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Early Du Paquier Porcelain

By Stanley Ungar, New York

(Fig. 20—22)

Except for the Swan Service, probably no XVIIIth Century dinner ware is so well known to porcelain collectors as the DuPaquier Jagd Services; yet it would be difficult to imagine two sets more dissimilar. A Swan Service dish is pure form, sparsely painted in polychrome, and each one is practically identical with its mates. The display and serving pieces are fantastic in shape and brilliant in color. On the other hand, the only plastic decoration afforded the first Jagd Services, aside from indenting the rims of the plates, is the modest pineapple-shaped finial on the tureens. The painting is in somber schwarzlot heightened with touches of gold and, except for the border design, no two pieces are painted alike. We know who ordered the Swan Service, who designed almost every individual piece, how many pieces were made, when it was started and when it was completed. About the Early Jagd Services, none of these things are known.

There are, however, some traditions concerning the Jagd Service which, despite the uncertainty of their origin, at least have the authority of long acceptance. One is quoted from the Guide to the Collections in the Oest. Museum: «Jagd Service, the earliest service made at the Vienna Factory» (page 81). The other tradition is that the service is the work of Jakobus Helchis. Lately, however, these traditions have come under fire. The dating has been challenged as too early and the connection of many pieces with Helchis has been disputed. It is my purpose to refute these objections and, in the body of this article, will deal with them in detail. For the present I should just like to comment that, as a graduate in science, I have very often been surprised by the frequency with which «old-wives tales» and traditions are discovered to spring from the good seed of truth.

I bring to this discussion two pieces of evidence: one new, the other old but so neglected as to be, actually, also new. The old evidence has been questioned and, I have no doubt, so will the new. But that is as it should be for, in the absence of documentation such as we have in the case of the Swan Service, it is only by subjecting every possible clue to the closest scrutiny that we may cast light on a hitherto dark subject. Since very large gaps must be filled by interpretation, reason and logic, every step can be disputed; yet the sum total of the «circumstantial evidence» can build up to an impressive case, perhaps a conclusive case.

I shall start, then, with a re-examination of a piece of old evidence, a cup and saucer illustrated in DEUTSCHE FAYENCE UND PORZELLAN HAUSMALER (Abb. 204, page 235) that would appear to be a typical Ignaz Preussler piece were it not marked, on the back of the saucer, «IH». It is discussed, on the same page, as follows:

«Neuerdings wurde aber die Preussler-Frage noch dadurch kompliziert, dass im Wiener Kunsthandel eine Tasse auftauchte, die auf DuPaquier-Porzellan in goldgehöhter Schwarzlotmalerei die ganze charakteristische Preussler-Malerei mit Chinesenpaaren unter Baldachinen, mit Grotteskranken, Vögeln und Blumenvasen aufweist. Die Untertasse trägt rückwärts die Signatur J. H., die nur auf Jakobus Helchis bezogen werden könnte. Ich kann mich nicht entschliessen, diese für alt zu halten. Einerseits stimmt die Zeit nicht, da die Malerei um 1720—1725 anzusetzen wäre, während der in Triest geborene und zunächst an der Turiner Fabrik beschäftigte Helchis erst wesentlich später in Wien bezeugt ist, nämlich 1746 und 1747, von wo er als Arkanist nach Neudeck-Nymphenburg geht, wo er aber kein Glück hatte; andererseits aber — und das fällt noch viel schwerer ins Gewicht — zeigt die Malerei dieses Preussler-Stückes einen ganz anderen Charakter als die beiden andern Stücke, die die Signatur von Helchis tragen, und die übrigen Stücke, die ihnen sonst angeschlossen werden können.»

A foot note to the above is as follows:

«. . . Inzwischen sind auch anderwärts im Handel verschiedene weitere Porzellane mit Preussler-Dekor aufgetaucht, die die Helchis-Signatur tragen; auch die, die ich nicht gesehen habe, werden mir von vertrauenswürdigen Seiten als verdächtig oder direkt als Fälschungen bezeichnet.»

The only other pertinent quotes known to the author are from Honey. In his EUROPEAN CERAMIC ART, page 303, he writes:

«No dated work of Helchis is known, but a cup and saucer figured by Pazaurek (p. 235), signed «IH» and painted with scrolls and a Chinoiserie in black and gold in the style of PREISSLER, cannot be much later than 1725; but it may be doubted whether the signature on this specimen, which differs from Helchis' other work, should be associated with him at all.»

In the same work, p. 501, he again takes up the question:

«It should be noted that painting similar to both these classes were done in the Vienna factory and it is sometimes impossible to decide whether a particular piece was decorated there or by the younger Preissler . . .

. . . It has been thought that the Vienna painter or Hausmaler Jakobus HELCHIS worked at first in this style; a characteristic Schwarzlot cup and saucer figured in Pazaurek (p. 235) bears the initials «IH», but there is no reason for associating them with Helchis, and the genuineness of the signature has been doubted.»

In DRESDEN CHINA there is a short foot-note (346) which says, in abbreviated form, what is quoted above and these, so far as the author is aware, form a complete bibliography of references to the «IH» cups and saucers to be found in book form. Honey obviously depends entirely on Pazaurek for his opinion and Pazaurek, in turn, is willing to take the opinion of «vertrauenswürdigen Seiten» for fact. In view of the decisive role these «IH» pieces could play in explaining the early history of Du Paquier and the career of Jakobus Helchis, it is nothing short of amazing they haven't been the subject of serious study. Let it be noted immediately that Pazaurek did not hesitate to accept the porcelain as early DuPaquier; neither did he hesitate to date the painting as between 1720 and 1725. The only thing in doubt is the signature. The only reasons for doubt are an imagined anachronism in the relationship between the signature and the painting; and a difference from the style usually associated with Helchis.

In dealing with the chronological objection, I should first point out that Pazaurek dates the three Helchis pieces he illustrates, Abs: 205 and 206 and Plate 20, as 1740. Secondly, from Hayward's VIENESE PORCELAIN OF THE DU PAQUIER PERIOD, p. 131, we learn that Dott. V. Viale, Director of the Musea Civico di Torino, has definitely established that Helchis did not arrive at Turin until 1741. Since everyone, Pazaurek included, agrees that most of the work attributed to Helchis at Vienna is prior to that date, it is obvious that Helchis went to Turin FROM Vienna, not vice-versa as Pazaurek incorrectly theorized. This definitely eliminates the connection between Helchis and Turin as a criterion for dating his early work at Vienna. Honey completely ignores the time factor in his discussion of the «IH» pieces. As a matter of fact, every modern writer has Helchis at Vienna by 1730, at the very latest, if only to explain his alleged connection with Bottengruber.

Since there is no reason for restricting ourselves in the matter of dating, our consideration should turn to the point of style. Now, style and technique are elusive and illusive criteria for defining the œuvre of an artist. If, for instance, you have one Utrillo or one Roualt, you pretty well know

their styles and can expand from there. But how would you go about putting Picasso in a neat little category from one painting . . . or two, or three or four? In other words, some artists work continuously in a single technique which may or may not develop; some grow gradually from one technique into another, or several other, techniques; some make one or several sudden and drastic changes in technique for no apparent reason during their careers. In the case of Helchis, we can recognize two very different techniques which are displayed on the three signed pieces generally accepted as authentic works of this master; a couple of two-handled covered cups (Hayward Plates 58a and 59), and a Jagd Service dish (Hayward Plate 40a), of which the first two are fully signed and the third signed «JH». The dish is in the typical Helchis cross-hatched «Kielfeder» technique. The two cups employ the same technique, though somewhat finer in execution, for a background that consists of a landscape with animals; but the principal figures, putti, are drawn in a fine stipple technique. It is quite proper to use these as a base and examine any Vienna porcelain in either of these techniques for a possible attribution to Helchis. It is not, however, proper to exclude anything not done in either of these techniques or to limit our acceptance, in the case of cross-hatching, to the extremes represented by the fine work on the cups and the coarser work on the dish. To do this would be to assume that our artist would have worked from the start in either or both of these, so far as monochrome painting is concerned, artificial techniques and never had learned line drawing or shading by means of a wash. Even if Helchis had started as an engraver, this would not be probable, hardly possible; and, since there is no record of Helchis as an engraver, we can safely assume that he learned these techniques from engravings, not as an engraver. If we exclude von dem Busch and transfer printing, since these were actually engravings, Du Paquier is the only porcelain painted in cross-hatching anywhere in Europe until about 1830 (Pazaurek, p. 236). Even on DuPaquier, it is confined, almost entirely, to the Jagd Services and is so unique that its use for any part of a subject is enough to invoke, immediately, thoughts of Helchis. The stipple technique, while practiced before 1730 by Ortolani at the Vezzi factory and by Bottengruber and his pupils, C. F. von Wolfsburg and H. G. von Bressler, outside of Vienna, is normally used, in painting, for the blending of colors, not for shading monochrome and is, thus, also an artificial technique. It was in recognition of this artificiality that the association between Helchis and Bottengruber gained currency. It was known that Bottengruber worked in Vienna in 1730 and for, perhaps, a year after that so it seemed natural to connect that visit with the work Helchis did in the stipple technique. Since no one dates any work in the stipple technique that could, with any assurance, be

assigned to Helchis before 1740—1744, such a relationship is highly doubtful. To accept Bottengruber as Helchis's master, we must ignore a minimum of nine years that passed before Helchis made his first attempt to practice his lessons; we must ignore the fact that, in over-all effect, the subjects painted by Helchis in stipple bear not the slightest resemblance to Bottengruber's work while that of his other known disciples, von Bressler and von Wolfsburg, is so close to the master that, more often than not, a signature is required to separate them. It is safe, then, to dismiss Bottengruber as an influence, certainly as a major influence, on Helchis.

The school that produced Helchis practiced *schwarzlot*, especially gold high-lighted *schwarzlot*; they painted hunting scenes and animals; they employed complicated borders as a principal feature of the decoration. This can only mean the Preussler workshop. Actually, the Preussler influence on early Vienna is greater than that of Bottengruber; far greater than has been generally credited. While every modern authority acknowledges the difficulty of separating many pieces which may be, in Pazaurek's nomenclature, Bohemian Hausmalerei, Vienna Hausmalerei or Vienna Factory Work, no one seems willing to come forth and state, in so many words, that Preussler was a major influence at Vienna. Yet, many pieces that are indisputably DuPaquier factory work bear elements which are among Preussler's favorite and most typical motifs. To list but few examples, I refer you to Hayward as the most complete collection of illustrations. The earliest *schwarzlot* subject he illustrates (Plate 2 b) is a tea-pot, dated about 1720, and painted with a typical Preussler *Chinoiserie*. The earliest gold high-lighted *schwarzlot* piece (Plate 4b), dated 1720—1725, is another *Chinoiserie* in the same style and is tentatively attributed, by Hayward, to Karl Wendelin Anreiter von Zirnfeld whose work, also according to Hayward, is easily confused with Preussler's. The flask, Plate 32 b, has indisputable Preussler decoration on the neck and distinctively Preussler-ish flower-baskets are to be found on the objects illustrated in Plates 34, 35 and 37a, and this, by no means, exhausts this source. The Lana tureens (Catalogue of Second Sale, Plate 69) display birds which are repeated over and over again by Preussler as, for instance, the cups and saucers, Mayer Sale, Plate 18, and there are at least a dozen other examples that come easily to mind. It is not impossible that much work now called Preussler will some day be assigned to DuPaquier.

The important point is, there was a definite Preussler influence at work in the DuPaquier Malerstube and, while it is possible it arrived with examples of his work, it is much more likely to have been brought there by a Preussler workman or student. Since we know Anreiter was at Vienna as early as 1724 and since, as we have noted above, his *Chinoiseries* are painted in the Preussler manner, the honor

would certainly go to him if it were not for the «IH» cups and saucers. Let us, then, return to them and see what there is in the way of evidence for authenticating the signature.

For positive evidence, we have only Pazaurek's testimony that the porcelain was early DuPaquier and the Preussler-type decoration is contemporary with the porcelain; the rest is negative. But there is much to be learned from asking yourself why something was or was not done and, then, examining all possible motives. If we start with the assumption that the signature was a counterfeit, we ask ourselves why the «counterfeiter» used «IH». He had sufficient knowledge to choose genuine porcelain with authentic painting for his «counterfeit»; should he not also have had knowledge of the signed Helchis pieces, which had been illustrated more than twenty years before the «IH» pieces first appeared, and how those signed pieces differed in technique. The work of the Preussler family was equally as well publicized, in works on glass as well as on porcelain, and there was no previous Preussler signature. Not only would a unique Preussler signature have been more valuable than a third or fourth Helchis signature, it would not have to stand the test of comparison. Also, to use Pazaurek's careful terminology, «several» pieces «emerged in the Vienna Art Trade» at about the same time. Why put out a «number», which would only cheapen his product by glutting the market, to say nothing of arousing suspicion? Then, why was there no promotion of these signatures as there was of the cryptic Lowenfinck «signatures» which appeared at about the same time and, finally, why was there no attempt to profit from them? Either the «counterfeiter» was an incredibly foolish expert or an incredibly expert fool . . . or, as I prefer to think, the signatures are genuine.

Accepting them as genuine explains much that is otherwise a mystery concerning the early years of the Vienna factory and the early training of Helchis. It explains how the Preussler influence came to Vienna; why *schwarzlot* became so popular at a factory whose palette was good enough, and extensive enough, to excite the admiration of Meissen when presented by the defecting Herold; how Helchis was capable of mature work on the Jagd Service at such an early date and; in conjunction with the revised dating of the Turin adventure, offers one clue to why the work of Helchis in stipple should not be dated earlier than 1742. The evidence of a piece in my possession, I believe, will provide the necessary document for the transition of the Preussler-schooled Helchis to the painter of the Jagd Service.

It is a vegetable dish or small tureen from an early Jagd Service (Fig. 20), an almost exact duplicate of that in the Thornton Wilson Collection (Hayward, Plate 41), now in the Metropolitan Museum. On the underside of this tureen, inside of and close to the foot-ring and following it for

almost its entire periphery, is a series of scratch marks. Almost all of these have no discernable meaning but, every here and there, they form a mysterious and tantalizing letter or letters. At one end of the transverse, or longer axis, the scratch-marks quite clearly form, along with some other indecipherable symbols, the letters «JH» and, close by, the legend «15 M 24» (Fig. 21). The last of these numbers might be a «6», but is most likely a «4». The «JH» closely resembles the examples of Helchis's signatures illustrated in Folnesics and Braun WIENER PORZELLAN, Markentafel facing page 200. The «J» of the scratch-signature more nearly resembles the «J» of the fully signed specimen than the «J» of the «JH» signed Jagd Service dish.

If these scratch-marks can be confirmed as a signature, we have the hitherto missing link that connects the «IH» pieces with Helchis and proves the tradition that a Jagd Service is the oldest Vienna Service to be true; and that, if it is not entirely, it is mainly the work of Jakobus Helchis. Let us, then, apply to the tureen the same sort of inductive reasoning we applied to the «IH» pieces.

For positive evidence we can say that the porcelain is the brownish-white of the very early DuPaquier period so often confused with Bottger's and the cause of so many disputes concerning the provenance of such pieces as the Hunger enameled bowl and «Kaiserbecher» from the Mayer Collection and the pair of Preussler decorated vases (Catalogue, Plate 90) from the Darmstaedter Collection. The shape and the potting are primitive; obviously cast in a two-part mold, the body is very thick and the mold marks are not cleanly removed. The glaze reveals brush-marks and is unevenly applied, leaving the body so thinly covered in places as to be practically dry. As compared, technically, with the cup and saucer which Hayward figures in Plates 12c and b and dates 1725/30, or with the deep-dish from the Mayer Collection, «Joseph and Potiphar's Wife» (Sales Catalogue, Plate 28)¹, which the same author dates, by inference, as about 1730, the porcelain of the tureen is crude enough to be considered appreciably earlier. There is nothing in the physical make-up of the tureen to preclude a dating of 1724. If we may consider the scratch-marks «15 M 24» to be a date, the evidence of the potting tends to confirm it.

The dating of the decoration, however, has been questioned by Hayward who states his case, in abbreviated form, as follows: «In view of the technical qualities of this service, the absence of any Oriental elements in the design, and the fully evolved borders, it would be difficult to date it earlier than about 1730—1740» (page 102). He continues on page 103: «We have another source of evidence as to the date of the Jagd Service, namely the date of publication of the engravings from which its decoration is derived . . . Certain of them are derived from Riedinger's ENTWURFF EINIGER THIERS which was first published in

Augsburg in 1738 . . . The first of the Riedinger sets of hunting subjects was published in 1722. Others came out in 1728 and in 1733. Having regard to the date of publication of these engravings, it is impossible to date the Jagd Service before about 1730/35 at the earliest.»

If I appear here, to belabor Hayward, it is only because, in the entire literature on DuPaquier, he is the only author who has had the courage and consideration to expose to his readers his reasons for dating the Jagd-Service.

Having already treated the «technical qualities», I shall take up the other objections in order. It should first be noted that a good deal of the earliest DuPaquier shows no trace, whatsoever, of «Oriental elements». Hayward, Plates 2a, 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 5a, 5b and 5c are just a few cases in point, to say nothing of Plate 1, the earliest known piece of DuPaquier. As in the case of early Herold Meissen, there is a tendency to forget that Oriental motifs are only part of a general baroque influence. Bottger's porcelain competed at Vienna with Chinese for influence, and Bottger was far more partial to Irminger's silver forms than to Oriental. There was a strong Oriental influence, but it was, by no means, exclusive; and dating by its presence, or absence, is a rule of thumb, not a precision instrument. The same might be said about the development of the borders. While it is probably true that, in general, the borders progressed from simple to complex, too many factors enter into the choice of a border to make its complexity a yard-stick. Hayward dates Plate 20b and 20a, with a far more complex border, both the same; and this is only one of many possible examples where he violates his own precept. But, more important than that, quoting, again, from Hayward, pages 167 and 168, «The Vienna factory made use of . . . the designs of Paul Decker . . . who died in 1713 . . . In these Decker pattern books we find the pure Laub- und Bandelwerk of the borders of the Jagd Service, the Laub- und Bandelwerk intermixed with grotesques of the later schwarlot service of unidentified provenance (Plate 43b) . . .»

It thus becomes immediately apparent that the Jagd Service border design elements existed before, even, the founding of the factory and that, along with the subject matter of the field drawing, the border arrangement was specified from pattern books. This not only removes the development of the border as a criterion for dating the Jagd Service, it provides another interesting possibility for a bridge between Vienna and Preussler, via Helchis. Plate 43b is from the same service as four dishes from the Otto Blohm Collection of which, Number 74 is illustrated on page 67. Both these dishes show many of the elements used over and over again by the Preussler shop. Though far less crowded,

¹ These pieces now in the author's collection.

and interspersed with the typical DuPaquier cross-checked medallions foreign to Preussler, we find the *Bandelwerk*, the birds and the *Baldachinen* so characteristic of Preussler as to be almost his trademark. Is it not possible that Preussler also used Decker? And, if Helchis came from the Preussler workshop, would he not have known that source, possibly even have brought it with him to Vienna? And would not Helchis, trained by Preussler, have been accustomed to working with borders far more «developed» and complex than that, even, of the *Jagd Service*?

The subjects derived from *ENTWURFF EINIGER THIERS*, admittedly, cannot be earlier than the publication date of that work, but the birds and animals painted on the scratch-marked tureen, the Thornton Wilson tureen, the two Lana tureens (*Second Sale Catalogue*, Plate 69) and the tureen in the Troppau Museum (k. k. Wiener Por. Manuf., *Folnescis & Braun*, Tafel V, 6), are not from *ENTWURFF EINIGER THIERS*. They are not from any Ridinger print available in New York, nor do they resemble, in style or execution, any work of Ridinger in the slightest degree. Although, unfortunately, I am unable to cite other sources, it is certain that Ridinger was not the only source used by the painter of the *Jagd Service* and the date of even his first publication, 1722, does not limit our dating of the *Jagd Service*. I have already referred to the similarity between certain birds used in Vienna decoration and those used by Preussler; it is not impossible that the same person who brought Decker to Vienna, Helchis, also brought other of Preussler's sources.

This, however, is almost entirely negative and proves, merely, that there is no logical reason why the scratch-marked tureen could not have been made in 1724. The scratch-marks, also, are clearly the work of an abrasive wheel and could have been made at any time and for any of a number of reasons. We should, then, inquire as to why they were made and what they could mean. The possibilities are: (1) they were caused by the wheel used to grind down the foot-ring, which was obviously treated in this manner; (2) they were made by a smaller wheel used to remove sand-pits and imperfections from the glaze; (3) they are the work of a counterfeiter, attempting to enhance the value of his piece; or (4) they resulted from the use of an abrasive wheel to remove writing that had been fired into the glaze.

Alternative (1) may be discarded immediately because the scratches are too close under the foot-ring to have been made accidentally and, while those scratches close to the foot-ring are, roughly, parallel to it, those forming the signature are perpendicular to it (Fig. 21 and 22). Alternative (2) must likewise be discarded because numerous pit-marks and blemishes remain on the surface which should, could and would have been removed had any such treatment been

employed. It is also quite evident that the scratches did not remove any blemishes, nor did they attempt to do so. For alternative (3) we must apply the same sort of reasoning we used in dealing with the «IH» pieces and ask who profited from this forgery, if such it were. Before buying the tureen, I knew of its existence for over two years and saw it pass through the hands of at least three reliable and knowledgeable dealers, including the importer. They were unanimous in their surprise when shown the photograph of the signature, Figure 21, and all expressed interest in repurchasing the tureen at a substantial profit. This would seem to eliminate anyone through whose hands the tureen passed since coming to America. Further, I have been able to ascertain it came on the market at about the same time Thornton Wilson received his tureen from the *Oesterreichisches Museum* and, while I have not been able to verify this, was given to understand that it was released from that museum about the same time as Thornton Wilson's. Miss Louise Avery was kind enough to permit an examination of the Wilson tureen and, on the base, there were much the same sort of scratch-marks in much the same locations as on mine. Unfortunately, none of the scratches on the Wilson tureen formed legible writing, as far as could be determined under the limitations of time and lighting facilities afforded for the examination but, despite their illegibility, the existence of similar scratches carries a significance beyond that of mere coincidence. Since the ownership record of the Wilson tureen is complete, from Emperor Charles VI to Empress Maria Theresa to the monastery of Sankt Blasien to the monastery of Sankt Paul im Lavanttal to the *Oesterreichisches Museum* to Thornton Wilson, we can assume that it was not tampered with. It would not, then, be unreasonable to assume that the other tureen, practically identical with the Wilson tureen in all respects except for the signature and date, also was not tampered with. We are on certain ground in stating that it could not have been tampered with until after it left the *Oesterreichisches Museum*. Since it, allegedly, was in America within a month or two after it left the Museum, and since neither the importer nor the dealers who owned it before me knew of the signature, it is also safe to say that no one attempted to profit from the scratch-signature. Again, we are dealing with an impossibly inept «counterfeiter», or the scratch-marks, signature and all, have been on the tureen since it left the factory.

Why, then, wasn't it noticed before? The reason is quite simple. When examined by «normal» light, either day or artificial, unless the tureen is twisted and turned so that the rays strike the scratches at exactly the correct angle, they are meaningless, if not invisible. The photographs, however, were made by what is called «tangential» or «texture» lighting. The light-rays were concentrated to a slit and directed at an angle, determined experimentally,

where they hit the sides of the scratches directly, but the rest of the surface at a very small angle. The scratches, consequently, are brightly illuminated while the light skims over the rest of the surface, leaving it comparatively dark. This effect is exaggerated by photographing the scratches with a contrasty film and the result is much clearer than anything visible to be unaided eye. It causes the author no embarrassment to admit the scratch-marks were discovered by accident.

But, granting all his to be true, if Helchis painted the Thornton Wilson tureen and the scratch-marked tureen, there should be some traceable connection between them and the pieces accepted as indisputably his; in the 15 to 20 years that, theoretically, passed between the painting of the tureens and the signed cups, there should be some evidence of development. Perfection is a legitimate criterion for development, but a number of factors should be kept in mind. One is that a painter will take pains commensurate with the importance of the commission, another consideration is the time allowance but, most important, is the fact that any painter, no matter how experienced, will appear far less skilled, even unskilled, if forced to work in an unfamiliar technique. It does not require very careful scrutiny of the scratch-marked tureen to discover that the artist was not at home in his technique; that he had not, as yet, disciplined himself to it. First of all, on the cross-hatched animals and, especially, on some of the peculiar stiffleaved foliage, shading is brushed and even washed-in every here and there. Also, on the inside of the tureen, a bird and some streublumen are drawn conventionally, in lines and shadows. While this displays a lack of ease and discipline, the overall effect of the decoration remains strong, indicating a skilled painter working in an unfamiliar technique.

Why the cross-hatched technique was chosen, we will never know. Perhaps it was specified along with the subject matter when the Jagd Service was ordered, perhaps the inspiration came from Helchis, himself. This much, however, can be taken for certainty; that the first Jagd Service piece was among the first ever painted in cross-hatching and that, for so important a commission, DuPaquier would have chosen a painter practiced in *schwarlot*, one he could be certain had the skill to carry it out successfully. If the crudeness and the stiffness of the decoration on the scratch-marked tureen would seem to contradict this requirement, the power of the drawing and the strong over-all effect of the composition prove the artist to be no amateur. Even though the treatment is elementary; the various animals parade around the sides and covers of the Lana tureens, the Thornton Wilson and the scratch-marked tureen with little or no relationship to one another; their disposition within the ornamentation reveals a practiced hand and can be related to one of Preussler's favorite arrangements. A

few examples from Pazaurek, Abs. 192, 193, 197 and 204, the «IH» piece that started this discussion, may be taken as illustrations; but 197 is possibly the best example. The main figures are isolated from one another, but the ornamentation provides the unifying element for the composition. Later pieces reveal an artist not only more assured in his technique, but casting loose from the Preussler tradition. The ornamentation recedes to become merely a frame for more and more complex field subjects. However, while the composition improved, the technique became more refined and the subject matter more complicated, the Jagd Services never revealed Helchis at his best. As important as they were, they were large orders and there was always a certain element of haste. The minimum standard Helchis would permit himself, or be permitted, was always fairly high; but the time element remained and offers a reasonable explanation for the difference in quality between what may be termed the «masterpiece» fully-signed cups and the Jagd Service pieces, signed or unsigned. But, no matter how a painter's technique improves, no matter how much care he devotes to one piece than to another, certain idiosyncracies remain. They are his trade-mark, his signature when any overt signature is forbidden or lacking for any other reason.

Unfortunately, I have seen or handled very few pieces from the various Jagd Services, so my search for this «trade-mark» was limited to what is available in illustrations. Even from these, however, there are two characteristic inclusions that recur too often to be accounted for by coincidence, both of them leaf clumps. One of them is made up of leaves that are, roughly, sword-shaped and is well illustrated in both the scratch-marked and Thornton Wilson tureen, under the central animals on the covers and under the birds with the queer lyre-shaped tails on the bodies. Other places where it is easily made out include the Lana tureen covers and the following illustrations from Hayward: 39b, in a modified form behind the antelope; 40b, along the foreground of the field decoration; 42a, all over the field; 44c, under the deer and 40a in three places along the bottom border of the field decoration. This last is seen more clearly in Pazaurek, Ab. 205, a somewhat larger and sharper illustration. Since 40a is the «JH» signed Jagd Service dish, we have our first connection. The second comes in the form of what resembles a hollyhock leaf and appears in clumps which, while still stiff, are not nearly so stiff and prickly as the «sword-shaped» leaf clumps. These may be clearly seen on the stand for the Wilson tureen (Hayward Plate 41), growing out of the rock behind the wolf. It is also very clear on the Lana tureens under the feet of the animals; on the cover of 964 between the turkey and the wolf and on the cover of 965, between the doe and a bird that might be a pheasant. Other places, in Hayward, where it is obvious include: 40a, the «JH» dish,

where it is interspersed with the «sword-shaped» leaf clumps along the bottom (again, the Pazaurek illustration is somewhat clearer); 40b, in the same location as 40a; 42a, in back of the standing deer and 59b, the cover of the «masterpiece» cup where it appears in front of some fragments of pillars, at the bottom of the illustration. There are many other places where it is possible that one or the other of the leaf clumps may exist but are not clear enough in the illustrations for certain identification. There are many places where the hollyhock leaf appears without clumps and it may or may not be significant that one of these is a gold high-lighted schwarzlot tea-pot, Hayward 5b, where the entire painting resembles very closely that on the inside of the scratch-marked tureen which, also, is not too dissimilar to that of Plate 5c.

The «hollyhock» leaf cluster, thus, ties together the fully-signed cover of the «masterpiece» cup, the «JH» dish and the Thornton Wilson tureen stand. The «sword-shaped» leaf cluster ties together the «JH» dish, the Thornton Wilson tureen and the scratch-marked tureen. Now the borders may have been specified, the subject matter specified and, even, the technique may have been specified but there can be no doubt that these odd leaf clumps could never have been specified, yet they are represented on pieces that come from different services and on pieces that were obviously decades apart in date. They could only have been introduced by the artist, willfully and for a reason; they were his signature. Lowenfinck rebelled against anonymity by concealing his initials in leafveins or drapes of cloth; Helchis used leaves. We have already seen, from the «IH» cups and saucers, the «JH» dish, the two fully-signed masterpiece cups, that Helchis was not partial to anonymity. As a hausmaler, he signed freely. As a factory-hand, this was forbidden and he found other ways. Why he chose these peculiar leaf-clumps, I am not conversant enough with either botany or XVIIIth Century colloquial German to definitely determine. The word «helchis» has no connection I have been able to discover, but there are at least two possible connections with the first name. The «hollyhock» leaf closely resembles the «Jakobstab» and the «sword-shaped» leaves bear some resemblance to certain of the mints. Since «Jakobus» is a synonym for mint, though strictly in the sense of coinage, it is possible that this far-fetched pun caught the artist's fancy. These suggestions are offered only tentatively, but without apology because, whatever the actual connection, it is certain that the inclusion of these leaves was deliberate and that they had some special significance for the artist. While it may, again, be only coincidence, there is a clump of three «Jakobstab» leaves on the «IH» saucer, directly below the single Chinese on the edge, and in the line with the two ewers. The fact that the same leaf occurs, also, on other «Preussler» work,

such as Pazaurek Ab. 196, can, among other interpretations, mean a rebellion against the well known policy of anonymity enforced by Preussler who was, perhaps, even more rigid in this respect than the factories. On the other hand, it may be a coincidence, another in a very remarkable chain of coincidences, the most remarkable of which is undoubtedly the existence of scratches forming the initials of a painter on the bottom of a piece associated with him for years by tradition, and forming a date that is entirely logical. But when coincidence piles on coincidence, when they all mesh and point in the same direction, they become circumstantial evidence of the highest order. Let us, then, string together these «coincidences» with the known facts of the life of Helchis and see whether they form a logical continuity.

Helchis was born in Trieste at some still undetermined date and made his way in some still undetermined manner to the Preussler workshop. Serving his apprenticeship there, he learned to paint, in schwarzlot, all the various elements which combined, later, to make him famous as the creator of the Jagd Service. Leaving Preussler, he came to Vienna, where there was a good supply of white porcelain available to hausmaler, and painted the «IH» pieces. His presence, there, may help explain the large amount of Vienna porcelain with Preussler decoration when it is known that Preussler's patron much preferred Chinese to either Meissen or Vienna porcelain. His presence in Vienna was known to DuPaquier, if only because he purchased white porcelain from the factory, and it is likely that Helchis entered the DuPaquier malerstube, if only on a part time basis, before the ordering of the Jagd Service. When this service was commissioned, no doubt several design sketches were submitted and, from these, one or more «proof» pieces requested. The scratch-marked tureens, for the Thornton Wilson tureen is also «scratch-marked», were probably among those proof-pieces, laboriously painted in an unfamiliar technique, but revealing a powerful mastery of draftsmanship and an arrangement of design elements brought to Vienna from the Preussler workshop. On the bottom, descriptive material is painted to identify the sources, the design, the artist and the date and is fired in at the same time as the decoration. Once approved, or even disapproved, there would be no further need for such a legend and it is removed in the only practicable manner, with an abrasive wheel. Broad, sweeping strokes were employed close to and under the foot-ring, more careful and selective erasure away from the foot-ring where the abrasions would be more noticeable. This, of course, is surmise but, since «accident» and «coincidence» are ruled out by every consideration of possibility, the surmise can be incorrect without in the least invalidating the fact that the signature resulted from the deliberate, purposeful and LEGITIMATE use of the abrasive wheel. At

any rate, Helchis continued to paint at Vienna for a considerable time; mostly, if not entirely, cross-hatched Jagd Service pieces. About 1740 or 1741 he left the DuPaquier employ and may have worked, again, as a hausmaler in Vienna, as witness the «JH» Jagd Service dish of about this date, and then left for Turin and his unsuccessful essay as an arcanist. Whether he worked at Turin, also, as a painter, we have no way of knowing because all that remains of the entire output of that factory is two figurines. The trip was not entirely unfruitful, however, because it was while in Turin, or elsewhere in Italy, he became acquainted with the work of Lodovico Ortolani. He may have met the painter, who had worked at the then closed Vezzi factory, his son who went by the same name, or have just seen, and been impressed by, an Ortolani piece. At any rate, the stipple

work of Helchis is much closer to the example of Ortolani's Vezzi dish, illustrated by Arthur Lane in ITALIAN PORCELAIN, Plate 10c, than to any work of Bottengruber and his pupils, and the dating of Helchis's stipple is always later than his return from Turin.

Back in Vienna, Helchis worked as a hausmaler and produced the masterpiece cups in a combination of his old cross-hatching and new stipple techniques, was re-employed by the factory and went to work painting polychrome putti in his new manner. He married his second wife in Vienna in 1746 and then, in 1747, deserted the factory for the second time to try his luck as an arcanist at Neudeck. He had no more success here than at Turin and, with his discharge from that factory for incompetence, Helchis disappears from the porcelain scene.

Weitere Beiträge zur Frage der Habaner Keramik

Von Ruzena Hrbková, Olmütz

Abb. 23—31

Dem interessanten Aufsatz «Beiträge zur Frage der Habaner Keramik» von Béla Krisztinkovich, Budapest, im Mitteilungsblatt Nr. 40, möchte ich einiges hinzufügen, da wir hier in Mähren, dem klassischen Lande der Habaner Keramik, reichlich Gelegenheit haben, nicht nur diese Keramik selbst in grosser Auswahl, sondern auch archivalisches, bisher z. T. unzugängliches Material aus Schlossarchiven zu studieren.

Nicht wenig trug zur Erkenntnis der Habaner Keramik, ihres Materials und ihrer Technik, die grosse Ausstellung von Habaner Keramik bei, die Anfang 1956 im Kunstgewerbemuseum in Brno (Brünn) veranstaltet wurde und die 445 Exponate aus fast sämtlichen Museen, Schlössern und Privatsammlungen der Tschechoslowakei umfasste. Diese Ausstellung, einzig und erstmalig in ihrer Art, machte mit den keramischen Erzeugnissen der Habaner in allen Perioden ihres Schaffens in Mähren und Oberungarn bekannt und vermittelte ein klares Bild ihrer Tätigkeit.

Es ist noch gar nicht lange her, dass man den Habanern und der Habaner Keramik die ihnen zukommende Beachtung schenkt. Wie wenig man früher von der Produktion der Habaner wusste, ersieht man aus dem Handbuch der kgl. Museen in Berlin, erschienen 1896 und herausgegeben von Otto von Falke, das auf S. 182 unter Abb. 75 ein mährisches Habaner Krüglein als eine Arbeit von Ludwig Pfau, Winterthur, anführt. Jan Koula, einer der ersten Forscher, die sich mit dem Habaner Problem befassten, wies schon gegen Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts darauf hin, dass er den Eindruck habe, dass dieses Krüglein eine der ersten mährischen Fayencen repräsentiere (Jan Koula, Cesky lid, VIII, pag. 66). Im Jahre 1925 veranstaltete das Landesmuseum in Troppau unter seinem Direktor E. W. Braun und dessen damaligem Assistenten Dr. Karel Cernohorsky eine Ausstellung von Wischauer Volkskeramik und den damals noch spärlich vertretenen Habaner Fayencen. Die Direktion des Landesmuseums erhielt zu dieser Ausstellung



Abb. 20 The «scratch-marked» tureen. Notice how there is shading that is brushed in, rather than «crosshatched». The shadow under the wolf-dog, the leaves etc.

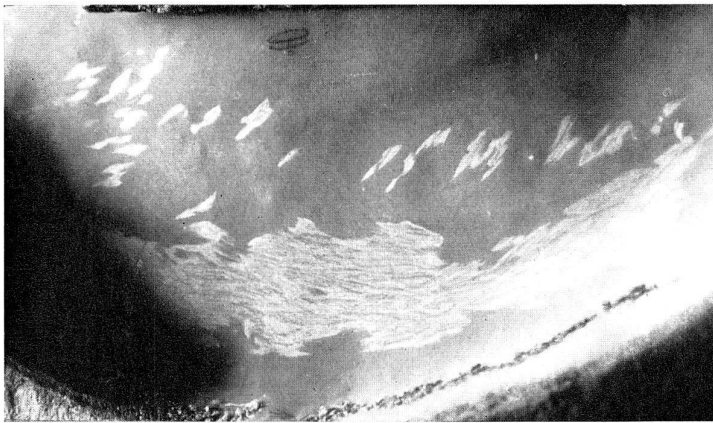


Abb. 21 The signature and date. Notice the different direction of the scratches.

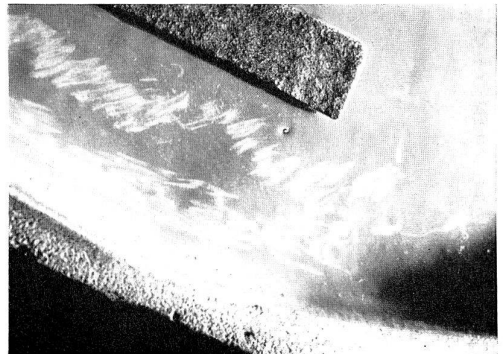


Abb. 22 Example of other scratches undecipherable and approximately the same as those on Thornton Wilson tureen.