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The Golden Years of Meissen Porcelain and Saxon Jesters: the Schmiedel bust in Australia

by Eva Czernis-Ryl

The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney acquired a glazed white porcelain portrait bust of «Baron» Schmiedel (fig. 1, 2) in 1950 — several months after the sculpture had come to light at a local antiques auction and was subsequently attributed to Johann Joachim Kändler (1706—1775) of the porcelain manufactory in Meissen. The new acquisition was not published until the 1970s when the bust was given some attention in Sydney publications.¹ Nevertheless, the existence of this third surviving example of a significant work by Kändler has remained largely unknown. The Museum's extensive preparations for exhibitions opened in Australia's bicentennial year have brought renewed attention to this intriguing bust. The following discussion explores the surviving evidence concerning its background and production, as well as the history of Schmiedel himself.

The almost life-size bust of the Saxon court jester Schmiedel, executed in 1739, was intended for display in the *Japanese Palace* in Dresden as a pair to the bust of another jester, Joseph Fröhlich, modelled about 1730 by Johann Gottlieb Kirchner² (fig. 3). The Schmiedel portrait was an exceptionally late commission for the Palace — originally a showcase of Meissen porcelain achievements of the early 1730s. The bust is an important work of a most interesting, stylistically transitional phase in the development of early porcelain sculpture at the Meissen manufactory.

Augustus the Strong (1670—1733) — Elector of Saxony and King of Poland — established the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in Meissen in 1710 following the invention of European hard-paste porcelain by court alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger. By about 1727, after a decade or so of the manufactory's successful production predominantly of painted tableware³, the King conceived a plan for a «porcelain palace». For this purpose he remodelled his Dresden *Dutch Palace*⁴, and renamed it as the *Japanese Palace*. Its vast interior was to be filled with the King's precious collection of Oriental porcelain as well as with Meissen products — unprecedented monumental animalier sculpture along with exquisitely painted vases and

dishes. The extravagant project was also to include a variety of architectural elements and a chapel with a complete altar-piece. The idea was an expression of the grandiose scale of Augustus the Strong's absolutist rule which was greatly influenced by that of the French Sun King, Louis XIV.

In order to carry out the sculptural part of the enterprise the manufactory needed skilful modellers. Kirchner and Johann Christoph Lücke were the first sculptors engaged at Meissen. In 1731 the King appointed a new modeller to the manufactory. Johann Joachim Kändler was a 25-year-old court sculptor who had been working on the decoration of the Royal Treasury (*Grünes Gewölbe*) in Dresden. He was more versatile and proved better suited to modelling for porcelain than his colleagues, and in 1733 Kändler became the modelmaster and the major sculptor on the project.

The furnishing of the *Japanese Palace* was never completed. In 1733 Augustus the Strong died and, at first, his son and successor, Friedrich August II (1696—1763) — Augustus III as King of Poland — continued his father's enterprise. The new King's interest in the Palace, however, soon waned. By 1736 the production of the large Baroque animals and birds had practically ceased. Kändler was now occupied with smaller-scale figures often intended to decorate royal tables, as well as with commissions for elaborate dinner services and religious groups. The latter works continued to reflect Baroque influence. The cabinetpieces gradually began to reveal the spirit of the Rococo with its interest in «genre» court scenes — the crinoline groups depicting fashionably dressed courting pairs enjoyed particular popularity. For the first time satirical works inspired by real-life events (such as the *Tailor Riding on a Goat*⁵) entered Kändler's repertoire. This paved the way for the satirical bust of Schmiedel — a Baroque sculpture which was also stimulated by the Rococo fascination with themes commenting on contemporary life and people.

The decision to portray the jester in porcelain as the next court personality after the King (figures of Augustus

III had already been made by Kändler) confirms that the traditional belief in the inseparability of a king and his jester was still alive in the 18th century.⁶ The ancient «profession» of court jester continued to flourish. With the Baroque period, jesters were becoming better mannered and more cultivated; often the fancy for physical or mental deformity was giving way to the appreciation of wit and natural humour.

A 19th-century German author, Dr. Schfr. (as he signed his article), while commenting on the history of Saxon jesters, called the times under the rule of Augustus the Strong and Augustus III «the true golden age of court jesters in Saxony».⁷ Indeed, Augustus the Strong maintained quite a group of jesters at his court and they enjoyed a prosperous life there. The King employed a well known individual, Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Kyau, who had been a jester to three consecutive Saxon electors.⁸ By about 1730, two other jesters had been engaged at court — Joseph Fröhlich and «Postmaster» Schmiedel. These two with their colleague Leppert from Leipzig were known as the «merry three-leaf clover».⁹ Lesser jugglers, dwarfs and giants, including the dwarf Monsieur de Peine, Inspector of Curiosities¹⁰, complemented this merry company.

Augustus III followed in his father's footsteps. «His Polish Majesty has always five or six buffoons in waiting, who are obliged to be in his dressing-room every morning by four o'clock, and who never quit him the whole day, unless when Count Brühl comes into the room...» wrote Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, an English Envoy to the Polish court, in a memorandum of 1749.¹¹ Among the characters alluded to in the note must have been Fröhlich and Schmiedel who continued in the service of the new King. Kyau had died in 1733, and Leppert had moved to Count Brühl's palace the same year.¹² A Turk — «Kammerturka»¹³ and Schindler¹⁴ were other jesters known to have been engaged at the court.

Schmiedel was one of the most prominent jesters in 18th-century Saxony. He reached the height of popularity at the court whilst in the service of Augustus III. Unlike Fröhlich, he has been largely neglected by historians. This limited historical interest in Schmiedel may have stemmed from his well known melancholic character¹⁵ which was the opposite of the lively personality of Fröhlich who always remained the more popular of the two. The picture of Schmiedel which emerges, however, also reveals a more energetic side of his personality. We learn that he maintained court positions and titles similar to his colleague, his services were appreciated and he was given valuable presents.

Schmiedel's real name was Johann Gottfried Tuscheer. He is said to have come from Silesia, although the exact place and the date of his birth are not known.¹⁶ We can presume that he was born about 1700 since he appears to be in his late thirties in the porcelain portrait by Kändler. The social standing of the Tuscheer family remains obscure. The backgrounds of court jesters of the time varied widely — although some were nobles and educated men, the majority came of peasant stock. It is most likely that Schmiedel belonged to the latter group and that he left his homeland in search of employment.

There is some evidence of Schmiedel's life before his court career. Dr. Schfr. states that Schmiedel was a postmaster in Langensalza, a little town in Thuringia.¹⁷ Schmiedel's name, however, has not been found in local chronicles listing Langensalza postmasters.¹⁸ Had Schmiedel been a postmaster there, this would account for his later nickname of «Postmaster», but we shall see that there is also an alternative explanation for this title. According to Willnau¹⁹, Schmiedel worked as a waiter in Dresden before he joined the court. There he became well known for playing the «trumpet» with his mouth only. The restaurant's guests were often army officers, so military tunes such as the reveille, cavalry attack and various marches were the most popular in Schmiedel's repertoire.

The earliest evidence of Schmiedel's presence at the Dresden court is a sandstone portrait bust of him (fig. 4), a pair to one of Fröhlich, executed about 1730 by an unidentified sculptor. Both sculptures surmounted the pillars flanking a stable gate in the vicinity of the castle in Moritzburg. The busts commemorate a prank the two jesters played on Augustus the Strong. At one time, after falling from grace, Fröhlich had been imprisoned but had managed to escape. As the King was about to visit Moritzburg, Fröhlich with his fellow Schmiedel overtook the procession just as it was approaching the gate and climbed some ladders behind the pillars of the entrance. Smiling innocently they welcomed the amazed King to the castle. Apparently the King appreciated the joke and commissioned the sculptures to record the incident.²⁰

From about the same time comes a reference to an event which would have included Schmiedel. Flögel records that in April 1731, after a well known Prussian jester Professor Jacob von Gundling had died in Berlin, all the fools in Dresden went into mourning.²¹ They wore «*crape bands about twenty ells in length, and mourning cloaks so long that they or others were always tumbling over them*».²² Schmiedel also appears in a group-scene on a Meissen vermouth beaker made about 1725—30 and painted in manganese purple by a *Hausmaler* about 1731—33.²³ Schmiedel here wears his badge of office which confirms that he held the position of «Travel, Post and Hunt Courier» while a jester at the

court of Augustus the Strong. The badge, an inseparable element of Schmiedel's official garb, also implies that he was already wearing his yellow coat in his early years at court. Schmiedel's costume is usually referred to as a postmaster's uniform. It may be, however, that he used the yellow dress of a Master of the Royal Hunt which resembled that commonly worn by postmasters, and hence Schmiedel's nickname — the «Postmaster». ²⁴

After the death of Augustus the Strong in February 1733, Schmiedel left the court for the city of Lauchstädt where he actually took a position as postmaster. ²⁵ How long he remained there is uncertain. After a stormy love affair he returned to the court. In an entry of 1736 in the Saxon Court and State Calendar, Schmiedel is referred to as: «Court juggler Gottfried Tuscheer known as little Schmiedel». Another note, from 1739, mentions: «Gottfried young Baron Schmiedel sans repos». ²⁶ Similar entries continued until 1754 revealing some of his other «titles», such as the «Commissary of the Hunt, Count Johann Gottfried». ²⁷

A remarkable incident involving Schmiedel was recorded in contemporary documents. On 27th April 1738 the jester took part in a royal visit when Maria Josepha, the Queen of Poland, wanted to show her sister, the Queen of Sardinia, the Meissen manufactory. During the visit porcelain presents were given to the most noble participants. Schmiedel and Fröhlich, along with the Papal nuncio, each received a complete coffee and tea service with underglaze painted decoration, as well as six cups with chinoiserie scenes — all of the best quality. ²⁸ The event confirms the position of respect these jesters held. In fact, they not only attended the King in his dressing-room, they regularly appeared at the royal table and took part in the most intimate gatherings of the court. They also kept company with their master on visits and hunting expeditions. Wherever they were, they joked, juggled, played magic tricks, exchanged witty badinage and expressed themselves boldly. Jestors could usually say the most outrageous things, although the King sometimes punished them for their outspokenness.

With the outbreak of the Seven Year's War in 1756, Augustus III moved to his Warsaw residence. Together with court officials and servants, the King's favourite jesters found themselves in the Polish capital. The Polish chronicler Kitowicz recorded them being involved in court life as actively as usual. He reveals another aspect of Schmiedel's role, that of court poet who «on each occasion, ably composed witty and amusing jokes in German». ²⁹ Kitowicz describes Schmiedel at the annual target shooting competition held in the royal gardens each May: «The King's poet, after each shot, said some rhymes in German either to praise or to make fun of the shooter.» ³⁰

Early in 1763, soon after the withdrawal of the Prussian

army, Augustus III returned to a devastated Dresden. Not all his courtiers accompanied the King on this journey — Fröhlich had died in Warsaw in 1757. Schmiedel was most probably among the returning suite. In any case, he can be considered as the last «professional» jester Augustus III was to have — the King died in October 1763, several months after the return of peace.

At the time Schmiedel was portrayed in Meissen porcelain, in 1739, he was enjoying life at the prosperous Dresden court of Augustus III. His bust was commissioned by the King himself. Sponsel, referring to Kändler's report, notes that two works of Schmiedel and Fröhlich were being modelled on the 15th of December, 1738. ³¹ If the reference is to the Schmiedel bust (form no 21), and there is no other single Schmiedel figure known to have been produced at the time, the modelling and production of the piece must have taken several months, for in the work report of late June 1739 Kändler writes of the finished work as follows:

«The so-called Baron Schmiedel in Dresden poses by the highest order, a life-size bust with his very decorative clothing and hat, on his left chest he has a silver shield, which hangs on two small chains with a post-horn. On the shield one sees the Royal Polish and Saxon coats-of-arms above which is written: Travel, Post and Hunt-Courier, on his shoulder, as on his hat, sit two mice». ³²

Kändler has portrayed Schmiedel with a startling realism. The bust emphasises both the sitter's melancholy disposition and his ostentatious elegance — the result of Schmiedel's well known anxiety for recognition, ³³ but also an attribute of the jester: traditionally the costumes of jesters differed from the norm and were either preposterously out of fashion or lavishly the height of vogue. Schmiedel's head is turned to the left, his eyes, with deeply modelled pupils, look vacuously into space. He has a handsome moustache set in a military manner (in life it would have been treated with a tar and resin mixture, then shaped with a hot metal comb ³⁴). The tidy «pigeon wings» of a fashionable pig-tail wig flank his full, softly modelled face. At the back, the long queue has a large bow and is wound around with a ribbon. Schmiedel wears a lavish suit richly decorated with ornamental braid and buttons. The matching tricorne, trimmed with another bow, is foppishly tilted. Below the jabot ruffles of the starched shirt, on a plaited ribbon, hangs a large medallion based on Groskurt's coronation medal of Augustus III. ³⁵ (fig. 5). The heavy escutcheon applied to the chest leaves no question regarding the court status of its owner — all the Royal and Electoral heraldic details, ³⁶ along with Schmiedel's court titles of honour are represented here. The costume decoration and accessories are framed

with drapery flowing across the torso. Below its soft curve, surprisingly, a group of unusual watch fobs appears — a sartorial oddity which normally would have been concealed under the doublet, hanging from the pocket of his breeches.

The idea of adding two naturalistically rendered mice to the original conception of the bust, and one or two more in later versions, was inspired by Fröhlich's magic tricks performed at court: he would change carrots into mice which he then found in Schmiedel's pockets³⁷ or even in his mouth.³⁸ The role of Schmiedel as the «victim» in this game (he actually tamed mice himself) required him to show his fear to amuse the audience. He must have been a skilful actor, for it seems that both his contemporaries and most of the later writers believed in Schmiedel's phobia, convinced, no doubt, by the eloquent porcelain scenes created by Kändler (fig. 6). It is also possible that some engravings, which Kändler occasionally used as models, provided indirect inspiration for the mouse motif. Images featuring tramps and street musicians «decorated» with mice were to be found among caricatures by Arnold van Westerhout.³⁹

The concept of modelling Schmiedel in the elite form of a commemorative bust provided Kändler with an excellent basis for this satirical portrait study which focuses on the jester's specific role at court. Schmiedel is shown here as a distinguished court personality and royal companion and, on the other hand, the king's servant, a juggler-magician whose duty was to make the company laugh, often by poking fun at himself.

Stylistically, the Schmiedel bust is a major example of Kändler's porcelain sculpture which draws on the artistic tradition of Baroque sculpture in Germany. Kändler belonged to the Permoser school of sculpture — a German version of the High Baroque.⁴⁰ Just how dynamic his interpretation of the style could be, is shown in his tomb sculptures executed for local churches.⁴¹ When Kändler the stone and wood sculptor becomes a porcelain modeller, he sets aside dramatic pathos and extremely vigorous composition. For his large birds, animals and even the religious groups he chooses a restraint more suited to the technically difficult material (at the time, large sculptures often cracked and collapsed in the kilns due to the pressure forces in the porcelain mass). Yet, Kändler's porcelain compositions retain much of the Baroque spirit both in the rich modelling and expressive movement. The Schmiedel bust, a reference to the Berniniesque type of portrait sculpture, makes the Baroque idiom especially striking. The turn of the head and the gaze are counterbalanced by the flow of the drapery, and this crossing of directions gives their work a distinct sense of movement. The deep drapery folds and the intricate re-

lief of the layered costume encourage the play of light and shade on the glazed porcelain. The Baroque theatricality is enriched further by the ceremonial pose and spectacular costume both conforming to the basic function of the Baroque bust — the glorification of an eminent individual. The satirical emphasis of the Schmiedel bust, however, breaks away from this traditional role by both adding an element of frivolity and replacing the importance of the sitter with the metaphor: the Schmiedel bust, through its masterly execution, prestigious material and good humour, glorifies Augustus III, the patron of them all.

The colourful court jesters must have appealed to Kändler's imagination. Concurrently with modelling the Schmiedel bust he explored the theme in smaller scale figures. In June 1739, Kändler made an entry in his work report: *«A group or small cabinetpiece which consists of five small figures. Firstly, a lady neatly dressed in court attire is seated, behind her is a page (Läufer) who holds a dish. Next to the lady is Baron Schmiedel who appears to be in conversation with her. Behind Schmiedel is a harlequin showing a mouse. Next to the lady is a ca-*

Figs. 1 and 2 Bust of the Saxon court jester «Baron» Schmiedel modelled by J. J. Kändler in 1739, form no. 21. Glazed white porcelain. H. 48 cm. This example of Kändler's sculpture came to light in Sydney in 1950. Photographs courtesy of the Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney.

Fig. 3 Bust of the court jester Joseph Fröhlich modelled by J. G. Kirchner, circa 1730. Glazed white porcelain. H. 53,5 cm. Photograph courtesy of Porcelain Collection (Staatliche Porzellan-Sammlung) in Dresden.

Fig. 4 Bust of Schmiedel by an unidentified sculptor, circa 1730, Eisenberg near Moritzburg, Sandstone. H. 65 cm. This is a reproduction which replaces the original now held in the Barockmuseum, Castle Moritzburg.

Fig. 5 Coronation medal of Augustus III by Heinrich Paul Groskurt, 1734. Silver. D. 5,5 cm. A medallion based on this medal is worn by Schmiedel in the portrait bust by Kändler. An example of the medal is held in the Museum of Medallion Art in Wrocław, Poland.

Fig. 6 «The Mousetrap» modelled by J. J. Kändler in 1745, form no. 290. Porcelain decorated in enamel colours. H. 26 cm. Porcelain Collection in Dresden. Photograph courtesy of the VEB Verlag der Kunst, Dresden.



1



2





4



5



valier who is kissing her skirt.»⁴² In March 1741, after a break devoted, among other things, to the completion of altarpieces for Empress Amalia of Austria, Kändler returned to the subject of the jesters. He modelled a sleigh group (form no 251) based on a humorous incident involving Schmiedel and Fröhlich which was described as follows: «An entire group with a horse-drawn racing sleigh in which a woman sits. Joseph Fröhlich sits at the back and embraces the woman. A monkey and an owl are to be found on the sleigh.»⁴³ What Kändler failed to say here is that this «woman» is given Schmiedel's physiognomy. Willnau confirmed the observation by providing a description of the sleighride of the court from Dresden to Moritzburg in February 1740. He recounted how Fröhlich, intending to «steal a kiss» from a Countess Friesen, found Schmiedel, disguised as the lady, sitting in her sleigh instead.⁴⁴ In September 1741, the ingenious team-work of the two jesters provided inspiration for a porcelain group with a mouse-trap (form no 290) finished by Kändler's assistant, Johann Gottlieb Ehder: «Joseph Fröhlich and Mons. Schmiedel stand next to one another, and Fröhlich holds a mouse-trap with a mouse in it, showing it to Schmiedel who cannot look at it.»⁴⁵ (Fig. 6) This lively group exists in several versions which are among the most beautiful cabinetpieces made by Kändler. In Kändler's *Taxa*, a report on his work carried out privately, there is mention of a figure modelled in November and December 1741, which reads: «One Schmiedel figure of the same size (as one of Fröhlich), in his full costume with his shield, 6 thalers.» The same piece is referred to in a slightly later entry: «Mons. Schmiedel, with his shield (on chest).»⁴⁶ Although the production of the piece was questioned by Rückert⁴⁷, it seems improbable that such meticulous records could refer to a projected work only. The reports of the three subsequent years record only minor works related to Schmiedel. In 1742 Ehder modelled a pipe-bowl in the form of the jester's head. In May 1744 Kändler reported: «A tobacco head with a portrait of Schmiedel at court (represented on it) was remodelled.»⁴⁸ This last known entry suggests that it was about this time that representations of Schmiedel came to an end.

Three Schmiedel busts are known to exist. Apart from the example in Sydney, one has remained in the Porcelain Collection in Dresden, and one is now in the Detroit Institute of Arts. All three are almost identical. The formal differences lie in a slightly varying size and in the number of mice accompanying Schmiedel, the latter probably a result of the artistic licence of manufactory *bossiersers*. The Detroit example has only two mice sitting on Schmiedel's right shoulder and hat. The piece in Sydney has an additional mouse hanging from Schmiedel's mouth, while the

Dresden version shows a fourth mouse peeping out from under the coat beside the shield. None of the busts bears a manufactory mark.⁴⁹

It is not known how many casts of the Schmiedel bust were made. In the case of the large animalier sculptures the editions of individual designs were never less than four, but the series could have been made up of as many as sixteen pieces. Kändler left no indication in his surviving notes of any additional castings of the bust.⁵⁰ The incomplete inventory of 1770, which repeats the items from the oldest inventory books begun in 1721, provides no information with regard to any Schmiedel busts entering the Dresden Collection.

The bust in Detroit represents the exact form of Kändler's original concept as described in his work report and, although not documented, could have been the first Schmiedel bust produced in Meissen. The remaining two busts must have been executed not long after its completion in June 1739. From about 1742, the popularity of the Schmiedel theme was overtaken by other subjects, and by that time the personal interest of Augustus III in his father's Palace had long ceased. The plaster moulds of the work, however, have always been kept in Meissen, so it is possible that some of the Schmiedel busts could have been manufactured somewhat later.⁵¹ Even so, their production is unlikely to have been later than the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756. During the War, the manufactory was taken over by the Prussian King Frederick II and the limited production concentrated on small groups and the King's commissions for tableware. Subsequently, the manufactory produced works in the Rococo and, later, in the Neoclassical styles. The Sydney bust could be a candidate for this alternative dating but its considerable firing cracks indicate a production date no later than about 1750, by which time such notable faults in significant pieces had been overcome.

Many facts about the two emigrant busts remain obscure. The preserved documents leave us with hypotheses only. The inventory from 1779 lists two Schmiedel busts held in the Dresden Collection. The first printed guide-book of 1834 mentions only one.⁵² If the guide-book included all the objects from the Collection, then we could suppose that by 1834 one piece had been sold or given away. We can speculate that the bust from Detroit was the vanished work, and that it left Dresden accompanied by a Fröhlich bust (fig. 3). In 1872, such a pair was recorded in Paris when they were auctioned at the Hôtel Drouot.⁵³ Then, in 1873, as the property of Sir William Drake, these busts appeared in London, displayed at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. Later, they entered the Siegfried Kramarsky collection in New York, and as such were exhibited in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, in 1926.⁵⁴ Finally,

in 1959, they reached the Detroit Institute of Arts, through the Ford Collection.⁵⁵

The fact that one of the three surviving busts was not listed in 1779 could indicate that either it had left the collection by this time (during the Silesian Wars a number of pieces were given away or stolen) or that not being listed in the records, it parted from the collection some time later. The lack of full inventories from 1770 to about 1970 leaves the matter without clear resolution. If we assume that the above reconstructed story of the Detroit bust is correct, the unrecorded work must have been the bust now held in Sydney.

The whereabouts of the Sydney bust before it appeared in Australia are not known. It could have reached Australian shores in the 19th century, or early this century, among the family possessions of wealthy European immigrants — as many European art objects did. Neither its Australian provenance nor its Meissen origin were known to the Sydney auction house, Colman-Page, when in 1950 it offered the unmarked bust for sale. «It was dirty and covered in clay, it looked as if it had been long stored in a backyard» recalls Sydney antique dealer, William Bradshaw, who purchased the porcelain sculpture and revealed its identity. Thus a rare work of considerable importance, both as a document of a colourful epoch and an artistic statement of a leading Meissen modeller, entered an Australian collection.

Since early 1988, the Schmiedel bust has been exhibited in Sydney's new *Powerhouse* — the redevelopment of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Footnotes

¹ H.H.G. McKern, «Decorative Arts in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney» in: *The Australasian Antique Collector*, no. 14, 1973, p. 92; Terry Ingram, «A Market Uplift for the Famous Bradshaw Bust» in: *Australian Financial Review*, 16.2.1978, p. 10; also: *A Question of Polish*, Sydney, 1979, p. 35.

² For attribution of the Fröhlich bust see: Rainer Rückert, «Der Hofnarr Joseph Fröhlich, Porträts und Lebenslauf eines Dresdener Spassmachers» in: *Kunst und Antiquitäten*, no. 5, 1980, pp. 42, 44, 54.

³ Small pieces in Böttger porcelain began to be sold in 1713; the improvements of paste in 1717 and 1720 respectively, as well as the painted decoration by Johann Gregorius Höroldt, contributed to the growing popularity of Meissen products.

⁴ The Dutch Palace was originally built for Jacob Heinrich, Count von Flemming, by Pöppelmann in 1715.

⁵ This centrepiece (form no. 107), modelled in 1737, is said to have been commissioned by Count Brühl as a consequence of his tailor's request to appear at the royal table.

⁶ The phenomenon of reciprocity of king and jester has been examined in Erica Tietze-Conrat's *Dwarfs and Jester in Art*, London 1957.

⁷ Dr. Schfr., «Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Biographik des sächsischen Hofnarrenthums» in: *Der Sammler für Geschichte und Alterthum, für Kunst und Natur im Elbthale II*, 1837, p. 487. I am grateful to Dr Walter May for bringing this reference to my attention.

⁸ Carl Friedrich Flögel, *Geschichte der Hofnarren, Liegnitz, Leipzig: 1789*, p. 293 (courtesy of the Warsaw University Library).

⁹ Dr. Schfr., *op. cit.*, p. 482.

¹⁰ R. Rückert, *op. cit.* no. 5., 1980, p. 66.

¹¹ Earl of Ilchester and Elizabeth Langford-Brooke, *The Life of Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, Poet, Wit and Diplomatist*, London: 1928, p. 148.

¹² C.F. Flögel, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

¹³ R. Rückert, *op. cit.*, no. 1, 1981, p. 66, also no. 6, 1980, fig. 27.

¹⁴ Yvonne Hackenbroth, *Meissen and Other Continental Porcelain, Faience and Enamel in the Irvin Untermyer Collection*, London: 1956, pp. 117, 118, fig. 104.

¹⁵ Feature pointed out by C.F. Flögel, *loc. cit.*, hence repeated by later authors.

¹⁶ R. Rückert, *op. cit.*, no. 5, 1980, p. 44.

¹⁷ Dr. Schfr., *op. cit.*, p. 482.

¹⁸ See the chronicles by G. & H. Schutz, p. 314, and by H. Gutbier, both held in Bad Langensalza archives (Rat des Kreises).

¹⁹ Carl Willnau, (Carl Wilhelm Nauman), *Ein Schelm, der's gut meint. Des Hofnarren Fröhlich ergötzlicher Lebensroman*, Leipzig: 1942, p. 168 f.

²⁰ C. Willnau, «Joseph Fröhlich, Hofnarr Augusts des Starken, der Erbauer des Narrenhausels in Dresden» in: *Landsverein sächsischer Heimatschutz, Mitteilungen*, 29, 1/4, Dresden, 1940, cf R. Rückert, *op. cit.*, no. 6, 1980, p. 58.

²¹ C.F. Flögel, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

²² John Doran, *History of Court Fools*, London, 1858, p. 343.

²³ Held in the Porcelain Collection, Dresden, no. inv. PE2925; the dating provided here is based on the fact that the scene includes von Kyau, who died in 1733, and Schmiedel who left the court early the same year.

²⁴ R. Rückert, *op. cit.*, no. 5, 1980, p. 44.

²⁵ C. Willnau, 1942, *op. cit.* p. 232, also *ibid.*

²⁶ Johann Georg Theodor Graesse, «Über die in der Königl. Kunstsammlungen zu Dresden vorhandenen Andenken an den Hofnarren Joseph Fröhlich» in: *Zeitschrift für Museologie und Antiquitätenkunde sowie verwandte Wissenschaften*, vol. 1, 1878, p. 12.

²⁷ Enid Welsford, *The Fool*, London: 1935, p. 190.

²⁸ Otto Walcha, «Fröhlich und Schmiedel im Meissner Porzellan», *Keramos*, no. 32, 1966, p. 35.

²⁹ Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Pamiętniki czyli Historia Polska*, Warsaw: 1971, p. 114.

³⁰ *Idib*, p. 117.

³¹ Jean Louis Sponsel, «Kabinettstücke der Meissner Porzellanmanufaktur von Johann Joachim Kändler», Leipzig: 1900, p. 76.

³² Kändler's work report, vol. IAB 12, p. 97, pt 4 (Meissen manufactory archives); cf O. Walcha, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

³³ C.F. Flögel, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

³⁴ See J. Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III*, Warsaw: 1985, p. 198.

³⁵ This was one of five coronation medals of Augustus III, see Edward Ryczyński, *Gabinet Medalów Polskich* oraz tych które się, dziejów Polski tyca, Poznań: 1841, p. 196—198.

³⁶ The shield depicts the arms of Poland and Lithuania (the Polish eagles and the equestrian Knights of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania), and Saxony (the Electoral crossed swords in a shield of pretence and the arms of the Duchy of Saxony surmounted by an ermine-trimmed Electoral cap) both set below a Royal crown.

³⁷ J.G. Graesse, *loc. cit.*

³⁸ C. Willnau, 1942, *op. cit.*, p. 275f.

³⁹ Arnold van Westerhout, *Caricature pittoresque di diverse attitudini di varie figure*; Rome: 1687; illustrations reproduced in: Karl Storck, *Musik und Musiker in Karikatur und Satire*, Oldenburg, Berlin: 1910, p. 235—236, figs no 227 and 226.

⁴⁰ Kändler was a pupil of a Dresden court sculptor Benjamin Thoma (1682—1751) who, in turn, had trained under Balthasar Permoser (1651—1732).

⁴¹ See Helmut Gröger, Johann Joachim Kaendler, Der Meister des Porzellans, Dresden: 1956, pp. 102—129.

⁴² O. Walcha, *op. cit.*, p. 38; cf Ernst Zimmermann, Meissner Porzellan, Leipzig: 1926, p. 150.

⁴³ O. Walcha, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ C. Willnau, 1942, *op. cit.*, p. 278—80.

⁴⁵ O. Walcha, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁶ R. Rückert, *op. cit.*, no. 5, 1980, p. 47.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ O. Walcha, *op. cit.*, p. 40; illustrated in: Karl Berling, Das Meissner Porzellan und seine Geschichte, Leipzig: 1900, p. 42, fig. 30.

⁴⁹ The bust in Detroit has a Johanneum number: N420.

⁵⁰ I am grateful to Mr H. Brandes of the VEB Staatliche Porzellanmanufaktur Meissen for this information.

⁵¹ Meissen factory displays a contemporary cast of the Schmiedel bust which represents the version held in the Dresden collection.

⁵² I am indebted to Dr F. Reichel of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden for this information.

⁵³ R. Rückert, *op. cit.*, no. 5, 1980, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Tentoonstelling van Oude Kunst, exhibition catalogue, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: 1926, p. 129, fig. 662.

⁵⁵ Paul L. Grigaut, «Two Court Jesters in Meissen Porcelain», in: Detroit Institute of Arts Bulletin, vol. 40, no. 1, 1960—61, p. 8.

Johann Jacob Wolrab's engravings of characters from the *Commedia dell'Arte*, Nuremberg, c. 1720

T. H. Clarke

In July 1960 Arthur Lane published in *Mitteilungsblatt* No. 51 of the KFS an important article on «The engraved sources of Feilner's Höchst and Fürstenberg Comedians». He had recently discovered in the library of the Victoria and Albert Museum a set of twelve figures of Italian comedians: engravings evidently of the early 18th century, each figure carefully cut in outline away from its background and pasted in pairs onto lined sheets of 19th century paper. These came from a collection which the V&A had acquired in 1910. Arthur Lane rightly concluded that these fragmentary prints formed the graphic source for the two outstanding mid-eighteenth century series of German porcelain figures made first at Höchst in the early 1750's and a little later, from 1752—53, at Fürstenberg. Two, or possibly three of the scissor-cut prints were missing.¹

To discover the whole set of prints, complete with the

name of the artist and/or engraver, the publisher and the precise identification of the *Commedia* characters has been the ambition of numerous ceramic researchers. The first to refer to a part set, together with the name of the publisher, was Baron Ludwig Döry, in a note to an article on the sources of Andreas Pirot's designs for his tapestry atelier in Würzburg;² but Döry did not exploit this discovery, nor did he give his source. Now fourteen prints have been discovered together with their backgrounds, by two quite different sources; and yet this knowledge is confined to only a very few ceramic historians.

The first to publish the set of fourteen prints was the late Günther Hansen in his remarkable book, *Formen der Commedia dell'Arte in Deutschland*; this was in 1984.³ But Dr. den Blaauwen had also been in possession of a set of fourteen such prints since 1961⁴, and the author of this