The porcelain factory in Sévres generally did not receive specific commissions. Throughout its history, its directors had to determine what to produce, attempting to anticipate what might suit their clients, beginning with the most demanding of them, the sovereign or chief of state. That task was particularly arduous for Alexandre Brongniart, director from 1800 to 1847, who had to accommodate a series of very different rulers, from the ostentatious Napoleon I, who bought almost every item Sévres produced for his own use or as gifts, to the parsimonious Louis XVIII and Charles X, who hesitated to replace their damaged or incomplete services and tried to limit their gift giving to their intimate circle, to Louis-Philippe, who was anxious to furnish his many official and private residences with spectacular objects for public display and with simpler pieces for the less important apartments.¹ Except in certain châteaux, the modest objects from Louis-Philippe’s reign have not survived nearly as well as the more prestigious creations. It is remarkable to find a typical example in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, one of the few public collections in the United States that has taken an interest in this somewhat neglected period of Sévres’s production.

The object is a vase jasmin cornet with rosette handles (Figure 1).² The chrome green ground is adorned at the mouth and foot with gold lines and bands and with a light ornamental decoration inspired by classical Greece: Greek key patterns, laurel leaves, linked scrolls, and rosettes. On the front, an oval medallion encircled by laurel and a row of beads bears a monocrome portrait in profile; it is painted in shades of brown to imitate a cameo and labeled “Raphael Sanzio” (Figure 2). On the back, an emblem in gold and platinum shows a palette and other artist’s instruments framed by the names of three painters representing the three schools—Rubens, Titian, and Poussin—all within a wreath of calyces surmounted by a palmette and supporting a lamp (Figure 3). The vase handles are gilded, apart from the rosettes, which were left white.

The factory’s archives make it possible to trace the history of this vase. The expenses incurred for every piece were recorded on a cost-assessment sheet when the item was completed and entered the sales shop, so that the cost and retail price could be calculated. One such sheet, dated August 9, 1834, shows that the vase was part of a pair; its counterpart bore a portrait of Michelangelo. The vases are described as follows: “Deux Vases Jasmin Cornet Iere [grandeur] anses rosace fond vert et fond pourpré, portrait de Raphaël et Michel Ange en camé attributis en or et platine peint et décor en or et couleurs” (two vases jasmin cornet largest [size] rosette handles green ground and crimson ground, portrait of Raphael and Michelangelo in cameo emblems painted in gold and platinum and decoration in gold and colors; Figure 4). The sheet specifies that, for gilding the decorations, “Moyez” (Jean-Louis Moyez, gilder, active 1818–48)³ was paid 40 centimes, while painting the ornaments and figures earned “M. Riton” (Pierre Riton, painter of ornaments, active 1824–60) 132 francs.⁴ The cost of each vase was calculated to be 222 francs 35 centimes, and the retail price set at 250 francs. The account ledger of decorated pieces at the sales shop also includes an entry for the vases on August 9, 1834.⁵ The reference number makes it possible to verify that they were delivered to the château of Saint-Cloud “for the service of the king and the royal family at Saint-Cloud” on August 23.⁶

Tracking the history of these vases can be confusing, as a similar pair of vases was produced that same year. The archives give somewhat contradictory information for them. The latter pair, called vases jasmin japonais, were made in a shape similar to that of the Museum’s vase and also in the largest size, but had no handles and stood on a marble base.⁷ The decoration is similar in every respect, from the ornaments to the portraits, to the colors of the ground. According to the cost-assessment sheet, these vases entered the sales

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Metropolitan Museum Journal 36
The notes for this article begin on page 303.

299
shop on February 22, 1834. Moyez received the same sum, 40 centimes, for gilding the decoration, and Riton only 120 francs for painting the ornaments and figures. The blank vase cost 18 francs, in contrast to the 35 francs for the Museum’s vase. The fabrication cost was fixed at 189 francs for each vase in the pair, and the retail price at 215 francs. The vases were entered into the account ledger of the sales shop on February 8, 1834. They were delivered by the factory on August 16, 1834, to the palace of Compiègne, where only the one with the portrait of Raphael is preserved (Figure 5). Two other vases with similar decoration were produced the same year: two vases Medici in the fourth-largest size, “fond vert de moufle décor en or et couleur portrait de Raphaël et Michel-Ange en camés, avec attributs de peinture en or et platine peint, décor en or et couleurs variés” (muffle-fired green ground with decoration in gold and color, portrait of Raphael and Michelangelo in cameo, with emblems of painting painted in gold and platinum, decoration in gold and various colors), came into the sales shop on December 16, 1834.

As Brigitte Ducrot has noted, the archives also contain some of the models the decorators used for
these vases: Augustin-Armand Caqué’s medal of 1822 from the series Numismatica Universalis Virorum Illustrium, and the sketch of 1831 for the emblem “Painting and Drawing” by Alexandre-Evariste Fragonard (Figure 6).13 We do not know who created the ornament designs but can probably attribute them to the master painter Antoine-Gabriel Willermet (active 1825–48). The archives no longer have the actual drawing used for the vases, but very similar elements—Greek key patterns, linked scrolls, rosettes—are found on other plans (Figure 7).

The vase in the Metropolitan Museum is perfectly representative of Sèvres production of this type, both in the elegant simplicity of its shape and in its decoration. The cameo-style painting, developed in the early nineteenth century thanks to the improvement of the palette and, no doubt, to Alexandre Brongniart’s passion for mineralogy, was used extensively until about 1850 on different scales, from large compositions circling monumental vases to small portraits, such as that of Raphael. At Sèvres, cameo-style portraits often

Figure 4. Cost-assessment sheet, August 9, 1834. Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, Archives (photo: MNS/G. Jonca)

Figure 5. Vase jasmin japonais, French, Sèvres, 1834. Hard-paste porcelain, H. 13 1/4 in. (35 cm). Musée National du Château de Compiègne, inv. C 1781 (photo: Hutin)

Figure 6. Alexandre-Evariste Fragonard. Sketch of an emblem, ca. 1831. Ink and pencil, H. 6 7/8 in. (17.6 cm). Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, Archives (photo: MNS/G. Jonca)
adorned service pieces and vases because the format allowed for varying the subject easily, at a time when the director insisted upon a thematic unity for all the sets. Dinner services and vases were thus devoted to historical figures from different ages and vocations. It is not surprising that ceramists and artists were among those most often depicted, nor that, given the general admiration for Raphael in France at the time, he was painted more often than his colleagues.14

A predilection for Raphael was not new at Sévres. The so-called arabesque service undertaken in 1782 was described as follows in the delivery order of the Committee of Public Safety on 19 Floréal, Year 3 (April 8, 1795): "toutes les formes prises sur celles du goût antique le plus sévère et décorées des superbes arabesques de Raphaël" (all the shapes [were] taken from those of the most severe classical taste and decorated with superb arabesques in the style of Raphael).15 In 1810, Alexandre Brongniart wrote to Dominique-Vivant Denon, director of the Musée Napoléon, asking him to make paintings available for the artists in the factory to copy. He sought to draw on the success among artists and with the emperor of portraits of famous women "copied after Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci," noting that "tous les artistes conviennent que nous ferons constamment bien quand nous aurons de pareils models" (all the artists agree that we will always do well when we have such models).16 Brongniart was determined to commit to posterity in permanent form past and contemporary masterpieces, the fragility of which had been proven by experience. He gradually increased the number of copies of famous paintings on vases and, above all, on large porcelain plates.17 Here again, Raphael was represented far more than his colleagues.18 Surprisingly, few works contain allusions to episodes in the lives of painters,19 but once more Raphael is the best treated: the Sévres factory devoted to him a large pedestal table "dans le style de la Renaissance . . . au centre du plateau, le jeune Raphael est présenté comme eleve au Perugin. Cartels colores et en grisaille rappelant les principaux ouvrages de Raphael" (in the Renaissance style . . . In the center of the tabletop, the young Raphael is presented to Perugino as his student. Friezes, colored and in grisaille, recall Raphael’s major works).20

It may have been in the interest of economy that the factory at Sévres adopted a light and classical decoration for the vase in the Metropolitan Museum even as it was developing a "Renaissance style" that might have seemed more appropriate for the artists represented.21 In that contradiction, and in its simplicity, the vase is valuable evidence of a type of object too modest to have been adequately taken into consideration before.

Figure 7. Motifs for use by porcelain decorators. Ink and pencil, H. 12 1/4 in. (31 cm). Manufacture Nationale de Sévres, Archives (photo: MNS/G. Jonca)
NOTES


2. The *vase jasmin cornet* was created in 1806. It was derived from the *vase jasmin*, one of the first designs produced during Alexandre Brongniart’s tenure. The *vase jasmin*, first mentioned in 1801, is wider and squatter. Two versions of it exist: one in which the cornet is detachable from the base and the other in which it is fixed to it. In 1806, there were three versions of the *vase jasmin cornet*—without handles, with "anse torse," and with "anse rosace"—and three different sizes.

3. Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres, Archives (hereafter AMNS), box Pb 9 bis, cost-assessment sheets for 1834. The entry "2 Vases Jamin lere gr[andeur]" (2 *vases jasmin* largest size), vases for which Moyez received forty centimes in March 1834 (ibid., Vj 41, decoration work, 1834, cols. 105ff.), may refer to the gilding of these vases.

4. The vases were painted in April 1834 and retouched in June (ibid., fol. 61ff.).

5. Ibid., Vv 2, fol. 85, no. 2.

6. Ibid., Vbb 9, fol. 41. In this registry, the ground is described as "vert olive" (olive green).

7. The *vase jasmin japonais* is mentioned in November 1807 (AMNS, Va ‘16, molding work, fol. 180v), though the design was not registered until 1808. It has a much straighter line than the *vase jasmin cornet*, and no foot; the cornet rests directly on a square base. It, too, was conceived in three sizes. It might owe its name to one of the Japanese pieces Dominique-Vivant Denon offered the factory (see Tamara Préaud, "Denon et la manufacture impériale de Sèvres," in Dominique-Vivant Denon: L’oeil de Napoléon, exh. cat., Musée du Louvre [Paris, 1999], pp. 294–99 n. 31).

8. AMNS, box Pb 9 bis, cost-assessment sheets, 1834.

9. Ibid., Vv 2, fol. 78, no. 33.

10. Ibid., Vbb 9, fol. 40. On the delivery order, the reference number is given as 78–92, out of confusion with "Deux Vases Jasmin Japonais lere [grandeur] fond vert antique frise de palmettes" (two Japanese jasmine vases largest size antique green ground palmette frieze) costing one hundred francs apiece, also entered in the account ledger on February 8, 1834. Of the portrait vases, only one was devoted to Raphael remains. These vases have been studied by Elisabeth Fontan in Raphael et l’art français, exh. cat., Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais (Paris, 1983), pp. 261–62, no. 391, and Brigitte Ducrot, Porcelaines et terres de Sèvres (Paris, 1993), p. 154, no. 80.

11. AMNS, box Pb 9 bis. Jean-Louis Moyez was paid 30 centimes for the gilding, and Pierre Riton 170 francs for the painting. The fabrication cost of each vase was fixed at 251 francs 70 centimes, and the retail price at 300 francs. I have found no trace of the delivery order.


13. Note that the name Raphael, which appears in the design sketch (Figure 6), was replaced by Titian on the vase.

14. For the regard Raphael enjoyed in France, see Raphael et l’art français. It may be helpful to give the complete list, published at that time, of portraits of Raphael painted at Sèvres. Two tapered vases (vases "Fuseau"), third-largest size, with portraits of Raphael and Van Dyck came to the sales shop on July 31, 1811 (AMNS, Vu 1, fol. 116v, no. 276–38), and were offered to the vicery of Italy on December 31, 1812 (ibid., registry Vvbq, fol. 49). A breakfast service with bright blue ground and portraits of famous Italian artists painted by Antoine Béranger came to the shop on December 24, 1813 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 11, no. 24), and was offered to the countess of Talhouet on December 29, 1813 (ibid., Vbb 5, fol. 11); the work record adds that there were portraits of Raphael and Michelangelo on the teapot (ibid., box Pb 3). A dessert service with a green ground and portraits of famous Italians came to the shop on March 17 and April 14, 1814 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 16, nos. 17, 41), and was immediately delivered to the Tuileries (ibid., Vbb 5, fol. 83); the work record shows that the ice pails were to have portraits of Raphael and Michelangelo on them (ibid., box Pb 2, work for 1809). Twice in 1822, plates for the service bearing portraits of Raphael were replaced (ibid., entries for October 12, Vv 1, fol. 180, no. 33, and for November 23, Vv 1, fol. 187, no. 66). Two *vases carafe etrusque*, second-largest size, with color portraits of Raphael and Baldassare Castiglione done by Jenny Denois came to the shop on December 23, 1819 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 197, no. 44). In Notice sur quelques-vases des pièces qui entrent dans l’exposition des porcelaines de la Manufacture Royale de Sèvres faite au Musée Royal le 1er janvier 1820 (Paris, n.d.), Alexandre Brongniart adds that the portrait of Raphael was inspired by the Musée Royal painting known as Raphael and His Fashioning Master. Then there were the three pairs of vases in 1834. Finally, in 1840, Raphael appeared on a pair of *vases etrusque de 1810 anses riches*, with cameo portraits of sixteenth-century painters and sculptors, now in the château de Fontainebleau (see Bernard Chevallier, Les Sèvres de Fontainebleau: Pièces entrées de 1804 à 1904 [Paris, 1996], pp. 111–12, no. 76). Let us add that a portrait of Raphael may be among the portraits of Italian painters printed from plates engraved by Dominique-Vivant Denon and entrusted by him to the factory in 1808 (see Tamara Préaud, "Denon et la manufacture impériale de Sèvres," p. 297 n. 28).

Raphael also may have been depicted on one of the pieces in a breakfast set bearing portraits of famous Italians; it came to the sales shop on December 28, 1812 (AMNS, Vu 1, fol. 140, no. 300–2), and was offered the same day to the grand duchess of Tuscany (ibid., Vv 21, fol. 91).

By way of comparison, apart from Michelangelo, the only other painters cited are Mignard and Poussin, who are depicted on two *vases cloison* painted by Jenny Denois that came to the shop on December 22, 1821 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 170, no. 33), and were delivered to the royal warehouse on June 11, 1823 (ibid., Vbb 6, fol. 29v). We no longer possess precise lists of the painters depicted on the following sets: a breakfast service with portraits of painters from the Flemish school by Martin Drolling, which came to the shop on December 24, 1813 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 11, no. 22), and was offered on the twenty-ninth to the baroness of Mesgrigny (ibid., Vbb 5, fol. 19); a breakfast service with portraits of French painters by François Dufey, which came to the shop on December 24, 1813 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 12, no. 6), and was offered on the twenty-ninth to Princess Aldobrandini (ibid., Vbb 5, fol. 11); a breakfast service with portraits of famous Dutch and Flemish painters, which came to the shop on December 27, 1815 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 55, no. 21); a breakfast service with gold ground, bearing portraits of five famous painters with a copy of a painting by each one, which came to the shop on December 27, 1815 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 55, no. 24), and was
delivered to the king’s brother in December 1815 (ibid., registry Vv 3, fol. 11), to a Vogue etrusque carafe, second-largest size, with busts of painters and sculptors from antiquity, which came to the shop on December 21, 1827 (ibid., registry Vv 1, fol. 330, no. 10), and were delivered to the Civil List central property office on October 14, 1831 (ibid., Vbb 8, fol. 53).

15. Ibid., box H 6. In 1787, Jean-Jacques Lagrènêe, assistant head of decoration, was also reimbursed 240 francs “pour achat des trois suites d’arabesques de Raphael” (for the purchase of three Raphael arabesque sets; see Tamara Préaud, “Jean-Jacques Bachelier à la manufacture de Vincennes-Sèvres,” in Jean-Jacques Bachelier [1724–1806]: Peintre du Roi et de Madame de Pompadour, exh. cat., Musée Lambinet [Versailles, 1999], p. 63 n. 11).

16. AMNS, box T 5, bundle 1, dossier 8, letter of February 19, 1810.


18. Before 1850, copies after Raphael could be found on a number of pieces, including a few plates from the Olympian Service of 1804-6 (see Elisabeth Fontan, Raphael et l’art français, p. 261, no. 390, and Albert R. Baca, “Caponnement et Psychê, ou les Travaux de l’Amour,” Sèvres 9 [2000], pp. 49–54). In addition, a litron cup and saucer, fourth-largest size, with bright blue ground and a color Portrait of Joan of Aragon painted after Raphael by Marie-Victoire Jaquotot came to the shop on May 24, 1809 (AMNS, Vv 1, fol. 77, no. 237–77), and was delivered to the emperor on December 2, 1809 (ibid., Vbb 2, fol. 98). A cup and saucer jasmin, largest-size, with green chrome ground and a Madonna after Raphael by M.-V. Jaquotot, came to the shop on May 2, 1810 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 93, nos. 255–8), and were offered to the grand duchess of Tuscany on December 31, 1810 (ibid., registry Vbb 2, fol. 125). A litron cup with bright blue ground and a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of the Portrait of Joan of Aragon came to the shop on December 29, 1810 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 99, nos. 265–77), and was delivered to the princess of Baden on December 31 (ibid., Vbb 2, fol. 125). A cup and saucer jasmin, largest size, with gold ground and the bust of a Madonna by M.-V. Jaquotot, came to the shop on December 31, 1811 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 1239, no. 283–14), and were probably the ones offered to the countess of Luçay the same day (ibid., Vbb 4, fol. 6v). A cup jasmin with a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of the Genius of Poetry also came to the shop on December 31, 1811 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 1239, no. 283–15), and was immediately offered to the duchess of Elchingen (ibid., Vbb 4, fol. 6). Two vases etrusque carafe with green chrome ground and copies by M.-V. Jaquotot of Madonnas came to the shop on December 28, 1812 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 139, nos. 299–9), and were offered to the empress of Austria the same day (ibid., Vbb 4, fol. 10v). A breakfast service with gold ground and copies by M.-V. Jaquotot of busts of Madonnas came to the shop on December 24, 1813 (ibid., registry Vv 1, fol. 12, no. 1), and was offered on the twenty-ninth to Empress Marie-Louise (ibid., Vbb 5, fol. 1v). An itemization of the copied paintings is found in box Pb 3, breakfast-service dossier no. 11, 1813. A rectangular breakfast tray with a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of La belle jardinière came to the shop on July 24, 1816 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 68, no. 20). A plaque with a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of the Madonna with a Carnation came to the shop on December 12, 1817 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 97, no. 21). A plaque with a copy by Abraham Constantin of the Holy Family came to the shop on December 26, 1818 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 116, no. 17). A plaque with copies by M.-V. Jaquotot of the busts of the Virgin and Child from Madonna of the Fish came to the shop on December 26, 1818 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 117, no. 7). A Gothic cup and saucer with bright blue ground and a copy by Virginie Tréverret of La belle jardinière came to the shop on December 22, 1820 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 154v, no. 64). A plaque with a copy by A. Constantin in Florence of La Fornarina came to the shop on August 8, 1822 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 201, no. 25). A plaque with a copy by A. Constantin in Florence of the Madonna del Granduca came to the shop on December 23, 1824 (ibid., Vv 1, fol. 297, no. 40). A plaque with a copy by A. Constantin of The School of Athens came to the shop on December 31, 1834 (ibid., Vv 2, fol. 92, no. 1). A plaque with a copy by A. Constantin of The Mass of Bolsena came to the shop on December 31, 1834 (ibid., Vv 2, fol. 92, no. 2). A plaque with a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of the Lady with a Veil came to the shop on December 31, 1834 (ibid., Vv 2, fol. 92, no. 3). A plaque with a portrait by M.-V. Jaquotot of Joan of Aragon, came to the shop on December 10, 1836 (ibid., Vv 3, fol. 12, no. 37). A plaque with a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of Saint Cecilia came to the shop on April 25, 1840 (ibid., Vv 3, fol. 69, no. 1). A plaque with a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of Portrait of Pope Julius II came to the shop on April 29, 1842 (ibid., Vv 3, fol. 101, no. 2). A plaque with a copy by A. Constantin of The Deliverance of Saint Peter, came to the shop on April 29, 1842 (ibid., Vv 3, fol. 101, no. 16). A plaque with a copy by M.-V. Jaquotot of a self-portrait of Raphael came to the shop on April 29, 1842 (ibid., Vv 3, fol. 101, no. 3). A plaque with a copy by A. Constantin of the Perugia Madonna came to the shop on August 17, 1848 (ibid., Vv 5, fol. 13, no. 6). A plaque with a copy by Adelaide Duchezau of the Lady with a Veil came to the shop on March 17, 1849 (ibid., Vv 5, fol. 25, no. 16). Four tapered vases (vases “Fusseau”), second-largest size, depicting Music and Dance after Raphael and Prud’hon, came to the shop on December 31, 1849 (ibid., registry Vv 5, fol. 31, no. 30). And finally, two tapered vases (vases “Fusseau”), second-largest size, with grisaille figures after The Hours, came to the shop on December 31, 1849 (ibid., registry Vv 5, fol. 31, no. 31). In the same period, apart from contemporary artists, there were eleven copies after seven other Italian painters, twenty-five copies after sixteen Flemish or Dutch painters, seven copies after two Spanish painters, and nine copies after a French painter.


20. It came to the sales shop on April 25, 1840 (AMNS, Vv 3, fol. 68, no. 12). All the other episodes evoking lives of painters are found on objects of smaller dimensions.