

# Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 10 — Chippendale, Thomas

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1887

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**CHIPPENDALE, THOMAS** (*fl.* 1760), furniture maker, was a native of Worcestershire, who came to London in the reign of George I. He describes himself in 1752 as a cabinet maker and upholsterer of St. Martin's Lane, London. Hardly anything is known of his personal history. His influence is attested by the fact that almost all mahogany furniture of the last century is nowadays referred by the ignorant to 'Chippendale.' Speaking generally of his work, it is at once heavier in style and less severe in ornamentation than the slender and tasteful designs of Heppelwhite and Sheraton a quarter of a century later. Elaborate and delicate, Chippendale's designs are overwrought, and show nothing of that architectonic feeling without which there can be no true designing of furniture. His work as a whole reflects the culture of his age. With the flimsy 'baroque' of the prevailing French taste, we find a tendency towards a severer and more classical style, such a style as might be suggested by the contemporary labours of Sir William Chambers and the brothers Adam. Sheraton, writing in 1793, says of Chippendale and his work: 'As for the designs themselves, they are now wholly antiquated and laid aside, though possessed great merit according to the times in which they were executed.' Chippendale published in 1752 the first edition of a book of designs for furniture drawn by himself, dedicated to Prince William Henry, and entitled 'The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director.' A second edition appeared in 1759, and a third in 1762. John Weale issued in 1858-9 an elaborate volume entitled

‘Chippendale’s Design for Sconces, Chimney and Glass Frames in the old French Style.’

[Redgrave's Dict. of Eng. School; Sheraton’s Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book, 4to, 1793-4.]

E. R.

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*Dictionary of National Biography*, Errata (1904), p.[65](#)

N.B.— *f.e.* stands for *from end* and *l.l.* for *last line*

Page Col. Line

259 ii 20 **Chippendale, Thomas:** *for* 1752 *read* 1754  
22 *for* Prince William Henry *read* Hugh,  
Earl of Northumberland



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