

Two Looking-Glasses

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Source: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Oct., 1934, Vol. 29, No. 10 (Oct., 1934), pp. 172-173

Published by: The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3256733>

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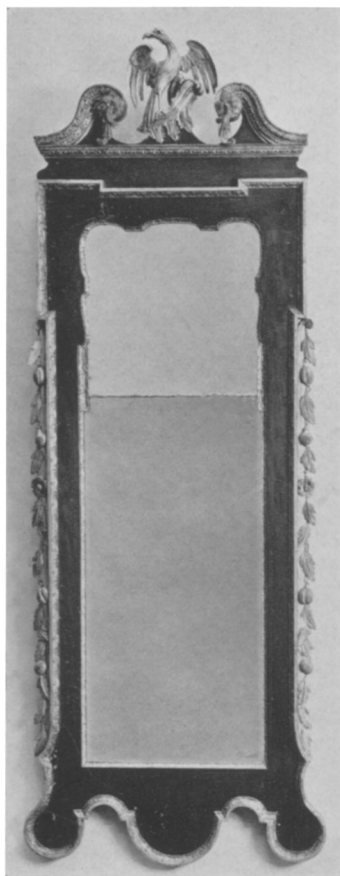
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worthy precursor, in fact, of the funerary statues and reliefs which later commemorated the dead. It served at the same time as a receptacle for offerings<sup>9</sup>; for there is the usual hole in the floor of the bowl, to allow libations to reach the dead—in this case presumably the sea captain who lost his life in the fight portrayed.

The vase belongs to the developed period of Attic geometric art and represents its climax. Such magnificent vases, thrown on the wheel, fired in one piece, and elaborately decorated, are great feats in the craft of pottery. And they suggest some degree of civilization. This is indicated also by the representations of warships engaged in battle. Athens at this early period, contrary to prevalent conceptions, must already have been a state of some consequence. It is true that we do not know whether the ship scenes represent piratical attacks or regular sea battles in which an Athenian "navy" was engaged.<sup>10</sup> But piracy in those days was as honorable a calling as in the Elizabethan age. And in either case these scenes point to the existence of formidable Athenian warships and show that

Athenian chieftains performed feats at sea which were commemorated at home in sumptuous memorials. We are learning more and more that the Athenian aristocracy which wielded the power during this early epoch did its share in the upbuilding of the greatness of Athens.

GISELA M. A. RICHTER.



LOOKING-GLASS, AMERICAN, MIDDLE  
OF THE XVIII CENTURY

## TWO LOOKING-GLASSES

Two handsome looking-glasses which have been on exhibition in the American Wing as loans for several years past have now become the property of the Museum by gift and by purchase.

One, acquired through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Luke Vincent Lockwood, is a horizontal overmantel mirror of the Queen Anne style, framed in walnut.<sup>1</sup> Surrounding the triple beveled glass is a foliate border modeled in gesso and gilded. At the sides scalloped wings provide a space for brass candle sconces to be fastened. In England and the Colonies, looking-glasses similar to this one were accommodated to the narrow panel above the fireplace that was the precursor of the mantel shelf.

The second looking-glass, distinguished by its unusual size, beauty of design, and able execution, is a recent purchase out of the Pulitzer Bequest.<sup>2</sup> The frame is fashioned of mahogany veneered upon pine and enlivened with

<sup>1</sup> Acc. no. 33.34. H. 16½ in., w. 53 in. Exhibited in the room from Almodington, Maryland (Gallery M 15).

<sup>2</sup> Acc. no. 33.142.2. H. 86½ in., w. 32½ in. Exhibited in the assembly room from Alexandria, Virginia (Gallery M 16). Illustrated above.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Poulsen, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> If the latter, these sea battles of "geometric" times would be previous to the battle between Corinth and Corcyra in the seventh century, which Thucydides (I.13.4) calls "the earliest sea fight of which we know." This would not be the first time that archaeological evidence has contradicted that of literature. We may also recall that at least in the time of Kylon (about 640 B.C.) we hear of Athenian naucreries (Herodotus V. 71), which suggest the existence of an Athenian navy.

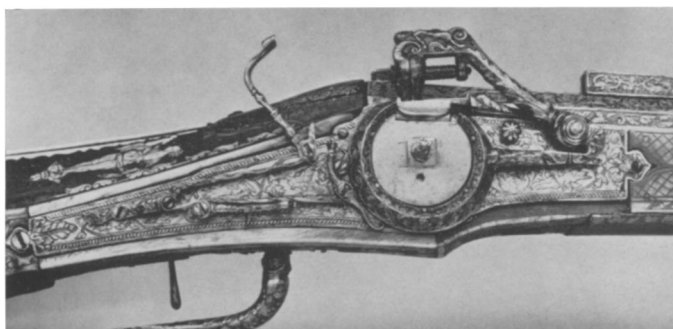
## A HAPSBURG GUN

gilded gesso borders, pendants, and cresting.<sup>3</sup> Its contour illustrates the fact that prior to 1750 the designers of furniture depended largely upon architectural motives: here the eared outline and scrolled pediment echo the elements that are incorporated in the near-by doorways. The rocaille carving of the finial, upon which perches a fabulous bird, half pheasant, half eagle, forecasts the approaching storm of asymmetry that was to overtake all decoration early in the third

There is a particular satisfaction in having in the Museum's armory an object which belonged to the Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol (1529-1595), one of the greatest collectors of all time. His gun (fig. 1), a purchase shown this month in the Room of Recent Accessions, is a worthy addition to the impressive group of objects in the Department of Arms and Armor which is associ-



FIG. 1. HUNTING GUN OF ARCHDUKE FERDINAND OF TYROL

FIG. 2. COMBINATION MATCHLOCK AND WHEELLOCK  
DETAIL OF THE HUNTING GUN OF ARCHDUKE FERDINAND

quarter of the eighteenth century.

Engravings of English designers were largely the fountainhead of the Colonial builders' inspiration. The book of Abraham Swan, so popular that it was reprinted in America,<sup>4</sup> sets forth a variety of suggestions for "tabernacle" frames and overmantels. The pediments and eared architraves of these are often embellished with rocaille ornament in much the same manner as our looking-glass.

JOSEPH DOWNS.

<sup>3</sup> It is often difficult to ascertain the provenance of looking-glass frames, even though American wood appears in their construction, owing to the fact that in Colonial days woods

ated with the Imperial House of Hapsburg.

It is not a military piece, but a weapon used entirely for sport. In the sixteenth century, when mercenaries had to furnish their own arms, military guns were crude, but the utmost care and skill were exercised to bring the sporting guns of princely houses to perfection. The gun has a lock-plate on which match- and wheellock mechanisms are combined (fig. 2). The matchlock persisted in use for more than two centuries

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were exported to England and Holland in vast quantities.

<sup>4</sup> *The British Architect or Treasury of Staircases*. London, 1745, 1750, and 1757. Philadelphia, 1765.