

A ROMANESQUE CENSER-COVER IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM¹

By A. B. TONNOCHY

The censer-cover (Pl. i) which forms the subject of this paper² is of cast bronze, once gilt and still retaining traces of the original gilding. In form it is an architectural development, or variation, of the hemispherical type. In the centre rises a three-storied tower, from the angles of which project gabled buildings surmounted by round open turrets; the spaces between these, forming the spandrels of four contiguous semicircles round the base, are filled by the symbols of the Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John being shown with the books of their gospels. Enclosed in each semicircle is the half-figure of an angel clasping a book among openwork foliate scrolls. At the junction of the semicircles are half-figures of lions, each with his forepaws resting on a portion of the scroll ornament, and with open mouth to take the chains. It has suffered some damage; one of the round turrets surmounting the gabled buildings is slightly distorted, and the columns of the arcade are broken. The height of the cover is 5.1 in. (12.8 cm.) and the diameter 4.3 in. (11.1 cm.).

The successive stories are quadrilateral, the sides consisting of an arcade with three round arches, the sides of the uppermost tower being gabled; in each story the roof projects, and is supported at each corner by a column surmounted by a spherical terminal, seen also on the round turrets, which have similar arcading. The projecting gabled buildings are arcaded on three sides, two arches appearing on each of the longer sides and three on the outside shorter end; the roofs of these are tiled.

The *locus classicus* for the architectural type of

¹ Read at Burlington House, June 10, 1931.

² It was bequeathed to the British Museum in 1919 by Mr. Robert Steggles.

censer is the *Diversarum Artium Scheda* of the monk Theophilus, who has been plausibly identified with Roger (Rogkerus) of Helmershausen,¹ a monastery in the diocese of Paderborn in Westphalia, the earliest mention of which is apparently c. 1100, a work to which we shall have to return. But first we may draw attention to three examples, perhaps of a date previous to that work. A bronze object thought to be a censer-cover found at Pershore about 1770, and published by, among others, Mr. (now Sir) C. R. Peers in 1906,² has a Saxon inscription, and resembles the top of a form of tower common in Germany and exemplified in England by the tower of Sompting Church, Sussex,³ which is probably pre-Conquest, early eleventh century. The lower part is on a square plan, each side having an arcade of three round arches, surmounted by a gable filled with imbrications; between the gables rises a slightly convex quadrangular spire, the sides of which are filled with openwork animal ornament. The angles and tops of the gables and the summit of the spire have animal heads rather suggestive of gargoyles; at the bottom corners are projections with small holes.⁴ It was dated by Mr. Peers 900-1050, and Dr. Brøndsted⁵ of Copenhagen, arguing from analogous ornament in English manuscripts, gives it a similar early date. Two examples in the British Museum, about which there has been considerable difference of opinion, show similar features. The one (Pl. ii, A) comes from the Thames near London Bridge.⁶ The square tower again appears, but the spire has been broken off, and two of the gables have been much injured. The lower part has openwork birds back to back on three sides and similarly placed animals on the fourth;

¹ A. Ilg in R. Eitelberger von Edelberg, *Quellenschriften zur Kunstgeschichte*, vii, p. xlii, Vienna, 1874.

² *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, xxi, p. 52.

³ *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, xli, p. 11.

⁴ The suggestion was put forward that this might be the upper part of a hemispherical cover, made in two parts, the holes being little worn and too small to take more than wires,

and a suggested restoration was shown. Alternatively, it was thought that, if the object were the entire cover, the three side-chains were attached to the bowl only.

⁵ J. Brøndsted, *Early English Ornament*, pp. 264, 265, London and Copenhagen, 1924.

⁶ *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, xxi, p. 56.



CENSER-COVER. BRITISH MUSEUM.



A. CENSER-COVER (?) FROM THE THAMES, NEAR LONDON
BRIDGE. BRITISH MUSEUM.



B. CENSER-COVER (?) FOUND AT
CANTERBURY. BRITISH MUSEUM.

the gables are filled by crouching birds, and the top corners show animal heads. It was dated by Mr. Peers probably twelfth century. The other (Pl. ii, B), which was found about nine feet deep at the north end of Palace Street, Canterbury, is, like the last, somewhat damaged.¹ The square plan with gables and spire is again seen. Four projecting feet are pierced with holes to receive upright rods, upon which the cover moved up and down: openwork animals, birds, and monsters back to back are seen on the sides, the gables being occupied by single beasts, birds, or monsters. In parts there is an inlay of silver showing traces of engraved palmette design. Mr. Aymer Vallance, who exhibited it to the Society of Antiquaries, put forward 1200 as the earliest possible date,² but Dr. Brøndsted's view is at present in favour, and the censer-tops are classed as Anglo-Saxon.

However that may be, there is certainly great difficulty in determining when the architectural elaboration of the hemispherical top came in, and as far as the West is concerned, we can at present say little more than that it is a Romanesque development, and that, apparently, it did not displace the simpler form, examples of which we shall have to consider. It has been suggested that the later Coptic type of censer pointed the way to the Romanesque type, and a censer-cover of uncertain date in the Berlin Museum³ may perhaps illustrate this; it has openwork Coptic vine-scrolls issuing from vases of chalice form. In the silver treasure from Luxor in the Cairo Museum are two spherical censers, dated by Strzygowski fifth to sixth century, the upper portion with openwork ornament, in one case of crosses, in the other medallions with figures of birds and pierced work.⁴

¹ *ibid.*, p. 352.

² He argued that the likeness to the Sompington Tower might be explained by archaism, but that such late features as the crockets and the gargoyles could not well have been anticipated. Dr. Brøndsted (as above), however, insists on the analogies between the ornament shown in Carolingian and English MSS., and

such objects as the Alcester ivory tau-cross in the British Museum, of the beginning of the eleventh century, two stirrup-plates from Jutland, and a bronze sword from Skaane, Sweden.

³ O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und mittelalterliche . . . Bildwerke*, no. 981, Berlin 1909.

⁴ J. Strzygowski, *Koptische Kunst*, nos. 7205 ff., Vienna, 1904.

Contemporary representations of censers, from illuminated manuscripts of the Romanesque period and from other sources, show for the most part the spherical form. They occur as small parts of figure subjects, and there is little room for elaboration of detail. In a Scandinavian book of the Gospels dating from about 1200, in the National Museum at Copenhagen,¹ two angels censuring appear on the tympanum of an arch surmounting the canonical tables (Pl. iii, A). It would be too much to see in these rather indistinct censers an architectural top, but there is a departure from the spherical in the form of a conical cover, and the bowl appears to be a rather flattened hemisphere. An initial from a thirteenth-century psalter in the British Museum (Pl. iii, B)² shows a hand swinging a censer between the figures of Our Lord and King David. The censer is spherical with three chains. The cover shows signs of the scheme of semicircular or triangular divisions, which we shall see later, when we come to the surviving examples.

We may next note two ivories, each showing the subject of the Maries at the Tomb,³ a scene in which the leading figure is commonly represented carrying a censer. One (Pl. iv) is a book-cover preserved in the Bavarian State Library at Munich, described by Dr. A. Goldschmidt as Frankish, end of the eleventh century.⁴ The openings in the cover, matched by those of the bowl, have rather the appearance of an arcade, and may perhaps be an attempt to suggest architecture; on a small scale one would not look for an elaborate structure. The other (Pl. v), whose provenance is Cologne, now preserved in the Schnütgen Museum there, and belonging to the second half of the twelfth century, shows two of the holy women with censers,

¹ *Greek and Latin Illuminated Manuscripts X-XIII centuries in Danish Collections*, Copenhagen and London, 1921. Pl. xxxii.

² Add MSS., 30045 f. 23. Initial letter of Ps. xxxix. *Dixi custodiam vias meas*.

³ Incense was used by the Christians in the earliest times along with other perfumes to embalm the dead or to burn round the body, no

religious significance being attached to such practices; towards the end of the fourth century, however, as the Testament of St. Ephraim shows, incense and perfumes were considered marks of respect towards the dead and no longer mere practical necessities (Cabrol, *Dict. d'Arch. chrét. et de Liturgie* s.v. *Encens*).

⁴ *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, ii, no. 152a, Berlin, 1918.





IVORY BOOK-COVER. BAVARIAN STATE LIBRARY, MUNICH.

(Photo by permission.)



IVORY PANEL. SCHNÜTGEN MUSEUM, COLOGNE.

(Photo : Bildarchiv des Rheinischen Museums.)



A. CENSER. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, TRÈVES.
(Photo : Bildarchiv des Rheinischen Museums.)



B. CENSER. ALLVER3KIRCHEN, WESTPHALIA.

(Photo : Denkmälerarchiv der Provinz Westfalen, Münster, Westfalen.)

on the first of which some detail can be seen. The form is spherical, with a low foot, and on the cover are two rows of windows, again, perhaps, a simplified form of the architectural top.¹

An example of an undoubted architectural censer is seen in two beaten copper reliefs,² originally belonging to the Liebfrauenkirche at Maestricht, and afterwards to the Church of St. Servatius in the same place. They have been ascribed to a school of metal-workers in Maestricht along with other objects in the treasure.

We may now consider some of the extant examples of censers which show analogies with the British Museum cover. The theory of the censer has been expounded, as we have already noted, by Theophilus, and minute directions are given by him for the construction of the beaten and cast censers respectively,³ which are to be made after the likeness of 'the city which the prophet saw upon the mountain.'⁴ The scheme is an elaborate one, the essentials of which may be summarized.⁵

The censer may be made in gold, silver, or copper. The dimensions should be such that the height is half as much again as the breadth. The cover is planned in a series of turrets arranged in tiers. On the top is an octagonal turret with windows, surmounted by a ring to which the central chain of the censer is attached. Below are four square gabled turrets with an arcade and a round window in the middle, over the arches; under these are eight towers, four being round, situated below the upper square towers, in which flowers or birds or animals or small windows may be made;

¹ Goldschmidt, as above, iii, no. 6.

² Fr. Bock and M. Willemsen, *Die mittelalterlichen Kunst- und Reliquienschatze zu Maestricht*, p. 64 and fig. 16, Cologne and Neuss, 1872; J. Destree, *Exposition de dinanderie, août-septembre, 1903, Guide de Visiteurs*, pp. 61 (fig.), 62. Namur, 1905.

³ *Diversarum Artium Schedula*, iii, ch. lx, lxi. Text with English translation by R. Hendrie, London, 1847.

⁴ cf. Ezek. xl. 2.

⁵ The translations of Theophilus are generally unsatisfactory; and, indeed, a mere translation of so highly technical a work is almost useless. M. Molinier (*Histoire des arts industriels: L'orfèvrerie religieuse et civile*, p. 141, note 12) points out that the editors hitherto had not used all the known manuscripts, and had not discriminated between those which they used.

between them four square towers, which may be broader, in which half-figures of angels are seen. The lowest stage in the cover is four semicircular arches, each containing the figure of an evangelist either represented as an angel or by the usual symbol. At the junction of the arches on the rim are four heads of lions or of men, through which the chains pass.¹ In the bowl of the censer the arches are to correspond to those of the cover, and may be occupied by figures representing the four rivers of Paradise with their urns, from which the water is represented flowing. The angles, as above, may contain human or lions' heads. The foot, if it cannot be of one piece with the bowl, may be soldered. The rings of the chains are attached to a lily, on which is a larger ring held by the bearer of the censer. Silver or copper censers may be gilded.

Medieval theology, as Dr. Joseph Sauer points out,² had apparently little to say about the outward form of the censer, being mainly concerned with symbolism. One view, expounded by Amalarius of Metz (about 780-850/1),³ Honorius of Autun (d. 1152),⁴ and, later Gulielmus Durandus (1237-1296),⁵ represents the censer as the body of Our Lord, and various aspects of His divinity and humanity are suggested by its attributes and parts, the material, the chains, the smoke, the fire. Another view showed the censer as symbolizing the heart of man,⁶ and the relation of his prayers and good deeds to the divine mercy.

Theophilus is thus an independent thinker. The symbolic representation by the censer of the heavenly Jerusalem, to which we have just referred, or that of

¹ A censer in Treves Cathedral (Pl. vi, A) shows in its upper part an approximation to the model. It will be noticed, however, that there are eight towers immediately below the topmost octagonal tower and four in the third tier. N. Irsch, *Der Dom zu Trier*, p. 340, Dusseldorf, 1931. A Romanesque censer at Allverskirchen in Westphalia (Pl. vi, B) shows a rather similar architectural scheme (A. Ludorff, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler von Westfalen* vii, Kreis Münster-Land, p. 24, Münster, 1897).

² *Symbolik des Kirchengebäudes und seiner Ausstattung in der Auffassung des Mittelalters*, pp. 204 ff., Freiburg i. B., 1902.

³ *De Eccl. Off. Migne, Patrolog.*, cv, 1125A.

⁴ *Gemma Animae*, Migne, clxxii, 546, *ibid.*, 546.

⁵ *Ration. Divin. Offic.*, iv, ch. x, 1.

⁶ *ibid.*, VI, vi. Sicardus, Bishop of Cremona, writing in the thirteenth century, expounds a similar doctrine (Migne, ccxiii, 49B).

the three children in the furnace, of which we shall have examples later, seems to be peculiar to him.

Turning again to the British Museum cover, we see that the plan is very similar to that envisaged by Theophilus. The central tower is square, in three stories, instead of octagonal, and lower down the square gabled buildings are surmounted by round turrets. The arches are filled with half-figures of angels holding books, presumably, as Theophilus says, representing the Evangelists, and a peculiar feature in our censer-top is the additional representation, in the spandrels, of the Evangelists by their symbols. The lions' heads appear in the present example, but human heads or simple loops are apparently rather more common.¹

With our censer-top may be compared three examples in the National Museum at Copenhagen, two complete censers and one cover (Pl. vii).² The complete specimens are from the twelfth-century churches³ respectively, of Thorsager (A) and Værum (C) in the same district of Jutland, about twenty-five kilometres from each other. On the first we see the symbols of the Evangelists surmounted by windows in a gabled building which takes the place of the semicircular arch in our cover. The architectural scheme is an alternation of round and square buildings, the round towers appearing like apsidal appendages to the square. The semicircular compartments of the bowl have openwork foliate ornament. The censer is 17.8 cm. (7 in.) high, and 12.1 cm. (4.8 in.) in diameter. In the other the plan is similar; the evangelistic symbols are in low relief; the bowl shows the rivers of Paradise personified; the foot is higher than in the preceding. The censer is 18 cm. (7.1 in.)

¹ In a fifteenth-century inventory of Lincoln Cathedral, under the heading *turribula*, the entry occurs: 'item j turribulum maximum de argento deaurato cum capitibus leopardorum in corpore et cum vj fenestris cui deficit unum folium super fenestram unum pinnaculum et cacumen unius pinnaculi habens iijj catenas de argento non deaurato . . . ' (*Archaeologia*, liii. p. 10).

² I am indebted to Dr. Poul Norlund, of the National Museum, for sending me photographs and giving me information about these censers.

³ It should be mentioned that the date of a church has not necessarily a bearing upon the date of the censer associated with it.

in height, and 12 cm. (4·7 in.) in diameter. The third (B), which is a cover only, 11·5 cm. (4·5 in.) in height and in diameter, is of unknown provenance, and has affinities with the first.

Probably the finest of all the known architectural censers is the famous example preserved in the Cathedral Treasury at Treves, found in the early part of the nineteenth century in a small village in the diocese (Pl. viii).¹

The censer is cruciform in plan. The lower part of the cover has four gabled buildings with apsidal ends, arcaded, and with circular windows in the gable, and tiled roofs, the upper part of the bowl conforming. Between these rises an upper tier of four round turrets with similar arcades; on the roof of each arm of the cross are figures of patriarchs in scenes representing sacrifices symbolic of the New Testament sacrifice; Abel with a lamb, Melchizedek with the bread and the chalice, the sacrifice of Isaac, Isaac blessing Jacob, with Esau behind seizing Isaac's left arm. On the top Solomon is enthroned, with fourteen figures of lions round the foot of the throne. The spaces on the cover not occupied by figures and buildings show pierced scroll-work of a style very similar to that on the British Museum cover. The upper part of the bowl has between the buildings busts in high relief of Aaron with a censer, Moses with his rod, Isaiah and Jeremiah each carrying a book; below are four nude figures among pierced ornament. The rim of the cover and the bowl are inscribed with hexameters explaining the figures, and on the foot is a hexameter with the name of the donor, Gozbertus, who is perhaps also the maker of the censer. The cap which receives the chains has small busts of four apostles with two explanatory hexameters. The censer is 9·5 in. (24 cm.) high, and 5·5 in. (13·9 cm.) broad.

Two examples may next be mentioned, in which the scheme is purely architectural, except for the human heads into which the chains are fitted. The

¹ N. Irsch, as above, pp. 341 ff.



A. CENSER FROM THORSAGER
CHURCH, JUTLAND.

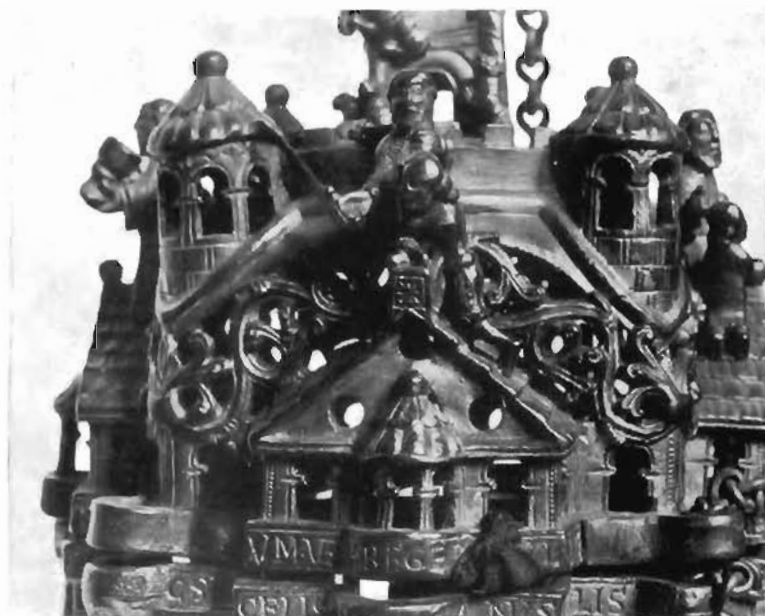


B. CENSER-COVER. UNKNOWN LOCALITY.

CENSERS AND COVER. NATIONAL MUSEUM, COPENHAGEN.



C. CENSER FROM VAERUM
CHURCH, JUTLAND.



CENSER AND DETAIL OF COVER. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, TRÈVES.

(Photo : Bildarchiv des Rheinischen Museums.)

one¹ came from the Collegiate Foundation of St. Veit, near Freising, and is now in the Clerical Seminary of that town (Pl. ix, A). It is said to be Bavarian, and has been dated about 1200. The other, which is so similar that it would seem to be by the same hand, is preserved in the Bavarian National Museum at Munich.²

In the famous censer at Lille (Pl. ix, B), to which we may now turn, the architectural features, if they may be so called, are of the slightest. This censer, like that of Treves, is one of the most remarkable specimens of its kind and period.³ The censer is 6.5 in. (16.5 cm.) by 4.1 in. (10.5 cm.). The form is that of a sphere with lobed foot; the sphere is divided into three contiguous circles, intersected by the rims of the cover and bowl, the rims being inscribed with hexameters in which the donor Reinerus offers the censer, and asks for a burial similar to that of a cleric, and for prayers 'which will be the incense rising to Christ.' In the semicircles is openwork, showing animals or birds in scrolls, confronted or back to back; three loops with animals' heads take the chains. On the top are figures of Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, the three children in the furnace, with their backs to a low structure with arches and knobs at the corner; on a higher stage is seated the angel who appeared to the children. On the circumferences of the semicircles of the cover are the names of the children. The censer is ascribed to the middle or second half of the twelfth century, and may conceivably be the work of Reiner of Huy, who is known by documentary evidence to be the maker of the baptismal font of St. Bartholomew at Liège.⁴

¹ Munich Exhibition, June-September, 1930. *Kirchliche Kunstschätze aus Bayern*, Catalogue, no. 26. I am indebted to Dr. W. L. Hildburgh, F.S.A., for this reference and a photograph, and for much help and many valuable suggestions in connexion with this paper.

² A reproduction may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

³ It is preserved in the Archaeological Museum in the Palace of Fine

Arts at Lille. It was published by E. Théodore in the *Revue pratique de Liturgie et de musique sacrée*, nos. 47, 48, May-June, 1921, pp. 415 ff. He has kindly allowed me to reproduce it.

⁴ The controversy on this point cannot detain us here, valuable as all evidence is which would enable us to determine the provenance of any censer. M. Destrée of Brussels (*La Dinanderie sur les Bords de la Meuse*, p. 14, Namur, 1904) believed that

Another censer with the same subject and with almost identical iconography was published many years ago in the *Archaeological Journal*,¹ being then in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Daniel Rock. It would seem to be the work of the same maker.

We may now consider some further specimens with architectural tops. In the Catholic church, belonging to the Romanesque period, at Balve in Westphalia (Pl. ix, c) there is a censer² with a structure of round and angular turrets, and gables at the top, and large gables on the cover and bowl partially filled with pierced scrollwork. It is 23 cm. (about 9.1 in.) high. On another censer in the British Museum (Pl. x, A) the top is a rounded tower with circular windows, surrounded on a lower level by gables with two round windows each. Lower still are pierced gables with half-figures of angels; at the corners are pierced hollow columns to hold chains, corresponding to human heads on the bowl. The rivers of Paradise personified, appear in openwork in semicircles on the bowl. Below is engraved ornament following the lines of the semicircles; the foot is low and somewhat battered. The whole censer is surmounted by a cross with a loop. It is 7.35 in. (18.8 cm.) high and 4.3 in. (11.4 cm.) broad. In the parish church of Rup- pichterth in the Rhineland, which is first mentioned about 1131, is preserved a censer³ of a similar type (Pl. x, B). On the top is a high central turret surrounded at its base by smaller turrets, below which

Reiner of Huy was the author of the censer. M. Théodore of Lille disagreed, denying the affinities and arguing that there was nothing in the inscription to suggest more than a donor. More recently Dr. Egid Beitz of the Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, in his work on the theologian Rupert of Deutz (*Rupertus von Deutz*, Cologne, 1930), which he has very kindly sent me, while admitting the difficulties, is inclined to agree with M. Destrée. He further sees the influence of Rupert (born about 1060-1070, died probably in 1129), who came as a child to the Benedictine Monastery at Liège, and spent much of his life there. Rupert's com-

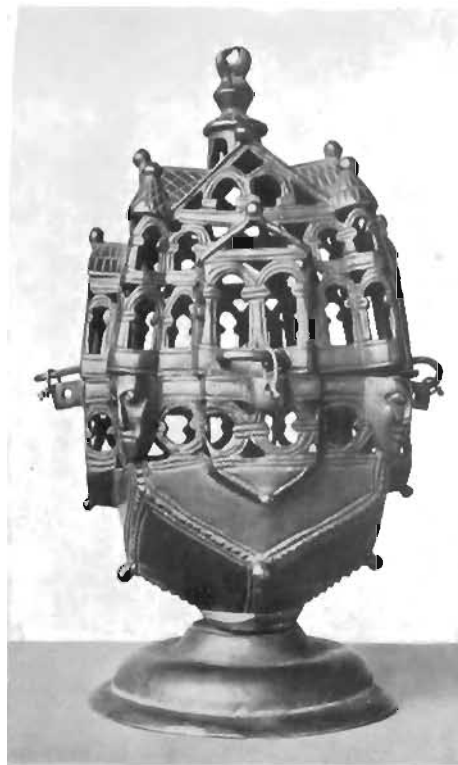
mentary on the Book of Daniel in his work, *De Trinitate et operibus Ejus*, xlii, gives an interpretation of the story of the Three Children (Migne, clxvii, 1499, 1506 ff.).

Dr. Beitz has further suggested to me that the iconography of the great Treves censer may also very likely have been inspired by a theologian; this, as he says, would be a fruitful field of research.

¹ xv, p. 119.

² A. Ludorff, as above, xx. Kr. Arnsberg, p. 49, and Pl. 17.

³ P. Clemen, *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Rheinprovinz*, v, p. 180, fig. 121; Aus'm Weerth, *Kunstdenkmäler des christl. Mittelalters*, iii, p. 35. Pl. xlix, 3.



A. CENSER. CLERICAL SEMINARY, FREISING,
BAVARIA.

(Photo : Bayer. Landesamt für Denkmalspflege, München.)



B. CENSER. ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM,
PALACE OF FINE ARTS, LILLE.



C. CENSER. CATHOLIC CHURCH, BALVE,
WESTPHALIA.

(Photo : Denkmälerarchiv der Provinz Westfalen, Münster, Westfalen.)



A. CENSER. BRITISH MUSEUM.



B. CENSER. RUPPICHTEROTH, RHINELAND.
(Photo : Bildarchiv des Rheinischen Museums.)

are two tiers of gables ; in all of these are windows of key-hole shape. The almost semicircular arches on the cover and bowl show in openwork : on the cover, the symbols of the Evangelists, on the bowl, figures of the rivers of Paradise. It is 25 cm. (9.85 in.) high.

We now come to an example presenting features which we have not observed so far. It is preserved at Hellefeld in Westphalia.¹ Here we have a pyramidal summit with a single tier of round turrets at its base. Below this are gables with apses showing trefoils in openwork surmounted by a pierced quatrefoil. On the top of each gable is a nimbed human head. The bowl is of squat form having apses corresponding to those of the cover in a hallowed-out space. The height is 21 cm. (about 8.27 in.). Another, identical in essentials, is part of the Cathedral treasure at Minden, Westphalia² (Pl. xi, A).

So far we have not considered the Latin countries in our survey ; they seem to provide less comparative material for our subject. But it is desirable to mention a censer from the Lazaro Collection in Madrid,³ described as twelfth century, and probably Spanish, which has points of resemblance with those to which attention has been drawn. The key-hole windows are found in the turrets and in the apses which project from the gables as in the two preceding examples. A similar example is illustrated (Pl. xi, B), from the collection of Dr. Hildburgh, obtained in Florence but quite possibly Spanish.⁴

Of the earlier censers found or preserved in England, two may be illustrated. The extant examples likely to be of early date seem to be somewhat crude in execution. Censers figure largely in inventories and records of English churches. We have already quoted an example from an inventory of Lincoln Cathedral. Many censers of silver gilt are recorded by Dugdale⁵ (*Monasticon Anglicanum*) from

¹ A. Ludorff, as above, xx, p. 72, and Pl. 28, 2.

² In this example the turrets are upright instead of being inclined inwards as in the preceding example.

³ *La Coleccion Lazaro*, Madrid, 1926, no. 286.

⁴ A collection of Romanesque censers, mainly spherical in form, is in the Episcopal Museum at Vich, Spain.

⁵ Quoted by T. J. Pettigrew in *Journ. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, xix, p. 86.

Lincoln Cathedral, York Minster, and St. Paul's. Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester (963-984) gave to the monastery of Peterborough, among other things 'one silver censer.'¹ At the end of the eleventh century at St. Albans Abbey, the Abbot Robert 'caused many rich gifts to be prepared . . . a censer'² And we may mention, although it is outside our period, the splendid Ramsey censer found in Whittlesea Mere and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.³ The first censer (Pl. xii, A) was found about two feet under the floor in the chancel of Limpsfield Church, Surrey,⁴ during the restoration of the church in 1871.⁵ It is about 5.25 in. (13.5 cm.) high by 4.05 in. (10.3 cm.) broad. It is of bronze. The cover is hemispherical, with a round turret rather damaged; there are foliate scrolls roughly reminiscent of the Treves censer and the British Museum cover. The bowl has no openwork; round the edge is a band of roughly engraved saltires in almost square panels. A date about 1200 seems possible.

The second to be illustrated was found at Pershore, Worcestershire, and is now in the British Museum (Pl. xii, B).⁶ It is of bronze, 7.9 in. (20.2 cm.) high, and 4.85 in. (12.2 cm.) broad. The cover is almost a hemisphere, with semicircular arches, below which are five square windows, the three inner being surmounted by three would-be circular ones. The ornament between them consists of crude engraved lines and along the foot a band of saltires in panels, as we saw in the preceding example. The spandrels each have one window similar to those described. On the top rises a round turret surmounted by a bird with a loop for suspension on its back. From the foot of the turret there project four gabled buildings, each with two irregular rectangular windows. There are three loops on the cover and bowl, to take the chains. The bowl,

¹ W. W. Watts, *Old English Silver*, p. 12, London, 1924.

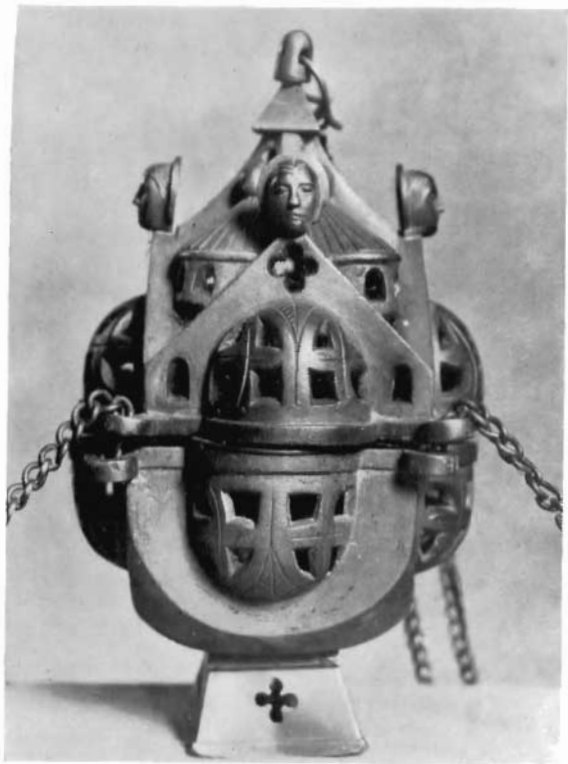
² *ibid.*, p. 13.

³ *ibid.*, pp. 116, 117.

⁴ I have to thank Mr. G. C. Druce, F.S.A., for very kindly sending me photographs and slides of the censer.

⁵ *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, v, p. 285.

⁶ *Proc. Soc. Antiq.*, xi, p. 26, in which two others are illustrated having close affinities with the Pershore example. One was found under the modern portion of the parish church of Ripple, Worcs.; the other is a cover only, from Langwith, Derbyshire.



A. CENSER. CATHEDRAL TREASURY, MINDEN.
(Photo : Dr. F. Stœdtner, Berlin.)



B. CENSER. HILDBURGH COLLECTION.





B. CENSER FOUND AT PERSHORE, WORCESTER-
SHIRE. BRITISH MUSEUM.

which is considerably damaged, has a band of saltires within panels, as on the cover, and below that is a crude linear pattern looking like an attempt at concentric semicircles. There is a high foot with a rough engraved zigzag ornament. There are clear affinities with the Limpsfield censer, and the same tentative date may be assigned to it.

Having passed in review a number of typical examples of Romanesque censers, we must consider what light they throw upon the question of the provenance and date of architectural censers as a type, and in particular of the cover which forms the subject of this paper. It must be confessed that the paper serves to raise problems rather than to solve them.

Representations of Romanesque censers on other works of art in such detail as to be a real guide, are not numerous; in fact the two Maestricht reliefs mentioned above are the only good examples which I have found. The surviving censers do not explain themselves. Few are inscribed at all, and none of our period is signed in such a way that the maker unmistakably declares himself. Nor does the locality help us. The censer was an easily portable object, and the twelfth century was a cosmopolitan age; craftsmen travelled from one country to another. So that, although, as we have seen, several continental censers are associated with Romanesque churches, and some English examples have been found on English sites, there is no certainty that these places were the places of origin. I do not know of any censers having been found on the site of workshops, or with objects which would give a clue to their date.

Roger of Helmershausen, the identification of whom with the monk Theophilus is usually accepted, has four surviving pieces of metalwork¹ ascribed to him, but no censer can be traced to his hand. Where, then, are we to turn in our attempt to find some firm ground?

The twelfth century was a period in which cast

¹ G. Lehnert, *Illustrierte Geschichte des Kunstgewerbes*, i, p. 241, Berlin, 1905.

bronze was much in favour, and in which sculpture in metal was developed to a high degree, and characterized by considerable boldness of design and execution. The art of the lower Rhine and North Germany generally maintained their former activity, and their influence must have been definitely predominant. With the beginning of the twelfth century we see the rise of the Meuse valley as a centre of metal-working.¹ Reiner of Huy, the earliest of the Lorraine craftsmen, made the bronze font, already mentioned, at Liège, perhaps in the second decade of the century, and we have seen that he has been plausibly put forward as the author of the Lille censer. A somewhat similar circumstance is noted by Dr. Egid Beitz in connexion with the great Treves censer.² A cast bronze font, now lost, known as the Folkardus font, set up in front of the summer refectory of the Maximinstift, and assignable on grounds of style to the twelfth century, was made by Gozbertus and Absalon. We noted that the name Gozbertus occurred on the censer itself, and he may possibly have been the author. Now, if we compare once again the Treves censer with the British Museum cover,³ we shall see at least points of resemblance and, I think, what may be called affinities. The architecture is noticeably similar; the conical turrets and the windows are in the same style. The iconography and costume of the figures, and the scroll-work, suggest a similar provenance and authorship. While, therefore, recognizing our lack of direct evidence and the considerable obscurity of the whole subject, we may perhaps suggest that our censer-top either came from this northern Lower-Rhine and Meuse-valley area, or was made by a craftsman from that region.

¹ M. Molinier in A. Michel, *Histoire de l'Art*, ii, p. 861, points out that the limitations of frontier did not operate then, as they did later, and that one bank of the Rhine did not necessarily show a style clearly distinguishable from that on the other. It was common for artists from one country to travel to another, to execute orders for patrons such as the Abbot Suger of St. Denis.

² *Das Heilige Trier*, p. 26. Augsburg, 1927.

³ We have noticed similarities also with the censers in the Copenhagen Museum. These have not hitherto been published, and, as far as I am aware, no theories have been advanced about their provenance. I do not propose to anticipate any work that may be done on them, but I am glad to have been able to illustrate them.

When we come to the problem of dating the censers, we are hardly on surer ground. We saw that in the case of the Canterbury censer widely divergent dates ranging from the Anglo-Saxon period to 1200 could be suggested. With the Romanesque censers we have a smaller range. While we cannot establish a direct connexion between surviving censers and the *Diversarum Artium Schemata*, we have seen that the general principles laid down in that work follow or are followed by the Romanesque censers which we have been considering. From Theophilus' treatise¹ it seems clear that the author was a German and that the objects which he described belonged to the eleventh and twelfth centuries.² We may return for a moment to the Lille censer, the date of which has been the subject of controversy. Von Falke, accepting it as the work of Reiner of Huy, dated it about 1120.³ M. Théodore of Lille, not accepting the authorship of Reiner, places it in the second half of the twelfth century.⁴ Dr. Egid Beitz who favours Reiner, points out that the censer may be separated in time by some decades from the St. Bartholomew font at Liège, which may date from the second decade of the twelfth century.⁵ Reiner in all probability died soon after 1150, so that a date about the middle of the century appears to be indicated. It seems probable that a later date must be assigned to the architectural group which we have been studying. In the British Museum cover we might point to the increased realism and naturalism, as seen in the greater boldness and vigour of the animals; the occurrence of the symbols of the Evangelists I am inclined to think a late feature. It is true that we cannot safely suppose that the architectural form at any point of time superseded or

¹ It was consulted by curious and learned persons in the sixteenth century, but it was only in the eighteenth century that it began to receive serious attention (E. Molinier, *Histoire des Arts* iv, *L'Orfèvrerie Religieuse et Civile*, p. 141). The oldest MS. is in the Grand-ducal Library, Wolfenbüttel, and is of the twelfth century.

² This lends probability to Ilg's theory that he was identical with Roger of Helmershausen.

³ In G. Lehnert, *Illustrierte Geschichte des Kunstgewerbes*, i, p. 265.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 416.

⁵ The old precise date given for the font, 1112-1113, no longer holds good, and the period 1112-42 must be substituted.

displaced the spherical form. Architecture, as we have seen, appeared in varying degrees on different specimens. In the Freising and Munich censers, on the one hand, the scheme is entirely architectural; no spherical part can be seen. In the two censers found in England at Limpsfield and Pershore it is reduced to a minimum.¹ There are indications that the architectural scheme grew less elaborate during the thirteenth century; in Germany during that century and the following, the simpler form seems to have been again in vogue.² On a censer-top in Limoges champlevé enamel,³ dug up at Barnham, Sussex, which was shown to the Society of Antiquaries two years ago by Mr. Ralph Griffin, and dated probably thirteenth century, two rows of key-hole openings in the middle tiers are perhaps a suggestion of an architectural scheme, but no more. There seems to be a case, therefore, for suggesting that the architectural censers which we have considered were produced some time towards the end of the twelfth century and in the beginning of the thirteenth, and that the British Museum censer-top may reasonably be dated about 1200, perhaps before rather than after.

The object of this paper is strictly that indicated by its title, namely, to draw attention to a fine and hitherto undescribed work of art in our national collection, and it is to that extent unambitious. But I am fully conscious of, and indeed oppressed by the difficulty of the subject of censers, arising from the lack of evidence which would help us to determine provenances and dates. If I can induce others to criticize my theories, and to fill in the gaps in my researches, I shall feel rewarded.

¹ They are, of course, much less elaborate productions. Not every censer would be a masterpiece; these two, though not unpleasing in form, are crude in execution.

² J. Taverer Perry, *Dinanderie*, p. 131, London, 1910.

³ *Antiq. Journ.*, x, p. 242. Another example from Auxerre Museum, is shown in Rupin, *L'Œuvre de Limoges*, p. 536, fig. 600.