



Diploma Lecture Series 2012
Absolutism to enlightenment: European art and culture 1665-1765



Meissen porcelain: the origins of 'white gold' in Europe

Mark de Vitis

2 / 3 May 2012

Lecture summary:

Hard-paste porcelain was produced in Europe for the first time in the early eighteenth century. As porcelain objects were highly coveted in the period, the ability to manufacture true hard-paste porcelain came with significant economic and political advantages. Augustus the Strong, the Prince-Elector of Saxony and the patron of the project to produce hard-paste porcelain, harnessed its powers to drive his ambitions for status and authority. Perceptions of and responses to the porcelain medium are even today coloured by his influence. Augustus established a royal manufactory, in the town of Meissen, near Dresden in Saxony, which played a central role in determining the importance and meaning of porcelain in the eighteenth century. The lecture today will focus on the early history of the Meissen manufactory and the significance of the objects it produced.

Slide list:

1. Louis de Silvestre, *Augustus, Elector of Saxony*, c.1700, oil on canvas
2. *Japanese Palace* (Japanisches Palais), built 1715 and extended in 1729-31 (Pöppelmann, de Bodt, Longuelune and Knöffel), Dresden, Germany
3. *Schloss Mortizburg*, built between 1542 and 1546, and remodeled in the 17th (Wolf Caspar von Klengel) and 18th centuries (Pöppelmann and Longuelune), Dresden, Germany
4. Pöppelmann, *Zwinger*, built between 1710-1728, destroyed 13–15 February 1945 during the bombing of Dresden and re-built 1964, Dresden, Germany
- * 5. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Lion*, ca. 1732, hard-paste porcelain
6. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Parrot*, 1730s, hard-paste porcelain
7. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Lioness*, 1730s, hard-paste porcelain
8. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Eagle*, 1730s, hard-paste porcelain
9. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Macaw*, 1730s, hard-paste porcelain
10. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *King Vulture*, 1730s, hard-paste porcelain

Proudly sponsored by



11. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Vulture*, 1730s, hard-paste porcelain
12. Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Monkey*, 1730s, hard-paste porcelain
- * 13. Anon., *Charger with Duck*, c. 1745, hard-paste porcelain
14. Anon., *Coffeepot*, Meissen, ca. 1740. hard-paste porcelain, 22 cm
15. Johann Joachim Kändler, *Commedia dell'arte figures*, ca. 1740, hard-paste porcelain, aprox.15cm
- * 16. Johann Joachim Kändler, *Bowing Harlequin*, ca. 1740, hard-paste porcelain, 15.2 cm
17. Anon., *Figure of Pantaloon*, Meissen, ca. 1710-12, Stoneware, partially polished, H. 20.6 cm
18. Gottlob Siegmund Birckner (decorator), *Cup*, 1745-47, hard-paste porcelain, 7.5 cm
- * 19. Johann Gregor Höroldt (decorator), Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (moldeler) *Meissen Cup, Standing, with Cover and Stand* (pokal), hard-paste porcelain, 39.4 x 15.9 cm

Reference:

- Röntgen, Robert E., *The book of Meissen*, 2nd ed., Atglen, Pa., 1996.
- Richards, Sarah, *Eighteenth-century ceramics: products for a civilised society*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999.
- *Fragile diplomacy: Meissen porcelain for European courts ca. 1710-63*, ed. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.



Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (modeler), *Lion*, ca. 1732, hard-paste porcelain



Anon., *Charger with Duck*, c. 1745, hard-paste porcelain



Johann Joachim Kändler, *Bowing Harlequin*, ca. 1740, hard-paste porcelain, 15.2 cm



Johann Gregor Höroldt (decorator), Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (moldeler) *Meissen Cup, Standing, with Cover and Stand* (pokal), hard-paste porcelain, 39.4 x 15.9 cm



5



13



16



19