

# The Cloisters, New York

Home

No real pewter, but two interesting paintings



## Joseph Interpreting Dreams

There was no real pewter in evidence at this most charming of Museums, at the very northern tip of Manhattan.

It is part of the Metropolitan

Joseph Interpreting the Dreams of his Fellow Prisoners  
Netherlandish, about 1500.  
Insert: a close-up of the tableware



Museum of Art - and therefore your ticket to one will get you into the other. Catch the M4 on 5th Avenue; or the Red Line, express from 59th and Columbus Circle.

Those of you who know their Bible, and indeed those of you who know Joseph and his Amazing Multi-Coloured Dreamcoat (Music Andrew Lloyd-Webber, Lyrics Tim Rice) will know the story represented here (taken from Genesis, chapter 40). Joseph stands at the left and interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker, who had been imprisoned with him. The butler dreamed of filling Pharaoh's cup from the vine, and the baker dreamed that birds ate bakemeats intended for Pharaoh from a basket on his head. Joseph interprets these dreams to mean that the butler will return to Pharaoh's favour and the baker will be hanged in three days.

It seems to me that the prison was well appointed, the 'prisoners' eating off starched linen and using fine pewter - more like house arrest! But the pewter, as usual when painted by Dutch or Flemish artists, looks substantial and rather fine.

(Cont. page 2)

## St Augustine of Hippo

A man of great learning (born in 354 AD), he is, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica remarkable for what he did and extraordinary for what he wrote. There is a link below to EB's full entry on this remarkable man.

The painting caught my attention for the remarkable reproduction of what clearly are two pewter objects, a goblet and, what, a censor? And is that a third item, a dish perhaps, bottom right?

What is their significance?

If anyone can throw more light on one or both of these paintings - and particularly, the pewter, please let me know.

**Alan Williams**

Photos: Alan Williams



Scenes from the life of St Augustine of Hippo  
South Netherlandish, Flanders, Bruges, about 1490.  
Inset: close up of the pewter, from centre foreground  
of the painting



Joseph

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437034>

St Augustine

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Augustine>

Home

*The Pewterer*, Volume 9, number 2. May 2018.

Editor: Alan Williams

Published by Alan Williams, 14 Dandridge House, 31 Lamb Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6ED and endorsed by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, Pewterers' Hall, Oat Lane, London EC2V 7DE

Articles: copyright the several authors 2018. Get-up: copyright Alan Williams, 2018.

No reproduction without permission. All enquiries to the Editor.