

signed "auguste f." bottom right, in handwriting corresponding to that of Robert-Joseph Auguste. Depicting a wine cooler and a *verrière*, they have many similarities with several pieces produced for Catherine II of Russia. Very probably executed, as indicated by another inscription bottom right, "4 a ferre" [four to be made], the drawing of the wine cooler proposes two variations (**ill. 5**). The one on the left has a goat's head handle, attached to a vine branch joining an oval cartouche. The lower part is decorated with large ornamental leaves and the base with mouldings. On the right-hand side there is a differently drawn goat's head as handle and a vine branch descending to the middle of the belly. The proposition on the left was reused in the wine coolers of the Ekaterinoslav service (1776-1777) and those of a service bought by Count de Povolide.⁸ The design on the right was used for the cooling buckets of the Nijni-Novgorod service (1778-1779), whose ram's head handle corresponds to the left-hand proposal.⁹

The left part of the drawing of the *verrière* (**ill. 6**) shows a moulding of laurel leaves surmounted by plastrons forming a serrated border. The upper, concave and undecorated part of the body is embellished with indented rectangular panel and the convex lower part is decorated with gadroons. The curved handle is attached to a rosette. The right-hand, bulbous side of the body is decorated in the middle with a garland of flowers departing from the handle and joining the centre of the object. The serrated edges are formed by volutes and the handle is S-shaped. Catherine II seems to have appreciated these designs, which recur with variations in pieces of the Ekaterinoslav service (left-hand proposal) and in the Kazan service (right-hand proposal). These two proposals are synthesised in the *verrières* of the Nijni-Novgorod service.¹⁰



Ill. 5 Wine cooler, pen, black ink and sepia wash, signed "auguste f.", private collection, photo Suzanne Nagy.

The elevation drawing of a sauceboat and plan drawing of its tray¹¹ are similar to the designs Auguste produced for the George III service. He delivered two sauceboats like this, which were reproduced by the Hanover silversmith Frantz Peter Bundsen to augment the service.¹² Of all the drawings auctioned in 1925, this is the only one faithfully depicting a piece by Auguste. But it is difficult to ascertain whether it was made for the execution of the sauceboats or afterwards.

The drawing of a four-branched candelabrum¹³ corresponds to no known work by Auguste. Extremely ornate, its stem is formed by three female figures (the Three Graces?) holding a garland of flowers, its base is decorated with mouldings and oak-leaf garlands, its girandole surmounted by two cherubs and S-shaped branches. This candelabrum is reminiscent of François-Thomas Germain's *Three Graces* clock, one of which, made after this silversmith's model, was delivered to Madame Du Barry. The idea of using cherubs as a support for the central branch was reused by Auguste with a single cherub, for the candelabras of the George III and Catherine II services.¹⁴ Although the object represented has some of Auguste's characteristics, its sculptural aspect is in the tradition of the great 18th-century Parisian silversmiths and shows that he was the rightful heir of Ballin, Besnier, Germain and Roëttiers.

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For the complete text of this article and articles by Chantal Bouchon, Anne Forray-Carlier and Sylvie Legrand-Rossi, consult the online catalogue at : <http://www.lesartsdecoratifs.fr/francais/nissim-de-camondo/actualites>

8 Foelkersam, *op. cit.*, pl. 35; Leonor d'Orey, *A baixela da coroa portuguesa*, Lisbon, 1991, no. 40, p. 205.

9 Foelkersam, *op. cit.*, pl. 39.

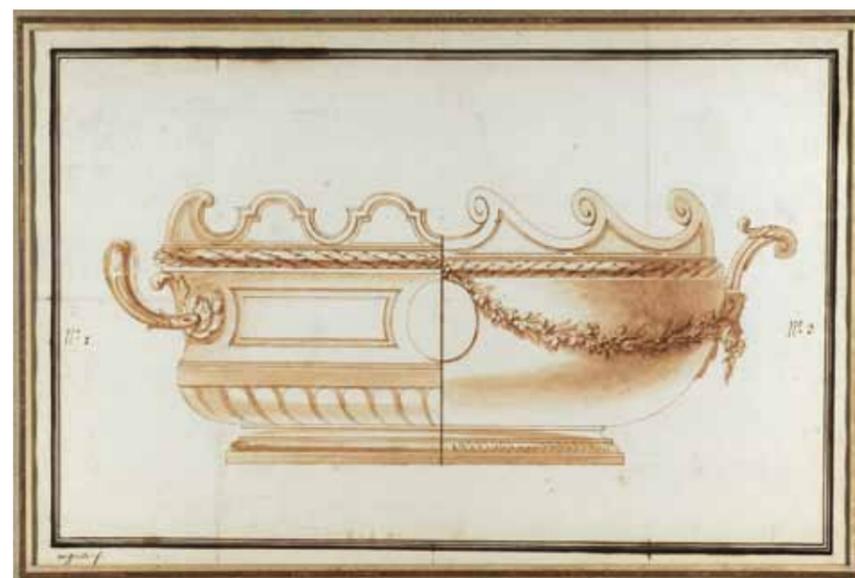
10 Foelkersam, *op. cit.*, pl. 33, 35 and 39.

11 Pen, black ink and sepia wash, private collection.

12 Seelig, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

13 Pen, black ink and wash, private collection.

14 Seelig, *op. cit.*, p. 155; Foelkersam, *op. cit.*, pl. 36.



Ill. 6 Verrière, pen, black ink and sepia wash, signed "auguste f.", private collection, photo Suzanne Nagy.

DRAWINGS OF SILVERWARE BY ROBERT-JOSEPH AUGUSTE (1723–1805)

> MUSÉE NISSIM DE CAMONDO

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Ill. 1 Salt seller, pen and black ink, inv. 24 722 B. Photo Les Arts Décoratifs, Paris.

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Robert-Joseph Auguste was born in Mons in 1723. He entered his mark in Paris in 1757 and was appointed "ordinary silversmith to the king" in 1777. He was allocated lodgings in the Galeries du Louvre in 1784, and handed over his business to his son Henry the following year. Since none of his creations for the Crown have survived, he is known mainly for the silverware and complete table services he produced for the courts of Lisbon, London, Copenhagen, Saint Petersburg and Stockholm.

The drawings auctioned in 1925¹ were attributed to Auguste's workshop due to the inscription "auguste" on three of them, apparently written in silversmith's own handwriting, and their depiction of objects produced in his workshop or in his manner. These drawings are not a coherent group since they were executed by different draughtsmen using different techniques. The objects depicted are shown in their entirety or merely sketched, some with two choices of decoration. These differences pose the question of their status: some were clearly done for clients, so that they could choose from different decorative proposals, while others seem to be *ricordi* of works produced by the workshop solely for in-house use.

The drawing of half of a sauceboat (ill. 2) has similarities with Auguste's early manner. Although the object's overall design and the tray is similar to that of the sauceboats of the Soltikof service in the late 1760s,² this drawing should be compared rather to the tureens and *pots à oille* produced in 1756-1757 and acquired by Christian VII of Denmark during his stay in Paris in 1768. Still markedly in the rocaille style, these objects and this drawing have similarities suggesting that this may have been an object belonging to or intended for the

1 *Dessins, gouaches, aquarelles, miniatures*, auctioned at the Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 4 April 1925, pp. 9–12, nos. 38–57.

2 Baron de Foelkersam, *Inventaire de l'argenterie conservée dans les garde-meubles des palais impériaux*, Saint Petersburg, 1907, vol. II, pp. 730–31.

3 *La table d'un roi. L'orfèvrerie du XVIII^e à la Cour de Danemark*, Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1987–88.



Ill. 2 Half of a sauceboat, pen and black ink, inv. 24 722 A. Photo Les Arts décoratifs, Paris.

service of Christian VII of Denmark, commissioned by an unknown client, of which only the pieces still in the Danish royal collection have survived³.

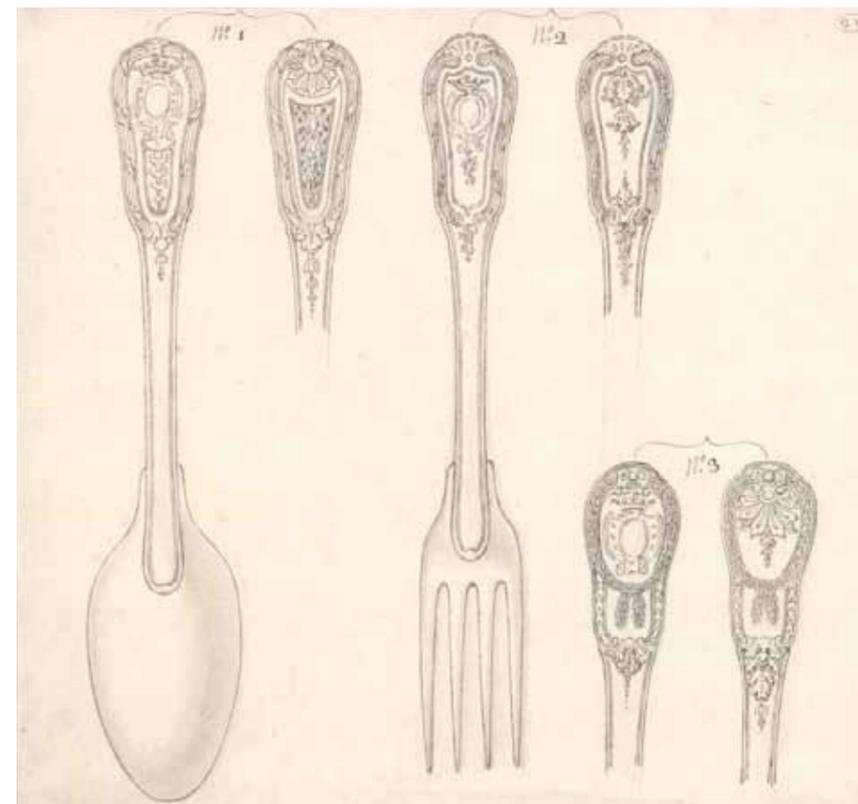
Identical in technique, the drawing depicting two propositions for the decoration of a salt cellar-pepper pot in the form of two children sculpted in the round, each holding a scallop (ill. 1) has for a long time been related to objects stamped by Auguste and dated to the late 1760s. The existing works show that the decorative proposal shown on the right hand part of the base was partially used by Auguste, but in a more neoclassical style.⁴ As with the preceding drawing, the objects combining sculptural and ornamental treatment reflect Auguste's training as a sculptor.

For major table service commissions, Auguste usually subcontracted the cutlery to other silversmiths. Although sometimes attributed to one of the members of the Langlois family, five drawings can be linked to Auguste's production because one of them bears his name on the verso (ill. 3). The tip of the cutlery handle, is a form in use between 1770 and 1780. Bordered by a moulding of beribboned rushes, it has an emblazoned cartouche in the middle of the upper side, surmounted by an agrafe, and the lower side has a chased ornament beneath a scalloped agrafe. Eighteenth-century Parisian cutlery is usually less ornate, which suggests that these could have been drawings for more luxuriously decorated gold or silver-gilt cutlery.

The drawing of the tureen, resting on a piedouche on a tray shows two alternative decorative motifs. The one on the left is reminiscent of Auguste, who used the lion's mask with a ring in its muzzle as a handle motif. Its

4 *Designing the décor. French drawings from the eighteenth century*, Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, 2005–06, no. 86, pp. 232–35.

5 Inv. 24713, pen, sanguine. For the Moscow Service, Foelkersam, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–74. For the Cadaval Service, Christie's, Geneva, 11 November 1975, no. 209.



Ill. 3 Cutlery, pen, black ink and wash, signed "auguste" (verso), inv. 24 725 B. Photo Les Arts décoratifs, Paris.

combination with a lid with gadroons surmounted by an ornamental body of leaves, from which emerges a seed-shaped knob, was reused by the silversmith several times (a 1776 service and the so-called Moscow service in 1782–83). A very similar garland of leaves and lid were produced in the 1770s for pieces in the Cadaval service.⁵

The second drawing of a tureen reuses the lion's mask with a ring in its muzzle as handle, but proposes an alternative ram's mask form. The decoration of the piedouche, including a beaded frieze and a moulding of piastres (*or rais de cœur*) was frequently used by the silversmith (the George III, Count de Creutz and Moscow services). However, the martial decoration suggests this design was probably commissioned by a soldier. Although most of the elements are characteristic of Robert-Joseph Auguste's work, the tray's two lateral clawed feet were more frequently used by his son Henry.⁶

Similarly, in the drawing of the *pot à oille* surmounted by a figure group with Diane resting with a dog, the perpendicular handles, frieze of large leaves and foliation are more typical of Henry's manner (ill. 4). Since none of the objects the Augustes produced for the Crown corresponds to the one represented, on which there is an escutcheon held by cherubs surmounted by the French crown, this could be a design rejected by Louis XVI's administration, or one of the two *pots à oille* or tureens delivered for the Queen's service at Saint-Cloud in 1788, about which we know only that they were 'very ornate'.⁷

Two of four drawings from the 1925 auction now in a private collection are

6 Inv. 24710, graphite. For the Comte de Creutz service, in exh. cat. *Le Soleil et l'Etoile du Nord*, Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 1994, pp. 314–19. For the George III service, Lorenz Seelig, «Das Silberservice König Georgs III von Robert-Joseph Auguste und Frants Peter Bundsen, zur Goldschmiedekunst des frühen Klassizismus in Paris, London und Hanover», *Münchner Jahrbuch des bildenden Kunst*, 2007, pp. 141–206.

7 For Auguste's services for the Crown, Yves Carlier, «L'orfèvrerie de table de Louis XVI» in exh. cat. *Versailles et les tables royales en Europe*, Versailles, Musée national du château, 1993–94, pp. 106–09 and, Yves Carlier, «Marie-Antoinette et ses orfèvres», in exh. cat. *Les atours de la Reine*, Paris, Centre historique des Archives nationales, 2001, pp. 45–55.



Ill. 4 Pot à oille, graphite, inv. 24718. Photo Les Arts décoratifs, Paris.