

J. PIERPONT MORGAN, MASTER COLLECTOR: LOVER OF THE 18TH-CENTURY FRENCH DECORATIVE ARTS

by Theodore Dell



Figure 1. Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806). *Love Letters*, from the series of decorative canvases know as *The Progress of Love*, painted by Fragonard for the pavilion of Madame Du Barry at Louveciennes, c.1771-73. Acquired by J. Pierpont Morgan for his London house in 1898. Copyright, The Frick Collection, New York. Museum no. 15.1.47.

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN about the life of J. Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913). Indeed, as an extraordinarily dynamic banker and financier who played a major role in the development of this country from about 1880-1910, 20th century America owes him great homage. But Morgan had another side which he pursued with equal passion - that of the collector. Although this too has been much written about,¹ the very breadth of his collecting has made it difficult for anyone to focus on a single area. It is this breadth that always seems to fascinate. One has only to walk through the galleries of the Metropolitan to see just how vast and varied his holdings were, with works ranging from ancient Egyptian through to the 19th century. His wife once joked that he would "buy anything from a pyramid to the tooth of the Mary Magdalen." Although Morgan owned many fine paintings, his real love was for books and manuscripts, and works of art which required the craftsman's skill. There are at least twenty-one catalogues of his collections.

The third generation of money, Pierpont Morgan was born in Hartford to the drygoods merchant Junius Spencer Morgan (1813-1890) and Juliet Pierpont, daughter of the poet, the Reverend John Pierpont. When Pierpont was 13 years old, Junius transferred to Boston to become a partner in the firm to be known as J.M. Bebee, Morgan and Co., which both conducted and financed foreign trade. Suffering from inflammatory rheumatism when he was 15 years old,

Pierpont spent five months in the Azores, afterwards joining his parents for a three-months tour of the British Isles and the Continent. In 1854 his father was taken on as a partner in London by the American merchant banker George Peabody, and when the family took up permanent residence in that city, Pierpont was sent to the Sillig School in Vevey and then on to Göttingen University in Germany.

After Göttingen and a brief period of employment in his father's London office, Pierpont settled in New York. There in 1864 he formed the partnership Dabney, Morgan & Co., and in 1871 joined Anthony J. Drexel to form Drexel, Morgan & Co., soon to become the most prosperous private banking house in America, and one of the most powerful internationally. After Drexel's death in 1893, the house became known as J.P. Morgan & Co..

As the focus of this article is the whole of Pierpont Morgan's collection of the

18th-century French decorative arts, which has not been studied before, space does not allow for a more thorough tracing of his remarkable career. But it is clear that his intense involvement in financial affairs initially left his little time for outside interests. It was not until after his father's death in 1890, when he was able to add his father's considerable fortune to his own, and bring under his control the London-based J.S. Morgan & Co., that Pierpont Morgan began to collect. Perhaps most importantly, he gradually learned to delegate work.

Although he had bought random works of art throughout his adult life, Pierpont Morgan emerged in the early 1890s as a serious collector of rare books, manuscripts and autographs. But he was soon collecting in a multitude of other areas. Unfortunately, his destruction of virtually all the papers relating to his purchases before 1896 makes it difficult to understand just how his tastes developed. Before the completion of The Pierpont Morgan Library building in 1906, his books and manuscripts were kept in the basement of his brownstone on the corner of 36th and Madison where the annex to the Library now stands, but virtually all the works of art that he had purchased abroad and not donated to the Metropolitan were kept principally in England in order not to have to pay the heavy import duties then levied on works of art. These were loaned to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Gallery, the Glasgow Museum of Art in Scotland, or kept in the two large houses he had inherited from his father, No.13, Princes Gate facing Hyde Park, or Dover House on ninety-two acres near Putney. Some works purchased in Paris were kept in storage there.

Morgan's passion for the decorative arts of 18th-century France seems to stem from his spectacular purchase in 1898 of the series of decorative paintings known as *The Progress of Love*, executed by Fragonard in 1771-73 for the *salon de jeux* of Madame Du Barry's dining pavilion at Louveciennes (fig.1).² There can scarcely be a more seductive series of works. Morgan had these installed in a specially fitted room at No. 13 Princes Gate, which became known as The Fragonard Room.

There can be little doubt that the Wallace Collection, which was opened to the public in June of 1900 and which Morgan had very likely seen before, had a profound effect on Morgan. This extraordinary assemblage of works contained collections in many areas that interested Pierpont Morgan, including majolica, Renaissance bronzes, boxwood carvings, ivories, glass, gold and silversmiths' works, and miniatures, not to mention the decorative arts of 18th century France.

Morgan's appetite whetted by the Fragonard panels, he began to acquire other works of the 18th-century French decorative arts. Surviving bills preserved in the archives of The Pierpont Morgan Library show that his next important purchase in this area was made in February of 1899, when he acquired from Duveen Brothers, London, the extraordinarily fine commode and secretaire (fig.2) made by Riesener for Marie-Antoinette,³ and which had appeared at the Hamilton Palace sale in 1882. A little over a year later, in April of 1900, he acquired from the dealer Charles J. Wertheimer of 21 Norfolk Street, London, the spectacular *bleu turquin* marble table (fig.3), now known to have been made by Pierre Gouthière for the Quai Malaquais house of the duchesse de Mazarin.⁴ Wertheimer had acquired the table from comte Boni de Castellane, who had formed an extraordinarily opulent collection after having married Anna Gould in 1895. After quickly spending his wife into serious debt the works were sold.

Surviving bills suggest that there was a two-year pause in the collecting of furniture until April of 1902 when he purchased from the dealer Jacques Seligmann of Paris, the most extraordinary Louis XVI regulator clock known (fig.4), its case by Balthazar Lieutaud, and its bronzes by Philippe

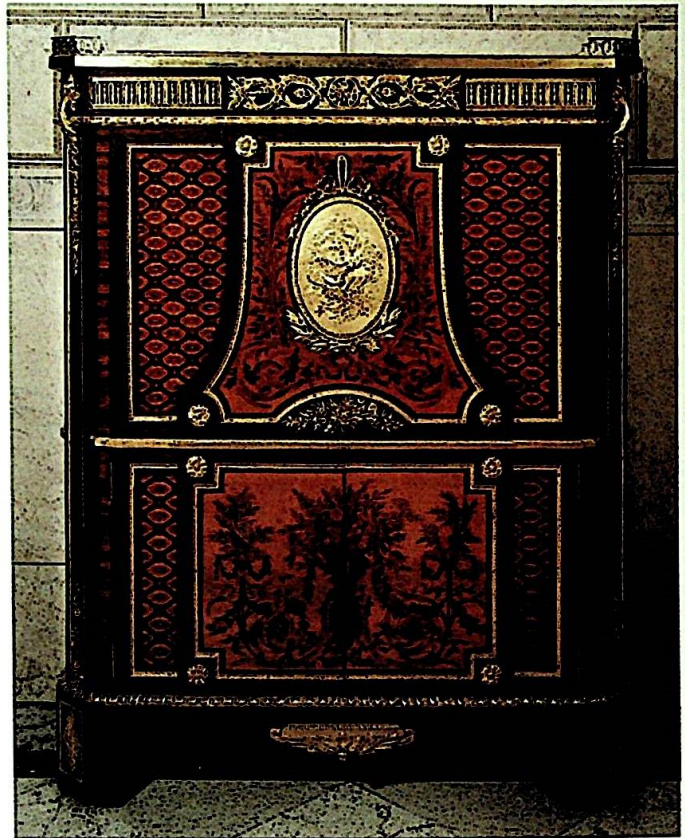


Figure 2. Jean-Henri Riesener (1734-1806). *Secrétaire en suite* with a matching commode made by Riesener for Marie-Antoinette, ca.1785. Pierpont Morgan's first important pieces of furniture purchased in 1899. Copyright, The Frick Collection, New York. Museum no.15.5.75.

Caffiéri.⁵ By 1902 he had also acquired from an unknown source a splendid pair of Louis XVI candelabra, perhaps by P.-P. Thomire (fig.5), incorporating vases veneered with lapis lazuli, which had formerly belonged to Prince Soltykoff.⁶ At this point his collection was small, but very choice and its pieces must have looked remarkable among the sober English pieces of the day. A second pause ensued.

Then in 1904 he doubled the size of his Princes Gate residence by acquiring the adjoining house at No.14, apparently at the same time rethinking his approach to the collecting of furniture. Henceforth he seems to have had a specific destination for whatever he bought, as though he were interested in the appearance of the overall ensemble. A six-page bill from Duveen Brothers, London, dated October 4, 1906, summarizing purchase agreements made by Pierpont Morgan on five occasions during the previous year, lists a plethora of works chosen room by room. Unfortunately, the vague descriptions of a number of these works does not allow for identification.

Regency Room (March 23, 1905): A Savonnerie carpet; six pieces of furniture, including a 'Louis XIV' *bureau plat* from the collection of Boni de Castellane;⁷ a pair of *famille rose* cisterns on giltwood stands; a pair of Louis XVI ormolu-mounted vases and covers by 'Dela Fosse'⁸ and two 'Louis XV' ormolu-mounted commodes by 'Dela Fosse.'



Figure 3. Made by Pierre Gouthière in 1781 for the Quai Malaquais house of the duchesse de Mazarin. Acquired by Pierpont Morgan in 1900. Copyright, The Frick Collection, New York. Museum no.15.5.59.

Louis XV Sitting Room (March 23, 1905): three pieces of case furniture; five giltwood *fauteuils* upholstered in modern silk; and a pair of Louis XVI *chenets* with a cat and a dog.

Louis XVI Marble Hall (March 23, 1905): a marble figure by 'Falconet' of Cupid cutting a bow.

Fragonard Room (March 23, 1905): pair of Louis XV *chenets*, and four Louis XV 'X'-frame benches, with two armchairs to match, covered with blue silk.

Louis XVI Room (March 23, 1905): a pair of Louis XVI *chenets*; a round Louis XVI gilt-bronze table with a lapis lazuli top;¹⁰ a chimneypiece with mounts by Vassé; three Beauvais lambrequin window hangings.

Louis XVI Drawing Room (July 8, 1905): a Beauvais tapestry suite with modern Louis XVI style frames, consisting of three *canapés* and eight *marquises*;¹¹ a Louis XVI marquetry commode by Riesener, stamped with the number 10, formerly the property of Marie-Antoinette, and given by Charles X to the marquise de Saintpern (fig. 6);¹² a Louis XVI marquetry commode formerly belonging to Lord Tweedmouth;¹³ a Louis XVI writing table decorated with apple-green Sèvres porcelain plaques¹⁴ a Louis XVI round *guéridon* decorated with

Sèvres plaques; a pair of *secretaires* decorated with Sèvres plaques formerly in Lord Tweedmouth's collection;¹⁵ a Louis XVI *guéridon* decorated with a Sèvres plaque; a terra cotta group signed and dated by Clodion, from the Constantini collection;¹⁶ a pair of Louis XVI candlesticks 'by Gouthière' with cupids' heads and festoons;¹⁷ and a Louis XVI ormolu-mounted side table.

Sitting Room (July 19, 1905): a Louis XVI oblong marquetry table by 'Dela Fosse'.¹⁸

Without destination (July 8, 1905): a pair of powder blue Chinese porcelain vases mounted in the 'finest Gouthière' mounts [described in a 1915 inventory as each being supported on three feet and being mounted with nude women on the sides]; and a rose-ground tapestry-covered bench (frame modern).

In March of 1905 Pierpont Morgan also purchased from Charles J. Wertheimer a small Louis XVI table with a Sèvres porcelain top decorated with scattered rosebuds within a blue border, and a tripod worktable decorated on top with a Sèvres plaque and a pair of candle arms (fig. 7).¹⁹ Finally in 1911, near the end of his collecting days, he purchased from the executors of Charles Wertheimer, a round Louis XVI worktable signed by Carlin and mounted on top with a yellow-ground Sèvres porcelain plaque painted with a mythological subject,²⁰ a small square Louis XVI table mounted on top with a Sèvres plaque painted with a group of children, and a Louis XVI parcel-gilt firescreen carved on top with sphinxes, mermaids and mermen, and mounted

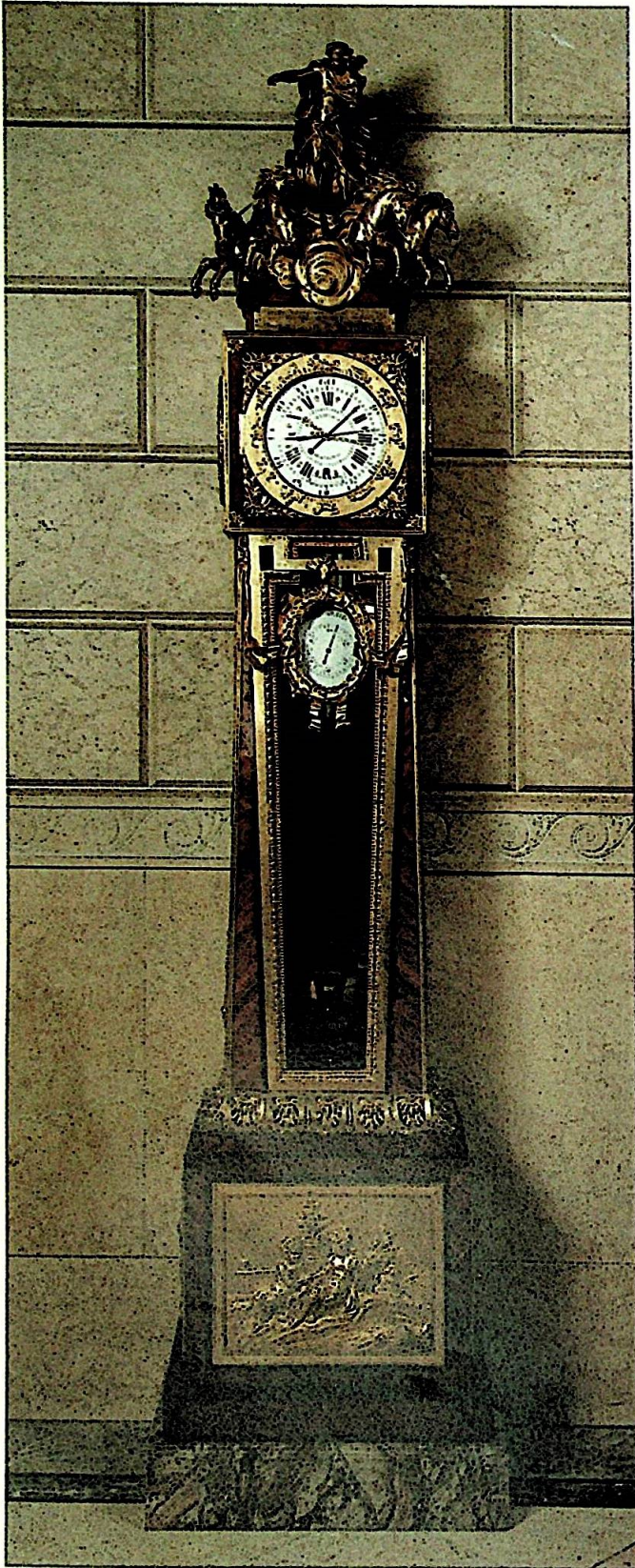


Figure 4. Clock case by Balthazar Lieutaud (d.1780), mounts by Philippe Caffiéri (1714-1774), movement by Ferdinand Berthoud (1727-1807). The most magnificent Louis XVI regulator clock known. Bought by Pierpont Morgan in 1902. Copyright, The Frick Collection, New York. Museum no. 15.5.46.

with a tapestry panel depicting cupids.

All along, Morgan had been working on other aspects of his collection of 18th-century French decorative arts, including, starting in 1899, his extraordinary collection of porcelain (fig. 8), which he bought for the most part as individual pieces and which he kept principally in his Louis XVI salon at Princes Gate;²¹ at least four important 17th-century Savonnerie carpets (fig. 9), three of which are known to have come from Charles J. Wertheimer;²² two important sets of tapestries, one woven at the Beauvais manufactory in 1733 after designs by Oudry and consisting of three panels from the *Comedies of Molière* series,²³ and a suite of five rose-ground Gobelins tapestries from the *Don Quixote* series (fig. 10)²⁴ bought in 1903 for £80,000, as well as a Beauvais tapestry representing Boucher's *The Flute Player*, from *Les Beaux Pastorales* series;²⁵ a collection of gold snuff boxes, *camets de bal*, *étuis* and *nécessaires*;²⁶ a few choice pieces of silver (fig. 11);²⁷ and a number of decorative marble and terra-cotta sculptures (fig. 12).²⁸

Also should be added to Pierpont Morgan's amassment of the 18th-century French decorative arts was his purchase in 1906 of the collection belonging to the Paris architect and designer, Georges Hoentschel, consisting principally of 18th century chairs, console tables, fragments of *boiseries*, painted panels and gilt-bronze mounts.²⁹ In donating it to the Metropolitan Museum that same year, Morgan made it known 'that it should be made the nucleus of a great collection of decorative art.' It did indeed spur the establishment of the Department of Decorative Arts at the museum in 1907, with the young William R. Valentiner (1880-1958) being appointed its first curator, and the building of a new wing on the north end of the building. As fascinating as the Hoentschel Collection is, its material is now considered for the most part peripheral.³⁰

The consuming question has long been, what did Pierpont Morgan intend with all this frenetic buying? Although he bought works singly as they presented themselves, often relying on expert advice, his propensity for acquiring collections that others had painstakingly assembled is well known.³¹ It is apparent that he got as much pleasure from the act of buying as he did from the works of art themselves. But that there was a grand scheme is clear, and it was not a simple matter of aggrandizement. Morgan had a selfless mission. Extensive travel abroad starting at age 15 and continuing as an adult, with extended annual trips to Europe and elsewhere, gave him great perspective on his own country. Americans were hard working and sincere, but they lacked the wit and sophistication of Europe. The texture of the country was plain. One senses that Pierpont Morgan saw something very positive he could do for his native land. He could bring to it the accretions of culture it so lacked. He built up a collection of works of art which traced the history of Western civilization from ancient Egypt up to 19th century Europe. But ultimately his project proved to be on such a massive scale that he was never able to fully realize it.

To honor his father whom he greatly revered, Pierpont Morgan embarked on a number of projects to memorialize his father, one of which was the construction of the Morgan Memorial building at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, the museum which Junius Spencer Morgan had so generously supported. Consequently the Atheneum had high



Figure 5. One of a pair of candelabra, c.1785, made perhaps by Pierre-Philippe Thomire, incorporating lapis lazuli vases. An early purchase by Pierpont Morgan and recorded in a photograph of his Princes Gate house made in 1902. Copyright, The Frick Collection, New York. Museum no.20.6.10.

hopes that it would one day be the recipient of Pierpont Morgan's vast holdings.

In New York, where he had put down roots, Pierpont Morgan had served as a member of the board of trustees of the Metropolitan Museum starting in 1888, and as president since 1904. During his tenure there he had given it over 4,000 objects, but an equal number remained in his private collection which was kept largely abroad. The Metropolitan too had great expectations. But Pierpont Morgan had been careful to make promises to no one.

In fact, Pierpont Morgan was faced with a dilemma. In his zeal to enrich his country with a magnificent collection of works of art, he had placed virtually half his fortune in this area, and it remained unclear how much would be needed to pay death duties and legal fees before he could make the bequests to the various members of his family he had intended. He therefore prudently had made no decisions, waiting for matters to clarify themselves.

With the passage of the Payne Aldrich tariff bill in 1909,

repealing the 20% import tax on those works of art over 100 years old, Pierpont Morgan no longer felt compelled to keep his works abroad. Therefore in 1911, when he was 74 years old and no doubt feeling that the time was near to decide about the disposition of his collections, he gave directions to have them packed. He had arranged with Edward Robinson, director of the Metropolitan, to hold a vast exhibition at the museum in 1914 of all those works that he had kept abroad, making it the first time they would be seen together.

There were 351 cases in all, containing approximately 4,000 objects, with virtually every piece described and numbered. A copy of this inventory preserved in the archives of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, now serves as a wonderful tool for identifying these works. The cases were shipped to New York during the course of 1912 and stored in the basement of the Metropolitan in preparation for the exhibition.

The autumn of 1912 was a difficult period for Pierpont Morgan. He had been called to Washington to appear before the Pujo committee to determine the extent of his control over major American corporations through interlocking directorships, and whether such control was detrimental to competition. The assault on his character distressed him and his health was affected. On a trip to Egypt several months later he grew ill, and on his return through Rome in late March of 1913 he took a turn for the worse, dying there on March 31st.

Pierpont Morgan thus departed this world before the great exhibition of his collection could take place, and indeed

Figure 6. Commode attributed to Jean-Henri Riesener. Acquired by Pierpont Morgan for the Louis XVI salon of his Princes Gate house in 1905. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Bequest of Eleanore Elkins Rice. Museum no.39-41-4.



before he could make the decisions necessary for its final disposition. He left an estate whose total value was estimated at about \$125,000,000, but of which an estimated \$60,000,000 consisted of his library and works of art.

In his remarkable will, which began 'I commit my soul



Figure 7. Martin Carlin (c.1730-1785). *Guéridon* signed by Carlin with a Sèvres porcelain top dated 1779. One of two such tables acquired by Pierpont Morgan from different sources in 1905. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Bequest of Eleanore Elkins Rice. Museum no.39-41-15.

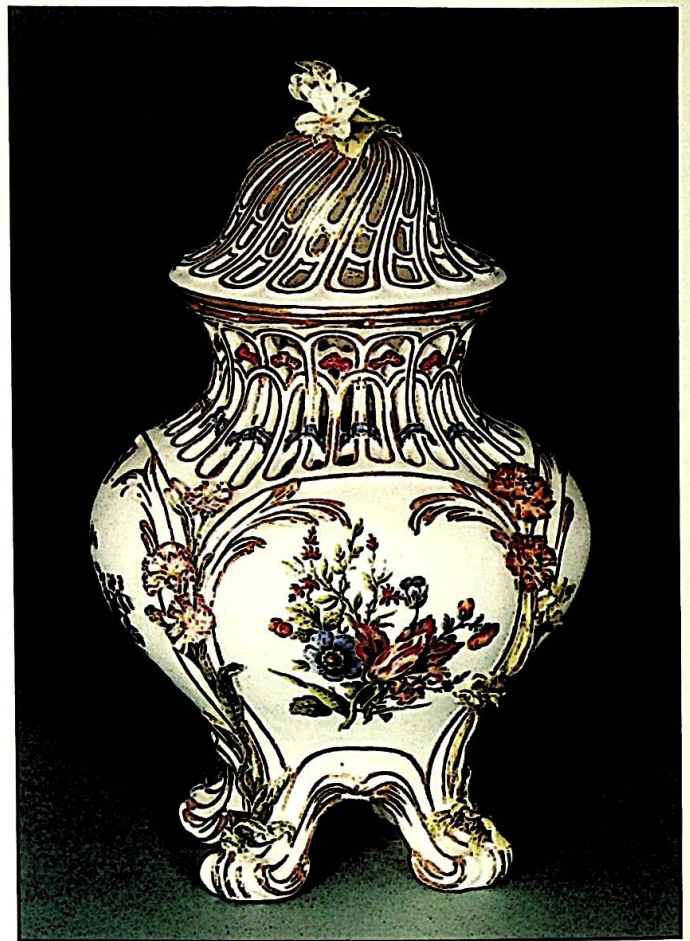


Figure 8. One of a pair of Vincennes *pot-pouri* vases, c.1751-53, H. 10¼ in (26.1 cm), from Pierpont Morgan's large collection of French 18th-century porcelain, catalogued by Xavier de Chavagnac in 1910. Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, J. Pierpont Morgan Collection. Museum no.1917.983.

into the hands of my Saviour...,' he stated in a codicil written less than three months before he died:

'I have been greatly interested for many years in gathering my collections of paintings, miniatures, porcelains and other works of art, and it has been my desire and intention to make some disposition of them, or of such portions of them as I might determine, which would render them permanently available for the instruction and pleasure of the American people. Lack of necessary time to devote to it has yet prevented my carrying this purpose into effect.

'Unless I shall accomplish it, or make some disposition of these collections in my lifetime, they will pass to my son, John Pierpont Morgan, Jr., or to his son, Junius Spencer Morgan, Jr.

'Should either my said son or my said grandson thus succeed to the ownership of these collections I hope he will be able, in such manner as he shall think best, to make a permanent disposition, or from time to time, permanent dispositions, of them or of such portions of them as he may determine, which will be a substantial carrying out of the intentions which I have thus cherished. It would be agreeable to me to have 'The Morgan Memorial' which forms a portion of the property of the Wadsworth Atheneum at Hartford,

Connecticut, utilized to effectuate a part of this purpose.

'I do not, however, by the expression of these wishes intend to impose upon my said son, or my said grandson, any duty or obligation, legal or moral, nor to quality, in any manner or in any degree, his absolute and unqualified ownership of said collections should they pass to him under this will.'

Thus, J.P. Morgan, Jr., – as he styled himself to be distinguished from his father – had inherited outright his father's collection with the moral obligation to donate as much as possible to public institutions. With the future uncertain, J.P. Morgan, Jr., authorized the Metropolitan to proceed with the exhibition, and it opened to the public on February 17, 1914. Occupying 13 galleries of the second floor of the north Fifth Avenue wing, four such galleries were devoted to the decorative arts of 18th-century France. The vast exhibition was arranged chronologically,³² starting with classical antiquities, proceeding through the early Christian period with enamels and carved ivories; through the Gothic period with carved wood sculptures and tapestries; into the Renaissance with collections of bronzes and Italian majolica, Venetian glass, precious metal, amber, and rock crystal works of art, as well as tapestries; into the Northern Renaissance

and Baroque galleries with cases filled with Limoges enamels, Palissy and Saint-Porchaire ware, boxwood carvings, jewelry, elaborate works of Italian and German goldsmiths' art; and on into the 18th-century with its four galleries devoted to France, with the display of Pierpont Morgan's furniture, carpets, tapestries, small sculptures, gold boxes, porcelain (mostly Vincennes and Sèvres), mounted Chinese porcelain, and with a special gallery for the Fragonard panels (fig.1). On the walls of the first of the 18th-century galleries (No.17), and above his pieces of 18th-century French furniture, was hung his prized collection of 18th-century English portraits.

The final three galleries were devoted to watches (Gallery 21) dating from the 16th to the 19th centuries, which the exhibition guide described as the greatest collection ever brought together; German porcelain (Gallery 22); and a collection of close to 800 miniatures dating from the 16th to 19th centuries, and by the most important artists of the day. The exhibition was a huge success, remaining open until late May of 1916.

To settle the estate, J.P. Morgan, Jr., had to start thinking immediately about what would have to be disposed of to raise money and what works would best be preserved for the collections of the Metropolitan and the Wadsworth Atheneum. First to be sold in February of 1915 were the Chinese porcelains,³³ regarded as the finest collection in the world, which had been on loan to the Metropolitan for many years and thus not part of the 1914 exhibition. The porcelains were bought by Duveen Brothers for an estimated \$3,500,000-\$4,000,000, with the collection being divided among Henry Clay Frick, Peter A.B. Widener, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and others.

Slightly later in that same month the Fragonard panels were sold to Duveen Brothers for a reported \$1,000,000, who then sold them to Frick for the main salon of his Fifth Avenue house where they have remained ever since. In late April of 1915 virtually the whole of the French furniture and sculpture collection was sold to Duveen for an unknown price, though the value of the collection was put at \$3,000,000. A lull of a year followed, and then groups of works were sold by J.P. Morgan, Jr., starting with the collection of 40 tapestries to P.W. French & Co. in April of 1916 for a reputed \$2,000,000, and the splendid assemblages of 200 Renaissance bronzes, 150 Limoges enamels, and the collection of majolica to Duveen for an estimated \$3,000,000-\$4,000,000. Frick was to buy a large portion of the bronzes and the enamels. This completed the great series of sales to satisfy the demands of the estate. All purchased works remained on exhibition at the Metropolitan until the Morgan Loan Exhibition's closing in late May of 1916, with both Duveen Brothers and French & Co. being able to show their new possessions to clients *in situ*.

With the exhibition closed and the necessary money raised, J.P. Morgan, Jr., was able to act more freely. He retained for his own pleasure the collection of 800 miniatures, keeping them at his house in Glen Cove, Long Island.³⁴ In 1917 he gave to the Wadsworth Atheneum the majority of the collection of French porcelain (keeping some of the most important pieces for himself),³⁵ the collection of Meissen porcelain, collections of ancient bronzes, Roman and Venetian glass and ancient jewelry, as well as a collection

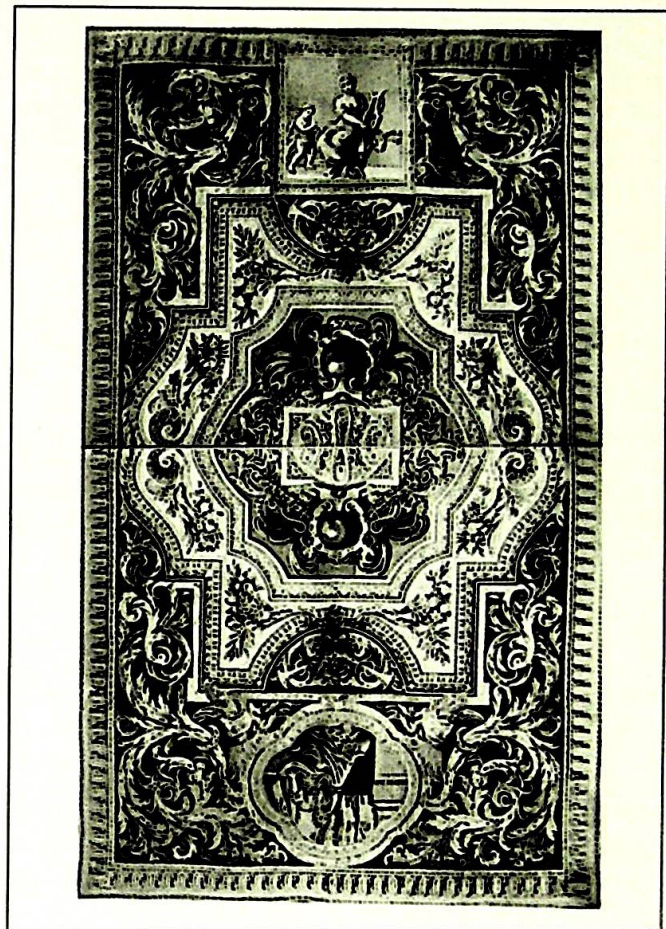


Figure 9. Savonnerie carpet woven for the Grande Galerie of the Louvre, c.1687-89, for position no.11, in the series of 93. One of at least four 17th century Savonnerie carpets owned by J. Pierpont Morgan. The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino.

of Staffordshire ware – 1,325 objects in all.³⁶ At about the same time he gave in the name of his father the rest of the collection of Classical through Baroque works (consisting in the neighborhood of 7,000 objects, some of which had been on loan for years) to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where it was moved the following year to the newly designated Pierpont Morgan Wing.³⁷ The Pierpont Morgan Library, containing approximately 20,000 rare books, manuscripts, and prints and drawings, was not incorporated by J.P. Morgan, Jr., as a public institution until 1924.

Although J.P. Morgan, Jr., had done a remarkably fine job keeping intact the central core of his father's collection tracing the course of Western civilization, the collection of 18th-century French decorative arts had been devastated. No doubt to the younger Morgan works of so recent an era seemed peripheral.

In fact, Pierpont Morgan had built up a very coherent collection in this area, with the donation of the 18th-century portion of the Hoentschel Collection to the Metropolitan in 1906 potentially serving as rich supporting material for his collections of *ébénisterie*, porcelain, faience, tapestries, carpets, decorative sculpture, and gold boxes. After the sales, the museum was left with only this supporting material and

collections of faience and gold boxes. It took nearly another half century for the museum to build as coherent a collection as Pierpont Morgan had formed, through astute purchases and through such important bequests and donations as those of William K. Vanderbilt (1920), George Blumenthal (1941), R. Thornton Wilson (over a period of years starting c.1939), Catherine D. Wentworth (1948), Jules S. Bache (1949), the Samuel H. Kress Foundation (1958), Emma A. Shaefer (1973), Jack and Belle Linsky (1982), and most munificently, Charles and Jayne Wrightsman.

But Pierpont Morgan's efforts to endow his native land with a rich patrimony in this area was not in vain. Henry Clay Frick, the great lover of paintings who had built his great house on Fifth Avenue with the intention of it becoming a museum someday, seized the opportunity to expand his collection beyond his single area of interest and, after being offered first refusal, bought 15 of the choicest pieces of furniture and gilt-bronze work for his New York home,³⁸ as well as at least four others for his country house at Pride's Crossing, Massachusetts.³⁹ At about the same time Mrs. George Widener (later Mrs. A. Hamilton Rice and now referred to as Eleanore Elkins Rice) acquired eight works for her New York and Newport homes, bequeathing them to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1939;⁴⁰ Mrs. Fitz-Eugene Dixon (daughter of the preceding and later known as Mrs. Widener Dixon) acquired the set of five 'Don Quixote' tapestries (fig.10), donating them to the same museum over the period 1945-48; Peter A.B. Widener acquired three pieces of furniture⁴¹ and a pair of large Louis XVI mounted vases, his son Joseph donating them to The National Gallery of Art in 1942; Henry and Arabella Huntington acquired nine works now in the Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino;⁴² over a period of years Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., acquired the suite of Louis XV tapestry-covered chairs belonging in the 18th-century to Baron Bernstorff of Copenhagen, eventually donating it to The Metropolitan Museum of Art;⁴³ and Mrs. Horace E. Dodge acquired from Duveen in 1932 the suite of Louis XVI-style tapestry-covered chairs, bequeathing them to The Detroit Institute of Arts in 1970.

The combination of the original Morgan bills retained in the archives of The Pierpont Morgan Library, the detailed packing and shipping inventory, and the inventory and photographs made of the Loan Exhibition galleries retained in the Metropolitan, along with the catalogues of the auction held at Parke-Bernet in 1944 after the death of J.P. Morgan, Jr., allow us to identify virtually every piece of 18th-century French decorative work in the collection. A handful of mostly lesser pieces have escaped museum collections, appearing from time to time at auction.⁴⁴ A few works have disappeared without trace.⁴⁵

Time heals all wounds, and indeed good can be seen to come from virtually every bad event. The Metropolitan Museum lost a great collection which it nearly had in its grasp, but which it was eventually able to build on its own. Other collectors were greatly inspired and the treasures were shifted about. Although Pierpont Morgan's plans had gone awry, one must not forget the pleasure he got from his collection while he was alive. Some would argue that is what really mattered.



Figure 10. *Don Quixote Guided by Folly*, woven by Neilson at the Gobelins workshop in 1783 (signed and dated). One of five tapestries from the 'Don Quixote' series purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1903. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Mrs. Widener Dixon. Museum no.45-90-1.

NOTES

1. See Cass Canfield, *The Incredible Pierpont Morgan: Financier and Art Collector*, New York, 1974; Linda Horvitz Roth et al., *J. Pierpont Morgan, Collector: European Decorative Arts from the Wadsworth Atheneum*, Hartford, 1987; and Louis Auchincloss, *J.P. Morgan: the Financier as Collector*, New York, 1990.
2. Series reproduced by Bernice Davidson and Edgar Munhall, *The Frick Collection, an Illustrated Catalogue, II, Paintings*, New York, 1968, pp.94-120.
3. Discussed by Theodore Dell, *The Frick Collection, an Illustrated Catalogue, VI, Furniture and Gilt Bronzes*, New York, 1992, pp.71-91.
4. *Ibid.*, pp.104-123.
5. *Ibid.*, V, pp.314-332.
6. *Ibid.*, VI, pp.276-286.
7. In the style generally associated with Charles Cressent. Now in the Widener Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Museum no.C-268.
8. Same as above, nos.C-292, 293.
9. Pair of commodes signed by P. Duprè in The Frick Collection. See Theodore Dell, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 351-358.
10. Now in The Frick Collection. *Ibid.*, VI, pp.143-150.
11. Now in the Dodge Collection, The Detroit Institute of Arts, nos.F71.47-71.57. One *canapé* ill. in *Guide to the Loan Exhibition of the J. Pierpont Morgan Collection*, New York, 1914, op. p.115.
12. Now part of the Rice Bequest at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, no.39-41-4. See William Rieder, *Philadelphia Museum of Art, Guides to European Decorative Arts (3): France, 1700-1800*, Philadelphia, 1984, no.20.
13. Now same as above, no.39-41-3. *Ibid.*, no.22.
14. Now in the Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh.
15. Later sold from the collection of Thelma Chrysler Foy, Parke-Bernet, New York, May 13+, 1959, lots 346-47.
16. Probably the Zephyrus and Flora group in The Frick Collection (15.2.76). See Terrence W.I. Hodgkinson, *The Frick Collection, an Illustrated Catalogue, IV, Sculpture*, New York, 1970, pp.102-105.
17. Now in The Frick Collection, New York (18.5.6 & 7). See Theodore Dell, *op. cit.*, VI, pp.287-294.
18. Almost certainly that attributed to J.-F. Leleu, now in the Widener



Figure 11. Tureen. Silver, executed 1735-38, 36.9 x 45 cm (overall). Designed by Juste Aurèle Meissonnier, French, Paris, 1695-1750. © The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1995, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Fund, 77.182. Bought by Pierpont Morgan at auction in 1909.

- Collection, National Gallery of Art, no.C-274.
19. One of two such tables from Pierpont Morgan's collection, now part of the Rice Bequest in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. See William Rieder, *op. cit.*, no.16.
 20. Now in the Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh.
 21. See Comte X. de Chavagnac, *Catalogue des porcelaines françaises de M. J. Pierpont Morgan*, Paris, 1910.
 22. Two now in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino. See Robert R. Wark, *French Decorative Art in the Huntington Collection*, San Marino, 1979, figs.40-42; one, its central ground decorated with a large cassiolette, was sold from the collection of Countess Sala, Parke-Bernet, New York, November 18, 1961, lot 281; and one seen in a photograph of gallery 17, of the 1914 Morgan Loan Exhibition, ill. in Guide, *op. cit.* p.103, was auctioned by Christie's, Monaco, December 5, 1993, lot 215, coming formerly from the Stotesbury and Garbisch collections.
 23. Later sold from the collection of Mrs. John E. Rovensky, Parke-Bernet, New York, January 18, 1957, lots 823-25. One illustrated in the 1914 Morgan Loan Guide, *op. cit.* p.112.
 24. Morgan Loan Guide, *idem.*
 25. See The Cleveland Museum of Art, *Catalogue of the John L. Severance Collection*, Cleveland, 1955, no. 121, Pl. XXXVI.
 26. Now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
 27. For one of the pair of Kingston tureens formerly owned by Pierpont Morgan, see Henry H. Hawley, 'Meissonnier's Silver for the Duke of Kingston,' *The Bulletin of The Cleveland Museum of Art*, December 1978.
 28. The inventory made of Galleries 17 and 18 of the 1914 Morgan Loan Exhibition (contained in the archives of The Metropolitan Museum of Art) lists 23 small sculptures placed around the rooms: four by or attributed to Houdon, including a bronze identified as 'Madame de Pompadour' [d.1764] as Diana (probably the 22 in. high figure in the Huntington), two terra cotta busts of Houdon's daughters Claudine and Anne-Ange, and a marble bust of a young girl; five works by Clodion, including a terra cotta representing *The Embrace* said to be dated 1779 (the Zephyrus and Flora in The Frick Collection), two terra cottas representing a mother and child (now in the Huntington), a terra cotta of a little girl holding up flowers in her skirt (now Prentiss Collection, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Prentiss cat. no. 38), and a terra cotta of a little girl with a tambourine and small cupid walking beside; two female terra-cotta busts by Marin; nine marbles by or after Falconet (all but one ill. by Réau, I, pls.XV-XIX), including a standing woman holding a dead bird in her hand, Venus standing against a tree stump with her right arm pressed against her breast, Venus and Cupid with two doves beneath (later in the Judge Elbert H. Gary sale, New York,

- 1928, lot 252), Venus chastising Cupid (Gary sale, lot 253), four other groups of Venus and Cupid, Venus and Adonis with a dog at the base (now The Frick Collection, New York, see sculpture cat., *op. cit.*, pp.95-97) a Pajou marble bust of Madame Roland; and two bronze busts of a youth and a young girl (now Frick Collection, New York, see sculpture cat., pp.142-45). In Gallery 20 was a terra cotta ewer signed 'Sigisbert 1799,' now in the Wadsworth Atheneum.
29. André Pératé and Gaston Brière, *Collections Georges Hoentschel, acquises par J.P. Morgan*, 4 vols., Paris, 1908.
30. A number of the carved wood elements, including the richly carved paneling of the former 'Morgan Alcove,' are incorporated into the present Wrightsman Galleries.
31. A story relating to this which Pierpont Morgan delighted in telling is published in the 1914 Morgan Exhibition guide: 'I heard that Mr. So-and-So had a certain object in his collection that I was very anxious to secure, and in the hope of being able to buy it, I obtained an invitation to visit his collection, which had never been seen. But when I saw what treasures the man had, I said to myself, "what is the use of bothering about one little piece when I might get them all". So I asked him at once if he would take so much for his entire collection; he said he would, and I bought them then and there'. Another such story from the *New York Herald* of May 25, 1914, relates how upon visiting Bernard Frank of Paris, a fellow collector of *camets de bal*, he astounded Frank with an offer that was too good to refuse. After concluding the deal he asked the owner how long it had taken him to form his collection. "Thirty years," was Frank's answer. Pierpont Morgan replied, "Well it took me five minutes."
32. See The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Guide to the Loan Exhibition of the J. Pierpont Morgan Collection*, New York, 1914, pp.2-152.
33. Sales reported in the *New York Herald*, a clipping file of which exists in the Morgan records at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
34. These were later sold in 795 lots by Christie's, London, June 24-27, 1935.
35. These and a great many other works which had belonged to Pierpont Morgan, were auctioned from the estate of J.P. Morgan, Jr., by Parke-Bernet in 1944: Part I, January 1-4; Part II, March 22-25.
36. See Linda Horvitz Roth, *op. cit.*
37. See The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Handbook of the Pierpont Morgan Wing*, New York, 1929, 394 pages.
38. See Theodore Dell, *Frick Collection furniture catalogues*, 1992, vols. V and VI. In vol. V: two Louis XV style secretaires (15.5.35 & 36); a Louis XVI regulator clock with mounts by Philippe Caffieri (15.5.46); two Transitional commodes by Pierre Dupré (15.5.40 & 41). In vol. VI: a Carlin mechanical table with Sèvres plaques (15.5.62); a Riesener secretaire and commode (15.5.75 & 76); a Gouthière console table (15.5.59); a gilt-bronze guéridon with a lapis lazuli top (15.5.60); a Louis XVI style lyre-leg table (18.5.63); a Savonnerie banquette (15.5.146); a pair of Louis XVI candelabra (15.6.7 & 8); a pair of Louis XVI candelabra with lapis lazuli vases (15.6.9 & 10); a pair of Louis XVI candlesticks attributed to Martincourt (18.6.5 & 6).
39. A Louis XVI *bureau plat* mounted with Sèvres porcelain plaques and attributed to Martin Carlin; a Louis XVI round *guéridon* mounted with Sèvres porcelain plaques painted with scattered roses; a Louis XVI round *guéridon* with a yellow-ground Sèvres porcelain top painted with a mythological subject; and a pair of gilt-bronze ewers emblematic of wine and water, signed by Pierre Gouthière (ill. P. Verlet, *Les bronzes dorés françaises du XVIII^e siècle*, p.205, fig. 235) all now belonging to the Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh.
40. See William Rieder, *op. cit.*: two Carlin marquetry *bonheurs-du-jour* (no.8); two Carlin *guéridons* with candle arms (no.16); a Riesener commode with trellis marquetry (20); a commode with floral marquetry possibly by Riesener (22); two secretaires, each mounted with a round Sèvres plaque, attributed to Weisweiler (30)
41. A Régence *bureau plat* in the style of Cressent (museum no.C-268); a small Louis XV table stamped B.V.R.B. (C-273); and a Louis XVI sliding-top table attributed to J.-F. Leleu (C-274).
42. See Robert R. Wark, *op. cit.*, two Savonnerie carpets (figs. 40-42); a Louis XVI clock with a movement by Sotiau (fig. 90); a Louis XVI 'Three-Graces' clock with movement by Montjoy (fig. 9); a Louis XVI marble clock after Falconet with movement by Lepaute (fig. 92); a pair of Louis XVI style candelabra incorporating marble female figures (fig. 94). See also R.R. Wark, *Sculpture in the Huntington Collection* San

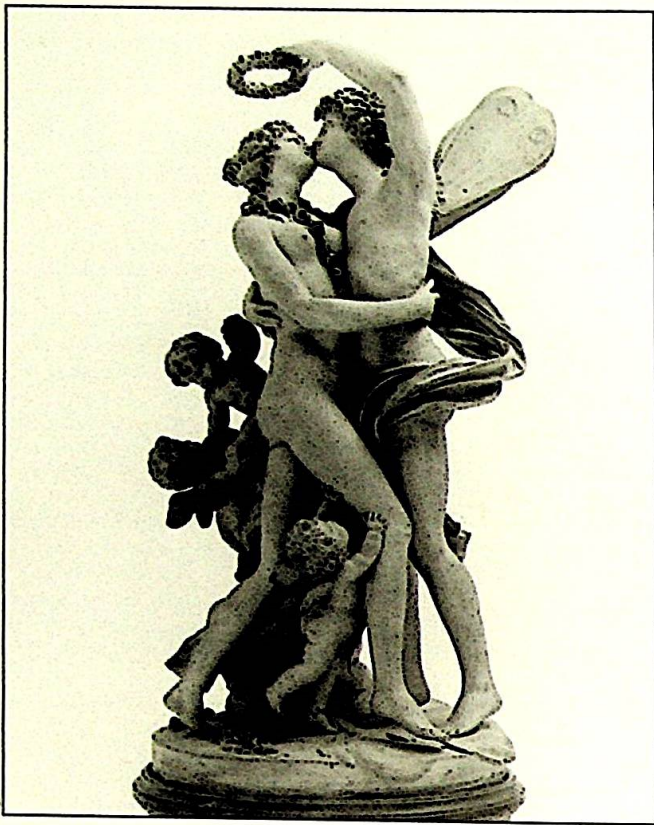


Figure 12, *Zephyrus and Flora*. Terra cotta, signed by Clodion and dated 1799. H.20 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (52.7cm). Copyright, The Frick Collection, New York. Museum no.15.2.76.

- Marino, 1965 (fig. XXXIV – one group only). Also in this same collection is a bronze figure of Diana, 22 in. high.
43. James Parker, 'Eighteenth-century France Recreated in the "cold, barbarous country": the Tapestry Room from the Bernstorff Palace, Copenhagen,' *The Burlington Magazine*, June 1973, pp.366-73.
 44. A Régence commode, ex. coll. Boni de Castellane, sold Butterfield & Butterfield, San Francisco, February 15, 1984, lot 1207, and a Louis XV commode signed Joseph, lot 1244 of the same sale (Morgan provenance listed for neither); a Louis XV bureau plat sold from the Elizabeth Parke Firestone collection, Christie's, New York, March 23, 1991, lot 923; a pair of Louis XVI style secretaires mounted with porcelain plaques (see note 15).
 45. Most notably, a Louis D-shaped *console-desserte* with fluted columnar legs and a galleried white marble top partially visible in a 1914 Loan Exhibition photograph.

ADDENDA

Besides those discussed above, a number of other 18th-century French decorative works once forming part of Pierpont Morgan's collection have entered museum collections. Now belonging to The Metropolitan Museum of Art are a series of six decorative canvases executed by Hubert Robert in 1777-84 for the *salle de bains* of the comte d'Artois at Bagatelle, which entered the museum through the 1917 J.P. Morgan, Jr., gift (see *Guide to the Wrightsman Galleries*, 1979, pp. 65-66) and a Louis XVI *secrétaire à abattant* signed by Philippe Pasquier and mounted behind glass with a number of watercolor, gouache and pastel drawings, which entered the museum through the Samuel H. Kress Foundation gift of 1958 (see James Parker, et al., *Decorative Art from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, 1964, no. 16). In addition, a pair of Louis XVI mounted ivory vases which form part of the 1941 George Blumenthal bequest, correspond to the brief description of those owned by Morgan and may well be the same (Wrightsman Galleries guide, pp. 108-09).

Belonging to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and bought by Forsyth

Wickes from the 1944 J.P. Morgan, Jr., estate sale (Parke-Bernet I, January 6-8, and II, March 22-25) are a garniture of three Sèvres *vases hollandais* (Chavagnac, Morgan porcelains catalogue, 1910, no. 99; Morgan sale, II, lot 646; Jeffrey H. Munger, et al., *The Forsyth Wickes Collection*, Boston, 1992, no. 119); a pair of Sèvres *vases hollandais nouveaux ovales* (Chavagnac, no. 104; Morgan sale, I, lot 487; Wickes cat., no. 121); a Sèvres *étielle* and plateau (Chavagnac, no. 100; Morgan sale, II, lot 626; Wickes cat., no. 125); a Sèvres covered cup and saucer (Chavagnac, no. 176; Morgan sale, II, lot 643; and another similar (Chavagnac, no. 120; Morgan sale, II, lot 625; Wickes cat., no. 145). In The Cleveland Museum of Art and purchased from Arnold Seligmann, Rey & Co., New York, shortly after the 1944 J.P. Morgan estate sale, are a Vincennes bowl and cover (Chavagnac, no. 54; Morgan sale, II, lot 634); a Chantilly *déjeuner* service (Chavagnac, no. 8; Morgan sale, II, lot 640); and a pair of Saint-Cloud *seaux* (Chavagnac, no. 2; Morgan sale, II, lot 638), as well as the above-mentioned Beauvais tapestry and Meissonnier silver turcen acquired from different sources (see notes 25 and 27). In 1975, J. Paul Getty purchased for his museum in Malibu, Pierpont Morgan's Sèvres *vase vaisseau à mât* (Chavagnac, no. 109; 1944 J.P. Morgan sale, I, lot 486; Adrian Sassoon, *Vincennes and Sèvres Porcelain: Catalogue of the Collections*, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, 1991, no. 10) and his pair of *pots pourris à bobèches* (Chavagnac, no. 107; Morgan sale, II, lot 647; Sassoon, no. 9). Calouste Gulbenkian acquired at an unknown date Pierpont Morgan's magnificent table clock attributed to A.-C. Boulle, incorporating the arms of the Cardinals Ottoboni (*Calouste Gulbenkian Museum: Catalogue*, 1982, no. 570; Jean Nérée Ronfort in Ottomeyer/Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Munich, 1986, II, p. 477), which Morgan had purchased from Charles J. Wertheimer in London.

Besides the above clock and those purchased by Henry and Arabella Huntington (see note 42), Pierpont Morgan owned a Louis XVI blue Sèvres lyre clock which J.P. Morgan, Jr., gave to the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1917 along with the many other pieces of French porcelain from his father's collection; a Niderviller urn clock (Chavagnac, no. 208; Morgan sale, I, lot 493); a Louis XVI style green Sèvres urn clock (Chavagnac, no. 205; Morgan sale, II, lot 644); a Louis XVI Sèvres porcelain clock of pilgrim-bottle form raised on slender legs, with an English movement by Dupont (Chavagnac, no. 177; Morgan sale, I, lot 490); a Louis XVI white marble mantel clock in the style of Falconet, with a youth and a maiden leaning over either side of the dial, and with its movement by Revel (sold Parke-Bernet, January 26, 1946, lot 65); a terra-cotta 'bacchanal' clock signed by Marin, with its movement by de Belle (sold René Fribourg collection, Sotheby's, London, October 18, 1963, lot 757); a Louis XVI mantel clock with its movement by Lepaute and inscribed on front 'Eclipse du 1^r Avril, 1764,' consisting of a bronze maiden standing over the dial at right and a putto seated at left; and a Louis XVI blue enamel and gold urn clock inset with Sèvres porcelain medallions, rose diamonds, pearls, and enamelled decoration in the style of Joseph Coteau (G.C. Williamson, *Catalogue of the Collection of Jewels and Precious Works of Art, the Property of J. Pierpont Morgan*, London, 1910, no. 107; 1944 Morgan sale, II, lot 613).

Also of note in J. Pierpont Morgan's collection were a low Transitional *bonheur du jour* with marquetry in the style of J.-F. Oeben, auctioned from the collection of Lord Michelham in London in 1926 (Hampton & Sons, November 23, lot 183); a Louis XV commode signed by L. Boudin, painted with *fête champêtre* scenes after J.-B. Huet, sold from the estate of J.P. Morgan, Jr., in 1944 (II, lot 722); and a large Louis XVI *bleu turquin* marble jardinière mounted with a series of bronze plaques representing Dionysian scenes, one signed by Clodion and dated 1784, sold at auction in New York in 1946 (Parke-Bernet, January 26, lot 53), and now belonging to Wildenstein & Co., New York.

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