

'A Mind to Copy': Inspired by Meissen

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Figure 1. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams by
John Giles Eccardt. 1746
(National Portrait Gallery, London.)

The association between Nicholas Sprimont, part owner of the Chelsea Porcelain Manufactory, Sir Everard Fawkener, private secretary to William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, the second son of King George II, and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, diplomat and sometime British Envoy to the Saxon Court at Dresden was one that had far-reaching effects on the development and history of the ceramic industry in England. The well-known and oft cited letter of 9th June 1751 from Hanbury Williams (fig. 1) to his friend Henry Fox at Holland House, Kensington, where his china was stored, sets the scene. Fawkener had asked Hanbury Williams ‘...to send over models for different Pieces from hence, in order to furnish the Undertakers with good designs... But I thought it better and cheaper for the manufacturers to give them leave to take away any of my china from Holland House, and to copy what they like.’ Thus allowing Fawkener ‘... and anybody He brings with him, to see my China & to take away such pieces as they have a mind to Copy.’

The result of this exchange of correspondence and Hanbury Williams’ generous offer led to an almost instant influx of Meissen designs at Chelsea, a tremendous impetus to the nascent porcelain industry that was to influence the course of events across the industry in England. Just in taking a casual look through the products of most English porcelain factories during the first twenty years, from 1751 to the early 1970s it is difficult not to find some influence from Meissen either in form or decoration.

However, prior to this event one can see some influence that appears to have come from Meissen, perhaps introduced indirectly to our manufacturers, in this case Thomas Frye and Edward Heylyn who were experimenting with making a material whereby ‘a ware might be made of the same nature or kind and equal to, if not exceeding in goodness and beauty, china or porcelain ware imported from abroad’. This wording taken from the first patent granted on 6th December 1744 most probably refers to the porcelains known as ‘The ‘A’ marked class’ and, if this is correct, they were among the first made in England and adopted the formula described in this patent. The small fluted cup (fig. 2) of this class shows perhaps the earliest example of a Meissen influence, not in the form, but in the flower decoration whose whole tone of palette and the manner of drawing are markedly similar to the *indianische Blumen* so favoured by J.G. Höroldt and his fellow decorators in the enamelling workshop at the Meissen factory in the 1720s. The peculiar tone of the palette and the combination of purple, iron-red, yellow and the green foliage outlined in red may be seen on other pieces from Bow, most particularly several mugs in the Freeman Collection.¹ Also from this period comes the two-handled cup form with two moulded scroll handles that appears at



Figure 2. Fluted cup: ‘A’ mark class. Attributed to Heylyn & Frye, Bow First Patent porcelain, 1744-46. (Private Collection)

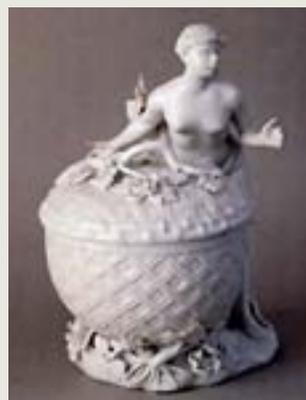


Figure 3. Bow sweetmeat-figure, 1750. 8½ in. (22 cm) high (London Borough of Newham)

Bow circa 1750 and later at Chelsea and Derby.²

The sweetmeat-figure modelled as a *Negress with a Basket*, glazed and biscuit sherds of which have been recovered from the factory site, is directly copied from the original Meissen example first conceived by Eberlein in 1741 (fig. 3) there is a dated Bow version of this of 1750 in the Katz Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.³ Another example of a direct adaptation from Meissen is the *Piedmontese Bagpiper* by J.J. Kaendler (1741) after an engraving of 1739 *Le Jouer de Musette* by Daullé from J. Dumont le Romain.



Figure 4. Meissen basket, Kaendler, 1735 (Errol Manners)

A moulded oval two-handled basket with rope twist and Frauenkopf handles modelled by Kaendler in the 1730s reappears at Bow as early as 1750-52 with typically vibrant famille rose decoration of flowering peony issuing from pierced rockwork.⁴ (fig. 4)

These few isolated examples predate the Hanbury Williams intervention at Chelsea and looking at pieces from the Chelsea factory anything that bares a Meissen resemblance before 1751 appears to have appeared by way of China. An illustration of this is a very rare Chelsea blanc de chine teapot of the raised anchor period of globular form with moulded leaves and a leaf-moulded cover that has a Chinese counterpart from Dehua of circa 1700 and Meissen parallel of 1735, although Chelsea taking the model from Meissen example should not be entirely discounted.⁵ It is interesting to note that Sprimont in the 1740s, during the triangle period, was greatly influenced by his own silver forms and there appears to be no direct influence from Saxony.

In 1749 the situation at Chelsea had been difficult for Sprimont as his partner, Charles Gouyn, had left the concern 'with the loss of part of his funds, and makes at his house, in St. James's Street, very beautiful small porcelain figures'⁶ The astonishing discovery of this document by Jean Hellot, in the library at Caen, led Dragesco to give the former so-called *Girl-in-a-Swing*

pieces to the St. James's Factory of Charles Gouyn. The situation was financially precarious for Sprimont and it appears Sir Everard Fawkener came to his rescue and he was refinanced and then able to advertise in the *Daily Advertiser* a '... Variety of Services for Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, Porringers, Dishes and Plates, of different Forms and Patterns, and a great Variety of Pieces for Ornament in a Taste entirely new.' At the same time he took additional premises in Lawrence Street, he also made some changes to the paste and the factory mark became a raised anchor on an oval pad. Now, this 'taste entirely new' took the form of elegant wares decorated in the Japanese manner inspired by Arita wares and most particularly those decorated in the Kakiemon style, sometimes using Sprimont's own silver designs as the basis for form, but also a large number of pieces adopted the simple octagonal and decagonal forms so popular in Japan. Pieces with the well-known Arita pattern of radiating red panels of white scrolls divided by precious objects.⁷ The Japanese patterns *The Red Dragon, Flying Fox, Flaming Tortoise, Squirrel and Vine, The Three Friends* (pine, prunus and bamboo issuing from banded hedges) were all well established at Meissen by 1735 and the Chelsea copies could have come from Meissen via Hanbury Williams or they may have come from Japanese originals already in England. Many of these patterns occur in the 1688 Inventory and a schedule of 1690 relating to the porcelains at Burghley House.⁸ *The Red Dragon* pattern, for example, is thought to have been a late



Figure 5. Meissen *Platmenage*, 1745-48 (The Duke of Northumberland)

Japanese pattern of 1740 and not of 17th century origin as once considered. The Japanese examples of this however occur on Meissen shapes and it has been suggested this was a Meissen invention rather than Japanese.⁹ The curious *Arita* pattern, called in England *Lady in a Pavilion* pattern occurs at Chelsea and Bow after an *Arita* original, but the pattern does not occur at Meissen.¹⁰ The point to be learnt here is that it is not necessarily a straightforward borrowing from Meissen, but a direct copy from an oriental original.

The late Tim Clarke wrote extensively on Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and the Chelsea factory and discussed in detail the Meissen dinner and dessert service given by Augustus III to Hanbury Williams as a diplomatic gift.^{xii} It was Clarke who identified this as being the service now belonging to the Duke of Northumberland at Alnwick. Of particular interest to us now is the 'Epargne' as it was listed or *Platmenage* painted with a rhinoceros after Durer's woodcut of 1515, the design for this exists as a watercolour drawing at Alnwick by an unknown hand but dating from circa 1749-53, there is also a circular Meissen dish with this design and a Chelsea oval dish

in the Untermyer Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. (figs. 5 & 6) The finials of the various tureens from the service make an interesting comparison: a partridge, a chick and two small pheasants all appear as Chelsea models. A dinner plate with a stag in rut has a Chelsea counterpart in a lobed circular dish, the design having its origin in an engraving by J. E. Ridinger of circa 1738-40 'Ein Brunst Hirsch' and the flowers after Johann Wilhelm Weinmann's *Phytanthoza-Iconographia*, published in Regensburg 1737-45. Clarke continues his discussion with details of the dessert service, described briefly as having 'a brown edge and painted with flowers'. He publishes three lists and then discusses the possible pieces that may have been a source for Chelsea and Sprimont and might have seen on his visit to Holland House in 1751.

The first documentary piece of undoubted Meissen inspiration is the fluted oval dish in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. It is painted with a typical Meissen style harbour scene of a type associated with F. Herold or perhaps Heintze, the border has typical *deutsche Blumen* and is supposedly signed with the initials WD and the date 1751. Although other pieces of this genre exist including peach-shaped cream-jugs and other tea wares painted with idyllic wooded landscapes with figures and distant buildings; there are also wares precisely painted with *Holzschnitt Blumen*, one such example shows not only

Figure 6. Chelsea oval dish, 1755. 12¾ in. (32.5 cm) wide
Untermyer Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





Figure 7. Chelsea oval dish, inscribed WD 1751, raised anchor mark. 8 in. (20.5 cm) wide (Katz Collection, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

this type of flower decoration but a leaf-dish form taken from Meissen and later copied at Bow. By the mid 1750s naturalism in general was the fashion and *deutsche Blumen* dominate the scene, not just at Chelsea, but all the English porcelain factories adopted this idiom, each displaying their own nuances of style and palette.

The moulded service made at Meissen for the Berlin merchant Johann Ernst Gotzkowsky by Eberlein in 1741 was decorated in relief with a wreath of flowers and became a popular design at Meissen that was then copied at Chelsea, perhaps via the Hanbury Williams pieces and appears as a staple part of the Chelsea repertoire throughout the 1750s and described in the 1755 and 1756 sale catalogues as '*damask'd*'. Flower painting at most factories was the least expensive and among the most popular of decorative styles. The vogue for naturalism extended to some magnificent bird painting; the three vases shown here span two decades but show admirably how the style was handled when it came to England, the Chelsea and Worcester examples being mid 1750s following the Meissen example of circa 1745. The extensive range of Chelsea leaf-moulded tablewares are Meissen inspired but Sprimont made a great show of the variety he produced which is apparent from a study of the auction sale catalogues of 1755 and 1756. Some of these forms are mentioned in Francis Thomas's Stock Book as early as 1751, by the mid 1750's however the list of various forms including tureens and boxes is extensive. By 1756, when Derby came under William Duesbury's management,

the proprietors advertised in the *Daily Advertiser* offering for auction in London 'fine Figures, Jars et after the finest Dresden models' and in May 1757 they were advertising 'the largest variety of the Derby or second Dresden' yet his products are perhaps rather more influenced by Chelsea than direct copies from Meissen.

The proliferation of Meissen style in England did not always come via Chelsea, for example the unusual Bow octagonal sugar-box decorated with scroll panels was perhaps taken from an Arita original, and the exact form came from Meissen in the 1730s, yet the Chelsea version of this is of a form unknown elsewhere. This plagiarism and copying is a complicated mixture of blending style and form from different sources. Some patterns used at Meissen have oriental origins, especially the Arita and Kakiemon patterns, for example the well-known Two Quail pattern originating in Japan in the 1680s, copied at Meissen in the 1730s, Chinese porcelain was painted with this design in Holland in the 1730s, variations occur at Chantilly 1735-40, at Chelsea and at Bow in the 1750s where the pattern was called *Partridge*; it is mentioned in Bowcock's contemporary Memorandum Book of 1756, it occurs later at Worcester in 1770s and 80s.

The so-called Hampton Court hexagonal vase and cover form occurs in Arita porcelain, Meissen and Chelsea; in one instance the decoration of Höroldt chinoiserie figures appears on a Chelsea vase directly copying the Meissen original.¹² In this case the Turkish figures in these scenes are taken from Charles François Silvestre (1667-1738) engravings entitled '*Differents Habillements de Turcs Dediez A Monseigneur Le Duc de Bourgogne*'. Direct copying of Höroldt chinoiseries is extremely rare on English porcelain. The extremely rare Worcester helmet-shaped jug after a silver model has a Dehua, Meissen and Bow counterpart (figs. 8a & b). Yet, the frequently seen cos-let-tuce leaf-moulded sauceboat, so popular at Worcester and later copied by William Littler at Longton Hall in Staffordshire and West Pans in Scotland is apparently taken from Meissen. While delivering this lecture at Art Antiques London I asked the audience if anyone had seen a Meissen example and one gentleman assured me the model exists and that he had one, I hoped to be able to illustrate it here but the owner has fallen silent.

Among the successful English factories Worcester is perhaps the least inspired by Meissen. The early chinoiseries of the 1750's show no connection with the factory, yet the trailing flowers are perhaps loosely inspired by Stadler style *indianische Blumen*. Their rare forays into European figure painting in idyllic landscapes may however owe themselves to a Meissen origin and the flower painting of *deutsche Blumen* ultimately derive from Meissen, as is the case with the other English factories. By the 1770s, when Worcester was producing wares with lavish ground colours, most notably scale and wet



Figure 8. Meissen ewer, 1730. 6¼ in. (16 cm) high (Errol Manners)
Worcester ewer, 1752. 4⅞ in. (12.4 cm) high (Simon Spero)

blue, green and yellow, they were looking to Sèvres rather than Meissen for their lead although Meissen had introduced a large range of different ground colours in the 1730s. Their huge output of wares decorated in underglaze blue and the overglaze transfer printed pieces owe little to Saxony. The exception here is a plate and a teacup and saucer painted in underglaze blue with *deutsche Blumen*. The cup form is certainly taken from a Meissen model, the imitation blue crossed swords mark of Meissen, adapted from the Electoral Arms of Saxony. This was a familiar mark at Worcester, frequently seen

on the wares decorated in London. There was clearly a perception among the buying public that Dresden or Saxon china was considered prestigious and upmarket. It was Sprimont as the 'Undertaker' of the Chelsea concern that petitioned parliament in the early 1750s to stop the import of Saxon china to encourage the growth of his factory.¹³ Very occasionally Worcester seems to have copied Meissen direct, perhaps even as a replacement as is the case with a teabowl with the Meissen *Tischmuster* pattern, but this is exceptional. The ogee moulded chocolate-cup form is taken directly from Meissen, a popular form at Worcester and there is a dated Bow blue and white example of 1764 recently acquired by the British Museum.¹⁴ The partridge tureens based on a Kaendler model of the 1740s and copied at Chelsea, Bow, Worcester and Derby are another example of the quick transition from London to the provinces.

A rare lobed oval Bow teapot, circa 1752-53, with Kakiemon style flowering prunus in the Freeman Collection, after a Japanese original, has a Meissen counterpart in the Arnhold Collection.¹⁵

Turning to the production of figures, the English factories relied heavily on Meissen models for their inspiration. The Chelsea figures of the triangle period with the exception of a Print Seller after Bouchardon have no Meissen parallels. In 1749 Joseph Willems arrived from Tournai to take charge of modelling at Chelsea, he was a skilled modeller in terracotta and he introduced a peculiarly Flemish style to the modelling at Chelsea. However he began with an outstanding series of birds based on engravings by George Edwards.¹⁶ There are a few rare Italian Comedy figure models of the raised



Figure 9. Chelsea Chinaman, raised red anchor mark, circa 1750-52. 4½ in. (10.5 cm) high (Private Collection)

anchor period, for example Dr. Boloardo, Pantalone¹⁷ and Scaramouche based on models by Peter Reinicke and another figure of a Peasant with a hurdy-gurdy and of a Chinese Boy with a leaf hat,¹⁸ yet the Meissen influence didn't begin to make itself strongly felt until the red anchor period. The soft Chelsea paste gave a much gentler appearance to these figures, the colouring frequently pale and sparse. A range of Italian Comedy figures appear based on the Meissen models by J.J. Kaendler and Peter Reinicke for the Duke of Weissenfels of 1743-45 largely derived from Joullain after Callot.¹⁹ A Chinese family group based on an engraving *Les délices de l'Enfance* by J.J. Balthou after

François Boucher appears in the raised/ red anchor period and was later modelled by Kaendler, Reinicke and Meyer for Meissen in about 1750; in this instance the source was the engraving rather than the Meissen interpretation. A very rare group of Pantalone and Columbine after Kaendler's model of 1736 later remodelled in 1741, was produced at Chelsea and a seated Columbine playing the hurdy-gurdy has parallels at Chelsea, Bow and Longton Hall. A small raised anchor Chinaman has its origins in a model by P. Reinicke (fig. 9). The list of parallels is endless and it would be tedious to list them all here, but I wish to emphasise how very important Meissen was as a source of design and decoration on English porcelain. London was the first port of call, Chelsea and Bow, and then this quickly spread to Derby and Longton Hall. Although Willems at Chelsea was creative in his own right, producing models without Meissen prototypes, in his distinctive style, many figures and groups are ultimately taken from Meissen's broad repertoire. Kaendler's spirited group of the *Indiscreet Harlequin* of 1740 occurs at Bow and *The Mockery of Age* inspired a Derby version.²⁰ The Vauxhall factory made a figure of a *Man playing the Lute* in circa 1755 after Kaendler's model of some ten years earlier. The well known *Tyrolean Dancers*, that wonderfully swirling model by Eberlein from the 1730's was copied at Chelsea in the late red/early gold anchor period, and also at Bow and Derby. Kaendler's *Count Bruhl's Tailor* has a parallel in the Derby *Welsh Taylor and His Wife*. The small standing goat by Kaendler has a striking counterpart at Derby in the early 'dry edge' period of the 1750's. The *Stallions with a Turkish and Blackamoor Attendant*, a strong but late Meissen model of 1753 were successfully copied at Longton Hall.²¹ The striking figures of a *Turk and Companion* were also taken directly from Meissen and occur at Longton Hall, Liverpool, currently attributed to Samuel Gilbody's factory and also in creamware and saltglaze versions from Staffordshire.²²

The Meissen Monkey Band *Affenkapelle* by Kaendler were modelled before 1753 and later reworked by Kaendler and Reinicke in the 60s; there are rare copies from Derby in the 1750s and Chelsea of the gold anchor period, 1760. (fig. 12)

Pug dogs, so familiar in English porcelain, were made at most factories and most derive from the series of mops conceived by Kaendler in the 1740s, in both recumbent and seated form. The larger group of a *Pug bitch with her Puppy* by Kaendler of 1741 was copied in England in the early 19th century either at Coalport or Chamberlain's factory, Worcester. Various small models of sheep by Kaendler, a recumbent ewe and lamb occur at Chelsea in the raised/red anchor period and also at Longton Hall. Among these animal models William Cookworthy's factory at Plymouth made a very wooden copy of a *Seated Hare* after Kaendler's spirited model of the 1740's. (figs. 11a & b)



Figure 10. Chelsea Nun, red anchor mark, circa 1755. 5½ in. (14 cm) high (Private Collection)
 Liverpool nun, Richard Chaffers' factory, circa 1762- (whereabouts unknown)

Religious figures, especially the Holy Family and Saints are exceptionally rare in Protestant England, but monks and nuns are plentiful, the seated version of a nun by Kaendler occurs at Chelsea, Bow, Longton Hall and Chaffers' factory, Liverpool (figs 10a & b).

Shortly after delivering this lecture at Art Antiques London I went to Dresden and Meissen to see the exhibitions commemorating the 300th anniversary of the founding of the factory.²³ It was gratifying to see there so many pieces that inspired our manufacturers to emulate their innovative and sophisticated designs. Here too was an exhibition showing contemporary Meissen porcelain, as cutting edge in its way as in the early years yet not as easily plagiarised by our contemporary manufacturers who are bound by regulations limiting the industrial espionage, which was rife in the 18th century.



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Notes

1. Anton Gabszewicz and Geoffrey Freeman, *Bow Porcelain The Collection formed by Geoffrey Freeman*, London 1982, pp. 23 & 28, nos. 1, 10 & 11.
2. Anton Gabszewicz and Geoffrey Freeman, *op.cit.*, London 1982, p. 42, no. 40.
3. Exhibition Catalogue 'Bow Porcelain 1744-1776', British Museum October 1959-April 1960, figs. 6 & 7, no. 44 and Anton Gabszewicz and Geoffrey Freeman, *op.cit.*, London 1982, p. 121, no. 184.
4. Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, *The Arnhold Collection of Meissen Porcelain 1710-50*,



Figure 11. Hare: Meissen, Kaendler, 1745. 6 in (15.2 cm) high (Brian Haughton Antiques) Plymouth, circa 1768. 6½ in. (15.5 cm) high (National Trust, Fenton House, Hampstead)

New York 2008, p. 448, no. 195.

5. Frank Tilley, *Teapots and Tea*, Newport 1954, p. 34, no. 57, pl. XVI for the example then in the Statham Collection.
6. Bernard Dragesco, *English Ceramics in French Archives*, London 1993, p. 14.
7. Referred to in the 1755 Chelsea sale catalogue as 'Red Panel Pattern'
8. Exhibition Catalogue, 'The Burghley Porcelains, An Exhibition from the Burghley House Collection and based on the 1688 Inventory and 1690 Devonshire Schedule', Japan Society, New York 1986.
9. John Ayers, Oliver Impey, J.V.G. Mallet et al., *Porcelain for Palaces*, OCS London 1990, p. 262
10. Mentioned in the Chelsea sale catalogue of 1756 as 'Old Lady Pattern'
11. T.H. Clarke, 'Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and the Chelsea Factory', *ECC Transactions*, Vol. 13, Pt. 2 (1988), pp. 110-120. 55-78.
12. Abraham L. den Blaauwen, *Meissen Porcelain in the Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam 2000, pp. 127-129, no. 75
13. Elizabeth Adams, *Chelsea Porcelain*, London 1990, p. 14, fn. 11 (British Library, Lansdown MSS, no. 829, fol. 21).
14. Inscribed 'Elizth, Mackly./ 1764' Anon. sale, Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, u
15. Anton Gabszewicz & Geoffrey Freeman, *op. cit.*, 1982, p. 48, no. 51, col. pl. III and Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 357, no. 125.
16. George Edwards, *Natural History of Uncommon Birds*, London 1743-1751.
17. Yvonne Hackenbroch, *Chelsea and other English Porcelain Pottery and Enamel in the Irwin Untermyer Collection*, London 1957, p. 22, Pl. 39, Fig. 14 after Reinicke's model of 1743-44 and *ibid.* p. 21, Pl. 21, Fig. 13.
18. F. Severne Mackenna, *Chelsea Porcelain The Gold Anchor Wares*, Leigh on Sea, 1952, Pl. 36, Fig. 74.



Figure 12. Derby monkey musician, 1756 (Errol Manners)

19. Published in Riccoboni, *Histoire du Théâtre Italien*, Paris 1727.
20. For the Meissen originals in the Arnholt Collection, see Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, *op. cit.*, 2008, pp. 263 & 264, nos. 51 & 52.
21. Bernard Watney, *Longton Hall Porcelain*, London 1957, p. 44, pls. 63B &
22. Bernard Watney, *op. cit.*, London 1957, Pls. 42 & 43.
23. Ulrich Pietsch and Claudia Banz (eds.), *Triumph of the Blue Swords*, Dresden 2010.