

Yellow-ground tea caddy  
Painted by Adam Friedrich von Löwenfinck  
after his own drawings

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Meissen ca. 1730  
Underglaze blue swords mark  
Height: 13,9 cm (with lid), 11,1 cm (without)

**Provenance**

Coll. Baron Born, Budapest 2021. Lepke 04.12.1929 no. 92 plate 30  
Coll. Margarete und Franz Oppenheimer, inv.-no. 311 in red  
(Den Blaauwen no. 210; Sotheby's New York 14.09.2021 no. 103)

# LANGELOH

## PORCELAIN

The model of the large rectangular tea caddy with yellow ground is very rare. In the Collection Dr. Schneider, Bavarian National Museum at Lustheim Palace, there is a baluster-shaped, fourfolded tea caddy with a yellow ground (Weber Vol. II No. 426, dated 1735 and Rückert 1966 no. 366 plate 93, dated 1730-35). The Munich Residence has a rectangular fluted tea caddy with yellow ground, which is part of a large dinner service (Rückert 1966 p. 373 plate 95, dated 1730/35).

Our large tea caddy is painted by the young Adam Friedrich von Löwenfinck. The two portraits are based on original drawings by himself, which were published by Otto Walcha (in *Keramos* 34/1966 pp. 130-135 fig. 5, black and white) and Ulrich Pietsch (in the large exhibition catalogue of 2014 no. 3, coloured) (see figs below).



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The comparison between the original drawings and the porcelain paintings shows the closest similarity very clearly. In the case of the couple, Löwenfinck has omitted the horse in the background as well as the wine jug, thus changing the farewell scene of his drawing into that of a couple loving and embracing each other. He proceeded similarly with the other scene, in which two boys seem to be pulling a helpless old woman to the ground (Walcha p. 132). Here he has reinterpreted the entire “unattractive scene”, as Walcha calls it, in a playful way, without having to make many concessions from his original drawing. He had also essentially retained the basic tone of the colours.

Our tea caddy is a great rarity. So far, only one faience and one porcelain directly based on Löwenfinck’s drawings have become known:

- This is the tankard made of Bayreuth faience from the Zschocke Collection (Pietsch 2014 figs. 34, 35 and *Keramikfreunde der Schweiz* 34/1956 cover) and
- the plate from the Klemperer Collection (Pietsch 2014 figs. 45, 46; cat. Klemperer no. 126 fig. 21)

In 1966, the year in which the knowledgeable archivist of the Meissen manufactory, Otto Walcha, published Löwenfinck’s drawings for the first time (loc. cit.), not one single porcelain was known to have been painted according to them.

In his Löwenfinck catalogue (pp. 68 ff.), Pietsch has published a series of Löwenfinck porcelains that are similar in style to the original drawings, but which are not directly based on them.

In this respect, our tea box represents a hitherto unseen enrichment for Löwenfinck’s œuvre — neither Den Blaauwen, nor Pietsch, nor Sotheby’s, who researched the box before us, have seen that.

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## PORCELAIN

### THE WATERCOLOUR MASTER DRAWINGS

The Dresden Porcelain Collection acquired the sheets after 1918 under the manufactory director Max Adolf Pfeiffer (1875-1957). They are five watercolours, each with three different scenes. Together, therefore, there are fifteen single depictions, which were painted by Löwenfinck but not signed.

Pietsch has the merit of determining the origin of the East Asian motifs that inspired Löwenfinck's drawings. They go back to Chinese porcelains of the Yongzheng era (1723-1739) from the Royal Collections of Augustus the Strong (Pietsch p. 75).

With figure 49 (p. 77), Pietsch refers to a Chinese bowl from the Dresden collection, which is also found on a Meissen tureen (fig. 50 cat. no. 63, Coll. Krieger) (see the following illustrations).



Löwenfinck, however, was not only guided by the motifs, but also adopted the dotted way of depicting the ground and the garment folds. Walcha had already commented on this subject in 1966 (p. 123): „Im Gegensatz zu ihrer Subtilität (der Hauptszene) sind die bescheidenen Requisiten, die flüchtig das Terrain der Reitenden andeuten sollen, wie Blumen, Kräuter, Gräser und Steine mit einer gewissen Nonchalance behandelt. Trotzdem erkennt man gerade in ihren grafischen Elementen, den Wellenlinien, sich überschneidenden Bogenreihungen, den lanzettförmigen Blättern, den Schraffuren, und Pünktelien, die Handschrift Löwenfincks. Die sichtbar werdende Abstrahierungstendenz findet sich in den Gewandfalten der Figuren und der Fellbehandlung der dargestellten Tiere wieder, sodass durch die scheinbaren Nebensächlichkeiten eine Stilvergleichung ohne weiteres ermöglicht wird. Die Farbigkeit der Blätter wird natürlich durch den Chamois-Ton des überdies vergilbten Papiers, vor allem aber durch den Aquarellauftrag sehr



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*geschmälert. Trotzdem ist die stereotype Farbauswahl Löwenfincks zu erkennen und ohne Mühe als frische und leuchtend auf Porzellan vorstellbar“.*

To this day, Walcha's reflections have lost none of their convincing power.

### DATING

Our tea caddy also contributes to re-evaluating the question of dating. The painting on our box was undoubtedly not done by the experienced Löwenfinck; it was certainly done during his apprenticeship (November 1727 to February 1734) — as shown by the still clearly more restrained brushwork and the not so dynamic painting style. We therefore estimate that it was painted around 1730 (3rd year of apprenticeship), as done by the catalogue of the Born Collection. This is in good agreement with the dating of the master drawings, which Pietsch estimated at around 1730 (2014 no. 1-5).

Walcha emphasises how important it was for the ambitious trainees to have template sheets at their disposal in order to develop something new from them. For this, they were given more time and appreciation by the manufactory. In this respect, Walcha refers (p. 132) to Löwenfinck's letter of justification of 6.11.1736 from Bayreuth to the commission member Damian Pflug. As the Zschocke tankard shows, Löwenfinck took his master sheets there with him.

Our tea caddy therefore supports the dating of the watercolours by Pietsch. The dating of Den Blaauwen and the Sotheby's catalogue (op. cit.) as 1730-35 is thus too broad. This is also supported by the absence of incised marks ("Grillenmarken"), which were introduced in Meissen at the beginning of the 1730s.

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### Literature

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- Wark, Ralph: The Wark Collection: Early Meissen porcelain. Cummer Gallery of Art. Jacksonville 1984