

Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design

Issued Quarterly

Vol. V

JANUARY, 1917

No. 1



PAMELA ANDREWS

Bequest of Miss SARAH C. DUFFEE

ROBERT FEE

"PAMELA ANDREWS"

By ROBERT FEKE.

THE work of the early American painters is of constant interest, not only for the technical difficulties which they overcame, and the sincere characterization which found expression in their portraits, but for the evidence they afford of the life of the time. It should be kept constantly in mind that there was little incentive for the artist to make much progress in his chosen field, except in the direction of portraits, for which there was a certain demand from the more wealthy colonists. This lack of patronage was also a reflection of a loss of interest in art in Europe at the time.

In a paper read before the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1904, Professor William Carey Poland brought together the results of his researches about Robert Feke, the early Newport portrait painter. Due emphasis is placed upon the part which Rhode Island played in the early art manifestation in America.

In his discussion of Feke's work, the author calls attention to "an ideal figure picture representing Pamela Andrews, the heroine of Richardson's novel, which is owned by Miss Sarah Crawford Durfee, of Providence. Miss Durfee was the great-granddaughter of Benjamin Cozzens, brother of Eleanor Cozzens, Robert Feke's wife; and she received the picture by transmission in the family from her great-grandmother, the wife of Benjamin Cozzens, to whom it was given in the year 1755 by some one of the Feke family, presumably by the artist's widow. The picture is in good condition and charmingly represents the fair subject dressed as a servant on the eve of her romantic marriage. Whether the work is entirely original with Feke is not certain. He may have copied it from Smibert, as has been suggested, but it seems clear that he painted the picture, although it bears no signature."

It is of interest to the friends of the Museum to know that by the recent be-

quest of Miss Durfee, this interesting example of Feke's work has become a feature of the permanent collections. Since its receipt the painting has received expert attention which, by the removal of dirt, varnish and some repainting, brought out much of the original beauty of the painting; with the result that Feke's position as an able painter of surprising merit is now more apparent.

In the paper mentioned, many interesting details about the artist's life and work are presented. We learn that there were several ways of spelling the name. In England the family name appears as "Feake," "Feke," "Feak," etc. In New England the three spellings that appear are "Ffeake," "Feake," and "Feke." Robert Feake or Feeks married Clemence Ludlam and became a Baptist minister at Oyster Bay, Long Island. These were the parents of Robert Feke, the painter. He was born in 1705 according to tradition, and went to live in Newport before 1729. He married Eleanor Cozzens on September 26, 1742. Tradition has it that Feke made several voyages to sea, on one of which he was made a prisoner of war and taken to Spain. The legend continues that while there he began to paint. It is known that he resided in Newport and also worked in Philadelphia and Boston. Feke went to Bermuda for his health and died there in 1750, according to an early engraved portrait of him.

In giving proper emphasis to Feke and his work it may be remembered that artists in his time had small opportunity to see and study other pictures. Our only way of knowing how much this advantage was enjoyed by the artist is to note the features in his paintings which suggest elements found in the art expression of Italy, England or Spain.

Other paintings by Feke may be seen in the Redwood Library and the Historical Society, Newport, and Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, while still others may be found in private possession in Rhode Island and Boston.



CHINESE TOMB-JADE

Han Dynasty

Pi

CHINESE TOMB-JADES.

IT seems quite impossible for the Occidental to fully understand the Oriental mind, for he fails usually to appreciate the deep interest in symbolism, abstract thinking, and introspection. For generations our artistic expression had developed in the direction of natural representation, while the more remote the work is from this form of art the more will it interest the Oriental. This is an almost universal spirit in the East, shared alike by the followers of Confucius and Buddha. It was even more in evidence in the early periods of Chinese history, especially in the Chou dynasty (1125-255 B.C.) and the Han dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.)

While admiration for the superior civilization achieved in these great periods of Chinese history is reflected in the literature and tradition, there are few classes of art-work which have come down to us. These are chiefly pottery figures, bronzes, and jade. The name "Jade" is applied to two very different kinds of stones. Nephrite (a calcium-magnesium silicate) is a variety of amphibole, and is usually green or white in color. Jadeite is an aluminium-

sodium silicate, rather pale in color and with white patches of brilliant green of different colors. The name usually given to jade in China is *yu-chi*.

The gift by Mrs. Gustav Radeke, to the Museum, of five remarkable pieces of jade, presents an opportunity to see the material which has been so prized by Chinese connoisseurs, which takes us back to the early days of the Chou and Han dynasties, and which affords such an interesting chance to illustrate the love of symbolism in the Oriental mind.

The love of a precious or semi-precious stone is characteristic of many people. With this is often coupled a superstitious or religious belief which gives added interest. This was decidedly the case with the Chinese, where jade was of religious, political and artistic significance.

The five pieces include a remarkable dark-green jade disk, $11\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter. This form was called *pi*, and was the symbol of Heaven. The example dates from the Chou dynasty.

The second, of gray-green stone, is the tube, *t'sung*, of the Chou dynasty, and rather primitive in form. This was symbolic of Earth.

The third is a beautiful example of jade ring, *pi*, dating from the Han dynasty, and decorated on both sides with the "sleeping-cocoon" pattern in low relief.

In the group was also a yellow-brown jade in the form of a dragon carrying on its back two of its young. This dates from the T'ang dynasty (618-906 A.D.), and shows the deity which was symbolic of rain, of the rain-clouds and of thunder and lightning. This was called *lung*.

The fifth of the group is a Chou dynasty axe, without surface ornament, pierced at one end, and of a green and white jade. This is not as good material as in the other pieces and contains some iron, which in

since there the symbolism was much in evidence. Here the disk *pi* was placed under the back and the tube *t'sung* on the abdomen of the body, thus invoking the protection of the gods of Heaven and Earth for the departed, and in theory keeping the body uncorrupted.

In official life jade was also highly prized, and in the Chou dynasty there was formulated a definite set of rules assigning certain forms of jade as insignia of the different ranks of officers.

Besides these uses jade has always been cherished by the Chinese for reputed medicinal value and as a symbol of virtue.

Throughout the years ancient jades have been eagerly sought for and highly prized or even revered by the Chinese connoisseur, so that the friends of the Museum may well be pleased that such a representative group of tomb-jades of superior quality has been added to the collections.

L. E. R.

A SYRIAN MARRIAGE-CHEST.

THE Syrian bridal chest which has recently been added to the permanent collection of the School of Design is representative of a class of furniture very rarely found in our museums, in fact, known only to a few collectors, from one of whom, Mr. George B. Dexter of Boston, the present example was acquired. But the precious materials, silver, mother-of-pearl, and cedar of Lebanon, would serve to make any object fascinating, and how much more so such a romantic treasure-box from that sacred East where those very materials, dearly prized from time immemorial, found frequent and fond mention throughout the Bible.

The accompanying illustration renders a long description unnecessary. The body of the chest measures approximately a foot and a half wide by four feet long and twenty inches high. It is supported nearly ten inches from the floor by runners at either end; only in front are they projecting and bracketed. The flat cover overlaps about an inch at front and sides.



CHINESE TOMB-JADE
T'ang Dynasty

Lung

the course of ages has discolored the surface in places. This form was sometime used as the symbol of power and was called *chen kuei*.

Jade of superior merit was never a common stone, and was obtained chiefly in Shensi Province, or was imported from Turkestan. Its chief place of finding was in the river-beds, in the form of boulders. Because of its rarity it was highly prized as a gift, to be made either to the individual or to the temple. As a result, during the Chou and Han dynasties, the rulers of China often made presents of jade symbols for the funerals of distinguished men of State, or favorites.

The connection of jade with burial customs in Early China is also of interest,



SYRIAN MARRIAGE-CHEST

Recent Acquisition

XVII cen.

The rather indifferent craftsmanship of the cabinet-maker, whose tools were doubtless inadequate, is more than atoned for by the ambitiously brilliant and thoroughly successful work of the decorator. The rich embellishment is confined wholly to the front, for in the Syrian house such a piece of furniture is regularly set back to a wall and so covered that top and ends do not show.

Of this decoration the principal interest attaches to the design on the body of the chest proper. It is carried out in three ways. First, the cedar shows the main lines of the pattern in wood-carving. Then, the finer lines are inlaid in strips of silver alloy. Finally, luminous bits of mother-of-pearl are set in the spaces thus framed for them. A passing mention of the wave in silver lines set with pearl on the front edge of the cover and of the triangle marked off in similar materials on each of the brackets below will suffice. These are felt as decidedly subordinate designs and they are so simplified as to dispense with the wood-carving entirely.

But the main panel is worth close attention. It falls into three sections: right and left, the same interlace repeated; in

the middle, three trees in the intercolumniations of a triple arcade. Above each of the outer arches of this a disk and crescent, sun and moon, appear. The keyhole, rudely breaking the ornament, takes its place above the middle arch.

Now in connection with the two interlaces it must be noted that both are done from the same pattern. This was symmetrical with reference to its center only, not with respect to its axes. Hence, when repeated right and left, the result is asymmetrical. The outer half of one interlace does not correspond to the outer half of the other, but to the inner half, and *vice versa*. This peculiar circumstance makes the restless and intricate interlaces, the shapes and exterior lines of which do not in any way agree with their square frames, contrast all the more sharply with the rigidly stable middle section of the design. Though in themselves the interlaces are of the well-known triple-band type, with large and small loops filled with stars, circles, and the like,—a type widely used since Hellenistic times,—this particular application of them has more specific bearings.

In our Western European decorative composition we are accustomed to frame

our design carefully, to balance the parts perhaps obscurely but symmetrically, and to allow freedom and variation to increase gradually from the periphery to the focus of the design. So pronounced has this habit become that the very word "border" has come to denote conventional design. We rely on the center of the composition for the radical, the edges for the conservative, elements. In an arbitrary phrase this western type might be called a balance composition or a convergent one. If, as is most likely, any one feels disposed to quarrel with the terms, let him glance aside from the Syrian chest to one of the occidental chests in the Museum beside it. In every one the outer designs will be found to be regular and evenly disposed, the central untrammelled and individual, as a coat of arms, or a group of figures.

The decorative composition of the Hither East, of which this chest from Syria is an example, employs a diametrically opposed method. The central member, however unusual or striking, is made absolutely rigid and uncompromisingly symmetrical. Note that, in contrast to the treatment of the interlaces, the sun-disk and moon-crescent are not merely repeated right and left, but are reversed in relative position so as to be exactly pendent. Note that the outer columns of the arcade are trimmed of all their exterior protrusions so there may be nothing to project beyond, or even against, the predetermined limits of this central motive. Note the number of trees and arches taken as threefold, a quantitative unit which was a symbol of the symmetrical whole, of unity in variety, ages before man dreamt of the Trinity. Once the oriental designer has the center monarchically established, he leaves the other elements of his composition, here the interlaces and the subsidiary ornament of cover and brackets, all free to take their own varied course. The composition depends for its coherence on the stability of its dominant central member. Again, expressing, as one often must, a thought which is

clear enough in language, which is equally ambiguous, this in an arbitrary phrase might be called a centralized composition or a divergent one. If centralization and divergence seem paradoxical, look at the lighting of the western sky at sunset.

This general distinction between the two types of composition is of course, after all, but a generality and admits, even demands, much qualification. The oriental composition came in frequently with other oriental influences to modify the art of the West. A fine early illustration of the point is found in the arrangement of the metopes of temple C at Selinus. The middle one is absolutely frontal, those beside it gradually diverge toward the side. But the sculpture there was frankly orientalized. By the time the Parthenon was decorated the Western spirit had recovered itself and rejected an oriental composition on the frieze of the western front though the subject almost seemed to demand divergence. The intermediate stage is at Delphi.

The above is only one of many lines of comparison that are suggested by this modest piece of furniture. It does not pretend to contain more than a partial truth, but the statement of even that will offer material for the construction of a more complete one. Whether any one will agree or disagree with such statement is not to the point. It will have accomplished its purpose if it draws attention to a single problem of art, composition, and to a single monument of art, this Syrian chest, which we are all so happy to have as a permanent feature in the Museum.

JOHN SHAPLEY.

EXHIBITIONS OF THE QUARTER.

FALL EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN PAINTING.—The annual Fall Exhibition of American Painting was installed in the special galleries of the Museum from October 4 to October 26. As in previous years, a successful effort was made to show in a selected group of canvases some of

the artistic expression of contemporary artists. The place of honor in the first gallery was occupied by the well-known and beautiful "Winged Figure" by Abbott Thayer, loaned through the courtesy of the Hillyer Art Gallery of Smith College. The balance of the exhibition was equally worthy of consideration and included work by such well-known painters as Karl Anderson, F. W. Benson, John F. Carlson, Mary Cassatt, William Cotton, Randall Davey, Charles H. Davis, Arthur W. Dow, Gertrude Fiske, Daniel Garber, Arthur C. Goodwin, Childe Hassam, Charles W. Hawthorne, Charles S. Hopkinson, William C. Loring, Richard E. Miller, George L. Noyes, Charles Rosen, John E. Sargent, Albert F. Schmitt, Leopold Seyffert, John Sloan, Robert Spencer, Martha Walter, J. Alden Weir and Charles H. Woodbury.

BRONZES AND TAPESTRIES.—The exhibition during November brought to public interest a choice group of small bronzes, including work by A. H. Atkins, Edward Berge, Gail S. Corbett, A. St. L. Eberle, Louise Allen Hobbs, Anna V. Hyatt, Albert Jaegers, Charles R. Knight, Isidore Konti, F. W. MacMonnies, H. F. Mears, Bessie P. Vonnoh, A. A. Weinman and Mahonri Young.

With these bronzes wereshown a notable group of tapestries, of French and Flemish origin, lent by Mrs. R. Livingston Beeckman, Mrs. Jesse H. Metcalf and Miss Ellen D. Sharpe. They included a superb late 16th-century Gobelin hunting tapestry, a Flemish "verdure" tapestry and other equally interesting examples.

SENEFELDER CLUB.—The exhibition in December of the work in Lithography by the Senefelder Club of London brought to public attention not only a very notable group of artists, but a phase of art expression which is again appealing strongly to art-lovers. The group of artists, included among others, Joseph Pennell, John Copley, Spencer Pryse, J. Kerr-Lawson and Frank Brangwyn. From the start the standard of quality has been of the

highest in lithography. At most but fifty impressions are allowed from each stone, and one of their rules reads that where "the first bloom and freshness have worn off, the stone is condemned long before the number has been reached." The collecting of prints is appealing to an ever-increasing number of art-lovers, and lithography takes its place with etching, engraving and mezzo-tint, in offering works of art within the reach of the small as well as the large collector. A selected group of lithographs by Albert Sterner, and wood-block prints by Edna Boies Hopkins and Eliza D. Gardiner were also shown during December.

OTHER exhibitions during the quarter included stained glass and cartoons by Charles J. Connick of Boston; designs for interior decoration from A. H. Davenport & Co. and Cooper & Williams of Boston, and E. F. Caldwell & Co. and William Baumgarten & Co. of New York were also shown.

NOTES.

—
EDWIN A. BARBER.—The death of Edwin Atlee Barber, Director of the Pennsylvania Museum, is a great loss to the museum world. Dr. Barber was an authority on American and European ceramics and glass and was the author of several books on these subjects. He was as kind as he was learned, and willingly helped those who came to him for information. The Rhode Island School of Design is indebted to him for the catalogue made by him in July, 1912, of the European and American china and glass in its collections.

WILLIAM M. CHASE.—America has lost in the death of William Merritt Chase one of its most accomplished painters and inspiring teachers.

The Museum of the Rhode Island School of Design is fortunate in possessing six examples of Mr. Chase's art. Two of these were gifts from Mr. Isaac C. Bates. Among them the beautiful "Lady

in Pink" is especially familiar to visitors to the Museum.

A painting of still life, in which Mr. Chase greatly excelled, was purchased by the Trustees from the Fall Exhibition in 1902, with the interest of the Jesse Metcalf Fund.

SUNDAY DOCENT SERVICE.—The Sunday docent service for the present season started on December third. The service given in December included: December 3, "Old Chinese Jade" by Mr. L. Earle Rowe; December 10, "Old Lace and Its History" by Miss Margaret T. Jackson; December 16, "Persian Pottery" by Miss Florence V. Paull; and December 31, "How Wood-block Prints are Made" by Miss Eliza D. Gardiner. Other interesting subjects dealing with parts of the permanent or loan collections will be discussed by equally interesting speakers during January, February and March. The opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the treasures of the Museum is being enjoyed by a constantly increasing and enthusiastic audience. This important branch of work is one feature of the educational activity of the Museum.

ADMISSIONS.

HOURS OF OPENING.—The galleries are open to the public on every day of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the Fourth of July. From July 1st to September 15th the hours are from 1 to 5 P. M. on week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays; from September 15th to July 1st the hours are from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays. The Pendleton Collection is open from 2 to 5 P. M. daily.

Twenty-five cents admission to the museum is charged on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the museum is free on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Free transferable tickets admitting four persons on pay-days are sent to all members of the corporation. Art students and artists, on application to the authori-

ties, may obtain free tickets of admission for any pay-day. Teachers with pupils of both public and private schools will be admitted without payment upon application.

LIBRARY.

The Library contains 3,041 volumes, 15,930 mounted photographs and reproductions, 2,136 lantern slides, and about 3,514 postcards. During the months of June, July and August the library is closed.

The Bulletin of the Rhode Island School of Design Providence

All communications should be addressed to the
General Editor, Mr. L. Earle Rowe.

Entered as second-class matter January 16, 1913, at the post office at Providence, Rhode Island, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

Copyright, 1917, by Rhode Island School of Design.
All rights reserved.

OFFICERS

Mrs. GUSTAV RADEKE	.	.	President
THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN	.	.	Vice-President
G. ALDER BLUMER, M. D.	.	.	Secretary
STEPHEN O. METCALF	.	.	Treasurer
L. EARLE ROWE	.	.	Director

TRUSTEES

Term expiring 1922	HOWARD HOPPIN, HARALD W. OSTRY
Term expiring 1921	HOWARD O. STURGES, WILLIAM WURTS WHITE
Term expiring 1920	WILLIAM T. ALDRICH, HENRY D. SHARPE
Term expiring 1919	Mrs. GUSTAV RADEKE, JESSE H. METCALF
Term expiring 1918	HOWARD L. CLARK, THEODORE FRANCIS GREEN
Term expiring 1917	Miss LIDA SHAW KING, G. ALDER BLUMER, M.D.

EX-OFFICIO

His Excellency Governor R. LIVINGSTON BEECKMAN
His Honor Mayor JOSEPH H. GAINER
Commissioner of Public Schools, WALTER E. RANGER
The Superintendent of Providence Schools, ISAAC O. WINSLOW
President of Brown University, WILLIAM H. P. FAUNCE
Professor WILLIAM CAREY POLAND, of Brown University
E. CHARLES FRANCIS, of State Board of Education
Judge FREDERICK RUECKERT, of State Board of Education
Librarian of Providence Public Library, WILLIAM E. FOSTER

MEMBERSHIP

Honorary Members
Governing Members for Life, who pay at one time \$100.00
Annual Governing Members, who pay annual dues of \$10.00
Annual Members, who pay annual dues of \$3.00