



Chelsea Porcelain Some Recent Additions to the Irwin Untermyer Collection

YVONNE HACKENBROCH Curator, Western European Arts

The great collection of Irwin Untermyer has been growing steadily since the publication of its catalogue of seven volumes in 1956–1969. Mr. Untermyer's frequent gifts to the Museum have included outstanding examples of English furniture and silver and Continental porcelain. The following article concerns his most recent donation—a group of English porcelains, added this spring.

Uncertainty surrounds the initial productions of English porcelain from the Chelsea area of London. As a new enterprise in England, it was first pursued by silversmiths or goldsmiths rather than by professional potters. In 1745, Nicholas Sprimont (1716–1771), a silversmith from Liége, formed a partnership with Charles Gouyn, a French jeweler and china dealer. Their joint directorship lasted only until 1749, when Gouyn withdrew, apparently to set up a rival business.

During their years together, the Chelsea factory produced articles predominantly for domestic use—more specifically for the tea or dinner table. Sprimont is assumed to be the designer of most of these, because he had previously created similar models in the medium of silver. (He had registered his maker's mark in 1743, when he obtained the freedom of Goldsmith's Hall, and he continued as a silversmith at least until 1748.) A white, unmarked sauceboat may serve as a typical example of Sprimont's work (frontispiece). It is modeled in the shape of a shell resting upon smaller shells, coral, and seaweed, with a crayfish serving as the handle.

In this period of joint enterprise with Gouyn, the incised triangle mark was occasionally applied (Figure 1). Since very few of the early Chelsea pieces were decorated, the factory probably had no painter of its own as yet but depended upon outside decorators for the objects requiring color; one of these, another Fleming, Michel-Joseph Duvivier, who came to England in 1743, eventually became the principal painter of the firm.

Contemporary with the Sprimont-Gouyn venture in tableware production, and for the first few years after these two men went their separate ways, decorative figures and groups were also being created in the Chelsea area. They appear to be the work of one independent modeler, sometimes referred to as the girl-in-a-swing master after one of his characteristic white porcelains (Figure 2). We know that he cannot have been a part of Sprimont's company because his paste is softer and somewhat coarser than

FRONTISPIECE

Sauceboat, by Nicholas Sprimont. English (Chelsea), 1745–1749. Porcelain, height 5¾ inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.2. Photograph: Helga Abramczyk

ON THE COVER

Toys in the form of bouquets of flowers, part of a group of Chelsea porcelain given to the Museum by Irwin Untermyer, discussed in the first article. The mixed bouquet is inscribed GAGE D'AMOUR. English (Chelsea), gold anchor period, about 1760. Porcelain, heights 3 1/16 and 25% inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.10ab, 6ab. These Chelsea toys are posed against a background of Spitalfields brocaded silk dating from the mid-eighteenth century. Rogers Fund, 35.47.2a





1. Factory mark during the partnership of Charles Gouyn and Nicholas Sprimont, 1745–1749

2. Girl in a Swing, by the Master of the Mourning Britannia. English, about 1751. Porcelain, height 61/4 inches. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

that used at the factory and because his figure style is markedly different from that of any of the large figures bearing the various Chelsea factory marks. (He himself is never known to have used a mark.) The key piece among these porcelains is the figure of Britannia lamenting the death of Frederick, Prince of Wales, whose death occurred on March 20, 1751 (Figure 3). Britannia, a slender figure of delicate build, is shown in a diagonal position. This pose occurs in three other pieces in the Untermyer collection that we attribute to our master of the mourning Britannia: they are similar in size and have the same kind of irregular base (which all bear slightly incised curved lines possibly intended to indicate vegetation). One of these represents Hercules and Omphale embracing (Figure 6); the others, a pair fitted as candlesticks, feature Ganymede with the Eagle and Europa on the Bull (Figure 7).

Although our anonymous master had a highly personal style, he was nevertheless open to outside influences. For instance, we note a certain affinity between his mourning Britannia displaying the portrait medallion of the Prince of Wales, and the Rijksmuseum's white marble tomb figure by Laurent Delvaux of the mourning Athena leaning on a shield with the arms of the Van der Noot of Ghent. It is likely that both artists derived their compositions from the same engraved design, just as the source of the Hercules and Omphale is an engraving by Laurent Cars (Figures 4, 6), after a painting by François Le Moyne of 1724. This same picture had also been used for a white Vincennes porcelain group (Figure 8). In each instance the modeler felt free to take such liberties as were consistent with his own sensibilities, local taste, and the specific nature of his paste. Lastly, it could be argued that Le Moyne had been aware of the bronze group of Hercules and Iole by the Florentine sculptor Giovanni Battista Foggini, of which we show a terracotta model (Figure 5), and which had served as the inspiration for a white faience group from the Este factory in the northern Italian province of Padova.

Manifestations of technical difficulties with the paste—fire cracks and an opening of the seams between separately modeled parts—can be seen in the pair of mythological candlestick groups. The nearly identical height of this pair and related groups was, no doubt, determined by the size of the

Contents

Chelsea Porcelain Yvonne Hackenbroch	405
Marquetry Furniture by a Brilliant London Master Colin Streeter	418
Florentine Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum Everett Fahy	430
A Comprehensive Architectur Plan for the Second Century Jane Schwarz	al 444

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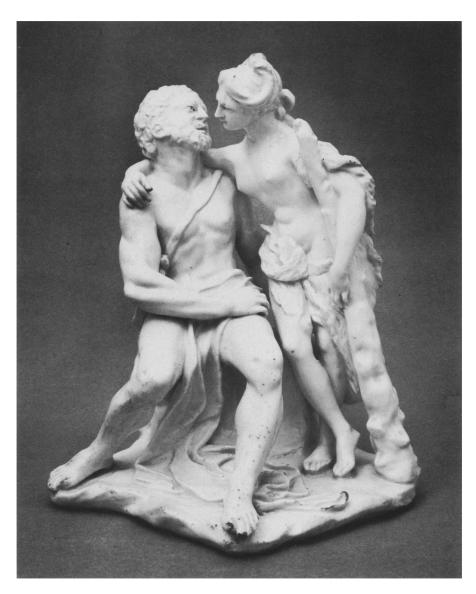
3. The Mourning Britannia, by the Master of the Mourning Britannia. English, 1751. Porcelain, height 7 inches. Collection of Irwin Untermyer, New York

- 4. Hercules and Omphale, by Laurent Cars (1699–1771), French, after the 1724 painting by François Le Moyne (1688–1737). Engraving, 15 x 11 inches. Victoria and Albert Museum, London
- 5. Hercules and Iole, by Giovanni Battista Foggini (1652–1725), Italian (Florentine). Terracotta, height 15½ inches. Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham





6. Hercules and Omphale, by the Master of the Mourning Britannia. English, about 1751. Porcelain, height 8¾ inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.19. Photograph: Helga Abramczyk



kiln; moreover, the mourning Britannia master's paste was not entirely dependable and did not allow the modeling of taller pieces, for fear that they might collapse during firing. All these works must be dated close to 1751, when the figure of the mourning Britannia originated, and after Joseph Willems had embarked upon his activities as modeler in Chelsea, where he created a factory style of very different character.

Sprimont had engaged Willems, a gifted compatriot from Brussels, immediately after he assumed the sole directorship of the factory in 1749. By that time the ever-increasing number of Meissen figures being imported were setting new standards of design and technique, and, for the sake of sound business, it was essential not to restrict the factory's output to the tableware that Sprimont himself could model. Willems was an able sculptor, who had previously worked in the porcelain factory at Tournai, to which he was to return in 1766. Because of his special talents and Continental background and because of Sprimont's fine, hard paste, the Chelsea factory was able to produce large figures that could compete with the for-







eign imports better than the mourning Britannia master's typically English pieces could ever do.

A pair of terracotta models for porcelain, signed and dated by Willems in 1749, shows the pleasing, vigorous style he pursued when he entered the Chelsea factory (Figure 9). Most of his subsequent work in porcelain can be identified: it frequently exhibits Flemish popular imagery, and some of his models are in fact derived from compositions by Rubens and Teniers. Whereas the mourning Britannia master's figures are slender and of a languid, contemplative mood, Willems's are rounded, robust, and often humorous. A typical example is his Dutch dancers—executed during the period of the red anchor factory mark, about 1755—a masterpiece of complementary movements of two well-defined, harmonious figures (Figure 10). Willems's progression continues from this relatively plain form to the

7. Candlestick pair: Ganymede with the Eagle and Europa on the Bull, by the Master of the Mourning Britannia. English, about 1751. Porcelain, heights 6¼ and 7½ inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.20, 21

8. Hercules and Omphale. French (Vincennes), about 1750. Porcelain, height 8¾ inches. Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 43.100.33

9. Pair of dancers, signed by Joseph Willems (about 1715–1766), Flemish. Dated 1749. Painted terracotta models for porcelain, height 12 inches. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

BELOW RIGHT

10. Dutch dancers, by Joseph Willems. English (Chelsea), about 1755. Marked with a red anchor—visible on the base below the woman—which was used from about 1753 to 1756 at the Chelsea porcelain factory. Porcelain, height 7½ inches. Collection of Irwin Untermyer





11. The Four Seasons, by Joseph Willems. English (Chelsea), about 1765. Each marked on the back with a gold anchor. Porcelain, heights 12% and 12¾ inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 64.101.520, 1971.75.1



fanciful style of the fully developed rococo in England. His later figures often appear before flower-laden tree-trunk supports or bowers, placed on scroll bases, which are picked out in gold and encrusted with a medley of flowers and fruit. Painted floral decoration, sometimes on a gilded ground, enhances the costumes of these figures. This style is typical of the period after 1756, when the gold anchor replaced the earlier red anchor mark (Figure 12). A pair of groups, representing the Four Seasons, is characteristic of Willems's increasingly ornate work; they also show his thorough understanding of the human form, and his growing delight in fashionable floral decoration (Figure 11).

It was probably Willems's idea to shape his rococo scroll bases to simulate the ormolu mounts from France that had become so fashionable on the Continent. This intention would seem to be evident in the exclusive use of gilding for his porcelain bases, unlike those made subsequently in Bow, another important London manufactory, which were colored to match the figures they support. The simulation of ormolu in porcelain suggests comparison with English furniture of the period, on which the ormolu enrichments seen on French commodes were frequently imitated in carved wood. We believe that porcelain modeler and cabinetmaker alike may have wished to avoid spending money abroad by providing in England what otherwise had to be imported from France. Moreover, they may have wished to exhibit their particular virtuosities in one material rather than in combination with another, which perforce had to come from entirely different workshops.

Among the most popular porcelain items produced from the 1750s on were "toys"-small, charming, often sentimental trifles, such as scent bottles, bodkin cases, and snuff and patch boxes, which were used as gifts and souvenirs. Their production was, like Willems's large figures, initiated to compete with Meissen imports. While none of the toys now known bears a factory mark, the modeling, the paste, and the changing style of decoration often enable us to date the pieces and draw conclusions as to the influence of particular artists. Some of the earliest toys can be linked to our independent master of the mourning Britannia. All of the master's work, whether on a larger or on a miniature scale, exhibits the same paste and similar slender, long-limbed figures with small heads. He must have employed an enamel painter for the decoration of these toys, all of which are colored. He may, moreover, have enjoyed the patronage or active participation of Gouyn, after the goldsmith left Sprimont in 1749. Indeed, it is tempting to follow Arthur Lane's suggestion that Gouyn-whose training as a jeweler rendered him eminently qualified—designed and executed some of the gold mounts for the master's toys, which often bear French mottos. This theory is based, at least in part, on the fact that the earliest known reference to his toys occurred in December 1754, in an advertisement of a sale lasting five days, when Sprimont disposed of a large stock of toys "made elsewhere." It stated that "Nothing of the above kind was in their former Sale, nor will any Thing of the same Sort as this be sold from the Manufactory till after next year." What Sprimont acquired may have been the entire



12. Gold anchor mark used after 1756 at the Chelsea porcelain factory

13. Two putti with music box and birdcage. English, before 1754. Porcelain, height 1 9/16 inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.3

CENTER

14. Swan seal, inscribed SIGNE D'AMOUR, and scent bottle with two putti supporting a fountain, inscribed FONTAINE DAMOUR. English, before 1754. Porcelain, heights 1 7/16 and 3 7/16 inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.4, 22ab

RIGHT

15. Three Graces and Chinese Lady scent bottles. English, before 1754. Porcelain, heights 41% and 35% inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.9ab, 23ab

stock of his old competitor who closed down in 1754, and Sprimont's purpose was not only to sell these figures at auction, but also to embark upon similar productions in the near future.

Examples of early porcelain toys that may have been among those that Sprimont auctioned are seals and scent bottles with slender, small-headed figures, modeled with a special inclination for miniature form. The scent bottles are painted with floral decoration, such as sprigs of roses, above and below the concave bases, as seen on a miniature group with two putti, one with a music box, the other with a birdcage (Figure 13). Indeed, the putto with birdcage is somewhat reminiscent of the mourning Britannia of 1751. Other examples of the master's miniature models are those of a swan, inscribed SIGNE D'AMOUR, and a scent bottle with two putti supporting the FONTAINE DAMOUR, in which two swans are swimming and a third swan forms the stopper (Figure 14). Furthermore, there is a scent bottle representing the Three Graces and another of a Chinese lady holding a wicker basket (Figure 15). Painted floral sprigs decorate their gowns, and continue







above and below the concave bases. The gold mounts are simple though essential, for they secure the stoppers or protect the edges of a base. We might also point out that the gold bead necklace of the Chinese lady, whose head serves as the stopper, corresponds to the one painted around the neck of one of the Three Graces.

The earliest scent bottles Sprimont produced following his purchase of toys from the unknown source may have been made in the molds created by the anonymous master. These were, however, slightly modified to suit changing taste, as can be seen in the slender figures of two nuns and Portia (Figures 16, 17). New elements are the flowers and foliage in relief, which

serve decoratively in being applied to the tree-trunk supports, and functionally as stoppers. Dentil borders, painted in gold to imitate earlier gold mounts, such as on the *fontaine d'amour* in Figure 14, encircle the bases. The colors are pastel-shaded and the decoration is still simple, a characteristic that was to change during the gold anchor period that began in about 1756.

Other toys produced at the Chelsea factory before the end of the red anchor period did not rely on the mourning Britannia master's molds or show his influence. These include pieces representing fruits, birds, and animals, such as a gold-mounted patch box with a banded agate cover beneath, which shows two mother ducks with their ducklings (Figure 19). Floral sprigs are painted on the interior. To this box may be added a bottle with two squirrels perched on a cherry branch eating the fruit, another in the form of a yellow plum, and a third consisting of a cluster of ripe cherries (Figure 19). Particularly in their decoration—dark colors are used and a large proportion of the surface is painted—and in the increasingly detailed





modeling, this group is clearly related to other Chelsea productions of the same period in which the talent of modeler Willems is evident. They also serve as a transition between red and gold anchor period toys, as does a scent bottle of innocent charm on which two small boys are trying to catch a beetle (Figure 18). The use of gilded floral decoration, in this case underneath the concave base, is typical of the later period.

The style of some gold anchor period scent bottles corresponds with contemporary large figures by Willems. He might even have modeled the one of a young lady kneeling beside her confessor in monk's garb (Figure 21). Her costume is patterned with gold flowers, and a floral spray in gold ap-

16. Two nuns and Portia scent bottles. The nun at the left is inscribed QUE CE GUY/TE PROTEGE. English (Chelsea), about 1759. Porcelain, heights 4 5/16, 3 9/16, 41/4 inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.11a-c, 12a-d, 14a-c

17. Detail of compact in Portia's base

18. Scent bottle: two boys trying to catch a beetle. English (Chelsea), about 1756. Porcelain, height 2 15/16 inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.7ab

19. Toys: ducks with ducklings, squirrels on a cherry branch eating fruit, plum, bunch of cherries. English (Chelsea), about 1756. Porcelain, heights 1 15/16, 2 13/16, 2 9/16 (without stand), 2 9/16 inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.5ab, 13ab, 17a-c, 15ab



pears underfoot beside the legend IL PROFITERA DE SA FOIBLESSE. Other scent bottles of that same period are modeled as bouquets of blossoms, and some patch boxes appear in the shape of flowers arranged in a vase. Three such examples have been added to the collection (cover and Figure 20).

The culmination of the gold anchor period—and indeed of rococo art in England—was reached in the sets of spectacular and unusually elaborate vases whose modeler remains unidentified. Brilliant ground colors, with figural decoration painted in reserves, are combined with gilded decoration. The addition of bone ash to the Chelsea paste had increased its reliability, and it was now possible to pierce the porcelain as well as to apply loops and scrolls, which followed the outlines of the vases from base to finials.

The Museum's set of three crimson- or claret-ground vases, with pierced necks and covers, is typical of these lavishly ornamented objects (Figure 22). From the swirling bases, picked out in gold, double handles reach out to the conical covers with floral finials. The reserved panels within undulating borders are painted with Boucher children in rustic settings. Because a number of similar vases are described for the first time in the Chelsea sales catalogues of 1761, this would appear to be the approximate date of our set, which bears the gold anchor underfoot.

A pair of monumental mazarine blue vases are among the ultimate achievements of the art of the Chelsea factory (Figure 23). Marked with a brownish anchor, they display pierced scrollwork handles and are enfolded and crowned by finials in white and gold. The reserved panels, surrounded by gilt lacework borders, are painted with The Flute Lesson and Lovers Sur-





20. Toy in the form of a vase of flowers, inscribed LEURS DOUCEUR MATTIRE. English (Chelsea), gold anchor period, about 1760. Porcelain, height 3 7/16 inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.16a-c. Photograph: Helga Abramczyk

21. Scent bottle: lady kneeling before her confessor, possibly modeled by Joseph Willems. English (Chelsea), gold anchor period, about 1760. Porcelain, height 3 9/16 inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.8ab





22. One of a set of three claretground vases. English (Chelsea), about 1761. Marked with a gold anchor. Porcelain, height 12¾ inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1971.75.18ab. Photograph: Helga Abramczyk

OPPOSITE

23. Pair of mazarine blue vases, with scenes in reserves of The Flute Lesson and Lovers Surprised from engravings by René Gaillard, after paintings by François Boucher (1703–1770), French. English (Chelsea), 1762–1763. Marked with a brownish anchor. Porcelain, height of each 23% inches. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1970.313.1ab, 2ab. Photographs: Eileen Tweedy

prised, taken from engravings by René Gaillard, after François Boucher's paintings of 1748–1750; exotic birds are seen on the opposite sides. These vases display an impressive mastery of technique, attainable only through division of labor. First we note the bravura of modeling and firing and, thereafter, the brilliant dark blue ground with burnished gold decoration, competing with the *bleu du roi* of the royal Sèvres factory. Finally, we distinguish the hands of different painters for the Boucher children and the birds. The results of such teamwork are magnificent but could not be maintained in a commercial enterprise that was sadly lacking in all royal patronage. Indeed, the years following the production of these vases were precarious ones: Sprimont's health was failing, he was unable to continue public sales because his factory's output was so meager, and his modeler Joseph Willems returned to Tournai in 1766.

These outstanding rococo vases were sold to a Mr. Hunter in Nicholas Sprimont's last sale of porcelain, at Christie's on Saturday, February 17, 1770, lots 60 and 61: "One large round urn and cover, mazarine blue and gold, most curiously enamell'd with a shepherd teaching a shepherdess on the flute. One ditto, of the same magnificence, with the lovers surpriz'd. £261 15s 6d." Included in the same Christie's sale were the almost identical Foundling and Chesterfield vases. All four pieces appeared together once again at the Earl of Dudley's sale at Christie's on May 21, 1886, but no buyer was willing to pay the price the earl hoped to realize. They were disposed of to Sir Joseph Robinson only when Dudley House was sold. Subsequently, on November 26, 1963, they appeared one last time together at public auction at Sotheby's, where Kate Foster reidentified them. Additional information was supplied by John Mallet of the Victoria and Albert Museum, after that institution had secured the Foundling and Chesterfield vases for its collections.

Not long after the 1770 sale at Christie's, the Chelsea factory was sold to William Duesbury of Derby, who removed the molds to his own Derbyshire factory, bringing the history of Sprimont's Chelsea to its close.

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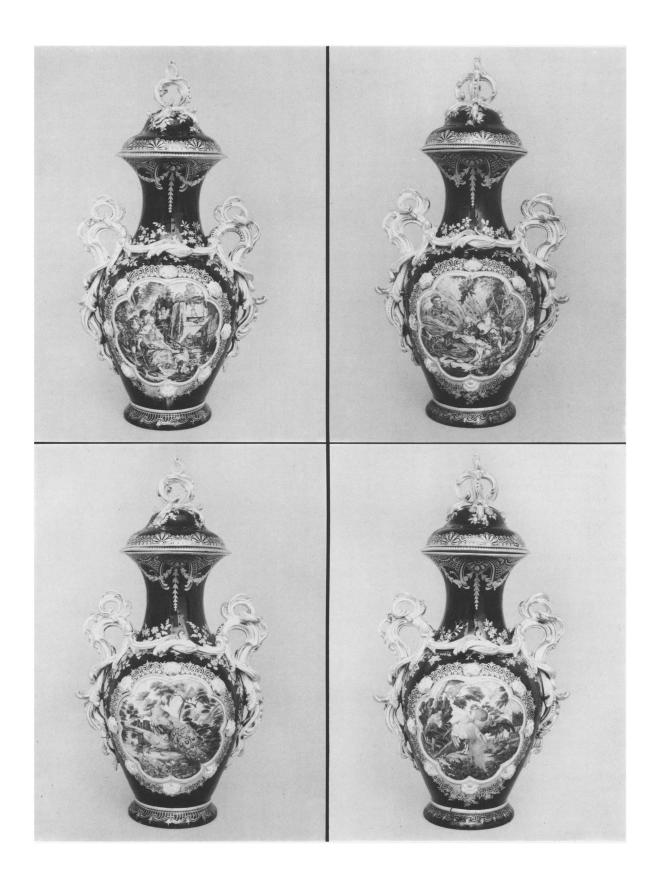
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Marquetry Furniture by a Brilliant London Master

COLIN STREETER

Curatorial Assistant, Western European Arts

Most of the very best eighteenth-century English furniture is anonymous today, even pieces with a highly individual character, simply because London cabinet-makers customarily did not identify their furniture in any way. They seldom labeled it, nor did they stamp it as their contemporaries in Paris were expected to do, under the regulations of the Paris guild, the Corporation des Menuisiers-Ebénistes. The London cabinetmakers' guild, the Joyners' Company, did not exercise the control over its members or the trade at large that its Parisian counterpart preserved until the Revolution swept it away. During the second half of the century, the Joyners' Company was rapidly decaying into a social and political club based in the ancient City of London.

Some English furniture has been attributed, and some important makers retrieved from obscurity, by linking furniture with surviving bills and accounts or, rarely, with related drawings. A few more pieces have been attributed on the basis of their correspondence to designs in such publications as Chippendale's Director or Ince and Mayhew's Universal System. Such attributions sometimes prove insecure, however, since published designs were considered public property in an era that took a more lenient view of plagiarism than does ours. Provincial craftsmen were enthusiastic subscribers to these volumes and are known to have followed the engraved plates faithfully, particularly for simpler pieces. Ironically, a few cabinetmakers' trade cards pasted inside surviving furniture - often intrinsically commonplace pieces have brought the names of several second-string makers into undue prominence.

Another approach, not often attempted, would group pieces of furniture on the basis of style: of the distinctive imprint of a single workshop in their design, construction, and decoration. The unusually elaborate furniture illustrated in this article forms one such group. These pieces can be attributed to a single London shop of the 1770s, and since two of them are cases made for pianofortes by Frederick Beck, for convenience's sake I will call their source "Beck's Cabinetmaker." The furniture falls into two groups, which coincidentally typify the two major stylistic influences on English taste in the 1770s, a fascinating decade of change. The first consists of com-

modes inspired by an intimate familiarity with French models and made about 1772. A later group, made about 1777, manifests a confident, full-blown Adam style. One piece stylistically in transition can be assigned to 1774/75.

The 1770s witnessed the renewal of ties with France after the peace of 1763 that ended the Seven Years' War, and once more Englishmen flocked to the Continent. To those who could afford them, the elegant furniture and luxurious small objects available in Paris were irresistible. At home, this decade saw the dissemination of Robert Adam's elegant neoclassicism. The French taste and neoclassicism, the currents that run strongly through Beck's Cabinetmaker's furniture, are two of the most important trends in English design during the latter half of the century.

The furniture I ascribe to Beck's Cabinetmaker is marked by extraordinary richness and sophistication: its most striking characteristic is elaborate marquetry, a delicate and time-consuming technique reintroduced into England from France late in the 1750s, but taken up by comparatively few craftsmen. Beck's Cabinetmaker was in the forefront of fashion and must have catered to a limited, wealthy clientele. At the time he was working, wholesale adoption of French and neoclassical forms by London cabinetmakers still lay ten or twenty years in the future. During the 1770s, by far the majority of furniture made in London manifested an English vernacular style: it retained conservative lines, emphasized by overall veneers, the wood, often mahogany, chosen for the beauty of its grain; small areas might be decorated by chaste carving; and metalwork was confined to simple moldings, functional handles, and keyhole escutcheons. For an indication of avant-garde English taste, the work of Beck's Cabinetmaker provides brilliant examples.

Among the earliest of these pieces is a commode in

- 1. Commode in French taste, attributed to Beck's Cabinet-maker, the marquetry medallion attributed to Christopher Fuhrlogh. English (London), about 1772. Mahogany and deal with marquetry primarily of satinwood, harewood, tulipwood, and mahogany; lacquered bronze mounts. Bequest of Marion E. Cohn, from the Marion E. and Leonard A. Cohn Collection, 66.64.2
- 2. The Triumph of Venus, by Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), English. Stipple engraving printed in sepia by W. W. Ryland, diameter 12 inches. Gift of Mrs. Morris L. Chaim, 20.93.5
- 3. One of a pair of commodes, attributed to Beck's Cabinet-maker. English (London), about 1772. Oak with marquetry of various woods; lacquered bronze mounts. Bequest of Marion E. Cohn, from the Marion E. and Leonard A. Cohn Collection, 66.64.3



the Metropolitan Museum, illustrated in Figure 1. It follows contemporary French models with a fidelity unusual for London furniture of the early 1770s. Like its Transitional French prototypes, it retains cabriole legs and a shaped apron – two vestiges of the Louis XV style – on a rectangular carcase divided vertically in three, with strong emphasis on the central marquetry medallion. The lavish use of bronze mounts is French too. They have been cleverly applied to accentuate the design and overall richness of effect. For instance, the frieze mounts, which incorporate and disguise the handles of three drawers, have been cut and assembled to give the impression of a vine growing continuously across the front and round the sides. On either side of the central medallion, bucrania (or cattle skulls—a classicizing touch) are draped with swags that a strange owl-like creature with bat wings catches up in his claws.

The chief decoration of this commode, however, is its marguetry. Panels of pictorial marguetry provide a foil to the trellis marguetry on top, front, and sides, which derives directly from French fashion. An oval composition on the top features an urn with a berry vine and a rather elastic drapery swag, crudely executed and naïvely disposed in an unsteady, loose asymmetry. The superbly executed circular medallion of a seated muse on the front cannot be by the same hand. The craftsman who executed this panel was master of an interesting and highly developed technique for rendering the painterly effects demanded by this unusually boldly scaled figure. By fitting together elaborately shaped pieces of lighter and darker veneer, he has been able to suggest light and shade in the muse's hair and the volume of the drapery under her left arm. To model the planes of her eyebrow and cheek, he shaded the separate piece of veneer that forms her eye and nose by dipping one corner briefly into hot sand. Though shading formed part of the London marguetry-cutter's standard repertory, the fitting of veneers in this manner is uncharacteristic of English work. Rather, it reflects the marguetry technique that the celebrated cabinetmaker David Roentgen was bringing to perfection just at this time in his workshops at Neuwied in Germany.

The muse's profile and the outline of her bare arm are graceful and sensitively drawn; and finishing details are engraved with a light, nervous touch, with controlled gradations of the line, which ends in whiplike flourishes among the folds. The composition is taken from Angelica Kauffmann's Triumph of Venus, which would have been available to a marquetry designer through the engraving in Figure 2. Although Angelica's compositions proved popular subjects for painted decoration on English furni-

ture, marquetry translations of her designs have not been noticed before.

Finally, this commode is set off from its French and English contemporaries by its unusual construction: the three panels of the front do not open like doors, in the usual fashion, but let down and slide out of the way on brass rails fixed to the underside.

Also in the Metropolitan Museum are a pair of smaller commodes, one of which is illustrated in Figure 3. The pair complement the larger one in their trellis marquetry, in the bronze mounts, and in details of their carcases. Their front panels let down and slide away in the same fashion.

Only minor details distinguish a commode in The Lady Lever Art Gallery (Figure 4) from the large one at the Metropolitan. The carcases are identical, even to the slight convexity of their canted corners and the curves that soften the transitions from plane to plane. The Lady Lever commode has undergone some adaptations, however: the three panels of the front now open as doors in the ordinary way, but plugged keyholes at the top of each panel indicate that they too originally let down and slid away. Floral marquetry has taken the place of the bronze mounts in the frieze, on the canted corners, and around the central medallion. Ralph Fastnedge, Keeper of The Lady Lever Art Gallery, points out that while the fronts of the drawers bear holes for former handles, the marguetry has never been penetrated, and must have been added after the original handles had been removed. Two plugged holes outside each corner of the undisturbed trellis marquetry doubtless mark the former position of rosettes like those still in place on the Metropolitan's commode.

Once again, the oval reserve on the top, showing a bouquet of flowers, is by a more pedestrian craftsman than the central medallion on the front. Signs of retouching in the engraved details, particularly the heavy crosshatching of the flesh, do not obscure its resemblances to the medallion on the Museum's commode in the unusually bold scale of the figure who dominates a simply realized background, in the elaborately shaped veneers, and even in the spiky outlines of the bushes in the background.

The Lady Lever commode was originally one of a pair. Its mate was discovered only last year (Figure 5). The oval marquetry on its top is very similar in design to the Metropolitan's, and, more important, the marquetry medallion on its front is clearly by the same skilled hand as those on the Lady Lever and Metropolitan commodes.

John Hardy of the Victoria and Albert Museum informs me that this central medallion is signed "Angel-



ica Kauffman, R.A." and "Christopher Fuhrlohg [sic] MDCCLXXII." This is a discovery of the first order. Signed marquetry on English furniture is extremely rare, and the few marqueteurs whose names appear are either foreign or known to have worked for foreign cabinetmakers who had settled in London; Fuhrlogh was, in fact, a

- 4. Commode in French taste, originally one of a pair, attributed to Beck's Cabinetmaker, the marquetry medallion attributed to Christopher Fuhrlogh. English (London), 1772. Mahogany and deal with marquetry primarily of satinwood, tulipwood, harewood, and walnut. The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, Cheshire. Photograph: © Unilever Research Laboratory, Port Sunlight
- 5. Marquetry medallion, after Angelica Kauffmann, on the mate to the commode in Figure 4, signed by Christopher Fuhrlogh and dated 1772. English (London), 1772. English private collection

Swede who spent some time in Paris before going to London in 1768. To conclude that Fuhrlogh made the commode itself, and by implication all these pieces, would be rash, for in every case of signed marquetry on late eighteenth-century English furniture, the signature refers to the marqueteur and not to the cabinetmaker. Most likely Fuhrlogh habitually supplied marquetry panels to Beck's Cabinetmaker. Trade in finished panels of marquetry had been an established English practice at the end of the seventeenth century, so it would not be surprising to find that, when this very specialized form of decoration was revived in the late 1750s, the trade in ready-made marquetry panels revived too.

There is another reason to suspect that Christopher Fuhrlogh was a marquetry specialist: he described himself in a trade card as "Ebeniste to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." Geoffrey de Bellaigue has suggested that the term "ebeniste," when it was used in England, implied a cabinetmaker specializing in inlay and marquetry, techniques that the English quite naturally associated with French cabinetmaking. A later trade card of Fuhrlogh's tends to bear out this distinction, since it describes him as "Cabinet Maker, Inlayer and Ebeniste to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, makes and sells all kinds of Inlaid Work."

A writing table that reflects the Louis XVI style in its trellis marquetry and straight, tapering legs (Figure 6) is an interesting link between these French-inspired pieces and later ones Beck's Cabinetmaker conceived in the Adam style. The same highly individualistic mounts used on the Metropolitan's commode reappear on the table the running berry vine and the eccentric owl-bat creature clutching swags of laurel. In themselves they do not provide conclusive evidence that both pieces are by the same maker, for bronze-founders' catalogues of this period illustrate a wide range of gilt-bronze hardware and embellishments that were available to any cabinetmaker who could afford them. Nevertheless, the design of the marguetry on the top of the table clinches the attribution to Beck's Cabinetmaker; it is a departure from the otherwise French design of the table, more characteristic of the work done in this shop during the second half of the decade. For example, the covered urn bearing rams' heads, although a rather commonplace bit of neoclassical design, recurs so regularly on pieces made by Beck's Cabinetmaker in the later 1770s that it can be regarded as something of a signature, when we find it combined, as it is here, with scrolling rinceaux. Equally characteristic of his Adam manner, these symmetrical rinceaux have beads and flowerheads strung on the stems, while escaping tendrils twine loosely around them.

Two examples of Beck's Cabinetmaker's English rather than French neoclassical style are the two cabinets he made for Beck's pianos (Figures 7, 10); Beck signed and dated both, one 1775, the other 1777. The newly introduced square piano offered wider possibilities for decoration than did its predecessor, the harpsichord, with its uncompromising asymmetrical shape. And these cases for Beck's pianofortes stand at the beginning of a fruitful tradition of supplying "piano fortes in commodes" to the very rich, which by 1790, the firm of Longmans and Broderip was extending to the middle class, advertising "Piano Fortes in Commodes, Side Boards and Dressing Tables for convenience of small rooms." The keyboard and action of the 1775 pianoforte are merely laid into the simply constructed case, itself no more than a great box with a top that lifts up to disclose the keyboard and with doors at either end that enclose deep cabinets for

6. Writing table in French taste, attributed to Beck's Cabinet-maker. English (London), about 1775. Mahogany with marquetry principally of satinwood, rosewood, tulipwood, and amaranth; gilt-bronze mounts. His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick. Photographs: © Country Life, London; Gilchrist Photo Services Ltd., Leeds



storing music. The case could scarcely have been designed by a pianomaker, as Philip James has pointed out, since the practical consideration of providing knee room for a seated player has been sacrificed ruthlessly to a monumental design. A plinth and the slight advance of the front corners articulate its rectilinearity.

The case has, as the focus of its design, a marquetry medallion of a muse almost identical to that on the Museum's commode (Figure 1). Though much of the engraving is effaced, the shaping of the pieces of veneer and the identical dimensions suggest that this was made from the same template. The distinctive touch of Christopher Fuhrlogh can also be seen in the corner panels showing female figures playing musical instruments.

The top bears an oval rosewood reserve containing a bouguet of roses, which is flanked by bands of rinceaux like those on the frieze. Certain details in the subordinate elements of the marguetry are also characteristic of Beck's Cabinetmaker's neoclassical style, particularly the loose tendrils that escape from the honeysuckle below the figures at the front corners. The designs for these figures derive from impeccable antique sources. The one at the left has been taken from an engraving of a famous yellow glass gem, probably of Hellenistic origin (Figure 8), which was widely copied and adapted for various media in the eighteenth century. Christopher Fuhrlogh has discreetly draped the muse's arm and bosom. As Josiah Wedgwood said in a 1790 letter, "none either male or female, of the present generation, will take or apply [works of the ancients] to furniture, if the figures are naked." By a less conscious concession to eighteenth-century taste, he has sweetened her profile and prettied her coiffure.

The right-hand figure derives from a fresco discovered in Herculaneum and engraved in 1760 for *Le Pitture Antiche d'Ercolano* (Figure 9). This scholarly volume was one in a luxurious series produced by the Neapolitan Academy and dedicated to their patron, Charles III, the

^{7.} Square pianoforte, by Frederick Beck. English (London), dated 1775. Mahogany case with marquetry principally of rosewood, satinwood, amaranth, harewood, and green-stained wood, the figural marquetry attributed to Christopher Fuhrlogh. The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, Cheshire

^{8.} Engraving, by Bernard Picart (1673–1733), French, after an antique gem signed Onesas. Dated 1723. From Philippe de Stosch, Gemmae Antiquae Caelatae (Amsterdam, 1724), plate XLV. Rogers Fund, 67.100.5

^{9.} Engraving, by Filippo Morghen (1730–after 1807), Italian, after a Roman wall painting. From Le Pitture Antiche d'Ercolano, vol. 2 (Naples, 1760), plate XX











Bourbon King of Naples. The series fed the widespread European interest in the discoveries at Herculaneum, but was never issued in a complete English edition. Thirteen illustrations were published from January 1773 to December 1775 in The Gentleman's Magazine, that eclectic repository of social notes, political news, and curiosities of all kinds, but this plate was not among them, nor does the engraving seem to have been pirated elsewhere. Introducing their series, The Gentleman's Magazine editors mentioned the prohibition against making drawings of the antiquities in the royal collections at Naples that "has operated so far to this day, as to confine the engravings of most of those valuable remains of antiquity to the libraries of those only to whom His Majesty has been pleased to present them." Clearly, these volumes were inaccessible to a mere cabinetmaker or designer of marquetry, so we can only assume that Fuhrlogh was on sufficiently close terms with an enlightened patron to be able to borrow a copy of the second volume. Indeed, he might have had access to the series through Sir William Chambers, the English architect with the widest European connections of his generation, for Chambers, who was born in Sweden himself, is known to have employed the Swedish cabinetmaker George Haupt, Fuhrlogh's brother-in-law and business associate.

The 1777 piano case takes the form of a rectangular commode with canted corners on straight, tapering legs (Figure 10). Behind the more obvious influences of the Adam manner—rectilinearity and more strictly confined decoration—a hint of contemporary French design can be detected in the presence of a central panel that overlays the front, a favorite device of Jean-Henri Riesener's; here, it drops down to reveal a cabinet for storing music. Beneath the crisp goat's-head mounts, the corners are inlaid to simulate fluting and the legs to imitate paneling. Once more Christopher Fuhrlogh supplied the central medallion, a muse playing the lyre.

Three commodes, none of them previously published, vary this design, using the same repertory of marquetry motifs, with medallions undoubtedly by Christopher Fuhrlogh, and gilt-bronze mounts. They must all have been produced by Beck's Cabinetmaker within a very few years of 1777. The ones in Figures 11 and 12 are both grander in conception than the pianoforte, and were probably made for Richard Grenville, second Earl Temple, who retired after political disappointments and devoted his energies to extensive rebuilding at Stowe, his seat in Buckinghamshire; the furnishing of the interiors was reported to be under way in 1777, the approximate date of these pieces.

The first of these commodes (Figure 11) bears the same marquetry medallion as that on the 1777 piano, and a very similar frieze. The side panels and the ends combine flowerhead and trellis marquetry like that on the "French" commodes with reserves containing the familiar neoclassical urns. The front legs are paneled and inlaid on all four sides, a detail that would ordinarily be appreciated only by a housemaid. Each panel of the

Figures 10–13 are attributed to Beck's Cabinetmaker, and their marguetry medallions to Christopher Fuhrlogh:

- 10. Square pianoforte, by Frederick Beck. English (London), dated 1777. Mahogany case with marquetry principally of satinwood, harewood, rosewood, and sycamore; gilt-bronze mounts. Collection of Nelson Davis, Toronto
- 11. Commode in Adam style, from the collection of the Earls Temple. English (London), about 1777. Mahogany and pine, with marquetry principally of satinwood, harewood, and tulipwood; gilt-bronze mounts. English private collection. Photograph: A. C. Cooper, Ltd., London
- 12. Commode in Adam style, from the collection of the Earls Temple. English (London), about 1777. Marquetry of various woods; gilt-bronze mounts. Present whereabouts unknown. Photograph: Christie, Manson & Woods
- 13. Commode in Adam style. English (London), about 1777. Marquetry of various woods; gilt-bronze mounts. Formerly on the London art market; present whereabouts unknown. Photograph: Victoria and Albert Museum, London





front falls forward and slides away on projecting pins that run in grooves in the space between the bottom of the cupboard and the framed underside of the commode. This refinement on the construction of the similar fall fronts of the commodes at the Metropolitan independently suggests that this group is later in date. Once the fronts are open, the frieze drawers, undisfigured by handles or keyholes, can be made to spring forward by releasing the catch—a projecting sliver of wood fixed to the underside of each drawer-through a fingerhole in the dustboard.

The second commode has not been traced since its sale in 1941 (Figure 12). It was described in the auction catalogue as a "very fine Adam commode of bow shape, . . . three drawers in the frieze secured by secret catches, . . . and a fall front, finely inlaid in shaded woods, on square tapering legs with gilt-bronze mounts headed by rams' masks in ormolu." The marquetry medallion shows Diana despondently seated on a rock, accompanied by a hound, her quiver hung up on a tree. Once again Fuhrlogh has derived his design from an engraving by Angelica Kauffmann. Quiver, bow, and hunting horn form a conventional trophy in the circular reserve on each bowed corner. The rounded front corners of this commode result in a D-shaped top, a mark of very advanced taste in a piece made about 1777, as no D-shaped tops for tables or commodes appear even in Hepplewhite's Cabinet-Maker and Upholsterer's Guide, issued about a decade later, in 1788.

A third commode in this group, formerly on the London art market but known to me only through the photograph reproduced in Figure 13, combines and simplifies elements of both of Lord Temple's commodes. It takes the overall design of its carcase and marguetry from the commode in Figure 11, but adapts from the commode in Figure 12 the scrolls flanking the medal-

14. Dressing table, attributed to Beck's Cabinetmaker. English (London), about 1775-1780. Mahogany with marguetry principally of satinwood, tulipwood, and mahogany. Victoria and Albert Museum, London

15. Semicircular commode, one of a pair designed by Robert Adam about 1773 and possibly made by Ince and Mayhew. The figural marquetry is attributed to Christopher Fuhrlogh. English (London), about 1773. Mahogany with marguetry principally of satinwood, harewood, and rosewood; giltbronze mounts. Osterley Park, Middlesex. Photograph: Victoria and Albert Museum, London

16. Detail of the marquetry medallion, attributed to Christopher Fuhrlogh, on the mate to the commode in Figure 15. Osterley Park, Middlesex. Photograph: Victoria and Albert Museum, London





lion, expanding them (with a somewhat awkward result) to fit the wider central panel. The legs merely simulate paneling. The central panel must let down from the top, to judge by the placement of the keyhole, and there are three drawers in the frieze with keyholes in the ordinary fashion. These economical adaptations show how a design that must have been very costly to produce could be rendered suitable for more ordinary stock-in-trade.

A small dressing table in the Victoria and Albert Museum that manifests the anglicized Louis XV style generally associated with Hepplewhite's Guide of 1788 can be dated about 1775-1780 (Figure 14). It summarizes some of the marquetry vocabulary and features of construction associated with Beck's Cabinetmaker's style in the later 1770s. Its top slides back to reveal an adjustable dressing mirror, flanked by fitted compartments for necessaries. Beneath it is a drawer released from below by a secret catch like those in the commode in Figure 11. Some details of the marquetry, such as the scrolls in the banding round the top and the hunting trophy composed of a bow, quiver, and horn on the shelf between the legs, though they are part of the common vocabulary of English neoclassical cabinetmaking, occur on the commode illustrated in Figure 12. Other motifs characteristic of the marguetry produced in Beck's Cabinetmaker's shop are the urns at the center of the frieze and the scrolls in tight spirals with a single loosely trailing tendril inlaid on the top, frieze, and shelf.

Christopher Fuhrlogh's marguetry can be seen in other pieces that relate in various ways to those from the shop of Beck's Cabinetmaker. The most famous of these are two semicircular commodes made for the drawing room at Osterley Park, which were designed by Robert Adam about 1773 (Figure 15). One bears a marquetry medallion of Diana seated with her hounds (Figure 16) that differs from the medallion on the commode in Figure 12 only in the presence of a second dog. All the figural medallions on the Osterley commodes bear the characteristic touches of Christopher Fuhrlogh. It would be too simple to conclude that the Osterley commodes were made by Beck's Cabinetmaker, for these medallions are merely screwed into the frame from behind rather than being built into it as an integral part of the construction. There is nothing in the construction of the pieces to suggest Beck's Cabinetmaker: the commodes are purely decorative—there are no doors, no drawers, in fact no way of using them at all. None of the distinctive motifs that we have come to recognize in the marguetry produced in the shop is present, though Adam's design may have dictated the details. Nor do any of the mounts on other furniture by Beck's Cabinetmaker appear on these

commodes, whose mounts, however, may have been specially commissioned, since the tablets on the frieze harmonize with similar tablets in the decoration of the room.

Panels of bacchantes identical to two by Christopher Fuhrlogh on the Beck piano of 1775 appear on a bonheur du jour at Stourhead, Wiltshire (Figure 17). Though its frieze is decorated with a repeated palmette and honeysuckle motif that is not inconsistent with friezes on Beck's Cabinetmaker's furniture, the attribution of this bonheur du jour remains uncertain. Traditionally it has been included with the furniture that Thomas Chippendale the Younger supplied to Stourhead, yet it is unlike his other work in that house.

This is an opportune moment to return to Frederick Beck. The dates on two of his pianofortes have provided a pivot around which to sketch the development of the cabinetmaker he utilized. Furthermore, the inscriptions above their keyboards provide a clue to this cabinetmaker's possible identity. The first is signed "Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1775 No. 4 Broad Street, Golden Square"; the second, "Fredericus Beck Londini Fecit 1777, 4 and 10 Broad Street, Golden Square." It was logical for Beck, a German immigrant who gravitated to London during the disruptions of the Seven Years' War, to settle in Golden Square. In 1767, when Angelica Kauffmann, also newly arrived in England, set up her studio at Number 16, the slightly aging houses in Golden Square, once a center of aristocratic social and political life, and in the narrow surrounding streets sheltered a mixed population of foreigners and of artists and craftsmen, including a concentration of pianoforte and harpsichord makers. At the same time, this area had become a serious threat to St. Martin's Lane as a center for the workshops of top-flight cabinetmakers and upholsterers: Robert Campbell was in Little Marylebone Street, Chipchase and Lambert in Warwick Street. The carvers Sefferin Alken and Sefferin Nelson had workshops in Dufours Court, off Broad Street, while John Oakley (a cabinetmaker who had been apprenticed to David Roentgen in Germany) and William Ince and John Mayhew had premises right in Broad Street, within a few doors of Frederick Beck's workshop. It would have been a simple matter to carry the movements of his pianofortes to one of these nearby workshops to have them fitted into cases.

Now in London during the 1770s only a limited number of cabinetmakers were capable of executing furniture with ambitious marquetry in the French and neoclassical styles. Inlaid furniture by Thomas Chippendale, John Linnell, John Cobb, and Peter Langlois has been identi-

fied, but none of the known pieces by these makers resembles the pieces we have illustrated here.

Ince and Mayhew, however, were among the very first London cabinetmakers to exploit marquetry decoration when it was a novelty in the 1760s. In 1765 they delivered to the sixth Earl of Coventry a pair of satinwood and holly commodes for his seat at Croome Court, Worcestershire, charging him £40 (Figure 18). These should be compared to Beck's piano of 1775 (Figure 7), their only close parallel—for such a pure boxlike design, set on a plinth and incorporating marquetry—in English furniture of the period.

Marguetry furniture made in the 1770s by Ince and Mayhew largely remains to be identified. There is one exception, the cabinet, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was made by Ince and Mayhew in 1775 for the Duchess of Manchester (Figure 19). But it is hard to detect a characteristic workshop style in its form and decoration because, like the Osterley commodes, it is an example of a highly individual and purely decorative showpiece made under the supervision of an architect and intended for a specific client. Designed to incorporate existing panels of pietra dura (the Florentine mosaic work of semiprecious stones cherished by English connoisseurs), its design was dictated by numerous precise drawings provided by Robert Adam. Access is only through doors in the ends. We should not be able to attribute the cabinet to any workshop if we were not able to follow its construction through correspondence between Ince and Mayhew and the Birmingham firm of Boulton and Fothergill, who supplied the gilt-bronze mounts. Nevertheless, details of the marguetry bear a strong resemblance to that on the Osterley commodes.

In light of Beck's Cabinetmaker's intimate knowledge of current French design, it is interesting to remember that Ince and Mayhew—cabinetmakers with a high contemporary reputation—were also among the London importers of French furniture. A trade card issued by them invites prospective customers to inspect "an assortment of French furniture, consigned from Paris . . . at their warehouses, Broad Street, Soho."

While no known documents unequivocally connect any of Beck's Cabinetmaker's furniture with Ince and Mayhew, the Duke of Northumberland's bank account at Hoare's contains a tantalizing entry: a payment of £86 to Mr. Mayhew, dated February 28, 1775. This sum would have been more than ample to cover a tardy payment for a set of twelve chairs the duchess referred to in a note at the back of her diary for 1771–1773, mentioning "12 Chairs, 2 with Arms are bespoke of Mayhew & Ince come home but 6 have arms," and again "To send

to Mayhew & Ince for Chairs for my Anti Room." It might well have included the writing table in Figure 6, which is datable from its style to just about this year. It should be added that the duke's only other recorded payments to cabinetmakers about this time are too early to apply to this table: William Vile (1759) and his successor William France (1767), John Linnell (1763–1771), and John Taitt (1768).

We need more documentary evidence to confirm the hypothesis that Beck's Cabinetmaker and the workshop of Ince and Mayhew are one and the same. But the furniture by Beck's Cabinetmaker, whether or not he is to be identified with Ince and Mayhew, is highly distinctive, sophisticated, and avant-garde. And the figural marquetry on these pieces satisfied an increasing demand for more literal decoration: Christopher Fuhrlogh's painterly handling of marquetry is an important intermediary step in the evolution of English taste, lying between the stylized floral marquetry of Peter Langlois and the naturalistic flowers and scenes painted on furniture in the 1790s.

Fuhrlogh's marguetry is more advanced than the contemporary work of Chippendale, who sometimes decorated his furniture with small-scale medallions that depended for their effect on the contrast of light woods against a dark background, and it is more intricate than the marguetry on commodes attributed to John Cobb, which relied on elaborate engraving to give volume to rather conventional vases and flowers. Indeed, the only contemporary practitioner of a comparable marquetry technique was the German cabinetmaker David Roentgen. But the Roentgen-Fuhrlogh style was too demanding technically to catch on widely in England; in fact, the distinctive medallions and panels that enliven the furniture we have discussed represent the most ambitious and successful pictorial marguetry surviving from eighteenth-century England.

- 17. Lady's writing desk (bonheur du jour), the figural marquetry attributed to Christopher Fuhrlogh. English (London), about 1780. Mahogany with marquetry principally of kingwood, tulipwood and rosewood. Stourhead, Wiltshire. Photograph: Fine Art Engravers, Ltd., Godalming, Surrey
- 18. One of a pair of commodes delivered to the sixth Earl of Coventry by Ince and Mayhew in 1765. Marquetry principally of satinwood and holly. Photograph: The Greater London Council as Trustees of The Iveagh Bequest
- 19. Cabinet designed by Robert Adam and delivered to the Duchess of Manchester by Ince and Mayhew in 1775. Marquetry principally of satinwood and rosewood; set with Florentine pietra dura panels; gilt-bronze mounts by Boulton and Fothergill. Victoria and Albert Museum, London



NOTES

Frederick Beck's pianofortes, when they appear on the market, are very ordinary productions of the type current in the 1770s, a simply veneered light case on legs. The two pianofortes illustrated here are magnificent exceptions.

A spur to the creation of the 1775 piano may have been provided by Robert Adam's design dated 1774, which was published in 1775 as an engraving entitled "Design of a Harpsichord, executed in London, with different Coloured Woods, for the Empress of Russia." The commission must have caused a stir among London's musical instrument makers even before the publication of the engraving.

The Metropolitan Museum has five of Bernard Picart's red chalk preparatory drawings for the engravings after gems published in *Gemmae Antiquae Caelatae*, including that for the one in Figure 8.

An indication of the trade in finished panels of marquetry in England at the end of the seventeenth century is offered by the trade card of Phillip Hunt, advertising furniture he was equipped to provide "And Curious inlaid Figures for any worke."

This article depends a great deal on the unrivaled photographic archive of English furniture at the Victoria and Albert Museum, in the care of John Hardy, who drew my attention to Fuhrlogh's signature and the date on the commode in Figure 5. The Duke of Northumberland has graciously permitted me to quote from typescripts of the first Duchess's diaries at Alnwick. Mrs. John Craib Cox noted for me the reference to Mayhew in the first Duke of Northumberland's account at Hoare's. Charles Truman recently showed me the Angelica Kauffmann source for the Fuhrlogh panel in Figure 12. Daisy Irving, Ralph Fastnedge, and Gervase Jackson-Stops put me in touch with owners and arranged for special photography.

Philip James first pointed out that the large commode now at the Metropolitan must be by the maker of Beck's piano cases, in *Early Keyboard Instruments* (London, 1960). John Hayward's article "Christopher Fuhrlogh, Anglo-Swedish Cabinet-maker" appeared in *The Burlington Magazine* 111 (1969), pp. 648–655. Lindsay Boynton published the documents relating to the Duchess of Manchester's cabinet in "An Ince and Mayhew Correspondence" in *Furniture History* 2 (1966), pp. 23–36. For the term "ebeniste," see Geoffrey de Bellaigue, "English Marquetry's Debt to France" in *Country Life* 143 (1968), pp. 1594–1598. Eileen Harris, *The Furniture of Robert Adam* (London, 1963) discusses the Osterley commodes and the Duchess of Manchester's cabinet.

Florentine Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum

An Exhibition and a Catalogue

EVERETT FAHY
Curator in Charge
Department of European Paintings

This summer, in a departure from its usual exhibition policy, the Museum is going to present an exhibition whose goal is inclusiveness rather than selectivity. The more than 140 Florentine paintings in the Metropolitan's collection will be shown together. Masterpieces by Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Botticelli can be seen with intriguing works by lesser-known artists, and paintings that seem fresh from the artist's hand will hang beside some that have suffered over the centuries, but are still worth studying for the traces of what was originally there. The exhibition is intended as a parallel to the comprehensive new catalogue of all the Museum's Florentine paintings that will appear this month. This is the first of four volumes on the entire collection of Italian paintings; the others will deal with the Venetian, the north Italian, and the Sienese, central, and south Italian schools.

The exhibition will give the ordinary visitor an opportunity to make comparisons of quality and condition usually available only to specialists. These comparisons are worth making, for the Museum's collection of Florentine paintings is one of the largest and most impressive of its kind outside the city of Florence. Extraordinarily varied, it amply illustrates the history of painting in Florence, spanning over 700 years, from the thirteenth-century Madonna and Child by Berlinghiero, the earliest Italian painter we know by name, to the Self-Portrait of Pietro Annigoni, the contemporary artist. It is richest in paintings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, largely because of the taste of several collectors, who preferred the so-called primitives-tempera on gold grounds. There are, however, several gaps in periods that have never been popular in America: the few seventeenth-century pictures, for instance, are all recent gifts, and there are no nineteenth-century paintings at all.

Over thirty years ago Harry B. Wehle wrote the first systematic catalogue of the Museum's Italian paintings. Since then the collection has grown so rapidly that there has long been a demand for a new catalogue. In Wehle's catalogue of 1940, for example, there were 286 Italian paintings. Despite the subsequent sale of some inferior ones, their number has risen to well over 400.

The new catalogue is the work of Federico Zeri, an expert of international standing, who brings great knowledge and connoisseurship to the task. He was assisted by Elizabeth E. Gardner of the Museum's staff. Their work involved analyzing a constantly increasing body of facts and opinion. Not unexpectedly, their research has produced many original discoveries and observations: the subjects of some pictures have been identified for the first time; documents have been found that throw new light on many of them; old attributions have been rejected and other artists proposed. In the catalogue, this information is summarized and interpreted to be of maximum use to the student. The photographs that follow illustrate the scope and quality of the collection.

Epiphany, by Giotto (1266 or 1276–1337), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, gold ground, 17¾ x 17¼ inches. John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 11.126.1

One of seven surviving panels from a set depicting scenes from the life of Christ, the Metropolitan Museum's small Epiphany has often been called a product of Giotto's workshop. Dr. Zeri convincingly argues on the basis of its high quality that it is an autograph work by the master, although some small areas may have been painted by assistants. Two aspects of the composition are unusual: the combination of the Annunciation to the Shepherds with the Adoration of the Magi, and the action of the kneeling king, who lifts the Christ child from the manger. From a technical point of view, the painting is interesting, because the customary gold ground was laid down on a pale green, rather than a red, preparation.

431



Madonna and Child, by Berlinghiero (active by 1228, dead by 1242), Italian (Lucchese). Tempera on wood, gold ground, 31% x 211/8 inches overall. Gift of Irma N. Straus, 60.173

The earliest picture in the collection, the Madonna and Child by Berlinghiero is not, strictly speaking, Florentine. Berlinghiero was the leading painter of the school of artists that flourished in the Tuscan city of Lucca before Florence emerged as the dominant artistic center toward the end of the thirteenth century. His works, combining the Romanesque and Byzantine styles, had an enduring influence upon Florentine painters.

Many pictures have been attributed to Berlinghiero, but few of them display the refined execution of the Museum's example. Dr. Zeri considers it to be one of three pictures in the world that can be ascribed to Berlinghiero himself. The others seem to be by assistants or followers.



Diptych, by Pacino di Bonaguida (active by 1303 until after 1320), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, height 24% inches. Gift of Irma N. Straus, 64.189.3a, b

Pacino di Bonaguida, an exact contemporary of Giotto's, is a master whose works are seldom seen outside the churches and galleries of Florence. The Museum's painting is in the form of a diptych, a small portable altarpiece with two movable wings. It is divided into four scenes: the Crucifixion, given the greatest prominence; the Madonna enthroned: the death of the Virgin; and the youthful St. John the Evangelist seated on the island of Patmos, touching his cheek and gazing with deep concern at the book in his lap. The lively detail of these scenes is characteristic of Pacino, who spent most of his life decorating manuscripts with tiny illuminations, different from Giotto's monumental style.









Madonna and Child with Donors, by Giovanni da Milano (active about 1350–1369), Italian (Milanese, active in Florence). Tempera on wood, gold ground, 271/8 x 563/4 inches. Rogers Fund, 07.200

As his name suggests, Giovanni was not a Florentine by birth. From before 1346 until 1368, however, he worked in Florence, where he introduced to the local painters the naturalistic style of contemporary North Italian painting. The Museum's Madonna and Child with Donors is a fine example of his work: its palette-pale lilac, pinks, orange—and softly brushed forms are typical of this great master. Dr. Zeri observes that the lunette shape of the panel is unusual, but he doubts that it was part of an altarpiece and suggests that perhaps it was made to go over a tomb or doorway.

Crucifixion, by Giovanni di Francesco Toscani (died 1430), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, gold ground, 251 x 19 inches. Maitland F. Griggs Collection, Bequest of Maitland F. Griggs, 43.98.5

This Crucifixion was formerly ascribed by the Museum to the workshop of Masolino, which was to say it was painted by an early fifteenth-century Florentine artist under the influence of Masaccio and the International Gothic style. A number of other paintings were subsequently attributed to this "Master of the Griggs Crucifixion," so named after the donor of the Museum's picture. His real name, Giovanni Toscani, came to light several years ago, when a pair of his frescoes was connected with documents recording payment to him in 1423 and 1424. The semicircular arrangement of figures around the cross in our Crucifixion was Toscani's way of organizing spatial depth simply. His cascading draperies can be linked with the style of the sculptor Ghiberti and the International Gothic artists.

Portrait of a Man and a Woman at a Casement, by Fra Filippo Lippi (about 1406–1469), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, 251/4 x 161/2 inches. Gift of Henry G. Marquand, 89.15.19

Of all the early fifteenth-century pictures in the Museum, one of the most intriguing is the Portrait of a Man and Woman at a Casement by Fra Filippo Lippi. It has been preserved in an almost unblemished condition. According to Florentine tradition, the subjects are shown in profile, but the figures are placed in a curious relation to one another: their heads are framed by two small windows in the corner of a room. Moreover, they stare blankly past one another, completely detached both spatially and psychologically. On the basis of the elaborate costumes of the sitters, the painting can be dated about 1440 to 1445, relatively early in Fra Filippo's career.

This double portrait was acquired in 1889 as a Masaccio, but in recent

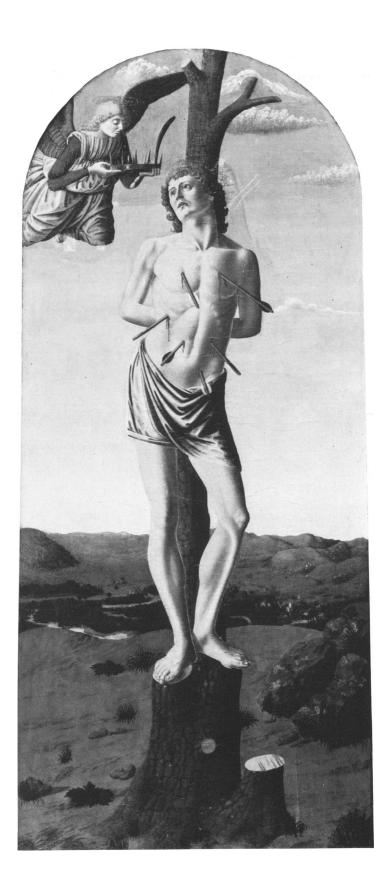
times it has been attributed by the Museum to Fra Filippo's workshop. Dr. Zeri assigns it unreservedly to the master himself, and his attribution is clearly supported by the purity of the silhouette and the detail of the landscape and the woman's costume.

Madonna and Child, by Filippino Lippi (1457–1504), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, 32 x 23½ inches. The Jules S. Bache Collection, 49.7.10

Because of the coat of arms on the capital of the column seen through the window, this picture can be identified as one commissioned for the Strozzi family, whose chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella, Florence, Filippino Lippi frescoed between 1487 and 1502. This Madonna and Child appears to have been painted slightly before that period—it most closely resembles Filippino's altarpieces of the early 1480s. Piero di Cosimo and an unidentified early sixteenth-century Florentine follower of Filippino or Raffaellino del Garbo are known to have copied this work.







St. Sebastian, by a Follower of Andrea del Castagno. About 1465. Tempera and oil on wood, overall height 56¾ inches. Harris Brisbane Dick and Rogers Funds, 48.78

Not all the Museum's previous attributions have fared so well: this painting of St. Sebastian, for example, once believed to be the work of Andrea del Castagno, is now attributed to a follower. Dr. Zeri observes that the lighting of the saint, the type of landscape, the relation of figures to background, and a comparison with several other paintings believed to be by the same artist, point to a date around 1465, eight years after Castagno died. The composition corresponds most closely with later fifteenthcentury pictures by the Pollaiuolo brothers and Sandro Botticelliindeed, Dr. Zeri thinks our painting may have inspired Botticelli's famous version of the subject now in the Berlin Museum. Dr. Zeri associates the author of the Museum's painting with a group of pictures tentatively identified as early works of Francesco Botticini.

St. Christopher and the Infant Christ, by Domenico Ghirlandaio (about 1448–1494), Italian (Florentine). Fresco, sight size 112 x 59 inches. Gift of Cornelius Vanderbilt, 80.3.674

In addition to their tempera or oil paintings, most of the artists represented in this exhibition worked in the fresco medium, but because it is so difficult to remove frescoes from the walls on which they were painted, very few of them have been detached. This extremely rare example is one of only two Florentine frescoes in our collection, and it is also one of our largest possessions—over nine feet tall. Its author, Domenico Ghirlandaio, was one of the prime practitioners of fresco painting during the age of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and he is best known for his murals in the choir of the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella.

Ghirlandaio is well represented in the Museum's collection: there are three portraits, a Madonna, and a set of predella panels from one of his altarpieces in the Uffizi.





Last Communion of St. Jerome, by Sandro Botticelli (1444/1445–1510), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, 13½ x 10 inches. Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 14.40.642

Despite its extremely small size, Botticelli's Last Communion of St. Jerome captures the monumental feeling of Florentine art. The saint's chamber is a modest structure with thatch walls and roof, yet its simple perspective creates a spacious setting. In the foreground the ailing saint kneels in devotion as two friars support him, but the scale of the figures is somewhat incongruous: St. Jerome would be much taller than any of the others if he were to stand on his feet. Part of the great beauty of the picture—one of the finest in the Museum's paintings collection—stems from the radiant expressions of the administering priest and the pair of youthful deacons bearing candles.

Scenes from the Life of St. John the Baptist, by Francesco Granacci (1469–1543), Italian (Florentine); The Preaching of St. John the Baptist, from the workshop of Francesco Granacci. Both oil on wood, 311/2 x 60 inches; 293/4 x 821/2 inches. Purchase, principally from funds given or bequeathed by Gwynne M. Andrews, Ella Morris de Peyster, Harris Brisbane Dick, William E. Dodge, Isaac D. Fletcher, and Jacob S. Rogers, as well as contributions made by Mrs. Donald Oenslager and others in memory of Robert Lehman, 1970.134.1, 2

Exemplifying paintings the Museum has purchased, these fine examples of large-scale narrative cycles by a





High Renaissance master were acquired at an auction in London a year ago through a special appropriation voted by the trustees. They are among the best preserved paintings of their date—almost entirely free of any blemish or damage to the paint surface.

In depicting several episodes of a single story on the same panel, these pictures are similar to fifteenth-century cassone fronts, long rectangular panels set into marriage chests, although the Museum's paintings were probably engaged in the wainscoating of a small room.

Although both of these panels have been attributed to Francesco Granacci (best known as the youthful friend of Michelangelo; he worked with him in the Ghirlandaio studio and helped him with the frescoes on the Sistine Chapel ceiling), Dr. Zeri believes that only the Scenes from the Life of St. John was painted by Granacci himself. The other one,

Dr. Zeri feels, was conceived by Granacci and executed by a close associate. The Granacci panel has the cool, even tonality of a large fresco painting; the design of its figures and architecture is conservative and nearer the normal quattrocento style. The other picture is more boldly painted, with heavy impasto and richer colors; its figures twist and turn with greater freedom, displaying the contrapposto typical of Michelangelo's style on the Sistine ceiling.

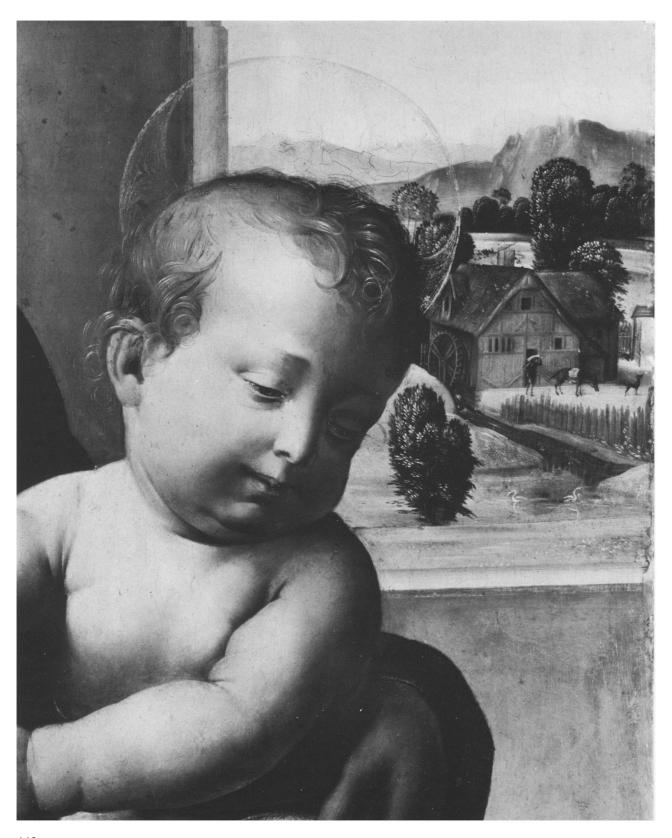
Portrait of a Young Man, by Biagio di Antonio (active 1476–1504), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, 21½ x 15¾ inches. The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 32.100.68

Formerly attributed by the Museum to an unknown Florentine painter of the third quarter of the fifteenth century, this portrait is identified by

Dr. Zeri as a work of Biagio di Antonio, an obscure Florentine who spent most of his life working at Faenza. In his time, however, he seems to have been rather important: in 1482 he was summoned to work in the Sistine Chapel along with most of the leading Italian artists of his day. This picture was probably painted shortly before he went to Rome. As Dr. Zeri observes, it is most closely related to earlier Florentine portraits like the Portrait of a Man by Andrea del Castagno in the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Although the expression of the young man and setting of the portrait against an open landscape background are quite beautiful, the painting is not ordinarily exhibited with the Museum's permanent collection, because of its poor condition: the face and sky are badly abraded, and much of the original color is missing.







Madonna and Child with the Young St. John the Baptist, by Fra Bartolomeo (1472–1517), Italian (Florentine). Tempera on wood, 23 x 171/4 inches. Rogers Fund, 06.171

Along with Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolomeo, the great artist-friar who worked at the convent of San Marco, was the leading painter in Florence during the early decades of the sixteenth century. The purity of form and simplicity of style found in his works is related to the style of Fra Angelico, who worked at the same convent almost a century before. But this painting—a relatively early one of Fra Bartolomeo's-is fascinating because it directly reveals two influences on his style: Leonardo da Vinci and Flemish painting. The design of the central group and their draperies recall the Benois Madonna by Leonardo, and the landscape seen through the window on the right is taken almost exactly from a painting by Memling.





Detail of Virgin and Child Enthroned with Two Angels, by Hans Memling (active about 1465, died 1494), Flemish. Oil on wood, 22½ x 16½ inches. Uffizi, Florence. Photograph: Alinari—Art Reference Bureau

Benois Madonna, by Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), Italian. About 1478. Oil and tempera on wood transferred to canvas, 19 x 12½ inches. State Hermitage, Leningrad

Portrait of a Young Man, by Bronzino (1503–1572), Italian (Florentine). Oil on wood, 37% x 29½ inches. The H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 29.100.16

Reigning supreme over the small group of sixteenth-century paintings in the collection is Bronzino's Portrait of a Young Man. Dr. Zeri suggests that it was painted in the late 1530s, after the artist returned to Florence from the court of Urbino, but he rejects the traditional identification of the young man as the Duke of Urbino. Although we may never know who the subject was, there can be little doubt about what his personality was like: Bronzino's brush describes him as a haughty youth with frozen lips and a cold, penetrating gaze. The bristling contours of his jacket, the fantastic masks on the furniture, and the baffling architectural setting distinguish this picture as one of the artist's greatest portraits.





Charity, by Cesare Dandini (1596–1656), Italian (Florentine). Oil on canvas, 471/8 x 411/2 inches. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Friedman, 69.283

One of the few seventeenth-century pictures in Dr. Zeri's catalogue is the superb allegorical Charity, by Cesare Dandini. This picture is a brilliant example of the idiosyncratic treatment of the baroque style by Florentine artists: rather than being loosely painted like most Italian baroque pictures, it is tightly composed, with a strong linear design. It is remarkable, moreover, for its extraordinarily vibrant colors—dazzling reds, white, and lapis lazuli blue—which Dr. Zeri observes are typical of Dandini's middle period.



A Comprehensive Architectural Plan for the Second Century

JANE SCHWARZ Staff Writer

Over the past year considerable controversy has surrounded the Museum's announcements about its plans for expansion and reorganization. There have been headlines about the "encroachment on the park" and public pressure for the Museum to decentralize. There have also been public hearings before city agencies and the City Council, where criticism as well as broad-gauged support for the Museum's plans has been expressed. As so often happens, the controversy has managed to obscure the facts and much of the reasoning behind the Museum's present philosophy that is embodied in its new Comprehensive Architectural Plan for the Second Century.

The roots of this plan date back to the very early years of the Museum, when the decision was made to move the Metropolitan from its temporary quarters and to incorporate it as a permanent feature of Central Park. In 1878, the Museum entered into a lease agreement with New York City for the tract of land bounded by Eightieth and Eighty-fifth streets and by the park's East Drive and Fifth Avenue. For a long time the building was entirely park-oriented, and actually surrounded by the park, with



Model of the Museum as seen from the park. Photograph: Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates

the main entrance facing first west and then south. It wasn't until an addition in 1902 that it turned around and faced Fifth Avenue, and the entrance on the park side was no longer used.

From the beginning there were building plans that involved expansion on the Museum's park site. The present one happens to be fifth in the Museum's history, each of the past ones being discarded by succeeding administrations and Boards of Trustees who then produced their own. The immediate thought is, why not this one too? What makes this plan so different from its fated predecessors that it won't be junked a few decades from now? There are no guarantees, but two things make it different from earlier ones and should give the skeptic some reason to believe that this may be the final master plan for the Museum.

First, this plan, unlike any of the others, deals with the works of art already collected as well as the present problems of the Museum, instead of offering grandiose architectural schemes for collections of the future. Second, and more important, over the past year there has been a significant change in the Museum's acquisition

policy. The three major recent acquisitions—the Temple of Dendur, The Michael C. Rockefeller Collection of Primitive Art, the Robert Lehman Collection—each fill gaps in the present collections. Now the Metropolitan's task will be to refine its collections. This not only means buying fewer, more important works of art, but also winnowing out pieces no longer useful for exhibition or study, and selling or exchanging them.

But does the Metropolitan need a comprehensive plan at all? As the Museum enters its second century, the original building has been engulfed by sixteen additions covering seven acres. Any visitor who has tried to find his way from one area to another is painfully aware of the need for a better organization of the various departments. The galleries are overcrowded, with the annual number of visitors many times what it was in 1926, when the last major addition for exhibition space was constructed. So inadequate is the space that significant portions of several collections—such as the American nineteenth-century period rooms and much of the decorative arts collection—are forced to be in storage. There

is, of course, no room in the existing building for the Lehman collection, the Temple of Dendur, or the Rockefeller collection of primitive art. Staff offices are cramped and cluttered and often located in inappropriate back corners.

Because of the complexity of the problems, it seemed essential to base proposed solutions on an exhaustive study of the Museum's present facilities and to devise a comprehensive plan for its future. To this end, the architectural firm of Kevin Roche, John Dinkeloo and Associates has been working closely with the Museum's staff for three years.

One part of the plan deals with the Metropolitan's present buildings. Detailed scientific studies, including structural, mechanical, and electrical surveys, were made. These will help the Museum make best use of the space it already has by outlining what can be done to update existing facilities. Some of the work of renovation has been completed. The new plaza in front of the Museum, with its impressive fountains and broad stairway, and the cleaned and refurbished Great Hall are the two most dramatic features.

A very important aspect of the plan is its design for a more logical organization of galleries with smoother transitions between them. Each department will have an orientation room and space for special exhibitions near the display of the most important objects from its collection. Study-storage rooms will be available to the public, and much more space will be devoted to educational facilities such as classrooms.

The second part of the plan is devoted to renewing the direct access from Central Park to the Museum, and with housing the new acquisitions. The Temple of Dendur, a first-century B.C. Egyptian monument given to the United States by the United Arab Republic, was awarded to the Metropolitan because, among other reasons, our design provided shelter for its delicate stone. The glass-enclosed temple will be placed in a re-creation of its original Nile River setting to enhance the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the temple, and of our great Egyptian collections in the adjoining galleries. It will be built over the employees' parking lot at the building's north end.

The Michael C. Rockefeller Collection of Primitive Art, containing over 3,000 objects of art from Oceania, Africa, and the Americas, will be housed in a building over what is now the public parking lot at the south end

of the Museum. Its design will echo the enclosure for the Temple of Dendur. The plans call for subtle illumination of both wings at night for the benefit of strollers.

The magnificent Robert Lehman Collection of European paintings, drawings, and decorative arts, which includes works by Rembrandt, El Greco, and Ingres, will be placed in a new wing in the center of the west façade of the Museum. Among the many attractions of the building will be seven period rooms, recreating the ones in the Lehman house that Mr. Lehman had decorated specifically for showing masterpieces of his collection.

Until now, the west or park side of the Museum has been largely ignored: its architecture is a jumble and gives the impression of being unfinished. The new designs will not only complete the western façade, but will preserve those architectural elements that contribute to the Museum's classification as a landmark, such as the early park entrance and the southwest façade designed by Theodore Weston in 1888. Furthermore, the light and airy feeling of the glass architecture should make the entire Museum blend better with its park environment, as the founders had envisioned.

The expense of realizing a design such as the comprehensive architectural plan comes high in this day of spiraling costs. The Lehman pavilion will be constructed entirely with private funds, and its maintenance and operation have been endowed. The Rockefeller wing will also be largely privately funded. The Museum realizes that the cost of other parts of the plan will have to be shared between the city and generous private donors. One might object that the debt-ridden city should not put up any of its money for additions to museums, when so many other public facilities are inadequate, but if New York is to be livable in the future, it will be partly because of its museums, parks, and libraries. The Museum is a great educational institution – by far the largest public school or university in the city – existing for the benefit of New Yorkers of all ages.

If the matter of money has been the cause of concern, the issue of encroachment on the park has provoked outrage. The construction, however, is well within the tract described in the lease granted to the Metropolitan by the city. Most of the additions will be built on what are now parking lots (garage space will be relocated underground). Several areas that are now asphalt will be turned back to grass, including various driveways, part of the public parking lot, and the playground that was



cemented over in 1953. Conservationists may not be entirely satisfied, but there will actually be a net gain of public green areas.

he most complex objection to the expansion, and the one that goes right to the core of the Museum's philosophy, is whether the new acquisitions should be placed here at all. Some supporters of decentralization argue that the Museum is too big already, and that the city would be better served if the Metropolitan housed its newest collections at different locations around the boroughs. A few of the most frequently voiced suggestions call for putting the primitive art collection in Harlem or in The American Museum of Natural History, placing the Temple of Dendur on Welfare Island, and opening the Lehman townhouse on Fifty-fourth Street to the public.

These ideas were appealing at first, but after a thorough investigation the practical problems appeared to outweigh the advantages. For one thing, the cost of building and staffing a series of branch museums around the city would be prohibitive. By adding to the present building, the new wings can draw on the specialized facilities that already exist and that would be costly to duplicate even on a small scale, such as the complicated security network, expert curatorial and educational personnel, and the well-equipped conservation department. It is estimated that the new American Wing would cost more than twice the contemplated amount if it were detached from the main building.

The question of whe'ther as many people would get to see the works of art if they were located in Harlem or on Welfare Island can be argued both ways. "If you've got something good, people will come," is one point, but attendance at the Museum of the American Indian and the Hispanic Society, both in northern Manhattan, the Staten Island Museum, and other small but excellent institutions around New York appears to disprove this.

In addition to the technical and financial reasons against putting the Rockefeller primitive art collection in Harlem, a compelling argument against doing this was voiced at one of the public hearings on the Museum's plans by a resident of that neighborhood: she insisted that she wanted the art of her black African forebears in the same place as the art of early white people. If there is Greek and Roman art at the Metropolitan, why not African? If the collection were to be put across the park at the Museum of Natural History it would be considered anthropology. It's art and belongs in an art museum.

The possibility of opening the Lehman house was thoroughly explored. The problems involved in safely and

successfully converting it into a public gallery seemed insurmountable. First of all, wall space was so limited that only half of the collection was ever on exhibition there at one time. Then, too, it is a typical private residence with a narrow staircase and Lilliputian elevator. It is not fireproof and it lacks space for storage, for study-seminar rooms, and for the extensive Lehman library that was given to the Museum along with the rest of the collection.

The Metropolitan is in favor of a decentralization that would extend educational opportunities into areas of the city where there are now very few. But this can be accomplished without literally splitting up the Museum. Instead, the Museum can share its services and facilities with the communities, and the administration has already sought the advice of organizations throughout the city that have indicated their interest. These groups have suggested that a "colonial" or "imperialistic" move by the Metropolitan to set up branches would be resented. They feel each community should have absolute control over its museums. Larger institutions like the Metropolitan should support local cultural centers by allowing them to draw on its resources. The Museum has concluded that these groups are right, and will cooperate in the development of new community cultural programs by lending works of art from its collections and providing specialized technical help such as conservation techniques and exhibition design. Several community projects have already been undertaken: a mobile exhibit called Eye Opener has been traveling through the five boroughs since August 1970, and pilot programs of loan exhibitions and special assistance to organizations and libraries in Queens and the Bronx have been started.

Many details of the Comprehensive Architectural Plan for the Second Century are still being worked out. Originally, for instance, the plan suggested the removal of the Great Stairs, but a number of factors, including some public opposition to this idea, caused the Museum to restudy and eventually drop this proposal.

A plan the size and scope of this one will never totally please everyone and it will continue to have its critics. But it should be considered as an overall guideline—a truly comprehensive plan. It is meant to resolve the Metropolitan's present urgent problems of organization and space. The Museum must be ready to face the demands that will be placed upon it in the future, and to meet its responsibility of sharing its vast treasures with the public in the most enjoyable and enlightening way possible.

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