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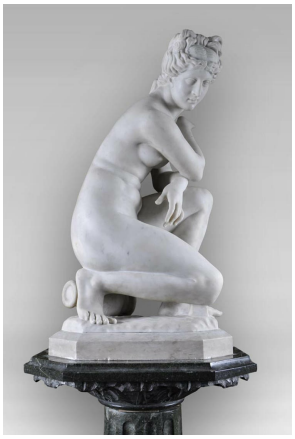
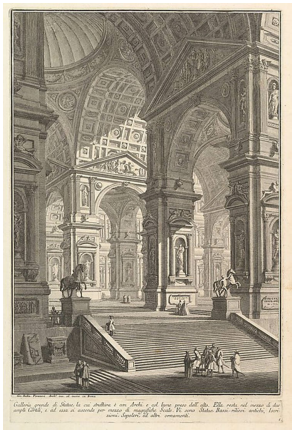
Arthur or James Tibbets WILLMORE, Lord George BYRON contemplating the Colosseum in Rome, Bibliotheque des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, France.

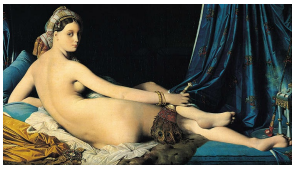


"Crouching Aphrodite", marble statue of the Grand Tour after the Greek original, 19th century, Carrara marble. (Ref. No. 19145)



Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), Large sculpture gallery built on arches and lit from above, Architecture and Perspectives (Part One), ca. 1750, Etching, Met Museum, New York.

Emil Brack (1860–1905), Planning the Grand Tour, oil on canvas, Private collection.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), "Grande Odalisque", 1814, Louvre Museum, Paris.

From the late 17th century up to the end of the 19th century, the **Grand Tour** was a must for any young man of good family wishing to further his education, enabling him to perfect his knowledge of the classics and open his mind to other cultures, deeply related to the establishment of Western society. This journey of initiation had not only an intellectual dimension, but also represented the completion of the transition from childhood to adulthood and the affirmation of virility.

The first Grand Tour: Greco-Roman antiquity

The idea of the Grand Tour first came up in late 17th century Germany, where it was known as *Junkerfahrt*. Its other name was "*Cavaliertour*" - literally "Knight's Tour" - reflecting the adventurous aspect of this type of expedition, which entailed military enlistment in order to travel. The English soon adapted this practice, making it a journey intended to finalise the education of a "*compleat gentleman*".

The destination for this circuit was Italy and Greece. To be complete, the journey began with France and the **Classicism** of Poussin and Lorrain and sometimes works by Dutch masters. They then travelled to Italy to contemplate the **Renaissance** masters of the Cinquecento, Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, and especially **Roman antiquity** in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Finally, they reached the roots of Western culture, the Great Athens of the 5th century with its Acropolis.

The young people learned ancient Greek and visited public or private museums to admire the masterpieces. While the Grand Tour made it possible to acquire great knowledge, it was also a mark of social status. It was a journey that had to be made by anyone claiming to belong to the elite. Moreover, many souvenirs were brought back from these excursions :

• These included, for example, ***Vedute*** - views using perspective to represent urban scenes, typically of the Venetian canal, by the famous Canaletto. There was then much production of paintings using these codes. This trend is closely linked to the paintings of Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691 - 1765), or "Pannini" and Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720 - 1778), known as "The Piranesi". The works of the latter were the subject of extensive production of etchings.

• Other popular souvenirs were ***intaglios*** - casts of engraved gems representing works of art, constituting a portable Glyptothek.

• It also happened that the wealthiest brought back imposing pieces of **statuary in marble**, modelled on the masterpieces of antiquity. This is particularly the case for our *Crouching Aphrodite* (Ref. 19145).

This practice led to a change in the image of the gentleman, who became a man of taste, with strong knowledge of the classics. The personality of George Gordon Byron (1788 - 1824), known as "**Lord Byron**", was the father figure of this culture of the Grand Tour.

This form of education was to have much influence over the end of the 18th century, which witnessed the emergence of **Classicism** as a bulwark to the excesses of rococo.
The abundance of models enabled diffusion of the codes of antiquity. This golden age of the arts provided the new artistic ideal of the time. In France, it was **Hubert Robert** who best represented this trend, particularly with his Capriccio, invented compositions combining various ancient ruins, or else with his imaginary museums.
A more sober architecture appeared, the Palladianism fashion, inspired by the lavish Venetian palaces of the renaissance architect, **Andrea Palladio** (1508-1580).
Furniture and interior design followed the same path, as can be seen in the works of David. This great painter imagined with **Jacob** a more manly and massive furniture, modelled on those found in the excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Going further: the Second Grand Tour, to Egyptian and Moorish roots

Later, **Romanticism** was born from these journeys, featuring the extension of landscapes of ancient Western ruins devoured by nature - nature that had become rare and valuable with urbanisation, and imbued with mysticism at the time of the industrial revolution. In Germany, this would especially inspire **Caspar Friedrich**.

With the Napoleonic wars, the Grand Tour became more complicated and pushed the English to go further into the Mediterranean basin, to encounter cultures dating back thousand of years: *Egypt* and other *Arab countries*. These destinations became increasingly accessible throughout the 19th century with the advent of the steam engine and the development of modes of transport. It was thereafter possible to go further and faster.

These journeys were steeped in the mysteries of the Orient, full of a great power of seduction and give birth to **Orientalism**. The paintings of **Ingres** and **Delacroix**, although rivals at the Salon, both represent this taste. Works of Moorish earthenware – such as those of Iznik – were particularly appreciated for their colours and **Theodore Deck** became the leading figure of this art, much later, at the Universal Expositions in the second half of the 19th century.

Théodore Deck (1823 - 1891), Alhambra vase, 1878, Decorative arts Museum, Paris.

Eugène Giraud, Théophile Gautier Smoking His Chibouk, 1862, watercolor, BnF, Paris.

Escalier de Cristal (Att. to), Hunt Scenes Bronze mantle garniture in the Indian style patinated in three colors (Ref #03208).