

# Reinhold Vasters, Goldsmith

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HISTORICISM, combining a fervent regard for the past with the desire to re-create its forms, was a cultural movement that swept through most of Europe in the nineteenth century. Different countries reacted to this phenomenon in different ways. In England, for instance, historicism found early expression in the Gothic Revival, of which Isaiah Berlin has written: "The Gothic Revival represented a passionate, if not nostalgic attitude towards life, and while some examples of it appear bizarre, it sprang from a deeper sentiment and had a good deal more to say than some of the thin 'realistic' styles that followed."<sup>1</sup> In Germany, the movement acquired strong romantic, religious, and patriotic overtones. In the Rhineland, a region of concern to us here, historicism had a special significance, focusing as it did on the restoration and completion of the unfinished Gothic cathedral in Cologne, a process that lasted almost sixty years. Building activities, in the course of which two Gothic towers were added to the cathedral, started as early as 1823; in 1840, a society—the Dombauverein—was formed for the purpose, and two years later a foundation stone was laid by the crown prince; finally, in 1880, Emperor Wilhelm I presided over the closing ceremonies.

Enthusiasm for the Gothic style in architecture gradually led to an entirely new appreciation of medieval art objects, and as a result much attention was given to their restoration, often going beyond the strict requirements of conservation. In the course of repair, for instance, damaged objects were frequently brought closer to nineteenth-century canons of beauty. Prototypes were copied, faithfully or with variations,

and the copies were circulated with or without makers' marks. Such a climate of nostalgic make-believe obviously did not foster the ability to discriminate between original and copy; above all, it discouraged independent creativity. Exhibitions were arranged in which originals, restorations, and imitations could be seen side by side, setting the seal of approval on the effort to revive medieval art. Thus, in 1860, Dr. Franz Bock (1823–99), canon of Aachen Cathedral, mounted an exhibition of the cathedral treasures, accompanied by an illustrated catalogue, the frontispiece of which recalls the crowning of Charlemagne at the cathedral in A.D. 800 (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Canon Bock employed highly skilled goldsmiths, who not only restored but also replaced liturgical objects that had been damaged through continuous usage. Among these specialists was Reinhold Vasters (1827–1909), whose later activities, until recently shrouded in obscurity, must be seen in part at least as the outcome of this early environment, typical of the period of historicism.

The present inquiry was prompted by the discovery some years ago of a large collection of goldsmiths' designs in the Victoria and Albert Museum

A list of frequently cited sources is given at the end of this article.

1. I. Berlin, *Personal Impressions* (Oxford, 1982) p. 3.

2. F. Bock, *Der Reliquienschatz des Liebfrauen-Münsters zu Aachen in seinen kunstreichen Behältern zum Andenken an die Heilighumsfahrt von 1860* (Aachen, 1860), preface by J. T. Laurent ("Mit einer Einleitung von Dr. J. Th. Laurent, Bischof von Chersonnes i.p.i.").



1. Frontispiece to *Der Reliquienschatz des Liebfrauen-Münsters zu Aachen* by Franz Bock (Aachen, 1860). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library

that can be traced to Vasters and his workshop.<sup>3</sup> They feature articles of virtue in medieval, late Gothic, and Renaissance styles, and even a few in the style of the nineteenth century. Although Vasters's signature appears only twice, a great many drawings bear color notations and instructions for the executing goldsmith in German in Vasters's handwriting. The discovery has led to the identification of a considerable number of objects in The Metropolitan Museum of Art and elsewhere that are dependent, wholly or in part, on some of these designs. Subsequent research into Vasters's background in Aachen has brought to light not only the date of his death—June 14, 1909—which was previously unknown,<sup>4</sup> but also the cata-

logue of Vasters's estate, including plaster casts, galvanoplastic reproductions, and a comprehensive art library, offered for sale shortly after his death by the auction house of Anton Creutzer in Aachen, October 26–27, 1909.<sup>5</sup> The drawings now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, among them a few that are not by Vasters, must have formed part of this sale. We are now in a position to evaluate some of the opportunities and temptations that confronted this one-time specialist in neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic liturgical silver during his middle and later years.

The son of a locksmith, Reinhold Vasters was born on June 2, 1827, in Erkelenz, a town about twenty-four miles north of Aachen. He entered his maker's mark as a goldsmith in Aachen in 1853, and in the same year was appointed restorer at the Aachen cathedral treasury by Canon Bock. Two years later, he married Katharina Hammacher; she died in 1859, having borne him two daughters. Gradually, Vasters acquired a reputation as a *Gold- und Silberarbeiter*, specializing in liturgical silver in the Romanesque and Gothic styles; in the town records he is repeatedly mentioned as one known for "Anfertigung kirchlicher Gefässe in mittelalterlichem Stil," but only once named as a jeweler.<sup>6</sup> Vasters moved three times be-

3. I am indebted to the late John F. Hayward for having introduced me to the Vasters drawings. They were apparently bought by the London dealer Murray Marks at the sale of Vasters's estate in Aachen in 1909, and were subsequently included in the Marks sale at Christie's, July 5, 1918, lot 17. Acquired by Lazare Lowenstein for £37.16.0, they were presented by him in 1919 to the Victoria and Albert Museum (E.2570–3649-1919). See Truman (1979) p. 154.

4. Information about the date of Vasters's death, as about other matters in the city records, is due to the kind assistance of the staff of the Aachener Stadtarchiv. Prior to this research, only the year 1890 was quoted, as the date when Vasters ceased to be active as a goldsmith; see M. Rosenberg, *Der Goldschmiede Merkzeichen*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt am Main, 1911) p. 10, no. 34; *ibid.*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, 1922–28) I, p. 12, no. 42; Truman (1979) p. 154; Grimme (1981) pp. 13–31; H. Tait, "Spring in Bloomsbury: A Day to Remember," *Proceedings of the Silver Society* 3 (1983) p. 63.

5. See *Katalog Vasters*. His "reichhaltige kunstwissenschaftliche Bibliothek" comprised lots 517–818.

6. A. Kisa, Museums-Verein zu Aachen, *Denkschrift aus Anlass des Fünfundzwanzigjährigen Bestandes des Suermondt-Museums* (Aachen, 1903) p. 4, and n. 1, where some of Vasters's work is specially mentioned; Rosenberg, *Der Goldschmiede Merkzeichen*, 2nd ed., p. 10, no. 34, 3rd ed., I, p. 12, no. 42; *Ämtlicher Führer*





tween 1861 and 1870, a fact that suggests increasing prosperity at a time when he still produced church silver with his maker's mark (Figures 2, 3). One address, 26 Jacobstrasse, given on an invoice dated April 24, 1869 (Figure 4), was an ideal location for trade, being close to the marketplace. The decorative rendering of Vasters's billhead is typical of the spirit that must have moved him, at least during his earlier years. The scene of the goldsmith in his workshop evokes a

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*durch die Historische Jahrtausend-Ausstellung in Aachen*, exh. cat. (Aachen, 1925) p. 87, nos. 113–116a, liturgical silver by Vasters described as "neu-gotisch" and "neu-romanisch," followed by works of Martin Vogeno (nos. 117–125) and August Witte, senior (no. 131); G. Grimme, "Die Goldschmiedekunst der Kaiserstadt Aachen," *Die Bergstadt* 14, fasc. 4 (reprint n.d.) p. 16; E. G. Grimme, "Der Aachener Domschatz," *Aachener Kunstblätter* 42 (1972) pp. 5, 57, no. 39; W. Scheffler, *Goldschmiede Rheinland-Westfalens: Daten, Werke, Zeichen* (Berlin, 1973) I, p. 40, no. 137; Grimme (1981) pp. 13–31; Richter (1983) pp. 63–70; Tait, "Spring in Bloomsbury," pp. 63–64, figs. 2, 3.

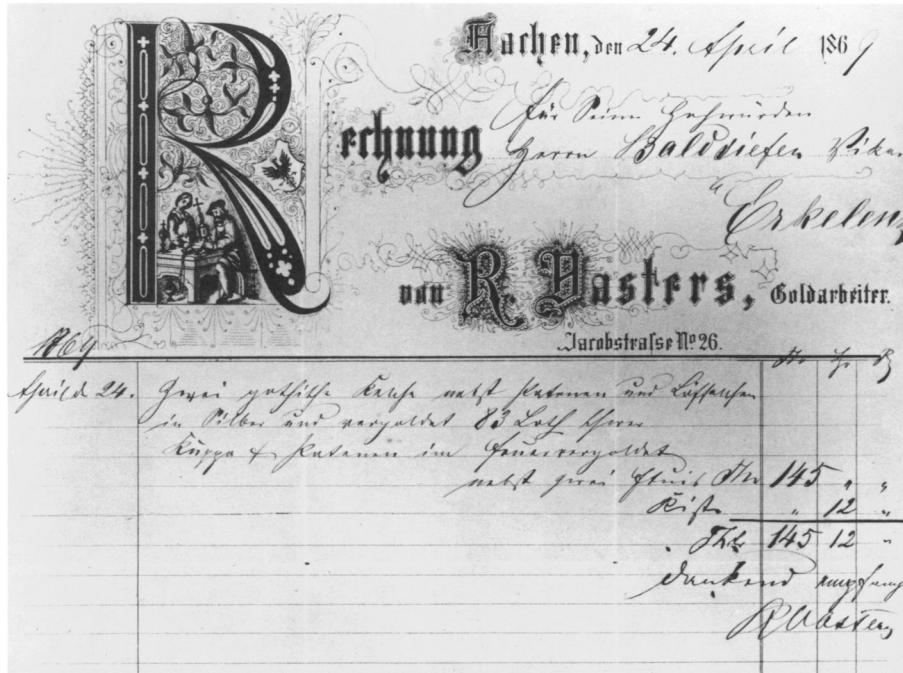


2, 3. Reinhold Vasters (1827–1909), two neo-Gothic chalices, hallmarked R. VASTERS AACHEN, Figure 3 dated 1867. Silver-gilt, H. 20.6 cm., 21 cm. Oberkrüchten, Catholic Church (photos: Landeskonservator Rheinland, Bonn)

romantic make-believe, such as Goethe described in the words of Faust to Wagner:

Was ihr den Geist der Zeiten heisst,  
Das ist im Grund der Herren eigner Geist,  
In dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln.  
(What you might call the spirit of the times is really men's  
own spirit, in which the times are reflected.)

In 1872, Vasters bought the house in which he was to live until his death in 1909, at 17 Mariahilfstrasse. The tree-lined Mariahilfstrasse, opened as recently as 1861, had soon become a favorite residential location for well-to-do citizens of Aachen. During these later years Vasters was apparently a man of considerable



4. Invoice of R. Vasters, Goldarbeiter, 26 Jacobstrasse, Aachen, signed and dated April 24, 1869, for two silver-gilt Gothic chalices with patens and spoons ("Zwei gothische Kelche nebst Patenen und Löffelchen in Silber und vergoldet 83 Loth schwer / Kupp & Patenen im Feuer vergoldet / nebst zwei Etais") (photo: C.-W. Clasen)

substance, no longer dependent wholly on the sale of church silver in the medieval style, but with other, more lucrative sources of regular income. These were evidently sufficient to enable him to participate as a collector of decorative arts in the Düsseldorf exhibition "Ausstellung der kunstgewerblichen Alterthümer" of 1880,<sup>7</sup> and again in the "Kunsthistorische Ausstellung" held in Düsseldorf in 1902, when he exhibited almost 500 objects; on that occasion, "the collection of the Aachen goldsmith Vasters" was acknowledged among others by the organizers of the exhibition in a commemorative volume.<sup>8</sup>

Vasters's collecting interests seem to have had a surprisingly wide range, from goldsmiths' work, where his strength might have been expected, to textiles, arms and armor, glass, rock crystals (see Figures 14, 15), ceramics, and even furniture. Edmund Renard, commenting on the 1902 exhibition, wrote: "Among the smaller private collections that of the Aachen

goldsmith Reinhold Vasters offers a highly characteristic picture; throughout one notes the specialist and technician. Several decades of cooperation with the greatest genius among nineteenth-century collectors, Spitzer, have had a distinct influence on the formation of the collection."<sup>9</sup> At that time Frédéric Spitzer (1815–90), the Vienna-born *marchand-amateur*, had been dead for twelve years, but clearly his significance among European collectors was not forgotten. There is, as we shall see, much circumstantial evidence to link Vasters with Spitzer, but this is the only

7. *Ausstellung der kunstgewerblichen Alterthümer in Düsseldorf 1880* exh. cat. (Düsseldorf, 1880). The catalogue is organized by class of object; there are numerous loans by "Vasters in Aachen," as there are by "Spitzer in Paris" (see below). I am largely indebted to Norbert Jopek, Trier, for this and other material connected with Vasters as a private collector.

8. *Die Kunsthistorische Ausstellung Düsseldorf 1902*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf, 1902) pt. 2, pp. 211–221, nos. 2918–3161; *Die Industrie- und Gewerbe-Ausstellung Düsseldorf 1902* (Düsseldorf, 1903) p. 392.

9. Edmund Renard, "Die kunsthistorische Ausstellung Düsseldorf 1902," *Rheinlande: Monatschrift für deutsche Kunst* (1902) pp. 41–42, ill. (see Figure 15). "Unter den kleineren Privatsammlungen bietet die Sammlung des Aachener Goldschmiedes Reinhold Vasters ein sehr charakteristisches Bild; überall merkt man den Fachmann, den Techniker heraus; jahrzehntelanges Zusammenarbeiten mit dem grössten Sammler-Genie des 19. Jahrhunderts, Spitzer, ist für das Entstehen der Sammlung von besonderem Einfluss gewesen." The writer goes on to men-

contemporary mention that has so far come to light of an association between them.

After 1895, Vasters is no longer referred to in the Aachen records as a goldsmith, but as a retired person—to be precise, a *Rentner*, a man of private means. Sales from his collection, publicized by the loan exhibitions in the Rhineland, probably helped to finance the last years of his life. At all events, few objects of the kind Vasters had exhibited figured in the sale catalogue of his estate when he died in 1909.

Vasters's early activities were ideally suited to the ambience of a quiet German cathedral town. His task of restoring the cathedral treasures was typical of the contemporary concern to preserve relics of the past, an endeavor initiated with the foundation of the *Karlsverein zur Wiederherstellung des Aachener Münsters* in 1847, just six years after the first such creation in the Rhineland—that of the *Dombauverein* in Cologne. It was in the shadow of medieval cathedrals that neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic styles were promoted, leaving their mark not only on architecture, including such civic enterprises as schools, museums, and railroad stations, but also on most branches of sacred and profane art.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, practicing architects, such as those in the Rhineland who participated in the completion of Cologne Cathedral, played an active role in extending the prevailing historicism to goldsmiths' designs. Although the independent work that Vasters offered for sale was often based upon prototypes in the Aachen cathedral treasury, some of his clients preferred to furnish their own designs. Thus, in 1865, the Catholic congregation of Berlin asked the Cologne architect Hugo Schneider to design a crozier in twelfth-century style for presentation to Leopold Pelldram,

5. Vasters, head of a crozier, made for Bishop Leopold Pelldram of Trier, 1865, from a design by Hugo Schneider. Silver-gilt, filigree, and enamel, H. 45 cm. Trier, Domschatz (photo: D. Thomassin, Trier)

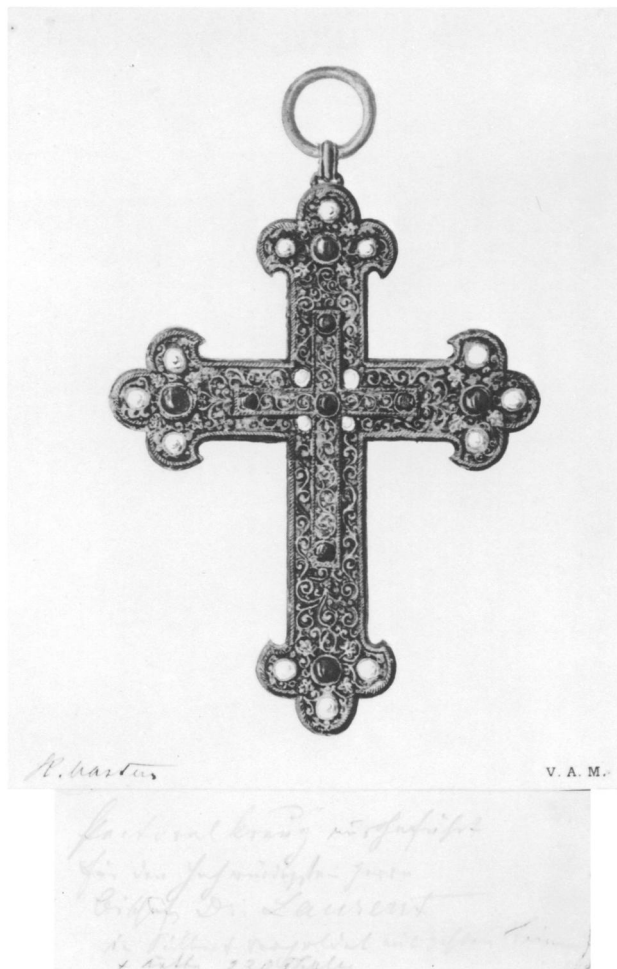


tion the fragments of interest to specialists, in particular "a series of rock crystal vessels, mostly of 16th-century northern Italian, Milanese origin, with a wealth of carved ornament and figural representation." The loans by Vasters also included a varied selection of gold jewels, with gemstones and enamels, of a kind "specially favored in 16th-century Germany."

10. P. Bloch, *Skulpturen des 19. Jahrhunderts im Rheinland* (Düsseldorf, 1975); W. Schäfke, *Goldschmiedearbeiten des Historismus in Köln*, exh. cat. (Cologne: Kölnisches Stadtmuseum, 1980); Grimme (1981) pp. 13–31; B. Mundt, "Theorien zum Kunstgewerbe des Historismus in Deutschland," in *Beiträge zur Theorie der Künste im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. H. Koopmann and J. A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth (Frankfurt am Main, 1971–72) I, pp. 317–336.

the newly appointed bishop of Trier. Vasters, commissioned to execute the design, showed his masterly handling of the techniques of filigree, enameling, and embossing of allegorical figures (Figure 5). The crozier was received with such enthusiasm as to be immediately exhibited in Vienna and published in Aachen.<sup>11</sup> Exhibited with the crozier were two chalices by Vasters in Romanesque style, together with liturgical silver by Martin Vogeno (master in 1854) and August Witte (master in 1858), both from Aachen.<sup>12</sup> The crozier was probably not the only item that Vasters made from a design by Schneider, for two drawings dated 1871 and signed by the architect are in the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum: one shows a ciborium, the other a fountain;<sup>13</sup> the latter, according to its handwritten legend, was entered in the competition for the marketplace of Lübeck, where it won first prize.

6. Vasters, design for a silver-gilt and jeweled pectoral cross for Bishop Laurent, signed *R. Vasters*, ca. 1860–65. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3009-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



Only two of the drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum bear Vasters's signature. One of these represents a covered cup in late Gothic style, which closely resembles the Corvinus Cup of 1462 at Wiener Neustadt, as well as its near copy formerly in the Karl von Rothschild collection in Frankfurt.<sup>14</sup> The other shows a pectoral cross in Romanesque style, a design in which the styles and techniques of past and present are reconciled in perfect harmony (Figure 6). The legend below the drawing notes that this pectoral cross was executed for Bishop Laurent in silver-gilt with precious stones and a chain, its value 230 talers.<sup>15</sup> It may not be altogether incidental that Vasters's signature is found only on drawings of objects in a revival style, something for which he had established a professional reputation. Regrettably few items bearing his maker's mark seem to have survived. Silversmiths such as Martin Vogeno and August Witte, who worked with

11. My thanks are due to C.-W. Clasen of Bonn, who first brought the crozier to my attention, and to Norbert Jopek, secretary of the exhibition "Schatzkunst Trier," held in Trier Cathedral in 1984, who kindly supplied a photograph; see *Schatzkunst Trier*, Treveris Sacra 3, exh. cat. (Trier: Bischöfliches Generalvikariat, 1984) no. 218, p. 252, ill. For contemporary references to the crozier see: K. B. and B., "Der Stab des Bischofs Leopold von Trier," *Organ für Christliche Kunst* (1865) pp. 150–151; and "Moderne kirchliche Kunst von Aachen im Österreichischen Museum," *Echo der Gegenwart*, no. 218 (Friday, Aug. 11, 1865), reprinted from *Neue Freie Presse*. See also G. Hermeling, "Zwei neue Bischofsstäbe in goth. Stile," *Zeitschrift für Christliche Kunst* 5 (1892) pl. II.

12. Rosenberg, *Der Goldschmiede Merkzeichen*, 2nd ed., p. 10, nos. 35 (M. Vogeno) and 37 (A. Witte), 3rd ed., I, p. 12, nos. 43 (Vogeno) and 44 (Witte); Scheffler, *Goldschmiede Rheinland-Westfalens*, I, p. 40, no. 143 (Vogeno), p. 41, no. 146 (Witte); Grimme (1981) p. 20.

13. Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2580-1919, E.2584-1919.

14. For the Vasters drawing see Truman (1979) p. 161, fig. 12. Richter (1983) pp. 38–40, figs. 30–33, illustrates a galvanoplastic reproduction of the original cup (fig. 31), of the kind that might have been known to Vasters; see also note 167.

15. "Pectoral Kreuz ausgeführt für den hochwürdigen Herrn Bischof Dr. Laurent in silber-vergoldet mit echten Steinen und Kette, 230 Thaler." A Bishop Laurent contributed the preface to Canon Bock's catalogue of the exhibition of treasures from Aachen Cathedral in 1860; see note 2 above. The cross itself is extant (Norbert Jopek, personal communication). It may have been the "Croix pectorale d'Evêque" exhibited by Vasters in Malines in 1864 (no. 1132): see *Catalogue des objets d'art religieux à l'hôtel Liederkerke à Malines*, exh. cat. (Brussels, 1864) p. 189, "1120–1132 Objets exposés par M. Reinhold Vasters, orfèvre pour objets d'église en style moyen âge, Aix-la-Chapelle." See also *ibid.*, nos. 1134–1140, for works by another Aachen goldsmith, Martin Vogeno (see note 12).

him at the cathedral treasury, are far better known, for many objects bearing their marks can be traced. Moreover, Vogeno and Witte, who continued at the treasury long after Vasters seems to have gone his own way, established flourishing firms bearing their names. Did Vasters chafe at the restricted activities of a cathedral goldsmith, resenting the limitations on his creative genius, on the range of objects he might hope to design, and on the materials he could expect to handle? Did he aim at higher compensation than could be looked for within the boundaries of the cathedral precinct? Whatever his reasons, Vasters seems not to have participated in exhibitions of church silver after 1865, and the 1869 invoice for two Gothic chalices (Figure 4) is the last known reference to his work in this vein.

As it happens, a promise of more varied activities, tied to the prospect of rapid financial advancement, could have opened up for Vasters during the sixties as a result of his association with the cathedral treasury. Around 1865, Canon Bock ordered the conversion of a silver-gilt pax, made about 1520 by Hans von Reutlingen, into a morse, or clasp. According to Stephan Beissel, whose book on forged artworks appeared in 1909, a dozen or so copies were made at the time, some with slight variations (Figure 7).<sup>16</sup> One of these versions, incorporating parts of the original, found its way into the Spitzer collection in Paris, probably commissioned by the collector himself.<sup>17</sup>

Frédéric Spitzer was no stranger in Aachen. He had established a firm there in about 1855—Spitzer, Kunst- und Antiquitäten-Handlung—and maintained it until at least 1868, moving three times during that period.<sup>18</sup> If we lend credence to tales then circulating in Aachen, Spitzer induced the local clergy to let him have old liturgical objects, arguing that in a damaged condition these had lost most of their value. Moved by deep-rooted antiquarian concern, he was nevertheless willing to acquire such objects and to replace them with new ones, made to serve their specific liturgical purposes even better, while preserving the appropriate “medieval” style.

If, as seems plausible, the conversion of the original sixteenth-century pax by Hans von Reutlingen was entrusted to Vasters, Spitzer must have been impressed by the cathedral goldsmith’s resourcefulness in blending old and new parts to create a harmonious unit. That Spitzer had friendly ties with the ca-

thedral authorities—ties that no doubt he was able to exploit—is confirmed by his gift in 1871 of a silver-gilt morse, once again composed of old and new parts.<sup>19</sup> In all likelihood, this morse was made by Vasters. It displays a Romanesque openwork roundel within a pseudo-Romanesque quatrefoil setting; the inscription includes the words FRIEDERICUS SPITZER ARCHAEOLOGUS VIENNENSIS A 1871.

Two other works can probably be assigned to the same early phase of Vasters’s new career, if we are right in thinking that its opening stages were marked by commissions to convert and reset surviving treasures. One is a remarkable enameled plaque with the Holy Trinity, now in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. (Figure 8).<sup>20</sup> The roundel is a superb example of *ronde-bosse* technique—enamel on gold raised in high relief—executed in the finest French court tradition of about 1400. The silver-gilt setting, on the other hand, shows close affinities with the pax by Hans von Reutlingen, converted into a morse around 1865 (see Figure 7).

16. S. Beissel, *Gefälschte Kunstwerke* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1909) p. 86, “wohl ‘ein Dutzend Kopien.’” For a full bibliography see Grimme, “Der Aachener Domschatz,” pp. 122–123, ill., and pl. 145. For similar morses see: *Catalogue illustré de la collection . . . Antoine Jos. Essingh*, sale cat., J. M. Heberle (H. Lempertz) (Cologne, Sept. 18–29, 1865) pt. II, lot 903, pl. VIII (upper); see Figure 7); E. Felix, *Zierstücke des älteren deutschen, französischen und italienischen Kunstgewerbes zumeist aus dem sechzehnten Jahrhunderte, nach den Originalen in der Kunstsammlung von Eugen Felix* . . . (Leipzig, 1883) no. 617, pl. XIII, mounted on copper gilt; J. Camón Aznar, *Guía abreviada del Museo Lazaro Galdiano* (Madrid, 1951) ill., “Gran broche gótico de capa pluvial”; Richter (1983) pp. 70–71, fig. 61, morse in the Kestner Gesellschaft Museum, Hanover.

17. *Collection Spitzer*, I, p. 140, no. 144 (German, end of 15th or beginning of 16th century), ORFÈVREURIE RELIGIEUSE pl. XXIV; Spitzer Sale, I, lot 350, pl. IX, cf. lots 346, 349, 364.

18. 1855–58: 10 Ursulinerstrasse; 1858–61: 38 Harscampstrasse; 1861–65 (or 1868): 40 Harscampstrasse.

19. Grimme, “Der Aachener Domschatz,” pp. 149–150, no. 166, pl. 192.

20. Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Catalogue of a Collection of European Enamels: From the Earliest Date to the End of the XVIII. Century*, exh. cat. (London, 1897) p. 74, no. 242b, and pl. LXIII, “Lent by J. E. Taylor”; *Catalogue of the . . . Collection of Works of Art . . . Formed by J. E. Taylor*, sale cat., Christie’s (London, July 1, 1912) lot 234, ill.; T. Müller and E. Steingraber, “Die französische Goldemailplastik um 1400,” *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 5 (1954) pp. 36, 38, 67, no. 4, fig. 9; P. Verdier, “La Trinité debout de Champmol,” in *Etudes d’art offertes à Charles Sterling*, ed. A. Châtelet (Paris, 1975) pp. 69–70, fig. 48.





7. Morse with the Virgin and Child, after pax by Hans von Reutlingen, ca. 1520, here attributed to Vasters, ca. 1860–64. Silver, H. 17 cm. Formerly Cologne, Antoine Jos. Essingh Collection. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library (photo: after Heberle's sale catalogue, 1865, pl. viii, detail)



8. Morse with the Trinity: central group, Paris or Burgundy, ca. 1400; setting attributed to Vasters, ca. 1865–70. Enameled gold, pearls, jewels; diam. 12.6 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, 1942.9.287 (photo: National Gallery)



9. *St. James Major at the Battle of Clavijo*: plaque, Danube region, ca. 1520; frame by Vasters, ca. 1865–70. Enameled gold and silver-gilt. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, M.551-1910 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)

The second, which was in Spitzer's collection at his death, is an early sixteenth-century enameled plaque from the Danube region, showing St. James the Major at the battle of Clavijo, in a silver-gilt setting designed by Vasters (Figure 9).<sup>21</sup> The plaque itself had formed part of the roof of the Erasmus Shrine once in the Hallesche Heiltum of Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg. Since 1910 this work has been in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where an inventory note records that it was "Restored by Vasters" and mentions the existence of a photograph, now lost, which showed an alternative setting.<sup>22</sup> This is the only known instance in which a near-contemporary source has linked Vasters by name with an object formerly in Spitzer's collection. The lack of documentary evidence, however, need not deter us from attributing to Spitzer a critical role in Vasters's career.

The two men could not have been more different in background. Frédéric Spitzer (Figure 10) was a prominent member of the antiquarian world, who moved with apparent ease across the international scene in the second half of the nineteenth century, amassing vast quantities of antiques that ranged from furniture, sculpture, and arms and armor to glass, ivories, enamels, bronzes, and exquisite *objets de vitrine*; their value has been estimated at twelve to fourteen million French francs.<sup>23</sup> In 1852, having decided no doubt that Paris would offer the best base for his operations, Spitzer bought a large house in the sixteenth arrondissement at 33 rue de Villejust, thereafter known as the Musée Spitzer, in which his accumulated treasures were displayed (Figures 11, 12).

In considering Spitzer as a collector and dealer, it is as well to remember that the Napoleonic conquests had resulted in an almost unprecedented destruction and dislocation of works of art in Europe. The gradual reawakening of national consciousness stimulated new interest in these scattered treasures. Some had been damaged beyond repair, but others could be restored and preserved. Frédéric Spitzer, combining commercial genius with genuine antiquarian interests and a discerning eye, knew instinctively how to exploit the situation. He appealed to a new society of bankers and merchants with a penchant for personal magnificence, luring them with Viennese charm to yield to the fascination of art collecting under his guidance. Spitzer seems to have used every trick of the trade to make contacts with prospective clients.

Preferring to be known as an *amateur*, he invited Liszt to play the piano to specially invited friends, asked outstanding actors of the Comédie Française to recite for them, and on one occasion even added a touch of humor by himself appearing in the guise of Charles V.<sup>24</sup>

Writing in the year of Spitzer's death, Edmond Bonnaffé gave an admirable description of the flair, energy, and business sense that had contributed to his success: "Il avait l'instinct de la curiosité, le flair des belles choses, le coup d'oeil rapide et sûr, une activité endiablée, le génie des affaires et foi dans son étoile; il devait réussir."<sup>25</sup> Bonnaffé's description of Spitzer's house and those who frequented it is also worth quoting: "Pendant douze ans [1878–90], l'hôtel de la rue de Villejust a été le pèlerinage de toute l'aristocratie européenne, aristocratie de naissance, de talent ou de fortune."<sup>26</sup> In the end, however, the privilege of being one of Spitzer's clients was not entirely unmixed, particularly for those who bought at the sale of his collection in 1893—"la plus grande vente du siècle." The catalogue of the sale, which ran from April 17 to June 16 and realized well over nine million francs,<sup>27</sup> stipulated that "il ne sera admis aucune réclamation une fois l'adjudication prononcée." Even at the time questions were raised in some circles about Spitzer's connoisseurship and motivation. Justus Brinckmann, director of the Hamburg Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, was quick to point out Spitzer's methods of misleading those who sought the truth

21. *Collection Spitzer*, III, p. 143, no. 12 (Venetian, beginning of 16th century), ill.; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 1797 (Venetian or Spanish); Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Catalogue of a Collection of European Enamels*, pp. 72–73, no. 242, pl. LXI, "Lent by G. Salt- ing"; E. Steingraber, "Süddeutsche Goldemailplastik der Frührenaissance," in *Studien zur Geschichte der Europäischen Plastik: Festschrift Theodor Müller . . .*, ed. K. Martin (Munich, 1965) pp. 225, 228, figs. 8, 9; J. Rasmussen, "Untersuchungen zum Halleschen Heiltum des Kardinals Albrecht von Brandenburg," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 27 (1976) pp. 105–106, figs. 44, 45.

22. See Truman (1979) p. 154.

23. Beissel, *Gefälschte Kunstwerke*, p. 151.

24. M. Rheims, *La Vie étrange des objets: Histoire de la curiosité* (Paris, 1959) pp. 36, 401.

25. E. Bonnaffé, *Le Musée Spitzer* (Paris, 1890) p. 8. (Bonnaffé's essay was adapted and reprinted as a preface to the Spitzer Sale catalogue, pp. xiii–xx, see esp. p. xiii.)

26. Bonnaffé, *Musée Spitzer*, p. 22.

27. Spitzer Sale, supplement, p. 12: 9,123,780 frs.; Beissel, *Gefälschte Kunstwerke*, p. 152: 9,500,000 frs.

about objects in his collection.<sup>28</sup> The quality of much of the collection was outstanding, but Spitzer's proclivity for obscuring or inventing provenances, for combining old with old or old with new to complete, to beautify (in terms of contemporary taste), or simply to multiply objects had not gone unnoticed. A few years after the sale, one writer referred candidly to the fakes and overrestored items it had contained.<sup>29</sup>

Spitzer is known to have engaged gifted designers and craftsmen, specialists in their own right. He had them study great collections of religious and secular art, including those of arms and armor, and commissioned them to furnish sketches as points of departure for ingenious repairs or new settings of old fragments. The practice of revitalizing broken or otherwise damaged works of art, particularly those made of precious materials, and of creating for them new, congenial settings has a long tradition and is not in itself illegitimate. Difficulties arise, however, if deceptively optimistic descriptions and pedigrees are attached to the results. The prevailing trend of historicism, with its emphasis on the revival of arts and crafts and on the merits of medieval and Renaissance prototypes, proved to be highly auspicious for this part of Spitzer's enterprise.

We learn from Beissel, whose *Gefälschte Kunstwerke* appeared in the year of Vasters's death, that Spitzer had "as is well known, employed for almost fifty years a series of first-rate artists in Paris, Cologne, Aachen, etc., who made him 'old things.'"<sup>30</sup> It seems reasonable to suppose that Spitzer was not eager to advertise these activities, and a designer resident in Aachen, out of the public eye, would have suited his purposes admirably.

Initially, Vasters may not even have fully realized that objects executed by him or from his designs were to be passed off as rare survivals of medieval or Renaissance art, as Spitzer was to describe them in later life in an ambitious catalogue of his collection. This magnificently printed and illustrated six-volume work was brought out in the years 1890–92. Entirely planned by Spitzer, who lived to see only the first volume published, the catalogue included contributions by a number of well-known specialists.

When the collection was sold in 1893, a two-volume catalogue was issued, more or less repeating the entries used in the earlier volumes. One of the accompanying plates shows a group of rock crystal and hardstone vessels and other objects (Figure 13), fifteen

of which are now in the Metropolitan Museum. Many of the items can be recognized in the photograph of the interior of the Musée Spitzer, in the center vitrine against the far wall (Figure 12). With less evident justification, many can also be recognized among the Vasters designs in the Victoria and Albert Museum, where, as we shall see, working drawings for them, in part or whole, are clearly identifiable. The catalogue entries attribute completely authentic origins to these as to almost every other piece in Spitzer's collection.<sup>31</sup>

Both catalogues—that of the Spitzer collection and that of the sale—were listed in Vasters's library when it was auctioned in 1909.<sup>32</sup> Vasters's ownership of these volumes can only indicate that he was aware of Spitzer's duplicity.

Without the catalogues, of course, it would be practically impossible to link Spitzer by name with such an extraordinary array of objects, ranging all the way from works of exceptional quality to made-to-order fakes. No doubt a great many items had passed through Spitzer's hands before he decided to catalogue his collection, and of these transactions there are no known records. Some objects, including several that had not been catalogued, remained in the family, and were sold by his heirs in 1929.<sup>33</sup>

28. J. Brinckmann, "Die Versteigerung der Sammlung Spitzer in Paris," *Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg: Bericht für das Jahr 1893* (Hamburg, 1894) pp. 45–68. See also W. von Bode, *Mein Leben* (Berlin, 1930) I, p. 155; II, p. 97.

29. W. B[raun], "Noch einmal die Versteigerungen Zschille und Bardini in London," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 22 (1899) p. 423. The writer mentions the Spitzer collection and the prices attained "für die hervorragenden Stücke, noch für das Gros der Sammlung, das zahlreiche falsche oder stark restaurierte Stücke, ja ganze Abtheilungen, welche dieser Vorwurf traf, in sich schloss."

30. Beissel, *Gefälschte Kunstwerke*, p. 152, "Er beschäftigte bekanntermaßen seit fast 50 Jahren eine Reihe vortrefflicher Künstler zu Paris, Köln, Aachen usw., die ihm 'alte Sachen' machten." Not unnaturally, no names are named, though the mention of Aachen in this context may be thought significant.

31. For bibliographical information about the catalogues see the list of frequently cited sources. Although for present purposes the two sets of entries have not been collated, they appear to be substantially the same; significant differences are noted. Both catalogues use the following formula for provenance and date: "*Travail allemand* (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle)," "*Travail italien* (fin du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)," and so on.

32. *Katalog Vasters*, lots 664, 665.

33. See Spitzer Sale (1929). A sale of the arms and armor was held in Paris in 1895.

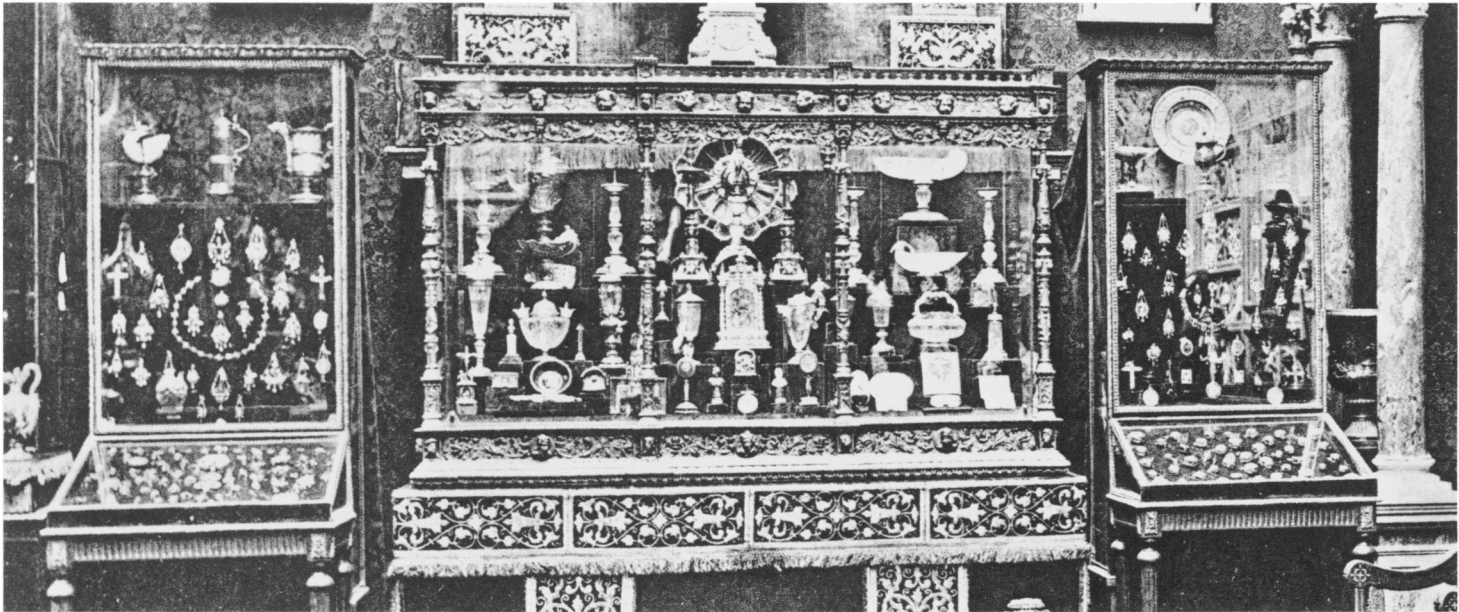
10. *Frédéric Spitzer* (1815–90), frontispiece to *Le Musée Spitzer* by Edmond Bonnaffé (Paris, 1890). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library



11. Interior of the Musée Spitzer, 33 rue de Villejust, Paris 16e. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library (photo: after Bonnaffé, *Le Musée Spitzer*)









12. Detail of Figure 11

13. Rock crystal and hardstone objects included in the sale of the Spitzer collection, Paris, 1893. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library (photo: after Spitzer Sale, pl. LIX)



14, 15. Two installation photographs of rock crystal objects lent by Vasters to the exhibition "Die Kunsthistorische Ausstellung Düsseldorf 1902," Figure 14 annotated—by Vasters(?)—*Aachen Bergkrystall. Gefäße aus der Slg. R. Vasters* (photos: Rheinisches Amt für Denkmalpflege)



The association between Spitzer and Vasters must have had its legitimate aspect, or it could hardly have been mentioned openly in 1902 as having influenced Vasters's private collection.<sup>34</sup> Two installation photographs of rock crystals exhibited by Vasters that year are striking confirmation of his dependence on the other's example (Figures 14, 15), though at a much less ambitious level. The fragmentary nature of some of the exhibits, the temporary or unfinished appearance of certain mounts, the unadorned baluster stems of different heights—suggesting alternative forms of presentation, are intriguing clues to the kind of work Vasters had been engaged in before his retirement, and was perhaps still prepared unofficially to put in hand. The photographs also raise a number of speculations about what were then regarded as permissible borderlines between authentic, restored, and retrospective works.

Our present pursuit, to match Vasters's designs in the Victoria and Albert Museum with the objects restored or made from them, and where possible to suggest his prototypes and sources of inspiration, is primarily concerned with Renaissance and neo-Renaissance works which are today in the Metropolitan Museum. Included in the discussion are certain related works in other—mainly American—collections. Although the great generation of American collectors—Altman, Friedsam, Morgan, Walters, and Widener—came too late to have had direct contact with Spitzer, they were still under the spell cast by those *objets de luxe* that he had so successfully promoted. With a single striking exception, now in a private collection in the United States, Vasters's medievalizing designs are not examined here. The logical place for an investigation of that side of Vasters's activities is the Rhineland, where medieval objects were valued and collected, and where some of Vasters's medieval-style chalices are still in use.<sup>35</sup>

Before going further it is as well to admit our dependence on Vasters's designs as guides across difficult territory. Certain Renaissance-style pendants, cups, or ebony and gold cabinets, previously accepted as genuine—if sometimes with an element of doubt as to the exact origins of a piece—must now be seen as creations or re-creations of the nineteenth century. Expert opinions about undocumented objects, or objects whose provenance is not in doubt, have traditionally been based on personal experience and

sensibility, depending heavily on the absence of mechanical casting or tooling, as well as on the character and colors of the enamel if used. However, such expertise can be faced with insurmountable problems if, for example, the design of a piece is impeccably in period and it is not available for handling. Where no outside doubts about authenticity exist, the tendency is to seek an art-historical explanation of elements that may seem out of key. As the frontiers of our knowledge have expanded, through the aid of photography, metallurgy and chemistry, and the discovery of Vasters's designs, the pioneer work of Otto von Falke in 1924 becomes even more admirable: Falke was the first to express doubts about some of Vasters's creations.<sup>36</sup> In this context a pertinent example, never previously questioned, is the so-called Rospigliosi gold cup, enhanced as it is by historical associations. Most of the controversial objects under discussion, however, are far less ambitious and tend to follow repetitive, if not monotonous, designs. Their occasional lack of surface quality has often been attributed to a provincial origin, in some faraway region of eastern Europe or southern Spain. When such objects are matched with preparatory drawings by Vasters, their nineteenth-century origin can no longer be in doubt.

The surviving drawings now in the Victoria and Albert Museum are predominantly, though not exclusively, secular in character, with an emphasis on Renaissance style. This in itself suggests that for the most part they postdate Vasters's employment as a cathedral goldsmith, when his concerns are more likely to have been with medieval church art. Among the drawings are illustrations of or after pieces that could not be seen in the Rhineland. Although Vasters was obviously in a position to travel, his well-stocked art library, which must have represented a considerable investment, would have served him for reference as well as inspiration. One is inclined to believe that only after he had severed his ties with Aachen Cathedral

34. See note 9 above, esp. the reference to rock crystal vessels of mainly 16th-century northern Italian, Milanese origin. The writer used the photograph reproduced here as Figure 15 to illustrate his point that the rock crystals, though damaged, still created a very rich impression.

35. Such an investigation has recently been undertaken by Norbert Jopek, attached to the cathedral treasury in Trier.

36. O. von Falke, "Silberfälschungen," *Belvedere* 5, Forum (1924) pp. 1–6.

did Vasters fully respond to the general trend of the *Gründerjahre* in Germany, ready to work in a greater diversity of styles and to produce *Schatzkammer* objects for which a demand had become perceptible.

Uncertainty remains as to the whereabouts of the workshops in which Vasters's designs were realized. As so many of the items to be discussed belonged at one time to Frédéric Spitzer in Paris, it seems likely that one or more workshops existed there, to handle in particular those objects which incorporated genuine fragments from Spitzer's collection or which were made of heavy gold and precious gemstones that he might have preferred to keep under his eye. On the other hand, objects whose related drawings remained in Aachen were probably executed—at least in part—in local workshops. The coexistence of several centers of production might also help to explain discernible differences in quality and technical accomplishment in the finished pieces. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to indicate whether Vasters sold his designs wherever he could, or predominantly to Spitzer, whom he survived by nineteen years. The circumstances suggest, however, that Spitzer had secured for himself considerable prerogatives, based on steady patronage and regular financial support.<sup>37</sup>

In the absence of any hall- or master's mark establishing the precise authorship of the objects under consideration, it is wise to refrain from making direct attributions to Vasters, tempting as it may be to do so. Too few of his drawings are signed. Moreover, the

large number of objects depending on them raises doubts about their varied use. Until more is known about Vasters's practice as a designer and about the workshops that realized his designs, his autograph work is best limited to examples of hallmarked liturgical silver such as are still found in churches of the Rhineland. It is difficult, however, to resist mentioning in advance at least three items, based on designs from Vasters's estate and of superb quality, that seem to show this Aachen goldsmith at his best: the mounts and bail handle of a sixteenth-century rock crystal bowl (Figure 68); the enameled-gold settings, including the figure of a recumbent dog, of a seventeenth-century red jasper bowl (Figure 152); and a large agate covered bowl, with densely ornamented figural and decorative bands and finial (Figure 163).

In the discussion that follows, the pieces have been grouped for convenience as far as is practicable: pendants (Figures 16–55); gold-mounted rock crystals of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century origin, including *verres églomisés* in rock crystal settings (Figures 56–95); gold-mounted rock crystals of nineteenth-century origin (Figures 96–151); hardstone vessels with gold mounts (Figures 152–165); the Rospigliosi gold cup (Figures 166–177); wood objects mounted in gold (Figures 178–187); a hardstone statuette (Figures 188–193); and—by way of a postscript to this review of Renaissance and neo-Renaissance works—a neo-Gothic drinking horn (Figures 194–205).

37. It would be interesting to know the source of Rosenberg's information (see note 4) that the last year in which Vasters was active as a goldsmith was 1890—the year of Spitzer's death. In the Aachen city records, as noted, Vasters is not described as a *Rentner* until 1895.

## PENDANTS

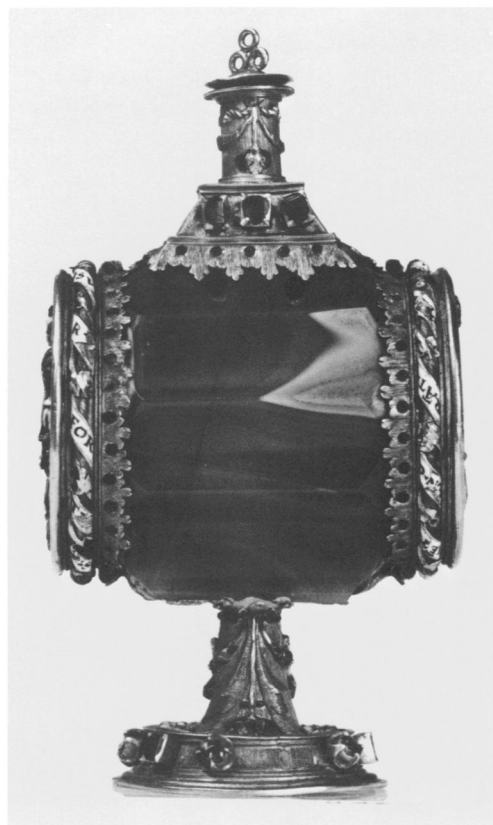
A small scent bottle from the Medici collections, now in the Museo degli Argenti in Florence (Figures 16–18),<sup>38</sup> must have been known to Vasters, probably illustrated in one of the many pattern books and volumes of lithographs of art objects from earlier periods that formed his working library. The gold-mounted bottle of banded agate, set with rubies and diamonds, has at each end an oval medallion enclosing an enameled figure in low relief: one is a young man, attired in the fashion of 1515–20, the period of the youthful François I, who runs beside the wheel of fortune; the other is a lady, also in fashionable dress of the period, who raises one hand to receive a heart presented to her out of the clouds. The much-damaged inscription includes the word FORTUNE.

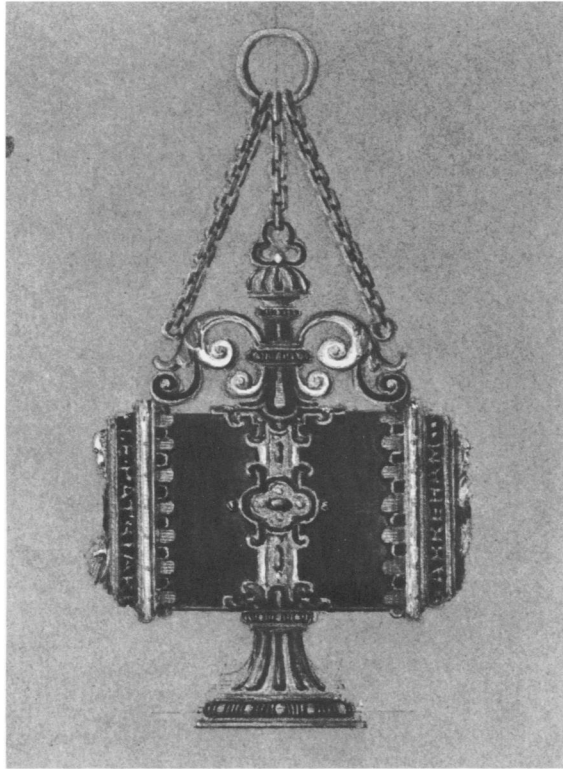
16–18. Scent bottle, France, ca. 1515–20. Banded agate, enameled gold, rubies, diamonds. Florence, Museo degli Argenti (photos: Marcello Bertoni)

A color sketch by Vasters shows this Medici scent bottle converted into a pendant, embellished with *Schweifwerk* and a central band with a cartouche of mid-sixteenth-century character (Figure 19); encircling inscriptions read, on the left, LE PATRIAR[CH] and, on the right, ABRAHAM. The matching piece, formerly owned by Spitzer, is now in the Metropolitan Museum as part of the Robert Lehman Collection (Figures 20–22).<sup>39</sup> Unaware of the contradictions of style between shape and decoration, and disregarding the secular character of the original in Florence, Vasters substituted for the lovers in the medallions busts of bearded Old Testament figures, named on

38. Y. Hackenbroch, "A French Perfume Bottle in the Medici Collections," *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 36 (1985) pp. 72–80.

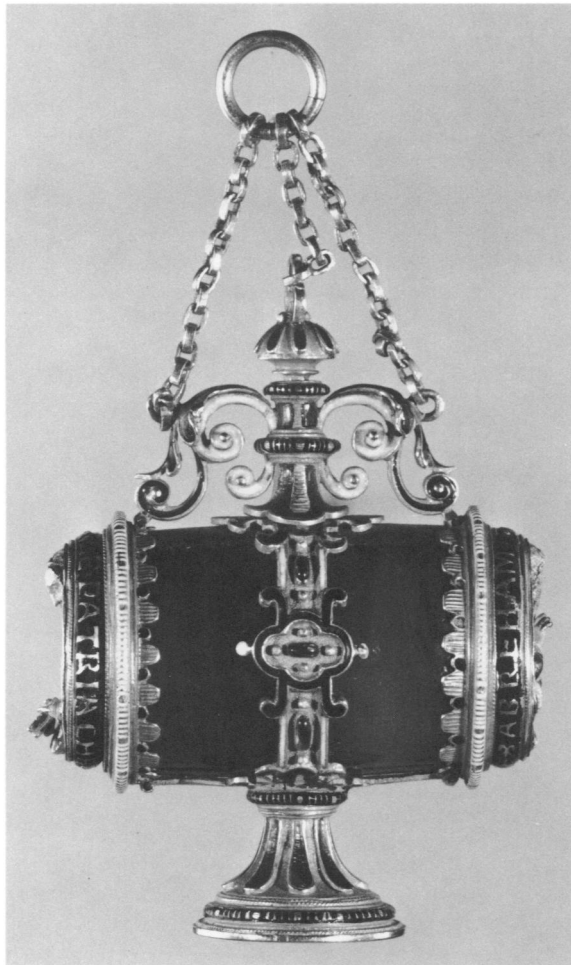
39. Spitzer Sale (1929) lot 605, ill., "French, 16th century"; *Exposition de la Collection Lehman de New York*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée de l'Orangerie, 1957) p. 133, no. 208, pl. 86.





19. Design for scent-bottle pendant, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2839-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

20–22. Scent-bottle pendant, ca. 1870–90. Banded agate, enameled gold; 6.7 × 3.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.1534







23–25. Designs for a mermaid pendant, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2827, 2802, 2800-1919 (photos: Eileen Tweedy)

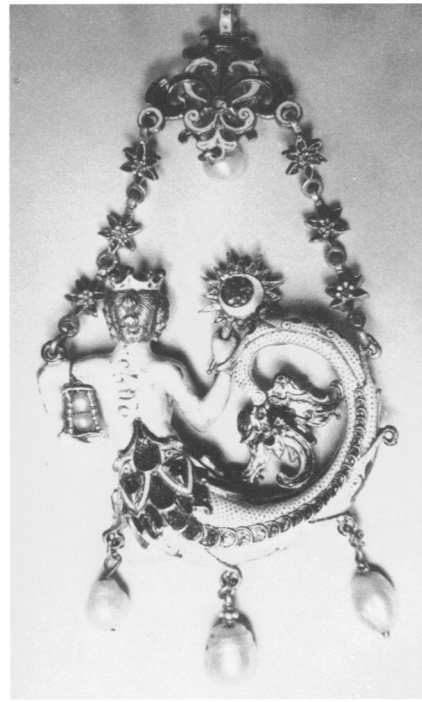
the enameled bands encircling the bottle as ABREHAM LE PATRIACHE and JONAS LE PATRIACHE; the latter displays an open book. A strange pair for an object originally conceived as a lover's token! The bust portraits correspond in style to Paris enamels made about 1400, and are curiously reminiscent of the representation of God the Father in the Trinity morse, which I believe to have been reset by Vasters (see Figure 8). A similar scent bottle with "PATRIACHES" formed part of the Lafoulotte collection.<sup>40</sup>

Vasters made several drawings for pendants in the form of mermaids, wearing either a diadem or a crown, each one displaying a large baroque pearl in her chest. Sometimes, as in Figures 23–25, the mermaid holds a sun-scepter, a motif known in only one prototype: like the scent bottle that Vasters adapted, this is in the Medici collection in Florence (Figures 26, 27).<sup>41</sup> It shows a mermaid wearing a crown and carrying a sun-scepter in one hand with an hourglass under the other arm; these attributes distinguish her as a personification of Fortune, queen of the waves, which she rules in sunlight and in darkness, across changing tides, measured and symbolized by the sand



40. *Collection de Lafaulotte: Objets d'art de curiosité et d'ameublement . . .*, sale cat., Hôtel Drouot (Paris, Apr. 5–13, 1886) lot 301, ill.

41. C. Piacenti-Aschengreen, *Il Museo degli Argenti a Firenze* (Milan, 1968) no. 2027, color pl. 62; Hackenbroch (1979) p. 240, fig. 642, p. 368 n. 26 with full bibliography; Y. Hackenbroch, *Treasures of the Medici* (Florence, forthcoming).



26, 27. Pendant with mermaid as Fortune, Netherlands, ca. 1575. Enameled gold, pearls, jewels. Florence, Museo degli Argenti (photos: 26. Marcello Bertoni; 27. Hackenbroch)

28, 29. Pendant with mermaid as Fortune, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, silver, pearls, jewels; H. 13.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.881



running through her hourglass. Such an interpretation, obscured by the passage of time, would have been perfectly clear to Renaissance society, well versed in the literature of emblem books. A nineteenth-century version of this pendant (Figures 28, 29), now in the Metropolitan Museum, can be attributed to Vasters even in the absence of a design that corresponds to it exactly.<sup>42</sup> Considerable liberties have been taken in creating the later version. Renaissance pendants are almost always made of gold; but the New York example is cast predominantly in silver, which causes the mermaid's traditionally fair and alluring body to tarnish, and her legendary golden hair to darken. If, as seems likely, Vasters copied the Florentine pendant from an illustration, he would have had no opportunity to examine the reverse. Otherwise he might have noticed that the sun-scepter was backed not by a repeat of the face on the front but by a crescent moon, symbolizing the mermaid's reign by night as well as by day. Her shoulders at the back are partly hidden by a three-lobed collar; these lambrequins, such as are seen in Vasters's sketches, cover her traditionally exposed charms in a coy, Victorian manner. Finally, her fishtail should be scaled; in the silver copy, its reverse shows a pattern of nonheraldic fleurs-de-lis, comparable to the larger pattern on the nineteenth-century base that supports the reliquary bust of Charlemagne, donated to Aachen Cathedral by Charles V in 1376.<sup>43</sup>

A number of pendants with allegorical or mythological beings can be matched to designs by Vasters. These include a pendant with the figures of Charity

and three children, in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figures 30, 31);<sup>44</sup> one with Fortitude mounted on a stag, in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (Figures 32, 33);<sup>45</sup> and one with a Triton riding a sea monster, in the Metropolitan Museum (Figures 34, 35).<sup>46</sup> They show that Vasters and those working from

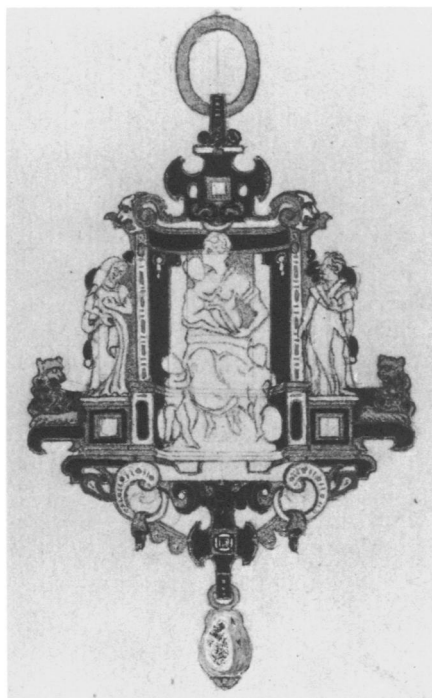
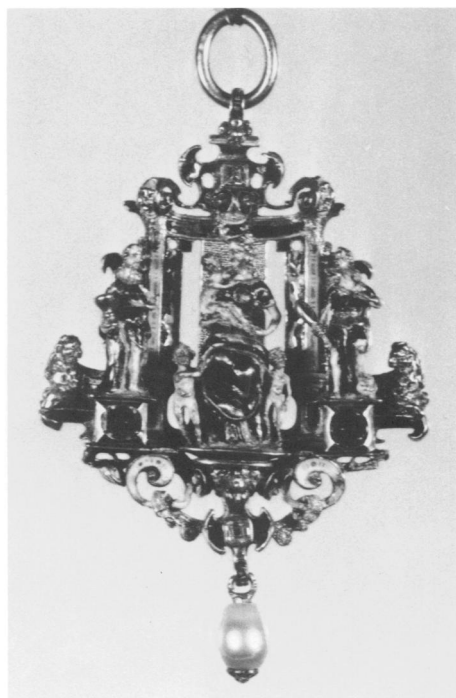
42. G. C. Williamson, comp., *Catalogue of the Collection of Jewels and Precious Works of Art the Property of J. Pierpont Morgan* (London, 1910) pp. 35–36, no. 24, pl. XIII and color pl. II; Hackenbroch (1979) p. 368 n. 26. For a similar mermaid pendant, also based on Vasters's designs, with sun-scepter but no hourglass, the tail set with diamonds and rubies, see Luthmer (1883–85) II, color pl. 50c.

43. Grimme, "Der Aachener Domschatz," pp. 88–90, no. 69, color pl. XII. For further comparisons see *ibid.*, pp. 102–103, nos. 79 and 80, pls. 91–94 (fleur-de-lis patterns on the armorial shields of Hungary and Poland), and pp. 103–104, nos. 82–84, pls. 96–98 (*fleurdelisé* backgrounds). All these are 14th-century works, heavily restored about 1860–70.

44. See Truman (1979) p. 160, color pls. fi, fii, g (middle row, left and right), fig. 10; *Princely Magnificence*, p. 44, color pl., p. 137, no. H17, p. 139, no. HG1, ill. Another version with three children is at present on the market in Germany.

45. *Collection Spitzer*, III, p. 148, no. 34 (German, 16th century), bijoux pl. v; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 1819, pl. XLVII; D. Scarisbrick, "The Jewelry of the Renaissance," in *Jewelry Ancient to Modern*, Walters Art Gallery cat. (New York, 1980) p. 190, no. 518, ill.; *Princely Magnificence*, p. 44, color ill., p. 137, no. H19, and p. 139, no. HG3 (drawing E.2801-1919; another E.2855-1919).

46. Hackenbroch (1979) p. 338, fig. 908, color pl. XXXX; *Princely Magnificence*, pp. 139–140, no. HG4, ill. (drawing, E.2818-1919); C. Vincent, in *The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1984) pp. 194–195, no. 114, ill.



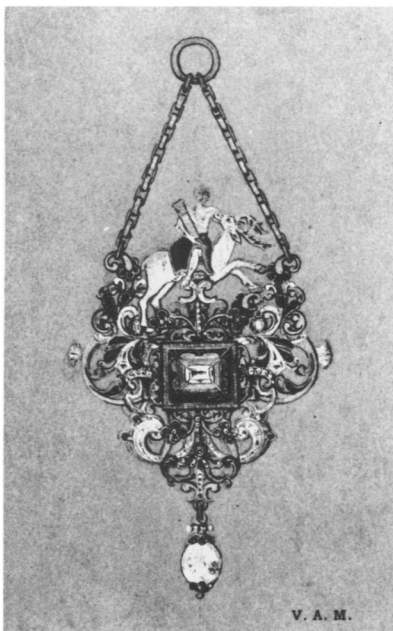
30. Pendant with Charity, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, pearl, jewels; H. 7.1 cm. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, M.534-1910 (photo: Hackenbroch)

31. Design for Charity pendant, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2841-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



32. Pendant with Fortitude riding a stag, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, silver, pearls, jewels; H. 12.7 cm. Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, 44.622 (photo: Walters Art Gallery)

33. Design for Fortitude pendant, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2801-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



34. Pendant with Triton mounted on a sea monster, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, pearls, jewels; H. 11.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982.60.382

35. Design for Triton pendant, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2818-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

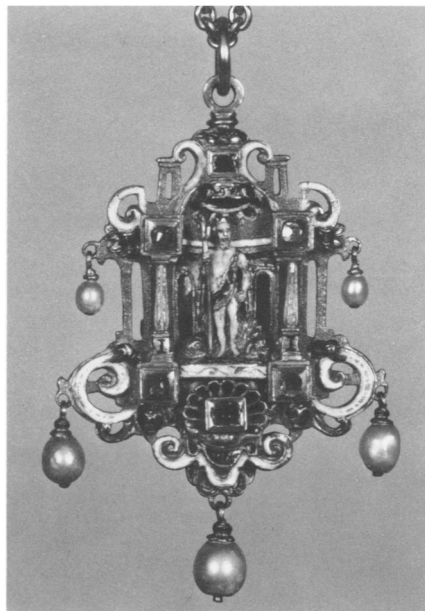




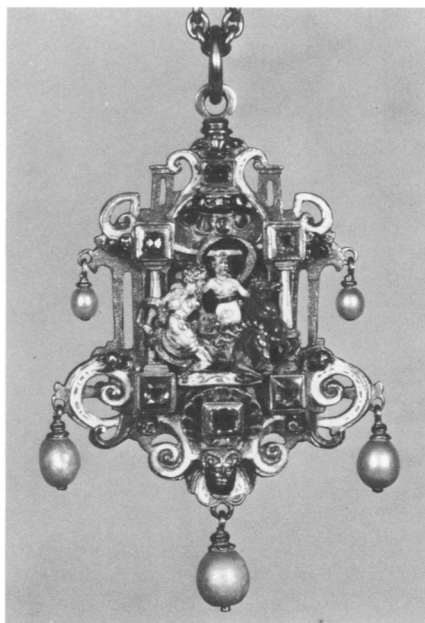


his designs used motifs for decorative purposes without strict regard for their original significance or context. It is unclear, for instance, why Fortitude, carrying a column, should ride a stag. The personification of Charity seems to have been influenced by a figure of St. Anne (see Figure 137).<sup>47</sup> The narwhal or unicorn horn with which the Triton's hippocampus is furnished may have been the executing jeweler's whim, since it is not envisioned in the surviving design. Such variations may strike us as welcome attempts not to stick too closely to the rules.

A type of jewel that can be considered a true Vasters invention is the double-sided pendant, consisting of two figural scenes back to back, each surmounted by a tabernacle with a shell top, and flanked by two pilasters. Sculptural pendants of this kind are usually flat at the back in order to hang correctly when worn, but Vasters has ignored the traditional distinction between the two sides. Quite unorthodox, moreover, is the way in which the different layers of these pendants are soldered together—a laborsaving shortcut—instead of being fastened with nuts and bolts, as in genuine works of the sixteenth century. Spitzer owned an example now in the Walters Art Gallery, with Judith and her maid—about to drop the head of Holofernes into a sack—on one side, and David and Goliath on the other, for which there is a preparatory drawing by Vasters (Figures 36–38).<sup>48</sup> A similar pendant in the Metropolitan Museum, with marine deities on both sides (Figures 39, 40), can be attributed to the same designer.<sup>49</sup> In spite of the variation



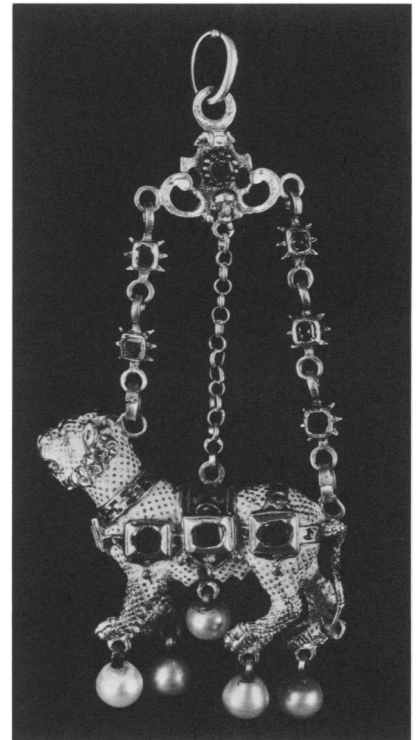
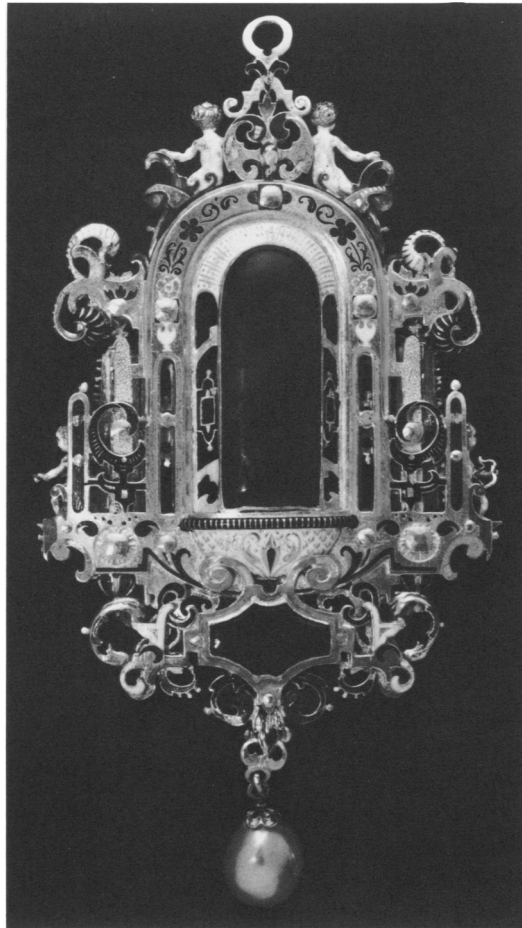
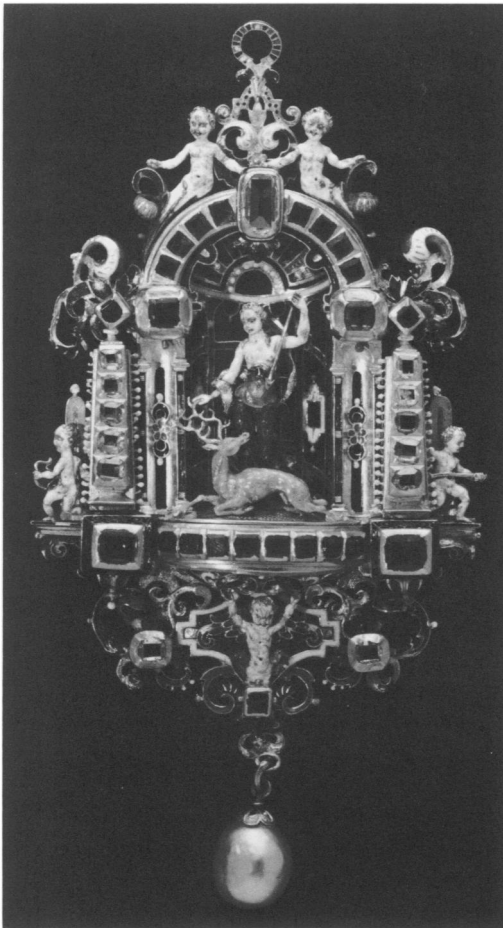
39, 40. Double-sided pendant, ca. 1870–90: Neptune; marine deities. Enameled gold, pearls, jewels; H. 6.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.665



47. A sketch by Vasters of a similar group, in which Charity has a child on each arm and another beside her, shows the same influence (Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3012-1919). Vasters used another version of Charity, with two children, based on a prototype in the Grünes Gewölbe, Dresden, as a finial; see Figures 130–132, 138, 139, and also Figure 183.

48. *Collection Spitzer*, III, p. 52, no. 55 (German, 16th century), *Bijoux* pl. v; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 1840, pl. XLVII; Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Catalogue of a Collection of European Enamels*, pp. 74–75, no. 244, pl. LXVI, “Lent by Mrs. J. E. Taylor”; Truman (1979) p. 160, color pl. G (bottom, drawing E.2487-1919); Scarisbrick, “Jewelry of the Renaissance,” pp. 189–190, no. 517, ill.; *Princely Magnificence*, pp. 136, color ill., 137, no. H18, pp. 140, 141, no. HG2, ill.

49. Scarisbrick, “Jewelry of the Renaissance,” p. 190; C. Truman, in *Princely Magnificence*, p. 137, in connection with no. H18, the similar pendant in the Walters Art Gallery. Both authors wisely refrained from giving an opinion about a jewel that they had been unable to examine more closely.



41, 42. Pendant with Diana of the hunt, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, pearls, jewels; H. 11.4 cm. Germany, private collection (photos: Sotheby's, New York)

43. Lioness pendant, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, pearls, rubies; 8.9 × 4.1 cm. Pittsburgh, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Sarah Mellon Scaife Foundation Grant, 75.29.1 (photo: Carnegie Institute)

of themes there is a monotony about these jewels, the result of sacrificing free invention to conformity.

The temptation to turn out repetitions or variations of a successful design seems to be irresistible to artists working in a retrospective style. The architectural type of pendant in the form of a tabernacle—each has a central niche, often with a shell-shaped top, and a platform to accommodate figures or groups—is found in single-sided versions as well as in the double-sided ones we have discussed. It is based on designs by the Antwerp-born goldsmith Erasmus Hornick, which were published in a series of engravings in Nuremberg in 1565.<sup>50</sup> The great advantage of this kind of pendant is that it can be prepared before the point of sale to receive any figure or group desired by the client. The nineteenth-century versions range from excellent, as in the case of a pendant with Diana of the hunt surrounded by putti in the frame-

work (Figures 41, 42),<sup>51</sup> to indifferent examples, turned out in quantity by casting from master models. Another frequently encountered type of pendant takes the shape of a bird or animal, parrots, dogs, and lions being the most popular; again there is a wide range of quality. One of the best of its kind, a lioness suspended from a triple chain, is owned by the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh (Figure 43).<sup>52</sup> Such pendants continue to puzzle those who consider high

50. Hackenbroch (1979) pp. 159–160, figs. 426A,B.

51. Ibid., pp. 160–161, figs. 433A,B, color pl. XVIII; *Jack and Belle Linsky Collection*, sale cat., Sotheby's (New York, May 21, 1985) lot 117, color ills. front and back.

52. Ex coll.: Baron de Redé. *Meubles et objets d'art . . . appartenant au Baron de Redé . . .*, sale cat., Sotheby's (Monte Carlo, May 25–26, 1975) lot 150, color ill. Cf. *Princely Magnificence*, p. 138, nos. H21–H23, ills., p. 140—inside back cover, nos. HC5–HC7, ills.

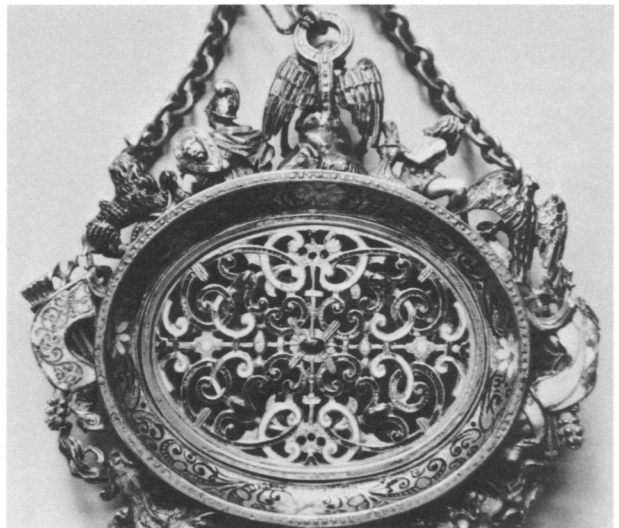


44. Design for pendant with Cain and Abel, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3023-1919 (photo: Hackenbroch)

45, 46. Pendant with Cain and Abel, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, pearls, jewels. Paris, Musée de Cluny (photos: Hackenbroch)

quality of execution an indication of their Renaissance origin. A gifted goldsmith, however, can acquire dexterity and skill in handling his materials; only the freshness and element of surprise in a work of genuine imagination remain unique.

In a class somewhat apart is a group of three oval pendants, all of which are too large to be worn as personal adornments. Although not exceptional enough to qualify as *Kunstkammer* objects, which usually exhibit rare natural formations complemented by harmonious settings, they seem to have been made as *objets de vitrine* of vaguely antiquarian character. Two such pendants, executed by the same jeweler, depend on sixteenth-century pictorial sources. A drawing by Vasters shows one of these pendants, now in the Cluny Museum in Paris (Figures 44–46); the scene has been copied from an engraving after Etienne Delaune illustrating the struggle between Cain and Abel.<sup>53</sup> The other pendant, in the Metropolitan Museum, features the Sacrifice of Isaac, conceived in the style of Marten van Heemskerck (Figures 47, 48).<sup>54</sup> Both



53. Y. Hackenbroch, "New Knowledge on Jewels and Designs After Etienne Delaune," *Connoisseur* 162 (1966) pp. 82–89, color pl.

54. Ex colls.: Maurice de Rothschild; Arturo Lopez-Willshaw. A. Morassi, *Antica oreficeria italiana*, exh. cat., Triennale (Milan, 1936) p. 45, no. 238, p. 122, fig. 118; *Thirty Renaissance Jewels and Works of Art from the Collection of the Late Arturo Lopez-Willshaw*, sale cat., Sotheby's (London, Oct. 13, 1970) lot 22, color pl. p. 44, detail p. 46; G. Bott, *Ullstein Juwelenbuch: Abendländischer Schmuck von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main,



47, 48. Pendant with the Sacrifice of Isaac, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, pearls, jewels; H. 18.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982.60.384

scenes are endowed with a density of form and movement that exceeds traditional standards of sixteenth-century composition; they suggest a nineteenth-century master with an individual approach to his sources and considerable technical ability. The framework around the scene of Abraham and Isaac, more restrained than the other, is composed of rhythmically distributed swags, arabesques, and winged cherub heads in oval reserves. The third of these large pendants, formerly owned by Mrs. Henry Walters, Baltimore, and almost certainly of Florentine origin, was designed to display a Neoclassical interpretation of the Ganymede cameo from the Medici collections (Figures 49, 50).<sup>55</sup> The setting has strong sculptural qualities and features two sphinx heads; in style and character these are midway between the gold and enameled sphinx heads that Biviverti added to Buontalenti's lapis lazuli vase bearing the Medici arms and the date 1583 (Figure 51),<sup>56</sup> and repeated drawings of the sphinx motif by Vasters, to which we shall have occasion to return. All three pendants are alike in having extraordinary interlace patterns on the reverse, executed in enameled openwork of great clarity. Several preparatory designs for such patterned backs survive among Vasters's drawings: some were intended for pendants—Figure 52, for example, which can be compared with Figure 46; others for watchcases (Figure 53).<sup>57</sup> In their harmony and balance they attest to Vasters's ingenuity as an ornamental designer and show the careful planning that went into his work.

1972) pp. 96–97, 108 ill., 113; Vincent, in *The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, p. 199, no. 119, ill.

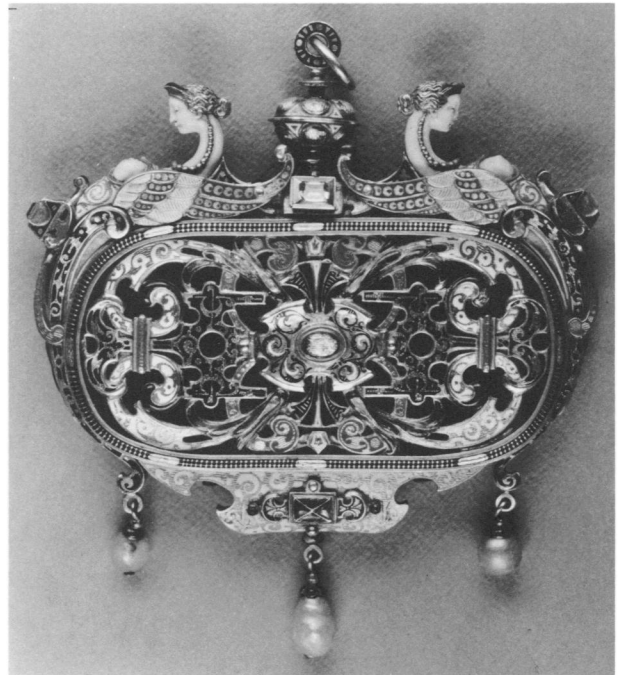
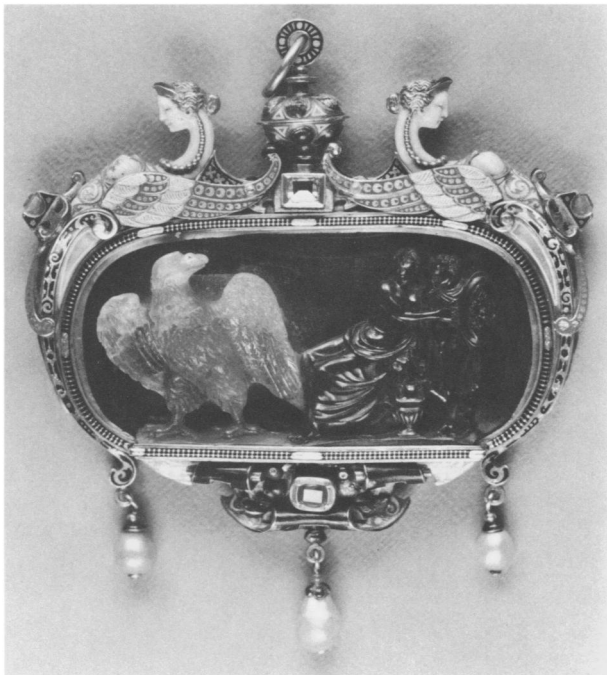
55. *Art Collection of the Late Mrs. Henry Walters*, sale cat., Parke-Bernet (New York, Nov. 30–Dec. 4, 1943) lot 999, ill.; M. McCrory, "An Antique Cameo of Francesco I de' Medici: An Episode from the Story of the Grand-ducal Cabinet of *Antiquarie*," in *Le arti del Principato Mediceo*, ed. C. Adelson et al. (Florence, 1980) p. 312, n. 60, and figs. 116, 117. The pendant is now owned by the firm of Bulgari, Rome.

56. J. F. Hayward, *Virtuoso Goldsmiths and the Triumph of Mannerism, 1540–1620* (London, 1976) color pl. iv.

57. For a watchcase similar to this design see Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2710, pl. LXII.







49, 50. Pendant with replica of Ganymede cameo from the Medici collections, ca. 1870–90. Agate, enameled gold, pearls, jewels; H. 11.4 cm. Rome, Bulgari (photos: Bulgari)

51. Jacopo Biliverti (d. 1603), detail of setting of lapis lazuli vase by Bernardo Buontalenti, 1583. Enameled gold. Florence, Museo degli Argenti (photo: Hackenbroch)



52, 53. Designs for pendant and watchcase backs, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2866,2864-1919 (photos: Eileen Tweedy)

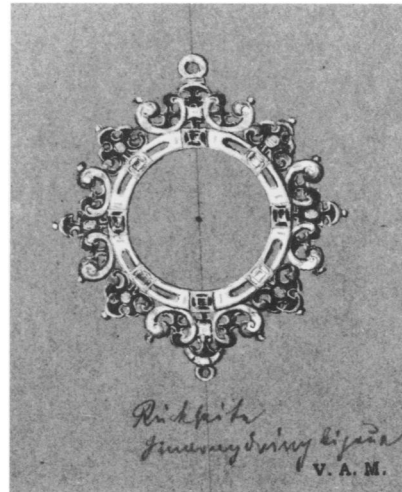






54. Pendant with the Risen Christ: roundel, French, 1560–70; framework and chains, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, green quartz, jewels; H. 10.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of George Blumenthal, 41.100.30

55. Design for framework of pendant with the Risen Christ, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3024-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



Finally, a return to Vasters as the creator of new settings for old things. The Metropolitan Museum owns a pendant formed from a sixteenth-century gold and enamel medallion, showing the Risen Christ between the Virgin and St. John, and a framework designed by Vasters (Figures 54, 55).<sup>58</sup> Although the attenuated figures in the medallion follow the court

style of Henri II as formulated by Jean Goujon and Etienne Delaune, and Vasters's setting can be typified as more robust and Germanic, medallion and frame are nevertheless perfectly combined. A stray fragment has been transformed into an attractive, easy-to-wear, and salable object. It comes as no surprise to learn that the pendant was once in the Spitzer collection.

58. *Collection Spitzer*, III, p. 150, no. 45 (Italian, 16th century), *Bijoux* pl. iv; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 1830, "Ce bijou a été complété"; S. Rubinstein-Bloch, comp., *Catalogue of the George and Florence Blumenthal Collection* (New York, 1926–30) III, pl. 25D.

# GOLD-MOUNTED ROCK CRYSTALS OF SIXTEENTH- AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ORIGIN, AND *VERRES EGLOMISES* IN ROCK CRYSTAL SETTINGS

Among the antiques that Spitzer accumulated were precious objects in rock crystal, enriched with intaglio or relief decoration. Some were mounted in gold, others had been left unadorned, many no doubt were acquired in the shape of fragments. It must be understood that well-preserved works in crystal were practically unobtainable on the international market. They survived mostly in dynastic *Schatz-* or *Kunstkammern*, set up under provisions that rendered their contents virtually inalienable. Thus protected, objects in such collections were in less danger of having their gold mounts removed for the value of the metal in times of acute financial embarrassment. By contrast, the survival of rock crystals in private collections was always precarious; the objects changed hands, and their mounts were often forcibly removed, thus causing severe—sometimes irreparable—damage to the crystal. Spitzer's acquisitive and commercial instincts, however, seem to have ren-

dered him determined to collect such crystals, no matter how damaged their condition. Once restored and fitted with new mounts, handles, or covers, they could be offered for sale, often with fictitious, out-of-the-way provenances impossible to verify.

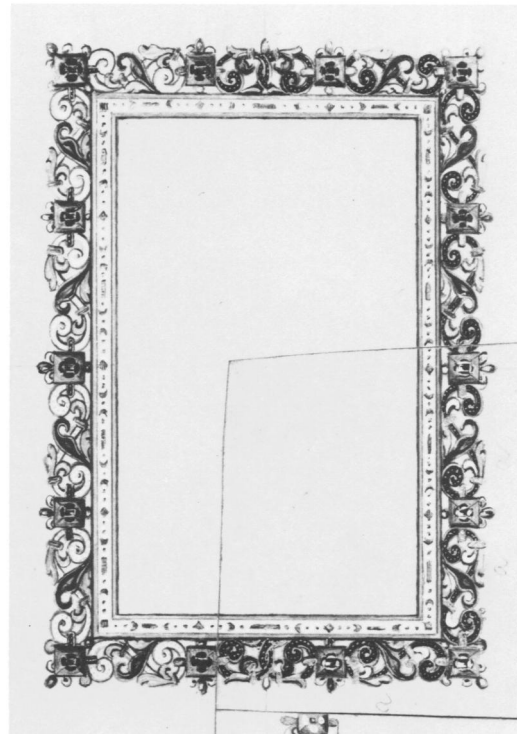
Only rarely can the authorship of such crystals be established beyond doubt. A case in point is a sixteenth-century plaque of great distinction in the Louvre, engraved with an incident from Roman history and signed by Valerio Belli of Vicenza (Figure 56).<sup>59</sup> The gold and lapis lazuli frame, made of open-work, enamel, and jewels, on the other hand, which has always been accepted as contemporary, follows a

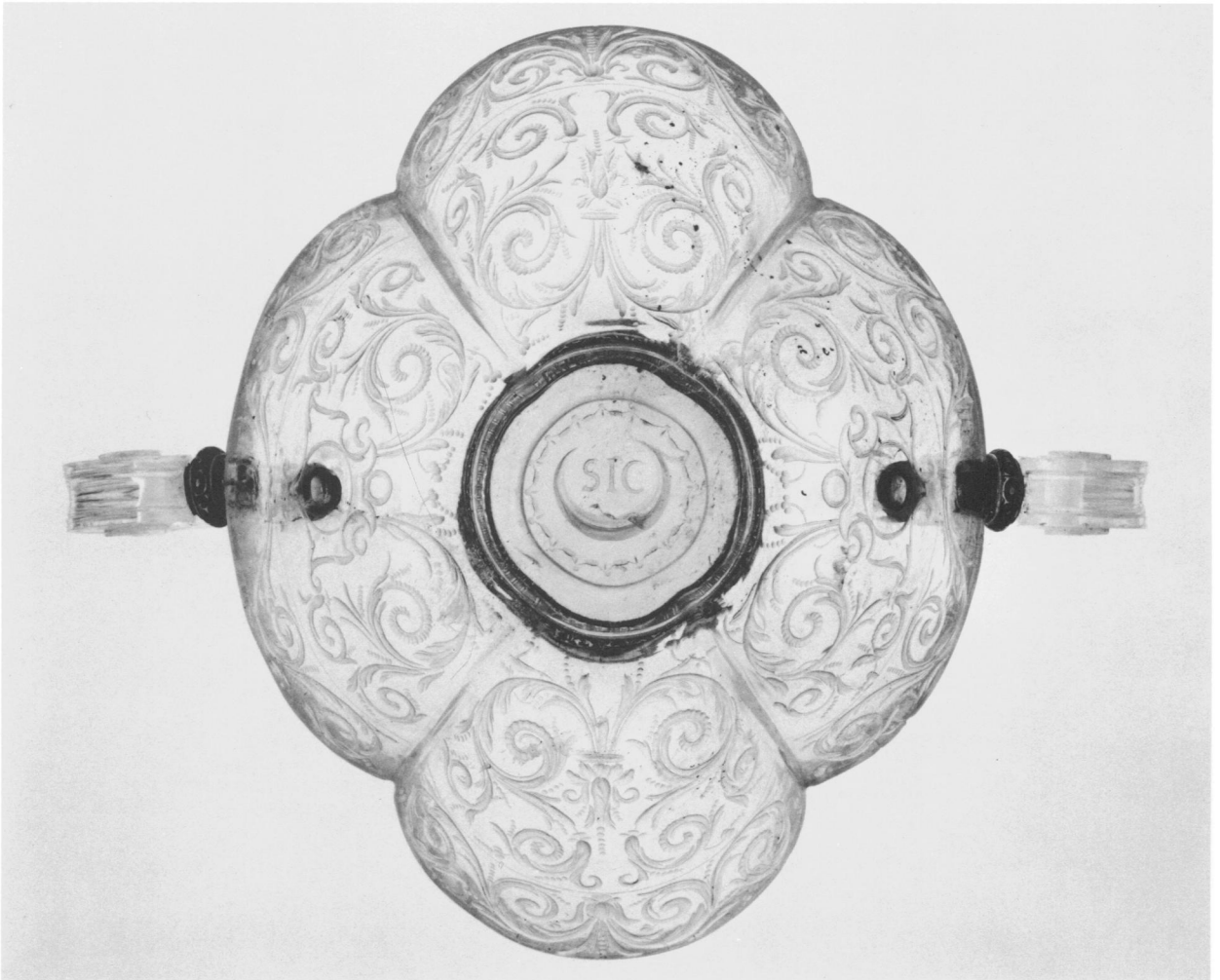
56. Valerio Belli (1468–1546), rock crystal plaque engraved with scene from Roman history, signed VALERIUS.VI.F, Italy, early 16th century. Frame, enameled gold and jewels, ca. 1870–90. 12.3 × 8.6 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Musée du Louvre)



59. Ex colls.: Baron Adolphe de Rothschild; Baron Maurice de Rothschild, who bequeathed it to the Louvre in 1935. E. Molinier, *Les Bronzes de la Renaissance: Les Plaquettes, catalogue raisonné* (Paris, 1886) I, pp. 189–212; E. Kris, *Meister und Meisterwerke der Steinschneidekunst in der italienischen Renaissance* (Vienna, 1929) I, pp. 48–59; *L'Art italien*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1935) p. 408, no. 1454, lent by Baron Maurice de Rothschild, Paris; G. Fontaine, "Deux Cristaux de roche de Valerio Belli," *Bulletin des Musées de France* 8 (1936) pp. 2–4, ill. p. 3; Morassi, *Antica oreficeria italiana*, p. 52, no. 298, p. 109, fig. 91; *The Decorative Arts of the Italian Renaissance: 1400–1600*, exh. cat. (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1958) pp. 154–155, no. 411.

57. Design for frame of rock crystal plaque engraved by Valerio Belli, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3030-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)





58–60. Quatrefoil rock crystal bowl, with device of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Milan, ca. 1600. Handles and enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. L. 22.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Irwin Untermyer, 1973, 1974.28.108

colored design by Vasters in every detail (Figure 57), including the inner band of white and gold that separates the plaque from the bright hues of the enameled frame. It is evident once again that Vasters was more conversant with German than with Italian or French sixteenth-century ornament. His background shows in a preference for density of form and vivid colors; by contrast, Italian taste was more classically oriented and French typically more restrained.

It is worth considering the circumstances in which authentic crystal and gold treasury pieces had been produced. Most were created in Milanese workshops during the later sixteenth century. With no local court to supply, Milanese artists were eager to fill commissions for the dukes of Bavaria or Savoy, the grand dukes of Tuscany, the electors of Saxony, and the Hapsburg emperors, kings, or archdukes. Some insight into the workshop practices of the five Saracchi brothers of Milan is possible through Paolo Morigia's *Nobiltà di Milano*, published in 1595, and through the correspondence of Albrecht V and Wilhelm V in Munich with Prospero Visconti, the Wittelsbach agent in Milan.<sup>60</sup> Each of the Saracchi brothers was a specialist: their different fields ranged from the “arte grossa” of designing and cutting the basic shape out of the block of rock crystal, to the “arte minuta” or “subtile” of cutting the decoration in relief or intaglio, and finally to the goldsmiths’ work, which comprised enameled and often jeweled gold settings with imaginative handles and finials. Emperor Rudolf II was successful in bringing members of another prominent family of glyptic artists—the Miseroni—from Milan to Prague, in order to fill his *Kunstkammer* with carved and mounted rock crystal or hard-stone masterpieces. It was, in fact, Rudolf II’s patronage that prolonged the fashion for these objects. Most of the activities of the artists at the Prague court came to an end with the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618, under Emperor Matthias. In Germany, the dukes of Württemberg confined their patronage of lapidaries for the most part to those of Freiburg im Breisgau, where locally mined crystal and hard-



61. Design for section of enameled-gold mount, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2998-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

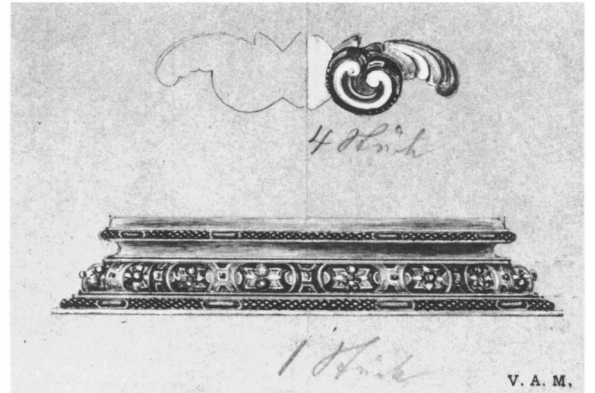
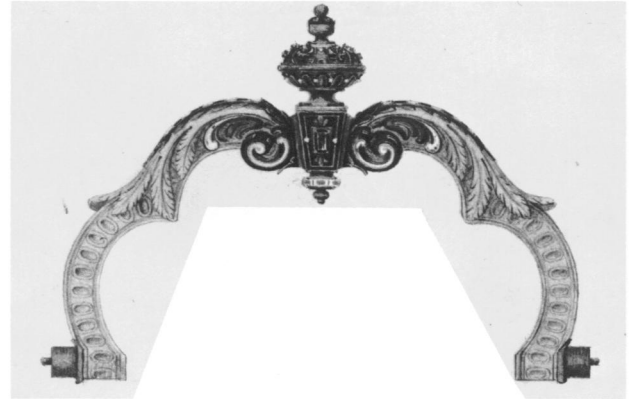
stones were used. Similar practices prevailed in Dresden and Kassel, while the patrician families of Nuremberg and Augsburg preferred to place their commissions in their home towns. As might be expected, their taste was not identical with that of court circles, but attuned to the more solid, down-to-earth character of a merchant society.

A quatrefoil bowl in the Metropolitan Museum illustrates the type of Milanese-cut crystal that must have survived damaged or incomplete into the nineteenth century, when it received handles and enameled-gold mounts after designs by Vasters (Figures 58, 59).<sup>61</sup> A recently identified cipher is engraved on the base, showing a crescent moon around the letters *s i c* (*sic illustrior crescam*—thus shall I grow more famous).<sup>62</sup> The device was one chosen in 1595 by Vincenzo I Gonzaga (1562–1612), fourth duke of Mantua, on the

60. J. Stockbauer, *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttechnik des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*: III. *Die Kunstbestrebungen am Bayerischen Hofe* (Vienna, 1874); H. Simonsfeld, *Mäiländer Briefe zur Bayerischen und allgemeinen Geschichte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols., Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften Abhandlung XXII (Munich, 1901–02); B. P. Baader, *Der Bayerische Renaissancehof* (Leipzig, 1943).

61. *Notable Art Collection . . . of the Late Joseph Brummer*, sale cat., Parke-Bernet (New York, May 14, 1949) pt. II, lot 756, ill., “Florentine, XVI century,” acquired by Irwin Untermyer.

62. Y. Hackenbroch, “A Gonzaga Rock Crystal Bowl Rediscovered,” in *Festschrift für Carl-Wilhelm Clasen* (Cologne, 1983) pp. 83–90, ills., with full bibliography.



62, 63. Rock crystal bowl with bail handle: bowl, Milan, second half of 16th century; handle and enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. H. with handle, 20.3 cm., diam. 19.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.654

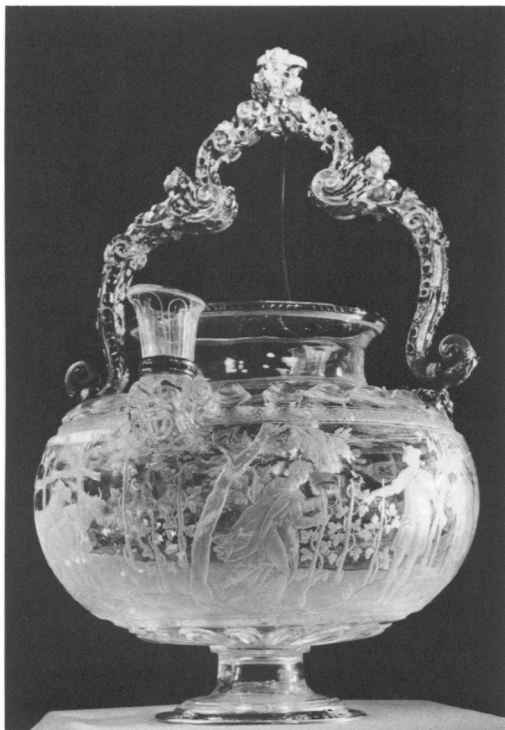
64, 65. Designs for bail handle, mounts on handle, and foot rim of rock crystal bowl shown in Figures 62 and 63, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3455.3282-1919 (photos: Eileen Tweedy)

66. Rock crystal bowl with bail handle and mounts in enameled gold, Milan, third quarter of 16th century. H. with handle, 42 cm., diam. 25 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Archives Photographiques)



occasion of the first of his three rather ineffectual expeditions against the Turks, who had taken the Hungarian fortress of Giavarion (Győr). Before his departure, Vincenzo ordered a splendid suit of armor from Pompeo della Chiesa in Milan,<sup>63</sup> on which the burnished and gilt scrollwork repeated the device of the crescent moon; the same device was also worn by Vincenzo's troops, stitched to the sleeves of their uniforms, in turquoise, yellow, and rose. Use of the device was short-lived, however, and it was abandoned altogether in 1601 when Vincenzo returned from his third expedition; perhaps the bowl survived without precious mounts in consequence. Vincenzo must by then have realized that he had gained nothing, apart from the possible goodwill of Emperor Rudolf II, and the somewhat vainglorious satisfaction of having joined the ranks of those who had fought the Turks before him—Charles V in Tunis and Don John of Austria at Lepanto.

The particular feature that links the Gonzaga bowl with Vasters is the ornamental pattern of the rims around the handles and foot (Figure 60). They display up-and-down curling feathered scrolls interspersed with crosses, enameled white, black, and red—a pattern seen among Vasters's designs (Figure 61) and



repeated with variations on the mounts of several restored or nineteenth-century vessels in rock crystal or hardstone, including examples in the Metropolitan Museum (see Figures 70, 110). Many of these objects are known to have belonged to Frédéric Spitzer. The Gonzaga bowl would certainly have appealed to Spitzer, although it is not recorded as having been in his collection. We can be glad, however, that this rare piece has survived and has been so harmoniously restored. It is an object of considerable historical interest, and incidentally one of the few rock crystals which can be dated with some precision.

The attribution to Vasters is more fully documented in the case of an intaglio-cut sixteenth-century bowl in the Metropolitan Museum, which was completed around 1870–85 by means of a crystal and enameled-gold bail handle, hinges, and foot rims (Figures 62, 63).<sup>64</sup> His preparatory colored sketches for all these parts survive (Figures 64, 65). The bowl formed part of the Spitzer collection and was then described as coming from Valencia Cathedral. The claim is an unlikely one, to judge by the profane character of the bowl, engraved as it is inside on the base with nymphs pursued by centaurs and sea serpents. The exaggerated movements of the figures and their attenuated forms invite comparison with figures cut in a small rock crystal barrel by the Saracchi workshop, in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam,<sup>65</sup> and suggest a similar date—1560–70—and origin for the bowl. Its flattened globular shape is familiar from Paduan bronze vessels, and also from goldsmiths'

63. The upper part of the armor is recorded in a portrait of Vincenzo I by Frans Pourbus the Younger, owned by the National Trust, Tatton Park, Cheshire: see *Splendours of the Gonzaga*, ed. D. Chambers and J. Martineau, exh. cat. (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1981) pp. 224–225, no. 240, color ill., with bibliography; and M. Praz, "The Gonzaga Devices," *ibid.*, p. 67; see also V. Errante, "Forse che sì, forse che no," *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, ser. 5, 42 (1915) pp. 15–114. Only the helmet is known to have survived; it is now in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan (*Splendours of the Gonzaga*, pp. 226–227, no. 242, color ill., with full bibliography).

64. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 14, no. 6 (Italian, 16th century), GEMMES pl. VI; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2598, "Provient de la cathédrale de Valence (Espagne)," pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

65. M. A. H. Blussé van Oud-Alblas, "Bergkristal in de schatkamer van het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam," *Antiek* (May 1967) pp. 3–12, fig. 7; R. Distelberger, "Die Saracchi-Werkstatt und Annibale Fontana," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 71 (1975) pp. 146–147, and p. 139, fig. 167.



67. Rock crystal reliquary: *The Annunciation* in *verre églomisé*, Milan, mid-16th century; rock crystal and enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. H. 28.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.666

drawings by Giulio Romano and Francesco Salviati. A comparable work is the famous rock crystal bowl with the story of Noah, from the French crown treasure, its bail handle formed by two winged caryatid figures in a virtuoso display of the Milanese goldsmith's technique (Figure 66).<sup>66</sup> The New York bowl seems to be unique in its undulating rim with two pairs of dolphins, the interspaces being used for the attachments that hold the bail handle, which rises to a knob above foliage at the apex. The foot rim shows cartouches alternating with bunches of fruit, of an intensity of color and fullness of form that bring to mind ornamental engravings by Matthias Zündt and Wenzel Jamnitzer of Nuremberg rather than the more restrained work of Milanese goldsmiths.

An almost identical foot rim, only with larger bunches of fruit, encircles the base of a rock crystal reliquary created to house a sixteenth-century Lombard *verre églomisé* of the Annunciation (Figure 67).<sup>67</sup> Other unmistakable Vasters touches are the narrow bands around the medallion with a herringbone pattern and with vertical black and gold stripes. Once again Spitzer, to whom the reliquary belonged, and Vasters have succeeded in giving a genuinely old work a new setting.

A late sixteenth-century Milanese rock crystal bowl similar to Figure 62 is in the Robert Lehman Collection (Figure 68).<sup>68</sup> Its enameled-gold mounts include a foot rim, an ovolo band around the lip interrupted by two crystal lion masks with gold manes, and hinges for an extraordinarily imaginative bail handle, for which Vasters's preparatory designs survive (Figure 69). The handle is formed by two pairs of opposing dolphins, each dolphin fastening its jaws on an object held in suspense between them;<sup>69</sup> the tails of the lower dolphins end in griffins' heads that loop through the hinges; the upper dolphins are joined at the apex of the handle by a winged female half-figure with a diadem and swags. The graceful curve created by the

66. Marquet de Vasselot (1914) p. 140, no. 859, pl. LX; P. Verlet, "Galerie d'Apollon, Paris," in *Royal Treasures*, ed. E. Steingraber, trans. S. de Haan (New York, 1968) p. 27, no. 17, p. 18, ill.

67. Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2638, pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

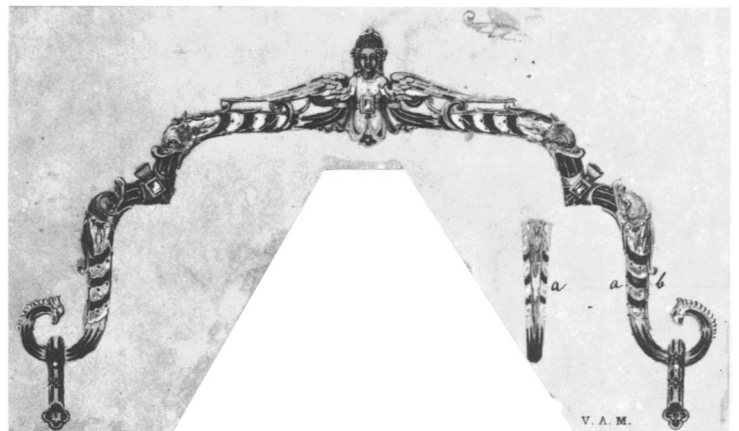
68. Ex coll.: Freiherr Max von Goldschmidt-Rothschild, Frankfurt am Main.

69. Vasters's whimsical motif of the swallowing fish is also found on a jasper cup with dragon and mermaid mounts (see Figure 161).



68. Rock crystal bowl with bail handle: bowl, Milan, third quarter of 16th century; handle and mounts in enameled and jeweled gold, ca. 1870–90. 20.3 × 18 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.1496

69. Design for bail handle and attachments of rock crystal bowl shown in Figure 68, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3458-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)





70. Rock crystal bowl surmounted by a bird: bowl, Milan, ca. 1580; bird and enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. 12.1 × 25.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.656

71. Design for foot rim in enameled gold, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3613-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

slim bodies of the dolphins shows Vasters's skills as a designer. These mounts, with such original touches as the addition of gold manes to complement the carved crystal lion masks, are almost undoubtedly Vasters's autograph work and show him at his very best.

Another rock crystal from the Spitzer collection that incorporates nineteenth-century restorations is a shell-shaped oval bowl with the figure of a long-necked bird at one end, poised to drink (Figure 70).<sup>70</sup> The bowl itself is of sixteenth-century Milanese origin, in the style of Annibale Fontana, with an allover intaglio-cut design of tendrils, some of which terminate in birds' heads. At one end are large feathers carved in relief, a motif that in conjunction with the tendrils is only explicable if it originally formed part of a bird perched above; the present bird is a nineteenth-century re-

placement. A similar combination of intaglio tendrils and feathers in relief occurs on the bowl of a table-fountain in the Munich Schatzkammer.<sup>71</sup> Another, slightly later example also of interest in this connection is the helmet-shaped rock crystal bowl in the Museo degli Argenti, probably cut by Cristofano Gaffuri in Florence.<sup>72</sup> This bowl was originally fitted with an enameled-gold handle, now lost, which was

70. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 15, no. 8 (Italian, 16th century), ill.; *Spitzer Sale*, II, lot 2600, pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

71. *Schatzkammer*, p. 175, no. 359, where it is described as "probably Prague, ca. 1610–20."

72. Piacenti-Aschengreen, *Il Museo degli Argenti a Firenze*, p. 138, no. 176. C. W. Fock, in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici nell'Europa del cinquecento*, exh. cat. (Florence: Palazzo Vecchio, 1980) pp. 226–228, no. 431, gives a complete account of the history and bibliography of the bowl.



72. Two-handled rock crystal bowl surmounted by a bird: bowl, Milan, third quarter of 16th century; rock crystal additions and enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. L. 28.9 cm. Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, 41.63 (photo: Walters Art Gallery)

73. Design for a rock crystal bowl surmounted by a bird, ca. 1870–95. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2662-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



the last known work by Jacopo Biliverti and dates from 1600; the dragon of the lost handle (see Figure 113) continues onto the crystal, where its wings and feet appear cut in relief.

The foot rim of the bowl echoes a design by Vasters (Figures 71); though lacking the interspersed jewels, this shows the same black enameled scrolls—one curled up, the other down—separated by a red-and-white enameled star, a motif that is often repeated in his work. The somewhat stiff, unimaginative figure of the bird with spread wings, placed on a square enameled base, recurs on a two-handled rock crystal bowl in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (Figure 72).<sup>73</sup> Although there are no designs that correspond exactly to this bird, Vasters's drawings include a different version of the bowl and drinking bird (Figure 73); a piece that matches this drawing in al-

most every detail was exhibited in Düsseldorf in 1902 with other rock crystals from Vasters's private collection (see Figure 14).<sup>74</sup>

Among the various combinations of old and new from Spitzer's collection is a large shell-shaped cup

73. The bowl is said to have belonged to the grand duke of Baden.

74. Its present location is unknown.

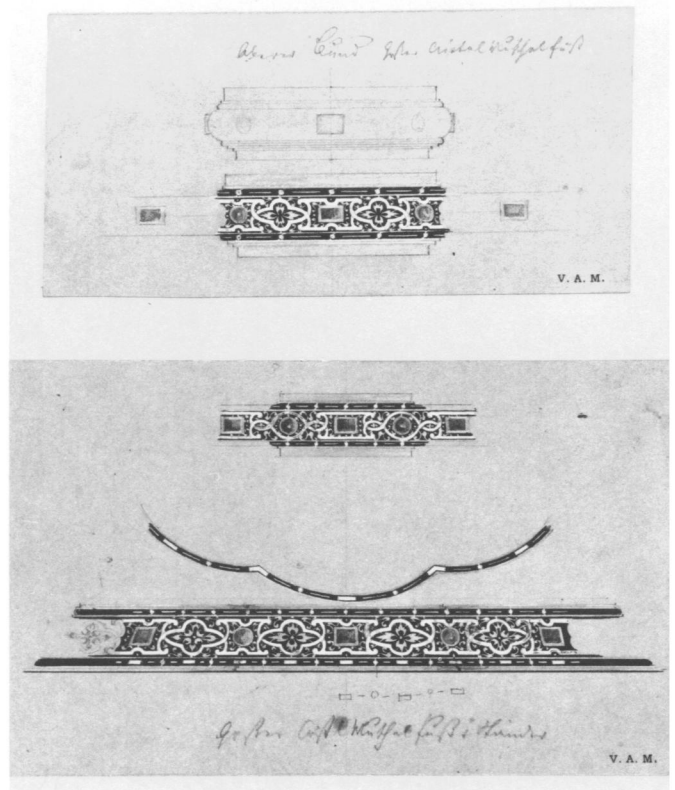




74. Shell-shaped rock crystal cup: cup, Milan, ca. 1600; stem, foot, and enameled-gold mounts with jewels, ca. 1870–90. 24.1 × 31.1 × 26 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.655

(Figure 74).<sup>75</sup> The scalloped rock crystal shell is the product of a Milanese workshop that had survived into the early seventeenth century. Carved with a tight all-over pattern of foliage scrolls incorporating rows of dots instead of flowers, the shell is raised on a fluted baluster stem and oval foot with scalloped edges designed by Vasters. The foot is carved with foliage scrolls and dots that imitate the pattern on the cup in a rigid nineteenth-century manner. Vasters's detailed drawings for the mounts show a geometrical design of moresque derivation, enameled black and white, with narrow strips as borders (Figure 75). Of these proposals all but one have been faithfully adopted. Vasters indicated spaces for the attachment of pearls and gemstones in their collets, and two tiny holes for securing the pierced pearls to the ground. The goldsmith, apparently inexperienced and fearful of damaging the enamel when using solder for the collets, chose to sink the pearls in apertures, an unorthodox solution which resulted in tiny protrusions on the reverse. The alternative practice, widely used, was to secure superimposed parts to the base by means of butterfly clips, a practice first observed about 1500. It is possible that Spitzer became aware of this goldsmith's shortcomings and raised an objection, since there is no sign of the same impoverished method being used in any of the other pieces under discussion.

Intended for liturgical use was a set of two tall pricket candlesticks and a crucifix, made of assorted rock crystal sections of sixteenth-century origin; the gold figure of Christ and the mounts in silver-gilt and enameled gold are nineteenth-century (Figures 76, 77).<sup>76</sup> As usual, Vasters seems to have taken infinite pains to display the genuine crystal parts to the best advantage. One of his drawings shows the entire crucifix (Figure 78). A simulated rocky base, like that of the crucifix, also appears in a large-scale drawing of a monstrance, encircled by an enameled band and resting on alternative designs for the feet (Figure 79); one of these is a scroll-shaped design akin to the feet of the candlesticks. The enameled decoration of the set is executed in a technique well suited to these large pieces, if economies of material and labor were to be taken into consideration: silver-gilt was substituted for gold, and the applied ornament was cast for convenience in identical sections. Introduced during the later sixteenth century—an agate cup from the French royal collections now in the Metropolitan Museum is a distinguished contemporary example of the prac-



75. Designs for enameled-gold mounts of shell-shaped rock crystal cup shown in Figure 74, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3142,3144–1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

tice (Figure 80)<sup>77</sup>—the technique was revived for many large-scale objects in the Spitzer collection.

Another devotional piece from that collection, a

75. *Collection Spitzer*, V, pp. 14–15, no. 7 (Italian, 16th century), *GEMMES* pl. vii; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2599, “La monture de cette pièce nous semble d’époque postérieure à la coupe,” pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

76. Ex colls.: F. Spitzer; F. Gans; K. W. Bachstitz. *Collection Spitzer*, V, crucifix—p. 13, no. 2 (German or Italian, 16th century), candlesticks—p. 14, no. 3 (Italian, 16th century), *GEMMES* pls. II, III; Spitzer Sale, II, lots 2594, 2595, pl. LIX (see Figure 13); *Collection Fritz Gans* (Frankfurt am Main, 1910) pl. 8; *The Bachstitz Gallery Collection* (Berlin, 1921) III, pl. 76.

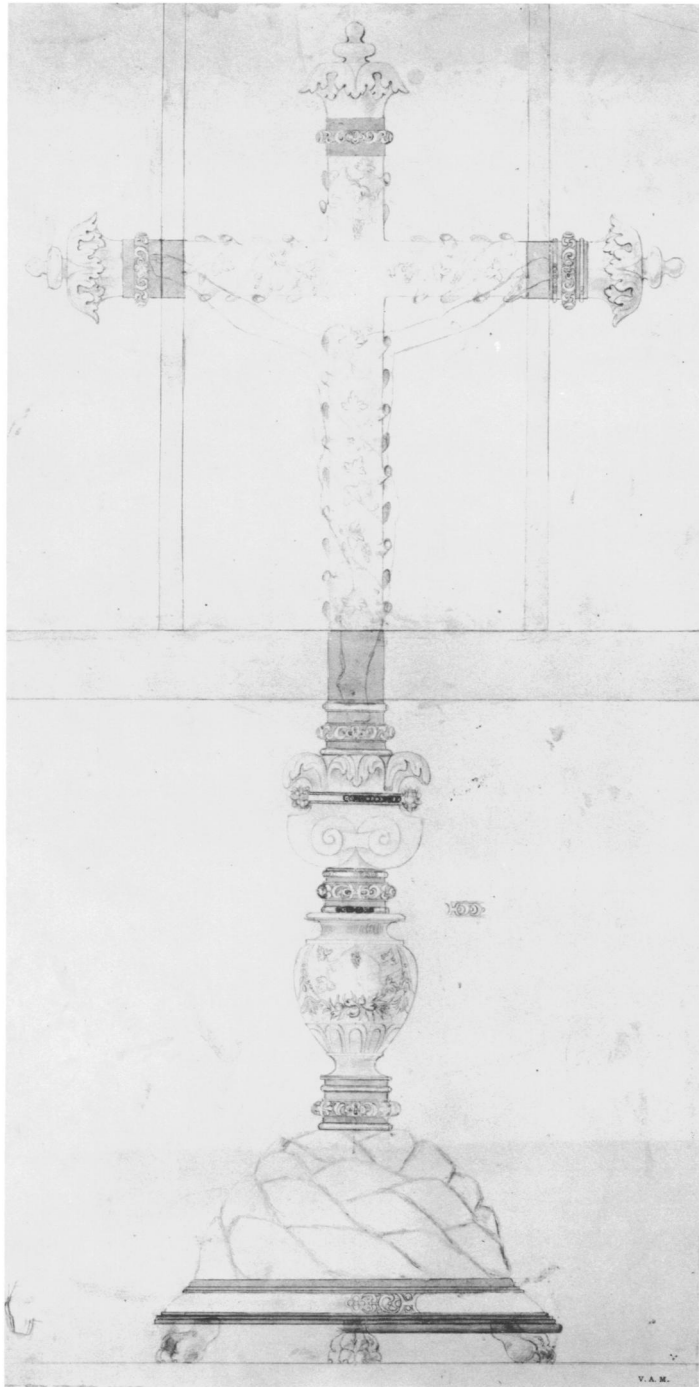
77. Ex colls.: Louis XIV; Louis XV; Louis XVI; Baron Karl Mayer von Rothschild, Frankfurt am Main; Princesse Jacques de Broglie, Paris. Another round agate cup from the French crown treasury exemplifying this technique for the mounts is in the Louvre; see Marquet de Vasselot (1914) p. 133, no. 820.



76. Crucifix and pair of pricket candlesticks: rock crystal parts, Italy, 16th century; gold corpus, silver-gilt mounts with enameled-gold decoration, ca. 1870–90. H. crucifix 57.2 cm., candlesticks 34.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931, 32.100.243–245

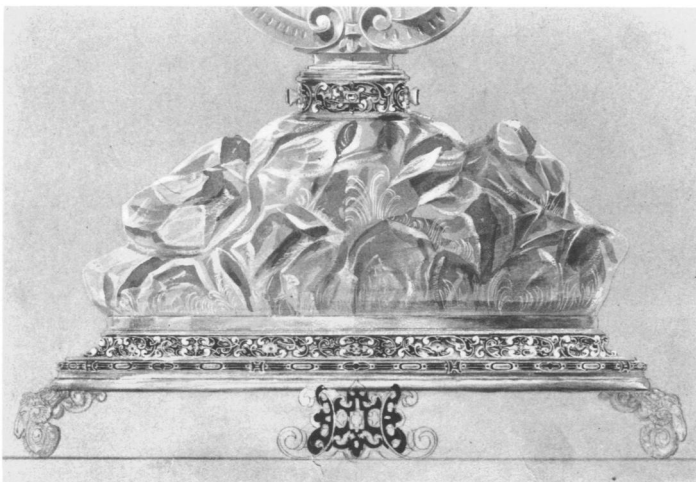
77. Detail of foot and bracket support of a candlestick shown in Figure 76 (32.100.243)





78. Design for the crucifix shown in Figure 76, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2572-1919 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)

80. Agate cup with cover, mounted in silver-gilt with applied enameled-gold decoration, Italy, second half of 16th century. H. 17.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931, 32.100.241a,b



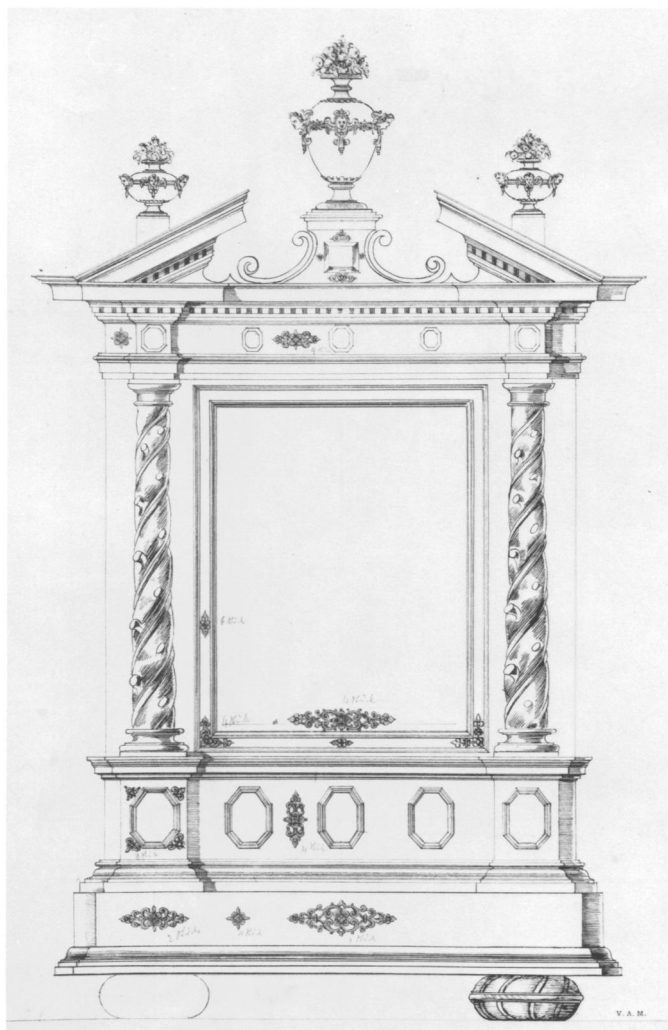
79. Detail of design for a monstrance, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2596-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



81, 82. Pax: *The Adoration of the Magi* and six medallions of saints in *verre églomisé*, Italy (Lombardy), 16th century; rock crystal frame, silver-gilt mounts and back, group of St. George and Dragon at apex and applied decoration in enameled and jeweled gold, ca. 1870–90. 31.1 × 18.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.664



83. Design for a house altar with spiral rock crystal columns, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2779-1919 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)



large pax, shows the same technique, with similar ornamental sections applied as part of the decoration in front (Figures 81, 82).<sup>78</sup> The pax incorporates a *verre églomisé* of the Adoration of the Kings and six small *verres églomisés* of saints' heads, all of sixteenth-century Milanese origin. The nineteenth-century outer frame in rock crystal is flanked by two spiral columns that support an architrave and a broken pediment, with perceptible classical overtones. Similar spiral rock crystal columns appear in one of Vasters's designs for an ebony house altar (Figure 83), which has marked

affinities with the pax in its conception and style; blanks have been left for *verres églomisés* or other forms of representation.<sup>79</sup>

The pax, surmounted by a figure of St. George defeating the dragon, is engraved at the back with conventional foliage and fitted with a scroll handle. I am inclined to believe this pax to be the work of Italian artists following designs by Vasters and based perhaps in Paris, where Spitzer, who would have supplied the *verres églomisés*, could have supervised their activity.

A large oval plate in the Metropolitan Museum, composed of carved rock crystal sections within a silver-gilt framework, presents another example of restoration (Figure 84).<sup>80</sup> Badly damaged, the sixteenth-century oval center surrounded by a continuous hunting frieze is bordered by shaped decorative panels of a later period, reminiscent of designs by Vasters (Figure 85). The silver-gilt frame is basically original, although in part concealed beneath added strips filled in with translucent enamel in the *basse-taille* technique. In its general type the plate can be compared with a basin of intaglio-cut rock crystal in silver-gilt and jeweled mounts, interspersed with painted enamel roundels (Figure 86);<sup>81</sup> the basin and its matching ewer, in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, are the work of the Augsburg silversmith Hans Jakob Mair and date from 1664. Although damaged and restored, the Metropolitan Museum plate represents a not unjustifiable effort to rescue fragments of value.

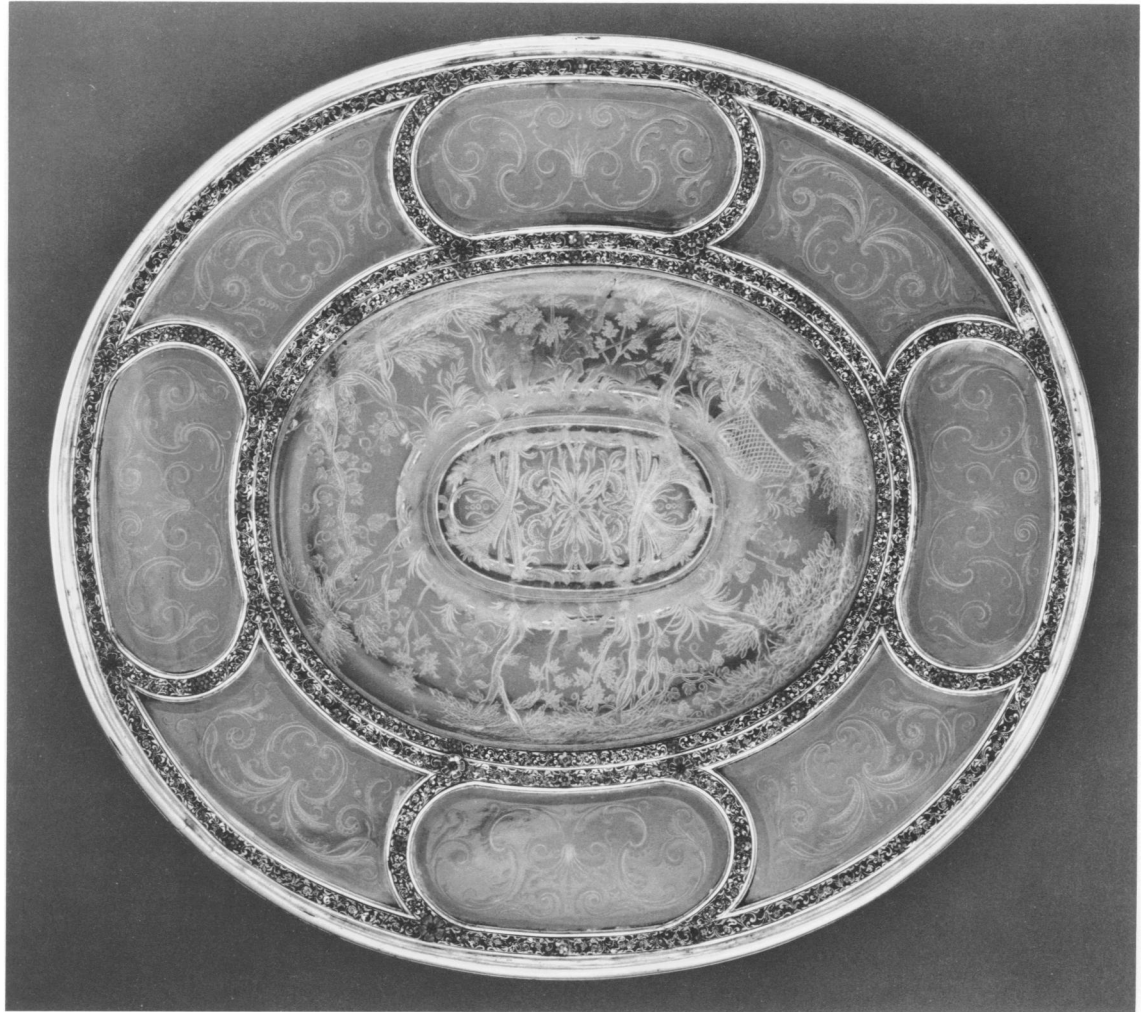
Among the sixteenth-century rock crystals which have undergone ingenious repairs or disguises is an

78. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 13, no. 1 (Italian, 16th century), *GEMMES* pl. 1; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2593, pl. LIX (see Figure 13). The spiral rock crystal columns with silver-gilt capitals are of Italian derivation: cf. the Venetian reliquary chest of ca. 1600 in the basilica of Sta. Barbara, Mantua (*Splendours of the Gonzaga*, pp. 207–208, no. 313, ill.).

79. For house altars designed by Vasters see below under Wood Objects Mounted in Gold and Figures 178, 179, 183, 185, 186.

80. Provenance unknown.

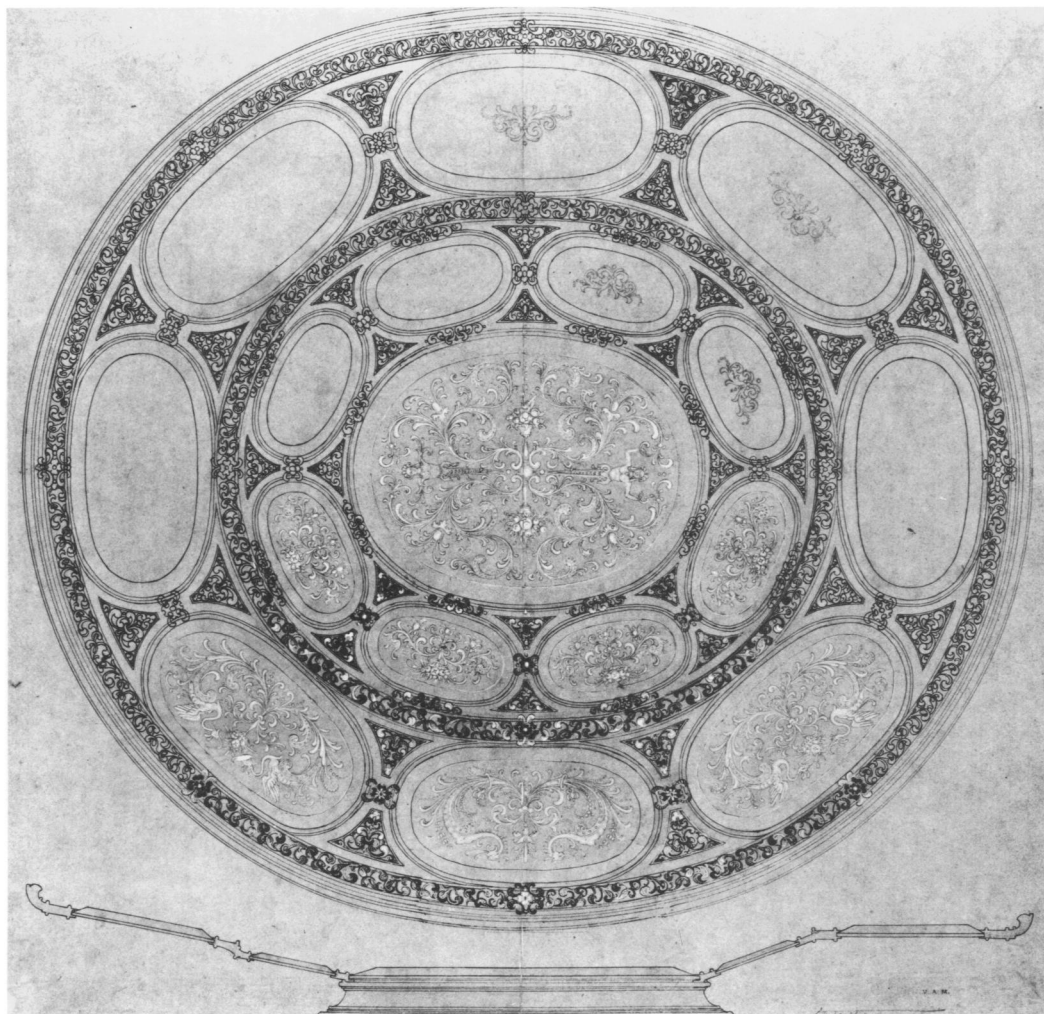
81. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. no. 3226 (ex coll. Imperial Treasury). *Augsburger Barock*, exh. cat. (Augsburg: Rathaus and Holbeinhaus, 1968) p. 341, no. 494, pls. 300, 301, described as with no visible marks; these have recently been discovered, see H. Seling, *Die Kunst der Augsburger Goldschmiede 1529–1868* (Munich, 1980) I, p. 104, n. 446, color pl. XI.



84. Oval rock crystal plate: the two center panels and the silver-gilt setting, Milan, ca. 1600; border panels and mounts in enameled gold, ca. 1870–90. 49.9 × 43.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.527

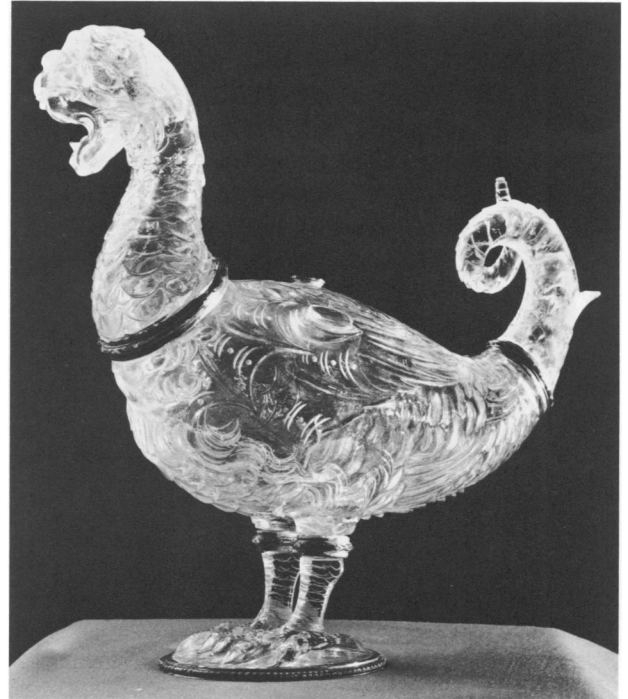
85. Design for an oval plate composed of oval rock crystal medallions mounted in enameled bands, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2670-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

86. Hans Jakob Mair, oval plate with rock crystal panels mounted in enameled and jeweled gold, Augsburg, ca. 1686. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (photo: Kunsthistorisches Museum)

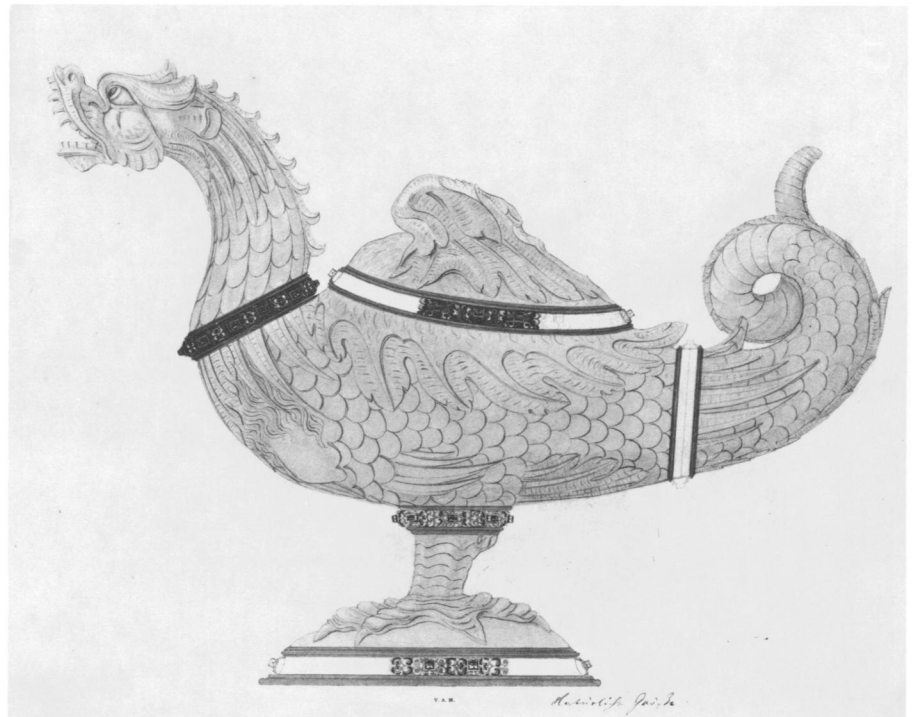




87. Filippo Negroli, breastplate of suit of armor for Guidobaldo II della Rovere, ca. 1530–35. Steel. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (photo: after Boccia and Coelho, *L'arte dell'armatura in Italia*)



88. Rock crystal ewer in the shape of a basilisk, with enameled-gold mounts, Milan, second half of 16th century. 26.5 × 31 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Archives Photographiques)





appealing group of vessels carved as fabulous creatures, often fitted with dragons' wings of Milanese invention. Such wings appear on Milanese armor as helmet crests; their scalloped outlines and peacock eyes also extend across breastplates, as in the suit by Filippo Negroli, made between 1530 and 1535 for Guidobaldo II della Rovere (Figure 87).<sup>82</sup> In rock crystal, the griffins and basilisks go back to such splendid mid-sixteenth-century examples as the one from the French royal collections (Figure 88).<sup>83</sup>

None of the vessels in the group is recorded as having been in the Spitzer collection, and their attribution to Vasters as restorer depends not on any surviving drawings but on their characteristic mounts. That Vasters was familiar with such vessels, however, is borne out by his large drawing of a monster-shaped ewer on a claw foot, complete with meticulous designs for the mounts (Figure 89).<sup>84</sup>

The Metropolitan Museum owns a ewer in the shape of a basilisk which is somewhat later in date than the one in the Louvre, being composed of several sections joined together (Figure 90);<sup>85</sup> earlier examples were made of fewer parts. The basilisk's head, body, wings, curled tail, and claw feet standing on a circular base are separate components, held together by enameled and jeweled gold mounts. At some stage the head was broken off and suffered multiple injuries; these have been mended and concealed by means of added gold swags, a motif recurrent in Vasters's work. The upper lip had to be shortened and smoothed, and what was lost was replaced by rows of

90. Rock crystal ewer in the shape of a basilisk: rock crystal, Milan, second half of 16th century; enameled and jeweled gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. 22.2 × 18.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.538



82. L. G. Boccia and E. T. Coelho, *L'arte dell'armatura in Italia* (Milan, 1967) figs. 245, 246.

83. Ex coll.: Cardinal Mazarin. Marquet de Vasselot (1914) p. 141, no. 866, pl. LIX; D. Alcouffe, "The Collection of Cardinal Mazarin's Gems," *Burlington Magazine* 116 (1974) pp. 514–526, no. 545 of Mazarin's inventory of 1661, fig. 23.

84. The present location of this ewer, if it exists, is unknown. Another drawing by Vasters shows a similar ewer, but lacking mounts, cover, and tail (Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2618-1919).

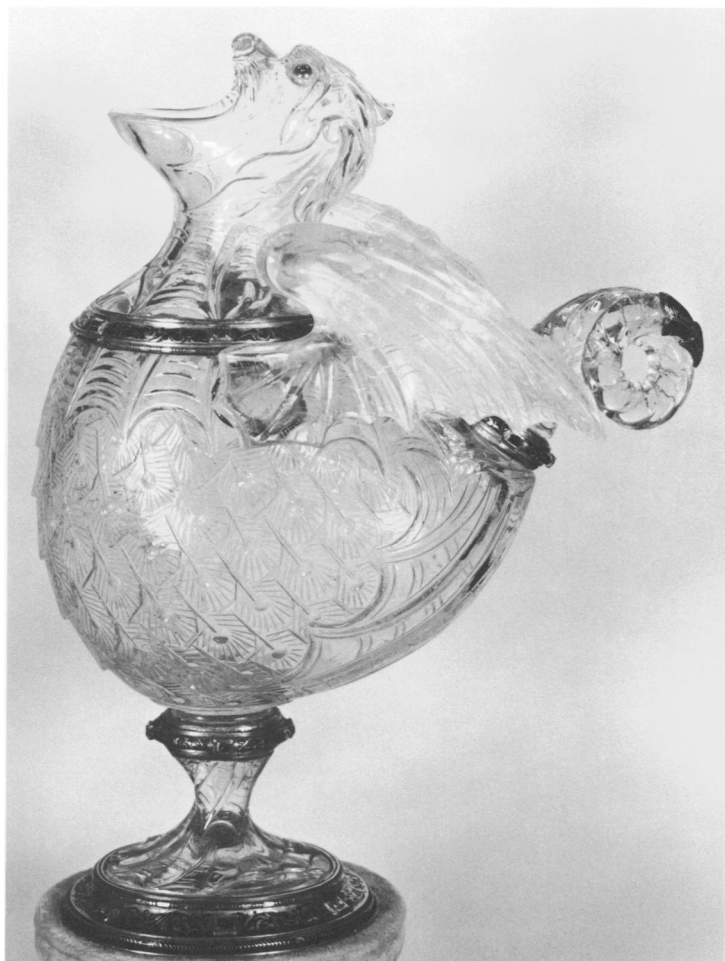
85. Ex coll.: Lord Hastings. Williamson, *Catalogue of the Collection of Jewels and Precious Works of Art the Property of J. P. Morgan*, pp. 92–93, no. 61, "The mounts are later in date than the rock-crystal," pls. xxxix, xl.

89. Design for rock crystal ewer in the shape of a monster, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2661-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

diamond teeth. The legs are old but do not belong to the body; the point of attachment has been moved forward, since the original area was weakened by repairs. In spite of these considerable misfortunes, however, the basilisk has survived with a certain supercilious charm and humor.

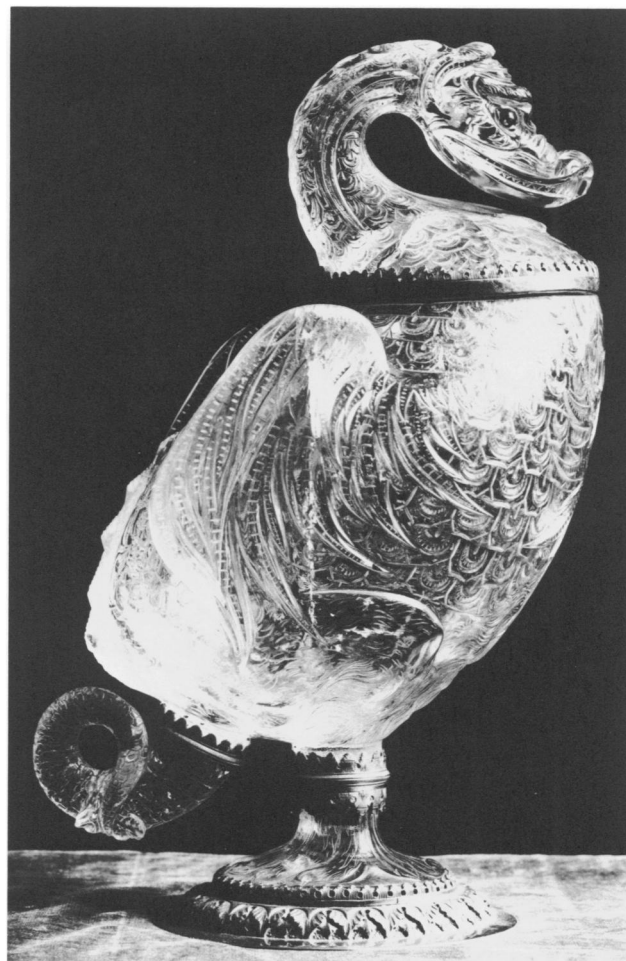
A ewer from the Widener Collection, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., forms part





91. Rock crystal ewer in the shape of a basilisk: body and head, Milan, second half of 16th century, with wings, tail, and foot of later date; enameled and jeweled gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. H. 22.9 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, 1942.9.298 (photo: National Gallery)

of the same group (Figure 91).<sup>86</sup> In the course of its existence, this basilisk has suffered even more grievous damage than the example in the Metropolitan Museum. Although the head and body are old, they do not belong together, and the head has been attached at an awkward angle. The tail, which has been repaired, is also old; the wings, feet, and enameled-gold mounts, on the other hand, are nineteenth-century and closely related to Vasters's style of work. The strangely squared plumage is of a kind seen, for example, on the splendid basilisk attributed to Annibale Fontana, in the Schatzkammer in Munich (Figure 92); bought by Duke Albrecht V of Wittelsbach, this is one of the few treasury pieces to have suffered a loss—its original ruby-studded gold mounts were removed and replaced by substitutes in 1779.<sup>87</sup>



92. Annibale Fontana(?), rock crystal ewer in the shape of a basilisk: rock crystal, Milan, second half of 16th century; silver-gilt mounts, after 1779. Munich, Schatzkammer der Residenz (photo: Bayerische Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser)

A grotesque rock crystal ewer in the Robert Lehman Collection takes the form of a seated quadruped

86. Ex colls.: F. Gans; K. W. Bachstitz; J. Widener. *Collection Fritz Gans*, pl. 2; *Bachstitz Gallery Collection*, III, pl. 75.

87. *Schatzkammer*, p. 160, no. 324. A perfectly preserved basilisk ewer, with leaf-shaped plumage, survives in the collections of the dukes of Hesse in Kassel; see E. Link, *Die landgräfliche Kunstkammer Kassel* (Kassel, 1975) pl. 11.



93. Rock crystal ewer in the shape of a seated quadruped, displaying arms dated 1571: body, Milan, 1571; head, scroll handle, and enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. H. 24 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.1497

displaying a coat of arms in *verre églomisé* between its front paws (Figure 93).<sup>88</sup> The head, scroll handle, and enameled-gold mounts are nineteenth-century replacements in the manner of Vasters, similar to those seen on the basilisk in Washington. Although its refitted head is distinctly doglike, the creature, cut in relief, was probably intended as a lion. The lion of Bavaria would have been an appropriate choice, since the arms displayed, dated 1571, are those of the Palatinate, Bavaria, and the monastery of Waldsassen in the Upper Palatinate—the latter a red basilisk on a silver field.<sup>89</sup> These are the arms of Count Palatine



94. Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Festival Costume*, Milan, ca. 1570. Drawing. Florence, Gabinetto dei Disegni (photo: Soprintendenza)

88. Ex coll.: Freiherr Max von Goldschmidt-Rothschild, Frankfurt am Main. *Exposition de la Collection Lehman de New York*, exh. cat. (Paris: Musée de l'Orangerie, 1957) p. 141, no. 233, pl. 93; *The Lehman Collection: New York*, exh. cat. (Cincinnati: Cincinnati Art Museum, 1959) p. 41, no. 525, ill.; G. Szabó, *The Robert Lehman Collection* (New York: MMA, 1975) p. 106; *Renaissance Decorative Arts from The Robert Lehman Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: National Museum of Western Art, 1977) no. 98, ill.

89. E. Zimmermann, *Bayerische Kloster-Heraldik* (Munich, 1930) p. 168 (top left), dated 1565. The arms are those of the Palatinate: 1. Sable, a lion argent, crowned gules; 2. The *Rautenschild* of Bavaria, in bend lozenge of argent and azure; and of the monastery of Waldsassen: 3. Argent, a basilisk gules. I am grateful to Helmut Nickel for this description.

Reichard von Simmern (1521–98) as administrator of the monastery, a former Cistercian foundation which had turned Lutheran; von Simmern held the office from 1560 to 1571, when Frederick III of the Palatinate took over. It is tempting to consider this crystal vessel as a presentation piece, given in recognition of services rendered. If it was indeed originally fashioned as an armorial lion, two Milanese ewers in the Munich Schatzkammer come to mind, one of jasper, the other of crystal, each surmounted by the bust of the Bavarian lion in gold.<sup>90</sup> Both ewers were made in Milan for Duke Albrecht V, and the Lehman ewer most probably originated in Milan too.

The quaint character of this seated quadruped owes much to Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527–93) of Milan, who designed fabulous costumes as part of the wedding festivities for Maria of Wittelsbach, daughter of Albrecht V, and Archduke Charles II of Styria, at Vienna in 1571 (Figure 94).<sup>91</sup> The nineteenth-century

restorer was no doubt unaware of such precedents and comparisons. However, he might have known a crystal ewer, then in one of the Rothschild collections and now in the Louvre, which has the shape of a winged, seated monster (Figure 95).<sup>92</sup> At some time in its history the ewer has been combined with a crystal nef on wheels; although totally different in character and scale, both parts are essentially of sixteenth-century Milanese origin.

90. *Schatzkammer*, pp. 163–164, no. 330, p. 210, no. 480; R. Distelberger, "Die Saracchi-Werkstatt und Annibale Fontana," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 71 (1975) pp. 128–129, figs. 148, 149.

91. B. Geiger, *I dipinti ghiribizzosi di Giuseppe Arcimboldi: Pittore illusionista del cinquecento (1527–1593)* (Florence, 1954); S. G. Alfons, *Giuseppe Arcimboldo*, *Tidskrift för Konstvetenskap* XXXI (Malmö, 1957) pp. 74–84; P. Preiss, "Prager Marginalien zu Giuseppe Arcimboldo," *Alte und Moderne Kunst* 9 (Nov.–Dec. 1964) pp. 12–14, with bibliography; A. Pieyre de Mandiargues, *Arcimboldo le merveilleux* (Paris, 1977), Eng. trans. *Arcimboldo the Marvelous* (New York, 1978); R. Barthes, *Arcimboldo* (Geneva, 1978). See also K. Vocolka, *Habsburger Hochzeiten 1550–1600: Kulturgeschichtliche Studien zum manieristischen Repräsentationsfest* (Vienna, 1976) pp. 47–98.

92. Gift of Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, 1922, no. R.148. See C. Dreyfus, "La Fondation Salomon de Rothschild," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 5th ser., 10 (1924) p. 325, ill.

95. Rock crystal ewer in the shape of a monster, combined with rock crystal vessel on wheels, mounts in enameled gold, Milan, ca. 1570. 40 × 40 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Musée du Louvre)



## GOLD-MOUNTED ROCK CRYSTALS OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY ORIGIN

In addition to designs involving the use of parts or fragments of authentic sixteenth- and seventeenth-century rock crystals, Vasters's work includes a number of vessels derived from Renaissance models but entirely nineteenth-century in execution. As a designer Vasters seems to have gradually developed a certain self-assurance and to have enjoyed combining styles in a way that reflects the historicism of his time. The objects that follow illustrate his progression from faithful interpreter to one who occasionally delighted in creating variations on set themes, with results which, although traditional in essence, are very much in keeping with prevailing retrospective tendencies.

Among the nineteenth-century rock crystals that most closely resemble sixteenth-century prototypes is a double-spouted, double-handled vase with cover, once owned by Spitzer and bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum by Benjamin Altman in 1913 (Figures 96, 97).<sup>93</sup> Vasters furnished colored designs for both crystal and mounts (Figures 98–103), showing the body of the vessel and the lid intaglio-cut with a foliage pattern; the handles carved in relief, and the spout and low foot fluted. Design and execution are so closely matched as to rule out any possibility that the crystal might in fact be older. The exquisite black and gold mounts, which include a cone-shaped finial, make use of a classical ovolo pattern not found elsewhere on enameled-gold settings for rock crystal vessels; it was, however, part of the vocabulary of sixteenth-century silversmiths, particularly in Germany and England.

Another rock crystal vessel from the Spitzer collection which is now in the Metropolitan Museum as part of the Altman Bequest is a relief-cut covered ewer that rises from a windswept foliated calyx (Figure 104).<sup>94</sup> It presents a number of unconventional elements: the spout is shaped as a female caryatid, the winged caryatid handle is topped by an animal head, and the unattached lid is in the form of a grotesque mask with ruby eyes, reminiscent of the kind proposed by Giulio Romano for silver vessels (Figure 105). Of related design and execution is a covered ewer in the Robert Lehman Collection in the Metropolitan Museum, with relief decoration showing Neptune and Amphitrite (Figure 106): similar windswept foliage surrounds the

calyx; there is a mask beneath the spout; the handle, this time with a putto's head, is again impractically designed; the hinged cover takes the form of a dolphin. The ewers, both elliptical, are alike in having circular, cone-shaped bases. They bear a marked family resemblance—the Altman ewer in particular—to a coverless ewer known to me only from an old photograph in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (Figure 107), which is annotated to the effect that the owner was a Milanese collector, Annibale Conti. From the photograph this ewer appears to be a genuine Milanese work of the late sixteenth century, which stands on an eighteenth-century silver-gilt fluted foot, presumably a replacement of the original foot in rock crystal. Perhaps it served as a point of departure for the two nineteenth-century ewers: given the affinities between them, these are likely to have been the work of one designer, one crystal cutter's workshop, and one goldsmith. A Milanese rock crystal coverless ewer from the French crown treasury could have offered a model for their handles, though its handle is in one piece and hence far more usable (Figure 108);<sup>95</sup> among Vasters's drawings is one of just such a ewer (Figure 109). A comparison of the example in the Louvre with the Altman ewer in particular shows at a glance how impractically this is designed: the spout is too low, the handle too high, and the cover tends to slide off. The cover of the Lehman ewer, on the other hand, is rather too efficiently hinged to its body, with an enameled-gold rod running through the attachments. Both covers, in fact, seem to be alien elements of the design.

93. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 18, no. 19 (Italian, 16th century), "Ce vase est fêlé," *GEMMES* pl. x; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2611, pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

94. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 23, no. 37 (German, end of 16th century), ill.; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2632, pl. LIX (see Figure 13). The intriguing suggestion has been made, as this article was going to press, that the ewer may be the one shown in Figure 107, embellished after acquisition by Spitzer (Helmut Nickel, personal communication).

95. H. Barbet de Jouy, Musée du Louvre, *Galerie d'Apollon: Notices des gemmes et bijoux* (Paris, 1867) pp. 42–43, E.92, "No. 156 bis de l'Inventaire des Bijoux de la Couronne, 1791"; Marquet de Vasselot (1914) p. 140, no. 962; Alcouffe, "The Collection of Cardinal Mazarin's Gems," pp. 514–526, fig. 20, no. 481 of Mazarin's inventory of 1661.

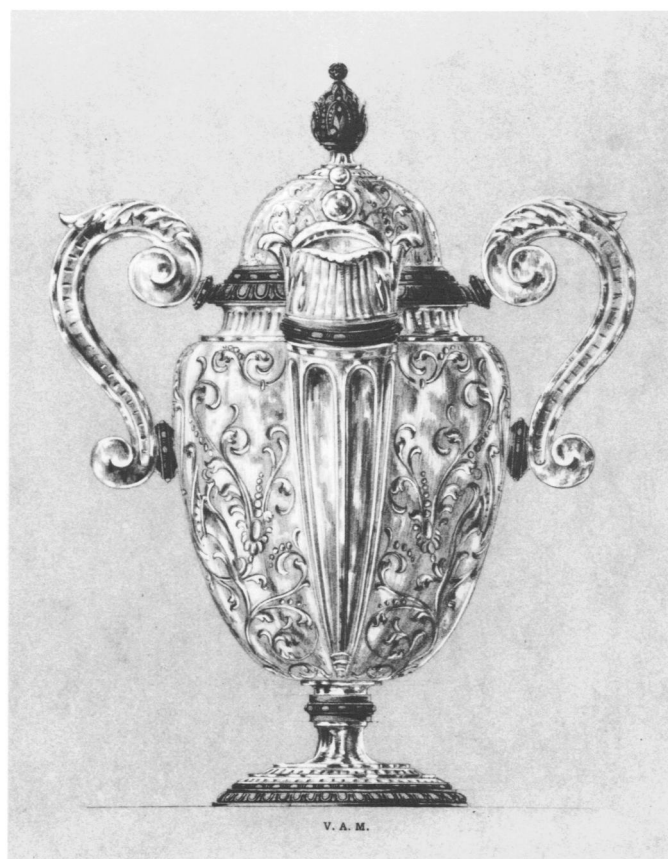


96, 97. Double-spouted rock crystal vase with cover and two handles, enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. 17.1 × 19.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.659a,b

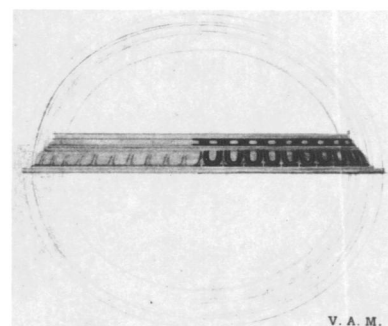
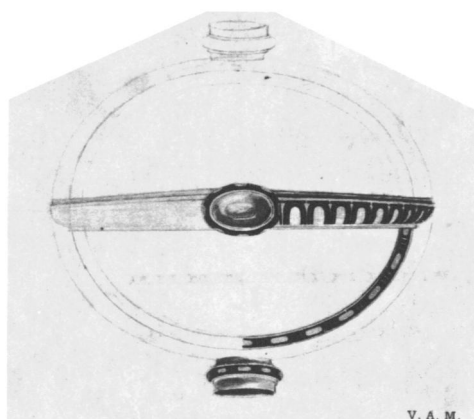
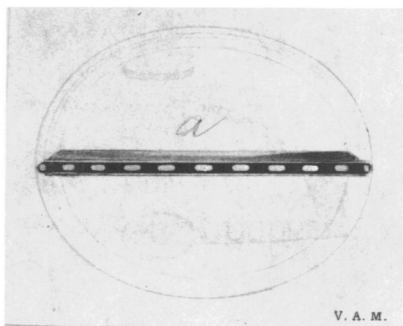
100–103. Designs for finial and mounts of double-spouted rock crystal vase, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3141,3460–3462-1919







98, 99. Designs for double-spouted rock crystal vase shown in Figures 96 and 97, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2612,2613-1919



104



106



105

107



216



104. Rock crystal ewer with cover, mounts in enameled and jeweled gold, ca. 1870–90. H. 24.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.660a,b

105. Giulio Romano (1492–1546), *Design for a Silver Dish and Cover*, first quarter of 16th century. Pen and wash over chalk. Oxford, Christ Church (photo: Christ Church)

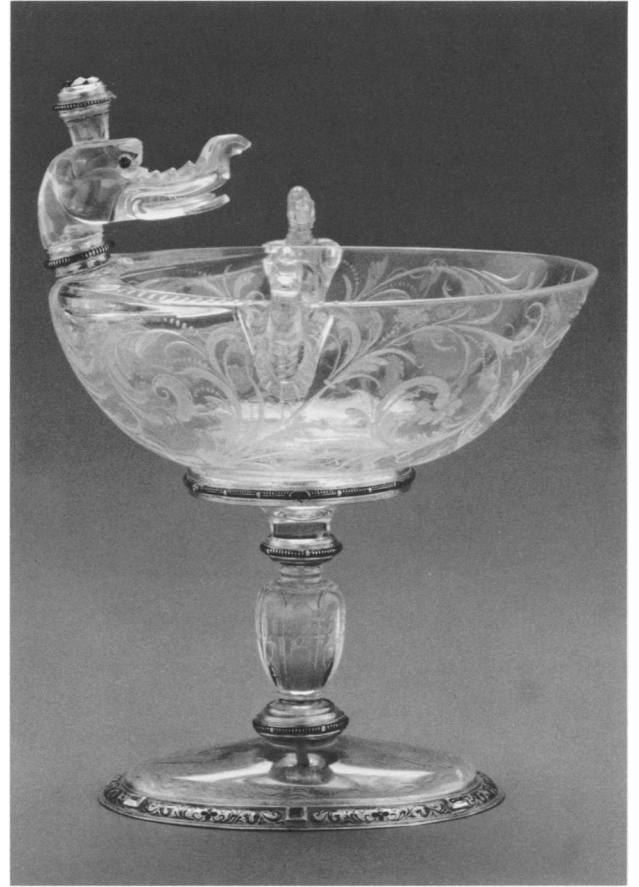
106. Rock crystal ewer with cover, enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–90. H. 18 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.1498



107. Rock crystal ewer on silver-gilt foot: crystal, probably Milan, second half of 16th century; foot, 18th century. Formerly Annibale Conti Collection, Milan (drawing, after photo: Kathleen Borowik)

108. Rock crystal ewer, enameled-gold mounts, Milan, second half of 16th century. H. 31.5 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Archives Photographiques)

109. Design for a rock crystal ewer, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2636-1919 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)



110, 111. Two-handled rock crystal cup with dragon's head, mounts in enameled and jeweled gold, ca. 1870–95. 17.6 × 13.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.1495

There are no drawings to link the Museum's ewers with Vasters, and only the Altman example is known to have been owned by Spitzer. That provenance, however, and the character of both ewers argue strongly in favor of Vasters's authorship—as do the enameled-gold mounts, so reminiscent of his style.

By contrast, a baluster-stemmed cup in the Robert Lehman Collection is well documented (Figures 110, 111).<sup>96</sup> Vasters's design (Figure 112) includes all the crystal parts: the bowl with two small dragon heads as handles, the pattern of the intaglio-cut tendrils, the gadrooned baluster and circular foot, and the ruby-eyed, open-mouthed dragon's head that looks inward across the bowl. An immediate prototype for this curious head, which is topped by a circular gold-capped knob, can be found in the dragon's head that once

supported Biliverti's gold and enamel handle for the helmet-shaped cup by Gaffuri in Florence (Figure 113);<sup>97</sup> the lower attachment of that now-missing loop handle appears on top of the dragon's head. Vasters, unaware of its purpose, has treated this hard-to-explain rudiment as mere ornament. For the overall design of the cup Vasters might have referred to a number of genuine Renaissance examples: a Milanese one in the Munich Schatzkammer;<sup>98</sup> one by Ottavio Miseroni in Vienna;<sup>99</sup> or a later one in Stuttgart, made for the dukes of Württemberg in Freiburg im Breisgau in 1633, which has a somewhat less fan-

96. Ex coll.: Constantin Bulgari, Rome, 1955.

97. See note 72 above.

98. *Schatzkammer*, p. 169, no. 342. See also *Bachstitz Gallery Collection*, III, pl. 72, an oval rock crystal bowl on a baluster stem with a dragon's head (ex coll. F. von Gans, Frankfurt am Main).

99. R. Distelberger, "Beobachtungen zu den Steinschneidewerkstätten der Miseroni in Mailand und Prag," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 74 (1978) p. 147, fig. 126.



112. Design for two-handed cup with dragon's head, ca. 1870–95. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2604-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



tastic head with enameled wings attached to it (Figure 114).<sup>100</sup>

The mounts envisaged in Vasters's design are much more elaborate than in the finished version, except for the narrow striped bands encircling the dragon's neck and the knob on its head, which are identical in both. The motif has been carried over to the mounts of the cup and stem, while the foot rim shows a characteristic feathery scroll pattern (see Figures 61, 71).

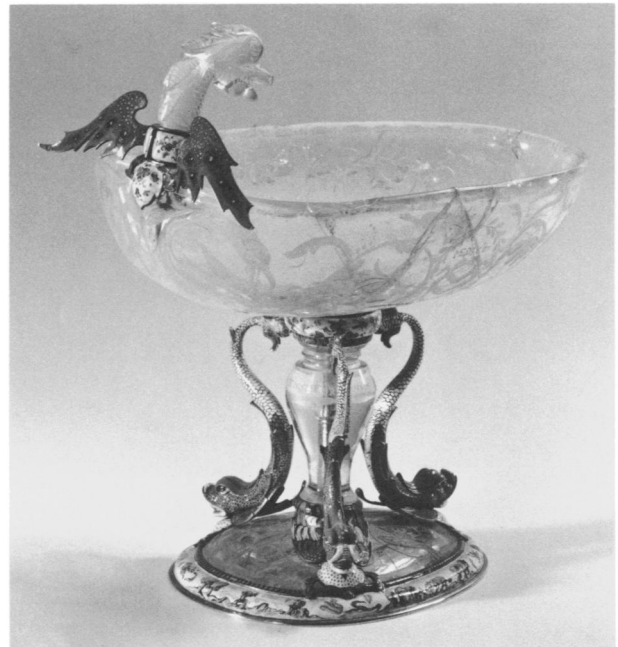
A two-handed rock crystal cup, with the same curiously crowned dragon's head facing inward, was exhibited by Vasters in Düsseldorf in 1902 as part of his collection (see Figure 14). It appears to have been identical with the one in the Robert Lehman Collection, except that it was mounted on a low, scroll-patterned foot. We shall have occasion to revert to the Düsseldorf exhibition in connection with another object in this group.

100. M. Landenberger, ed., *Kleinodien aus dem Württembergischen Landesmuseum Stuttgart* (Pfullingen, 1973) color pl. p. 47.



113. Jacopo Biliverti, dragon-head attachment for enameled-gold handle formerly on rock crystal cup by Gaffuri, Florence, ca. 1590. Florence, Museo degli Argenti (photo: Hackenbroch)

114. Rock crystal cup with bird's head and wings, mounted in enameled and jeweled silver-gilt, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1633. H. 18.2 cm. Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum (photo: Württembergisches Landesmuseum)





In addition to the pair of pricket candlesticks incorporating sixteenth-century rock crystals (see Figure 76), Spitzer owned a second pair, this one based on a design by Vasters that shows the rock crystal sections intaglio cut with gadroons and floral festoons (Figures 115, 116).<sup>101</sup> Vasters might have known the pair of sixteenth-century pricket candlesticks now in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, a prototype with similar vase-shaped and gadrooned rock crystal sections (Figure 117);<sup>102</sup> indeed, Vasters himself might have been responsible for raising these candlesticks onto their present drum-shaped bases, encircled with silver-gilt bands and applied enamel ornament of a kind frequently encountered in his work. The silver-gilt mounts of the pair from the Spitzer collection, however, are different in character, and the bases are decorated with animals in a continuous landscape

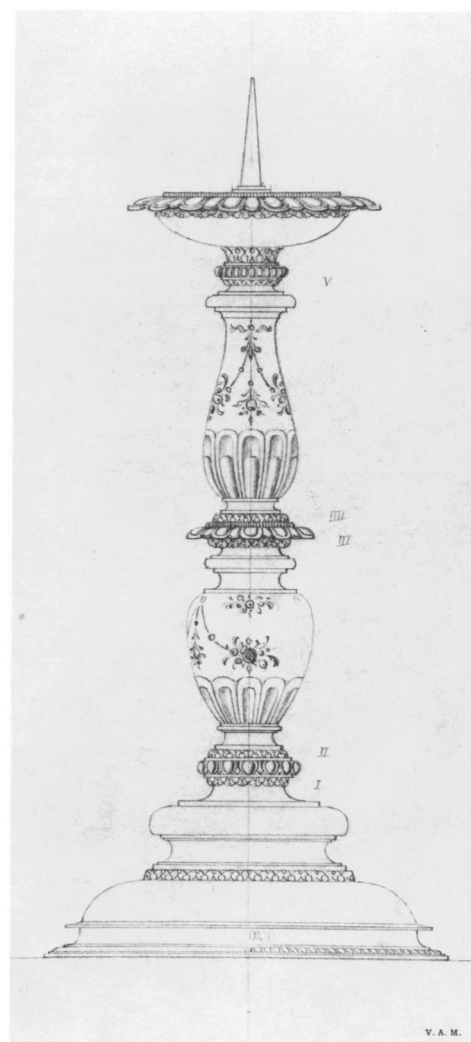
(Figure 118). Rendered in low relief in late sixteenth-century South German style, these friezes may have been modeled from plaster casts or galvanoplastic reproductions in Vasters's possession, such as were listed in the sale catalogue of his estate in 1909. If so, it would explain why there are no traces of hammering on the reverse. The surfaces are chased to give the slight relief more definition and sharpness; the backgrounds are tooled with coarse punches applied in a pedantic manner that would have disqualified any practicing member of a sixteenth-century goldsmiths' guild. Another technical observation concerns the

101. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 13, no. 4 (German, 16th century), *GEMMES* pl. IV; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2596, pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

102. Inv. no. 17196. Ex colls.: Gustave de Rothschild, Paris; Mme Stern, Paris; Mannheimer Collection, Amsterdam.

115. Pair of pricket candlesticks in rock crystal and silver-gilt, ca. 1870–90. H. 34.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.652,653

116. Design for pricket candlestick shown in Figure 115, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2728-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)





117. Pair of pricket candlesticks in rock crystal with enameled-gold mounts, second half of 16th century; raised on rock crystal bases mounted in silver-gilt with enameled-gold decoration, ca. 1870–90. H. 35.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (photo: Rijksmuseum)



118. Detail of foot of a pricket candlestick shown in Figure 115, with silver-gilt frieze of animals in a landscape

dentated upper edge of each frieze, which serves as an attachment to grip the segment of rock crystal rising from the base: too close to the animals in the frieze, this edge cuts into many of their heads. By contrast, the ovolo border that forms the outer rim of the base is cast and stamped separately.

The animals in their continuous landscapes are shown in repose, recalling scenes of the Creation or of Orpheus charming the beasts with his music. In this connection, two friezes engraved by Virgil Solis (1514–62) of Nuremberg come to mind: one, dated 1540, shows Orpheus with almost identical animals in a wooded landscape; the other depicts Adam and Eve among the animals in the Garden of Eden.<sup>103</sup> A Creation scene such as the latter was used to decorate the round base of a spectacular gold cup sold in 1937 as part of the Airthrey heirlooms (Figures 119, 120).<sup>104</sup> The cup was then described as a Renaissance work;

in view of the similarities between the friezes decorating its base and the bases of the pricket candlesticks under discussion, an attribution to Vasters cannot be excluded.

Illustrating clearly the differences between a work of genuine creation and the retrospective attitudes of Vasters and his generation is a similar scene of Orpheus charming the animals, featured in relief on a

103. I. O'Dell-Franke, *Kupferstiche und Radierungen aus der Werkstatt des Virgil Solis* (Wiesbaden, 1977): *Orpheus and the Animals*, p. 97, no. d 66, pl. 34 (see also no. d 65, pl. 33); *Adam and Eve*, p. 75, no. a 8, pl. 2 (see also no. a 7, pl. 2).

104. C. R. Beard, "The Airthrey Gold Cup: Discovery of an Unique Renaissance Treasure," *Connoisseur* 98 (1936) pp. 3–8, ill.; *The Airthrey Gold Cup*, exh. cat. (Edinburgh: How of Edinburgh, 1936) pl. 5; *Catalogue of the Airthrey Treasures Formerly the Property of the Late Donald Graham . . .*, sale cat., Sotheby's (London, June 10, 1937) lot 1, frontispiece and ill.



large silver-gilt basin with matching ewer in the Museo degli Argenti, Florence.<sup>105</sup> Commissioned by Prince-Bishop Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau of Salzburg, the set was made by Cornelius Erb of Augsburg about 1590. The relief shows a freedom of composition that reveals the sure touch of a master who knew how to benefit from the sources of design that served him for guidance.<sup>106</sup>

The objects described so far are nineteenth-century versions of sixteenth-century prototypes. We turn now to adaptations in the style of the seventeenth century. One of these is a sturdy rock crystal tankard with sil-

105. I. Weber, "Bildvorlagen für Silberreliefs an Arbeiten von Paul Hübner und Kornelius Erb, heute im Palazzo Pitti und im Britischen Museum," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 14 (1970) pp. 362–368, fig. 52.

106. Erb was able to enrich his vocabulary of quadrupeds and birds from books with woodcut illustrations of animals by Conrad Gessner, published in Zurich in 1551–58, and by Jost Amman, whose *Ein neww Thierbuch* appeared in Frankfurt am Main in 1569. See W. G. Zimmerman, "Conrad Geßner: Die Entdeckung eines großen Zürcher Künstlers," in *Zürcher Kunst nach der Reformation: Hans Asper und seine Zeit*, exh. cat. (Zurich: Helmhaus, 1981) pp. 161–163, nos. 171–176; and Y. Hackenbroch, "Renaissance Pendants After Designs by Jost Amman," *Connoisseur* 160 (1965) pp. 58–65.

119. The Airthrey globe cup, Germany (Nuremberg?), ca. 1560–70. Gold, H. 24.1 cm. England, private collection (photo: after *Connoisseur* 98, 1936)

120. Detail of foot of the Airthrey globe cup, with frieze of animals in the Garden of Eden (photo: after *Connoisseur* 98, 1936)



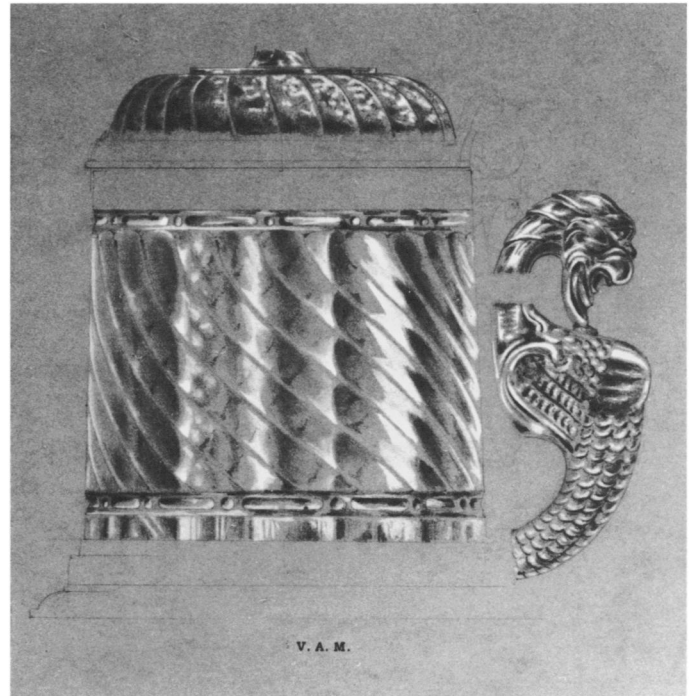


121. Rock crystal tankard, with silver-gilt and enameled-gold mounts, ca. 1870–95. 17.1 × 17.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.631

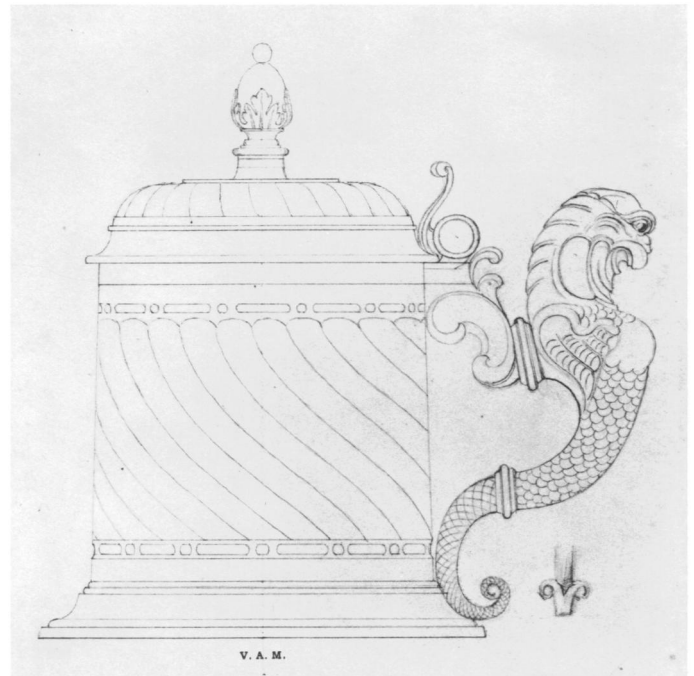
ver-gilt, gold, and enamel mounts (Figure 121).<sup>107</sup> Vasters must have had in mind a prototype such as the silver-gilt example executed by Philipp Küsel, who became a master in Augsburg in 1668; this tankard, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, has similar spiral fluting on the body and cover, although it differs in being fitted with a caryatid handle and ball finial.<sup>108</sup> Vasters left two preparatory drawings for his tankard: one for the crystal parts only, complete with domed cover and scroll handle in the form of a winged sea serpent; and the other for the whole piece with its silver-gilt mounts (Figures 122, 123). The handle he devised is totally impractical, a detail that seems

107. Williamson, *Catalogue of the Collection of Jewels and Precious Works of Art the Property of J. Pierpont Morgan*, pp. 96–97, no. 65, pl. XLIV.

108. Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 1877-1898. *Augsburger Barock*, p. 326, no. 471, fig. 309; Seling, *Die Kunst der Augsburger Goldschmiede*, III, p. 227, no. 1692, e.

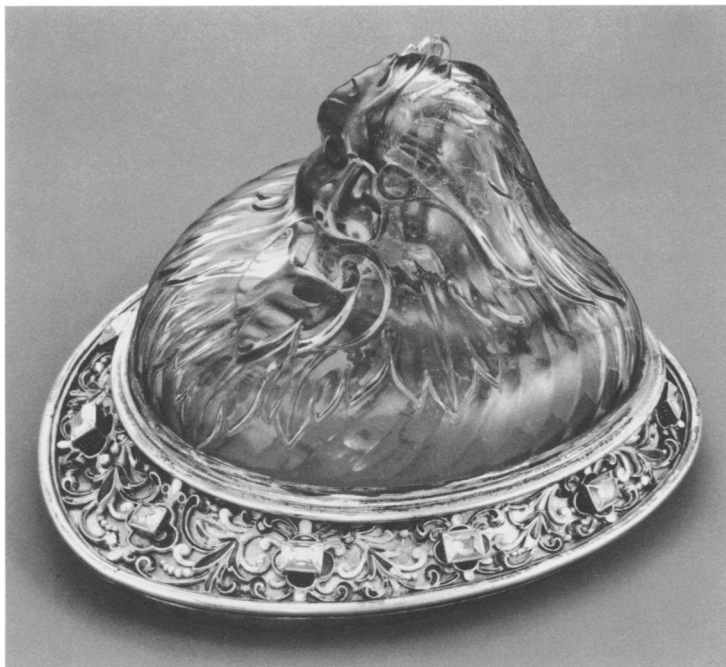


122, 123. Designs for rock crystal tankard shown in Figure 121, ca. 1870–95. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2642,2713-1919 (photos: Eileen Tweedy)





125. Cover of rock crystal ewer shown in Figure 124, with foliate mask



124. Smoky rock crystal ewer with cover, mounts in silver-gilt and enameled and jeweled gold, ca. 1870–90. H. 35 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.58a,b

not to have disturbed him in the least. The cone-shaped finial is found elsewhere in his work (see, for example, Figure 96). Indeed, most of Vasters's finial designs were used more than once. They are subtle but telltale reminders of his authorship.

One of the installation photographs of Vasters's loans to the Düsseldorf exhibition of 1902 shows a tankard that is almost identical to the one now in the Metropolitan Museum, except that it lacks the enameled scroll decoration applied to the mounts (see Figure 14).

Another object of seventeenth-century inspiration is a large, helmet-shaped, covered ewer in smoky crystal, formerly in the Spitzer collection, when it was described as a German work of the late sixteenth century (Figures 124, 125).<sup>109</sup> Its prototype may have been a cup from the Miseroni circle in Prague, such as a smaller, coverless example on a baluster stem and shell-shaped foot in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich (Figure 126);<sup>110</sup> the relief on both cups includes masks and palmettes. The nineteenth-century ewer shows the degree to which its designer responded to traditional form, while unwittingly adopting certain contemporary trends. The result is a stylistic compromise. Rising from a leaf-shaped base, the ewer is carved with windswept palmettes which frame a grotesque foliate mask. Foliage reappears on the cover, issuing from a stylized head that resembles a woodwose or—more specifically German—the old fairytale figure of Rübezahl, a well-meaning giant, half-spirit half-man, who lived in the woods. The prominent handle is also covered with foliage. Vasters prepared colored drawings for every detail of this ewer and its mounts (Figures 127, 128). The latter are silver-gilt with applied enameled-gold decoration forming a continuous frieze. In pattern and technique these mounts show a close resemblance to those of an agate cup from the French royal treasure (see

109. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 16, no. 11 (German, end of 16th century), *GEMMES* pl. IX; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2603, pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

110. Inv. no. 2176.





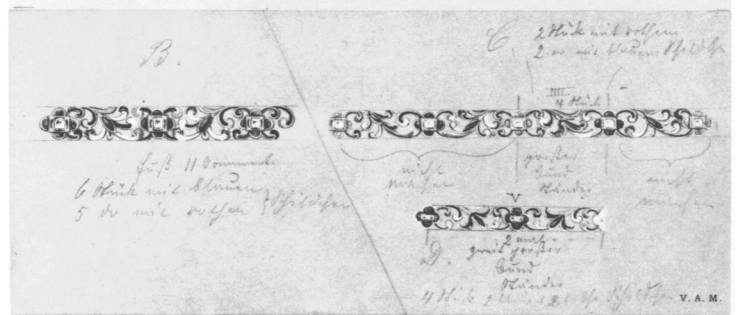
126. Circle of Ottavio Miseroni, rock crystal vessel with foliage mask, Prague, early 17th century. Munich, Bayerisches Nationalmuseum (photo: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum)



127. Design for smoky rock crystal covered ewer shown in Figure 124, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2643-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



128. Designs for enameled-gold mounts of smoky rock crystal ewer and cover shown in Figures 124 and 125, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3133,3134-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



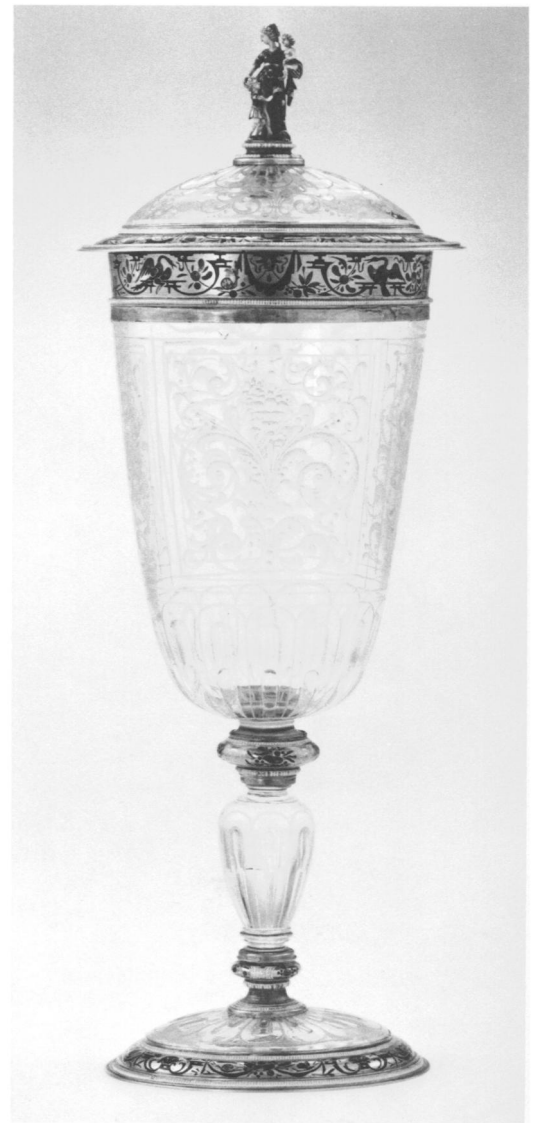


129. Smoky rock crystal cup, mounts in enameled and jeweled gold, ca. 1870–90. 13.3 × 14.3 × 11.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.1702

Figure 80); somewhat similar mounts have already been noted on a pair of pricket candlesticks formerly in the Spitzer collection (see Figure 77). The late sixteenth-century technique was one suited to the bold character and generous proportions of the ewer, for it allowed the sparing use of gold as a carrier of the enamel, applied to a sturdy base of silver-gilt.

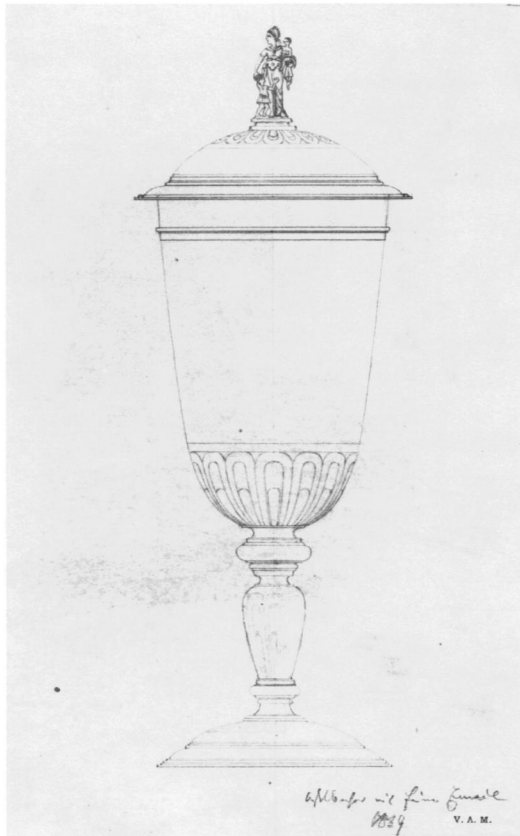
Another object in smoky rock crystal, this time very dark in color, is a cup standing on a high faceted foot (Figure 129).<sup>111</sup> Lapidary and goldsmith have achieved a strikingly harmonious relationship: the purely ornamental carving of the oval bowl is utterly restrained; so are the gold and black enameled mounts, which display the up-and-down feathery scroll pattern repeatedly chosen by Vasters, highlighted here by rubies and diamonds in rectangular box settings. In the absence of any preparatory drawings, it is the mounts that link this cup to Vasters, who seems likely

111. Ex coll.: Karl Mayer von Rothschild. *Orfèvrerie allemande . . . collection . . . C. M. de Rothschild*, sale cat., Galerie Georges Petit (Paris, June 12–13, 1911) lot 98, p. 83, ill.



130, 131. Rock crystal covered goblet, with enameled-gold mounts and Charity finial, ca. 1876–90. H. 26 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.661a,b





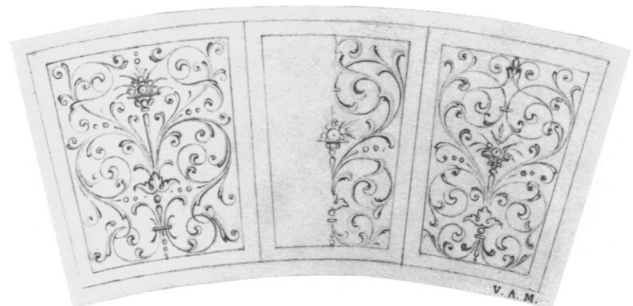
132.  
Design for rock crystal  
covered goblet with Charity  
finial, ca. 1870–90.  
London, Victoria and  
Albert Museum, E.2748-  
1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

133.  
Design for rock crystal  
goblet with intaglio-cut  
panels, ca. 1870–90.  
London, Victoria and  
Albert Museum, E.2610-  
1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

134.  
Design for intaglio-cut  
panels of the goblet shown  
in Figure 130, ca. 1870–90.  
London, Victoria and  
Albert Museum, E.3502-  
1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

to have supervised the work of both lapidary and goldsmith.

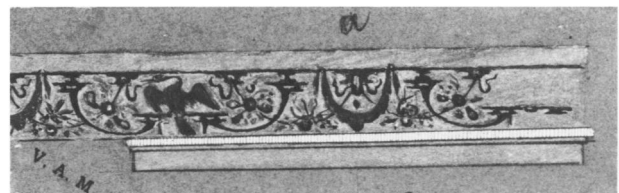
Two covered rock crystal goblets in the Metropolitan Museum, both with elaborate enameled-gold mounts, illustrate Vasters's more contemporary tendencies as a designer. For the first (Figures 130, 131), formerly in the Spitzer collection, Vasters left sketches showing the entire cone-shaped goblet, one with its cover and finial in the shape of a figure of Charity (Figures 132, 133).<sup>112</sup> Separate drawings exist for the final design of the ornamental panels cut into the crystal; for the finial; and for the decorative rims in *Tiefschnitt*, a technique in which the design is engraved into the gold and filled in with colored enamel, mostly but not exclusively translucent (Figures 134–136). The running ornament is formed by cartouches enclosing bunches of fruit linked by festoons with birds and flowers; both technique and imagery



135, 136. Designs for Charity finial and enameled-gold  
border of the goblet shown in Figures 130 and 131,  
ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum,  
E.3273,3288-1919 (photos: Eileen Tweedy)



112. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 24, no. 41 (German, 16th century), ill.; *Spitzer Sale*, II, lot 2633, pl. LIX (see Figure 13). Cf. a rock crystal goblet and cover bequeathed to the British Museum by Viscount Lee of Fareham (inv. no. 1935.2-1.4), for which Vasters's designs also survive: *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 16, no. 12 (Italian, 16th century), ill.; *Spitzer sale*, II, lot 2605, pl. LIX (see Figure 13); Truman (1979) p. 158, figs. 1–4; Tait, "Spitz in Bloomsbury," p. 63, figs. 2, 3.





137. House altar of Duke Albrecht V of Wittelsbach and his consort Anna: detail, statuette of St. Anne, Augsburg, 1573–74. Ebony, enameled gold, pearls, jewels. Munich, Schatzkammer der Residenz (photo: Bayerische Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser)

were prevalent in the Kaiserliche Hofwerkstatt of Rudolf II in Prague, and were already in use in Augsburg around 1573–74 on the *Hausaltar* of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria and his consort, Anna of Austria. This private altar, a masterpiece which was the first of its kind to use ebony among other precious materials, included figures of the duke and duchess's patron saints, St. Albert the Great and St. Anne (Figure 137), and it must have been known to Vasters, if not directly, then in the pages of a book on the *Schatzkammer* that he owned.<sup>113</sup>

The figure of St. Anne on Duke Albrecht's house altar seems to have influenced Vasters in his renderings of Charity—with the addition of a third child—as a centerpiece for pendants, such as the one in the Victoria and Albert Museum (see Figures 30, 31). The finial group designed for the crystal goblet, however, is more closely derived from a representation of Charity with two children, standing beneath an arch inscribed *CHARITAS*, on a jewel casket by Wenzel Jamnitzer and Nicolaus Schmidt in the *Grünes Gewölbe*, Dresden. The casket, first listed in the Saxon *Kunst-kammer* in 1589 and presumably made for the wedding of Elector Christian I and Sophie in 1582, was reproduced in a folio volume that Vasters owned (Figures 138, 139).<sup>114</sup> Charity, wearing a long, belted dress with a short overskirt or *peplum*, supports one infant on her left arm; she looks down at a boy on her right, who is older than the children usually gathered about her. Clad in a classical skirted outfit, he hangs anxiously onto Charity's dress, while she ex-

113. The earliest large color reproduction of this famous altar was published by Zettler (1876) pl. xxxiii; pl. xxxiv shows the altar closed and pl. xxxvi (misplaced with xxxv) its back. See *Katalog Vasters*, lot 732, for the copy owned by Vasters. For the most thorough, recent study of the altar and the Augsburg workshop from which it originated, together with a complete bibliography, see U. Krempel, "Augsburger und Münchner Emailarbeiten des Manierismus aus dem Besitz der Bayerischen Herzöge Albrecht V, Wilhelm V, und Maximilian I," *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 18 (1967) pp. 111–186, esp. pp. 137–140, p. 176, no. 17, figs. 29–31. See also *Schatzkammer*, pp. 75–76, no. 59, pl. 32; and Seling, *Die Kunst der Augsburger Goldschmiede*, III, pp. 52–53, fig. 27, color pls. I, II, and p. 79, no. 864, e.

114. J. G. T. Grässe, *Das Grüne Gewölbe zu Dresden* (Berlin, 1876) pl. 5; for Vasters's copy see *Katalog Vasters*, lot 574. See also J. L. Sponsel, *Das Grüne Gewölbe zu Dresden: Eine Auswahl von Meisterwerken der Goldschmiedekunst* (Leipzig, 1925–29) I, pp. 115–116, pls. 21, 22.



tends a protective hand over his head. The finial on the cover of the crystal goblet repeats all the essential details of Wenzel Jamnitzer's composition.

The allegorical figure of Charity was a popular one, especially in Protestant regions. A group very like the finial, except for a narrow piece of drapery billowing around Charity's head and shoulders, appears at the apex of an ebony tabernacle in one of Vasters's sketches (see Figure 183), and a similar group stands in the center niche of a small cabinet in damascened iron that formed part of the Spitzer collection.<sup>115</sup>

The second covered goblet in the Metropolitan Museum that can be attributed to Vasters is shaped like a latter-day champagne flute, while the intagliocut motifs are derived from designs by the Saracchi (Figures 140, 141).<sup>116</sup> Vasters made a detailed drawing of the floral finial, with instructions beside it (Figure 142). The mounts have been executed in the late sixteenth-century technique already discussed (see Figure 80), whereby enameled-gold scrolls are affixed to a slightly concave ground that allows the applied ornament to stand out. This is a rare instance in which the entire setting is made of gold; the applied ornamental sections can only be cast in and enameled on gold, but it is common to find silver-gilt being used for the ground. The technique, often chosen for objects of large proportions or intended for occasional use, allowed shortcuts to be made in the production process, since the ornamental sections could be cast in one or two complementary molds. These units gradually tended to acquire a monotonous character, the result of being turned out by busy, specialized workshops—a criticism, however, that certainly cannot be leveled at this exquisitely finished goblet.

A covered bowl in the Schroder Collection, with elaborate enameled and jeweled gold mounts on a

115. Charity is one of three silver statuettes; the present location of the cabinet is unknown. See *Collection Spitzer*, III, p. 44, no. 5 (Italian, 16th century), *FERS INCRUSTES* pl. III; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2534, pl. LVII. This allows us to form an idea of the magnitude of Spitzer's enterprise. Apparently master designs by Vasters—and not only by him—circulated from goldsmiths' workshops to other metalworkers.

116. Rubinstein-Bloch, *Catalogue of the George and Florence Blumenthal Collection*, III, p. xxx, said to be ex coll. Baron Karl Mayer von Rothschild, although no independent confirmation of this provenance has yet been found.



138. Wenzel Jamnitzer and Nicolaus Schmidt, jewel casket, Nuremberg, ca. 1582, as published in 1876 by J. G. T. Grässe, *Das Grüne Gewölbe zu Dresden*, pl. 5. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library

139. *Charity*, detail of Figure 138







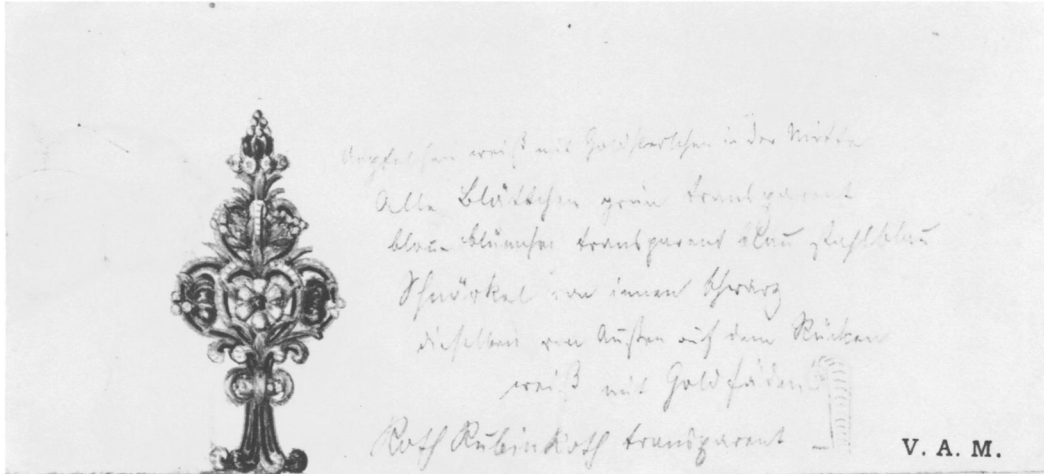
140, 141. Rock crystal covered goblet, with enameled-gold mounts and floral finial, ca. 1870–90. H. 36.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of George Blumenthal, 41.100.316a,b



white ground, serves to conclude this discussion of nineteenth-century rock crystals (Figures 143, 144).<sup>117</sup> Formerly thought to be late sixteenth-century in origin, the bowl has now been reattributed to Reinhold Vasters as a result of these studies. The general shape of the piece is not unlike that of a sixteenth-century

in surviving drawings of similar scenes (Figures 147–150). The style of these vignettes is derived from seventeenth-century sources, of the kind illustrated by the hunting scene on the Metropolitan Museum's oval crystal plate (see Figure 84).

Unmistakable as is the authorship of the Schroder



142. Annotated design for the floral finial shown in Figures 140 and 141, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3322-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

covered crystal cup on a baluster-stem foot from the French royal treasury.<sup>118</sup> Vasters's preparatory drawings include a version of the entire bowl and cover, with its sphinx-shaped handles and floral finial, and detailed sketches for the lip and foot rims, showing the enameled-gold bands with a pattern of arabesques inset with jewels (Figures 145, 146). The half-figures of sphinxes are embellished with diadems and rows of pearls, and have draperies descending from ears and wings. Their full breasts protrude from white-enameled chests patterned with dots and arabesques. Similar half-sphinxes, as we shall see, occur elsewhere in Vasters's sketches and in work depending on them. The floral finial can be compared with that in Figure 141, and with one on a large moss agate bowl for which Vasters's designs survive (see Figure 163). The crystal bowl itself is engraved with mythological scenes—Apollo pursuing Daphne, Cypris with the stag—in oval frames with scrollwork embellishments at the apex, much as outlined

bowl, the differences between it and the design in Figure 145 are worth noting. In the drawing the bowl rests on a flat foot, not a baluster stem; and the mythological scene envisaged, that of the Judgment of Paris, is without a frame and covers the entire side of the bowl.

The survival of so many designs by Vasters for rock crystals raises the question of where such objects could have been made during the later nineteenth century. The flourishing enterprises of the Saracchi and Miseroni in Milan had long since come to an end, in part transferred to Prague, in part affected by the dismal situation during and after the Thirty Years' War, and in part victims finally of increased competition from the glass industry, especially in Bohemia. Some cut crystal was produced in Paris during the period, but Spitzer—who owned at least five of the pieces now in

117. T. Schroder, comp., *Schroder Collection*, exh. cat. (London: Goldsmiths' Hall, 1979) no. 28, color pl. and cover ill., "North Italian, probably Milan, circa 1580"; American Federation of Arts, *Schroder Collection: The Art of the European Goldsmith*, exh. cat. (New York, 1983) pp. 179–181, no. 77, ill. and color pl., reattributed to Vasters.

118. Marquet de Vasselot (1914) p. 144, no. 883, pl. LXI.

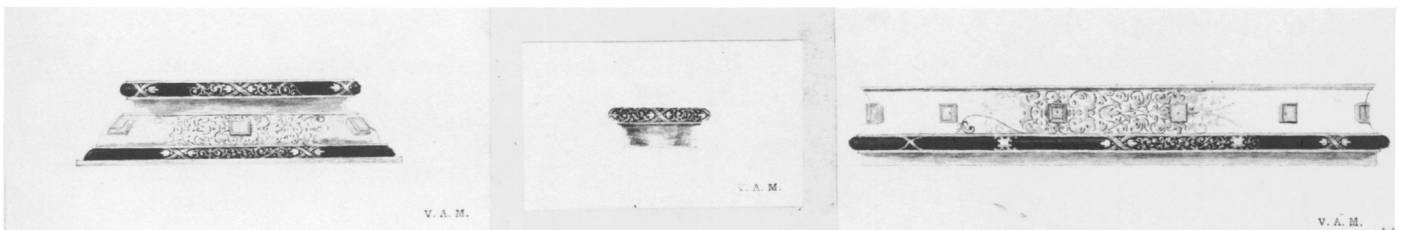


143. Rock crystal covered bowl with sphinx handles, mounted in enameled and jeweled gold, ca. 1870–90. 23 × 20 cm. London, Schroder Collection (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

144. Detail of sphinx handle of the Schroder bowl (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

145. Design for the Schroder bowl, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2606-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

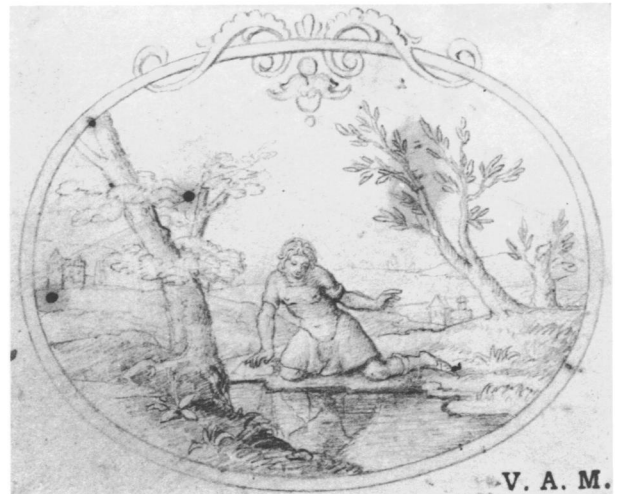
146. Designs for mounts of the Schroder bowl, ca. 1870–90; in the center, the finial base upside down. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3145–3147-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)





147, 148. Oval medallions seen from inside the Schroder bowl: *Apollo and Daphne*; *Cyparissus and the Stag* (photos: Eileen Tweedy)

149, 150. Designs for oval medallions, ca. 1870–90: *Apollo and Python*; *Narcissus*. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3520.3524-1919 (photos: 149. Eileen Tweedy; 150. Hackenbroch)

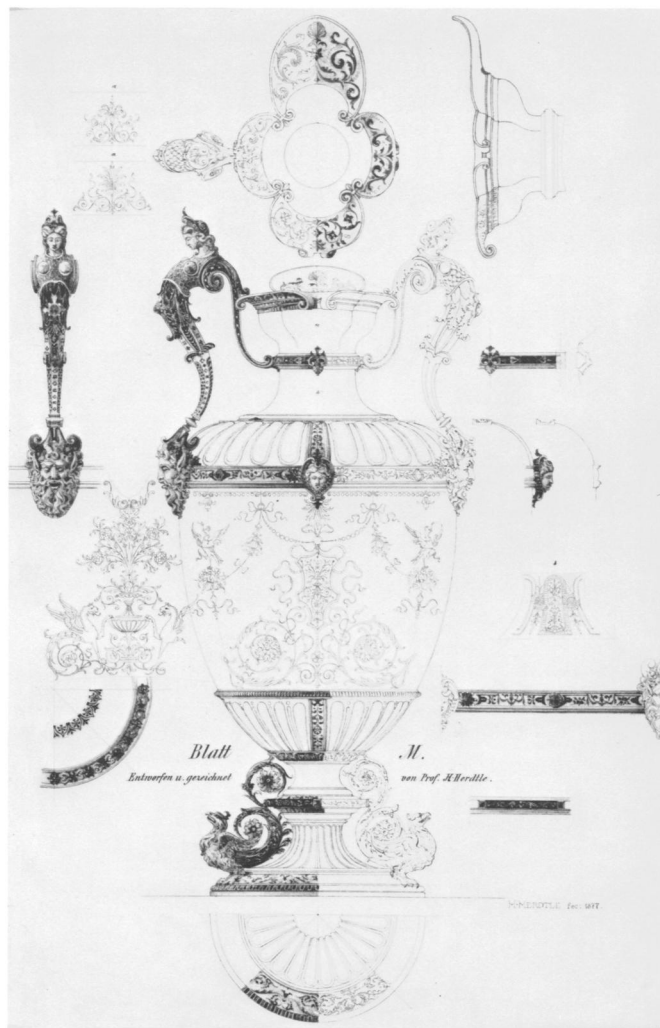


the Metropolitan Museum—would surely have preferred Vasters’s designs to be executed somewhere else, given that the results were to be passed off in Paris as sixteenth-century collector’s items. A possible resource existed in Spitzer’s native Vienna, where the well-known firm of J. and L. Lobmeyr, founded in 1822 and flourishing to this day, specialized in the decoration of Bohemian glass. The moving spirit was Ludwig Lobmeyr (1829–1917), one of the founder’s sons, who designed models himself or commissioned them from gifted artists in both contemporary and

retrospective styles. Although the firm’s commercial *raison d’être* was glass decoration, its men would have possessed the necessary skills to cut rock crystal as well. A single drawing of 1877 (Figure 151), out of over twenty volumes of designs presented by Lobmeyr’s to the Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, will serve to indicate the type of work they undertook. Another possibility lay closer to home: this was the town of Idar-Oberstein in the Rhine Palatinate, where rock crystal is known to have been cut in the nineteenth century.<sup>119</sup>

151. H. Herdtle, *Design for a Glass Vase and Mounts*, 1877, from the archives of J. and L. Lobmeyr. Vienna, Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst (photo: Museum für Angewandte Kunst)

119. See K. E. Wild, *Die Edelsteinindustrie in Idar-Oberstein und ihre Geschichte* (Idar-Oberstein, n.d.) pp. 5–15, and idem, “Zur Geschichte der Schmucksteinschleiferei im Gebiet der oberen Nahe und der Saar,” *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Heimatkunde im Landkreis Birkenfeld*, Sonderheft 2 (1959) pp. 7–27.





## HARDSTONE VESSELS WITH GOLD MOUNTS

Hardstone, as an alternative material to rock crystal, has had a distinguished tradition, for it is equally well suited to receive precious, often highly imaginative, gold mounts. During the last third of the sixteenth century, the Medici grand dukes favored the use of lapis lazuli, although by no means exclusively. In countries north of the Alps, the use of hardstone resulted in large part from a growing interest in locally mined minerals, especially near Prague, Dresden, and Freiburg im Breisgau. The exploitation of state-owned mines became a prestigious enterprise for members of ruling houses—the Hapsburgs, the Wettins, and the dukes of Württemberg among them—who wished to promote the use of domestic agate, jasper, chalcedony, or serpentine in *Schatzkammer* or presentation pieces. This development was accelerated by the growing competition between Milanese crystal cutters and Venetian glassblowers, while the import of rock crystal from the St. Gotthard region, along the hazardous trade routes from Switzerland, continued to be precarious. Tipping the scales still further in favor of semiprecious stone, hardstone, shell, and other natural substances for *Kunstammer* objects, seventeenth-century collectors developed a baroque delight in voluminous form and varied colors, a taste well suited to the characteristics of *naturaliae*. These were transformed into one-of-a-kind works of art, to be presented as vehicles of a fertile imagination combined with the utmost technical virtuosity.

Vasters's drawings show the ease with which he was able to interchange designs using rock crystal or hardstone, the choice of material depending no doubt on availability and demand. Several drawings are of the traditional shell-shaped cup on a baluster stem, surmounted by a figure or figures, often mythological or fabulous in derivation.

The Metropolitan Museum owns a remarkable red jasper shell-on-shell cup with enameled-gold mounts and decoration surmounted by a recumbent dog, formerly in the Spitzer collection (Figures 152, 153).<sup>120</sup> Among the surviving drawings by Vasters is a detailed sketch for one of the scrolling bands that frame the dog on either side, its floral motifs echoing those of the mounts (Figure 154); two other drawings show a jasper shell-on-shell cup surmounted by figures of

a nymph and a river god, and a similar cup in crystal with a recumbent dog emerging from the enameled-gold decoration (Figures 155, 156). It seems clear from these drawings that the Museum's cup—at least in part—must be attributed to Vasters.

That he was not responsible for the entire object is suggested by the splendid surface quality of the elongated shell bowl, a quality that speaks of a seventeenth-century rather than a nineteenth-century origin. Whether Spitzer or Vasters was responsible for finding this rare jasper shell, Vasters was certainly fortunate to have it as a point of departure, and he designed embellishments well worthy of it; components of different periods and materials have been brought together in a satisfyingly harmonious relationship. The result is one of Vasters's most imaginative compositions, masterly in its execution. The fact that preparatory drawings for it remained among his effects may indicate that it is a work produced in his workshop in Aachen, perhaps by Vasters himself.

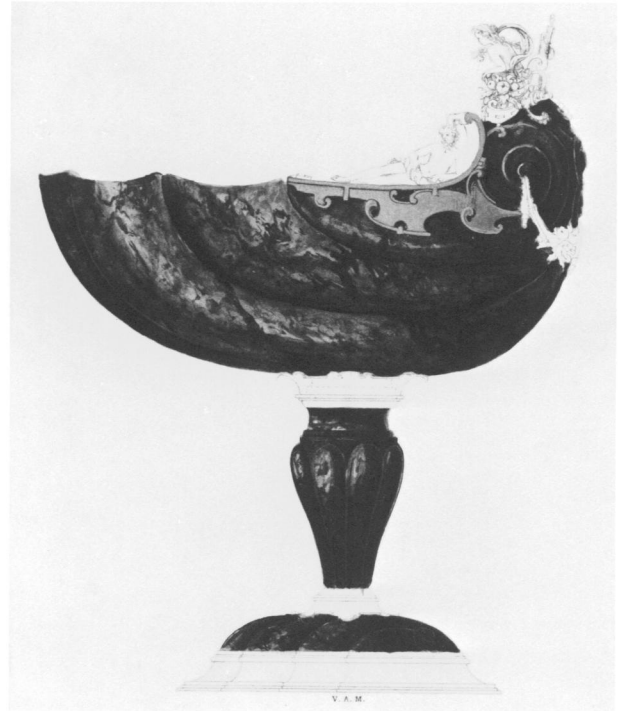
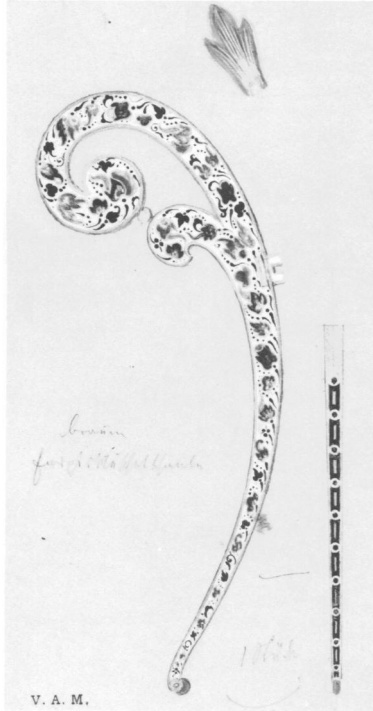
The search for a prototype, in the shape of a seventeenth-century shell-on-shell cup that has survived with its original settings, leads to an example in Stuttgart. This is a bloodstone or speckled green jasper cup carved by Daniel Mayer of Augsburg around 1662–63 for Duke Eberhard III of Württemberg, and described in a *Kunstammer* inventory of 1669 as a shell-shaped jasper cup with a silver-gilt foot enriched by emeralds and garnets (Figure 157).<sup>121</sup> The Stuttgart *Kunstammer* has three shell-on-shell cups, and the Munich *Schatzkammer* one (Figure 158), in which the hardstone components are joined together

120. *Collection Spitzer*, V, p. 15, no. 9 (Italian, end of 16th century), *GEMMES* pl. VIII; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2601, pl. LIX (see Figure 13).

121. Stuttgart, *Kunstammer*, inv. no. E 408. See Landenberger, *Kleinodien*, color pl. p. 55; W. Fleischhauer, *Die Geschichte der Kunstammer der Herzöge von Württemberg in Stuttgart* (Stuttgart, 1976) p. 60, n. 124, pl. 19 (the author quotes from an inventory of 1669, no. 19; "eine tiefere Schale von Jaspis muschelweis geschnitten, mit einem Fuss zierverguldet gefasst mit [27] Smaragd und [37] Granaten"); and W. Fleischhauer, "Zur Kunst der Edelstein- und Kristallschneider des Barock in Augsburg," *Pantheon* 35 (1977) pp. 17–20. For the shell-shaped jasper cup with silver-gilt mounts in Munich (Figure 158), see *Schatzkammer*, p. 213, no. 491.



- 152, 153. Red jasper shell-on-shell cup surmounted by recumbent dog, with mounts in enameled gold with jewels: cup attributed to Daniel Mayer, Augsburg, ca. 1670; stem, foot, and mounts, ca. 1870–90. 20 × 19.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.657



154. Design for enameled-gold mount flanking the dog on the jasper cup shown in Figures 152 and 153, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3445-1919 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)
155. Design for hardstone shell-on-shell cup with mounts including mythological figures, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2614-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



156. Design for rock crystal shell-on-shell cup surmounted by recumbent dog, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2626-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



157. Daniel Mayer, bloodstone shell-on-shell cup, with mounts in enameled silver-gilt with emeralds and garnets, Augsburg, 1662–63. H. 23 cm. Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum (photo: Württembergisches Landesmuseum)

by plain bands, offering a fascinating glimpse of seventeenth-century marketing practices. Clients could select a cup which had already been carved by the lapidary and which awaited only the addition of a precious setting designed by the goldsmith of their choice. Meanwhile, and in order to present the three hardstone components of the cup as a whole, the lapidary gave them a provisional setting with plain bands of silver or gilt metal. This practice explains the relatively sober appearance of the cup in Figure 158, and it may also account for the condition in which the bowl of the Museum's cup survived into the nineteenth century. In view of the quality of that bowl, an attribution to Daniel Mayer of Augsburg may not be too farfetched.

The extraordinarily congenial settings devised by Vasters illustrate his response to seventeenth-century style. Bands enameled with a floral design on a white ground show his ability to adopt the naturalistic floral representation favored at that time. One of his drawings actually reproduces an agate cup from the French royal treasure (Figures 159, 160),<sup>122</sup> whose scrollwork handle in predominantly white and green enamel gave him a point of departure for the handle in his sketch of a rock crystal cup surmounted by a dog (Figure 156). He seems to have spared no effort in trying to acquaint himself with an appropriate style before arriving at his own solution. The recumbent dog, on the other hand, is of considerable originality, for the dog, though a familiar symbol of fidelity in Renaissance pendants, is a motif unrecorded on other cups. Not so, however, is the way in which its hind-quarters disappear from sight, lost beneath lobed foliage. A panther similarly posed, half hidden by foliage, occurs on a nautilus cup in the Grünes Gewölbe, Dresden. Designed by Balthasar Permoser and exe-

122. Marquet de Vasselot (1914) p. 133, no. 823.



158. Daniel Mayer, red jasper shell-on-shell cup mounted in silver-gilt, Augsburg, 1660. H. 31 cm. Munich, Schatzkammer der Residenz (photo: Bayerische Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser)



159. Agate cup mounted in enameled gold, France(?), ca. 1600. H. 18.5 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Archives Photographiques)



160. Drawing of the agate cup shown in Figure 159, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2603-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

cuted by Bernhard Quippe about 1700, this cup is illustrated in the folio volume by Grässe, a copy of which Vasters owned.<sup>123</sup> He seems rarely to have missed an opportunity to enrich his vocabulary and to add to his versatility of style from the pages of the illustrated books in his library.

When similar enrichments are executed by a goldsmith of equal virtuosity but lesser sensibilities, the results may not be as happy. Another red jasper shell cup in the Metropolitan Museum, which stands on a baluster stem and an oval foot carved with simulated waves, poses its own set of problems (Figure 161).<sup>124</sup> The carving of the hardstone suggests a nineteenth-century origin for the entire cup. It is lavishly embellished with enameled and jeweled gold mounts that incorporate many of Vasters's decorative motifs, although it relates specifically to none of the surviving drawings. However, the fierce-looking horned and winged dragon with its long winding tail—a dragon

of Chinese parentage—that surmounts one end of the cup seems, in its grotesque exaggeration, to depart from Vasters's manner. (A somewhat similar dragon can be seen atop the helmet on the head of Athena that rises above a seventeenth-century agate-onyx ewer with enameled-gold mounts, from the French royal collections; see Figure 193.) At the other end of the

123. Grässe, *Das Grüne Gewölbe*, pl. 9; for Vasters's copy see *Katalog Vasters*, lot 574. See also J. Menzhausen, *Das Grüne Gewölbe* (Leipzig, 1968) pp. 104–105, pl. 122; H. W. Weihrauch, "Vorstufen eines Nautiluspokals," *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (1976) pp. 105–112, fig. 10, described as a work by Permoser and Quippe.

124. Ex coll.: Baron Adolphe de Rothschild. According to MMA records, it was bought by J. Pierpont Morgan with other items from J. & E. Goldschmidt, Frankfurt and London, in 1896. MMA, *The Pierpont Morgan Wing: A Brief Guide to the Art of the Renaissance, Mediaeval and Earlier Periods* (New York, 1918) pp. 24 ill., 26; MMA, *The Pierpont Morgan Wing: A Handbook*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1929) p. 167 fig. 92, pp. 205–206.



cup, the treatment of the mermaid who acts as a caryatid supporting the shell with arms entangled in a network of jeweled and enameled scrolls, presents another departure. Her face and body are entirely covered with white enamel, which shows off the anatomical precision of the modeling in every detail and introduces a somewhat dry, unsympathetic note. A similar surface treatment is found on a sphinx pendant in the National Gallery, Washington, D.C. (Figure 162),<sup>125</sup> whose sixteenth-century origin, much disputed, can no longer be defended; its exaggerated, lifeless symmetry is too far removed from any semblance of free invention. Arguably, the hand is that of an accomplished master who had come under Vasters's influence. A tentative impression, based on our present knowledge of objects that correspond closely with designs by Vasters, is that his three-dimensional figures are not usually totally covered by enamel in this way, and that at least their faces and hands are in gold. Closer to Vasters's designs are swags of colorful flowers and the fish swallowing the tip of the mermaid's tail, a motif used in the bail handle of a rock crystal bowl in the Robert Lehman Collection (see

Figure 68). Discrepancies of this kind suggest the existence of different workshops. Nor can one lose sight of the possibility that Vasters's drawings may have circulated beyond his immediate control.

In recent years, a large moss agate covered bowl with enameled-gold mounts has been on the art market, at first prompting ripples of optimism that a hitherto unknown Cellinesque work had been discovered. We are particularly fortunate in being able to link this extraordinary bowl (Figure 163), once owned by Spitzer, to a full range of preparatory drawings by Vasters.<sup>126</sup> The drawings show not only the entire bowl and cover (Figure 164) but also most of the details of the enameled and jeweled mounts,<sup>127</sup> including the

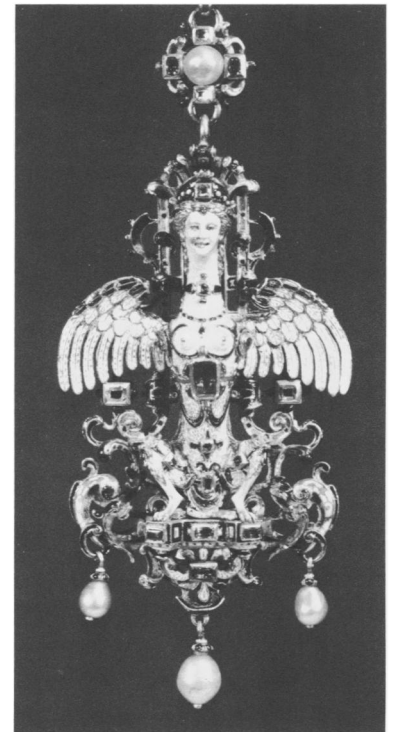
125. Hackenbroch (1979) p. 238, figs. 637A–C.

126. Spitzer Sale (1929) lot 628, ill., "French, in part 17th century"; *Fine Continental, English and American Silver and Objects of Vertu*, sale cat., Christie's (New York, Mar. 28, 1979) lot 237, cover, color ill., pp. 79, 80 ills. (designs); *Christie's Review of the Season 1979*, ed. J. Herbert (London, 1979) p. 310, color pl.; Truman (1979) p. 158, color pls. B–E.

127. *Fine Continental . . . Objects of Vertu*, p. 80, ills.; Truman (1979) color pls. D, E (Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2911–2927–1919).

161. Red jasper shell cup surmounted by a dragon, the mounts in enameled gold with jewels incorporating the figure of a mermaid issuing from a dolphin, ca. 1880–90. H. 26 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.1703

162. Sphinx pendant, ca. 1880–90. Enameled and jeweled gold with pendent pearls, H. 12.7 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, 1942.9.307 (photo: National Gallery)

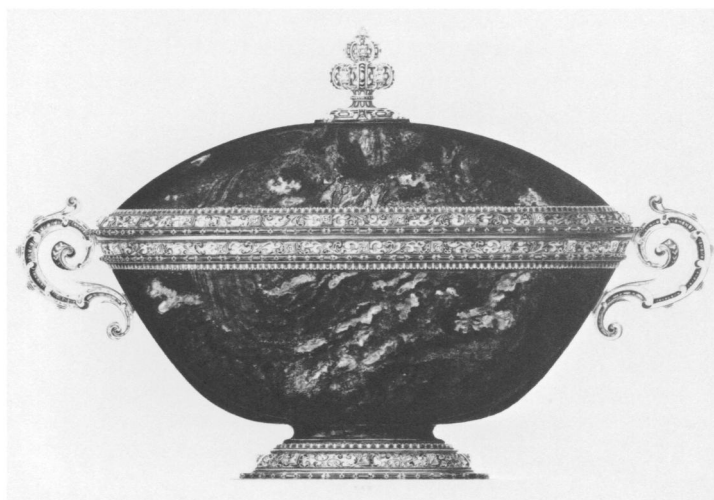




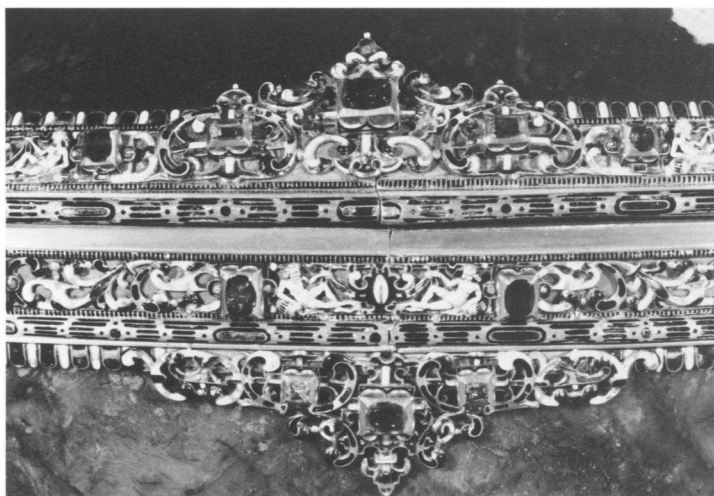
163. Moss agate covered bowl, mounted in enameled gold with jewels, ca. 1870–90. 35.6 × 50.8 cm. Europe, private collection (photo: Christie's, New York)

164. Design for agate covered bowl shown in Figure 163, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2599-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

165. Detail of enameled and jeweled mounts of the agate bowl and cover (photo: Christie's, New York)



double-knob finial, of a kind that Vasters repeated with variations elsewhere (see Figures 141, 143). The two scroll handles of the bowl follow the designs closely; only its lip and foot bands present a fascinating alternative solution, modifying the purely ornamental character of the continuous foliage in the design to include tiny pairs of white-enameled recumbent nudes confronting one another (Figure 165). Although their posture recalls that of ancient river gods and fountain nymphs, their thin, unathletic bodies are more akin to figures created by the Mannerist goldsmiths of Abraham Lotter's circle in Augsburg. Vasters was well acquainted with their work through the illustrated volume on the *Schatzkammer* in his library.<sup>128</sup>



<sup>128</sup> Zettler (1876); see *Katalog Vasters*, lot 732.

## THE ROSPIGLIOSI GOLD CUP

Among Vasters's drawings of shell cups with different embellishments, to which reference has already been made in connection with hardstone vessels, are three that call for a closer look. Two of these show variations on the figure of a sphinx; for the more elaborate figure Vasters has left a separate, annotated design (Figures 166–168). The third shell is presented with lavish decoration in gold: a figure of Neptune astride a dolphin surmounts the cup, which is supported by a dragon riding a tortoise or turtle; the base rests on the backs of two small snails (Figure 169). To date, no objects that correspond exactly or substantially to these drawings have come to light. In certain respects, however, the drawings parallel a celebrated work of art in the Metropolitan Museum's collections: the Rospigliosi gold cup (Figures 170, 171). This cup, whose name reflects its traditional provenance, consists of a shell-shaped bowl surmounted by a sphinx and supported by a reptilian winged dragon or basilisk riding a tortoise. What links, if any, Vasters had with this work remain to be explored.



Once thought to be the work of Benvenuto Cellini (1500–71), the Rospigliosi gold cup shared in the mystique that surrounded many such attributions. Its style, however, as I have previously pointed out,<sup>129</sup> is too late for Cellini's Florentine period and even for his life span, though the composition was derived from a series of twenty-one engravings of grotesque vessels published in Antwerp in 1548 by Hieronymus Cock (Figure 172). The designer of the series was Cornelis Floris (1514–75), an architect and sculptor of great originality.<sup>130</sup> His work attracted the immediate at-

129. Y. Hackenbroch, "Jacopo Bilivert and the Rospigliosi Cup," *Connoisseur* 172 (1969) pp. 175–181.

130. D. Guilmar, *Les Maîtres ornementistes . . . école française, italienne, allemande et des Pays-Bas . . .* (Paris, 1880–81) I, p. 477; R. Hedicke, *Cornelis Floris und die Florisdekoration* (Berlin, 1913) I, pp. 13–15, II, pls. ix, x; R. Berliner, *Ornamentale Vorlageblätter des 15. bis 18. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1925–26) I, pp. 154–157 (although Berliner does not illustrate the 1548 series, he gives a succinct appraisal of Floris's contribution and the dependence of Cornelis Bos on him); F. W. H. Hollstein, *Dutch and*



166, 167. Designs for hardstone and rock crystal shell cups surmounted by sphinxes, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2634,2625-1919 (photos: Eileen Tweedy)



168. Design for enameled-gold sphinx shown in Figure 167, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3359-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



169. Design for hardstone shell cup with gold mounts, supported by a dragon riding a tortoise and surmounted by Neptune astride a dolphin, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2657-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

tention of Lodovico Guicciardini (1523–89), a Florentine historian then living in Antwerp, whose book on the Low Countries first appeared in Antwerp in 1567 and was frequently reprinted. In it Guicciardini recorded his impression that Floris was the first to have introduced into the Low Countries from Italy the art of the grotesque with naturalistic elements.<sup>131</sup> The observation helps to explain the success that Floris's designs were to have in Florence. Other engravings of decorative vessels—by Agostino Veneziano of 1530 and 1531, and by Eneo Vico of 1543—were known, but they were primarily composed of elements derived from Roman art. Floris introduced fabulous creatures of land and sea, some supporting shells, and his work revealed a hitherto unfamiliar bent for the anticlassical, the grotesque, and even the scurrilous.

Outside the Low Countries, Floris's designs circulated only after the Spanish occupation—and in particular after the sack of Antwerp in 1576—when many

*Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts: Ca. 1450–1700* (Amsterdam, 1940–80) VI, p. 250; Hackenbroch, "Jacopo Bilivert and the Rospigliosi Cup," p. 174, figs. 1, 2; J. S. Byrne, *Renaissance Ornament Prints and Drawings* (New York: MMA, 1981) p. 64, ill.

131. "Il primo, che portasse d'Italia in questi paesi l'arte del contrafare le grotesche al naturale," quoted from the Plantin edition of L. Guicciardini, *Descrittione di M. Lodovico Guicciardini . . . di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania Inferiore . . .* (Antwerp, 1588) p. 132. The important passage is also given by Hedicke, *Cornelis Floris*, I, p. 110, and by Berliner, *Ornamentale Vorlageblätter*, I, p. 157.



Protestant artists fled, taking with them their tools, designs, and pattern books, and introducing Netherlandish overtones wherever they settled and worked. Among these artists was an outstanding goldsmith from Delft, Jacopo Biliverti, who came to Florence in 1573 at the invitation of Francesco de' Medici. The grand duke's commissions included the enameled-gold setting of Buontalenti's famous lapis lazuli vase of 1583, with two sphinxes on its shoulders (see Figure 51), figures that invite comparison with the sphinx on the Rospigliosi cup.<sup>132</sup>

The links connecting the Rospigliosi cup to engravings after Cornelis Floris of Antwerp and to enameled-gold mounts by Jacopo Biliverti of Delft show a merging of Netherlandish realism with Florentine stylization, characteristic of the scene in Florence during the last decades of the sixteenth century. In 1969, on the basis of these links, and in the ab-

sence of any contemporary documents that refer to the cup and to the circumstances of its commission, I proposed an attribution to Biliverti himself.<sup>133</sup> That was before the cup was removed from display for examination, and before knowledge of the Vasters drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum had raised speculations about a great many objects in

132. Piacenti-Aschengreen, *Il Museo degli Argenti a Firenze*, p. 141, color pl. 27; C. W. Fock, "Der Goldschmied Jacques Bylivelt aus Delft und sein Wirken in der Mediceischen Hofwerkstatt in Florenz," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 70 (1974) pp. 89–178, esp. pp. 117–121, figs. 94–96; idem, "Vases en lapis-lazuli des collections médicéennes du seizième siècle," *Münchener Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst* 27 (1976) pp. 119–154; Hayward, *Virtuoso Goldsmiths*, pp. 152–153, 169, nn. 66–70, color pl. iv; C. W. Fock, in *Firenze e la Toscana dei Medici*, pp. 226–228, nos. 429–431, p. 229, no. 435, p. 236, no. 449 (these notes are the latest and most informative of all).

133. Hackenbroch, "Jacopo Bilivert and the Rospigliosi Cup."





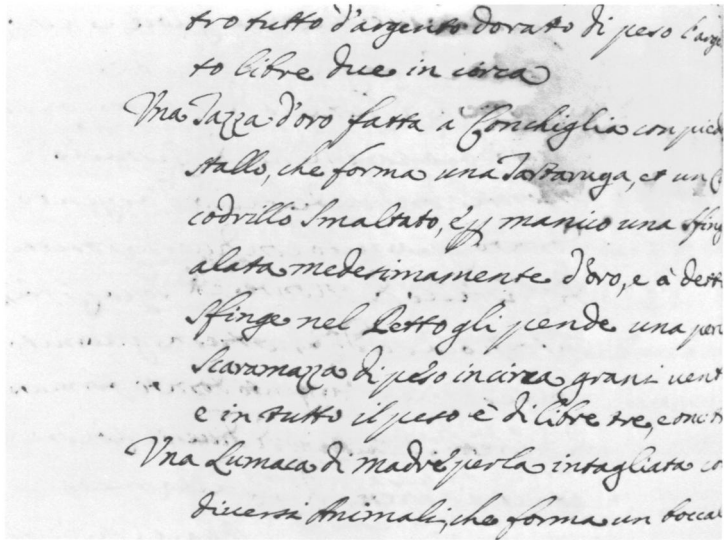
170, 171. Cup known as the Rospigliosi Cup, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold and pearls, 19.7 × 21.6 × 22.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913, 14.40.667

172. After Cornelis Floris, *A Fantastic Cup*, Antwerp, 1548. Engraving. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet Edmond de Rothschild (photo: Cliché des Musées Nationaux)

public and private collections whose authenticity had previously been taken for granted.

Before reviewing the physical evidence, we should consider the question of provenance. The first known reference to a gold vessel of this design occurs in an inventory of Rospigliosi possessions dated October 6, 1722, now in the Archivio di Stato in Rome (Figure 173):





173. "Una Tazza d'oro fatta à Conchiglia. . .," excerpt from the Rospigliosi Inventory of 1722. Rome, Archivio di Stato di Roma (photo: courtesy James Parker)

A tazza of gold worked like a shell, on a foot in the form of a tortoise, and an enameled reptile, and for handle a winged sphinx also of gold, and that sphinx has hanging at her breast an irregular pearl of about twenty grains, and the whole weighing three pounds and [ ] ounces.<sup>134</sup>

What appears to have been the first publication of the cup so described took place in Frankfurt am Main in 1852, when a large colored illustration of it was included by C. Becker and J. von Hefner-Alteneck in their two-volume compilation of medieval and Renaissance works of art (Figure 174). The reproduction is remarkably clear and detailed, and it is accompanied by a careful description of the "rich enamel ornaments" and their various colors.

This account opens with the following legend:

"Salt vessel" of gold and enameled in different colors, from the years 1540–70, said to be made by Benvenuto Cellini. The property of Prince Rospigliosi in Rome. From a sketch slightly smaller than the actual size, made by the Frankfurt sculptor von der Launitz.<sup>135</sup>

As a matter of record, Vasters owned a copy of this book.<sup>136</sup> Von Hefner-Alteneck published the plate again in 1888, adding the information that von der Launitz had done the sketch while in Rome.<sup>137</sup>

Some thirty years after the first publication of the

cup in Germany, Eugène Plon included a photographic reproduction of it in his study of Cellini, naming Prince Rospigliosi as the owner but giving its location as the family's ancestral country seat at Lamporecchio, near Pistoia, in Tuscany. Plon stated that the prince had no documents authenticating the attribution to Cellini, but knew only that "this magnificent object" had belonged to his ancestor, grand master at the court of the grand duke of Tuscany.<sup>138</sup>

After Plon saw the Rospigliosi cup in Tuscany, in or before 1883 when his book was published, nothing more is heard of it until 1909, when the London

134. "Una Tazza d'oro fatta a Conchiglia con piedestallo che forma una Tartaruga, et un cocodrillo smaltato, e per manico una sfiga alata medesimamente d'oro, e a detta sfige nel petto gli pende una perla scaramazza di peso in circa grani venti, e in tutto il peso è di libre tre, e onc: [ ]." Excerpt from the Rospigliosi Inventory, Oct. 6, 1722, in the Archivio di Stato, Rome (Notei Tribunali A.C. vol. 7023). I am indebted to my colleague James Parker for supplying photographs of the document.

135. C. Becker and J. von Hefner[-Alteneck], eds., *Kunstwerke und Geräthschaften des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Frankfurt am Main, 1852–63) I, pp. 49–50, color pl. 38. The cup is reproduced in the upper part of the plate, above two bands of ornament, and is described as follows: "Salzfaß aus Gold und in verschiedenen Farben emailirt, aus den Jahren 1540–70, angeblich von Benvenuto Cellini gefertigt. Im Besitz des Fürsten Rospigliosi in Rom. Nach einer von dem Bildhauer v. d. Launitz in Frankfurt, etwas unter Originalgrösse, gefertigten Zeichnung."

"Die geschmackvolle Form im Styl des Cinque-cento, wird durch die reichen Ornamente in Email noch besonders hervorgehoben. Die Schildkröte, worauf das Ganze ruht, ist golden mit braunschwarzen Feldern auf der Schale. Der darüber stehende Drache ist grün mit rothen Schuppen am Halse und mit goldenen, rothen und grünen Federn in den Flügeln. Die emailirten Streifen an der Schale bestehen aus abwechselnd rothen, blauen und goldnen Rauten auf weißem Grunde. In der Schale ist ein kleiner rother Krebs angebracht. Die Syrene, deren Gesicht, Brust und Füße golden und der Fischschweif grün-golden sind, trägt eine blätterartige Verzierung auf der Brust, worin eine Perle angebracht ist. Die Ornamente am Halse und auf der Seite sind ebenfalls golden auf weißem Grunde."

136. *Katalog Vasters*, lot 540.

137. J. B. von Hefner-Alteneck, *Trachten, Kunstwerke und Geräthschaften vom frühen Mittelalter bis Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main, 1888) IX, color pl. 588, "nach einer Zeichnung, welche daselbst [Rome] Bildhauer v. d. Launitz in Frankfurt etwas unter Originalgrösse anfertigte."

138. E. Plon, *Benvenuto Cellini: Orfèvre, médailleur, sculpteur* (Paris, 1883) pp. 262–263, pl. xxiv, "Le prince ne possède cependant aucun document de nature à établir l'authenticité absolue de l'attribution; il sait seulement que ce magnifique objet appartenait à son aïeul, grand maître de la cour du grand-duc de Toscane."

dealer Charles Wertheimer sold the cup now in the Metropolitan Museum to Benjamin Altman, who bequeathed it to the Museum in 1913.

What of the gold cup itself? Examined with heightened awareness for telltale signs of a copyist's hand, its construction reveals some worrisome short-cuts.<sup>139</sup> Above all, the figures are cast in halves, and further subdivided in totally unorthodox sections, contrary to any observation of nature. This process indicates close adherence to a graphic design rather than to an actual model, which would have suggested more logical methods of casting. Casting in such small sections is certainly no sixteenth-century practice, but it is useful in helping to avoid the risk of a second firing that might damage the enamel. To avoid this risk, the joins were covered with cold enamel, which has mostly chipped off. Certain elements, such as the wings of the sphinx and the dragon, are attached by means of soft solder. This unprofessional procedure has been disguised by covering the silver-colored solder with a thin layer of electrotype gilding. The tortoise has strange, tubular reinforcements within its legs, clearly visible in X-rays, which are needed to

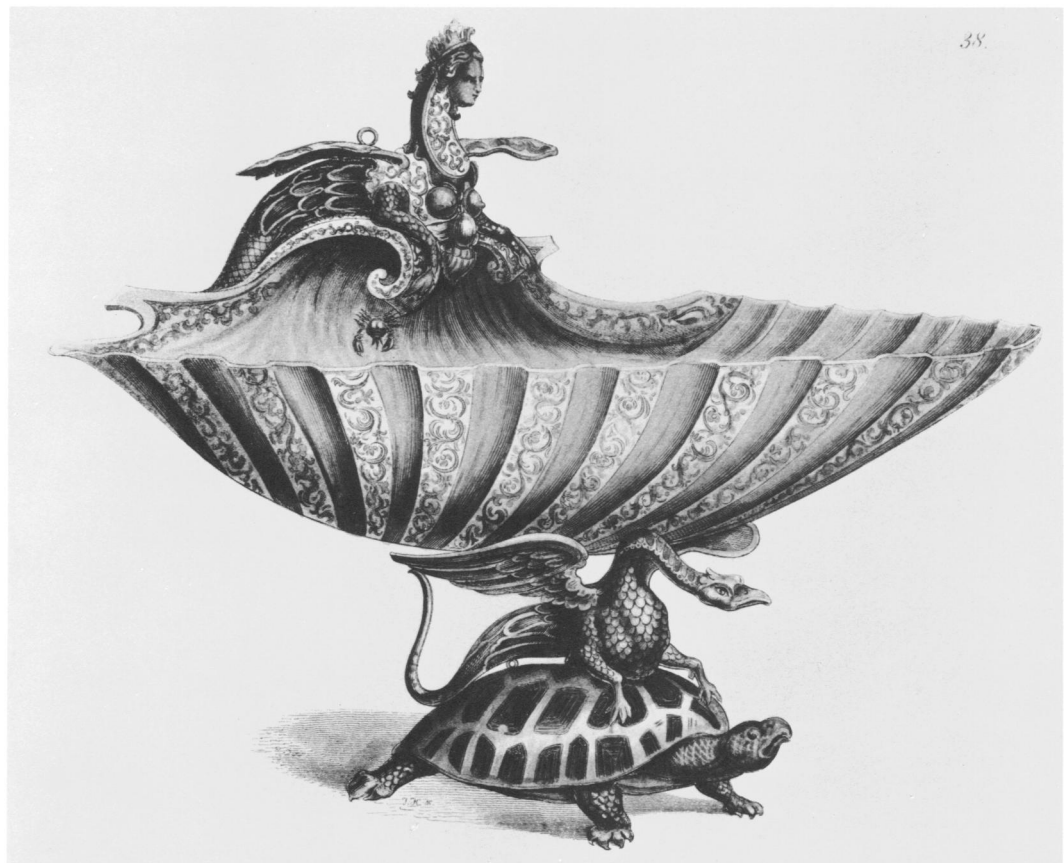
support the weight of the cup. Lastly, a loop placed between the sphinx's wings—a loop that might have served to chain the precious cup to a base and that is visible in the illustration of 1852 (Figure 174)—turns out in the Museum's cup to be the head of a long pin holding the separate parts together, parts that would have been soldered in a genuine work of the sixteenth century.

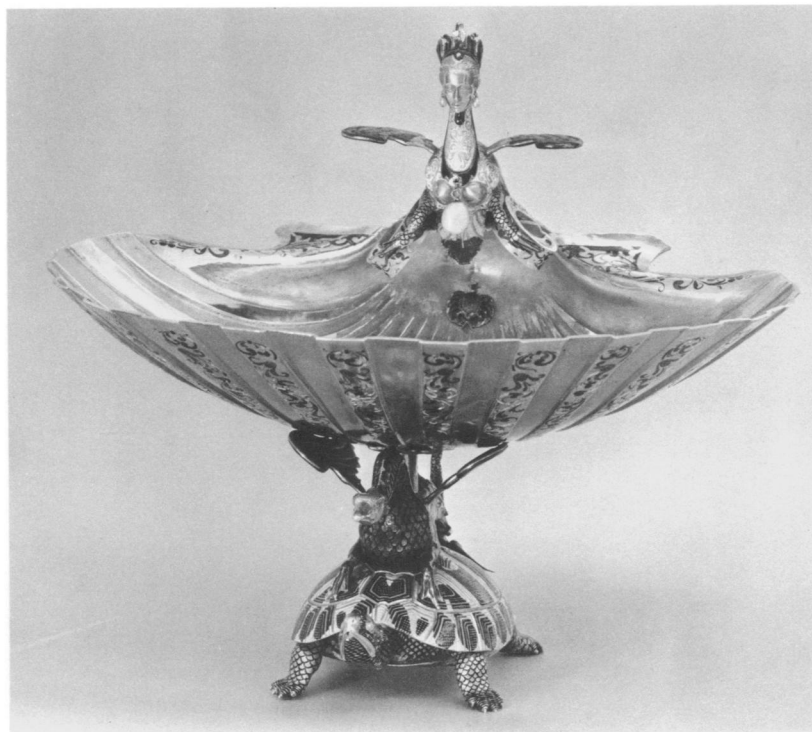
The *basse-taille* or *Tiefschnitt* enamel bands beneath the shell are noteworthy in that they show an easy flow of continuous ornament, applied with a lightness of touch that is entirely free of those hesitations so often present in the work of a copyist. Their flawless execution is indicative of a large workshop in which outstanding specialists participated.

Similar versatility is evident in the rhythmic display of multicolored ornament in *champlevé* technique on a white ground, running along the curving bands that flank the sphinx. These bands form a persuasive link with the white-ground ornament that flanks the recumbent dog surmounting a hardstone cup, ornament for which a drawing by Vasters survives (see Figures 152–154).

139. Richard E. Stone, Conservator in the Metropolitan Museum's Department of Objects Conservation, plans to publish a technical study of the cup.

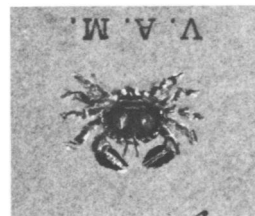
174. The Rospigliosi Cup, as published in 1852 by C. Becker and J. von Hefner[-Alteneck], *Kunstwerke und Geräthschaften des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, pl. 38 (photo: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich)





175. Cup known as the Rospigliosi Cup, showing enameled-gold crab inside the shell

176, 177. Two designs for enameled-gold crabs, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3415.3413-1919 (photos: Eileen Tweedy)



The sphinx displays considerable sculptural qualities, far exceeding those of the more decorative versions that serve as handles of the Schroder cup (see Figures 143, 144). Her lobed diadem and lambrequinlike draperies descending from ears and chest are features that, with slight variations, are present on all the sphinxes and mermaids attributed to Vasters. Of these, the sphinx on the Rospigliosi cup in the Metropolitan Museum is the most stylized, resplendent in cold perfection. The process of copying from a model or an illustration may account for this loss of life.

A surprising detail is a small red crab found inside the shell of the Rospigliosi cup, both in the 1852 illustration and in the Museum's version, where one might rather have expected a pearl (Figures 174, 175). The logical explanation for its occurrence escapes us, unless the crab represents an enigmatic pun, the meaning of which was shared only by a select circle of initiates. It is perhaps significant that in its appearance and placement the crustacean in the plate of 1852 differs slightly from its counterpart in the Museum's cup; and that sketches of two comparable crabs exist among Vasters's drawings (Figures 176, 177).

The question remains as to why Vasters—if indeed it was Vasters—would have been asked to make a copy of the Rospigliosi cup. Was it because of irreversible

damage to the original or difficulties over an inheritance? Was Spitzer a party? The scale of Spitzer's operations makes this a plausible supposition, although nothing has been found to date that either confirms or denies his involvement. Surely, though, to match a work by Benvenuto Cellini, to pass off an object as by the great master himself, is something that would have fired Spitzer's ambitions and presented a unique challenge to a nineteenth-century goldsmith.

The present gaps in our knowledge are disturbing, especially as the Rospigliosi gold cup became an instant focus of attention when first exhibited to the public in 1914, and legends have been woven around it ever since. Even if it is no longer possible to regard the cup in the Metropolitan Museum as identical with the "Tazza d'oro fatta alla Conchiglia" described by the Rospigliosi inventory of 1722, that inventory remains a reliable link with the historic past. It was almost certainly not accessible to foreign scholars, artists, or other applicants in the second half of the nineteenth century. After 1852, however, a detailed color illustration of the cup was available to those interested in antiquarian pursuits, Reinhold Vasters among them. The tantalizing thought cannot be entirely dismissed that somewhere, hidden away in a private collection, the original Rospigliosi cup still survives.

## WOOD OBJECTS MOUNTED IN GOLD

Vasters's designs include a group of house altars and cabinets in wood and ebonized wood with enameled-gold figures and mounts, which show both his use of sources and his versatility. The Munich Schatzkammer, repository of several ebony and enameled-gold house altars dating from the late Renaissance, seems to have supplied the main impetus for this field of endeavor. Whether or not Vasters knew the Schatzkammer at first hand, he had, as we have seen, a copy of the folio volume of 1876 illustrating its treasures, and no doubt was able to use this as a work of reference.<sup>140</sup>

The earliest and most important *Hausaltar* in the

Schatzkammer was the one made for Duke Albrecht V and his consort Anna around 1573–74 (see Figure 137);<sup>141</sup> it was the work of Abraham Lotter the Elder of Augsburg, assisted by the enameler David Altenstetter and the *Kistler*, or cabinetmaker, Ulrich Eberl. Only the close cooperation of the three masters made possible the creation of this new type of work, combining as it does different skills and materials. Vasters revived this South German art form, borrowing entire compositions or selected details to suit his own

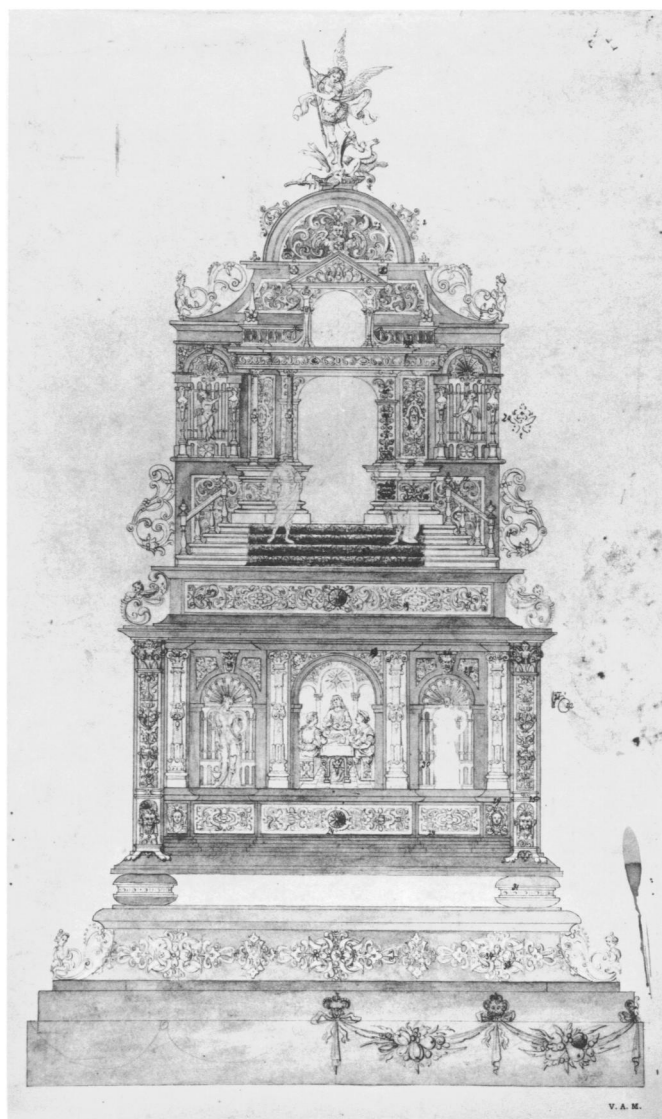
140. Zettler (1876) pls. I, IX, XXI, XXXIII.

141. Ibid., pl. XXXIII (see note 113).

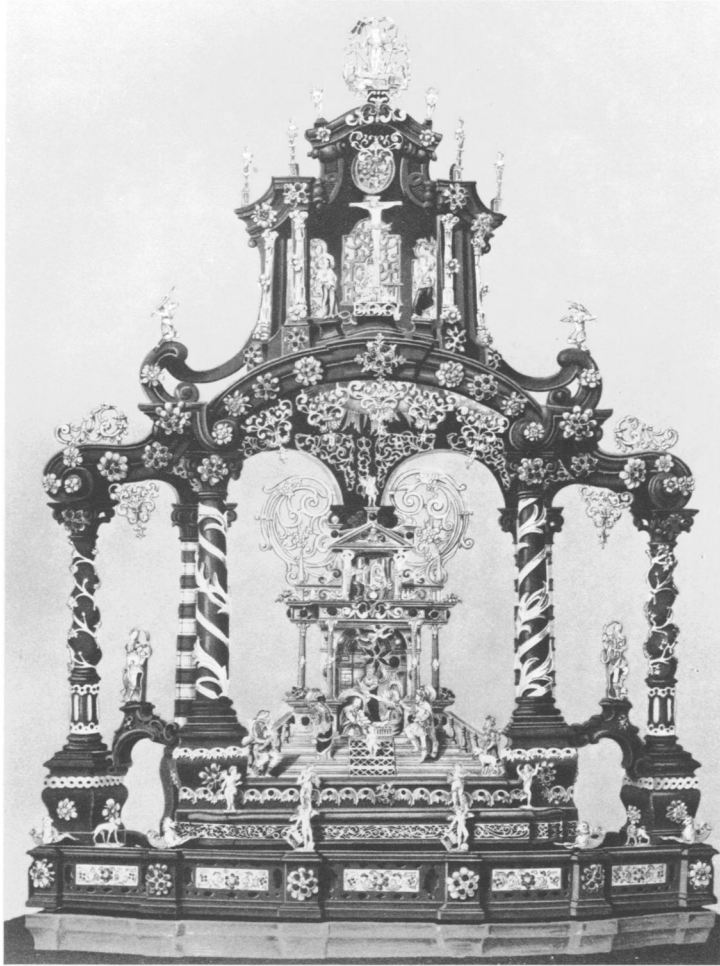
178. House altar-cabinet, ca. 1870–90. Ebonized fruit-wood and enameled gold, H. 36.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982.60.133



179. Design for house altar-cabinet shown in Figure 178, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2738-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)







180. The Andechs house altar, as published in 1876 by F. X. Zettler et al., *Ausgewählte Kunstwerke aus dem Schatz der Reichen Capelle in der königlichen Residenz zu München*, pl. ix. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library

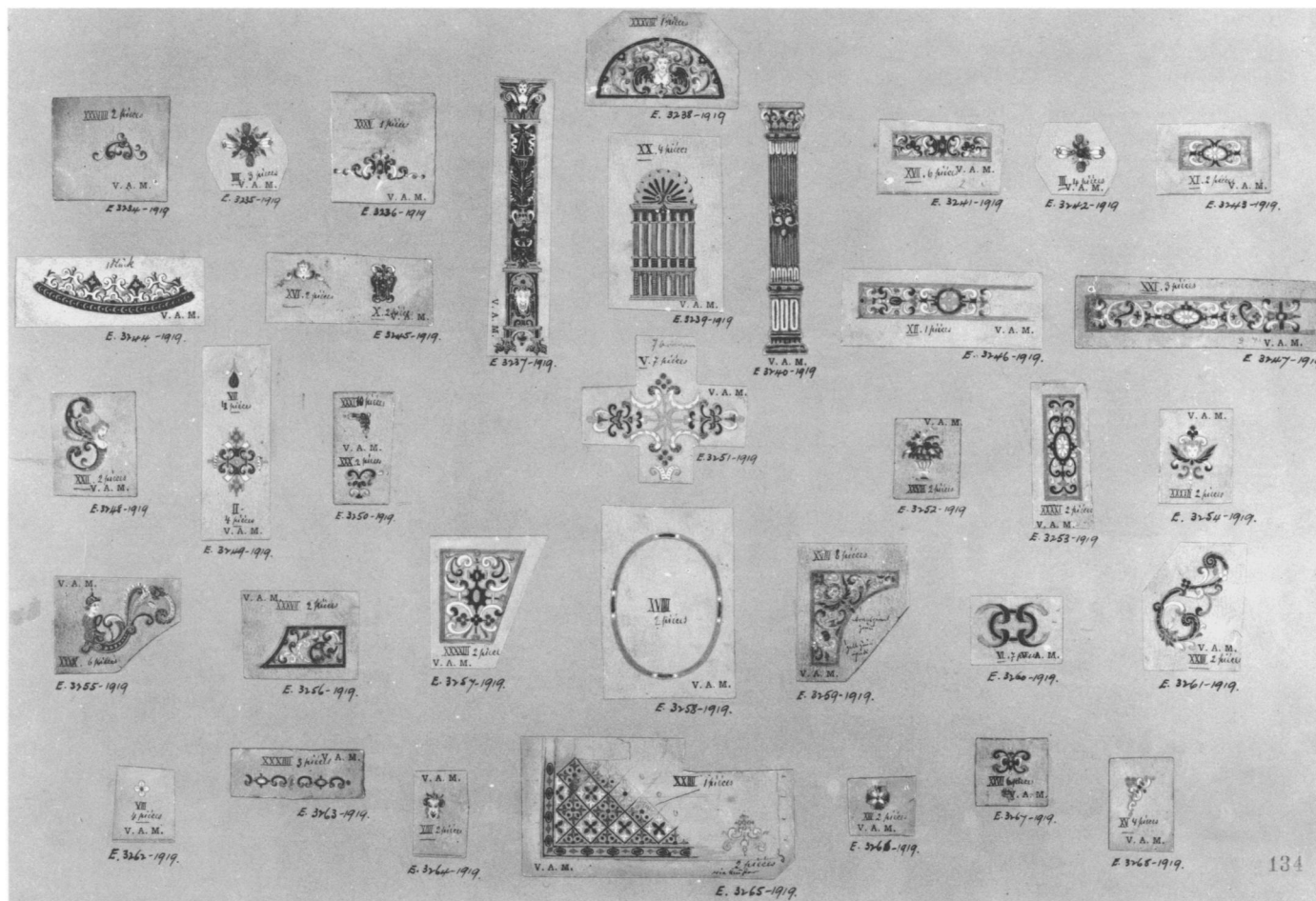
purposes. One result of this enterprise can be seen in a splendid altar-cum-cabinet recently presented to the Metropolitan Museum as part of the Jack and Belle Linsky Collection (Figure 178).<sup>142</sup> With certain minor differences—notably in the treatment of the base and in the choice of a crowning figure (St. Martin and the Beggar have been substituted in the executed version for St. Michael overcoming Satan)—this object follows closely its meticulously drawn design (Figure 179). Religious and secular prototypes have been combined by placing the small private altarpiece on a cabinet with drawers; these were usually intended to conceal jewels or writing utensils, although the storage of prayerbooks should not be altogether excluded. To reconcile the object's disparate devotional

and secular intentions, religious themes have been continued on the front of the cabinet.

The upper part of the altar-cabinet in the Linsky Collection is derived from a South German prototype: the *Hausaltar* once in the Benedictine monastery of Andechs in Upper Bavaria. Sold by the monastery in 1805, it was subsequently acquired by Ludwig I of Bavaria for the Reiche Kapelle, now part of the Munich Schatzkammer, and thus it came to be reproduced in the publication of 1876 (Figure 180).<sup>143</sup> At the center of the Andechs altar, prominently featured on a baluster-bordered flight of steps, is the Adoration of the Christ Child by the Magi and two shepherds, immediately below the scene of the Annunciation. Above the baldachin is the Crucifixion, with the Virgin, St. John, and St. Mary Magdalen clasping the foot of the cross; at the apex is the Resurrection of Christ. The ebony architectural setting that harbors these groups and additional allegorical figures was very largely replaced during the eighteenth century, but enough of the original character is preserved to suggest a source close to Lotter and his Augsburg followers. Vasters, with his keen, selective eye, borrowed freely from the Andechs altar, taking over the scene of the Adoration, with the Annunciation above it, along with several other elements, and borrowing minor details from other house altars in the Schatzkammer. Following the historicist trends of his time, though, he overstated his interest in bygone architectural shapes, adding niches, extra figures, terms, and figural scrollwork that tend to crowd the composition. A somewhat similar altar be-

142. Ex coll.: Arturo Lopez-Willshaw, Paris. Krempel, "Augsburger und Münchner Emailarbeiten des Manierismus," pp. 152–156, fig. 51; *Thirty Renaissance Jewels and Works of Art from the Collection of the Late Arturo Lopez-Willshaw* (cited in note 54), lot 20, 3 ills. pp. 39–41, color pl. p. 41; J. F. Hayward, "The Lopez-Willshaw Collection," in *Art at Auction 1970–71* (London, 1971) pp. 10–33, color pl. p. 12, detail p. 14; idem, *Virtuoso Goldsmiths*, p. 380, no. 453, fig. 453; Truman (1979) p. 158; Vincent, in *The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, pp. 193–194, no. 113, color ill.

143. Zettler (1876) pl. ix. For the recent scholarship see T. Müller, "Ein Augsburger Silberaltärchen in Prag," in *Opuscula in Honorem C. Hernimarch*, 27.12.1966 (Stockholm, 1967) p. 164; Krempel, "Augsburger und Münchner Emailarbeiten des Manierismus," pp. 154–156, no. 27, figs. 48, 49; R. Rückert, in *Der Schatz vom Heiligen Berg Andechs*, exh. cat. (Munich: Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, 1967) pp. 60–61, no. 53, figs. 68, 69; *Schatzkammer*, p. 79, no. 62.



181. Designs for enameled-gold mounts used on the altar-cabinet shown in Figure 178 or projected in the design (Figure 179), ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3234–3268-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

182. *The Last Supper*, design for enameled plaque on the lower register of the altar-cabinet in Figure 178, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.3014-1919 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)



longs to the Museum for Industrial Art in Prague, which opened in 1885.<sup>144</sup>

In addition to the overall sketch of the altar-cabinet, Vasters made careful drawings for its ornamental details (Figure 181). There are reeded pilasters encircled by ornate belts with masks, symmetrical sections of foliated scrolls for repetition as enameled friezes, and shell motifs to top tabernacles. The items are identified by roman numerals, and the number of repeats required is written in French. This has been taken to indicate a French origin for the cabinet, but such speculations are hazardous: we know too little about the workshops and craftsmen executing Vasters's designs. It seems unlikely that such a typically Germanic object, which does not appear in the catalogues of Spitzer's collection, would have been commissioned for sale in France.

144. E. Poche, *Uměleckoprůmyslové museum v Praze k 70. výročí založení ústavu* (Prague, 1955) no. 165, "Small cabinet. Ebony with enamelled figures of the Passion Christi. Augsburg; middle of the 17th century," ill.



183. Design for ebony tabernacle with three silver-gilt statuettes and rock crystal columns and plaques, mounted in enameled gold with jewels, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2586-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)

The scene displayed in the center of the cabinet, below the Adoration, seems to have been Vasters's own conception. In the preparatory drawing it appears as Christ at Emmaus, the three figures seated at table beneath a vault supported by two columns. A separate sketch (Figure 182), to which the executed version corresponds, shows this group expanded to represent the Last Supper, staged within a similar architectural setting. The scene is flanked by personifications of Faith and Vanitas, counterparts of two

freestanding figures on the Andechs altar; as recreated, their billowing draperies—a detail much favored by Vasters—are totally unmotivated, since both now stand well protected in shell-topped niches, framed by ornate columns and pilasters.

The figures of Faith and Vanitas recur, this time as freestanding statuettes, in a color drawing by Vasters of a tabernacle with rock crystal columns and plaques (Figure 183).<sup>145</sup> Crowning the whole is a figure of Charity with two children, similar to the group used by Vasters as the finial of a covered goblet (see Figures 130–132, and for his model Figures 138, 139); here a loop of drapery, corresponding to the draperies of Faith and Vanitas, frames the heads of Charity and the child on her arm.

The scene of the Crucifixion on the Andechs altar, with the Virgin, St. John, and St. Mary Magdalen, reappears as a freestanding group, formerly in the Spitzer collection and now in Amsterdam (Figure 184).<sup>146</sup> The group is mounted on a mottled green jasper pedestal containing a niche flanked by reeded pilasters of the kind seen on the altar-cabinet in the Metropolitan Museum. Placed in the niche is a *Trinity*, or *Vesperbild*: God the Father holds the dead Christ, while the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above. The figure of St. John, with raised head and hands, has taken on something of the appearance of Vanitas as reinterpreted by Vasters. Although no drawing for the composition survives, there are several familiar features to connect it with Vasters, such as the reeded columns and the standing figures with billowing draperies around their heads.

The group at the top of the Andechs altar, showing Christ triumphant rising from his tomb, is found in a number of pendants, only one of which—an example in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna—is

145. For the executed work see Spitzer Sale (1929) lot 625, ill., "from the treasure of a guild. . . in part Italian, 16th century," the group at the top described as South German, Renaissance, the ebony cabinetwork as 19th century. The whereabouts of this piece are not known.

146. Ex colls.: Frédéric Spitzer, Paris; James Simon, Berlin; Hermine Feist, Berlin; Frederick Mannheimer, Amsterdam. In the Rijksmuseum since 1952. *Collection Spitzer*, V, pp. 20–21, no. 30 (Italian, 16th century), GEMMES pl. v; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2622, pl. LIX (see Figure 13); *Collection Dr. James Simon de Berlin*, sale cat., Frederik Muller & Cie. (Amsterdam, Oct. 25–26, 1927) lot 293, ill.; Krempel, "Augsburger und Münchner Emailarbeiten des Manierismus," p. 156, fig. 50.



184. *The Crucifixion*; below, *The Trinity*, ca. 1870–90. Enameled gold, pearls, ebony, jasper; H. 18 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (photo: Rijksmuseum)

certainly late sixteenth century in date. The others, including one formerly owned by Spitzer and now in the Metropolitan Museum, all appear to be products of the late nineteenth century.<sup>147</sup>

The Linsky altar-cabinet is not the only such object in the Metropolitan Museum to follow a Vasters design. In the Robert Lehman Collection is another

house altar, this time in the style of about 1620, for which a preparatory sketch exists (Figures 185, 186).<sup>148</sup> The ebonized wood framework has been designed to exhibit sixteenth-century *verres églomisés* of Lombard origin. Spitzer, who once owned the altar, had a large collection of such fragments, some of which he had enshrined in rock crystal (see Figures 67, 81). The Lehman altar houses a large plaque with the Adoration of the Shepherds, above a narrow frieze of smaller plaques: in the center, the Adoration of the Magi, between the angel Gabriel and the Virgin of the Annunciation, with outer panels showing the eucharistic host, chalice, and paten on the left and the Arma Christi on the right. Two columns with composite capitals of silver-gilt support a pediment filled with a silver-gilt relief of God the Father in benediction. At the apex of the altar is an agate and silver-gilt draped vase in classical-revival style (two versions of a similar vase can be seen in Figure 183), flanked by two agate pinnacles. The altar has suffered losses, notably the two covered vases rising from the lateral scrolls, as shown in the drawing; the stands for these vases were apparently in place when the altar formed part of the Spitzer sale of 1893,<sup>149</sup> and a tiny socket is still to be found on top of each scroll. The winged cherub heads applied to the scrolls are repeated below above the rock crystal bun feet.

An elaborate ebony cabinet in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (Figure 187), may well represent another endeavor by Spitzer and Vasters to create new settings for old fragments, although no direct connection with either man has yet been established. The cabinet contains banks of drawers suitable for the storage of coins and medals or of writing utensils. Each drawer has an applied enamel and gold openwork

147. MMA, Gift of George Blumenthal, 41.100.28: see *Collection Spitzer*, III, p. 150, no. 46 (Italian, 16th century), ill.; Spitzer Sale, II, lot 1831, "La monture de cette pièce a été restaurée," pl. XLVII. For a Resurrection pendant in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, see Scarisbrick, "The Jewelry of the Renaissance" (cited in note 45), p. 184, no. 504, ill.; cf. *Medieval and Renaissance Jewelry . . . The Melvin Gutman Collection*, sale cat., Parke-Bernet (New York, Apr. 24, Oct. 17, 1969) pt. I, lot 29, ill., pt. II, lot 70, ill.

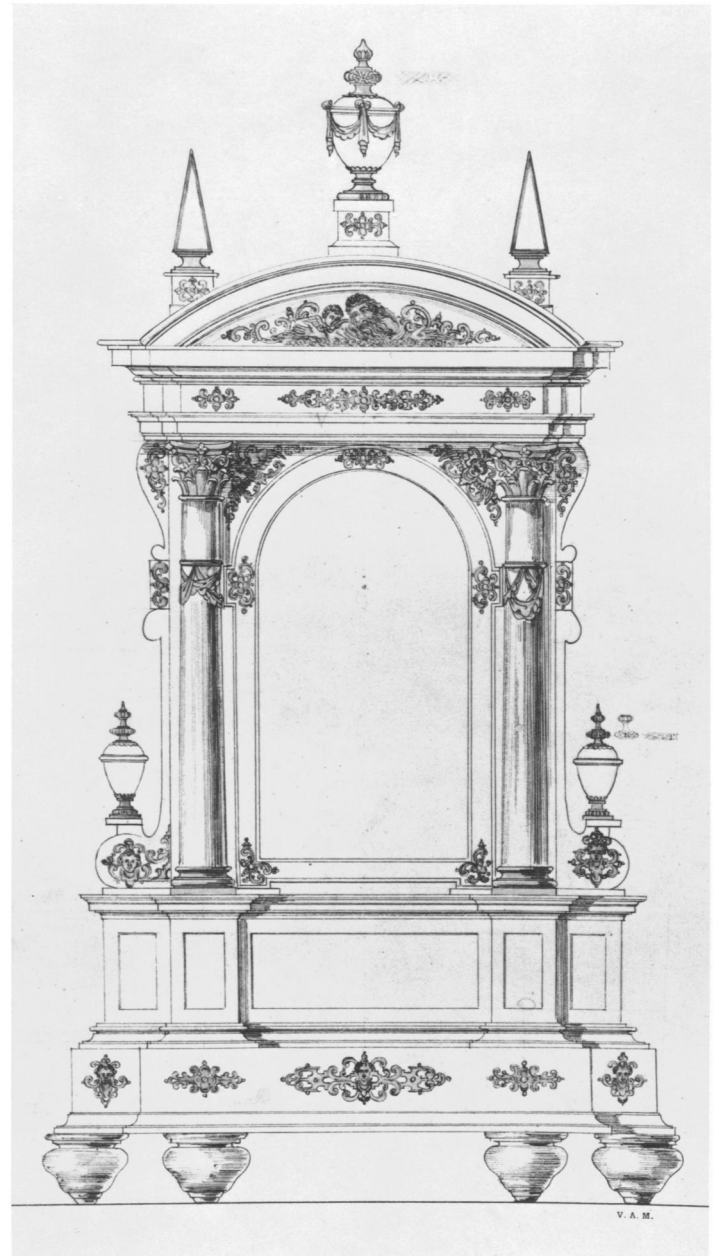
148. *Collection Spitzer*, III, p. 64, no. 5 (Italian, 16th century); Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2092, pl. LI; Spitzer Sale (1929) lot 599, ill., "Italian, late 16th or early 17th century."

149. See Spitzer Sale, II, lot 2092, pl. LI; they do not appear in the illustration of Spitzer Sale (1929) lot 599.



185. House altar: *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, *The Adoration of the Magi*, and other subjects in *verre églomisé*, Italy (Lombardy), late 16th century; setting of ebonized fruitwood, enameled gold, silver, agate, rock crystal, ca. 1870–90. H. 40.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975.1.1558

186. Design for house altar shown in Figure 185, ca. 1870–90. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2728-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



plaque of scroll ornament, of the kind seen in Lotter's Augsburg work and adapted by Vasters; the ornament in Vasters's design for an altar surmounted by Charity (Figure 183) offers a particularly close comparison. The drawers in the Walters cabinet are grouped around a rectangular central door displaying a silver-gilt shaped plaque with the Annunciation to the Shepherds rendered in low relief. The small oval plaque in the pediment shows God the Father in benediction. Both reliefs follow those seen on an early



seventeenth-century house altar in the Geistliche Schatzkammer in Vienna.<sup>150</sup> As Karl Feuchtmayr has pointed out, these are the work respectively of Hans Krumper of Munich and Jakob Krohner of Überlingen. Without dismantling the Baltimore cabinet to examine its plaques on the reverse, it is impossible to determine whether these are old or new casts; nor indeed does the heavy gilding, which is not present on the Vienna examples, allow a clear view of the surface tooling.

The impressive skill displayed in these adaptations and re-creations of suitable prototypes was motivated, at least in part, by a deliberate return to past styles, characteristic of a period when the creative impulse was at a low ebb. When disparate stylistic elements have been combined for purely decorative purposes, the results seem far removed from any genuine vision. But seen in the perspective of Vaster's own time, such inconsistencies must have appeared much less obvious.

150. H. Fillitz, Kunsthistorisches Museum, *Katalog der Weltlichen und der Geistlichen Schatzkammer*, ed. E. Neumann, 5th ed. (Vienna, 1971) p. 70, no. 48, pl. 24.

187. Cabinet with banks of drawers and two gilt reliefs, probably ca. 1870–90. Ebony, enameled gold, silver, agate; 72.4 × 62.2 cm. Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, 65.31 (photo: Walters Art Gallery)



## A HARDSTONE STATUETTE

The Metropolitan Museum owns a statuette of a Roman emperor (Figures 188, 189),<sup>151</sup> composed of jasper, onyx, agate, and chalcedony, with enameled-gold mounts, which turns out to have an interesting bearing on the relationship between Vasters and Spitzer. The emperor stands on a high, circular, green jasper base, carved with mythological figures, for which there is a drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Figure 190). Enameled-gold mounts similar to those on the base appear as ornamental elements of the emperor's attire. No drawing for this figure seems to have survived. Undoubtedly, however, it was inspired by a late sixteenth-century silver-gilt statuette of Vitellius (Figures 191, 192), now also in the Metropolitan Museum, which belonged to Spitzer and of which Vasters is known to have had a replica.

The original Vitellius is one of the twelve Caesars from a set of twelve large historiated tazzas made about 1570–80, possibly by an Augsburg-trained goldsmith active in Italy. There are no distinguishing town or master's marks, but each tazza has pricked in beneath its bowl the arms of Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, applied in the manner of an addition rather than of an original owner's mark. This, then, must have occurred before 1592, when Ippolito was elected pope as Clement VII. Six of the tazzas—those with Julius Caesar, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian—wound up in the hands of Spitzer, who for reasons of his own changed their original fluted bases (in harmony with the fluted bases on which the emperors stand) for more ornate ones of sixteenth-century Spanish origin.<sup>152</sup>

Sixteen years after these tazzas were dispersed at the sale of the Spitzer collection in 1893, we find lot



151. Ex colls.: Adolphe and Maurice de Rothschild. Described as a work by Valerio Belli, it was bought by J. Pierpont Morgan from the firm of Jacques Seligmann, Paris, in 1911.

152. When the Metropolitan Museum acquired the Vitellius tazza in 1945, it had been wrongly combined with the figure of Otho, and it was not until 1955 that exchanges among a number of collections reunited this and other tazzas with their appropriate figures. For the history of the twelve tazzas see J. Culme, *Nineteenth-Century Silver* (London, 1977) pp. 74–75, a reference for which I am indebted to Anthony Phillips, who has also given the best recent account of the set in connection



188, 189. *Roman Emperor*, ca. 1890–95. Statuette in various semiprecious stones, jasper base, mounts in enameled gold; H. 33.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 17.190.599

with the sale of the Vespasian tazza (*The Morgan Collection*, sale cat., Christie's [New York, Oct. 26, 1982] lot 68, ills. incl. color pl. and cover). The entire set was exhibited by Kensington Lewis in London in 1826 and published by R. Ackerman in *The Repository*, 3rd ser., 7 (1826) pp. 303–304. For the six tazzas owned by Spitzer see *Collection Spitzer*, III, pp. 23–24, nos. 58–63, ORFÈVRE CIVILE pls. XIII, XIV; Spitzer Sale, II, lots 1758–1763, pls. XLV, XLVI; and Spitzer Sale (1929) lot 626 (Julius Caesar); cf. the 16th-century Spanish feet Spitzer substituted with the base of a silver-gilt chalice made in Cordova in 1569 (MMA 07.198). See also: E. A. Jones, *Illustrated Catalogue of the Collection of Old Plate of J. P. Morgan, Esquire* (London, 1908) p. 84, pl. LXXV (Vespasian); Y. Hackenbroch, "The Emperor Tazzas," *MMAB* n.s. 8 (1950) pp. 189–197, ills. (proposing the exchange of the mismatched tazzas); J. Hayward, "The Aldobrandini Tazzas," *Burlington Magazine* 112 (1970) pp. 669–674 (with photos taken before the exchange of figures referred to above); *Schroder Collection* (London, 1979) no. 26, ill., and *Schroder Collection* (New York, 1983) pp. 66–70, no. 16, color pl. (Galba/Caligula, with original reeded foot); D. W. Wright, "The Morgan Collection of English and Continental Silver," in *Christie's Review of the Season 1983* (Oxford, 1983) p. 296, color pl. p. 297 (Vespasian).

190. Design for base of the *Roman Emperor* statuette, ca. 1890–95. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2683-1919 (photo: Eileen Tweedy)



303 of the sale catalogue of Vasters's effects described as: "Two large silver basins, gilded inside, from a set of twelve, representing the history of the Caesars. Replicas after Augsburg works of the sixteenth century. a) Vespasian . . . b) Vitellius. . ."<sup>153</sup> These copies, probably galvanoplastic reproductions, must have been in Vasters's possession before Spitzer's death in 1890.

What, if any, are the stylistic differences separating the sixteenth-century Vitellius from its nineteenth-century descendant? The former has a heroic presence, the latter strikes a theatrical attitude. In contrast to the earlier statuette's athletic build, the later one is portly, with a poorly articulated body, lacking any martial air. Instead of a simple laurel wreath on his head, the hardstone emperor wears a helmet in the shape of a mask, topped by a winged dragon. This dragon, with its humped neck and long curly tail, suggests that the designer was familiar with a seventeenth-century agate-onyx ewer in the Louvre (Figure 193), whose cover is surmounted by the helmeted head of Athena crowned with just such a beast.<sup>154</sup>

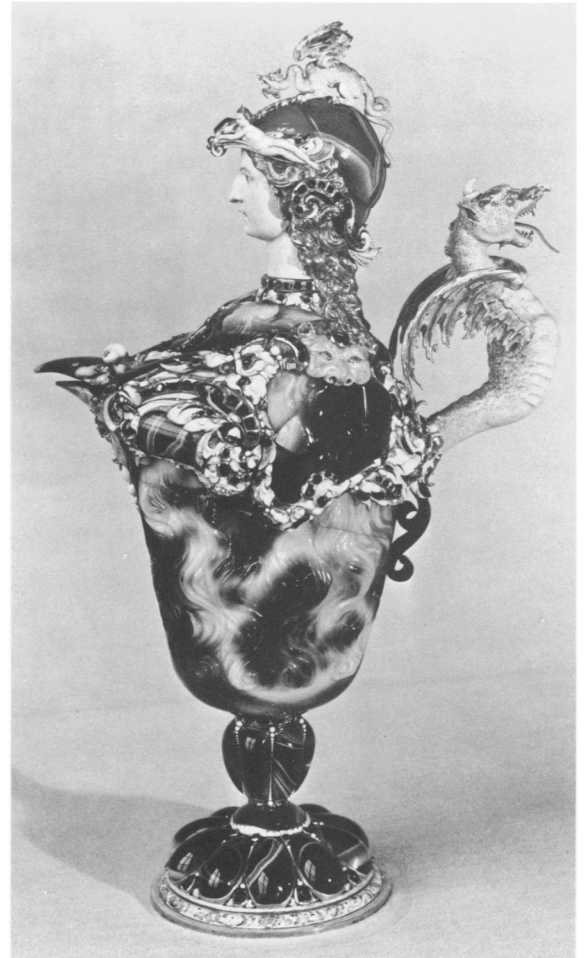
The Museum's hardstone "Vitellius" can be said to illustrate the neo-Baroque tendencies typical of the closing phase of historicism in Germany, when exaggeratedly sentimental Christian saints gave way to more earthbound heroes drawn from Greek and Roman history or myth. I am inclined to date the figure as late as 1890–95, that is, during the last five years in which Vasters was active as a goldsmith, between the death of Spitzer and the point at which Vasters was first described as a *Rentner*. There is a distinctive Germanic flavor about the statuette that Spitzer, *homme du monde*, might not have tolerated so gladly.

153. *Katalog Vasters*, lot 303, "Zwei grosse silberne Schüsseln, innen vergoldet, aus einer Folge von Zwölf, die Geschichte der Cäsaren darstellend. Nachbildungen nach Augsbürger Arbeiten des XVI. Jahrh. a) Vespasian. . . b) Vitellus. . ." The four scenes on the Vitellius tazza are correctly described.

154. Marquet de Vasselot (1914) p. 164, no. 997, pl. LXII. For a somewhat similar dragon surmounting a hardstone cup see Figure 161.

191, 192. *Vitellius*, statuette and matching tazza, from a set of twelve formerly owned by Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, Italy, ca. 1570–80. Silver-gilt, H. statuette, 21.4 cm., overall, 41.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 45.60.58a–h





193. Agate-onyx ewer, the cover surmounted by the head of Athena, mounts in enameled and jeweled gold, Italy, 17th century. H. 28 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Musée du Louvre)



## A NEO-GOTHIC DRINKING HORN

Vasters's activities were even more complex than might appear from this survey of neo-Renaissance works grouped around examples in the Metropolitan Museum. His drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum also show an interest in medieval goldsmiths' work both ecclesiastical and secular in character, including champlevé enamels of Mosan and Limousin origin. This is hardly surprising in view of his early career as a cathedral goldsmith and a creator of church silver in the style of the Middle Ages. He was perhaps more in his element when following in the foot-

steps of Renaissance jewelers and goldsmiths, though this could be the result of a dependence on commissions by Frédéric Spitzer in Paris. That astute collector and dealer was sensitive to tides of taste and fashion—in fact, he contributed essentially in promoting them. His influence made itself felt beyond the turn of the century, when American collectors started to compete in Europe, acquiring many of the objects that would eventually pass into American museums. By contrast, medieval goldsmiths' work appealed more strongly to German collectors.

Illustrating this point is a spectacular ceremonial drinking horn of late Gothic German style, now attributed to Vasters (Figure 194). It was acquired in unknown circumstances by Karl von Rothschild of

194. Ceremonial drinking horn with cover, ca. 1870–80. Ivory tusk mounted in silver-gilt. United States, private collection (photo: courtesy the collector)



Frankfurt before 1883, when it was included in the catalogue of Rothschild's collection.<sup>155</sup> As an heirloom, the horn eventually became the property of Victor Rothschild in London, who sold it at public auction in 1937.<sup>156</sup>

The prototype of the Rothschild horn, which consists of an ivory tusk mounted in silver-gilt (the silver-gilt has suffered corrosion), is a smaller one dated 1486, made for the Lüneburg Rat, or town council, probably by Hinrick vom Howell (Figure 195). Together with most of the *Ratssilber*, this horn was sold in 1874 to the Deutsche Gewerbemuseum in Berlin.<sup>157</sup> Although it was destroyed in 1945 during the Second World War, the Lüneburg horn is known from

195. Attributed to Hinrick vom Howell, ceremonial drinking horn with cover from Lüneburg, 1486. Ivory tusk mounted in silver-gilt. Formerly Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum, destroyed 1945 (photo: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin)



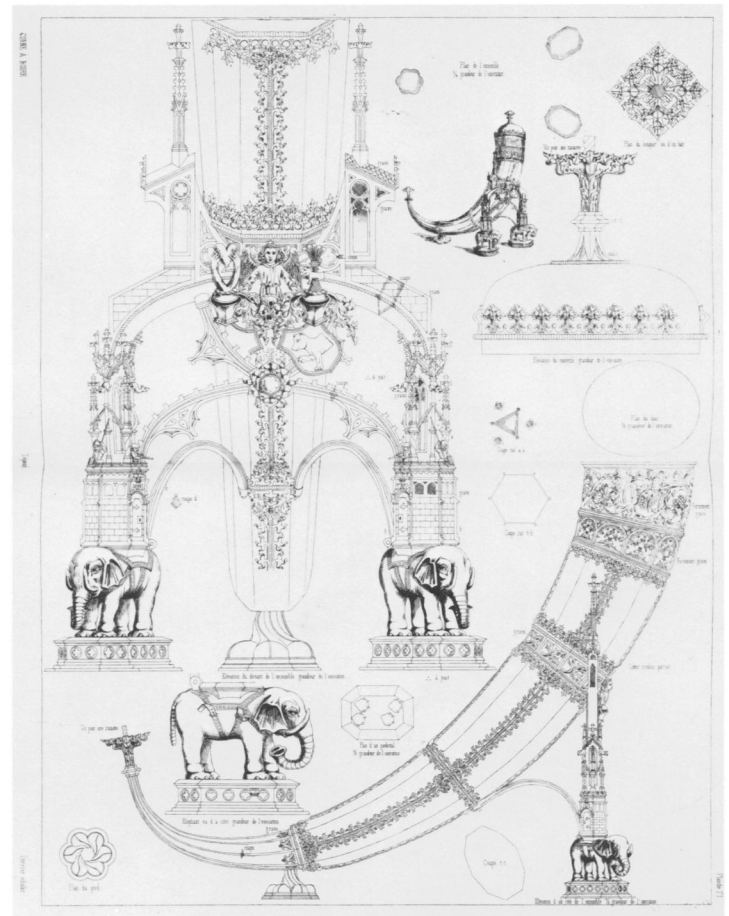
photographs and also from several publications. Detailed line illustrations of it, for example, were included by Thomas H. King, a Bruges architect, in a collection of drawings entitled *Orfèvererie et ouvrages en métal du moyen-âge*, published in two parts in the early

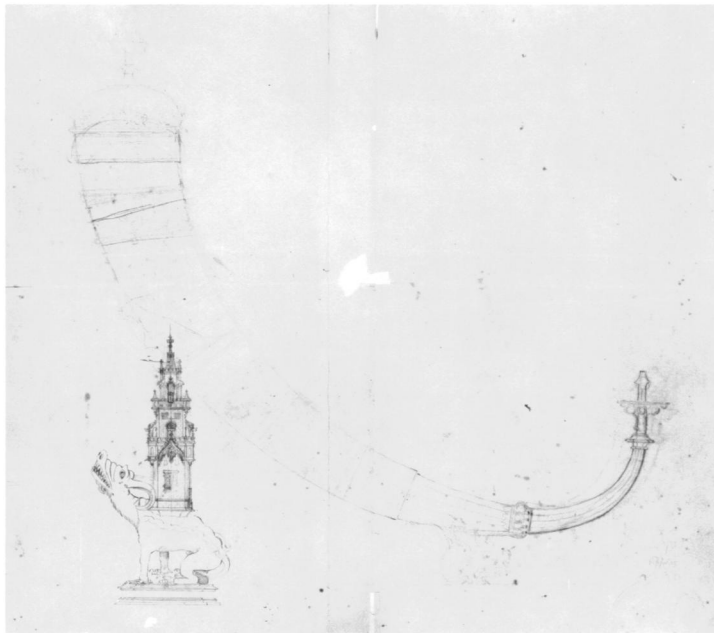
155. Luthmer (1883–85) I, pl. I; II, pl. VII. See also: F. Luthmer, *Gold und Silber* (Leipzig, 1888) p. 164; idem, *Führer durch die Freiherrlich K. von Rothschild'sche Kunstsammlung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1890) p. 23, ill. p. 41; von Falke, "Silberfälschungen" (cited in note 36), pp. 2–3; Truman (1979) p. 161; Richter (1983) pp. 9–10, fig. 1, p. 65, figs. 56a,b.

156. *Catalogue of the Magnificent Contents of 148 Piccadilly, W.1, Sold by Order of Victor Rothschild, Esq.*, sale cat., Sotheby's (London, Apr. 27, 1937) lot 125, pl. VIII. Via the London trade the horn was purchased by Lord Gort, Bunratty Castle, Ireland. After Lord Gort's death it was sold as part of his estate to the present owner, who has kindly given me permission to reproduce the horn and has supplied new photos.

157. Luthmer (1883–85) I, text to pl. 1; idem, *Gold und Silber*, pp. 164, 166 fig. 88; E. Molinier, *Histoire générale des arts appliqués à l'industrie du Ve à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1896–1919) IV, p. 278; H. Appuhn, *Das Lüneburger Ratssilber*, exh.

196. *Corne à boire*, measured drawings of the Lüneburg drinking horn of 1486, published in 1852 by T. H. King, *Orfèvererie et ouvrages en métal du moyen-âge*, pl. 71. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library





197. Design for drinking horn shown in Figure 194, ca. 1870–80. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2589-1919 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)

198. Detail of Figure 197 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)

199. Detail of drinking horn shown in Figure 194 (photo: courtesy the collector)

**FACING PAGE:**

200. Design for drinking horn shown in Figure 194, front elevation, ca. 1870–80. London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.2585-1919 (photo: Victoria and Albert Museum)

201. The drinking horn from the front (photo: courtesy the collector)



1850s and listed in the contents of Vasters's library (Figure 196).<sup>158</sup> In his preface King, in terms altogether appropriate to the spirit of historic revival, explained that the purpose of his publication was to promote a better understanding of Gothic art, by means of illustrations primarily intended for the practicing artist; contemporary artisans were thus to become familiar with the style of the Middle Ages and with the methods required to reproduce its works. If a replica were to be made larger than its model, King's advice was that its details should not be rendered on a larger scale, they should be repeated.<sup>159</sup>

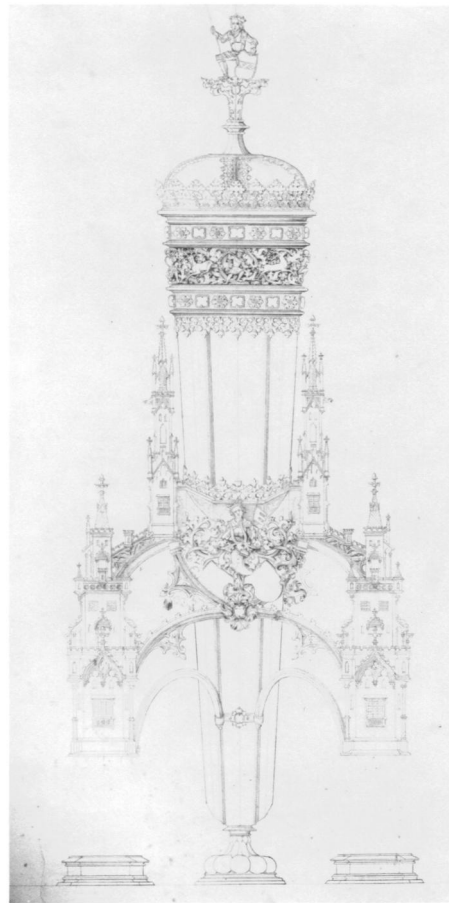
Vasters certainly seems to have been inspired by such advice in his re-creation, for which full-scale drawings survive (Figures 197–201). The basic quality of Gothic art, its architectural clarity, has been disregarded. The Lüneburg horn, mounted throughout in silver-gilt, was supported by two elephants carrying Gothic towers on their backs. Logically associated with an ivory tusk, these elephants were replaced by Vasters with two fierce gargoyled dragons, each carrying a flamboyant Gothic turret. The composition is crowded with a surfeit of architectural motifs—flying buttresses, tracery, barred windows, parapets, portals, gangways, pinnacles—and of more gargoyles, though none in places where these could fulfill their function as spouts for rainwater. The finial, an armorial supporter, resembles the figure of an

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cat. (Lüneburg, 1956) p. 6; W. Scheffler, *Goldschmiede Niedersachsens* (Berlin, 1965) II, p. 896; K. Pechstein, Kunstgewerbemuseum, *Goldschmiedewerke der Renaissance: Katalog V* (Berlin, 1971), where the surviving pieces of the *Ratssilber* purchased in 1874 are discussed and illustrated; B. Mundt, *Die deutschen Kunstgewerbemuseen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1974) pp. 75, 81, for the sale of the *Ratssilber*; J. Michael Fritz, *Goldschmiedekunst der Gotik in Mitteleuropa* (Munich, 1982) p. 307, pl. 871; Richter (1983) fig. 2.

158. T. H. King, *Orfèvrerie et ouvrages en métal du moyen-âge mesurés et dessinés d'après les anciens modèles*, 2nd ser. (Paris, 1855) pl. 71; *Katalog Vasters*, lots 672 (Brussels, 1852) and 673 (Paris, 1855).

159. King, *Orfèvrerie et ouvrages en métal du moyen-âge*, p. 1: "Ce travail devait être considéré uniquement comme préliminaire, comme une collection de simples modèles, dans le but d'habituer nos artisans au style du moyen-âge et à la manière de travail nécessaire pour reproduire avec exactitude les plus finies parmi les oeuvres d'art. . . . Ce n'est qu'en reproduisant les oeuvres des anciens artistes que nous pourrions acquérir le talent nécessaire pour créer nous-mêmes"; and p. 2: "Une plus grande dimension doit être obtenue, non par en agrandissant les détails, mais en les répétant."

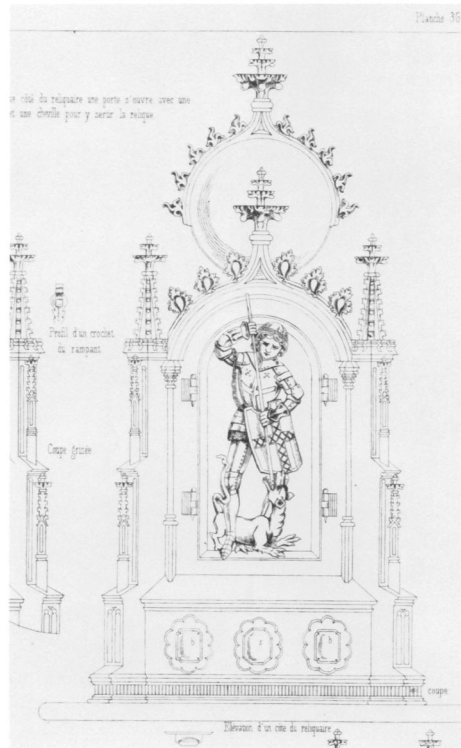




202. Badge with figure of armored knight displaying an achievement, ca. 1870–80. Silver-gilt, 14.3 × 11.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 49.56.7

armored knight displaying an achievement in a silver-gilt badge owned by the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 202); the knight stands awkwardly beneath a double arch, surrounded by a quatrefoil frame set with cabochon stones.<sup>160</sup> This figure in turn has affinities with a St. George illustrated in King's *Orfèvrerie . . . du moyen-âge* (Figure 203), and his unsteady posture might well be due to the elimination of the dragon on which St. George was shown standing. Horn and badge could be from one and the same workshop.

Instead of the ornamental bands that encircled the lip of the Lüneburg horn, the nineteenth-century version has a heavily cast hunting frieze of extraordinarily dense design, bordered on either side by a row of glass pastes and pearls. Freiherr Karl von Rothschild owned other works in the late Gothic style derived from the Lüneburg *Ratssilber*, including a silver-gilt tazza surmounted by St. Hubert and the stag; around this group is a hunting frieze similar to the one just described.<sup>161</sup> In the graphic arts the same kind



203. Measured drawing of a reliquary, detail with figure of St. George and the Dragon, from King's *Orfèvrerie et ouvrages en métal du moyen-âge*, pl. 36. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library

of frieze can be seen framing the title page of a book published in Frankfurt in 1875 (Figure 204). All three friezes have more in common with nineteenth-century historicism than with fifteenth-century invention.

Vasters, of course, was by no means the only practicing goldsmith of his generation to adopt revival styles.<sup>162</sup> In this connection it is interesting to compare his work with a drinking horn by Emil-Ferdinand

160. Ex colls.: Delannoy, Paris; Blumka Gallery, New York; Joseph Brummer, New York. *The Notable Art Collection . . . of the Late Joseph Brummer* (cited in note 61), pt. 1, lot 429.

161. Luthmer (1883–85) II, pls. iv, v.

162. Two such goldsmiths, Martin Vogeno and August Witte, were colleagues of Vasters at the Aachen cathedral treasury: see above and note 12, also notes 6, 15; see also Grimme (1981) pp. 13–31. For 19th-century goldsmiths' work, especially in the Rhineland, see C.-W. Clasen, "Die Kölner Goldschmiede Hermeling," in *Beiträge zur rheinischen Kunstgeschichte und Denkmalpflege* (Düsseldorf, 1974) II, pp. 263–278. For the firm of F. H. Hellner of Kempten (Düsseldorf) see Y. Hackenbroch and K. Citroen, "A Chalice of Jacoba of Bavaria in Gouda," *Nederlands*



204. Title page of catalogue for a decorative arts exhibition, *Historische Ausstellung kunstgewerblicher Erzeugnisse*, published in Frankfurt am Main, 1875 (photo: University Library, Frankfurt am Main)

Dahl,<sup>163</sup> who copied the so-called Oldenburg Horn of 1476–80 in Rosenborg Castle, Copenhagen, sometime between 1840 and 1879 (Figure 205).<sup>164</sup> Dahl elected to follow his original model closely and to identify his work by his maker's mark. But, like Vasters, he chose a highly elaborate example of late Gothic art to emulate, in keeping with the preferences of the *Gründerjahre*.

The Lüneburg horn displayed the arms of the donors, a former mayor of the town and his wife. Vasters's version comprises eight different armorials, including those of the Würzburg bishop Lorenz von Bibra (1495–1519), whose dates are too late for the Gothic style. The kneeling knight of the finial displays the arms of a bishop of Eichstätt. The shields

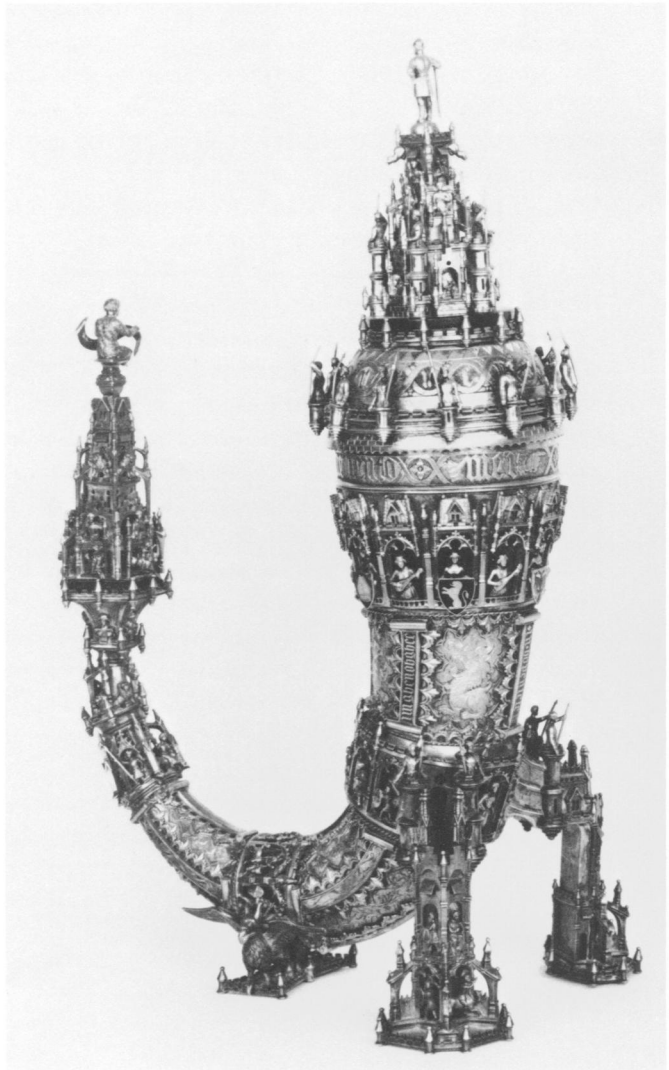


*Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 31 (1980) pp. 1–15. For the firm of Schleissner in Hanau see K. Siebert, *Hanauer Biographien aus drei Jahrhunderten*, August Schleissner (Hanau, 1919); and G. Bott, "Getriebenes Tafelgerät als Specialität im antiken Genre," in *Studien zum Europäischen Kunsthandwerk: Festschrift Yvonne Hackenbroch*, ed. J. Rasmussen (Munich, 1983) pp. 297–310. For ecclesiastical goldsmiths' work see *Schatzkunst Trier* (cited in note 11), esp. A. M. Zander, "Goldschmiede des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts in Trier," pp. 37–48.

163. *Argenterie européenne, objets de vitrine, succession de Monsieur Hubert de Saint-Senoch . . .*, sale cat., Sotheby's (Monte Carlo, Dec. 6, 1983) lot 1116, ill. The Metropolitan Museum owns a drinking horn from the J. Pierpont Morgan collection (17.190.507)—an ox horn mounted in silver-gilt with the figure of St. Michael—which was also made during the 19th century in the style of the 15th. It was produced by the Marcy workshop in Paris.

164. G. Boesen, "Rosenborg Castle Collections, Copenhagen," in *Royal Treasures*, ed. E. Steingraber, trans. S. de Haan (New York, 1968) pp. 84, 85 no. 5, color pl. p. 131; it was presumably commissioned by Christian I, the first Danish king of the House of Oldenburg. See also Scheffler, *Goldschmiede Niedersachsens*, II, p. 896; C. Hernmarck, *The Art of the European Silversmith 1430–1820* (London, 1977) no. 205; Fritz, *Goldschmiedekunst*, p. 259, pl. 518.

205. Emil-Ferdinand Dahl, ceremonial drinking horn with cover, after Oldenburg Horn of 1476–80, Copenhagen, ca. 1860. Silver-gilt, H. 37 cm. Private collection (photo: Sotheby Parke Bernet Monaco)



of six other donors are listed in the catalogue of the Rothschild collection published in 1883.

The expert entrusted with that catalogue was Ferdinand Luthmer (1842–1921), an architect and the director of the Frankfurter Kunstgewerbeschule und Kunstgewerbemuseum.<sup>165</sup> Founded in 1878, this combined school and museum of the decorative arts had as its principal purpose the revival of the arts and crafts tradition, menaced by industrialization. Luthmer, a native of Cologne, came to Frankfurt from Berlin, where he had taught at the Kunstakademie for eight years. He had also taught in Berlin at the Deutsche Gewerbemuseum, precisely during the period when the much-publicized Lüneburg *Ratssilber* was acquired. In Frankfurt, Freifrau Mathilde von Rothschild sponsored the decorative arts movement, providing Luthmer with financial backing in order to arouse interest and to suggest fresh scope for the teaching and exhibiting of “unserer Väter Werke”—the works of our fathers. Hence it may be assumed that Luthmer was in relatively close contact with members of the Rothschild family. That he was chosen to write the two-volume catalogue of their collection published in 1883–85, and later handbooks brought out in 1890, 1908, and 1915, suggests that he enjoyed their confidence over a span of years. In the absence of any proof to the contrary, then, it seems likely that Luthmer acted as the Rothschilds’ artistic adviser, although he need not have been the only one. Beyond conjecture at present are what objects Karl von Rothschild had acquired, and what advice he may have had in purchasing them, before Luthmer’s arrival in Frankfurt in 1879.

The neo-Gothic drinking horn designed by Vasters was probably made soon after 1874, when the Lüneburg horn became widely known as a recent addition to the Berlin collections. The later horn passed as one similar to the Lüneburg example—at least Luthmer described it as such in the catalogue of 1883, in his book *Gold und Silber*, published in Leipzig in 1888, and in an 1890 guide to the Rothschild collection.<sup>166</sup> Luthmer’s obvious mistake was to have accepted a recently made object without questioning its age and authenticity. Typical of his generation, he had an exaggerated admiration, not to say reverence, for monuments of the distant past, particularly for anything that had historical associations. The prevailing mistrust in the creative powers of contemporary artists may have predisposed him to accept retrospective

works as genuine, on the basis of their general style. It must also be said that substitutions and replicas, including galvanoplastic reproductions, were as yet uncommon, taking early victims of such frauds unawares and unprepared.<sup>167</sup> These factors may help to explain Luthmer’s vulnerable position as one better acquainted with theory than practice.<sup>168</sup>

Even if they were not personally acquainted, Luthmer and Vasters almost certainly knew of one another. They were both from the Rhineland and less than a generation apart in age. Both were involved in the revival of medieval and Renaissance styles, though in different ways. As a practicing artist and craftsman, Vasters had a firsthand knowledge of techniques, but he was not a scholar like Luthmer, whose principal interest was in the theory of styles and their historical sequence. Reinhold Vasters, goldsmith, seems to have shunned attention during his most active years, having established some reputation in his field when he was working at the cathedral treasury in Aachen and creating church silver that bore his maker’s mark; in old age he apparently emerged as a collector, who exhibited objects from an eclectic collection and presumably, on occasion, sold from it.

165. “Ferdinand Luthmer,” *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Literatur* 3 (1920–21) pp. 94–95; Mitteldeutscher Kunstgewerbeverein, *Zum Gedächtnis des Direktors unserer Kunstgewerbe-Schule, des Geh. Baurats Ferdinand Luthmer (1842–1921)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1921) pp. 6–17; Mundt, *Die deutschen Kunstgewerbemuseen*, pp. 203–207, where she describes some of Luthmer’s activities; *100 Jahre Historisches Museum Frankfurt am Main 1878 bis 1978*, exh. cat. (Frankfurt am Main: Historisches Museum, 1978) I, pp. 214–218.

166. Luthmer (1883–85) I, text to pl. 1; idem, *Gold und Silber*, p. 164; idem, *Führer durch die Freiherrlich K. von Rothschild’sche Kunstsammlung*, p. 23.

167. For galvanoplastic reproductions commercially available in the late 19th century, see G. Egger, *Gold- und Silberschätze in Kopien des Historismus*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst in Schloss Grafenegg, 1972).

168. Luthmer, who was described by contemporaries as a recreator (*Erneuerer*) rather than a creator (*Neuerer*), maintained an interest in silver with historic associations all his life, especially in municipal silver. Before 1903 he designed some of the principal pieces of the *Ratssilber* intended to recall Frankfurt’s glorious past, commissioned to honor Emperor Wilhelm II when he visited the town in 1912 (*Das Frankfurter Ratssilber*, exh. leaflet [Frankfurt am Main: Historisches Museum, 1982] ill.). Luthmer furnished the design for the gold and silver-gilt Emperor Cup (*Kaiserbecher*), modeled by a friend, Professor Hausmann, and executed by the firm of E. Schürmann.

Professor Ferdinand Luthmer, by contrast, enjoyed the limelight as a well-known teacher and museum director, a prolific writer, and probably also one whose advice on artistic matters was eagerly sought. When he died in 1921, his obituary recorded his many gifts and contributions with gratitude. Vasters's death, on the other hand, seems to have passed without notice.

None of the several objects in the Karl von Rothschild collection that suggest Vasters's hand appears in the Spitzer catalogues. All are works of pronounced German character, with a bias toward the late Gothic, of a kind that might have been difficult to place among Spitzer's sophisticated French clientele, whose taste for Italian Renaissance objects was being nurtured by Spitzer himself. The fact that Vasters's drawings for the drinking horn remained in Aachen may mean that they were executed close to home, though in this rare instance the execution in silver-gilt is somewhat rough, indicative of Vasters's style rather than his hand. How Karl von Rothschild in Frankfurt, not very far from Aachen, was persuaded to buy a brand-new article as a genuine antique is an open question. It seems improbable that Vasters himself would have dared to make the offer since the circumstances created a serious risk of exposure. Nor would such a prominent collector as Rothschild have been easy to approach without a middleman.

This excursion into Vasters's medievalizing activities serves to remind us of how much remains to be

learned. That he was known as a collector in later life, and as such participated in at least two retrospective exhibitions in the Rhineland, is something which has only recently come to light. More information of this kind, forgotten and overlooked, will undoubtedly emerge. In view of the attributions that so many of his works enjoyed during his lifetime, however, we can assume that much was deliberately concealed and may never be known. The connection with Frédéric Spitzer, probably the greatest collector-dealer in Europe at the time, seems firmly established. What is missing is a sense of Vasters the man. Were the financial rewards of his anonymous activities so seductive that they compensated for the loss of professional recognition? Was it the sheer challenge of successful deception that attracted him, or the opportunity to develop his skills as a jeweler and goldsmith over a wide range of styles and materials? Was he perhaps initially taken in by Spitzer, finding out the real purpose of Spitzer's commissions when it seemed too late to turn back or when he had become accustomed to the affluence they brought him?

Future inquiries may furnish answers to these questions and uncertainties. In the meantime, and in spite of Vasters's evident attempts to avoid publicity, it has nevertheless been possible to link some remarkable examples of nineteenth-century jewelry and goldsmiths' work in the Metropolitan Museum and elsewhere to his name, and to acknowledge Vasters as a striking interpreter of historicism in Europe.

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