UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

The Emergence of the Antique and Curiosity Dealer 1815 – c.1850
The Commodification of Historical Objects

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VOLUME 1

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ABSTRACT

The publication in 1836 of Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and Henry Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, which for the first time illustrated historical objects cited to be in the possession of dealers, as well as collectors, consolidated the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer as a discrete social and cultural identity and at the same time firmly embedded the historical object as commodity in the contemporary culture. Taking this important antiquarian publication as evidence of a significant shift this investigation considers the wider social and cultural impact of the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century. The project is set against the social and cultural change of early nineteenth-century Britain and an emerging interest in historical objects, centred around ideas of antiquarianism, the commercialisation of culture and the intellectualism of collecting. The project concentrates on the period 1815-c.1850 and places the emergence of the dealer in relation to the notion of an evolving historical consciousness in the period. This study takes as its focus the activities and practices of an early nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealer, John Coleman Isaac (c.1803-1887). Histories of collecting have, for the most part, assigned the collector with a degree of agency that has led to the activities and practices of the dealer being placed at the periphery of the narratives of collecting. This study, as well as investigating this narrative of displacement, places the dealer at the centre of an investigation that describes and contextualises the various roles that the antique and curiosity dealer played in the wider early nineteenth-century antique and curiosity markets.

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Doctor of Philosophy

The Emergence of the Antique and Curiosity Dealer 1815 – c.1850

The Commodification of Historical Objects

by Mark Wilfred Westgarth

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Mark Wilfred Westgarth, declare that this thesis entitled The Emergence of the Antique and Curiosity Dealer 1815 – c.1850: The Commodification of Historical Objects and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

· this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

· where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

· where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

· where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

· I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

· where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

· none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: [redacted]

Date: 24th SEPTEMBER 2006.

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The Emergence of the Antique and Curiosity Dealer 1815- c.1850

The Commodification of Historical Objects

INTRODUCTION

> 'a large part of our current literature remains unintelligible without the presence of the curiosity shop so common to our scenery.'
>
> Paul Bourget, (1885)[1]

The desire for historical objects dating from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, which became such an important aspect of fashionable taste and the collecting culture during the first half of the nineteenth-century, was promoted and disseminated through a variety of channels. Historians of collecting practices have stressed the importance of the activities of individual collectors, rehearsing the historical significance of such figures as William Beckford (1760-1844), Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783-1848), Ralph Bernal (c. 1783-1854) or A.W. Franks (1826-97) on changing tastes and fashions in collecting.[2] Writers also emphasize the impact of the publication of illustrated books and manuals as catalysts for promoting interest in the architecture, design and objects from the past. For example, attention is often directed to the influence of antiquarian publications, such as Thomas Hunt's *Exemplars of Tudor Architecture... and Furniture* (1830), Sir Samuel Meyrick and Henry Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836) and Joseph Nash's *Mansions of England in the Olden Time* (1838-49) in promulgating knowledge of architecture, interior design and the practice of furnishing with historical objects. The impact that design pattern

books published during the period, such as A.W.N. Pugin's *Gothic Furniture in the End of the 15th Century* (1835), as well as more practical volumes such as John Claudius Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1833) have also frequently been highlighted. Many writers have also emphasised the importance of the emergence of 'Romantic' fiction and historical novels, most famously those of Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), as influential catalysts for the promotion of the desire for historical objects in the period.[3]

Changing tastes and fashions in collecting and furnishing were both reflected through and shaped by the activities of collectors and contemporary publications. However, the role of the antique and curiosity dealer in these evolving historical interests, emerging collecting practices, and fashions in furnishing and design, has been little studied. Indeed those historians who have commented on the trade in historical objects in the early nineteenth-century have underplayed both its scale and significance.[4] Clive Wainwright, for example, who devoted more time than most to the study of collecting practices, has suggested that antique and curiosity dealers played only a minor role in the evolving markets during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century. Wainwright writes that 'even by the late 1840s there do not seem to have been large numbers of shops selling antiquities'.[5] Several other writers have also suggested that collecting and furnishing with historical objects was primarily shaped by the activities of the collectors themselves with dealers playing only a marginal role.[6]

However, one only need direct attention to the sheer scale of the number of dealers trading in antiques and curiosities during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century to realise that current opinion needs to be reassessed. The research undertaken for the present study has revealed that during the period 1820-1840 the

numbers of antique and curiosity dealers in London alone multiplied by more than 1500%, rising from less than 10 dealers in 1820 to at least 155 by 1840 (see appendices III.I and III.II). The numbers involved in the trade in antiques and curiosities and the rapid expansion of dealers in the capital were also supplemented by a considerable number of provincial dealers in many of the urban centres of Britain as well as a large number of antique and curiosity dealers on the Continent, where the British trade acquired much of its stock of objects. The figures alone indicate that the early nineteenth-century antique and curiosity trade was much more extensive and significant than has been previously considered. Indeed it is clear that far from being a peripheral figure in the histories of collecting and changing taste the antique and curiosity dealer was an influential catalyst and a critical agent in the developing antique and curiosity markets and played a significant role in the evolving fashion for collecting and furnishing with historical objects in the period.

Moreover, if we consider the significance of the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer and the antique and curiosity shop in the nineteenth-century in a wider historical and cultural context it is clear that they are intimately bound up with the appearance of a number of important social and cultural institutions, not least of which is the public historical museum itself.[7] Indeed the commercial trade in historical objects is no mere ancillary factor in the object-rich histories presented in the historical museum and it is now well acknowledged that the market plays a significant role in the eventual establishment of the legitimate museological object.[8] As a culturally regulated space the museum is just as much involved in the business of trading art and antiques as the antique and curiosity shop. Indeed the museum, as Joseph and Lisbet Koerner stress, 'supports the value of the commercially marketed object by reverentially displaying its 'priceless' twin, rather like the gold once held in

public trust against paper currency'.[9] It is all the more surprising then, given the significant place that the antique and curiosity dealer occupies in the market and the important role that they have played in the formation of collections, both private and institutional, and indeed the important place occupied by the antique and curiosity shop in the social and cultural fabric, that little attention has been directed at them until very recently. As the statement by the social historian and critic Paul Bourget indicates, even by the end of nineteenth-century the antique and curiosity shop had become such an integral part of the cultural landscape that it was impossible to ignore its impact (see plate 1).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to reinsert the antique and curiosity dealer into the histories of collecting, which, as indicated, are primarily constructed through monographic/biographic axes that privilege the activities of individual collectors. Indeed whilst monographic and biographic studies of collectors are an important historical practice in themselves we should also acknowledge their methodological limitations. The Marxist traditions of historiography have long since problematized such narrative frameworks. In art history for example, Nicos Hadjinicolaou, has argued that such approaches to history-writing are founded on two important interrelated premises; the notion that individuals make history and the notion that the history of art is figured through a history of 'great artists'.[10] If we extend this frame of reference to the subject matter here it is perhaps easy to see that the history of collectors and the history of collecting are also primarily structured in the same way. Indeed expanding on these ideas further, and in particular drawing on the writings of the cultural theorist Michel Foucault (1926-1984), specifically here his important essay '*What is an Author?*'[11], we can see that collections can also be considered as

'authored' objects. In this sense the collector serves as a function of the narrative discourse of collecting, something this study returns to in the final chapter of the current investigation. The principal methodological limitations of historical narratives that have taken the individual collector as their focus is that they tend to remove the practices, incentives and activities of collecting from their wider social and cultural contexts and for the most part they have ignored the broader socio-economic and cultural structures that underpin these collecting activities.[12] What is important to note here is that the collector can only exist insofar as there is an infrastructure of available objects and indeed a 'market' in which those objects are exchanged. A study that takes as its focus the activities and practices of the antique and curiosity dealer, and one that also pays attention to the wider structures that underpin their emergence, will not only provide a counterfoil to the existing narrative structures but will also provide a further layer of historical context to existing studies.

This project expands the field of investigation into the antique and curiosity dealer in the period c.1815 – c.1850. The focus of this investigation is the archive of John Coleman Isaac (c.1803-1887), an antique and curiosity dealer trading in London during the first half of the nineteenth-century. The Isaac archive is a rare survival of material generated by a nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealer. The Isaac archive is particularly significant given that the historical material which conventionally provides the narrative structure for histories of collecting is more generally provided by material that survives in the archives of historically significant collectors. By focusing on the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer this study suggests that such an investigation can provide illuminating evidence that offers a different perspective to the already established narratives of the history of antique

and curiosity collecting. This opening discussion describes the nature of the empirical evidence in the John Coleman Isaac archive and considers its significance and place within the thesis. It also outlines, in the form of a literature survey, the writings that have focused on the antique and curiosity dealer and the scholarly writings concerning the markets for art (i.e. paintings and sculpture) and for 'antiques and curiosities' (categories of objects that in the nineteenth-century came to be known as 'applied art' and more generally 'decorative art') during the past thirty years in order to highlight the significance of the emerging presence of the dealer in more recent scholarly literature. As an area of scholarly investigation, writings on the art market, together with the more recent development of writings on the market for antique and curiosities, have formed an important source of material for published information concerning the antique and curiosity dealer. This introduction discusses the approach of those writings and their position in relation to the present thesis. The present study maintains that such investigations have drawn a partial and often contradictory picture of the market for antiques and curiosities in the first half of the nineteenth-century.

This study provides a detailed discussion of the various roles that the antique and curiosity dealer played in the evolving markets for historical objects during the first half of the nineteenth-century and the various practices and techniques involved in the trade. However, the consideration of the antique and curiosity dealer as a pragmatic function of the evolving markets and as a facilitator for the distribution of the historical object forms only one aspect of this investigation. The emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century inaugurated a shift away from the more discrete practices of antiquarian collecting that had been established during the eighteenth-century and paved the way for the

embourgeoisement of historical objects by the middle decades of the nineteenth-century. Eighteenth-century discourses of antiquarianism had largely ignored the historical objects that came to be of interest during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century. Indeed by the 1820s 16th, 17th and even early 18th century furniture and associated domestic and utilitarian objects were coming into the purview of collectors and furnishers. Prior to the period under review here such objects would have been perceived by the wider consuming public as merely old-fashioned or beyond effective use, indeed for the majority of consumers such objects would have been considered as 'rubbish'. 'Rubbish' however, as the social anthropologist Michael Thompson has demonstrated, can be an extremely useful category.[13] As Thompson suggests, objects are 'socially malleable' and have a life-history of values that are capable of change over time. When objects make their initial appearance they belong in the category of 'transient value' (decreasing economic value) and only later do some objects emerge to become objects of 'durable value' (increasing economic value). For objects to shift status from the transient to the durable they must, Thompson maintains, pass through a 'region of flexibility', which is the 'zone of zero value we call 'rubbish'.[14] According to Thompson when an object reaches zero value 'it does not always turn to dust,' but rather, 'it exists in a timeless and valueless limbo.'[15] What interests Thompson are the mechanisms by which objects move between these categories of value – 'what sort of control mechanisms lie behind this real-life Midas touch?'[16] There is of course a wide range of influences that project the notion of value onto the historical objects that are the subject of the present study. And a broad socio-cultural framework lies beneath the shifts that register the emergence of renewed interest in historical objects in the period. But there is no doubt that the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer played a highly

significant role in these evolving interests. The strategies of the antique and curiosity dealers, their delivery of objects to the markets, the new commercial practices of antique and curiosity dealing and the new commercial spaces of the antique and curiosity shop became a significant channel through which this transition occurs. Indeed, as the present study discusses, by the mid 1830s the antique and curiosity shop had become one of the principal routes through which the historical object was articulated into nineteenth-century culture.

The Davies-Isaac Archive

The broad changes considered in this study are explored through an investigation of a large corpus of archive material relating to the antique and curiosity dealer John Coleman Isaac (c. 1803-1887).[17] Isaac was an influential and well-known dealer trading from various locations in London during the first half of the nineteenth-century. The Isaac archive is the only known surviving archive relating to a nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealer. Research undertaken for the present project has revealed that the Isaac archive is without precedent, focusing as it does on the activities of a dealer rather than a collector. Indeed in comparison to the substantial corpus of material in the Isaac archive there remains only widely dispersed and fragmentary material relating to antique and curiosity dealers surviving from the period covered in the current investigation. For example, the Scarisbrick archive held at the Lancashire County Record Office at Preston, (*DDSC 78/4*) contains only a relatively small number of bills and other material relating to the relationship between the Lancashire landowner Charles Scarisbrick (d.1860) and the Wardour Street

antique and curiosity dealers Edward and George Hull. The archive of the Bristol antiquarian collector George Weare Braikenridge (1775-1856), held at Bristol City Record Office (*14182(HB)*) whilst rich in material relating to an antiquarian collector in the period has only a small number of letters and bills from the London dealer Horatio Rodd. Likewise the archive of the prominent collector William Beckford (1760-1844), (Bodelian Library, Oxford, *d27/2*), which contains trading bills and letters from a number individuals involved in the trade in antiques and curiosities, including the London cabinet-makers and dealers Abraham Hume and Edward Holmes Baldock and the 'chinaman' and curiosity dealer Robert Fogg, provides only a partial picture of the activities and practices of antique and curiosity dealers during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century.

The Isaac archive covers the period from c.1815 up to the mid 1860s and whilst this is not a complete record of a dealer's activities it does consist of a substantial body of business and private correspondence, comprising some 500 letters, as well as other business ephemera. Part of the archive relates to the initial curiosity business operated by Gabriel Davies (c.1760–1838) and his son and daughter, Henry Abraham Davies (died c. 1822) and Sarah Davies (died 1875), who were trading between c.1810 and c.1823. The substantial portion of the archive relates to the business as it was continued by John Coleman Isaac after his marriage to Sarah, (née Davies), whom he married in late 1824 or early 1825, and up to the retirement of Isaac from the trade in 1868. The archive is rich in material concerning the operation of an antique and curiosity business during the period and includes correspondence with other dealers as well as a number of letters from many well known nineteenth-century collectors.[18] The archive also contains a photographed copy of a 'waste book'[19] detailing the transactions of the Davies and Isaac family businesses and together with

the corpus of letters provides a unique insight into the life and work of a significant early nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealer. Selected transcribed extracts from some of the letters and transcribed extracts from the waste book are included in the appendices to the present study (see appendix I and II); these provide both supporting evidence to the arguments of the current thesis and are also included to draw further attention to this unique archive.

Historical Objects

The use of the descriptive category 'historical objects' throughout this investigation is deliberate and purposeful. The contention is that during the period under review a particular value is granted to the objects from the past and that the antique and curiosity dealer emerges both as a response to and also acts as a catalyst for this evolving interest. This notion of the value of the objects from the past owes a great deal to the ideas advanced by the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905), specifically his essay *The Modern Cult of Monuments*.[20] Whilst Riegl's text is now over 100 years old, (it was written in 1903) and its primary focus is a consideration of architecture it still provides a particularly useful methodology for thinking about the complex system of changing values imbued in the objects from the past. During the opening decades of the nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealers sold a very wide range of historical objects and whilst some of these objects had conventionally already been exchanged within the antiquarian collecting economy throughout the second half of the eighteenth-century, especially for example objects such as ancient arms and armour, late medieval ivories, ancient furniture and stained glass, by the

opening decades of the nineteenth-century these historical objects were being put into wider patterns of circulation that reflected the changing social and cultural frameworks that underpinned their consumption. Moreover, by the early nineteenth-century added to this store of the material culture of the deeper past was an emerging interest in historical objects from the more recent past, including late seventeenth-century Delft pottery, furniture from the late seventeenth-century and even an evolving interest in objects dating from the opening decades of the eighteenth-century. The distinctive structure that becomes apparent amongst all of the objects sold by the dealers from the early part of the nineteenth-century onwards is that they were all, to a varying chronological degree, from the past. However, the notion that it was historical value alone that underpinned the consumption of these objects requires some qualification. The separation between the historical value of objects and other values, for example an aesthetic value implied in their desirability as objects that keyed into contemporary notions of taste and fashionability, can never be so precisely defined. Indeed in his attempt to present an historical explanation for the early twentieth-century inclination to value monuments, buildings or artefacts from the past Alois Riegl, as Henri Zerner has demonstrated, splits apart the notion of value into components such as 'historical value', 'age-value' and 'art value' only to draw attention to the fact that they are actually more intimately connected in the first place.[21] Riegl was acutely aware of the interdependences of such categorisations and their implied value systems. Historical value necessarily has aesthetic content, just as aesthetic preferences are historically and culturally specific. Paintings and sculpture inevitably become historical objects in their own right, as the discursive practice of 'art history' testifies. However, in order to allow a sharper focus on the more precise frames of interest that underpinned the consumption of antiques and curiosities in the

period it is important to attempt to isolate historical value from the wider frames of aesthetic value that underpin the market for paintings and sculptures and the established discourses associated with the market for the 'fine arts'. The market for fine art, that is the market for paintings and sculpture, has since at least the seventeenth-century had its own specific dynamic, one that has evolved within an intellectual discourse grounded in the practice and theory of art and a tradition of criticism and connoisseurship.[22] By comparison the market for the domestic and utilitarian objects from the past that comprised the broad category of historical objects that emerged to be of interest during the first half of the nineteenth-century evolved within a comparative knowledge and critical vacuum. Indeed as discussed below it was not until the middle decades of the nineteenth-century that there were any systematic attempts to classify and categorize the wide range of historical objects that entered the market from the eighteen-teens onwards. The extent to which the lack of a substantive critical framework allowed the values of the market to dominate resultant taxonomies and classifications is something that the present study proposes for consideration.

Writings on the Antique & Curiosity Dealer

A number of writers have provided overviews of the history of collecting and the broader use by collectors of antiques and curiosities in furnishing and interiors during the late eighteenth-century and the nineteenth-century.[23] These studies provide outlines of individual collectors and furnishers and the objects that they acquired and it is therefore not the intention of this study to offer a detailed discussion of collectors

and their collecting practices, although such a topic will at times inevitably be touched upon. Investigative and scholarly writings on the antique and curiosity dealer have appeared only infrequently over the last 30 years. As far back as 1986 the antiquarian scholar Clive Wainwright, writing in his doctoral thesis, drew attention to the lack of serious study of the role of the antique and curiosity dealer in the histories of collecting.[24] Wainwright focused on a study of antiquarian collecting practices of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries and his thesis was published in 1989 as *The Romantic Interior*.[25] In his investigation Wainwright included a short chapter on 'the trade' but at the same time he also highlighted the lack of study into this important area.[26] Wainwright drew attention to that fact that whilst the history of the British art auction and that of picture dealing had been well covered in print, the trade in what he termed 'antiquities' had yet to be written. Moreover, the distinguished historian of collecting Arthur MacGregor has more recently reiterated Wainwright's statements, writing that the wider role of dealers in the supply of historical objects would repay serious study.[27] Indeed whilst several writers have made passing reference to antique and curiosity dealers in their investigations of collectors and the history of collecting, the practices and activities of the antique and curiosity dealer in the nineteenth-century still remains a neglected area of cultural activity.

The most detailed focus on an individual dealer to date has been on the antique and curiosity dealer and cabinetmaker Edward Holmes Baldock (1777-1845). Baldock was the subject of two biographical essays by Geoffrey de Bellaigue published in *Connoisseur* in 1975 and information on this important dealer has been rehearsed and expanded in several subsequent publications.[28] The main protagonist in the present investigation, the antique and curiosity dealer John Coleman Isaac, was introduced by

the furniture historian Edward Joy in a short article published in the same journal in 1962,[29] and briefly discussed by Clive Wainwright in his book *The Romantic Interior* in 1989.[30] Isaac has also more recently been the focus of a second short biographical article by Martin Levy and Elaine Moss, which was published in 2002.[31] Both Joy's article and the Levy/Moss essay contain inaccuracies and misrepresentations which the present study endeavours to correct.

More recently the neglect of study of the antique and curiosity dealer has been addressed in the small but steady stream of publications that have begun to direct attention to the trade in antiques and curiosities. Charles Tracey for example published a study of the trade in ancient woodwork in the nineteenth-century and included some information on the role that curiosity dealers played in these evolving interests.[32] And prior to his death in 1999 Clive Wainwright was preparing a publication on the history of the antique trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. His notes for this project were edited and prepared for publication by Charlotte Gere and Carolyn Sargentson in a special edition of the *Journal of the History of Collections* in 2002 devoted to the relationships between the commercial trade in historical objects and the establishment of the South Kensington Museum (The Victoria & Albert Museum) in the middle decades of the nineteenth-century.[33] Two short journal articles on the history of the American antique dealers Sypher & Company, who were trading from 1866 to 1907 and compiled from family papers were also published in *Furniture History* in 1992 and 2004.[34] And the 2003 issue of the journal *Regional Furniture* emphasised the current interest in the history of the antique trade by devoting a whole issue to reproducing the memoirs of the twentieth-century antique dealer Roger Warner.[35]

However, whilst this new interest in the antique and curiosity trade is welcome it is apparent that many of the historians and writers involved in the recovery of the antique and curiosity dealer have tended to assign the dealer limited agency, if any, and have generally presented the dealer as a reflection of the desires and aspirations of the collector, both private and institutional. Inevitably in such studies the dealer is presented as a peripheral figure. Moreover, many of the scholars who have investigated the role of the antique and curiosity dealer in collecting practices have produced studies that consider that role within a narrative structure that is generally concerned with re-establishing the chain of provenance of the collectable object itself.[36] This particular narrative structure has a long legacy, one grounded in eighteenth-century antiquarian methodologies and practices. It is no surprise then that Clive Wainwright, the scholar most associated with investigations of the antique and curiosity dealer, described himself as 'an antiquary by inclination'.[37] There is no doubt that the establishment of a chain of provenance is an important academic exercise, but it is also important to acknowledge that when it is deployed in this way it is a methodology that is intimately bound up with the discourse of collecting itself. In this sense such methodologies can be seen as extensions of the connoisseurial narratives that provide the structure for many of the studies of the histories of decorative art collecting. We can perhaps see that the method underlying these new studies performs a distinctive ideological function, one that allows those in possession of socially significant objects to confirm themselves as inheritors of an already established form of cultural capital.[38] Moreover, underlying this methodology is the implicit notion that such investigations are performed in order to confirm or re-establish the authenticity of the collectable object and as a consequence to confirm the value of the collectable object within institutional and private collections.[39] The

notion of 'authenticity' is something that this study returns to in its subsequent discussions, but we can note that the notion of authenticity, as the critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin informs us, 'always transcends mere genuineness'.[40] Authenticity is a transient notion, determined as much by social valuation as by any intrinsic properties of the historical object itself, something that remains unacknowledged in many of these new investigations.

As the studies of Roger Warner and Obadiah and Asa Sypher (Sypher & Co) mentioned above suggest, the new interest in the dealer and the antique and curiosity trade has also led to a number of short biographical essays which, whilst having limitations as already indicated, remains an important historical practice. Indeed it is clear that the publication of biographical information concerning individual dealers provides an invaluable corpus of evidence from which more complex narratives can be developed. Moreover, part of the outcome of the research undertaken for the present study has been the recovery of a considerable amount of new information on antique and curiosity dealers as well as the drawing together of existing published information concerning many significant nineteenth-century dealers. The assembly of this material into appendix VI of the present investigation is included in order to provide further biographical information on individual dealers and is also included to assist in correcting some misinterpretations and inaccuracies in the information already in the public domain. The compilation of biographical material relating to nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealers is also presented as a supplement to the discussions in the main body of the current study. It is also hoped that the substantial amount of material in this appendix will provide a useful database for

researchers and will also provide a platform to facilitate further studies into the histories of the antique and curiosity trade.

The Idea of the Dealer

The persona of the antique and curiosity dealer entered the wider public consciousness during the second quarter of the nineteenth-century and there is a considerable corpus of evidence for the emerging identity of the antique and curiosity dealer in contemporary publications and in social commentaries from the late 1820s onwards. This persona was further embedded in the contemporary cultural consciousness through characterisations in the literary field in a number of highly successful novels published during the first half of the nineteenth-century. Beginning in the early 1830s the 'character' of the antique and curiosity dealer was beginning to be inscribed as a negative stereotype into the cultural consciousness. In 1831 for example the French novelist Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) introduced the anonymous old curiosity dealer in his novel *The Wild Ass's Skin*, portraying the dealer as a problematic character.[41] And Balzac returned to the theme of the characterisations of the curiosity dealer in his later novel *Cousin Pons*, published in 1847, where the dealers Rémonecq and Elias Magus provided a negative counterfoil to the main character, the collector Sylvan Pons.[42] By the early 1840s the British public had been introduced to perhaps the most famous dealer, the grandfather of 'Little Nell', in Charles Dickens (1812-1870) *Old Curiosity Shop*.[43] The 'idea' of the antique and curiosity dealer as a discrete cultural identity consolidated throughout the nineteenth-century and indeed became particularly prevalent during the early part of

the twentieth-century, a period which, as Stefan Muthesius has already suggested, was also a significant moment in the evolution of the market for antiques.[44] In 1919 for example, the publication of *Murray Marks and his Friends*, written by Professor George Williamson, marked the first biographical study of an antique and curiosity dealer, demonstrating the consolidation of the persona of the dealer as a socially meaningful subject and also validating the study of the cultural identity of the dealer as a legitimate subject for biographical investigation.[45] The 1920s also saw the first novel in which an antique dealer was the central character of the narrative with the publication in 1928 of *William Cook, Antique Dealer*.[46] And the mysteries of the modern antiques trade itself were revealed to the wider public for the first time in the 1920s in *Confessions of a Dealer*, a book written by Thomas Rohan, an antique dealer trading in Bournemouth.[47] These biographies, descriptive accounts and literary characterisations demonstrate a consistent interest in the idea of the antique and curiosity dealer, as well as the practices of antique and curiosity dealing, in the wider public consciousness and further demonstrate that the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer is a subject worthy of further academic investigation.

However, underlying many of the literary characterisations and indeed many of the factual writings on the dealer is the consistent notion that the antique dealer and the antique and curiosity shop represent the more problematic aspects of collecting. Moreover, this notion has continued to be a significant trope in the histories of collecting. For example, the recent resurgence of interest into the activities of the antique and curiosity dealer and the history of the antique trade has led to the idea of the dealer as a discrete cultural identity to become more firmly inscribed in the wider public consciousness. The decision to devote a small display at the new British

Galleries at the Victoria & Albert Museum, which were opened in 2001, to the trade in antiques during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is evidence of the consolidation of this interest. It is perhaps inevitable, given the trope of the dealer as problematic, that the underlying narrative of the display on the antique trade at the Victoria & Albert museum focuses on the notion of the fakes and forgeries that have entered the collections at the museum and the role of the trade in these problematic objects. The more dubious practices of the antique and curiosity markets have been consistently identified with the activities and the persona of the dealer and historians of collecting have regularly aired a note of caution when the dealer makes an appearance in the biography of an object. Clive Wainwright, who has drawn attention to these particular associations, writes:

> It is a curious aspect of objects which have been in the hands of dealers that if they have ever been suspected of being fakes, or of having been in some way altered or improved, then this reputation clings to them however hard scholars try to dispel it.[48]

Indeed whilst dealers have often been perceived to have considerable knowledge of the objects that they traded, they have also been consistently identified with a lack of authentic appreciation of them. And the idea that the persona of the dealer and the activities of dealing represent illegitimate practices persists in many areas of modern scholarship. For example, in his discussion of the activities of the collector William Hesketh Lever (1851-1925), 1st Lord Leverhulme, the founder of the Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight in Liverpool, the historian Arthur MacGregor contrasts the 'legitimate' collecting activities of individuals such as the famous collector Ralph

Bernal (c.1783-1854) in the first half of the nineteenth-century with those of Lever in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. Macgregor observes that because a collector like Lever 'bought mainly through dealers' he 'attracts less admiration today' than earlier collectors like Bernal, who acquired their objects 'by dint of shrewdness and the exercise of connoisseurship.'[49] The assertion is of course inaccurate. Bernal frequented the dealers in the first half of the nineteenth-century just as much as Lever was to do in the later nineteenth-century, but it is the desire to distance the activities of the collector from any association with such commercial modes of acquisition that is of interest here. The enduring notion that the objects that the dealer sells are spurious and that the dealer has an inauthentic relationship to the collectable object and is therefore a dangerous threat to the legitimate practices of the collector plays a significant structuring role within the narratives on collecting. These tropes and cultural stereotypes form part of the ideological camouflage of connoisseurship and taste. Indeed by drawing on the work of the social anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu alluded to here,[50] one of the purposes of the current study is to use the problematic notions and associations that cohere around the idea of the dealer as a kind of subversive tool and to scrape away the patina of the ideological systems that underpin the appreciation of the legitimate collectable historical object and that form such an important structuring narrative in the discourse of the history of the 'decorative arts'.

It is now widely acknowledged that the art market and its mechanisms play important roles in the structures of art practices, art collecting and indeed in the discourses of art history itself. As far back as 1976 the historian Francis Haskell in his account of the changing taste for collecting art, *Rediscoveries in Art*, drew attention to the important role that the art market itself has played in the changing fashions for art collecting.[51] Indeed it is no coincidence that Haskell's text pays particular attention to the post-revolutionary period in France and England, when as he suggests, 'flocks of dealers and agents'[52] emerged in response to the expanding art market that had been set in train by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Haskell is credited with an innovative approach to the subject of the changing taste in art, moving away from an investigation of stylistic and biographical approaches to art history to one derived from the practices of social historians. This approach was symptomatic of the new approaches to art historical investigations during the 1970s and 1980s and acted as a catalyst for more detailed investigations of the art market with a number of studies directed towards art dealers and the art market being published.[53] Recently there has been a further upsurge in the publication of studies of the art market with a number of scholars directing their attention to the art market and its mechanisms.[54] There have also been a number of academic conferences which have clearly demonstrated the interest that the art market and its mechanisms are currently generating.[55] These investigations have directed their attention towards studying the relationships and practices of individual art dealers and the desire for paintings and other fine art productions. For the most part the methodologies and scholarly tools deployed in these investigations have emerged from economic and

social historians, with a number of distinguished scholars leading the way into the study of the art market and its structures.[56] However, what is noticeably absent from many of these investigations into the emergence of the trade in works of art are its deeper social, cultural and indeed ideological functions. Indeed, apart from the historian Arnold Hauser's brief ideological consideration of the significance of the emergence of the trade in works of art in *The Sociology of Art* (1982), there appears to be little discussion of these deeper readings within these emerging studies into the art market and its mechanisms.[57] Arnold Hauser's study considers the market for art proper rather than the trade in antiques and curiosities that is the subject of the present study but his consideration of the consequences of what he calls the 'intervention' of the dealer into the market,[58] and the subsequent emergence of the work of art as 'commodity' have particular resonance for the present study.

In contrast to the investigations into the art market the market for collecting and furnishing with antiques and curiosities in the nineteenth-century has been subject to very little sustained analysis. Moreover, it is clear that for the most part those historians who have attempted an explanation of the history of the market for collecting antiques and curiosities have produced over-arching analyses which have floundered due to the ambitious scope of their investigations. For example, in the study of the market for *objets d'art* produced by the historian and writer Gerald Reitlinger (1900-78), entitled *The Economics of Taste*, the author considered a very wide range of decorative and historical objects over a period in excess of 200 years.[59] Other scholars such as Joseph Alsop, in his book *The Rare Art Traditions* (1982), have equally attempted to explore the changing taste for art objects and the art market over a considerable chronological period – in Alsop's case from antiquity to the

twentieth-century.[60] Alsop's bold attempt to investigate what he described as the 're-valuations' of art objects as part of an 'integrated system' over such a vast time-scale again led to an argument that was over-generalised. In such over-arching investigations collecting practices are dissolved into a trans-historical blur and these broad-brush approaches to the study of changing tastes in collecting detach the desire for acquisition from its historical and cultural context and deny the shifting motivations for collecting their respective contemporary social and cultural meaning. It is the complex nature of the subject of the consumption of antiques and curiosities that makes any attempt at a broad analysis of changing fashion and taste problematic.

The studies of Reitlinger and Alsop are essentially attempts to track evolving fashions and taste in collecting art and antiques through their changing economic value and both rely heavily on the comparison of the prices realised for objects as they have appeared on the market, or at least a significant channel within the market – the art auction. The price realised at auction sales of art and other collectable objects remain seductive pieces of evidence for the historian and this particular methodology persists even in current studies of the history of collecting. For example, the recent study of the art and antiques market in the early nineteenth-century and the collector William Beckford, which was published in 2001, also relies on the prices realised for objects at various auctions sales in the period as a primary motor in the narrative structure.[61] Inevitably however, the conclusions derived from such evidence are essentially reductive. To be fair Reitlinger did at least acknowledge the problems inherent in attempting to reduce the value of objects to their price, but even so he still persisted with this methodology, proposing that the prices that *objets d'art* have made at auctions in the past would highlight how 'cheap' such objects were in earlier

periods and would demonstrate how collectable *objets d'art* had become. Such price comparisons would also, he writes, be of interest to his readers, many of whom would be collectors themselves.[62] In this sense Reitlinger was rehearsing a long-standing tradition of studying fluctuating auction sale prices. Such a tradition can be traced into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most famously in the realm of picture sales in the work of George Redford (1816-1895) and in armour sales in the work of Francis Cripps-Day.[63] Indeed the wider desire for publications that consist of auction sale prices of objects is in itself a highly significant phenomenon in respect of the present study. The historian Kryzsztof Pomian was one of the first historians to draw attention to the wider significance of the emergence of texts that publicized auction sale results. In his study of collecting practices on the Continent in the 17th and 18th centuries Pomian demonstrated that the publication of auction sale results first began in the market for paintings within the Parisian art market in the late eighteenth-century.[64] The publication of the auction sale results for paintings has also more recently revealed to have become a common practice in Britain during the late eighteenth-century.[65] It is evident that as the consumption of art was commercialised in the late eighteenth-century, relationships between painters, patrons and collectors became less personal and more distanced and there was a rising demand for a framework through which the value structures of the art market could be mapped by a wider consuming public. The auction price index emerged as a result of this evolving consumer demand and is indicative of these changing relationships in the art collecting economy. Moreover, as Pomian indicates, one of the consequences of the evolving art market in the second half of the eighteenth-century was that it gave rise to the emergence of art professionals, exemplified by the art dealer.[66] It would appear to be no coincidence that we see the emergence of the price index in the

market for antiques and curiosities in the second quarter of the nineteenth-century, a period which also saw the consolidation of the antique and curiosity dealer as a discrete cultural identity. The results of the auction of the contents of Horace Walpole's collection at Strawberry-hill, which were published in 1842,[67] and Henry Forster's auction price guide to the contents of Stowe following the Duke of Buckingham's spectacular bankruptcy in 1848, are just two of the most famous price guides published during the period under review here and are indicative of the specific requirements of the antique and curiosity markets in the period.[68] Moreover the title-page of the price index to the Strawberry Hill auction also conveniently mentions that the catalogue 'may be had of...dealers in antique furniture,' drawing further attention to the critical role that the antique and curiosity trade played in the evolving value structures of the opening decades of the nineteenth-century.[69]

However, the price index may be highly significant in respect to the kinds of knowledge structures that are deployed within the art and antiques markets but the use of price index comparison is too much of a blunt instrument when considering the complex historical changes in taste and fashion. The auction price of an object is subject to so many unknown factors, such as availability, condition, contemporary notions of authenticity, as well as the more general economic background and attitudes towards it, that the evidence of prices in auction sale catalogues needs to be handled with greater sensitivity than it is currently granted.[70] What is equally problematic is that using the evidence of price comparison Gerald Reitlinger has concluded that the market for antiques and curiosities in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century was limited in its scale and significance.[71] Reitlinger's account, which was published as long ago as 1963, is still cited as a primary source, indeed it was rehearsed as recently as 1997 in a contribution outlining the history of collecting

by the historian Arthur MacGregor.[72] Reitlinger cites the low monetary values of antiques and curiosities in the period 1815-50 in comparison to the higher values achieved by the same, or similar objects during the period after 1850.[73] The most often cited example in these price comparisons is the purchase by the collector Ralph Bernal of the object known as the 'Lothair Crystal'[74], which Bernal obtained from the London dealer Samuel Pratt. Reitlinger highlights that Bernal paid just £10 for the crystal in the 1830s and that this same object was sold at the auction sale of Bernal's collections after his death in 1855 when it was purchased for £267 by the London dealer John Webb, who was acting on behalf of the British Museum.[75] The price differential between that paid by Bernal in the 1830s and the subsequent price assigned to the same object in the 1850s are used by Reitlinger to impose a teleological assessment of the development of taste in collecting. As a result of the prices that some of his objects realised in the auction sale in 1855 Reitlinger proposes that Bernal's 'taste' was 'advanced'.[76] The conclusions drawn from these comparisons are not sustainable, Bernal's 'taste' for historical objects was that, and could only be that, of a collector of the 1830s. It is legitimate to suggest from this kind of evidence that the desirability for antiques and curiosities had increased by the 1850s, indeed as this study discusses shortly the Isaac archive bears this out, but to conclude from this that the objects were not then desirable imposes a retrospective view that denies the market in the period its own economic and historical specificity. Indeed even if we take the same problematic evidence utilised by Reitlinger and examine the prices paid in the earlier period for objects we can note that in contemporary terms there were some very high prices indeed. For example, Reitlinger stresses that the prices for ancient armour in the period 1820 to the early 1840s were very low. Reitlinger rightly draws attention to the impact that the

infamous Eglinton Tournament, which was staged in August 1839,[77] had on the subsequent desirability of ancient armour, but he still suggests that even the most desirable suits could be bought in the period for £25 or £35.[78] However, the information in the Isaac archive reveals that armour had been one of the most desirable objects within the markets well before the significant social and cultural event of the Eglinton Tournament. In 1833 for example, Isaac, together with the dealers John Swaby, John Bentley and Israel Sack, collectively purchased two suits of sixteenth-century horse armour for over £300 at the auction sale of the armour dealer Thomas Gwennapp and later asked 500 guineas for them from the armour expert and collector Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick.[79] After negotiations Isaac eventually sold the armour to Meyrick, who had offered '£400, and not sixpence more'.[80] And this was hardly an isolated incident, the transactions in the 'waste book' in the Isaac archive consistently record that armour was traded for fairly substantial prices and was often sold for in excess of £100 even in the earliest decades of the period under review here.[81] Moreover, if we examine the contemporary responses by collectors such as Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick they consistently stress the impact that the expanding markets during the early decades of the nineteenth-century were having on the rising prices for antiques and curiosities. By 1839 Meyrick wrote to Isaac complaining that 'not only armour, but everything else is now so high priced that I fear I shall be obliged entirely to give up collecting.'[82] Meyrick was perhaps here alluding to the effect of the Eglinton Tournament in respect of the desirability of ancient armour, but as he also indicates it was not just ancient armour that was increasing in price, the values of a whole range of antiques and curiosities were intensifying. From these brief individual responses it appears that the market for antiques and curiosities in the period under consideration was dynamic and expanding rapidly in the 1830s. Indeed

far from the markets for antiques and curiosities in the early nineteenth-century being limited and small scale as historians such as Reitlinger have suggested, the research undertaken for the present project reveals extensive and diverse markets with a growing number of dealers emerging in response to the evolving collecting and furnishing practices. As this study discusses further in subsequent chapters the picture of the markets in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century revealed through the Isaac archive is a highly complex one. Indeed at times it appears to be expanding rapidly and yet on other occasions the market appears to become dormant, but either way this market is certainly not recognisable as one that was of limited significance.

Chronological Focus

This study investigates the significance of the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer in the period commencing in 1815 and concluding in about 1850. The chronological parameters of this investigation are constrained by the Isaac archive material itself, the waste book covers the period 1815-45,[83] and the corpus of letters covers the period c.1817 until the late 1860s. The chronology can also be legitimized through reference to wider political and social change and the broader conceptual ideas of this investigation. The starting chronological sequence of this study marks the end of the political wars in Europe with the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815. The political consequences of the Napoleonic wars led to a greater availability of historical objects as sections of the continental aristocracy, impoverished by the war and censured by the emerging political, order sold off artworks, interior furnishings and

other historical material. The Napoleonic wars also led to a disruption of the existing religious orders in Europe resulting in the dismantling and sale of interior fittings and stained glass from many religious establishments. The conclusion of the wars led to a much freer access to the Continent the consequences of which can be seen in the rapid expansion of importation consignments of historical objects by antique and curiosity dealers during the period after 1815. The opening chronology also keys into significant changes in the descriptive nomenclature of both the dealers themselves and the historical objects that were exchanged in this diverse economy. In 1817 we see the first instance of the term 'antique furniture dealer' in the London trade directories.[84] A host of related and complementary descriptive terms such as 'ancient furniture warehouse', 'antique furniture importer', and indeed the term 'curiosity dealer' itself, also began to appear in trade directories and in letters and other contemporary evidence with increasing frequency from the eighteen-teens onwards. The adoption of this distinctive descriptive terminology by antique and curiosity dealers is particularly important and its significance has been overlooked by those scholars who have studied the trade in historical objects.

The Isaac waste book and the majority of the letter archive finishes c.1850, which coincides with changes in the markets for antiques and curiosities. The consumption of historical objects during the second half of the nineteenth-century was shaped by the shifting demographics of collectors as well as broader social changes and design led cultural shifts such as the Arts and Crafts Movement, particularly from the 1870s onwards, as scholars such as Stefan Muthesius and Lucy Wood have demonstrated.[85] In the decades after 1850 the chronological focus of collectors and furnishers shifted again and objects from the later eighteenth-century were also beginning to be drawn

into the new patterns of consumption. Collectors also began to specialise to a much greater extent than earlier collectors and single type or class of object became a much more common collecting practice.[86] The broader collecting preferences that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth-century have been sketched by the historian Arthur MacGregor.[87] And these later markets for antiques and curiosities have also been eruditely considered in relation to notions of bourgeois identity by Rémy Saisselin, in what he called the 'democratisation of collecting' in the last decades of the nineteenth-century.[88] Saisselin's text charts the consumption of antiques and curiosities as it expands in the 1880s, linking the evolving desire for antiques and curiosities as extensions of the consolidation of bourgeois culture figured in emergence of new spaces devoted to commerce such as arcades and department stores. Discussion of these changes, although beyond the scope of this study, demonstrate the consumption of historical objects in the period just after mid century and help to sharpen the focus of the significance of the practices of the antique and curiosity dealer during the period under review.

The consolidation in the development of the public historical museum, most importantly perhaps with the emergence of the South Kensington Museum in 1853, gave a significant social and cultural sanction to the evolving interest in a wide range of historical material in the decades after 1850 and provided a further catalyst for the wider consumption of historical objects after mid century. John Charles Robinson (1824-1913), the first curator of the South Kensington Museum, drew attention to the impact that the emergence of the public historical museum had played in the democratisation of collecting even by the mid-1850s. 'The establishment of public museums' wrote Robinson, 'has rendered the taste for collecting almost universal

amongst educated persons.'[89] Indeed one of the contentions of this study is that after the 1850s the knowledge of and interest in historical objects shifts again as the museum itself, and the kind of firm knowledge implied by its displays and classifications, becomes a significant platform through which the historical object is articulated into later nineteenth century consumer culture. Changing collecting practices in the period post-1850 are also reflected by the emergence of specialized publications. Texts began to appear that were specifically directed at the practice of collecting as a discrete activity itself. *The Adventures of a Bric-a-Brac Hunter*, written by Major Herbert Byng-Hall and first published in 1868 exemplifies this development.[90] Such publications signify the changing focus on new types of collectable objects and also, as the concluding chapter of the present thesis shows, provide compelling evidence of the shifting social and cultural relationships between collectors and dealers in the nineteenth century.

More significant in respect to the kind of knowledge that is brought to bear in the changing value structures that underpin the evolving markets for antiques and curiosities was the publication of specialised classificatory texts. Publications on historical objects produced in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century reflected the evolving interest in historical objects as objects of antiquarian study and as objects that keyed into the historical revivals in design and interior decoration in the period. The majority of these earlier publications emerged as a result of antiquarian investigations and provided antiquarian collectors with a general historical background into a subject area allowing them to map their purchases of historical material into an acknowledged field of legitimate historical investigation. For example, in respect to the emerging interest in ancient furniture, the publication of Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and Henry Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836),

provided antiquarians for the first time with a substantial corpus of illustrations of 'ancient furniture' and other objects together with a discussion of their history.[91] Such texts were also, as the authors acknowledged, employed by a wider audience and provided source material for design and interior decoration for those furnishing in what was known at the time as the 'ancient decorative style.'[92] After mid-century, whilst the evolving collecting practices themselves continued to be intimately connected to design and furnishing practices the publications that emerged became more specialized with identification and classification of objects the predominant methodology. The requirements for such texts were driven by the more specialised collecting economy itself and provided systematic classificatory information that allowed the process of identification and ordering so important to collectors. If we focus, for example, on the collecting of 'old' ceramics; such objects, especially 'old Sévres' and 'old Dresden', had been of interest to collectors and furnishers since the opening decades of the nineteenth-century but by the 1850s collectors had also begun to direct their attention to eighteenth-century British ceramics from manufactories such as Chelsea, Bow and Lowestoft, as the journals of the collector Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812-1895) clearly demonstrate.[93] Prior to 1850 however, there was only one text that focused on British ceramic history; *History of the Staffordshire Potteries*, written by Simeon Shaw and published by the author in 1829. This text no doubt acted as a limited catalyst for interest in ceramics during the 1830s but it was still antiquarian in its methodology and approach, relating a somewhat dry descriptive account of the historical development of the Potteries. Moreover it is clear that rather than being a text for collectors of ceramics the main purpose of Simeon Shaw's text was as a panegyric to the history of British ceramic manufacturing. Shaw's book was intended as a catalyst to commerce and an attempt to raise the standards of

manufacturing production at the time.[94] In this sense it can perhaps be placed more properly as a text that was part of the general climate of mercantile, manufacturing and political concerns that would eventually give rise to the Parliamentary Committees into Arts and Manufactures in 1835 and Arts and Principles of Design in 1836.

Specialised classificatory texts for ceramic collectors were first produced in the collecting markets in Paris in the 1840s and keyed into the growing desirability of 'old Sévres' porcelains in France in the period. In 1844 for example, Alexandre Brongniart, the Director of the Sévres porcelain manufactory, published *Traité des arts céramiques*, which was the first text to provide systematic information on the marks and monograms that the ceramic manufactories had often applied to the bases and undersides of their productions in the eighteenth-century. The collecting markets for Sévres, Dresden and other continental ceramic manufactories developed slightly later on the continent than in Britain, where there was already a highly competitive market from the opening decade of the nineteenth-century led by influential collectors such as the Prince Regent and William Beckford amongst others.[95] The diarist Thomas Raikes, who was travelling in France in the 1830s wrote satisfactorily in 1836:

> ...years ago, when we were buying up with eagerness the buhl, the Sévres, the bronzes, and other objects of taste, the French would ridicule our fancy for vieilleries and rococo, now they are collecting them with the greatest eagerness, and the prices are more than doubled.[96]

By the mid 1840s, when Brongniart published his text, Thomas Raikes indicated that there had been an 'extraordinary rise in the price of old Sévres china', demonstrating this by highlighting the rising monetary value of 'one of the finest services'.[97] Writing in 1843 Raikes described how a few years earlier one half of the service had been bought by 'the well-known collector Demidoff'[98] and another quarter by another collector, 'for which was paid 1500 francs.'[99] Raikes continued, 'the remaining quarter is now on sale, and the owner asks for it, 20,000 francs, which he will probably obtain.'[100]

We can note however, that despite 'old Sévres' being more collectible in England than in France in the earlier period there was no desire for any form of classificatory text for English collectors. Indeed the appearance of Brongniart's text itself appears to have been the catalyst for English collectors who only had to wait a few years before they had a similar classificatory text providing information on Continental ceramic factory marks with the publication of Joseph Marryat's *Collections Towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain* in 1850.[101] The importance of such classificatory systems for collectors is clearly demonstrated by Honoré de Balzac in his seminal novel on collecting *Cousin Pons* (1848). Whilst in a conversation with the character Cécile, the main protagonist of the novel, the collector Sylvan Pons, discussed the merits of collecting eighteenth-century porcelains. Pons suggested that the commercial value of German Frankenthal porcelain, which was at the time low in comparison to the more popular Sévres porcelains, would in the future be worth many times its more famous rival.[102] We can note that as a collector himself Balzac assigned his imaginary collector, Sylvan Pons, the archetypal characteristics of a collector; Pons, who had been 'collecting for twenty-five years' believed himself to be 'ahead of the game' and had been collecting Frankenthal for many years.[103] Eager

to acquire the appropriate knowledge to be able to identify these potentially valuable objects Cécile responded, 'how do you recognise a piece of Frankenthal?'.... 'By the signature, of course!' replied Pons, 'all these ravishing pieces are signed.'[104] Pons also went on to describe the marks associated with various other ceramic factories, including 'Dresden', 'Vincennes', 'Vienna' and 'Berlin' emphasizing the importance of such a system for collectors.[105]

However, the relationships between the later markets post-1850 and the specific requirements of its value structures was no more in evidence than in the classificatory texts that emerged from within the antique and curiosity trade itself. In 1863 for example, William Chaffers, a well-known dealer trading from Jermyn Street, published a text on ceramic marks and also in the same year produced the first publication to provide silver collectors with information that would enable them to identify the silver hall-marking system.[106] Chaffers' *Marks and Monograms on Pottery and Porcelain* provided the ceramics collector with the first substantial English text on Far Eastern as well as European ceramics and included information on how to identify the factory and the date marks located on the bases and undersides of pottery and porcelain. Chaffers text keys into the expanding interest in collecting Chinese porcelains in the period, facilitated by the abolition of the monopoly of the East India Company in 1858, which allowed the importation of greater quantities of Chinese porcelain into Britain. Indeed other legislative changes, such as abolition of Government duty on the importation of 'foreign china' in 1860, also fed the expanding collecting market in the second half of the nineteenth-century.[107] We can see that publications such as those of William Chaffers also became fundamental to the practices of collecting. In *The Porcelain Collector*, (see plate 2) by the Belgian artist Alfred Stevens (1823-1906), painted in 1868 shortly after the publication of the

book by Chaffers, a lady collector examines the base of a Chinese vase, whilst a book, which can only be by Chaffers, lies open on the table. Later in the century, another dealer, Frederick Litchfield, the son of the antique and curiosity dealer Samuel Litchfield, also published a text on ceramics that was explicitly addressed to collectors – *Pottery and Porcelain, a Guide for Collectors*, published in 1879. Litchfield is also notable for publishing the first systematic text that discussed the history of English furniture, published in 1892.[108] The symbiotic relationships and the social rivalry between collectors and dealers, which the present study discusses further in the concluding chapter, no doubt encouraged the collector Mrs Bury Palliser to publish *The China Collectors Pocket Companion* (1874). Mrs Palliser, who is an important but neglected figure in the history of collecting antiques in the nineteenth century, was also instrumental in the promotion of interest in French and Italian antique furniture, publishing an English translation of Albert Jacquemart's *History of Furniture* (1876) in 1878.[109] Mrs Palliser's *Pocket Companion* on ceramics was, as the title suggests, one which collectors could carry around whilst they were visiting the antique and curiosity shops and auction sales, and unlike William Chaffer's bulky volume, provided the collector with a tool that would allow them to compete with the knowledge of the antique and curiosity dealer at the critical moment of exchange. By the third quarter of the nineteenth-century we can see that the activity of collecting was shifting radically, with a broadening audience of consumption acquiring an evolving range of objects and with new frameworks of knowledge through which collectable objects were understood.

There is also clear evidence from the Isaac archive of the emergence of these changes in the market for antiques and curiosities post-1850. Isaac made many buying trips to Venice in the 1850s searching for antiques and curiosities and sent

several letters to his Sarah back in London commenting on his purchases. By the early 1850s, as John Charles Robinson suggested, the 'taste for collecting' was having an impact on the monetary values of objects and Isaac was experiencing this at first hand. In one letter for example, sent from Venice in 1855, Isaac indicated that the desirability of dated pieces of Raphaelware[110] was becoming so concentrated that even broken examples were highly prized. Isaac wrote;

> ...to shew [sic] you the state of the market, Mr Riatti, the one in the Ghetto (not the rich one) had two very much broken raffael [sic] ware plates in his hand, and as he informed me had just returned from Mr Tironi, who had offered him 20 napoleons for them or £16. But he refused that sum for them, one had a date 1500 (and something – either 30 or 40)...so anything with early dates of that kind, they are quite awake to.[111]

For a dealer such as Isaac these broader changes in the market for antiques and curiosities post 1850 were also causing some anxiety. Writing again from Venice in 1857 Isaac commented;

> Business now is quite different to formerly, when I used to buy a fine lot, and see a certain profit. But now I only buy a single small article at a large price, and perhaps the next minute regret buying it.[112]

And on 1st October 1857 Isaac commented on the kinds of objects he had observed other dealers buying, including, 'bronze inkstands and a number of small bronzes, which we used to find not saleable, but I suppose they are now.'[113] In the same letter

Isaac listed some objects he had recently purchased and was sending back to London, including 'a torquois [sic] Blue China Vase or Bottle for 12/-, I think it may be worth 20 or 30 pounds.'[114] Isaac's comments towards the conclusion of this letter are revealing;

> You will perceive that all the things I mention, a few years ago I should not have purchased, but the times are different……formerly I bought things I understood and they gave me no further considerations, but now I……buy things I do not understand.[115]

Isaac continued in this letter, 'I never bought such a dear lot of Rubbish before……One thing is certain', he writes, 'all the fine things are gone, and the dealers here pay large prices for Rubbish, but they can sell them again.'[116] It is clear that Isaac was finding the shifting tastes of the antique and curiosity markets at mid century difficult to deal with, both in terms of the knowledge required to identify the new kinds of objects that were entering the markets and the financial risks involved in the speculation required to acquire them. By 1857 Isaac had been trading for over twenty five years and his extensive knowledge of curiosities, antique furniture, ancient armour and other historical material that he had been trading for much of his life did not necessarily fit with the changing tastes and patterns of consumption of antiques and curiosities that were emerging in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indeed we can perhaps conclude from his cautionary comments that the central position that an antique and curiosity dealer such as Isaac had held in the wider markets for antiques and curiosities since the 1820s was by the middle of the century being displaced, and Isaac's anxiety in his letters home to Sarah registers

recognition of this displacement. However, as the letters also suggest, the evolving markets were inevitably drawing in new dealers who were well equipped to respond to evolving consumer demand. These new dealers may be paying large sums for what Isaac called 'rubbish', but as he states, 'they can sell them again'. These shifting patterns of consumption and the new kinds of dealer that emerged have been briefly discussed by Clive Wainwright in a short descriptive account of the gradual drift of the antique and curiosity dealers as they began to move from areas such as Wardour Street and populate more fashionable locations such as New Bond Street in London by the 1850s.[117] However, whilst Wainwright appears to be generally correct in his assertion that the 'antiques trade as we understand it' began to emerge during the 1850s,[118] his assessment that the 'brokers had become antique dealers and their curiosity shops, art galleries'[119] presents a rather too smooth and progressive account of the transition and development of the trade and consumption of antiques and curiosities over the period. Even in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century antique and curiosity dealers were located in a diverse series of commercial locations within London, some of which were already sites of discrete consumer activity of the kind associated with the New Bond Street in the 1850s. However, despite this criticism of the smooth and progressive account of the evolution of the trade in historical objects what seems less in doubt is the general impact that the emergence of the historical museum and the production of specialized and classificatory texts had on the antique and curiosity markets post-1850. When Isaac began trading in antiques and curiosities in the 1820s the objects that he bought and sold were made sensible through reference to tastes and historical understanding that were peculiar to the early nineteenth century. The new systematic classificatory structures inherent in emerging institutions such as the historical museum and the emergence of specialised

texts that began to appear with greater frequency during the decades after 1850 allowed historical objects to be placed in sequences and taxonomies that themselves formed the basis of further collecting activities. We can perhaps see that one of the consequences of these structures, which provided an ever more specific language of identification and classification, was that they began to erase the broad category of curiosities that are so evident in the lists of objects in the Isaac 'waste book' and letter archive during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century.[120] Indeed such texts and the collecting practices that they signified contributed to the demise of the curiosity shop itself. 'Curiosity dealer', was a common descriptive classification operating alongside 'antique furniture dealer' and other related descriptive terms right up to the third quarter of the nineteenth-century, but by the late 1870s it was the descriptive category of the 'curiosity dealer' that was beginning to disappear most from the trade directories.

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[1] Paul Bourget, 'Edmond de Jules de Goncourt', in *Essais de psychologie contemporaine: Etudes littéraires*, (Paris, A.Lemerre, 1881-86), p.319. I use here the translation of Janell Watson, *Literature and Material Culture from Balzac to Proust, the collection and consumption of curiosities*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.25.

[2] See for example, Frank Herrmann, *The English as Collectors*, (London, Chatto & Windus, 1972); Clive Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior, the British Collector at home 1750-1850*, (New Haven and London, Yale, 1989); Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry (eds.) *A.W. Franks, nineteenth-century collecting and the British Museum* (London, British Museum, 1997); Derek Ostergard (ed.), *William Beckford, 1760-1844: an eye for the magnificent*, (New Haven and London, Yale, 2001).

[3] See in particular Wainwright (1989) op.cit.

[4] Gerald Reitlinger, *The Economics of Taste: Volume II, The Rise and Fall of Objet d'Art Prices since 1750*, (London, Barrie & Rockliff, 1963) in particular pp.89-123; See also Stefan Muthesius, 'Why do we buy old furniture? Aspects of the authentic antique in Britain 1870-1910', *Art History*, volume 11, no.2, June 1988, pp.231-54.

[5] Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.36.

[6] See in particular the work of Stefan Muthesius, who, whilst concentrating on the market in the later nineteenth-century still suggests that the dealer's role in the earlier market was limited. Muthesius (1988), op.cit. p.242.

[7] Indeed this is now being more widely acknowledged. See Charlotte Gere and Carolyn Sargentson, (eds.), 'The Making of the South Kensington Museum, Curators, Dealers and Collectors at home and abroad', *Journal of the History of Collections*, volume 14, number 1, (2002).

[8] See for example, Didier Maleurve, *Museum Memories, history, technology, art*, (Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1991), esp. pp.203-06.

[9] Joseph Leo Koerner and Lisbet Koerner, 'Value', in Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff, (eds.), *Critical Terms for Art History*, (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1996), pp.292-306, p.299.

[10] Nicos Hadjinicolaou, *Art History and Class Struggle*, (London, Pluto Press, 1978), pp.35-43.

[11] Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in Josue V. Harari, (ed.), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structural Criticism*, (New York, Cornell University Press, 1979), pp.197-210.

[12] For example the recent study of the collector William Beckford. Adriana Turpin, in Ostergard (ed.) op.cit. pp.177-93, and Bet Macleod, 'William Beckford, a celebrated collector', in Ostergard (ed.), op.cit. pp.159-75.

[13] Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory, the creation and destruction of value*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979).

[14] Ibid. pp.9-10.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid. p.52.

[17] The Isaac archive is held at the Hartley Library, University of Southampton, *MS139/AJ53*. The archive was transferred from the Anglo-Jewish archives at the Mocatta Library, University College London to the University of Southampton in 1990. The papers were deposited at the Mocatta Library, University College London by the late Joseph Pollitzer, John Coleman Isaac's great, great nephew. A number of letters are written in Hebrew and were translated into English in the late 1960s by a Rabbi Feld. A brief summary of the archive and in particular its significance in relation to Jewish cultural history was completed during the early 1970s by the late Alex Jacob and the late G.H. Whitehill, director of the Anglo-Jewish archives at the Mocatta Library, (see Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53* no.468/Add 3).

[18] The Isaac archive contains three fairly substantial parcels of letters from the collectors, Ralph Bernal (c.1783-1854), (covering the period 1834-41), Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (1783-1848), (covering the period 1831-42) and Captain Henry Augustus Langley (d.1834), (covering the period 1827-8). As well as several letters from and references to many other significant collectors, including Thomas Baylis, Lady Charlotte Bury, the Hon. Robert Curzon, Rev. Champion John Dymoke, Andrew Fountaine and Hollingworth Magniac. For further information on these collectors see endnotes to appendix I and appendix II of the present study.

[19] A waste book is a book-keeping record, typically a bound volume, detailing in rough the daily trading activities including receipts and expenditure in order of their occurrence. 'Waste Book', 'Day Book' and 'Journal' were often used interchangeably in the nineteenth-century. The copy held at the Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53,* no.467, is a photographed copy of the original book, which remains in a private collection in London. This private collection also hold photocopies of three diaries (the location of the originals are not known) relating to John Coleman Isaac's buying trips to the Continent during the 1840s, one of which dating to 1846 was partially transcribed and published in a short biographical essay on John Coleman Isaac published in 2002; Martin Levy & Elaine Moss, 'John Coleman Isaac, "Importer of Curiosities", an outline of his life and the 1846 Continental Diary', *Journal of the History of Collections*, volume 14, issue 1, May 2002, pp.97-114, (pp.105-112). The photographed copy of the waste book appears to have been obtained in the 1960s for a display at the Jewish Museum in London at the time the archive was lodged at the Mocatta Library at University College London. The transactions in the waste book are recorded in various hands. Levy and Moss (2002), op.cit. p.98, suggest that entries up to 1821 are those recorded by Henry Abraham Davies, or perhaps a clerk, and those of his sister, Sarah Davies. The entries after 1825 are identifiable with John Coleman Isaac's hand from comparisons to the letter archive.

[20] Alios Riegl, 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: its character and its origin', translated by K.W. Forster and D. Ghirardo, *Oppositions*, 25, Fall 1982, pp.21-51. See also Henri Zerner, 'Alois Riegl: Art, Value, Historicism', *Daedalus: the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, volume 105, 1976, pp.177-88, in particular pp.184-7; For an excellent discussion of the wider range of Riegl's theories see Margaret Iverson, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, (Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press, 1993).

[21] Zerner, (1976) op.cit. pp.177-88.

[22] See, for instance, in relation to the importance of the notion of connoisseurship, Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli*, (New York and London, Garland, 1982).

[23] See in particular Herman, (1972), op.cit. Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. and also Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. in particular Reitlinger's chapter on 'Antiquarian and Eclectic Taste', pp.55-88; For a brief but useful summary of texts dealing with these collecting practices see Russell Belk, 'A brief history of collecting', in *Collecting in a Consumer Society*, (London, Routledge, 1995), pp.42-6.

[24] Clive Wainwright, The Antiquarian Interior in Britain 1780-1850, PhD Thesis, University of London, 1986.

[25] Wainwright, (1989), op.cit.

[26] Ibid. pp.26-53.

[27] Appropriately, given the peripheral place granted to the role of the antique dealer in the histories of collecting, MacGregor relegates this opinion to a footnote. MacGregor, (1997), op.cit. fn.62.

[28] Geoffrey de Bellaigue, 'Edward Holmes Baldock', (parts I & II), *Connoisseur*, vol.190, August & September, 1975, pp.290-99 & pp.18-25. See for example the essays by Bet Macleod and Adriana

Turpin in Derek Ostergard (ed.), (2001) op.cit., and Amin Jaffer, *Furniture from British India and Ceylon*, (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 2001), p.130.

[29] Edward T. Joy, 'John Coleman Isaac: an early nineteenth-century London antique dealer', *Connoisseur*, volume CLI, December 1962, pp.241-4.

[30] Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.43-4.

[31] Levy and Moss, (2002), op.cit.

[32] Charles Tracey, *Continental Church Furniture in England: a Traffic in Piety*, (Woodbridge, Antique Collector's Club, 2001). This work, Tracey states, was published after encouragement from Wainwright.

[33] Charlotte Gere and Carolyn Sargentson, (eds.), *Journal of the History of Collections*, volume 14, no.1, (2002).

[34] F.J. Sypher, 'Sypher & Co., A Pioneer Antique Dealer in New York', *Furniture History*, Volume 28, 1992, pp.168-79. F.J. Sypher, 'More on Sypher & Co., A Pioneer Antique Dealer in New York', *Furniture History*, Volume 40, 2004, pp.151-206.

[35] 'Roger Warner, memoirs of a twentieth century antique dealer', *Regional Furniture*, vol.XVII, (2003).

[36] See for example, Clive Wainwright, 'The Banker, the Prince, and the Dealers: three Renaissance objects and the Victoria & Albert Museum', *Apollo*, February 2000, pp.41-6; Clive Wainwright and Charlotte Gere, 'The making of the South Kensington Museum IV, relationships with the trade: Webb and Bardini', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 14, no.1, (2002), pp.63-78; Clive Wainwright, 'A gatherer and disposer of other men's stuffe' Murray Marks, connoisseur and curiosity dealer', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 14, no.1, (2002), pp.161-76.

[37] Wainwright, op.cit. (1989), p.296.

[38] See, Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (translated by Richard Nice), (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

[39] Clive Wainwright, 'The importance of provenance: rehabilitated fakes', in Mark Jones (ed.), *Why Fakes Matter, essays on the problem of authenticity*, (London, British Museum, 1992), pp.174-81.

[40] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, (edited by Hannah Arendt), (London, Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp.219-53, fn.6.

[41] Honoré de Balzac, *The Wild Asses Skin*, (1831), (translated by Herbert J. Hunt), (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1977).

[42] Honoré de Balzac, *Cousin Pons*, (1847), (translated by Herbert J. Hunt), (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968).

[43] Charles Dickens, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, (1841), (London, Chapman & Hall, n.d.). This story was first published as part of the serial *Master Humphrey's Clock* beginning in April 1840.

[44] Muthesius, (1988), op.cit.

[45] George C. Williamson, *Murray Marks and his Friends*, (London, John Lane, 1919).

[46] Richard Keverne, *William Cook, Antique Dealer*, (London, Constable & Co., 1928).

[47] Thomas Rohan, *Confessions of a Dealer*, (London, Mills & Boon, 1927), first published 1924. Rohan opened his shop in 1903 at High Street, Southampton (trading as Rudd) and later moved to 2,3 & 4 Post Office Arcade, Bournemouth, as A. Rohan Antiques.

[48] Clive Wainwright, *Apollo*, February 2000, op.cit. p.41.

[49] MacGregor, (1997), op.cit. p.13.

[50] Bourdieu, (1984), op.cit. See also Pierre Bourdieu & Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art, European Museums and their Public*, (Oxford, Polity Press, 1991).

[51] Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art, some aspects of taste, fashion and collecting in England and France, 1750-1900*, (New Haven and London, Yale, 1976).

[52] Ibid. p.26.

[53] For example, John Fleming, 'Art Dealing in the Risorgimento - I', *Burlington Magazine*, volume, cxv, number 838, January 1973, pp.4-16; John Fleming, 'Art Dealing in the Risorgimento – II', *Burlington Magazine*, volume cxxxi, number 917, August 1979, pp.492-508; John Fleming, 'Art Dealing in the Risorgimento – III', *Burlington Magazine*, volume cxxxi, number 918, September 1979, pp.568-80; Hugh Brigstocke, *William Buchanan and the 19th century art trade*, (London, Paul Mellon Centre, 1982).

[54] A selection of such publications include, Michael North & David Ormrod (eds.), *Art Markets in Europe 1400-1800*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1998); For a non-European perspective see Malcolm Goldstein, *Landscape with Figures, a history of art dealing in the United States*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000); Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew & Sara F. Mathews-Grieco, (eds.), *The Art Market in Italy, 15th-17th Centuries*, (Modena, Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003). There are also a number of scholars investigating individual art dealers and their clientele, see for example the work of Linda Borlean on the art dealer Giovanni Maria Sasso (1742-1803) and Julia Armstrong-Trotten on the English art dealer Michael Bryan (1757-1821).

[55] For example see the conferences focusing on the mechanisms of the art market, 'The Art Market in Italy - 15th – 17th Centuries', Florence (19th, 20th & 21st June 2000); 'Auctions, Agents and Dealers: the mechanisms of the art market 1660-1830', *The Wallace Collection*, London (12th & 13th December 2003); 'Beauty and Truth for Sale, the Art of the Dealer', *The Getty Centre*, Los Angeles, USA (29th & 30th March 2004); And journal essays such as Francois Maraudet, 'Paul Rémy (1715-97): The Parisian Art Market in the Eighteenth-century', *Apollo*, (August 2003), pp.32-42.

[56] See, for example, Neil de Marchi & Cranfurd Goodwin (eds.) *Economic Engagements with Art*, (Durham, USA and London, Duke University Press, 1999), and the work of the historians David Ormrod, David Mitchell and Hans van Miegroet.

[57] Arnold Hauser, *The Sociology of Art*, (translated by Kenneth J. Northcott), (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), pp.506-17.

[58] Ibid. p.508.

[59] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. and Gerald Reitlinger, *The Economics of Taste, volume I* (London, Barrie & Rockliff, 1961). Volume I discusses the changing prices for paintings and sculpture, volume II considers 'objets d'art'. Both volumes by Reitlinger are based of the earlier study by Maurice Rheims,

Art on the Market, 35 centuries of collecting and collectors from Midas to Paul Getty (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1961), first published in 1959 as *The Strange Life of Objects.*

[60] Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: the history of art collecting and its linked phenomena wherever these have appeared,* (London, Thames & Hudson, 1982).

[61] For example see Adriana Turpin, 'Filling the Void: the development of Beckford's taste and the market in furniture', in Ostergard, (ed.), (2001), op.cit. pp.177-201.

[62] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. preface, pp.xiv-xvi.

[63] George Redford, *Art Sales: a history of sales of pictures and other works of art,* (London, privately printed, 1888); Francis Cripps-Day, *A Record of Armour Sales 1881-1924,* (London, G. Bell & Sons, 1925).

[64] See Krzysztof Pomain, *Collectors and Curiosities, Paris and Venice, 1500-1800,* (1987), (translated by Elizabeth Wiles-Portier), (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990), pp.139-41. The development of the publication of prices was also placed in the late eighteenth-century Parisian art market by the historian Hans van Miegroet in an (at present) unpublished conference paper titled 'The market for Netherlandish paintings in Paris 1750-1815'. *Auctions Agents and Dealers: the mechanisms of the art market, 1660-1830,* Wallace Collection, 12-13 December 2003.

[65] See North & Ormrod , (1998), op.cit.

[66] Pomian, (1990), op.cit. pp.156-9.

[67] H.D. Burn, *Aedes Strawberriannae, names and purchasers of the choice collections of art and virtu at Strawberry-hill villa*...(London, H. Burn, n.d. 1842).

[68] Henry Rumsey Forster, *The Stowe Catalogue priced and annotated,* (London, David Bogue, 1848).

[69] H.D. Burn, op.cit.

[70] Francis Haskell made this observation as long ago as 1976. See Haskell op.cit p.5.

[71] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. p.21.

[72] MacGregor, (1997), op.cit. p.10-11.

[73] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit.

[74] This circular crystal is believed to have belonged to King Lothair, 'King of the Franks', (A.D. 855-869). See Oliver Warner, 'The Crystal of Lothair', *Apollo,* September 1950, pp.87-8.

[75] See Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. p.106; Wainwright (1989), op.cit. pp.52-3. The sale was undertaken by Christie and Mason, in March 1855. See *Catalogue of the Celebrated Collection of ...Ralph Bernal Esq...commencing Monday, March the 5th, 1855.*

[76] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. p.103.

[77] See James Aikman, *An Account of the Eglinton Tournament, revised and corrected by several of the Knights,* (Edinburgh, Hugh Paton, 1839); For further information of this significant event see, Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot, Chivalry and the English Gentleman,* (New Haven and London, Yale, 1981), pp.87-110 and Ian Anstruther, *The Knight and the Umbrella: an account of the Eglinton Tournament, 1839,* (Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1986).

[78] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. p.80.

[79] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53,* no.181, letter dated 15th June 1833.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid. no.467, 'waste book', May 14th 1817, 'A suit of plate ancient armour...time of James I...£125; December 13th 1819, 'Sold Mr Reader a Suit of Bright steel Tilting armour...£110'.

[82] Ibid. no.192, letter dated 16th November 1839.

[83] The first entry, April 23rd 1815, records a payment of £10 to the bankers Rothschild & Co, whilst the final entry is for August 1st 1845; 'Paid for a book at Kitsons Portland Street...9s 6d', Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book'. Levy & Moss suggest this may indicate the presence of a further waste book; see Levy & Moss, (2002) op.cit. p.104.

[84] 'William Holl, antique furniture dealer, 17 Hanway Street', London. Muthesius, (1988), op.cit. cites the first instance as 1826, which is incorrect.

[85] Lucy Wood, 'Lever's Objectives in Collecting Old Furniture', *Journal of the History of Collections*, volume 4, number 2, 1992, pp.211-26; Muthesius, (1988), op.cit.

[86] See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.286-7.

[87] Arthur MacGregor, 'Collectors, Connoisseurs and Curators in the Victorian Age', in Caygill & Cherry, (1997), op.cit. pp.6-33.

[88] Rémy Saisselin, *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot*, (New Brunswick, USA, Rutgers University Press, 1984).

[89] John Charles Robinson, *Catalogue of the Soulages Collection...Museum of Ornamental Art, Marlborough House* (London, 1856), pp.iii. Also quoted in MacGregor (1997), op.cit. p.26.

[90] Herbert Byng-Hall, *The Adventures of a Bric-a-Brac Hunter*, (London, Tinsley Brothers, 1868). This volume was republished in 1875 as 'Chapters in Chinamania'.

[91] Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and Henry Shaw, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, (London, William Pickering, 1836).

[92] Ibid.,introduction, p.26.

[93] Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812-95), was one of the most well-known collectors of eighteenth-century European ceramics in the second half of the nineteenth-century. She donated over 2,000 pieces of English pottery and porcelain to the South Kensington Museum in 1885. Her extensive diaries of her collecting activities were published by her son, Montague Guest after her death. See Montague Guest (ed.), *Lady Charlotte Schreiber's Journals*, (2 volumes), (London, John Lane, 1911). For a brief overview of ceramic collecting over the period see Aileen Dawson, 'Franks and European Ceramics, Glass and Enamels', in Caygill & Cherry, (eds.), (1997), op.cit. pp.200-19.

[94] Simeon Shaw, *History of the Staffordshire Potteries; and the rise and progress of the manufacture of pottery and porcelain*, (Hanley, G. Jackson, 1829), preface.

[95] See for example, Ostergard, (2001), op.cit.; Hugh Roberts, 'Quite Appropriate for Windsor Castle' George IV and George Watson Taylor', *Furniture History*, volume xxxvi, 2000, pp.115-37.

[96] *A Portion of the Diary of Thomas Raikes Esq from 1831 to 1847*, (London, Longman, Brown, Green & Longman, 1856), (volume II), p.361, entry dated 'Wednesday 4th May, 1836.'

[97] *Raikes* (1856), op.cit. (volume IV), p.284, entry dated 'Saturday 19th August 1843.'

[98] Perhaps Nicholas Demidoff (1773-1828), or his son Paul Demidoff (1798-1840), members of the family of fabulously wealthy Russian industrialists.

[99] *Raikes*, op.cit, p.284.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Joseph Marryat, *Collections towards a history of Pottery and Porcelain in the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries: with a description of the manufacture, a glossary, and a list of monograms*, (London, 1850).

[102] Balzac, (1848), op.cit. p.49.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Chaffers' other publication, *Hallmarks on English Silver*, also published in 1863, was equally important, it was the first text to show a series of tables indicating the various marks used in the British hallmarking system. The discovery of the meaning of the system of silver hallmarking is actually credited to the collector and M.P. Octavius Morgan, who announced his discovery at a meeting of the *Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* in 1851. Morgan later delivered an expanded and revised paper on the same subject at the *Society of Antiquaries* in 1853. See Ann Eatwell, 'The Collector's or Fine Arts Club 1857-1874; The First society for collectors of the Decorative Arts', *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850 to present*, vol.18, 1994, pp.25-30.

[107] See, Frederick Litchfield, *'Pottery and Porcelain, a guide to collectors*, (London, 1879), p.323.

[108] See Muthesius (1988), op.cit. and Wood (1992), op.cit. for discussions of the development of specialist texts devoted to the history of furniture in the period post 1890.

[109] Albert Jacquemart, *History of Furniture*, (translated by Mrs Bury Palliser), (London, Chapman & Hall, 1878).

[110] Raphael ware was the name given to 15th and 16th century Italian maiolica.

[111] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, Add 1, no.83, letter dated 4th September 1855.

[112] Ibid., Add 1, no.97, letter dated 25th September 1857.

[113] Ibid., Add 1, no.98, letter dated 1st October 1857.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Clive Wainwright, 'Curiosities to Fine Art, Bond Street's First Dealers', *Country Life*, 29th May 1986, pp.1528-29. See also Wainwright (1989), op.cit. p.69.

[118] Ibid. p.1528.

[119] Wainwright (1989), op.cit.

[120] See for example, the long list of objects send from Fürth, Germany to London by Gabriel Davis in a letter dated 25th September 1821. Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.376; (See appendix II to the current study).

The Emergence of the Antique and Curiosity Dealer I

The Emergence of Historical Consciousness

The early nineteenth-century was a period where the desire for the past was expressed in myriad new activities. It was also a period in which interest in collecting and furnishing with historical objects, which had previously been the domain of the limited class of eighteenth-century antiquarians, was beginning to become for the first time the prerogative of a mass public. The opening decades of the nineteenth-century saw a broadening of interest in the historical past which is registered in the move away from a focus on the Classical Greek and Roman historical material that had been the central preoccupation of the eighteenth-century to an interest in British and European historical material dating from the later medieval period and extending even into the opening decades of the eighteenth-century. Indeed whilst it is true to say that in the eighteenth-century there were several notable collectors of medieval objects and the collecting and display of sixteenth and seventeenth century material was not nearly as rare as some writers have suggested,[1] it is also clear that eighteenth-century collectors had a restricted interest in objects of domestic origin and utilitarian nature surviving from the previous century to their own. The extensive collection of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian miaolica belonging to Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676-1753) at Narford Hall in Norfolk, which were well known in the eighteenth-

century, clearly demonstrate that such collections existed but Fountaine's collection aroused interest precisely because of its singularity.[2]

The catalysts for the evolving interest in the past in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century are complex and interwoven, as indeed are the motives and desires for the consumption of the vast range of historical objects that were exchanged in this diverse economy. As part of the network of supply and distribution the antique and curiosity dealer played a critical role in the promotion of this 'consumption of the past'. However, whilst it is argued here that the antique and curiosity dealer was an influential catalyst for the expanding interest in historical objects in the early nineteenth-century it is important to acknowledge that the emergence of the dealer was also part of a wider social and cultural transformation in the period. Therefore a study that considers the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer should also attempt to place the emergence of the dealer and the expanding consumption of historical objects into a broader contemporary social and cultural framework. The emergence of the dealer and the antique and curiosity shop can be related to the social, demographic and economic changes of the opening decades of the nineteenth-century, something the current study also considers, but the emergence of the trade in historical objects in the early nineteenth-century appears to be such an unusual phenomenon that its appearance cannot be wholly explained with reference to the changes in the social body and the expansion of economic and consumer capacity.

As scholars such as Colin Campbell have already suggested, new industrial and commercial capacity, shifting demographics and population growth can underpin revolutions in consumer behaviour but there are occasions when the shifting patterns of consumption also require an account that transcends materialist explanation.[3] Campbell's study was a reaction to the explanatory framework that had been

suggested for the consumer revolution in the late eighteenth-century, which had been the subject of a number of accounts in the early 1980s.[4] The suggested basis for the eighteenth-century expansion in consumption had been primarily drawn from the ideas of Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) and his influential text, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*,[5] (i.e. that consumer behaviour is always essentially emulative), which Campbell found unsatisfactory.[6] His own explanation for the expansion in consumption in the late eighteenth-century was the emergence of what he called the 'Romantic Ethic', suggesting that it was the 'the pursuit of pleasure' that underpinned the consumer revolution.[7] Campbell had drawn on the 'Protestant work ethic' model developed by the Marxist writer Max Weber (1864-1920), as the title of his work suggests, and his framework implies that motivations for consumption are driven by deeper psychological and indeed ideological perspectives.[8]

These particular debates are themselves perhaps outside the scope of the present investigation. However, Campbell's suggestion that social and economic change provides only part of an explanatory structure does provide a useful model through which the phenomenon of the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer can be further explored. The following discussions therefore place the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer against the background of an epistemological shift in the late eighteenth- and the early nineteenth-centuries. The conceptual frame underlying this contention is drawn from the work of the cultural historian and theorist Michel Foucault.[9] The principle developed by Foucault is that the various discourses of an age are structured as an epistemological totality, or 'episteme', and are related to one another to form a system of knowledge, and that an apparently continuous system of knowledge is fractured by a break which signifies the shift from one episteme to

another.[10] The shift suggested here coincides with the emergence of Foucault's Modern (Romantic) episteme at the end of the eighteenth-century.

A number of writers have drawn on this notion of the Foucauldian shift in their investigations into the historical changes in the period under review here. In *Romanticism and the Rise of History* for example, Stephen Bann detects a decisive transformation in both attitudes to the past and in the conceptual framework of historical knowledge in the early nineteenth-century.[11] Bann writes that the early nineteenth-century was a highly significant moment, a time when history and historical data became meaningful for a much broader public than had been the case previously and when a 'whole range of our contemporary concerns with the past became accessible to representation'.[12] And in a study of collecting practices in Germany in the same period the writer Susan Crane suggests that the early nineteenth-century saw the emergence of new and distinctive reactions to the past.[13] For Crane this shift is figured through aesthetics and gave rise to what she described as the 'aesthetic sublime'.[14] Underlying this more eruditely conceptualized notion, which framed through contemporary aesthetic theory would be accessible only to the educated elite of early nineteenth-century culture, was also a broader feeling of historical awareness in early nineteenth-century society and an emerging perception of the past as "past".[15] One of the consequences of this broad conceptual shift was a remarkable change in the types of historical objects that came to be of interest and a significant change in the perspective and scale of collecting activities themselves.

As Susan Crane indicates, the interest in collecting historical objects shifted from the personal, idiosyncratic and elite networks of eighteenth-century antiquarian collecting to more expansive and representative collecting activities underscored by broader political and national agendas.[16] Such a shift is registered in the change from

collections held in private cabinets to the emergence of the public historical museum by the second quarter of the nineteenth century. By the end of the period under review here the 'consumption of the past' was expanding well beyond the focus that it had in the opening decade of the nineteenth-century. Indeed from the mid 1830s, as Peter Mandler has demonstrated, historical interests became part of a much broader social and cultural framework. We see for example the beginning of mass 'historical tourism' in Britain by the working classes for the first time from the second quarter of the nineteenth-century.[17] For this new audience the primary appeal of old buildings was in their social and historical value rather than through the complex cultural registers suggested by aesthetic theories such as the picturesque and the sublime.

This expansion in historical interests is demonstrated, in part at least, by the wider circulation of inexpensive publications that described and illustrated the historical fabric of Britain. The *Penny Magazine*, for example, contained numerous discussions of monuments, abbeys and churches and the popularity of novels such as '*The Tower of London*' by W. Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882), which was first published as a 'shilling shocker' in 1840, led to an increasing interest in visiting such historical attractions.[18] The expansion and consolidation of historical interests by the second quarter of the nineteenth-century and the greater involvement of the social body in the consumption of the past is reflected in the evolution of the antique and curiosity trade in the period, which grew most rapidly during the 1830s and 1840s (see appendix III.I & III.II). The distinctive commercial trade in historical objects emerged as a consequence of these broader shifts and emerging interests in the past and the collecting and furnishing practices that arose from them. In this sense the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer and the antique and curiosity shop can be seen as

part of the much vaunted emergence of historical consciousness in the early nineteenth-century.

Historicism and Romanticism

Underpinning the consumption of the past in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century are two important cultural ideas – 'Romanticism' and 'Historicism'. These dual catalysts provided complementary frames of reference through which a vast range of historical objects were consumed. The emergence of 'Romantic' fiction, most fittingly for the purposes of the present study in the novels of Sir Walter Scott, acted as a primary catalyst in the promotion of the desire for historical objects. Indeed one of the expressed reasons for acquisition of historical objects in the period was that the desire for the past that arose from the reading of Romantic fiction would be further aroused by their collection and display. In that most important multi-volume publication on medieval objects, *Les Arts au Moyen Age* (1838-46), (see plate 3) the author, collector and founder of the Musée de Cluny in Paris, Alexandre du Sommerard (1779-1842) acknowledged the possibility that objects from the past could act as a stimulus for emotional feeling and imaginative speculation; 'A methodical collection of the brilliant remains of our ancestors,' wrote Du Sommerard, 'would contribute a lively interest to the reading of our chronicles.'[19] And in terms of contemporary fashion and taste in architectural and interior design in the period, 'Romanticism' reinforced the continuing appeal of the British 'Gothic' past.[20] The Gothic revival, or more properly perhaps, 'Gothic Revivals', for there appear to have been a number of periodic and distinctive reinterpretations of gothic design stretching

back as far as the early eighteenth-century, has provided a broad frame of reference for a wide range of collecting, furnishing and design-based activities throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. And the Elizabethan and Jacobean revivals of the early nineteenth-century can be seen as a continuation of the ideological frame through which the 'Gothic' was deployed.[21] However, whilst it is certainly accurate, as several writers have suggested, to draw attention to the influence of the Gothic revival in the wider consumption of historical objects in the early nineteenth-century, it is also important to point out that the furnishing and collecting practices that evolved out of the interest in the Gothic past provided only a partial explanation of these evolving patterns of consumption. Indeed as already indicated one of the distinctive features of the shift in historical interest in the period under review here was a desire for historical material from a much more recent time period than that constituted by the 'Gothic'. A much broader definition of 'Romanticism', one that incorporated imaginative historical reflections even on a period as recent as the early eighteenth-century, as we shall see, provided a framework through which an expanding range of historical objects were consumed in the period.

Equally significant, and in a particularly relevant way as this study discusses, was the emergence of the notion of historicism in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century.[22] It is not the intention of this study to attempt an account of the complex nature and development of nineteenth-century historicism, given that such an account must, by definition, begin in the present, but it is important to highlight some of the most relevant changes that mark its emergence in the period under review. The insistence of the primary importance of historical context, a principal tenet in nineteenth-century historicism, is reflected in the stress that is laid on the notion of historical accuracy. In the introduction to *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836) for

example, which is a critical text in this investigation as subsequent discussions demonstrate, the author Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick criticised the contemporary practice of historical painting, which had become an increasingly important visual medium in the evolving historical consciousness in the period. Historical painting, wrote Meyrick, had become so 'full of incongruities and anachronisms' that it was failing in its purpose to instil in the viewer an accurate sense of the past.[23] Meyrick stressed:

> In an historical composition, correctness in the auxiliaries is scarcely less important than in the prominent parts, for the introduction of a wardrobe or a chair of the time of Queen Anne in the representation of an apartment of the reign of Henry the Sixth is a glaring error...[24]

Samuel Meyrick's call for historical accuracy exemplifies the changing historical attitudes in the period. Indeed his own more specific interests similarly reflect these concerns. Meyrick was an acknowledged expert on ancient armour and the first person to treat the history of arms and armour both systematically and chronologically. He published a monumental study on the subject, *A Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour* (1824),[25]and his own extensive collections of armour at Goodrich Court near Hereford, which was also his private museum, were described and illustrated by the antiquary Joseph Skelton (c.1781-c.1850) in a published description in 1830 (see plate 4), and were amongst the most well-known in the period.[26] Meyrick's chronological rearrangement of the armour in the Royal Armouries at the Tower of London in 1827, and also at Windsor Castle, resulted in him being conferred with the Royal Hanoverian Order by William IV in 1832.[27] He was proud of his work

at the Tower, writing in a letter to the Board of Ordnance that 'it was now the only collection that is truly and historically arranged.'[28]

The playwright and antiquary J.R. Planché (1796-1880), who was also a member of Meyrick's circle of antiquarian friends, was equally well-known in the period for instituting the adoption of correct historical costume for the theatre. Planché famously convinced the actor-manager Chares Kemble (1775-1854) that his 1823 production of Shakespeare's *King John* at the Drury Lane theatre would benefit from having all the actors clad in historically appropriate costumes. Costume, which was seen as a kind of touchstone of historical accuracy, had been employed for the purposes of accurate dating in antiquarian discourse since at least the late seventeenth-century, as the consistent references to representations of costume in tomb monuments and stained-glass in antiquarian publications testifies, but was taking up an increasing amount of debate in the antiquarian publications in the period under review.[29] The new accuracy required of historical performances at the theatre during the opening decades of the nineteenth century inevitably led to commercial opportunities for dealers such as Isaac. Indeed the 'waste book' records several entries in respect of payments received for the hire of suits of armour to various theatres in the 1830s.[30] As armour was one of the most valuable commodities that the dealers sold, Isaac was inevitably concerned to protect his stock; the 'waste book' also records a payment of ten shillings in January 1836 to Thomas Whitton, an 'armourer' who Isaac often engaged to repair and clean armour, for 'attending the armour at the Coburg Theatre for two weeks.'[31] Isaac's suits of armour may have been the ones that the early nineteenth-century diarist Henry Crabb Robinson saw in a production of 'The Antiquary', which he recorded that he had seen at the Coburg Theatre on

December 12th 1836 - 'I could - bad as it was – interest myself in the story' wrote Robinson.[32]

Alongside this shifting perspective in the notion of historical accuracy, by the opening decade of the nineteenth-century antiquarians were also directing attention away from historical investigations based on important Royal and political archives to the more ordinary aspects in the history of human society. We see this for example in the publications of antiquarians such as Joseph Strutt (1749-1802), whose investigations into unexplored areas of culture, such as in *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, (first published in 1801, but also republished in 1830), began to draw attention to the possibility that the more mundane aspects of the past could be the focus of legitimate historical investigation. Indeed in a call that modern historians would recognise Strutt suggested that these more ordinary aspects of the past could provide more legitimate historical knowledge. Writing in the introduction to *Sports and Pastimes* Strutt suggested:

> War, policy, and other contingent circumstances, may effectually place men at different times, in different points of view but when we follow them into their retirements, where no disguise is necessary, we are likely to see them in their true state...[33]

Whilst Strutt's investigations were certainly a legacy of the already established eighteenth-century antiquarian study of the 'manners and customs of the time', which had been advocated by scholars such as the French antiquarian the Comte de Caylus (1692-1765) from the 1750s,[34] by the early nineteenth-century the prospective

audience for such historical interests were extending beyond the narrow confines of eighteenth-century antiquarianism. It is perhaps easy to see that directing attention to the significance of such everyday activities in the past would imbue the more mundane and domestic objects surviving from that past with greater historical interest. Perhaps more significantly however, nineteenth-century antiquarians had also begun to move beyond the interest in the medieval and pre-medieval British past that was the primary concern of British eighteenth-century antiquarianism and were pushing the chronological parameters of antiquarian investigation ever closer to their respective contemporary time. *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, for example, provided illustrations of 'all articles used for domestic purposes, from the earliest period of which specimens exist to the reign of Queen Anne.'[35] Indeed, Meyrick's 'museum' at Goodrich Court contained a number of 'period rooms' arranged in chronological sequence, such as 'Charles II Room', 'William III Room' and 'Queen Anne Room' that reflected these evolving historical interests.[36] Further rooms were dedicated to historical figures that were important in the genealogy of the Meyrick family, such as 'Sir Gelley's Chamber'.[37] These rooms were furnished with historical objects which dated from (or were believed to have dated from) the period corresponding to the date of the Monarch or individual. Thomas Roscoe, the antiquarian writer and traveller, who visited Goodrich Court in 1837, described the Queen Anne room, which was furnished with the:

> gorgeous furniture and flowing patterns of the days of Queen Anne,.... the pannels on the walls, the window curtains and hangings of the recess, the gilt pier table, the stand in the centre of the room, the looking-glass, Seve

(sic) and Dresden porcelain, and the splendid clock, are originals from that age.[38]

Whilst we now understand that it would be inaccurate to place production of Sévres and Dresden porcelains as occurring during the opening decade of the eighteenth-century, (the Meissen (Dresden) factory had produced some porcelain by 1710 under the auspices of J.J. Böttger, but large-scale production only began after 1715, and the Sévres factory was not established until the 1730s), this was a common understanding in the period and need not detain us here. However, what is significant to note is that a range of objects from the relatively recent past, some from a past as recent as the early eighteenth-century, were displayed and presented as 'historical'. Only twenty years earlier such interior schemes and associated objects were not generally considered as 'historical' at all, just merely 'old fashioned', as demonstrated by the contrast between an 'old fashioned' 'Cedar Parlour' and a 'Modern Living Room' by the landscape gardener Humphry Repton (1752-1818) in his publication *Landscape Gardening* (1816) (see plate 5).

For an antiquary like Sir Samuel Meyrick his collections at Goodrich Court reflected his interest in history and his knowledge of antiquarian discourse. However, we should also note that inevitably the establishment of such collections also keyed into the more mainstream fashionable tastes in furnishing in the period. The taste for historical decorations from the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-centuries, such as 'Louis XIV' decorations and associated objects, was also a critical aspect of the consumption of the past by the early 1830s as the contemporary writer John Claudius Loudon indicated.[39] What is perhaps more striking in respect to the present investigation's suggestion that new kinds of interest were being directed to the objects

from the past is the emergence of a more general value ascribed to objects because they were 'old', which is suggested in a number of emerging collecting activities. For example, the pioneer photographer Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877), chose to reproduce a 'photogenic image' of 'Articles of China' in his publication *The Pencil of Nature*, which was first published in 1844 (see plate 6).[40] The purpose of Talbot's publication was to promote his new invention and he wrote that he included the image of the collection of china to suggest its commercial possibilities. Talbot wrote:

> From the specimen here given it is sufficiently manifest, that the whole cabinet of a Virtuoso and collector of old China might be depicted on paper in little more time than it would take him to make a written inventory describing it in the usual way. The more strange and fantastic the forms of his old teapots, the more advantage in having their pictures given instead of their descriptions.[41]

As Talbot suggests, his invention would provide a more accurate 'description' of such objects than was possible by even the most comprehensive written account. He also added, astutely, that if the collection was unfortunately stolen the 'photogenic image' would make identification of the objects a much easier process.[42] However, we can also note the descriptive classification of 'old china' being applied to these objects. To be sure, such a classification had been employed variously throughout the eighteenth-century, most often in the descriptions of imported early Chinese and Japanese porcelains, but the distinctive nature of its deployment here is that these objects were perhaps only 80 or 100 years old by the 1840s. Indeed the classification 'Old China' was beginning to appear regularly in auction catalogues during the 1830s

and 1840s.[43] The apparent basis of this emerging interest, i.e. 'age-value' rather than the more objective 'historical-value' suggested by Meyrick's collections at Goodrich Court is significant. In his study of the changing value structures of art objects Joseph Alsop suggests that 'old-for-old's sake' is the final stage of the social valuation of objects.[44] Similarly Gerald Reitlinger, places the value of 'antiquity', 'as a quality in itself' much later than the period under review here, suggesting that such a value structure only appears towards the end of the nineteenth-century.'[45] And in his investigation of the consolidation of the notion of the authenticity of 'antique furniture', which the present study discusses further in the next chapter, Stefan Muthesius also suggests that it was not until the end of the nineteenth-century that 'age-value' became a predominant value structure in the desirability of such objects.[46] All such conceptions of course owe some acknowledgment of the work of Alois Riegl, who originally detected the 'rise of age-value in the late nineteenth-century.'[47] Riegl's sense of 'age-value', which was a purely a sensory reaction to the fragmentation and disintegration of objects, what one could call the aesthetics of decay, is indeed a 'quality' of historical objects that is most obviously present as a value structure at the end of the nineteenth-century, that is not in question here. However, as Stephen Bann has demonstrated in yet another of his compelling accounts of the importance of the Romanticism of the early nineteenth-century, the notion of 'age-value', as a historical phenomenon, can also be ascribed to an earlier period than that in which it has been given 'theoretical status.'[48] Whilst it is not in doubt that 'age-value' consolidated towards the end of the nineteenth-century the appearance of such a value structure in the period under review here is a further indicator of the emergence of a distinctive historical consciousness.

The Emergence of the Historical Object

This investigation into the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer was initially prompted by a close study of Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and Henry Shaw's *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*. *Specimens* was first published as a single volume in 1836 but like many other antiquarian publications at the time was originally published periodically in part form slightly earlier, appearing as separate illustrated sheets during 1832-35.[49] The text for *Specimens* was written by the eminent antiquary and armour expert Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and it contained illustrations by one of the most important antiquarian illustrators of the period, Henry Shaw (1800-1873), (See plate 7). *Specimens* was the first publication to be devoted primarily to the subject of ancient domestic furniture and indeed remained the standard text on the subject well into the 1870s (it was republished as late as 1866) when it was superseded by the publication of John Hungerford Pollen's handbook to the furniture and woodwork collections at the South Kensington Museum which was published in 1875.[50] Texts such as *Specimens*, which represent a tradition of antiquarian publications that stretches back as far as the late seventeenth-century, were fundamental to the practices of antiquarianism itself and were part of the larger antiquarian project to investigate the indigenous culture of Britain.

As this study discusses further below *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* is a critical piece of evidence in the cultural biography of the antique and curiosity trade, but the significance of this publication in respect to the emergence of historical consciousness is brought into sharper focus if we first direct attention to the illustrations of the historical objects in *Specimens* themselves. Conventionally, antiquarian publications that had considered such historical material had laid stress on the importance of the

authority of their representations of objects by only including illustrations reproduced from ancient manuscript sources.[51] Indeed many antiquarian publications found it more convenient to leave out illustrations of such objects preferring to rely on written descriptions reproduced from inventories and other manuscripts. *Horda Angel-cynnan*, by the antiquary Joseph Strutt, the first volume of which was published in 1775, provides a useful example.[52] Strutt's work investigated material culture from a very broad period and presented the interested reader with a wide array of historical objects, including chairs, tables, combs, shoes, and armour. The illustrations in Strutt's publication are all reproduced from manuscript sources; plate XXIII, for example, in volume 1 of *Horda Angel-cynnan* illustrates various objects, including seats and thrones, reproduced from the manuscript 'Aurelius Prudentius, at Bennet [sic] College, Cambridge' (Corpus Christi) (see plate 8). It can be argued here that the furniture and other objects illustrated in this particular plate from Strutt's work originates from a period in history, 'the time of the Saxon's', from which there were no actual surviving examples and for this reason Strutt was unable to illustrate any material specimens. This certainly would be a logical reason for the choice of a manuscript source for information concerning these particular objects. But even with furniture from a more recent period, such as that of the Tudor period, Strutt still chose to illustrate objects depicted from manuscript authorities. Plate XXXV, for example, of volume 1 of *Horda Angel-cynnan* illustrated various chairs, beds, chandeliers and tables taken from various 14th and 15th century manuscripts rather than from any real specimens themselves. Furthermore, the brief discussions that provided further information on the ancient furniture are reproduced from descriptions of objects in sixteenth-century inventories and other manuscript sources, highlighting the authority of the manuscript source for antiquarian investigations in the period.[53] The choice of

evidence that Strutt employs demonstrates a reliance on a particular notion of historical authority, one that was vested in the manuscript source rather than in the physical objects themselves. When we turn to the early nineteenth-century and consider *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* we can note a distinctive shift in the sources for the illustrations. The overwhelming majority of the objects illustrated in *Specimens* are actual examples of furniture that exist as material entities rather than being reproduced from manuscript illustrations. For example, plate XI illustrated a 'Chair of the Time of Henry Eighth', (see plate 9). To be sure, since the middle decades of the eighteenth century antiquarian methodologies had begun to suggest that the physical remains of the past could provide more accurate historical knowledge and had begun to move away from text-dominated historiographies to an archaeological methodology based on induction from material evidence. As scholars such as Sam Smiles and Rosemary Sweet have already demonstrated, by the closing decades of the eighteenth-century antiquaries were arguing that artefacts and monuments could furnish important information with a greater foundation of accuracy and be considered as evidence in their own right rather than simply be used to corroborate existing written accounts.[54] However, whilst these methodologies were beginning to take shape in the second half of the eighteenth century the type of physical material employed remained the artefacts and monuments from the deeper and ancient past - 'antiquities' rather than objects from the more recent past. The distinctive feature of the illustrations in *Specimens* therefore is the primacy given to the physical specimens themselves as historical authorities. Indeed of the seventy four illustrations reproduced in *Specimens* only eight were reproduced from a manuscript source, for example plate XXXV, which reproduced pieces of 14th and 15th century furniture from various manuscripts of the period (see plate 10).

Moreover as if to emphasize the newly emerging legitimacy of this practice, Samuel Meyrick, the author of the text, apologised where he had been forced to include illustrations reproduced from a manuscript. Plate IX, for example, a 'table from a drawing in an MS at Oxford', came with the caveat, 'although not from any real specimen, was too valuable to be omitted.'[55] It would be inaccurate of course to suggest that the manuscript source as 'evidence' was neglected completely in the period under review here. Indeed manuscripts and the illustrations that they contained continued to be utilised as sources of authority for historical investigations, as this study discusses shortly. Furthermore Samuel Meyrick made consistent reference to the authority of manuscript sources in his introductory discussion in *Specimens* in support of his project to deliver a more accurate history of furniture. But it is also clear that the authority of the manuscript source, which had remained virtually unchallenged in antiquarian investigations for this kind of historical material, had now been joined to an increasing degree by the physical presence of the historical specimens themselves.

A similar shift, and in the same period, is detected by Stephen Bann in his masterly analysis of the museums of Alexandre de Lenoir (1761-1839), the Musée des Monuments Français in Paris, established in 1795, and its direct heir, the Musée de Cluny established by Alexandre du Sommerard, which was opened in 1834.[56] In contrasting the museological displays in each museum Bann observed that in the earlier museum of Lenoir, the Musée des Monuments Français, the museum displays included reproductions and recreations mixed in with authentic historical material. In the later museum of Alexandre du Sommerard, the Musée de Cluny, a significant shift had occurred and the copies and reproductions that merely 'represented' the past were

banished from the displays and only 'authentic' historical material was admitted into the museum. Bann's concern was to reveal the rhetorical structures that lie beneath the narratives of historical discourse, a project initiated by the American writer Hayden White.[57] But this shift also has resonance in the context of the illustrations in *Specimens*. One of the opening points made by Bann in his important essay is the suggestion that historical discourse need not be confined exclusively to the historical text, and that a display of historical objects can also 'narrate the past'.[58] In this sense, just as Bann had intimated in his analysis of the displays at the Cluny museum, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* appears to suggest a kind of 'priority of the historical object over the historical text'.[59] Moreover, the new priority given to the physical historical object in *Specimens* implicitly privileges the historical object as a 'fact' of history at a moment when historical discourse itself was undergoing a similar (rhetorical) shift. Hayden White writes:

> in the early nineteenth century it became conventional, at least amongst historians, to identify truth with fact and to regard fiction as the opposite of truth...history came to be set over against fiction...(and) thus it came about that history (became) the realistic science par excellence.[60]

Of course there are few contemporary historians, even the most entrenched empiricists, who would propose that history is a simple objective enterprise and is composed of 'facts', be they 'textual descriptions' or 'material remains'. We now acknowledge that history itself is part of a complex ideological framework, structured through its own discursive practices, as Stephen Bann, Hayden White and many other theorists besides have admirably demonstrated.[61] Moreover, far from being the

bearers of a stable and consistent truth the physical remains of the past offer no more of a degree of historical accuracy than that supplied by a text. The physical remains of the past are mute and only speak when the historian begins to interpret them; far from being immutable the physical remains of the past are endlessly reconstituted in the present.[62] However, the important point to be made here is that not only does *Specimens* demonstrate that a wider range of historical objects had become a legitimate part of historical discourse during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century, but that the historical object itself had become a material representative of history - an historical artefact; a shift that is also figured in the emergence of the historical museum itself.

There is, however, an equally significant aspect in the shift registered in the changing focus of the illustrations in *Horda Angel-cynnan* and *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, it is one that illuminates the symbiosis between a discourse, such as the historical discourse we see emerging in the pages of *Specimens*, and an emerging market (and of course by extension the dealer). When Joseph Strutt published *Horda Angel-cynnan* in the eighteenth century ancient furniture was generally of limited interest. Ancient furniture does appear in the descriptive accounts of a number of significant collections, including those of the antiquary Richard Bateman (c.1705-1773)[63], the architect and antiquary, John Carter (1748-1817)[64] and also perhaps most famously in the collections of Horace Walpole (1717-1797), at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham.[65] And interest in ancient furniture is occasionally registered in diaries in the later eighteenth century. For example, the Hon. John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, that seemingly indefatigable British traveller, directed attention to the ancient furniture at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire during a visit in the 1780s,

commenting that Hardwick had 'a curiously inlaid oak table.....and a very ancient cabinet, that I wished to have explored.'[66] But outside the discussions of a few antiquarian collectors ancient furniture is hardly mentioned at all. Indeed even in antiquarian publishing in the eighteenth century, the conventional locus of such investigations, the interest in objects such as ancient domestic furniture was extremely limited. The pages of *Archaeologia*, the journal of the Society of Antiquaries, and perhaps the principal medium in which such arcane interest would be most evident devoted only a handful of articles on ancient furniture from its initial publication in 1770 until the end of the eighteenth century. Inevitably, with eighteenth century antiquarianism being so closely associated with the attentions of and investigations by the clergy and others of that semi-professional class, the primary focus of the antiquaries' interest in ancient furniture appears to have been in the context of its use in ecclesiastical buildings, with 'Mr Clark's Observations on Episcopal Chairs' being a singular example.[67] *Archaeologia* published only one illustration of ancient domestic furniture during the same period, in 1787 publishing the famous ancient cradle 'in which Edward II was rocked', which was then in the possession of Rev. Mr Ball of Newland, Gloucestershire (see Plate 11).[68] Investigation of publications such as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *London Magazine*, which had a wider readership than *Archaeologia*, has revealed that they were similarly parsimonious in their discussion and illustration of ancient domestic furniture during the late eighteenth century. The most significant discussion in the pages of these journals amounted to brief considerations of the chair which King Charles I was believed to have used at his trial in 1649[69] and a further consideration, and illustration, of the famous ancient cradle which had been discussed in 1787 in *Archaeologia*.[70] Indeed such was the fame of this particular historical object that it was also chosen by

Meyrick and Shaw to be illustrated in *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* in the 1830s (see plate 12), (with a revised and more 'accurate' assessment of its age). The almost complete lack of illustrations of ancient furniture, even in antiquarian publications, during the second half of the eighteenth-century clearly demonstrates that such objects remained within the narrow field of antiquarian discourse and were not generally part of the wider patterns of consumption. In *Specimens* therefore we have a publication that adumbrates the history of furniture as a discourse, one that, through its illustrations, demonstrates shifting notions of historical authority, and one that simultaneously reveals such objects to be part of the broader consumption of the past; symbiotic shifts that are all equally registered in the process of transformation from illustrations reproduced from manuscript sources to objects that existed as material entities.

However, the significance of the illustrations in *Specimens* provides one further piece of evidence in this investigation of the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer. It will be noticed that all of the illustrations of historical objects in *Specimens* have declarations of ownership appended beneath each print. Such declarations had been rehearsed in scores of antiquarian publications throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries identifying the all-important provenance of the collectable object. In the eighteenth century in his *Description of Strawberry Hill*, the inventory of his collection which was first published in 1774, the antiquarian collector Horace Walpole appropriately called this 'pedigree'. In the preface to his catalogue Walpole set out the purpose of his descriptions:

> The following account...is given with a view to their future dispersion. The several purchasers will find a history of their purchases...an authentic certificate of their curiosities....well attested descent is the genealogy of objects of virtu.[71]

If we examine the illustrations in *Specimens* we can see that many of the historical objects are indeed stated to be in the possession of well known antiquarian collectors or are cited to be in appropriately historically significant locations. For example, an ancient bed is said to be at 'Hardwicke Hall, a seat of his Grace, the Duke of Devonshire' (see plate 13), and a 'Napkin Press' was 'in the possession of Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, Goodrich Court', the author of the commentary in *Specimens* and as we have seen, one of the most famous antiquarian collectors of the period (see plate 14). And many other objects were also cited to be in the possession of other noted collectors, including the famous 'cradle of Henry 5th', which, by the 1830s was in the possession of George W. Braikenridge (1775-1856), the Bristol antiquarian, (see plate 12),[72] and 'a bedstead of the time of Henry 8th', which was in the possession of Reverend William Allen of Lovely Hall, near Blackburn.[73] However, what is highly unusual in *Specimens* is that several of the declarations appended to the illustrations also cite the historical objects to be in the possession of antique and curiosity dealers. An oak cabinet and an ebony chair, 'formerly at Strawberry Hill'[74] for example, are 'in the possession of Mr Webb, Bond Street', (see plates 15(a) & 15(b), 16(a) & 16(b)); a brass reading desk is 'in the possession of Mr Hull, Wardour Street', (see plates 17(a) & 17(b)); a pair of brass fire-dogs are 'in the possession of Messrs Samuel & Henry Pratt, Bond Street', (see plates 18(a) & 18(b)); a sixteenth-century chamber organ is cited to be 'in the possession of Mr Gwennapp' (see plates 19(a) &

19(b)); and a table 'time of Henry 8th' is 'in the possession of Mr Swaby' (see plates 20(a) & 20(b)). As named individuals, John Webb, Edward & George Hull, Samuel & Henry Pratt, Thomas Gwenapp and John Swaby were amongst the most well-known antique and curiosity dealers of the first half of the nineteenth century. Indeed even if the interested reader was unaware of the personal identity of these individual possessors the addresses associated with several of their names would have explicitly identified their locations as acknowledged places of commerce. John Webb and Samuel & Henry Pratt's location in Bond Street was an area associated with some of the most fashionable shops in London, and Wardour Street in particular was synonymous with the antique and curiosity trade during the period that *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* was published. These locations alone would have implicitly suggested that historical objects such as these were part of a wider system of commercial exchange. This is the first time that any antiquarian publication had illustrated a corpus of objects that were cited to be in the possession of antique and curiosity dealers as well as in the possession of antiquarian collectors. In one sense the illustrations in *Specimens* draw further attention to the important links between the commercial trade in historical objects and the practices of antiquarianism, which as Paul Baines has already demonstrated were already rooted in a system of economic exchange even as early as the opening decades of the eighteenth century.[75] But the importance of the illustrations in *Specimens* is that we can see that by the opening decades of the nineteenth century these relationships were becoming much more explicitly registered through the emerging profile of the antique and curiosity trade itself. *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* therefore marks the consolidation of the dealer as a discrete social and cultural identity in the period whilst at the same time firmly embedding the historical object as a commodity in the contemporary culture.

I take the definition of 'commodity' here in relation to a much broader understanding than the way this concept is routinely employed by many scholars. I acknowledge the more purist definitions of commodities as special kinds of manufactured goods, or indeed services, only associated with modern industrial economies, but my favoured definition is that advanced by scholars such as Arun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff.[76] Indeed in his discussions of the notion of commodity Appadurai draws attention to the fact that whilst the concept of commodity was a central part of Marx's critique of bourgeois political economy, the principal text for which is *Capital*, first published in 1867, Marx himself allowed for the definition of commodities to extend prior to capitalist modes of production.[77] In *Capital*, Marx opened his discussions on commodity with a very broad definition; 'a commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another.'[78] Appardurai is at pains to stress that the lengthy discussions that Marx subsequently provided on 'commodity' are notoriously dense, but what is of interest here, as Apparduari highlights, is a notation that Frederick Engels subsequently inserted into Marx's commentary on the notion of commodity. 'To become a commodity', Engels wrote, 'a product must be transferred to another, whom it will serve as a use-value, by means of exchange.'[79] Appadurai suggests that Engels notation indicates that in order to produce commodities a man must produce use values for others and that these values must, by definition, be social use values. As Appadurai stresses, this suggests that a commodity is first and foremost a social thing.[80] If we refer this framework to the kinds of historical objects that came to be of wider interest in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century we can see significance of these suggestions. Horatio Rodd, for example, an antique and curiosity dealer trading in Great Newport Street in London in the second quarter of

the nineteenth-century is well-known for producing catalogues of his stock during the period 1820s to 1840s, as this copy of the frontispiece of his 1842 catalogue illustrates (see plate 21).[81] One of Rodd's earlier catalogues, issued in 1824, included a description of 'a set of six Antique High Back Chairs, very finely carved in walnut-tree, perfect but want new seats.....£7.7s.'[82] They were not illustrated in Rodd's 1824 catalogue, but fortunately we do have an illustration of these chairs, as they were sold by Rodd in the same year and for the seven guineas advertised to George Weare Braikenridge, the well-known antiquarian collector who also owned the famous 'cradle of Henry 5th'.[83] Braikenridge installed the chairs in the lodge to Broomwell House, his home in Brislington, near Bristol, where they were sketched by the amateur artist W.H. Bartlett (1809-1854) (see plate 22). The chairs would appear to date from c.1700 and as Meyrick's commentary in *Specimens* has indicated such historical material was being dated much more accurately by the early 1830s. Henry Shaw's illustrations of three chairs 'of the time of William 3rd' reproduced in *Specimens* demonstrate the new and accurate chronology of such objects (see plate 23). We can certainly assume that Rodd would have been aware that his chairs were only 120 or so years old when he sold them as 'antique'. The assignment of the descriptive term 'antique' to such objects reflects the shifting focus and new significance granted to historical material from the more recent past. Indeed just like Samuel Meyrick's 'Queen Anne' room at Goodrich Court such chairs would have been considered to be of little interest by the majority of people only a decade or so before the time that Rodd offered them for sale as 'antique'. By the opening decades of the nineteenth century these historical objects have, to borrow Arun Appadurai's phrase, entered their 'commodity phase' and have become socially relevant in a new way.[84] Indeed if we can acknowledge that objects from the past such as these antique

chairs were once 'put to use', in the sense that they once served a function, we can say this original function is no longer their purpose, these objects have no use-value in that sense. Their use-value now lies in their deployment within a subtly different kind of social and cultural framework. For those who desired such historical material they would provide a catalyst for Romantic historical associations, or to suggest particular affinities with a social group and other collectors, they could also be used to demonstrate erudition, or to be displayed as markers of wealth. For those who disparaged such objects, for such objects were also, as this study discusses, considered to have limited aesthetic appeal or be of dubious historical interest by many commentators in the period, such historical objects could provide a convenient opportunity to suggest that ownership of them represented obscure or problematic taste. In this sense objects such as 'antique chairs' became important signifiers, for those who possessed them, for those who disparaged them, and for those who traded them. As Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood suggest in *The World of Goods*, commodities have long been used to define and preserve social relations.[85] But we can also note the critical role that the emerging antique and curiosity trade played in these emerging patterns of consumption. It was through the new kinds of antique and curiosity dealer, such as Isaac and Horatio Rodd, and the new kinds of antique and curiosity shop, that a new range of historical objects were disseminated in the wider contemporary culture.

[1] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. pp.100-1.

[2] For a useful discussion of this collection see Andrew Moore, 'The Fountaine Collection of maiolica', *Burlington Magazine*, volume CXXX, June 1988, pp.435-47. The collection, with subsequent editions by members of the family in the later eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, was eventually sold at auction by Christie, Manson & Woods, in 1884; See *Catalogue of the Celebrated Fountaine Collection of Majolica, Henri II ware, Palissy ware, Nevers ware.....June 16th 1884.*

[3] Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987).

[4] See in particular, Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of the Consumer Society – The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England*, (London, 1982).

[5] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: an economic study of Institutions*, (1898), (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1970).

[6] See especially, Colin Campbell, 'Understanding traditional and modern patterns of consumption in 18th century England: a character-action approach', in John Brewer and Roy Porter, (eds.), *The Consumption of World Goods*, (London, 1993), pp.40-56.

[7] Campbell, (1987), op.cit.

[8] For an extended discussion of Campbell's ideas see Colin Campbell, 'Capitalism, Consumption and the Problem of Motives', in Jonathan Friedman (ed.), *Consumption and Identity*, (Amsterdam, Harwood, 1994), pp.23-46. See also, Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons, (London, Unwin, 1930).

[9] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, (New York, Pantheon, 1972). For an excellent and cogent discussion of Foucault's work see Hayden White, 'Foucault Decoded: Notes from Underground', *History and Theory*, volume XII, 1973, pp.23-54.

[10] See Stephen Bann, 'Poetics of the museum: Lenoir and Du Sommerard', in *The Clothing of Clio: a study of the representation of history in 19th century Britain and France*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp.82-3.

[11] Stephen Bann, *Romanticism and the Rise of History*, (New York, Twayne, 1995).

[12] Ibid., p5.

[13] Susan Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-century Germany*, (Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2000).

[14] Ibid., p. x-xi.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Susan Crane, 'Story, History and the Passionate Collector', in Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz, (eds.), *Producing the Past: aspects of antiquarian culture and practice 1750-1850*, (Brookfield, Vt., Ashgate, 1999), pp.187-200.

[17] Peter Mandler, 'The Wand of Fancy: The historical imagination of the Victorian Tourist', in Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward and Jeremy Aynsley, (eds.), *Material Memories*, (Oxford, Berg, 1999), pp.125-41.

[18] Richard Altick, *The Shows of London*, (Cambridge, Mass., & London, Harvard University Press, 1978), pp.450-1.

[19] Alexandre and Edmond du Sommerard, *Les Arts au Moyen Age*, (5 volumes), (Paris, 1838-46); also quoted in Bann, (1984), op.cit. p.79.

[20] For an excellent introduction to the diverse meaning and interpretation of Gothic, particularly in respect of its aesthetics, see Paul Frankl, *The Gothic, Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1960). For a useful overview of Gothic in the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries see Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, (London, Phaidon, 1999) and for a discussion of the Gothic design and taste in the eighteenth-century (styled 'Gothick) see Michael McCarthy, *The Origins of the Gothic Revival*, (New Haven & London, Yale, 1987).

[21] For a consideration of the political relationships between Gothic and English and British history see Samuel Kliger, *The Goths in England, a study in seventeenth and eighteenth century thought*, (Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1952) and for an excellent application of an ideological reading of eighteenth-century Gothic at Strawberry Hill, the home of Horace Walpole, see David McKinney, 'The Castle of my Ancestors: Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill', *British Journal for 18th century studies*, vol.13, no.2, 1990, pp.199-214.

[22] For an excellent general introduction to the wide ranging notion of historicism see Paul Hamilton, *Historicism*, (London and New York, Routledge, 1996). For a more specific account in relation to the current study see Chris Brooks, 'Historicism and the Nineteenth-century', in Vanessa Brand, (ed.), *The Study of the Past in the Victorian Age*, (Oxford, Oxbow, 1998), pp.1-19.

[23] Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and Henry Shaw, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, (London, William Pickering, 1836), p.2.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, *A Critical Inquiry into Antient Armour*...(3 volumes), (London, R. Jennings, 1824).

[26] Joseph Skelton, *Engraved Illustrations of Ancient Arms and Armour from the Collection of Llewelyn Meyrick at Goodrich Court*, (2 volumes), (London, Schultze, 1830).

[27] See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.243.

[28] 'A letter concerning the horse armoury in the Tower of London', *Connoisseur*, volume civ, July1939, pp.90-1, p.91.

[29] See, for example, Thomas Jeffery, *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations*, (1757 and 1772); Joseph Cooper Walker, *Dress of the Ancient and Modern Irish*, (1788). For an excellent consideration of antiquarian speculation on costume see Sam Smiles, 'British Antiquity and Antiquarian Illustration', in Myrone & Peltz, (1999), op.cit. pp.55-66.

[30] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', entry dated 'December 28th 1835', 'Rec'd from Messr Levy Ten Pounds for the hire of two suits of Armour for four weeks at the Victoria Theatre.'

[31] Ibid., entry dated 'January 1st 1836'.

[32] Eluned Brown, (ed.), '*The London Theatre 1811-1866, selections from the diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, (London, Society for Theatre Research, 1966), p.116.

[33] Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, (1801), (London, Reeves, 1830) p.xvii.

[34] Caylus, in his antiquarian publication *Recueil d'Antiquités* (1752-67) advocated the value of studying simple household objects as well as great monuments because they could provide insights into past cultures not supplied by the study of great monuments alone. See Francis Haskell, *History and its Images, Art and the Interpretation of the Past*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1993), pp.180-5.

[35] Meyrick & Shaw,(1836), op.cit. p.2.

[36] For an extended discussion of Meyrick's collections at Goodrich Court see Wainwright, (1989), op.cit., pp.241-68 and Rosalind Lowe, *Sir Samuel Meyrick and Goodrich Court*, (Logaston, Logaston Press, 2003).

[37] Sir Gelly Meyrick (1556-1601), was prominent Welsh soldier.

[38] Thomas Roscoe, *Wanderings and Excursions in South Wales*, (London, Tilt & Bogue, 1837), p.103.

[39] See for example, John Claudius Loudon, *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*...(London, Longman, 1833), p.1039.

[40] Henry Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature*, (London, Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1844), (unpaginated), 'Plate III'.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] See, for example, that by 1835 Christie's had already begun to catalogue their lots as 'rare old Chelsea'. See Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. p.169.

[44] Alsop, (1982), op.cit. p.17.

[45] Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. p.13.

[46] Muthesius, (1988), op.cit. See also Stefan Muthesius, 'Patina: Aspects of the history of the look of age in the Decorative Arts in the late 19th century', *Zeitschrift fuer Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung*, 17, January 2003, pp.138-142.

[47] Riegl, (1982), op.cit. p.44.

[48] Stephen Bann, 'Views of the past – reflections on the treatment of historical objects and museums of history (1750-1850)', in Gordon Fyfe and John Law, (eds.), *Picturing Power: Visual Depictions and Social Relations*, (Routledge, London and New York, 1988), pp.39-64, p.43.

[49] For contemporary responses to the text see *Gentleman's Magazine*, volume ciii, February 1833, pp.155-6; June 1833, pp.544-5, and Volume I (New Series), January 1834, p.87; April 1834, p.419. For a useful summary of the text see Clive Wainwright, 'Specimens of Ancient Furniture', *Connoisseur*, vol.clxxxiv, no.740, 1973, pp.105-13.

[50] Published around the same time was Albert Jacquemart's *A History of Furniture*, (1876), with an English translation by Mrs Bury Palliser soon after, but this text did not include discussion of British furniture, its main subject being French and Italian furniture of the 16th to 18th centuries. The equivalent study of English furniture did not appear until 1892. See Frederick Litchfield, *Illustrated History of Furniture*, (London, Truslove and Shirley, 1892). Litchfield, incidentally was a dealer. For

a discussion of the development of publications devoted to the history of British furniture see Muthesius, (1988), op.cit. pp.231-55, pp.241-2.

[51] See for example, Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, (Berkeley & Oxford, University of California Press, 1990), chapter 3, 'The Rise of Antiquarian Research', pp.54-79, esp. pp73-4.

[52] Joseph Strutt, *Horda Angel-cynnan: or a Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Arms Habits etc of the Inhabitants of England from the arrival of the Saxons 'til the Reign of Henry the 8th*, (3 volumes), (London, Benjamin White, 1775-6).

[53] Strutt's source is the *Inventory of Goods and Chattels of Sir Adriane Foskewe, dated 30th year of King Henry 8th*. Strutt, op.cit. Vol. 3, pp.65-71.

[54] Sam Smiles, (1999), op.cit. pp.59-60; Rosemary Sweet, 'Antiquaries and Antiquities in Eighteenth-century England', *Eighteenth-century Studies*, volume 34, no.2, Winter 2001, pp.181-206.

[55] Meyrick and Shaw, (1836), op.cit. p.31.

[56] Bann, (1984), op.cit. pp.77-92. See also Stephen Bann, 'Historical Text and Historical Object: the poetics of the Musee De Cluny', *History and Theory*, vol.17, no.3, 1978, pp.251-66.

[57] Hayden White, *Metahistory: the historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*, (Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1973).

[58] Bann, (1984), op.cit. p.78.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Hayden White, 'The Fictions of Factual Representation', in Angus Fletcher (ed.), *The Literature of Fact*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1976), p.216.

[61] For the most penetrating analysis of these ideas see, White, (1973), op.cit; Roland Barthes, 'The Reality Effect', in *The Rustle of Language*, translated by Richard Howard, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989); Stephen Bann, *The Inventions of History; essays on the representation of the past*, (1990); Foucault, (1972), op.cit.; and Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an archaeology of the human sciences*, (London, Tavistock, 1970).

[62] See Christopher Tilley, 'Interpreting Material Culture', in Susan Pearce (ed.), *Interpreting Objects and Collections*,(London & New York, Routledge, 1994), pp.67-75.

[63] Richard Bateman, a close friend of Horace Walpole, lived at The Old Priory, Windsor. See *A Catalogue of that much esteemed and valuable museum, of the Hon. Richard Bateman, deceased....sold by Mr Christie...3rd May 1774.*

[64] Carter's collection were sold after his death in 1818 and included several 'ancient chairs' and other ancient furniture. See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.270-1.

[65] Horace Walpole, *A Description of the Villa of Mr Horace Walpole*, (London, Strawberry-hill Press, 1774). See also Clive Wainwright,(1989), op.cit. pp.54-108.

[66] *The Torrington Diaries, containing the tours through England and Wales of the Hon. John Byng (late 5th Viscount Torrington) between the years 1781 and 1794*, (edited by C. Bruyn Andrews, (4 vols.) (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1934-8). Vol.2, p.31.

[67] 'Mr Clarke's Observations on Episcopal Chairs', *Archaeologia*, vol.XI, 1794, pp.317-374.

[68] *Archaeologia*, vol.VIII, 1787, appendix, fig.1, plate XXI.

[69] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.lxiv, June 1794, p.507; vol.lxiv, July 1794, p.618; & vol.lxxviii, November 1808, pp.970-71.

[70] *The London Magazine*, vol.xliii, March 1774, pp.132-35.

[71] Walpole, (1774), op.cit. Preface.

[72] For a discussion of the collecting activities of Braikenridge see Sheena Stoddard, *Mr Braikenridge's Brislington*, (City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, 1981).

[73] Meyrick and Shaw, (1836), op.cit. plates xxxvi & xli and p.39 &p.41 respectively.

[74] It is interesting to note that the ebony chair was in the possession of John Webb at least 10 years before the dispersal of the collections at Strawberry Hill by Earl Waldegrave in 1842.

[75] Paul Baines, 'Our Annius': Antiquaries and Fraud in the 18th Century', *British Journal of Eighteenth-century Studies*, vol.20, 1997, pp.33-51.

[76] See Arun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things, Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), and Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in Appadurai, (1986), op.cit. pp.64-91.

[77] Appadurai states that Marx left the door open in this respect, writing that Marx stated that commodity made its appearance 'at an early date in history, though not in the same predominating and characteristic manner as nowadays.' Appadurai, (1986), op.cit p.9

[78] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, volume 1, (1867), (Chicago, Charles H. Kerr, 1906), p.1.

[79] Appadurai, (1986), op.cit. p.6-9.

[80] Ibid.

[81] See Wainwright, (1989), p.55, p.58.

[82] Horatio Rodd, *A catalogue of Authentic Portraits.....carvings in wood...for sale at the prices affixed*, (1824). The only known copy of this catalogue and the later one also issued by Rodd in 1842 are located at the Art Library, The Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

[83] George Weare Braikenridge MS Papers, Bristol City Record Office, *14182(HB)/C/38-46.*

[84] Appadurai, (1986), op.cit. p.15.

[85] Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods, towards an anthropology of consumption*, (first published in 1979), (London and New York, Routledge, 1996).

The Emergence of Antique and Curiosity Dealer II

The Antique and Curiosity Dealer and the Markets 1815-1850

Preliminary

As Pomian, Wainwright and other scholars have demonstrated, there was already a sophisticated market for curiosities on the Continent by the early 1600s.[1] In the seventeenth-century traders in such objects customarily sold their stock at markets and fairs. For example, during a visit to Rome in 1645 the diarist and collector John Evelyn (1620-1706) recorded that he took the time to visit a market in the Piazza Navona, 'to see what Antiquities I could purchase among the people, who hold Mercat there for Medaills, Pictures, & such Curiosities...'[2] Shops that specialized in the supply of antiques and curiosities also began to appear in cities such as Rome, Venice, Amsterdam and Paris. Evelyn also mentioned visiting a curiosity shop called 'Noah's Ark' in Paris in 1644, 'where are to be sold all sorts of Curiositys, naturall & Artificial...'.[3] It seems likely, given the activities of collectors like Evelyn, that there would also have been some traders in London in the seventeenth century selling such objects, although as Wainwright notes there is very little surviving evidence of their existence.[4] By the early part of the eighteenth century dealers in curiosities had begun to make a more obvious appearance in London. Traditionally these eighteenth century dealers sold a wide range of natural and artificial curiosities, objects that

would be of interest to natural philosophers and antiquarian collectors and would have comprised the exotic and the rare, objects from the realm of scientific endeavour and historical investigation.[5] In 1710, for example, the early eighteenth century German traveller Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach, whilst on a visit to London, recorded in his diary a visit to a dealer named Campe, trading in Charing Cross, 'a sword cutler by trade, though he shows no signs of it, for he has now taken to dealing in ancient coins... '.[6] Shops similar to that operated by Campe were an important channel in the eighteenth-century collecting markets. For much of the eighteenth century, the curiosity trade mainly congregated within the boundaries of the City of London amongst the book and print sellers in and around the area surrounding St. Paul's cathedral.[7] The dealers' strategic location amongst the print sellers and book dealers demonstrates that the principal consumers of antiques and curiosities during the eighteenth century comprised the class of antiquarian collectors. Antiquarianism and the antiquarian economy was centred on the wider diffusion of knowledge of historical objects and ancient sites through the print trade and it would be obvious therefore that the associated trade in historical objects would choose a location close to their main consumers. By the middle of the eighteenth century, as Wainwright has previously indicated, the so-called 'Broker's Row' in Moorfields was already a celebrated haunt of the antiquarian collectors.[8] Indeed, whilst it was more common that eighteenth-century Grand Tourists on their visits to the Continent would acquire their classical antiquities through direct negotiation with agents such as Thomas Jenkins or James Byers,[9] they could also acquire these objects in specialist consumer spaces such as shops, as this rare illustration of an eighteenth-century 'antique shop' in Naples demonstrates (see plate 24).

This brief summary highlights the fact that the trade in antiques and curiosities had of course already existed long before dealers such as Isaac entered the trade in the early nineteenth century. However, whilst the present study acknowledges that the antique and curiosity trade evolved out of these earlier practices and activities it also suggests that dealers such as Isaac represent a radical shift in the history of the trade in historical objects. The new kinds of historical objects that came to be of interest, the new kinds of activities and practices that the trade involved, and perhaps most significantly the evolving scale of the markets themselves signify a new beginning for the trade in the opening decades of the nineteenth century.

The political and economic upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars and the economic consequences of the resultant political instability were the primary catalyst for the development of the vigorous markets for historical objects on the Continent in the opening decades of the nineteenth century.[10] The wholesale dismantling of interior decorations and furnishings from palaces in locations such as Italy and the removal of stained glass, interior woodwork and architectural elements from churches and chapels in Holland and in Belgium, particularly after the second invasion by the French army in 1794, provided a rich source of material for antique and curiosity dealers. For example, the buying activities of the Norwich glass painter and dealer in ancient stained glass John Hampp[11] are well known, and many other dealers and collectors travelled to the Continent during the periodic lulls in the conflict between Britain and France in the first decade of the nineteenth-century.[12] After the eventual defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815 travel to Continental Europe was made easier leading to a rapid increase in the importation of historical objects from the Continent, with regular shipments arriving in Britain during the period after 1815 and scores of

dealers involved in the trade. The Davis family had already established a practice of importing a wide variety of antiques and curiosities from the Continent from at least 1815.[13] Gabriel Davies (c.1760-1838) was based at Furth in Germany from where many cases of objects were sent to the London base operated by Gabriel's son, Henry Abraham Davies and his sister Sarah.[14] When John Coleman Isaac took over the operation of the business after the death of Henry Abraham Davis in 1822, and his marriage to Sarah late in 1824 or early in 1825, he continued to make frequent trips the Continent, mainly it seems to Germany and Italy. These buying trips to the Continent were a common practice amongst all the major antique and curiosity dealers in the period, particularly during the period 1830-40 when the expansion of the trade was at its height. The letters written to Isaac from collectors such as Samuel Meyrick and Ralph Bernal make consistent reference to dealers being abroad on buying trips and often anxiously request information on whether Isaac's fellow dealers have 'returned'.[15] Isaac also mentions many encounters with the other members of the trade whilst he is abroad, often meeting dealers from familiar trading locations in London.[16] The Bond Street dealer John Webb, for example, who appears to have had a very cordial business relationship with Isaac, was one of a very large number of dealers who made regular buying trips to the Continent during the 1830s and 1840s. Indeed, by the late 1850s, when Webb was acting as an agent for the South Kensington Museum, Isaac recorded that he was, 'travelling in rather a good style.'[17] The activities of the dealers on the Continent were of such a scale that it was often seen as a hindrance to those collectors who undertook their own buying trips to the Continent. The 3rd Lord Braybrooke, who was in Antwerp in 1829 attempting to buy carvings, woodwork and other historical objects for his house Audley End, was

disappointed on his trip to Belgium, he found little to buy and was told 'the Jews collect it all, and send it back to England.'[18]

The rapid expansion of the markets for historical objects in the opening decades of the nineteenth century led to a widespread diversification in the consumption of historical objects not only in terms of the types of object that were sold but also in terms of the social base of consumption. Indeed the significance of this rapidly expanding market is drawn into a sharper perspective if we reflect on the changes that the idea of the market itself underwent during the period under review here. In its earliest usage in the twelfth century, 'market' had meant a specific gathering of buyers and sellers assembled within a specific time and location. By the sixteenth-century the idea of 'market' had evolved to refer to buying and selling regardless of locale and was also beginning to be applicable to more abstract notions such as the price or exchange value of goods or services.[19] Just prior to the period under review here the idea of the market became increasingly abstract, and as Jean-Christophe Agnew writes, 'by the end of the eighteenth century, "market" had come to imply, especially in literate circles, a boundless and timeless phenomenon'.[20] It was against this much broader and amplified notion of 'market' that the wider consumption of historical objects in the period was beginning to be played out. However, whilst the notion of a monolithic 'market', in the singular, does provide an appropriate conceptual metaphor for the broader 'consumption of the past' in the period, it is also important to highlight that there was not so much a 'market' for historical objects in the first half of the nineteenth century a myriad of 'markets'.

The Isaac archive highlights a number of effects that the expanding markets were having on the supply and demand for historical objects by the early 1830s. In a letter

sent from Germany to Sarah in March 1833 whilst Isaac was on one of his regular buying trips he highlighted the impact of the growing audience of consumption, complaining 'a bargain is almost impossible to meet with, there are so many purchasers now.'[21] And later that same month Isaac wrote:

> I assure you it is all up with coming to Germany to buy. In the first place nothing comes onto the market; the Continent is drained, and the people here begin to collect themselves. They make a noise with one and tell me I want to buy for the same price as 20 years ago, and they want to buy of me. You would be surprised to see the prices the dealers give for goods here; they don't understand anything, and they buy on speculation....It is true a great many strangers travel to buy...[22]

As Isaac himself explicitly acknowledges in this letter, dealers were now buying 'on speculation' suggesting that the commodity value of historical objects was emerging as a predominant aspect of their mode of consumption. Indeed, the more intense markets were not only confined to Germany. Whilst on a buying trip to Venice in 1836 Isaac remained sceptical about continuing the expense of travelling; 'This really must be the last journey in search of curiosities, for every time it is less, and it will not pay to come here to buy a few things.'[23] And again in a letter sent from Venice in 1841 Isaac complained to Sarah:

> I dare say Mr Pratt is returned before this, but I should very much doubt his doing any good, for I think it is quite done up with travelling, Bargains is not likely to be met with at all, and without good luck in selling the things,

> it will not pay. But at the same time, without the goods one stands no chance at all.[24]

It was also perhaps inevitable that such rapidly expanding markets, built on emerging and fluid interests for a wide range of objects, would not only draw in new dealers seeking opportunities for profit but would also result in traders withdrawing from the markets. Isaac draws attention to the fact that these markets often went through periods of difficult trading conditions and that even some well established dealers did not survive the shifting patterns of consumption. In 1841, for example, Isaac wrote to Sarah from Munich stating, 'I think the Obendorffers is nearly done up; they have commenced an Exchange Office.'[25] At this date, according to Isaac, Obendorffers still retained 'a good many of their old curiosities'[26] although he writes that they were not worth buying, but by 1844, whilst he was in Fürth in Germany, Isaac wrote to Sarah that Obendorffers had eventually given up their curiosity shop.[27] The mid-1840s appear to have provided some difficult trading conditions for other dealers as well. Mr. Zen, the dealer in Venice, who, according to Isaac, 'used to send those fine things to Emanuel has nothing at all...' and had 'commenced business in Stationary and Colours for Artists – that is a proof there is nothing more here.'[28] Isaac's concerns in these letters were both in respect of the competition for antiques and curiosities from other dealers and collectors, and also in respect of the quality and availability of stock. But we should perhaps inject a little caution into reading too much into these very personal and specific responses to the vagaries of trading in antiques and curiosities in the 1830s and 1840s. Isaac's anxiety is perhaps indicative of his own particular personality. The letter archive is consistently littered with his complaints and whilst these give us an indication that the business of an antique and

curiosity dealer in the period was often difficult, his continual trading activities indicate that he was for the most part a highly successful dealer and for the most part the business of an antique and curiosity dealer could be fairly profitable in the period. Indeed writing to his wife Sarah from Venice in April 1844 Isaac indicates the kinds of historical material that were available on the Continental markets and also the scale of the potential profit to be made:

> I have bought ten very large and fine Gilt carvings for a catholic church, unlike any you have ever seen; they cost me £20...but I am sure Mr Hull would give me at least £100 for them.[29]

This was apparently not just bravado on the part of Isaac, the waste book testifies that antique and curiosity dealing could be a very profitable business activity in the period. Isaac often made substantial profits on many of the objects that he sold, sometimes selling them for many times what he paid for them.[30] However, it is also clear that antique and curiosity trading could be a slow and difficult process. Indeed even in the mid 1830s, when the trade appears to have been at its height, trading in such material appears to have been difficult. Sarah wrote to her husband in May 1835:

> I regret to say that I have only taken four pounds since I last wrote to you and that was for four gilt pewter plates, of young Mr Rothschild of Paris, the same as bought the ewer and dish. This is all I have done nearly three weeks. I really think this business will drive me crazy.[31]

And in March 1844 Sarah complained bitterly; 'Our shop is enough to give anyone the miserables for I sit here day after day, and scarcely a soul comes in and that is enough to give anyone the horrors.'[32] However, despite these periodic lulls in consumer activity we can note that Isaac died a comparatively wealthy man,[33] often investing the considerable profits from antique and curiosity dealing into government stock, and he was also investing in property by the time of his retirement in the 1860s.[34] Moreover, despite the fact that Isaac redeploys his capital from trading in antiques and curiosities to a more conventional and stable investment we can also note that however much he appears to complain he continued to travel to the continent to buy historical objects almost every year from 1829, sometimes making two visits in a 12 month period, and he continued to travel until at least the late 1850s as the evidence in the archive indicates.[35]

By the early 1830s such were the rapacious activities of the dealers that the Government authorities in a number of countries on the Continent created special ministerial posts in an attempt to stem the flow of architectural fragments, stained glass and other ancient remains. In France, for example, the Post of Inspecteur des Monuments was instituted in 1830 and in newly created Belgium the Royal Commission for Monuments and Sites was established by 1835.[36] Whilst the establishment of these protective bodies signals a wider project, the emergence of National consciousness that was such a significant aspect of 'Romanticism', we can also see that such bodies emerged, in part at least, as a result of the activities of the antique and curiosity trade. In Venice, for example, where in one trip in 1836 Isaac appeared to be confident that his buying activities would be of sufficient scale to warrant the arrangement of substantial storage facilities; he wrote to his wife Sarah

that he had, 'hired a very large warehouse....for a month for ten shillings' and hoped to 'fill it with fine goods,'[37] the authorities also made attempts to restrict the activities of the dealers. Thomas Raikes, who was travelling in Venice in September 1838 wrote in his diary:

> ..the fine hotels of the once proud Venetians were gradually falling into decay, and the impoverished families ready to sell the costly materials to the best bidder, when an Imperial mandate came out forbidding the destruction of these ancient monuments of past glory, which put a stop at once to the sales...[38]

The Venetian mandate appears to have been only partially successful however. Indeed, the collector Ralph Bernal cautioned Isaac to reconsider undertaking a buying trip to Venice in 1840:

> I would advise you to reflect a little, before you decide on going to the Continent at this Season...I am informed that most of the pallazzi [sic] are entirely stripped of everything, nothing to be got.[39]

Interiors and Exteriors in Venice by the artist and photographer William Lake Price (1810-96), which was published in 1843, supports the comments of Bernal but also illustrates the responses that the destruction of palaces in locations such as Venice evoked in the period:

many of the Palaces in that most picturesque of all cities have been stripped of their gorgeous decorations, having, as in the case of the three Palazzi Foscari, only their vast and deserted halls, and the traditions of what they have been, to make the antiquary and the man of taste regret what they are...[40]

Moreover, whilst the destruction of the historic fabric on the Continent was obviously the subject of growing concern in the period the expanding markets for historical material, and in particular ancient woodwork, also resulted in many buildings in Britain being stripped of their interiors and demolished. Much of the destruction was made in the name of 'improvement', but against the background of the consolidation of the twin notions of Romanticism and Historicism it was inevitable that such activities would also give rise to condemnation. In a short polemic, *Some Remarks on the Taste and Effects of Collecting Fragments of Ancient Architecture*, which was published in 1832, the antiquary and draughtsman William Twopeny roundly censured the destruction that was being caused to buildings:

> The love of colleting fragments of ancient architecture has risen to such a height, that it is high time some one raised his voice against a taste which, I think is false in its foundation, and I know to be mischievous in its effects.[41]

Twopeny continued in his polemic pointing out the feeble defence, as he saw it, of those who collected these fragments. The amateur collector, Twopeny stressed, cited 'their great admiration for specimens of ancient taste, and the strong desire to preserve

them from destruction'[42] and the architects, the other main target of Twopeny's polemic, defended their actions, suggested Twopeny, by stressing that they required ancient fragments for 'their professional studies.'[43] However, Twopeny continued, this kind of collecting resulted in 'unmeaning fragments', and was 'mischievous spirit'. And in an oblique acknowledgement of the strength of the London antique and curiosity markets in the period Twopeny stressed that the collecting of fragments of ancient woodwork was a peculiarly 'English' activity; 'There is too much truth in the satire which places in the first leaf of an Englishman's album, a small piece of black paper, "torn from one of Raphael's Cartoons" concluded Twopeny.[44] The comments of a writer such as Twopeny again draw attention to the significance of one of the primary tenets of early nineteenth-century historicism. The importance of 'historical context', exemplified in *Considérations morales sur la destination des ouvrages de l'art* (1815) by the French archaeologist Antioine-Chrystome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849), was brought into sharper focus against the background of this destruction. However, one of the ironic consequences of these critical responses to the wholesale destruction of the historic fabric in Britain and on the Continent was that while the publications of Twopeny and Lake Price censured the destruction of architecture and interiors they also highlighted the significance of such historical material, making it more desirable and adding extra layers of meaning to the material on sale in the antique and curiosity dealers' shops.

During the 30 year period covered by the Davies/Isaac waste book (1815-45) and the 40 or so years that span the period of the archive letters (c.1819-c.1860) there are references to a bewildering array of items that made up the stock of an early nineteenth century antique and curiosity dealer. The archive records the sale of 'ancient armour and weapons, ancient stained glass, old oak carvings; antique furniture, Buhl and Riesener furniture, Dresden clocks, paintings; Raffael ware, Old Dresden, Old Sévres and Nankeen china, carved ivories, Venetian glass, and silver tankards', as well as myriad other objects that were sold under the catch-all categories of objects of virtu and curiosities.[45] The wide range of objects that are presented for sale by the antique and curiosity dealers in the opening decades of the nineteenth century clearly demonstrates that the markets made up a highly complex structure. Indeed, by the 1840s the interest in historical objects was expanding again and further categories of historical material were being drawn into the consumption of the past. During 1840s, for example, a number of societies, such as *The British Archaeological Association* and the *Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* emerged and began to direct attention to new areas of historical interest. These societies evolved out of the desire to promote the view that the medieval and pre- medieval past of Britain was of much greater significance than had been previously acknowledged by the majority of their antiquarian predecessors.[46] The primary focus of these societies was the deeper British past, particularly Romano-British antiquities, but the members had a broad range of interests and their meetings included discussions of historical objects from a wide historical time frame and encompassing an extensive range of material and techniques. For example, the pottery

manufacturer Enoch Wood displayed his large collection of historic Staffordshire ceramics at the *Archaeological Institute* in 1845, and this society was also the location where a number of academic papers on such topics as the history of ceramics and the history of silver manufacturing were read and first given public attention.[47] As a result of these interests, members began to undertake investigations into the history of the ceramic manufactories of Britain, both as a purely antiquarian and historical endeavour, but also with the view of promoting British manufacturing. It is clear that the focus of the investigations at these new societies was also linked to elevating the contemporary status of British design and manufacturing, a concern that was central to politicians, manufacturers and designers throughout this period.[48] However, within these evolving mercantile objectives emerged new collecting and furnishing practices and these societies are crucial to our understanding of the broadening of collecting practices by the middle of the nineteenth century. It is no coincidence that two of Isaac's most loyal customers, Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick and the M.P. Ralph Bernal (c.1783-1854), who are considered to be amongst the most important collectors of historical objects in the nineteenth century, were both members of the *British Archaeological Association.* Indeed, Bernal was elected as president of the *British Archaeological Association* in 1853.

The changing focus for collectors in the opening decades of the nineteenth century included already established activities, such as the collecting and display of arms and armour, but was now beginning to encompass seventeenth century glass and ceramics and ancient woodwork and also furniture of the seventeenth century, such as the 'English Cabinet' illustrated by the architect Charles James Richardson in his *Studies from Old English Mansions* (1st series, 1841), (see plate 25). Indeed, according to

Richardson, by the second quarter of the nineteenth century these examples of 'Genuine old English furniture' were becoming 'very rare, and of great value.'[49] The range of ancient objects was also supplemented by the developing contemporary taste for objects that keyed into changing tastes and fashions, such as Old Sévres and Old Dresden china and Old French Bronzes. Indeed it is in part through the conjunction of the rather more obscure antiquarian objects, such as ancient carvings and 'curiosities' with objects associated with 'refined taste' such as Old Sévres china, that part of the significance of the role of the dealers in the wider dissemination of historical material is revealed. Their shops displayed a range of diverse material, allowing the cultured gloss of luxury goods such as 'Old Dresden' and 'Old Sévres' to lend the kind of aesthetic capital that would specifically appeal to broadening audiences. As the advertisement of 'Davies & Isaac' suggests, their stock comprised 'Ancient Armour' together with 'a variety of other items of elegance and antiquity.'(see plate 55a). The emerging interest in historical objects from the more recent past during the early nineteenth century is reflected by a number of publications in the period aimed at promoting design and interior decoration in the then fashionable 'Gothic', 'Elizabethan', and 'Jacobean' styles of architecture and ornament, such as A.W.N. Pugin's *Gothic Furniture in the End of the 15th Century* (1835). Other publications, such as those of Joseph Nash, *The Mansions of England in Olden Time* (1838-40), or Charles Richardson's *Studies from Old English Mansions*...(1841-44), (see plate 26), as well as demonstrating the evolving interests in Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture, design and the appropriate interior fittings and furnishings, also demonstrate that the consumption of the past as figured through Romanticism. However, it is also important to note that whilst these publications were influential in the promotion of the desire for historical objects, the roles that the

antique and curiosity dealers played in the revival of historical styles and emerging collecting practices were equally significant. Indeed, the vast majority of these publications did not appear until after 1830, by which date the antique and curiosity dealers were already well established. Prior to the 1830s publications had proved to be ineffective in providing inspiration for the furnishing of Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott's Scottish home, with appropriate 'ancient furniture'. As the friend of Scott, the actor-manager Daniel Terry indicated in 1822:

> I have hunted London for a book on furniture and have ascertained that there is none of any character (and) not one of a style appertaining with your castle.....I have been hunting through a variety of old broker's shops, I have seen numbers of articles of exquisite beauty and character for your purposes and from the prices marked would indeed recommend the principle [sic] portion of your furniture.....be so obtained...[50]

Terry's suggestion of the lack of publications, and the activities of the curiosity trade, draws further attention to the central role that the antique and curiosity trade played in the evolving markets for furnishing and collecting in the period in the 1820s and 1830s.

The Social Base of Consumption

The widespread diversification and expansion of the markets for historical objects in the period, not only in terms of the range and types of objects that were brought to market but also in terms of the social base of consumption, was closely related to the

social, demographic and economic changes in the first half of the nineteenth century. The entries in the waste book and the letters of the Isaac archive indicate that during the period 1820-1845 the majority of the customers for historical objects, at least in Isaac's business, comprised the aristocracy, the landed gentry, the professional classes and some politically prominent statesmen. Many of Isaac's customers appear to have had similar interests, for example many were rebuilding or extending existing houses in the fashionable Gothic and Elizabethan style. Sir Edward Blackett (1805-1885), 6th Baronet, to whom Isaac sold a number of objects, including a 'gold watch' in January 1830,[51] was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and member of the *British Archaeological Society*, and was restoring Matfen Hall in Northumberland. And William Henry Quin, (1782-1850), 2nd Earl of Dunraven, who was rebuilding Adare Manor in County Limerick during the 1830s and 1840s with the assistance of the architect Lewis Nockells Cottingham, was supplied with large quantities of 'ancient armour' by Isaac in 1834 and 1835.[52] Many more clients are listed in the waste book entries, but what is also clear is that a great many of the transactions undertaken by Isaac were exchanges between other members of the trade, and such transactions are perhaps indicative of the strength of the activities of the trade itself in this period.

The historical revival of 'Old English' taste in the first quarter of the nineteenth century provided an important catalyst for the desire for historical material and as a part of these evolving interests the antique and curiosity dealer played a significant role in the formation of changing tastes and the development of new collecting practices. However, it is also important to remember that these evolving patterns of consumption took place against a period of considerable political and social change. The Great Reform Act of 1832, the Chartist revolts of 1839, and the activities of the Anti-Corn Law League in the late 1840s all contributed to the anxiety of the socio-

political elite. The desire of the existing political order to reinforce their social and political power, which was being dislocated from its inherited position of 'noblesse oblige' through the changing social and political landscape of early nineteenth-century Britain, provided a ready audience for historical material. Political appointments such as that enjoyed by the antiquarian collector Thomas Lister Parker (1779-1858) of Browsholme Hall in Lancashire (now Yorkshire),[53] who had the appointment of 'Bow-Bearer to the Forest of Bowland' and the sinecure 'Serjeant Trumpeter to the King' whilst no longer financially lucrative, provided an important theoretical connection to a significant past for the members of William Cobbett's 'Old Corruption'. Indeed, such historical revivals were given a noteworthy sanction during the coronation of King George IV in 1830, in which there was a rehearsal of *what were then considered the customs and the costume of late medieval Britain.*[54] However, early nineteenth-century society evolved within a dynamic of contested ground in which old power and new money were in constant flux. Indeed, far from events such as the Reform Act and the Chartist Revolts signifying the breakdown of aristocratic power a number of distinguished historians have argued that the aristocracy ultimately prevailed in the face of the political and social change of the first half of the nineteenth century. F.M.L. Thompson, for example, pointed out how successful the aristocracy and the gentry were in retaining political power until 1914.[55] And more recently the historian David Cannadine has also drawn attention to the consolidation of aristocratic titles and strategic political appointments that were generated during the opening decades of the nineteenth century, a process that allowed the elite to hold onto the most significant aspects of power until well into the second half of the nineteenth-century.[56]

The Tudor and Elizabethan revivals were underpinned by these overt political dimensions, and the furnishing and collecting activities of the opening decades of the nineteenth century provided the political hegemony with the opportunities to reinforce their 'right' of a natural succession to power through the adoption of appropriately national 'English' residences and filling them with the trappings of their lineage. Indeed, Sir Samuel Meyrick, writing in *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* made a specific point of the appropriateness of the revival of Tudor and Elizabethan, as a contrast to Grecian and Roman classical designs, for the interior of an 'English residence.'[57] As Chris Brooks writes:

> The Elizabethan century was lauded as England's first great age, when a reformed church headed by the crown was established, and the foundations of naval supremacy, worldwide commerce and Empire....its architecture, for the conservatively minded squirearchy, hit all the right notes.[58]

However, it was perhaps inevitable, given the social tensions in the period, that the 'new-old' would cause some critical responses. Thomas Raikes draws attention to the problems that the recirculation of historical objects brought in its train. He writes:

> Everything now tends to old recollections old names, old furniture, old chateaux, old forms and ceremonies, old tapestry, old china, old plate, are now the rage even with the nouveaux riches.[59]

As Raikes indicates, the desire for the past extended well beyond an interest in the historical objects themselves, 'old furniture, old tapestry, old china, old plate,' and

was evident in a wide range of social and cultural practices and historical revivals, 'old recollections, old names, old ceremonies'. Indeed as Raikes stresses, the trappings of the past were emerging as a fashionable commodity and had become desirable 'even with the nouveaux riches'. The engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, who was a member of the newly enfranchised industrial class, also collected 'ancient furniture', as an illustration of an 'ancient cabinet' in a sketch of the famous 'Shakespeare Room' at his home in Duke Street, London demonstrates (see plate 27). From the statement made by Thomas Raikes it is clear that the ownership of historical objects, which were an important signifier of those with inherited wealth, were now becoming more widely consumed and that these new patterns of ownership and display were problematizing one of the primary indicators of social class, allowing the newly rich to transgress accepted social boundaries. However, at least as far as many contemporary writers were concerned, there were two distinct categories of consumers of this wide range of objects. Or rather there were two recognised 'tastes' to which these various objects appealed - the antiquary and the virtuoso. In an early review of some of the illustrations that were later to be published in *Specimens of Ancient Furniture*, *The Gentleman's Magazine* commended the illustrations of furniture which had be drawn by the antiquary Henry Shaw. The anonymous commentators wrote that such objects would 'gratify the antiquary, who regards them for their associations,' and 'the virtuoso, who furnishes his mansion à la mode antique.'[60] Such a sentiment had already been aired in John Claudius Loudon's *Encyclopaedia* where the author also divides the audience of consumption for historical objects such as 'antique furniture' into two categories; that which would please 'the antiquary' and that which would please 'the man of cultivated mind.'[61] Whilst this dual profile provided a convenient frame through which the respective

audiences for 'antiques' and 'curiosities' could be classified, in truth these appear to have been tendencies and the wide range of historical objects on sale in the shops of the trade appear to have found a ready audience amongst an expanding social consumer base.

Whilst the primary activities of dealers such as Isaac involved the purchase and sale of historical material, the various roles played by the dealer in the supply of historical objects in the period reflected the wide variety of interests that encompassed the consumption of the past in the period. This study has already drawn attention to the fact that Isaac was involved in the loan of suits of armour for the theatre, and the hire and sale of a large quantity of ancient suits of armour by the dealers Samuel and Henry Pratt to the combatants involved in the infamous Eglinton Tournament in 1839 is well-known.[62] As is the involvement of Pratt in the wider organization of the Tournament including the initial 'Meetings for Practice' which were held at the Eyre Arms in St John's Wood in London as the inscription 'S & H Pratt' on one of the 'fixture-cards' for the practices illustrates (see plate 28).[63] Isaac does not appear to have been involved in the Tournament itself, although his close business relationship with Samuel and Henry Pratt must have kept him informed of its organisation and progress. Indeed, the collector Ralph Bernal wrote to Isaac on several occasions inquiring about the famous Tournament. In a letter sent in October 1839 Bernal was anxious for any information about the preparations for the Tournament, and in a short line towards the end of a letter Bernal asked, 'What are our Tournament friends doing?'[64] In an earlier letter Bernal revealed something of the social hierarchy that participation in the Tournament involved. Bernal wrote rather modestly '...have you seen anything new of the Messrs Pratt? I find I am much too humble a person to be

recollected by them always....these Grand Days of Tilting have put me quite in the background.'[65]

Ancient Woodwork

During the last decade of the eighteenth century there was already an emerging interest in ancient carved woodwork. The installation of ancient woodwork from the late 1790s at Plas Newydd (New Hall) by Sarah Ponsonby (1755-1831) and Lady Eleanor Charlotte Butler (1739-1829), the famous 'Ladies of Llangollen', is perhaps the most well known and has been subject to several publications.[66] The antiquarian collections of ancient furniture and woodwork that Thomas Lister Parker installed at Browsholme Hall in the years prior to 1815 are examples of historical interests that would become much more common during the period from the 1820s onwards.[67] Antiquarian collections such as those of John Holmes[68] of East Retford, Nottinghamshire, demonstrate how extensive the interest in such ancient woodwork became by the late 1820s. A description of his house, published in 1828, illustrates how central such historical material was for contemporary antiquarian collectors:

> The interior of the library is wholly composed of very ancient carved oak, brought from distant places.....The book-stands, tables, desks, chairs and other furniture exactly correspond.[69]

'An ancient oak sofa' from Mr Holmes's extensive collections was illustrated in a short and little known antiquarian publication, *The Antiquarian Bijou*, which was

published in Scarborough by John Cole in 1829, (see plate 29).[70] It is obviously assembled using ancient carved elements, which are probably of seventeenth century or indeed even sixteenth century origin, but the overall form that the object takes speaks more of the early nineteenth century than of any piece of furniture from an earlier period. Indeed the descriptive title - 'sofa', acknowledges this, and anchors this object firmly in the early nineteenth century. The commentary that was placed alongside the 'ancient oak sofa' follows the conventional pattern of antiquarian interest in such objects at the time and draws the attention of the reader to the object's age, its size, its provenance and its contemporary aesthetic qualities:

> The carved oak sofa, of which we give a representation, is said to be of the age of James I. It contains two drawers under the seat in front; its length is seven feet, breadth 20 inches, and height at the back four feet. It was purchased at Scarborough in 1825, by Mr John Holmes of Retford, in whose collection it now is, and altogether forms a useful appendage to a room, whilst it displays a fine specimen of carving in days long since departed.[71]

It is interesting to note that despite the obvious fact to the observer that the ancient oak sofa illustrated in *The Antiquarian Bijou* had the date '1620' carved into the back, the commentary on the object by the antiquarian John Cole still indicates a certain diffidence about the period in history when this ancient piece of furniture was actually made. Cole writes that it 'is said to be of the age of James I'. Implicitly the commentary appears to question the historical authenticity of this ancient object.

The market for ancient furniture and woodwork during this period far outstrips the interest that had existed during the late eighteenth century and was perhaps the most extensive of all the kinds of objects that were sold by the antique and curiosity dealers. The importance of the evolving taste for 'ancient furniture' and associated woodwork can be seen in the choice of locations of many antique and curiosity dealers, with many choosing to trade within the networks of woodcarvers and furniture-makers. Such locations placed them in an ideal situation in which to respond to evolving tastes and fashions for 'ancient furniture'. Moreover, many of the dealers themselves emerged from the furniture-making communities and many continued to combine their role as traders in historical objects with that of assembling 'ancient' furniture made up of fragments of ancient woodwork and carvings. James Nixon and Sons who traded from Great Portland Street, for example, were listed as 'cabinet-makers' in the trade directories but were also well-known in the period for the supply of 'ancient furniture' and other historical objects. The famous woodcarver William Gibbs Rogers of Great Newport Street trading in ancient carvings as this study discusses further in the subsequent chapter, and the cabinet-maker Wilkinson in Oxford Street, as the publications of John Claudius Loudon have indicated, was also involved in the supply of 'Elizabethan and Dutch carvings.'[72] Isaac, who unlike dealers such as Nixon or Wilkinson was not a trained cabinet-maker, appears to have sub-contracted work to a number of cabinet-makers in order to remodel existing furniture and make-up ancient fragments into new objects. For example, Isaac records a payment to a Mr Fowler for 'repairing and varnishing a carved wardrobe' in January 1836,[73] and he also regularly used 'Jackson and Tom' to repair and refashion antique and ancient furniture.[74] A considerable amount of the carved woodwork imported from the Continent was acquired by landed, often catholic, patrons for re-

installation into their country houses. John Talbot (1791-1852), the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, acquired much of the ancient woodwork that he had re-installed at his country seat, Alton Towers in Staffordshire, on which he engaged the architect A.W.N. Pugin and his son Edward W Pugin in the 1840s and 1850s, from the 'ancient furniture dealers' Edward and George Hull.[75] And the Lancashire land-owner Charles Scarisbrick (d.1860) also used the same dealers for the supply and installation of ancient woodwork at Scarisbrick Hall (see plates 30 and 31). Following the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and the consequent greater religious freedom the Act ushered in for the indigenous Catholic population, Catholic patrons such as the Earls of Shrewsbury and Charles Scarisbrick also often paid for ancient woodwork to be re-installed in their local country churches.[76] It was only after the 1850s however that this particular part of the market diminished considerably, through a combination of dwindling patronage of the dealers (a consequence of serious decline in rental and land values) and perhaps more importantly, the shifting focus of liturgical practices with the reform of the Anglican church through the Ecclesiological movement.[77] The Ecclesiologists, led by Alexander Beresford Hope (1820-87), commissioned new churches from architects such as George Edmund Street (1825-81) and William Butterfield (1814-1900), who advocated modern reformed Gothic interiors rather than re-constructed ancient woodwork for their new churches.[78]

The market for ancient woodwork and the demand for carvings expanded rapidly in the period prior to the 1850s. Indeed, many writers, such as Thomas Hunt author of *Tudor Architecture... and Furniture* (1830), suggested that although ancient furniture was eminently interesting, the ancient furniture that survived was of little practical use for modern living.[79] This was a sentiment echoed in the writings of J.C. Loudon, who whilst acknowledging that 'ancient furniture' was valued, in antiquarian circles at

least, for its historical associations, stressed that ancient furniture should still be made to conform to contemporary aesthetic preferences. 'The present taste for Elizabethan furniture' wrote Loudon, should not be that of a 'collector of curiosities' but 'that of a man of cultivated mind.'[80] More pragmatically though, Loudon suggested that the abundance of ancient carvings to be found in the curiosity dealer's shops have the benefit of being relatively cheap in comparison to modern woodcarving techniques when making furniture or fitting out interiors. Indeed, 'ancient carvings' had the added bonus of supplying the important 'emotional' effects of old associations, something that modern carved work could not achieve.[81] However, such modern carved work was technically difficult and production of it was consequently expensive. It was widely acknowledged, amongst architects and designers at least, that the skills of the woodcarver had declined considerably during the eighteenth century through the introduction of 'cast-work'. When called to the Parliamentary Select Committee into Arts and Manufactures in 1835, the architect C.R. Cockerell drew attention to the lack of skilled wood carvers, which, he suggested, was a result of, 'Adams the architect, Chambers and others...when cast-work was very much introduced into ceilings and walls, cast-work in putty decorations instead of carvings in wood.'[82] The revival of the 'ancient decorative style' also came on the back of the tastes for the much plainer furniture of the late eighteenth century derived from pattern books such as those of George Hepplewhite and Thomas Sheraton.[83] Plain furniture with veneered surfaces, rather than carving, was the fashion in the late eighteenth century. By the 1830s, the revival of 'ornamental furniture' styles such as 'Louis XIV' and 'Elizabethan' also required much more carved work, which was equally problematic for the same reasons. John Claudius Loudon indicated that considerable expense could be involved in these new styles of furniture because,

'modern workmen are unaccustomed to this kind of workmanship.'[84] There were several attempts in the period to provide inexpensive alternatives for the expanding desire for carved furniture and woodwork in these revived historical styles. Entrepreneurs and industrialists of the period directed the new industrial processes that were developed in the 1840s to the supply of the large quantities of carved woodwork necessary to meet the demands of the markets. The 'Patent Woodcarving Company', who had offices in Covent Garden and the Strand in the 1840s published catalogues of the wide range of carvings and the 'ancient furniture' that they supplied.[85] As their catalogue suggested:

> the amateur may now possess fac-similies of the fauteuil or prie-dieu, or the reliquary of the Middle Ages... the proprietor of an ancient manor may transform his apartments into the chambers, saloons, and banqueting-rooms of the style of Francis I.[86]

T.B. Jordan's steam-powered patent cutting machine, which were most famously used for the enormous amount of carved work required at the New Palace of Westminster, were the most well-known in the period.[87] Indeed, the machine carvings supplied by Jordan & Company were used by the dealers Edward and George Hull in their capacity as interior furnishers and decorators for Charles Scarisbrick for work undertaken at Scarisbrick's London house in Suffolk Street.[88] However, despite the obvious advantages of industrial production these new techniques also had their limitations. Machine carving still required a degree of hand finishing and the metal templates used to produce the carvings required constant maintenance. And perhaps more importantly the metal templates themselves were expensive to produce and

proved to be inflexible in a market where the kind of carved work in demand was constantly changing.[89] These limitations provide one of the explanations why the trade in ancient carvings and woodwork continued to thrive in the face of the challenges of industrial production. As John Claudius Loudon suggested, the man who desired to furnish in the ancient decorative style 'cannot attain his end at less expense than by having recourse to Elizabethan fragments.'[90]

However, we can also note that this particular aspect of the activities of the antique and curiosity dealers was not perceived as beneficial by some commentators. Indeed, in the prevailing climate of the promotion of commerce and manufacturing the activities of the antique and curiosity dealers were often seen as undermining the promotion of good design and consequently also the possibility of an expanding economy. And the importation of such enormous quantities of ancient woodwork by the antique and curiosity trade was itself seen as part of the problem of the regressive state of ornamental furniture manufacture in Britain. The architect John B. Papworth, called as a witness by the 1835 Select Committee to provide information on reasons why the standard of design and manufacture of ornamental furniture in Britain were retrograde in comparison to France, drew attention to the activities of the dealers. Papworth's explanation for falling standards of design was:

> the great deal of that very old matter of furniture from abroad, which arrives in ship-loads, and which is adopted instead of new furniture, much to the disadvantage of our designers and our workmen.[91]

Indeed, whilst the antique and curiosity trade is generally discussed in relation to the practices of collecting the activities of the trade can also be legitimately mapped

against the prevailing utilitarian climate which sought to promote commerce and manufactures in the period. And like any other legitimate business activity involved in the importation of goods from the Continent the activities of the trade were subject to the pragmatic requirements of existing legislation, particularly the Importation Duties levied by the Government. Such taxes were ostensibly to restrict manufactured goods entering the market from Europe and stifling indigenous manufacturing. The taxes ranged from a 10% levy on the importation of furniture and china, together with a wide range of other objects, to a 5% levy on anything that could be categorized as a 'work of art', unless it could be proved that they were 'not intended for sale.'[92] The archive indicates that Isaac often wrote to the customs office to request the release of his imported goods which had been seized because of undervaluation. On one occasion in November 1834 Isaac noted that he had written to the Customs Office to 'plead for the release of his goods', which he had undervalued by $40 [sic] – he stressed that 'no fraud was intended.'[93] Isaac appears to have attempted to make amends with the local customs officer, 'Mr. Dennison', recording on December 26th – 'Bought a very fine Turkey for one Pound and sent it as a present to Mr Dennison.'[94]

Dealer Practices

The Isaac 'waste book' records numerous entries for sub-contracted work for cleaning, repairing and 'mending' a wide range of 'old' objects in order to present them in a saleable condition.[95] Ancient armour, for example, which was one of the most prestigious objects that the dealers sold, frequently required extensive work

before it was considered to be in a saleable condition. The 'waste book' records scores of payments to various individuals for cleaning, repairing and fashioning missing parts for suits of armour, including 'Mr. Southall', an 'armourer', who had a workshop in Holborn, who was used extensively by Abraham Davies from as early as 1818 and he continued to be used by Isaac after he took over the business.[96] However, a much more significant activity undertaken by the antique and curiosity trade was the reconstruction and remodelling of historical objects prior to their delivery to the wider markets. Whilst many of the dealers did not actually undertake the work themselves, much appears to have been sub-contracted to other skilled workers such as cabinet-makers and porcelain repairers, these practices were often directed by the dealers and were a highly significant aspect of the evolving markets for historical objects. Isaac commissioned several kinds of craftsmen to remodel many other kinds of historical objects during his trading activities, suggesting that dealers such as Isaac played an important role in the formation of taste and fashion for historical objects during the period. Writing to his wife Sarah in 1833 concerning a lapis lazuli cup and cover he had just purchased in Frankfurt, Isaac stated; 'the lapis is very blue but it is not so good a specimen as the tazza I sold to Mr Hertz, neither do I like its present shape as well, but I think I can have it altered.'[97] These interventions into the material properties of historical objects bear a striking resemblance to the practices of the *marchand-merciers* trading within the luxury markets of Paris during the late eighteenth century, which have been so eruditely analysed by Carolyn Sargentson.[98] Indeed these practices appear to have been potent commercial strategies, and draw further attention to the significance of the roles of the dealer within the markets, illustrating that they can be equally seen to be active participants

in the wider markets rather than playing a passive role and merely responding to the requirements of collectors and furnishers.

'Authenticity'

These reconstructing practices, of course, also raise the issue of the 'authentic' historical object and any study of the antique and curiosity trade would not be complete without addressing this notion given that it plays such a central role in the cultural biography of the trade itself and is often such a contested and disputed issue in respect to the objects that the trade sold. Indeed, as indicated in the introductory discussion to the present study one of the constant themes that has emerged during this investigation is how consistently 'authenticity' becomes an issue when the dealer makes an appearance in the biography of an object. There is little doubt that several high profile members of the trade did produce what can only be described as intentional 'fakes'. Samuel Pratt, for example, the dealer in ancient armour, passed an infamous fake ancient basinet (helmet) onto Tower Armouries collections in the early 1850s, which even had a spurious provenance suggesting that it had been 'brought from Donnington (Castle) in Berkshire', (see plate 32a & 32b).[99]

The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, written in 1935 by the critic and philosopher of art and history, Walter Benjamin, is more often than not at the centre of any discussion on authenticity.[100] Benjamin's text is a rich source and covers much ground, taking into account the impact and eventual utopian potential of the mechanical reproduction of art. The notion of authenticity is woven by Benjamin into a complex series of arguments, but for the purposes of the present investigation

Benjamin's most salient remark was appended to his main argument in an important footnote:

> ...To be sure, at the time of its origin a medieval picture of the Madonna could not yet be said to be "authentic". It became "authentic" only during the succeeding centuries and perhaps most strikingly so during the last one.[101]

Here Benjamin implicitly links the notion of authenticity to the dislocation of the subject under the progressive conditions of modernity, a trajectory that brings in its train the consolidation of the commercial art market. Indeed authenticity is fundamental to the workings of the market, for it is difficult to divorce the concept of authenticity from the notion of economic value and the market's broader requirements for confidence in its products. The intimate relationship between the notion of authenticity and the market is important, but we must also acknowledge that Benjamin indicates that authenticity is neither a stable notion, nor is it a historically consistent one. Indeed in order to better understand the notion of authenticity we need to direct our attention away from the objects themselves for a moment, and consider the relationships between these objects and their consumers. As Brian Spooner suggests, searching for authenticity in the physical properties of the historical objects themselves is not that helpful a strategy. Authenticity, writes Spooner, 'does inhere in the object but derives from our concerns with it'..... 'it is a form of cultural discrimination projected onto objects.'[102]

Clive Wainwright encapsulates the assessment of the complex responses to the 'authenticity' of historical objects in the early nineteenth century. Wainwright writes:

> the question of genuineness was viewed very differently from today. If genuine pieces could be found, they were of course avidly bought and sold, but even these were frequently altered to suit dealers or collectors.[103]

It would appear then that in the opening decades of the nineteenth century there was a distinction made between 'authentic' historical objects and contemporary copies of furniture and armour made 'in the style of' but even when historical objects were assessed as genuinely old the notion of historical integrity played little part within this framework. Stefan Muthesius, in an otherwise erudite discussion of the formalization of the concept of authenticity in the later nineteenth century provided a rather over-arching assessment of the notion of 'authentic' in the period under review here, therefore his summation is one that requires recalling in full. Muthesius writes:

> Up to the 1870s what mattered most about old furniture was its overall shape and the design of its details, that is, its applied decoration, rather than its construction and its surface treatment, its materiality. To draw an exaggerated comparison: it was like heraldry: the signs had to be correct: what the coat of arms was made of and when it was made was of secondary importance. What mattered, then, about old furniture was that the forms were linked to textbook forms of, say, the Renaissance of Françoise I or the Tudor of Henry VIII. In the foreword to the first major publication on old furniture, Henry Shaw's "Examples"[sic]...of 1836, one

> reads about his concerns "to draw from existing authorities", by which he means that many examples are drawn from manuscripts of the Medieval period; they do not actually exist.[104]

We need not dwell on the fact that the main peculiarity of *Specimens* was that the historical objects illustrated in the pages did 'exist' as material objects. That was, as this study has already demonstrated, a critical aspect of the significance of this important publication. What is important to note here is that there is an assertion by Muthesius that there was a general disregard for the historical authenticity of objects such as ancient furniture in the period. As a scholar of nineteenth century architectural history, perhaps Muthesuis lays too much stress on the historicism underlying nineteenth-century 'restorations' of the medieaval buildings of Britain in the 1830s and 1840s, i.e. that Victorian architectural restorations were informed by the idea that the value of architectural remains was solely in their form.[105] Indeed, whilst the form of historical objects remained an overriding requirement for the assessment of their authenticity in the period, as employment of pictorial evidence to verify the age of objects testifies, this did not preclude the desire on the part of some consumers that their historical objects should be authentically 'old'. Moreover, if we examine the descriptions of such objects within the pages of *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* itself we find distinctions being made between objects that are 'authentic specimens' and those that are not. For example, Samuel Meyrick's description of an 'Oak Cabinet' at Cornishead Priory, 'if in its original form, instead of a recent composition, may have belonged to the class of sideboards'.[106] Meyrick also included an illustration of a 'Brass Chandelier' from St. Katherine's hospital in

Regent's Park, (see plate 33) and in his commentary suggested the purpose of including spurious objects in *Specimens*. Meyrick wrote:

> this being a composition of different dates is not very useful as an authority, and is therefore introduced as a caution to those who delight in the relics of our ancestors not to take for granted what may be told to them of the age of any curiosity.[107]

Moreover there certainly were critical responses in respect of the 'authenticity' of ancient furniture that entered the markets during the period under review here. Inevitably the members of the antique and curiosity trade were portrayed as the perpetrators of these problematic practices. The report of an auction sale, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in January 1842, suggested that much 'inauthentic' ancient furniture that was put up for sale was evidently the product of the trade. The anonymous writer commented wryly on an ancient 'closet', that was 'another evident composition of the curiosity dealers.'[108]

Many of the letters in the Isaac archive also indicate that, for many collectors at least, the primary interest in the objects was that they should be 'authentically' old. Writing to Isaac about the authenticity of a buckler (a small circular shield) that he was thinking of buying, the collector Ralph Bernal wrote, 'If...there be the least uncertainty or doubt, I will not have the buckler' - I hate spurious things!'[109] What is clear however is that there is certainly a gradual shift to more concrete notions of 'authenticity' over the period, as we can see by Isaac's statements by the mid 1850s;

> I purchased...a most beautiful Carved Ivory Dyptick (it is possible that the Ivory is modern), but I positively believe it to be not only original but very fine Gothic work...and you will allow that I can detect a modern thing, as soon as anyone.[110]

And if we examine the responses of the 4th Marquess of Hertford in the same period we can find the same concerns over the notion of 'authenticity.' Hertford was one of the richest men in Europe and a collector of paintings and French furniture and objet d'art in particular, as the collections at the Wallace Collection in London testify. The letters that Hertford wrote to his agent Samuel Mawson have been transcribed and published by John Ingamells and provide fascinating insight into the purchasing criteria of Hertford.[111] What is clear from these letters is that Hertford was very concerned that the objects he was considering to purchase should be authentically old. Hertford censured Mawson to be sure that the 'antique furniture' he had sent him to assess was authentic, and stressed that if they were 'not entirely old, do not buy them.'[112] Again and again in the letters Hertford writes directing Mawson to carefully check the furniture he is considering buying; 'my object is to find out whether the lots I begged you to have the goodness to examine are old, china as well as mountings.'[113] It is clear that the popularity of revived designs of French furniture and gothic styles of ornament led to a wide range of objects being reproduced for contemporary consumption and these objects, together with those from more enterprising makers that were deliberately produced with attempt to deceive the collectors of genuinely old furniture and ancient objects, were beginning to cause concern amongst collectors.

However, for many of Isaac's customers in the early nineteenth century 'form' remained the primary criteria that underpinned their desire for historical objects. For example, Captain Henry Augustus Langley, a regular customer of Isaac in the 1820s and 1830s, wrote to Isaac complaining about some ancient armour that he had recently received. In a letter dated October 27th 1827 Langley writes:

> Sir, the armour arrived here yesterday and although you stated in your letter that it was a perfect suit in every respect, I find it has the following defects: the right arm near the shoulder is composed of six pieces with four, five and four plates on it and plain on the edges, Thus *(Langley includes a small drawing in pen here)*. The left arm on the contrary has only five pieces and three, three and three plates on it, with scalloped edges, Thus *(another small drawing in pen is inserted)*, then the joints between the shoulder and elbow of the right is lacquered and of a different pattern to that of the left.[114]

Langley concluded in the letter that if Isaac would send him some arms that match he would be happy to complete the purchase. In fact, Isaac could not or would not send more appropriate arms for the suit, but it still appears that Langley retained the armour.[115] Likewise the Duke of Rutland, who was a regular customer of Isaac's brother-in-law, Abraham Davies, indicated in his letters that a complete suit, regardless of historical integrity, was the primary concern. The purpose of suits of armour, after all, was to create emotional effects through appropriate display and this remained the most important criteria for many consumers. Abraham sold the Duke several suits of armour in 1822, which the Duke set up in the entrance hall at Belvoir

Castle, in Rutlandshire (now Lincolnshire) his country seat. However, the Duke complained that several of the leg portions of the suits of armour only comprised front thigh sections and as a consequence they were unsatisfactory aesthetically:

> they are set up in a place, where the Spectator has a clear passage round them...it happens therefore that the upper part of the thigh is destitute of armour and presents a very unseemly appearance.[116]

The Duke asked Davies to send him some pieces of armour to complete the suits in order to make them more effective objects for display. In a pencil draft reply on the verso of this letter Davies took the opportunity to demonstrate his knowledge of ancient armour and, with consummate commercial sense, offered a practical solution:

> My Lord Duke,
>
> ...I beg to inform you that it is the universal custom not to furnish the hinder part of the thigh of a Horseman's Armour....I am now in expectancy of receiving some Chain Mail which is generally placed in those parts of a figure which have no armour...[117]

It would appear then that for many collectors there was a requirement that such historical material should be ancient, but we can also see that aesthetic considerations, (ancient armour is, after all sculptural in form) which were always present even for those collectors where 'history' was the predominant requirement for acquisition, also played a significant role in the desirability of historical objects.

Indeed, uniformity of tone and effect were amongst the important aspects in respect to 'ancient furniture' as well. The ancient furniture that was assembled by the dealers themselves also required techniques to provide an aesthetic uniformity and to subdue the obvious effects of it being assembled from fragments. John Swaby, for example, the Wardour Street dealer, is known to have sent the antiquarian collector George Weare Braikenridge a recipe 'to darken new oak to look like old', comprised of ingredients such as 'water...shag tobacco...umber and soaper's lees.'[118] This is a clear demonstration that uniformity was an important aesthetic consideration for reconstructed ancient furniture and for those furnishing in the 'ancient decorative style' in the period.

Dealer Expertise

The participants in the early nineteenth-century antique and curiosity trade appear to have entered the trade from a patchwork of overlapping and related trades and variety of practices. John Coleman Isaac was initially involved in the tailoring trades and is recorded as a 'clothes salesman' in insurance records in 1817.[119] After he joined the Davies family in the early 1820s he very quickly appears to have acquired the knowledge to make judgements on a very wide range of antiques and curiosities. Indeed by the 1830s he was considered to have considerable expertise by many of his customers, including the eminent collector Ralph Bernal. Bernal wrote to Isaac in September 1838:

You have been rather brief in your description of the Salade helmet I really wish to have a more full account of your opinion of it...You are aware that I have pleasure in shewing [sic] you any objects of antiquity...and I always like also to have your opinion on them. Don't fail to write to me, and give me the description of your articles and your remarks on the articles in Bond Street.[120]

In another letter from Ralph Bernal to Isaac in September 1838 Bernal reveals the importance of 'expert' opinion and the types of evidence utilized in the assessment of historical objects. Bernal wrote:

> I suppose Sir S Meyrick himself saw my Salade at Pratt's – did he not? Therefore he will have expressed his opinion as to the date of it to H Pratt, let me know if you please.[121]

Later in the same letter, whilst discussing a salade (a helmet with a tail-piece) that he had recently purchased from the dealers Samuel and Henry Pratt, Bernal requested Isaac to go to Pratt's shop and give his opinion on the helmet and was concerned that it should be accurately dated:

> ...there appears to have been some little misunderstanding as to the supposed date; Samuel Pratt said it was about the time of Henry 5th to Edward 4th (I think).....I never saw one of these salads before....I am very desirous that you should see the other articles at Pratt's, and believe me I am most careful in not commiting you in any way... [122]

Bernal suggests that the matter can be resolved by the conventional recourse to contemporary illustrated sources, '...in the British Museum is an old illuminated MS there and (I hear) are men painted with such salades.'[123] And in another letter to Isaac from Bernal he writes of a buckler which he was attempting to date accurately, suggesting that its date could be 'of the time of Henry 8th... as appears in a painting of the embarkation of that King at Dover...'[124]

Collector - Dealer Relationships

Isaac appears to have had excellent relations with a number of his private collector clients. Ralph Bernal's letters in particular indicate that he and Isaac had a very amicable and obviously mutually beneficial relationship. But it is still clear that the activities of the collector and those of the dealer also present us with evidence of both shared objectives and conflicting agendas. The letter archive indicates that Bernal makes consistent attempts to cultivate their relationship, although it is obvious that he does this in the hope of furthering his own collecting activities. For example, whilst on a trip to Antwerp in 1835 Bernal wrote to Isaac about some of the 'large and handsome collections of glass and other antiquities and curiosities' he had seen in Belgium, but he also took the time in the letter to reiterate some promises that he had made to Isaac in respect of his own buying activities.[125] Bernal writes that he;

> might have purchased some good things, if I had wished to, but as I already have many fine articles and am waiting to see your last acquisitions, I abstained, as I told you I would.[126]

Bernal continued by reassuring Isaac, 'As you know I prefer purchasing of you, to purchasing articles abroad.'[127] As this study has demonstrated collectors such as Bernal relied heavily on the trading activities of traders such as Isaac to supply them with historical objects and it is clear that Bernal acknowledged the importance of cultivating mutually amicable relationships with the dealers. In a letter sent to Isaac, dated 14th September 1838, Bernal stressed; 'I can say (candidly) that I have always much pleasure in acquiring objects of curiosity through you I always feel a confidence about them.'[128] And Samuel Meyrick remarked in one letter that Isaac was an invaluable resource and, as far as Meyrick was concerned, also a particularly honest one, which, given the rafts of criticism directed towards the dealer in respect of the notion of authenticity in the nineteenth century, only further reveals the problems of those critiques. Meyrick writes:

> The high opinion I have of you is solely the result of your own honourable conduct, which during a period of twenty years strict observance I have invariably found to be the same. Your dealings have always been grounded in such justifiable principles that I feel more pleasure in making purchases of you than of any one else, and in this sentiment I am sure Mr Bernal coincides.[129]

Indeed, 'Mr Bernal' was so keen to ensure that the supply of objects continued that on one occasion he even offered financial assistance to Isaac:

> you allude to "money being very scarce at present", with respect to some sales you have made: now if a little trifle can be of any service to you before my winter in Town, pray let me know, that I may have the pleasure of being of any assistance.[130]

However, Bernal could not resist a *quid pro quo* and continued in the same letter to suggest that Isaac should remove some objects from display in his shop in order to remove them from the prospective competition of other collectors; 'I should wish of course', he writes, 'to have the German Salt Cellar put by...'[131]

We get a sense of the other side to the relationships between collectors such as Bernal and a dealer like Isaac from some of Isaac's letters to his wife Sarah. Indeed, one of the aspects of the Isaac archive, and which makes it such an important resource, is that it reveals aspects of the mechanisms of the transactions between collectors and dealers from this perspective. Several letters in the archive indicate that in his dealings with collectors Isaac appears to be well aware of the importance of consumer psychology. Isaac writes:

> You can tell Mr Bernal that the reason I did not write to him, was because I have not bought anything like what he admired in Forrest's shop, and I thought very early and fine things did not interest him anymore.[132]

It is clear that Bernal had been patronizing the well-known dealer William Forrest, who traded in the Strand, and was apparently buying the 'modern clocks and furniture' rather than the curiosities that Isaac was buying in Germany and Italy. In another letter Isaac shows that he is also aware of the 'character' of the collector:

> You had better not tell Bernal anything more about the Glass with the exception of that one piece.....You had better say that this letter is from Vienna and that I intend to post it part of the way home, so that I may be home for the holydays, but don't take this letter out at all before Him, tell him what I write, for his eyes is dangerous, (so knowing).[133]

Isaac encapsulates the competition between the dealer and the collector here, it is, as the novelist Balzac suggests, 'a close contest between two pairs of eyes...'[134]

The critical structural position of dealers in the markets for antiques and curiosities in the period is highlighted by their roles as commission agents for a wide range of collectors and furnishers at public auctions. As a practice the role of commission agent at auction sales that dealers such as Isaac undertake was of course not new. From at least the 16th century brokers and dealers of various kinds, including art dealers, had acted on behalf of customers who were unable or did not wish to bid for articles themselves.[135] The Isaac archive records a detailed series of negotiations between Isaac and the collector Henry Williams Brown of Leeds[136] in respect of the famous Strawberry Hill auction sale which took place in April 1842.[137] These discussions supply insights into the relationships between dealers and collectors in the period. In a letter dated 15th April 1842 Brown requested to have the opinion of

Isaac, both on the quality of the objects coming up for sale at the auction and their potential value:

> I wish you would tell me if you have been to view the articles entrusted for sale at Strawberry Hill and what you think of them generally, and if you are of the opinion they will be sold at remarkable prices....I should also wish to know if you will undertake accompanying me to purchase such things as I may see in the Catalogue, and what could you charge for such...[138]

In a letter from Henry Williams Brown dated a few days later, obviously in reply to Isaac's response, Brown wrote:

> ...from the experience I have had of your judgement upon articles like those at Strawberry Hill, I am disposed to place more faith than in my own....I shall very willingly pay the charge you mention, say 5-6% depending entirely on you...and the price you may recommend me to give for them...[139]

Brown was particularly interested in Isaac's opinion of 'Anne Bolyens(sic) clock',[140] but the outcome of these discussions were not entirely to Brown's satisfaction for it seems that Isaac rescinded on any agreement to bid on behalf of Brown and took another commission, leaving Brown to write, 'I do feel unfairly treated'.[141] Isaac appears to have regularly acted as bidding agent at auction for a number of his customers. John Campbell, (1796-1862), 2nd Marquis of Breadalbane, who set about

remodelling Taymouth Castle, the family seat at Perth in Scotland, following the death of his father in 1834, commissioned Isaac to purchase several furnishings and carved architectural elements in June 1834.[142] The waste book entries appear to confirm that 5% of the total value of the objects purchased was the standard commission charge.[143] It is clear that within the knowledge structures of the evolving markets for historical objects dealers such as Isaac played an important role.

[1] Pomian, op.cit. pp.219-22; Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.46.

[2] Esmond S. De Beer, (ed), *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 6 vols. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), vol.II, pp.367-8, entry dated 20th February 1645.

[3] Ibid. vol. I, p.65, entry dated 3rd February 1644. Also quoted in Richard Altick, *The Shows of London*, (Cambridge, Mass., and London, Harvard University Press, 1978), p.13 and Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.46.

[4] Wainwright, (1989), op.cit.

[5] For an excellent overview of these practices see Oliver Impey & Arthur MacGregor (eds.), *The Origin of Museums: the cabinet of curiosities in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe*, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1985).

[6] W.H. Quarrell and Margaret Mare (eds.), *London in 1710; from the travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach*, (London, Faber, 1934). Also quoted in Wainwright, op.cit. (1989), p.33. Altick, op.cit. pp.13-14, also draws attention to Uffenbach's visit to Campe.

[7] For information of these specific relationships see Timothy Clayton, *The English Print 1688-1802*, (New Haven, Yale, 1997), pp.3-12.

[8] Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.34.

[9] See, Brinsley Ford, 'Thomas Jenkins, Banker, Dealer and unofficial Agent,' *Apollo*, June 1974, vol.xcix, pp.416-25; Brinsley Ford, 'James Byers, Principal Antiquarian for the English visitors in Rome', *Apollo*, June 1974, vol.xcix, pp.446-61.

[10] See for example, Haskell, (1976), op.cit. introduction; Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.46, p.292; MacGregor, (1997), op.cit. pp.7-9; Tracey, (2001), op.cit.

[11] See Bernard Rackham, 'English Importations of Foreign Stained Glass in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters*, vol. II, no.2, October 1927, pp.86-94; Jean Lafond, 'The traffic in old stained glass from abroad during the 18th and 19th centuries in England', *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass Painters*, Vol.XIV, no.1, 1964, pp.58-67. See also Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.66.

[12] See for example, Turpin, (2002), op.cit. pp.178-9.

[13] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', 1st entry recorded 'April 23rd 1815, 'Paid Messrs Rothschild & Co for a check upon their house at Frankfort am for...£10.'

[14] Much of the empirical information concerning the business and life of the Davies and Isaac family has already been introduced in the short article published by Martin Levy and Elaine Moss. See Levy & Moss (2002), op.cit.

[15] In a letter dated 3rd October 1838, the collector Ralph Bernal requested to know, 'is Mr Hertz still abroad? And is Mr Farrer returned?'; Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.151. And in another letter dated 4th November Bernal asks, 'is Mr Baldock returned?' Ibid, no.161.

[16] 'There has arrived here Four picture dealers from London, one has a shop in Wardour Street....' Ibid. Add 1, no.69, letter dated 9th May 1844, sent from Venice.

[17] Ibid., Add 1, no.102, Letter dated 11th October 1857; Isaac wrote, 'Yesterday Mr & Mrs Webb call'd on me.....He had been to see Mr Zen & bought Four Bottles with handles, which he wished me to send home.'

[18] Journal of the 3rd Lord Braybrooke, Acc.6767, Essex County Record Office. Also quoted in Wainwright (1989), op.cit. p.53, and Tracy, (2001), op.cit. p.64.

[19] See Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: the market and the theatre in Anglo-American thought*, 1550-1750, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[20] Ibid.

[21] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, Add 1, no.3, letter dated 16th March 1833.

[22] Ibid. Add 1, no.11, letter dated 4th March 1833.

[23] Ibid. Add 1, no.139, letter dated 19th November 1836.

[24] Ibid. Add 1, no.50, letter dated 12th October 1841.

[25] Ibid. Add 1, no.49, letter dated 5th September 1841.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid. Add 1, no.61, letter dated 13th April 1844.

[28] Ibid. Add 1, no.64, letter dated 2nd April, 1844.

[29] Ibid. Add 1 No.67, letter dated 24th April 1844.

[30] For example, Isaac records a purchase of '2 Turquoise Seve (sic) Ice pails....' for £9.2 on 20th April 1830, selling them the next day to Sir John Erskine for £21.5. Ibid. no.467, 'waste book'.

[31] Ibid. Add 1, no.30, letter dated 15th May 1835.

[32] Ibid. Add 1, no.62, letter dated 22nd March 1844.

[33] Probate on Isaac's estate was sworn on 4th April 1887, to the value of £23,630.12s.9d. Quoted in Levy & Moss, (2002), op.cit. p.104. Isaac's Last Will and Testament (see appendix V) remains at the Hartley Library at the University of Southampton, *MS139/AJ53*,no.104.

[34] See for example, entries in the waste book: 'October 29th 1833 - £400 Government Stock'; August 7th 1837 - £1000 Government Stock', Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, No.467, 'waste book'. See also a letter (undated but probably late 1850s) to Isaac from 'Mr George Michelmore(?), offering the sale of property, following an advertisement for 'real estate' that Isaac had placed in the newspapers, Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.287.

[35] Letters dating from late 1857 indicate that Isaac was still undertaking Continental buying trips at this date.

[36] See, for example, Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.56-7, and Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, (London, Phiadon Press, 1999), pp.270-77.

[37] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, add 1, no.40, letter dated 19th November 1836.

[38] Raikes, (volume II), op.cit. p.307, entry dated Tuesday 11th September 1838.

[39] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.161, letter dated 4th November 1840.

[40] William Lake Price, lithographed by Joseph Nash, *Interiors and Exteriors in Venice*, (London, T. Maclean, 1843), introduction.

[41] William Twopeny, *Some Remarks on the Taste and Effects of Collecting Fragments of Ancient Architecture*, (London, Privately Printed, 1832), p.3.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., p.6.

[44] Ibid., pp.7-8.

[45] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', passim.

[46] Arthur MacGregor, 'Antiquity Inventoried: Museums and 'National Antiquities' in the Mid Nineteenth Century', in Vanessa Brand, (ed.), *The Study of the Past in the Victorian Age*, (Oxford, Oxbow, 1998), pp.125-37, p.125.

[47] Ann Eatwell, 'The Collector's or Fine Arts Club 1857-'874, the first society for collectors of the Decorative Arts', *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850 to present*, volume 18, 1994, pp.25-30, p.26.

[48] For a general overview of the history of the political economy of design, see Jules Lubbuck, *The Tyranny of Taste: the politics of architecture and design in Britain 1550-1960*, (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1995), especially pp.233-65.

[49] Charles James Richardson, *Old English Mansions*...(1841), notes to plate XIX.

[50] Quoted in Clive Wainwright, 'Walter Scott and the furnishing of Abbotsford: or the gabions of Jonathan Oldbuck Esq.', *Connoisseur*, volume 194, no.779, January 1977, pp.3-15, p.9, and in Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.181.

[51] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book'.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Parker was a member of the gentry and an antiquary, indeed his is the name to which one of the most significant publications in the present investigation, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), is dedicated. See also Thomas Lister Parker, *Description of Browsholme Hall*, (London, S. Gosnell, 1815). The Parker family still occupy Browsholme Hall.

[54] For detailed descriptive account of the Coronation see, Geoffrey de Bellaigue, 'A Royal Mise-en-Scene: George IV's Coronation Banquet', *Furniture History*, (1983), pp.174-83.

[55] F.M.L. Thomspon, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth-century*, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963).

[56] For a discussion of these political changes and their significance see David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy, Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain*, (New Haven and London, Yale, 1994), pp.10-14.

[57] Meyrick and Shaw, (1836), op.cit. p.26.

[58] Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival*, (London, Phiadon, 1999), p.187.

[59] Raikes, op.cit. (volume 1), p.361.

[60] *Gentleman's Magazine*, volume 1 (New Series), January 1834, p.87.

[61] Loudon, (1833), op.cit. p.1099.

[62] Anstruther, (1986), op.cit. pp.128-32, p.235.

[63] The illustration of the 'fixture-card' was reproduced in a short article on the Eglinton Tournament by Michael Trappes-Lomax, in *Country Life*, January 25th, 1936, p.96.

[64] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.160, letter dated October 6th 1839.

[65] Ibid. no.155, letter dated 11th September 1839.

[66] See for example, Elizabeth Mavor, *The Ladies of Llangollen*, (1971), (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973).

[67] See *Description of Browsholme Hall*.....(London, S. Gosnell, 1815).

[68] The collections of John Holmes were eventually sold after his death on 27th October 1841. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, volume xvii, (New Series), January 1842, p.19.

[69] John Cole, *The Scarborough Collector and Journal of the Olden Time*, (Scarborough, John Cole, 1828), p.109.

[70] John Cole, *The Antiquarian Bijou*...(Scarborough, John Cole, 1829).

[71] Ibid.

[72] Loudon, (1833), op.cit. p.1039 and p.1101.

[73] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book'.

[74] Ibid.

[75] For archive information in respect of Scarisbrick's relationships with the antique and curiosity trade, in particular the dealers Edward and George Hull see Scarisbrick papers, Lancashire County Record Office, *DDSC 78/4*.

[76] For a discussion of this particular aspect of the trade see Charles Tracey, *Continental Church Furniture in England: a Traffic in Piety*, (Woodbridge, Antique Collector's Club, 2001).

[77] Ibid. p.79. For an overview of the Ecclesiologists and 'Reformed Gothic' architecture see Stefan Muthesius, *The High Victorian Movement in Architecture 1850-1870*, (London, Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1972).

[78] Tracey, op.cit. pp.79-80.

[79]Thomas Frederick Hunt, *Exemplars of Tudor Architecture, adapted to Modern Habitations*...(London, Longmans, 1830).

[80] Loudon, (1833), op.cit. p.1099.

[81] Ibid. p.1102.

[82] *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures*, (1835), 28th August 1835, p.101, no.1431.

[83] George Hepplewhite, *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Guide* 1st edition 1788; Thomas Sheraton, *The Cabinetmaker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book* 1st edition 1793.

[84] Loudon, (1833), op.cit. p.1040.

[85] Rosamond Allwood, 'Machine Carving of the 1840s and the catalogue of the Patent Wood Carving Company', *Furniture History*, Volume XXXII, 1996, pp.90-126.

[86] *Catalogue of the Patent Woodcarving Company*, (London, 1845).

[87] The furniture maker and antique dealer John Webb also supplied much of the most important furniture, designed by the architect A.W.N. Pugin, for the New Houses of Parliament, including the

Royal Throne. See Clive Wainwright, 'Furnishing the New Palace: Pugin's furniture and fittings', *Apollo*, volume cxxxv, no.363, (New Series), May 1992, pp.303-306.

[88] Lancashire County Record Office, *DDSC 78/4*, Scarisbrick Papers, parcel marked *78/4 (1), (10)*, Account supplied by George Hull to Charles Scarisbrick, dated August 2nd 1848, 'Paid Jordan & Co Wood Carving Company for Gothic Carvings.....£8.17.4.'

[89] Allwood, (1996), op.cit.

[90] Loudon, (1833), op.cit. p.1039.

[91] *Report* (1835), op.cit. 21 August 1835, p.90, no.1247.

[92] 'J. & R. McCracken, shippers...', printed list of Duties, (1846). Hartley Library *MS139/AJ53*, no.468.

[93] Ibid. no.467, 'waste book', entry dated 'November 21st 1834.'

[94] Ibid.

[95] For example, 'Paid Mr Salter Hanway Street for cleaning china clock case & group & riveting on a wing of a turkey tureen and cover.....15 shillings', Ibid. no.467, 'waste book', entry dated November 7th 1818. Charles Salter traded as 'foreign china warehouse' and 'china mender' in Hanway Street in the 1820s.

[96] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book'.

[97] Ibid. Add 1, no.12, 7th March 1833.

[98] Carolyn Sargentson, *Merchants and Luxury Markets, the marchands-merciers of eighteenth-century Paris*, (London, V&A, 1996).

[99] See, K.N. Watts, 'Samuel Pratt and Armour Faking', in Mark Jones, (ed.), *Why Fakes Matter, essays on the problem of authenticity*, (London, British Museum, 1992), pp.100-05.

[100] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations: Walter Benjamin*, edited by Hannah Arendt, (London, Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp.219-53.

[101] Benjamin, op.cit.

[102] Brian Spooner, 'Weavers and Dealers: the authenticity of an oriental carpet', in Arun Appadurai, (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), pp.195-235, p.226.

[103] Bristol Record Office, G.W. Braikenridge Archive, *MS14182/HB/X/4.64*. Also quoted in Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.58.

[104] Muthesius, (1988), op.cit. p.245.

[105] See for example, Chris Brooks, in Vanessa Brand, (ed.), (1998), op.cit.

[106] Meyrick and Shaw, (1836), op.cit. p.36.

[107] Ibid. p.44.

[108] *Gentleman's Magazine*, volume xvii, (new series), January 1842, pp.19-23, p.22.

[109] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.150, letter dated 27th September 1838.

[110] Ibid. Add 1, no.90, letter dated 28th August 1857.

[111] John Ingamells, (ed.), *The Hertford Mawson Letters*, (London, Wallace Collection, 1981).

[112] Letter dated 5th May 1851, quoted in Ingamells, op.cit., p.28.

[113] Ibid., p.46, letter dated 8th July 1853.

[114] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.166, letter dated 27th October 1827.

[115] In another letter from Langley dated 6th November, 1827 Langley writes, 'I am sorry you cannot make the armour more perfect than it is, as it totally precludes the possibility of my liking it, but I will not take it back...if you can get £30 for it I would recommend you take it as I do not consider it worth £20.' Ibid., no.168.

[116] Ibid., no.270, letter dated 1st September 1822.

[117] Ibid.

[118] See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.58.

[119] See Levy & Moss, (2002), op. cit. p.97.

[120] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.142, letter dated 7th September 1838.

[121] Ibid., no.144, letter dated 11th September 1838.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid. no.152, letter dated 12th October 1838.

[125] Ibid. no.136, letter dated 16th October 1835.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid., no.145, letter dated 14th September 1838.

[129] Ibid. No.193, letter dated 20th November 1839.

[130] Ibid. No.158, letter dated 1st October 1839.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid. Add 1, no.67, letter dated 24th April 1844.

[133] Ibid. Add 1, No.30, letter dated 15th May 1835.

[134] Balzac, (1848), op.cit. p.52.

[135] See, Evelyn Welch, 'From Retail to Resale: Artistic Value and the Second-Hand Market in Italy (1400-1550)', in Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthews & Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (eds.), *The Art Market in Italy, 15th – 17th Centuries*, (Modena, Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003), pp282-299.

[136] H.W. Brown, who lived at Heaton Hall, Leeds in the 1830s, was the son of William Williams Brown. His father, William, had been a member of the Northern Society for the Encouragement of the Arts in the 1820s.

[137] *Catalogue of the valuable contents of Strawberry Hill, sold by George Robins...April 1842*, (London, George Robins, 1842).

[138] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.318, letter dated 15th April 1842.

[139] Ibid. no.319, letter dated 19th April 1842.

[140] Ibid. The clock, lot 48 on the 17th day of the sale, it was described in the auction catalogue as '...the celebrated clock of silver gilt, presented by Henry VIII to his Queen, Anne Boleyn' was the gift of Lady Elizabeth Germaine to Horace Walpole. It was purchased at the auction on behalf of Queen Victoria and remains in the Royal Collections.

[141] Ibid. no.321, letter dated 23rd April 1842.

[142] Ibid. no.467, 'waste book', entry dated 'June 6th (or 8th?)', 'Purchased at Mr Oxenham's sale on Commission.....for the Marquis of Breadalbane...'.

[143] Ibid.

The Emergence of the Dealer III

The Spaces of Consumption - Shops, Auctions, Exhibitions

The antique and curiosity shop played a critical role in the expanding markets for historical objects in the early nineteenth century, as both a pragmatic facilitator in the wider distribution of historical objects, and as a discrete cultural site. One of the main proposals of the current study is that antique and curiosity dealing emerged as a discrete trade at the same time as the shop itself took on distinctive social and cultural meaning. However, whilst the antique and curiosity shop was at the centre of the new patterns of consumption the presence of historical objects was also consistently registered in other dealer locales in the period, such as auction rooms and specialist dealer exhibition spaces. The frequent appearance of historical objects in public venues that were both explicitly and implicitly dedicated to commercial exchange reflects the extent to which historical objects had become intimately woven into the contemporary consumer culture by the opening decades of the nineteenth century. In this sense the expanding consumption of historical objects in the period can be considered as part of the broader commercialisation of culture in early nineteenth-century Britain.[1] The discussions that follow draw further attention to the critical role that the antique and curiosity trade played in these new patterns of consumption and provide further evidence of the significance of the activities of the dealer within the contemporary culture.

The Social and Cultural Space of the Shop

Prior to what we now consider modern retail practice most consumers would have encountered the goods they wished to purchase at local markets and periodic fairs or from itinerant peddlers but by the end of the seventeenth century the retail shop, as a discrete site of consumer activity, had been established.[2] During the last decades of the eighteenth century the shop was beginning to take on more distinctive meaning as the more prosperous traders of London began to take houses for their families towards the periphery of the city and travel into their shops everyday rather than occupying living accommodation over their commercial premises. As the writer Susan Mountfield has suggested, one of the consequences of these changes was that the shop began to be seen as a separate social space dedicated exclusively to commercial transactions.[3] To take this line of argument further we need to draw on another body of theoretical writings, the analysis of architectural space produced in the 1980s by Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, published as *The Social Logic of Space*. In this work Hillier and Hanson draw attention to the relationships between architectural space and social and cultural activity.[4] 'The ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people', they write, and this is because buildings are social objects through their very form as 'objects'.[5] Hillier and Hanson do not suggest that the spaces of buildings create a domain where established relations are embodied or enacted, rather such spaces offer the opportunity of a heightened sense of space where these social relationships can be performed.[6] In this sense, in the context of commercial exchange, social interaction that once occurred outside in the public space of the market or the fair, where such transactions were enacted within the rhythm and flow of the crowd, become codified and intensified within the interior

space of the shop. We can see then that by the opening decade of the nineteenth century the shop had become a discrete site of social activity, one that was intimately associated with notions of consumption in ways that the earlier purchase of objects at markets and fairs was not.

The significance of the antique and curiosity shop as a distinctive social space within the expanding patterns of the consumption of historical objects is drawn more sharply into focus when we consider the central importance of the notion of exchange within the process of social valuation. In the opening chapter of *The Philosophy of Money* by Georg Simmel (1858-1918), which was published in 1900 and was the first systematic account of the defining characteristics of economic value, Simmel highlighted the significance of exchange in the wider structures of 'value'.[7] Simmel suggested that rather than being an objective property of objects, value is constructed in the immediate dialogue between the two parties involved in the process of exchange, a process that involves sacrifice on the one hand and gain on the other.[8] As Arun Appadurai succinctly puts it in his summary of Simmel's ideas in his own discussions of the complex nature of the notion of Commodity; 'exchange is not the by-product of the mutual valuation of objects, but its source.'[9] This insight directs attention to the structural position of the antique and curiosity shop within this process of mutual valuation. It was through and in the new antique and curiosity shops of the early nineteenth century that new kinds of historical objects were first articulated into the contemporary culture. As the primary locus in the evolving markets for historical objects the antique and curiosity shop was a space where the process of mutual valuation was formalized and one where those values were concretized through economic exchange.

> The prevalence at the present period, of a taste for Antique Furniture is most decidedly manifested, not by the examples which every one may happen to know of either ancient mansions, or modern houses in the 'Elizabethan' style, filled with collections of this description, but by the multitude of warehouses which now display their attractive stores...in almost every quarter of the metropolis. [10]

This short article entitled 'Ancient domestic furniture', which was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in January 1842, illustrates the extent to which the antique and curiosity shop had become such an integral part of the cultural landscape by the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The anonymous writer has also drawn our attention to three distinctive locations where objects such as antique furniture could be found in the period; 'ancient mansion', 'modern house' and 'warehouse'. This triumvirate appears, at first glance, to comprise discrete and separate entities, each governed by different concerns and objectives. The 'ancient mansion', for example, which can perhaps stand in as proxy for the historical museum, represents the location of the historical object as a bearer of historical knowledge. The 'modern house', represents the location where the activities of the furnisher, the decorator and the collector are performed, indeed as the anonymous writer stresses, it is 'filled with collections'. The final location, the 'warehouse', represents the market-place and as the writer indicates this was a new and important location, one that was also increasing in scale in the period. However, what the author of this short article has

drawn our attention to is that during the period under review here objects such as 'antique furniture' were beginning to be put into a familiar pattern of circulation, moving from 'museum' to 'household' via the 'warehouse'. Indeed the ways in which these objects were beginning to be classified, displayed and valorized in these three locations draws attention to their mutual involvement in the construction of value and reveals that objects such as 'antique furniture' were already, even by the second quarter of the nineteenth century, part of a much broader symbiotic value-system.

The Emergence of the Antique and Curiosity Shop: Locations

Clive Wainwright has already briefly sketched out the various locations of antique and curiosity shops in the commercial spaces in and around the City and the West End of London during the early nineteenth century and the current study acknowledges his work here.[11] However, Wainwright did not adequately address the wider significance of the diverse locations of the antique and curiosity shop in the Capital in the early nineteenth century, nor did he consider the significance of the wider geographical spread of the trade in the period. The following discussions therefore provide a more detailed account of the significance of the locations of the antique and curiosity shop in the opening decades of the nineteenth century.

Several scholars and historians have drawn attention to the importance of an expansion of consumer activity in the development of London in the early nineteenth century.[12] Indeed, whilst there was considerable economic growth in manufacturing

production in Britain during the period, for example in northern cities such as Sheffield for metalwork and Manchester for textile manufacturing, London remained the primary locus where the activities of consumption were played out. It is perhaps no surprise then that London was the main location for the peculiar development of the antique and curiosity trade in this period. By the early part of the nineteenth century the evolving trade in historical objects had begun to expand beyond their original locations in the City of London and were moving into the West End, as the audience for antiques and curiosities began to broaden considerably. The expanding trade began to draw in many more participants and the various locations within the West End of London reflected the wide range of overlapping practices involved in the trade. Several dealers chose established locations associated with complementary trades such as furniture making, such as Tottenham Court Road, which attracted Moore & Co. 'Dealers in Foreign China, Ancient Furniture and Curiosities', (see plate 34a). Other dealers chose distinctive locations devoted to retail. William Forrest, for example, a dealer well-known amongst nineteenth century collectors, including A.W. Franks of the British Museum,[13] was located at 54 Strand for at least 20 years, from 1835 until 1855. (see plate 34b). New Bond Street, which was one of the primary locations for fashionable trades from the opening decade of the nineteenth century, was also the location of a number of important dealers. John Jarman for example, who traded in 'curiosities' and 'old china' was installed in New Bond Street by the late 1820s, moving from St. James Street, Pall Mall. And Charles Askew, who was a regular trader with Abraham Davies, Isaac's brother-in-law, in the 1820s, was located at 126 New Bond Street by 1826.[14] Bond Street was also the location of the shop of the famous antique furniture dealer and cabinet-maker John Webb, who occupied premises at 8 Old Bond Street from 1825 until 1851 when he moved to Grafton Street.

And the two most famous dealers in ancient armour in the period, Thomas Gwenapp, who opened a shop in New Bond Street by 1806, certainly the earliest dealer to open a shop in this important location, and Samuel and Henry Pratt, who were trading in ancient armour from New Bond Street by the mid 1820s. Indeed, the fact that New Bond Street had attracted so many significant antique and curiosity dealers by the second quarter of the nineteenth century contradicts Clive Wainwright's assertion that it was not until after the 1850s that this important street became associated with the antique and curiosity trade.[15]

By the opening decade of the nineteenth century as the shop, as a discrete site, was beginning to become an important locus of social and cultural activity. The rise in the social status of the shop was accompanied by attempts to include them as part of regular architectural compositions in the metropolitan improvements in the capital. For example, the early nineteenth century saw the first 'shopping arcades' with the opening of the Royal Opera Arcade off Pall Mall, designed by the architect John Nash during the period 1816-18, and Burlington Arcade, designed for Lord George Cavendish by the architect Samuel Ware, who was incidentally also a noted collector and a client of John Coleman Isaac,[16] which was opened in 1819. These arcades were the first of a new type of covered shopping development in London based on the format that had been popularized in Paris, where a range of shops had been opened in the late 1780s along the Palais Royale. Such arcades are indicative of the evolving consumer culture of early nineteenth century London into which the antique and curiosity dealer emerged. Other 'new' streets, such as Regent Street, which as Dana Arnold has already discussed was amongst the most striking examples of the modernizing projects of early nineteenth century London,[17] were also the preferred sites for several dealers. In the 1830s, Regent Street, according to the London

guidebook published by John Tallis, was a 'noble street with Palace-like shops.'[18] This may be one of the reasons why Samuel Isaacs, who was one of the most well-known dealers in the period, chose 131 Regent Street as the preferred location for his shop (see plate 34c).[19] This important street also attracted a number of other antique and curiosity dealers such as Giovanni Noseda, whose relative, perhaps a brother, Anthony Noseda traded from Coventry Street in the same period. The dealers Abraham Hertz and John Bentley also traded from Regent Street, both of whom had particularly close commercial relationships with John Coleman Isaac.[20] Even John Coleman Isaac himself briefly took a shop in the Quadrant, Regent Street, in 1826, prior to moving to the spiritual heart of the antique and curiosity trade, Wardour Street in 1829.[21] The appearance of so many of these new antique and curiosity dealers in the new spaces of modernity and commerce in the metropolis draws further attention to the evolving patterns of consumption of antiques and curiosities in the period. Indeed, the fact that many of these new antique and curiosity dealers had already chosen to locate in the most 'modern' urban retail spaces of the metropolis, even by the early 1820s, is evidence that the antique and curiosity trade has a complex development rather than the smooth and progressive historical trajectory suggested by historians such as Clive Wainwright. Locations such as Regent Street and New Bond Street, for example, allowed the dealers to draw on the caché as well as the clientele of trades associated with the social elites, such as fashionable tailoring and other high class purveyors. As Chris Breward and Jane Rendell have demonstrated, during the early nineteenth century these discrete locations became associated with leisure, consumption and cultured patronage.[22] Indeed, it is in part through these new consumer spaces in the metropolis that 'curiosities', which had conventionally been associated with uncertain or indeed problematic cultural value, were assigned

increasing levels of social significance as they were presented for sale in these distinctive locations. Moreover, the appearance of the trade in historical objects in the new spaces of modernity in the Capital also highlights the intimate relationships between the modernizing projects of the early nineteenth century metropolis and the consumption of the past. Indeed despite its obvious association with objects from the past the early nineteenth century antique and curiosity shop can be considered a thoroughly 'modern' thing. It is no coincidence that the antique and curiosity shop takes on its distinctive form during a period when, as Marshall Berman has suggested, there was the most radical shift in the trajectory of 'modernity'.[23] For Berman, modernity has had three distinct historical phases; the first stage began in the sixteenth century and ended with the close of the eighteenth century, whilst the third and final phase of modernity emerged in the early twentieth century. But it is the 'second phase' of modernity, itself a product of Enlightenment and part of the Revolutionary wave of the 1790s, which acted as a catalyst for the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer and the antique and curiosity shop. As Berman indicates, the peculiarity of this 'second phase' of modernity was that it offered up 'a sense of living in two worlds simultaneously'; at the same time as being 'modern', people could 'remember what it is like to live, materially and spiritually, in worlds that were not modern at all.'[24] Indeed the antique and curiosity shop exemplifies the dichotomy of the experience of the 'second phase' of modernity that Berman described. The antique and curiosity shop presented the early nineteenth century modern public with material from their past, indeed as we have seen at times material from their recent past, through the modern consumer spaces of the shop.

However, alongside the sight of the antique and curiosity shops in the new consumer spaces of the Capital the trade also continued to exist in less prestigious locations, in and amongst less high-status traders. Indeed such was the demand for historical objects that even here the antique and curiosity trade was expanding rapidly. Seven Dials, for example, an area to the north-west of Covent Garden which was a notorious slum by the second quarter of the nineteenth-century, saw a rapid expansion of the number of dealers in the 1840s. The writer and commentator on London, Charles Knight (1791-1873), described the area around Monmouth Street, off Seven Dials, in 1843, where he noted that 'old Furniture, or curiosity shops, such as we find Wardour Street, are a new species, and amongst the most interesting.'[25] And dealers such as Joseph Jacobs, Moses Moses, Marcus Samuels and George Nightingale also continued to trade from locations in the City of London, the conventional locus of the curiosity trade since the eighteenth century. In this sense one of the distinctive markers of the trade in historical objects as it emerged in the period is its complex and diverse structure. Moreover, one of the consistent features in this study of the emergence of the antique and curiosity dealer is that despite the gravitation of the trade to discrete consumer locations such as Regent Street and New Bond Street, for many people the antique and curiosity trade continued to be associated with objects of limited cultural value and the trade consistently struggled to shed some of the more problematic aspects of its image.

We can see then that the antique and curiosity shop was a highly visible part of the urban fabric of London in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. However, whilst it is clear that the antique shop was concentrated to a large extent in the Capital it was not solely a London phenomenon. The evidence provided by the Isaac archive indicates that a considerable number of dealers were operating in many other parts of

the country in the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s. For example, the waste book records numerous transactions with the dealer Isaac Abrahams, who appears to have been a good friend of Isaac and was trading from Liverpool from the late 1820s and into the 1830s.[26] Isaac was also selling regular amounts of historical objects to a dealer named Brett in Oxford Road in Manchester in the 1830s[27] and to a fellow dealer L. Goetz in Southampton in the 1830s and 1840s.[28] Other dealers outside London have also been noted, such as Thomas Fenteman & Sons who were trading in Leeds by the early 1830s.[29] Indeed whilst London continued to be at the centre of the consumption of antiques and curiosities and was inevitably the preferred location of the most high-profile members of the trade, by the early 1840s there is evidence that some very well-connected dealers were also operating outside the Capital. Charles Redfern for example, with whom Isaac recorded business dealings in 1842[30] traded from Jury Street in Warwick and was amongst the most well-known dealers in the 1840s and 1850s.[31] The diverse locations of antique and curiosity shops, which we can note are all, in this period at least, in urban centres, (the country antique shop belongs to a later period and a slightly different narrative) are indicative of the wide geographical spread of the antique and curiosity trade even by the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Wardour Street

Within the specific patterns of commercial zoning in the metropolis in the first half of the nineteenth century Wardour Street was invested with distinct social and functional connotations. Wardour Street appears consistently in the contemporary

accounts of the antique and curiosity shop, it figures in trade literature, descriptive reports from visitors to the Metropolis and is a constant presence in letters and other exchanges between dealers, collectors, architects and designers. Indeed, it even makes an oblique appearance as early as the eighteen-teens in Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Antiquary* (1816) where Scott, perhaps ironically, has the venerable 'House of Wardour' teetering on the edge of financial ruin and hereditary displacement.[32] However, whilst we can say that the emergence of the scores of antique and curiosity dealers throughout Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century was a development of considerable significance, Wardour Street completely overshadows the myriad of other individual locations in the biography of the antique and curiosity shop.

Wardour Street was named after Edward Wardour, the owner of the land on which a small development of houses was built in 1680-81.[33] These seventeenth century houses were rebuilt during the period 1735-43, under leases granted by the Duchess of Portland and it would have been in these eighteenth century houses, remodelled at some time later in the century as retail premises that John Coleman Isaac opened his new antique and curiosity shop.[34] Isaac relocated the business from 41 Craven Street to number 12 Wardour Street on April 1st 1829, moving into a shop that had also previously been occupied by a curiosity dealer, William Rimmell, who had traded from number 12 Wardour Street during the early 1820s.[35] Isaac smartened up his shop in September 1832 and put his name over the front in gilded wooden letters, paying 'Mr Nott' £4.1s.6d for painting the outside, repairing the windows and supplying and gilding the 'wooden letters'.[36] His shop, with the smart new frontage is depicted two doors down from that occupied by fellow dealer Henry Farrer at number

14, in *John Tallis's London Street Views*, of 1838-40,[37] (see plate 35). Isaac, along with his wife Sarah, had by then taken full control of the antique and curiosity business that had been started by his father-in-law Gabriel Davies and his son Henry Abraham Davies in Craven Street in the early 1810s. In moving to Wardour Street Isaac chose to locate his business in an established location for the antique and curiosity trade. Indeed, it was to become the most famous location for antiques and curiosities in London during Isaac's period of occupation. By the mid-1840s Wardour Street had the largest concentration of antique and curiosity dealers in Britain and continued to be a centre of the antique trade until well into the 1870s (see appendix III.III). A composite illustration of the various shops occupied by the antique and curiosity trade in Wardour Street, composed from the research for the present study, indicates that as many as forty-two premises out of total retail premises of about one hundred and twenty-four were at one stage or another occupied by individuals who participated in the antique and curiosity trade during the period 1820-1850 (see plate 36). Isaac's business was amongst the longest standing of the antique and curiosity dealers in Wardour Street, remaining at number 12 for a period of tthirty-seven years until his retirement in 1866.[38] The shop that Isaac had occupied unfortunately no longer exists, it was demolished in the early twentieth century during a major redevelopment of a block of eight shops on the east side of Wardour Street, but from the pictorial evidence supplied by *Tallis* we can assume that Isaac's shop front was similar to the example of an early nineteenth century shop front at 181 High Holborn (see plate 37). The redevelopment of Wardour Street in the twentieth century also led to the demolition of the former shops of a number of other prominent dealers, including Henry Farrer, Edmund Terry (numbers 15 & 122), James Hadnutt (numbers 17 & 40), (see plate 38a), William Manser (number 27), (see plate 38b),

Edward and George Hull (number 109), (see plate 38c) and Thomas Hawksley (number 14). All of these antique and curiosity shops were replaced by a large building erected for the publishing company Novello & Co., designed by Frank Loughborough Pearson, the son of the famous nineteenth century gothic revival architect, which was completed in 1906.[39]

By the time Isaac had decided to move his business to Wardour Street in the late 1820s it was already synonymous with the antique and curiosity trade itself. Indeed as far as collectors, furnishers and designers were concerned a visit to Wardour Street was essential for the acquisition of antiques and curiosities. It was the primary location where the historical objects that had been gathered by dealers from all over the Continent were first delivered to the market. Sir Samuel Meyrick was just one of many collectors who relied on the dealers in Wardour Street for the supply of historical objects. As already discussed, Meyrick's main residence, and the primary location of his extensive collections after he removed them from his London address in Upper Cadogan Place in the late 1820s, was Goodrich Court in Herefordshire, which he had engaged the architect Edward Blore (1787-1879) to build during the period 1828-31.[40] Meyrick spent much of his time gathering historical objects for his displays at Goodrich Court and was constantly anxious to be informed about what was happening in the antique and curiosity markets in London. A letter from Meyrick to Isaac sent in June 1831 illustrates the significance of Wardour Street as the centre of activity in the wider consumption of the past:

> I am extremely obliged to you for your letter because removed as I am from that world of curiosities, Wardour Street, it is only in this way that I can learn what fresh comes into the market.[41]

Many more letters in the Isaac archive demonstrate the importance that collectors assigned to the activities taking place in Wardour Street in the period. The collector Ralph Bernal for example wrote to Isaac regularly in order to ensure that he was well informed about the markets; 'let me know about <u>all</u> the curious matters when they arrive in Wardour Street...don't fail to write to me, and give the descriptions...'[42] Indeed such was the contemporary fame of this location that it even appeared in one of the most famous antiquarian publications in the period. In the description of Cotehele, the 'ancient seat of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe' in Cornwall, which was published in about 1840, the author of the text, the antiquary Rev. F.V.J. Arundell, could not resist a reference to Wardour Street in his descriptive accounts of ancient interiors.[43] Drawing attention to the collections, Arundell described the drawing room, which had, 'twelve beautiful ebony chairs and sofa, that immediately attract the eye, as they would the heart of many a curiosity dealer in Wardour Street'.[44] However, despite, or perhaps more accurately because of the attention that Wardour Street attracted as the primary representative of the 'world of curiosities', this location also became a convenient shorthand for a host of problematic responses to the antique and curiosity trade. The vast majority of the criticism directed towards 'Wardour Street' evolved during the second half of the nineteenth century, much of it centred on the notion of the 'authenticity' of the 'ancient furniture' which, as this study has already discussed, was commonly constructed using fragments of ancient woodwork in the first half of the nineteenth century. The writer and historian N.N. Humphries,

writing in 1852, illustrates the standard response to such reconstructed furniture by mid century and cites Wardour Street as the principal source of these problematic objects:

> a variety of interesting publications have called public attention to the rich productions of medieval skill during the last twelve or fifteen years...but in most cases those styles have been imperfectly comprehended and a vast Wardour-Street commerce has been erected on the sure foundation of that ignorance...these wretched patchwork combinations consisting of every incongruous mixture, stuck together so as to form some article of furniture in common use have hitherto found ready sale, though without any pervading design.[45]

And in *Hints on Household Taste*, Charles Eastlake's didactic text on design published in 1868, Eastlake directed his audience to avoid the inauthentic 'ancient furniture' that was still a central part of the collecting and furnishing markets in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Again Wardour Street was at the centre of these critiques. Eastlake wrote:

> I would especially caution my readers against the contemptible specimens of that would be Gothic joinery which is manufactured in the backstreets of Soho. No doubt good examples of mediaeval furniture and cabinetwork are occasionally to be met in the curiosity shops of Wardour Street; but as a rule the 'Glastonbury' chairs and 'antique' bookcases which are sold in

> that venerable thoroughfare will prove on examination to be nothing but gross libels on the style of art which they are supposed to represent.[46]

One of the consequences of such criticisms was that by the third quarter of the nineteenth century Wardour Street itself came to denote objects of 'questionable antiquity', as the phrase 'Wardour Street English', implies.[47] It is significant to note however that the criticism of both Humphries and Eastlake relies on the assumption that the notion 'authenticity' has objective status. This assumption is at least partially dislodged when one considers that such critiques were ultimately routed through judgements on tasteful design based primarily on a moral concept of constructional rationalism that had been circulated in the polemical writings of the architect A.W.N. Pugin (1812-1852) and the writer John Ruskin (1819-1900).[48] What is equally important to note however is the impact that these contaminating tropes had on both the practices of collecting 'antique furniture' in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the profound impact on the way that furniture history was eventually written. Indeed, the complete absence of any of the 'made-up' ancient furniture dating from the 1830s and 1840s, which are after all a legitimate part of the history of furniture, from the canonical histories of furniture when they were published in the early part of the twentieth century by collector historians such as Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards testifies to the central role that the notion of 'authenticity' has played within the narrative structures of modern furniture history.[49]

However, it is also clear that even as early as the 1840s Wardour Street was beginning to be a signifier of the more problematic aspects of the trade in historical objects. For example, an article was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1848

criticizing Brougham Hall, which was designed in a fashionable Gothic style in the 1830s by the architect Lewis Cottingham for Lord Brougham.[50] The anonymous writers, describing themselves as 'Old Subscribers' were responding to a descriptive account of Brougham Hall penned by the Manchester architect and antiquary George Shaw that had been published the previous month in the same journal and which had suggested that the Hall was of considerable antiquity.[51] The description was, 'a tissue of falsehoods', wrote the 'Old Subscribers', who added, 'as regards the antiquity of Brougham Hall, the thing is a perfect hoax from beginning to end.'[52] The writers described various 'additions' to the 'historic' fabric of the building and then directed their invective towards the collections of arms and armour in the 'Armour Hall' at Brougham Hall (see plate 39):

> the suits of armour, match-lock guns, military accoutrements, spears, pennoncels, banners & "objects of interest from their family associations" (hearst thou, Mars!) have all been bought from various curiosity shops in Wardour Street...since 1830.[53]

Explanations for this criticism, which were routed through the convenient frame of 'Wardour Street', appear to involve a complex cluster of evolving ideas. Shifting tastes and fashion inevitably played their part, and there was also the lingering perception by many people that 'curiosities' were of limited aesthetic and historical value. Indeed, even for those who placed considerable social and cultural value on such objects there still remained the problem of the commercial mode of acquisition and the problematic associations that arise from this, as the concluding chapter of the current study discusses further. However, as the comments of the 'Old Subscribers'

suggest, their criticism of Wardour Street appears to be indicative of the shifting parameters of historical knowledge that had been framed through the evolving notion of early nineteenth century historicism. The 'Old Subscribers' criticised the displays at Brougham because they disrupted the notion of historical accuracy. This was not a criticism of 'taste', such as those voiced by Humphries and Eastlake, this was a much more serious indictment. The 'Old Subscribers' concluding remarks draw attention to what lay at the centre of their criticism. They were 'grieved on account of the violence done to archaeological science.'[54] Wardour Street and the activities of the antique and curiosity trade in particular, were equally culpable in the presentation of this spurious history. However, whilst it is important to draw attention to the criticism that Wardour Street attracted, it is also important to remember, as the comments of collectors such as Meyrick and Bernal demonstrate, that for many people Wardour Street remained at the centre of the markets for historical objects and played a critical role in their wider consumption in the decades prior to 1850. We should not let the significance of Wardour Street in this earlier period be diminished by the problematic narratives that emerged to tarnish its image.

Other Spaces of Consumption: Auctions and Exhibitions

The antique and curiosity shop may have been at the nexus of supply and demand for historical objects in the period but there were other spaces of commercial exchange through which these objects were drawn further into distinctive patterns of consumption. Auction sales of historical objects, either through the periodic sale of individual collections or trading stock of dealers were also an important catalyst in the

evolving markets in the period. We have already seen that 'Importation Sale' became a common auction sale classification during the eighteen-teens, a reflection of the extensive activities of the dealers on the Continent. And the trade relied heavily on well-established channels such as auction sales to quickly redistribute large quantities of imported stock. The Isaac archive clearly demonstrates the importance of sale by auction for the trade. In the period 1815-22, for example, prior to John Coleman Isaac taking over the running of the business, the Davies family regularly used auction sales to disperse the large amounts of 'curiosities' that they had acquired on the Continent.[55] And after Isaac took over the business he frequently bought and sold objects at auction, favouring the local auction rooms of Deacon's in Berner's Street and Mr. Oxenham's in Oxford Street.[56] Indeed, auction sales continued to be a critical part of the wider market structure throughout the period under review, often providing important opportunities for the extension of credit facilities within the trade itself, no doubt an important aspect for continued and successful trading given that the contemporary money economy was structured over extended periods of credit based on the circulation of bills of exchange. The archive records many instances where Isaac was offered 3 month credit facilities by the dealers Samuel and Henry Pratt whose auction sales of 'ancient armour' were also amongst the most high profile and well-known in the period.[57]

One of the most significant developments in the period, and one in which the trade was also a significant catalyst, was the emergence of specialist single category auctions of historical objects such as 'ancient armour'. The Davies family were only one of a number of dealers specialising in ancient armour in London in the period and the 'waste book' records a very extensive amount of arms and armour that Henry

Davies sold at auction, including one held by the famous collector, showman and merchant William Bullock at his 'Egyptian Hall' in March 1821.[58] Early in 1822 Gabriel Davies wrote a letter to Sarah, his daughter, (translated into his normal fractured English)[59] illustrating the importance of specialist single category auctions:

> We now got, with that two I got by me, 18 complete armoury beside those without faces that we can make a capital sale – out the spring with armours. I got two very handsome plated, I have been drawing of it in this letter you shall see it, and the other is with brass-nails complete with legs.[60]

The drawing that Gabriel mentioned was included within the letter (see plate 40), and we know that an auction sale of armour of 'H.A. (Henry Abraham) Davis', [sic], did take place on 6th June 1822, at which were sold 'the fluted suits of the Dukes of Leinengen & Lacklen.'[61] Such specialised auction sales instilled a concentrated consumer attention onto single object types, allowing more discrete patterns of difference and quality to be highlighted and allowing such objects to be woven into ever more discrete patterns of consumption. Indeed, the auction is a place where the economic exchange value of objects is publicly highlighted and where the fluctuations in the price of objects are detected much more acutely than they would be in the more intimate spaces of the antique and curiosity shop. The auction is a public event, a 'highly visible theatre of competing desires', as Andrew Miller suggests, one where 'the meanings of goods are developed and reinforced as their purely monetary value is recreated and calculated anew.'[62] Moreover, just as the interior spaces of the antique and curiosity shop direct attention to the exchange value of historical objects and

prioritized particular forms of consumer relationships so the public auction also plays a strategic role in the complex frameworks of the social valuation of objects. Arun Appadurai for example, draws attention to the importance of public auction as a 'Tournament of Value'.[63] For Apparduari the auction is a periodic 'event' where participation can be seen as a 'privilege of those in power and an instrument of status contests between participants.'[64] The cultural critic Jean Baudrillard has also drawn attention to the distinctive nature of the public auction as a discrete site of consumer activity. Baudrillard writes:

> Contrary to commercial operations, which institute a relation of economic rivalry between individuals on the footing of formal equality, with each one guiding his own calculation of individual appropriation, the auction, like the fête or the game, institutes a concrete community of exchange among peers...the essential function of the auction is the institution of a community of the privileged who define themselves as such by agnostic speculation upon a restricted corpus of signs.[65]

As Appadurai and Baudrilllard suggest, auctions are events where social prestige and economic power can be reinforced and also where the relationships between economic value, cultural value, and social status are made explicit. Collectors obviously played critical roles within these social events, but the consistent presence of the antique and curiosity dealers themselves also became a distinctive feature in the period. Indeed the dealer was such a constant presence within the wider auction market that collectors such as Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick automatically assumed that when new competition arose in armour collecting it must have emerged from within

the trade itself. Meyrick wrote to Isaac in July 1833 in response to a new buyer whose active participation at auction was attracting attention; 'I am rather curious to know who is this new admirer of armour, if he is not a dealer?'[66] At the auction sale of the contents of Stowe which were sold in 1848 following the spectacular bankruptcy of the Duke of Buckingham & Chandos the writer Henry Foster also draws attention to the explicit presence of antique and curiosity dealers at these important public forums:

> During the sale scarcely any respectable persons could enter the mansion without being imported to entrust their commission to persons of this class (brokers): you were told that the applicant belonged to the 'London Society of Brokers'.....that it was no use to offer personal biddings as the brokers attended for the purpose of buying and would outbid any private individual.[67]

At these important public events extensive numbers of lots were knocked down to the trade and the publication of the lists of purchasers at such sales drew further attention to the significant presence of the trade at these 'tournaments of value'. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, for example, regularly reported the activities of the dealers at auction sales,[68] and the publications of H.D. Burn following the Strawberry Hill auction sale in 1842 and that of Henry Forster in 1848 provided a role call of dealers, immediately recognisable through the conjunction of name and commercial location; 'Farrer, Wardour-street', 'Pratt, New Bond-street', 'Hertz, Marlborough-street', 'Forrest, Strand', 'Hull, Wardour-street'.[69] With the constant registering of the active participation of the dealers at such important public events attention is directed to the

central role that the trade played in the markets, and idea of the dealer as a discrete cultural identity was further inscribed into the public consciousness.

Auction Catalogues: The Price Index

Whilst the use of printed auction catalogues to accompany sales (in respect to art auctions at least) extends back into the early seventeenth century on the Continent,[70] and the late seventeenth century in Britain,[71] it was only in 1779 that it became a statutory requirement to produce a printed catalogue for sales by auction. It is clear that as the method of selling by auction had become progressively more popular during the second half of the eighteenth century the British Government saw a revenue opportunity to levy a duty on such sales and in 1777 passed the Auction Duty Act (17 Geo. III c.50). The refinement to the Auction Duty Act two years later, (1779), (19 Geo. III c.56), was enacted to ensure effective collection of the payment duty and required that all items to be sold should be listed in a catalogue and that the reason for the sale should also be stated (executor sales were exempt from duty). The penalties for non-compliance were stringent, a fine of £20 for those auctioneers who did not submit accounts.[72] Auction sale catalogues had been produced prior to the 1777 Act but this statutory requirement provided the catalyst for the production of more systematic auction sale catalogues.

The auction sale catalogue remains an important source material for information on the rhythms of the markets, providing collectors and dealers with critical information on a wide range of desirable objects as they are exchanged on the open markets. Auction sale catalogues are also highly significant in respect of the narrative

frameworks that they present and the ordering and taxonomies that emerge as a result of their categories and classifications, as scholars such as Malcolm Baker have suggested.[73] The consistent insertion of the price realised at auction in many of the surviving catalogues in archives, for example at the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, suggests that a significant aspect of the value of the auction catalogue for collectors and dealers was as a 'price index'. The handwritten notations recording the prices that objects have realised at auction was no doubt an extremely important exercise for the community of collectors. But such information, and the specific knowledge that it suggests, often remained locked within existing collecting economies in the eighteenth-century and had a limited effect on the markets beyond the corpus of collectors.

Kryztoff Pomian has already demonstrated how the publication of auction sale results for picture sales, which began in the Parisian art markets during the late eighteenth century, had a significant impact on the evolving structures of the art markets and led to rapid changes in the evaluation and desirability of artworks.[74] In respect of the historical objects that were central to the markets in the early nineteenth century the publication of auction sale prices first began to appear systematically during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The publication of the auction sale results of the auction sale of the collections at Strawberry Hill by H.D. Burn in 1842[75] and those of the Stowe auction sale in 1848 by Henry Forster,[76] are just two of the most famous instances in the desire for information on the changing monetary values of historical objects in the period. Alongside the publication of the results in specialist auction catalogues the reporting of auction sale results for historical objects also began to appear with increasing frequency in newspapers and journals from the 1830s onwards. Indeed, it is perhaps no coincidence that the publication of prices for

historical objects emerged simultaneously with the consolidation of the antique and curiosity trade itself. The publication of price indices of the changing commercial values of historical objects highlights the fact that economic exchange value had, by the second quarter of the nineteenth century, become an important cultural register in the consumption of the past.

A further point needs to be made in respect of the peculiar development of the auction sale catalogue during the period under review. By the early 1830s illustrated auction catalogues of historical objects also began appearing for the first time. The antique and curiosity trade appears to have been among the pioneers to adopt this more sophisticated sales technique. We should note that whilst the antique and curiosity dealers regularly disposed of stock by auction sale they rarely appear to have undertaken the sales themselves. Perhaps the acquisition of an auctioneer's licence, which was required by statute from 1779 and cost 20/- per annum in the Metropolitan area and 5/- in the countryside,[77] was seen as an unnecessary expense when there were so many professional auctioneers to undertake such work. Samuel and Henry Pratt, the dealers in ancient armour trading from New Bond Street, began to produce illustrated catalogues for their auctions sales at Mr. Oxenham's rooms during the 1830s and 1840s. Pratt's arms and armour auction sale in April 1841 included printed illustrations of selected objects, including a 'Tilting Suit' (See plate 41), and their auction sale catalogue in July 1842 included illustrations of a 'Close Helmet' (see plate 42) and a 'Gothic Suit' (see plate 43). Pratt's auction catalogue for an amour sale at Mr. Oxenham's in March 1843 was illustrated with a rare suit of 'Horse Armour' (see plate 44). Alongside these illustrated auction catalogues several dealers in the period also began to publish their own illustrated catalogues to

accompany the stock that they had for sale in their antique and curiosity shops. We have already noted the catalogues issued by the London antique and curiosity dealer Horatio Rodd from the early 1820s. Rodd's catalogue of stock issued in 1842 included several illustrations of 'ancient furniture' and carvings (see plate 45).[78] Clive Wainwright has suggested that Rodd was unique in publishing catalogues of his stock, but we know that Samuel and Henry Pratt also did the same[79] and there is tantalising evidence from the Isaac archive that Abraham Davies also produced catalogues of his stock. The 'waste book', for example, records a payment of '3 shillings' for 'porterage for delivery of catalogues' in 1818.[80] It seems unlikely that these publicizing activities were as unusual as the surviving evidence suggests. It may be of course that the ephemeral nature of the publications, (the surviving example of the catalogues produced for Horatio Rodd at the Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum are small, flimsy objects), has led to only very few remaining.[81] However, the fact that illustrations began to be included in auction sale catalogues of historical objects and that dealers also began to publish their own illustrated catalogues of the stock that they held for sale during the period is highly significant. As the present study has already indicated even by the 1830s there were only a handful of publications which focussed on historical objects of the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries and even within antiquarian circles there remained only partial and infrequently published discussions on such historical material. As if to emphasize the historical objects' status as a commodity at the time the most frequent publications in which historical objects made their appearance were in either the contemporary auction sale catalogues or the antique and curiosity dealer's catalogues of stock.

Exhibitions

There is a tangible relationship between the roles and strategies employed in the public auction of historical objects and the display of historical objects at public exhibitions during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed it was, and remains, a common practice for auction sales to involve the public exhibition of objects for a number of days prior to the start of the sale and an important part of the process of the auction sale itself involves the exhibition of objects by the saleroom porters as they are 'knocked down' to buyers. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the public exhibition of historical objects was intimately connected to the contemporary leisure culture and the wider commercial projects in the period.[82] The connections between the educational and informational intentions of the exhibitions and the emergence of the historical object as commodity in early nineteenth century culture are brought into sharper focus when one considers the relationships between these exhibitions and the evolving commercial structures of the markets.

From the opening decade of the nineteenth century 'curiosity dealers' had begun to play a critical role in the wider distribution of knowledge of historical material and several dealers had already begun to stage selling exhibitions in the various exhibition halls in London. J.C. Hampp, for example, the Norwich glass-painter and dealer in ancient stained glass, who was introduced in the previous chapter, held a series of exhibitions in London during the opening decade of the nineteenth century which prefigured the sale of his 'collections' at various auction sales.[83] And several other curiosity dealers operated 'museums' in the opening decade of the nineteenth century that were ostensibly selling exhibitions, eliding the distinctions between the

merchandizing possibilities and the professed didactic purposes of public exhibitions.[84] By the eighteen-teens there were a growing range of high profile public exhibitions organised by the new kind of antique and curiosity dealers. Indeed, we know that Abraham Davies, the son of Gabriel Davies and the main character in the business before Isaac took charge, advertised in 1817 in the *Morning Post* that he would be holding an exhibition of 'ancient armour', 'admission one shilling' at 20 Lower Brook Street, Bond Street.[85] The Lower Brook Street gallery was owned by the dealer Thomas Gwenapp senior, who was perhaps the most famous dealer in ancient armour during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Gwenapp's gallery, known as the *Oplotheca*, (an Anglicisation of the Greek word *hoplothêkê*, or armoury) was well-known in the period as the location for exhibitions of ancient armour.

The most important of Gwenapp's ancient armour exhibitions was staged from 1816, organized with 'very kind assistance from Dr. Meyrick',[86] the armour expert, and had an elaborate catalogue accompanying the displays.[87] Gwenapp's commentary in the catalogue directed attention to the monetary value of the collections, some 'ten thousand pounds', but Gwenapp was also at pains to stress that the value of the exhibition amounted to more than its 'intrinsic worth'.[88] The expressed purpose of the exhibition, as the catalogue indicated, was the instruction of the public; 'to illustrate the manners of our ancestors and elucidate many points of history.'[89] Gwenapp expanded his exhibition programme during the 1820s and staged several exhibitions of ancient armour at the famous 'Gothic Hall' in Pall Mall.[90] Ultimately, of course, Gwenapp's exhibitions of ancient armour were, like the 'collections' of Abraham Davies, sold at various auction sales subsequent to their public display. Indeed, the armour from Thomas Gwenapp's famous exhibition at the

Oplotheca was sold at a spectacular auction sale on the premises on 10th June 1833, and Isaac himself was amongst the successful purchasers.[91]

The dealers Samuel and Henry Pratt, who superseded Gwenapp as the most significant dealers in ancient armour in the period 1825-50, and are most famous for their involvement in the Eglinton Tournament in 1839, also staged several exhibitions of ancient armour and other objects during the late 1830s.[92] Pratt's exhibitions were held in a purpose built gallery annex to their shop at 3 Lower Grosvenor Street which was fitted out and designed by the architect and antiquary Lewis Nockells Cottingham (1787-1847).[93] Pratt's exhibitions were again very elaborate marketing exercises accompanied by erudite catalogues and were widely reported in the press both in London and the provinces.[94] Again, all of the exhibits were auctioned off in sales shortly after the exhibitions had closed. Indeed, whilst ancient armour was perhaps the most popular of attractions in the period it was not the only kind of historical object that was subject to these dealer exhibitions.

Amongst the dealers in ancient furniture and woodwork there were a number who staged exhibitions to draw attention to their stock. The famous carver and antique and curiosity dealer William Gibbs Rogers staged several exhibitions in the 1830s at his shop in Church Street, Soho. One was reported in the *Morning Post* in 1834 which described 'Roger's Collection of Ancient Carvings':

> One room alone contains materials for inspection and study, which will repay an hour's indulgence. This contains twelve rich oak panels, of carvings of the finest description, the work of the celebrated Berge, bearing the date of 1730....[95]

And another of Rogers' exhibitions included:

> several hundred figures in boxwood and oak....coffers and stands belonging to the Cenci...and a superb assemblage of the most elaborate carvings of Grenlin Gibbons [sic].[96]

Whilst the majority of these historical exhibitions were staged in London during the period by the late 1830s the dealer exhibitions were also expanding beyond the Capital in tandem with the expansion of the antique and curiosity trade. Thomas Agnew, perhaps better known as an art dealer in London during the second half of the nineteenth-century opened his first gallery in Manchester, which he appropriately named *The Repository for Arts* after Rudolph Akerman's famous premises at 101 Strand in London. In September 1838 Agnew advertised in the *Manchester Guardian* 'the arrival of a very extensive collection of French goods', (a further illustration of the overlapping commercial practices of antique and curiosity dealers and fashionable mercantile productions in the period), and also took the opportunity to highlight his activities as a dealer in ancient armour.[97] Agnew 'begged to inform the public'...of his new exhibition of 'curious specimens of... ancient armour.'[98] At many of these temporary provincial exhibitions historical objects were often displayed alongside objects of high cultural value, such as paintings and sculpture. This juxtaposition expanded the interest in historical material still further, allowing a range of historical objects that had been, for many consumers at least, of limited cultural value, to draw on the cultural capital of the work of art proper. For example, a short exhibition lasting 'a few days' was staged at Ladyman's Hotel in Manchester in November 1838

where visitors could view 'fine original paintings, by esteemed masters' and 'rare and curious specimens of old carved oak furniture.'[99]

The spread of the antique and curiosity dealer throughout Britain is further registered by their appearance at a number of didactic and mercantile exhibitions in the provinces. These exhibitions were part of a larger project, part of the desire of the Government to promote design and manufacturing and to elevate public 'taste'.[100] Such exhibitions had a trajectory that has its beginnings in the eighteenth century with the exhibitions of manufactured goods at the Royal Society Arts in 1756-7, but they are more conventionally seen to arise out of the Select Committee into Arts and Manufactures of 1835, a project that culminated in the Great Exhibition of 1851. In Leeds, for example, public exhibitions were staged in 1839, 1841 and 1843. The Leeds exhibitions were organized by local worthies following a pattern established by the Northern Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, whose exhibitions in the early 19th century had been staged to promote the work of contemporary artists.[101] The exhibition in 1843 was held in the Music Hall in Albion Street in Leeds and continued the earlier traditions of displaying contemporary art, together with a few Old Master paintings, but the organisers also included exhibitions of natural history and archaeological specimens, contemporary commercial products and examples of modern engineering. Alongside these artistic, scientific and practical exhibits the Leeds exhibition contained a 'Museum of Antiquities' presenting the public with the opportunity to see a whole range of historical objects including ancient furniture, ancient oak carvings and ancient armour. The lenders to this section of the exhibition comprised the usual antiquarian collectors, namely gentlemen of leisure and members of the professions. However, as James Lomax has noted, amongst the exhibitors there

were also members of the new antique and curiosity trade in the shape of Thomas Fenteman & Sons.[102] Fenteman, together with his two sons Thomas and Cooper traded in antiques and curiosities from Boar Lane in Leeds from the early 1830s until 1869. Fenteman exhibited 43 objects at Leeds, including some 'ancient armour' and 'ancient carvings in oak'. Also on display was a 'Carved Oak Gothic Cabinet, a fine specimen, temp. Henry VII', and an 'Elaborately carved Armed Chair...a fine specimen of the time of Charles II'.[103] Inevitably, of course, Fenteman's antiques and curiosities, unlike those objects loaned by the collectors, were for sale. As the catalogue for the exhibition informed the visitor; 'all articles marked * are on sale – apply to the Superintendent.'[104]

Further consideration of the importance of these exhibitions of historical objects in the decades around mid-century draws attention to the relationships between the expressed purposes of the exhibitions as part of the desire to promote manufacturing and design and the evolving economy of collecting historical objects, and in particular the role and emerging social and cultural profile of the antique and curiosity trade within these activities. The desire by the political and social elite for the education of the manufacturing classes in the industrial centres in the north of England provided the catalyst for the informational and didactic exhibitions in locations such as Manchester and Leeds. But the most high profile of the exhibitions aimed at promoting design and manufacturing and elevating public 'taste' took place in London during the 1850s. For example, the Exhibition of Ancient and Mediaeval Art at the Society of Arts in 1850, which was indicative of the consolidation of the interest in the Gothic revival of the middle decades of the nineteenth century, was staged with the expressed purpose of promoting manufacturing and design. Equally significant were the London exhibitions staged at Marlborough House, (the 'Museum

of Practical Art') which opened on 18th May 1852, the exhibition of 'Specimens of Historic Cabinet-work' at Gore House in May 1853, and indeed the later 'Museum of Ornamental Art' at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. The Marlborough House and Gore House exhibitions formed the genesis of what would become the South Kensington Museum and were organized by the Department of Practical Art under the Privy Council for Trade. The expressed purpose of these exhibitions was again the improvement and promotion of good design by exposing the manufacturing classes to 'first-rate' ornamental art in the hope that this would raise the quality of British manufacturing.[105] However, whilst such projects did indeed have such expressed practical and didactic purposes what has been less discussed by historians is the place of these exhibitions in the promotion of the interest in historical objects and the evolving collecting economy.[106] The catalogue for the Ancient and Medieval Art organized in 1850, for example, declared that the collections were drawn 'from the cabinets and galleries of the greatest connoisseurs in the Kingdom.'[107] And much of the reportage of the exhibition was just as much concerned with its antiquarian interest as in its purpose for promoting design and manufactures. *The Times*, for example, suggested that the Mediaeval exhibition at the Society of Arts was a place where 'all those who have a reverence for the past (could) revive and refresh their impressions.'[108] Similarly, *The Times* reported on the Gore House exhibition in 1853:

> Of the mighty past, it must be confessed that there are few traces more interesting than those which are found in the cabinets, the buffets, the coffers, the Great State chairs, the mirror frames, the tapestry, the secretaries and the clocks, religiously handed down from generation to

> generation...they form the best memorials of the stately and ceremonious domestic life of our ancestors...such feelings form a large ingredient in the pleasure with which the exhibition of Cabinet-work at Gore House is examined....[109]

Indeed despite the fact that the rationale for such exhibitions was to assist British manufactures through the promotion of 'good design', the catalogue to the Gore House exhibition specifically directs just as much attention to the age and authenticity of the exhibits as it does to their purpose as a catalyst to promote manufacturing.[110] In some cases the catalogue descriptions amount to a discourse of connoisseurship. Several objects are subjected to detailed critical investigation way beyond any analysis of form that would be appropriate for designers. For example, 'or-moulo [sic] mountings' on two objects are described as, 'probably modern restorations' and a question mark hangs over the age of a 'Buhl Cabinet', because the existence of contemporary reproductions made it 'difficult to determine exactly the epoch of execution.'[111] The objects on display at Gore House comprised an array of 'ancient' furniture dating from the fifteenth century right up to the 1770s, and already we can see that by the early 1850s the chronological frame of historical interest was extending into the second half of the eighteenth century. The objects intended for display at the Gore House exhibition were photographed by Charles Thurston Thompson and bound in two volumes which remain at the Victoria and Albert Museum.[112] Many of the donors of the ancient cabinet-work included aristocratic and titled individuals, including Queen Victoria and Earl Amherst, donors that are indicative of the desire of the organisers of such exhibitions to grant their project an important social and political sanction. We can also note that the objects belonging to

the aristocracy would also, by definition, provide the significant gloss of appropriate hereditary possession onto the range of historical material on display. Moreover, evidence of the expanding interest in collecting and furnishing with such objects and the evolving patterns of consumption are demonstrated by the inclusion of objects belonging to members of the newly enfranchised class of industrial wealth and political power. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, for example, loaned a 'Cabinet or Buffett', described as, 'Flemish, date about 1530-60' (see plate 46) [113], and Baron Lionel de Rothschild, who loaned a 'French, Carved Chestnut-wood Cabinet, Circa 1570-90' (see plate 47).[114] However, the central role that the antique and curiosity dealer continued to play in the markets for historical objects at mid century is illustrated by examination of the lists of donors of historical objects to the exhibition. Just as *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* had highlighted the close relationships between the practices of antiquarianism and the commercial trade in historical objects in the 1830s the exhibitions in the 1850s highlight the continuing relationships between the antique and curiosity trade and the evolving collecting practices in the 1850s. The catalogue for the Gore House exhibition indicated that of the 135 historical objects that were put on display at Gore House over one quarter of the total were exhibited by members of the antique and curiosity trade. The dealer John Swaby, for example, exhibited 'an oak table, Italian, c.1600', (see plate 48)[115] and a 'small oak table possibly English, c.1520-30' (see plate 49);[116] Henry Farrer, the well-known Wardour Street dealer, exhibited a 'napkin press, Flemish, c.1600' (see plate 50)[117]; The Bond Street dealer John Webb exhibited a 'Venetian Glass Chandelier, 17th century', (see plate 51),[118] a 'Clock, English or German, c1670-80' (alongside a 'Clock, French, 1736', belonging to Queen Victoria, see plate 52)[119], and a 'Venetian Mirror, c.1700' (see plate 53).[120] The catalogue also indicated that the dealers Samuel

Pratt and John Webb played important organisational roles in the staging of the exhibition.[121] The Gore House exhibition was explicitly a project for the promotion of manufacturing, but we can note that the discourse of collecting provided an important sub-text. The presence of the antique and curiosity trade also draws attention to the fact that the market for historical objects provided a significant underlying narrative.

The expressed intentions of Gore House and Marlborough House exhibitions were routed through the promotion of manufactures and design but perhaps a more intentional reflection of the practices of collecting was the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. The catalyst for the Manchester exhibition, arose as a consequence of the prohibition of paintings from the Great Exhibition in 1851. Albert, the Prince Consort, had suggested that the theme of the Manchester Exhibition should be art rather than industry, a purpose that reflected a broader political and social project that was intended to promote interest in, and wider access to, works of art proper.[122] The lenders to the exhibition reflected this narrower project, with objects owned by art collectors and art patrons comprising the most significant categories of objects. It is therefore unsurprising that we can also note a significant presence of the antique and curiosity trade at the Manchester exhibition. The London dealers in art and curiosities Henry Durlacher, Isaac and David Falcke, and Henry Farrer, and the Warwick antique and curiosity dealer Charles Redfern are all listed as lenders of objects to the 'Museum of Ornamental Art', which was the most significant part of the exhibition as far as the present project is concerned. The 'Museum of Ornamental Art' was also organised 'with the assistance' of several antique and curiosity dealers, including Redfern, William Chaffers and the armour dealer Samuel Pratt. The antiquary J.R. Planché, who provided the descriptive commentary on the

displays of ancient armour, which was part of the 'Museum of Ornamental Art' at the exhibition, wrote:

> My thanks to Mr. Samuel Pratt of Bond Street, not only for the careful and punctual execution of the work he contracted to do; but also for the energy and loyalty with which he laboured to promote, by every means in his power the success of the exhibition.[123]

The high profile presence of members of the antique and curiosity trade at these important social and cultural events in the early 1850s suggests the significant social status that was achieved by some members of the antique and curiosity trade in the period. These considerations also draw attention to the interrelationships between the evolving trade in historical objects and the design-led commercial, manufacturing and cultural concerns in the middle decade of the nineteenth century.

However, what also concerns us here is how the evolving interest in historical objects during the period up to the 1850s was mediated to the wider public. The establishment and expansion of a small number of highly important public museums in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, for example, Sir John Soane's museum, which opened in 1837, and the expansion of the British Museum in the 1830s and 1840s ushered in emergence of the public historical museum proper. However, it was not until the 1850s that publicly funded museums and galleries began to expand beyond the confines of London and even then the pace of change was painfully slow. The museums and galleries Acts of 1845, (8 & 9 Vic., c.43) and the Public Libraries Act of 1850 (13 & 14 Vic., c.65) may have adumbrated a system of

public museums as part of a national politically motivated project, but even by the 1860s there were no more than four or five cities that possessed municipally funded museums and galleries.[124] Moreover, it is important to note that significant as these public museums were, they contained very little of the kind of historical material that was on display in the antique and curiosity shops in the period 1815-50. Sir John Soane's museum, for example, was primarily a didactic collection of a professional architect and scholar and whilst it did contain a number of casts of Gothic carvings and architectural details it was mainly devoted to Classical architectural material.[125] And the trustees of the British Museum showed little interest in the acquisition of Mediaeval material before the late 1850s.[126] Indeed, the refusal of the trustees to purchase the extensive Mediaeval and later historical material in the collections of the architect Lewis Nockells Cottingham, which were sold at auction in 1851, demonstrates that such material was not considered to be appropriate for museological display at Britain's premier museum at that time.[127] Cottingham's collections, which by 1840 were housed at the architects own home in Waterloo Bridge Road, were well-known in the period amongst antiquaries and artists and as Janet Myles has demonstrated were the most significant collections of Mediaeval and later historical material in London in the period prior to 1850.[128]

However, the vast majority of early nineteenth century collections of historical material dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remained the property of literary and philosophical societies, or in private antiquarian collections which were often not readily accessible to a broader public. It is therefore much more likely, in the period up to 1850, that the wider public would encounter such historical material in the commercial sphere, either in the premises of the antique and curiosity dealers or at other commercial venues such as the specialist auctions of such objects. Indeed, as

we have seen, even in the publicly funded ostensibly didactic exhibitions such as those held in Leeds in the 1830s, the value of the historical objects as part of a wider system of commercial exchange was highlighted, as the potential commercial sale of Thomas Fenteman's objects demonstrated. At the same time that this new range of historical objects was being registered as historically significant in these public venues, their meaning as commodities was reinforced as their economic exchange value was explicitly highlighted. Indeed we can perhaps see that the empirical qualities of these objects as bearers of historical knowledge, or as models for the promotion of design and manufactures, recede in significance behind their existing function in the evolving systems of commercial exchange that had underpinned the broadening collecting economy.

Naming the Dealer

The trade in historical objects in the nineteenth century as it has been broadly sketched by historians such as Reitlinger (1963) and Wainwright (1989), and rehearsed in the work of MacGregor (1997), is mostly based on a diachronic analysis of the changing nomenclature of the trade. In this sense the market for historical objects is often presented as 'progressive', with a general shift from 'curiosities' to 'antiques' over the course of the nineteenth century. As this study has already discussed, there are elements within this assessment that accurately reflect the changing market for such objects in the early and later nineteenth century. However, the change from curiosities to antiques provides only a limited understanding of the complex and multi-layered meanings that these objects had for their consumers and such a smooth and progressive assessment of the historical development of the trade

tends to obscure the more discrete aspects of the trade in historical objects in the earlier period. Indeed, one of the contentions of the present study is that those scholars who have directed attention to the trade in antiques and curiosities have not paid sufficient attention to the subtle changes in descriptive terminology adopted by those trading in historical objects during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Clive Wainwright, for example, whilst acutely sensitive to the diverse range of objects in the collecting markets in the period has still tended to group a wide range of practices under a schematic descriptive classification of 'broking' and, as far as the present study in concerned, has not paid enough attention to the significance of the emergence of terms such as 'antique' to the trading practices in the period.[129] Likewise, Stefan Muthesius, in his study of the evolving interest in 'antique furniture' in the late nineteenth century, does not sufficiently acknowledge the subtle deployment of the term 'antique' in the earlier period.[130] Indeed, the ways in which terms such as 'antique' and 'ancient' are both applied to historical objects and employed by the trade in the opening decades of the nineteenth century suggests that the trade was much more complex and sophisticated than is generally allowed.

By adopting a synchronic analysis of the descriptive nomenclature, and attempting to understand the shifting social and cultural meanings of the terminology as it is employed within a specific culture will perhaps provide a better understanding of the evolution of the trade. A starting point, at least, for this kind of analysis is the information provided by the London trade directories. As highlighted in the introductory discussion to the current project the directories themselves provide clear evidence of the rapid expansion in the numbers of individuals involved in the trade in antiques and curiosities during a period from the early 1820s to the early 1840s, (as shown in appendices III.I & III.II). The trade directories also provide evidence of the

diverse and complex structure of the trade in historical objects, revealed, in part at least, by the increasingly sophisticated nomenclature adopted by the trade over the period (see appendix IV). It is important however to acknowledge the limitations of relying on the evidence deployed in the trade directories as a tool for reading the changing practices of the trade in historical objects. Naming is an unstable cultural register and many of the descriptive terms appear to have been used interchangeably in the period. Moreover, we also need to be aware of projecting our own perceptions into the prospective meaning of a descriptive category, classification or title. But even so, there can be little doubt that the trade directories provide us with significant evidence that the trade in historical objects began to take on a distinctive form in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the purpose of the trade directories, i.e. providing consumers with specific information on the location and activities of traders and professions, supports the contemporary social logic of the terminology deployed within their pages. There are other pieces of evidence that can be utilised to map the evolving practices and activities of the antique and curiosity trade, indeed the Isaac archive itself provides numerous supplementary descriptive terms employed both by collectors and employed within the trade itself. The inclusion of a selection of these in appendix IV to the present study, covering the period c.1830-c.1845, complements the descriptive framework as it appears in the trade directories and also supports the contention of this study that the trade in historical objects was complex and diverse in the period.

Clive Wainwright and several other writers have also drawn attention to the fact that there were a number of other terms employed to describe traders in historical objects in the period, including, for example, 'nicknackitarian', which is recorded as early as 1802.[131] For example, the writers describing themselves as the 'Old Subscribers' who

criticized the historical authenticity of the collections at Brougham Hall in 1848 described the collections on display there as 'nicknackery'.[132] The adoption of such descriptive terminology reveals much about the contemporary attitudes towards the trade and the objects that they sold and are an important piece of evidence in the complex social and cultural responses that these objects engendered. But the research for the current study did not find such a term employed in the trade directories, nor does it appear in any of the archive material during the period 1815-1850. The absence of such terminology in the descriptive categories assigned by the trade itself in the period under review here points towards the desire of the dealers to distance themselves from such problematic narratives and to assign their activities a discrete practice and, by extension, the objects that they sold a more positive cultural value.

The evidence in appendix IV indicates that in the opening decade of the nineteenth century there were only six trading categories that can be associated with the buying and selling of historical objects, with 'broker' still the most common description. As Wainwright has indicated, the classification of 'broker' generally signified a trader in second hand goods, but 'brokers' would certainly have encompassed those individuals trading in antiques and curiosities as well. The trade directories of the late eighteenth century and the period up to 1808 do not list 'curiosity dealers' specifically, indeed the earliest specific reference to 'dealer in curiosities' in the trade directories is that of the dealer Thomas Gwenapp, who appears under this classification in 1808. The changing descriptions that Gwenapp assigns himself in subsequent directories indicate a desire to present his trading activities a progressively more specific character, which in turn reflect the evolving markets. These changes also, no doubt, signal Gwenapp's attempts, like many other dealers in the period, to present a nuanced and discrete expertise. For example, by 1810 Gwenapp describes himself as dealer in 'old china'

and by the eighteen-teens he is listed as 'dealer in ancient armour', a specialisation for which he became well-known in the period. During the period under review the trade in general appears to have begun to adopt progressively more elaborate descriptive nomenclature for their business operations and as well as the ubiquitous 'curiosity dealer' we see such classifications as 'ancient furniture warehouse', (Edmund Terry, Wardour Street), 'antique furniture dealer,' (Moses Kasner, Wardour Street), 'antique lace warehouse' (Miss Clarke, Regent Street), 'Importer of Foreign Curiosities,' (Nathanial Nathan, Wardour Street), 'Antique Repository,'(Thomas Gwenapp, New Bond Street), and even 'Furnisher a l'antique', (James Robinson, Oxford Street). Indeed, from the 1820s onwards the trade directories began to group dealers under separate and distinct category headings, such as 'Ancient Furniture Importers' and 'Antique Furniture & China Dealers', a sure indication of the social and cultural significance of the trade in the period (see appendix IV).

Attention to the more specific the descriptive terminology adopted by the antique and curiosity trade during the period also reveals some significant shifts in contemporary meaning, suggesting that social and cultural values were also undergoing change. 'Ancient Furniture Warehouse', for example, which was one of the most popular designations for the trade during the period 1820-40, suggests that the particular dealer was, or wished to be, primarily associated with a specific kind of trading activity. However, the adoption by the trade of terms such as 'ancient' and 'antique' also reveal the shifting relationships between the contemporary world of the early nineteenth century and the past. For example, prior to the period under review here 'Ancient' had been used interchangeably with 'antique' as an appropriate term for objects dating from the Classical world, and was also as a legitimate descriptive term for objects dating from historical periods up to the late mediaeval period.

However, by the mid 1830s when the trade had begun to adopt the term, there were already attempts to restrict the field of meaning for such a designation. Thomas Frederick Hunt (1791-1831), the architect and antiquary, appears to have been among the first British writers to suggest a restriction of the chronological parameters assigned to 'ancient' objects. In the preface to his publication *Exemplars of Tudor Architecture.....and Furniture* (1830), Hunt wrote; 'It may be observed that I have, throughout, used the term 'ancient' as applied to a period not more remote than three centuries.'[133] It is clear that Hunt felt that he needed to qualify his definition of the term 'ancient' in order to avoid confusion in his readership, who were perhaps more used to 'ancient' being applied to a much more distant chronology. But Hunt's attempts at proscription also allowed historical material from the more recent past to be granted a significant semantic sanction.

With the classification 'antique' however we have a much more important shift. In the broader context of the trade in historical objects over the course of the nineteenth century, it is certainly legitimate to draw attention to the gradual drift in the conventional usage of the term 'antique' from an adjective to a noun. But within these broader changes, if we focus more directly it is also possible to place the meaning of 'antique' within a more specific field of social and cultural meaning.[134] For example, the term 'antique' as it is currently employed, has its own very specific definition, enshrined in the Government legislation on import tax and custom duty. 'Antique' in this proscribed definition 'are goods manufactured or produced.....more than 100 years before the date of importation.'[135] But 'antique' is more than a dry legal term, it has a broader social and cultural meaning and is employed with varying degrees of preciseness depending on the social and cultural context and is intimately related to notions of wealth, taste and culture.

In the late eighteenth century 'antique' was a descriptive classification employed to designate a chronological period but it was also, and perhaps more importantly, a familiar term employed in erudite collecting activities or objects such as classical sculpture and therefore also intimately connected to eighteenth-century notions of judgement and taste. As we have already seen, Horatio Rodd's catalogues in the early 1820s were already assigning the term 'antique' to a range of domestic and utilitarian objects such as furniture and porcelain during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. The adoption of the descriptive word 'antique' in respect to such objects in this period associates such objects with a distinctive frame of social and cultural meaning. It is clear therefore that between 1815 and 1850 the trade evolved into more specialised and discrete trading activities and that this diversification and specialisation in the trading of historical objects reflected the complex composition of the markets. The evolving nomenclature of the trade keyed into the various requirements of their consumers but these changes are also indicative of the desire by the dealers to assign distinctive cultural value to their respective activities.

Antique and Curiosity Dealing: a distinctive trade?

'No shop is so easily set up as an antiquary's'

Sir Walter Scott, 1827.[136]

The development of a more specialised trade in antiques and curiosities that arose in the opening decades of the nineteenth century evolved out of the already established curiosity trade of the eighteenth century but it is also clear that the trade

evolved from and involved a complex patchwork of related and overlapping trades and commercial practices. The problem of trying to assign the early nineteenth-century trade in antiques and curiosities a distinctive status is complicated by the rather amorphous qualities of such trading activities themselves. Attempts to distinguish the trade in antiques and curiosities are also exacerbated by the ambiguity of meanings assigned to subject objects. Patricia Allerston, who has studied the secondary markets for art-objects in the seventeenth century, suggests that there are inherent problems in attempting to isolate the dealer in specific kinds of objects, such as art or antiques, from more general commerce and trading activities.[137] Allerston found a wide range of disparate traders engaged in the trade in 'old paintings' in the seventeenth-century, including artists themselves, traders in household goods, merchants and even, she says, the odd barber.[138] It is clear that trading in historical objects during the early nineteenth century was equally diverse and as the trade expanded it began to draw in a wide range of other participants. Indeed many traders whose activities intersected with the antique and curiosity trade continued to combine their primary activities with trading in antiques and curiosities. For example, Samuel Hanson, 'cabinetmaker', William Manser 'chair jappanner', and James Hadnutt, 'carver and gilder' also traded in ancient furniture, and other traders, such as James Dantzigger, 'working jeweller', combined their skills as craftworkers with trading in antiques and curiosities. Indeed, the activity of trading in curiosities could also be combined with some quite surprising trading activities, James Shankey, for example, was listed as 'curiosity dealer and East Indian china tea dealer' in the 1830s.

The Davies family, who were able to supply eminent collectors such as Sir Samuel Meyrick and the Duke of Rutland with ancient armour with considerable confidence from the eighteen-teens, emerged from the broader structures of the merchant

economy itself and began their trading activities supplying 'curiosities' alongside more general merchant supplies. The Isaac archive is peppered with references to the supply of general goods in the substantial quantities associated with wholesale merchant trading. During the period 1815-20 the entries in the 'waste book' record numerous transactions devoted to the purchase and sale of general goods, mostly in relatively large quantities, alongside the sales of armour and other curiosities. For example, in 1815 a payment is recorded for 'glazing 42 Gross pocket Looking glasses,'[139] and in 1817 large quantities of 'Black Lead Pencils', 'Leaden Toys' and 'East India Rice.'[140] Indeed, such general business activities are reflected in the London trade directories which continue to list the Davies business as 'Davies & Co, Merchants' well into the 1820s.[141] From 1818 onwards, however, the evidence from the 'waste book' reveals that the quantity and range of antique objects and curiosities began to expand and by 1820 the sales of general trading merchandise appears to have subsided and the antique and curiosity side of the business becomes the primary trading activity. Indeed, by the time John Coleman Isaac took over the running of the business in c.1823/4 after the death of Abraham Davies in c.1822, the 'waste book' shows that the activities of the firm were almost all associated with the trade in historical objects. Moreover, by 1826 Isaac had made a conscious attempt to distance himself from the earlier general merchant activities of 'Davies & Co' and took the opportunity to describe himself as 'Dealer in Curiosities' when he subsequently insured his household goods and stock.[142] Indeed, the archive indicates that the purchasing criteria of Isaac, particularly in the later periods after 1830, appear to have become much more selective. What is noticeable in the 'waste book' entries is that the regular and very large consignments of 'curiosities' that the Davies family imported with such frequency in the period 1815-25 no longer take up such

substantial space in the waste book entries. These changes are indicative of the changing requirements of the wider markets for antiques and curiosities over the period which, as this study has already discussed in the introductory chapter, as a general trend gradually shifted from a wide range of historical material characterized as 'curiosities', to more discrete and specialized collecting activities by the 1830s and 1840s.

We can see then that the more discrete trading activities of the Davies/Isaac family evolved out of general merchant economy but also significant for antique and curiosity dealing was the relationship of this trade to the market and trade in second-hand goods. Indeed dealers in second-hand goods continued, and still continue, to operate alongside the more specialised dealers in historical objects. The trade in second hand goods is itself a highly significant one. As Evelyn Welch has indicated the re-circulation of goods, from clothes and linen to books and household effects, which must have taken place in all societies and at all periods, is an important social and cultural activity and a rich resource for social and cultural study, involving as it does, complex exchange systems, including gift and loan as well as through the more overtly commercial networks of dealers, auctions and private sales.[143] Indeed, despite the ubiquity of these networks in all historical periods their importance has only recently received scholarly attention. In the nineteenth century, for example, the markets for second-hand goods were much more important than they are now, particularly the markets for clothing, which for the lower classes often comprised the cast-offs of the wealthy. And the 'rag-trade', as the title suggests, involved a wide series of processes and economic activity as clothing materials were re-used and re-cycled. It is perhaps no surprise given the close association between these aspects of the second-hand trade and the antique and curiosity trade that Isaac was initially

employed as a tailor before he took up dealing in antiques and curiosities.[144] Many of these second-hand goods were sold by the lowest classes of merchants and in some of the most marginal of commercial spaces. Lynn Nead, in her study of Victorian London has drawn attention to the significance of these marginal spaces, highlighting in particular the problematic status of Holywell Street in the period under review here.[145] Indeed, directing attention to Holywell Street can also draw further attention to the links between the trade in antiques and curiosities and the trade in second-hand goods in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. William Schofield was listed as a 'furniture dealer' at 36 Holywell Street in the trade directories in the 1840s.[146] Schofield's shop, illustrated here in a watercolour painted by J.W. Archer, painted in 1847, (see plate 54) shows the kinds of second-hand objects that a 'furniture dealer' sold in the period. However, unlike the historical objects that comprised the more discrete trading activities of dealers such as Isaac, or Edward Hull and John Swaby, the objects in Schofield's shop can be considered firmly as 'second-hand'. The watercolour shows a jumble of furniture discarded by its owners, deemed either unfashionable or beyond practical utility. To the left of the doorway is a mahogany wine cellarette dating from the 1790s, not yet a 'fashionable antique', and a number of other domestic and utilitarian objects, some contemporary, others 20 or 30 years old, are scattered on the pavement. It is clear from the illustration that Schofield was a dealer in second-hand goods and whilst there is no doubt that dealers like Schofield would have sold antiques and curiosities when they had the opportunity (indeed Isaac records a purchase of a small quantity of carved woodwork in 1832 from a 'Mr Stockley' trading from Holywell Street)[147] dealers such as Schofield remain at the margins of the more discrete trade in antiques and curiosities. However, Schofield does represent the continuing relationships between the more specialised practices

undertaken by dealers such as Isaac and the practices of 'broking'. Indeed, as indicated, one of the problems of assigning dealers like Isaac with a more discrete trading activity is the catch-all description of 'broker'. Such a term is consistently employed by those historians who have investigated the trade in the period and moreover it was also a term that was frequently used by collectors, writers and the trade itself in the period under review. The writer Sir Walter Scott was just one of many interested individuals who used the descriptive term, writing to his friend, the actor-manager Daniel Terry in 1822; 'I would to Heaven I could take a cruize with you through the brokers, which would be the pleasantest affair.'[148] But one of the problems with this term when it is employed by historians to categorise trading activities is that it also has the effect of reducing our understanding of the complex nature of the trade in antiques and curiosities in the period. Furthermore, it collapses the diverse and discrete range of meanings that became attached to the historical objects in the early nineteenth century. Indeed, Isaac himself draws attention to the distinction between the marginal trading activities of 'broking' and the more discrete aspects of the antique and curiosity trade. Writing to Sarah from Germany in 1833 regarding the kinds of objects he has been able to purchase and send back to England, Isaac commented:

> I think if Mr Swaby sees the things this time, what I have bought, he then will say that it is nothing but old broking, but the fact is, it is the only thing that I am likely to bring out my expenses.[149]

The statement by Isaac clearly demonstrates the continuing relationships between antique and curiosity dealing and the second-hand trade in the period. Indeed, the

waste book records that like many other dealers Isaac was continuing to trade in second-hand furniture in the period, for example, selling a large quantity of what was obviously ordinary household furniture to the fellow dealer Nathanial Nathan in March 1828.[150] However, as Isaac suggests in his letters to Sarah, he only buys such objects out of economic necessity, and as his comments indicate he perceives that his trade should be in more socially and culturally meaningful objects. Moreover, it is also clear that both dealers and collectors in the period often made a distinction between the more discrete trade in historical objects and the practices of 'old broking'.

The notion of antique and curiosity dealing as a distinctive trade becomes even more problematic when we attempt to assign these practices as signifying the emergence of a specialized profession. In the realm of trading in 'antiques', some historians have denied that there were any 'professional' dealers at all until well into the 1870s.[151] However, whilst it may be true that it was not until 1918 that the British Antique Dealer's Association (BADA),[152] which is the premier trading association for the modern antique trade, was established, those historians who advance this notion deny the earlier trade in historical objects any distinctive status. It is true to say that 'professional' may be a contested classification, but even in its broadest definition, i.e. a loosely assembled body of individuals who earn a living from habitual employment (in this case selling antiques and curiosities), the majority of the dealers trading in the period fit this classification. Moreover if we take the definition of professional in a narrower sense, i.e. a clearly defined body with socially and culturally recognised skills or knowledge and, most importantly, legitimised in the public sphere through a significant sanction, then the dealers of the second quarter of the nineteenth century also appear to conform to a notion of 'professionalism'. We can note that John

Coleman Isaac was a member of the 'Dealers-in-Fine-Arts Provident Institution', a legal and commercial body already established by 1842 and an acknowledgment that dealers such as Isaac had professional status.[153] We can also note that even by the 1840s 'Dealers-in-Fine-Arts' incorporated a wide range of historical material, including, as the letter in the Isaac archive indicates, 'stained glass, china, shells, coins, carvings, enamels, fossils..' as well as the more obvious categories of paintings and drawings.[154] Moreover, the fact that dealers such as Isaac also deployed specific marketing strategies and produced distinctive business ephemera is a sign of their desire to present their trading activities as distinctive. We know, for example, that Isaac produced a trade card, probably in the 1830s, proclaiming that he was 'Importer of Dresden China & Curiosities' (see plate 55b), and several other dealers did the same. John Hedge Wickham, for example, also trading from Wardour Street in the early 1840s, produced a trade card indicating the range of objects that he sold, including 'antique furniture....armour, china etc.'[155] Some dealers also adopted the practice of the high-class furniture trade and attached labels to the furniture that they sold, for example a table supplied in 1837 to the Lucy family at Charlecote Park, Warwickshire by the dealer James Robinson, who was trading from addresses in Oxford Street and Rathbone Place in the 1830s, has a label, 'Robinson.....Decorater and Furnisher a l'Antique'.[156] Moreover, antique and curiosity dealers such as Isaac had been assigning their trading activities as distinctive since at least the second decade of the nineteenth century, as the press advertisements of Abraham Davies and those of Gabriel Davis and Isaac in the *Morning Chronicle* and *Morning Post* demonstrate[157] (see plate 55a). And we have already seen that dealers had been promoting their activities through the publication of brochures and pamphlets,

indicative of the desire to assign the trade in historical objects as a discrete trade in itself.

The art trade proper also incorporated dealers who sold antiques and curiosities, including perhaps the most famous art dealer in the period the Scottish art dealer William Buchanan (1777-1864) whose purchases of 'antique furniture' for the Lucy family at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire from the curiosity dealers Samuel Isaacs and John Swaby are well known.[158] And just as art dealers also sold antiques and curiosities the antique and curiosity trade incorporated several dealers who traded in paintings when the opportunity arose. Indeed, Isaac also made attempts to tap into these consumer markets and the waste book records that Isaac bought and sold paintings, albeit infrequently, over the period.[159] His ambitions as an art dealer seem to have expanded in the late 1820s and he had the confidence to purchase and send back to England 175 pictures together with a number of carved frames that he had purchased in Germany.[160] However, the more discrete knowledge required for the profitable acquisition and sale of paintings, a reflection of the specific requirements of the consumption of art proper, led to Isaac to concentrate on trading in antiques and curiosities rather than paintings. Indeed, by 1833 Isaac wrote to his wife that he had managed to get out of a deal to buy some paintings from the dealer Wimpfen in Germany, lamenting in the letter; 'the fact is we cannot sell any picture.'[161] The problems that Isaac had in selling paintings cannot have been as a result of the particular location of Isaac's shop. Wardour Street may not have been as discrete a consumer space as New Bond Street or Duke Street in the period, but it was the location of a number of art dealers, including William and George Clarke, Horatio Byard and William Pollentine. And Henry Farrer, who was a close neighbour, trading from 14 Wardour Street during the 1830s and 1840s, was amongst the most

well-known art dealers of the middle decades of the nineteenth-century. Farrer is regularly recorded as buyer and seller at picture sales in the period 1820-50, but he also sold 'antique furniture' and other ancient objects, as his consistent presence in the Isaac archive testifies. These overlapping trading practices of the art trade proper and the evolving antique and curiosity trade are a further demonstration of the expanding and diverse audience involved in the consumption of antiques and curiosities in the period.

[1] See, for example, Andrew Hemingway and William Vaughan (eds.), *Art in bourgeois society, 1790-1850*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), in particular Greg Smith's essay 'The Watercolour as commodity: the exhibitions of the Society of Painters in Watercolours, 1805-1812', pp.45-61.

[2] For a general introduction to the history of the shop see Dorothy Davis, *A History of Shopping*, (London, Routlege & Kegan Paul, 1966). Hoh-Cheung Mui & Lorn H. Mui, *Shops and Shopping in eighteenth-century England*, (London, Routledge, 1989), a study derived from economic history, provides a detailed, if largely statistical, investigation of the development of shops in England.

[3] Anne Mountfield, *Shops and Shopping*, (Hove, Wayland, 1976), p.81.

[4] Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[5] Ibid. pp.1-3.

[6] Ibid. pp.184-5.

[7] Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, (1900), translated by Tom Bottomore and David Frisby, (London, Routledge, 1990).

[8] Ibid. p.67.

[9] Appadurai, (1986), op.cit. p.4.

[10] *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.xvii, New Series, January 1842, 'Ancient Furniture', pp.19-23, p.19.

[11] See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.26-53 and Wainwright, (1986), op.cit.

[12] See for example, Celina Fox, 'A Visitors Guide to London, World City, 1800-40', in Celina Fox (ed), *London: World City 1800-40*, (New Haven and London, Yale, 1992), pp.11-20. Altick, (1978), op.cit.

[13] See Aileen Dawson, 'Franks and European Ceramics, Glass and Enamels', in Caygill & Cherry, (eds.), (1997), op.cit. pp.200-19, p.204.

[14] Davies sold Askew 'Dresden china groups' in April 1821, and '24 enamels on copper' in May 1821. Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book'.

[15] Wainwright, (1986), op.cit.

[16] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, No.467, 'waste book'; December 27th 1842 – Paid Messers Coutts & Co a check drawn by Samuel Ware Esq, Hendon Hall, Hendon.....£21.0.0.' For further information on Samuel Ware see appendix I, endnote 91.

[17] Dana Arnold, 'Rationality, Safety and Power, the Street Planning of late Georgian London', *Georgian Group Journal*, 1995, pp.37-50.

[18] Peter Jackson, *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-1840*, (London, Nattali & Morris, 1969), introduction. Also quoted in D.J. Olsen, *Town Planning in London*, (New Haven and London, Yale, 1982), p.19.

[19] Isaacs is known for his dealings with the Lucy family at Charlecote Park, Warwickshire in the 1830s. See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.225-6.

[20] Isaac exchanged some 'curiosities' with Abraham Hertz in July 1832, including '2 small ivory carvings of David and Goliath for 12 ivory figures and some wood carvings', and he sold Bentley

several objects over a long period of business transactions, including 8 suits of armour and a large amount of other curiosities for '£360', in August 1833. Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book'.

[21] Ibid. 'Paid Mr. Lipscombe £18 for a Quarters Rent for Shop in Quadrant due 29th last month' entry dated 4th October 1826, the last payment recorded for these premises is on 26th December 1827. See also Levy/Moss, (2002), op.cit. p.101.

[22] Christopher Breward, *Fashioning London, Clothing and the Modern Metropolis*, (Oxford, Berg, 2004); Jane Rendell, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London*, (London, Athlone, 2002).

[23] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1982), pp.16-17.

[24] Ibid. p.17.

[25] Charles Knight (ed.), *London*, (London, Charles Knight, 1841-44), (volume V), p.399.

[26] For example Isaac sold considerable quantities of 'curiosities' to 'Isaac Abrahams of Liverpool' in on December 18th 1829 and March 30th 1830 and continued to trade with Abrahams into the 1840s. Isaac recorded, 'Gave Mr Abrahams for a present...10/-', on April 25th 1843. Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, No.467 'waste book'.

[27] Ibid. For example, an entry dated 'December 5th 1838', records a quantity of paintings, furniture and other objects sold to Mr Brett.

[28] Ibid. no.366 letter dated 13th August 1844 & No.367 dated 14th August 1844 for transactions with the dealer L. Goetz in Southampton.

[29] James Lomax, 'Buying Antiques in Victorian Leeds: the 1843 Exhibition', *Furniture History*, volume xxxiii, 1997, pp.275-85.

[30] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', 'July 11th 1842, Delv'd to Pickford's Office 158 Regent Street, one small case directed to Mr C Redfern, Jury Street, Warwick....'

[31] Charles Redfern acted as the agent for a number of collectors, including for Lord Hertford at the Stowe auction sale in 1848; see Ingamells, (1981), op.cit. p.12 & p.22. Information in contemporary auction sale catalogues indicate that Charles Redfern was also a consistent presence in the London salerooms and his name appears in the purchase lists of several other high-profile auction dispersals, perhaps most famously at the Strawberry Hill auction sale in 1842, where he purchased the famous 'Walpole Cabinet', which is now at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

[32] Sir Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, (1816), (Edinburgh, Adam & Charles Black, 1871).

[33] For a comprehensive study of the development of Wardour Street see F.H.W. Sheppard, (ed.), *The Survey of London, the parish of St. Anne, Soho*, volume XXXIII, (London, Athlone Press, 1966), pp.113-14, p.221, pp.240-42, pp.288-96.

[34] Ibid. p.291. Levy/Moss record Isaac's shop as dating from the early nineteenth-century, which is incorrect. Levy & Moss, (2002), op.cit. p.102.

[35] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book'. Levy/Moss, record Isaac moving to Wardour Street in 1828, which is incorrect. See Levy & Moss, (2002), op.cit. p.102.

[36] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book, entry dated 'September 21st 1832'.

[37] See Jackson, (1969), op.cit. p.160.

[38] Isaac retired to live at 30 Gordon Street, Gordon Square, London, where he died on 16th March 1887, aged 85. See Levy & Moss, (2002), op.cit. p.104.

[39] *Survey of London*, (1966), op.cit. p.291-2. Illustrated on p.37.

[40] The building accounts for Goodrich Court, together with visitor books and other Meyrick ephemera are located at the Royal Armouries, Leeds. See Meyrick MS papers, *RAR.85, RAR.87*,and *RAR.401*.

[41] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.178, letter dated 18th June 1831.

[42] Ibid. no.142, letter dated 7th September 1838.

[43] Nicholas Condy and Rev. F.V.J. Arundell, *Cotehele, on the banks of the Tamar*...(London, published by the authors, n.d.) (1840).

[44] Ibid. p.33. 'Ebony chairs' such as those at Cotehele are amongst the most famous objects in the history of 'ancient furniture'., Historical interest in them begins in the eighteenth-century with Horace Walpole and there are several subsequent discussions of their history and significance, see for example: Clive Wainwright, 'Only the True Black Blood', *Furniture History*, vol. xx, 1984, pp.250-5. For a useful, and revisionist, summary of discussions see Amin Jaffer, *Furniture from British India and Ceylon*, (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 2001).

[45] N.N. Humphries, *Ten Centuries of Art*, (London, 1852), p.210.

[46] Charles Lock Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and other details*, (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1868), pp.57-8.

[47] The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'Wardour Street English' as 'applied to the pseudo-archaic diction affected by some modern writers especially of historical novels'. See also Wainwright, (1989), op.cit.p.36.

[48] See, in particular, A.W.N.Pugin, *The True Principles of Christian or Pointed Architecture*, (1841) and John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, (3 volumes) (1851-3), volume 2, 'The Nature of Gothic', pp.139-70.

[49] This suggestion coincides with the assessment of the consolidation of the notion of authenticity by Stefan Muthesius. See Muthesius, (1988), op.cit. See Percy MacQuoid and Ralph Edwards, (eds.), *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, (3 volumes), (London, Country Life, 1924 -27).

[50] Anon. 'Brougham Hall, A Modern Antique', *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.xxix, June 1848, pp.618-20.

[51] George Shaw, 'A Visit to Brougham Hall', *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.xxix, April 1848, pp.369-76.

[52] *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1848, op.cit. p.618.

[53] Ibid. p.619.

[54] Ibid. p.618.

[55] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, n.467, 'waste book', passim.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid. no.306, letter dated 26th April 1841, 'we shall be happy to take your bill at 3 months for the amount of any lots which you may purchase at the sale of our collection of armour...'. An offer that

was repeated again for Pratt's sale at Oxenham's in March 1842, see letter no.323, dated 9th March 1842.

[58] Ibid. entry dated, '6th April 1821'. Levy & Moss, (2202), op.cit. p.99, inaccurately state that this was the only occasion that the Davies family used the method of auction for disposal. For a comprehensive overview of the history of William Bullock and the Egyptian Hall see Altick, (1978), op.cit. pp.235-52.

[59] Probably translated by Rabbi Feld in the early 1970s. See Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, Add 3.

[60] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.430.

[61] Cripps-Day, (1925), op.cit. p.lxvi.

[62] Andrew Miller, *Novels behind glass, Commodity Culture and Victorian Narrative*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.21.

[63] Appardurai, (1986), op.cit. p.21.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Jean Baudrillard, "The Art Auction", in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, (translated by Charles Levin), (St. Louis, Mo., Telos Press, 1981), pp.112-23, p.117.

[66] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.182, letter dated 22nd July 1833.

[67] H.C. Forster, '*The Stowe Catalogue, Priced and Annotated*, (London, David Bogue, 1848), p.102.

[68] See, for example the reporting of the sales at *The Pryor's Bank* in Fulham, the property of the collector and antiquary Thomas Baylis which were sold in May 1841 and those of the Nottingham collector John Holmes at East Retford in October 1841, in *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xvii, January 1842, op.cit. p.23.

[69] Burn, (1842), op.cit.; Forster, (1848), op.cit.

[70] Pomian, (1990), op.cit. p.39.

[71] Brian Cowen, 'Arenas of Connoisseurship: Auctioning Art in Later Stuart England', in Michael North and David Ormrod, op,cit. pp.153-166, p.157.

[72] Satomi Ohasi, 'The Auction Duty Acts of 1777 and 1779: toward institutionalisation of auction in Britain', unpublished conference paper, '*Auctions, Agents and Dealers: the mechanisms of the art market 1660-1830*', Wallace Collection, London, 12 & 13 December 2003.

[73] Malcolm Baker, 'Auctions, catalogues and responses to small-scale sculpture in eighteenth-century Amsterdam', unpublished conference paper, *Wallace Collection*, December 2003, op.cit.

[74] Pomian, (1990), op.cit. pp.139-56.

[75] Burn, (1842), op.cit.

[76] Forster, (1848), op.cit.

[77] Ohasi, op.cit.

[78] *Catalogue of Authentic Portraits...carvings in wood etc.,...Horatio Rodd...*(London, 1824); *Catalogue of Portraits...carvings in Oak, Ivory and Boxwood, Antique Furniture...Horatio Rodd...*(London, 1842); See also Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.55-6.

[79] See Watts, (1992), op.cit. p.100.

[80] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', entry dated, '9th June'.

[81] In her study of the Bristol antiquarian collector George Weare Braikenridge, Sheena Stoddard inaccurately states that Horatio Rodd produced lists of 'seven thousand prints', but she confuses the curiosity dealer with the well-known book dealer and print merchant, Thomas Rodd who also traded from Great Newport Street in the same period. See Stoddard, (1981), op.cit. p.18.

[82] Altick, (1978), op.cit. pp.426-30.

[83] Lafond, op.cit. p.60.

[84] Altick, (1978), op.cit.

[85] Edward Joy, (1962), op.cit. p.242.

[86] Ibid. p.ix.

[87] *Catalogue of a Most Splendid and Instructive Collection of Ancient Armour, exhibiting at the OPLOTHECA*....(1816).

[88] Ibid. p.x.

[89] Ibid. p.iii.

[90] See Altick, (1978), op.cit.p.391

[91] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no. 181, letter dated, '15th June 1833'.

[92] For further descriptive accounts of the exhibitions of Pratt see Altick, (1978), op.cit. p.391, and K.N. Watts, in Mark Jones (ed.), (1992), op.cit. pp.100-104.

[93] For an extensive and detailed study of the architect Lewis Cottingham, see Janet Myles, *L.N. Cottingham 1787-1847, Architect of the Gothic Revival*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1996).

[94] See *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol.ix, (New Series), May 1838, p.532. *The Times*, Monday 16th April, 1838, p.3.

[95] I am very grateful to Joyce Stephenson of Ontario, Canada, a distant relative of Williams Gibbs Rogers, who supplied this information.

[96] Quoted in Altick (1978), op.cit. p.397. Rogers was well-known for his admiration of the late seventeenth-century sculptor and carver Grinling Gibbons.

[97] *Manchester Guardian*, September 22nd 1838.

[98] Ibid.

[99] *Manchester Guardian*, November 3rd 1838.

[100] See for example Lubbock, (1995), pp.248-78.

[101] Lomax, (1997), op.cit. p.275.

[102] Ibid.

[103] *Catalogue of the Second Public Exhibition of Paintings, Sculpture, Curiosities...at the Music Hall, Leeds*...(1843), appendix. A copy of this rare catalogue is held at Leeds Central Reference Library (Local Studies), LP 606 L517.

[104] Ibid.

[105] For a discussion of the Marlborough House and Gore House exhibitions see Anthony Burton, *Vision and Accident: the story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, (London, V&A, 1999), pp.26-39.

[106] Anthony Burton, 'The uses of the South Kensington Art Collections', *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol.14, no.1, (2002), pp.79-95; Burton acknowledges that the exhibitions were also driven to a substantial extent by antiquarian interests.

[107] *Catalogue of Works of Ancient and Mediaeval Art Exhibited at the House of the Society of Arts, London*, (1850), introduction.

[108] *The Times*, 20th March 1850.

[109] *The Times*, 4th June 1853, p.8.

[110] See *Museum of Ornamental Art – a handbook for visitors to Marlborough House*, (1852); *Catalogue of Specimens of Cabinet-work and Studies from the Schools of Art Exhibited at Gore House, Kensington*, (1853)

[111] *Catalogue...Gore House*, (1853), op.cit.

[112] Charles Thurston Thompson, *Photographs of Furniture Exhibited at Gore House, 1853* (2 volumes, 1853), (V&A Print Room, X.180).

[113] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.700*.

[114] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.662*.

[115] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.712*.

[116] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.720*.

[117] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.634*.

[118] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.674*.

[119] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.682*.

[120] Ibid. V&A photograph *32.608*.

[121] *Catalogue...Gore House*, (1853), op.cit. preface.

[122] See Lubbock, (1995), op.cit. p.250-2.

[123] J.R. Planché, *Some Account of the Armour and weapons, Exhibited amongst the Art Treasure of the United Kingdom at Manchester in 1857*, (1857), preface.

[124] Altick, (1978), op.cit. p.471.

[125] See Peter Thornton and Helen Dorey, *A Miscellany of Objects from Sir John Soane's Museum*, (London, Laurence King, 1992).

[126] See John Cherry, 'Franks and the Medieval Collections', in Caygill and Cherry, (eds.), (1997), op.cit. pp.184-99.

[127] Myles, (1995), op.cit.

[128] Ibid. especially chapter 2, 'The Museum of Mediaeval Art.'

[129] See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. pp.33-5.

[130] See Muthesius, (1988), op.cit. p.243.

[131] The term is recorded in relation to a civil court proceeding, *Hurst v. Halford* in 1802 where the plaintiff was described as '*a nicknackitarian, that is, a dealer in all manner of curiosities...*', see *Annual Register*, 1802, Chronicle, pp.445-6; See also Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.33; Altick,(1978), op.cit. p.24 and also Geoffrey Wills, 'On Nicknackitarianism', *Apollo*, volume cviii, no.201, 1978, pp.327-331.

[132] *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1848, op.cit., p.619.

[133] Thomas Frederick Hunt, *Exemplars of Tudor Architecture, adapted to Modern habitations...and Observations on the Furniture of the Tudor Period*, (London, Longmans, 1830), p.vii.

[134] I draw on the work of the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz here, and in particular his notion of 'thick description'; see Clifford Geetz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (1973).

[135] HM Customs & Excise, (2001), VAT Notice 702, appendix C.

[136] Sir Walter Scott; *Chronicles of the Canongate*, (1827), vol.I, p.99. Also quoted in Wainwright (1989), op.cit. p.36.

[137] Patricia Allerston, 'The Second-hand Trade in the Arts in Early Modern Italy', in Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthews & Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (eds.), *The Art Market in Italy (15th – 17th Centuries)*, (Modena, Franco Cosimo Panini, 2003), pp.300-312. Art dealing was similarly combined with related trades, such as frame-making and gilding, in the seventeenth-century. See Christopher Marshall, 'Senza il minimo scrupolo', Artists as dealers in seventeenth-century Naples', *Journal of the History of Collections*, volume 12, number 1, 2000, pp.15-34.

[138] Ibid. p.307.

[139] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', entry dated, 'October 26th, 1815, Paid Mr (?) for glazing 42 Gross pocket Looking glasses...£4.4.0.

[140] Ibid. entries dated 'August 30th 1817, ...Forwarded Mr John Hawkes one case containing 49 Gross Black Lead Pencils, 35 Doz boxes Leaden Toys....; September 4th 1817...Bought of William Rees Thomas, broker to the East India Company, 34 Bags of East India Rice....'

[141] *Kelly's* Directories continue to list Davies & Co as 'Merchants' as late as 1829.

[142] See Levy and Moss, (2002), op.cit. p.101.

[143] Welch, (2003), op.cit.

[144] See Levy and Moss, (2002), op.cit.

[145] Lynn Nead, *Victorian Babylon: people, streets and images in nineteenth-century London*, (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2000), pp.168-78. Nead focuses on the associations of Holywell Street with ethnic identities, particularly Jewish identity. It is interesting to note, given these associations, that Isaac records that his parents had moved to lodgings in the house of Mr. Levy, 10 Holywell Street, in 1842. Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', entry dated, 'October 6th 1842.'

[146] *Kelly's London Directory*, (1847).

[147] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', entry dated 'August 28th 1832'.

[148] H.J.C. Grierson, (ed.), *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1821-23*, (1934), letter dated 10th November 1822, quoted in Wainwright (1989), op.cit. p.33.

[149] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, Add 1, no.12, letter dated 7th March 1833.

[150] Ibid. For example, on 30th March 1828, Isaac sold the dealer Nathanial Nathan, '2 chests of drawers. 2 beds, bolsters & pillows, mattresses & straw pallias, 4 blankets...a sofa, a chimney glass, 2 old carpets...£29.7.0.'

[151] Muthesius, (1988), op.cit.

[152] The British Antique Dealers Association (BADA) remains the most high profile of the modern trade associations. The BADA was established in 1918, ostensibly in response to the new Labour Government's proposed introduction of a new luxury tax. The BADA has strict criteria for membership (currently c.400), based on a peer assessment of the specialist knowledge and economic trading status of the prospective member. Recommendation for membership must come from within the current membership. The establishment of the London and Provincial Antique Dealer's Association (LAPADA), formed in 1974, provided the modern antiques trade with a less exclusive professional body (current membership c.650). An international body for traders in antiques and works of art was also founded in 1935, the Confédération Internationale des Négociants en Oeuvres d'Art, (CINOA), which is based in Brussels (current membership c.5000).

[153] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, letter no.468, dated May 27th 1846.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Wickham's trade card is in the collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[156] See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.230.

[157] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', 'Paid to the Morning post office...advertisement and paragraphs for armour...£2.8.0., entry dated March 5th 1817. See also other 'waste book' entries in December 1825 and February 1826; (see appendix I).

[158] See Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.43 and p.47.

[159] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.467, 'waste book', passim.

[160] Ibid. entry dated July 30th 1829.

[161] Ibid. Add 1, no.12, letter dated 7th March 1833.

The Idea of the Dealer I

During the nineteenth century the activities of the antique and curiosity dealer and the specific presence of the antique and curiosity shop within the fabric of the city inscribed the 'idea' of the dealer as a discrete social and cultural identity into the wider contemporary cultural consciousness. As this study discusses further below, the idea of the antique and curiosity dealer was structured through the technical history of the activities and practices of the antique and curiosity trade itself - the dealer in historical 'fact'. But an important aspect in the wider construction of the specific persona of the antique and curiosity dealer was structured through characterisations of the dealer in literary 'fiction'. Both 'technical fact' and 'technical fiction' provide the dialectic that figured the dealer.

The character of the antique and curiosity dealer began its appearance in contemporary fiction during the first half of the nineteenth century, simultaneous with the consolidation of the trade itself. Beginning in the early 1830s, and continuing throughout the 1840s, the characteristics of the dealer, descriptions of their problematic activities, together with some iconic descriptions of the interior of the antique and curiosity shop, embedded the dealer as 'problem' in the cultural consciousness. As discussed below, the novels of Balzac, Gautier and Dickens provide exemplary models for this suggestion. Indeed, Balzac's famous and formidable description of the antique shop in the opening chapter of *La Peau de chagrin*, (The Wild Ass's Skin) which was first was published in 1831, also provides

further support of one of the main contentions of the current study, namely that during the period under review here the historical object had become an integral part of the consumer culture in the second quarter of the nineteenth-century.

In the opening sequences of Balzac's novel, the chief protagonist, Raphaël de Vallin, entered an antique and curiosity shop situated on Quai Voltaire in Paris. We can note that Balzac, known as a 'historian of his own times',[1] fixed his fictionalized representation of the dealer as 'authentic' by locating his curiosity shop in this important location, which was, rather like Wardour Street in London, already famous for its traders in antiques and curiosities in Paris in the period. Mons. Escudier, for example, from whom the British dealer Edward Holmes Baldock recorded the purchase of 'Old Sévres' in 1836, traded from a shop at 21 Quai Voltaire and was one of the most well-known dealers at the time.[2] Raphaël makes his way through the interior of the shop and is overwhelmed by the clutter of the gallery:

> At first glance the place presented a confused picture in which every achievement, human and divine, was mingled...A Sèvres vase, bearing Napoleon's portrait by Madame Jacotot stood beside a sphinx dedicated to Sesostris. A kitchen jack leaned against a pyx, a republican saber on a medieval hackbut...Instruments of death, poniards, quaint pistols, weapons...porcelain soup-tureens, Dresden china plates, translucent cups from China, old salt-cellars, comfit-boxes belonging to feudal times. A carved ivory ship...a Salt-cellar from Benvenuto Cellini's workshop...a Milanese suit of armour, brightly polished and richly wrought...votive shields, panoplies, carved shrines and figures on the walls at every step...a writing-desk made at the cost of a hundred thousand francs...a lock with a

> secret worth a king's ransom...An ebony table that an artist might worship, carved after Jean Goujon's designs...precious caskets...classic bas-reliefs, finely-cut agates, wonderful cameos...a priceless vase of antique porphyry...[3]

Balzac's description has been significantly truncated here, it runs over five pages, 'the debris of fifteen hundred vanished years',[4] as Raphaël makes his way further up through the four floors of antiques and curiosities to his eventual quarry, the ass's skin of the title of the novel. It seems to me we have here an assembly of historical objects that appears, at first, to offer us no real classificatory structure; curiosities, relics, precious artefacts, objects of domestic origin, comprising all manner of materials and from a wide chronological span are assembled in the galleries of the antique and curiosity shop. Here, unlike in the rationale that underpins the ordered taxonomy of the good collection, there is no real attempt to convert these objects into erudite knowledge. But if we look again we can see that there is a kind of order in the objects in the shop. Balzac's description draws our attention to the fact that what was beginning to bind all of these objects together, as they are presented in the galleries of the antique and curiosity shop, was their emerging status as commodities within the contemporary culture.

In Balzac's other famous novel about collecting, *Cousin Pons* (1848) the focus was on the relationships between the collector and the dealer and we see a number of fictional dealers introduced, including the characters of Monistrol, Rémonencq and Elias Magus. As a collector himself, Balzac was a frequent visitor of antique and curiosity shops, indeed records indicate that he purchased objects from several well known dealers, including Louis Wolf, Schwab (Balzac recorded satisfactorily that

Schwab gave him 'a whole year's credit')[5] Lazard and Charles Mannheim.[6] Many of these 'authentic' dealers again provided Balzac with appropriate models for his characterisations.[7] Balzac's description of the dealer Rémonencq in his novel *Cousin Pons* is well known, the dealer was both a 'monster' and a pimp, standing in his shop 'like an old madam amidst the bevy of girls she offers for sale.'[8] Balzac's withering description Rémonencq continued:

> The beauty and marvels of art mean nothing to this man, who is simultaneously subtle and vulgar, figuring out the profit he is going to make and browbeating ignoramuses. He has become quite an actor and feigns attachment to his canvases and his inlays; or he pleads poverty, lies about the prices he has paid and offers to show you his bills of sale. He changes shape like a Proteus. He is everything by turns.....a cheap-jack, a bumpkin, a lumpkin, a Scrooge, a stooge and a clown.[9]

The characterisations of the dealer as a problematic character and the shop as a problematic space continued in the work of other contemporary novelists, such as Theophile Gautier (1811-1872) whose short story, *The Mummy's Foot* was published in 1840.[10] Gautier set his ghostly story against the background of an antique and curiosity shop where the collector purchased the mummy's foot of the title of the story. The shop itself was an archetypal location for the inauthentic, as Gautier writes:

> the cobwebs are more authentic than the guimp laces; and the old pear-tree furniture on exhibition is actually younger than the mahogany which arrived but yesterday from America.[11]

Gautier's description of the dealer himself continues to rehearse the common tropes that constructed contemporary and enduring characterisations of the dealer:

> his two little yellow eyes, which trembled in their orbits like two louis-d' or upon quicksilver...his hands – thin, slender, full of nerves which projected like strings upon the finger-board of a violin, and armed with claws like those terminations of bat's wings – shook with senile trembling; but those convulsively agitated hands became firmer than steel pincers or lobster's claws when they lifted any precious article – an onyx cup, a Venetian glass, or a dish of Bohemian crystal. This strange old man had an aspect so thoroughly rabbinical and cabalistic that he would have been burnt on the mere testimony of his face three centuries ago.[12]

The novels of Balzac and Gautier evolved out of the antique and curiosity trade as it emerged in Paris, Marseille and other locations in France and provided stereotypes through which the subsequent identity of the dealer were channelled. In London at the same time as Balzac and Gautier were directing attention to the antique and curiosity trade the British public were introduced to perhaps the most famous characterisations of both the dealer and indeed the curiosity shop itself with the publication of Charles Dickens' *Old Curiosity Shop*. The story was originally published in serial form beginning on 25th April 1840 as *Master Humphrey's Clock*,

before being published in a single volume in December 1841. Dicken's story was extremely popular, it is estimated that it had a circulation of 100,000 copies. Indeed, the popularity of Dickens' novel acted as a catalyst for a range of visual material reinforcing the stereotypical identity of the dealer and the curiosity shop throughout the rest of the nineteenth-century. The woodblock prints by several artists, including George Cattermole (1800-68), whose interior studies of the *Old Curiosity Shop* (see plates 56 & 57) furnished the original editions with an enduring visual characterisation of both the shop and Nell Trent's grandfather, the curiosity dealer at the centre of the novel. The *Old Curiosity Shop* also inspired many other paintings, such as *Kit's Writing Lesson* by R. B. Martineau (1826-1869), which was painted in 1852, (see plate 58). Dickens' interior descriptions of the shop rehearse the trope of the shop as problematic space, one that was retentive with its knowledge and in which the 'dis-ordered' objects in its interior spaces provided the antithesis of the ordered collections assembled by the collector. The *Old Curiosity Shop* was:

> one of those receptacles for old and curious things which seem to crouch in every corner of this town, and hide away their musty treasures from the public eye in jealousy and distrust. There were suits of mail standing like ghosts in armour, here and there; fantastic carvings brought from monkish cloisters; rusty weapons of various kinds; distorted figures in china, and wood, and iron, and ivory; tapestry, and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams.[13]

Indeed, Dickens' conflates the character of the antique and curiosity dealer with the shop itself – 'the haggard aspect of the little old man was wonderfully suited to the place.'[14]

The curiosity shop was inscribed even further into the wider public consciousness when the *'Old Curiosity Shop'* itself made its appearance, slipping from 'fiction' to 'fact' as it became a distinct physical presence in the capital during the 1870s. Following the death of Charles Dickens in 1870 a shop at 13 and 14 Portsmouth Street was suggested by the illustrator Clayton Clarke, better known as the illustrator 'Kyd', as the actual shop on which Dickens based his shop in the novel.[15] There were already doubts concerning the authenticity of the Portsmouth Street shop as the model for the *Old Curiosity Shop* even as early 1900.[16] And since then many Dickens scholars and other writers have suggested other locations in London as models for the shop, including Green Street, off Leicester Square and a shop in Fetter Lane.[17] However, regardless of the subsequent questions in respect of the veracity of the Portsmouth Street shop as the model for the *Old Curiosity Shop* the owner of the shop at the time, a bookbinder named Charles Tessyman, took full advantage of the opportunity and began trading as a curiosity dealer, even having, *'The Old Curiosity Shop, Immortalized by Charles Dickens'* emblazoned on the front of the shop (see plate 59a & 59b). This most famous 'curiosity shop' may have emerged as a result of the writings of Dickens but its presence contributed to the consolidation of the idea of the curiosity dealer and the curiosity shop as discrete social and cultural identities in the public consciousness during the nineteenth century.

The Idea of the Dealer II

Michel Foucault begins his discussion of the notion of authorship in his now famous essay *What is an Author?* by repeating the words of the author and playwright Samuel Beckett, 'What does it matter who is speaking?.....What does it matter who is speaking?.....'.[18] Foucault's succinct critique of the authorial voice also provides a useful starting point from which to begin to consider the 'idea' of the antique and curiosity dealer. Foucault uses this exhortation exclusively as grounds for investigating the notion of authorship in its literary sense, however he allows the room, insists even, that the notion of the author can be transposed to other areas of social and cultural activity.[19] I use it here to investigate the idea that the antique and curiosity dealer, as the voice behind the historical object, 'speaks' on behalf of the object from a specific position within the social and cultural fabric. As this study discusses below, during the course of the nineteenth century the antique and curiosity dealer was positioned at the centre of a cluster of problematic narratives. We often hear, for example, of Samuel Pratt 'the notorious dealer in New Bond Street,'[20] duping collectors with his 'fake armour'.[21] Or of John Charles Robinson of the South Kensington Museum dismissing the activities of dealers such as William Chaffers, who was, according to Robinson, 'not reputable'[22] and Henry Farrer the Wardour Street dealer, who 'dealt largely in forgeries...'.[23] Moreover, Robinson was even more damning in his condemnation of the dealer 'Herr Dux of Hanover', who he suggested had been passing 'fakes' to the hapless Henry Cole whilst Cole was buying for the South Kensington Museum in the early 1860s.[24] When Dux sent a 'Nautilus Shell' to the museum as a prospective purchase in 1865 Robinson dismissed both the object its sender. The object belonged, wrote Robinson:

> ..to a clan of spurious fabrications...of which any number of equally precious examples may be found in the third rate curiosity shops at Oxford Street, Holborn and the City....I have no doubt that Herr Dux is perfectly aware of the real character of these objects and I recommend that they are returned to him with a sharp rebuke for having attempted so impudent an imposture.[25]

Indeed, even when there was a faint hint of recognition of the significance of trade activities there was still a reluctance to break down the social and cultural stereotype; Robinson wrote that the French dealer Couvreur, for example, was 'sufficiently honest' adding the caveat '...for a dealer.'[26] It appears that when the dealer makes an appearance in the histories of collecting the notion of 'fake' is always not very far behind. Indeed, whilst Robinson's criticism belongs to a time when the notion of the 'authenticity' of such objects was consolidating there have also been many more recently published essays that have continued to rehearse the idea of the dealer as 'problem'.[27] Moreover, as indicated in the introductory chapter to this investigation, the 'idea' of the dealer as a problematic character continues to this day and is evidenced, subliminally at least, by the association of the antique dealer with 'fakes and forgeries' in the new British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum. This notion of the dealer as problematic runs through a number of themes, but is most in evidence in the suggested dichotomy between the 'character' of the dealer and the collector and the signification of their activities. Indeed, attempts by collectors to distance themselves from the more overt commercial practices of dealing are a consistent theme in the history of collecting. In the eighteenth century Sir William

Hamilton (1730-1803), British Minister Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Naples, collector of classical antiquities and connoisseur, was always conscious of transgressing the social boundaries between collecting and dealing. 'I am delicate as to the manner of selling', wrote Hamilton in a letter to one of his friends in 1790, 'as I should hate to be looked upon as a dealer.'[28] Hamilton's pre-emptive response to the potential charge of being a trader in antiquities is understandable given his social and cultural position. As an eighteenth century connoisseur Hamilton perceived himself to be the rightful custodian of the socially significant objects that were signified by his famous collections of antiquities. Hamilton belonged to a social class in the eighteenth century that regarded art and the collecting of its products as an aspect of morality, or 'virtu' as it was known, and his concern to uphold those values are overtly demonstrated through his statement.[29] His remarks however also exemplify attitudes towards the practice of dealing in objects that were so socially and culturally significant. Indeed, whilst dealers in antiquities and curiosities were often understood to have considerable knowledge of the objects that they sold, as the discussions in the letters between John Coleman Isaac and his collector clients have already demonstrated in the present study, they have also consistently been identified with a lack of authentic appreciation of those objects. Moreover, it is clear that such notions continue even in the present day. The contemporary art collector Frank Cohen, for example, who made his wealth from DIY stores in the 1980s, was questioned recently about the comparison between his activities as a collector of contemporary art and that of his more famous rival Charles Saatchi. In response to the suggestion that through his collecting activities Cohen was attempting to challenge the status of Saatchi as the most important collector of contemporary art, Cohen responded; 'There's a big difference between us, I'm a collector; Charles

Saatchi is basically a dealer.'[30] Whilst it is important here to acknowledge that the desire to distance oneself from the commercial aspects of the consumption of art proper brings up another series of issues, 'art' is after all a special category, it is also important to stress that the historical objects that are the subject of this study were similarly charged with social and cultural meaning.

These attempts to distance oneself from the charge of being a dealer can be seen as part of the ideological camouflage of connoisseurship. 'What is at stake', as the social anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu informs us, is 'personality, i.e. the quality of the person, which is affirmed in the capacity to appropriate an object of quality.'[31] 'Personality' is indeed at the core of the discussions that follow. These discussions take as their focus the different 'personalities' of the dealer and the collector and the distinction, to use Bourdieu's phraseology, that is made between their respective identities. However, this is a distinction, I suggest, that is unquestionably difficult to cleave so smoothly. But how to we get to grips with an attempt to separate the two identities? It seems inevitable that there are going to be overlaps and that each will have common characteristics. Indeed, whenever the practice of collecting has emerged there must have always been a status of collector-dealers. And the process of collecting itself involves a degree of trading, swapping objects and off-loading things as a collection develops. Moreover, it is clear that many of the antique and curiosity dealers in this investigation combined the practices of dealing and collecting throughout their careers. And the desirability of becoming a collector rather than remaining a dealer is demonstrated by the frequency with which dealers, when they became financially successful enough, transformed themselves into collectors. The dealer Edward Holmes Baldock is perhaps the most obvious case during the period under review. Baldock's immense financial success as an antique and curiosity dealer

during the opening decades of the nineteenth century enabled him to retire in 1843 to a comfortable address in Hyde Park Place, which he rented from the Earl of Lucan for £275 per annum.[32] The contents of his antique and curiosity shop, including 'Florentine cabinets, ancient carvings and Sèvres' were sold at auction by Messrs Foster & Son in May and June 1843, but inevitably Baldock retained some objects and established his own collection.[33] Baldock's newly acquired status as a respectable member of the gentry, (he registered a coat of arms with the College of Heralds in the year of his retirement) would necessitate the appropriate trappings of taste and erudition that were signified through the display of such objects. Indeed Baldock appears to have been keen that his new found social status would continue and he made stringent requirements in his will to ensure that this would happen.[34] He would have been no doubt suitability proud of his son, Edward Baldock junior, who was made heir to Baldock senior's considerable estate and eventually married the daughter of Sir Andrew Corbett and took a seat at the House of Commons as Conservative member for Shrewsbury between 1847 and 1857.[35] Similarly, the dealer John Webb, an active trader from addresses in Old Bond Street and Grafton Street in London for over 25 years, and famous for his acquisitions for Henry Cole, Richard Redgrave and John Charles Robinson at the South Kensington Museum during the 1850s and 1860s, had retired to his villa in Cannes by 1865 with a large collection of objects.[36] Indeed, the John Webb Trust Fund, established through the legacy of £10,000 that Webb left the South Kensington Museum perpetuates institutional collecting activities in his memory. And the dealer Abraham Hertz, who was trading from Regent Street and Marlborough Street in the 1830s and 1840s, built up a substantial collection, which was eventually acquired, according to the nineteenth century publisher Henry Bohn, by the well-known collector Joseph Mayer of

Liverpool during the 1850s.[37] John Coleman Isaac himself, who retired from the antique and curiosity trade in 1867, moving to a house in Gordon Street, London, retained a collection of objects, including 'pictures, curiosities, objects of vertu etc', which he eventually left to his niece Matilda Levy on his death in 1887.[38] Likewise, John Swaby, the antique and curiosity dealer who traded from Wardour Street also appears to have retired from trading, from commercial premises at least, during the mid 1830s, vacating his Wardour Street shop in 1834. Swaby does not appear in trade directories after 1835 but it appears that he was still active in the antique and curiosity markets, indeed he made a fairly substantial purchase from Isaac in 1838.[39] By the end of the 1840s however Swaby appears to have discharged himself completely of any association with trading in historical objects. He is recorded as a purchaser at several high profile auction sales after 1840, including the Stowe sale in 1848[40] and at the Bernal sale in 1855,[41] but unlike the scores of names of the successful buyers recognisable as dealers that were published alongside the sale results after these auctions, Swaby is the only one that required more that the standard use of the surname only. The recording of the purchaser at these auctions as 'J. Swaby Esq.' in contrast to the recording of his buying activities in earlier catalogues as plain 'Swaby' is indicative that his status was no longer that of a dealer but of a collector.

In truth though it seems that for all but the very poorest dealers the trading in historical objects and the collecting of them were parallel activities, and that those individuals who take up dealing in antiques and curiosities become, 'by default' collectors themselves. Indeed, it is clear that John Swaby held onto some of the purchases he made during his time as a dealer for many years after he had initially acquired them. The 'ancient table', for example, illustrated in *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (see plate 20), was obviously in his possession in the 1830s, but as we have

seen it was still in his possession in 1853 when 'John Swaby Esquire, Torriano Place, Kentish Town' loaned it to the Gore House exhibition (see plate 49).[42] The table only eventually appeared on the wider open market at the auction sale of his collection after his death in 1860.[43] The dealing and collecting activities of someone like Swaby illustrate that the notion of a separation between the dealer and collector is, in practice at least, never so clear cut. But even so there is plenty of documentary evidence indicating that distinctions in the respective identities of the dealer and the collector have persisted and there certainly appear to have been attempts to make distinctions between collecting and dealing during the period under review. And if we explore the evidence provided by the corpus of auction sale catalogues produced during the period we can begin to see some important aspects of the distinctions that are made between the dealer and the collector.

'Collection' and 'Stock'

The auction sale catalogues of significant collections put up for sale during the nineteenth century are generally described as such; sometimes anonymously, for example 'the collection of a man of taste',[44] but more generally collectors are considered of such social importance that they are more often referred to more directly. For example, when the auction sale of the collection of Ralph Bernal took place in 1855 following his death in 1854 the catalogue described this significant event as, 'the celebrated collection of that distinguished collector Ralph Bernal Esq.'[45] However, if we direct attention to catalogues where an antique and curiosity dealer's objects are sold during the period of their trading activity it appears that 'stock' was

most often deemed the most appropriate word of description. For example, when the auction sale of the objects belonging to the Wardour Street dealer John Swaby were sold in 1834 the catalogue categorized these objects as the 'Ancient Armour & etc...the remaining stock of Mr Swaby'. And when objects belonging to the dealer Israel Russell were sold in 1848 the auction catalogue described the sale as the 'Stock of the Ancient Furniture, Curiosities etc of Israel Russell'. Moreover, even when a dealer's objects were eulogised as 'magnificent and extensive', as was the case in the auction sale of the furniture makers and antique and curiosity dealers Messrs Town & Emanuel of New Bond Street in 1849, the most appropriate descriptive classification was still as 'stock.'[46] However, given that part of the function of the auction sale catalogue is to cultivate the desires and expectations of prospective purchasers it would be obvious that there would be occasions when the trading stock of an antique and curiosity dealer was routed through the more socially significant descriptive classification of 'collection'. For example, when the Wardour Street dealer Edward Hull died in 1844 and his trading stock was sold the catalogue described the event as the 'first portion of Mr Hull's collection'.[47] Similarly when the dealer Francois Deschryver died in 1841 and his objects were sold at auction the catalogue described them as 'The Ancient Collection of the late Mr. F. Deschryver...many years an importer...'.[48] The descriptive classifications of 'collection' and 'stock' employed here suggest distinctive social and cultural contexts, each providing a series of discrete meanings for historical objects. An ancient cabinet in the possession of an antique and curiosity dealer, such as John Coleman Isaac, and located in his shop in Wardour Street, obviously does not change its physical properties when it is eventually sold to a collector such as Ralph Bernal and enters his collection in Eaton Square, but in each location the ancient cabinet is endowed with a set of specific

social and cultural meanings. In Ralph Bernal's house in Eaton Square the ancient cabinet would be primarily presented as an object of taste and erudition, representing the discrimination, knowledge, wealth, and of course the social power of Bernal.[49] In John Isaac's shop the ancient cabinet is located in a temporary commercial space, classified as 'stock', and is explicitly identified with economic exchange values and the wider market structures. Indeed, as Janell Watson has noted, in the nineteenth century the metaphor of the curiosity shop was often invoked to suggest an inappropriate model for the display of a collection and to implicitly question the authenticity of the collecting practice itself.[50] The novelist and critic Edmond de Goncourt (1822-96), who was also along with his brother Jules was one of the most famous collectors of the nineteenth century, described a visit to the famous Rothschild chateau at Ferrières in September 1872 where he was critical of the vast array of collectables on display, writing that, 'it is not a furnished château, but a curiosity shop'.[51] And in her directions to collectors in 1878 Mrs Bury Palliser stressed the importance of an appropriate display of 'antique furniture' by invoking its negative counterpart, writing that 'a rich interior should not resemble the well-furnished shop of a dealer.'[52]

The desire amongst collectors to suggest that there is a tangible difference between the objects assembled through their own collecting activities and those gathered together by dealers for resale is a consistent thread in the narrative being sketched out here. For example, 'Viator' a writer protecting their identity with a pseudonym, wrote to the editor of *The Times* in 1892, rehearsing the standard response of allowing the meaning signified by a collection to be disrupted by the association with the activities of the dealer. Writing in response to a visit to the South Kensington Museum where the writer had seen a display of newly acquired objects with labels indicating that they

had been purchased from the well-known Italian antique dealer Stefano Bardini (1836-1922), the writer objected to the stated provenance of the objects as being from the 'Bardini Collection'.[53] 'Viator' was highly critical of the objects on display at the museum, a '16th century shrine' for example, was on closer examination obviously made-up of 'old fragments, patched and joined together'.[54] We can note here that the notion of the inauthentic object is inevitably associated with the possessions of the dealer. But the writer was also vociferous in his condemnation of what he saw as a dealer's stock being classified as a 'collection'. 'Hitherto', the writer states, 'it has not been usual to dub objects occasionally purchased from a dealer as from his, Signor or so-and-so's 'collection', they are part of his stock in trade.'[55] 'Viator' implicitly disassociates the space of the museum from that of the antique and curiosity shop. But the rivalry between the antique shop and the museum is superficial. Indeed, the museum is a place where the historical object elides its explicit status as commodity whilst simultaneously acting as intellectual prop in the systems of value of the collecting economy. In a sleight of hand performance, the object in the historical museum is de- -valued) and is presented exclusively as a bearer of historical knowledge. The museum and the antique and curiosity shop may be contiguous spaces but as the above responses indicate it is better if they are never actually seen to meet. Indeed when, in 1924 the V&A acquired the eighteenth-century shop front that had formerly been the business premises of A. Hardingham 'Dealer in Works of Art',[56] a short article published in *Connoisseur* could not resist the temptation, exclaiming in it's opening line - 'An antique shop in the Victoria and Albert Museum!' (see plate 60).[57] The inclusion of an exclamation mark suggests an implicit questioning of the appropriateness of the appearance of this shop-front within

the spaces of the museum and exemplifies the problematic associations of the trade, exposing the false dichotomy that lies at its heart.

As we can see then, collectors have consistently attempted to draw a distinction between collections and the trading stock of the antique and curiosity dealer. Indeed, this desire to distance collection from 'stock' is not primarily a reflex of collectors themselves in their attempts to suggest that their activities are a distinctive social practice, some distinguished historians of collecting have also insisted in drawing a distinction between collection and stock. In his masterly investigation of collecting practices in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries Krzysztof Pomian carefully delineated the complex set of characteristics that defined a collection concluding:

> ...the chief distinguishing feature of a collection is the fact that the objects of which it is comprised are kept either temporarily or permanently out of the circuit of utilitarian activities.[58]

Pomian's definition appears sensible enough, however, one thing that Pomian was emphatic about in his definition is that the collecting of historical objects and the commercial practice of dealing in them are two distinct spheres. He writes; 'a set of objects assembled in a shop or boutique in order to be sold does not constitute a collection.'[59] Indeed, Pomian likened the objects in a dealer's shop to 'sets of instruments intended for the production of materials or finished products'.[60] According to this definition, the objects for sale in the dealer's shop are incomplete and like the broken fragments of ancient statues that they sometimes are themselves, they await the collector to assemble them into a meaningful whole. How do we

approach a distinction between collection and stock from this perspective? And what does the desire to separate collection and stock tell us about the meaning of collecting and the perception of the antique and curiosity trade?

The distinction drawn between collection and stock has some resonance with the attempt at defining a collection proposed by the theorist and cultural commentator Jean Baudrillard. In a brief essay on collecting written in 1994, Baudrillard made a distinction between collecting and accumulating.[61] Accumulating is a process of merely acquiring things, something that happens, you could say, in the course of everyday life. We all accumulate things – kitchen storage jars, paper clips, old Tesco shopping bags. Collecting is something quite different, indeed the concept of collecting, as Baudrillard informs us, is a matter of discriminating between objects, it emerges, he says, 'with an orientation to the cultural'.[62] Baudrillard's process of defining by dichotomy is a useful model in the sense that it allows us to further investigate the subtle social and cultural meanings that are inherent in the categories 'collection' and 'stock'. First of all, we must acknowledge that an antique and curiosity dealer's stock is more than a mere accumulation of objects and that it is assembled through some kind of process of discrimination. This process is evident throughout the practices of acquisition by the dealer and is evident in the Isaac archive itself when we read of Isaac's decision making processes when acquiring objects during his Continental buying trips. For example, in October 1841 Isaac wrote to Sarah from Venice:

> Since I wrote to you, I have bought a most beautiful Doge chair, repaired and fresh Gilt in parts (picked out like it was originally), cost me £4 but I will never take less than £20 for it.[63]

It is clear that whatever the ultimate merits of the pragmatic purchasing decisions that Isaac makes and however much these appear to be impelled by economic considerations, the choices he makes are inevitably constructed within a framework of a wider contemporary aesthetic sensibility and social and cultural logic. But does this 'orientation to the cultural' inherent in the assembly of a dealer's stock place it within the framework of a collection? I think that the evidence outlined above suggests that it does not. Indeed in the obvious and pragmatic distinction between 'collection' and 'stock' it is clear, as I have suggested, that the distinction is less to do with the objects themselves and more to do with the social and cultural meaning of the objects as they are deployed within the social field. The subtle distinctions between 'collection' and 'stock' therefore help to sharpen the focus on the social and cultural structures that construct the 'idea' of the antique and curiosity dealer and also begin to reveal the ideological frameworks inherent in those structures.

Collectors & Dealers

Collectors and dealers are social categories that reflect the ways in which collectable objects are consumed. As we have seen, for the collector, the dealer is often seen as a problematic character and represents an inauthentic relationship to the collectable object. This dichotomy, which remains to a large extent valid even today,

began to take on its defining characteristics during the second half of the nineteenth century and there is a large body of evidence in support of this suggestion. The *Adventures of a Bric-a-Brac Hunter* (1868) by Major Herbert Byng-Hall is one of the first published texts that began to explicitly separate the roles and objectives of the collector and the dealer, rehearsing a dichotomy that remains a significant trope in the histories of collecting. For the historian of collecting Byng-Hall's text is a rich mine of information on antique and curiosity dealers and their locations and the type of stock that they sold during the 1860s. And for the collectors of the time the book provided a host of practical instruction and advice on the kinds of objects a novice collector should buy and also where they could be obtained. For example, for those collectors travelling to Germany Byng-Hall recommended that they visit a dealer named 'Herr Levy', adding that Levy was 'an unquestionable Israelite, as indeed, nearly all bric-a-brac dealers are.'[64] We can note in passing that whilst Jewish identity is intimately bound up in the social and cultural identity of the antique and curiosity dealer further consideration of these notions would take the current study into areas that could not be sufficiently addressed here. We can perhaps draw attention to the fact that whilst John Coleman Isaac was of Jewish ethnicity and a number of the antique and curiosity dealers recovered during this investigation also emerged from the Jewish community the research undertaken for the present study has also revealed that whilst traders of Jewish ethnicity made up a significant portion of the trade this remained far below what could be defined as a critical mass. Indeed it appears that during the period under review dealers of Jewish ethnicity only made up approximately 25% of the trade. It is perhaps enough to note that in the nineteenth century Jewish ethnicity was often seen to be at the margins of contemporary society

and was a signifier of a wide range of social ills and the cultural stereotype of Jewish identity appears to have provided a convenient screen for the dealer as 'problem'.[65]

However, to return to Byng-Hall's text; Byng-Hall presented the dealer and the collector as having conflicting agendas, with the dealer consistently portrayed as a hindrance, rather than as a facilitator, to the legitimate practice of collecting. Indeed, the expressed purpose of Byng-Hall's book was to protect the 'ignorant amateur', who he likened to 'a mere child in the hands of the dealers'.[66] Byng-Hall saw the activities of antique and curiosity dealer within the markets as expressly designed to subvert the activities of the collector; 'there appears to be a combination among dealers,' writes Byng-Hall, 'which utterly upsets the hopes and expectations of an amateur.'[67] Here Byng-Hall sets the rivalry between the dealer and the collector firmly in the public space of the auction room, which as we have seen was a highly significant social space within the wider markets. Byng-Hall also draws attention to a particularly problematic activity undertaken by the trade - the 'combination', which he suggested was endemic amongst members of the antique and curiosity trade in the period. This echoes the threats made by the dealers that Henry Foster recalled at the Stowe auction sale in 1848, where the dealers stressed that they would 'outbid any private individual', to which Foster added, 'the villainy of the system will be judged when we add that four or five of these men generally work together.'[68] Byng-Hall and Foster both highlight an important practice undertaken by the antique and curiosity dealers – the 'knockout.'[69] The practice of 'knockout' was well-known in the eighteenth century, particularly in the Parisian art markets where it was known as the 'revision', but became a common practice within the antique and curiosity markets during the period under review here. The knockout suggests that a subsidiary market for objects operated within the trade, a kind of micro-economy sustained by

the members of the antique and curiosity itself. Indeed, Isaac makes several references to his participation in these activities during the period. During a visit to Fürth in Germany in 1833 for example, Isaac mentioned to Sarah that he had recently been involved in a knockout with a number of dealers, including 'Mr. Pickett.'[70] And the waste book records that Isaac received a share of the money from knockouts at one of the auctions of the armour dealer Thomas Gwennapp's stock in 1833[71] and had to pay out some money after a knockout at an auction at Christie's in 1840.[72] This practice was legal at the time that Isaac was trading but as the criticism of Byng-Hall and Henry Foster indicates it provided a convenient frame through which the distinction between the 'legitimate' practices of the collector and the 'problematic' activities of the dealer could be rehearsed. Indeed, public auctions inevitably provided a convenient site where the tensions between the objectives of the collector and those of the dealer were played out. And at times the mere presence of the dealer in socially significant spaces such as the auction room is enough to cause critical responses. An anonymous writer, commenting on an auction sale in 1860, neatly encapsulates contemporary attitudes towards the dealer and their activities in the market-place. The writer describes the auction room, full of prospective buyers, admiring a wide range of art, antiques and curiosities, (see plate 61), and amongst them of course are members of the trade:

> Musty-looking, dusty-looking dealers are there, prowling about, seeking whom they may bid for...florid-looking speculators in Art and Virtu...[73]

By the late 1850s it is clear that for many collectors even the social discourse inherent in the practice of collecting itself needed to be separated and protected from the

contaminating personality of the dealer. In 'The Collector's Club' for example, which was established in 1857 and was the first collectors club devoted to the study and appreciation of what in collecting circles is still described as 'decorative art',[74] we can see that it was important that the distinction between collectors and dealers was maintained.[75] The *Art Journal* for 1857 announced the establishment of the society:

> The Collector's Club, a new society of amateurs of vertu has just been formed; consisting solely of such gentlemen as collect for their own tastes, objects of antiquity and are not dealers therein.[76]

But why is it so important for collectors to make such obvious attempts at proscription? There are two main themes I would like to suggest here; one relates to the activity of collecting as a personal and indeed intimate act, and the other draws attention to the act of collecting as a collective and social activity. In this sense the act of collecting embodies the individual and psychological investment by the collector and is also symbolic of investment in wider social relationships. Each of these themes can provide an explanatory structure though which these critical responses to the antique and curiosity dealer can be better understood.

The psychoanalyst Werner Muensterberger has argued that there is a pathological and compulsive aspect to the activity of collecting. In his study on the psychology of collecting he draws attention to the collecting activities of the French author Honoré de Balzac, suggesting that Balzac's collecting was a method by which he compensated for his own loneliness and the sense of failure that he had experienced as a child after his wealthy father had lost all his money and had abandoned him to be

raised by a resentful mother.[77] Muensterbeger suggests that in Balzac's novel *Cousin Pons* Balzac assigns the fictional collector Sylvain Pons characteristics that draw deep on his own personal experiences, suggesting that for Pons, 'the realities of life always fell short of the ideals which (he) created for himself.'[78] For Walter Benjamin, the activity of collecting is similarly bound up with the personal; collecting is about 'ownership', and for 'the real collector', 'ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have with objects.'[79] Indeed, as Benjamin asserts, for a collector the activity of collecting is almost a matter of self-preservation, it is 'not that (objects) come alive in him; it is he who lives in them.'[80]

Jean Baudrillard has also written about the impulses of the collector and reiterates Walter Benjamin's assertion, stressing that 'possession' is intimately bound up with the notion of the self:

> the exchange value of an object depends entirely upon the fact that it is I who possess it – which in turn, allows me to recognize myself in it as an absolutely singular being.....For it is invariably oneself that one collects.[81]

Shifting from this framework, which suggests that collecting is a deeply introverted act, to another that suggests that collecting can also embody social and collective practices. As Susan Crane has suggested, collecting involves a 'performance of ownership', which 'invariably plays best before an appreciative audience, comprising individuals whose desires to own will also be tantalized.'[82] Indeed, many of the discrete collecting activities in the nineteenth century appear to have involved collectors who came from similar social or class backgrounds, or had professional

ties, fostered through similar educational backgrounds. In the first half of the nineteenth-century for example, the vast majority of Isaac's private clients were either from the aristocracy, the gentry or the professional classes, such as clergy, lawyers and the military, tied by class, social and familial bonds. Such collective practices inevitably led to many collections being enlarged with donations from friends and associates. The collections of Sir Walter Scott, (who was, apparently anyway, not a client of Isaac) perhaps the most well documented and studied individual in respect of a collector of historical objects during the period under review here, were consistently enlarged in this manner.[83] However, Scott is also known to have purchased a large majority of the historical objects in his collection from antique and curiosity dealers and in particular frequently made purchases from the Wardour Street dealer John Swaby in the 1820s and 1830s. And even in the opening decades of the nineteenth-century there remained a perception that this method of acquisition was somehow less appropriate for the establishment of a collection. Indeed, during 1812, when Scott's collection was still at an early stage in its development, his friend Joanna Baillie wrote to him suggesting that as his fame expanded so it would be inevitable that his collections would do so as well, but rather than being assembled through the commercial mode of acquisition that underscored his early collecting activities, these collections would be a reflection of personal friendships and Scott's enduring fame. As Baillie suggests; 'We shall see then, some years hence a collection...with contributions from your numerous admirers rather than purchases from curiosity brokers.'[84] The gift exchange system implied here performs an important function. The study of such systems in 'archaic societies' by the anthropologist Marcel Mauss in the 1920s revealed that they have their basis in social exchange.[85] Individuals give gifts as part of a ritual, and whilst there is no explicit demand for payment, gift giving

settles an obligation on the receiver to reciprocate. Indeed, Mauss discovered that in gift exchange systems objects are regarded as representing the 'persona' of the person giving the gift, with some gifts actually representing or containing the portrait of the gift-giver. At the root of the gift exchange system is a socially competitive power struggle where victory is judged by the size of the gift. Mauss suggested that the nature of gift exchange economies revealed a system of exchange that was equally as coherent as the commodity exchange system described by Marx. Nonetheless, as Joanna Baillie suggested in her note to Scott, gift economies are a preferable model to the commodity exchange model exemplified by the transactions enacted through the antique and curiosity trade. However, important as gift exchange is as an appropriate method for the establishment of a collection, the superior social system implied by gift exchange can be superseded. Indeed, the exemplary mode of acquisition for collectors is through family bequest, as Walter Benjamin writes:

> Inheritance is the soundest way of acquiring a collection, for a collector's attitude towards his possessions stems from an owner's feeling of responsibility toward his property.[86]

The significant thing to note, in the advocacy of these various modes of acquisition is the underlying notion of authenticity, which is suggested here, not in relation to the material properties of the historical objects themselves, but rather in their 'provenance'. Indeed, 'provenance', the chain of ownership that is often viewed as critical to the establishment of an authentic object, was, and remains, central to the discourse of authenticity.[87] And a consistent aspect in the problematic identity of the dealer is that their activities are consistently seen to disrupt this chain. As early as

1831 Sir Samuel Meyrick drew attention to the problematic role that the dealer played in the wider distribution of historical objects. In a letter published in the journal *Archaeologia* Meyrick described a pair of 'twelfth-century' candlesticks that he had recently acquired and had exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries, implying that a significant part of the history of the candlesticks had been lost as a result of their mode of acquisition. Meyrick wrote that as 'they had been purchased at the house of a travelling dealer...it is impossible to ascertain their original locality.'[88] By the 1850s, when as this study has demonstrated the notion of the 'authenticity' of historical objects was consolidating, the well-known collector A.W. Franks of the British Museum, went even further:

> the value of objects is frequently lost when they pass through a dealer's hands; their authenticity is destroyed and their history mutilated. Or they acquire a pedigree which only misleads the unwary archaeologist.[89]

As sketched out here, collecting is at the fulcrum of individual and social identity, it is both an individual act, one that is part of the essential creation of the self, and it is also part of social activity, one that allows participation in the social sphere, drawing together social groups and classes. In this sense, we can begin to see why the activities of the dealer are presented as being so problematic. The dealer provides an ambiguous benefit for collectors. It is through the activities of the dealers that personally important and socially significant objects come more frequently and more easily into the possession of enthusiasts, but the relationship between the collectors and the objects of their desire becomes more superficial, and short-lived.[90] In

essence, the dealer represents a separation of the collector from the authentic experience of the authentic object.

[1] See Donald Adamson, *The Genesis of Cousin Pons*, (Oxford , Oxford University (1966).

[2] Bellaigue, (1975), op.cit.

[3] I use here the translation of Herbert Hunt – Honoré de Balzac, *The Wild Ass's Skin*, (1831), (Harmonsworth, Penguin, 1977), pp.14-19.

[4] Ibid. p.19.

[5] Ibid.

[6] For a very brief description of Balzac's activities and purchases, see Werner Muensterberger, 'Two Collectors: Balzac and his Cousin Pons', in Muensterberger, *Collecting, an unruly passion – psychological perspectives* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994), pp.132-3.

[7] Gerald Reitlinger suggested that the dealer Charles Mannheim was the model for Balzac's Elias Magus, see Reitlinger, (1963), op.cit. p.130, p.134. Donald Adamson suggested that the name Magus may derive from 'Mage', who was a dealer trading at 1 Quai Voltaire in Paris, and also recalls that the dealer Frederick Spitzer believed that Magus was modelled on the dealer Lazard, who Balzac visited in Marsielle in 1845. See Adamson, (1966), op.cit. p.116.

[8] Balzac, (1848), op.cit.p.120.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Theophile Gautier, 'The Mummy's Foot', (1840), in Theophile Gautier, *Tales and Romances*, (London, London Press Company, 1900), pp.181-91.

[11] Ibid. p.182.

[12] Ibid. p.183.

[13] Dickens, (1841), op.cit. p.3.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Bernard Lewis, *About the Old Curiosity Shop*, (unpaginated), (London, 1964).

[16] Hanslip Fletcher, *London Passed and Passing: a pictorial record of destroyed and threatened buildings*, (London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Son, 1908), pp.239-40.

[17] 10 Green Street is suggested by Robert Allbut, 'The Old Curiosity Shop', *Dickensian*, VI, 1910, pp.44-5; 24 Fetter Lane is suggested by Edwin Beresford Chancellor, *The London of Charles Dickens*, (London, Grant Richards, 1924), pp.139-43. Wainwright, (1989), op.cit. p.37 discounts both locations as inaccurate.

[18] Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in Josue V. Harari (ed.), (1979), op.cit.

[19] Foucault suggests that the notion of authorship can also obviously encompass artists and composers etc. Ibid. p.205.

[20] Cripps-Day, (1925), op.cit. p.lvi.

[21] K.N. Watts, in Mark Jones, (ed.), (1992), op.cit.

[22] Quoted in Anna Somers Cocks, *The Victoria and Albert Museum: the making of a collection*, (Leicester, Windward, 1980), p.20

[23] Quoted in Wainwright, (2000), op.cit. p.44.

[24] See, Helen Davies, 'John Charles Robinson's work at the South Kensington Museum', parts I & II, *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol.10, no.2, 1998, pp.169-88, and vol.11, no.1, 1999, pp.95-115.

[25] Somers Cocks, (1980), op.cit.

[26] Quoted in Clive Wainwright, (edited for publication by Charlotte Gere), 'The making of the South Kensington Museum III: Collecting Abroad', *Journal of the History of Collections*, volume 14, no.1, 2002, pp.47-8.

[27] See, for example, John Hayward, 'Salomon Weininger, Master Faker', *Connoisseur*, vol.187, no.753, November 1974, pp.170-79; Anna Maria Massinelli, 'The Meneghetti, Venetian Antique Dealers and Forgers', *Apollo*, vol.cxxxii, August 1990, pp.90-4; High Tait, 'Reinhold Vasters: goldsmith, restorer and prolific faker', in Mark Jones, (ed.), (1992), op.cit. pp.116-23; Wainwright, (2000), op.cit.

[28] Quoted in Ian Jenkins and Kim Sloan, *Vases and Volcanoes, Sir William Hamilton and his collection*, (London, British Museum, 1990), p.62.

[29] For a useful overview of connoisseurial collecting in the eighteenth-century see Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting*, (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 1988), chapter 7, 'The Connoisseur and Connoisseurship'.

[30] Richard Brookes, *The Sunday Times*, June 18th 2006, p.10.

[31] Bourdieu, (1984), op.cit. p.281.

[32] Bellaigue (1975), op.cit. p.290.

[33] *Catalogue of the Remaining Stock of Edward Baldock...sold by Messers Foster & Son...25th to 27th May 1843.* A further sale, also undertaken by Foster took place on 21st July 1843. Both auction sales were held at Baldock's shop in Hanway Street. See Bellaigue, (1975), op.cit. p.292.

[34] Baldock required that if his heir was female, in the event of her marrying, her husband must assume the Baldock name in lieu of or in conjunction with his own, provided that Baldock always came last. Her husband would also be required to adopt the Baldock coat of arms, either unaltered, or quartered with his own armorial bearings. Bellaigue, (1975), op.cit. p.290.

[35] Ibid.

[36] For information relating to Webb and his role in the collections at the South Kensington Museum see Davies, (1998), op.cit. and Clive Wainwright (edited for publication by Charlotte Gere), 'The making of the South Kensington Museum IV, relationships with the trade: Webb and Bardini', *Journal of the History of Collections*, vol.14, no.1, 2002, pp.63-78.

[37] Henry Bohn, *Guide to the knowledge of Pottery and Porcelain and other objects of vertu, comprising an illustrated catalogue of the Bernal collection*, (London, H. Bohn, 1857).

[38] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, no.104. See appendix V. See also Levy & Moss, op.cit. p.104.

[39] Ibid. no. 467, 'waste book', 'Paid to Messrs Coutts & Co....a Check drawn by Mr Swaby...£87.' Entry dated March 28th 1838.

[40] Forster, (1848), op.cit. For a brief discussion of the auction sale of the contents of Stowe, which followed the spectacular bankruptcy of the Duke of Buckingham, see Herrmann, (1972), op.cit. pp.274-81.

[41] The Bernal auction sale is celebrated in the history of British collecting and has been the subject of several extended discussions. The Christie & Manson auction sale catalogue (1855) and Bohn, (1857),

op.cit. are the primary resources, but overviews of the dispersal of the collection can be found in Reitlinger (1963), op.cit. pp.103-09; Herrmann, (1972), op.cit. pp.293-9; and MacGregor, (1997), op.cit. pp.32-3.

[42] *Catalogue...Gore House*, (1853), op.cit.

[43] The table is now at Penshurst Place, Kent. See MacQuoid and Edwards, (eds.), (1927), op.cit. volume III, p.185.

[44] Sold by Christie & Manson, September, 1837.

[45] Christie & Manson, the auction commenced on March 5th 1855.

[46] *Catalogue of the Magnificent and Extensive Stock of Messrs Town and Emanuel*, sold by Christie & Manson, during April and May, 1849.

[47] *Catalogue of Edward Hull, dealer in curiosities, Splendid Ancient Furniture...oak carvings...old bronzes & mosaics...being the first portion of Mr. Hull's collection*, 4th June, 1845.

[48] The only known copy of Deschryver's catalogue in a public collection was unfortunately destroyed whilst in the collections at the British Library in London, only the library catalogue entry survives.

[49] Bourdieu, (1984), op.cit.

[50] Watson, (1999), op.cit. p.61.

[51] Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *Journal*, (1851-96), (edited by Robert Ricatte), (3 vols.), (Paris, Fasquelle and Flamarion, 1956), vol. 2, p.531.

[52] Mrs Bury Palliser, (ed.), *A History of Furniture translated from the French Albert Jacquemart*, (1876), (London, Chapman & Hall, 1878), p.14.

[53] *The Times*, 5th October 1892, also quoted in Wainwright, *Journal of the History of Collections*, (2002), op.cit. p.73-4.

[54] Ibid. p.74.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Clive Wainwright suggests that the shop was formerly at 32 York Street, Westminster, and reproduced a photograph of the shop in c.1900, see Wainwright (1989), op.cit. p.41. The author of the article in *Connoisseur* (1924) states that the shop was formerly 32 Petty France, Westminster.

[57] Anon. 'Current Art Notes'; 'An "Antique Shop" and other acquisitions at the Victoria and Albert Museum', *Connoisseur*, volume LXX, September 1924, pp.52-3. I am grateful to Dr Abigail Harrison Moore of the University of Leeds for drawing this article to my attention.

[58] Pomian, (1990), op.cit. p.260.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Collecting', in John Elsner & Roger Cardinal, (eds.), *The Cultures of Collecting*, (London, Reaktion, 1994), pp.7-24.

[62] Ibid. p.22.

[63] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, Add 1, No.50.

[64] Byng-Hall, (1868), op.cit. p.102.

[65] See for example, Nead, (2000), op.cit. pp.173-79.

[66] Ibid. (1875 edition), p.12.

[67] Ibid., (1868 edition), p.197.

[68] Foster, (1848), op.cit. p.102.

[69] The practice of the 'knockout' (also known as 'the ring') involves a group of dealers agreeing not to bid in competition with each other for an object or number of objects, at a given auction sale. One dealer is designated by all the dealers concerned to bid for the object, which if purchased is then re-auctioned by the dealers in private after the end of the auction. The resulting price difference between the object sold at the auction (say £50) and the price eventually realised during the private bidding by the dealers (say £150) is then distributed on a sliding scale depending on the point at which a dealer abstains from bidding in the resulting private auction. The calculations involved in this practice are based on individual assessments of the possible profit to be gained by the future sale of the object if the dealer is successful in acquiring it in the private auction, and the immediate profit to be obtained by dropping out of the bidding and receiving a share of the price difference. The legitimacy of the practice of the knockout only began to be questioned in the 1920s, and was only made illegal within civil law in 1927 (1927 Bidding Agreements Act). It has more recently been deemed a criminal act, (Bidding Agreement Act 1969), but was a legitimate practice at the time that Isaac was trading. For an outline of the legal status of this practice see Michael Kay 'Under the Hammer: Is Joint Account Bidding at Auction Legal?', in Donald Garstang (ed.), *Art, Commerce, Scholarship: a window on the art world, Colnaghi 1760 to 1984*, (London, P&D Colnaghi, 1984), pp.57-59.

[70] Hartley Library, *MS139/AJ53*, letter Add 1, no.70, dated 22nd March 1833.

[71] Ibid. no.467, 'waste book', entry for June 10th 1833 – 'Rec'd One Pound Seven Shillings at the....(nock out) [sic] at Gwenapp's sale.

[72] Ibid. 26th February 1840 – 'Paid.....£10.9.0. Knockout'.

[73] Anon., 'The Picture Sale', *Cornhill Magazine*, volume IV July to December 1861, pp.470-71.

[74] Although the term 'Material Culture' is the now more generally designated in academic discussions the term 'decorative art' remains current amongst collectors and other enthusiasts, indeed the *National Association for Decorative & Fine Arts Societies*, established in 1968, continues to thrive in the UK.

[75] See Ann Eatwell, (1994), op.cit. pp.25-30.

[76] Ibid. p.25.

[77] Muensterberger, (1994), op.cit. pp.101-34.

[78] Ibid. p.103.

[79] Walter Benjamin, 'Unpacking my Library', in Hannah Arendt, (ed.) *Walter Benjamin, Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zohn, (London, Cape, 1970), pp.61-9, p.69.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Baudrillard, (1994), op.cit. p.12.

[82] Crane, (2000), op.cit. p.61.

[83] See in particular, Clive Wainwright, 'Myth and Reality, Sir Walter Scott and his Collection I,' *Country Life*, September 16th 1982, pp.804-06 & 'Objects of Natural Curiosity – Sir Walter Scott and

his Collection II', *Country Life*, September 23rd 1982, pp.886-88 and also Wainwright (1989), op.cit. pp.146-207.

[84] Letter from Joanna Baillie to Scott written in 1812. Quoted in Wainwright, *Country Life*, September 16th, 1982, op.cit. p.806.

[85] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, (1925), (translated by Ian Cunnison), (London, Cohen & West, 1954).

[86] Benjamin, (1970), op.cit. p.68.

[87] Wainwright, (1992), op. cit.

[88] Samuel Meyrick, 'Observations upon a pair of candlesticks and a pix, both of the twelfth century, preserved at Goodrich Court...', *Archaelogia: or Miscellaneous Tracts relating to Antiquity*, volume xxiii, 1831, essay xviii, pp.317-22, p.317.

[89] *Archaeological Journal*, volume IX, 1852, p.14. Also quoted in Marjorie Caygill, 'Franks and the British Museum – the Cuckoo in the Nest', in Caygill and Cherry (eds.) op.cit. pp.51-114, p.98.

[90] Hauser, (1982), op.cit. p.506.

Conclusion

This study has offered a critical reassessment of the significance of the antique and curiosity dealer and the trade in historical objects in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Through the investigation of the wide range of empirical material in the archive of the dealer John Coleman Isaac this study has demonstrated that dealers such as Isaac played a much more influential role within the wider market structures for historical objects than has been considered previously. Indeed, far from being a peripheral figure within the histories of collecting in the opening decades of the nineteenth century this study has revealed the antique and curiosity dealer to have been a significant agent in the promotion of the desire for historical objects and a primary catalyst in their wider dissemination into the contemporary culture. The recovery of new information concerning the hundreds of individuals involved in the trade in historical objects in the first half of the nineteenth century is a testament to the sheer scale of dealer activities, the diverse backgrounds from which the traders emerged and the complex nature of the evolution of the trade in the period.

Indeed, as this study has suggested, the early nineteenth century antique and curiosity markets themselves were much more significant and much more complex and diverse than many of the existing historical accounts have indicated. By investigating the markets in their own cultural context, rather than perceiving them only in relation to the later markets, the early nineteenth century markets for historical objects have proven to be richly layered with rapidly expanding, and at times

contracting, patterns of consumption, and they reveal much about early nineteenth-century consumer culture.

As this study has demonstrated a new kind of antique and curiosity trade emerged in London during the opening decades of the nineteenth century, one that was not only considerably different from the existing eighteenth century trade, but was also radically more extensive in scale. The distinctive and increasingly specific classifications and descriptive nomenclature adopted by the trade from the second decade of the nineteenth-century were indicative of the new patterns of consumption of antiques and curiosities in the period. And as this study has suggested the employment of such descriptive terminology not only reflects the diverse markets for antiques and curiosities but also disrupts the conventional account of a smooth progressive change from 'curiosities' to 'antiques' over the nineteenth century. The adoption of a distinctive nomenclature has also suggested that the trade assigned its activities a considerable degree of specificity, one that has often been obscured by classifications such as 'broking'. Indeed, as we have seen, despite the obvious fact that dealers such as Isaac were inevitably involved in a wide range of trading activities, much of it involving the more conventional trade in second-hand goods, Isaac was also keen to distinguish his activities from such practices. Isaac consistently presented his 'trade' as distinctive, and as many of the letters indicate, many of Isaac's customers also acknowledged and relied on the dealer's considerable expertise of the market and its structures. As this study has sought to demonstrate, whilst the early nineteenth century antique and curiosity markets were led, to a great extent, by a number of highly influential collectors, the dealers played a much more active role than present accounts often suggest.

It is also clear that the new antique and curiosity trade released a wide range of historical objects from the narrow confines of eighteenth century antiquarian collecting and put them into wider patterns of circulation, facilitating new values and meanings to be projected onto a range of historical material that was previously considered to have been of limited cultural value. Disseminated through the new kinds of antique and curiosity shops historical objects were woven into the wider commodity culture of early nineteenth-century Britain. 'Antique furniture', 'old Dresden china', 'Ancient Armour', together with a vast range of other historical material was presented through the antique and curiosity shops to an expanding consumer audience as desirable commodities. From the 1820s antique and curiosity shops had begun to appear in discrete locations more conventionally associated with elite patterns of consumption, such as Regent Street and New Bond Street, a feature that appears much earlier than has previously been suggested. Indeed by the second quarter of the nineteenth-century, as this study has demonstrated, the antique and curiosity shop had become the principal channel through which the historical object was articulated into the contemporary culture. Indeed, as this study has suggested, by the second quarter of the nineteenth-century the antique and curiosity shop had become such an integral part of the cultural landscape that it was almost impossible to ignore its presence. Moreover, the significance of the role that the dealer played within the evolving spaces of commerce in the Capital, such as auction rooms and dealer exhibition spaces in the period, has also drawn attention to the relationships between the evolving structures in the markets, the importance of the publication of price indices, and the consolidation of the trade during the second quarter of the nineteenth-century. These insights have also drawn further attention to the emerging

social identity of the dealer as the presence of the dealer was consistently registered in the public spaces of the Capital in the period.

The emergence of the trade in historical objects has also been revealed to have been part of a much deeper shift in early nineteenth-century culture, with the antique and curiosity shop making its appearance against the background of an emerging historical consciousness in the period. *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), provided a fulcrum through which this shift was discussed, as the changing focus of historical interest, the expanding patterns of consumption and the emergence of the dealer as a discrete cultural identity were simultaneously registered in its narratives. As this study has suggested, the appearance of the antique and curiosity shop during the opening decades of the nineteenth-century was certainly a radically new kind of object, it was also a new kind of consumer space, a thoroughly 'modern' thing. Indeed the presentation of historical material from a much more recent past than had been of interest previously through the 'modern' consumers spaces of the new antique and curiosity shop registers an acknowledgement of the past as 'past' - as Chris Brooks has written, 'it is discontinuity, not continuity that brings historical consciousness into being.'[1]

Wardour Street in particular has loomed large in the cultural biography of the antique and curiosity trade. It has been revealed to have been a site that both attracted and repelled collectors at different historical moments, and one which still remains a signifier for the more problematic associations of the trade. An evolving notion of 'authenticity' has played a critical role in these discussions, and whilst this study has suggested that 'authenticity' was a much more important requirement for historical

objects in the early nineteenth-century than many writers have suggested, there is certainly less doubt that the notion of 'authenticity' takes on a more proscribed definition as the nineteenth-century progresses. What is clear however, is that the notion of the 'dealer as problem' runs parallel with the progressive trajectory of the notion of the 'authentic' historical object during the second half of the nineteenth-century.

The concluding chapter of this study has drawn further attention to significance of the social and cultural identity of the antique and curiosity dealer. In this chapter critical reactions to the antique and curiosity shop and the dealer were mapped over a more extended period in order better to understand the cultural biography of the antique and curiosity trade. Through this lens the socio-cultural framework that underlies the notion of the dealer as 'problem' has been investigated. The 'idea' of the dealer was discussed as it has appeared in a wide range of material. As the discussions in this concluding chapter have suggested, the notion of 'authenticity' has again played a central role in the construction of the 'idea' of the dealer. Here however, authenticity was suggested in relation to the legitimacy of the activity of collecting itself - as an individual act of self-construction and as a collective social practice. In this concluding chapter the significance of the 'persona' of the antique and curiosity dealer is sketched out further, as it made its distinctive appearance in the fictional literature of the 1840s, most famously in the novels of Balzac, Gautier and Dickens. The trope of the dealer as a problematic character was embedded in the cultural consciousness through such characterisations. The activities of the dealer were also registered in a wide range of other material illustrating that the 'idea' of the dealer and the 'idea' of the antique and curiosity shop have provided a convenient

screen for a range of critical responses. As this study has illustrated the dichotomy that arose in the nineteenth-century between the legitimate practices of collecting and the more problematic activities of those who traded in the collectable historical object reflects the immense social and cultural values that are assigned to the practices of collecting and the collectable objects themselves.

The Isaac archive, which lies at the centre of this project, remains a rich resource and there is certainly much more work that could be done on this unique material. Perhaps one of the most obvious methods of employing such material, particularly objects like the 'waste book', is to use the archive to provide further information on the biography of the collectable object and re-establish a link in the chain of provenance. Indeed for the most part this has been the methodology of those authors who have previously investigated this archive. As Levy and Moss suggest in the concluding remarks of their essay on John Coleman Isaac, which was published in 2002, the primary value of such archive material is that it allows one to '(link) the evidence in the waste book and correspondence with surviving papers and sale catalogues to identifiable customers...'[2] This project has attempted to employ the archive as part of a much broader project, to layer the empirical information it presents against its contemporary social and cultural background and provide an extra layer of context to the histories of collecting in the early nineteenth century. It has also been a purpose of this project to suggest that the re-insertion of the dealer into the histories of collecting need not amount to the provision of just another link in the chain of provenance that inevitably leads to the collector.

[1] Chris Brooks, 'Historicism and the Nineteenth Century', in Vanessa Brand, (ed.), *The Study of the Past in the Victorian Age*', (Oxford, Oxbow Books and the British Archaeological Association, 1998), p.3

[2] Levy/Moss, (2002), op.cit., p.105.

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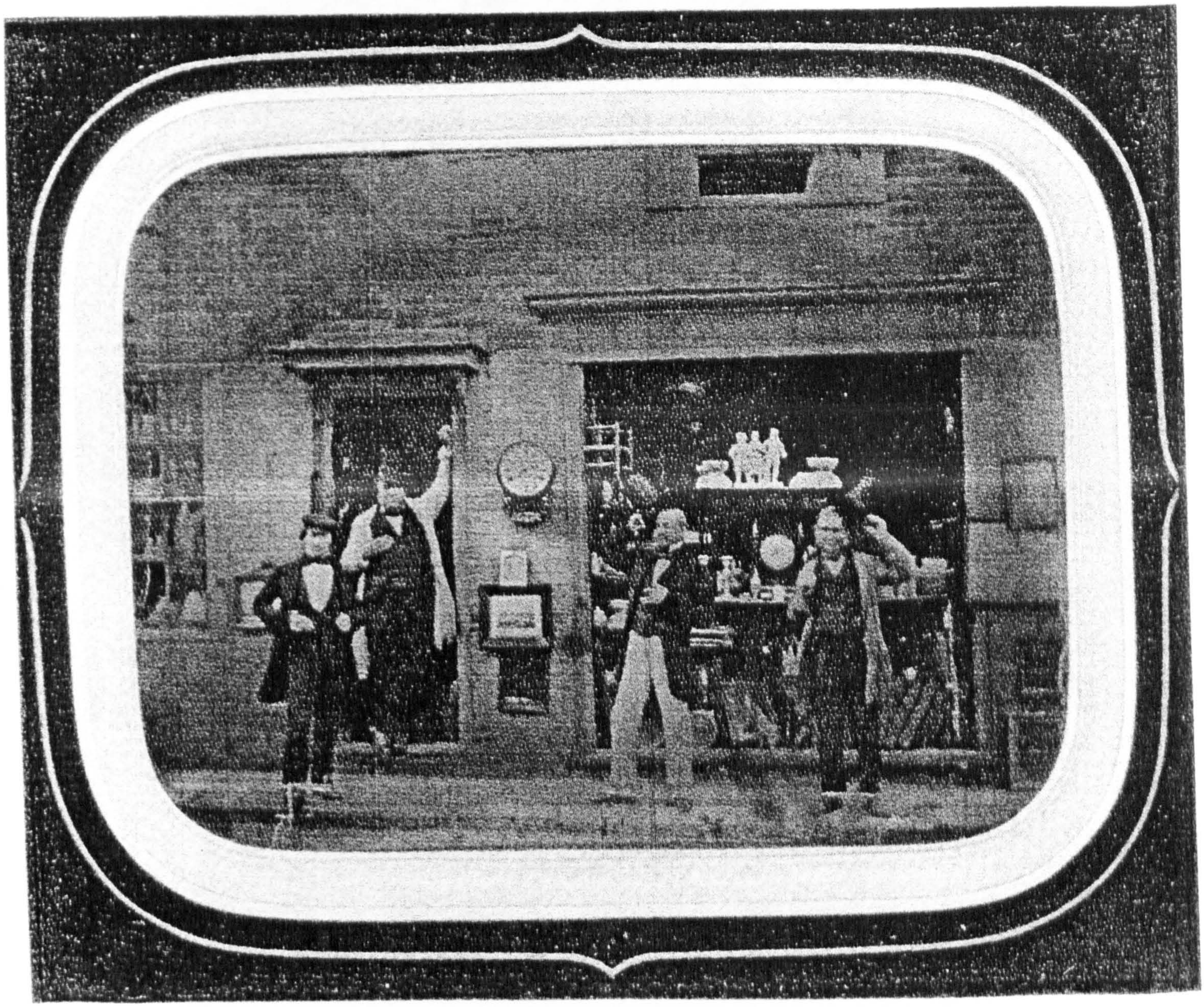


Plate 1

Reeves Antique Shop, Courthouse Street, Hastings – (c.1850) anonymous photographer, ambrotype. Sold Christie's South Kensington, 18th November 2003, lot 1. Present location unknown.



Plate 2
'The Porcelain Collector', (1868) by Alfred Sevens (1823-1906). Oil on Canvas, 68.3 x 45.7 cm. North Carolina Museum of Art, the gift of Dr and Mrs Henry C. Landon III.

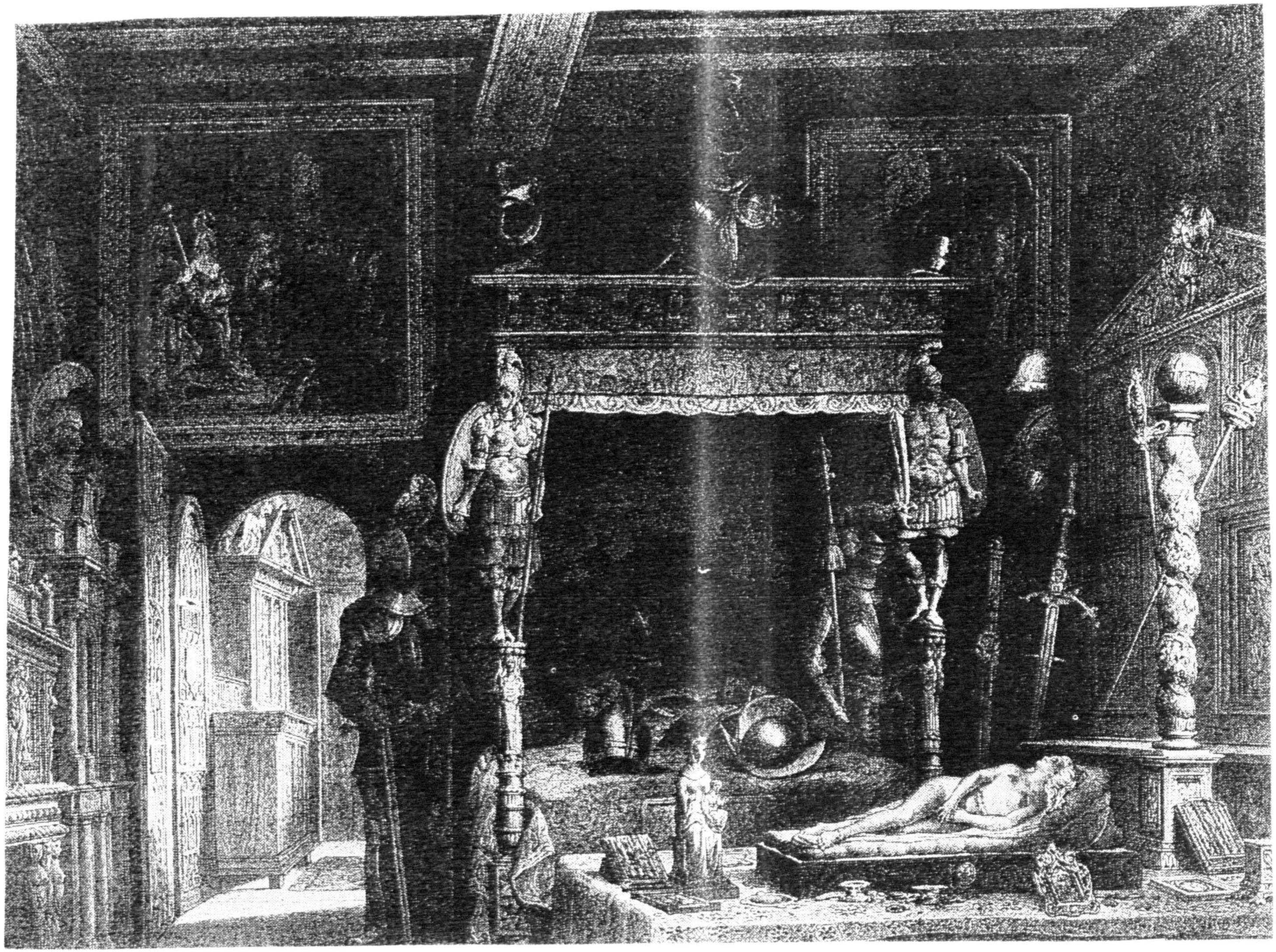


Plate 3
François 1st Room – lithograph from Alexandre du Sommerard (1779-1842) *Les Arts au Moyen Age*.....(1838-46).

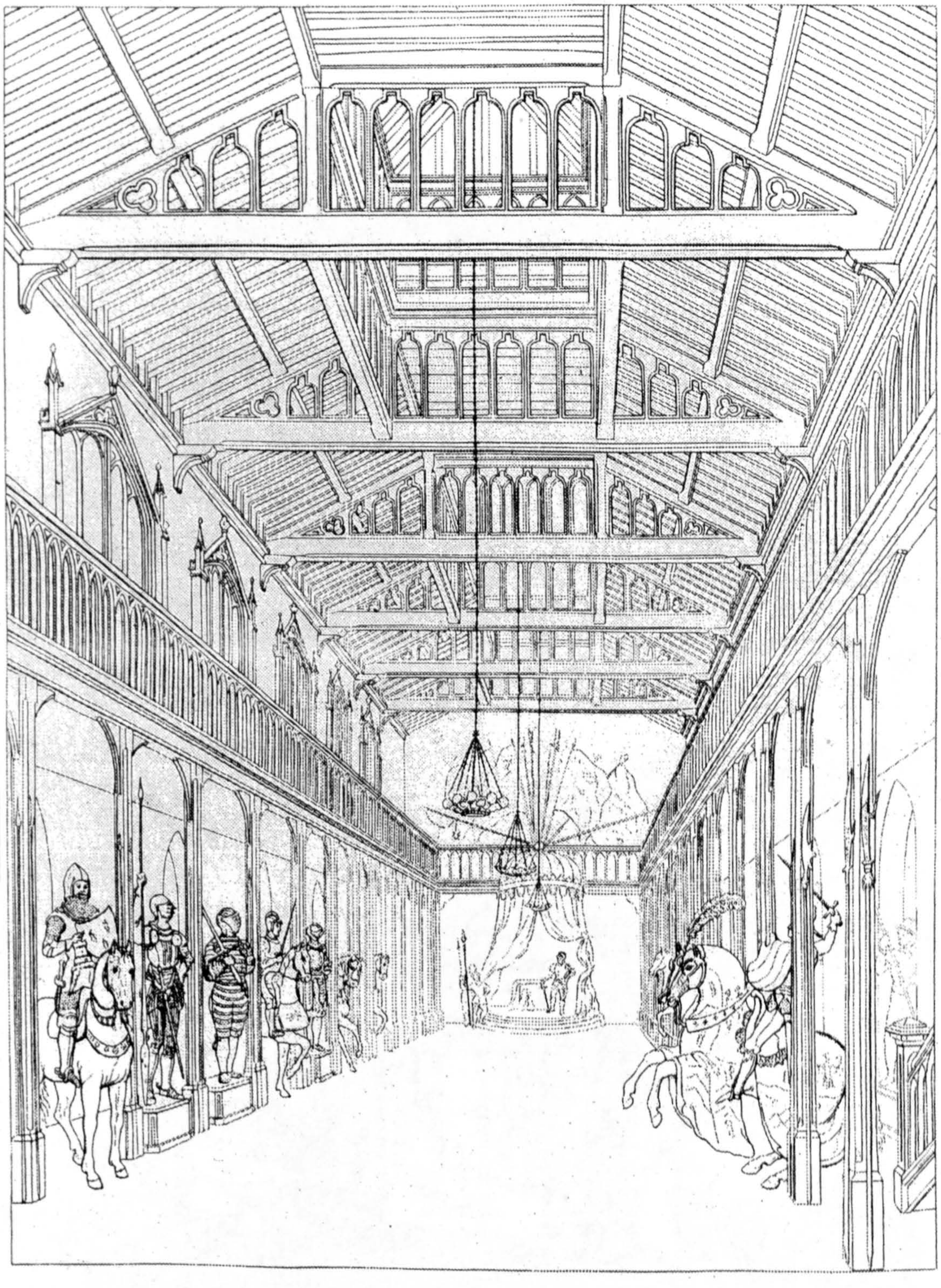


Plate 4

The Grand Armoury at Goodrich Court – (1830) Joseph Skelton, *Engraved Illustrations of Ancient Arms and Armour at Goodrich Court*, (1830).

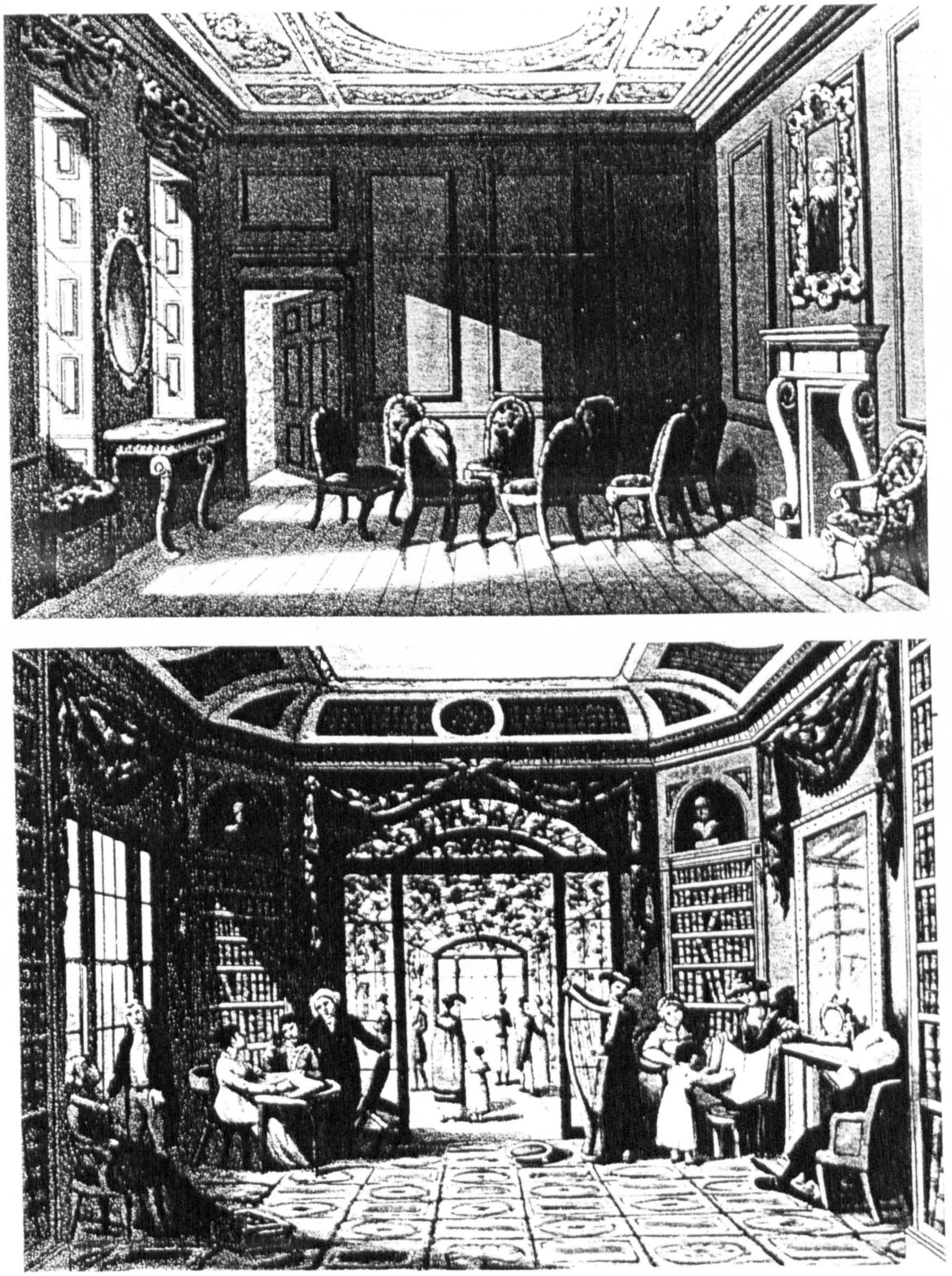


Plate 5

Cedar Parlour and *Modern Living Room* – (1816) Humphry Repton (1752-1818) *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816). *British Library.*



Plate 6

A collection of old china. *Articles of China* – Plate III in Henry Fox Talbot *The Pencil of Nature* (1844). *British Library*.

Specimens

of Ancient

Furniture



Drawn from

Existing authorities.

by

Henry Shaw

F.S.A.

Plate 7
Title page from *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).

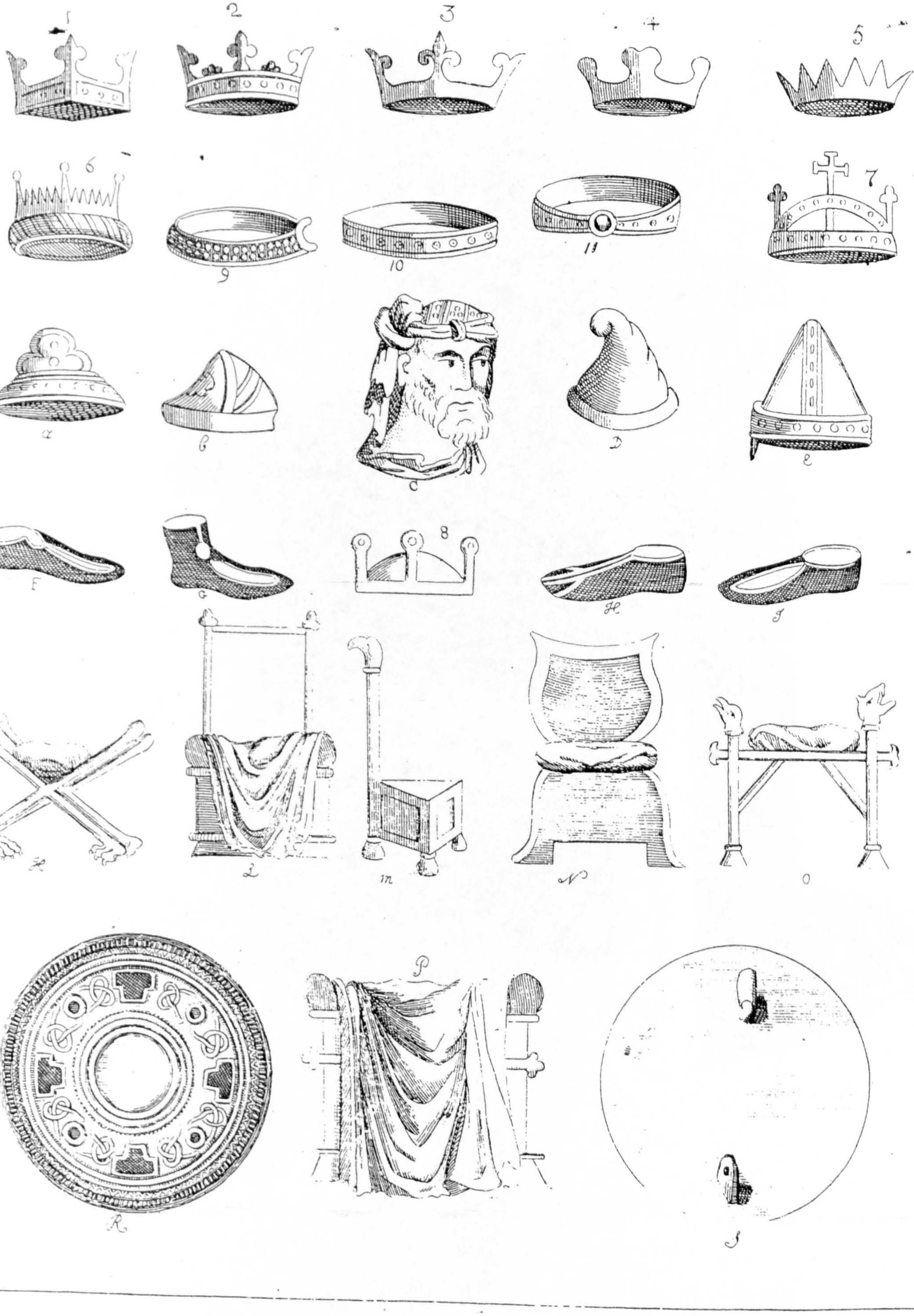
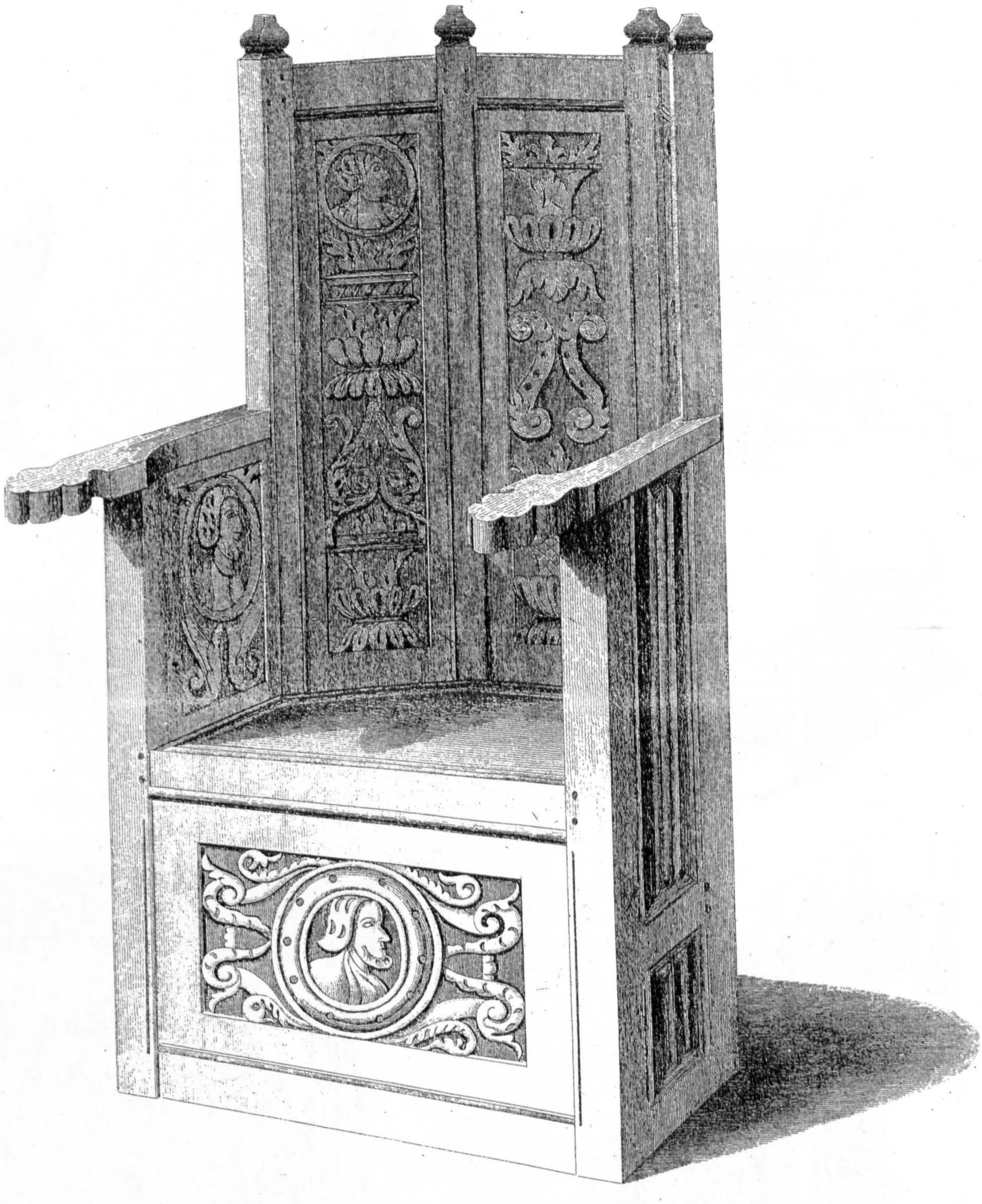


Plate 8

'Seats and Thrones from MSS Aurelius Prudentius, at Bennet College, Cambridge', Plate XXIII from Joseph Strutt, (1749-1802) *Horda Angel-cynnan……*, Volume I (1775).



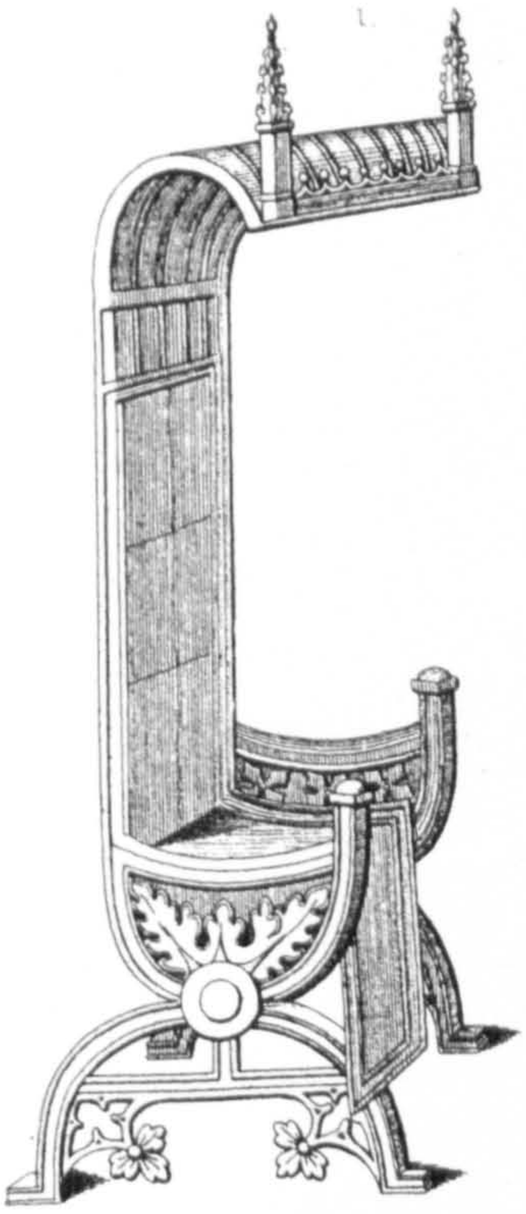
CHAIR,

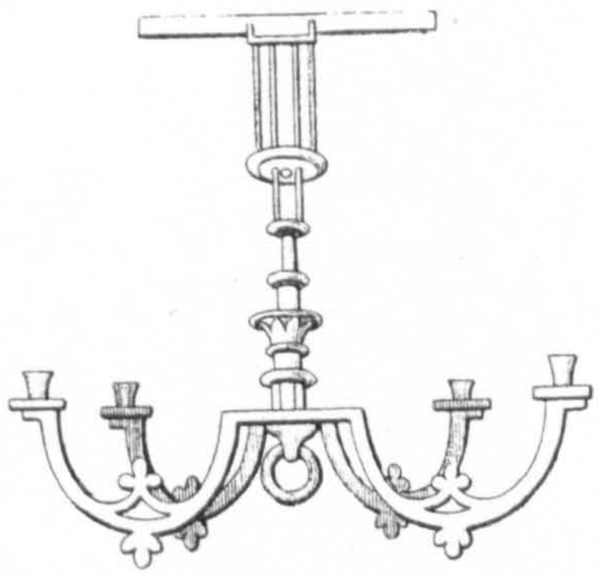
Of the time of Henry 8th.

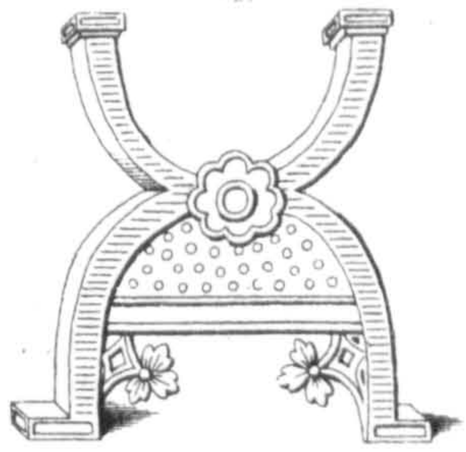
In the Possession of Jh. Abel Esqre. Mitchel Dean, Gloucestershire.

Plate 9

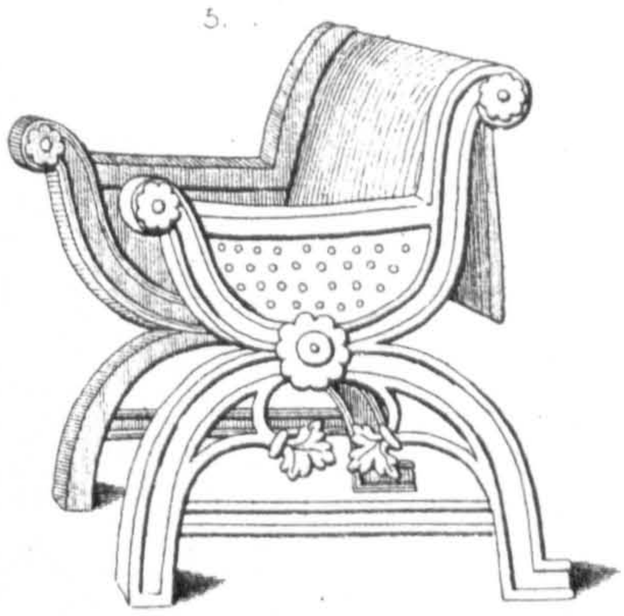
'Chair of the Time of Henry the Eighth...', (1836), Henry Shaw,(1800-1873) plate XI, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).

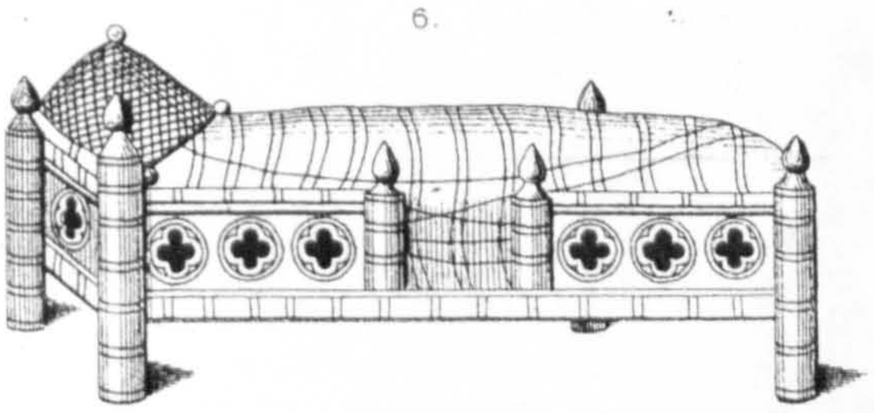


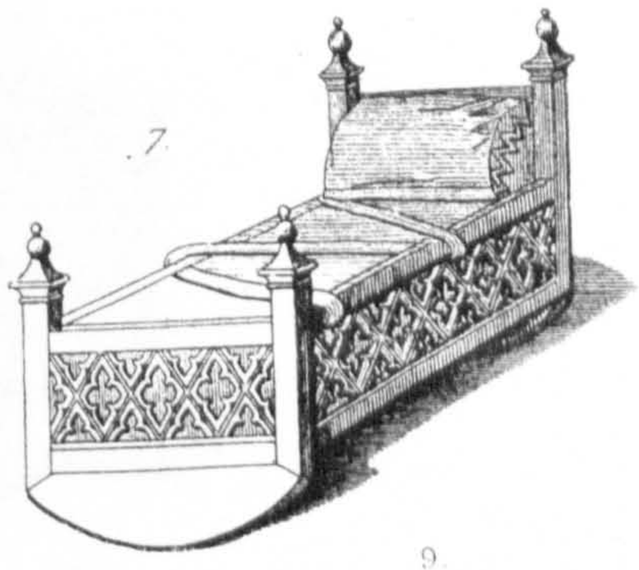


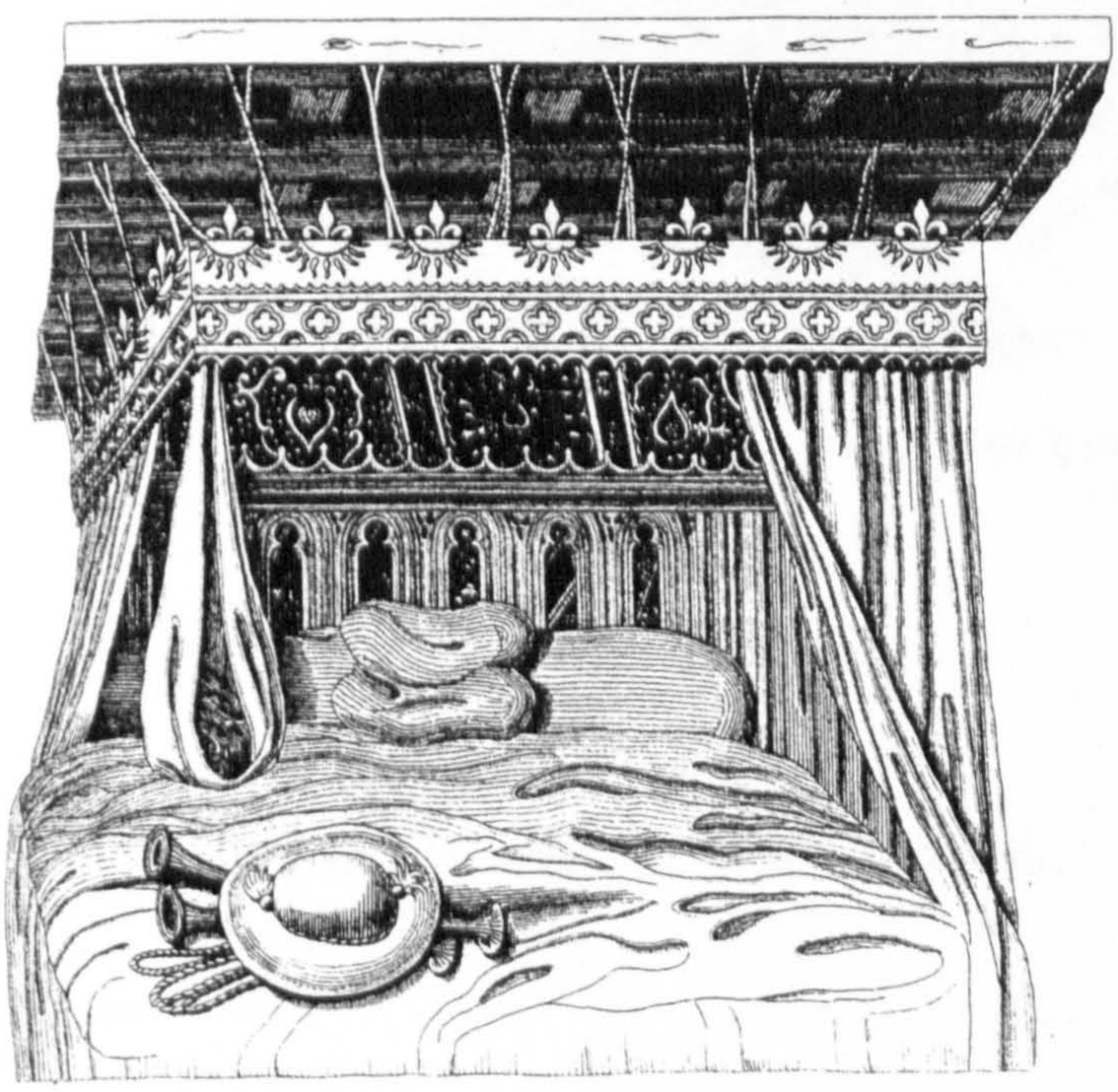


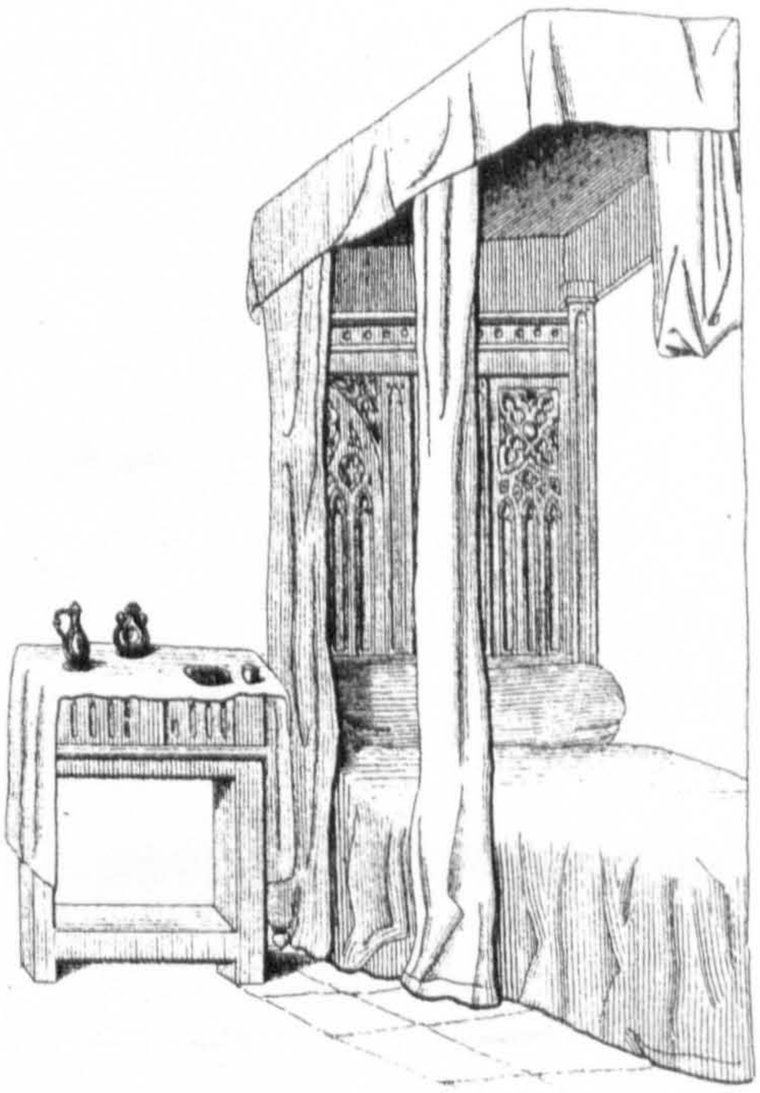








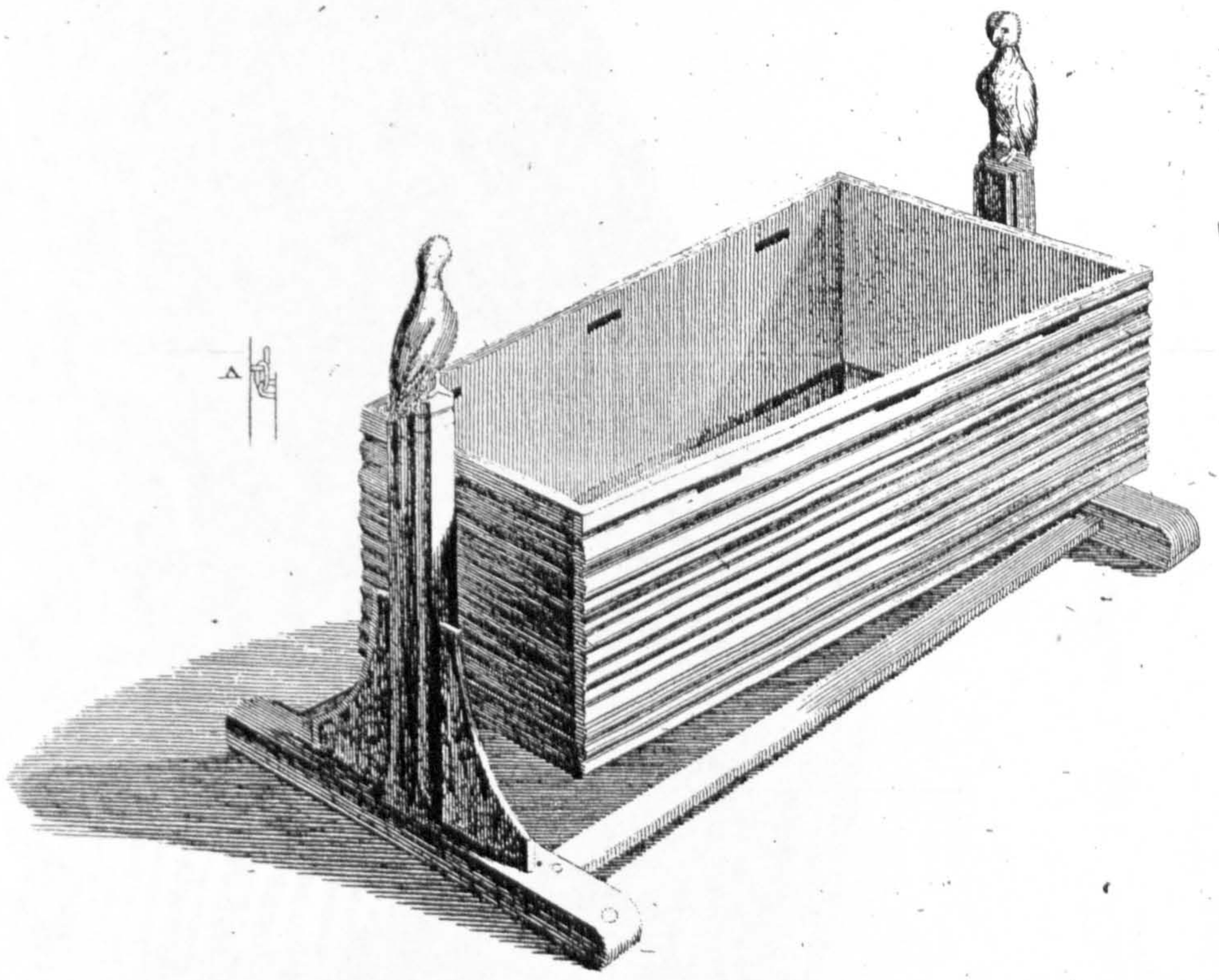




N.os 1, 4 & 5. Chair & Stools of the 15th Cent.y from the Roman de Renaud de Moutauban.. Drawn by Jean de Bruges.
N.os 2 & 3. Sconces from a M.S. entitled Histoire Romaine.. N.o 6. Cradle of the 14th Cent.y from a M.S. in the Bib. Imperiale.
N.o 7. Cradle of the 15th Cent.y from a M.S. in the Bib. du Roi.. N.o 8. Bed of the 15th Cent.y from a M.S. des Miracles de Saint Louis
N.o 9. Bed & Table of the 15th Cent.y from the British Museum, Royal M.S. 16. G. III.

Plate 10

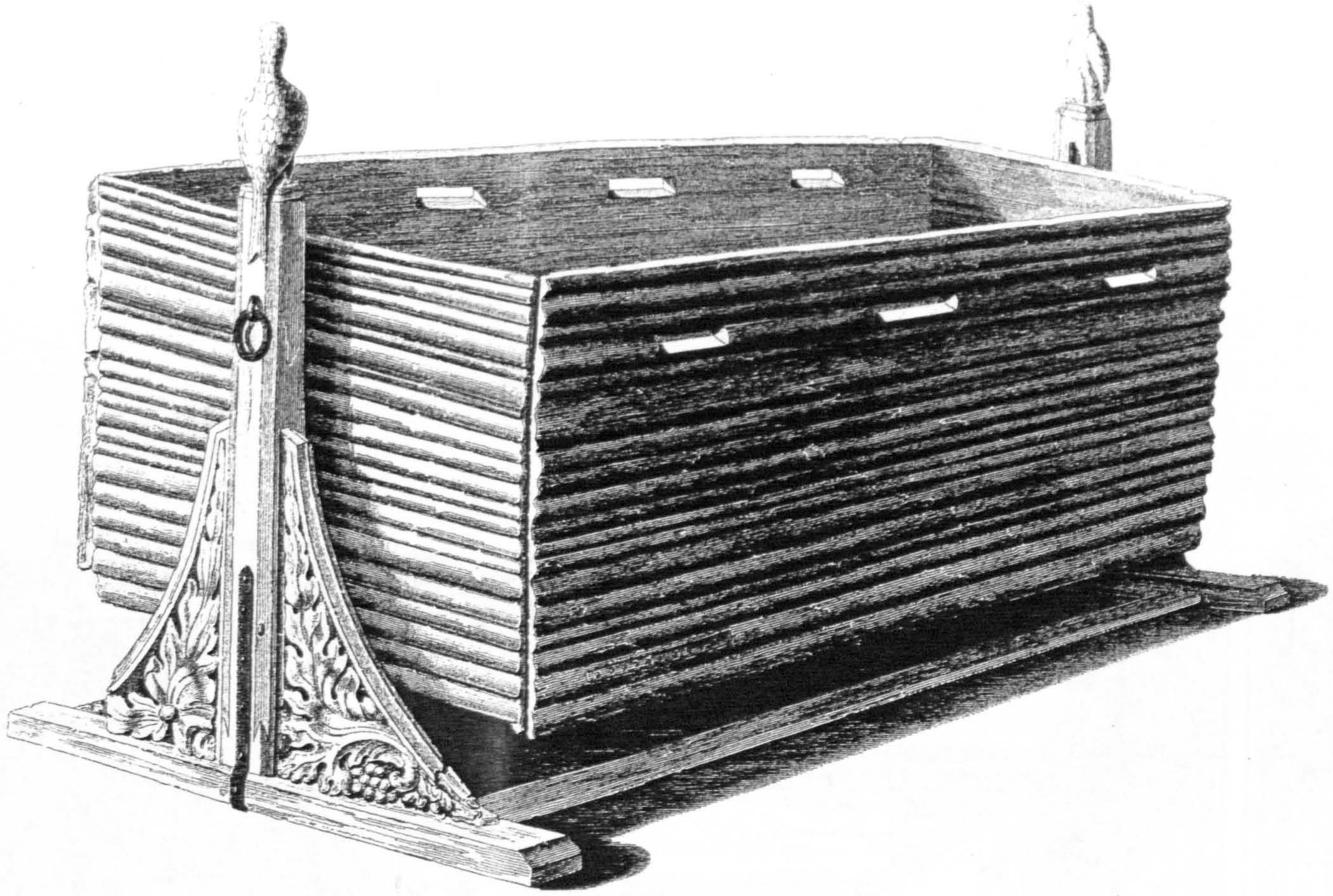
Various furniture etc reproduced from manuscript sources of the 14th and 15th centuries – (1836) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XXXV, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



KING EDWARD *the Second's* CRADLE.

Plate 11

'King Edward the Second's Cradle'. *Archaeologia*, volume VIII, 1787, appendix, fig.1, plate xxi.



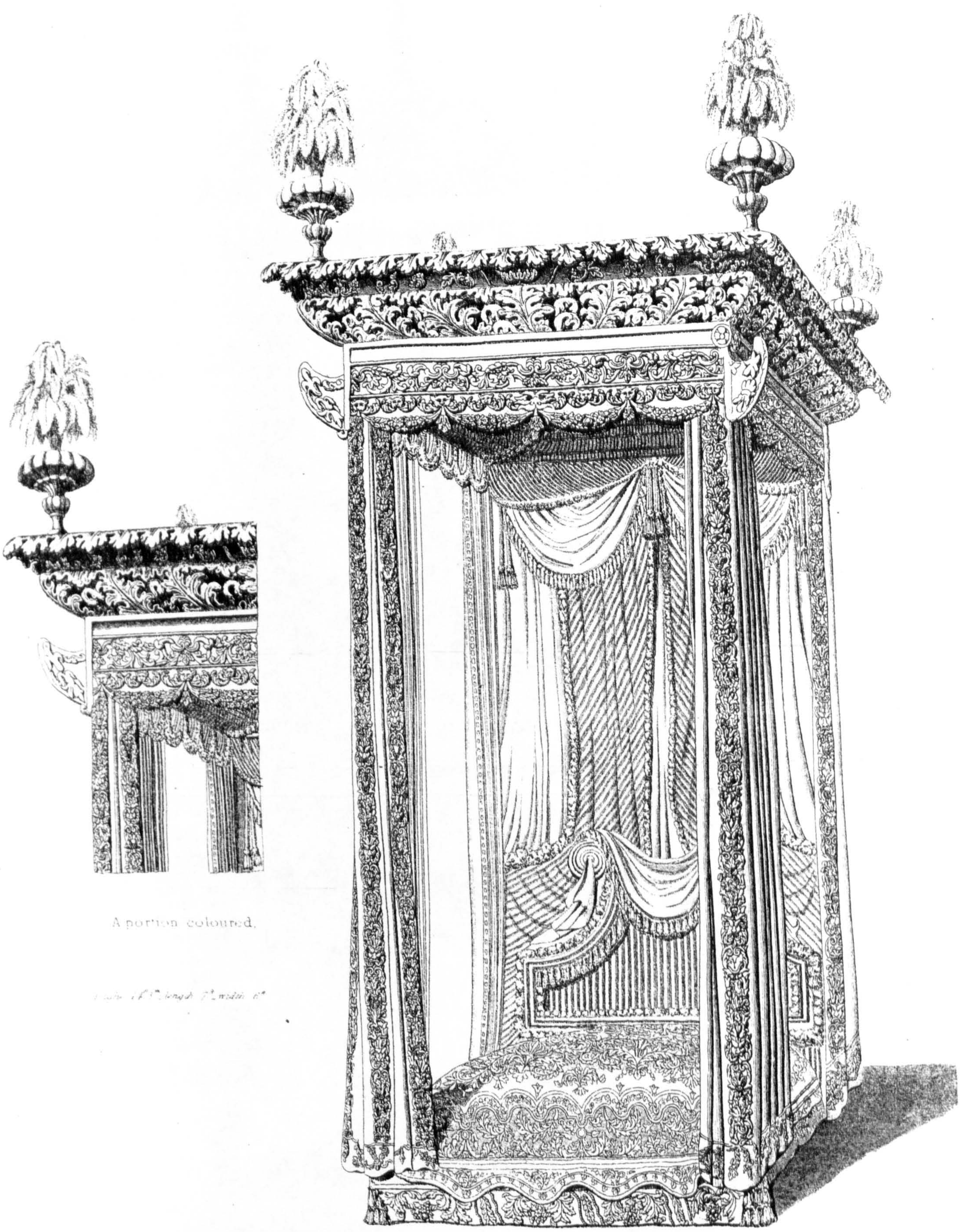
THE CRADLE OF HENRY 5TH

In the Poſſeſsion of George Weare Braikenridge Esqre Brislington near Bristol.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw.

Plate 12

The Cradle of Henry 5th, in the possession of George Weare Braikenridge Esq. – (1836) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XLI, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



A portion coloured.

VELVET BED, WITH GOLD & SILVER ORNAMENTS, AT HARDWICKE HALL, DERBYSHIRE.

A Seat of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw.

London, Pub.d June 2 1834 by W.m Pickering, Chancery Lane.

Plate 13

Velvet Bed, with Gold and Silver Ornaments, at Hardwicke Hall, Derbyshire, a Seat of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire – (1834) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XL, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



NAPKIN PRESS,

of the time of Queen Elizabeth.

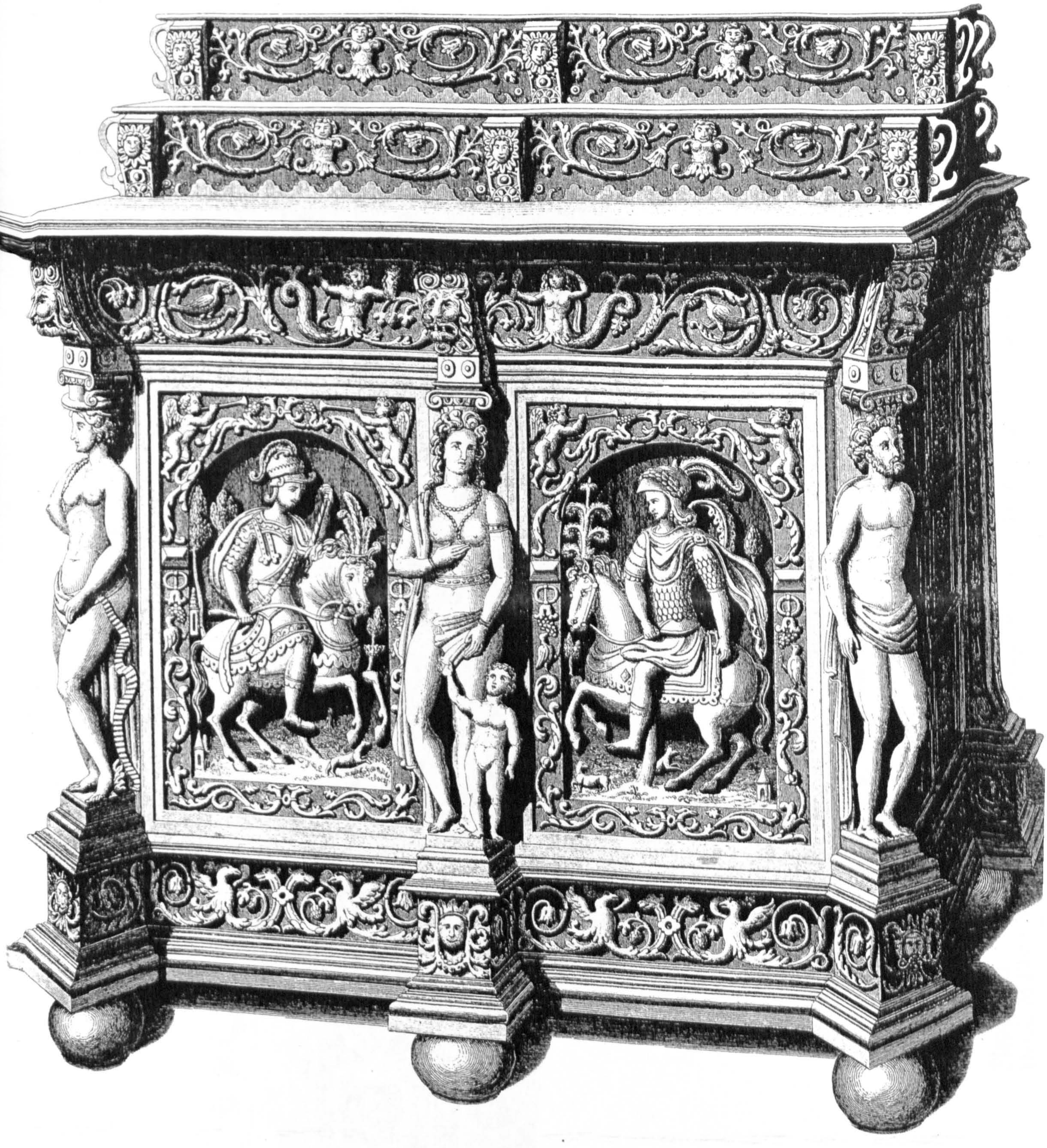
In the Possession of Sir Sam! Meyrick, Goodrich Court, Herefordshire

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw

London, Pub.d April 1835 by Wm Pickering, Chancery Lane

Plate 14

Napkin Press, of the time of Queen Elizabeth, in the possession of Sir Saml. Meyrick, Goodrich Court, Herefordshire – (1835) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XXXIV, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



CABINET,

of the time of Elizabeth, or James 1st

In the Pofsefsion of Mr Webb, Bond Street.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw

Plate 15(a)

Cabinet, of the time of Elizabeth, or James 1st, in the possession of Mr Webb, Bond Street – (1836) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XXVIII, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).

CABINET,

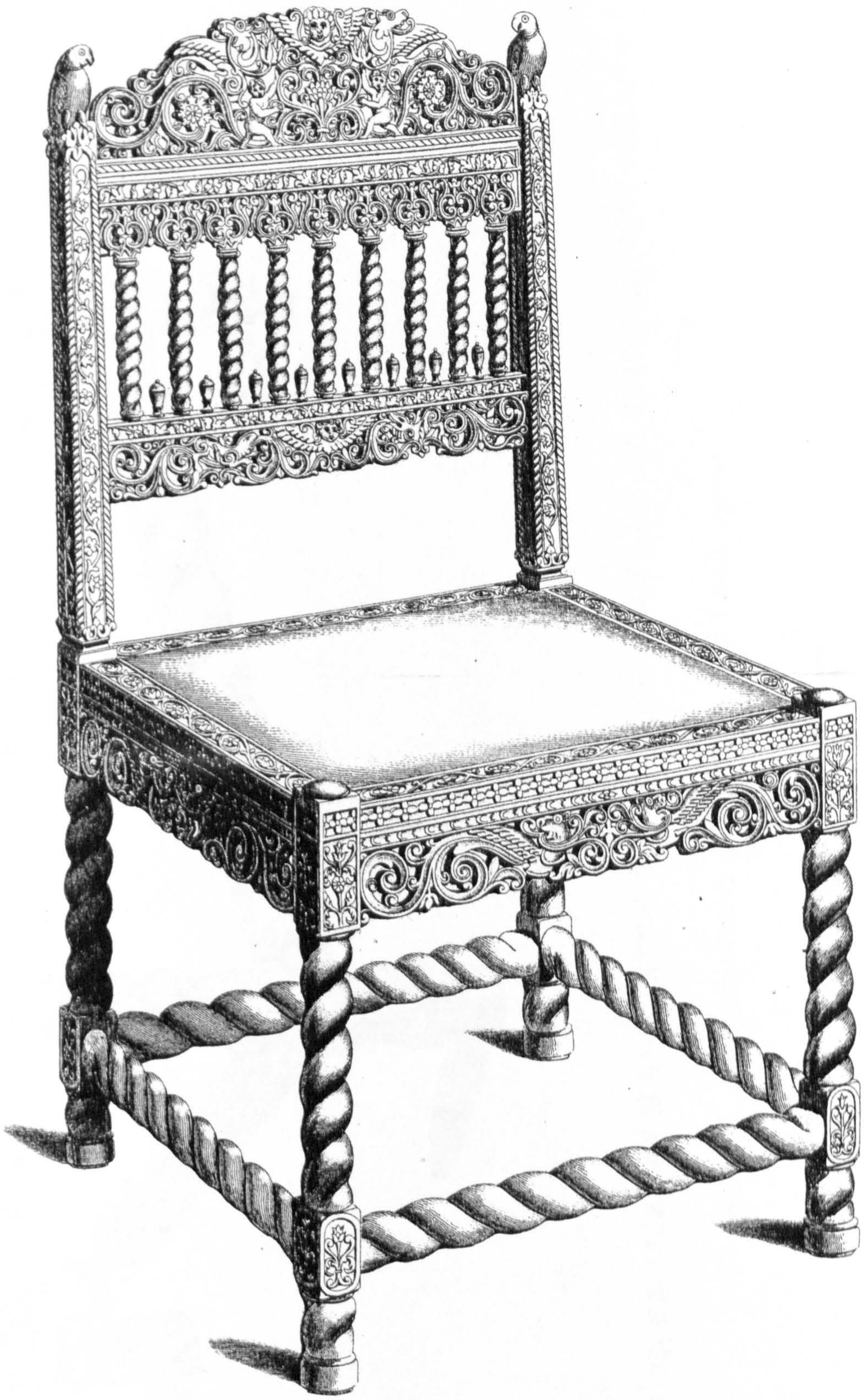
of the time of Elizabeth, or James 1st.

In the Poſſeſsion of Mr. Webb, Bond Street.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw.

Plate 15(b)
Detail of Plate XXVIII, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), indicating ownership of 'Mr. Webb, Bond Street'.

Date the beginning of the [illegible]



EBONY CHAIR, FORMERLY BELONGING TO HORACE WALPOLE AT STRAWBERRY HILL.

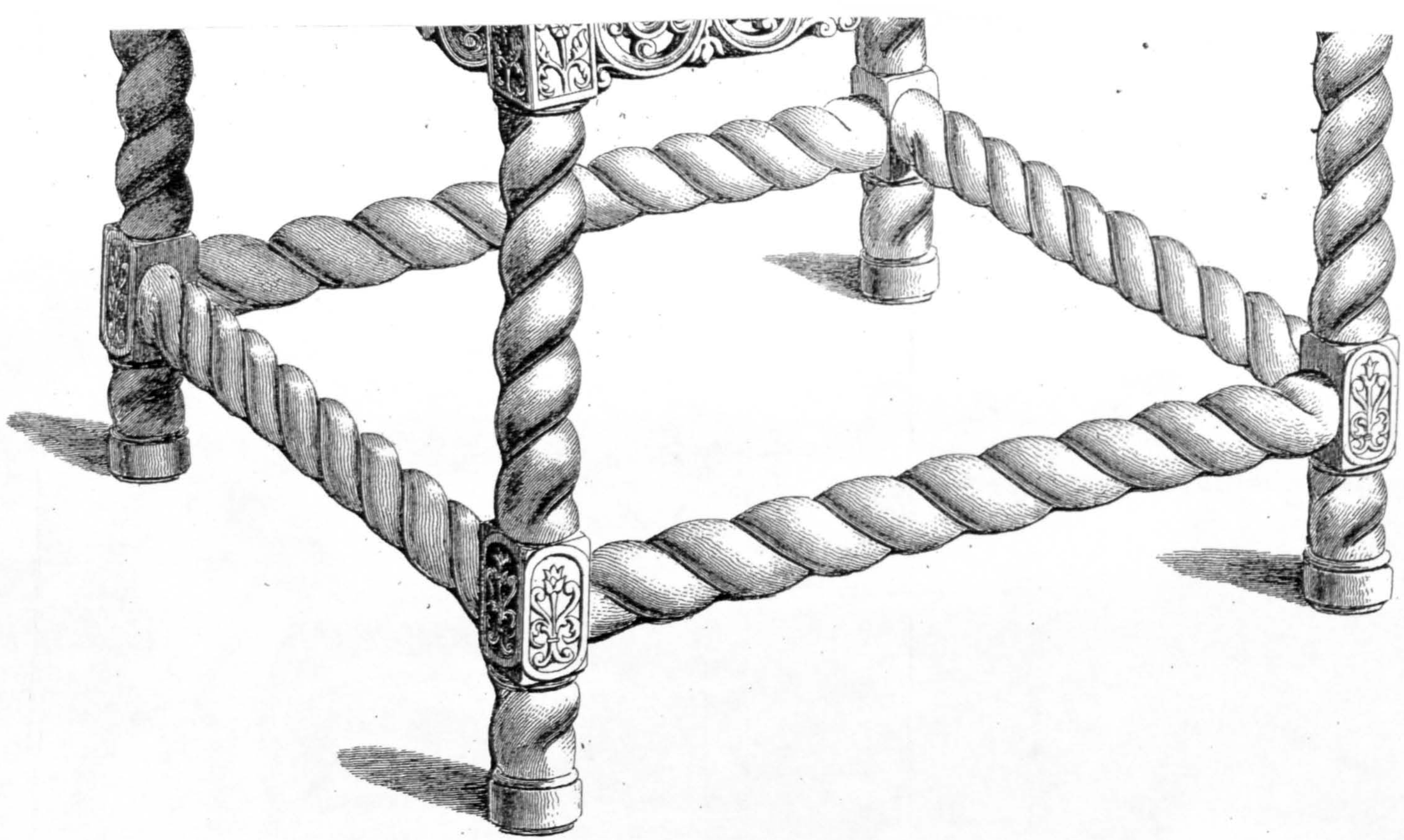
Now in the pofsefsion of Mr Webb, Old Bond Street

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw

London, Pub.d June 2, 1834, by Wm Pickering, Chancery Lane.

Plate 16(a)

Ebony Chair, formerly belonging to Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, now in the possession of Mr Webb, Old Bond Street – (1834) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XIII, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



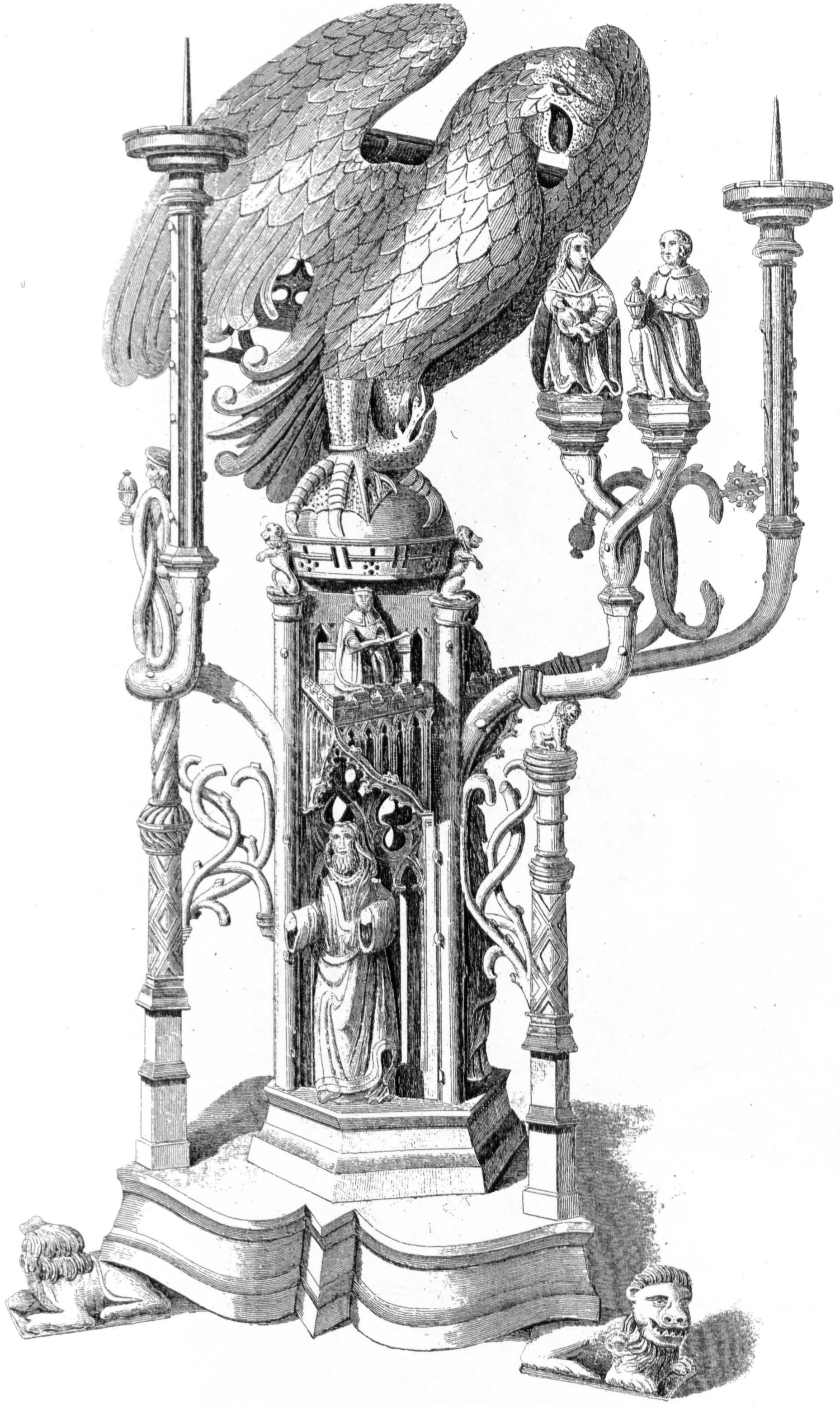
EBONY CHAIR, FORMERLY BELONGING TO HORACE WALPOLE AT STRAWBERRY HILL.

Now in the posseſsion of Mr. Webb, Old Bond Street.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw.

London Pubd June 2. 1834. by Wm Pickering, Chancery Lane.

Plate 16(b)
Detail of Plate XIII, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), indicating ownership of 'Mr. Webb, Old Bond Street.



BRASS READING DESK,

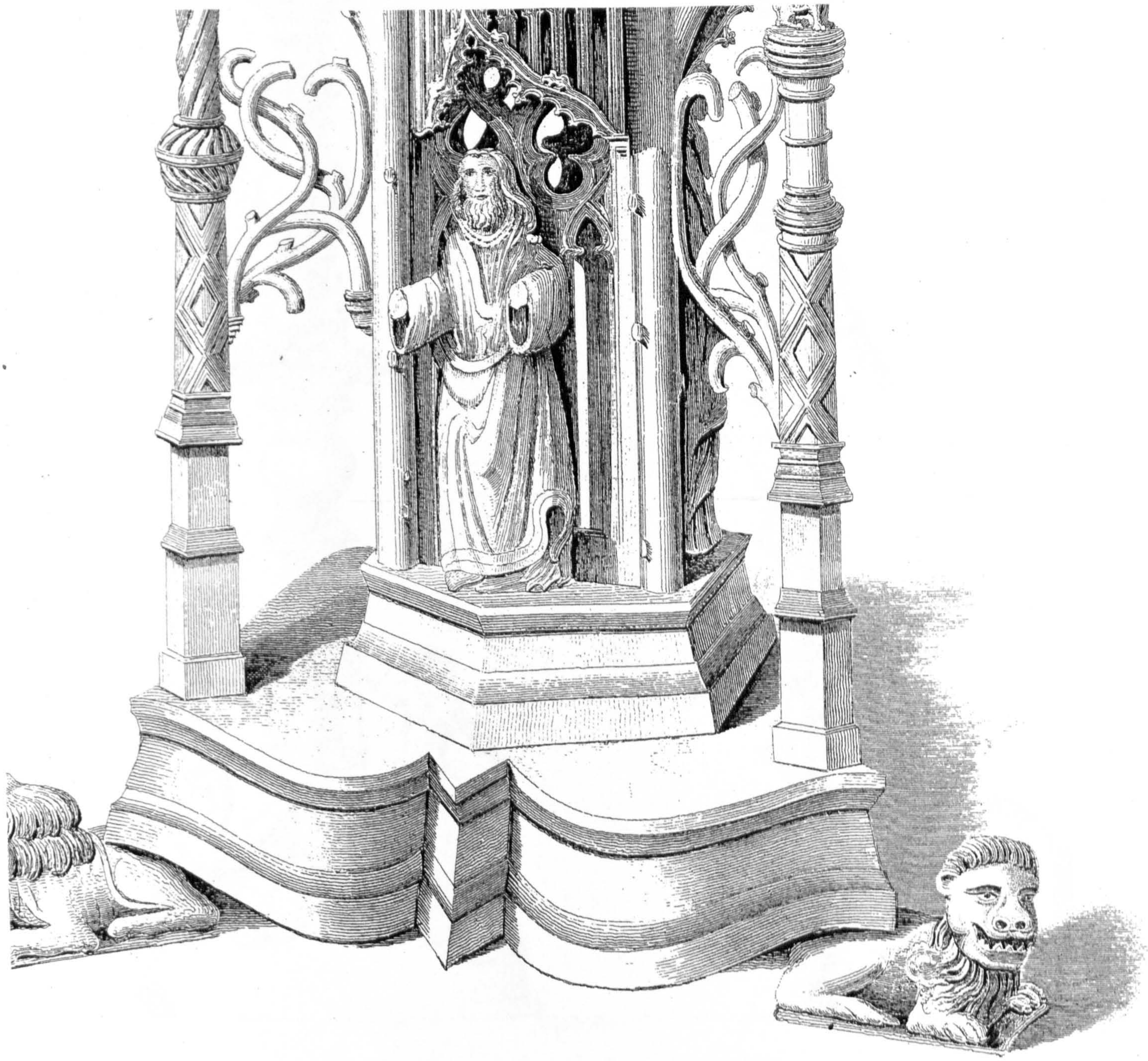
In the Poſſeſsion of Mr Hull, Wardour Street,

Date the latter part of the 15th Cent?

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw.

Plate 17(a)

Brass Reading Desk, in the possession of Mr Hull, Wardour Street – (1836) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XLV, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



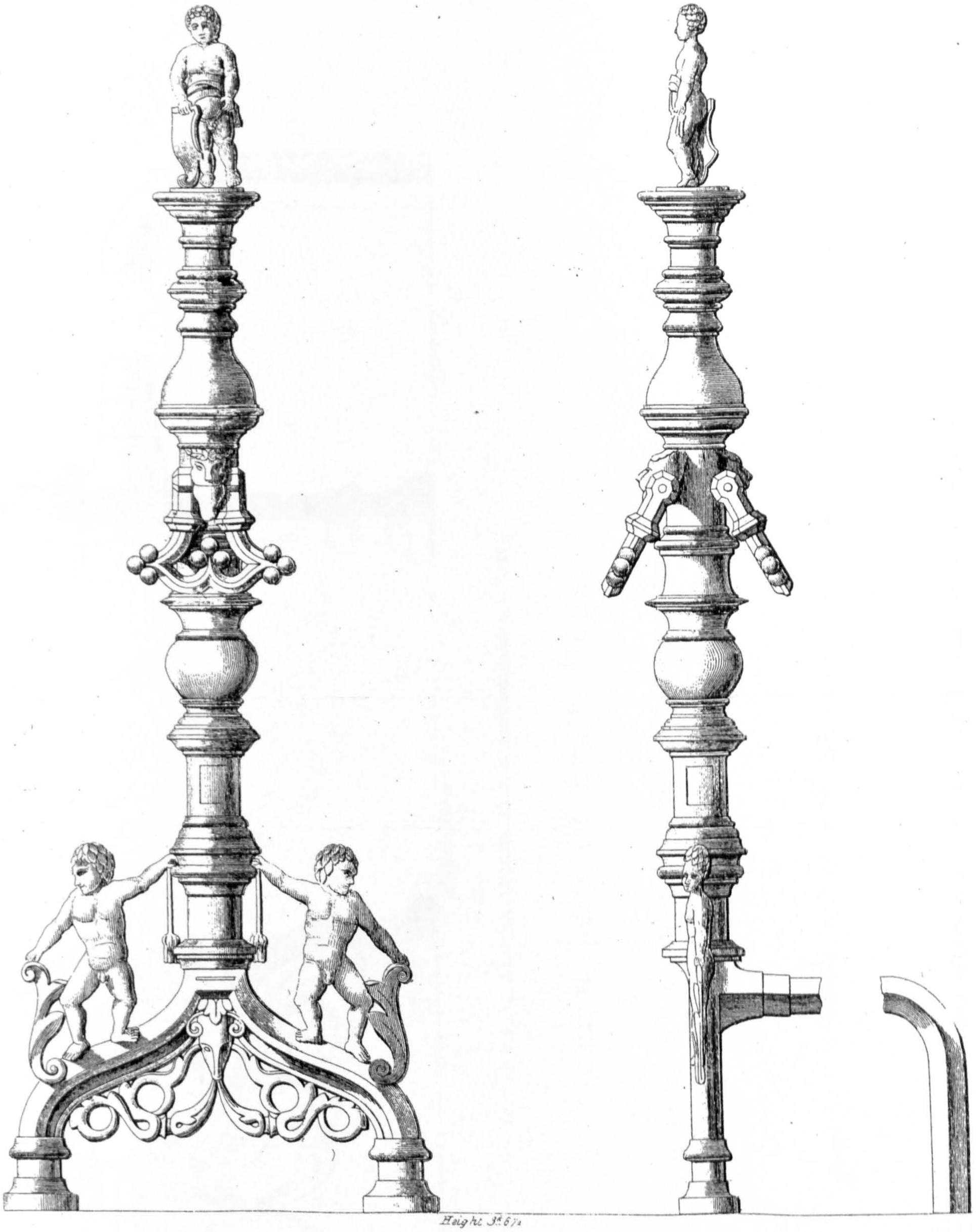
BRASS READING DESK,

In the Posseſsion of Mr. Hull, Wardour Street,

Date the latter part of the 15th Cent.y

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw.

Plate 17(b)
Detail of Plate XLV, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), indicating ownership of 'Mr. Hull, Wardour Street'.



From a pair of Brafs Dogs,

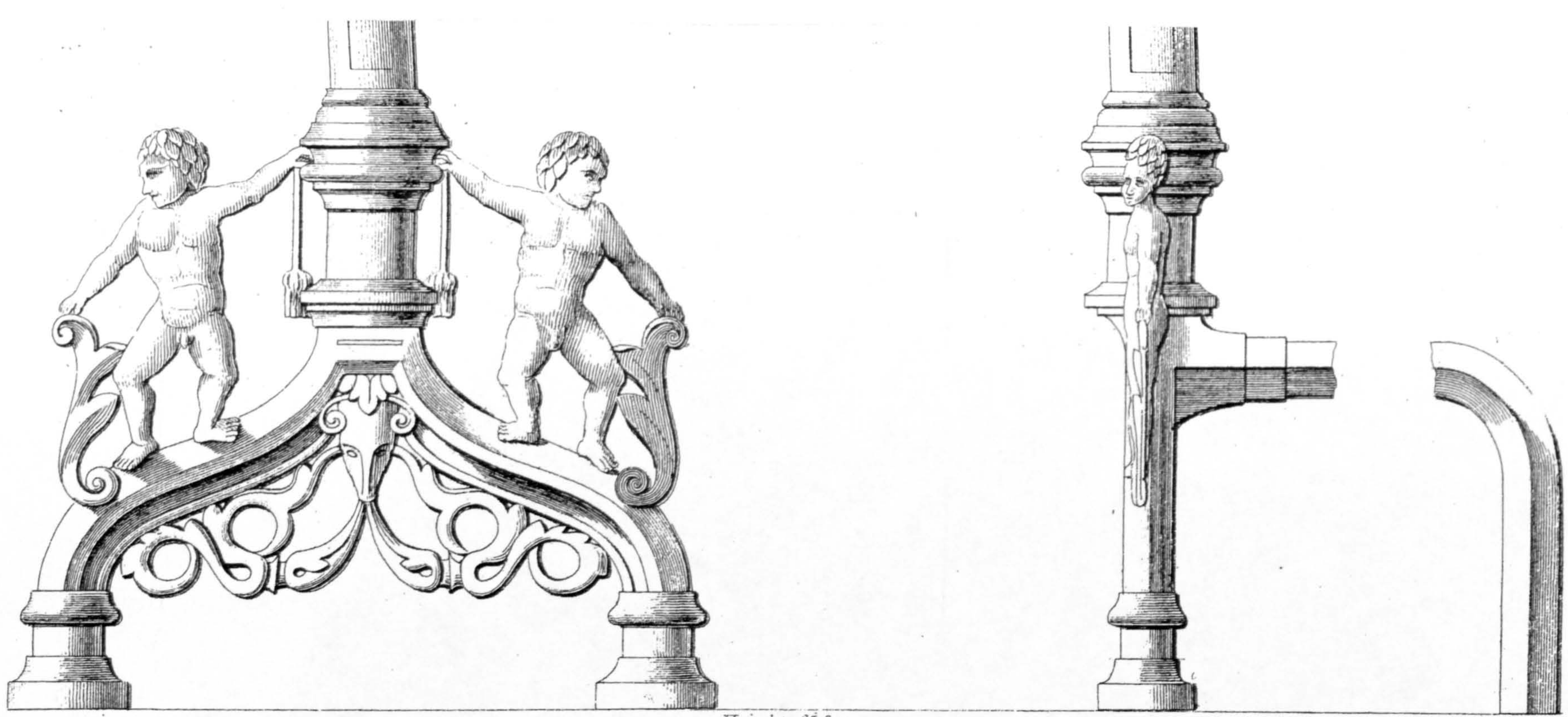
in the pofsefsion of Mefsrs Saml & Hy Pratt, Bond Street.

of the time of Queen Elizabeth or James 1st

London, Pubd Jany 1, 1833, by Wm Pickering, Chancery Lane.

Plate 18(a)

From a Pair of Brass Dogs, in the possession of Messrs Samuel & Henry Pratt, Bond Street, of the time of Queen Elizabeth or James 1st – (1833) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate LVI, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



Height 3ft 6½

Scale Foot

From a pair of Brafs Dogs,

in the pofsefsion of Mefsrs Saml & Hy Pratt, Bond Street.

of the time of Queen Elizabeth or James 1st

London, Pubd Jany 1, 1833, by Wm Pickering, Chancery Lane.

Plate 18(b)
Detail of Plate LVI, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), indicating ownership of 'Messrs. Samuel & Henry Pratt, Bond Street'.



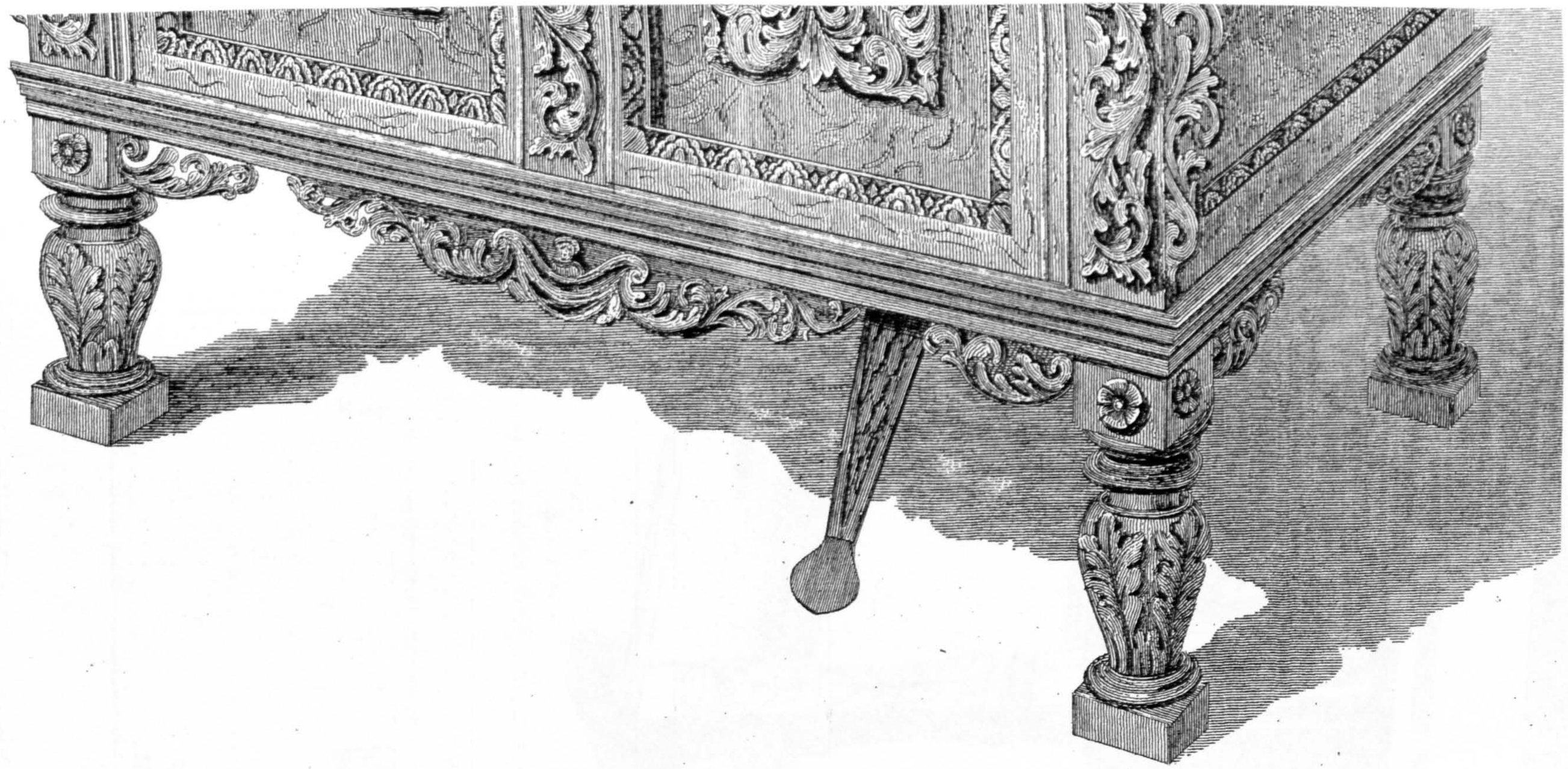
CHAMBER ORGAN EXECUTED AT VIENNA IN 1592,

by C.H. Hoffheimer.

In the poſſeſſion of Mr Gwennapp.

Plate 19(a)

Chamber Organ Executed at Vienna in 1592, by C.H. Hoffheimer, in the possession of Mr Gwennapp – (1833) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XXXIII, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



CHAMBER ORGAN EXECUTED AT VIENNA IN 1592,

by C.H.Hoffheimer,

In the posfesfion of Mr Gwennapp.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw.

London, Publd July 20 1833, by Wm Pickering, Chancery Lane.

Plate 19(b)
Detail of Plate XXXIII, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), indicating ownership of 'Mr. Gwennapp'.

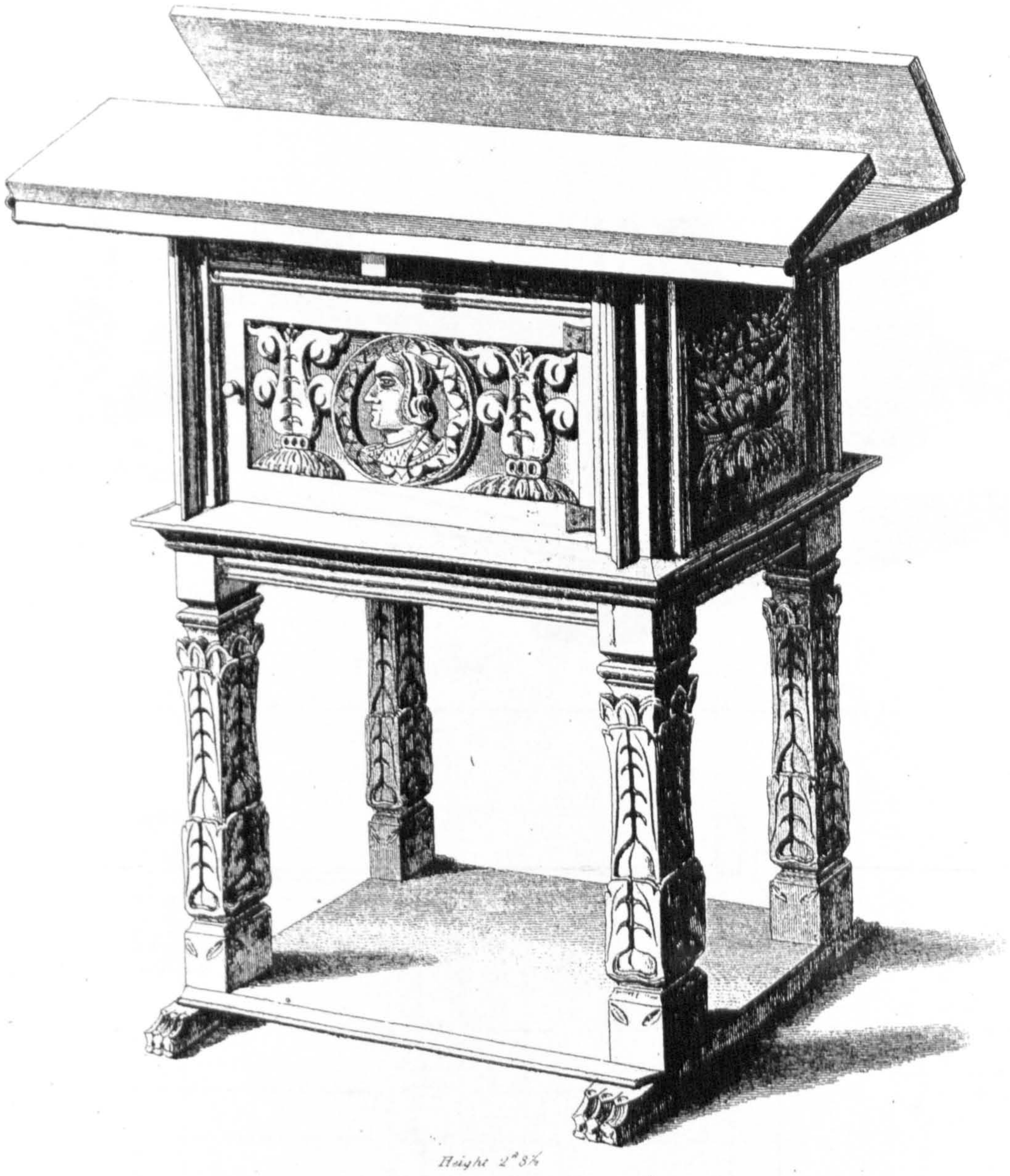


TABLE OF THE TIME OF HENRY 8TH

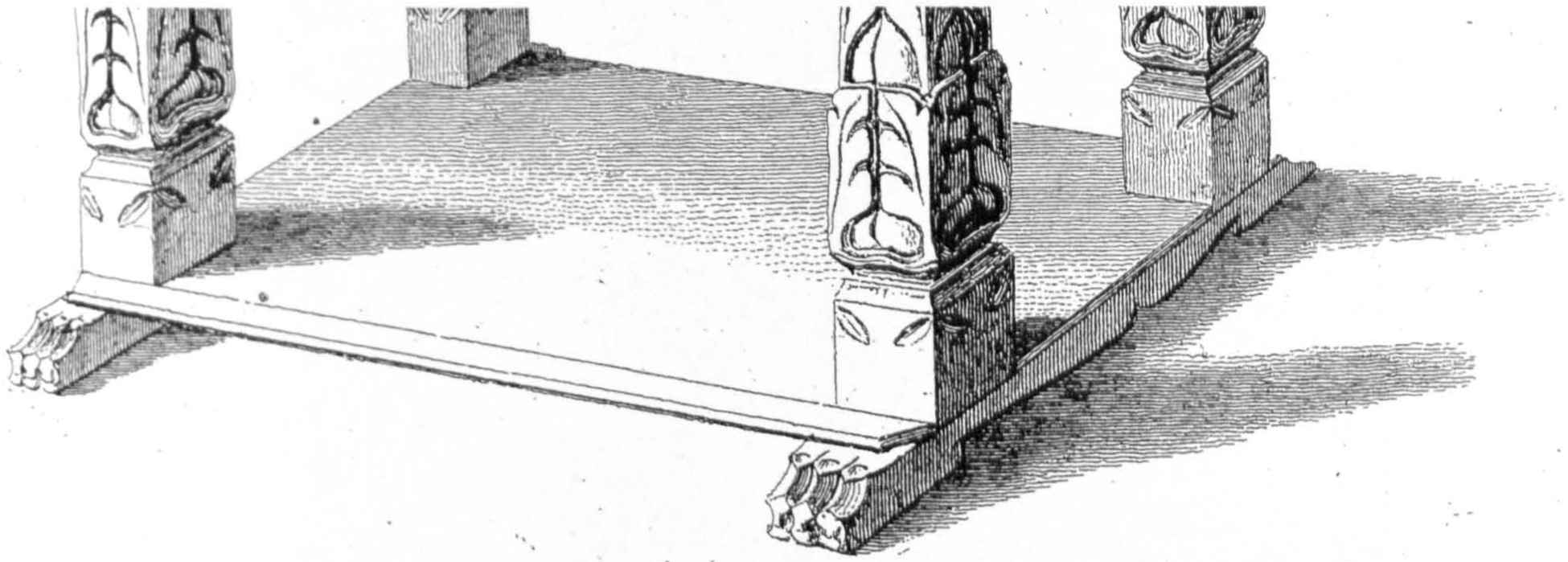
from Hill Hall. Efsex.

In the poffeffion of Mr. Swaby.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw

Plate 20(a)

Table of the time of Henry 8th, from Hill Hall, Essex, in the possession of Mr Swaby – (1832) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XIX, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



Height 2ft 8½

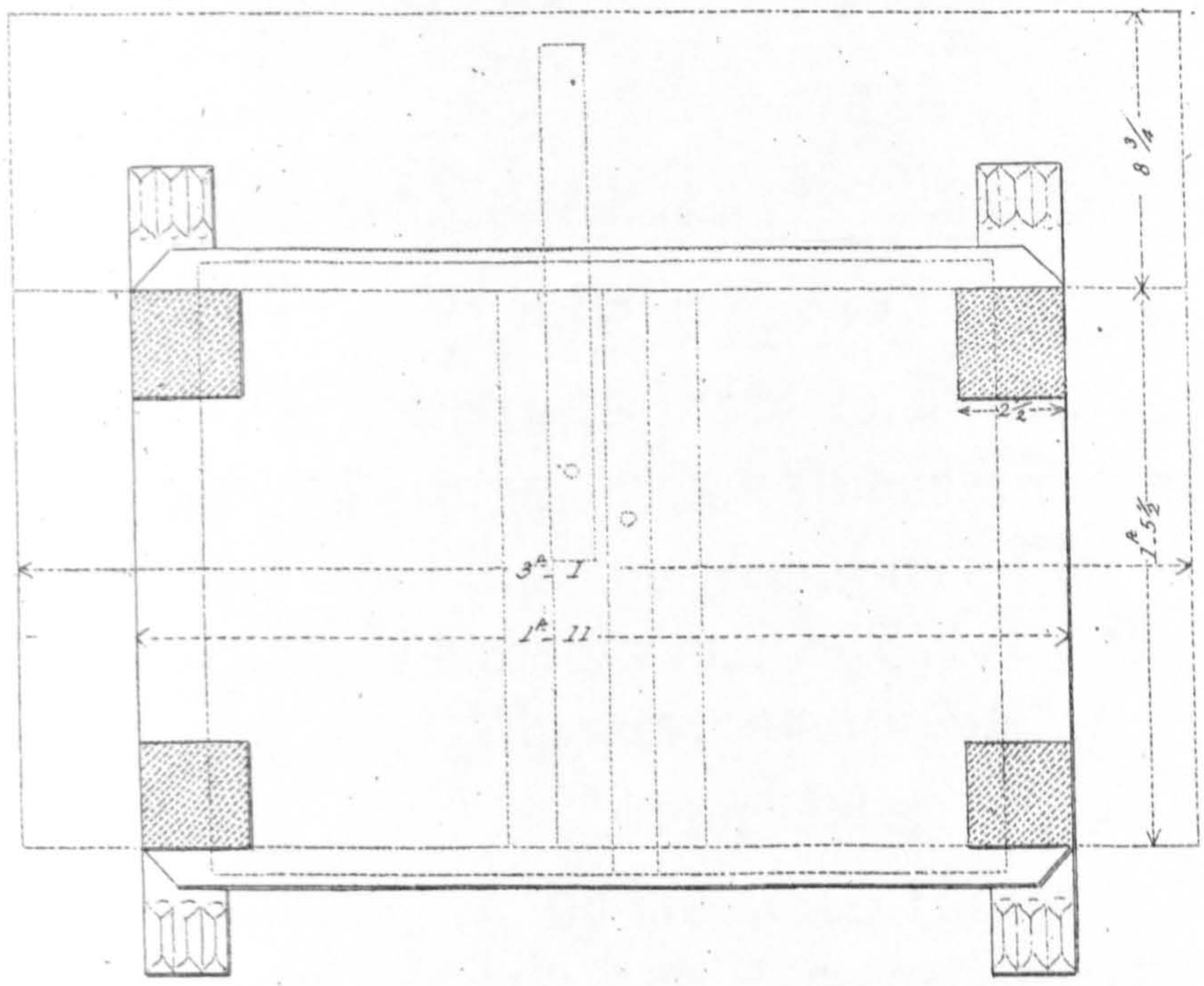


TABLE OF THE TIME OF HENRY 8TH.

from Hill Hall, Efsex.

In the poſſeſsion of Mr. Swaby.

Drawn & Engraved by Henry Shaw

Plate 20(b)
Detail of Plate XIX, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836), indicating ownership of 'Mr. Swaby'.

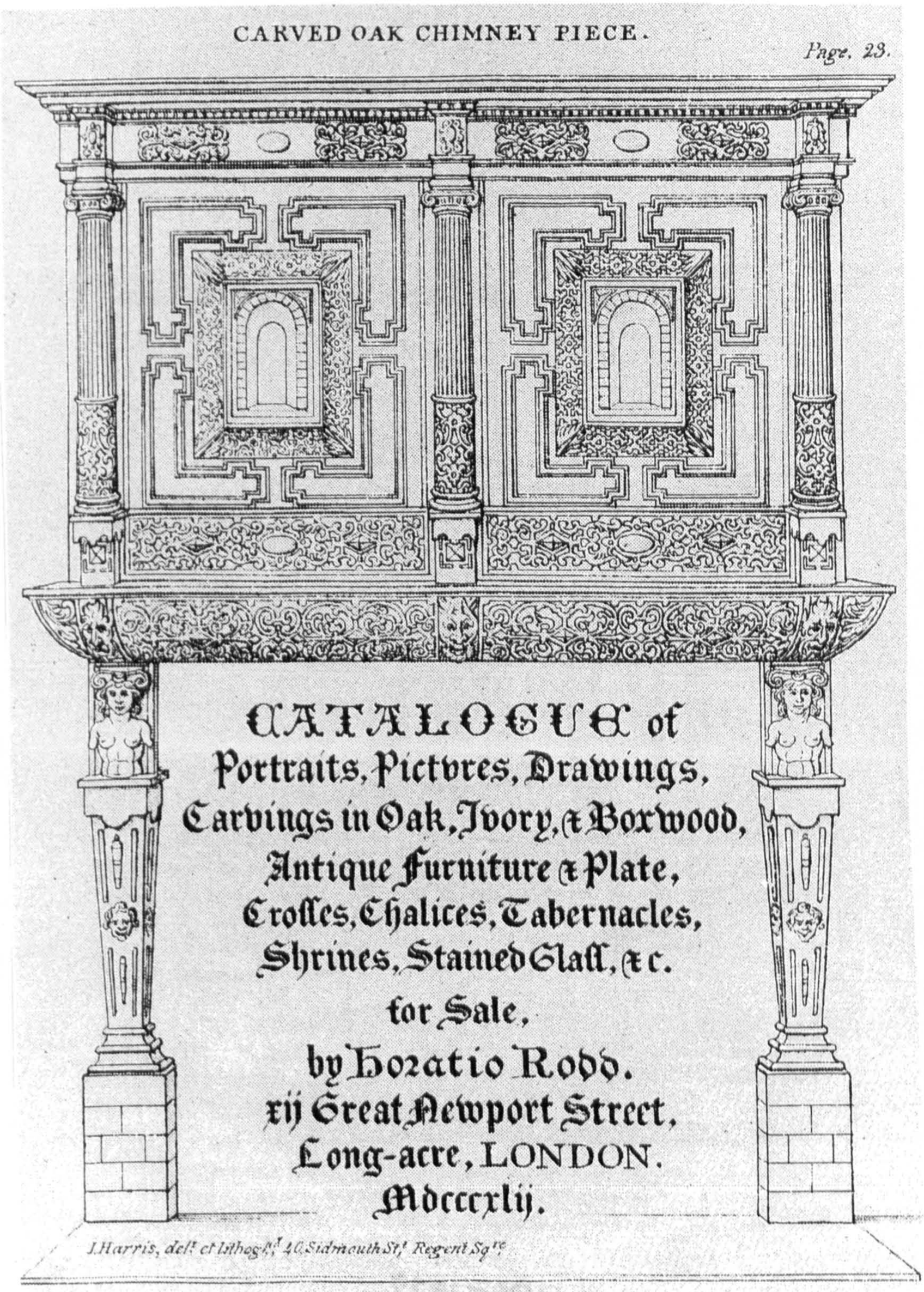


Plate 21

Title page of catalogue of the stock of Horatio Rodd, Great Newport Street, London, 1842. *Victoria and Albert Museum, Art Library.*

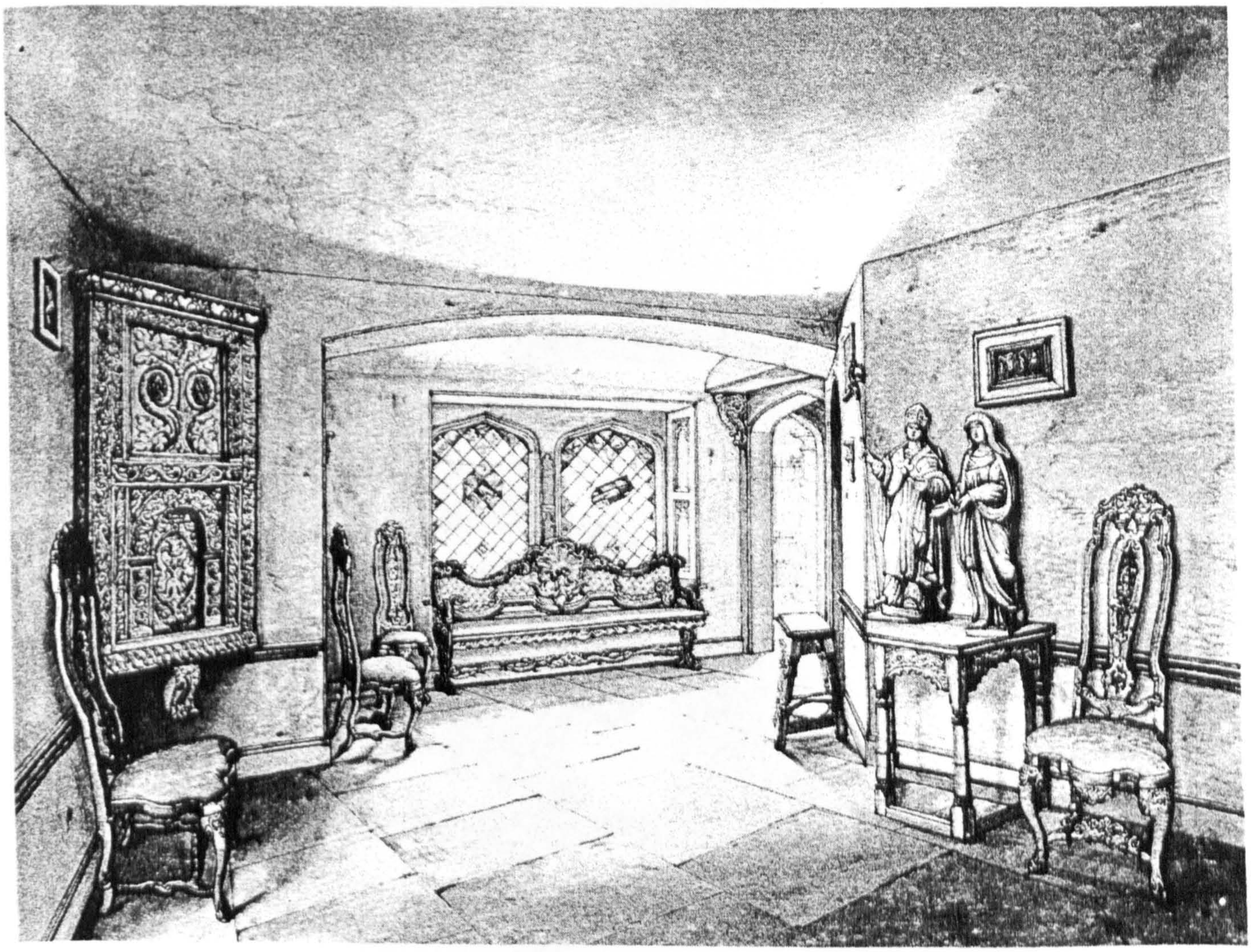
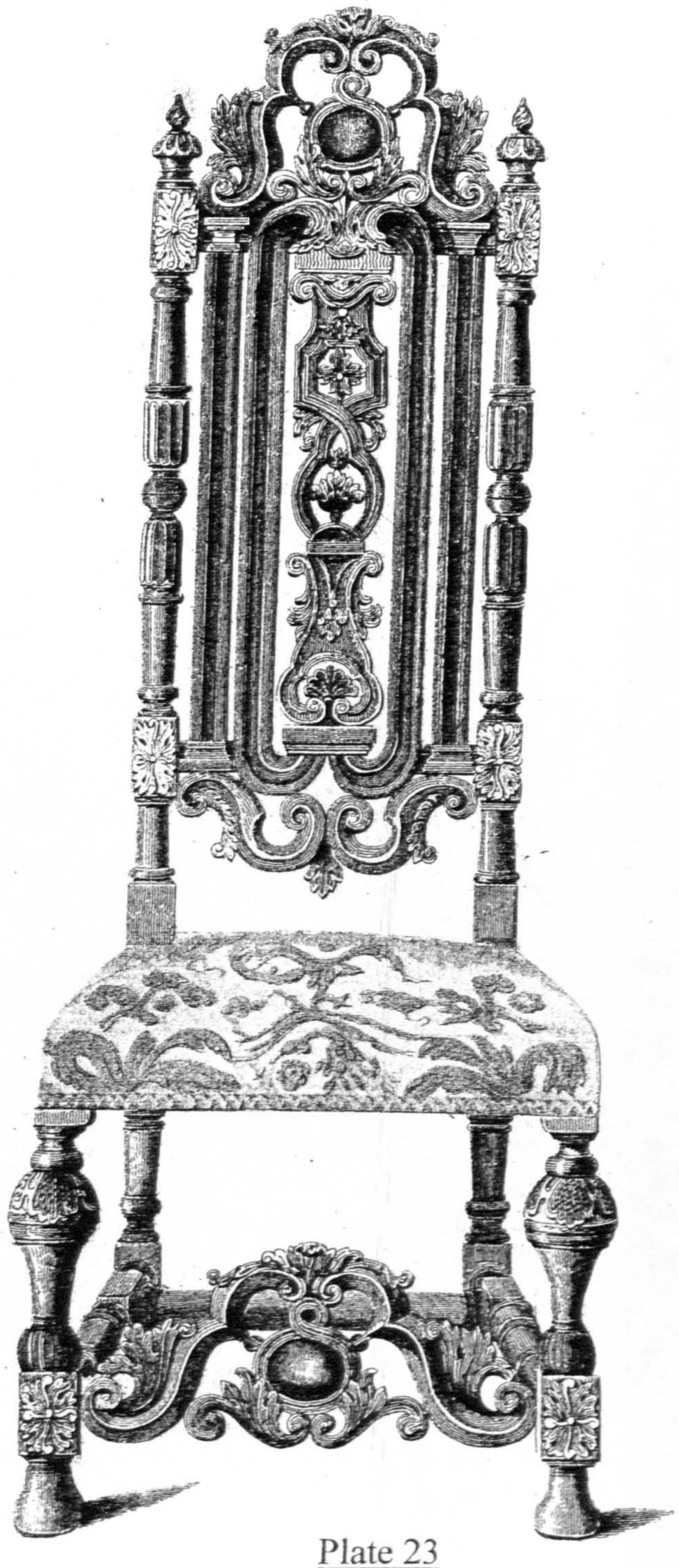
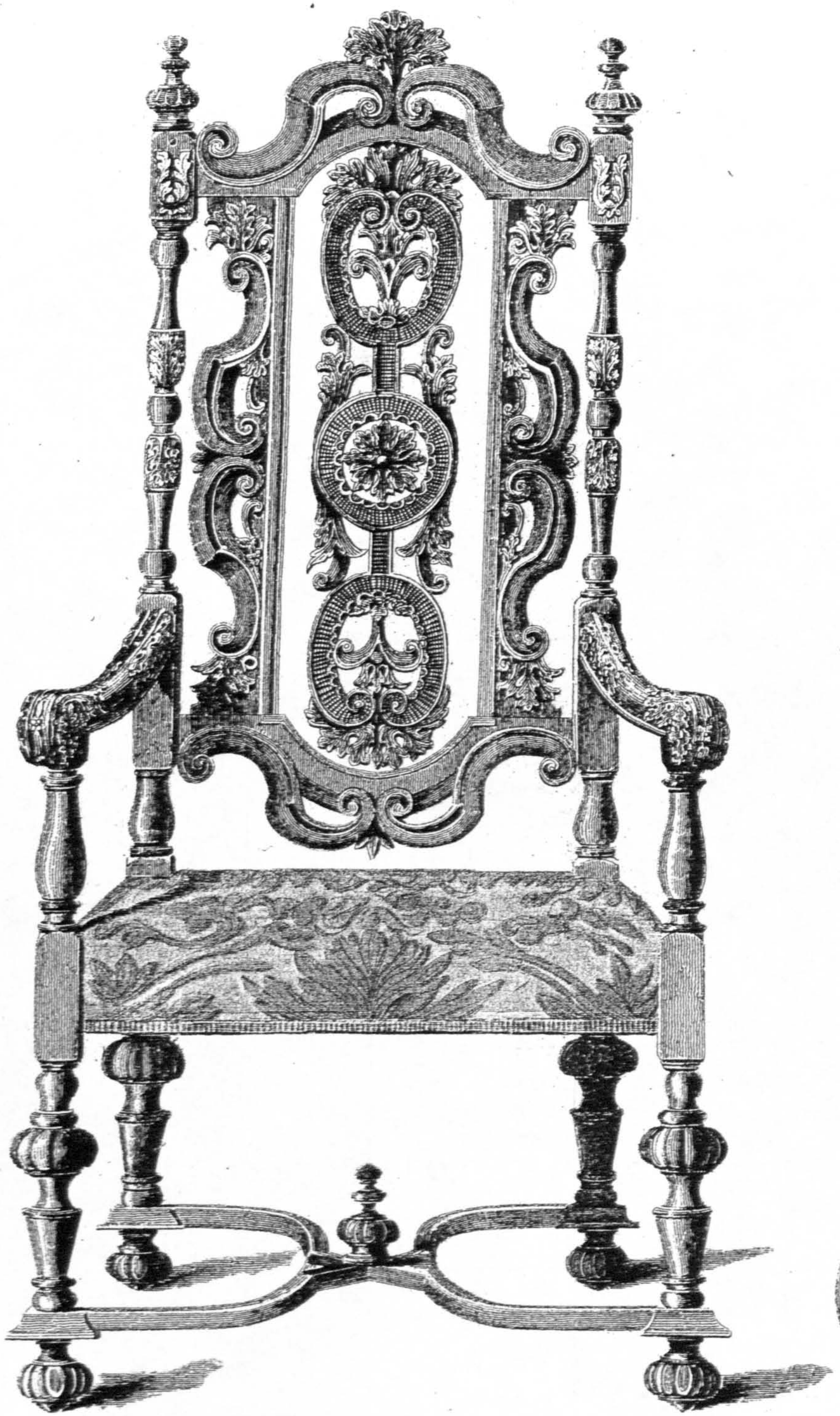


Plate 22
Interior of Broomwell House Lodge, Bristol – (c.1825), W.H. Bartlett (1809-1854), pencil and watercolour. *Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol.*

1.



2.



Nº 1. In the Pofsefsion of J.W. Wright, Esqre
Nos 2 & 3. in the Vestry Room of
St Catherine's Chapel, Regent's Park.

3.



Plate 23
Chairs, of the time of William 3rd, no.1 in the possession of J.W.Wright, esq – (1836)
Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XVI, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).

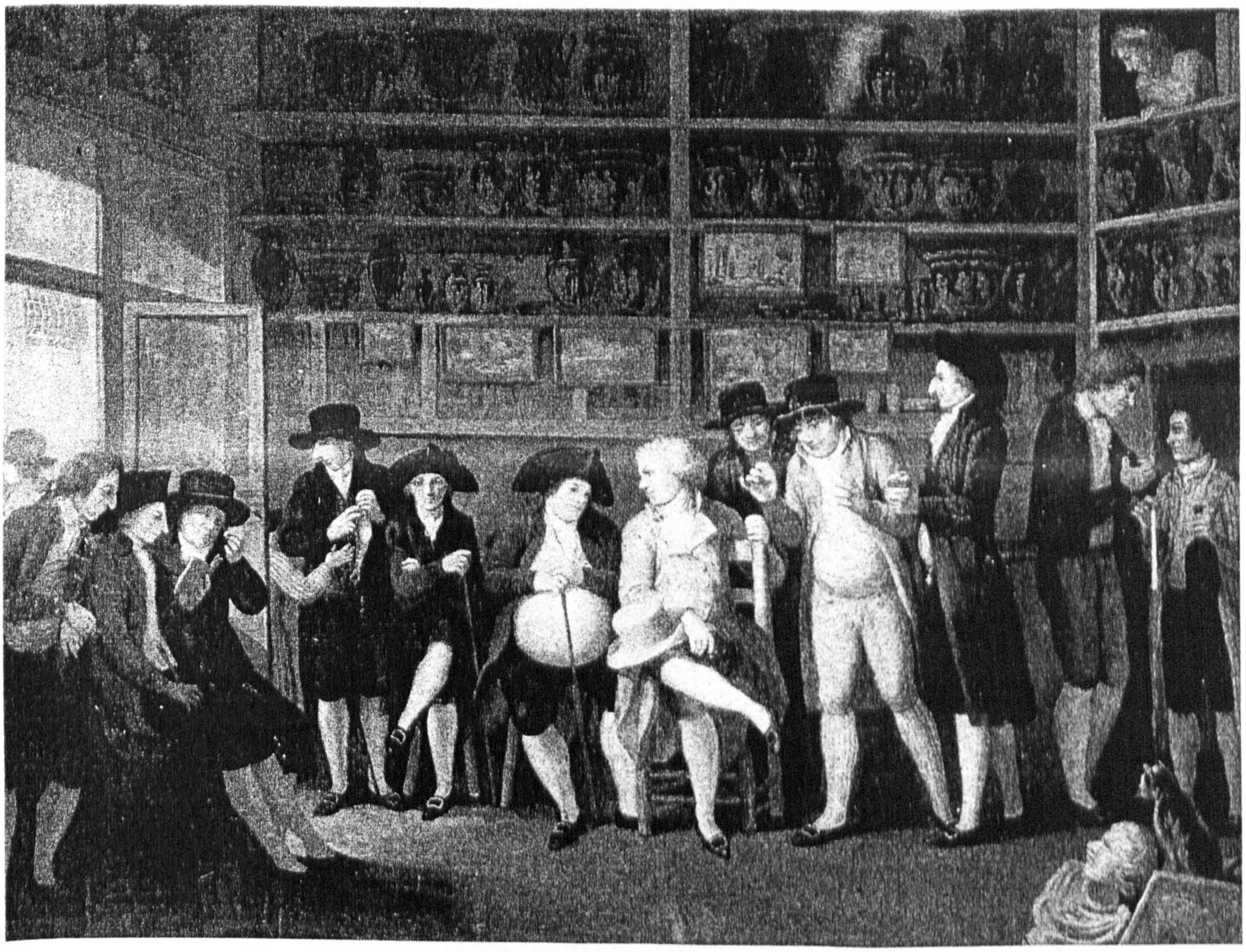
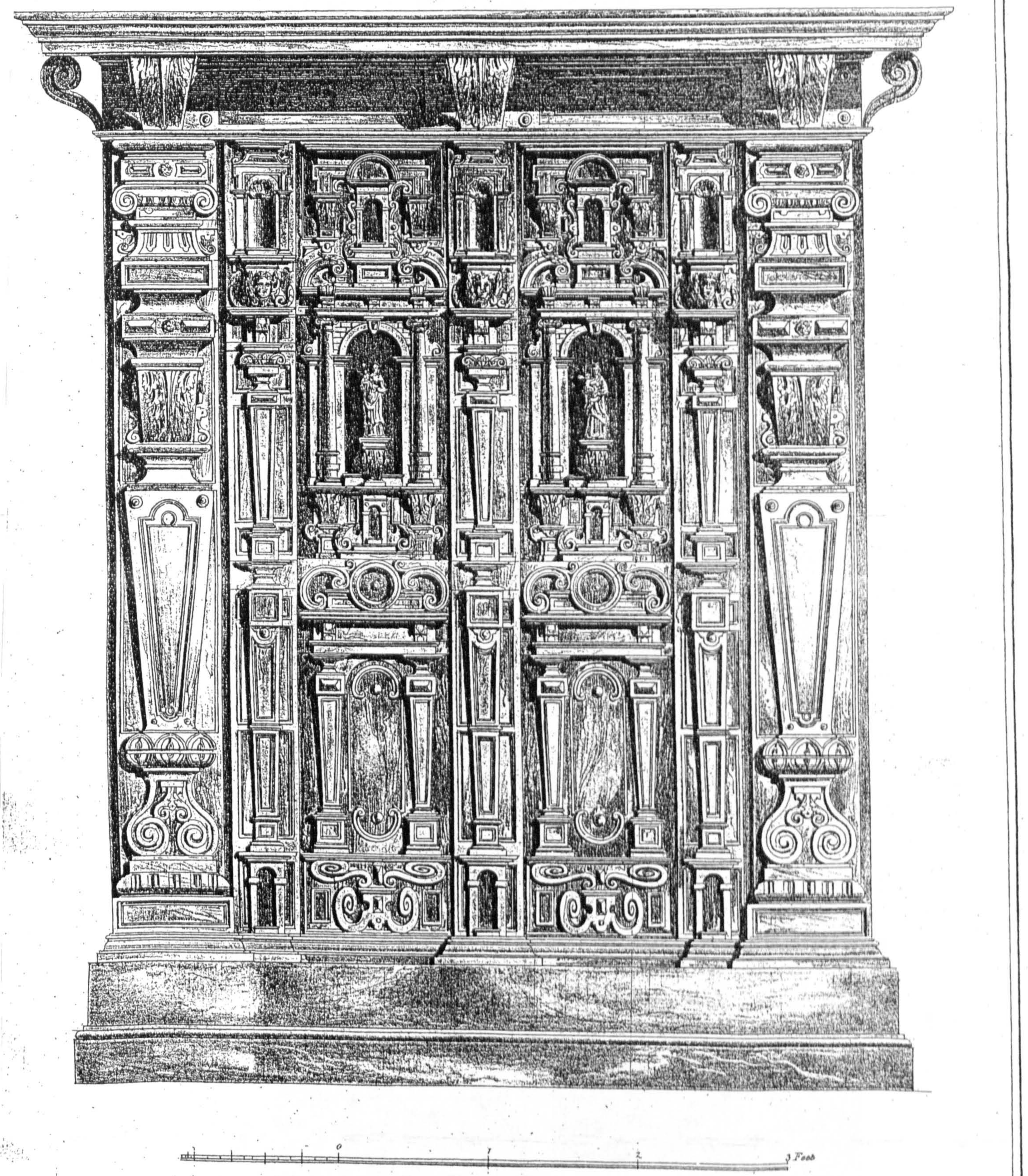


Plate 24

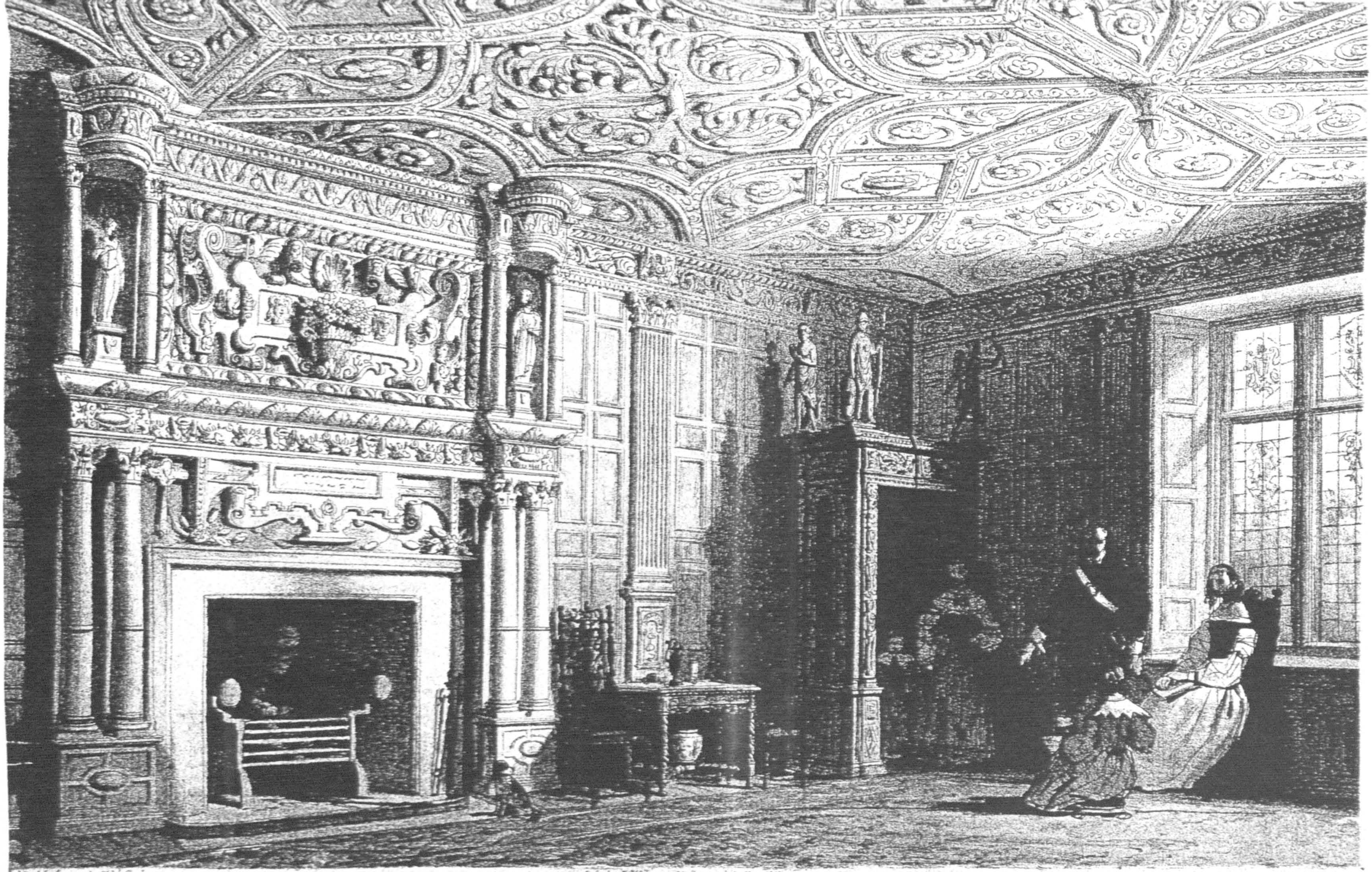
Antique shop in Naples – (1798) anonymous, watercolour. Illustrated in Ian Jenkins & Kim Sloan *Vases and Volcanoes – Sir William Hamilton and his Collection* (London, 1996), fig.22. Private collection in Rome.



AN ENGLISH CABINET formerly the property of KING CHARLES 1st at THEOBALDS.
now belonging to T. Mackinlay, Esqre Soho Sqre

Plate 25

An English Cabinet formerly the property of King Charles 1st at Theobalds, now belonging to T. Mackinlay, Esq. Soho Square – (1841) Charles James Richardson, from Charles James Richardson, *Studies from Old English Mansions, their Furniture, Gold & Silver etc* (1st series, 1841).



THE GREAT CHAMBER, STOCKTON HOUSE. WILTSHIRE.

Plate 26

The Great Chamber, Stockton House, Wiltshire, Seat of Henry Biggs esq., - (1843) Charles James Richardson & Weld Taylor, from Charles James Richardson, *Studies from Old English Mansions, their Furniture, Gold & Silver etc* (3rd series, 1844).

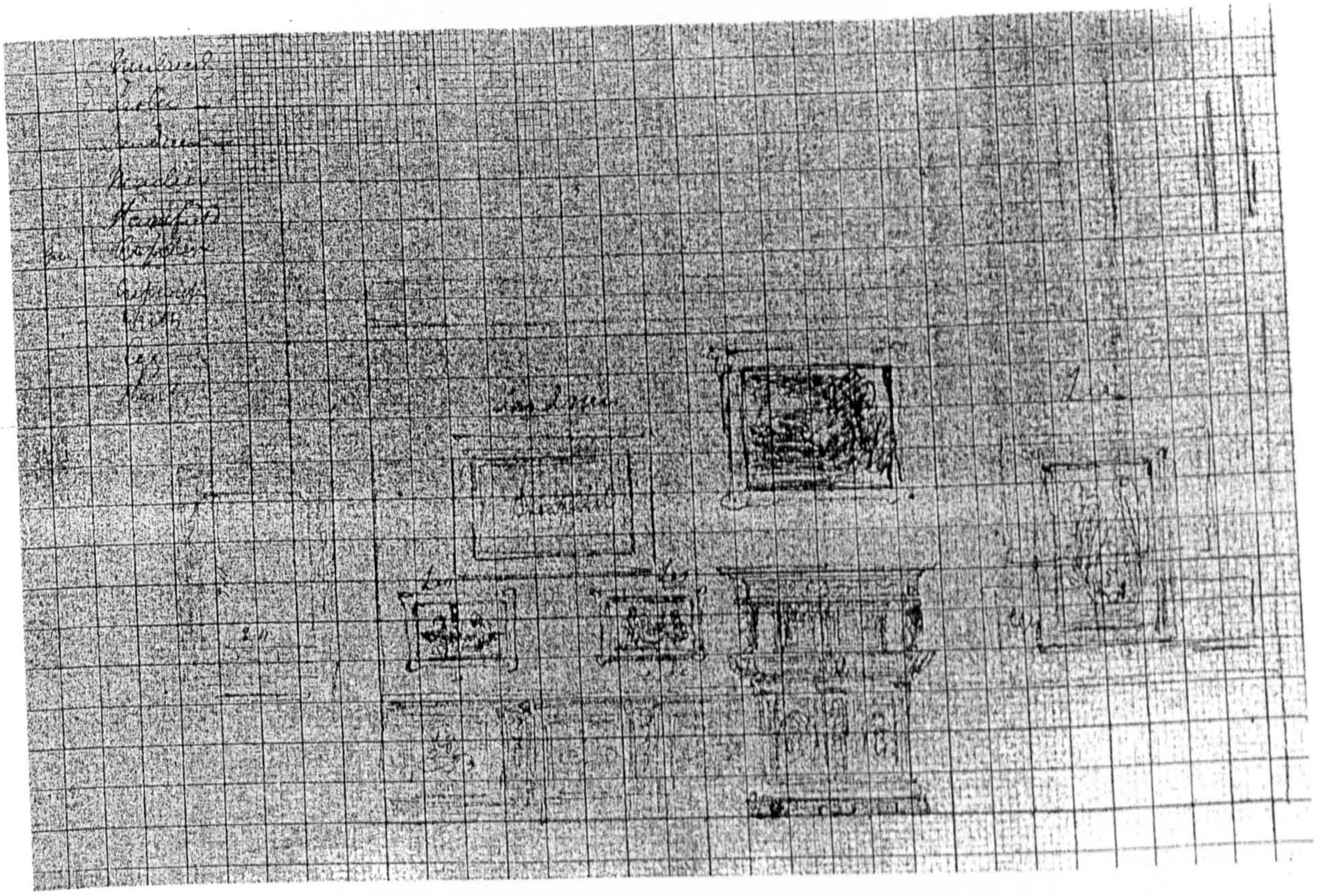
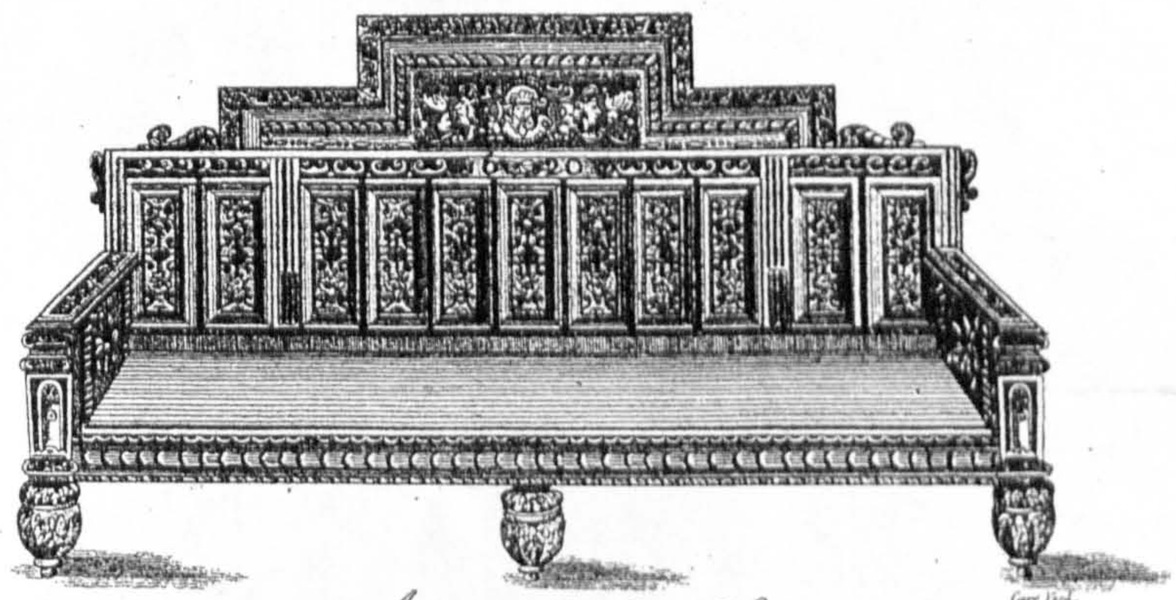


Plate 27
Sketch for the Shakespeare Room, 18 Duke Street, London, c.1848 – Isambard Kingdom Brunel.



Plate 28
Invitation Card for practice for the Eglinton Tournament, c. 1839, with the signature of S & H Pratt. (*Country Life*).



Ancient Oak Sofa

Plate 29

'An ancient oak sofa, in the collection of Mr John Holmes in 1825'. Illustration from John Cole, *The Antiquarian Bijou*.....(Scarborough, 1829). *British Library*.

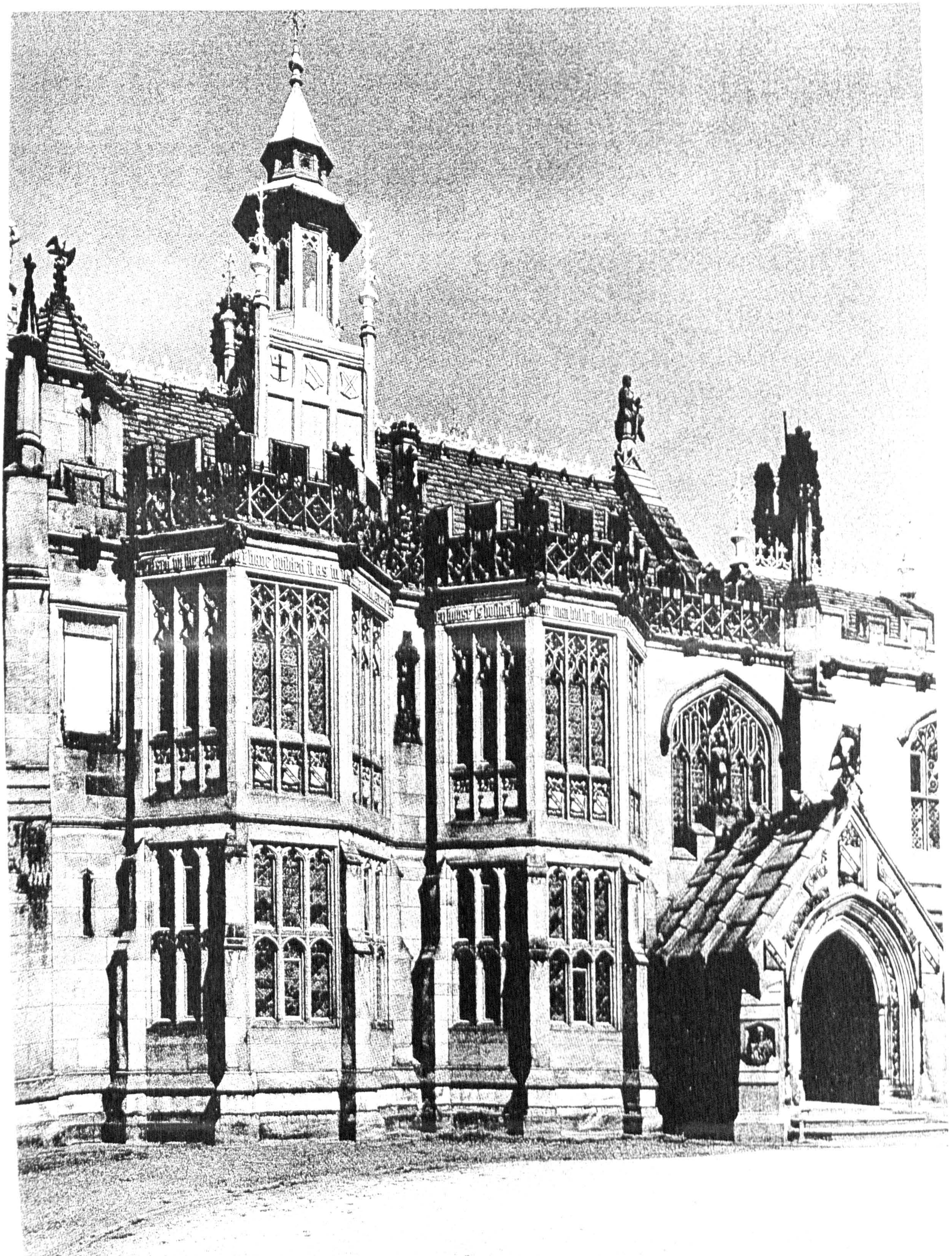


Plate 30

Scarisbrick Hall, Lancashire, designed by A.N.W. Pugin 1837-45 & E.W. Pugin 1862-8. The exterior of the hall, (*Country Life*).



Plate 31
Scarisbrick Hall, Lancashire, The Oak Room, (*Country Life*).



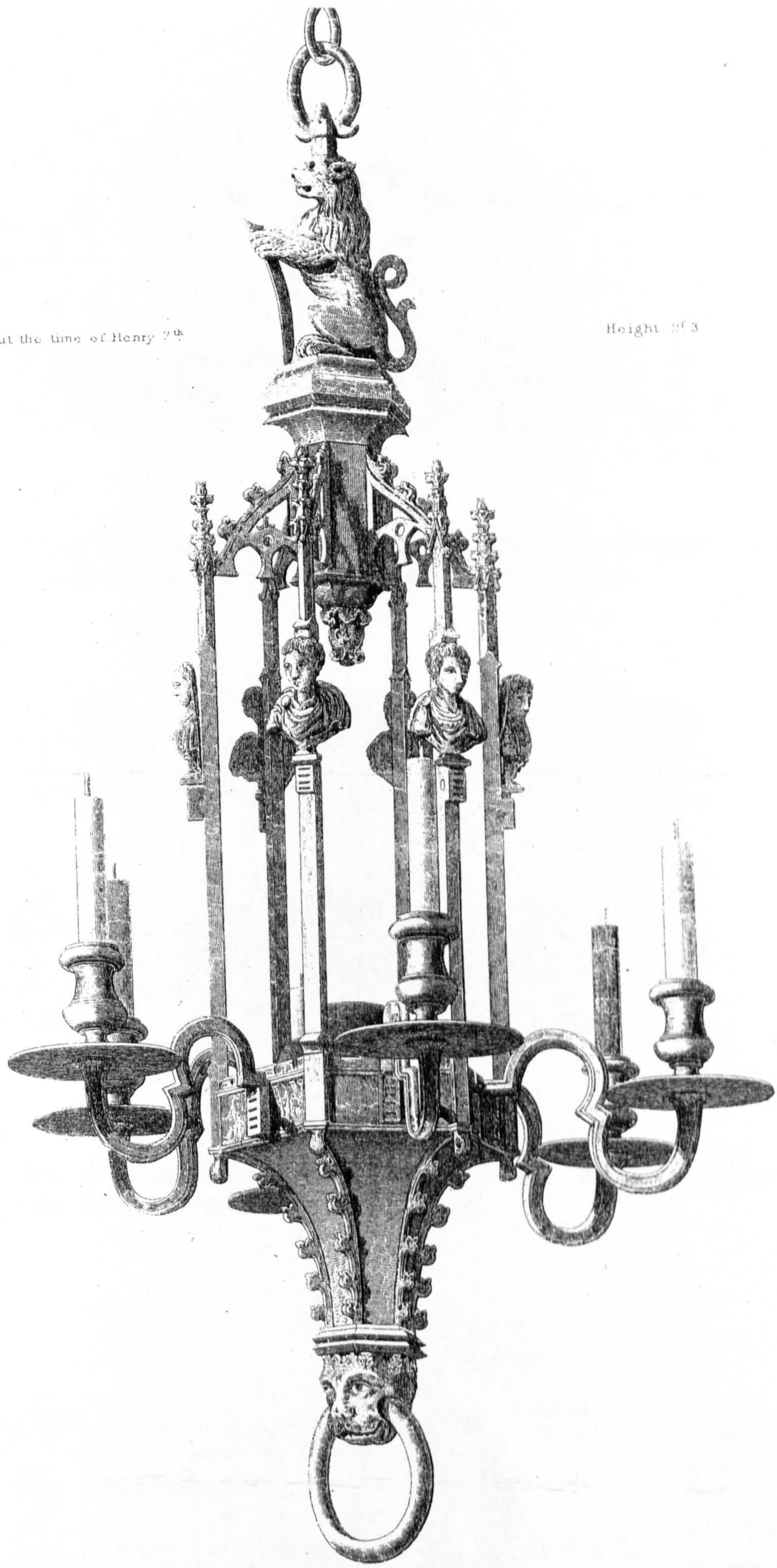
Plate 32
(a) Fake basinet purportedly of the 14th century, supplied by Samuel Pratt, c.1840. Royal Armouries collections (XXI.5).



Plate 32
(b) Drawing of the fake basinet from the scrapbook of Thomas Grimshaw, with spurious provenance, c. 1840. *Royal Armouries Collections (I.143).*

Date about the time of Henry 7th

Height of 3



BRASS CHANDELIER.

in St Catherine's Church, Regents Park

Drawn & engraved by Henry Shaw.

Plate 33

Brass Chandelier, in St Catherine's Church, Regent's Park – (1836) Henry Shaw, (1800-1873) plate XLVIII, *Specimens of Ancient Furniture* (1836).



Plate 34

(a) The shop of Moore & Co., 25 Tottenham Court Road – (c. 1838-40). Detail from Peter Jackson (intro.), *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40.*



Plate 34

(b) The shop of William Forrest, 54 Strand – (c. 1838-40). Detail from Peter Jackson (intro.), *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40.*



Plate 34

(c) The shop of Samuel Isaacs, 131 Regent Street - (c.1838-40). Detail from Peter Jackson (intro.), *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40.*

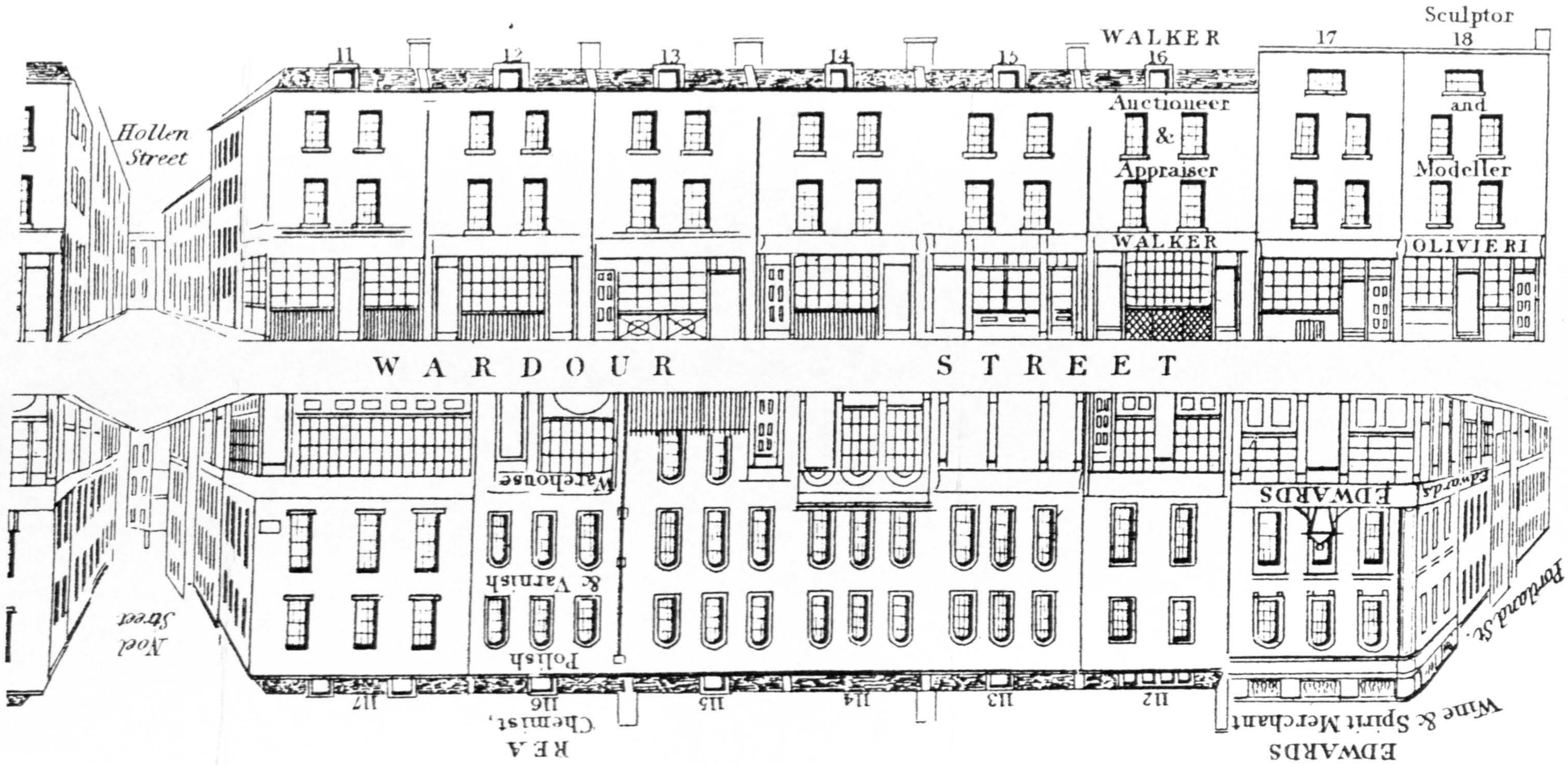


Plate 35
Detail of Wardour Street c. 1838-40, showing the shop of John Coleman Isaac, 12 Wardour Street and the shop of Henry Farrer, 14 Wardour Street. Detail from Peter Jackson (intro.), *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40.*

CONTAINS PULLOUTS

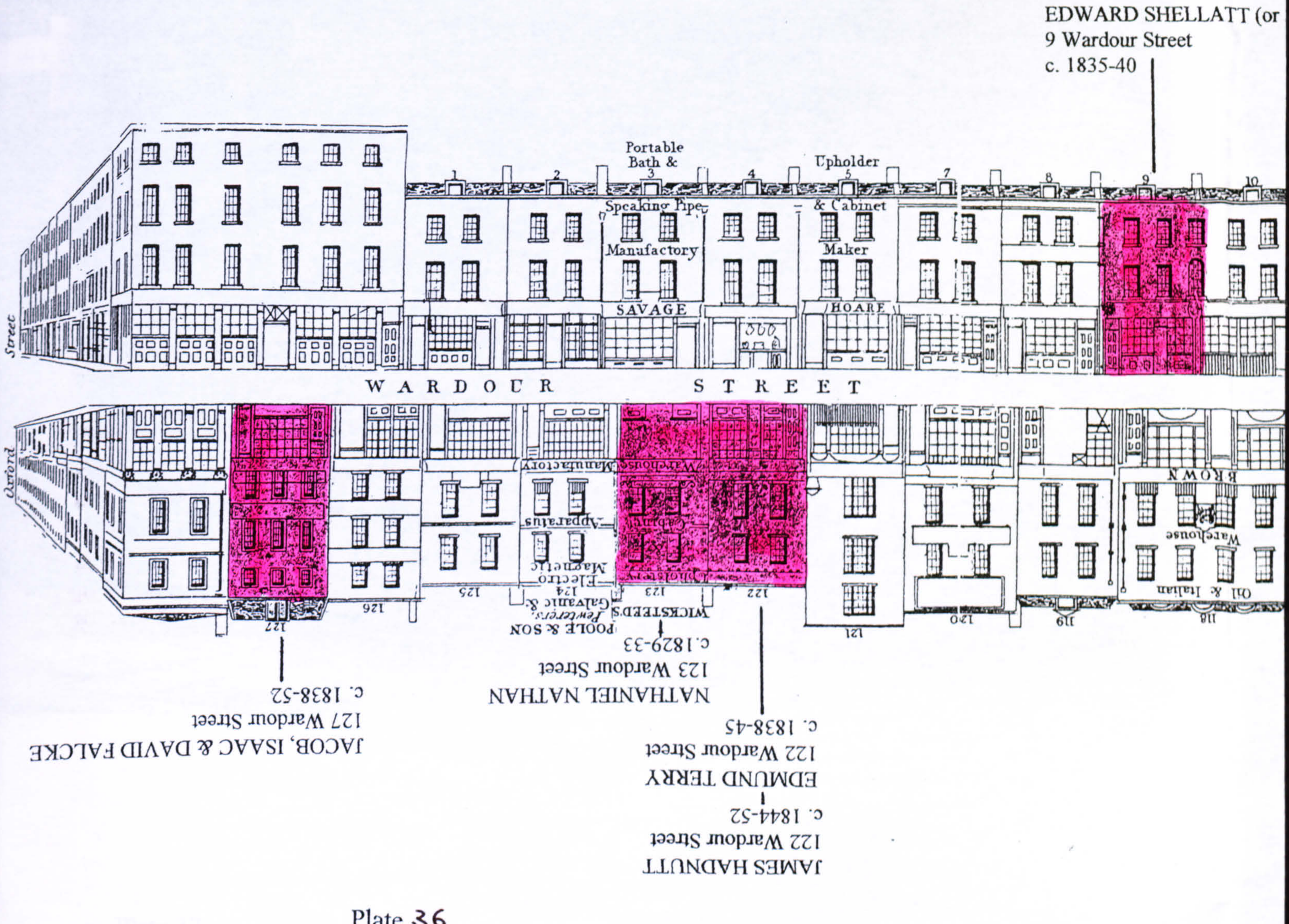


Plate 36

Wardour Street – (c. 1840) Showing locations of Antique & Curiosity Dealers, and those k

WILLIAM RIMMELL
12 Wardour Street
c.1824

HENRY & WILLIAM FARRER
14 Wardour Street
c. 1838-52

EDMUND TERRY
15 Wardour Street
c.1841-1870

JAMES HADNUTT
17 Wardour Street
c. 1840

ANN THATCHER
18 Wardour Street
c. 1832

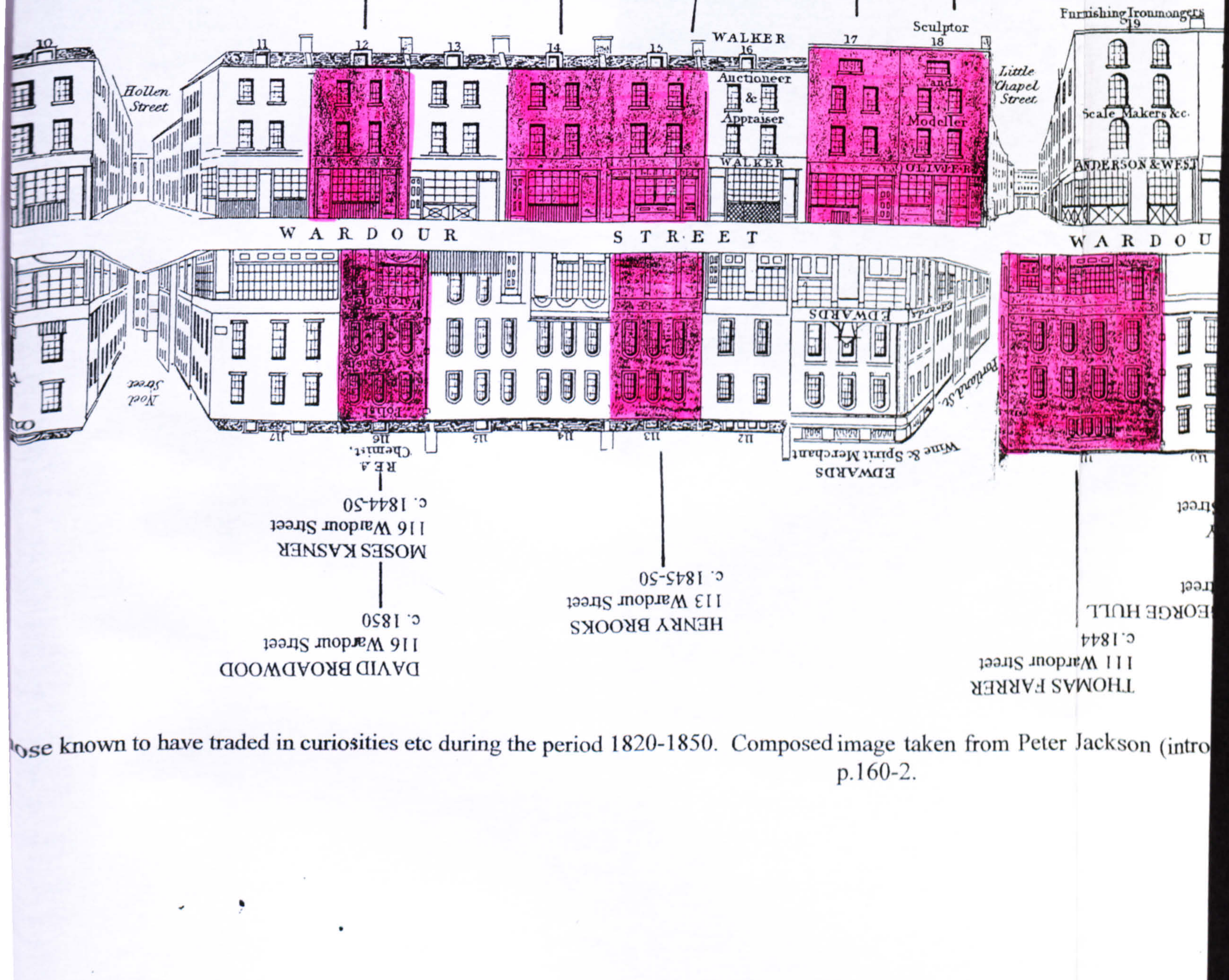
JOHN BRYANT
17 Wardour Street
c. 1838-40

WILLIAM RIMMELL
18 Wardour Street
c. 1824-29

T (or SHELLEY)

JOHN COLEMAN ISAAC
12 Wardour Street
1829-66

THOMAS HAWKSLEY
14 Wardour Street
c. 1826-36



REA
Chemist.
116 Wardour Street
c. 1844-50

MOSES KASNER
116 Wardour Street
c. 1850

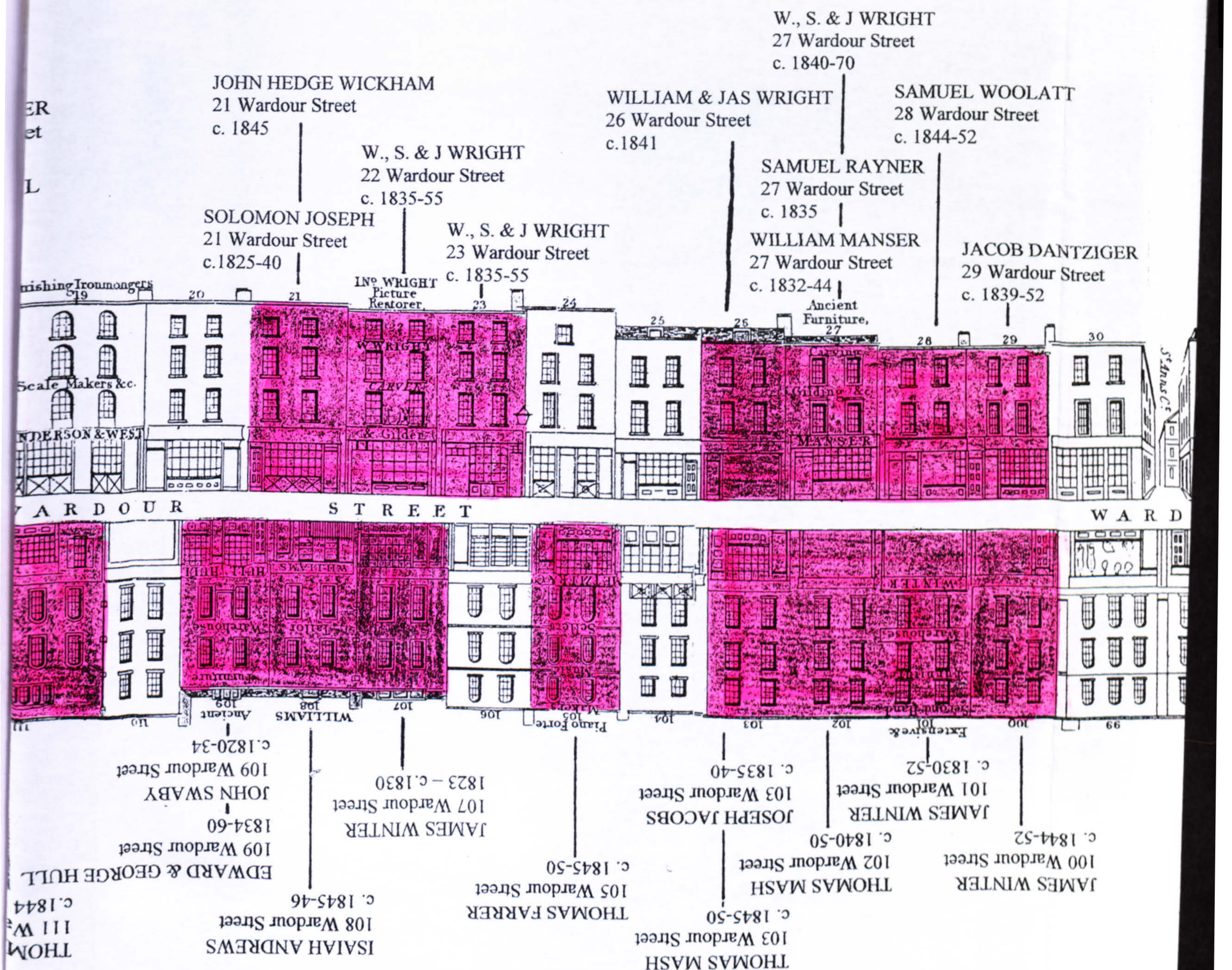
DAVID BROADWOOD
116 Wardour Street
c. 1850

HENRY BROOKS
113 Wardour Street
c. 1845-50

THOMAS FARRER
111 Wardour Street
c.1844

GEORGE HULL
Street

ose known to have traded in curiosities etc during the period 1820-1850. Composed image taken from Peter Jackson (intro
p.160-2.



Jackson (intro.) *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40*,

CHARLES ANDREW DEBGER
34 Wardour Street
c. 1839-52

LOUIS NATHAN
35 Wardour Street
c. 1838-46

JACOB & JAMES DANTZIGER
35 Wardour Street
c. 1829-39

LOUIS NATHAN
39 Wardour Street
c. 1846-52

JAMES HADNUTT
40 Wardour Street
c. 1838-44

HADNUTT
Dealer
in Ancient
Furniture



JOHN RAMSDEN
85 Wardour Street
c.1841

MRS CAROLINE CHILVES
85 Wardour Street
c. 1850

WILLIAM JOHNSON
86 Wardour Street
c. 1850

MAURICE BARNARD
85 Wardour Street
c. 1844

HENRY BROOKS
86 Wardour Street
c. 1838-45



THOMAS ESWORTHY
51 Wardour Street
c.1840

WILLIAM HAWLEY
51 Wardour Street
c. 1840

ALFRED WEAVER
46 Wardour Street
c. 1850

SAMUEL SLOMAN
45 Wardour Street
c.1844

BERT GOLDRING
Wardour Street
1850

HADNUTT
our Street
4

NKS
treet

ROBERT GOLDRING
78 Wardour Street
c. 1838-45

GEORGE SEYFFERT
77 Wardour Street
c. 1844-52

IAM HAWLEY
rdour Street

S ESWORTHY
our Street

JACOB FRANKS
71 Wardour Street
c. 1850



Plate 37

An early nineteenth-century shop front (181 High Holborn), similar to John Coleman Isaac's shop at 12 Wardour Street. *Greater London Photograph Library.*

Plate 38
(a) The shop of James Hadnutt, 40 Wardour Street – (c.1838-40). Detail from Peter Jackson (intro.), *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40.*



Plate 38
(b) The shop of William Manser, 27 Wardour Street – (c. 1838-40). Detail from Peter Jackson (intro.), *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40.*

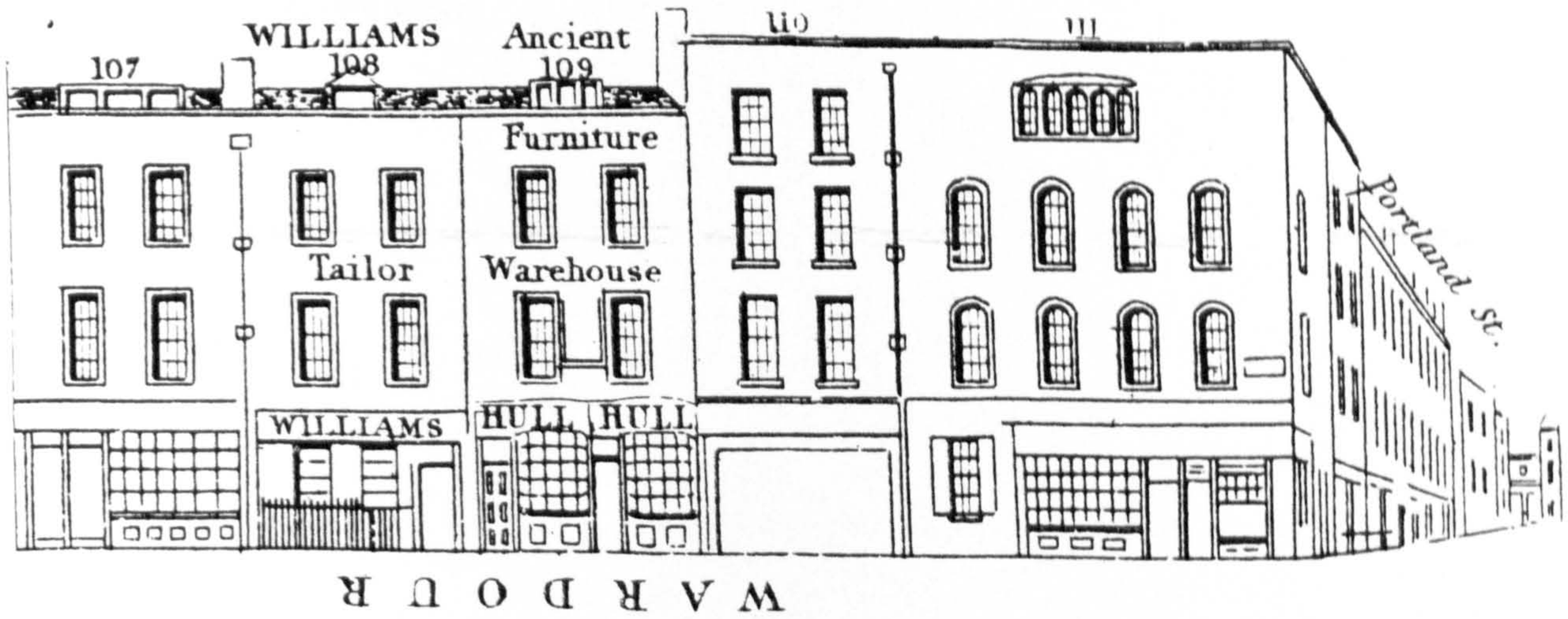


Plate 38
(c) The shop of Edward & George Hull, 109 Wardour Street – (c. 1838-40). Detail from Peter Jackson (intro.), *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-40.*

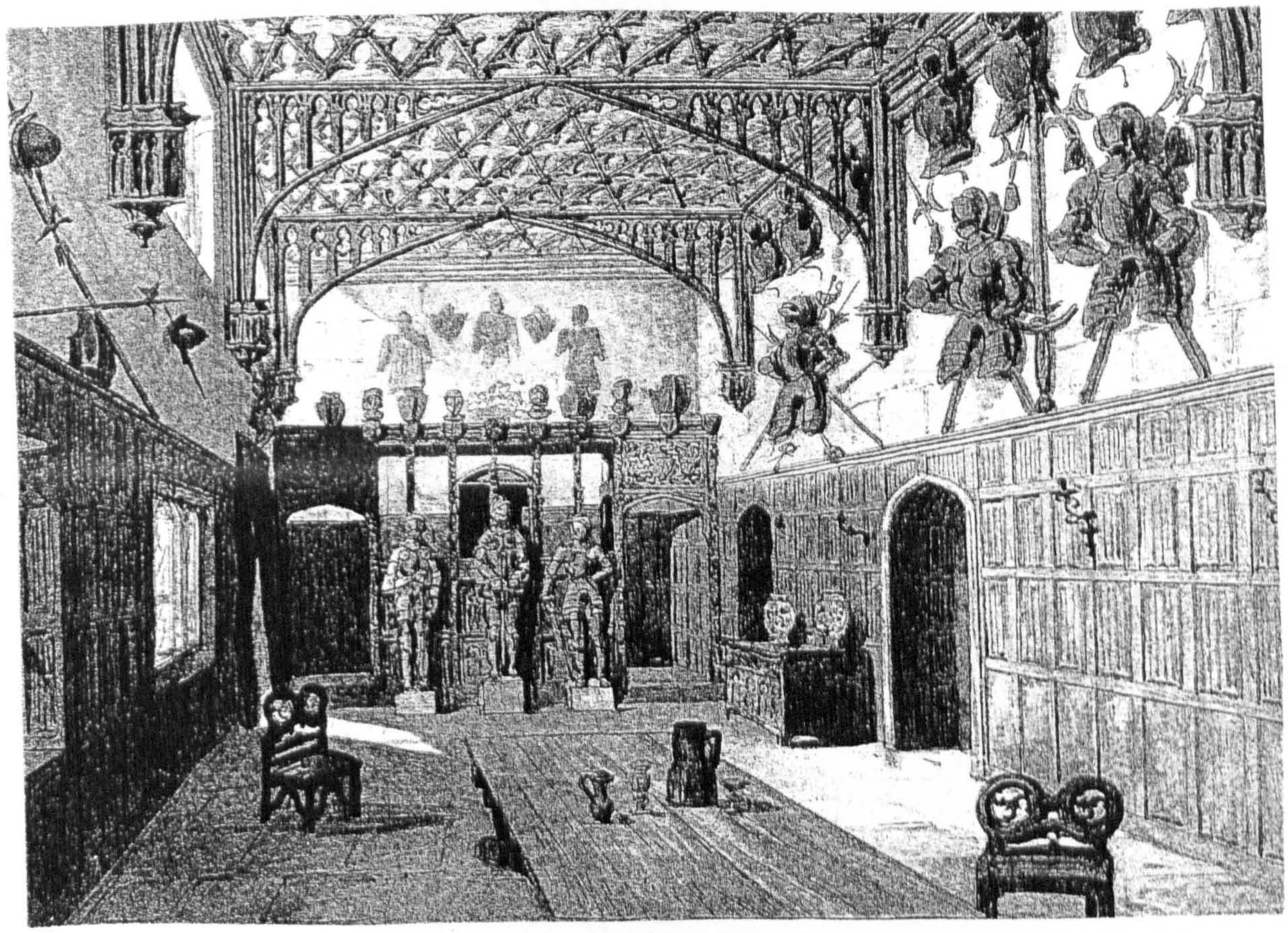


Plate 39
The Armour Hall at Brougham Hall - c. 1850. C.V. Richardson, watercolour, 19 x 25.5 cm. Location unknown.

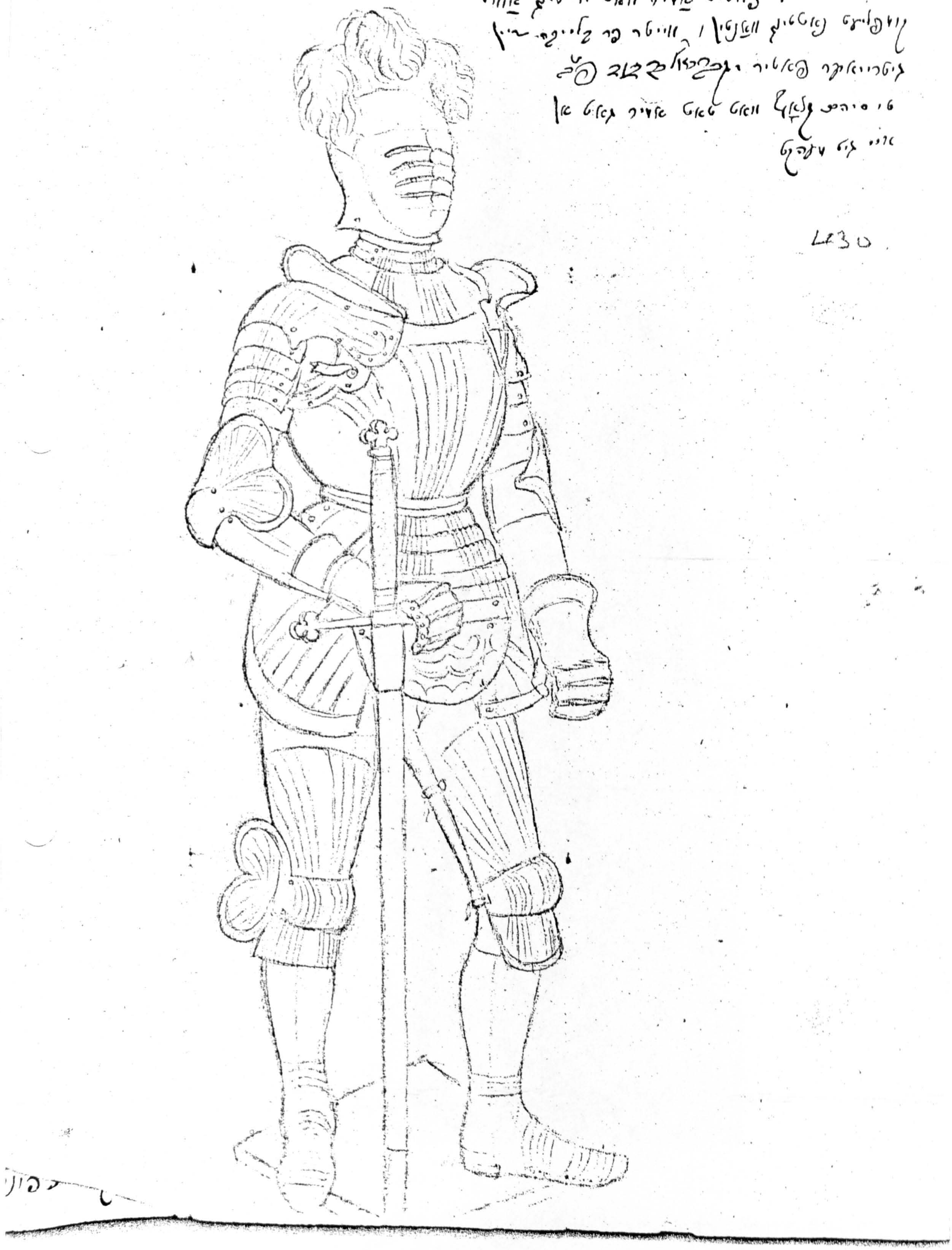


Plate 40
Drawing of a suit of armour by Gabriel Davies, 1822. Hartley Library, University of Southampton, *MS139, AJ53*, letter no.430.

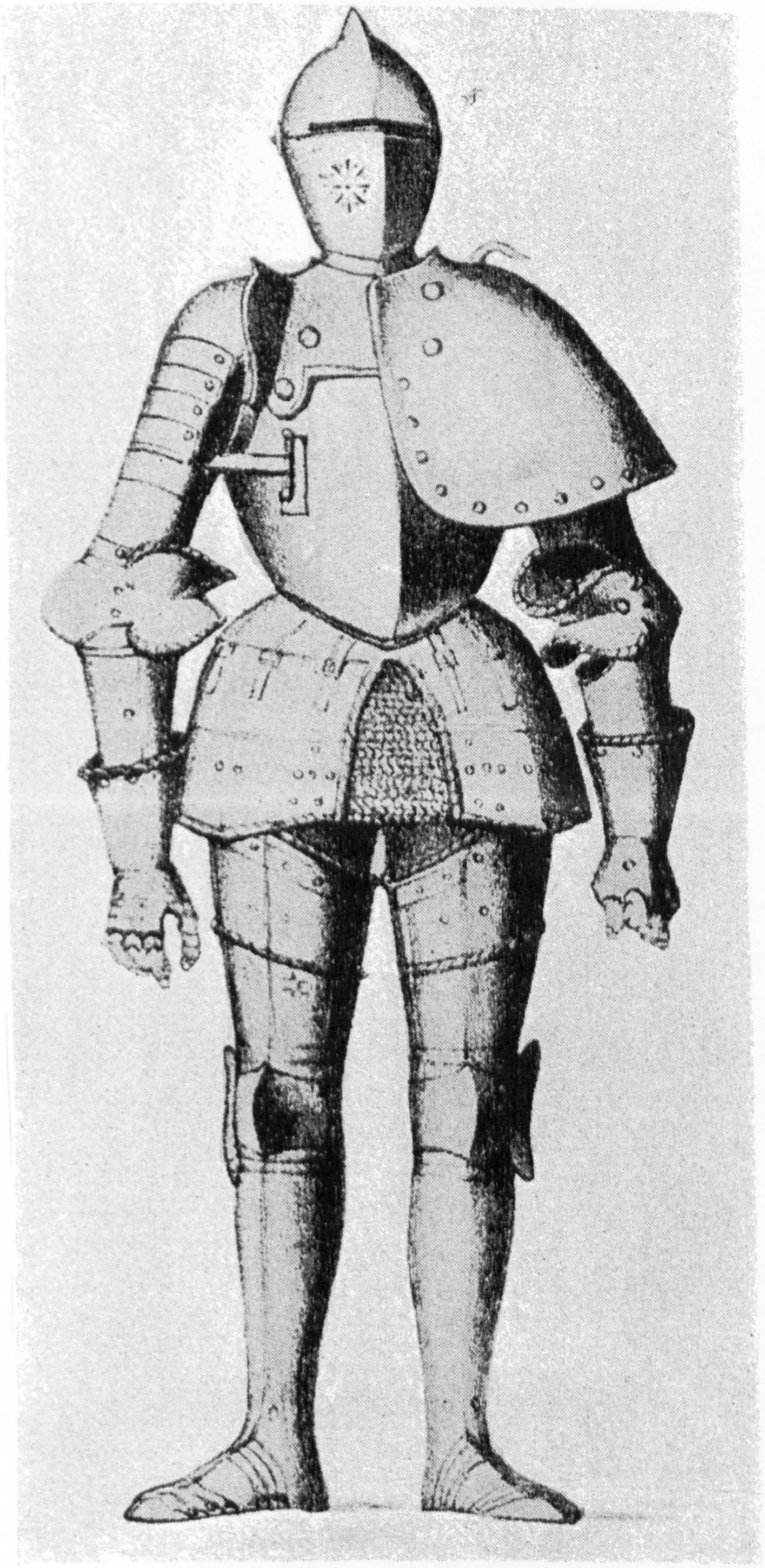


Plate 41
'Tilting Suit', illustration of lot 436 from Oxenham's auction sale of Samuel & Henry Pratt's stock, 29th April 1841. *British Library.*

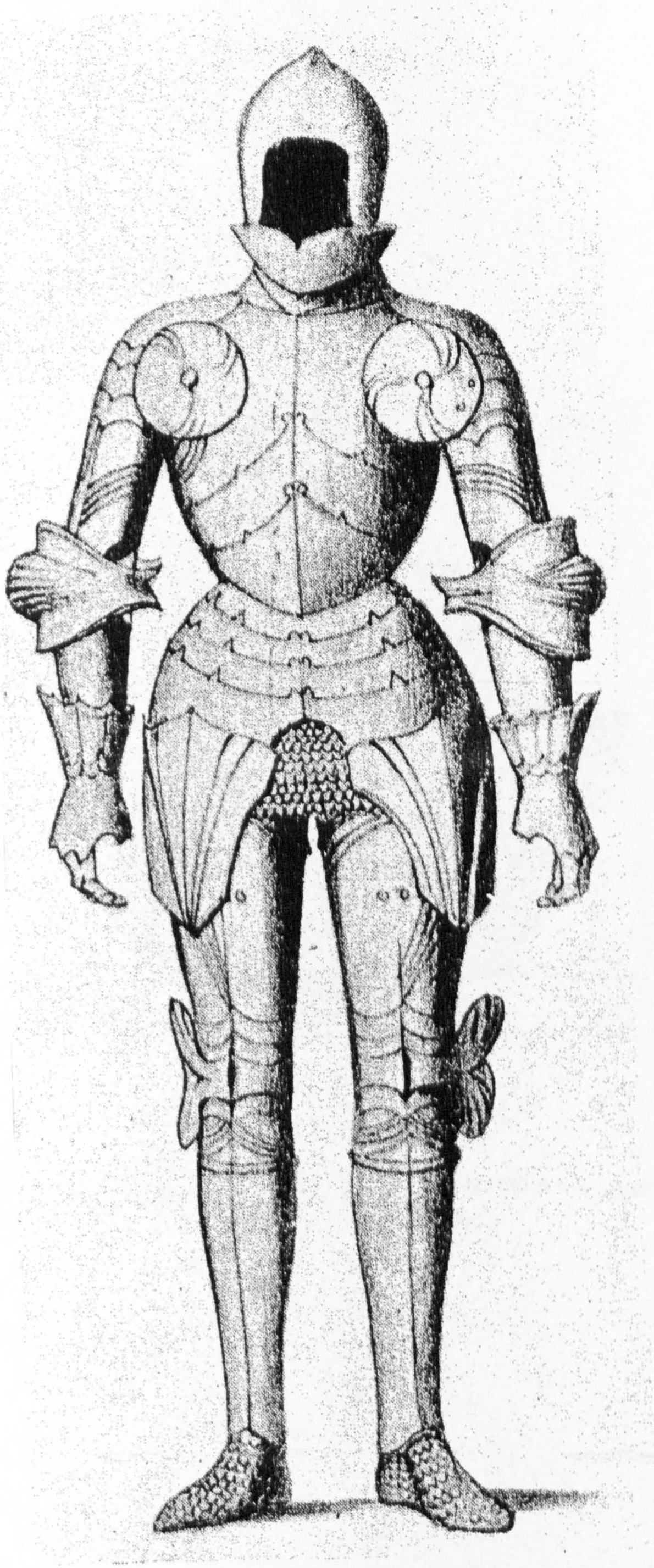


Plate 42
'Gothic Suit', illustration of lot 250 from Oxenham's auction sale of Samuel & Henry Pratt's stock, 21st July 1842. *British Library*.

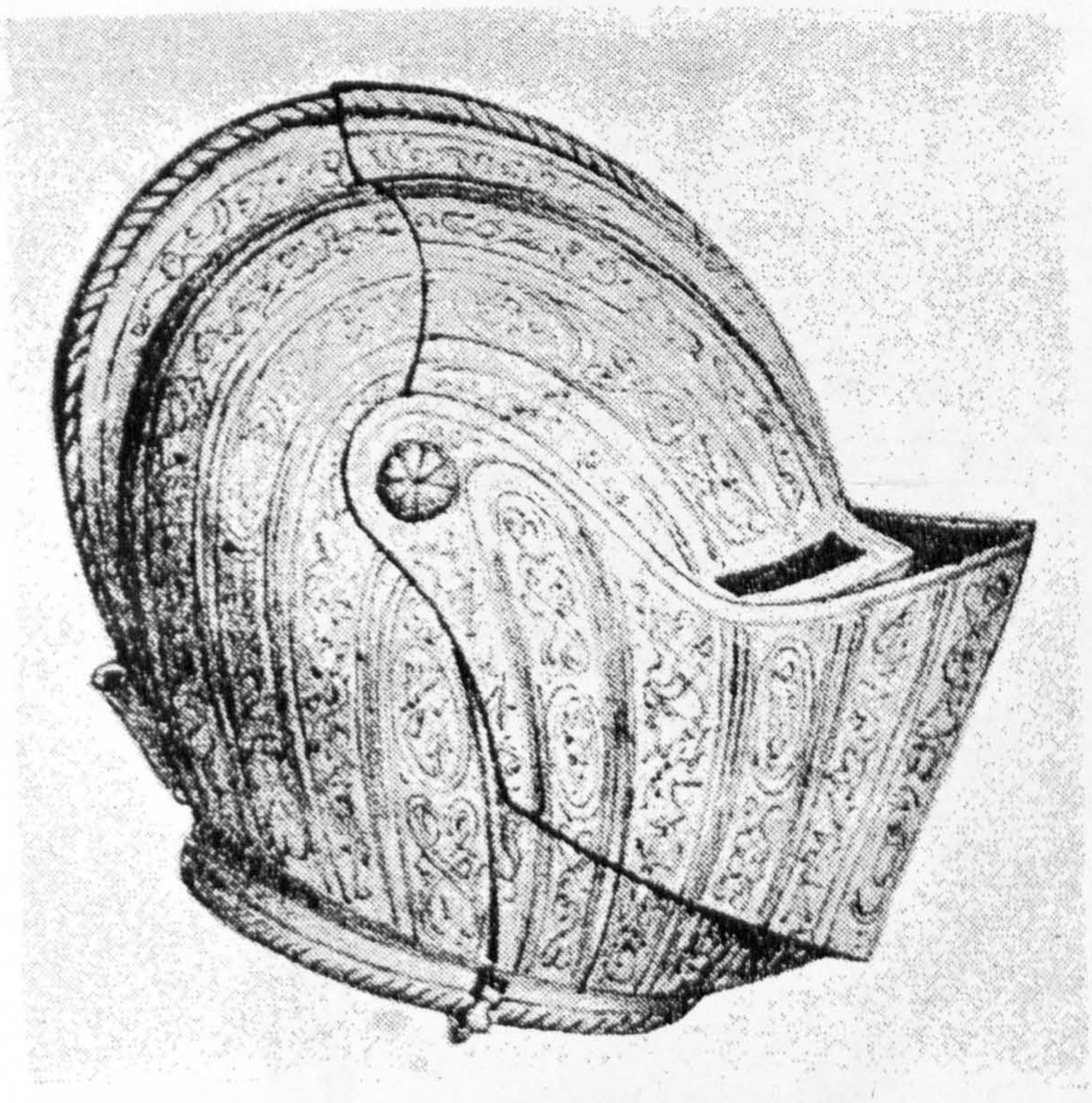


Plate 43
'Close Helmet', illustration of lot 57 from Oxenham's auction sale of Samuel & Henry Pratt's stock, 21st July 1842. *British Library*.

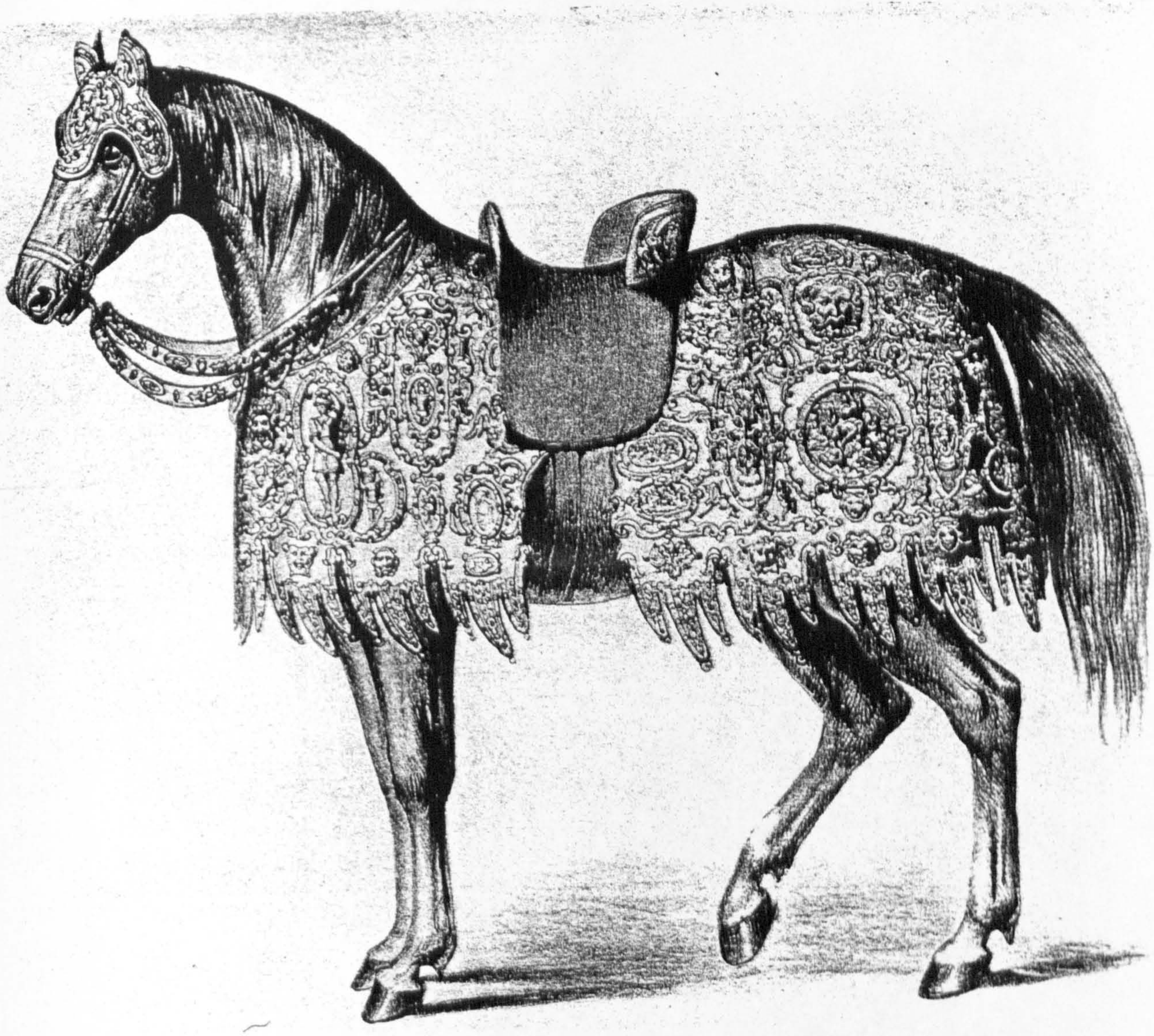


Plate 44
'Horse Armour', illustration of lot 310 from Oxenham's auction sale of Samuel & Henry Pratt's stock, 30th March 1843. *British Library.*

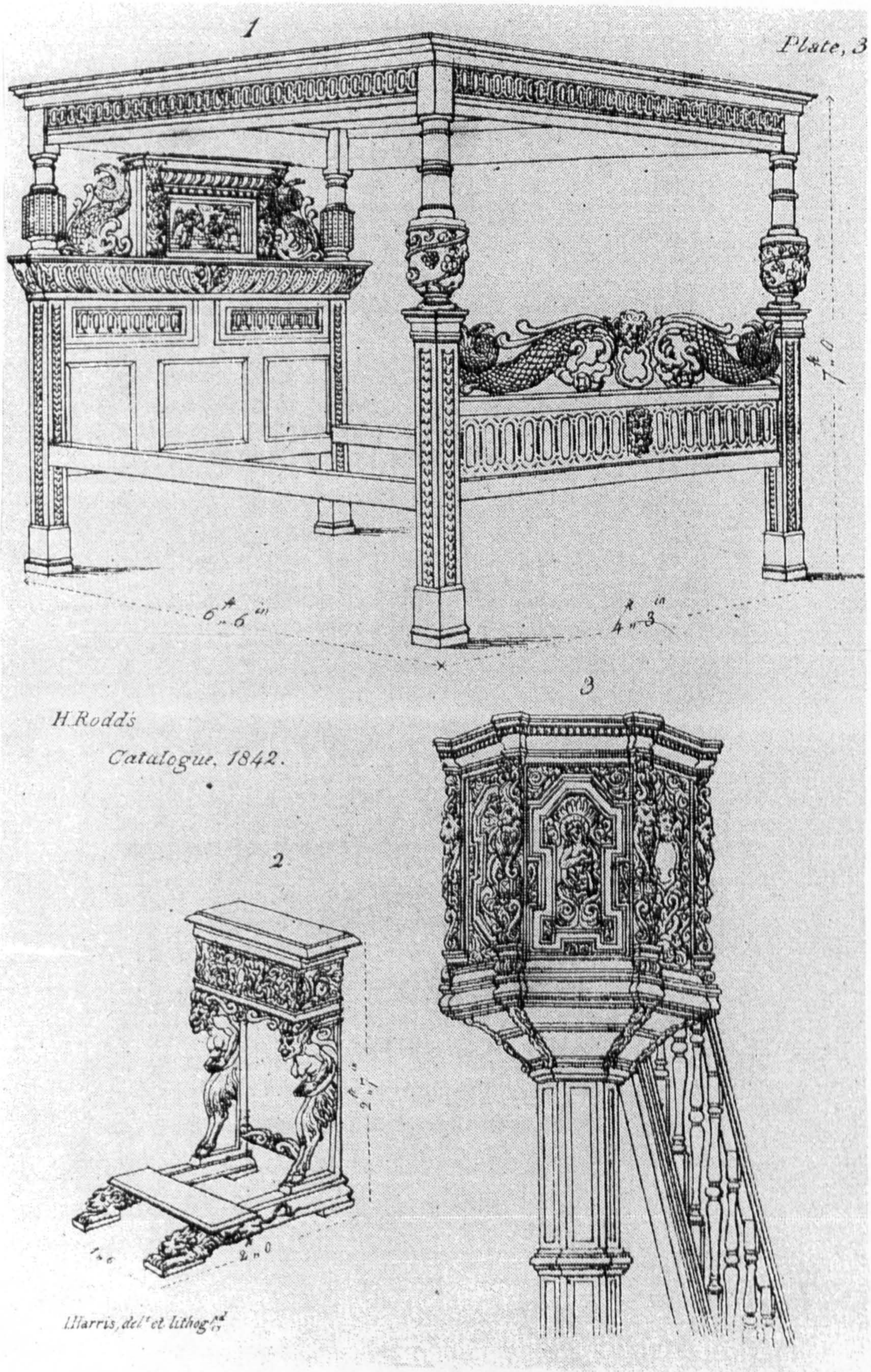


Plate 45

'Ancient Woodwork', page from the catalogue of the stock of Horatio Rodd, Great Newport Street, London, 1842. *Victoria and Albert Museum, Art Library.*

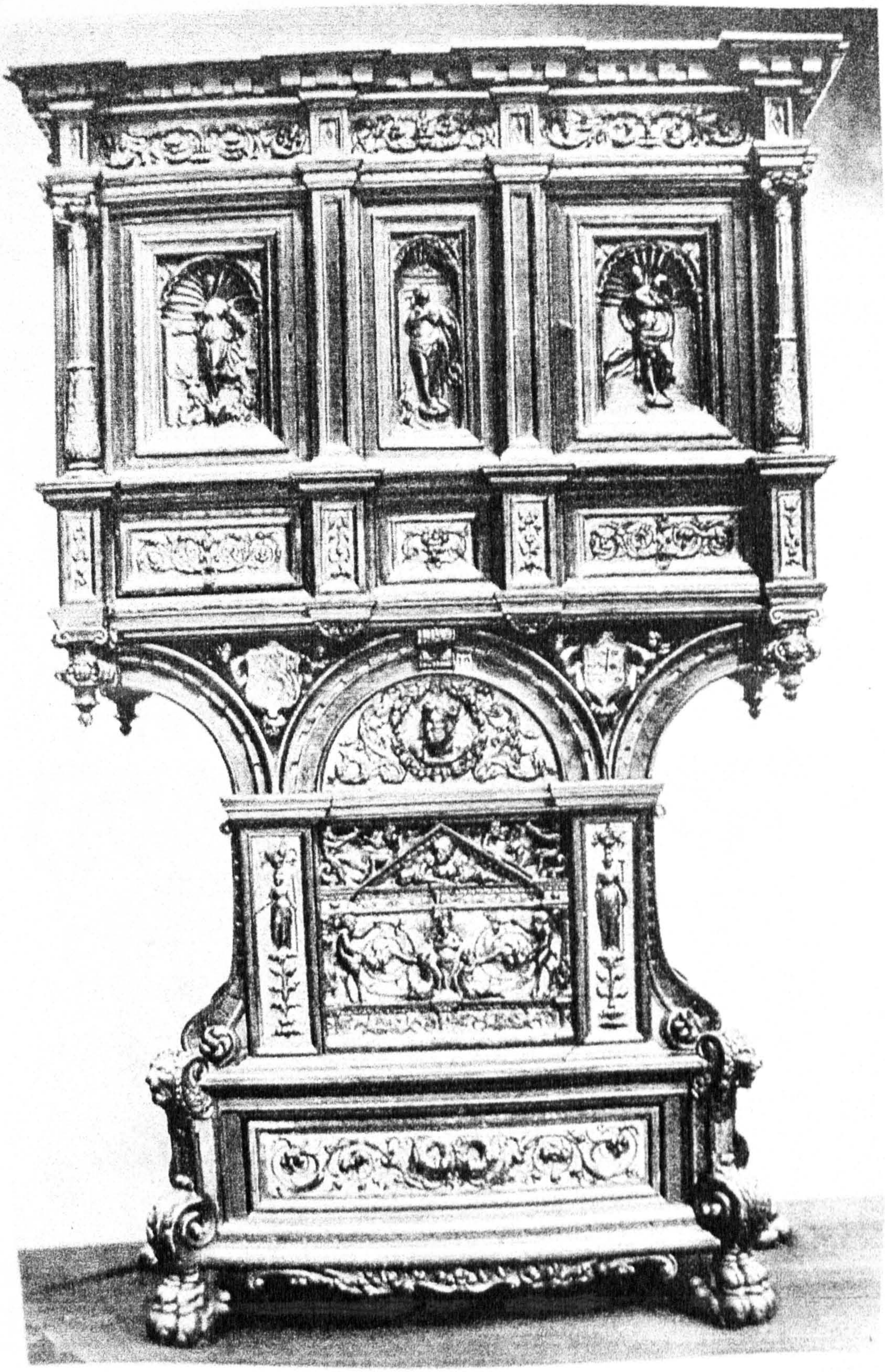


Plate 46
'Cabinet or Buffet, Flemish, c.1530-60, possession of I.K. Brunel esq.', photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2 (photograph 32.700). *Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Room, (X.180)*.

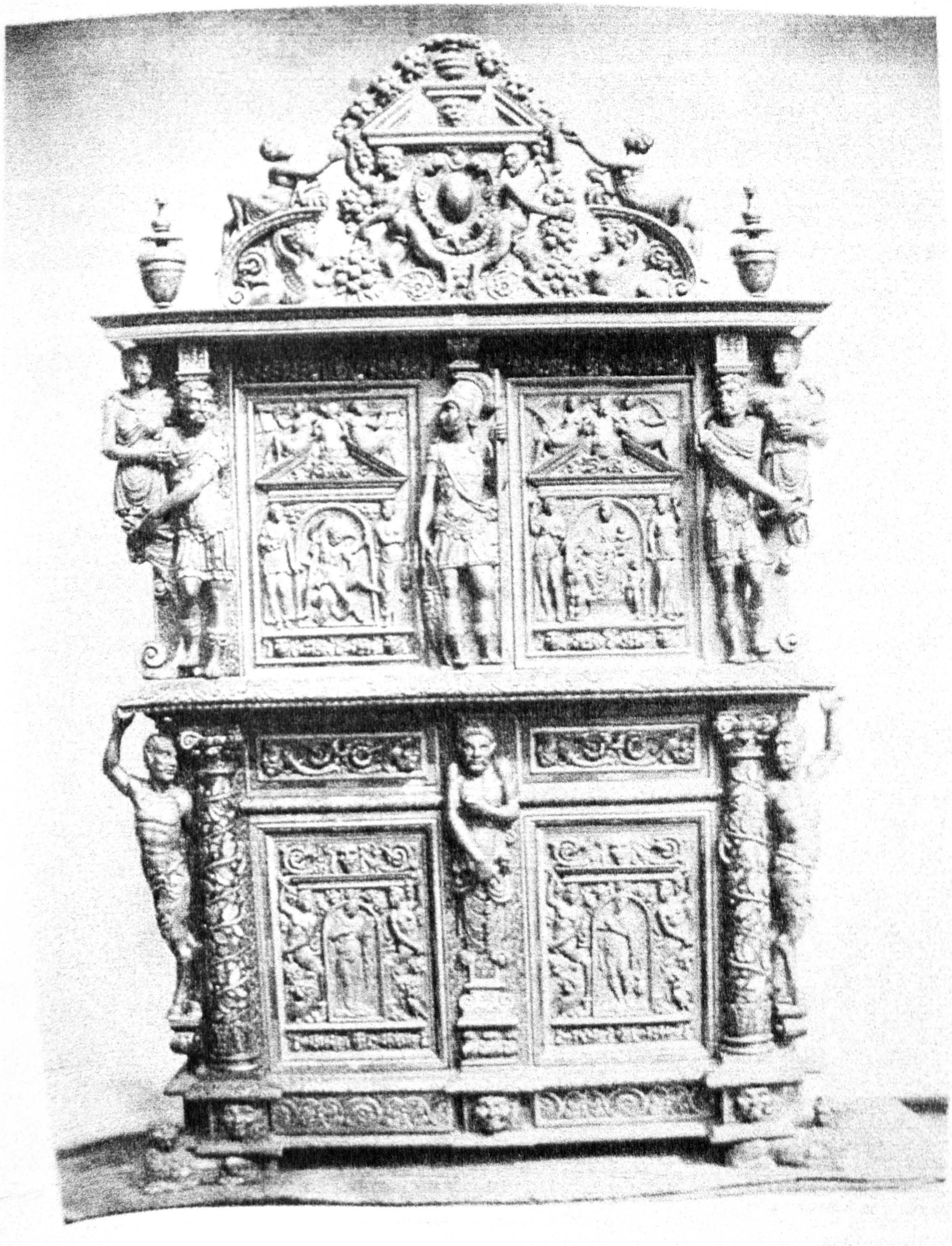


Plate 47

'Carved chestnut wood cabinet, French, c. 1570-90, possession of Baron Lionel de Rothschild', photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2, (photograph 32.662). *Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Room, (X.180).*

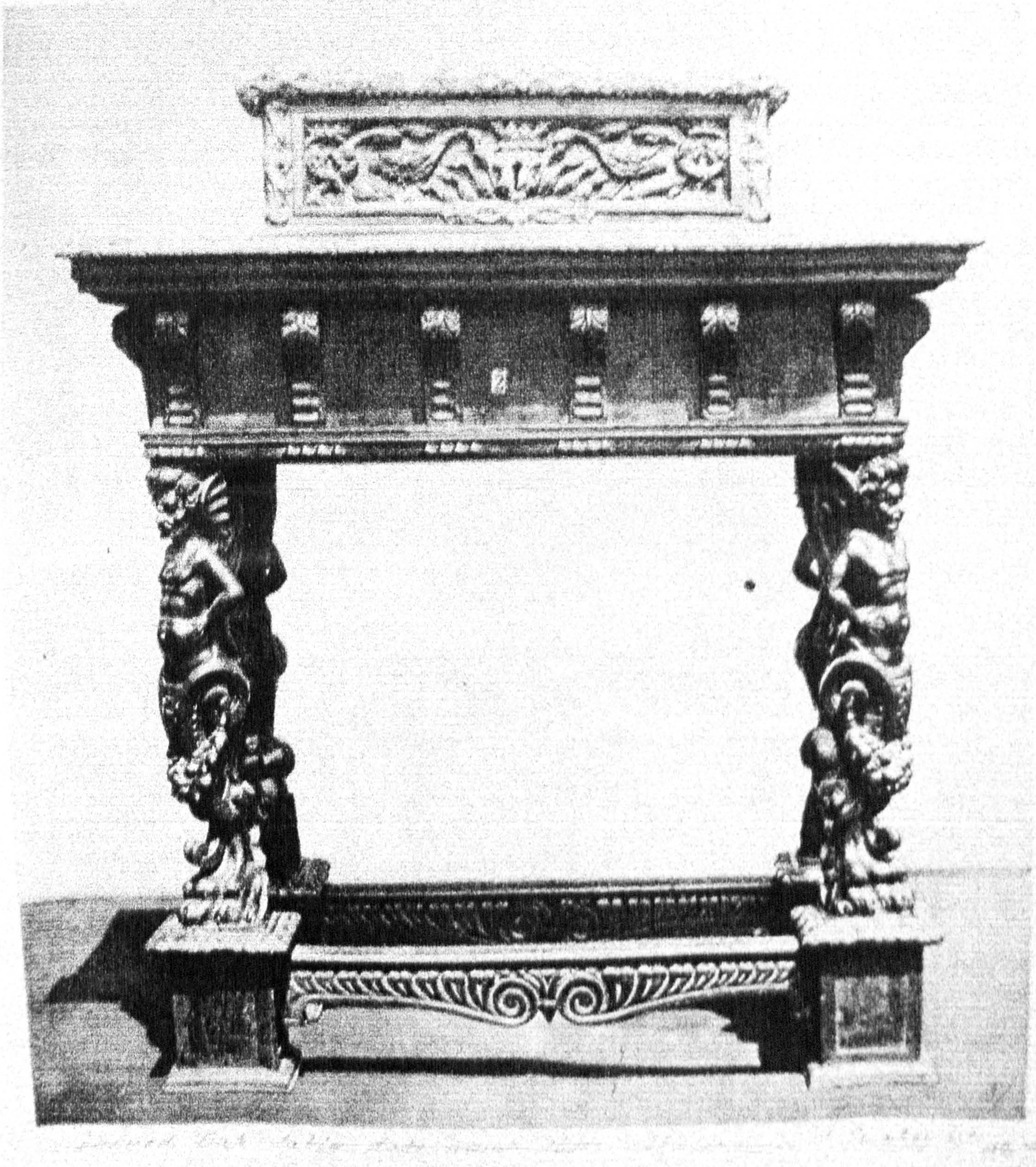


Plate 48
'Oak Table, Italian, c. 1600, possession of J. Swaby esq.', photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2 (photograph 32.712). *Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Rom, (X.180).*

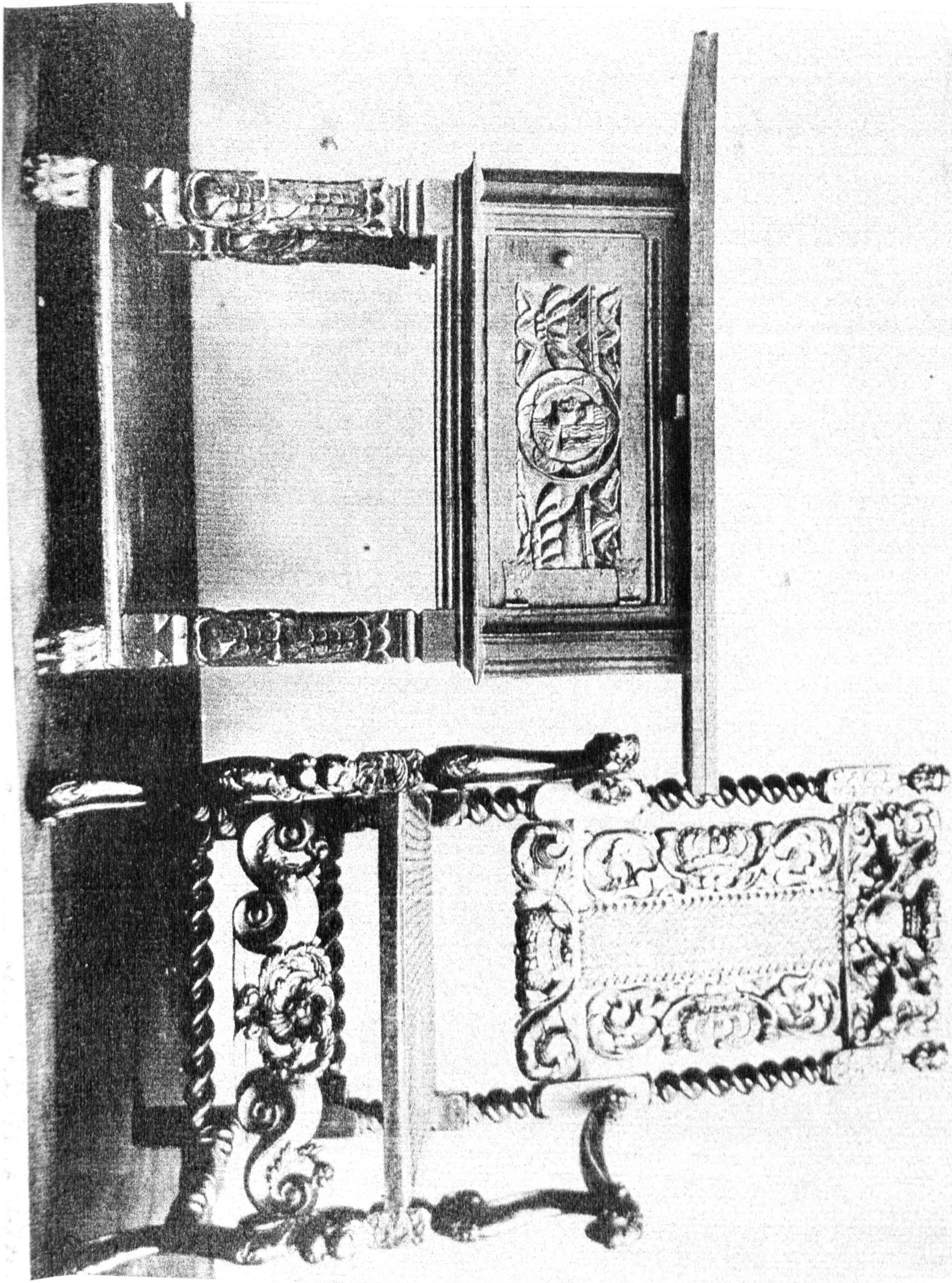


Plate 49

'Small oak table, possibly English, c. 1520-30, possession of J. Swaby esq. and carved arm-chair, c. 1670-80, possession of Mr J.M. Levien ', photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2. *Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Room, (X.180).*

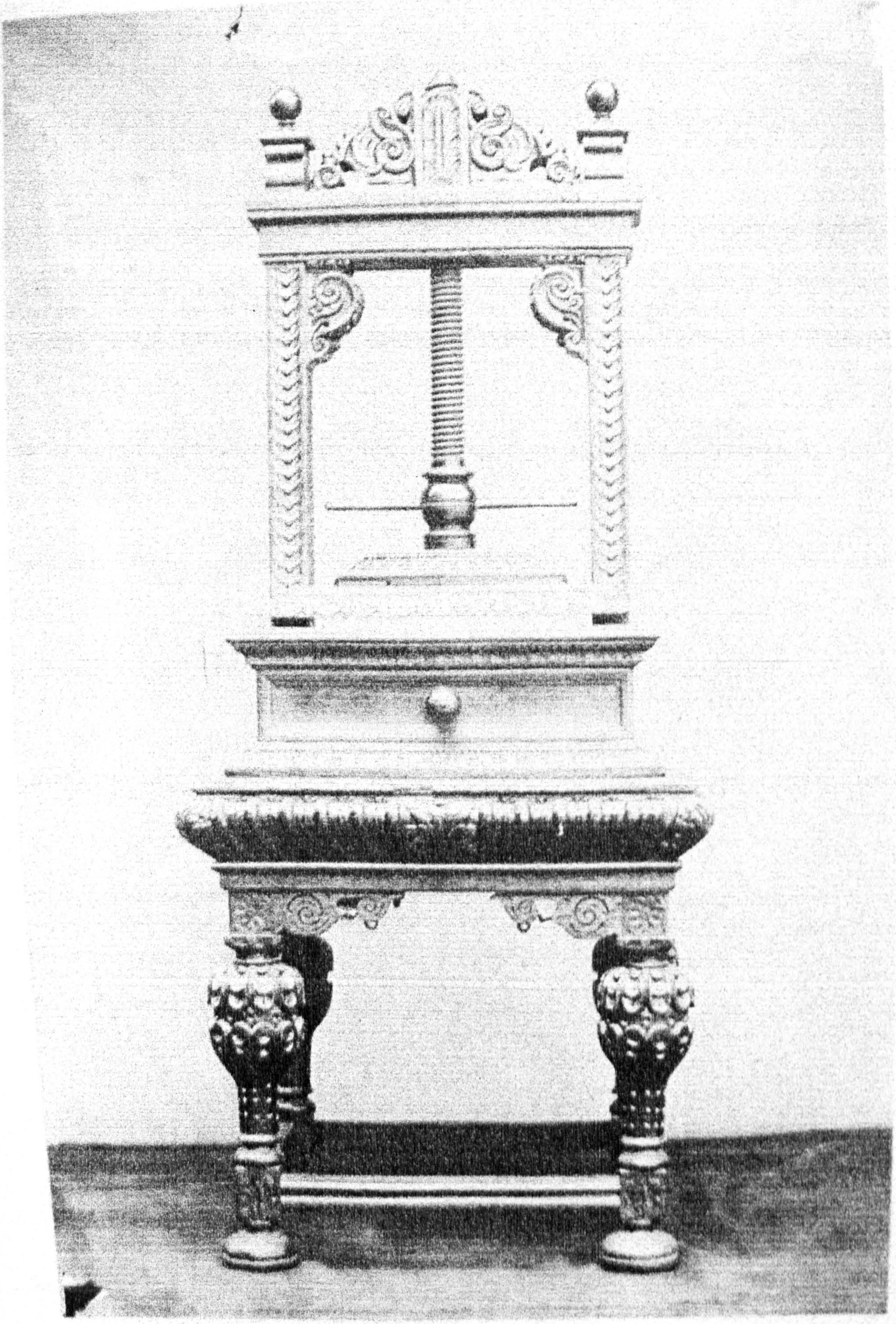


Plate 50
'Napkin Press, Flemish, c. 1600, possession of Mr H. Farrer', photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2, (photograph 32.634). *Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Room, (X.180).*

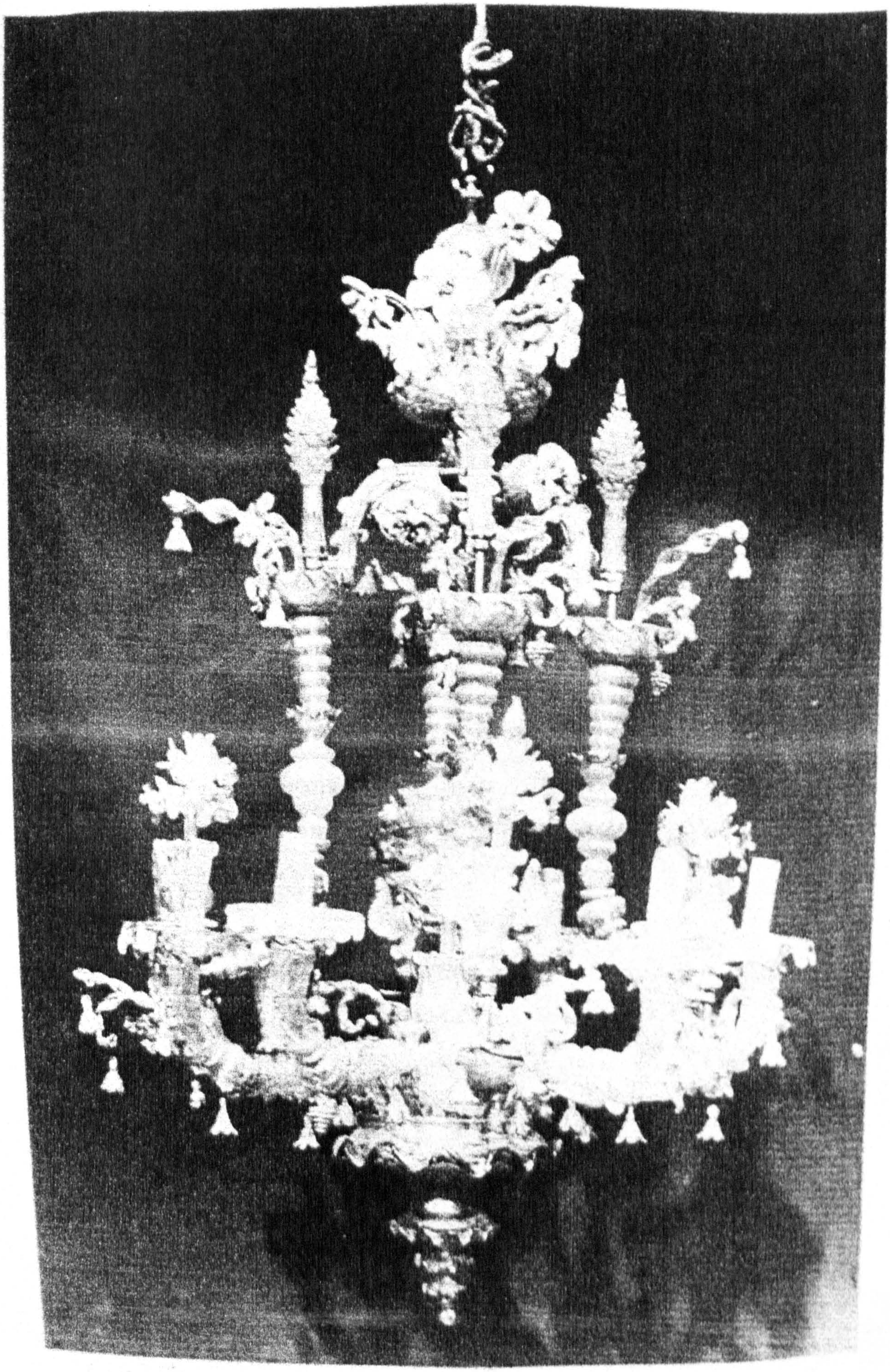


Plate 51
'Venetian glass chandelier, 17th century, possession of Mr J. Webb', photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2, (photograph 32.674). *Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Room, (X.180).*

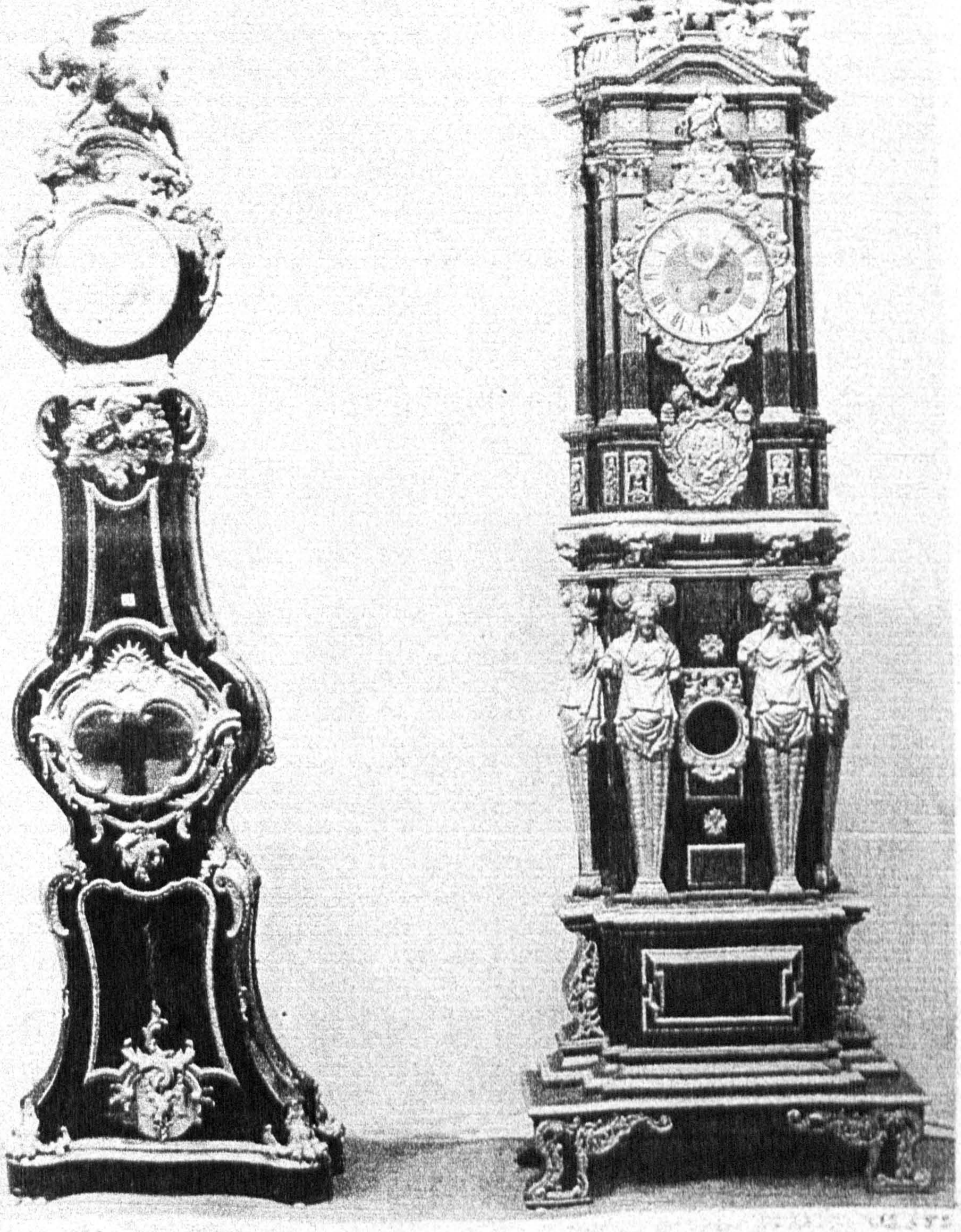


Plate 52
'Clock, French, 1736, possession of Her Majesty the Queen' (right side), 'Clock, English or German, c. 1670-80, possession of Mr John Webb' (left side), photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2 (photograph 32.682). *Victoria and Albert Museum, (X.180).*

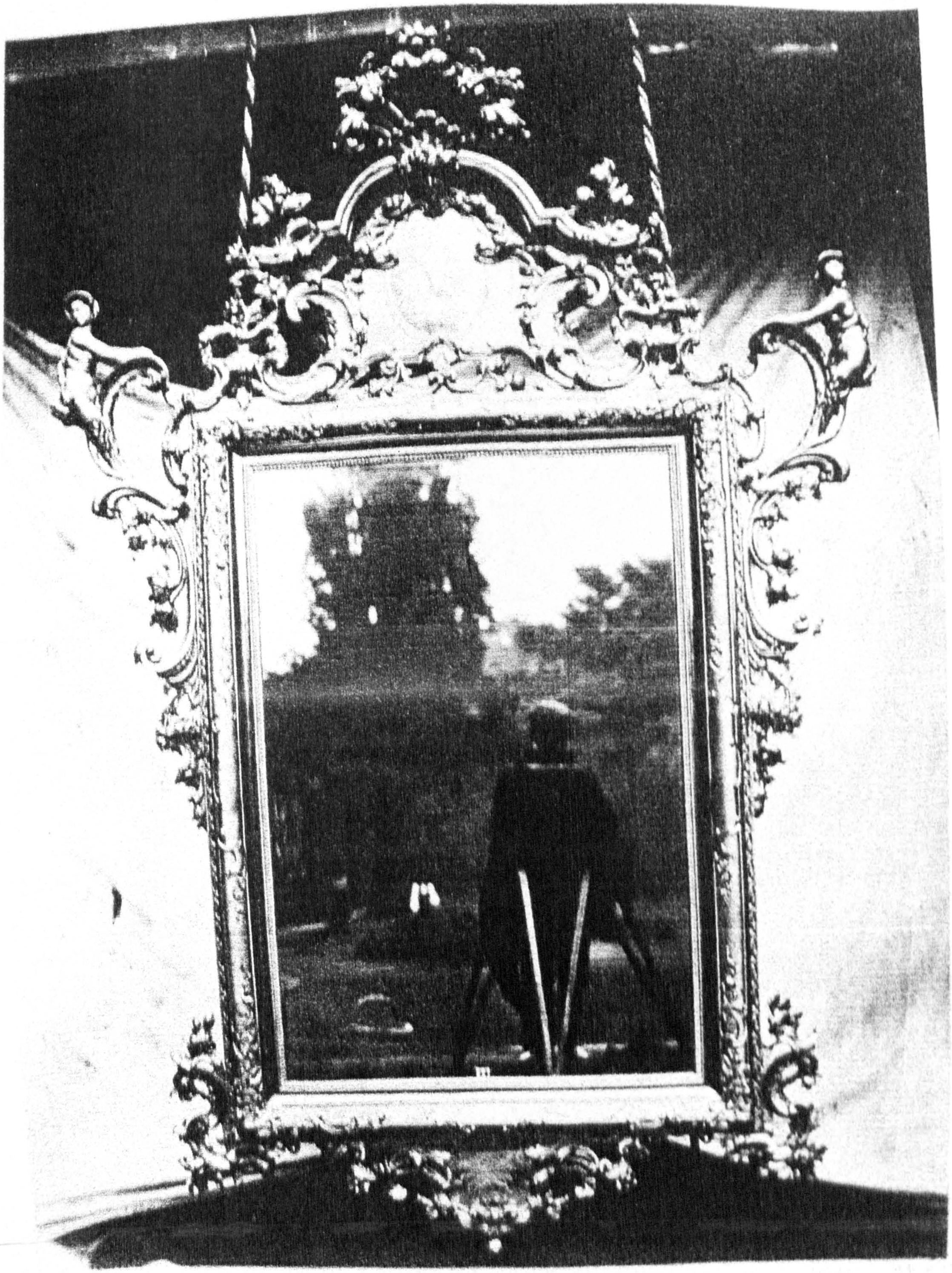


Plate 53
'Venetian mirror, c. 1700, possession of Mr John Webb', photograph by C. Thurston Thompson 1853. *Furniture Exhibited at Gore House*, volume 2, (photograph 32.608). *Victoria and Albert Museum, Print Room, (X.180).*



Plate 54

The shop of William Schofield, '*Furniture Dealer'* 36 Holywell Street, (1847). 'Old Entrance to Lyon's Inn, Holywell Street, Strand, April 1847', J.W. Archer, from *Drawings of Buildings in London and the Environs*, vol.10-4. Watercolour, 24.3 x 33.7 cm. *British Museum.*

ANCIENT ARMOUR and ARMS.——DAVIES and ISAAC, of 41, Craven-street, Strand, beg most respectfully to inform the Connoisseur, that they have just imported several cap-à-plé Suits of fluted and plate polished steel ARMOUR, of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, including a magnificent suit of Charles the First, Emperor of Austria, and a ditto of Maximillian; together with a variety of weapons of various periods, and almost of every nation.—Dresden and Sevre Porcelaine, Cabinets, Mosaic Tables, Cameo Rings, Musical Clocks, and a variety of other items of elegance & antiquity, &c

Plate 55
(a) Advertisement for 'Davies and Isaac' from *The Morning Chronicle* of 9th February, 1826.

I. C. ISAAC,
Importer of
DRESDEN CHINA & CURIOSITIES,
No. 12, Wardour Street, Soho
LONDON

Plate 55
(b) John Coleman Isaac's trade card. Illustrated in Edward Joy's article 'John Coleman Isaac' *Connoisseur* December 1962, pp241-244, p242. Present location unknown.



Plate 57
Old Curiosity Shop – (c. 1840) George Cattermole (1800-68), engraving.



Plate 56
Quilp at the Old Curiosity Shop – (c. 1840) George Cattermole (1800-68), engraving.



Plate 58
'*Kit's Writing Lesson*', (1852), R.B. Martineau (1826-1869), oil on canvas, 52cm x 70cm. Tate Britain, London.

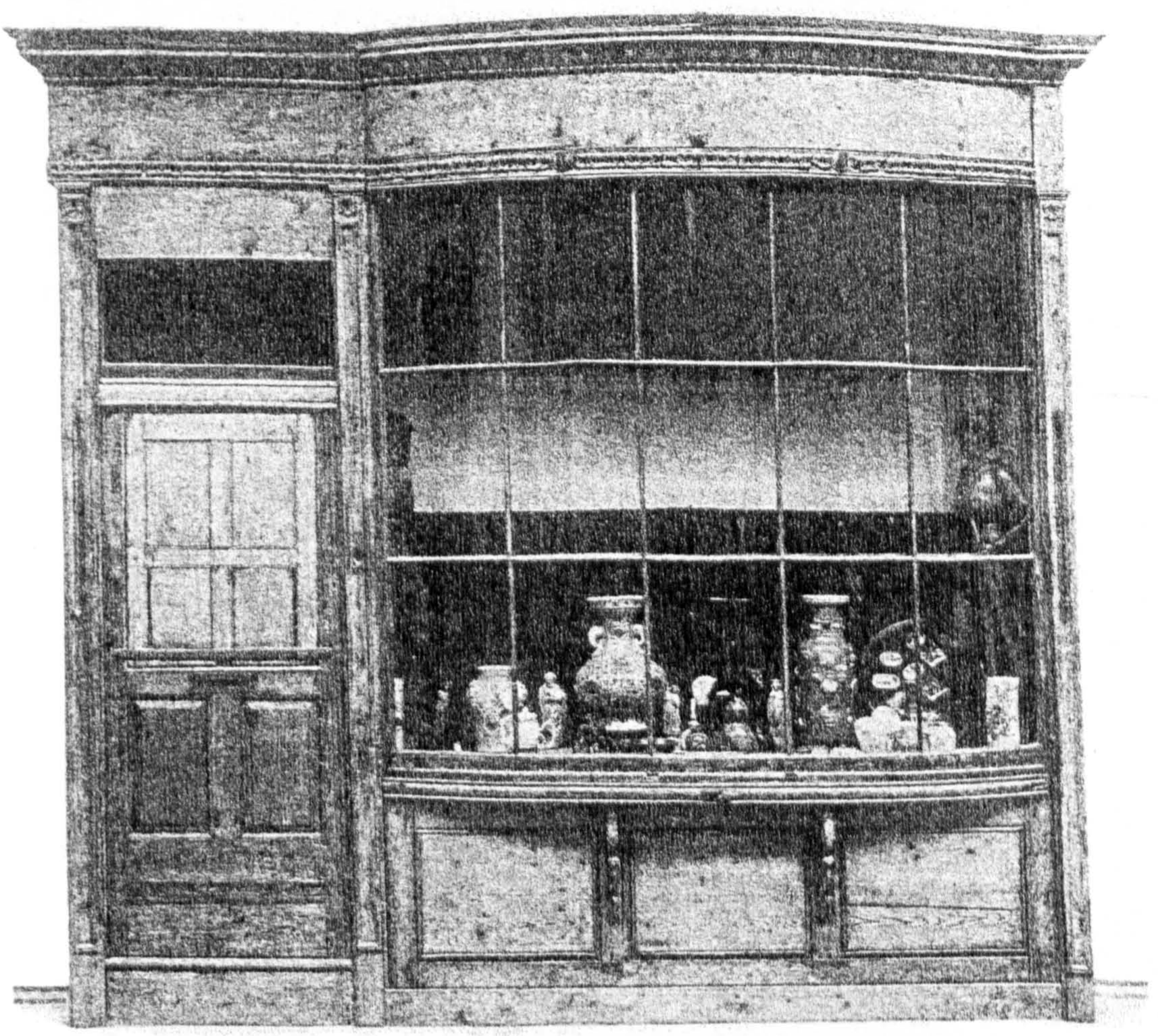


Plate 60

'An Antique Shop at the Victoria and Albert Museum!' *Connoisseur*, volume LXX, September, 1924.

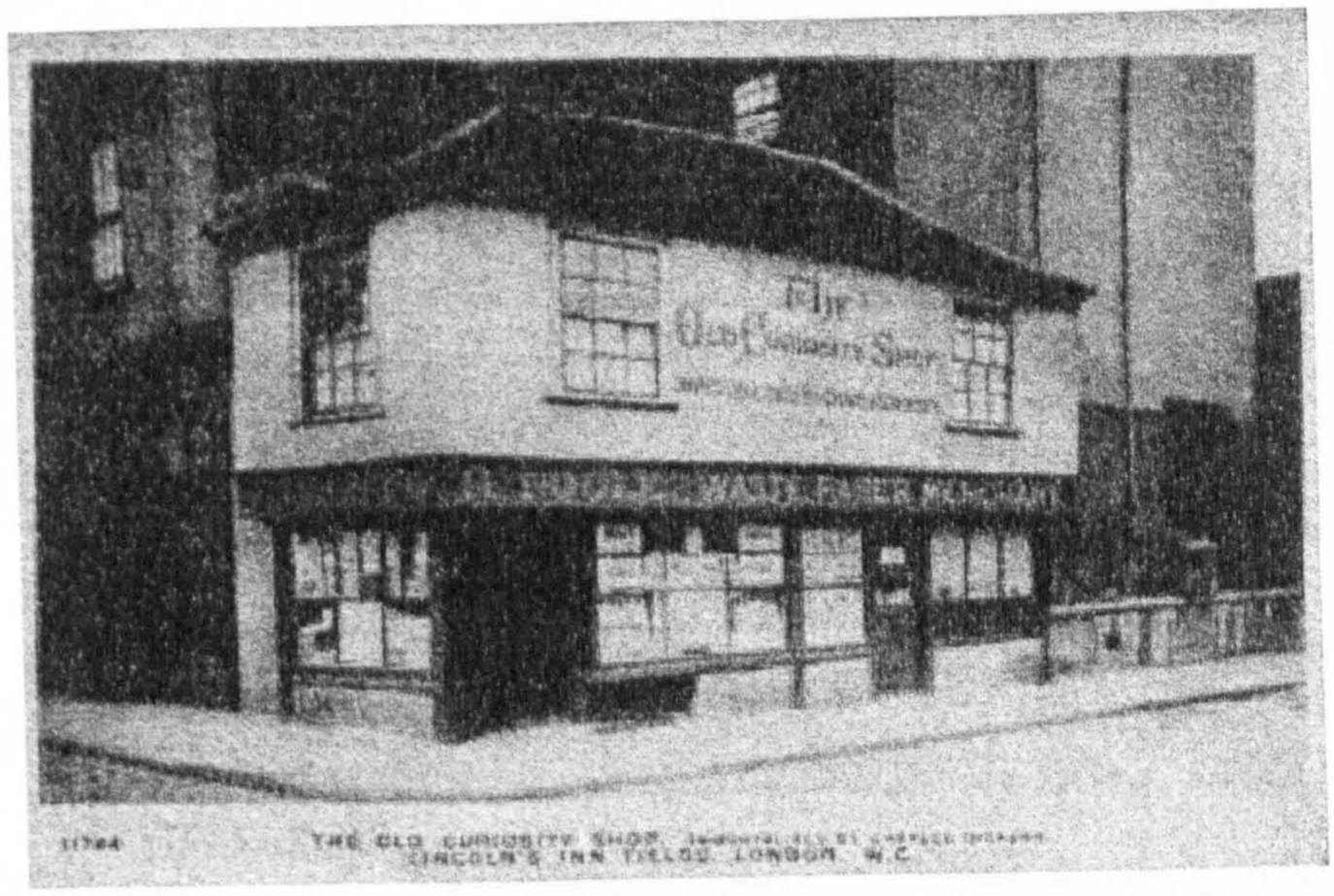


Plate 59
(a) *The Old Curiosity Shop* – (c. 1902) postcard. Location unknown.

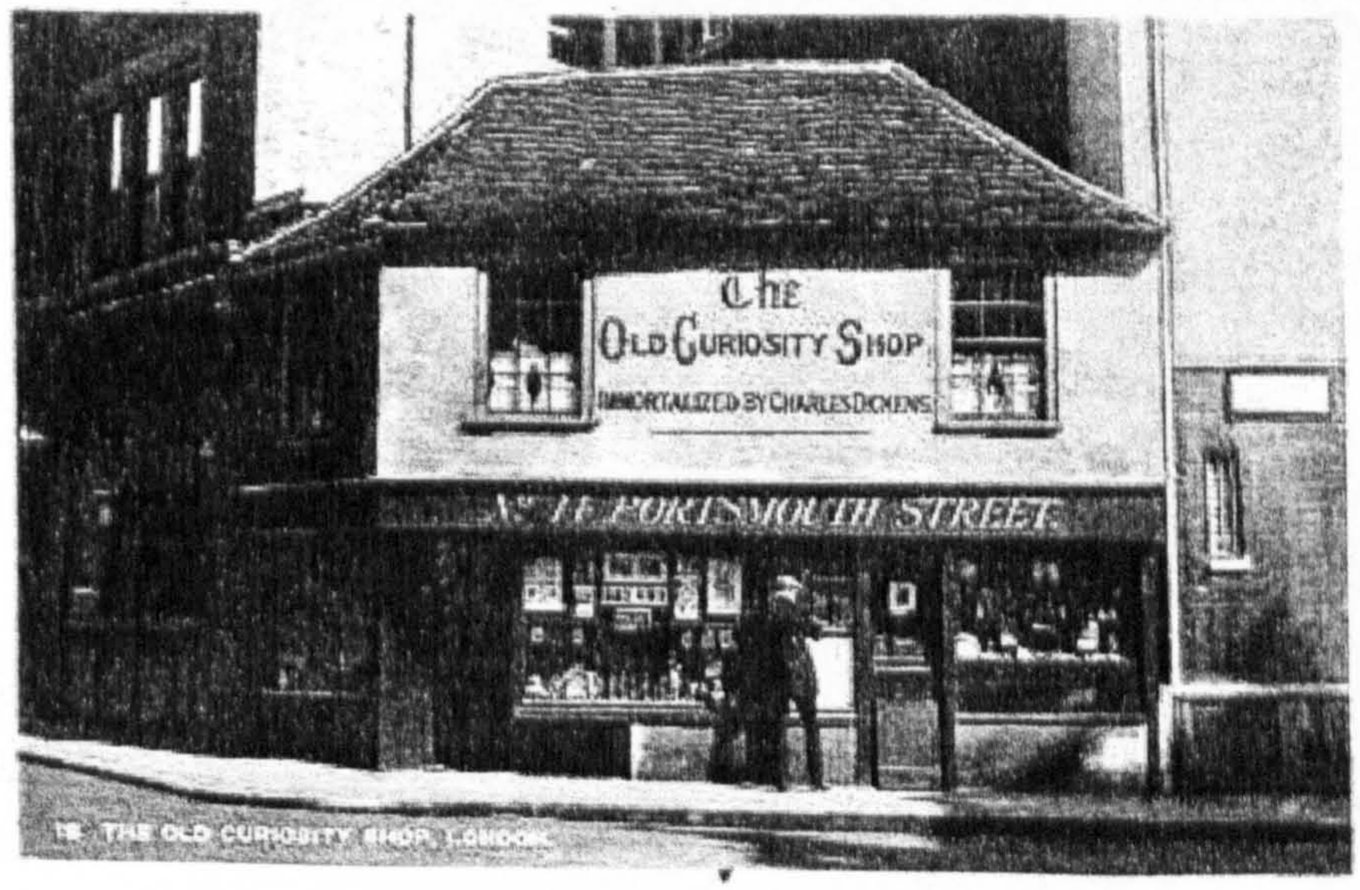


Plate 59
(b) *The Old Curiosity Shop* – (c. 1915) postcard, collection of Roger Haaheim.

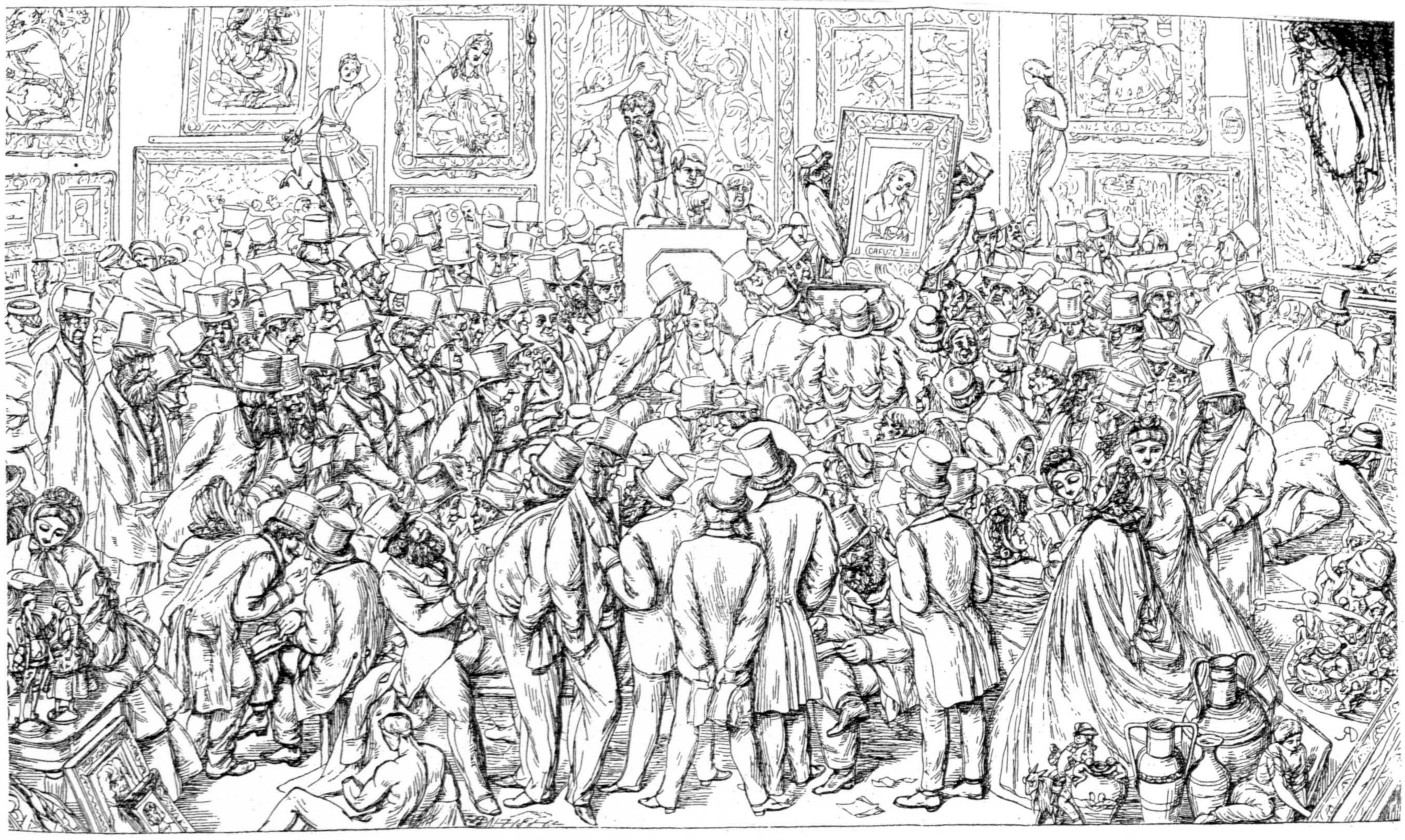


Plate 61
The Picture Sale – (1861), *The Cornhill Magazine*, volume IV, July to December 1861, p.470.