

A Lingering Ducal Taste: Silver Vase Sets or Garnitures after Chinese Porcelain

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On 4 October 1683, the diarist and courtier John Evelyn (1620–1706) accompanied Charles II and others on a visit to the rich and expensively furnished Dressing Room belonging to Louise de K rouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth (1649–1734), the monarch’s French mistress, part of her apartments at the Palace of Whitehall. Filled with the latest French fashions associated with the court of Versailles, including Gobelins tapestries from *Les Maisons Royales* series, Evelyn lists its contents disapprovingly: ‘Then for *Japon Cabinets, Skreenes, Pendule Clocks, huge Vasas of wrought plate, Tables, Stands, Chimny furniture, Sconces, branches, Braseras, etc.*, they were all of massive silver and without number... purchased with vice and dishonour’.¹ Evelyn’s description is supported by another contemporary description, published in 1684, by an Italian satirist, Gregorio Leti (1630–1701), who also noted the Duchess of Portsmouth’s splendid rooms adorned with silver vessels, remarking that no European princess could boast of having richer or more nobly crafted ones, all paid for, he insinuated, by Charles II.²



Fig. 1: ‘Femmes a la Mode’, with a seven-piece garniture above a cabinet, engraving, ca. 1685-86. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie.

¹ Cited in Christopher Hartop and Ellenor M. Alcorn, *British and Irish Silver in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums*, Cambridge, Mass., New Haven, Conn; Harvard University Art Museums and Yale University Press, 2007, pp. 56–57, quoting from Esmund Samuel De Beers (ed.) *The diary of John Evelyn: now printed in full from the manuscripts belonging to Mr. John Evelyn*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1955, vol. IV, pp. 343-344.

² Gregorio Leti, *Il Teatro britannico, o vero Historia della Grande Bretagna*, Amsterdam, Abraham Wolfgang, 1684, vol. I, p. 132, the original quote is as follows: ‘superbissime stanze ornate di Vasselame d’Argento’.

Whether the 'huge Vasas of wrought plate' were of French, Dutch or English workmanship is not recorded—the use of the term 'vasas' rather than 'jar', might suggest they were of classical design and thus French—but if English or Dutch, we may assume that the shapes were after Chinese porcelain forms, jars, bottles, beakers and even bowls, which decorated the tops of large ebony or lacquer cabinets on stands and perhaps chimney-pieces in the second half of the seventeenth century.³ Such massed displays of silver in bedchambers and dressing rooms were typically associated with the apartments of royal and aristocratic ladies, and also included toilet sets and fire furniture: andirons, fire shovels, tongs and pincers (Fig. 1).⁴ As display vessels, vase sets or garnitures, as they are also known, were part of this furnishing silver, which was in its Zenith during the Restoration period, recorded in Evelyn's poem *Mundus Muliebris: or The Ladies Dressing-Room Unlock'd, and her toilette spread in burlesque*, London, 1690: 'Branches, brassero, cassolets,/A cofre-fort, and cabinets,/Vasas of silver, porcelain, store/To set, and range about the floor:/The chimney furniture of plate/(For iron's now quite out of date);/Tea-table, skreens, trunks, and stand,/Large looking-glass, richly japann'd;/An hanging shelf, to which belongs,/ Romances, plays and amorous songs...'

Garnitures, typically, comprised an uneven quantity of jars and beakers with matching or ensuite decoration, numbering three, five, seven or nine pieces (and sometimes even more) per set, with pairs centred around a single jar: some elite households owned more than one set. Not since the appearance of several articles by John Starkie Gardner (1844–1930) over a century ago, has a comprehensive history of these silver garnitures or vase sets been published, becoming very fashionable among collectors in the early twentieth century arising resulting from sales of historic collections.⁵ The subject was briefly discussed with examples in this author's display on the history and origins of the ceramic garniture held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 2016/2017, entitled 'Garnitures: Vase Sets from National Trust Houses', documented in the eponymous catalogue.⁶

While there was a great explosion of 'wrought' plate during the Restoration period, the appearance of such vessels in England, was more specifically a response to the shortage of Chinese porcelain jars and beakers in the mid-seventeenth century following the transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty, when all official exports ceased in 1657, but which in fact had already commenced in the 1640s as the worsening political situation gradually reduced trade; supply was not revived until about 1685. This paper summarises the history of this decorative fashion in

³ While no French examples appear to survive, they may have resembled published designs by Daniel Marot for oviform fountains and ewers with classical details, as in *Nouveaux Liure d'Orfeurerie*, 1701-3, see Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. RP-P-1964-3136).

⁴ David M. Mitchell, *Silversmiths in Elizabethan and Stuart London: Their Lives and Their Marks*, Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017, pp. 107

⁵ See J. Starkie Gardner, 'Charles II Silver at Welbeck, Part I', *Burlington Magazine*, (April) 1905, Vol. 7 (25), pp.32-33, 36-39; 'Silver Plate at Belvoir Castle, Part I & II', *Burlington Magazine*, (March) 1906, pp.396–401.

⁶ Patricia F. Ferguson, *Garnitures: Vase Sets from National Trust Houses*, London, V&A Publishing, 2016.



Fig.2: 'Cabinets – King's Bedroom', photograph, by C. Essenhigh Corke, ca. 1890. Knole, Kent (NT). Photo Credit: Charles Thomas.



Fig.3: Five-piece cabinet garniture or vase set, silver, unmarked, English, c.1670-80, on a French cabinet-on-stand, c. 1650, from a private collection on loan to Knole, Kent (NT). Photo Credit: Robert Morris.

display silver, citing textual references and examples, although in no way definitive, and documents its continued appreciation, long after these silver vessels ceased to be produced.⁷ For example, in 1780, the connoisseur Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford (1717–1797), observed in the rooms at Knole, Kent, 'There are two or three very large Ebony Cabinets, & a most beautifull table & Glass [mirror] of wrought silver, very old, & many Jars & beakers of the same', all of which survives in the collection (Fig. 2 & 3).⁸

Typical of surviving silver garnitures is a three-piece set at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, known as the Ashburnham garniture, consisting of a central covered jar ("ginger jar"), of Chinese porcelain form, flanked by two pear-shaped bottles or flasks with stoppers, embossed with 'a burst of exuberance in floral repoussé work', each with London hallmarks for 1675-1676, acquired in 1914, (Fig. 4)⁹ and the following maker's marks, WW, fleur-de-lys between two pellets in a shaped shield, 57.6 oz. dwt., and AM in monogram, crowned, in shaped shield, 76.10 oz. dwt., respectively, height 37 cm. (14.5 in.) and smaller. The marks have been identified by David Mitchell as probably William Wakefield (act. as a freeman in 1661–d.1677) and Arthur Manwaring (act. 1643–d.1678).¹⁰ These three large vessels from the Restoration period were for the decoration of a cupboard or chimney-piece, perhaps with additional pairs of vessels and described as 'an excellent example of the sumptuous manner of Charles II's reign', ornamented in the Dutch floral style, or "French fashion" with acanthus foliage and swags of fruit tied with ribands in relief on a matted ground, the jar having a melon-shaped finial on the cover, and the pair of flasks with twisted ribband bands around the foot. Although the work of two different goldsmiths, they are unified by the design, elements of which appear to have been stock patterns, and also by the, presumably, later gilding.

⁷ This paper is based on an unpublished presentation given in London at the Society of Antiquaries for the Silver Society on 26 June 2017, and more recently for the Silver Society of Canada on 24 January 2024. I thank Dorothea Burstyn for allowing me the opportunity to revisit and publish this material.

⁸ Paget Toynbee, 'Horace Walpole's Journals of Visits to Country Seats, &c.', *The Volume of the Walpole Society*, vol.16, 1927-28, p.77

⁹ Inv. no. M.46-1914. Anonymous, 'English Silver at South Kensington', *Country Life*, 4 December 1920, Vo. 48 /vol 1&2, (1248), pp. 768-770, fig. 3; and Charles Oman, *Caroline Silver, 1625-1688*, London, Faber, 1970, pl. 76A; and Carl Hernmarck, *The Art of the European Silversmith*, New York, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1977, vol. 1 & 2, p. 542.

¹⁰ David M. Mitchell, 2017, p. 227, fig. 134.



Fig. 4: Three-piece garniture, silver-gilt, maker's marks of William Wakefield and Arthur Manwaring, London, 1675-1676. Height 37 cm. (14.5 in.) and smaller. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Inv. no. M.46-1914.

For many of these thinly gauged silver vessels, the value was in the workmanship, which spared them being melted and refashioned long after their popularity among England's aristocracy in the second half of the seventeenth century as furnishing vessels had ceased. Instead, they were doubtless enjoyed for their 'bling', and the ability to reflect light in dark rooms, but also part of carefully curated, often deliberately 'archaic', interiors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, sometimes as sideboard plate, where they offered the patina of age, of old money, providing social currency for their new owners, who acquired them second-hand at auction or through the trade. The gar-

niture was included in the 1914 Christie's sale, *Catalogues of fine English & foreign silver of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries : the property of Bertram, 5th Earl of Ashburnham*, London, 24 March 1914, as lots 35 and 36, where the bases are noted as engraved with an 'A' under an Earl's coronet, referencing a title created in 1730 for John Ashburnham, 1st Earl of Ashburnham (1687–1736/37).

Stylistically, the cipher suggests it may have been a later second-hand acquisition, applied as a discrete record of ownership by one of the following: the 2nd Earl, also John (1724–1812), his son, the 3rd Earl, George (1760–1830), or perhaps his eldest son, who pre-deceased him, George, Viscount St. Asaph (1785–1813). The garniture was certainly in the collection before the 3rd Earl's death, as it was recorded in the 'Inventory of Plate, 1817', prepared by the famous goldsmith Robert Garrard (1758–1818), describing the 'Sideboard Plate', as '2 embossed Bottles, 75, 10 dwts' and '1 embossed do Jar, 54, 18', with a note 'St. Asaph's plate'.¹¹ It is of course also possible that the garniture was acquired by their patriarch, John Ashburnham (1656–1710), a wealthy landowner and courtier, whose London house, Ashburnham House, was in Little Dean's Yard, Westminster (since 1739, part of Westminster School). An *Inventory of jewels, plate, furnishings etc. at Westminster, Whitehall and Chelsea, ante 1679*, records the delivery from the strong box of 'Two paire of Large silver bottles', but to be sold to 'Mr. Johnson at the 3 Flower de Lucs in Cheapside'.¹²

Among the earliest of these English silver display jars is an example with a contemporary associated cover in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, dated 1661–1662, with the 'TF' mark identified as Sir Thomas Fowle, the

¹¹ East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office (ESBHRO), Brighton, Ashburnham MSS, ASH/2763.

¹² ESBHRO, Ashburnham MSS, ASH/2759.¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 9–13.16

goldsmith-banker, but as suggested by Mitchell, it may be the work of a stranger or alien goldsmith subcontracted by Fowle, height 31.4 cm (12.4 in.) (Inv. no. Э-16163).¹³ It is silver-gilt, cast and chased, with a typical design of gadrooned neck and shoulders, above foliate swags on the upper sides, and overlapping acanthus leaves around the base, the lid having similar motifs with applied ornament. The base bears a later engraved armorial with the eighteenth-century arms and motto of Chudleigh, presumably belonging to the bigamist Elizabeth Chudleigh (1721–1788), who had married secondly, Evelyn Pierrepont, 2nd Duke of Kingston-upon-Hull: among her other chattels brought to Russia, was his enormous wine-cooler, 1699–1700, which was later bought by the state and is also in The Hermitage Museum. The latest silver display vessels, dated 1695–1696, are from a flat chased chinoiserie set, marked 'RC' in a fringed or a dotted ellipse accompanied by pellets and dots, owned by the Dukes of Rutland, at Belvoir Castle, Rutland, in Leicestershire, and published by Starkie Gardner in 1906.¹⁴

Before discussing the silver examples further, the following paragraphs provide the context for this silver phenomenon.¹⁵ Between 1600 and 1647, the European nobility had been supplied with ever-increasing quantities of Chinese porcelain, which included two important, new forms. The first was the jar – a large handle-less vessel with a cover, practical for storing luxurious food stuffs; the second was the tall cylindrical beaker, as wide at the neck as at the foot, or its variant another cylindrical vase, but with a short-waisted neck known under the Dutch term 'rolwagen', neither having any obvious function in Europe³ other than as ornament (the display of cut-flowers was yet to be developed). In Europe, when new, they were frequently acquired in pairs, and arranged symmetrically above large cupboards or hooded chimneys, as can be seen in contemporary paintings of Dutch interiors, such as Emanuel de Witte's *Portrait of a Family in an Interior* (1678, Alte Pinakothek, Munich). The quantity of porcelain displayed was evidence of wealth and access to privileged networks of exchange. However, imports virtually ceased during the tumultuous transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty, with the last sizeable shipment occurring in 1647.

In the interim, and as early as 1660, French merchants commissioned sets copying Chinese porcelain from Dutch potters in Delft. Many were intended for wealthy merchants, who wished to emulate the Chinese porcelain displays of the aristocracy. Similar sets were ordered from French potteries, initially at Nevers, in Burgundy, and, later, from Rouen and Saint-Cloud, near Paris. From 1659, agents of the Dutch East India Company also sent elements of Delft garnitures to Japan to be copied in porcelain by potters in the town of Arita in order to supply Europe with Chinese-style porcelains, which were brought back to Europe as part of their private trade. Japanese potters continued to

¹³Mitchell 2017, p. 525; Hartop, 2007 p. 57, mentions an example of 1658-59, but without a citation.

¹⁴See footnote 2.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 9–13.16

supply costly, and primarily five-piece, garnitures comprising three jars and two beakers, with matching decoration, well into the late 1730s.

In France, this demand for garnitures was fuelled by the introduction, in the second half of the seventeenth century, of smaller-scaled chimney surrounds with a prominent new mantelpiece at breast height. The chimney piece formed the central focus in intimate, private apartments, and the mantelpiece acted as a fixed stage for a changing tableau of small luxury goods, including garnitures. The mantel was often surmounted by a looking-glass, creating the sense of theatre and illusion that is characteristic of baroque interiors. Designs for this area of the room, with garnitures, perhaps of Nevers faience, were circulated in French engravings that recorded the interiors and taste of Paris's commercial elite and lesser nobility. When grouped together, these vessels formed a single, strong visual unit, within a richly decorated interior. In England, overmantels were more often reserved for sculptural panels or paintings, and silver garnitures may have been intended for display on cabinets rather than above chimneys, until the early to mid-eighteenth century.

During the hiatus in Chinese porcelain imports, the English nobility appeared to prefer garnitures made of silver to domestic tin-glazed earthenware, although by the 1670s, imported Japanese jars and beakers were also popular among the upper classes. On 17 April 1673, Evelyn remarked on the 'silver jars and Vasas, Cabinets & other so rich furniture, as I had seldom seene the like' in the new dressing room at Goring House of the Dutch-born Isabella van Nassau-Beverweert, Countess of Arlington (1633–1718), who had married Henry Bennet, 1st Earl of Arlington (1618–1685), in 1666.¹⁶ As Evelyn was a frequent visitor to Goring house, the display an 'excesse of superfluity' was evidently only recently installed and furnished with 'Vasas', a term frequently employed by Evelyn in reference to antiquities, hence of classical forms, whereas 'Jars' may describe English or Dutch silver ginger jars": none of her silver vases and jars have been identified. Isabella (also known as Elisabeth) was a collateral member of the House of Orange-Nassau through her father, who around the time of her marriage had been a special ambassador to England. Her Dutch silver toilet service in the "French Fashion", 1666, perhaps part of her wedding trousseau, was added to 1678 and again in 1691, the last ordered from a French-born London goldsmith, confirming her cosmopolitan taste and networks.¹⁷

¹⁶ De Beers (1955, vol. IV, p. 8.

¹⁷ The house (later the site of Buckingham Palace) and much of the contents, which included the plate and the 'best and most princely furniture' was destroyed by fire the following year, however, other items may have been at Euston Hall, their seat in Norfolk, as elements of the Countess's silver-gilt toilet service survive: for the Dutch pieces (1666 and 1678), see the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague (inv. no. OME-1950-00001 to 00007), and for the English elements (1690-1691), see the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. BK-1973-68) and the musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. no. OA 10214), the last discussed in Michèle Bimbenet-Privat, Florian Doux et Catherine Gougeon, *Orfèverie de la Renaissance et des temps modernes : XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles : la collection du Musée du Louvre*, Paris, Louvre éditions, 2022, vol. 1, cat. no. 64, pp. 236-237.

Even before the appearance of silver jars in the 1660s, the fashion may have begun with the application of silver or gilt-silver mounts to Chinese porcelain in order to form or emphasize the notion of a set of objects unified by ensuite mounts. For example, there is a pair of Chinese porcelain beakers, painted in *wucai* ('five colours', a decorative

technique incorporating underglaze blue and polychrome overglaze enamels), made in the Shunzhi period (1644–1661), which have silver-gilt openwork and chased mounts at the mouth and base, marked 'IV', c. 1670, sold from the collection of Lord Brabourne (John Knatchbull, 7th Baron Brabourne (1924–2005), of Mersham-Le-Hatch, Kent), and possibly by descent from Sir John Knatchbull, 2nd Baronet (c.1636–1696).¹⁸

Another example is a pair of unprovenanced 'rolwagen' beaker vases, with rare polychrome overglaze enamels, c.1645, with chased and repoussé mounts at the mouth and base, with the typical exuberant acanthus scrolls and twisted wire bands, c. 1665–1680, at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (NT) (inv. nos. 1127127 & 1127136) (Fig. 5).¹⁹ An inventory of 1675 for Lady Diana Cecil, née Maxwell, Viscountess Cranborne (1619–1675), whose father-in-law was the William Cecil, 2nd Earl of Salisbury (1591–1668), of Hatfield House, records '1pr. Rolwagings coloured garnisht 6:0:0', which could describe either of the above examples.²⁰

As arrivals of Chinese porcelain began to cease at mid-century, by 1660, with the Restoration, there appeared jars, beakers, double-gourd bottles, bowls, flasks and rosewater sprinklers produced in low-gauge silver after Chinese shapes, 'theatrical in effect, richly decorated and delighting in complex details', a specialty of foreign workers, which became the ultimate status symbol in ostentatious display during the later Stuart period.²¹ As noted, the decoration on English examples is often standardized, the scrolling acanthus leaves interspersed with putti, and portrait cameos, cherubic faces or masks on the shoulders, after engraved design



Fig. 5: Rollwagen' vase, porcelain, painted in polychrome enamels, Shunzhi period, c. 1640-50, mounted in silver, in England, c. 1665-1680. Height 47.5 cm. (18.7 in.). Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (NT), inv. no. 1127127. Photo Credit: Robert Morris.



Fig.6: Covered Jar, one of a pair, silver, mark IH, London, 1675-1676. Height 38.1 cm (15 in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. no. 68.141.153 a, b.

¹⁸Christie's, London, 14 October 1992, lot 203.

¹⁹ Patricia F. Ferguson, *Ceramics: 400 years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces*, London, PWP, 2016, pp. 16-17

²⁰Mark Hinton and Oliver Impey, *Kensington Palace and the Porcelain of Queen Mary II*, London: Christie's, 1998,

²¹ Philippa Glanville, 'Alien Goldsmiths at the Court of Charles II', *Grosvenor House Fair catalogue*, London, 1993.



Fig. 7: Pair of Beakers, silver, maker's mark of Thomas Jenkins, London, ca. 1670-80. Height 45.1 cm (17 3/4 in). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. no. 68.141.241

sources used to circulate fashions, by Stefano della Bella (1610-1664), Jean Bérain (1637-1711), or Polifilo Giancarli (1600-1625)(Fig. 6). In its original condition, the matted grounds created a frosted surface, to appear white, resembling stone perhaps, but overtime with polishing the original effect has been lost. The majority of surviving examples appear to date between 1674 and 1693, and are the work of a small group of goldsmiths: the German-born Jacob Bodendick (1633–1681), who had arrived in London by 1661; Anthony Nelme (act.1680–d.1722); Sir Thomas Fowle (1637–1692), who, as already noted, probably subcontracted work from Bodendick and Manwaring to meet demand; the former's nephew, William Fowle (1658–1684), who had been apprenticed to Manwaring; Thomas Jenkins (act.1668–d.1704) (Fig. 7); and George Bowers (act.1667–d.1690).²² Among the identified Dutch silversmiths found in English collections, in particular, the Duke of Portland's, at Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire, are Nicolaas Loockemans (d.1673) or Mattheaus Loockemans (n.d.) and Adam Loofs (1645–1710), all of The Hague, the last had spent time in Paris, before returning to the Netherlands in 1681.²³ Frequently, however, the vessels are unmarked, presumably bespoke or perhaps royal commissions.

The provenances identified for these survivors include the wealthiest aristocrats of the second half of the seventeenth century: the Earls of Dorset, Knole, Kent; the Earls of Home, Temple Newsam, Leeds; the Dukes of Portland, Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire; the Dukes of Rutland, Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire; the Earls of Coventry, Croome Court, Warwickshire. Whether they were the original patrons, or subsequent owners is not always identified, as the fashion for this rich display continued to be a status symbol of later generations. Decades after the taste for silver vessels was replaced with the arrival of new Chinese porcelain examples from the mid-1680s onwards, and even as porcelain began to be removed from display under Queen Anne with the introduction of austere Palladian interiors, the archaic taste continued through the second-hand market.

²²All discussed in Mitchell 2017, with the following exceptions: 'CL' reversed in monogram under a sun; 'IH' over fleur-de-lys and pellets; and 'RC' in a fringed or a dotted ellipse accompanied by pellets and dots.

²³E. Alfred Jones, *Catalogue of Plate Belonging to the Duke of Portland, ...at Welbeck Abbey*, London, 1935; and see Jet Pijzel-Dommisse, *Haags goud en zilver: edelsmeedkunst uit de Hofstad*, Zwolle Den Haag : Waanders Uitgevers ; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, 2005 fig. 21, for a discussion of the Welbeck garniture, known in the Netherlands as cabinet sets (*Kaststel*), rather than as chimney ornaments.

On 7 March 1721, Cassandra Willoughby, Duchess of Chandos (1670–1735), the extremely wealthy chatelaine of Cannons, Little Stanmore, Middlesex, wrote to the widow Frances, Lady Scudamore, née Digby (1684–1729), wife of the 3rd Viscount Scudamore (1684–1716) of Holme Lacy, Herefordshire, about the acquisition of plate: ‘I shall be willing to take the two role wagons & the great jarr & six sconcess. I desire the bearer may know when I send to see the plate weighed & that you will have the goodness to pardon so much trouble from, Madam, your most humble servant.’²⁴ The sale of plate, which was perhaps originally commissioned by Lady Scudamore’s father-in-law, or his wife, daughter of Lord Burghley, 4th Earl of Exeter, may have been successful. Entries in the inventory of Cannons of 1725, listing the contents of The Best dressing room, No. 42, includes three possible jars: ‘A large Jarr and Cover, do, ‘170 oz. 4 pt. [at] £76.11.9’ and two others, ‘A large jarr do, 74 oz. 5pt. [at] £33.8.2¼’ and ‘Ditto, 75.3 oz. 3 pt. [at] £33.16.3¾’; and also two rolewagons, ‘A large roller do, 72 oz. 6pt. [at] £32.10.7½’ and ‘Ditto, 74 oz. 6 pt. [at] £33.8.7½’.²⁵ There were also several smaller jars and bottles listed in the inventory, weighing from 8 oz. 10 pt. to 18 oz. 7 pt. These may have been arranged on either the marble chimney-piece or above an ‘India Cabinet with a Guilt frame’ or a ‘Mozaick table with a Guilt frame’. The silver furnishing-vessels do not appear in the auction sale catalogue held by the London auctioneer Christopher Cocks (d. 1748), on 1–11 June 1747, nor in the 1848 sale of Stowe House, owned by descendants.

Second-hand silver vase sets do appear at London auctions in the eighteenth century. On 15 and 18 April 1747, the *Daily Advertiser* announced an auction held by Cocks, comprising ‘several thousand ounces of Plate curiously wrought and gilt of his Grace, John, Duke of Buckingham and Normanby [John Sheffield, 1st Duke of Buckingham and Normanby (1648–1721), of Normanby, Lincolnshire], which included ‘large Jars, Beakers, and other ornamental Pieces for Cabinets’.²⁶ While on 7-9 April 1747, in the *London Evening Post*, John Briscoe, Jeweller and Goldsmith, at the Three King’s and Golden Ball, over against Foster Lane, Cheapside, announced ‘he has now to dispose of very Cheap, a fine wrought Table with an open Border of exquisite Workmanship; a fine large Fruit dish, two Jars and four Beakers of the old imboss work’. Months later, Briscoe may have been marketing them as two sets or had acquired others, having announced on 1 August 1747, in the *St. James’s Evening Post*, he ‘hath new ready for sale, exceeding cheap, A Curious Chaced Fruit Basket, two Sets of fine Jars and Beakers, four fine wrought Candlesticks...’. John Briscoe (act. 1744–1769) was a specialist in ‘second-hand plate’, whose trade card is in the British Museum (Inv. nos. Heal, 67.38). A later auction held by Thomas Pervil (d.1776), announced on 20 August 1762, in the *Gazette and London Daily Advertiser*, noted ‘All the valuable and curious stock-in-trade of Phillip Garden [(act.1730–1773)], goldsmith, a Bankrupt, by Order of the Assignees at his house in St.Paul’s Church-Yard, included ‘Setts of Vases’ among

²⁴Eric Weichel, “‘Every Other Place it Could be Placed with Advantage’’: Ladies-in-waiting at the British Court and the “Excessive” Display of Ceramics as Art Objects, 1689–1740’, in Julia Skelly (ed.), *The Uses of Excess in Visual and Material Culture, 1600–2010*, Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2014, pp. 41–62, p. 44.

²⁵Susan Jenkins, “‘An Inventory of His Grace The Duke of Chandos’s Seat Att Cannons Taken June The 19th 1725’ By John Gilbert””, *The Volume of the Walpole Society*, vol. 67, 2005, pp. 93–192, pp.121-122. ‘Six silver sconces weight 199oz 8pt at 7s p oz, £69.15.–’, were listed in the Drawing Room No. 41, on p. 116, but there were also other examples.

²⁶ In 1698, the Duke acquired the lease for Goring House from the Earl of Arlington, and in 1703, built Buckingham House, later sold in 1761 by his heirs to George III.

his stock of rich chased Epargnes, Tureens, Tea-Kitchens, Tea-Kettles, though these vases could also be eighteenth-century manufacture.

One last example, documenting the continued taste for acquiring second-hand Caroline silver garnitures, was recorded by Walpole in his 1774 guidebook to his collection at Strawberry Hill, entitled *A description of the villa of Horace Walpole, youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole earl of Orford, at Strawberry-hill, near Twickenham. With an inventory of the furniture, pictures, curiosities, &c* (Strawberry-Hill). The vases were displayed in the Round Drawing-Room hung with crimson damask, on the chimney-piece in white marble inlaid with scagliola by John Augustus Richter (1730–after 1809), in a design after the tomb of Edward the Confessor, improved by the architect Robert Adam. They were described as ‘three large jars and two beakers, of silver also, bought at the auction of lady Eliz. Germaine; on the middle one is the rape of the Sabines embossed’.²⁷

Lady Elizabeth ‘Betty’ Germain (1680–1769), daughter of the 2nd Earl of Berkeley, was the owner of Drayton House, Northamptonshire, the seat of the Earls of Peterborough, inherited through the first marriage of her husband, the Dutch-born soldier with many ties to the Netherlands, Sir John Germain, 1st Bart. (1650–1718), who was said to be the half-brother of William III. The auction by order of the executors was held in London by Abraham Langford (d. 1774) on 7-10 March 1770, advertised as from the ‘collection of the old Earls of Peterborough and also Part of the Arundelian Collection’: however, there is no evidence the garniture came from Drayton.²⁸ In her widowhood, she had lived in No. 16, St. James’s Square and had a suite of rooms at Knole, in Kent.²⁹ The five pieces forming the garniture appear among several similar lots, sold on the third day, 9 March, under ‘Silver Plate Embossed, &c.’: ‘29 A large jar and cover, with figures and ornaments curiously embossed’, £8.10.–; ‘31 Two high beakers’, £9.4.–; and ‘37 Two fluted jars and covers’, £10.6.–; these lots are confirmed as per a receipt made out to Walpole, signed by the auctioneer Langford, with a note that Morgan, perhaps the china merchant, Thomas Morgan (act. 1747–1791), had been paid 5 guineas for attending the sale :

The Hon. Hor. Walpole

Bt at Lady Betty Germaine Sale

3 Day	29. A Jar weight	211 oz	@ 0.10	[£]93. 3.10
	31. 2 Beakers.	99 oz. 10	@ 9.4	46. 8. 8
	37. 2 jars.	206 oz. 5	@ 8.5	86.15.11

²⁷ Walpole, 1774, pp. 73-74.

²⁸ For a catalogue of her gems from the Arundel Collection, acquired from her husband’s first marriage to the Duchess of Norfolk, prepared in 1727, see Society of Antiquaries, MSS/0043. I thank Drayton archivist Bruce Bailey for sharing his opinion that the contents of the 1770 sale was primarily non-Drayton chattels.

²⁹ Among Lady Germain’s executors was the goldsmith and jeweller John Robinson of New Bond Street, see his trade-card in the British Museum (Heal, 67.342).

³⁰ For the receipt, see Horace Walpole Collection. The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. LWL MSS 1, Series III. I thank Susan Odell Walker and Michael Snodin for this information.

Recv'd March 10 1770 the full...

A Langford Jun.³⁰



Fig. 8: 'Chimney in the Round Room', engraving on paper, from *A Description of the Villa of Horace Walpole at Strawberry-Hill, Twickenham, Strawberry-Hill, 1784*. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University

While the weights may assist with identifying the actual vessels, we are fortunate that the garniture was illustrated in Walpole's 1784 guidebook, entitled *A Description of the Villa of Horace Walpole at Strawberry-Hill, Twickenham* (Strawberry-Hill), displayed on the chimney-piece described above (Fig. 8). The pairs of covered jars and beakers closely resemble known English examples, albeit somewhat modified in the drawing, with alternating tiers of embossed swags above raised lobed panels on the beakers, similar to those in a four-piece vase set, comprising two parcel-gilt jars and two beakers, unmarked, circa 1675, 43.8 cm. (17 ¼ in.), and 47cm. (18 ½ in.), (306 oz), sold by the de Saumerez family at Christie's, London, 24 November 1971, lot 63. The central vase, with its figural decoration with the Rape of the Sabines, however, is unlike any published English examples, although a few examples have cartouches with mythological scenes.³¹

The garniture next appears in the auction catalogue of the contents of Strawberry Hill, *A catalogue of the classic contents of Strawberry Hill collected by Horace Walpole*, published in London, in 1842. The author of the prefatory remarks on the silver beakers and jars in the round Drawing Room notes that they are 'valuable for their weight of metal alone,—to say nothing of their workmanship'.³² The set was offered as four consecutive lots on the 23rd Day, 20 May 1842:

36 A SPLENDID OLD CHASED SILVER CENTRE VASE, of most elegant and chaste design, elaborately and powerfully worked in alto relievo with matted grounds, the subjects representing the RAPE OF THE SABINES, the cover boldly chased with figures of Bacchus and Venus, 17 inches

³¹ See for example the "ginger jar" with Romulus and Remus exposed to the Tiber River after an etching by Giovanni Battista Fontana (1524–1587), with the maker's mark of Anthony Nelme and London hallmarks for 1693-1694, in the Gans Collection at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (inv. no. 97.1a-b).

³² Walpole, 1842, p. xvi.

high, a truly remarkable and fine specimen of the early art of chasing, and for which the ancients are so justly celebrated

The above lot and the three following were purchased at the auction of Lady Elizabeth Germaine's property.

- 37 A MAGNIFICENT OLD SILVER CHASED VASE, beautifully and elaborately worked, matted grounds with masques and arabesque border, festoons of flowers, the bodies fluted and ornamented with leaves, the workmanship equally fine with the preceding lot
- 38 A DITTO to correspond
- 39 A PAIR OF EQUALLY BEAUTIFUL LARGE SILVER BEAKERS, of rare and splendid workmanship, matted grounds, chased with festoons of fruit, flowers and foliage, 18 inches high³³



Fig. 8: Covered Jar (*dekseipot*), silver, with the Rape of the Sabine women, unmarked, Dutch, c. 1670-1680. Height 43.1 cm (16.9 in). The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-1964-3.

According to the *Aedes Strawberryanae*, the five pieces, collectively among of the most expensive lots in the sale, were purchased by Sir. W. Middleton, Bart, for £244.10.0, £342.11.0, £168.6.0, and £39.18.0.³⁴ Middleton was Sir William Fowle Fowle Middleton, 2nd Bart. (1784–1860), of Shrubland Park, in Suffolk, whose wife was the sister, Anne (d.1867) of John Cust, 1st Earl Brownlow (1779–1853) of Belton, Lincolnshire. Significantly, or perhaps coincidentally, the provenance of the four vessels sold by the de Saumarez family in 1971, discussed above, were said to have descended from the Brownlow family of Belton House, Lincolnshire. In fact, it may have been through the marriage in 1882 of James St. Vincent de Saumarez, 4th Baron Saumarez (1943–1937) to Jane Anne Vere-Broke (1853–1933), the daughter of Captain Charles Acton Vere-Broke (1818–1858) who married Louisa Middleton (n.d.), sister of Sir William Fowle Fowle Middleton, 2nd Bart, who died without issue, leaving Shrublands to descend to the de Saumarez family.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁴ G. Edward Waldegrave and H. Walpole, *Aedes Strawberryanae: Names of purchasers and ... prices to the sale catalogue of the ... collections ... at Strawberry-hill villa*. London, Burn, 1842, p. 54.

³⁵ Cripps, 1886, p. 275. The retailers Lamberts, goldsmiths, jewellers and silversmiths, at 10-12 Coventry Street in London, was established in 1803.

³⁶ Anonymous, 'Aanwinsten', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, 12de Jaarg., Nr. 3/4 (1964), p. 101, where it was described as Dutch, c. 1670.

However, the next reference to the set appears in a footnote, in Wilfred Joseph Cripps, *Old English Plate: Ecclesiastical, Decorative, and Domestic: Its Makers and Marks*, London, 1886, as having passed through the hands of Messers Lambert to the Scottish nobleman, the last Marquess of Breadalbane in 1857, presumably John Campbell, 2nd Marquess of Breadalbane (1796–1862), of Taymouth Castle, Perthshire, perhaps spending his compensation by the British government in 1833 upon the abolition of slavery, in regard to his Hope Estate in Jamaica; the house and contents were sold in 1922, following the death of the 1st Marquess of Breadalbane, Gavin Campbell (1851–1922).³⁵ Given the patterns were so standardised, Lord Breadalbane may have acquired a similar set.

None of the five pieces of the Lady Germain garniture have been identified, however, the central vase is extremely similar to a silver jar with the same subject, the Rape of the Sabine women, carried off by Romulus and his men during a feast, in the Rijksmuseum, which although unmarked may have been made in the Netherlands, c. 1670-1680 (inv. no. BK-1964-3).³⁶ The covered jar (*dekselpot*), acquired in 1964, measures 43.1 cm (16.9 in), logically, it may have been part of a set of three jars with the same ensuite figural pattern. No marked English examples are embossed and chased with a continuous scene running around the sides of the pot or on the cover, and no other Dutch examples have been identified. The stylised drawing of the figures in the 1784 catalogue is very similar to the angle of the raised figures on the Rijksmuseum jar, but a comparison of the historic weights might determine its eighteenth-century British provenance. There is much more research to be done on these exuberant display vase sets or garnitures, and the above is a brief attempt to bring attention to this overlooked area of silver production during the Restoration period and its enduring interest among collectors.

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