

Figure 1: *The Duc de Choiseul, Mme. de Brionne and the Abbé de Barthélémy at the Château de Chanteloup*, about 1765, by Jacques Wilbault (French, 1729-1806). The J. Paul Getty Museum.

The author wishes to thank Gillian Wilson, Curator of Decorative Arts at the Getty Museum, for bringing this portrait to her attention and allowing it to be used in this article.

## **An Expensive Affair: The Cost of Elegance in Eighteenth-Century France and Italy\***

Anne Ratzki-Kraatz

Was the pursuit of elegance an expensive affair in the eighteenth century? How much, proportionately, did elegant men and women spend on their laces and clothes in relation to other things? Were special occasions such as weddings the excuse for extraordinary spending? In short, what were the economics of elegance in the 18th century?

This article proposes to try to give at least the beginning of an answer to these questions by quoting figures for various items purchased by fashionable people of the day. Most of the examples cited are drawn from unpublished sources in the French and Venetian State Archives. For access to the latter, I would like to express my grateful thanks to the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation of New York from which I received two separate grants enabling me to spend five months in Venice, working in the Archives.

In order to make the figures quoted more meaningful, I have established an artificial relation of one to one between the French and Italian currencies of the time and the American dollar, that is, one French livre or one Venetian lira will be quoted as one dollar.<sup>1</sup> This is merely a device to help visualize, as it were, the sums mentioned. I have done this because what I would like to show is *not* how much certain goods manufactured in the eighteenth century would cost today: that is impossible! Most of them are no longer made and, besides, currencies fluctuate far too widely and frequently in our era. Instead, what I have attempted is to establish a scale of values by comparing the price of luxury items with amounts spent for necessary or less luxurious ones, thereby placing the economics of elegance in the context of the times to which they belong.

To illustrate the point right away: the average price of a one-pound loaf of bread in France in the second half of the eighteenth century was three sols (or 3/20 of a livre).<sup>2</sup> Using the livre as a unit of value of one dollar, I refer therefore to the price of bread as fifteen cents. The average monthly wage of a servant in a fashionable household at the same time was twenty livres, to which I refer as twenty dollars. The price of a length of multi-colored silk fabric averaged twenty-four livres an ell, the ell being a unit of measure varying widely from country to country but taken here to represent one and a quarter yards.<sup>3</sup> This price of twenty-four livres shall be quoted as twenty-four dollars, so that it may readily be seen that a servant in a wealthy household, consequently better paid than many, would have had to work five weeks in order to be able to purchase a single length of good silk.

\*Taken from a lecture delivered at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and at the J. Paul Getty Museum in March 1983, in connection with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art exhibition "An Elegant Art: Fashion and Fantasy in the Eighteenth Century."

But first let me set the elegant continental stage as described in the diary of a young lady of fashion, Miss Cleone Elizabeth Knox of Castle Kearney, County Down, Ireland, who was travelling to France and Italy with her father and brother in the year 1764. Arriving on August sixth at the Château de Chanteloup, at the invitation of the Duchesse de Choiseul whose husband was Secretary of State to Louis XV and a protégé of Madame de Pompadour, Miss Knox exclaims: "Never have I seen or indeed dreamed of any place so magnificent as this . . . everywhere one glances are fine gilt mirrors, clocks and vases of priceless value . . . 'Tis fit for a princess! We pass our days in elegant leisure and, for supper, we dress as if at Versailles."<sup>4</sup>

A painting by Jacques Wilbault now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, shows the Duc de Choiseul himself with Madame de Brionne and the Abbé de Barthélémy at the Château de Chanteloup (Figure 1). Judging from the lady's dress and her laces, the date must be nearly the same as that at which our young lady was guest in the house, that is in the middle 1760's.

Madame de Brionne is wearing an afternoon dress of plain salmon-pink silk; such unbrocaded, solid-color silks cost an average of thirteen dollars a length at that time. Fabrics were a narrow twenty-one inches in width so that it took up to thirty-four yards to make a dress. That would put the cost of Madame de Brionne's dress at 442 dollars; the dress-maker would receive some twelve dollars for the work of cutting and sewing the dress.<sup>5</sup> The lace cuffs, which appear to be French needle lace of the Alençon/Argentan type, might have cost as much as 490 dollars an ell, as indicated on a bill from a Monsieur Vanot. Monsieur Vanot was lace-merchant to the king of France, Louis XV. Several of his bills preserved in the French National Archives show that on January seventh, 1765, he furnished Louis XV with extra fine needle lace at 490 dollars an ell for a pair of cuffs. Madame de Brionne's cuffs, or *engageantes* as they are called, require approximately four yards of lace<sup>6</sup> and would therefore have amounted to a total of 1,960 dollars, almost exactly five times as much as the cost of her dress.

Returning to the king's accounts for a moment, we find that M. Vanot also supplied Louis XV in January 1765 with several lengths of Valenciennes lace for his nightcaps and cuffs. The bill specifies that it is real Valenciennes lace, meaning that it was made in the city of the same name, in northern France, and not in a neighboring town, however close, where the quality of the air as well as of the workmanship were thought to be inferior to those prevailing in the city itself (Figure 2). In the month of January 1765, alone, the king ordered a total of forty-three ells of "super fine" Alençon, Argentan, Valenciennes, Malines and Brussels lace to make up eight nightcaps, twenty-four pairs of matching cuffs for his nightshirts and three pairs of other cuffs. The bill amounted in all to 5,286 dollars.<sup>7</sup> The king was obviously as elegant by night as he was by day (Figure 3)! By comparison, the average yearly wage of a Valenciennes lace-worker for the same period was 156 dollars, or less than the cost of one length of her own lace.<sup>8</sup> The daily account

books of a French lady show us what one could buy with three dollars, the equivalent of our lace-worker's weekly wage: ". . . item, one pig's tongue, jellied, two bottles of wine (origin and year not specified), one one-pound bread," or hardly enough to feed a family for a week!<sup>9</sup>

To illustrate the point with one last example: on the seventeenth of September, 1766, the seven-year-old Madame Clotilde, one of the princesses of the blood, received two new flounces for her dressing table, one of Alençon lace and one of Brussels lace worth a total amount of 7,733 dollars, representing almost fifty years of salary for a lace-maker (Figure 4).<sup>10</sup> This is admittedly not a true comparison for not one but many lace-makers would have worked on such large dressing-table flounces; it is merely intended to provide a yardstick by which to gauge the importance of luxury goods at the time.

Still in Paris, in 1763, the Venetian ambassador, Count Tiepolo, moved into an elegant townhouse, or *hôtel particulier*, for the rental of which he paid 8,000 dollars a year, just a little more than was paid for the two lace flounces of the seven-year-old Madame Clotilde.<sup>11</sup>

Count Tiepolo must have been an elegant man for he regularly spent eight dollars a month in pomade and powder for his wigs, liked to have flowers on his terrace and in his apartments at the high cost of thirty-seven dollars a month, paid his tailor, Monsieur Cancray, an average of 900 dollars a month, and gave one of his servants twenty-four dollars a month to wash and generally care for his laces. He liked to eat ices in summer and spent an average of fifteen dollars a month on them during the hot season, while for the same amount a month the waterbearer brought in water for the household needs. His servants' wages amounted in all to almost 1,000 dollars a month. If we allow an average of twenty dollars a month to each servant, that means there were some fifty servants in the house. That figure is not too high considering that Miss Knox claimed there must have been at least four hundred domestics at the Château de Chanteloup.

To feed the entire household, servants included, cost Count Tiepolo an average of 1,500 dollars a month. He was particularly fond of Graves wines from the Bordeaux region, for which he paid two dollars a bottle. He and his family also drank an average of twenty-four bottles of mineral water a month at two dollars a bottle, or the same price as that of a bottle of wine.

As a man of elegance he kept a number of fine horses in his stables, among them an English horse purchased for 1,200 dollars in England and brought over by boat at a cost of 200 dollars. The six hundred bales of hay, six hundred bales of fodder and twelve 120-pound bags of oats for the horses cost him an average of 600 dollars a month, or the equivalent salary of thirty servants. He occasionally bought honey as a remedy for sick horses, at the high cost of twelve dollars a jar. In all, Count Tiepolo spent an average of 17,000 dollars a month while in Paris, living, it may be assumed, a fairly elegant life.

If daily life was an expensive affair, special occasions such as weddings were the pretext for such displays of elaborate elegance as to bring even wealthy families close to bankruptcy. Noble families marrying a daughter often had to pay for the dowry in several installments, so important were the amounts involved, while the bridegroom's went into debt, sometimes for years, to pay for the day's expenses and the bride's wedding attire.<sup>12</sup>

Our young lady of fashion, Miss Knox, who had arrived in Venice in April 1765, was invited to such a wedding. All the bride's garments and jewels were laid out for the guests to see, causing Miss Knox to exclaim: "Never have I seen such a wardrobe before . . . at least a score or more gowns of rich materials. A profusion of gold and silver brocade, velvet, linen, fans, buckles, shoes, lace and embroidery. I call to mind in particular a superb costume of silver satin embroidered in silver, a cloak of rose-colored velvet trimmed with ermine, etc. etc." (Figure 5).<sup>13</sup>

The wedding of his excellency Domenico Tiepolo, a relative of our ambassador, and the noble lady Maria Priuli, which took place in Venice in July 1788, must surely have been one of the most magnificent ones of the year. 63,739 dollars were spent on clothes and accessories for the bride alone.<sup>14</sup> The bridal dress had to come from France, of course. The celebrated house of Farge et Fils, in Lyon, furnished it. It was made out of thirty-four ells of white silk damask with a garland motif, twelve ells of brocaded veil and thirty-seven ells of blonde lace for the trimmings, at a cost of 22,888 dollars, shipping in a sturdy crate included. In that connection, it is interesting to note that the dress was white and that there was a veil, although we do not know exactly how it was worn; this would seem to contradict the frequent assertion that weddings in white and wedding veils only came into fashion in the early nineteenth century.

The house of Farge and Sons also supplied various lengths of fabrics, embroidered waistcoats for the groom and other dresses among which was one, the color of London fog (in French, "couleur des cheminées de Londres!"), that is, silvery grey, embroidered with gold bouquets for 990 dollars, seventeen meters of lilac-and-green-striped satin at 394 dollars, a man's coat and breeches of watered silk with matching embroidered vest for 670 dollars, and a man's waistcoat embroidered with gold and multicolored silks for 1,100 dollars.

The sums above amount to little, however, when compared with the price of a set of laces expressly ordered for the occasion from Flanders and comprising a deep flounce, a smaller one, two kerchiefs, two trimming lengths and quadruple sleeve cuffs or *engageantes*. The whole set cost 5,046 dollars, including the twenty-two dollars given the designer who created the motif (Figure 6). By contrast, two sets of lace cuffs, one of Brussels, the other of Malines lace, purchased on May tenth, 1788, for the same wedding, cost only 418 dollars; presumably the design, hence the workmanship and skill required, was here considerably less elaborate than on the preceding set. Indeed, lace

designs in 1788 generally consisted of nothing more than a few lightly traced branches with minute flowers and string of pearl-like ornaments (Figure 7). Grand sets, with an especially rich composition, were evidently still thought desirable for grand occasions, at least in Italy.

In Paris, the look in 1788 was one of utter simplicity. The French queen Marie-Antoinette, had adopted the English fashion of wearing white dresses made out of Indian lawn, a simple but expensive fabric at twenty-four dollars a yard; with that she usually wore a hat of yellow straw with a bow in front, one at the back and a ribbon to tie under the chin, at fifty-four dollars, and English linen kerchiefs around her shoulders at eighteen dollars each.<sup>15</sup>

Back in Venice, where the bride's clothes were by no means so simple, the bridegroom, who had to pay for it all by tradition, did not hesitate to save where he could by subtracting a sizable 18% off the bill submitted by one Elisabetta Bagolin on the twenty-second of March, 1788, for the embroidering of a white silk skirt and cape. The bill amounted to 220 dollars; she was paid only 180. She could not read or write and so signed her name with a cross and it is to be hoped, for her sake, that she could not count either!

Furs ordered for the bride included sable, white wolf and white rabbit from Moscow, as well as pelts from the underbelly of snow lynx with which to make cuffs, trimmings and linings for her white, pink, and powder blue satin cloaks. The whole was worth 2,458 dollars, or half as much as the set of laces from Flanders mentioned earlier. The use of fur trimmings had become fashionable, it is said, as a result of Louis XV's marriage to the daughter of the king of Poland, Marie Leszczinska, in 1725, Polish dress being trimmed with fur in winter (Figure 8). But by 1788, in France at least, such fur trimmings had fallen almost completely out of fashion. Marie-Antoinette's fur bills for the entire year 1785 do not exceed the very modest sum of 1,030 dollars, out of a total wardrobe expenditure of 236,000 dollars.<sup>16</sup> This amount was, by the way, more than 110,000 dollars in excess of the queen's annual wardrobe allowance of 120,000 dollars.

Back in Venice once more, Count Tiepolo's bride received twenty pairs of shoes for the wedding. Almost all of them were made of satin, red, white, or lilac colored, and some of them were embroidered. They were purchased from one Domenico Schiavetto and cost an average of only twelve dollars a pair, except for the one in embroidered white satin, which cost forty-eight dollars. These are extremely modest amounts considering the skill required to make a shoe. It means that a lady's maid could probably afford to wear satin shoes, just as her mistress did, on her monthly wages of twenty dollars.<sup>17</sup>

The Tiepolo bride had twelve fans that, except for the one ordered from Paris and made of mother-of-pearl which cost 110 dollars, are also surprisingly among the most reasonable items in her trousseau. One of these, for example, with a leaf painted in the Chinoiserie style, cost only twenty-two dollars, even though it was ordered as well from a Parisian house by the name of Vielacz. Another painted fan cost even less: two and one half dollars! Altogether, the twelve fans with their boxes cost 404 dollars.

That fans were an inexpensive item, at least in the 1780's, is confirmed as it were, in Marie-Antoinette's accounts for the year 1785, where total expenses for fans amount to only 319 dollars.<sup>18</sup> That would seem to make fans one of the few items much more valuable today on the antiques market than they were in the late eighteenth century.

The bride's corset, made to order of course, included eleven main whalebone stays, as opposed to the thirteen generally used for a grown-up woman. Her age is not indicated but it is possible that she was in her early teens and consequently very small in the chest, hence the two stays less (see Figure 5). The eleven stays cost in all only three dollars.

The bridegroom ordered a watch from Geneva, a fashionably flat, enameled one with diamonds all round the dial and a secret compartment, for 1,540 dollars. He also ordered an oval snuff box with a medallion in the center surrounded with pearls, for 880 dollars, and a triple gold chain with diamonds for 2,904 dollars. Although expensive and far beyond the reach of most people at that time, these jewels and watches cost little more than a single dress or suit of clothes and far less than some laces, as we have seen.

Perhaps as a present to his bride-to-be, the groom had his portrait painted in April 1787, by a painter of some note, Signor Bertoldi, who was paid the handsome fee of 1,936 dollars. Unfortunately, the portrait does not seem to have remained in the Tiepolo family, whose direct descendant, Dottoressa Tiepolo, is currently head of the Venetian State Archives, where the bills concerning the Tiepolo family expenses as well as the account books of the Venetian ambassador to France, another Tiepolo, are kept.

All male servants received a new livery for the occasion of the Tiepolo wedding, as well as new silk stockings (they wore cotton ones on ordinary days). A pair of silk stockings cost twenty-two dollars, or two dollars more than the servant's wage of twenty dollars a month and almost twice as much as a pair of satin shoes. The total amount spent by the Tiepolos to renew their servants' outfits for the wedding, including that of the gondoliers who had a particularly elaborate costume, was 20,411 dollars.

Miss Cleone Knox bears witness to the magnificence of gondola decorations on festive days in Venice. She recounts the Gradenigos' gondola in particular ". . . draped superbly in gold brocade, fringed with purple, their coat of arms embroidered in silver upon either side. Their gondoliers in rich costume. The oars gilded. I lay on cushions of purple satin and thanked heaven I had on my lilac satin and pearls for this occasion."<sup>19</sup>

Finally, before we come to the expenses for the wedding banquet, let us briefly look at the Venetian palace where it took place. Everything in it was completely refurbished for the wedding. All chairs and sofas were reupholstered and new curtains made of Pompadour blue satin. It took 369 meters of fabric at twenty-seven dollars a meter to do so, bringing the upholstery bill, labor not included, to the enormous sum of 9,963 dollars.

Gourmet food was just as much a part of the elegant man's or woman's life in the eighteenth century as it is today. The wedding banquet at the Tiepolo-Priuli wedding was therefore a most elegant and costly one. Altogether 11,780 dollars were spent on it. There were such delicacies as twenty-one dozens of fresh Roman truffles (the white, Italian kind), at 168 dollars; 960 dollars' worth of salt-water fish and 669 dollars' worth of fresh-water fish. There was veal, beef, chicken and other fowl and various vegetables on the menu. Among these young artichokes were one cent apiece. There were big strawberries. There were thirty large watermelons, all of them for only two dollars. This puts the price of a watermelon at something less than the price of a loaf of bread. It may safely be assumed that these prices were somewhat inflated, since the goods were supplied to a wealthy, patrician family. Presumably the common folk were able to obtain vegetables and fruits at lower cost so that the lace-worker mentioned earlier could, for example, with her three dollars a week, buy little meat but many fresh vegetables and fruits, as well as bread for her family.

The wedding cakes were eighteen in number and pyramidal in shape. They cost 320 dollars. By far the most expensive course on the menu, jams, sweetmeats and other candy distributed for dessert, cost 3,200 dollars.

Lavish tipping on the occasion of ceremonies such as weddings or funerals was also a tradition and a mark of elegance in the eighteenth century. It was also a way for the servants to increase their wages and they depended a great deal on it. For his part, his excellency Count Domenico Tiepolo distributed 8,121 dollars in various tips and gratuities among members of his household staff and that of his bride on the day of the wedding.

Because the amounts involved were so enormous, the economics of elegance was not always based on the outright purchase of goods which, as we have seen, were very expensive. Instead, there were a number of practices to which eighteenth-century men and women of elegance resorted in order to make their money go further.

They included purchasing an object and paying for it several months to several years later, interest free; asking for a discount at the time of payment; re-selling objects used or thought to have become unfashionable, sometimes to the very person from whom they had been purchased in the first place, but even more frequently to one's servants; or renting expensive items, particularly jewels, but also clothes and laces, instead of buying them. The specific examples that follow all come from Venetian archives, but could as easily have been found in Paris or in London.

Girolamo Corner, a Venetian nobleman, was obviously especially adept at the buy-now-pay-later system. On the seventh of April, 1745, a merchant whose boutique was called "At The Three Saints" had furnished him with thirty-five ells of extra fine gold lace, worth 782 dollars, presumably to trim a habit or a dress. Payment for the lace was made on the twelfth of September, 1751, or six and a half years later!<sup>20</sup>



Another Venetian, Francesco Barbarigo, had purchased on the twenty-fourth of December, 1739, a large number of laces, trimmings and shirts from several different boutiques including the most fashionable one in Venice then, "At The Cardinal"; the name of the boutique would seem to indicate something of the reputation of the church in matters of elegance . . . .

From Niccolò Foresti, the owner of "Al Cardinale," in particular, he had bought a complete set of super fine French needle lace comprising two lappets for a bonnet of the latest style (latest style specified on the bill), a matching trim for the cap and a cap-back, a neckerchief and approximately twenty-one ells of trim, all for a total of 5,580 dollars. On the twenty-fourth of September, 1740, he consented to pay 1,650 dollars out of his total bill. By 1742, three years later, he had not given another penny and the merchant involved took him to court. Barbarigo at first pretended not to know the man and his associates, never to have had ". . . the opportunity of having been introduced to any of these gentlemen. . . ." and informed the court sternly that if they should continue to pester him with their demands, he should find himself under the painful obligation of protecting his privacy by legal means. The judge was not amused and he sentenced Barbarigo to pay his debt; that was done, interest free, on August twenty-first, 1747, eight years after the original purchase, probably something of a record.<sup>21</sup>

Getting rid of used clothes, laces, or fabrics by selling them to one's friends, servants or to second-hand dealers was a common practice at the time. On the eleventh of February, 1751, one of the ladies from the house of Tròn, in Venice, sold a wool, silver-trimmed riding habit with matching skirt to a used-clothes dealer named Girolamo Savioni for 400 dollars, a small veil entirely of lace for 264 dollars, and for 1,320 dollars a complete trimming assortment of sable furs that had been purchased new at a cost of 2,200 dollars. It is interesting to note that the lady was able to obtain a full 60% of the original price of the furs from the dealer.<sup>22</sup>

Renting jewels and other expensive items is not limited to the eighteenth century, but it does seem to have been extremely prevalent then. On May third, 1788, for example, Signor Pietrotrentin, jeweler at the sign of "Bergamo," undertook to supply the same soon-to-be-married Count Tiepolo mentioned earlier with a pearl necklace for his bride-to-be composed of thirty-one pearls, all perfect in shape and free of defects, weighing altogether one hundred and fifty-two carats, for a period of six months beginning June first, 1788. Count Tiepolo undertook for his part to return the necklace in the same condition at the end of the period. The whole transaction cost the relatively modest sum of 320 dollars. Purchasing the necklace would easily have cost ten times that amount. As we have seen earlier, Count Tiepolo had every reason to save where he could on his wedding expenses!

The figures I have quoted in relation to the Tiepolo wedding add up to some 114,000 dollars. Could this amount be translated into real dollars at today's value? As I have indicated at the onset, it is quite impossible to do so with any accuracy. Various experts have estimated the

currencies of the time to represent between three and ten times the value of modern currency. Taking these estimates for a moment as valid, and settling for a middle course between the two of five times the value, we translate the Tiepolo wedding expenses into a “modern total” of 570,000 dollars, a very respectable sum indeed. Using the same multiplier of five with the lace-worker’s yearly wage of 156 dollars, we arrive at 780 “modern” dollars. The difference speaks for itself!

The answer to my original question: “Was the pursuit of elegance an expensive affair in the eighteenth century?” can therefore be answered with an unequivocal “yes.” Fashionable people of the day were willing to spend five times more on a single set of laces than they did to feed themselves, their families and their staff for a month. Most of them were permanently in debt but most of them did not worry about it very much for there was no other way to maintain such elegant standards.

My last quote from our young Irish belle, Cleone Knox, shows the lady expressing unusual anxiety over the economics of her elegance: “Have decided on the following wardrobe for the Spring. Item. A buttercup silk, with red and green. White moiré gown ruffled with pink-lilac satin and a striped peau-de-soie. Pink and apple green striped satin with feathers. Crimson gros-de-Tours trimmed with Valenciennes lace, sky blue satin gown with bouquets of flowers with thick ruching. . . . Papa has purchased himself a new Spring suit and as for Ned [her brother] he is ordering himself new satin breeches and coats every moment, has as many as 12 long waistcoats and all his shoes set with gold buckles. Heaven knows who will pay for it all!” (Figure 9).<sup>23</sup>

#### Notes

1. In addition, all fractions of a currency have been dropped and the figures rounded out: i.e. 156 livres 4 sols 6 deniers has become 156 “dollars,” and 156 lire 4 soldi 6 piccoli has become 156 “dollars.”
2. A.N. KK523, *Journal des Dépenses d'une Dame de la Cour*, 1787.
3. These figures have been computed by averaging prices found in expense accounts of the time, on bills submitted by various Parisian and other merchants, in individual and commercial inventories, and wedding trousseaux. The French and Venetian archives contain extensive collections of such records, some of which are referred to in the preceding and following notes. Two major sources used for computing prices have been “*Mémoires de Marchandises Fourny et d'Ouvrage fait pour Madame et Mademoiselle de Bercy*,” 1756-1769, MSS, unnumbered, Musée de la Mode et du Costume de la Ville de Paris, and “*Dépenses du Duc de Penthièvre*,” 1738-1770, A.N. KK 390-392.
4. cf. Cleone Knox, *The Diary of a Young Lady of Fashion in the Year 1764-1765*, New York, 1926.
5. See note 3 above.

6. The author writes in a letter to the editors dated January 19, 1987: "The amount of fabric and lace used for a dress and for a pair of *engageantes* respectively have been arrived at by several means: measuring eighteenth-century dresses at the Musée Galliera, where I curated the exhibition "Modes en Dentelles," by finding bills for similar quantities of fabric in wardrobe accounts such as the ones quoted in my notes to this article and by measuring *engageantes* at the same museum. Taking these different factors into account, I have arrived at these averages which are meant to represent average dresses, not court attire (one bill for a court dress with train for Marie-Antoinette, for example, mentions that the quantity of fabric required was ninety-nine yards, or rather meters). I have also translated the French term "aulne" or ell into yards. I have also included in my computation the underskirt and the more or less required bottom flounce of the same fabric."
7. A.N. o<sup>1</sup> 830/176.
8. Philippe Guignet, "The Lacemakers of Valenciennes in the Eighteenth Century," in *Textile History*, X:1979, pp. 96-113.
9. A.N. KK 523.
10. A.N. KK 378.
- 11.cf. A.S.V. Archivio Tiepolo, Seconda Consegna, B. 30. All other figures quoted in relation to Ambassador Tiepolo's expenses are from the same source. I am grateful to Dottressa Tiepolo, head of the Archivio di Stato Veneto, for letting me know of the existence of this particular document.
12. The author writes in the same letter quoted above: "The source for the bridegroom paying for the wedding expenses and the bride's attire is quite simply that all the bills are addressed to him and not to her father or mother (or to herself); it is an old custom that prevails to this day in well-to-do and aristocratic families in Europe."
13. See note 4 above.
- 14.cf. A.S.V. Archivio Tiepolo, Prima Consegna, B." All other figures quoted in relation to the Tiepolo-Priuli wedding come from the same source.
- 15.cf. G.A.H. de Reisert, *Modes et Usages au Temps de Marie-Antoinette, Livre-Journal de Madame Eloffe*, Paris, 1855.
16. Ibid.
17. Again in the same letter, the author writes: "I do not mean this statement literally, but merely as a descriptive example of what a maid could afford to buy with her salary, and what shoes cost."
18. See note 15 above.
19. See note 4 above.
20. Museo Correr, MSS P.D.c. 2640/2.

21. Museo Correr, MSS P.D.c. 2271.
22. Museo Correr, MSS P.D. 2254/2.
23. See note 4 above.

A.N. = Archives Nationales, Paris  
A.S.V. = Archivio di Stato Veneto, Venice  
MSS = Manuscripts

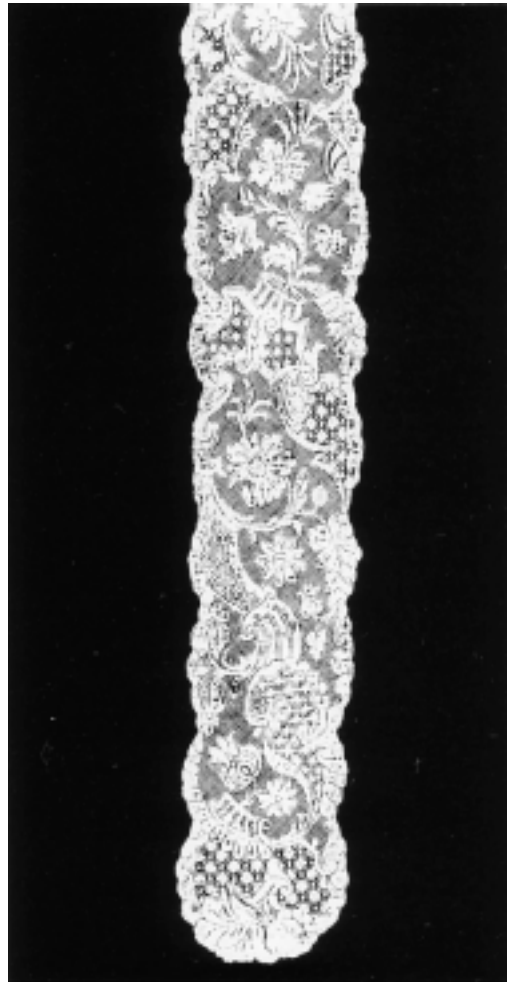


Figure 2: Lappet, Valenciennes bobbin lace, circa 1745. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Spence-Reigate Collection. The quality of workmanship, as well as that of the design, probably indicate that this is “real” Valenciennes, i.e., made in the city itself.



Figure 3: Cap crown, Argentan/Alençon needle lace, circa 1745. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Spence-Reigate Collection. This is undoubtedly an example of what the lace merchants of the day referred to as “superfine” or “extra fine” *point*, or the most expensive category of lace.

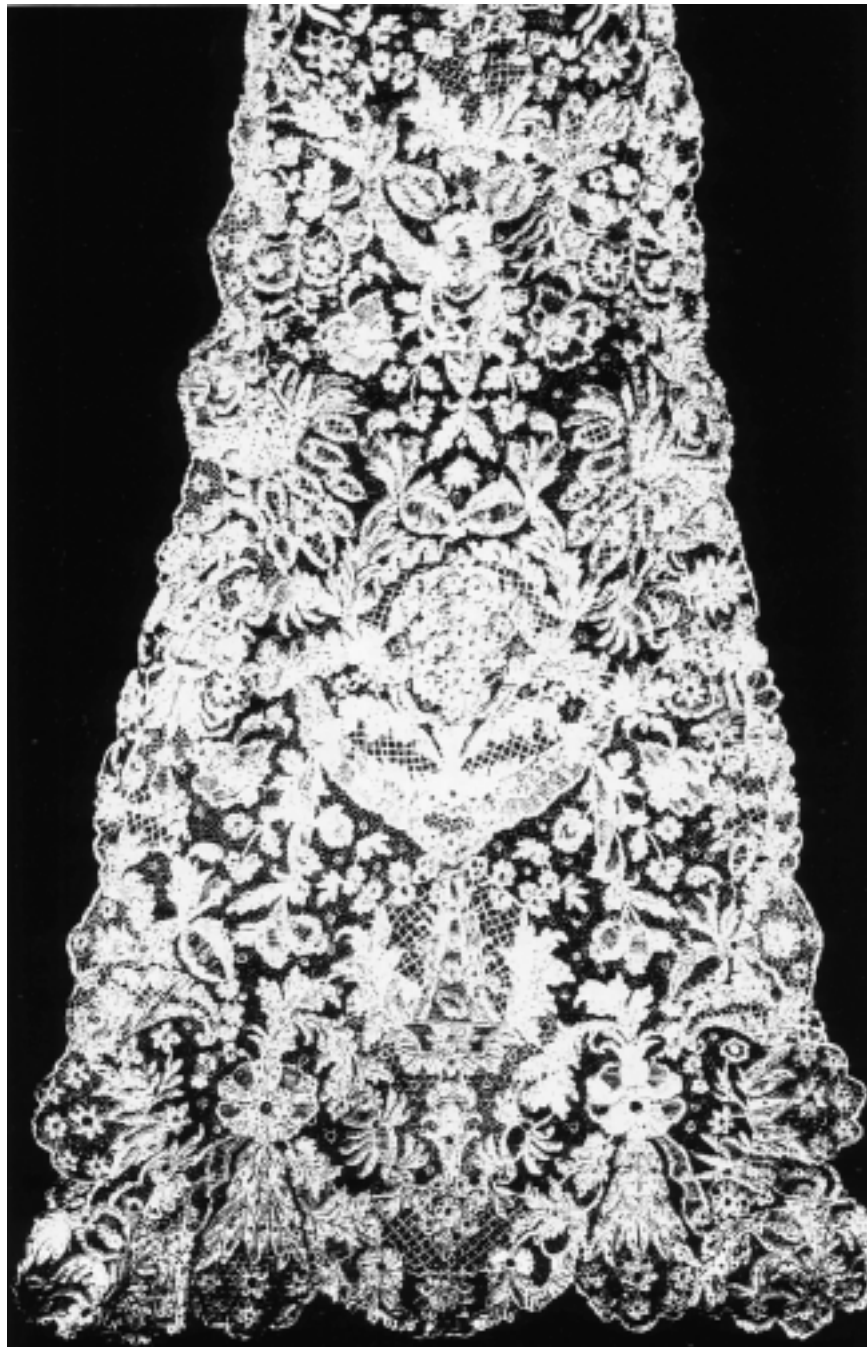


Figure 4: Panel cut from a flounce, Point de France / Point de Sedan needle lace, circa 1745. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Mrs. Edward S. Harkness, 1930. The flounce from which this panel was cut may well have served originally as a dressing table flounce, such as the one Madame Clotilde received for her apartments.



Figure 5: *Maria Luisa of Parma, later Queen of Spain*, by Laurent Péchoux (Italian [Roman], 1729-1821). This picture, which was painted in Parma shortly before Maria Luisa's marriage in 1765, to be sent to her future bridegroom, Charles IV of Spain, shows the young lady at the age of thirteen or fourteen. Like the Tiepolo bride, her corset was undoubtedly made of fewer than the usual thirteen stays, and her costume probably resembles ones in the trousseau so much admired by Miss Knox. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bequest of Annie C. Kane.

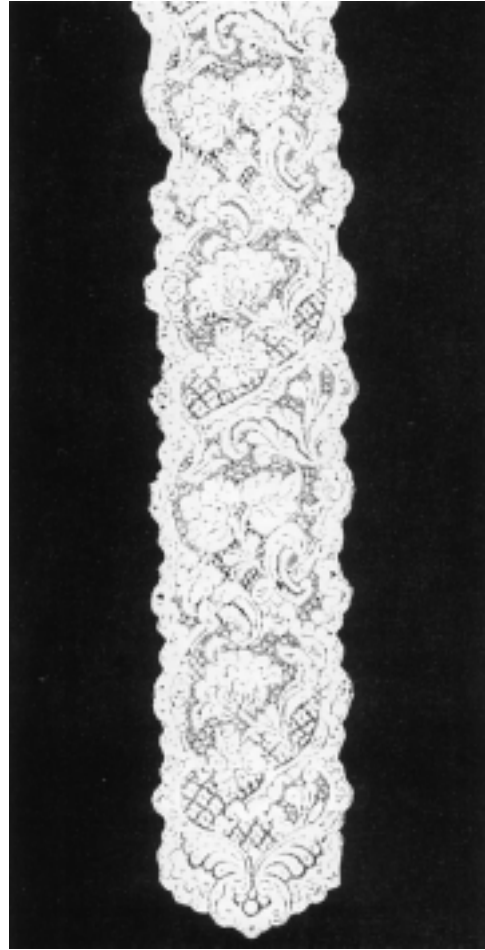


Figure 6: Lappet, Binche bobbin lace, circa 1740. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Spence-Reigate Collection. A pair of lappets such as this would have been part of a complete “set” such as the Priuli bride ordered from Flanders for her wedding.



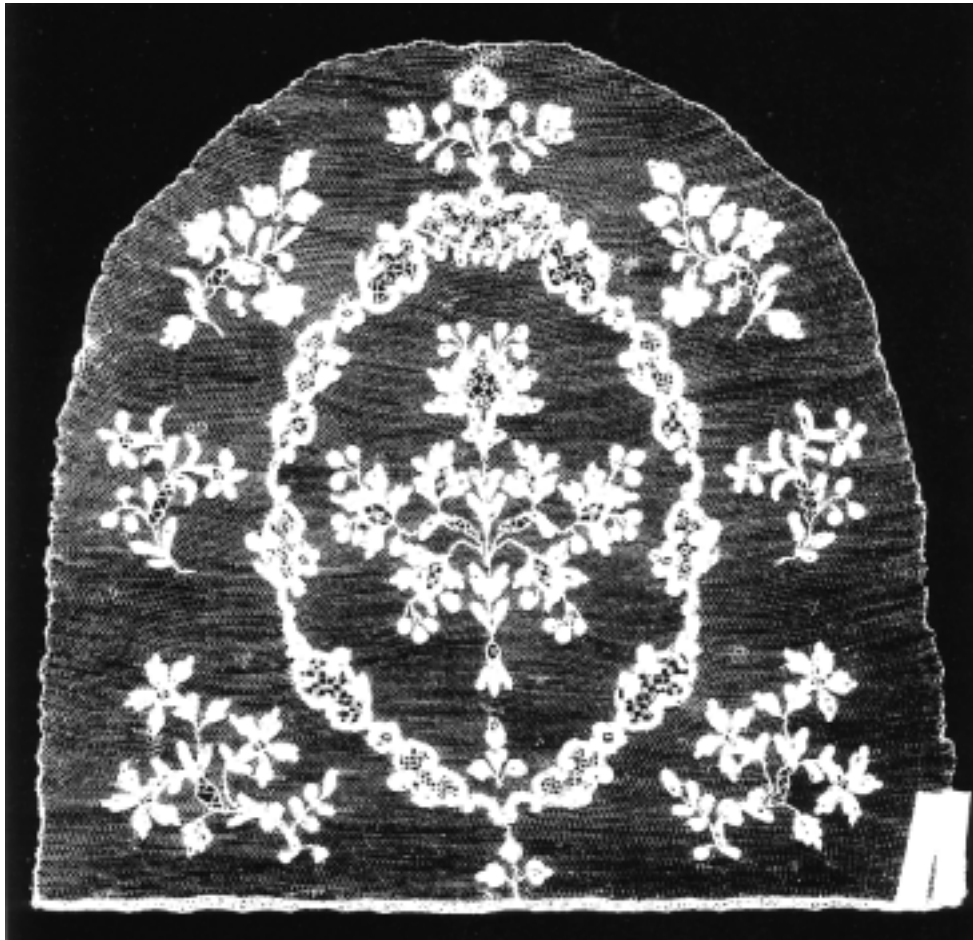


Figure 7: Cap crown, Argentan/Alençon needle lace, circa 1770. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Spence-Reigate Collection. The design on the Priuli bride's needle laces was probably of a richer composition than this, given the price quoted. By the late 1770's, however, lace designs were becoming less and less elaborate and this example, although still very elegant in its decorative concept, is typical of the evolution towards sparseness.



Figure 8: *Winter* by François Boucher (French, 1703-1770). Dated 1755, this charming allegory shows a young lady dressed for the weather in fur-trimmed garments, including a fur neckband and muff, but with shoulders and bosom exposed to the elements. Her lover, who pushes the swan sled, is more practically dressed, with a fur hat, fur-trimmed and lined cloak, heavy stockings and skates to protect his feet from the ice. Copyright the Frick Collection, New York.



Figure 9: *Madame de Saint-Maurice* by Jean Siffred Duplessis (French, 1725-1802). Painted in 1776, the lady's costume shows the use of lace and elaborate trimming in the eighteenth century in Europe. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Bequest of James A. Aborn.