

The Bagpiper – a possible inspiration for the figure



Statue of the Bagpiper

This paper is suggesting a possible inspiration for the figure of the Bagpiper, made by several early manufacturers.

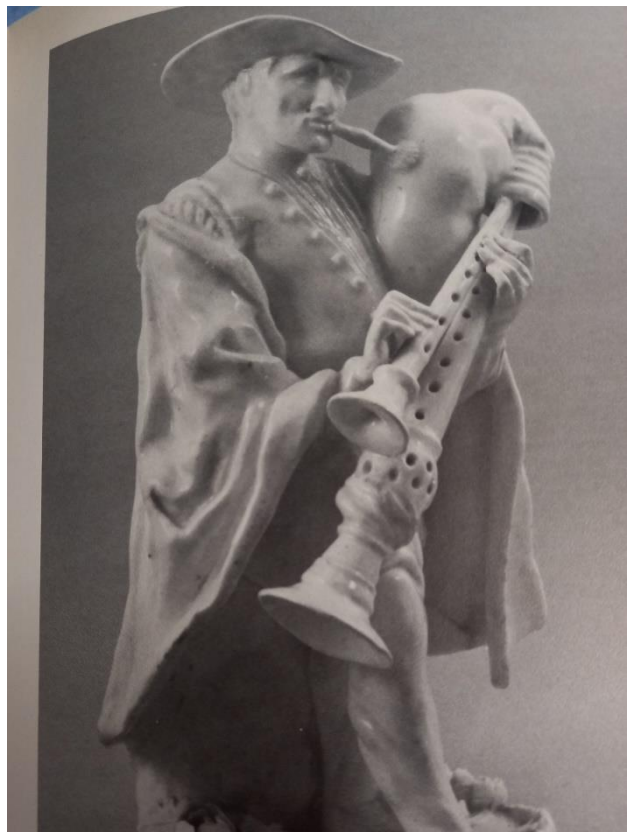
Examples exist of such figures made in porcelain by Meissen, Bow, Zurich, Capodimonte, West Pans and also in Staffordshire pottery. The example I found of the Staffordshire figure dates from the 19th century. There are probably others.

My illustrations are of the best known which are probably Meissen and Bow. These date from around 1740/50. Both did figures of a standing bagpiper playing the Piedmontese pipes.

Both also produced figures of a seated bagpipe player, playing more traditional pipes. This figure is often represented as Harlequin, but in several examples he is dressed as a shepherd boy.



A Meissen figure



A Bow figure



A Bow Harlequin figure



A Meissen Harlequin figure

There is a print by Jacques Dumont le Romain, finished by the French engraver Jean Daullé, of a Piedmontese bagpiper. This is dated 1739 and is generally accepted as a source for a Meissen figure of 1741 and 1745. The Bow factory produced its 'copy' of the Meissen figure around 1750/52



An earlier source of the seated bagpiper, which may be found more commonly, is thought to be a bronze, dating from the 16th century, by Giovanni Di Bologna (Giambologna). He was a Flemish sculptor who studied first in Antwerp and then moved to Rome in 1550, later moving to Florence where he worked for Francisco de Medici. He died in Florence in 1561.

It is suggested that Kaendler used this as his inspiration for the Meissen figure.

Other porcelain manufacturers have copied this style of figure, several using a harlequin figure in the same seated position.



The Bagpiper in Bronze

I'd like to suggest another figure that could join the source possibilities.

Walking through the V&A one will notice a large Portland stone statue of a seated bagpiper. The work of Caius Gabriel Cibber.

Cibber was a Danish sculptor born in 1630 in Flensburg which is now in Germany. He was the son of the cabinet maker to the Danish King. Prior to arriving in England, just before the Restoration in 1660, he had studied in Italy. He continued to work in England until his death in London in 1700. He worked on sculpture with Sir Christopher Wren on St Paul's Cathedral and other sites in London, and from 1688 to 1691 he worked at Chatsworth House on figures for the House, Chapel and Gardens.

It is possible that during his Italian studies he saw the Giovanni Di Bologna bronze and used this as his model for the work in the V&A which came to the museum from the grounds of Stowe in Buckinghamshire.

Looking at the Cibber statue, the position of the figure is similar to that of the Bologna figure, and it would seem to be a contender as inspiration for the porcelain figures.

References: Information on Cibber and the statue from the museum item plate. Other information on Cibber from Wikipedia/Google

Photos: Own photography - and from Google

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