

FEBRUARY 1968

ART
FOR-
GERY

The Metropolitan Museum of Art BULLETIN

ART FORGERY

*This Bulletin is devoted to various aspects of art forgery.
The first four articles are adapted from a series of seminars
presented by the Museum in November and December 1967.*

The Game of Duplicity

THOMAS P. F. HOVING *Director*

THE GAME OF DUPLICITY, the fine—or unfine—art of forgery is something that involves everyone in the museum business almost daily. These seminars will discuss four aspects of forgery: this one will cover the general aspects of the forger's game and the detection thereof. The second program will concern style and the eye: the intuitive investigation of a work of art that reveals it as a genuine piece or as nothing. In this museum the eye is king. The scientific apparatus that one brings to bear in discovering a forgery is first minister to the king, and the technical analysis of art objects will be dealt with in the third session. The last one will discuss the extremely complex legal aspects of investigating and revealing forgeries.

Why are we having this series of seminars? There are several reasons. First of all, the sudden rash of news stories was a very important factor in deciding to air some of these problems. And secondly, we think that such discussions—the types of fakes and their detection—are a vital part of the Museum's educational obligation to the public: this is part of the daily life of people who work in museums; it's something that we worry about, often after the fact. Another reason is a feeling that the public has many questions that it would like to pose; I hope this will become an arena where some of these questions find answers.

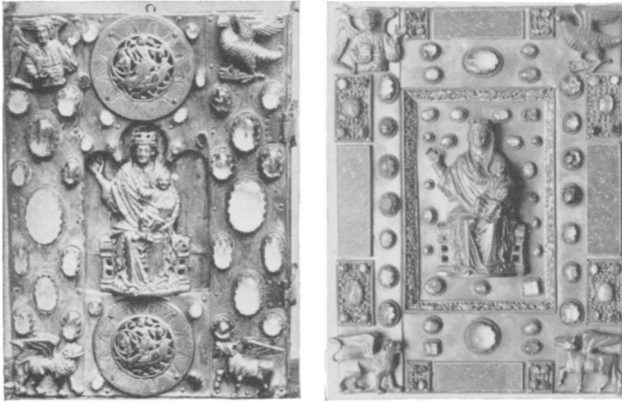
If you're going to discuss forgery in the broadest possible sense, you must erect around this term two wide parentheses. The first is that there has not been a single collector in the entire history of collecting who has not made a mistake. And the other parenthesis is a quotation from the great art historian Max Friedländer: "It is indeed an error to collect a forgery, but it is a sin to stamp a genuine piece with the seal of falsehood." That's pretty rough stuff, but I've met many a young student who will

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FIGURE 1

*Forgery*

come and dismiss as a fake, offhandedly, something you've just purchased. The point is that collectors and museums have this tension of apprehension, and it takes a great deal of study, knowledge, expertise to be able to suspect and then prove that something is no good. At the same time you have to watch very carefully that you don't commit the sin of branding something a falsehood when it is, in fact, a genuine piece that you simply don't have the perceptivity to know about.

Forgery is not a modern phenomenon. Just after the first true artist began to do his first work of art, you can be sure that the first forger began to do his. During the Roman Empire, for instance, there was an extraordinary amount of copying: some of it straight forgery, I'm sure, although it's not easy to prove; a great deal, however, was not forging, but an artistic harking back to earlier styles, sometimes for political reasons, sometimes for family or traditional reasons. It must have been hair-raising to live in Rome during the time of Hadrian. You can imagine the clank of chisel upon marble as people hurried to get "genuine Greek things, just brought over from Greece" to impress the emperor.

In my particular field of endeavor, the medieval period, artists and patrons were scandalously keen about forging things. In Venice, in the thirteenth century, a great workshop of mosaicists, of sculptors, of document

FIGURE 2

*Forgery*

writers spent years turning out work done in earlier styles, trying to prove that the Cathedral of St. Mark's was at least as old and traditional as Rome itself.

Throughout the entire history of art, for many reasons – from the basic reason of a young artist urgently wanting to be discovered all the way up to sheer duplicity – you have forgeries: in the Renaissance, in the baroque and rococo periods, and then, of course, in the nineteenth century (although every day we're learning that lots of the antiquities we thought were faked in the late nineteenth century actually are forgeries of earlier times).

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*Forgery*

Today forgers seem to be all around us, and indeed there's a cleverness now, an acuteness, that often defies description.

I want to categorize the types of forgeries that have occurred throughout the history of art. Before I start, though, there is one thing that I want to make very clear: you must distinguish between hard-core forgeries, works made to fool, and those pieces that are misattributions: the paintings, for example, that come from the workshop of one of the great painters, but that have been attributed to the master, have fallen off from that status, and too often have been dismissed as fakes. The two are totally different: one is an outright act of deceit, the other is a question of opinion and analysis.

What are the categories? The types, in ease of detection, are, first, the direct copy. Figure 1 shows two jewel-encrusted bookcovers. The one on the right is a copy—a neater, smoother, characterless copy—of the mid-thirteenth-century cover on the left. If you know your stuff, you're likely to spot a forgery like this as a copy of a famous type, and you'll dismiss it quickly.

The second category, which is a little more difficult, is something called a pastiche. The forger takes elements from many things and patches them together in such a clever manner that you don't put your eye on the single thing he has copied. The tapestry on the right in

Figure 2 takes its inspiration from a variety of late fifteenth-century examples, and combines these authentic ideas into an extraordinarily lackluster whole. Contrast the vigor of the good one, on the left, with the sickliness of the other. (Don't hesitate to use derogatory adjectives in describing forgeries. They should not be given any sort of adulation, despite the fact that at certain times in art history people have collected forgeries for their own sake. I'm not one of that school.)

The next category is the most difficult of all to detect. This is the evocation, when a forger does not go to a single model or several, but tries to pick up the spirit of the time, tries to evoke what an artist would have done. This category could not be better summed up than in the works of van Meegeren. In the next seminar Ted Rousseau will discuss van Meegeren's famous forgeries of Vermeer, which he was brilliant enough to paint in "what might have been" Vermeer's early style. On rare occasions van Meegeren attempted to do other things, and Figure 3 shows his attempt at capturing the style of Pieter de Hooch. Of course you can tell that the one on the left has a life and a light and a feeling to it, while the painting on the right is wooden, hesitant. These are the categories of forgeries. There are only three distinct ones, although naturally you can get combinations of them.



FIGURE 4

Now I'd like to take up those things that involve not forgery, but the problems of repair, of historical retrospective, and of our lack of knowledge. The head at the right of Figure 4 is a good example of a work of art that has been heavily repaired. In the picture on the left the additions have been taken off: it becomes a perfectly honest piece of the late twelfth to early thirteenth century – not, perhaps, of the highest quality, but a strong, living thing. You can see what the “restorations” did to it, how horrible they made it.

Then, in very rare cases throughout history, you find an artist going back to earlier styles in creating a work of art. In the lower part of Figure 5 you see an enamel plaque that probably dates from the middle or late fifteenth century, which is quite clearly based upon the Annunciation plaque (above) created in 1181 for the great altarpiece in Klosterneuburg by Nicholas of Verdun. The iconography, the manner in which the scene is depicted, is the same, but various changes have been made: there is an almost bourgeois monumentality in the lower one that is lacking in the pensive, delicate quality of the twelfth-century piece. The fifteenth-century plaque was discovered in the city of Mainz in the mid-nineteenth century; it was presented to Klosterneuburg and they kept it in the treasury there until The Cloisters managed to acquire it. In the middle to late fifteenth century, particularly in Austria, artists made a deliberate attempt to pick up significant styles from Romanesque and Gothic miniature painting and enamelwork, and inject them into their own works of art. In a case like this, you've got to be very careful, and not just say, “Oh, a nineteenth-century fake.” We tested our plaque not only by our eye and by technical analysis, but by the greatest grace of all in forgeries: how it stands the test of time. It seems to be perfectly

FIGURE 5



genuine. It's not the most beautiful thing I've ever seen, but it is a significant fifteenth-century document. I'd rather have the one on top.

The last of my non-forgery categories is represented by the ivory cross in Figure 6, which comes from England and was probably made around the year 1181. Because of its inconsistencies with other medieval works of art—it had errors in iconography, it had a curious style, it had misreadings of the inscriptions—people sat back and said, “No good.” But is there an explanation for these inconsistencies? One, for example, is this: on the titulus, on the front of the cross, to which the little hand is pointing, you can see a curious mixture of Greek and Latin and pseudo-Hebrew that says not “Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudeorum” (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews) but “Jesus Na[z]arenus Rex Confessorum”—King of the *Confessors*—which is about the only time in history that the plaque above Christ's head has not said “King of the Jews.” There's a very good reason for that: in the particular monastery in which this particular thing was made at this particular time in English history, it was very important that Christ was not King of the Jews, who at that time were considered total infidels, but that he was king of the confessors, because a confessor was a man of the faith. It turned out that its very inconsistencies made the cross very rare—and very fine.

I want to end by telling you how to look at a work of art. I have a very deliberate process that I automatically go through to help me overcome any urgency, any feeling of “grab it.” First of all, what is your immediate opinion? Do you feel strong about it? Do you feel cool? Do you feel doubtful? Write that word down; put it away someplace.

Then describe it. Not just pass your eyes over it, but really describe every bit of it. What is it? Did it have a purpose? Even a painting has to have had a use if it was of antique time.

What about its condition? Does it show wear? Get your microscope or your loupe and see whether the worn parts are really where human beings would have touched it.

What is the subject? Did the subject have a meaning and purpose in its own time? What is the iconography? Is it wild? And if it's wild, for what reason? Does it have inconsistencies? If so, list them; put them aside.

What is the style? Its individual style, and the wider style of its period. Compare it with everything else of the epoch in which it was supposed to have been made.

Then go into its history. Investigate the documents concerning it, which are vitally important. We fool our-

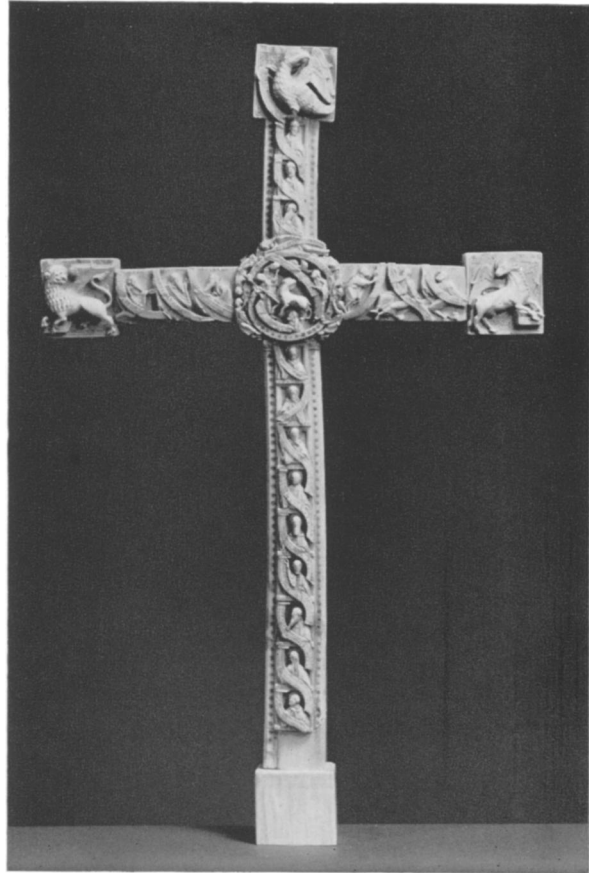


FIGURE 6



selves sometimes by trusting documents that are just as phony as the piece; they should be examined on their own.

Another thing: stop, take stock. Make a list of the things that bother you and a list of things that make you feel great about the work of art. Take that list of things that bother you and peel them like an onion. Try to discover the weakness, because if you do, everything else will shatter. Once a forgery begins to be detected, it falls apart.

Then take a look at your mood at the time you want to buy the piece. Whether you're a private person or a museum, your mood can be categorized in three words: speed, need, greed. Do you have to buy it quickly? Why? Take more time; living with something is the only way you will really be able to tell. Need: do you *have* to have it to show your friends, to show other institutions? The confidence game, which is part of the forger's game, is based upon crawling greed. More for-

geries have been perpetrated and collected because of greed than because of anything else.

Then, finally, go back to your initial reaction. If there are any doubts at all, drop it.

What are the responsibilities of a museum like ours concerning forgeries in its collections? I believe it's important for the Metropolitan Museum to clean its own house occasionally; to discuss and reveal fakes. No collector, indeed no enormous collector like us, has ever gone through its history without ever making a mistake. But be sure, first, that they are fakes: remember that the worst thing you can do is to stamp a genuine piece with the mark of falsehood.

One final word. Some people say, "Well, if it's fooled so many experts, why isn't it so great on its own?" The obvious answer is something of a parable: a woman is fine and wonderful, but after she tells you her first lie, she may not be different, but she *has* changed—very deeply.

CAPTIONS

FIGURE 1

Left: Thirteenth-century German book cover. From the church of Höxter, Westphalia. Diocesan Museum, Paderborn.

Right: Forgery: book cover. Metropolitan Museum, 17.190.405.

FIGURE 2

Left: Detail of a German (Franconian) tapestry, dated 1497. Sebalduskirche, Nuremberg. From Plate 310 of *Die Deutschen Bildteppiche des Mittelalters* (Vienna, 1926), III, by Betty Kurth.

Right: Forgery: tapestry. Metropolitan Museum, 32.100.388.

FIGURE 3

Left: The Card Players, by Pieter de Hooch (1629-after 1684), Dutch. Buckingham Palace, London.

Right: Forgery: painting in the style of de Hooch, by Han van Meegeren (1889-1947), Dutch. Photograph: Copyright Laboratoire Central des Musées de Belgique.

FIGURE 4

Left: French head of the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries. Metropolitan Museum, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, The H. O. Havemeyer Collection, 29.100.29.

Right: The head before later restorations were removed.

FIGURE 5

Above: Annunciation plaque, 1181, by Nicholas of Verdun, Mosan. Abbey of Klosterneuburg, Austria. From Plate 3 of *Der Verduner Altar* (Vienna, 1955) by Floridus Röhrig.

Below: Annunciation plaque. Upper Rhenish or Austrian, xv century. Metropolitan Museum, The Cloisters Collection, 65.3.

FIGURE 6

Above: Back view of the Bury St. Edmunds Cross. English, about 1181. Metropolitan Museum, The Cloisters Collection, 63.12 and 63.127.

Below: Titulus. Detail of the front of the cross.

The Stylistic Detection of Forgeries

THEODORE ROUSSEAU *Chairman of the European Paintings Department*

THIS SEMINAR, devoted to the detection of forgeries by stylistic analysis, and the next one, on scientific methods of detection, should be thought of together, for they are complementary and one can't stand independently of the other. Modern science has brought us new techniques of analyzing works of art that reinforce and are a considerable help to the stylistic methods that have existed for a long time, which we will discuss here this evening.

I'll begin by trying to give you an idea of what we mean by style. This is a very subtle and complex matter, and therefore an extremely difficult one to present to a large audience, but I thought the best way to do it would be to discuss a well-known forgery. First, a word of warning: we should all realize that we can only talk about the bad forgeries, the ones that have been detected; the good ones are still hanging on the walls. A sense of humor is important in this subject, and so is common sense and the realization that there aren't so many forgeries, discovered or undiscovered, as the newspapers would like to make us believe. Forgeries are exceptional at any time. They're created by a market: if the market's good there are more than when the market is quiet.

To get back to my subject, the forgery that I'm going to talk about is an exceptional one, because it was considered a beautiful thing—and forgeries rarely are. One of the characteristics of average forgeries, the kind we've heard about recently, is that they're mediocre. That is why they pass: they escape notice. But this one was thought to be very fine: it is the picture of Christ and the Pilgrims at Emmaus (Figure 1), attributed to Vermeer but actually painted by Han van Meegeren, the Dutch forger who flourished just before and during the Second World War.

I'll start by pointing out the reasons for this picture's success, the things in it that were done well. Then I'm going to show you a painting by Vermeer. By comparing the stylistic qualities of the two, we can draw our conclusions.

The key to the whole question of van Meegeren's

success is that he did not try to imitate the classical Vermeer—the Vermeer we all think of, in the pictures upstairs and in the Rijksmuseum and other great galleries. Van Meegeren chose Vermeer because he was a Dutchman, because he was famous, and because his works are very rare and very expensive. At the time van Meegeren began, there were rumors all over Europe that Andrew Mellon had offered more than one million dollars—an enormous sum in those days, much greater than it is today—for the famous *Artist in His Studio*, now in the Vienna museum, which was then still in private hands. Van Meegeren, who had studied and knew art history, took advantage of the fact that Vermeer's a man we know little about. We have a group of works done when Vermeer was mature, some of which are dated. The work of his youth is missing. We have three or four pictures that we believe were painted when he was young. They are quite different; so different that the one in Figure 2, *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, in the Edinburgh museum, would not, I believe, have been attributed to him if it were not for the fact that it bears his signature. (Even with the signature, it has taken people a long time to accept it as his.) In other words, part of Vermeer's oeuvre is missing. Well, van Meegeren saw this gap and decided that he would fill it. He wouldn't copy Vermeer: he would create the missing part of Vermeer's oeuvre.

Every forger, when he paints, has to begin by getting a feeling for the period and the place in which the picture is supposed to have been painted. Van Meegeren has captured this feeling to some extent in the *Pilgrims at Emmaus*. The simplicity of the background and the architecture, the solemn, Protestant atmosphere, fit our idea of seventeenth-century Holland. The way the bulk of the figures fills the picture is a seventeenth-century characteristic, as is the composition. Here, in fact, is an instance of van Meegeren's cleverness. He knew that art historians were looking for an Italian origin for Vermeer's style, for Italian influence in his works, and so he took the composition from the Caravaggio painting in Figure

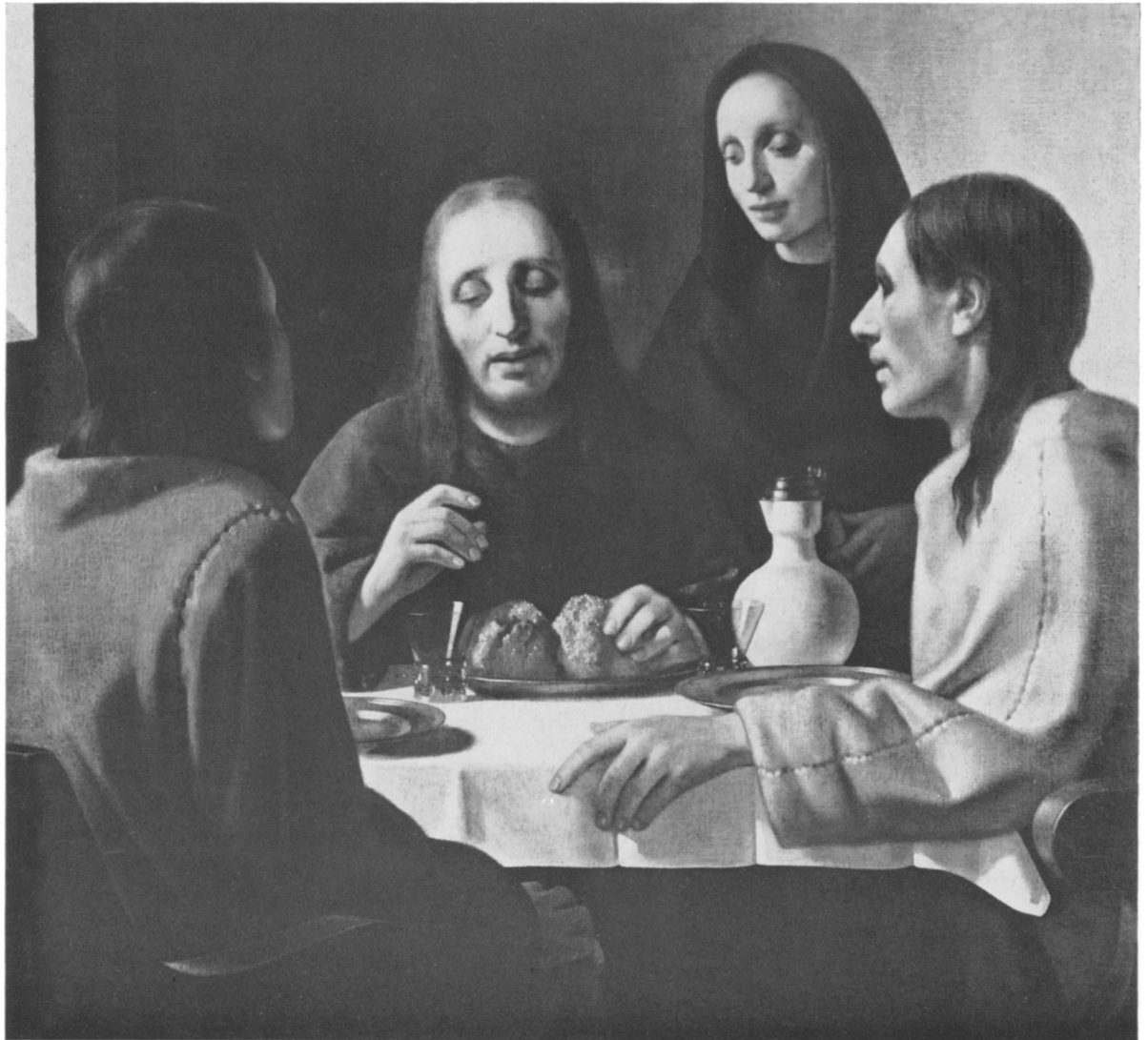
3, confirming the hypothesis of twentieth-century art historians about Vermeer's sources.

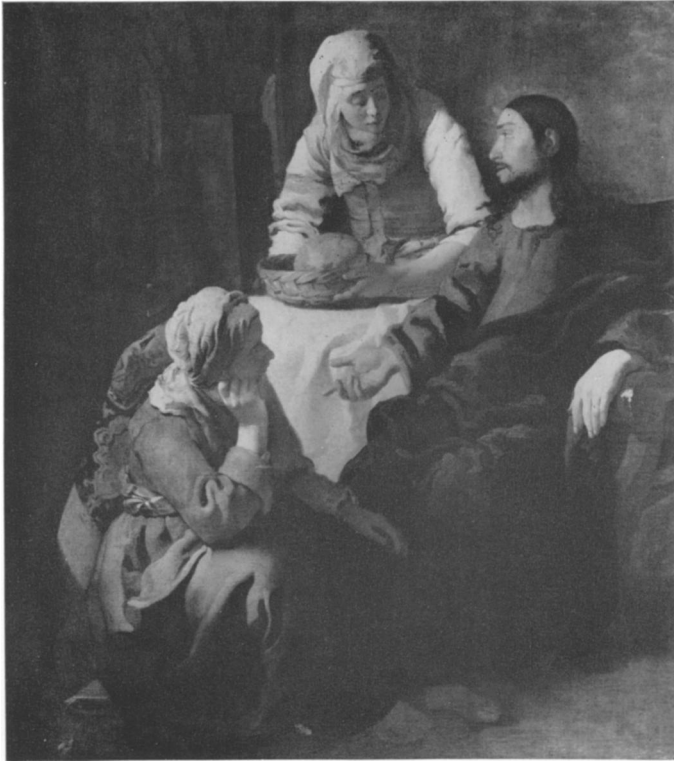
Van Meegeren took certain elements from pictures by Vermeer. But he did not make an exact copy; rather, he evoked the artist's style. The head of Christ is probably inspired by the head of Christ in the Edinburgh painting. For the head and hand of the disciple at the right, van Meegeren took his inspiration from *The Astronomer* (Figure 7). And for the head of the woman in the background, he seems to have used the head of

the girl in *The Procuress* (Figure 4) as a model. Certain details, such as the still life, were taken directly out of pictures by Vermeer: the jugs in *The Procuress* and the Museum's *Girl Asleep* (Figure 5) are very close to the one in van Meegeren's *Pilgrims at Emmaus*.

Van Meegeren studied Vermeer's harmony of color, its predominant blue tone, and imitated it. He imitated, too, some of his characteristic "pointillist" brushwork, particularly in the still life. Finally he put in the signature, which is, of course, always the easiest thing to add.

1. *Christ and the Pilgrims at Emmaus, in the style of Vermeer, by Han van Meegeren (1889-1947), Dutch. Museum Boymans - van Beuningen Foundation, Rotterdam. Photograph: Copyright Laboratoire Central des Musées de Belgique*





2. *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, by Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675), Dutch. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. Photograph: T. & R. Amman & Sons

4. *Detail of The Procuress*, by Vermeer. Picture Gallery, Dresden. Photograph: Bruckmann



5. *Detail of The Girl Asleep*, by Vermeer. Metropolitan Museum, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 14.40.611



3. *Christ and the Pilgrims at Emmaus*, by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1573-1610), Italian. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan. Photograph: Alinari – Art Reference Bureau





6. *Detail of van Meegeren's Christ and the Pilgrims at Emmaus*



7. *The Astronomer, by Vermeer. Private collection, Paris. From Plate 62 of Vermeer (London, 1958) by Ludwig Goldscheider*

Now let's look at a painting that we are certain is by Vermeer, and see if we can isolate the qualities that are outstandingly his. The *Girl Reading a Letter* (Figure 8) in the Rijksmuseum is recognized by everyone as Vermeer's work. It is a true expression of the spirit of seventeenth-century Holland: the feeling of peace, security, and prosperity, the people's satisfaction with themselves, the delight in material riches natural after a long period of disaster and war, and the Protestant reserve and reticence. These are all characteristic of Dutch painting in the seventeenth century. The things that are personal to Vermeer are surely the picture's cool serenity, the feeling of completely arrested movement and of silence – the silence that Claudel describes so well in his book *L'Oeil Ecoute*. There is also the fact that there is nothing personal about the human being; the girl is rather like the still life. She doesn't make you want to put your arm around her waist. The delight you take in the picture is entirely a visual, aesthetic delight, not sensuous or emotional in any way.

Other important characteristics of Vermeer's style are the incredibly lovely nuances of light and color that run all through the picture, and the way each form is surrounded by crystal clarity. Vermeer doesn't model his form: he creates it by a series of colored facets, evoking rather than representing it. These are things that occur in all pictures of Vermeer's mature period.

Compare this painting to *Christ and the Pilgrims at Emmaus*. Once we've looked at a true Vermeer, the faults of the other come out, the weaknesses, the failure of the forger. None of the fundamental qualities of Vermeer's style, which reflect his special habits of feeling and working, really exist in this other picture. The clarity is gone: you don't feel the space around each figure. There is a sentimentality to the head of Christ that is quite foreign to anything of the real Vermeer. It's actually much closer to our time. This is a major weakness of any forger: he can't help interpreting past art in terms of present predilections. The modeling is not done in a series of facets, and the touch is greasy, without that wonderful cool and measured quality that you get in Vermeer. The overall harmony and balance of Vermeer's pictures is also missing: look at van Meegeren's exaggerations, his insistence on the seams on the sleeves and the highlights on the bread – impossible for Vermeer.

In spite of these faults, van Meegeren was almost successful. But he was almost successful not because of the painting – I think that is plain, although stylistic discussions cannot be fully convincing when they're



8. *Girl Reading a Letter*, by Vermeer. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Photograph: Bruckmann

based on illustrations rather than on actual works of art—but because of the tricks he played. He was a remarkable confidence man, an extremely intelligent crook. He created a provenance for the picture; he had an intermediary who sold it for him; he got one of the most prominent art historians—Abraham Bredius—to write an article on it, which was published in *The Burlington Magazine*; it was then exhibited publicly. Finally it was sold to the Boymans museum. The museum hesitated about taking it, although they were urged by D. G. van Beuningen, an important collector who later bought others of van Meegeren's works. In the end, the museum was pushed into buying it because van Meegeren floated the rumor that the Rijksmuseum wanted to get it.

At the end of the war I interrogated one of Göring's agents, a man who represented him in Holland. It was he who bought, or was the intermediary for Göring's purchase of, a picture by van Meegeren after war was declared. This man, Alois Miedel, told me the story of how this happened, an instance of van Meegeren's astute sense of timing and his exploitation of circumstance. Miedel ran a small bank in Amsterdam. His wife was Jewish, and they finally fled from Holland to Spain, where I found and interrogated Miedel himself. He told me he aided the Resistance under cover all through the war, helping people to escape, out of loyalty to his Jewish wife. One night a man, who, he knew, was in the Resistance, came to him and said, "Mr. Miedel, I know you buy paintings for the Reichsmarschall and I have a picture for you. But I will sell it to you only on one condition, and that is that you don't inquire where it came from, because it belongs to an old Dutch family who want to give the money to the Resistance." At that time Miedel had staying with him an old friend, Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's photographer and advisor on artistic matters. Van Meegeren knew Hoffmann was there. Miedel took the painting up to Hoffmann, who said, "Why, it's a Vermeer! I want it for the Führer." Miedel went to the telephone and called Göring, who said he'd send a plane for it the next day. Van Meegeren was a real opportunist, and a very clever one.

He was finally arrested for financial collaboration, since it was discovered that he had amassed an apparently inexplicable fortune during the Occupation. Hoping to get out of this collaboration charge, he admitted to painting fake Vermeers. As a result he was sentenced to only one year in jail. During his confession, and after later studies, his tricks were revealed. He painted with

colors used in the seventeenth century, making only one mistake, which came out in scientific analysis: he used cobalt blue, not invented until the nineteenth century. The medium he used was a substance similar to Bakelite. When heated, this medium hardened, and the picture seemed to have aged centuries in a few hours. As a consequence, the x-ray of a picture painted in this medium looks like the x-ray of an old picture. It also resists solvents the way an old picture does. Van Meegeren's paintings were done on top of old ones that already had a craquelure, and by heating and rolling them he transferred this craquelure to his own work.

What made it possible for him to get away with all this was, of course, that soon after the first picture was well publicized and bought by the Boymans museum, war was declared. All paintings by Vermeer were hidden away and the experts were in hiding, so it was impossible to compare genuine Vermeers with van Meegeren's. Van Meegeren's later pictures were much worse in quality. I think there's no doubt that with time the forgeries would have come out because of their stylistic weaknesses. That's a very important aspect of forgeries, particularly of old masters: a forger not only has to put himself into the skin of the artist and understand his times, but he also has to realize what in the artist's work is attractive to us today. Of course tastes change as time passes. It's all very well to say that we can detect the forgeries easily now, stylistically, but every time I think of it I feel, "There but for the grace of God go I." There's no doubt that twenty years ago van Meegeren's paintings were much more appealing. Time is essential in a case of this kind.

A curious consequence of today's sudden burst of scientific knowledge is that we now tend to look too closely at the physical components of a work of art. The other day one of our most prominent scholars in Dutch painting told me that when he saw the article in *The Burlington Magazine* and the photographs of the Emmaus he said to his pupils, "That's a forgery." But then he went to Holland, and when he saw the picture in front of him, with its convincing craquelure, convincing colors, convincing aging, he began to doubt his own first impression. There, close to it, he saw all the convincing details and not what was wrong with the style.

For any of you who intend to buy works of art, all I can say is, don't go into it unless you're willing to give it a tremendous amount of time, to train your eye, to look and look and look. And, even then, probably the best lesson you can have is to buy a forgery.

The Forgery of Our Greek Bronze Horse

JOSEPH V. NOBLE

Vice-Director for Administration

AT THE FIRST SESSION Tom Hoving spoke about a museum's responsibility to set the record straight in the case of forgeries that were discovered in its collection. This is the responsible thing to do, because the truth is what we are all seeking. We have an announcement to make tonight; since we were holding this technical symposium and since the announcement concerns a technical analysis, we thought it most appropriate to tell you about it here.

The subject is an important object in the Museum's collection: our famous Greek bronze horse (Figure 3). This piece was bought on February 16, 1923, from a dealer in Paris, and it has always been dated between 480 and 470 B.C. Many scholarly works present the horse as being a high point in the history of Greek art. The horse has been so popular that over the years thousands of plaster casts have been made of him and you can still buy them – up until tonight.

Now the horse, unlike our Etruscan warriors, was never questioned. It was never questioned on any stylistic basis and it was never questioned on a technical basis. All right, if it was never questioned, what happened?

Well, I like the horse a tremendous amount. In fact, in 1946 I bought a plaster cast of him and have had it in my home ever since. And I've passed this horse a thousand times, I've looked at it in every light and from every angle. But one time, in the summer of 1961, as I was walking toward the horse, I saw something I had never seen before. I saw a line running from the tip of his nose up through his forelock, down the mane and back, up under the belly, and all the way around (Figure 1). I recognized it as the casting fin caused by a piece mold. The sections of a mold had come together there and the metal had oozed out, forming a casting fin that had been filed off, leaving this line. Now, you might say, "Well,



1. Head of the Museum's horse, showing the mold line

of course the horse was cast in a mold!" Yes, of course he would have been cast in a mold, but if he had been genuine he would have been cast by the lost-wax process. In ancient Greece, a piece of this size would have been cast by making a wax model of the horse and covering this model with clay, leaving a hole in some inconspicuous place. Next you heat the clay, causing the wax to run out through the hole (hence "lost-wax process"). Then you pour in the bronze, break away the mold when the metal has cooled, and you get a bronze casting. You get a *seamless* bronze casting. Our horse's mold line is from a mold made out of sand, a process not invented until the fourteenth century A.D.

2. *Horse. Greek, about 460 B.C. Bronze, height 8 $\frac{15}{16}$ inches. Archaeological Museum, Olympia. Photograph: German Archaeological Institute, Athens*



Once you find one thing wrong with a work of art, then your eyes are clear and you can see more errors. We see, for instance, the hole in the mane; it's obviously for the harness. But the hole is misplaced; the harness straps should tie right behind the ears (Figure 2), and this hole is much too low. There's another hole, running deep into the forelock. What was it for? That kind of hole is found on the life-size marble statues on the Acropolis of Athens; whether they're female korai or marble horses, they have a hole on the top of their head. It's for a bronze or iron spike, called a *meniscus*, to keep the pigeons off. The forger saw the marble statues on the Acropolis, he saw the hole and thought it was for a plume or something like that, and so he put a hole on top of his small bronze horse.

I was sure that this was a forgery and turned in a report on August 25, 1961. You don't just rush out and say things are fakes, however; you check your conclusions until you come up with some definitive proof that the piece, and not just your knowledge, is faulty.

Dietrich von Bothmer, the curator of Greek and Roman Art, was going to Greece in a few days, and I asked him to examine the horses at Olympia (including the bronze one that resembled ours, shown in Figure 2),

the marble horses on the Acropolis, and other comparable Greek statues. He did, and sent back a letter saying, "Remove the horse from exhibition," which we did on September 15, 1961.

A month or so after Dietrich came back, we went to Greenpoint, Brooklyn, to visit the Bedi Rassy Foundry, one of the few companies in this area that still uses the French sand piece-mold process (most use the lost-wax technique). We took along a plaster cast of the horse, and told Mr. Rassy that we were interested in having a bronze cast of it; how would he do it? Mr. Rassy took the horse and laid it on its side in a bed of sand mixed with clay. Then he said, "Now I would fill the mold with sand up to this point"—and he indicated a line that exactly followed the line running around the body of our horse. "I would put lumps of sand mixed with clay all over the upper part; then I'd take them away, take out the model, and put the pieces of the mold back together again. You could cast a solid bronze horse in it."

We were about to thank him and go away, when he added, "But I wouldn't do it that way." "What would you do?" I asked. "I'd cast the horse hollow." "How?" "Well, you do it exactly as I've said, but then you make a core out of this sand and clay, and you stick iron wire—about the thickness of coat-hanger wire—through it to support the core so the bronze can flow around it. The iron wire won't melt." I objected that the ends of the wire would stick out. "You cut them off," Mr. Rassy said, "and make little bronze plugs to cover the holes."

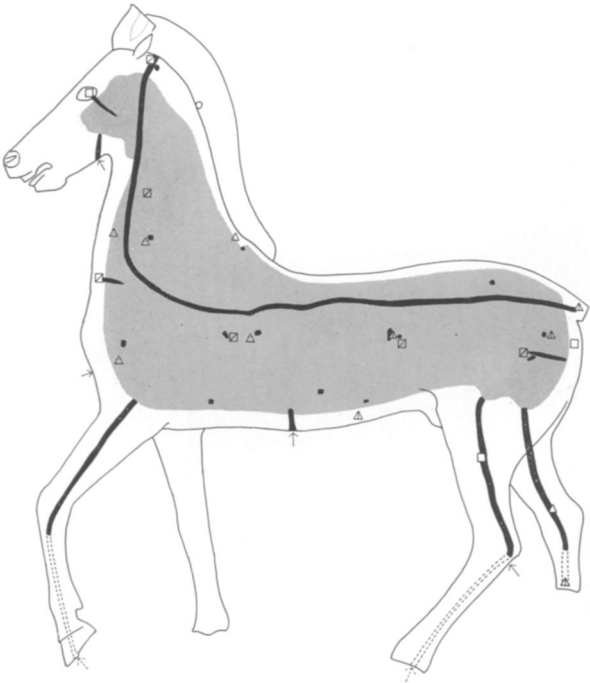
Dietrich and I thanked him and rushed back to the Museum, because we realized that we had seen these little plugs on the horse. We had always thought that they were ancient repairs, because in ancient castings you get little bubbles and it's normal for these to be repaired with rectangular bronze plugs like the ones on our horse. We counted them, and they were exactly where Mr. Rassy said they would be—on the head and back, and several along the sides.

How could we find out what really was inside the horse? Of course we thought of x-rays, but in those days there was no way of getting through this much bronze with x-ray equipment; if you did penetrate it, the x-rays would be so scattered that you could not get a clear image of the interior. But the following day, a young assistant curator in the Greek and Roman Department, an Englishman by the name of Brian Cook, came up with a very ingenious thought. "If there's iron in there," he said, "a magnet will stick to it." So he took a little magnet, attached it to a string, moved it around the

horse, and plotted the points of magnetic attraction on a chart (Figure 4). In some places the magnet stuck to the horse's body; most of these coincided with the location of the plugs. There were other places where the magnet swung toward the horse, but did not stick; these are places where the iron does not come as close to the surface. And so, in the spring of 1962, we had a chart of the internal structure.

Since then Dietrich and I continued to search for ancient examples made by this sand piece-mold process. They do not exist. We were also searching for even more definitive proof that the horse was a fake.

This past summer I heard of an organization called Radiography Inspection Inc. that uses x-rays and gamma rays to inspect for flaws in the nine-inch steel plates on atomic submarines. And I thought, "That's for us!" I called them up and said that we had an art object that



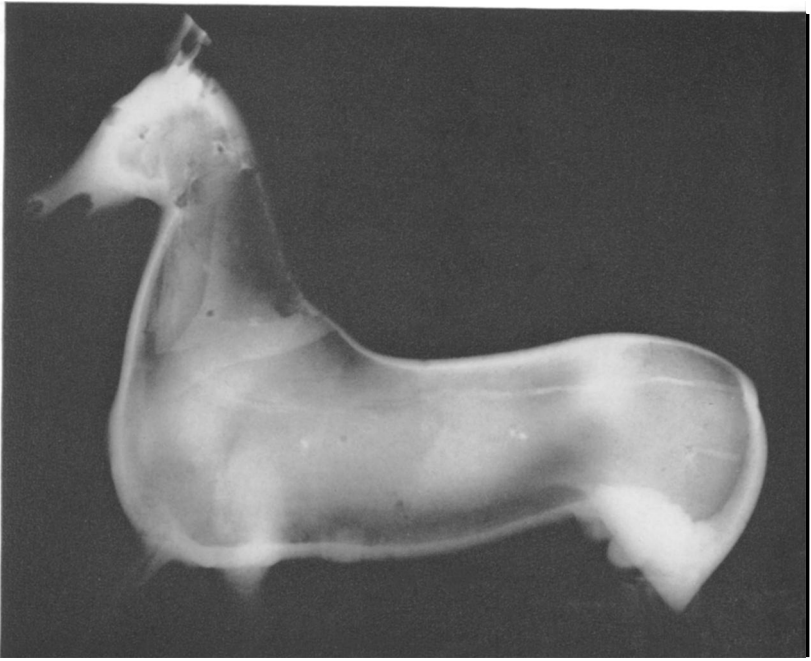
	LEFT	RIGHT	CONTOUR
Magnet sticks	◻	△	→
Magnet is attracted, but does not stick	◻	△	→
Iron, as seen in x-ray	—		
Iron, as conjectured (beyond limits of x-ray)	----		
Sand core			



3. The Museum's horse. Bronze, height 15¹³/₁₆ inches, weight 25½ pounds. Acc. no. 23.69

4. Chart showing the points of magnetic attraction

5. X-ray showing the iron wires and sand core



we wanted them to x-ray for us. On September 15, 1967, just a couple of months ago, they arrived here with a truckload of equipment. Figure 6 shows us in the North Parking Lot of the Museum. The radioactivity signs are for real; the chap who is setting up the equipment is licensed by the Atomic Energy Commission. The picture shows the preparation of the first test: very heavy x-ray equipment, the horse, and the film behind it. The image produced by these x-rays was not clear, so we switched to their heavy gun—Iridium 192, which is highly radioactive. This was exposed by gamma rays; they rushed the film into the truck and developed it; and in Figure 5 you will see, for the first time, the inside of the horse. You can see the cavity filled with the sand core, and then the faint, telltale line: the main iron wire running through the horse. The white spots are the ends of the transverse wires that also held the core. The shadowgraph confirms without doubt that the horse was made by the sand piece-mold process; it is the definitive proof of the forgery.

You may wonder why we know the horse is a forgery,

and not simply a work of art made in a neoclassical style. Because it was made with the intent to deceive: not only does it have a poor patina (since patina is a rather nebulous subject, I didn't even bother to bring it up), but it has deliberate mutilation—of the legs and the tail, for instance.

How old is it? Since it was done in the very sophisticated French sand-casting technique, I believe the horse was made in Paris between 1918 and 1923. I do not think that its style, the neoclassical stylization of archaic art, would have been possible earlier. This brings up a subject that Ted Rousseau touched on: why are art forgeries so attractive? The horse appeals to us, and has appealed to us for forty years, because it is closer to our taste than it is to the taste of the ancient Greeks.

What happens to it now? All forgeries found in the Metropolitan Museum are kept here for study purposes; they do not go out on the market. It will be on exhibition and available for study for as long as there is interest.

And that is the story of our Greek bronze horse. It's famous, but it's a fraud.

6. *Setting up the x-ray equipment*



The Legal Aspects of Forgery and the Protection of the Expert

DUDLEY T. EASBY, JR. *Secretary of The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

RALPH F. COLIN *Trustee and Vice-President of The Museum of Modern Art, and Administrative Vice-President of the Art Dealers Association of America, Inc.*

MR. EASBY: In a light moment, Viscount Buckmaster, a former Lord Chancellor of England, once observed: "Law and legal procedure have always been a mystery to the uninitiated, a snare to the unwary, and a red rag to the unhappy man possessed by reforming zeal." Our task will be to abandon the lawyer's legendary role of mystifying the uninitiated, and, instead, to try to clear away some of the incontestable fog that envelops the topic assigned to us. This topic is the legal aspects of forgery and the protection of the expert. Although the subject is a relatively narrow one, were we to speak with the tongues of men and of angels, it is doubtful whether we could come up with all the answers. If we do not add to the confusion, you—and we—will be that much farther ahead.

Mr. Colin and I will be speaking as individual lawyers, and not as representatives of, nor spokesmen for, our institutional clients.

I think we should open the discussion by hearing from Mr. Colin on the legal definition of art forgery and the Penal Law of the State of New York concerning it.

MR. COLIN: There is, unfortunately, no readily available legal definition of art forgery. The statutory law of New York is simple. Up to a short time ago, Section 959 of the Penal Law, headed *Reproduction or Forgery of Archaeological Objects*, covered the field accurately defined by the title—that is, only archaeological objects. Effective on September 1, 1967, as part of the new Penal Law, the new Section 170.45, headed *Criminal Simulation*, was added. It's short, and the easiest thing to do is to quote it in toto. It provides, "A person is guilty of

criminal simulation when: 1. With intent to defraud, he makes or alters any object in such manner that it appears to have an antiquity, rarity, source or authorship which it does not in fact possess; or 2. With knowledge of its true character and with intent to defraud, he utters or possesses an object so simulated." The section goes on to state that criminal simulation is a class A misdemeanor (which is punishable by not more than a year in jail).

The nub of this statute is the phrase, "with intent to defraud." Here, as in many other phases of the law, the problem is proving intent. It's obvious that the court or attorney or jury can't make a hole in the head of the person under investigation and read what appears on his mind. Intent must be proven by the circumstances surrounding the event. For instance, if a reputable art dealer, who repeatedly has sold honest goods, is found one day with a work that is ultimately determined to be a fake, ordinarily no conclusion would be drawn from this that he was offering the fake intentionally. If, on the other hand, a dealer were in existence who continually offered fakes, one would be led to presume that somewhere along the line he must have known that most or all of what he was offering was false, and accordingly a jury or a judge would be entitled to draw the conclusion that he was dealing "with intent to defraud."

Of course there are other ways that intent might be proven. The dealer might have mentioned to a friend that he knew he had fakes, but this is unlikely: one doesn't usually prove fraud out of the mouth of the person accused. So, under any statutory provision dealing with intentional fraud, you have to prove circum-

stances that lead to the inevitable conclusion, by judge or jury, that such an intent was present.

It might be helpful to the layman for us to mention here that there is a great difference between what a person's legal rights are and what he can prove. This is always true; it's true in the world of art and it's true in all other fields. A person may have a right, but if he can't prove the facts necessary to substantiate that right, he's out of court.

MR. EASBY: You have the same problem of proving intent in the civil remedy that's available to the victim of an art fraud. In common law it's called an action for deceit, and the plaintiff must show that the seller knew he had a fake.

MR. COLIN: That's true if the civil action is for deceit, but ordinarily the art fraud case need not be an action for deceit, and therefore intention need not be proven. It is the common law, even without the recent statute, that when a dealer sells a work that he describes as "Corot, 1867, Dancing Nymphs in a Forest," he is representing that the picture *is* by Corot, that it was painted in 1867, and that it is known in the literature as Dancing Nymphs in a Forest. So, if the painting turns out not to be what it was represented to be, all one need do is prove that fact – it was not as represented – and the dealer has thereby breached his warranty, intentionally or unintentionally.

MR. EASBY: The proof that an art object is not what it was represented as is based on the stylistic and scientific criteria discussed in the earlier seminars. It's the same sort of proof, incidentally, that you rely on in any legal action involving expert testimony: part fact, part opinion.

This brings us to the second half of our topic, the protection of the expert. Who or what is an expert? Some writers have preferred to use the word "authority" rather than "expert," but I think we'll agree that he might be a dealer, museum curator, critic, art historian, professor, conservator, researcher, metallurgist, chemist, x-ray man, or even a nuclear physicist. One thing all these people have in common among themselves and in common with other expert witnesses is some special knowledge based upon long study and experience. Another thing they have in common – and this is contrary to popular belief – is that they are not possessed of papal infallibility.

MR. COLIN: The true expert is more modest than one would expect. He is satisfied if he knows everything there is to know about a very narrow field. I can give as an example Lloyd Goodrich, the former director of the Whitney Museum, who claims to be an authority only

on four nineteenth-century American painters. I would take his opinion on a much wider field than that, but that's all he claims. The true expert doesn't pretend to be all-knowing.

MR. EASBY: Twenty-seven years ago, Huntington Cairns, who was then general counsel of the National Gallery of Art, and I got together on a document that we thought would protect the curatorial people in our respective museums. In that document, the undersigned (who is the person bringing in the work for an opinion) certifies that he is the owner, that he requests an examination and an informal oral opinion as to the probable date and attribution for his personal information only, and not for use in connection with any past or contemplated commercial transaction. In consideration of the giving of that opinion, the person requesting it agrees to indemnify the Museum, its Trustees, and the members of its staff, and save them harmless from any and all liability in the event of any claim based in any way upon the rendition of the opinion.

It was our feeling then – and it is my feeling now as a lawyer, and not as secretary of the Metropolitan Museum speaking for the Museum – that that is about as much protection as the expert on the Museum's staff can ever hope for.

The New York State Attorney General's office is currently drafting a bill designed to protect art experts from lawsuits for uttering disparaging opinions of the authenticity of certain kinds of works of art. As far as I can make out, the apparent urgency for passing such legislation to protect the expert stems, in part, from an article published in the December 1965 issue of *The Record of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York*. There a member of the bar opened his article by stating, "The United States has been inundated with fraudulent art. This is a direct consequence of the laissez-faire attitude of all branches of the art community." He goes on to say that he is limiting himself primarily to contemporary art. Mr. Colin, as vice-president of The Museum of Modern Art and also as vice-president of the Art Dealers Association, where your membership includes a number of people dealing in contemporary art, I'd like to have your comments on those two statements.

MR. COLIN: I would say that both of them are quite false and, in my opinion, irresponsible. Let's take them separately. "The United States has been inundated with fraudulent art." Bearing in mind that the writer of the article states that he is dealing mainly with contemporary art, I state as a fact that it is only a very, very small fraction of one per cent of all art dealings in the United States or in the world, in any one year, that in-

volves fake art. Hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of art is sold every year by honest dealers, and comprises honest works of art. When a fake is sold and discovered, it hits the newspapers. The sale of honest works is not newsworthy and doesn't hit the newspapers. This is analogous to the situation with respect to airplane travel: millions of miles of airplane travel occur without a comment from the papers, but every time there's an accident, there's a headline. This is what happens in the world of art. There is no inundation of fraudulent works. There are a few fakers and when they are discovered, they make the headlines and are given an importance that is entirely unwarranted in terms of percentage of the market.

Let's take the second statement, that this so-called inundation of fraudulent art is "a direct consequence of the *laissez-faire* attitude of all branches of the art community." What are all branches of the art community? Well, that certainly includes museums and dealers, primarily; collectors too, incidentally. I don't believe there's a *laissez-faire* attitude on the part of museums; I think museums are extremely careful in what they purchase. The fact that every so often they make a mistake doesn't mean that there's a *laissez-faire* attitude. On the contrary, they're very shamefaced about it; they admit they are not perfect – but they are far from *laissez-faire*.

When it comes to dealers, bear in mind that a dealer not only sells art, but he buys it. And when a dealer lays his money on the line, you can be certain that he's just as careful as he can be that what he buys is what he thinks it is, and is something that he can therefore resell for what he thinks it is. Of course I'm talking about the responsible dealers. There are crooked dealers, as there are crooked lawyers and crooked doctors and crooked stockbrokers. But I choose to believe that most segments of any industry or profession are honest, and I think the fact is that most art dealers are honest. They're certainly careful, and there's no *laissez-faire* attitude that I'm aware of.

I would think that if there is any *laissez-faire* attitude in the art world, it may be among some collectors who try to outsmart the market and buy bargains. When they're doing that, they *are* engaging in *laissez-faire* practices, but knowingly. They're taking their chances on something that looks cheap: cheaper than it ought to be, and therefore they ought to be suspicious.

MR. EASBY: In that same article in the Bar Association Record, the writer says that "Museums have been just as lax as collectors and dealers, in obtaining documentation on authenticity of contemporary art – particularly when the acquisition comes from a patron or a

potential patron. It is no secret among the better-informed members of the art community that unscrupulous owners of art of questionable authenticity who want to salvage their investment, but do not want to risk the embarrassment through public sale, resort to tax-deductible gifts to their favorite museums." The writer goes on to say that perhaps museums accept these because "they are afraid of what they may find and whom they may offend. In any event the museums in this country are becoming the custodians of a prodigious number of fakes." It was brought out earlier by the representatives of The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney that this statement is without foundation as regards those two museums.

MR. COLIN: I would say it's entirely without foundation. I'm aware of the care with which works offered to The Museum of Modern Art are scrutinized, because for many years I've been a member of the acquisitions committee. This statement is just false.

MR. EASBY: And, although in this context it's limited to contemporary art, it certainly is false as applied to other than contemporary art in any responsible art museum.

The writer continues, "The museums have also facilitated the marketing of fakes by prohibiting members of their staff, often consisting of the leading art experts, from rendering opinions on authenticity to a prospective purchaser of art. This prohibition by museums is not motivated by a perverse willingness to countenance frauds, but rather for the practical purpose of insulating them and their staffs against costly lawsuits that can be extremely difficult to defend. Nevertheless, the silencing of the art expert permits those dealing loosely with art to become more brazen. Who is left to accuse them?"

MR. COLIN: I'd like to answer that question very simply: The answer is the Art Dealers Association of America, which has been accusing people right and left when they find that the accusations are warranted. There is a very active, competent, and responsible agency at work in the art world today to accuse when action is warranted.

MR. EASBY: The passage continues, "The silencing of the expert also leaves the collector in a quandary when he is about to make a purchase, particularly if the artist is not available." The writer then discusses briefly the practice in the major New York museums, referring to the fact that The Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim prohibit any member of their staffs from giving an opinion for the public on questions of authenticity; he refers quite correctly to the practice at the Metropolitan, where we will permit our staff members

to give an oral opinion – not a written certification – and he refers to the same practice at the Whitney. He then concludes, “Perhaps the solution may rest in the passage of legislation to protect certain museum curators, art professors and the like from liability if they render opinions within the area of their competency in good faith.” I think the law is that now, without legislation. The final statement is, “Exculpation will break the silence of the expert.”

I submit that that statement is really based on a misunderstanding of the facts, and the present legislation now under study, which refers only to the fear of litigation, seems to be based largely upon it. Fear of litigation is certainly an important element in the reluctance of museums to have their staff participate in expertise. But there are more fundamental considerations.

One is the unreasonable demands made on the time of the staff. You can’t pick and choose, and say, “Well, we’ll give an opinion to so-and-so but we won’t give one to somebody else.” It’s a public institution, and if you have a policy like ours of giving informal opinions, you have to give them to everyone.

I have a second practical reason for questioning the value of these opinions: at best they’re cursory and can’t be based on extended research. In the earlier sessions we’ve heard of studies that have gone on for twenty-five or thirty years before conclusions were reached – and even then you can’t be sure that they’re the final conclusions. It’s unreasonable, I think, to expect a man – even an art expert – to look at something for five or ten minutes and come up with an absolute judgment. He may, in the clear cases, be able to pull down a book and show the person the answer to his question. On the other hand, it may be something that has to go to a laboratory to be tested.

There are other considerations, ethical ones. The European practice of supplementing a museum man’s income by paid expertise is frowned on in this country and, in fact, is regarded as unethical in the museum profession. Both the Association of Art Museum Directors and the International Institute for the Conservation and Preservation of Historic and Artistic Works have provisions specifically prohibiting written expertise for pay. Another ethical consideration is that the staff of a museum, being primarily academic people, do not wish to be put in the situation of assisting the making of a sale, or of running an investment counseling service for somebody who wishes to buy cheap and sell high. Nor should a museum be a Consumer’s Union, nor put a Good Housekeeping seal of approval on works of art: I think

that demeans the works of art. It’s for these reasons that curators don’t want to come forward and counsel somebody, “You should purchase this.”

Now it’s true, we all know, that members of museum staffs do give advice to collectors who are well known to the museum and whose collections are ultimately going to come to the museum. But that’s quite different from advising any stranger who, for all you know, may be a runner for some dealer, asking for an opinion so he may then go out and say, “The Metropolitan says it’s thus and so,” and puffs the price. (It’s amazing how even the simplest comment by a museum can be used. A friend told me of having seen, in a little curio shop in the country, a painting marked with a card saying, “Authenticated by The Metropolitan Museum of Art as an oil painting.” He told the shopowner he would like to see that authentication, and it turned out to be one of our form letters, thanking the man for a photograph and saying we wouldn’t be interested in acquiring his painting.) That situation is especially delicate in art centers such as New York.

So far, in considering the reluctance of museums to become involved in issuing certificates of authentication, we’ve referred to the practical reasons and the ethical considerations. Coming back now to the statute under study, which is addressed to the fear of litigation, it addresses itself only to one type of litigation. That is an action based on disparagement of title or disparagement of quality. If the statute were passed, I think it would create a false sense of security in a museum man if he thought he was being protected against all possible litigation. One of the most important types of litigation that an expert can get himself involved in, of course, is inducing a breach of contract. If something is up for purchase and he tells the prospective purchaser, “Lay off that, it’s not right,” the dealer can come back and claim he’s lost a sale, so the expert must defend himself against that type of action. Another action may be based on the negligent rendering of an opinion; if somebody sets himself up as an expert, qualified to give opinions in a particular area of his competence (and the statute would set museums up to do this), he may well find himself being sued for negligence if, in an opinion based on a cursory examination, he recommends a fake or a pastiche as a rare and desirable original, and the person receiving that opinion goes out and sinks a lot of money in it. The reverse twist would be the case of a man who comes in with, say, a genuine El Greco and is told that it is unfortunately not by the master. He goes out and sells it for a hundred dollars, and later discovers

that the purchaser has put it up at auction and it's brought a hundred thousand. I think he would have an action for negligence there.

Then, there's another possible action that is not as remote as it sounds. There's a pretty thin line between condemning an object and condemning the dealer who has the object. I can well imagine a curator, tired after four hours of inspecting things of relatively minor importance, being shown something from the Joe Smith Gallery and exclaiming, "Oh my heavens, is this another of Joe Smith's fakes?" Any defamatory statement about a man in his trade, profession, or calling is actionable per se—and that means you don't have to prove any special damages, you merely have to prove that somebody has made the defamatory statement that this is an unreliable dealer. So there are at least four actions not covered by this statute.

Another weakness is that the bill, as now drawn, defines a work of fine art as "a painting, sculpture, drawing or work of graphic art." It completely leaves out of consideration, as was pointed out by Mr. Hoving at one of the hearings, furniture, glassware, metalwork, ceramics, porcelain, carpets and tapestries, and even the archaeological objects covered by the penal statute that Mr. Colin discussed earlier. It should be possible to draw a statute that would cover all types of works of art. The Customs laws, after all, have been administered for a long time without any statutory definition of art or antiquity, other than that the object in question be a hundred years old.

If you could put through a statute that covers all

works of art and all types of action, this would be an ideal world. I think museums would welcome having the additional protection. On the other hand, my personal opinion is—and this is not simply pride of authorship—that what Cairns and I worked out twenty-seven years ago gives almost the same thing without the necessity for legislation.

MR. COLIN: I agree entirely, and I think, in addition, that if a true expert, at the request of an interested party, gives an opinion in an area in which he is reasonably expert, he is safe without any law, or without any release, or without anything else. He is safe, that is, from liability, but nobody can stop someone from suing him. Anyone can sue anyone for anything at any time, and you can't prevent suits either by laws or by pieces of paper. If people get angry enough, they'll sue you.

MR. EASBY: The Metropolitan's practice of giving oral opinions is directed to the genuine collector and seeker after truth, who really wants to know about his work of art and not primarily what he can sell it for. I hope the time will come when we can give more of these, but I think that's all the public reasonably has a right to ask for. The purchase of a work of art is, after all, primarily the collector's responsibility. Ted Rousseau gave some pretty sound advice to true collectors: "Don't go into it unless you're willing to give it a tremendous amount of time, to train your eye, to look and look and look." All the expert advice and all the legal protection in the world cannot guarantee that a buyer of a work of art—be it a novice collector or a great museum—will never get stuck with a fake.

The Art Frauds Legislation

LOUIS J. LEFKOWITZ *Attorney General of the State of New York*

I AM A FIRM BELIEVER in self-regulation. Every business should police itself, keep its own house in order. Government should not step in unless a business refuses or fails to do this. Then we have an obligation to protect the public interest, not to mention the good people in the business.

Works of art are an important part of our economic and cultural world: art frauds hurt those who buy and those who sell. Over two years ago, my office had heard enough complaints to warrant undertaking an investigation into what we could do to protect the rights of the artist, the buyer, the reputable dealer. There were complaints, but no pat solutions. So we set out to find what could be done. For months we held one public hearing after another, we solicited opinions from all parts of the art world, we talked to many, many people—artists, collectors, dealers, lawyers, museum people.

What have we accomplished? More important, what do we still have to do? Well, two years ago three new laws were passed. One specifies that whenever a work of art is sold, the artist retains reproduction rights unless he specifically transfers them. Another law provides that if a dealer puts the name of an artist on the bill of sale, that bill is an express warranty of the work's authenticity. The third law makes it a crime for a dealer to misappropriate an artist's property held by the dealer as the artist's selling agent.

These laws are on the books, but there are many other areas where the law needs strengthening. We have more bills in the drafting stage that are under consideration but by no means final. One is aimed at making the

"express warranty" law more effective. As things stand now, a man who discovers that he has bought a fake may be helpless if the dealer or auctioneer has excluded his own liability (including his consignor, if any) by disclaiming, at the time of sale, any warranty of its authenticity. To prevent unconscionable results, this bill provides that disclaimers are inoperative when a work turns out to be a forgery and the buyer seeks only the return of the work of art and the repayment of the price.

A second bill under consideration makes the falsification of certificates of authenticity a misdemeanor.

A third bill under consideration is primarily aimed at protecting experts from lawsuits for any statement they make to government agencies that "tends to deny or tends to disparage the authenticity, quality, condition, or value of a work of fine art." The Internal Revenue Service must depend on outside opinions to help it sort out the legitimate tax deductions and appraisals for donations of art on tax returns. Other possible provisions for protection of art experts in exposing forgeries are still under study.

All of these bills are in the drafting stage. They have in the past and will in the future be submitted to interested parties for their views. It is hoped that through constructive criticism bills will be drafted for submission to the legislature that will have some deterrent effects upon the proliferation of fraudulent art in the New York art markets.

Interview by Alexander Stuart, with Joseph Rothman

The Mystery of the Eight Evangelists

CARMEN GÓMEZ-MORENO

Associate Curator of Medieval Art and The Cloisters

WHEN YOU WORK in an art museum and, moreover, in a curatorial capacity, you have to get used to the reaction it produces on outsiders. First comes surprise, reflected in, “How very interesting!” A question follows: “And what do you do?” It takes a long time to explain and even longer to sound convincing. One thing is certain, however: there can be days, even weeks, of tedious routine, and then a little detail catches your eye and all the wheels of excitement are set in motion and everything becomes different and worthwhile. It is a feeling that must come quite close to what a good detective feels when, after he has had nothing really interesting to work on for some time, a sudden and exciting crime makes him recover his faith in the inexhaustible resources of the evil nature of man.

Surrounded as it was by objects visually more attractive, the slender Mosan cross on a large rounded base (Figure 1) – very much like a turtle that has stopped its slow motion to wonder what has been put on its back – had never attracted my attention. One day I had to take it out of its case and, having it in my hands, I became rather puzzled at the abundance of symbols of the Evangelists on such a simple and comparatively small object. A set of them was at the four ends of the cross (Figure 4): the eagle of St. John at the top, the winged man of St. Matthew at the bottom, St. Mark’s winged lion at the left, and St. Luke’s winged bull at the right; the four Evangelists themselves, together with their symbols, were represented on the base (Figure 3). I also observed that on the cross the eagle of St. John had the name of Matthew, while the winged man of St. Matthew had the name of John. I thought, moreover, that the style and the quality of the enamels on the base were far superior to those of the cross.

My curiosity made me look through the dossier of this piece and I found that many years earlier, in 1933, the cross had been separated from the base and held under suspicion. It would have remained that way if a famous scholar, who visited the Metropolitan Museum in 1956, had not defended the authenticity of the cross and its right to remain together with the figure of Christ and the base. His verdict was accepted, the reasons for suspicion were dropped, the case was closed, and the three pieces were reunited.



I was not convinced that the verdict was right. Perhaps because I was not at the Museum when it was delivered and I was free of outside influences. Perhaps because I believe that even the greatest and most knowledgeable men can make mistakes. Perhaps because I could not stop myself from remembering the story of the Emperor's new clothes. When I found the time I set about searching for some more clues, trying to be impartial, methodical, objective, and scientific.

Apart from the wrong names on the symbols of Matthew and John, a comparative study of the inscriptions on the base and on the cross brought out, quite clearly, that the inscriptions on the cross were taken from those on the base by somebody who was neither familiar with the lettering and abbreviation system in medieval writing nor with the meaning of the words themselves. As a result of this lack of knowledge, *MAHEVS* (Matheus) became *MAHEVS*; *IOHNS* (Iohannes), *IOBS*; *LVCAS*, *IVCAS*; and *MARCVS*, *OAVSRC* (Figure 5). If there were only one mistake or two we could suppose that whoever wrote them was just clumsy, but in this case all the names are wrong and meaningless.

The ignorance of the manufacturers of the cross is even more obvious in the inscription above Christ's head – the *titulus* (Figure 5) – the text of which was usually taken, in the twelfth century, from the Gospel of St. John (19:19: "Scripsit autem et titulum Pilatus, et posuit super crucem: erat autem scriptum: *IESUS NAZARENUS, REX IUDEORUM*"). The name of Jesus usually appears in abbreviation in the medieval representations of the crucifixion, as *IHS* or *IHE* (from the Latin *IHESVS*) or, if there is Byzantine influence, as *IHC* (from the Greek *IHCOC*). In this cross the name appears almost complete. That

1. *Cross, corpus, and base. Copper-gilt, with champlevé enamel on cross and base. Base and corpus: Mosan, XII century. Cross: later reconstruction. Overall height 12 inches. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.341 a-c*

is not wrong in itself, but the *ɾ* has been inserted between the *h* and the *e*, and slightly above them, and the *v* (always used for the letter *u*) has been replaced by a curve that has no meaning. The word *NAZARENUS* has been omitted entirely. I have checked a considerable number of tituli, not only of the twelfth but also of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and I have not found a single one where that word was omitted and very few where it was abbreviated. The word *IVDEORVM* or, rather, its abbreviation *IVDEOR* has been divided in a peculiar way, with the *e* above by itself as if it were an abbreviation, although there was enough space for it on the bottom line. Instead of a *v* there is a *u*, which belongs to another type of lettering that was never used in inscriptions of the Mosan school of that period. This inscription should be enough to condemn the cross, but there are other factors that are quite conclusive in themselves.

The cross seems too narrow for the figure of Christ, and too small for the base and, certainly, for the large knob. Rectangles at the four ends, such as we see here, were used sometimes in larger crosses—processional crosses—but not in small ones such as this. The arms are not horizontal but inclined downward. This peculiarity could be easily explained in an ivory or wooden cross where one has to work with a material that has a shape of its own and a grain that sometimes makes shaping difficult. In metal, however, I cannot find an excuse for such clumsiness unless it was a deliberate attempt to make the piece look handmade.

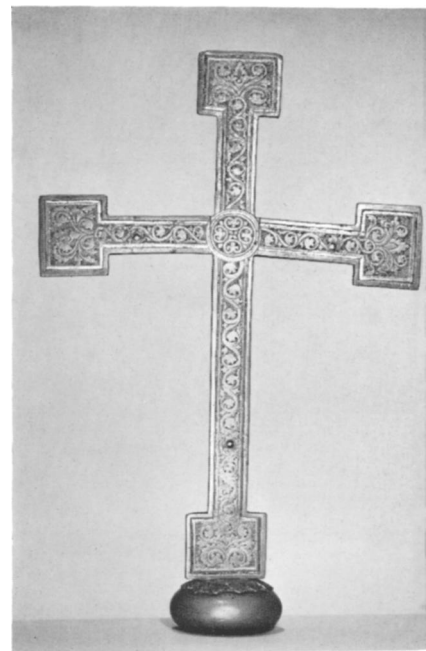
The use of the four symbols of the Evangelists on the front of the cross is very rare, though there are a few examples that show that this is not impossible. To my knowledge none of these examples occurs in Mosan art of the twelfth century. The symbols appear much more frequently on the reverse of crosses around the Lamb of God, Christ in Majesty, or even the Virgin Mary. In any case, they are never represented twice in the same piece. The head of the winged man, symbol of Matthew, at the bottom of our cross appears in profile. This is most unusual.

In very few examples have I been able to find heads in profile in Mosan enamels, and they usually are in groups with other heads seen frontally or in three-quarter view (the most frequently used device). In the case under study, I believe that this winged man was taken from the St. John on the base, copying the shape of his nose, mouth, chin, hair, and even the upper part of his mantle, but showing the face in profile. This may account for the awkward shape of the head, and also for the presence of the name of John instead of Matthew: the copyist was carried away and forgot that he was representing somebody else.

Because of the narrowness of the cross, the cruciferous nimbus had to be too small for the head of Christ. The serpent symbolizing evil (Figure 4) under Christ's feet, which is described with a very weak incised line and looks up with a placid smile, is utterly ridiculous and alien to Mosan style or any other medieval style. The beaded motif around the border of the cross is too even and mechanical; the same can be said about the scroll decoration on the back (Figure 2), which is almost Renaissance in flavor, particularly in the fleurons at the four ends and the rosette in the crossing.

The enamels completely lack the boldness of design and technique that we see in the base. While in the latter the incised lines are deep, strong, and full of meaning, in the cross they are weak and superficial, and the enamel paste poured into them has overflowed, forming ridges that confuse the already confused design. This is particularly obvious in delicate areas such as hair, feathers, or wrinkles. If the base had enamel in places such as these or in the incised lines of the faces, it has all disappeared. Only the inscriptions and larger areas, such as garments or floral decoration, still have enamel, at least in part. It is difficult to believe that the base could have suffered so many losses and the cross so very few if they had been made at the same time, with the same technique, and had remained together for centuries.

The colors of the enamels on the cross are close to those on the base. If they had been



2. *The back of the cross*



3. *The base. The Evangelists, starting from the bottom and proceeding counterclockwise, are: St. John, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Matthew*

used in a more convincing way, without so much being squeezed in such a restricted space, they might have been a good imitation, difficult to detect. We took a small particle of the only color of the cross that had a break – the turquoise blue band around the borders of the rectangles – and another particle of the same color from the band around the bottom of the base. The enamel from the cross proved to be very hard and corresponds – according to the technicians – to enamels made recently, while the enamel from the base was very brittle and broke with the slight touch of a needle, as is characteristic of enamels of considerable age. Both particles were submitted to spectrographic analysis, the results of which were inconclusive because, though they showed differences in the composition of the enamels, the color we had to use is not a very important one and the amount was too small. To test other colors it would have been necessary to damage the cross seriously, and we felt that a step like that was not compulsory when we had several other means of proving the authenticity or falsehood of this piece.

The metal of the base has a very worn surface, quite pitted, and has a brown patina that does not rub off. The surface of the cross, on the other hand, is smooth and perfectly preserved, and the patina is so superficial that it disappears when you rub it with your fingertips, revealing the shiny copper underneath. A greenish area with the appearance of corrosion, below the arms of Christ, was removed very easily with solvents, revealing the uncorroded metal beneath. The spectrographic analysis of small particles of metal from the base and the cross shows enough difference to indicate that they were not made at the same time. The composition of the metal of the cross varies from typical modern alloys, suggesting that it was not made in the immediate past.

The gilding on the base is almost completely gone. Only a little remains on the floral-decorated border around it and in the lion's feet, which are almost certainly a later restoration. We also find traces of gilding on the cross, along the incised lines around it

(both on the front and on the back) and in the nimbus. It seems logical that if the original gilding had worn away through use, the area under the corpus, inaccessible to touching, would show at least some gilding. No traces of it appear.

The corpus itself is perfectly genuine, but whether it was meant to be on the cross that went with this base cannot be proved. It is consistent with twelfth-century Mosan crucifixes, and the wear and remains of gilding are completely convincing. The feet, placed side by side, were meant to rest on a suppedaneum – or support for the feet – as was customary in the Mosan school of that period. Most frequently the suppedaneum forms part of the feet, but in this case it must have been part of the original cross. When the cross under study was made, the manufacturers did not know about that particular feature, and they ran into trouble when they tried to place the figure of Christ on the flat surface of the cross. There was not much of a problem with the hands, though they had to make the holes on the arms of the cross a little low in order to keep the head at the crossing, but they must have been quite puzzled at finding that the feet had no holes. They opened one on the left foot, but when they tried to pass a nail through it they found that the feet formed a forty-five-degree angle with the cross and so the nail would have to curve a long way to reach the flat surface. They gave up the idea, filled in the hole with a metal that looks identical to that of the cross, and decided to put one nail between the two feet. Although this too has to curve, it is less conspicuous than if two nails had been used. This detail would be enough to indicate that the cross and the corpus were not made at the same time and that the corpus was originally made for another cross.

Summing up the facts: We have, 1) A round base made of copper with remains of



4. *The plaques on the cross. The symbols of the Evangelists, starting from the bottom and proceeding counterclockwise, are: the winged man of St. Matthew, the winged bull of St. Luke, the eagle of St. John, and the winged lion of St. Mark*

gilding, decorated with champlevé enamels representing the Four Evangelists in quatrefoils with their corresponding symbols on the left and floral motifs in between. The shape and style are close to the well-known Foot of the Cross of St. Bertin, a Mosan piece of about 1180 in the Museum of Saint-Omer, but ours is less spectacular, in part because it is so damaged. It is interesting to note that in both cases the cross has disappeared. 2) A figure of Christ from a crucifix, perfectly consistent in style and iconography with Mosan crucifixes of the twelfth century, but, in my opinion, less good stylistically than the base. 3) A copper cross with the symbols of the Evangelists in champlevé enamel. Poor in shape and proportions compared with the other two pieces, it is very bad in style. It shows a considerable number of mistakes that cannot be easily explained within the Mosan school of metalworkers and enamellers, who appear to have been reliable and accurate in techniques, knowledge of iconography, and reading and writing of religious texts.

After all these findings, it was decided to

exhibit the base; to keep the corpus as a genuine piece but not important enough to leave on display; and to put away the cross for life and, this time, not under suspicion but as definitely guilty.

Note of advice to colleagues: Never be ashamed of reading mystery stories. Sometimes it can be very useful.

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5. The inscriptions on the base, on the plaques, and on the cross

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China into Delft:

A Note on Visual Translation

CLARE LE CORBEILLER *Assistant Curator of Western European Arts*

NOVELTY is exhilarating; it pleases, it informs, it challenges. Novelty came to Holland in 1604 in the form of an estimated 100,000 pieces of blue and white Chinese porcelain taken off the captured Portuguese carrack *Catharina*. Such a quantity of porcelain had never been seen in Europe. Until then, only a few celadons and blue and white pieces had, from 1338, enriched the collections of royalty and the nobility. Highly admired, these were often elaborately mounted in silver gilt, like a group of Wan-Li pieces in the Museum, traditionally said to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Essex. In the sixteenth century some few dozen blue and white porcelains painted to order document the first direct contact between Portugal and China in 1517 and a subsequent unofficial trade. Italy, advantageously linked by her seaports to the Levant, was most familiar with the porcelains of the Near and Far East, and both Islamic and Oriental traditions are evident in the earliest surviving Western imitations of blue and white wares, made in Florence between 1575 and 1587 (Figure 1).

But these were isolated occasions; Oriental porcelain remained an exotic, enviable rarity. The sudden appearance of an "untold mass of porcelain of all kinds" in 1604, and its dispersal by auction in Amsterdam set off a reverberation that echoed for two centuries. On the one hand it stimulated a traffic in porcelain which, in just the short period between that year and 1657, brought well over three million pieces of porcelain to Holland—an extraordinary amount in proportion to the population. And on the other hand it set off an equally lively industry of domestic imitations.

For at first, from about 1640 to 1660, the blue and white wares of the Delft factories

were quite literally imitative: the potters were too uncertain of their material (tin-glazed earthenware, a rough and ready substitute for hard-paste porcelain) and too ignorant of Oriental design to stray very far from their models.

Despite their limitations the effect of the Dutch wares is often surprisingly persuasive. Were they, in fact, meant to be so persuasive as to deceive? Acknowledging certain commercial motivations, they probably were. Enthusiasm for Oriental blue and white was such that everyone wanted it, and despite the enormous quantities arriving in Holland there were years when ships and their cargoes were lost at sea, and years—sometimes many together—when negotiations between the Dutch and Chinese merchants broke down and no porcelain was either ordered or shipped. Locally produced wares that satisfied the visual requirements (and perhaps, not so incidentally, the table customs) of the Dutch were therefore in demand, and insofar as they were meant to fool the eye they were indeed deceptive. But the deception could only have been superficial. A close inspection of these optical illusions of the mid-seventeenth century reveals a number of divergences, quite apart from the obvious ones of certain shapes unknown in the Orient: the all-important difference of the material itself, irregular control of the tones of blue and white, unevenness of glaze and painting, overcontrasting outline drawing, and—ultimate innocence—the Dutch potter's own mark. (Chinese marks, it is true, were often imitated or paraphrased in Europe, as in Figure 6. There was certainly ample tradition for the practice, since the Chinese themselves frequently employed the reign mark of an earlier emperor out of veneration for the ex-

cellence of the porcelain original to that period. Some such reasoning may have operated in the West; the application of a pseudo-Chinese mark on what must have been even then an unmistakably domestic piece of ceramic was perhaps simply a rather naive tribute to The Real Thing.)

All these details, however, are irrelevant to the Dutch potters' intention. Their achievement was to provide a substitute for Chinese porcelain that satisfied not so much an objective (or curatorial) idea of its correctness as a highly subjective "feel" for the thing. And it is precisely this subjective quality that ensures Delft blue and white wares against being mechanical repetitions or forgeries. Perhaps it would be more accurate to think of them as translations that, while depending for their existence on the creativity of other artists, possess an independent creativity of their own. For as a rule we are not satisfied with a literal translation from one language to another; we require not a point-by-point correspondence, but an equivalence of intention—of spirit, of effect. What we accept as a "good" translation is in fact one that, being essentially idiomatic, is really a paraphrase of the original. Each translator must analyze and choose the idioms and elements of design that will produce what he feels to be an equivalence (Figure 9).

Success depends, in effect, on the purpose and style of the translator, and in evaluating

the legitimacy and originality of a translation contemporaneity appears to be an important factor: what we accept as enthusiasm for novel ideas or techniques we tend to dismiss as eclecticism, pedantry, or outright calculation when it appears at a later period. In this light we may consider, for example, our reaction to the Renaissance Italian and Georgian English approaches to classical architecture; to certain passages in the King James and Revised Standard versions of the Bible; and to seventeenth-century and later eighteenth-century European interpretations of Oriental porcelain.

The Delft experience was repeated several times later as new surprises reached the West from China and Japan. Toward the end of the seventeenth century red stoneware from I-hsing excited considerable enthusiasm in Europe, where the novelty both of its material and its associations (with the lately developed custom of tea drinking) invited "translation" into the teapots and caddies of Lambeth, Delft, and Meissen. And the impact of Japanese kakiemon porcelain, also at the turn of the century, was as revolutionary as Chinese blue and white had been fifty years before. The nature of Europe's immediate response to these discoveries was one of such guileless charm that we may enjoy her ceramic translations in the spirit they deserve—not as copies, certainly not as forgeries, but as attractive works of art in their own right.

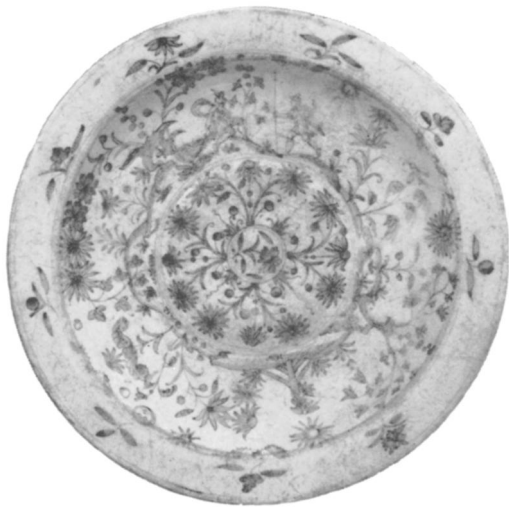


FIGURE 1

Plate painted in underglaze blue on a white ground. Marked on the back, also in blue, with the dome of the Cathedral of Florence, the letter F below. Italian (Florence, Medici factory), about 1580. Gift of Mrs. Joseph V. McMullan and Fletcher Fund, 46.114

Early records place European attempts to simulate Oriental porcelain as early as 1504, when the Duke of Ferrara purchased seven bowls of Venetian-made *porcellana contrefatta* ("counterfeit porcelain"). The first pieces to survive, however, are those made in Florence between 1575 and 1587 under the patronage of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francesco I de' Medici. The principal goal of the Italians seems to have been to produce the material and palette that at the time connoted Oriental porcelain; the decorative motifs of Medici wares owe as much to Renaissance and Turkish sources as to Chinese.



FIGURE 2

Two plates painted in underglaze blue on white. Both unmarked. Chinese and Dutch (Delft), Wan-Li period and about 1660, respectively. Rogers Fund, 16.93 and 30.86.3

The Chinese example is characteristic of what the Dutch referred to as carrack porcelain, so called from the ships in which it was first imported. This ware was wholly Chinese in its decoration, making no concessions to Western styles. All porcelain exported to Holland before about 1635 was of the carrack variety. In that year the Dutch first began to dictate the shapes of objects and the styles of decoration acceptable to them, and so introduced a transition ware that heralds the stylistic bouillabaise of eighteenth-century China-Trade and European porcelain. Despite this increasing interference, the Dutch continued to admire the blue and white porcelains of the Wan-Li period (1573-1619), demanding even of the Japanese, as late as 1671, that they manufacture porcelain "in the Chinese manner." Thus it is to be expected that this Dutch plate, although made well in the transition period, reflects little of Western taste and is a fine example of the Dutch "feel" for the first Chinese porcelains to reach Holland.

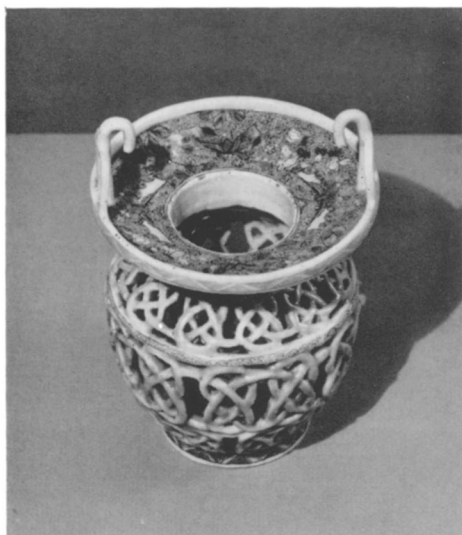


FIGURE 3

Pair of hanging vases painted in colors over the glaze. Chinese and German (Meissen), about 1720 and 1730, respectively. Above: City Art Museum of St. Louis, Bequest of Samuel C. Davis; below: Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 50.211.230

Baskets of this design were used in China to hold perfumed flowers, a function probably unknown to the Meissen potter. The challenge posed by his model would have been a technical one, as pierced work was not practiced in the European ceramic factories at this period. The Meissen version—excepting the Westernized dogs' heads—is faithful both in detail and in spirit to its Chinese prototype, but it is far from being an attempt at deception: the Meissen factory mark of crossed swords painted on the underside suggests rather the potter's pride in a tour de force.

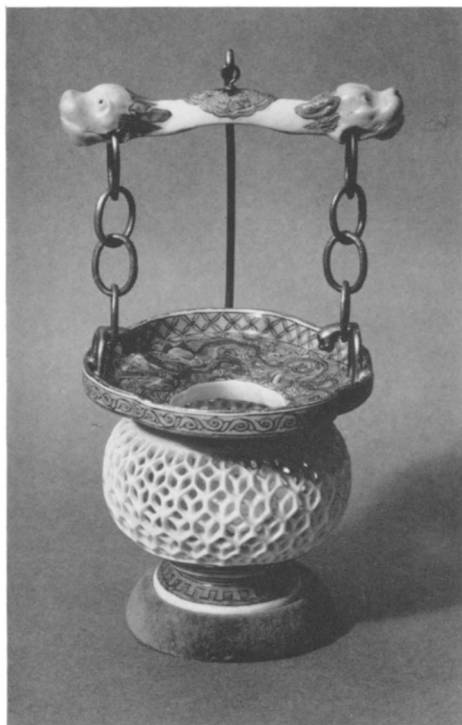


FIGURE 4

Plate, teapot, and tulip vase. Japanese, German (Meissen), and French (Chantilly). All are painted over the glaze in light shades of turquoise, blue, and green; the palette of the Chantilly vase is particularly faithful to that of the Japanese plate. The plate is late seventeenth century, the others are both about 1730. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Wathen, 66.118.1 (plate); Gift of Mrs. George B. McClellan, 42.205.129 (teapot); Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 50.211.122 (vase)

The introduction into Europe of the colorful Japanese kakiemon ware in about 1683 produced as electric an effect as had the earlier blue and white porcelains from China. Contemporary versions of the kakiemon style were especially popular at the Meissen, Vienna, and Chantilly factories, where technical advances—notably the perfection of a thin porcelain body and a reliably clean white glaze—enabled them to reproduce its spare, elegant style and light clear colors with considerable success. The repertoire of kakiemon motifs spread to all the European ceramic factories in the course of the eighteenth century. Where used, as here, idiomatically and admiringly, the “translation” may be said to be a good one. Later decorators, lacking the impetus of novelty, too often reduced the same motifs to mere pattern-making, and by so doing produced repetitions that are closer to being copies or deceptions than these stylish pieces.





FIGURE 5, RIGHT

Pair of dishes painted in colors over the glaze. Both unmarked. Austrian (Vienna) and Chinese, about 1730 and 1720. Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 50.211.8; Michael Friedsam Collection, 32.100.420

The easy style of this Viennese dish is in marked contrast to the stiff copying of the second dish in Figure 6. Excepting only the too-elaborate peony blossom—also a discordant feature of the Viennese fan-shaped dish—it is a graceful example of the difference between imitation and translation.



FIGURE 6

Pair of fan-shaped dishes (shown front and back) painted in colors and gilt and, on the outside, in underglaze blue. Japanese and Austrian (Vienna), both about 1725-1730. Gift of Mrs. V. Everit Macy, 23.255.156; Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 43.100.1



The East India Company records at Deshima, published by Professor T. Volker in his *Japanese Porcelain Trade after 1683*, reveal that at the time polychrome ware was becoming familiar to Westerners—from 1683—no Japanese porcelain at all was being exported in Company ships. Such kakiemon and Imari wares as reached Europe between 1683 and 1759 (when all trade with Japan ceased) came either in the private baggage of Company staff or as part of the China trade. As Volker points out, the quantity of porcelains thus shipped cannot have been very large, a circumstance that makes the extent of their impact on Europe quite remarkable.

An indifference to the niceties of provenance is apparent in this Viennese dish, which is painted with a pseudo-Chinese mark. The license may just as well have been Japanese as European: Soame Jenyns has observed that six-character Chinese marks are a not unusual feature of seventeenth-century Arita wares, and our Viennese painter may have duplicated exactly what was in front of him.





FIGURE 7

Plate painted in famille rose colors and gilt, with landscape cartouches executed in sepia. Soft-paste porcelain. Not marked. Tournai (?), about 1750-1760. Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 50.211.164

In composition and technique this plate captures beautifully the delicacy of the genre scenes characteristic of Yung-chêng porcelains (1723-1735). In effect it is perhaps the most convincing of all these European translations. The impression is somewhat disturbed, however, by the vignettes on the rim, which are strongly reminiscent of the harbor and shipping scenes popularized at Meissen. These were frequently paraphrased by the Chinese in the porcelain they made for export, and what we have here seems to be a Continental version of China-Trade porcelain, in which the Oriental spirit of the German scenes survives in this retranslation by the European painter.





FIGURE 8

Dish. Tin-enamelled earthenware painted in colors and gilt. From a table service presented about 1776 by the Polish king Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski "in proof of his most complete affection and utter devotion" to the Turkish Sultan, with whom Poniatowski was at that time allied in war against Russia. Warsaw (Belvedere factory), about 1776. Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 50.211.277

The dish is copied from a Chinese model, and corresponds in almost every detail to an example sold from the Royal Saxon Collection in 1919. That it may have been copied from that very piece is not impossible, as the porcelain cabinets formed by the Dutch and German kings at the turn of the seventeenth century were an important factor in the enthusiasm for, and imitation of, Oriental wares. That Poniatowski chose an Oriental pattern for an Eastern potentate may seem odd, but Poland was at this time just turning to western Europe for her intellectual and aesthetic standards, and was evidently discovering Chinese porcelain in much the same spirit as had the Dutch a century and a half earlier. This dish is a very literal translation from the Chinese and might occasion speculation were it not for the Turkish inscription, which explains its provenance unequivocally.

FIGURE 9

U.S.S. Missouri and model of carved and painted wood. Above: the National Archives, Navy Department; below, University Museum, Philadelphia

As the anthropologist Carleton Coon describes the event, one day in 1947 "an aged mountaineer from the Spanish zone of Morocco sought me out on the terrace of my favorite hotel in Tangier. He wanted to sell me a ship model that he had just finished carving. It was, he declared proudly, an exact replica of the U.S.S. *Missouri*, which had anchored in the harbor for several days a short time before. Unless he had told me, I never would have recognized it. The hull was copied from that of an ordinary freighter. On either side of the bow two imitation diamonds glared ahead to ward off the evil eye, as in most Mediterranean ships. In place of the bridge stood a high rectangular tower, in the form of a Moroccan minaret, and from the tower two tiny airplanes swooped overhead on wires." What the old man thought was an exact replica was, in effect, a translation made delightful by his very inability to "see" the original. It was just such a case of cultural myopia that transformed the European "replicas" of Oriental porcelains into individualistic works of art.



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CONTEMPORARY ARTS: Henry Geldzahler, *Curator*

THE COSTUME INSTITUTE: Polaire Weissman, *Executive Director*. Stella Blum, Mavis Dalton, and Angelina M. Firelli, *Assistant Curators*

DRAWINGS: Jacob Bean, *Curator*. Merritt Safford, *Conservator of Drawings and Prints*

EGYPTIAN ART: Henry G. Fischer, *Curator*. Nora Scott and Eric Young, *Associate Curators*. Virginia Burton, *Assistant Curator*

EUROPEAN PAINTINGS: Theodore Rousseau, *Chairman*. Claus Virch, Margaretta M. Salinger, and Elizabeth E. Gardner, *Associate Curators*. Guy-Philippe de Montebello, *Assistant Curator*. Hubert F. von Sonnenburg, *Conservator of Paintings*. Gerhard Wedekind, *Associate Conservator*

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GREEK AND ROMAN ART: Dietrich von Bothmer, *Curator*. Brian F. Cook, *Associate Curator*. Andrew Oliver, Jr., *Assistant Curator*

ISLAMIC ART: Ernst J. Grube, *Curator*. Don Aanavi, *Assistant Curator*

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Information

THE MAIN BUILDING: Open weekdays, except Tuesdays, 10-5; Tuesdays 10-10; Sundays and holidays 1-5. Telephone: TRafalgar 9-5500. The Restaurant is open weekdays 11:30-2:30; Tuesday evenings 5-9; Sundays 12-3; closed holidays. Coffee hours: Saturdays 3-4:30; Sundays 3:30-4:30.

THE CLOISTERS: Open weekdays, except Mondays, 10-5; Sundays and holidays 1-5 (May-September, Sundays 1-6). Telephone: WAdsworth 3-3700.

MEMBERSHIP: Information will be mailed on request.