

THE FRENCH PORCELAIN SOCIETY

IDENTIFICATION OF PLATES AND SERVICES IN THE SEVRES SALES REGISTERS

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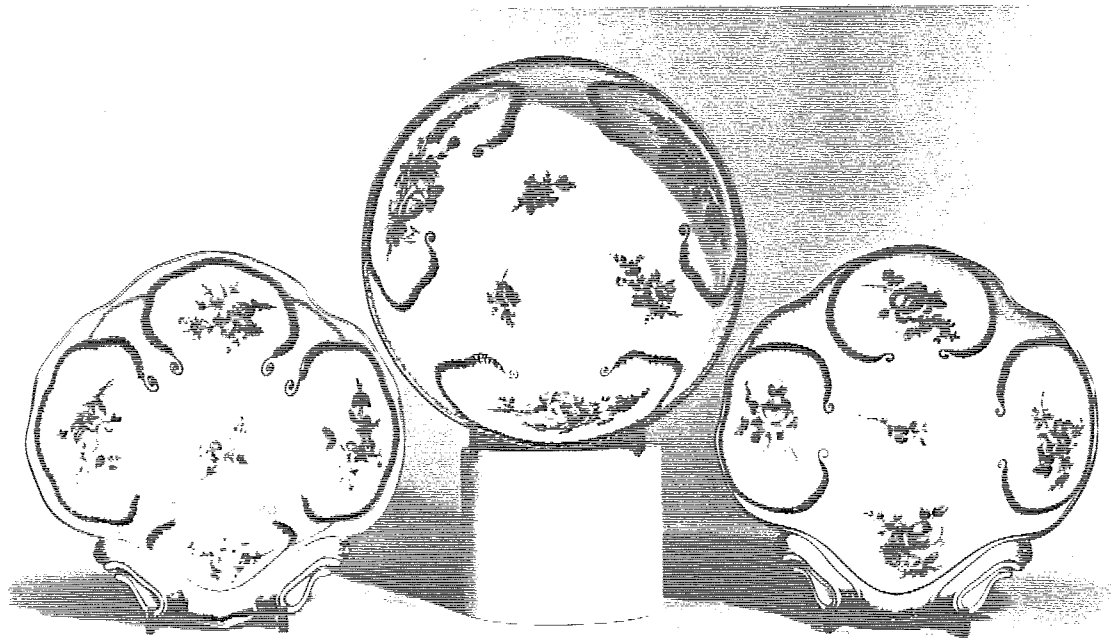
This discussion of the identification of plates and services in the Vincennes-Sèvres Sales Registers represents an early stage in research, hoped to be made available next year, into this subject and the object of the discussion is not only to inform but also to provide the opportunity to be informed. There must be innumerable plates, part services and individual service components in existence which are capable of identification with entries in the Sale Registers and which, if or when so identified, will expand the range of information communicated by these most important 18th Century records.

The Sales Registers are, of course, a record of sales and prices are therefore of paramount importance. Even when details of decoration and recipient are absent, the price is always recorded and with it the name of the article and quantity. It is well-known that, in general terms, the sale price of an item of Vincennes or Sèvres reflects the quality or complexity of its decoration and also size and shape if the item was produced with variations of these kinds. The dinner and dessert plates sold by the factory provide a particularly useful basis for considering the significance of price in relation to decoration alone. They were a staple diet of the factory's production throughout the 18th Century and there was relatively little variation in size and shape, so that the price at which a plate was sold was normally determined just by its decoration. Through analysis of the prices of all plates of described or otherwise known decoration it is possible to produce simple scales of prices appropriate to different styles of decoration, for example as shown below:-

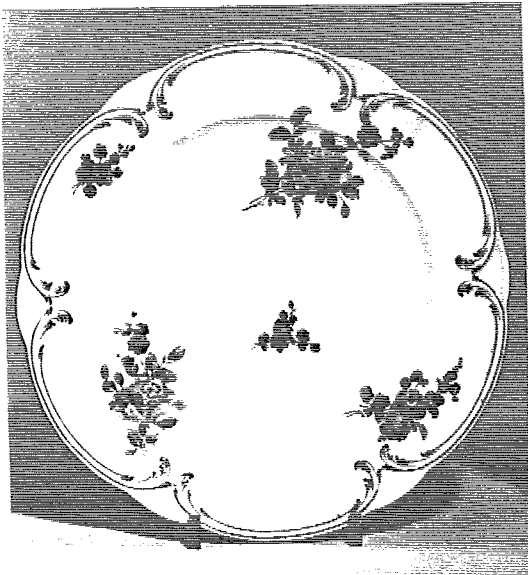
| CATEGORY | PRICE | DESCRIPTION RECORDED IN THE REGISTERS OR OTHERWISE KNOWN | 1768 - 1774 |
|--|-------|---|-------------|
| REBUT (REJECT) | 1.10 | | |
| | 2 | | |
| | 3 | Plain white (undecorated) in the case of the cheaper wares and basic decoration (fleurs, filets) in the case of the more expensive. | |
| | 4 | | |
| BASIC DECORATION | 7.10 | filets d'or (small size). | |
| | 8 | filets d'or; filets bleux. | |
| | 9 | filets d'or; filets bleux; fleurs (small size). | |
| | 10 | filets d'or/double filets d'or; fleurs. | |
| | 12 | filets d'or; filets bleux; fleurs; frizes d'or. | |
| | 13.10 | feuilles de choux. | |
| SIMPLE DECORATION ON WHITE GROUND | 15 | guirlandes bleux et hachures en or/guirlandes bleux hachées en or. | |
| | 18 | - (probably garlands, etc.) | |
| | 21 | bleu céleste (small size). | |
| | 24 | - (probably feuilles de choux, attributs; etc). | |
| | 27 | roses et feuillage/petites roses. | |
| TYPICAL GROUND COLOUR DECORATION, ETC. | 30 | petites roses; roses et mosaïque; attribus et guirlandes. | |
| | 33 | bleu céleste; bleu et or; fond vert à groupes de fleurs; pensées rehaussées d'or; fleurs chinoises; guirlandes de verdure marguerittes rehaussées; corbeilles et guirlandes de roses. | |
| | 36 | bleu céleste/ B.C. fleurs/B.C. oiseaux/B.C. fleurs et oiseaux/B.C. oiseaux et chiffres; lapis caillouté; vert; frizes colorées; frizes riches; guirlandes et attribus; guirlandes de verdure et marguerittes en carmin rehaussées d'or; bleu céleste pointillé, attribus. | |
| SPECIAL DECORATION | 39 | bleu céleste oiseaux. | |
| | 42 | rubans bleu céleste/rubans B.C. guirlandes colorées; guirlandes détachées, pois d'Espagne; guirlandes de fleurs colorées et pois d'Espagne en or; petites vases et guirlandes; bleu céleste guirlandes bleux et or. | |
| | 48 | cartels bas relief | |
| | 54 | bord bleu, enfans et corbeilles | |
| | 60 | - | |
| | 72 | enfans bas relief, fond bleu fallot | |
| | 96 | en chinois (reduced from 140 livres) | |
| | 140 | figures chinoises | |

A most important consideration in connection with this chart is that it reflects a price-decoration relationship for only one particular period, in this case 1768 - 1774. Consideration of these relationships over a longer period of time reveals several apparent drops in price for particular levels of decoration as the 18th Century progressed. The first such drop appears to have occurred in about the middle of 1760, when plates of basic 'fleurs' decoration slipped from a typical price of 18 livres down to about 10 or 12 livres. At about the end of 1767, there appears to be a significant drop in the price of plates at the upper end of the decorative scale: ground colour plates slip from typical prices of 42 or 48 livres to 33, 36 or 39 livres. Somewhere in the middle of the 1770's, the prices of middle range, and to some extent lower range, plates also experience a drop: thus, for example, a 'roses et feuillage' plate moves from 27 or 30 livres down to 18 or even 15 livres. Identification of an existing plate by reference to entries pertaining to its estimated price therefore very much depends on the date of the plate: a green ground plate with bird or floral reserves will have slipped from as much as 60 livres in the late 1750's to as little as 33 livres in the early 1780's and careful attention has to be paid to these changes when using price as a guide to identification.

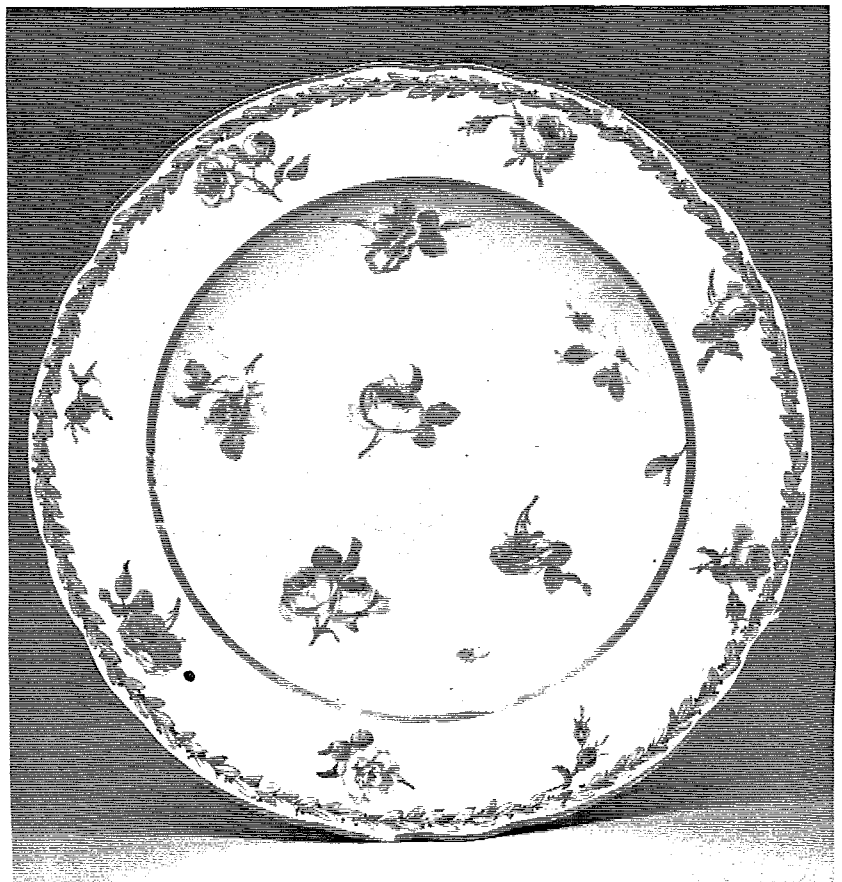
Some typical examples of different styles of plate decoration, and their prices in the different periods in which they were sold, are shown below:-



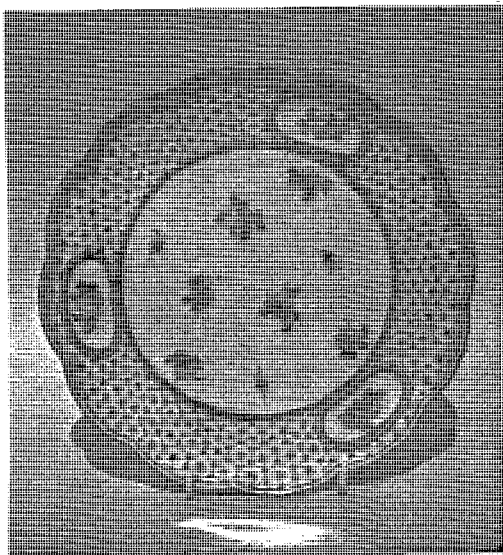
'Feuille de chou' - usually 13.10 livres/sols to mid-1770's, then 9 to 12 l.
(Courtesy Christie's)



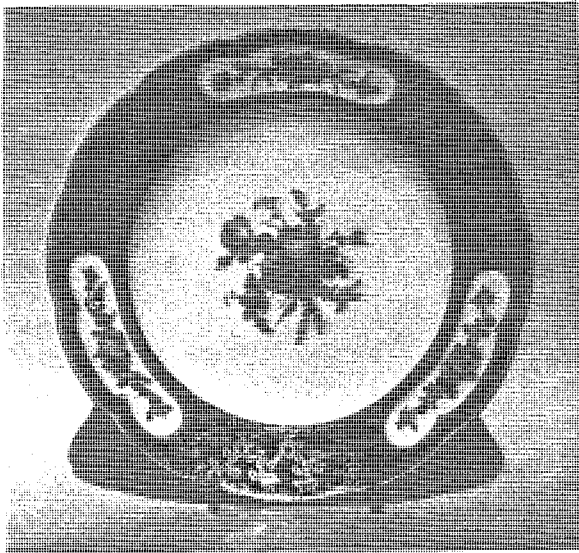
'Fleurs' - usually 18 l to mid-1760, then 10 or 12 l to mid-1770's, thereafter 6 to 12 l. (Courtesy Christie's)



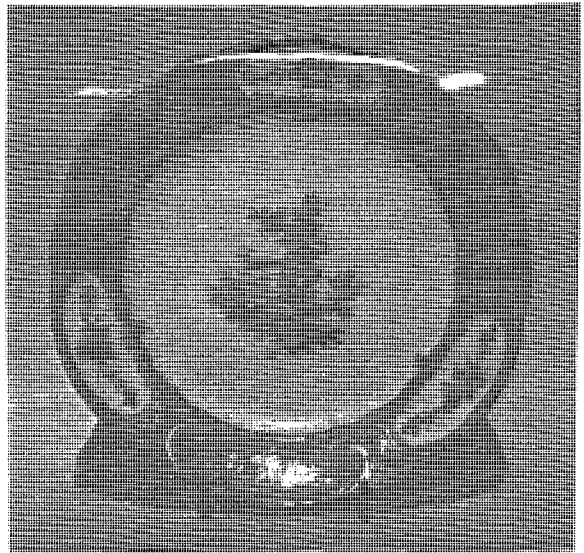
'Roses et feuillage' or 'Petites roses' - usually 27 or 30 l from 1769 to about mid-1770's, then 18 l or even 15 l.
(Courtesy Victoria & Albert Museum)



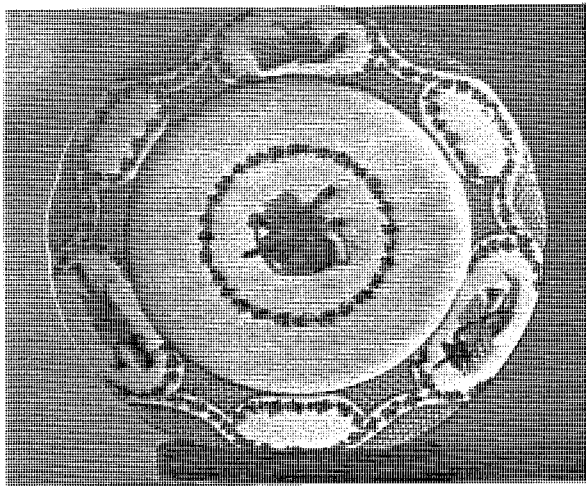
'Roses et mozaïque' - usually 30 l from 1769 to mid-1770's, then about 24 l.



'Bleu lapis' or 'Bleu lapis caillouté' - usually about 42 l from mid-1761 to end of 1767, then 36 l

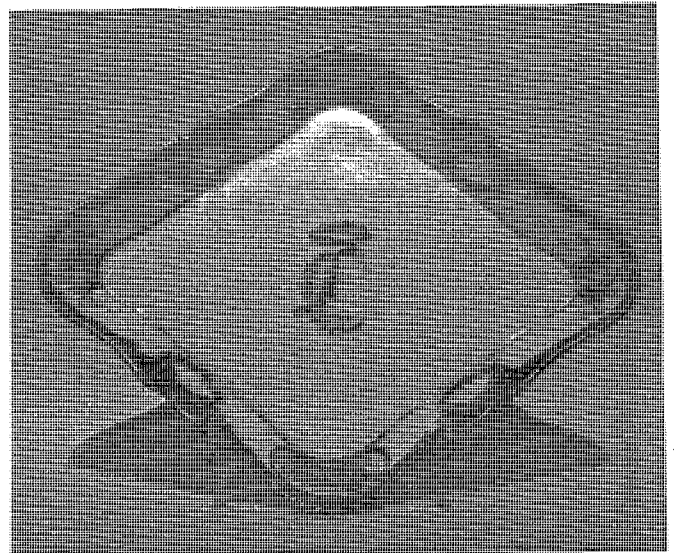


'Bleu céleste oiseaux et fleurs' (or 'B.C. fleurs' or 'B.C. oiseaux') - usually 48 l from 1754 to end of 1767, then about 36 l.



No express description in Registers in period studied so far - the ground is 'Fond pointillée' and the motifs 'attribus' - about 36 l from 1770, depending on motifs.

(Courtesy Deborah Gage)



'Bord bleu, enfans et corbeilles' - about 54 l from early 1770's, but more (e.g. 60, 66 or 72 l) for more elaborate decoration.

It can be seen that a white ground plate with simple floral and border decoration merited a very low price in relation to plates with more elaborate or ground colour decoration. Such simply decorated service wares formed the backbone of the factory's sales in this field, together with large quantities of reject wares. By way of example - not necessarily to be held as typical, but providing a good illustration of the point - in 1778 the factory sold approximately 6170 plates, of which some 2670 were reject wares or similar, 2120 probably had very basic decoration such as a line border, 1090 probably had basic decoration such as polychrome flowers, and a mere 290 appear to fall in the category of more elaborately decorated pieces. One source for the large number of later-decorated and redecorated plates is immediately apparent, quite apart from the later bulk sales of undecorated wares. It is quite possible that the factory maintained almost continuous production, for stock, of wares with decoration such as "fleurs" and "feuille de chou", assembling individual services from the stockpile as and when required. This may account, together with supplements, for the wide spread of dates often encountered in existing services with this type of decoration. In the higher price bands, standard patterns are also evident, but only occasionally are the components of a more expensively decorated service comfortably interchangeable with those of another without differences in, for example, gilding pattern being apparent.

Because of the sheer quantities of simply-decorated white ground wares that were sold, the prospect of identification must, except in special cases, always remain slim. In making any study of plates and services sold by the factory it is expedient to simply disregard entries relating to plates either expressly with basic decoration or otherwise sold at prices which strongly point to basic decoration. Suitable threshold prices for this purpose can be set at 21 livres and above for the period 1755 to mid-1760, and thereafter at 18 livres and above. Prior to 1755 it is difficult to obtain any clear picture of a price-decoration relationship, in which case it is appropriate to note all entries except, perhaps, plates which are expressly of "fleurs" decoration and which were not sold at a price above the usual 18 livres mark.

Given below are two extracts from a prepared list of all plates sold by the factory above these price thresholds:-

| DATE | QUANTITY | TYPE | DECORATION | UNIT COST | RECIPIENT | PART OF SERVICE | NOTES |
|------------|----------|---------------|------------------------------------|-----------|---|-----------------|--|
| 21.4.1753 | 12 | gauderons | oiseaux colorées | 24 | M.de Courteille (Intendant des Finances, Vincennes) | No | sold with 2 sucriers ovales à compartiments 1 ^e oiseaux colorées @ 48 l. |
| 30.6.1753 | 12 | - | camayeux paysages | 3.10 | M.Bouillard (Vincennes shareholder) | No | 'rebut' wares |
| 4.9.1753 | 12 | berceaux | oiseaux et guirlandes | 36 | M.de la Boëxières (Vincennes shareholder) | No | see 4.9.1753 further below, NB Vincennes Cat. Nos. 30, 31; Brunet et Préaud, No. 18 |
| 11.8.1753 | 15 | berceaux | oiseaux et fleurs guirlandes | 36 | M.de Courteille (Intendant des Finances, Vincennes) | No | see 7.12.1753 below. NB notes against 4.9.1753 above |
| 21.8.1753 | 12 | ozier | enfants camayeux | 24 | Not stated (cash) | No | |
| 4.9.1753 | 3 | berceaux | oiseaux et fleurs guirlandes | 36 | M.de la Boëxières (Vincennes shareholder) | No | see 4.9.1753 further above and notes. Poss. omitted from earlier entry |
| 2.11.1753 | 18 | ozier | enfants camayeux | 24 | M.Bouret (fermier-général & Vincennes shareholder) | Yes | see Service List 3 for details. NB poss. supplement of 27.12.1753. |
| 7.12.1753 | 4 | berceaux | oiseaux et guirlandes | 36 | M.de Courteille (Intendant des Finances, Vincennes) | No | see 11.8.1753 above and notes |
| 18.12.1753 | 12 | moulées unies | paysages camayeux | 12 | Machard (m-m) | No | NB similar plates sold 27.12.1753 |
| 18.12.1753 | 12 | cordonné | enfants camayeux | 15 | Bazin (m-m) | No | sold with 2 compotiers tournées 1 ^e enfants camayeux @ 27 l |
| 18.12.1753 | 12 | groseilles | enfants camayeux | 24 | Bailly (m-m) | No | sold with 4 compotiers à ozier 1 ^e enfants camayeux @ 21 l. |
| 27.12.1753 | 6 | ozier | enfants camayeux et fleurs | 24 | M.Bouret (fermier-général & Vincennes shareholder) | No | NB 2.11.1753 above |
| 27.12.1753 | 12 | moulées unies | camayeux paysages | 12 | M.de Crillon (poss. Louis-Balbe-Berton, Marquis de Crillon) | No | NB similar plates sold 18.12.1753 |
| 31.12.1753 | 12 | ozier | enfants camayeux | 24 | Duvaux (m-m) | No | |
| 31.12.1753 | 12 | ozier | fleurs | 21 | Duvaux (m-m) | No | NB Duvaux L-J No. 1688 of 23.11.1753 sale of 12 such plates, but @ 18 l |
| 31.12.1753 | 8 | cordonné | enfants camayeux fleurs guirlandes | 30 | Duvaux (m-m). Sold to Madame de Pompadour | No | see Duvaux L-J No. 1688 of 23.11.1753 Described as 'figures et guirlandes camayeux pourpres'. NB Cordey; Inventaire. M. de P. No. 390. |

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|------------------|-------------------------------------|----|---|-------|---|
| 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 | 24 | - | Not stated | 48 | Bachelier (m-m, and Director of Decoration, Sèvres) | Prob. | } see Service List 37 for details. |
| 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 | 12 | - | Not stated | 54 | Bachelier (m-m, and Director of Decoration, Sèvres) | Prob. | |
| 1.10.1766 | 72 | - | Frizes colorées | 48 | Vicomte (Duc) de Choiseul | Yes | see Service List 38 for details |
| 6.10.1766 | 180 | diff. | Not stated, but bleu fallot, fleurs | 48 | Count Starhemberg (per Duc de Choiseul (A.E.)) | Yes | see Service List 39 for details. Gift to Austrian Ambassador. In private coll. |
| 12.1766 | 60 | poss. à palmes | frizes colorées | 48 | Marquis de Durfort | Yes | see Service List 40 for details. See 4.7.1767 for prob. supplement |
| 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 | 4 | - | Not stated | 54 | Bachelier (m-m, and Director of Decoration, Sèvres) | No, | but prob. supplement to Bachelier wares of 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 (see Service List 37) |
| 1st $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 | 8 | - | Not stated | 54 | Bachelier (m-m, and Director of Decoration, Sèvres) | No, | but prob. supplement to Bachelier wares of 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 (see Service List 37) |
| 3rd $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 | 24 | - | - | 33 | Poirier (m-m) | Prob. | see Service List 41 for details |
| 3rd $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 | 24 | - | - | 24 | Bachelier (m-m, and Director of Decoration, Sèvres) | Poss. | see Service List 42 for details |
| 4.7.1767 | 1 | palmes | frizes colorées | 48 | Marquis de Durfort | No, | but prob. supplement to service of 12.1766 (Service List 40) |
| 31.12.1767 | 36 | fruits | verd, fleurs | 18 | Comte du Châtelet | Yes | } same service. See Service List 43 for details. Sold with 'bleu pointillé' dinner wares |
| 31.12.1767 | 72 | manger | verd, fleurs | 33 | Comte du Châtelet | Yes | |
| 31.12.1767 | 84 | - | mozaïque | 24 | Not stated (cash) | Yes | } sold as same service, although 18 l plates may be separate. See Service List 44 for details |
| 31.13.1767 | 5 | - | mozaïque | 18 | Not stated (cash) | Poss. | |
| 4th $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 | 18 | - | - | 33 | Poirier (m-m) | No | } sale to Madame Lair included 12 compotiers @ 36 l |
| 4th $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 | 67 | - | - | 30 | Madame Lair (m-m) | No | |
| 4th $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 | 5 | - | - | 48 | Madame Lair (m-m) | No | |
| 4th $\frac{1}{2}$ 1767 | 36 | - | - | 21 | Dulac (m-m) | Poss. | see Service List 45 for details |
| 31.12.1767 | 48 | (petites palmes) | bleu céleste, oiseaux (& fleurs) | 48 | Bouffet et Dangirard (bankers for Maréchal Razoumovsky) | Yes | see Service List 46 for details. At Waddesdon, Bucks. |

The extract from the early years shows the emphasis on statement not only of decoration but also of type. This emphasis disappears in later years as plate types settle on a few basic forms. In the early years there are few occasions when plates are clearly sold as part of a service - by 'service' is, for convenience, meant a set of plates and a reasonable number (i.e. more than two) of at least one other dinner or dessert item with conformable decoration - and the purchasers are largely partners in the Vincennes enterprise itself. It is interesting to note instances when the factory has sold two lots of plates of a particular type, for example 'moulées unies', on two close occasions and then virtually no others of the type, which suggests batch production and sale of the batch in parts.

The extract from the middle 1760's shows that purchases are spread between dealers on the one hand and, in general, members of the upper echelon of French society on the other, while the sale of plates specifically as parts of services takes place on a regular basis.

From the viewpoint of identification of existing plates, it can be seen that the parameters of date, quantity, stated decoration, price and recipient provide a wide range of criteria to assist in making an identification or, at the very least, in eliminating a large number of clearly inappropriate entries.

What can be done with plates can, of course, be done with other service components. Thus, probable price structures for services which contain plates of particular prices can be constructed from appropriate examples in the Sales Registers, as shown in the sample below for some structures from the early 1760's to the mid 1770's:-

| ITEM | UNIT COST (LIVRES) | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|----------|---|---------------|---|--------------------|
| | FLEURS | ~ | TROPHIES | ~ | ROSES, ETC | ~ | GROUND COLOUR, ETC |
| Assiettes | 10,12 | ~ | 24 | ~ | 30 | ~ | 36 |
| Assiettes à potage/soupe | | | | | 30 | | |
| Pots à ooglio/oille et plateaux | 288 | | | | | | 600 |
| Terrines et plateaux | | | | | | | |
| Salières à 3 compartiments | 21 | | 30 | | | | 54 |
| Salières doubles | 18 | | | | | | 33,36 |
| Salières simples | 10 | | 15 | | | | 24 |
| Moutardiers et plateaux | 30 | | 48 | | | | 72,78 |
| Beurriers et plateaux | 30 | | 60 | | 80 | | 102,120 |
| Pots à jus | 9 | | 15 | | 18 | | 24 |
| Plateaux (for pots à jus) | 36 | | 48 | | 72 | | |
| Saucières | 36 | | | | | | 78 |
| Plateaux (losanges) (for saucières) | 24 | | | | | | 48 |
| Saladiers 1 ^e | 48,51 | | 84 | | 100 | | 120,144 |
| Saladiers 2 ^e | 33,36 | | 60 | | 80 | | 108,120 |
| Plats de hors d'oeuvres | 30,36 | | | | | | 48 |
| Plats à raves | 24 | | | | | | |
| Porte-huiliers (sans carcasses) | 15 | | 30 | | | | 45 |
| Compotiers ronds | 15,18,21 | | 36 | | 36,39,40,42 | | 42,45,48,51 |
| Compotiers ovales | | | | | | | |
| Compotiers carrés | | | | | | | |
| Compotiers coquilles | | | | | | | |
| Sucriers et plateaux/M.le Premier | 54 | | 72,78,84 | | 80,96,120,132 | | 120,126,132 |
| Tasses à glace | 9 | | 15 | | 18 | | 21,24 |
| Soucoupes à pieds | 27 | | 36 | | 39,42 | | 42,48,51 |
| Plateaux Bouret | 18 | | 30 | | 42 | | 36,42,45 |
| Plateaux | | | | | | | |
| Plateaux | | | | | | | |
| Plateaux à 2 pots | 30 | | 72 | | 80 | | 120,126 |
| Plateaux à 3 pots | 36 | | | | | | |
| Fromagers et plateaux | 42 | | | | | | 120,144 |
| Jattes anglaises | | | | | | | 72 |
| Seaux à bouteilles | 120 | | 168 | | | | 192,204 |
| Seaux à demi-bouteilles | 84 | | | | | | 144,156 |
| Seaux à liqueurs ronds/topettes/ord ^{re} | 42 | | 60,72 | | 72,84,96 | | 102,108,120 |
| Seaux à liqueurs ovales | | | | | 132 | | 144,156 |
| Seaux crénelés | 144 | | | | | | 192,204 |
| Seaux à verres | 27 | | 48 | | | | 60 |
| Seaux à glaces | 150 | | | | 240 | | 240,252 |
| Jatte à punche et mortier | 240 | | | | | | 600 |

The expected grading of prices - albeit with overlaps and the rather bumpy progression to be expected in a sample taken over a short range - is evident from this chart. Even if, in practice, this grading does not occur with absolute consistency it nevertheless provides a working guide.

It is particularly helpful when transcribing services from the Sales Registers to employ a standard format for listing the service components, as shown on the left of the chart. This enables quick and simple comparisons between services and easy detection of those services with a particular component of interest. The selected format follows that most commonly used by the factory and in the great majority of cases the components of a service will be found in this list. The components from 'assiettes a potage' to 'porte-huiliers' are primarily dinner wares and those from 'compotiers' to 'jattes à punche et mortiers' dessert wares. A dessert service will, however, often include certain dinner items, such as 'beurriers'. Moreover, a proper dessert service will nearly always contain 'compotiers' and 'sucriers'.

The foregoing briefly outlines the methods used to obtain a better understanding of the entries in the Sales Registers concerning plates and services and it is instructive to consider some practical examples of how these methods can be applied:-

1. A particular problem concerning the entries in the period late 1750's to mid 1770's is the presentation of sales to merchants as lengthy lists of components grouped together according to type and covering a quarterly, semi-annual or even annual sales period. The grouping of components according to type completely obscures the possibility of some of these components having been sold to the merchant as a service. A typical example is given below, in the form of the section concerning service wares in the list of purchases by the marchand-mercier Madame Lair in the last six month period of 1773:

BULK LISTING OF PURCHASES MADE BY MADAME LAIR (MARCHAND-MERCIER) IN THE LAST HALF OF 1773

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>Tasses à glaces:</u> 45 @ 9 1 | <u>Assiettes:</u> 136 @ 8 1 | <u>Salières:</u> 12 @ 8 1 (10) | <u>(Saladiers):</u> 2 @ 54 1 |
| 32 @ 10 1 (10) | 111 @ 10 1 | 10 @ 18 1 | 4 @ 60 1 (60) |
| 6 @ 18 1 | 210 @ 12 1 | 15 @ 21 1 | 2 @ 108 1 |
| 8 @ 21 1 | 36 @ 13,10 1 (15) | 2 @ 36 1 | 1 @ 144 1 |
| 4 @ 24 1 | 1 @ 21 1 | <u>Pots à jus:</u> 18 @ 7,10 | <u>Soucoupes à</u> |
| <u>Seaux:</u> 2 @ 27 1 (27) | <u>24 @ 36 1</u> | 9 @ 9 1 | <u>pieds:</u> 1 @ 27 1 |
| 12 @ 60 1 | <u>Plat(?):</u> 1 @ 27 1 | 96 @ 10 1 (12) | 6 @ 30 1 (30) |
| 2 @ 78 1 | 9 @ 30 1 | <u>Portehuilier:</u> 1 @ 48 1 (48) | 2 @ 48 1 |
| 8 @ 84 1 | <u>Beurriers:</u> 5 @ 24 1 | 1 @ 78 1 | <u>Plateaux:</u> 8 @ 21 1 (24) |
| 4 @ 96 1 | 12 @ 30 1 | <u>Pots à conf:</u> 1 @ 12 1 (12) | 1 @ 24 1 |
| 10 @ 120 1 | 6 @ 36 1 (36) | <u>Compotiers:</u> 39 @ 18 1 | 5 @ 30 1 |
| 4 @ 132 1 | 1 @ 102 1 | 16 @ 21 1 | 3 @ 36 1 |
| 2 @ 156 1 | <u>Moutardiers:</u> 4 @ 24 1 | 11 @ 24 1 (27) | |
| 2 @ 204 1 | 3 @ 30 1 | 1 @ 42 1 | |
| <u>Seaux à liqueurs:</u> 6 @ 36 1 | 4 @ 36 1 (36) | 6 @ 48 1 | |
| 6 @ 42 1 (108) | 1 @ 78 1 | 1 @ 72 1 | |
| 1 @ 156 1 | <u>Saucières:</u> 3 @ 36 1 (36) | <u>Saladiers:</u> 1 @ 27 1 | |
| <u>Seaux à glace:</u> 4 @ 120 1 | <u>Sucriers:</u> 5 @ 36 1 (36) | 6 @ 33 1 | |
| 3 @ 150 1 | 4 @ 48 1 | 7 @ 36 1 | |
| 1 @ 162 1 (162) | 11 @ 54 1 | 4 @ 42 1 | |
| | 6 @ 60 1 (60) | 4 @ 48 1 | |
| | 1 @ 126 1 | (continued) | |

As it stands, this list is a rather unhelpful jumble of figures, but it attracts interest in the scope of the present study because of the presence of plates at a price above the threshold for basic decoration and in a quantity compatible with a small service. As a first step in analysing the content of the list, marked in brackets against each component type is a respective threshold price which should denote the upper limit of basic decoration. The 'seaux' and 'salières' of unspecified forms (it can at least be postulated that the 'seaux' will be of the cylindrical type) are marked with the threshold prices for the smallest, and therefore the cheapest, type. The threshold price noted against the 'porte-huiliers' is that for the 'à carcasses' form.

Transcribing these entries to the preferred standard format for a service listing, and eliminating all entries not above the threshold price, produces the result shown below:-

| QUANTITY | ITEM | UNIT COST (LIVRES) | PRICE STRUCTURE OF SERVICE WITH PLATES COSTING 36 LIVRES |
|----------|---|--------------------|--|
| 1/24 | Assiettes | 21/36 | 36 |
| | Assiettes à potage/soupe | | |
| | Pots à ooglio/oille et plateaux | | |
| | Terrines et plateaux | | |
| | Salières à 3 compartiments | | 54 |
| | Salières doubles | | 33, 36 |
| 10/15/2 | Salières simples | 18/21/36 | 24 |
| 1 | Moutardiers et plateaux | 78 | 72, 78 |
| 1 | Beurriers et plateaux | 102 | 102, 120 |
| | Pots à jus | | |
| | Plateaux (for pots à jus) | | |
| | Saucières | | |
| | Plateaux (losanges) (for saucières) | | |
| 2/1 | Saladiers 1 ^e | 108/144 | 120, 144 |
| | Saladiers 2 ^e | | 108, 120 |
| | Plats de hors d'oeuvres | | |
| | Plats à raves | | |
| 1 | Porte-huiliers (à carcasses) | 78 | above 72, 96 |
| 1/6/1 | Compotiers ronds- | 42/48/72 | 42, 45, 48, 51 |
| | Compotiers ovales | | |
| | Compotiers carrés | | |
| | Compotiers coquilles | | |
| 1 | Sucriers et plateaux M. le Premier | 126 | 120, 126, 132 |
| 6/8/4 | Tasses à glace | 18/21/24 | 21, 24 |
| 2 | Soucoupes à pieds | 48 | 42, 48, 51 |
| | Plateaux Bouret | | 36, 42, 45 |
| 5/3 | Plateaux | 30/36 | |
| | Plateaux | | |
| | Plateaux à 2 pots | | |
| | Plateaux à 3 pots | | |
| | Fromagers et plateaux | | |
| | Jattes anglaises | | |
| 12/2/8/4 | Seaux à bouteilles (various) | 60/78/84/96 | 192, 204 |
| 10/4/2/2 | Seaux à demi-bouteilles (various) | 120/132/156/204 | 144, 156 |
| | Seaux à liqueurs ronds/topettes/ord ^{re} | | 102, 108, 120 |
| 1 | Seaux à liqueurs ovales | 156 | 144, 156 |
| | Seaux crénelés | | |
| | Seaux à verres | | 60 |
| | Seaux à glaces | | |
| | Jatte à punche et mortier | | |

It can now be seen that, in terms of quantities and component types, there is the possibility that a service is present.

The next step, as shown above in the column on the right, is to note against the individual components the prices they might be expected to have if part of a service with plates costing 36 livres. This reveals a general consistency of many of the actual prices on the left with the guide prices on the right. It also reveals that the single 'comptier' costing 72 livres is rather too expensive to be part of such a service and that the 'seaux' of unspecified forms at prices of 78, 84 and 132 livres do not clearly fit, whereas the 'seaux' prices of 156 and 204 livres coincide with those for 'seaux à demi-bouteilles' and 'seaux à bouteilles' respectively. Considering quantities as well as prices, the prospect of a small 24 plate service containing as many as 10 'salières' @ 18 livres, 15 'salières' @ 21 livres, 12 'seaux à verres' @ 60 livres or indeed 10 'seaux à topettes' @ 120 livres is not very likely (although it is not impossible that portions of some of these totals might be included in a small service). Moreover, only one of the sets of 'tasses à glace' would be likely to belong to a service. These suppositions - and they are perhaps no more than that - help clarify the picture of what the service, if there is a service, may have comprised. In this particular example the analysis is simplified by the absence of any significant duplication of components, which might otherwise suggest the presence of a second service.

The selected example does, however, exhibit one peculiarity in that it has a number of single items - single "sucrier", "moutardier", "beurrier", "porte-huillier" and "seau à liqueurs" for example - whereas these items in a service are more usually present as pairs or multiples of pairs. In addition, the presence of isolated dinner wares in a list of largely dessert wares raises doubts. It is then helpful to consider other sales made by the factory in this period and of particular interest is a service - sold specifically as a service and indeed described in the Register as a "service particulier" - acquired on 15 November 1773 by the Comte de Montbel for the Comtesse d'Artois, a purchase probably not unconnected with the marriage ceremony of the Comte d'Artois at Versailles the following day. This service is represented on the left, while on the right is the reduced list of Lair wares with deletion of the further items probably not connected with a service:-

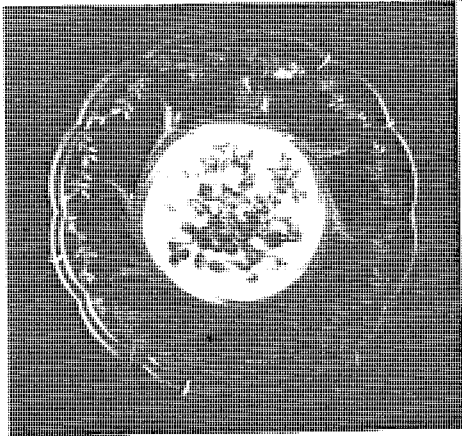
COMTESSE D'ARTOIS - 15.11.1773
Service - 'Fond vert à groupes de fleurs'

MADAME LAIR - Last half of 1773
Possible composition of service in bulk purchases

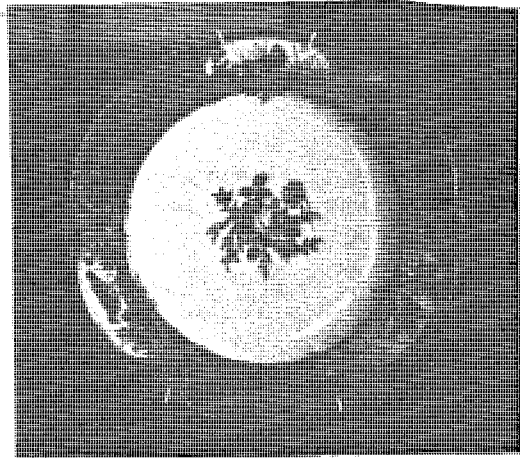
| QUANTITY | ITEM | UNIT COST | QUANTITY | ITEM | UNIT COST |
|----------|---|-----------|----------|---|-----------|
| 24 | Assiettes | 33 | 24 | Assiettes | 36 |
| | Assiettes à potage/soupe | | | Assiettes à potage/soupe | |
| | Pots à oglio/oille et plateaux | | | Pots à oglio/oille et plateaux | |
| | Terrines et plateaux | | | Terrines et plateaux | |
| | Salières à 3 compartiments | | | Salières à 3 compartiments | |
| 2 | Salières doubles | 30 | 2 | Salières (doubles) | 36 |
| | Salières simples | | | Salières simples | |
| 1 | Moutardiers et plateaux | 72 | 1 | Moutardiers et plateaux | 78 |
| 1 | Beurriers et plateaux | 96 | 1 | Beurriers et plateaux | 102 |
| | Pots à jus | | | Pots à jus | |
| | Plateaux (for pots à jus) | | | Plateaux (for pots à jus) | |
| | Saucières | | | Saucières | |
| | Plateaux (losanges) (for saucières) | | | Plateaux (losanges) (for saucières) | |
| | Saladiers 1 ^e | | 1 | Saladiers (1 ^e) | 144 |
| 2 | Saladiers 2 ^e | 90 | 2 | Saladiers (2 ^e) | 108 |
| 2 | Plats de hors d'oeuvres | 45 | | Plats de hors d'oeuvres | |
| | Plats à raves | | | Plats à raves | |
| 1 | Porte-huilliers à carcasses | 72 | 1 | Porte-huilliers (à carcasses) | 78 |
| 4 | Compotiers ronds | 39 | 6 | Compotiers ronds | 48 |
| | Compotiers ovales | | | Compotiers ovales | |
| | Compotiers carrés | | | Compotiers carrés | |
| | Compotiers coquilles | | | Compotiers coquilles | |
| 1 | Sucriers et plateaux/M. le Premier | 120 | 1 | Sucriers et plateaux/M. le Premier | 126 |
| 8 | Tasses à glace | 18 | 8 | Tasses à glace | 21 |
| 2 | Soucoupes à pieds | 45 | 2 | Soucoupes à pieds | 48 |
| | Plateaux Bouret | | | Plateaux Bouret | |
| | Plateaux | | | Plateaux | |
| | Plateaux | | | Plateaux | |
| | Plateaux à 2 pots | | | Plateaux à 2 pots | |
| | Plateaux à 3 pots | | | Plateaux à 3 pots | |
| | Fromagers et plateaux | | | Fromagers et plateaux | |
| | Jattes anglaises | | | Jattes anglaises | |
| 2 | Seaux à bouteilles | 192 | 2 | Seaux (à bouteilles) | 204 |
| 2 | Seaux à demi-bouteilles | 144 | 2 | Seaux (à demi-bouteilles) | 156 |
| | Seaux à liqueurs ronds/topettes/ord ^{re} | | | Seaux à liqueurs ronds/topettes/ord ^{re} | |
| 1 | Seaux à liqueurs ovales | 144 | 1 | Seaux à liqueurs (ovales) | 156 |
| | Seaux crénelés | | | Seaux crénelés | |
| 2 | Seaux à verres | 72 | ? 4 | Seaux (à verres) | ? 96 |
| | Seaux à glaces | | | Seaux à glaces | |
| | Jatte à punche et mortier | | | Jatte à punche et mortier | |
| 2 | Coquetiers | 10 | | | |

It can be seen that the composition of the Artois service is so close to that of the group of wares contained in the Lair list after price and quantity analysis (plus a little hypothesising) that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the latter may represent a small service. Some reinforcement for this notion is provided by similar analysis of the block listing of wares purchased by Madame Lair in the first six months of 1771; this reveals a possible service of virtually identical composition.

2. Applying this method to a specific instance of existing service ware, an example can be made of the "bleu lapis" and "verd" ground composite services in the possession of the Duke of Richmond and displayed at Goodwood House in West Sussex. These services are apparently the consequence of a purchase described by the Reverend William Cole in his Paris Journal (London 1931) under the date 12 November 1765: "The Duke and Duchess of Richmond, who were attended one morning while I was at Paris by Mr. Walpole, bespoke a service of this manufacture for their table which was to cost five hundred pounds. I mean Mr. Walpole went with their Graces to Seve". To this reference can be added the comment that Charles, 3rd Duke of Richmond, who built the present Goodwood House, was Ambassador Extraordinary to Versailles from November 1766; he left Paris on leave shortly after 5 February 1766 and did not return. Elements of the services, which exhibit gilding differences within each service, are shown below together with lists of exactly what survives at Goodwood:-



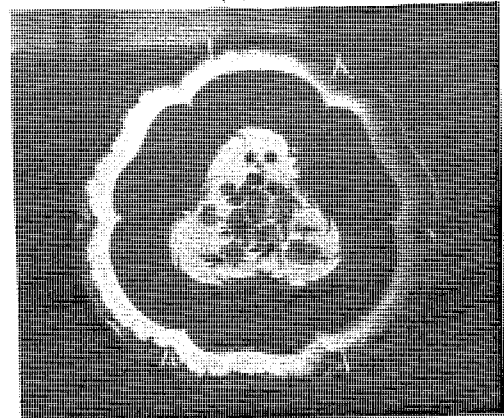
(1)



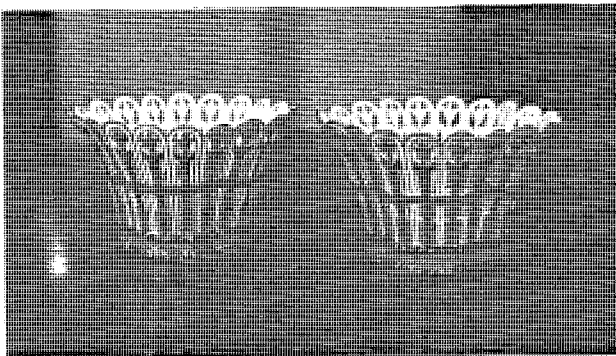
(4)



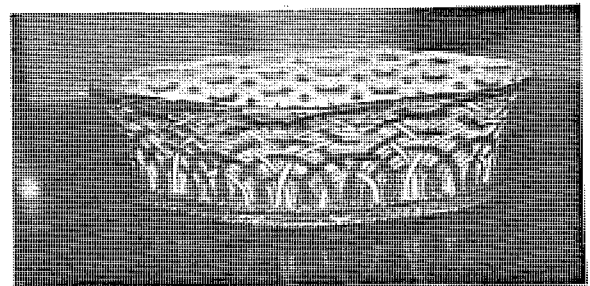
(2)



(5)



(3)



(6)

BLEU LAPIS SERVICE

- 24 assiettes
- 4 porte-huiliers
- 2 compotiers ovales
- 4 sucriers et plateaux
- (2) 20 tasses à glace
- (1) 4 soucoupes à pied
- (3) 4 corbeilles ronds (lapis et verd)

VERD SERVICE

- (4) 22 assiettes
- 8 compotiers (coquilles, carrés)
- (5) 4 plateaux Bouret
- 4 seaux à bouteilles (or demi-bouteilles)
- (6) 1 corbeille lizonnée

The Sales Registers for the period do not record the sale of any services to the Duke of Richmond or indeed any services that comfortably fit the compositions of the Goodwood services and of which the Duke might conceivably have been the recipient. However, taking the plates as a starting point, it is possible to estimate a likely price of about 42 or 48 livres in 1765 - 1767 and an absolute minimum price of 33 livres. Assuming 33 livres as a threshold and taking account of the quantities of 24 'bleu lapis' and 22 'verd' plates, inspection of the list of plates sold by the factory in 1765, 1766 and 1767 (see the second of the two extracts previously shown) indicates only two likely candidates, namely the various plates costing 48 and 54 livres bought by Bachelier at various times in 1766 and 1767 and the 24 plates costing 33 livres bought by Poirier in the third quarter of 1767. Of these two possibilities, the Bachelier entries are obviously far more promising that the Poirier entry. The service wares bought by Bachelier, who was the factory's Director of Decoration and additionally maintained a shop in Paris, in the first half of 1766 are shown in the table below with notation, to the right, of the threshold prices taken to signify basic decoration. In the case of items above these threshold prices, the associated quantities have been encircled.

| QUANTITIES NOW AT GOODWOOD | | BACHELIER PURCHASES IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1766 | | | (APPROX. MAX. PRICE FOR BASIC DECORATION) |
|----------------------------|------|---|---|----------------------|---|
| B. LAPIS | VERD | QUANTITY | ITEM | UNIT COST | |
| 24 | 22 | 36/27/12/24/12 | Assiettes | 10/12/24/48/54 | (13.10) |
| | | | Assiettes à potage/soupe | | |
| | | | Pots à ooglio/oille et plateaux | | |
| | | | Terrines et plateaux | | |
| | | | Salières à 3 compartiments | | |
| | | | Salières doubles | | |
| | | 2/2 | Salières simples | 10/21 | (10) |
| | | 1 | Moutardiers et plateaux | 30 | (36) |
| | | | Beurriers et plateaux | | |
| | | 12 | Pots à jus | 9 | (12) |
| | | | Plateaux (for pots à jus) | | |
| | | | Saucières | | |
| | | | Plateaux (losanges) (for saucières) | | |
| | | 2/1 | Saladiers 1 ^e | 48/192 | (60) |
| | | | Saladiers 2 ^e | | |
| | | | Plats de hors d'oeuvres | | |
| | | | Plats à raves | | |
| 4 | | 1/4 | Porte-huiliers | 12/54 | (18) |
| 2 | 8 | 4/4/8/10/3/2/3 | Compotiers ronds | 12/15/18/21/24/60/72 | (27) |
| | | | Compotiers ovales | | |
| | | | Compotiers carrés | | |
| | | | Compotiers coquilles | | |
| 4 | | 4/2 | Sucriers et plateaux/M. 1 ^e Premier | 54/168 | (60) |
| 20 | | 28 | Tasses à glace | 27 | (10) |
| 4 | | 4 | Soucoupes à pieds | 60 | (30) |
| | 4 | 2/1/4 | Plateaux Bouret | 24/48/60 | (18) |
| | | | Plateaux | | |
| | | | Plateaux | | |
| | | | Plateaux à 2 pots | | |
| | | | Plateaux à 3 pots | | |
| | | | Fromagers et plateaux | | |
| | | | Jattes anglaises | | |
| | | | Seaux à bouteilles | | |
| | 4 | 4 | Seaux à demi-bouteilles | 192 | (96) |
| | | | Seaux à liqueurs ronds/topettes/ord ^{re} | | |
| | | | Seaux à liqueurs ovales | | |
| | | | Seaux crénelés | | |
| | | | Seaux à verres | | |
| | | | Seaux à glaces | | |
| | | | Jatte à punche et mortier | | |
| 4 | 1 | 4/2 | Corbeilles | 96/192 | - |

On the lefthand side in this chart are listed the quantities of 'bleu lapis' and 'verd' wares now at Goodwood and a remarkably close coincidence can be observed between these quantities and those of the expensive items in the list of Bachelier purchases. This extends even to the baskets, for which no threshold prices are conveniently available, but which are priced in the Bachelier list at levels which strongly suggest more expensive decoration.

Lacking from the Bachelier list are a sufficient number of plates costing 54 livres and sucriers costing 168 livres to agree with the Goodwood quantities, but consultation of the list of factory plate sales for the period shows that Bachelier - and only Bachelier - acquired a further 12 plates @ 54 livres later in 1766 and at the start of 1767. Indeed, the plate price of 54 livres does not recur until the end of 1773. The purchases at the end of 1766 also included two sucriers @ 168 livres. Moreover, a substantial service of green ground tea and coffee wares also at Goodwood and evidently connected with the green ground dessert service has an appropriate counterpart in the Bachelier delivery for the last part of 1766. If these Bachelier deliveries are considered to contain the Goodwood services, including the tea and coffee service, then the picture that emerges is as follows:-

| PERIOD OF BACHELIER DELIVERIES | QUANTITY THEN (NOW) | ITEM | UNIT COST (LIVRES) | TOTAL COST |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---|--------------------|------------|
| <u>BLEU LAPIS DESSERT SERVICE</u> | | | | |
| 1st half 1766 | 24 (24) | assiettes | 48 | 1152 |
| " " " | 28 (20) | tasses à glaces | 27 | 756 |
| " " " | 2 } 4 (4) | sucriers et plateaux | 168 | 672 |
| last half 1766 | 2 } | | | |
| 1st half 1766 | 2 (2) | compotiers ovales | 60 | 120 |
| " " " | 4 (4) | soucoupes à pieds | 60 | 240 |
| " " " | 4 (4) | porte-huiliers | 54 | 216 |
| " " " | 4 (4) | corbeilles (rondes) (bleu lapis et verd) | 96 | 384 |
| | | | | 3540 |
| | | | | 3540 |

(CONTINUED)

GREEN DESSERT SERVICE

| | | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|------|------|---------------------------------------|-----|-------------|------|
| 1st half 1766 | 12 | } 24 | (22) | assiettes | 54 | 1296 | |
| last half 1766 | 4 | | | | | | |
| 1st quarter 1767 | 8 | | | | | | |
| 1st half 1766 | 8 | (8) | | compotiers (coquilles, carrés) | 72 | 576 | |
| " " " | 4 | (4) | | plateaux Bouret | 60 | 240 | |
| " " " | 4 | (4) | | seaux à bouteilles or demi-bouteilles | 192 | 768 | |
| " " " | 2 | (1) | | corbeilles (lizonnée) | 192 | 384 | |
| | | | | | | <u>3264</u> | 3264 |

GREEN TEA/COFFEE SERVICE

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----|------|--|------------------------------------|-----|-------------|------|
| last half 1766 | 1 | (1) | | théière | 108 | 108 | |
| " " " | 38 | (36) | | tea cups, coffee cups, and saucers | 60 | 2280 | |
| " " " | 2 | (2) | | pots à sucre | 72 | 144 | |
| " " " | 2 | (2) | | pots à lait (ou caffetaire) | 72 | 144 | |
| " " " | 1 | (1) | | jatte à lait | 72 | 72 | |
| | | | | | | <u>2748</u> | 2748 |
| | | | | | | | 9552 |
| | | | | | | | ==== |

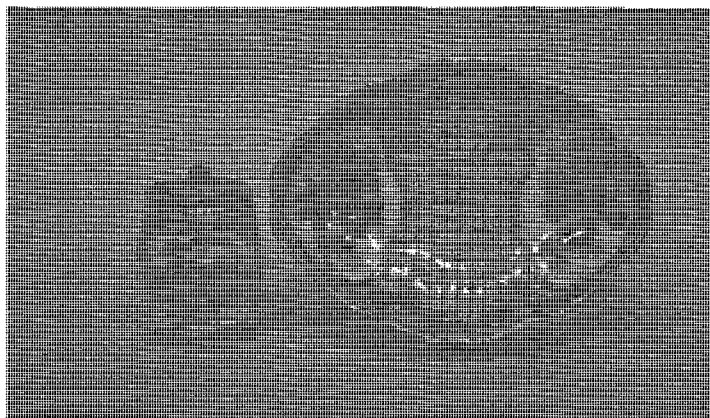
The total price of the Bachelier wares tentatively identified with the Goodwood wares is thus 9552 livres, which by the exchange rate prevailing at about this time is not significantly distant from the £500 mentioned by the Reverend Cole. The association with the Goodwood services with the Bachelier deliveries must remain a hypothesis unless or until more concrete evidence emerges, but the Sales Registers are unlikely to yield a more convincing alternative.

3. Pursuing the possibilities of identification of service wares by price alone, the service ware purchases made by Madame Lair in the first half of 1768, as set out below, raise some intriguing questions:-

MADAME LAIR - First half 1768

| QUANTITY | ITEM | UNIT COST (LIVRES) |
|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 48/72/384/13/6 | Assiettes | 8/10/12/13.10/30 |
| | Assiettes à potage/soupe | |
| 1/3 (| Pots à oglio/oille et plateaux | 168/180 |
|) | Terrines et plateaux | |
| | Salières à 3 compartiments | |
| | Salières doubles | |
| 1/7/6/6/1 | Salières simples | 8/10/18/21/90 |
| 3/1 | Moutardiers et plateaux | 30/144 |
| 6/1 | Beurriers et plateaux | 30/96 |
| 8/24 | Pots à jus | 7.10/9 |
| | Plateaux (for pots à jus) | |
| 3 | Saucières | 36 |
| | Plateaux (losanges) (for saucières) | |
| 1/2/2/6/2/illeg. | Saladiers 1 ^e | 30/33/36/42/60/illeg. |
| | Saladiers 2 ^e | |
| | Plats de hors d'oeuvres | |
| | Plats à raves | |
| 2/2/1 | Porte-huiliers | 18/42/48 |
| 10/27/29/25/4 | Compotiers ronds | 15/18/21/24/96 |
| | Compotiers ovales | |
| | Compotiers carrés | |
| | Compotiers coquilles | |
| 2/16/6/2/1 | Sucriers et plateaux/M. le Premier | 42/54/60/90/240 |
| 1/14/6 | Tasses à glace | 7.10./9/18 |
| | Soucoupes à pieds | |
| | Plateaux Bouret | |
| | Plateaux | |
| 1/4 | Plateaux à 2 pots à confitures | 10/13.10 |
| | Plateaux à 3 pots | |
| | Fromagers et plateaux | |
| 4/2/2/1/2 | Jattes anglaises ou à lait | 18/33/48/84/96 |
| 8/2/2/6/4/2/1 | Seaux à bouteilles diff. | 27/33/54/60/84/120/180 |
| 1/ plus 3 illeg. | Seaux à demi-bouteilles diff. | 192/plus 3 illeg. |
| | Seaux à liqueurs ronds/topettes/ord ^{re} | |
| 1/1 | Seaux à liqueurs ovales | 96/300 |
| 3/3 | Seaux crénelés | 120/144 |
| | Seaux à verres | |
| 1/2 | Seaux à glaces | 120/150 |
| 1 | Jatte à punche et mortier | 240 |
| 1/2/2/1/1/1/1 | Ecuelles et plateaux | 30/39/48/84/180/192/360 |
| 3/3/1 | Coquetiers | 6/9/12 |

The small quantity of plates costing 30 livres does not suggest that there is likely to be an associated service, but encircled in the list are some items that seem to be exceptionally expensive for the period. These items have the appearance of possibly constituting a small service - without plates - in their own right. A 'moutardier' costing 144 livres, for example, must have had particularly special decoration to justify a cost that seems to be almost double that for a ground colour 'moutardier'. This entry brought to mind a 1767 'moutardier', decorated by Dodin, in the possession of the Antique Porcelain Company in London, as shown below:



The quality of the putto reserves on this piece is clearly exceptional and whilst decorative appeal is a highly subjective issue, it is difficult to deny that this piece is a particularly elegant example of the factory's work at that period. To explore the possibility of a connection between this 'moutardier' and the Lair 'moutardier', it is necessary to tabulate all the 'moutardier' sales recorded in the Sales Registers for the period 1767 to 1770, as set out below:-

RECORDED MOUTARDIER SALES 1767, 1768, 1769 & 1770

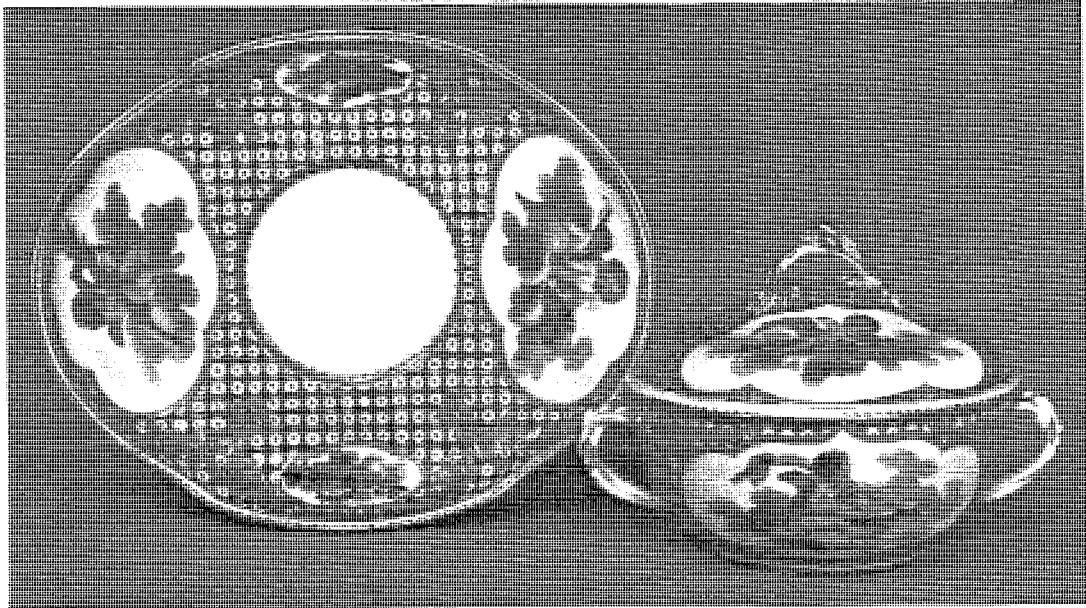
| DATE | RECIPIENT | DECORATION | QUANTITY/COST | DATE | RECIPIENT | DECORATION | QUANTITY/COST |
|------------|-----------|----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 10.3.1767 | Chonen | - | 1 @ 30 | 4.2.1769 | Testard | - | 8 @ - |
| 1st ¼ 1767 | Poirier | - | 1 @ 30 | " " | " | - | 2 @ - |
| " " | Lair | - | 1 @ 18 | " " | " | - | 2 @ - |
| " " | Bréant | - | 2 @ 30 | 1.7.1769 | Christian VII | B.Lapis caill. | 4 @ 78 |
| 1.4.1767 | Louis XV | - | 2 @ 30 | 1st ½ 1769 | Poirier | - | 4 @ 30 |
| 9.4.1767 | Cash | - | 2 @ 30 | " " | Lair | - | 1 @ 30 |
| 5.7.1767 | Cash | (rebut) | 3 @ 3 | 20.10.1769 | Cash | - | 1 @ 30 |
| 3rd ¼ 1767 | Poirier | - | 2 @ 24 | 2.9.1769 | Louis XV | fleurs | 1 @ 30 |
| " " | " | - | 4 @ 30 | 12.1769 | Choiseul | fleurs | 2 @ 30 |
| " " | " | - | 2 @ 36 | 11.4.1769 | du Barry | B.C. oiseaux | 2 @ 72 |
| " " | Lair | - | 7 @ 30 | 12.1769 | Buffauls | bleu céleste | 2 @ 78 |
| " " | Sayde | - | 1 @ 30 | 2nd ½ 1769 | Poirier | - | 4 @ 30 |
| 11.9.1767 | Cash | - | 1 @ 15 | " " | Dulac | - | 2 @ 33 |
| 14.11.1767 | Cash | - | 2 @ 24 | " " | " | - | 1 @ 66 |
| 31.12.1767 | Cash | - | 2 @ 30 | " " | Lair | - | 2 @ 24 |
| 31.12.1767 | Châtelet | bleu pointillé | 4 @ 78 | " " | " | - | 3 @ 30 |
| 4th ¼ 1767 | Poirier | - | 2 @ 24 | " " | Sayde | - | 1 @ 30 |
| " " | " | - | 5 @ 30 | " " | Bailly | - | 2 @ 30 |
| " " | Lair | - | 5 @ 30 | 8.1.1770 | Cash | - | 2 @ 30 |
| " " | Dulac | - | 2 @ 30 | 7.8.1770 | Cash | - | 1 @ 30 |
| " " | Tesniers | - | 1 @ 30 | 25.9.1770 | Buffauls | - | 2 @ 33 |
| " " | Bailly | - | 1 @ 30 | 1st ½ 1770 | Lair | - | 4 @ 30 |
| 31.12.1767 | de Mauroy | - | 2 @ 30 | " " | " | - | 2 @ 36 |
| 14.1.1768 | Cash | - | 2 @ 24 | " " | Poirier | - | 2 @ 30 |
| 4.2.1768 | Cash | - | 1 @ 72 | " " | " | - | 2 @ 36 |
| 14.6.1768 | Cash | lapis | 1 @ - | " " | Dulac | - | 1 @ 30 |
| 2.7.1768 | de Verdun | - | 1 @ 30 | " " | Sayde | - | 1 @ 30 |
| 5.9.1768 | Cash | (rebut) | 1 @ 6 | " " | Cash | - | 2 @ 24 |
| 1st ½ 1768 | Poirier | - | 6 @ 30 | 12.1770 | Louis XV | - | 1 @ 48 |
| " " | " | (rebut) | 1 @ 6 | 21-24.9.1770 | Office du Roy | - | 2 @ 30 |
| " " | Lair | - | 3 @ 30 | 12.1770 | du Barry | - | 1 @ 144 |
| " " | " | - | 1 @ 144 | 1.9.1770 | Poirier | - | 1 @ 24 |
| " " | Tesniers | (rebut) | 2 @ 6 | 2nd ½ 1770 | " | - | 2 @ 30 |
| 5.11.1768 | Cash | bleu céleste | 2 @ 84 | " " | " | - | 2 @ 72 |
| 14.12.1768 | Cash | - | 1 @ 18 | " " | Lair | - | 2 @ - |
| 2nd ¼ 1768 | Poirier | - | 2 @ 24 | " " | " | - | 6 @ - |
| " " | " | - | 4 @ 30 | " " | Dulac | - | 2 @ 30 |
| " " | " | - | 1 @ 36 | | | | |
| " " | Lair | - | 2 @ 30 | | | | |
| " " | Tesniers | - | 1 @ 30 | | | | |
| " " | Sayde | - | 2 @ 30 | | | | |
| " " | Bréant | - | 1 @ 30 | | | | |

30 livres = white ground, scattered flowers
 36 livres = feuille de chou
 48 livres = probably white ground, scattered roses
 72, 78 & 84 livres = coloured ground
 144 livres = special

The 'moutardiers' sold at prices above the level associated with basic decoration (36 livres) are underlined in the above list and immediately apparent is the exceptional nature of the price of 144 livres, which appears on only one other occasion in connection with a small - and very expensive - service bought by Madame du Barry in September 1770. The closest approaching price of 84 livres, expressly for a 'bleu céleste' ground piece, is some distance from 144 livres. It would be difficult to accept that a 'moutardier' with such striking decoration as that illustrated would command a price below that attaching to a more

conventionally decorated ground colour example. This being so and if the Sales Registers are not deficient in recording all sales made in this period, there are only the Lair and du Barry entries that seem to be candidates for identification with the Dodin 'moutardier'. The du Barry purchase in September 1770 is a few years later than the 1767 date of this 'moutardier' and there are considerations that the decoration of the du Barry service may have been something else. The Lair entry is left as the preferred candidate and since there were other similarly expensive items in the Lair delivery there is the prospect that other dated items of this decoration may exist. The list can perhaps be extended to include a few exceptionally expensive wares in the Lair purchases for the first half of the following year, in particular 'tasses à glaces' @ 36 livres and a single 'porte-huillier' costing 144 livres. The pattern even persisted into the first half of 1770, with a 'beurrier' costing 240 livres and two 'plats de hors d'oeuvres' each costing 168 livres, all being prices well above the usual for elaborately decorated or ground colour wares, although this does not itself predicate a connection with the 1768 or 1769 delivery.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that a few pieces with decoration conforming to that of the 'moutardier' do indeed exist. The 1768 Lair delivery included a single 'seau à liqueurs ovale' and such a 'seau' appeared in the Sotheby's, New York, sale of 5.12.1974 (lot 68). The same salerooms presented a 1767 'cuvette' on 1.12.1977 (lot 231), although the item illustrated in the sale catalogue closely resembles a plateau of a type occasionally used for 'sucriers ovales', a single 'sucrier' being present in the 1768 Lair delivery. Also included in this delivery was an 'ecuelle' and shown below is an undated 'ecuelle' in the Victoria & Albert Museum (Cat. No. C431 to b - 1921):-



(Courtesy Victoria & Albert Museum)

4. Of equal importance in the identification of services by reference to quantities and prices is the consideration of component types. A relevant example is the 1767 'bleu céleste' service, or composite service, sold by Sotheby's, London, on 1 February 1946 as lot 94, part of the catalogue illustration being shown below:-



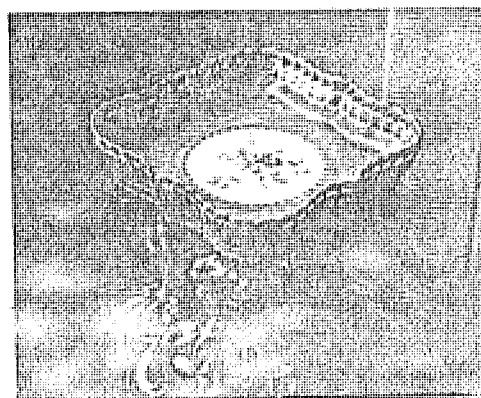
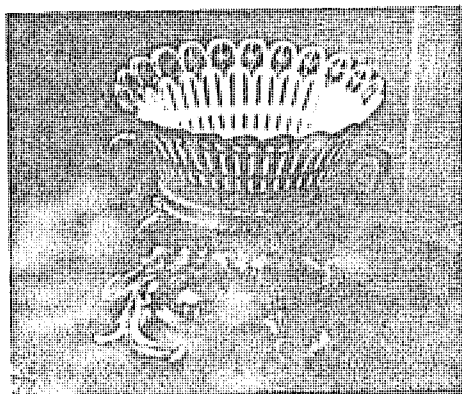
(Courtesy Sotheby's)

These components are a 'soucoupe à pied', a 'compotier rond', a 'sucrier', a 'plateau losange' with basket-work border and a plate ('assiette à palmes'), no less than 43 plates being included in the sale along with two of the 'plateau losanges'. A search of a list of plates sold by the factory in 1767 and the next few following years with reference to a set of not less than 43 forming part of a service, and having a price of about 48 livres in 1767 and about 36 livres thereafter, reveals only one clearly suitable candidate. This is the large 'bleu céleste, fleurs' service sold on 16 April 1768 to the Baron de Breteuil; the Baron played a significant part in 18th Century French internal and external politics and at the date of acquisition of this service was the French Ambassador to Sweden, an important post. Details of the service he acquired are shown in the following list:-

BARON DE BRETEUIL 16.4.1768

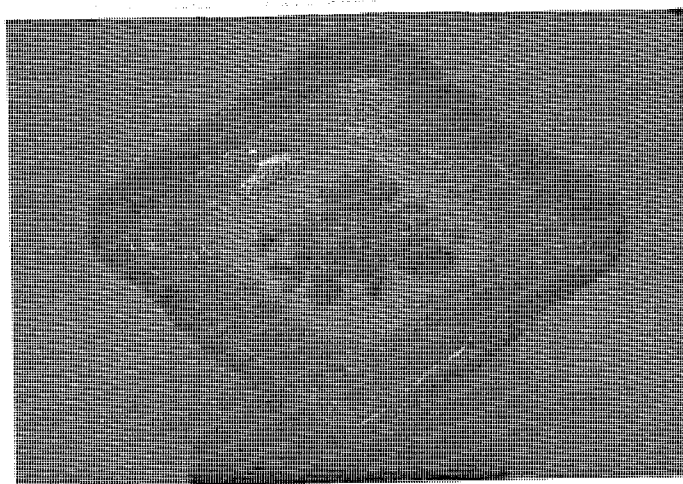
| QUANTITY | ITEM | UNIT COST |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 96 | Assiettes à manger | 36 |
| 36 | Assiettes à potage/soupe- fruits | 21 |
| | Pots à oglio/oille et plateaux | |
| | Terrines et plateaux | |
| | Salières à 3 compartiments | |
| | Salières doubles | |
| | Salières simples | |
| | Moutardiers et plateaux | |
| | Beurriers et plateaux | |
| 14 | Pots à jus | 24 |
| | Plateaux (for pots à jus) | |
| | Saucières | |
| | Plateaux (losanges) (for saucières) | |
| 4 | Saladiers 1 ^e | 144 |
| 2 | Saladiers 2 ^e Verdun | 60 |
| | Plats de hors d'oeuvres | |
| | Plats à raves | |
| | Porte-huiliers | |
| 12 | Compotiers ronds diffs. | 48 |
| | Compotiers ovales | |
| | Compotiers carrés | |
| 4 | Compotiers coquilles | 42 |
| 4 | Sucriers et plateaux/M. le Premier | 132 |
| 36 | Tasses à glace | 21 |
| 4 | Soucoupes à pieds | 42 |
| | Plateaux Bouret | |
| 4 | Plateaux triangles | 36 |
| 4 | Plateaux du Roy 2 ^e | 42 |
| 2 | Plateaux à 2 pots | 120 |
| | Plateaux à 3 pots | |
| 2 | Fromagers et plateaux | 120 |
| | Jattes anglaises | |
| | Seaux à bouteilles | |
| 4 | Seaux à demi-bouteilles | 144 |
| | Seaux à liqueurs ronds/topettes/ord ^{re} | |
| 2 | Seaux à liqueurs ovales | 144 |
| 4 | Seaux crénelés | 192 |
| | Seaux à verres | |
| 2 | Seaux à glaces | 240 |
| | Jatte à punche et mortier | |
| 2 | Grands corbeilles | 288 |

Allowing that this service is indeed large enough to embrace all the pieces in the Sotheby's sale, it is interesting to observe that the service includes two "grandes corbeilles" each at the particularly high price of 288 livres, unusual and evidently quite significant pieces. A "corbeille" is, of course, a basket and the trays in the Sothebys sale are indisputably trays, although with basketwork borders. Such trays were more usually components of déjeuners and known as, for example, "plateaux losanges corbeilles à jours". It would be helpful to know, however, whether the description "grande corbeille" might apply to such a tray in the less usual context of a service. An answer might be provided by the Sales Registers as far back as 1755, when it is recorded in the 31.12.1755 supplement to the Louis XV "bleu céleste" service that the more usual service components were accompanied by "grandes corbeilles rondes, quarrés, ovales, losanges, octogones and triangles" as well as by "grandes corbeilles ovales élevées" and "rondes élevées". Some of these baskets passed through the hands of the Comte de Stainville to the Duke of Buccleuch and are today at Boughton House, Northamptonshire, two being shown below:



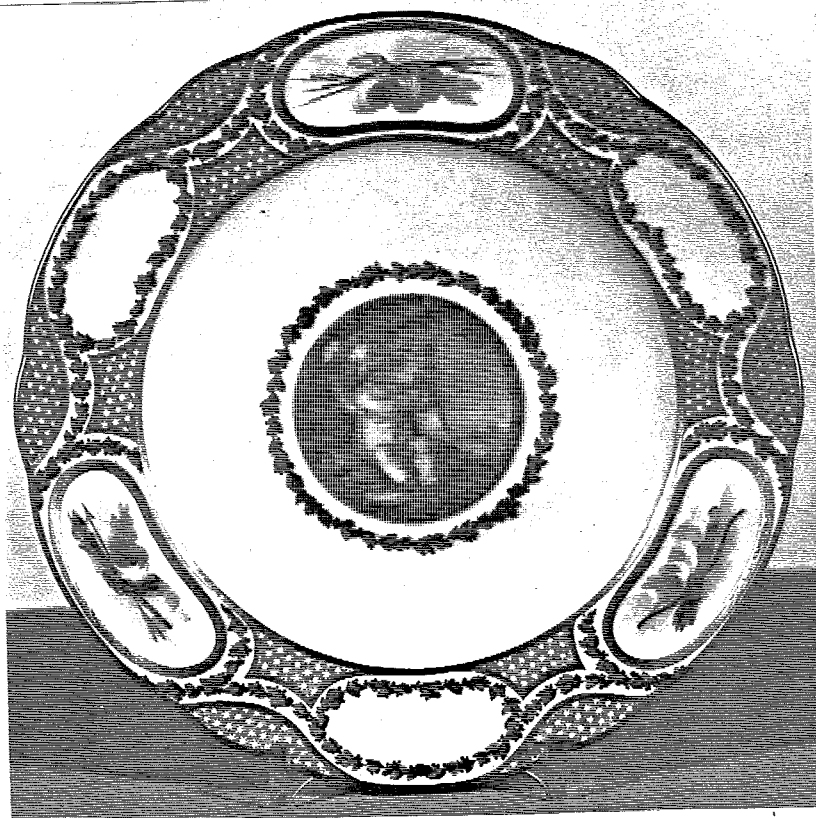
On the left is what is evidently one of the "grandes corbeilles ovales élevées" while that on the right is apparently one of the "grandes corbeilles quarrés". The latter is in fact a tray with basketwork border and one of the numerous variations in plan shape of this type of tray. On at least one occasion therefore,

even if that occasion was rather earlier than the de Breteuil service, the description "grande corbeille" in a service signified a tray of the kind in the Sotheby's sale. The association of this unusual tray with the description in the de Breteuil service perhaps provides an extra detail to tip the scales a little more firmly in favour of correspondence of the Sotheby's wares with the Ambassador's service. It is worth recording that these basketwork border trays are impressively detailed and massively potted pieces and one such, in the possession of the Antique Porcelain Company, is illustrated below:



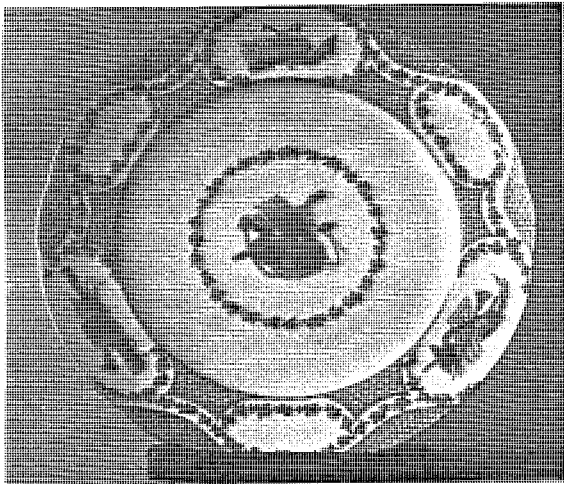
By its decoration (it carries no date), especially the distinctive gilding with hatched rococo panels and the flamboyant mélange of flowers and fruit, it might well be the companion to the one illustrated in the Sotheby's catalogue.

5. For a final example, a descent will be made into the field of speculation, which sometimes has to provide the starting point for more tangible studies. The Royal Collection contains a particularly fine set of 12 plates (de Bellaigue: 'Sèvres from the Royal Collection' (1979), No.72) each with a pale blue 'oeil-de-perdrix' border containing reserves with trophies. In the centre of each plate is a polychrome medallion featuring a putto emblematic of one of Love, the Seasons, the Elements and the Arts. One of these plates is illustrated below:-

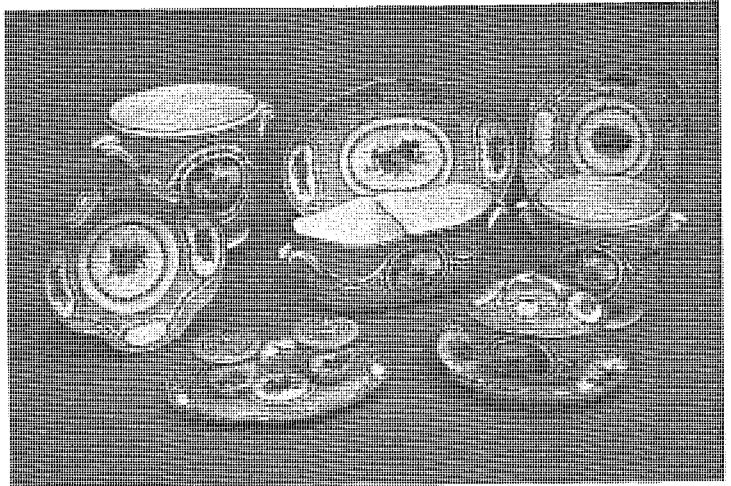


(Courtesy
H.M. the
Queen)

It is instinctively felt that a plate of such quality must be of some importance and the presence of a figural subject in the decoration suggests that a higher sale price than usual would be appropriate. The Collection catalogue cited above indicates a date for the plate of circa 1765 - 70 and if the Sales Registers are consulted for an extended sales period of 1765 to 1777 no reference can be found to any plate with described decoration, such as 'fond pointillé', clearly appropriate to the Royal Collection plates. Apart from some 'bleu pointillé' dinner wares bought by the Comte du Châtelet on 31 December 1767, it is not until 30 December 1783 that a service of the relevant ground is specifically mentioned: a small service 'fond bleu céleste pointillé oiseaux d'après M. de Buffon', unhelpfully without plates, acquired by the Duc de Chartres and very likely given to the wife of his friend and confidante, Nathaniel Forth. A particular difficulty is thus the estimation of the likely price of the Royal Collection plates. However, some help might be derived from the Melbourne service of 20 March 1771, the decoration of which is not stated but which happily is preserved intact at Firle Place in Sussex. Some pieces from this fine service are reproduced below:-



(Courtesy Deborah Gage)



(Courtesy Deborah Gage)

As can be seen, the Melbourne plates - for which the Sales Registers record a price of 36 livres - are of basically the same decoration as the Royal Collection plates but with substitution of a central trophy for the figural subject. Other elements of the Melbourne service have exclusively putto reserves, however, or, in the case of the 'sucrier' and 'plateau', both putti and trophies. Consideration of the price structure of the Melbourne service shows a sharp division in price between the pieces with putti and those with trophies only. This is revealed by the following table, in which prices of the components of the Melbourne service are additionally compared with the prices of equivalent components of - on the left - fairly expensive services (mostly ground colour) in the period 1765-77 and - on the right - some of the most expensive services from this period:-

| MELBOURNE 20.3.1771 Item / decoration / price | EXPENSIVE SERVICES 1765 - 1777 | | | | | | VERY EXPENSIVE SERVICES 1765 - 1777 | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | Breteuil 16.4.1768 | Christian 1768-69 | Lambert 7.3.1770 | Gustav 1.10.1771 | A.E. (Saurd) 26.8.1773 | | Starhemberg 6.10.1766 | Razoumovsky 31.12.1767 | du Barry 1.9.1770 | A.E. (Naples) 4.12.1773 | du Barry 31.8.1773 | Asturies 10.3.1775 |
| Assiette trophies (36) | (36) | (36) | 42 | (36) | (36) | | 48 | 48 | 60 | 54 | 140 | 66 |
| Saladier trophies (144) | (144) 60 | (144) 120 | | 120 108 | 120 96 | | 240 168 | | | 156 | | 210 174 |
| Compotier trophies (42) | (42) 48 | 48 51 | 48 54 | 48 | 48 | | 72 | 72 | 72 | 78 | 180 | 90 |
| Sucrier putti (216) | 132 | 132 | 144 | 126 | 96 | | 168 | 192 | (216) | 180 | 192 | 192 |
| Plateau à deux pots trophies (120) | (120) | (120) | | 126 | | | | | | | | |
| Jatte anglaise trophies (72) | | | (72) | | | | | | | | | |
| Seau à bouteille putti 288 | | 204 | | 204 | 180 | | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 | 240 |
| Seau à toquette putti 204 | | 120 | 108 | 108 | 72 | | 144 | | 192 | 144 | | 156 |
| Seau ovale putti 216 | 144 | 156 | | 156 | 144 | | 168 | 192 | | | | 204 |

The price correspondences in this comparison are encircled and it can be seen that the putto decorated pieces in the Melbourne service are generally some 60 to 80 livres more expensive than their counterparts in the expensive, as distinct from exceptionally expensive, services. In the latter category, the only exact correspondence is between the Melbourne 'sucrier' and that of the du Barry service of September 1770. The price of the Melbourne 'seau à toquettes' and 'seau ovale' are approached, if not quite equalled, by the equivalent components in the du Barry and Asturies services. The Melbourne 'seau à bouteille' at 288 livres remains well out of reach and it is necessary to look to the Comte d'Artois service of 16 August 1782 to find a 'seau à bouteille' at this price (apart from the exceptionally high prices charged in the 1750's). Considering the comparative table as a whole, it would not seem unduly rash to suggest that, had the Melbourne plates been decorated with putti rather than trophies, they might have merited a price in the vicinity of 60 livres, in any event not less than about 48 livres. If 48 livres is taken as a base value, it is interesting to extract from the Sales Registers all the recorded sales of plates at 48 livres or more in the period 1765 to 1777, as shown below:-

| DATE / QUANTITY / DECORATION / PRICE / RECIPIENT | DATE / QUANTITY / DECORATION / PRICE / RECIPIENT |
|--|--|
| 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1765 12 - 48 Dulac | 1771 1 - 60 Poirier |
| 12.1765 10 - 48 Not stated | 26.1.1773 1 cartels bas relief 48 Mazarin |
| 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1765 1 - 48 Bachelier | 26.1.1773 1 enfans,bleu fallot 72 Mazarin |
| 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1765 1 - 60 Bachelier | 4.12.1773 48 enfans et corbeilles 54 A.E. (Naples) |
| 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 24 - 48 Bachelier | 31.8.1773 10 Figures chinoises 140 du Barry |
| 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 12 - 54 Bachelier | 28.5.1774 2 en chinois 96 Mazarin |
| 1.10.1766 72 Frizes colorées 48 Choiseul | 28.5.1774 2 en guirlandes 72 Mazarin |
| 6.10.1766 180 (Bleu fallot) 48 Starhemberg | 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1774 4 - 60 Lair |
| 12.1766 60 Frizes colorées 48 Durfort | 10.3.1775 96 (wreaths,landscapes,etc) 66 Asturias |
| 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1766 4 - 54 Bachelier | 9.8.1775 10 enfans,diff.desseins 66 de Faire |
| 1st $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 8 - 54 Bachelier | 20.8.1776 1 - 100 de la Foix |
| 4.7.1767 1 Frizes colorées 48 Durfort | 20.8.1776 1 - 72 de la Foix |
| 4th $\frac{1}{4}$ 1767 5 - 48 Lair | 20.8.1776 1 - 54 de la Foix |
| 31.12.1767 48 B.C. oiseaux 48 Razoumovsky | 20.8.1776 1 - 48 de la Foix |
| 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1769 3 - 48 Poirier | 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1776 4 - 48 Bazin |
| 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1769 1 - 60 Poirier | 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1776 1 - 84 Cellieu |
| 1.9.1770 12 - 60 du Barry | 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1777 2 - 96 Grouet |
| | 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 1777 2 - 66 Daguerre |
| | 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ 1777 2 - 96 Grouet |

If this list is searched for a set of at least 12 plates, or purchases together making up such a set, it is apparent that there are very few candidates. The Bachelier purchases of 1766 and 1767 are, as already discussed, strong candidates for identification with the Goodwood services and the Dulac purchase of 12 plates @ 48 livres in the first half of 1765 seems to be at the very limit, or beyond the limit, for the likely sale date of wares with the style of decoration exhibited by the Royal Collection plates. An intriguing entry is the sale of 10 plates 'enfans, diff. desseins' @ 66 livres to M. de Paire on 9 August 1775, but his name does not appear again in connection with plate purchases and his 1775 purchase is two short of the total in the Royal Collection.

The only entry not tentatively disqualified on the grounds of date, quantity and decoration seems to be that concerning the 12 plates each costing 60 livres featured in the du Barry service of 1.9.1770. This service has already been mentioned and, to the components listed in the comparative table, can be added a single 'salière en corbeille' at 96 l, a single 'moutardier' at 144 l (which has already attracted notice in this discussion), 'tasses à glace' at 30 l, a 'plateau triangle' at 60 l, 'seaux à demi-bouteilles' at 216 l, a 'corbeille ovale' at 192 l and 'manches de couteaux' at 24 l, a small but expensive service.

In view of the price comparison with the Melbourne service, the close proximity in date - the services are less than 7 months apart - and the considerations that the Royal Collection plates raise, it would not unduly strain credulity to speculate that the du Barry service might have been decorated in a manner similar to that of the Melbourne service but entirely with putto subjects. A few other pieces of service ware of this kind of decoration also exist and shown below are two 'seaux à bouteilles' scheduled for sale at Christie's in July 1985, one 'seau' including in its decoration a dated reference to the marriage of the 16 year old dauphin to the equally juvenile Archduchess Marie Antoinette on 16 May 1770:-



(Courtesy Christie's)

Whether or not these 'seaux' might have any connection with the Royal Collection plates and whether or not the 'seaux' or the plates might have a connection with the 1770 du Barry service awaits a more concrete study. It is a diverting thought, however, that, if there were such connections, Madame du Barry might have acquired in 1770 a small service including a decorative allegory concerning a powerful girl with whom her personal relations deteriorated to the point of requiring the Austrian Empress to instruct her recalcitrant daughter to adopt a more civilised manner towards the King's mistress, an instruction obeyed only to the extent of a nominal thaw in the atmosphere between them on New Year's Day 1772. The arrival of Madame du Barry's famous "petits vases et guirlandes" service in 1771 might then have provided a welcome opportunity to dispose of the small 1770 service - Madame du Barry was not noted for such frugal measures as selling one possession to buy another - and lend additional meaning to the cryptic comment recorded by Baron Davillier ('Les Porcelaines de Madame du Barry' (1870), p.61) that the 1771 service "servi à remplacer celui que la Manufacture lui avoit fourni précédemment, et qu'elle avoit vendu au sieur Bufau, pour l'Angleterre".

The foregoing notes are intended merely as the record of a talk and not as a comprehensive article on the subject, for which reason the discussion has been confined to the way in which a particular study is being carried out together with a handful of examples to indicate its direction. The examples given have, of course, presupposed that the Sales Registers are sufficiently complete for conclusions to be drawn about individual entries and existing items of service ware, although it has been observed that the Registers cannot be counted on to be completely free of omissions. Even so, there are very few if any instances when it can be said that the Registers are completely devoid of any entry that might conceivably correspond with a particular existing plate or service: the example of the Goodwood services was provided to illustrate this point. In addition, since the discussion has been concerned with the identification of plates and services in the Registers, no attention has been paid, except for comparative purposes, to well-known services which are already the objects of some familiarity. The Sales Registers contain references to many services that, by their size, their cost or the importance of their recipient, deserve to be equally well-known. They remain obscure perhaps because such remnants as may still exist were long ago dispersed or else reside unrecognised and unresearched in a collection. It is hoped that the result of the present study will eventually be on the one hand to provide information useful in understanding the nature of plates and services produced by Vincennes-Sèvres in the 18th Century and on the other hand to help or encourage the bringing to light of examples of service ware which may be capable of identification and which will then contribute to the understanding of the Registers themselves.

The nature of this discussion, prepared at short notice, does not call for footnotes, but in preparation of material thanks should be recorded to many people and institutions including The Antique Porcelain Company Ltd, Boughton House, Christie's (London), Deborah Gage Ltd, Goodwood House, Hoff Antiques Ltd, The Royal Collection, Sotheby's (London), The Victoria & Albert Museum, The Wallace Collection and Winifred Williams Ltd.

Time has not been available to cross-check the figures in the foregoing material to the extent necessary to ensure complete freedom from errors or omissions.

David Peters, 1985