



*The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

FIGURE 1. EMBROIDERY FOR A DRESS SUBMITTED TO THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE. DESIGNED BY J. F. BONY, LYONS.

## A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION OF LYONS SILKS

THE History of the Silk Manufacture in Lyons, to which Time and the artistic value of the fabrics, as well as association with famous users, has given the glamour of romance, is illustrated by the collection of Mr. H. A. Elsberg, which he was kind enough to lend to the NEEDLE AND BOBBIN CLUB for an exhibition held at the Arden Gallery during the week of March 11th to 18th, 1927. The Club was much indebted to Mrs. Rogerson and Mrs. Meigs for their generosity in putting their gallery at the disposal of the Club and making possible the showing of this important collection.

The silks shown dated from the end of the seventeenth century to the present day, with an especial emphasis on the work of two famous designers, Philippe de Lassalle (1723-1805)<sup>1</sup> and Jean François Bony (c. 1760-1828).

<sup>1</sup>See Vol. 4 No. 2 of the *Bulletin* of the Needle and Bobbin Club:—"A Mise En Carte by Philippe de Lassalle" by Frances Morris.



*Lent by Mr. H. A. Elsberg*

FIGURE 2 BROCADED SILK, LOUIS XV. CALLED "CHARIOT OF THE SUN." BLUE GROUND, BROCADING IN WHITE AND PALE COLORS.

Several very beautiful pieces illustrated the earlier part of the XVIII century, notably a magnificent brocade shown in figure 2, called *Char du Soleil*, a most perfect type of its epoch, illustrated in Clouzot's book<sup>1</sup> and a piece of blue damask, with "trophies" of flags, guns and military emblems, all combined into a most peaceful and unwarlike design, said to have been made as a present from Louis XV to the Maréchal de Saxe.

Jean Revel, known for his special talent for designing flowers in a naturalistic manner was represented by a rich brocade of the period of the Regency.

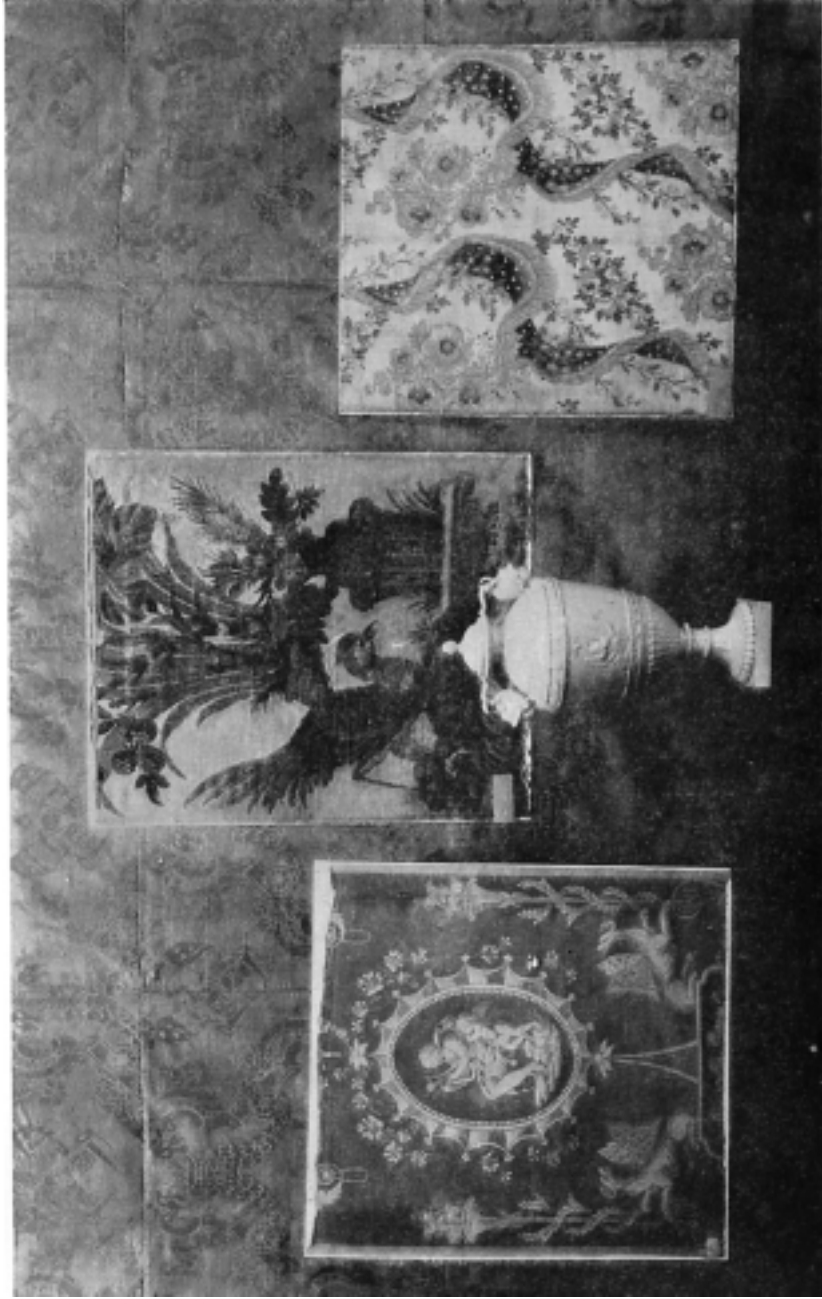
Very typical of Philippe de Lassalle's work is the design showing a large pheasant, foliage, etc., displayed in the center of the group in figure 3. His well-known skill in the handling of birds and animals is exemplified in this interesting piece. Chenille has been used in the weaving of this piece to enhance the velvety effect of the plumage. The design at the left in the same plate, done in the style of the Empire, is also by Lassalle, showing that during the later part of his life he had accepted the fashion of the day but had kept his characteristic sense of dignity and balance.

Among the examples of the work of Bony were some borders about eight inches wide made to edge hangings or panels of silk for the apartments of the Empress Josephine at Malmaison. (See figure 5). While they are the work of a clever designer, they are much coarser in colouring and execution than the earlier fabrics. On the other hand it would be hard to find a velvet of a more exquisite quality than that used in the court train of flame-colour with a gold-embroidered border shown in the center of figure 4, which was worn by the Princesse de Léon at the marriage of Napoleon to Marie-Louise, in April, 1809. Its colour and texture are so perfect as to give one a distinct sensation of delight.

The precious "miniature" velvets, of which there were several examples in addition to the two portraits, of Napoleon and Louis XVIII, shown in figure 4, were one of the elaborations of weaving developed at Lyons during the late eighteenth century, much sought after by collectors.

A group of pieces heavy with rather coarse gold and brilliant colour were the fabrics made for Russia, for use in their national costumes as well as in church vestments, etc. It was most interesting to find that the

<sup>1</sup>Clouzot, Henri, *Le Metier de la Soie en France*, 1466-1815.



*Mr. H. A. Eisberg*

FIGURE 3.  
BLUE DAMASK ORDERED BY LOUIS XV FOR THE MARÉCHAL DE SAXE



FIGURE 4. COURT MANTLE OF "COQUELICOT" COLORED VELVET EMBROIDERED IN GOLD WORN BY PRINCESSE DE LÉON AT THE MARRIAGE OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON I WITH THE ARCHDUCHESS MARIE LOUISE OF AUSTRIA, 2 OF APRIL 1809—LENT BY MR. H. A. ELSBERG.

TWO PANELS OF "GRÉGOIRE VELVET" PORTRAITS OF NAPOLEON I AND LOUIS XVIII, LENT BY MR. H. A. ELSBERG.

DRESS OF LYONS SILKS AND FIGURED VELVETS, MADE BY WORTH, C.1885 FOR MRS. WILLIAM H. PERRY—LENT BY THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM.

versatile weavers of Lyons had produced these gorgeous stuffs to meet the demands of their Russian clients.

Among the many other fabrics of which only a passing mention can be made, was the very gorgeous panel, part of some hangings made to decorate the Yildiz Kiosk for the Sultan in Constantinople. There were also many examples of rich dress materials made for the great Paris houses during the last fifty years. Some of these were shown as made up into dresses, a group of which had been lent by the Brooklyn Museum and Mrs. C. A. deGersdorff. One of these dated back to about 1840, and the others were made by Worth in the 'eighties and 'nineties. Their beautiful fabrics tortured into complicated styles left some of their observers with a feeling of gratitude for the present simple fashions.

In closing mention must be made of a group of brocades that seemed at first sight to be the product of the eighteenth century. Then one learned that they were copies of old pieces, made during the war-years, 1914-18, when the employers had organized this work to provide occupation for skilled weavers who had not been called into the service, and for whom there would have been no regular orders on account of the stagnation of trade.

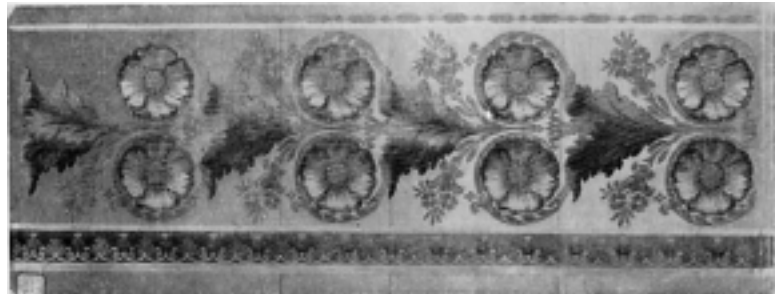


FIGURE 5.

BORDER DESIGNED BY J. F. BONY FOR A PALACE OF NAPOLEON.