



MICHAEL
DUNN
ANTIQUES
WORKS OF ART

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*This Fall, another catalogue, our sixth,
sets out an array of objects to intrigue the
eye and stimulate a search into history. Surfaces
of wood, alabaster, volcanic stone, iron and ivory,
delighted princes, merchants, mandarins and
lamas much as they do today.*

*The quest for material culture, as in
every century before, continues. And, we,
with an abiding taste for articles carved, engraved,
cast, painted and gilded, particularly from the ages
before high technology, pursue those specimens of
the exotic or the historically significant,
always tempering our appetite for ownership
with personal aesthetics.*

*Please call on us for more information
about the offerings herein or to let us know
of your collecting interests. We are always ready
to act as agents for you in the brokering of objects.*

*Again, our thanks for your past comments,
and for your continued patronage.*

FALL 1995



NOTTINGHAM ALABASTER

The Middle Period in English medieval alabaster production, (1380-1420), extensively catalogued by Francis Cheetham in, *English Medieval Alabasters*, identifies characteristics specific to this period's development. Vertical panels begin to appear, often with embattlements across the upper edge, and relatively simple compositions framed by carefully finished edges. Here, St. Peter Receiving the Souls of the Blessed into Heaven, portrays the Saint with his symbolic key clasped in his left hand, his right hand extended and his head bent slightly forward bestowing a gesture of fatherly beneficence. Souls come forward in awed humility to accent St. Peter's hand. Embarrassed by his nakedness, the first of three souls meekly offers up his hand to be drawn within the portals of heaven, represented by the castelated pillars and canopy, which surround St. Peter. The composition of these early, and peculiarly English works, is invariably charming, however it is their naive expression of faith and innocence which renders them their power. Circa 1400. ¶ H. 14½" (32cm) W. 9¼" (24cm)

see:

Francis Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, Pg 144 pl. 73.



OVAL GILT BOX

A most remarkable oval box of gilt brass. The engraving depicts Elizabeth I of France and includes her death date, Obiit 1592. She is pictured with her coat-of-arms against a backdrop of church buildings. One hand fingers a rosary while the other clasps a book. To her right is an image of the crucifixion. Foliate scrolls complete the composition while on the reverse of the box a border of foliate scrolls surrounds the conjoined letters which spell Maria above a heart pierced by a sword. It has survived in an excellent state with only minor rubbing of the gilding. Circa 1590. ■ H. 4½" (11.75 cm) W. 3⅝" (9 cm) D. ¼" (1.8 cm)



MOUNTED COCONUT

A gilt-brass, mounted coconut with cast and engraved decoration was both a curiosity and a symbol of status in the late 16th to early 17th Centuries. Exploration of distant seas in the age of discovery saw their return bring what was then the exotic. The coconut lent itself to mounting as a flask, wine ewer, beaker and flagon. Given an owl or jester's head or, becoming an ostrich's body with silver mounts, the coconut had inventive attention lavished on it. Probably Germany or The Low Countries, Circa 1600. ¶ H. 8" (21 cm).

See:

Rolf Fritz, *Die Giefasse aus Kokosnuss in Mitteleuropa 1250-1800*.



IRON DOORKNOCKER

Artistry in wrought iron represents a victory for the smith over a material that resists with every hammer blow becoming that which the artists envisions. Here the opposed scrolls formed of tense dolphin/dragons, mirroring each other in fins and scales, with open, tooth-filled mouths and fearsome eyes declares another triumph for the smith. France or Germay, Early 17th Century. ¶ H. 13¼" (33 cm) W. 9" (18 cm).

See:

Henry Rene D'Allamagne, *Decorative Antique Ironwork*, pls. 117 & 118.



GANESH

To propitiate Ganesh is to embark with good beginnings. He guards the portals of both dwelling place and sanctuary and the believer is wise to worship him before other deities. Popular in Javanese homes, he is carved of buff volcanic stone. He sits atop a ring of skulls, holding in one of four arms, his broken tusk which he uses as a pen to record the epics. His upper left hand holds a string of recitation beads, or aksamala. A necklace of skulls encircles his neck while another hand supports his everpresent bowl of sweetmeats into which he directs his trunk. As presented here he is at once compact and mighty. His close set eyes, plump body, flattened chest and facing feet are all characteristically Javanese. Another Ganesh with a necklace of skulls, and seated upon them as well, is in the Rijksmuseum, Leiden. A very similar example is in the Central Museum, Jakarta. Central Java, 9/10th Century. ¶ H. 27½" (65 cm) W. 18" (45 cm) D. 14" (35 cm).

See:

Borobudur, Kunst en religie in het oude Java, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, pp. 57 & 84, pl. 6.

Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *Leaves From The Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pala India (8-12th Centuries) and Its International Legacy*.

Alistair Shearer, *The Hindu Vision, Forms of the Formless*, pp. 78-9, pl. 44.

Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. II, pl. 504.



IVORY THRONE LEG

An object of naive elegance, subtle compressed power and intriguing surface patterns, this 17th Century ivory throne leg from the Deccan, and formerly in the Heeramanek Collection, is the mate to one in the Jay C. Leff Collection. The equestrian is a bearded, princely figure with an intent stare. He wears an elaborate turban and is attended by two jama clad figures. A fondness for detail is lavished on costume, jewelry, horse trappings, and weapons. The color and crazing of the ivory, (which retains remnants of red and black pigment), imparts an immediate sense of tactile quality that can only be satisfied through touch. Possibly a piece made for the Golconda Market Trade. ¶ H. 12½" (31.7 cm).

See:

Haskins, *Near Eastern and Far Eastern Art from the Collection of Jay C. Leff*, pl. 65.

Shebaz H. Safrani, *Golconda and Hyderabad*, pg. 17, pl. 12.





WOOD CARVING

Executed in a curly grained hardwood, this rendering of the Mosque of Sultan Suleyman was carved in Constantinople by Mikael Condopidius, a native of Isle of Naxos who included both his name, as well as his birthplace and the date 1678, just above the bottom border. Further demonstrating his skill, or perhaps a wry sense of humor, he hid a human face among the repetitive serrated leaves of the outer border, directly above the minaret in the middle of the composition. A French inscription, in ink on the back, elaborates on the Latin text. ¶ H. 7½" (18 cm) W. 7" (18 cm).

PALAMPORE

Particularly fine and rare, this Indian Palampore is painted and dyed in polychrome colors on a mustard cotton ground. The intricate design features the Tree of Life with scrolled, flowering branches growing from a decorative rocky mound. Urns of flowers, each in a cartouche, flank the tree and small sprays of flowers decorate the background. The border has double floral swags and tassels hanging from bows. Made for the European Market with a stamp on one corner, early-19th Century. Unusually large it measures: ¶ L. 141" (354 cm) W. 98½" (247 cm).



AFRICAN HELMET

This 16/17th Century African bronze helmet was made for members of the Ogboni group of the Yoruba tribe, Nigeria. Cast with a decoration of standing helmeted figures in relief against a lattice-work and reticulated background, this is a rare survival, reminiscent of Benin bronzes. Circa 1600. H. 7½" (19 cm).



AFRICAN CORPORA

Portuguese explorers and traders of the 16th Century brought with them religious images for use in church as well as for personal devotion. It was these early icons that first inspired indigenous peoples and which were imitated by them. Stylistically the Congolese bronze corpus, presented here on the right, was roughly a hundred years old when it was copied in the 16th Century. These purely European models were later treated to a wholly African interpretation as seen in the 17/18th Century bronze example pictured on the left. ¶ Left: H. 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (14 cm) W. 5" (13 cm) ¶ Right: H. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (13.5 cm) W. 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (13.25 cm)

See:

Rob L. Wannyn, *L'Art Ancien du Metal au Bas-Congo*, pp. 69-78, pls. I-XX.

Via Orientalis, Fundacao Oriente, pp. 93 & 94, pls. 69 & 70.

Ezio Bassani and William Fagg, *Africa And The Renaissance: Art In Ivory*, pg. 44, pl. 10, see quote.

Quote: "After the conversion of King Afonso I of the Kongo, in 1512, images of the crucifix, the Virgin Mary, and of St. Anthony were created in bronze by Kongolese artists after Portuguese originals. In time, the people returned to their original religion and the images lost their Christian meaning."



JICHIMU SIDE TABLE

This 16/17th Century Chinese side table of the late Ming period derives its structural appearance from furniture constructed of bamboo. The apron-molding and the stretchers wrap around the upper legs imitating the rounded, pliable quality achieved with bamboo but hardly expected of a dense hardwood. In this instance, JiChiMu, or chicken wing wood, prized for the resemblance of its grain to the feathers of a chicken's wing, was selected. Save for three replaced brackets the piece is entirely original and undisturbed. Circa 1600. ¶ H. 32¼" (82 cm) W. 47" (119 cm) D. 16" (40 cm).

See:

Grace Wu Bruce, *The Dr. S.Y.Yip Collection of Classic Chinese Furniture*, pp. 60-61, pl. 19.

Sandra Lok Fu Chin, *Classical Chinese Wood Furniture*, pg. 30, catalogue #10.

Rober P. Piccus, "Chinese Furniture in Hong Kong," *Orientalism*, January 1993, pp. 58-61, fig 4.

George Kates, "Chinese Hardwood Furniture," *Journal of the Classical Chinese Furniture Society*, Winter 1991, pg. 40, fig. 3.

Wang Shixiang, *Connoisseurship of Chinese Furniture*, Vol. 2, pg. 79, pl. B40.



BIRD FINIAL

Han bronze bird finials are known but rarely does one encounter an example with silver inlay. Here, the inlay is intact and the bird charming. Circa 400 BC-400 AD. ¶ H. 1¼" (4.3 cm) L. 3¼" (8 cm).



GILDED GARMENT HOOK

Worn high spots add a visual power to the large gilded face of the fantastic creature at the bottom of this Warring States Period buckle. Its scowl and flared nostrils, intense eyes and horned head and what appears almost vertebrae-like emerging from between its ears, then curves back on itself at the other end to form an animal's face staring back down the length of the hook. Mongolia?, 3rd Century BC. ¶ H. 4½" (11.5 cm) W. 2¼" (5.5 cm).

For an identical example in the British Museum,

See:

William Watson, *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, pl. 87c.



ARMOIRE

Probably from the Lyon area, France, this carved and painted armoire, with its leather-like surface, is a tour-de-force of individualized expression. Whether the work of one man or a small cabinet shop, few of these exuberant pieces are known but all are highly appreciated. Vases spilling stems with leaves and flowers, gouge carved borders, intricate grill-like reserves, fiddle-head scrolls, shell carvings; all combined they achieve a dramatic effect on a field that is the front of this piece of furniture. Circa 1770. ¶ H. 7'3" (223 cm) W. 55½" (140 cm) D. 24½" (61 cm).



THE POACHER

With several trout already caught the poacher readies his net. The oxygen rich water at the base of the small dam behind him is a spot favored by trout. The sky is becoming threatening and the poacher appraises the scene with a knowing, wary eye. Entitled, "The Poacher", in brown ink, on an old paper label on the reverse and signed, T.S. Good, the painting is an oil on panel and in superb condition. English, Circa 1810, image size. ¶ H. 12¼" (32 cm) W. 11" (28 cm).



CANDLESTICK

A most remarkable 15/16th Century candlestick whose spiraling, hexagonal shaft has been faceted, creating diamond and triangular reserves, each engraved with one of five floral motifs. Bands of simple foliate scrolls and tulips heads are found around the drip pan and the base. The underside of the candlestick has been struck with a crowned R as a touch mark or owner's mark. A similar example is in the Kunstgewerbe Museum Berlin, (though its shaft is octagonal and without engraving), and a nearly identical example formerly in the Musée Cluny, Paris, (Inv. CL 12493) is now in the Musée National De La Renaissance, France. Circa 1500. ¶ H. 11¼" (26 cm)

See:

Klaus Pechstein, *Bronzen und Plaketten*, pl. 34.



BELLERMINE

Probably made on Streitzeuggasse, in Cologne, in the mid-16th Century, this is a classic example of a benign faced bellermine. With sprig-applied, flowing square beard, and band of text about its broad middle, it is further decorated with opposed acanthus leaves and romayne heads of men in small rondels. Its light brown glaze and solid form are nearly identical to an example in the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Cologne. Circa 1550. ¶ H. 8½" (22 cm) W. 6½" (14 cm).

See:

Gisela Reineking Von Bock, *Steinzeug*, pg. 239, pl. 289.



TABLECARPET

A rare survival, this Elizabethan English, silk and wool needlework table carpet is in remarkable condition with only minor restorations that reflect careful maintenance. The overall repetitive pattern is nearly identical to an example in the Art Institute of Chicago and in the spirit of a cushion cover dated 1601, in The Untermeyer Collection. ¶ L. 69" (172 cm) W. 69" (172 cm). The design of the field has been used for the endpapers of this catalogue.

See:

Pamela Clabburn, *Masterpieces of Embroidery*, pg. 20, pl. 17.

Yvonne Hackenbroch, *English and Other Needlework Tapestries and Textiles in the Irwin Untermeyer Collection*, pl. 12, fig. 22.



GOTHIC CANDLESTICKS AND BUCKLE

Two variations of the 13th Century pricket candlesticks of the Low Country. Differing in proportion and surface, each is a successful example of its type. The greenish excavated example is a sturdy brother to the smaller more elegant Franco-Flemish examples. A utilitarian piece crafted during the Migrations Period, this tidily designed buckle was found in the area around Cologne, Germany. ¶ Left: H. 8¼" (21.25 cm), Right: H. 7⅝" (20 cm), Center: H. 1⅞" (4.66 cm) W. 1⅝" (4.25 cm).



ROSARY BEAD

This ivory carving was used as a primary rosary bead. One side depicts a bust of the Virgin, while a skeleton, invaded by snakes, serves as a memento mori on the other. Separating the two figures is a banner-like device with the words "Helas Morir Nous Fault," Alas We Must Die. Franco-Flemish, 16th Century. ¶ H. 2⅝" (6 cm).

See:

Richard Randall, Jr., *Masterpieces of Ivory From the Walters Art Gallery*, pg. 248, pl. 367.



CHAIR BACK

Woven as a knotted carpet, this Kang H'si chair or throne back boasts a fearsome five-clawed dragon with a fiery face. In his mouth is the pearl of wisdom. He is shown poised in the heavens above waves crashing against the rocks. Although Chinese in origin this chair back was found in Tibet, Kang H'si (1662-1722). ¶ H. 34" (84 cm) W. 34" (84 cm).

See:

Lennart Larsson Jr., *Carpets From China, Xinjian & Tibet*, pg. 85, fig. 96.

H. A. Lorentz, *A View of Chinese Rugs From the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*, pg. 134, fig. 47.

Charles I. Rostov and Jia Guanyan, *Chinese Carpets*, pg. 190, pl. 120.



TWO DRAWER TABLE

This most unusual and elegant Chinese black lacquer two drawer table or stand, with its uncommon brasses is taller than normally encountered. Finished on all four sides its height is gracefully accented by a recessed vertically-stepped beaded return that visually originates below the flat stretcher and follows the inside of the legs to a castelated apron. Subtlety and proportion are successfully achieved by a top whose thickness is alleviated with a half round and then upturned molding. The off center alignment of the castelated apron below the drawer pulls, set against two well proportioned drawers, is recessed on level with the returns. The symmetry of what might be called a frieze is broken by the vertical drawer dividers, adding once again to its visual lift. In as found, original condition including brasses, the piece was discovered in Beijing, 18th Century.

¶ H. 33³/₄" (85 cm) W. 24" (60 cm) D. 19¹/₂" (50 cm).



TIBETAN FOLDING TABLE

The front of this colorfully painted and vigorously carved 19th Century Tibetan lama's folding table is cut through and decorated with the chinless face of a sky god known as Chibar, "that which resembles nothing," or Shi-dong, "face of splendor." It is shown here surrounded by foliage above a rock strewn foreground. From its mouth extend tendrils of vegetation which, like dragon tails, are held in his armless hands. This deity serves as an auspicious emblem protecting the devoted from evil and thus is a familiar motif on Buddhist altars. The two relief carved sides each feature a flower amid leaves above rocks. The two sides and front, (there is no back), fold up and inside the overhanging apron to create a small flat object easily carried by a traveler or strapped to an animal. ¶ H. 10¼" (27 cm) W. 24¾" (61 cm) D. 11" (28 cm).



QAJAR MIRROR CASE

This sensuously carved Persian mirror case, dating from the Qajar period, is made of boxwood and is decorated on both sides with a pair of birds relaxing amid blossoms and leaves. The reticulated sliding lid allows a hint of the mirror within, while at the same time, creating the impression of a two-tone border. Circa 1810. ¶ H. 9" (23 cm) W. 5¼" (13.5 cm)



CONFUCIUS

Shown here is a Chinese Ming bronze figure of a seated Confucius. He wears his characteristic hat above a sensitively modeled face. Sculpted with great attention given to the detail, his robes are full of floral designs as well as fabric folds. 16th Century. ¶ H. 15³/₄" (40 cm) W. 8" (21 cm).