

Worcester by James Giles.....an interesting Cup and Saucer in Green.



When I first saw this cup and saucer, I thought it had been repaired because the green painting and the position of the gilding were very crude. It was unlike anything I had seen previously!

The first challenge was to look at porcelain with the cross swords...Dresden and Bristol came to mind. But it is soft paste, which ruled out both of them.

I was then reading 'The First Century of English Porcelain' by Moore Binns (1906) which on Worcester at page 16 on colour and glazes, he states 'Copper greens can only be produced in about two tints, the one a soft grass-green, the other a turquoise- tinted green. They are both merely stained fluxes, and are semi-transparent; it is therefore necessary, if any depth of colour is required, to lay them on the china quite thickly, with the result that the colour can be felt slightly with the finger...'

Then at page 74 (on Worcester) it is stated 'While writing of ground colours, we cannot omit the exceedingly beautiful 'copper green' or 'apple green.' This colour is quite peculiar, and its technical peculiarities we have endeavoured to explain [earlier]. It will always be found that on pieces with copper green ground, the gilding is on the surface of the white china, not on the green; this is because the green is of so soft a nature that were the gold laid upon it, the burning necessary to fix the gold would also melt the green, when the gold would be entirely absorbed and its lustre destroyed.'

Moore Binns also states at page 93 (on Worcester marks) that ‘the Dresden cross swords mark seems to indicate that they were not casually painted ....and that they were so marked to distinguish them as special pieces.’ He further states that the ‘9’ was the most often encountered numeral but no means unique. My conclusion is that this cup and saucer are quite rare because the colours were difficult to produce and mass production not straightforward. This is supported by the comments in this book on marks on Worcester porcelain. It was most probably painted in the *atelier* of James Giles.





As an aside, these older books contain wonderful information not found elsewhere in the ‘modern’ books on Ceramics.

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