

***** ANTIQUES *****

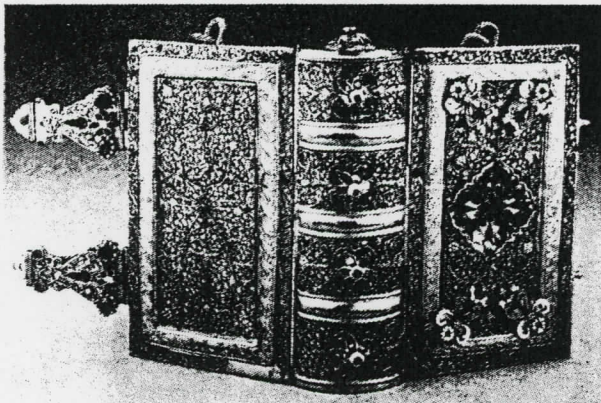
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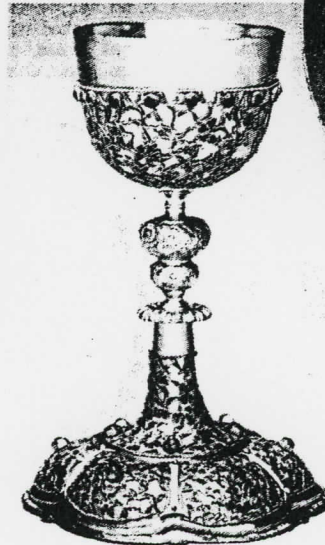
Bard Graduate Center To Show Art of Hungarian Goldsmiths



Silver-gilt, filigree, enamel prayer book cover, artist unknown, early Eighteenth Century, Transylvania.

Detail of tazza, 1620, by Erhardus Wustemann Locse, silver-gilt.

Copper gilt, carved, cloisonne and glass chalice by Simon Radnich, 1733.

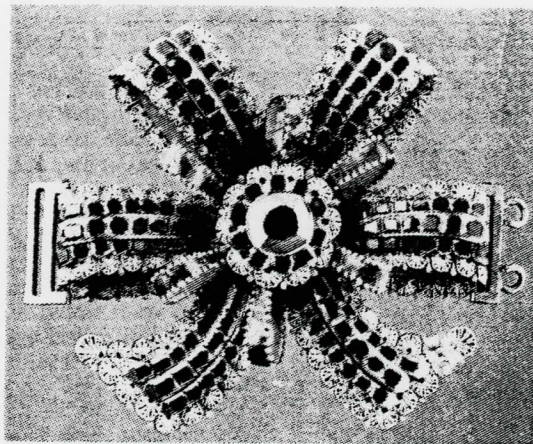


NEW YORK CITY - "Baroque Splendor: The Art of the Hungarian Goldsmith" will examine the development of the Hungarian goldsmiths' and jewelers' art from the Renaissance to the Baroque periods, from the late Sixteenth through the Eighteenth Centuries. Included in the exhibition at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts are over 200 works, such as silver and silver-gilt vessels, ecclesiastical treasures, and jewels, as well as arms and armor, textiles, paintings, and engravings which provide a broader understanding of the decorative arts of the period.

The Bard Graduate Center at 18 West 86th Street presents the exhibition from August 25 through October 30. All of the objects come from the Magyar Nemzeti Muzeum (Hungarian National Museum) in Budapest, which houses one of the largest collections of goldsmiths' work in Europe.

The historical era covered in the exhibition begins with the defeat of the Kingdom of Hungary by the Turks in 1526 and culminates with the expulsion of the Turks and the beginning of Hapsburg rule in the Eighteenth Century. During the time of Turkish occupation, Hungary was

divided into three parts: the Turks controlled the central and eastern regions, Transylvania further to the east became a self-governing principality, and the upper and western areas came under Hapsburg rule. Many goldsmiths, fleeing the war-torn central region, settled in the towns of North Hungary and Transylvania, protected by high mountains. In the workshops of the guilds in these areas, the art of the Hungarian goldsmiths flourished.



Gold, enamel and ruby pendant circa 1600, maker unknown, Transylvania.

Memberships in the guilds safeguarded the interests of the goldsmiths and assured steady work. In the late Sixteenth Century it became compulsory for goldsmiths to put a maker's mark – the master's name, often combined with the town's coat-of-arms – on every article made. This was important not only because it assured quality, but also because it proclaimed the identity of the goldsmith. As a result, many of the names of artists featured in the exhibition are known.

A variety of tankards and jugs were popular. The tankard, used for secular purposes, was cylindrical and frequently ornamented with an S-shaped handle and fitted with a lid. A plainer jug form was used for religious purposes. Later in the period, the

widely used beaker was modified to become the more slender and ornate footed beaker. Other types of Seventeenth Century work were hexagonal or octagonal ornamental plates, frequently made in sets and decorated with the owner's coat of arms, and the tazza, a footed cup with a wide shallow bowl.

A single flower, lavish bouquets, bunches of fruit, unusual animals, or biblical or mythological narratives were common motifs used to embellish the surface of the vessels. A similar decorative vocabulary is evident in the delicate embroidery and lace work of the period.

With the return of peace under the Catholic Hapsburgs in the Eighteenth Century, the rebuilding of towns damaged in the Turkish wars and their aftermath heralded the widespread use of the Baroque style, already flourishing in Western Europe.

New forms were required for the chalices, monstrances, and reliquaries in the now Catholic country. Chalices richly decorated with ribbon and shell motifs, and depicting scenes from the Old and New Testament, were produced in great numbers.

The colorful world of Hungarian metalwork of this period is apparent in jewelry. Pendants, set with enamel and precious stones, and often in the shape of bows, were among the most popular pieces. Characteristically Hungarian are the necklets and bracelets made of S-rosettes – small rosettes bent into an S-shape, ornamented with enamel and precious stones. In the second half of the Seventeenth Century, "Transylvanian enamel," enamel overpainted with thin, lace-like lines, became widespread. This technique can be seen in a number of belts and belt mounts of the

era. The paintings in the exhibition reveal how jewelry and other decorative accessories were worn.

The Bard Graduate Center is publishing a fully illustrated exhibition catalogue with essays by distinguished curators from the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum. Among the issues to be examined are the Hungarian goldsmiths' work in the context of the other decorative arts and painting from the era; Turkish and Italian influences on artists of the age; and the socio-economic and political climate of Hungary in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

The gallery is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 11 am-5 pm; Thursday 11 am-8:30 pm; closed Monday. For information call (212)721-4245.