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SATIN VISITING DRESS TRIMMED WITH BLACK VELVET

English, ca. 1864–65

This boldly graphic two-piece dress of gleaming white satin trimmed with wide bands of black velvet ribbon attests to the increasingly rapid transmission of new styles in the mid-nineteenth century, made possible through a flourishing fashion press, the availability of both paper patterns and sewing machines, and innovations in photography, particularly the small-format, mass-produced carte de visite patented in 1854. The inspiration for this visiting or late day ensemble was a toilette designed by the so-called father of haute couture, Charles Frederick Worth (1825–1895), and worn by Princess Pauline de Metternich, wife of the Austrian ambassador to the French court during the Second Empire, who was known for her trendsetting elegance. A. A. E. Disdéri, the inventor of the carte de visite, recorded multiple views of the princess in her Worth gown with its distinctive vertical black velvet appliqués on the full, trained skirt between 1861–62. In *Fashion: A Timeline in Photographs: 1850 to Today* (2015), dress historian Caroline Rennolds Milbank presents several photographs of women in similarly decorated gowns dating to 1863—evidence of the almost immediate impact made by Worth's gown on mainstream fashion. Contemporary French and English fashion plates also document the innumerable copies that appeared on both sides of the Channel and persisted into the mid- to late 1860s.

The most direct reference to Worth's design in this striking iteration are the long, pointed velvet bands—*barrettes* or *pattes*—graduated in height and extending across the front of the expansive skirt that would have been supported by a large cage crinoline. Measuring 139 inches in circumference at the hem and stiffened with a broad facing of glazed cotton, the skirt is constructed from five panels of silk—gored front and side pieces and two selvedge widths at the back to create fullness. The deep, box-pleated flounce edged with black velvet enhances the impressive volume of the trained skirt that became fashionable around 1860. Repeated on a smaller scale, velvet bands on the boned bodice, as well a single row of matching buttons, accentuate the rounded bust and slender waist that epitomized the ideal female silhouette. Although the wide sleeve cuffs are more typical of the early 1860s, the eye-catching peplum outlined with velvet ribbon, a zigzag embellishment, and a large bow at the center back are consistent with fashion plates from 1864 and 1865. A fashion plate from the May 21, 1864, issue of the *Petit Courrier des Dames*, illustrates a two-piece taffeta dress with black velvet trim on the flounce at the hem and on the *basques* of the jacket bodice.

A handwritten tag with the name "Mrs. Dickman" that accompanied this dress indicates an English, rather than a French, origin, and may identify the wearer, who likely made the dress herself. All of the seams in the ensemble are machine stitched; the inside bodice seams are hand finished, while those in the skirt are left raw. The velvet ribbons and flounce are hand sewn with running stitch. With an eye sensitive to scale, the maker used several different widths of ribbons, ranging from one-and-a-half inches on the bodice and top of the skirt flounce, two inches for the center back bow and the bottom of the flounce, and two-and-a-half inches for the imposing bands on the skirt front. Narrow velvet ribbon and scalloped black lace delicately edge the high, round neckline.

Although it is impossible to determine what sources the maker used to confect her à la mode dress, the inclusion of full-scale paper patterns in fashion periodicals from about 1850 and the expanding retail distribution of sewing machines, especially in the 1860s, allowed—even encouraged—women to re-create the most up-to-date styles at home. Two leading publications, *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* and *Le Moniteur de la Mode*, regularly offered their readers patterns that could be modified by the individual dressmaker and advertised the newest models of sewing machines. These two magazines illustrate the close relationship between French and English styles, especially the assiduous eagerness with which English women followed French fashion and the speed at which they were able to do so. A *toilette de jeune personne* of taffeta trimmed with black velvet bands and streamers illustrated in the *Le Moniteur de la Mode* in September 1864 appeared with slight changes in *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* in February 1865. Between 1863 and 1866, *The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* often published advertisements for paper patterns of the latest Parisian models available at Mme. Adolphe Goubaud's premises on the Strand; Goubaud's husband was a powerful press magnate whose many fashion-related magazines included *Le Moniteur de la Mode*. By 1869, *Le Moniteur* was available in London and numerous other cities worldwide.

In her assertive interpretation of Worth's influential design, the wearer, and likely maker too, of this gown announced her awareness of and participation in a widespread trend that originated from the most famous couturier in the long-acknowledged capital of fashion.

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ABOVE Princess Pauline de Metternich wearing a day dress by Charles Frederick Worth, probably in silk faille. Photograph by Disderi & Cie, Paris, ca. 1863

BELOW Silk taffeta dress trimmed with bands of black velvet, turned back cuffs, wide sash. Photograph by F. Deron, Brussels, ca. 1864

Collection of Caroline Rennolds Milbank

PAINTED-AND-DYED PALAMPORE

Indian (Coromandel Coast) for the English market, ca. 1775
95 x 77 in.

As unmistakably Indian in design and technique as they are paradigmatically global in their commercial reach, palampores stand at the center of a crossroads spanning the length of the Silk Road and several centuries of reciprocal transnational influence. The Tree of Life motif finds its probable origins in Persian manuscripts of the Timurid dynasty (ca. 1370–1504), themselves derived from earlier Chinese paintings of the Yuan and Ming dynasties. The motif acquired its distinctive form during the seventeenth century, when Indian artists combined Eastern and Western influences including Chinese silk embroideries and Flemish verdure tapestries, for example. The Tree of Life pattern was adapted to European tastes, creating the characteristic mordant-painted-and-dyed cottons that proved so commercially successful as interior decoration in Europe.

The influx into Europe, via the East India Companies, of Indian chintz for furnishing and dress coincided with the mania for all things Asian. The superfine porcelain of Jingdezhen and varieties of Chinese and Japanese lacquered goods had long fascinated Europeans, yet the secrets of their manufacture were elusive. Nevertheless, even after discovering the requisite kaolinitic trade secrets and producing comparable "Japann'd" furnishings in the eighteenth century, Westerners still desired the far-flung allusions that actual Asian products conveyed. With Indian chintz and Far Eastern porcelain and lacquer having separately conquered the world, it is unsurprising that their iconography would eventually merge into a hybrid that seized on the indiscriminate exoticism demanded by European consumers—that is, chinoiserie.

By the mid-eighteenth century, one would be hard pressed to find a member of fashionable English society whose country house did not have at least one "Chinese room," the vogue owing to architectural and decorative treatises, like Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker's Director* (1754) and William Chambers's *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines, and Utensils* (1757), and the ever-increasing number of Chinese goods circulating in Britain, including painted wallpapers and silks. Developed specifically for export to Europe, these painted wallpapers and silks took inspiration from the tried-and-true arborescent forms of Indian palampores while also incorporating bamboo, exotic animals, figures, and garden imagery like scholars' rocks. The disregard for origin and the interchangeability of Asian arts in the minds of Europeans are demonstrated by the preferred term in England and the American colonies: "India papers."

By the 1770s, the branching forms of Chinese wallpapers made their way into chintz designs. The dense network of fantastic flowers that had characterized earlier painted-and-dyed cottons gave way to sparser compositions with blossoms scaled down in size to match those on Chinese imports. Most importantly, the thick, rigid trunk of the central Tree of Life now assumed attenuated proportions, at times sinuous and at others craggy, in keeping with those seen on the painted products of Canton and Guangzhou.

This palampore, although found in the Netherlands, is representative of the Chinese-inspired Indian cottons produced for export to England and North America in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Set against a pale mustard, vermiculated ground pattern on plain-weave cotton, its design is dominated by a flowing, serpentine tree.

Green stems with red blades at the nodes weave in between the tree's trunk and branches. Having abandoned the familiar verticality of bamboo, Indian artisans did not wish to demonstrate botanical accuracy, as in Chinese wallpapers, but rather their aptitude in incorporating new plant forms into existing compositions. Large fantastic blooms dotting the tree's branches resemble stylized torch ginger plants common to Southeast Asia. The bulbous fruit hanging from two slender branches are almost certainly modeled on cashew apples, native to Brazil and introduced to India by Portuguese traders. Among the flowers and fruit in the small, rooted trees along the border are deep red peonies and a variety of long-tailed birds, both typical motifs on Chinese wallpapers.

The best-documented instance of these Chinese-inspired Tree of Life palampores making their way to an English residence is the case of actor David Garrick's bed hangings from the Chintz Room at his villa, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum (17, 18, 19-1906; W.701-1917). Customs officers confiscated the cottons upon their arrival in England in 1774, the year when restrictions on Indian chintz imports, put in place in 1701 and 1721, were finally lifted. Garrick's prosaic letter to an influential acquaintance, in which he asked for their release, is telling, if a bit melodramatic, of how prized such palampores might have been. In it, he compared his wife's mourning over "the loss of the chintz" to that of Rachel for her descendants in the Old Testament.

While no two palampores are wholly identical owing to their mode of production, the shape of this tree and the placement of its larger blossoms closely relate to a palampore at the Royal Ontario Museum (934.4.3). Arrangements of diminutive, rooted trees alternating with long-tailed birds are also seen on the border of a palampore at the Victoria & Albert Museum (IS.44-1950) and a fragment of a border at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (X.501). The red cumulous tufts that envelop the rocky hillocks at the foot of the tree are this example's most unusual feature. Chippendale included such a rocky formation on the japanned furniture commissioned for Garrick's Chintz Room, and it is possible that the present motif is also intended to evoke moss- or lichen-covered rocks or clouds, a further allusion to Chinese earth and sky iconography.

MAD

REDWORK BED HANGING

English, ca. 1650
91 x 94 in.

The elegant and subdued composition of this crewelwork curtain—removed from the whimsy of exotic animals, flowers, and arabesques of contemporary embroideries—is a testament to the pre-Linnaean botanical craze in seventeenth-century England. Sprays of ferns and foxgloves possibly reveals an interest in local botany while also adhering to conceits made popular through needlework pattern books like Richard Schorleyker's *A Schole-House for the Needle* (1624) from which come stylized tendrils ending in voided circles and the double fleur-de-lis running along the border.

The floral and foliate motifs evoke, in their unusual frontal rigidity, the taxonomic regularity of a cabinet of specimens. The fern branches, here laid out in symmetrical arrangements, are uncommon in embroidery. The maker may have had access to herbals like John Parkinson's *Paradisi in sole paradisus terrestris* (1629) that contains numerous examples of fern species as well as foxglove. Also known as the "Virgin Mary's gloves," foxglove was so-called for the size of its flowers, which could fit over a human finger. Here, the sprays of bending foxgloves closely resemble those drawn in the Tudor Pattern Book (1520) at the Bodleian Library (MS. Ashmole 1504). While these flowers sometimes appear in embroideries as miniscule characters in Edenic garden scenes, their size here foretells the fashion for large-scale florals in the later seventeenth century, and their presence as stand-alone motifs appears to be unique to this curtain and its smaller mate, now in a private collection.

The crimson crewel yarns are typical of the monochromatic embroideries made for the most part by women during the second quarter of the seventeenth century. The charming and straightforward composition is executed primarily in chain and stem stitches on a fustian ground, with the addition of running stitches to add further depth to the leaves and buds of the foxgloves, a feature seen in other extant embroideries of the period. It is finished on three sides with a simple knotted and twisted fringe.

Found at Waddon House, Weymouth, Dorset, this curtain dates to the house's period of ownership under Thomas Gerard of Trent (1593–1634), the first historian of Dorset and author of *Coker's Survey of Dorsetshire* (written ca. 1625, published in 1732), and his eldest daughter Elizabeth, who married Colonel Bullen Reymes (1613–1672) in 1640. Thomas's father William willed Waddon House to him on his death in 1604; nearby properties, including Little Waddon, had already been in the Gerard family since at least the mid-sixteenth century when Thomas's great-grandfather William (bef. 1502–1567/8), a farmer, resided there.

It is tempting to link the foliage depicted to the ancestral profession of farming within the Gerard clan. However, neither foxgloves nor ferns appear in the family's coat of arms, which is prominently displayed on Thomas Gerard's 1633 monument to his wife Anne at St. Andrew's Church, Trent, though there

may be a connection between the expansive laurel tree painted on the soffit of the monument and the foxglove's leaves, which more closely resemble bay leaves. More plausibly, this curtain and its counterpart might have been part of a set of hangings made by Elizabeth on the occasion of her wedding to Bullen Reymes or at the time her husband inherited Waddon House. According to an indenture preserved in the Archives of the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Reymes received Waddon House on July 25, 1651, as part of Elizabeth's inheritance.

This curtain, its mate, and a pieced fragment were among a group of items sold in 2004 from Waddon House by the Chaffyn-Grove family, descendants of Bullen Reymes. Reymes, who appears frequently in Samuel Pepys's diary, was a devout royalist who held numerous noble and military posts and was elected MP for Weymouth and Fellow of the Royal Society. His and Elizabeth's eldest son, also called Bullen Reymes, married Anne Coker in 1691. The younger Reymes died in 1695, and his widow remarried between 1697 and 1699 to Harry Chafin of Zeals, bringing Waddon House into the hands of the Chafin family.

This hanging relates to a group of redwork curtains and bedcovers in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago (1986.988), Metropolitan Museum of Art (40.88a-f), Museum of London (80.67), and Victoria & Albert Museum (401-1930; T.165-1930), as well as an example in a private collection (see *Cora Ginsburg* catalogue 2011, pp. 2, 3).

MAD

SILK TAFFETA DAY DRESS

French, ca. 1837–38

Exaggerated proportions and ebullient trimming dominated women's fashions of the Romantic period between about 1824 and 1835. Inspired—often loosely—by fashions of the late sixteenth century, dresses with ever-ballooning, gigot sleeves—the signature feature of the sartorial *goût gothique*—balanced by increasingly expanding skirts and frothy applied decoration created the hourglass shape of the much-admired "sylph." In this noticeably understated olive-green silk taffeta dress, dating to about 1837–38, the narrow pleats at the top of the sleeve, held in place with backstitching, signal the first change in the Romantic silhouette. In the latter months of 1836, French fashion periodicals document the initial collapse of the voluminous sleeve, and, by 1840, tight-fitting sleeves, long, pointed waists, and unadorned skirts reminiscent of mid-seventeenth century women's dress were firmly in place.

In 1837 and 1838, the influential *Journal des Dames et des Modes* (1797–1839) frequently acknowledged the many variations in current sleeve fashions, noting in July 1837 that "we have never seen more versatility practiced on one single point." In October, the editor advised adopting a "happy medium" among "all the exaggerations," citing examples created by leading dressmakers including "mesdames Palmyre, Victorine, Camille, [and] Prévost" that displayed deep cuffs and fitted epaulettes. Here, the controlled fullness at the shoulder and wrist of the two-piece, bias-cut sleeve illustrates one of the most popular transitional styles—the *manche à la jardinière*—that was particularly favored by the magazine. In April 1838, the *Journal des Dames* asserted that the "*manche à la jardinière* will be adopted as the happy medium between the immensely large sleeve, in which the arm is lost, and the flat sleeve, into which the arm barely glides, as in a glove." And in the same month, the fashion editor declared that "the most widely adopted long sleeves are *à la jardinière*, whether organdy, muslin, silk, wool." In 1837 and 1838, *The London and Paris Ladies' Magazine of Fashion*, published in London, that pirated fashion plates from the *Journal des Dames*, illustrated many green silk dresses including, in December 1838, a carriage dress "of green levantine" (a twill-weave silk) with "sleeves *à la jardinière*." This fabric may be a type of foulard, a lightweight, plain-weave silk. In March 1838, the *Journal des Dames* listed the "innumerable varieties" of silks offered by mercers, including *foulards d'Azan*, *foulards de la Mecque*, *foulards Pékinet*, and *foulards pointillés*, and noted that green would be the color worn for the annual visit to Longchamps during Holy Week that provided women an opportunity to parade their latest spring finery.

The utter simplicity of this dress—lacking any trimming—is a mark of its sophistication and reflects the refinement of its construction and impeccable sewing. Darted at the bust, the unlined bodice front is joined at the side seams to two back pieces that are lined in dark brown glazed cotton. The back hook-and-eye closure is characteristic of dresses from this period, but the inclusion of a matching green silk cord, allowing for an adjusted fit around the wide, U-shaped neckline, is somewhat unusual. The placement of

the waistline—slightly higher than what was currently in vogue—may reflect what the *Journal des Dames* referred to in July 1837 as an example of fashion's "*nuances fugitives*." The dubious editor expressed his hope that this tendency "among the most elegant women" would not result in a return to the overtly neoclassical styles of the Consulate (1799–1804), when the waistline rose to under the bust.

The rounded skirt, comprising seven selvedge widths, is knife pleated to the lined waistband from the front to the center back, where the fabric is cartridge pleated for additional fullness, and a deep-brown cotton facing helps to hold out the hem. The plainness of the skirt, which would have been amplified by multiple petticoats, belies its potentially seductive appeal. In Honoré de Balzac's 1846 novel, *La Cousine Bette*, set between 1838 and 1841, the beautiful, scheming Valérie Marneffe uses the movement of her skirt to captivate yet another lover: "every woman has a victorious gesture, a studied movement, which she knows must win admiration … Madame Marneffe's triumph, however, was not face to face like that of other women. She turned sharply round to return to Lisbeth at the tea table. This ballet-dancer's pirouette, whisking her skirts, by which she had overthrown Hulot, now fascinated Steinbock."

Accessorized with a wide-brimmed bonnet, a delicate lace or muslin fichu, and flat, silk or kid shoes, this toilette would have been the epitome of late Romantic fashion.

MM

SILK SATIN DAMASK SACK GOWN AND PETTICOAT

English, the silk ca. 1749; the dress, ca. 1760

The large-scale, sinuous, floral-and-foliate pattern of this damask sack gown, with its serpentine, self-fabric trimming, conveys the pronounced rococo aesthetic in mid-eighteenth-century women's dress. These curvilinear elements, together with the dress's gently rounded silhouette, suggest a sense of fluid movement, complementing the wearer's graceful deportment that was an outward sign of leisure status among elite women.

Worn throughout most of the eighteenth century, the sack gown (as the *robe à la française* was known in England) with its box pleats flowing from the upper back to the slightly trained hem was the perfect form to display uncut patterned dress silks, whether vividly polychrome or subtly monochrome. Here, the impressive forty-one-and-a-half-inch repeat of the creamy-colored damask extends almost the full length of the back. Although many sack dresses were constructed with two selvedge widths joined at the center back, the use of a single width in this gown maximizes the impact of the design's elegant asymmetry. Bold patterns were considered especially well suited to the play of light created by damask's shiny and matte surfaces that juxtapose satin and plain weave. In this silk, stylized flowers—some softly drooping, others upright—and curling serrated leaves create an impression of swaying on their intertwined stems. Dating to about 1749, the design is similar to several by Anna Maria Garthwaite (see Natalie Rothstein, *Silk Designs of the Eighteenth Century*, 5987.20, p. 237, and Victoria & Albert Museum, 5987.18). Most of the annual output by this gifted and successful English designer was for brocaded and other types of silks; however, Garthwaite regularly produced damask patterns for her master weaver customers, with the highest numbers in the years 1748 and 1749.

Although we are able to identify both extant silk patterns on paper and woven silks with highly skilled designers such as Garthwaite, the seamstresses who confected gowns for their clients remain anonymous. A rare—and inadvertent—trace of the maker of this dress survives in two construction pins, partially visible in the linen bodice lining, just below the shoulder seams. As she made up the dress, the seamstress would have inserted the pins to secure the lining to the folds of the outer back pleats. Along with scissors, needles, thread, a thimble, and an iron, pins—purchased by the thousands—were a staple of the dressmaker's workshop. These two pins provide a moving link to the "hand" of the unknown female worker and serve as a material reminder of the time-consuming human labor of the pre-industrial era.

In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when applied trimming became a characteristic feature of women's dress, pinking was both decorative and practical, since it prevented raveling and required less time to execute than hand hemming the edges of flounces and robings. Here, pinked-and-punched serpentine bands, graduated in width from neck to hem and ending in emphatic scrolls, sprightly bowknots, triple sleeve ruffles, and petticoat flounces decorate the front of the gown and petticoat. In a 1764 letter to her brother, Christian Russell described the trimming of a gown that she was ordering while in London for Edmond's new wife, Mary. Russell noted that the front of the petticoat was to have "scollop" flounces and drew a detailed sketch of the sleeve ruffle, specifying that the scalloped edges were to be "pink'd," while the top part of the sleeve should have double pleats that closely resemble the triple pleats of this gown's sleeves. Although in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751–72), pinking tools, or *emporte-pièces*, appear only in the plates for the *Fleuriste Artificiel*, seamstresses surely had access to these tools. Elaborate trimming that combined a variety of delicate materials would have been added to a finished dress by a milliner, or *marchande de modes*, while dressmakers would have created and stitched pinked, self-fabric decoration.

A hazard of the trained sack was a soiled or torn hem, especially evident in a white gown like this one in which a small section at the center back has been replaced with matching silk. In a letter purportedly written by a fictional Chinese philosopher living in London published by Oliver Goldsmith between 1760 and 1761 in *The Public Ledger*, the author commented humorously on the frequent necessity of mending hems, writing, "A lady's train is not bought but at some expense, and after it has swept the public walks for a very few evenings, and is fit to be worn no longer, more silk must be bought in order to repair the breach, and some ladies of peculiar economy are thus found to patch up their tails eight or ten times in a season."

Many dresses dating from the 1740s to the 1770s affirm the popularity of pinked-and-ruched, self-fabric trimming, and numerous mid-eighteenth-century portraits by artists such as Allan Ramsay and Sir Joshua Reynolds depict fashionable elite women in monochromatic silk gowns luxuriantly adorned with this type of decoration. An English yellow silk faille sack-back gown, dating to the 1760s, in the Victoria and Albert Museum (T.60-1934), and a white taffeta sleeve ruffle and matching, unpicked flounces and bands in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago (1937.706a-f) have pinked-and-punched trimming similar to this damask gown. Written in ink on one of the flounces is the inscription, "The bottom of a hoop 1758 and ruff sleeves then in fashion."

MM

TRAINED GOWN OF NETTED COTTON

English, ca. 1798

The 1790s were a period of turbulent change in Europe, politically and, consequently, sartorially. Revolution in France led to renewed interest in classical philosophy as well as dress. Britain, en-gulfed in wars with France and Spain, revolts in Ireland, debates about the universal rights of man, and an economic depression, developed its own radical fashions, distinct from French influence. This specifically Anglo style was quite separate from the strict classicism, accompanied by near nudity, that constituted the mode of the *merveilleuses* in post-Thermidorian Paris.

In the past, allusions to history or to foreign cultures were grafted onto the prevailing European sil-houette, mostly confined to changes in the pattern of a textile or more easily variable headwear. In the final decade of the century, however, classicism and exoticism—both the results of war—completely subsumed tradition, leading to never-before-seen transformations in terms of construc-tion and decoration. Evacuating the conical corsets that had defined the fashionable female silhou-ette since the sixteenth century, women embraced diaphanous fabrics, drastic asymmetry, and nov-el embellishments complementing a general softness of silhouette and material.

This dress, made of citron-yellow netted cotton, is a rare testament to this liminal period in fashion, embodying a mixture of classical nostalgia, up-to-the-minute novelty, and a forward-thinking interpretation of the idea of transparency (see *Cora Ginsburg Modern* catalogue 2020, p. 12). The linen underbodice and sleeves, skillfully constructed using minute stitches, are overlaid with champagne-colored silk taffeta suggestive of skin. Veiling this substructure, strands of cotton yarn form a one-square-centimeter-gauge netted mesh, covering the surplice-style wrapped bodice and forming a voluminous trained skirt. To make things more complicated, the netter doubled the yarn to create a more resilient web, exhausting an exorbitant amount of thread, over one thousand yards, in the process. Yellow satin ribbon is the only decoration, delineating the low V-neck, the exaggerated pocket slits at the hips, and spiraling around the upper arm in concert with narrow bands of net. At the back, carefully pressed lengths of ribbon form rays emanating from the raised waistline, deli-cately pieced to meet the sleeve stripes. The seamstress who made the dress used coordinating sew-ing thread to blend with the surrounding textiles: yellow silk to secure the yellow ribbon, cream silk to attach the taffeta. Untouched since the closing years of the eighteenth century, it is a remarkably intact specimen of late eighteenth-century dressmaking with traces both of its maker and wearer: basting threads are present throughout, and a wound-wire-headed pin, probably used to fit the dress on the original owner, is still stuck through the lining at the left shoulder.

Humans have created nets since at least 5,000 BC, mostly as a practical craft used for hunting fish and birds. By the mid-eighteenth century in Europe though, netting had become a genteel pastime. Like knotting and tatting, which also required specialized shuttles—precious objects themselves of wood, ivory, or metal—netting was a repetitive skill that kept idle hands busy, but also resulted

in a product that acted as proof of the maker's diligence and ingenuity. Two pieces of equipment are required for netting: some type of gauge or sizing card to determine the size of the mesh, and a needle, also called a shuttle, with two forked ends forming blunt points, around which thread was wound. The shuttle had to remain small enough to pass through the mesh, forcing the net maker to continually reload as she went. By the 1790s, specialized netting cases were available, and the pop-ularity of the craft only grew in the nineteenth century, when it was mostly employed to create small bags known as reticules, or miser's purses, using specialized "purse twist" silk.

The long-staple cotton yarn used in this dress was also a relatively new innovation, probably pro-duced to supply the growing cotton-hosiery industry that was, by the time this dress was created, centered in Nottingham in the East Midlands. It appears combed rather than carded, probably the result of having been prepared on Richard Arkwright's drawing frame, also called a "lantern frame," invented in the 1770s, on which rollers straightened the fibers and added a slight twist be-fore the actual spinning process.

Throughout most of the century, fashionable netting was restricted to accessories such as bags and shawls, or to small bits of trimming. However, for a brief period in England during the 1790s, net-ting expanded to encompass full garments, reaching a peak of popularity in the spring and summer of 1798. Perhaps serendipitously, this vogue coincided with the Mediterranean campaign of naval battles between the forces of Napoleon Bonaparte and Horatio Nelson that culminated in the Battle of the Nile in August 1798. These clashes sparked several fashion and decorating trends in England and France, although netting appears to have enjoyed a vogue for dress only in the former, where national pride hinged upon naval supremacy since the time of Elizabeth I.

"London Half & Full Dress," ***Fashions of London and Paris***, April 1798

Bunka Gakuen Library Digital Archive of Rare Materials

For half dress in April 1798, the *Fashions of London and Paris* recommended a loose, short-sleeved "Circassian robe" of white silk entirely covered with pink cotton netting, worn over a white satin petticoat also trimmed at the hem with pink net. A band of matching netting held the robe closed at the waist, and covered the wrapped turban, accented with ostrich feathers. The following month, the same magazine showed a long muslin cloak "covered with coloured netting" again suit-able for London half dress. In August—the month of Nelson's triumph in Egypt—*The Lady's Monthly Museum* included two plates with netted garments: a "green net cloak" for morning

attire and a “green net curricle,” a tunic-length overdress of loosely classical inspiration. Perhaps refer-encing the beaded net dresses of Egypt’s Fourth and Fifth Dynasties, these garments might also have been playfully patriotic allusions to nautical power. Netted garments continued to enjoy spo-radic popularity until 1810.

Although the netting trend did not apparently spread to France, women in Britain’s American colo-nies were apprised of the style through these fashion plates. Portraits of Philadelphians Marianne Ashley Walker (Indianapolis Museum of Art, 52.6) and Frances Cadwalader Montague (Philadelph-ia Museum of Art, 1983-90-7), both by Gilbert Stuart and made around 1799, depict what is possi-bly the same dress of white silk or muslin with short oversleeves of white net, probably cotton.

Only three other extant netted garments from this time are known. A trained wrapping dress of white cotton, probably English, is in the collection of the DAR Museum, Washington, D.C. (see Alden O’Brien, *An Agreeable Tyrant: Fashion after the Revolution*, 2016, pp. 78, 79). Two others are American: a tunic-length example also of white cotton in the Mary Doering collection at Colo-nial Williamsburg, worn in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and a full-length round gown of netted pink silk worn by a member of the Walton family, in the Museum of the City of New York (49.211.7).

Provenance: Sizergh Castle, Cumbria, U.K.; perhaps worn by Anastasia Lawson (1769–1807), wife of Thomas Strickland Standish (1769–1813), married in 1789

WDG

BLOCK PRINTED GLAZED COTTON

Bannister Hall for George Anstey
English, ca. 1805
97 1/2 x 35 1/2 in.

The rage for antiquity in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century, prompted by the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, was widespread in painting, sculpture, architecture, and interior decoration. In the case of the latter, the designs, palette, and arrangement of furnishing fabrics evoked—often indiscriminately—Grecian, Pompeian, Etruscan, and Egyptian styles. In Britain, consumers eager to display these latest fashions in their homes could consult influential publications such as Thomas Hope's *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* (1807), George Smith's *A Collection of Designs for Household Furniture and Interior Decoration in the Most Approved and Elegant Taste* (1808), and the monthly *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics*, founded by Rudolph Ackermann in 1809.

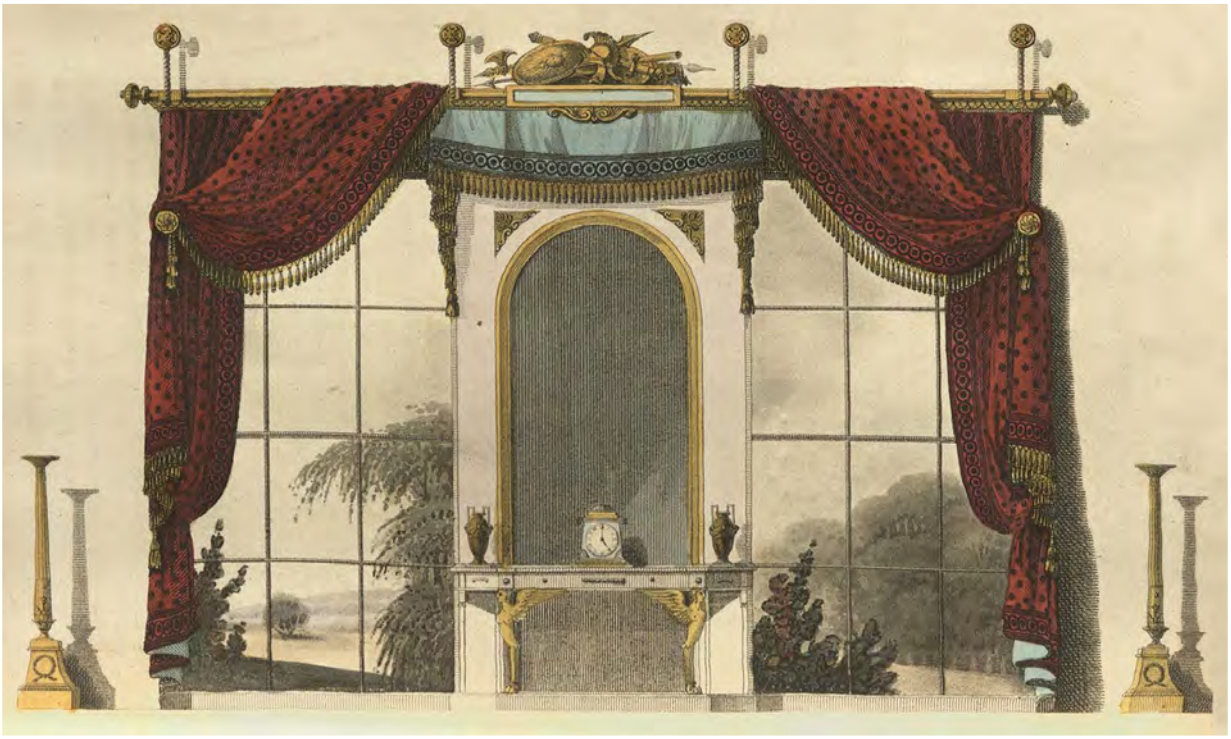
The drapery of curtains was considered of utmost importance in antique-styled interiors and this aspect of a room's decoration received significant attention in *A Collection of Designs* and in the *Repository*. In April 1809, the *Repository*'s editor noted that "in no department of furnishing has the inventive power of fancy been more assiduously employed, than in the disposition of draperies for windows, beds, alcoves, and other suitable objects." Hung from rods embellished with finials of animal or bird heads, martial elements, or other appropriate motifs, asymmetrically arranged curtains with elaborate cascading folds and multiple swags, often trimmed with tasseled fringe, mimicked drapery seen in antique wall paintings and statuary.

This curtain panel of glazed, block-printed, plain-weave cotton, in deep red and black on vibrant yellow, manifests the eclecticism of the neoclassical style in domestic interiors. Inspired by Roman wall paintings like those seen in the Villa of the Mysteries and the House of the Vettii in Pompeii that feature burnt red with black, this color combination was especially associated with antiquity, as were similar "Etruscan" color schemes of terracotta and black, copied from ancient Greek vases discovered in Etruria. Small, stylized sprigs based on the boteh filling patterns in women's cashmere shawls—which also appeared in printed dress cottons—decorate the field. The border design comprises wide black bands with zigzags and scrolls, large circles, and a battlement motif framing modified laurel wreaths and two other stylized plant forms. Two blocks, one for each color, measuring ten-and-a-half inches long by nine inches wide were used for the field, while the border blocks measure fifteen inches long by eight-and-a-half inches wide. Quercitron, a yellow dyestuff derived from the inner bark

of the American black oak tree that became available in the late eighteenth century, promoted the fashion for this color. However, it is likely that the bright yellow ground of this cotton was achieved with Persian berries—the preferred choice of English calico printers—or a combination of dyestuffs including these two. Madder, in conjunction with iron and alum mordants, produced the black and red shades, respectively, of the sprigs and border motifs. Small traces of the original dark-brown glazed cotton lining remain visible along the left side of the panel, while the selvedge edge on the right side contains blue threads required by export laws, confirming a manufacture date between 1774 and 1811.

The use of two colors for furnishing fabrics was deemed both elegant and correct. In March 1809, the *Repository*'s "Fashionable Furniture" column declared: "A considerable alteration has taken place in the fitting up of apartments within these few months. Instead of a gaudy display in colouring, a more pleasing and chaste effect is produced in the union of two tints. This has been happily managed in calicoes, producing an appearance equal to silk, particularly in the richer and more brilliant colours." The following month, the same column described a "window curtain" for a boudoir shown in an accompanying illustration as "a ruby-coloured calico enriched with star-like figures of various black hues." According to Smith, "plain-coloured calicoes, or small chintz patterns" were suitable for "secondary" rooms "where magnificence is not so much required."

This cotton was printed at Bannister Hall for George Anstey, a prominent London-based decorating firm. Listed as "furniture-printers" (as these enterprises were known) in the 1814 *Post-Office Annual Directory* with premises in the Strand, Anstey was one of several influential wholesale and retail drapers who commissioned fabrics directly from leading Lancashire print works like Bannister Hall, operating from 1799 to 1840, located near the town of Preston. Anstey and other London tastemakers depended on the high-end production of Lancashire cotton manufacturers who dominated this burgeoning sector of the British textile industry from the 1780s. Although mechanized roller printing of furnishing and dress cottons increased dramatically in the early nineteenth century with a corresponding drop in prices, more expensive hand-block printed cottons retained their prestige among affluent clients.



R. Ackermann, ed. *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions and Politics*, April 1809, pl. 19

Identical curtains are in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum (T.138-1973) and Old Sturbridge Village (26.77.12a-c). The fabric was reproduced by Brunschwig & Fils in about 1976 for three floor-to-ceiling library windows at Boscobel, built between 1804 and 1808, originally situated in Montrose, New York, and now in Garrison, New York. This cotton's border may have been copied from a nearly identical design in the collection of the G.P. & J. Baker Archives, London (Inventory 56: London furniture printer's album of borders, ca. 1805–10).

MM

EMBROIDERED BEDCOVER

American (New England, Connecticut River Valley), 1811
88 x 82 in.

"A hundred years from now, when its history has been forgotten, it may perhaps be proudly displayed as a unique example of German handiwork. Stranger things have happened."
—Homer Eaton Keyes, *Antiques*, September 1938

Writing in 1938 about the recent sale of an American wool-embroidered bedcover to the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin—now in the Winterthur Museum (1975.0236)—Homer Eaton Keyes emphasized, in jest, the mystery surrounding a group of recently unearthed coverlets emerging from New England and New York houses. Despite the interest from colonial revivalists, little was known about these bedcovers. They appeared singular in history and yet shared a remarkably similar vocabulary of design motifs and techniques unrecorded elsewhere.

Over the next decades, this curious category of textiles received new attention. The 1972 exhibition Bed Ruggs at the Wadsworth Atheneum focused on pieces entirely embroidered to resemble cut or uncut pile. Nevertheless, an aura of mystery surrounding the "second generation" coverlets, as Keyes called them—that is, early nineteenth-century bedcovers that followed the composition of so-called bed rugs but lacked their distinctive allover needlework—has persisted in varying degrees since *Antiques* magazine first reported their discovery in July 1924. The present one, dated 1811, is an ideal case of the misattribution that Keyes had jokingly predicted in 1938. Its history has been lost to time and, while it is not known if it ever left the United States, it eventually resurfaced as attributed to Scandinavia.

Executed in a variety of stitches including outline, stem, seed, and chainstitch, the bedcover is embroidered across two forty-one-and-a-half-inch panels of herringbone-twilled wool seamed down the center with a simple ladder stitch. The homespun wool, irregular in dye and weave with pairs of thin tan stripes, starkly contrasts with the technically advanced composition with its variety of stitches and the surprising, almost garish vibrancy of the crewel yarns. The central basket with diamond filling pattern from which stems a branching floral arrangement is surrounded by wide borders containing a sinuous vine with fantastic, oversized florals. Notably, the centers of the four-petaled flowers use the same technique as that seen on bed rugs: a loose running stitch pulled through the ground fabric and trimmed to create the effect of looped-and-cut pile. A sawtooth frame separating the medallion and border is worked in herringbone stitch with satin-stitch triangles alternating in red, blue, green, pink, brown, and white wools. The embroiderer has included the initials and date "O * B / 1811" in a heart outlined in buttonhole stitch.

This bedcover's imaginative and skillfully executed motifs are, in fact, known from four other remarkably similar coverlets, all embroidered in vibrant crewel yarns on brown or nearly black twilled wool grounds (American Folk Art Museum, 1995.32.1; Old Sturbridge Village 26.108.27; and Winterthur Museum, 1952.0340.005 and 1969.0554). The strong similarities include the floral medallion with or without a basket and borders with scalloped outer frame; parallels in form, color, and size of motifs; techniques with cut pile elements; and rounded lower corners (except the Sturbridge example). These

commonalities also illustrate the strong kinship between early nineteenth-century bedcovers and bed rugs.

The sawtooth frame with herringbone and satin stitch appears to be unique to these five bedcovers. Other closely related features common to all include the four-petaled florals with tricolor embroidery and cut-pile flower heads, exotic pineapple-form blossoms with serrated petals, voided acanthus leaves, and multicolored feathered quatrefoils. One of the Winterthur coverlets (1952.0340.005) contains the initials "L A" and the year "1816" within a heart that is very similar to that on the present one. A sixth coverlet lacks the distinguishing sawtooth frame but shares the floral types and serpentine vine in herringbone stitch (Colonial Williamsburg, 1959-8), and two others (Wadsworth Atheneum, 1945.30; Winterthur, 1956.0602) depict closely related baskets with diamond filling pattern, cut-pile flower heads, and pineapple-like blooms. These stylistic similarities suggest that the makers of the present bedcover and its relatives were likely connected, perhaps even intimately. Such a phenomenon is not unheard of, as there are other known instances of familial bedcover production along the Connecticut River Valley (see, for instance, *Cora Ginsburg* catalogue 2017, pp. 20, 21).

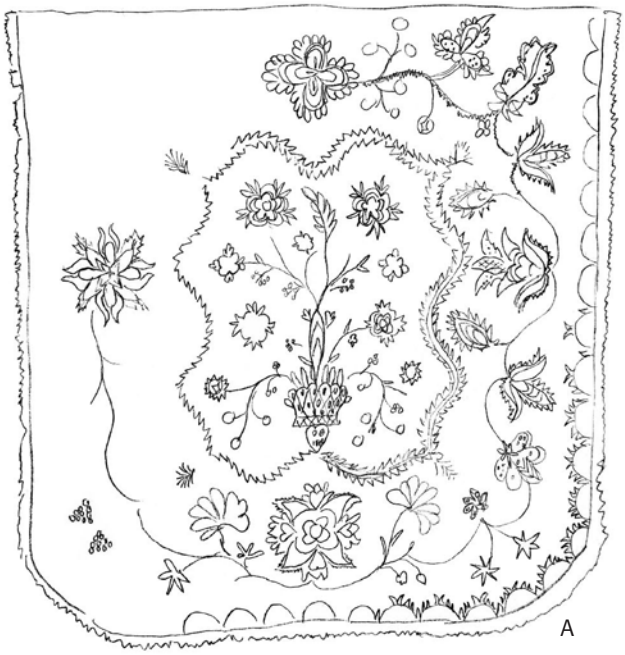
Scholars since Keyes have speculated about the movement of these objects and their design throughout the Northeast and mid-Atlantic. This bedcover, as well as its sisters and cousins, must have originated in the western Connecticut River Valley, probably western Massachusetts or northern Connecticut, based on conceits shared with those with confirmed provenances. Sturbridge's coverlet is anecdotally attached to Elsie (probably Eliza or Elizabeth) Chamberlain of Deerfield, Massachusetts, although no Chamberlain with such a given name has been identified, and the Wadsworth coverlet bears a Lenox, Massachusetts provenance, while the example at Colonial Williamsburg is connected to northwestern Connecticut. The techniques and motifs employed, themselves an amalgam of earlier northern European traditions, traveled with families as they moved along the Connecticut River Valley. Polly McCall of Walton, New York—who made the example cited by Keyes in 1938—had previously resided in Lebanon County, Connecticut. The McCall bedcover notably also features the characteristic four-petaled florals with cut-pile flower heads and creeping vines in herringbone stitch seen here.

"Both bright and somber … more odd than exquisite" was how Keyes described these coverlets in *Antiques* in December 1932. Ninety years later, however, they are rightfully considered far from mere curiosities, and far from the attributions, both hypothetical and real, to northern Europe. Instead, this bedcover and its mates are revealing of the transmission and movement of the rich technical and decorative traditions found along the Connecticut River Valley.

MAD

RIGHT Line drawings of the six related bedcovers by Jan Whitlock

Fig. A Present bedcover. **Fig. B** Winterthur Museum, 1969.0554
Fig. C American Folk Art Museum, 1995.32.1. **Fig. D** Dated 1816, Winterthur Museum, 1952.0340.005
Fig. E Old Sturbridge Village, 26.108.27. **Fig. F** Colonial Williamsburg, 1959-8



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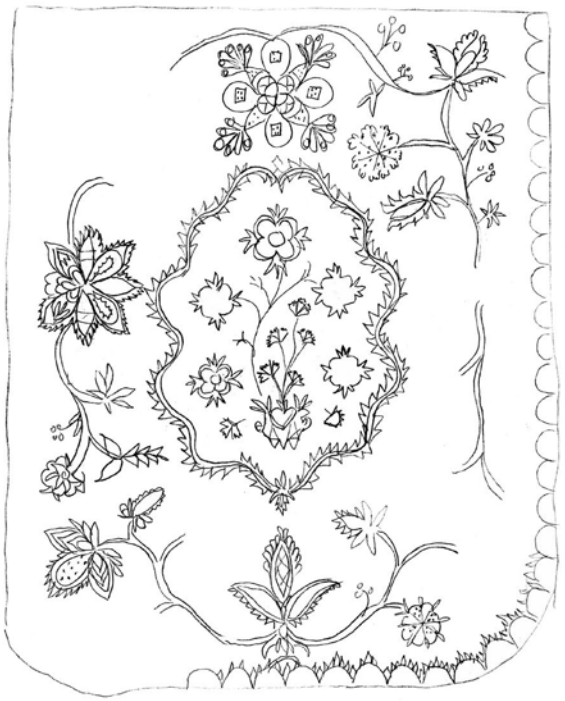

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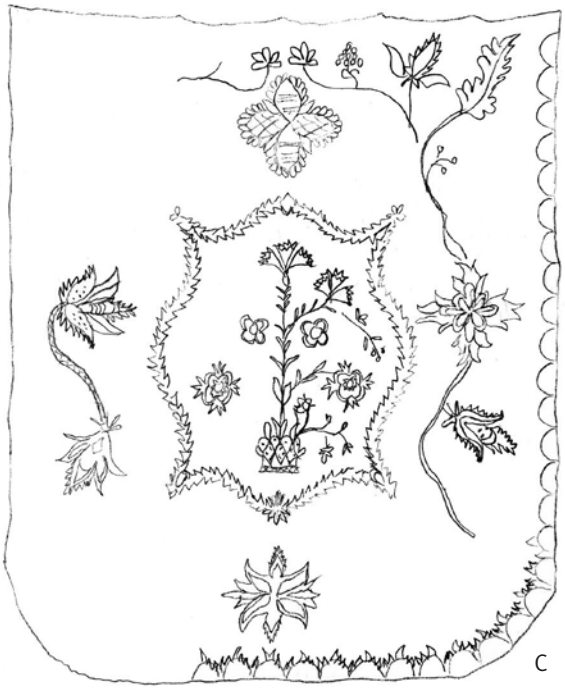

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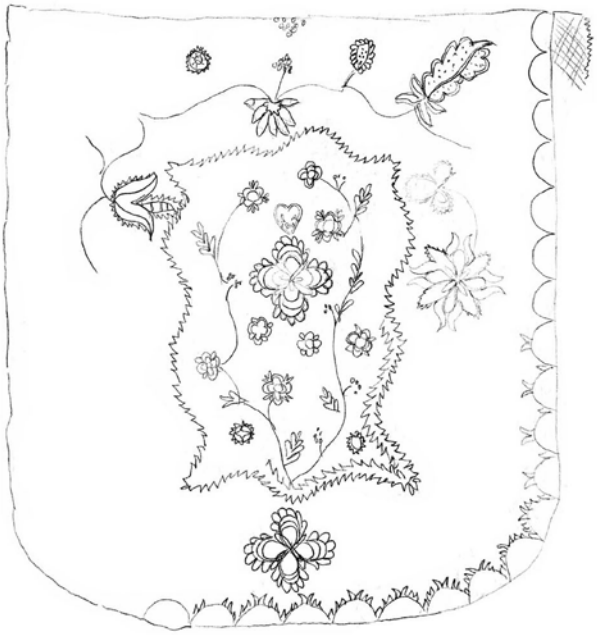

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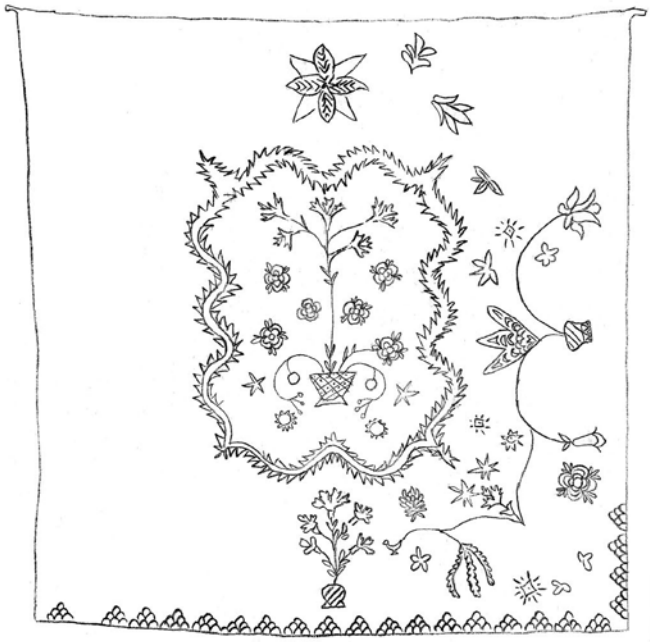

E

F

COLLECTION OF TWELVE *RUBANS FACONNÉS*

French (probably Paris), ca. 1735

In Samuel Madden's 1733 speculative epistolary novel *Memoirs of the Twentieth Century*, a man called Herbert, the representative of the British Lord High Treasurer, writes to his master from Paris of the dizzying array of ever-changing luxuries in the French capital. Although the letter is dated 1997 in the book, Madden's commentary was actually a portrait of Paris in the early years of Louis XV's reign. "It would be very entertaining to write an History even of the Fashions," he wrote, listing modes come and gone in the last few years: "High Stays, low Stays, no Stays, short-waisted, long-waisted … many Ribbons, all Ribbons, few Ribbons, broad Ribbons, narrow Ribbons, rich Ribbons, plain Ribbons, flowered Ribbons, stampt Ribbons, no Ribbons." A folio dedicated to these changing fashions, he surmised, would be a best seller.

In the seventeenth century, Louis XIV and his finance minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert propagated the French ribbon industry by making these accessories indispensable elements of fashionable dress and courtly etiquette. Given as favors to men and women, ribbons were attached to swords, shoes, sleeves, hats, and worn in the hair by the late seventeenth century. This remarkable collection of elaborate ribbons offers a hint of the variety and richness of ribbons available to the highest levels of French society in the early eighteenth century, a period generally considered a low point for the industry, from which both depictions of these materials in portraiture, and the objects themselves, are exceedingly rare.

Ribbons incorporating silver and gold threads were made in only two places in France: Paris and Lyon, with those of the former the "most esteemed," according to Jacques Savary de Brûlons in his *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*. The weavers of silk textiles and the weavers of ribbons were part of the same main guild, the *maîtres Tissutiers-Rubaniers*, and worked alongside each other in these centers. From the seventeenth century on though, they were separated into the *ouvriers de la petite navette* (workers of the small shuttle), who were allowed to weave ribbons no more than one third of an aune (40 cm) wide, and the *ouvriers de la grande navette*, who wove dress and furnishing silks. The similarity between the motifs seen on certain ribbons in this collection, such as large naturalistic fruit and trees, and those found on contemporary dress silks, underscores the close proximity of the industries, each in search of constant novelty. Because low-warp ribbon looms were simpler to set up than those for silks, ribbons were even more highly susceptible than yardage to the demands of consumers and the news of the day. "There is no industry more subject to inconstancy, to the caprices of fashion and taste, for in the usage of this commodity, the taste of consumers varies without cease," noted the *Journal de Commerce* in 1761, and the same had been true in the 1730s.

We know this because of the survival of two volumes in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, which contain hundreds of samples of ribbon, many nearly identical to those in this collection. Collected between 1732 and 1736 by M. Raudot, *intendant général de la marine*, on behalf of his superior, the comte de Maurepas, secretary of state, the samples are meticulously annotated with information on their origins, prices, and names, including several referencing current events. These objects were considered significant enough to merit inclusion in a larger collection of thousands of engravings documenting the years of the *Régence* and first decade of Louis XV's reign, called the *Anecdotes de notre temps*. Subsequently acquired by Louis François Armand de Vignerot du Plessis, duc de Richelieu, the collection was purchased on behalf of Louis XVI in early 1789 following Richelieu's death.


FULGENCE
76, rue La Boétie
ELYSÉES 08.12

Most of the ribbons in this assemblage are strikingly similar to those in Tome VII of the Richelieu collection, which contains ribbons made in Paris between 1735 and 1737. Painstakingly woven one at a time, brocaded ribbons such as these were generally produced by the piece (twelve aunes) or demi-pièce (six aunes). They could be purchased this way by merchants for resale or sold individually by the aune by peddlers or at boutiques and fairs. Prices for comparable ribbons in the Richelieu collection range from four to six livres per aune (a unit of measure roughly one-and-a-half yards in length), though gold ribbons could go up to ten or twelve livres per aune, more than double a day's wages for a skilled laborer. Ribbon weavers themselves were notoriously poorly compensated, like many other workers in the luxury trades. In Paris, the industry was centered in La Villette on the right bank and the faubourg Saint-Marceau on the left bank, close to the Gobelins manufactory, nicknamed the "*faubourg souffrant*" because of the poverty that plagued these artisans, who generally worked at home, engaging their wives and children to assist.

Nearly half of the ribbons in this collection contain gold thread, which made them exponentially more costly. Two of these cloth-of-gold ribbons bear traces of their original uses as part of women's dress, and were even further elaborated by hand. One, with pairs of nodding pink flowers bracketed by feather-like motifs in gold *filé*, was cut at the sides after being removed from the loom to create a scalloped edge, then trimmed with gold bobbin lace, and finally bound with blue plush fringe; lined with a simpler striped ribbon, its pattern of creasing indicates that it once formed the robing encircling the neck of a woman's gown. It, like several others in the collection, is almost exactly one aune in length. Two lengths of another ribbon, with a yellow ground woven with strawberry-like fruit against both silver and gold brocading, were also scalloped, and augmented with silver twisted fringe; they likely formed the trimming around a woman's sleeve cuffs.

This collection was amassed by the Fulgence family of *antiquaires*, who operated a shop in Paris at 75, rue la Boétie from the late nineteenth century until at least the 1950s. A pioneering firm in the sale of eighteenth-century costume as art, Fulgence et Cie. sold pieces to the Victoria & Albert Museum and to collectors like Lyon businessman H. A. Elsberg, who sold the Metropolitan Museum of Art its first eighteenth-century dresses. It is accompanied by an eighteenth-century box covered with *papier dominoté* bearing the firm's label.

Comparable ribbons are in the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum (1354-1871; 1355-1871; 1357-1871; 1358-1871) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (07.62.27; 07.62.28; 07.62.68; 09.50.296; 38.92). For more information, see Roger-Armand Weigert, *Textiles en Europe sous Louis XV*, 1964.

WDG

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