

# The decoration and decorators of late-eighteenth-century Sèvres porcelain in the Bowes Museum\*



17. Soup plate. Sèvres, 1791. 24 cm. diam. (The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham).



18. Dessert plate. Sèvres, c.1796. 24 cm. diam. (The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham).

RECENT extension of the Ceramics Galleries at The Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, County Durham – a project fostered by the late David Garlick – has allowed an opportunity to review the wide variety of eighteenth-century Sèvres porcelains acquired in France in the 1860s and early 1870s by the Museum's founders, John and Josephine Bowes. There are more than five hundred pieces of Sèvres in the Museum's collection of over 1500 examples of European (excluding British) porcelain. The range of items suggests that the Bowes's collecting strategy was to acquire a wide selection of material from across Europe and such a policy for ceramics would be consistent with other sections of the Museum's collection. In contrast to collectors of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who pursued the formation of specialist collections, the Boweses chose generalisation. The systematic study of porcelain was then still in its infancy, and they were collecting too quickly across the field of fine and decorative arts to take time to become experts. They depended for advice on their regular agents, the Parisian dealers Lamer and Lepautre, who dispatched consignments of objects to Josephine Bowes for approval or rejection.

Invoices in the Museum's archives rarely specify individual items, implying that purchases were made *en bloc*.

The results may seem haphazard in terms of present knowledge and method, but one consequence is a varied selection of later servicewares from Sèvres. These provide a tableau of changing design in the Revolutionary and Directory periods as the factory moved more firmly into the grip of a Neo-classical style and placed increasing emphasis on economy of decoration. Moreover, thanks to the survival of the factory's archives for enamel decoration, gold firing and sales during the 1780s and 1790s, servicewares from this period can be identified more readily than earlier pieces. These identifications in turn assist interpretation of the archives themselves and provide information on decorators at the factory.

The use of pearls and roundels on a plate (*assiette unie*) with a rather crowded pattern in which the roundels, containing pansies, are linked by richly gilt claret bands and a row of rose and cornflower sprigs (Fig.20), locates the pattern in the 1780s.<sup>1</sup> The pattern corresponds with a design marked 'B' in the Sèvres factory's album of plate designs,<sup>2</sup> and this fact, together with the presence of the factory date letters 'MM', signifying 1789, permits relatively secure identification of the plate as a component of a service described in the Sèvres sales registers as '*Service No.B*' and purchased on 27th June 1789 by Marie-Thérèse, comtesse

\*In preparation of this article particular thanks are due to the late David Garlick and Elizabeth Conran and Sarah Medlam of the Bowes Museum, and the Wallace Collection, London, for essential research facilities.

<sup>1</sup>Cat.X 1742; the Museum also has a second plate, cat.X 2680, by Hirel de

Choisy.

<sup>2</sup>The album, preserved in the Sèvres archives, is a volume of water-colour designs for plates, in chronological sequence spanning 1784-1800. Only some of the designs were reproduced on services.

d'Artois, sister-in-law of Louis XVI. The service included 96 such plates each costing 33 *livres*, and the service is referred to in the Registers as '*pour Versailles*'. Whether it saw use at Versailles is a moot point; the comte and comtesse d'Artois were obliged to emigrate at the onset of the Revolution and left Versailles on 16th July 1789. Curiously, a pair of oil-bottle carriers (*porte-huiliers*) probably intended for the service was recorded in the sales registers as sold to the Countess on 2nd September 1789. The Bowes plate also bears the gilder's mark 'FM' of François Mirey and a painter's mark of a lower case 'p', identification of which has not previously been discussed (Fig.19). However, a significant number of surviving later-period servicewares with this mark can be linked with some certainty with Guillaume Buteux, who commenced work at the factory in 1782 and was often referred to simply as 'Guillaume'.<sup>3</sup> The Sèvres artists ledgers show that Guillaume Buteux received six *assiettes unies* on 8th January 1789 for decoration as '*Service d'Artois*'.

The decoration of the comtesse d'Artois's service was not, in fact, unique; it repeated a pattern carried by two services produced in 1784 for Marie-Antoinette and Gustaf III, King of Sweden, respectively. The latter service has for some time been thought to be represented by a more simply decorated part-service of 1775 in the Swedish Royal Collection. Gustaf III's 1784 service was, however, removed from the collection in 1809.<sup>4</sup> That it was apparently decorated in a parallel manner to the Marie-Antoinette service can be ascertained by consideration of the closely similar composition of the two services and because the relevant entries, most of which were termed '*Service de la Reine*', are duplicated in the artists ledgers and kiln books. Surviving components of the two 1784 services are now thoroughly mixed with each other and with components from the 1789 comtesse d'Artois service, and this has not assisted the task of distinguishing between the services.

At the start of the 1790s, when in spite of the political turmoil the factory's production of services reached its peak for the century, there was a movement towards decoration characterised by blue border bands adjoining a row of floral sprays or a continuous floral garland. The soup plate (*assiette à potage*), which is one of a pair in the Museum (Fig.17), is an example of such a pattern.<sup>5</sup> In this case the decoration between the blue bands is in the form of a garland of oakleaves and acorns, a simple but enduring design that has been reproduced on modern porcelain. The soup plate carries the date letters '00' for 1791, gilder's mark 'FM' of François Mirey and painter's mark 'FB' of François Barrat. In common with many other Sèvres decorators, Barrat has had his mark rather differently represented in older publications showing Sèvres marks, and as a consequence the scope of his work has not been properly

recognised. The artists ledgers suggest that he must be included amongst the principal decorators of better quality servicewares with floral motifs. The oakleaf garland pattern is no.126 in the factory's album of plate designs and appeared on one service of 1791 and two of 1792. The 1791 service alone included soup plates, and it seems safe to assume that the Bowes soup plates formed part of that service, which was sold on 1st December 1791, described as '*Zone bleu Guirlande de feuilles de Chêne*', to a 'Mons. Verdier'. Verdier purchased other services at this time and was probably a *banquier, négociant* or other intermediary between factory and client. Of the thirty soup plates in the service, one set of six was passed to Barrat on 27th July 1791 for decoration with '*feuille de chêne*' and all thirty, together with some spares, were sent for firing on 27th September 1791. The survival rate seems high: a set of twenty-four was sold at Christie's, London, on 21st February 1908, lot 75, and another two were sold in the same rooms on 9th May 1977, lot 20. These, together with the further pair in the Bowes Museum, account for at least twenty-six, and possibly twenty-eight, of the original thirty.

The theme of blue border bands is repeated at The Bowes Museum on a group of servicewares probably dating from 1795, including a *seau à liqueur rond* (Fig.22).<sup>6</sup> On this *seau* the blue bands border a garland of red flowers and the main white area is occupied by scattered sprigs of a purple bellflower. The bands themselves carry gilt trails of reeds (*roseaux*), which was a common gilding motif in this period. The pattern is readily identifiable as that of design no.154 in the album of plate designs.<sup>7</sup> This design is distinguishable from the adjoining and otherwise identical no.155 by the detail that the gilt reeds on the two bands point in the same direction on no.154, but in opposite directions on no.155. Design no.154 is helpfully marked in the album with the legend '*Pouvoir Exécutif 24 Frimaire an 4*', and no.155 is similarly marked '*Ambassadeur de Venise Pluviose an 4*'.<sup>8</sup> The legend on no.154 denotes a service recorded in the Sèvres sales registers as sold on 25 Frimaire IV (16th December 1795) to the Directoire Exécutif, now more usually referred to as just the Directoire. It was described in the sales registers as a 24-place dessert service decorated with '*deux zones Bleu avec des jolies frises d'or dessus une guirlande souvenir carmin au Pourtour des Pièces et fleurs de réponses sur le Blanc*', and was one of nine services entered in the registers at the end of year IV in a list of porcelains delivered to the Directoire in the period 4 Brumaire IV to 1 Vendémiaire V (26th October 1795 to 22nd September 1796). Included in the service were four '*seaux ronds pour vins de liqueurs*' each valued at 66 *livres*.<sup>9</sup>

The floral decoration of this *seau* is of some interest. The rather clumsy border garland certainly incorporates leaves resembling those of the *souvenir carmin* (carmine forget-me-

<sup>3</sup>Other members of the Buteux family were employed as decorators at Sèvres, which is probably the reason for the first name use. Surviving servicewares marked with 'p' and identifiable with Guillaume Buteux include 8 *compotiers* listed in the artists' ledgers on 31st January and 5th March 1787 (sold Sotheby's London, 17th March 1987, lot 120), and 4 *seaux à bouteille* listed on 13th January 1793 (sold Christie's, London, 29th June 1987, lot 163). The mark also occurs with a horizontal bar through the loop of the 'p' and perhaps should be regarded as the musical sign for a minim, rather than as a letter of the alphabet.

<sup>4</sup>Information courtesy of Hans Lepp, Curator, Kungl. Husgerädsammaren, Stockholm. The Gustaf III service was a diplomatic gift during a visit to France.

<sup>5</sup>Cat.X 2377.1 and .2. The other soup plate, in fact, has date letters 'nn' for

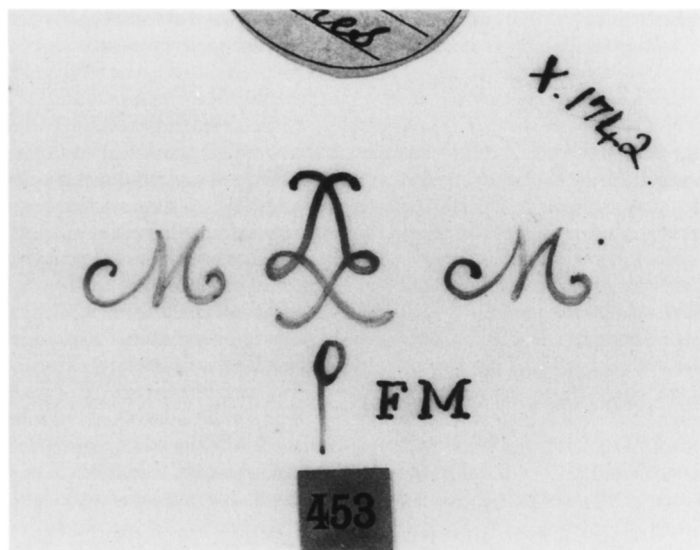
1790, although it is likely to be of 1791 manufacture.

<sup>6</sup>Cat.X 2284. The other members of the group are 6 *assiettes unies*, cat.X 2491.1-6, and 1 *assiette à fruit* (small size plate), cat.X 2491.7.

<sup>7</sup>Design no.154 is reproduced in M. BRUNET: 'Sèvres - Les Grands Acheteurs choisissaient dans cet Album', *Connaissance des Arts*, 170 [1966], p.103, fig.2.

<sup>8</sup>A service corresponding to design no.155 was sold to Alvise Maria di Zuanne Querini, Venetian Minister Plenipotentiary to France, on 29 Nivôse IV (19th January 1796). It is largely intact in the Fondazione Querini-Stampalia, Venice (information courtesy of Michael Hall and Adrian Sassoon).

<sup>9</sup>The height of the Bowes *seau à liqueur rond* is 13.2 cm. There were four other sizes of cylindrical *seaux* (coolers): *seau à verre* (10-11 cm.); *seau à topette* (15-16 cm.); *seau à demi-bouteille* (16.5-17.5 cm.); and *seau à bouteille* (18-19 cm.).



19. Detail of the marks on the reverse of Fig.20.

nots) garland mentioned in the sales registers description, but when part of the service, including the four *seaux à liqueurs rond*, was fired in the kiln on 14 Brumaire IV (5th November 1795) the clerk concerned with the kiln book entries elected to describe the oddly-shaped flowers as *jasmin rosé* (pink jasmin). The even more awkwardly shaped bellflower sprigs referred to as *réponses* have been identified as rampion (*campanula rapunculus*), the present-day French spelling being *raïponce*.<sup>10</sup>

Only part of the service is recorded in the Sèvres artists ledgers, and against only two decorators: Buteux *l'ainé* and *citoyenne* Durosey *l'ainée*. Buteux *l'ainé* was Charles-Nicolas Buteux, and his well-known mark '9.' appears on all other pieces of this service in the Bowes Museum. The four *seaux à liqueurs ronds* are recorded in the ledgers against *citoyenne* Durosey *l'ainée* on 18 Fructidor III (4th September 1795) and it is of interest that the mark on the Bowes *seau* is an unidentified script 'AD'. *Citoyenne* (Mlle) Durosey *l'ainée* is identified in one reference work as Julie Durosey, whose mark is logically recorded as a script 'JD'; but considerable uncertainty attaches to the published references concerning the Durosey family. At least one other surviving piece with the script 'AD' mark can be tentatively linked with an artists ledger entry against *citoyenne* Durosey *l'ainée* and it seems quite possible that this mark was indeed hers, even if her full name remains uncertain (see below).

As an alternative to bands, the factory often structured its serviceware designs around lines (*filets*). An example occurs on a plate (*assiette unie*) in the Museum (Fig.18).<sup>11</sup> The central blue line is almost wide enough to be a band, and the corresponding design (no.136) in the album of plate designs, where the line is even wider, has the notation:

'le filet du milieu est un tier trop large Sa vrai largeur est indiquée par le noir qui recouvre le bleu'. Two thinner blue lines lie outside the central line, which is entwined by garlands of roses and convolvulus in alternation. This pattern and variations seem to have been known variously by the titles '*roses et volubilis*', '*baguettes bleu*' and '*large filet bleu*'. There is more than one service from which the Bowes plate might derive. A distinct possibility is being the service sold on 2 Floréal IV (21st April 1796) to the Directoire with the description: '*trois filets Bleu dont un Plus large dans les quelles s'enlace une guirlande de Roses et volubilis, une groupe de Roses et volubilis etc dans le milieu de l'assiette*'. Another service of probably the same decoration was purchased by the dealer Mme Lefebvre on 20 Floréal III (9th May 1795).<sup>12</sup>

In common with nearly all Revolutionary and Directory productions, the Bowes plate carries no date marking to indicate its year of decoration, but it does bear an unidentified decorator's mark, 'V.', which is commonly encountered on relatively simply decorated wares over an extended period. Items with simple decoration are not by nature particularly distinctive and were painted by a large number of obscure artists at Sèvres. Of some interest, therefore, are several surviving 'V.'-marked plates dated 1783, each with basket relief at the border and painted over the entire surface with densely packed sprigs of cornflowers. Decoration with loosely scattered cornflowers was commonplace and termed '*barbeaux*'. However, in the artists ledgers there is reference against Mme Noualhier on 30th August 1783 to thirteen *assiettes à ozier* with '*barbeaux sur toute la surface*', which evidently signifies decoration with rather more cornflowers than usual. There does not seem to be any evidence that any more than thirteen plates of this decoration were made in 1783. In addition, the British royal collection contains a 'V.'-marked 1785 *soucoupe à pied* (footed stand) with a blue band and sprigs of jasmin and forget-me-nots,<sup>13</sup> evidently part of a '*Zone bleu – jasmin et souvenirs*' service that was produced in 1785. This service included two *soucoupes à pied* and associated *tasses à glace* (ice-cups). The only apparently relevant entries in the records relating to decoration of these items appear against Mme Noualhier.<sup>14</sup> A handful of other surviving 'V.'-marked servicewares from 1787 and 1788, all of relatively simple floral decoration, also have corresponding entries against Mme Noualhier, whose *œuvre* as defined by entries in the archives was almost exclusively that of simple floral subjects.<sup>15</sup>

The principal obstacle to this attribution is the existence of 'V.'-marked pieces dating from years prior to Mme Noualhier's published work period of 1777-95. In addition, her mark has been published as a script 'SD', taken to signify a maiden name of Sophie Durosey. However, the starting date of 1777 is not correct, as Mme Noualhier appears in the piecework/overtime lists in various years

<sup>10</sup>Information courtesy of the Royal Botanic Gardens Library, Kew, via Judith Howard.

<sup>11</sup>Cat.X 2386.1; the Museum also has a second plate, cat.X 2386.2, by Marie Bunel.

<sup>12</sup>The service was described as '*Double filet bleu, et un Large dans le milieu*'.

<sup>13</sup>Information courtesy of Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue.

<sup>14</sup>Artists ledgers, 23rd February 1785: 2 *soucoupes à pied* and 14 *tasses à glace*, '*Zone*

*bleu – petites fleurs*'; Piecework/Overtime Lists, March 1785 (transfer from artists ledgers), 2 *soucoupes à pied* and 14 *tasses à glace*, '*Zones bleu*'. Probably fired 6th June 1785.

<sup>15</sup>For example, a 1788 *tasse à glace* of 'Bombelle' decoration (Piecework Lists, November 1788, Mme Noualhier, 14 *tasses à glace* 'Bombelle'); seven 1788 *assiettes unies*, yellow bands and convolvulus (Piecework Lists, June 1788, Mme Noualhier, 12 *assiettes* '*Volubilis*'). See also note 20 below.





20. Dessert plate from the comtesse d'Artois service. Sèvres, 1789, 24 cm. diam. (The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham).

back to 1764. In the case of the mark 'SD', this has been noted on a few pieces of c.1795-98,<sup>16</sup> which is a meagre survival rate for the work of an artist with a relatively prolific output for around thirty years. So far as Mme Noualhier herself is concerned, Dauterman suggests that she may have been Sophie-Adelle Durosey listed as working from 1793 to at least 1800,<sup>17</sup> but this is incompatible with the appearance of the name Mme Noualhier before 1793. Brunet et Préaud refer to a Mme Noualhier *née* Durosey *l'aînée*, but assign the 'SD' mark to a different Mme Noualhier, stating a first name Sophie but giving no maiden name, which leaves open the question why her mark would be 'SD'.<sup>18</sup> Eriksen and de Bellaigue give the 'SD' mark to Mme Noualhier *née* Sophie Durosey working 1777-95.<sup>19</sup> There is no evidence of a Sophie or any other Durosey carrying on decorative work at the factory before 1777, by

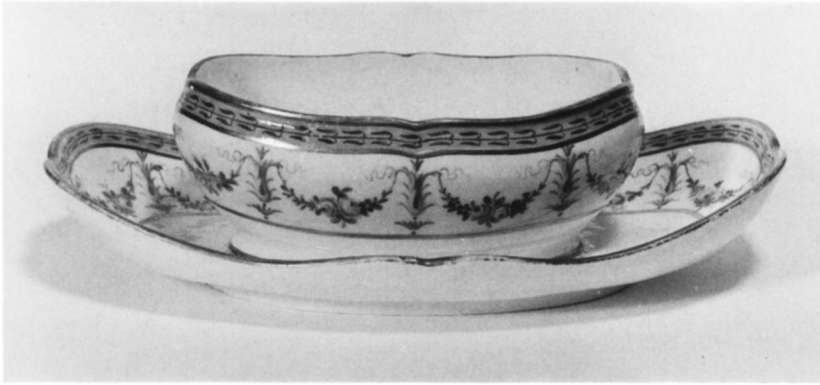
which time Mme Noualhier was being recorded under her married name, and it seems improbable that Mme Noualhier would adopt the initials of her maiden name as a mark after she was married. In fact, as Eriksen and de Bellaigue have pointed out, the attribution of 'SD' to Mme Noualhier derives not from an eighteenth-century reference but from an 1845 list by Riocreux, curator of the factory's museum. The attribution may well be true as far as it goes, but it is unlikely that the Mme Noualhier concerned was the same Mme Noualhier who worked from at least 1764. Perhaps Sophie-Adelle Durosey married a Noualhier – there was a Noualhier *fils* at the factory from 1780 to 1791 – at the end of the century and it was she whom Riocreux identified as Mme Noualhier with the mark 'SD'. There is much more to be discovered on this subject and 'V.' may well be a mark shared by several

<sup>16</sup>For example, 5 *gobelets litrons* and 4 *soucoupes* of *roses et feuillage* decoration at Woburn Abbey, Beds. (information courtesy of Lavinia Wellicome).

<sup>17</sup>C. DAUTERMAN: *Sèvres Porcelain: Makers and Marks of the Eighteenth Century*, New York [1986], p.115.

<sup>18</sup>M. BRUNET and T. PRÉAUD: *Sèvres: Des Origines à nos jours*, Fribourg [1978], p.375.

<sup>19</sup>S. ERIKSEN and G. DE BELLAIGUE: *Sèvres Porcelain*, London and Boston [1987] p.166.



21. Sugar bowl. Sèvres, 1795. 15.5 cm. diam.  
(The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle,  
County Durham).



22. Liqueur bottle cooler. Sèvres, 1795. 13.2 cm. high. (The Bowes Museum,  
Barnard Castle, County Durham).

family members.<sup>20</sup> On the present evidence the most likely decorator of the Bowes plate was the Mme Noualhier who worked from 1764 or earlier.

A departure from the predominantly floral designs of the two preceding examples is the uncompromisingly neo-classical pattern applied to the sugar bowl (*sucrier de M. le Premier*; Fig.21).<sup>21</sup> It lacks its cover, but as one of only three known survivors of a service with this unique decoration it merits illustration. The decoration consists of red and blue acanthus motifs suspending swags of flowers, and a pale blue border band carrying a stylised reed trail. Such a distinctive design presents no difficulties of identification in the archives. It appears as no.150 in the album of plate designs, annotated '*Pouvoir Exécutif 22 frimaire an 4*' and was indeed bought on that date (13th December 1795) by the Directoire. The decoration is described in the sales registers as '*une Zone bleu pâle feuillage brun dessus, guirlandes de fleurs variées soutenues Par des culots Bleu etc*'. The service included two *sucriers* each costing 96 *livres*. The Bowes

*sucrier* bears the heraldic ermine mark of Cyprien-Julien Hirel de Choisy, but the artists ledgers do not mention the *sucriers* under this or any other name: decoration was possibly carried out in overtime.<sup>22</sup> Firing of the *sucriers* took place on 14 Frimaire IV (5th December 1795) together with a substantial part of the service. The only other known survivors are two plates, one in the Musée Nationale de Céramique, Sèvres, and the other in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

Also of strictly Neo-classical appearance, but with an Etruscan theme, are a *plateau Bouret* and *tasses à glace* (Fig.24), the latter being part of a set of six in the Museum.<sup>23</sup> A stylised trail of leaves meanders between two red bands which are flecked with white to simulate porphyry. The design is an adaptation of no.162 in the album of plate designs and, as an annotation indicates, characterises yet another service purchased by the Directoire, this time on 11 Germinal IV (31st March 1796) under the description '*deux zones imitant le Porphire bordées d'or un feuillage étrusque entre les Deux zones*'. The service contained twenty-eight *tasses à glace*, each costing 9 *livres*, and four *plateaux pour les servir* each costing 36 *livres*, ice-cups and serving trays usually being in the ratio of 7 to 1 or 6 to 1. Some components of the service, though unfortunately not the *tasses à glace* and *plateaux Bouret*, are recorded in the artists ledgers in the period 29 Prairial III to 8 Ventôse IV (1st June 1795 to 27th February 1796) against the little-known decorator Gouffé, and all components are listed in the kiln books from 13 Vendémiaire to 21 Ventôse IV. The *tasses à glace* and *plateaux Bouret* were included in the firings on the latter date, and on 14 Nivôse IV. The kiln books imply that Gouffé was the sole decorator, and also mention the gilders as Foinet (La France), Le Guay, Prévost and Vincent. These were among the factory's foremost gilders, yet the gilding on the service consists of nothing more than edging lines. Apart from factory marks, the Bowes pieces bear the 'HP' mark of Prévost, the '2000' mark of Vincent and the 'Gi' mark of the gilder Girard (not noted in the kiln books). The tray and three of the ice-cups also bear, in addition to the 'HP' mark, the mark 'L-G' in capital letters, which might be taken to signify the gilder Le Guay. However, Le Guay's mark was normally a script 'L G', and it is surprising that two gilders should be involved in the application

<sup>20</sup>In years III and IV, for instance, there are references to work by 'Noualhier, Mère et fille'. A *tasse à glace* in a private collection and from the same service as Fig.3 bears the mark 'V.'; decoration of the 28 *tasses à glace* in that service was apparently shared between *citoyenne* Durosey l'aînée and Mme Noualhier and her daughter.

<sup>21</sup>Cat.X 2250.

<sup>22</sup>Choisy is recorded in the artists ledgers as receiving a *plateau à 2 pots* on 6 Fructidor III for decoration with '*Culots et Guirlandes*'. The *sucriers* do not appear in the overtime lists up to Vendémiaire IV (lists for Brumaire-Frimaire are not available); two *sucriers* appear against Choisy in Thermidor III, although seemingly for a different service.

<sup>23</sup>Cat.X 2355.1-7.



23. Tray with preserve pots. Sèvres, 1798. Tray: 30 cm. wide; pots: 6.5 cm high. (The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham).

of lines to the same piece. Another possibility is that the 'L.G.' mark in this instance is actually that of Gouffé. In the absence of corroborative evidence, such an attribution remains speculative.

The final item is a *plateau à deux pots* for preserves, sometimes known as a *confiturier* or *plateau à confitures* (Fig.23). Also in the Museum are a second such tray and four matching ice-cups (*tasses à glace*).<sup>24</sup> The decoration consists of a ribbon-tied bouquet of roses and a bright mid-blue border with a gilt floral and wheat-ear frieze. The blue, which was used as a ground colour on only three services, was known as *bleu azure*. The pattern is essentially that of no.183 in the album of plate designs, but with substitution of the pale blue-grey colour of no.183 by the *bleu azure* colour of adjoining design no.184. A third adjoining design, no.182, has a pale green (*verd Celadon*) colour and all three designs are basically the same with variations of border colour and gilt frieze. Each of the Bowes *plateaux à deux pots* bears a factory mark of a simple script 'Sèvres', which frequently signifies the Directoire period. Only two of the three *bleu azure* services were made in this period, and only one of the two possessed both *plateaux à deux pots* and *tasses à glace*.<sup>25</sup> This service, of which the Bowes items were presumably once part, was one of three delivered on 25 Thermidor VI (12th August 1798) to three emissaries of the Cisalpine Republic, an Italian state created in 1797 by uniting Cispadene and Transpadene, themselves created only in 1796. A treaty of alliance between France and the Cisalpine Republic was concluded on 3 Ventôse VI (21st February 1798), perhaps of greater advantage to the former than the latter, and the Cisalpine negotiators – Serbelloni, Visconti and Ragonne – were each rewarded with gifts including a Sèvres service. The recipient of the *bleu azure* service was Ragonne and the service, which included two '*plateaux à confiture, nouveaux*' each costing 120 *francs*, was described in the sales registers as decorated with '*une Zone bleu azur, avec frise en or dessus Bouquets de Roses dans le milieu des Pièces*'.<sup>26</sup>

Both of the Bowes *plateaux à deux pots* have the painter's mark 'm.b.' of Mme Marie Bunel, née Buteux, and gilder's mark 'Gi' of Etienne-Gabriel Girard. The service was fired in company with that for Visconti on 3 Messidor and



24. Tray with ice cups. Sèvres, 1796. Tray: 21.2 cm. diam; cups: 6.3 cm. high. (The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham).

1 Thermidor VI. A handful of items possibly from the three Cisalpine services have been noted, but the only other recorded survivor from the Ragonne service is a plate that was in the collection of the Parisian Dr Edouard Chappey at the turn of this century.<sup>27</sup>

This selection of servicewares from the Bowes Museum is but a sample of the diversity of patterns applied by the Sèvres factory to its productions during the Revolutionary and Directory periods, and further examples can be found in the collection. They demonstrate that as far as service-ware patterns were concerned the factory had largely distanced itself from the familiar rococo motifs of ground colours with reserved cartouches, birds in landscapes, trophies and over-elaborate gilding. The simpler designs of the last decade of the eighteenth century have a less obvious connexion with the era from which they derive, but their simplicity allows them to appeal very easily to twentieth-century taste.

<sup>24</sup>Cat.X 2266-1 (one tray and two ice-cups); cat.X 2266.2 (other tray and other two ice-cups).

<sup>25</sup>The other two services were one (of late 1780s design) produced 1788-90, but sold 19 Vendémiaire to 15 Frimaire III to Empaytaz et Cie; and the other produced 1798 and sold 2 Prairial VII (21st May 1799) to P.-A. Grouvelle.

<sup>26</sup>Visconti received a *verd Celadon* service, possibly decorated in the manner of album design no.182. Serbelloni, who was Cisalpine Ambassador to France

from 1798 to 1800, received a service with blue bands and rose garlands, possibly corresponding with design no.188; servicewares of this decoration are in the British royal collection.

<sup>27</sup>See Masson: 'La Porcelaine de Sèvres, Collection Chappey', *Les Arts*, no.38 [February 1905], ill. p.15, Vitrine (XII), 4th shelf down. A second *bleu azure* plate was in the Chappey Collection and may be the example of variant decoration now in the Musée National de Céramique, Sèvres (MNC 2881/1).