin gave place to the escutcheon with the fleurs de lis or on a field azure, reserved to the reigning sovereigns of France.

A souvenir of this new aspect of the jewel-cabinet is preserved for us by two painters, Gautier-Dagoty and Madame Vigée Lebrun.

The gouache of Gautier-Dagoty, which has been discussed by Monsieur Pierre Verlet,[4] was acquired in 1938 by Monsieur Gaston Briere for the Chateau at Versailles (fig.4). The artist pre-

[1] No. 65.20. H. .795 m.; L. .685 m.; W. .22 m. Our study of this piece is based upon photographs sent to us through the courtesy of Mr. Philippe Verdier, Curator of Medieval and Subsequent Decorative Art at the Walters Art Gallery.

[2] Cabinet des Estampes, *Ha58, info,* various projects, fol. 32. H. 0.63 m.; W. 0.74 m.; F. de Salverte, *Les ébénistes du dix-huitième siècle,* Paris, Bruxelles, 1923, pl. XX.

[3] ". . . un dauphin allumé, langué, crête, barbé, oreillé, lorré, et peautré de gueules, rosé en pal." The heraldic creature, so well described by *Le Grand Armorial,* reminds us of the origin of the title of Dauphin, which was originally reserved to the Comtes du Viennois and d'Auvergne. The dolphin charged the escutcheons of these princes. The stylized fish was represented in profile, its body curved in a semi-circle and its head large in proportion, so that it had only a distant resemblance to natural appearances. Shortly after the ceding of the Dauphiné to France, the title reverted by right to the eldest son of the King of France, and the province became his apanage. Charles V was the first to have the title of Dauphin, Charles X was the last.

[4] *Bulletin des Musées de France* (April, 1938), pp. 49-51.

FIGURE 4 VERSAILLES, PALACE

GAUTIER-DAGOTY

*Marie-Antoinette in her Bed-room*

sents to us the young sovereign in her chamber before her dressing table covered with point d'Espagne. Marie-Antoinette is dressed, having just left the hands of her hair-dresser and of her ladies in waiting. She is about to play the harp, her fingers plucking at the strings, but patiently she pauses to listen with interest to the supplication which one of her maids of honor asks permission to read. The lady's wide striped gown partly covers the bench on which she is seated. The request is signed by Gautier-Dagoty who wishes to be authorized to bear the title of "Painter to the Queen." At the end of the room, beyond a sumptuous bed with a canopy, one may distinguish the great jewel-cabinet, displaying the arms of France. This piece of furniture, merely sketched, is partly hidden by two gentlemen. The delineation is not very precise, since the artist has concentrated his efforts on the representation of the personages in the foreground. He has, moreover, complacently introduced himself at the right of the composition, in the act of painting the portrait of his queen.

The picture by Elisabeth Vigée Lebrun is well known (fig. 6). It belongs to the museum of Versailles and represents Marie-Antoinette and her children. The queen, at the height of her beauty, wears a magnificent gown of orange-red velvet, around which runs a double band of fox fur. Her headdress is a heavy, fur-trimmed toque of the same material, in which are thrust aigrettes and ostrich-plumes. The queen holds on her knees the younger of her sons, the duc de Normandie, the future Louis XVII. Madame Royale, Marie-Thérèse Charlotte of France, leans against her mother's chair, while on the right, near the cradle of his young brother, stands Louis-Joseph Xavier of France, the first Dauphin, who died in 1789. In the shadows of the background the artist has indicated a single piece of furniture—the jewel-cabinet.[5] This time it is represented with great precision, so that the transformed armorials are clearly visible and we may appreciate the color and richness of its original appearance, of which Germain Bapst has left us some details.[6]

The understructure of the cabinet in carved and gilded wood supported on the center stretcher the eagle of Austria, its spread wings holding back a heavy garland of flowers. The symbolic bird rested on a shield adorned with the sun—recalling, the author says, the emblem of France. The body of the cabinet was partly covered with red velvet embroidered in gold and ornamented with elements of sculptured gilt bronze. The two groups of dolphins, so promptly removed, were in carved and gilded wood. The crown had a cap of crimson silk and was set with pearls and colored stones, like the coronation crown. The interior design was as carefully detailed as the exterior. Each door concealed a group of eight drawers sheathed in gold cloth and pale blue satin outlined with gold braid. Each drawer was furnished with a bronze ring in the shape of a laurel crown.

Bocciardi, draughtsman of the Cabinet du Roi, made the detailed drawing of the cabinet after the designs of the architect Bellanger, the *ébéniste* Ewald[7] was charged with the details which demanded his specialty, the *miroitier* La Roue attended to the execution of the embroideries and the covering of the sheathed parts with stuffs and with lace. Gouthière cast and chased the bronzes, certain ones of which were moulded from waxes by Houdon.

This cabinet by its very fragility seemed peculiarly destined to destruction. Nevertheless, it was preserved until the period of the Direc-

[5] J. Niclausse, *Thomire,* Librairie Gründ (Paris, 1947), p. 76.

[6] *Notes et souvenirs artistiques sur Marie-Antoinette* in *Gazette des beaux-arts* (1893), 2ième semestre, p. 381.

[7] Archives Nationales, $0^1$2875.

FIGURE 5 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Model for a Jewel-cabinet*
*(Detail of end)*

toire. The government, whose treasury was desperately in debt, decided to sell it. It was entrusted to two Greek merchants who made a business of barter and exportation to the Levant. This beautiful object, covered as it was with emblems of the French monarchy, could not at this troubled time find a buyer except beyond our frontiers. Up to the present, no trace of it has ever been found.

It is necessary to recall these details before undertaking the examination of the *maquette* preserved in the Walters Art Gallery (figs. 1,2,5,7), which sometimes has been wrongly supposed to be the model that was actually carried out for the daughter of Marie-Thérèse.[8] This model, in wood, wax and painted paper, figured in the sale of Mme. C. Lelong at the beginning of the century.[9] It is of considerable interest first because documents of this nature dating from the eighteenth century are extremely rare,[10] and secondly because it acquaints us with the aspect of an especially charming piece of furniture designed for the royal family on a particular occasion. Unfortunately, this small-scale model, the execution of which seems so painstaking to us today, did not receive full approval, but, as we have just seen, another composition was preferred.

This *maquette* carries on its back a label: "First (and unexecuted) model presented to the Dauphine Marie-Antoinette by Louis XV in 1770." This description hardly seems open to doubt.

The Walters jewel-cabinet is in general form quite close to the armoire by Bellanger. A long console, with a wide band ornamented with rinceaux, is supported on eight legs grouped in sets of four. Each set is connected by an undershelf supporting an ovoid vase on the cover of which kneel two fauns on either side of a *pot à feu*. On this elegant base rests the main rectangular cupboard, architectural in form. The corners are marked by four columns set in cups of acanthus leaves from which spring wreathed flutes whose turning movement echoes the bases below, gadrooned in spirals. The columns project somewhat from the main mass, diminishing

[8] Guy Francis Laking, *The Furniture of Windsor Castle* (London, 1905), pl. p. 176.

[9] Sale, Paris, Galerie Georges Petit, April 27-May 1, 1903, lot 290. Brought 4,100 francs. Subsequently in the possession of H. W. Harding.

[10] *Cf.* wax *maquettes* referred to by H. Lefuel, *Georges Jacob, ébéniste du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, 1923), pls. X, XI.

FIGURE 6

VERSAILLES, PALACE

ELISABETH VIGEE-LEBRUN

*Marie-Antoinette and her Children*

FIGURE 7

*Model for a Jewel-cabinet*
*(Detail of front)*

WALTERS ART GALLERY

the heavy effect of the cabinet. The front of the piece is very richly ornamented, being divided by three caryatids who are brought forward slightly and support the entablature. These gracious female telamons are clad in antique fashion in very short tunics of fanciful conception. The chest is bare, revealing carefully modelled breasts, while the thin flowing fabric of their dresses, like a wet veil, reveals the form of the body beneath. Garlands of flowers link these charming and graceful figurines whose roguish faces recall the types of Clodion. There are several small scenes which depict the Olympian deities and episodes of the chase, delicately drawn on paper in Chinese ink and gouache—white figures on a blue ground. Numerous decorative elements—lyres, rinceaux, sphinxes *à la grecque*,[11] lion masks, squirrels and doves, throng an already copious decor, to which were appropriately added eight dolphins with bulging heads which remind us—more subtly this time—that the cabinet was destined for the heirs presumptive of the kingdom. The initials of Louis and Marie-Antoinette are inscribed in two medallions festooned with light cords. The eagle of Austria is set on top of the chest, with wings outspread. The bird holds in its talons two lily sprays and two heavy boughs, each supporting at its end a sphere charged with fleur de lis and surmounted by a crown, symbolizing the alliance of the two houses (fig. 2).

How interesting it would be to know the comments with which this model was received when it was presented before the Court! Then we might know the intentions of the designer as to the details of the finished piece. The polychromy of the *maquette* allows us to guess quite uncertainly at the artist's intention. It would seem that the fine dark tonality and satin marking of mahogany would be admirably appropriate for this cabinet and would set off to advantage the decorative elements executed in chased and gilded bronze. These would envelop the chest of the armoire like a glittering net. The delicate compositions on blue ground might be painted in *grisaille* to suggest cameos

FIGURE 8 VERSAILLES, PALACE

F. SCHWERDFERGER

*Jewel-cabinet Presented by Paris to Marie-Antoinette*

[11] In 1783 the brothers Rousseau decorated the large sitting-room of the queen at Versailles with analogous sphinxes. These winged sphinxes with women's heads are seated two by two on either side of flaming tripods. They do not come from Egypt, but straight from Greek vases. In fact, as M. Guillaume Janneau observes, *La meuble*, Tome III, p. 6: "the Egyptian sphinx is masculine and not winged, while the Greek one is feminine in its bust and has the wings of an eagle. It is the latter which has been copied in French art since Louis XIV. The Egyptian campaign will again bring elements of inspiration which will influence the Empire style."

(*Continued on page 91*)

## THE JEWEL-CABINET OF MARIE-ANTOINETTE

(*Continued from page 77*)

and executed like miniatures on vellum or on thin slabs of ivory, unless the Sèvres manufactory would have carried them out in white biscuit with blue ground in imitation of Wedgwood.

It appears that the Walters *maquette* had not been forgotten when, in 1787, the queen received a new jewel-case offered to her by the city of Paris. This piece, which was executed by the *ébéniste* F. Schwerdferger, is well known, for it is preserved at the Chateau of Versailles (fig. 8). It lies outside the limits we have set ourselves for this study. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention the many details which are close—such as the architectural caryatids on the front, the frieze of palmettes decorating the cornice, the central motive of the lower entablature expanding in width, the same disposition of the legs. But the evolution of style is there also—the maidens personifying the seasons have lost the playful grace of the figurines of 1770. They already potentially embody a modicum of the rigidity which was to assume its full character under the Empire.

FIGURE 1 WALTERS ART GALLERY

*Here attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*St. Lucy (lateral part of altarpiece)*

# A PAINTING OF ST. LUCY IN THE WALTERS ART GALLERY AND SOME CLOSELY RELATED REPRESENTATIONS

BY GERTRUDE COOR

DURING A RECENT VISIT to the Walters Art Gallery I was captivated by a painting of great refinement in form and color which represents St. Lucy of Syracuse (fig. 1). This painting, which, exclusive of the modern frame, measures approximately 28x18 inches (71x45 cm.),[1] is attributed to Pietro Lorenzetti. The size, together with the shape and composition, indicates that it was originally in the main tier of a polyptych of the type exemplified by a number of intact examples from the circles of Duccio di Buoninsegna, Simone Martini, and Pietro Lorenzetti. St. Lucy, who wears a pink-rose dress and mantle with brown borders and lining, is shown holding several attributes: the dagger with which she was executed, and a vessel containing her eyes and a flame, both relating to the Latin form of her name, *Lucia*, which suggested light.[2] Her blond hair is partly covered with a white veil, and her head is crowned with a diadem, referring to her noble birth. Her head is framed by a large halo of elaborate design and delicate workmanship, and it is surmounted by a gilded arch of moulded wood. In the top corners of the panel one discerns parts of two painted circles, decorated with geometric and floral ornament and surrounded by foliage.

The panel, which is clean, has suffered considerably. The color of the semi-transparent white flesh is largely lost, and in the face and on the neck and visible hand we see now mainly gray-green under-painting. Loss of color is very marked also on the mantle lining and the vessel, and most of the gold leaf of the background is modern. A vertical split through St. Lucy's left eye and damages in the lower part of the figure were repaired in 1938.

The panel was acquired by Henry Walters in

[1] 37.756. Exact size: 27⅞ x 17 15/16 in. (71 x 45 cm.). I am much obliged to Mr. Edward S. King, Director of the Walters Art Gallery, for information concerning the size, condition, and provenance of the panel.

[2] This name form has been considered to be a contraction of the word *lucida,* or (in the *Golden Legend*) even of the words *lucis via*. The attributes seen in the Baltimore painting were employed perhaps a little earlier by Pietro Lorenzetti in the repainted full-length figure at S. Lucia tra le Rovinate, Florence [E. DeWald, *Pietro Lorenzetti* (Cambridge, 1903), fig. 38], but there the dagger is plunged into the neck. The attribute of the eyes, based on a late legend according to which Lucy tore out her beautiful eyes, does not seem to have been employed in Tuscan art before the second quarter of the fourteenth century. In accordance with tradition, in the Segnesque representation of St. Lucy in the Budapest Museum [G. von Terey, *Die Gemäldegalerie des Museums für bildende Künste in Budapest* (Berlin, 1916), fig. p. 29], and still in painting no. 38 in the Siena Gallery (fig. 7) the virgin martyr merely holds a flaming lamp.

FIGURE 2 NEW YORK, SAMUEL H. KRESS FOUNDATION

*Here attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA
*St. Vitalis (lateral part of altarpiece)*
*(Courtesy Samuel H. Kress Foundation)*

1902, in his purchase of the Massarenti collection. It is listed in the Massarenti collection catalogues of 1894 and 1897, respectively, as a work by Simone Martini.[3] This attribution has been replaced since then by the more plausible one to Pietro Lorenzetti, which has been supported by Berenson, Van Marle, and Wehle.[4] The correctness of this ascription has never fully convinced DeWald, who in his study of Pietro Lorenzetti implicitly rejected the painting as a product of this artist.[5] Indeed, this attribution cannot be sufficiently supported because in the St. Lucy Segnesque and Simonesque characteristics are combined with Pietran ones in a fashion not met with in any certain work by Lorenzetti.

The Walters saint immediately reminded me of two panels from a dismembered altarpiece which I had seen a few years previously in a storeroom of the National Gallery, Washington, where they were on loan from the Kress Collection, New York, from 1941 until 1951 (figs.2, 4). On one of these panels is depicted a warrior saint who wears armor and a red mantle and holds a mace, and on the other a crowned virgin martyr with a palm branch in her right hand. The iconography of the female figure suggests that we are dealing with a representation of St. Catherine of Alexandria,[6] and that of the male personage points to an image of St. Vitalis, an early Christian officer who was beaten to death with a mace. This little known martyr was depicted in the later fourteenth century in a manner very similar to that seen here, but in full length, by the Sienese painter Paolo di Giovanni Fei.[7]

The Kress paintings, which measure 27 by 16½ inches (69x42 cm.), have been restored—as can easily be seen even in the reproduction in respect to the hair and mantle of St. Vitalis—but fortunately they have not undergone major changes. They were loaned to the National Gallery by Mr. Samuel Kress and had previously been in possession of Lord Holland in London. Nothing is known of their earlier whereabouts. In the National Gallery's *Preliminary Catalogue* they are classified as Sienese representations of 1320-1330.[8] This date is somewhat too early, but the anonymous cataloguer deserves credit for the remark that the dominant influences on these saints are those of Segna di Bonaventura and Pietro Lorenzetti.

The Kress paintings and the Walters example agree so well in dimensions, proportions, shape, ornament, style and color scheme that all three saints would seem to be not only by the same hand but parts of the same work. As a matter of fact, with her jeweled crown, blond hair, semi-transparent flesh, while veil, and light blue dress and mantle, the St. Catherine matches the St. Lucy perfectly. Even the golden borders of the veils and the colored borders of the mantles are

[3] Rome, Palazzo Accoramboni, *Catalogue of Pictures, Marbles, Bronzes, Antiquities, etc.* . . . (Forzani, 1894), p. 8(33); and *Catalogue du Musée de Peinture, Sculpture et Archéologie* . . . (Vatican, 1897), p. 10(47).

[4] B. Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1932), p. 292; and revised Italian ed., *Pitture italiane del Rinascimento* (Milano, 1936), p. 251; R. Van Marle, *Le scuole della pittura italiana* (L'Aja, 1932-34), II, p. 392, n. 2; and H. Wehle, *A Catalogue of Italian, Spanish, and Byzantine Paintings* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1940), p. 75. On the basis of the haloes and the spandrel ornament alone Wehle's contention that the Baltimore St. Lucy formed probably a part of the same altarpiece as Pietro Lorenzetti's St. Catherine in the Metropolitan Museum (13.212) can be refuted. These decorative details connect the New York St. Catherine with the St. Dorothy in the Perkins collection at Assisi, and with the Madonna and Child in the Loeser collection in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (*cf.* DeWald, *op. cit.*, figs. 36, 37, 82).

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[6] I consider it possible that an iconographically and stylistically closely related representation in a Segnesque pentaptych which is at S. Antonio Abbate, Montalcino [F. Bargagli-Petrucci *Pienza Montalcino e la Val d'Orcia senese* (Bergamo, 1911), fig. p. 155], is an early painting by the same hand as the Kress St. Catherine.

[7] In one of the three lateral parts from a polyptych in the Siena Gallery (no. 126), G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), fig. 1151.

[8] Washington, National Gallery of Art, *Preliminary Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture* (1941), p. 182 (138, 139). The misidentification of the male saint in this catalogue as Sigismund of Burgundy was corrected by Kaftal, *op. cit.*, col. 1025, who referred to the painting as a product of Duccio's school.

FIGURE 3 SIENA, PINACOTECA

*Attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*St. Bartholomew (lateral part of altarpiece)*

very similar, and the rendering of the hair and flesh, and the shapes of the eyebrows, eyes, and ears are almost identical.

The color, style, and ornament of the Walters St. Lucy brought to my mind furthermore a representation of St. Bartholomew in a lateral part from a polyptych in the Siena Gallery (no. 37; fig.3). This fairly well preserved painting shows the Apostle surmounted by small figures of SS. John the Evangelist and Nicholas of Myra. Bartholomew, who enjoyed special veneration in Siena in the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth century,[9] is depicted holding a book and the knife with which he was flayed, and wearing an ochre robe and light blue mantle with pink-rose lining. The inscriptions on the painting, which give the Latin forms of the names of the saints above, are original, and the inner framework is largely intact. The protective outer frame was added when the painting was restored in 1931.

The polyptych part is recorded in the Siena Gallery since 1842, but its provenance is unknown.[10] It is currently labeled as a Tuscan product and in recent years has been considered by Brandi to be possibly by Jacopo del Casentino,[11] by Berenson to be by Segna,[12] and by Van Marle to be by a follower of Duccio.[13] Several scholars have expressed the opinion that the painting is by the same hand as the polyptych parts no. 38 in the same gallery (fig.7), but so far there has been no agreement in the attributions to a known artist.

Exclusive of the outer framework, the Siena

[9] For this veneration consult E. Carli, *Vetrata duccesca* (Firenze, 1946), p. 48.

[10] *Cf.* C. Brandi, *La Regia Pinacoteca di Siena* (Roma, 1933), pp. 24-26.

[11] *Loc. cit.*

[12] Berenson, *Italian Pictures,* p. 524; Italian edit., p. 451.

[13] Van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting* (The Hague, 1923-38), II, p. 94; Italian edit., II, p. 95.

FIGURE 4 NEW YORK, SAMUEL H. KRESS FOUNDATION

*Here attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*St. Catherine (lateral part of altarpiece)*

FIGURE 5 FORMERLY ALBERT KELLER COLLECTION

*Attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*St. John the Baptist (lateral upper part of altarpiece)*

polyptych part (fig.3) measures 46 by 17¼ inches (118x44 cm.). Inclusive of the halo, the main figure is about 26⅜ inches (67 cm.) high, and each small saint about 11 inches (27 cm.). The dimensions, as well as the panel shape, composition, and iconography of the St. Bartholomew, the moulding of the arch over the main figure, the arrangement and rendering of the draperies, treatment of hair, mustache, and beard, shape of the eyes, nose, and mouth, and modeling with line, light, and color suggest that this painting formed a part of the altarpiece to which the Baltimore and Washington saints belonged. Such a function is called to mind even by reproductions of different scale. It is expressly urged by the ornament of the spandrels and of the Apostle's dress and halo, and it is not seriously opposed even by the discrepancies in the shape of the ears of the Bartholomew when compared to the same features in the panels in the United States, because the ears of the Siena saint have been restored.

Intact Sienese altarpieces of the first half of the fourteenth century furnish reasons for the supposition that the work which is here being partially reconstructed was most likely a pentaptych, in which a central image of the Virgin and Child was flanked at the left by SS. Lucy and Vitalis, and at the right by SS. Bartholomew and Catherine. It would seem that originally all these figures were surmounted by coupled representations of small saints and crowned by pinnacles with additional figures of saints or of the blessing Redeemer and angels.

The small figures in the Siena painting (fig.6) are less evolved and more reminiscent of Segna's art than is the Bartholomew. Their study leads me to draw attention to the pictures of St. James the Greater, St. John the Baptist (fig.5), Mary Magdalen, and St. Dominic (fig.8) which, in the original form of pairs, the German painter and collector, Johann Anton Ramboux, acquired in Italy during the first half of the nineteenth century. The Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne purchased these in 1867 at the auction of

[14] For these paintings see especially Berenson's references in *Dedalo,* XI (1930-31), p. 263, fig. p. 266; or in *International Studio,* XCVII (Oct. 1930), p. 31, fig. 2; in *Italian Pictures,* p. 396 (Lucerne, Coll. Steinmeyer, and New York, Coll. Keller); and in the Italian edition, p. 341 (Amsterdam, Coll. Lanz, and New York, Coll. Keller). The Baptist and Dominic from the Keller collection were during World War II on the New York market, and shortly afterwards they were returned to Europe.

[15] J. A. Ramboux, *Katalog der Gemälde alter italienischer Meister (1221-1640) in der Sammlung des Conservator . . .* (Cöln, 1862), p. 14 (66, 67).

[16] J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in Italy . . .* (London, 1864-66), I, p. 59, n. 1; Italian edit. (Firenze, 1875-87), III, pp. 35 f.; ed. L. Douglas (London, 1903-14), III, p. 29, n. 4; and ed. E. Hutton (London, 1908-09), II, p. 23, n. 4.

[17] See note 14.

FIGURE 6 SIENA, PINACOTECA

*Attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA
*St. John the Evangelist and St. Nicholas (detail of figure 3)*
*(Courtesy Frick Art Reference Library)*

the Ramboux collection but sold them about 1923. Now, after the splitting up of the coupled figures, the panels have entered private collections, partly in Europe and partly in the United States.[14] These paintings, each of which measures about 11 by 8 inches (28x20 cm.), match the small Siena saints in size, ornament and style. Considering that the James and John, and the Magdalen and Dominic originally belonged together, and that the Baptist and the Magdalen are sharply turned to the right, it seems therefore very possible that the two pairs originally surmounted the Lucy and Vitalis. Ramboux attributed them to Duccio,[15] but Cavalcaselle ascribed them shortly afterwards to Niccolò di Segna.[16] This attribution, which has found favor with Berenson,[17] seems to me correct.

On the basis of the important similarities in composition, iconography, form, execution, and color between the paintings nos. 37 and 38 in the Siena Gallery (figs.3, 7) I join Jacobsen, De

FIGURE 7

SIENA, PINACOTECA

*Attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*Lateral Parts of Altarpiece*

Nicola, Perkins, and Van Marle in the view that both works are by the same hand. And on the basis of the relations of these two paintings to Niccolò di Segna's documented works, the Madonna of 1336 (fig.9) and the Crucifix of 1345,[18] I agree with Cavalcaselle that both show this artist's manner.[19] Although comparisons between the figures of saints and the representations of the Virgin and Child and the Crucified do not offer striking similarities, they make it evident that in regard to morphological details and the modeling with light and shadow and color, St. Michael's face is closely analogous to the Virgin's, that the arrangement and rendering of Bartholomew's mantle in painting no. 37 are repeated with slight variations in the mantle of the St. John of 1345, and that the treatment of the hair and flesh, and the representation of the draperies in all these paintings show a far-reaching agreement. Furthermore, one observes important similarities in the design and execution of the haloes, and in the ornament of the garments and spandrels.

Niccolò di Segna's dated panels indicate that, in addition to his father's art, he was influenced by Simone Martini and subsequently by Pietro Lorenzetti. The painting of 1336 recalls Madonnas by Simone as well as those by Segna, while the Crucifix of 1345 brings to mind late works by Pietro Lorenzetti in addition to considerably earlier Crucifixes by Segna. Inasmuch as the saints in the United States show some effect of Simone's art in addition to influences of Segna and Pietro, the altarpiece to which these paintings belonged would seem to have been produced close to 1340. The strongly Simonesque painting no. 38 in the Pinacoteca, Siena, appears best placed in the early 1330's,[20] and Niccolò's Madonna in the same gallery (no. 44),[21] originally the center of a Gothic altarpiece, was surely produced shortly after the work of 1336.

In the search for the central panel of the altarpiece which we are attempting to reconstruct,

FIGURE 8 FORMERLY ALBERT KELLER COLLECTION

*Attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*St. Dominic (lateral upper part of altarpiece)*

[18] Reproduced in Van Marle, *le scuole,* II, fig. 100. For the documents relating to Niccolò di Segna consult P. Bacci, *Fonti e commenti per la storia dell'arte senese* (Siena, 1944), pp. 44-46; and *idem, Identificazione e restauro della tavola del 1336 di Niccolò di Segna da Siena,* in *Bollettino d'arte,* XXIX (1935-36), pp. 1-13. This article contains some good observations concerning Niccolò's style.

[19] Crowe and Cavacaselle, *A History of Painting,* Italian edit., III, p. 35; and ed. Douglas, III, p. 29, n. 5. In the just quoted article in the *Bollettino d'arte,* Bacci attributed painting no. 38 in the Siena Gallery to Niccolò di Segna, but he did not refer to painting no. 37.

[20] Still more strongly Simonesque are the somewhat earlier three panels from a triptych of the Madonna and Child and SS. John the Baptist and John the Evangelist by the same hand in S. Giovanni Battista, San Giovanni d'Asso (Van Marle, *The Development,* II, fig. 57).

[21] This painting is discussed on p. 10 and reproduced under figure 4 of Bacci's article in the *Bollettino d'arte* of 1935-36.

FIGURE 9 MONTE SIEPI, CAPELLA S. GALGANO

NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*Madonna and Child* (1336) (*center of altarpiece*)

FIGURE 10 FORMERLY PRATO, S. FRANCESCO

*Here attributed to* NICCOLO DI SEGNA

*Madonna and Child (center of altarpiece)*

neither of Niccolò's two known single Madonnas offers help. The dated painting formed the back of the central part of a triptych of the Crucifixion, and the Siena group of the Virgin and Child is framed by a pointed trefoil arch. However, the shape of a third panel with a representation of the Madonna and Child suggests a possible connection of this kind (fig. 10), and it is therefore very unfortunate that this panel's dimensions are not known. The work in question, which has been cut down on all sides and crudely repainted, was in the 1930's in S. Francesco, Prato. Its earlier whereabouts are unknown, and, according to the information which I received in 1953 in Prato, it was sold by the monks of S. Francesco during World War II. Perkins published this panel as a late product of the school of Duccio,[22] and Berenson assigned it to Segna.[23] To my knowledge it has not previously been attributed to Niccolò di Segna, although the haloes alone point to this artist. A comparison of the reproductions of the Prato painting and that on Monte Siepi (figs. 10, 9) indicates that these two Madonnas are by the same artist, and the broad and heavy figures in the repainted work suggest that this was produced between Niccolò's Madonna in the Siena Gallery and the Crucifix of 1345.

Until twenty years ago, when Bacci identified the Madonna panel in the Cappella di S. Galgano on Monte Siepi as a part of the work which Niccolò di Segna had executed in 1336 for Ristoro da Selvatella, Niccolò's art had received little attention and had commonly been underestimated. The reason for this lack of understanding is easily explained by the fact that until 1935 the only known documented work by Niccolò was the Crucifix of 1345, a rather crude imitation of Pietro Lorenzetti's late art. Since the publication of the Madonna of 1336, Bacci's attributions of this painting and the closely related Madonna in the Siena Gallery have found general acceptance, and it is by now widely recognized that, under the influence of Simone's art in addition to Segna's, Niccolò produced some very attractive works during the 1330's. Bacci followed Cavalcaselle in adding to the examples of this artist's Simonesque phase the polyptych parts no. 38 in the Siena Gallery. Partly on the basis of this work and partly on the basis of Niccolò's documented panels, I have been led to attribute to him the St. Bartholomew in the Pinacoteca, Siena (fig. 3), the St. Lucy in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (fig. 1), the SS. Vitalis and Catherine in the Kress Foundation, New York (figs. 2, 4), the Madonna and Child formerly in S. Francesco, Prato (fig. 10), and the small St. James the Greater, St. John the Baptist, Mary Magdalen, and St. Dominic from the Ramboux collection. If not all, at least a part of these paintings formed portions of an altarpiece produced close to 1340. At that time Niccolò di Segna (known to have been at least twenty-one years of age in 1331) was probably about forty years old. Since we know nothing of the artist after 1345, there is reason to suppose that he may have died in the devastating plague of 1348.[24]

[22] In *Diana*, VII (1932), p. 46.

[23] *Cf.* Berenson, *Pitture italiane*, p. 450.

[24] Stylistically closely connected with Niccolò's documented paintings and with the panels which have here been attributed to this artist is the altarpiece of the Resurrection in the Pinacoteca of Borgo San Sepolcro [reproduced in *Diana*, V (1930), pls. 11-16]. This polyptych, which is strongly influenced by Pietro Lorenzetti, has recently been referred to by Longhi as Niccolò di Segna's masterpiece: R. Longhi, *Pietro della Francesca*, 2nd edit. (Milano, 1946), p. 158. Because of an unaccustomed rigidness in the figures, unmatched artificialities in the arrangements of the garments, and a lack of expressiveness in the faces, I find it difficult to believe that Niccolò himself painted this work (which cannot have come into existence before the 1330's). It would seem to me more likely that it was produced by an associate of Niccolò, as was perhaps his brother Francesco (for the records relating to the painter Francesco di Segna consult Bacci, *Fonti e commenti*, pp. 46 f.).