



Allegorical Figure Group "Commerce"

27 cm

10.6299212598425

Meissen, 19th Century

Porcelain

27 cm (10⁵/₈ inches)

Oval rock base with relief ornamental borders. Mercury, the messenger of the gods, sits on a laced bale with winged feet, a winged hat, and a pink cloth patterned with gold stars. He places his right foot on a barrel. His left hand holds a book. With his right hand, he writes on a tablet attached with a laurel wreath to a marbled column stump above a profiled pedestal. Accompanying him is a putto with a purse of coins, seated on a war chest. Polychrome painting with rich gold decoration. Designed by Michel Victor Acier. Crossed swords mark.

Slightly modified in detail from a figural group designed by Acier in 1772/1774 from the so-called "Great Russian Commission" for Tsarina Catherine II of Russia, known as Catherine the Great. The group symbolizes Russia's status as an emerging trading power. The successful naval Battle of Çesme (July 1770) against the Ottomans secured Russia's influence in the Aegean and thus access to internationally important trade routes.

Literature:

See Von Spee, Classical Porcelain Sculpture of the Meissen Manufactory, (dissertation), Bonn, 2004, Cat. No. 28, pp. 229f.; Pietsch, Meissen für den Zaren, No. 180.