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THE CERAMIC WARE OF THE POTTER RUDOLPH CHRIST AT
BETHABARA AND SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA, 1786-1821

Stanley South

Excavations at the eighteenth century Moravian town site of
Bethabara, North Carolina, in 1966, revealed that the potter Rudolph
Christ was making a polychrome mottled glazed slipware using English
type molds, between 1786 and 1789, during which time he operated a
shop there. In 1789, after the death of the master potter Gottfried
Aust, Christ moved to Salem and took over the management of the pottery
shop, where he remained as master potter until he retired in 1821. He
continued to make the 'Tortoise-shell' ware, as well as milk pots, pans
and other utilitarian forms.

Excavations at Salem in 1968, and documents found in the Salem
Archives, revealed that Christ was making tin-enamelled ware, or
faience in white, blue, green and yellow, after 1793, and fragments of
white and green glazed faience were recovered. Some of these were
painted with blue designs over a white glaze, on ware made on English
type plate molds. The use of such molds was introduced by William
Ellis into the Salem pottery shop in 1773, but it was apparently many
years later before Christ was able to go into production with such
plates.

Of particular importance in the 1968 excavations was the discovery
of a kiln waster dump in which the finest of the "fine pottery" made by
Christ was discovered. Here examples of sprigged ware with pearl beading
around the rim and base, and double intertwined reeded handles with
applied terminal spriggs were found. The close relationship to this
polychrome glazed "Tortoise-shell" ware to examples made at the Leeds
factories in England is remarkable.

The excavations at Bethabara and Salem have resulted in the recovery
of "Tortoise-shell", mold made zoomorphic bottles, sauceboats,
dishes, plates made on molds in patterns of "Queens", "Royal", and
"Feather" designs. Also found to have been made was "faience", and
coloring and figuring of porcelain, mugs and teapots with double inter-
twined handles and terminal spriggs, as well as white stoneware, and an
olive-green glazed stoneware product. In the face of these discoveries
the fact remains that the surface has only been scratched at Salem, and
excavation in the years to come should produce more surprises from the
pottery shop of Gottfried Aust and Rudolph Christ.

This statement is only an outline of the ware found to have been
made by Rudolph Christ at Bethabara and Salem as revealed in excavations
in 1966 and 1968. Since the paper dealing with this material was pre-
seated at the Ninth Annual Conference on Historic Site Archaeology in
Knoxville, it has been revised and expanded so that it is too long for
inclusion in this volume, and only this summary is presented. However,
the complete paper is to be published as a technical paper of the
Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South
Carolina.
Ware of Rudolph Christ from the Christ-Krause kiln waster dump at Bethabara, North Carolina. The top center sauce boat is a reconstruction made from the plaster mold restored from fragments found in the waster dump. The handle is a form sometimes found on sauceboats of this type, though a double inter-twined reeded handle may have been used on such pieces. The polychrome "Tortoise-shell" plates and bowls are covered with a white slip, onto which splotches of manganese and copper glazing was applied, producing a brown and green coloration on a bright yellow or cream-colored background. The bowl in the lower right has a light buff paste, and is, therefore, closer related to the English examples than are the red-paste slip-coated pieces.
Ware of Rudolph Christ Recovered from Excavations at Salem, North Carolina.

**Upper Left:** Green tin-enamelled glazed "faience" vase, made by Christ after 1793.

**Upper Right:** "Tortoise-shell" ware teapot with pearl-beaded rim and base, with double intertwined, reeded handles with applied terminal spriggs; perhaps the finest Christ piece yet discovered.

**Lower Left:** Brown lead glazed mug with rouletted rim similar to those found on English scratch-blue salt-glazed stoneware; with double intertwined, reeded handles with applied terminal spriggs typically found on Christ's ware from Salem.

**Lower Right:** Bisque fired mug with "bead and reel" gadrooning in relief, with double intertwined handles with applied terminal spriggs. This particular form resembles closely early Leeds mugs.