In 1720 Johann Gregor Herold, or Höroldt, a native of the Saxon university town of Jena, reputedly trained as a miniature painter and enameler on copper, was working as a porcelain enameler at the Du Paquier factory in the imperial city of Vienna. He was invited by Samuel Stölzel, a runaway workman from the Meissen factory, to return to Saxony with him. Stölzel was lucky to escape punishment at Meissen, for his unauthorized departure the year before, taking with him some of the jealously guarded secrets that made Meissen the only true European porcelain, was a grave misdeed. Even more grave was his part in establishing the rival Du Paquier factory. Augustus the Strong’s well-known porcelain mania undoubtedly saved him, for the Elector, having inspected samples painted by his protégé Herold, reinstated Stölzel, and with characteristic impetuosity appointed Herold to take charge of the decorating atelier at the Meissen works. Herold was then twenty-three.

Although the achievements of Johann Friedrich Böttger, the factory’s first director, had been prodigious, at his death in 1719 the affairs of the factory were left in considerable disorder. The commission thereupon appointed by the Elector to undertake the reorganization and reform of the factory acted to good effect: putting its financial affairs on a sound basis, dismissing incompetent workmen and corrupt officials, and providing for the regular payment of the workers. In addition, a new kiln—consistently refused to Böttger—was constructed, improvements were made in the porcelain paste, a new pale brown glaze like the Chinese “dead leaf” glaze was perfected, and some modifications were brought to the enamel colors. A trained artist such as Herold, accustomed to working with enamels, was the very thing the Elector needed at this point to complete his scheme of reorganization, and to realize his plans for furnishing his palaces with replicas of the Oriental vases he had been collecting for some years.

It was what Augustus had seen abroad that inspired him with a desire to create an equal brilliance at home. Two years of travel between the impressionable ages of fifteen and seventeen had acquainted him with the courts of Vienna, Lisbon, Madrid, and, above all, Versailles, where he had been the guest of Louis XIV, and where the huge display of Oriental porcelain could not have failed to impress him. He was then a prince without responsibilities, a younger son famous only for his numerous love affairs and uncommon physical strength. But in 1694 Augustus had acceded to the Electorship of Saxony on the death of his brother, and this change of fortune, however disastrous politically for Saxony, gave him the occasion and opportunity to his extravagant and luxurious tastes for creative patronage of the arts. His porcelain factory, established in 1710, was originally intended as an economic venture to put money in the royal exchequer, but he soon began to
demand the production of wares with which
to rival porcelain displays abroad.

Herold did not disappoint Augustus. With
the help of several workmen inherited from
Böttger’s regime who were already accus-
tomed to experimental work, he gradually
succeeded in providing the factory with the
means by which very close imitations of the
Elector’s Chinese wares could be made. Such
additions to the factory’s decorative vocabu-
lary included not only an improved range of
colored enamels for painting, but many ground
colors as well, purely technical achievements
that would be sufficiently important to secure
Herold a leading position in European ceramic
history. But Herold was not merely an imi-
tator of foreign patterns and techniques. He
also extended to porcelain an important sty-
listic change that was occurring in the Euro-
pean decorative style of chinoiserie, and car-
ried the rest of the atelier with him.

It was inevitable that all chinoiseries should
have certain elements in common, originating
as they did in European attempts to capture
the arresting differentness of the Oriental
world depicted on imported silks, lacquers,
and porcelain. The Chinese method of pre-
senting landscape, for example, developed by
long generations of scroll painters, was not
understood by European artists, who had
learned to render spatial perspective in two
dimensions; thus, in imitating Oriental scenes,
Europeans reduced them to a formula of
deliberately haphazard scaling and orderless
placement of features. In the established Euro-
pean convention for chinoiserie decoration,
followed at Meissen itself before the arrival
of Herold, landscape was the main interest:
among hills, trees, pavilions, pagodas, bridges,
and other structures, human and animal fig-
ures were quite out of scale and placed more
or less at random. In the chinoiseries intro-
duced by Herold, however, people are the
main interest, and the organization of the
scenes follows European lines of composition:
figures are in proportion to each other, and
where landscape is introduced, it recedes ac-
cording to European rules of perspective.
Other characteristics of earlier chinoiseries,
such as the apparent fragility of Oriental ar-
chitecture, the atmospheric brightness of the
outdoor settings, and the inherent drollness
of the people, are retained and given greater
emphasis.

Among the many riches of the R. Thornton
Wilson Collection of ceramics in the Museum
is an important group of Meissen porcelain
decorated with this new kind of chinoiserie.
Several pieces are notable for their documentary
interest—one at least is known to be by
the hand of Herold himself—and all are su-
perb examples of painting in miniature. The
photographs that accompany this article,
many of them enlarged, will, it is hoped, offer
an opportunity of experiencing some of the
pleasure and sense of discovery that come
from the minute examination of these tiny
paintings, for the cursory glance observes only
the generally similar color scheme and subject
matter, and misses countless particularities of
draughtsmanship, coloring, and humor.

The earliest pieces in this group—a handle-
less cup and companion saucer—belonged to a
combination tea and chocolate service com-
missioned by Augustus as a present to Victor
Amadeus, king of Sardinia. This was the very

2. Tea caddy, shown in color on page 18
first of a long series of armorial services to be made at the Meissen factory — only individual pieces bearing arms had been made in the Böttger period. On the saucer the Elector's full armorial quarterings are minutely drawn and correctly tinctured, and on the cup appears his crowned monogram, encircled by the chain and jewel of the Order of the Annunciation.

The Meissen factory records indicate that Herold himself worked on the decoration of this service between March and June 1725, a fact that invites the keenest scrutiny of the miniature painting. The predominating colors are iron red and rose-purple — an unlikely combination that is nonetheless successfully brought off with the help of the brilliant white of the unpainted porcelain background — and touches of black, green, yellow, and blue. The greater part of the surface of the cup (Figure 3, Color Plate) is occupied by a lobster salesman and what we may take for his two sons. The brawny-armed father is busily setting out his goods on a low circular table, while one son (of the type Charles Lamb would certainly have called a booby) teases a bird with three lobsters he has tied by their tails to a pole, and his brother, on hands and knees, watches the attempts of another lobster to escape. At variance with their presumed station in life, the clothes of all three are richly figured; there are, in fact, no ragged Chinamen in Herold's new style.

The emphasis on a single incident is common to all the chinoiseries in this group, whether coming from the hand of Herold or one of the anonymous decorators in his atelier. The same may be said for the general scheme of coloring, and the humor and cohesion of design. What is particular about the chinoiseries on this piece is the extraordinary degree of characterization and expression, imparted to each of the three figures by the most deft and economical means. Though Herold was apparently trained as a portrait painter in miniature, the knack of suggesting mood and character on such a tiny scale (the faces on the cup are no more than an eighth

O P P O S I T E:

4. Plate. The central scene was probably painted by J. G. Herold. About 1730. Diameter 8 3/4 inches. Accession number 54.147.73

5. Cup, made for Sophia Dorothea, Queen of Prussia, painted by J. G. Herold. 1728. Height 15 3/4 inches. Lent by R. Thornton Wilson, L 57.60.1
of an inch across) was all his own invention. Shadowed areas of the faces are rendered with minute, parallel strokes of the brush—quite as a miniaturist would do on ivory. Profiles and hands, however, are built up by a series of simple, U-shaped curves, drawn with an almost calligraphic movement of the brush. Occasionally these curves are slightly thickened to suggest additional shading, as under the nose and lower lip of the boy in the center.

Breakfast services such as that for Victor Amadeus took pride of place among the Meissen productions of the 1720s. There were usually six cups and saucers, a bowl or two, a coffee pot, a teapot and tea caddy, and one or two chocolate cups. To such a set must have belonged an oviform tea caddy (Figure 2, Color Plate), dating about 1725-1730, with the unidentified arms bendy or and azure. The painting, which shows a servant girl carrying refreshments to a gentleman and his guests, has all the characteristics accepted as signs manual of Herold himself: for example, the black, wiglike hair of the woman, the bizarre hats of the men, the elongated figures, the powdery smoke coming from a brazier, the richly figured material for clothing, the pedestals and high-backed chairs, and, above all, the expressive faces—no two alike. But on closer inspection, only the figures of the servant girl and the man tending the fire behind her are clearly by the same hand as the lobster-hoisting booby on the Victor Amadeus cup. Other details seem a trifle less proficient in draughtsmanship—vide the odd perspective of the pavilion roof and the host’s chair—and lack something of Herold’s lightness of touch in painting faces. Herold’s unknown collaborator on this piece, however, has caught the humorous and inventive spirit of his master’s work, and the four people grouped round the table exhibit a variety of moods: an amiably composed host, a seated guest, clearly in need of the Cup That Cheers, and another friend, standing behind him, who seems to be developing malaria. It is only the small divergencies and a somewhat brighter color scheme that reveal a second hand at work on this piece; the general effect of all Meissen chinoiseries is of a single unified style, although it was practiced by an increasing number of decorators, following Herold’s example with varying success.

A plate dating from about 1730 (Figure 4) exhibits a combination of three distinct genres of decoration associated with the Meissen factory. The center of the plate is occupied by four figures supported on a stepped bracket. A soldier wearing a suitably sceptical expression bargains with a wayside peddler, and on either side are a female of particularly malign aspect and another peddler. The latter holds a hawk that maintains an aloof composure in spite of the little Pekingese worrying at him, just out of reach. The depiction of faces in this chinoiserie and the harmonious juxtaposition of colors seem to point to the same hand as the decorator of the Victor Amadeus cup, that is, Herold himself. Beneath these main figures are small cartouches containing landscapes with figures in purple monochrome, and around the rim are longer cartouches enclosing shipping scenes of a European aspect. This plate may also represent a collaboration between
Herold and another artist, who, working in a very different style, painted the shipping scenes.

The most splendid piece of the porcelains in the group is a cup bearing the monogram of Queen Sophia Dorothea of Prussia (Figure 5). It must have been made in 1728, the year the Elector paid a formal visit to the Prussian court; presumably he took this cup with him as a specially commissioned present to the Queen.

It was a most impressive gift: the stemmed cup stands on a tray, and its domed cover is surmounted by a figure of Athena, modeled by Johann Gottlob Kirchner. The interiors of both cup and cover are gilded; the fine turquoise ground of their outer surfaces is adorned with enameled and gilded lappets, leaves, and jewelings in high relief; six polychrome chinoiseries, in scrolled and gilded frames, and as many minute landscape scenes in puce monochrome are set into the gilt-scrolled borders at the lip and foot of the cup.

These pictures refer directly to the gift and its recipient. Queen Dorothea may even be observed in one of them, seated in a garden while an attendant brings forth the cup. Her monogram, quaintly enough, appears on Athena’s shield on the cover, and three more times in the painted decoration: in one chinoiserie it is being painted on a square of cloth, and it appears on an oval shield in two others. In one of these scenes (Figure 6), parted curtains are drawn up on each side of the monogrammed shield—a unveiling that seems only just to have taken place, for there is a stir among the onlookers, trumpeters sound a fanfare, and rather brigandly looking acolytes swing censers.

The cup itself appears again in a cartouche on the cover (Figure 7), where it is carried importantly by a mustached attendant and preceded by two jolly trumpeters. Just behind the cupbearer comes a third trumpeter of despotic mien, sulkily blowing his trumpet in the reversed position. Two little pages carrying the train of the cupbearer bring up the rear, their heads bending together in pagey conversation as the end of the train droops from their negligent hands. Far in the background are groups of people in a rocky, palm-tree-dotted landscape. The whole scene is little more than two-and-a-half inches across.

Around the stem appear trumpeters and drummers, as though to emphasize the festive nature of the offering of the gift, and musicians also figure in five of the cartouches. The most engaging musical scene, shown in Figure 8, is of a flautist, lutenist, and one other man, probably a singer, grouped on a short promontory and attentively reading from a large sheet of music held up by a small boy, whose arched back and raised arms suggest a certain rueful determination to hold the pose until the song is finished.

The range, delicacy, and reliability of enamel colors at the factory’s disposal as a result of Herold’s experiments are particularly well displayed on this cup. The decorator—undoubtedly Herold himself, for there are obvious correspondences between the draughtsmanship here and that on the cup from the Victor Amadeus service—paints hazy distances with pale mauves, greens, and yellows, while foreground objects are crisply and richly rendered with the characteristic rose-purple and iron red, as well as a beautiful soft blue, several tones of green, and yellow. A sooty black is sparingly introduced for hats, hair, and other small accents, and Böttger’s improved puce luster, often overdiapered with gold, is used for robes.

7. The presentation of the cup. Detail of Figure 5, enlarged from an area only 3½ inches across
The curious mélange of mythological subjects and chinoiseries is repeated on the fountain for rose water described earlier in this issue (see page 3). Four figures of classical inspiration entwine the upright cistern, whereas the wide, shallow bowl is decorated with chinoiseries. The bowl's interior is mainly occupied by a large chinoiserie (Figure 9) that appears to be “made up” from three workshop sketches. At the left is a messenger or servant (judging from his obsequious attitude and curiously vacant smile); at the right is a group of friends seated at table. A heartening event in the foreground, the defleating of a pug dog, focuses their attention and draws an interested stare even from a pet monkey with a protesting bird in his hands. Finally, an intrusive and incomplete figure of a nude blackamoor sprouts inexplicably from behind a palm tree.

Several features, such as the steeple-like rock formations and the figures appearing totally in shadow, recall scenes on Sophia Dorothea's cup. But details of the technique support an attribution to one of Herold's followers rather than to the master himself. The faces of the two servants with the dog, for example, are drawn to the same formula, resulting in identical expressions; the same may be said of the man seated at the table behind them and the woman to his right. These are repetitions uncharacteristic of Herold's work. So is the perfunctory treatment of eyes on all the figures, rendered by a black crotchet-shaped mark.

Another unknown but more skillful hand, capable of working on as fine a scale as Herold himself, is to be seen at work on a covered beaker made between 1725 and 1730 (Figures 10 and 11, Color Plate). This artist has a gift of comic insight comparable to Herold's own, but he is not Herold, as becomes obvious when one notes the recurring square-jawed, wedge-nosed faces of his Chinamen. On the sides of the beaker are two chinoiseries in elaborate frames of heavily overgilded puce luster. Both are harbor scenes of Eastern ports, shown in the conventional way of illustrations in seventeenth century travel books. In the background of one is a European vessel, drawn
LEFT TO RIGHT: Cup, from a service made for Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia, painted by Johann Gregor Herold (1696-1775) in 1725. Height 3 inches. Covered beaker, painted by an unknown decorator about 1725-1730. Height 6\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches. Tea caddy, probably painted by J. G. Herold and an unknown decorator about 1725-1730. Height 4\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches. Sugar bowl and tea caddy, from a service made for Clement Augustus, Archbishop Elector of Cologne, probably painted by Christian Friedrich Herold (1700-1779) in 1735. Heights 4\(\frac{3}{16}\) and 5\(\frac{3}{8}\) inches. Accession numbers 54.147.75-76, 50.211.231, 54.147.71, and 50.211.232-233
inshore with lighters going out to meet it. From the right foreground comes a Chinese, sitting like a clothes peg on his horse and holding a half-furled flag over his shoulder. His approach causes great excitement among a group of people at the left: one hails him with both arms upraised, another holds out a bowl of food, a third busies himself with dishes on a convenient stone ledge, while tiny squirrels frolic in the spindly trees nearby.

On the reverse side, two European merchants, one of them looking confident, the other more doubtful, are negotiating with three Chinese, while bales are unloaded on the seashore and stately European ships lie at anchor in the background. Each of the foreground figures epitomizes a specific point of view, conveyed as much by their stances as by their expressions: from the polite nonchalance of the assistant holding a dragon banner, to the self-confidence of the European merchant, to the obvious truculence of the Chinese at his left.

It is only natural that a style adopted by a whole factory should develop somewhat within itself as the years go by. In addition one would expect greater liberties to be taken with a pattern by an artist than by a mere journeyman-decorator. Intimations of both such changes in the style initiated by Herold may be seen on a tea caddy and sugar bowl that date from 1735 (Color Plate). They belonged to a tea, coffee, and chocolate set made for Clement Augustus, the archbishop elector of Cologne, whose full armorial quarterings occur on both pieces. Furthermore, the Archbishop’s initials, CA, are shown several times in the chinoiserie decoration, a form of flattery already seen on Sophia Dorothea’s cup. The possibility of the service’s having been a present for Clement Augustus’s thirty-fifth birthday is suggested by an inscription that appears on a cloth held by a Chinaman: “Clement[i] August[o] n[a]t[o] b[aptizato] 16 A[ugust] 1700.” Clement Augustus was one of the richest of the Rhineland nobility, and
he lived extravagantly, forming a great art collection of both contemporary and established schools, giving great hunts and balls, and indulging a passion for building. His admiration for porcelain was almost as boundless as was Augustus the Strong's, and he owned a large collection of Oriental and Meissen pieces, as well as some early French soft paste.

This service is generally believed to be the work of Christian Friedrich Herold, a younger kinsman of Johann Gregor and one of the handful of known decorators at Meissen. He came there in 1726, not as an apprentice but as a fully proficient painter of enamels on copper, and by 1735 he was one of the four highest-paid workers at the factory.

The chinoiseries on these two pieces are of jewel-like brilliance and clarity in execution. In scope, however, they are very much diminished from the earlier Meissen style of chinoiserie. There is no background, they are set in no landscape, and the little figures, with their Chinese robes and European faces, are earnest rather than droll and appear on the porcelain merely as supporters of the Archbishop's initials or accouterments.

The Clement Augustus service is one of the latest examples of porcelain decorated with chinoiseries that was to be made at Meissen for a leader of fashion. Even in these pieces there is greater drama in the minute monochrome wharf and harbor scenes—the "harbor style" for which C. F. Herold is best known. Already fully developed in 1735, it finally superseded chinoiserie completely at Meissen, though for a few years longer debased versions of chinoiserie were made for general sale. The porcelains we have discussed, therefore, span almost the entire life cycle of the chinoiserie style introduced by Johann Gregor Herold: a vivacious, very individual episode in the stately procession of European decorative styles, and so charming as to make one regret that nowadays we have occasion only to drink from cups, instead of looking at them too.