

Silver for dazzling and entertaining: the Ickworth Collection

By James Rothwell



Ickworth in Suffolk is the repository of what is probably the National Trust's most important collection of silver: nearly 1000 individual pieces of the finest quality and by the best makers of their times (fig. 1). It is also thoroughly recorded and redolent of the compelling story of one of England's greatest and most entertainingly eccentric families. The recent publication of a comprehensive and fully illustrated study, *Silver for Entertaining: the Ickworth Collection* (Philip Wilson, London, 2017) by the author of this article follows nearly a decade of analysis of the collection and bringing together of information on it and those members of the Hervey family responsible for its collecting - in particular the 1st and 2nd Earls of Bristol and the 1st Marquess of Bristol. Much has also come to light on how this remarkable haul of silver came to survive the ravages of the 20th century when so many other collections were dispersed.

The principal archival sources have been the Suffolk County Record Office at Bury St Edmunds, where the Hervey family papers are deposited, the British Library and the National Archives at Kew. Eighteenth century newspapers were scoured for contemporary accounts, revealing amongst other things that George Hervey, 2nd Earl of Bristol (1721-75) had been one of the six earls selected to be pall-bearers at the funeral of Frederick, Prince of Wales in 1751.¹ Careful attention was also paid to dozens of volumes of correspondence and accounts relating to the 2nd Earl's diplomatic and political career, naval papers which allowed the tracking of some of the transnational journeys the silver went on in the 1750s and 1760s, and a rather intriguing stash of mid-18th century papers relating to a legal case brought against the 4th Earl - the notorious Earl Bishop - which gave contextual information in the form of inventories of china and glass and income accounts, though sadly nothing specifically about the silver.² By great good fortune the Herveys banked with Gosling's and Hoare's banks, the ledgers of both of

¹ *The London Advertiser and Literary Gazette*, no. 37, 15 April 1751.

² The National Archives (henceforth TNA), C 103/174 Hervey – v – Bristol 1762-79.

which survive, and the family entries include frequent payments to goldsmiths and related businesses such as toyshops. They also provided new information on the patronage of 'Capability' Brown and Thomas Gainsborough.

The 2nd Earl's time as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland led to the astonishing resource that are the papers of Sir Robert Wilmot, 1st Baronet, English Secretary to the Lords Lieutenant, in Derbyshire Record Office. Sir Robert was secretary for thirty-two years from 1740 and kept everything, even when marked 'private & to be burnt' by the gossipy Irish Secretary in Dublin Castle, Thomas Waite. Given the destruction of the Irish national papers in 1916 this is an especially fortunate survival and, amongst other things, has allowed the resolution of whether or not Lords Lieutenants of Ireland received perquisite plate, as did ambassadors and other representatives of the Crown.³ They did not but it was accepted practice for them to use part of their allowances to buy silver and some of the more honourable ones amongst them put the royal arms on such pieces, including the 2nd Earl of Bristol as, for example, on an exceptionally early survival of a mirror plateau (fig. 2) of 1766, the year he was appointed to the post. Such plateaux would have been embellished and bedecked with Chelsea, Bow and Meissen figures, which the Earl had aplenty, and they might also be used to represent water, as appears to have been the case for the dessert prepared for George III and Queen Charlotte at the Guildhall in 1761:

... the King's table was furnished with a desert of sweet-meats, which had a lively and grand appearance, representing in an expressive manner a large bay, in which the waves seemed to roll as if fanned by a gentle breeze. In the centre were seen Neptune and Amphitrite riding a car drawn by sea-horses, and surrounded by sea nymphs and myriads, with whales, dolphins, and other inhabitants of the watery element, who in a supportive manner seemed to play and throw up water, which to distant spectators appeared to flow as if from fountains. The bounds of the bay were composed of ornamented pastry, which served as a foundation on which the desert was placed. At proper distances laurels seemed to grow, extending their boughs over the centre, and bearing as fruit different sorts of sweet-meats, which formed in the whole a most pleasing prospect.⁴

³ Derbyshire Record Office, Wilmot papers, WH/3459, 'A Rough Estimate of of His Excy's [future] Income & Expences as Lord Lieut. of Ireland from 3d. April 1761 to Do. 1763 & from 3d. April 1763 to Do. 1765', drawn up by Thomas Waite, May 1761.

⁴ *Public Ledger*, Monday 16 November 1761, issue 578.



Fig. 2 Mirror plateau, sterling silver, London, 1766/7. W: 44.8 cm (17³/₈ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift



Fig. 3 Part of the silver display at Ickworth. The showcase in the arched niche is one of those designed by Raymond Erith and constructed in 1957-8. National Trust/David Kirkham

Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 4 One of a pair of oval tureens (left), sterling silver, Frederick Kandler, London, 1752/3. H: 35.6 cm (14 in.), and one of a pair of round tureens (right), silver, Turin, *circa* 1756. H: 34.6 cm (13½ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift



Fig. 5

Fig. 5 Oval dish from the Scarsdale epergne, Britannia silver (the gilding later), Paul de Lamerie, London, 1724/5. W: 33.7 cm (13¼ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift



Fig. 6

Fig. 6 Cruet frames with bottles from the Scarsdale epergne, Britannia silver, Paul de Lamerie, London, 1723/4. H: (to top of bottles) 20.6 cm (8½ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Morris



Fig. 7

Fig. 7 Casters from the Scarsdale epergne, Britannia silver, Paul de Lamerie, London, 1723/4. H: (of largest casters) 21.6 cm (8½ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

Lord Bristol had previously served as British Envoy in Turin and whilst there he commissioned a significant quantity of silver from the principal goldsmiths to the court, Andrea Boucheron and Paolo Antonio Paroletto. The Turin state archives, which were consequently consulted in preparing for publication, confirmed that the Earl was a very able diplomat, a Turinese minister commenting on him to his king: 'Not only is he [Lord Bristol] very noble and extremely rich [both major compliments in eighteenth century Europe] but he also has much spirit and a very gentle and honest character'.⁵

Some of the most recent papers to be consulted were those of the British Treasury relating to the transfer in lieu of tax of the house and collection at Ickworth to the National Trust in the 1950s. H.D. Molesworth, Keeper of Woodwork at the Victoria and Albert Museum, initially advised the government that the choicest pieces only should be acquired, and for transfer to his museum rather than being left in situ. The National Trust, he suggested, could instead furnish the dining table with Sheffield plate which would be 'quite as effective, a tithe of the responsibility, and less temptation to burglars'.⁶ A subsequent visit to Ickworth, however, resulted in a startling volte-face. Molesworth was utterly beguiled by the place, describing the house and grounds as 'superb' and identifying the silver as the most important element of the chattels. Having damned the pictures and furnishings with faint praise, as a 'very adequate filling for the house', he continued:

'all this plate ... really is of exceptional quality and interest as a collection, and were it to be properly displayed, quantity added to this quality would make a really splendid effect ... I think there is perhaps reason and justification for accepting this large quantity of material for the very impression it affords of the grand scale of life in the grand manner in the 18th century'.⁷

The silver duly came almost in its entirety, being displayed in cases (fig. 3) designed by the eminent architect, Raymond Erith and, as revealed by Ickworth's own archive of papers, made by Frederick Sage & Co who reconstructed the House of Commons after bomb damage in the Second World War.⁸

These rich sources of archival information, coupled with a careful visual analysis of each piece, led to many discoveries being made and some examples follow of those covered in detail in the book. The collection of silver at Ickworth is full of splendid baroque and rococo examples from the eighteenth century by the finest makers such as a pair of ice pails by Philip Rollos of *circa* 1730, candelabra by Simon Le Sage of 1758 and the magnificent tureens of 1752 by Frederick Kandler (fig. 4). Most intriguing of all, however, is a series of pieces bearing the mark of Paul de Lamerie and previously thought to be unrelated. They comprise an oval dish (fig. 5) which had been erroneously dated to 1734 in the 1950s and accepted as that thereafter, and two sets each of cruet frames with bottles (fig. 6) and casters (fig. 7), all of 1723 and always recorded as such. On turning the dish over it was immediately apparent that it was marked for 1724 rather than 1734 and that it had a bezel indicating it was intended to fit into something. The handles had also always been a puzzle and it was generally accepted that they had been added later. In fact, Lamerie had used just such handles a number of times, most pertinently on the Mountrath epergne of 1737. In that case they were on an almost identical dish

⁵ Archivio di Stato di Torino, Sezione Corte, Materie Politiche Estero, Lettere Ministeri, mazzo 59/1, Count Perrone to King Carlo Emanuele III, 20/2/1755.

⁶ TNA, T 227/1244, ff. 68-9, preliminary report on Ickworth chattels by H. D. Molesworth, Keeper of Woodwork V & A, 10 October 1955.

⁷ *Ibid.*, ff. 75-6, report on the Ickworth chattels by H. D. Molesworth, 15 October 1955.

⁸ Ickworth House, archive files, Robin Fedden to Raymond Erith, 10 October 1957, copy letter, and Gordon Watts to Nicholas de Bazille Corbin, 24 January 1958, copy.



Fig. 8 Some of the 120 silver plates at Ickworth: 72 re-shaped *circa* 1751, probably by Frederick Kandler; 48 made to match in Turin, *circa* 1756. The covers on the dishes behind are part of the 2nd Earl of Bristol's ambassadorial allocation in 1758. National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

⁹ Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds (henceforth SRO), 941/46/13, 1st Earl of Bristol's disbursements and diary, 1688-1742.

¹⁰ Barclays Group Archives, Goslings Ledgers, 130/8, ff. 276 and 338. The total price for the epergne when new would have been £250 10s, or thereabouts. This figure is based on the 1718 charges per ounce of 5s 8d for the silver and 3s 6d for fashion, plus £10 for engraving, of Lamerie's epergne for Thomas Coke of Holkham, added to which is the 6d per ounce duty payable from 1720.

¹¹ SRO, 941/46/13, 1st Earl of Bristol's disbursements and diary 1688-1742.

to that at Ickworth, pointing to all the Lamerie pieces there having come from a comparable creation. There had certainly been an epergne at Ickworth, bought second hand from the estate of the 4th Earl of Scarsdale in 1737 for £166 17s and weighing 497 oz 12 dwt,⁹ and Lord Scarsdale's bank account, also with Goslings, revealed a payment of £150 to 'Paul Delamiere [sic]' which is very likely to have been for the epergne along with the £100 to 'Mr. Lemerie' which followed on the 4th March, 1726.¹⁰

Detective work was also required for 72, or six dozen, of the 120 silver plates (fig. 8) which survive at Ickworth. The current shape is standard for the mid eighteenth century, and all 72 were recorded as being by Frederick Kandler, 1751, but an inspection along with scientific analysis revealed that new wavy, gadrooned borders had been added to plain circular plates. They had, too, clearly been turned inside out as vestiges of early eighteenth century engraving of the Hervey arms are visible on what is now the underside. One advantage of that to the goldsmith who did the transformation (probably Kandler) was that the original hallmarks, retained to avoid paying duty, were removed from the front face where they were conventionally placed in the first decades of the century. The preservation of old hallmarks is fortunate for historians, provided that the trap is avoided of assuming they always give the date of manufacture of the extant pieces. In cases such as these plates they can tell us something about the items that had been turned in to be transformed, helped in the case of the Bristol silver by the detailed accounts of the 1st Earl of Bristol. Thus some 29 of the 36 plates supplied to the Earl by his banker, James Chambers, in 1703 can be identified through hallmarks as can the fact that they were made by John Jackson I. Furthermore, the dishes supplied at the same time are also represented amongst these plates and they too were by Jackson, hallmarked for 1702.¹¹ Several pieces of Lord Hervey's silver are also present, including two plates with marks for Paul Crespin and 1725 which may well be connected to Lord Bristol's payment of £78 on the 26th February, 1726 to 'Mr David Willaume ye silver-smith in full for ye dozen of silver plates I gave my son Lord Hervey'.¹² If that connec-

tion is correct then it also provides evidence of the interconnection between makers, suggesting as it does that Crespin at this early stage in his career was supplying Willaume.

We owe so much of our understanding of the early history of the silver at Ickworth to the meticulously kept accounts and diary of John Hervey, 1st Earl of Bristol (1665-1751). A constant stream of silver purchases is recorded from 1689, when they begin, until Lord Bristol's death 62 years later. There were very grand items, such as the epergne, but there were also practical pieces for daily use such as the chocolate pot of 1704 by Pierre Platel (fig. 9). This is an object which bears manifest signs of intensive use and it is quite clear from his correspondence and account books that the Earl had a great fondness for drinking chocolate. The first mention in the accounts of the expensive and highly desirable comestible is made on the 16th May 1711 when he paid £12 10s to 'Mrs Hyde for 50 Pounds of Chocolate' and just a few months later, on the 21st August 1711, 'Mrs Ryff ye Dutch woman' supplied another 20 pounds or so.¹³ Consumption, which initially settled to about 50 pounds a year, rose to 100 or more in the early 1720s and Lord and Lady Bristol are revealed as habitually consuming it with breakfast in letters to each other of the time. Writing on the 6th September, 1721, Lord Bristol railed against his 'ungovernable' servants at Ickworth and wrote of hounds causing chaos in the kitchen and the bread being 'left all night in the oven and utterly spoyld, and not so much as a toast left for me to eat with my chocolate'. Lady Bristol, two years later and on her way to Bath, wrote on the morning of the 12th September 'tis 8 a clock, & I am just going to drink your dear health in chocolate, and then set out'.¹⁴ The Earl continued to partake for the rest of his life. In July, 1746 his daughter-in-law Lady Hervey brought chocolate with her from London when she visited him at Ickworth and on the 5th January, 1751, just two weeks before his death at the age of 85, he paid Mrs Mary Pitts £4 19s 'for 11 pounds of Vanillo Chocolate at 5s p[er] pound & 11 pounds of plain Do at 4s p[er] pound'.¹⁵



Fig. 9

Fig. 9 Chocolate pot, Britannia silver, Pierre Platel, London, 1704/5 (?). H: 24.8 cm (9¾ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Hervey, Rev. S. A. H., *Letter-Books of John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol*, 3 vols (Wells, 1894), vol. 2, pp. 184 and 327.

¹⁵ Ibid., and SRO, 941/46/13, 1st Earl of Bristol's disbursements and diary 1688-1742.



Fig. 10 Coffee pot, probably sterling silver (transposed marks), Thomas Cooke II and Richard Gurney, *circa* 1735. H: 18.1 cm (7¼ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

Coffee was also accounted for in the 1st Earl's collection and a pot of 1735 (fig. 10) by Gurney and Cook was made in London but actually supplied by a Bury shopkeeper, Peter Rogers, who was much favoured by the Herveys. It cost £6 18s and its scratchweight of 17oz 10dwt indicates a rate per ounce of 6s 11d.¹⁶ That was the full rate including 6d per ounce tax but all is not as it seems. The makers, Richard Gurney and Thomas Cooke II, had dodged the duty of 6d per ounce by inserting an old disc of silver in the base with late 17th century sterling marks, their own device stamped twice to conceal the original date letter and maker. They had quite clearly not passed on the saving to Lord Bristol which would suggest that he did not pay close attention to hallmarks. It would be interesting to know if Gurney and Cooke sent duty dodgers to the provinces routinely, perhaps relying upon the distance from London for safety from detection. Did their names also, both having East Anglian resonance if not actual connections, help them to obtain commissions in the region?

Finally, in relation to the 1st Earl we come to 'that poysonous plant, tea', as Lord Bristol referred to it.¹⁷ He became convinced that excessive tea drinking was bad for the health of his sons, even potentially fatal, and a number of rants against it are included in his later letters. On the 27th December, 1735, for instance, he wrote to John, Lord Hervey :

Your constitution would never have deserved half the hard words you have given it, had not you ruind it by forceing on it so many tuns of that detestable infusion of tea, by the constant use wherof, tho' not for near so long a time nor to so strong a degree as you have done, your brother Felton hath already destroyd the strongest stamina that ever any man was blessed¹⁸

In spite of such vociferous outbursts, and a personal preference for chocolate, Lord Bristol does not seem to have banned tea from his house. To do so would, anyway, have been socially unacceptable, so intertwined was it with the rituals of aristocratic life, and there are numerous references to items associated with the service of tea in the Earl's accounts. In 1689 he bought 'a white Tea-pot & bason' for his first wife, adding 'a Tea=Table & 2 pair of China Cupps' the following year.¹⁹ The tea pot is likely to have been Chinese porcelain, perhaps with silver or silver-gilt mounts, and the table to have been carved and gilt and one of the large number imported from China and Japan at the end of the 17th century.

¹⁶ SRO, 941/46/13, 1st Earl of Bristol's disbursements and diary 1688-1742.

¹⁷ Hervey, Rev. S. A. H., *Letter-Books of John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol*, 3 vols (Wells, 1894), vol. 3, p. 48.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁹ SRO, 941/46/13, 1st Earl of Bristol's disbursements and diary 1688-1742.

²⁰ *Ibid.*,



Fig. 11 Tea kettle and lamp, sterling silver, Peter Le Chouabe, London, 1726/7. H: (combined) 29.2 cm (11½ in.). The waiter on which they stand, sterling silver, Frederick Kandler, London, 1745/6. W: 22.9 cm (9 in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

On the 7th December 1698 the future 1st Earl paid his goldsmith-banker, James Chambers, 'for a Tea-Kettle & Lampe wt. 90 ou, 11 dwtt at 6s. 2d.'²⁰ Kettles were then something of a novelty and this one, which was of a prodigious weight, is likely to have been of the flattened pear or loaf form as is the earliest surviving English example, that of 1694 in the Norwich Castle Museum. There is no mention of the 1698 kettle being turned in subsequently and it may well have been relegated to Suffolk when in 1726 Lord Bristol acquired a new kettle by Pierre Le Cheaube (fig. 11), not long before Lord Hervey suffered the severe bout of fever that may have sparked his father's fear of the effects of tea.

In the case of the 2nd Earl of Bristol we do not have the advantage of diaries or copious personal correspondence but a fairly vivid picture of him is revealed by the writings of others - he was, after all, very nearly prime minister in the 1760s so was much commented upon. He was an inordinately proud man, slight of stature but feisty and brave as revealed by a particular instance in his youth recorded by both Horace Walpole and his mother. In 1750 he was attending one of Lady Cobham's Wednesday assemblies in London and, as recited by Walpole,

was leaning over a chair talking to some women, and holding his hat in his hand – Lord Cobham [the future Earl Temple of Stowe] came up and spit in it – yes, spit in it! – and then with a loud laugh, turned to [his friend] Nugent and said, 'Pay me my wager'. In short, he had been laid a guinea that he committed this absurd brutality, and that it was not resented. Lord Hervey with great temper [control] and sensibly, asked if he [Cobham] had any farther occasion for his hat? – 'Oh! I see you are angry!' – 'Not very well pleased', Lord Cobham took the fatal hat and wiped it, made a thousand foolish apologies, and wanted to pass it for a joke.

Lord Hervey proved his mettle by declining to receive the offending pair the next morning and challenged one or other of them to a duel. He only backed down when Cobham agreed to write an abject apology in his own hand. Horace Walpole dubbed Hervey 'the fair conqueror' and Lady Hervey wrote to her second son Augustus in Paris



Fig. 12 One of a pair of carving knives, silver handle, probably London, *circa* 1751, steel blade, later. L: (of handle) 11.4 cm (4½ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

proudly recounting the whole affair as well as society's commendation of 'Lord H's coolness and conduct throughout.'²¹

One of the 2nd Earl's earliest purchases was a set of carving knives and forks, of which only the pair of knives survive today (fig. 12). Joints of meat would have been carved at the table and hence the need for fine implements to undertake the task. John Trusler explained the protocol in his *The Honours of the Table* of 1788:

When there are several dishes at table, the mistress of the house carves that which is before her, and desires her husband, or the person at the bottom of the table, to carve the joint or bird, before him.²²

The art of carving was considered an essential part of the training of a gentleman, Lord Chesterfield stating 'that to carve well ... is useful twice every day [dinner and supper], and the doing of it ill is not only troublesome to ourselves, but renders us disagreeable and ridiculous to others.'²³ Trusler's work is subtitled *The Art of Carving* and seventy pages are devoted to explaining how to tackle all manner of beasts, birds and fish, with detailed descriptions, accompanying illustrations, and guidance on the choicest parts. Carving was to be executed from a seated position, the carver was also expected to add gravy and he or she should either distribute the meat evenly, ask what part was preferred or give the best 'to those of superior rank, in preference to those of inferior'.²⁴

The roast meat would have been on one of the various dishes with shell handles (fig. 13) that the 2nd Earl commissioned after inheriting in 1751, the shells distinguishing the Ickworth dinner service from pretty much every other one of the period surviving. They were added to many of the dishes the Earl inherited from his father and grandfather as is evident from a comparison with one of the few new –made at the same time. Large numbers were needed because of the way dinner was served in the 18th century: *à la française*, with all the food in dishes on the table and diners helping themselves and each other.

²¹ Lewis, W. S. (ed.), *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 48 vols (New Haven, 1937-1983), vol. 20, pp. 123-4 and vol. 26, pp. 29-30.

²² Trusler, Rev. John, *The Honours of the Table, or, Rules for Behaviour during Meals with the whole Art of Carving illustrated by a variety of cuts* (London, 1788), p. 7.

²³ *Ibid.*, frontispiece.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-6.



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

Fig. 13 One of a set of four oval dishes, silver, the shell handles probably added by Frederick Kandler, *circa* 1751. W: 47 cm (18½ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

Fig. 14 One of four covered sugar basins with stands, silver-gilt, Frederick Kandler, London, 1758/9. H: (overall) 11.7 cm (4½ in.). To the side is one of four sugar ladles, silver-gilt, London, 1758/9. L: 17.8 cm (7 in.). Being ambassadorial plate, all are engraved with the royal arms. National Trust Images/Robert Thrift

Fig. 15 One of a pair of tea urns, sterling silver, Paul Storr, London, 1809/10. H: 36.5 cm (14½ in.). National Trust Images/Robert Thrift



Fig. 15

When he went to Turin Lord Bristol discovered that it was *de rigueur* on the Continent to have pairs of round tureens as well as oval and for all of them to stand on dishes rather than directly on the table. Thus it was that he commissioned the additional pair of round tureens (fig. 4) together with the stands for them and the oval tureens, amongst numerous other items. Lord Bristol loathed his French counterpart, the Marquis de Chauvelin, from the start and it was almost certainly the fact that he was giving huge dinners, for as many as 30 guests²⁵ that prompted the Earl to buy more plates (at least three were needed per guest) and thus there are 48 Turinese examples at Ickworth matching those transformed for Lord Bristol in London circa 1751.

On progressing to Madrid as ambassador in 1758 the 2nd Earl received the usual allowance of plate, 5,893 oz white and 1,066 oz gilt. Much of the white plate was taken up by the magnificent set of twelve candelabra which examination has revealed to have the makers' marks of both Simon Le Sage and the lesser known James Peltro, the latter probably actually being the maker and the former merely the retailer. The gilt plate supplied was entirely for dessert and the chief survival is a set of four covered sugar dishes and stands (fig. 14), also supplied by Le Sage but made by Frederick Kandler. In the first half of the 18th century sugar was dispensed at meals from casters, such as the larger of those supplied with the Earl of Scarsdale's epergne in 1724 (fig. 7). This continued to be the standard practice in the 1750s and Lord Bristol's allocation of sugar dishes for use with dessert, rather than as part of the tea equipage, is one of the first recorded instances. It is likely that he was reacting to Continental custom and perhaps particularly that in Italy as the French were not such devotees of sugar as were the English and Italians.²⁶ A large number of *zuccheriere* of Turin manufacture survive from the period – probably more than any other category of plate – and many are ribbed or fluted and have floral finials for handles as do the covers of the Ickworth dishes.²⁷

Some handsome additions were made to the collection by Frederick Hervey, 1st Marquess of Bristol (1769-1859) and as he was a patron of Rundell Bridge and Rundell a number of them are by Paul Storr, including a pair of tea urns of 1809 (fig. 15). In general, however, the Marquess was content with the heirloom plate left by the 2nd Earl and it is thus the silver of the mid eighteenth century, in the most exuberant rococo style, that dominates at Ickworth and makes the collection so important. It is fortunate indeed that the Earl's two younger brothers, the 3rd and 4th Earls, were otherwise distracted in the last few decades of the eighteenth century and did not send in the family plate wholesale to be melted and replaced in the reigning Neo-classical taste.

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²⁵ TNA, State Papers Turin, SP 92/63, ff. 88-9, George Charles to Sir Thomas Robinson, 31 May 1755.

²⁶ Pinkard, Susan, *A Revolution in Taste The rise of French Cuisine 1650-1800* (New York, 2009), p. 149.

²⁷ Fina, Gianfranco and Luca Mana, *Argenti Sabaudi del XVIII Secolo* (Milan, 2012), pp. 177-203.