



Summer 2009



Members of the French Porcelain Society at the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte

As we go to press the first copies of Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue's monumental three volume work on the French porcelain in the Royal Collection have arrived. The fearsome weight of scholarship (10 ½ kilos of it to be precise) promises to set new standards for Sèvres studies. We have also had a rare opportunity to see many of the masterpieces of the collection in the exhibition curated by Joanna Gwilt at the Queen's Gallery which will have opened by the time you read this and can be visited by all members who are coming to the June festivities.

Those of us fortunate enough to have been on the April trip to Naples enjoyed a truly memorable experience. We were hugely privileged to have the doyenne of Neapolitan ceramics, Angela Carola-Perrotti, as our guide and 'opener of doors' to this magical and majestic city. We are deeply indebted to her and also to our fellow FPS members Jeffrey Tate and Klaus Kuhlemann who shared their knowledge and love of Naples with us to our inestimable advantage. The most memorable grand finale was the performance of Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* conducted by Jeffrey as Music Director of the San Carlo Opera House. Thanks to our travel bursary, funded by Mavis Watney, we were able to contribute to the cost of trip for three members; you can read their reports in this issue. All of us would like to thank Nette Megens and Sonja Djenadija for all their huge efforts in making this trip possible and so enjoyable.

In pursuance of our primary mission to encourage the

appreciation of French porcelain we have contributed £3000 towards the publication of a catalogue by Christopher Maxwell to accompany the exhibition of French porcelain at the Victoria and Albert Museum which will open in September. Without our support this probably would not have been viable. We have also awarded a travel bursary from our general funds to a Courtauld student, Catrin Jones, to pursue her researches in France into the links between Sèvres and contemporary textile designs, we look forward to hearing the results in due course.

Since our last newsletter, the Spring lecture series rolled to a triumphant end with important presentations on Rouen porcelain by Cyrille Froissart and the role of Tea in France by Ann Eatwell. Once again I would like to express our gratitude to Bonhams in so generously allowing us the use of their lecture theatre, without which it would be difficult to see how this most important part of our activities could continue.

We have just established a 'French Porcelain Society members' Facebook group - it is in its infancy but promises to be an enjoyable vehicle for sharing information and photographs of activities.

Finally we all look forward to seeing many members and friends in London in June.

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URGENT MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

2009 and late 2008 subscription fees taken by CREDIT CARD

Unfortunately a serious problem has occurred with the processing by Barclaycard of all credit card payments, dating back to 23rd May 2008. If your payment was processed by me on or after this date up to mid April 2009 – there were 51 of these transactions in total – the money was not actually taken from your account, despite my being issued with an Authorisation number in the normal way. In order to rectify this, Barclaycard have now done a global search on our client number and put through all these transactions en bloc. Please do not be alarmed if you see your last year's payment only going through now (there were only a small number done after May 23rd for 2008, but inevitably some of these have now coincided almost with the 2009 payment). The majority of the payments were for the 2009 subscription, submitted to me between January and April of this year, none of which have actually been taken until now.

If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me on 00 44 208 299 8806 or fpsmembership@btinternet.com. Please note this only affects subscription fees processed by me, any other credit card payments will have been processed normally by our Treasurer Georgina McPherson. Barclaycard have apologised and assure me everything should be working normally now. Thank you for bearing with us over this matter.

*Susan Newell,
Membership Secretary*

Please note also, subscriptions for this year were due in January 2009. If you have not yet paid please contact me urgently.

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MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO NAZIONALE DI NAPOLI

Patricia Ferguson reviews the first afternoon of the recent FPS trip to Naples

We gathered at mid-day Thursday on the roof-terrace of the Grand Parker Hotel overlooking breathtaking views of Capri and Mt. Vesuvius (below). Our hotel, according to an 1893 Baedeker, was a favorite venue of *inglesi*, and still is, understandably. Fortified with a delicious lunch, we eschewed the donkeys and *carrozze* (two-horse cart) favoured by earlier Grand Tourists, in favour of the Metro to reach the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, and happily replaced the Baedeker with Nette Megens and Angela Carola-Perrotti as our guides.



Built as stables in the 1580s and later used as a university, the Museum was grandly fitted up to house the Royal collection, between 1790 and 1827, when it was named the Real Museo Borbonico. The Museum contains the Farnese Collection of Roman marble copies of classical Greek sculpture, acquired through inheritance when Elisabetta Maria di Parma, (Isabella Farnese) married Philip V of Spain in 1714. More outstanding acquisitions were made by their son Carlos III, King of Naples and Sicily, later King of Spain (Charles of Bourbon), which he housed in his Royal palaces at Portici and Capodimonte. Then from 1738, when the first excavations in the Vesuvian area began, he acquired Pompeian statues, mosaics, frescos and other artifacts revealing the culture and daily life in Campania in the first century AD. The collection was displayed in its entirety until WWII, when the paintings and decorative art were transferred to the Museum in the Palazzo Reale di Capodimonte.

Highlights from the excavations include the bronzes excavated from the largest and most sumptuous Roman Villa extant, the 'Villa of the Papyri'. Many of the objects are familiar to us through the multi-volume *Antichità di Ercolano Esposte* (1757-92), which disseminated the classical style around the world. Treasures of the Farnese Collection provided the experience of standing at the feet of the colossal 'Farnese Hercules', mimicking the figures in the famous image created by Hendrick Goltzius, c. 1592 (top right, on the left), and an awe-



inspiring saunter around the largest antique sculptural group, the 'Farnese Bull', also discovered in Rome's Baths of Caracalla. A Roman copy of the Hellenistic 'Venus Callipygos' ('Aphrodite of the Beautiful Buttocks' -above right), should have been familiar to collectors of French porcelain. The female figure lifting up the back of her dress to study her reflection in the pool originally surrounding the base, was reproduced in biscuit at Sèvres in 1768 as the 'Callipygian Venus'.

Among their 4,000 pieces of glass, a rarity was the cameo carved blue glass amphora overlaid in white with dionysiac scenes, second only to the Portland Vase at the British Museum. Some of our group may have viewed the *Gabinetto Segreto* or 'Cabinet of the Obscene', created in 1819 to display ancient pornographic remains to a select audience. The museum is currently in the midst of a gradual re-installation, as many parts remain undisturbed since the 1930s; it is hoped that the original display cabinets of the 1820s will be preserved and incorporated in any new displays. As punishment for our sybaritic pleasure enjoying these Roman treasures, Zeus retaliated with a thunderstorm of mythical proportions (including hail), which sent most of us scurrying for umbrellas and taxis back to the hotel. Calm returned and the dinner arranged by Nette was a triumph!

Patricia Ferguson

MUSEO NAZIONALE DELLA CERAMICA DUCA DI SAN MARTINO

Christopher Maxwell gives an account of the second day of the FPS trip

After (another) hearty breakfast, we set out for the funicular, which lugged us uncomplainingly up the slopes of the Vomero Hills. It was a then but a short walk through the leafy streets to the Museo Nazionale della Ceramica Duca di San Martino. We were met in the grounds by Angela Carolà-Perrotti who conducted us in and offered an introduction to the building and its contents.

The neo-classical villa was built during the 19th century as a summer residence for the Duchess of Florida, wife of Ferdinand IV. The collection it contains, however, was formed during the second half of the 19th century by the Placido de Sangro, Duke of Martina. The ground floor is occupied by the Far Eastern Collection, recently redisplayed with great clarity, with the help of Luisa Mengoni (now Curator in the Far Eastern Section at the V&A and involved with the current gallery redevelopment there). A good deal of time was spent examining this most comprehensive collection, which delighted even the most formidable scholars in the group. For the Euro-centrics, there were endless fascinating prototypes and references to note.

Rousing ourselves from dreams of Cathay, and girding our loins, we marched upwards to European Porcelain. The first-floor galleries are flooded with natural daylight and traverse the *piano nobile* in a series of enticing *enfilades*; the antiquated cases brimful with treats and not a few brain-teasers.

The highlights of French porcelain included a splendid early Saint-Cloud vase, with fanciful Berainesque decoration (below left). There was also much excitement at a group of finely decorated Villeroy figures (below right), particularly the standing chinaman whose luxurious robe represents the best of the factory's enamelled decoration (bottom row).



above left: a 14th century Meiping vase with tin-glazed earthenware cover; above right: a shell-shaped covered vessel, China, 1700-1725, below right: pair of vases, China 1700-1725

A handsome glass cooler from the Arabesque service presided over the Sèvres. Dated 1784, it was made a year after the service was begun for Louis XVI, to designs by the architect Louis Le Masson. The service was unfinished by the time of the revolution and was finally given to the Prussian Minister of State in 1795. Amongst the delightful selection of Vincennes was a curious cuvette, or flower holder, which can now be attributed to Höchst after the discovery, by Errol Manners, of a similar, but marked, example in the Landesmuseum in Mainz.



The hours slipped by unnoticed before thoughts of a light snack drew us back down to the garden where nothing less than a banquet had been set out under the trees. And Lo! More Rum Baba!



Having (most wholeheartedly) performed our devotions to Bacchus and Ceres, we sallied forth uphill to the Certosa di San Martino. Formerly a Carthusian monastery, the complex occupies an advantageous position overlooking the Bay. The chief attraction was the astounding church. The interiors are one of the most cogent expressions of the Baroque in Naples. The nave is rich with inlaid marble work and the ceiling boasts an Ascension by Lanfranco. It is presided over by an astonishing gilded wooden altar, which was a model for a final design to be executed in *pietre dure*. The Monks' Choir, Sacristy and Treasury were no less splendid, with further works by Lanfranco, Guido Reni and Ribera and some marvellous marquetry.

With much of the museum closed, we were able to profit from the tranquil Chiostrò Grande. The elegant and shady colonnades of this 17th century cloister are a striking achievement in mid 17th century Baroque architecture, indebted to the style of Florence. Our visit, however, could not have been considered complete without seeing the famous local *presepi* (Nativity figures made from terracotta and wax). The collection is heralded as the greatest in the world, with extensive and elaborate compositions involving hundreds of figures, some by prominent Neapolitan sculptors.

Having reassembled, a party was formed for a tour of downtown Naples. We were deposited in the Piazza di San Domenico. The streets around were narrow and dilapidated, criss-crossed overhead by washing lines. Grand façades, blackened with centuries of grime bore down over mopeds, vendors of every type, and a small assorted group clad in linen and panamas, clutching a guidebook, in search of San Paolo Maggiore (closed). This wonderfully atmospheric walk culminated in a visit to the Duomo. Dedicated to St Jenaorius, the Cathedral was begun in 1294. However, the façade was remodelled in the late 19th century. Inside we were intrigued to discover a font adapted from a late Antique urn. We strolled passed the tombs of Charles I of Anjou (1285), Clementina of Habsburg and her husband, the King of Hungary (1296), into the marble-clad chapel of St Jenaorius. The seven altars are magnificently dressed in silver, the principal one of which houses the head of the Cathedral's patron saint. The highlight, however, was the crypt: a Renaissance masterpiece by Tommaso Malvito.

After such an eventful day nothing could have been more perfect than the evening we spent as guests of Angela Carolà-Perrotti followed by the opportunity for the authors of this account to show their gratitude to Mavis Watney whose generosity ensured their place on this unforgettable trip.

Christopher Maxwell

SORRENTO AND HERCULANEUM

Charlotte McIlwraith recounts the third day of the recent FPS trip, including visits to the Museo Correale, Sorrento, Herculaneum and the Villa Pignatelli

Our first visit was to the Museo Correale in Sorrento, housed in the summer villa of the ancient and distinguished Correale family, overlooking the Bay of Naples. The brothers Alfredo and Pompeo Correale, born in 1827 and 1829 respectively, were the last of their line and left the villa and its collections to the town together with part of the garden (the other part being let to a hotel to provide for the upkeep) and after the death of Alfredo's widow in 1924, it was opened to the public. In the house are collections of furniture, paintings, clocks, uniforms and ceramics, all acquired over many years by the family. For the connoisseur it is a treasure trove.

The ceramics are mainly to be found on the top floor. The Italian factories are well represented as are Meissen, and even Bow. Some early Meissen included a coffee service, and an octagonal tea-caddy of about 1725. Doccia figures included an important group of the Deposition from the Cross, and there are three fine Vezzi tea pots decorated in polychrome (below).



The Naples factory included a pair of bas-relief medallions on a blue ground of Ferdinand IV (died 1825) and his wife, Marie Caroline of Austria (sister of Marie Antoinette) (below).



The Capodimonte figures included street sellers and one of a doctor. Among the French porcelain there was a lovely St. Cloud cane-handle painted in the kakiemon style, and

most notably, a pair of Sèvres vases of 1759 (below), with a blue and green ground and *caillouté* gilding that was very worn; in particular the pattern inside the rim (partly covered by the later mounts) was thought to be reassuringly authentic.



Downstairs was a service of twenty-four plates of Paris porcelain of about 1820, decorated in enamels with pairs of figures in traditional costume, and with gold concentric rings on the borders of the plates. There was also some good Castelli majolica in the collection, including some pieces decorated by the Grue family.

After lunch we set off to Herculaneum, an eagerly awaited visit by all of us. There were some who, like me, knew very little about the site and how exactly it was destroyed. When Vesuvius erupted in AD 79, it first spewed out rocks and stones which were caught by the wind at very high altitude (close to the stratosphere) and blown towards Pompeii for about 19 hours, destroying most of the buildings and burying the city to a depth of over 9 foot, probably killing the majority of the people; Herculaneum, meanwhile, was comparatively unaffected. But then, in a second, pyroclastic phase, the volcano erupted again, throwing out a cloud of gas, ash and lava to a height of twenty miles, which streamed down towards the much nearer town of Herculaneum at a speed of about 100 mph. The lava hugged the ground and filled up the buildings from below so that when, finally, Herculaneum was buried to the astonishing depth of over 75 feet, the buildings did not collapse and their supporting timbers were carbonised and preserved by the intense heat giving us a vivid picture of a Roman town. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 25,000 people altogether lost their lives in the eruption. Neither city was ever rebuilt.

The population of Pompeii at the time was about 25,000, that of Herculaneum about 5,000. Pompeians eligible to vote were allowed to do so in Rome, but those of Herculaneum

were not. It is likely that most of Herculaneum's population died in the heat, but in 1989, about two hundred and fifty skeletons were found near the boat-houses by the sea, where they would have been waiting to be rescued by boats.

Excavations began in the early 18th century, but when Pompeii was discovered soon after, being more easily accessible, attention was switched there and almost incredibly, after some years of looting which led to further destruction of the buildings, Herculaneum was forgotten until the 20th century when some desultory excavations took place during the Second World War. Then in the 1980s, when drains were being dug for the modern city of Ercolano, more serious excavations began again. Over the years, Ercolano has grown up and over the old town; now it overhangs it in places and together with tourists, puts a great deal of pressure on the site.

The buildings of the ancient town were grouped in blocks, (*insulae*) defined by the crossings of the roads, the *cardi* and the *decumani*. Traffic along the road to and from the harbour was all on foot or by mule - no wagons were allowed, only handcarts were permitted. The main street, the *decumanus maximus*, opened out into a forum where wagons were also banned.

There are many traces of mosaics, frescoes and painted decoration to be seen in the buildings. In the House of Telecus, the original red paint still in place on pillars and walls, and a basin for water collection remains. At the House of the Deer, so called because of the figure of a deer attacked by dogs that was found there, the frescoes on the walls of the *triclinium* (the dining area) are in the so-called 4th painting style whose dates were AD 50-100, which means they must therefore have been quite newly painted at the time of the eruption. There is no cistern at this house, suggesting that an aqueduct provided its water. Like all the sculptures found at Herculaneum, the original deer is now in the Museo Archaeologico in Naples. Part of the mosaic decoration of the House of Neptune and Amphitrite is well preserved (below). There are many, many other examples of similar type.



Our last, unscheduled, visit to the Villa Pignatelli at the end of the afternoon, gave us another glimpse into the private world of families who had collected works of art over many years, essentially for their own domestic pleasure. The neo-classical villa built by Sir Frederick Acton in the 1820s, is set back and entirely secluded, from the Riviera di Chiaia. After changing hands a few times, was finally acquired by the Duke of Monteleone, a member of the Pignatelli-Cortes family. In 1952, it was donated together with its collections to the Italian State. It is full of memorabilia, especially photographs, and works of art such as furniture, silver, bronzes and porcelain. The Italian and German factories are represented, as one would expect, but the single most important piece of porcelain in the collection is a magnificent Chelsea tureen and stand in the form of a hen and her chicks of about 1755 (below). Another rare object is the milk-glass beaker with its *trembleuse* saucer made in Venice in about 1740.



It was a really wonderful, fascinating day, and an indication of the staggering quantity and quality of the riches of Naples.

Charlotte McIlwraith



Members of the Society at Herculaneum

MUSEO DI CAPODIMONTE

Susan Newell reviews the final day of the recent FPS trip to Naples

My first view of the massive and imposing Royal palace of Capodimonte was from the Certosa monastery, located far away on another bluff to the eastern limits of the city. The monotony of the palace's facade, its stucco painted dark red, belied the varied delights within its massive interior. It was built by King Charles IV of Naples (1716-88), Duke of Parma and Piacenza, primarily to house the extraordinary Farnese art collection, inherited from his mother Elisabetta Farnese, and at the time scattered among various palaces in Naples, Parma, Piacenza and Rome. After Charles's accession to the throne in 1734, it was eventually transferred to Naples. The palace was always intended therefore to serve a dual purpose as a museum and royal residence, however its vast proportions and corresponding cost meant that construction was slow – it was not entirely finished twenty-five years later when the King departed to take up residence in Madrid as King Charles III of Spain.

When Charles left in 1759, his young son Ferdinand IV came to the throne, initially with Bernardo Tanucci as Regent. The collection continued to grow and included the best archaeological finds from the new excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum (later moved to the Museo Archeologico) as well as a broad range of works of art and paintings. In the 19th century, during the Napoleonic era, the restoration of the Bourbons and later rule by the house of Savoy, this trend continued. The principal reception rooms were decorated in 1836-1838 and only during the mid 19th century was part of the palace in regular use as a royal residence. The Museum opened in its present form in 1957.



We were privileged to have Angela Carola-Perrotti (left) again as our guide for this final day. In the palace courtyard she explained that although the Capodimonte porcelain factory had been established nearby, there were very few pieces of Capodimonte porcelain in its collections (the main exception being the porcelain room, of which more later). The ceramics housed in the palace comprise mainly porcelain services and biscuit table decorations used in all the various former Bourbon residences of the kingdom.

Our visit began with the startling monumental biscuit porcelain group displayed in the museum's entrance: 'The Fall of the Giants' (top right). A *tour de force* of modelling, this original sculpture (inspired by the antique rather than copying any recognisable model) was originally intended as a table centrepiece, but the King himself judged it too big and so it remained at the factory until it was installed in the museum. It is an eloquent testament to the

extraordinary abilities and vision of the Real Fabbrica Ferdinando's (RFF) principal modeller and Director of Sculpture, Filippo Tagliolini. Tagliolini was brought to the factory in 1781 by its Tuscan Director, Domenico Venuti di Cortona, (an important influence in his own right as his



father was a noted archaeologist and connoisseur, responsible for the Farnese library and the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii). Tagliolini had trained in Rome at the Academy of St. Luke, and spent time at the imperial porcelain factory in Vienna before his appointment in Naples. The RFF was particularly fortunate that technical ability, cultural awareness and a corresponding passion for the antique, all coincided in the person of this talented artist.



Thanks to Angela's own influence we were given special access to another significant display area (closed to the public on that day) devoted to the porcelain collection. This comprised many



more RFF biscuit sculptures by Tagliolini, modelled after antique prototypes, either in the Farnese collection or newly excavated marbles or ones in Roman collections. Among the great rarities were a monumental clock (left) with glazed porcelain griffins surmounted by a bull group in biscuit (King Francesco I had a passion for clocks and there were over 180 in his inventory), and a glazed version of the Farnese male figure with a cornucopia, thought to be unique.

Tagliolini's biscuit models were not only used as table decorations by the royal family, they were sold individually and became 'must have' souvenirs for wealthy visitors on the 'Grand Tour'.



In stark contrast to the antique figures, Tagliolini also modelled fashionable contemporary groups, the so-called 'Berneschi', named after the satirical poet Francesco Berni whose work is thought to have inspired them. Another popular subject from this period are the curious anthropomorphic animal groups (usually monkeys (above), bears or dogs) with sieved clay fur, of which examples are known signed by the modellers Aniello Ingaldi and Francesco Zarra.

We also discovered the remarkable collection of Viennese porcelain from the Sorgenthal period in the museum. Some were gifts from the Habsburg Emperor Francis II to his aunt Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples, others were special commissions by the royal family. The cups are painted with silhouettes, the saucers with views of Vienna and Naples. Not only is the decoration exceptional but the cups appear to have been specially designed as they differ from the standard 'litron' shape.



A more local special commission was the commemorative vase (one of a pair) ordered by Francesco I from the Naples factory, by this time under the ownership of Poulard Prad. It was a present for his father Ferdinand IV, on the occasion of his birthday, probably in 1823. Francesco, then Duke of Calabria, was the main patron of the miniaturist and independent porcelain decorator Raffaele Giovine, and he was in all probability responsible for the miniature portrait group of Francesco, his wife Maria Isabella and several of their numerous children crowning a bust of the absent Ferdinand IV (top right). Few large pieces were being produced by the factory at the time, one of extreme political uncertainty, and Giovine's work is more commonly found on imported



Paris porcelains. Angela mentioned that the earliest inventories of the palace list all the vases displayed with silk flowers and under glass domes.

In the late 18th century there had been no service for use by the royal family on special occasions. For each state banquet the royal household was obliged to borrow pieces from the RFF factory. To rectify this situation, a new official service was created in 1793-95. The King had wanted the newly excavated ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum to feature on every piece, but he was dissuaded from this idea (it was deemed unlucky) and the service features instead views of Naples and the surrounding area (see below for a detail of Vesuvius). It is known as the '*Servizio dell'Oca*' after the tureen knops designed by Tagliolini as a putto holding a goose by the neck.



The fabulous Capodimonte porcelain room was for many members, the highlight of our visit to the palace. The room was originally constructed in the Portici Palace for Queen Maria Amalia in 1757-59 (grand-daughter of Augustus the Strong of Meissen fame) and only rebuilt here in 1866. It was conceived as a total environment dedicated to rococo fantasy at its most playful and comprises low relief chinoiserie figure panels (inspired by engravings after Boucher), connected by scrolls, swags and trophies, all of which break down into over 3000 individual interlocking pieces of Capodimonte porcelain. The joins have been cleverly concealed and special fixings make it possible to dismantle and reassemble the room. It seems only fitting that a Queen raised in Dresden and familiar with the concept and prestige of porcelain rooms

should have demanded a porcelain room of her own from the Neapolitan factory's principal modeller, Giuseppe Gricci.



We also had the opportunity to see a rare white altarpiece set in Capodimonte porcelain (below left) made in 1745, originally also for the Portici Palace and also by Gricci. It comprised a cruxifix, candlesticks and a figure representing the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin (below right). The latter was acquired in recent times as Angela discovered archival evidence that this figure was included in the original ensemble.



We owe the Napoleonic era for the presence of two French vases in the palace. After his invasion and annexation of southern Italy, Napoleon installed his brother Joseph Bonaparte as King of Naples in 1806, a title later adopted by Napoleon's favourite, the successful military commander Joachim Murat (1808-15). The Sèvres vases are of 'vase fuseau' shape and are painted with a miniature of Napoleon (signed by Jean Georget) and his Empress Maria Louisa respectively, both in coronation robes, c. 1810-11, appropriately displayed under massive full-length portraits. Georget's name is cited

in the Sèvres records (together with Jaquotot) as one of the artists responsible for painting Imperial portraits on vases intended as diplomatic gifts. (The pair to the Maria Louisa vase is probably the one in the château de Compiègne).



Having only touched on the ceramic collections of the palace (briefly pausing to note Cardinal Farnese's maiolica service made at Castelli c. 1574) the other treasures are far too numerous to mention, not least one of the greatest collections of Italian school paintings to be found anywhere. Our tour ended as we were summoned to another more-than-adequate lunch served in a side room of the Museum cafe, after which most of us retired to our hotel rooms to recuperate before attending the finale of the FPS visit to Naples: a visit to the opera for Mozart's 'Escape from the Seraglio' at the Teatro di San Carlo.

The curtain rose to the sight of a modern motor cruiser, almost filling the stage, the first of many surprises from the producer Damiano Michieletto and the young set designer Paolo Fantin. The corpulent Pasha resplendent in scuba diving kit then emerged from the 'waves' and proceeded to change out of his wet suit - not the last flesh to be aired on the stage, as the harem, depicted as leggy models to the East European drug dealer 'Pasha', played their parts to perfection... If the staging was not to everyone's taste in the group, the score proved less controversial and we all felt privileged to see and hear the Maestro (and long-term FPS member) Jeffery Tate in action. Mozart's sublime music rose from the pit in perfect harmony with the glittering surroundings of the Teatro di San Carlo, inaugurated in 1737 and the oldest opera house in Europe still in use.

We then proceeded to our farewell dinner at Aldo Bruni's nearby Trattoria San Ferdinando. Six (or was it seven?) courses later we were all well and truly convinced of the excellence of Neapolitan cuisine. This final extraordinary day had proved to be a true feast for all the senses, leaving us exhausted and content, albeit tinged with sadness that the FPS Naples trip was officially over and the prospect of a flight back to reality loomed just over the horizon.

Susan Newell

I am particularly grateful to the FPS's Travel Fund for enabling me to join this unforgettable trip.

THE PALAZZO REALE

Patricia Ferguson writes on a brief trip made to the Palazzo Reale by some FPS members

A quick tour of the *Palazzo Reale* just before the opera, revealed some impressive 19th century Sèvres and a suite of monumental porcelain vases, possibly Limoges, decorated in Naples by Raffaele Giovine and others, between 1840 and 1850 (published by Angela Caròla-Perrotti, *Le Porcellane napoletane dell'Ottocento, 1807-1860*, 1990). The Palace was built in 1600, and the interiors restored after a fire between 1838 and 1842. Upon our ascension up the Grand Staircase, we encountered a Sèvres biscuit bust of Marie-Caroline, Duchesse de Berri (1798-1870), resting on a blue ground socle with gold cypher, 1816. The former Princess Maria-Carolina Ferdinanda Luisa of Naples and Sicily (Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) had married in that year Charles Ferdinand, Duc de Berri (1778-1820), a younger son of Charles X.

Further along was a pair of large ormolu-mounted blue ground vases, 1817, each with a full-length portrait, one of Louis XVIII (1755-1824), after Robert Lefèvre (1755-1830), and the other depicts the Duchesse's father-in-law (Louis XVIII's brother), Charles-Phillippe de France, Comte d'Artois, later Charles X

(1757-1836), after a painting by François Gérard (1770-1837). The respective vases were signed by the factory painters Jean Georget and Abraham Constantin, and the grounds dotted with L's or C's, interspersed with *fleur-de-lys*. It has been suggested that the vases were a gift of the Duchesse, but they may have been French diplomatic gifts.

In addition, there was a pair of *Vases Floréal*, painted with the 'Seasons' based on French views, attributed to Jean-Baptiste Gabriel Langlacé, on a *beau bleu* ground, circa 1820-44, the scenes included: 'Été, vallée du Graisivaudan, près de Grenoble', and 'Printemps, Chateau de la reine Blanche, foret de Chantilly' (below left).

Finally and appropriately a chrome-green ground ormolu-mounted *Vase Médicis* with decoration in gold and platinum, painted with 'Homer among the Potters of Samos', after François Gérard, was executed by the factory painter Antoine Béranger and dated 1825 (below right).

Patricia Ferguson



Current Exhibitions

London

Baroque

4th April - 19 July 2009

*Victoria and Albert Museum
Cromwell Road
London SW7
+44 (0)20 7942 2000*

The World In Monochromes An Oriental Ceramic Society Exhibition

16 April – 20 June 2009

*Brunei Gallery
School of Oriental and African Studies
Thornhaugh Street
Russell Square
London WC1H 0XG.*

French Porcelain for English Palaces: Sèvres from the Royal Collection

23 May – 11 October 2009

*The Queen's Gallery
Buckingham Palace
London SW1A 1AA*

Birmingham, UK

Exotic Eccentricities: Petitot's 'Suite de Vases'

8 May – 6 September 2009

*Barber Institute
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TS*

Forthcoming Exhibitions

London

Objects of Luxury: French porcelain of the eighteenth century

September 2009- March 2010

*Victoria and Albert Museum
Cromwell Road
London SW7
+44 (0)20 7942 2000*

Limoges

Présentation des collections permanentes, et notamment de la plus grande collection au monde de porcelaine de Limoges

1 July 2009- 28 February 2010

*Musée nationale de la porcelaine Adrien Dubouché
8 place Winston Churchill
LIMOGES 87000
France*

00 335 55 33 08 50

New York

Imperial Privilege: Vienna Porcelain of Du Paquier, 1718–44

September 22, 2009–March 21, 2010

*Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York
New York 10028*

Washington D.C.

Sèvres Then and Now: Tradition and Innovation in Porcelain, 1750–2000

*Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens
4155 Linnean Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008-3806
Information: 202.686.5807*

Recent Publications

Geoffrey de Bellaigue
*French Porcelain: In the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen
The Royal Collection*

ISBN-10: 1905686102
ISBN-13: 978-1905686100
£495.00

Joanna Gwilt
*French Porcelain for English Palaces: Sèvres from the
Royal Collection*

ISBN-10: 1905686145
ISBN-13: 978-1905686148
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Amanda Dunsmore and Matthew Martin
*The Peter Wynne Morris collection : French eighteenth-century
white porcelain in the National Gallery of Victoria*

ISBN-13: 978-0724103041
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siècle*

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1750-2000*

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£35.00

Meredith Chilton
*Fired by Passion: Vienna Baroque Porcelain of Claudius
Innocentius Du Pacquier*

ISBN-10: 3897903040
ISBN-13: 978-3897903043
£150.00

Recent Articles

Régine de Plinval de Guillebon. "La manufacture de
porcelaine du comte de Provence à Clignancourt".
L'Estampille - L'Objet d'art, n°443, février 2009, p.62-
69.

Sommaire de la revue Sèvres N° 17 • 2008

'Sic et ... similitur. Images sacrées et images profanes sur les
pots d'apothicaireries de la Sainte Maison de Lorette', Maria
Cristina Villa Alberti

'Xanto, Nicola da Urbino et Maestro Giorgio da Gubbio',
J.V.G. Mallet

'Une nouvelle acquisition du musée des Arts décoratifs de
Paris', Monique Blanc

'La vaisselle des demeures provençales des XVII^e et XVIII^e
siècles', Frédéric d'Agay

'Une « bouillotte » en porcelaine de Bordeaux', Catherine Le
Taillandier de Gabory

'L'heure du thé', Jacqueline du Pasquier

'De quelques passages en ventes aux enchères de porcelaines
de Sèvres conservées dans les collections publiques françaises',
Guillaume Séret

'Louis-Léon de Brancas, comte de Lauraguais et la porcelaine
dure', Odile Chardon

'Un voyage à Paris de Bartolomeo Ginori en 1771', Antoine
d'Albis et Alessandro Biancalana

'Ferdinand Barbedienne et Alfred Serre', Pascal Massé

'Les porcelaines de Sézanne en Champagne', Alain Collomp

'Les bouteilles à sujet', Gérard Wagner

'Mémoire porcelainière', Michel Ardant

'Jean Dupas et la manufacture de Sèvres', France Lechleiter
et Romain Lefebvre

'Fernand Léger et la céramique', Brigitte Hedel-Samson
'Sèvres, années 30', Isabelle Laurin

'La collection d'art du verre contemporain du Mudac',
Bettina Tschumi

'Charles Hair', Florence Slitine

Editor's choice from the Museo Nazionale della Ceramica Duca di San Martino



Saint-Cloud pot à tabac, c. 1720-30



Chantilly jug (one of a pair) of an unrecorded shape, c. 1735



Menecy pot-pourri (one of a pair), c. 1740-50



Japanese cup with Kakiemon decoration c. 1690-1700, French gilt-bronze mounts and Saint-Cloud lions c. 1730



Saint-Cloud snuff box, c. 1740-50

When Madame de Pompadour saw the sea

When Madame de Pompadour saw the sea in 1749
She'd been waiting twenty years.

Rather long for a Poisson.

Years in which water had been something merely

Useful, tame, symbolic –

Poured on her hands, rose-scented, at breakfast,

Splashing in the park with poised abandon,

Or painted, as nymphs or river gods,

By Boucher in her porcelain *salle de bain*;

Weather, the view through a gilded sash

Glimpsed from the stairs on winter days,

Or the breezy reserve on her Vincennes cup,

So stirring, with chocolate, at bedtime.

What happened when she reached Le Havre?

A cheerful sniff at the salty air, a patting of dampened
skin?

A turn at the prow with the King and a glass,

Chasing the gulls in her wind-pressed India cape?

Or a rampant bursting of buttons and stays,

Sharp ripping of muslin and lace,

For a heedless drenching plunge

Wedding Diderot to Shelley?

In fact, they went to mass, then launched three ships,

And watched a phantom battle in the port.

No one shrieked, and no one drowned,

An artist etched each artful scene

To sell to Paris gossips. Another made a model ship

With eighteen working guns: quite watertight,

And fit to bob through calm, symmetrical waters

Warming an orderly heart.

Giles Ellwood

(Madame de Pompadour only once saw the sea, at Le Havre in 1749)



Chantilly tureen and stand, c. 1750-60



Pair of Sèvres egg-cups, c. 1770s

