Dear Members

This is both a celebration of the fantastic work that Dr. George Manginis did for so many years on developing the OCS Newsletter and an exciting new venture for Dr. Teresa Canepa and Beth Gardiner working with the designer and production team. We are so fortunate in the Society to have such knowledgeable and creative people.

In this Newsletter we have scholars participating from many different parts of the globe including the United States, Mexico, Europe, Japan and China. The combination of innovative short research articles, news and features from around the world is extremely exciting to read and complements the Transactions beautifully. One of the strengths of the Society is its diversity and topics included are truly varied from excavations in Cambodia, to an exhibition of work by a Scottish photographer living in Singapore and Hong Kong just decades after the advent of photography, and Chinese and Japanese lacquer ware. It is also a very exciting time to be involved with Asian Art with so many new exhibitions bringing the past to life and this issue will include some highlights of the many shows to visit across the world.

Activities for members are not just confined to original lectures and handling sessions. The Society is very much looking forward to the conference in Dresden in June and the next OCS tour to Madrid from 24th to 28th September 2018. In Spain members will enjoy Chinese Ming and Qing porcelain in museums, palaces and monasteries in Madrid and the surrounding areas. These trips provide an opportunity for enthusiasts of all sorts to exchange ideas on Asian art topics. In London, we have some really outstanding speakers who will present their latest research at the Society of Antiquaries with Dr. Tang Hui and Dr. Sarah Cheang our next speakers.

Best wishes,
Jessica Harrison-Hall

Research

**Ming Dramas as Sources for the Dancing Scene on Coromandel Lacquer Screens and Kangxi Porcelains**

**HE Feng, Ph.D. Candidate**
 Institute of East Asian Art History, Heidelberg University

An interesting circular porcelain box is on long-term display in the Sir Percival David Collection at the British Museum in London. Located at the very bottom of a display case (Case 24, Shelf 1), it is sometimes missed by visitors. Yet the exquisite narrative decoration on the cover of this box deserves serious attention. Painted in underglaze cobalt blue are twelve female figures with six joyful children in the elegant setting of a garden (fig. 1). The figures are centred around an outcrop of huge taihu rocks, a banana tree and a plum tree. Three women are sitting on stools, one playing a musical instrument, called a *pipa*, while the other two lean towards her. To the right is a female dancer: her eyes are closed and arms stretched, as if she is enjoying the moment. Does she look familiar? A keen observer would recall the frequent repetition of dancing scenes depicted on Jingdezhen porcelain produced during the Kangxi period (1662–1722) of the Qing dynasty. For instance, a five-piece garniture in the Victoria and Albert Museum bears images of a female dancer with the same gesture and costume as the one in the British Museum. Three pieces of this garniture are currently on view (V&A, Room 137, Case 10, Shelf 4). Another garniture, quite similar to that in the V&A in terms of the shape of the vases, shades of cobalt blue and style of brush strokes was part of Frederick Leyland’s (1831–1892) famous Peacock Room now on display in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Dancing scenes appeared not only on Jingdezhen porcelain of the Kangxi period, but also featured as the central decoration on Coromandel lacquer folding screens, which were transported to Europe during the second half of the seventeenth century. Classified as a specific type of Chinese lacquerware today, the term ‘Coromandel lacquer’ in reality is an early twentieth-century western invention, which came to be used because it was shipped to Europe via the Coromandel coast of southeast India. This type of lacquerware began to arrive in Europe no later than 1682. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was more commonly referred to as ‘Bantam Work’ after the name of the Dutch East India Company or VOC’s trading port in Java, which was abandoned in 1817. In China, however, this type of lacquer was named after its style of production: *kuancai*. About one hundred

**Fig. 1 Circular porcelain box. China, Jingdezhen. 1662–1700, Kangxi period, Qing dynasty. Porcelain with underglaze cobalt-blue decoration. h. 9 cm, d. 17.3 cm. Inv. No. PDF A620. © Trustees of the British Museum.**
years before the arrival of Coromandel lacquer in Europe, a Chinese lacquer master named Huang Cheng (active 1567–72) finished a book entitled Xiushiliu (Account of the Decoration of Lacquer), in which he elaborated thoroughly on the styles and manufacturing crafts of Chinese lacquer. This technical treatise was published in 1625 by a later craftsman, Yang Ming, and is considered the foremost ancient Chinese text on lacquer. The Xiushiliu consists of eighteen chapters. At the beginning of the treatise, Huang Cheng records the preparation of raw materials and tools, various flaws of the materials, and the possible causes. The majority of the chapters categorize fourteen types of lacquer decoration, while the final two chapters deal with production, conservation, and the making of archaic works. In the tenth chapter, the author gives a concise description on the styles of decoration achieved by carving and hollowing the lacquer surface. The kuancai technique requires more sophisticated skills by the artisans, as there are more procedures to follow than carved red or black lacquerware. After incising layers of dried lacquer, the artisan needs to fill in the gaps with coloured lacquer or oil, and gold or silver when necessary. The true kuancai process includes multiple colours.

The technique of kuancai allows for more possibilities for the vivid representation of figures, animals, architectural details and landscapes. In the meantime, artisans were able to imitate the various colours and even texture of the objects carved on lacquer. Moreover, the form of the twelve-fold lacquer screen provides an appropriate surface for horizontal composition, as well as echoes the form of the twelve-fold lacquer screen to its inscriptions, to 1672. The inscription also directly describes the scene as ‘Spring Morning in the Han Palace’. For instance, a twelve-panel folding screen in the Freer Gallery of Art can be dated, according to its inscriptions, to 1672. The inscription also directly describes the scene as ‘Spring Morning in the Han Palace’.

In some versions, the dancing scenes are performed by a single actress. In the Museum of Decorative Arts in Dresden, a smaller folding screen dated 1692 is on display at the end of the Museum’s west wing. In it, a single dancer is performed by a single actress. In the Museum of Decorative Arts in Dresden, a smaller folding screen dated 1692 is on display at the end of the Museum’s west wing. In it, a single dancer is gazing at two female dancers performing on a red carpet (fig. 3). Some screens were inscribed on the reverse, indicating that the object was a gift for the occasion of a birthday or retirement.

Coromandel lacquer folding screens featuring the theme of ‘Spring Morning in the Han Palace’ can be found in many public and private collections in Europe and North America. At the Ashmolean Museum a massive and exquisite Coromandel lacquer folding screen is on view (in the entrance to Room 35 on the second floor). Its seventh panel depicts the central hall of a palace, where a high-ranking male official is gazing at two female dancers performing on a red carpet (fig. 3). Some screens were inscribed on the reverse, indicating that the object was a gift for the occasion of a birthday or retirement. For instance, a twelve-panel folding screen in the Freer Gallery of Art can be dated, according to its inscriptions, to 1672. The inscription also directly describes the scene as ‘Spring Morning in the Han Palace’. In some versions, the dancing scenes are performed by a single actress. In the Museum of Decorative Arts in Dresden, a smaller folding screen dated 1692 is on display at the end of the Museum’s west wing. In it, a single dancer is carved and painted, performing outside the hall of a palace (fig. 4). Qing-dynasty lacquer workers specifically depicted the dancing scenes with different pictorial motifs, the majority of which were the birthday celebration of Tang-dynasty general Guo Ziyi (698–781) and the Spring Morning. In many cases, the dancers remain anonymous. However, in late Ming woodblock-printed drama books, the dancers were given certain defining characteristics within the theatrical context.

Yu he ji (Jade box) is a drama written by Mei Dingzuo (1549–1615) in c.1585 and published in 1610. It tells the story of a Tang-dynasty scholar Han Hong (active Tianbao period 742–56, titled jinshi in 754) and his lover Ms. Liu. Liu was a former performer in the official Tang entertaining house at Zhangtai. As an engagement gift, Han gave his lover a jade box before the Lushan Rebellion separated the couple. Liu stayed in a Buddhist temple, while Han served as military adviser for General Hou Xiyi. After the war, Han returned to the capital and unexpectedly met Liu, only to find that his lover had been captured by a nomad general named Sha Zhalli. Liu gave the jade box back to Han as proof that she took it wherever she
upon hearing the couple’s story, General Xu left to put himself at risk to rescue Liu. Immediately upon hearing the couple’s story, General Xu left to put himself at risk to rescue Liu. Immediately.

Another illustrated drama, follows a similar narrative pattern. The Tou tao ji (Story of the Peach), published during the late Wanli period (1600–20), tells the story of a Song-dynasty student Pan Yongzhong and his lover, Huang Shunhua. The couple took a secret oath together, but a villain, Xie Duan, made every effort to break them apart. Xie Duan, who is the brother-in-law of the emperor and a senior politician, aggressively proposed to marry Shunhua, and threatened her father, General Huang. The Huang family was forced to agree to the marriage. In the twentieth chapter titled, Qiu huai (Yearning in the Autumn), Pan missed his lover terribly. He was lured by his friend into a brothel. There they met with the Wang sisters, the elder excelled in singing and the latter in dancing. In an illustration accompanying the narrative, Pan (on the left of fig. 6) politely refused his young friend’s invitation to get drunk and forget about Shunhua. Singing was difficult to illustrate for Ming artisans, therefore the seduction of the Wang sisters is depicted as a dancing scene.

Other examples of late Ming dramas can be found where the motif of dancing is used to underline the theatrical moments of the story. The floral gowns of the dancers, their flowing sleeves, and fine hairstyles all enhanced the theatricality of the narration, which often lead to a turning point in the plot.

In conclusion, while comparing and contrasting the narrative scenes on lacquer folding screens, the painted designs on porcelain, the illustrations in books and written words of dramas, there are many intriguing questions raised for collectors, curators, and scholars.

In 2015 archaeological work began at the port of Acapulco in a project administered by PAMPA (Maritime Archaeology Project of the Port of Acapulco). The project examines the history of Acapulco, which in the sixteenth century was designated the only official port of the Spanish colonies in the New World to trade with Asia through the Manila Galleons. The Manila Galleon Trade ran from 1565, when the Spanish discovered the return route from the Philippines across the Pacific Ocean, to 1815 when the Mexican Independence put an end to 250 years of continuous navigation. So far, the project has yielded a rich collection of materials including, Asian stoneware, Mexican majolica, Spanish and Peruvian ceramic containers, English earthenware and above all, over 6,000 shards of Chinese porcelain. The porcelain shards date from the early period of the Spanish trans-Pacific trade route in the 1560s to the early nineteenth century. The archaeological work taking place in Acapulco has consisted of excavations in two parts of the city, with the goal of documenting both trade and daily life.

The first archaeological excavation was at the Fort of San Diego, which in the sixteenth century was designated the only official port of the Spanish discovered the return route from the Manila Galleons. The project examines the history of Acapulco, which in the sixteenth century was designated the only official port of the Spanish colonies in the New World to trade with Asia through the Manila Galleons. The Manila Galleon Trade ran from 1565, when the Spanish discovered the return route from the Philippines across the Pacific Ocean, to 1815 when the Mexican Independence put an end to 250 years of continuous navigation. So far, the project has yielded a rich collection of materials including, Asian stoneware, Mexican majolica, Spanish and Peruvian ceramic containers, English earthenware and above all, over 6,000 shards of Chinese porcelain. The porcelain shards date from the early period of the Spanish trans-Pacific trade route in the 1560s to the early nineteenth century. The archaeological work taking place in Acapulco has consisted of excavations in two parts of the city, with the goal of documenting both trade and daily life.

The first archaeological excavation was at the Fort of San Diego, which in the sixteenth century was designated the only official port of the Spanish trans-Pacific trade route in the 1560s to the early nineteenth century. The archaeological work taking place in Acapulco has consisted of excavations in two parts of the city, with the goal of documenting both trade and daily life.

The first archaeological excavation was at the Fort of San Diego, which was built after the Manila Galleon route was established and Acapulco was designated the official port (fig. 1). Construction began in December 1615 and was completed on February 4, 1617. An opening ceremony was held on April 15 of that year. Following a proposal by the Dutch engineer Adrian Boot, the structure was originally built as a castle in the form of an irregular pentagon perched upon rocks. Except for one occasion – the seizure of the port in 1624 for one week by Dutch pirates – Acapulco was an impregnable bastion throughout the colonial period. An earthquake of great magnitude hit the area on April 2, 1776 which damaged the structure of the fortress considerably. The reconstruction work began on March 16, 1778, concluding on July 7, 1783. The new fortress was built with stone, surrounded by a moat, and housed up to two thousand people with food, ammunition and drinking water for a whole year. Four archaeological excavation pits (each of two meters by one metre) were opened in different parts along the periphery of the fortress, which yielded a rich collection of objects. In addition, porcelain fragments were found in the walls, incrust in the cement between the stones (fig. 2).
A second archaeological excavation was conducted in downtown Acapulco. Archaeological work began here when the local government opened a 30-metre ditch contiguous to the Cathedral in central downtown to replace a water system (fig. 3). The ditch was two metres deep. Thousands of shards of blue-and-white porcelain were recovered, mostly of kraak porcelain produced at various private kilns of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province (fig. 4). Given the central location of this archeological site, the current hypothesis is that this area was the site of the traditional Acapulco fair, which took place every year immediately after the arrival of the Manila Galleon in December or January. As many of the motifs on the porcelain shards are similar, experts believe that most of these pieces were damaged upon the long voyage from Asia to Acapulco, which sometimes lasted up to six months. In all probability some of the porcelains broke en route, and when the containers were opened they were discarded.

The porcelain recovered from both sites is classified predominately as dating to the late Ming dynasty (1368-1644) with some dating to the subsequent Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Several fragments of dishes and bowls produced in the kilns of Jingdezhen were dated to between 1560 and 1570, which is a strikingly early date considering that the Manila Galleon route began its run in 1565. It is also significant that the porcelain recovered is of high quality and painted with very detailed motifs (fig. 5).

The shards mentioned above share various decorative motifs, such as animals, birds and flowers. Other fragments from the late Ming dynasty were found, but of porcelain dating to the 1580s and produced in the southern province of Fujian. The centre and rim border of some dishes are decorated with landscapes. Another common central decoration is the deer-in-a-landscape design, with rim borders of aquatic plants. There are a large number of bowls with radiating panels enclosing various motifs of flora and fauna. These have been dated between 1600 and 1620. Some bowls are of a type commonly known as ‘crow-cups’. The latter and a large number of other fragments are of kraak porcelain, with the characteristic panelled borders painted with various alternating decorative motifs, such as birds, animals and flowers. There are also many high quality and delicately painted shards identified as porcelain from the Transitional period, that were produced at the end of the Ming and beginning of the Qing dynasties.

Among the finds from the Qing dynasty were fragments of small porcelain cups used for the consumption of hot chocolate. These were mainly exported to the Spanish colonies in the New World and to Spain. Other types of Qing porcelain recovered, include trade blue-and-white, sancai, wucai, Batavia ware, blanc de chine, Canton wares, and armorials (fig. 7).

It is important to highlight a few conclusions following the preliminary analysis of the porcelain recovered so far. Firstly, the fragments unearthed at Fort San Diego are very different from those found in downtown Acapulco. While the porcelain fragments found in downtown Acapulco are from the early years of the Manila Galleon trade, those recovered from the Fort coincide with the period of its reconstruction in the late eighteenth century. Also, it should be noted that the fragments found downtown are larger and more complete than those recovered in the Fort, which may provide clues about the way these porcelains were discarded. The PAMPA project is still in its initial stages in understanding the history of Acapulco and its international connections. Further work will undoubtedly yield more material such as Asian stoneware, but finds are anticipated to be mainly Chinese porcelain. A detailed catalogue of the porcelain finds is being prepared and will be available shortly.
The Nanhai I: A Unique Southern Song Dynasty Merchant Ship Raised with its Cargo from the South China Sea

The Nanhai I is a Chinese merchant ship that sank in the South China Sea (Nanhai) while carrying a cargo of ceramics and other goods for export during the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). The shipwreck was found in the waters of Guangdong in 1987, the year when an underwater archaeology section was formed by the China History Museum (now the China National Museum) with the support of its late director Yu Weichao (1933–2003), a renowned scholar. Nanhai I was discovered when Maritime Exploration and Recovery Ltd. of the UK worked with China on the 1772 Rimsberg shipwreck of the Dutch East India Company.

In 1989, a team of Chinese and Japanese experts performed the first survey of the Nanhai I site and roughly situated the shipwreck. Between 2001-2004, with funding from the Chinese government and various diving circles in Hong Kong (Chen Laifa, et al.), Chinese maritime archaeologists carried out seven underwater surveys, precisely locating the shipwreck and retrieving many objects. The wreck lay in about 25 metres (82ft) of water and was covered in mud, which were perfect conditions for preservation. Both the ship and its contents are in exceptionally good condition compared with other shipwrecks. The ship is about 23.8 metres long, 9.6 metres wide.

In 2007, the salvage team built a massive steel cage around the shipwreck. They then raised the shipwreck and the surrounding silt inside the cage and moved all to a new purpose-built museum in Yangjiang for well-controlled ongoing preservation and excavations (fig. 2). In Yangjiang in November 2017, an international symposium on the Nanhai I wreck was organised to commemorate the 30th anniversary of its finding, jointly by the Underwater Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre of State Administration of Cultural Heritage, Guangdong Province Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, and Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum in Yangjiang. In the meantime a two-volume book was published jointly by the various institutes involved, entitled, *Archaeological Report of the Nanhai I Shipwreck, No. 1: the Surveys of 1989–2004*.

About 21,000 pieces/set of objects and 2,600 less complete specimens have been found to date from the ongoing work of this shipwreck, which include both trade goods and personal items, and sustenance for the crew and merchants (and/or passengers) aboard. As with many shipwrecks, most of these are ceramics, but there are also hundreds of gold and silver objects, such as Chinese gold leaves and silver ingots, which were used as currency, and exotic ornaments from other regions. Also found were Chinese bronze, iron, lead, tin, bamboo, wood, lacquer and stone wares, including a stone seated figure of Guanyin (Bodhisattva of Compassion).

Fig. 1 Yu Weichao, late director of China History Museum and founder of underwater archaeology in China
Avalokiteśvara (or Goddess of Mercy), plus many animal and plant materials, such as grapes and pepper. Apart from these are some 17,000 coins spanning from the Han (206 BCE-220 CE) to the Southern Song dynasty which probably served as currency along the trade routes. Most of the coins are from the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), and the latest found to date are from the Qianlong period (1736–1795), although for some time those from the Shaoxing period (1131–1162) were later found on the shipwreck.

Among the ceramics found are qingbai (bluish-white) glazed porcelain from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province, greenwares from Longquan in Zhejiang province (figs. 3–4), and ceramics of various glaze colours from kilns of Fujian province, such as Dehua (fig. 5) and Cizhao. It is believed that the ship may have set sail from Quanzhou in Fujian (or Guangzhou in Guangdong), and was bound for Southeast Asia from Shaoxing in Zhejiang province, such as Dehua (fig. 5) and Cizhao. The ship was salvaged in 1987 and is currently displayed as part of the Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Museum, Yangjiang.

China
An Overview of the Dongxi Kilns in Zhangzhou City
Fujian Province

The Dongxi (Eastern Stream) kilns are situated in the neighbouring areas of Huana county and Nanjing county of Zhangzhou city, Fujian province, in the upper reaches of Jiulongjiang (or the Nine Dragons) river. This area features high mountains and deep valleys with streams, and abounds in woods, plants and china clays. Most kiln sites discovered during archaeological surveys are located on hillsides along streams.

The Dongxi kilns were first discovered in the 1980s. Since then a number of archeological surveys and excavations have been conducted, which have identified numerous kiln sites of the Ming and Qing dynasties with the remains of kilns and workshops. In 2007 and 2015, archeological excavations were carried out at three of the kiln sites, which give us a basic understanding of the ceramic industry of the Dongxi kilns and their primary characteristics. The main Dongxi kiln sites found to date can be divided into two primary clusters, namely Wanyaokeng and Dongxitou.

The Wanyaokeng, cluster of kiln sites include those from the Southern Song, Yuan, late Ming, and mid to late Qing dynasty. These include one kiln site from the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279) and one from the Yuan dynasty (1280–1368), while most other kiln sites are from the late Ming (1368–1644) or mid to late Qing dynasty (1644–1912). The Dongxitou cluster of kiln sites includes those dating to the late Ming, the early Qing, and mid to late Qing dynasty.

Dragon kilns were used during the Southern Song dynasty. The type of kilns used during the Yuan dynasty remains unclear. From the late Ming until the early to mid-Qing dynasty, stepped dragon kilns divided into rectangular compartments were used (fig. 1), while the late Qing dynasty saw the use of stepped dragon kilns.

The Dongxi kilns fired white porcelain from the Southern Song to the Yuan dynasties, while blue-and-white porcelain was the main product in the late Ming to early Qing dynasties (fig. 2). From the mid to late Qing dynasty, blue-and-white porcelain remained the primary output (figs. 3–6), although other porcelain types were also produced. These include white porcelain such as mihuang or rice-yellowish-glazed ware of beige or buff tone reminiscent of raw, unhulled rice grains, other monochrome porcelain with celadon, russet (“soy-sauce-coloured”), cobalt-blue or low-fired green glaze, and wucai (five-coloured) and famille-rose porcelain with overglaze polychrome enamels.
forms include bowls, plates, saucers, cups of various sizes and usages, boxes, spoons, ladles, incense burners, lamps, gu beaker-shaped flower vases, ewers, water droppers, brush pots, flower vessels, Buddhist figures, and moulds for making porcelain spoons and rice-flour cakes.

Designs for the blue-and-white porcelain include landscapes, flowers, foliage and grasses, unusual birds such as egrets and magpies, auspicious animals such as lions, dragons, qilin and rabbits, figures of babies, children, the elderly and officials, zabao (Miscellaneous Treasures), Eight Trigrams and inscriptions.

The kilns, furniture and ceramic products of the Dongxi kilns from the late Ming dynasty are essentially similar to the Zhangzhou wares fired at the Nanxiong and Wuzhai kilns of Pinghe county, in the lower reaches of the Jiulongjiang river. We maintain that when the Zhangzhou kilns declined in early Qing dynasty, the production centre shifted to the Dongxi kilns, which was in the upper reaches with richer resources for the ceramic industry such as raw materials, fuel and water, where consequently a new peak of porcelain production was quickly achieved.

The large quantities of porcelain fired in the Dongxi kilns were transported downstream on the Jiulongjiang river and were exported via the port of Amoy (present-day Xiamen), to various destinations along the maritime trade routes. They have been found in many archeological and shipwreck (e.g. the Tek Sing) sites in Taiwan, Japan and Southeast Asia.

A small number of the white porcelain is carved or incised with flowers, foliage and grasses. Rice-yellowish wares feature small ice crackles in the glaze, and some are impressed with cloud-and-thunder (key fret or meander border) or bow-string line designs. Most celadon wares have ice crackle of variable sizes in the glaze, and some pieces bear carved, incised or impressed designs. The low-fired green-glazed wares are usually plain with no decoration, although some are moulded with designs. Wucai and famille-rose porcelains were produced in only small quantities, and their decorations include phoenixes, flowers, foliage and grasses, lotus petals and ornamental rocks, etc.

The excavation of a complete dragon-shaped kiln used for firing Mi-se ware was the first archeological discovery in China related to the Mi-se ware production sites and it provided important information relating to production technology. Particularly striking was a large number of fragments of Mi-se ware unearthed, including a representative long-necked octagonal vase, a long neck vase with a round body, a ewer, a cup, a cup stand, a bowl, a plate, etc. (figs. 2–4). Each shape has a variety of styles. These pieces correspond exactly with the fourteen Mi-se celadon wares excavated in 1987 in the Famen Temple of the Tang dynasty, located 120 kilometers west from the capital of Xi’an, in Shaanxi province. The most important find is the discovery of several bowl-shaped saggars for firing, bearing the ‘Guan’ mark. The saggars are made of ceramic and covered with a brown glaze in a standardized mode of production. Excavation reports showed that before firing, the Mi-se ware was placed inside two bowl-shaped saggars joined together mouth to mouth by glaze, offering an important clue to Mi-se ware’s firing technology. This further proved that Mi-se celadon wares were produced as a special commission for the imperial court.

This site had a very rich accumulation of relics, reaching a thickness of 5 metres or more. This gave archaeologists a good stratum for identification and staging, and for determining with accuracy the date of the site. For the first time, based on the study of the archaeological materials recovered, scholars were able to make a clearer judgment on the Mi-se ware production period, which spanned from...
the Xuanzhong period of the Tang dynasty (846–859) to the mid-Five dynasties.

In May 2017, the Mi-se ware exhibition 'Mi-se Chong Guang' (translated roughly as 'Mi-se Came to Light') was held at the Palace Museum in Beijing. The exhibition focused mainly on the two major archaeological discoveries, the site of the Famen Temple during the Tang dynasty (not too far from Xi’an) and the major kiln site of the Mi-se ware in Ningbo. It examined the research results and established a new criteria for understanding Mi-se ware, including the technical characteristics of its production, while underscoring the curators’ broad knowledge of the subject. Of particular interest unearthed from the underground Palace of Famen Temple, the ‘Jiansong zhenshen shi sui zhenshen gongyangdaoju ji enci jinyinyiwu zhang’ was displayed, which is a contemporary tombstone inscribed with an inventory of buried objects, including information about thirteen pieces of Mi-se ware. The text clearly matched the objects that had been excavated.

In the center of the Palace, under the bronze tombstone inscribed with an inventory of objects, the excavation of Mi-se ware in the Housai’ao kiln site in Ningbo also corresponds with this document, which can be regarded as further proof.

These two important pieces of archeological news in 2017 in Beijing, which were so splendidly presented on the international stage, have partially answered some of the longstanding questions concerning Mi-se ware. This topic has been mentioned in western academic publications in the past. In fact early in 1980, the British collector, Geoffrey St. George Montague Gompertz (1904–92), quoted Sir Percival David’s words from ‘Some Notes on Pi-së Yao’ on the discussion of understanding the name of ‘Mi-se’: At first it meant ‘secret colour’, referring to the mysterious beauty of the glaze, but later it was applied to the products of the same Yue zhou factory after these had been reserved exclusively for use by the Ruling House of Wu-Yüeh; thus it came to be used in the secondary sense of ‘prohibited colour’, and the original meaning either lapsed or was forgotten.

The recent archaeological discoveries have sparked interest among western scholars, making this a good opportunity to place the topic of these long-loved celadon wares back in the spotlight.

In the future, research on Mi-se ware is expected to be carried out in the following areas: the production technology of early wares, the glazing of the body, the standard characteristics of the vessel shapes, the reexamination of the celadon wares of the Tang and Five dynasties from museum collections. This knowledge will offer the possibility of separating the Mi-se ware from the more general Yue and Longquan kiln sites. It will also form a comparative basis for further refining the specific characteristics of this type of celadon ware, as well as our understanding of the raw materials and the formula of its stoneware body and glaze. We look forward to seeing new discoveries of Mi-se ware in Chinese archaeology.

Liu Youzheng
Archaeology and museum scholar from China; Author, Blanc de Chine, China Science Press, 2007
Information and images: China ‘Heritage World’ Magazine, Palace Museum, Beijing
Translated by Zickey Zhao

Amongst the best friends ceramic lovers can have are archaeologists, and today that increasingly means marine or underwater archaeologists. As underwater exploration has exploded in the past few decades, aided by the advances made through technology and the increasing availability of historic texts and maps, some of our most exciting twenty-first century finds are turning up as salvaged shipwreck cargos. No wonder then that ceramic scholars were amongst the 120 participants from 30 countries at the ‘3rd Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage: Voyaging, Migration, Colonisation, Trade and Cross-Cultural Contacts’ (APCONF) held in Hong Kong in November 27–December 2, 2017.

The papers presented ranged from the dating of the ‘Blues of the Santa Cruz Shipwreck [Hongzhong Period, 1488–1503]’, which investigated the origin of the colour differences of the various ceramics generally lumped together as qinghau with the wreck’s Thai and Chinese blue & whites, to ‘Exploring the Sunken Heritage of Midway Atoll’. The diversity of subjects caused more than a few interesting conflicts among the attendees as three strands of papers ran concurrently covering a breadth of subject matter that the organizers could only whittle down to 14 categories.

Focusing on the topics of ‘Ceramic Trade and Cross-cultural Exchange from the Asian-Pacific Region to the World’ and ‘The Archaeology of Manila Galleons, Past, Present and Future’ were papers presented from researchers based in the Philippines, Indonesia, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Cambodia, Mexico, the United States, and the United Kingdom, including our colleagues Teresa Canepa, whose topic was ‘The Trans-Pacific Trade of Chinese Porcelain to the Spanish Colonies in the New World in the Late 16th and early 17th Centuries’, and Etsuko Miyata, who presented the paper ‘Seeking the Manila Galleon trade network through exported Chinese ceramics’.

Two previous conferences (Manila in 2011 and Hawaii in 2014) began the dialogue and were instrumental in bringing together this year’s diverse group of researchers (both independent as well as affiliated), academics and other educators, museum administrators and curators, ceramic lovers, historians, and land and underwater archaeologists, who shared their research, findings, future plans, failures and successes, and more importantly, their concerns.

A key theme for all was preserving our underwater cultural heritage — a topic that was addressed by both the conference’s keynote speakers, as well as several individual presenters. Throughout there was a buzz of activity — the sharing of names and contact details, ideas, and information. Ideas for furthering the field through public education and awareness were presented by several participants and there was a growing awareness of the importance of making the group’s work known to a larger public ranging from academics to local communities and to audiences as young as primary or secondary school students. The use of new media and apps (such as FYUSE) in sharing information to excite interest in underwater research was highlighted and the importance of engaging young people to help ‘tell our stories’. While ultimately not all scheduled participants were able to attend, many submitted papers, which were read by the organisers or on-site colleagues. Over time, they will be available at www.themua.org or you may contact the editor of this journal or the author of this article for more information (pbjwelch@gmail.com).

Patricia Bjaaland Welch
President, Southeast Asian Ceramic Society
Kyūshū National Museum is located in the historical city of Dazaifu, where the regional government for Kyūshū was once established. The museum is also the neighbour of Hakata, one of the major cities in eastern Japan which has been serving as a gateway to foreign countries from ancient times. With this rich historical background, the Museum has set its goal on showcasing the history and culture of Japan through its interactions with Asian and European countries. Namban art, in particular, has been one of the main subjects that the museum has been working on, and the special exhibition ‘Japanese Art in the Age of Discoveries’ was a result of the research that Kyūshū National Museum has been carrying on since its opening in 2005.

The exhibition, held from 14 October to 26 November 2017, explored Japanese art from the viewpoint of ‘cultural exchanges’, focusing particularly on the turbulent period between 1543, when the Portuguese first arrived on wako ships and introduced western firearms to Japan, and 1639, when the Tokugawa Shogunate prohibited Christianity, controlled foreign trade and completed its isolation policy. This was a period of active exchanges and confrontation with different countries such as China and Korea (with which Japan had had a long diplomatic history), as well as the various regions of Southeast Asia and Europe (figs. 1–3).

The exhibition took two new perspectives. Firstly, the team of curators paid attention to regions of Southeast Asia and Europe (figs. 1–3). As well as the namban trade and the red-seal ship trade. These trades were discussed as separate themes of study although their activities overlapped in time and space. For example, we decided to display the renowned Portrait of St. Francisco Xavier (Kobe City Museum) side by side with the Statue of Mazu, or the Chinese goddess of the sea (private collection) (fig. 4) to relay the story that the first western merchants and missionaries, who arrived on Japanese shores, actually had taken private ships trading illegally in the South China Sea to reach the country.

Secondly, thanks to the most generous support of the Fundação Oriente, Museu do Oriente in Lisbon and the Museo Soumaya in Mexico City, the show was able to feature three invaluable folding screens that are believed to have been produced in Macao and New Spain (present-day Mexico) in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. While Japanese folding screens were conventionally sent to foreign countries as tributary gifts and trade goods from the early ages, they also crossed the oceans to Europe and the New World during the ‘Age of Exploration’. Interestingly, folding screens modelled after the Japanese works soon began to be manufactured in some places where they had been imported to, particularly in New Spain. Since the monumental exhibition ‘Biombos Mexicanos’ held at the National Institute of Anthropology and History of Mexico City in 1970, which introduced twenty pieces of colonial folding screens, biombos have become a centre of attention among art historians in Europe and the Americas, recognizing their direct influence from Asian folding screens. Although it was not until recently that the existence of these colonial biombos came to be known to Japanese audiences, the screens of the Great Flood and Roman Emperors on Horseback (both from the Soumaya Museum) and the screen of Christ’s Life (Fundação Oriente, Museu do Oriente) have received a great deal of favorable attention due to their similarities with the Japanese screens in such ways as subject matter and iconology or in the way the screens were mounted.

Incidentally, it was most fortunate that the pair of namban screens by Kano Naizen (1570–1616), previously in the collection of the Kawanishi family and believed to be lost by fire in World War II, was re-discovered in excellent condition during the preparatory research for this exhibition (fig. 5). They were displayed to the public for the first time in nearly eighty years with an image of them included in the catalogue.

The catalogue for this exhibition contains all 123 artworks displayed in the show. It also includes two insightful contributions written by Dr. Nakajima Gakusho (Associate Professor, Kyushu University) and Dr. Okada Hiroshige (Professor, Osaka University), along with five essays written by the curators at the museum. The essay by Dr. Nakajima gives a historical overview of the maritime exchanges that Japan took part in from the 1540s to 1610s, while Dr. Okada examines the relationships between the art of Momoyama-period Japan and that in the colonial Americas. In order to make their convincing discussions reach a wider readership, these two essays are accompanied by full texts in English translation. The exhibition catalogue is available online ISBN-10: 4907902182, ISBN-13: 978-4907902186.

Finally, it was truly an honor for the Museum to have the opportunity to host the international workshop ‘Momoyama Japan and the Artistic Contacts via Asian and Transpacific Sea Lanes’ organized by Osaka University Department of Art History and Dr. Okada with the cooperation of Historiographical Institute of University of Tokyo. For this occasion, we welcomed Dr. Alberto Baena Zapatero (Salamanca University), Dr. Fujita Akiyoshi (Tenri University) and Dr. Oka Mihoko (Historiographical Institute of University of Tokyo).
Namban lacquer is one of a number of Japanese export lacquer styles made to order by makie-ishi (lacquer craftsmen) at workshops in Kyoto for the European merchants and religious missionaries (namban-jin), who arrived on the Japanese archipelago from the mid-sixteenth century. It is estimated that more than 1,000 pieces were produced in this unique style. The existence of namban lacquer has been recognized in Japan from around the mid-1910s. After World War II and before the 1960s, a great deal of research was accumulated by Japanese and Western scholars. In the last decade, various exhibitions took place in Japan and in Western countries, especially in Spain, which all featured namban lacquer, and presented new research concerning its unique style and dating. As a result, namban lacquer has become universally recognized as one of the Japanese export manufactured goods of the ‘Age of Discovery’ in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Namban lacquer is mostly decorated in traditional Japanese urushi techniques. It incorporates Japanese motifs such as autumn plants, the namban tendril pattern and mother-of-pearl inlay, the latter possibly influenced or derived from China or the Korean Peninsula. It is clearly a hybrid style as it combines local or Asian materials, construction methods and decorative techniques or patterns. This distinctive lacquer style was mostly utilized on western-style furniture and smaller objects made to order for religious or secular use. While the stylistic characteristics of such namban lacquers were already recognized by the studies conducted in the 1910s, recent research is offering new insights and fueling worldwide scholarly interest.

The symposium, entitled ‘In Search of the Multiple Origins of Namban Lacquer’, held at the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties on March 3–4, 2017, was a result of this recent research history. The symposium explored cutting edge research in this field; research that is not only limited to work in the Humanities, but also includes research in the Natural Sciences (fig. 1).

The speakers, themes and presentation order of the symposium were as follows:

2. Record of objects related to Namban lacquer as mentioned in old Portuguese documents with focus on Coleções dos Simples e Drogas da India (1563) by Garcia de Orta by Dr. Mihoko Oka (Historiographical Institute, The University of Tokyo).
4. Period of production of Namban lacquer by Koji Kobayashi and Dr. Kunio Yoshida (The University Museum, The University of Tokyo).
5. Urushi and adhesive used for Namban lacquer by Dr. Takayuki Honda (School of Science and Technology, Meiji University).
6. A provenance study of urushi used for Namban lacquer by Dr. Kunio Yoshida.
7. Wood used for Namban lacquer by Dr. Shuichi Noshiro (Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute).
8. Preliminary observation of the shells utilized on Namban lacquer by Taiji Kurozumi (Natural History Museum and Institute, Chiba).


11. Lacquered Luso-Asian furniture of Indian or Chinese origins, closely related with Namban lacquer by Ulrike Körber (PhD-candidate in Art-History, University of Évora, CHAIA / Laboratório HERCULES).

12. Shape and material of gold lines decorating Namban lacquer by Dr. Yoshimi Kamiya (Tokyo Metropolitan Industrial Technology Research Institute).

13. Discussion and Comments by all presenters

Each presentation highlighted new research and unknown facts, thus the symposium can be considered a milestone in our understanding of Namban lacquer research. Although it is not easy to summarize the entire content of the symposium, I would like to underscore one important point: Luso-Asian lacquer, which is very similar to Namban lacquer and has in the past been wrongly described as Indo-Portuguese, was one focus of the symposium being compared or discussed alongside Namban lacquer. Both Luso-Asian lacquer and Namban lacquer were strongly influenced by European tastes and specific requirements, and by exploring these similarities, the symposium deepened our understanding of Namban lacquer.

This type of investigation and multidisciplinary exchange represented by the symposium is just beginning. While it will take time to gather reliable data, I expect an increase in worldwide interest, which will result in more fruitful discussions about Namban lacquer.

The symposium proceedings (fig. 2), including English translations, can be downloaded from the web page: http://www.tobunken.go.jp/info/info170304/index-e.html

Koji Kobayashi
Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties

In the early autumn of 2016 a two-part forum on the Yuanmingyuan (Old Summer Palace in Beijing) was hosted by the Institut d’Etudes Supérieures des Arts (IESA) at the Institute of Historical Research, London. Titled ‘Objects of Contention: Spoils from the Yuanmingyuan in British Museums’, the event was inspired by two extremely rare ceramic pieces from the Yuanmingyuan and the adjacent Yiheyuan: a large portion of a Qing imperial revolving vase, painted in enamels with the Eight Daoist immortals on a turbulent sea among many red bats (figs. 1–2), and a head of Guanyin from the facade of the Sea of Wisdom Temple on the Wanshou Shan (figs. 3–4). The objects were formerly housed in the Surrey Infantry Museum, Clandon Park, which was destroyed by fire in the spring of 2015 due to a control panel malfunction. The objects sustained severe damage in the conflagration: the revolving vase was reduced to fragments, its enamel decoration almost entirely melted away, and the Guanyin was charred black, though it remains intact. Against this background, the forum emphasized the importance of documenting and conserving objects from the Yuanmingyuan.

The subject of the Yuanmingyuan is highly complex, involving as it does questions of history, contemporary politics, law and art. Objects from the site have also accrued diverse values and meanings related to their various positions within China and their dispersal after the 1860 conflict. Antiquities such as ancient bronzes and Song ceramics collected by the Qing...
emperors, along with articles of Qing patronage like jade carvings and cloisonné vessels, were revalued and repurposed by nineteenth-century Europeans; and their trajectories continue through museums, marketplaces and private collections today, sometimes with tragic results, as in the case of the objects in question.

This history inevitably informs discussions of display, interpretation, and provenance; and to address these issues a group of scholars working in the diverse fields of art history, history and philosophy, appeared at the forums to discuss the Sack of the Summer Palace and the impact of the 1860 war on Western collections then and now.

IESA director Adriana Turpin, whose support was critical to the event’s success, welcomed the audience and introduced the panel members. At the first forum on August 15th, the speakers discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site. Steve Johnson, curator of the Surrey Infantry Museum, lectured on the major battles of the war and updated the audience on the fire damage and recovery efforts at Clandon Park. John Roote, author of Destruction of Paradise: Triumph, Tragedy, and the Sack of the Summer Palace (2017), examined in detail how campaign members carried items from the estate and considered the possible quantity of objects taken. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The Oriental Ceramic Society Newsletter

The Yuanmingyuan during the later nineteenth century became a destination for Western tourists, who appropriated objects from the site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.

The second panel, which took place on September 25th, focused on objects from the Yuanmingyuan and their status in Western collections. Kate Hill introduced the Surrey Infantry Museum, with a fruitful knowledge exchange. She discussed the 1860 conflict and the removal of objects from the Yuanmingyuan site as souvenirs. Her lecture included a slide of the Sea of Wisdom Temple, a spot especially popular with travellers, from which the Surrey Guanyin was removed in 1872.
John Thomson arrived in Singapore in the spring of 1862 and set up a photographer’s studio. He spent the next ten years documenting the landscapes and lives of the peoples of China, Siam and Cambodia. Significantly, he was the first photographer to visit and record Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Now, over 150 years later, highlights from this collection of his photographs will be shown in London for the first time. The exhibition toured twenty major cities so far and has been seen by nearly one million visitors.

Who was John Thomson? How did a young man from Scotland manage to travel to Asia and work as a professional photographer? Why are his photographs so special that they continue to fascinate and inspire the public today?

John Thomson was born in Edinburgh in 1837, two years before the invention of photography. From a family with modest means, Thomson was apprenticed to an optician and scientific instrument maker at the age of fourteen. During the apprenticeship, he also attended evening classes at the Edinburgh School of Art. His scientific training combined with his appreciation of western art provided an important foundation for Thomson’s practical and creative skills. He embarked upon the new profession of photography at a time when its importance and creative skills were all but ignored. He managed to procure a letter from King Mongkut to facilitate his passage to Cambodia. This was an arduous journey. Plagued by leeches and mosquitoes, Thomson contracted ‘jungle-fever’, most likely malaria. All this hardship paid off and Thomson became the first photographer to document Angkor Wat.

In 1862 Thomson joined his brother in Singapore. As a trading colony Singapore offered many opportunities. Thomson embraced these wholeheartedly and besides doing studio portrait work, he embarked upon a number of journeys to surrounding regions. He carried with him a variety of large, heavy cameras, glass negatives, and chemicals, as well as a portable darkroom tent. When he arrived in Siam in the autumn of 1865, Thomson discovered a land more exotic than any he had seen before. With the help of the British Consulate in Bangkok he managed to arrange an audience with the King of Siam (fig. 1). King Mongkut was interested in western education and had engaged an English governess, Anna Leonowens, to teach the royal children (fig. 2, back cover). Her biography, which used some of Thomson’s photographs, became the inspiration for the internationally successful musical The King and I. (Coincidentally a new production of the musical will be opening in London this summer.) Thomson stayed in Siam for several months and photographed Bangkok: the city and its river, the countryside and its people. Having read accounts of the Cambodian jungle and the amazing ruins of Angkor, Thomson was keen to see them. He managed to procure a letter from King Mongkut to facilitate his passage to Cambodia. This was an arduous journey. Plagued by leeches and attacked by mosquitoes, Thomson contracted ‘jungle-fever’, most likely malaria. All this hardship paid off and Thomson became the first photographer to document Angkor Wat.

Thomson spent two years back in Britain, where he set about creating a reputation for himself as a serious traveller, photographer and writer.

In 1868 Thomson arrived in Hong Kong to start the next chapter of his life. Later that year, he married Isobel Petrie, daughter of a South Seas explorer whom he had met in Edinburgh. Hong Kong was an important trading station for British colonial and business interests and the new city was growing at a rapid pace. Thomson worked and socialised with a vibrant community of expatriate Scots. Unlike Singapore, Hong Kong already had a number of established commercial photographic studios, all competing with each other. In 1869, the colony was buzzing with the excitement of a visit by Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria. Streets, buildings, and boats were all festooned in his honour. Thomson was commissioned to take a series of photographs to illustrate the official commemorative book. This sealed his professional reputation.

In 1870, Isobel and their first born child set sail for home. The Far East, where disease was rife, was not an easy place for a young European woman to bring up a baby. Thomson stayed on and was free to travel and explore. Between 1870 and 1872, he made numerous journeys to Guangdong, Shantou, Hainan, Fujian, Nanjing, Beijing, Tianjin, Taiwan and Macao. On these travels he experienced both hospitality and hostility. As well as visiting big cities, he travelled to rural places where people who had probably never seen a white man before were understandably very suspicious, especially of a contraption like “the camera”. They believed that it would suck out their souls and cause their deaths. Despite the difficulties Thomson had a remarkable ability to develop a network of friends and contacts. This helped him to access sites and people, and offered him experiences available to few westerners at that time.

Thomson took a special interest in the daily lives of ordinary people (fig. 2). Dealers of curiosities, menders of broken chinaware, travelling chiropodists, fruit sellers, knife-grinders and the travelling magic lantern peep show - this vivid tableau of street scenes brings to life activities that have now disappeared forever (fig. 3). Especially notable are the large number of images of women. This distinguishes his work from that of other contemporary photographers.

In 1871–72, Thomson noted that: “artisans plied their trades on every vacant space in the streets in Beijing. This distinguishes his work from that of other contemporary photographers.
In April 1872 Thomson sailed home, packing his collection of nearly 700 glass negatives into three wooden crates, the same way in which they are stored today. In London he set to work on bringing his body of photographs of China to the attention of the British public. In 1873–74, he published Foochow and the River Min and a large four volume deluxe set, entitled, Illustrations of China and its Peoples, that was bound in buckram and embossed in gold. Much later, in 1898, he produced another volume, Through China with a Camera. These works are now highly prized.

In 1920, by chance, an elderly Thomson paid a visit to an exhibition of historical artefacts in London collected by the wealthy American pharmaceutical manufacturer, Henry S. Wellcome. One corridor was lined with displays of photographs: many of Africa, but none of China. So, Thomson wrote a letter to the Wellcome curator offering to sell his collection. Thomson, however, died of a heart attack in 1921 before negotiations were concluded. Luckily the exchange of correspondence was discovered and Thomson’s heirs completed the sale. At the Wellcome Library the glass negatives were expertly stored and preserved allowing for these 150-year-old images to be digitised and printed to large format for exhibition display. These iconic landscapes and portraits not only show wonderful places and faces, but also illustrate fascinating clothes and artefacts, providing precious information and moving glimpses into ways of life of long forgotten people and their vanished times.

Betty Yao

MBE is co-curator of China and Siam: Through the Lens of John Thomson at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Russell Square, London from 13 April to 23 June, 2018. For more details, see www.JohnThomsonExhibition.org

**Germany**

**The Dresden Porcelain Project**

![Fig. 1 Louis de Silvestre, portrait of Augustus the Strong, c.1723. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden.](image)

**History**

When he passed away, Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (1670–1733) had amassed over 24,000 pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain (fig. 1). Some regarded him as a maniac, which he was not, but he certainly was gripped by ‘la maladie de porcelaine’. Apart from the pleasure porcelain must have given him, he also collected these wares for other reasons. His Japanisches Palais on the shore of the Elbe River, furnished with porcelain, was destined to become the most grandiose monument to his taste and status, surpassing all other royal and imperial porcelain rooms and cabinets in Europe (figs. 2 and 3). Furthermore, the shapes and decorations of the Chinese, but especially of the Japanese porcelains in his collection, inspired or served as models for shaping and decorating the fashionable pieces being produced in his newly founded Meissen porcelain factory. One of the most outstanding features of this fabulous collection is its extant eighteenth-century written documentation, in particular the inventory books (fig. 4). These records, in combination with the incised or painted inventory numbers (so-called Palace numbers, in reference to the Japanisches Palais) and their respective ciphers on the porcelain pieces, provide highly important information and descriptions of the large, early and very varied collection of Asian porcelain. Nowhere else in the world is there a similar collection from the early eighteenth century that is so well documented and offers such deep insights into the types of export porcelain that were available and valued at the time.

The king’s successors, however, did not share his fascination and slowly the collection was dispersed. During the following reigns, pieces were sold or given away, were damaged and were probably even stolen. Yet in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, parts were still displayed in the basement of the Japanese Palace and from 1876 at the former Royal Art Gallery, the so-called Johanneum. It was also during this time that the numbers and ciphers on the royal porcelain pieces began to be incorrectly referred to as Johanneum numbers. They are Palace Numbers and should rightly be called so. In the early twentieth century ‘duplicates’ were sold at auctions – something we now bitterly regret. During World War II the collection escaped the destruction of Dresden because it along with other museum treasures were hidden in castles and mines elsewhere in Saxony. After the War the Soviets confiscated the collection. Large parts of the porcelain holdings were transported to the Soviet Union as war loot and the transfer of the entire collection back to Dresden was only completed in 1958.

By that time, all the pieces had been provided with a new inventory number in red paint (PO numbers). Nowadays, a fine selection is exuberantly exhibited in the baroque galleries of the Zwinger in Dresden, in installations designed by the New York architect Peter Marino. Yet, a much larger part of the collection is preserved in the well-equipped storage in the basement of the Zwinger (fig. 5).

Selections and highlights of what we now
call the Palace Collection have been published by Zimmermann, Reichel, Ströber and others, but to date a complete, modern catalogue of the former Royal Porcelain Collection has not been compiled. This is partly due to the huge quantity of objects in the Asian collection, circa 8,000 pieces, and partly due to a lack of funds. Thanks to the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD), the Museum & Research Foundation and support from others, a new initiative to create such a catalogue bore fruit and since 2014 work on the Dresden Porcelain Project has been in full swing. The task of cataloguing all the pieces, including damaged ones, is complex and can only be realised by a community of scholars. The ultimate goal is to create a digital catalogue – digital only, because it soon became apparent that a printed catalogue simply was impossible. Since the amount of information accompanying each object becomes clear. The initial period of the Project was devoted to transcribing and translating the inventory entries relevant to the Asian holdings, to digitally photographing each and every piece, and to developing a stringent system to catalogue the extensive collection with an international group of specialists. Selected scholars, curators and researchers worldwide were informed about the project and invited to participate. Meanwhile, the rather small staff at the Porzellanverwaltung braced itself for an avalanche of work and organisational challenges. Not surprisingly, we were soon confronted by a shortage of funds and needed help. The Ernst von Siemens Foundation in Germany, the Freundeskreis der Dresdner Porzellanverwaltung im Zwinger e.V., and the Bei Shan Tang Foundation in Hong Kong generously came to our rescue, while in Japan the Japan Foundation and the government of Saga Prefecture guaranteed the photography of all the Japanese porcelains. In the Netherlands and in the USA, foundations of Friends of the Project were created for tax-deductible donations and many porcelain dealers, collectors and enthusiasts gave small to substantial donations that greatly helped to sustain the project during a rather difficult period. After the retirement of Prof. Ulrich Pietsch, who had initiated the project and greatly supported this immense undertaking, the newly appointed director of the Porzellanverwaltung, Dr. Julia Weber, continued to promote the project around the world. We are now connected to the Rijksmuseum and the National Palace Museum in Taipei. At this stage (February 2018) our cataloguers are actually busy writing their entries. We are very happy with our 28 colleagues from nine different countries – this truly is an international collaboration! Coordination and supervision is in the hands of Cora Würmell, curator at the Porzellanverwaltung, who is supported by a wonderful team. We are very positive that with further financial assistance the project will be finished in time and yield extremely interesting results. Furthermore, this digital catalogue will become the basis for new research and be a touchstone for everyone involved in the field, particularly because the authenticity, provenance and dating ante quem of the Dresden porcelains is undisputed.

Let me finish with one of the many surprises found in the treasure trove of the Augustus the Strong collection: a small piggybank, decorated with a floral pattern in underglaze blue, Kangxi period (1661–1722), early eighteenth century (fig. 6). I myself had never seen such an object. It was hidden behind a couple of teacups and saucers on one of the shelves in the storage. It is not difficult to identify its model, an undecorated Dutch Delft model. Height 7 cm.

Fig. 2 The Northern gallery of the Zwinger, exhibiting Asian export porcelains.
Fig. 3 The famous Dragoon Vases, Kangxi, c.1700.
Fig. 4 (Left) A page from the original inventory book of Japanese Imari porcelain.
Fig. 5 (Top) One of the storage compartments with Japanese Imari porcelain.
Fig. 6 (Bottom) Piggybank, Kangxi, c. early eighteenth century, after a Dutch Delft model. Height 7 cm.

Amsterdam, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem (USA), the Kyushu Ceramic Museum in Arita, and the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Many more astonishing pieces have already been revealed and more will come – just wait and see!

Dr. Christiaan Jörg
Academic supervisor
The Dresden Porcelain Project
The Netherlands

The newly renovated galleries of the Princessehof National Museum of Ceramics, Leeuwarden

On December 1st 2017 the Princessehof National Museum of Ceramics, housed in a charming historic building once the residence of the ancestors of the current Dutch king, reopened its doors to the public after an extensive renovation and reinstallation of its permanent collection. The main reasons for this renovation were two-fold: 1) to integrate the Asian and European collections, as the latter had been removed from display to make room for a temporary exhibition space; 2) to improve the accessibility of our previous scholarly display to visitors. The result is a condensed and contextual exhibition space; 2) to improve the accessibility of our previous scholarly display to visitors. The result is a condensed and contextual display that takes the visitor along a journey where ‘East meets West’. What is porcelain and how does it feel? Where did porcelain first appear? How did it spread by trade within Asia, to the Middle East and later to Europe? What other developments were crucial in ceramic history and how did ‘Delftware’ become such as major success?

In addition to this display several smaller permanent exhibitions were created. The first honours the founder of the Museum: Nanne Ottema. It is thanks to his endless passion for collecting ceramics and his efforts to preserve this collection for future generations that the Museum was established in 1917. In the same room the visitor is introduced to the history of Delftware, other developments that became a major success. The flower holder from the factory ‘De Metaale Pot’ is a great example of this achievement (fig. 3). Besides examples of this achievement (fig. 3). Besides

Within Asia, stoneware and porcelain have all influenced each other to a great extent, both in terms of decoration, shapes and technologies. Large dishes for serving food were produced in China, Korea, Japan, Thailand and Vietnam for the Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern market. However, each area had its own characteristics. A 15th century dish with a water landscape is a product of Vietnam (fig. 1), clearly recognisable by its loose execution and colour combination. While China already produced porcelain from around the 8th century, it took until the early 17th century for the first pieces to appear in Japan. Within a short time period the production in Japan reached a high standard, of which the kakiemon porcelain is particularly famous. In April 2017 the museum was able to acquire two charming bijin figures that are now part of the permanent collection (fig. 2). Kakiemon porcelain was appreciated in Japan and beyond, as shown by imitations made in Delft and Meissen. These pieces represent an introduction to the following gallery: the trade in porcelain from East to West and the fascination that this material triggered for the people of that time.

People often know that kraak porcelain was the inspiration for the emergence of Delftware, but it is less well-known that the technique that helped create the success of Delftware originated in the Middle East. The method to apply a tin-glaze layer to earthenware was developed in this region around the 9th century. Through the ages this technique spread via Spain, Italy and Belgium to The Netherlands. This made it possible for the Delft potters to imitate the desired blue-and-white porcelain that was shipped by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) from the early 17th century onwards. Even though other potters in The Netherlands and abroad also imitated porcelain, it was the Delft wares that became a major success. The flower holder from the factory ‘De Metaale Pot’ is a great example of this achievement (fig. 3). Besides the history of Delftware, other developments in Europe are shown in this room, such as the first porcelain industries and the introduction of Creamware. Chinese and Japanese export porcelain specifically produced to cater the Western market complete this display.

A special room was created with wooden crates stacked and filled with ceramics from different periods as an area for visitors to appreciate the immense volumes and variety of ceramics traded between the East and West. Visitors can discover all kinds of ceramics in these boxes, from old to new, unique to mass-produced. The end of this display provides a dramatic contrast: visitors enter a room in which beautiful selected pieces of ceramics from the art nouveau and art deco period are ‘dancing in the dark’. The visitor can simply admire the enchanting display, or dive deeper into this period and learn how many of potters were greatly influenced by the long ceramic history of Japan and China. With its newly renovated galleries the Princessehof is ready to welcome many visitors in 2018, the year in which Leeuwarden is the ‘Cultural Capital of Europe’. To celebrate this event the exhibition ‘Made in Holland’ will open in June, showing the glories and the creativity of the Dutch ceramic industry.

Eline van den Berg
Curator of Asian ceramics
Princessehof National Museum of Ceramics, Leeuwarden

Figs. 2 and 3
After a prolonged closure for revamps and upgrades the University of Pretoria reopened their large ceramic collection to the public in 2017. Now called the World of Ceramics exhibition this part of the UP Museums showcases ceramics from across the world with displays from Africa, Europe, South America and Asia. The Eastern Ceramics gallery which hosts the collection of the University of Pretoria’s Asian Ceramics is the largest of the eight exhibition spaces.

The gallery used as a space for the training of South Africa’s museum studies students was created to serve several academic functions in the University environment. The display area has an overall theme looking at two parts of Asian ceramics and their importance. The first section takes a look at the different colours and techniques involved in the creation of the objects. This section is also used as a training and learning area for visual arts students looking to make a career in the fields of arts and ceramics. The second section looks at symbols and the meaning of ceramics and decoration and is a handy teaching spot for Japanese studies and anthropology. Within this broader theme are separate display cases which, although overseen by a curator, were created by post graduate museum studies students. Their responsibility was to choose a theme within the broader context of the museum and then create a display, which includes information on the theme and the individual objects. In this way students were able to see beyond the concept of their work and learn from the experience. Separate from the training element, the exhibition showed off the more important elements of the collection to the connoisseur and was a pleasing display of colour for the layman. The entire spectrum of the collection was on display, from Neolithic pots to the 2010 gift of Xi Jinping.

The collection itself was donated to the University of Pretoria in 1980 by a Dutch entrepreneur Mr Jacob van Tilburg (1888–1980). Van Tilburg was an avid collector of art with a focus on Chinese ceramics. He bought these objects from as early as the 1920s to as late as the 1970s. The bulk of the collection was a small museum brought from Batavia to Rotterdam by Firma van Nierop & Co., a shipping merchant that imported ceramics and cotton from Indonesia, Java and Japan to The Netherlands. In 1915–17, after the Surabaya revolt in East Java, where Firma van Nierop & Co. had their head offices, they moved to Rotterdam. Firma van Nierop & Co. moved their collection of Asian art to Rotterdam and for a time from 1932 it was displayed at the Handelsmuseum van Oost-Aziatische Kunst, located at Keizersgracht 690 in Amsterdam. In 1936 the Museum entered into financial trouble and requested donations from its stakeholders, but the Museum was not able to keep head above water and consequently closed down. The bulk of the collection became part of the Het Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, but the Van Nierop Collection was returned to him. Somewhere between 1947 and 1957 the van Nierop Collection was bought by Van Tilburg (fig. 1). Today this forms the bulk of the collection at the University of Pretoria.

The collection consists of 1,717 pieces; the largest section is from mainland China. Other countries represented in the collection include Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia and Persia (Iran). In the collection there are 692 plates, with three very large sixteenth/seventeenth century Japanese Arita plates (fig. 2). There are also 403 vases and pots dating from as early as 2,000 BC (fig. 3), 157 bowls as well as 256 cups. There are 67 spouted pots ranging from teapots to milk jugs to wine ewers (fig. 4); 41 porcelain boxes and 22 sculptures which include several tomb figures. Lastly, there are 14 objects described as other ceramics which would include a granary from the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) and a large funeral urn from the Song dynasty (960-1279). The key ceramic objects in the collection are probably the Zhangzhou (Swatow) or provincial Chinese ceramics.

The World of Ceramics exhibition is open to the public Mondays to Fridays 8:00-16:00, and for a tour please contact: museums@up.ac.za.

Gerard de Kamper
Curator Van Tilburg porcelain collection, University of Pretoria
News from Southeast Asia

Cambodia

Imported ceramics at Angkor Thom

Several archaeological excavations carried out in Angkor Thom, Cambodia, and led by Jacques Gaucher (Ecole Française d’Extrême-Orient) were aimed at reconstituting the plan of the capital of the Khmer kings and, in particular, focused on its complete history. Aside from the domestic pottery and local Khmer stoneware, these excavations yielded a considerable corpus of imported ceramics (about 9,500 shards), mainly Chinese, but also Vietnamese and Thai. These imports started in the tenth century and continued until the first half of the fifteenth century with a short revival at the turn of the seventeenth century.

A preliminary study had established the types and the dates of wares already excavated at the Royal Palace of Angkor. Subsequent archaeological expeditions outside the Royal Palace confirmed the same characteristics in relation to the flow of the imported ceramics.

Among the Chinese forms, covered boxes are the most numerous up until the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century. Later, bowls are predominant, although boxes are still present in large numbers. Overall, however, for the entire period of occupation from the tenth to the fifteenth century, the fragments of covered boxes are in the majority compared to bowl shards.

In other settlement sites in Southeast Asia (whether palatial or not), bowls and jars are the most numerous imported items by far. Boxes were found only occasionally and were of a type usually required for betel leaves, cosmetics or perfumes and medicinal unguents. In Angkor, vessels made of metal or vegetable matter, such as lacquer-coated wicker, were traditionally assigned to certain domestic uses where elsewhere bowls and dishes were chosen for the same purpose. Therefore, such an unusually large demand for covered boxes implies some particular and different set of uses. The large range of covered boxes in various shapes which have been recovered with stoneware or porcelain bodies and various types of glazes - and sometimes with complex moulded decoration - was probably linked to the cult and rituals of the surrounding temples and monasteries. Some large boxes with cylindrical bodies and conical tops with lotus-shaped knobs may have had a funerary use, as their shapes are reminiscent of those types of urns.

The earliest wares excavated from the site consist of a few greenwares from the Yue kilns in Zhejiang province dating from the tenth century. During the following two centuries, a number of kilns in Jiangxi and Guangdong provinces produced similar types of ceramics with whitish porcelain bodies. They are represented in Angkor by the shards of a few high-quality ewers, bowls and a varied group of covered boxes, mostly with qingbai glaze. Up until the fall of Angkor, celadons from the Zhejiang kilns are the most numerous wares found. Circular boxes, bowls and dishes demonstrate the differing glazing features that occurred between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Greenwares, with a high-fired stoneware body, produced in a number of kilns in the south of Fujian province, such as those of Putian, were also found in almost the same quantity as Longquan celadons. They included fragments of covered boxes of various sizes and bowls with an unglazed ring on the interior and sometimes a floral motif impressed on the centre. The fairly extensive recovery of bowls of this type in the excavations of the Malay word first appeared to be associated with trade settlements of coastal areas. However, their presence in great numbers in the palatial site of Trowulan, centre of the great Javanese kingdom of Majapahit, as well as in Angkor, testify to the impressive output of these Fujian kilns, as well as the widespread distribution and appreciation for these mass-produced wares.

A few other ceramics (mainly fragments of boxes) from Fujian were also excavated. They were manufactured in the Jinjiang district, notably at the Cizhao kilns during the thirteenth century. They are characterized by a high-fired buff earthenware body with an apple-green glaze. Although always found in small quantities, they are present in many sites scattered throughout Southeast Asia, even in the uplands of Borneo, where they were highly valued.

Porcelains with underglaze cobalt blue decoration produced at the kilns of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province in the fourteenth century are also present. The group includes fragments of large vessels of high technical achievement, as would be expected for use in the Royal Palace, as well as more modest blue-and-white bowls. Stoneware storage jars are the most common type of vessels recovered from any maritime site of Southeast Asia, where they were indispensable for storing household supplies. They also acquired a special status among some native inland people. However in Angkor, only a few are present as a consequence of the local Khmer stoneware production.

Not surprisingly, during the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, Thai and Vietnamese production became mingled with Chinese ceramics. Evidence of such production consists mostly of fragments of bowls from the Sukhothai kilns decorated in underglaze iron-black or turquoise-green glazed wares from the Sawangkalok kilns in Thailand and of fragments of ivory-glazed wares, jars with inlaid brown decoration, and bowls painted in underglaze iron-black from kilns in Vietnam.

After a clear disruption in the import of foreign ceramics, the presence in Angkor of a small group of Chinese blue-and-white porcelains indicates the revival of some form of settlement on the site. These porcelains, consisting of fragments of bowls and boxes, are part of the production of the late Ming dynasty, mostly attributed to the Wanli period (1573–1620). The range of foreign ceramic types excavated in Angkor is very much in line with those found elsewhere in Southeast Asia during the same periods, aside from the strikingly large proportion of boxes from the tenth to fifteenth centuries (a phenomenon which, as noted above, is most probably linked to the activities of local temples and monasteries).

For the complete study of these excavations, see the forthcoming Péninsule, Paris, 2018.

Marie-France Dupoizat

The Oriental Ceramic Society Newsletter 36
News from the Americas

United States

Exhibition ‘Mirroring China’s Past: Emperors and Their Bronzes’ at the Art Institute of Chicago

Mirroring China’s Past: Emperors and Their Bronzes is the blockbuster exhibition recently opened at the Art Institute of Chicago, which runs until May 13th, and which has been expertly curated by Dr Wang Tao, who joined the museum as the Pritzker Chair of Asian Art in 2015. This dazzling and ambitious exhibition celebrates archaic Chinese bronzes as well as the tradition of collecting, scholarship and connoisseurship around them.

With over 170 works, Mirroring China’s Past is the largest exhibition of Chinese bronzes ever held outside of China. The exhibition draws on bronzes from the museum’s own collection, alongside loans from prominent private collections and, significantly, both the Palace Museum, Beijing, and the Shanghai Museum, many of which are being shown in America for the first time.

Unashamedly academic, this spectacular exhibition opens with a variety of bronze ritual vessels, lined up to greet the visitor, immediately conveying the extraordinarily broad variation in form, decorative technique and - in a theme repeated in the exhibition - state of preservation (fig. 1). Some of the bronzes reveal a brilliant shiny surface, as originally intended, others bear the more familiar blue and green encrustation resulting from centuries of having been submerged in mineral-rich soil, revealing how the vessels themselves are very much a victim to their circumstances.

The opening gallery of bronze vessels is simply breathtaking with cases displaying a vast array of bronze vessels, some well-known and iconic examples, juxtaposed with fabulously rare and fantastical examples, such a late Shang dynasty (1600–1046 BC) bird-shaped container, zun, from a private collection (fig. 2). In a separate gallery to the side, the museum has staged a monumental reunion, exhibiting the famous set of fourteen Western Zhou (1046–771 BC) ritual vessels from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, alongside a monumental lobed cauldron, li, known as the Shi Yin Li, from the same period, from the collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing, where it is considered a National Treasure. Reunited after a century apart, both the set of bronzes and the li were photographed together in c.1907 before the prominent bronze collector Duanfang, the image itself serving as an Instagram-worthy backdrop to the gallery.

State-of-the-art visuals throughout the exhibition enlighten the visitor as to the manufacture of bronzes as well as the more rarely seen, and certainly little understood, ritual context for the bronzes, such as a triple-screen re-enactment of the Liji (Book of Rites).

For those of us in the Chinese art world, the issue of authenticity and attribution is never far from one’s mind. The exhibition must be commended for not shying away from this topic, critical as it is to the study and appreciation of Chinese bronzes. Several of the displays confront this thorny issue head on, not only by juxtaposing ‘authentic’ archaic bronzes with their later archaistic versions, including a fascinating Chongzhen period (1627–1644) ding (helpfully dated by inscription to 1636), from the Palace Museum, Beijing, but also by reattributing and redating some bronzes from their own collection, as well as those loaned to the exhibition, including a pair of bronze you (known as the Hezi You, one, with its cover, from the Minneapolis Institute of Art; the other from the Shanghai Museum) that have left curators and academics scratching their heads for decades.

Unsurprisingly, given the title of the exhibition, the legacy of the Qianlong Emperor (1736–1795) looms large, with two galleries devoted to his collection and connoisseurship. Numerous and various eighteenth century works of art inspired by archaic bronze vessels are included here, with rare porcelains, lacquers, cloisonné enamels, each modelled or decorated to evoke China’s historical past. Spectacular loans worth highlighting in these galleries include the famous court painting ‘One or Two?’ (Shi Yi Shier Tu) from the Palace Museum, Beijing, depicting the Emperor surrounded by some of his rarest treasures from the Imperial collection. Although slightly earlier in date, two examples of the ‘Twelve Beauties’ hanging scrolls from the late Kangxi period (1661–1722), also from the Palace Museum, elegantly demonstrate the display of archaic bronzes in the eighteenth century (fig. 3).

The non-imperial tradition of collecting bronzes is represented by a long horizontal hand scroll of bronze rubbings from the collection of the government official and diplomat Wu Dacheng, ‘Collected Antiquities of Kezhai’, Kezai Ji`atu (enclosed in the longest case the museum has ever made), ingeniously reunited with some of the bronzes depicted on the scroll, which have now made their way to major museum collections.

The exhibition concludes firmly in the twenty-first century, displaying works from a number of contemporary Chinese artists, including Hong Zhao, Xu Zhen and Tai Xiangzhou, who have continued to engage, somewhat playfully, with China’s artistic legacy. This current engagement eloquently demonstrates the long, continuous and significant role ritual bronzes have played throughout Chinese history and that they will, undoubtedly, continue to play in the future.

Angela McAteer
Vice President, Head of Department Chinese Works of Art, Sotheby’s New York
Chinese black and gold lacquer production made for export from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries has not been examined in depth. Unlike the study of Japanese export lacquer, the study of Chinese export lacquer is generally included within global China Trade commodities research and has not been considered as a subject on its own. The substantial number of pieces of Chinese black and gold export lacquer present in European and American collections substantiates the need for a more in-depth understanding of these objects.

Investigations into Chinese Export Lacquerware: Black and Gold, 1700–1850 is currently being carried out in the Preservation Studies Doctoral Program, University of Delaware in the United States. This interdisciplinary study combines the material analysis and documentary data needed to understand Chinese black and gold lacquer production made for the export market between 1700–1850, in the region of Canton (present-day Guangzhou). The designation ‘Chinese export’, that frames this research, was adopted for the purpose of clarity. Chinese export art was produced in China to suit the European and American markets. Its design, either in shape or in decoration – for instance, notice the substantial amount of armorial porcelain – represents customs and iconography related to the history of Europe and America, and not to China itself. For this study, the classification ‘Chinese export lacquer’ will include objects with the following characteristics: made of wood, presenting shapes suitable for the Western market, coated with black lacquer, and decorated with gold. ‘Shapes suitable for the Western market’ refers primarily to pieces of furniture: chairs, game tables, sewing tables, cabinets, work tables, among others, that have a European or American design, and were created and used widely in these regions (fig. 1). Lacquer decoration from the region of Canton (Guangzhou) was produced in gold-painted decoration or miao-jin. In this technique, the decorative gold motif was painted with fine brushes over several layers of black lacquer. Objects of this kind were brought home by merchants and sea captains to furnish their own homes, as gifts to family members and friends, and as trading commodities and commissions for other consumers. During the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, a considerable number of lacquered pieces reached Europe and the United States due to trading with China. Shipping documents provide invaluable information about merchants, trade, and cargoes, especially the records related to the ships’ supercargo. The ‘supercargo’ was the man on board responsible for the money from investors and for all of the commercial transactions in the various ports where the ships docked. It was also his responsibility to record all cargoes that went in and out of the ships and to keep them in good condition until they reached their final destination. Archival research was carried out to document the relation of the pieces to their geographic provenance, to understand the lacquer trade during that period, and to investigate lacquer production and workshops in the Canton (Guangzhou) region of China.

A group of study pieces was sampled and analyzed to identify materials and techniques employed in their manufacture. Chinese export black and gold lacquer coatings display a multi-layered stratigraphy composed of the ground layers, the lacquer layers, and gilt decorations, mainly the gold and metallic alloys, applied on top. Ground layers usually contain an organic binder and inorganic material such as clay. Lacquer layers are composed of a mixture of Asian lacquer, drying oil, plant resins and other additives, as well as inorganic pigment.

Due to the particular structure and varying constituents, a multi-technique approach, including cross-section Optical Microscopy (OM), Pyrolysis-Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (Py-GC/MS), and Scanning Electron Microscopy-Energy Dispersive X-ray Spectroscopy (SEM-EDS), is required to analyze and identify the materials present in these decorative finish layers. Comparisons among the various pieces in this study will permit identification of similarities and differences and the establishment of patterns of production. Both material identification and manufacturing technology are being investigated and compared. Stylistic comparison will be carried out to establish connections between the pieces and other documented examples of the same production, as well as to define chronological periods of production.

The objects chosen for study come mainly from American and Portuguese collections in addition to other sources. A number of institutions and individuals from various countries have contributed to this research by giving permission to sample objects in their collections or by granting access in order to study related pieces. This study has had invaluable support from the Winterthur Museum (fig. 2), the Peabody Essex Museum, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in the United States; from the São Roque Museum, the National Palace of Ajuda, and a private collector, all in Lisbon, as well as Jorge Welsh Works of Art in both Lisbon and London; also in London: the Victoria & Albert Museum and Ronald Phillips Antiques; the Slots-og Kulturstyrelsen in Copenhagen, the Lacquer Museum in Munster, the Royal Brighton Pavilion in Brighton, the Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou, and the Hong Kong Maritime Museum.

Documentary research, stylistic comparison, and analytical data have been combined to characterize lacquerware manufacture methods in the region of Canton (Guangzhou) in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. With the financial support from institutions such as the Phillips Library/Peabody Essex Museum, Foundation of the American Institute of Conservation, True Vue Inc., Fundação Oriente, and the Center of Material Culture Studies at the University of Delaware, research was carried out in many archives and museums. Archives have included the Phillips Library in Salem, Massachusetts, the Baker Library at Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts and the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence, Rhode Island. A study trip to Guangzhou, Macao, and Hong Kong allowed for the study of some objects in the region and visits to museum collections that included lacquered objects with similar shapes and decoration. This trip also contributed to furthering our understanding of different lacquerware techniques used in that region of South China, contributing greatly to the discussion of the objects’ provenance.

The Investigations into Chinese Export Lacquerware: Black and Gold, 1700–1850 dissertation is to be concluded by mid-2019.

Maria João dos Santos Nunes Petisca
Ph.D. candidate, University of Delaware
United States

Exhibition ‘Linking Asia: Art, Trade and Devotion: The Influence of Trade Routes on Asian Art’ at the Denver Art Museum

The exhibition Linking Asia: Art, Trade and Devotion: The Influence of Trade Routes on Asian Art at the Denver Art Museum opened in December, 2017 and ran until 1 April, 2018. It explored the exchange of ideas, beliefs and techniques along the complex network of trade routes criss-crossing the globe, including the Silk Road, and illustrated how over time these routes profoundly influenced the development of art across the Asian continent. The exhibit also considered important themes, such as the cross-cultural hybridization of styles in a variety of media, in continental and maritime trade, and through religious links.

Featuring approximately 150 objects from the Museum’s collection along with other loaned objects from important collections, ‘Linking Asia’ included ceramics, textiles, metalwork and sculptures, many on view for the first time. The objects originated from 20 countries spanning more than 2,500 years of history. The exhibition was curated by Tianlong Jiao, Joseph de Heer Curator of Asian Art at the Denver Art Museum. A catalogue published to accompany the exhibit, provides new scholarship through essays and contextual information and is the first major record of the Asian collection of the Denver Art Museum, which first opened its doors in 1915.

Objects from across the Silk Road, including China, India, Korea, Persia (Iran) and Japan, were displayed. The influence of Buddhism, which spread to China in the late Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD) and then to Korea and Japan, was reflected in the many objects.

Highlights from the exhibition included this Korean bronze vessel, of a shape that originated in India, known as a kundika or chongbyong (pure water sprinkler), which was used for purifying the ground during Buddhist ceremonies (fig. 1). Paintings dating to the Koryo period (918–1392) in Korea illustrate similar water vessels, which were produced in bronze and celadon. Water was placed into this vessel though the spout on the shoulder, and poured out through the mouth at the top. This shape has been known in China since the Tang dynasty (618–906) and would have been carried by Buddhist pilgrims along with an alms bowl and staff.

Camels acted as an important mode of transportation across the difficult trade routes of the Silk Road from Central Asia, transferring goods by a relay system. Significant numbers of Sancui (three-colour) ceramic figures of two hump Bactrian camels have been excavated from Tang dynasty tombs in northern China (fig. 2). These figures, which were not native to the Tang heartland, formed part of the funerary procession and were displayed on carts. With their number and size determined by the social rank of the deceased, they were placed into the tomb once the coffin was laid in the burial chamber. Their presence among other burial objects reflects the deceased’s wishes to continue using them in the afterlife.

Blue-and-white porcelain moon flasks of superb quality were made in China during the Qianlong period (1735–1796). This large example, with a flattened circular body, tall neck and double scroll handles, reflects a combination of archaic and Islamic influences (fig. 3, front cover). The shape, originally modelled after an Islamic metal flask, first appeared in porcelain of the Ming dynasty. The petal-shaped panels with Eight Buddhist emblems, which are believed to have been introduced to inland China by the spread of Buddhism from Tibet, that are painted around the central boss reflect the religion formally adopted by the Qing court.

Indian textiles known as palampore were being manufacture by the third quarter of the eighteenth century incorporating both Chinese and European design elements. This cotton hanging shows that motifs such as rocks, pheasants and peonies were clearly based on Chinese wallpapers of the period, and that the floral garland borders were based on European models (fig. 4). The central motif of a flowering tree growing from a mound, or tree of life, which relates to the ancient symbol for wish-fulfillment, appeared commonly on Indian chintz furnishings made for export to Europe in the eighteenth century, when textiles like these were used as bed-coverings, wall-hangings, curtains or table coverings.

There were strict rules concerning attire when attending ceremonies during the Qing dynasty. In the exhibition robe is of a style usually worn by men with a large front-facing dragon in the centre, curled around a flaming pearl. Yellow robes were considered the most auspicious and were reserved specifically for the royal family. Minor princes or noblemen were allowed to wear blue, which was the Qing dynasty’s official colour. The decorative motifs of this robe, such as the striped hem representing the waves of the sea and the dragons with five claws amid clouds, suggest an association with the Qing Imperial court, and suggest that it may have intended for an Imperial consort in the nineteenth century.

Linda Pomper
Independent scholar, New York
continued exploration of the Americas, however, occurred within that take for granted imperial Europe and in particular, is still largely based on models historical accounts of Euro-America within an points to the need for recasting prevailing much attention, an intensity of trade that porcelain and other commodities has received early twentieth centuries. The circulation of as the Americas from the sixteenth through Pacific to developments in what is known today world working on the role of East Asia and the bringing together scholars from around the History' at Brown University with the goal of making the symposium series ‘The Asia Pacific in the framed by maritime and commercial ambitions regarding Asia. The map in fig. 1 indicates the Spanish and English attempts to imaginatively and ideologically place America adjacent to East Asia, to shrink the Great Ocean. Objects, aesthetics, ideas, and people crisscrossed the Pacific from the earliest days of European settlement. The work presented by dozens of speakers in our nine symposia demonstrates that we cannot narrate histories of the West and East in isolation from one another (See symposia websites: https://www.brown.edu/conference/asia-pacific/home and https://blogs.brown.edu/nexus taiwan.) To bring this story into the present, increasing digitization of the documents, objects, and art we use to construct these global histories has opened a new form of global interaction, that of shared scholarly resources worldwide. When we discussed the logical outcome of our conference series — a publication of select papers — we were all more interested in the research agenda going forward than looking back. How might we best use these papers to continue to look beyond the ‘exchange’ framework of international studies, which extracts and celebrates states and their leaders from culturally rich transnational cultural contexts? How might we best promote a global studies that puts all historical actors, regardless of location and identity, on a level playing field rather than work within the familiar narratives of Western empire? How might students and scholars located far from libraries, repositories, and museums gain access to the sources necessary to move beyond stale nationalism to new perspectives?

With these questions in mind, we have developed an open-access online publication (http://scalar.usc.edu/works/apma/index). Like a print publication, it includes conference papers, especially those representing new and unpublished research. But, in addition, it offers the capacity to share digitized rare books, documents, and visual culture. We began with essays that drew on resources close at hand in the Brown libraries, such as the Dictionarium Sinicum and the Dong Xi Yang Kang, both rare texts used by our authors as evidence against two limiting yet dominant commonplaces of the East Indies trades. We then expanded to include resources in China and Mexico.

The Dictionarium Sinicum is, as its title indicates, a dictionary of 15,000 Chinese words and expressions with Latin transliterated and published in 172-page rice paper, twine-bound manuscript. The viewer directly to a scan of the complete text when the government outlawed doing so. Its presence in two of our essays, ‘Benjamin Bowen Carter, Chinese Bibliophile’ by John Eng-Wong and ‘Benjamin Bowen Carter’s Xiu xiang hong mao faz’ by Man Shun Yeung, together with its complete digitization on our website, allow researchers around the world, beyond Brown, to use this rare manuscript to better recognize the extent and nature of interactions between Americans and Chinese in Canton. Europeans and Americans did indeed have ample opportunity to learn Chinese, contrary to prevailing narratives, although only a few chose to do so. Likewise, a link to the first-edition 1618 Dong Xi Yang Kang in our essay ‘Spanish Manila and the Conquest of Asia’ by John Lucian Smith sends the viewer directly to a scan of the complete 172-page rice paper, twin-bound manuscript. This text is valuable to researchers of the early European commodity trades in and around China. Much like England’s Richard Hakluyt, who used eyewitness counts of incoming sailors for his 1589 Principal Navigations, Zhang Xie’s text is written from the accounts of arriving Chinese merchant sailors. It offers a Chinese perspective on all manners of foreigners encountered across...
Southeast Asia and Japan, as well as evidence for the strong presence of Chinese merchants in the ‘Eastern and Western Seas’. In the dominant narratives of the European East Indies trades and subsequent U.S. China trade, the Chinese rarely leave shore and have limited maritime technology. Moreover, they are thought not to use maps, yet this 1618 edition includes eight maps, later removed in the much more commonly known reprinted Qing editions. Very few first-edition Dong Xi Yang kao exist, and it has not been readily available to researchers.

Beyond the Brown libraries, a colleague from Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China, Dr. Jiang Yinghe, has contributed an essay on small watercolor books filled with scenes of ‘Chinese torture’ (fig. 3). He found them in the Guangzhou Museum while researching East-West aesthetic interactions. They were painted in Canton by Chinese artists catering to an Anglo-American market fascinated by graphic images of the ‘cruel Chinese’. Few such booklets remain in the United States today. Identical scenes are also found on export porcelain (fig. 4), and Jiang indicates that the art is based in a Chinese tradition of narrative illustration of the Buddhist Hells. Here the movement of this design motif from porcelain to tourist-trade watercolor booklets exclusively devoted to punishment scenes indicates an aesthetic interaction latent with hostility.

In another example, economic historian Melba Falck of the Universidad de Guadalajara presented an astounding essay on the seventeenth-century Japanese community in Mexico in which she drew from documents in the Jalisco State Library, Guadalajara. Members of this Asian immigrant community sailed back and forth conducting a lucrative trade between Mexico and Japan, becoming wealthy enough to marry local women, hold government positions, and a pew within the Catholic Church. One Japanese man, who was buried with his wife at an altar of the Guadalajara Cathedral, left an extensive will, which declares his origin as Osaka and his wealth in Mexico as over 6,000 silver pesos and seventeen slaves. Every page of this Last Will and Testament is reproduced on our website.

Clearly within many leading libraries, private collections, museums, and historical societies, valuable archival and visual resources reflecting the important historical transpacific interaction lie unrecognized and underutilized. Texts and objects that attest to this relationship in Latin America and in East Asia are often inaccessible to U.S. or European students and scholars, and vice versa. We intend the digitized resources available on our website to further transnational research agendas on the Asia-Pacific in the making of the Americas.

Dr. Caroline Frank
Department of American Studies, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

The Collection of Storage Jars in the Princessehof, National Museum of Ceramics, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

Jars as ‘Trans-cultural’ Objects

The collection includes jars from Cambodia (dating into the thirteenth century), a number of jars made in kilns in Thailand and Vietnam, and ‘real martabans’, made in the kilns of Burma, now Myanmar. Many of the jars, however, are difficult to date and their origin is not clear. Inventory cards for example provide only basic information such as ‘Southern China or Vietnam, 13th to 18th century’.

The Uses and Meanings of Jars

Jars were used for many purposes. Functionally, they were used in households or on ships to store water, wine, oil, pickles, etc. But jars also played a role in the social and spiritual life of many traditional societies on the Malay archipelago, especially in Borneo, where many of the Princessehof examples were acquired. For instance, jars decorated with dragons represented someone of a high social status. Jars also served as vessels for burials. The spiritual, ‘magic’ powers attributed to jars enabled them to play important roles in rituals and ceremonies, from healing to head hunting (fig. 4). In Japan, functional Chinese storage jars were appreciated aesthetically in the Zen inspired art of the tea ceremony and were used to store tea leaves.

Jars as ‘Trans-cultural’ Objects

Jars are an example of ceramic objects which, when transferred into a cultural context different from the place where they were manufactured, served a variety of purposes and were appreciated in different ways. They are the quintessential ‘trans-cultural’ objects. Research on Asian and Southeast Asian storage jars is therefore automatically interdisciplinary.
To study jars means sharing, combining and interpreting results not only in the field of ceramic history, but also in the areas of inter-Asian and global maritime trade, as well as epigraphical, anthropological and religious studies.

**Jars with Inscriptions**

An example of a specific group of jars dating to the Tang dynasty may illustrate the fields of research which arise while studying jars.

The Princessehof Museum holds a group of about 20 jars, dating to the ninth and tenth century. Most were excavated on Central Java near the Borobudur Temple, the important Hindu-Buddhist centre, and were acquired there by Anne Tjibbes van der Meulen in the early twentieth century. Some of them were filled with ritual metal objects. Would this suggest a connection between the jars and their ritual use in Buddhist or Hindu-Buddhist ceremonies? Further research is needed to clarify the role of jars depicted on the stone reliefs in Southeast Asian temples, like the Angkor Wat in Cambodia, and the temples of Pagan in Burma (now Myanmar).

Most of the Tang dated jars are thickly potted, of globular or ovoid shape, and glazed on both the exterior and interior. They were made in several kilns in Guangdong province in southern China. Comparable jars or shards of jars were excavated not only of sites in Indonesia, but also in the Philippines, in Mantai, Sri Lanka, the Indus River Delta in Pakistan, in the Great Mosque in Siraf in Iran and as far away as on the Lamu archipelago, off the coast of East Africa. The wide distribution of excavation sites of this type of storage jars suggests that they were used in Tang maritime trade, on the two great trade routes connecting China with the Middle East and the Mediterranean, the so-called ‘Maritime Silk Roads’.

Two jars in the Princessehof collection bear inscriptions, in both cases below the lip on the shoulder. The inscriptions were incised under the glaze when the jars were originally manufactured, not added later. The inscription on the large, olive green glazed jar has been identified as probably Manichean. It is possible that the inscription stands for oil, (y)ağ. Manichaean script was devised in the third century and was used exclusively by the followers of Manichaeism, a Persian religion, up until the tenth century. The other jar has an undeciphered inscription. The jar with its smaller size, fluted rim and small spout would in fact be suited for pouring wine.

The inscriptions on the Princessehof jars can be compared with two jar fragments found on the site of the Great Mosque in Siraf. Two of the jars of the large olive glazed egg-shape found on the Belitung shipwreck, are dated to after 826. Relating the epigraphical information on the Princessehof and other jars found on the ‘Maritime Silk Roads’ could add important information on the historical context of Tang international trade.

**Research Results and Further Links**

The article presented above is just one aspect of a research project funded by the Ottema-Kingma Foundation (OKS), Leeuwarden, in 2016. https://www.princessehof.nl/img/uploads/jars_research_Eva.pdf

For the research project by the same author on the collection of Zhangzhou (Swatow) ware, see https://www.princessehof.nl/img/uploads/Zhangzhou_Research_0.pdf

**Dr. Eva Ströber**

Sinologist and art historian, former curator for Asian ceramics at the Princessehof Museum

With thanks to Roderick Orlina, historian and epigraphist, based in New York, for interpreting the inscriptions.
Collecting and Displaying China’s ‘Summer Palace’ in the West. The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France


This collection of essays by ten authors brings together collection- and object-focused studies on aspects of the 1860 partial destruction by Anglo-French forces of the Yuanmingyuan, the large and magnificent complex of palaces and gardens built by and for the Qing emperors between 1709 and 1783. The editor is also the author of a scene-setting essay, one which prepares for the discussion of British and French treatment of looted objects, as well as accounts of several museums which contain objects from the Yuanmingyuan. James Hevia, whose publications on the Yuanmingyuan have addressed the treatment of the events of October 1860 in China and in the West, contributes an essay ‘The Afterlives of a Ruin’ which traces the fame of the Summer Palace in certain museum collections and notes shifting official and community responses to the destroyed palace and its contents during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In an otherwise excellent essay, Professor Hevia mistakenly writes that the leaves of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi /Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Qing Court now in the collections of the National Museum of Scotland and the National Museum of Ireland were sold by the British Museum. This is incorrect: the leaves were sold to Edinburgh and Dublin by the Victoria and Albert Museum, as noted by Margaret Medley in her TOCS article of 1957–59, p. 99.

Detailed discussion of individual objects associated with the dispersal of the Summer Palace loot is in an essays by Nick Pearce, who is one of a number of contributors to discuss the bronze zodiac heads sold at auction in 2000, 2007 and 2009 and subsequently returned to China. Other specific objects discussed are a turquoise-glazed tile fragment, a jade perfume holder and an enamelled box and cover, all in the V&A. In each case, Pearce forensically traces the appearance and known provenance of the object, highlighting connections with British soldiers including those who served in India. Kevin McLaughlin’s essay discusses the Hope Grant Ewer and the National Museum of Scotland records about its acquisition and display. Stacey Pierson’s essay traces the evolution of the category of object known in the West in the nineteenth century as ‘Chinese Imperial art’. She sheds light on the way in which the appearance on the market after 1860 of objects from the Yuanmingyuan changed scholarly understanding of the categories of Chinese porcelain. Kate Hill’s interesting essay traces the place of Yuanmingyuan objects in the industrial art exhibitions that were presented in provincial towns around Britain during the 1860s. The spoils of war were transformed into ‘specimens’ in the service of industrial design, and studied by students, craftsmen and working people around the country. Major General Charles Gordon (1833–1885), often known as ‘Chinese Gordon’, and Yuanmingyuan objects associated with him in the Royal Engineers Museum, Gillingham, Kent, are the subject of an essay by the museum’s former curator, James Scott, who succinctly conveys the challenge of displaying such objects sensitively and meaningfully.

John Finlay contributes a fascinating account of the Chinese interests of Henri Bertin (1720–1792) Secretary of State to Louis XV and Louis XVI. Bertin and his circle corresponded with Jesuits at the Chinese court. Finlay discusses the ‘40 Views of the Yuanmingyuan’ and the ‘20 Engravings of the European Palaces’ to demonstrate that knowledge of China among a group of collectors and bibliophiles was lively and sustained.

Two essays, by Vincent Drogue and by Greg Thomas, discuss the very different destiny of Yuanmingyuan objects taken to France after the French forces, commanded by General Cousin-Montauban, decided to present France’s share of the loot to Emperor Napoléon III and Empress Eugénie. These objects were displayed first at the Tuileries, and later, in part, installed at the Château de Fontainebleau, where they formed part of the Chinese Museum, today reinstalled by the curators of the Château as they were during the Second Empire. The final essay is a measured and thought-provoking examination of the placement and understanding of the Yuanmingyuan objects in the Fontainebleau displays, highlighting the focus on ‘ornamentation’ as a principle of choice, and the readiness of the Empress and her architect to adapt and install objects in surprising ways, interpreted by Thomas as ‘a sincere attempt by Eugénie and her craftsmen to generate aesthetic dialogue with imperial Chinese culture’. This is a useful and extremely thorough collection, despite its extremely high price, and lack of colour in the illustrations. It is the product of a Manchester University conference in 2013.

Beth McKillop

The Merchantile Effect. Art and Exchange in the Islamicate World during the 17th and 18th Centuries


It was in the year 1780 that a Constantinople-born Greek under the deliciously misunderstood name ‘Wandy Metre’ (Giannis Dimitri) and an Isfahan-born Armenian imaginatively called ‘Baptisto Basilion,’ both residents of Madras, embarked on a fateful mercantile enterprise that spelled financial doom for both. Their cargo of, among other goods, bird-nests and canons was seized by the British and the two merchants found refuge in Canton and embarked on a legal battle with the aim to recover their losses (see Gelina Harlaftis, ‘The Greeks and their Collaboration with Armenians in India and in Asian Seas during the 18th Century’ (in Greek), Ionios Logos 3 (2011), 287–302). If the cosmopolitanism gleaned in this story seems unexpected for such an early date, it is because even scholars have been conditioned in a tradition that pigeon-holes the historical record into the parameters of specific political and nationalist agenda. Wandy and Baptisto’s life paths and the material culture they surrounded themselves with – alongside the imprint they and their peers left in the archaeological record – were immensely diverse and crisscrossed the Indian Ocean, the Central Asian plains and the Eastern Mediterranean with the same celerity
Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland


Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland is the type of beautifully designed, sumptuously illustrated and well-written book that anyone interested in Chinese art or in British interior design should own, both for pleasure and as an essential reference work. It is the first full-scale study of Chinese wallpaper in nearly 40 years, since Friederike Wappenschmidt’s 1980s work. De Bruijn writes with an authoritative tone and guides the reader chronologically, from the 1740s to the present day, through the production and consumption of pictorial wall coverings made in China. Although the book was informed partly by work carried out on National Trust wallpapers, it also incorporates examples in private homes and others that are now in the collections of public institutions such as the V&A or Peabody Essex Museums. In the book, a helpful map of 169 past and present sites in Scotland, Wales, England, Northern Ireland and Eire demonstrates the widespread distribution of these wallpapers.

As well as analysing and distinguishing the different styles of wallpapers, which gives the reader a clear framework for dating different styles, each of the ten chapters tackles the wallpapers in their historical contexts, by using original documentation and making comparisons with wallpapers in Europe and North America. I particularly enjoyed reading about the professional paper hangers, who were sent out from metropolitan centres to install the papers in grand houses. Installing the papers in each setting required careful professional adaptations, which included pasting cut-outs of images of people, plants or birds. These adaptations assisted the flow of the designs or necessitated the use of cut-off parts of the wallpapers to fill borders at the top and bottom of a high-ceilinged space. Fascinating first-hand accounts include complaints about how much these paper hangers were paid for their labours and their travel expenses.

Although in China prints were pasted on to walls for decoration, they were not exactly the full wall coverings that were developed through the East India Companies for export. Chinese market wallpapers were originally plain, or lightly patterned, with pictorial elements later pasted over the top. In fact, the interactions between the Chinese sellers and the Western consumers radically altered the appearance of wallpapers over the 300 years of their manufacture.

The first two chapters of the book explore the traffic of these hangings from Guangzhou shops to East India company ships to auctions in London to the owners of grand houses in Britain and Ireland. Unpicking these interactions is complicated and the origins of Chinese wallpapers are looked for in late 17th century printed books, polychrome-painted wooden panels, leather panels, English tapestries, printed books, polychrome-painted wooden panels, leather panels, English tapestries, Indian chintz, imported lacquer screens and fire screens. Chapter 3 explores the emergence of Chinese wallpaper in the period 1740–1765, with the earliest papers focussing on birds and plants. From surviving documents, we know that the earliest surviving wallpaper scheme was put up in the Chinese bedroom of Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk, between 30 March and 9 May 1752.

Chapter 4 examines the period 1750–1810 through landscape compositions, particularly non-repeating panoramic landscape scenes.

Chapter 5 focuses on ‘Auspicious Gardens’ from 1765–1790, and explains how the pink, yellow, blue or emerald green grounds originally would almost have sung from the walls, such was their dazzling appearance. Chapter 6 looks at a style of wall covering used to create a ‘print room’ between 1760 and 1815, a style which reached its climax at the Royal Pavilion in Brighton with the trompe l’oeil paintings in the Red Drawing Room. Chapter 7 looks at the period 1790–1835, when silvered elements were introduced.

Chapter 8 covers 1830–1890 and the changing attitudes to China, which were a result of the Opium Wars. Chapter 9 documents the century between 1870 and 1970, including a revival of antique styles and the distribution of papers from their original settings in country houses after the First World War. The final chapter introduces modern manufacturers and some of the contemporary bespoke schemes that have been particularly successful.

De Bruijn also presents fascinating discoveries by paper conservators, who have analysed the construction and installation of the wallpapers, some of which are on silk. For example, by examining the designs closely, it is revealed that many of the earliest wallpapers were woodblock-printed and then hand-finished by painting, whereas the later papers were entirely painted. Conservators have also been able to reconstruct the original bright colours from faded samples, so that we can see, for instance, the beautiful blue ground of the bird-and-flower wallpaper at Cobham in Kent.

Finally, I suggest that OCS members should place their orders for this book quickly, as the hardback edition had already sold out when I tried to buy my own copy which is a testament to its appeal.

Jessica Harrison-Hall

The author of this very attractive new book needs no introduction, but the recently reopened Sir Joseph Hotung Gallery of China and South Asia in the British Museum certainly does. A strikingly different gallery needs a strikingly different book to accompany it. This does the job brilliantly for the more informed as well as the more general reader, and particularly for students and people like me who teach in this Gallery. It partly replaces the invaluable handbook that came out with the first iteration of the Gallery in 1992 [ed. Rawson, The British Museum Book of Chinese Art]. It takes account of new thinking, collecting, research and archaeological discoveries. It ranges from prehistory to yesterday like the Gallery now does. It looks at nomads and cities, the invaders and the invaded, war and peace, high art and the more everyday objects. It is trenchant in tone, dispelling myths (about continuity, the Silk Road etc.) and rescuing popular culture and little known parts of the collection from obscurity and condescension. It is also profusely illustrated with 650 colour illustrations, several on most spreads, unlike the more austere selective approach of the V&A’s Chinese Art and Design for example. This is after all A History in Objects. It does bring together, for example, on one page all the surviving Lushans from Yixian to contextualise the one in the BM. A strong narrative thrust helps propel the reader through 6,000 years or more on a journey that no other culture in the world or any other museum gallery can offer. There are helpful sections on places like Anyang and later Shanghai, on people like Confucius.

The range of the new Hotung Gallery is not only more modern but includes more media, notably textiles, paintings and graphic art as a result of filtering out daylight, which also helps with concentration. So there are Dunhuang treasures illustrated here that you can see in context in the Gallery, as well as watercolours and Andy Warhol’s portrait of Mao. British-born artist Caroline Yi Cheng has donated her very striking work Peacock (2012) from her “Mandarin Butterfly Series”, which looks from a distance like an outsized robe, but is in fact covered in thousands of porcelain butterflies made by ceramic workers in China. Dazzling ceramics are of course one of the great strengths of this collection, and Jessica does them justice here, as the gallery redesign does also. What we also get, in the book especially, are gardens and theatre, Dr Johnson’s outsized teapot, some stunning photos of landscapes and buildings, opium wars and the Dowager Empress as well as a nimble account of recent history despite the disclaimer that “telling China’s twentieth century history simply through objects…is a huge challenge…” When the paperback edition is prepared, it will hopefully be on the same quality paper, but it would help to have some maps – and perhaps to up the lighting levels in parts of the Gallery that have just hard objects.

Book and Gallery also connect China to the wider world in a new BM house style that is to be welcomed and which hopefully will infuse the treatment of other cultures on the reconceived Main Floor of the Museum now under consideration. The big question for historians is why Chinese culture has developed and survived for so long (although with interruptions of course) and not the cultures of India or Rome, Babylon or Persia, Maya or Zimbabwe? The clues are presented throughout this book: early technological prowess on a massive scale, a succession of massively ambitious and ruthless rulers raising the stakes for their successors, a resilient writing system, abundant natural resources and, when invaded, the invaders becoming Chinese, at least until the nineteenth century. A wider public needs to better appreciate China and its cultures now, as they step into the shoes of the Old and New World empires. This is a rewarding and very visually satisfying place to start, especially when used in conjunction with repeated visits to the Gallery and the adjacent galleries of Chinese jades and ceramics. As Jessica says in her introduction, ‘the past is not distant, but nearby’ - so go visit and take this book with you.

John Reeve

Collecting China: The Memoirs of a Hong Kong Art Addict


In his latest and most intimately written book, Collecting China: The Memoirs of a Hong Kong Art Addict, Brian McElney recounts his life of nearly nine decades. Rather than reading a published memoir, it is written in a style that makes the reader feel as if the author is present in person, reminiscing about days gone by. Having lived through the majority of the twentieth century, Mr. McElney has witnessed drastic social and technological changes. The book, written from the perspective of a former British expat solicitor, is filled with personal observations and details of the development of Hong Kong, from a sleepy group of colonial islands in the 1930s to one of the world’s economic engines. The author recounts not only his decades of experience collecting art, particularly Chinese art, but also of legal and financial insights into the history of Hong Kong. We also learn much about his family and the people who have impacted his life over the years. Along the way, the reader meets various influential and vibrant personalities, whom the author had associated with and befriended. The reader also gets detailed glimpses into the lives of these people through the author’s account.

For those interested in Chinese art, the book provides some insights into the Hong Kong art market, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s. Mr. McElney sometimes recalls the types of objects that were available at different times and the prices he paid for the pieces he collected. He vividly recounts the more memorable stories of how he acquired some of the objects that are currently in the collection of the Museum of East Asian Art in the City of Bath in the United Kingdom. The author touches on how the dealers and art market in Hong Kong were connected to the Chinese art market in London and other parts of the world.

This memoir is also a record of one facet of British and Hong Kong social history. The author was born in Hong Kong, but spent part of his childhood and early adult life in England, from the 1930s to 1956. He recounts the life of his family during the Second World War and their experiences. Upon Mr. McElney’s return to Hong Kong as a young professional, he entered a world that had changed drastically since his early childhood. The gilded-age of the former colony had begun. Through the years, the author witnessed the transition from boat travel to air travel on his journeys around the
Chinese Porcelain in Habsburg Spain


Chinese Porcelain in Habsburg Spain by Cinta Krahe is based on the author’s two-volume doctoral dissertation for Leiden University, The Netherlands. This lavishly illustrated book fills an important gap in our general knowledge of the commercial and cultural exchanges that occurred between China and Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Spain was ruled by the Habsburgs (1517–1700). In China, this period corresponded to the late Ming (1638–1644) and early Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, when many political and social changes took place.

As extant textual and material evidence of the importation, distribution and consumption of Chinese porcelain in Habsburg Spain during this period is scant, and virtually no pieces have survived in the royal collection, Krahe embarked on an exhaustive interdisciplinary study of various previously unknown or unused sources. Her many years of research in several archives in Spain – especially the General Archive of the Indies (Archivo General de Indias) in Seville that preserves documents relating to the commercial activities between Spain, and the Spanish colonies in the Philippines and the New World – proved to be fruitful. The book has brought to light a remarkable number of primary sources that were largely unknown to art historians (both in Spain and abroad), such as inventories, appraisals, estate partition documents, dowry receipts and wills. They contain new and valuable information on the wide variety of Chinese porcelains and other Asian goods that were imported into Spain and show how they were valued, used and displayed by the royalty, nobility, clergy, merchant class and other individuals in their respective palaces, ecclesiastical institutions or private households. Krahe’s research methodology is to be praised, as she not only transcribed these documents and translated them into English, but also meticulously organized them in three documentary appendices for the reader.

The information gathered from these documents is complemented by an extensive analysis of the extant material evidence dating to the Habsburg period. This includes a few pieces of Chinese porcelain still found today in Spain (four of them remaining in situ), a considerably large quantity of shards of porcelains of various types and dates found in archaeological excavations throughout the country, and the porcelain salvaged from the Spanish galleon, the San Diego, which sank in Philippine waters in 1600. Including the latter in her research is not surprising, as Krahe was in charge of the catalogue of the recovered San Diego porcelain housed in the Naval Museum in Madrid.

To visually contextualize the Chinese porcelain imported into Habsburg Spain, Krahe includes a detailed identification of the porcelain pieces depicted in still-life and genre paintings by a number of different Spanish artists of the period. Although Krahe concludes her extensive study with the surprising fact that only a limited quantity of porcelain was actually imported at the time, and that the majority of it was acquired by the royalty, high-ranking society and wealthy merchants, the porcelains depicted in these paintings demonstrate that they were valued for both their beauty and rarity. A painting by Antonio de Pereda depicting a porcelain bell-shaped cup decorated in the so-called Transitional style, which, as noted by Krahe, has the rim damaged, attests to the limited availability of porcelain in Spain (p. 269, fig. 209).

This well-documented and beautifully published book, offering new and much needed insight into these fascinating early commercial and cultural exchanges between China and Spain, will serve as a reference for art historians, historians, archaeologists and collectors of Chinese porcelain for years to come.

Teresa Canepa
Calendar

Exhibitions

The Americas

United States

The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago
*Mirroring China’s Past: Emperors and Their Bronzes*
to 13 May 2018

The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland
*Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors*
7 July to 30 September 2018

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth
*From the Lands of Asia: The Sam and Myrna Myers Collection*
to 19 August 2018

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
*Reflection and Enlightenment: Chinese Buddhist Gilt Bronzes from the Jane and Leopold Swergold Collection*
to 13 May 2018

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City
*Islamic Art: Global Connections and Exchange*
to 17 June 2018

The Getty Centre, Los Angeles
*A Queen’s Treasure from Versailles: Marie-Antoinette’s Japanese Lacquer*
to 6 January 2019

Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis
*Power and Beauty in China’s Last Dynasty*
to 27 May 2018

Enchanted Mountains: Chinese Landscape Painting from Mia’s Collection
to 18 November 2018

Newark Museum, Newark
*Dramatic Threads: Textiles of Asia*
14 March 2018 to 15 February 2019

The Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven
*Japan’s Global Baroque, 1550–1560*
to 21 May 2018

Asia Society, New York
*Unknown Tibet: The Tucci Expeditions and Buddhist Painting*
to 20 May 2018

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
*Crowns of the Vajra Masters: Ritual Art of Nepal*
to 16 December 2018

*Japanese Arms and Armor from the Collection of Etsuko and John Morris*
to 6 January 2019

*Spirited Creatures: Animal Representations in Chinese Silk and Lacquer*
to 22 July 2018

Freer and Sackler Galleries, Washington, D.C.
*Secrets of the Lacquer Buddha*
to 10 June 2018

The Prince and the Shah: Royal Portraits from Qajar Iran
to 5 August 2018

---

DREWEATTS
EST. 1759

CHINESE CERAMICS & ASIAN WORKS OF ART
INVITING ENTRIES FOR NOVEMBER 2018

AUCTION LOCATION
Dreweatts
Dormington Priory
Newbury
 Berkshire RG14 2AE

ENQUIRIES
Mark Newnham
Tel: +44 (0) 1344 703 333
contact@dreweatts.com

*Buyer’s premium of 20% (VAT included).*
Asia

China

Palace Museum, Beijing
Ge Wares
to 31 August 2018

Capital Museum, Beijing
Tibetan History and Culture
to 22 July 2018

Shanghai Museum, Shanghai
Qianwen Wanhua: Chinese Lacquer
from Warring States to Modern
16 November 2018 to 24 February 2019

Taiwan

Taiwan Palace Museum, Taipei
The Phenomenon of Yixing Ware
8 July 2018

Fineries of Forgery: “Suzhou Fakes” and their
Influence in the 16th and 18th Century
to 25 September 2018

Treasures from the National Palace Museums
Collection of Qing Dynasty Historical Documents
to 4 November 2018

Europe

Germany

Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst Köln
Cologne
The Printed Picture: The Blossom of Japanese
Woodcut Culture
to 1 July 2018

Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Museen
to Berlin Museum, Berlin
Vis à vis: Asia Meets Europe
to 30 April 2019

The Netherlands

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
A Journey to 18th Century Canton
to 27 May 2018

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
Van Gogh & Japan
to 24 June 2018

Groninger Museum, Groningen
The World Indoors: Chinese and Japanese
Porcelain, Delft Faience 17th-19th centuries
to 24 March 2019

Gemeentemuseum, The Hague
Splendour and Bliss: Art from the Islamic World
8 September 2018 to 3 March 2019

United Kingdom

The British Museum, London
Reopening of the Mitsubishi Corporation
Japanese Galleries (Rooms 92–94)
Autumn 2018

Manjū
23 May 2019 to 26 August 2019

Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Lustrous Surfaces
to September 15, 2018

National Museums Liverpool, Liverpool
China’s First Emperor, and the
Terracotta Warriors
to 28 October 2018

Auctions

Europe

Bonhams, New Bond Street, London
Fine Chinese Art, 17 May
Fine Japanese Art, 17 May
Fine Chinese Art, 8 November

Bonhams, Knightsbridge, London
Asian Art, 14–15 May

Bonhams, Edinburgh
Asian Art, 11 July
Asian Art, 5 December

Chiswick Auctions, London
Fine Chinese Paintings, 24–25 May
Asian Art, 24–25 May

Chinese Bronzes: Song to Qing, 24–25 May

Christie’s, King Street, London
Chinese Ceramics & Works of Art, 15 May

Duke’s, Dorchester
Asian Art, 17 May

Sotheby’s, New Bond Street, London
Important Chinese Art, 16 May

St George Street Sale: Chinese Art, 18 May

Asia

Bonhams, Hong Kong
Fine Chinese Works of Art, 29 May
Fine Chinese Works of Art, 30 November

Christie’s, Hong Kong
Chinese Contemporary Ink, 28 May
Fine Chinese Classical Paintings and
Calligraphy, 28 May
The Imperial Sale & Important Chinese
Ceramics and Works of Art, 30 May

Sotheby’s Hong Kong
Scholarly Art from the Collection of Mr and Mrs
Gerard Hawthorn, 31 May
Chinese Art, 31 May–1 June

Art Fairs

International Antique Fair, Hong Kong
25 to 29 May 2018

Masterpiece, London
28 June to 4 July 2018

TFEAF, New York
Fine and decorative art from antiquity to 1920
27 to 31 October 2018

Fine Art Asia, Hong Kong
29 September to 2 October 2018

Lecture

The Sir Percival David Foundation
of Chinese Art Annual
Lecture 2018

Khalili Lecture Theatre
SOAS University of London
14 May 2018 at 6:00pm
Around the World

Société Française d’Etude de la Céramique Orientale
Musée Cernuschi, 7 avenue Velasquez, Paris 75008, France
The Oriental Ceramic Society of Portugal – Associação Amigos do Oriente
Rua da Imprensa Nacional, no 30, Lisboa 1250–123, Portugal
The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong
G.P.O. Box 6202, Central, Hong Kong, orientalceramics.org.hk
The Oriental Ceramic Society of Norway (NSOK)
Postboks 17, N-1318 Bekkestua, Norway, orientalskkeramikk.com
The Oriental Ceramic Society of Sweden
c/o Kerstin Vansvik, #1201, Sodra Vagen 32, 412 54 Goteborg, Sweden, ocssweden.se
Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines
P.O. Box 80, Dasmariñas Village, Manila City, Metro Manila, The Philippines, facebook.com/ocsphil/

Southeast Asian Ceramic Society Singapore
Tanglin P.O. Box 317, Singapore 912411, seaceramic.org.sg
Southeast Asian Ceramic Society West Malaysia
11 Jalan Balai Polis, Kuala Lumpur 50000, Malaysia
The Ceramic Society of Indonesia
Jl. Turi 1 / 10 Blok S, Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta 12180, Indonesia himpunankeramikindonesia.com
The Japan Society of Oriental Ceramic Studies
#201, San’ei Building, 6–9, 2-chome, Minami-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101–0061, Japan http://toyotoji.com/en/society/
The Asiatic Society of Japan
c/o Tokyo Health Care University, 2-5-1 Higashigoka, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 152-0021, Japan, asjapan.org
TAASSA – The Asian Arts Society of Australia
P.O. Box 996, Potts Point, NSW 2011, Australia, taasa.org.au

Reminder
The rules of the Oriental Ceramic Society provide that no member is entitled to make use of the Society’s name for any business or trade purpose, nor shall any member dealing in antiquities or ceramic ware advertise his / her membership except in the Society’s Transactions and Newsletter.

Disclaimer
The views expressed in the articles herein represent the views of their writers. No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of the information given in this Newsletter.

Conferences/Symposiums
The 8th International Conference of the Society for East Asian Archaeology
Nanjing University, China
8–11 June 2018
(Deadline for submissions: 31 January 2018)
International Conference
Porcelain Circling the Globe: International Trading Structures and the East Asia Collection of Augustus the Strong (1670–1733)
Porzellansammlung Dresden, Germany
13–14 June 2018
Annual Conference of Chinese Studies
Hetero/Homogeneous China: Connections, Dynamics and Transformations
University of Oxford, United Kingdom
21–22 June 2018
(Deadline for submissions: 22 February 2018)
Asian Art Society in the Netherlands (VVAK)
Lustrum Symposium
Collecting Asian Art in the Western World - Past, Present and Future
Rijksmuseum, the Netherlands
23 June 2018
The 22nd Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA)
The University of Sydney, Australia
3–5 July 2018
(Registration for non-paper givers closes 30 June 2018)
The 22nd Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS)
China and the World: The Mapping of Exchange
The University of Glasgow, Scotland
29 August – 1 September 2018
(Deadline for submissions: 15 January 2018)