

# The length of J.G. Herold's career as an artist, and other notes

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## The length of J.G. Herold's career as an artist, and other notes

By William W. Blackburn, New York City

(Fig. 37—46)

### I. Introduction

The general operation of the Meissen factory was much improved just after Boettger's death in 1719 by W. H. Nehmitz and Steinbruck. As Honey (1946) says, the reorganization was so successful that in October 1719 more porcelain was sold than in the preceding nine months. Still, though the porcelain was improved, the painting was not really artistic or worthy of the medium. The impermanent enamels of Boettger's time were improved, but were still not so bright or interesting as faience painting of that time and certainly did not compare with the Kang H'si colors. Johann Gregor Herold's coming in 1720 simultaneous with the perfection of an underglaze blue seems to have added to the rejuvenation. Herold's highly successful new colors soon appeared and ushered in the peak of the factory, so far as artistic versus plastic production is concerned.

### II. Sources of Herold's designs

While Herold's greatest contribution was his eminently successful adaption to porcelain decoration of the chinoiserie vogue then raging in many other forms of art, he also painted some excellent genre scenes during the early 1720's. Examples of these are the tankard shown as Abb. 1 in Schoenberger, the cup and saucer Abb. 29 in Pazaurek (1929), a similar cup and saucer in the Wark collection, and the Glassewald cup, Abb. 24 in Pazaurek (1925). The origins of these designs are not known, but the motifs could probably be found in contemporary genre painting.

The style of chinoiserie designs that Herold introduced into Meissen painting are well known, of course. The unfailingly happy, fairy-like visions of Chinese life he did so much to elaborate in his designs represent to me the exuberant height of Meissen decoration. His vivid imagination and gift of invention are justly appreciated.

However, we must not go too far in considering Herold as the actual inventor of this never-never land of design. Schulz (1922, 1928) has documented in detail the extent to which Herold relied on Augsburg etchings of Engelbrecht and others for the designs in his factory sketch book.

Saucer fig. 40 in the present article, from the author's collection, is an example of a design that apparently originated with Engelbrecht (or was perhaps copied even by him from an earlier lacquer design) and which was used by Herold in his Meissen sketch book. The original Engelbrecht sketch of «Kiakouli» is shown as Abb. 5 in Schulz (1928), the Herold sketch as Abb. 10, and a tankard with this scene as Abb. 9. Another tankard with this scene is in the Wark collection (fig. 23). Abb. 105 and 106 of Schulz (1922) show early saucers with a single woman in each, which are executed from Herold's sketch Abb. 103. This sketch in turn had been copied from an Engelbrecht print, shown as Abb. 32 in Schulz (1928).

We do not presently have many such instances where we can trace a design on porcelain back to a Herold sketch and then trace the sketch back to another source. Schulz (1922), however, said he had 105 pages of Herold sketches of chinoiseries plus 9 sketches of (presumably) genre scenes. Schulz' various articles have reproduced only about 10 of these 105 sketches. Of these 10 sketches, at least three show elements borrowed from earlier Engelbrecht prints. We can only speculate what the remaining hundred or so sketches contain, but it seems safe to assume that they too contain many ideas from Engelbrecht, Nieuhoff, and others.

Let me add here, in defense of Herold's artistic ability, that there is a world of difference between getting an idea for a subject or composition from a certain source and the translation of that idea into a finished painting on porcelain. There can be no question of the charm and skillfulness

of Herold's work on porcelain. Cup fig. 38 in the present article, from the author's collection, shows Herold's painting at his careful best, even though the idea is probably taken from Nieuhoff's «Embassy to the Grand Tartar Cham», published in 1669.

### *III. How can one identify the painting of J. G. Herold?*

It is not very realistic to expect a formula for the identification of a painter or of an art object. One very good way is to become so familiar with genuine samples of the artist's work that one has an instantaneous «Yes or No» impression when seeing a new specimen. This «Gestalt» approach is fine for someone who has the opportunity to see many J. G. Herold pieces, for example, but is difficult to communicate to newer collectors.

In seeking to identify J. G. Herold's hand, it is assumed that some painters can be separated out and identified by their own styles: Horn, with his somber colors; Ehrenfried Stadler with his grotesque proportions and stylized faces; Loewenfinck, who used black for outlining figures rather than red, and many of whose figures have jutting lower jaws. The most difficult artist that must be distinguished is Christian F. Herold, who was apparently painting only harbor scenes (often with Chinese figures) around 1725, but who painted chinoiserie and both Chinese and European harbor scenes from about 1730. Examples of C. F. Herold's painting about 1725 are: Plate 22a of Honey (1946); Abb. 20 and 21 of Schoenberger. C. F. Herold's work of 1730 or later: Plate 22b of Honey (1946); the Clement August Service of 1735. Signed pieces are: Abb. 122 Pazaurek (1925) and Abb. 66 Pazaurek (1929). (Note: the teapot Plate 22a of Honey mentioned above is really 1725—1726 rather than 1730—1735 as dated by Honey. Several other pieces from the same service bear careful enamel swords overglaze; the cartouche borders have Boettger-lustre).

There is no real substitute for comparing the production of an unknown painter with a known Herold piece, but perhaps some of the following signs may be helpful. These signs often occur in signed Herold sketches and on Herold porcelain painting. They are not in every painting, of course. The signs are listed in descending order of validity, that is from the ones that occur almost exclusively in Herold painting down to those that are occasionally duplicated by other painters.

1. Birds flying in the air with their legs hanging down as if they were about to land, and with talons or claws indicated at several places on the leg rather than at the end of the leg only. This is unrealistic drawing and was perhaps not copied by other artists for that reason. Illustrations 42, 43 and 46 of this article, and even more clearly in signed Herold drawings Abb. 109, 112, 113 in Schulz (1922), or Abb. 163 and 202 of Hoffman.

2. A dog, usually with bushy tail and often shown in action with the forefeet off the ground and the back arched. Illustration 45 of this article, Abb. 113 Schulz (1922), Abb. 12 Schoenberger.

3. Women, especially in earlier painting, often have Roman noses (that is, noses going straight down from the forehead with no indentation). Illustration 42; Abb. 1 and 3 Schoenberger; Abb. 6, 29, 30 Pazaurek (1929).

4. One hand is often extended palm out as if offering something, Illustrations 38, 40, 46; Abb. 112 Schulz (1922); Abb. 27 Schmidt (1932).

5. Faces are not stylized, but are always full of expression, with eyes directed somewhere; the proportions are life-like and realistic.

6. Hands are well drawn and proportioned; in some of the less carefully executed work the hands tend to be slightly exaggerated in length, but still good. Abb. 29 Pazaurek (1929).

7. The hair of the Chinese women is often long enough so that the bottom ends of the hair are gathered into clubbed braids or pigtailed which lie flat along their necks or shoulders. This can be seen in Illustration 46, but is especially clear in Abb. 5 Schoenberger; Abb. 109 Schulz (1922).

### *IV. How long was Herold's career as a painter?*

We know, of course, that Herold had been doing some porcelain decorating at Du Paquier's factory before he came to Meissen in 1720, and we know he was active in factory administration for at least 30 years after that. How long did he continue active as a painter? On the evidence of presently known pieces, it would appear he painted rarely if ever after 1732—1735.

At first it is a little puzzling to think that Herold seldom exercised his artistic talent for the last 40 years of his life. However, it is not so mysterious when one remembers two facts: first, that Herold was the manager of a business with 170 painters and employees by 1734, and second that Herold did not apparently have the insatiable urge to paint that has possessed artists of really authentic genius.

Actually, being a factory manager would have slowed down the output of even such a prolific painter as van Gogh (and it's quite doubtful whether he could have handled the job of factory manager). Since the factory was undoubtedly operating the then customary 12—14 hours per day, six days per week, there could have been precious little time or energy left at the end of a day for artistic efforts at home. Presumably Herold was making enough money so that his home life was comfortable, but probably even in those days wives felt they had some rights, so there must have been other demands on his time.

To my knowledge, the earliest specimens of decoration that we can reasonably ascribe to Herold date from 1721—

1722. Probably the cup with underglaze bleu fouetté ground shown in Illustration 38 dates from this period. Three other cups and saucers of this set are known: one in the Kocher collection of the Bern Museum and two in the collection of our fellow member Mr. Wark (fig. 25). These pieces, early though they are, represent a style and technique already highly developed. The painting is of miniature fineness.

There seems to be surprisingly little work which we can attribute to Herold from his first year or so at the factory, in spite of the fact that his painting must have been maturing rapidly. He was, after all, recognized as a painter by being appointed Hofmaler in 1723. Surely there must be pieces which show how his style was developing during the first year at the factory, though their whereabouts are presently unknown (to me, at any rate).

Pieces by other hands of the period about 1720 are rare, but do exist. The pieces decorated with enamel colors show the pale, unimproved colors of Boettger's palette. A very interesting transition bowl of this period was in the Eckstein collection and is now in the collection of Sir Joseph Evill in London. It shows on each side two Callot dwarfs dancing; the decoration is simple and the colors are very pale. A predominant hue is a very light rose purple, which shade incidentally still appears in the backgrounds of the bleu fouetté pieces such as Illustration 38 and in the two saucers Illustrations 39 and 40. Some underglaze blue pieces with pseudo Chinese marks may date from this year, and probably some of the gold chinoiserie. While Herold probably painted some gold chinoiserie pieces, none of them would appear to be so early as 1720. He probably did not decorate in underglaze blue at all.

Saucers 39 and 40 illustrated here probably date from about 1723. They are notable in having black sky rather than the grey blue of genre scenes of this period or the clearer blue of the sky in the many beautiful Herold tankards of 1724—1726. Grey sky examples are Abb. 2 and 6 Schoenberger; blue sky: Abb. 1 and 20 Schoenberger; Eckstein No. 147; Abb. 5 and 6 Pazaurek (1929).

The years 1732—1735 seem to mark the end of Herold's career as an active painter, since there appear to be no examples of decoration ascribable to him of a later date. An example of Herold decoration of this later period is the plate in illustration 45 of this article. It is obviously a presentation piece because of the extreme delicacy of the work. It is interesting further in that part of the decoration is by Christian F. Herold (the harbor scenes in cartouches) while the larger Chinese figures have all the earmarks of J. G. Herold. The decoration can probably be dated to 1730—1735 because of the black outlines around parts of the gold bandelwerk and because of the purple harbor scenes (the 3 center cartouches). The companion piece to

this plate is No. 166 in Brüning, from the von Dallwitz collection. These plates can profitably be contrasted with numbers 183 and 184 of Fischer catalogue (1906), which are decorated entirely by C. F. Herold.

Plate 46 illustrated here is of the same period and is probably, but less certainly, by J. G. Herold. It also has black outlines around the gold arabesques and is of miniature painting quality. The scene, by the way, is a copy of a Herold sketch shown in Abb. 106 Schulz (1922). An armorial tankard, Eckstein No. 145, with similar black outlines on the gold arabesques probably dates to about 1730—1735, as does tankard No. 599 of the Goldschmidt-Rothschild catalogue.

#### V. Comments on the Herold pieces illustrated in this article and others

Illust. 37. Handleless cup  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches high, one of four formerly in the Goldblatt collection (Sotheby's May 1956) (fig. 17). The bands around top and bottom are in light purple, but the other colors are the familiar bright iron-red and the early Herold palette. This armorial decoration is rare and was undoubtedly made for a presentation. As such, it was likely to be painted by Herold himself, and does in fact have many of the signs referred to in section III above. There are several birds with their feet hanging down while still in flight; on another cup of the set is a typical Herold dog with bushy tail. The idea for the design of the cup illustrated here is very similar to that of the tankard shown as the frontpiece in Honey's book *Dresden China*. No mark. About 1723—1724.

Illust. 38. A chocolate cup 3 inches high (saucer not shown). Underglaze bleu fouetté ground, with panels outlined in gold and iron red. This cup and saucer is one of four, others belonging to Mr. Wark (fig. 25) and to the Kocher collection in the Bern Museum. They all show full-length portraits of a single Oriental figure, painted with miniature painting care. The clouds in the background are light blue with pink sunset edgings in some cases. The colors in the figures are iron red and other early Herold palette colors, while the hills in the background have some light rose purple of the Boettger period. The source of the designs is not known, although the figure pictured in Illust. 38 is very reminiscent of the «Ambassadors of the Zutadsen» of Nieuhoff's «Embassy to the Grand Tartar Cham» 1669. One of the saucers in the set shows a typical dog in action. These pieces are considered by Mr. Wark and myself to be as early as 1721—1722 because of the experimental nature of the underglaze blue ground. No mark. About 1721—1722.

Illust. 39. A saucer showing a Chinese man holding up an animal or a skin in both his right and left hands. The figure is like the middle figure in the Herold sketch Abb.

104 of Schulz (1922), probably suggested in turn by an earlier Engelbrecht sketch. Illust. 40 shows another saucer with part of the scene «Kiakouli in villa sua» by Engelbrecht, Abb. 5 Schulz (1928), which was the basis for Herold's own sketch Abb. 10 Schulz (1928) and which has appeared on more than one tankard of about 1725. No marks. Saucers both have three red circles on the underside. About 1723—1724.

Illust. 41. This is a konfektdose of the type illustrated by Schoenberger Abb. 2 (and fig. 68 in this periodical). The plate (not shown) has similar landscape decoration with a river scene in the background. This particular genre decoration is not uncommon; Mr. Wark has a similar piece; the Linsky collection in New York has a pair; a bowl, teapot and coffepot with the same style of decoration form lot No. 797 of the Margarete Oppenheim collection catalogue.

The reason this konfektdose is included in this article is that in some ways all the above genre scene pieces resemble the Herold genre tankard Abb. 1 of Schoenberger (and fig. 68). The tankard, with its full size figures in the foreground, is certainly a Herold piece. The resemblances between the tankard and the other genre pieces mentioned above are; (a) the trees and leaves are constructed and colored in the same way; green leaves are painted over and among brown ones, as if the tree had some dead leaves along with live ones.; (b) the distant landscape at the horizon is filled in with considerable detail (as in most early Herold pieces such as 37, 38, 40, 42 of this article) and is usually tinted with the Boettger rose purple color.

The difference between the Schoenberger genre tankard and the other genre scenes such as illust. 42 of this article are (a) that the genre tankard and other known Herold pieces contain large scale human figures in the foreground, while the other genre type always have very small and somewhat awkward figures in the background; (b) the clouds of the genre pieces have the same colors and touches of pink as do the known Herold pieces, but often the clouds seem to lie in horizontal layers, whereas those in Herold pieces do not.

What these contradictory bits of evidence add up to, I am unable to say. It might seem that these genre pieces with figures only in the background could be early efforts by C. F. Herold, except that he apparently did not come to the factory before 1725—1726 (Pazaurek 1929), and the examples in question are definitely earlier. Another possibility is that these were painted by J. G. Mehlhorn the younger, who worked at Meissen at least for a while after 1720. Pazaurek (1925) shows two pieces possibly by Mehlhorn as Abb. 239 and 240. The leaves on the trees and the small figures in the background are very much like the decoration on the konfektdose Illust. 41 of this article. In addition, the underside of the saucer of this konfektdose has

rather thick jagged thorny branches similar to those of the Mehlhorn in Abb. 239 and 240 of Pazaurek. Illustration 41 the konfektdose has no mark. About 1722—1723.

Illust. 42. A basin to a fountain modelled by Kirchner. The decoration is by J. G. Herold. Aside from the large center cartouche, there are 13 smaller cartouches scattered over the surface. Note the bird in the center scene with feet hanging down as if landing. The sky still has light blue clouds, and the background horizon is carefully detailed. Mark: large swords. About 1727.

Illust. 43. A pea green ground AR vase with chinoiserie decoration in panels, done by J. G. Herold. This vase is probably a companion piece to the Turkish green ground vase shown as Abb. 17 of Schoenberger. Note there is now no sky and no background; the figures are in silhouette. Note also the typical bird in the sky flying with feet down. Mark: AR. About 1730.

Illust. 45. An elaborately decorated presentation plate with the large figures by J. G. Herold and the scenes in cartouches by C. F. Herold. (See section IV above for description and comments.) Mark: large swords. About 1730—1735; probably one of J. G. Herold's latest factory pieces.

Illust. 46. Another carefully done presentation plate, probably by J. G. Herold. The scene is copied from a Herold sketch and had been repeated earlier (1725) on a tankard. (See section IV above for further comments.) Mark: swords. About 1732—1735.

Illust. 44. A polished Boettgerstein tankard with Boettgerstein lid, decorated with very carefully done gold chinoiseries. This tankard is of an unusually light orange shade. It was evidently considered at the time to be of the same class of importance as the two black ground vases of the Untermyer Collection (1956) and the very dark brown glazed cup and saucer shown by Pazaurek (1927). This latter piece was No. 69 in the F. and M. Oppenheimer Collection and is now at the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam. The vases, cup and saucer, and the tankard in this article were all decorated by the same hand. Another important piece with gold chinoiserie decoration by the same hand is the 30 cm. porcelain lantern, after a pierced Kang H'si type, shown as No. 62 in the F. and M. Oppenheimer Collection. No. 36 in the same collection is another polished Boettgerstein tankard with silver cover, possibly decorated by the same artist, but in a somewhat less elaborate fashion.

Some of the figures on the tankard shown here as Illust. 44, especially the figures of a dog and of a woman with a tall pointed hat and fan in one hand and a basket in the other, are repeated on the black Untermyer vases and on all the other pieces mentioned, except the lantern (at least on the two sides shown in the catalogue photograph).

Was the artist J. G. Herold? Schnorr von Carolsfeld believed he was, as he says in the introduction to the Oppen-

heimer catalogue. Miss Yvonne Hackenbroch says the same thing in her introduction to the Untermeyer Collection catalogue. Certainly all the pieces are of a quality that deserves the finest artistic decoration. After all, there are only three known black ground vases, and only two lanterns (one of them colored and both in the Johanneum). It seems logical that Meissens's best man would be called on.

There are some things to note, however. These pieces were not decorated 1720—1725, but probably much nearer 1730, even the Boettgerstein ones. The Untermeyer black vases are marked AR, the saucer with brown glaze has knaufschwerter. The lantern is unmarked. These were not things done during the hiatus before Herold developed satisfactory enamel colors and before there were more than two or three painters in the factory. Second, the drawing is not especially like other known Herold work, although it is possible that the technique of working with gold and scratching it out to make decoration on the gold demands a different style.

The source of the designs is not immediately obvious, though at least one figure can be traced to a Herold sketch. The man kneeling in Illust. 44 with one hand holding a plate and the other stretched over it apparently comes from the Herold drawing Abb. 108 Schulz (1922). The same figure appears on most of the other gold chinoiserie pieces mentioned here.

There is one other very interesting gold chinoiserie piece that seems to shed additional light on the question of whether Herold actually painted any gold. This is the kapuziner-brown glazed tankard No. 581 of the Goldschmidt-Rothschild collection. This tankard has gold chinoiserie figures on it, one of whom is holding a piece of cloth which bears the words: «Christian Friedrich Höroldt Meissen d 8 April 1732.» The figures on this tankard are much more relaxed and realistic than those on the pieces mentioned in the paragraphs above. The robes of the men are drawn with quite realistic wrinkles, which is not true of the Boettgerstein tankard in Illust. 44. The photograph in the catalogue does not reveal any signs such as a bird with feet hanging down, which could be considered typically Herold, but altogether one has the impression that the artist here was actually J. G. Herold, who painted the piece as a presentation gift to C. F. Herold.

*Note:* Since the main body of the article was written, the author has examined the recent book *Meissner Porzellan 1710—1750*, published in Dresden, 1957. Illustration 36 shows a vase painted and signed on the bottom by J. G. Herold, 17 Augusti, 1726. It shows a scene from his sketch book on one side and flowers on the other. The scenes are in panels reserved from a powder underglaze blue ground.

The significant thing here is that the vase has gold decoration on the top of the blue ground of exactly the same

type as the tankard from Goldschmidt-Rothschild described immediately above. It is possible, of course, that someone else did the gold decoration, but it does not seem likely that anyone else would have painted anything significant on a piece actually signed by J. G. Herold. It seems doubtful, therefore, that the gold chinoiserie on the tankard illustrated here (fig. 44) or the Untermeyer black vases are actually by J. G. Herold.

#### VI. Conclusion

Although I have perhaps tied together in this article a few loose ends concerning the origin of Herold designs and the span of his factory painting career, this is only a beginning. Things that need to be explored further are:

1. The location and publication of the remaining Herold sketches from the G. W. Schulz collection.
2. Positive identification of Herold's work at the beginning of his career at the Meissen factory, that is, location of products of his of 1720—1721.
3. Identification of Herold productions of 1735 or later.
4. Finding some additional biographical material on Herold that would help explain him further as a person, especially why he apparently stopped painting around 1735.

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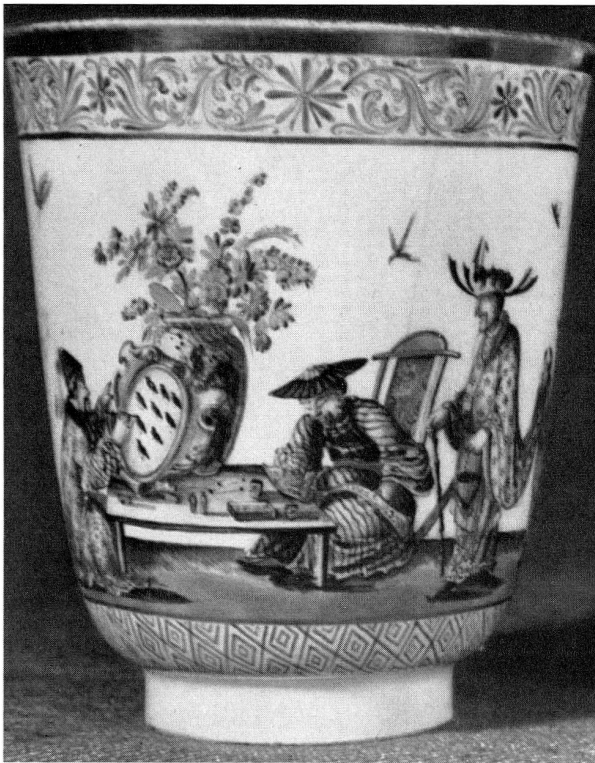


Fig. 37 Handleless cup with a combination of chinoiserie and armorial design painted by J. G. Herold. No mark. Meissen about 1723—1724. Slg. W. W. Blackburn.



Fig. 38 Chocolate cup with chinoiserie panels by J. G. Herold, set in an underglaze blue fougite ground. No mark. Meissen 1721—1722. Slg. W. W. Blackburn.



Fig. 39 and 40 Saucers with chinoiserie figures; sky has black clouds. Both painted by J. G. Herold after recorded J. G. Herold sketches. No mark. Meissen about 1725. Slg. W. W. Blackburn.



Fig. 41 Konfektose with landscape decoration, possibly decorated by J.G. Herold, but more probably by J.G. Mehlhorn. No mark. Meissen about 1722-23. Slg. W.W. Blackburn.



Fig. 42 Basin to a Kirchner fountain. Decorated with chinoiserie by J.G. Herold. Mark: careful swords. Meissen about 1727. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





Fig. 43 Vase with green ground and chinoiserie panels painted by J.G. Herold. Mark: AR. Meissen about 1730. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 44 Böttgerstein tankard decorated with gold chinoiseries both on the body of the tankard and on the Böttgerstein lid. No mark. Meissen about 1725-30. Slg. W. W. Blackburn



Fig. 45 Plate with chinoiserie figures by J. G. Herold and with harbor scenes both in color and in purple monochrome by Christian F. Herold. Mark: large swords. Meissen about 1730-35. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Fig. 46 Plate with chinoiserie after a Herold design; possibly painted by J. G. Herold. Mark: swords. Meissen about 1732-35. Slg. W. W. Blackburn