

sein Exportgeschäft jedoch große finanzielle Aufwendungen beanspruchte, musste Cox seinen Großhandel weitgehend schliessen und hielt in den Jahren 1765, 1772 und 1773 eine ganze Zahl von Lagerverkäufen ab. Das Angebot dabei umfasste sowohl Arbeitsmaterialien wie auch fertige Waren wie Uhren, Schnupftabakdosen und Spielzeuge; offeriert wurden außerdem viele Wertartikel für den lokalen und den Exportmarkt. Durch diese Abverkäufe sowie die, die abgehalten wurden nachdem Cox 1778 Bankrott gegangen war, ergaben sich sicherlich viele Gelegenheiten für fremde Juweliere, unvollendete Arbeiten von Cox fertig zu stellen. Dies könnte auch eine Erklärung dafür sein, dass die Achatpaneele des vorliegenden Exemplars nicht ganz denen anderer von Cox geschaffenen Kabinette gleichen.

A very fine and rare miniature cabinet for the Chinese market, with inset clock (at some stage replaced with later model clockwork), original key with agate decoration

Case: agate, all sides with 20k gold embossed rococo mountings. The base is in the form of an 18th century table, on cloven hooves with acanthus, volute and rocaille fittings, key drawer. Cabinet on volute feet, with double doors and rounded edges; figural gold mountings: on the left door Erato the lovely, the muse of lyric and erotic poetry with the kithara; on the right door Diana, goddess of the hunt with bow and arrow. Four corners with urn filials. Top part with lavish volute ornamentation, clock and urn filial. Inside the cabinet are two lavishly decorated corner units and a hook. Back side with hinged protective cover with engraved foliate scrolls and crowned coat of arms (leaping stag and cartwheel). **Dial:** enamel, radial Roman numerals, Louis XVI hands. **Movm.:** full plate movement, keywind, gilt, applied ornamentation, chain/fusée, verge escapement, three-arm brass balance, very fine floral engraving, pierced balance cock.

Patry & Chaudoir were watchmakers recorded in Geneva from circa 1791-1795.

Cox's pieces follow a style that allows some unsigned work to be attributed to him with far more certainty than can be done with some of the more exotic automaton creations. Cox's nécessaires and his jewellery boxes are typically characterised by quasi-symmetric gold rococo scrollwork over fine agate panels. He rarely used either animate or human figures in the scrollwork itself, although he did use animal and mythical figures in the caryatids and pedestals of his pieces. This rococo scrollwork style is of course not unique to James Cox, so some discretion is needed in attributions to his "workshop", but several anonymous pieces seem to simply "announce" by their style that they are by James Cox. It is important to understand that, as Cox did not make these articles himself, but was rather the entrepreneur who commissioned them from selected workshops, these similarities in style represent on the one hand Cox's own view of what he liked and thought he could sell, and on the other the artistic inclinations and capabilities of the workshop artisans that he used.

Source: English Clocks for the Eastern markets by Ian White, Witney, Oxford 2012, p. 165.

Like the piece we have here, the one held by the Walters Museum is fitted with a watch that was not created by Cox. There are a number of cabinets that match Cox's individual style but have watches by other makers; the timepieces could of course be replacements carried out at a later point in time, however, there could be another explanation. Cox was originally a wholesaler who supplied other jewellers and retailers with gemstones and other materials and even after he turned to producing the large musical and automaton clocks for the Eastern and other export markets in 1763, he attempted to keep his wholesale business going, so he might have had to start spreading out some of his work to be completed by other workshops. As his export trade required large financial commitments, Cox was forced to close down most of his wholesale trade and held a number of stock sales in 1765, 1772 and 1773. The range of articles offered at these sales included working materials as well as finished pieces such as watches, snuff boxes and toys; also on sale were large numbers of valuable articles for local and foreign trade. These sales and others that were held after Cox was declared bankrupt in 1778 certainly paved the way for other jewellers to complete some of Cox's unfinished pieces. This could be an explanation for the fact that the agate panels on the cabinet we have here are not typical of those we have seen on other cabinets produced by Cox.

36321 G/C: 2, 23 Z/D: 2, 22, 23 W/M: 2, 22, 30, 41
 200.000 - 300.000 EUR 256.000 - 384.000 USD
 2.000.000 - 3.000.000 HKD

