

**JOURNAL OF THE  
ACADEMIE INTERNATIONALE  
DE LA PIPE**



Edited by  
Peter Davey and Anna Ridovics

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# JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMIE INTERNATIONALE DE LA PIPE

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The Académie Internationale de la Pipe was founded in 1984 to provide a forum for leading scholars from around the world engaged in any field of study relating to the smoking pipe. The Academy's object is to advance the education of the public in the economic and social history of tobacco and pipe smoking worldwide. Its principal aims are to promote better awareness of the pipe as a cultural, artistic and social phenomenon; to highlight the particular place the pipe holds in the history of peoples and civilizations; to collect, preserve and disseminate evidence relating to its history and associations, and to encourage research concerning the past, present or future of the subject.

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Cover image: *Chibouk bowl with wind cover and retaining chain, overlaid with woven, brass-wire protective cover (photograph by Darius Peckus).*

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**VOLUME 4**

Académie Internationale de la Pipe  
Liverpool  
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# JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMIE INTERNATIONALE DE LA PIPE

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## CONTENTS

### INTRODUCTORY PAPERS

Editorial *by Peter Davey and Anna Ridovics* ..... iii

### GENERAL PAPERS ABOUT SMOKING

The changing representations of tobacco and pipe smoking in the old and new worlds between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries  
*by Paul Jahshan* .....1

Rauchzeichen über Helvetien: zum Stand der tonpfeifenforschung in der Schweiz unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Kantons Bern  
*by Andreas Heege*.....15

Dutch influences on the Japanese smoking habit *by Barnabas Suzuki* .....39

### OTTOMAN PERIOD PIPES IN THE EAST

‘Drinking’ a bone pipe: food for archaeological thought *by Ayşe Dudu Tepe*.....45

The *other* Turkish pipe: the legacy of an Ottoman original, the chibouk  
*by Ben Rapaport*.....51

### MEERSCHAUM PIPES

True or false, in the wake of a legend: the so called ‘pipe of the first meerschaum carver’, Károly Kovács, in the Hungarian National Museum?  
*by Anna Ridovics* .....71

Iconography, morphology and meerschaum: four essays illustrating their nexus  
*by Frank Burla, Hakon Kierulf, Sarunas Peckus and Ben Rapaport* .....83

The victory at Kenyérmező pipe *by Frank Burla* .....83

Norwegian pipe models with acanthus ornamentation  
*by Hakon Kierulf*.....87

The circus cheroot holder: mystery solved! *by Sarunas Peckus* .....90

Canova's 'The Three Graces': from marble to meerschaum by Ben Rapaport .....	92
---	----

## **PIPES FROM THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

Presentation pipes, with particular reference to the 'Queen Alexandra' pipe by Susie White .....	97
The conflict between Goedewaagen and Danco regarding double-walled patented pipes by Ruud Stam and Paul Jung .....	113

## **REVIEWS**

Natascha Mehler: <i>Tonpfeifen in Bayern (c1600-1745)</i> by Ruud Stam.....	119
Jan Van Oostveen and Ruud Stam: <i>Productiecentra van Nederlandse kleipijpen: een overzicht van de stand van zaken</i> by David Higgins.....	119

<b>CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS VOLUME</b> .....	121
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<b>GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS</b> .....	122
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## Editorial

This fourth volume of the Journal of the Académie Internationale de la Pipe has been published at the same time as the third volume. Because of the number and size of the papers derived from the Budapest conference (Hungary in 2009) it was realized that there were too many for a single volume of the journal. As a result it was decided to publish the mainly archaeological contributions on pipes from excavations in Hungary and the neighbouring countries in Volume 3 so that there would be a coherent statement of all of this new evidence in one place. The remaining available Budapest papers which are more wide ranging in scope are published here in Volume 4, together with some material from both the Grasse (France in 2010) and Novi Sad (Serbia in 2011) conference, though the main groups of regionally-based papers from those conferences will appear in Volume 5.

The first three papers, whilst concerned directly with pipes of one sort or another are essentially studies of the phenomenon of tobacco use and smoking in different regions of the world, including Europe, America, Switzerland and Japan. Although the pipes that are used in different places and at different times are of intrinsic interest to the collector and art historian they are also very important in the study of the central role played by tobacco in many societies.

Paul Jahshan's paper, given in Budapest, considers the changing perceptions and representations of smokers and smoking in America, England, France and Hungary at different times. Heege provides a detailed overview of the arrival of tobacco and a smoking culture in Switzerland, together with an account of the sources of the pipes in use and the rather limited evidence for local pipe production. Barnabas Suzuki, in his Novi Sad paper, assesses the role of Dutch traders in the introduction of both tobacco and pipe smoking in Japan and documents the extraordinarily individual development of smoking utensils in that country. There follow two papers on eastern pipes. Ayşe Dudu Tepe discusses the archaeological and documentary evidence for the use of bone pipes by the Bedouin in Arabia. This is followed by a far-ranging, well-read overview by Ben Rapaport of the history of the *chibouk* both from the view point of foreign travellers, the artefacts themselves and their social significance.

The third part of the volume is devoted to papers on meerschaum pipes. In the opening paper Anna Ridovics looks afresh at the claim that the first meerschaum pipes were carved in Hungary by one Károly Kovács and demonstrates the extreme complexity of the evidence for and against it. More important, she introduces a very early meerschaum carving which could be 'thought' to be the 'Kovács pipe', together with two other early carvings from the first part of the eighteenth century. There follows a quartet of papers provided by members of the Academy's Meerschaum Working Group, originally presented at the Grasse conference, on the subject of the iconography

and morphology of the meerschaum pipe. The four case studies show how this raw material provided a wonderful medium for the expression of artistic, cultural and social ideas through a wide range of subject matter. Frank Burla considers the historical background, possible maker and owner of a pipe which commemorates the Transylvanian Battle of Breadfield in 1479 (Kenyérmező in Hungary). Hakon Kierulf looks in detail at the sources of inspiration and execution of acanthus-style decoration on the typical Norwegian pipe models. Sarunas Peckus takes the reader on a detective trail beginning with the purchase of a cheroot holder depicting acrobats who, eventually, are firmly identified as the world famous Belgian *Troupe Lafaille*. Finally, Ben Rapaport explores the influence of Canova's sculpture, 'The Three Graces' created for the Duke of Bedford between 1814 and 1817, on meerschaum carvers. In particular he presents a table pipe and a cheroot holder from the second half of the nineteenth century both of which in different ways, have derived their main inspiration from the Canova sculpture.

The final main section of the journal includes two papers dealing with twentieth-century pipes. In the first Susie White looks at the phenomenon of presentation pipes with particular reference to a briar pipe given to the troops fighting in the Boer War by Queen Alexandra in 1901. She considers the evidence for their production (quite a complex process involving factories in France and London) and distribution to the troops. The final paper written by Paul Jung who is based in America and Ruud Stam from the Netherlands documents a trans-Atlantic dispute between the Danco Corporation of New York and Goedewaagen in the Netherlands about the patenting of double-walled, slip-cast pipes. Both these papers point to the need for pipe studies to tackle the twentieth-century evidence in a serious way.

The volume concludes with reviews of two new books, one by Academician Natascha Mehler on the clay pipes of Bavaria and the other by Jan van Oostveen and Ruud Stam on those of the Netherlands.

In future, too, the Editor of the Journal will be happy to consider for publication any papers within the field of pipe studies that are considered to make a significant contribution to knowledge and that might be expected in the publication of a learned society.

Peter Davey  
Anna Ridovics

# 'Iconography, morphology and meerschaum: four essays illustrating their nexus'

by F. Burla, H. Kierulf,  
S. Peckus and B. Rapaport

## Introduction

by Ben Rapaport

What is iconography? Its origin is Greek, *εἰκών* (eikon), 'image' and *γράφειν* (graphein) 'writing', but it means much, much more! Iconography is best explained and answered in what is a very informative and illuminative book on the subject, *An Introduction to Iconography* (van Straten 1994). However, this monograph is much less about iconography per se, and much more about meerschaum carvings as an art form, so as this essay evolves, the association between iconography and meerschaum will become apparent. There are assorted definitions, interpretations, and concepts of iconography, but there are the common elements to all definitions, interpretations, and concepts, such as works of art, pictures, images, and symbols. Using the Wikipedia definition, in brief:

Iconography is the branch of art history that studies the identification, description, classification, and the interpretation of the content of symbols, themes, *subject matter*, or images (our emphasis).

It is, literally, symbolic forms associated with a subject or theme of a stylized work of art, or pictorial material relating to or illustrating a subject. We happen to like the following definition:

...the study and interpretation of figural representations, individual or symbolic, religious, secular, or mythological and, more broadly, the art of representation by pictures or images. It is pictorial *material* (our emphasis, again) relating to or illustrating a subject, or the imagery or symbolism of a work of art, an artist, or a body of work.

Note that pictorial material is sufficiently generic and broad that it can be *any material*. Therein lies the connection between meerschaum, the material, engaged in the hundreds of thousands of two- and three-dimensional carved pipes and cheroot holders that have been produced throughout time that, as visual arts, literally, span myriad subjects.

Extensive iconographical study did not begin in Europe until the eighteenth century when, as a companion to archaeology, it consisted of the classification of subjects and motifs in ancient monuments, e.g., engravings. Then, it slowly began to apply to the history and classification of Christian images and symbols of all sorts in whatever

medium they happened to be rendered originally or in whatever way they were reproduced for study. With the rise of the systematic investigation of art from prehistoric ages to modern times, it became apparent that each major phase or epoch in which figural representations occur had created and developed an iconography of its own in varying degrees of richness and elaboration. As used today, the term is necessarily qualified to indicate any field of study under discussion, so iconography can take many forms, such as the iconography of Buddhism, Christian art, Cervantes's Don Quixote, the artist Van Dyck, the portraits of British Army officer T.E. Lawrence, Nasca ceramics, advertising, the violin, and a host of other interesting topics deemed worthy of investigation.

Unless an artwork makes visual sense, peeling the layers of meaning in its iconography is pointless. In the study of most art objects produced in a distant era or in a faraway country, knowledge of iconographic shorthand is a useful tool. For example, appreciating the symbolic implications of a finely carved meerschaum pipe can make viewing it more engaging. Iconography can also be related to actions, situations and concepts, so, for example, St. Catherine of Alexandria is traditionally portrayed in the presence of a wheel, a familiar attribute that serves to identify her and, at the same time, signifies a miracle connected with her martyrdom. Some attributes are more difficult to understand, and their obscurity has led scholars to consult other images or literary sources in order to interpret the motif more satisfactorily. Iconography is a way to classify works of art with reference to its subject matter, themes, and symbolism, rather than style. Attaching significance to symbols can help to identify subject matter; for example, viewing a painting in which a specific number of attendees are present at the coronation of Queen Victoria are identified in order to determine the significance of why this particular group and to place this work of art in its proper historical context. Or, something from literature, an apropos quotation from Louis Aragon in his *Le Paysan de Paris* (1980) that is quite relevant to this thesis:

A meerschaum pipe which represented a siren provoked the sudden memory of a prostitute that he once knew on the Rhine (Cohen 1993, 198).

It might have been the siren's looks, her apparel, or how she reposes on the pipe that provoked this memory... the image and its symbolic significance.

Much has been written in several languages about meerschaum as a cottage industry, about the craft of carving, and about the principal carvers and where they plied their trade, but there is very little study on record about the art of meerschaum iconography. This monograph is merely a starting point, an *entrée*, so to speak, into this specific dimension of research. More than 200 years' worth of meerschaum pipe and cheroot holders produced in western and central Europe, England, and the United States represent a cornucopia of iconographic subject matter. By the time craftsmen affiliated with the fledgling industry of meerschaum carvers began to express their

own unique and individual skills creating the utensils of smoke in the early 1800s, thousands of assorted images - sculptures, paintings, architecture, ceremonial, celebratory and historic events, famous personages of the day, battles won and lost, heroes and heroines of mythology, and much more - were relatively familiar themes to these artisans. There were no industry guidelines, design criteria, pattern books, factory catalogues, or instructional notes on what to carve - essentially no rules, no limitations, no boundaries - so applying their individual skills, imagination, inspiration, perspective, and creativity, they duplicated and replicated in meerschaum those images, or interpreted art objects and events as they saw fit, using this soft, white, pliable mineral that was very popular for smoker's utensils from about the mid-eighteenth century until the early 1900s. These artisans often portrayed and thematically executed pipes and holders as they viewed or understood them, and they often found that other carvers in competition had rendered the same motif in either exacting or, sometimes, quite dissimilar fashion, e.g., two expressions from the deft hands of two different carvers. For example, a pipe of the bust of Mephistopheles, the carver influenced after having read Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, or Christopher Marlow's *Faustus*, the other after having attended a performance of Charles Gounod's opera, *Faust*. One could ask: "What does this work of art depict?" or "What is the theme or subject of this work of art?" The answer would be the same. The outward appearance of each, when compared, however, would be different, because each artist's rendering would be different, e.g., discrete nuances or affectations in the face, or the length and curve of the feather in his hat, or the style of his shirt collar; the face, the feather, the collar are symbolic, each interpretation shaped by the social background of each artisan and what each had personally experienced, read or seen about the character prior to undertaking the task of carving the pipe.

The most commonly encountered meerschaum icons, whether from European or American artisans, have been a handful of assorted, elementary, common motifs, some of which are being reproduced today by contemporary Turkish meerschaum carvers: eagle talon and egg, skull/skull in hand, busts of a plain-Jane schoolmarm wearing a hat, a turbaned, bearded Arab, a Nubian man or woman, cherubic children in various poses, and assorted horses, deer, and dogs. These motifs, in our opinion, have no iconographic significance...they were popular icons, and most ateliers catered to the average patron's pedestrian taste. The more intellectually challenging, intricate, complex, detailed, outsized, and ornately carved pipes and cheroot holders are those that bore unique, incised patterns representative of a region, such as intricate scrollwork and the stylized Greek key, or were special pieces as much to preserve as to smoke. This finery was produced 'to order', or commissioned to celebrate an important event or occasion, in order to create a representation of something or someone worthy of perpetuity, however long the pipe or cheroot holder might endure, use and degree of care and preservation notwithstanding.

At a time there was once a school of ivory carvers in Provence, France, specializing solely in carving Christian icons - biblical scenes and personages from the New Testament - and it is our thesis that, quite in parallel, we present a case for a much larger school of meerschaum carvers spread across Europe and the United States, engaging meerschaum in limitless expressions, not just a single motif or theme. The title of a recent book, *The Karen Bronze Drums of Burma: Types, Iconography, Manufacture and Use* (Cooler 1995) says it all, because the contents describe the various stylistic designs and formats of drums produced over time by the several Karen tribes of Burma. Were we four to collaborate on a book on meerschaum utensils for the pipe and cigar smoker, we might adapt the title from Cooler and call ours *Meerschaum Smoking Utensils of Europe and the United States: Types, Iconography, Manufacture and Use!*

The four essays that follow are written by members of the International Academy of the Pipe who are best described as devotees of the antiquarian utensils of smoke, more specifically, antique pipes and cheroot holders in all mediums, with a special interest in those crafted in meerschaum. Each essay is different, each singular in its focus, and each tells its own unique story of a particular piece (or pieces) in their respective collections, or of a piece with which he is familiar. Each author states what he believes to be the meaning or significance that the artist intended, explains why the object was created, and ventures a best guess as to why it was created in this fashion. After a careful reading of each essay, perhaps the reader may arrive at a different conclusion and have a better, more logical answer to this latter question than the respective authors.

### **The Victory at Kenyérmező Pipe**

*by Frank P. Burla*

#### **The pipe bowl described**

The pipe - more precisely, a pipe bowl without its accompanying stem - is a carved block of meerschaum, and is 6 inches (15.2cm) in height and 5-¾ inches (14.6cm) in length. The motif carved on the bowl depicts the commemoration of the victory by the Hungarian army against the Turks in the battle at Transylvanian Kenyérmező (Breadfield), Hungary, in 1479 (Fig. 1).

In the far-left midsection of the bowl are bas-relief-carved horses in a makeshift fenced-in area. The centre midsection shows in bas-relief three military officers in uniform having a discussion, happily saluting each other with upraised hands. At the top centre of the bowl is a scroll inside of which in bas-relief are written the words *Istennek hála mienk a győzedelem*; translated, these words declare "Thanks be to God, the victory is ours" (Fig. 2). To the far right, on the midsection of the bowl an armed

officer is on guard in front of a tent (Fig. 3). On the top of the tent there is a symbol of the famous Hungarian Black Army, a flag with a shield on which is seen the letter M under a crown. Above the shield a bird is sitting. The bird - a raven - is the heraldic symbol of the great Hungarian king, Matthias. At the heel of the tent is written the attribution of the historical place and date: Kenyér/mező



Figure 1: Front view of the Victory at Kenyérmező Pipe.

1479.

The pipe bowl is further inscribed, having in bas-relief on three separate front pedestals the names of the main Hungarian historical personalities in this battle: left pedestal, Kinezi Pál; middle pedestal, MATIAS Corvinus; right pedestal, Bathori I. (Fig. 4).

Under the central pedestal a shield is carved under a seven point crown, a crown of baronial rank, with the monogrammed letters /S J or I (?)/.

Below (Fig. 5), on the silver base of the wind cap is the engraved name Ujfalvi Sándor. There are marks on the base of the silver lid on the bowl: they are the hallmarks

of Old Buda (Óbuda which was merged with Buda and Pest to become Budapest in 1873) with the date, 1825, and the number 13 (representing 13/16 pure silver content) and the stamp of the silversmith, PH Adler (Philip/Fülöp Adler). There is also an unidentified floral silver stamp.

### Inspiration for the carving

The motif on this pipe bowl commemorates the Battle of Breadfield (Kenyérmező). The names of the main Hungarian historical personalities of the battle are carved on the front pedestals of the pipe. Matthias Corvinus, or Matthias I Hunyadi (1443-1490) was the king of Hungary and Croatia (1458-90). He also became King of Bohemia, (1469-1490) and Duke of Austria. He received his surname Corvinus after the raven (*corvus*) on his coat of arms. He was the great Renaissance ruler of the Hungarian Kingdom who organised a powerful centralised country. He raised a strong military force, the first permanent Hungarian mercenary army, the Black Army. At this time Hungary reached its greatest territorial extent (present-day south-eastern Germany to the west, Dalmatia to the south, the Eastern Carpathians to the east, and south-western Poland to the north). Wars against the Ottoman Empire were an important stimulus for the protection of the borders against them. There was a great victory in 1479 when a huge Ottoman army was damaged at Szászváros (now Orăștie, Romania) in the so-called Battle of Breadfield, famous throughout Europe. The Hungarian forces were commanded by Pál Kinizsi and István Báthori. Pál Kinezi, correctly written Pál Kinizsi (1431? - 1494) was a well-known, very strong military leader in the Black Army of King Matthias, Ban of Temes and Captain of all military forces of southern Hungary. István (Stephan) Báthori of Ecsed (1430c-1493) was of high noble birth, Royal Court judge, *Voivode*, or territorial governor, of the Hungarian Crown for Transylvania (1479-1493) and commander of the Transylvanian army.

The Turkish army entered Transylvania on October 9, 1479, near Câlnic and was led by Ali Kodsha and Skender, or Ali Michaloglu and Skander, according to other sources. The probable strength of the Ottoman forces was about 20,000 soldiers, accompanied by some 1,000-2,000 Wallachian infantryman led by Basarab cel Tânăr-Țepeluș. On October the 13th, Kodsha bey pitched his camp at Breadfield, located between Alkenyér (now Șibot, Romania) and Szászváros (now Orăștie, Romania). The Hungarian army of somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 men was led by Pál Kinizsi, István Báthori, Vuk Branković, and Basarab Laiotă cel Bătrân. The Battle of Breadfield took place at a location between Szászváros and Alkenyér. The casualties were high, with several thousand Turks and approximately 1,000 of their Wallachian allies killed. The Hungarians lost approximately 3,000 men in this battle. The few Turks who survived the massacre fled into the mountains where most were killed by the local population. In memory of the victory against the Turks, István Báthori raised a chapel near the village of Becenc (now Aurel Vlaicu earlier Bintini, German Benzendorf, Romania).



*Figure 2: Inscription within a banner at the top centre of the pipe: Istennek hála miénk a Győzedelem*



*Figure 3: Mid-section of the bowl of the Victory at Kenyérmező Pipe with inscription: Kenyér/mező/1479 (see insert).*

There are numerous references to the battles in the Transylvanian region. One of these is a short history of the land and its control entitled *Transylvania, A Short History* (Lasar 1997). Reading Lasar's book and portions of *The Ottomans in Europe* (Woodward 2001), *The Nation's History* (Yolland 1917) and *The Poetry of the Magyars*, (Bowring 1830) provided the knowledge to realize how historically significant this pipe bowl was.

#### **The owner(s) of the pipe**

Under the central pedestal is carved in the meerscham a shield under a seven point crown, a crown of baronial

rank, with the monogrammed letters /S Z(?)/. It could be the monogram of the person who commissioned the pipe or for whom it was commissioned. Later it could have been presented for a subsequent owner, whose name is engraved in the silver mount. Ujfalvi Sándor (1792–1866) was a reform politician, writer, legendary great hunter, and a well-known and passionate individual from this region who stood for the rights of freedom and open land. He was involved in the movement for a new form of animal husbandry.

#### **The master of the pipe?**

Based on this circumstantial evidence and my research,

although limited because of my lack of command of the Hungarian language, I was able to find a few sources of information. These sources indicate that the Philip (Fülöp) Adler workshop in Óbuda probably executed this bowl. This conclusion is based on the following:

- The silver hallmark is Adler PH, 1825, Óbuda;
- The researchers think that Philip Adler's workshop made not only silverwork but was one of the few master pipe-carving entities operating in the area at the time;
- Philip (Fülöp) Adler was also attached to Hungarian traditions, such as battle scenes for freedom, one in particular that the company portrayed on an earlier pipe carved in 1823 known as the Bercsényi Pipe (Levárdy 1994, 128-130).



**Figure 4:** Names on the three front pedestals of the Victory at Kenyérmező Pipe: (left) Kinezi Pal, (centre) MATIAS Corvinus, (right) Bathori I

The pipe bowl was sold by an Eastern European family to a dealer, and the dealer was told that this meerschaum pipe bowl, along with other items the family was selling, were historic family heirlooms from the 1800s. The first American appearance of this rare meerschaum pipe bowl in recent years was at a public exhibition, *Meerschaum Masterpieces*, sponsored by the then Museum of Tobacco Art and History, Nashville, Tennessee in 1994 (Museum of Tobacco Art and History, 1990, 12-13, Fig 75). This bowl is in my personal collection.



**Figure 5:** Engraving on the base of the wind cap: Ujfalvi Sándor.

#### Acknowledgement

I wish to thank Anna Ridovics of the Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, for her assistance in this research endeavour. Without her contribution, especially for translation and for her intimate knowledge of Hungarian history, my undertaking would have been a much more daunting and intellectually challenging effort.

References such as encyclopaedias, partially translated articles, and a wide variety of information on the Internet, e.g., Wikipedia, were used in the preparation of this essay.

#### Norwegian pipe models with acanthus ornamentation by Hakon Kierulf

This article does not focus on a particular antique meerschaum pipe, but on meerschaum pipe bowls in the typical Norwegian style decorated with acanthus ornamentation. All the photographs are by the author.

#### The Norwegian pipe model

The true origin of a specific pipe model that is considered typically Norwegian will never be fully known, but its design and configuration are supposedly from around the turn of the eighteenth century (Pritchett 1890, 25). It is a fairly simple configuration cut from a flat, narrow block without any distinctive separation between the bowl and the shank (Fig. 6). Viewed from the front or from above, it has straight or nearly straight, parallel sides. Viewed from either side, it appears quadrangular, but rather than four similarly proportioned angles, the lower side is most often curved. The sides are even or almost even, as are the ends. The upper ends are sharp-edged, each end having a hole,

the nearest for insertion of a pipe stem, the farthest being the tobacco bowl. The lower edges are usually graded or have softer forms. Originally, this particular pipe was made of wood, usually birch, much later of briar and, to a certain extent, of block and imitation meerschaum. The most common variety was undecorated, but some were, and some even had silver mounts.



**Figure 6:** Side view of a typical, plain, meerschaum pipe bowl in typical Norwegian form; the identity of the 'AR' of Christiania (Oslo) is not known.

### The acanthus décor

The acanthus motif derives from the Mediterranean vegetable family, *Acanthus*. Through the ages, two species, *Acanthus spinosus* and *Acanthus mollis* (Fig. 7), with their large, floppy leaves and prominent veins, have been used as ornamental design. The Greeks used this motif c500-600 years B.C.; the Romans adopted it at the time of Emperor Augustus (63 B.C.–14 A.C.), and since that era it has been part of European art history.



**Figure 7:** *Acanthus mollis*.

The time from when the acanthus, as a carved ornament, was used in Norway lies in a hazy mist, as does the origin of much earlier designs. The existence of primitively carved tendrils is documented as far back as 800 B.C. (Magerøy, 1983, 43, 148–222). Through time, influenced by the European Renaissance in the sixteenth century,

artists employed simple acanthus ornamental décor in church interiors and, to some extent, on profane furniture and everyday objects. But it was not until the Baroque trend arrived in Norway in the seventeenth century that the acanthus became a popular and widespread design applied in woodcarving, in ironwork, in the traditional Norwegian rose painting of house interiors or on furniture, and on assorted utensils. From then on it spread and became popular throughout the country. Although allowance for woodcarving was reserved for members of the town guilds, it was, nevertheless, also employed by district locals. In Norway, woodcarving is divided into three main schools: *Karveskurd* (cut carving), e.g., patterns with triangular cuts; *Flatskurd* (relief carving with an almost even surface); and *Krillskurd* (deep, three-dimensional, plastic carving). Cut carving was also used for pipe making, but in the context of acanthus is of no interest, whereas the other two are. Districts, counties and valleys came to adopt and develop different carving styles. *Flatskurd* was common in the county of Telemark, while *Krillskurd*, especially in the nineteenth century, dominated in Gudbrandsdalen, because tradesmen in the towns of Trondhjem and Christiania - the former name of Oslo - through advertisements, encouraged local farmers to carve first-class souvenirs, such as pipe bowls, for the tourist trade. Merchants established workshops in which competent woodcarvers from the districts were engaged; moreover, carving schools were established to fulfil this purpose (Sveen 2004, 18–19, 43, 49, 64, 96).

### Early Norwegian tobacco pipes

The first written documentation of the use of tobacco in Norway, one of the poorest countries in Europe, prior to and in the beginning of the twentieth century, stems from a criminal case in 1612 in the town of Bergen (Gierløff 1928, 57). Due to the country's seafaring traditions and contact with England and Holland, tobacco, pipe smoking and clay pipes probably arrived much earlier from the west. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, meerschaum pipes exhibiting typical German models - with long stems and flexible mouthpieces - became fairly common among the more wealthy families. Tobacco was expensive, yet it was smoked at all levels of society, but meerschaum pipes never became commodities for ordinary people. Norway had a long tradition of making everyday utensils in wood; hence, wooden copies of imported meerschaum pipes were produced, as well as the earlier-mentioned Norwegian model.

### Meerschaum pipe makers of Norway

Not only did Norway have an established tradition of using wood as a popular material, but it also had a tradition for embellishing wooden utensils with exquisitely carved designs. Meerschaum pipes were imported in the beginning, but local wood-turners and wood-carvers, whose names are now long forgotten, started making pipe bowls in birch. Some of these pipe makers decorated their pipes with relief-carved motifs or various traditional designs, and the acanthus was one of the very popular designs.

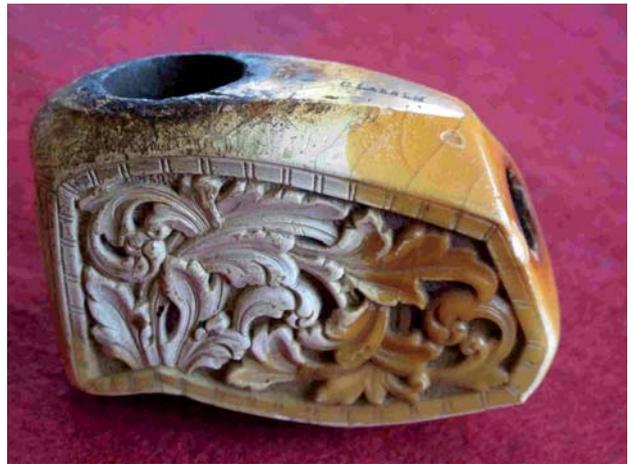
Pipe production on a larger scale did not occur in Norway until the wood turner and carver Gudbrand Larsen (1815–1902) from the municipality of Ringsaker in Hedemark County started his pipe factory in the small town of Lillehammer in 1844. Sometime earlier, he had visited Eskesehir, Turkey and established contact with raw meerschaum exporters. This was his incentive to make meerschaum pipes. As a wood-carver, Larsen knew the acanthus design very well, as did his carver-employees, among whom Jehans Odde (1836–1899), August Larsen, Gudbrand's son (1856–1914), and Lars Prestmoen (1871–1957) are the most famous. They were exceptionally competent carvers of miniature objects who, from time to time, carved extraordinary and beautiful motifs on the pipes, but their production was principally focused on pipes meant for smoking, not as gifts for special occasions. Quite a number of the pipes from their hands exhibited some degree of decoration, and the acanthus was the most significant. These carvers, working in G. Larsen's factory never signed their pipes. The pipes bore only the stamped factory name. From 1844 onwards, this Lillehammer factory dominated the Norwegian pipe-making market, but supposedly some local, independent carvers also carved meerschaum pipes before as well as after the factory was established.

#### Acanthus-ornamented meerschaum pipes of the Norwegian model

Meerschaum pipes, the bigger the better and, when ornamented and silver-mounted, yet better, symbolized the status of their owners. Tobacco, meerschaum and silver demonstrated that the owner was a wealthy man. Neither of the two pipes shown in this article is large, but both are representative of the Norwegian ornamented model in meerschaum.

Pure meerschaum derives its eventual colour from tobacco smoke, as is shown in the illustration (Fig. 8), the first example of these pipe bowls. It measures 6.6cm in length, 5.1cm in height, and 3cm in breadth. Its silhouette, somewhat unusual for the Norwegian model, is almost pentagonal, and its top edges are graded. Otherwise, it has the typical features of the model. It is decorated on the sides, front and bottom with acanthus leaves, and there is also a flower on the underside. The carving is done artistically with deep cuts, giving the acanthus an animated look typical of *Krillskurd*, the Gudbrandsdal acanthus style. It has a few surface cracks, and it has been smoked, although not long enough to change its colour uniformly and completely. Rather small in size, and of the simple Norwegian model, yet of meerschaum and exhibiting a relative high standard of carving, the pipe probably belonged to a man of some means. It is stamped 'G. Larsen' and it dates from about the second half of the nineteenth century.

The ornamentation on the silver-mounted pipe bowl (Fig. 9) is also acanthus, but more *Flatskurd*-like, i.e., Telemark acanthus. Its measurements are 6.7cm in height, 8.2cm in length, and 3.2cm. in breadth. It has some minor cracks,



*Figure 8: Unusual, almost pentagonal, Norwegian meerschaum model with acanthus decoration in krillskurd.*



*Figure 9: Silver-mounted Norwegian meerschaum pipe model with acanthus leaf decoration in flatskurd.*

has not taken on any colour, and the meerschaum quality is questionable, i.e., whether it is block or pressed meerschaum. Its silver mountings bear no incised stamp or maker's mark. This bowl, however, is also stamped 'G. Larsen' which must be taken as a grant for the quality of the silver. The mark S-830 is, per the Norwegian Silver Act of 1891, a required stamp on all silverware produced for sale. Nothing precise can be said regarding dating. It was most probably produced in the last half of the nineteenth century, and without any silver stamps, it is possible that it was made before 1891, although it does not have the older, required silver stamp. Due to its origin, the pipe material, silver and carving, this pipe bowl was obviously bought and smoked by a man of a certain high standard of society.

Both pipes have acanthus ornaments but of slightly different styles although carved at the same factory in Lillehammer, the gateway to the Gudbrandsdalen valley where the *Krillskurd* style was dominant. The fact that *Flatskurd* carving was employed at G. Larsen shows that pipes were carved at the factory without any affiliation to

local traditions, but according to the prospective buyer's taste and purse. Although the two styles in question originated in different areas, both were popular and also used by local unnamed pipe carvers elsewhere in Norway, depending on their manner and carving competence.

### The circus cheroot holder: mystery solved!

by Dr. Sarunas 'Sharkey' Peckus

The evolution of this essay began several years ago when I purchased a meerschaum cheroot holder on eBay. The motif was four circus acrobats executing an intricate routine. The fitted case bears the inscription 'Emanuel Czapek, Praha - Prikopy 35, Prag - Graben 35', one of the most prestigious and respected nineteenth century meerschaum carvers of the region, south-eastern Europe (Fig. 10). Specifically, as the carving indicates in this complex routine, a lady acrobat is precariously positioned while holding up three male acrobats and their paraphernalia: a table and a variety of barbells. At the base of the holder is the inscription: 'TROUPE LAFAILLE'. What this particular act signified, and who this troupe was piqued my interest and curiosity, and I began an investigation of sources available to me. To my excitement, Google produced the first clue, indicating that this group was a member of the [P.T.] Barnum and [James Anthony] Bailey, 'The Greatest Show on Earth'; since 1907, Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey was listed under 'performers and acts with circuses' (*Billboard*, July 16, 1910). Hence, this was proof that this group was real, not a motif imagined or invented by the carver, and that Troupe Lafaille were professional performers affiliated with this circus renowned for its high-flying trapeze acts. As a collector and at that time, I was content with this knowledge, having gained this much information for my own purpose. Were someone to ask about it then, I could offer this titbit in response.

A number of years passed without follow-on research. However, the thought of mining this further kept recurring now and then. There just had to be more to this story, and somewhere out there in the ether I would find it, if I persisted and persevered, because the Internet was burgeoning with all sorts of information and data in tsunami-like fashion. The impetus for a renewed attempt to research the background of this cheroot holder and, perhaps, to discover the association between Czapek, a meerschaum craftsman in Prague and a (determined later) Belgian circus troupe, an intriguing linkage - if such existed - came in October 2009 with the decision by the International Academy of the Pipe's Meerschaum Working Group to write a collaborative monograph on iconography and meerschaum.

The first Google search in late 2009 resulted in a phenomenal find, a black and white postcard for sale illustrating, in the exacting detail as that depicted on the holder, this acrobatic group doing its routine (Fig. 11). The title on the postcard in German read 'Truppe Lafaille, Original, Die Besten Olympische Spiele', translated



Figure 10: Meerschaum cheroot holder showing an acrobatic routine involving three male and one female acrobat.

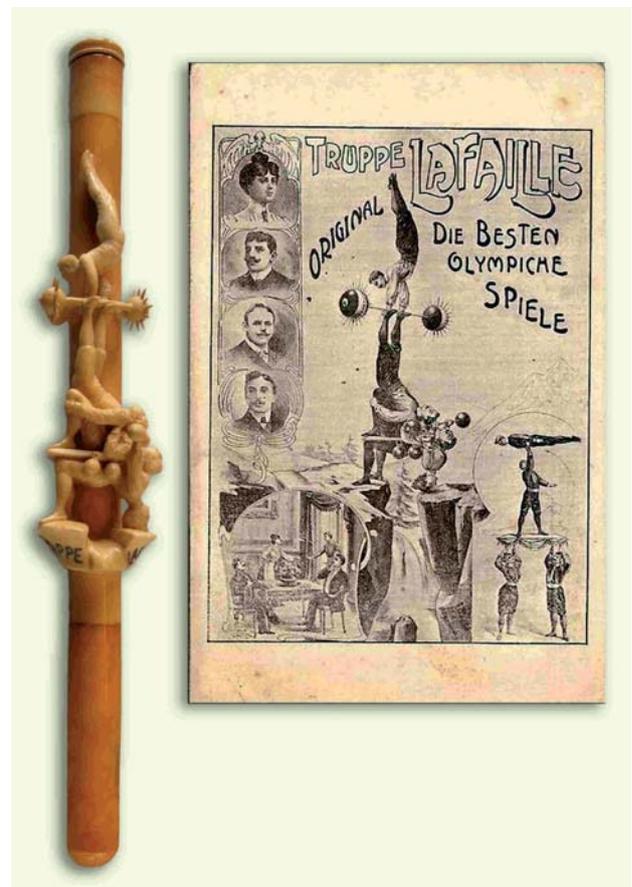


Figure 11: Black and white German postcard (right) showing the Lafaille troupe in the same acrobatic position as the cheroot holder (left).

literally, 'Troupe Lafaille, Original, The Best Olympic Games'. In addition, the postcard included the portraits of these very four artists. Without question, this was, indeed, at least at that moment, a great find, like encountering the proverbial needle in the research haystack!

Further searches offered a number of leads that did not exist at the time of my first attempt. I then found a postcard in English with the title 'Troupe Lafaille, Continental Acrobatic Sketch, Manager: J. Lafaille' (Fig. 12) without additional details, but this second postcard made my day nonetheless.

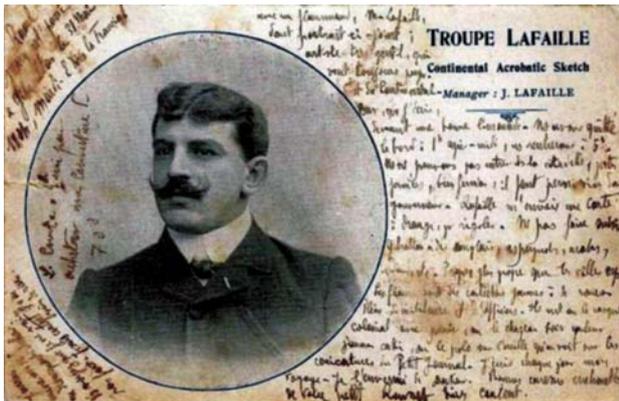


Figure 12: Black and white English postcard including a photograph of the troop manager J. Lafaille.

Next I found a short notice in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, August 2, 1908:

Vier Mann hoch und auf eine zwei Meter hohen Treppe hinauf; atemlos folgt man der Menschen pyramide. Auf lebendem Piedestal - arbeitet mit erstaunlicher Kraft die Truppe Lafaille.

This, translated literally, is:

One observes breathlessly a two-meter high pyramid of four individuals. With amazing power this human pedestal, the Troupe Lafaille is performing their act.

Following this came a very pleasant surprise, a black and white photograph of the entire troupe accompanied by a young Belgian acrobat in the circus archives of the Andre De Poorter division of the Museum of East Flanders, Gent, Belgium (Fig. 13). This mystery was being solved, piece-by-piece, and I sensed that with all this new, additional information in hand, I could craft a story from what I had now learned that would be stimulating reading to any inquisitive individual interested in either circus history or meerschaum iconography.

Then, in contact with the University of Illinois, it kindly provided me with two Barnum and Bailey programmes,

one for 1909 and one for 1910, each with the following notation:

Another new and novel act of strength. Numerous feats entirely new to America, concluding, Mlle. La Faille forms a bridge and alone supports the entire troupe and paraphernalia, Belgium's greatest artists, The Lafaille Troupe (Fig. 14).



Figure 13: Black and white photograph of the entire troupe accompanied by a young Belgian acrobat in the archives of the Museum of East Flanders, Gent.

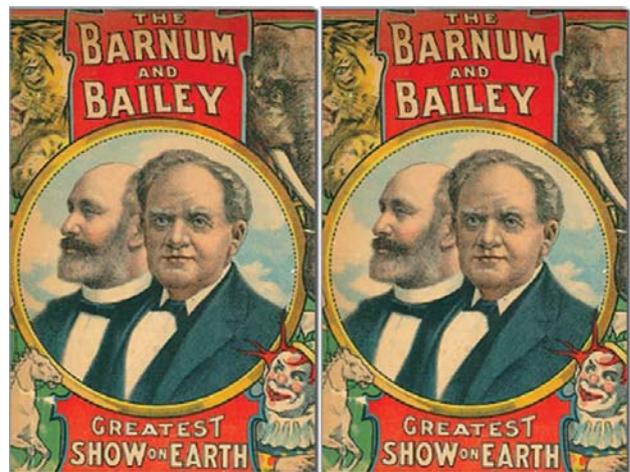


Figure 14: 1909 and 1910 programmes for 'THE BARNUM AND BAILEY GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH'.

These two programs conclusively establish the fact that these Belgian artists were at the peak of their career and had earned a reputation of having the highest degree of artistic endeavour and strength.

The culmination of my research was a colour poster that the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida, sent to me (Fig. 15). The greatest pleasure in owning this poster is seeing the troupe, centre stage, performing its signature routine just as it appears on the holder and on the first postcard. The poster bears the inscription:

The Barnum & Bailey, Greatest Show on Earth.  
New Foreign Feature Acts Now Seen For The First  
Time in America

...and it is dated 1909.

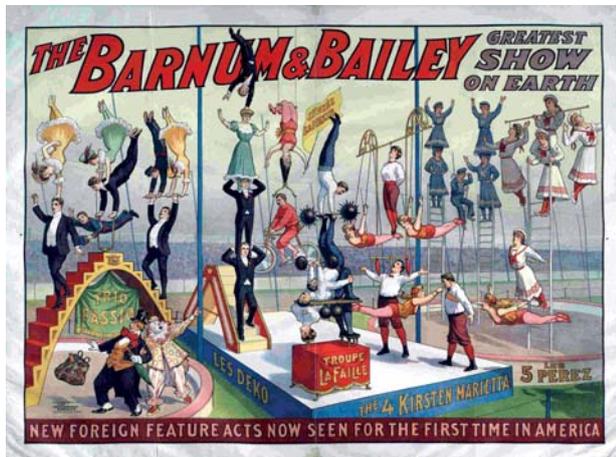


Figure 15: 1909 poster for Barnum and Bailey circus showing the Troupe La Faille in the centre.

I am now at peace. My quest for information at this juncture is adequately sated. I may never learn the connection between Czapek and Lafaille, but I confidently know who this troupe was and why it received so much international attention. Given the burgeoning expansion of the Internet, there is no doubt that more data can be found, but for the purpose of this intellectual exercise, what I have uncovered is ample and sufficient. I may undertake a third investigation at some later date, but at this moment, I bask in the light of discovery, because what I have discovered, learned and described herein is not (meerschaum) art *imitating* life, but meerschaum art *duplicating* life or, in this instance, lives.

There are a number of immediate questions that can be asked. Here are some that come to mind. Why was the holder carved? Was it a commemorative piece? If so, what was the occasion or event? Was it commissioned and, if so, by whom? Why a carver in Prague, when many in Belgium at the very same time were as proficient in producing finely executed meerschaum pipes and holders? Did everyone in the troupe have one?

I have to believe that by now all the members of this troupe have assumed their rightful place in the great acrobatic circus tent above. Where are they buried, and might their graves be appropriately marked for posterity as one of the greatest acrobatic teams ever may, one day, using advanced search techniques, be known or, more likely, may never be known. Anything is possible, and it is my sincere hope that some future reader of this essay will have the intellectual wherewithal to assume the mantle, the challenge, and the curiosity to take this next step. The iconographic relationship between the holder and its history has begun, but it should not end here.

## Canova's 'The Three Graces': from marble to meerschaum

by Ben Rapaport

After more than a century of prim cover-ups, literal and metaphorical, of the sexual content of the greatest nudes in art, experts have been waking up to the erotic, even pornographic, potential. As Blake Gopnik wrote in 'In Art We Lust' (*The Washington Post*, November 8, 2009):

I think it essential that we understand them as objects in the context of men wanting to look at naked women.

Today's art historians don't believe that all the many masterpiece works of art with a capacity to titillate detract from the works' importance or sophistication. Nudes were depicted in sculpture and vase paintings by the ancient Greeks, in Roman wall paintings at Pompeii, Botticelli's allegorical painting, 'Springtime', Titan's 'Venus With a Mirror', Goya's 'Nude Maja', Courbet's 'Origin of the World', and Canova's 'The Three Graces', just a few examples of this art genre that could be called lusty aesthetics.

### Significance of the number three

To the Chinese, three is a perfect number; to the Mayan, the sacred number of woman; Egyptians saw it as the number of the cosmos; to the Japanese, it is three treasures: truth/courage/compassion. In Christianity, the Trinity and concepts such as body/mind/spirit, refer to the makeup of a human being. We have been encouraged to live and act in faith/hope/charity. The combination of thought, word, and deed is the sum of the capability of humans. As Paul Fussell claims:

In early Christianity the enemies are three: the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, just as the virtues are three: Faith, Hope, and Charity. And in adjacent mythologies there are three Furies, three Graces, and three Harpies, Norns, or Weird Sisters (Fussell 1975, 128).

### The artist

Antonio Canova was born in Italy in 1757, the son of a stonemason. When his mother remarried in 1762 after his father's death, he was sent to live with his grandfather, also a stonemason and sculptor. His talents recognized, he was apprenticed to the sculptor Giuseppe Bernardi and moved to Venice. By the time he was 18, he had opened his first studio, and in 1780 he moved to Rome. His style comes from the close study and understanding of ancient Roman sculptors, and there is a consistent theme of Greek and Roman mythology in all his sculptures. Canova is considered the quintessential sculptor and in all respects, until perhaps the maturity of Rodin, he was the role model for all aspiring sculptors.

## The sculpture

Artists throughout the ages have found 'The Three Graces' an appealing subject. They were depicted in Greek sculpture and vase paintings, in Roman wall paintings at Pompeii, in later, allegorical paintings, and in the marble statue of Canova. Their prominence in the world of art is somewhat surprising, because their role in mythology was not great. Canova sculpted more than a dozen figural groups in marble and cast-plaster, but none of equivalent beauty of 'The Three Graces' - considered the most expensive sculpture in the world - frequently depicted as Rubenesque-looking, anatomically correct, naked sisters with their hands on each other's shoulders, the two outer figures looking one way, and the middle one looking the other; it stands approximately five feet, four inches in height. The Duke of Bedford commissioned this sculpture for Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire, England, after he saw a previous version commissioned by the Empress Josephine. Finished sometime between 1814 and 1817, it arrived at the Abbey in 1819 where it was surrounded by other neo-classical sculptures for nearly two centuries (Fig. 16).

Frederick, Earl of Carlisle heaped praise on the sculpture in his paean, 'To The Duke of Bedford on His Group of the Three Graces':

Tis well in stone to have three Graces,  
With lovely limbs, and lovely faces;  
But better far, and not in stone,  
To have the Three combined in One (Howard 1820,  
60).

Who were these three girls? They were the daughters of the god Zeus and the nymph Eurynome, three sister goddesses who attended Venus, the goddess of love. They were an ancient symbol of liberality: Aglaia (Splendour, or Elegance), who gave away; Euphrosyne (Mirth), the sister who received; and Thalia, (Good Cheer, or Youth and Beauty), who gave back. In Greek mythology, they are the goddesses of joy, charm, and beauty. They presided over banquets, dances, and all other pleasurable social events, and brought joy and goodwill to both gods and mortals. They were the special attendants of the divinities of love, Aphrodite and Eros, and together with companions, the Muses, they sang to the gods on Mount Olympus, and danced to beautiful music that the god Apollo made upon his lyre. In some legends Aglaia was wed to Hephaestus, the craftsman among the gods. They were believed to endow artists and poets with the ability to create beautiful works of art. They were almost always together as a kind of triple embodiment of grace and beauty. In art they are usually represented as lithe young maidens, dancing in a circle, a popular subject for artists of all kinds around the world. Standing close together, the only covering they wear is a delicately placed drape. They are traditionally shown with one sister in the middle facing backwards, but Canova has his beauties all facing the same way, leaning in towards each other. Although veiled for modesty, one can admire how lifelike Canova's white marble statue is,

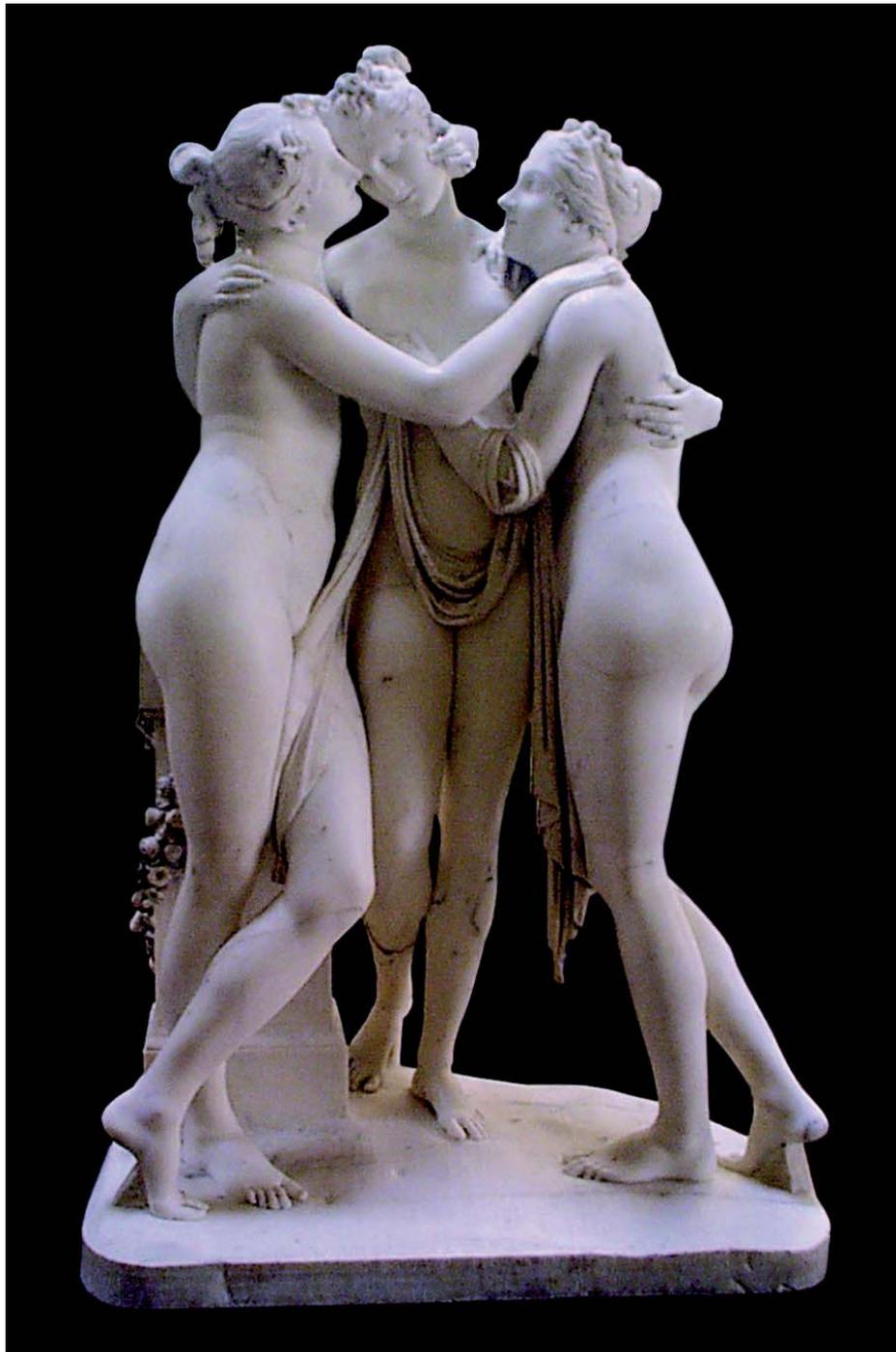
the freedom in the arms, the delicacy in the hands, the elegance of their coiffures, and the affectionate manner in which these three entwine; lovingly caressing the others, each sister is serene and peaceful, if somewhat erotic.

## Expressions in art and literature

Canova's model has been replicated many times on canvas and in etchings. Perhaps the earliest discovered is 'The Three Graces', a fresco by an unknown Roman artist, 79 A.D., found at Pompeii; Sir Peter Paul Rubens, 'The Three Graces'; George Frederick Watts, 'The Three Graces'; Jacques Louis David, 'Mars Disarmed by Venus and The Three Graces'; Lucas Cranach the Elder, 'The Three Graces'; Sandro Botticelli; Jacopo Carucci; 'The Three Graces' by John Singer Sargent; and many others. There are also expressions by three contemporary artists, Michael Parkes, Gary Kaemmer, and Linda Apple. And that's not everything painted, sculpted, etched, chiselled, and carved of this subject. So famous was this sculpture that several books have been written about it and Canova, as well as a few reprises in other mediums, among them, Edward Granville, *The Three Graces. A Comedy in One Act* (1889); Gilbert Abbott à Beckett, *The Three Graces*, a classical and comical, musical and mythological burlesque in two acts (1853); The Duchess (pseudo.), *The Three Graces* (1895), and *The Three Graces*, a 1988 Russian opera-parody composed by Vladimir Tarnopolsky. No doubt, there is much more that I have not cited, so is it any surprise, then, with all the interest, attention, and notoriety that Canova's sculpture had received, someone decided to carve its likeness in meerschaum?

## Replicate art in meerschaum

Even in the nineteenth century, an early stage of globalization was operative in a regional sense. Think of it: Greece, Rome, Rubens (Flemish), Canova (Italian), all having a slight degree of connection with the sculpture, ample evidence that communications of a limited kind travelled in those days. And anyone who might have given thought to carving a meerschaum pipe or a cheroot holder in the sculpture's likeness would have been a nineteenth century craftsman from Austria, Germany, or France; from about 1850 to 1925, these three countries had the most skilled carvers with agile hands and an eye for art. Canova's sculpture was not only a challenge, but also an inspiration, to reproduce it in miniature, given an appropriate amount of raw material and the time to execute it. Who these unsung artisans were, how many might have undertaken the challenge, how many variant configurations might have been produced; all these questions remain a mystery never to be solved. A few carvers must have admired the sculpture sufficiently enough; after all, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. It is unfortunate that everyone can associate 'The Three Graces' with Canova, but without a clue of any kind, it is impossible to determine who might have carved the two meerschaum expressions illustrated in this article. I would like to believe that many other likenesses were produced, and that those others are still in existence somewhere in the world in private collections or in museum vaults. The



**Figure 16:** Canova's sculpture of the three graces commissioned by the Duke of Bedford, carved between 1814 and 1817.

first image is the property of a private American collector, a striking interpretation of 'The Three Graces' as a table pipe standing 31.5 inches in height including the pedestal, supposedly produced by the Ludwig Hartmann Company, Vienna, for the 1873 *Weltausstellung* (World's Fair) in that city (Fig. 17). To create a functioning pipe, a few modifications and adaptations were required, and it is also evident that the artist used his discretion to make a few artistic changes, but the resemblance is unquestionable. Discounting the wood pedestal, these changes are readily apparent: the young women have been separated, the body drapes have been removed, and their arms uplifted to

support a tray and a pitcher forming the pipe bowl. Added to this scene is a winged putto at the base, and a bird and a rose atop the underside of the tray.

The second expression, a cheroot holder, is considered to be a 'one-off' version, a variant, or The Three Graces updated for the genteel Victorian era. This 7-inch cheroot holder, made in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Fig. 18), is also the property of an American collector. Here the three young women are transformed from scantily-clad nudes to prim and proper young ladies believed to be The Three Virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, one helmeted and



*Figure 17: Meerschaum table pipe depicting the 'Three Graces', c1873.*



*Figure 18: 'Three Graces' meerschaum cheroot holder, second half of the nineteenth century.*

one with a cornucopia; on the shank, below and in front are foliate scrolls; there is an amber mouthpiece and an amber insert in the silver wind cover. Just like Canova's work, the products of these two unidentified meerschaum master-carvers are remarkable for their purity, beauty, simplicity and execution.

Today, there are porcelain, bronze, cold-cast marble, stone, and resin figurine-size replicas of the Three Graces for sale, and even tempera on paper of them dancing, but on reflection, other than Canova's rendition in marble, and these two relatively similar artefacts in meerschaum - there may be yet more to be discovered - there are too few three-dimensional versions in other mediums that illuminate the beauty and finesse of his original in marble. That level of detail is not lost on the cheroot holder and, more specifically, the table pipe. In particular, the table pipe exhibits the affinity of the artist (or artists), an excellent example of handcraftsmanship in one medium adapted to and transformed into another medium.

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