

DON CAROLIS: A CASE STUDY OF A NINETEENTH-CENTURY COLOMBO FURNITURE MAKER

Robin Jones

Whilst the furniture of colonial South Asia is becoming better recorded and more accurately localised, substantial information about the makers of that furniture and the range of their products is often still lacking. This lack of either provenanced furniture, reliable information concerning the design sources of furniture makers or biographies of those makers has informed the historiography of this subject. The furniture produced under European patronage in India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere in Asia during the nineteenth century has often been regarded as an exotic, but nonetheless diluted or misunderstood version of that produced in the metropolitan country.¹ Another contributing factor to this perception is that previous studies have examined Asian furniture of the colonial period in isolation rather than within the context of its production and use and have compared these products with those of the European 'homeland', often to the detriment of the former. Occasionally it is possible to reconstruct something of the biography of indigenous makers and to examine their products within the cultural context in which they were made and consumed. That is the purpose of this article. Evidence will be examined which sheds light on the products and history of a firm of Sinhalese cabinet makers established in Colombo, Sri Lanka by 1860 — Hewavitarne Don Carolis. Using contemporary printed sources, such as almanacs, trade directories, reports on the International Exhibitions and an unpublished illustrated catalogue of the firm's output, the range of Don Carolis's cabinet making will be outlined and set within the context of the rapidly changing political economy of the island during the second half of the nineteenth century.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was only a small number of British on the island and their effect on the cultural and social life of the country was insignificant.² Even during the middle decades of the century there was not the concentration of numbers found in the Indian Presidency towns and cities. Consequently there were fewer European patrons for goods and services in Sri Lanka. With the expansion of the plantation of coffee in the central provinces of the island during the 1830s and 1840s and the sudden influx of British planters from India and Europe, a greater need for furniture and other goods arose, which initially at least, was satisfied by local furniture makers.³ Many of these makers, who in the early years of the century comprised a master craftsman who ran his own workshop with a small number of assistants,⁴ were clustered around a village just south of Colombo at Moratuwa. By the mid-nineteenth century the reputation of these woodworkers was well established. The Revd Spence Hardy wrote in 1864, 'There is scarcely an estate in the island that has not contributed to the wealth of Morotoo [Moratuwa], as the men of the village have been



1. Interior of workshop, H. Don Carolis & Sons, Slave Island, Colombo
A. Wright (ed.), Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon, London, 1907,
opposite p. 476

employed to build the dwellings, stores and lines of the planters, and a great part of the furniture has been made by the same hands. I have not been able to learn at what time and by what means, they became so famous as carpenters'.⁵ In contrast to India, where a number of European cabinet-making firms were established in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, in Sri Lanka, apart from a small number of Europeans, such as William Phillips or the lugubriously-named Mr Sumps, the information which exists for furniture makers on the island suggests that the majority were indigenous Sinhalese.⁶ In fact, information from census returns of the period indicates the large numbers of Sinhalese carpenters and specialist furniture makers on the island.⁷

During the nineteenth century in Sri Lanka furniture could be acquired in three ways: by purchasing ready-made furniture from carpenters, by commissioning furniture from carpenters and specialist furniture makers and by purchasing second-hand furniture at auction sales. A number of British commentators noted these methods of furnishing and at Colombo a Mrs Griffiths wrote on 16 April 1841, 'We bought a small, four post bedstead today made of jackwood and very neatly carved for the ridiculously cheap price of 13s. 6d. We purchased it ready made of a man who was passing the gate of the compound'.⁸ (Presumably the carpenter took his client to see the bed rather than wheeling it past the house in the expectation of a sale!) This commentator also noted: 'We bought a great deal of this kind of furniture [i.e. ready-made], which is almost all of jackwood; otherwise everything has to be made to order.'⁹ As the island developed from mercantilist to plantation economy, Colombo became the largest and wealthiest centre of population. The growing numbers of European and indigenous consumers with surplus disposable income led to increased demand for westernised goods and services. Certain zones in the city supported specific crafts. For example, the trade of coachbuilding, which grew rapidly during the middle decades of the century, was

mostly centred in the Hultsdorf and Maradana districts of the city.¹⁰ Cabinet makers were concentrated in the Pettah, close to the Fort and it was in this area that H. Don Carolis are first recorded as furniture makers.

The list of trades in *The Ceylon Directory* (1866–68) records ‘Furniture Dealers and Carpenters & C.’ in Colombo, ‘Carolis Appoo’ having premises in Keyzer Street, Pettah. All the other furniture makers who were recorded except one also had premises in various streets close to Keyzer Street.¹¹ Later trade directories, almanacs and guides record the location of furniture makers, including Don Carolis in the same locations in the Pettah.¹² In the nineteenth century the Pettah contained a mix of communities, including Burghers (descendants of Dutch settlers on the island), Sinhalese, Malays, Tamils as well as British and other Europeans. The district had previously been known as the *Oude Stad* (Old Town) in the Dutch period (c. 1658–1796) and had been laid out on a grid system.¹³ The area in which H. Don Carolis had their premises, although today a thriving if somewhat untidy commercial zone, with modern accretions attaching to older buildings, was in the nineteenth century an attractive mixed residential and commercial district. R. L. Brohier noted that ‘there were many fine houses with luxuriant gardens and rows of compact one-storeyed villas with their roofs slung from a common ridge and pitched low over broad verandahs or *stoepes*, which lent the Pettah respectability’.¹⁴ It is most probable that furniture makers, including H. Don Carolis, chose this district to retail furniture, at least some of the actual objects being made elsewhere in Colombo, as will be seen below.

The founder of the firm, Hewavitarne Don Carolis, who was born in 1833 at Matara, in the south of the island, and was educated at the Buddhist Monastery of Raja Maha Vihara near that town.¹⁵ The district in which he grew up, including the town of Galle and its surrounding areas, had acquired a reputation by the nineteenth century for the production of high quality furniture. In 1859 Sir James Emerson Tennent, the Colonial Secretary, noted ‘the carpenters and cabinetmakers, inhabiting the villages and towns on the southern coast [of the island] who produce the carved ebony furniture, so highly prized by Europeans’.¹⁶ Sometime before 1860, Hewavitarne Don Carolis moved away from Matara, established himself in Colombo and had acquired a small workforce comprising carpenters from that other centre of woodworking expertise, Moratuwa.¹⁷ The dichotomy of indigenous craftsmen on the island during this period of rapid change is exemplified in the case of H. Don Carolis. These craftsmen had their roots in the indigenous, Buddhist culture of the island but earned their livelihoods in an increasingly westernised, plantation economy whose consumers sought western cultural forms. Hewavitarne Don Carolis is described as being of ‘pure Sinhalese and Buddhist origin and culture’ and at the same time is credited with ‘seeing the practicability of supplying the planters with solid and artistic furniture in the best European styles and at moderate prices’.¹⁸

As the firm developed, it adapted to the requirements of its mixed British and indigenous market on the island. The production of furniture was distributed between workshops at Moratuwa and Wakande, Slave Island, Colombo.¹⁹ Mechanisation of production was introduced during the late nineteenth century and the firm advertised their Steam Furniture Works, where about 250 woodworkers were employed.²⁰ In order to maintain supplies of the raw materials for manufacture, a timber department was



No. 191b. Ebony Centre Table.
With carved top of different Ceylon woods, legs carved and ornamented with quill work, diameter of top 30 in. Rs. 120-00.

2. Ebony centre table, with carved top of different Ceylon woods, legs carved and ornamented with quill work, number 191D

H. Don Carolis & Sons: *Illustrations of Furniture, Colombo, 1908*

also established at Slave Island. Sri Lanka had long been renowned for the variety and beauty of its cabinet woods, although getting these timbers from the forests of the interior to Colombo, even in the nineteenth century, presented logistical problems. J. W. Bennett wrote in 1843, 'the island abounds with teak [introduced as a plantation tree by the Dutch], nadoon [*pericopsis mooniana*], satinwood, black and variegated ebony timber, commonly called calamander . . . redwood . . . and innumerable other trees . . . adapted to every purpose to which the ship and house builder, the cabinet and musical instrument maker could possibly apply them'.²¹ In 1883 a forestry officer on the island noted the difficulty of controlling the procurement of suitable timber when he wrote, 'Under this system [the subcontracting of timber cutting] everyone consulted his own convenience. The cutter took trees as were most convenient, the cartman and cutters alike preferred short logs to long ones and generally one is inclined to question the advantages . . . of work on these lines'.²² The felled and logged timber was either taken to the sea coast by cart or, more usually, floated down a river near the felled wood to the sea where it was brought in rafts or on boats around the coast to ports, such as Colombo on the west and Trincomalee on the east coast.²³ H. Don Carolis's Timber Department advertised the supply of 'teak and other wood . . . seasoned at our Steam Furniture Works . . .' as well as 'flooring boards . . . rough sawn joists, rafters . . . over door ventilators'.²⁴ The firm mostly used Jackwood and Nedun for the manufacture of their furniture, as well as satinwood and ebony and claimed that 'the goods . . . we turn out are as showy as English Furniture, and not being veneered or glued, are best adapted to this climate'.²⁵

The sources for H. Don Carolis's furniture were varied and revealed evidence of the polyglot nature of the island's history and material culture in the second half of the nineteenth century. One category of furniture intended for the office, clearly derived from mid-nineteenth century British designs in the 'antique' or classical style, are tables with turned bulbous legs, plain frieze drawers and rectangular tops similar to those produced by firms such as Holland and Sons during the second half of the nineteenth century and were offered with different drawer arrangements, for example; 'In jackwood with two drawers (no locks) 3ft. 6in.' for 10 rupees ('Plain Writing Table'



3. Sri Lankan ebony, specimen-wood and porcupine quill decorated centre table, late nineteenth/early twentieth century
Carlton Hobbs Ltd, London

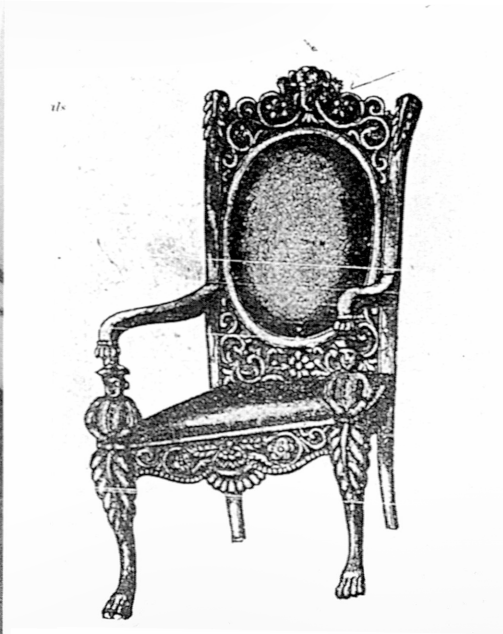
number 7D). The arm chairs for offices, also of 'antique' or classical form, have similar legs to the tables, with downswept arm rests joining the seat rail in vase-shaped terminals, the backs with cross bar and broad overscrolled top rail with raised tablet. The seats were caned. An example of this type of arm chair, which is found all over the island today, is 'Office Arm Chair' number 11D in the firm's catalogue, costing 4 rupees in jackwood and 6/50 rupees in nedun.²⁶ From the evidence of the firm's catalogue, once a type of furniture had been developed it continued to be produced for long periods in the same form, making the dating of furniture problematic. Dutch forms of furniture also continued to be manufactured on the island during the British period. An arm chair of similar style to the so-called Raffles chair is depicted in the catalogue as number 72D and is described as 'the "Dutch" chair', 'With arms, in Nadun . . . 8 rupees'.²⁷ Even a seventeenth-century form such the Burgomaster was being manufactured by H. Don Carolis in the late nineteenth century. One is illustrated as number 390D and is also described as a 'Dutch Chair' with 'caned seat, in Nadun' at the high price of 35 rupees (Figure 7). Whether this form of chair had been in continuous production on the island since the Dutch period or had been revived as a form in the nineteenth century is, at present, unclear.

The firm also produced furniture made from the most expensive timbers grown on the island. The catalogue includes illustrations of 'Elegant Examples of Tables and Bookshelves, Made in Ebony, Satin inlaid with Ebony, Nadun'. These include 'Carved Drawing Room Tables', one of whose tops is inlaid with segments of the different woods of the island.²⁸ These tables are of a distinctively Sri Lankan type and are amongst the most recognisable forms of furniture produced on the island.²⁹ Two of these table tops are illustrated as numbers 185D and 188D respectively and described as being 'In Ebony with top of various Ceylon Cabinet Woods'.³⁰ The dating of similar ebony and specimen wood tables which appear at the present time on the art market should acknowledge that such tables have, on the basis of documentary evidence, been produced on the island from at least 1833 to 1908 (and probably after this date) (Figure 8).³¹ A 'Carved Easy Chair' (number 595D) of ebony ('price on application') is also derived from a type of chair developed on the island in the first half of the nineteenth century, which is loosely based on the form of British library arm chair from the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Figure 5). This form of chair originally appears to have been a speciality of the furniture makers of Galle District, in the south-west of the island, and contemporary commentators make reference to these items (Figure 4).³²

The influence of the contemporary British cabinet-making trade is noticeable throughout the catalogue of the firm's products. Customers for the firm's furniture included, in addition to Europeans living on the island, members of the indigenous élite and middle class. An incremental process of anglicisation of this élite had taken place throughout the century stemming from the teaching programmes of missionary schools and other educational establishments. K. M. de Silva has written that the 'English schools were the nurseries of the anglicisation process [of the indigenous middle class and elite]' on the island.³³ The effect of this process was recorded by a number of contemporary commentators such as Louis Liesching who noted in 1861 that, 'The houses and tables of the higher classes [of Sinhalese] are furnished in English style'.³⁴ The furniture of the island reflected and helped to reproduce this process and many



4. Carved ebony easy chair, Galle, Sri Lanka, first half of nineteenth century
Dutch Period Museum, Pettah, Colombo

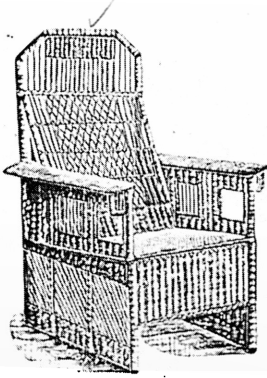


No. 285b,
Carved Easy Chair.

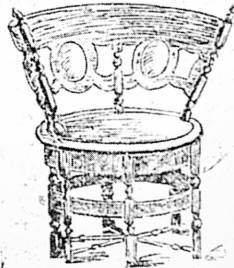
5. Carved easy chair, number 595D
H. Don Carolis & Sons: Illustrations of Furniture, Colombo, 1908

items in Don Carolis's catalogue reveal form, style and surface decoration which is almost entirely British; even the names given to individual pieces of furniture promote that furniture through their anglicisation. For example, number 396D is listed as 'The "Wilton" Sideboard', or number 384D is described as the 'Oxford' cabinet. Current British fashions in furniture making are also reflected. An asymmetrical and spindly item 'in nadun, [the] upper part with gallery an cupboard with glass door and plate glass back. The lower part [with] two cupboards and 2 drawers' is captioned as a 'Quaint' sideboard.³⁵

As might be expected in the prevailing climate of Sri Lanka, the firm also produced a large range of caned and bamboo furniture for use on verandahs as well as in drawing rooms. These products, grouped under the general heading of 'Cane Furniture', were shown plain or with upholstery in a variety of styles. The use of cane to manufacture baskets, cart hoods, chair bottoms and backs in addition to items of furniture was well established in Sri Lanka by the nineteenth century. A number of varieties of cane grew on the island including *calamus zeylanicus* and the more useful *calamus radiatus*.³⁶ Contemporary commentators recorded the use of this material in the manufacture of furniture. In 1842 a Mrs Griffiths noted 'a species of cane [which] grows wild in every part of Ceylon, forming a thick underwood, it is of this that cane-bottom chairs and similar articles are made'.³⁷ Many of the captions suggest that the chairs were



No. 476b. The "Vollmer" Wicker Chair.
In Cream Cane. Rs. 25-30



No. 390b. Dutch Chair.
Cane seat, in Nodun ... Rs. 25-00

6. The 'Vollmer' wicker chair, number 476D, in cream cane
H. Don Carolis & Sons:
Illustrations of Furniture, Colombo, 1908

7. Dutch Chair, number 390D
H. Don Carolis and Sons:
Illustrations of Furniture, Colombo, 1908

'enamelled any colour' to match upholstery or decor. In a similar way to the cabinet furniture, certain chairs are named, such as number 143D 'the "Burmah" Easy Chair', or number 137D 'the "Ceylon" Chair'.³⁸ An interesting feature of this section of the catalogue is that a number of arm chairs are described as 'the "Vollmer" Wicker Chair' (Figure 6). These chairs are in a different style to the remainder of the cane furniture, being more linear and with geometric detailing. Hans Vollmer was a pupil of Josef Hoffmann, the leading Vienna Secession architect. Vollmer provided designs for willow and cane furniture and these were manufactured by the firm of Prag-Rudniker, some of which were shown at Secession exhibitions.³⁹ In 1904 *The Studio* published an illustrated article on Austrian wicker furniture and a number of Hans Vollmer designed arm chairs made by Prag-Rudniker were shown.⁴⁰ Whilst Prag-Rudniker chairs were widely distributed in Europe, it is most probable, considering the distance of the island from Europe and the lack of price differential between the 'Vollmer' chairs and other caned furniture, that these chairs were manufactured by H. Don Carolis, the designs most probably being copied from *The Studio* or a similar publication.⁴¹

Wardrobes and *almirahs* or two door cupboards were also illustrated in the firm's catalogue. The *almirah* was an example of a form of furniture born of the transcultural contact between Europe and the island.⁴² The firm illustrated a 'Superior Jewel Almirah' as number 297D and described it as being made of 'Flowered Satinwood'⁴³ with Ebony carved work, Ebony carved pilasters at sides, top, drawer faces, panel borders and beadings in carved Ebony, four shelves and three drawers . . . a unique work of Ceylon art, suitable as a present . . . very superior quality Rupees 200'.⁴⁴ A contemporary commentator noted in 1907 that satinwood was 'used for furniture and in great favour for almirahs'.⁴⁵ Island-made *almirahs* are usually neatly manufactured of framed panels and are of knock-down construction. They exist in large quantities in Sri Lanka but are less well known as a form of furniture in Europe.

The catalogue also reveals an unusual surface decoration for furniture provenanced to Sri Lanka — overlaying small boxes and furniture with split porcupine quills in



8. Sri Lankan carved ebony and specimen-wood inlaid Loo table, second half of the nineteenth century

H. Don Carolis & Sons, Colombo, Sri Lanka

repeating patterns. H. Don Carolis seem to have made a speciality of this technique. A large hexagonal porcupine quill and specimen wood centre table is illustrated in a photograph of their showrooms.⁴⁵ At the Paris Exhibition of 1900 the firm exhibited a quantity of quill-decorated furniture and won a bronze medal for these products (Figures 2 and 3).⁴⁶ The firm's catalogue also illustrates as number 379D, a 'Porcupine Quill Writing Case, with folding desk drawer and paper rack'.

H. Don Carolis & Sons described themselves in 1908 as 'the largest and most experienced manufacturers in Asia of Furniture for the House, Office, Club. . .'.⁴⁷ They had showrooms in Keyzer Street and First Cross Street in the Pettah, Colombo which occupied 'nearly three acres . . . with furniture of every description from the finest and most delicately hand-carved cabinets . . . to plain solid household and office furniture of every kind'. They marketed their products through these showrooms, an extensive illustrated catalogue, advertisements in planters' manuals, self-promotion in publications such as *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon*, and at various International Exhibitions of the period. Furniture was supplied by the firm for the Queen's (the Governor's House) House, Colombo, The King's Pavilion, Kandy, Galle Face Hotel,



9. Sri Lankan carved jackwood arm chair, early twentieth century
Leeds City Council, Department of Leisure Services, Museums & Galleries Division, Temple Newsam House

Colombo, The Hill Club, Nuwara Eliya, Grand Hotel, Mount Lavinia and many other private and public institutions on the island as well as South Africa and India.⁴⁸ The sources for the design of their furniture were eclectic, as was to be expected, mixing avant-garde designs from Vienna with older forms of furniture found on the island and products of the mainstream cabinet trade in Britain. The products of the firm by 1900 can be viewed as physical manifestations of the colonial relationship between the indigenous and European populations on the island and exemplify the convergence of western and Asian forms in the material culture of Sri Lanka at this date. The firm continues to produce furniture today, based in much the same premises as it was during the late nineteenth century, and is managed by descendants of the founder of the firm. Contract furnishing now forms the most important aspect of their business, the recent spate of bomb blasts in Colombo necessitating the refurbishment of large bank and office premises in the Fort. With the recent relaxation of trade tariffs by the Sri Lankan Government and the increasing amount of cheaply produced furniture being imported into the island from Malaysia and elsewhere in Asia, the management of the firm have decided, in more difficult economic conditions, to negotiate a merger with a British furnishing company; still, however, retaining the name H. Don Carolis and Sons, which it is hoped will continue as a going concern well into the twenty-first century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Regional Furniture Society for the grant of a bursary towards the costs of research contained in this article. I also acknowledge, with thanks, the assistance of Ms Mala Weerasekera and Mr A. T. Alwis.

REFERENCES

1. 'Indian [furniture] construction, then, in the main reveals a naive understanding of Western methods: the same is true of the reproduction of Western forms in response to an insatiable demand for objects representing



10. Trade label of H. Don Carolis & Sons
*Leeds City Council, Department of Leisure Services, Museum & Galleries Division,
Temple Newsam House*

- European taste.' R. Edwards and K. de B. Codrington, 'The Indian Period of European Furniture', *Apollo*, xxi, June 1935, 338.
2. In 1824 the population of Colombo District showed a return of only 949 'Europeans' or 'European Descendants' out of a total population over 200 times as large as this. *Return of the Population of the Island of Ceylon — compiled 27 Jan. 1824*, Colombo, 1827, pp. 54–55.
 3. Customs records show that in the late 1830s Sri Lanka was a net exporter of furniture to the British possessions in India. However, a dramatic illustration of the rush of Britons and other Europeans, who were resident in India, to Sri Lanka to cash-in on the coffee planting mania of the late 1840s is shown by the surge in value of furniture coming into the island during this period from India. In the years 1845 and 1846 — the height of the coffee boom — £1,897 and £2,274 in value respectively of 'cabinet ware' was exported from India to Sri Lanka. PRO CUST 7 *Imports into Ceylon, Register under Articles*.
 4. M. Roberts, *Caste Conflict and Élite Formation — The Rise of the Karava Elite in Sri Lanka, 1500–1931*, New Delhi, 1995, p. 267.
 5. Revd Spence Hardy, *Jubilee Memorials of the Wesleyan Mission, South Ceylon*, Colombo, 1864, p. 192 cited in M. Roberts, *ibid.*, p. 273.
 6. Trade directories of the period indicate the level of European involvement in the cabinet-making trade in India. *Street's Indian and Colonial Mercantile Directory for 1867–8*, London, 1868, records cabinet makers such as R. Beaumont, Deschamps and Co., Maddox and Co., and Shaw and Co. trading in Madras. In Sri Lanka, by contrast, few Europeans are recorded as furniture makers, the exceptions being William Phillips, who described himself as 'a cabinet maker and French polisher' (*Colombo Observer*, 27 June 1852) and A. C. Sumps, Slave Island, Colombo (*The Ceylon Observer*, 3 October 1879).
 7. In 1891, 27,948 'carpenters' were recorded on the island, of which 24,273 were described as 'Low Country Sinhalese' (i.e. those living in the southern and western coastal districts of the island). Specialist furniture makers (described as 'Furniture Dealers' in the census) recorded in the Industrial Class of this census for the whole island numbered 100 (99 of whom were noted as Sinhalese). Sixty-six of these furniture makers were located in Galle District. *Ceylon Census, 1891*, 1, Colombo, 1891, ch. xxii, p. 522.
 8. *Ceylon during a Residence in the Years 1841–2*, Maj. and Mrs G. Darby Griffith, MSS University of Peradeniya, vol. 1, p. 90.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
 10. Sixteen coach-building firms are listed in 1870 at addresses in Norris Road, Dam Street, Wolfendaal and Grand Pass. The majority appear from their surnames to be Burghers (descendants of Dutch settlers on the island), e.g. Cornelius Brower, Francis Kronenburg, Cornis Gergheim. *Peterson's Ceylon Almanac for 1870*, Colombo, 1870, p. 255.
 11. *The Ceylon Directory: Calendar and Compendium of Useful Information . . . for 1866–1868*, Colombo, 1868, p. lxxvii, Trade List.
 12. G. J. A. Skeen, *Guide to Colombo*, Colombo, 1889, appendix E, p. xliii, Mercantile and Trade List. H. Don Carolis is listed at 51–54, Keyzer Street, Pettah. Skeen writes, 'The road parallel with Main Street immediately to the right — Keyzer Street — is the Colombo Furniture Mart.'. *Ibid.*, p. 67. At the present time H. Don Carolis & Sons have their premises at 64 Keyzer Street.
 13. D. Brohier, *Dr Alice de Boer and Some Pioneer Women Doctors*, Colombo, 1994, p. 22.
 14. R. L. Brohier, *The Changing Face of Colombo*, Colombo, 1984, p. 59.
 15. A. Wright (ed.), *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon*, London, 1907, p. 478.
 16. Sir J. Emerson Tennent, *Ceylon — An Account of the Island*. . . , London, 1860, 4th edn, vol. 2, 650.
 17. A. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 478.
 18. A. Wright, *op. cit.*
 19. *H. Don Carolis & Sons: Illustrations of Furniture*, Colombo, 1908. I am grateful to Ms Mala Weerasekera for allowing me access to this catalogue.
 20. A. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 476.
 21. J. W. Bennett, *Ceylon and Its Capabilities: An Account of its Natural Resources, Indigenous Productions and Commercial Facilities*. . . , London, 1843, p. 121.
 22. F. D'A. Vincent, *Report on the Conservation and Administration of the Crown Forests of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1883, p. 30.
 23. Sir J. E. Tennent, *op. cit.*, p. 494; Oriental and India Office Collections, photograph 249/10, 'Cinglee Boats', c. 1852 by Frederick Fiebig shows Sinhalese boats on a beach with piled stacks of logs.
 24. *H. Don Carolis & Sons Illustrations of Furniture*, *op. cit.*
 25. *Ibid.*
 26. A set of virtually identical jackwood arm chairs is found in Colombo Museum Library. On page v of *Illustrations of Furniture*, Colombo Museum is recorded as one of the numerous public institutions furnished by the firm.

27. For a teak 'Raffles' arm chair of a similar form see J. Veenendaal, *Furniture from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India during the Dutch Period*, Delft, 1985, plate 166, p. 132.
28. Number 601D.
29. Tables of this type are mentioned by contemporary commentators on the island such as Dr W. Hoffmeister, *Travels in Ceylon and Continental India*. . ., Edinburgh, 1848, p. 129; and H. C. Sirr, *Ceylon and the Cingalese*. . ., II, London, 1850, 266–67.
30. Page 56. The tops could either be supplied in circular form or as a hexagon. An ebony table with circular top inlaid with the island's woods made by H. Don Carolis is still in possession of the firm.
31. The earliest record of such a table is found in a 'List of Furniture in the King's House. . .' (Colombo) where it is described as '1 Table with different woods of Ceylon, ebony feet'. PRO CO 54/127.
32. Mrs Griffiths, whilst living in Galle, records the purchase of such a chair in 1842. She notes, 'I purchased the other day a very handsome arm chair of solid ebony carved all over with patterns of fruit and flowers for the sum of £1.5s.od.' Major and Mrs G. Darby Griffiths, *Ceylon during a Residence*. . ., IV, op. cit., 99.
33. K. M. de Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka*, London, 1981, p. 332.
34. L. F. Liesching, *A Brief Account of Ceylon*, Jaffna, 1861, p. 18.
35. 'Quaint' furniture appeared as a recognisable style in the main British cabinet trade journals, such as the *Cabinet Maker and Art Furnisher*, during the 1890s. It appears to have been a trade response to the 'new art' movement. See E. Aslin, *19th Century English Furniture*, London, 1962, pp. 74–75.
36. F. Lewis, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the More useful Trees and Flowering Plants of the Western and Sabaragamuwa Provinces of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1902, pp. 152–53.
37. *Ceylon During a Residence in the Years 1841–2*, IV, op. cit., 198.
38. Pages 44 and 45 of *Illustrations of Furniture* respectively.
39. P. Kirkham, 'Willow and Cane Furniture in Austria, Germany and England, c. 1900–1914', *Furniture History*, XXI, 1985, 128.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 131, 132.
41. The 'Vollmer' chairs were priced between 22/50 and 36 rupees.
42. 'A great number of European words, mainly Portuguese or Dutch, have become established in the native languages, especially such as relate to houses, furniture and meals eg almira for cupboard. . .'. J. C. Willis, *Ceylon — A Handbook for the Resident and the Traveller*, Colombo, 1907, pp. 107–08.
43. The Sinhalese word for satinwood — *buruta* — is sometimes prefixed by the word *mal*, a shortened version of the word for flower. Flowered satinwood most probably describes the prominent rays found in radially cut wood, although F. Lewis states that 'the condition known as "flowered" [is] probably due to arrested growth at a certain stage of the plant's life'. F. Lewis, op. cit., p. 54.
44. F. Lewis, op. cit.
45. A. Wright (ed.), *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon*, London, 1907, opp. p. 476.
46. 'Report on the Ceylon Section, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900', *Ceylon Sessional Papers 1901*, Colombo, 1901, p. 345.
47. H. Don Carolis *Illustrations of Furniture*, op. cit.
48. *Ibid.*