MUSEO ORIENTALE UMBERTO SCERRATO

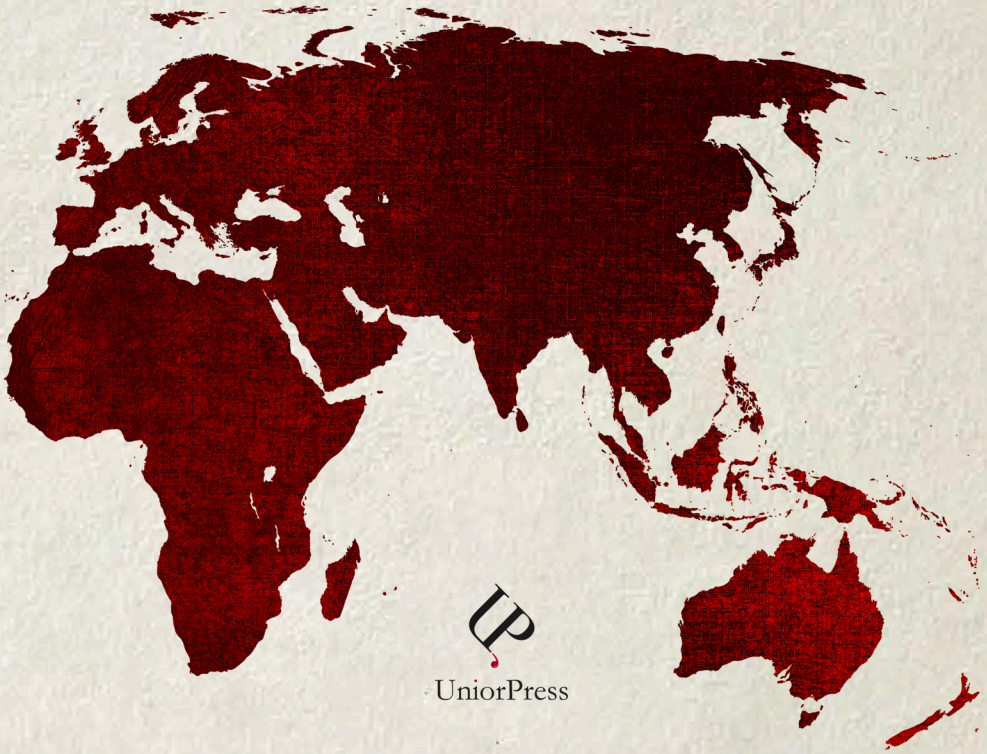
Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"

SOCIETÀ AFRICANA D'ITALIA NAPOLI 1881

Quaderni delle Collezioni Museali
de "L'Orientale"
4

# The Rinaldi Donation:
## A Collection of Chinese Art

Chiara Visconti
with contributions by Lucia Caterina and Maura Rinaldi



UniorPress



Università degli studi di Napoli
"L'Orientale"


Quaderni delle Collezioni Museali
de "L'Orientale"
4

# The Rinaldi Donation:
## A Collection of Chinese Art

Chiara Visconti
with contributions of Lucia Caterina and Maura Rinaldi

UniorPress
Napoli 2025

Pubblicazione / Publishing
Università di Napoli L'Orientale

ISBN
978-88-6719-345-5

Info
www.museorientale.unior.it
museorientale@unior.it




UniorPress
Via Nuova Marina, 59 - 80133, Napoli

# Contents

# Preface

The Rinaldi Donation has profoundly enriched the East and South-East Asia sections of the Museo Orientale "Umberto Scerrato" of the Università di Napoli L'Orientale, both in scope and significance. Thanks to the generosity and scholarly vision of Maura Rinaldi, the museum now houses a remarkable collection that reflects the breadth and refinement of East Asian artistic traditions, as well as the networks of exchange that connected China with the wider world.

This donation represents an important stage in the development of the Museo Scerrato, strengthening its mission as a place of research, education, and cultural dialogue. For the students of L'Orientale, the collection offers a unique opportunity to approach the study of Asian art through direct observation and critical analysis, fostering a deeper understanding of materials, techniques, and historical contexts.

This first catalogue, devoted to the Chinese artefacts, inaugurates a broader programme of study and publication that will further explore and highlight the richness and diversity of the Rinaldi Collection.

Roberto Tottoli
Rector, Università di Napoli L'Orientale

# Acknowledgements

I wish to thank once again Maura Rinaldi for her generosity in sharing not only the objects she collected, but also her knowledge and experience, offered with great warmth and openness throughout this project.

I am deeply grateful to Lucia Caterina, my mentor and a truly inspiring scholar, whose trust and constant encouragement have guided me from the very beginning of my academic path. It was thanks to her vision and dedication to her students that the Museo Orientale "Umberto Scerrato" was established and the Rinaldi Collection found its new home.

Designing a display that would present the donation in the way it deserved, and doing so within such a short time, was by no means an easy task. I wish to thank all those who took part in the project, contributing with their work and commitment to securing the necessary resources: the Confucius Institute of Naples and its directors Valeria Varriano and Wu Junru; the Department of Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean Studies of the Università di Napoli L'Orientale and its director Roberta Giunta; Andrea Manzo, President of BIMA; Matteo Delle Donne, Director of the University Museum System – Museo Orientale "Umberto Scerrato"; Mariano Cinque, Gabriele Flaminio, and Rosario Valentini.

The donation became the central focus of the Master's course in Chinese and Japanese Archaeology and Art History for the academic year 2024–2025. The students took part with great enthusiasm in the project – studying, photographing, and classifying the objects, and working with me to design an exhibition narrative that, starting from the material evidence, would lead visitors through the religious systems, traditions, and craftsmanship of East and South-East Asia.

My heartfelt thanks go to all of them, and I feel it is only right to record their names here: Martina Amendola, Daniele Massimo Ascione, Vincenzo Bassano, Maria Cristina Bonapace, Federica Caiazzo, Addolorata Celoro, Piera Ciccomascolo, Camilla Cilento, Lorenzo Colferai, Simone Colinet, Carmine Coronato, Veronica Cosenza, Denise Covelli, Carla D'Auria, Mirea Decandia, Dafne Dell'Aquila, Camilla De Mori, Giuliano Di Dio, Raffaele Di Fenza, Sara Di Gennaro, Ilaria Di Pasquale, Sabrina Esposito, Alessia Festante, Adriana Fontana, Chiara Giordano, Marzia Giovannelli, Michela Iadevaia, Maria Rosaria Jacobelli, Christian Leonetti, Marta Mattera, Antonio Mazza,

Maria Luigia Mazza, Francesca Mercolino, Claudia Minniti, Concetta Misso, Gaetano Modera, Michele Mormile, Martina Muoio, Diana Natalie, Gessica Niemiec, Noemi Oliva, Silvia Pandolfi, Simona Pellegrino, Caterina Pezzella, Chiara Ricciardi, Gianmarco Ruscito, Matilde Russo, Dorotea Sabbatasso, Tamara Sansone, Valentina Senatore, Eleonora Stabili and Maria Ziccardi.

Credits: the section The Story of a Collection and the introductory essay Kraak Porcelain were written by Maura Rinaldi; the introductory essay Monochrome-glazed Porcelains for the Scholar's Studio is by Lucia Caterina. All remaining texts, as well as all catalogue entries, are by Chiara Visconti.

# The Story of a Donation

I met Maura Rinaldi for the first time in April 2024, when she welcomed me into her beautiful home in Rome, where the collection she had assembled over many years of study and travel across East and South-East Asia was displayed with great elegance. Although we had never met before, I already knew Maura's work well: her publications on Chinese porcelain had long served as an essential guide for my own research and for dating objects I had encountered during my career as a scholar in archaeological excavations and museum collections. I was therefore delighted to meet the author of those studies, and equally pleased at the prospect that the objects from her private collection might become part of the museum heritage of the Università di Napoli L'Orientale. Yet both the encounter with Maura and the significance of her collection – its potential for research and for advancing our knowledge of East Asian art and material culture – far exceeded my already high expectations.

The signing of the donation act at Maura Rinaldi's home in Rome, September 2024

Some years earlier, Lucia Caterina – whose dedication was largely responsible for the opening of the Museo Orientale "Umberto Scerrato" in 2012, where she served for many years as director – had first suggested to Maura Rinaldi the idea of donating her collection to the Università di Napoli L'Orientale. Maura now felt ready to embrace that possibility, in an act of remarkable generosity that came after long reflection on the destiny of the objects she had gathered over time. The decision took shape at a turning point in her life, as – once again, and with the courage and determination that I would later recognize as her defining traits – she was preparing to leave her home and move to another country. She was therefore eager to discuss with Lucia and me whether L'Orientale could truly become a new home for her collection – one able to welcome, study, and preserve it with the care it deserved.

In those April days and in the months that followed, the work on the donation gradually became entwined with Maura's own life story. Her interest in Chinese art began when she arrived in Singapore in 1980, where she soon started collaborating with the National Museum and with the South-East Asian Ceramic Society. Before long she came into contact with some of the leading scholars of Chinese ceramics and focused her attention on Chinese *kraak* porcelain. In 1989 she published in London *Kraak Porcelain. A Moment in the History of Trade*, a volume that filled an important gap in the specialised literature and remains today the key reference on the subject.

During the years she spent in Asia, Maura also turned to collecting, choosing and acquiring objects that reflected both her passions and her scholarly interests. The collection – assembled in the antique markets of Singapore and London and during her travels across Asia – eventually comprised more than 150 objects, mostly ceramics from China and Southeast Asia, together with several pieces acquired in Africa during the years she had spent in Uganda. They were all displayed with great care and taste in the house she was about to leave.

In the following months, Maura generously welcomed Lucia and me several times, and together we worked on cataloguing and drafting an initial description of the objects. We also spoke at length about the reasons that had led her to donate her collection to a university museum, and in particular to that of L'Orientale: she was deeply drawn to the clearly educational vocation of the Museo Scerrato and to the chance to make a meaningful contribution to the Neapolitan museum landscape devoted to the decorative arts of East and South-East Asia.

The opening of the exhibition Art from China and South-East Asia in Naples, presenting the donation to the public for the first time

In September 2024, the act of donation was formally signed and the objects were transferred to the Museo Scerrato. In keeping with the spirit of the Museum – and with Maura's own wishes – the collection immediately became a resource for students of the Master's degree in Chinese and Japanese Archaeology and Art History, who worked on cataloguing the materials and helped to enivisage how they might be displayed. This work culminated in an exhibition that presented the donation to the public for the first time, inaugurated on 7 February 2025, an event that was met with great interest and heartfelt participation both within and beyond the academic community.

Maura arrived in Naples a few days before the opening, sharing her knowledge with the students with extraordinary generosity and working with Lucia and me on every detail of the exhibition. In the months that followed, internships were launched students led guided tours open to the public, schools were welcomed, and workshops were organised to restore the tangible experience of objects to the centre of learning, fostering awareness of these materials and new, more thoughtful ways of engaging with them.

At present, two students are writing their dissertations on selected groups of objects from the donation. The collection, now on permanent display at the Museum and significantly enriching its East and South-East Asian section, continues to serve as a privileged space for the training of L'Orientale's students. With the forthcoming reopening of the Museo Scerrato to the public, it is hoped that the Rinaldi Donation will become part of a wider network that already includes such important collections as those of the Museo Nazionale della Ceramica Duca di Martina and the Museo di Capodimonte – a network in which the expertise of L'Orientale provides an essential guide for a more informed and meaningful narration of East Asian cultural heritage in Europe.

This catalogue, devoted to the materials from China, marks only the first stage in the study of the collection. It will be followed by the publication of the South-East Asian materials and by a series of thematic studies. The volume also includes contributions by Maura Rinaldi, author of the introduction


The display of the Rinaldi Donation in the rooms of the Museo Orientale "Umberto Scerrato", Palazzo du Mesnil, Naples

to Kraak porcelain, and Lucia Caterina, author of the section on monochrome-glazed porcelains.

Beyond the value of its individual pieces, it was through studying the collection that I gradually came to understand the thread that had guided its formation and the principles behind Maura's choices. These were, without doubt, choices shaped by personal taste and by a profound understanding of East Asian aesthetic traditions – particularly evident in her selection of monochrome ceramics and objects for the "scholar's table." These pieces are particularly valuable as they enrich both the museum and, more broadly, the local context with ceramic types that had so far been scarcely, or not at all, represented. Even more remarkable, however, is the group of *kraak* porcelains, the largest nucleus within the donation: an authentic reference collection, in which different shapes and decorative patterns alternate to form a tangible timeline of this production.

At the same time, the meaning of Maura's gesture became clearer to me: through her donation, these objects would go on speaking – teaching, inspiring, and connecting generations of students and visitors alike.

# The Story of a Collection

Maura Rinaldi

I could call myself a traveller, but in truth it would be more accurate to describe myself as someone who has lived – each time for several years – in countries scattered across four continents. Living abroad is quite different from travelling. When you travel, you know you will be back home in a few days, among old friends and familiar habits. Each new residence, instead, means a new house, finding shops where to buy supplies, making new acquaintances. Acquisitions made in the rush of a tourist trip bear little resemblance to those chosen during a long stay, when there is ample time to reflect on what to select and why.

At the age of eight I moved with my family to Argentina, where I remained for about ten years, although I frequently returned to Italy. These returns often meant losing a year or two of schooling, but I always caught up by studying privately. It was during one of these stays in Italy that I attended a school of interior decoration; when I returned to Buenos Aires, I continued those studies while collaborating with an architect. At the same time, I devoted myself to learning French and English. At nineteen I spent a year in a pensionnat in Lausanne, where I immersed myself not only in the language but also in French history and literature, before enrolling in the School of Interpreters at the University of Geneva. Four years later, I graduated with honours in three languages: Spanish, Italian and French.

From 1965 to 1971 I worked in Rome, first as a translator for CTIP (which designed refineries in Spanish-speaking countries), and then as Executive Secretary for IBERIA Area 5, in charge of managing agencies in Europe and Asia.

In 1971, during a trip to Uganda, I met Gino Rinaldi, then Managing Director of AGIP Uganda. A few months later we married – in Bali! – and I moved to Kampala. A year later, however, the unrest caused by Idi Amin Dada's expulsion of the Asian community of Indian origin made Uganda too dangerous to live in, and my husband was appointed Managing Director of both Kenya and Uganda, with residence in Nairobi. While in Uganda there had been few opportunities to acquire objects, in Kenya we did make some purchases: the typical combs of various sizes, finely worked, but above all a Makonde ebony sculpture that greatly impressed us. It was the work of a well-known artist who had also attracted the interest of a Metropolitan Museum representative, who

bought some of his pieces. We were told that the statue represented the African concept of "village". Not, as one might think, a series of huts, one or more streets and perhaps a shop. No, for African people the village is something different: it is an entity, representing those who live in it in symbiosis. The statue is composed of a face – maybe more than one – a hand here, a leg there. It is a living interweaving, precisely what a village is to an African eye.

In 1975 we returned to Italy for a year, and then my husband was appointed Managing Director of AGIP Spain and we moved to Madrid. In theory, my husband's task was to find a local manager, but every time Rome asked him to stay longer given the "complicated" situation. As a result, with three-month extensions that kept being renewed, we remained in Madrid for four years. During this time I was unable to work, although it would have been very easy for me to find a position with IBERIA.

As can be seen, nothing up to that point had suggested that I would one day dedicate myself to the research and study of Chinese porcelain at a scientific level. The turning point in my life came at the end of 1980, when I arrived in Singapore with my husband, who had been appointed AGIP PETROLI representative for East and South-East Asia. After four years in Madrid, in a situation reminiscent of Buzzati's *The Tartar Steppe*, always waiting for something that never seemed to arrive, I told myself on reaching Singapore: "No matter how long we stay here, from today I shall organise my life as if I were to remain for ten years." In fact, I stayed in Singapore for sixteen years – from the end of 1980 to the end of 1996.

Determined to build a life of my own in this new environment, within a week I had already joined the only association in Singapore devoted to organising cultural events: the Friends of the Museums (FOM Singapore), founded less than two years earlier by four remarkable ladies, all experienced in running similar associations in other parts of the world. A lover of history, I was delighted to attend, the following week, a lecture on the Ming dynasty. That first encounter encouraged me to become more involved, and soon after I had the chance to enrol in one of the Study Courses that had been organized on different themes. Convinced there would surely be a course on Chinese history, I queued up full of anticipation. To my great disappointment, however, the only course on China was "Chinese Ceramics." I turned to a lady beside me and uttered those fateful last words: "But who on earth could ever be interested in something as silly as Chinese ceramics?" She tried to reassure me, pointing out that if I chose a topic like celadons, produced for some two thousand years, I would inevitably have to study the history as well. What finally convinced me, though, was learning that the course would be led by Anne Tofield, one of

the four FOM founders and a wonderful woman with wide experience of Asia. She soon became my closest friend, and remains so to this day.

From that moment my life took a new direction. In the first half of 1981 I attended the course on Chinese ceramics, and in the second half of the year I followed a six-month course to become a museum guide. Meanwhile, I joined the Steering Committee as Slide Librarian. In January 1982 I became Vice-President, and in January 1983 President. From 1984 to 1996 I continued to serve as a Committee Member, always deeply involved in the running of the Museum.

SEACS Vice-President and Convenor Maura Rinaldi at the opening of the Exhibition 'Ceramics in Scholarly Taste', jointly organised by the National Museum of Singapore and the Southeast Asian Ceramic Society in November 1993. Photo: Sue Sismondo

What happened during that first course on Chinese ceramics was that I quickly became deeply absorbed, even though it was not celadons that most caught my attention. I remember that one of the participants, who had chosen to speak about blue and white wares, mentioned the *kraak* porcelain only *en passant*, a few sentences at most. Yet it was immediately clear to me that this class of ceramics was deeply entangled with history, above all the history of international trade.

My interest grew when, at the end of 1982, the National Museum asked Anne to put together a small group to catalogue its collection of ceramics, and she invited me to take part. How could I possibly refuse such a stroke of luck? At first there were four of us working one morning a week; later we became three, and eventually only Anne and I continued for at least another two years. It was during this period that I realised how very little was known about *kraak* porcelains: a short paragraph here, a couple of lines there, at best half a page devoted to them.

As a result, one of my pastimes in Singapore became roaming from one antique dealer to another, and even visiting junk shops which, from time to time, managed to get hold of a few *kraak* pieces. I would spend hours with them, trying to discover where they had found those objects and what they knew about them. At times they were burial furniture unearthed in Indonesia; the more valuable pieces, however, were to be found on the market in Hong Kong or sometimes in Japanese collections. From these encounters I gathered a wealth of information.

Of course, this constant visiting of junk shops and antique dealers soon tempted me to begin buying a few pieces myself. I did not yet feel ready to acquire important ceramics, so at first I bought some celadons, which over the years I returned or exchanged for more significant objects. At the end of 1982 I also joined the South East Asian Ceramic Society (SEACS). Not long afterwards I became a Committee Member, and in 1985 I was elected Vice-President; in 1990 I was even offered the Presidency, which I declined for personal reasons.

It was also in those early years in Singapore that I enjoyed learning the art of bargaining, at which the locals were true masters. I applied these lessons when buying my beloved 19th century Burmese Buddha. It stood in a shop window, and each time I passed I was bewitched by its sweet, serene expression. I had offered about half the price the dealer was asking, and each time I reminded him that the Buddha was destined for me, that no one else would ever buy it, and that he would eventually have to resign himself to my price. Six months later, I bought it – at the price I had named.

From the very beginning I also took part in the many study tours so superbly organised by the FOM. Indonesia was among the first destinations, and it was there that I acquired two Wayang shadow-theatre figures, along with other small objects such as turtle-shell boxes.

In 1983 I was able to visit Burma, thanks to an exchange agreement for Traveling Groups that I had signed with the FOM of Bangkok, one of the few organisations then able to obtain visas. That first journey to Burma was truly unforgettable, the country still authentic and spectacular. On that occasion I bought objects such as lacquered and gilded banana leaves inscribed in Pali with Buddhist sutras written in black lacquer, a small inlaid wooden cabinet that I carried back in my suitcase, and some refined little cups whose elasticity derived from a base of plaited horsehair covered with successive layers of black or red lacquer. I also purchased typical *kalaga*: intricate appliqué embroideries in relief with gold thread, stones and sequins. These usually depicted scenes from the life of the Buddha, but mine – rather unusually – showed two birds, perhaps large parrots.

The following year, 1984, I organised and led a study tour to China – a task that at the time seemed inexpressibly complex to me, but everything went well. On that occasion I bought from a company specialized in costumes for the Beijing Opera a sumptuous hand-embroidered cloak, together with many other small objects, though of course no ancient porcelain, whose export was strictly forbidden.

That same year proved memorable for another reason. As a Committee Member I was collaborating with the National Museum of Singapore in various ways: carrying out research, continuing the catalogue of ceramics,

selecting *kraak* pieces and arranging their display in a dedicated case, and more. One day the Curator asked me to assist a visiting colleague from a Dutch museum who was bringing a travelling exhibition on comparative Delft and *kraak* porcelains. It was none other than Christiaan Jörg.

One morning we were working in a vast hall: I was on one side selecting display stands, while he was handling some ceramics. Suddenly he called me over, lifting a large dish above his head, and asked: "What do you think this is?" Without a second's hesitation I replied: "I don't know, but it isn't Chinese." He lowered the dish slowly and said: "Do you realize that in the world, at this distance, there are no more than three or four people able to tell that this is not Chinese? How come you know so much?" I told him my story, and he concluded: "*Kraak* porcelain is an extremely complex subject, and it is really necessary that someone should write a book about it." Then he looked at me and said: "Why don't you come to the Netherlands? It is there that the greatest concentration of *kraak* porcelain can be found, and I would gladly take you to see both public and private collections." Of course I went – jumping at the chance!

This was followed by an intense period of research, and in 1986 I published my first article in *Heritage* (no. 8), the Museum's journal, entitled "Kraak Porcelain: The History and Classification of Dishes". It was warmly received by international experts, in particular by Daisy Lion-Goldschmidt who, to my great embarrassment, insisted that I sign a copy for her. My hand was trembling as I did so! To me, she and Margaret Medley were the two great ladies of porcelain studies, and from the very beginning both welcomed me most generously.

At that point the question arose: should I continue writing articles describing single aspects of *kraak* porcelain, or should I summon the courage to devote myself to writing a book? The first step was to find a publisher. I wrote to Han Shan Tang, at the time a renowned bookshop specialising in publications on East Asia, from which I had often ordered volumes by post. I sent them a copy of *Heritage* and asked if they could suggest a publisher who might be interested in a book on *kraak* porcelain. They replied by return mail that, by chance, they had just decided to move into publishing, and that they were indeed interested in my proposal.

Some things really seem to be written in the stars. How else to explain that chain of 'coincidences' which, step by step, led me by the hand to the final outcome: a book that marked a significant moment in the study of *kraak* porcelain (*Kraak Porcelain, A Moment in the History of Trade*), and the joy I still feel when I hear that young scholars continue to consult it, despite all that has since been written on the subject.

Let me now turn to the other pieces that entered my collections. For their sheer beauty I acquired several silver objects. Foremost among them were pieces produced in the second half of the nineteenth century by Chinese craftsmen, who created items in typically European shapes – such as teapots or ladies' dressing-table accessories – yet always decorated them with exquisitely Chinese motifs, especially floral designs. I bought these in Singapore from a renowned collector. Other silver pieces I purchased in the Phnom Penh market in the early 1990s, during the first tourist trips permitted in Cambodia, when the Khmer Rouge were still in power. These objects were of great beauty and intricate workmanship. When I returned to Cambodia twenty years later, I promised some friends they would find equally fine silver objects. What a disappointment! Everything was machine-made, dozens of pieces all strictly identical, no doubt imported from China.

And now to the main elements of the Rinaldi Collection: the ceramics. Among them, naturally, the *kraak* wares already mentioned, but also monochrome stoneware from earlier periods – Song and Yuan – as well as my beloved Tang figurines, some of the oldest pieces in the collection and among the very first I acquired. Then the refined *qingbai* porcelain and the lustrous black Jin wares, the mysterious Jun glazes, and of course the classic celadons – one of whose dishes, as my husband once remarked, looked just right for serving spaghetti!

Alongside these first acquisitions, the blue and white ceramics (chiefly the *kraak* pieces) were added later, with a clear research purpose. I bought them mostly when I was already well advanced in writing my book and needed to check details such as the finish of a cup foot, the thinness of a dish, or the gradation of a blue. It was my 'study collection'. I deliberately included *kraak* pieces of different quality: some particularly fine, others less so; some decorated with very common motifs, others with rarer ones. Among these the little dish with two deer "engaged in amorous pursuits," as the London dealer delicately described it, stands out. To my knowledge the motif is absolutely unique.

My decision to donate this collection to the Museo Orientale "Umberto Scerrato" was based above all on its didactic vocation, but also on the wish to promote Naples, already an important centre for Oriental studies, as a city recognised internationally for its artistic heritage relating to East Asia, thanks to the presence of two significant collections: one preserved in the Museo Nazionale della Ceramica Duca di Martina at Villa Floridiana, and the other housed in the Museo Scerrato at Università di Napoli L'Orientale.

I cherish the hope that my donation may act as a catalyst, encouraging others to add further donations to the Museo Scerrato in the years to come.

# Chinese Ceramics

The production of ceramics in China boasts a history deeply rooted in the knowledge of clays and firing techniques, mastered since ancient times and laying the foundations for the development of a refined tradition that would become renowned throughout the world.

From a geological perspective, China can be broadly divided into two macro-regions, north and south. The northern region is characterised by loess, a fine rock powder originating from desert areas, transported and reworked by rivers into secondary loess – the clay already exploited by Neolithic potters as early as 10,000 years ago. From the sixth century CE onwards, refractory clays derived from granitic rocks were also used in northern China; these made it possible to produce compact and impermeable ceramic bodies. The southern region, by contrast, is characterised by volcanic formations that gave rise to highly refractory secondary clays, and by deposits of kaolin, a primary white clay already employed from the Bronze Age, in the second millennium BCE, and later used in the manufacture of porcelain (Kerr and Wood 2004).

During the Neolithic period (c. 7000 BCE – c. 1700 BCE), various ceramic cultures emerged across the territory we now call China. Potters working within these traditions already made use of refractory clays and were able to construct kilns capable of withstanding high temperatures and different firing atmospheres. Such knowledge would prove fundamental during the Bronze Age (second millennium BCE), both for the production of refractory moulds used in metal casting and for the development of white kaolinitic wares. Equally ancient is the discovery of vitreous coatings (glazes), initially formed by ash deposits on ceramic surfaces during firing, which came to be applied, partially or entirely, to ceramic bodies. The use of glazes offered the dual advantage of waterproofing the vessels while also enhancing their aesthetic appeal.

For the firing of ceramics, two main types of kiln were developed in China, both of which continued to be built and used over the centuries. In the north, the *mantou* kiln 饅頭窯 – so called because its shape resembles that of the Chinese steamed bun – was the standard type. It consisted of a single firing chamber, horseshoe-shaped with a domed roof, one or two chimneys, and a firebox set at a lower level. The chamber itself was built of bricks and lined with refractory clay, so as to be perfectly insulated. Fuelled by wood or, more frequently, by coal, this kiln, despite its limited capacity due to the single chamber, proved highly efficient and was capable of reaching temperatures as high as 1350 °C. Jun wares [nos. 16, 17] were produced in *mantou*-type kilns.

The characteristic kiln of southern China was the *longyao* 龍窯, or "dragon kiln," so called for its long, sinuous form that typically stretched along the slope of a hill. Wood-fired, the *longyao* had its firebox at the base and the flue exit at the summit, so that draught was ensured by the upward incline of the kiln itself. Dragon kilns could reach considerable dimensions – up to 100 metres in length – and were divided into several firing chambers, with openings at regular intervals allowing temperature to be monitored along the way. Their main advantage lay in the ability to fire an enormous number of pieces simultaneously, even of differing qualities. Heating up and cooling down rapidly, they were particularly suited to firing stonewares with celadon-type glazes, which required a quick firing cycle [nos. 7-13] (Nagatomo *et al.* 2022).

Building on these earlier technological achievements, from the late third century BCE onwards, during the imperial age, manufacturing centres developed in both northern and southern China. In the centuries that followed, several of them grew into fully organised production complexes, distinguished by the presence of numerous kilns and diversified production. The excellence of Chinese ceramics was due precisely to the efficiency of the organisation of these centres, marked by the adoption of an almost industrial system based on the division of labour and on standardised methods, which allowed technical mastery to be combined with an impressive scale of production. Potters working in these centres experimented both with the ceramic body and with the treatment of vessel surfaces. As regards the former, Chinese classification – unlike that used in the West – distinguishes only two types of ceramic body: those fired at low temperatures, the earthenware (*tao* 陶), and those fired at high temperatures, the *ci* 瓷, which include both stoneware and porcelain. This point will be taken up again later.

As for surface treatment, although Chinese ceramics could be decorated by a variety of techniques, they are typically distinguished by the use – and the beauty – of their glazes. Chinese ceramics were produced with three main types of glaze, defined according to the flux used to lower the melting point of silica: lead glazes [nos. 1,2], alkaline glazes, and lime-alkaline glazes. From the Tang period (618–907), potters were able to employ all three types and to achieve, by adding metallic oxides, a wide palette of colours (Wood 2007).

During the Song period (960–1279), the range of ceramic classes produced gradually increased, and manufactories likewise multiplied and expanded in scale. Some were able not only to satisfy domestic demand but also to supply markets overseas. Indeed, the refinement of Chinese ceramics, combined with advances in naval technology, encouraged the growing request for stonewares from China, which began to be exported and, whenever possible, imitated along the coasts of Asia.

Particularly noteworthy were the celadon from the Longquan kilns (Longquan *qingci* 龍泉青瓷) [nos. 7-15], stoneware with its characteristic glazes in shades of green, which became the most widely exported class of ceramics during this period and under the subsequent Yuan dynasty (1279–1368).

At the same time, the production of what European nomenclature would later call porcelain marked a crucial turning point in the history of Chinese ceramics. The very term derives from that of a shell whose whiteness probably suggested to Marco Polo (1254–1324) the name by which he described bowls "le plus belles que l'en peust deviser" (Bibl. Nationale de France, Ms. fr. 1116: CLVI): white, translucent vessels that would soon become the object of desire for European courts. Exported and imitated everywhere, Chinese porcelain was a hard-paste ceramic, made from a mixture of kaolin (from the Chinese *gaoling* 高齡, a locality near Jingdezhen, the principal centre of porcelain production), a primary clay, and petuntse, a feldspathic rock containing quartz and hydromica, its name again derived from Chinese (*baidunzi* 白盾子) and also known as porcelain stone. The combination of these two elements, considered by the Chinese to be the "bones" and the "flesh" of porcelain, together with firing at extremely high temperatures above 1280 °C, overcame the poor plasticity and fragility of Bronze Age kaolinitic wares. The result is a body that is compact, impermeable, white, translucent and resonant.

The kilns of the Jingdezhen 景德鎮窯 system expanded enormously under Mongol rule, becoming the leading production centre for both domestic and overseas markets. The latter, thanks to advances in naval technology and maritime trade, grew on a scale never experienced before: Chinese porcelains travelled along the routes of the Indian Ocean and are now found in excavations in Japan, Korea, the Philippines, South-East Asia and South and West Asia, reaching, especially through the mediation of the Islamic world, as far as Europe. Indeed, it was through the system of gift exchange that the first, still sporadic, arrivals of Chinese ceramics reached Western Europe. One of the earliest collections was formed in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, beginning with a small group of celadon-glazed stoneware and blue and white porcelains presented to Lorenzo the Magnificent (1449–1492) by the Sultan of Egypt, today preserved in the Museo degli Argenti in Florence (Morena 2005).

It was again in Tuscany that, in the second half of the sixteenth century, Francesco I sponsored the establishment of a manufactory where experiments were carried out in the production of soft-paste wares imitating porcelain – an original synthesis, in both forms and decoration, of Italian maiolica and Chinese models. Although short-lived, this first attempt to reproduce the technical and aesthetic qualities of Chinese porcelain achieved remarkable results and was later followed by experiments in numerous European workshops, just as it

had been preceded by parallel endeavours in South-East Asia, Iran, Egypt and Turkey. What attracted attention was not only the outward appearance of the vessels but the very material itself, whose manufacture remained a secret carefully guarded by China, which retained the monopoly of production.

There can be little doubt that – although it cannot be summarised here – the history of the trade, acquisition, use and, indeed, imitation of Chinese porcelain wares from this period onwards, and in the different countries and socio-cultural traditions where they circulated to a greater or lesser extent, plays a seminal role in understanding the glocal dynamics of the second millennium.

During the fifteenth century, the presence of Chinese porcelain in Europe, though still limited, was already of such significance that it appeared in celebrated paintings at the turn of the sixteenth century, such as Andrea Mantegna's *Adoration of the Magi* (ca. 1495–1505) and Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* (1514). From the early sixteenth century, with the establishment of direct maritime contacts between China and the Iberian peninsula, and in the following centuries with the foundation of the various East India Companies – among them the Dutch VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*), founded in 1602 and particularly active in the export of ceramics from East Asia (Jörg 1997; Carioti and Caterina 2010) – porcelain became a highly coveted commodity at every European court. Initially, the most widely imported wares belonged to the blue and white decorative style (*qinghua ci* 青花瓷), which employed cobalt oxide beneath the glaze. While these wares became immensely popular abroad – so much so that they were soon regarded as virtually synonymous with Chinese porcelain – they were less favoured by the Chinese elite, whose taste inclined towards monochrome ceramics. This divergence in appreciation between domestic and overseas markets was to have a decisive influence on the types of porcelain produced specifically for export, most notably the so-called *kraak* porcelain. A variant of blue and white, it was manufactured in large quantities for the European market between the second half of the sixteenth century and the mid-seventeenth century, and it constitutes the core of Maura Rinaldi's collection and of her scientific research [nos. 31-51].

Between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, demand from European courts for porcelain grew to such an extent that in China an ever-increasing number of objects and decorative classes were produced exclusively for export. These were the expression of a synthesis – both in form and in iconography – between Western commissions and Chinese techniques and imagery. Purchases on the market and the circulation of objects through dynastic ties that united European courts shaped the aesthetic and decorative choices of the age, eventually giving rise to the artistic phenomenon known as *chinoiserie*.

In the meantime, attempts to imitate Chinese porcelain multiplied, leading in 1708, after decades of systematic experiments, to the invention of the first European hard-paste porcelain at Meissen, up-river from Dresden. The achievement was such that on 23 January 1710 Augustus the Strong (1670–1733), whose passion for Chinese ceramics was legendary, proclaimed – in German, Latin, French and Dutch – that vessels equal in transparency and other qualities to the porcelain of the East Indies could now be produced in Saxony, and that the Meissen manufactory was officially founded (Greenberger 2019). Many decades, however, would pass before Meissen and the other European manufactories that followed were able to establish a production capable of satisfying the enormous demand for porcelain on the market. Indeed, it was only in the nineteenth century that the importation of Chinese wares began to decline, while at the same time a more critical and comprehensive knowledge of Chinese art developed in Europe. This new scholarly interest led to the publication of the first scientific studies on porcelain (Jacquemart and Le Blant 1862) and to the creation of collections of Chinese ceramics assembled through purchases on the antiquarian market. The reasons behind the formation of these collections – highly varied in both scope and quality – cannot be examined here, but it is important to note that they began to include objects previously excluded from European assemblages, such as containers and utensils used in the practice of calligraphy [nos. 52-58], as well as monochrome vessels from the world of Chinese literati [nos. 59-63] .

The Rinaldi Collection, formed over a century later, stands in continuity with this ideal, which regarded travel and study as essential motives for the collecting of Chinese art, and also comprises numerous examples of these categories.

Further reading: Fang 2023; Kerr and Wood 2004; Medley 2006; Pierson 1996; Pierson 2009; Rastelli 2004; Rinaldi 1989; Vainker 1991; Valenstein 1989; Wood 2007

# Lead-glazed or Low-fired Glazed Ceramics

The earliest lead glazes – also known as low-fired glazes due to their low melting point of around 700 °C and inability to withstand temperatures above 1100 °C – first appeared on rare objects during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) (Dong *et al.* 2020), but only became widespread from the 1st century BCE, under the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) (Chen *et al.* 2020). Typical of northern China, and in particular of the kilns in Henan, Shaanxi and Shanxi, these glazes were produced in an oxidising atmosphere and were characterised by a high lead content, offering significant advantages both economically and aesthetically. From an economic perspective, the firing process required less fuel and shorter firing times compared to the high-fired (alkaline or lime-alkaline) glazes. To reduce costs further, lead glazes were generally applied only to the outer surfaces of vessels. Aesthetically, lead glazes readily absorb colouring oxides, producing opaque, glossy and vibrant tones that effectively mask imperfections in the ceramic body. However, due to the low firing temperature, the body remains porous and poorly vitrified, making it unsuitable for storing liquids or foodstuffs. To ensure a minimum degree of durability, vessels typically have thick walls. The high lead content also renders this type of ceramic highly toxic. For all these reasons, lead-glazed wares were used exclusively for funerary and ritual**,** rather than domestic, purposes.

The colour of the glaze depended on the addition of metal oxides. During the Han period, the most common hues were warm tones ranging from ivory to amber to brown, achieved using varying proportions of iron oxide, and green tones derived from copper oxide. In most cases, yellow or brown glazes and green glazes were used separately. The green glaze was particularly popular and sometimes displayed a silvery iridescence caused by corrosion in humid conditions. Only on a few rare Han examples can one observe a combination of the two colours – a decorative effect that would be fully developed in later centuries.

Indeed, the emergence of lead-glazed ceramics during the Han period laid the foundation for the development of *sancai* 三彩 ware under the Tang dynasty (618–907). After a phase of decline during the turbulent period following the fall of the Han, low-fired terracotta production resumed with renewed creativity between the late 7$^{th}$ and 8$^{th}$ centuries. The revival of this genre was closely tied to the significance attributed to funerary practices and grave goods, while high-fired stoneware and proto-porcelain dominated daily use (Jiang 2019).

The lead-glazed ceramics of the Tang period are generally referred to as *sancai*, literally “three colours” – a modern term that alludes to the main hues

used: creamy yellow, amber, and green, often applied in combination on a single object. However, the term is in many ways misleading: firstly, because the number of colours obtained exceeded three and included, for example, blackish-brown and, most notably, blue, derived from cobalt oxide imported from the Iranian world; and secondly, because *sancai* is broadly used to refer to all lead-glazed ceramics of the Tang period, regardless of how many or which colours are employed.

The chromatic palette varied not only according to the oxide used but also to the quantity of pigment present. Nigel Wood (2007: 199-206) has distinguished three main types of *sancai* ware based on the concentration of colouring oxides. The first, and rarest, is characterised by a high percentage of iron oxide (over 8%) or, more occasionally, copper oxide (over 5%), resulting in very dark glazes in shades of black with brown or grey nuances. The second and most common type features medium to high levels of colouring oxides and involves the application of multiple hues – by brush, pouring, or dipping – on the same object. Typically, coloured glazes were laid over a transparent glaze to reduce their intensity. Finally, the third type is defined by a low concentration of colouring oxides and is typical of monochrome wares, such as those in this collection [nos. 1–2]. In these cases, the glaze was applied either directly onto the body or, more commonly, onto the biscuit.

The body was fired at a temperature higher than the glaze could withstand, hence the need for a two-step firing process. The first, to fire the biscuit, took place at around 1100 °C, while the second, for the glaze, was carried out at a lower temperature – between 900 and 950 °C – which was still significantly above the melting point of the glaze (around 650 °C). This relatively high temperature explains the glaze's tendency to run – an effect clearly intentional, exploited by Tang potters to evoke naturalness and spontaneity, and to heighten the contrast between the body and the glaze. This contrast is one of the distinguishing features of the two objects in our collection: a begging bowl [no. 1] and a flask [no. 2], the latter inspired by leather canteens traditionally used by the nomadic peoples from whom the Liao dynasty – which extended its rule over northern China between 907 and 1125 – originated.

Further reading: Medley 1981; Rastelli 2004; Watson 1984; Wood 2007

## No. 1
Inv. No. MO 1339

## No. 1

Inv. No. MO 1339

Alms bowl
Lead-glazed earthenware
Tang dynasty (618–907)
H. 10.8 cm – Rim D. 10.5 cm

This alms bowl features a simple, globular form with a sturdy construction that reflects a practical and functional design. It is characterised by a slightly inverted mouth rim and a rounded bottom.

The exterior surface is partially covered with an ochre-coloured lead glaze, applied in a deliberately uneven manner. The darker edges of the glaze enhance the contrast with the exposed light-coloured ceramic body at the base.

Alms bowls of this characteristic shape were produced in a variety of materials, including ceramics of various types and bronze, and were used in Buddhist contexts.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 2
Inv. No. MO 1340

## No. 2

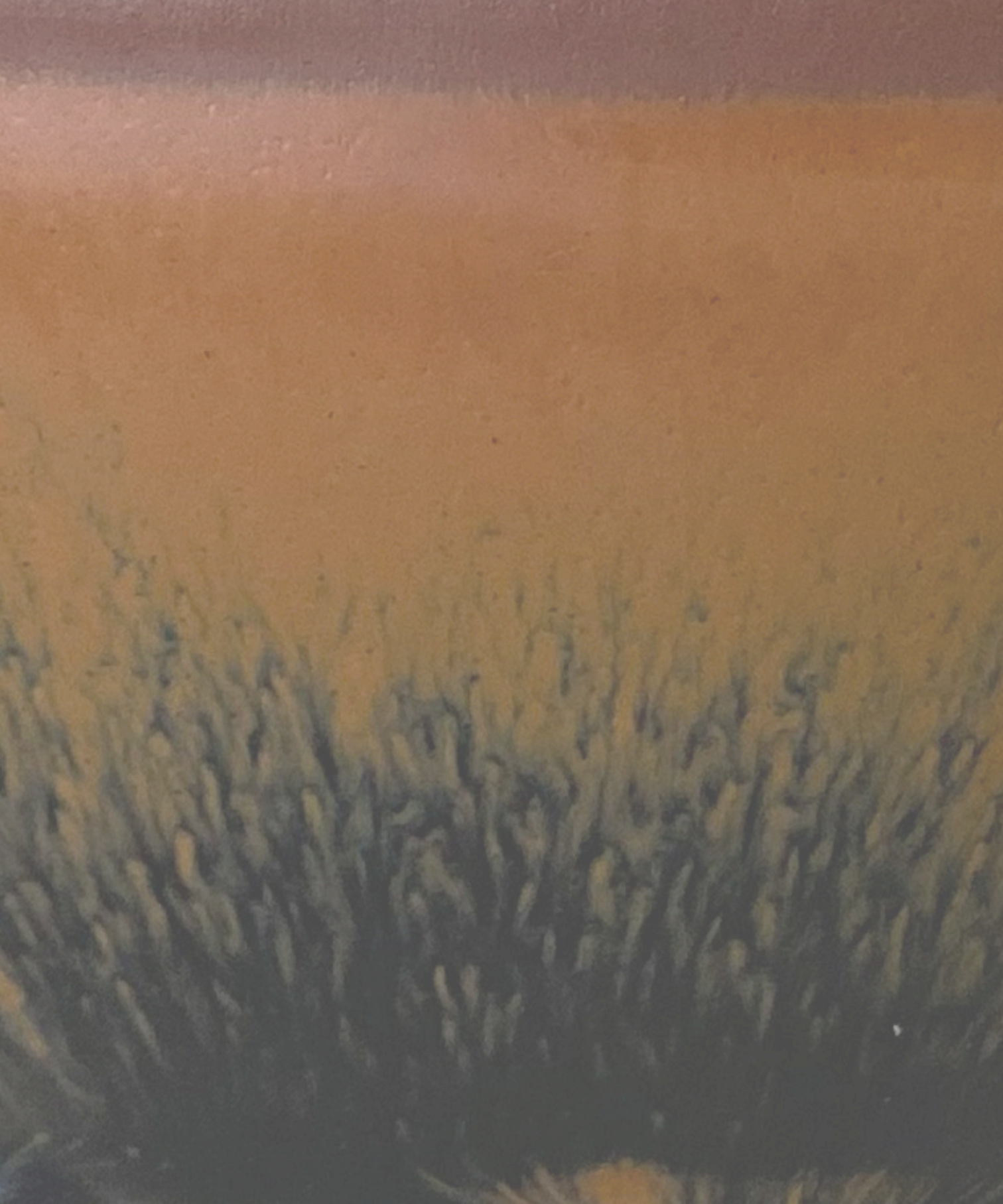
Inv. No. MO 1340

Flask
Lead-glazed earthenware
Northern China, Liao dynasty (907–1125)
H. 30.4 cm

Modelled after leather prototypes, the flask features an elongated body and a footring, a finger-pinched handle attached to a cylindrical spout with a shaped rim and a raised band at its base. The vessel is partially covered with a glossy ochre-coloured lead glaze, which runs down irregularly, leaving the buff-coloured body exposed at the base.

This type of flask, also known as a saddle gourd, replicates in ceramic the leather canteens typical of the nomadic culture of the Liao dynasty, which was led by the Khitan people and ruled from 916 over Manchuria, Mongolia, and northern China. The ceramic production characteristic of this period combines forms rooted in northern nomadic traditions with decorative techniques inherited from the Tang dynasty (618–907), as exemplified by the present piece.

*References:* unpublished



# Black-glazed Stoneware

In many respects, ceramics with lustrous black glazes are among the most fascinating and characterful of China's vast monochrome production.

Black-glazed stoneware developed in northern China from the sixth century CE onwards, thanks to the use of iron-rich fusible clays, containing a wide range of high-temperature fluxes, from the great central plain (Ayers, Medley and Wood 1988: 13–14). During the subsequent Northern Song (960-1127) and Jin (1115-1234) periods, several northern kilns built upon the experience accumulated in earlier times to produce high-fired iron glazes, matured at approximately 1,250–1,310 °C and containing about 6 per cent iron oxide. These tended to develop brownish-amber tones when thinly applied, and a glossy black when applied in thicker layers. In general, the black-glazed stoneware of northern China falls within the popular Cizhou 磁州 tradition, whose kilns, widely distributed across the provinces of Henan and Hebei, produced mainly daily wares, including tableware, storage jars of various sizes, wine bottles, and tea bowls [nos. 3, 5, 6].

Certain types of black-glazed stoneware were also produced during the Song period in southern China, most notably at the Jizhou kilns 吉州窯 in Jiangxi and at the Jian kilns 建窯 in Fujian. These southern centres were widely distributed across their respective regions; in the case of Jian, the kilns were located along the valleys of the Jianxi River 建溪 and its tributaries in northern Fujian. Jian production is distinguished by bowls with coarse-grained, dark, iron-rich bodies and lustrous blackish-brown or bluish-black glazes containing 5–8 per cent iron oxides, fired at about 1,250–1,280 °C. The glaze surface often shows fine brownish streaks that gave rise to the term "hare's fur", an effect produced through successive transformations during firing: as the glaze melted, iron compounds crystallised and migrated, forming linear streaks as the molten surface flowed and cooled (Wang *et al*. 2025; Wood 2007: 149). The shapes of these bowls are generally simple and compact, and the glaze typically runs down in large, viscous drops above the foot.

A stoneware tea bowl with this characteristic "hare's fur" glaze, typical of Jian production, is represented in the Rinaldi Collection [no. 4].

Closely associated with the consumption of tea, the so-called *jianzhan* 建盞 (Jian tea bowls) were especially valued in Japan, where they became known as *tenmoku* 天目 – a term derived from the Japanese pronunciation of Tianmushan 天目山, the mountain in Zhejiang where, according to tradition, a Buddhist temple visited by the Japanese Buddhist monk Dōgen 道元 (1200-

1253) took part in a Chan tea ceremony in which Jian tea bowls were used. It is said that on his return to Japan he brought one of these bowls with him, arousing immediate admiration.

By the end of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), when the custom of tea drinking had become widespread, such bowls were no longer imported solely from China but were also reproduced in the kilns of Seto. This gave rise to a Japanese *tenmoku* tradition that preserved the aesthetic of the Jian bowls long after it had vanished in China, making these distinctively shaped and coloured vessels among the most celebrated in the Japanese tea ceremony.

Further reading: Ayers, Medley and Wood 1988; Plumer 1972

## No. 3
Inv. No. MO 1338

## No. 3

Inv. No. MO 1338

Jarlet
Cizhou-type stoneware with black glaze
Henan province, 12th century
H. 11.2 cm – D. rim 8 cm

Small jar with globular body, covered on the exterior with a glossy black iron-rich glaze that stops above the footring, revealing the buff stoneware body. The profile of the jar is accentuated by vertical slip-trailed ribs, created by applying thin strings of white slip to the body before glazing. Through the translucent black glaze, the brownish tone of the clay and the lighter slip lines subtly emerge in contrast.

Such decoration is typical of northern Chinese kilns in Henan and Hebei provinces, particularly those producing Cizhou-type wares (Tregear 1982: 76–84). A closely comparable jarlet, also similar in size, is preserved in the British Museum (inv. no. 1973,0726.270) and dated to the Jin dynasty (1115–1234).

*References:* unpublished

## No. 4
Inv. No. MO 1341

## No. 4

Inv. No. MO 1341

Tea bowl
*Jian* stoneware with "hare's fur" glaze
Fujian province, 12th–13th century
H. 6.3 cm – D. 12 cm

Small bowl with steep sides and straight rim, marked by a slight ridge below the lip and a small, boldly cut footring. The bowl is covered with a thick, lustrous "hare's fur" glaze that has run in heavy drips towards the base. During firing, the black glaze flowed downward, exposing the iridescent brown slip around the rim and creating the fine streaks characteristic of the decorative effect known as "hare's fur".

The form and the predominance of dark tones are typical of *Jian* 建 wares – known in Japan as *Tenmoku* 天目 – produced in Fujian kilns during the Song period and closely associated with the practice of tea drinking, particularly within the context of Chan Buddhism. Bowls of this kind are characterised by their dense, dark bodies and glossy brown-black surfaces, enhanced by natural variations in texture and tone. Their shape was designed to sit naturally in the hollow of the hand, enabling both the visual appreciation of the tea during preparation and a comfortable grip, with a rim shaped for ease of drinking.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 5
Inv. No. MO 1259

## No. 5

Inv. No. MO 1259

Bowl
Stoneware with black glaze
Henan (?), Jin dynasty (1115–1234)
H. 7.5 cm – D. 17.4 cm

Bowl with gently rounded sides, straight rim and footring. It is covered with a thick, lustrous black glaze that stops short of the foot, revealing the buff stoneware body. The glaze is suffused with subtle russet spots, particularly visible beneath the rim.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 6
Inv. No. MO 1342

## No. 6

Inv. No. MO 1342

Jar
Cizhou-type stoneware with black glaze
Hebei (?), Jin dynasty (1115–1234)
H. 16.5 cm – D. 14.5 cm

Large jar with rounded body, short neck and wide mouth, set on a low, slightly flared footring. Two small loop handles connect the rim to the shoulder. The upper part of the body is covered with a thick, glossy black glaze that stops below the midsection, revealing the coarse-grained buff stoneware body.

A likely provenance for this jar is the Cizhou kiln site of Guantai 關台磁州窯, in southern Hebei province, where excavations have yielded closely comparable examples (Guantai 1997: pl. 52–4).

*References:* unpublished

# Longquan Green-glazed Stoneware, or Longquan Celadon

Kilns in the Longquan area (龍泉窯), in present-day Zhejiang province, began operating as early as the third century CE, taking advantage of the abundance and high quality of the local raw materials. Over time, and particularly from the Song dynasty (960–1279) onwards, they developed into one of the largest ceramic manufacturing centres in China, alongside Jingdezhen and Dehua. From the late twelfth century onwards, the Longquan kiln system began producing a wide range of high-fired ceramics in a reducing atmosphere, with glazes ranging from light blue to pale and olive-green tones. Characterised by the distinctive bluish-green tones of their glazes, these wares, known in Chinese as *qingci* 青瓷, are referred to in Western literature as *celadon*—a term derived from the name of the shepherd Céladon, the protagonist of the pastoral romance *L'Astrée* by Honoré d'Urfé (1568–1625), in which he is described as wearing ribbons of pale green.

In Western literature, Longquan celadon is generally described as fine stoneware. However, Nigel Wood's analysis of its glazes and bodies has shown them to be almost identical to those of Jingdezhen porcelain (see *infra*), differing only in a slightly higher content of iron and titanium oxides and in a predominance of potassium over soda (Wood 2007: 75–76). These differences make the Longquan ceramic body, once fired, grey and compact, and have led to its classification as stoneware in the European typology, although its actual composition is closer to that of porcelain than to the those of green-glazed stoneware produced in other regions of China. The glazes of Longquan celadon are likewise lime-alkaline, similar to those of blue and white porcelain (see *infra*), but with a higher content of colouring oxides. The colour and texture of the glaze may vary considerably: some surfaces appear matte and smooth [nos. 9, 11, 12], others glossy and translucent [no. 15]. Occasionally the glaze exhibits a *craquelé* effect, obtained by exploiting the different coefficients of thermal expansion between the glaze and the body [no. 14]. Decoration, when present, may be impressed under the glaze [no. 7] or moulded in relief [nos. 8, 10]. The repertoire of shapes, produced either on the wheel or in moulds, is wide and includes bowls [nos. 7, 8], dishes, and closed forms such as bottles [no. 13] and vases.

The peak of production can be placed between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the demand for Longquan celadon rose sharply. The number

of individual kilns, distributed along the Longquan River and grouped into two main clusters, is estimated to have reached several hundred (Zhang *et al*. 2023). During this period, significant advances were achieved both in the composition and multi-layer application of glazes and in firing techniques (Fang 2023: 425–426). Celadon was fired in so-called dragon kilns (see *infra*) in a strongly reducing atmosphere at temperatures between 1250 and 1280 °C.

From this time until the decline of the Longquan kiln system after the mid-Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the volume of trade and diplomatic exchange through which celadon circulated reached unprecedented levels along the maritime routes. This class of pottery became the most widely exported of all Chinese wares, finding major markets in the Indian and Islamic worlds as well as in Japan and Korea, and accounting for more than half of all Chinese ceramics exported overseas (Qin 2019). Archaeological evidence demonstrates the extensive distribution of celadon across a vast area stretching from Egypt (Gyllensvärd 1975) to East Asia (National Museum of Korea 1977). Prestigious collections such as those of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul (Ayers and Krahl 1986) and the Shrine of Ardabil (Pope 1956) attest to its enduring prestige.

It was probably in response to the enormous demand for celadon, both within China and abroad, that the production of Longquan was soon accompanied by that of other kilns in southern China. The overseas diffusion of celadon also stimulated imitation: several countries sought to reproduce its forms and, above all, its distinctive green glazes – the most successful examples being those produced in Egypt, Japan, and especially Korea.

In recognition of this long-standing ceramic tradition, the *Celadon firing technique of Longquan, China* was inscribed in 2009 on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Further reading: Kerr and Wood 2004; Leidy 2025; Palace Museum *et al*. 2019; Palace Museum *et al*. 2021

## No. 7
Inv. No. MO 1321

## No. 7

Inv. No. MO 1321

Bowl with floral decoration
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Longquan kilns, c. 1100–1170
H. 4.5 cm – D. 19.5 cm

Bowl with a wide, shallow, truncated-conical basin ending in a thin, slightly everted rim decorated with two parallel grooves. It rests on a footring whose unglazed edge has oxidised to a bright orange-brown tone. The interior is decorated with an incised design under the glaze: a circular floral corolla at the centre surrounded by interlinking foliate scrolls. The exterior is moulded with slender upright lotus petals radiating from the footring. The greyish-green hue of the celadon glaze, typical of certain Longquan productions, displays a fine crackle pattern evenly covering the smooth, translucent surface.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 8
Inv. No. MO 1319

## No. 8

Inv. No. MO 1319

Bowl with lotus-petal decoration
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Longquan kilns, late 13th century
H. 7.3 cm – D. 16.4 cm

Bowl with rounded sides, straight rim and small footring. Covered with a pale green celadon glaze, it is decorated on the exterior with a lotus-petal relief. The unglazed foot rim has oxidised to a bright orange-brown tone.

Lotus bowls of this type were a characteristic product of the Longquan kilns throughout the Southern Song period (1127–1279). In Buddhist symbolism the lotus, growing pure and unstained from the mud, embodies spiritual rebirth and enlightenment, and became one of the most widespread decorative motifs in Chinese art. Through maritime trade, lotus bowls were also exported beyond China and inspired imitations in the Islamic world (see, for example, a comparable bowl preserved in the British Museum, inv. no. 1925,1121.1).

*References:* unpublished

## No. 9
Inv. No. MO 1312

## No. 9

Inv. No. MO 1312

Ewer
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Longquan kilns, late 13th century
H. 13 cm

Small globular ewer with tall neck, slightly everted mouth, curved spout, and strap handle joining the shoulder to the neck. It stands on a short foot and shows precise wheel-throwing with smooth contours and balanced proportions. The vessel is coated with a celadon glaze of soft greyish-green tone, which stops above the footring, leaving part of the fine buff-coloured body exposed.

Characteristic of Longquan production in the Southern Song (1127–1279) and early Yuan (1279–1368) periods, this ewer type – with rounded shoulder and upright neck – embodies the refined aesthetic of pouring vessels used in China for water or wine, while also being produced for export. A very similar ewer, clearly produced for export, was found at the archaeological site of Sung Wong Toi (Song Huang Tai 宋皇臺) in Hong Kong (Liu 2022: 56, 65, fig. 45) and dated to 1220–1270.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 10
Inv. No. MO 1316

## Nos. 11, 12
Inv. Nos. MO 1317, MO 1322

## No. 10

Inv. No. MO 1316

Jarlet with dragon-and-cloud decoration
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Longquan kilns, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 7.4 cm

Jarlet with globular body, footring, and short neck. Except for the base, the vessel is covered with a rather thick matt celadon glaze of greyish-green tone. The decoration, moulded under the glaze, shows a sinuous dragon encircling the mid and upper sections of the body, while clouds are depicted on the lower part. A very similar piece, both in form and decoration, is preserved in the Portland Art Museum (no. 2009.27.22).

*References:* unpublished

---

## Nos. 11, 12

Inv. Nos. MO 1317, MO 1322

Pair of jarlets
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Longquan kilns, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
MO 1317: H. 6 cm / MO 1322: H. 4.2 cm

Pair of jarlets with squat bulbous body and short neck, characterised by a simple and well-proportioned shape. Undecorated, they are covered on the exterior with a matt celadon glaze of light green tone. Minor traces of wear and porosity are visible on the surface. Their small size may suggest a decorative or practical use, for example to contain oils or spices, or possibly a funerary function.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 13
Inv. No. MO 1311

## No. 13

Inv. No. MO 1311

Bottle with floral decoration and cover
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Longquan kilns, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 24 cm (without cover), 26.2 cm (with cover)

Bottle with ovoid body, long neck, and pyramidal cover surmounted by a knob. The decoration, incised beneath a matt celadon glaze of greyish-green tone with *craquelé* effect, is divided on the body into three registers: the first is decorated with a frieze of lotus petals, the central register with lotus flowers and branches, and the third with *ruyi*-head motifs. The neck and the cover are further adorned with floral patterns. The foot is left unglazed.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 14
Inv. No. MO 1313

## No. 15
Inv. No. MO 1314

## No. 14

Inv. No. MO 1313

Jarlet
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Longquan kilns, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 9 cm

Small jar with globular body, short footring and two small symmetrical loop handles connecting the shoulder to the mouth. A thick greyish-green celadon glaze, showing a fine crackle effect, covers the vessel except for the unglazed foot, where the light buff stoneware body is exposed. The glaze displays slight discolourations in tone.

*References:* unpublished

---

## No. 15

Inv. No. MO 1314

Incense burner
Stoneware with celadon glaze
Southern China, Ming dynasty (1368–1644)
H. 9 cm – D. 9.4 cm

Small incense burner in the form of an archaic tripod (*ding* 鼎) with a trilobed body and two upright loop handles on the flat, everted rim. It is covered with a thick olive-green celadon glaze and decorated with an incised floral motif of three peonies, one on each lobe of the body. The bases of the three legs are unglazed and have re-oxidised to a reddish tone.

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 115-116, no. 108

# Jun Ware

Jun ware 鈞瓷 takes its name from Junzhou County – present-day Yuzhou 禹州– in Henan province, where ceramic production is attested from the Song period (960–1279) to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Another major kiln complex associated with the manufacture of this type of stoneware was located in Ruzhou 汝州 County, also in Henan. However, ongoing archaeological research increasingly suggests that so-called Jun ware was in fact produced in kilns scattered across a broader area, including sites in Hebei, Shanxi, and Inner Mongolia (Medley 2006: 118; Wood 2007: 118). To date, around one hundred kilns producing Jun ware have been identified (Fang 2023: 384–391), and it is this wide geographical distribution that accounts for the stylistic diversity and variations in quality.

The fame and appeal of Jun ware lie above all in its glaze, which is typically blue and opalescent, with hues ranging from bluish green and pale blue to sky blue, turquoise, and lavender, sometimes enhanced with purple spots or streaks. The glaze is often thick – up to 3 mm – rich in texture and unevenly applied, likely the result of multiple layers being brushed on (Tregear 1982: 120–21). The range of forms includes utilitarian shapes such as deep bowls with nearly vertical or slightly flared walls and a gently incurved rim [no. 17], all resting on feetring, as well as dishes, incense burners, headrests, and flower vases.

Excavations carried out from 1974–75 in the Yuzhou area, first at the Juntai kilns and later, from the early 2000s, in other nearby production centres, have helped clarify certain aspects of this ware, which is otherwise poorly documented in historical sources (Gugong Bowuyuan Taoci Yanjiu Zhongxin 2005: vol. 2). One key question concerned its origins: archaeologists now tend to place the beginning of its production between the late Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) and the early Jin dynasty (1115–1234), i.e. between the 11th and 12th centuries, with some proto-types already emerging during the Tang period (618–907).

Another major focus of research has been the composition of the glaze. Without delving too deeply into technical matters – on which others have written in greater detail (Wood 2007: 118–125) – copper oxide was fundamental in Jun glazes: it is the small quantity of this component, fired at high temperatures in an oxidising atmosphere, that imparts the characteristic blue tones. The glaze was applied to the biscuit body, which was typically thick-walled, and the firing – conducted in kilns fuelled by either coal or wood – was slow, which influenced the quality and appearance of the glaze surface. From the 12th

century onwards, a higher concentration of copper oxide was used to create purple or violet splashes and streaks, either seemingly accidental or delicately linear, such as those along the rim of bowl cat. no. 16. These markings created a striking and unexpected contrast with the blue ground, rendering each piece effectively unique. From a technical standpoint, the use of copper rather than iron to achieve red-toned effects marked a small revolution in ceramic glazing.

Produced for the domestic market, Jun ceramics were primarily intended for the use of the affluent classes, although some pieces were made to order and commissioned for the imperial court.

During the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), the number of kilns and the production of Jun ware increased significantly, often at the expense of glaze quality and overall workmanship. Particularly admired in China, where they reflected the aesthetic ideals associated with the figure of the scholar-official, Jun wares began to be collected at court during the final imperial dynasty and, especially, under the long reign of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–1795). Jun ceramics only began to enter European and American collections in more recent times.

Further reading: Eskenazi *et al*. 2103; Gugong Bowuyuan Taoci Yanjiu Zhongxin 2005

## No. 16
Inv. No. MO 1320

## No. 17
Inv. No. MO 1331

## No. 16

Inv. No. MO 1320

Brush washer
Jun-type stoneware with sky-blue glaze
Northern China, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 7.5 cm – Rim D. 14 cm

This Jun stoneware brush washer has gently rounded walls that curve inward at the mouth and a broad, flat ring foot. It is covered with a thick sky-blue glaze, accented by subtle violet streaks near the top, shading to beige at the mouth rim. The glaze ends irregularly at the foot, where a thin and uneven film remains along the base.

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 60, no. 5

---

## No. 17

Inv. No. MO 1331

Bowl
Jun-type stoneware with lavender-blue glaze
Northern China, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 8 cm – D. 18.5 cm

Bowl with straight rim and small footring, covered – except at the base – with a thick bluish glaze showing lavender tones, darker than what is typically associated with Jun ware.

*References:* unpublished

# Qingbai Porcelain

Among the finest southern porcelains of the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) periods is *qingbai ci* 青白瓷, literally "bluish-white porcelain", also known as *yingqing ci* 影青瓷. Produced at numerous kilns across southern China between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, it is characterised by a transparent, watery-blue glaze, resulting from low titanium content and the reduction of iron during firing (Medley 2006: 165; Wood 2007: 50–53). The term *qingbai* first appears in Chinese sources of the eleventh century, in the *Cha lu* 茶录, where Cai Xiang 蔡襄 mentions "*qingbai zhan* 青白盏", a small tea bowl with a bluish-white glaze.

The distinctive pure-white body of *qingbai* porcelain, made from a mixture of *kaolin* and *petuntse* (a feldspathic material), marked the culmination of a long process of experimentation that reached maturity by the late tenth or early eleventh century. This composition, characteristic of true porcelain, produced a plastic and resilient paste, less prone to deformation during firing. *Qingbai* porcelain was fired in a reducing atmosphere in the *longyao* 龍窯, or dragon kilns, typical of southern China (see *infra*). The firing temperature, by porcelain standards, was relatively low, generally ranging between 1,220 and 1,260°C.

Although the precise origin of *qingbai* porcelain remains debated, its main production centre was certainly the Jingdezhen kilns. However, it was also made at other kilns in central and southern China and in the coastal regions of the southeast, including Fanchang (Anhui), Nanfeng (Jiangxi), Husi (Hubei) and Dehua (Fujian) (Li *et al*. 2021). In the latter case, *qingbai* production represents the immediate antecedent of the later *blanc de Chine* porcelain, renowned for its purity and refinement. *Qingbai* ware displays a wide variety of shapes, with frequent changes in style and quality. By the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, decoration was often limited to incised or moulded designs with floral and bird motifs adorning elegant forms such as lobed dishes, *meiping* vases 梅瓶, ewers, censers, cups, and covered boxes. A decorative process that became common in the early thirteenth century involved the use of moulds, introduced from the north, which played a crucial role in the industrial development of southern kilns, thereby initiating mass production capable of meeting the growing demand for porcelain both for domestic use and for export.

During the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), *qingbai* porcelain continued the tradition established under the Northern Song (960–1127), showing

considerable variation in the quality of both material and craftsmanship. The vessels became heavier and more robust, with decoration incised [no. 18], moulded [no. 19], or carved.

*Qingbai* porcelain achieved great popularity and was produced both for the aristocracy and for daily use, as well as for export. Sherds from sites such as Sharma, on the Gulf of Aden (Zhao 2015), and Sohar, on the Gulf of Oman (Kervran 2004), where assemblages of *qingbai* have been recovered, demonstrate that it was the most important Chinese ceramic type exported to the Arabian Peninsula between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. At the same time, numerous shipwrecks discovered in China and Southeast Asia have made it possible to trace its evolution (Song 2022), while finds from sites ranging from Africa to Japan attest to its wide distribution. The small *qingbai*-glazed jar from Dehua, preserved in the Treasury of San Marco in Venice and traditionally associated with Marco Polo, provides eloquent evidence of this extensive circulation (Curatola and Squarcina 2024: no. 239).

The popularity of *qingbai* declined only with the great expansion of Longquan celadon production (see *infra*).

Further reading: Chinese Society of Ancient Ceramics 2015; Scott *et al*. 2002; Tregear 1982

## No. 18
Inv. No. MO 1255

## No. 18

Inv. No. MO 1255

Bowl with impressed decoration
*Qingbai* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, early Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 7.2 cm – D. 21 cm

Shallow bowl with thin walls, straight rim and footring. The interior is decorated under the translucent *qingbai* glaze with an impressed design of boys among lotus leaves and volutes forming broad, flowing curves.

Both the decoration and the form closely resemble those of a bowl preserved in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (B65P41), dated to the 13th century. The motif of boys among lotus flowers originated during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) and symbolises the importance of male offspring in Chinese culture of the time. Similar bowls have been found in tombs dated to the 13th century, suggesting for this example a dating to the early Yuan period.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 19
Inv. No. MO 1269

## No. 19

Inv. No. MO 1269

Bottle with floral decoration
*Qingbai* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 17.5 cm

Pear-shaped bottle with a truncated conical neck, slightly flared mouth, and a footring. The neck is flanked by two 8-shaped handles. The exterior, except for the base of the footring, is covered with a greenish-white *qingbai* glaze. On the front is a moulded relief decoration of a plum branch that runs gracefully along the height of the vessel.

The decoration, the form of the bottle, and the quality of the glaze are typical of the Yuan period and can be observed on other contemporary examples, some of which were destined for export, such as the piece from the Sinan shipwreck (National Museum of Korea 1977: pl. 188) and those unearthed in the Philippines (Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines 1993: 79, pl. 39).

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 112, no. 101

## No. 20
Inv. No. MO 1315

## No. 21
Inv. No. MO 1318

## No. 20

Inv. No. MO 1315

Jarlet with cover
*Qingbai* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 13th – 14th century
H. 8.4 cm (without cover); 14.7 cm (with cover)

Small jar with globular body and short footring. Set on the slightly everted rim is a tall cover shaped to resemble a traditional Chinese roof, with moulded details imitating the ridge and eaves decorations. The vessel is covered, except for the foot, with a translucent white glaze suffused with pale bluish tones, characteristic of *qingbai* porcelain.

This jarlet belongs to a small and little-studied group of miniature *qingbai* porcelain jars whose shape evokes, in either a faithful or stylised manner, that of a granary. Usually between 7 and 10 cm in height and produced mainly between the Southern Song (1127–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) dynasties, that is, between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, these so-called "granary jars" occasionally retain traces of grain inside and were probably used as auspicious offerings or placed in tombs as funerary objects.

*References:* unpublished

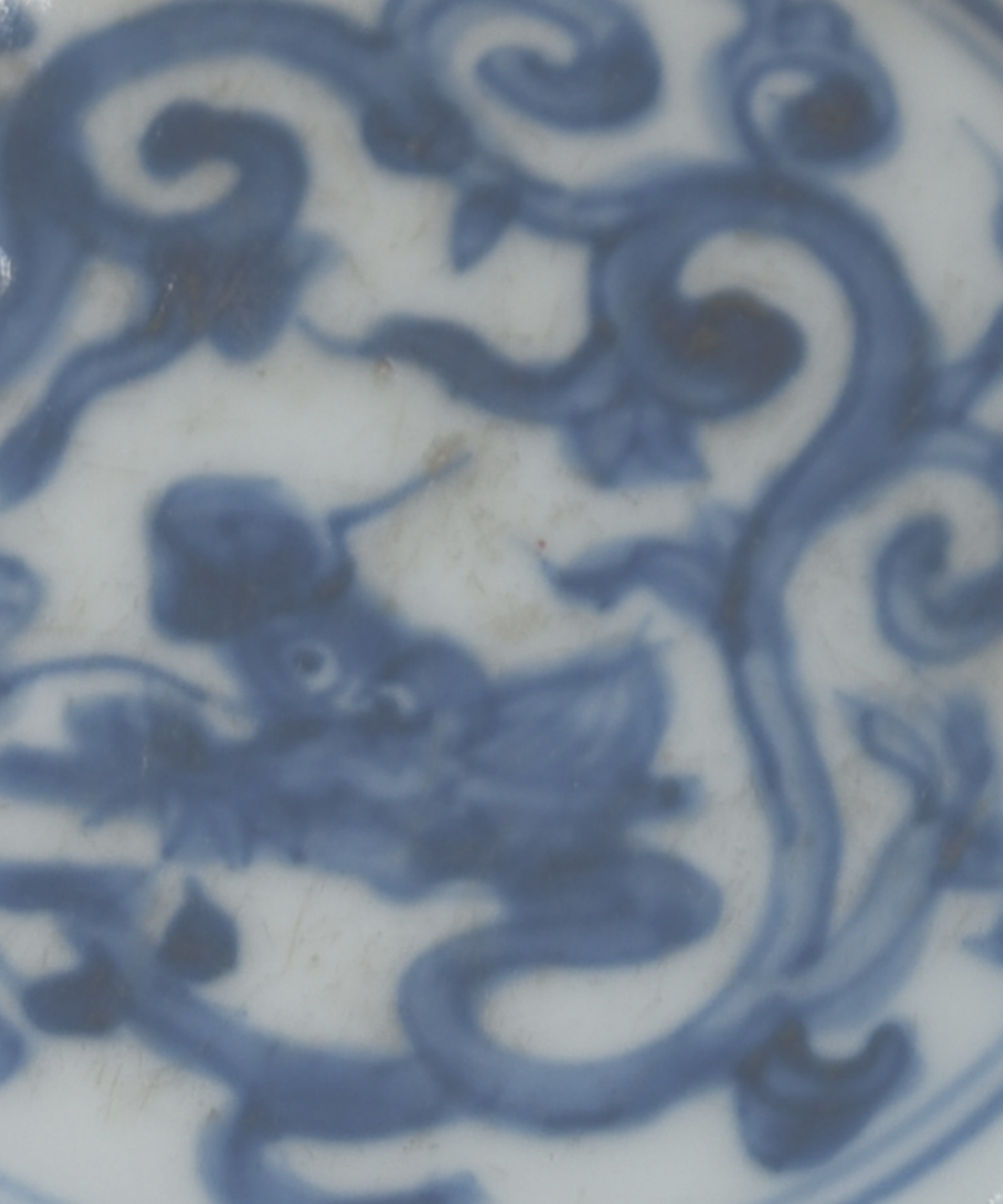
---

## No. 21

Inv. No. MO 1318
Cup
*Qingbai* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
H. 3.8 cm – D. 6.5 cm

Deep, round cup with straight rim highlighted by a fine incised line. The exterior is decorated with a faint relief-moulded floral design beneath the bluish-white *qingbai* glaze.

*References:* unpublished



# Blue and White Porcelain

Blue and white porcelain is probably the best-known and most cherished of all Chinese ceramics outside China. The immense popularity it has enjoyed – and continues to enjoy – around the world has, in recent years, led to a flourishing of studies aimed at resolving lingering uncertainties concerning the provenance of cobalt, the emergence of this ceramic type, and its sources of inspiration. Excavations carried out in recent years at the kilns of Jingdezhen (Hu *et al*. 2011; Peng 2018), along with the discovery of tombs and shipwrecks that have yielded examples of blue and white ware, and the scientific analyses conducted on the pigments, are enabling scholars to build an increasingly comprehensive picture of its chronological and technological aspects. At the same time, the growing body of research evaluating globalisation dynamics is bringing to light not only the mechanisms of trade, but also issues related to the exchange and working of raw materials, the adoption and hybridisation of decorative motifs, and the use and perception of Chinese porcelain within the diverse geographical and cultural contexts in which it spread.

Known in Chinese as *qinghua ci* 青花瓷, blue and white porcelain is characterised by decoration painted in cobalt ores under a lime-alkaline glaze on a fine white body fired at high temperature. The contrast between the pure whiteness of the porcelain body and the deep blue of the design, together with its remarkable durability, as the pigment was preserved under the protective glaze, determined its success both in the Islamic world and in Europe, inspiring countless imitations.

The first remarkable feature is therefore the use of cobalt – a metal rarely and only sporadically employed in ceramics before the ninth century (Porter 2000: 5). The earliest examples of white ware with cobalt-blue decoration in China, the precursors of later blue and white porcelain, date precisely to this period, at the same time as a ship sailing from the southern coasts of China towards Western Asia sank off the island of Belitung in Indonesia, losing its cargo of ceramics (Krahl 2010). Recovered more than a thousand years later, the wreck yielded three dishes that bear witness to the adoption of the blue-and-white chromatic combination during the Tang dynasty (618–907). Produced in the kiln system of Gongxian 鞏縣, Henan province (Gongyi 2009), like other similar fragments found at Siraf, Iran (Wood and Priestman 2016; Spataro *et al*. 2019), or in the port of Yangzhou (Zhang and Pollard 2022), these dishes reveal, in their geometric and vegetal decorative schemes, their intended destination towards Western Asia. In a kind of circular movement, analyses of

the cobalt have demonstrated that it originated from deposits outside China, probably from the Iranian world.

Even later, from the early fourteenth century onwards, as blue and white porcelain flourished in the kilns of Jingdezhen – later to become the most distinctive of all export wares, surpassing even Longquan celadon (*infra*) – the cobalt used continued to be imported from the Iranian world, probably from Qamsar, and the decorative motifs drew largely on the Islamic repertoire. It is not possible here to summarise the numerous archaeometric studies that in recent years have shed increasing light on the varying composition of the cobalt ores employed at different times (Du and Su 2008; Li *et al*. 2016; Pinto 2019; Wen 2017; Wood 2007; Zhang and Gethin 2021); what is important to emphasise, however, is that blue and white porcelain can be regarded, from its very inception, as a truly global product in the modern sense of the term, encompassing raw materials partly imported from abroad, local manufacture, the reception and adaptation of decorative motifs, the export of the finished product, and, finally, the imitations made wherever the opportunity arose, from East Asia to Western Europe.

From the fifteenth century onwards, local cobalt – richer in manganese and sourced from the provinces of Yunnan, Jiangxi and Zhejiang – also began to be used, at first mixed with the imported material and later on its own. At the same time, blue and white porcelain production underwent a veritable boom and, within the vast kiln system of Jingdezhen, developed into a highly specialised process organised in sequential phases, from the preparation of the clay body to distribution. Decoration was applied to the dry but still porous body, often using stencil templates whose outlines were brushed over by hand in cobalt oxide, enabling large-scale production for export. Once dry, the pieces were dipped in a transparent glaze and fired once at temperatures exceeding 1,280 °C.

With the opening of the maritime routes that directly linked Europe and China at the dawn of the sixteenth century, blue and white porcelain quite literally flooded the European market, becoming virtually synonymous with "Chinese porcelain". Once again, its shapes and decorative schemes reflect the synthesis – not only commercial but also cultural – of which blue and white porcelain is the most eloquent expression: Chinese iconographic repertoires merged with forms derived from European or Islamic traditions; motifs of Buddhist origin coexisted with depictions of scholars or with animals from the Daoist imaginary; pieces were reassembled, mounted, represented in paintings, their decorative motifs reworked and reinterpreted, so that it is often difficult – and perhaps even unnecessary – to assign them a specific origin.

The Rinaldi Collection preserves a substantial group of blue and white porcelains, largely belonging to the *kraak* category (*infra*), produced mainly for export and dating between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The pieces not attributable to this category include two small dishes [nos. 24, 25] from the cargo of the so-called *Hatcher Junk* – the wreck of a Chinese vessel that sank in the 1640s in the port of Batavia (present-day Jakarta), where the Dutch East India Company had its headquarters – its cargo clearly intended for the European market. Also destined for Europe was the small dish with a landscape decoration [no. 27], whose design is typical of eighteenth-century porcelain and was widely echoed in European manufactories.

This section concludes with two ginger jars [nos. 28, 29], probably produced in southern Chinese manufactories in the nineteenth century and recovered from a shipwreck whose identity unfortunately remains unknown, and a large Martaban storage jar found on the *Nuestra Señora de la Limpia y Pura Concepción*, a Manila galleon that sank in 1641. Although the latter does not, of course, belong to the blue and white category, it has been included here as an example of the same patterns of circulation and exchange of which blue and white porcelain itself was an expression.

Further reading: Ayers and Krahl 1986; Carswell 1985; Carswell 2007; Da 2021; Kerr and Wood 2004; Finlay 2010; Gerritsen 2020; Peng 2018; Shanghai Museum 2012; Ströber 2013; Zhao 2017

## No. 22
Inv. No. MO 1266

## No. 22

Inv. No. MO 1266

Bowl
Blue and white porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, Wanli period (1572–1620)
H. 6.4 cm – D. 14 cm

Slightly misshaped bowl with flared rim and footring, decorated in underglaze cobalt blue. On the outer wall run the sinuous bodies of two dragons among lotus flowers and tendrils. The interior has a circular medallion enclosing a coiled dragon and a diaper border along the rim. On the foot appears an auspicious four-character mark in regular script, to be read from top to bottom and from right to left, *chang ming fu gui* 長命富貴 (long life, wealth, and honour). The characters are arranged around a square with a double outline, resembling the graph *hui* 回. This layout imitates the appearance of Chinese coins, which traditionally had a square central hole. A particular category of these, used not as currency but as auspicious amulets, bore inscriptions of good fortune. Whenever this formula appears on porcelain, it is always arranged to imitate such amulets, with the central square carefully reproduced. This feature is characteristic of the Wanli period.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 23
Inv. No. MO 1365

## No. 23

Inv. No. MO 1365

Cup
Blue and white porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, Wanli period (1572–1620)
H. 5.4 cm – D. 9.5 cm

Deep cup with straight rim, footring, and thin walls. Undecorated on the exterior, it is decorated in underglaze blue on the inside, with a circular medallion framed by a single double line, depicting an egret in a pond. Along the inner rim runs a band of diaper motifs. The elegance of the form is enhanced by the brilliance of the plain outer glaze.

*References:* unpublished

## Nos. 24, 25
Inv. Nos. MO 1366, MO 1367

## No. 26
Inv. No. MO 1325

## Nos. 24, 25

Inv. Nos. MO 1366, MO 1367

Pair of saucers with prawns and flowers
Blue and white porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns,1640–1645
Recovered from the Hatcher junk
D. 9 cm

Thinly potted saucers with rounded cavetto and carefully foliated rim. The interior is decorated in light cobalt blue with a prawn among seaweeds and flowers. The underside is undecorated except for a single blue line close to the footring. These saucers were part of the cargo of the so-called Hatcher junk [see nos. 43 and 52]. One survives intact, while the other has been broken and repaired from several fragments, showing traces of salt-water erosion. The pair nevertheless preserves the refinement of their potting and delicate painting.

*References:* Sheaf and Kilburn 1988: 66, pl. 94

---

## No. 26

Inv. No. MO 1325

Birdcage feeder
Blue and white porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, first half of the 20th century
H. 2.3 cm – D. 8 cm

Small circular feeder with flat base and two loops for attachment to a birdcage. The exterior wall is decorated in underglaze blue with a scene showing a scholar and his attendant: the servant carries tea, while the scholar sits gazing outward in contemplation of a landscape composed of mountains, a river, and pine trees. The rim is marked by a double line, and the interior is left white. Despite its small size and simplicity, the feeder depicts a theme characteristic of Chinese art: the ideal of the scholar's communion with nature.

*References:* unpublished

## Nos. 28, 29
Inv. Nos. MO 1323, MO 1324

## Nos. 28, 29

Inv. Nos. MO 1323, MO 1324

Pair of ginger jars
Blue and white porcelain
Southern China, 19th century
H. 16.5 cm

Pair of jars with short necks, decorated with landscape motifs. The surface of both vessels is extensively damaged: on MO 1323 the seascape decoration remains partially visible, whereas on MO 1324 it has been almost entirely eroded, probably due to prolonged exposure to salt water. The latter also bears numerous marine encrustations and shells still adhering to its surface. Likely retrieved from a shipwreck, the jars were originally fitted with lids and belong to a type commonly known as "ginger jars". First produced during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), such vessels were used for exporting salt, spices, oil and other commodities, particularly to South-East Asia.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 30
Inv. No. MO 1369

## No. 30

Inv. No. MO 1369

*Martaban* storage jar
Glazed earthenware
Southern China, 1638–1641
Recovered from the Manila Galleon *Nuestra Señora de la Limpia y Pura Concepción*
H. 38.5 cm

Storage jar with rolled mouthrim and broad rounded shoulders, the body tapering to a small flat base. On the upper shoulder are four small horizontal lugs, their ends pressed onto the body. The dark brown glaze covers both the interior and exterior, except for the mouthrim and base, and is markedly eroded as a result of long immersion in seawater. On the shoulder appears the mark OP incised through the glaze, referring to the initials of the *Orden de Predicadores* (Dominican Order).

The term *Martaban*, by which this type of storage jar is known, derives from the Arabic pronunciation of the eponymous port in present-day Myanmar, a major centre of maritime trade. Such jars were used to transport provisions, liquids, spices, and even porcelain, and were produced in the southern Chinese kilns of Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong, as well as in various centres across Southeast Asia. Although Martaban jars were widely distributed along the routes of the so-called Maritime Silk Roads, the incised inscriptions on some examples appear to be a distinctive feature of the cargo of the Spanish galleon *Nuestra Señora de la Limpia y Pura Concepción*, which sank in the Pacific Ocean off Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands in 1641 and was excavated in the late 1980s.

*References:* Rinaldi 1990: 439–440, 456

# Kraak Porcelain

Maura Rinaldi

In the last three decades, *kraak* porcelain has been the subject of extensive scholarly discussion. Belonging to the large family of blue and white wares, it was produced over a period extending roughly from the establishment of the Portuguese settlement at Macao in 1557 to the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644. Most of the pieces were designed as tableware: dishes of various sizes, cups, and bowls (commonly referred to as *klapmuts* for their resemblance to a typical Dutch woollen cap). The repertoire also included bottles of extravagant forms and jars of various dimensions. One of the most distinctive features of *kraak* porcelain is the use of panelled decoration. Some scholars have identified an Islamic influence on this decorative scheme (Cao 2012) while others have suggested an Italian contribution introduced into China by the Jesuits (Pomper 2015). The panels may also derive from floral motifs; in fact, the Japanese term this style *fuyode* 芙蓉手 (hibiscus flower). Christiaan Jörg, during a personal conversation with the author, suggested that this development may have been prompted by European, particularly Iberian demand, as these consumers were accustomed to decoration that completely covered dishes and cups. Yet, it is undeniable that such panels closely resemble those frequently adorning Yuan-dynasty jars. Another characteristic feature of *kraak* porcelain is the thinness of the dish rims and cup walls, which appears to have been primarily motivated by economic considerations. Using less clay reduced production costs, while shipping expenses, calculated by weight, were also lowered; lighter wares allowed a greater number of pieces to be loaded onto a single vessel.

In its early phase the production of *kraak* porcelain was relatively limited, consisting mainly of small dishes (diam. c. 20–22 cm) and small cups of typically Chinese form. On dishes the decoration followed that of the Jiajing period (1522–1566), with a central motif surrounded by a blank area and a rim embellished with naturalistic designs. By the late sixteenth century, however – as clearly demonstrated by the recovery of the cargo of the *San Diego*, a galleon sunk in Manila Bay in December 1600 – production expanded dramatically, with an extraordinary proliferation of new forms and patterns, and with panels covering every available surface of the rims.

The majority of *kraak* dishes recovered from the San Diego, display a central medallion decorated with deer in a landscape setting, ranging in number from one to five, although the depiction of a pair is the most common. Curiously, this motif soon disappeared from higher-quality wares and survived only in a much simplified form on pieces of lesser value. Among the finds from the San Diego appear, for the first time, auspicious motifs of Daoist and Buddhist inspiration, together with the so-called Eight Treasures (Carré *et al*. 1994).

Among the porcelains recovered from the San Diego were three cups known as *crowcups*, so called because of a bird – mistakenly identified as a crow but most probably depicting a magpai – that invariably decorates the central medallion. These represent some of the earliest examples ever produced, but this type soon became the most common and characteristic form of *kraak* porcelain. Crowcups are distinguished by almost vertical walls, with a rim that flares slightly outward before turning upwards. This form was not specifically suited to drinking; indeed, in Flemish paintings they are frequently shown filled with berries.

The San Diego also yielded a wide variety of bottles in different shapes and sizes: numerous pear-shaped examples with long, elegant necks, others in the form of double gourds, as well as several *kendi*, including zoomorphic ones in the shape of elephants.

The porcelains recovered from the San Diego, were probably acquired in 1599, a year before the shipwreck. In the same year, the Florentine merchant Francesco Carletti – who, trading privately at his own expenses, in twelve years completed a circumnavigation of the globe – left us an invaluable account of the goods available at the Guangzhou fair, which he attended in October 1599.

As a merchant, Carletti compiled an impersonal yet detailed list of available goods and prices. When he turned to porcelain, however, his tone shifted to one of wonder at its variety: he notes that some buyers chose one kind, others another, but in his view the most beautiful was the white porcelain with blue decoration, produced in such quantity that not only the hold of a single ship, but the holds of an entire fleet could be filled with it, and it was sold at a very low price.

Carletti's account conveys two important points: first, that China was producing an enormous quantity of porcelain, especially for export; and second, that its price was remarkably low. Manufactured at Jingdezhen, the world's first great industrial city, porcelain was made in hundreds of kilns employing some 70,000 workers, organised according to a strict assembly-line system (anticipating Henry Ford by centuries!). Millions of pieces were produced annually, and it is said that each passed through many (28) pairs of hands before being ready for sale.

As for the cost, Carletti records that he purchased about 700 pieces of high-quality blue and white porcelain, paying in silver a sum which, when converted into today's value of silver, corresponds to roughly USD 4.500 – that is about USD 6,50 per piece. If we compare this expenditure with his total capital in silver, which at current value would amount to about one and a half million dollars, and consider that about half of this enormous sum was spent on 150 kg of musk, highly prized by the perfume industry, we gain a clearer sense of how inexpensive porcelain really was.

At that time China was the only industrial-scale producer of porcelain (Korea also produced porcelain, but solely for the domestic market), and Chinese porcelain was sought after worldwide for both its beauty and its usefulness.

From the years spanning the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, porcelain was at first transported on Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese vessels and mostly sold in South-East Asia and some in Portugal, while, from the last quarter of the 16th century Spanish galleons navigating from Manila across the Pacific Ocean brought it to the Americas and from there across the Atlantic Ocean to Spain. The Dutch arrived in East Asia early in the 17h century, and immediately bought enormous quantities of porcelain, soon requiring new shapes as well as ordering new specific decorative motifs. On Dutch ships, porcelain reached India, Africa, the New World and most importantly, the Dutch became the most important distributors of it across Europe.

*Kraak* porcelain thus represents the first industrial product in history to achieve truly global circulation and consumption.

Further reading: Canepa 2008; Rinaldi 1989

## No. 31
Inv. No. MO 1354

## No. 31

Inv. No. MO 1354

Dish
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, c. 1595–1610
H. 4.1 cm – D. 20.5 cm

Dish with rounded cavetto ending in a straight, lobed rim. It features a circular central medallion and a moulded, unpainted cavetto decorated with *ruyi* heads – a motif inspired by Buddhist ceremonial sceptres and associated with the fulfilment of wishes, as suggested by the Chinese characters *ru* 如 ("as") and *yi* 意 ("to wish").

The central medallion, painted in a dull cobalt blue, is framed by diaper motifs enclosing auspicious symbols: the double gourd, also known as the gourd of immortality, symbolising good fortune, abundance, and protection from negative influences; the artemisia leaf, valued in traditional medicine for its healing properties and associated with both physical and spiritual virtues; and Chinese knots, likewise symbols of good fortune. The moulded decoration on the cavetto is barely perceptible.

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 74, pl. 48

## No. 32
Inv. No. MO 1347

## No. 32

Inv. No. MO 1347

Dish with deer decoration
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1570–1600
H. 3.1 cm – D. 20.7 cm

Shallow dish with flat, lobed rim. The central medallion is painted in light blue and depicts two deer in a landscape. The stylised rocks appear as circular forms, possibly alluding to the Wheel of the Law (*dharmacakra*), set in motion by the historical Buddha during his first sermon in the Deer Park at Sārnāth. The cavetto is undecorated, while the rim features a pattern of ducks among aquatic plants.

On the reverse, birds are shown perched on branches alongside plum blossoms. As the first flowers to bloom while winter still lingers, plum blossoms are associated with perseverance and inner strength within the Chinese symbolic repertoire.

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 78, pl. 53

## No. 33
Inv. No. MO 1350

## No. 33

Inv. No. MO 1350

Dish with mandarin ducks
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1580–1600
H. 4 cm – D. 21 cm

Dish with rounded cavetto ending in a straight lobed rim. The star-shaped central medallion contains a delicate and finely executed scene of two mandarin ducks swimming in a pond, surrounded by aquatic plants and flowers. The border is divided into ten equal panels separated by thin lines and decorated with flower sprays or peaches. The reverse is likewise divided into panels following the scheme of the inner border, each panel decorated with an auspicious symbol.

Mandarin ducks, symbols of conjugal love, make their first appearance on *kraak* porcelain of this period in dishes such as the present example, which is distinguished by the refinement of its decorative scheme (Rinaldi 1989: 83). They would later become a recurring theme in porcelain decoration.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 34
Inv. No. MO 1349

## No. 34

Inv. No. MO 1349

Dish with deer and landscape
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1595–1605
H. 4.5 cm – D. 28 cm

Large dish with rounded cavetto and lobed rim. The decoration, of particularly good quality, features a star-shaped central medallion containing two deer in a landscape. As in no. 32, the rocks are highly stylised, to the point of resembling the *dharmacakra* or Wheel of the Law. The border is decorated with eight pomegranates, symbols of abundance and prosperity, alternating with leaves and ruyi-head motifs. On the reverse are bows with hanging ribbons alternating with stylised jewels; the rim and the foot are outlined with a fine line.

This type of border decoration with pomegranates, associated with bows on the reverse and with circular or star-shaped medallions containing various motifs, has been attributed by Maura Rinaldi (1989: 81–82) to a relatively limited production, datable between 1580 and 1610. The shape of the medallion and the high quality of the decoration suggest a more precise dating for this dish between 1595 and 1605.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 35
Inv. No. MO 1258

## No. 35

Inv. No. MO 1258

Dish with deer and landscape
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1590–1605
H. 3.8 cm – D. 21 cm

Dish with a rounded cavetto, a straight lobed rim and rather thick walls. At the centre, within a circular medallion defined by a double line, four deer and two birds in a landscape are painted in a light shade of blue. The border consists of wide panels with ogival frames alternating with narrow ones. The wide panels show flowering branches or peaches, while the narrow panels contain a row of pearls and a simple tassel. The reverse is decorated with birds perched on branches.

This dish depicts only four deer, rather than the five more commonly represented.

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 94, pl. 79

## No. 36
Inv. No. MO 1263

## No. 36

Inv. No. MO 1263

Dish with deer
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1605–1610
H. 2.2 cm – D. 21 cm

Dish with a cavetto curving gently and a flat border. In the star-shaped central medallion, surrounded by diaper motifs, two deer are shown mating. On the border, wide panels with ogival frames, alternating with narrow ones, radiate around the medallion. The wide panels contain floral motifs or good-luck symbols drawn from the extensive repertoire of auspicious decorative themes in Chinese art, such as the artemisia leaf or a pair of scrolls.

The reverse follows the same scheme as the front, with the larger panels simply decorated with dots combined either with spirals or with lozenges, and the narrower ones containing stylised *lingzhi* 靈芝 fungus motifs.

The most striking feature of this decoration is the attitude of the deer, entirely alien to the Chinese decorative tradition. While deer set in idealised landscapes are a characteristic motif of kraak porcelain, especially in the late sixteenth and very early seventeenth centuries, the moment of mating, as depicted here, is a *unicum*. It is possible – though only a hypothesis – that such an unusual representation was linked to the European market, for which the dish was probably intended.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 37
Inv. No. MO 1262

## No. 37

Inv. No. MO 1262

Dish with deer
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1605–1610
H. 2.2 cm – D. 21 cm

Dish with a shallow rounded cavetto, a wide flat border and a lobed rim. In the star-shaped central medallion, surrounded by diaper motifs, is depicted a double-gourd vase. The double gourd is a recurrent good-luck object in Chinese imagery, associated with the world of the Immortals who, according to tradition, used it to contain the elixir of immortality, and symbolising the unity between Heaven and Earth.

On the border, wide panels with ogival frames, separated by narrow ones, radiate around the medallion. The wide panels alternate motifs of sunflowers, probably derived from the stylisation of peaches, with artemisia leaves and flaming wheels.

The reverse follows the same scheme as the front, with the larger panels simply decorated with dots, and the narrower ones containing stylised *lingzhi* 靈芝fungus motifs [see also no. 36].

*References:* unpublished

## No. 38
Inv. No. MO 1345

## No. 38

Inv. No. MO 1345

Central medallion of a dish
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, c. 1625
Recovered from the Wanli cargo
D. 13 cm

Fragment of a dish corresponding to the central medallion. Within an octagonal frame defined by diaper motifs are depicted a grasshopper on a rock and a butterfly in flight, surrounded by peonies and spring plants. The glaze is rather matte, perhaps also due to corrosion from seawater.

The medallion was recovered from the so-called Wanli shipwreck, discovered by chance in 1998 off the eastern coast of Malaysia and later excavated by the private company Nanhai Marine Archaeology, in agreement with the Malaysian government. The wreck belonged to a Portuguese ship that sank in 1625, whose hull and most of its cargo had been severely damaged by a massive explosion, probably during a conflict with a rival vessel, possibly Dutch. It has been estimated that the ship was carrying about 37,000 porcelain pieces, of which only 2,000 were found completely intact. In many dishes only the central section was preserved; these sections were trimmed and sold as medallions on the company's website (thewanlishipwreck.com).

Despite the variety of the decorations, these medallions share certain stylistic features, such as the shape of the frame or the diaper borders. The motif of this medallion, with its combination of insects and flowers evoking in Chinese symbolism ideas of spring, health and longevity, recurs with minor variations on many other pieces recovered from the wreck.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 39
Inv. No. MO 1348

## No. 39

Inv. No. MO 1348

Saucer
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, c. 1600–1615
H. 2.9 cm – D. 14.1 cm

Saucer with a cavetto curving gradually, a straight border and a slightly flared foliated rim. In the central medallion, enclosed within a star-shaped design, are depicted a scroll and a double-gourd flask tied with crossed ribbons, tassels and *lingzhi* 靈芝. The radial drop-shaped panels contain flowers and good-luck objects. The reverse is divided into segments by thin lines framing groups of pearls and dots.

The decoration of this saucer is characteristic of the late Wanli period (1572–1620), and is distinguished by the quality of the drawing and the shade of blue.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 40
Inv. No. MO 1346

## No. 40

Inv. No. MO 1346

Saucer
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1610–1635
H. 2.8 cm – D. 14 cm

Saucer with a rounded cavetto, a straight border and a slightly flared foliated rim. In the central medallion, enclosed within a star-shaped design, are depicted, cursorily rendered, an artemisia leaf, tassels and *ruyi* 如意 heads. The radial drop-shaped panels contain flowers and stylised peaches.

Peaches are among the most widespread decorative motifs on Chinese porcelain and convey a wish for eternal life. This symbolism derives from the myth that in the garden of Xiwangmu 西王母, the Queen Mother of the West, peach trees blossomed once every 3,000 years, their fruit bestowing immortality.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 41
Inv. No. MO 1351

## No. 41

Inv. No. MO 1351

Bowl or *klapmuts*
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1605–1635
H. 4.5 cm – D. 14 cm

Small and thin-walled bowl with shallow rounded sides, a flat up-turned rim with a lobed edge, and a footring. The bowl is decorated in a deep blue. In the central medallion are depicted an artemisia leaf and a double-gourd vase. The well and rim are divided into four wide and four narrow panels. The wide panels contain ogival cartouches enclosing flowers and auspicious symbols, surmounted by grotesque masks. The narrow panels are decorated with hanging ribbons. The reverse is divided into four panels containing jewels and dots, with a band of floral motifs along the outer rim.

The name *klapmuts* derives from caps commonly worn in seventeenth-century Holland, with up-turned brims made of wool or felt. Applied to shallow porcelain bowls with flat, up-turned rims, the term appears in the shipping lists of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and continues to be used by connoisseurs to distinguish this form from traditional Chinese bowls, as it is typical of the kraak repertoire.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 42
Inv. No. MO 1352

## No. 42

Inv. No. MO 1352

Bowl or *klapmuts*
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1620–1635
H. 4.5 cm – D. 14 cm

Small and thin-walled bowl with shallow rounded sides, a flat upturned rim with a lobed edge, and a footring. The bowl is decorated in a light blue. In the central medallion is depicted a scroll with, behind it, a double gourd, auspicious symbols frequently found in the decoration of *klapmutsen* of this period [see also no. 41].

The decoration of the well and rim consists of four wide panels separated by four narrow ones. The wide panels contain oval cartouches with peaches and flower sprays, surmounted by grotesque masks. The narrow panels are decorated with hanging ribbons.

The reverse is rather cursorily divided into four panels with circular cartouches and dot motifs, alternating with narrower panels containing stylised *lingzhi* 靈芝. Along the outer rim runs a band of small formal flowers with tendrils.

The overall quality of the piece suggests a relatively late date within the production range.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 43
Inv. No. MO 1344

## No. 43

Inv. No. MO 1344

Large bowl or *klapmuts*
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1640–1645
Recovered from the Hatcher Junk (?)
H. 5.8 cm – D. 27.5 cm

Large bowl or *klapmuts* with shallow rounded sides, a flat up-turned rim with a lobed edge, and a footring. The circular central medallion, outlined by a double line, depicts large peonies, a rock with a butterfly resting on it, and a small bird humorously shown upside down. On the well and border appear four oval panels with pairs of peaches surmounted by grotesque masks, alternating with narrow rectangular panels decorated with hanging ribbons.

The reverse is divided into five sections decorated with roundels instead of the usual four. A floral band runs along the outer rim. The blue colour is very pale and the glaze appears matte, probably degraded by seawater.

Stylistic features such as the bulbous nose and squinting eyes of the grotesque masks suggest a date after 1640 and closely recall pieces from the cargo of the so-called Hatcher Junk, dated to 1640–1645 [see no. 52].

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 133, pl. 147

## No. 44
Inv. No. MO 1356

## No. 44

Inv. No. MO 1356

Bowl
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1590–1605
H. 11 cm – D. 21.7 cm

Large, deep bowl with a flared foliated rim and a thin, relatively high footring. The exterior is divided into eight radial panels alternating a deer facing forward with one turning its head backwards, both surrounded by foliage and wheel-shaped motifs, the most common decorative pattern on bowls of this type.

The interior, unlike most examples of the same category, is not subdivided into decorative panels. The decoration is confined to the border, adorned with a crested wave pattern, and to the central medallion, outlined by a wavy frame, which depicts a flying horse.

In Chinese iconography, the deer symbolises long life and immortality, being the only animal able to find the fungus of immortality, and it is also a typical motif on *kraak* porcelain [see also nos. 32, 34 and 35]. The horse, by contrast, may convey various meanings, including perseverance, speed, power and beauty.

The balanced proportions of this bowl—the diameter being roughly twice the height—together with the flared rim and the decoration, are typical of production between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 45
Inv. No. MO 1353

## No. 45

Inv. No. MO 1353

Cup or *crow cup*
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, c. 1615–1630
H. 8.2 cm – D. 13 cm

Cup with high, almost vertical walls, a flared foliated rim and a footring. The body is very thin-walled. The exterior is divided into wide panels separated by narrower sections decorated with stylised *lingzhi* 靈芝. The eight wide panels contain tassels and various good-luck symbols, such as the fan.

The interior shows a similar division into panels: the wider ones alternately depict flowers and twisted branches, while the narrow ones repeat the *lingzhi* motif found on the exterior. In the medallion at the bottom of the cup a bird – either a crow or a magpie – is depicted perched on a rock. It is precisely this subject that characterises this type of vessel and explains why it is known among connoisseurs as *crow cup*, from the Dutch kraaikop.

The shape of *crow cups*, with a height-to-diameter ratio of about 2:3, steep walls and a flared rim, differs markedly from traditional Chinese cup forms and is typical of *kraak* porcelain.

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 153-154, pl. 181

## No. 46
Inv. No. MO 1368

## No. 46

Inv. No. MO 1368

Wine pot
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1590–1625
H. 20 cm

Wine pot with globular lobed body, S-shaped spout set in line with the nearly square handle, and low footring. The wide mouthrim is fitted with a domed lid surmounted by a knob and attached to the handle by a silver chain. The tip of the spout is also encased in a silver mount, possibly added after chipping. decorated with floral motifs in a deep, intense cobalt blue. Around the shoulder runs a broad diaper band containing two small cartouches with a flower. The domed lid and the handle are similarly adorned with floral patterns.

Wine pots of this type belong to a small group of *kraak* porcelains characterised by uniformity of form: they all have a six-lobed body, the same type of spout and handle, a lid with a central knob, and a height ranging between 18.5 and 20.5 cm. The decoration of the panels is generally floral, sometimes alternating flowers with auspicious symbols or figural motifs. In China, such vessels were used for rice wine, which is served warm, while in Europe they were more likely to be appreciated as decorative objects or repurposed for serving tea.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 47
Inv. No. MO 1357

## No. 47

Inv. No. MO 1357

Pouring vessel or *kendi*
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1600–1625
H. 19.8 cm

Heavily potted *kendi* with rounded body, long tubular neck flaring to a wide brim with a narrow mouth, and a bulbous spout. The body is decorated in light blue with pomegranate-shaped panels enclosing flowers and auspicious symbols. Peaches appear on the shoulder and on the spout, while the neck is adorned with plum branches and insects.

The term *kendi*, of Malay origin, derives from the Sanskrit *kuṇḍikā*, designating a bottle employed in Hindu and Buddhist rituals in India. The absence of a handle distinguishes this type of vessel, which was instead held by the neck when pouring.

*Kendi* appear in China no earlier than the Song dynasty (960–1279) and were subsequently produced mainly for export to South-East Asia.

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 176, pl. 222

## No. 48
Inv. No. MO 1364

## No. 48

Inv. No. MO 1364

Pear-shaped bottle
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, c. 1615–1635
H. 27 cm

Pear-shaped bottle with rounded body, tapering neck, slightly flared mouth and a broad low footring. The body is relatively thick and heavy. The decorative scheme on the body consists of six large panels, alternately enclosing auspicious symbols and flower sprigs, separated by narrow panels with a simple geometric pattern of lines and dots. On the shoulder runs a dense *ruyi*-head motif. The neck is divided into six panels enclosing rows of pearls ending in tassels. A band of triangular motifs encircles the mouth rim.

All the decoration is painted in a deep but rather matte blue. The mouthrim shows traces of restoration and partial replacement.

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 167, pl. 208

## No. 49
Inv. No. MO 1256

## No. 49

Inv. No. MO 1256

Covered cup
*Kraak* porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1620–1635
H. 11.4 cm – D. 11.4 cm

Thickly potted cup with high, almost straight walls and a footring, surmounted by a domed lid topped with a ring knob. The body is divided into three main panels alternating with narrower ones, painted in a rather light cobalt blue without shading. The larger panels depict a rabbit, a spotted deer, and a flower spray, while the narrow panels show decorative motifs. The lid repeats this scheme, with the three larger panels decorated with peach sprays. The cup has been rather roughly restored.

Cups of this type always have a lid with a ring knob, which not only serves to lift the lid but also acts as a footring when the lid is placed upside down on a flat surface, allowing it to be used as a small bowl.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 50
Inv. No. MO 1355

## No. 50

Inv. No. MO 1355

Dish imitating *kraak* porcelain
Blue and white porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, c. 1680
H. 2.7 cm – D. 21.5 cm

Stylised imitation of a *kraak* dish produced during the Kangxi period (1662–1722). The dish has a rounded cavetto ending in a straight rim. In the star-shaped central medallion, framed by scale and swastika patterns, is a depiction of a *taihu* 太湖 rock with plants and flowers. Around it, on the cavetto and border, sixteen radiating panels alternate between flower sprays and peaches set within scale or swastika borders. The reverse is decorated with a simple scroll of flowers and leaves. On the footring is a mark, possibly a conch, within a double circle. The blue is dark and luminous.

While the interior decoration follows the typical kraak scheme, the exterior flower scroll does not. Both the tone of the blue and the mark are characteristic of the Kangxi period. On stylistic grounds, Maura Rinaldi has suggested a date around 1680 for this dish, prior to the major reorganisation of the Jingdezhen kilns following the unrest that accompanied the establishment of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

*References:* Rinaldi 1989: 231-32, pl. 293

## No. 51
Inv. No. MO 1267

## No. 51

Inv. No. MO 1267

Cup
Batavia-glazed porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, Kangxi period (1662–1722)
H. 7.1 cm – D. 7.9 cm

Bell-shaped cup with slightly flared rim and footring. The exterior is covered with a brown Batavia glaze, while the interior is decorated in underglaze blue with six panels divided by wavy double lines: three depicting landscape scenes and three with flower sprays. A small flower is painted in the centre of the base.

Connoisseurs use the term *Batavia ware* to describe porcelain with a distinctive brown or *café au lait* glaze. Produced mainly for export to Europe, it was made in particularly large quantities during the 18th century. The name derives from the port of Batavia (present-day Jakarta), the Dutch East India Company's headquarters in East Asia and a major trading hub.

*References:* unpublished

# Monochrome-glazed Porcelains for the Scholar's Studio

Lucia Caterina

Monochrome glazes represent a constant feature in Chinese ceramic production and, since the Song period (960–1279), they have been among the most admired and desired by scholars. During the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), monochrome porcelain reached a remarkable stage of development, particularly in the kilns of Jingdezhen, which were directed by skilled superintendents who revived many of the technical innovations of the Ming period (1368–1644), reworking and refining them in response to the demands of the market.

While many Qing monochrome porcelains drew inspiration from archaic prototypes – particularly ancient bronzes – artisans also created new and original forms that reflected the aesthetic sensibilities of their time. Equally rich and diverse was the palette of monochrome glazes, the outcome of continuous experimentation with technical processes, combinations of metallic oxides, and varying firing conditions. Indeed, to achieve glazes of distinctive hue and texture, potters employed oxides of iron, copper, cobalt, and manganese, adjusting proportions and firing atmospheres with great precision.

Admired for the subtle beauty and variety of their glazes, Qing monochrome porcelains exemplify refined simplicity: their undecorated surfaces were at most enlivened by incised or relief ornamentation, and occasionally by delicate gilding or metal mounts. When exported to Europe, such pieces were often fitted with elaborate gilt-bronze mounts, becoming prized ornaments in the sumptuous interiors of the Baroque and Rococo periods.

Among the high-fired glazes, which had already been developed in earlier periods but reached outstanding technical quality under the Qing, one of the most admired was the red glaze. Its deep and brilliant colour, ranging from light to dark shades of red, was achieved by combining copper oxide with a transparent glaze and firing in a reducing atmosphere, followed by a strong final oxidation phase. In Europe it became known as *sang de boeuf*, while in China it was called *Langyao hong* 郎窯紅, named after a superintendent of the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen [no. 59].

A variant of this glaze is the so-called *peach bloom*, a delicate pinkish-red tone often mottled with darker patches, applied to the surface of the vessel by spraying the glaze through a bamboo tube [nos. 56, 58]. It was generally used for small, elegant pieces designed for the scholar's desk; the subtle hues of these porcelains were particularly admired for their refinement and restraint.

Another high-fired glaze, pale blue in colour and derived from cobalt oxide, is known as *clair de lune* [nos. 62, 63]. Porcelains in this soft bluish tone were likewise produced for the scholar's desk. Indeed their cool and subdued colouring evoked the tranquil atmosphere and contemplative spirit associated with the literati ideal.

Also belonging to the group of high-fired glazes is the translucent *apple green*, of an emerald hue, obtained through the transmutation of the copper glaze by introducing an oxidising phase during the reduction firing [no. 54]. The result is a brilliant, glassy surface with a vivid yet balanced tone, which reveals the potters' mastery in controlling complex firing atmospheres.

Another notable high-fired glaze is the black type, dense and lustrous, obtained from iron, cobalt and manganese oxides, known in Chinese as *wujin* 烏金 (black metal) and in Western literature as *mirror black* [no. 60]. Vessels of this kind were often highlighted with gilding, now mostly lost, though small traces sometimes remain, suggesting the refined and opulent taste that characterised this production.

The Rinaldi Collection includes several Qing-period objects with monochrome glazes, all originally intended for the scholar's studio (*wenren* 文人), a figure central to China's cultural and bureaucratic tradition. Throughout history, scholars distinguished themselves by their mastery of the classical texts, their involvement in public affairs, and their cultivation of the visual arts, forming the educated elite from which officials were traditionally drawn.

The scholar's studio (*wenfang* 文房) was the space devoted to artistic creation and writing – its walls were adorned with calligraphic works and landscape paintings, while the furnishings included precious wooden furniture, shelves with scrolls and literary classics, and a desk on which were arranged the traditional 'Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio' (*wenfang sibao* 文房四寶): the brush, ink, paper and inkstone. Alongside these were small monochrome ceramic objects – water containers, seal-paste boxes, brush holders, brush washers and vases – collectively referred to by connoisseurs as *badama* 八大码, the "Eight Great Numbers" or "Eight Classical Shapes", of which the collection preserves several examples.

These refined monochrome porcelains, emblematic of the scholar's cultivated taste and pursuit of simplicity, stand as eloquent witnesses to the enduring dialogue between technical mastery and aesthetic ideals in Qing art.

Further reading: Crick *et al*. 2019; Rinaldi 1993

## No. 52
Inv. No. MO 1326

## No. 52

Inv. No. MO 1326

Seal-paste box (?)
Monochrome porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, 1640–1645
Recovered from the Hatcher Junk
H. 3.2 cm – D. 4.8 cm

Small globular box with domed cover and low footring. Except for the foot, the exterior is decorated in underglaze blue with a five-petalled flower at the centre of the cover, set against a background of scales or waves outlined in dark blue and covered with a mid-blue wash. The interior is white and glazed.

The box was intended to contain seal paste but was probably destined for reuse on the European market as a pill container. It was recovered together with some 500 similar pieces from the so-called Hatcher Junk, the wreck of a trading vessel discovered in the South China Sea in 1983 by Captain Michael Hatcher (Sheaf and Kilburn 1988). About 25,000 intact porcelain objects were brought to light, mostly Jingdezhen blue-and-white wares but also examples from Fujian kilns. They were later sold in four auctions at Christie's Amsterdam and are now divided between private and public collections. The British Museum, for example, preserves two boxes identical to the present piece (inv. 1984,0303.15.a-b), as well as a lidded bowl with analogous decoration (inv. 1984,0303.14).

The Hatcher Cargo has been dated, on the basis of epigraphic and documentary evidence, to 1640–1645.

*References:* Sheaf and Kilburn 1988: 79, pl. 120; Rinaldi 1993: 87-88, no. 66; Harrison-Hall 2001: 392, nos. 12:97-98

## No. 53
Inv. No. MO 1332

## No. 53

Inv. No. MO 1332

Seal-paste box
Porcelain with "powder blue" glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, 19th century
H. 3.3 cm – D. 8.3 cm

Compressed globular seal-paste box on a low ring foot. The exterior is covered with a monochrome glaze known as "powder blue" (*bleu soufflé*). Probably first developed during the Xuande period (1425-1435), this technique – like others of Ming origin – was revived and perfected under the Qing (1644-1911). Unlike other blue glazes of the time (Valenstein 1989: 199-204), the colour was not mixed into the glaze but blown onto the unfired body through a bamboo tube covered with fine gauze, producing the uneven or powdery effect that characterises it. A transparent glaze was then applied before firing.

On the base, which like the interior is glazed white, appears an underglaze blue six-character apocryphal reign mark of the Qianlong era (*Da Qing Qianlong nianzhi* 大清乾隆年製).

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 87, no. 67

## No. 54
Inv. No. MO 1333

## No. 54

Inv. No. MO 1333

Seal-paste box
Porcelain with "apple-green" glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, 19th century
H. 4.2 cm – D. 8.4 cm

Compressed globular seal-paste box on a low footring. The exterior is covered with a monochrome glaze with a *craquelé* effect, known by connoisseurs as "apple-green," which shades along the edges. The base, like the interior, is glazed white.

The "apple-green" colour results from a double glazing process: a high-fired transparent glaze with a craquelé finish, followed by a low-fired lead glaze with added copper oxide. Together they produce the bright emerald-green tone for which these porcelains are renowned.

Probably developed as early as the Kangxi period (1662–1722), this technique is more widely used in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the green becomes darker and more vivid.

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 86-87, no. 66

## No. 55
Inv. No. MO 1265

## No. 55

Inv. No. MO 1265

Seal-paste box
Porcelain with "apple-green" glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, 19th century
H. 4.2 cm – D. 8.4 cm

Brush washer consisting of a small well-shaped basin surmounted by two stylised female figures who are depicted as if in conversation. Two small adjacent cylinders serve as brush holders. Traces of use are visible inside the basin. The piece rests on a wooden stand.

Covered with a bluish-white glaze, the object was produced in the kilns of Dehua 德華窯, in southern China, and belongs to the group of wares known in Western literature as *blanc de Chine.*

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 140-141, no. 148

## No. 56
Inv. No. MO 1335

## No. 56

Inv. No. MO 1335

Brush washer
Porcelain with "peach bloom" glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, 18th century
H. 7.6 cm – D. 5.3 cm

Small hemispherical vessel with short neck, slightly flared mouth, and flat base. It is covered with a copper-red glaze which, owing to variations in temperature and atmosphere during firing, developed a wide range of tones, from pale green – where the copper oxide did not fully reduce to red – to pink and deep red. On the base is an underglaze blue six-character reign mark of the Yongzheng era (*Da Qing Yongzheng nianzhi* 大清雍正年製, 1722–1735).

This glaze, a variant of the copper-red type, is known in China as *jiangdou hong* 豇豆紅, after a kind of red bean, and referred to by connoisseurs in Western literature as "peach bloom". Developed during the Kangxi period (1662–1722), it was used only on small objects associated with the literati. In this case the vessel serves as a brush washer, the flared mouth helping to remove excess water and shape the brush bristles to a point. The form, relatively common, is generally referred to as *Taibai zun* 太白尊, after the poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), although Qing court archives record it instead as *huanang* 花囊, "flower pouch".

*References:* unpublished

## No. 57
Inv. No. MO 1336

## No. 57

Inv. No. MO 1336

Water container
Porcelain with lavender-blue glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, mid-19th century
H. 3.8 cm – D. 5.5 cm

Small dome-shaped water container with a circular opening at the top. Used by literati to dilute ink, these containers were employed together with a small ladle to draw water and pour it onto the inkstone.

A high-fired glaze with a soft lavender-blue tone – produced by the addition of a small amount of cobalt – covers the exterior, while the interior and base are finished in white glaze. An underglaze blue double circle is present on the base, but no reign mark is visible.

Although the pale lavender-blue glaze was first introduced during the Kangxi period (1662–1722) and used only rarely thereafter, the shape of the footring is a feature characteristic of the mid-19th century, suggesting that the piece dates from this period.

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 57, no. 20

## No. 58
Inv. No. MO 1334

## No. 58

Inv. No. MO 1334

Water pot
Porcelain with "peach bloom" glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, 19th century
H. 6.4 cm – D. 8.8 cm

Globular water pot with an inward-curving mouth, flat base, and recessed foot. The exterior is covered with a copper glaze of the type known as "peach bloom", also found on no. 56; in this case, the predominant colour is a watery green with streaks and shadings ranging from pink to red.

Water pots of this type are known as *pingguo zun* 苹果尊, or apple-shaped vases, for their resemblance to the fruit. They occur in two main variants: without a neck, as in the present example, or with a short neck resembling the stalk of an apple, and are generally decorated with monochrome glazes or, more rarely, with floral motifs in underglaze copper red. Apple-shaped water pots fall within a group of small vessels of various forms, standardised during the Kangxi period (1662–1722) and collectively referred to by connoisseurs as *badama* 八大码, the "Eight Great Numbers" or "Eight Classical Shapes", of which the collection preserves several examples.

Defined by their rounded, harmonious forms and monochrome glazes, these vessels were intended for the scholar's desk and were probably produced in sets. The purity of form and the elegance of the glaze perfectly reflect the aesthetics of the literati world, as exemplified also by the brush washer no. 56, the small vessels nos. 62, 63, and the seal-paste box no. 53.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 59
Inv. No. MO 1264

## No. 59

Inv. No. MO 1264

Vase
Porcelain with "*sang de boeuf*" glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, 1821–1850
H. 16.8 cm – D. 13 cm

Small vase with a globular body, slender neck and short footring. The harmony of its proportions is enhanced by the thick monochrome glaze of a rich, deep red colour, which covers the outer surface and ends in irregular drips around the foot. The interior and base are glazed white. Because this red glaze is highly fluid, when poured from top to bottom it leaves characteristic white streaks around the rim (Fang 2023: 835–36), as visible on this example.

Known in Western literature as *sang de boeuf*, the glaze is called *Langyao hong* 郎窯紅 ("Langyao red") in China, a name derived from the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen administered by Lang Tingji 朗廷極 (1663–1715) during the Kangxi reign (1662–1722).It was at this time that Jingdezhen potters perfected a copper-rich glaze, fired at high temperature in a reducing atmosphere and then reoxidised during cooling, achieving a deep, lustrous red. Originally intended to recreate the monochrome red porcelains of the fifteenth century – whose recipe had long been lost – the process instead produced one of the most celebrated and admired monochrome glazes of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

*References:* unpublished

## No. 60
Inv. No. MO 1268

## No. 60

Inv. No. MO 1268

Vase
Porcelain with "mirror black" glaze
China, 1821–1850
H. 14.3 cm – D. 7.8 cm

Globular vase with a long neck, slightly flared mouth, and a footring. The exterior is covered with a very dark and highly reflective black glaze that shades to brown along the edges. This glaze is rich in iron but also contains cobalt oxides and, above all, manganese (Wood 2007: 156, 265), which prevent it from turning brown and give it the lustrous quality that characterises it.

Popular in China during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) under the name *wujin you* 烏金釉, this glaze is described by Georges Vogt (1893: 227) and, earlier, in the letters from China of the French Jesuit François Xavier d'Entrecolles (1712; repr. 1819: 153), who introduced the term *mirror black* by which it is known in Western literature. Some *mirror black* wares were decorated with gold, probably in imitation of black lacquer with gilt decoration, which had gained great popularity on the European market (Shulsky 2004: 31–36).

*References:* unpublished

## No. 61
Inv. No. MO 1257

## No. 61

Inv. No. MO 1257

Bowl
Porcelain with blue glaze
Jingdezhen kilns, Guangxu period (1875–1908)
H. 7 cm– D. 17 cm

The bowl has a regular hemispherical shape, with a thin rim slightly inclined inward and a short tapered footring. It is covered, both inside and out, with a luminous sapphire-blue glaze. The base of the foot, left white, bears a six-character reign mark in underglaze blue reading *Da Qing Guangxu nian zhi* 大清光緒年製 ("Made in the Guangxu period of the Great Qing dynasty"), dating the piece between 1875 and 1908.

Devoid of any painted or incised decoration, the bowl stands out for its refined simplicity and the depth of its sapphire-blue glaze, reflecting the high technical and quality standards achieved in the Guangxu period.

*References:* unpublished

## Nos. 62, 63
Inv. Nos. MO 1260, MO 1261

## Nos. 62, 63

Inv. Nos. MO 1260, MO 1261

Pair of vases
Monochrome porcelain
Jingdezhen kilns, early 20th century
H. 15.4 cm

The vases have a slender and harmonious form, with a body tapering towards the small footring and a long neck that gently flares outward. The surface is smooth and glossy, covered with a very pale bluish glaze of the type known as *clair de lune*, which lends simplicity and elegance to the pieces. On the base is an apocryphal reign mark of the Kangxi era (*Da Qing Kangxi nianzhi* 大清康熙年製). Each vase rests on a circular wooden stand.

The *clair de lune* glaze, often referred to in Chinese as *tianlan you* 天藍釉, is a high-fired glaze whose range of tones – from pale blue to lavender – derives from the addition of about 1% cobalt. The refinement and luminosity of these glazes made them among the most prized of the Qing period (1644–1911), when, like the "peach bloom" glazes [nos. 56 and 58], they were used for objects destined for the scholar's desk. This is also the case with this pair of vases, whose slender form is known in China as *Guanyin ping* 觀音瓶, recalling the bottle that appears among the attributes of Guanyin, the bodhisattva of compassion and one of the most venerated figures in East Asia.

*References:* Rinaldi 1993: 143, no. 155

# Funerary Statuettes

*Mingqi* 明器, literally "spirit objects" or "spirit articles", are funerary statuettes made of terracotta, wood, bronze or stone, representing people, animals, buildings or everyday utensils. The practice of placing such figures in tombs became established during the Warring States period (5th–3rd century BCE), a politically turbulent age that preceded the unification of the Chinese empire in 221 BCE. This time of turmoil proved, however, to be remarkably fertile from a cultural point of view: the need to respond to the loss of traditional values and ideals, together with an acute awareness of human transience, gave new impetus both to philosophical reflection – focused on ontological and moral questions – and to artistic creation.

After the unification of the empire in 221 BCE, reflections on death and ritual practices, previously distinct among the various states, were synthesised into a coherent system of thought that gave rise to a new conception of tombs and funerary equipment. Death came to be understood not as an end but as a transformation, in accordance with the same view that regarded the alternation and complementarity of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 as the foundation of all existence. Human beings were likewise thought to possess two souls: one of celestial and ethereal nature, called *hun* 魂 and associated with the *yang* principle; and another of material and vegetative nature, called *po* 魄 and nourished by *yin* energy. United harmoniously within the body during life, the two souls separated at death: the *hun* ascended to the realm of the ancestors, while the *po* remained bound to the body. Reflecting this belief, tombs came to be conceived as true underground palaces, mirroring the earthly residence of the deceased – a passage through which the *hun* might return to the ancestral realm, while the *po* and the body could continue their existence surrounded by the same comfort and prosperity enjoyed in life (Lippiello 2006).

With this new conception of the tomb came a lasting transformation of the funerary furniture, which, from being purely ritual, became functional to life after death. The grave goods now comprised three categories of objects: ritual implements (*jiqi* 機器), the personal belongings used by the deceased in life (*shengqi* 生器) – such as vessels, clothing boxes, utensils and lamps – and finally the *mingqi*. The term appears for the first time in textual sources of the 4th–3rd century BCE, where *mingqi* are defined as "objects that resemble real ones but cannot be used" (*Liji* 66; *Xunzi* 2.245; see also Poo 2011): substitutes, therefore, produced and intended exclusively for burial. Archaeological evidence shows that the *mingqi* tradition took hold partly because the sacrifice

of human victims was no longer considered ritually appropriate; figures representing people came to accompany and eventually replace the so-called *renxun* 人殉, the "companions in death".

Funerary statuettes thus multiplied in number and variety, recreating a world parallel to that of the living and serving a function perhaps even more complex than that of earlier sacrificial victims: to delineate an environment distinct from, yet mirroring, the human realm, composed of places, objects, and, above all, people. The most extraordinary example of this conception is the vast terracotta army and other statues accompanying the mausoleum of Qin Shi Huangdi, the First Emperor (r. 221–210 BCE).

*Mingqi* are therefore simulacra of varying sizes and materials which, from the Han period (206 BCE–220 CE) onwards, were regularly placed in aristocratic tombs. The most common examples are made of low-fired earthenware, either painted in polychrome pigments after firing [nos. 64-66] or covered with lead glazes [nos. 67, 68]. Their quality and quantity, as well as the complexity of their arrangement, reflected the social status of the deceased. Many figurines were organised into groups or processions, sometimes very numerous.

During the Tang dynasty (618–907), the production of funerary statuettes reached its peak, encompassing an extensive repertoire that included exotic grooms or merchants, dancers and musicians, officials, warriors, and court ladies. Representations of animals – especially horses, much loved by the court, and camels, symbols of the trade routes of the Silk Roads – were also widespread. The *mingqi* of this period make an essential contribution to our understanding of Tang society, providing vivid insights into the customs, fashions, hairstyles, sports and pastimes of the aristocracy, and portraying their world with remarkable immediacy and realism.

The Rinaldi Collection also includes two *mingqi* dating from the Ming dynasty, attesting to the continuity of this long-standing tradition. In Ming tombs, statuettes are often arranged in processions or grouped into *tableaux vivants*, each figure engaged in its own occupation or duty. As in earlier centuries, these figures – though rendered with striking realism and detail – were not intended as portraits of individuals, but as representations of social types and categories (Harrison-Hall 2001: 545–546).

Further reading: Caterina and Verardi 2005; Harrison-Hall 2001; Olberding and Ivanhoe 2011; Rastelli 2008

## Nos. 64, 65
Inv. Nos. MO 1362, MO 1363

## Nos. 64, 65

Inv. Nos. MO 1362, MO 1363

Pair of female statuettes
Earthenware with polychrome pigments
Northern China, Tang dynasty, 7th–8th century
H. 28.5 cm

Pair of funerary statuettes representing tall, slender court ladies standing upright, each with one arm hanging down and the other bent to hold a fold of the elegant gown. The attire consists of a fitted bodice with round neckline and short sleeves, a long skirt, and a shawl draped over one shoulder and knotted at the opposite side. The hair is arranged in a high chignon. Cold-painted with polychrome pigments, the figures preserve traces of their original decoration.

These figurines belong to the tradition of *mingqi* 明器, literally 'spirit objects': tomb statuettes intended to recreate the environment that had accompanied the deceased in life [see also nos. 66, 67 and 68]. The practice of placing such statuettes in funerary assemblages, already known in pre-imperial times, became fully established with the unification of China in 221 BCE. During the Tang period, *mingqi* encompassed an extraordinary variety of subjects – ladies, dancers, attendants, soldiers, officials, foreign merchants – providing a wealth of information on the customs, fashions, and daily life of the period.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 66
Inv. No. MO 1361

## No. 66

Inv. No. MO 1361

Statuette of a warrior
Earthenware with polychrome pigments
Northern China, Tang dynasty, 7th–8th century
H. 38.5 cm

Funerary statuette of a standing warrior dressed in the typical armour of the Tang period: a long tunic with an armoured skirt parted at the centre and fastened at the waist with cords, together with a breastplate and shoulder guards. Once brightly painted, the figure preserves traces of red, green, and black pigments applied after firing. The left hand rests on the hip, while the right, raised to chest height and clenched in a fist, once held a sword, now missing. The hair is arranged in a high chignon. With frowning brows, bulging eyes, curled moustache, and fierce expression, the warrior was intended to inspire fear and to ward off enemies, demons, and malevolent spirits, protecting the tomb and its occupant.

Funerary statuettes, or *mingqi* [see also nos. 64, 65, 67 and 68], depicting guardians or apotropaic figures, were included in tomb furnishings as early as the Han period (206 BCE–220 CE) and became a constant feature of aristocratic burials in the following centuries. In the Tang period, under the influence of Buddhism, such guardians assumed an iconography related to the Four Heavenly Kings (*Lokapāla*), the traditional protectors of the four directions.

*References:* unpublished

## Nos. 67, 68
Inv. Nos. MO 1327, MO 1328

## Nos. 67, 68

Inv. Nos. MO 1327, MO 1328

Pair of male court attendants
Lead-glazed earthenware
Ming dynasty (1368–1644)
H. 20 cm

Pair of funerary statuettes representing high-ranking male court attendants, each standing on an unglazed rectangular base.

MO 1328 (on the right) rests his right arm by his side, the hand concealed within the long sleeve, while the left arm is bent at chest height with the hand clenched in a gesture of deference and loyalty. He wears a long cross-collared robe, tied at the waist and falling in pleats above his boots. The garment is covered with a brilliant low-fired lead glaze, its green colour obtained from copper oxide. The simply modelled face retains traces of slip and pigments applied after firing, while the close-fitting cap is painted black.

MO 1327 (on the left) raises both arms to hold at chest height a tablet or book. His garments and cap are similar to those of MO 1328, but the green glaze is more abraded and the pigments applied after firing have almost completely disappeared.

Statuettes of servants and court attendants are frequently found in Ming tombs, often arranged in sets. Although varying in quality, they are highly consistent in dress, attributes, and posture, representing archetypal figures rather than individuals: images of social categories or roles. In Ming burials, attendants and servants ensured that the deceased would enjoy a comfortable existence in the afterlife, where rank and status were believed to continue unchanged (Harrison-Hall 2001: 544–559).

*References:* unpublished

# Export Silver

Until recent years, Chinese export silver remained little studied and relatively unknown. Nevertheless, it represents a particularly interesting and distinctive branch of the so-called early China Trade – the commercial system through which, within the framework of the Canton System, trade between China and European and American merchants was conducted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Under this system, foreign merchants were restricted to the single port of Guangzhou (Canton), where commercial activities were tightly controlled, and it was here that the manufacture of export silver first developed, later continuing to flourish well into the mid-twentieth century.

China is rich in silver, with mines located in several regions of the country, particularly in the south-western province of Yunnan. Silver circulated in the form of ingots of various shapes and weights, known as *sycee* – a pidgin-English corruption of the Chinese term *xisi* 細絲, literally "fine silk", referring to the rippled surface that resembled the sheen of silk. Westerners nicknamed these ingots "shoes" because of their curved ends, reminiscent of traditional Chinese footwear. During the period of the China Trade, additional silver reached China from Central and South America, imported by European traders in exchange for silk, porcelain, and tea. No precise standard existed for the purity of *sycee*, and no detailed records survive concerning objects made by melting local or imported silver. Likewise, the pseudo-hallmarks found on some pieces did not conform to European assay standards. As a general rule, however, export silver had a fineness varying between 840 and 980 (Marlowe 1990: 14–15).

The presence of foreign merchants in Canton had a profound impact on the city's decorative arts and craftsmanship. Existing workshops expanded and adapted their production to meet foreign demand, while new ones were established, experimenting with techniques and decorative vocabularies that had previously been little known or rarely practised.

Chinese export silver can be broadly divided into two main periods. The first extends from 1757, the year marking the establishment of the Canton System, to the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. During this time, production focused mainly on reproducing Western prototypes – tea and coffee services and other table accessories – manufactured at a fraction of the cost of those made in Europe. Osmond Tiffany (1823–1895), a merchant from Baltimore who

arrived in Canton in 1844 and later published *The Canton Chinese*, described the work of a local silversmith as follows:

> "*A silversmith's is near by. […] He can manufacture any article, from a salt spoon to a service of plate, in the most elegant manner. He will line a pitcher with its coating of gold, or produce a favorite pattern of forks at very short notice. The silver is remarkably fine, and the cost of working it is a mere song. Its intrinsic value is of course the same as it is in Europe, but the poor creatures who perspire over it are paid only about to keep the breath in their bodies. […] It is much cheaper to have a splendid service of plate in China than in any other country, and many Europeans send out orders through supercargoes*" (Tiffany 1849: 73).

Foreign merchants, who arrived in increasing numbers in Canton towards the end of the eighteenth century, brought with them a wide range of European silver objects in the fashionable styles of the time – Neo-Classical, Regency, and others – which Chinese silversmiths faithfully reproduced (Marlowe 1990: 16). These objects were often stamped with pseudo-English hallmarks that, unlike the complex British system of marks, conveyed no reliable information regarding purity, date, or place of manufacture. Such marks were, at least in the beginning, probably added simply as part of the faithful reproduction of imported models.

After the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, foreign communities established themselves also in Hong Kong and Shanghai, where retail branches of Cantonese silversmiths were opened and new workshops founded. The production of this second generation of silversmiths, active from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, was directed primarily towards a Western clientele but also appealed to wealthy Chinese buyers. In this cosmopolitan environment, their works came to embody a synthesis of Western forms and Chinese decorative traditions, reflecting at its best the cultural as well as economic exchanges of the period.

Although still largely based on Western shapes, the Cantonese style gradually incorporated distinctly Chinese motifs and designs. Tableware, toilet articles, snuff boxes, cases of various forms, visiting-card holders, and tea and coffee services with teapots and caddies – often accompanied by porcelain cups – were decorated with bamboo [nos. 70, 73], floral and bird motifs [nos. 69, 71], and peonies [no. 72]. As production evolved, the pseudo-hallmarks disappeared and were replaced by marks bearing the silversmith's name or initials in Roman letters, sometimes accompanied by Chinese characters. These latter could refer to the silversmith's firm, the workshop, a retail branch, or the individual craftsman, and their study – a field that has recently attracted renewed attention – provides valuable evidence for identifying and dating export silver.

The Rinaldi collection includes Cantonese teapots [no. 69], clothes brushes from Shanghai [no. 72], and small objects [nos. 73, 74] that formed part of dressing-table sets and were often taken to Europe as souvenirs. Though limited in number, this group of silver pieces effectively illustrates the decorative vocabulary and stylistic trends of Chinese export silver between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Further reading: Crossman 1991; Von Ferscht 2015

## No. 69
Inv. No. MO 1283

## No. 69

Inv. No. MO 1283

Teapot with bird-and-plum blossom decoration
Canton, c. 1875
H. 14 cm (with lid)

Teapot with a circular base, cylindrical body, and lid surmounted by a knop in the shape of a bud.

The body is chased with plum blossoms and birds, while the lid is engraved with different floral motifs. Marks under the base, characteristic of the silversmithing of the time, testify to its origin and to its destination for the international market. These include the initials WA, referring to an unidentified silversmith active in Canton between 1845 and 1900 (Von Ferscht 2015: 783-86), and a two-character Chinese mark recording the name of the craftsman who created and decorated the piece.

The combination of plum blossoms and birds carries strong symbolic significance. In Chinese tradition, flowers are not mere ornaments but embody universal values and virtues. The plum blossom, which blooms in the depths of winter, symbolises resilience and hope, associated with rebirth and renewal. Birds, in turn, evoke freedom and the link between the earthly and the celestial realms, underlining the harmony between humankind and nature.

Despite being intended for export, the decoration preserves a symbolic repertoire typical of Chinese tradition.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 70
Inv. No. MO 1282

## No. 70

Inv. No. MO 1282

Square teapot decorated with bamboo and plum blossoms
Silver
Shanghai (?), late 19th – early 20th century
H. 13.5 cm

Teapot with a square base and a handle modelled to imitate a bamboo stem. One side shows birds and plum blossoms framed by a gnarled branch, while the other depicts a bamboo plant within a four-lobed cartouche. Both decorations are in relief, set against a hammered matte ground typical of Chinese ornament. Marks appear under the base, including a poorly preserved Chinese-character mark possibly identifying the craftsman.

The choice of decorative motifs reflects a repertoire that was a major source of inspiration for export silverware of the second half of the nineteenth century. In Chinese tradition, plum and bamboo, together with the chrysanthemum and the orchid, are known as the *Four Gentlemen* (*si junzi* 四君子), symbols of moral ideals and Confucian values defining the virtuous man. The plum, resistant to cold, symbolises perseverance; the bamboo, graceful yet strong, represents modesty and mental strength; the orchid, delicate and secluded, embodies the modest and virtuous gentleman; and the chrysanthemum, soberly elegant, symbolises nobility of character. When depicted together, the Four Gentlemen may also represent the four seasons: plum for winter, orchid for spring, bamboo for summer, and chrysanthemum for autumn.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 71
Inv. No. MO 1296

## No. 71

Inv. No. MO 1296

Hand mirror
Silver
Canton or Hong Kong, second half of the 19th century
H. 25.4 cm

Oval hand mirror. The decoration, executed in relief, features plum branches, bamboo and birds. At the centre, a blank cartouche was left for engraving and personalisation. On both sides of the handle are four-character Chinese idiomatic inscriptions (*chengyu* 成語). On the front is *de xin ying shou* 得心應手, translated as "with effortless mastery"; on the back is *ru yi ji xiang* 如意吉祥, "good fortune and the fulfilment of your wishes".

At the base of the decoration on the oval are the marks of the silversmith: the initials SS, the Chinese character *liang* 良 (an artisan's mark meaning "excellente"), and again SS. These identify the workshop of Sun Shing (1790–1915), one of the most renowned silversmiths producing for the export market. Originally based in Canton, then the only port open to foreign trade, with a workshop in New China Street, the firm also opened a retail branch in Hong Kong around 1840. Sun Shing was initially known for the high quality of objects in the English/American style, where the marks with the initials were accompanied by pseudo-hallmarks. From the mid-nineteenth century, however, the decoration shifted from the Georgian style to a Chinese manner, while the forms remained inspired by Western silverware. At the same time, pseudo-hallmarks disappeared and the initials SS were often accompanied, as here, by a Chinese character. This sudden change of style suggests that the House of Sun Shing may have changed ownership or passed to an heir (Von Ferscht 2015: 669–674).

The subject and style of the decoration, together with the marks, suggest a date in the second half or late nineteenth century.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 72
Inv. No. MO 1295

## No. 72

Inv. No. MO 1295

Clothes brush
Silver
Shanghai, 1870–1920
L. 17.5 cm

Clothes brush with an elongated oval body, decorated in relief with two luxuriant peonies. At the centre is an oval blank cartouche left for engraving. In Chinese tradition, peonies are associated with spring and closely linked to the feminine sphere.

On one side is a production mark typically found on export silver, indicating place and workshop. In this case, the mark TC identifies the brush as a product of Tuck Chang, the leading silver retail establishment in Shanghai, active between 1870 and 1920.

Such brushes were commonly included in silver vanity sets for export, usually accompanied by other grooming items such as mirrors and combs.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 73
Inv. No. MO 1297

## No. 73

Inv. No. MO 1297

Glove stretchers
Silver
Shanghai, c. 1890–1910
L. 23.5 cm

Glove stretchers with handles decorated in relief with bamboo. The handle also bears a mark attributing the piece to Tuck Chang, a silversmith active in Shanghai between 1870 and 1920 and probably the most renowned among the city's international community. Glove stretchers such as this one formed part of dressing table sets, which could also include a hand mirror [see no. 71], clothes brushes [no. 72], a button hook [no. 74], combs, and other items. Such sets, which combined everyday usefulness with an exotic appeal for Western buyers and could easily be taken home as souvenirs, formed a key part of Tuck Chang's business (Von Ferscht 2015: 769).

*References:* unpublished

## No. 74
Inv. No. MO 1298

## No. 74

Inv. No. MO 1298

Glove stretchers
Silver
Shanghai, c. 1890–1910
L. 23.5 cm

Button hooks were practical instruments with a hook-shaped end, designed to pull buttons through their buttonholes. They were particularly useful with stiff leather buttons on footwear, gloves, or garments made of heavy fabric, and between the 1890s and 1920s they became a common accessory for everyday dress. This example has a handle decorated with prunus blossoms and bears the mark WH, identifying the renowned Canton silversmith Wang Hing, who began his activity shortly after the end of the First Opium War in 1842 and became one of the most important Chinese silversmiths of the period, later establishing branches in Shanghai and Hong Kong around 1920. The piece also carries the purity mark 90, indicating the silver standard.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 75
Inv. No. MO 1299

## No. 75

Inv. No. MO 1299

Small jewellery box with mirror
Silver
Shanghai or Canton, c. 1930
6 × 4 cm

Small rectangular box, decorated in repoussé. The lid is ornamented with a landscape scene, typical of Chinese painting and the decorative arts, showing three figures in a court garden beneath flowering prunus branches. Following the model of the larger wooden toilette boxes from the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), the lid opens to reveal a small folding mirror. Beneath it, a drawer can be pulled open by means of a leaf-shaped handle. The long sides of the box bear the character for "double happiness" (*shuangxi* 囍), typically used on objects associated with weddings and bridal gifts, while the short sides are decorated with the character for "longevity" (*shou* 壽), placed at the centre and surrounded by bats, a propitious motif since the word for "bat" is homophonous with "fortune" in Chinese.

*References:* unpublished

# Lacquer, Basketry and Textile

The Rinaldi Collection includes a small group of objects relating to everyday life, which reflect the customs and traditions of twentieth-century China.

Among the most renowned and admired of all Chinese creations, lacquer stands alongside porcelain and silk as a symbol of refined craftsmanship and aesthetic sophistication. The term *lacquer* may refer to the object itself, to the decorative technique, or to the raw material from which it is made. In East and South-East Asia, lacquer is obtained from a resin extracted from the *Rhus verniciflua*, or lacquer tree, which has been used in China since the Neolithic period. Through a complex process of refinement and polymerisation, this resin acquires waterproof and protective properties that make lacquered objects resistant to heat, humidity, and insect damage. Usually applied to wood but also to other supports such as bamboo, leather, textiles, or ceramics, and coloured with polychrome pigments, lacquer enables craftsmen to decorate objects with pictorial motifs, incisions, and surfaces inlaid with mother-of-pearl or sprinkled with gold and silver powders. During the long period of commercial exchange between East Asia and the European trading companies, and amid the rise of *chinoiserie*, lacquerware was second only to porcelain in the preferences of European courts, where it was widely displayed and reused in furniture and *boiserie*. The objects preserved in the Rinaldi Collection, however, are not the richly decorated pieces intended for export or for the Chinese aristocracy, but everyday items such as the compartmented box [no. 77] and the charming red-lacquer carved duck-shaped vessel [no. 78].

The food container [no. 76] is of the type used in ceremonial contexts – particularly weddings – for serving rice and other food offerings. Traditional wedding ceremonies also featured *wedding baskets* [no. 79] made of woven bamboo and wood: tall, multi-tiered containers which echo and expand the form of food carriers, and were used to hold the bride's trousseau or the gifts received on the occasion of the marriage.

Completing this small miscellaneous group is the spectacular costume from the Beijing opera. Combining music, song, dance, gesture and acrobatics, the Beijing opera is celebrated for its brightly coloured costumes and symbolic make-up, each designed to express the personality and moral qualities of the character. The inclusion of such a costume in the Rinaldi Collection pays homage to one of the most distinctive and enduring expressions of Chinese performance art.

Further reading: AA.VV. 2004; Bonds 2008; Clifford 1992; de Moura Carvahlo 2001

## No. 76
Inv. No. MO 1276

## No. 76

Inv. No. MO 1276

Food box
Lacquered wood
Zhejiang (?), first half of the 20th century
H. 35.5 cm

Octagonal food box painted in red and gold lacquer, with a hinged metal clasp and an arched handle carved with a central flower flanked by two opposing birds in gilt. The handle folds down, and the front section of the lid can be slid open to reveal the interior. The surface shows considerable signs of wear. Such boxes were used to contain and serve food on special occasions.

*References:* unpublished

## No. *77*
Inv. No. MO 1275

## No. 77

Inv. No. MO 1275

Jewellery box
Lacquered wood
First half of the 20th century
H. 9 cm – D. 20 cm

Circular box, entirely lacquered in dark red and decorated in gold, containing an inner tray divided into small compartments. It was used for storing jewellery and other personal items. The surface, particularly the lid, shows considerable signs of wear.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 78
Inv. No. MO 1277

## No. 78

Inv. No. MO 1277

Duck-shaped box
Carved lacquer
Second half of the 20th century
H. 19 cm

Carved red laquer box. The lid, modelled as a duck with its beak turned towards the tail, is delicately incised to suggest the wings and characteristic features of the bird. The lower section is carved more deeply, following the traditional *tixi* 剔犀 technique, which involves applying successive layers of lacquer in contrasting colours – in this case black and red – to form a dense surface suitable for carving decorative motifs. Carved lacquer, most often red in colour, is commonly known as "cinnabar lacquer", after the powdered mercury sulphide historically used as its primary pigment. The interior of this box is finished in black lacquer, with rims edged in brass.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 79
Inv. No. MO 1370

## No. 79

Inv. No. MO 1370

Wedding basket
Lacquered wood and bamboo
Southern China, 20th century
H. 48.5 cm

Octagonal four-tiered basket with a handle finely carved with human and animal figures, surmounted by a metal grip with dragon-head terminals. The lid is black-lacquered and retains traces of a gold-painted landscape. Each tier is formed of woven bamboo and framed on each of the four shorter sides by black-lacquered wooden panels decorated in gilt, using the same technique as the lid. The scenes depict auspicious motifs for newlyweds, symbolising harmony, serenity and abundance. Gentle overall signs of wear and use.

Such baskets were traditionally used, particularly in southern China and South-East Asia, to hold the trousseau and gifts presented to the bride and groom.

*References:* unpublished

## No. 80
Inv. No. MO 1374

## No. 80

Inv. No. MO 1374

Beijing Opera robe
Silk, cotton, gold thread and satin
20th century
H. 150 cm – W. 210 cm

Robe for Beijing Opera, red in its upper section and richly decorated. The dominant motif is the dragon, represented three times with its coiled body forming circular patterns on both sides and along the sleeves. A wave pattern separates the upper part of the robe from the lower section, which features a broad border decorated with oblique stripes dominated by shades of blue. The embroidery is executed in blue and light-blue cotton threads, outlined with gold thread.

Costumes in Beijing Opera are designed to allow the audience to identify at a glance a character's gender, age and social rank. They include formal and informal robes, costumes for military or civil officials, and other specific types. This robe belongs to the category of ceremonial costumes known as *mang* 蟒, a theatrical adaptation of the *longpao* 龍袍, the court dress of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), characterised by its trapezoidal shape and long, wide sleeves. The voluminous garment created an imposing silhouette, whose solemnity was enhanced by the slow and graceful movements of ceremonial etiquette. In Beijing Opera, the red *mang* was worn by actors portraying the highest-ranking officials of the imperial court, second only to the emperor, while the blue tones in the lower section suggest a virtuous, proud and strong character (Bonds 2008: 73–76).

*References:* unpublished

# References


AA. VV. (2004) *Chine: trésors du quotidien. Sur les traces de François Dautresme*. Milano–Monaco: Skira/Grimaldi Forum Monaco.

Ayers, J. and Krahl, R. (1986) *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul: A Complete Catalogue*. 3 vols. London: Sotheby's Publications.

Ayers, J., Medley, M. and Wood, N. (1988) *Iron in the Fire: The Chinese Potters' Exploration of Iron Oxide Glazes*. London: The Oriental Ceramic Society.

Bibl. Nationale de France, Ms. Fr. 1116 = Marco Polo (14th cent., first quarter) *Le Devisement dou monde*. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, ms. Français 1116 (former shelfmarks: Regius 7367, Dupuy II 645, Rigault II 1031).

Bonds, A. B. (2008) *Beijing Opera Costumes: The Visual Communication of Character and Culture*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Canepa, T. (2008) *Kraak Porcelain: The Rise of Global Trade in the Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries*. London: Jorge Welsh Books.

Carioti, P. and Caterina, L. (2010) *La via della porcellana: la Compagnia Olandese delle Indie orientali e la Cina*. Genova: Il Portolano.

Cao Jianwen 曹建文 (2012) Zhong Pu zaoqi maoyi yu kela ciqi zhuangshi fengge de qiyuan 中葡早期贸易與克拉瓷器装飾風格的起源 [Early Sino-Portuguese trade and the origin of Kraak porcelain decorating style]. In Cheng Pei-kai 程备恺 (ed.) *Proceedings of the International Symposium: Chinese Export Ceramics in the 16th and 17th Centuries and the Spread of Material Civilization*, pp. 301–308. Hong Kong: Chinese Civilization Centre, City University of Hong Kong.

Carré *et al.* 1994 = Carré, D., Desroches, J.P. and Goddio, F. (1994) *Le San Diego: un trésor sous la mer* [exposition, Paris, Grand Halle de la Villette, 15 septembre 1994–8 janvier 1995]. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux; Association française d'action artistique.

Carswell, J. (1985) *Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and its Impact on the Western World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carswell, J. (2007) *Blue & White: Chinese Porcelain around the World*. 2nd ed. London: British Museum Press.

Caterina, L. and Verardi, G. (2005) *Tang: arte e cultura in Cina prima dell'anno Mille*. Napoli: Electa.

Chen et al. 2020 = Chen, Y., Wen, R. and Wang, T. (2020) The origins of low-fire polychrome glazed pottery in China. *Antiquity*, 94 (377), pp. 1-8.

Chinese Society of Ancient Ceramics (Zhongguo Gu Taoci Xuehui 中国古陶瓷学会) (ed.) (2015) *Qingbai ci yanjiu* 青白瓷研究 [*Studies on Qingbai Porcelain*]. Beijing: Gugong chubanshe.

Clifford, D. (1992) *Chinese Carved Lacquer*. London: Bamboo Publishing.

Crick *et al.* 2019 = Crick, M., Lam, P.Y.K. and Schwartz-Arenales, L. (2019) *Millennium of Monochromes: From the Great Tang to the High Qing. The Baur and the Zhuyuetang Collections*. Milan: Five Continents Editions.

Crossman, C.L. (1991) *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade: Paintings, Furnishings and Exotic Curiosities*. Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club.

Curatola, G. and Squarcina, C. (eds) (2024) *I mondi di Marco Polo. Il viaggio di un mercante veneziano del Duecento*. Arezzo: Magonza.

Da Ya 达雅 (2021) *Qinghua ci: qing bai jian de Zhongguo ciqi shi* 青花瓷：青白间的中国瓷器史 [*Blue and White Porcelain: A History of Chinese Ceramics between Blue and White*]. Beijing: Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe.

d'Entrecolles, F. X. (1712; repr. 1819) in AA.VV. *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, écrites des missions étrangères*. Lyon: J. Vernarel; Ét. Cabin et Cie.

de Moura Carvalho, P. (ed.) (2001) *The World of Lacquer: 2000 Years of History*. Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Dong et al. 2020 = Dong, J., Li, Q. and Liu, S. (2020) Scientific analysis of some glazed pottery unearthed from Warring States Chu tombs in Jiangling, Hubei Province: indication for the origin of low-fired glazed pottery in China. *X-Ray Spectrometry*, 49, pp. 538–553.

Du, F. and Su, B. (2008) Further study of sources of the imported cobalt-blue pigment used on Jingdezhen porcelain from late 13th to early 15th centuries. *Science in China Series E: Technological Sciences*, 51, pp. 249–259.

Eskenazi, G. *et al*. (2013) *Junyao*. London: Eskenazi Gallery.

Fang, L. (2023) *The History of Chinese Ceramics*. Singapore: Springer.

Finlay, R. (2010) *The Pilgrim Art: Cultures of Porcelain in World History*. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gerritsen, A. (2020) *The City of Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and the Early Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gongyi 2009 = Henan Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, Zhongguo Wenhua Yichan Yanjiuyuan and Riben Nailiang Wenhuacai Yanjiusuo 河南省文物考古研究所、中国文化遗产研究院、日本奈良文化财研究所 (2009) *Gongyi Baihe yao xin faxian* 巩义白河窑新发现 [*The New Archaeological Discovery at Baihe Kiln in Gongyi*]. Zhengzhou: Daxiang chubanshe.

Greenberger, M. (2019) *Early Meissen Porcelain: The Michael Greenberger Collection*. New York: Blurb.

Guantai 1997 = Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics, Department of Archaeology of Beijing University and Handan Office for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments and Relics 河北省文物研究所、北京大学考古学系、邯郸地区文物保管所 (1997) *Guantai Cizhou yaozhi* 观台磁州窑址 [*Cizhou Kiln Sites in Guantai*]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe.

Gugong Bowuyuan Taoci Yanjiu Zhongxin 故宫博物院陶瓷研究中心 (ed.) (2005) *Zhongguo gudai yaozhi biaoben: Henan juan* 中国古代窑址标本·河南卷 [Ancient Chinese kiln site specimens in the Palace Museum collection: Henan volume]. 2 vols. Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe.

Gyllensvärd, B. (1975) Recent finds of Chinese ceramics at Fostat. II. *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 47, pp. 93–117.

Harrison-Hall, J. (2001) *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*. London: The British Museum Press.

Hu *et al.* 2011 = Hu Dongbo 胡东波, Zhang Hongyan 张红燕 and Liu Shulin 刘树林 (2011) *Jingdezhen Mingdai yuyao yizhi chutu ciqi fenxi yanjiu* 景德镇明代御窑遗址出土瓷器分析研究 [Analytical study of porcelains excavated from the Imperial Kiln Site of the Ming dynasty at Jingdezhen]. 2 vols. Beijing: Science Press.

Jacquemart, A. and Le Blant, E. (1862) *Histoire artistique, industrielle et commerciale de la porcelaine*. Paris: Librairie Renouard.

Jiang, Q. (2009) *Tang sancai*. PhD thesis, School of Archaeology, University of Oxford.

Jörg, C.J.A., in collaboration with van Campen, J. (1997) *Chinese Ceramics in the Collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: The Ming and Qing Dynasties*. London: Philip Wilson Publishers.

Kerr, R. and Wood, N. (2004) *Science and Civilisation in China, Vol. 5, Part 12: Ceramic Technology*. Series editor: Joseph Needham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kervran, M. (2004) Archaeological research at Ṣuḥār 1980–1986. *The Journal of Oman Studies*, 13, pp. 263–281.

Krahl, R. (2010) Tang blue-and-white. In Krahl, R., Guy, J., Wilson, K. and Taby, J. (eds) *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*, pp. 209–211. Washington, DC and Singapore: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; National Heritage Board, Singapore Tourism Board.

Leidy, D.P. (2024) *Celadon on the Seas: Chinese Ceramics from the 9th to the 14th Century*. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery.

Li *et al.* 2016 = Li, W., Lu, X., Luo, H., Sun, X., Liu, L., Zhao, Z. and Guo, M. (2016) A landmark in the history of Chinese ceramics: The invention of blue-and-white porcelain in the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD). *STAR: Science & Technology of Archaeological Research*, 3(2), pp. 358–365.

Li *et al.* 2021 = Li, Z., Doherty, C. and Hein, A. (2021) Rediscovering the largest kiln site in the middle Yangtze River Valley: insights into Qingbai and grey-greenish ware production at the Husi kiln site based on bulk chemical analysis. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*, 13, article number 218.

Lippiello, T. (2006) La vita nell'oltretomba: credenze religiose e pratiche rituali. In Lanciotti, L. and Scarpari, M. (eds) *Cina. Nascita di un impero*, pp. 41–47. Milano: Skira Editore.

Liu Wei 刘未 (2022) Xianggang Song huang tai yizhi chutu Song Yuan maoyi taoci yanjiu 香港宋皇台遗址出土宋元贸易陶瓷研究 [A study of Song–Yuan trade ceramics unearthed from the Sung Wong Toi site in Hong Kong]. *Wenwu* 文物, 11, pp. 53–77.

Marlowe, A.J. (1990) *Chinese Export Silver: A Survey of Chinese Export Silver with a Catalogue of an Exhibition at the Galleries of John Sparks, 128 Mount Street, London W1*. London: John Sparks.

Medley, M. (1981) *T'ang Pottery and Porcelain*. (Faber Monographs on Pottery and Porcelain). London: Faber and Faber.

Medley, M. (2006) *The Chinese Potter: A Practical History of Chinese Ceramics*. 3rd ed. London: Phaidon.

Morena, F. (2005) *Dalle Indie orientali alla corte di Toscana: collezioni di arte cinese e giapponese a Palazzo Pitti*. Firenze: Giunti.

Nagatomo *et al.* 2022 = Nagatomo, T., Nakamura, D. and Shinoto, M. (eds) (2022) *Kilns in East and North Asia: The Adoption of Ceramic Industries*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports (BAR).

National Museum of Korea 국립중앙박물관 (1977) *Sinan haejeo munmul* 신안해저문물 [*Special Exhibition of Cultural Relics Found off Sinan Coast*]. Seoul: Samhwa chulpansa.

Olberding, A. and Ivanhoe, P.J. (eds) (2011) *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines (1993) *Chinese and South East Asian White Ware Found in the Philippines*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Palace Museum *et al.* 2019 = Palace Museum, Zhejiang Provincial Museum and Lishui Municipal People's Government 故宫博物院、浙江省博物馆、丽水市人民政府 (eds) (2019) *Tianxia Longquan: Longquan qingci yu quanqiuhua* 天下龙泉：龙泉青瓷与全球化 [*Longquan of the World: Longquan Celadon and Globalisation*]. 4 vols. Beijing: Gugong chubanshe.

Palace Museum *et al.* 2021 = Palace Museum, Zhejiang Provincial Museum and Lishui Municipal People's Government 故宫博物院、浙江省博物馆、丽水市人民政府 (eds) (2021) *Tianxia Longquan: Longquan qingci yu quanqiuhua guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 天下龙泉：龙泉青瓷与全球化国际学术研讨会论文集 [*Longquan of the World: Longquan Celadon and Globalisation International Seminar Proceedings*]. Beijing: Gugong chubanshe.

Peng Minghan 彭明瀚 (2018) *Da Ming Jingdezhen minyao jinian qinghua ci* 代景德镇民窑纪年青花瓷 [Dated blue-and-white porcelain from the folk kilns of Jingdezhen in the Ming dynasty]. 2 vols. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe.

Pierson, S. (ed.) (1996) *Earth, Fire and Water: Chinese Ceramic Technology*. London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies

Pierson, S. (2009) *Chinese Ceramics: A Design History*. London: V&A Publications.

Pinto, A. (2019) *Microstructure et procédés techniques des porcelaines qinghua: une approche de type science des matériaux*. Thèse de doctorat, Université Toulouse III – Paul Sabatier.

Plumer, J.M. (1972) *Temmoku: A Study of the Ware of Chien*. Tokyo: Idemitsu Art Gallery.

Pomper, L. (2015) A possible source for the panelling on one type of Kraak ware. *Arts of Asia*, July–August, pp. 38–47.

Poo, M. (2011) Preparation for the afterlife in ancient China. In Olberding, A. and Ivanhoe, P.J. (eds) *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*, pp. 13–36. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Pope, J.A. (1956) *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Porter, Y. (2000) Le cobalt dans le monde iranien (IX$^{e}$–XVI$^{e}$ siècles): notes sur son utilisation en céramique et son commerce. *Taoci*, 1, pp. 5–14.

Qin Dashu 秦大树 (2019) Cong haiwai chutu Yuandai ciqi kan Longquanyao waixiao de diwei ji guanxi wenti

taolun 从海外出土元代瓷器看龙泉窑外销的地位及关系问题讨论 [A discussion on the status and relations of Longquan kiln exports as seen from Yuan dynasty ceramics excavated overseas]. In Palace Museum, Zhejiang Provincial Museum and Lishui Municipal People's Government 故宫博物院、浙江省博物馆、丽水市人民政府 (eds) *Tianxia Longquan: Longquan qingci yu quanqiuhua* 天下龙泉：龙泉青瓷与全球化, Vol. III, pp. 266–291. Beijing: Gugong chubanshe.

Rastelli, S. (2004) *Ceramica cinese: evoluzione tecnologica dal Neolitico alle Cinque Dinastie*. Venezia: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina.

Rastelli, S. (ed.) (2008) *Cina: alla corte degli imperatori. Capolavori mai visti dalla tradizione Han all'eleganza Tang (25–907)*. Milano: Skira.

Rinaldi, M. (1989) *Kraak Porcelain: A Moment in the History of Trade*. London: Bamboo Publishing.

Rinaldi, M. (1990) The ceramic cargo of the *Concepcion*. In Mathers, W.M., Parker III, H.S. and Copus, K.A. (eds) *Archaeological Report: The Recovery of the Manila Galleon Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, pp. 397–470. Sutton: Pacific Sea Resources.

Rinaldi, M. (1993) *Ceramics in Scholarly Taste*. Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society.

Scott *et al.* 2022 = Scott, R., Barnes, A.J., Nikles, E., Teo, C. and Pierson, S. (eds) (2002) *Qingbai Ware: Chinese Porcelain of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*. London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art.

Shanghai Museum 上海博物馆 (ed.) (2012) *Youlan shencai: Yuandai qinghua ciqi teji* 幽蓝神采：元代青花瓷器特集 [*Splendours in Smalt: Art of Yuan Blue-and-white Porcelain*]. Shanghai: Shanghai Museum Press.

Sheaf, C. and Kilburn, R.S. (1988) *The Hatcher Porcelain Cargoes: The Complete Record*. Oxford: Phaidon.

Shulsky, L.R. (2004) Famille noire and mirror-black: The European taste for black ground ceramics of the Kangxi period (1662–1722) and their relationship to lacquer. In Kopplin, M. and Staatliche Schlösser und Gärten (eds) *Schwartz Porcelain: The Lacquer Craze and its Impact on European Porcelain*, pp. 31–36. Munich: Hirmer Verlag.

Sjöstrand, S. and Sharipah Lok Lok bt. Syed Idrus (2007) *The Wanli Shipwreck and its Ceramic Cargo*. Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Muzium.

Song, J. (ed.) (2022) *Shipwreck Archaeology in China Sea*. Singapore: Springer.

Spataro *et al.* 1019 = Spataro, M., Wood, N., Meeks, N., Meek, A. and Priestman, S. (2019) Pottery technology in the Tang dynasty (ninth century AD): Archaeometric analyses of a

Gongyi sherd found at Siraf, Iran. *Archaeometry*, 61(3), pp. 574–587.

Ströber, E. (2013) *Ming: Porcelain for a Globalised Trade*. Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers.

Ströber, E. (2016) *The Collection of Chinese and Southeast Asian Jars (Martaban, Martavanen) at the Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands*. [https://files.friesmuseum.nl/files/1/8/2/3/jars_research_Eva.pdf].

Tiffany, O. (1849) *The Canton Chinese: Or, The American's Sojourn in the Celestial Empire*. Boston: J. Munroe and Company.

Tregear, M. (1982) *Song Ceramics*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Vainker, S.J. (1991) *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*. New York: George Braziller.

Valenstein, S. (1989) *A Handbook of Chinese Ceramics*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Vogt, G. (1893) *La porcelaine*. Paris: May et Motteroz.

Von Ferscht, A. (2015) *Chinese Export Silver 1785–1940: The Definitive Collectors' Guide*. Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Scottish Centre for China Research.

Wang *et al.* 2025 = Wang Tian 王甜, Yang Shaoxiong 杨少雄, Xia Senwei 夏森伟 *et al.* (2025) Jinyao Songdai heiyou ci wuhua zucheng ji zhibe gongyi yanjiu 建窑宋代黑釉瓷物化组成及制备工艺研究 [A study on the physicochemical composition and manufacturing techniques of Jian kiln black-glazed ware of the Song dynasty based on spectroscopic technology]. *Guangpuxue yu Guangpu Fenxi* 光谱学与光谱分析, 2, pp. 448–455.

Watson, W. (1984) *Tang and Liao Ceramics*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Wen Rui 温睿 (2017) Sumaliqing kaobian 苏麻离青考辨 [A textual analysis of *Sumaliqing* cobalt]. *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊, 1, pp. 144–153.

Wood, N. (2007) *Chinese Glazes: Their Origins, Chemistry and Recreation*. London: A & C Black.

Wood, N. and Priestman, S. (2016) New light on Chinese Tang dynasty and Iraqi blue and white in the ninth century: the material from Siraf, Iran. *Bulletin of Chinese Ceramic Art and Archaeology*, 7, pp. 47–60.

Zhang, R. and Gethin, P. (2021) Provenance of the cobalt pigment used for Jingdezhen *minyao* blue-and-white porcelain in the early Qing dynasty. *Ceramics International*, 47(18), pp. 25763–25768.

Zhang, Y. and Pollard, A.M. (2022) The archaeological and scientific analysis of blue-decorated ceramics in the Tang and Song dynasties. *Archaeometry*, 64(6), pp. 1394–1410.

Zhang *et al.* 2023 = Zhang, R., Kennet, D., Brown, P.J., Song, X., Guangyao, W., Zhai, Y. and Wu, M. (2023) Longquan celadon: a quantitative archaeological analysis of a pan-Indian Ocean industry of the 12th to 15th centuries. *World Archaeology*, 54(5), pp. 700–722.

Zhao, B. (2015) La céramique chinoise à Sharma: pour un essai d'étude typo-chronologique et spatiale. In Rougeulle, A. (ed.) *Sharma. Un entrepôt de commerce médiéval sur la côte du Ḥaḍramawt (Yémen, ca 980–1180)*, pp. 277–321. Oxford: Archaeopress.

Zhao, B. (2017) The production of storage jars in China and Southeast Asia: a vibrant but little-known artisanal practice. *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, 103, pp. 259–265.

IL TORCOLIERE • Officine Grafico-Editoriali d'Ateneo
Università di Napoli L'Orientale
stampato nel mese di novembre 2025

ISBN: 978-88-6719-345-5