

20 Years in Emigration

Emil Delmár and the Disintegration of His Collection

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This study – based on contemporary sources – describes the disintegration of Emil Delmár's art collection and gives a short review on its amassment, on the history of its disintegration, as well as on Emil Delmár as the collector. As mentioned in the title, this paper concentrates on the 20 years (c. 1939–1959) that Delmár spent in emigration and on the masterpieces of his medieval and modern art collection of sculptures and applied artefacts that were sent abroad. The study does not cover the artefacts that remained in Hungary during the years of emigration. Although some earlier studies¹ had already been published on this subject discussing this topic in part or entirely, some newly discovered documents and other sources I identified during my scholarship in Berne and London expanded the existing information on the disintegration of the collection and on the role of the owner, Emil Delmár in this process.

The findings of my research give a more subtle interpretation to several sources I consulted during my study such as a correspondence between Emil Delmár and C.C. Oman and the documents of the Stora Art Galleries and Schaeffer Galleries. In the paper below, a brief outline will be provided of the collection itself, of its history, of the collector, Emil Delmár and on the circumstances of collecting in Hungary in the first half of the 20th century. Although we only have a rudimentary knowledge on how the collection came into existence, the disintegration of the collection is much better documented as several files, letters and other sources shed light on the various details of the decomposition.

In Hungary, the collection of artefacts was a privilege of the wealthy high class, a narrow strata of society comprised of the historical aristocracy and the church. Only they could afford such a “vanity” as to collect on a large scale until the end of the 19th century. However, the economic boom established a new class of power and wealth: the bourgeois as a social group emerged at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. The newly rich class of the bourgeois started collecting and took over the leading role in artefact collection from the aristocracy and the church. It was not only a symbol of prosperity but a gesture of self-definition as well, insofar as collection became a means to acquire and validate a position in high society. Thus, the bourgeois regarded collecting as a primary instrument to demonstrate their similarity to the historical high class and it also served as a kind of legitimacy and expression of continuity. This is especially true of the middle and upper class citizens of Jewish origin, many among whom in-

vested heavily into high value art pieces such as Mór Lipót Herzog, the Hatvany family, Marcell Nemes (Marcel von Nemes) and Adolf Kohner. The family company owner dr. Emil Delmár (1876–1959), subject of this research paper was a typical member of this social circle.

Delmár's family was originally a seed merchant family, but later on they founded a shipping and dredging company on the Danube along with a construction business, which earned their wealth and status in the Hungarian upper-middle class or even high class. These circumstances provided the necessary background and the funds essential to cover the material costs of Delmár's growing collection of artefacts. An important factor in tracing the history of this family – a history also representative of their social circle – is their change of name. The head of the family altered the surname of his sons from Hirsch to „Delmár” in 1889. His agenda was to help his sons (Tivadar and Emil), since an easily pronounceable surname, which might as well be a real Hungarian name, was necessary for their international trips, business and lifestyle both in Hungary and abroad. As a matter of fact, the change of surname was an obvious example and act of free willed assimilation of the Jewish into Hungarian society. At the same time, it forecast the life and destiny of Emil Delmár who boasted a perfect command of several languages, had a Doctor of Law degree and began collecting around 1900 during his travel to the East.

“Emil Delmár's collection was almost equal in magnitude and quality to the Herzog and Hatvany collections. Delmár's collection of sculptures was outstanding in Hungary, in the realm of small bronzes and big statuettes of the Middle Ages” – as László Mravik states in his study.² Due to the special profile of his collection, Delmár can be regarded as an innovator among collectors. In Hungary, only a few earlier forerunners, such as Miklós Jankovich, István Marczibányi, Gábor Fejérváry, Ferenc Pulszky, István Ferenczy and the Andrássy family shared the same collecting profile as Delmár. Delmár had initially collected Oriental artefacts but he gave away most of these objects



Fig. 1. Room for Statues. Budapest, Apartment of Emil Delmár. 1930s.
Photo: Forster National Center of Cultural Heritage, Photo Collection, 93036

by 1910 due to a change in his collecting profile and started focusing on acclaimed European medieval and modern sculptures (Fig. 1.), masterpieces of applied art and he purchased a few paintings as well. This special concept prevailed as his focus in the following 25 years. It is crucial to emphasise this because these European objects could be sold abroad easily, while Hungarian pieces were difficult or even impossible to trade – therefore, at the time of their purchase profitability was certainly not Delmár's real motivation. Apart from his international collection mentioned above, some Hungarian paintings, graphics, ceramics, old furniture and Transylvanian carpets also belonged to Delmár.

During that era, the relationship between collectors and museums was sound. Delmár did not only co-operate with Hungarian and foreign museologists and art dealers, but also was on friendly terms with many of them. These friendly and trustful links would become very important later. During this period, Wilhelm von Bode exerted a major influence on Hungarian museologists like Károly Csányi by helping him shape his collection. Delmár also shared Bode's ideas and concepts about how to create and arrange a collection and this was reflected in Delmár's collecting habit as well. Delmár took an active part in the work of the Association of Art Museums' Friends and from 1926 he became the vice president of the organisation. As a member of the association with other fellow collectors he had acquired several objects of value and he also donated different art pieces to Hungarian museums. These museums organised several exhibitions from Delmár's private collection many times in Hungary and abroad as well.³ The collection's fame ensured a prominent position for Delmár in the Hungarian museum world, which helped him to establish new connections and to increase the reputation of the collection even more. Delmár's collection was famous for another reason as well, as he travelled widely and purchased his unique art pieces at high profile auctions of outstanding international collections like the Oppenheim's, Dirksen's, Figdor's, Kauffmann's, Pannwitz's, and so on. These art pieces had already been well known in the international community of scholars and museologists. Several studies were also published at that time about Delmár's spatial art collection by museologists and Delmár kept a precise account of who wrote what and when about his collection. The list of prominent scholars such as Giovanni Mariacher, Wilhelm von Bode, Georg Swarzenski, Leo Planiscig, and Simon Meller etc. were given by Delmár in his letter to the Kunstmuseum Bern.

There are many reasons for a collection to fall apart, for example, the owner might sell it due to financial problems, they might pass away giving way for an auction sale, or the collection might become a museum, too. Another probable reason of disintegration can be the donation, deposit or sale to a museum. All these solutions are the "peaceful" turns in the life of a collection. However, external, so-called "violent" events can also play an important role in the life cycle of a collection. For example, during the 20th century, the activity of the private collectors and collecting was interrupted by the major historical events and the crucial changes in both the international and Hungarian political scene: the world wars, the economic crisis and the subsequent arrival of Socialism. Many art pieces disappeared, got ruined or got stolen. Many of the remarkable private collections in Hungary fell victim to these historical circumstances, among which the Second World War and its consequences were the most devastating. These

events forced collectors to flee into exile, to give up collecting and sell their art pieces and collections or leave it as a deposit in a museum. This was especially true of the still existing collections of the aristocracy and the industrialist barons, company owners and businessmen of Jewish origin.

Although the various pieces of the former Delmár collection are not together any more as a whole, they are of great interest as many are still well documented and kept available in museums, private collections and some of them are in the possession of Delmár's heirs in Hungary and abroad. After the first "Jewish Law" was adopted in 1938, limiting the proportion of Jewish people in white collar and intellectual jobs, Delmár realised he was no longer safe in Hungary. Thanks to his good Hungarian and foreign connections he rescued a part of his collection by transporting the art pieces to Switzerland. He contacted art historians, museum directors and friends to make the process as smooth and safe as possible. Several letters, postcards, transport documents and customs forms survived proving that he conducted a conscious and systematic rescue program. By that time, Delmár was already in his sixties, but he embarked upon saving his collection with the ardour of a young man. The smaller art pieces left Hungary first, for a number of reasons. First of all, they were easy to transport, but transport was not the only obstacle, as Delmár had to make sure that the most precious objects went to a safe place. Secondly, Delmár knew very well that he would have to leave Hungary soon and he would have to make a living and ensure his existence abroad. Under such circumstances, the easily marketable and most profitable objects were rescued first, as these artefacts had to raise the interest of the museums and private art collectors of the Western world (Europe and the USA). Thirdly, the masterpieces displayed at international exhibitions had already gained reputation, and first class collectors and museums were prone to purchasing them. Finally the above mentioned, well-known art historians wrote studies about these pieces as well, which increased their fame and value. To sum up at this point, internationally known pieces were transported first as they could change ownership more easily. Delmár had started to use his social capital to transport the objects to save them from loss and then to sell them to an "appropriate" institute or collector, for an "appropriate" amount of money – this was mainly due to his financial difficulties and it also showed the value of the collection.

There was a correspondence between Emil Delmár and Charles Chichele Oman who worked for the Department of Metalwork of the V&A Museum. In 1938 Delmár wrote: „I hope you will remember me and our personal meetings and correspondence of the late years... I would like to compare my model piece with the silver basin in the possession of Earl Ilchester... The sole intention is the comparison – which would certainly interest you too – after which the basin is to be sent to the Museum in Bern, Switzerland, where I am asked to make a loan exhibition... Through the intermediary of a Hungarian lady scientist I was in correspondence with him (Earl of Ilchester) too, and I know he will be also very pleased by this proposition.”⁴ In a letter, in which the Earl Ilchester was asked to send the basin to the Museum, Oman wrote that “Dr. Delmar is a quite well-known figure in Budapest, and is in fact the President of the Hungarian National Art Collections Fund.”⁵

The Earl of Ilchester agreed to bring his ewer and basin to London for this purpose and Delmár's basin (Fig. 2.) was sent to the V&A. In July, 1938 Oman wrote to

Delmár that “Lord Ilchester invited me to come to his house this morning to see his ewer and basin...” Then, the comparison was done by Oman and he „Came to the conclusion that both pieces were by the same hand. The differences between them seemed to me to be such as might be expected when an artist sets out to improve his preliminary sketch and to carry it out in a different material... he (Lord Ilchester) told me that Paul de Lamerie had made a lot of plates for his ancestors, which strengthens the case supposing he may have been responsible for both plaque and basin.”⁶ In 1939

Delmár wrote that it had not been possible for him to go to London as “The exposition of a part of my collection opening probably in a month or so in the “Kunstmuseum” Bern, I think it would be of importance to show the Lamerie plate, too... If possible to forward the parcel... to the Kunstmuseum Bern.”⁷ Later on, in two of his studies, Delmár acknowledged C.C. Oman’s expertise and expressed his gratitude for providing information concerning three of his studies. This was not the end of their connection and correspondence: it continued in 1950, but this would be discussed in detail later in this research paper.

It is still unsure when Delmár left Hungary for good, but he had been travelling widely in Europe since 1938. He was on friendly terms with Conrad von Mandach the then director of the Kunstmuseum Bern, and their relationship developed throughout the years. Thanks to this friendship, “Emil Delmár... has given [the museum] a valuable collection of works of art on loan, which will be exhibited in [the] Museum in a separate room.”⁸ While the collection was hosted in the museum, Professor Hahnloser at the Bernese University organized a seminar for the exhibited artefacts.

Still in 1938 Emil Delmár received the export licence for 60 sculptural and applied art objects. The licence was issued by Count István Zichy the then director of the Hungarian Historical Museum and allowed the masterpieces to be sent to an exhibition in Berne.⁹ The official exhibition catalogue mentions 61 pieces and even other documents and sources prove that much more objects left Hungary. In 1939 Delmár got an export licence for other 35 pieces from Hungary. It is still uncertain what the exact number of art pieces was as the sources contradict each other and even new objects turn up from time to time.

This is the very case with the old Islamic textiles from Egypt, for example. These textiles had been on loan and exhibited in the Staatliches Kunstgewerbemuseum in Vienna but in 1938 Delmár asked Richard Ernst, the director to send them to Berne. Before the transportation Ernst mentioned in a letter that these “wonderful” textiles complemented their late antique and medieval collection very well. These textiles were purchased by Delmár probably in Egypt during a business trip in the 1930s. It is unsure when they arrived in Berne but they were certainly exhibited in 1947 under the



Fig. 2. *Dish*. Cleveland, Museum of Art. C. 1725-50. Photo: Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Cat. 15.

working title *Altislamische Stoffe des 9-12. Jahrhunderts*. It was a real discovery to find the photocopies and the relating documents about these art pieces as they were not mentioned in Hungarian sources.

To return to the matter of exporting, all the art pieces were preserved and exhibited in the Kunstmuseum until the end of the Second World War. The export licence was continuously extended by Delmár's lawyer. In a file addressed to the Minister of Religion and Education he mentioned Delmár's high income, apartment of great value and 114 works of art which were on loan in the Hungarian Historical Museum as warranties. The value of the objects transported abroad was only a fragment of Delmár's fortune. Delmár's lawyer also mentioned two acclaimed art historians, Sándor Mihalik and Elemér Varju, who had written a letter to express their appreciation for Delmár's activity as both a historian and art historian. This also showed the good relationship Delmár had with other art professionals, which helped to extend the export licence. Thanks to this friendly relationship, Delmár could organize to leave the bigger part of his collection on loan, which was quite complicated as the museums' depositories were full of artefacts of private collectors. Finally, when there was no more demand for his art pieces, Delmár left Hungary at the end of the war or some time later. Unfortunately, plenty of documents were lost from this era, which is why we do not know what happened exactly.

Delmár left Europe in 1941 and went to Cuba first as a riverbed dredging advisor, working for the Cuban government first. Later that year, he settled in the US where he was an internee just because being a citizen of a hostile country. Later on he became a volunteer assistant of a cultural committee. „The Committee on the Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas of The American Committee of Learned Societies was established... in 1943. Expert scholars, art historians, collectors, and artists – the most renowned in the world – aided the committee in compiling lists and preparing maps of the most important monuments and works of art to be protected. A master index of all works in occupied countries was developed, as well as an extensive photo archive collection.” Emil Delmár volunteered for the Committee alongside with Charles de Tolnay, Sigfried Giedion, Millard Meiss, Erwin Panofsky, Lionello Venturi and many others who were called “The Monuments Men”. Delmár knew quite a few monuments of Hungary as he had taken part in special “monument tours” with his museologist friends such as Anna Zádor and Edith Hoffmann in 1938-39. Probably, he got his US citizenship for this “volunteer work” which might have helped him later to sell his artefacts.

While his collection was falling apart, Delmár started his work in the field of art history. During his emigration in the 1940–50s he wrote a book and several essays for *The Burlington Magazine*, *The Art Quarterly*, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and so forth. He published some studies about his (former) art pieces as follows: *A Model by Paul de Lamerie*, “*The Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis*” by Danese Cattaneo, *A Venetian Embroidery of 1517*. The latter ones had been published in 1945 just before the transportation of objects to New York. It is most probable that the studies were meant to call attention to the artefacts and the collection. The *Notes on Contributors* in *The Art Quarterly* of 1947 states the following: “Emil Delmar, whose field of special study is the art of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance, is the author of a book on Hungarian medieval

art in the collections in Switzerland, which has established his reputation as a scholar of great consciousness and acute critical sense. The same qualities are revealed in his study of "*The Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis*" by *Danese Cattaneo* which offers a solution of a problem previously discussed by such scholars as L. Planiscig, formerly Curator at the Vienna Museum of Art, and J. G. Phillips, Curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art." After the world war, most of the artefacts were shipped from Switzerland to New York between 1945 and 1948. A bit earlier, in 1941 an accredited person had been commissioned by Delmár to deal with his estate and the artefacts on loan in the Hungarian Historical Museum. In 1947 and 1948, the museum was asked to give several pieces to the accredited person such as carpets, Coptic textiles, a papyrus, Italian Renaissance embroideries and several other, smaller works of art so these were also sent to the US – but nothing is known about their fate.

In the 20th century, and especially during and after the war, a lot of works of art and collections got to the US. The awakening desire of collecting and the subsequent collecting fever in society epitomised the status of the US as an emerging world power. The art market was huge and financially viable so it was easy to acquire works of art or entire collections for collectors and/or museums. The circumstances were different in Europe so Delmár sold his art pieces rather in the US through art dealers and galleries, notably the Raphael Stora Art Galleries and the Schaeffer Galleries. These galleries made art business and had good connections with Europe. This must have been quite beneficial for Delmár since some of his objects were still in Europe. We can only guess which art pieces Delmár kept for himself. Many objects of his collection are on sale at auction houses while some are absolutely unknown to the scholarly research. Some well-known and remarkable art pieces displayed in the *Kunst und Kunstgewerbe* exhibition are the following. The following artworks of the former Delmár's Collection are housed in reputable museums around the world.

Current location: Belvedere, Vienna

1. Artist: The Master of Heiligenkreuz
(was of French origin)

Title: *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*, c. 1415/20 (Fig. 3.)

Medium: Tempera on gold ground panel

Classification: Painting

Dimensions: 21,5×18,5 cm

Acquisition: sold by the Galerie Sanct Lucas, Vienna, 1995

Provenance: Delmár Emil (Budapest)

Becker Collection (Dortmund),
with Hans M. Cramer (the Hague)

German private collection



Fig. 3. The Master of Heiligenkreuz:
Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine. C. 1415/20.
Photo: Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Cat. 45

Current location: Kunstmuseum, Berne

2. Artist: unidentified, Southern German, beginning of 16th century

Title: *Saint Bishop*

Medium: wooden, painted

Classification: Sculpture

Dimensions: 89,5 cm (height)

Acquisition: Gift of Emil Delmár, 1956

Current location: The Wallace Collection, London

3. Artist: Henry Bone, after the painting of Sir Thomas Lawrence, English

Title: *Miniature of Francis Charles Seymour-Conway, 3rd Marquis of Hertford (1772-1842)*, 1824

Medium: painted in enamel on copper, in velvet and ormolu bordered frame

Dimensions: 9,3×7 cm, 18,5×15,5 cm (with frame)

On view: Boudoir Cabinet

Acquisition: Delmár sold the miniature at Sotheby's in 1956

Provenance: Collection of Count Berchtold, Budapest

Emil Delmár, Budapest

The miniature depicts the grandfather of Sir Richard Wallace whose wife bequeathed the collection to the British nation in 1897, so it might not be a coincidence to send this piece to an auction sale held in England.

Current location: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

4. Artist: unidentified, Italian or Northern European, 15th century

Title: *Saint Christopher* (Fig. 4.), with inscription on the foot: 1407

Medium: metal (bronze)

Classification: Sculpture

Dimensions: 20,3×11×6 cm

On view: Italy 1400-1500/Renaissance - 206

Acquisition: from Emil Delmár, 1951

Provenance: István Marczibányi (Budapest)

István Rakovszky (Budapest)

Emil Delmár

It was one of the most unique pieces of the Delmár collection. It was displayed in many exhibitions worldwide as well as many scholars publishing a study on this subject, disputing about its attribution.



Fig. 4. Saint Christopher. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. 1407.

Photo: Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Cat. 7

5. Artist: unidentified, Augsburg

Title: *Pendant*, half-figure of Madonna and Child in high relief on crescent

Medium: metal, silver gilt

Classification: Silver

Dimensions: 5 cm (DM)

On view

Acquisition: Gift of Emil Delmár, in honour of dr. Swarzenski's 75th birthday to the museum, 1951.

Swarzenski was one of the scholars who published a study on Delmár's statue of Saint Christopher in 1929. He was the director of the art museums in Frankfurt and his field was medieval and modern art. He fled to the United States in 1938 and became the acquisitions curator of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston until 1957. So it was probably not a coincidence that the statue of Saint Christopher was acquired by the museum during his curatorship. At the same year Delmár gave the pendant as a gift so they might have known and respected each other.

Current location: Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington D.C.

6. Artist: unidentified, Byzantine

Title: *Virgin and Child*, Hodegetria type, second half of the 10th century (Fig. 5.)

Medium: ivory (carving)

Dimensions: 12,6×11,7 cm

Acquisition: through R. Stora and Company, New York, 1946

Current location: Indianapolis Museum of Art

7. Artist: Master of the Orléans Tryptich, Limoges

Title: *Tryptich: Circumcision, Epiphany, Presentation in the Temple*, 16th century

Medium: enamel on copper, pen, ink

Dimensions: 21,2×36 cm



Fig. 5. Virgin and Child, Hodegetria type. Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington D.C. Second half of the 10th century. Photo: Kunst und Kunsngewerbe, Cat. 2

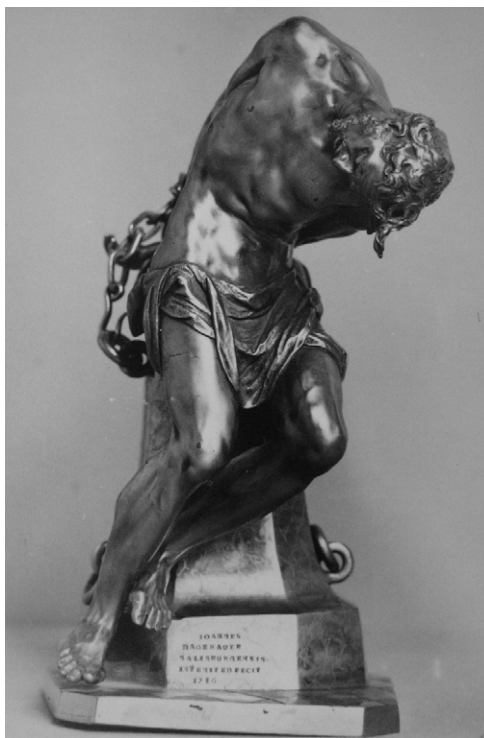


Fig. 6. Johann Baptist Hagenauer: Christ at the Column. Cleveland, Museum of Art. 1756. Photo: Kunst und Kunsngewerbe, Cat. 13

Current location: Museum of Art, Cleveland

8. Artist: Johann Baptist Hagenauer, Austrian

Title: *Christ at the Column*, 1756, signed: „Joannes Hagenauer Salisburgensis inventited fecit 1756” (Fig. 6.)

Medium: gilt bronze

Classification: Sculpture

Dimensions: 19,6×10,2×11,3 cm

Acquisition: through Raphael Stora and Company, New York, 1953

Delmár wrote some lines about the sculpture in a letter to William M. Milliken to the then director of the museum in 1953 as follows: „... I was very happy to know that the Hagenauer Christ on the Pillory, one of my favourite pieces, will have a lasting place in your museum, especially since such an important part of what I was able to save from my collection is now there... It is without doubt the very best work of the master, the only one he executed in gilt bronze... I am still very proud of the acquisition, for I bought it against common doubt... Since I acquired it in 1913 it was requested for every exhibition of Austrian, and even German art. I must tell you at this time a very witty remark Planiscig made about the piece. He said: the only defect of the piece is that it is fully signed and dated. Were this not so scholars would have long discussions to which of the great Italian sculptors it should be attributed...”

9. Artist: unidentified, English or German, c. 1725-50

Title: *Dish*

Medium: gilt bronze

Dimensions: 31.9×38,5

Acquisition: through Raphael Stora and Company, New York, 1955

It is the „metal plaque” mentioned above relating a correspondence between Delmár and C.C. Oman. In October 1950 Delmár wrote again to Oman the followings: „You kindly asked me some time ago to let you know whenever I „got tired of it”. Now, this not has happened yet, but in a couple of months I shall be 75 years of age, and I should think it more reasonable to dispose of my art objects myself... its rightful place would be in your museum, and in your department...” Oman replied in November to say that he considered Charles Kandler could be the artist rather than Paul de Lamerie. According to Oman „we both agreed that this museum is the proper place for your bronze dish, but he said [the director] it would be impossible for us to pay for it in dollars.” In his reply, Delmár writes „I... preferred to see my piece displayed in your museum.” Finally, probably due to „foreign currency problems” or other reasons not the V&A but the Cleveland Museum of Art purchased the dish.

10. Artist: probably by Alessandro Vittoria, Italian

Title: *Feast of the Gods*, c. 1575

Medium: bronze, dark brown patina

Classification: Sculpture, relief

Dimensions: 34,3×22,2 cm

Acquisition: through Raphael Stora and Company, New York, 1952

Provenance: István Marczibányi (Budapest)

Antal Rakovszky (Budapest)

Dr. Emil Delmár

Scholars are still arguing about the attribution formerly given by Leo Planiscig. He attributed the relief to Danese Cattaneo (Venetian, 16th century) and claimed that „... the craftsmanship of the relief in the Delmar collection is superior...” This attribution was also accepted by Delmár who also published an article on this subject.

11. Artist: Ludwig Krug, German

Title: *Adam and Eve*, 1518

Medium: brass

Classification: Sculpture, plaque

Dimensions: 12,7×10,8 cm

Acquisition: through Raphael Stora and Company, New York, 1948

Provenance: Abbey of Klosterneuburg (near Vienna)

Emil Delmár

Stora, the art dealer wrote a letter to Helen S. Foote (Cleveland Museum of Art) in which he states the following: „Mr. Milliken asked me to let you know that I am shipping to the museum two plaques: one in bronze by Ludwig Krug, signed L. K., and dated 1515, representing Adam and Eve. On the reverse is the date 1518, which is the date of the casting...” Delmár published a study on this plaque in 1950 and wrote again to C.C. Oman who had contributed an appendix to it. Apart from the four stone models, there are two pieces in the Cleveland Museum of Art which were the gifts of Emil Delmár to the museum as the silver *Scissors Etui* made in the Netherlands, c.1600 and a *Chalice Cover* (?) from Italy dated to 1587.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection

12. Artist: unidentified, probably Bohemian

Title: *Chasuble*, with two orphreys (that have now been removed), early 15th century (?) (Fig. 7.)

Medium: embroidered, silk and metallic threads on Italian velvet (chasuble) and linen, parchment and paper (orphreys)

Dimensions: 74 cm (greatest width of chasuble); 52,5×21,1 cm; 42,7×19,8 cm (orphreys)



Fig. 7. Chasuble. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters. 14th century (?).

Photo: Kunst und Kunstgewerbe, Cat. 48

Acquisition: through Schaeffer Galleries, New York, 1961

There was a correspondence between Delmár, Schaeffer and Margaret Freeman, the then curator of The Cloisters, about the price of the piece. Delmár had wanted to sell it to the Museum for \$6,000 but it was acquired from the estate for much less in 1961 (as Delmár passed away in 1959).

Salton private artcollection, New York (of coins, medals and plaquettes)

13. Artist: unidentified, Nuremberg (?)

Title: *Portrait of a Patrician*, 16th century (Fig. 8.)

Medium: (oval) wax medallion in fire-gilded bronze case

Dimensions: 9,5×72 cm, 15,7×9 cm (with case)

Provenance: Spitzer Collection, Paris, 1890, V, p. 191, no. 10

Spitzer Collection, Paris, 1893, II, no. 2959, pl. LVI

Lanna Collection

Pick Collection, Budapest

Delmár Collection, Budapest



Fig. 8. Portrait of a Patrician. Salton Collection. 16th century.

Photo: Kunst und Kungsgewerbe, Cat. 42

Some other pieces were housed in US museums and sold to private collectors in the US and Europe, but little is known about them still and further investigation is required. Some sculptures of the collection, still in Berne, were sent to an auction sale at Kunsthaus Lempertz in Cologne in 1956, while some other kind of pieces were sent to Sotheby's in 1956. It is still uncertain whether they were sold or not, and who the present owner is. The only thing that can be taken for granted is that there was a high profile auction process for the Delmár pieces held at Sotheby's. Emil Delmár passed away in 1959 and executors of his will continued selling the pieces of the remaining collection. They were in correspondence with the Bernese Kunstmuseum to accomplish Delmár's will. One of the executors wrote that „you are now instructed to ship the bust of the bearded man and the two Persian bowls which you are holding in the museum to the London auction house of Sotheby and Co... we would like these objects, if possible, included in a late June catalogue...” Earlier, in 1960 the executors sent a letter to the dealer Hans Schaeffer as „... We are in the process of inventorying his [Delmár's] estate and we would greatly appreciate it if you could furnish us with a list of the property held by you for Dr. Delmar.” Schaeffer replied two days later in a letter claiming that „... We are holding for the estate of dr. Delmar: two small ivory altars..., one chasuble with embroidered orphreys, still at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and one Italian embroidery (slightly damaged)...” The research is still unfinished and a wider and deeper investigation could reveal the missing links.

It is beyond doubt that Delmár had a perfect sense for collecting. His choices and his artefacts stand the test of time. They are housed by the world's leading museums and private art collections or displayed in big exhibitions worldwide. The collection's life and the migration of objects bear the traces of the change in the structure of society and collecting and reveal the interlocks of museologists and collectors to the present day. Delmár exploited the collecting policy of the museums in the US, but instead of continuing collecting, he sold his beloved objects and made sure they find their way to a safe haven.

Notes

- 1 My earlier articles about Emil Delmár: Andrea RÓZSAVÖLGYI, "Delmár Emil műgyűjtő művészettörténeti kapcsolatai," (The Private Collector Emil Delmár's Connection with Art History) in *Ars Perennis*, ed. Anna Tüskés (Budapest: CentrArt, 2010), 177–181.; Andrea RÓZSAVÖLGYI, "Delmár Emil magángyűjteménye svájci források tükrében," (Delmar Emil's Private Collection According to Swiss Sources) *Lymbus* 7 (2009): 221–230.; Andrea RÓZSAVÖLGYI, "A Delmár-gyűjtemény felbomlása," (The Disintegration of the Delmar Collection) *Lymbus* 8 (2010): 271–282.
- 2 László Mravik, "Budapest műgyűjteményei a két világháború között" (Art Collections in Budapest Between the World Wars), *Budapesti Negyed* 32–33 (2001) Nr. 2–3: 176.
- 3 *A Szent György céh kisplasztikai kiállítása (Exhibition of Small Sculptures organized by the St. George Guild)*, ed. Jenő Radisics (Budapest, 1912); *Budapesti gyűjtők és művészek érem- és plakettkiállítása (Exhibition of Medals and Plaquettes in Private Ownership and Museums)*, ed. Károly Csányi (Budapest, 1924); *Régi olasz mesterek kiállítása: képek, szobrok magyar magángyűjteményekből 1937–38 (Exhibition of Old Italian Masters. Paintings and Sculptures in Hungarian Private Ownership)*, ed. Elek Petrovics (Budapest: Nemzeti Szalon, 1937); *Kleinkunst der italienischen Renaissance* (Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 1936); *Exposition d'Art autrichien*, ed. Alfred Stix (Paris: Musée du Jeu de Paume de Tuileries, 1937).
- 4 V&A Museum Registry, Nominal File, MA/I/D850, Delmár Dr. Emil, 1938.
- 5 V&A Museum Registry, Nominal File, MA/I/D850, Delmár Dr. Emil, 1938.
- 6 V&A Museum Registry, Nominal File, MA/I/D850, Delmár Dr. Emil, 1938.
- 7 V&A Museum Registry, Nominal File, MA/I/D850, Delmár Dr. Emil, 1938.
- 8 Kunstmuseum Bern, Registry. Ausstellung Sammlung Dr. Delmar Budapest, 1939/1940. File.
- 9 *Kunst und Kunstgewerbe. Sonderausstellung 1939/40*. Kunstmuseum Bern, ed. Conrad von Mandach.

