

David Moulson Antique Pewter Specialist

A Fine Pair of Engraved Sauce Boats by Henry and Richard Joseph 1785 to 1793.



These are a superb pair of skillfully engraved sauce boats, 7.25 inches in length and 4.5 inches high, with acanthus leaf handles c1790. Line engraving is rarely found on items of pewter but there was a notable piece so decorated, also with hunting scenes, in the sale of the Little Collection, Lot 11, Christies May 2007. The Victoria and Albert Museum confirmed that the style of dress in that engraving was contemporary with the mid 17th century date of the charger.

Examination of the paintings of artists working at the end of the 18th century or early 19th who painted hunting scenes such as George Stubbs, Henry Pyall and Francis Calcroft Turner show equivalent similarities in styles of dress between the hunters shown in their paintings and the engravings on the sauce boats. In Henry Pyall's 'The Death' c1825 the huntsman is shown wearing a bowler style of hat whereas the followers wear old fashioned top hats exactly as depicted on the boats. FC Calcroft painting in the 1840's shows in 'Bachelor's Hall Plate No 4' that top hats were still being worn for hunting but the frock coats had now been replaced by shorter hunting jackets.

Works by George Stubbs who died in 1806 show a number of features as engraved on these boats. In 'A grey hunter with a groom and a greyhound at Cresswell Crags' c1763 the groom is shown wearing a frock coat and the hunter's tail is cut short as with a number of the horses on the sauce boats. The depiction of the hounds is also very similar to those painted by Stubbs in a number of paintings such as 'A Couple of Foxhounds' painted in 1792.

This stylistic evidence in particular put together with oxidization and eruptions coming through the engraving convince me that these sauce boats were indeed decorated close to the time of manufacture and probably no later than the 1830s. In addition they are decorated in a highly skilled manner, perhaps by a silversmith, and are works of art in their own right.

Also -

(These are by Henry and Richard Joseph who worked together only for 8 years from 1785 and who were major exporters to the newly independent United States of America. They are beautifully decorated with skilled line engraved hunting scenes all around their bodies. In 40 years I have never seen the like as line engraving is quite rare on pewter: David Little's charger, Lot 11 also showing a hunting scene around the rim was line engraved.

I have every reason to think that they were engraved at the time of manufacture having looked closely at patterns of wear, oxide and dress style.)

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Such sauce boats have not been seen on saucers made as in the 20th C style. Likely these would be placed if anywhere on standard rimmed approx 9" diameter plates.

