

BULLETIN OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

VOLUME XLVI

BOSTON, DECEMBER, 1948

No. 266

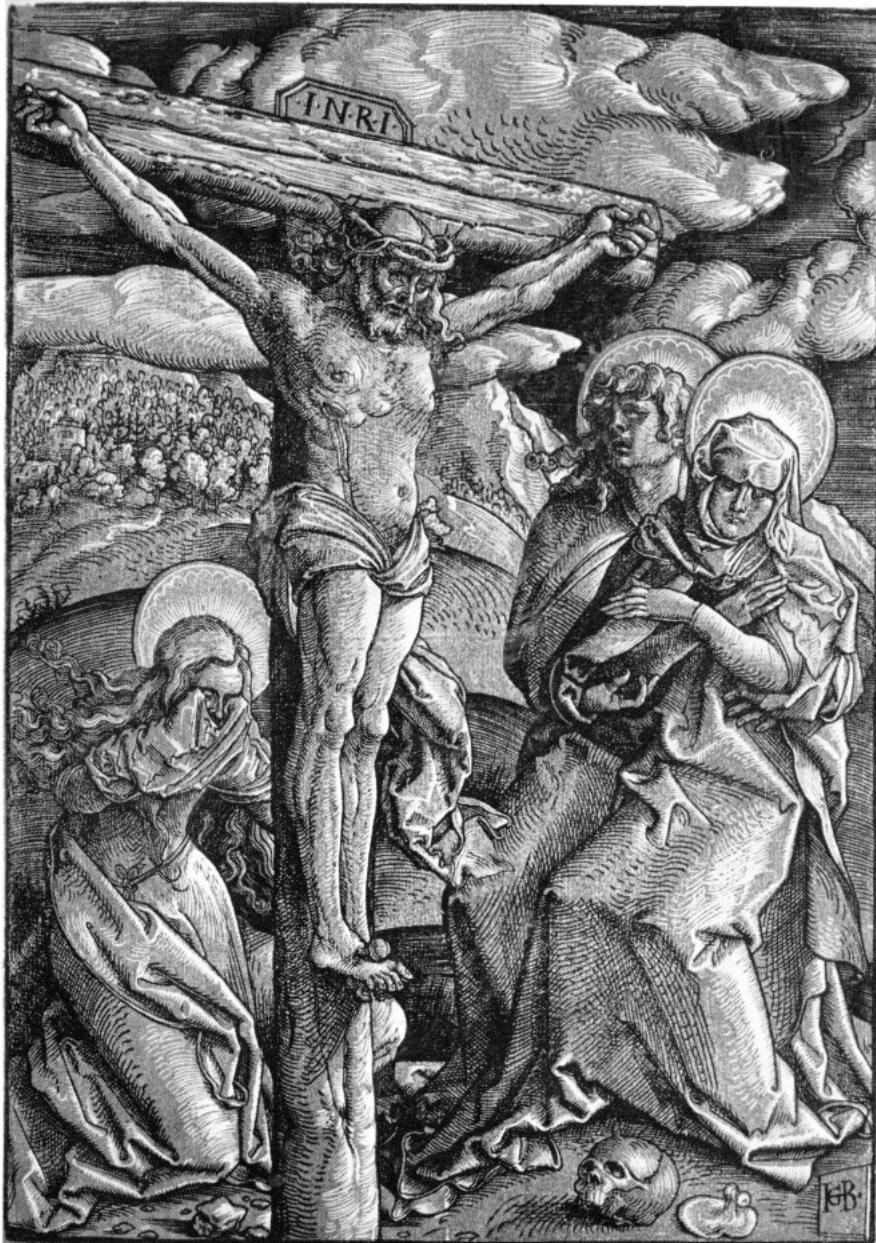


Fig. 1. Christ on the Cross

William Francis Warden Fund

Hans Baldung (Grün), c. 1476-1545

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

SUBSCRIPTION ONE DOLLAR

emphasis given here to fashionable appearance. Remarkable is the planned suggestion that the busts appear as fictitious participants, assistants, or spectators related to the living surroundings. This, too, is not an Italian motive — more drastic figures in this function appear already on French Gothic buildings.

The real character of French Renaissance portraiture is evident in two painted Limoges enamels, and meeting it in this *pur sang* French medium is always a revealing experience. Looking at this medallion (Fig. 4),¹ of Marguerite de Navarre, sister of François I, and the oval portrait of a still unidentified person of indubitable importance (Fig. 5),² one should realize that this subtle, intimate, and objective realism, significant of French portrait crayons, panels, and prints, found a specific vehicle in this precious technique which at the same time was a costly mass production indulging in bluntly copying popular models of Italian or Italianizing style. Again a contrast or rather a new aspect in the field of the so-called minor arts is revealed by a number of works by Bernard Palissy (Figs. 6-9).³ He is the great personality with penetrating ingenuity. As a ceramist he is rooted in popular, artless, indigenous pottery with all the charm of strong colors, although Italian Maiolica and the Robbias had found enthusiastic admirers in France. As an artist he is so independent, so opposed to convention that the taste of certain of his works is just intolerable, and in his writings he is one of the few who point a finger at habitual working on foreign models. All this may or may not be apparent in this remarkable group of original works by his hand; one is immediately fascinated by the great character of style and feels tempted to think of Peter Brueghel.

Executed on a small scale and in a rather cheap but extremely personal medium, these glazed, colorful reliefs encounter here a great contemporary work of monumental sculpture and architectural design (Figs. 10-13).⁴ This is but one of the finest chimney pieces, especially favored in this period, and outstanding in its artistic quality. Since the installation of the complete work will take time, only its most important sculptural parts are published here. They are executed in very fine, soft, white French limestone which is the ideal medium for sculpture of this sensitive quality and style. The great outspoken character of this work leads into the domain of Jean Goujon. It has been attributed to the master and this is a right suggestion since, in all probability, it is really connected with his atelier or with one of his associates, and is to be dated about 1560. A

¹ 47.1542. Diam. 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". Hezekiah E. Bolles Fund. Ex. col. Horace Walpole. Strawberry Hill.

² 47.1454. H. 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Grace M. Edwards Fund.

³ 46.53-56. H. 12 $\frac{5}{16}$ ". Hezekiah E. Bolles Fund. Ex. col. Gustave de Rothschild.

⁴ 48.371. Side figures H. 51 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Medallion D. 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". H. 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Half circle H. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Gift of Mrs. Joseph Brummer and Ernest Brummer in memory of Joseph Brummer.

thorough analysis would be impossible along these lines, but a hint may explain the position of the work in the development of French Renaissance. Important is the homogeneity of the strongly opposed ornamental and figural representations. Each is a self-contained part of the great design, none of them subordinated in intensity or quality, and with the hand of the same master appearing here and there, yet the human figure overweighs the ornament. Such opposition is in contrast to the playful combination of the Classical-Italian Grotesques and this may be, in a deep sense, a reflection of Michelangelo. However, the predominant tendency of our sculptures, of Goujon, and of the French Renaissance at this stage in general, is more congenial to the spirit developed by the followers of Correggio in the peripheral North Italian Schools than to the Tuscan-Roman style based on Raphael and Michelangelo. There is everywhere a strong reaction, but this reaction is rather in the nature of a withdrawing.

GEORG SWARZENSKI.

Two Pieces of Furniture from the Egyptian Sudan

TWO objects from the Museum's excavations in the Sudan, found in what seemed hopelessly damaged condition, have recently been placed on exhibition in the Fourth Egyptian Study Room. They serve to illustrate the way in which the careful observation and recording of the excavator, combined with the painstaking skill of the museum restorer, can transform such objects into interesting and sometimes beautiful museum exhibits.

The first of these objects is shown restored in Fig. 1¹. It was found in the stairway which gave access to the burial chamber of pyramid 17 at El Kurru, the tomb of King Piankhy, second ruler of the Napatan Kingdom of Kush (Ethiopia) and founder of the twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt, who died about 710 B.C. Figure 2 shows the object as it lay crushed and broken among stones and rubbish in the western end of the stairway where it probably fell from the destroyed chapel above as a result of the destruction wrought by ancient tomb robbers and stone thieves. Figures 3 and 4 show its component parts as they came from the excavations. They are of bronze and consist of three main parts: (1) a circular base 45.5 cm. in diameter tapering upwards into a tube-like stem which terminates in a heavy bronze disc. To this disc is riveted (2), a tray 41.5 cm. in diameter to the flat rim of which are stapled four little flaring cups. From the centre of this tray rises (3), a stem in the form of a conventional palm column, the top of which terminates in a shallow bowl. With the exception of the heavy disc at the top of (1) the whole is made of moderately thin sheet bronze which, from the na-

¹ Reg. No. 21.3238, Expedition No. 19-2-674. Height over all, 82.0 cm.



Fig. 1. Bronze Libation Stand of King Piankhy, restored



Fig. 2. Crushed Libation Stand, as found



Fig. 3. Upper Part of Libation Stand, before straightening

ture of the alloy and the effects of time, has become extremely brittle. A high degree of patience and skill was required on the part of Mr. Wm. J. Young, head of the Museum's research laboratory,

to restore the parts to their original forms by repeated shaping and annealing. A few places where the metal had been corroded away have been patched with new material and one of the

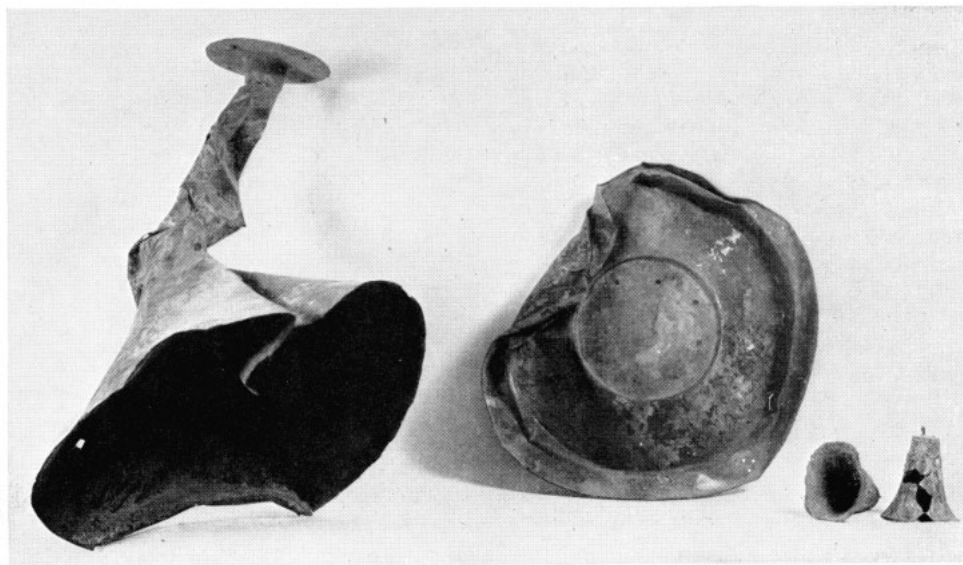


Fig. 4. Parts of Libation Stand, before restoration

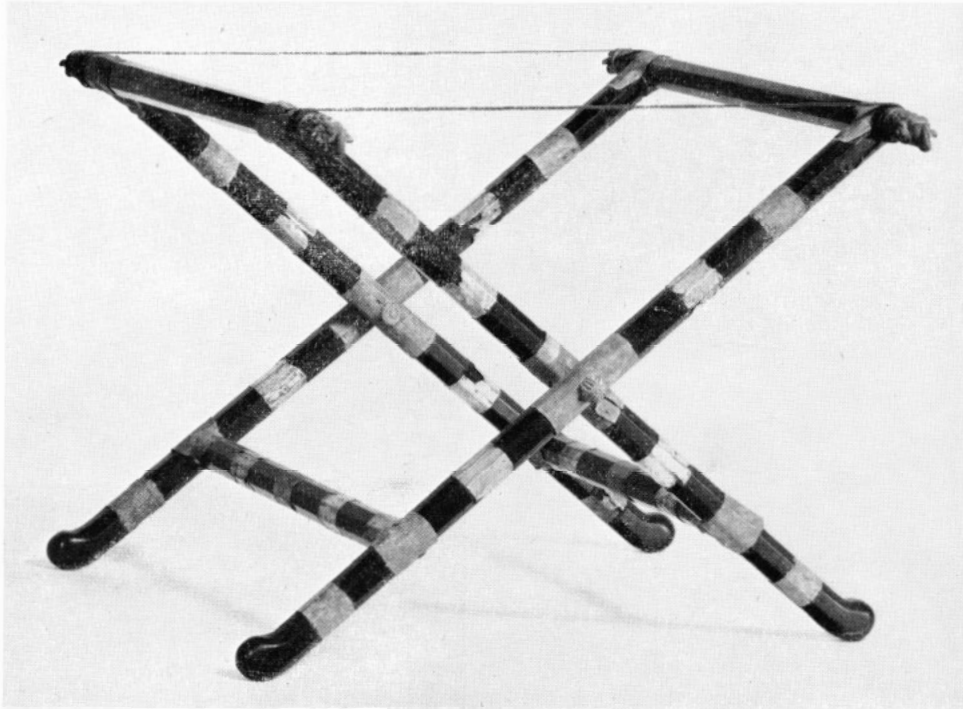


Fig. 5. Meroitic Folding Stool, reconstructed

rim-cups is a modern copy; but in all other respects the piece is original. Its purpose must be a matter of conjecture, for no like object is known. We have called it a libation stand because of its original location in the tomb chapel and because the series of containers for food and liquids suggest such a use.

The second object here published is the folding stool shown reconstructed in Fig. 5.¹ It was

¹Reg. No. 23.152, Expedition, No. 23-2-107. Height as it stands 39.5 cm.

found collapsed along the south wall in the burial chamber of tomb W. 415 at Meroë, belonging to a man of the Meroitic Period, which we date somewhat vaguely 100 B.C. - A.D. 100, that is, from 600 to 800 years later than the libation stand. Figure 6 is a photograph of this tomb chamber showing the objects as found, and Figure 7 is a plan which clarifies the objects seen in the photograph. The ebony frame was completely decayed although its form and dimensions could

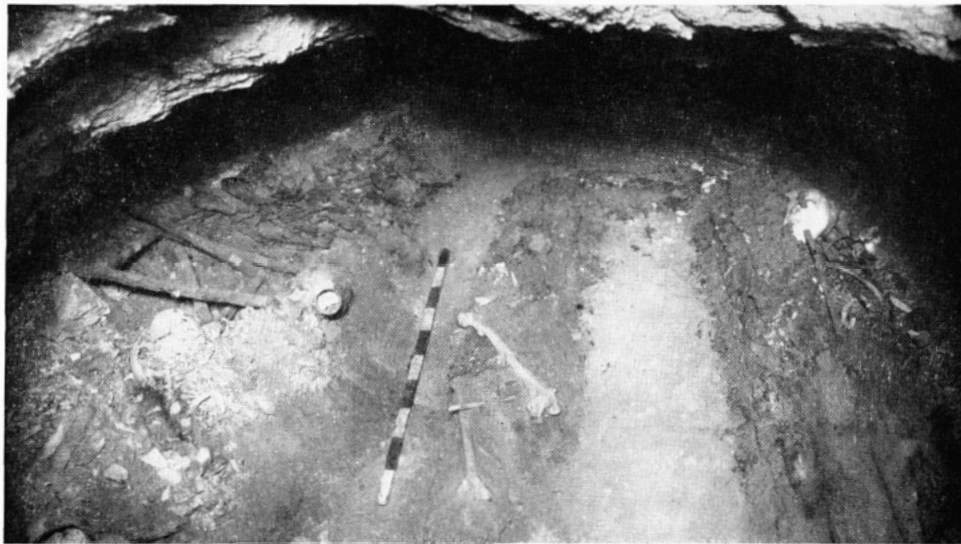


Fig. 6. Burial Chamber W. 415 with Stool, as found

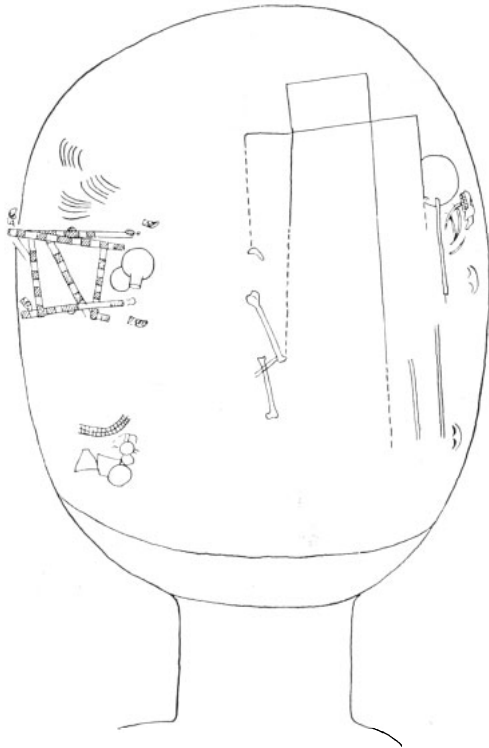


Fig. 7. Drawing to show position of Objects in Burial Chamber

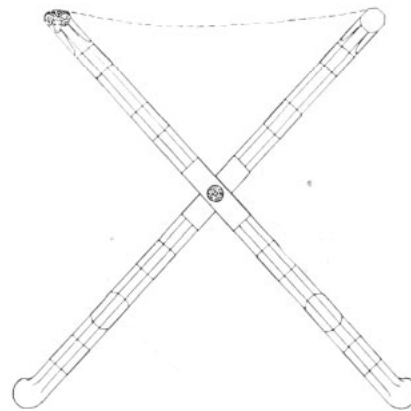
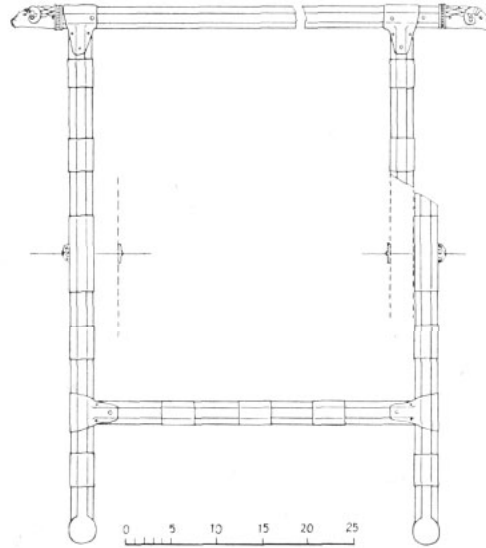


Fig. 9. Scale Drawing of Stool showing its Construction

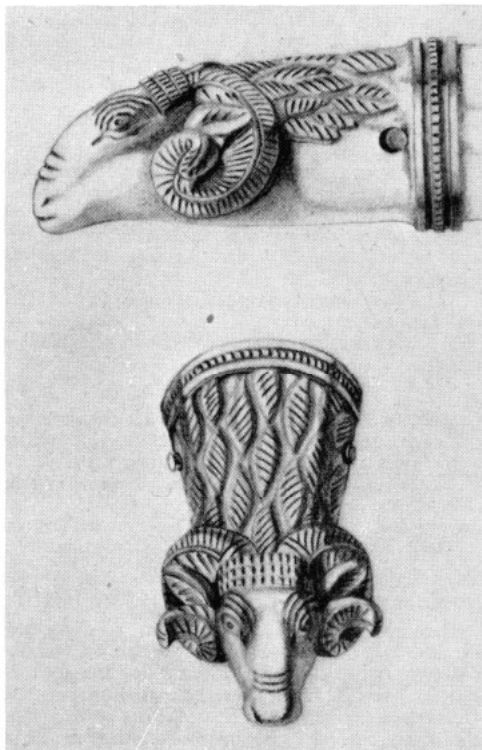


Fig. 8. Ram's Head Terminals on Meroitic Stool
Drawing by Miss Suzanne Chapman

be recovered as it lay, with the exception of the feet whose exact shape could not be ascertained. The various bars of the stool, which were octagonal, had been sheathed at intervals with alternating bands of bronze and silver. The upper ends of the framework terminated in bronze ram's heads of excellent Greco-Roman style, and the central joints were held together by iron pins terminating in ornamental bronze heads. Figure 8 reproduces the bronze ram's head terminals in front and side view, and Figure 9 is a scale drawing of the stool to show its construction. Originally there must have been a seat of textile or leather, but no trace of this was found for such materials seldom survive. Our reconstruction omits this essential feature and the stool is now held in position by two narrow leather thongs. The wooden framework is modern, but the ram's heads, pin heads, and sheathing bands are, for the most part, the original ones reset after cleaning.

DOWS DUNHAM.