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Walton on Thames
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Mr. William Rau
M.S. Rau Antiques
630 Royal Street
New Orleans
Louisiana
70130
United States of America

3rd December 2022

Dear Mr Rau,

Please see my appraisal details on your Early George III Mahogany Library Desk:

Having now had the opportunity to fully inspect this masterpiece, I am happy to inform you that I can with full confidence confirm that without question this is a work of art of the period by Thomas Chippendale.

I have attached herewith drawn examples, which corroborate my attribution. This is fully underpinned by the following:

- The Pink / Red wash that is on the underneath, this is a particular and unique finishing feature Chippendale used on his case pieces.
- The very particular design of castor and the placing of the castors beneath the pedestals. The form is of the main wheel of the castor revolving on a circular brass back-plate by means of two smaller wheels moving within a groove, a most distinctive design, which was used by Chippendale on a marquetry library table supplied to Harewood House, Yorkshire, now at Temple Newsam House, Leeds and on another desk supplied to Dumfries House, Ayrshire in 1759. Chippendale's invoices for both of these desks particularly describe the castors used and their placing, two only to each pedestal, centrally mounted, rather than four, one in each corner. This is a noted idiosyncrasy unique to Chippendale's workshop. Please see Fig 1 and Fig 2
- The fire gilded swan neck handles again are a feature of his, Chippendale had the best caster & gilder of Brass working for him. Identical handles can be seen for three different Clothes Press supplied by Chippendale to Nostell Priory, Harewood House & Paxton House. Please see Fig 3, Fig 4 & Fig 5
- A near identical form desk, by Thomas Chippendale, can be seen from the Lord Lonsdale, Lowther Castle collection, that was sold in 1955 by the late Gregory & Co, Mayfair London. Your desk has additional superior features and a far grander presence, but without question both made and designed by Chippendale. Please see Fig 6
- The purity and detail in design go beyond the norm, the writing table / desk was primarily a functional piece, these pieces were most often far simpler, the magnificence in function of this masterpiece would

confirm it was certainly originally commissioned by an aristocratic patron. I can say this with all good conscience; I believe this is one of the finest examples of the purity in design type that Thomas Chippendale produced.

It is a masterpiece of design & construction, Chippendale put as much effort in perfecting the carcass as he did the exterior of his pieces, his pieces are not only visually beautiful, they are incredibly well made. The show timber on your piece is exceptional quality Cuban Mahogany; this again was a variety of Mahogany favoured by Mr Chippendale.

As you would expect from his workshop, the cabinet work throughout is exemplary, the swan neck Brass handles, Brass locks & Oak drawer linings, were a beauty to behold and show Thomas Chippendale's supreme skill at his most exquisite.

This is a historically important masterpiece Mr Rau & would grace the most important Museum, it is a work of art from the most important & influential Cabinetmaker in history.

Here is a brief synopsis on the great man. Thomas Chippendale was born in Otley, Yorkshire, 1718 and died in London in 1779. Chippendale was an only child, born into a family of Yorkshire carpenters. Details of his early career are unknown but in 1748, aged 30, he moved to London where he set up as a cabinet-maker, married and had a large family. In 1754 he published *The Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker's Director*, a pattern book that was to secure his position as one of the most eminent cabinet-makers of the 18th century. Chippendale's workshop was on St Martins Lane, the newly fashionable centre of the furniture making trade in London. From there he undertook many large-scale furnishing projects for grand houses throughout Britain. Breakthrough In the 18th century there was an increasing demand for luxury goods. Chippendale's *Director* provided for this market with 160 engravings of fashionable furniture designs. The *Director* was an instant success. It was reissued in 1755, and again in 1762 with additional plates in the new Neo-classical style. Subscribers included aristocrats and cabinet-makers. Shrewd publicity brought Chippendale many lucrative commissions. His firm supplied all manner of furnishings and household equipment. So influential were his designs, in Britain and throughout Europe and America, that "Chippendale" became a shorthand description for any furniture similar to his *Director* designs. Quite simply, he was a genius & the finest Cabinetmaker & designer of the period.

It was a pleasure appraising this impeccable work of art.

Kindest Regards

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W.L.R.' followed by a stylized flourish.

Warren
Warren Lee Richards

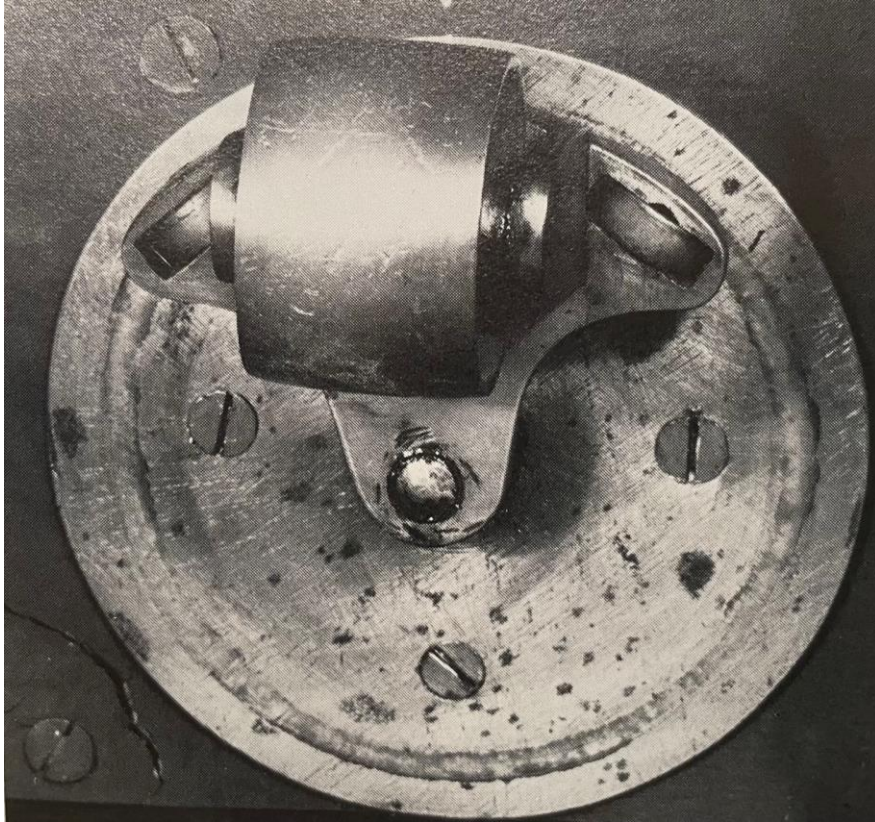


Fig 1: Brass castor with "triple wheel" friction rollers, 1771, from the Harewood Library Table now at Temple Newsam House, Leeds



Fig 2: The marquetry library table supplied to Harewood House, Yorkshire, now at Temple Newsam House, Leeds



Fig 3 Thomas Chippendale supplied Clothes Press c1769-1770 Harewood House



Fig 4: Thomas Chippendale Clothes Press, Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire, supplied 1767



Fig 5: Thomas Chippendale Clothes Press supplied 1774 Paxton House



THE CONNOISSEUR, December, 1955

GREGORY & CO.

(BRUTON STREET) LTD.

(ESTABLISHED 1823)

27 BRUTON ST., BERKELEY SQUARE,
LONDON, W. 1

TELEPHONES:
MAYFAIR 2608/9/0
MAYFAIR 2066

TELEGRAMS:
GREGCO, WESDO
LONDON

A N T I Q U E S	B U I L D I N G
F U R N I T U R E	E L E C T R I C A L W O R K S
U P H O L S T E R Y	D E C O R A T I O N S
C U R T A I N S	H E A T I N G
C A R P E T S	V A L U A T I O N S

An important Chippendale mahogany Partners' Desk, with a gallery; the three drawers in the frieze are repeated on the reverse side with cupboards in the pedestal below; of a fine colour and with the original handles. *Circa 1760.*

Width 5' 1" Height 2' 8" Depth 3' 10"

From the collection of the late Lord Lonsdale,
Lowther Castle.

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Fig 6: A Thomas Chippendale Desk, circa 1760, previously retailed by the late Gregory & Company in 1955, provenance Lord Lonsdale, Lowther Castle