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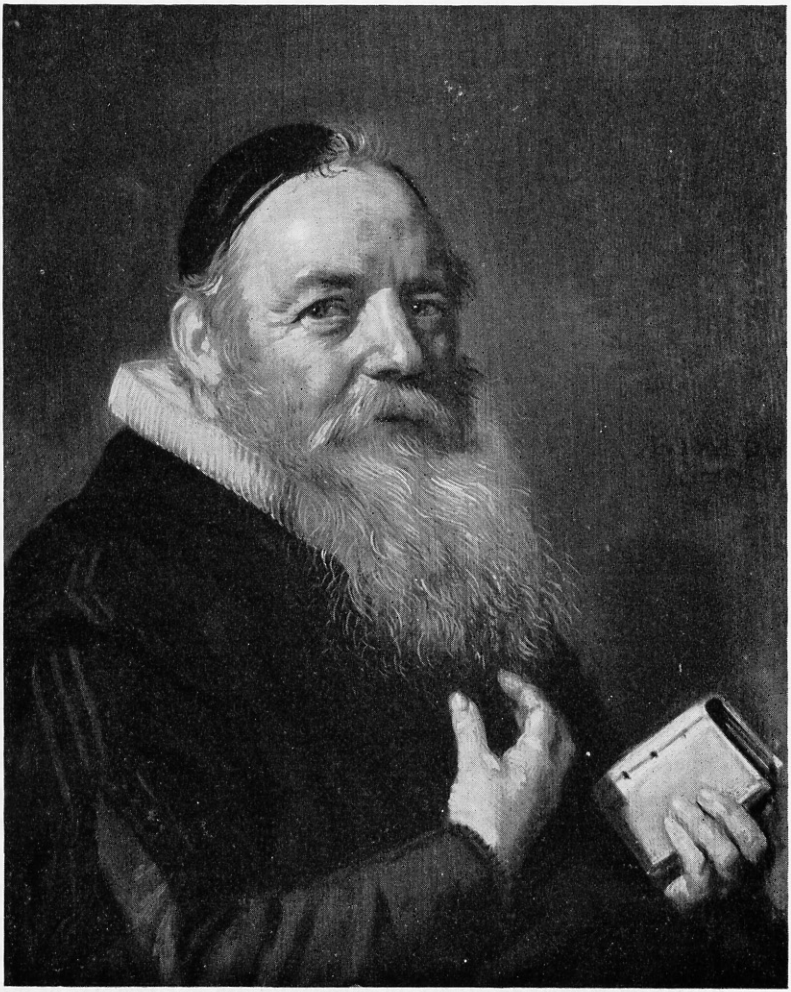


HENDRIK SWALMIUS
by FRANS HALS,
DUTCH (1585?-1666)

Joint acquisition of the City Purchase Fund and the Founders Society, 1949

EUROPE REVISITED

In building our collection we have three tasks: 1) to create here a collection of the great art of the world, so that the people of Detroit may enjoy the opportunities for knowledge and enjoyment that a great city should afford; 2) to represent worthily the culture and achievements of our own country; 3) to encourage the talent of our own day.

I went back this summer to revisit some of the chief museums in Europe, not only to refresh my memory and restudy these famous collections, but to look for answers to several questions:

How do our recent acquisitions stand up in quality?

Art history, like any other form of serious knowledge, is continually developing. How do some of the new theories stand up, judging by the objects themselves, and what new light can be derived from them to illuminate our own collection? Should any traditional attributions be altered? Should our presentation of the great periods of art be altered to conform to new perspectives?

What suggestions can be gathered from the way the European museums —of England, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal—present their material?

What interesting new developments have appeared since the war?

One conclusion I drew from the European collections was that the greatest general shortcoming of American museums is their presentation of American art. When a traveler visits a foreign country, he wishes to see not only what examples of the world's art it possesses, but to see what it has produced. In Spain one wants to gain some idea of what Spain has done; in France or England or Portugal one wants to see what the culture of these countries is like. The museums of Europe present their own local and national cultures extremely well. Everywhere in Europe one finds the national art given the same searching, selective, loving and distinguished presentation as is given to the general art of the world. But not in America. American museums, taken as a whole, stand alone in giving a visitor too often a haphazard, fragmentary survey of this country's artistic life. Our own museum, thanks to the generosity of the donors who have interested themselves in this field, is one of the few to offer an excellent survey of American art. To develop this still further, on the most distinguished level, should be a major aim of our institution as a progressive American museum. With the increasing growth of America as a world power, the curiosity of the world about our life and culture grows also; yet there are few collections which give either to Americans or to foreigners an adequate notion of our culture and tradition.

Another question which could be answered only by direct observation was that of the quality of our representation of European art. Have our acquisitions been of the first quality, as we have intended, or have we been unconsciously forced by poverty of funds, or poverty of the art market, to acquire things of secondary importance? It was encouraging that in quality, if not in quantity,

our representation of European art stands the test very well. The Murillo *Flight into Egypt* and the Ribera *St. Jerome in the Wilderness* would hold their own in the Prado. Our English conversation pieces are as interesting as those one sees in London. The Houdon bust, the Tintoretto, the La Tour, the Desiderio da Settignano, the other French and Dutch pictures, the Spanish Gothic altarpiece and choir stalls, the decorative arts – to mention only the objects published in the last volume of the *Bulletin* – would look well in the museums of their country of origin. This was an important point to study. For it is all too easy for a museum, like any other institution, to lose its greatness of aim and fall back into being content with merely local or provincial success. This city has become, in the last half century, one of the great cities of the world. It is our task, in our own special field, to build an institution worthy of the city. Much, very much, remains that we would wish to do: but the accomplishment of the past is important and will stand.

E. P. RICHARDSON

A PORTRAIT OF HENDRIK SWALMIUS *by* FRANS HALS

During the war we had for safe keeping, among the European loans to the New York World's Fair of 1939, one of the most genial and delightful of Frans Hals' works, a portrait of *Hendrik Swalmius, Rector of Haarlem.* A masterpiece of penetrating characterization and mellow humanity, this picture seemed to me at the time, and still seems, one of the most remarkable of Hals' works.

It was a "lost" picture. In modern times its existence had been known from an old engraving by J. Suyderhoef, published by Moes in his *Iconographia Batava* (1879), No. 1720; but the location of the original picture was unknown. In December, 1934, however, the picture appeared in an auction at Sotheby's, in London, of paintings from a Scottish country house in East Lothian. It had not been known to the owners of that collection as a Frans Hals. But when a clever pair of art dealers bought it at the auction and had it cleaned, it proved to be a work not only of the first quality but fully signed and dated by the artist. Mr. H. E. Ten Cate, of Almelo, Netherlands, then acquired it for his great collection of Dutch masters and later loaned it to the New York World's Fair Exhibition. We had it here for several years thereafter and the superlative quality of the picture grew with greater acquaintance. It has now returned to our collection, permanently, as a joint acquisition of the City Purchase Fund and the General Membership Fund of the Founders Society. To many Detroiters it will be like the return of an old friend.

Frans Hals illustrates the fact that the instinct of the collector and amateur of art is sometimes more discerning than that of the art critics. His recognition as a great painter is the result of the admiration of the artists and collectors of the last years of the nineteenth century when Impressionism brought a renewed

appreciation of his luminous, vital and spontaneous style. Yet the verbal explanation of his greatness, offered by the critics of that period, dwelt on one superficial aspect of his art, his bold and flashing brushstroke, alone, as if he were another Boldini or Anders Zorn. This view lingers today and was repeated in so valuable a modern work as Martin's *Hollandsche Schilderkunst in de 17 Eeuw* (1935), where it is stated flatly that "Hals' greatness lies not in the conception of his portraits, or in his genre studies . . . but preeminently in his pictorial execution." (Vol. I, p. 334). This does but poor justice to Hals. The truth is that an innovation in technique is great, and significant, only as it is the creation and expression of a great imaginative impulse. And Hals' works are filled with the poetry of discovery – discovery of light, of movement, of unexplored qualities of human life.

Perhaps the confusion has arisen about Hals' work from the confusion of simplicity with shallowness, which is one of the great fallacies of our times. The depth of Hals' work is in its penetration into life, not in its "manner." Hals has given us an art of profound and memorable character studies, not less profound for being good humored, witty, and expressed with what appears to be unpremeditated freshness and ease. As I have mentioned in discussing the *Laughing Boy* by Hals, elsewhere in this issue, Hals' art developed within a lifetime after the flowering of High Renaissance portraiture. Titian, a great example of the latter, gives us a noble and timeless summation of a life, as serene and noble as a Greek head. Hals, too, summed up the whole quality of a life in a portrait but he discovered another way to do it. His method was to catch the revealing momentary gesture – the characteristic glance, smile, gesture of the hand – which make a personality suddenly exist in all its warmth and vitality before us. Here, painting the portrait of *Hendrik Swalmius,* rector of the First Church of Haarlem, in his sixtieth year, he summed up sixty years' development of benevolence, good humor and intelligence in one keen glance, a smile, a curl of white hair over the rim of the black skull cap, and the gesture of the scholar's hands.

In brevity, wit and completeness, such a summation of a whole phase of life is like an epigram from the Greek Anthology, although its momentary flash is quite different from the Greek style. The Greek poet, writing the epitaph of a ship-wrecked sailor, would distill a whole aspect of life into four lines:

A ship-wrecked sailor, buried on this coast,
Bids you set sail.
Full many a gallant bark, when he was lost,
Weathered the gale.

Or, on a wine jug, as a votive offering:

To thee, O Bacchus, Xenophon the drinker of wine
Dedicates this empty jug.
Accept it graciously.
It is all he owns.

There is no detail here: all is large, clear, and timeless. The last two thousand years of life have added a quality of detailed psychological analysis to our way of seeing people. To sum up in a single image the whole complex psyche of a human being, observed with all the subtle penetration of which the modern mind is capable, is a task of supreme difficulty. Frans Hals has done it in this *Swalmius.*

E. P. RICHARDSON

Cat. no. 938. Panel. Height, 10⅝ inches; width, 7⅞ inches. Inscribed right center: AETAT 60/1639/FH (the initials forming monogram). Engraved by Jan Suyderhoef. Coll.: Mrs. Brown Lindsay, Colstoun, Haddington, Scotland (sold at Sotheby's, London, December 12, 1934, no. 1418); H. E. Ten Cate, Almelo, The Netherlands. Lit.: E. W. Moes, *Iconographia Batava,* 1897, no. 1720; E. W. Moes, *Frans Hals, sa vie et son œuvre,* 1909, no. 75; Hofstede de Groot, *Frans Hals,* 1910, no. 228; W. von Bode and M. J. Binder, *Frans Hals, sein Leben und seine Werke,* 1914, no. 296; W. R. Valentiner, *Frans Hals (Klassiker der Kunst)* 1921, no. 217; *Art News,* January 12, 1935, p. 21; *The Connoisseur,* XCV (1935), p. 105 (ill). Exhibited: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, *Tentoonstelling,* 1936, no. 69; Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, *Frans Hals Tentoonstelling,* 1937, no. 77; New York, World's Fair, *Masterpieces of Art,* 1939, no. 183; Detroit, *Masterpieces from the Two World's Fairs* (1939, No. 20; 1941, No. 27). Joint acquisition of the City Purchase Fund and the Founders Society, 1949. Acc. no. 49.347.

DEDICACE from *Voyage Pittoresque . . . des Royaumes de Naples et des Deux-Siciles* by RICHARD DE SAINT-NON, PARIS, 1781-1785
Bequest of C. Edmond Delbos, 1949

(see next page)

THE C. EDMUND DELBOS BEQUEST TO THE INSTITUTE'S LIBRARY

Two kinds of books make up our monthly list of additions to the Institute's Library. Some – most of them in fact – are unglamorous both in their appearance and their titles. We may be proud to have among our recent accessions the last volumes of "Thieme-Becker," the bible and catechism of art historians, or the last issues of the Vienna Museum's *Jahrbuch,* or complete files of the *American Journal of Archaeology* or *Technical Studies in the Field of Fine Arts;* but they are not glamorous – only extremely useful. Other books are no less helpful; but they are also beautiful to look at. To this latter category belong the volumes which form the C. Edmund Delbos Bequest to the Institute's Library.

We had been searching for many years for Springer's wonderful and scarce series of reproductions of Hercules Seghers' prints; we have it now. Our set of Charles Blanc's *Histoire des peintres de toutes les écoles* is at last complete; and, thanks also to Mr. Delbos' generosity, we now have Dutuit's *Manuel de L'amateur d'estampes.* But beyond doubt, the most valuable part of Mr. Delbos' bequest is Abbé de Saint-Non's famous *Voyage Pittoresque ou Description des Royaumes de Naples et de Sicile,* of which we reproduce the "Dédicace à la Reine" engraved by the Abbé himself. In a period famous for the excellence of its printing, this *Voyage* remains one of the monuments of eighteenth century typography. Even from the point of view of mere size, the undertaking was tremendous; five large folio volumes were published, illustrated with 1 plan, 12 maps, 11 large vignettes, 74 culs-de-lampe, and 376 other engravings. The best engravers of the golden age of French engraving are represented: Cochin, Ponce, Duplessi-Bertaux, Choffard, Saint-Aubin and others. Besides these "grands petits maîtres," we find the two great masters, Fragonard and Hubert Robert, both of whom had been in love with Italy since they were *pensionnaires du roi* in the French Academy in Rome. All the qualities of the eighteenth century – wit, delicacy, charm and a desire to please – are found in their designs for this monumental work. The man responsible for all this was the scholarly and lovable Abbé de Saint-Non (1727-1791), who spent eight years of his life working on the *Voyage* and was financially ruined by the undertaking. He was a close friend of Fragonard and Hubert Robert with whom he roamed throughout Italy for three years, coming back to France with "toute une bibliothèque de dessins." As an epigraph to his most famous work, the Abbé wrote the charming, if trite, sentence: "What flowers are to our gardens, the arts are to life."

MARGARET INSLEY

A ROMANTIC SKETCH *by* BARON GROS: MURAT AT ABOUKIR

Until recently the grand style of the Napoleonic era, an essential link in the development of French painting, had been unrepresented in the Institute.

JOACHIM MURAT AT ABOUKIR
by BARON ANTOINE JEAN GROS, FRENCH (1771-1835)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1949

Portraits of the early French Romantic school, some of them of outstanding importance, are hanging in our European galleries, it is true; and we are justly proud of them. But the genre of the *tableau d'histoire,* so typical of the period and so influential throughout the nineteenth century, was absent. Either in France or in this country, such works are in fact difficult to obtain. The majority being commissions made to the artists by Napoleon and his generals, or the results of competitions ordered by the State, they have usually found a resting place in the Louvre, the Versailles *Galerie des Batailles* or, when they fell out of fashion, in the dreary provincial museums of pre-war France. Fortunately it was the custom of the artists to make large scale studies of their huge compositions, either for their own guidance, or as *maquettes* to be submitted for approbation to their patrons. Finished works of art in themselves, such preliminary sketches usually tell us more of the technique of their creators than the official orders, since the latter were, in a large part at least, the works of assistants. One of these studies has recently been acquired by the Institute: Baron Gros' masterful sketch for his *Battle of Aboukir,* which celebrates Joachim Murat's victory over the Turks during the Egyptian campaign.[1] It comes to us as a present from Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, who have done so much already to make the representation of the French school worthy of Detroit, and to whom we owe such important and diverse examples of French art as Nattier's *Madame Henriette,* Fragonard's *Storm* and the magnificent Louis XV console, illustrated p. 22.

This new acquisition, as may be seen from the reproductions, is a fascinating

painting. As interesting as his work was the painter himself. Better than Delacroix, the leader of French Romantic painting, so sedate in his habits and so quiet a man of action, Antoine-Jean Gros is the ideal romantic hero – melancholy, unhappy and handsome (did Josephine Bonaparte admire only the painter in the young man she protected?). Full of contradictions, he was proud and conscious of his great artistic gifts, but weak and, even in his work, easily influenced; ambitious, but only intermittently and without sustained energy; covered with honors, protected by the successive rulers of France, but unable to resist the attacks of the jealous critics who influenced opinion against him. A born realist, Gros should have painted only the great men of his time, whom he knew well, and depicted only the epic deeds which, as a member of Bonaparte's retinue in Italy, he had witnessed in his youth. Yet under the influence of his *mauvais génie,* David, the last twenty-five years of Gros' life were spent in producing allegories of Wisdom or Moderation, and his last work was a *Hercules and Diomenes* which even his panegyrists do not defend. The painter of *Aboukir* and *Napoleon at Eylau* was born to be the *chef d'école* of the romantic movement in art: he merely became its first exponent, and only the truly great painters of the school, Géricault, who copied his first large battle scene, and Delacroix, who, as he said, was made indifferent to flattery for life by Gros' congratulations, acknowledged their debt towards him. The *Hercules* was shown at the Salon of 1835, and was bitterly attacked. Unable to bear any longer the venomous criticism of unfair rivals and at last aware of his failure, Gros drowned himself in the Seine. In the year of Gros' death, Alfred de Vigny wrote what is probably the masterpiece of the French Romantic drama, *Chatterton.* It was the story of a sensitive and tortured poet at odds with the world who finds escape only in suicide. There was a great deal of Chatterton in Gros.

Today the classical works of Gros' later years are forgotten. But his Napoleonic portraits, and above all the five or six great battle scenes, so full of bravura and color, which he painted in the first decade of the century, have given him lasting fame in France. Still Gros is not so well known in the United States as he deserves to be. In 1938, at the time of the first Gros exhibition in New York, only two of his works were owned in this country;[2] in addition to the Detroit picture, two more have recently been acquired by American museums. It may not be an over-statement to say that, historically at least, the sketch for the *Battle of Aboukir* is of the greatest importance. After Napoleon's fall, and its owner's tragic death, the enormous battle scene for which the Detroit sketch is a study was rolled up and hidden in the attic of a Neapolitan palace, where Stendhal saw it pitifully neglected. Before being placed in the famous Versailles *Galerie des Batailles,* it had to be so extensively restored that it can hardly be considered Gros' work any longer.[3] Yet so grand is its composition, so bold its color scheme that it has been called one of the greatest masterpieces of French painting.[4] The Detroit sketch, as fresh as it was when first painted, and differing only in minor details from the Versailles *Aboukir,* is not inferior to it.

The *Battle of Aboukir* or, to give it its full name, *Cavalry Charge under General Murat at the Battle of Aboukir in Egypt,* was ordered from Gros by Murat himself. The painter was then, in 1805, at the height of his career. At the Salon of the preceding year, his famous *Pest-Ridden of Jaffa,* in which Napoleon Bonaparte plays the main part, had been received with enthusiasm. The painting had been decorated with laurels by his friends; Girodet in a wretched poem had praised Gros "palette brûlante" (making it rhyme of course with "teinte éclatante"), and members of the new aristocracy became anxious to sit to this protégé of Josephine's. It is quite logical that Murat, always anxious to imitate his hero, should have asked Gros to perpetuate the memory of his victory; and anyway this flamboyant innkeeper's son who, an abbé in his youth, became a few years later prince of the Empire, Grand admiral of the French fleet, Grand duke of Berg and Cleves, king of Naples and the Emperor's brother-in-law, was not adverse to sitting for his portrait.

It would be tedious to give a full description of the scene, to which Gros' biographer, Delestre, devotes nineteen pages. The moment chosen by the painter is the turning point of the battle, when the generalissimo of the Turkish army, Mustapha Kulei, has just been wounded by Murat; the son of the Turkish leader, in sign of submission, presents his father's scimitar to Murat, while the old Pasha, seized by a homeric anger, tries to stop one of the fleeing mamelukes. The most striking figure, a masterpiece of intense characterization, is "beau" Murat himself. Immobile on a prancing white horse, his right arm extended in a hieratic

JOACHIM MURAT AT ABOUKIR (Detail)
by BARON GROS

gesture as if he were some Oriental god, he is unmistakably the hero of the battle, and its only calm actor. Behind him, in a long oblique line which vanishes in the golden haze of the African sky, his cuirassiers rush to the enemy, galloping wildly on their black horses. The citadel of Aboukir, with its ramparts and its minarets shimmering in the hot morning sun, and the camp of the Pasha, lightly sketched in pale colors, form for this scene of fury a background as ethereal as a mirage.

Gros had witnessed such skirmishes during the Italian campaign, only a few years before the execution of the *Aboukir*. In a masterly fashion he expressed the hopeless confusion of eighteenth century battles, in which the cavalry still played the most important part. One of the first examples of romantic realism in French art, the painting is a faithful representation of the actual event. To insure its authenticity, the artist had studied the available maps, as well as the report written to the Directoire by Bonaparte himself; we know that he also asked his friend Vivant-Denon, who accompanied the First Consul to Egypt, for the loan of his collection of Oriental arms and costumes. As seen in the Detroit sketch, which is the actual *maquette* presented to Murat for the general's approval,[5] the result is striking. Under the torrid sun the whole scene has a veracity such as the French had never experienced: from then on the pseudo-exotic *Turqueries* of Lancret or Liotard and the charmingly false *Seraglios* à la Mozart would be replaced by this discovery of the romantic painter, faithful local color. More difficult to express was the astounding realism of gesture which gives the *Aboukir* its prominent place in the development of French painting. "Painters should be able to draw the silhouette of a man while he is falling from a fourth floor window," Delacroix said. Long before him Gros discovered the truth of the saying. Whether he paints a naked slave trampled by a wounded horse, or a soldier on horseback bending to give a mameluke the *coup de grâce,* he endows his character with the right attitude, the logical gesture. For the first time possibly a modern painter dares to express the vulgar ugliness of violent death, the astonished look and gaping mouth of a dying man who utters a last cry. No detail is too subtle or too crude to omit: the futile gesture of the Turk who, a shadow behind a veil of dust, attempts to tear away from under Murat the conqueror's saddle, the limpness of the Pasha's bleeding hand, the fury of a drowning horse. Historical painting had long been, as the theoretician Dufresnoy said it should be, "the sister of Tragedy"; with Gros and his disciples painting becomes dangerously akin to melodrama.

Such a scene of carnage, such apparently hopeless confusion, would be almost unbearable, were it not that *Aboukir* possesses qualities which transcend realism. The most fruitful is perhaps the excellence of Gros' technique, with its thick impasto and slashing brushstrokes which remind one of Fragonard, some of whose works Gros had seen in his own home and at Mme. Vigée-Le Brun's. But most striking is the originality of Gros' color scheme. To few other works can Delacroix' famous sentence, *"Le rouge change la gloire du vert,"* be more

justly applied. Strong reds and acid greens dominate the general tonality, heightened by black accents, as in a ballet with costumes by Baskt. Yet the effect is not garish, thanks to the soft golden background and the pastel shades of the tents before which the figures stand out sharply. *Aboukir* has the magnificence of a Titian or a Rubens, and at the same time the unexpected harmonies which were to characterize throughout the nineteenth century the French School of painting.

The painting now owned by the Institute has a distinguished pedigree. It first appeared in an unnamed sale in 1828, fetching what was for the period a very large sum and, in 1847, was mentioned as belonging to the Diot collection. Still later it hung in the home of the descendant of a great Napoleonic figure, Cambacérès. Its last owner was the Duc de Trévise whose ancestor, Marshal Mortier, was one of the Emperor's most trusted generals, and whose collection of paintings and drawings by French Romantic artists was the most representative and carefully chosen of its type.

PAUL L. GRIGAUT

[1] Cat. no. 937. Canvas. Height 34¾ inches; width 54½ inches. The original width of the canvas has been pieced out by two strips of wood added by the artist; the painting extends out over these strips, which were evidently a rough-and-ready device to give the composition greater width than was foreseen when Gros stretched his canvas. Signed on a rock in left-center foreground: *Gros.* A study for the horse of Mustapha Pasha is in the museum at Besançon and a sketch for Murat in the Smith College Museum of Art. Exhibited: *Gros, ses amis et ses élèves,* Paris, 1936 (no. 33); *Bonaparte en Egypte,* Paris, 1938 (no. 95); *Gros, Géricault, Delacroix,* New York (Knoedler), 1938 (no. 5). *French Romantic Artists,* San Francisco Museum of Art, 1939 (no. 4). *New York World's Fair,* 1940 (no. 230). A note in the catalogue of the last named exhibition states that the painting was done for Napoleon. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1949. Acc. no. 49.337.

[2] Walter Pach in the preface of the 1938 New York exhibition catalogue.

[3] Pierre Lelièvre, *Gros, peintre d'histoire, Gazette des Beaux-Arts,* 1936, p. 296.

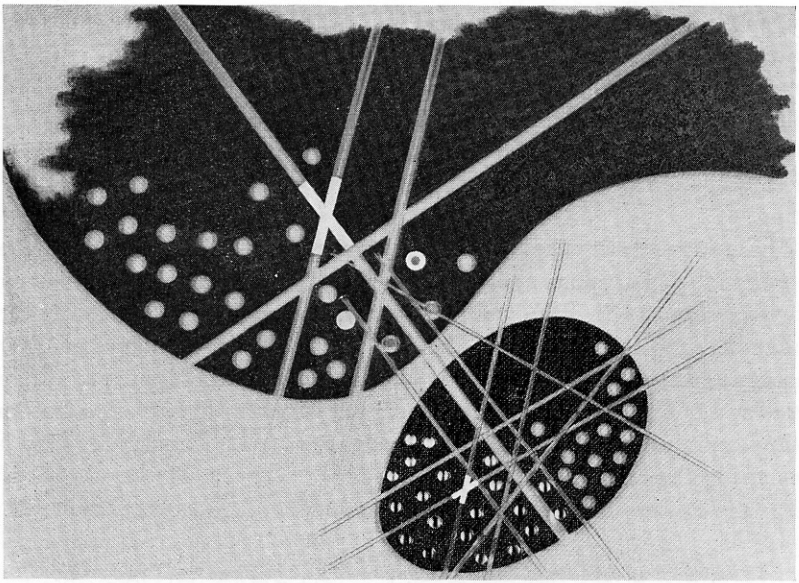
[4] Raymond Escholier, *Gros, ses amis et ses élèves,* p. 11.

[5] J. Tripier Le Franc, *Histoire du Baron Gros,* Paris, 1880, p. 230. The Detroit sketch is also mentioned in J. B. Delestre, *Gros et ses ouvrages,* Paris, 1867, p. 105.

RED OVER BLACK

The Moholy-Nagy Space Modulator already in the museum's collection of abstract art has now been supplemented by another of this artist's works, the Space Modulator entitled *Red over Black.* In this work, as in many others of his last years, Moholy has dramatized relationships of color and shape through the use of light and space.

The construction of the piece is in itself an important item. The large area in the upper left is painted on the outer surface of a rectangular plane of transparent plastic; the small ovoid area is applied to the under surface of a second plane of transparent plastic. Between the two sheets of plastic is sandwiched a



RED OVER BLACK: SPACE MODULATOR
by LASLO MOHOLY-NAGY, AMERICAN (1895-1948)
Gift of W. Hawkins Ferry, 1948

wire screen. This unit of plastic, paint, and screen is suspended a short distance in front of a smooth white surface which serves as a frame, a reflector of light, and a ground for cast shadows.

In *Red over Black,* as in all his works, Moholy-Nagy has sought to use for an aesthetic purpose the materials and techniques developed by an age of machinery and mass-production. Here in an organized artistic whole are the products of modern invention – the plastic of an airplane cowl, the wire mesh of a backdoor screen, the smooth enamel of a new automobile finish, the regularized texture of stippled wall paint. The shapes too make reference to the technical world; here is the graph of the mathematician with its precisely plotted curves, its parabolas and circles, its network of interesting X and Y coordinates. In addition, there are established strong contrasts of warm color against cold, of dynamic contour against static; these and other repeated oppositions suggest a dramatic conflict between the "Red" and the "Black." As a result, Moholy-Nagy's seemingly abstruse technical experiment acquires an additional and more general meaning in the realm of feeling. VIRGINIA HARRIMAN

Cat. no. 940. Height, 18½ inches; width, 25½ inches. Gift of W. Hawkins Ferry, 1948. Acc. no. 48.3.

FRANS HALS' LAUGHING BOY

The portrait of a *Laughing Boy* by Frans Hals, added to our collection as the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Fisher, needs no explanation. Its vivid humanity and good humor as a study of a little boy, the vitality and

easy assurance of its style, mark it for all observers as the work of a master. The child represented is probably one of Hals' own children.[1]

The series of portraits of laughing boys and girls, of various ages, to which our picture belongs, are not dated but are generally agreed to have been executed in the early 1620's. This dating agrees very well with the development of Hals' style, as shown by the signed and dated 1623 *Cavalier and his Sweetheart* in the Metropolitan Museum, and also with the growth of the children of his second marriage of 1617.[2] Hals' family was large and troublesome. But when, in the 1620's, Hals' genius overflowed the existing bounds of portrait painting, his children were the models for a series of pictures in which he found his way to a new technique and a new style.

Only sixty years separate this picture from Titian's *Man with the Flute,* to take an example from our own collection of the mood of portraiture in the preceding century. Titian's portraiture was lofty, noble and reserved: so was the work of his contemporaries in the Netherlands like Antonis Mor and Willem

THE LAUGHING BOY
by FRANS HALS, DUTCH (1585?-1666)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Fisher, 1948

Key. It is true that the sixteenth century northern painters had already begun to make tentative essays in the study of laughter, like Frans Floris' *Two Court Fools* and Peter Huys' *Bagpipe Player* (both in Detroit). But these early experiments were tentative and the effect always strikes us a little rigid and hard. Never before Hals had a painter achieved such insight, and command of the instantaneous flash of expression in the human face, as Hals shows here.

To express this flash of life it was necessary for Hals to create a new technique. In the sixteenth century even artists like Pieter Bruegel worked with firm, decisive outlines and rather enamel-like paint. In Venice, meanwhile, a technique had been developed with a free use of flashing lights to express movement. But it had never been applied to the psychological study of human character in action in the instantaneous movements of the face and hands, until Frans Hals developed his free, brilliant and intensely personal technique. These informal studies of his own children, in which he could let himself go, unrestrained by the need to satisfy the conventional requirements for a portrait, have an exhilarating quality, for they are filled with a great artist's delight in the discovery of his new found powers.

E. P. RICHARDSON

[1] Cat. no. 959. Panel. Height, $13^{1}/_{16}$ inches; width $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Collections: E. Warneck, Paris, 1926; William A. Fisher, Detroit. References: Amsterdam, F. Muller, *Maitres hollandais,* 1906, no. 58; W. von Bode and M. J. Binder, *Frans Hals, sein Leben und seine Werke,* no. 33, pl. 14a; W. R. Valentiner, *Frans Hals* (Klassiker der Kunst), 1921, p. 32; W. von Bode, *Studien zur Geschichte der hollandischen Malerei,* p. 58, no. 78; E. W. Moes, *Frans Hals, sa vie et son œuvre,* no. 246; Hofstede de Groot, vol. III, *Frans Hals,* 1910, no. 20; Frits Lugt, *Collection Warneck, Tableaux Anciens et Modernes,* Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, 1926, no. 58. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Fisher, 1948. Acc. no. 48.383.

[2] Others in the series in this country are the *Laughing Child with a Flute* (Davis collection, St. Louis), *Laughing Boy* (sold in the John Bass sale, New York, 1945), the *Laughing Child with a Flute* (Taft Museum, Cincinnati), the *Laughing Child* (Wimpfheimer collection, New York), the *Laughing Boy with a Flute* (E. W. Edwards collection, Cincinnati). The miniature-like *Singing Girl* and *Singing Boy* in the Art Institute of Chicago, painted on diamond-shaped panels, are of a slightly later date.

HOPPNER'S "LITTLE GARDENER"

English eighteenth century portrait was the product of its times. The eighteenth century was a social century – its interest was in people, in human society. This was not a merely frivolous interest, for the strong and fruitful forms of society and government we use today are the products of eighteenth century political thought. It was also an age of spacious formal architecture, in which paintings served as important decorative elements. To meet these conditions Reynolds, Gainsborough and Romney created a portrait style decorative, monumental, giving expression to the social rank and dignity of their aristocratic clients, yet at the same time not losing the individuality of the sitter.

In America we do not tend to distinguish clearly enough between the full eighteenth century style of the period of Reynolds and Gainsborough, which began about 1755, from the later developments, the classical portraiture of Romney, which began about 1770, and the style of Lawrence and Hoppner, which dominates the period 1790 to 1815. Yet each of these represents a distinct phase, social, cultural and stylistic, and was linked both with the development of English architecture and English life.

The acknowledged leaders of the Regency period, the rivals who competed for the favor of the fashionable world, were Lawrence and Hoppner. Lawrence had the support of the King, Hoppner of the Prince of Wales, whose official portrait painter he became in 1793. One might emphasize that to become

YOUNG LADY SEATED IN A WOOD
by JOHN HOPPNER, ENGLISH (1758?-1810)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Fisher, 1948

portrait painter to George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1793, meant something. For in his early life, the future George IV, gay, careless and dissolute as he may have been, was a man of superb taste. Carlton House, the residence, rebuilt for him by his architect, Henry Holland, was an extraordinarily handsome building in the strongest and most subtle version of the English neo-classical style. Something of its distinction may be seen in the interior reproduced in Rowlandson and Pugin's *Microcosm of London* (1808), which is to be found in the pleasant little Penguin reprint of 1947. The Regent's taste later declined to the point of building the oriental Pavilion at Brighton, but in the 1790's he had fine artistic judgment.

Hoppner's portrait of a *Young Lady Seated in a Wood,* sometimes called *The Little Gardener,* is a youthful masterpiece of his style about the time that he attracted the interest and patronage of the Prince. Nothing could show better what his gifts were before his art (like his patron's taste) had lost its youthful freshness. He based himself upon the late style of Reynolds and, in fact, this picture was once called Reynolds', when it was in the collection of the Earl of Normanton.[1] But Algernon Graves had already suggested the right attribution when the picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1892[2], and Mr. E. K. Waterhouse, the best student of Reynolds among the younger English scholars, has recently reiterated that attribution.

The picture is an example of Hoppner's best portraits of children. The color is fresh and pleasing, the design large and decorative, the modeling of the young girl's face sensitive, clear cut and delicate, and the whole expression of wistful, dreamy repose is appealing and convincing. Sentiment, grace, simplicity, these are the keynotes of the picture. It has the broad, clear, decorative quality of English style at the last, most refined moment of classical taste, about 1790, before it had degenerated into the more flashy style of 1800 and after. This picture, which is the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Fisher, will be a very popular addition to our collection of English portraiture.

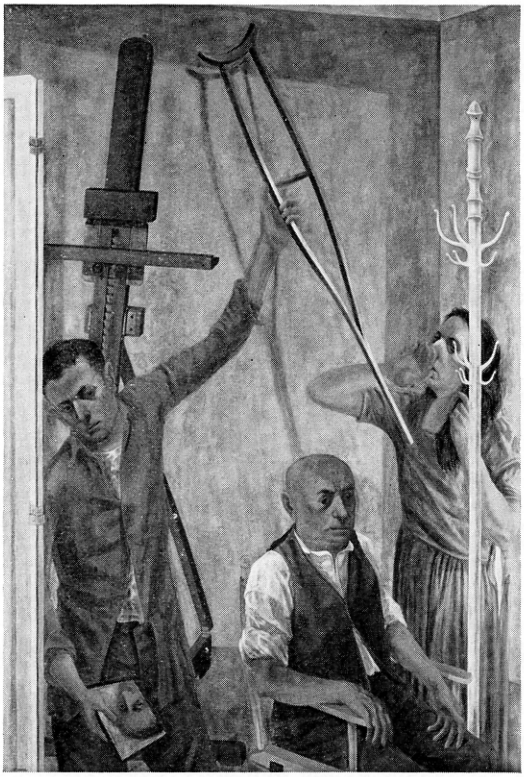
Allan Cunningham, the gossipy biographer of these painters, said that Hoppner later lost his place in his bitter rivalry with Lawrence, partly because of a spiteful remark. "'The ladies of Lawrence,' said Hoppner, 'show a gaudy dissoluteness of taste, and sometimes trespass on moral as well as professional chastity.' For his own he claimed, by implication, purity of look as well as purity of style. This sarcastic remark found wings in a moment, and flew through all coteries and through both courts; it did most harm to him who uttered it; all men laughed, and then began to wonder how Lawrence, limner to perhaps the purest court in Europe, came to bestow lascivious looks on the meek and sedate ladies of quality about St. James's and Windsor, while Hoppner, limner to the court of a gallant young prince, who loved mirth and wine, the sound of the lute and the music of ladies' feet in the dance, should, to some of its gayest and giddiest ornaments, give the simplicity of manner and purity of style which pertained to the quaker-like sobriety of the other. Nor is it the least curious part of this story, that the ladies, from the moment of the sarcasm

of Hoppner, instead of crowding to the easel of him who dealt in the loveliness of virtue, showed a growing preference for the rival who 'trespassed on the moral as well as on professional chastity'. After this Lawrence had enough of gentle sitters." But in this portrait, painted at the height of his powers, Hoppner shows how attractive his simplicity and purity can be.

E. P. RICHARDSON

[1] Cat no. 960. Canvas. Height, 50½ inches; width, 40⅜ inches. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Fisher, 1948. Acc. no. 48.384. Cf. Max Roldit, "The collection of pictures of the Earl of Normanton, at Somerley, Hampshire, "*Burlington Magazine,* II (1903), p. 218.

[2] Algernon Graves, *A Century of Loan Exhibitions, 1813-1912,* 1914, vol. III, p. 1064.



FAMILY PORTRAIT
by STEPHEN GREENE, AMERICAN (CONTEMPORARY)
Gift of John S. Newberry, Jr., 1948

FAMILY PORTRAIT *by* STEPHEN GREENE

Because of the tendency of some painters to veil the content of their pictures with obscure, private devices and props, the use of symbols in contemporary

painting is not unanimously accepted in art circles. Stephen Greene paints with symbols and his pictures are calculated to tell a story in terms of specific objects. But the objects he chooses are things encountered by everyone in day to day experience and therefore the symbols, which derive directly from the common use of the object, are potentially comprehensible to the most untutored Non-Freudian.

Family Portrait, given to the Institute in 1948 by John S. Newberry, Jr., is a painting of pictorial and spiritual sensitivity. The figure of the young man at the left is a self-portrait and presumably the other figures are portraits of Greene's parents. The haunting green and saffron tonality, the introspective look and intense articulation of the figures, suggest that the scene is charged with some undercurrent of secondary meaning.

The painter writes: "The mirror and the crutch are props of the painter; these props, however, are derived from his relationship to his parents. The mirror is used to turn from the family to self-searching and introspection, and the crutch is the symbol of relationship to the parents. In this particular case the relationship to the mother is stronger than the one to the father. The upraised arm of the mother is a gesture suppressing a possible cry of recognition and despair resulting from the family relationship."

The clothes tree is to Greene a symbol of torture while the easel becomes symbolical of a cross. The biblical implication of the cross relates this painting to the religious themes drawn upon by Greene during the last few years. Yet the biblical symbol in *Family Portrait,* as in most of Greene's more recent work, is no longer the main theme of the painting but only incidental to the personal reaction of the artist to his immediate environment.

A. S. CAVALLO

Cat. no. 960. Canvas. Height 60 inches; width 40 inches. Signed lower left. Gift of John S. Newberry, Jr., 1948. Exhibited at Durlacher Brothers, New York, March 1-26, 1948 (no. 10). Acc. no. 48.396.

FOUR WATER COLOR STUDIES *by* JOHN LA FARGE

As a gift of the Founders Society through the Merrill Fund, the Museum has acquired four important water color studies by John La Farge. These, studies for mural decorations in the Baltimore Court House, make interesting companions to the sketch for a stained glass window discussed in a recent issue of the *Bulletin.* The murals and windows upon which La Farge's fame rests most firmly are, *in situ,* inaccessible to many of us, a circumstance which makes his handsome studies more to be cherished.

The four mural studies are really drawings with color washes. One cannot help but delight in the strong, meticulous draughtsmanship which was the foundation upon which all of La Farge's larger works were built. In Europe,

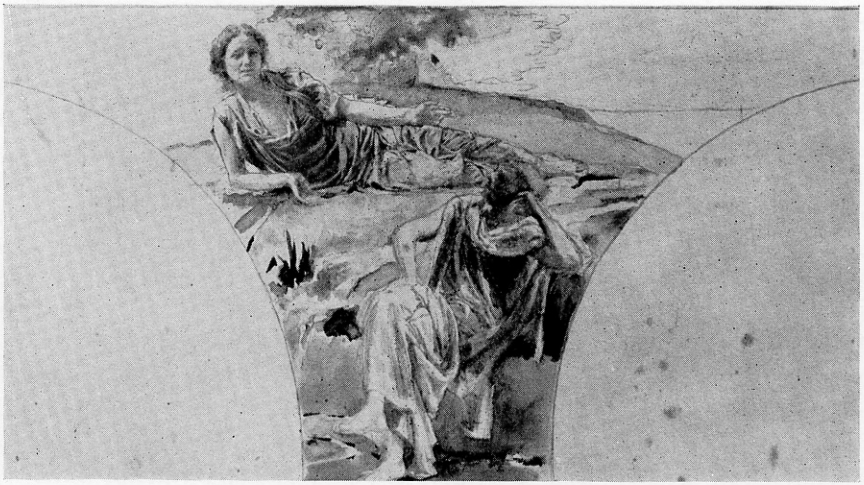


Fig. 1. NUMA POMPILIUS
by JOHN LA FARGE, AMERICAN (1835-1910)
Gift of the Founders Society, 1948

where he first began seriously to study painting, La Farge copied the drawings of the masters in the great collections in Munich and Dresden. Of these he wrote: "If I copied the painting for which the drawing had been made I could only copy the surface, without knowing exactly how the master had made his result. But I knew that in the master's drawings and studies for a given work I met him intimately, saw into his mind, and learned his intentions and his character, and what was great and what was deficient." One feels that he began on a firm footing which was later to hold his imaginative, and sometimes inspired, mind to a solid ground of craftsmanship and discipline.

Our four studies, too, give some indication of La Farge's wide range of knowledge. He chose, for the Court House setting, to represent four of the great lawgivers of East and West, and each of the studies bears a brief notation of the subject in his own hand and the date, 1905.

Of Numa, represented in the first of the studies (fig. 1), La Farge wrote: "Numa Pompilius: He sits listening to the nymph instructing him. The fount flows between them." Numa was the second king of Rome, renowned for his piety, and upon whose systems of ceremonial law the Romans based their rites of worship.

Of Mahomet, the founder of Islam: "Mahomet: He sits veiled between the sons of his son-in-law, Hussein and Hocein. He is praying. Hocein holds the flag above him."

"Lycurgus: He consults the Pythian oracle with regard to the laws of Sparta, before his disappearance or death." Lycurgus drew up a constitution, approved by the oracle, which set very high standards of honor and justice for the city of Sparta. About to embark upon a journey, he exacted an oath from the

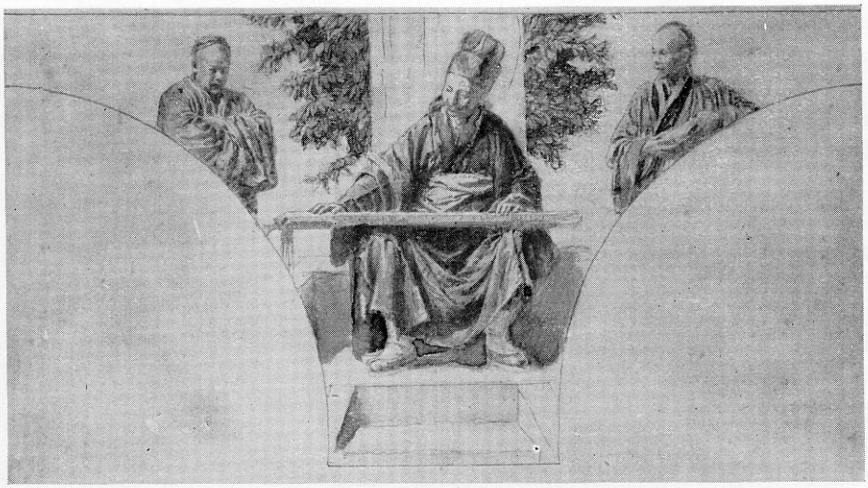


Fig. 2. CONFUCIUS
by JOHN LA FARGE, AMERICAN (1835-1910)
Gift of the Founders Society, 1948

people that they would not change the laws until his return. Lycurgus spent the rest of his life in voluntary exile, thus binding the Spartans to his laws forever.

"Confucius: He plays as usual before his commentaries, or teaching. The disciples listen, interpreting his meaning. He is seated in his usual seat: the apricot altar" (fig. 2). One of the names which Confucius had among the Chinese was the Man of the Curtain. Okakura, the famous scholar and friend of La Farge, told the artist this when he saw the painting of Confucius sitting in the open before a white curtain – a fact which La Farge had not known but which coincided with his use of the curtain compositionally, to make a perpendicular mass in the center of the design.

The murals were painted, in heroic size, in the four spandrels of a domed room. It is very interesting to note that La Farge has filled the difficult shapes in a very free and lively manner, not feeling constrained by them, nor forcing his figures into a stereotyped pattern. A. F. PAGE

Cat. nos. 954, a, b, c, d. All four studies are of the same dimensions: height, 5¾ inches; width at top, 11 $^{7}/_{16}$ inches. Gift of the Founders Society, Merrill Fund, 1948. Acc. nos. 48.270 through 48.273.

THREE EXAMPLES OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FURNITURE

During the past two years there have been added to the Institute's collection of decorative arts a number of pieces of European furniture. Some are of outstanding importance. Among these should be mentioned the rare octagonal table (a gift of Mrs. John S. Newberry) which adds a delightful accent to our

eighteenth century English gallery, and the impressive French desk, of the Empire period, which was recently presented in memory of Dr. Erick Husserl by a group of his friends. Illustrated here are three other pieces of furniture, each of which, with dignity and charm, fills a gap in our collections.

The earliest in date is a Venetian armchair of the 1730's (fig. 1)[1]. Originally in the Giovanelli Palace in Venice it represents rococo at its most delicate, without the exuberance and lack of restraint which often characterize the furniture of the Most Serene Republic. It is no paradox to say that this chair is today more beautiful, more pleasing to the eye, than it was when it graced the hall of the Palazzo Giovanelli near the Grand Canal: the brown paint which covers the wood has now mellowed to a soft *caffè látte* tone, the gold which outlined each curve is now hardly more than a dull yellow, and the gorgeous wool velvet has faded to resemble ivory. Rarely has a piece of eighteenth century furniture aged so gracefully.

Until recently Nattier's *Madame Henriette* stood by itself in its *rocaille* frame. Thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, the donors of this portrait of Louis XV's daughter, a perfect ensemble has been created in the Institute's Baroque Gallery by placing under the painting a magnificent carved and gilded console of the same period (fig. 2)[2]. To claim for this console, of a type known as "modèle des Tuileries," a royal origin, is not merely wishful thinking. Similar tables may be seen in the official portraits of Louis XV's family, those

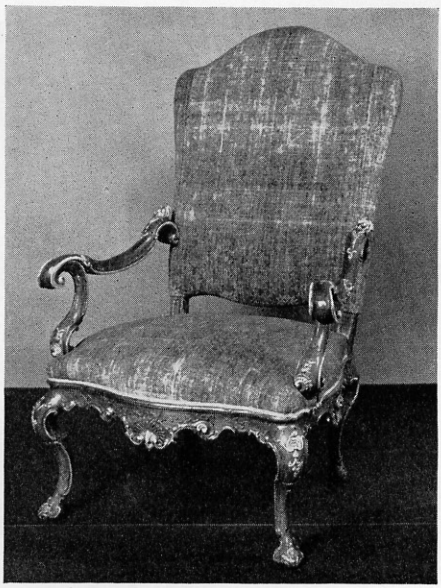


Fig. 1. ARMCHAIR, ITALIAN (VENICE), ABOUT 1730. ONE OF A PAIR.
Gift of the Founders Society, 1947

of Queen Maria Lesczinska by Carle van Loo or Tocqué for example; and, in the hallali scene which decorates the base, the dogs bear on their collars the names of three hunting dogs of the king's pack of hounds, Créon, Fox and César. Monumental in conception, yet exquisitely fragile, this console is a masterpiece of eighteenth century craftsmanship. Its complex decorative scheme and carefully planned asymmetry, so expressive of the dynamic quality of all things French at that period, may seem strange to us today, accustomed as we are to restraint and nudity in the objects we use. But is it fair to apply our standards of taste to such works, and did not Reynolds say: "Could we teach taste and genius by rule, they would no longer be taste and genius?" "Genius" may be too strong a word to use in connection with this console, certainly "taste" is not.

The third piece of furniture illustrated here (fig. 3)[3] is part of a group of eighteenth century French furniture which was presented some time ago to the Institute by Miss Oglesby of New York City. Two chairs and two rare sewing tables represent now the subdued and delicate taste of the French *bourgeois* of the Louis XV period and form an instructive contrast with the courtly furniture exhibited in the French Room. More important still are two Louis XVI pieces, a circular dining table, and the console shown on this page. In Paris at least, it was usual for eighteenth century *ébénistes* to sign their work:

Fig. 2. CARVED AND GILDED CONSOLE APPLIQUE, FRENCH, ABOUT 1740.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1949

the console bears the stamp of Claude-Mathieu Magnien, an excellent craftsman whose works, considered worthy of a place in the palace of Fontainbleau, are among the typical productions of the period. As may be seen from the Institute's console the Louis XVI style in full bloom was a radical departure from the Rococo: linear severity, chastity of design, perfect symmetry, discretion in the use of ormolu, are some of the qualities which replace the qualities of the *style rocaille*. The wood used here is mahogany – not the dark wood which was favored by the English and American cabinet makers of the period, but a delicately grained blond mahogany which blended well with the brasses and slabs of marble which remained an integral part of Louis XVI furniture. In addition to its intrinsic interest as a work of art, this *console desserte* – really a simple type of the more familiar dining-room sideboard – is a valuable addition to our collection of decorative arts as an example of the classical style *à l'antique* almost totally unpresented in our eighteenth century rooms.

P.L.G.

[1] One of a pair. Acc. nos. 47.38 and 47.39. Height, 49½ inches. Gift of the Founders Society, 1947.

[2] Acc. no. 49.339. Height, 35 inches, length 60⅜ inches. Formerly in the Huntington and Rasmussen collections. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1949.

[3] Acc. no. 47.391. Height, 34½ inches; length, 49¼ inches. Gift of Miss Catharine Oglesby, 1947.

Fig. 3. CONSOLE *(Desserte)*
by CLAUDE-MATHIEU MAGNIEN (FRENCH, ACTIVE LAST QUARTER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)
Gift of Miss Catharine Oglesby, 1947

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