Cup and saucer - With trompe l'oeil engravings and so-called faux bois (wood grain imitating) painted decoration

Ceramics and Glass Collection

Accession Nr.:	5602.a-b
Manufacturer:	Nymphenburg Porcelain Manufactory
Date of production:	late 18th century
Place of production:	München - Nymphenburg
Inscription:	csésze: alján, száraz bélyegzővel benyomott bajor címer; a masszába nyomva: felfelé mutató talpas nyíl; alj: alján, száraz bélyegzővel benyomott bajor címer; a masszába nyomva: 2 (?); félkörív
Materials:	porcelain
Techniques:	cast; gilded; painted in polychrome overglaze; painted with purple (purpur)
Dimensions:	height (cup): 6,4 cm legnagyobb szélesség (csésze): 9,4 cm átmérő (csésze-száj): 7,5 x 7,3 cm átmérő (csésze-talp): 4,4 cm magasság (alj): 3,1 cm átmérő (alj): 13,5 x 13,3 cm

The use of imitation to produce the illusion of various techniques and materials, such as Chinese lacquer painting, cameo carving, mosaic images, minerals, cards, and ribbons, can be found in the European porcelain art of the second half of the 18th century. Painted simulated wood grain decoration had been known since 1760 in French faience wares, where its name *faux bois* comes from, and in time was also employed by certain German manufacturers. Similar objects were produced in Tata, Hungary starting from the middle of the 1770s (see here).

The realistic, light-colored imitation wood grain and the minute purple paintings that appear to be engravings tacked on to the surface of this cup and saucer made at the Nymphenburg Porcelain Manufactory attest to high levels of technical and artistic skill. The figure of a horseman in the engraving on the cup and the small stone bridge that can be seen in the background of the landscape in the middle of the saucer are painted in a manner that emulates old engravings. Even the damage to the paper is depicted with such precision that it fools the eye. These items with extraordinary ornamentation were considered fine wares that flaunted the mastery of porcelain decorators, and so they were primarily made as ornamental pieces for show.

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