**Public access description**

The shape of this tureen, cover and stand was designed by Jean-Claude Duplessis who was directeur artistique at the Vincennes/Sèvres porcelain factory from the mid 1740s. He was responsible for the vast majority of models made there up until his death in 1774. This model was one of the early service shapes famously used for the turquoise blue ground service delivered to King Louis XV 1753-1755. These original shapes were still in use twenty-five years later. The shape is loosely based on silver vessels, first introduced in court circles in the 1670s. As well as these, Duplessis (who was trained as a goldsmith) derived inspiration from the porcelain service shapes developed at the ground-breaking Meissen factory in the 1730s. This shape may indeed be that referred to in the Sèvres records as ‘pot à oille ‘Saxe’ after Saxony, the state where the Meissen factory is located. By the early 1750s Duplessis’ version of the shape seen here has a properly rococo bombé form with scrolling leafy feet and its realistic cluster of vegetables forming the handle. This is made up of artichokes and a leek, perhaps referring to the contents of the tureen. They were intended for serving different types of mixed meat and vegetable stews called ollies in French, after the Spanish origins of the dish 'olla' meaning pot, and by association the stews served in them.

A new way of dining evolved in France during the 1700s which became known as service à la française. Then all the dishes of each course were set out symmetrically at one time and diners helped themselves and their fellow diners to food. Ollies were generally served during the first course, alongside the terrines, and were placed at the ends of the table. They were sometimes also included in the next course where roast meats and salads were served. Contemporary cookery books bear witness to the new prominence of aromatic herbs, onion and garlic used to flavour these stews, almost completely replacing the role of spices used in former times. Ollies, which had originated as Spanish hearty peasant fare, became more elaborate and subtle dishes, as befitting their elevation to aristocratic tables. They could comprise beef, veal, mutton or chicken but game and other birds were also popular. These were sometimes served whole in tureens, marinaded in subtly flavoured bouillons. Pots à oille are recorded with special silver liners which could ensure the food was kept hot and only dropped into the tureen just before being taken to the table.

Information taken from:

**Descriptive line**

Hard-paste porcelain tureen and cover painted with flowers in enamels and gilded, made at Sèvres porcelain factory, France, 1778.

**Physical description**

Hard-paste porcelain tureen and cover painted with flowers in enamels and gilded.

**Dimensions**

Height: 16.2 cm, Diameter: 24 cm, Width: 30 cm maximum, Height: 305 mm Approximate with all parts assembled. measured by Conservation, Width: 49 mm Approximate with all parts assembled. measured by Conservation, Depth: 40 mm Approximate with all parts assembled. measured by Conservation

**Museum number**

C.28&A-1922

**Object history note**

Goes with C.28B-1922.

**URL**

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O100081/pot-a-oiille-tureen-and-cover-sevres-porcelain-factory/