

9. Transport of goods from the Netherlands to Dresden

Having acquired the porcelain with the help of local merchants, it was Van den Bempden's or the St. Martin's responsibility to arrange its transport to Dresden. The organisation of this is well documented, although the sources reveal more information about the first lot that Lagnasco bought in 1716–1717 than the later purchases.

While the purchases were finalised in late January, the winter conditions prohibited any transport and delayed the shipment for three months. "Regarding the delivery of wares, it is better to wait four or five weeks until winter has passed", wrote Van den Bempden in January 1717, who also advises Lagnasco to use the time to "apply for a passport of the States so as not to be subject to the export duties that individuals must pay".¹⁵⁸ Consequently, the wares were stored in the merchant's warehouse, a service for which Van den Bempden charged "only 25 guilders".¹⁵⁹

Not only the date, but also the method of transport was discussed by letter, which would either be by ship to Hamburg and from there up the river Elbe to Dresden, or overland by carriage to Saxony. Both routes were risky, Lagnasco warned, either because of "Swedish privateers crossing the estuary of the Elbe river";¹⁶⁰ or because "there are many large crates, and it would be even more dangerous to send them by coach. We are in a season where frost can set in overnight".¹⁶¹ These warnings notwithstanding, Augustus the Strong ordered that the purchases be transported overland:

[...] if possible, I would like you to send the purchases you made very soon, and also by land. One would anyway have to use one coach for every crate, and, time and roads permitting, one could also put it all on sledges, which would be quite practical.¹⁶²



Fig. 13. Portrait of Franz Kreuchauff, by Johann Martin Berningeroth after Elias Gottlob Haußmann, 1747.

Having a well-connected and influential person such as Van den Bempden at hand was particularly helpful when it came to assessing shipping prices and export duties. "I am doing what I can to convince my friends to estimate the

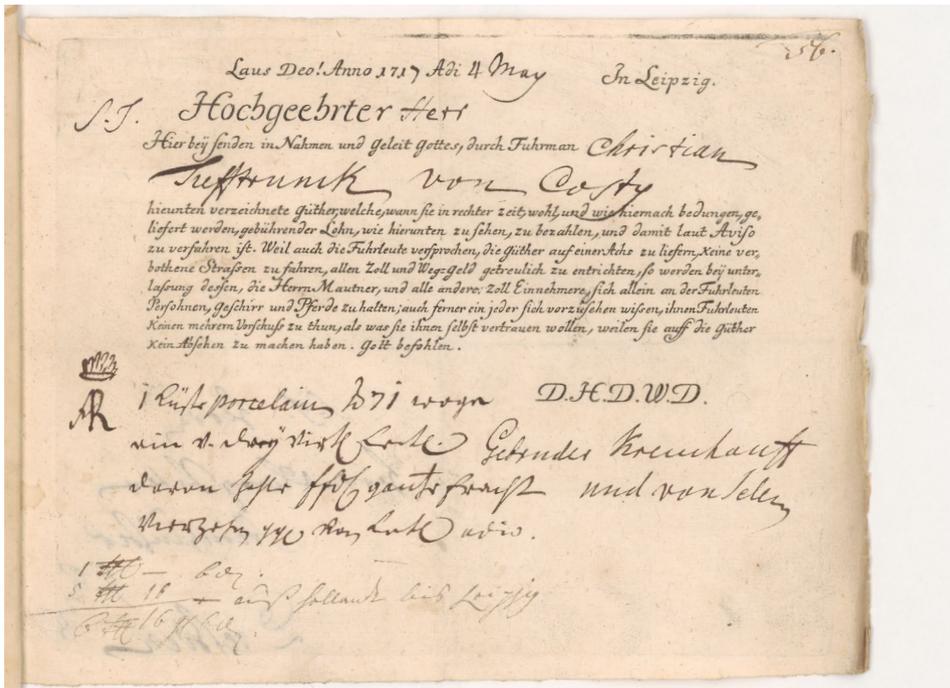


Fig. 14. Delivery note for one crate of porcelain from Leipzig to Dresden.

acquisitions at a lower price; otherwise one has to pay a lot to customs", he wrote the day before the goods left. At the same time, he complained: "if you had allowed me to operate freely, I probably could have arranged for the purchases to leave without paying anything [...]"¹⁶³

The carriages left Amsterdam on 6 March 1717.¹⁶⁴ The dispatch company, Amsterdam-based Grommée & Comp., was owned by the merchants Diederick Grommée (1693–1772) and his cousin Arend van der Waeyen (1685–1767) until the latter transferred his share to Grommée in 1720.¹⁶⁵ The company delivered goods to today's Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and was well experienced in long-distance haulage.

The documents concerning the shipments of both acquisitions repeatedly state that the wares were not transported non-stop to Dresden, but were first entrusted to the care of associates in Leipzig. An undated invoice from Grommée & Comp. lists eight barrels and 62 crates of various sizes and values. They were marked with the royal insignia, "AR" (Augustus Rex) and "CDL" (Comte de Lagnasco) and transported on six carriages by the coachmen Hans Echolt and Simon Haverman.¹⁶⁶ A delivery note dated 3 April 1717¹⁶⁷ confirms that all the crates and barrels arrived in Dresden about four weeks later.

A second, separate invoice created by Van den Bempden on 10 April 1717 lists an additional crate of porcelain ("No. 71") to be shipped by the same company, accompanied by the coachman Hans Michel Sauvbre.¹⁶⁸ It specifies that the crate had to be transported to Leipzig and delivered to the "brothers Kreuchhauff and Van Seelen".¹⁶⁹ This refers to Johann Heinrich von Seelen (1687–1762) and his brother-in-law Franz Kreuchauff (1649–1746) (fig. 13). The Kreuchauffs were a Leipzig merchant family involved in the textile trade.¹⁷⁰ Franz Kreuchauff resided at Peterstrasse, a hub of trade and stock turnover in Leipzig, and, in addition to operating the linen trade, ran a transport company.¹⁷¹ An insurance document from May 1717 records the shipment of "one crate of porcelain" from the "brothers Kreuchauff and Van Seelen" to an unspecified destination.¹⁷² As the document is marked with the royal insignia "AR" and a crown (fig. 14), it must be assumed that His Majesty ordered the shipment, although it is unknown why this crate was sent separately.

Concerning the St. Martin's acquisitions, there is no other information about the cargo's transportation besides what they convey in their letters. Here, the name of Philippe DuMont repeatedly appears as the addressee. Almost nothing is known about Philippe DuMont, but he supposedly founded the Huguenot community in Leipzig, and resided as both merchant and banker "Am Marckte".¹⁷³ Philippe DuMont also acted as one of one of the creditors for purchases in Holland (see chapter 6.2), but apart from this, he rarely appears in the historical sources relating to porcelain purchases for Augustus the Strong.¹⁷⁴

Since no receipt from the Saxon court officials seems to have survived, it cannot definitely be determined how long it took for the coaches to travel from Amsterdam to Dresden. The documents above specify 10 April 1717 as the day on which crate no. 71 left Amsterdam, and it left Leipzig on 4 May, so this overland journey took approximately 25 days.

In 1722, the distance by road between Leipzig and Dresden was 26.5 leagues or 13.25 postal miles (about 120 kilometres). One league was equal to the distance a person could cover when walking for one hour at a speed of ca. 4.5 kilometres per hour. One postal mile corresponded to 9,06 kilometres. Considering external circumstances that could influence a journey such as the weather and the conditions of the roads, carriages, and horses, it took at least two to three days to cover 13.25 postal miles. Contemporary maps such as the "Chur Sächsische Postkarte" (Post map of the Electorate of Saxony), created in 1719 on Augustus the Strong's behalf by Adam Friedrich Zürner (1679–1742), shows that the usual road from Leipzig to Dresden ran through the cities of Grimma, Colditz, and Nossen, entering Dresden from the southwest.¹⁷⁵ As crate no. 71 left Leipzig on 4 May 1717, it must have arrived at the court around 7 May 1717, almost one month after being dispatched from Amsterdam.