How I Didn't Get

Mr. Gulbenkian's Art

and why the greatest personal collection of our time is now on display in Lisbon

By JOHN WALKER
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The Gulbenkian Collection, the greatest in breadth and standard of quality assembled by one person in our time, has now become public property. A new building has been erected in Lisbon, both as a museum and as offices for the Gulbenkian Foundation, one of the world’s largest. Collection and foundation are presided over by José de Azeredo Perdigão, a brilliant and dedicated lawyer to whom Calouste Gulbenkian entrusted the drafting of his will and whom he appointed as one of his testamentary executors. More than anyone else Perdigão is responsible for the works of art coming to Lisbon, and as I shall explain, for my personal frustration. The Portuguese are fortunate. The collection is already a pilgrimage site for lovers of art and the foundation a site for petitioners for grants. Thus the genius of a little-known Armenian has restored to Lisbon an élan missing since the Second World War.

Although Calouste Gulbenkian might not have approved the spare, modern architecture of the building, he would have loved the seventeen acres of garden surrounding it. For the contemplation of natural beauty was his greatest delight, and every day for months on end he passed hours in the parks of Lisbon, sitting on a camp chair, meditating and dictating to his secretary. His only problem, he once told me, was that he soon became an object of curiosity to the urchins of the town, who to his consternation surrounded him, stared, jabbered, and interrupted his work.

For Gulbenkian, to be confronted with a problem was to find a solution. Each day he selected the oldest and strongest boy, made him Managing Director of the group, and offered him a modest sum to be distributed to the others provided they played elsewhere. When the Chairman of the Company, Gulbenkian, was undisturbed, dividends were paid, but if he had been annoyed, the dividend was passed.

When I attended the opening of his museum, I wondered whether he would have been pleased. I was not, however, sufficiently disinterested to make a fair judgment. A personal failure was involved. For eight years, from 1947 to 1955, I bent every effort to acquire both the collection and the foundation for the United States. In the midst of my final negotiations with Calouste Gulbenkian death touched this extraordinary man, surprising him as much as the skeleton in Holbein’s Dance of Death surprises its victims. True, he was eighty-six, but he had expected a span of life longer than that of his grandfather, who died at 105.

Before we met I had heard a good deal about Calouste Gulbenkian. I knew that among other assets he owned 5 per cent of all the oil in Iraq; that although he was Armenian by birth and thus a subject of the Ottoman Empire, he had become a British citizen, while at the same time he held an Iranian diplomatic passport; and that, obsessed with privacy, he avoided interviews and photographs. Thus in our publicity-ridden age, as someone said, “He had become the most mysterious man of our era.”

Thirty-one of his paintings had been lent to the National Gallery in London.
THE ECLECTIC COLLECTOR

More than five thousand of some of the finest objects of several cultures fill the collections Gulbenkian made during his lifetime. His European tapestries are surpassed in quantity only by his Middle Eastern carpets. His private collection of Greek coins is the finest in the world. His obsidian head of Amenemhet III is a renowned example of small Egyptian sculpture. His library contains early manuscripts of East and West, rare volumes of the past five centuries, and many fine bindings. He admired eighteenth-century French furniture and silver and bought liberally. His European art spans four centuries in drawing, painting, and sculpture; and his Islamic collections include tiles, ceramics, glass, and the velvets of Tabriz and Bursa. He also admired and collected the Art Nouveau jewelry of René Lalique. Gulbenkian bought fewer paintings after 1940; he thought prices had risen too high.

Art Nouveau jewelry by René Lalique, said Gulbenkian, “occupies a very privileged position among my collections.” The ornament above is one of his more than one hundred works by Lalique.

This Metaponium didrachma from 350 B.C. was acquired as part of a $283,827 coin purchase in 1947.

Gulbenkian’s collection of eighteenth-century French furniture includes a table made by Louis XV’s designer, Jean François Oeben.

in the 1930’s, and a part of his Egyptian collection was on loan to the British Museum. These works of art I had seen, and they were staggeringly beautiful. Museum directors are predators by nature; no prey seemed as tempting as the Gulbenkian Collection, no prize as desirable as some future Gulbenkian foundation. I determined to get both.

But first I had to meet the owner of these irresistible possessions. I knew he lived in Lisbon and had very few friends, but among them was the American ambassador, Dr. Herman Baruch. Through a mutual acquaintance I arranged for the ambassador to show Gulbenkian a color film about the National Gallery of Art. Shortly thereafter, to my delighted surprise, I received an invitation to be his guest at the Aviz (a Lisbon hotel no longer in existence, but once the best in the world), where he occupied an entire floor. He met me at the airport with the stately and elaborate courtesy of an Eastern potentate. He reminded me at once of a fierce bird. Stocky, bald, he walked at a hopping trot. His deep-set, unblinking eyes were surmounted by exceptionally bushy brows. His aquiline nose increased this hawklike appearance, a resemblance he must have recognized since he once had himself photographed beneath a sculptured Horus, the legendary hawk of Egypt.

For the next two weeks we met every evening. In his sparsely furnished and dimly lit living room, where his hat, cane, and gloves were always laid out as though he were ready at any moment to depart or flee, we talked until one or two each morning, our conversations occasionally interrupted when he showed me a new rug he had acquired or some coins he had recently purchased. I was to see him often over the next six years, and as our friendship grew, I was sad that my affection might appear to him to be clouded by ulterior motives. I had ceased to be a predatory museum director and had become a devoted friend.

What charmed me about Calouste Gulbenkian was his entire devotion to
He had amassed hundreds of millions of dollars, but he seemed desperately anxious to explain to me that this vast sum of money held no basic interest for him. It was the organization he had created—the beautiful structure, the balance of interests, the harmony of economic forces—that gave him joy and satisfaction. His masterpiece was the Iraq Petroleum Company. It was as architecturally designed, as faultless in its composition, he felt, as Raphael's painting *The School of Athens*. If he compared himself to Raphael, he compared his partners, especially two of them, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey and Socony-Vacuum, to Girolamo Genga. It was delightful to hear him find analogies between the activities of these oil companies and the work of an obscure, mediocre follower of the Renaissance masters. Through their selfishness the oil companies were always trying to destroy his beautiful work of art. It was this he fought to preserve. His money was secondary. His interest was in the structure that yielded it.

He told me the history of the Iraq Petroleum Company. He explained its origins in the early struggles for oil in the Near East. His family, distinguished members of the Armenian community in Constantinople, had for many years been in the business of importing and exporting oil. As a young graduate of London University he learned early how to deal successfully with both the international oil interests and the Turkish rulers. Indeed, it was his report on Mesopotamian oil that made Hagop Pasha, director of the sultan's privy purse, realize that the sultan's major asset, apart from the estimated thirty thousand women in his harem, was this vast reserve of petroleum. In gratitude Hagop Pasha told young Gulbenkian, "My boy, you ought to be very proud because you served the Treasury of His Majesty, and to serve His Majesty's Treasury is to serve your conscience." There was no other compensation, not even one concubine, which the sultan, one would think.
might have been able to spare.

But Calouste Gulbenkian was a man of infinite patience. He foresaw the revolt in 1909 that put the Young Turks in power. Although he had become a British subject, he continued to ingratiate himself with the Turkish government. In 1910 he was instrumental in setting up the National Bank of Turkey, which was in fact a British front for obtaining concessions for the exploitation of Mesopotamian oil.

Meanwhile the Germans, using the leverage of the Berlin-Baghdad railway, were getting oil concessions for themselves. Calouste Gulbenkian was at his best when reconciling divergent interests; and after long negotiations, the National Bank of Turkey underwent a metamorphosis and became what Gulbenkian always intended it to be, the Turkish Petroleum Company. The Germans were bought off with a 25 per cent interest, the British took 35 per cent for themselves, and Gulbenkian was allowed to distribute the remaining 40 per cent. This he did by giving 25 per cent to the Royal Dutch Shell Company, a merger he had previously helped to arrange, and by retaining 15 per cent for himself.

But just as the new company was preparing to drill, Gulbenkian’s partners, England and Germany, began their mutual slaughter. The belligerents were too engulfed in a sea of blood to exploit their pool of oil. Calouste Gulbenkian had to wait.

He was already a rich man. As marriage broker to Royal Dutch Shell, he had received immense benefits, and there were many other successful deals that added their millions. But he continued to concentrate on what he knew to be the great bonanza, the Turkish Petroleum Company. The end of the war revived his hopes. His first step was to urge the transfer of the German 25 per cent interest to the French. When the Americans complained that under the “open-door” policy of the United States, they too should be admitted to the Turkish petroleum syndicate, he recognized the wisdom of including these powerful interests. For a time, however, the Turkish Petroleum Company was a football kicked back and forth by Lloyd George and Clemenceau, with Gulbenkian darting in and out, a desperate and frustrated referee. His share in the company shrank from 15 per cent to 5 per cent, but in 1925 he finally got the settlement he had designed, with the partners he wanted. The new arrangement was that the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, the Royal Dutch Shell group, the French participation, and the American interests would each have 23 3/4 per cent of the stock. This left Gulbenkian with 5 per cent, but with a balance of power he rightly felt would protect him. He was satisfied to have earned the nickname Mr. Five-Per-Cent.

In reality, however, his partners each had 23 3/4 per cent, and he 5 per cent, of nothing, for the Turkish Petroleum Company had never produced oil, and it had no valid concessions to drill. The land it intended to develop was no longer a part of Turkey. Calouste Gulbenkian had to begin all over. To make the situation more difficult, he had to negotiate with a nonexistent government, until after long delays the state of Iraq was established in Mesopotamia. When it finally came into being, the Gulbenkian syndicate was, as might have been expected, the oil concessionaire. Subsequently the company was tactfully rechristened the Iraq Petroleum Company, and the enormous oil pool of Mesopotamia was tapped.

He was always convinced, he told me, that the oil resources of the Near East extended into Saudi Arabia. For many years the geologists employed by his partners insisted he was wrong. If he was right and oil was found, he wanted to be sure he received his share. Thus in every contract he insisted on what came to be known as a “self-denying” clause. To achieve this, he had to persuade each partner in turn that the others were untrustworthy—something each believed in any case. Urged on by Gulbenkian, they made a pact, known as the Red Line Agreement, that provided for mutual exploitation of all oil found within the boundaries of the old Ottoman Empire.

Some years later when, as Gulbenkian had predicted, oil was discovered on this vast piece of real estate, the discoverers—among them Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony-Vacuum—found the Red Line Agreement a nuisance and wished to abrogate it. They had the courtesy to buy off their major partners in the Iraq Petroleum Company, but Gulbenkian seemed too insignificant for their attention.

He was, he said, like an artist who had painted a great picture. It had been bought, and now the new owners were ignoring its creator. They did not realize that he was an artist who would fight with every drop of his blood to keep his work of art from being defaced. I was with him often during this struggle with the world’s leading oil companies. In the end, by brilliantly playing one partner against another, the balance of power he had so carefully arranged won him a fair settlement, and as a consequence, many additional hundreds of millions of dollars. Henceforth he would often be referred to as the “mystery billionaire.”

This tremendous effort made by a man of seventy-nine was from my point of view a disaster. If it had not been for the lawsuit over the Red Line Agreement, which absorbed the best years of his old age, he would, I assure me, have made his first trip to America. This in turn would have immensely increased the chances of the Gulbenkian Museum being erected in Washington instead of in Lisbon.

Long before Baruch showed him our film, Gulbenkian knew all about the National Gallery of Art. To my surprise, one of the first things he pointed out when we met was how much the museum, of which I was then Chief Curator, had benefited from his activities. True, his assistance had been inadvertent, and from his point of view, highly regrettable. Nevertheless,
The Annunciation by Dierik Bouts, a fifteenth-century Dutch-Flemish master, was acquired by Gulbenkian from the Hermitage in Leningrad after secret negotiations with the Soviet Antikvariát. In the final contract the Russians stipulated that the risk would be Gulbenkian’s own if any surviving owner from czarist times challenged the transaction.
Rembrandt masterpiece, *Portrait of an Old Man* (above), was the last purchase Gulbenkian made from the Soviet government, in 1930. Since 1772 it had been part of the Rembrandt collection assembled by Catherine the Great.

Rembrandt's *Pallas Athene* (opposite), circa 1655, also came to Gulbenkian from Russia in 1930. About collecting he once told a Soviet negotiator, "You... are a fortunate man not to have this passion which is like a disease."
One of the loveliest landscapes ever painted, Jean Honoré Fragonard's *A Fête at Ram­bouillet* was purchased in 1928 from the Marquis de Sayve, whose family had owned it since 1795. Fragonard's fairy­
tale rendering of an aristocratic garden party had the character and "a certain mystery" that Gulbenkian sought in art.
In art, as in life, Gulbenkian was an admirer of beautiful women. Elizabeth Lowndes-Stone, the wife of a country gentleman, sat for the bridal portrait on the facing page by Thomas Gainsborough in 1775. Bought through an antique dealer for $168,750 in 1923, the painting had belonged to Baron Alfred-Charles de Rothschild.

Rubens's portrait of Helena Fourment, his young second wife, at right, belonged to Catherine the Great, then to the Soviet state. Taking advantage of the Russian need for foreign exchange, Gulbenkian paid $753,750 for the painting and fifteen gold and silver objets d'art. A detail from the portrait appears on the cover.
This 1745 pastel of Duval de l'Épinoy by Maurice Quentin de La Tour is considered one of the finest in the world. Gulbenkian paid Baron Henri de Rothschild in Portuguese money because of British wartime controls. The price for the pastel and a jasper ewer was a million escudos, about $34,000.
credit must go to him for having made possible the greatest single acquisition by an American collector, Andrew Mellon’s purchases from the Hermitage Gallery in Leningrad. Had it not been for Calouste Gulbenkian, these sales might never have occurred. They resulted from his usefulness to the Soviet government in dumping Russian petroleum for desperately needed foreign exchange. This was one of his most successful enterprises. He killed two birds with one stone: his advice netted the money the Soviets required, while the dumped oil ultimately depressed the value of Royal Dutch Shell stock, with whose management Gulbenkian was having one of his periodic quarrels. But best of all, to his delighted surprise, a third bird lay at his feet. The commissars asked what he would like in return for his help and delightedly accepted his recommendation that their holdings of foreign exchange be further improved by converting some of their works of art into gold. This had not occurred to them, and they immediately offered to sell Gulbenkian many of the supremely beautiful treasures now in the museum at Lisbon.

The prices were reasonable, and everyone was happy except the curators of the Hermitage. They let it be known that in their opinion the government was as naive about the sale of oil on canvas as it was about the sale of oil from the ground. Stung by this criticism, the commissars turned to a young Berlin dealer named Matthiesen, who had Communist connections, and asked him to come secretly to Leningrad, look at the collection, and tell them something about values. They emphasized, however, that under no circumstances would anything ever be sold. Matthiesen gave them the information they wanted and returned to Berlin.

Some months later Gulbenkian summoned him to Paris and immediately inquired about his Russian trip. Matthiesen, conscious of the secrecy of his mission, denied having been in Russia. Gulbenkian called him a liar, took him into the next room, and showed him the works of art from the Hermitage that he had just purchased at Matthiesen’s greatly increased valuation. Matthiesen was staggered. He could not believe the Soviet commissars would sell the very paintings he had told them were irreplaceable.

Gulbenkian then offered a deal. He would pay Matthiesen to be his Russian agent. But Matthiesen, aware that he had stumbled on invaluable information, decided that he could make more money elsewhere, and refused.

There followed one of those thunderous and terrifying rages Calouste Gulbenkian could not control. Years later Matthiesen still remembered his fright. He was thrown out of the house, and Gulbenkian swore he would never buy another work of art from the Soviets. This was a decision he regretted the rest of his life. “But worse still,” he told me, “I, who have always been discreet, had disclosed a vital secret. I knew the information would be used to my regret.”

He was right. Matthiesen hastened to London, got in touch with Andrew Mellon’s dealers, and shortly thereafter a score of masterpieces from the Hermitage were on their way from Leningrad to Washington. Thus the National Gallery is indirectly indebted to Calouste Gulbenkian for these stupendous works of art.

He received still less pleasure from another incident that affected the gallery. With uncharacteristic gullibility, he placed confidence in an unreliable adviser, Lord Duveen of Milbank. Prince Felix Yusupov, Duveen said, had just arrived in London with two canvases by Rembrandt that were generally accepted as among the greatest examples of all portraiture. Unfortunately Joseph E. Widener had seen the prince first, and the paintings had been sold, but their sale was not necessarily final. Duveen told Gulbenkian that Joseph Widener’s father had gone to Russia before the First World War to buy these paintings, but at that time the Yusupovs were so much richer than an American millionaire that he was unceremoniously shown the door of their palace. The revolution had come, and the scion of the Yusupovs, Rasputin’s murderer, was penniless. His only assets were the two paintings and some jewels, which he had managed to smuggle out of Russia.

The paintings had already been shipped to Philadelphia, Duveen explained, but there was a clause in the deed of sale that would enable Yusupov to retrieve his pictures. Originally he had wished to use them as collateral for a loan, but Widener, with the same lack of ceremony shown his father, told the prince he was not a pawnbroker. Finally it was agreed that Widener could buy the portraits for $500,000, but that if Yusupov were ever able to resume his former way of life, he could redeem them.

Thus all Gulbenkian needed to do, according to Duveen, was to help the prince do just that by advancing some money that would be deducted from the ultimate price of the portraits, which, Duveen said, were worth at least $5,000,000 apiece (a figure far below their market value today). Gulbenkian agreed, and next to the Matthiesen disaster, it was admittedly the greatest folly of his career as a collector.

With an enormous advance for expenses and a check for $500,000 to recover the paintings, Yusupov set about taking up his former way of life. His New York spree left Gulbenkian far from happy, but worst of all, Widener refused to allow the portraits to be redeemed. He pointed out that Russia was still Communist and that there was something suspicious in this resumption of the prince’s extravagances.

A famous court battle followed, and the outcome depended upon the telegram from Yusupov accepting Widener’s offer. Joseph Widener’s lawyers searched Lynnewood Hall, his home, from top to bottom, but they could not find the cable. With a brilliance that made legal history, they convinced the jury of the existence of the telegram without being able to produce it, and
Yusupov lost his case. Years later, when I was packing the Widener Collection for shipment to the National Gallery, the missing cable fell out of an old studbook Joseph Widener must have been reading when it arrived. I told Gulbenkian about it, but it did not lift the gloom into which he was plunged when he thought of the money he had spent helping Yusupov enjoy his former way of life, principally in New York City nightclubs.

It was part of Gulbenkian’s attractiveness that he was detached and humble about his mistakes and about himself. But his charm in turn was lessened by his ineluctable suspicion, which increased his isolation and loneliness. When he finally concluded that a person was trustworthy, he was enchanted and could be himself enchanting. But he was by nature a recluse. As his close friend Lord Radcliffe has written, “If he had to go into a public room he preferred to charge head down, thus to minimize the chance of catching anyone’s eye.” People, he felt, diminished his vitality, lessened his capacity for work, and wasted his intellectual force.

Although Gulbenkian’s artistic discernment was extraordinary and impressed me deeply, the invitation I received to visit him in Portugal in 1947 was indirectly connected with one of his few errors of taste. He had once bought, and for a time admired, the most celebrated of all examples of calendar art, September Morn. For years he had been teased about this vulgar canvas. But one day, he told me, a banking friend from New York, having been shown his Rembrandts, his Rubenses, his Van Dycks, and his other masterpieces, expressed a preference for September Morn. Gulbenkian’s joy at this surprising choice was indescribable. Before the banker could change his mind, September Morn was his.

During the Second World War, however, the painting had become separated from its frame, which had remained in England. Gulbenkian instructed his London office to send the frame to the new owner in New York. A few days later he was told that the British Board of Trade was making difficulties about the export. He was stunned. If there were impediments to the shipment of a gold frame, what of the paintings and other works of art that he had lent the British National Gallery and the British Museum? Fate and bureaucratic stupidity were on my side. I knew that as far as he was concerned, I would get all the loans I wanted.

This left me with two problems. I had to negotiate with the British authorities to release the works of art, and I had eventually to try to transform these loans into gifts. Following the shrewd and tactful procedures laid down by Gulbenkian, I managed to get the loans to America without a commitment for their return. Gulbenkian was delighted with my success, and also with the care I had shown “his children,” as he called his works of art. I seemed to him a satisfactory guardian for his artistic offspring, and I was constituted forthwith with their “nanny,” as his real children used to call me.

It was a job that aged me greatly. No father has ever been more preoccupied with the care, reception, and future of his progeny than Gulbenkian was with his art. For six years I received almost daily letters from him, and if I did not reply by return post, a cable would follow asking what was wrong.

Here is a sample of one of our many dialogues. It involved the shipment of a portrait of Duval de l’Epinoy by La Tour, probably the most important pastel in the world.

GULBENKI AN: Tell me, Mr. Walker, is there danger in shipping a pastel?

WALKER: In some cases there is. For instance, I would advise you to leave the pastel of Duval de l’Epinoy in London unless it is to remain in America.

GULBENKI AN: To have it left behind would be lamentable. Consult Sir Philip Hendy [the director of the British National Gallery].

WALKER: I have consulted Sir Philip. He concurs that the pastel should travel as little as possible.

GULBENKI AN: Without the pastel my exhibition will be a failure. We might as well calU the whole thing off.

WALKER: Since you are so anxious for the pastel to be in the exhibition, we shall move it as carefully as is humanly possible.

(Later. The pictures are now on the Queen Elizabeth, which will sail in a few minutes. A phone call from Paris.)

GULBENKI AN: I hope you were right, Mr. Walker, to persuade me to lend you the portrait of Duval de l’Epinoy. Your responsibility is very great. You know, of course, that when the Rothschilds owned the pastel, they built a special room to protect it from the vibration of traffic.

I thought of the Queen Elizabeth’s turbines vibrating across the Atlantic. The painting was boxed and in the strong room. I couldn’t even look at it. The agony of that trip remains unforgettable. The picture arrived safely and is still in perfect condition. I am not! I developed nervous indigestion and ever since have taken what I call my Gulbenkian pills.

It was soon evident that Gulbenkian
When those in England had been ex­tricated, he brought up the subject of the removal of a large part of the im­mense treasure in his Paris house. He told me he had a great regard for America. The United States, he said, had behaved admirably in two world wars and had twice come to the rescue of Europe. He wished to show his appreciation, something few Europeans had done. But what impressed him most about the United States was the treatment of his cousin. He explained that though he himself had become a British subject as a very young man, in the eyes of the English he remained an Armenian; whereas his cousin, who managed his estate at Deauville, had taken out American citizenship and was as American as anyone else.

He proposed that after his death his house at 51 Avenue d’Iéna, one of the most beautiful in Paris, become the residence in perpetuity of the American ambassador to France, and he asked me to determine whether such a proposal would be well received by the Department of State. Needless to say, I discussed this enthusiastically with two close friends, David Bruce, then ambassa­dor, and his successor, Douglas Dillon. Both were favorably disposed.

Next he brought up the question of the foundation he wished to establish. Would it be possible for the Chief Justice of the United States to be chairman of the board, ex officio? We in­quired and found no obstacle.

I was playing for high stakes—the collection, the foundation, and even the house in Paris—and I seemed to be winning. Then came two reverses. The Office of Foreign Buildings, which manages United States embassy prop­erty, made difficulties. The chief of this division of the State Department pointed out that it would be impossible to guarantee that the Gulbenkian house would be the American ambassador’s residence in perpetuity. He admired the great beauty of the house, he said, but he insisted structural alterations would have to be made. This setback was followed by a real catastrophe. A new law, the McCarran Act, was passed, requiring that American citi­zens of foreign birth reside in the United States if they wished to retain their citizenship. The Armenian cousin, who had been so touchingly taken to the bosom of the United States, was managing the Gulbenkian estate in Deauville. If he remained abroad, he lost his citizenship; domiciled in Amer­ica, he was of no use to his employer. Gulbenkian was furious and told me in no uncertain terms that he had mis­judged the United States. His cousin was after all a second-class citizen, worse off than any British subject. Stormy letters followed. I must have the law changed, or an exception made. I struggled with every branch of the government, used all the influence I possessed, tried unceasingly to rectify the situation, but in the end I failed. I felt like Cardinal Wolsey when he had to tell Henry VIII that the pope would not grant his divorce.

Fortunately, Gulbenkian was more understanding than the Cardinal’s frustrat­ed lover. We still discussed the American future for the collection and the foundation, and I felt we were closer than ever to a solution. Our last talks took place in Deauville just be­fore his long, fatal illness. We drove from the hotel each day to his estate nearby. It was a vast park, its only archi­tectural feature a balustrade, as in a painting by Hubert Robert. As far as one could see there stretched flowering meadows planted with fruit trees, and in the distance, low hills. He had never built a house because no architect was able to suggest anything beautiful enough to be worthy of this enchanting garden.

The last time we met he told me he had finally made a will. To my sur­prise he told me that for tax reasons he was establishing his foundation in Por­tugal; but, he said, there was an im­portant provision that would enable his trustees to remove the foundation to any other country if this proved ad­visable. He added that he would in­struct his trustees about the disposi­tion of his collection, and that Wash­ington was still very much in his mind.

We parted; he returned shortly after­ward to Lisbon, fell ill, and I never saw him again. But I like to think of him as he was during those last days in Deau­ville, sitting on his camp chair con­templating the beauty of nature, re­minding me of a Zen sage.

After Gulbenkian’s death no instruc­tions about the collection were found. My years of effort were wasted, my mission a failure. Apart from a gener­ous contribution for music from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, whose trustees with one exception are now Portuguese, the National Gallery of Art has not benefited. From all those trips by sea, by rail, by air, from that immense correspondence stretch­ing over many years, what had I to show? Only my friendship with a re­markable human being. Calouste Gul­benkian had driven all his life to make his every activity a work of art. Often he had succeeded; sometimes he had failed. To have enjoyed his friendship was my only reward, but it has always seemed to me sufficient.