

An Italian giltwood carved pliant, with a rectangular loose cushion seat in a green damask and trimming, above 'X'-frame baluster supports, carved with scrolls, joined by shaped stretchers, on inward scrolled feet.

Turin, Circa 1740

Height: 19 ¾ in. (50 cm)

Width: 22 ½ in. (57cm)



Literature:

- Enrico Colle, *Museo di arti applicate. Mobili e intagli lignei nel Castello Sforzesco*, Mondadori Electa, 1997, note 414.
- V. Viale, *Mostra del Barocco Piemontese*, Turin 1963, tabs. 185–186a.
- R. Antonetto, *Minusieri ed ebanisti del Piemonte*, Daniela Piazza editore, 1985, p. 223.
- A. Gonzales Palacios, *Casa D'oro, gli stili dei mobili*, Fratelli Febbri editori, Milano 1966, vol. I, p. 112.

Comparative Examples:

Our *pliant* is modelled after the iconic ones designed by Filippo Juvarra (1678–1736) for the Gabinetto Cinese in the Turin Royal Palace (fig.1). The present piece is more probably after a design by Benedetto Alfieri (1699–1767), the successor to the Sicilian Juvarra as royal architect. Alfieri designed them for another interior of the Turin Royal Palace, the Gabinetto delle Miniature, where some similar stools can still be found (fig.2). Other similar examples are in Milan, at the Museo di Arti Applicate at Castello Sforzesco (fig.3). They are identical to the present piece, but seem to have lost the carved wood supports to the scrolled feet.

The *pliants* was considered a seat of favour but also of subjugation. It marked the privileged social rank of those who were allowed to sit in front of the king or a prince of the blood. More often, however, they remained unused, being displayed in the official apartments to accentuate the standing position of those who had neither the right nor the honour to sit before the majesty of a powerful person.



1. Torino, Palazzo Reale, Gabinetto Cinese



2. Torino, Palazzo Reale, Gabinetto delle Miniature



3. Milan, Castello Sforzesco