

The Jerwood Supplement

Recent acquisitions (2000–06) of sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

THE WORKS ILLUSTRATED in this Supplement represent a selection of the sculpture acquisitions made by the Victoria and Albert Museum in the last seven years. As in the previous two decades (see the Supplements for the years 1986–91 and 1992–99 in this Magazine, 133 (1991), pp.876–80, and 141 (1999), pp.783–88), a relatively small number of purchases was made, due to both scarcity of funds and the already comprehensive nature of the collections. Once again, the Museum is indebted to the Art Fund for its perennial support, to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and to H.M. Government for allocating objects to the Museum in lieu of inheritance tax. It is worth noting that a good number of the acquisitions were of objects previously on loan to the Museum. There can be no guarantee that loans will be translated into acquisitions, but there is always a better chance of this happening than if they had not been taken on, especially in the case of long-term loans.

It has become obvious in recent years that the funds available for acquisitions are increasingly inadequate, and that the buying power of the Museum is far weaker than it was in the early 1980s. No major purchase can now be made without the support of the funding bodies mentioned above, and the Museum is also dependent on gifts, both financial and of objects, to augment the collection. This has led to a more reactive acquisitions policy, whereby the Museum only responds to items stopped for export or ones offered in special circumstances, so that more unusual works – often for sale at reasonable prices – are sometimes missed. No fewer than eleven of the sculptures featured here were acquired at no cost to the Museum.

In the last Supplement of this type, in 1999, it was pointed out that the collecting of sculpture at the V. & A. was inevitably conditioned by its position within a museum of the decorative arts. The overlapping nature of the collections led in 2001 to the amalgamation of the Sculpture, Metalwork and Ceramics & Glass departments into a single entity, and the inclusion here of the magnificent silver reliquary statuette of St Sebastian (Fig.VI) and the fire basket by Charles Sargeant Jagger (Fig.XV) are concrete manifestations of how sculpture can be applied to categories of objects normally viewed as belonging to the decorative arts. Likewise, the four heraldic beasts from Naworth (Fig.VII), although acquired by the Furniture, Textiles & Fashion Department, also fit comfortably into a sculpture supplement.

The corollary to the acquisition of a work of art is its display. In the period covered by this Supplement, three new sculpture galleries were opened to the public. The first, dedicated to the materials and techniques of sculpture, was installed in a refurbished space between the Cast Courts in 2004 (The Gilbert Bayes Sculpture Gallery); the second, over-

looking the main entrance hall and intended as a flexible space for the display of bronzes, opened in 2005, and was supported by Paul Ruddock in memory of William Ruddock; and the third, a suite of galleries given over to Sculpture in Britain in the post-medieval period, opened in 2006 in the restored galleries immediately south of the Garden and was made possible thanks to the generosity of Dorothy and Michael Hintze. Alongside these new galleries, much sculpture was included in the new British Art & Design Galleries 1500–1900, which opened in 2001. In addition to these displays, a great deal of effort has gone into making the material more accessible in book form through catalogues of the Museum's collections of Italian Bronzes (2001), British Sculpture 1470 to 2000 (2002), German Sculpture 1430–1540 (2002) and Netherlandish Sculpture 1450–1550 (2002).

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1. *The three Graces*, by Joseph Nollekens. c.1802. Terracotta, 18.5 cm. high. (A.1–2000; given by the late Mrs Linda Murray F.S.A.). This terracotta group was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1802 (no.1064) and seems not to have served as a model for a larger composition in marble. It was included in the sale of Nollekens's effects in 1823 and was eventually bought, in about 1962, by the art historians Peter and Linda Murray. For a detailed account of the terracotta, see D. Bilbey, with M. Trusted: *British Sculpture 1470 to 2000. A concise catalogue of the collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London 2002, no.143.



II. Chess-piece. English, c.1120–30. Walrus ivory, 5.9 cm. high. (A.40–2000; bequeathed by the late Mrs Jane Stott). Found among the ruins of Kirkstall Abbey in Yorkshire in about 1830, this important and unusual Romanesque chess-piece was placed on loan to the V. & A. in 1925. It is probably a king, and is decorated with various beasts and with figures riding goats.



III. *Virgin and Child*. Italian (Florence), c.1410–30. Terracotta, 35 by 21 cm. (A.7–2003; bequeathed by the late Mr and Mrs H. Ingham). Formerly in the Beckerath and Silten collections in Berlin, this is one of a number of terracotta reliefs traditionally associated with the style of Lorenzo Ghiberti, and was probably produced in a Florentine workshop in his circle.



IV. Effigy of a lady. Spanish (Toledo?), c.1490–1510 (detail). Painted and gilt wood and canvas, 158 cm. long. (A.35–2000; previously on loan from Sir Edgar Speyer). A comprehensive discussion of this piece is included in M. Trusted: *Spanish Sculpture. Catalogue of the post-medieval Spanish sculpture in wood, terracotta, alabaster, marble, stone, lead and jet in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London 1996, no.2.*



V. Crozier (seen from both sides). Norwegian (Trondheim?), c.1400. Walrus ivory with traces of gilding and later bone restorations, 22 cm. high; volute 12.7 cm. wide. (A.1–2002; accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of inheritance tax (estate of S. Wingfield-Digby) and allocated to the Victoria and Albert Museum, 2002). On one side of the crozier is St Olav, the eleventh-century king responsible for introducing Christianity to Norway; on the other a bishop, probably St Eystein (Augustine), who built St Olav's shrine in the cathedral at Nidaros (Trondheim) in the twelfth century. Known as the Digby Crozier, because it had been in the possession of the Wingfield-Digby family at Sherborne Castle in Dorset for more than 300 years, it had been on loan to the V. & A. since 1930. It is thought to have been brought to England from Ireland in the seventeenth century by the Right Revd. Essex Digby, Bishop of Dromore, although its style and subject matter point unequivocally to Norway. Scandinavian ivory carvings of this kind are extremely rare even in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and there is nothing directly comparable in British collections.



VI. Reliquary of St Sebastian. German (Augsburg), dated 1497. Silver, parcel-gilt, pearls, sapphires and rubies, 49.5 cm. high. (M.27-2001; acquired with the aid of contributions from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and The Art Fund). An inscription on the base recounts that the reliquary was commissioned in 1497 by Abbot Georg II Kastner of Kaiserheim, a Cistercian monastery in Swabia, to protect against the plague. A drawing by Hans Holbein the Elder in the British Museum probably represents a preliminary design. The 1531 chronicle of the abbey records that a second reliquary figure, representing St Christopher, was also commissioned and that both were paid for by Duke Frederick III of Saxony. The monastery was secularised in 1802 and the reliquaries subsequently passed through the Soltykoff and Wernher collections, before being sold at auction in 2000. The *St Christopher* now belongs to the Thomson Collection and is presently on loan to the V. & A. For a concise description of the St Sebastian reliquary and its provenance, see the entry by Marian Campbell in *The National Art Collections Fund 2001 Review*, pp.118–19.



VII. The Dacre Beasts. English, c.1520. Painted oak, 189 cm. high (Gryphon); 185 cm. high (Ram); 205 cm. high (Dolphin); 206 cm. high (Bull). (W.6 to 9-2000; accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of inheritance tax and allocated to the Victoria and Albert Museum, with additional funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, The Art Fund, the Friends of the V. & A. and other private benefactors). The Dacre Beasts were commissioned by Thomas, Lord Dacre (1467-1525), whose crest is represented by the red bull. They were displayed in the Great Hall at Naworth Castle in Cumbria until 1999, but may originally have been made for Kirkoswald Castle, another Dacre stronghold in Cumbria. All carved from the same oak tree, they were repainted after the Great Hall at Naworth was gutted by fire in 1844.



VIII. Three standing figures. English, c.1500-25. Oak, each 109 cm. high. (A.11 to 13-2001; purchased with the aid of contributions from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and The Art Fund). It is likely that these figures represent retainers of the Dacre family of Cumbria: a knight, a man-at-arms and a squire. On acquisition in 2001, it was thought that they were made for the Great Hall at Naworth Castle, from where they came immediately before their sale. Just before the fire of 1844 the three figures were displayed on a screen in the Great Hall, alongside the four heraldic beasts (see no.VII); but it is probable that they were made for the hall at Kirkoswald, and were only moved to Naworth when Kirkoswald was dismantled in the early seventeenth century.



IX. *Constant de Silvecane*, by Claude Warin. Signed and dated 1647. Silver, 7.55 cm. diameter. (A.12-2002; gift of the Parnassus Foundation). Constant de Silvecane was President of the Cour des Monnaies in Lyon and President of Parlement. This is a rare example of this extremely fine uniface medal.



XI. *Ferdinando I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany*, by Giambologna. c.1592-94. Wax on wire armature, 18.6 cm. high. (A.3-2002; accepted by H.M. Government in lieu of inheritance tax (estate of Sir Brinsley Ford) and allocated to the Victoria and Albert Museum, 2002). This autograph sketch is the only surviving contribution of Giambologna to the marble statue of Ferdinando outside the cathedral in Arezzo, which is dated 1594: the inscription on the sculpture shows that Pietro Francavilla carved it, and that Giambologna was responsible for its design. The wax model subsequently belonged to Sir Thomas Lawrence and Richard Ford, descending through the latter's family to Sir Brinsley Ford.



X. *St Peter*. South Netherlandish, c.1510-20. Oak, 95 cm. high. (A.4-2002; gift of Miss Joan Hurst through The Art Fund).



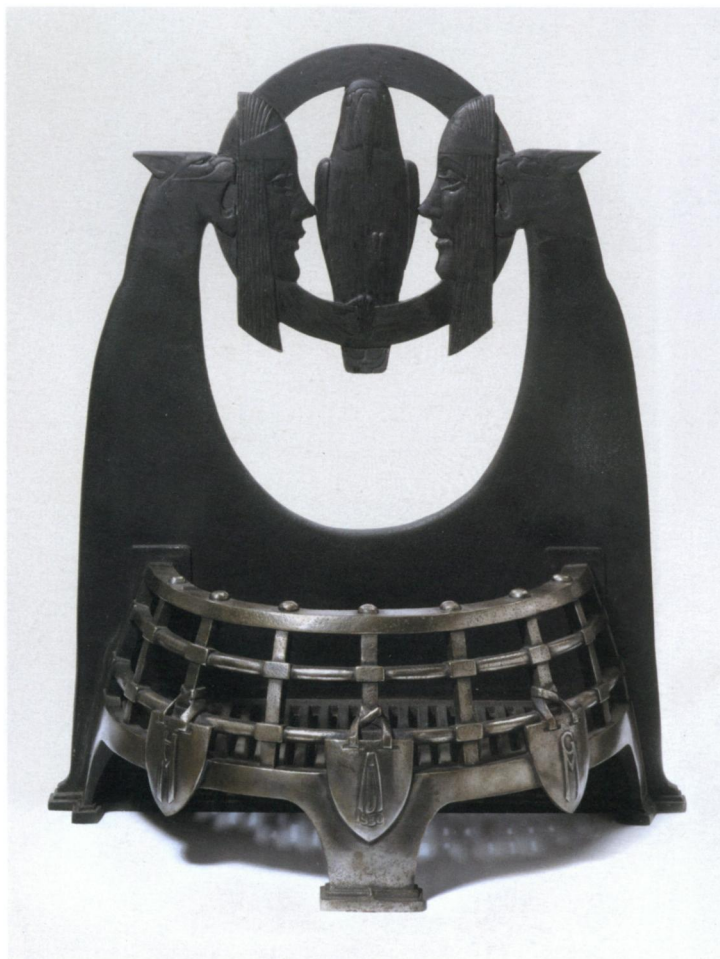
XII. *Francis Musters (1664–80)*, attributed to Caius Gabriel Cibber. c.1680. Marble, 154 cm. high. (A.8–2003; purchased with the aid of contributions from The Art Fund and the Hugh Phillips Bequest). Cibber was born in Denmark but became one of the leading sculptors active in Britain in the late seventeenth century. He arrived in England in about 1660, after a period of study in Italy, and became ‘carver to the king’s closet’ at the court of Charles II. The marble relief, enclosed within a pedimented and framed memorial with columns and inscription tablet (not illustrated here), commemorates Francis Musters, the son of Sir John Musters, who died at the age of fifteen. Sir John Musters had a number of court connections which may have brought him into contact with Cibber. The memorial was formerly in the parish church of St Mary in Hornsey, Middlesex, which was demolished and replaced by a modern church in 1969.



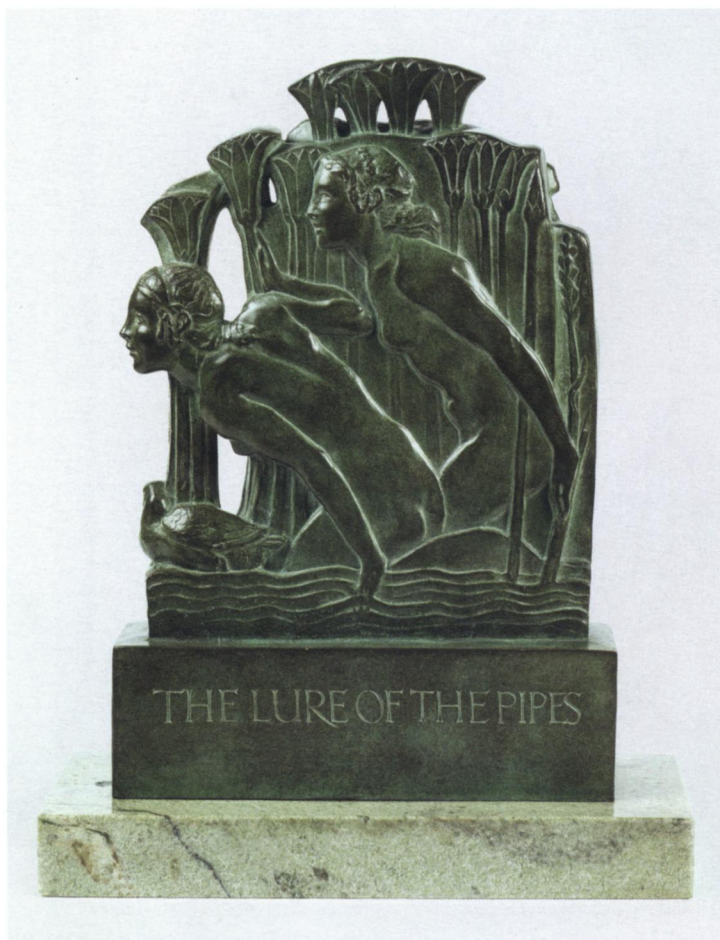
XIII. *The rape of Proserpine*, by Edward James Physick. Signed and dated 1849. Plaster, 124 by 107 cm. (A.1-2005; given in memory of her father, David Physick). Edward James Physick (1829-1906) was a member of a distinguished family of nineteenth-century sculptors. This relief, which won the Royal Academy Gold Medal in 1850 and was shown at the Great Exhibition in 1851, was given to the Museum by the great-great-granddaughter of the artist.



XIV. *Mother and child*, by John Tweed. c.1894. Bronze, 25 cm. high. (A.27-2005). Tweed's debt to the work of Rodin is clearly demonstrated in this bronze relief, based as it is on the latter's *The young mother* of 1885, a plaster example of which is also in the V. & A. (A.25-1924).



XV. *Fire basket*, by Charles Sargeant Jagger. Signed and dated 1930. Cast iron, 91.5 cm. high. (M.16-2005; purchased with the aid of contributions from the Friends of the V. & A. and The Art Fund). This fire basket is a rare example of Jagger turning his sculptural skills to a scheme of interior decoration. In 1930 he was commissioned to make the fire basket and a large bronze relief entitled *Scandal* above the fireplace for the drawing room of Mulberry House in Westminster, the home of Henry Mond, 2nd Lord Melchett, and his wife, Gwen. The iconography of the fire basket – with snarling cats, female masks and a parrot – refers to the gossip surrounding the unconventional married life of the couple. For a fuller description, see the entry by Eric Turner in *The Art Fund 2005 Review*, p.97).



XVI. *The lure of the pipes of Pan*, by Gilbert Bayes. 1932. Bronze, 47 cm. high. (A.3-2004; given by the Gilbert Bayes Charitable Trust).



XVII. *John Charles Robinson medal*, by Felicity Powell. 2002. Patinated bronze, 11.6 cm. diameter. (A.5-2002; commissioned from the artist with funding from an anonymous donor). Felicity Powell (born 1961) was commissioned to make a medal commemorating John Charles Robinson, the first curator of the art collections at Marlborough House and then at South Kensington and a pioneering scholar of sculpture. To capture his acquisitive spirit she reproduced words taken from a letter he wrote to the Museum in 1866 – 'Now is the Time' – which referred to the need to act quickly in order to purchase objects recently made available by political unrest in Spain. The hands on the other side of the medal are taken from that of the Virgin in Arnolfo di Cambio's marble *Annunciation*, which Robinson acquired for the Museum in 1861. The Robinson medal is now presented to major benefactors of the Museum.