

A Knole Settee upholstered in velvet with inset 17th century, Brussels tapestry panels. From the Collection of the 1st Viscount Cowdray, Cowdray Park, Sussex, supplied by Lengyon & Co circa 1910

Sold



REF: 10955

Height: 119 cm (46.9")

Width: 185.5 cm (73")

Depth: 95 cm (37.4")

Description

The long back tapestry panel on the back is finely woven with a central cartouche with stylised fruit and leaves and putti either side. The two panels on the sides are finely woven with putti. The panel on the front is woven with fruits and flowers echoing the back panel. The tapestries are woven in shades of blue, green, brown, beige and yellow. They have been cleaned and conserved. The velvet upholstery has been replaced. The brass castors are original.

Height 119 cm., 47 in. , Length 185.5 cm., 73 in, Depth 95 cm. 27 ½ in.

This is a 19th century interpretation of the infamous, sumptuously, upholstered, 17th century, couch with hinged arm rests, found at Knole Park, Sevenoaks, Kent, the ancestral seat of the Sackvilles. The original couch served the dual purpose of bed and settee, and is one of the earliest examples of English, upholstered, seat furniture. This is a particularly fine example, with an exceptional provenance.

During the late-16th/early 17th century a new form of day-bed was introduced to match the contemporary upholstered 'X' chairs and stools. They were padded and upholstered throughout and the ends were let down on a toothed steel ratchet to enable the occupant to repose at full length. They were generally destroyed when the coverings had worn out at the woodwork was of little value. One survives at Knole Park, illustrated above.

Similar couches were plentiful in France under Louis XIII and can be seen in Abraham Bosse's engravings of domestic interiors but they were only found at Court and the houses of great noblemen in this country. When the contents of the Royal Palaces were dispersed after Charles I's execution a number of couches were included in the sale.

The Venetian, silk damask is in the most prized and expensive colour of the late-17th century, 'blue', brocaded with gold thread. Until the invention of Prussian Blue in the first decade of the 18th Century, a very good fast blue dye could only be made from lapis lazuli, which was extremely expensive. The colour of the silk changes with the intensity of light and appears peacock green in very little light similar to the image below. I can provide a sample of the silk to illustrate this.

FRANCIS LENYON, LENYON & CO, LENYON & MORANT

Born in England in 1877, Lenygon was trained as a cabinetmaker and studied at the South Kensington Museum in London. By 1900, he found work with Art Workshops, Ltd., and soon after with Charles Duveen, son of Sir Joseph Duveen. Employed by C.J. Charles for several years, Lenygon became well-known as cabinetmaker to England's aristocracy. He opened his own firm, Lenygon & Co., in 1904, and in 1912 merged with Morant & Co., to become Lenygon & Morant, holding royal warrants under four successive British kings.

In 1910, Lenygon made his first visit to the United States to supervise the interior decoration of Whitlaw Reid, and soon opened a New York branch of his firm. As in England, Lenygon's American clients were

wealthy and sophisticated and relied on Lenygon to furnish authentic and reproduction interiors in period styles. In the 1930s, Lenygon was hired by Nelson Rockefeller to serve as a major consultant to t...