



Cat. exh. Metropolitan Museum New York 2001  
The Treasury of Basel Cathedral

### 27. Three Spouted Jugs

Basel, 14th century. Cast and engraved pewter: Height (each), 27 cm.

Inscribed: (respectively) s ◊ ◊ PVERORVM; s OLEVMI  
INFIRMOR ◊ ; s CRISMA

Historisches Museum Basel, 1870.443.a.-c.



### 28. Covered Container and a Lid

Basel, 14th century. Cast and engraved pewter: Height (vessel with lid), 28 cm.

Inscribed: (on the vessel) + ◊ + PVERORVM + ; (on the lid)  
+ ◊ + P + ; (on the spare lid); + ◊ + I +

Historisches Museum Basel, 1870.442 (vessel and lid),  
1873.15 (lid).

The 1525 inventory records three cylindrical, lidded containers and the three green glazed tiles that they stood on, as well as three large spouted jugs for holy oil; of this group, the present vessels alone survive.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the Middle Ages, two types of oil figured in Church ritual: holy oil and chrism (holy oil to which balsam had been added). Only a bishop could consecrate the chrism, which was used in administering the Seven Sacraments—particularly at baptisms, confirmations, and ordinations—as well as at the consecration of churches and altars. Holy oil was employed at

lesser rites—as, for example, for the unction of the sick. The distinction is evident in the inscriptions on these vessels: One of the large double-handled jugs is labeled CRISMA, for chrism, while all the others are marked O or OLEVMI for holy oil, which would be used in ministrations for children and for the sick. Both lids are engraved with the head of a crosier—the arms of the Bishopric of Basel. These vessels, which were kept in the Romanesque sacristy, are mentioned in the Cathedral Ceremony Book in connection with the annual rite of consecrating the oils.



PROVENANCE: (jugs and container) 1834, excluded from the allotments to Basel-City and Basel-Country; 1862, given by the government of Basel-City to the Medieval Collection; 1870, accessioned by the Historisches Museum Basel; (spare lid) 1873, gift of S. Merian-Bischoff to the Historisches Museum Basel.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: (27) Burckhardt 1933, no. 22; Reinle 1988, p. 83, fig. 32; Basel 2001, no. 57, 1-3; (28) Basel 2001, no. 58, 1 and 2.

1. Inventory 1525:51-53.

## 29. Ceremonial Staff

Upper Rhineland (?), probably 15th century. Stamped and applied silver, gilded copper, rock crystal, and painted wood: Length, 121 cm.

Historisches Museum Basel, 1870.624.

A ribbon of silver stamped with a vegetal motif, much of it now missing, spirals around the length of the staff, which is capped by two rock-crystal elements set in gilded-copper mounts. In areas, an earlier surface of a slightly lighter green, with a pattern of white dots and horseshoe shapes, is visible. As it is itemized in both the 1511 and the 1525 inventories but not in that of 1477, this ceremonial staff may have entered the Treasury at some point in the intervening years. It is clearly described as “a staff with silver strokes around it, for the *Pedell*, or master of the ceremonies, in large processions” (“ein stock mit sylberen strycken umbwunden fur den pedellen inn den grossen umbgengen”).<sup>1</sup> The *Pedell*, known in Basel Cathedral as the *Dormentarius*, held a priestly position that combined the role of “Sigrist,” or guardian of order, with that of master of the ceremonies, in one person: He called the prelates to services, laid out the liturgical implements, led processions, controlled crowds, and issued important instructions during ceremonies. In more elaborate rites his specific task was distinguished by which of the two official staffs he carried: One was for ordinary occasions (*baculus ferialis*) and the other for more solemn events (*baculus solemnis*). The present staff served the latter function.<sup>2</sup>

PROVENANCE: 1834, excluded from the allotments to Basel-City and Basel-Country; 1870, accessioned by the Historisches Museum Basel.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Burckhardt 1933, no. 49; Reinle 1988, p. 182; Basel 2001, no. 54.

1. Inventory 1525:45; see Egger, in Basel 2001, no. 54.

2. *Ibid.*

