

GUE

AN
TIES

CH
UM

CH
OY
DE
L.B.
MFA

OXFORD

HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

1A/6.

CATALOGUE
OF
EARLY CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES
AND
OBJECTS FROM THE CHRISTIAN EAST

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
BRITISH AND MEDIAEVAL ANTIQUITIES AND ETHNOGRAPHY
OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM

BY
O. M. DALTON, M.A.
ASSISTANT IN THE DEPARTMENT

LONDON
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES
SOLD AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

AND BY LONGMANS AND Co., 39 PATERNOSTER ROW
BERNARD QUARITCH, 15 PICCADILLY; ASHER AND Co., 13 BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER AND Co., PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD
AND HENRY FROWDE, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS WAREHOUSE, AMEN CORNER

1901

[All rights reserved]

PREFACE

THE following Catalogue has been prepared by Mr. O. M. Dalton of this Department, who is also responsible for the Introduction. I have compared the description with the objects.

CHARLES H. READ.

DEPARTMENT OF BRITISH AND MEDIAEVAL
ANTIQUITIES &c.

November, 1901.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF PLATES	x
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT.	xi
INTRODUCTION	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxi

CATALOGUE OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES

I. ENGRAVED GEMS AND RINGS

A. Before 600 A. D. and mostly from Italy.

(i) GEMS:

(a)	Inscribed	1
(b)	Uninscribed	3

(ii) RINGS WITHOUT GEMS:

(a)	Inscribed	8
(b)	Uninscribed	11

B. From the Christian East.

(i) GEMS:

(a)	Intaglios	12
(b)	Cameos	16

(ii) RINGS WITHOUT GEMS:

(a) Inscribed :

	PAGE
1. Iconographic	19
2. Marriage	21
3. Acclamations and prayers	22
4. Names	26
5. Monograms	27

(b) Uninscribed :

1. Iconographic	30
2. Marriage	32
3. Miscellaneous	33

II. JEWELS, PERSONAL ORNAMENTS, ETC.

A. Found with various Silver Treasures (Nos. 227-250)	36
B. From the Christian East (Nos. 251-288)	39

III. IVORY CARVINGS (Nos. 289-303).

A. From Italy (Nos. 289-294)	48
B. From the Christian East (Nos. 295-303)	53

IV. SILVER TREASURES (Nos. 304-424).

I. The Esquiline Treasure (Nos. 304-345)	61
II. Roman Silver Spoons of the Fifth Century (Nos. 346-355)	77
III. Carthage Treasure (Nos. 356-375)	79
IV. Lampsacus Treasure (Nos. 376-396)	81
V. Cyprus Treasure (Nos. 397-424)	86

V. BRONZE (Nos. 425-597).

A. Exagia and Weights (Nos. 425-485)	91
B. Stamps (Nos. 486-494)	98
C. Lamps and Stands (Nos. 495-529)	100
D. Miscellaneous Vessels (Nos. 530-542)	104
E. Plaques and Medallions (Nos. 543-557)	109
F. Crosses (Nos. 558-580)	112
G. Miscellaneous (Nos. 581-597)	115

VI. GLASS (Nos. 598-712).

A. Gilded Glasses (Nos. 598-651)	117
B. Other Vessels (Nos. 652-659)	131
C. Money Weights (Nos. 660-685)	133
D. Miscellaneous (Nos. 686-712)	136

CONTENTS

ix

VII. POTTERY (Nos. 713-930).

A. Lamps (Nos. 713-859):

	PAGE
i. From Carthage, Sicily, Italy, &c. (Nos. 713-804)	139
ii. From Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor (Nos. 805-859)	147
B. Pilgrims' Flasks (Nos. 860-915)	154
C. Other Objects (Nos. 916-930)	159

VIII. STONE (Nos. 931-950).

Sepulchral Monuments, Architectural Fragments, &c.	164
--	-----

IX. MISCELLANEOUS (Nos. 951-1003).

I. Textiles, &c. (Nos. 951-957)	168
II. Plaster and Clay (Nos. 958-968)	170
III. Small objects of Stone (Nos. 969-980)	171
IV. Wood (Nos. 981-987)	172
V. Bone (Nos. 988-995).	175
VI. Lead (Nos. 996-999).	176
VII. Various small objects (Nos. 1000-1003)	177
TABLE for converting inches into millimètres	178
INDEX	179

LIST OF PLATES

	NUMBERS
I. ENGRAVED GEMS	1, 2, 15, 16, 18-27, 38, 42, 43
II. ENGRAVED GEMS AND RINGS	3-7, 9, 10, 31-37, 39, 40, 70, 71
III. CAMEOS	104-114, 116
IV. JEWELLERY	121, 129-131, 210, 252-254, 264-267, 284, 285, 287
V. JEWELLERY	268, 269, 270, 274, 276, 277, 280, 282, 283, 286, 288
VI. IVORY PANELS FROM A CASKET	291
VII. IVORY PANELS	292, 294
VIII. LEAF OF AN IVORY DIPTYCH, THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL	295
IX. IVORY BOX WITH STORY OF ST. MENAS	297
X. IVORY BOX WITH STORY OF DANIEL, ETC.	298
XI. IVORY PANELS	296, 299, 300
XII. BONE PANELS FROM A CASKET	301
XIII. ESQUILINE TREASURE: THE CASKET OF PROJECTA	304
XIV. THE CASKET OF PROJECTA: TOP OF LID	304
XV. THE CASKET OF PROJECTA: FRONT	304
XVI. THE CASKET OF PROJECTA: BACK	304
XVII. THE CASKET OF PROJECTA: RIGHT END	304
XVIII. THE CASKET OF PROJECTA: LEFT END	304
XIX. ESQUILINE TREASURE: DOME-SHAPED CASKET	305
XX. ESQUILINE TREASURE: FIGURES REPRESENTING CITIES	332-335
XXI. CARTHAGE TREASURE	358-360, 371, 375
XXII. LAMPSACUS TREASURE	376-378
XXIII. LAMPSACUS TREASURE	381, 383, 385, 386-392
XXIV. CYPRUS TREASURE	397, 398
XXV. CYPRUS TREASURE	414-421
XXVI. BRONZE LAMPS	495, 496, 529
XXVII. BRONZE LAMPS	501-503, 507-509, 512, 525-527
XXVIII. GILDED GLASS	603, 605, 610, 612, 613, 615, 630, 631, 641
XXIX. GILDED GLASS	608, 609, 619, 632, 636, 637
XXX. GILDED GLASS: FRAGMENTS OF A BOWL WITH SMALL MEDALLIONS	629
XXXI. GILDED GLASS: SMALL MEDALLIONS FROM BOWLS	601, 602, 606, 616, 618, 620-627, 635
XXXII. POTTERY LAMPS AND PILGRIMS' BOTTLES	714, 718, 805, 819, 822, 860, 882, 883
XXXIII. THE CONSTANTINE BOWL	916
XXXIV, XXXV. CARVED WOODEN PANELS FROM CAIRO	986

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

NUMBER	PAGE
ENAMELLED BYZANTINE CROSS	xiv, xxiv
12. INSCRIBED GEM	3
28. GOLD RING, SACRED MONOGRAM	5
44. GOLD RING, GARNET INTAGLIO	7
46. SILVER BEZEL OF A RING	8
48. GOLD RING, 'AEMILIA'	8
49. GOLD KEY-RING, 'ACCIPE DULCIS, ETC.'	9
57. SILVER BEZEL, MALE BUST	10
60. GOLD RING, 'BLITHIA'	10
64. GOLD RING, PALM-BRANCH	11
78. GOLD RING	12
83. JASPER INTAGLIO	13
84. CRYSTAL INTAGLIO	13
87. HAEMATITE INTAGLIO	13
88. HAEMATITE INTAGLIO	14
90. JASPER INTAGLIO	14
92. CHALCEDONY INTAGLIO	15
93-95. THREE GEMS, MONOGRAMS	15
97. STEATITE SEAL	15
101. ONYX CAMEO	16
102. SARD CAMEO	16
103. ONYX CAMEO	16
120. GOLD SIGNET-RING	19
122. GOLD SIGNET-RING	20
123. GOLD SIGNET-RING	20
129. GOLD MARRIAGE-RING, NIELLOED	21
131. INSCRIPTION FROM A GOLD MARRIAGE-RING	22
133. BEZEL OF A GOLD MARRIAGE-RING	22
139. BRONZE SIGNET-RING	23
142. SILVER SIGNET-RING	24
147. SILVER RING	24
148. INSCRIBED BEZEL OF A BRONZE RING	25
160. INSCRIBED BEZEL OF A BRONZE RING	26
168. GOLD SIGNET-RING, MONOGRAM	27

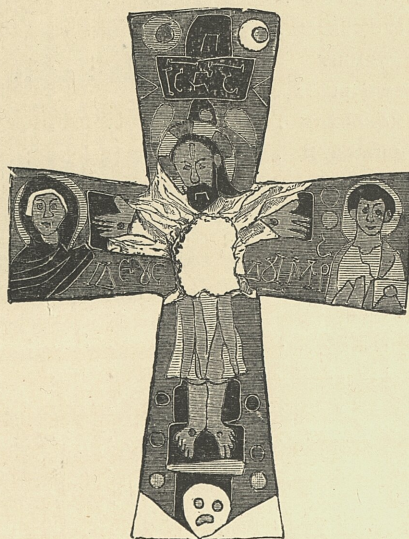
NUMBER	PAGE
169. BEZEL OF A BRONZE SIGNET-RING, MONOGRAM	27
170. BEZEL OF A GOLD SIGNET-RING, MONOGRAM	27
171. GOLD SIGNET-RING, MONOGRAM	27
173. BEZEL OF A BRONZE SIGNET-RING, MONOGRAM	28
179. BEZEL OF A SILVER RING, MONOGRAM	28
185. BRONZE SIGNET-RING	29
189. GOLD SIGNET-RING FOUND WITH COINS OF HERACLIUS	30
190. GOLD SIGNET-RING FROM SMYRNA	30
205. BRONZE SIGNET-RING FROM BEYRÛT	32
207. GOLD MARRIAGE-RING	32
212. GOLD RING FROM SMYRNA	33
400-424. DESIGNS ON THE BACKS OF SILVER SPOONS FROM CYPRUS	35
227, 229, 230. THREE SILVER FIBULAE	36
232, 233. SILVER PINS	37
235. HEAD OF A SILVER PIN	37
236. SILVER EAR-RING	37
237. SILVER EAR-RING	38
238. SILVER RING	38
240, 241. SILVER CHARMS	38
256. BRONZE-GILT FIBULA	40
257. BRONZE-GILT FIBULA FROM PALESTINE	41
258, 261. BRONZE-GILT PLAQUES FROM PALESTINE	42
278. GOLD EAR-RING	45
279. GOLD BRACELET	45, 46
284. GOLD RELIQUARY	46
289. IVORY PYXIS	48
293. IVORY PANEL, THE DISPUTATION AND BAPTISM	51
302. LEAF OF AN IVORY DIPTYCH, ST. MICHAEL	58
302a. IVORY PANEL, DEATH OF JACOB	58
302b. IVORY PANEL, ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM	59
303. LEAF OF A TRIPTYCH	60
304. TOP OF THE SILVER CASKET OF PROJECTA	61
305. FIGURES OF MUSES FROM THE SIDES OF A SILVER CASKET	65
305. SECTION OF A SILVER CASKET	66
306. EMBOSSED SILVER FLASK	67
307. SILVER EWER	68
308. SILVER AMPHORA	68
310. FLUTED SILVER DISH	69
311. SILVER DISH	70
312. RECTANGULAR SILVER DISH, MONOGRAM IN NIELLO	71
316. CIRCULAR SILVER DISH, MONOGRAM IN NIELLO	71
321. FLUTED SILVER BOWL	72
322. INSCRIBED SILVER SPOON	72
328. SILVER SPOON	73
331. INLAID SILVER KNIFE-HANDLE	74
332. SILVER CHAIR-ORNAMENT, STATUETTE OF ROME	74

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

xiii

NUMBER	PAGE
335. SILVER CHAIR-ORNAMENT, STATUETTE OF ALEXANDRIA	75
336. SILVER CHAIR-ORNAMENT, HAND HOLDING POMEGRANATE	76
338. SILVER-GILT HORSE-TRAPPINGS	76
354. MONOGRAM AND CROSS ON A SILVER SPOON	78
356. SILVER BOWL, PASTORAL SCENES	79
361. SILVER BOWL WITH COVER	80
364. SILVER SPOON	80
376. STAMP ON BOTTOM OF A SILVER LAMP-STAND	82
379. STAMPS ON BOTTOM OF A SILVER DISH	82
380. MONOGRAM ON A SILVER SPOON	82
387. DESIGN ON A SILVER SPOON	83
390. INSCRIPTION AND MONOGRAM ON A SILVER SPOON	84
393. SILVER LAMP-DISH	85
397. STAMPS ON THE BOTTOM OF A SILVER DISH	86
398. NIELLOED DESIGN ON A SILVER BOWL	87
399. STAMPS ON THE BOTTOM OF A SILVER VESSEL	87
399. SILVER VESSEL FOR SUSPENSION	88
400. INSCRIPTION ON A SILVER SPOON	89
405. POUNCED INSCRIPTION ON A SILVER SPOON	89
423, 424. ANIMALS ON BOWLS OF SILVER SPOONS	90
434. BRONZE WEIGHT, MONOGRAM	92
444. INSCRIBED BRONZE WEIGHT	93
447. BRONZE WEIGHT, TWO BUSTS	93
453. BRONZE WEIGHT, MONOGRAM	94
476. BRONZE WEIGHT, MONOGRAM	96
478. CIRCULAR BRONZE WEIGHT	96
483. BRONZE WEIGHT, FIGURES OF TWO SAINTS	97
485. STEELYARD WEIGHT	98
491. CRUCIFORM BRONZE STAMP	99
530. BRONZE BOX FOR SUSPENSION	104
532. INSCRIBED BRONZE VESSEL	105
533. INSCRIBED BRONZE LID FROM SYRIA	105
534. BRONZE PATERA	106
539. BRONZE EWER FROM EGYPT	107
540. BRONZE CENSER	107
540. DETAILS OF BRONZE CENSER	108
541. BRONZE VASE AND BASIN FROM SPAIN	108
543. BRONZE PLAQUE FROM SYRIA	109
544. BRONZE-GILT PLAQUE, ST. THEODORE	110
559. BRONZE RELIQUARY-CROSS FROM SMYRNA	113
653. GLOBULAR GLASS VESSEL	131
658. BLUE GLASS VASE FROM AMIENS	132
664. GLASS MONEY-WEIGHT, MONOGRAM	133
675, 676. GLASS MONEY-WEIGHTS, MONOGRAMS.	134
679, 680. GLASS MONEY-WEIGHTS, MONOGRAMS.	135
686. CAMEO GLASS PASTE, OUR LORD	136

NUMBER		PAGE
693.	CAMEO GLASS PASTE, ST. THEODORE	137
697.	GLASS PENDANT, THE GOOD SHEPHERD	137
	TYPES OF POTTERY LAMPS	148
821.	POTTERY LAMP FROM EGYPT	150
835.	POTTERY LAMP FROM SYRIA	152
903.	POTTERY AMPULLA	158
916.	INTERIOR OF THE CONSTANTINE BOWL	160
926.	IMPRESSED DESIGN FROM AN EARTHENWARE PLATE	162
928.	IMPRESSION OF STAMP UPON A TILE	163
930.	IMPRESSION OF STAMP UPON AN EARTHENWARE VESSEL	163
942.	COPTIC TOMBSTONE	165
944.	SCULPTURED LIMESTONE FRAGMENTS	166
946.	CAPITAL OF A COLUMN	167
951.	LINEN TUNIC FROM EGYPT	168
951.	TAPESTRY MEDALLION FROM A TUNIC	169
961.	SEAL FROM A WINE-JAR	170
986.	CARVED CEDAR PANEL FROM EGYPT	173



ENAMELLED BYZANTINE CROSS IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM,
SOUTH KENSINGTON. FRONT.

INTRODUCTION

THE objects representing the minor arts of the Early Christian and Byzantine periods in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities were first united in 1893, in which year several rooms were assigned to exhibitions illustrating the various religions of the world. But even now the whole collection is not exhibited in one place. The need for safer custody involved the placing of jewels and objects of gold in the Room of Gold Ornaments and Gems, and the passage by which it is approached, while a few of the ivory carvings are in the Mediaeval Room where they form part of the large series there exhibited. A number of objects are also to be found in other Departments, and with these the present Catalogue is not concerned. For instance, much material illustrating the Christian art of Egypt, together with a large collection of Gnostic gems, is in the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities, while the Department of Manuscripts possesses an extensive series of Byzantine leaden seals. In the custody of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities are a number of mosaic pavements of the Christian period obtained in Northern Africa.

The collections included in the Catalogue are naturally somewhat miscellaneous in character, and the various divisions are rather unequally represented. For purposes of classification the whole has been divided into nine sections, viz.:—gems and rings, jewels, ivory carvings, silver, bronze, glass, pottery, sculptured stone, and miscellaneous antiquities. Of these classes the gems, ivories, silver, and glass are the most important. The section of rings and gems was chiefly enriched by the acquisition of the cabinets of the Abbé Hamilton in 1856, and of Signor Castellani in 1865 and 1872; while the bequest in 1897 of the collection formed by Sir A. Wollaston Franks, K.C.B., added some of the finest examples to the series. The section of jewellery profited to an equal degree by the generosity of the same benefactor, who indeed contributed in a greater or less proportion to the increase of all the classes enumerated. Of the ivory carvings an important part was acquired in 1856, with the Maskell Collection, which included valuable examples of Early Christian Art such as the two sets of panels from caskets (nos. 291 and 292), one of which is well known among the earliest representations of the Crucifixion. Among other private collections from which this section has been augmented, may be mentioned those of Mr. Alexander Nesbitt, from which the *pyxis* with the martyrdom of St. Menas was derived; of Mr. Felix Slade, which included the remarkable panel (no. 299) with the Descent into Hell; and of Mr. Rohde Hawkins,

to which the series is indebted for a similar panel (no. 300) with the scene of the Nativity. The nucleus of the series of glass is formed by the fine set of gilded glasses (*fondi d'oro*) chiefly obtained by the purchase in 1854 and 1863 of the collections belonging to the Chevalier Bunsen, and the Counts Matarozzi of Urbania. Two exceptional pieces of the same class (nos. 628 and 629) came from the Disch and Herstatt Collections at Cologne, the more remarkable of the two (no. 628) having been bequeathed by Mr. Felix Slade in 1868. The two curious vases, perhaps chalices, of dark blue glass (nos. 658 and 659), one forming part of the same bequest, the other from the Pourtalès Collection, are also worthy of especial note. The section consisting of objects in silver is chiefly remarkable for the various Treasures which it contains. Foremost among these is that found in 1793 on the Esquiline Hill, including the famous Bridal Casket of Projecta (no. 304). The other treasures, that from Carthage (nos. 356-375); that found at Lampsacus in 1848 (nos. 376-396) comprising a set of inscribed spoons; and that discovered in Cyprus in recent years (nos. 397-424) are all worthy of mention, the last two being of especial interest from the occurrence on four vessels of several Byzantine stamps. The bronze section has a good series of weights and lamps, the latter including a fine example of a *polycandelon* (no. 529). The class of pottery, in addition to representative collections of lamps and pilgrims' flasks, contains in the so-called Constantine Bowl a remarkable example of the potter's art of the fourth century. Of all the sections, that of sculptured stone is the least satisfactory: the collection as a whole is pre-eminently one of small objects, sculptures and monumental inscriptions being alike scantily represented.

As far as the Early Christian Antiquities were concerned, the desirability of publication was long ago recognized, and in 1899 it was decided to print a catalogue. But as soon as a beginning had been made with the work, it became clear that the miscellaneous small objects in the possession of the Department illustrating the minor arts of the Christian East under the Byzantine Empire might be included with advantage. Exigencies of arrangement had brought the two classes together in a small room, and it seemed obviously appropriate that they should be comprised in a single volume. There was another reason which this course rendered desirable. Recent years have witnessed a remarkable revival in the study of Byzantine history and archaeology. In Germany and Russia reviews have been issued entirely confined to these subjects¹. In France, and in a far less degree in our own country, a number of valuable books and monographs have been published, while Russian and Modern Greek scholars are devoting themselves to investigations for which they are so advantageously situated². As a result of this activity, the evidence afforded by the minor arts is receiving more

¹ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, edited by Karl Krumbacher, Leipzig, from 1892; *Vizantiski Vremennik*, St. Petersburg, from 1894. The 'Materials for Russian Archaeology' (Russian), published by the Imperial Archaeological Commission, St. Petersburg, also contains a number of important articles on Byzantine Archaeology. A new publication, *Oriens Christianus*, devoted to the antiquities of the Christian East has just appeared under the auspices of the German Campo Santo at Rome.

² Especial service has been rendered to students of the Minor Arts of the Christian East by the works of M. Gustave Schlumberger of Paris, and Professor J. Strzygowski of Gratz. To the study of enamels, silversmith's work, and ivory carvings, the researches of Professor N. Kondakoff, M. Smirnoff, and Dr. Hans Graeven are of fundamental importance.

and more attention from students of the history of the Later Roman Empire, so that the present moment seems propitious for rendering the collections in the British Museum more accessible by publication. But the proposal to include them in the Catalogue raised difficulties similar in character to those which had already affected the ordinary process of acquisition; it had to be decided whether all Byzantine antiquities were to be admitted, or only those which bore some obvious mark of Christian ownership. The latter alternative had been adopted for the beginning of the Christian era, with which period the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities was equally concerned. Theoretically no objects belonging to these early centuries were placed in the Christian Room which did not bear clear signs of Christian use, but contemporary pagan antiquities were included when they formed part of a single find with those of a religious character. This system was found to work well in practice, and is still continued. But in dealing with the period after the foundation of Constantinople, more especially in countries outside Europe, other difficulties arose, for the Greek and Roman Department does not acquire objects of so late a date. Byzantine antiquities which bore outward evidence of Christianity, that is to say a very large proportion of the whole, found their legitimate place in the Christian Room. But there were others without such evidence, which were in a sense beyond the pale, and might logically have been omitted. It seemed a matter of regret, however, that they should be altogether unrepresented in the National Collection, and they were consequently admitted on grounds of expediency. Their admission introduced an unavoidable complication, for it was now impossible to discriminate, as in the earlier period, between objects with signs of Christianity and those without; but it was felt that the material advantages of inclusion more than compensated for the want of uniformity. It was therefore decided that publication should follow the lines laid down for purposes of exhibition, and that the Catalogue should also comprise all objects of the Byzantine period without exception. This decision was confirmed by the acquisition of the above-mentioned Franks Bequest in 1897, which was separately exhibited, but contained a number of Byzantine objects which it was most desirable to make better known. The above development had, however, the effect of making the Catalogue unsymmetrical. Whereas for Eastern Christianity the close of the Middle Ages was adopted as a general limit, few western antiquities were admitted of a later date than the sixth century. The Romano-British, Teutonic, and Western Mediaeval Collections in the Department are destined to form the subject of independent catalogues¹, and the amalgamation of any part of them with the Christian Collection had never been in contemplation; Russian antiquities, which also form a class worthy of separate treatment, were omitted for similar reasons. An exception was only allowed in the case of one or two objects with Christian inscriptions, such as no. 541, which, though produced in countries under Teutonic dominion, stood in a more immediate relation to Roman civilization. The division thus adopted cannot

¹ A few Roman objects found in Britain, and now in the Romano-British collection of the Department, have upon them the sacred monogram ✠. They are four cakes of pewter stamped with the name Syagrius (see *Arch. Journ.*, vol. xvi, p. 38 and *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*, Series II, vol. ii, p. 35); and a pewter dish found in Hampshire, on which the monogram is roughly scratched (see *Archaeologia*, vol. lvi (1898), p. 17).

but be open to criticism, for it is influenced to a certain extent by accidental conditions of arrangement; but it seemed that the publication of the available material should take precedence of all other considerations, and if the present opportunity had been allowed to pass, this might have been indefinitely postponed.

In the province of Early Christian Antiquities, which de Rossi and his numerous distinguished followers have so carefully explored, the date of most objects can be approximately determined. But in dealing with a subject like the minor arts of the Byzantine Empire, where there is so much untrodden ground, the case is very different. Here the danger of premature hypothesis must be set against the security of excessive caution. In the frequent absence of definite landmarks, conjecture is perhaps a greater evil than suspension of judgement, and it is better to err rather on the side of prudence than of temerity. Precise dates have therefore been sparingly assigned, and in many cases the age of an object has been left quite undetermined. But although decisive evidence is unfortunately rare, it is not altogether wanting. In a few cases objects are found associated with coins; for example nos. 252-255 were discovered with coins of Constantius, the ring no. 189 with coins of Heraclius, while the ring no. 210 contains a coin of Marcian. Internal evidence of a less conclusive nature is sometimes sufficient to date certain classes within comparatively narrow limits; for example, the occurrence of a particular form of letter or monogram, or the name of an office like that of Eparch which fell into desuetude after the sixth century, will often serve as a useful guide. Inscriptions cannot always be relied upon to afford exact indications of date, for where so large a proportion of objects are of the most varied material and the rudest workmanship, the different forms of letters cannot be easily differentiated; moreover, the study of Byzantine epigraphy has yet to be fully developed. The Museum has not the good fortune to possess one of those monuments which, like the Cross of Justin at Rome, the Reliquary of Cortona with the name of Nicephorus Phocas, or the ivory at Paris with those of Romanus IV and Eudocia, make explicit mention of historical persons. It is to rare instances of this kind that the most satisfactory attempts to introduce a chronological sequence in Byzantine antiquities are due; but even here the permanence of style which a comparison of dated ivories has revealed, proves that if Byzantine art was sometimes slow to rise it was often unexpectedly slow to fall. M. Molinier has truly said, that except in the rather improbable event of striking new discoveries, there must always be an element of uncertainty even in the dating of ivory carvings¹. Much greater, therefore, is the chance of error in dealing with classes of antiquities which offer no such criteria as the dated ivories provide. In default of significant inscriptions, there remain other less direct indications which are not without value. Among these may be mentioned peculiarities of iconography; relation to historical epochs, or events such as the Arab invasions, the iconoclastic crisis, or the catastrophe of 1204; and finally the general style of workmanship and various technical or artistic affinities. But the value of these aids is naturally greatest in the case of the finer and more valuable works which have survived in the smallest numbers; the less pretentious objects do not lend themselves

¹ *Histoire générale des arts appliqués à l'industrie*, vol. i. *Ivoires*, p. 98, 1896.

so readily to exact classification, and it is of these that the collection is very largely composed.

Such are the data, scanty and inadequate at best, which enable us to associate different types or styles with different historical epochs. The early period which included the reigns of Theodosius and Justinian is not represented in the collection by many objects of artistic merit, though the lesser like the greater arts probably found their highest expression at that time. But the famous leaf of a diptych (no. 295) with the figure of the Archangel Michael, perhaps the finest surviving ivory carving ever produced in the East, is of this date; while some of the silver treasures are near enough in point of time to give a favourable idea of the silversmith's art. Of the workmanship of the iconoclastic interval and of the transitional period which followed it, marked as it sometimes was by a reversion to antique models often imperfectly understood, there are two examples among the ivory carvings (nos. 299 and 300) and perhaps one among the gems (no. 104). The period of the Basilian Dynasty, which witnessed so great an external expansion and so marked a revival of the arts within the Empire, is represented by fewer fine examples than are to be found in some other collections; but there are several rings and jewels (nos. 129 ff.) which can with probability be attributed to this time. The final phase of impoverishment and decay, initiated by the sack of Constantinople by the Crusaders, and concluded by the last victories of the Turks, is represented by work insignificant in character and feeble in execution. The difficulty in assigning accurate dates to Byzantine antiquities is perhaps greatest at the beginning and end of the Empire. Between the fourth and sixth centuries the respective claims of East and West are not easy to define, while at the opposite extremity it is hard to say where the Middle Ages pass into modern times. The desire to secure the publication of material which might otherwise remain unnoticed has prompted the inclusion of a few interesting objects, both early and late, which may ultimately be proved intruders. An instance of this latitude is afforded by certain gems in Section B (pp. 12 ff.), the attribution of which is by no means claimed as final. The point at which one archaeological period merges in another can seldom be exactly determined, for the time of transition is as indefinite as the twilight by which darkness is divided from day.

Although in the above paragraphs the word 'Byzantine' has been used for the sake of convenience, it will be observed that in the title, and generally in the Catalogue itself, it has been discarded in favour of the paraphrase 'from the Christian East.' The change has been made for several reasons. In the first place the word Byzantine implies too close an association with the metropolis of the Empire, to the exclusion of art-provinces like Syria and Egypt, the importance of which is daily being more widely recognized. It has been remarked by a French writer on Byzantine history that local differences even now stand out very clearly on the general background of artistic evolution. Thus there was a Byzantine art of Asia Minor, another of Syria, and a third of Egypt¹. We can already anticipate the time when the antiquities of the Christian East will fall into their proper places in spheres well defined by local

¹ Ch. Diehl, *Justinien et la civilisation Byzantine au VI^{me} siècle*, p. 659 (Paris, 1901).

influence, and when that time arrives, the compromise here adopted will naturally be replaced by phrases of greater precision. In the meanwhile it may serve a useful purpose in so far as it suggests decentralization and implies that finality has not yet been reached. In the second place the term Byzantine has still for many minds a misleading connotation¹. Although the old reproach of formalism is based upon a superficial view of the history and art of the Empire, the prejudice has struck such deep roots that the process of eradication must be slow. If the word as now too often used contributes even in a small degree to the perpetuation of an error, it is better that it should be abandoned where it is not absolutely necessary. A third advantage of the more general phrase is that it has no political associations, and thus permits the inclusion of isolated objects such as gems cut by Persian Christians (cf. no. 82), to which the terms 'Early Christian' and 'Byzantine' would not be wholly appropriate.

An attempt has been made in the index to illustrate the comparative fertility of different districts in Christian antiquities, the numbers of the objects being entered under the names of their respective countries in all cases where the localities are recorded in the Register of the Department. But as in a large number of cases actual records are wanting, the enumeration must not be taken as exhaustive; for instance, the prominence of Egypt and Syria would be yet greater if the index took account of probability in addition to registered facts. Yet, imperfect as they are, such lists serve a useful purpose by drawing the attention of the student to the geographical distribution of Christian remains. A metrical scale has been given on each plate, and a parallel scale of centimetres and inches will be found on p. 178. Throughout the Catalogue the dates immediately following the dimensions of objects indicate the year of acquisition.

The Trustees are indebted to the Society of Antiquaries of London, and to the Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, for the use of several blocks (pp. xiv, xxiv, and 186, and nos. 376, 379, 397-399, 400, 405, 424, 539) inserted in the text.

¹ On this subject see Professor Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. i, pp. viii and ix. (London, 1889.)

LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS OF BOOK TITLES REFERRED TO IN THIS CATALOGUE

Arch. Journ.

The Archaeological Journal, published under the direction of the Council of the Royal
Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. London, 1844 &c.

Bonner Jahrbücher.

Jahrbücher des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande. Bonn, 1842 &c.

Byz. Zeitschr.

Byzantinische Zeitschrift, edited by K. Krumbacher. Leipzig, 1892 &c.

C. I. G. (1877.)

A. Boeckh, *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, vol. iv. Berlin, 1877.

C. I. L.

Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum. Berlin, 1863 &c.

D'AGINCOURT, *Peinture, Sculpture, &c.*

Seroux d'Agincourt, *Histoire de l'art par les monuments.* Paris, 1823.

DELATTRE, 1890, 1893, &c.

Delattre, Articles on terra-cotta lamps in *Revue de l'Art Chrétien.*

DE ROSSI, *Bullettino.*

J. B. de Rossi, *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana.* Rome, 1863-1894.

DE VIT, *Onomasticon.*

V. de Vit, *Totius Latinitatis Onomasticon.* Prato, 1859-1867.

FORRER, *Frühchristl. Altertümer.*

R. Forrer, *Die frühchristlichen Altertümer aus dem Gräberfeld von Achmim-Panopolis.*
Strasburg, 1893.

GARRUCCI, *Storia.*

R. Garrucci, *Storia dell' Arte Cristiana.* Prato, 1872-1880.

GARRUCCI, *Vetri.*

R. Garrucci, *Vetri ornati di figure in oro.* 2nd ed. Rome, 1864.

CAT
EA
C
ANTI
IN
BR
MU

BIB
TEA
LPH
TEA
ADP