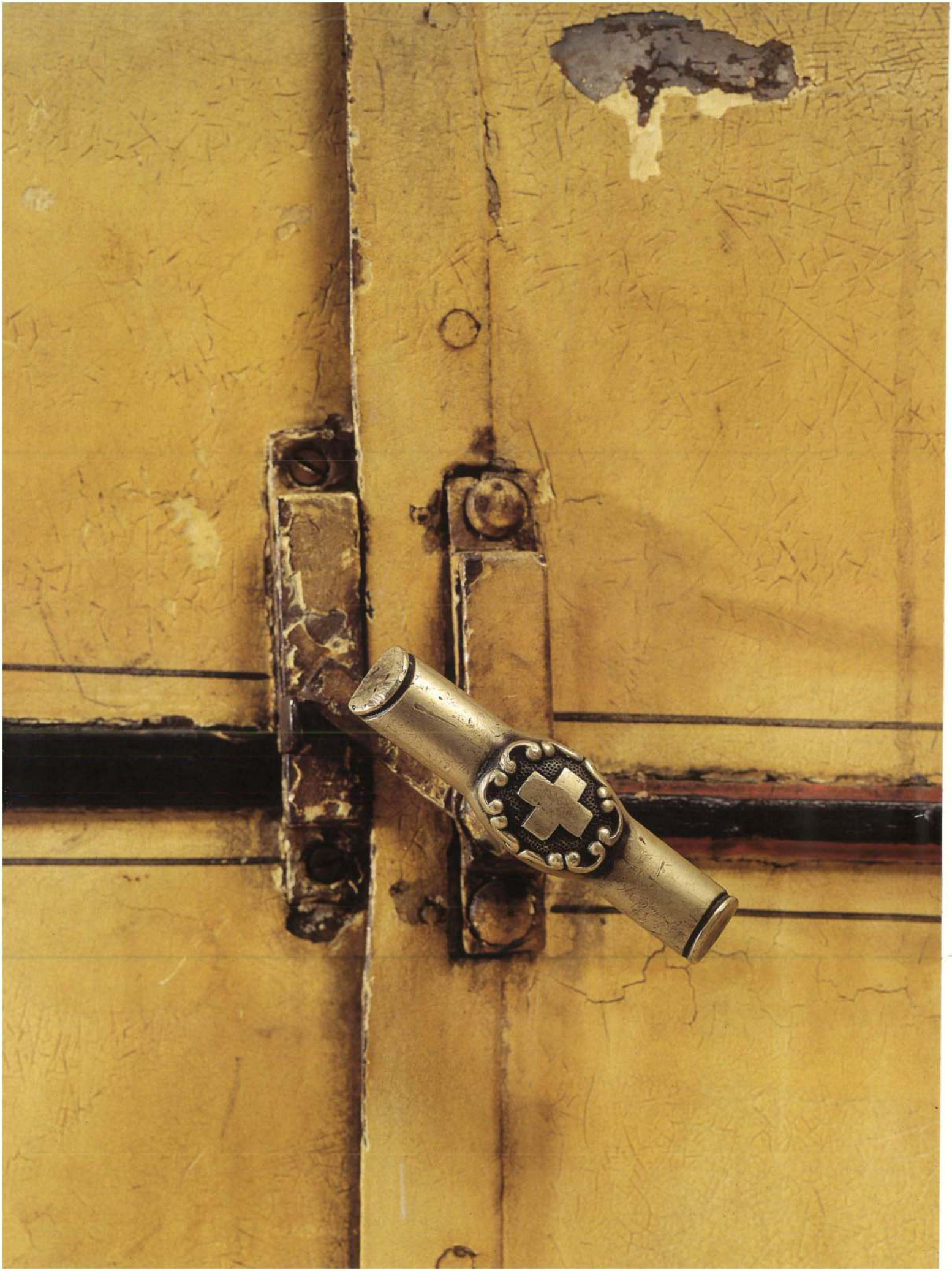
SWISS NATIONAL MUSEUM
ZURICH & PRANGINS

SWISS MUSEUMS



SWISS NATIONAL MUSEUM ZURICH & PRANGINS

ANDRES FURGER

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SWISS MUSEUMS

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Frontispiece
Swiss national postal coach (cf. pp. 100–101)
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Contents

Preface

The Swiss National Museum has a legal obligation to collect and publicly exhibit objects that reflect the history of Swiss culture from its very beginnings down to the present day. This essentially encyclopaedic approach was established during the 19th century and has been maintained ever since. Over the past 100 years, the collection has expanded to include approximately 800,000 objects. A large proportion of these are displayed in the eight museums that currently form the Swiss National Museum. The objects in this volume are primarily to be found at the main building in Zurich and in the newly opened section at the Château de Prangins in the French-speaking part of the country.

This book uses a selection of 58 objects to provide a representative cross-section of Swiss cultural history. Each object represents an integral part of the whole. This is the reason why close-up photography is used so extensively to draw the reader's attention to detail. It also explains why we devote equal space to the late 19th and 20th centuries, although the collection for this period has yet to develop the breadth and depth of earlier centuries. Considerable efforts have been made in the past ten years to fill these gaps. This volume marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the National Museum in Zurich, as well as the opening of the affiliate in Prangins. It is hoped that both the publication and the new museum on Lake Geneva will strengthen links between the German and French-speaking parts of the country.

Many of the Swiss National Museum's staff have worked on this volume and I should like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to them all. Special thanks go to Monica Iseli and Hans Peter Treichler who were responsible for editing and proof-reading the manuscript. With the exception of a few pictures, all the photographs were taken by Donat Stuppan especially for this publication. The results bear testimony to the remarkable sensitivity he demonstrated in carrying out this jointly developed task.

The book was made possible by the extraordinary commitment of Banque Paribas and the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors, Adalbert Korff, to whom I own a sincere debt of gratitude. It was designed and edited by the staff of the Swiss Institute for Art Research, who likewise deserve my special thanks.

Andres Furger
Director of the Swiss National Museum

The Foundation and Building of the Swiss National Museum in Zurich

In the age of historicism, several decades after the founding of the Swiss Confederation in 1848, preparations were made for the establishment of a central collection of national antiquities. Two factors finally provided the legal foundation for a national museum in 1890: first, a gradually developing sense of responsibility on the part of the representatives of the new state towards their cultural heritage and, second, the alarming increase in sales of important antiquities to foreign buyers. In addition, there was a growing need for the federal state to provide a cultural self-portrait in the shape of a national museum (cf. p. 110). Like other European states, Switzerland placed the emphasis on a particular epoch from its past, in this case the then much-revered Middle Ages. As a result, the collection concentrated on artifacts from the Romanesque and Gothic periods as well as the Renaissance. It was only fitting that the building designed to house the rapidly growing collections should be of a distinctly medieval character.

Finally completed in 1898, the museum directly behind Zurich's main railway station is dominated by its tower-like gatehouse. Above the entrance in golden letters it says:

SCHWEIZERISCHES LANDESMUSEUM
GEGRÜNDET DURCH BESCHLUSS DER
EIDGENÖSSISCHEN RÄTE
ERBAUT VON DER STADT ZÜRICH
(Swiss National Museum / Founded by decree of the Swiss Parliament / Built by the city of Zurich)

This staid inscription conceals the colourful story of the building of the museum. The federal structure of Switzerland's democratic state had made the very notion of a central museum highly controversial from the outset. The announcement of the chosen location had led to a running battle, resulting in a test of strength in the country's bicameral system, with the upper and lower chambers taking opposite positions. The dispute between the cities of Lucerne, Basle, Berne and Zurich and their supporters ended in a narrow victory for the then rapidly up-and-coming city of Zurich. By way of return, the city fathers were obliged to put in their own culturally significant collections – as a kind of basic inventory – and to build the premises at their own expense. A project of such controversial origins could never be housed in a cube-shaped edifice, in the style of a Renaissance temple, for example. The solution finally chosen was a castle-like complex with a distinctly eclectic character that reflected the regional diversity of Switzerland's cultural history. The project was completed at astonishing speed, as evidenced by the banderole above the entrance: Built between 1892 and 1898. On 25 June 1898, the Museum's official inauguration was marked by an historical procession through the city centre.

The pair of figures dominating the entrance stand on a pedestal held aloft by two lions, the traditional shield-bearers on Zurich's coat-of-arms. To the left and right of the Swiss cross stand an old Swiss warrior with a sword symbolizing defence and a Swiss woman holding a distaff. In old German law, the latter represented the fief that passed to female descendants on extinction of the male line and probably also stands for the domestic industriousness of Swiss womanhood. While the woman turns her face towards visitors, the man looks into the distance. The upper section of the tower features Romanesque windows topped by a row of merlons and a Gothic roof. An attractive complement to the building's castle-like architectural style, which is occasionally considered rather forbidding even today, are the two huge wisteria, carefully tended for many, many years, that climb up the sides of the tower.

Until 1932, the wing to the right of the tower was home to the School of Art and Design: in line with historicist thinking, it was hoped that the Museum's collection would provide fledgling artists and designers with suitable inspiration.

However, just as the present is in a continuous state of flux, so too is our view of history and institutions that make history their business. Back in the 19th century, our forefathers decided the National Museum should be housed in a single, central building. In the course of the 20th century, there has been a growing conviction that other museums should be affiliated. This has led to the establishment of further offshoots in Wildegg, Cantine di Gandria, Seewen and Schwyz, as well as two more branches in the city of Zurich itself. Gradually, the belief that the Museum should also have a suitably imposing counterpart in the French-speaking part of the country was accepted and realized.

Hall of Weapons. Photograph, c. 1907

Gustav Gull (1858–1942)
Swiss National Museum
Zurich, 1892–1898

Robert Durrer, *Heinrich Angst, erster Direktor des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums und Britischer Generalkonsul in Zürich*, Glarus 1948.
– *Schweizerisches Landes-Museum – Zürichs Bewerbung. Den Hohen Eidgenössischen Räthen Gewidmet. Im Dezember 1890.* – *Festgabe auf die Eröffnung des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums in Zürich am 25. Juni 1898.*

Château de Prangins: the National Museum in French-speaking Switzerland

To celebrate its one hundredth birthday in June 1998, the National Museum will be opening its new premises in French-speaking Switzerland: the Château de Prangins (Vaud), situated halfway between Lausanne and Geneva. After a century of housing the entire collection in Zurich, the Swiss National Museum believes the time has come to display a sizeable proportion of its exhibits in another part of the country, thus building a cultural bridge between Switzerland's different language regions.

It was with this objective in mind that the cantons of Vaud and Geneva offered the Prangins estate to the Swiss Confederation in 1975. The Swiss National Museum had also selected the location because it boasted a combination of features that made it particularly well suited for the purpose: the Château itself, which dates from the beginning of the 18th century and is of considerable architectural and historical interest; its splendid location on a terrace overlooking Lake Geneva against the imposing backdrop of Mont Blanc; and its interior.

However, it was to take many years of patient work before it could be opened to the public. The building and its two annexes were extremely dilapidated and required painstaking restoration. In addition, transforming a private residence into a public building demands the installation of sophisticated security, heating, ventilation and other equipment. Finally, the grounds surrounding the Château also required comprehensive renovation and nowhere was this more true than in the vegetable garden, where old fruit and vegetable varieties are cultivated.

Now open to the public, Prangins combines a permanent museum of 18th and 19th century Swiss history coupled with temporary exhibitions and an events centre.

In the museum section, visitors make their way through a series of displays on Swiss history from 1750 to 1920 and discover the past of the estate which houses it. The ground floor provides an introduction to the Age of Enlightenment, while the first floor demonstrates the political, economic, social and cultural development of Switzerland from the Ancien Régime to the beginnings of the 20th century. On the top floors are depictions of Switzerland's relations with the rest of the world and the country's integration into the global economy. In the cellars, visitors can trace the origins of the Château and its construction and discover the workings of the barony and its economic system. Finally, not far from the vegetable garden is a place of relaxation and recreation: an exhibition that evokes the pleasures of horticulture and provides some insight into the main changes in the Swiss countryside since the 18th century.

The enormous rooms in the Château's old press-house and annexe are ideal for regular temporary exhibitions from other Swiss or foreign museums, which in turn encourages inter-museum loans and offers the public a better choice. To round off its facilities, the Château de Prangins houses an events centre that addresses issues of relevance to the Switzerland of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The centre organizes workshops, conferences and seminars, as well as cultural events (plays, concerts etc.).

From the very beginning, the Château de Prangins seems to have been predestined for its eventual role as a focal point of relations between German and French-speaking Switzerland. Indeed, it was built and inhabited for almost a century by a family of German-Swiss origin which, after moving to France in the early 17th century, decided to set up home on the banks of Lake Geneva in 1723. For it was in that year that the Prangins estate was purchased by one Louis Guiguer, a descendant of the Gygers of Bürglen in the canton of Thurgau. On its grounds stood a ruined château that dated from the second half of the 16th century and was itself constructed on the site of an earlier building. Louis Guiguer thus became the Baron of Prangins and added the cachet of nobility to his immense fortune. As a banker with connections in Paris, London, Amsterdam and Geneva, he operated at the heart of an international network and was closely involved in the major political and financial issues that characterized the end of the reign of Louis XIV and the Regency. It was he who commissioned the building of the present château, with construction – no doubt based on plans drawn up by a French architect – starting in the 1730s.

Louis Guiguer and his wife Judith, née van Robais, do not appear to have lived at Prangins themselves. They bequeathed the estate to their nephew Jean-Georges, who moved into the château in 1755 a few months after lending it to Voltaire, who was likewise looking for somewhere to live in the area.

After the death of Jean-Georges Guiguer in 1770, his son, Louis-François, a former lieutenant in the Swiss Guards, made Prangins his home. His arrival ushered in a glittering chapter in the history of the château, which became a centre of cultural and social exchange and hosted lavish entertainments. The diary which Louis-François kept faithfully until his death in 1786 is a moving testimony to this epoch and a precious source of information.

It was his son, Charles-Jules Guiguer de Prangins, later to become a general in the Swiss army, who sold the family estate in 1814.

The new owner, Joseph Bonaparte, older brother of Napoleon I and the exiled former king of Spain, undoubtedly intended to settle in Prangins for good. However, the governments of the allied powers meeting at the Congress of Vienna took a dim view of the former king's presence in Switzerland. Joseph left Prangins hurriedly in March 1815 to join Napoleon, who had returned from the island of Elba.

During the 19th century, the estate gradually became fragmented as it passed from hand to hand. As of 1873, its prestige was to rise again as a boarding school run by a community of Moravian monks. For over 50 years it housed a school of international reputation and welcomed more than 2,000 pupils, most of whom came from English or German-speaking countries. Instruction fo-

Entrance to the Château de Prangins

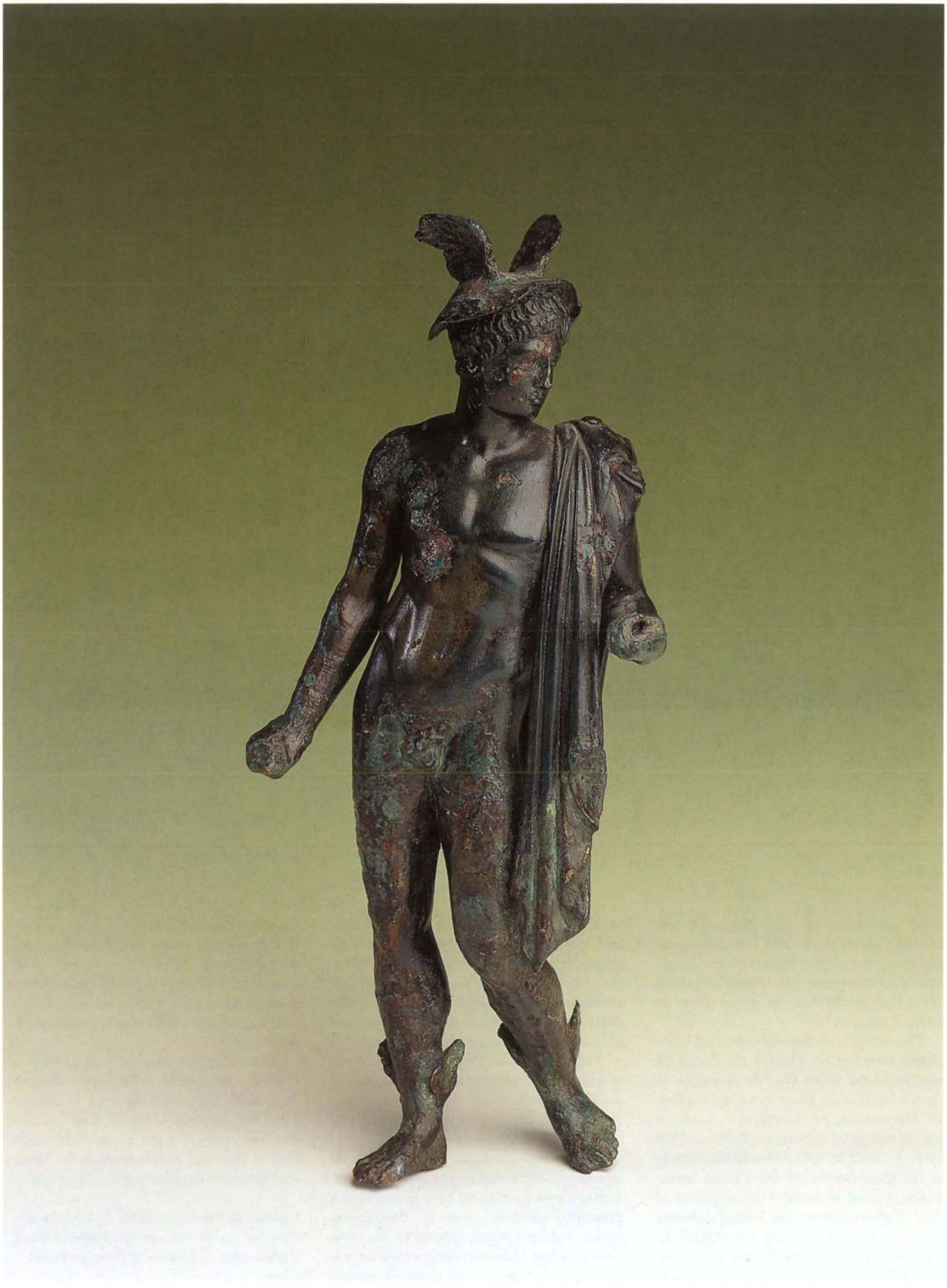
cused on commerce and languages, but drawing, sport, music and even photography were also taught. Ruined by the departure of so many foreign students as a result of the First World War, the school closed its doors in 1919.

The estate was then bought and completely restored by Horace de Pourtalès, brother of the writer Guy de Pourtalès. In 1930, it became the property of Mrs Katherine McCormick, an American famous for her patronage of culture, medicine and the feminist cause. In 1964, she sold the château to the government of the United States, which planned to make it the residence of their Ambassador to the United Nations. However, this project was abandoned for financial reasons and the château was put on the market once again in 1970. After a brief period in the possession of Bernard Cornfeld, a financier who went bankrupt soon after, the Prangins estate was purchased by the cantons of Vaud and Geneva in 1974 and presented the following year to the Swiss Confederation as the home of the National Museum in French-speaking Switzerland.

The Château de Prangins is an historic monument of immense importance. Built in the French style of the 1730s, it impresses visitors with its size, its symmetry and the harmony of its proportions, as well as the great restraint exercised in its design. It stands on an impressive terrace, each of its four corners dominated by a tower with a pyramidal pavilion roof. In the almost square main courtyard, formed by the principal building and two facing wings, we are struck by the absence of a central, monumental doorway. Eight doors of equal significance provide access to the different areas of the château and attest to its role as the economic and administrative centre of the barony, housing reception rooms, the private section and ancillary services under the same roof.

The Swiss National Museum and the architects responsible for the château's restoration have been rigorous in their respect for the original layout. This provides the framework for the permanent exhibition of 18th and 19th century Swiss history and the other functions of the Museum.

Chantal de Schoulepnikoff, *Le Château de Prangins. La demeure historique* (Album no 2), Zurich 1991. – *Château de Prangins. Guide*, 1998.



In the Company of Hermes

When the museum was founded, the intention was clearly for it to focus on the remote past of the territory that had subsequently combined to form the Swiss Confederation. Today, its curators prefer to stress the importance of a comprehensive collection that covers every epoch in our history from the Stone Age to the present. This approach is also reflected in the current publication, whose chronological sequence represents a bridge spanning the millennia. Objects from the collections in Zurich and Prangins form its building blocks. Every single object says something about the cultural history of Switzerland. The authors make use of each artifact or work of art as a means of probing the country's distant past. Both text and photographs make extensive use of the close-up. The principle that lies at the heart of a museum's function – to bring the visitor as close as possible to the original – also applies to these pages. We have also attempted to view many objects in a new light and reveal unusual interconnections between them.

The prelude to our journey in time through Switzerland's cultural history takes the form of the bronze figure depicted on the cover: the Greek god Hermes, the divine personification of the guardian of doors and gates. In his company, we shall pass through the dark arch at the foot of the tower; he will be our guide on our journey of discovery through the millennia.

According to 19th-century accounts, the statuette was found, together with a number of other bronze objects, in Thalwil (Zurich) and was passed on to the archaeological department by Zurich's Antiquarian Society, many of whose possessions are lodged safely within the museum's walls. Hermes represents the heritage of antiquity, which left such a mark on Celtic and Roman civilizations and has been reinterpreted continuously since Renaissance times – and is still predominant even today. According to Caesar, the god known to the Romans as Mercury was worshipped as a major divinity by the citizens of Roman-occupied Gaul. Because of its exceptional quality, the 22-centimetre high bronze statuette, which dates from the 2nd century, is regarded as one of the most important representations of Mercury to come from the Roman provinces. Although the partly corroded statuette lacks some of Hermes' more familiar attributes, such as the staff in the left hand and the purse in the right, his winged hat and sandals leave us in no doubt about his role as messenger of the gods and companion of souls.

Mercury's elegant stance – he is dressed only in a cloak draped over his shoulder – and the beautifully worked body with the left leg slightly trailing remind us of Greek models from the 5th century BC. There are hints of a sculpture of the Trojan hero Diomedes, commonly attributed to Cresilas, as well as of the so-called Doryphoros of Polyclitus. The classically trained Roman artist has endowed his small bronze with many elements borrowed from Polyclitus, for example, the slightly impudent turn of the head towards the trailing leg that characterizes our Mercury. The reinterpretation of a Greek sculpture by a Roman artist, who here transforms Hermes from a hero into a god, is a well-known phenomenon and is typical of the age.

The Mercury of Thalwil is a perfect example of how Greek culture, passed down via Gallo-Roman times, continues to affect us today, how deep our cultural foundations are and how intricately the paths of history are interconnected. To shed light on history and the stories it tells is one of the most important tasks carried out behind the scenes at the National Museum, which possesses more than 800,000 objects. Our book presents only a small selection of them. A significant proportion of the 18th and 19th-century objects and the vast majority of the 20th-century works of art were acquired during the last ten years. The work of acquisition, particularly of 20th-century objects, continues apace. A museum lives with and from its collections. The text of this book is based on extensive studies of objects performed by many generations of researchers and, in particular, on the research conducted by staff currently employed by the Swiss National Museum.

Mercury from Thalwil. Roman
Bronze statuette
H. 22 cm; W. 9.5 cm; D. 6.3 cm
A 3447

In the "Gifts to the Collection" section of the Zurich Antiquarian Society's sixteenth report for 1859 and 1860, we read: "from Mr Spengler Suter in Thalwil: Mercury statuette in bronze, and fragment of a bronze dagger from Thalwil". The possibility that the statuette found its way to Thalwil through a dealer cannot be excluded.

Walther-Herwig Schuchhardt, "Der Merkur von Thalwil", in: *Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 20/1960, pp. 163–175.
– Annalis Leibundgut, in: *Polyklet. Der Bildhauer der griechischen Klassik*, exh. cat., Liebighaus, Frankfurt a. M. 1990, pp. 415ff. and 666f.

Detail of wild horses

Humanity's cultural history stretches back as far as its physical beginnings, that is to say more than two million years. For the vast majority of its existence, the economic basis of human life has been hunting and gathering. Since the last Ice Age, the early Palaeolithic, the history of Switzerland has been determined by human beings as we understand the term today, by Homo sapiens sapiens, who have bequeathed us a rich legacy of objects including a number of astonishing works of art. When we think of cave dwellers, we still have the image of half-naked savages sheltering in wretched caverns. However, the caves whose wall paintings we now so admire served as places of culture and not, as is commonly believed, as dwelling places, which were often located in the open. At that time, after the retreat of the glaciers, the foothills of the Alps and central Switzerland resembled a steppe. The flora and fauna were similar to those still found in the far north and animal life included herds of reindeer and small wild horses that were intensively hunted.

The 29-centimetre-long pierced stave depicted here was made from a reindeer's antlers and engraved with a sequence of two wild horses. It was discovered in 1893 in a shallow cave at Schweizersbild near Schaffhausen, a small recess in the rock which yielded numerous bones, teeth and flints. The find was carefully unearthed, set in plaster at the excavation site and freed from its plaster case by the later curator of the National Museum. Apart from a small number of omissions from the back of the first horse, the rod has survived intact. Such rods with a circular opening at one end are very common for this period but their function still remains a mystery. Could they be arrow stretchers, sceptres or handles of some kind?

The rod, which is some 13,000 years old, is decorated with V-shaped marks and lines at either end. Between them, we find the depiction of two horses walking to the left with their heads slightly lowered. The front horse is blowing its nostrils, its mouth open.

Pierced stave with wild horses. Early Palaeolithic
Schweizersbild near Schaffhausen
Engraved antler. L. 29 cm
A 11242.26

Thanks to a few score marks indicating the horses' thick hair, the depiction makes a three-dimensional impression.

Markus Höneisen / Susanne Peyer,
Schweizersbild – ein Jägerlager der Späteiszeit,
Schaffhausen 1994, pp. 104ff.

Fertility and the first farmers

The Neolithic Revolution is the name given to a process which lasted many thousands of years and started in approximately 10,000 BC in the Middle East before spreading both eastwards and westwards. It reached Switzerland between 6000 and 5000 BC. Its chief innovations were crop-raising and livestock breeding. This was the time of the pile villages which Swiss researchers began to study more than one hundred years ago. These lake settlements have long been thought of as an island-like idyll. Indeed, the pile village became a symbol of the small Alpine republic sandwiched between the great European powers (see p. 79). Today, we know that these villages were common during the early Stone Age and that in central Switzerland they were primarily established around the lakes of the unwooded plateau. For their inhabitants, they were not so much an idyll as backbreaking work, with Nature seemingly reluctant to give way in the face of this new way of life. To a very large extent, communities now produced their own food, breeding pigs, cattle, cows, goats and sheep as well as cultivating cereals. This fact is attested to by remains of cereals which have been preserved under favourable conditions, particularly when carbonized, as depicted by the ear on the right to which a host of cereal grains are still clinging.

Gynaecomorphic vessel. Neolithic
Zurich
Fired clay. H. 29 cm; Diam. 20.3 cm
A 52167

Before it was possible to plant cereals, the fertile ground had to be cleared. During this period, our part of the earth witnessed a process that still continues in certain parts of the world today: indigenous hunter-gatherers are driven off their land or forced to adapt to the new, more rigid way of life. This includes new forms of dwellings, particularly fixed and clearly ordered wooden constructions.

The strictly regimented outlines of the villages of the early Stone Age testify to this new mode of habitation. The new economy also provided enough food to sustain more people than had previously been possible. That is why many of the favourably situated bays around the lakes of central Switzerland harbour traces of the Neolithic period and Bronze Age settlements.

Teams from the National Museum have performed independent excavations at these sites. Among other things, the early Neolithic layers have yielded numerous clay vessels. These storage and cooking vessels are the innovative products of Neolithic culture. A very small number of vessels dating from this period (approximately 3700 BC) are decorated with small bulges in the form of female breasts. These can be interpreted in terms of fertility cults, which are also indicated by wall decorations and miniature figures dating from this period.

Die ersten Bauern, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1991. – René Wyss, *Archäologische Forschungen: Die jungsteinzeitlichen Bauerndörfer von Egolzwil 4 im Wauwilermoos*, 3 vols., Zurich 1983/1988. – Id., *Steinzeitliche Bauern auf der Suche nach neuen Lebensformen Egolzwil 3 und die Egolzwiler Kultur*, 2 vols., Zurich 1994/1996.

Innovations from the Neolithic period

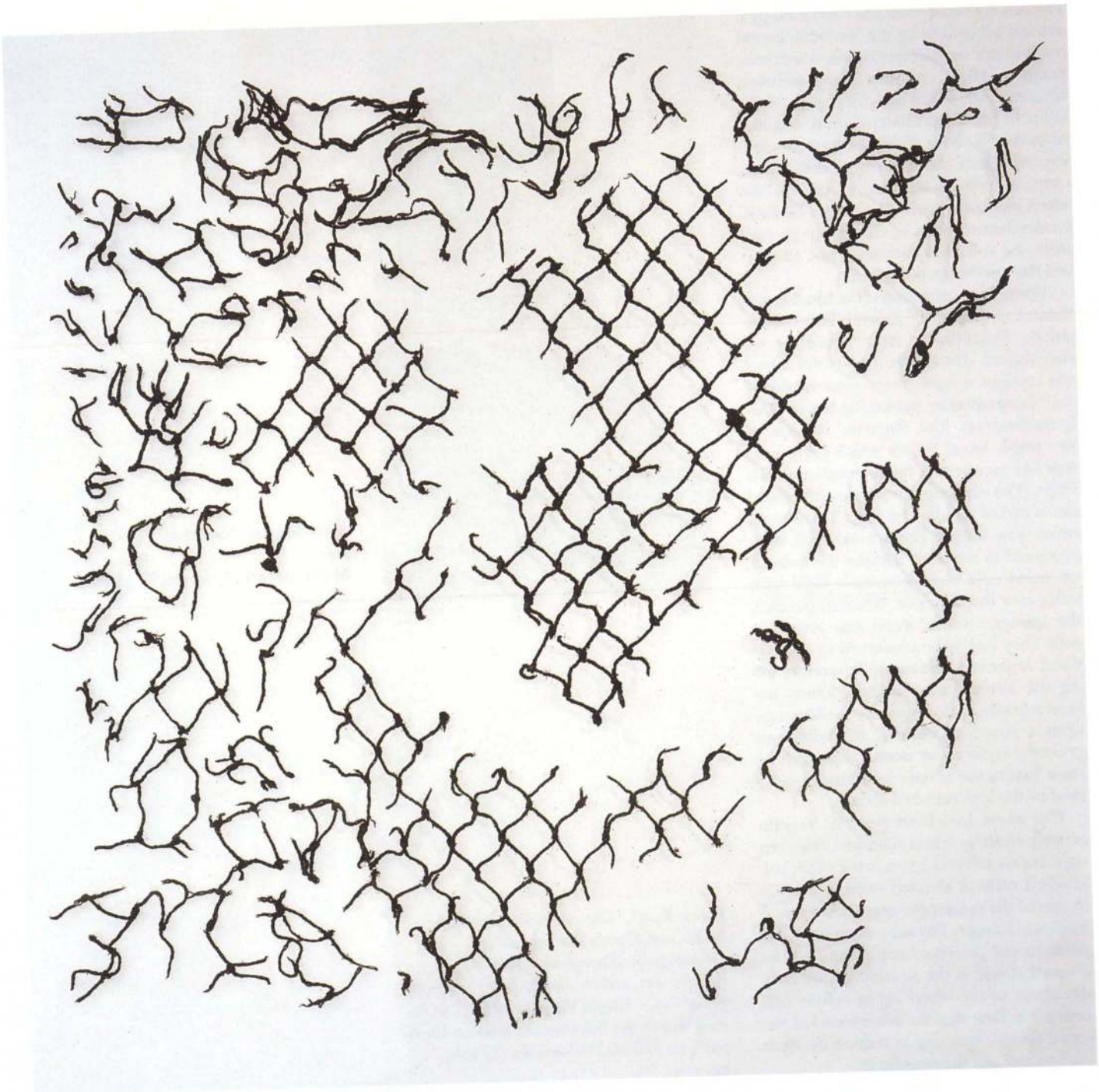
The new forms of economics and food production ushered in by the Neolithic period resulted in a wave of innovation which continues to affect us today. Many technical achievements, which still form part of the fabric of life in the modern world, originated in the Neolithic Age. Like the economic structure itself, the majority of innovations came from the East. One example is the wheel as a component of a cart or carriage. Its development can be traced step by step, from the solid wheel through the strutted and then to the spoked wheel.

The wheels unearthed at the lakeside settlement to the east of Zurich's Bellevue are among Switzerland's most important archaeological discoveries. Our solid wheel was brought to light in 1976 near the site of the current Ringier publishing house (Dufourstrasse 23). The fragment consists of two maple wood boards which are bound together on one side by three rabbeted ash strips. The close-up shows the embedded inside end of the shortest strip. The wheels, which were located below water level, were preserved in the earth because the individual wood cells were completely filled with water over the millennia. When discovered, the spongy, swollen wood was extremely soft. They had to be conserved in the National Museum's restoration laboratory using the alcohol-ether method, which has been refined and developed by the Museum. Over a period of months, the water was gradually replaced by alcohol and then by ether before the wheels were finally stabilized by the application of resin.

Our wheel dates from 2700 BC. Together with a similar wheel fragment from the same excavation and a somewhat older, solid wheel without inserted strips, it belongs to one of the earliest groups of wheel excavations in Europe. The same excavation also yielded a well-preserved axle which could be inserted snugly in the square axle recess in the centre of the wheel. As in railway carriages, it is clear that the axle rotated as the wheel turned, resulting in friction between the box rest and the rotating axle.

Wheel fragment. Neolithic
Zurich
Maple and ash. L. 63 cm; W. 32 cm
A 86041

Ulrich Ruoff, "Die schnurkeramischen Räder von Zürich-Pressehaus", in: *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt* 8/1978, pp. 275–283, and in: *Antike Welt* 10/1979, 4, pp. 46–50. – Eugen Woytowitsch, "Die ersten Wagen der Schweiz: die ältesten Europas", in: *Helvetia Archaeologica* 61/1985, pp. 2–45.



Woven artifacts recovered from damp ground

Excavations conducted in Switzerland's many Neolithic lakeside settlements have brought huge finds to light. The inexorable rise of the water level in the lakes from the end of the Bronze Age onwards permitted the preservation of many organic remains in the damp layers of organic residue. Thanks to this type of material, we often know more about everyday life in the last few millennia BC than we do about the ages which followed. The Swiss National Museum houses one of Europe's most significant Neolithic collections, containing a huge variety of woven materials. The very first researchers into Switzerland's pile villages discovered such textile remains. However, it was left to the National Museum, and Emil Vogt in particular, to pursue the systematic investigation of these discoveries. According to Vogt, this type of product, "played a very important role in the lives of Stone Age people".

Three samples can easily suggest the extent of the museum's collection: The net found in Zurich's Kleiner Hafner was taken from a settlement dated to approximately 4200 to 4000 BC – one of the oldest in the entire Zurich basin. Such nets were used for catching fish. They were made by hand or with the help of a needle and from fine flax threads that were frequently less than one millimetre in diameter. These nets testify to the processing of flax which, according to botanical research, was produced with increasing frequency from this period onwards. A variety of bobbins and balls of material provide evidence of the fine working of flax and sometimes also bast (linden or oak bast). The diameter of the material which forms our ball is only one millimetre and the thread was produced by twisting together two strands which were no more than half a millimetre thick. The spinning of continuous thread was one of the great technological advances of the Neolithic Age and permitted the later development of weaving, Switzerland's earliest example of which dates from shortly after 4000 BC.

The object discovered in Maur is an example of the most common type of weaving found in Neolithic times: chain stitching or yarn-bound weave. These were generally produced from basts, which were woven together either as strips or as finely worked threads. They are characterized by the fact that the strands are woven around a (significantly thicker) starting thread. The strands running in the other direction bind these threads or bast strips together. This means that the weaving was hung up during production, a technique which can be considered a precursor of loom-based weaving.

Emil Vogt, *Geflechte und Gewebe der Steinzeit*, Basle 1937. – Antoinette Rast-Eicher, "Gewebe und Geflechte", in: Werner Stöckli / Urs Niffeler / Eduard Gross-Klee (eds.), *Neolithikum. Die Schweiz vom Paläolithikum bis zum frühen Mittelalter II*, Basle 1995, pp. 169ff.

Ball of thread. After 4000 BC
Erlenbach/Widen
Linen (flax). Thread: Diam. 1 mm, twisted from two separate threads of 0.5 mm each
A 79568

Weaving. c. 2500 BC
Maur/Schifflände
Tree bast, yarn-bound weave. 40 × 35 cm
A 79649

Fishing net. 4200–4000 BC
Zurich, Kleiner Hafner
Linen (flax) knotted, carbonated
Mesh: 1.6 × 1.6 cm; Thread: Diam. 0.15 mm
A 79311

Respectful burial for a chief

Since the early Neolithic period, the burial of the dead has been accompanied by ritual. The grave discovered in Lenzburg in the canton of Aargau is an excellent example of a careful, respectful burial of the late Neolithic period. The necklace made of pierced animal teeth, the weapons (arrows) and the comb made of bone make it clear that the deceased must have occupied an important position in the community. The man, who was approximately 35 years old, was buried in a carefully constructed stone coffin laid on a flat plinth. Before this was possible, the grave had to be cleared of the remains of one or more earlier burials.

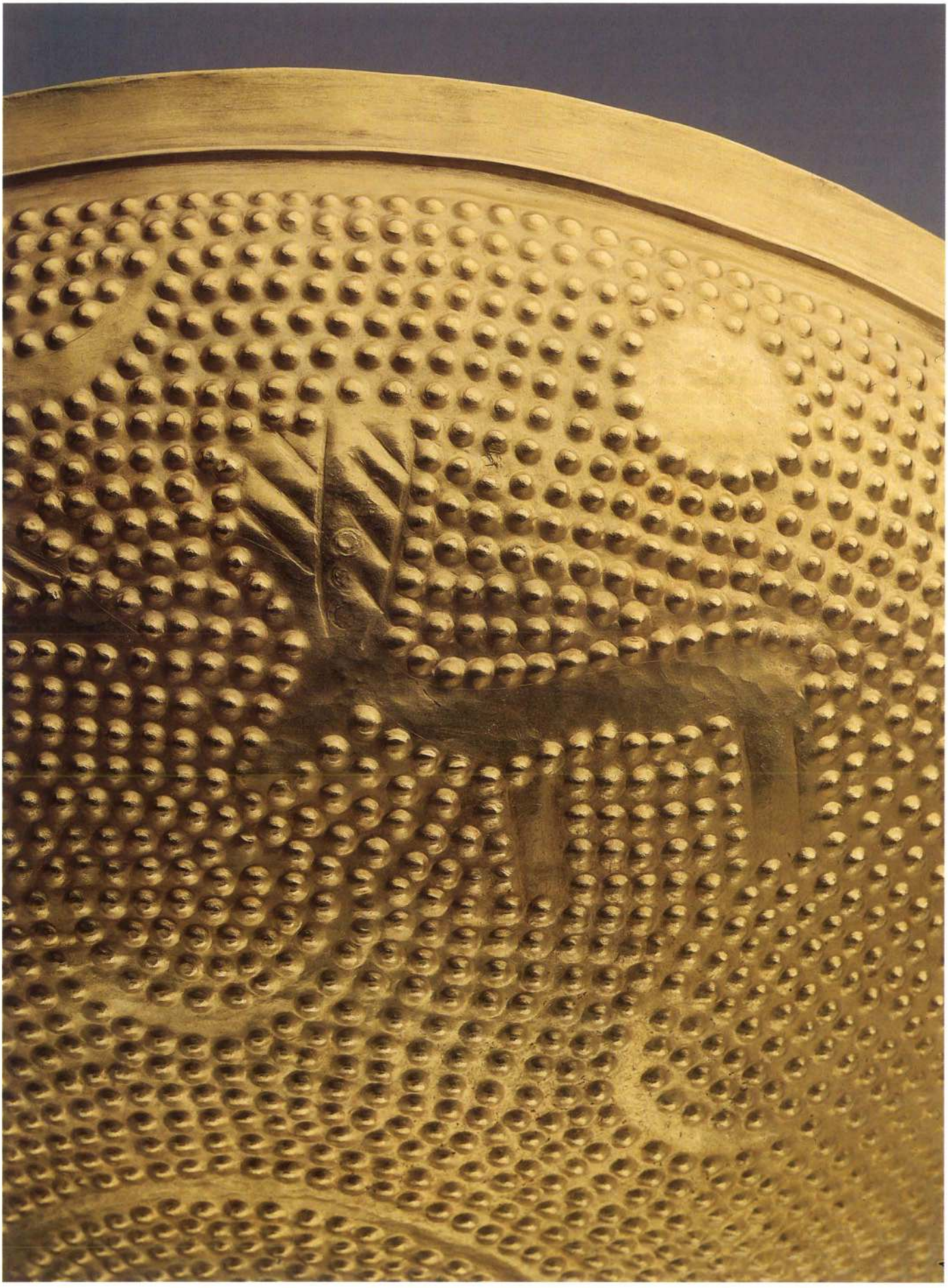
In 1959, a team from the National Museum raised the entire stone grave in a single block. In the laboratory the skeleton was then freed from the narrow grave. The obviously crouched position of the corpse may well indicate that it was bound and is reminiscent of the concept of the so-called "dangerous dead", whose return in the form of phantoms was so feared by the living.

The grave testifies to the practice of individual burials in the period around 4200 BC. Later, multiple burials in one and the same grave were to become increasingly common, leading to collective burials in the well-known dolmen burial chambers. If we use the evidence of the dead to consider the living, it is possible that these changes in ritual reflect changes in social paradigms, perhaps echoing the extension of the family to form larger clan groups.

At this time, cereals represented an important source of nourishment. The grains were finely ground on a flat stone slab using a small stone roller. Naturally, the abraded stone was mixed with the ground cereal and was chewed along with the food at mealtimes, thus greatly wearing down the teeth. This phenomenon can be observed both in the buried chief and in many other Neolithic jawbones.

Grave. 4th millennium BC
Lenzburg, grave 12
Bones, stone. c. 129 × 149 cm
A 86048 (grave complex)

René Wyss, in: *Germania* 45/1967, pp. 20–34. – Id., *Archäologische Forschungen. Das neolithische Gräberfeld von Lenzburg*, Zurich 1998 (to be published). – *Die Schweiz vom Paläolithikum bis zum frühen Mittelalter II*, eds. Werner Stöckli et al., Basle 1995, pp. 259–273.



An unsolved mystery

The golden bowl from Altstetten is surrounded by mystery. We know just as little about its function and the exact meaning of the symbols inscribed on it as we do about the precise time and place of its creation. There is no known parallel for this bowl and, as a result, estimates of its age vary from 1000 to 400 BC. However, the late Bronze Age (1000 to 800 BC) appears to be the most likely dating. This extraordinary object, which weighs 907.3 grams, is the heaviest gold vessel dating from this period ever found in western Europe. The bowl is formed from a mixture of 85% pure gold and 14% silver with traces of other metals. It measures 25 centimetres in diameter and the body varies between 0.4 and 2 millimetres in thickness. The gold was not mined but was washed from gold-bearing river sand.

The badly dented bowl, buried approximately one meter underground, was discovered in 1906 during the construction of a railway in Zurich's Altstetten district not far from the current Swiss Federal Railway works. The possibility of some form of cremation cannot be completely excluded. However, it is more likely that the bowl was intended as a votive offering to a divinity. When the bowl was found, it was lying upturned on a flat stone, inadequately protected by a totally fragmented ceramic vessel which had been placed above it. This position is reminiscent of that of the sun between day and night. Four full moon or sun symbols and four crescent moon symbols form the upper frieze while the lower frieze consists of seven crescent moons. Between the friezes is a band of seven animals introduced by the stag illustrated in the detail opposite and followed by six hoofed animals (sheep, goat, chamois or ibex).

We can say more, however, about the method used in its manufacture. Once the flat bowl shape had been hammered out of a single piece of gold at the anvil, the goldsmith used a scribing iron to engrave the figures in the metal. It was then necessary to form the rows of indentations around the animal shapes. In the case of the stag, a number of indentations were obviously initially punched inwards between the two horns and then continued outwards around the figure as the three concentric circles clearly show. The antlers were chased to provide a clearer outline. Finally, the goldsmith filled the empty space with a dense network of indentations which catch the light in a way which is a characteristic of this fascinating object.

Gold bowl. Probably 10th–9th century BC
Zurich, Altstetten
Beaten gold. H. 12 cm; Diam. 25 cm
A 86063

Gold der Helvetier, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1991, p. 109. – Patrick Nagy, "Technologische Aspekte der Goldschale von Zürich-Altstetten", in: *Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* 75/1992, pp. 101–116.

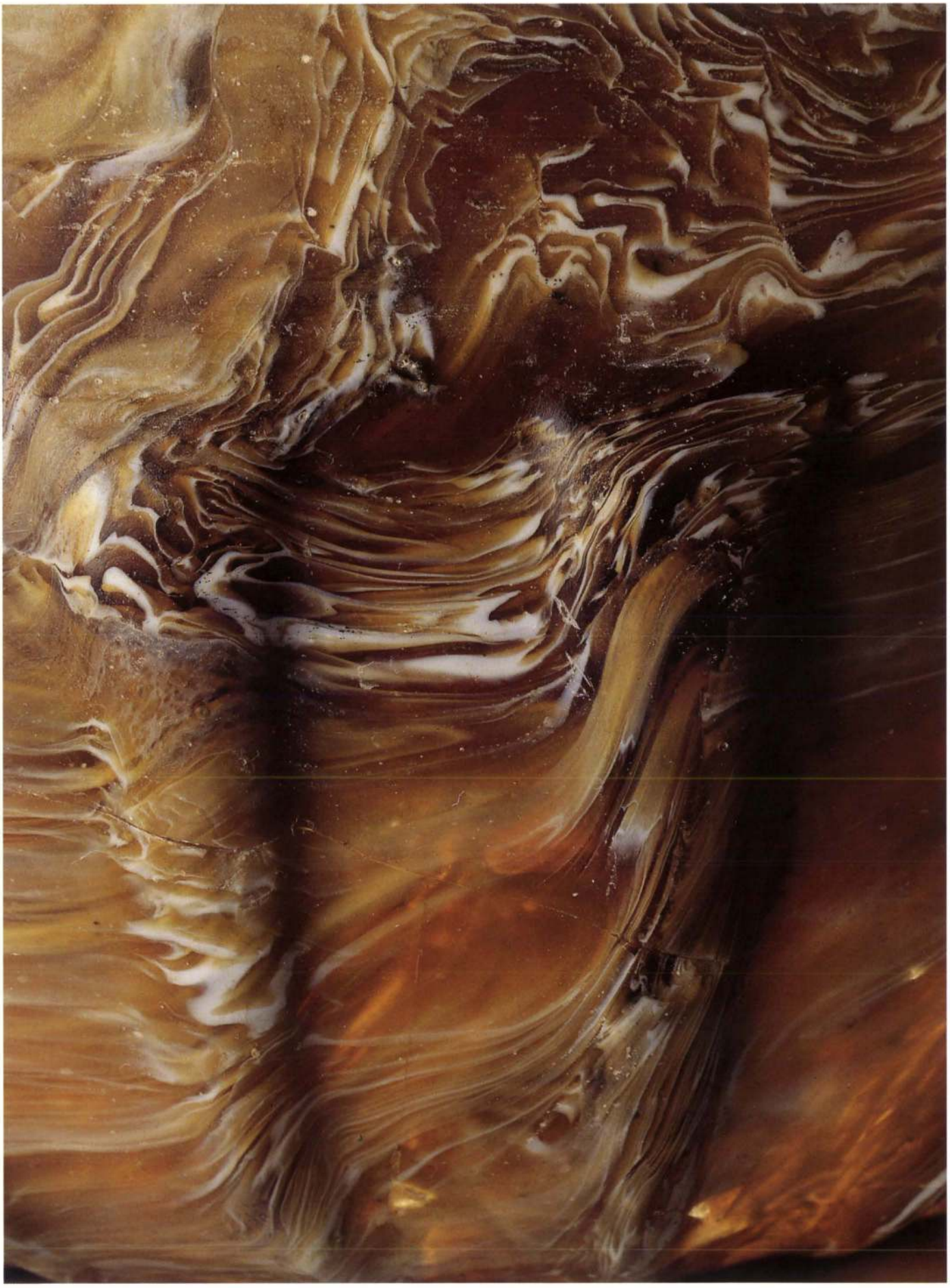
One of the constants of archaeological research is the realization that the most important finds raise as many questions as they answer. This is just as true of the Altstetten bowl (cf. p. 23) as of the collection of gold objects found at Erstfeld in the canton of Uri. These exceptionally valuable gold objects are decorated with symbolic figures which we are unable to decipher because the underlying traditions are unknown to us. What, for example, would a find containing the Christian cross tell us if we were ignorant of the contents of the Bible? We do not possess the Bible of the Celtic age, whose rich culture we see depicted here. The Celts' religious leaders, the Druids, carefully passed on their teachings to their students using an exclusively oral tradition.

The gold necklaces and bracelets, which together weigh 639.8 grams, were discovered in 1962 in a shallow cave at the foot of a cliff in a rocky valley above the village of Erstfeld on the route to the Gotthard pass. The rings, which date from the early decades of the 4th century BC, are among the most elaborate Celtic works of art ever discovered. Alongside its complex interlacing, the bracelet pictured on the far right is decorated with two masks which fade into beard-like palm fronds. The other two rings are decorated with an undulating depiction of a running dog, a symbol of the famous principle of Die and Become. The necklace partly depicted at the far left of the photograph is decorated with bullish heads, feather shapes and palm fronds. The necklace pictured on the right of the page is a composition of interlinked human and animal forms. Similar motifs can be identified on the almost identical pair of necklaces on the facing page. In these, however, a small bird has been inserted between the other figures. It can be presumed that the rings were produced either at or close to their place of discovery.

The jewellery and clasps, which still function, have been perfectly preserved. They are all hollow and the figurative elements have generally been embossed and chased in two separate halves before being skillfully soldered together. The close-up shows a detail of the two main intersecting figures on the necklace to the left of centre. The left-hand figure is wearing an aureole-shaped form of head decoration while the other bears animal's ears. Both figures are wearing trousers and bracelets and standing on a half human/half animal combination. Presumably, these groups of figures reflect a conceptual world based on the idea of the "Queen of Animals", which resulted from the fusion of older regional traditions and new stimuli provided by Mediterranean art.

Necklaces and bracelets. 4th century BC
Erstfeld
Gold, beaten, punched, soldered
Diam. 17.3 cm (necklaces)
A 52044

Gold der Helvetier, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1991, pp. 17ff. – Andres Furger, *Die Helvetier*, Zürich 1984. – Martin A. Guggisberg, *Der Goldschatz von Erstfeld. Ein keltischer Bilderzyklus zwischen Mitteleuropa und der Mittelmeerwelt*, 1997 (unpublished manuscript).



Roman lifestyle grows popular

Among the remains of Roman civilization, the various types of crockery have been the object of particularly meticulous study because of their archaeological significance as chronological reference points. Vast quantities of shards have been unearthed, not only during the excavation of the large villas, which were to be found throughout the Roman provinces, or the examination of the major Helvetian towns such as Augst (Augusta Raurica) or Avenches (Aventicum), but also in the earth of former Roman villages. Finds from the first century AD contain an increasing proportion of fragments of glass vessels. Although glass had long been known as a material, the technique of glass blowing, invented by the Romans, made it possible to produce and market large quantities of glass vessels using a rapid and economical procedure. Glass vessels soon became important items of tableware, starting in the Italian cities and then spreading to the Roman provinces.

The heavily-restored ribbed bowl depicted in the photograph comes from the village of Oberwinterthur, which has been the object of a wide-ranging study by the Zurich archaeological centre since 1977. Flat bowls with vertical ribbing were a common product of the first century AD and more than 500 fragments of such bowls have been found in the village-like settlement of Oberwinterthur. The shape of the bowl was not produced by blowing but by means of the potter's wheel or by the lowering of a hot sheet of glass into a corresponding mould followed by fine polishing of the inside and top edge. Then, as now, marbling was a fascinating effect, with the firing of the material and internal stresses helping to make the glass transparent. The mould was produced using the so-called mosaic method in which individual blanks or multi-coloured glass rods were mixed together in a semi-molten form.

Beat Rütti, *Beiträge zum römischen Oberwinterthur, VITUDURUM 4* (Berichte der Zürcher Denkmalpflege, Monographien 5), Zurich 1988, pp. 22ff.

Roman ribbed bowl. 1st century AD
Oberwinterthur
Marbled glass. H. 10.5 cm; Diam. 23.2 cm
A 86191

Early Christian relics

After the blossoming of imperial Roman culture, there followed crises in the 2nd and, more particularly, 3rd centuries AD. In the wake of great internal problems and external aggression, the Roman Empire gradually had to cede its northern frontier on the Rhine and withdraw its troops in about the year 400. This was the dawn of early medieval mass migrations in Switzerland, putting an end to centralization and heralding a new age of regionalism. Confrontation between the Romanic and Germanic peoples was replaced by a new era of peaceful coexistence, which finally resulted in the fusion that provided the basis for the more familiar medieval period. During this period, Christianity was to play a pivotal cultural role.

Events in Switzerland in the early Middle Ages were dictated by the remaining Romanic population on the one hand and, on the other, by the newly arrived Germanic peoples. In north-eastern Switzerland and in the eastern part of the central flatlands, it was the Alamanni and the Franks who held sway whereas the western part of central Switzerland and the south of the country played host to the Burgundians and the Langobards. The process of cultural assimilation between the Romanic and Germanic peoples took very different courses in these different regions. This is reflected by the fact that the German language dominated in the north of the country whereas Latin was to develop into French in western Switzerland and into Italian in the Ticino.

Langobard graves have yielded a particularly high number of crosses made of very fine gold leaf. The object pictured here, which dates from approximately 600 AD, was discovered on the chest of a corpse in a meadow known as Vigna da Cichin near Stabio. The holes pierced around the edge suggest that the cross was sewn to the shroud or to a veil. The cross is richly decorated with typical early medieval ornamentation which hides five creatures of fable. The beast in the centre is either biting its own tail or licking its body, while the beaks of the other four are reminiscent of birds. The exact significance of these figures is unknown, although it is generally assumed that they were intended to ward off evil. The combination of such beings with the Christian cross is not unknown, although it rarely appears in such an unadulterated form during this period of religious belief. In this particular context, we might easily be reminded of the well-known Irish illuminated manuscripts of the period, in which indigenous elements are creatively fused with Christian content.

Langobardian cross. 6th century
Stabio
Gold, press plate technique
H. 9 cm; W. 9 cm
A 40832

Renata Windler, in: Andres Furger (ed.), *Die Schweiz zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Zurich 1996.

The symbols and insignia of the new upper class

As we now know, the first Germanic peoples from the far north did not initially make their way through to the heart of Switzerland simply in order to acquire land. Indeed, it was not until later that they started to settle in the region, namely in the 6th and 7th centuries when the Romanic population had already fallen significantly. Politically speaking, the new settlers belonged to the Kingdom of the Franks, which considered itself to be the successor of the Romans in Gaul.

The origins of the majority of Swiss villages go back to the early medieval period. In most cases, the traces of their past have been poorly preserved and for this reason their history has been the object of little research. Indeed, more information is provided by the nearby graves and the rich offerings they contain. According to custom, the Germans sent their dead to their graves accompanied by a symbol of their status in life: weapons for men, luxurious clothing and jewellery together with a purse for women. In the early Middle Ages, the accoutrements might well have included a large belt, which was worn visibly and often richly decorated. The metal buckles were highly conspicuous, if only because of their size. To make sure the luxurious decorations were clearly visible, the leather belt end was inserted between the decorative plate and the base plate. The plates of the buckle pictured here are decorated with silver filigree work soldered to a silver base. The other parts are made from bronze or copper. Analyses of comparable finds have shown that the buckle decorations were produced in a northern French workshop and are totally compatible with Roman traditions. The buckle comes from the grave of a man who died and was buried in Elgg in the canton of Zurich in approximately 550 AD. His grave also contained a long sword, a short sword, an axe, lance, shield, comb and tankard. These grave gifts indicate that the dead man was a Frank. He arrived as an official in Elgg after the period 536/37 when the Alamannic area of north-eastern Switzerland fell under the Merovingian rule of the Franks, and worked in the still inhabited Roman settlement. Such high officials, often drawn from the military élite, formed the nucleus of the new upper class.

Belt buckle. Mid-6th century
Elgg
Bronze, silver filigree work, copper rivets
Decorated buckle: L. 7.3 cm; W. 2.5–3.5 cm
Rear decoration: L. 3.4 cm; W. 2.5 cm
A 58952.7–8

Renata Windler, in: *Jahrbuch der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Ur- und Frühgeschichte* 72/1989, pp. 181–200.

During the early Middle Ages, a particular form of knighthood began to emerge among the upper classes, as manuscripts and illustrations of the High Middle Ages make vividly clear. This way of life embraced a complex feudal and vassalage system. Allegiance was owed not to the state, as in earlier classical models, but to an individual within a hierarchical structure that encompassed everyone from the Emperor to the humblest of peasants. The high nobility assumed new symbols and insignia.

Helmets, such as the one pictured here, became important status symbols. Our helmet is one of barely three dozen of its type which have survived in Europe and is thought to have been produced in the 6th century. In contrast to Roman times, the skullcap was no longer manufactured from a single piece of metal but was formed from four curved iron plates. In our example, these plates had suffered severely from rust and were replaced by the museum. The cap plates are riveted in place by means of four gilt bronze bars. The punched head band encircling the bottom of the helmet is also gilded. The holes were used to attach the cheek and nose protection (now missing) and the chain mail which protected the wearer's neck.

Below the geometrical pattern, the head band is decorated with an array of small figures similar to those found on other helmets from this period. These often take the form of Christian motifs, in this case doves eating grapes as the close-up shows. This image was very popular as early as Roman times and was later interpreted by the Christians as a symbol of the resurrection, paradise and peace.

Here, again, we can observe the interaction of the Christian and Germanic cultural traditions. However, what is astonishing about this helmet is its place of discovery. It was found at Villeneuve in the canton of Vaud during mechanical excavations at the confluence of the Rhône and Lake Geneva. The same area has also yielded a considerably older Celtic statue with monetary offerings. This indicates that we are dealing with a sacred place which managed to outlive the age of Roman rule. In pre-Christian times, both the inlet and outlet of a lake were considered to be places of worship and sacrifice. We need, for example, think only of the famous La Tène site on the Lake of Neuchâtel.

Helmet. 6th century
Villeneuve
Iron and gilded bronze. H. 17.6 cm
A 38925

Andres Furger (ed.), *Die Schweiz zwischen Antike und Mittelalter*, Zurich 1996.

The triumph of Christianity

During the 8th and 9th centuries, Christianity established itself as Europe's major religion. Evidence of Christian activity increases dramatically throughout the Carolingian period. Moreover, when discussing this period we are no longer principally dependent on archaeological finds from graves and excavations. This epoch saw the founding of many monasteries, some of which still survive today, and we can thank the tradition of worship, which has survived for over a thousand years, for the preservation of many important sacred objects such as manuscripts and book bindings. This genre includes the ivory tablet illustrated here, which was created in approximately 865 and was originally one element in a diptych, a two-part wax writing tablet with a long tradition stretching back to antiquity. The tablet was then subsequently set in a book binding as a decoration. The book itself was the transcription of a – what else would we expect? – liturgical text. However, it is impossible to identify the codex in question since the binding and the manuscript were later separated. Did the volume originate in Zurich's cathedral? What is certain is that the ivory tablets were stored in the monastery at Rheinau during early modern times before travelling to Zurich.

The depiction on our tablet illustrates Psalm 24, in which we find the text: "To you, oh Lord, I lift up my soul" and "Keep my soul and save me, preserve me from harm, because I have trust in you." Two bands of clouds separate the cover into three scenes. At the top, God the Father, whose right hand is broken, sits in majesty between four angels. In the middle stands David, the Psalmist, attacked by a host of enemies armed with spears, swords and shields. From God, David receives a message in the form of a book which he gives to the troops standing behind him. The word of God is then passed on the lower band of figures. Somewhat older than this tablet is the so-called Utrecht Psalter, which has a similar illustration of Psalm 24 and was probably used as a model for our carving.

Artist from the Liuthard group
David, the Psalmist
Rheinau monastery, c. 865
Ivory relief, carved. H. 11.3 cm; W. 8.5 cm
LM 21825

The condensed representation in our version can only be understood against this background, as can be seen from the detail depicted here. In the Utrecht model, the front bowman shoots an arrow at David from some considerable distance while the other warriors behind him prepare their arrows. In our tablet, we see only a warrior drawing an arrow from his quiver.

Adolph Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser VIII.–XI. Jahrhundert*, vol. 1, Berlin 1914. – Robert Deshman, "The Exalted Servant: The Ruler Theology of the Prayerbook of Charles the Bald", in: *Viator, Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 11, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1980.

Knight's shield belonging to Arnold von Brienz
Seedorf, 1st quarter of 13th century
Alder, leather, plaster and limestone foundation, painted, partly decorated with silver leaf. H. 87 cm
LM 3405.1

Switzerland also boasts a rich collection of secular objects from the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the survival of this shield from the monastery of Seedorf in the canton of Uri can still be attributed to religious custom. This rare object dates from approximately 1200 and is one of the oldest known shields produced in Europe during the Middle Ages. Cuts on the front inflicted by axes or swords and holes pierced by arrows or sharp-ended weapons show that it was carried in battle or at tournaments. However, when its owner died, the shield was not buried with him, as was the usual custom during the early Middle Ages (cf. p. 31), but was instead hung up above his grave. The higher the rank of a deceased person during his life, the closer he lay to the relics of the saints in death. A grave inside the church was considered to be particularly prestigious.

The first owner of this shield (made for use on horseback) was Arnold von Brienz, who founded the Seedorf monastery before his death in 1225. In return, he expected the inhabitants of the monastery to pray eternally for his soul, as was the custom in the Middle Ages. The shield went on to survive the rebuilding and conversions carried out on the monastery church from the 13th to the 16th century and remained within its walls until the 19th century.

The shield is totally intact apart from the straps of the rear carrying handle and its lower tip. It consists of four glued alder wood boards over which a cowskin parchment is stretched. This is covered with a plaster ground which is chalked over and fixed with a layer of lime. This foundation was then painted with blue paint, which has changed to green over the years. Analyses conducted by the National Museum indicate that the dye was produced using ground azurite. To increase the luminosity of the blue, the artist first applied a light blue undercoat. The lion was modelled in relief from a block of limestone before being silver plated. The depiction of the rampant lion clearly indicates that the shield served both as a weapon and a coat of arms. This shield is representative of its genre and looks back to a time when the knighthood was sure of its position in society and played an increasingly important role. During the 13th century, the motifs that were depicted on shields gradually became the proud symbols of entire lineages and have remained so to this day.

Himmel Hölle Fegefeuer, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1994, p. 280. – Helmi Gasser, *Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Uri*, vol. 2, Basle 1986, pp. 176ff.

It was not only the nobility who were acquiring outward displays of their position; communities, too, were starting to realize the importance of signs and symbols. The towns and cities, which from the 13th century onwards were to play an ever more important role, could trace their histories back to their original foundation. The city of Zurich, for example, began to revere the martyrs Felix and Regula, figures from the city's Roman past, as its patron saints. The head of Felix, crowned with a wreath as an antique symbol of saintliness and accompanied by the inscription ZVRICH*, adorned the coins issued by the city's civic head, the Abbess of the Fraumünster convent. During the 13th century, the right to mint coins was leased, under varying conditions, to a consortium of Zurich citizens. The Council of Zurich was beginning to make its influence felt.

When compared with the coins used in antiquity, the medieval bracteates (from the Latin *bractea* – thin metal sheet) are very simple in appearance. They were produced from thinly hammered silver sheet and stamped on one side only. The coins started as square and then were manually cut out using scissors with the edges slightly curved to ensure that there was sufficient room for the round coin on the blank. This was then positioned on the iron coin stamp, a lead sheet or wooden block was placed on it and the impress was hammered into the silver plate.

The Middle Ages was a period of regional power, a fact which is reflected in the insignia stamped on regional coins. The coin find pictured here was discovered in Winterthur's Holderplatz in 1970. The 2,284 separate coins in the find consist mostly of pfennigs from Zurich together with a small number of pfennigs from Basle, Berne and Diessenhofen in the canton of Thurgau. The hoard, which was discovered at a depth of 20 centimetres below a protective stone, must have been collected before the year 1265. At that time, there were no banks as we understand them today. In difficult times, money was simply hidden in the house or buried at some place which could be easily located. The fact that the pot containing this fortune remained in its hiding place is due either to the fate of its owner or to the hiding place itself, which we can easily identify as inside the medieval town of Winterthur. It lay 28 meters beyond the last row of houses and therefore just inside an area in which the city walls and moat were being reconstructed, a process which was to continue for many decades. Perhaps the owner was unable to retrieve his 860 grams of coins before the building workers descended and buried what at that time amounted to approximately half a year's income.

Coin find. Winterthur, 13th century
Coins: Silver, stamped on one side
Pot: fired clay with stone lid
Coins: Diam. c. 1.5–1.8 cm
Pot: H. 16.5 cm; Diam. max. 18.6 cm
Stone: H. max. 6 cm; Diam. 20–22 cm
AZ 3615–5910 (Coins); LM 54073 (Pot); LM 54074 (Stone)

Hans-Ulrich Geiger, "Der Münzfund von Winterthur-Holderplatz", in: *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau* 53/1974, pp. 88–112.

In the very same year that the Museum opened its doors, a collector in Attinghausen in the canton of Uri acquired this richly decorated chest dating back to 1250. The chest had previously been kept in the town's parish church, where it had served as a reliquary during the Middle Ages. Despite this, it is a secular object which was presumably commissioned by the Barons of Attinghausen. This branch of a major noble line from central Switzerland made a significant contribution to the opening up of the land in what is nowadays the canton of Uri. It is impossible to identify the chest's precise origins because of the scanty documentary evidence, the interpretation of which is further complicated by the fact that the ruling families of the time possessed estates in many different parts of the country. Furthermore, this was still a period of great social mobility, during which a number of noble families were just beginning to take shape.

A number of clues suggest that the Barons of Attinghausen originated in the Emmental. This would be compatible with the coats of arms reproduced on the side of the lid which, in so far as they are identifiable, belonged to aristocratic families from the area around Burgdorf in the canton of Berne. Perhaps one of these belongs to a bridegroom, who presented the chest to his bride in which to keep the tokens of his love for her.

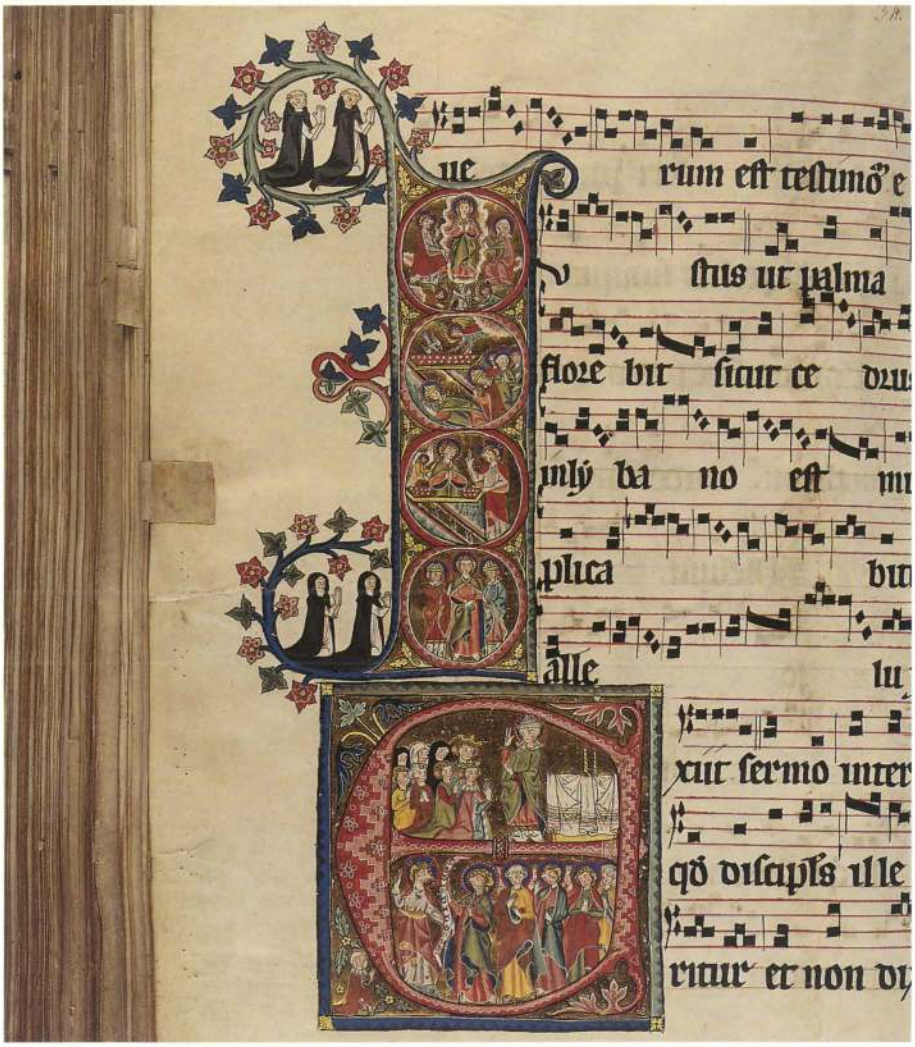
This casket is an example of the so-called *minne* chests which were common in southwestern Germany and Switzerland. The imagery on these small painted or carved caskets was generally allegorical in nature and referred to love. Their external shape matches that of ordinary chests of the period. The feet, side panels and lid are made of beech and the base of spruce, while the cabinet maker chose maple for the decorative inlay and inner partition. The side panels and lid are covered with a plaster and limestone ground covered by silver plate. The carved band which runs all the way around the front of the chest consists of an ornamental frieze which is painted black, covered with gold lacquer and picked out with elements of white. The white-glazed inlay imitates a bone or ivory carving and testifies to an oriental influence which probably goes back to the crusades. Red and black are used to emphasize the characteristics of the depicted humans and animals. Below the catch of our small Romanesque casket we can see a lion, with another beast of prey below it. To the left, surrounded by palm fronds, we see a dog, his tongue hanging out, pursuing a stag.

Chest. Berne (?), c. 1250
Beech and maple, carved
H. 22.2 cm; W. 35.5 cm; D. 13.7 cm
LM 3405.34

Roger Sablonier, "Innerschweizer Gesellschaft im 14. Jahrhundert", in: *Innerschweiz und frühe Eidgenossenschaft*, vol. 2, ed. Verein der Fünf Orte, Olten 1990, pp. 17–18.
– Hans Stadler-Planzer, *Geschichte des Landes Uri*, part 1, Schattdorf 1993, pp. 135–144.
– Karl Iten, *Uri. Die Kunst- und Kulturlandschaft am Weg zum Gotthard*, Altdorf 1991, p. 28.
– Heinrich Kohlhaussen, *Minnekästchen im Mittelalter*, Berlin 1928, pp. 11ff. – Hanspeter Lanz, "Untersuchungen zur Kassette von Attinghausen UR", in: *Jahresbericht des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums* 100/1991, pp. 78ff.

The monasteries and convents of the Middle Ages played an important political and cultural role. Thus, the Abbess of the Fraumünster in Zurich was also the city's civic head (cf. p. 41). In the Middle Ages, a significant part of land ownership took the form of mortmain foundations (cf. p. 51). Most of the valuable manuscripts produced in the Middle Ages originated in monasteries or convents. Our manuscript comes from a convent. The Dominican convent, located on the banks of the Rhine at St. Katharinental near Diessenhofen in Thurgau, possessed a scriptorium, since writing and illuminating were considered to be highly valued work which could be performed by nuns in the service of God. However, research indicates that the nuns of Diessenhof were not responsible for creating this exceptional manuscript and that it is more likely to have been produced in Constance. The quality of the work is reminiscent of the "History of the World" by Rudolf von Ems. The illuminated parchment manuscript, which dates from 1312, is known as a gradual because the psalms it contains were sung on the gradus (the step up to the stage in front of the choir stalls).

Upon the dissolution of the convent, this beautiful manuscript was taken to England in 1869 and repurchased in 1958 thanks to the joint action of the Swiss government, the canton of Thurgau and the Gottfried Keller foundation. Forty-six of its 314 pages contain miniatures. The page pictured here contains two initials, namely the "I" of *Iustus ut palma florebit* on the second line and the "E" of *Exiit sermo* on the third line from the end, together with the lay commissioner of the illumination at the bottom left and four spiritual donors in the wreaths of flowers to the left of the "I". Taken together, the initials depict, from bottom to top, the marvellous events which accompanied the death of the disciple John. Below is depicted the visit of Christ and the Apostles to John, who is dressed in green. Above this (see detail on left), we see John in Bishop's vestments preaching in Ephesus to two crowned heads, two nuns and other figures. In the illustrations within the "I", we see John's soul ascending until, in the topmost segment, it appears in a cloud of light between Christ and Mary (for the cult of John, cf. p. 49).



Gradual. St. Katharinental, c. 1300
Illuminated manuscript and gold leaf on parchment. 48.5 × 33.5 cm
LM 26117

Dione Flühler-Kreis, "Geistliche und weltliche Schreibstuben", in: *Die Manessische Liederhandschrift in Zürich*, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1991, pp. 41–50. – Albert Knoepfli, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Thurgau*, vol. 4, Basle 1989, p. 173. – Ellen J. Beer, "Die Buchkunst des Graduale von St. Katharinenthal", in: *Das Graduale von Sankt Katharinenthal* (commentary), Lucerne 1983, pp. 188ff.

Sumptuous reliquaries

The Church in the Middle Ages could look back on a vibrant past. People who, like Christ, died for their faith during Roman times were particularly revered. Just as in St. Peter's Cathedral, where a vast sacred chamber was constructed around the grave of St. Peter, other churches also placed the graves or relics (Latin: remains) of early martyrs at the centre of their worship. Relics, even in the form of small fragments of bone, scraps of cloth or other saintly remains, were transported over large distances and even offered for sale. During the Gothic age, showcases were designed to display these relics. Their external forms often said a great deal about their contents: for example, they might represent the head, arm or hand of the saint in question.

In 1450, a foot-shaped case was selected to house a (foot?) bone (no longer extant) from the treasury of Basle cathedral. During the late Gothic period, images of saints gradually began to replace relics. Our reliquary, which physically contained the saint's bone fragment, but which was shaped like a part of the body, forms a kind of mid-point on the journey to the abstract representation of the spiritual whole.

Although its contents disappeared after the Reformation, the valuable case survived. It is made from beaten silver sheet laid over a wooden form to which the sheet is fastened by large numbers of pins with small, gilded rose-shaped heads. A ground rock crystal, set into the instep, permitted the faithful to view the remains of the foot of a baby believed to have been murdered during the Massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem. Saint Columban is said to have presented this holy relic to Basle Cathedral. An inscription on the sole provides some information on this question. The inside also contains the following inscription: *oswaldus fecit hoc opus de voluntate dei 1450 jar.* Initially, Oswaldus had been thought to be the Basle goldsmith Oswald Ueberlinger. However, the Christian name has subsequently been identified with the master builder supervising the construction of Basle Cathedral, Oswald Walcher, the commissioner of the reliquary. The top opening of the reliquary takes the form of an engraved, mother-of-pearl medallion with a depiction of the presentation of Christ in the temple, thus establishing a thematic connection with the Massacre of the Innocents. Both sides of the ankle joint are decorated with older enamel medallions which are richly encrusted with gold filigree work and pearls. These are the work of a 14th-century, Parisian goldsmith (see detail). The straps of this richly ornamented sandal are vitrified and decorated with gemstones. These coloured stones were also intended to aid meditation. When the treasury of Basle cathedral was divided in 1834 following the subdivision of the canton of Basle, the reliquary was put on the market as a work of art and was purchased for the Swiss National Museum in London in 1892.

Foot reliquary. Basle, 1450
Silver, gilded copper, on wood; mother of pearl, enamel, pearls, gemstones, vitrified
H. 14.2 cm; W. 23.5 cm; D. 9.5 cm
IN 184

Ulrich Barth, *Erlesenes aus dem Basler Münsterschatz*, Basle 1990, p. 13. – Ernst Günther Grimme, *Goldschmiedekunst im Mittelalter. Form und Bedeutung des Reliquiars von 800 bis 1500*, Cologne 1972, p. 175. – *Der Basler Münsterschatz*, exh. cat., Historisches Museum, Basle 1956, pp. 33–34.

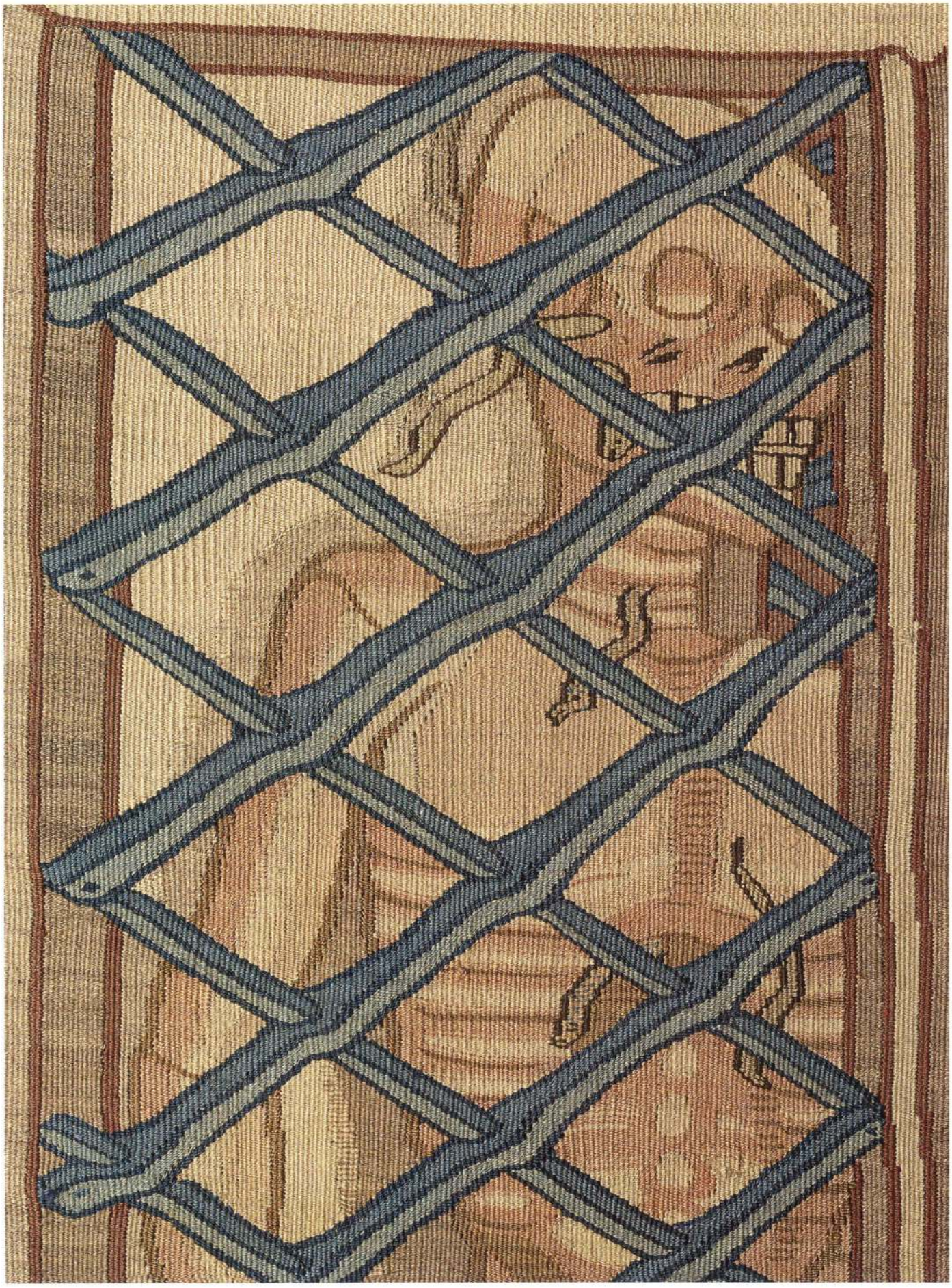
The veneration of John in the convent

Since the 11th century, the name day of John the Evangelist, which falls on 27 December, has been the occasion for the customary Veneration of John. To celebrate this day, wine was distributed in the churches and sometimes taken home to drink. This practice has its roots in heathen customs, which sometimes echo sacrificial rituals. It was not usual to offer red wine so much as white because, according to medieval colour theory, the latter stood for the Uncorrupted. The distribution of wine on John's name day is also based on the legend that John drank a previously blessed goblet of poison without suffering any harm. Drinking to the *amor Johannis* is generally connected with experiences of leave-taking or death. Monasteries and, in particular, convents where John was especially revered, also observed the ritual celebration of the Evangelist's name day. Many depictions of John in the gradual of St. Katharinental provide ample evidence of this reverence (cf. p. 45).

Medieval goldwork has often come down to us in a modified form. This is also true of our drinking vessel from the Benedictine convent of St. Andreas in Sarnen (canton of Obwalden). The vessel, made of beaten silver, has the usual form of a late medieval wine goblet. For example, the base of the vessel is decorated with a vine shoot and its centre is occupied by a tin-reinforced wall over which the three-dimensional castle and chapel were later formed. The trefoil-shaped handle is thought to be original and depicts the disciple John and his emblem, the yellow-brown enamel eagle on a formerly enamelled background comprising three sets of eight stars. It is very likely that our vessel was used for the celebration of John's name day in the Sarnen convent. The central castle with its towers, which look out above the filled bowl, not only fit well within this context but also suggest a symbol of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Drinking bowl. Probably northeastern Switzerland, 1st half of 15th century
Beaten silver, moulded, partly gilded, chased, punched, engraved, with enameled handle. H. 4.9 cm; Diam. 17.6 cm
LM 4480

Georg Schreiber, *Deutsche Weingeschichte. Der Wein in Volksleben, Kult und Wirtschaft*, Cologne 1980, pp. 375ff. and 379ff. – Robert Durrer, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Unterwalden*, Zurich 1899–1928, pp. 685–691. – Hanspeter Lanz, "Vier mittelalterliche Trinkschalen im Vergleich", in: *Aachener Kunstblätter* 60/1994, pp. 305–318.



An offering on behalf of the soul

Woven tapestry from Berne cathedral. Switzerland, c. 1460. Wool. 100 × 242 cm. LM 19688

In the centre of this woven tapestry, on the lid of an imaginary grave, stands the text "In this figure you shall see how, with you all the end will be". The basic message, "Remember Death", is emphasized by the unobstructed view of a corpse literally creeping towards disintegration. This richly decorated medieval representation originally hung in a side chapel of Berne cathedral as a seasonal decoration above the grave of Rudolf von Ringoltingen, who died in 1456. How did this work of art, somewhat macabre for modern tastes, come into being? It is highly likely that the dead man's son commissioned a weaver in Basle to produce the tapestry and then presented it to the church along with many other objects. The work of art itself indicates a much more extensive offering. Such gifts were motivated by the hope that the soul's suffering after death would be alleviated, that is to say its sojourn in purgatory would be brief. In the Middle Ages, it was believed that this phase could be influenced through intercessions from this world. As the second-richest man in Berne during his lifetime, the city's mayor, Rudolf von Ringoltingen, was well able to afford a private chapel in the cathedral. The donor also endowed the church with such wealthy estates that the interest received made it possible to employ a priest to pray for him every day at his graveside and also to organize a large commemorative service each year to mark the day of his death – and that until the end of the world! It is precisely such a liturgical memorial service, celebrated here by members of the Teutonic Order of Knights, that is displayed in the centre of the tapestry. It is attended by the male members of the family on one side and their wives on the other.

Despite the care taken to set up the foundation, the hanging fell into other hands following the Reformation in the 16th century. During this period, the coat of arms of the Berne donor was stitched over with those of the carpet's second owners who came from Schaffhausen and St. Gall. Clearly no one interfered with the pictorial content of the tapestry. The semi-decomposed body and the symbolism of the corpse in general continued to be part of the normal depiction of death until well into the 16th century. Nowadays, when death has become a taboo subject, such a graphic depiction seems much stranger than in an age when it was common to combine many representations of the triumph of death in the scene – for example, in the form of the Dance of Death. The visible presence of death was an everyday fact of life at a time when pestilence and plague were so widespread; ultimately, this type of depiction was interpreted as "an excessive cleaving to life".

Anna Rapp Buri / Monica Stucky-Schürer, "Totenmesse und Memento Mori", in: *zahm und wild. Basler und Strassburger Bildteppiche des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Mainz 1990, pp. 153–156. – *Himmel Hölle Fegefeuer*, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1994, no 85. – Philippe Ariès, *Geschichte des Todes*, Munich 1980, pp. 143ff. and 162ff. – Id., *Bilder zur Geschichte des Todes*, Munich 1984, p. 166.

Medieval fringe groups

Felix and Regula, later to be joined by Exuperantius, were already established as the city's patron saints (cf. p. 41). They stand at the centre of the altar picture painted for the Grossmünster between 1497 and 1502 by Zurich's Carnation Master, Hans Leu the Elder. The background to this depiction of martyrdom is the splendid panorama of the late medieval city of Zurich. The representational importance of this early topographic view of the Limmat city can certainly be considered the main cause for the preservation of the panel over the centuries. During the Reformation, the "idols", as depictions of saints were termed at the time, were scratched away before the most important elements of the city panorama were recombined to recreate the picture. It was probably Hans Asper who painted over the remaining figures some time after 1566. At the same time, the golden sky normally found in sacred pictures was changed to blue. During the 19th century, the tendency to restore such objects to their original state prevailed and the martyrs and their executioners were partly uncovered and the scratches retouched. The detail on the right shows Felix at the left of the picture, together with part of the head of Regula, in the company of three "Romans". This depiction reveals a wealth of illuminating details concerning the life of a city in about 1500. It is as if the viewer possesses a telescope to inspect the streets, and look beyond the courtyards and squares to discover the city's main waterway. We also see scenes of everyday life which are rarely depicted in the art of the time.

Hans Leu the Elder (c. 1465–1507)
The Martyrdom of the Patron Saints of Zurich
Zurich, 1497–1502
Tempera on wood. 69.8 × 96.3 cm
Dep. 7.1 (Antiquarian Society, Zurich)

If we focus on the quayside in front of the convent, we see a labourer dragging a ship loaded with four containers to land. A figure kneels imploringly at his side, begging for alms or something to eat from the merchandise. It waits expectantly at the location where goods from dry land are loaded on board ship. A second rag-clad figure in the background is also turned towards the ship. Its legs are paralysed and it uses small boards tied to its calves to move. This pitiful figure belonged to the large army of beggars who accounted for 10 to 20% of the city's population in late medieval times. The main causes of poverty in those days were disease, such as the plague, as well as economic uncertainty and a shortage of land at a time of rapid population growth. These fringe groups depended primarily on the charity of religious institutions, such as the monasteries, and most importantly on the bread distributed by the church as well as the hospice which provided lodgings for the poor.

Die Zürcher Stadtheiligen Felix und Regula, eds. Hansueli F. Etter, Urs Baur, Jürg Hanser, Jürg E. Schneider, Zurich 1988. – Renate Keller, "Der Stadt Zürich Conterfey. Maltechnische Untersuchung und Restaurierung", in: *Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 39/1982, pp. 172–175. – Ingomar Bog, "Über Arme und Armenfürsorge in Oberdeutschland und in der Eidgenossenschaft im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert", in: *Jahrbuch für Fränkische Landesforschung* 34/35/1974/1975, pp. 983–1001.

In around 1500, while art north of the Alps and particularly in Switzerland, continued to be dominated by the Gothic style, the Renaissance was already approaching its zenith in Italy. Ticino's affiliation to Lombardy was expressed not only in the art of the region but also in its power structures and the traditions of the leading families. These included the Ruscas, who originated in Como and were related to the Milanese Viscontis. The Ruscas owed allegiance to Milan and had been counts of Locarno since 1439. Locarno castle, which served as the family residence, owes its considerable 15th-century extensions to them. However, the castle was unable to guarantee their position for long; Ticino was to become a theatre of war in the struggles between the Swiss Confederation and the Duchy of Milan. The struggle for the territories south of the Alps – and thus for the most important Alpine passes – fell to the Confederates. In 1512, the Swiss occupied the Locarno region and the city and its castle were ceded to them. Ticino was then administered as a joint dependency before becoming a canton in its own right in the 19th century.

The bas-relief, Renaissance-style medallion slightly predates these radical events and is thought to have been worked in Lombardy. It probably depicts the wife of the last Count of Locarno, a young noblewoman named Eleonora whose looks earned her the admiration of the Milanese court. In this bas-relief, she radiates the dignity and aristocracy of a woman fully aware of her elevated station. We are immediately struck by the strings of pearls plaited into her sinuous hair and the crown-like, four-row wreath of pearls. This marble relief, which was once walled up in Locarno's Casa Rusca, was only recently placed on public display. Now on view in Zurich, it testifies to Switzerland's rich and varied past.

Medallion portrait of a lady from the Rusca family. Southern Switzerland/Northern Italy, c. 1500
Marble. H. 33.5 cm; W. 24 cm; D. 4 cm
LM 15427

The lost game and the "Sad Nobody"

In 1515, at the battle of Marignano, the Swiss Confederation's ill-considered attempt to juggle mercenary service for Europe's great powers with the pursuit of their own political interests resulted in disaster. Many Swiss warriors, accustomed to victory and seduced by their thirst for adventure, lost their lives on the battlefield. One such was the Basle-born standard-bearer, Hans Bär, a wealthy merchant who, even as a mature and settled man, was unable to resist the lure of battle and adventure. On 10 May 1515, he set off with a contingent of troops from Basle, leaving behind him his wife and six young daughters. The story of how his campaign ended is told by a famous table leaf, which has gained a certain fame as a figurative puzzle known as the Holbein Table.

The viewer's attention is first drawn to the central chaotic arrangement of broken objects. However, on closer inspection we discover coded messages such as a sealed letter. The torn playing card makes everything clear: the game is over. And indeed, the Basle standard-bearer and ardent card player shed his blood on the battlefield. Next to the card hovers a white butterfly: the symbol of the soul flying from the body.

When studied closely, the leaf – the work of a refined and important artist – gradually yields up further secrets. At one time it was attributed to the young Hans Holbein, who had just moved to Basle. Nowadays, we tend to ascribe the table to Hans Herbst. Whoever painted this black table on that black day in Marignano knew how to make an integral whole out of different worlds. The central area is encompassed by four independent scenes from everyday life. These should be read from the outside in. They depict, first, the tournament as a symbol of war; the hunt followed, on the shorter sides, by fishing and falconry, and the latter redolent with veiled allusions to the machinations of Eros.

In the middle of the table, below a coat of arms and slogan, we see the unhappy Nobody with his padlock in front of his mouth. Nemo, or no one, was well-known during Renaissance times. Nobody was – or is – responsible for chaos, for destruction, for failure.

Hans Herbst (c. 1468–1550)
Painted table leaf with the private coat of arms of Hans Bär and Barbara Brunner. Basle, 1515
Oil on poplar. 136 × 120 cm
Dep. 527 (Central Library Zurich)

Rudolf Schnyder, "Marignano als Schicksal. Fragen zum sogenannten Holbeintisch", in: *Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 50/1993, pp. 251–261. – Lucas Wüthrich, "Der sogenannte Holbeintisch", in: *Mitteilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft Zürich* 57/1990.


Indigenę passim per Indi
am nouam sunt antropo
phagi
ionibus
r habens
culum in
t catulos,
famuli
Orafes p̃

The Renaissance was more than a simple return to the values of antiquity; it was also a time of re-orientation and discovery. In 1492, Columbus discovered America and simultaneously defined the year of birth of the New Age. Nevertheless, decades later very little more was known about the newly discovered continent. That becomes clear from a glimpse of the St. Gall globe, which is based on Mercator's map of 1569. Creatures of fantasy populate the oceans. There had been little contact with the inhabitants of the newly discovered continents and it is clear that prejudice was rife. The Europeans behaved as masters and the age of colonization began. The deprecation bestowed on other cultures resulted in darkly macabre assumptions. In the lower, green-coloured part of South America, we find the concise text: *Indigeni passim per Indiam novam sunt anthropophagi.* The "cannibals from the New Indies" are also portrayed in the illustration: one is butchering a person while the others are roasting a human leg over a fire. However, a thorough examination of the evidence on cannibalism reveals no reliable historical proof that this was ever as extensive a phenomenon as suggested here.

The rotating globe was mounted on a frame decorated with portraits of mathematicians, astronomers and geographers. A wooden cog on the frame made it possible to set the angle of rotation of the earth's axis. At the very top is an hour circle. Since 1595, this opulent geographical aid, which also contains maps of the stars, stood in the famous library of the St. Gall seminary. To get there it took a devious path as a gift or mock sale from a member of the Augsburg Fugger family. Originally, or so it is assumed, the globe was made in Augsburg for the merchant and painter Johannes Fugger. Finally, in 1712, it travelled from St. Gall to Zurich with part of the library as booty captured during the Second Villmergen War. Here it was displayed to the public alongside many other rarities and collections in the city library, a former moated church. Many of these items were later to form the core of the National Museum's collection, which was founded in 1898 by the city and canton of Zurich.

Terrestrial and celestial globe (the so-called St. Gall globe). Augsburg (?), c. 1570
Stand: Wood, partly painted; Sphere: Oil paint on plaster ground over papier maché on shingle. H. overall 233 cm
Sphere: Diam. 121 cm
Dep. 846 (Central Library Zurich)

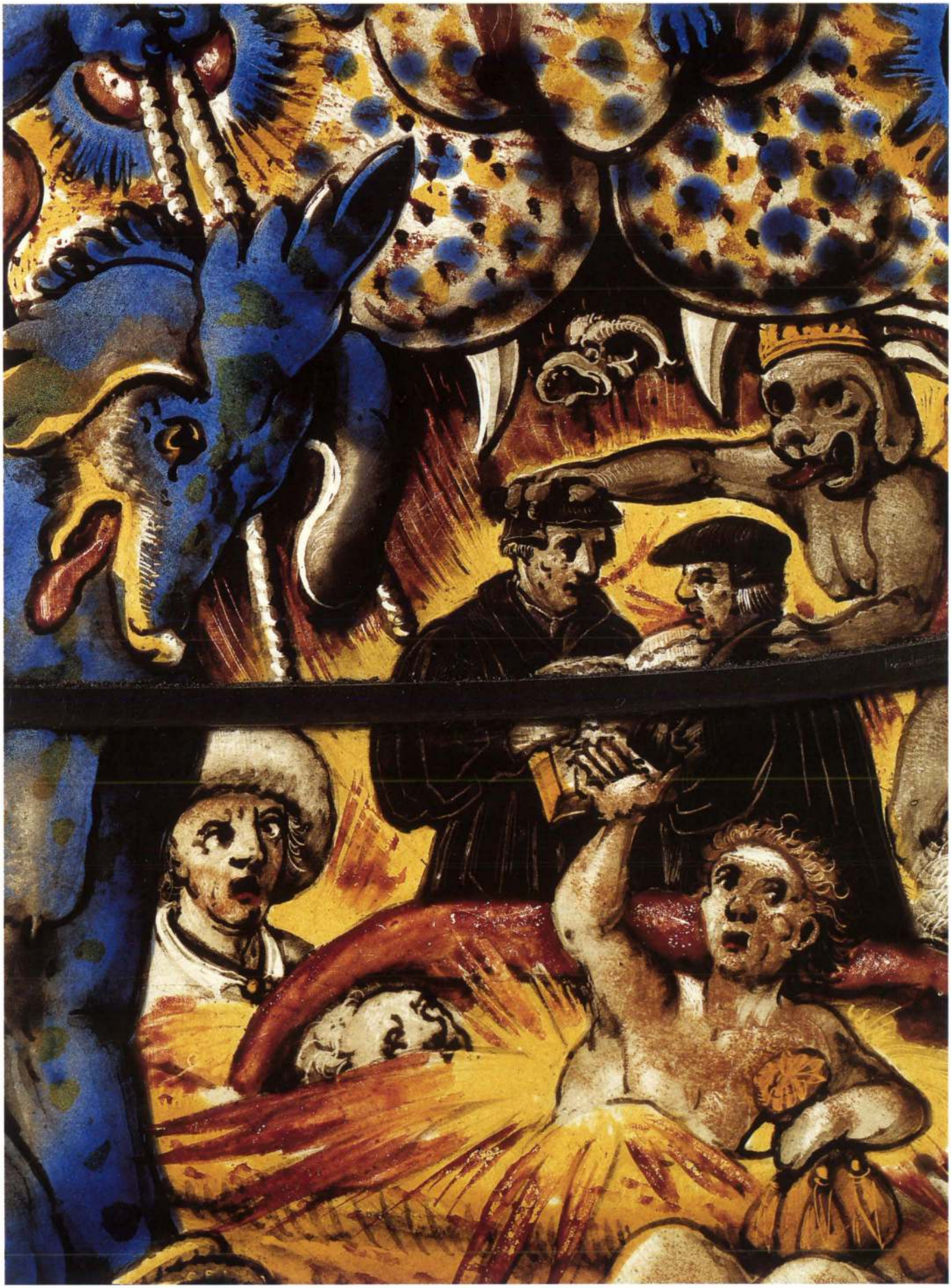
Annerose Menninger, *Die Macht der Augenzeugen. Neue Welt und Kannibalenmythos, 1492–1600*, Stuttgart 1995. – Hans-Peter Höhener, "Der St. Galler Globus. Ein Beutestück aus dem Zweiten Villmergerkrieg 1712", in: *Zentralbibliothek Zürich. Schatzkammer der Überlieferung*, eds. A. Cattani and B. Weber, Zurich 1989, pp. 59–61, 167–168.

Room from the Casa Pestalozzi
Chiavenna, 1585
Walnut, Swiss pine, ash, maple, beech; partly gilded. H. 3.75 m
Dep. 11 (Gottfried Keller Foundation)

The so-called Pestalozzi room from Chiavenna in the Valtellina, which was created slightly before the Bürgi globe (cf. p. 61), also testifies to the Renaissance philosophy of life. At that time, the valley which provides the Southern approach to the Splügenpass and which now belongs to Italy was part of the Swiss Confederation. The room comes from the *piano nobile* of a palatial city house, the first floor of the Palazzo Pestalozzi-Castelvetro on the main road, Via Dolzino 101–105. The Pestalozzi family had long been connected with Graubünden and the Bergell, and a branch was later to settle in Zurich. In Chiavenna, a regional passport control and customs station, the family owed its wealth to trade. The wealthy commissioner of the palace, his wife and the wood-panelled room have all but disappeared into the obscurity of history. Only their names and ages are still to be found on the panelling: ANTONIO PESTALOZA ETATIS 44 ANGELICA PESTALOZA 31 1585. The man, in the prime of life, and his wife, 13 years younger than he, were clearly very religious since they commissioned a picture of the biblical Susanna over their bedroom door. Susanna was falsely accused of adultery with two old men, as the inscribed motto suggests: CONIVGALI.PV / DICITIAE.FAVET.DEVS // NEQVITIAM.VERO / PVNIT.ET.AVERSATVR.

Rooms of this construction were known as *stüa* in the Romance-Italian area of the Alps. This word is etymologically related to *estufare* (to heat). When the room was installed during the building of the new National Museum in 1896, one window was replaced by a door and the dresser below the recess housing the tap intended for hand washing was modified. Unfortunately, the stove was already missing. The wood panels, dresser and doors were produced from a variety of local woods, mainly walnut, maple, ash and the wood of various fruit trees. The surfaces are decorated with saw cuts, a technique typical of this period. Some of the carved parts are gilded, giving the room a noble aspect which is somewhat untypical of a simple Alpine valley. The work was clearly entrusted to a leading cabinet-maker who was at the peak of his powers. He decorated the room entirely in the late Renaissance style known as Mannerism and never fails to surprise the viewer with his thrilling application of this genre. Closer examination reveals further details of the artist's excellence: every door has been reshaped along with its frame; the gilded representations of Hermes at the main door next to the dresser are striking in their execution as are the Corinthian columns at the bedroom door and the three antique masks at the third door (section).

Hans Hoffmann, "Das Pestalozzi-Zimmer im Schweizerischen Landesmuseum, ein Beispiel für Wand- und Deckenbildung des Manierismus", in: *Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 13/1952, pp. 33–38.



A scene from the Counter-Reformation

The use of stained glass to create windows for both sacred and profane settings was extremely popular in Switzerland in early modern times. They mostly originated as gifts to decorate friends' houses, government buildings or churches and monasteries. It was as a result of such a donation that the nunnery in Rathausen, in the canton of Lucerne, became the owner of what is probably the most significant cycle of 16th-century stained glass. The figurative depiction, which starts with Adam and Eve, comprises 67 episodes. The image pictured here is the last pane of the cycle. It bears the insignia of the city of Lucerne, the donor, to which the accompanying text also refers. Next to the open sarcophagus, we see the monogram "ff", the signature of FRANZ FALLENTER, and beneath it the inscription: MEMENTO MORI. The scene is of the Last Judgement, at which all souls are judged by Christ. This explains the text above the judge of the world: "Christuss Richt Hie gar Ebe merck // Vergillt Jedem nach Sine Werck." (Christ judge here as Thou deem meet // Reward all as their deeds befit.)

In the middle of the picture, the dead are rising from their graves. The Archangel Michael, his sword raised, drives them into two groups. To the left, behind Michael, are the redeemed; to the right of him the suffering unfortunate are being chased towards the vengeful fires of Hell. Here, we see two darkly clad priests, as the detail clearly shows. Their clothing shows them to be priests and their headgear reveals that they are Reformers. To judge by their features, they are probably Luther and either Calvin or Zwingli. Both have been taken by the scruff of the neck by one of the hounds of hell.

These panes belong to the late Renaissance which was already giving way to the nascent Baroque Age. During this period the Catholic church reacted forcefully – and, as we can see, not particularly squeamishly – to the Reformers and the Reformation. As far back as the early Renaissance, the Popes in Rome had wanted to mount *spettacoli grandiosi* to win apostates back to the True Faith. Frequently, however, their ostentation achieved precisely the opposite response.

Franz Fallenter (1555–1612)
Stained glass window from Lucerne
Rathausen nunnery, 1598
Stained glass. 67.3 × 66.3 cm
IN 49.17

In Switzerland, the Baroque Age was the artistic vehicle of the Counter-Reformation. As part of this movement, the Rathausen nunnery, like many other religious buildings, was enlarged by extensions and new construction work. To this day, the religious buildings of Catholic central Switzerland continue to characterize both rural and urban architecture.

Hans Lehmann, *Geschichte der Luzerner Glasmalerei von den Anfängen bis zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Lucerne 1941, pp. 145ff. – Hermann Meyer, *Die Schweizerische Sitte der Fenster- und Wappenschenkung vom XV. bis XVII. Jahrhundert*, Frauenfeld 1884, p. 326.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, tapestries largely ceased to be the product of the tapestry loom as the embroidery frame gained ground. Such embroideries were now most often produced by the mistress of the house, frequently assisted by her maids. During this period there was a continued need for wall hangings as protection against the cold as well as for decoration.

Our 1601 wool embroidery on a linen base depicts a daughter by the name of LUIGIA working at the embroidery in the third medallion from the top on the right-hand side. There is, therefore, every reason to think that she created this tapestry. Luigia was one of the fifteen children of the Morell-Ossenrot family from Constance, whose descendants can be found in many

Family idyll

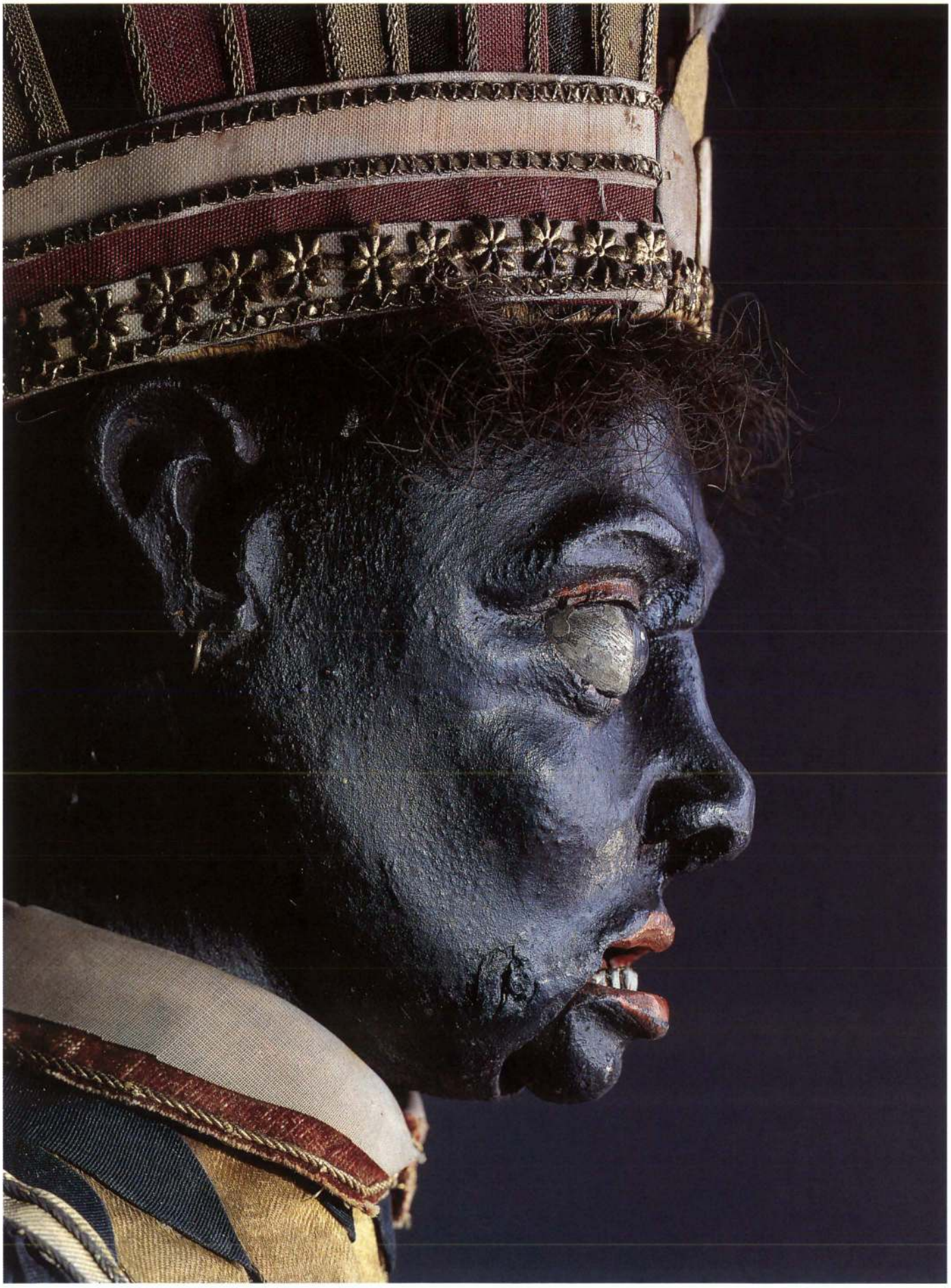
different areas of Switzerland. Luigia's work shows us something of the life of her family. In the middle, her mother and father sit at the table. Below them are the smallest children: in a playpen, on a child seat or in swaddling clothes. The medallions which surround this scene depict twelve children and children-in-law in a variety of everyday situations. At the top left, Madlena is sitting at table with her husband Ludwig Hüetlin; we also see a servant, a young woman with two children and the children's' table at which six children, who can be seen more clearly in our detail, are sitting. In accordance with the custom of the day, the children are dressed in adult clothes, thus explaining the ruff. Despite this, they continue to behave like children, with two of the boys fighting one another.

To the right of this medallion we find first, Barbara with her husband Daniel Labartt and their three children, then Maria who, with a lapdog at her feet and her husband Antoni Olion behind her, is carefully decorating a hat. This scene is followed by Hans Jacob and his wife Marta Hackin on horseback, Ursula and Hans Jerg Schaland with their two children and the figure of Luigia herself, probably together with her future husband. The series concludes with Christina next to the fire, Caterin walking with her bridegroom Helias Fels, Andreas in the fabric shop, Helena fetching wine from the cellar and Efrasina gathering pears in the garden followed, finally, by the dead Johannes.

This depiction reflects the sedate lives of the upper class. It should not, however, delude us about the more general facts of life in early modern times. In an average family, only two to three children survived beyond infancy. The infant mortality rate was still very high, with parents' lack of concern for their younger children clearly being a contributory factor. The relationship between parents and their children cannot be compared with today's ideal: usually children were only cared for if they could be put to work (cf. p. 109).

Luigia Morell (?)
Tapestry depicting the Morell family
Constance or eastern Switzerland, 1601
Wool embroidery on linen, with silk, linen and metal threads. 175 × 175 cm
LM 24507

Jenny Schneider, "Zürcher Bildstickereien des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts", in: *Zürcher Taschenbuch 1963*, Zurich 1962, pp. 78–79. – Rudolf Lenz, "Emotion und Affektion in der Familie der Frühen Neuzeit", in: *Die Familie als sozialer und historischer Verband*, ed. Peter-Johannes Schuler, Sigmaringen 1987, pp. 121–146.



Fascination for the exotic – but slavery nevertheless

This piece is a writing case, clock, automaton and coat of arms in one. On the chest-like pedestal, which contains compartments for quill pens, stands a black man dressed in richly coloured garb, his legs astride. In his left hand he holds a bow, in his right an escutcheon. The enamelled coat of arms of the Rahns, a Zurich family, bears the inscription "Herrn Hans Rudolf Rahn, Bürgermeister 1646" (Hans Rudolf Rahn, Esquire, Mayor 1646). He was presented with the valuable automaton, which originally came from Augsburg, during his second year of office, while taking the waters at the nearby spa in Baden. It had been donated by councillors and citizens of Zurich. Gifts like these, presented at the spa, were an old tradition, regularly used by the city fathers of Zurich to honour travelling guests. In those days the citizens of Zurich, who were normally subject to strict puritanical curbs on their freedom, disported themselves with such gay abandon in Baden that in 1646 the guardians of the city's public morals felt obliged to implore "the women of Zurich and their daughters not to cause a general outrage with the flightiness of their dress [...]". It is altogether possible that Councillor Rahn treated those selfsame women and their daughters to a performance by the black figure: every hour, on the hour, it rolled its eyes to and fro and moved its chin and thick lower lip up and down. In those days, an automaton like this would no doubt have caused considerably more frissons of terror to run up and down the spine than it would today.

The story behind it, however, is considerably more serious. The Moor had served the Rahn family as an arms bearer only since the beginning of the early 16th century. Back in those days, it was considered good form in the Mediterranean region and certain northern trading cities to have a "black-amoor" as a labourer, a decorative figure for the carriage and horses, or in the salon. At the same time, a fashion emerged for depicting black slaves – in place of animals – as motifs in coats of arms. A black man, for example, was depicted as a kind of trademark in the escutcheon of John Hawkins, the wealthiest slave trader of the 16th century. The colourful outfit turned the Rahns' Moor into a decorative figure, much in keeping with the period's well-known fascination with the exotic. At the same time, the demonic face is a representation of exorcized evil. Instead of a heart, the figure has a clockwork mechanism with a system of pulleys and levers to do precisely what would have then been expected: to show the hours, roll his eyes and move his mouth dumbly up and down.

It was not until 1815 – after the Enlightenment and the Congress of Vienna – that Europe generally showed its disdain for slavery and for treating human beings as commodities. Nonetheless, the racism and arrogance remain, as revealed by two none too ancient descriptions of our automaton: "The tiny heathen stood there woodenly, in all his helplessness [...]" or "His posture lacked all nobility or uprightness; the clock plate weighed heavily on his chest, causing his back to arch."

Automaton in the guise of a Moor
Augsburg, 1646
Figure: Wood, carved and painted; with clock movement
H. 69 cm; W. 35 cm; D. 20 cm
Dep. 2443 (Rahn family)

Hans-Joachim König, "Verständnislosigkeit und Verstehen, Sicherheit und Zweifel: Das Indiobild spanischer Chronisten im 16. Jahrhundert", in: *Die Kenntnis beider Indien im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, eds. U. Bitterli and E. Schmidt, Munich 1991, pp. 37–62. – Olga Amberger, "Die schwarze Baden-Schenkung", in: *Zürcher Wochen-Chronik*, 1.2.1913. – Klaus Kreimeier, "In die schwarze Farbe gehüllt...", in: Thomas Theye, *Wir und die Wilden. Einblicke in eine kannibalische Beziehung*, Reinbek/Hamburg 1984, in particular pp. 105ff.

Clearly visible on the left side of all the men in the tapestry on p. 67 is a dagger, the sign of a freeman. In the 17th century, Zurich society was organized along very strict lines. The city-state was governed by an aristocracy who had become wealthy on trade and the income from hiring out mercenaries and set the tone for every aspect of social life. Outwardly, the sumptuary laws, repeatedly reformulated since the Reformation, had imposed curbs on the public flaunting of wealth, with the result that Baroque extravagance was all the more exaggerated within the family's own four walls. These double standards are reflected in the modest façades of Zurich's townhouses, which conceal magnificently appointed drawing rooms and interiors like the *Seidenhofzimmer*, which is installed in the National Museum. This belonged to the townhouse of General Hans Rudolf Werdmüller, who was infamous for his dissipated lifestyle. The much-travelled officer also owned a country house on the Au peninsula, near Zurich, where he kept both male and female slaves from Dalmatia.

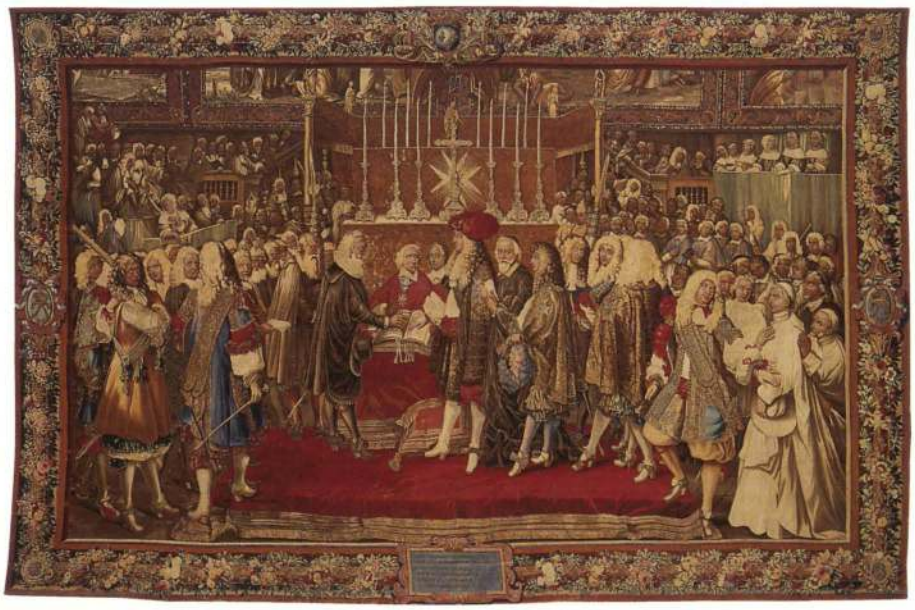
The work commissioned by wealthy clients provided several well-known goldsmiths with a livelihood. These included Felix Werder, who was renowned for his magnificently crafted pistols, and the goldsmith Hans Peter Oeri, who established a reputation well beyond Zurich for his splendidly decorated trophies and weapon handles. These were intended primarily as showpieces, where appearance was of far more importance than practicality. The handle of this hunting knife, for example, which was made around 1665, is almost completely covered with animal figures, very much in the Baroque tradition. The pommel consists of a lion fighting with a bear, while the hilt features a hunter with a pig-sticker and a deer surrounded by dogs. For the central part of the guard, the artist went all the way back to antiquity for his depiction of Hercules seen struggling here with the Nemean lion. The two quillons, elaborated in great detail, show the battle between the lion and the serpent on the left and, on the right, a lion at rest. Lions fighting, then, is a theme that occurs no fewer than four times. Could the weapon have belonged to a man named Leu (a Swiss name, meaning lion)? We are unable to say because the piece was only recently purchased from a private dealer. Perhaps the lions are simply a general symbol for strength, courage and, of course, their subdual to man.

A great deal more research has been devoted to the manufacturing of such weapons than to their iconographic background. The dagger's complicated handle was the result of several castings that were part of the artist's repertoire. The individual brass components were so skillfully joined together, soldered, chased and finally plated with gold that the finished product appears to be a homogeneous whole. In 1833, for reasons unknown, the weapon received a new sheath together with a blade that had been ornately decorated and signed by the Parisian gunsmith, Henry Le Page (1792–1854).

Hans Peter Oeri (1637–1692)
Ornamental hunting knife
Zurich, 1665–1670; blade 19th century
Cast brass (several parts), chased, gilded
Hilt: H. 15.7 cm; W. 12.7 cm; H. total 72.5 cm
LM 64642

Barocker Luxus. Das Werk des Zürcher Goldschmieds Hans Peter Oeri 1637–1692, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1988.

The Sun King and the Swiss



Charles Le Brun (1619–1690)
Adam Frans van der Meulen (1632–1690)
Alliance tapestry. Paris, after 1665
Basselisse-Gobelin in dyed wool and silk
387 × 585 cm
Dep. 65 (Gottfried Keller Foundation)

Despite harsh criticism, which had been mounting steadily since the 16th century, the Swiss tenaciously clung to their long-established practice of offering mercenary services to foreign buyers in the 17th and 18th centuries. When foreign powers wished to enlist entire divisions or regiments, the suppliers were no longer private individuals but the government itself. In the 17th century, Switzerland's main partner was the kingdom of France. This large Gobelin tapestry depicts the ratification of the mercenary agreement of 1663. It was made at the royal workshops near Paris, based primarily on designs by Charles Le Brun, and was part of a series glorifying the exploits of the absolute monarch, Louis XIV. In this exhibit, which was acquired in 1896 following some adept negotiation on the part of the founding director Heinrich Angst, the National Museum possesses an object that portrays Switzerland's representatives at that time from the viewpoint of outsiders.

In a fashion typical for the time, an act of state of as decidedly secular a character as the renewal of a mercenary agreement, took place at Notre-Dame in Paris. The oath was sworn on a bible, which lies open before Cardinal Barberini. This was a meeting of two unequal partners, as can be seen from the oath itself. On the Swiss side, which was usually divided, delegates from each of the communities involved made the oath individually, while for the French, the word of the king alone was sufficient. On the one hand, we see humble delegates from small communities, on the other, the embodiment of absolute authority. We have tangible subordination contrasted with an ostentatious demonstration of wealth and power. This becomes particularly apparent if we look more closely at the two main protagonists: on the left we see the mayor of Zurich, leader of the Swiss delegation, deferentially holding his hat in his hand; on the right, the Sun King complete with wig and headgear. It is a scene which makes the great difference in age between the 63-year-old mayor and the 25-year-old king all the more impressive.

Even in terms of appearance, the Swiss in their black garments are a clear contrast to this colourful host of courtiers. The latter no longer wear frills round their necks, are clean-shaven and have luxurious wigs. In terms of the opulence of their clothing, they have even upstaged their womenfolk, who are clearly visible in the top right-hand corner. Here, it is the men who appear feminine. This applies as much to the king as to his brother, the Duke of Orléans, whom we see in the detail. His posture, his finely crafted shoes with their high heels speak a language of their own: here, the male members of the aristocracy are making a demonstrative show of their leisurely, effortlessly elegant lifestyle.

Sigrid Pallmert, "Kleider machen Leute – Könige machen Mode", in: *Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte* 47/1990, pp. 49–54.

Sleigh belonging to the Pfyffer family. c. 1680
Wood, carved and painted
H. 194 cm; L. 280 cm; W. 100 cm
LM 19818
Photograph: Michel Zumbrunn

In spite of its legal constraints, Switzerland was not unaffected by the lifestyle of kings and princes. Senior officers returning from service abroad built palaces based on foreign models and often maintained their newly acquired habits after returning home. This was particularly marked in regions where the authorities permitted a certain amount of luxury, such as the Catholic areas of central Switzerland. This sleigh dates from the 17th century and originally came from Altishofen in the canton of Lucerne, better known for its 16th-century castle of the "King of the Swiss". It indicates a feudal lifestyle since, according to contemporary sources, sleigh-riding was one of the pastimes of princes and knights. Sleighs decorated with figures like this one were popular for so-called "carousels" in winter, tournament-like entertainments in which the lady sat up front while the gentleman was perched on a seat at the back, holding the reins. In the shell-shaped main body of this sleigh we find seats for two passengers. The vehicle would be used primarily for elegant outings, which are documented – even in Switzerland – by textual and pictorial sources. The teams, passengers and sleighs would adopt a specific motto or program for their excursion, to which the figures too would be adapted. Animals from the owner's coat of arms or even mythological figures, as in this case, would often be used. The tone is set by a gilded Triton blowing into a conch; according to ancient legend, he could use this to raise or calm the waves. Decorating the whole length of the runners is a silver meander pattern on a blue background, which clearly represents water. The two fishy creatures with their wide-open maws may not feel entirely at home here: the rings through their noses allude to the taming of natural forces.

The main body of the sleigh is adorned with fishes and shells and was based on a design by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, who made a whole series of such designs for the Viennese court around 1570. The Triton is reminiscent of Bernini's fountain of the same name in Rome, which features a similar figure. Another fabulous creature with a moving tongue adorns the point at which the two runners converge. Sleighs such as this one should also be seen in the context of the exciting world of the carnival and would be used for this purpose mainly by the younger members of aristocratic families. Our sleigh was probably in use until the early part of the 20th century. This is borne out by the later addition of fittings for a pair of horses and the fact that the carriage had been repainted. This coat was removed totally in 1989 to reveal the well-preserved original paintwork with its lustrous, painstakingly completed figures.

Heinrich Kreisel, *Prunkwagen und Schlitten*, Leipzig 1927. – Andres Furger, *Kutschen und Schlitten in der Schweiz*, Zurich 1993. – Giancarlo Marsiletti, *Antiche Slitte*, Vicenza 1994.

A roundabout journey to the National Museum

The monstrance seen here, like the stained glass window on p. 65, originally came from the nunnery in Rathausen. During the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic church not only embarked upon a new building programme but also went to great lengths to procure equally imposing utensils that reflected the taste of the new era. These included magnificent showpiece items like this monstrance, at the centre of which the Host could be placed for the procession on Corpus Christi. It was a gift of the Abbess Maria Caecilia Pfyffer von Wyher, whose coat of arms decorates the base. The lower part is made of (gilded) silver, the upper part of pure gold. On the short protuberance at the centre of the circular base stands John the Baptist. His right hand points upwards, indicating the lamb of God, while his left holds a cornucopia. From this shoots forth a tree in all its luxuriant splendour. Two of its boughs frame the vessel for the Host, which is decorated with enamelled arabesques and set with pearls and precious stones. On one side of the container we see Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, on the other Saint George. The culmination of the piece is the crowning of the Virgin, beneath which we see a pelican feeding its blood to its young.

The particular charm of this monstrance lies in the perfection of the overall design and the garland which gracefully encloses the upper part. The pearls, arranged like bunches of grapes, and the rays in the form of ears of wheat react to the slightest movement, just as in Nature. They imbue the entire piece with an airy lightness and prevent the inner part, with its encrustations of emeralds, diamonds, pearls and rubies from appearing over-elaborate. The monstrance is generally considered to be the masterpiece of the master goldsmith Franz Ludwig Hartmann, who skillfully integrated imagery connected with the nunnery's history: Saint Bernard was the founder of the Cistercian order, St. George the patron saint of Rathausen nunnery.

Our monstrance has a colourful past. The fact that we can still admire it, so well preserved, in the Upper Chapel at the National Museum in Zurich is little short of a miracle. After the closure of the nunnery in 1848, it was sold to a buyer in Paris, purchased by the papal legate and taken for safekeeping to the Vatican. In 1858, the Pope committed it to the care of the nuns, who by this time had moved to Schwyz. When they were forced to leave Switzerland, they took the piece with them to Lorraine. From there, they were driven to Bavaria, where the monstrance, too, finally ended up. The piece later fell into the hands of a dealer in Frankfurt, from whom it was purchased by the Gottfried Keller Foundation in 1919, which in turn presented the magnificent piece to the Swiss National Museum.

Franz Ludwig Hartmann (1657–1708)
Monstrance from Rathausen nunnery
Lucerne, 1688–1691
Gold, gold-plated silver, enamel, precious stones. H. 65.3 cm
Dep. 2753 (Gottfried Keller Foundation)

Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Luzern (Die Kunstdenkmäler der Schweiz), vol. 1, Basle 1946, pp. 279ff. – *Anzeiger für Schweizerische Altertumskunde*, ed. Swiss National Museum, Zurich, vol. 6 (1904/1905), vol. 7 (1905/1906).


Wann die wehrte Eidgnosschafft
Hat von ihrer Tugend wegen
Offt gefühlt des Neides krafft;
Hat sie doch auch offt dargegen
Schöne Ehren-krantz gewunnen
Durch Freund- und Gevatterschafft
Grosser Herren, Fürsten, Cronen
Gegen diser Völkerschafft.
EVITAT VITII VIR BONUS ET SPECIEM.
Wann Zwen Löwen sich betrengen,
und den Fuchs in Fride lassen,
Wirdt er sich nicht einvermengen,
Noch sein eigne Bütze hassen:
Wann Zweÿ Potentaten kriegen,
Wirdt ein Weiser Freÿer Stand
Wann er kan in Fride ligen,
Nicht einflechten seine Hand.
PRÆSENTEM MONSTRAT QUÆLIBET HERBA DEUM.
VIRTUTIS COMITES GLORIA ET INVIDIA.
Verbunst und Ehr begleiten
Die Tugend beider seiten.
4. Urÿ
INTER SCYLLAM ATQUE CHARYBDIN.
Der glückselig wirdt gepreiset,
Der im Mittelweg durchreiset.
Eidgnössische Neutralitæt.
6. Underwalden
Hat gelehrter Leüten Zahl
Sich gezeiget überall,
Ein fromer Man die Laster scheücht,
Ja gar den schein des bösen fleücht.
Jedem halten seine Pflichten,
Der die selben würd auch halten,
Und sich in die Zeiten richten,
Alles aber der gestalten,
Das er Mittel-straaß bewahre
Und sich schlag auff keine seit:
Mittel wendet die Gefahre,
Bringet eigne Sicherheit.
Kein graß noch kräütlein ist so klein,
Es zeiget Gott den Schöpfer sein.

Switzerland seen as a fox

The Baroque stoves found in Swiss town halls, most of which stem from workshops in Winterthur, have one feature in common: the individuals who ordered them figure in the painted decorations around the sides. Most of them have a didactic content of some form or other: the scenes are taken from either the Bible or from local or national history. At the end of the 17th century, three tiled stoves were made for Zurich's town hall. One of them depicts the history of Zurich. The other, which is our subject here, shows the history of the Swiss Confederation, of which Zurich had become a member in 1351. Both were built by a stovemaker from Winterthur, David II Pfau, and decorated by his cousin, Hans Heinrich III Pfau, a stove painter by profession. They completed their work shortly after Zurich's town hall was officially opened in the summer of 1698.

The pictures and attendant verses reflect a pride in the past, but also exhort present-day onlookers to ensure that the state continues along the path mapped out by their forefathers. One of the tiles on the right-hand side of the tower section of the stove is the centrepiece. Adorned by a banner with the words "Neutrality for the Confederation", the picture shows two lions doing battle in the foreground while a fox lurks on a promontory in the background. Above the illustration, we find the words:

INTER SCYLLAM ATQUE CHARYBDIN
Der glückselig wirdt gepreiset
Der im Mittelweg durchreiset.
(Happy is he who takes the middle path.)

The message is clear. Switzerland is admonished to continue taking the middle road between the great powers of Europe (Scylla and Charybdis), in order words, the position of the watchful fox resting watchfully in the background. This is spelt out in even clearer terms by the accompanying text:

When two lions do battle against each other,
Leaving the fox in peace,
He should neither interfere
Nor take his own peace lightly.
When two mighty potentates go to war,
The wise man remains aloof
And does not become involved.

Every man should do his duty
And adapt to the times.
But he should also do everything
Within his power to stick
To the middle course
And not take sides.
By doing so, he wards off danger
And guarantees his own safety.

The basic idea that the middle course is the best one has remained with the Swiss to this day, although no one would admit to championing the happy medium with the same degree of candour today. This, as we all know, has its pros and cons. But how did this basic image of the lurking fox come into being? There were certainly internal and external reasons. As the Middle Ages came to a close and the early Modern Age began, the loose collection of states that made up the Swiss Confederation were continually plagued by internal strife. There was no solid foundation for a common foreign policy. In addition, the tiny Alpine republic saw itself surrounded by the major blocs and alliances formed and dissolved as the scales of power within Europe were constantly adjusted, and which represented a continuous threat. Neutrality proved to be a necessity to the outside world. By sitting still on the sidelines, Switzerland was able to avoid becoming embroiled in European conflicts. Against this background, neutrality was increasingly, if tacitly, seen as a tactical way of adapting to conditions in Europe, and it was not until the time of our magnificent stove that it assumed the status of a state maxim. In the words of Edgar Bonjour: "For a long time, the Swiss Confederation thrived on the jealousies of its larger neighbours. One could almost say that the balance created by the rivalries of the larger powers is the space in which the neutrality of the small state is able to flourish."

David II Pfau (stove)
Hans Heinrich III Pfau (painting)
Stove from Zurich town hall (fragment)
Winterthur, 1698
Faience; Sharp-fire painting
H. 286 cm; W. 130 cm; D. 135 cm
Dep. 1573 (City of Zurich)

Margrit Früh, "Winterthurer Kachelöfen für Rathäuser und Zürich 1697/98", in: *Keramik-Freunde*, Mitteilungsblatt no 95, Dec. 1981. – Edgar Bonjour, *Geschichte der schweizerischen Neutralität*, Basle/Stuttgart 1978. – Jürg Späni-Schleidt, *Die Interpretation der dauernden Neutralität durch das schweizerische und das österreichische Parlament*, Berne/Stuttgart 1983.

The concept of neutrality prevailing at the time by no means prevented the Switzerland of the Ancien Régime from allowing its menfolk to go on with the traditional *Reislaufen* (mercenary force). The existence of a professional soldiery represented an important source of income, but also meant that one Swiss was often fighting against another, as in the Battle of Malplaquet in 1709. The Swiss had a reputation for serving their paymasters well as long as they received a fitting reward. The French monarchy had always thought highly of their services: the most highly esteemed troop of foreign soldiers bore the name "Compagnie des Cent-Suisses". The One Hundred Swiss had a function similar to the Swiss Guard at the Vatican, which has survived to this day. Like the latter, they had magnificent uniforms and suitably decorated weapons for special occasions. The halberd of the partisans, as it was called, bears a gilded emblem of the Sun King. The company of the One Hundred Swiss, like the king's own bodyguard, had numerous representative functions, as proved by this decorative uniform made of silk and velvet in red, white and blue, the colours of the royal standard. This gala uniform is cut in the style of the clothing worn by Swiss mercenaries in France during the 17th century and was clearly only worn on parade in the 18th century. On the Alliance tapestry on p. 73, we see two lavishly clad officers of the Swiss Guard in front of the Swiss delegation. Excessively decorated as it was, this ceremonial dress proved to be entirely unsuitable for daily use, and from 1750 onwards, the Swiss Guard began wearing a simpler and more practical form of clothing for their everyday duties.

The royal Swiss Guard have gone down in history for their part in the events of the French Revolution. After the attempted flight of the French king, Louis XVI, who was unable to come to terms with his role as a constitutional monarch, the Tuileries were stormed on August 10, 1792. The Swiss Guard put up staunch resistance and two-thirds of the regiment was annihilated. Subsequently, the new government formally disbanded the royal troops. There was a brief sequel in the course of the restoration, and the Swiss company in Paris was finally dissolved following the Revolution of July 1830.

Historic uniform of the Swiss Guard with elaborately decorated halberd
France, 18th century
Cloth, silk, velvet; Gold-plated iron
Uniform: Trousers: L. 100 cm; Waist 85 cm
Jacket: Sleeve: L. 70 cm; Back: L. 60 cm; Waist 90 cm
Halberd: H. 236.9 cm; W. 28.3 cm
LM 16618 (Uniform); LM 70591 (Halberd)

Jérôme Bodin, *Les Suisses au service de la France*, Paris 1988.

Diana the fair

The French Revolution marked the closing of the last chapter on the so-called Ancien Régime. The prevailing decorative style of the time was the decidedly whimsical Rococo. This influenced the life of the bourgeois in Zurich and was reflected in such outward manifestations as a more sophisticated dining culture. Pewter and wooden tableware gradually disappeared from the homes of well-to-do burghers. Around the mid-18th century, crockery made of faience and porcelain became fashionable. Initially imported mainly from China, this was soon being produced by European manufacturers in Meissen or Nymphenburg. In 1763, a porcelain manufactory was founded just beyond the gates of Zurich, on the lake shore at Kilchberg-Schooren, which built on the old Zurich Hafner ware tradition. It created jobs for an impoverished population and sold its wares primarily to a class known as the *nouveaux riches*, whose money came from the profits made during the recently ended Seven-Year War. Such contrasts were typical of a time as fast-moving as this, marked by massive fluctuations in the economy. As a result, an expensive indulgence like luxury chinaware only managed to survive until 1790.

Some of the most sought-after products to leave the Kilchberg factory were elaborately decorated centrepieces. The idealistic aestheticism of the piece illustrated here is completely in tone with the tastes of the time. Room had to be made for the fine arts, even at the dining table, which explains why the factory in Schooren commissioned the well-known artist Salomon Gessner to draw many of its designs. To go with their tableware, the gentry had a penchant for suitably designed centrepieces, usually depicting allegories of the senses, street and genre scenes, or ancient mythology. In line with the restraint typical of the protestant Zurich mentality, these pieces had virtually none of the extravagant flamboyance of the foreign manufacturers. It was typified much more by its reserved elegance, which gave it a charm that has survived to this day.

Table centrepiece with Diana, the goddess of hunting
Manufactory at Kilchberg-Schooren, c. 1770
Porcelain, painted. H. 38.5 cm;
W. and D. 19 cm each
LM 22695 (Statuette); LM 20865 (Base)

Our centrepiece shows four hunters with their shotguns and hounds, and the kill. In those days, hunting was one of the most publicly celebrated distractions of the upper classes and was also a source of delicacies for the table. At the centre of the group stands the figure of Diana, the ancient goddess of fertility and hunting, in an interpretation very typical of the time. Her facial features comply with the prevailing masculine idea of the ideal woman: a pure-looking young girl with a sweet, innocent expression. Such women were the ideal prey for hunters. Courting and seducing them was considered a suitable pastime for any real man. In Zurich, women with more self-assurance gradually began to defend themselves against it (cf. p. 91).

Hans Wysling (ed.), *Zürich im 18. Jahrhundert*, Zurich 1983. – Siegfried Ducret, *Die Zürcher Porzellanmanufaktur und ihre Erzeugnisse im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2, Zurich 1958.

Biology of a grenadier's cap

Over the past few decades, Konrad Lorenz and comparative behavioural researchers have provided ample proof that biological and cultural developments are governed by similar laws. Every new step forward is taken on the foundations of experience that has proved reliable in the past. Acquired characteristics tend to be adjusted and adapted rather than abandoned. Where biologists would speak of the transmission of hereditary characteristics, historians would refer to tradition. Developments of this type are particularly clear from old uniforms. Our grenadier's helmet is a particularly good example. In the early 18th century, infantrymen wore a broad-rimmed slouch hat that provided protection against the inclemencies of the weather and even, to a lesser degree, against well-aimed blows from a sword. When advances in weapons technology meant that they had to start throwing grenades, the broad rim became a hindrance. The grenadiers were thus given official permission to wear the headgear usually reserved for work and camp duty – a simple pointed cap – on the battlefield. Because these did not entirely look the part, they were stiffened and decorated with patterns and emblems. However, the lower turned-up brim and the little plume serve as a reminder of the hat's origins.

In order to ensure that the stiff cap sat firmly on the wearer's head, it had a strap running under the chin. This in turn made it impossible for soldiers to take it off when acknowledging a senior officer, as they had done with the slouch hat. The grenadiers were thus permitted to substitute removal of a the hat with a symbolic movement of the hand to the brim of the hat. The military salute was born! Until very recently, soldiers were only allowed to salute wearing headgear – this at a time when the purpose of the gesture had long been forgotten.

Our *Pörtler* cap – the name stems from that of a crack Zurich battalion that used to have its training ground next to the Crown Gate – has a brass exploding grenade as a decoration. Earlier grenades bore a distinct similarity to the pomegranate (cf. old French *pome grenate*, an apple having many grains), whose name was adapted to describe the new weapon and the special troops – the grenadiers – who used them.

Grenadier's cap belonging to the Zurich City Gate Guards
Zurich, end of the 18th century
Red and blue wool; Badge made of gold and silver-plated brass. H. 40 cm; W. 25 cm
LM 7428

Hugo Schneider, *Vom Brustharnisch zum Waffenrock*, Frauenfeld/Stuttgart 1968.
– Otto König, "Biologie der Uniform", in: *Naturwissenschaft und Medizin*, 23/1968, pp. 41–50.

The Rhine Falls

The Rhine Falls, near Schaffhausen, are one of the most spectacular landscapes in Switzerland and were also one of the most frequently depicted subjects in the art of the 16th century. However, until the 18th century, artists had always chosen a viewpoint above the Falls and well-removed from the subject.

From this moment on, at a time when Switzerland's most famous sights were attracting an increasing number of visitors, the perspective changes. Claude Joseph Vernet was the first artist who chose to place himself directly opposite the Falls, where he could better appreciate the spectacle of the boiling waters hurtling down from one level to another. He has used his artistic skills to give us a faithful representation of the subject and reinforced the impression given by other travellers, such as Lavater or Goethe, who like him were fascinated by the sight of Nature at its wildest and most untamed, and which they attempted to convey in words.

In summer 1778, Vernet accompanied his patron, the Parisian banker and art collector Jean Girardot de Vermenoux, on a trip to Switzerland. The principle stages of their journey are known. Vernet also records painting two views of the *Rhine Falls*, one of which has disappeared. The other, acquired by the National Museum in 1994, shows the little group of travellers marvelling at the magnificent scene in front of them. Monsieur Girardot de Vermenoux is at the centre of the picture, his back to the onlooker and, dazzled by the morning light, has taken off his hat to shield his eyes. To us, this looks distinctly like a salute to the glorious scene in front of him. His stance suggests that he is very deeply moved. As for Madame, she is using a pink umbrella to shade her eyes and is clearly so impressed that she is clinging on to the arm of her female companion. At their side, seated on the ground, is the painter himself, totally engrossed in his work. His son, Carle, is leaning over his shoulder, following with interest the birth of a work of art.

Claude Joseph Vernet (1714–1789)
The Rhine Falls at Schaffhausen. 1779
Oil on canvas. 88 × 130.3 cm
LM 73944

Claude Joseph Vernet clearly paid close attention to the play of the light and the water. So close, in fact, that he has succeeded in making an admirable rendition on canvas, one which is very realistic. In the foreground, he pays homage to the great tradition of French landscape painting and genre scenes, and even makes a nodding acknowledgement to the location by showing a couple in typical Schaffhausen-style dress. In the background, however, his attitude towards Nature is freer and he takes a more realistic and generous approach towards his subject.

The role of Vernet here is that of the precursor. His *Rhine Falls* is an extravagant opening to a new chapter in the history of the representation of the Swiss countryside. The perspective from which he has chosen to view this wonder of Nature was to become the accepted one in the course of the following centuries.

Rudolf Schnyder, "Der Rheinfall von Claude Joseph Vernet", in: *Jahresbericht des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums*, Zurich 1994, pp. 61–64.

William Tell and the Helvetic Society

The "Tell goblet" takes us on a journey into three different epochs. If the main subject, Tell with his son, is a reminder of the Swiss struggle for independence, the glass trophy held by the tree trunk takes us into the years of the Restoration after 1815. This we know because of the two medallions engraved on the inner surface of the trophy: one of these consists of a laurel wreath with the inscription: Eidgenössischer Freundschaft Heilig (Sacred to the companionship of the federation), while the other shows the Swiss cross surrounded by the coats of arms of 22 cantons. Since this medallion was modelled on the federal seal of 1815, the trophy cannot have been made before then and must have replaced an earlier vessel in the 19th century. Commissioned by the Basle members of the Helvetic Society from Alexander Trippel, who lived and worked in Rome, the statuette was presented to the Helvetic Society in 1782, in the town of Olten. By way of thanks, Trippel was named an honorary member of the Society.

The Helvetic Society had been formed in 1760 by a group of patriotically minded men from the social elite of the old confederation. Members met every year to spend a few days together engaging in a series of talks, formal lectures and social events. At the centre of their meetings was the idea of a common fatherland, regardless of religious or political belief. Towards the end of the century, these celebrations of patriotism were being attended by well over one hundred men, often accompanied by their wives and grown-up children. At the larger banquets, the Tell goblet would do the rounds, filled with "Swiss blood", as the wine was called that grew on the battlefield of St. Jakob on the Birs.

The Tell legend had been one of the linchpins of Swiss history since the end of the Middle Ages, although doubts were already being voiced in the 18th century about the historical accuracy of the version of the tale that had been handed down. Historians, too, had questioned the legality of murdering a tyrant. It is perhaps significant that in Swiss society, it was not the historic deed that was stressed so much as a collection of themes based on duty and love of the fatherland, from which the model for the patriotic elite would develop. Johann Kaspar Lavater's "Tellenlied" (Tell's song), written for the Helvetic Society in 1767, anticipates both the scene and the sentiment translated by Trippel in his sculpture.

Voll jugendlicher Munterkeit
Jauchzt ihm der Sohn, in Eil
Bringt er dem Vater – welche Freud'! –
Am Apfel seinen Pfeil

So schlug ihm nie ein Vaterherz,
So pries er niemals Gott;
So quoll ihm Freude nie aus Schmerz,
Und Ehre nie aus Spott.

(Full of youthful enthusiasm, he cheers and brings to his father – oh, what joy! – the apple with his dart. Never has a father's heart beat so strongly, never has anyone praised God more. Never has more joy streamed from pain, never more honour from derision.)

Trippel's Tell motif has been reproduced on Helvetic Society programs since 1791 and found its way in 1798 into the vignettes of the Helvetic Republic via the Basle printing firm of Haas.

Dieter Ulrich, in: *Alexander Trippel (1744–1793). Skulpturen und Zeichnungen*, exh. cat., Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen 1993, pp. 76–81.

Alexander Trippel (1744–1793)
William Tell and son. c. 1780
Table decoration. Carved walnut statuette
H. with goblet: 57.5 cm; Group: H. 47.5 cm
IN 70

From heroic exploits to embroidery: a General of many parts

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, Switzerland underwent the greatest upheaval ever in its political and economic history, the result of the French Revolution and the politics of Napoleon. This is made perfectly clear by the example of the career of Niklaus Franz von Bachmann (1740–1831), the first General of the Swiss army and the owner of the two chairs pictured here. As the child of a family whose father was constantly absent, fighting in the service of others, he was raised primarily by his mother before being entrusted to the clergy. At the tender age of 16 he found himself doing military service, was twice wounded and then wrote a new, much lauded set of military regulations for the French Ministry of Defence. His brother, who was likewise in the service of the King, was charged with being responsible for the resistance shown by the Swiss at the storming of the Tuileries in 1792 and executed. Fearing for his own life, Bachmann fled France, entered service with the Sardinians and thus the enemies of France. After an enforced peace, he was captured and delivered into the safekeeping of the Helvetic Republic, which was loyal to Napoleon, and kept under house arrest.

In 1799, Switzerland itself became a theatre of war. Bachmann assembled his own regiment, covered the allied retreat from the advancing French forces and then retired to Allgäu and the Vorarlberg. After the signing of the peace treaty between France and the great coalition, his regiment was dissolved. In 1802, Bachmann fought against the Swiss government forces and fled abroad when French troops once again marched into Switzerland.

After their withdrawal, he returned to Switzerland in 1804 and was able to enjoy a few quiet years on his estate at Näfels. In 1815, French troops under Napoleon, who had by now returned from Elba, once again posed a threat to Switzerland. Bachmann was appointed the first Swiss general and attempted to set up an effective system for defending the country's frontiers. After this, he retired from the public eye until his death in 1831 at his home in Glarus.

Two armchairs. Paris, c. 1810
Mahogany; Wool embroidery by General Niklaus Franz von Bachmann (1740–1831)
H. 95 cm; W. 68 cm; D. 67 cm
LM 65300, 65301

In Bachmann's obituary we read: "The man of the house was as proficient with needle and thread as he was with weapons." The house referred to is An-der-Letz, the estate near Näfels brought into their marriage by his wife. This was the origin of the two Empire armchairs, together with several more chairs, as well as a grandfather clock and other items.

The covers of the chairs shown here were probably made by General Bachmann himself during his respite from active service between 1804 and 1818. The chair on the right shows an unidentified country house while the one on the left is a depiction of one of the fabric printing factories that had opened in Glarus (cf. p. 107). Apart from the other turmoil it had created, the French Revolution had also liberalized trade and commerce. After the structural crisis resulting from the years of revolution, Switzerland entered the Industrial Age.

Jahresbericht des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums, Zurich 1985, pp. 28ff. – Hans Laupper, "General Niklaus Franz von Bachmann An-der-Letz", in: *Grosse Glarner*, Glarus 1986, pp. 95ff.

Precious objects return to fashion after the Revolution

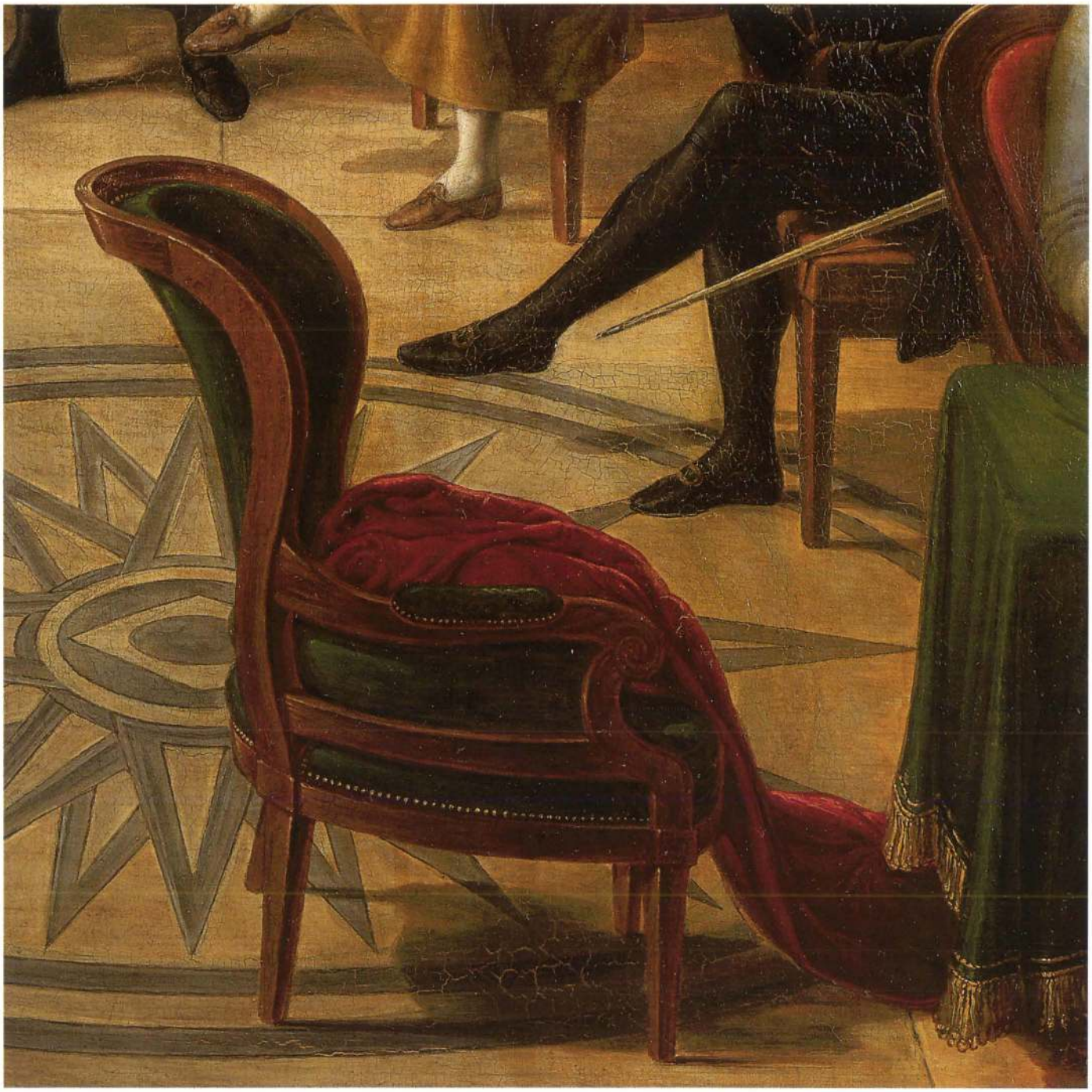
The French Revolution was a body blow to the manufacturers of luxury objects. Geneva, where the production of watches and automatons had played a significant role in the economy since the late 17th century and throughout the 18th century, had not been left unscathed. Nonetheless, the years of the Revolution were also a time when barriers where broken down and new inventions were being made in all fields. In 1796, the Geneva watchmaker Antoine Favre-Salomon succeeded in producing a musical automaton without the traditional hammers and bells. He discovered that a vibrating steel lamella would serve equally well as a sound source. Because of the difficult economic circumstances prevailing at the time, he was unable to exploit his invention commercially. This was to be left to his successors when things had calmed down again about ten years later and – precisely as a result of the prevailing unrest – the well-to-do were once again ready to pay for expensive items. One of the rising stars among Geneva's entrepreneurs was one Isaac-Daniel Piguet from the Vallée de Joux, who worked with Samuel Philipp Meylan between 1811 and 1828. Their workshop manufactured the musical part of our automaton, with its circular plate and fan-shaped steel lamellae. The clockwork was made by the Rochat brothers. The production of these complicated automatons, which were manufactured in Geneva for customers all over the world, particularly in the East, was based on an early form of contract manufacturing: individual parts were commissioned from specialist artisans and then assembled by a master craftsman.

Piguet & Meylan, Rochat brothers
Bird automaton in the form of a birdcage
Geneva, c. 1820
Gold, pearls, turquoises, diamonds, enamel
H. 28 cm; W. and D. 10 cm each
LM 30010

The automaton is surrounded by the base of a golden birdcage, which has a traditional 18th-century shape. It is richly decorated with pearls, turquoises, diamond roses and enamel. The bells chime on the full, the half and the quarter hour. In addition, at the full hour, the musical mechanism would be set in motion. The tiny birds turn with it and their beaks open and close as they twitter away merrily. One of the enamel plates in the base (the holes for winding the mechanism are concealed behind the second) can be pushed to one side to reveal another automaton, this time consisting of two musicians whose arms move (see detail).

Piguet's automaton is the most sophisticated of its kind. This wonderful piece of mechanical engineering is beautifully preserved, together with its original case in dark-red leather. Following several overhauls, the complex mechanism now functions perfectly once again. An inscription on the clockwork (written in Paris) attests to the fact that it has been interfered with on several occasions: "Qui est le salaud qui a fait des soudures à l'étain?" Or: "Who's the idiot who did the tin soldering?"

Eduard C. Saluz, *Klangkunst. 200 Jahre Musikdosen*, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1996.



JEAN-ELIE DAUTUN came from a Huguenot family that had settled in Morges. He studied theology and was a minister in Paris, Morges and, from 1799 until 1816, at the French church in Berne. He finally settled in Lausanne, where he ran a guest house for foreigners. As an artist, Dautun was probably self-taught and devoted himself to three types of painting: the allegorical, the religious and the historical.

This monumental piece, *Famous Men of Switzerland*, was painted around 1829. It takes all three traditions up and unites them into an impressive interpretation of Swiss history from the point of view of religion, tolerance and enlightenment. Group portraits featuring celebrated historical figures had a long tradition. Raphael's *School of Athens*, a fresco painted around 1510, was the key work in this genre and its structure and basic concept undoubtedly influenced Dautun. The "historical event" painting reached its apogee in the late 18th and 19th centuries. History was seen as a means of making the past present: significantly enough, at the time when Dautun's work was in the making, similar projects were being realized in neighbouring countries. In Germany, Ludwig I of Bavaria championed the construction of a temple in honour of

great German figures. In 1830, the cornerstone of "Valhalla" was laid near Regensburg. Modelled on a Greek temple, it towers high up over the Danube, a national shrine for the marble busts of figures who have contributed towards the creation of a Teutonic culture. At the same time, Ingres was working on the fictitious group portrait genre. His *Apotheosis of Homer* was completed in 1827 (Paris, Musée du Louvre).

Dautun's monumental work is also based on the collected biographies of famous men, complete with portraits, which were immensely popular at the time. In the 17th century, Switzerland had contributed two works of major significance to historical thinking. The first of these was David Herrliberger's *Schweizerischer Ehrentempel* (Swiss Temple of Honour), which appeared in 1748, and the second was Leonard Meister's *Helvetiens berühmte Männer* (Helvetia's Famous Men), the first volume of which was published in 1783 with engravings by Johann Heinrich Pfenninger. These portraits also served as the models for around half of Dautun's figures.

In Dautun's painting, the temple of honour assumes the form of a Gothic cathedral. From the choir, a cross encompassed in light shines into the nave, placing the entire scene under the symbol of Christian faith. In the background stand the forefathers, the founders of the Swiss confederation and the first preachers of the faith. The centre of the picture brings together the reformers, while on both sides of them we see major figures from the fields of science, art and politics. Three foreigners with close ties to Switzerland stand at the window, which looks out onto the shore of a lake: Edward Gibbon, Voltaire and the Abbé Raynal are figures to whom Switzerland owed a debt of gratitude for bringing enlightenment to the country. Dautun pays scant attention to women; on a second level of reality – as an image within an image – he places the faces of a few famous women in a pyramid-shaped monument at the right of the picture.

Jean-Elie Dautun (1776–1832)
Famous Men of Switzerland (Les Suisses célèbres)
c. 1829
Oil on canvas. 152 × 230 cm
LM 76910

Dautun was clearly at pains to bring the great men of French and German-speaking Switzerland together. At the small table in the foreground, we see Jacques Necker, the French minister of Louis XVI who came from Geneva and was the last mayor of the old city of Berne. The painting must be interpreted as a call for national unity and dialogue above and beyond linguistic and religious borders, even if it is unquestionably seen from the viewpoint of a protestant minister.

The empty chair remains a mystery. Should it be seen as an exhortation to seek a dialogue with tolerant and liberal-minded individuals in troubled times, to sit down with them at the same table? Or is the painter reserving a chair for the future – a future he views as a living, open monument?

Paul Lang, in: *Die Erfindung der Schweiz*, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1998.

Who's wearing the trousers?

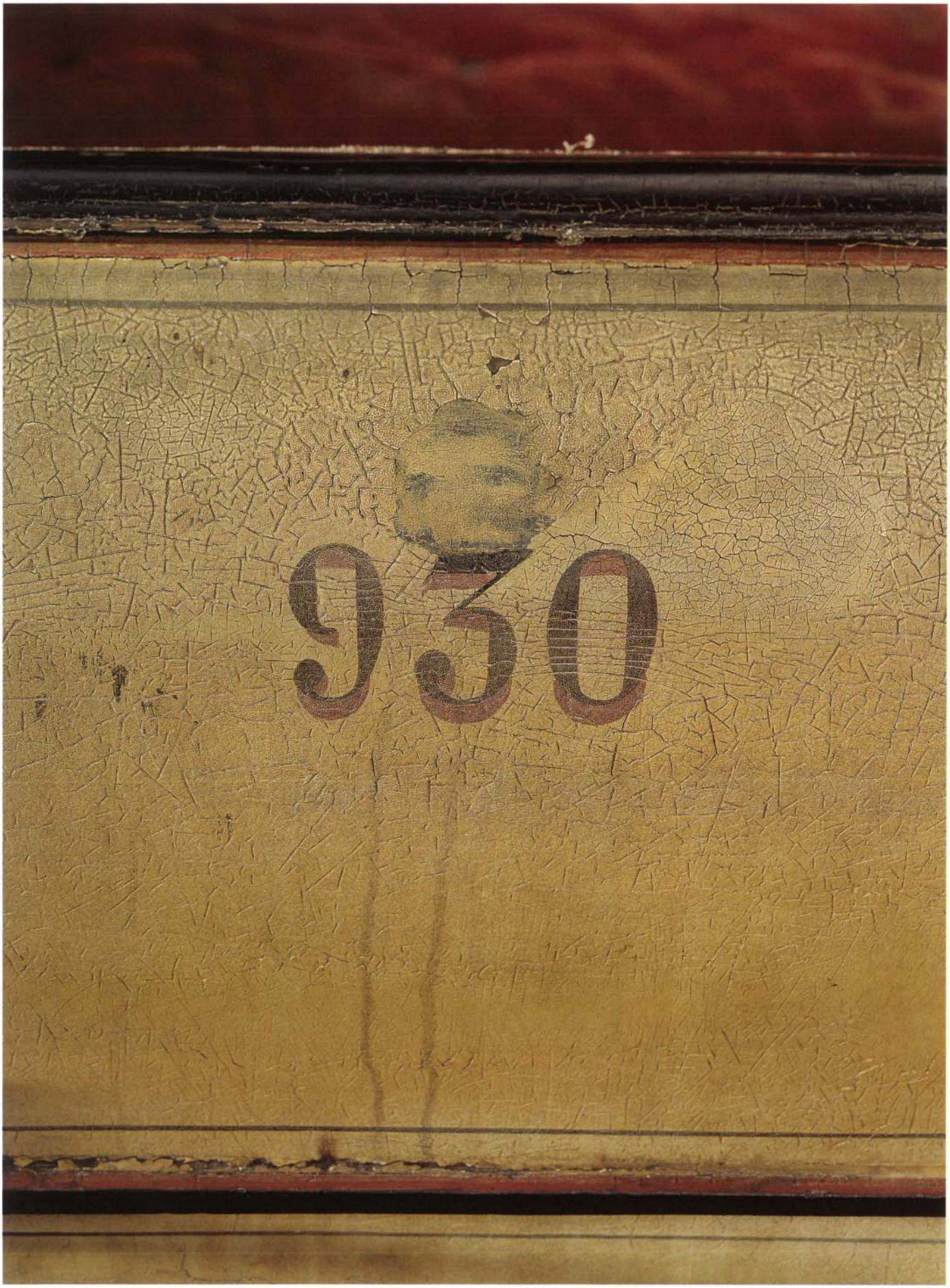
In the 18th and 19th centuries, potteries sprang up even in rural areas. Most of the crockery they produced was garishly coloured and richly decorated. Langnau in the Emmental was one of the first centres to make its name, back in the 17th century. Our bowl was made in the heyday of this particular pottery, which was often decorated with sayings of a satiric, moralistic or pious nature.

One outstanding characteristic of Langnau pottery design is its lively narrative quality, which is manifested in the three-dimensional sculpted lids. A perfect example is this wedding bowl, whose lid has a humorous group of figures instead of a handle. Encircled by a kind of crown-wheel and a decorative plaited garland after the fashion of the times, sit a man and woman with a dog and a cat as a pair of opposites at their feet. There has been an exchange of roles: while the woman idles away her time enjoying a cup of coffee and cake, the man is bent over his work on the spinning wheel.

This kind of humour takes up the tradition of a topsy-turvy world, which had been particularly popular in the Renaissance and had lived on for a long time in popular art. Here, animals hunt people and fish fly through the air. A playful form of this type of "subversion" is still extant in our present-day carnival, where men dress up as women and women as men. Limited to a few days as it is, the crazy world of carnival is ultimately an affirmation of the world as it is precisely because it stands on its head. The subject of our cosy little marital scene should be seen in this spirit: it does not question the basic justice of the roles of the sexes but should be seen, on the contrary, as an admonition to uphold the existing model as it was. In those days, the sexual hierarchy was believed to be part of God's world order, and infringements against it were punished appropriately. In Switzerland and other parts of Europe, if it became known that a man was allowing his wife to beat him, the neighbours would climb onto their roof at night, in a form of popular justice, and remove the tiles from their roof!

Soup bowl. Langnau, c. 1830
Ceramic, painted. H. 27 cm; Diam. 21 cm
LM 950

Robert Wildhaber, *Schweizerische Volkskunst*, Zurich 1969. – Lutz Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, Freiburg i. Br. 1973. – Rudolf Schnyder, *Porzellan und Fayence im Zunfthaus zur Meisen*, Berne 1978.


930

The Swiss national coach

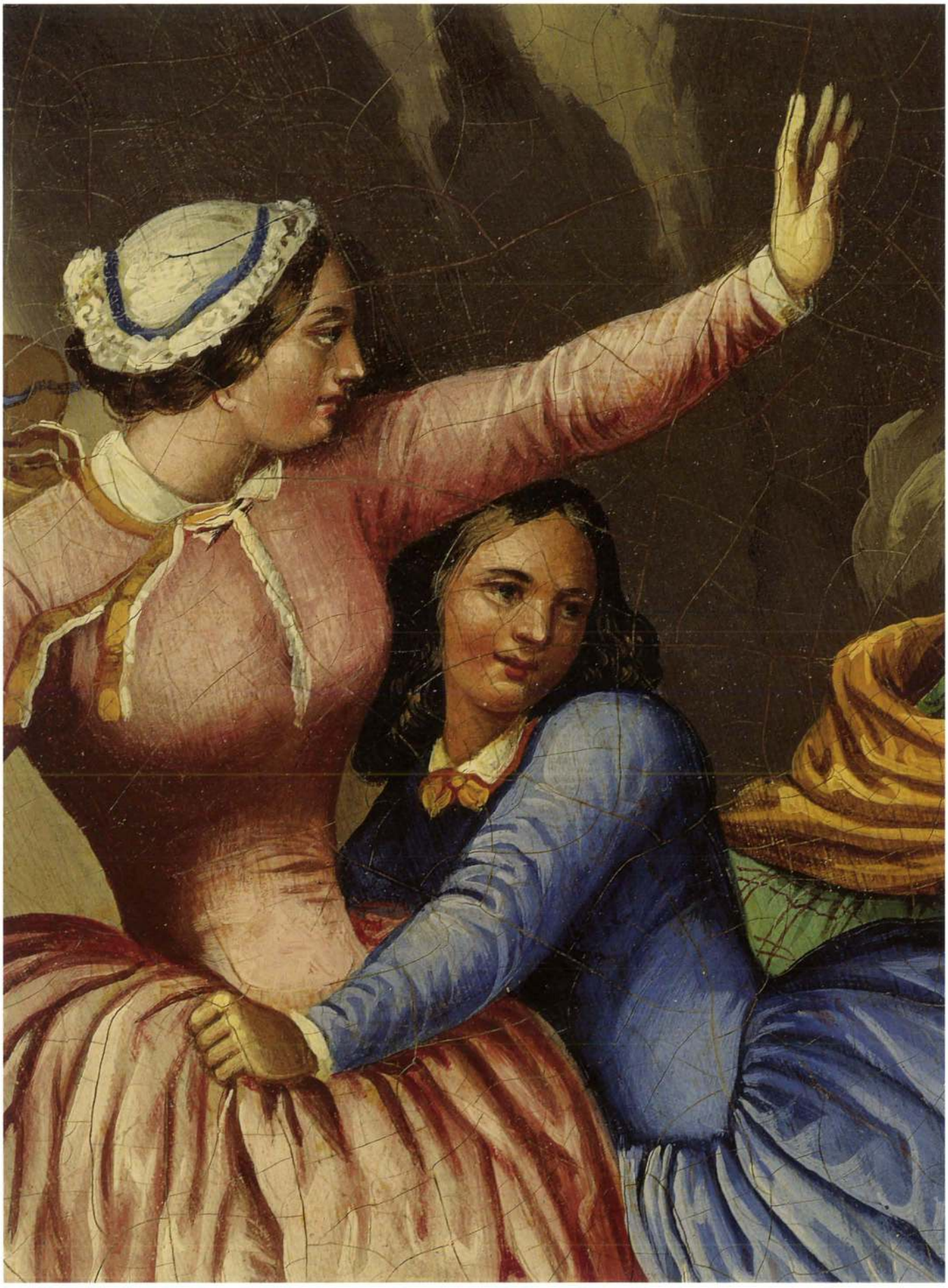
Following the 25-day *Sonderbund* civil war (which broke out as a result of divisions over the Federal Pact), the federal state was founded in 1848. For the first time ever, Switzerland had a constitution that was valid for all cantons. Among other things, this unified the various postal systems and the new organization came into being as early as 1849. The post coaches were painted a standard straw yellow, numbered serially and bore a new national emblem, namely the Swiss cross (here only on the door handle, cf. frontispiece). At first, the new federal post office's vehicles were the old ones formerly used in the various cantons, but in time they were replaced by newer models, which had been ordered immediately by the administration. Among these were a number of so-called *char-de-côté* coaches: it is a typically Swiss design, which was otherwise found only in a small number of areas across the border. In this type of coach, the open or closed carriage was mounted sideways onto the chassis. This not only facilitated a narrower gauge but was also very necessary because many Swiss roads in the middle of the last century – particularly in the Jura and Alpine regions – had not yet been widened to accommodate the 1.40 metre gauge that was standard for the rest of Europe. Foreign visitors to Switzerland who came in their own coaches were thus often obliged to change to a vehicle owned by a local or to the post coach – both of which were about 20 centimetres narrower than the standard coaches – if they were planning to visit out-of-the-way places.

Similar coaches were also used by the Bernese aristocracy, particularly in the hilly regions around Emmental. Many years later, this type of carriage was still in regular use for round-the-lake trips, which won them the nickname: tour du lac. If tourists tried to beat the driver down too much on price, he would often agree but gain his revenge by driving in the opposite direction, which meant that the tourists had a wonderful view of the mountains but not of the lake they had come to see.

Char-de-côté
Western Switzerland, probably 1849
H. 203 cm; L. 355 cm; W. 144 cm;
Weight 478 kg
LM 15307

Our coach, bearing the number 930, probably saw its last active service in the Jura. This is borne out by a note in the luggage space confirming the last time the vehicle was repainted (II. 1901 FITZÉ PEINTRE NEUCHATEL P.N.). The wheels were also overhauled in 1901 (I.1901.No.V.b.R.II2, on the hubs). The carriage still looks exactly as it did then. Even the interior, fitted with the typical dark-red wool velvet usually found in better post coaches, has remained intact. The coach was drawn by a single horse and had room for two to three passengers inside. In bad weather, the windows could be folded down and closed. Vehicles like this one were commissioned by the post from local coachmakers and smiths, because there were many skilled craftsmen at this time. Of course, with the advent of industrial automobile manufacture, this trade slid into oblivion.

Arthur Wyss, *Die Post in der Schweiz*, Berne/Stuttgart 1988. – Andres Furger, *Kutschen und Schlitten in der Schweiz*, Zurich 1993. – Robert Sallmann, *Kutschen-Lexikon*, Frauenfeld 1994.



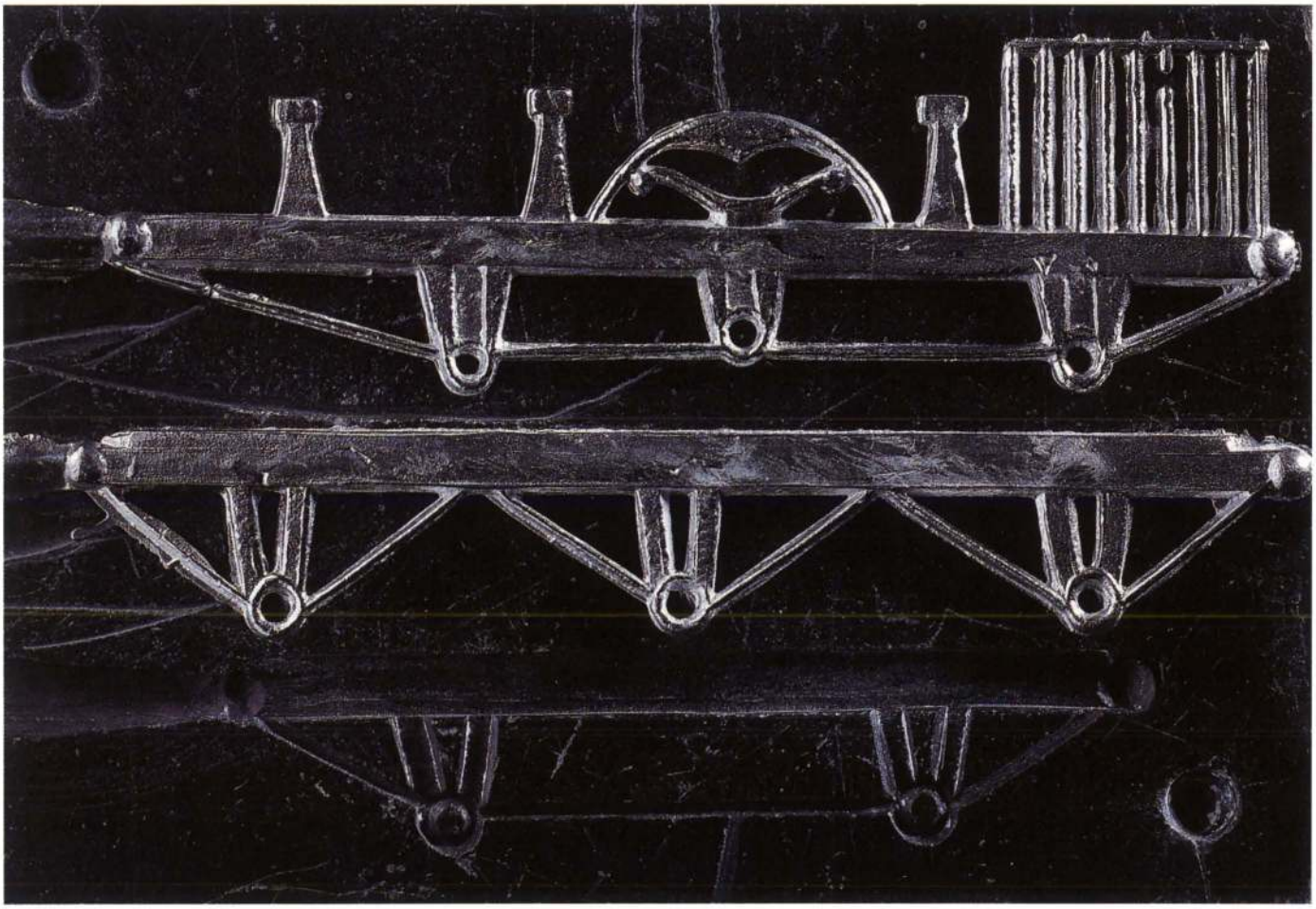
Poking fun at the Alpine worshippers

With the Alps becoming a significant symbol for the Romantic movement in Europe, foreign tourism established itself as a major element in the Swiss economy as early as the first half of the 19th century. The English in particular came to the Alps in search of an encounter with the sublime, hoping to experience the divine presence in Nature itself. It was inevitable that the often crass discrepancy between their elevated ideals and the banal reality of everyday life often gave rise to ridicule and satire. The tourist has been a favourite subject of caricaturists since time immemorial. However, the depiction of lonely individuals at the mercy of imposing and awe-inspiring mountain landscapes was something of a tradition. Lord Byron's "Manfred" was an indispensable part of every traveller's baggage and of every painter's repertoire.

In Johann Konrad Zeller's work, the contrast between human frailty and the grandeur of Nature is taken to grotesque limits, culminating in a satire on the romantic school of Alpine painting. A group of tourists in urban dress have lost their way in the mountains. Horrified, they realize that they will have to cross a raging mountain torrent via a tree trunk. The painter's attack on his contemporaries takes place on three different levels: first, as a satire on burgeoning mass tourism; second, on the romantic nonsense of those who enthused so much about the Alps; and third, on the histrionic gesture of classical historical painting.

Zeller, who was born in Zurich in 1807, had lived in Rome from 1832 to 1835, which was home to a significant colony of French and German painters. Familiar with all the rules of the grand gesture in the depiction of the classical hero, he transfers this to his picture of the unfortunate tourists. Their fear and desperation is frozen in the central pose, so typical of the hero of antiquity. Zeller's virtuoso satire masterfully handles this triple confrontation of the banal with the emotional imagery: the grand gesture in the face of Nature's indifference reduces the travel craze of the time to absurdity.

Johann Konrad Zeller (1807–1856)
Tourists in the mountains. c. 1850
Oil on canvas. 63 × 78 cm (frame)
LM 75641



Switzerland bringing up the rear

As far as transport was concerned, Switzerland always took an extremely conservative approach to newfangled inventions, one major reason for this being fear of the loss of traditional sources of income. In the early 19th century, the country had delayed widening the bridle paths over the Alps for so long that a road-building program had been forced on it by pressure from abroad. Now, several decades later, something similar was happening with the railways. In England, the first railway link between Manchester and Liverpool had been opened in 1830; Switzerland's first domestic route did not become operational until 17 years later (although the line between Basle and Saint-Louis had been finished in 1844).

The single most important factor in the development of the railways had been the invention of the steam engine in around 1770, which had also been a decisive point in the triumphal rise of industrialism. This new form of economy brought about fundamental changes in the history of mankind and one of its many repercussions was the need for greater transport capacity for both people and goods. Prior to 1848 (the year when the country adopted a uniform constitution), the introduction of a railway system had always foundered on disagreements between the individual cantons. These had been unable to agree on routes or even on a standard gauge. In addition, the thought of a route to Basle unleashed all kinds of economic worries in up-and-coming Zurich. However, the insight that a railway line would bring any city linked to it untold economic advantages prompted the city to act on its own authority and built a line between Baden and Zurich that was inaugurated in 1847. This was not the hoped-for success from the very beginning and had soon earned itself a derisory nickname: the *Spanisch-Brötli-Bahn* (the Spanish bread roll train) – an allusion to a Baden speciality, popular among Zurich's moneyed classes, which could now be conveyed from the baker's to the dining tables of Zurich that much more quickly. When customs restrictions between the cantons were abolished as a result of the new constitution and the country became a single unit for economic and transport purposes, the speed of development accelerated. Keenly aware of the danger that foreign railroad companies might make a large detour around Switzerland, the government commissioned two British railway engineers to design a railway system for the entire country.

Only slightly younger than the *Spanisch-Brötli-Bahn* itself is the toy train made of tin and pictured here. The individual parts were cast using moulds made at the J. R. Wehrli tin-casting factory in Aarau in about 1850. The locomotive bore the name Brugg and appeared as a vignette on the timetable of the northern region railway. It is probably the oldest Swiss toy train in existence. Various toy manufacturers in Germany, among them E. Heinrichsen in Nuremberg and J. Haffner in Fürth, had also made similar trains, and these had possibly served as models for the Aarau company.

Locomotive, Tender and *Tin mould* in black slate from the J. R. Wehrli company (The individual parts together make up the locomotive and tender). Aarau, c. 1850
Mould: H. 10 cm; W. 12 cm
LM 15470

Kohle, Strom und Schienen. Die Eisenbahn erobert die Schweiz, Zurich 1997. – Peter Mäder, *Geschichten in Zinn*, exh. brochure, Schloss Wildegg, 1997.

Bosses, workers and children in the factory

Workers at a Riehenteich silk factory
Basle, c. 1896
Photograph on paper, gelatin-silver print
16.8 × 22.3 cm
LM 100060

The 19th century saw the gradual emergence of a new social class: the factory workers – men, women ... and children. Indeed, minors accounted for up to a sixth of the entire workforce, as was the case in the factories of Glarus in 1868–1869! The work, particularly in the dyeing factories, was extremely hazardous, the hours inhumanly long and the food miserable. Living conditions often beggared description because a worker's wages were rarely sufficient to cover rent and food, with the result that women and children were also forced to work in the factory. The fact that people were prepared to resign to their fate was occasioned by the massive growth in population at the time: too many people, too little work. Industrial legislation designed to eliminate the most crass abuses was long in coming, and it was only in 1864 that a law was passed in Glarus limiting the working day to a maximum of 12 hours. This came some 16 years after a law banning child labour under the age of 12 in 1848.

The boy pictured in this photograph can be little more than 12, like the girl in the centre of the front row. Unfortunately, we know nothing about these children or the other people in the picture. They share the same fate as that of the typical factory worker: they remain anonymous. Only their employer has a name, Köchlin & Burckhardt, a silk spinning mill, here shortened to S.I.S. on the board, which had its premises at number 24 Isteinerstrasse in Kleinbasel. The factory was situated on the Riehenteich, which provided the necessary hydroelectric power. The abbreviation S.I.S. stands for Swiss Industrial Company for Schappe. The company survived the rapid process of concentration that took place around 1900 and even managed to expand. Floss – or schappe – is made using raw silk waste or cocoons from which the raw silk filament cannot be reeled. In our group portrait, which was probably arranged to mark the company's takeover by S.I.S., and in keeping with a convention of the time, some of the thirty subjects are holding characteristic tools and utensils, such as a mechanical reel, a pare of scales and a yarn-twisting tool. The two men (father and son, perhaps) are clearly the workers' superiors, but most probably not the former owners of the mill, who would hardly have deigned to be photographed with their employees. For many years, the owner of the factory was one Julius Burckhardt-Merian, who was also active in the raw silk trade and is described as a "lawyer and rentier". This status would give him connection with numerous other members of the Basle bourgeoisie. A "rentier" lived on the interest yielded by his (usually inherited) capital. In order to ensure that family fortunes were not unnecessarily fragmented, wealthy families were very prudent about making suitable marriages. Among Burckhardt's family connections, for instance, we find a number of names well-known in Basle's upper-class circles, such as VonderMuehll, Hoffmann or Merian. Many of these families had made a great deal of money in the Basle silk industry, with ribbon production and the secondary silk industry – or schappe. It was in these industries that Basle's modern-day chemical giants had their origins.

Hans Bauer, *Basel, gestern-heute-morgen. Hundert Jahre Basler Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, Basle 1981.

The fresco feud

F. Hodler. 1900 – März (F. Hodler. 1900 – March) is the signature at the bottom right-hand corner of the large central picture on the western wall of the Hall of Weapons at the Swiss National Museum. However, the Museum itself had been inaugurated 20 months earlier. So why the delay? It had to do with the bitterest feud that ever arose over a Swiss work of art. "The Zurich art row" had been in progress since 1895, with the committee and management of the National Museum on the one side and the Federal Art Committee together with the Federal Council on the other. From the moment construction had started on the building, there had been general agreement that the six lunettes on the narrow sides of the nation's Hall of Fame should be reserved for paintings from Swiss history, as an ideal complement to the flags, armour, cannon and countless other weapons exhibited there. The winner of the competition for the commission was FERDINAND HODLER, who at that point was approaching the peak of his artistic powers. For the Museum's management and the authorities of the city of Zurich, who were at pains to ensure that the new building would be in a distinctly historic style, the choice of an artist who was regarded as an avant-garde symbolist came as a complete surprise. In the words of the young art critic Josef Zemp: "At the centre stands one man with his legs spread apart, his arms outstretched holding a pole; to the right, another holds up a flaming halberd as if taking part in a procession; to the left we see someone gesticulating wildly in the air with a ridiculously small sabre (NB not a Swiss one): all in all, a complete madhouse peopled by an executioner's henchmen."

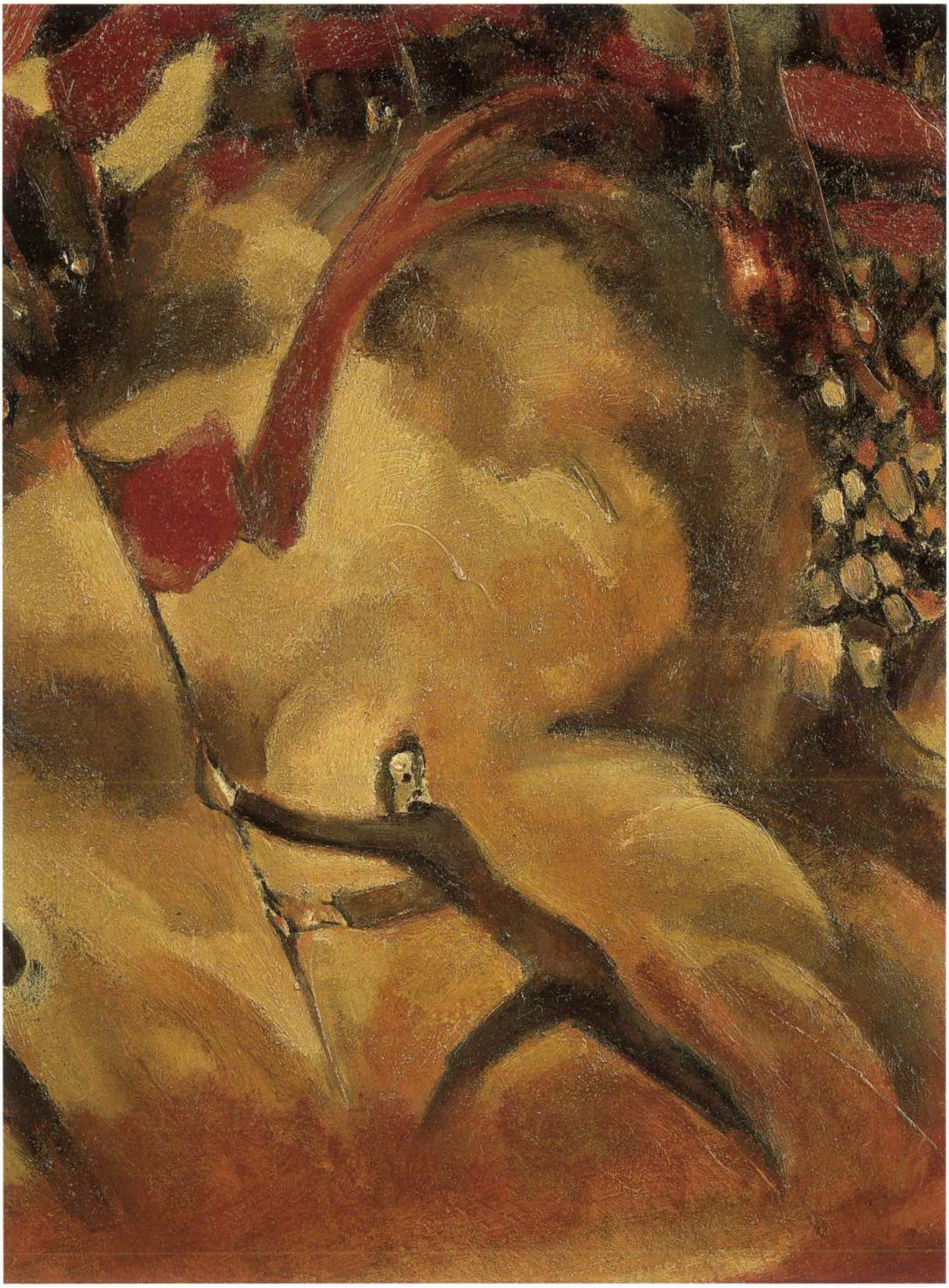
As the supreme champion of "the proper version of Swiss history" the by no means faint-hearted founding director Heinrich Angst vehemently opposed Hodler and his fresco designs. The quarrel came to a highly emotive peak with Hodler's words that Angst knew "shit-all about art" and the director's reply to Hodler that he would "paint the shit and the stink as well [...], if you only could." In the end, the Federal Council was called in and upheld the jury's decision in favour of the avant-garde.

The background to the Zurich art rumpus was provided by the clash of two historical and cultural world pictures. First, there was the traditional 19th-century approach with its conviction that it understood the historical truth and was able to judge what was an appropriate kind of imagery. Opposed to this was a clearly less restrictive way of treating the events of history, as if it were more like a series of quotations. From a modern point of view, it is difficult to fully understand the emotionally charged atmosphere that must have existed between the two poles for the simple reason that Hodler's interpretation of the retreat also looks very dated one hundred years later. The widely publicized row made Hodler better-known, but also left its emotional scars as we can see from the self-portrait in the centre fresco: Hodler stands there, an exhausted warrior, his battle-axe resting inertly on the ground. Originally, he was to have designed the fresco on the east wall – the subject of this being "The reception of the Zurich forces in Berne on their way to Murten in 1476." However, the committee of the National Museum was opposed to a scene of this kind. It was not until 1915, when it had been agreed that the subject should be an "episode in a battle from which the Swiss had emerged victorious", that Hodler was able to begin work on the painting *The Battle of Murten*. The work was to remain uncompleted. When Hodler died in 1918, all he left was a version on cardboard.

With this fresco cycle depicting *The Retreat from Marignano*, the management of the National Museum were unwittingly – and unwillingly – presented with a major work of the 20th century. At the same time, Hodler's frescoes became the most important – and, again, unwanted – items in the 20th-century collection and were to remain so for a long time to come.

Ernst Heinrich Schmid, *Ferdinand Hodlers "Rückzug bei Marignano"*, Affoltern am Albis 1946. – Franz Zelger, *Heldenstreit und Heldentod. Schweizerische Historienmalerei im 19. Jahrhundert*, Zurich 1973. – *Die Erfindung der Schweiz*, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1998.

Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918)
The Retreat from Marignano (Der Rückzug bei Marignano). March 1900
Frescoes on the western wall of the Hall of Weapons at the Swiss National Museum
Fresco and tempera
Central part of fresco: 332.5 × 490 cm
Left part of fresco: 210 × 194.5 cm
Right part of fresco: 205.5 × 194 cm
LM 41994–96



Red flags

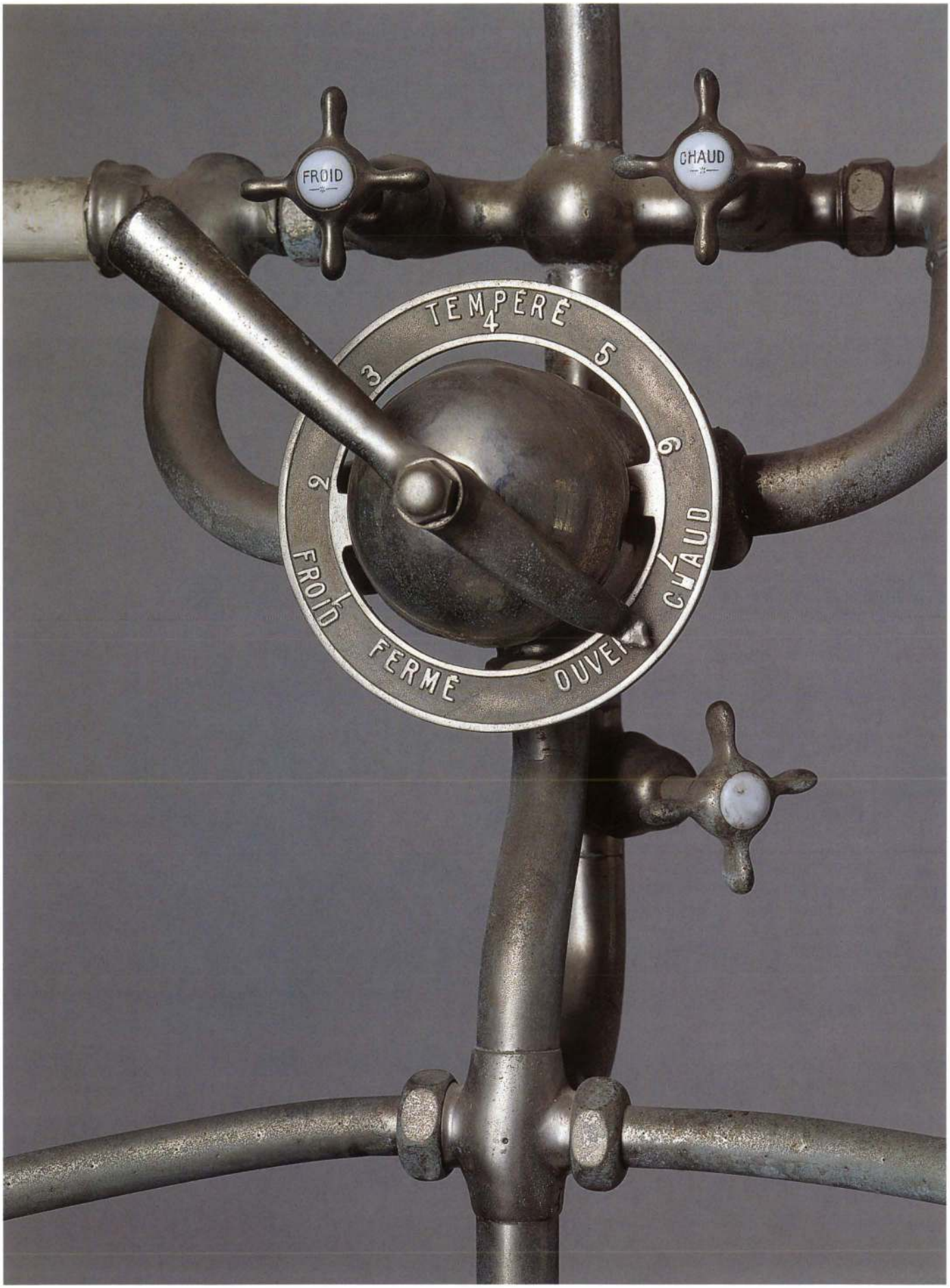
A vision of doom and disaster: a rider of the Apocalypse – a Biblical symbol of plague, war, famine and death – leads the procession with a raised flaming torch. The fact that the horse is grey identifies it as that of the fourth rider: "And I looked and beheld a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." (Revelation, 6.8)

The soot given off by the flames has darkened the sky and the horizon. Led by a sketchy figure holding a red flag, an indiscernibly large crowd of people is following the rider, at their head two women with a small child, apparently in a trance. The abstract landscape evokes associations of the Flood, this time in flames, of the mouth to Hell, perhaps even of Sodom and Gomorra.

The painting by Karl Wirz, born in Basle in 1885, is undoubtedly an allegory of the events that took place between 1917 and 1919. For it was then, at the end of the Great War, that revolution broke out in most countries of Europe. In Switzerland, too, the General Strike of November 1918 had brought the country to the brink of civil war. For many of those victims of fate, the red flag that takes such a prominent position in this painting (completed in 1918) was a symbol of hope; for the privileged it was a vision of terror.

Works of art that take the social and political upheavals in Switzerland around 1920 as their subject matter are rare indeed. So when a gallery in the small town of Zofingen put the work up for sale in 1996, the National Museum, which is currently expanding its 20th-century collection as rapidly as possible, had no hesitation in acquiring this arresting allegory. Unfortunately, it has been extremely difficult to establish much about the life of Karl Wirz. After completing an apprenticeship as a painter and decorator, he continued to teach himself and made a name as an artist in his own right. He died in 1957.

Karl Wirz (1885–1957)
Red flags. c. 1918
Oil on canvas. 100 × 85.5 cm
LM 75106

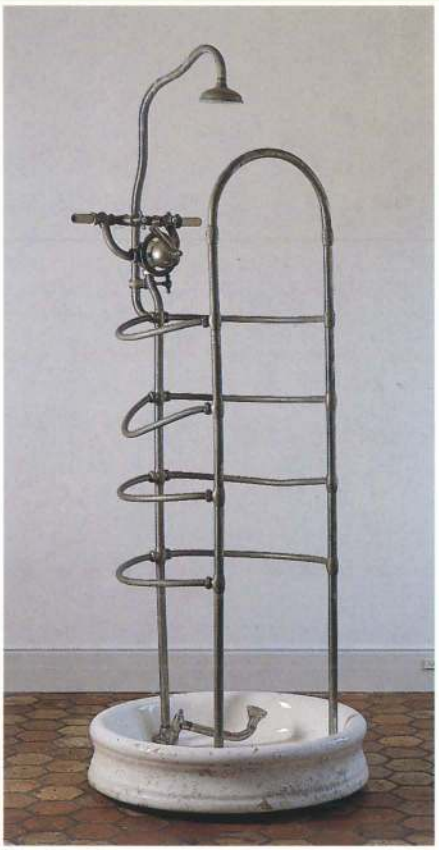

FROID
CHAUD
TEMPÉRÉ
3
4
5
2
6
1
7
FROID
FERMÉ
OUVERT
CHAUD

Hygiene and therapy

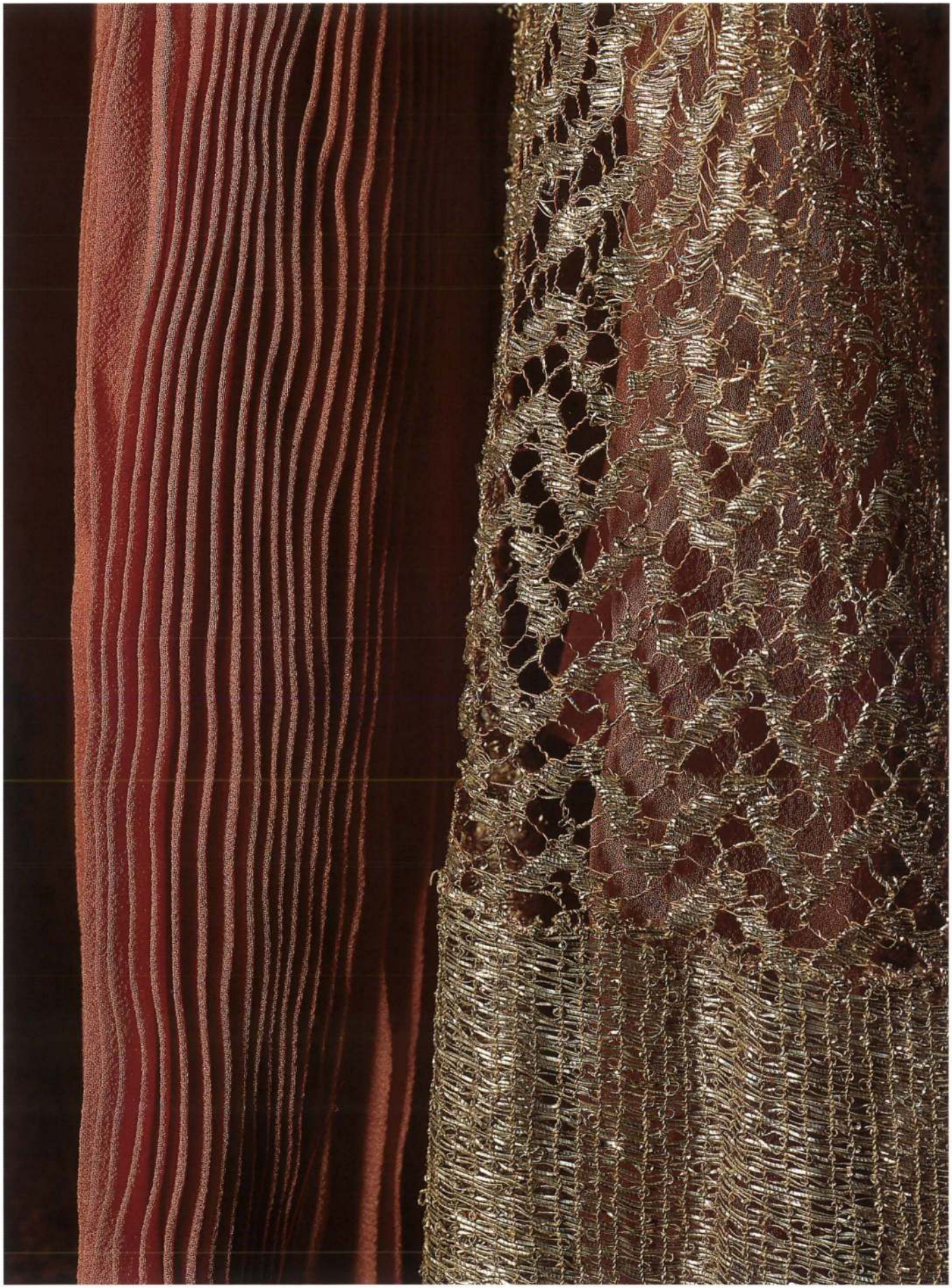
Bathrooms have been part of the typical bourgeois household only since the end of the 19th century. The history of the bathroom is closely connected to improvements in water supply and disposal systems in and around the rapidly expanding urban areas. Before the middle of the century, houses with running water had been very rare, and water carriers had delivered supplies direct to people's homes. The waste water disposal systems stemmed from medieval times and channelled untreated sewage directly into the lakes and rivers. Under these circumstance, bathing at home was a luxury reserved for the fortunate few. Personal hygiene was kept to a minimum: not even the occasional visit to a public bathhouse was general practice.

Outbreaks of cholera and typhus brought about major changes in thinking after 1830. New research, showing how sickness could be transferred by germs, revealed the weak spots in public hygiene. Gradually, new sewage systems were introduced, homes were equipped with running water and steps were taken to impress the importance of cleanliness on people at all levels of the social hierarchy. Personal hygiene was no longer an expression of luxury or associated with loose morals but essential to health and – yes – the duty of any upstanding member of society.

Nevertheless, scepticism remained widespread until after the First World War. Regular bathing or showering was not recommended, or at least only under medical supervision. A popular book on health matters published at the beginning of the 20th century warned expressly that "People who have taken too much upon themselves in the form of alcohol, tobacco or intellectual effort should not impose other artificial stimuli on their bodies, such as the cold shower." Hydrotherapy, which reached its first peak following the work of Vinzenz Priessnitz (1799–1851) and Sebastian Kneipp (1821–1897), saw the emergence of countless different types of baths, tubs and showers. The circular shower installed at Château de Prangins (probably in the 1920s) was one of a whole series of bathroom fittings that attempted to combine hygiene with therapeutic aims.



Kappelen shower
Château de Prangins, c. 1880
H. 248 cm: Bowl: Diam. 95 cm
LM 75956



Simple cut, dazzling materials

The First World War brought substantial social upheavals and in many areas a complete break with tradition. As might be expected, this also led to major changes in post-war women's fashions, even in Switzerland, which had been spared the hardships of the war itself. During the hostilities, women had done men's work and asserted their place in society, Now, another step in the direction of equality was about to be taken. The new feminine ideal was that of the *garçonne*: short hair, cut in the pageboy style. This was combined with more comfortable clothes that broke radically with the fashions of the pre-war years. Long, elaborately ornamented dresses with their tiny waistlines were replaced by the tubular look: loose-fitting dresses with shorter hems. The new fashions, which were dominated by Parisian couturiers, subtly underplayed the breasts and hips. The most striking new feature, however, was the low waistline, which in the case of our dress is emphasized by an oriental-looking pattern. This embroidery replaced the belt. Pure, simple elegance, with flowing lines was now the dominant feature. Under the growing influence of the Bauhaus, the "unity of form and function" maxim began to assert itself increasingly. In fashions, materials became finer and lighter, designed to emphasize the cut and permit freedom of movement.

The 1920s, of course, have gone down in history as The Roaring Twenties, a happy-go-lucky period that attempted to forget the horrors of the war years and saw the emergence of the Art Deco style. Luxury and wealth were flaunted once again, even in fashion. This trend was particularly marked in dresses for evening wear. Our sleeveless dress, with its V-shaped cut-out neck at front and rear, is a classic example. Exclusive, shimmering materials were an eye-catcher. The upper part of the dress is in coral-coloured silk chiffon, combined with golden-coloured metallic lace and pearl embroidery. The lower part consists of pleated silk chiffon with two strips of metallic lace, as we can see in the detail. This extremely sophisticated dress was created especially for a young lady who had married into a well-known Zurich family.

Ladies' dress. c. 1920
Silk chiffon, pearl embroidery, golden-coloured metallic lace. L. 95 cm
LM 73175

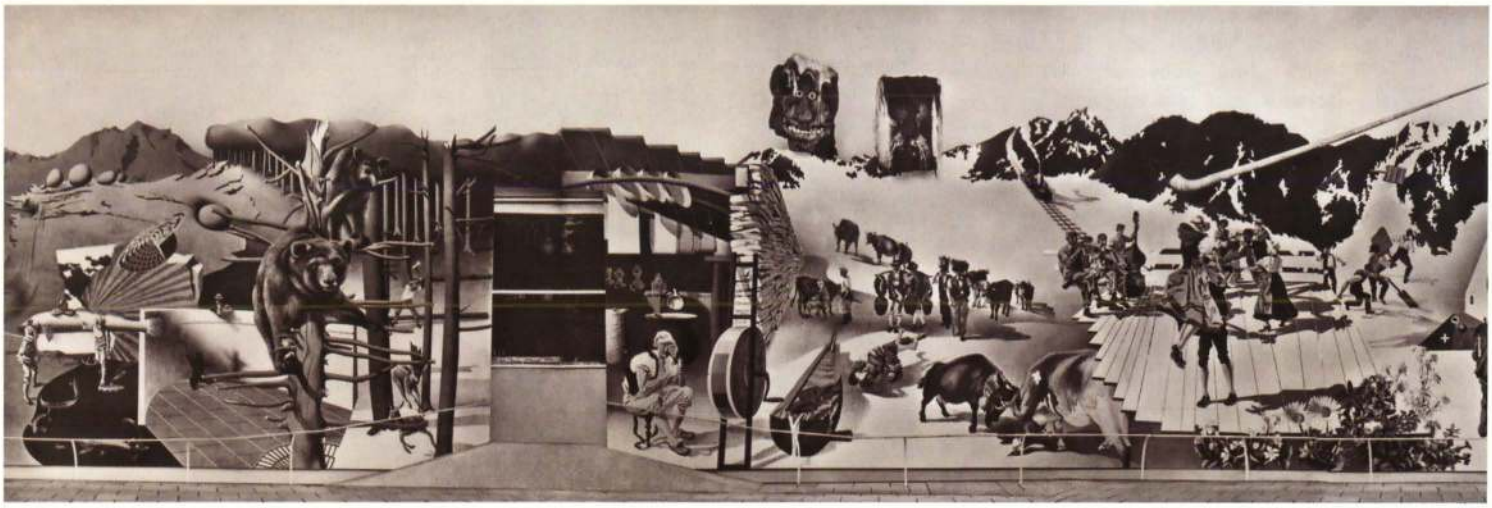
Gisela Reineking von Bock, *200 Jahre Mode – Kleider vom Rokoko bis Heute*, Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Köln 1991.

A vision of Switzerland shortly before the outbreak of war

A young and talented artist, Hans Erni, left Switzerland for Paris at the age of twenty, where he became a member of the "Abstraction-Création" group and was accepted into the leading avant-garde art movement. This was followed by a period in London. It was there, in 1938, that Erni received a telephone call from Armin Meili, the architect entrusted with the planning and organization of the national exhibition, asking him whether he would be prepared to paint a large-scale fresco depicting Switzerland as a holiday venue. Erni decided to follow the call from his homeland, left his international circle of friends behind (who would later include such famous names as Hans Arp, Constantin Brancusi and Piet Mondrian) and dedicated himself entirely to his new project. He spent six months working his way into the material. All that time, he was able to rely on the assistance of Konrad Farner, Switzerland's champion of the concept of humanistic socialism (in other words, the idea of the free soul in a creative community) who was also a major supporter of the Socialist Party.

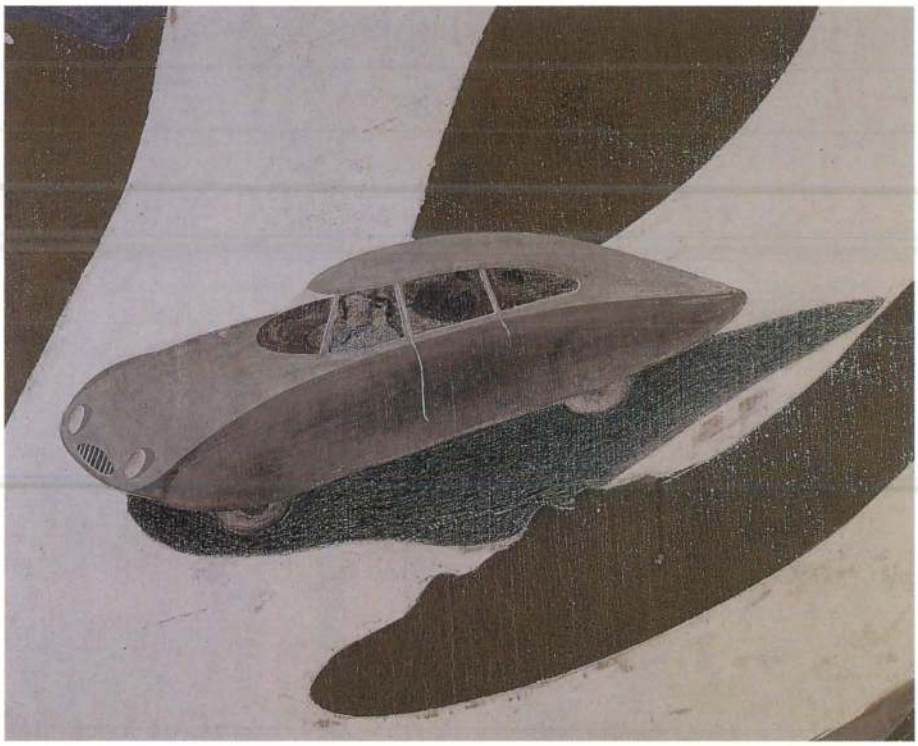
It took no less than six months for Erni to transfer his design onto the 500 sq.m area, a job in which he was assisted by Walter Linsenmaier and Bruno Meyer. Erni had the ambitious objective of weaving the complex subject of nature and people in the history of Switzerland into a single picture. The result is a multiplanar composition. In the course of his work, Erni discovered the personal style that was to typify his later work. At the same time, he profited immensely from his career so far, which had taken him through the branches of the avant-garde, surrealism, abstract school. But Erni was also an artist who aimed to appeal to society at many different levels. This was one of several reasons why he decided to return to figurative painting – together with his talent as a draughtsman, which he put to highly effective use in his human and animal figures. In this way, his work was very closely related to that of Socialist Realism. His decision to turn his back on the abstract avant-garde and his political idealism were to invite a great deal of criticism for the rest of his life.

The picture is based on an extremely sophisticated scheme. Moving from left to right, the composition follows the course of the four seasons. Erni begins with motifs of Nature in its virgin state and ends on the right-hand side with a model of an atom; undoubtedly, an allusion to the taming and exploitation of natural forces. This is further underlined by the power station and the way in which the road winds tortuously through the precipitous mountain scenery. The famous road over the Susten Pass is unmistakable. With its streamlined profile, the little car is decidedly avant-garde, as can be clearly



seen from the detail. Models like this one were drawn by the engineer Paul Jaray (1889–1974), an international pioneer in this field who made trailblazing discoveries in automobile and airship design. Shortly before the Second World War, Jaray fled to Switzerland; he was befriended by Erni, who acted as "test pilot" for his experiments. With this tiny detail, the artist has thus interpolated an anecdote from his own life into his largest and best-known work.

Konrad Farner, *Hans Erni. Ein Maler unserer Zeit*, Basle/Zurich 1945. – Stanislaus von Moos, "Hans Erni and the Streamline Decade", in: *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, no 19, 1993.



Hans Erni (born 1909)
Switzerland, the people's holiday venue (Die Schweiz, das Ferienland der Völker)
Lucerne, 1938–1939
Casein tempera on sheets of plywood
5 × 100 m (142 individual parts)
LM 70784

First aid for bomb victims

At the beginning of 1939, eleven-year-old Ruth Ehrlich, together with her expectant mother, entered Switzerland as a refugee. Waiting for her was her father, MAURITIUS EHRLICH, who had entered the country illegally two months earlier near St. Margrethen. Thanks to the intervention of the then secretary of the Social Democratic Party in Switzerland, he had been granted political refugee status, because he had been subjected to increasing repression in his home town of Vienna.

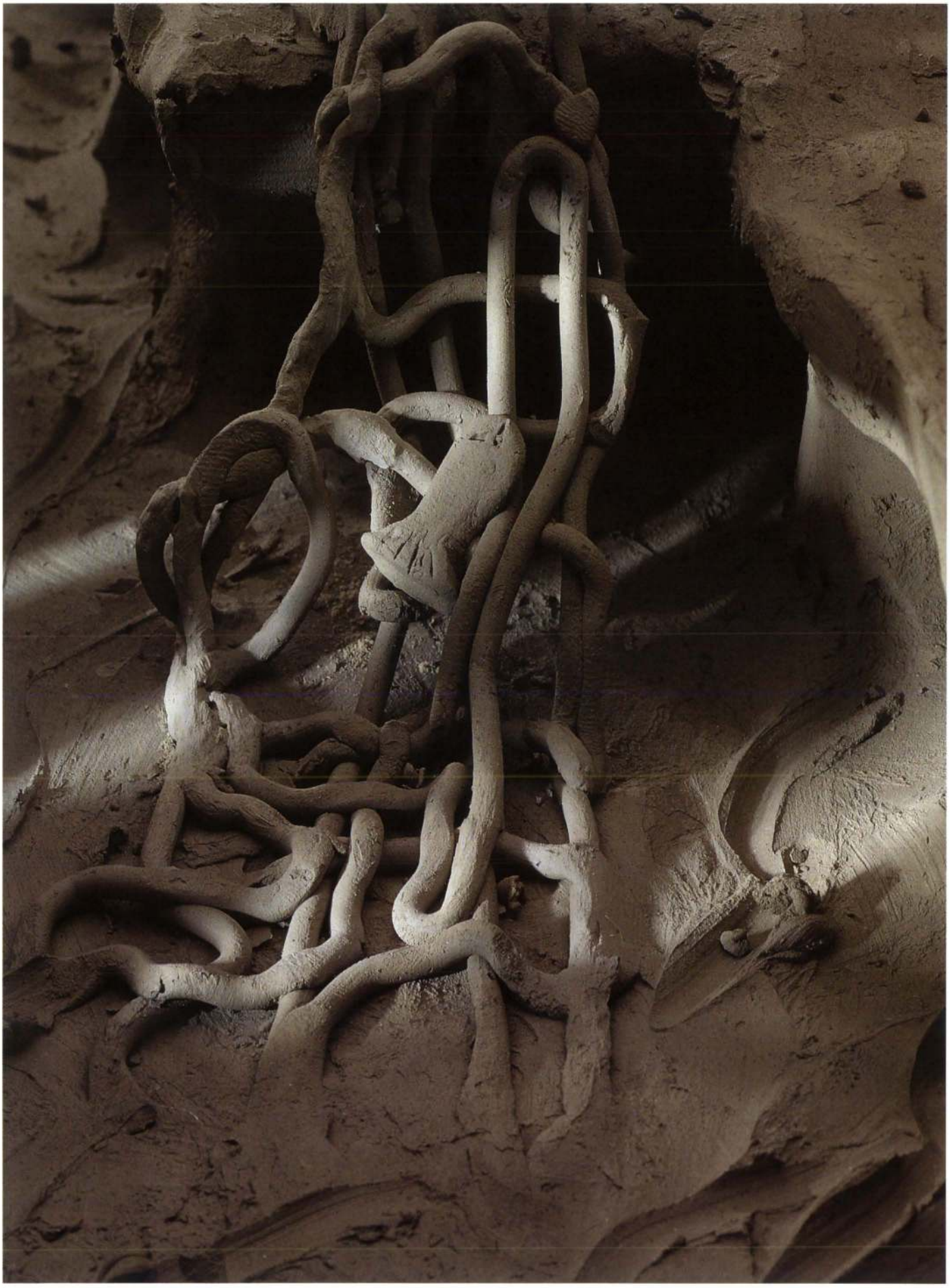
On August 19, 1992, the National Museum opened its first-ever exhibition about the post-war years entitled: "Sonderfall? Die Schweiz zwischen Réduit und Europa" (A Special Case? Switzerland between the "Réduit" and Europe). Ruth Ehrlich was so impressed that she immediately contacted the National Museum, offering to donate her father's emergency furnishing package.

During the Second World War, Mauritius Ehrlich had worked in an honorary capacity for Swiss Aid for Emigrant Children as well as for the Swiss Study Group on War-damaged Children, and was head of its adoption and sponsorship section following the latter's merger with the Red Cross. As a father himself, who had experienced first-hand the hardships facing refugees, he had started working on projects for post-war aid during the war years. One of these was a scheme to provide people who had lost everything in bomb attacks with an easily transportable, minimum package of furnishings that would get them started again. Ehrlich's kit consisted of two bed frames, two woollen mattresses, a cupboard, a table and four stools together with cooking utensils and tableware for four people. The entire package weighed approximately 170 kilograms and could be packed inside the bed for transport purposes.

From January 1945, the packages were produced by AERMO GmbH, a company that had been set up near Zurich specifically for this purpose. One of the first shipments abroad went to St. Etienne in France, where many people had been made homeless after a particularly heavy bombing raid. From then until 1947, about 30,000 kits were made and despatched to various reconstruction areas. Of the originals, whose functional design was praised by Max Bill among others, not one has been preserved. All that remains is a miniature prototype on a scale of 1:3.

Mauritius Ehrlich
Emergency furnishings (scale of model 1:3)
Zurich, 1944
Spruce and beech wood, iron, steel, linen, jute, cotton. Table: H. 25.5 cm; L. 40 cm; W. 26.5 cm
LM 73303

Christof Kübler, in: *Sonderfall? Die Schweiz zwischen Réduit und Europa*, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1992.



Ancient images captured by contemporary artists

A rope had just been tired around the mooring post, the man climbs out of his boat in which his rich kill still lies. A child comes scampering happily out of the house while other children play on the neighbouring platform. Here, a net is being pulled out of the water, a big fish thrashing from side to side. The scene is a lakeside settlement in the Late Stone to Bronze Age. We can read about it in a Zurich text book designed for Class 5 schoolchildren in 1961: "The lakes teemed with fish. The forests provided all kinds of fruits, and the pile dwellers sowed grain on the dry lake shore."

The tale of the "pile dwellers", a uniquely Swiss invention, remained intact until very recent times, ever since archaeologist Ferdinand Keller's treatise on Celtic settlements on the Lake of Zurich in 1854. Keller's report attracted immense attention. At last, the Swiss had found their forefathers! The image of insular settlements, perched on interwoven framework supports, fitted in perfectly with the self-image of the Swiss in the 19th century. As recently as the Second World War and as part of the country's intellectual defence of its heritage, the myth was reactivated and still being referred to in the final stages of the Cold War. In the process, the nation's school textbooks elegantly ignored the picture obtained of the period as a result of more recent archaeological research. The findings of new excavations were not wanted: the old metaphors relating to early Swiss history were buried too deep in the national consciousness.

Peter Fischli (born 1952)
David Weiss (born 1946)
Pile dwellers from the *Suddenly this Insight (Plötzlich diese Übersicht)* series. Zurich, 1980–1981
Clay, unfired. H. 20 cm; L. 40 cm; W. 37 cm
A 86090

Peter Fischli and David Weiss presented their clay sculpture to the National Museum following the "A Special Case?" exhibition mentioned earlier (cf. p. 121). The two artists, who have been working together since 1979, had drawn together many of the basic tenets of Swissness in soft modelling clay in a series of sculptures entitled *Suddenly this Insight*, and it is from this series that the pile-dweller settlement is taken. Other items include a Swiss automatic rifle and various types of sausage. All 250 sculptures were exhibited in a gallery on white pedestals, illuminated by an unforgiving bluish-white neon. Subjects from the worlds of film, entertainment, sport, fashion, music, favourite places and even national history: nothing was taboo, no subject too sacred for inclusion. At first glance, a confused hotchpotch of images, the collection includes the entire range of contemporary art. Everything is questioned, subjected to mild ridicule: familiar images from Swiss life and history are given a fond working over. Something of all this is present in our pile dwellers' settlement. It is left up to the viewer to make out of it what he wishes. The important thing is that the exhibits shake up our habitual ways of seeing the world and encourage reflection.

Peter Fischli / David Weiss, *Plötzlich diese Übersicht*, Zurich 1982. – Patrick Frey, *Das Geheimnis der Arbeit. Texte zum Werk von Peter Fischli & David Weiss*, Düsseldorf 1990.

The Cultural Revolution of the late Sixties questioned many of the fundamental ideals of the twenty or so years of progress that had taken place since the end of the war. The world of fashion was not left unscathed: women's burgeoning self-confidence had brought about all kinds of upheavals. Established ideals, such as the primacy of sexual attraction, were subjected to withering scrutiny, all of which had a major effect on clothing. Suddenly, the emphasis was no longer on the hips and breasts but on woman as a whole. One Swiss fashion designer who broke with stereotypical feminine norms was CHRISTA DE CAROUGE, starting out in the Sixties in Geneva before later moving to Zurich. Her clothes give freedom back to the body. They are designed to feel comfortable on the inside – hence the frequent use of silk as a lining – and at the same time offer protection on the outside, which explains the use of solid materials, such as wool. Christa de Carouge knows her clients extremely well: in her own words, they include many divorcees.

For Christa de Carouge, clothes are like a room in which we live, a sort of cocoon. They should initiate something in our bodies but at the same time leave room for improvisation and independent design. Christa de Carouge would really prefer to sell pieces of fabric to her clients, which they could then drape around themselves as a dress, but because most people want finished items, she designs these in such a way that they can, at least, be varied or given a different shape. Our coat, for example, is made of a firm, metallic fabric that can be shaped at will by the wearer. When it is not being worn, the jacket simply hangs there like a skin that has been shed. It does not assume a shape or design until it is being worn. The carefully selected fabrics, which are chosen to fit the cut, only begin to come alive when they have an occupant.

The generous proportions of clothes designed by Christa de Carouge are reminiscent of Japanese kimonos. Japan stands for "perception of the essential". Christa de Carouge feels an affinity with minimal art. To put it in a nutshell: her fashion designs are based on an overall concept that demands reduction to essentials. This approach leads her to surmount barriers in various directions. Her fashions express a new self-assurance, a new view of itself and a new vitality.

Christa de Carouge (Christa Furrer)
Ladies' evening jacket. Zurich/Geneva, 1994
Copper wire-silk, various materials
H. 113 cm
LM 74265

Modedesign Schweiz 1972–1997, exh. cat., Swiss National Museum, Zurich 1997.

Local Affiliates of the Swiss National Museum

The National Museum's headquarters in Zurich and its branch, the Château de Prangins, in the French-speaking part of the country have six other affiliated museums at various locations in Switzerland. Each of the museums has its own history and atmosphere, and special value is given to their connections with the local area.

Ludwig Rudolf von Effinger von Wildegg (1803–1872)
Pauline and Julie, painted by their father. c. 1841
Oil on canvas. 41 × 32 cm
SW 532

Wildegg Castle and domain, canton of Aargau

Wildegg Castle lies between Aarau and Brugg on the western spur of the Chestenberg and is part of the imposing landscape formed by the nearby castles of Lenzburg, Brunegg, Habsburg, and Hallwyl. From 1483 until 1912, Wildegg Castle and its domain remained uninterruptedly in the possession of the Effingers, a patrician family from Berne. Thanks to these circumstances, the opulent interior and large areas of the domain have remained virtually in their original state. The castle's unusual architecture documents its development from a medieval keep with an adjoining residential tract to a magnificent country seat in the period around 1700. Twenty-eight rooms on four floors are open to the public: from the stables in the natural rock via the elegant salon to the well-stocked library; from the wine cellars to the kitchen with its original furnishings and 17th-century roasting spit; from the banqueting hall with the spoils brought back from Turkey by Bernhard Effinger in 1683, to the red-and-white-striped billiard room, which reminds us most of a tent from the Napoleonic period.

The domain covers a total of 98 hectares (242 acres). Extensive woodland areas (42 hectares/104 acres) offer ideal walking country, while a further 48 hectares (118 acres) are used for farming and the remaining 8 hectares (20 acres) are taken up by parkland and vineyards. The pleasure grounds-cum-kitchen garden, stemming from around 1700, are a particularly attractive feature and can be seen far and wide on the southwestern flank of the hill on which the castle is situated. Visitors can stroll around the garden, buy flowers and vegetables and at the same time discover much about the numerous different varieties of useful and ornamental plants as well as changes in taste and eating habits.

Johann Jakob Frei
Tureen with lid. Lenzburg, c. 1775–1780
Faience, painted. H. 18 cm; W. 23.5 cm
LM 40890

Guild Hall Zur Meisen in Zurich

The porcelain and faience exhibition at the Zur Meisen Guild Hall is housed in the most beautiful and opulent rococo surroundings ever boasted by the city of Zurich and has remained intact to this day. The collection gives us an insight into Switzerland's contribution towards the art of faience and porcelain tableware in the 18th century.

The faience culture itself was initiated by imports of crockery from abroad, but from about 1760 onwards Switzerland had its own thriving production centres. The exhibition includes examples of imported crockery and a representative selection of items made by Swiss manufacturers.

In the porcelain section, the emphasis is on the exquisite figurines and tableware manufactured by the Zurich faience and porcelain manufactory as well as items produced at the porcelain manufactory in Nyon.

Cigarettes smuggled in double-walled motor cycle petrol tank
LM 57856

Swiss Customs Museum in Cantine di Gandria, canton of Ticino

The Museum is situated in a picturesque border area of Ticino, surrounded by water and forest, and accessible only by boat. The new concept incorporates the authentic fittings and furnishings of a frontier post around 1890, a customs office around 1850 and a Ticino border guard's household around 1900, all of which have been restored. The first floor is dedicated to Swiss customs administration and the subject of "The Second World War on the Swiss border". In the loggia overlooking the lake is a smuggler's car with several hiding places which visitors can only discover using an endoscope (a medical instrument for examining the interior of hollow organs). Boats used by smugglers and confiscated on Lake Lugano can also be seen here. The department on the second floor sheds light on some of the dubious goings-on that normally come to light at national borders. Topics here include imitation brand names, protection of animal and plant species, drug smuggling and passport forgery. Visitors can take an active role in hunting down smugglers, and try out a night vision instrument or a passport testing device. The third floor is devoted to touring exhibitions.

A collection of frontier stones attractively complements the beautiful surroundings and will eventually contain about a dozen old frontier stones, some of which can still be found at points along the Swiss border from Geneva to the Rhine Valley or from the Jura to southern Ticino.

Christ on a donkey, entering Jerusalem. Steinen, 12th to mid-13th century
Carved wooden statue on wheels, painted
H. 177 cm; L. 165 cm; Diam. of wheels 45 cm
LM 362 (IN 0557)

Forum of Swiss History in Schwyz

The Forum of Swiss History is housed in premises built in 1711, which for many years served as an arsenal. Here in this building, the Swiss National Museum has established a modern museum and cultural forum whose work is best summarized by the title of its main focus of interest: "History is Movement". Visitors are invited to discover the world of their forefathers, with the emphasis on the people who inhabited the area now known as Switzerland between 1300 and 1800. Men and women, young and old, rich and poor, mountain and valley dwellers, the powerful and the pariahs: how did our ancestors surmount the many different challenges that confronted them in their everyday lives? And where did they go wrong? On the ground floor, we see people in their normal surroundings: ways of life and economic systems in the country and the city, use of energy resources, traffic, transport. The upper floor shows us how people survived in good and bad times: solidarity and feud, rule and negotiation, leisure pursuits and social interaction. On the attic floor is the "historic workshop". Using the raw material of the past, each generation forms its own view of history on the screen. The stairwell contains the "Spiral of History", where everything washed ashore by the tide of time moves in ever-changing combinations past the eyes of visitors. Special exhibitions provide bridges to the present day.

The Forum of Swiss History is part of the rich cultural heritage to be found in Schwyz, the administrative centre of the canton of the same name. Nearby, we find the "Ital Reding", a 17th-century homestead complete with patrician house; the "Bethlehem" house, built in 1287; the town hall, completed in 1891 and featuring some impressive frescoes depicting heroic scenes from Swiss history; and a special museum, inaugurated in 1936, commemorating the signing of the pact in 1291 that marked the founding of the Swiss Confederation.

F. Nicole
Musical box in book form. Geneva, c. 1819
Case: brass plate, painted. H. 4.4 cm;
W. 16.5 cm; D. 10.9 cm
LM 75415

Museum of Automatic Musical Instruments in Seewen, canton of Solothurn

The Museum nestles in the gently rolling hills between Grellingen and Liestal. The collection of automatic musical instruments is of international significance and was based originally on the private collection of Dr. h. c. Heinrich Weiss-Stauffacher. One of its outstanding features is the astonishing variety of the exhibits: golden pocket watches with tiny musical trains, cages with twittering birds, automatons, chiming tobacco tins, wooden musical boxes with operatic overtures, orchestrinas with dance music and evergreens, mechanical pianos with classical music and hurdy-gurdies the size of a railway carriage booming out the tunes of yesteryear – all these combine to create a very special experience. They unite precision and technology, magic and charm, the result of inspired genius and precision craftsmanship. Most of them were made in the remote Jura mountains, Switzerland's Silicon Valley of the 19th century, but were sold all over the world.

This unusual collection of mechanical musical instruments can be seen and experienced in new premises from spring 1999. At the same time, the Museum will become a centre for research into all forms of mechanical music, specializing in the restoration of automatic musical instruments and taking commissions from private customers.

View from the renowned Hotel Schwert in Zurich onto the River Limmat and lake
Augsburg, last quarter of the 18th century
Peep-show print from the Académie Impériale art publishing house. 29 × 41 cm
LM 77566

Zur Weltkugel
Museum Bärengasse in Zurich

This museum, which was opened in 1976, is dedicated to home décor. Consisting of two buildings – the *Weltkugel* (Globe) and the *Schanzenhof* – it is located at the heart of Zurich in Bärengasse, just behind Paradeplatz. Today, a good twenty years later, it is being extensively renovated. There are plans to turn the large, light-flooded attic into a venue for cultural and social events. As its working title – "Zurich before the French Revolution. A society in flux" – suggests, the permanent exhibition will provide an insight not only into living conditions at the time but also put the spotlight on men and women as protagonists of social change. The aim is to enable visitors to see and feel for themselves how much culture is influenced by our everyday surroundings, a product arising out of thoughts and feelings, colours and shapes. The non-permanent exhibitions will take a critical and provocative – if none too serious – look at the many different aspects of Zurich.
Reopening: April, 1999.

Schloss Wildegg, Braunschweig 1988. – Rudolf Schnyder, *Porzellan und Fayence im Zunfthaus zur Meisen*, Berne 1978. – Walter Leimgruber / Peter Pfrunder (eds.), *Forum der Schweizer Geschichte. Geschichte ist Bewegung*, Zurich 1995. – Regula Zweifel, *Musikautomaten Museum Seewen*, Braunschweig 1993. – *Wohnmuseum Bärengasse. Zürcher Wohnkultur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, n.d.