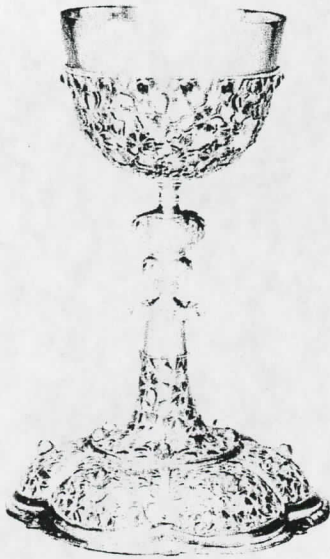


# Arts/Travel

Sunday, August 21, 1994



Hungarian goldsmiths' art heralded as

## Baroque Splendor

**M**agnificent works by Hungarian artisans from the Renaissance to the Baroque periods are showcased in an exhibition opening Thursday in New York City.

"Baroque Splendor: The Art of the Hungarian Goldsmith" examines the development of the Hungarian goldsmiths' and jewelers' art from the late 16th through 18th centuries. It will be on display through Oct. 30 at the Gallery of the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, 18 West 86th Street in Manhattan.

Included in the exhibition are more than 200 works, including silver and silver-gilt vessels, ecclesiastical treasures, and jewels, as well as arms and armor, textiles, paintings and engravings that provide a broader understanding of the decorative arts of the period.

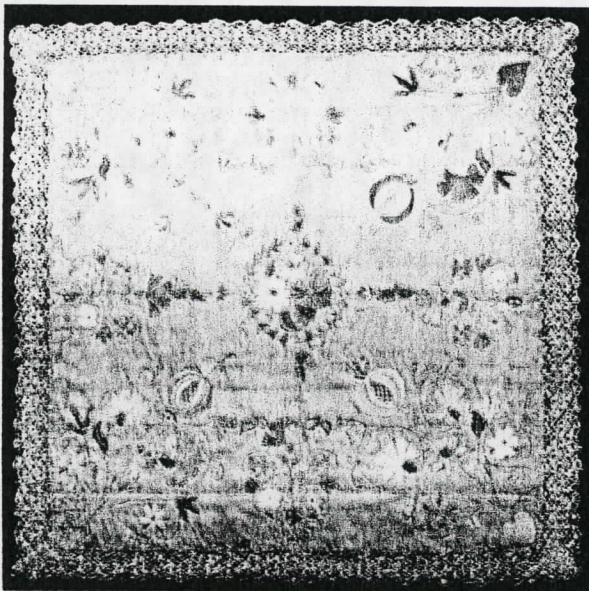
All of the objects come from the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum (Hungarian National Museum) in Budapest, which houses one of the largest collections of goldsmiths' work in Europe.

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 18th century. During the time of the 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 the high mountains. In the workshops of the guilds in these areas, the art of the Hungarian goldsmiths flourished.

Membership in the guilds safeguarded the interests of the goldsmiths and assured steady work. In the late 16th century it became compulsory for the 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.

The 17th century, the transition period between the



A copper-gilt chalice, top left, and a work of embroidery, left, are among the decorative Hungarian items featured in "Baroque Splendor."



Tazza, left, a footed cup with shallow bowl, is dated 1620.

## THROUGH THE GALLERIES

## Hungarian artistry shines in 'Baroque Splendor'

Continued from E1

Renaissance and the Baroque in Hungary, witnessed an increased number of domestic objects and the demand for new types of vessels as wealthier families became interested in accumulating and displaying a wide assortment of silver and silver-gilt objects.

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 17th-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.

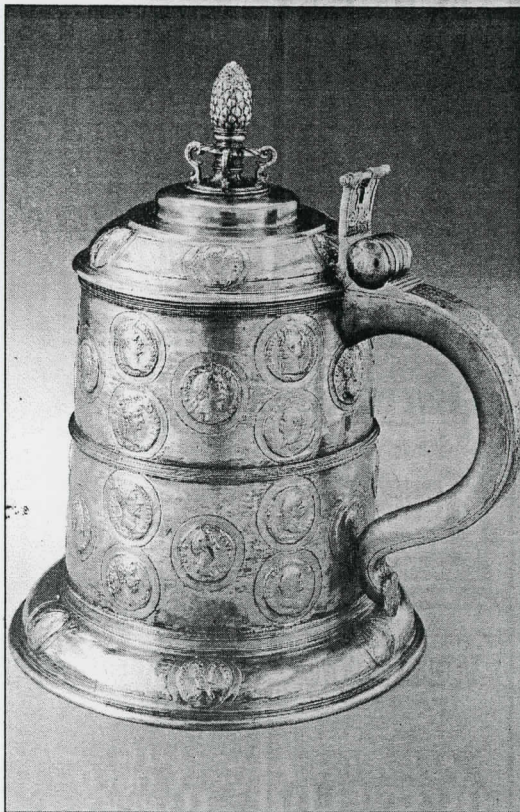
A single flower, lavish bouquets, bunches of fruit, unusual animals, or biblical or mythological narratives were common motifs used to embellish the surface of the vessels. A similar decorative vocabulary is evident in the delicate embroidery and lace work of the period.

With the return of peace under the Catholic Hapsburgs in the 18th 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 splendidly 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 in an S-shape, ornamented



The Prock Tankard, about 1600, is embossed silver-gilt.

with enamel and precious stones.

In the second half of the 17th century, "Transylvania 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.

"Baroque Slender: The Art of the Hungarian Goldsmith" was

organized by the Bard Graduate Center for the Studies in the Decorative Arts in collaboration with the Trust for Museum Exhibitions, Washington, D.C., and the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Budapest.

The exhibition is an expanded version of "Baroque Goldsmiths and Jewelers Art from Hungary," an exhibition organized by the Trust for Museum Exhibitions and curated by Dr. Judit Hajto-Kolba,



Tankard, about 1690, is signed by the artist, Sebastian Hann.

curator of the Goldsmith Collection of the Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum.

The Bard Graduate Center is publishing a fully-illustrated exhibition catalogue with essays by 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 17th and 18th centuries.

The Gallery at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, located at 18 West 86th Street in Manhattan, is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; closed Mondays. Admission is \$2 for adults; \$1 for seniors; children under 12 are admitted at no charge.