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Archives of American Art

Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, General Correspondence: American Art Association, 1923-1937

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Gothic Tapestries

SEVERAL superb Gothic tapestries in the McCormick collection demonstrate to perfection how admirably the conventions of Gothic tapestry design are suited to the capabilities of the loom. Relief effects in Gothic tapestries are obtained through a special technique of ribs, hatchings, and particularly slits, cleverly used to suggest shadow and giving the lace-like quality so apparent in the Gothic tapestries and one of their most distinguishing features.

Perspective is obtained by tipping grounds up and forward so that figures and motives all the way up to the top of the tapestry are like columns continuing the vertical lines of the figures and motives off the foreground and giving the effect of dominant vertical line characteristic of all Gothic design.

The charm of the millefleurs grounds characteristically found in Gothic tapestries is convincingly demonstrated in a McCormick example woven after designs by Antoine Fierret, son and pupil of one of the most famous tapestry designers of Bruges and Tournai in the XV century; and a hunting tapestry vividly portrays an episode from the life of medieval French nobility.

All three of the magnificent Gothic tapestries in the McCormick collection were woven at Tournai, the great tapestry weaving centre of the XV and early XVI century. At this time the French Duke of Burgundy, who held great domains in the French Netherlands, was a greater and richer power than the King of France, and the finest tapestries of the period were made at Tournai to the duke's lavish orders. At the end of the XVIII century Gothic tapestries "went out of fashion" and many of the rarest examples completely disappeared. In later years some were recovered only after having suffered from harsh treatment in being used, in one instance, to spread over orange trees in a greenhouse, in another, to pad the stalls of a bishop's stable. The rare complete tapestries and even the fragments in existence to—[continued in bottom of second column]]

November Auction Prices

GOTHIC & RENAISSANCE ART

THE highest price obtained in the dispersal of the Thomas Fortune Ryan collection was \$102,000 given for a XV century sculptured marble bust of a Princess of Aragon by Laurana. Next highest were \$16,000 for the companion male bust; \$11,000 for the Brussels Pieta tapestry; \$13,000 for the Ispahan palace carpet; \$7,000 for Rodin's marble of Napoleon; \$6,750 for the XV century Limoges enamel Entry into Jerusalem by Nardon Penicaud; \$7,500 for the Houdon child bust, purchased by Miss Elinor Ryan and, we understand, to be exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; \$10,000 each for two bronze statues by the Spanish XVIII century sculptor Alonso Cano; \$6,200 for the French XIII century gilded bronze and Limoges enamel chasse; and \$6,200 for the Jean Limousin oval plate depicting stag hunts of the King of France.

ENGLISH FURNITURE & DECORATIONS

A George I armchair was sold for the high price of \$2,500; a Queen Anne armchair for \$1,500; a George II mirror for \$500; and a pair of Queen Anne stools \$680. A pair of George III small silver tureens brought \$420; a Chamberlain's Worcester dinner service \$600; a pair of Chelsea porcelain figures \$180; and a set of Louis XVI Sevres bisque statuettes by Le Riche \$1,275.

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THE MCCORMICK LIBRARY

MRS. MCCORMICK'S splendid library, including her renowned series of books bound at the Doves Bindery, first editions of Charles Lamb, Reynolds's *The Triumph of Good over Evil*, with manuscript annotations by Lamb and Coleridge, and many other important books, will be sold in February.

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