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THE DU PAQUIER PORCELAIN IN THE MUSEO CIVICO AT TURIN

J.F. Hayward, London

The fact that the most important existing collection of the rare and precious porcelain made in Du Paquier's factory at Vienna is preserved in the Museo Civico at Turin has long been well known, but, apart from the pieces illustrated in Folnesics and Braun ("Geschichte der k.k. Wiener Porzellan Manufaktur"), little has been written about it. It is remarkable not merely on account of the large number of pieces (109, of which 53 belong to one service), but their individual importance. While there are a few smaller pieces such as cups, saucers and plates, the majority, apart from the service, are more imposing objects such as large vases, pilgrims bottles, candlesticks and even a wine cooler. This collection of Du Paquier was founded by the first Director of the Museo Civico di Torino, Conte Emmanuele di Azeglio, who bequeathed to the Museum, together with a large and varied collection of works of art, 24 pieces of porcelain dating from the earliest period of the factory. This gift was received in the year 1875, but shortly afterwards in 1877 considerable further purchases were made with the help of funds left for this purpose by the Conte. The most important purchase in 1877 was a red leather travelling case, finely tooled and gilt, containing a Du Paquier tea service of 53 pieces, all decorated in a Kakiemon style apparently derived from Meissen. Each piece in the service bears the arms of a Cardinal of the Gonzaga family. An unusual detail is that instead of being fired on, the Gonzaga arms are only painted in oil colour, which appears to be covered with a protective coat of some water resisting lacquer. There are signs that the Gonzaga arms have been painted in place of some other amorial bearings which have first been ground off. A number of other pieces in Turin carry the armorial bearings of Italian families, and it would appear that like the Meissen factory, that at Vienna did a certain amount of export trade with Italy. It is not however the case that the whole collection was acquired in Italy, and could therefore be regarded as having reached the country in the 18th century. The Conte d'Azeglio travelled extensively and is believed to have acquired a number of his Du Paquier pieces in Vienna itself.

The initial impression created by this magnificent display of Du Paquier porcelain at Turin is one of solemnity and grandeur. The forms seem at first unnaturally solid and ponderous for so delicate a material as porcelain. These massive shapes have their prototypes in the precious metals, and their unimaginative design is due simply to the fact that in these early days of the manufacture of porcelain in Europe (the Du Paquier period of Vienna extends from 1719 to 1744), a language of porcelain had not yet been developed. Where it was not possible to find an appropriate model in the goldsmith's shop, the Du Paquier designers turned to the contem-

porary Chinese and Japanese porcelain, made for export to Europe, for inspiration. The large vases of oriental porcelain, which so often found a place in the schemes of interior decoration of the late 17th century in Western Europe, provided in their turn a heavy style which gave the European potters little encouragement to exploit the ideas which arose from their own fantasy. In form, therefore, Du Paquier's porcelain suggests an earlier phase of Baroque than that properly associated with the period in which it was produced. An exception to this massiveness must however be recognised in the graceful, slender trembleuse cups with their tall tapering bodies. The ponderous form is however contradicted by the delicacy of ornament. While adhering to a consistently symmetrical pattern, the web of finely drawn, softly coloured Laub- und Bandelwerk reminds us that the taste for serious matters in art was passing. The spirit of Baroque was not however easily suppressed, and while the gay colours and fine interlacing of the polychrome ornament look forward to the freedom of Rococo, there was another mode of expressing precisely the same ornament that made no concession to the carefree style of the future. I refer to the Schwarzlot ornament, which, though occasionally used at Meissen also, was so particularly favoured by the Vienna decorators. There is no doubt that the application of decoration in black to a white ground was effective, but porcelain is a material that calls for treatment in less solemn terms. Schwarzlot decoration is on the whole associated with the earlier years of the Vienna factory, and as might be expected, it gave way in later years (1730-1744) to polychrome decoration.

One of the very few documentary pieces of Du Paquier is preserved at Turin: the clock illustrated in Folnesics and Braun, (op.cit.Pl.I,1), which bears on the back the inscription "Anno a nato Salvatore 1725". This piece is decorated in polychrome, and the architectural character of its construction is emphasised by the figure sculpture placed in the angles of its facade. The colour on this piece seems stronger than on many of the later examples decorated with somewhat similar chinoiserie, but the reason for this lies not in the use of a different palette, but in the fact that one finds much larger patches of pure colour in its decorative scheme than was usual later. This generous use of plastic ornament, in the form both of figures and of richly scrolled handles is further evidence of the force of Baroque tradition in Vienna in the second quarter of the 18th century. The figures were not well modelled; they were often required to fill a space that might equally well have been filled with some decorative detail, the modelling of which remanded a lesser degree of technical mastery. Nevertheless tradition called for figure sculpture and the Du Paquier modellers provided it to the best of their limited ability.

Perhaps the predominant impression made by a group of pieces of Du Paquier porcelain is the freedom with which the designers have made use of the conventions of ornament of the longer established arts. There are frequent quotations from the art of the stuccoist, the fresco painter and the goldsmith. Of these the first is represented by the figure modelling and the rich mouldings, the second by the typical planning of the ornament with a central panel containing figures

in a landscape, set in a frame of polychrome strapwork relieved by a judicious intermingling of foliage, and the third by the models used by the potters. In the porcelain of Du Paquier we find a microcosm of Viennese Baroque art.

In addition to its extensive series of factory pieces, the Turin collection includes a few pieces painted by those Hausmaler who used Du Paquier porcelain, Ignaz Botten-gruber, and his two followers whose work is so difficult to distinguish, Wolfsburg and Bressler. The hand of Jakob Helkis is also well represented, with an example (illustrated in "Jakob Helkis and the Du Paquier Factory", Apollo, Oct.1948) dating from his earlier period when, perhaps as a Hausmaler, he was painting very much in the Bottengruber style, and also with pieces painted by him in the last years of the factory with Putto subjects amid garlands of fruit and flowers, a design copied from the interior decoration of the Oberes Belvedere palace in Vienna.

The productions of the Meissen factory are not well represented at Turin, so that in the great gallery containing the porcelain and fayence, collections of the Museo Civico, the porcelain of Du Paquier stands absolutely unrivalled in beauty and splendour.

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