

LAFAYETTE  
ART COLLECTIONS



Louis C. Tiffany & Company (attr.), *Shield of Achilles*, 1876-1880, ca.  
brown and black drawing inks; transparent brown washes on wove paper; graphite, 40  
1/2 x 40 1/2 in.

1997.02

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Found in Kirby Basement during 1997 renovation (may  
have been moved from South College library in 1958 renovation).

Provenance Notes:

Lafayette Art Galleries & Collections | [artgallery@lafayette.edu](mailto:artgallery@lafayette.edu)

Drawing designed by students and executed by Tiffany & Co., New York.

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Provenance:  
Gift of Lafayette students to Professor R.B. Youngman, circa 1876-80.

See object file for additional documentation; condition report, slides with details of drawing;

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Lafayette College Journal

It has been Prof. Youngman's custom to challenge each sophomore class, while they were reading the eighteenth book of the Iliad, to produce a representation of the shield of Achilles, as there described. Three times the proposal has been accepted. The first shield, by a member of the class of '71, is a burlesque and displays much originality.

The second, from the class of '80, is the result of considerable study, and is quite artistic. But the class of '81 has far outdone both the former, and claims the result of its efforts to be the best representation of the famous shield of Achilles existing, or possible, in the present state of knowledge regarding the very ancient Greeks and their customs. When the usual challenge was given to the class, three members, Messrs. Haymaker, Lehman and Scott, appointed themselves a committee to answer it.

They began their work with an extremely careful examination of the text, word by word.

They also read every book they could obtain, which would throw light upon the passage, and profited largely by the results of Schliemann's recent discoveries. Thus, they slowly elaborated a design, which was sketched by Mr. Haymaker, in accordance with the suggestions of the committee. When the sketch was completed, an appeal was made to the class for the financial support in having a finished drawing made by some artist. The appeal was answered generously.

Mr. Whitehouse, who is at the head of Tiffany's designing department, was selected to do the work; a selection which his execution of the work has justified. The drawing is colored to imitate the metallic lustre of the wonderful shield. It is thirty-six inches in diameter (the size of the largest found by S.) and is set in a plain but elegant frame of ebony, about fifty inches square. The figures portrayed are arranged in three departments, indicative of their cosmical character.

- I. The Heavens (the boss of the shield).
- II. The Earth, (the open field of the shield).

Scenes from Town Life  
City at Peace

a. Marriage Festival

b. Dispute between two men  
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City at War

a. A City Besieged

b. An Ambuscade

c. The Fight

Scenes from Country Life

Agricultural

a. Ploughing

b. Reaping

c. Vintage

Grazing

a. Pasturing Cattle

b. A Sheep-walk

c. A Shepherd's Dance

III. The Water (Around the shield runs the strength of Oceanus).

The frame is mounted upon an easel by means of a pivot, which allows it to revolve, thus permitting an easy inspection of the various scenes. The easel is eight feet high and is made of ebony, with ornamentation in gilt lines. Above the frame, on the easel, is a Greek inscription in sunken gilt letters:

“As I shall forge most envied arms, the gaze  
Of wondering ages, and the world's amaze.”

Below the frame is a silver plate bearing the inscription of presentation and the names of the class of '81. The shield was presented to the College, very informally, at last commencement, and has been placed in the reading room.

Heinrich Schliemann; 6 January 1822 – 26 December 1890  
Published about Troy 1868, 1874, 1875,

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