

Imperial Porcelain Factory in the Reign of Catherine II

The reign of Catherine II (1762–96) is generally referred to as the Golden Age in Russian history. At the age of fourteen, Sophia-Augusta Fredericka, Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, linked her destiny with Russia and came to be titled the Great even in her lifetime. Having ascended the throne as a result of the 1762 coup, she managed to take the reins of government into her hands and showed an extraordinary strength of will and determination in asserting herself as an enlightened and solicitous sovereign of her new motherland.

Striving to add lustre and grandeur to her reign, she promoted the development of science and art, invited men of talent from abroad, and by her regular commissions encouraged local enterprises to perfect their products.

The brilliant court of the Semiramis of the North attracted outstanding architects, artists and decorators from all over Europe. Among them were such illustrious names as the sculptor Etienne-Maurice Falconet, the painters Heinrich Grootz, Johann-Baptist Lampi and Benjamin Paterssen, the architects Charles Cameron, Giacomo Quarenghi, Antonio Rinaldi, and Jean-Baptiste Vallin de la Mothe, the cabinetmakers David Roentgen and Jean-Henri Riesener, the goldsmiths Jean-Pierre Ador and Johann Scharff.

■ Bust of Empress Catherine II 1793

Model by Jean-Dominique Rachette
Signed, on the back: *Rachette fecit*
Biscuit. 28 x 19.5 x 14 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg
Inv. No. ЭРФ 453

Jean-Dominique Rachette made the model after the marble original of 1783 by Fedol Shubin (1740–1805) now housed by the Russian Museum in St Petersburg.

■ Medallion on the vase made to the name-day of Catherine II

The oval medallions against the cobalt background of the vase body bear an allegorical figure of Glory holding a trumpet and a shield with the monogram *E II* under a crown, on the one side, and an angel with a shield having the zodiac sign of the Archer and the figure 24, on the other side.



■ Covered vase Late 1780s–1796

Porcelain, covered in underglaze cobalt, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding, incised decoration.
50.5 x 41.6 x 31.4 cm; 27 x 21 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 488 а, 6

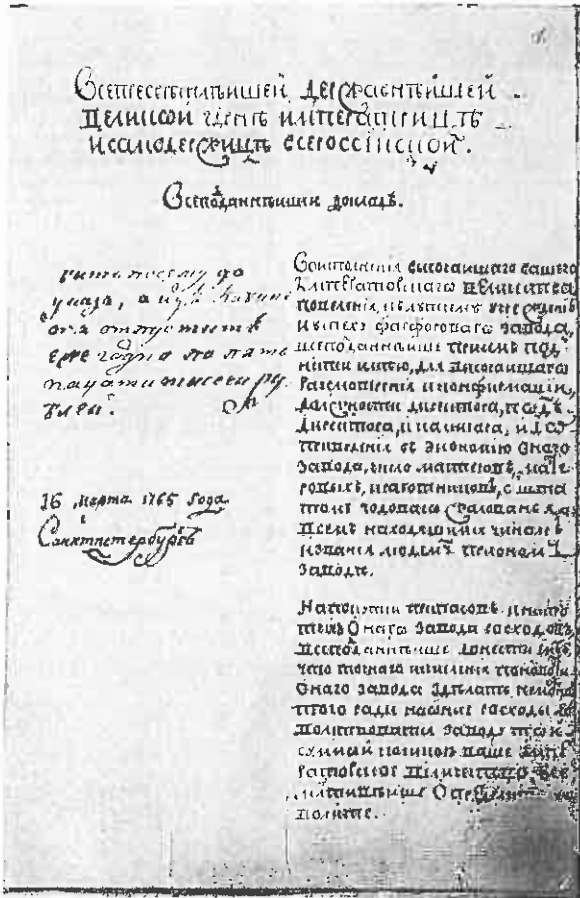
This cobalt vase with gilded snake-shaped handles and a cover surmounted with a helmet and a sword

was produced specially for Empress Catherine II's name day.

The Imperial Porcelain Factory produced unique presentation pieces for the members of the Imperial Family for Christmas, Easter and their name-days. This vase belongs to this kind of articles.

Judging by the allegorical representations on the vase body, it was a present to Catherine II on her name-day celebrated on November 24, when the sun is in the zodiac sign of the Sagittarius.





■ Report of Lieutenant Aleksandr Shchepotyev to Empress Catherine II
Cardboard, leather, stamping, gilding.
paper: 22 x 33.2 cm
The Hermitage, Porcelain Factory Museum
Department, St Petersburg. Inv. No. 119/1998

Sheet No. 1 from the book *Inscribed Decrees of Sovereign Empress Catherine II and Personal Commissions of Her Imperial Majesty in 1765*
Lieutenant Aleksandr Shchepotyev reported to the Empress on introduction of the posts of the director, senior director, commissar, as well as a number of masters, artisans and workmen necessary for the Imperial Porcelain Factory, and their wages
The sheet bears the resolution made by the Empress' hand: "Until otherwise decreed, allot fifteen thousand roubles every year from the Cabinet. March 16, 1765 Saint Petersburg".

1. Ségur, p. 25
2. Wolf, *Prilozheniya*, pp. 15, 16
3. The Hermitage, archive of the Porcelain Factory Museum Department: *Imennye ukazy Gosudaryni imperatritsy Ekateriny II i sostavennoruchnyy zakaz Eyo Imperatorskogo Velichestva 1763-go Goda*, f. 16
4. *Ibid.*, f. 5. 5 rev., 6.

Viewed in retrospective, the achievements of Russian culture, arts and crafts under Catherine II appear incontestable. Catherine's services to the country were recognized even by her contemporaries. One of them, the Comte de Ségur, French ambassador in St Petersburg, wrote: "During her reign Russia turned into a European power. Petersburg took a prominent place among the capital cities of the enlightened world and the tsar's throne came to rank among the most powerful and important."

Following her accession, Catherine II reaffirmed the main mission of the Petersburg manufactory and other thriving enterprises as the enhancement of "Russia's glory".

In January 1763, 55 snuff-boxes and 134 porcelain pieces, chiefly tea services and individual items, were sent to Moscow.² It was intended to put first-rate articles on sale during Catherine's coronation to demonstrate the successes of Russian porcelain-makers. In the second year of her reign Catherine visited the manufactory and in 1765 ordered a reorganization, approving the new staff and the new name, "The Imperial Porcelain Factory". After 1765 the decision was taken to use the ruling monarch's cipher as the mark of the factory. The Empress showed the factory to distinguished foreign guests and presented them with items of her own, Russian-made porcelain. Later, when magnificent porcelain ensembles appeared, she arranged

ostentatious displays in the presence of diplomats.

The staff of employees and master craftsmen increased. On 17 February 1764 Catherine II signed a Decree to Our Cabinet which ran as follows: "Aleksandr Shchepotyev, lieutenant of our Horse Guards Regiment, by virtue of his special gift for chemical sciences and his knowledge of these sciences acquired while staying in foreign lands, is to be appointed director of the porcelain factory with all its equipment and appurtenances, under the supervision of privy councillor Olsufyev."³ The new staff list of the factory, submitted by Shchepotyev, numbered 111 people including the director, three master craftsmen "who prepare the porcelain clay", ten turners, three moulders, ten engravers, one coppersmith to mount porcelain pieces, two gilders on porcelain and copper, "ten painters for figures, and five painters for flowers"⁴ As before, the factory's staff consisted only of executors while designers were invited from elsewhere and created models to order. The factory sought to improve the production process by bringing in experienced specialists. In 1764 contracts were signed with the chemist Regensburg, who had worked at the Vienna Royal Factory, and the bronzesmith and modeller Arnoult.

But the main source from which the factory drew new talents was the Academy of Arts founded in St Petersburg in 1757. In the 1760s, for instance, the graduates of the Academy's sculpture class — Fedor Kristishin, Ivan Semyonov and Gavriila Nikiforov — along with the painters Alexei Artemyev, Afanasy Krylov and Andrei Sobolev began to work

there. In 1766, a school was opened at the factory, in which the workmen's children learned the ceramist's craft following their fathers' example.

During the first decade of Catherine's reign the artistic and technical processes of production developed on the foundations laid down in the preceding period. The composition and processing of pastes underwent no substantial changes. Porcelain was still fired in the kilns designed by Vinogradov. The form, decor and even marking of wares differed little from those of Elizabethan porcelain.

One of the most illustrious works produced in the early years of Catherine's reign was the service she presented to her favourite, Count Grigory Orlov.⁵ This ensemble, rather unusual in composition, was intended for use at breakfast and the long morning toilet, when its owner received visitors while taking tea and being shaved. The service consisted of approximately 300 pieces designed by Gavriil Kozlov. The centrepiece of the toilet set, the mirror complete with a clock, was mounted in a porcelain frame decorated with moulded military armour and helmeted cupids perched on a cannon. It was supplemented with candlesticks, jewel caskets, perfume bottles, toilet boxes of varying forms as well as shaving and dental paraphernalia. The breakfast was served with tea- and coffee-pots, baskets, bowls, and dishes and plates with covers and figured trays.⁶

The entire ensemble is actually a mixture of baroque and neoclassical elements. On closer inspection, they fall into two groups which are likely to date from different times, being different in decor, style and execution. Obviously, the first to be produced was the breakfast part of the service. The rocaille profiles of its bulky forms are akin to Elizabethan porcelains. The pieces are embellished with relief ornaments, moulded putti, silhouetted depictions of trophies, and military scenes, all rendered in silver and gold on a cobalt ground.

The toilet set was produced later, soon after 1765, when Catherine II promoted Orlov, an artillery officer, to Chief of Ordnance, but not later 1770, when Catherine signed the bill for the service. Featured on its pieces are artillery emblems — symbols of Orlov's new assignment. The silver silhouettes are replaced by elaborate polychrome scenes painted by Andrei Chorny. The ornamental motifs are drawn from the neoclassical repertory.

The items of the Orlov Service bear the early marks in the shape of the double-headed eagle that were first used in 1759. The exact date when the eagle was replaced by Catherine's cipher is unknown, but judging by the marks of the Orlov Service, this must have happened after 1765. Thus, the Orlov Service not only outshines all the early Catherine porcelains in its variety of form and sophisticated decor, but is also a most remarkable complex vividly

Item	Quantity	Price (Rubles)	Price (Kopecks)
Зеркало	1	100	100
Чашки	2	60	120
Тарелки	2	25	50
Стаканы	3	20	60
Салфетки	3	18	54
Тарелки	10		
Чашки	1	50	50
Тарелки	1	25	25
Стаканы	1	20	20

■ The Staff of the Porcelain Factory and Their Wages

Cardboard, leather, stamping, gilding; paper. 22 x 33.2 cm
The Hermitage, Porcelain Factory Museum Department, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. 119/1998

Sheet No. 5 from the book *Inscribed Decrees of Sovereign Empress Catherine II and Personal Commissions of Her Majesty in 1765*

- Kudriavtseva, 1984, pp. 23–26
- Before 1917 most of the service pieces were in the collection of Count Vladimir Orlov-Davydov. The mirror was in the collection of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich and after 1917 was transferred to the Stieglitz Museum and later to the Hermitage. In 1932, it was handed over to the Russian Museum which also houses plates and tea-things from the service. 17 pieces from the dinner, tea and toilet sets, acquired at Christie's in 1981, are now in the Hermitage. Caskets in gold mounts and various plates and dishes are in the Kuskovo Museum of Ceramics. A large group of tea and dinner pieces is in the Hillwood Museum, Washington, D.C. Single items are also found in other museums and private collections.

■ **Sculptural group *Jassy Treaty***

About 1791

After the model by Jean-Dominique
Rachette

No marks

Biscuit. Height 29.5 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. No. 3PФ 445

In the centre of the composition, is the figure of crowned Cybele — patroness of cities and states. She is attended by a woman holding a horn of plenty. Cybele is represented sitting in a boat and leaning against Hercules' club and a shield with a portrait of Catherine II crowned with a laurel wreath and a depiction of the steering oar entwined with a snake. Beside her is a shield bearing the state emblem of Russia. They are surrounded with war trophies: vanquished Turkish banners, a quiver with arrows, a shield, a baton, and a turban with a crescent. On the other side of the base is three-headed Cerberus and an unrolled scroll. In the archives of the model workshop of the Imperial Porcelain Factory the group is named as *Conclusion of Treaty* (Russian State Historical Archives, F. 468, Inv. 10, doc. 91, l. 176) while in some literary sources one can meet another name, *Apotheosis of Russia*, which is not confirmed by any document.

This allegorical sculptural group by Rachette demonstrates, on the one hand, Russia's victory over Turkey and, on the other hand, symbolizes the wise and powerful reign of the Empress, peaceful development of the conquered lands and brisk flourishing of trade on the Black Sea. After the Russo-Turkish war of 1787–91 was over, peace talks began. Russia was represented by Prince Grigory Potemkin and Count Aleksandr Bezborodko, while the opposite side was represented by Yusuf-Pasha. The peace treaty was signed on December 29, 1791, in Jassy. The result of the event was that Russia strengthened her position on the Black Sea, fortified her southern boundaries and confirmed the annexation of the Crimea.





■ **Paired covered vases**
1790-95
Model by Jean-Dominique Rachette
Made by I. Prokofyev
No marks
Signed: *Rachette f.* impressed in the paste
Tinted and white biscuit. Height 42 cm
Peterhof State Museum-Reserve,
St. Petersburg.
Inv. Nos. П/МП 3450-Ф;
ЭРФ 3451-Ф

The vases are made of biscuit tinted in the paste and decorated with applied white relief details in the "jasper" style of the pieces produced at J. Wedgwood's Etruria Factory, which were in vogue at that time. This was the reason for their mistaken attribution in the 1885 inventory. The vases are among the few pieces signed by J.-D. Rachette, the chief modeller of the Imperial Porcelain Factory. The vase models are listed in the *Inventory to*

Models and Forms Which are under Supervision of Collegia Council and Chevalier Rachette and are Housed at the Model Workshop Chamber which was compiled on September 21, 1802. They are described as "vases, four in number, with garlands, figures of Satyrs and other ornamental things". The vases from the collection of the Peterhof State Museum-Reserve are first mentioned in the 1859 inventory of the English Palace.

■ Items from the Orlov toilet service

Second half of the 1760s

Designed by Gavril Kozlov

Painted by Andrei Chorny

Marks: impressed in the paste double-headed eagle and № 3 painted in gold (on the plate); impressed in the paste double-headed eagle (on the dish, toilet box and trays)

The cup, spoon and shaving tray have no marks and signs.

Signs: impressed in the paste O (on all other pieces)

Porcelain, underglaze painting in cobalt and overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding, silvering, incised decoration.

Tea-pot with lid 21 x 22.5 x 13.5 cm; two triangular trays: 2 x 12.8 x 15.4 cm, covered cup for cream: 8 x 5 x 5.5 cm, toilet box with lid 8.6 x 5.5 x 4.4 cm; plate: 3.7 x 23.5 cm; dish: 3 x 17.2 x 15.1 cm; shaving tray 2 x 12.8 x 15.4 cm; coffee spoon: 9.9 x 2.5 x 1 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 160; ЭРФ 8280 а, б, ЭРФ 8281; ЭРФ 8282 а, б, ЭРФ 8284 а, б, ЭРФ 8291, ЭРФ 8292, ЭРФ 8294

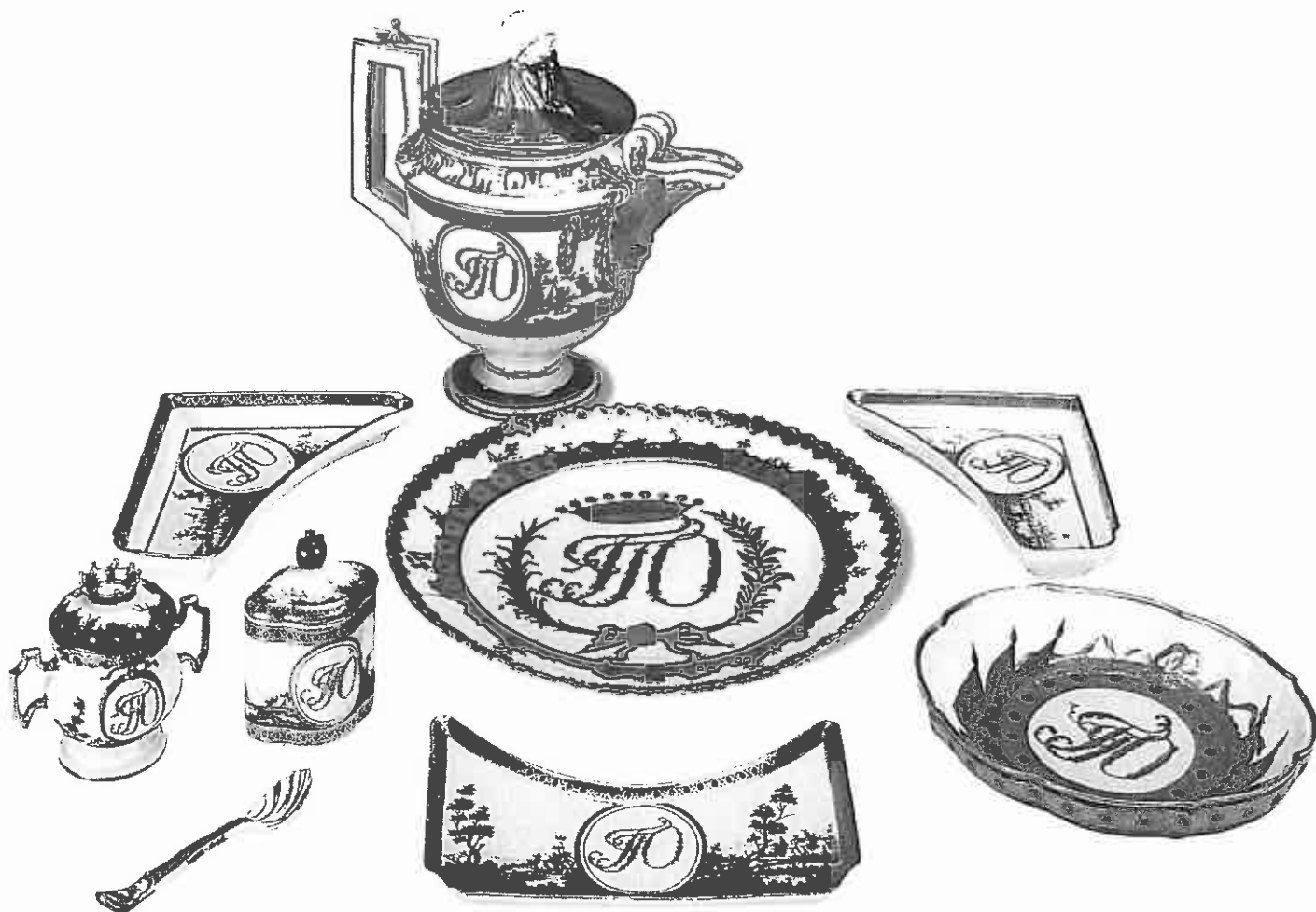
On May 17, 1770, Catherine the Great paid the bill of the Imperial Porcelain Factory for the production and delivery of the porcelain service she had ordered.

The service was made to the order of the Empress as a gift for her favourite, Count Grigory Orlov (1734-1783). Grigory Orlov was one of the most enthusiastic participants of the coup d'etat of July 28, 1862, which brought Catherine to the Russian throne. During the coronation celebrations the Empress awarded him a count's title and ever since gave him many luxurious presents. The toilet service, which is considered to be one of the best samples of early Russian porcelain pieces, is one of them.

It combines the features of the Baroque and the early Classicism. The service

designed for early breakfast and morning toilet comprised about 300 pieces differing in their shapes and functions. Among its items was a porcelain-framed mirror with sculptural decoration, flasks, caskets and trays, as well as some pieces designed for breakfast. Each object bears the monogram of its owner *ITO*, with a count's gilded crown on top. The finials of the lids of the cups and cream bowls are also modelled as gilded crowns. The service is painted with miniatures showing scenes of army life, war trophies, insignia, as well as some ornaments painted to the design of the well-known painter and decorator Gavril Kozlov. The subjects of the painting are connected with Orlov's military career. In 1765, he was appointed to the post of the Chief Quartermaster of

Artillery, and judging from its decor, the service might have been presented to him on this occasion. Apparently the painting was done by Andrei Chorny, the best miniature painter active at the Imperial Porcelain Factory during its early period. Some caskets and flasks were set in golden mounts made by the court jeweller of the Empress Jean-Pierre Ador (1724-1784). Items from the service can be found not only in the Hermitage but also in the State Russian Museum, St Petersburg (the mirror), the Museum of Ceramics at Kuskovo, Moscow, the Hillwood Museum in Washington, National Museum of Finland in Helsinki and some private collections outside Russia.



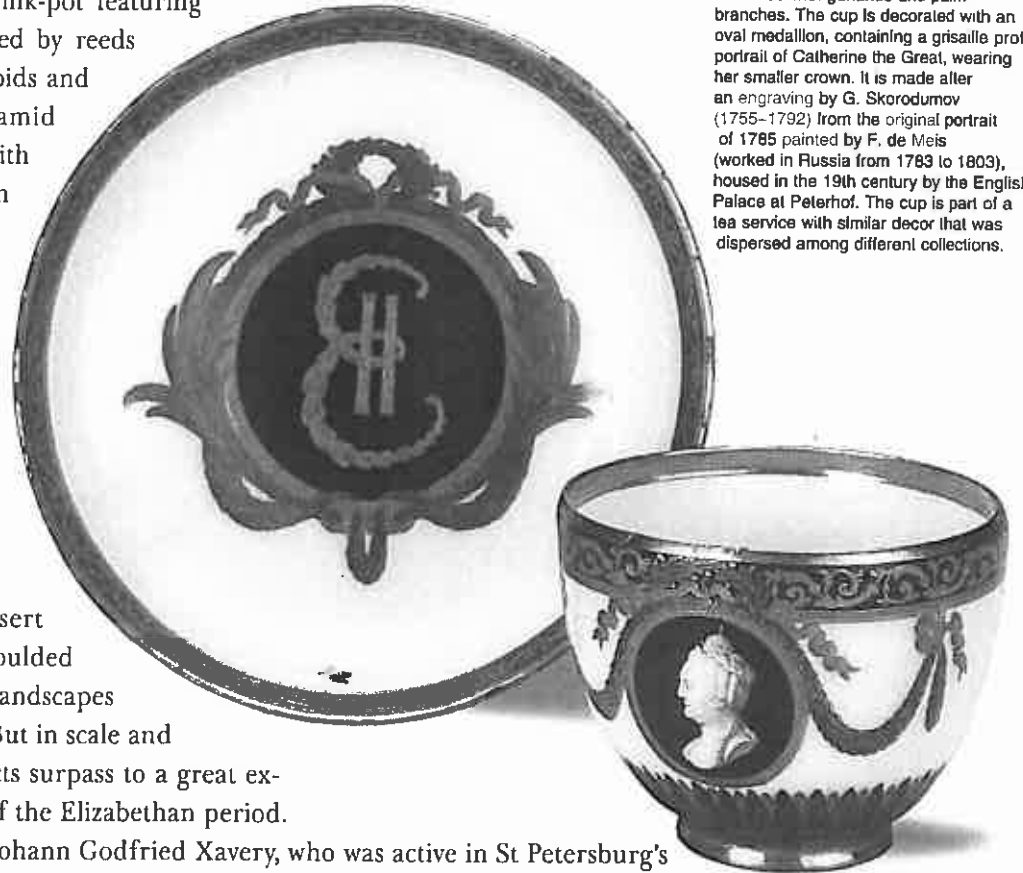
reflecting the stylistic changes that took place in the early years of Catherine's reign and facilitating the dating of the factory's first marks.⁷

Among the most original works created during the early period of Catherine's rule, those by "the porcelain master" Arnoult undoubtedly deserve particular mention. Unfortunately, they have not come down to the present, being known only from contemporary descriptions. The factory's inventories for 1764, for example, list elaborate sculptural compositions executed by Arnoult, including "an ink-pot featuring figures in the water ... surrounded by reeds and grasses"; chandeliers with cupids and Chinese figures in arbours amid flowers and palm leaves; vases with "diverse flowers of ten species in life-size" and a "table dessert cover on thirty white dragons, representing a Russian landscape." Among Arnoult's unfinished works, we find "a composition depicting a chemist's shop with a chemist and his assistant engaged in making liqueur at the fire; and a terrace on four lions coming out of the caves."⁸

Fanciful table decorations, dessert sets, vases, and utensils with moulded flowers and exotic figures set in landscapes are still a tribute to the Baroque. But in scale and elaborate composition, these objects surpass to a great extent the unpretentious figurines of the Elizabethan period.

In 1769–77 the Flemish sculptor Johann Godfried Xavery, who was active in St Petersburg's Department of Construction, executed for the Imperial Factory biscuit replicas of his marble figures *Children Playing with a Garland* and *Sleeping Cupid with an Arrow* along with a bas-relief portrait of Gustav III of Sweden.⁹ Xavery's models were, however, too heavy and too replete with detail to be reproduced in decorative porcelain sculpture. Totally different from the factory's traditional sculpture, they were produced in single copies and not repeated later.

Then, the factory's artistic development came to a standstill. Until the end of the 1770s no large-scale projects were undertaken and the emphasis was evidently placed on the already established range of wares. Yet production gathered strength: the equipment was increasingly improved and gifted decorators, painters and sculptors continued to be trained at the factory. In 1779 the talented sculptor Jean-Dominique Rchette, who had previously worked in Germany, Denmark and France, arrived in St Petersburg to head, for 25 years, the sculpture workshop of the Imperial Factory. One of his main tasks was to expand the thematic range of porcelain sculpture. During the later decades of Catherine's reign, he supervised the production of various ensembles of allegorical, mythological and genre statuary.



■ Cup with portrait of Catherine II and saucer with her monogram
About 1785
Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding 5.8 x 10.1 x 7.8 cm;
9 x 13.5 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 390 а, б

The Empress' monogram on the saucer is framed with garlands and palm branches. The cup is decorated with an oval medallion, containing a grisaille profile portrait of Catherine the Great, wearing her smaller crown. It is made after an engraving by G. Skorodumov (1755–1792) from the original portrait of 1785 painted by F. de Meis (worked in Russia from 1783 to 1803), housed in the 19th century by the English Palace at Peterhof. The cup is part of a tea service with similar decor that was dispersed among different collections.

7. The bill for the Orlov Service, the designs for its decor by Gavriil Kozlov and the gold mounts by Jean-Pierre Ador, as well as the clocks, instruments and cases made for the service, was published for the first time in Sergei Troitskii, "Kleima elizavetinskogo farfara", *Sredn kolektsionerov* 1–2, 1923, pp. 16–19.

8. Wolf, *Prilozheniia*, p. 17.

9. Two sculptures by Xavery are now in the Hermitage collection (Inv. No. ЭРФ 451, 7218). Another version of the *Sleeping Cupid* (Inv. No. Ф 679), dating from 1769, is in the Russian Museum. For more detail on these and other works by Xavery, made in porcelain in 1769–77, see B. A. Shelkovich, "Skulptor Xavery, na Peterburgskom farforovom zavode", *Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha*, 7, Leningrad, 1961, pp. 48–51

■ Table with views of Pavlovsk
1789

Painted after watercolours
by S. Shchedrin; legs are modelled
by Jean-Dominique Rachette
No marks

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
enamels, gilding, ormolu, "root" wood.
79 x 83 cm

Pavlovsk State Museum-Reserve,
St. Petersburg. Inv. No. UX-310-V

The table, from July 23, 1789, up to
present day, is in the Empress Maria
Fedorovna's boudoir. The table-top is
centred with a gilded ornamented round
with a representation of the Pavlovsk
Palace viewed from the Slavianka River.
The four octahedral medallions framed
with a gilded white ornament bear the
representations of the Pavlovsk Park
pavilions: the Temple of Friendship, the
Apollo Colonnade, the Old Chalet
and Marlenthal, made after watercolours
by Sylvester Shchedrin. The table frame is
decorated with an ormolu chased
ornament. The table legs with round
porcelain bases are decorated with
porcelain caryatids shaped as female
half-figures wearing veils, with flowers
in their hands. Placed on the round platform
joining the stretchers in the basement
of the table, is the white porcelain vase,
with a relief ormolu flame and bead design
encircling its foot. A Kucumov believed
that the design of the project belonged to
Nikolai Lvov.





■ **Sculpture of Erato**
 About 1798
 Model by Jean-Dominique Rachette
 after an original of 1785–89 by Johann-
 Heinrich Dannecker
 Biscuit. Height 37 cm
 The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
 Inv. No. ЭРФ 457

Erato, the muse of lyrical and love poetry, is represented in an antique tunic and veil crowned with a laurel wreath and holding a kithara and plectrum in her hands. She is one of the nine Muses surrounding the Temple of Apollo. The sculpture belongs to a series of biscuit table decorations, part of the services from the dowry of the daughters of Paul I. The inventory to models and forms which are under supervision of Collegia Council and Chevalier Rachette and are housed at the model workshop chamber of September 21, 1802, lists some series of models for mythological characters done by Jean-Dominique Rachette. The models for the nine muses Euterpe, Terpsichore, Clio, Polyhymnia, Urania, Melpomene, Calliope, Erato and Thalia were among them. According to I. Popova, they are part of 21 porcelain figures for table decoration added to the service intended as a wedding gift for Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna made in 1797–99 especially for her wedding to Prince Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Antique statues from the Vatican Palace served as samples for these figures. For this purpose models of plaster of Paris were made at the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg in 1798. The bronze replicas of them were later made for the Pavlovsk Park. The model for the biscuit figure of Erato was made after the marble sculpture by Johann-Henrich Dannecker (1758–1841), now in the collection of the Pavlovsk Palace Museum, which in its turn was derived from an antique statue that once belonged to the Queen of Sweden and is in the collection of the National Museum, Stockholm.

■ **Sleeping Cupid with an arrow**
 1769
 Model by Johann Godfried Xavery
 No marks
 Signed, impressed in the paste by hand
 J. H. Xavery f. 1769
 Biscuit. 18 x 52 x 24 cm
 The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
 Inv. No. ЭРФ

This is a replica made by the author from his marble sculpture *Sleeping Cupid*. The original, twice as large, signed and dated by Xavery by 1765 is housed by the Hermitage too. The Russian Museum, St Petersburg, has one more variant of the biscuit figure (Inv. No. Ф 679) that differs from the Hermitage piece in small details only: there is no drapery and the pillow at the sculpture's base is larger. It is dated by 1769 and signed by the sculptor and the paste maker A. Chernov. In the Hermitage collection there is one more biscuit sculpture signed by J. G. Xavery — *Children Playing with a Garland* (Inv. No. ЭРФ 7218), made in the 1770s, also with the participation of A. Chernov. B. Shelkovnikov added to the list of biscuit works by Xavery two pieces. These are a bust from the Catherine Palace (Tsarskoye Selo Museum-Reserve) and a bas-relief portrait of Gustav II of Sweden made in 1777. This made it possible to say that the period of Xavery's work at the Imperial Porcelain Factory was rather long: from 1769 to 1777. So, it is evident, that even before Jean-Dominique Rachette, a talented sculptor worked at the Factory who introduced biscuit sculptures into the Factory's assortment. The biscuit composition was made by A. Chernov, a son of the well-known porcelain painter of the Vinogradov period, A. Chernov.



■ Wash-set

Late 1760s–early 1770s

Marks: E II in underglaze cobalt

Signs: impressed in the paste K

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured

enamels, gilding 25 x 16.8 x 11.5 cm;

7 x 35.5 x 28.5 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. No. ЭРФ 402 а. 6

The jug bears two painted medallions on both sides, containing representations of the Three Graces and nymphs disarming Cupid; the bottom of the basin is painted with bathers in a pond.

10 I. P. Popova. "Farforovye kompozitsii"; *Jean-Dominique Rachette. 1744–1800*, St Petersburg, 1999, p. 37.

11 T. V. Kudriavtseva, "Naiada s levretkoj," *Antik*. 2001, No. 5, pp. 44, 45

12. Russian State Historical Archives, Fond 468, inv. 10, doc. 91, f. 176 rev.

The extensive inventory of Rachette's works created at the Imperial Factory mentions over 150 models,¹⁰ including the popular allegories of the elements, seasons and feelings, sculptural replicas of ancient frescoes, mythological characters, and allegorical compositions dedicated to contemporary heroes and events, among them the Jassy Peace Treaty concluded with the Turks in 1791.

Rachette also contributed to the flourishing of portrait sculpture, although the circle of models featured in bas-relief medallions, busts and figures was as before limited to the members of the imperial family.

Animal sculptures that appeared chiefly depicted the inhabitants of the palace apartments as well – Italian greyhounds and pugs, above all, Catherine's pet Zemira. One of the finest "portraits" of this dark-brown Italian greyhound lying on a pillow is housed in the Peterhof Palace. A wide variety of sitting and lying greyhounds decorated vases, paperweights and inksets. A graceful naiad with an Italian greyhound, now in a private collection,¹¹ is identified with Rachette's *Sea Nymph with a Desk Set*¹². The functional components of the desk set are cleverly concealed in the details of the sculptural composition. Apart from their meaningful and decorative role, the naiad's attributes also serve a utilitarian purpose. Thus, the shell she is holding acts as a support for the pen while the vase by her feet acts as an inkpot. The practical use of the statuette is rather dubious: a popular



eighteenth-century surprise or *trompe-l'oeil*, this delicate porcelain knick-knack merely produces an illusion of functionality. It is hardly possible that the fairly refined successors to the Age of Enlightenment dared to daub with ink the precious lines of Rachette's work. This fascinating neo-classical example of small-size decorative statuary shows new facets of Rachette's talent as a sculptor. In this model the master of solemn sculptural apotheoses and the imposing statues of contemporaries, likened to ancient gods, pays tribute to *rocaille* traditions. The simple mythological overtones along with the unrestrained, natural grace of the young nymph echo eighteenth-century pastorals. But instead of the picturesque palette that enlivened the porcelain dolls of the eighteenth century, the nymph's figure is clad in a gilded armour that lends it a touch of classical impersonality. This golden composition may have been inspired by the decorative sculptures Rachette created for Peterhof in 1800–86: monumental gilded goddesses, naiads and tritons glistening in the cascades of fountains.

The majestic porcelain compositions of table adornments for the grand services and the ensembles of allegorical and mythological figures made under Rachette's supervision, all revealed the plastic and decorative potential of biscuit porcelain. Neoclassical artists like Rachette were attracted by its marble-like, grainy texture. Quite often, biscuit models were executed after marble or bronze originals by renowned sculptors such as Antonio Canova, Michel Claude-François Clodion, Johann-Heinrich Dannecker, and Fedot Shubin. The first biscuit reproductions of these sculptures often bear the signature *Rachette fecit*. Just as Vinogradov had put his initials on the earliest wares "from the Russian land," Rachette placed his name on biscuit replicas of well-known sculptures by other artists, considering that a perfect reproduction in a new, still not completely mastered material, was tantamount to a joint work.

Jean-Dominique Rachette is credited with having conceived a theme for Russian porcelain that was favoured and constantly treated by most of the country factories. In the 1780s–1800s, as head of the sculpture workshop of the Imperial Factory, he created a series of sculptures of the peoples of Russia, which included about 60 models. The series was based on illustrations by the famous German-born ethnographer Johann Gottlieb Georgi, printed in the book



Figurine of an Italian greyhound
1780s

Model by Jean-Dominique Rachette
No marks

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
enamels, gilding. Height 29 cm
Peterhof State Museum-Reserve,
St Petersburg. Inv. No. ПДМП 842-ф

Two dogs of Italian greyhound breed named Sir Tom Anderson and Lady Anderson were presented to Catherine II by the Englishman Baron Dimsdale. Among the numerous offspring of this pair the greyhound named Zemira won a special liking of the empress who repeatedly mentioned her in private letters. In the park of Tsarskoye Selo still extant is a stone put up over the burial place of Zemira. The stone bears the carved epitaph, written by L.F. Ségure at the request of the Empress:

Építaphe de Zemíre
Ici mourut Zemíre, et les Graces en deuil
Doivent jeter des fleurs sur son cercueil.
Comme Tom, son aieul, comme Lady, sa
mère,
Constante dans ses goûts, à la course
légère,
Son seul défaut était un peu d'humeur;
Mals ce défaut venait d'un si bon coeur.
Quand on aime, on craint tant Zemíre
aimait tant celle
Que tout le monde aime comme elle!
Voulez-vous qu'on vive en repos,
Ayant cent peuples pour rivaux?
Les dieux, lémoins de sa tendresse,
Devalent à sa fidélité
Le don de l'immortalité,
Pour qu'elle fut toujours auprès de sa
maîtresse.

No documentary evidences attesting to the fact that this porcelain sculpture features Zemira have not been found, yet this dog was one of the Italian grayhounds which belonged to Catherine II. The inventory to models and forms which are under supervision of Collegia Council and

Chevaller Rachette and are housed at the model workshop chamber compiled on September 21, 1802, lists "a dog lying and just the same sitting", one of which, probably, was a model for the Peterhof figurine. The figurine, mentioned in the Inventory of the English Palace for 1831, at present is on display at the Divan Room of the Great Palace in Peterhof. The collection of the Museum of Tropin and Moscow Artists of His Time comprises a white porcelain figurine of a sitting Italian greyhound. It is interesting to note that the collection of the museum reserve in Peterhof houses a cast-iron replica of the sculpture.



■ Pieces from an everyday service
1780-96

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste, in purple, 3 2; 4 1 Co: 1 4; 1 4 (on the sauce-boat); impressed in the paste by hand 121 (on the bowl and tray)
Inscribed in purple, on the dish *П К* (for Court Office)
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels. Two covered dishes
7.5 x 37 x 28 cm; 14 x 30 x 20.5 cm;
7 x 39 cm; 17 x 30.2 cm; the oval dish:
4.6 x 37.2 x 27 cm; the dessert plate:
4 x 26.5 cm, salt-cellar: 4.3 10.9 x 7.9 cm;
the sauce-boat: 14.5 x 19 x 11 cm;
the covered bowl: 15.2 x 25 cm; 9 x 25.3 cm;
the leaf-shaped tray: 6 x 23.6 x 9 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 91 а,б; ЭРФ 93; ЭРФ 114;
ЭРФ 6930; ЭРФ 7715 а, б

Alongside with the ceremonial services designed for banquets and reception dinners at the court, the Imperial Porcelain Factory produced services for everyday use for each of the imperial residences. As a rule, they were more modest in their shapes and decor. Among them was the so-called "rose" service used in the Winter Palace in St Petersburg. Its pieces were decorated with an impressed border of net

and plaited design and painted with scattered bunches of flowers, mostly large roses. The massive covers of the dishes were lopped with modelled cones of hop and lemons.

While being in much use, the services required regular supplements that is why their pieces bear the marks of the four Russian monarchs: from Catherine II to Nicholas I.

On October 5, 1838, an order was issued by Prince P. Volkonsky, the Minister of the Court, "to change the present everyday porcelain service in the Winter Palace, while, with roses, for a new one — white, with golden borders and the state coat of arms, for 500 persons". The old service was to be transferred to the Peterhof Palace (Russian State Historical Archives, F. 469, inv. 14, l. 200). Similar services, more austere in shape and decor — the state coat of arms-were — were commissioned at the same time for other imperial residences.

Cover of a dish
from the everyday service. Detail



■ Three cups

1770-1780s

Marks: E II in underglaze cobalt

Signs: impressed by hand

in the paste 16 and 271

Porcelain, overglaze painting in enamels of

two colours, in coloured enamels, monochrome

painting, gilding. The cup with the monogram

1 E: 6.5 x 10.4 x 8 cm; 4.3 x 8.3 cm; 3 x 14.3 cm;

the cup with the depiction of allegories of

love: 5.8 x 9 x 7 cm; 3 x 13.6 cm;

the cup with the inscription imitating Arabic

ligature: 7.3 x 5.8 cm; 2.3 x 5.9 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 389 а, 6, а; 820 а, 6; 104 а, 6

All the three cups have different decor.

The covered cup and saucer are decorated

with the cipher 1 E (for Empress Catherine II);

the cup and saucer — with the depiction of

allegories of love. The cup is painted with

Cupid carrying a shield emblazoned with a

stylized heart, while the saucer is

decorated with Cupid and a pigeon. The

third cup bears the inscription in Russian

made in imitation of Arabic ligature:

Господин мой, будь здоров, да будет это

усладой жизни (My lord, be healthy, and

let it be for your delight).



13. J. G. Georgi, *Beschreibung aller Nationen des Russisches Reiches, ihrer Lebensart, Religion, Gebräuche, Wohnungen, Kleidungen und übrigen Merkwürdigkeiten*, St Petersburg, 1776, p. 6

14. The groups *Koriaks* and *Shaman Woman* were made either in biscuit or porcelain with polychrome painting. They used to be included in table decorations for formal services. There are biscuit versions of the figures in the Hermitage and painted versions in the Russian Museum.

■ Cup and saucer

1770-1780s

Marks: E II in underglaze cobalt

Signs: impressed in the paste 14;

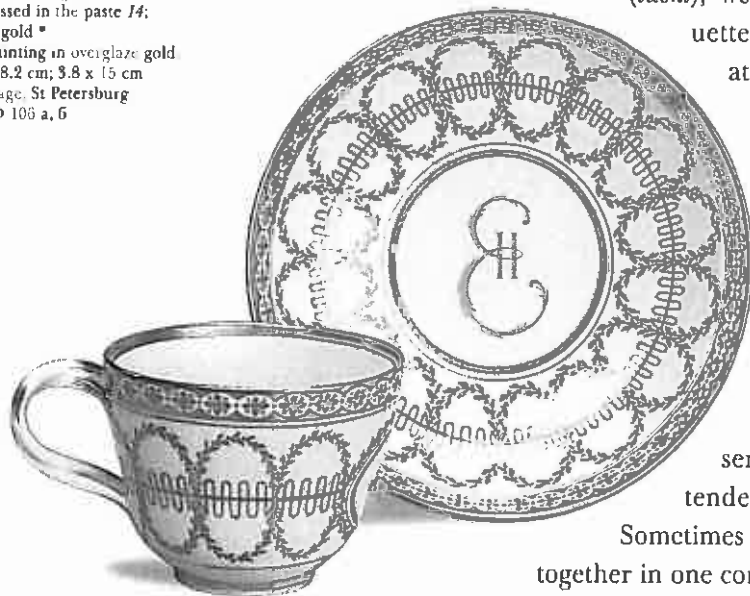
in overglaze gold *

Porcelain, painting in overglaze gold

6.2 x 10.8 x 8.2 cm; 3.8 x 15 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg

Inv. No. ЭРФ 106 а, 6



Beschreibung aller Nationen des Russisches Reiches, ihrer Lebensart, Religion, Gebräuche, Wohnungen, Kleidungen und übrigen Merkwürdigkeiten ('A Description of All the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian Empire, their Lifestyle, Religion, Customs, Dwellings, Dresses, and Other Notable Features') as well as on engravings by Mikhail Kozlovsky, Jean-Baptiste Le Prince and other artists.

"Everyone well-versed in ethnography knows that there is not a single country on the globe which is inhabited by such a great multitude of different peoples as the Russian Empire," wrote Georgi in the preface to the book,¹³ which contained 100 colour prints. But while only a narrow circle of bibliophiles and scholars had access to Georgi's work, copies of Rchette's series of sculptures sent as gifts to the European monarchs vividly demonstrated the might of the multinational state governed by an enlightened ruler, while serving, at the same time, as visual aids to ethnography, that is, as an additional source of knowledge.

The squat figures in Georgi's book, somewhat resembling characters in popular prints (*lubki*), were transformed by Rchette into porcelain statuettes with more well-balanced proportions and stately

attitudes. The almost grotesque facial features of the

book personages are softened and the porcelain

figures acquire a more noble, albeit somewhat

doll-like, appearance. The poses, details of costume

and accessories suggesting a particular

occupation are sometimes altered. At the same

time, prints from Georgi's book and other

sources were used for figures of street vendors

and artisans, altogether about ten in number. This, of course, is not sufficient for a separate ensemble, and it is quite possible that they were intended as an addition to the *Peoples of Russia* series.

Sometimes characters from various engravings were grouped together in one composition, for example, *Koriaks*, *Shaman Woman* and *Rural Musicians*.¹⁴ To these groups mounted on pedestals, single ethnic types

were attached to form a table ornament. A similar "biscuit fillet of national figures" comprising 18 sculptures of ethnic types and three sculptural groups on pedestals, was presented to the Austrian Archduke Joseph during his visit to the Imperial Factory.¹⁵ This table ornament along with services and vases from the dowry of the Archduke's wife, Grand Duchess Alexandra Pavlovna, is now in the Budapest Museum.¹⁶ The statuettes of ethnic Russian types and the accompanying multifigure compositions were repeatedly copied until the early 1830s. Almost all known figures of this series can be found in the inventories of models created by the sculpture workshop at the Imperial Factory.¹⁷ Some of them continued to be made until the end of the nineteenth century. The theme so successfully started was developed in the wares of the Imperial and private factories (Gardner's, Popov's, Kornilov's, and Poskochin's, to name but four) to become traditional for Russian porcelain.

The late eighteenth century marked the beginning of the Imperial Factory's heyday. Having failed to turn into a profitable enterprise able to "supply all Russia with porcelain,"¹⁸ it nevertheless managed to cope with the ever increasing court commissions and its wares competed with those of the best European manufactories.

Formal and everyday services engraved with the customer's name (*imennye*), decorative vases, sculptures, various kinds of utensils for the private apartments, unique pieces for diplomatic purposes, gifts for courtiers and favourites, all were produced for the Winter Palace and other imperial residences.

The late-eighteenth-century calendar included sixty-six court, church and chivalric order feasts. Since some of them coincided, the number of feast days totalled fifty-nine. The most esteemed feasts were Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, the day of the accession of the ruling monarch, the name-day and birthday of the emperor and heir to the throne. Coronation festivities were held in Moscow, and on such occasions the court moved there together with the imperial regalia from the Winter Palace.

The key events in the life of the imperial family, the births and marriages of the grand dukes, the victorious conclusions of wars or the arrivals of crowned heads and distinguished guests were celebrated with particular pomp. As the Comte de Ségur noted, "Catherine's court was the meeting-place of all sovereigns and celebrities of her epoch."¹⁹



■ Perfume vase

1780

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt

Signs: impressed in the paste

Porcelain, overglaze painting in gold,

incised decoration. 43 x 29 x 23.5 cm;

10 x 15.4 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. No. ЭРФ 487 а, 6

The cover of the vase is decorated in open work, on its body, in relief wreaths, are depicted the attributes of the arts and sickles with ears of crops.

Two similar vases once were in the collection of Prince Felix Yusupov and the collection of the Russian Museum, St Petersburg, has analogues vases with the depictions of the Russian and Austrian coats of arms.

These vases were made for the arrival in Russia in 1780 of Emperor Francis Joseph II of Austria.

So, the other vase done after the same model, may be referred to about 1780.

15. "By Our oral order, money spent in December 1799 from the chamber sum" (Russian State Historical Archives, F. 468, inv. 1, doc. 3916, f. 307).

16. Tashnadi-Marek, pp. 84-89.

17. Russian State Historical Archives, F. 408, inv. 10, doc. 91, f. 176, 176 rev.

18. Wolf, p. 60.

19. Ségur, p. 25.

■ **Covered vase decorated with portraits of the rulers of Macedonia**
1780

Designed by Jean-Dominique Rachette
Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding, incised decoration.
42.5 x 30.5 x 23 cm; 12.5 x 19.5 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 480 а, 6

On both sides of its body, placed within the oval laurel wreaths, on the ground of gold and purple powder, are profile portraits of the Macedonian rulers (diadoches) Cassander and Antigonus wearing their helmets, with the corresponding inscription below: ΚΑCΑΝΔΡΟC and ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΟC.

The paired vase, with another portraits in medallions, was in the well-known collection of S. and V. Yevdokimov in St Petersburg. The literature mentions of one more vase of a similar form and the portraits of the rulers of Syria and Egypt: Seleucus and Ptolemy. The series of vases, three of which are extant now, was probably executed in connection with the visit in 1780 to Russia of Emperor Francis Joseph II of Austria who was received with great honours. According to the porcelain researcher B.-N. Emme, portraits of the great rulers of the old times were to symbolize the union of Russia and Austria. The vases might be part of the decor of the rooms where the Austrian emperor was received or were part of diplomatic gifts. Frequently, the articles made as diplomatic gifts and favoured by the Empress, were copied for her.



Not infrequently, court ceremonies continued for several weeks and were usually accompanied by balls, masquerades, fireworks, concerts, performances, and gala dinners.

Special services looked after the enormous palace household, the daily needs of the imperial family and numerous attendants. The Court Office and the Marshal of the Court's Department, which was separated from it in the late eighteenth century, had charge of the maintenance and decoration of the imperial residences, and the staging of festivities in the Winter Palace. The Ekspeditsiya of Ceremonial Affairs drew up programmes of feasts with a detailed list of tables and the names of guests to be placed in the various halls of the Winter Palace, the names of chamber-fourriers, stewards and chefs responsible for each table, and the names of dishes. Large service storerooms provided table decoration befitting the particular occasion and level of reception. On the days of grand receptions and masquerades, the number of people invited sometimes exceeded four thousand, and as many places as possible had to be set.²⁰

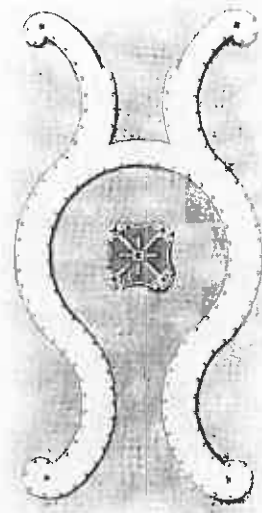
Royal dinners were managed by the ewery, pantry and kitchen officers who took care of the dinner table and crockery while the cup-bearers, coffee-men and pastry-cooks dealt with drinks, tea, coffee, and dessert.

Court ceremonial prescribed a definite programme for every festive occasion, including the names of people to be granted an audience, invited to the ball and to the empress's table; the costumes of the guests, the decor of the designated halls and the setting of the tables. On particularly important occasions, use was made of specially designated objets de vertu, crockery and utensils.

The work of innumerable servants was monitored by members of the court staff such as chamber-fourriers, valets, commissaires, a coffee-man, silver-servant, and silver-watchman.²¹

The observance of elaborate court etiquette and ceremonial was controlled by the grand Master of the Ceremonies and Lady Governess to the Court while other court ranks performed their time-hallowed duties in the magnificent spectacle of the emperor's entrance, reception or gala dinner.

It is also noteworthy that any public ceremony or pageant in the eighteenth century was designed not only to entertain and captivate through the beauty and ingenuity of performance, but also conveyed a certain message, a scenario dependent on the cause or the central figure of the festivities. Banquets and fancy-dress balls, too, were staged according to a definite scenario. The decor of state rooms and halls intended for such occasions included a variety of symbols or allegorical images elucidating the meaning of the particular celebration. Even the shape of banquet tables was determined not so much by considerations of convenience and functional efficiency as by the overall concept, according to which the tables were given the outlines of appropriate emblems or imperial attributes "like the crown or the double-headed eagle."²² Bartolommeo Rastrelli, the builder of the Winter Palace, designed tables in the shape of a lyre or the cipher of Empress Elizabeth. During Catherine's reign, fanciful figured tables were going out of fashion and constructed only on extremely important occasions, such as the wedding banquet of Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich held in the Winter Palace in February 1796.²³ As a rule, collapsible mahogany tables used to be removed from the palace storerooms and arranged in the form of a square or the Russian letters *И* and *Г*.



Francesco Bartolommeo Rastrelli
 ■ Design of a lyre-shaped banquet table
 1750s
 Drawing
 State Museum of the History of Russian Literature, St Petersburg

Francesco Bartolommeo Rastrelli used to do drawings of fancy-shaped banquet tables shaped as the tsar's cypher, crown, double headed eagle, lyre, and so on, and designed their decorations. The tables were not only part of the ceremonial ensemble, but with their forms and the table decorations they introduced an additional tint to the idea of the ceremony. While constructing such tables the artist had to take into consideration the public character of the eighteenth-century banquettes: on the balconies there were spectators, as a rule. Besides, the most important events were depicted in series of engravings, accompanied with corresponding explanations to the programme of the ceremony.

20. *Kamer-furyersky tseremonialnyi zhurnal 1772 goda* (hereafter KTZ), St Petersburg, s.a., p. 229.

21. Georgi, 1794, p. 178.

22. Stolpiansky, 1913, p. 30.

23. *Tseremonialy i zhurnaly vysokotorshestvennogo obruchenia brakosochetaniia Velikogo Kniazia Konstantina Pavlovicha s Velikoi knuzhniei Annoi Fedorovnoi Fevral' 1796 goda*, St Petersburg, 1895, p. 11.



■ Six-candled candelabrum shaped
as a vase

1780s

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt (two)
Porcelain, covered with underglaze cobalt
and painted in overglaze coloured enamels,
gilding, incised decoration.

70 x 25.5 x 26.5 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg

Inv. No. ЭРФ 818 а, 6

Against the cobalt blue background
of the vase body, are a golden powder
decoration in the *poudré d'or* technique
and relief garlands of gilded roses.
Placed in the vase is a bouquet of
porcelain flowers with metal stems, leaves,
and six candle-holders.

■ **Vase with a portrait of Catherine II and a biscuit bouquet**
1780s

No marks
Porcelain, biscuit, modelling, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding, incised decoration. 34.5 x 15.8 x 12.2 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 480

The biscuit medallion decorating the vase is made after the medal executed in 1762 by Johann Georg Vechter (1726–1800) to commemorate Catherine's accession to the throne. The empress is portrayed as the goddess of wisdom wearing the aegis and antique helmet. The medals cast in

gold were sent to Voltaire and Diderot. In 1774, the jeweller Jean Pierre Ador (1724–1784) made 30 snuff-boxes decorated with Vechter's medal as presentation pieces to the participants of the coup d'état which brought Catherine to the throne. This medal was repeatedly used in decoration of the applied art pieces in different materials. In this case, one of such repetitions decorates the vase. Its body is embellished with modelled garlands of flowers, maskarons of lions and the double cipher E. Initially this richly decorated vase had modelled handles shaped as two Cupids. Later, they were lost.



K. Emer

■ **Drawing of a vase with a portrait of Catherine II, biscuit bouquet and Cupids**

Late 19th–early 20th centuries
Signed bottom left: *сн. нам. К. Эмеръ*
Pencil, watercolours, white on cardboard.
38.5x19.4 cm
The Hermitage, Porcelain Factory Museum
Department, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. 160

The watercolour features the vase in its initial shape — with the handles modelled as two Cupids.



■ **Kvasnik and lid**
1780s

Marks: *E H* in underglaze cobalt
Porcelain, covered in underglaze cobalt,
painted in overglaze coloured enamels,
gilding, incised decoration.
19 x 19.5 x 19.2 cm; 6 x 19.8 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 379 а, 6

This cobalt *kvasnik* (*kvass jug*) bearing
the arms of the *Viazemsky* family was
designed for the Manager of the Imperial
Porcelain Factory, Prince Aleksandr
Viazemsky.

The creators of magnificent *fêtes* in the Age of Enlightenment — poets, musicians, painters, and mechanics — were past masters of allegories and symbols. Festive scenarios were drawn up by state dignitaries, writers and artists.

Porcelain ensembles made for particular occasions sometimes served as a source of poetic inspiration. Thus Gavrila Derzhavin, the foremost poet of the Age, extolled the Arabesque Service created for the 22nd anniversary of Catherine's coronation as the apotheosis of her brilliant reign.

The ideological message of grand porcelain services was embodied in their decoration and in sets of allegorical sculptures personifying momentous events, victories, the virtues and valour of the monarch. That was a reflection of the Enlightenment's motto not only to cognize and interpret the surrounding world but also to record its discoveries and the historical landmarks of successive governments in spectacular images.

The eighteenth-century banquet usually required two or three changes of setting (*peremeny*) depending on the number of courses. The make-up of porcelain banquet services was patterned on that of silver ensembles. They included the dinner and dessert parts for a certain number of persons, counting the changes, plus a sideboard for wines. Thus, the grand Orlov Service, intended for twenty-four diners, had over 720 silver plates, that is, thirty plates per person, while altogether it numbered about 3,000 pieces.²⁴ Food was served in voluminous tureens and bowls on high trays, decorated with relief coats of arms and ornaments, dishes and bowls with tall covers, on massive under plates; and in pans of varying shapes, sauce-boats, oil-cans, and salt-cellars. Spice-stands were usually arranged on a figured tray together with statuettes, vases and candlesticks, forming a fanciful *plat de ménage* — one of the key table adornments. Wines and corresponding cups were cooled in bottle- and wineglass-containers. The crystal cruets of *plat de ménages*, decanters, glasses, goblets, and wineglasses necessary for the table setting were made at local factories or commissioned from abroad.

Completing the sumptuous table decoration were branched candelabra and massive candlesticks that either formed part of the service ensemble or were selected from those kept in the storerooms.

Despite the achievements of the Russian and European porcelain industry, silver services continued to dominate the banquet table setting. Their make-up was determined by the requirements of the French cuisine adopted at the Russian court and was not different from European examples. "Transplanted and flourishing on Russian soil, the French cuisine, however, did not need any kinds of new tableware, as Russian nobles, among whom the ministers Nesselrode and Guryev perpetuated themselves in the names of dishes, would spend enormous fortunes on food, boasting more of the high cost and sophisticated preparation of known dishes rather than the invention of new ones that would have called for special crockery. Some nobles fried game using cloves instead of wood, others fed poultry with hulled nuts giving it cream and hock to drink, or porridge with truffles, to fatten, while others still kept crayfish in cream with Parmesan."²⁵

Russian noblemen used to hire a foreign chef, preferably a French one, and Grigory Potemkin, famous for his extravagant epicurean tastes, kept no less than a dozen cooks of different origin, who adorned the prince's table with all kinds of exotic food. The Russian nobles of Catherine's time, Potemkin, Stroganov, Razumovsky, and Osterman, strove to

24. For the list of pieces in the Orlov Service, see *Opisi zolotykh i severnykh veshchei, khronicheskikh v kladovykh Imperatorskikh Zimnego, Anichkovskogo i Gaichanskogo dvortsov. Obrabotany baronom*

A. E. Felkersam, vol. 2, part 2, St Petersburg, 1907, pp. 104–116
For the detailed history of the service, see A. Kudriavtseva, "Orlovskii serviz", *Sezony*, Moscow, 1995, pp. 209–220.

25. Troinitsky, 1924–1, p. 62.

III Solitaire tea service with a portrait of Aleksandr Viazemsky 1786-92

Marks: *E II* underglaze cobalt Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding, incised decoration.

Tray: 22 x 30.8 cm; tea-pot with a lid: 9.6 x 15.9 x 10.2 cm; 3.8 x 5.9 cm; sugar-basin with a lid: 6.7 x 13 x 9.8 cm; 4.5 x 10.3 cm; cream-jug with a lid: 10.1 x 10.5 x 6.7 cm; 3.1 x 4.7 cm; cup with a saucer: 5.2 x 9.6 x 7.8 cm; 4 x 8.2 cm; 3 x 13.4 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 8032-ЭРФ 8036

The service was designed for the eminent statesman of Catherine's time, General Procurator Aleksandr Viazemsky (1727-1793), who played a significant role in managing the internal affairs of the state, the finances and justice. From 1773 to 1792 he was Director of the Imperial Porcelain Factory. The ancient Russian family of Princes Viazemsky traced its origin from the grandson of Vladimir Monomachus, Prince Rostislav Mstislavovich Smolensky, whose grand-grandson was granted the apanage of Viazma. Thus the family-name 'Viazemsky' appeared. The coat of arms of the Viazemsky family comprised that of the apanage principality of Smolensk — a silver shield bearing representation of a gun, with a bird perched on it; the shield is covered with a prince's mantle, the Russian imperial crown being placed on its top. Several monograms integrated into the service's decor may belong to the members of Aleksandr Viazemsky's family. The main article of the solitaire service, the cup with a saucer, is decorated with a portrait of Aleksandr Viazemsky and the coat of arms of Princes Viazemsky (on the saucer): the coat of arms of the Principality of Smolensk consisting of the representation of a gun on a golden carriage, with a bird perched on it, depicted against an ermine prince's mantle under a Russian prince's crown. The tray bears the allegorical representation of love: a woman amidst clouds, with a pigeon, holding a heart in her hand. The tea-pot, sugar-basin and cream-jug bear the monograms *PAW*, *PAV* and *PEV* topped with a prince's crown.

IV Portrait of Prince Aleksandr Viazemsky, with the star and ribbon of the Order of St Andrew the First-Called, on the cup from the solitaire tea service. Made after the 1786 engraving by G. Skorodumov (1755-1792) from the portrait kept at the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow.





■ Dinner at the Faceted Chamber of the Moscow Kremlin
Sheet from the coronation album of Catherine II
Unknown engraver, after a drawing of 1762–63 by Jean Louis de Velli
(1726–1809 and M.Makhayev (1718–1770) Engraving by chisel. 59 x 79 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg. Inv. No. 93Г 3478



■ Vine fountain and roasted oxen
Sheet from the coronation album of Catherine II of 1744
Engraver I. Sokolov. (1718–1757)
Engraving by chisel, tinted by watercolours.
43.7 x 28
The Hermitage, St Petersburg
Inv. No.9PT 25766

On great festivals food for people was cooked and dispensed in the square in front of the Palace.

excel one another at inventing new dishes and the intricate decoration of the table. It was customary for rich families to keep a table for fifty or more people. The menu of a supper for this number of guests included upwards of a hundred dishes served in four courses: cold hors d'oeuvres (*zakuski*), hot dishes or soups, roast meat, and dessert.²⁶

The menus of eighteenth-century banquets abounded in intentionally extravagant meals, all elaborately prepared and decorated. Both the appearance and name of each dish reflected the tendency to create an image. In one of the mid-eighteenth-century menus we find the following list of dishes:

- Fricassée of nightingale's tongues
- Ragout of deer's lips and ears
- Bull's eyes in sauce, waking in the morning
- Elk's lips in sour cream
- Boiled bear's paws
- Pies with baked-in doves
- Wines: Burgundy, Hungarian, and other foreign brands.²⁷

The ceremonial tableware and utensils removed from the palace storerooms for Catherine's feasts not infrequently belonged to past stylistic eras. The property and treasures of the Russian court were administered by the Court Office which received all commissions and gifts for the court and distributed them between the storerooms. "On the ground floor is a vaulted passageway with two rows of piers and paved with slabs [the Rastrelli Gallery — T.K.]... on either side of it are special compartments for the kitchen, the court apothecary and the spacious room in which the gold, silver, porcelain as well as dinner, coffee and other services are stored."²⁸

The crockery and utensils, most remarkable in artistic respect, were kept either in the Empress's private apartments or the Hermitage collection. The silver storerooms, watched by two servants, contained objects some of which had been acquired as early as Peter I's reign. Whenever necessary, new items were added to the services.

On 3 August 1772, in the gallery of the Winter Palace, "the Prussian Envoy Count von Solms presented Her Majesty with a specially made porcelain service sent by His Majesty the King of Prussia, which was wholly set out on [the tables] in due order."²⁹

26. M. T. Pyhaev, *Staroe zhit'e*, St Petersburg, 1897, p. 7.

27. *An Imperial Fascination: Porcelain Dining with the Czars Peterhof: An Exhibition of Services from the Russian Imperial Palaces. From the Collection of the State Museum in Petrodvorets (Peterhof)*. Texts by Nina V. Vernova, Vadim V. Znamenov, Tamara N. Nosovitch, New York, 1991, p. 155.

28. Georgi, *Opisanie Sankt-Peterburga*, pp. 75, 178.

29. KTZ 1772, 1872, p. 11.

30. The Frog Service is housed in the Hermitage collection. For its history and complete catalogue of items, see Micheel Raeburn, Ludmila Voronikhina, Andrew Nurnberg, ed. *The Green Frog Service*. Foreword by Sir Martin Wedgwood, Bt. Essay by Gaye Blake Roberts, London, 1995.

31. The Cameo Service is kept in the Hermitage reserves. It was displayed at many exhibitions, including "Versailles et les tables royales en Europe XVII^e – XIX^e siècles. Musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon, Paris, 1993.

■ **Table laid with the ceremonial dessert service presented to Catherine II by Frederick II**
Berlin, the Royal Porcelain Manufacture
1770–72

Model by F.-E. Mayer and W.-Ch. Mayer
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
enamels, gilding
The Hermitage, St Petersburg

The Berlin Service, one of the most remarkable porcelain ensembles of the 18th century, was presented to Catherine II by Frederick II in commemoration of the 1763 union of Prussia and Russia.

The service comprised 120 plates with the empress' monogram, entwined into the open-worked carved decor of the rims, and scenes from the Russo-Turkish war of 1769–74, painted by J.-B. Borrmann.

The service comprised also 120 sets of dessert silver things with porcelain handles and many other different items.

The table was centred with a monument to Catherine II, under a canopy, surrounded with allegorical sculptures, figures representing peoples of Russia kneeling before the empress as well as captive Turks.

The laid table resembled a magnificent garden with sculptures and vases of flowers, melon-shaped bowls, compote-basins shaped as leaves, baskets, candelabra with porcelain bouquets.



■ **Trophies. Sculptural composition**

1783–91

No marks

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
enamels, gilding, 33 x 19 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No ЭРФ 6441

This sculptured composition is part of the *surtout-de-table* for one of the ceremonial services produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. Placed in the centre of the composition is the white banner with the double-headed eagle and the monogram *E II* of the Yekaterinoslav Cuirassier Regiment, the chief of which was Prince Grigory Potemkin. Represented around it are the arms and ammunition of the late 18th-century Russian army: a cuirassier helmet, a drum with a pair of drumsticks, a gun, bombs and sabres. Hanging on the tree trunk entwined by the laurel wreath is a cartridge pouch with the monogram *E II*. Similar compositions with war trophies comprised part of the *surtout-de-table* of the dessert service from the Berlin Porcelain Manufacture presented to Catherine II by Frederick II. The paired composition with Russian banners, once having belonged to Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich, is now in a private collection in Paris.

This gift from Frederick the Great eclipsed all the porcelain services of Elizabeth's reign. Particular attention was, of course, paid to the centrepiece, the *surtout-de-table* — one more apotheosis of Catherine II's reign. She is presented enthroned under a canopy, with groups below paying homage. The sculptural ensemble was produced by the finest masters of the Königlische Porzellan Manufaktur in Berlin: the brothers Friedrich Elias and Wilhelm Christian Mayer.

In 1773, the celebrated ceramicist Josiah Wedgwood made the faience Frog Service featuring views of Great Britain for the Chesme Palace in the environs of St Petersburg.³⁰

A worthy rival to the best European services found at the Russian court was the famous Cameo Service, executed in 1778–79 to Catherine's commission by the Sèvres Royal Manufactory.³¹ It included 744 pieces for sixty place settings and a large biscuit *surtout-de-table*, *Russian Parnassus*, made after Louis Simon Boiseau's models. Contemporaries were struck by its noble, strict forms and elegant decor of garlands on a turquoise ground, inlaid with carved cameos.

The above masterpieces by the famous European manufactories were widely emulated and some of their features, decorative motifs and colour combinations can be traced in subsequent European and Russian services.





Detail of painting on the Arabesque Dinner and Dessert Service

■ Pieces from the Arabesque Dinner and Dessert Service. 1784

Marks: E II in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste D. E.
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding, incised decoration. Sauce-boat with a lid and tray: 6.6 x 20.5 x 12.9 cm; 7.9 x 16.2 x 12 cm; 3 x 22.8 x 16.5 cm; dessert plate: 4 x 24.3 cm; bottle-holder: 12.8 x 16.2 x 13.3 cm; egg-cup: 4 x 4.5 cm; cream-cup: 6 x 7.5 x 5.8 cm; 3.5 x 4.6 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg
Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 348 а, 6; ЭРФ 350; ЭРФ 351 а, 6; ЭРФ 353; ЭРФ 355

The Arabesque Service was the first great ceremonial service produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory for ceremonial receptions at the Court. It consisted of 60 sets and comprised 973 items of various functions, which present more than 50 different shapes. The shapes and ornament were done in the style of the early Classicism. All the objects have smoothly rounded outlines, with a decoration of exquisite arabesques, garlands of foliage and flowers and medallions derived from the Antique cameos enthusiastically collected by the Empress. They contain silhouette profile portraits and vases, details of decorative murals discovered at the excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii. The three-dimensional objects, plates and dishes are decorated with fancy-shaped cartouches enclosing grisaille allegorical representations of Justice, Industry, Arts etc. The colour-scheme of its painted decor was

built up of light pastel colours — pinks, blues, violets, and light greens — enhanced with gold. By the time when the Arabesque Service was created, several splendid services produced by the famed European manufactures had been already purchased for the imperial court. Among them were the St Andrew Service from the Meissen Manufacture, the Berlin dessert service, with the sculptural group glorifying the Russian Empress, and the Sèvres service with cameos, which incorporated table sculptural adornments made in biscuit after models by L.-S. Boisseau. There is no doubt that these masterpieces of European porcelain inspired Russian masters.

Prince Aleksandr Viazemsky, General-Procurator and Director of the Imperial Porcelain Factory from 1773 to 1792, suggested that the Arabesque Service should comprise a *surtout-de-table* of eight biscuit compositions encircling a magnificent porcelain statue of Catherine the Great. The sculptural pieces embodied the main message of the whole project. Among the people who elaborated it in detail was the talented architect, artist, poet and musician, Prince Nikolai Lvov (1751–1803/4).

The sculptures which encircled the monument to Catherine the Great were allegorical representations of the new lands incorporated into the Russian state, such as Taurida (the Crimea) and Georgia, as well as of the virtues of Catherine as the ruler of Russia. The models for the

allegorical sculptures were executed by Jean-Dominique Rachette (1744–1809), who from 1779 to 1804 headed the sculpture workshop at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. The famous Russian poet of the period Gavriil Derzhavin made a detailed description of the sculptural compositions provided with full explanations of their allegorical meaning. At present these sculptural pieces are kept in the collection of the State Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

On the completion of the works, the Arabesque Service was transferred to the Winter Palace and prepared for presentation to the Empress. On the next day after the official celebration of the 20th anniversary of her reign held on September 23, 1784, in the Winter Palace the Empress accompanied by the Grand Dukes "deigned to examine the porcelain dinner service designed for 60 persons that was produced by the local St Petersburg Porcelain Factory" (The Fourrier Ceremonial Journal for 1784, St Petersburg, 1884, p. 487). The service, with its thoroughly elaborated shapes and ornament, served as the sample for the following articles of this kind produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. It was used for the most important ceremonial dinners and receptions, e.g. in the table setting for the wedding party of Catherine's grand-daughter Grand Princess Elena Pavlovna and Friedrich of Mecklenburg which took place on October 12, 1799 (The Fourrier Ceremonial Journal for 1799, St Petersburg, 1898, pp. 1512-1513).



■ **Military Force. Part from the *surtout-de-table* of the Arabesque Service**
 Model of 1784
 Sculptor J. -D. Rachette
 No marks
 Signed by the author, in the paste:
Rachette fecit
 Porcelain. Height 49 cm
 Peterhof State Museum-Reserve,
 St Petersburg.
 Inv. No. ПДМН 5852-φ

This is the unpainted version of one of the 9 compositions of the table adornment from the Arabesque Service. The sculptural groups commemorate in allegorical form the activities of Catherine II. The major part of the service and the *surtout-de-table*, decorated with gold painting, are housed by the State Russian Museum, St Petersburg.

■ Pieces from the Yacht Service

1785-87

Marks: E II and II (crowned) in underglaze cobalt

Signs: impressed in the paste C (on the tray and dish), S: D (on the plate and salt-cellar) Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. The bowl with a lid and tray 13 x 32 x 23.5 cm; 17.5 x 37 x 22 cm; 5.5 x 42.5 x 33 cm; the perfume basin with an open-worked decor on the cover and body: 19.5 x 31 x 19 cm, 11 x 25.2 x 18 cm; the triangular covered tray:

6.2 x 53.5 x 31.5 cm, the bottle-holder:

14.3 x 19.5 x 15.8 cm; the plate:

4.2 x 24 cm; the salt-cellar with a spoon:

4 x 10.7 x 7.3 cm; 10.5 x 8 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 352; ЭРФ 354; ЭРФ 356;

ЭРФ 358; ЭРФ 360; ЭРФ 357; ЭРФ 359;

ЭРФ 3565; ЭРФ 4730; ЭРФ 8307 а, б

This service was modelled after the Arabesque Service and is, so to say, its 'twin'. The variety of forms and shapes the items from the Arabesque Service, as well as its colour-scheme and ornamentation are repeated in the Yacht service, yet some alterations are introduced into its decor. The shaped cartouches with allegorical figures are replaced in the Yacht Service by the oval medallions with representations of the double-headed eagle clutching the laurel wreath and white standard of the mercantile fleet, with crossed anchors on it.

The scallops of the plates' rims are somewhat wider and bear gilt serrated design. The arrangement and dimensions of foliage garlands and medallions is changed.

As the Chief Curator at Hillwood Museum, Ann Odom, supposes, the service might have been created as a part of equipment for the Empress' visit to the Crimea. She went there in the spring of 1788 down the Dnieper in a galley accompanied by a large flotilla of 80 ships which carried the numerous retinue and servants as well as the necessary utensils, crockery and provisions. Every day, at 1 p.m. the Empress had her dinner, together with her close retinue. "As usual, her table was laid for ten persons. Only once in a week she invited all her suite who was honoured to accompany her. Then the table was laid on a large vessel that could accommodate 60 persons".

Moreover, ceremonial dinner parties were given by the Empress to honour her eminent guests, the King of Poland Stanislas II August Poniatowski among them. The Yacht Service was, probably, made for such occasions.

The emblems of the merchant fleet, decorating this service, were to demonstrate the endeavour of Catherine the Great to develop industry and trade in Russia. In fact, it was the first Russian "yacht" service followed by the numerous services produced for the imperial yachts during the 19th century.



The first grand ensemble on a par with the famous European examples was the Arabesque Service,³² completed in St Petersburg in 1784. Its 973 pieces intended for sixty persons were painted with ornamental arabesques in the style of ancient Roman murals. The service was planned in two parts, for dinner and dessert, and contained over fifty types of item for the complete setting of the banquet table. The set of allegorical figures, with the sculpture of Catherine in the centre, was designed by Rachette according to a plan drawn up by the factory's director Aleksandr Viazemsky and the artist and poet Nikolai Lvov. Rachette's compositions extolled the acts and virtues of Catherine's government, highlighting one of the key events of her Age — the annexation of Georgia and the Crimea. In contrast to the Berlin service, where the ruler's apotheosis is presented as a theatrical action with the festively-dressed extras gallantly kneeling in front of the enthroned Empress, this same message is conveyed in the Russian service through abstract classical allegories. The figure of Catherine is a veritable monument in porcelain, adapted to the dessert table's dimensions. She is surrounded by four allegorical groups representing Georgia and the Crimea, and the military and naval might of the Russian Empire. Another four groups personify the virtues of the enlightened monarch. Catherine displayed the newly completed Arabesque Service in the Winter Palace the day after the twenty-second anniversary of her coronation in September 1784.

The table adornments of the Elizabethan period usually featured exotic curiosities, *trompe l'oeils* and miniature landscapes with plants and fountains, all amazing the onlooker by the textural effects of the materials used. The characters depicted, such as cupids and mummers, were intended to intrigue and surprise. In contrast, the table ornaments of Catherine's times were designed to convey an idea, to represent an event or a personality through sculptural allegory. Their ideological message was made clear in inscriptions, attributes and poetic commentaries which quite often accompanied the display of such ensembles.

In 1787, Catherine II set off, with a large retinue, on her famous trip to the newly acquired Crimea. As the Comte de Ségur, who accompanied the Empress, later wrote, she travelled down the Dnieper on the galley-yachts "escorted by the most magnificent flotilla that had ever sailed on that wide river. It consisted of 80 ships carrying 3,000 sailors and soldiers."³³ Every day, aboard her lavishly decorated galley Catherine gave dinners for ten persons while on Sundays and on the days of ceremonial receptions she invited a host of distinguished guests to her table. For this historic trip, described by many of its participants, Catherine apparently commissioned the first Yacht Service which is closely related to the Arabesque Service in both shape and ornament. Its painting was supplemented by the depiction of the double-headed eagle with the flag of the merchant marine symbolizing a peaceful reign and the flourishing of the empire's new lands. Later, in the nineteenth century, a large number of personal yacht services featuring standards, maritime emblems and names of ships would be made in Russia for the Imperial family.

The Empress travelled in the company of her ministers and courtiers, those who stood behind many of her reforms and military triumphs. Among them was Count Aleksander Bezborodko (1747–99), one of the illustrious minds of the age, who headed the College of Foreign Affairs. In 1793–95, in recognition of his outstanding services to the country, a superb porcelain ensemble was produced for him at the Imperial Factory. The commission

32. KTZ 1772, p. 410.

33. Ségur, p. 184.



■ **Covered cup and saucer**
St Petersburg, 1780–96
Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste 13
Porcelain, covered in underglaze cobalt
and painted in overglaze coloured enamels,
gilding, incised decoration. 8.1 x 11 x 7.1
cm; 4.5 x 7.5 cm; 3.2 x 13.5 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 399 а, б, а

The cup is decorated with the gilded
inscription *береги чтобъ помнить*
(keep in order to remember), monogram
E P (ciphers of Empress Catherine II and
Grand Duke Pavel Petrovich) and garlands

against the cobalt background.
It was in vogue in the epoch of early
Sentimentalism to give small presents to
one's "darlings". These were separate cups
and glasses with memorial inscriptions,
pictograms, allegorical depictions,
representations of memorial places or
articles having a special private meaning
for the both. This elegant cobalt cup
belongs to such gifts. It is decorated
with the monograms of both the donor and
the recipient and the meaningful
inscription. The fragility of porcelain is
associated here with the fragility of senses
and reminiscences.



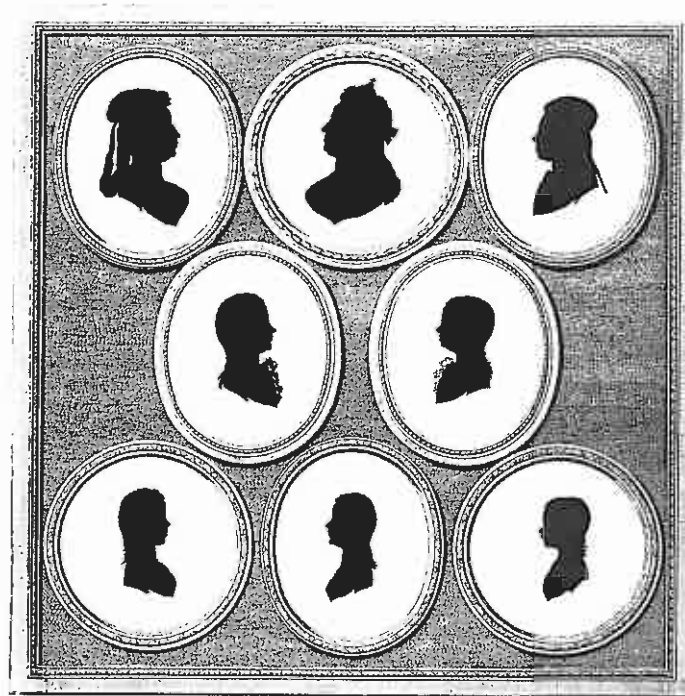
■ **Covered cup and saucer**
Late 1780–early 1790s
Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste by hand I
Porcelain, covered in underglaze cobalt,
lustre, overglaze painting in enamels
of two colours, gilding. 5.6 x 10.5 x 8.4 cm;
4.1 x 8.9 cm; 3 x 14 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 397 а, б, а

In reserves, against the lilac with lustre
background, are silhouette portraits of
Grand Dukes Alexandr Pavlovich and
Konstantin Pavlovich in their childhood.

J.-Ch. Nabholz
1752–1797

■ **Portraits of Catherine II, Grand Duke
Pavel Petrovich, and Grand Duchess
Maria Fedorovna with her children
Alexander, Konstantin, Alexandra,
Elena and Maria**
Etching About 1790
The Hermitage, the Porcelain Factory
Museum Department, St Petersburg

In the late 18th century silhouette portraits
come into fashion. These portraits of the
members of the imperial family are made
by the artists J.-Ch. Nabholz (1752–1797),
Sidout, active in St Petersburg in 1782–83,
and others.



■ **Covered paired vases**
1780–late 1790s
No marks
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
enamels, gilding 55 x 18.5 cm
Pavlovsk State Museum-Reserve
St Petersburg. Inv. No. ЦХ-5235-1: 5236-1

The paired vases are decorated with
silhouette portraits of Grand Dukes Pavel
Petrovich and Alexandr Petrovich, as well
as with the portraits of Maria Fedorovna
and Konstantin Pavlovich.





■ Items from the tea services painted with flowers 1780-96

Marks: E II in underglaze cobalt

(on the tea-pot and cup)

Signs: impressed in the paste 5 I and A 6

(on the tea-pot and creamer)

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. The tea-pot and lid: 12.5 x 21 x 12.1 cm; 5 x 7.5 cm; the creamer and lid: 11.1 x 13 x 7 cm; 3 x 4.7 cm; the covered cup and saucer:

6.2 x 10 x 7.2 cm; 4.1 x 7.7 cm; 3.2 x 14 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 384 а, б; ЭРФ 385 а, б, в;

ЭРФ 386 а, б, в

These items from two different services have only small variations in their decor. It was a custom, when it was necessary, to unite pieces from different services painted in flowers and fruits when laying a table for a large number of persons.

34. For the dinner and dessert services commissioned for Count Bezborodko, see Russian State Historical Archives, fond 468, inv. 37, doc. 64, list 1.

35. On Catherine's orders, later confirmed by Paul I and Alexander I, the Imperial Factory produced four gala services for the dowries of Grand Duchesses Alexandra, Elena, Maria, and Ekaterina, the daughters of Paul I and Maria Fedorovna. These services were variants of the Cabinet Service, with similar Italianate landscapes in medallions but different borders of roses. Each one was distinguished by its design of roses and included a table decoration with large biscuit figures.

36. List of the porcelain and biscuit pieces made for the service of His Highness Count Aleksandr Alekseevich Bezborodko.

Name:...

For the table decoration:

Large group antique, from Herculaneum *Love for Sale*

1 500 roubles

Groups: *The Wedding of Andobruno*,

350 roubles each

2 700 roubles

Group: *Cupid and Psyche*

1 90 roubles

Figure: *Love Overcoming Power*

1 50 roubles

Antique figure: *Venus*

1 60 roubles

Antique figure: *Faun*

1 60 roubles

Antique figure: *Mercur*

1 60 roubles

Cupid on the Clouds

1 30 roubles

Altogether 2,476 roubles

See Russian State Historical Archives, Fond 468, inv. 37, doc. 64, f. 3

37. *Obraznye tsarstvomaniia i svoito: Ekateriny Velikoi Paxlom Siamokozym. Pochetnym chlenom Impriatorshogo Vilenskogo universiteta*, part 2, St Petersburg, 1852, pp 80, 81.

called for a large "dinner and dessert service with biscuits and coffee covers to be made after the example of the one presented to Her Imperial Majesty in 1784".³⁴ Numbering 800 pieces, this service ranks among the most consummate examples of Russian porcelain. Its classical forms are in perfect accord with the picturesque bands of field flowers and the architectural views of Rome and its outskirts in medallions on a white ground. The Italian motifs were derived from engravings by Giacomo Piranesi, Giuseppe Vasi and other artists. This is a kind of "travel service" presenting a unique panorama of Roman landmarks, many of which are no longer extant. Following Wedgwood's example, the Factory's artists thus created another porcelain album of architectural antiquities. Subsequently the service was transferred to Her Majesty's Cabinet (hence its name: the Cabinet Service) and was used as a model for later porcelain ensembles.³⁵

■ Items from the tea service 1780-96

Marks: E II in underglaze cobalt

Signs: impressed in the paste I, H 6, I 13

and I C; painted in gold *

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels. The covered coffee-pot:

14.5 x 16.1 x 9.2 cm; 4 x 6.9 cm;

covered creamer: 12 x 14.5 x 8.3 cm;

3.6 x 6.2 cm; covered sugar-basin:

6.1 x 10.9 cm; 4 x 11.3 cm; two cups

and saucers: 6.3 x 8.3 x 6.5 cm; 3 x 13.2 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 805 а, б-ЭРФ 809 а, б

The service is decorated with chintz-like painting of forget-me-nots and roses.

■ Tea table with a porcelain table-top 1780-96

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. 74.5 x 52 cm;

diameter of the table-top 44 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv. No. ЭРФ 7349

The porcelain table-top is decorated with chintz-like painting of roses, cornflowers and twigs; on the border is a garland of laurel leaves. The wooden table frame is carved and gilded against a white background.



The Cabinet Service was provided with a table decoration comprising nine classical figures in biscuit: *Venus, Faun, Mercury, Cupid and Psyche, Cupid on the Clouds*, and large groups on motifs from classical murals: *Love for Sale, Love Overcoming Power* and *The Wedding of Andobrandino*.³⁶

The ensemble gained popularity thanks to its simple allegories fit for any occasion. Individual figures were repeatedly copied as gifts or supplemented the services made for the dowries of the grand duchesses.

In addition to these grand service ensembles, the Imperial Factory also produced a wide variety of wares for everyday use. Commissioned by the Court Office, such articles bore unpretentious painted decor of flower motifs and quite often carried the inscription *Прудвор.* (for the court) or *И:К* in Cyrillic for 'Pridvornyi kontrol' ('court management'). Over several decades the factory manufactured a plethora of bowls, plates and dishes with free arrays of varicoloured bouquets and "cotton print" patterns of small sprigs of flowers here and there. In spite of differences, the items could be easily combined for any number of persons. They were in everyday use in the Winter Palace and suburban palaces until 1838 when Nicholas I commissioned new everyday services decorated with the double-headed eagle. Needless to say, formal services from the Imperial Porcelain Factory were found only in Court or in the homes of courtiers enjoying Catherine's particular favour; other well-to-do families had to content themselves with imported porcelain. In the luxury of interior decoration, the multitude of servants and the magnificence of receptions and celebrations, the palaces of the richest grandees sometimes competed with the royal residences. Many used to give dinners for 20–30 persons, but the host himself was often absent, being at Court, or dining out in a club or with friends. "Mondays there, Thursdays here; a reception every day here. [People] assembled for dinners and evening parties; rooms resounded with music; beauties streamed in, and waiters in galloon were only to glad to oblige. A newcomer could save having his own board all the year round, going from one pleasant company to another."³⁷

Precious utensils formed luxurious props for an endless succession of carousals and gala dinners at which Russian nobles abandoned themselves to the delights of the culinary art. The festive setting of a rich table without porce-



■ Covered dish with views of English castles 1793–96

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste 2
Porcelain, overglaze monochrome painting, gilding. 5.5 x 38.7 x 28.7 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 76 а, 6

Placed in the centre is a monochrome grisaille miniature encircled by gilded foliage garlands. The miniature represents the ruins of the castle in Barlington (Knaresborough, Yorkshire, and the Wooburn Castle in a Surrey. The sides of the cover bear gilded monogram *E II* under the crown and the cursive inscriptions in black made by hand: *Vue des Ruines du château du Comté de Burligton and à Knaresborough, dans la province d'York*; the interior of the cover bears two inscriptions: *226; Vue du Ch: Knaresborough, auprès de Doncastre, dans le Comté d' York* on one side and: *1114; Vue a Wooburn, dans le Comté de*

Surry Camp: de M. Philippe Southcote on the other side.

The dish made part of the service which was obviously inspired by the famous earthenware "Green Frog" Service commissioned by Catherine II from J. Wedgwood for her Chesme Palace near St. Petersburg and produced during the years 1773–1774. The "Green Frog" Service was decorated with monochrome views of Great Britain painted after engravings and life sketches. The subjects of the painted decor, their arrangement on the surface of the items as well as the encircling design of twigs with lollage were borrowed from the "Green Frog" Service. The green frog emblazoned on the pieces from the Wedgwood service as an emblem of the Chesme Palace located on marshy soil was replaced with the gilded monogram *E II* in this service produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. The shapes of its items, somewhat more simple and classical, were modelled after the Cabinet Service which took a long time to complete: from 1793 until the beginning of the reign of Alexander I.



■ Pieces from the Green Frog Service
England, Wedgwood Firm
1773
Porcelain, underglaze painting



■ **Presentation cup and saucer. 1796**
 Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
 Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
 enamels, gilding, 8 x 8.7 x 6.7 cm; 3.4 x 14 cm
 The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
 Inv. No. ЭРФ 393 а, 6

The cup is painted with three medallions containing the monograms *П* (Paul), *М* (Mary), and *Н А* (Honore, Amore — Honour and Love). The cup and saucer are encircled with black lambrequins bearing the gilded double-headed eagles, orange draperies and borders with the gilded monograms *П* and *М*. The rim of the saucer is decorated with the border of the octagonal order star and the double-headed eagles on the orange ground.

In the centre of the saucer is painted an allegorical composition of an obelisk with banners, trophies, laurel wreath, the monogram *Н А* emblazoned on a shield, a pair of doves hovering above the rose bush — an allegory of honour and love; the dog depicted at the basement of the obelisk is the symbol of loyalty; the obelisk is flanked by the laurel and oak branches. The roundel is encircled by the inscription: *CONSERVEZ MA DEVISE: ELLE EST CHERE A MON COEUR: LES MOTS EN SONT SACRES: C'EST. L'AMOUR ET L'HONNEUR* ("Keep my motto: it is dear to my heart: its words are sacred: they are love and honour").

The cup reproduced was presented by Catherine the Great to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of her son's marriage to Maria Fedorovna on September 26, 1796. The colour-scheme of the painting is dominated by black and orange, the colours of the Romanov House, imperial banner and the order of St George. The monograms designate the names of the married couple, while the symbols, emblems and allegories featured in the decor illustrate the motto of the Empress herself, which serves to emphasize the high status and the lofty incentives of the princely couple.

■ **Vase with relief garlands, medallions and masks of Satyr**
 1780-96

No marks
 Porcelain, covered in underglaze cobalt and painted in overglaze coloured enamels, gilding, incised decoration
 41.5 x 16 x 18 cm
 The Hermitage, St Petersburg
 Inv. No. ЭРФ 482



lain was already considered outmoded. This is vividly demonstrated by the table appointments adopted in hospitable homes where both the invited and the uninvited assembled at the usual hour: "At such evening parties places for about 200 were laid after nine. A silver service was placed on one table and a service of Saxon porcelain on the other; the old, grey-haired servants were bustling around the first table and only the young waiters attended to the second."³⁸

According to newspapers, one of the Gostinny Dvor shops sold "Saxon tableware, statues, dolls, tea services, and new-fashioned candlesticks with flowers" as early as 1756.³⁹ With the passage of time, when porcelain was also imported from Vienna, Britain, and Berlin, it took a permanent place in well-to-do households.

The Imperial Factory's wares continued to be expensive in comparison with imported porcelains. Moreover, the factory was obliged to supply the court with the finest pieces it produced while being hardly able to cope with the constantly increasing orders for everyday and souvenir pieces. The most commonly used gifts at court were vases, sculptures, tea services, cups, and snuff-boxes.

Vases and services from Catherine's reign display an inexhaustible variety of form and decor based on a few classical types. The favourite form of the time is the ovoid with mask-, figure- and scroll-shaped handles. The lids are crowned with moulded bouquets, cones and military trophies. The body is decorated with relief medallions, clusters of flowers and ornaments. Even more varied is the painted decor which, however, never obscures the lines of the classical amphora. While the shapes of services from the first half of Catherine's reign are rounded, towards the end of the eighteenth century they become rectangular and angular. Conical and cylindrical volumes prevail and cups take the form of glasses with rectangular handles.

The painting varies from the random sprays of plain "cotton print" flowers to miniature pictures and portraits encircled by minutely fashioned garlands and gilded elevated ornaments.

Flowers are plaited into frames, wreaths and the initials of the owners. The coats of arms, portraits and monograms of the owners usually occur on souvenir items made to order. Quite often, they are accompanied or re-



■ **Covered cup and saucer**
1780-96

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste: *I. 14*
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding.
5.5 x 8.3 x 6.1 cm;
3.2 x 6.5 cm;
2.8 x 12.7 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 398 а, 6, в

The cup is painted in imitation of wood, with bouquets of flowers in medallions.

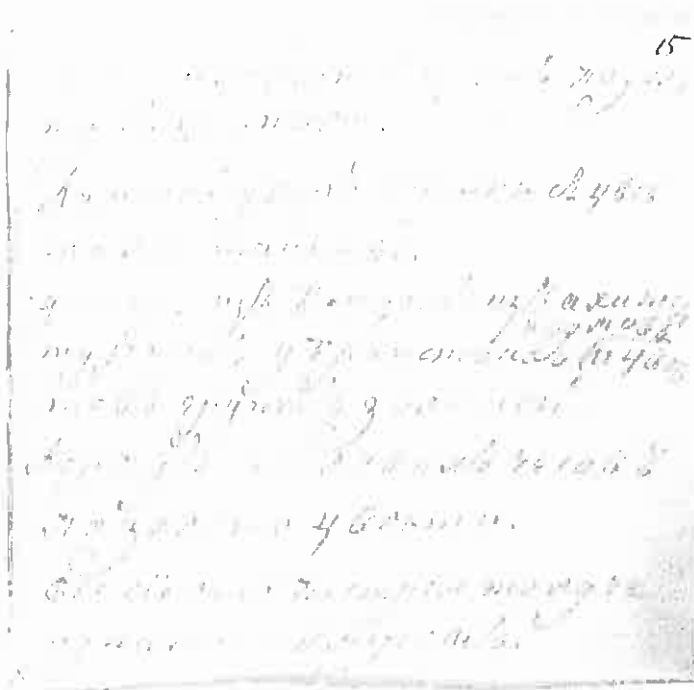


■ **Covered cup and saucer-trembles**
1780-96

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt, on the biscuit
Signs: impressed in the paste by hand Φ (initial of the moulder)
Porcelain, underglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. 9 x 12.8 x 7.2 cm;
4.6 x 8 cm, 3.2 x 15.6 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No. ЭРФ 387 а, 6, а
The cup is decorated with a plaited design in relief and painted, in oval medallions, with flowers, a quiver with a bow and arrows, a score and musical instruments

38. Pyliaev, p. 441.

39. P. Stolpiansky 1915, p. 5



■ The order to the Imperial Porcelain Factory with the list of articles in the hand of Catherine II
Paper, red crayon. 17.6 x 18.5 cm
The Hermitage, Porcelain Factory Museum Department, St. Petersburg
Inv. No. 119/1998

*Tea and coffee service, with flowers against gold.
Mantel set and flower pots, the same.
Table decoration of pergolas, architectural details, houses and flowers, with gold background.
Table clock-case, gilded, with coloured painting.
The more particoloured, the better, however, with taste.*
From the book *Inscribed Orders of Sovereign Empress Catherine II and the Personal Commission of Her Imperial Majesty for 1765*

40. Such inscriptions occur on porcelain cups and a kevas-jug in the Hermitage collection.

41. Hermitage archive, Porcelain Museum Factory Department. *Immennye ukazy. Ekateriny II.*, f. 15.

placed by commemorative, well-wishing or edifying inscriptions and mottoes of the donor such as *Keep as a remembrance, My lord, be healthy, may this be the joy of your life, or Observe my motto, it is dear to my heart: its words are sacred: it is love and honour.*⁴⁰

The Empress herself not only wrote many texts but was the main subject of allegories and portrait medallions. Her cipher — single or doubled, rendered by the skilful calligrapher's hand, or plaited from flowers — is featured on gifts and pieces for personal use. The owners' monograms and portraits feature on order and presentation pieces. In the 1780s, when silhouettes came into fashion, cups and vases were adorned with black profile portraits of the Empress and the family of Grand Duke Pavel Petrovich (later Paul I). Now and then, portraits of courtiers and Catherine's close associates appeared on items intended as gifts. To take one example, the only cup from a magnificent *service-solitaire* (now in the Hermitage) bears the image of its owner, Prince Aleksandr Viazemsky, Procurator-General of the Senate, who headed the Imperial Factory from 1773 to 1792. As a rule,

portrait miniatures cast from medals were painted or impressed on porcelain. Such utility items as vases, cups and plates always featured a portrait in their decor.

In spite of the polychrome and elaborate painted decor, the whiteness of porcelain always took precedence. Medallions with painted miniatures were offset by cobalt, purple, pistachio-coloured, and light-turquoise grounds. The addition of a golden lustre served to create the illusion of depth and precious texture. As in Elizabeth's times, objects of personal use showed a preference for richly gilded grounds. This is confirmed by Catherine's personal note of 1765 (now in the factory's archive), in which she orders for herself "a tea and coffee service on gold with flowers. Mantelshell pots with similar flowers. A dessert from pergolas, "architectural appointments, houses, and flowers on a gilded ground. Cases of table clocks with gilt and flowers. All this to be made the more motley the better but tastefully."⁴¹

During Catherine's reign the Imperial Factory joined the ranks of Europe's leading porcelain manufacturers. Its staff of highly-qualified artists, sculptors and other master craftsmen assimilated the entire repertory of porcelain wares, then known on the continent. The porcelain produced by the Imperial Factory competed in artistic terms with the masterpieces of the celebrated European centres, serving as a worthy ornament to the palace halls and banquet tables of the most luxurious court in Europe. During this period the factory not only ensured for itself the status of the primary supplier to the court but, most important, it turned into an artistic establishment upholding the country's prestige abroad. The magnificent formal services created at this time were destined to be emulated in the years to come. Their amazingly fine painting, the striking elegance of ornamentation and the harmony of classical form and decor revealing the beauty of the material have remained unsurpassed to this day. The flourishing of Russian porcelain contributed one of the glorious chapters to the Golden Age of Catherine II.



■ **Serving plate from the Cabinet Service**
1793-96
Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste by hand 4
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
enamels, gilding. 3.5 x 24.5 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg
Inv. No ЭРФ 6844

Painted in the round medallion is the
Gale of St Paul in Rome. The bottom is
inscribed in hand in overglaze black:
Porte de s. Paul.



■ **Serving plate from the Cabinet Service**
1793-96
Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
Signs: impressed in the paste by hand 5
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured
enamels, gilding. 3.4 x 24.5 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
Inv. No ЭРФ 6850

Painted in the round medallion is a view
of the Villa Corsini. The bottom is
inscribed in hand in overglaze black:
Maison de plaisance corsini.

■ Pieces from the Cabinet Service
1793–1801

Marks: *E H* in underglaze cobalt (on the dish and bottle-holder), crowned *H* (on the liqueur glass holder)
Signs: impressed by hand in the paste *A 1*; *E H* (on the wine glass holder); *I A*; *A A 2* (on the bowl); *4 10* (on the round dish); *3 A* (on the oval dish); in black paint *; *I B* (on the square dish)
Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. The liqueur glass holder: 14.2 x 32.5 22.3 cm, 17.5 x 20 x 0.8 cm; wine glass holder: 12.5 x 30 x 16.5 cm; bottle holder: 4 x 34.6 x 27.5 cm; dish with the pierced rim: 4 x 34.6 x 27.5 cm; oval opened-worked basket: 10.2 x 27.8 x 20.8 cm; covered bowl on a stand: 15.3 x 34.5 x 20.5 cm; 11.2 x 29 x 21.8 cm; 10 x 37.5 30 cm; round covered dish: 5.5 x 28.4 x 28.3 cm; 12 x 22 x 22.2 cm; oval covered dish: 4.6 x 36.5 x 27.7 cm; 14 x 29.5 x 20.3 cm; square covered dish: 4.2 x 30.5 x 30.8 cm; 14.5 x 20.4 x 20.4 cm
The Hermitage, St Petersburg. Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 344 а, б; ЭРФ 6854; ЭРФ 6810 а, б, в; ЭРФ 6811 а, б; ЭРФ 6814 а, б; ЭРФ 6818; ЭРФ 6819; ЭРФ 6916; ЭРФ 8915

Liqueur glass holder with gilded handles shaped as goat's heads and a movable partition

Painted within two oval medallions are views of Tivoli and the Egeria Spring in the vicinities of Rome. The bottom is inscribed by hand in overglaze black: *A Tivoli. La Fontana Egeria*

Wine-glass holder with gilded handles shaped as female heads

Painted within two oval medallions are views of the St Francesca the Roman Church and the Aventin Hill in Rome. The bottom is inscribed by hand in overglaze black: *Eglise de S. Françoise Romaine Mont Aventin*

Bottle holder with views of the Villa Madama and the Church of the St Paul Monastery in Rome, near the three fountains

The bottom is inscribed by hand in overglaze black: *Eglise et Monastere de S. Paul aux trois Fontaines. Maison de plaisance Madame*

Round dish with pierced rim

Painted within the oval medallion is a view of the Temple of Concord in Rome. The bottom is inscribed in hand in overglaze black: *Temple de la Concorde*.

Open-worked oval basket

Covered bowl on a stand
Painted within the oval medallions are views of the Pont Molle and the Temple of Janus in Rome. The bottom is inscribed in hand in overglaze black: *Le Pont Molle. Temple de Janus Quadifronte*.



Covered round dish

Painted with a view of the Capitoline Hill in Rome and inscribed, on the bottom, by hand in overglaze black: *Mont Capitolin*.

Covered oval dish

Painted with a view of the Isis Temple and the Sarapeum in Tivoli. The bottom is inscribed in hand in overglaze black: *Temple d'Isis & de Seraps ou du Soleil & de la Lune*.

Covered square dish

Painted in the round medallion is a view of the ruined Temple of Juno Lucina. The bottom is inscribed in hand in overglaze black: *Restes du Temple de Junon Lucina*.

The Cabinet Service stands out among the numerous ceremonial services produced in the times of Catherine the Great.

The name "Cabinet" was coined in the first half of the 19th century, when it was transferred to the Imperial Funds under the auspices of His Majesty's Cabinet. Initially it was named after its owner, Count Aleksandr Bezborodko (1747–1799), reputed to be one of the most influential and wise statesmen of Catherine's reign. On February 18, 1793, the Empress ordered for him "a presentation dinner and dessert service, with biscuit and coffee sets, that could surpass in its quality and splendour the one made by the local factory for Her Majesty..."



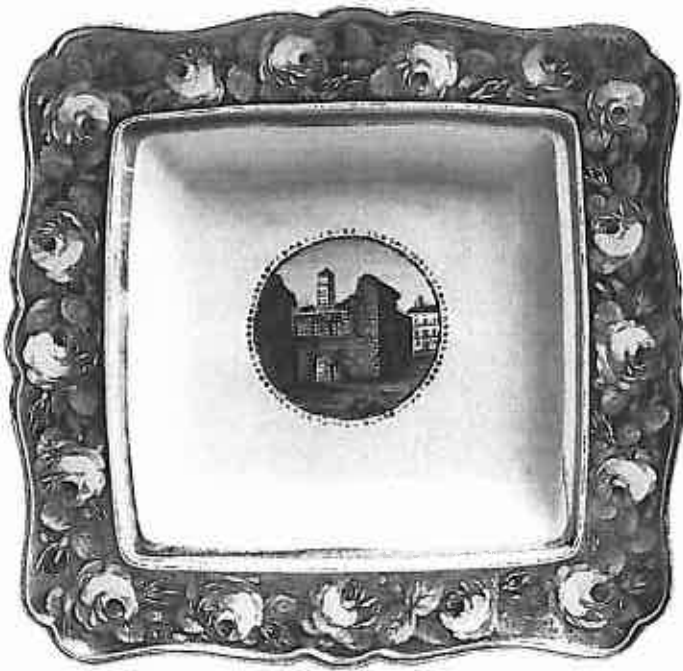
(Russian State Historical Archives, F. 468, inv. 37, doc. 64, l. 2). The service proposed by the Empress as a model for the future presentation service was the magnificent Arabesque Service, which was presented to the Empress in 1784 and impressed the whole Court with its beautiful decor and variety of the forms of more than fifty pieces. The items of the Bezborodko Service were no less rich in the number of its items and also comprised *surtout-de-table* of nine allegorical sculptural groups of white biscuit. In comparison with the Arabesque Service, the forms of its pieces are more classical and strict. The items of the Bezborodko Service are decorated with gilded borders with coloured garlands of wild flowers and oval and round medallions painted with views of Rome and its environments. The landscape miniatures were executed after compositions by Giuseppe Vasi, Giambattista Piranesi and others published the many-volumed illustrated 18th-century editions of engraved views of Roman antiquities: *Delle Magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna*. Da Giuseppe Vasi da Corleone, Roma, Libro 1–10, 1764; *Antichità Romane opera di Giambattista Piranesi*, Roma, 1756. The articles designed for ceremonial dinners and the *surtout-de-table* compositions were finished in 1794, while the production of additions to the service was continued till 1799, when Count Bezborodko died.

The dessert pieces as well as the "coffee set" mentioned in Catherine's order might have been not produced at all which is supported by the fact that they are not mentioned in the archival lists of the completed works and are absent from the museum collections. In all, about one thousand pieces were produced.

The harmonious combination of the items' shapes and their painted decor, which suggested numerous variations, made the service a fine model for the following endeavours of the Imperial Porcelain Factory. The pieces repeating the Bezborodko Service, were presented to the new Emperor Paul I on Christmas and other holidays. The Emperor was so pleased with them that he commissioned in 1800 a whole service repeating the same decor, but, in keeping with his taste and life-style, it was small: for eight persons only. The work was completed in February of 1803, after the Emperor tragically died, by the order of Alexander I. Later, as it was not much used, the service was transferred, in 1815, by the order of the Cabinet of His Imperial Majesty to the service store of the Winter Palace, where it was added to the pieces produced for Bezborodko. It was just the time when it became to be listed in the inventories as the Cabinet Service. The service served as a sample for some other ceremonial services designed as part of the dowry for the daughters of Paul I: Grand Duchesses Alexandra, Elena, Maria and Catherine, as well as for a ceremonial service made later for Emperor Alexander I.

This list of the service imitations could be long, and that confirms a special position of the service in the history of Russian porcelain of the late 18th to the early 19th centuries and the perfect implementation of its artistic idiom.





■ Dish (uncovered) from the service of Grand Duchess Alexandra Pavlovna 1795-96

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt
 Inscribed on the bottom, by hand in black:
 **L'Arc des Pontans & le Monastère de l'Annonciation*
 Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. Diameter 30.8 cm
 Peterhof State Museum-Reserve, St Petersburg. Inv. No. ПДМII 3610-φ

The medallion decorating the dish features a view of the arch of the Annunciation Monastery in Italy, the sides are decorated with a garland of roses.

Grand Duchess Alexandra Pavlovna (1783-1801) was the elder daughter of Grand Duke Pavel Petrovich and Maria Fedorovna. In 1796 she was engaged to be married to the King of Sweden Gustav IV Adolf, but the marriage never took place

because of the different creeds of the bride and bridegroom. In 1799 she married to the Archduke of Austria, Joseph, and on March 4, 1801, she died from post-natal fever. Princess Alexandra was buried in Ophen, where Alexander I ordered to erect an Orthodox church above her grave. After the untimely death of his wife Archduke Joseph presented some of the dowry pieces to the National Museum. The collection of the Museum of the Applied Arts in Budapest at present comprises 72 items from the dinner service constituting part of Princess Alexandra's dowry: a bowl, plates, dishes, open-worked baskets, wine-glass holders, sauce-boats, cruet-stands, egg cups, salt-cellars, ice-cream piles, a liqueur bottle holder and liqueur cups. All the pieces are marked with initials of Catherine II and Pavel I. Russian museums have some separate pieces from the service only.

■ Dish from the service of Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna 1797-99

Marks: *II*, under a crown, in underglaze cobalt
 Inscribed by hand in black, on the bottom:
Civita Castellana
 Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. 32 x 25.2 x 18.2 cm
 The Hermitage, St Petersburg.
 Inv. No. ЭРФ 7702

In the medallion on the dish, is a view of Civita Castellana, the rim is decorated with a garland of paired roses, entwined with stems with buds.
 Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, the second daughter of Paul I, in 1797 married Prince Friedrich Ludwig of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. On September 12, 1803, she died in Schwerin.
 During the last years of her reign Catherine the Great ordered to begin the production of the dowry for the elder daughters of Grand Duke Pavel Petrovich (future Emperor Paul I), Elena (1783-1801) and Alexandra (1784-1803), by his second wife, Maria Fedorovna. On April 22, 1799, Emperor Paul I himself, after he had "favoured to examine the things prepared as dowry for Her Imperial Highness Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, issued His Majesty's order to start production of the same for Their Imperial Highnesses Grand Duchesses Maria Pavlovna and Catherine Pavlovna, according to the list attached to the order" (Russian State Historical Archives, F. 468, inv. 37, doc. 508, f. 12).
 The dowry consisted of a porcelain dinner and dessert service, tea and coffee sets, a file of biscuit sculptures mounted on mirror stands framed in bronze sets. Among the other porcelain items in the dowry was a bronze table with a porcelain table-top supplemented with a déjeuner service of seven items. Produced from porcelain were

also some parts of the toilet set which comprised a mahogany toilet table decorated with biscuit insets in bas-relief, a toilet mirror in a bronze frame on a porcelain base, two chandeliers with biscuit figures, porcelain vases, powder-cases, trays, brushes, a jug with a washing basin, and two déjeuner services of five and four items. The dowry also included two clocks and two chandeliers made of porcelain, marble and bronze.
 The nomenclature of the objects in the dowry for the four Russian Princesses was the same. The shapes and decor of the dinner services were based on those from the Bezborodko Service, also known as the Cabinet Service. The all dowry services followed the overall scheme of decoration of the Cabinet Service: the ornate borders and garlands of flowers encircling the objects, with central oval or round medallions containing views of Italy. Yet, the ornate borders in the decor of the Cabinet Service consisted of wild flowers whereas those of the Princesses were made of roses.
 The service of Princess Alexandra was painted with large roses following one another in a frieze. The smaller roses decorating the service of Elena were arranged in detached pairs, alternating with intertwined stems. The large roses in the service of Princess Maria were painted in reserves, alternating with grisaille rosettes enclosed within the rhomb-shaped surrounds. The service of Princess Catherine had the most sophisticated decor consisting of the garlands of tiny roses encircling the service items, interrupted by oval medallions with architectural motifs in silhouettes.
 The inventories of the dinner service mentioned oval-shaped and round tureens on stands, covered and uncovered dishes, sauce-jugs, salt-cellars, mustard pots and butter dishes, bottle and wine-glass holders, round milk cups, cup with stands and



spoons, as well as 18 dozen soup and 24 dozen dessert plates. The dessert set of the service comprised fruit baskets, square and leaf-shaped dishes, ice-cream pails, liqueur bottle holders with one or two sections, stands for seven liqueur cups, and stands for nine egg cups or dessert cups. The inventory lists more than 1,100 pieces. The tea and coffee sets comprised tea- and coffee-pots of three various dimensions, cream-jugs, sugar-basins, tea caddies, slop basins and six dozens of cups. The file supplementing each service consisted of an ensemble of 28 biscuit sculptures mounted on marble bases set in bronze frames decorated with bas-relief arabesques. The sculptures were made after the models by Jean-Dominique Rachtelle. In the centre, was put the group of six figures: nymphs and Cupids by the statue of Apollo. It was flanked with the temples of Apollo the Kithared, surrounded by the nine muses, one of whom was Erato. The temple is analogous to the architectural bas-relief from the collection of the Peterhof State Museum-Reserve. The ensemble also included paired figures of vestals and allegories of Fertility, made after Antique originals, and compositions *Marriage of Aldobrandinia*, *Cupid and Psyche*, *Love overcoming Power*, borrowed from the file from the Bezborodko Service. The dowry file also comprised 24 small vases with "wings" and the same number without them, with handles, for decorating the table. All the sculptures as well as the vases were put on a mirror tray framed in bronze.



■ Soup plate from the service of Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna 1799-1802

Marks: crowned A in underglaze cobalt inscribed by hand, on the bottom, in overglaze black. *Eglise de s. André de la Valle* Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. 4.8 x 29.5 cm. The Hermitage, St Petersburg. Inv. No. ЭРФ 863

The rim is decorated with a garland of flowers placed on a golden ribbon, alternating with three oval medallions containing grisaille representations of castles. The roundel is painted with a view of the Sant Andrea della Valle Church in Rome.

Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna (1788-1818) was the fourth daughter of Grand Duke Pavel Petrovich and Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna. In 1808 she married Prince Peter Friedrich Georg of Oldenburg (1784-1812) and gave birth to two sons, Alexandr and Peter. After her husband's death in 1812 she married Wilhelm of Württemberg and moved Stuttgart where she brought her dowry, including the porcelain dinner service. On May 14, 1802, the Director of the Imperial Porcelain Factory, Prince Nikolai Yusupov, reported the completion of the work on a set of pieces from the dowry of Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna: the porcelain dinner service with the file of biscuit sculptures on twenty-one stands decorated with glass and bronze, two porcelain candelabra, also of porcelain, glass, marble and bronze, and also a tea set and a coffee set.



■ Portico with a figure of Apollo 1797-99

Sculptor Jean-Dominique Rachtelle. No marks. Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. Height 29.5 cm. Peterhof State Museum-Reserve, St Petersburg. Inv. No. ПДМИ 8042-Ф

The Portico is decorated with a medallion bearing a profile portrait of Catherine II, in the guise of Minerva, made after a model by J.-G. Vechter (1724-1800), produced for the medal commemorating the accession of Catherine II to the Russian throne in 1762.

It was probably part of the model of the Temple of Apollo the Kitharedes from the *surtout-de-table* from the dowry services of the Grand Princesses.

■ **Figures of native Kamcharka man and woman**

1780–1790s

After the models by Jean-Dominique Rachette

No marks

Signature of the modeller (impressed in the paste): *H.X.* (on the figure of a woman)

Inscriptions on the base (gilded, impressed in the paste). *КАМЧАДААЪ*;

КАМЧЕДААКА

Porcelain, overglaze painting in coloured enamels, gilding. Height 20 cm, 20.5 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg
Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 791; ЭРФ 176

The figures belong to the *Peoples of Russia* series and depict the natives of the Peninsula of Kamchatka, which was annexed to Russia in the late 17th century, Kamchadals, or, as they used to call themselves, Intelmen.

The series of porcelain figures *Peoples of Russia* was one of the most significant works in sculpture created by Jean-Dominique Rachette, who from 1779 to 1809 headed the modellers' workshops at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. The series was based on the book published in 1776–77 by the famous ethnographer, traveller and explorer Johann Gottlieb Georgi (1729–1802) *A Description of All the Peoples Inhabiting the Russian Empire as well as of Their Ways of Life, Beliefs, Traditions, Dwellings, Clothing and Other Characteristic Features*. In the book was collected the information received from different parts of Russia by many travellers and scholars, such as Peter Simon Pallas, Gerard Friedrich Miller, Johann Georg Gmelin, Stepan Krashennnikov, Rachkov brothers and some other explorers of Russia's lands and population. More than one hundred illustrations of the book were engraved after the life sketches of different travellers as well as after the materials kept in the *Kunstkammer*, considered to be the first museum in Russia, founded by Peter the Great himself. The engravings were executed by St Petersburg carvers Ch.-M. Rott (active in St Petersburg in 1761–77) and Dmitry Schleppey.

The sculptures after these engravings were made of porcelain painted in coloured enamels, some of them were repeated in biscuit. Their average height is 20–23 cm, though some larger pieces are known. For example, in the Porcelain Factory Museum Department of the Hermitage is kept the figure of a Mongol man with the height 40 cm, as well as the original models made by Rachette himself. They are distinguished from their later replicas with perfect proportions and refined and skilful modelling.

The *Peoples of Russia* series also comprised many-figured groups: *Coryaks*, *Blind Musicians*, *Shaman Woman from Krasnoyarsk*, all made after the book by Georgi. The bases of the sculptures often bear the names of the peoples depicted in Russian or in French. Sometimes, inside the bases one can see the initials of the sculptor who made the piece.

This large-scale work endeavouring to present in porcelain almost all the illustrations from the book by Georgi was carried out by Rachette and his pupils—sculptors of the Imperial Porcelain Factory. Alongside with the representations of various peoples inhabiting Russia produced were figures featuring folk

characters such as Russian vendors and craftsmen. The figures of different peoples of Russia were copied throughout the late 18th century to the early 19th century as presentation pieces as well as additional decorations for the ceremonial services produced at the Imperial Porcelain Factory. Thus, among the gifts presented to Archduke Joseph, heir to the throne of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, was a table decoration from the figures of peoples. This popular series is most amply represented in the collections of the Hermitage and the Russian Museum in St Petersburg, the Museum of Ceramics in Kuskovo, near Moscow, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York.



■ **Figures of Russian milk and ice-cream sellers from the *Traders and Craftsmen* series**

1780–1790s

After the models by Jean-Dominique Rachette

Signature of the modeller (impressed in the paste by hand): *H.X.* (on the ice-cream seller)

Height 19.4 cm, 20.5 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg
Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 406; ЭРФ 815



■ **Malmista (Finnish) Lady and Chukhoneta (Finn)** from the *Peoples of Russia* series 1780–1790s

After the models by Jean-Dominique Rachette

No marks

Signatures of the modeller impressed in the paste by hand. *CI*; № *M K*.

Inscription on the base, gilded, in relief: *МАЙМИСТУХА*

Height 20.8 cm; 21.7 cm

The Hermitage, St Petersburg.

Inv Nos. ЭРФ 790; ЭРФ 795

Malmistikha is a Finnish woman, or Malmista woman. Malmista was the name for Protestant Finns originating from the Karelian tribe who called themselves *suomalaiset*, living in the Petersburg gubernia (region). Among common Russian folk they were more known as Chukhontsy. The State Museum of Ceramics in Kuskovo in Moscow has in its collection a replica of the figure of the woman. The collection of Porcelain Factory Museum Department of the Hermitage comprises a terracotta model of the figure of the woman from the late 18th century which was probably the authentic piece by Rachette, after which the porcelain sculptures painted in coloured enamels were produced.



■ **Figures of a Tatar Man from Kazan and Estland Woman from the Peoples of Russia** series 1780–1790s

After the models by Jean-Dominique Rachette

Marks: *E II* in underglaze cobalt

Signs: impressed in the paste *12* (on the figure of the woman)

Inscription on the base, impressed and gilded: *TАТАРЪ КАЗАНСК*

Height 22 cm (both)

The Hermitage, St Petersburg

Inv. Nos. ЭРФ 3357; ЭРФ 788

The Estland is the old name for the population of one of the three north-western gubernias of the Baltic region, Estlandia, the present-day Estonia. The replicas from the figure of the Estland woman are in the Russian Museum in St Petersburg, the State Museum of Ceramics in Kuskovo, near Moscow, and in the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki.