

J. LATE NEOCLASSICAL

Late Neoclassical begins in France in about 1790 when it sheds its Roman complexity and ornament for an image that is simpler, often more politically appropriate, and more inspired by ancient Greece than ancient Rome. By this time, scholarship indicates that ancient Greece influenced Roman art to a far greater extent than was previously thought. Increased admiration and appreciation for ancient Greece leads to a preference for the simplicity of its art and architecture. Drawing from scholarship and archaeology, architects and designers emphasize archaeological correctness and often copy or adapt antique examples for architecture, interiors, furniture, and decorative arts. Following the French and American Revolutions, Neoclassicism aligns with the new, more democratic forms of government and becomes a favored style for government buildings and artistic propaganda. By the 1820s (earlier in England), designers begin to tire of the limitations of classicism and seek inspiration in other periods, such as the Middle Ages, and even different cultures, such as that of China.

Under Napoleon I, Late Neoclassical France resumes her leadership in art and design. Like the Bourbon monarchs, Napoleon recognizes the importance of art to the state. His principal architects, Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine, create what becomes the Empire style to glorify the emperor and help legitimize his reign. The Empire style in France largely manifests in interiors and furniture because little noteworthy building takes

place. In imitation of Napoleon I, other European sovereigns and nobles adopt the Empire style for their surroundings. The middle classes in Germany and Austria follow a simplified Empire style known as Biedermeier. Lacking an emperor to glorify, neither England nor America develops a strong Empire interior style, but French Empire furniture is fashionable in both countries.

Greek Revival originates in England as the first of the great architectural revival styles of the 19th century. However, it is more popular and lasts longer in Scotland, Germany, and America. The style in all countries is associated with new building types, such as museums that are regarded as temples of art. In Germany and America, Greek Revival acquires political overtones. In the United States, it becomes a visual metaphor for the democratic government, whereas Greek Revival represents the German spirit in Germany. In contrast, the Picturesque or Romantic Movement in England promotes a greater taste for other cultures and modes. Empire or classical is but one aspect of England's Regency period, which also shows influences from Greece, Rome, Egypt, China, India, and Gothic.

During the early 19th century, the changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution increase, making its influence felt more than ever before. New technology and inventions facilitate mass production, which makes an increasing array of goods available to more people. Periodicals join books as the means of spreading the newest styles and fashions.





CHAPTER 27

Directoire, French Empire

1789–1815

Neoclassicism dominates the period, although it changes in response to political and social developments. Little important building takes place, so interiors and furniture are the main purveyors of style. In interiors and furniture, the simple, plainer Directoire defines the beginning of the post-Revolutionary period and evolves into the heavier, more majestic Empire. Architect-designers Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine create the Empire style, as dictated by Napoleon Bonaparte as Emperor of France.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL

The French Revolution, which begins with great hopes of changing injustices in the political and social systems, deteriorates into terror, violence, and random destruction. Ultimately, for real and trumped-up crimes against the people, members of all classes are executed, including King Louis XVI and his queen. Between 1789 and 1795, new regimes rise and fall quickly, leaving the country

Persuaded as we are that this sickness, which is that of modern taste . . . , must find its treatment and cure in the examples and models of antiquity—followed not blindly but with the discernment suitable to modern manners, customs, and materials—we have striven to imitate the antique in its spirit, principles, and maxims, which are timeless.

—Percier and Fontaine, *Discours préliminaire, Recueil de décorations intérieures*, 1801

in shambles—its political, economic, and social systems all but destroyed.

A five-person Directory, as stipulated by the new constitution, governs France between 1795 and 1799. Although it makes some progress in restoring the country economically and socially, its incompetence and dishonesty limit its effectiveness. Additionally, conflicts between the Royalists, determined to restore the monarchy, and the Jacobins, who want a democratic republic, threaten the fragile peace. Hoping to increase financial stability, the Directory authorizes military aggression abroad and appoints Napoleon Bonaparte as commander-in-chief. Military victories reap some success while earning Napoleon national recognition and helping to restore French confidence.

During the years of the Directory, a different social life and structure evolve in France. A *nouveau riche* class of businessmen, financiers, and speculators begins to display its wealth in newly purchased and refurbished townhouses that once belonged to the aristocracy. Times that are more settled foster tastes for luxury and pleasure, and fashionable society once again attends concerts, plays, games, and fireworks. The middle class assumes a new and greater importance.

By 1799, the power and influence of the Directory are so deteriorated that Napoleon, along with others, easily seizes power in a *coup d'état*. Napoleon sets up the Consulate, with himself as *Premier Consul*, and strives to unify France, heal the wounds of the Revolution, and create a stable government. Gradually, he in-

creases the powers of the Consulate, while decreasing those of the various legislative bodies. In 1802, he revises the constitution to declare himself Consul for life. In 1804, Napoleon declares himself Emperor, and thereby dissolves the Consulate and establishes a hereditary monarchical regime in France. He reigns as Napoleon I from 1804 to 1815. Although he presents himself as a man of peace and defender of the Republic, Napoleon believes that the way to peace is through military might. In 1805, he renews aggression against the nations of Europe. However, his efforts to enforce a blockade against Britain and to invade Spain and Russia lead to the Empire's downfall. Napoleon abdicates in 1814 but retains the title of Napoleon I until 1815. Louis XVIII, younger brother of Louis XVI, then becomes king.

French society during the time of the Empire is as glittering and magnificent as when the Bourbons reigned. Realizing the advantages to the Empire and society as a whole, Napoleon requires brilliant entertainments, although he rarely participates himself. Court etiquette and dress again become as rigid and codified as in the days of the French monarchy. Following the lead of Empress Josephine, Empress Marie Louis, Madame Récamier, and other noble women who are aware of the latest innovations in design commission the finest of furnishings for their homes. They host *salons*, gatherings of eminent people, which are once again fashionable. As the period progresses, women's freedoms, acquired during the Directoire period, diminish. Napoleon opens more schools for women, but their learning is restricted to such things as painting, dance, and sewing. The *Code Napoleon* reestablishes the husband as head of the house, so women again take a secondary role and are expected to remain at home.

CONCEPTS

Neoclassicism characterizes French architecture throughout the period. In contrast, three styles—Directoire, Consulate, and Empire—define interiors and furniture. Like architecture, they stem from Neoclassicism, but each has a different focus and appearance that reflects the political and social climate of its day.

Directoire, or *Le Style Républicain*, is named for the Directory that rules France from 1789 to 1799. A transition style, it links Louis XVI and Empire and reflects a more spare and Grecian classicism. Designers eliminate all references to the former Bourbon kings and strive to emulate more closely antique (primarily ancient Greek) concepts and designs.

During the time of the Consulate (1799–1804), the early years of Napoleon's rule, designers interpret classicism by emphasizing Imperial Roman and Egyptian influences over Grecian ones. During this period, increased formality, monumentality, and ornamentation reflect France's increasing stability, wealth, and confidence.

The fully developed Empire style, coinciding with the reign of Napoleon I, glorifies him and his empire. Recognizing the value of art to educate people about his greatness and legitimize his rule, very early in his reign Napoleon calls for writers and artists to create an image of him as a man of destiny, a modern Caesar, a hero who has earned the right to rule France. Paintings and images of the Emperor present a heroic character to reinforce the military

origins of the empire. Architect–designers Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine document their design ideas in their book *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, published in 1801, 1812, and 1827.

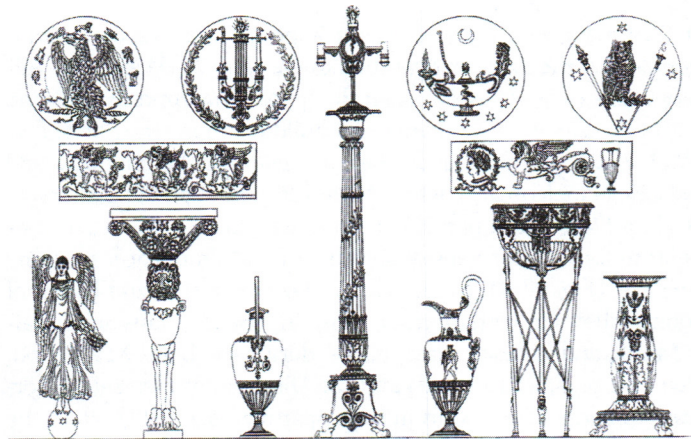
MOTIFS

■ *Motifs*. Classical motifs common through 1815 (Fig. 27-1, 27-6, 27-7, 27-8, 27-9, 27-11, 27-13) include the classical figure, acanthus leaf, swag, rinceau, rosette, anthemion, scroll, arabesque, cartouche, vase, and lyre. Common during Directoire are lozenges, rosettes, spirals, and symbols of the Revolution, such as the oak leaf and clasped hands. During the Consulate years, Roman motifs emerge, such as animal legs, swans, caryatids, chimeras, and monopodia. They are joined by military symbols, such as stars, swords, spears, helmets, and X shapes. In 1798, after Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, Egyptian motifs (Fig. 27-13), sphinxes, obelisks, pyramids, and headdresses of pharaohs, come into vogue. Additional Empire motifs (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-8, 27-11, 27-14, 27-19, 27-20) are military icons, swords, and symbols associated with Napoleon and his wife Josephine, such as the honeybee, laurel wreath, letter N, eagle, rose, and swan.

ARCHITECTURE

Most building activity occurs after the 1790s because earlier times are too uncertain and prominently displaying one's wealth is unwise. As the period becomes more stable, the newly rich begin to purchase and renovate the *hôtels* that once belonged to the aristocracy. Recently formed governments remodel older structures to accommodate their needs.

Designers and architects study, measure, draw, and publish information on ancient structures, which subsequently become the models for new buildings. As a result, the assembling of forms is more deliberate than it was before. Architectural theory emphasizes form and structure over ornament, and education continues



▲ 27-1. *Détails et ajustements tirés de l'Atelier de Peinture du C. I.*, c. 1827; France; Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine.



▲ 27-2. *Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile*, c. 1808–1836; Paris, France; J.-F.-T. Chalgrin.

to center on ancient models. The *Académie Royale d'Architecture* closes in 1793, but its successor, *L'École des Beaux-Arts*, opens in 1819. A concept unique to France, the school strives to prepare architects to design monumental public buildings. This education system makes France a center for theory development and architectural debate in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Architecture, bold but stylistically unadventurous, continues the plain, geometric, and classical trends of the late 18th century. Greek influence is particularly evident in severity or plainness, but exteriors also may exhibit Roman or Egyptian attributes and motifs. New state architecture under Napoleon is monumental in scale and sited in open space or in prominent vistas to emphasize its monumentality (Fig. 27-2). Most of Napoleon's personal commissions are for the restoration and enlarging of palaces, *châteaux*, and *hôtels* for himself, his family, and government dignitaries.

Public and Private Buildings

■ **Site Orientation.** To create a more imperial Paris, Napoleon commands that the areas around the Louvre (Fig. 27-3) and the Tuileries palaces be cleared to open the space. This effort extends the size of the Louvre and initiates new buildings along the *Rue de Rivoli* (Fig. 27-5). To enhance the settings of public buildings and palaces, Napoleon also orders the restoration of public gardens.

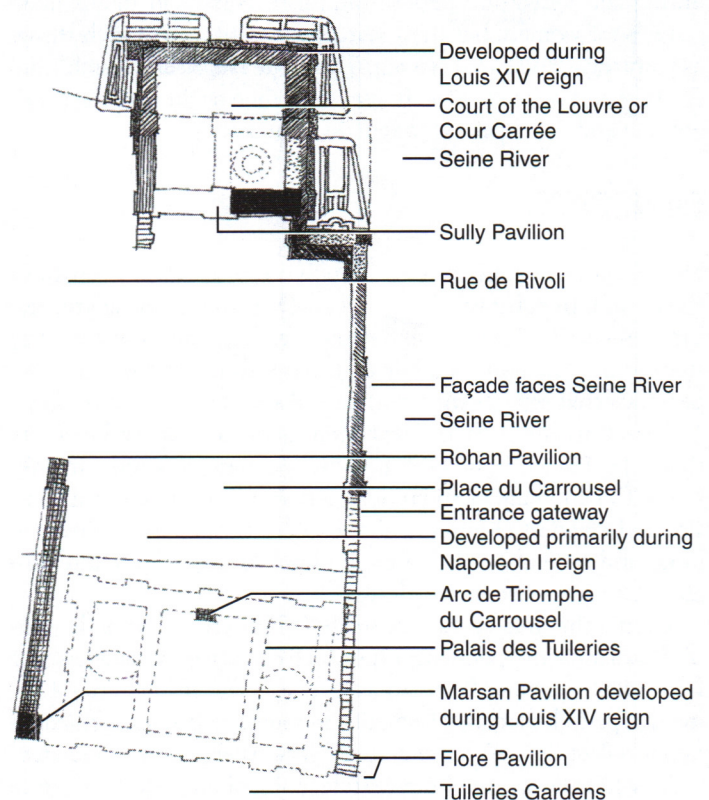
■ **Floor Plans.** Most public and private building plans are rectangular in form with rooms symmetrically distributed at least along one axis (Fig. 27-4). In residences, the orientation and layout of rooms follow earlier patterns, continuing the emphasis on formality, rank, and status as was common during the Louis XIV period. Plans are organized around public and private *appartements*. Doorways to connecting rooms in state apartments are aligned on the same side of the wall to create an *enfilade*, with each space more ornately decorated than the last one.

■ **Materials.** Most new buildings are of stone with iron balconies at windows. Napoleon promotes new materials in architecture such as cast iron, which is used for bridges, domes, and structural support.

■ **Façades.** Grecian severity defines monumental buildings (Fig. 27-2, 27-4), which means that these buildings have little ornament and few details. Most buildings are raised on podia to emphasize their importance. Arcades or columns may completely surround the building or only articulate the façade. Columns, engaged columns, or pilasters combine with other details to form repeating units.

■ **Windows and Doors.** Rectangular windows, large and small, delineate façades of both state and lesser buildings (Fig. 27-5). French windows allow access to porches or balconies. As during previous periods, their use on important floors marks that floor on the exterior, enhances inside illumination, and adds to the magnificence of the interior spaces. Doorways are imposing for all buildings with columns or pilasters and pediments identifying them. Some entrances have a monumental portico (Fig. 27-4). Arcaded walkways are common (Fig. 27-5).

■ **Roofs.** Roofs are flat with balustrades, pyramidal, or gabled with a low pitch in the antique or Grecian manner (Fig. 27-4).

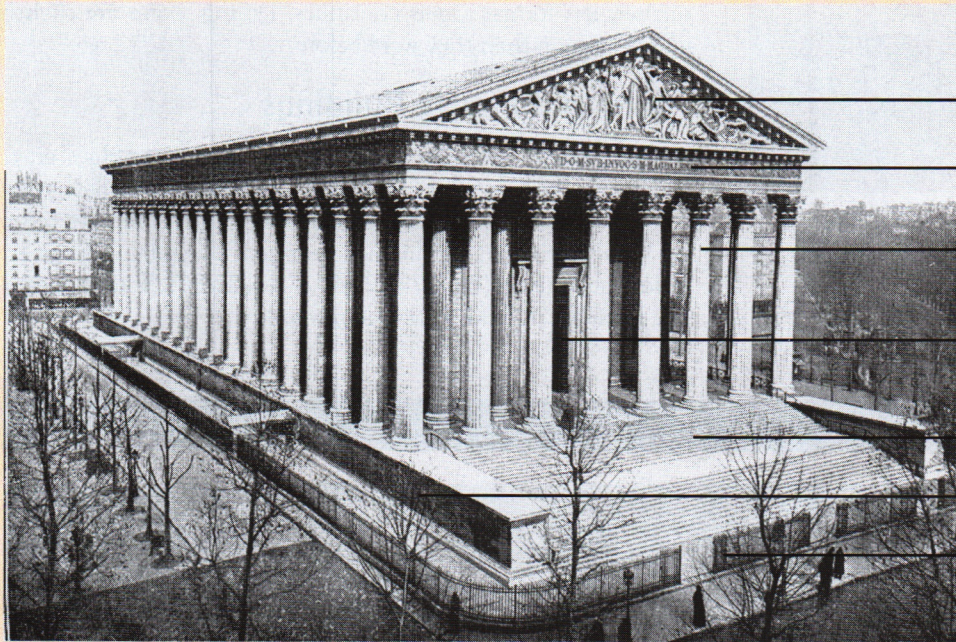


▲ 27-3. Site plan, Louvre and the *Palais des Tuileries*, begun c. 1200 with many later additions; c. 1790s–1820s additions include the *Cour Carrée*, wing linking Rohan and Marsan Pavilions, and enlargement of *Place du Carrousel*; Paris, France; c. 1800 additions by Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine.

DESIGN SPOTLIGHT

Architecture: Inspired by Maison Carrée, and originally intended as a church, *La Madeleine*, in Nîmes, France, had a short life as a Temple of Glory to Napoleon's army before returning to its original use as a place of worship. The open site and podium convey monumentality and significance. Corinthian columns surround the exterior and form the portico. A sculptured pediment announces the entry, which is approached from

the front in the Roman manner. Contrasting with the relatively plain exterior, the opulent interior derives its character from Roman baths. The Corinthian columns carrying round arches and a sequence of three coffered domes are reminiscent of Byzantine and some Romanesque structures. The design of the exterior and interior serves as a visual link between the Napoleonic and Roman Empires.



Pediment

Entablature

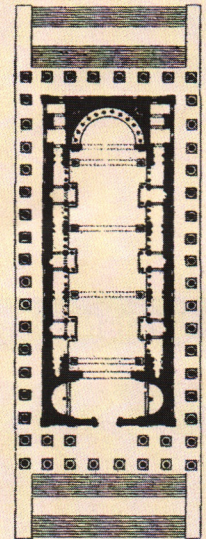
Corinthian column

Main entry door on center axis

Steps in front create procession

Podium

Prominent site for monumental effect



▲ 27-4. *La Madeleine* and floor plan, 1804–1849; Paris, France; Pierre Vignon and interiors by J.-J.-M. Huvé in 1825–1845.



▲ 27-5. *Rue de Rivoli*, 1802–1855; Paris, France; Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine.

INTERIORS

Classical attributes and motifs drawn from Greek, Roman, and Egyptian sources characterize interiors from the Directoire years through those of the Empire. The image changes from one of lightness and delicacy to majesty and pompousness. Common to the entire period are wall decorations based upon those uncovered in ancient Pompeii.

Directoire interiors continue the scale and treatments of the last years of Louis XVI's reign but with noticeable simplicity, muted colors, more delicate decoration, and additional antique details. In the 1790s under the Consulate, a new richness and formality begin to permeate interiors as an outgrowth of increasing prosperity. Scale and color grow bolder. Imperial Roman and Egyptian motifs appear as wall decorations and on chimneypieces, fabrics, furniture, and porcelains.

Empire interiors are masculine, formal, and richly detailed. Classical decorations; rich colors; and large, formal furniture arranged stiffly around the walls characterize interiors. Court architects Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine



▲ 27-6. *Le Salle du Trone à Napoleon* (throne room of Napoleon), *Palais de Fontainebleau*, c. 1800; Fontainebleau, France.

create the style for Napoleon using the forms and motifs from ancient Roman models. They design all elements in the magnificent, masculine settings that glorify the Emperor and reinforce his heroic image.

Rectilinear spaces arranged symmetrically reflect the organization of façades and emphasize the integration between the exterior and interior. Floor plans and room types change little during the period because modes of living do not vary much from earlier times. Rooms of state and private *appartements* dominate residences (Fig. 27-7), and the trend of the previous period toward smaller, less formal rooms continues. Dining rooms are slightly more common than they were before.

Public and Private Buildings

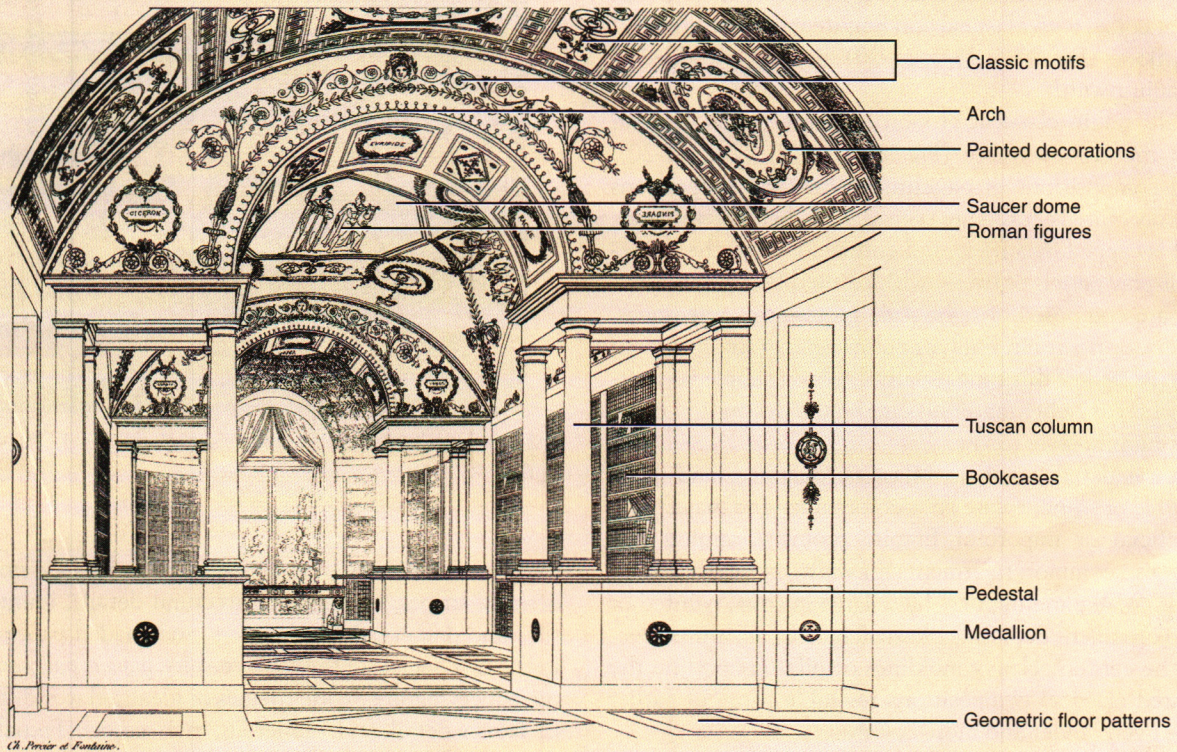
■ **Color.** Directoire colors are softer with more muted blues, grays, and greens than those of Louis XVI. During the Consulate years, colors move toward richer reds, blues, and greens. Empire colors are highly saturated and include deep red, magenta, blue, green, yellow, and purple (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-14, 27-20). Some have poetic names such as fawn or lemon wood.

DESIGN SPOTLIGHT



▲ 27-7. *Salle de Conseil* (Council Chamber) and *Cabinet de travail-bibliothèque* (Library), *Château de la Malmaison*, c. 1800; near Paris, France; Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine; library published in *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, 1812, 1827.

DESIGN SPOTLIGHT



Interiors: While Napoleon is fighting in Egypt, Josephine purchases the *Château de la Malmaison*, a rundown early-18th-century *château*. She directs Percier and Fontaine to refurbish it in the opulent Empire style, which contrasts with the plain, simple three-story exterior with a slate roof. Revealing a strong masculine image, the design of the Council Chamber and the library emphasizes the large scale, symmetry, geometric forms, crisp lines, and classical details that define Empire. The striped-fabric walls and ceiling of the Council Chamber resemble a tent, which recalls the military origins of the Empire. The X-form dado, reminiscent of military uniforms, and spears add to the military character. Painted trophies and Roman-style helmets embellish the panels. A Roman-style table with monopodia supports occupies the center of the room. The library features mahogany Tuscan columns on pedestals, saucer (shallow) domes, round arches, and painted ceiling decorations composed of portraits of the Roman emperors, a reminder of the link between the Roman Empire and Napoleon. Mahogany bookcases by the firm Jacob Frères line the walls. Rich colors of red, blue, and gold enrich the interiors and complement the furnishings. As a reflection of his tastes and demand for a heroic image, these rooms are typical of the interiors with which Napoleon surrounds himself—masculine, sober, and replete with classical details and reminders of the historic nature of the empire.



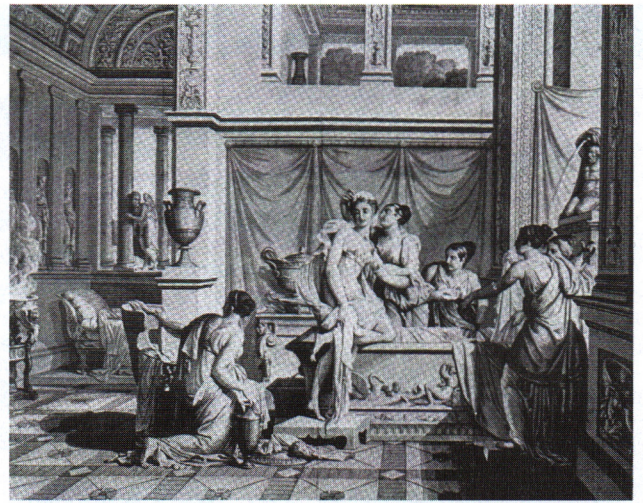
■ **Floors.** Floors are wooden boards or parquet. Entrances, bathrooms, and dining rooms are sometimes black and white marble tiles. In most rooms, Savonnerie and Aubusson carpets and rugs in bold, bright colors with classical and Empire motifs lie on wood and masonry floors (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-20). Borders are added or removed to adjust width.

■ **Walls.** Walls retain classical proportions and details with an emphasis on the chimneypiece (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-8, 27-20). Symmetrical compositions of paneling in classical proportions with plain or decorated centers are typical. A dado forms the base, and the wall is capped by a frieze and cornice. During the Directoire, walls display panels or friezes with painted Pompeian decorations that are composed of light-scale grotesques, arabesques, foliage, flowers, or figures in brighter colors against softly colored backgrounds. Rooms of this time usually display a simple geometric rhythm, whereas richer materials and bolder decoration characterize later Empire-style rooms.

Architectural details, such as pilasters, columns, and pediments in marble or stone, create greater formality and majesty required in official or important Empire rooms. Graining and marbling are also common treatments for walls, dados, moldings, or baseboards. Wall paneling may have large mirrors, painted or gilded stucco ornament depicting classical motifs, or painted decorations in the centers. Heavy moldings or pilasters outline the panels. Painted classical compositions resemble those of earlier times but are even bolder and more colorful.

Textile wall treatments (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-20) become opulent during Empire, helping to soften stiffness and increase richness and majesty. Walls loosely draped with fabrics and/or valances are thought to look antique. Tent rooms, reminiscent of the military origins of the Empire, are fashionable during the period. Percier and Fontaine are among the first to use them at Malmaison.

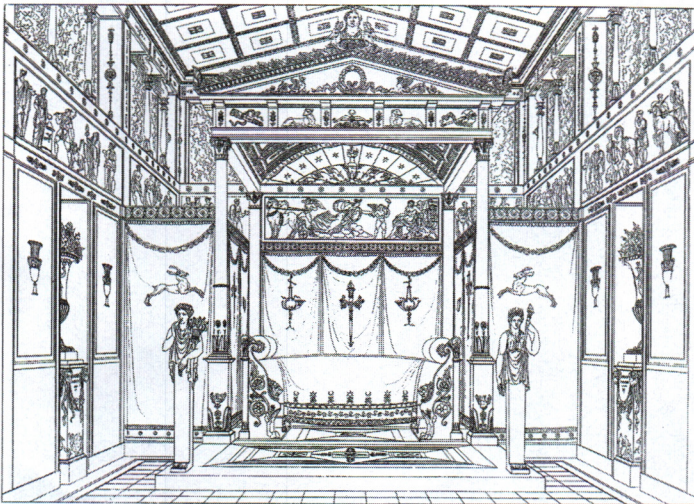
■ **Wallpaper.** The use of wallpaper (Fig. 27-9) increases, particularly in public buildings and in the homes of those who cannot af-



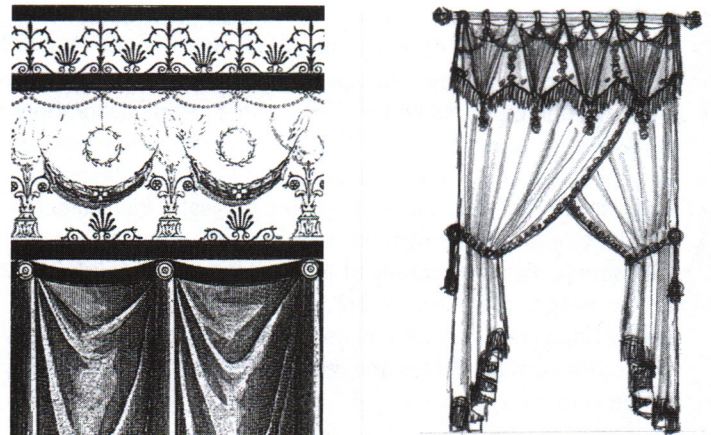
▲ 27-9. Wallpaper: Panel from "Psyche and Cupid," 1814; France; Dufour.

ford more expensive treatments. Patterns include small repeating designs, stripes, borders, architectural details, imitations of textiles and drapery, flocked papers, and shaded papers. Introduced in the first decade of the 19th century, *papiers panoramiques* or scenic papers feature exotic themes or idealized worlds block printed in lavish detail and numerous, rich colors. French wallpapers dominate European markets despite the Napoleonic Wars.

■ **Chimneypieces.** Mantels (Fig. 27-7) usually are of white, black, red, or brown marble with a shelf supported by columns, pilasters, consoles, caryatids, or winged lions. Simpler mantels are rectangular forms with applied gilded bronze or stucco classical motifs such as swags, draped figures, or sphinxes adorning them in the manner of Empire furniture. Above the mantel, there is a large painting or mirror. Objects on the mantelshelf, such as clocks or *candelabra*, are large and showy.

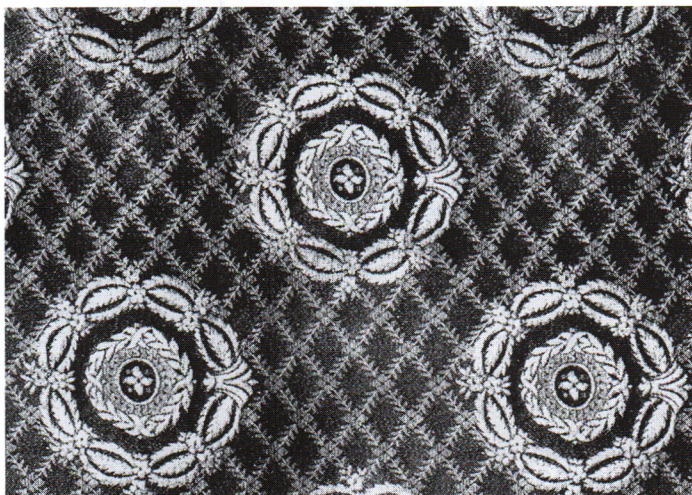


▲ 27-8. *Lit exécuté à Paris*, c. 1827; Paris, France; Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine; published in *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, 1812, 1827.



▲ 27-10. Window Treatments: Wallpaper showing drapery treatment and actual drapery example, c. 1815–1820s.

■ *Window Treatments.* Like other decorative details, window treatments (Fig. 27-10) become more opulent and layered during the period. They are composed of elaborate fringed and tasseled swags and festoons draped over rods or attached to decorative cornices. Rods shaped like spears, lances, or other similar forms terminate in large finials. Beneath are curtain panels that may puddle on the floor. Muslin or other thin fabrics hang next to the glass. Pairs of windows may be treated as one with continuous drapery. Curtains may open and close using the new French draw rod introduced in 1790, or they can be tied back with ropes and tassels or looped over holdbacks during the day.

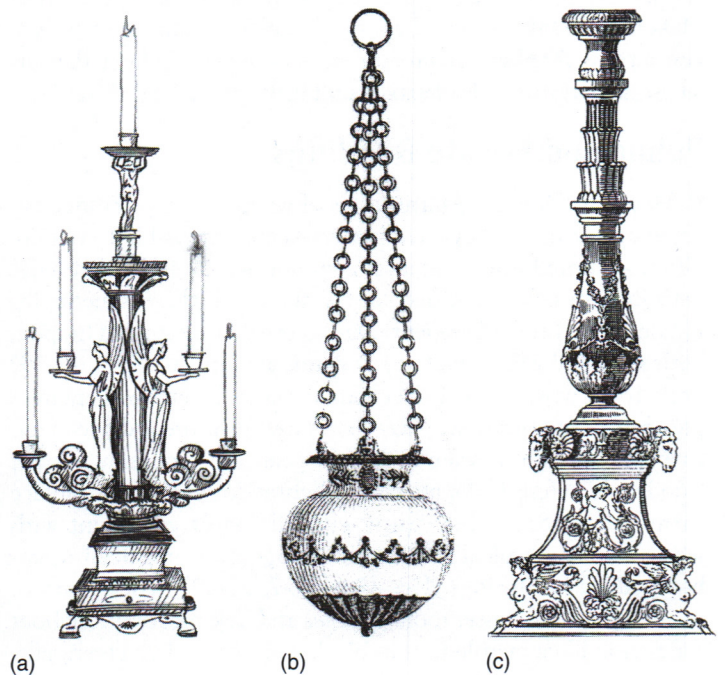


▲ 27-11. Textiles: Upholstery fabrics with period motifs; France.

■ *Ceilings.* Ceilings in rooms of state and important residential areas are the most heavily decorated with carved wood or stucco work enhanced with paintings or gilding (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-20). Sometimes, the carpet repeats the ceiling decorations. Lesser rooms have plain ceilings, some with a central rosette. Some may be painted to look like the sky.

■ *Textiles.* Napoleon's large commissions revive France's silk and cotton industries, which had almost completely disappeared during the Revolution. Typical furnishing fabrics (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-11, 27-13, 27-14, 27-16, 27-20) are brocades, damasks, velvets, moirés, lampas, and printed cottons. Printing methods include hand-blocks, copper plates, and cylinders. Patterns are numerous, but most come from classical sources. Ensembles consisting of *fauteuils*, *chaises*, *canapés*, and stools are upholstered alike in tapestry, silk, satin, or damasks in vivid colors or horsehair in black, red, green, plum, and light blue.

■ *Lighting.* Lighting fixtures of the period (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-12) include candlesticks, *candelabra*, *appliqué*, *lustre*, lanterns, *guéridon*, and oil lamps. Classical motifs embellish the surfaces repeating interior ornamentation. Many fixtures emulate those of classical antiquity. For example, hanging fixtures may imitate ancient oil lamps. In progressive, wealthy homes, oil lamps begin to replace candles. Most *candelabra* are of gilded bronze with darker bronze figures.



▲ 27-12. Lighting: (a) *Candelabra*, (b) *cristeaux* (hanging lamp), and (c) *guéridon* (floor lamp), c. early 1800s; France.

FURNISHINGS AND DECORATIVE ARTS

Classical attributes, forms, and motifs define furniture from Directoire to Empire. For inspiration, designers rely on surviving examples from Pompeii, ancient vase paintings, and stucco reliefs. Copying and adapting ancient Greek and Roman furniture continue during all periods. Directoire advances trends evident in the last years of Louis XVI's reign, such as slender proportions, greater severity, and angularity. During the Consulate period, furniture becomes heavier in scale, gilding and ornament increase, and Egyptian motifs are more evident. Empire furniture continues classical emphasis and its architectonic feeling, but becomes masculine, stiff, and majestic as design supersedes comfort. Pieces are intended to be seen primarily from the front and to support formal living. Symmetry is an important design principle in all periods.

Although furniture still lines the walls when not in use, toward the end of the period it begins to migrate from the perimeter, centering on the fireplace in less-formal rooms (Fig. 27-6, 27-7). By the end of Napoleon's reign, industrialization is affecting furniture making. Individual cabinetmakers begin to disappear, replaced by large firms. Overall design quality begins to deteriorate as furniture becomes larger, bulkier, and more curvilinear.

Although much of Directoire closely resembles Louis XVI, distinguishing characteristics in seating include the rolled-over back, saber leg (Fig. 27-13), greater emphasis on Grecian prototypes, and motifs associated with the Revolution. During the Consulate years, furniture begins to assume characteristic Empire features such as heavier scale, frontality, and Roman and Egyptian motifs (Fig. 27-15). A clean, simple silhouette with sharp corners and no attempts to soften them distinguishes Empire furniture. Large areas of flat mahogany veneer with little carving, few moldings, and heavy bases enhance the blocky appearance. Makers leave off door handles and keyholes to achieve an unbroken surface. Applied ornamentation may appear on large flat surfaces, such as those of *commodes* and beds (Fig. 27-19, 27-20).

Public and Private Buildings

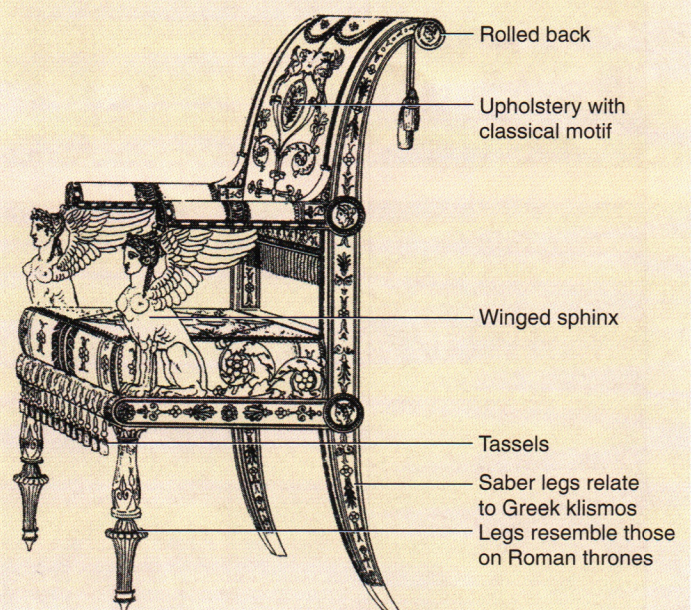
■ **Materials.** Directoire furniture is of wood native to France because of hostilities; imported materials are impossible to obtain. Often a painted finish disguises common woods and coordinates with interior colors and decoration; there is little marquetry, inlay, or applied embellishment. During the Consulate and Empire, both solid and veneer mahogany dominate furniture (Fig. 27-19) until 1806, when a naval blockade imposed by France's enemies prevents its importation. After that, most furniture is made of native woods, such as walnut, beech, pear, ash, and elm. Darker woods rule before 1806; after that, lighter-colored woods replace them. After 1810, white paint with gilding or gray paint with white details is typical for furniture. Important or official rooms have gilded furnishings (Fig. 27-6, 27-7, 27-20), while plain or painted pieces fill lesser rooms. Tables and case pieces throughout the period have marble tops in black, gray, blue, dark green, purple, brown, or white. Pewter, ebony, or ivory inlay in bands and/or gilded bronze or brass mounts in classical motifs characterize Consulate or Empire casepieces.

■ **Seating.** Sets of upholstered chairs and sofas are very fashionable. Directoire seating is light in scale, often painted, and reveals delicate classical decoration. Legs are tapered and quadrangular, turned, or baluster-shaped. Backs may feature trellises or lyre splats. A rosette in a square accentuates the junction of leg and seat rail.

Designed to be sat in erectly and be seen primarily from the front, Empire *chaises* and *fauteuils* are stiffly rectilinear with some curves in backs, legs, or seats (Fig. 27-7, 27-13, 27-14, 27-15). Backs may be flat and rectangular or rolled-over. Front legs are straight and fluted, turned, sabers, or flat and reminiscent of Greek rectangular leg designs. Back legs most often are sabers.

DESIGN SPOTLIGHT

Furniture: This *fauteuil* repeats the large scale of Empire interiors. Its rolled-over back and continuous line of back and legs are reminiscent of the Greek *klismos*, while the turned front legs resemble those of Roman thrones. Sphinxes, common after Napoleon's Egyptian campaign in 1799, form the arm supports. The upholstery and carvings highlight classical motifs and geometric shapes common to the period. The trim and tassels under the seat add further opulence.

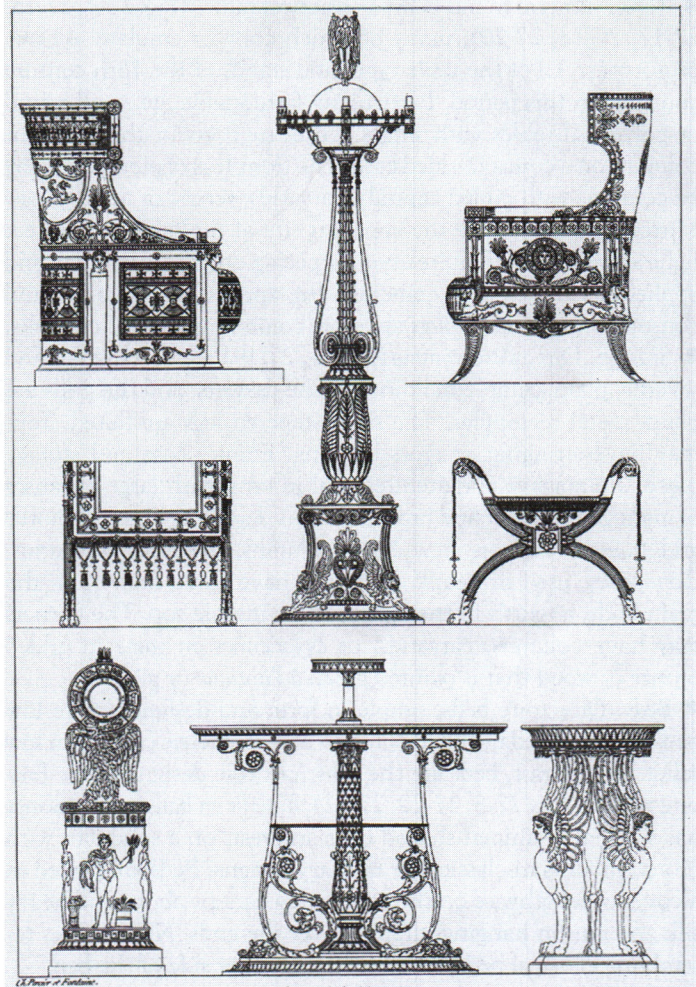


▲ 27-13. *Fauteuil et Siege à deux places*, c. 1800; Paris area, France; Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine; published in *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, 1812, 1827.

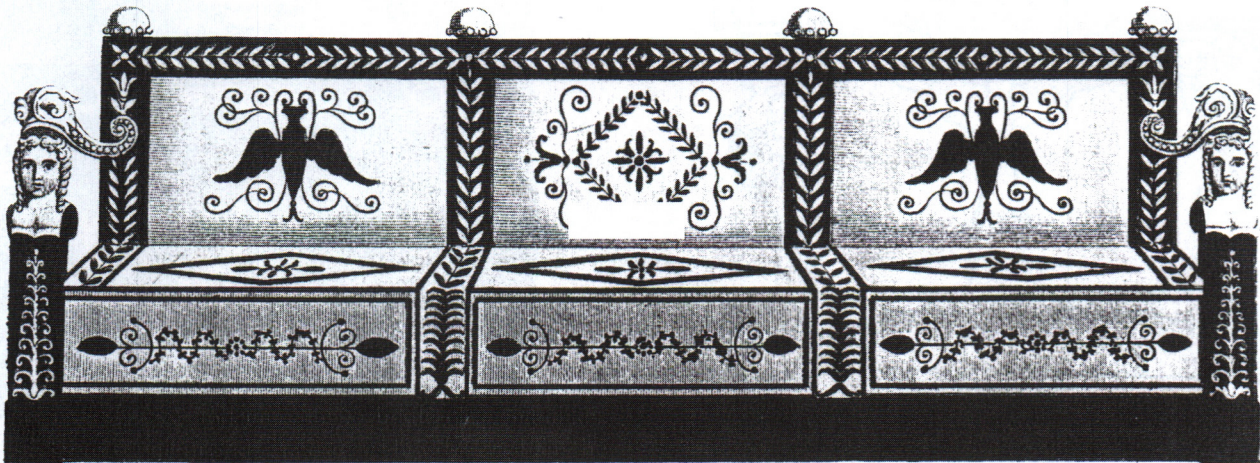


▲ 27-14. Gondola chair with swans, c. early 1800s; France.

Arm supports may be flat, turned, or animal shaped. The boxy upholstery has sharp corners. Curule or X-shaped chairs and stools copy antique examples (Fig. 27-6, 27-15). Gondola chairs (Fig. 27-14) are popular during the period (Figure 27-14). *Canapés* (Fig. 27-16), beginning in the Consulate period, closely follow antique forms with outward scrolled arms equal or unequal in height and either turned or outwardly curved legs. A variation is the *méridienne*.



▲ 27-15. *Fauteuils, tabourets, candelabra, côté du tabouret, petit pendule, and table*, c. 1800; Paris area, France; Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine; published in *Recueil de décorations intérieures*, 1812, 1827.



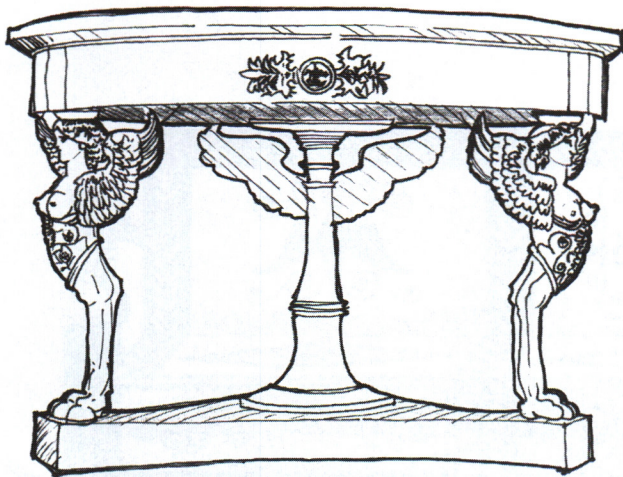
▲ 27-16. *Canapé*, c. 1790s–1810s; France.

■ **Tables.** Empire rooms boast a variety of tables (Fig. 27-7, 27-15, 27-17, 27-18, 27-20), many of which copy or emulate antique prototypes. All of the table types and stands of the 18th century continue in this period. Particularly fashionable are small round or polygonal tables with single center supports or three or four columns on a concave-sided base. The front legs of pier tables may be columns with gilded capitals, caryatids, terms, or animal legs. Mirrored backs double the apparent size of the table and reflect light as well as the Empire-style carpeting on the floor. Inlay and applied classical motifs embellish the aprons of pier tables and consoles.

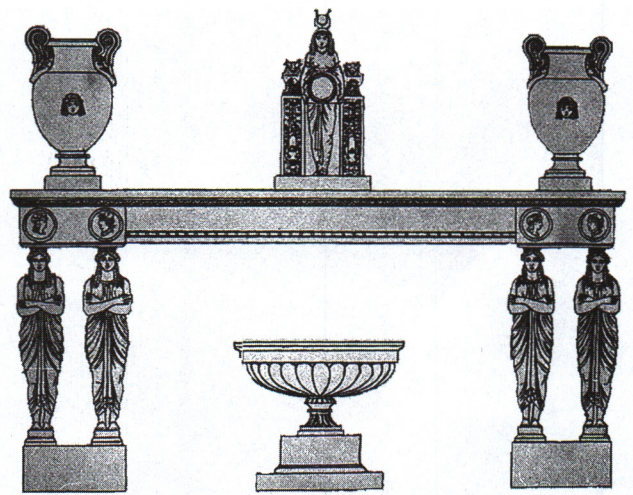
■ **Storage.** Directoire commodes (Fig. 27-19) are rectangular and severely plain. Simple moldings define drawers, and the pulls are plain, metal rectangles. The short, tapered legs are fluted. Tops may have stringing or cross banding. Empire case and storage pieces are massive and architectural in form with large expanses of mahogany veneer and bronze mounts depicting classical motifs and figures. Corners may have columns, caryatids, or terms.

Commodes, used in nearly all rooms, have three drawers in the main body, a fourth in the apron, and a marble top. The corners may have columns, caryatids, or *égyptiennes en gaine* in gilded bronze or wood that is painted green *à l'antique* or gilded.

■ **Beds.** Directoire beds, simple in form and design, feature low pediments carried by fluted columns and geometric carving in low relief. In contrast, beds are the most creative designs of the Empire period (Fig. 27-8, 27-20, 27-21). The *lit en bateau* commonly has scrolled or animal-shaped ends and rests on a solid dais with bronze mounts in classical or military designs. Beds are placed in alcoves or lengthwise on the wall with a canopy above and heavy silk and muslin hangings draping over the ends. Night tables resembling classical pedestal tables flank either side of the bed.



▲ 27-17. Round table with pedestal base and animal legs, c. early 1800s; France.



▲ 27-18. Pier table, c. 1800s–1820s; France.

■ **Decorative Arts.** Napoleon's commissions also revive the decorative arts. Porcelain becomes large, monumental, and completely covered with applied or painted decoration. Classical scenes, cities, sites important to the Empire, classical figures, and scenes from the Renaissance and Middle Ages embellish table services, tea and coffee services, centerpieces, vases, and other porcelain objects.

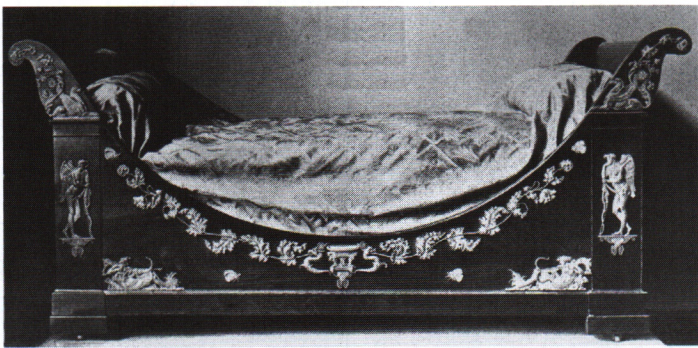
■ **Later Interpretations.** Empire furnishings are revived in the 19th century during Second Empire and in the 20th century during Art Deco (Fig. 27-22), and interpretations continue today.



▲ 27-19. Commode with ormolu decoration, c. 1800s–1820s; France.



▲ 27-20. *Lit, Chambre à Coucher de l'Impératrice* (Josephine's bedroom), *Château de la Malmaison*, c. 1800; near Paris, France; Charles Percier and Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine.



▲ 27-21. *Lit en acajou garni de cuivres dorés* (bed in mahogany with gilded bronze *appliqués*), c. early 1800s; France.



▲ 27-22. Later Interpretation: Table and chair, 1926; Jacques Ruhlmann. Art Deco.