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PORTRAIT OF THE CONDESA DE GONDOMAR
BY FRANCISCO GOYA, SPANISH, 1746-1828
Gift of the Ralph H. Booth Fund, 1941

THE CONDESA DE GONDOMAR BY GOYA

THE PORTRAIT of *The Condesa de Gondomar* by Goya (1746-1828), the recent gift of the Ralph H. Booth Fund, is an important addition to the series of masterpieces by the great figures of European art in our museum. It is a well known work, done about the middle of the decade 1800-1810, which is generally conceded to be the high point of Goya's work as portrait painter, and takes its place among the small group of Goya's best portraits of women, along with the *Portrait of a Woman in Grey* in the Louvre, the *Señora Sebasa Garcia* in the Mellon Collection of the National Gallery, Washington, and the *Donna Isabel Cobos de Porcel* in the National Gallery, London. The fact that all of these were done at about the same time (not far from the year 1806, when the London portrait was painted) is indicative of the importance of this moment in Goya's art. Such outstanding works of outstanding men are rare enough; they are not often available and are all too often out of the reach of our museum. The Ralph H. Booth Fund, which enables us to make an addition of this sort, is thus of a value to the museum quite in proportion to the wisdom and devotion to the museum's interest of its donor in his life time.[1]

Goya occupies a unique position in the story of painting. The general and instinctive judgment of time, which is fame, seems to be uncertain whether to place him among the Old Masters or among the Moderns. He belongs to both and is sometimes called the last of the great Spanish painters (thus being grouped with Velasquez and Greco) and sometimes the founder of the modern movement. He stands in singular and solitary fashion astride the great dividing line in European history, the era of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. He was forty-three when that Revolution began in 1789 and sixty-two when the wave of invasion swept over Spain in 1808. His best work was done between those years. Certainly no other artist who began his career as a typical eighteenth century decorative painter in 1771, while Fragonard and Mozart were at their height, was still to be found in the forefront of Europe's intellectual life in the 1820's, the age of Scott and Delacroix. But Goya lived until 1828, four years after Byron had died in Greece and a year after the death of Beethoven.

The *Portrait of the Condesa de Gondomar* is one of the pictures which seems to belong to both worlds. In quiet authority and simplicity of statement it seems one with the great Spanish portrait painters of the seventeenth century. But place the picture with Velasquez, Ribera and Zurbaran and there is a difference, subtle yet decisive—an intensity of spirit, a luminosity of color, an abandon in the touch, that belong to the Romantic age and its heirs. In this Goya is a true Spanish artist. For it is a truism that in Spain, where tradition is so strong, the spirit of the past lingers on to color succeeding ages long after its last vestiges have vanished elsewhere. The Roman world, the Arab, the medieval, were each prolonged there as a living ingredient into succeeding ages. And it is only natural, perhaps, that the grand tone of the imposing and objective baroque world should still be discernible in Goya's romantic and subjective art.

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Like the two portraits of women in London and Washington, the Detroit portrait is almost startling in the luminosity of its flesh tones. The Condesa is seated on a very plain wooden chair. Her head, turned to gaze straight at the spectator, and her arm holding the mantilla close against her, have the quality of repose combined with the suggestion of potential movement which is the hall mark of nearly all great portrait painting. The long Spanish face is an oval of very pale ivory and rose; her eyes and hair are brown, her eyebrows firm black lines against the very fair skin. The color scheme depends upon the simple contrasts of the cool, luminous skin, the warm black of the mantilla and dress, the buff of the long glove, and the warm green background. But these simple color contrasts are united and harmonized by reflections and echoes through the picture. There are dashes of rose and of deep red through the black; touches of white showing through the black lace at her neck, and in the pearly grey fan; green shadows on the yellow glove; and the yellow of the glove is dotted into the frill of black lace around the head by a few stipplings of a brush filled with yellow ochre, to soften the contrast and unite the black silhouette of the figure with the background. But whereas a seventeenth century painter would probably have used glazes for these minor lights and reflections, Goya dashed them on with a full-loaded brush, letting them blend themselves on the canvas in a way that foreshadows Impressionism. Technically, Goya seems here a link between the style of Velasquez and that of Manet. One of his favorite sayings sounds like that of an Impressionist, "A picture, the effect of which is true, is finished."[2]

It is interesting to compare Goya's choice of color in this portrait with that in the Paris, London and Washington portraits of women. The quiet, passive woman in the Louvre, is in celadon green. He painted the flamboyant vitality of *Donna Isabel Cobos de Porcel,* in London, in a rose colored satin dress gleaming through the sweeping folds of a black mantilla. In the *Señora Sebasa Garcia,* in Washington, the delicate glow of youth and grace is set off by a golden yellow shawl. Our portrait represents the pale, grave elegance of an older, more quiet and less colorful personality. The buff glove is all that relieves the contrast of the pale face and the enveloping black of her costume. All four color schemes are singularly appropriate to the character of the sitters.

There remains the question of Goya's point of view as an artist. Too much, I think, has been made of Goya's personality, which lends itself to a kind of romanticizing that, by overemphasizing the *Caprices,* obscures the real quality of his art. He was tempestuous in temperament and he had an able man's contempt for stupidity whenever he found it. These are traits which seem to have a special appeal for the current mood of American taste. But others have had these feelings without being Goya. The eighteenth century had cultivated a satirical wit as one of the elements of an intelligent mind; the fashionable world which Goya frequented was permeated by it. Those who make a hero of Goya simply because he was disrespectful of stupidity in high places, might well look into the *mots* of Talleyrand, who was also accustomed to courts and was certainly no left-winger. The popular estimate of Goya as a mocker at humanity is merely the vulgar error that confuses disrespect with satire, which is really wit and anger expressing a deep positive belief.

An artist can only be great where he has deep sympathy: Goya's were almost exclusively for man and his activities. In the great period of his art, to which our portrait belongs, Goya had long outgrown his early adventures, when

a sheer excess of energy had led him into all sorts of scrapes. His deafness, dating from an illness of 1792-3, had thrown his attention inward. But Beruete, who as a Spaniard ought to know something of the matter, believed that he was, in these middle years, in harmony with the society of great aristocrats and professional men whom he painted and with whom he lived. The savage bitterness of his old age came after the French invasion of 1808 when the collapse of Spanish society was enough to sour a far less lonely and unhappy old man than Goya. The proof of his harmony with his own world is in the great portraits of the years 1793-1808, among which ours belongs. Such pictures are not produced by a negative attitude toward people or by a scorn of life. They are, in essence, a positive affirmation of life—of the dignity and value of human existence and of its profound significance for the creative mind. It is the energy of this affirmation which gives his portraits a dramatic force far beyond what was in the character of the sitter or the boldness of the brushstroke. (How many feeble paintings have been painted with bold brushstrokes since!) In Goya's time there was a great deal of portrait painting on a high level of competence and professional dignity. If the best of Goya's portraits stand out above them all, it is because the force of his imaginative understanding of life makes them do so.

E. P. RICHARDSON

[1]Accession Number 41.80. Canvas: Height: 33 inches; Width: 25½ inches. Painted c. 1805. Identified as a Condesa de Gondomar from the circumstance of its having originally been in the possession of the Gondomar family; perhaps the wife of the eighth Marquess and Count de Gondomar.

References: Albert F. Calvert, *Goya, An Account of His Life and Works,* London, 1908, pl. 164; A. F. Mayer, *Pantheon,* I (1928), p. 195; Walter Heil, *Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Prints by Francisco Goya,* San Francisco, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, 1937, No. 21 and *Catalogue of the Golden Gate Exhibition,* 1940, No. 141; *Exhibition of Paintings of Women,* Art Gallery of Toronto, 1938, No. 28; *Exhibition of Spanish Art,* Dallas Museum, 1939; Daniel Catton Rich, *The Art of Goya,* Art Institute of Chicago, 1941, No. 78; José Gudiol, *Spanish Painting,* Toledo Museum of Art, 1941, No. 95.

Collections: Gondomar, Madrid; Count Jellebey, Oslo; Tietjen, Amsterdam.

Gift of the Ralph H. Booth Fund, 1941.

[2]Quoted by W. Rothenstein, *Goya,* 1901, p. 28.

A FOURTEENTH CENTURY SILK BROCADE

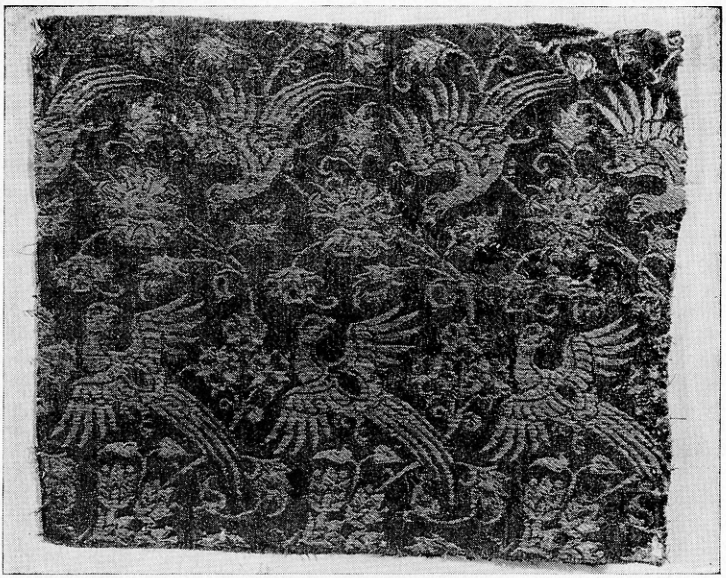
THE EVOLUTION of the late medieval silk style in Italy is due to a fusion of the Gothic spirit of naturalistic representation with the Chinese spirit of aloofness. A new type of ornament marks a complete break with the earlier Sasanian-Byzantine inspired silks.

The new characteristic is a free disposition in diagonal rows, technically achieved by the half-overlap, but disguised by the use of at least three or four different motives. Animals are still the preponderant element, but they have lost their heraldic aspect, and instead of quietly confronting each other or marching in stately procession they are now drawn realistically, full of life and motion. They run, fly, rush in, assault or recoil, or face each other threateningly. The floral ornament also succumbs to caprice; palmettes and stylized tendrils are not entirely discarded, but with them appear twisted flowery sprigs with a variety of leaves and blossoms. The repertory of motives is immensely enlarged; never before or since have there been textile designers of so much imagination; the power of

invention seems inexhaustible. The result is a series of fabrics which arouse our deepest admiration.

Two cities were paramount in producing silk fabrics that could compete with the best imports from Moorish Spain and the Levant, Lucca and Venice. We already own a beautiful specimen of Venetian brocade,[1] and to this there has now been added, again as a gift of the Founders Society, a specimen representing the textile art of Lucca.[2]

Between wavy tendrils with spiky leaves and three distinct groups of flowers, long-tailed birds — parrots adapted from the Chinese phoenix — fly up and



SILK BROCADE
41.88 ITALIAN, LUCCA, FOURTEENTH CENTURY
Gift of the William H. Bates Fund, 1941

swoop down, defiantly. The pattern is brocaded in skin-gold, with details of heavy pink silk, on purple satin ground.

Lucca probably owed its early supremacy in silk weaving to the proximity of Pisa, Ghibelline port *par excellence.* Through Pisa's trade relations with Sicily and the Levant, Lucca may have received more than merely inspiration. It is quite possible that Sicilian weavers, depatriated in consequence of the political unrest after the death, in 1250, of Frederick II, may have brought their craft to a new home, Lucca which had been famous for centuries past for the production of fine woollen cloth.

Soon the fame of Lucca silks spread across the Alps, already in 1336 the Lucchese merchants in Paris formed a syndicate. Henceforth *samit de Lucques,* and *drap d'or de Lucques* are found in practically all French inventories. *Cendal, siglaton* and *baldacchin* were no longer furnished exclusively from the Islamic East for Lucca competed successfully. Lucca traded her silks mainly with France, Burgundy and England. Froissart relates how, at the entry into Paris of Isabeau

of Bavaria, queen of Charles VI, in 1389, "twelve hundred citizens, all on horseback, were ranged along the streets, all clothed in red and green baldacchin." Michel Moricon, "marchant de Lucques" in Paris, is mentioned repeatedly in the inventories of the Burgundian court; he sold to John the Fearless and to Philip the Good. One *baldacchin* is especially described as "brocaded in gold and worked with peacocks"; it was used as a robe for the baby Charles. Chaucer repeatedly mentions Lucca silks, always as exceedingly beautiful and costly fabrics; thus his Sir Topas wears a robe "of circlaton that coste many a jane."

The main difference between the silks of Lucca and those imported from the East seems to be that the former were honestly woven by good craftsmen, while the latter, as troubadours and trouvères give us to understand, were the work of fairies, *les dames blanches.*

ADELE COULIN WEIBEL

[1]Accession Number 34.31. Published in the *Bulletin of the Detroit Institue of Arts,* Vol. XIV, November, 1934, page 27.

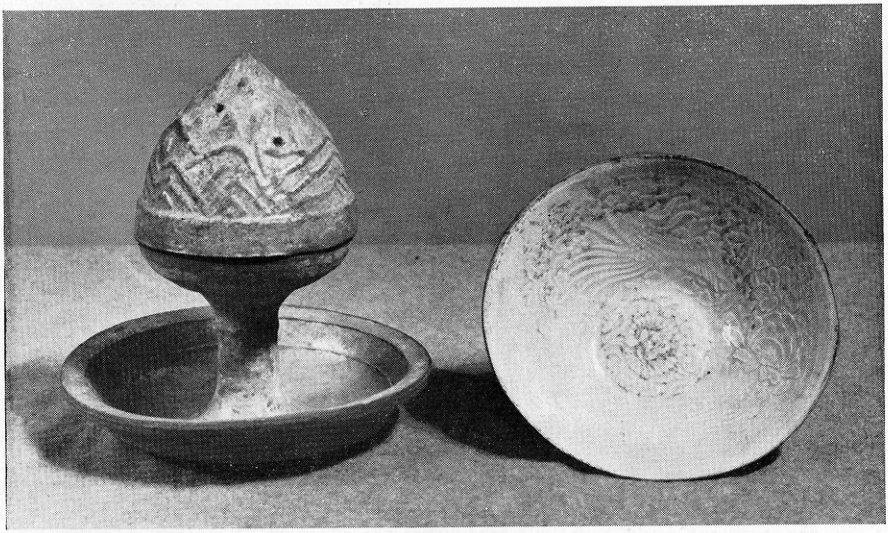
[2]Accession Number 41.88. Height: 9¼ inches; Width: 10½ to 11¼ inches. Gift of the Founders Society, William H. Bates fund. Exhibited at the *Mostra del tessile nazionale,* Rome, 1937 to 1938; catalogue number 17, plate 36.

TWO CHINESE CERAMICS

THE POTTER'S ART in China is generally conceded to be of the highest importance in any consideration of Chinese art or in any study of ceramic history. The wide range of shapes, glazes and techniques provide a summary of the craft. It is not by chance that where derivative pottery is found, the influence is very often traced to China. Persian pottery, French and English porcelains and contemporary pottery have all felt this invigorating influence. An adequate knowledge of Chinese ceramics demands the understanding of the early wares as well as of the sophisticated porcelains. The acquisition, by gift and purchase, of two wares hitherto unrepresented in the collections, brings the Institute closer to this ideal.

The pottery of the Han dynasty (206 B.C. — 220 A.D.) is well exemplified by the glazed earthenware Hill Censer *(po shan lu).*[1] The materials of this object are simple, as befits the art of an empire which suddenly emerged from a relatively archaic feudal society. Red clay and a lead glaze are the elements of most Han pottery. During the course of burial the glaze usually takes on a silvery iridescence which adds a sensuous quality to an originally austere form. The shape of the censer is produced by the demands of clay on a potter's wheel, as well as by the intended function of the object. In this case we have a base with a container for incense and a perforated cover which allows the odors to escape. Representative and symbolic elements are present in this cover. Moulded on the surface are representations of waves lapping at the peaks of a mountain, the bulk of which is the cover itself. According to Laufer[2] this represents the Taoist abode of the blessed, Mount Plêng lai. Taoism was a favored religion at this time, and the first Emperor of the Han Dynasty, Wu, is reputed to have searched for this abode of the blessed and to have constructed replicas in his gardens at Chien Chang. This censer then is of interest not only for the simple strength of its shape, for its suitability to function, but also for its historic place in the development of Chinese culture.

As a product of an advanced urban culture we should expect the Ting ware bowl[3] to display more sophisticated and subtle qualities than the early vigour of



POTTERY HILL CENSER
CHINESE, HAN DYNASTY, 206 B.C. — 220 A.D.
Purchased by City Appropriation

TING WARE BOWL WITH MOULDED DECORATION
CHINESE, SUNG DYNASTY, 960 — 1278 A.D.
Gift of the Laura H. Murphy Fund, 1941

the censer. The Sung dynasty, best known in artistic matters as the age of great landscape painting, was also productive of pottery and porcelain marking a high point of ceramic achievement. The final development of true porcelain is traced to this dynasty and our new bowl is one of these porcelain types. *Ting yao* was one of the important wares of the dynasty and much favored by the Imperial court. Various types of the ware were classified by connoisseurs. Ours is of the *fên Ting* (flour Ting) classification.[4] It is a deep wide spreading bowl with rounded sides resting on a very low foot. The color and texture is comparable with old ivory to which time has added variations on a warmer scale. The inside of the bowl is decorated with a moulded design of characteristically Chinese motifs: phoenix and peony. The edge of the bowl was probably bound, in a later dynasty, by a copper band. This has been removed and the raw edge allows us to see the fineness of the creamy porcelain body. The delicate, fine-bred qualities of later porcelains are wedded here to the simple, robust traits of earlier wares.

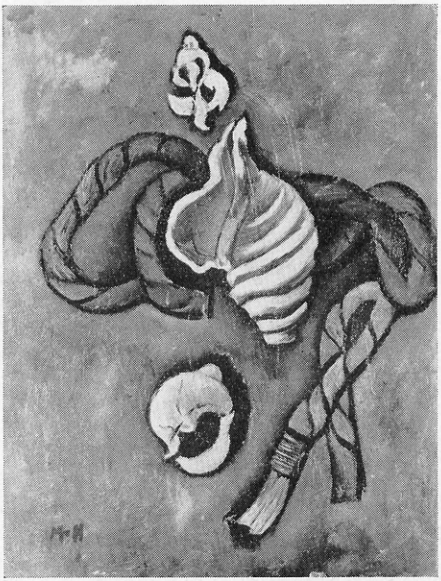
SHERMAN E. LEE

[1]Accession Number 41.79. Height: 8¾ inches; Width: 8 inches. Purchased by City Appropriation.

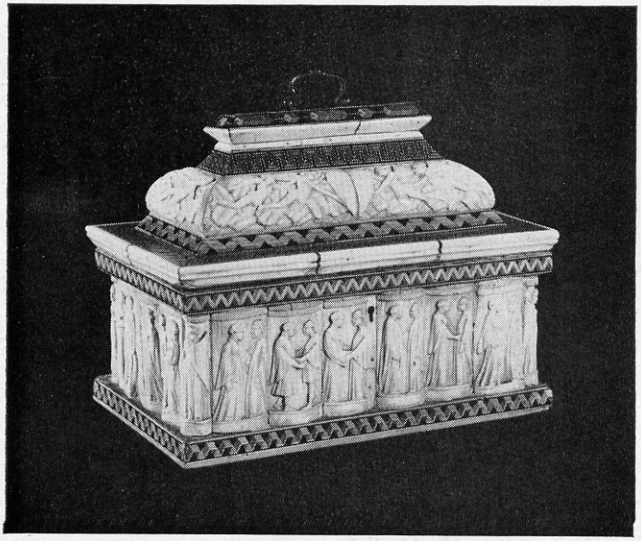
[2]Berthold Laufer, *Chinese Pottery of the Han Dynasty,* Leiden, 1909. p.191-193.

[3]Accession Number 41.85. Height: 3¼ inches; Width: 7⅜ inches. Purchased from the Laura H. Murphy Fund, 1941.

[4]R. L. Hobson, *Catalogue of the Chinese, Corean and Persian Pottery and Porcelain in the George Eumorfopolous Collection,* London, 1926, Vol. III, p. 18.



STILL LIFE, ROPE AND SHELLS
BY MARSDEN HARTLEY, AMERICAN, 1877-
Gift of the Merrill Fund, 1941



CASKET OF WOOD DECORATED WITH INTARSIA AND
BONE CARVINGS
NORTH ITALIAN (VENICE?), EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY
Gift of the Elliott T. Slocum Fund, 1941