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Autor: Hayward, J.F.
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Johann Gregor Herold at Vienna

by J. F. Hayward, London

(Fig. 1—3)

The earliest reference we have to Johann Gregor Herold, apart from the record of his birth in Jena in 1696, appears in a deposition¹ made by Christoph Conrad Hunger, according to which Herold had worked in his employment in Vienna during one whole year. Hunger, who was one of Claude du Paquier's partners in the establishment of the Vienna porcelain factory, and is described in the patent founding the factory as «Kunstarbeiter», had arrived in Vienna in October, 1717. Whether Herold was already living in Vienna before he was engaged for the factory by Hunger or was brought to Vienna through Hunger we do not know. He had presumably worked as an enameller before he entered the factory, for he was already aged twenty-three years when he did so. We know that he left the factory in the company of a certain Samuel Stölzel, a Massenbereiter and Brenner, who had deserted the Meissen factory in January 1719, in order to better himself at Vienna. His hopes were not fulfilled at Vienna and he returned to Meissen in April 1720 taking with him the young Herold. The latter must, therefore, have entered into the employment of the Vienna factory early in 1719, and this would mean that he was taken on at about the same time as Stölzel. This is extremely likely as, prior to the latter's arrival, little success had been achieved in Vienna and there would have been no point in taking on a second decorator besides Hunger before the problem of devising a satisfactory paste had been solved. That it was only in 1719 that this problem was in fact solved is demonstrated by the well-known experimental cup and saucer at Hamburg dated 1719².

We have three sources of evidence as to Herold's activity at Vienna. Firstly, Hunger's deposition made before the Commissioners of the Meissen factory on August 20 1727. In his description of his activities at Vienna he states that with the help of clay brought from Saxony «hatte man

Porcelain in Wien gemachet, er selbst dergleichen allda praepariret, die Aufstreichung der Farben an Hand gegeben und dadurch den jetzigen Hof Maler Herolden in Meissen zu arbeiten Gelegenheit gemachet, welcher ein ganzes Jahr über wirklich in seiner Besoldung gestanden.»

Secondly, we have Hunger's further statement in a letter to Dresden dated April 1 1730. Referring to Herold and Stölzel, he states «Dieselben wurden auch zu Dieben und nahmen mir alle meine Farben mit, wodurch diese beiden schönen Herren in Dresden zu grossem Estim gekommen; bin also auch um meine Wissenschaft gekommen durch diese zwei gottlosen, ehrvergessenen Leute, dann vorher wusste man in Sachsen nicht, was blau oder grün, rot usw. auf das Porcellain wäre.»

The third source of information is the report³ of the special commission appointed by the King of Saxony to consider certain specimen pieces of Vienna porcelain which Herold had brought to Meissen as evidence of his capacities. The relevant passage states that the pieces painted by Herold «bezeugen, dass er nicht nur die blaue, sondern auch rothe und andere Farben auf dem Porcellain dergestalt zu tractiren vermag, dass darbey die Glätte conserviret, jede Figur kunstmässig gezeichnet und im Feuer nachmals beygehalten werden können.» Another passage in the report lists the pieces which Herold had brought with him from Vienna as follows «3 blaue glatte Schälgen: 1 dgl. Kopgen, 2 dgl. Choccolate Becher; 4 roth emaillierte Schälgen: 1 dgl. Kopgen, 3 Choccolate Becher — welche insgesambt der von Wien wieder zurück gekommene Fabricante Stölzel daselbst zubereitet, die Farbe darauf erfunden und von dem mit hierher gebrachten Mahler Herolden also bemahlet worden.»

It is evident from the terms of this report that Herold's work in Vienna made a considerable impression in Meissen. Furthermore that he was using a palette consisting of blue, red, green and other colours as well, practically the whole

du Paquier colour range, and that his figure subjects withstood successfully the firing.

We now come to the difficult problem of identifying the pieces painted by Herold in his brief Vienna period. Since the factory was still in an experimental phase when Herold was there, there is a very fair chance that any piece of du Paquier porcelain with painted decoration dating from the year 1719 was painted by him. Hunger's statement that he had «den jetzigen Hof Maler Herolden in Meissen zu arbeiten Gelegenheit gemacht» suggests that he had left the actual decoration to Herold and had not done it himself. There is, in fact, one du Paquier piece and one only which is painted with polychrome decoration and can be dated within the year 1719. This is the cup (Becher) in the Berlin Kunstgewerbe Museum, which is decorated with Japanese foliage and birds in polychrome and bears on the base, lightly fired in black, the date «20 August 1719». This cup is described and illustrated by Berling⁴ as an experimental piece «Jedenfalls ist der Becher aber ein Versuchsstück gewesen; dafür spricht einerseits der Umstand, dass hier nicht ein bestimmtes japanisches Muster verwandt ist, sondern dass eine ganze Anzahl solcher auf der Tasse vereinigt sind, wie Chrysanthemum, Paradiesvogel, Rotdorn usw., andererseits aber, dass, so gut die anderen Farben auch gelungen sind, eine, und zwar das Blaugrün, verfehlt erscheint. Diese Farbe hat den starken Brand nicht vertragen, und es ist daher das Gelb aus ihr herausgebrannt.» This then is the one piece which might conceivably have been painted by Johann Gregor Herold at Vienna. Unfortunately there is little enough to be said about it⁵. It follows without any marked feeling for ornament the usual Japanese decoration and apart from its early date has nothing to distinguish it from many other of the cups which can be attributed to the earliest period of the du Paquier factory.

It has not been possible to secure a photograph of this cup; it is, in fact, not yet known whether it is amongst the many pieces from the Berlin Museums that were destroyed as a result of the last war⁶. The illustration of it in Berling is hardly good enough for reproduction and in its place I illustrate a plate, one of three in a private collection in Prague, which shows much the same ornament as the dated cup. The primitive nature of the piece places it in the earliest period of the factory, but there is no evidence whatsoever which would warrant our dating it before 1720, apart from its resemblance to the Berlin cup. It is reproduced as an example of one type of decoration which we know to have been executed at the du Paquier factory when Herold was there. Unfortunately, it throws no light on the subsequent development of Herold's style (fig. 1).

The Meissen report commented on the success of Herold's figure painting on du Paquier porcelain. I know of no piece of du Paquier porcelain decorated with figures which could

be attributed to the brief period when Herold was at Vienna; if such pieces exist, they are only likely to be found at Meissen or Dresden, whither they were brought by Stölzel and Herold. According to the list of the pieces examined by the Meissen Commissioners Herold brought with him two types of cup (Köpfigen and Chocolate Becher) and saucers (Schälgen). It is very likely that production was at first confined to such small pieces, and, in fact, the two surviving pieces dating from the year 1719 are both beaker-shaped cups. The Berlin beaker-cup is of primitive form with almost parallel sides, widening only very slightly towards the rim. This form appears on other early cups from the du Paquier factory (fig. 2) and can be recognised as a feature of the more primitive wares. Beakers of such elegant and sophisticated form as that illustrated in fig. 3 can on the other hand hardly be associated with the earliest period of the factory.

The type of ornament traditionally associated with the name of Johann Gregor Herold consists of chinoiserie and it probable that the pieces decorated by him at Vienna with figures were also decorated with chinoiserie. They constituted one of the standard forms of decoration at the du Paquier factory during most of its existence. It is a peculiar fact, however, that those pieces which are decorated with ornament in the manner that is usually, though perhaps without justification, associated with J. G. Herold cannot be dated to the earliest period of the factory, when Herold's influence would still have been felt. A characteristic example is the attractive beaker cup illustrated in fig. 3, the quality both of paste and potting of which are such that it could hardly be attributed to the early experimental period of the factory. An early piece decorated with chinoiserie is illustrated in fig. 2; though of earlier date than the beaker in fig. 3, its decoration is less closely related to the traditionally accepted Herold style.

The results of the foregoing are unfortunately entirely negative. Unless the cups and saucers brought back by Herold from Vienna to Dresden are re-discovered, it seems that we are unlikely to discover anything positive about Herold's manner of painting when he was employed at Vienna.

¹ Printed in full in Hayward, *Viennese Porcelain*, London, 1952, Appendix III.

² Illustrated Hayward op. cit. Plate I.

³ Quoted Berling, *Meissner Porzellan*, Leipzig, 1900, p. 34.

⁴ Illustrated Berling, op. cit. p. 37, Fig. 22.

⁵ Zimmermann: *Die Erfindung und Frühzeit des Meissner Porzellans*. Berlin, 1908, p. 308, note 624, considered the inscription to be spurious.

⁶ The statement of Prof. Klar quoted by me in *Viennese Porcelain*, p. 61, note 13, that the cup was destroyed seems to have been premature.

Tafel I



Fig. 1 Plate, decorated in purple, iron-red and green and slightly gilded. Coll. of R. Just, Prag, formerly in the possession of Graf Morzin, Schloss Hobenelbe.

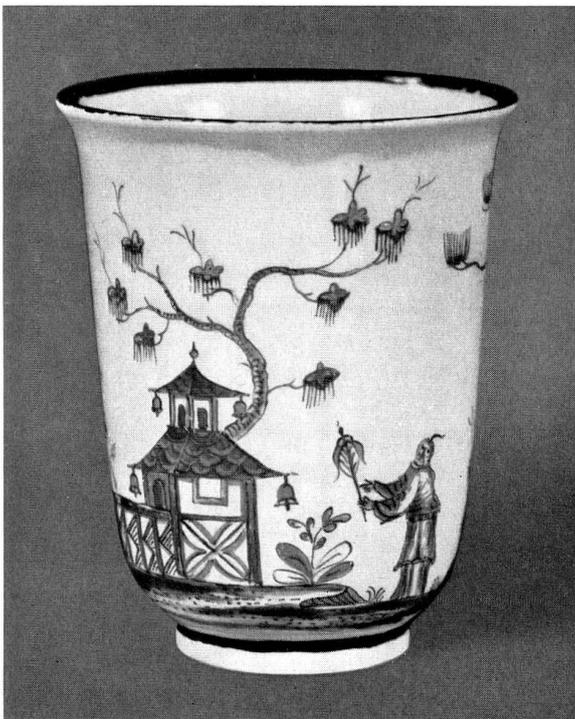


Fig. 2 Beaker-cup decorated with chinoiserie in iron-red with slight gilding. Author's collection.



Fig. 3 Beaker-cup, decorated with chinoiserie in polychrome. Collection of Dir. Leproni, Campione.