

Wedgwood's Green Frog Service and an Otherwise Unknown View of Stourhead

Josiah Wedgwood's firm produced in 1773-74 a dinner service for Catherine II, Empress of Russia, the renowned Green Frog Service. Totalling nearly one thousand individual pieces, the Service featured centrally on each dish, cover, or serving piece a depicted view of some building or landscape of English patrimony. The motifs of the Green Frog Service align more with Romanticism than with Neo-Classicism, and my interest in the Green Frog Service is focused on only one of the pieces that provided a vista of Stourhead Landscape Garden (Wiltshire) that is mostly still forgotten today, even by the National Trust. Although this paper will not promise original research on the Frog Service itself, it will bring an authoritative extrapolation on an otherwise unknown view of the Stourhead "Turkish Tent." The Turkish Tent on the Mount of Diana, the long-lost "Chinese" bridge, and the Gothic cottage (and other medieval features) were all situated to *dilute* the Classicism of the Palladian house and its temples of Hercules, Ceres, and Apollo. Henry Hoare's heir removed all the non-classical bits, but that original intent remained. And the present paper pursues the parallel commission of a porcelain service related to landscape and horticulture, merging Aristotelian knowledge and Enlightenment empiricism.

Classicists may have walked the Stourhead circuit or know about it from reading. It was seen in its day as the journey of Aeneas miniaturized. But later scholars accept the stylistic eclecticism of Hoare's landscape features. The garden — and Wedgwood's transmission of one detail — are of interest in the context of a discussion of Wedgwood's neoclassicism, for thereby one can illustrate more honestly the three-dimensionality of 18th-century British neoclassicism.