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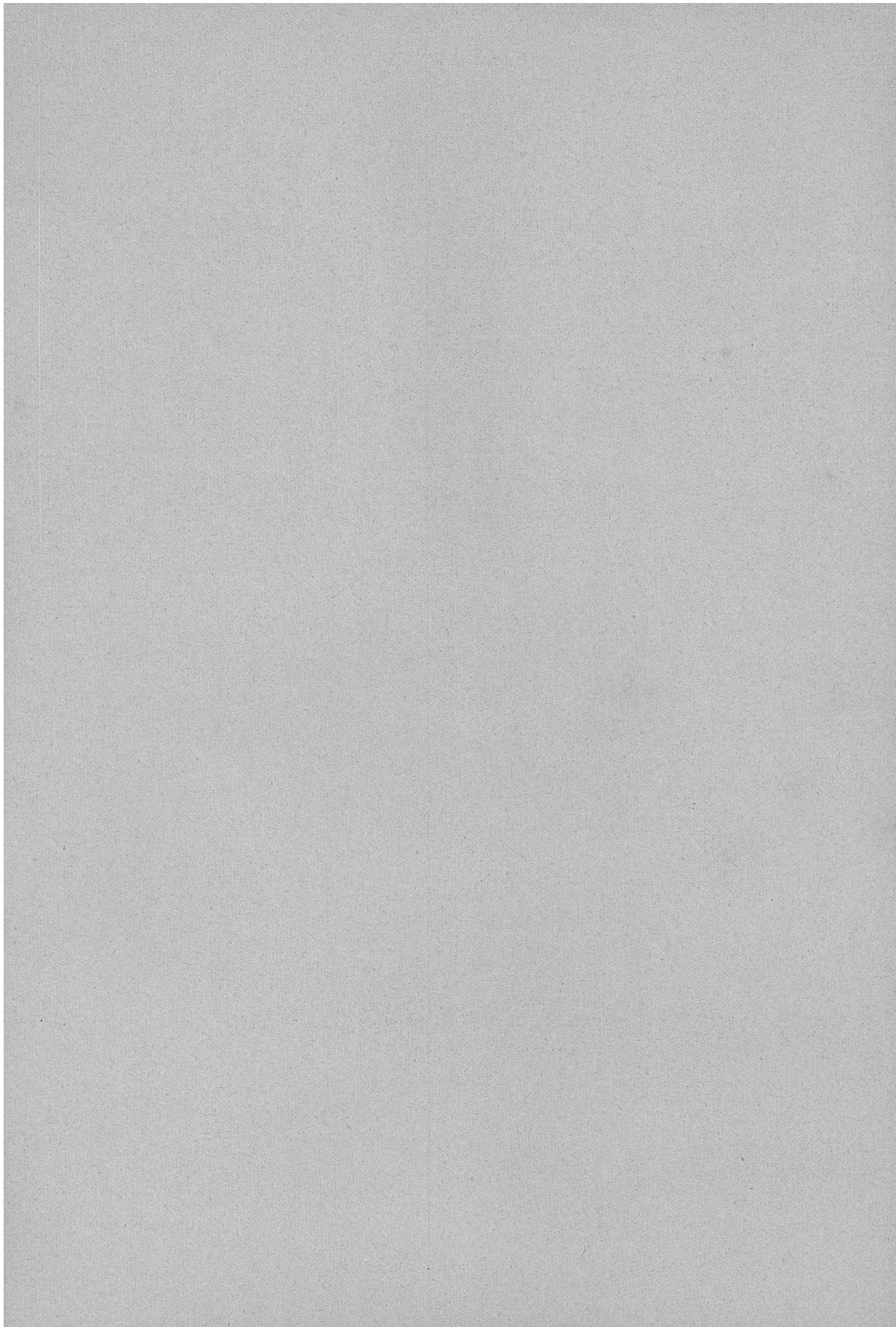
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MITTEILUNGSBLATT
DER KERAMIKFREUNDE DER SCHWEIZ

*Höroldt's «Propositions» for
the Re-Organisation of the Meissen Factory
dated February 24, 1731*

TRANSLATION FROM «MITTEILUNGSBLATT» NO. 43

By Ralph Wark, Hendersonville NC.



In our last issue of the *Mitteilungsblatt* we began publishing reports hitherto unknown, or only partially made known, and taken from the Archives of the Meissen Factory. This material is being sifted now by the present Librarian, Mr. Otto Walcha, to whom we are most grateful. Today's report is another one of considerable importance and of great interest. SD.

The number of painters and apprentices employed at the Factory now number: 25 painters and 11 apprentices, as well as two men, who do the grinding of colors. When in 1720 I first came to the Factory from Vienna, I found no painters employed at all. I had to do all the painting and decorating alone. Shortly after my arrival I took into service a young apprentice by the name of Heintze, who now has developed into one of my best painters. I was also given for my assistance a man coming from the Eggebrecht Fayence Factory in the old part of Dresden, and from time to time additional workers and apprentices, who,

owing to their poverty, could not make a living at that Factory. I trained these people so that today they are doing good work at our Factory. It becomes clear that, as the work in the Factory expands, additional help will be necessary and more painters and apprentices will have to be employed.

From various sources complaints have been made about my having employed men, who from profession were cloth-makers, carpenters etc., instead of my having taken persons who had been painting on pottery and fayence. It was shown, however, that such painters are very difficult to train for porcelain painting, also there arose other obstructional difficulties. It proved to be much more satisfactory to employ men, who had no knowledge of painting and to train them, even if I did not test them as to their ability in advance.

At first it was my intention to employ painters from the Dutch Delft Factory, or men from other cities, but it was found that these men, having bad living habits, had bad influence on my men, their work was quite indifferent and poor, with the result, that I soon gave up this idea.

It will be best in the future for me to have a free hand in selecting men to be employed in accordance with the needs of the Factory. Also I must be left the authority to be able to correct the work

of painters and apprentices, and to check on their behavior, because otherwise they will fall into ill repute and will not make good use of their time during working hours. There would be no proper relationship between production and wages.

If in future work is to be paid for by piecework instead of on the basis of a weekly wage, and his Majesty's interests are to be maintained, working hours should continue as at present, i. e. from Easter until Fall beginning as early as a workman wants to start, but not later than 6 AM, and for the winter months starting as soon as it becomes daylight.

During the summer work should be carried on until 8 PM, and during winter until 9 PM since working hours are shorter during the winter. All employees must keep these hours and must not absent themselves without cause or without my special permission, nor may they go away on travel.

Only such a work-schedule can be of profit to his Majesty's treasury when painters and apprentices, who up to now have worked on a weekly wage basis, are now to be paid for their work by the piece. In order to maintain proper relationship in connection with their work, and in order to take care of possible future changes and additions of new lines of merchandise, I have made the sug-

gestions listed as No. 1 in my re-organisation plan. This takes care of the prices to be paid for the different types of decoration in accordance with how they have been paid for by me in the past, and how payments should be handled in future to the various painters and apprentices as listed below. It takes into consideration the abilities of the workmen.

It will be seen that future prices and costs differ considerably from those of the past. If his Royal Majesty's treasury is to continue to pay me on the yearly basis of 600 Taler and the Factory is to operate with a good profit, it will be found, that existing prices will not be possible to be maintained. In the past I have been paying the workmen a weekly wage. As the Factory's production increased, however, I was compelled to let the men work overtime and had to pay them for this work by the lot or by the piece. The trouble was, however, that the men started to neglect their regular day-work on which they were paid a fixed wage and would either draw out this work over days, or neglected their work entirely in preference to doing overtime work where they could earn more money.

During the last years some of the men have worked the entire night and up to early morning and have made night into day, thus in some in-

stances doing no wage-work at all during the day, preferring to rest up so that they could work all night at over-pay by the piece.

In order to take care of this situation, I recommend that within the new re-organisation plan it become forbidden for any man to work late into the night, specially after the regular working hours as mentioned in paragraph 3, since, if a man has his proper rest during the night, he will be more alert and capable during the day. If he wants to earn much, he must work hard during the day and remain on the job. Should he still engage in overtime work, this work will be poor and in order to check this, I in future will not authorize payment unless the work has been pass upon by me.

Although some of the apprentices do as good a painting job as the regular painters, I would still have them paid but one half of the earnings of the regular painters. This would be to the best interest of his Majesty's treasury. By this method we will keep the apprentices under control as well as in obedience under the realisation that they are under strict supervision during their full six years of apprenticeship. At the end of this period when they pass their test, they will receive, as has been customary, a Sword as well as their freedom to become a painter.

It may be said that present regulations are in

the best interest to his Majesty and it will be generally conceded, that all types of decorations listed under sub. til. 1 complying with present public taste, would not have been accomplished, if not passed upon and approved of by me according to my best conscience and ability and also considering what the workmen have earned.

It is my intention in future, that inspections shall continue to be carried out by me, and that I will personally prepare the gold color and all other colors, and that, as far as time permits, I will personally execute special orders for fine table-wares. I should be paid for such work and I will leave it up to the Management to consider the proper reimbursement I should be paid for such work.

It will not be possible to discontinue wage payments by the week in preference to payment by the piece for all workmen, because now and again special work comes along which, if paid by the piece, could not properly be calculated, and later on difficulties would result.

In order to take care of such cases I suggest that for the following employees only, the weekly wage be maintained. This wage is to be as follows:

1. Koch, who applies the gold and who is very good at this work must do many small appli-

cations on many pieces. When not doing gold work, he paints flowers or Services with «grodesco», or flowers on knife-handles. Since he does his work very well, he has been earning a weekly 2 Taler 8 Gr. He now should receive 2 Taler 16 Gr. since he must discontinue his after-hours work.

2. Leutner, who, after the gold has been applied and fired does the burnishing and thus cannot be paid by the piece, single items having to be worked over at many spots. He should be paid for this work a weekly 1 Taler 8 Gr.
3. Petzold, who paints fine panel scrolls on Services, and who's time is fully occupied by this work, but who also does some flower painting, should continue to be paid his present weekly 2 Taler.
4. Stein, who paints flowers on Services, because those who paint fine figures and landscapes in gilt panels have nothing to do with flower painting, and who also has to paint small flowers on handles, or small Tea-Pots as well as lids, and because sometimes gets quantities of these items that could not be calculated on a piece time pay, should continue on a wage

basis. He now receives 1 Taler but because he will lose his overtime pay should now get a weekly 2 Taler.

5. Lehre, who paints the brown edges around pieces decorated in the Japanese style has a full-time job. Sometimes I have had to give him an additional helper. No one likes this type of work and much of the work becomes defective in handling and must be re-done. This man who has been getting 1 Taler should receive now 1 Taler 8 Gr. and an agreement should be made with him that, if it becomes necessary for him to finish a job on overtime, he shall receive 2 Gr. for each hour.
6. Zimmermann, who is a blue painter and who must from time to time make models for pieces to be decorated later with gold, and who has a full-time job in decorating Tankards, Center-Pieces, Butter Dishes, Bowls and Platters is a painter of some skill. He has up to now received 2 Taler 4 Gr. Since he will lose his overtime pay, from which he has been earning well, he should now receive 2 Taler 16 Gr.
7. Zoellner, a color-grinder and

8. Burkhardt, likewise a grinder, who have been working for me several years so that I always have a supply of the necessary colors on hand, and because the work is too much for one man to handle alone, and because their work has steadily been increasing, have each been getting 18 Gr. but should now receive 21 Gr. to 1 Taler. They should be told, however, that in future during the winter months, they must help in firing the stove in the Painters Room, something the apprentices have been doing up to now. They should also carry the painted pieces in blue to the Glazing Room and all otherwise decorated pieces to the Firing Room and return them. Also, they should bring from the Store Room the porcelains to be decorated and return them for storage when finished. Since these two grinders are fully occupied, another assistant will become necessary very soon.
9. Wittich, a firer, and
10. Müller, also a firer have up to now been receiving Wittich: 6 Taler and Müller 5 Taler. Since their work is heavy, standing all day in front of the kilns, I should consider that Wittich get 8 Taler, the other man 6 Taler per week.

For this these two men must not only continue in their present occupation, but they must also stand by and assist the Foreman Stoeltzel in whatever he may need them for. It would also be advisable that these two men take the Oath of Loyalty to the extent that they carry out their work of firing with greatest care and also that they watch their associations, specially when in company with other men in Beer-Halls and the like, and that they do not talk about their work to anyone.

11. Loewenfinck and
12. Eschenbach, two beginners and apprentices in painting who at present, as the other apprentices do not receive full pay, but only one half of what regular painters get, should receive a weekly 16 Gr. since they must still work in blue and since they must be taken care of and must not starve, and must be properly supervised.
13. Keil, who by profession is a Huntsman, is a sensible goodhearted fellow, and because he is also my Brother-in-Law I have employed him for two years and have given him valuable instruction. He puts on the colored glazes,

burnishes the gold on porcelains in the Japanese manner and is fully occupied. He is also supervisor over all painters and has proven very satisfactory after his predecessor Dietzen, to be followed by Schindler, had caused such great disturbance among the painters and apprentices. As soon as these men turned their backs the painters worked according to their own likes.

This man Keil has received from me a weekly 2 Taler 12 Gr. because of his shown ability. In future he should receive more, because during my absence he must remain continuously in the Painters Room and supervise the painters and apprentices and also I intend to pass on to him additional information relating to painting and the preparation of colors.

Beside these 13 persons, all other painters and apprentices should in future be paid piece-work and according to the work they turn out. From month to month, if I find it necessary, the staff should be increased. Also in the case of the painter Dietzen now discharged, should he be re-employed, he should be placed on a piece-work schedule just like all other workmen, even though behind my back he talks, and not only he, but also his spouse, claiming he knows the secrets of the Factory, the

preparing of the colors, but not admitting, that all he knows, he learned from me. He should be made to state in writing that in future he will not forster intrigues within the Painters Room. He must also not continue to hide in any dark corner and smear a lot of paint on white porcelain he has somehow managed to get ahold of. This sets a bad example to the other painters and harms the Factory.

For these Services and any future additional work, I should receive the yearly salary of 600 Taler. For this I will take care of all of the work in connection with the Painters Room, prepare the colors and the gold, and now and again do some personal painting and correcting. I am also to receive from the Royal Treasury the necessary gold and Dukaten coins against my personal voucher, as well as the necessary funds, also against receipt, for the purchase of color materials unspecified, and to forestall any future possible complaints or doubts, I am willing to take an Oath, that I will only use this gold and the Dukaten coins handed over to me for the sole purpose of decorating porcelains, and will not use any of the funds advanced to me for other uses but the purchase of materials for the Factory.

Since one the finest and most treasured colors to be applied on porcelain is the underglaze-blue, and

which is still being used in our decorating, I find it necessary to make a report in this connection. At no time has this blue not tended to run or «bleed», even at the time of the former Supervisor David Koehler. Also did it always blur when fired a second time, making it impossible to obtain sharp outlinings, specially if the design calls for very fine strokes of the brush. Still, at Koehlers time it was better then what it is now, and prepared by the Supervisor Stoeltzel. I have spoken at several times to Stoeltzel, and once, when he was in a specially great difficulty, shortly after Koehlers death, and Stoeltzel could not produce a good blue at all. I gave him some suggestions by which at last this blue could be properly produced, however, in a costly and difficult manner. Just before the former Supervisor Koehlers death, so to speak on his deathbed, and because Koehler always had confidence in me, he confided to me, and told me how to prepare this blue at a low cost. After my instructing Stoeltzel, the blue painting improved during about six months to a year, but from then on not a single firing has produced a good blue. All turns out a gray-blue, a blackish-blue and lead-spotted, which, as can be readily understood, is quite detrimental to the Factory's reputation and treasury. Not only can it not be sold even at auction, but dozens of sets

costing a great deal of money cannot be assembled into Services for deliveries. At several times the Supervisor Stoeltzel has claimed that all of these faults are not of his making, but has tried to blame the painters, saying that they have applied the blue color unevenly and without sufficient care.

This all is not true, because I have had samples made from time to time by my painters and apprentices, picking the most adept one's. Personally I have also painted pieces, in order to find out what is the trouble, but we have found that these carefully executed paintings, when being fired at the same time in the same kiln, and also having been painted by the same person, using the same paint, have come out of firing with some of them gray or black or covered with lead spots. I therefore believe that this blue color, if it is to be used successfully in decorating, must be improved upon by the Arcanists by solving the problem of the relationship between the porcelain paste and the glaze. This is proven by the fact, that the painting and the firing are not at fault, since pieces decorated by one and the same hand come out in different conditions, good and bad. In order to make a saving for the time being, and to prevent loss to the treasury, it would seem advisable not to produce too much of this type of decoration now.

When larger sets are made, where all pieces must be uniformly alike in quality, there is too much waste at present.

I do wish the Supervisor Stoeltzel a long life, but should by chance he die unexpectedly, or should other difficulties in preparing paste and glaze arise, I have enough courage to believe, that I can assist ably and overcome many of the difficulties to the best satisfaction of his Majesty.

The two other Arcanists, Schubert and Hoppe, although good and reliable men, lack experience and the know-how in order to increase their personal knowledge, I, however, have experimented a great deal, and have accomplished much. I only call attention to the time of the late Koehler, when it was impossible to fire plates that did not warp, and how I invented the capsul and gave further instructions, so that most of the plates now hold their shape.

Because the present blue color is extracted from domestic cobalt ore from the Obergelbirge mountains, and I also use this color in connection with mixing other colors which have turned out unsatisfactory, it seems advisable that the Supervisor Stoeltzel be instructed to obtain a better ore, or that he be sent to the Obergelbirge to the cobalt mine, on Royal decree, so that he may personally select a better quality.

With regard to paragraph 1 of the report, stating that at present there are 36 painters and apprentices employed, it will be likely, that in the future, when more persons are given work, the present Painters Room is insufficient and there will be no place to put them. Up to now I have them all working in this one room, since they work on a weekly earning basis. Thus they are more likely to work competitively and more conscientiously, being under my or Keil's supervision. This situation will now change, as painters and apprentices will be working on piece-time, and better and more efficient work should be turned out, each man earning more.

It therefore would be to advantage that workmen be placed better so that on one side they are not so crowded with their porcelains and colors, and on the other side get improved lighting. At present more than half of the men must sit away from the three windows of the room and have poor working light.

It will also be better to separate the painters, because it is unavoidable that quarrels come up, and that some cannot get along with others. If those who work in blue are placed by themselves, and those who paint in gold and burnish it are placed by themselves, as well as the painters in colors, are separated, the organisation to my mind

could not be better. Painters doing one type of work together with their apprentices should be kept together.

So, as to carry out this suggestion, I am willing to give up the two rooms that are just across from the present Painters Room, and which have served up to now as my living quarters. I will move into a privat house within the Palace grounds. Thus a number of the painters and their apprentices could be moved into the so-called Corner-Room, which has very good lighting by three large windows, and in which I now store models and porcelains to be decorated. Some painters could be placed in my present living room, although it only has one window. Communication among all workers would be maintained. Personally I would separate within one of these rooms a section for my use, a small Cabinet, where I can do my own work, and where I can keep on hand the necessary colors. When I am not preparing the gold or the colors, I must spend my time as much as possible, with the painters and apprentices and also must do some painting myself.

This suggestion, specially the one concerning the Corner-Room, should not incur much expense. The laying of a wooden floor to cover the dusty tile floor, replacing of the quite ancient fire-place by a stove, as well as re-leading of the windows

would provide a most suitable workroom with good lighting, which would also be to the benefit of the Factory, specially when local or outside visitors inspect the premisses. Now everyone inspecting the one and only Painters Room is in constant fear of knocking down the stacks of porcelains, which would cause damage and loss.

By storing the decorated and gilded porcelains in my Cabinet, installed in my old living room, a better control will be maintained, then when the boys, and also the girl, who keeps my premisses cleaned, entered the Corner-Room, where they have been stored up to now. Thus, under my lock and key, I would have all pieces delivered to me under control and no losses should be feared, as has been the case in the past, when anybody could enter the Corner-Room.

Also several work-benches, chairs for painters and apprentices, which were made up at my expense, also a stove in the living room, should be properly appraised, and I humbly request, that a commission decide on a proper reimbursement to me for these items, which should become the property of the Factory, and should be taken into inventory.

In order that the new work-rooms are not left alone during the night where colors and porcelains will be stored, the above mentioned Keil should

be instructed to remain on the premisses, together with one apprentice. On the side of the living room, there, where my Cabinet will be located, on the wall having no window is a proper place for a night watchman.

As I have already requested in paragraph 2, I would like to have complete disposition over all painters and apprentices, so as to be able to maintain order and discipline, as well as to encourage interest in the affairs of the Factory. For this reason the Comptroler Nohr should be advised, that under no pretext whatsoever he mix into the affairs under my supervision, and that he does not listen to all the complaints made by painters or apprentices, when they have been scolded. He would only make my work more difficult.

It would be a great consolation to me, if I were given power in regard to the employment of new personel, so that I would not have to depend on decisions made by the Royal Commission, at least when it concerns painters and apprentices. I would submit written reports, which should be counter-signed by the Commission. This would have as a result that quick actions are possible, much to the Royal Majesty's interest. No decisions would be made without my knowledge, as is now the case.

Notwithstanding this, I would remain in close cooperation with the Comptroller Nohr in such matters concerning the Painters Rooms and in connection with finance matters such as the supply of polishing-teeth, oil, firing-tins, wooden vessels etc., which have to be replaced from time to time. For these I would give him my receipt. I would also be willing to provide him with worksheets of weekly and monthly earnings of the painters and apprentices, and the time they have worked, so that, when he pays them, he has at hand a proper record.

Finally I humbly ask from His Dukal Excellency, the Cabinet Minister Count von Hoym, that I be paid for the many models of fine Japanese porcelains I have made, and for which I paid for colors and material. Also for the purchase of a quantity of painted and glazed originals, which should remain as models in the possession of the Factory. For these I beg the Commission to make an appraisal value, so that I may be reimbursed. Further I request that the Comptroller, or who may be responsible in this matter, to pay me in addition to my salary of 600 Taler, the monthly cost of the three cords of wood agreed upon, against which I will give my receipt. I then promise to further the best interests of His Royal Majesty's Porcelain Factory to my best ability,

and to supervise all personel under my jurisdiction, so that His Royal Majesty may find pleasure in His enterprise and the Factory's Treasury obtain profitable revenue.

Commentary

This extensive and precise re-organisation plan of Höroldt's dated February 24th 1731, is of such interest, reflecting the past and the future, since the year of 1731, in the history of the Meissen Factory, was one of its most consequential.

If an attempt were made to analyze the very extensive record material of this year 1731, and a history calender only covering this short period were made, one would obtain a cross-section of an economic organisation of the early 18th century, warm blooded and full of liveliness hardly to be conceived with greater clearness.

With the exception of Boettger, the entire classic emsemble would appear on the stage of this Opera of the year 1731. We find Höroldt, Kirchner, Kaendler, Loewenfinck, Stoeltzel, Hoppe, Schubert, Nohr, Otto, Chladni, Le Maire, Augustus the Strong, Count Hoym, v. Wichmannshausen, Pflugh, all make their appearence, and finally no less then the parasites Meerheim, Mehlhorn senior

and Hunger. Particularly the first three months of this year bring events of dramatic Dynamics. Its culmination lies between the months of April and May when the King assumed personal control and management over the Factory. A second highlight is given by the entry of Kaendler in June. The tensions between him and his forerunner Kirchner are no less exciting, then those between him and Höroldt. Höroldt in February of 1731 was promoted to «Inspector» with a yearly salary of 600 Taler. (at that only on a trial basis for one year duration!)

Since he was given additional duties in connection with this advancement, he was asked to make suggestions for the division of painting according to styles, as well as to introduce a new schedule of wage payments starting March 1st. He therefore incorporated into his «Propositions» descriptions concerning current greavances and recommendations for their elimination (mainly in wage policies). For this reason his «Propositions» were submitted.

The most important of his suggestions was the change-over from a fixed wage basis to that of payments on piece-work for workman doing overtime work.

That Höroldt thus obtained a more rigid control over his staff is clearly visible. If the quality

of the work was to be improved, is another matter of debate. Also the strict allotment of working hours is of interest. We see at least that in those days it was not easy to earn money, specially since the wage schedule suggested by Höroldt was not adopted, but lowered by nearly 50 %. Of this low rate the apprentices, who in many instances did as good work as their teachers (this is specially pointed out in the report), finally only received one half of what the regular painter was paid.

Most revealing for Höroldt's mistrust against the rising younger talents is his discrimination against Loewenfinck and Eschenbach, who are excluded from all other apprentices from being placed on a piece-work basis, but who must continue to work on a weekly miserly 16 Groschen «so that they are taken care of and kept from starving, and remain under close and better control».

The youngest Arcanist, the «Herr Court Painter Höroldt» thus began an iron rule over the Factory. He had been intrusted now with the full «Arcanum». His influence spread considerably.

It thus is not surprising that these «Propositions» suggest improvements in the still very unsatisfactory production of the underglaze-blue, and thus reveal also his strained relationship with Stoeltzel. He also makes a «bagatel» of the some-

what mysterious circumstance under which he obtained the secret from Koehler of making the blue color. Finally, he stands up with sound reason for the separation of the blue painters from the other painters, whereby the latter are given more and better lighted working space.

The active events of the spring of 1731 finally are reflected by Höroldt's withdrawel from Nohr, the Comptroler, and his demand that the Factory Comptroler mind his own business. No doubt, Höroldt was already aware of the fact, that Nohr's days of freedom were numbered.

Otto Walcha, Archivar, Meissen

