

MOUNTING THE FANS

Lauronce was a printer-lithographer, not a fan maker. So who was responsible for the finished articles that were sold to customers ?

Did Lauronce simply deliver his printed leaves to various fan-makers ? Did he have a say on the style of sticks and finishing used ? Did he operate a workshop himself ?

The jury of the 1878 Paris Exhibition clearly mentions “éventails de sa composition” and not ‘prints’ or ‘printed leaves’. Moreover it seems unlikely that he would have exhibited items that he had not approved of.

Montures

Whichever workshop(s) supplied sticks for Lauronce fans, one thing is sure: they were produced in great quantities, worked by hand but also by mechanical techniques. Almost any kind can be found, in mother-of-pearl, bone or wood but not ivory, which does not seem to have been used.

The mother-of-pearl montures are usually plain goldfish pearl with overlapping sticks, but some very elaborate pierced sticks are also to be found.



(Collection Mrs A.Price)

Though the report of the Paris Exhibition jury mentions “ebony sticks” the wood used is rather soft fruitwood in natural colours or tinted black, enhanced with gold or silver paint in imitation of gold or silver leaf, sometimes even gilded all over.

Bone is widely used too. Wood and bone can be pierced, punched or grilled ,with overlapping sticks or of the skeleton type, straight or undulating.

The same leaf can be mounted on different sticks or the same sticks used with different leaves.



Some sticks sporting a 'Reuerdo' motif seem to have been intended for the Spanish market.



These montures could have been supplied by the firm Meyer, a fan-maker who, according to Duvelleroy, provided fans for export.

The lawsuit about the 1874 patent mentions orders made to Ploncard by Meyer. It is only logical that this firm should have done business with Lauronce as well.

From the same source we know that Ploncard's designs were also sold to other fan-makers:

- James Père et Fils, 7 Passage des Panoramas.
- V.Hugot, 3 Bd de Stasbourg & 53 Rue du Château

I don't know if Lauronce sold to James but I am sure he sold to Hugot. I have three fans with a double signature 'A.Lauronce' and 'V.Hugot' : 'A la taverne', 'Mon coeur est à vous ' and the Boucher fan.

They could have been special orders from this fan-maker, but not exclusive designs: the other 'Tavern' fan, the one with lace, only has the Lauronce signature.

Thanks to a label on a reverse of the paper fan "Kermesse villageoise" I know that Lauronce fans were also sold by the firm Bail, specializing in cheap fans for dances.



Lastly, on removing the guard of my fan 'Return from the Village Fair' for minor restoration, I found a pencilled inscription on the satin: "Maison Genin". At the moment I don't know anything about this firm but something may turn up one day.

Finishing touches

The fan-makers were probably responsible for providing the finishing touches.

The heavy satin leaves would be stiffened with paper and lined at the back with fine cloth or silk in matching colours. These linings are sometimes in poor condition, compared to the relative good conservation of the satin leaves. Many Lauronce are thus quite often presentable on the obverse but totally ruined on the reverse.

Examples of leaves mounted à l'Anglaise are rare but do exist : my fan 'Dame, mousquetaire et lévrier' is one.

Paper leaves would simply be doubled, the metallic-finish paper being stiff enough.

Whether fabric or paper, the reverse was seldom decorated : only three fans on the vast number I have seen so far:

- One has a satin leaf decorated with a spray of flowers.



- The other two have paper leaves with a floral motif on green background.



I have a paper fan with exactly the same printed paper on the reverse, though the obverse is by no means a Lauronce leaf : obviously fans from the same workshop.

Lastly, a choice of trimmings was available. Cheaper fans would be left unadorned, while more expensive ones would be embellished with spangles, embroidery, loop, tassel or paste rivet.



'Marchande de colombes' with sequins



' Marchande de Colombes', plain



'Fête Galante' with silk embroidery
