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***The Reception and Adaptation of Oriental Ceramics in Britain, with  
particular reference to Imperial Chinese Copper-Red Wares***

By

**Mandy Jill Maxwell**

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Word Count 100, 000



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## **British *Flambé***

### **Chronology of Manufacture**

**Bernard Moore** (High and Low-Fired *Flambé*), c. 1902-1915. Applied to porcelain, bone-china and fine-earthenware bodies. Moore mostly decorated blanks from other factories.

**Ruskin Pottery** High-Fired *Flambé* and Transmutation stonewares, c. 1903-1935.

**Royal Doulton** (Low-Temperature *Flambé*)

- *Rouge Flambé* – c. 1904-1996, reintroduced in the Spring of 1999, along with *Sung* and *Chang Ware* ranges. Applied to bone-china. Doulton *flambé* examples are both plain and decorated with black/grey underglaze painted and printed designs.
- *Sung Ware* – c. 1920- late 1930's, *flambé* with opalescent effects and often with coloured underglaze painting. Applied to bone-china.
- *Chang Ware* – c. 1925-late 1930's, thick layered glazes of various colours on a *rouge flambé* base. The top glaze layer often appears heavily crazed. Applied to a heavy, refractory body.

**Moorcroft** Low-Temperature earthenware *Flambé*, c. 1919 until the Clean Air Act of 1956 and introduction of natural gas at the factory combined to make *flambé* production difficult. The kiln used for firing *flambé* was demolished in 1974. Moorcroft *flambé* pieces were plain and decorated with underglaze painting and slip-trailing.

**Wedgwood & Sons - Norman Wilson Unique Ware**, including High-Temperature *Flambé* and experimental Transmutation glazed stonewares, c. 1935.

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*VEINED*

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

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- Chang** and signed **NOKE** (and monogram)   
**Royal  
Doulton**

Royal Doulton *Chang Ware*, c. 1930-1935, Burslem. Acc. No: 1956. 1204. National Museums of Scotland, The Royal Museum, Granton Stores, Edinburgh. Bought for s. 15 / - from Alex Johnston, 28 Grassmarket, Edinburgh 1.

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Base of stand has paper label printed: **RUSKIN POTTERY**

**MADE IN**

**ENGLAND**

*This colour scheme cannot be repeated*

Date c. Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Acc. No: 462P. 35 (PM & AG)

**Fig. 55:** **Barrel-Shaped Vase, porcellanous stoneware.** High-temperature reduced copper-oxide transmutation glaze, ruby red with mauve and turquoise patches, flecked with green and spots of metallic copper in its purest reduced state. Narrow, slightly flared lip and no foot. Ht: approx. 11 cm. Diam: Approx. 5.7 cm. Inscription impressed on base **RUSKIN ENGLAND**. Date inscribed on base – **1933**. There is evidence to suggest the glaze had overrun the base which has possibly been ground down. Acc. No: DERSB: 503. Part of the Frank Ollerenshaw bequest of studio-pottery to Buxton Museum and Art Gallery, 1949.

**Fig. 56:** **Vase, porcellanous stoneware.** Tall vase of Art Deco form, long trunk neck with thick bevelled lip and squat bulbous body. Very narrow foot rim. The vase exhibits an exquisite glaze – one of the best specimens of Howson-Taylor's reduced copper-oxide transmutation glazes, the neck predominantly red, shading to pink in areas, flecked with green and spots of pure reduced metallic copper. Spanning the circumference of the bulbous body is a band of green copper speckling with pale apple-green patches. Throwing rings are visible around the body and neck. Ht: approx. 20 cm. Diam. Approx. 11.3 cm. Date: 1933. Impressed inscription on the base **RUSKIN ENGLAND 1933**. Acc. No: DERSB: 471. Part of the Frank Ollerenshaw bequest of studio-pottery to Buxton Museum and Art Gallery, 1949.

**Fig. 57:** **Grafton Galleries *Flambé* Exhibits, Victor Skellern's Scrapbook:** Wedgwood, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent. Wedgwood 1936 Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, 6 Grafton St., W1: 23<sup>rd</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> May 1936.

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**Vase, hard-paste porcelain.** Upper two-thirds of body ridged from the shoulder, the ridging becoming tighter towards the base. Decorated with streaked *rouge flambé* on white body with transparent felspathic glaze. The glaze gives the surface a shiny pitted texture reminiscent of salt-glazed stoneware. Ht: 24 cm. Inscribed V34 (shape no.) and standard printed **BULLERS ENGLAND** on base. Acc. No: 2P.1959.  
Purchased by PM & AG from a Louis Taylor sale for £2 in 1959.
- Fig. 61:** **Bullers *Flambé* (c. 1934-1941)**  
**Shallow Dish, hard-paste porcelain.** Thickly potted shape of Chinese-inspiration. Covered with pale *jun* glaze of grey tint. Slight surface crazing with brown specs and purple rim. Narrow raised foot which has been hollowed out on the underside in a manner similar to many Chinese ceramic vessels. Ground foot rim. Diam: 13.5 cm approx. Base inscriptions blurred by glaze. Acc. No: 433P. 1941 – Part of the Bullers Collection of 22 pieces with various Chinese glaze effects including two examples of *sang-de-boeuf*, presented to PM & AG in 1941 by Guy Harris and Gordon Forsyth.
- Fig. 62:** **Bullers *Flambé* (c. 1934-1941)**  
**Experimental *Flambé* Vase, hard-paste porcelain.** Short ovoid shape with bulbous base. Narrow raised foot. White body glazed with crazed transparent

felspathic glaze; areas of patchy *rouge flambé* shading to brown and green. The whole surface covered with a pitted sheen. Ht: 14.5cm approx. Inscribed on base 375, and marked in paint 295. Acc. No: 130P.1962. Purchased by PM & AG from Mr. Rhead for £3 in 1962.

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 ([www.christineannrichards.co.uk/porcelain/thrown\\_porcelain\\_5.htm](http://www.christineannrichards.co.uk/porcelain/thrown_porcelain_5.htm))

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## Abstract

This thesis analyses the assimilation of the copper-red glaze into British ceramics throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The theme of assimilation is approached from different angles; technological, historical and cultural. Major themes are Manufacturing, Style, Taste and Collecting.

Rich documentary and material sources are taken from museums in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Staffordshire. These are supplemented with interviews, contemporary transactions and periodicals.

The study reveals that objects – in this case copper-red ceramics - however replicated, undergo significant shifts in meaning to be reinterpreted with new sets of values corresponding to the age in which they are produced. In certain contexts, consumers appear less concerned with authenticity and seem even to prefer objects that represent the stylistic bricolage that has come to represent much contemporary British design.

In turn, shifts in value and taste have contributed to the democratisation of collecting and the 'collectable'. Manufacturing has responded to recent interest in collecting with items 'made to collect', promoting the notion of 'instant' antiques. Derivations of the *rouge flambé* glaze have been subject to the manufacturing culture of limited editions. The groups and individuals behind these forces have been discussed throughout.

*The Reception and Adaptation of Oriental Ceramics in Britain, with Particular  
Reference to Imperial Chinese Copper-Red Wares*

**INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation is a social and economic history of the copper-red glaze. The study moves away from traditional art history and purely aesthetic considerations to research the objects in their broader context. In the introduction to *Art Markets in Europe 1400-1800*, Michael North outlined three aspects of the social and economic history of art which he hoped would be developed in future research:

- “1. *The demand for art...*
2. *The conditions of artistic creativity and communication between different artistic centres and artistic milieus.*
3. *Art markets, which may serve as a link between the first two questions, due to the dynamics of the market and its potential for innovation.*”<sup>1</sup>

These aspects of art history have influenced the shape of this dissertation as much as North’s subsequent suggestion that,

*“...economic historians should give higher priority to cultural production than has hitherto been the case, and be prepared to view the history of the market as the product of cultural as much as economic forces.”*<sup>2</sup>

A range of artefacts in various media could have been chosen to illustrate similar points made in the thesis, for instance a silk kimono or fan. The copper-red glaze has been chosen because of its longevity, diversity and circulation. It originated in China around the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD and evolved through the centuries moving across continents to emerge variously interpreted in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain.

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<sup>1</sup> North, Michael & Ormrod, David: *Art Markets in Europe 1400-1800*, Aldershot, Ashgate Pubs., 1998, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period of renewed interest in the oriental 'exotic' urged European potters to try and recreate various glaze effects. Among the revived glazes were the *jun* glaze, various crystalline glazes and glazes initially designed within China to emulate precious materials such as celadon (jade) and *blanc de chine* (ivory). This study will be chiefly concerned with the copper-red and transitional *rouge flambé* glazes. These glazes had been subject to similar revival attempts in China, particularly during the 18<sup>th</sup> century when veneration of the classical past was widespread. The process of adaptation and re-creation was not therefore peculiar to 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. How far it is possible to reinterpret the artistic endeavour of a past age is one of the key questions to be addressed.

By tracing the reception of the *rouge flambé* glaze from Imperial China into the local milieu of the British Potteries, this study offers insight into the nature of the cultural encounter within British Empire and contributes to debates about Orientalism. It will challenge notions about the hegemonic character of British cultural imperialism by focusing on specific Chinese objects and the processes of assimilation and adaptation for manufacture within Britain. The dissertation will also contribute to a growing body of research on collecting and exhibitions, the formation of taste and notions of value. There are seven main sections in the thesis:

- The Science and Development of the Copper-Red Glaze
- Methods of Manufacture
- Style
- Stylistic Reinterpretation
- Taste

- Exhibitions
- Collecting and Collectors

The first three sections deal with context and culture, the latter with the agents of cultural change and development. But in terms of sources and methodology, the chapters can be divided into two units; (A) chapters 1-2 and (B) chapters 3-7.

## **Science and Methods of Manufacture**

### **(A) Scientific and Technological Sources and Methodology (Chapters 1-2)**

Research related to scientific and technological aspects of the thesis draws upon a range of sources. Glaze and body recipes represent a combination of primary and secondary material, published and unpublished information. The limitation of these sources is that without reconstructing chemical experiments, it is difficult to make judgements on aesthetic effects or chemical reactions with certainty. It is also true that manufacturers probably deviated from their recorded research, adjusting formulae according to different manufacturing environments. Moreover, glaze formulae for individuals such as Bernard Moore working with a small gas test-kiln for some of his pieces are likely to have differed from those used by Royal Doulton to produce *flambé* commercially, even though the 'base' recipe might have stayed the same. Modifications in firing time and or slight compositional alteration made significant differences to the finished product. Unpublished information was as much about constant modification as it was about maintaining trade secrets.

Interviews constituted another primary source for scientific and technological data. Those conducted with Derek Emms and Stephen Course revealed that there

was no 'one way' of achieving successful results, therefore it is important not to over-emphasise the significance of an individual testimony.

The objects themselves can also be 'read' and form an essential source group. Objects are clear illustrations of different techniques used to create different aesthetic effects to appeal to different markets. The drive to enter these markets highlighted a scientific and technical determinism motivated in part by profit and also by the desire to compete with British and Chinese rivals. The objects represented in the thesis are written about in periodicals, journals, exhibition catalogues, newspapers and many now reside in museum collections. The published scientific papers referred to are more objective and analytical in content, contrasting with the journalistic reports which tended to eulogise the products and make inaccurate comparisons between British and Chinese glazes. Many artists working in the Arts and Crafts tradition relied on results through personal experimentation rather than published research and often recorded their results only informally, sometimes not at all. For instance, William Howson-Taylor neither published nor even retained his findings for others to use subsequently.

There have already been significant scientific contributions on the composition of the copper-red glaze and its western re-invention. Robert Tichane in *Reds*, *Reds, Copper-Reds*<sup>3</sup>, Nigel Wood in *Chinese Glazes*<sup>4</sup>, and Pamela Vandiver in

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<sup>3</sup> **Tichane, Robert:** *Reds, Reds, Copper Reds*, New York State, New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1985.

<sup>4</sup> **Wood, Nigel:** *Chinese Glazes: Their Origins, Chemistry & Recreation*, London, A & C Black Pubs., 1999, Chapter 9.

*Ceramic Masterpieces – Art, Structure and Technology*,<sup>5</sup> have investigated the chemical make-up, firing procedures and chemical interactions which took place to produce Ming copper-red, Qing *langyao*, *sang-de-boeuf*, *rouge flambé* and reduced copper decorated *jun* wares. They have also commented on production of the same by ceramists at Sèvres, Hermann Seger at the Royal Berlin Manufactory and others. The Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art has published a concise monologue on *Chinese Copper-Red Wares*, a scholarly collection of scientific essays.<sup>6</sup> Prior to these recent publications, there had been a raft of European commentators: The 18<sup>th</sup> century letters of Pere d'Entrecolles,<sup>7</sup> papers by Louis Franchet,<sup>8</sup> J.N. Collie,<sup>9</sup> and J.W. Mellor<sup>10</sup> writing for the British Ceramic Society, and A.L. Hetherington's *Chinese Ceramic Glazes*<sup>11</sup>. Instead of focusing on the science of production this dissertation will concentrate on the wider cultural order which gave birth to these innovations. It will be necessary however to briefly define the chemical nature of the glaze and describe the processes of manufacture in order to make valid comparisons between Chinese and British production methods, and between the varying approaches of British firms. The study will attempt to show how processes of manufacture influence an object's aesthetic.

<sup>5</sup> Kingery, David W. & Vandiver, Pamela: *Ceramic Masterpieces – Art, Structure and Technology*; London, Collier Macmillan Pubs., 1986. Chapter 4; 'A Song Dynasty Jun Ware Bowl', pp. 93-109.

<sup>6</sup> Ed. Scott, Rosemary: *Chinese Copper Red Wares*, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, Occasional Monographs No.4, SOAS, University of London, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> D'Entrecolles, Francois Xavier (1712 & 1722): Letters from Jingdezhen to Pere d'Orry. Translated and repub. in R. Tichane: *Ching-te-Chen – Views of a Porcelain City*, NYS IGR, 1983, pp. 49-128.

<sup>8</sup> Franchet, Louis: 'On the Development of a Copper Red in a Reducing Atmosphere', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, 1907, Vol. 7, pp. 71-79.

<sup>9</sup> Collie, J.N: 'Notes on the *Sang de Boeuf* and the Copper Red Chinese Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, 1917, Vol. 17, pp. 379-384.

<sup>10</sup> Mellor, J.W: (Dedicated to Bernard Moore, 1852-1934). 'The Chemistry of the Chinese Copper Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, 1936, pp. 364-378, & p. 487-491.

<sup>11</sup> Hetherington, A.L: *Chinese Ceramic Glazes*, Los Angeles, Commonwealth Press, 1948, Chapter 3.

The import into Europe of attractive copper-reds stimulated chemical and technological experimentation with a view to commercial advantage. In turn, the later 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese potters of Jingdezhen were swift to respond to Western interest in copper-reds:

*"The modern chi-hung vases are less uniform in tint, developing purplish or crimson mottled shades like the old sang-de-boeuf... they are improving daily under the stimulus of high prices..."<sup>12</sup>*

The difficulties encountered in reproduction - often alluded to in technical and design periodicals, and even in exhibition reports - added to the mythology and desirability of the copper-red glaze in Britain.

#### (B) Cultural and Social Sources and Methodology (Chapters 3-7)

Provenance, dating and aesthetics are key methodological concerns of chapters 3 to 7. The thesis has adopted, as far as possible, a chronological approach of technical and aesthetic development. It is apparent that the chronology overlaps as does the techniques and aesthetics employed. There is a danger the chronological framework influences the explanatory value. The manufacturers and periods chosen for discussion have been selected to present a spectrum of aesthetic and technological developments in the production of *flambé* throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Detailed comment on the vast array of miscellaneous British '*flambé chinoiserie*' of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is absent from the thesis, as is intricate analysis of European, particularly French, German and Hungarian, *flambé*. In the case of the former, technological or stylistic features were not thought to contribute significantly to the development of British *flambé*,

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<sup>12</sup> **Bushell, S.W:** *Oriental Ceramic Art, illustrated by examples from the collection of W.T. Walters*, London, Frederick Muller, 1981, p. 273. Originally published in 1896.

or at least to enhance the debate. With regard to European *flambé*, it was felt that to avoid losing focus concentration on British products was more appropriate.

Chapters 3 to 7 use a commonality of sources: Newspapers, exhibition reports, descriptions in periodicals, exhibition catalogues, shop and auction house catalogues, literature on taste, manufacturers publications, interviews, museum collections, etc. Such data is interpreted through the lens of contemporary and later art critics and historians. Sociological studies of collecting also contribute to the interpretation of the meaning of objects, individually and in groups.

Because sources such as auction and shop catalogues are chiefly concerned with selling, they often reinforce rhetoric which creates cultures of consumption and/or taste. The exhibition catalogues appear more concerned with historical contexts, provenance and chronology, forming typologies and classifications. Some of the exhibition catalogues reflect hierarchies of value in relation to Chinese porcelains of the 19th century. And, while certain newspaper reports are eulogising, advertisements are more blatant, creating as much as reflecting reality.

With regard to collecting, travelogues such as those by Orvar Karlbeck provide useful source material while also being a form of entertainment for a wider public, leaving readers to extrapolate information between the lines. Stephen Bushell's work is particularly insightful, written from the perspective of someone who lived and worked in China. Interviews with collectors are similarly useful but it is wise to be mindful of their desire to create a market for their

investments, hence the propensity towards biased value judgements of pieces, often formed in collusion with dealers. Further, it is noteworthy that the boundaries between collecting and dealing are blurred, again with reference to the dual activities of Bushell and Jellinek. Also, private collectors can be economical with the truth regarding their holdings because of fear of theft and their wish to preserve the secrecy of their sources. Forgery likewise covers difficult terrain where value and collections are concerned, hence the decision not to delve deeply into this area in the thesis, although mention has been made of the recent copies of copper-red and *flambé* porcelains issuing from factories in Jingdezhen.

### Style

Style will be considered separately. First; changes to form and decoration within China, and then as the copper-red glaze and its derivatives were developed in Britain.<sup>13</sup> British adaptations will be compared to Danish and French interpretations. In many cases it is possible to detect traces of cultural preference within different national traditions. The contextual factor is of primary importance when assessing whether an object can truly be divorced from its cultural origins, or whether something of its original philosophy is absorbed in subsequent reproductions.

With regard to 'style', the Aesthetic Movement of the 1860's asserted a preference for Japanese design, if not the real thing then a western approximation. In the public mind, virginal Japan retained the hallmarks of pre-

industrial purity. China had lost its idyllic charm, having been commercially exploited and cast aside. Stylistically, turn of the century *japonisme* mingled with *chinoiserie*. In terms of motifs and techniques, western 'imitations' fused oriental traditions in the same object. The rent-a-style approach of the 1900's was most evident in the stylistic Sino-Japanese confusion of early Doulton *flambé*, later replaced by a western sentimental aesthetic including the portrayal of dray horses and pastoral landscapes.

Stylistic combinations will be examined in terms of 'selling the exotic', centring on public acceptance and misconceptions surrounding the meaning and symbolism behind Chinese ceramic design. Copper-red and *flambé* glazed studio-ceramics will be compared alongside more commercial interpretations.

### **Stylistic Reinterpretation**

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it seems the *interpretation of the interpretation* is a lucrative market. To add to the complexity, oriental imports of modern *flambé* have a reasonable market in Britain and co-exist with home-made versions. For instance, many garden centres are stacked to the gunnels with stoneware *flambé* of an oriental character, (see **fig. 1**). The opening years of the twenty-first century appear to support an eclecticism which surpasses Victoriana. If this is the case, why and how has it arisen? *Feng Shui* and the Antiques Road Show have surely been influential in the new Orientalism. We appear to exist in a multi-cultural 'free-for-all', possibly as a consequence of Empire and more recently, of globalisation. John Mackenzie writing in *Orientalism – History, Theory and the*

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<sup>13</sup> Kerr, Rose: 'Jun Wares and their Qing Dynasty Imitation at Jingdezhen', published in *The Porcelains of Jingdezhen*, Ed. Rosemary Scott, Percival David Foundation, SOAS, University

*Arts*, discussed the role of 'Orientalism' in design from the 18<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the impact of Empire on public perception of 'oriental' products, imported and indigenous.<sup>14</sup> It is my intention to bring this debate into the present.

Notions of utility - changes of use and significance, and related changes in patterns of consumption - are inextricable from issues of **cultural interpretation**. For instance, Ming dynasty (1368-1644) copper-red vessels were originally intended for Imperial sacrificial ceremonies at the Altar of the Sun. Later, Qing dynasty (1644-1911) *Langyao* reds were used for the same ceremonial purposes. The transitional rouge *flambé* glaze which was also developed during the Qing dynasty, became mostly ornamental. Certainly, Chinese *flambé* reds were made during the 19<sup>th</sup> century to cater for a different market. According to Nigel Wood, 19<sup>th</sup> century copper-reds had become very different in character from their 18<sup>th</sup> century predecessors, tending to be over-fluxed and applied to heavy vases.<sup>15</sup> Despite this degeneration in quality, the composition of the copper-red glaze remained shrouded in secrecy. This view was supplemented by Monsieur Scherzer, the French consul at Hankow, when he visited the Jingdezhen kilns on behalf of Sèvres in 1882, and the

*'lone, unique factory from which came the actual masterpieces, the vases with copper red glazes called Kung-houng'.*<sup>16</sup>

Although these reds were probably not the *Chi-hung* 'sacrificial red' or *sang-de-boeuf* glazes made during the Ming and earlier Qing administrations, pains were

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of London, 1993.

<sup>14</sup> MacKenzie, John M: *Orientalism - History, theory and the arts*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, p.185.

<sup>16</sup> F. Scherzer: 'A Trip to Ching-te-Chen', translated by Tichane, R: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, pp.186-201.

obviously still taken to guard recipes and methods of production, reaffirming the special place the copper-red glaze and its derivatives had and have within China.<sup>17</sup>

By the time copper-red or more accurately, *sang-de-boeuf* and *rouge flamé* glazes reached Britain, they had lost ritualistic and sacrificial connotations for their Western audience. These Chinese glazes and their western counterparts became purely ornamental with new sets of cultural values, markers of upper-middle class respectability. For instance, Doulton and Moore *flamé* at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were considered ceramics for the *arriviste*, the *modernist* and cultured who were not afraid to dispense with populist floral design in return for glossy exotic monochromes. *Culture* in the sense of aesthetic taste and education, was as much an industry in later Victorian Britain as it is today. Texts such as Charles Eastlake's *Hints on Household Taste*, were aimed at educating the bourgeoisie.<sup>18</sup> Mass production made *culture* widely available to the aspirant.

The cultural significance of an object was also enhanced by patronage, the act of commissioning a living artist with specific demands regarding subject, style and technique. Commissioned by and made for successive Chinese Emperors since Hongwu (1368-1398), copper-red and *flamé* ceramics acquired automatic status though not the individual potters who created them. The same was true of Doulton ware when the factory received the Royal Warrant and sold its products to royalty. In 1913, *The Connoisseur* reported a 'Royal Visit to Stoke-on-

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<sup>17</sup> Kerr, Rose: *Chinese Ceramics – Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911*, London, V&A, 1998 ed., p. 78.

Trent'.<sup>19</sup> Queen Mary and King George V promoted products of the British Potteries, recognising the need for '*intelligent and general support*' in the face of fierce foreign competition.<sup>20</sup> Influential royal and enlightened middle-class patronage played an important role in visiting, supporting and organising the national and international exhibitions of the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These exhibitions shaped taste and generated artistic exchanges which were invaluable to commercial manufacturers and individual designers.

Methods of financing the manufacturers and changes in the market have had a direct effect on the production of ceramic wares, especially *flambé*. In France, the state subsidised Sèvres factory was able to conduct earlier systematic experimentation into the copper-red glaze for the purposes of commercial reproduction. In Britain, it is evident that Royal Doulton modified their mid-20<sup>th</sup> century rouge *flambé* pieces quite considerably from earlier productions both chemically and stylistically. This modification undoubtedly increased profit margins while conforming to consumer demand and changes in fashion.

Unhalting mechanisation also played its part in the production of an increasingly uniform glaze. Perversely, the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have seen a growing emphasis on the virtue of the unique and even imperfect, hence the renewed emphasis on small, dedicated teams of chemists and designers working towards batch rather than mass production. By way of an interesting comparison, Jingdezhen in China was essentially mass producing Imperial Ware with a

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<sup>18</sup> Eastlake, Sir Charles L: *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and other Details*, 1<sup>st</sup> pub.1868. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. published by Westmead, Farnborough Gregg International, 1971 – revised photographic reprint of the London, Longmans Green ed., 1872.

<sup>19</sup> *The Connoisseur*: 'The Royal Visit to Stoke-on-Trent', 1913, Vol.35, pp. 209-210.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*.

division of labour almost identical to that of 19<sup>th</sup> Britain, the only difference being the absence of mechanised technology.<sup>21</sup>

## **Taste**

The subject of taste formation is an integral part of connoisseurship and collecting, a by-product. A principal agent of taste formation has been the growth in collectors' clubs ranging from the scholarly Oriental Ceramic Society to the popular interest clubs linked to manufacturers. The latter have an interesting role in creating heritage – the antiques of the future. They also boost sales of contemporary products using historical jargon, glossy newsletters and explanatory pamphlets emphasising tradition and continuity. This study will examine the recent trend for nostalgia, and investigate collecting club culture.

The notion of taste-makers - those who influence popular and elite culture - will be another facet of this study. The Oriental Ceramic Society, dealers such as John Sparks and Roger Bluett, and a host of museum scholars, engineers, artists, designers and chemists pioneered the field and fashioned taste, albeit often indirectly. Accounts by early travellers to inland China provide information on the types of ware sought after and obtained. Orvar Karlbeck's book, *Treasure Seeker in China*<sup>22</sup> records details of his missions to secure purchases for a syndicate of seventeen European museums and individual collectors between spring 1930 and spring 1935.<sup>23</sup> Important philosophers and aesthetes of the day

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<sup>21</sup> **Dillon, Michael:** PhD - 'A History of the Porcelain Industry in Jingdezhen', University of Leeds, 1976. This thesis gives an extensive account of the organisation of the Imperial kilns.

<sup>22</sup> **Karlbeck, Orvar:** *Treasure Seeker in China*, London, The Cresset Press, 1957.

<sup>23</sup> **Pearce, Nick:** 'Soldiers, Doctors, Engineers: Chinese Art and British Collecting, 1860-1935', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, Vol. 6, 2001, pp. 49-51.

such as Henri Bergson, Vernon Lee and Oscar Wilde influenced the way people saw design in terms of pure form and emotion. Although Edwardian, their views still resonate in contemporary artistic circles.

The growth of Britain's craft movement during the 20<sup>th</sup> century cannot be ignored in this study; the drive to seek alternative lifestyles, to find 'truth' and spirituality in the pursuit of aesthetic purity. Studio-potters took a formative role in the Arts and Crafts movement, rooted as it was in Morris-style socialism. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain the Arts and Crafts ethic has survived among college students and studio-potters. The Orient was seen as a guide to truth and beauty throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in much the same way that the British public had perceived it in the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the initial throes of the Industrial Revolution. This new form of spiritual orientalism was adopted by the Aesthetic and Art Nouveau Movements and elaborated by figures such as Bernard Leach, and to a lesser extent Roger Fry. Leach's *Beyond East and West* gave rare insight into the spiritual Anglo-Oriental aesthetic adopted by him and his followers.<sup>24</sup>

### Exhibitions, Collecting and Collectors

A major part of this study will deal with collecting and connoisseurship: changes in taste and notions of value from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. In the West, connoisseurship involves evaluation and appreciation of the *quality* of a work of art, as well as scholarship concerning its provenance. Connoisseurship in China is thought to have been established in the Bronze Age. The earliest text

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<sup>24</sup> Leach, Bernard: *Beyond East and West – Memoirs, Portraits & Essays*, London, Faber & Faber Ltd., 1978.

references to Chinese connoisseurship can be traced back to the Han dynasty (202 BC-AD 220).<sup>25</sup>

There are distinctions between the art of connoisseurship and collecting.

Connoisseurs tend to be dispassionate scholars with expert knowledge of an artist or genre. Collectors can be connoisseurs, but they can also be amateurs responding to works of art without any significant knowledge. Unlike dealers and patrons, collectors generally focus on the past with little or no contact with the creator.<sup>26</sup> This section of the dissertation will examine the popularisation of **collecting**, the shift from elites to amateurs.<sup>27</sup> The development of new technologies coupled with the democratisation of society provided the context which shaped fashion, design and notions of value.<sup>28</sup> Within that milieu, dealers, collectors and state institutions have interacted to form the philosophies of what is beautiful and valuable. It is impossible to overrate the importance of provincial and national museums and galleries in promoting culture. **Exhibitions** and their accompanying catalogues of oriental art were crucial in educating the public and forming taste, even as early as William Langdon's exhibition of Chinese Art in 1844. In *Colonialism and the Object*, Craig Clunas set out to observe:

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<sup>25</sup> **Little, Stephen B:** 'Connoisseurship – China'. Ed. **Turner, Jane.** *The Dictionary of Art*, London, Macmillan Pubs., 1996, Vol. 7, pp. 715-716.

<sup>26</sup> **Ibid. Cumming, Robert:** 'Collecting', pp. 560-561.

<sup>27</sup> **MacKenzie, John:** *The Empire of Nature - hunting, conservation & British imperialism*, Manchester University Press, 1988, p.37 – MacKenzie makes a reference to '...the downward percolation of elite values and ideals which was such a characteristic of the time (mid-19thc.)' Although writing about Victorian natural history collecting, the same principle applied to most collecting fields and has contemporary relevance.

<sup>28</sup> **Notions of value** can be related to "... social needs within each society and with perceived inferiority and superiority between societies, as these perceptions affect cultural borrowing and the communication and diffusion of ideas and symbols. They need to be addressed, ... against the background of our experience of chinoiserie, japonisme, and orientalism generally." **Spooner, Brian:** 'Weavers and dealers: authenticity and oriental carpets', p. 215. From *The Social Life of Things: commodities in cultural perspective*, Ed. **Appadurai, Arjun**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.

*"... changes in the presentation of material from China in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum... ' and how the 'interplay of private and public possession, between individual collectors and public museums which they patronised and supported, and which ultimately came to possess the objects they had amassed, is of particular importance in forming the collections of material out of which representations of 'China' and 'Chinese art' were manufactured in Britain. "*<sup>29</sup>

In the same edited collection, Catherine Pagani observed the paradoxical view of China that existed in mid-19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain whereby:

*"... [It] was seen as both the land of the uncivilised and as a country which produced wonderful and exotic goods. "*<sup>30</sup>

It is relevant to any discussion on collecting to look at museum collections and exhibitions, and comment on the way they projected Chinese cultural history and influenced public opinion.

Central to connoisseurship was the confusion that existed between oriental cultures in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Curators struggled to formulate attributions and frequently confused country of origin. In a paper delivered to the Oriental Ceramic Society in 1973, Basil Gray reflected on the lassitude prevalent in European and American art establishments at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

*"It was however seldom before 1914 that Chinese art was considered independently of Japanese... As late as 1906 Sir Purdon Clark, then director of the Metropolitan Museum, declared: 'It is all nonsense to attempt to distinguish between Chinese and Japanese art. ' "*<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Clunas, Craig: 'China in Britain: The imperial collections', Ch. 4, p.43. From *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, material culture and the museum*, Eds. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, London & New York, Routledge, 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Pagani, Catherine: 'Chinese material culture and British perceptions of China in the mid-nineteenth century', Ch. 3, p.28.

<sup>31</sup> Gray, Basil: 'The Development Of Taste In Chinese Art In The West 1872 To 1972'. Paper read on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 1973, *T.O.C.S.*, 1971-1973, Vol.39, p.21.

Collecting and collectors play a major part in determining value structure. Sue Pearce's text *On Collecting*, assesses European collecting practices from the Classical past to the present day, touching on motive and outcome.<sup>32</sup>

Determining value is an essential part of the collecting process. In the case of ceramics, and especially the copper-red glaze, the value appears to be associated with identity, heritage and age rather than intrinsic worth. The Chinese collected antiquities and took much pride in their knowledge of past cultural legacies. Calligraphy and painting were initially privileged within China. Bronzes came to be greatly admired, but it was the Song dynasty (960-1279) which sparked interest in ceramics and developed imperial patronage to encourage their manufacture. However, the exact status of Song and later Imperial ceramics at the time of production is still unclear. Court ceramics were probably at the lower end of an extensive object hierarchy.<sup>33</sup> Recently, some of the highest prices for copper-red and *sang-de-boeuf* ceramics have been paid in Hong Kong by Chinese investors eager to reclaim their cultural heritage.<sup>34</sup>

This thesis will examine the collecting culture relating to Chinese ceramics in general and the role of institutions such as the Oriental Ceramic Society in forming an 'acceptable' aesthetic. It will focus on case studies of various British collectors, past and present, metropolitan and provincial.

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<sup>32</sup> Pearce, Sue: *On Collecting: An investigation into collecting in the European tradition*, London, Routledge, 1995.

<sup>33</sup> Clunas, Craig: *Art in China*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, Ch. 2, p. 58.

<sup>34</sup> The following two sales provide examples of important copper-red pieces which, held in Hong Kong and sold in HKD, no doubt aroused considerable interest among Chinese collectors: **Sotheby's Hong Kong, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May, (1989): Imperial Chinese Porcelain, Enamels and Jade Carvings from the Works of Art Collection of the British Rail Pension Fund, Lots 8-10, 34, 36, 37, 53, 61, 63, 64.** And, **Sotheby's Hong Kong, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May, (1988): Important Private Collection of Ming and Qing Porcelain**, auctioned at the Furama Hotel, **Lots 11-15 (Ming), and 55-64 (Qing).** Unfortunately I have been unable to ascertain the buyers' names, but suspect the pieces went to public, corporate or individual Chinese/Japanese collectors.

Collecting in Britain became increasingly entrepreneurial throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has been interesting to compare collectors of the ‘genuine article’ – the specimen made in China, to those who went for the second tier – made in Britain to *look* Chinese. *Fin de siècle* ‘Ming Millionaires’ co-existed with flea market bargain hunters. Even within the former category there were circles within circles; those who disdained collectors of highly decorative 18<sup>th</sup> century Qing porcelain, disregarding entirely examples from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Academic snobbery that developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century persists today in certain quarters. It was an attitude that suggested ancient wares; Neolithic (c. 6500-c. 1600 B.C.), Shang to Han (c.1600 B.C. – A.D. 220), Six Dynasties (222-589 A.D.), Sui-Tang (581-907 A.D.), and those of the Classical Sung (960-1279 A.D.), Yuan (1279-1368 A.D.) and earlier Ming periods (1368-1644) were more desirable than later products because of their historical and scholarly content. The appreciation of glossy floral surfaces was assumed to be uneducated and effeminate. An article written in 1922, ‘Some Reflections on Artistic Value’, expressed caution towards the veneration of early ware. The author bravely suggested:

*“Preferences in art are so commonly mistaken for judicial estimates, that it is sometimes necessary that the world in general, ourselves included, should be reminded that a work of art has an intrinsic value as art quite apart from any opinion we may hold about it... we are all fallible in our artistic judgements.”*<sup>35</sup>

In the present climate, partly due to rarity of ancient specimens and their relative increase in value, a reappraisal of later wares has taken place. Even so, some of the older generations of collectors remain unconverted. Among others, Van Oort’s, *Chinese Porcelain of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*,<sup>36</sup> and the exhibition catalogue *From the Dragon’s Treasure – Chinese Porcelain from the 19<sup>th</sup> and*

<sup>35</sup> Wethered, V: ‘Some Reflections on Artistic Value’, Paper read to the Oriental Ceramic Society on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1922; *T.O.C.S.*, London, 1922-23, Vol. 2, p.14.

20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Weishaupt Collection,<sup>37</sup> laid scholarly foundations for 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese ceramics, and have been instrumental in shifting taste. Scholarship of this later period has played a major role in forming taste and changing perceptions.

The Oriental Ceramic Society founded in 1921 to promote knowledge of the oriental arts chiefly through collecting and exhibitions had an inner sanctum of membership before the war, and can be seen as a social barometer in terms of collecting-culture. In the more egalitarian post-war climate these divisions fragmented and membership expanded. A. L. Hetherington's article 'A History of the Oriental Ceramic Society', described these changes.<sup>38</sup> Socio-economic divisions were evident throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century collecting fields, but to what extent they have driven the art market is to be discussed in terms of the type of ware collected, by whom and why. Collectors of the decorative arts have often shaped tastes in the higher echelons of the art market, which gradually infiltrate the mass market. Brian Spooner discussed this process with regard to oriental carpets:

*"Although the handmade Axminsters and others had opened a market in the middle of the eighteenth century, ... it was only a century later ... that carpets became a commodity on a scale available to all who could pay. The new market was soon stratified. The collectors stood at the top and, in complex combination with the dealers on whom they depended for their acquisitions, set the values that led the market. The market is still hierarchical, led by antiques ... But the room at the top has continuously expanded, especially since the 1950's."*<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Van Oort: *Chinese Porcelain of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries*, Netherlands, 1977.

<sup>37</sup> Avitabile, G: *Chinese Porcelain from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Weishaupt Collection*, London, 1987.

<sup>38</sup> Hetherington, A.L: 'A History of the Oriental Ceramic Society', *T.O.C.S.*, London, 1947-48, Vol. 23, pp. 9-12.

<sup>39</sup> Spooner, Brian: 'Weavers and dealers: authenticity and oriental carpets', p. 219. From Ed. Appadurai, Arjun: Cambridge, 1986.

More recently, limited editions based on the earlier Anglo-Chinese productions have risen in popularity. A triumph of promotional advertising, these limited editions are often accompanied with pseudo-historical copy and a 'guarantee of authenticity'. Indeed, authenticity or '*cultural discrimination projected onto objects*', became a paramount concern of 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors, and has infiltrated contemporary collecting psychology. Authenticity is not a modern concept. It became a concern when...

*"with the appearance of mechanically produced clone-commodities we began to distinguish between the social meaning of handicraft and that of mechanical production, as well as between uniqueness and easy replaceability... In seeking authenticity people are able to use commodities to express themselves and fix points of security and order in an amorphous modern society."*<sup>40</sup>

The quest for 'authenticity' raises questions about forgery, from which Chinese ceramics were not exempt. And, as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, provenance added value to already expensive and rare items.<sup>41</sup> A well-documented history in the right hands proved not only romantic but also an extremely valuable commodity.

The factors that constitute an '*antique*' or that make an object '*collectable*' pose important questions. I shall be looking how notions of value change throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The mid- 1960's saw a marked interest in Victorian pottery and work from the Art Nouveau studios, barely a hundred years old. Sharp dealers in the 1960's and '70's realised that Edwardian Doulton and Moorcroft had acquired a pedigree. *The Art Dealers* written in 1969 charts the meteoric rise of

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>41</sup> One of the reasons for the success of the Cunliffe Sale was the detailed provenance of many pieces in the collection. **Bonhams: The Cunliffe Collection of Chinese Ceramics and Jade Carvings**, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002, New Bond Street, London.

post-war *collectormania*.<sup>42</sup> Magazines and television programmes have encouraged and popularised collecting as a respectable pursuit. This dissertation will look at influential factors surrounding the creation of new markets at a time when many beautiful treasures were securely in public collections.

Alongside collecting came a voluminous literature. In the early 1900's this took the form of anecdotal pamphlets and books such as *Chats on Oriental China* by J.F. Blacker.<sup>43</sup> Auction catalogues became ever more detailed and scholarly in their attributions. Exhibition catalogues were another reliable source of information, especially those by the Oriental Ceramic Society. World trade fairs did much to disseminate trends in art and design, which in turn stimulated the market for antiques.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

In summary, my intention is to write an *integrated* history of the dissemination of the copper-red glaze into British ceramics, focusing on the aesthetic and cultural rather than scientific reasons for its introduction and evolution reflecting the wider historical context of the society which created them.

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<sup>42</sup> Russell Taylor, John & Brooke, Brian: *The Art Dealers*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1969.

<sup>43</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Chats on Oriental China*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1908.

<sup>44</sup> The Great Exhibition, London, (1851); unrestricted public access to the British Museum granted (1879); Paris Exh.'s (1867, 1868, 1889) and the 1900 Paris World Exh; the World Exposition, Chicago, (1893); St. Louis Exh. (1904), USA; Barcelona World Exh. (1888); Vienna Exh. (1908); Darmstadt Exh.'s (1904, 1908 & 1914); The Imperial International Exhibition at the White City, London, (July 1909); Brussels Exh. (1910); Turin Exh. (1902) and the Turin International Exhibition (1911); Ghent Exh. (1913); Panama-Pacific Exh., San Francisco, (1915).

**Fig. 1**

- **Imported *Flambé* Garden Pots, Stoneware.** Bridgemere Garden World, Staffordshire, March 2005.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE SCIENCE & DEVELOPMENT OF THE COPPER-RED GLAZE**

The purpose of this chapter is to define the nature of the copper-red glaze, its composition and the chemical processes that cause the formation of the rich red colour. The first part will take the form of a literature review on the subject -- starting with a description of the type of clay bodies on which the glaze was applied before giving an explanation of the chemical reactions which create the red colloidal layer. The second part of this chapter will provide a brief historical summary of the evolution of the copper-red glaze in China to show it was developed without recourse to western science, the Chinese possessing intimate knowledge of their raw materials. As this study reveals, scientific and technological advances had a dialectical relation with social and economic change. Chapter One provides an essential scientific foundation which underpins the other sections in the thesis.

#### Informal Networks Underpinning the Development and Dissemination of Technical Literature and Sources in Chapters 1 & 2

The scientific and technical literature outlined in this chapter, and the glazed ceramics that came about as a result of these chemical investigations were the result of carefully guarded experimentation. Informal networks of friends and colleagues that may have existed in Staffordshire were most likely concentrated around the North Staffordshire Technical College, now Staffordshire

University. For instance, Dr. Mellor, one of the chemists alluded to later in the chapter, was a pupil of Bernard Moore and dedicated his published research to him. Moore became the consultant to Royal Doulton, working closely alongside Cuthbert Bailey and Charles Noke advising on the production of their *rouge flambé* as will be discussed in Chapter 3. And, it was Moore who recommended Norman Wilson for a post with Wedgwood, also detailed in Chapter 3. Further, all the potters mentioned so far were members of the *British Ceramic Society* which published papers on a diverse range of subjects – technical and scientific, aesthetic and historical. Persons such as R.L. Hobson from the British Museum were invited to contribute papers published as transactions, as did European chemists such as Louis Franchet (1907), extending beyond the confines of Staffordshire. The society also drew from collector-scientists such as Norman Collie (1916/18) who published further research on related subjects in the *Transactions of The Oriental Ceramic Society* (1923). London-based collectors like Eumorfopoulos would have perhaps read such papers or been acquainted with the authors. Moore gave pieces of his work to the British Museum in 1902 and it was likely that artists working for Royal Doulton in Lambeth were acquainted with recent developments in British and European ceramics through this institution and the South Kensington, later Victoria and Albert Museum. Hence networks almost certainly existed even if formal evidence is scant. William Howson-Taylor's father, Edward Richard Taylor, came from a Staffordshire potting family, and in 1877 became headmaster of the Birmingham School of Art, no doubt able to wield some influence with art-critics and the promotion of his son's work. But, Howson-Taylor himself was a potter in the Arts and Crafts mould, learning his trade first with his uncle in

Hanley, then through a process of relentless experimentation sponsored by his father. As far as is known, all records of Howson-Taylor's research were destroyed and he did not share compositions or techniques with his contemporaries, although Bernard Moore, A.F. Wenger and John Adams of Poole Pottery sent him specimens of their work for advice on glazes.<sup>1</sup> This process of private experimentation characterised the methods employed by Bullers Ltd., Norman Wilson working for Wedgwood and Derek Emms', etc.

The development of the copper-red glaze varied according to the objectives of individual manufacturers hence chemical composition and the corresponding technicalities regulating firing times were subject to variation. In this sense, with the possible exception of similarities between some Bernard Moore and Royal Doulton *flambé*, using the formula of a rival firm was not beneficial. It seemed that commercial competition played a large part in driving scientific experimentation, a view shared by the eminent historian C.A. Bayly:

*"Not all this effusion of creativity could be attributed to popular agency... It was usually shrewd businessmen who saw the potential in the popular market. But, to differing degrees, the success of these new or modified art forms reflected active choices by working people, and it sometimes reflected their own creative involvement in making culture."*<sup>2</sup>

There is no evidence to suggest that formal interaction in terms of sharing glaze formulae took place between manufacturers vying to recreate variations on the *flambé* theme, though each would probably have been aware of published European research. As stated later in this chapter (pp. 67-8), Clement

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<sup>1</sup> **Bennett, Ian:** *Ruskin Pottery- The Work of William Howson-Taylor (1876-1935)*, Ex. Cat., Haslam and Whiteway, 105 Kensington Church Street, London, April 13 – May 2, 1981, Chapter 1.

<sup>2</sup> **Bayley, C.A:** *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914 – Global Connections and Comparisons*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 391-392.

Wedgwood was aware of A. Salvétat and J. J. Ebelmen's published research for *Sèvres – a memoir on the composition of the materials used in the fabrication and decoration of Chinese porcelains* (1852), describing the first French attempt to reproduce high-fired copper-red. Bernard Moore had probably read Hermann Seger's *Collected Writings* Translated from the German by members of the *American Ceramic Society* in 1902, which probably influenced Moore's use of an accurately controlled gas test-kiln for some of his high-temperature glazes.<sup>3</sup> It is likely Moore may also have seen Seger's work in the Chicago exhibition of 1892-3, or read reports about them, and was likely to have observed the work of French ceramists at the various late 19<sup>th</sup> century Parisian exhibitions, (see pp. 69-70).

J.W. Mellor also knew of a raft of European published research as is evident in the extensive bibliography of his paper for the British Ceramic Society.<sup>4</sup> Throughout his 1936 paper, Mellor refers to European contemporaries and previous experiments. He is aware of Seger's observations regarding cuprous oxide as the tinctorial agent in copper-reds; C. Lauth and G. Dutailly's '*vide infra*' experiments with copper-red glaze chemistry (1888); J.J. Ebelmen and A. Salvétat's chemical analyses of Chinese *rouge flambé* glazes (1856), and of their – including Moore's – opinions of the necessary percentage of copper oxide to be added to the glaze.<sup>5</sup> Mellor builds on this research and experiments

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<sup>3</sup> **Bleining, A (Ed):** *The Collected Writings of Hermann August Seger*, Vol. 1, Easton, PA.; The Chemical Publishing Company, 1902, pp. 222-224.

<sup>4</sup> **Mellor, J.W:** 'The Chemistry of the Chinese Copper-Red Glazes. Dedicated to Bernard Moore, 1852-1934.' *Transactions of the British Ceramic Society*, Vol. 35, 1936, p. 376.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 367-368, 370.

in order to gain his own results and theory. He acknowledges points where research correlates with his result.<sup>6</sup>

Mellor proceeds to quote from J. N. Collie who shared the view that iron was necessary for the development of *sang-de-boeuf*, and then mentions the Japanese ceramists T. Yoshioka and S. Hiraoka (1929) who observed the desirability of tin-oxide for '*clear and beautiful*' copper-reds.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, manufacturers such as Sèvres had gone to elaborate lengths to obtain technical information, subsidising the industrial espionage of M. Scherzer in Jingdezhen c.1882. Scherzer's samples and technological information on the Chinese copper-red glazes were received by M. Georges Vogt, head of the Sèvres laboratories. In 1899, Vogt published his careful chemical analyses. Information gathering of this sort from China began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the investigations of the Jesuit Pere d'Entrecolles detailed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Exhibitions, the subject of Chapter 6, were a means of public dissemination – at least in terms of design ideas and new chemical developments, if not in the concrete exchange of precise scientific information. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century international exhibitions, particularly those in Paris, and the 1904 St. Louis Centennial Exhibition were probably formative in the development of the *flambé* glaze in early 20<sup>th</sup> century British ceramics. Exhibitions provided a forum where manufacturers could meet and discuss ideas informally. Similar trade exhibitions perform the same function for contemporary manufacturers.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 369.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 369.

## PART 1

### Clay Bodies used for Copper-Red Glazes

Before explaining the composition of a copper-red glaze it is necessary to discuss the type of clay body on which the glaze was applied. In China, a porcelain body was used for the copper-red glaze and its derivatives. In 1722 the French Jesuit Pere d'Entrecolles wrote that the copper-red glaze was applied to a porcelain body that contained no petuntse. '*Some yellow earth*' was used as a substitute and mixed with kaolin.<sup>8</sup> Scherzer recorded in his visit to the Jingdezhen kilns in 1882 that '*the paste for this glaze (copper-red) is very hard, which is necessary in order to resist several successive high firings.*'<sup>9</sup> He noted that different coloured glazes were applied to the same porcelain body except '*copper-red and turquoise-blue which need special biscuits.*'<sup>10</sup>

Georges Vogt analysed Scherzer's samples from Jingdezhen and published the results in 1899. He concluded that the paste used by the Chinese in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for copper-red glazes was '*an ordinary composition*', except it contained more iron than the porcelain used for white glazes. The high iron content gave a grey caste to the body. Moreover, Vogt acknowledged the Chinese wisdom in using an opaque body for the red glaze, '*which would look*

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<sup>8</sup> Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles (1722), 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter sent from Jingdezhen to Pere d'Orry. Translated and republished in Robert Tichane: *Ching-te-Chen - Views of a Porcelain City*, New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1983, p. 119.

<sup>9</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p.199.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.201.

*terrible under a white glaze*', reserving the transparent white porcelain for *blanc de chine* and underglaze decoration.<sup>11</sup>

In Britain several types of clay bodies were used for the various interpretations of the Chinese copper-red and rouge *flambé* glaze. These included porcellaneous stoneware, porcelain, bone-china and earthenware. The body used corresponded to the broad and shifting definition of *flambé* adopted by each manufacturer, which shall be examined more closely in chapters two and three. British copper-red and *flambé* produced according to the Chinese ideal used high-firing bodies of porcelain and porcellaneous stoneware. William Howson Taylor's *sang-de-boeuf* and *flambé* used only fine stoneware bodies. Some manufacturers used all four different body types in their experiments. Bernard Moore is said to have imported porcelain blanks from the Continent and maybe even from Japan, although attribution remains uncertain.<sup>12</sup> Royal Doulton used more than one body type. Examples of Doulton stoneware and bone-china bodies can be found covered with *rouge flambé*, *Sung* and *Chang* glazes. Moorcroft used earthenware bodies for their low-fired *lustre-flambé*.

### **What is a Glaze?**

In order to understand the technical details relating to the copper-red glaze it is necessary to define the nature and purpose of any ceramic glaze. Essentially, a

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<sup>11</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, Wisconsin, USA, Krause Publications, 1998, p.278. Georges Vogt: 'Chinese Copper Reds – Analyses', published in 1899 – translated and republished in the above – pp. 275-290.

<sup>12</sup> Dawson, Aileen: *Bernard Moore Master Potter (1850-1935)*, London, Richard Dennis Pubs., 1982, Ch.5, p.43.

glaze is the glassy coating fused to a ceramic body to make it watertight or for decoration. Ceramic glazes are made up of three main elements:

1. **Silica** – the glass forming oxide which forms the bulk of the glaze.
2. **Alumina** – which acts as a stiffener to prevent the glaze running off the ware during firing.
3. **The Fluxes** – which reduce the melting point of silica from 1710°C to about 1200°C. Lead, feldspar, sea salt, borax, soda and organic ashes from ferns, bone, and seaweed are a selection of materials used to create fluxes.

These ingredients are *calcined* – heated in a kiln to remove volatile material and compound the different substances. This process is also known as *fritting*. The resulting mixture is ground into an insoluble powder, often suspended in water. When an object is dipped, the water is immediately absorbed into the clay body leaving a powdery film on the surface. The calcined powder can otherwise be dusted or sprayed onto a clay body.

In an early paper to the British Ceramic Society, Louis Franchet claimed it was beneficial to frit the batch of materials used for a copper-red glaze - including the copper and tin oxides - in an oxidizing fire before application. During the course of lengthy experimentation, Franchet found that the failure rate was high when the copper oxide was not fritted with the other glaze materials because, “... *when the oxide is simply mixed with the glaze, we are hindered by the fact*

*that it is not completely dissolved when the glaze is matured... "*<sup>13</sup> He also claimed that the use of a raw unfritted glaze achieved a uniform tint of red rather than a flamed appearance, and that success was '*uncertain.*'<sup>14</sup>

### **The Copper-Red Glaze**

A brilliant copper red is probably the most difficult colour to achieve in the ceramic glaze spectrum. The use of copper to create red glass is thought to have originated in Mesopotamia c.3000 BC. By around the mid-second millennium BC, the use of copper was established in Egyptian red glass. In each case, large quantities of copper were used, around five to eleven per cent. The resulting glass was relatively opaque.

Although the Chinese ceramic copper-red glaze has a history spanning over 1,000 years, it reached its zenith in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. With the addition of 0.5 to a maximum of 1 per cent copper oxide, the copper-red glaze used the same clear porcelain glaze developed at Jingdezhen in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike earlier Middle Eastern, Egyptian and Roman reds, Chinese copper-reds were translucent, high-fired glazes. The comparatively small amount of copper in the glaze composition was key to the colour. Too much copper often results in liverish brown, too little in a colourless glaze as approximately half of the copper evaporates during the firing. For an explanation of other chemical elements included in the base composition of the copper-red glaze, see

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<sup>13</sup> Franchet, Louis: 'On the Development of Copper Red in a Reducing Atmosphere', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. VII, May 1908, pp. 74-75.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.75.

Appendix I. Below is an example of Bernard Moore's experimentation where the copper has volatilized leaving only grey stains on the porcelain body, (fig.2).

**Fig. 2**



• **Copper-red trial; porcelain; H: 15cm. Bernard Moore, c.1903-05. Acc. No: 77P.1973.** Brown stains have appeared where the copper has volatilised during firing. The body is badly damaged and cracked in several places. Marked on the base in pencil – No. 115 THERMIC. Inscribed with the no. 8079.

Presented to the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery by Mr J. Burton in 1973. (Burton was a pupil of Mr. Mountford's evening class – Ex-Museum Director).

### Copper Sources

According to Nigel Wood in '*Chinese Glazes*', most of the early glazes coloured with copper have been found to contain subsidiary amounts of tin oxide.<sup>15</sup> This is significant because in reduction fired glazes tin oxide appears to have aided the production of the most brilliant copper-reds. Traces of tin oxide have been found in the copper-red painted decoration on Song and Yuan *jun* ware, and in early 15<sup>th</sup> century Ming copper-reds. Where the Chinese obtained their source of copper remains mysterious. It is likely that the source for Kangxi

monochrome reds was oxidised bronze. Pere d'Entrecolles' second letter from China in 1722 confirms the impurity of the copper sources:

*"Maybe it would be convenient to learn how these copper shavings are prepared. We know that, in China, ... there are many pieces (of silver) of an alloy base. However, there are occasions where they have to be refined... Then, we have recourse to workers whose trade is refining silver in furnaces specially built for this purpose, at the same time separating the copper and lead. They form copper shavings, which, undoubtedly still contain some invisible bits of silver or lead."*<sup>15</sup>

It is possible that the copper shavings described above might also have contained tin. Pere d'Entrecolles elaborated on the extraction process of copper oxide. He described how water was flicked onto the molten copper, the resulting film removed with iron tweezers and immersed rapidly in cold water.

In 1882, the French consul at Hankow, Monsieur Scherzer, visited Jingdezhen to collect samples of Chinese ceramic glazes, bodies and enamels for M. Brongniart, then director of Sèvres Porcelain. These samples were analysed by Georges Vogt, Technical Director of Sèvres. Vogt's published analysis of 1899 revealed the content of the copper filings collected by Scherzer and used in 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese copper-red glaze compositions. These copper filings contained copper oxides mixed in approximately equal parts with an iron-rich material, possibly clay:

*"The copper filings which are part of the red preparation, kun-houng, are far from being pure metal. One finds by qualitative analysis, cupric oxide, cuprous oxide, traces of lead, oxides of iron, aluminum, manganese, calcium and silicon, plus a sizeable amount of carbonaceous material."*

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<sup>15</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes – Their Origins, Chemistry and Recreation*; London, A&C Black Pubs., 1999. Chapter 9, 'Copper in Chinese Glazes', p. 167.

<sup>16</sup> Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles (1722), 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter. Translated and republished in Tichane: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, p.206.

*Nitric acid divides this material into a soluble part, composed mainly of copper and an insoluble part composed of a grey ferruginous clay (which should become red after firing), and carbonaceous material.*"<sup>17</sup>

### **Chemical Summary of the Copper-Red Glaze Composition**

To summarise, there are certain limits in the composition of the base glaze suitable for copper-reds. To the base glaze it is necessary to add small amounts of copper oxide and tin oxide to obtain a good red colour. Copper appears in Chinese glazes in three forms; **cupric oxide (CuO)**, **cuprous oxide (Cu<sub>2</sub>O)** and **colloidal copper metal (Cu)**. In concentrations of approximately 3 per cent, **Cupric oxide** provides emerald green in Chinese lead glazes and turquoise blue in alkaline glazes. **Colloidal copper metal** is the final reduced form and the prime tinctorial agent in Chinese and European copper-red glazes. The colours from this source are diverse, ranging from orange-cherry red, pink and mauve-purple. Wood states that:

*"Copper cannot exist in a solid state in glazes at high-temperatures, (its melting point is 1083 °C), but it can solidify below this temperature as the glaze cools down."*<sup>18</sup>

A simplified version of the copper-red formation process can be described thus: Copper atoms form in cooling. These atoms clump together to produce small crystals of copper metal. If the cooling rate is not too slow, particles of copper remain extremely small – preferably in the region of 20-200 Angstrom units, (1

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<sup>17</sup> **Vogt, Georges:** 'Chinese Copper Reds – Analyses', 1899; translated and republished in **Tichane:** *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, p. 280.

<sup>18</sup> **Wood, Nigel:** *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.168.

Angstrom unit measuring 1 hundred millionth of a centimetre).<sup>19</sup> These tiny particles give the red colour to a transparent base glaze. Copper of this fineness is *colloidal* – existing in a borderline state between suspension and solution. As the literature reviewed later in this chapter will reveal, it took many years of research to determine that copper-red glazes were coloured by colloidal particles of copper suspended in the glaze. There were rumours circulating in China that the red colour was the result of crushed rubies:

**Po wu yao lan:-** “In the reign of Hsuan-te (A.D. 1426-35) were made the *tazza-shaped* (lit. *handled*) or *stemmed cups* decorated with red fish. Made of red precious stones from the west reduced to powder, the form of the fish emerged during the baking from the paste, and stood out in relief as brilliant as rubies.”

**Nan ts'un sui pi:-** “The ‘sacrificial’ red of the reign of Hsuan-te was made by mixing red precious stones from the west reduced to powder with the glaze. It rose in relief because the glaze was as transparent and thick as a mass of lard, so that its surface became marked like the skin of a chicken, or the peel of an orange. The paste is composed of rich and solid material, so that the pieces do not easily crack or break. There are also good specimens among the productions of the reigns of Cheng-te (1506-21), Hung-chih (1488-1505), Lung-ch’ing (1567-72), and Wanli (1573-1619).”<sup>20</sup>

### The Copper-Red Glaze Chemical Reactions

The copper-red glaze is formed as a result of many complex chemical changes. The best way of explaining these glaze reactions is to review the work of J.N. Collie in collaboration with Sir Herbert Jackson, and the work of J.W. Mellor. Although previous papers had been published on the copper-red glaze in France

<sup>19</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 24, p.163.

<sup>20</sup> Bushell, S.W: *Description of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain – Being a Translation of the T'ao Shuo*, (with an Index by Lady David), London, Oxford University Press, Oxford in Asia Studies in Ceramics, 1977, pp. 57-58.

and Germany, this dissertation focuses on the British perspective, hence the decision to use the work of British scientists.

Before commenting on the papers, it is necessary to recap on the nature of a colloid. Colloidal particles are of a finely divided substance such as copper, which are dispersed throughout another substance – in this case the porcelain base glaze. The divided particles are known as the dispersed or discontinuous phase; the substance containing them is known as the dispersion medium, or continuous phase. Together, both phases become a colloid – halfway between a suspension and a solution. Colloidal particles can be smaller than the wavelengths of visible light, and may only be seen with an electron microscope. These small particles interfere with the light waves, hence the coloured effect. Although one particle may be invisible to the naked eye, the collective effect is often striking. The collective colour tends to vary according to the size of the particles dispersed throughout the glaze. Writing in 1917, Collie understood that only a small amount of copper was necessary to produce the characteristic red of the *sang-de-boeuf* glaze. In fact, so small was the quantity of copper present in the glaze that if oxidised it would only produce a “faint green.”<sup>21</sup>

The work of J.N. Collie, “Notes on the ‘Sang de Boeuf’ and Copper-Red Glazes” (1917), is an early English classic on the chemistry of copper-red glazes. He is nearly convinced that the red colour of the glaze is due to colloidal

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<sup>21</sup> Collie, J.N: ‘Notes on the ‘Sang de Boeuf’ and the Copper-Red Chinese Glazes’, *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 17, 1917-18, p. 382.

copper metal, and describes how he has reached this conclusion by comparison with *famille rose*, “... which is almost certainly due to colloidal gold...”<sup>22</sup>

In a subsequent paper Collie delivered with Sir Herbert Jackson, the colloidal copper metal theory is taken further by analogy with copper-red glasses. Put simply, they explained that colloidal metal solutions were highly responsive to fluctuations in temperature, which caused changes in molecular aggregation and therefore changes in the colour. When the glaze or glass was molten, the reduced copper remained transparent. Rapid cooling retained the colourless transparency whereas gradual cooling resulted in the formation of small copper metal particles inherent in transparent copper-red glazes. Larger particles tended to result in opaque reds. They were aware that the “*red colour (was) ... not the last stage of a reduced copper glaze,*” and went on to state that with increased heat, “*the red copper particles would aggregate together into larger globules and... by reflected light there would be a definite copper coloured opacity over the whole surface... shades varying from sealing-wax red to ...marked brown tint – almost a chocolate brown.*”<sup>23</sup>

In Collie’s original ‘Notes’, he asserted that extreme heat would eventually fuse the copper particles together into “*infinitesimal globules of metallic copper too small to be seen by the eye and so the glaze would appear colourless.*”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 379.

<sup>23</sup> Collie, J.N: ‘A Monograph On The Copper-Red Glazes’, *T.O.C.S.*, 1921-22, p.27. (The paper was read by Prof. Collie on Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1921, & was followed by ‘further explanations given by Sir Herbert Jackson, F.R.S., during a subsequent discussion’.)

<sup>24</sup> Collie, J.N: ‘Notes on the ‘Sang de Boeuf’’, *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 17, 1917-18, pp. 379-380.

Collie was able to distinguish between earlier and later specimens of the *sang-de-boeuf* glaze, noting that the 'true Lang yao must be a brilliant red, varying in depth and even entirely absent in places; there must be no purple or grey streaks, a faint crackle must be seen in the glaze, and the glaze must not run down on to the base but stop at the foot rim.' <sup>25</sup> Although he sensibly assumed that early Kangxi reds also ran - smaller pieces were often ground down and re-fired to soften the glaze and remove any traces of grinding. Collie suggested that the Jingdezhen potters found it easier to work with more fluid glazes, which gave later glazes different characteristics. Collie wrote that an early *sang-de-boeuf* Kangxi specimen "of a pure brilliant red contained no phosphate, whilst another (later) piece with purple and grey splashes" was found to contain a considerable amount. <sup>26</sup> The addition of phosphorus pentoxide to later Chinese *sang-de-boeuf* glazes was very likely. It is a glass-forming oxide which is usually present as a trace element in a glaze, and often enters the glaze through vegetable or bone ash. Added in small amounts, phosphorus creates a colloidal opacity as seen in Chinese *jun* glazes. The presence of phosphorus reveals itself as a blue flush in glazes, possibly contributing to the later *flambé* effects. The small colloidal phosphorus particles remain separate from, yet suspended in the silica glass of the glaze. Because they are separate, the phosphorus particles have a different surface from the surrounding glass which bends the light waves, making the glaze look opaque.

Collie also recognised the role of iron and tin oxide as agents of reduction essential for the development of the red colour. It was known that tin was

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 381.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 382.

necessary for the formation of *famille rose* - a colloidal gold glaze. By analogy, Collic proposed that iron was responsible for reducing copper to a colloidal state. He was aware of the iron-rich body used by the Chinese for copper-reds as described by Pere d'Entrecolles, suggesting "*the yellow clay... (owed) its colour to oxide of iron*". He knew that analysis of the *sang-de-boeuf* glaze had revealed "*more iron than copper, the latter being present... probably much less than 1 per cent.*" And that in fact, the copper was added to an "*ordinary felspathic glaze containing silica, alumina, lime and alkalies.*"<sup>27</sup>

Collie argued that iron was primarily responsible for the reduction of copper-reds, yet in the paper he delivered with Jackson, he also acknowledged that "*when tin oxide is present in a felspathic glaze, a larger concentration of copper is possible (in solution). As a result, the well-known sealing-wax red effect is secured...*"<sup>28</sup> The role of tin oxide is defined and clarified in the later paper by J.W. Mellor.

Before considering Mellor's work, it is worth mentioning Collie's comments on the microscopic appearance of the copper-red glaze. He is accurate in so much as the red colour does not permeate the glaze, producing "*only a thin line of copper-red...*"<sup>29</sup> However, Collie's explanation as to how this line of colloidal copper-red was produced is open to question. In his subsequent paper for the Oriental Ceramic Society, Collie reasserts his view that the "*copper-red colour is restricted to a very thin layer next to the body*", and adds that the rest of the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 383.

<sup>28</sup> Collie, J.N: 'A Monograph', *T.O.C.S.*, 1921, pp. 28-29.

<sup>29</sup> Collie, J.N: 'Notes on the 'Sang-de-Boeuf'', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 17, 1917-18, p. 382.

glaze was colourless.<sup>30</sup> He gave two reasons for this: First that the red layer was due to the presence of the reducing agent iron oxide applied as a ferruginous slip. We know now that although iron was probably present in the glaze and body, it was not applied as a slip beneath the *sang-de-boeuf* glaze. Also, here Collie has ignored the role of tin oxide as a reducing agent. Secondly, Collie theorised that because the temperature range at which copper can disperse is limited, the glaze body interface was the only place where the copper-red colour could develop. He assumed the heat next to the body would retain the correct temperature for longer than the exterior, thus maintaining the necessary glaze viscosity to produce a 'thin lamina'.<sup>31</sup> It is easy to grasp the logic of Collie's early ideas, although the second theory illustrated insufficient understanding of the oxidation-reduction process; how oxygen permeated the glaze to produce the colourless upper layer. Mellor explains this complex reaction in greater depth, and reveals the five different layers in the copper-red glaze structure.

On balance, Collie's research in collaboration with Jackson produced valuable results, scholarly foundations on which Mellor and others could build. He was correct in his conviction that varying the amount of copper in the glaze affected the colour and opacity, and that temperature control was crucial in the formation of the colloidal copper metal, (copper coming out of suspension/solution). He understood the importance of achieving the correct viscosity of glaze to ensure mobility of the separated copper particles, and that particle size, as well as the

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<sup>30</sup> Collie, J.N: 'A Monograph', *T.O.C.S.*, 1921, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

extent to which they were dispersed throughout the glaze, had a bearing on the colour.<sup>32</sup>

### **John W. Mellor (1869-1938)**

The British ceramic-chemist John W. Mellor is to be discussed in relation to his work on copper-red glazes, but he is also known for research into the properties of glaze minerals during fusion, including 'The Spitting of Glazes in the Enamel Kiln'.<sup>33</sup> Mellor was instrumental in the development of lead-free glazes, although he was not alone in working towards this goal - Bernard Moore and William Howson-Taylor also experimented with lead-free alternatives. Mellor's paper of 1936, 'The Chemistry of the Chinese Copper-Red Glazes' is dedicated to Bernard Moore. It is understood that considerable interaction took place between the chemists as they tried to unravel the secrets of the copper-red glaze. Mellor's work into the copper-red glaze successfully synthesised and updated the research of earlier European chemists and ceramists. This is particularly evident in the detailed bibliography of research literature he lists at the end of Part I.<sup>34</sup>

Like Collic and Jackson, he agreed that the red colour of the copper glaze is derived from colloidal copper metal; that the glaze was colourless before reduction, the red developing from a sub-oxide of copper in a felspathic glaze.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>33</sup> Mellor, J.W: 'The Chemistry of the Chinese Copper-Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 35, 1936, pp. 364, 378. Dr. J. W. Mellor, CBE, FRS, of 132 Highlands Heath, Portsmouth Rd., London, SW 15, was an Hon. Member of The British Ceramic Society. References to other papers by Mellor include: 'Collected Papers from the County Pottery Laboratory', London, 373,

He understood that the colour varied according to the proportion of copper used and the way the colloidal copper particles were dispersed in the glaze.

One of the most informative aspects of this classic paper is Mellor's use of microphotographs to illustrate the structure of the *rouge flambé* in-glaze and on-glaze. From Figure 1 we can clearly see the five different layers that compose the *rouge flambé* in-glaze. The surface layer is colourless; the next layer is tinged with yellow; the third layer is red; the fourth layer is blue, and the fifth and final layer at the glaze-body interface is colourless. Mellor used each layer to describe the chemical reactions involved in the formation process.

In brief, Mellor advanced the theory that the **surface colourless layer** was "*formed by the oxidation of the colloidal copper in the red layer.*" The **second, yellow tinged layer** resulted from an "*arrested stage in the oxidation of colloidal copper*", and he noted, "*sometimes the yellow band is absent.*"

Mellor believed the red particles of colloidal copper were finer in the yellow layer because the aerial oxygen permeated this section of the glaze, forming a film of cupric oxide around the surface of the particles. The film was dissolved by the surrounding glaze, thus diminishing the particle size until they appeared as a yellow colloid before disappearing altogether – hence the colourless surface layer. Mellor observed that a similar process occurred in glazes which contained iron oxide and colloidal gold and silver.<sup>35</sup>

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1914; & 'A Comprehensive Treatise on Inorganic and Theoretical Chemistry', London, 4, 983, 1923.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 376 & 378.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 365–366.

The **third layer** from the glaze surface, or **red layer**, was thought by Mellor to contain colloidal copper "*in association with stannic (tin) oxide... as a stabilising agent, or protective colloid.*"<sup>36</sup> By analogy with colloidal gold, Mellor suggested that tin oxide helped the colloidal copper particles to disperse and remain separate in solution. Tin oxide's ability to disperse the colloidal copper to give the intense red colouration throughout the glaze was considered remarkable, since only 0.1-0.5 per cent copper oxide was needed. Mellor was aware that the amount of dissolved cupric oxide needed to produce an oxidised green lead glaze without tin oxide as a dispersion agent was much higher – typically 3 per cent, but it could be as much as 5 per cent.

The **forth layer** is shown as **blue** on the microphotograph. Mellor was of the opinion it represented an arrested stage in the reduction of colloidal copper metal. He referred to the paper by Collie and Jackson who noted that tin oxide in the form of stannous oxide is able to reduce cuprous oxide to colloidal copper metal. Mellor noted they inferred that "*the aggregation of the dispersed colloidal copper change the colour of the glaze in transmitted light from red to blue.*"<sup>37</sup> In other words, the blue colloid contained less dispersed particles of colloidal copper than the red colloid. Tin oxide, which changes from stannous oxide (reduced) in the blue colloid to stannic oxide (oxidised) in the red colloid, plays a key role in dispersing particles in the blue colloid to create the upper red colloidal layer. Present as stannic oxide, tin enables the colloid particles to separate and disperse, and also stabilises the colloidal state.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 366.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 367 & Collie, J.N: 'A Monograph', T.O.C.S., 1921, p. 26.

The **fifth, colourless layer** of the glaze rests **next to the body**. This zone is commonly known as the *interface*. Mellor assumed the colourless solution contained cuprous oxide and was "*produced by the reduction of oxide in the glaze...*", although he acknowledged H.A. Seger's experiments which suggested the fifth glaze layer may be a solution of copper.<sup>39</sup> Mellor used his own hypothesis as the basis of this research paper. Mellor, Collie and Jackson agreed on the corrosive nature of the reduced glaze (colourless fifth layer) on the body, especially evident in Mellor's microphotographs of the glaze interface seen in Figures 3 & 4.<sup>40</sup>

At this point it is worth reiterating the earlier theories of Collie and Jackson explaining the development of the red colloidal layer in the glaze. They supposed the red layer of the glaze to be at the interface, omitting the presence of a reduced colourless layer. A thin red lamina next to the body was claimed to sit beneath a deeper colourless glaze, formed as a result of the heat expelled from the clay body:

*"... the pot itself retains heat longer and therefore gives the appropriate conditions of temperature ... to enable the copper to come out..."*<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, the copper was thought to be attracted to a roughened surface available at the interface, aided by the deposition of iron oxide from the body which was known to assist reduction. Hence, Collie and Jackson proposed it was logical for the copper to come out of solution and deposit itself on the

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<sup>38</sup> **Mellor, J.W:** 'Chinese Copper-Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 35, 1936, p. 369.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>41</sup> **Collie, J.N:** 'A Monograph', *T.O.C.S.*, 1921, pp. 31- 32.

surface of the clay rather than throughout the glaze. Mellor's research into the reactions which caused the colloidal red layer and its position within the glaze suggested otherwise.

According to Mellor, aerial oxygen invades the molten glaze surface, working its way down towards the body. The oxygen is able to convert some of the reduced stannous oxide in the colourless reduced layer of glaze contiguous to the body to oxidised stannic oxide. Once formed, the stannic oxide works to reduce the unstable dissolved copper into colloidal metal. The colloidal copper first appears as a blue layer because of the lack of stannic oxide necessary for further dispersion. As more oxygen permeates the hot glaze, stannic oxide accumulates resulting in the complete dispersion of colloidal copper particles. Complete dispersion is visible as a red layer in the glaze. As mentioned previously, stannic oxide has a dual role. As well as assisting in reduction, stannic oxide protects and stabilises the colloid. Finally, when enough oxygen is dissolved in the glaze, the colloidal copper is oxidised and becomes colourless.<sup>42</sup>

Mellor claimed that the work done by J.J. Ebelmen and A. Salvétat substantiated his interpretation that the red band of colloidal copper metal is formed primarily on the surface but retreats towards the body as oxygen permeates the glaze.<sup>43</sup> Mellor thus summarised the complex chemistry of in-

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<sup>42</sup> Mellor, J.W: 'Chinese Copper-Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 35, 1936, p. 370.

<sup>43</sup> Ebelman, J.J. & Salvétat, L.A: Second Memoir (Part 2), Vol. XXXV, 1852, p. 312 - 'Researches on the Composition of Chinese Porcelain'. *Journal Ann. Chim. et Phys.*, translated and republished in Tichane: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 31, pp. 207-211: 'Concerning Some Glazes of the High Fire; Red Glazes.'

glaze *flambé* considering the three 'definite' zones; the colourless oxidised surface and lower reduced layer sandwiched between a red colloidal film:

*"The red band is derived from the lower colourless (reduced) zone; and the upper colourless zone from the red band. The presence of the upper colourless band demonstrates the permeability of the glaze to aerial oxygen. The depth of the zone above the red band shows how far the aerial oxygen has been able to permeate into the glaze and to oxidise the colloidal copper."*<sup>44</sup>

Writing at a later date, Dr. Robert Tichane recorded his research into the glaze-body interactions of copper-red glazes. He does not dispute the validity of Mellor's research and description of the five glaze layers, but suggests alternative reasons for their formation. Here, Tichane is only concerned with the red colloidal layer, the blue colloidal layer, and the colourless reduced layer next to the body. In the course of his experimentation, Tichane noticed that he could remove the **blue** layer by changing the composition of the glaze or the firing environment. He found that using a 'glassy' glaze composed of *"only lime, feldspar and a frit (in addition to copper and tin)"*, caused the blue layer to disappear.<sup>45</sup>

Other experiments with the glaze composition did not remove the **clear** layer at the glaze-body interface. This was achieved by altering the composition of the clay body. Tichane discovered that using a *"pure silica body (that has no clay and no feldspar)"* rendered the clear layer absent. He came to the conclusion that the lowermost clear layer was the result of *"a contaminant coming out of the body and entering the glaze or to some glaze ingredients moving out into the*

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<sup>44</sup> Mellor, J.W: 'Chinese Copper-Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 35, 1936, p. 372.

<sup>45</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 28, p. 189.

body.”<sup>46</sup> This theory is feasible because both Chinese porcelains and Western clay bodies were ‘impure’.

After further experimentation, Tichane realised that the creation of the clear glaze layer was probably the result of glaze elements pervading the body. Also, he noted that a faster firing cycle caused the clear layer adjacent to the body to shrink; a slower cycle had the reverse effect. Tichane’s study of the *peach-bloom* glaze – which has no clear layer at the interface - led him to deduce that the clear layer in copper-reds was not the result of copper diffusing into the clay body.

Tichane concluded that the explanation for the formation of a clear layer at the glaze-body interface is due to lime, which decomposes to calcium oxide during firing. He stated that excessive quantities of calcium added to a copper-red glaze cause opal formation, hence a blue tinge. He suggested the opal formation was a “*particle size effect*” responsible for the blue layer. While Dr Mellor was in agreement with particle size causing the colour of the blue colloid, he did not mention the significance of calcium.

To summarise, the reaction of lime with the feldspar in the glaze activates the alkali content. The alkalies choose to migrate into the body where the alkali concentration is lowest. The clear reduced glaze at the interface is therefore thought to be “*higher in calcium than the average glaze composition. Therefore ... (forming) blue colloidal colours in the area just below the red layer and just*

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 189-190.

*above the clear layer next to the body.*" Tichane confirmed his theory by analogy with *jun* glaze properties, where examination of a cross-section of the *jun* glaze revealed the movement of alkali from the glaze into the body "*when sodium was used as the marker.*" <sup>47</sup>

### **Dr Mellor: Gas-Bubbles in Chinese *Flambé* Glazes**

Figures 3 and 4 of Dr Mellor's paper show the common phenomenon of gas bubbles in the copper-red glaze. Here it is evident they are forming at the glaze interface while the clay body is being corroded by the glaze. Mellor postulated the bubbles in the glaze were the outcome of gas escaping from the vitreous body, partly because they were located so near to the interface, and because their position suggested they developed late in the firing cycle. Interestingly, Mellor recorded he did not find gas-bubbles in western reproductions of Chinese *flambé*, where the bodies appeared to offer greater resistance to the glaze. In fact, he claimed it was once thought that the way to discern Chinese *flambé* from Western reinterpretations was to remove a section of the ware and examine it for a mass of gas-bubbles in the glaze adjacent to the body.<sup>48</sup>

### **Dr Mellor: Lustre Copper-Reds**

Dr Mellor illustrated the on-glaze copper-red lustre in a second microphotograph - Figure 2. He noted the red colour of the on-glaze effect was

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>48</sup> Mellor, J.W: 'Chinese Copper-Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 35, 1936, p. 376.

due to colloidal copper, but unlike the in-glaze colloid it did not emerge out of solution. The on-glaze copper-red was vaporised onto the surface of the glaze. He theorised that if a container of copper chloride was heated near to white-glazed porcelain in a reducing environment, a vapour of copper would stain the glaze red. The problem of attaining a uniform deposition was overcome by mixing the copper salt with clay before painting it onto the vessel and exposing it to a reduction firing, a technique which originated in the Middle East c.8<sup>th</sup> century AD. After the firing, the clay was scrubbed from the ware to leave an iridescent copper-red film.

The essential difference between *in-glaze* and *on-glaze flambé* is practically self-explanatory. *On-glaze flambé* is the result of a copper vapour absorbed at the glaze surface which disappears when re-fired in oxidation; *in-glaze flambé* results from reactions within the body of the glaze. The former is uniform, the latter richly varied in depth of tone and glaze markings. According to Mellor, the same process of oxygen diffusion operated in both glaze types.<sup>49</sup>

### **Dr Mellor: Opalescence in Copper-Red Glazes**

Mellor takes pains to differentiate the opalescent effect evident in some copper-red glazes from what '*connoisseurs*' called peach-bloom. He suggested the dictionary definition of '*bloom*' as "*the delicate powdery deposits on fruits like the grape, plum, etc.,*" was more appropriate to describe the "*opalescence on the Chinese-red glazes...*"<sup>50</sup> The opalescence Mellor described was the result of

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 375.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Part II, p. 488.

*devitrification* – the formation of crystals in and on the surface of a glaze during cooling. These crystals give colour, texture and opacity to the glaze.

Crystallisation is a complex and selective process, but one which merits explanation. During cooling, the crystals become isolated from the oxides in the surrounding glaze. Their development can be encouraged by holding the kiln temperature at c.800°C. Crystals **within** the glaze assume both flat and needle forms and can grow in the limited space at the glaze-body interface where they tend to remain small. Oxides such as calcium phosphate and calcium borate are known to form crystalline structures in *jun* glazes and copper-red of the fluid *flambé* type. Research has shown that crystals are more likely to appear in fluid rather than highly viscous glazes.

Needle and flat crystals form at the glaze **surface**, often including calcium silicate, magnesium silicate and iron oxide. When **heated**, molecular compounds within the glaze – silica, alumina, soda, potash, lead oxide, calcia and magnesia, etc. – remain **fluid**. During **cooling**, molecules of different chemical compounds link together to form **chains**. This creates what is known as a glass.

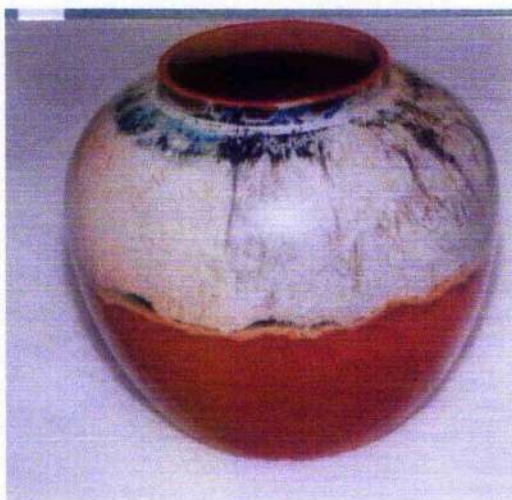
Some of the molecules will not be adequately matched and seek more regular chains. These displaced molecules are drawn to make bonds which satisfy their *valence* – the combining power of an atom. The subsequent bonding produces the characteristic lattice structure of a crystal. This process is activated when two or more oxides '*freeze*' at certain temperatures, forming a molecular bond.

During cooling the oxides are '*precipitated*' – separated from the rest of the glass. They have escaped from solution and are dispersed. Gradual cooling at a steady temperature enables the precipitated 'frozen' molecules to establish a regular structure – to crystallise. Excess alumina, calcia, magnesia and baria are known to precipitate on cooling and form crystals. The resulting crystals often do not include the colouring oxide of the glaze. As seen in opalescent *flambé*, white, blue or grey crystals often appear against a dark red background.<sup>51</sup> Below is an example of Bernard Moore *flambé* with crystalline effects, (**fig. 3**).

**Fig. 3**

• **Low-Fired *Flambé* Barrel Vase** with **silver crystalline glaze** superimposed on the upper body above green and blue glaze layers; earthenware. Printed 'Bernard Moore' on the base, c.1905-15. H: 16 cm. Acc. No. 825; Recorder – Major, P: 7.2.1979.

Gifted to the Buxton Museum & Art Gallery, Derbyshire by Mr Frank Ollerenshaw.



Mellor concluded that the opalescence on copper-red vases is due to "*incipient crystallisation or devitrification*", as illustrated in Figure 5, a microphotograph of the "*Crystalline Structure of the Opalescence on a Chinese Copper-red Vase*

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<sup>51</sup> **Hamer, Frank:** *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques*, London, Pitman Publishing, 1975, pp. 92-93.

(x350).<sup>52</sup> Trapped bubbles in a highly viscous glaze can also give rise to 'milky' patches akin to, "*the shimmering opalescence on the breast of a dove,*" as described by Mr William Burton.<sup>53</sup> If the bubbles cannot be identified individually because they are too small, the opacity is said to be colloidal – resulting from light deflected by matter smaller than wave-length size in the glaze.

### **Dr Mellor: Peach-Bloom**

Dr Mellor defined the *peach-bloom* effect as "*small patches of copper-red sprinkled over a differently coloured background.*" He attributed this patchy colouration to '*slight differences*' in the glaze composition applied to the vessel.<sup>54</sup> Summarising, the pale background had been oxidised resulting in a diminished red colloidal layer as described previously in connection with copper-red glazes. The dark red patches demonstrated varying rates of oxidation in different areas of the glaze.

In comparison to the cross-section of the copper-red glaze illustrated in Figure 1, Mellor theorised that if a section was taken from the peach-bloom bowl illustrated in Figure 6, it would reveal only a "*thin red-film over a thicker blue layer.*" This would account for the bluish-pink seen in the background of many

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<sup>52</sup> Mellor, J.W: 'Chinese Copper-Red Glazes – Part II', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. 35, 1936, pp. 488-489.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Part II, p. 488. Mr William Burton and his brother Joseph ran Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Pottery and Tile Co., founded in 1892. They were famed for their lustre pottery. Manufacture of ornamental ware was discontinued in 1937.

<sup>54</sup> Mellor, J.W: 'Chinese Copper-Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Part II - Vol. 35, 1936, p. 489.

peach-bloom glazes. The deep red areas portray "*the last stand made by the copper-red to resist annihilation by the ingress of aerial oxygen*".<sup>55</sup>

Mellor concluded his paper with comments on the green patches found on some peach-bloom glazes. According to Mellor, this happens when isolated copper particles in the red colloidal layer of the glaze flocculate, or aggregate into larger particles known as flocs. In some instances, part of these larger copper-metal particles are oxidised to cupric oxide. The cupric oxide dissolves in the glaze to create a green stain. Sometimes, the oxidation process permeates throughout the floc to produce green patches. Mellor's final remarks inferred "*the green patches are produced by the oxidation of spots of metallic copper formed by the flocculation of the red colloidal metal.*"<sup>56</sup>

### **Artificial or Local Reduction**

Before leaving the science of copper-red glazes, it is necessary to describe the *artificial* reduction favoured by some modern potters. This is achieved by adding an equal weight of copper oxide to silicon carbide powder of around 0.3 per cent to a base glaze, which is then fired in an oxidising atmosphere. Since the 1930's, silicon carbide has been employed in Western glazes and slips as a local reducing agent. It is called *local* reduction because only the glaze is reduced; a normal reducing atmosphere also reduces the clay body. A glaze of this nature is fired at a comparatively low temperature to ordinarily reduced copper-red glazes at "*about cone 7 or 7-plus,*" because the addition of silicon

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., Part II, p. 490.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Part II, p. 491.

carbide makes the glaze extremely fluid. Also, over-firing destroys the reduction capacity of the carbon in the silicon carbide, hence the red colour evaporates or streaks. According to Grebanier, this is one of the drawbacks of using the *local* or *artificial* reduction technique, which if misfired results in red mottling against a white ground. But, reds of this type are seemingly consistent in terms of depth of colouration where it appears, and can produce glowing results if fired properly. Grebanier stated that, "...the constant availability of a supply of oxygen in an oxidation firing of local reduction reds yields ... overall freshness of colour... (which confirms)... that reduction and oxidation are both necessary to the creation of the best copper-reds." <sup>57</sup> He acknowledged the literature by Moore, Mellor and Hetherington on the subject and called for detailed '*chemicophysical explanations*' of the local reduction process. Grebanier recommended firing in an electric rather than a gas kiln, because gas kilns often inadvertently caused slight reduction. For the most satisfactory results, he advised the use of fluid glazes with silicon carbide, as viscous glazes tended to hinder the release of carbon and could result in craters or blotches.

Silicon carbide remains unaltered in the glaze until it reaches around 1000°C. If the temperature climbs above 1000°C, silicon carbide divides into separate compounds which then seek oxygen to become silica and carbon monoxide - and finally dioxide. Oxygen is removed from the surrounding glaze. The silica unites with the glass melt and the carbon gases create bubbles which rise to the glaze surface to burst. Any copper-oxide in the glaze will therefore be reduced easily to copper metal. The difficulties experienced with this method of

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<sup>57</sup> Grebanier, Joseph: *Chinese Stoneware Glazes*, London, Pitman Pubs, 1975, Ch. 5, pp.77-78.

reduction include maintaining the red colloidal copper layer while eliminating gas bubbles from the glaze.

## **PART 2**

### **Historical Development of the Copper-Red Glaze in China**

Part 2 of this chapter looks at the how the chemistry of the copper-red glaze was employed within China and defines the various terms given to the glaze in different periods. Changes in the glaze terminology often corresponded with slightly altered chemical compositions resulting in new characteristics.

Archaeological excavations have revealed the first documented use of copper-red in Chinese ceramics at the Tongguan kilns near to Changsha in Hunan province, c.9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

According to Nigel Wood, reduction atmospheres may have occurred accidentally in the otherwise oxygenated dragon kilns at Tongguan. Another possibility is that *inglaze* reduction agents developed the red glaze. A heavy carbon atmosphere and the presence of tin oxide in the glaze would have facilitated *inglaze* reduction, or it could be that the red glaze simply contained less copper than the more usual green glaze.<sup>58</sup>

The next stage in the evolution of copper-red ware can be seen in the Henan *jun* wares of northern China produced during the Song dynasty (960-1279). These

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<sup>58</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, pp. 170-171.

opalescent lavender-blue glazes were freely decorated with copper washes. The spontaneous copper brush strokes were intended by Chinese potters to express *qi*, a universal energy. The purple markings displaying an '*aesthetic of organic naturalism*', have also been likened to cloud-like formations in Northern Song Daoist painting.<sup>59</sup> Recent investigations suggest that a copper-tin pigment was painted on the raw *jun* glaze. The ware was subsequently high-fired in reduction at temperatures of c.1250-1300°C, then cooled in an oxidised atmosphere – '*the natural state of a cooling kiln.*'<sup>60</sup> Copies of Song *jun* wares made during the Qing dynasty were sometimes completely covered in red. These are considered the first copper-red monochromes of the *flambé* type.

From the **Yuan dynasty (1279-1368)** onwards porcelain was made in southern China at Jingdezhen, and it was here that work began around the early 14<sup>th</sup> century to develop the copper-red glaze. Primarily, the red was used for underglaze painting rather than monochromes. One of the earliest examples of underglaze copper-red to survive intact was excavated from a burial tomb dated 1319. It is thought that problems with the stability and solubility of the red were factors which influenced the Jingdezhen preference for underglaze cobalt-blue.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> **Watt, James:** 'Huizong in the National Palace Museum', *Orientalism*, March 1996, pp. 55-56.

<sup>60</sup> **Wood, Nigel:** *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.172.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.173.

### Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) Copper-Red Monochromes

Examples of porcelain copper-red monochromes first appear in Jingdezhen during the reign of the **Emperor Hongwu (1368-1398)**. Hongwu copper-reds tended to be semi-opaque with a slimy sheen which has been attributed to the effects of unmelted material and bubbles in the glaze. These early reds often obscured engraved designs. They were prone to run during firing, leaving no, or a less defined white rim characteristic of later ware. The colours vary from brick red to dusky pink.<sup>62</sup>

During the reign of the **Emperor Yongle (1403-1424)**, red became the imperial colour. The engraved designs popular during the previous reign were gradually superseded by what has come to be recognised as 'classical' Ming. These were simple, undecorated copper-red forms adopted by successive generations of Chinese potters. The colours were brighter than the preceding Hongwu copper-reds.

The perfect 15<sup>th</sup> century cherry-red glazes produced during the **later Yongle (1403-1424) and Xuande periods (1426-1435)** were known as *Xianhong* meaning 'fresh red'. The *xianhong* glaze is generally regarded as the zenith in terms of copper-red brilliance. Recent analyses suggest the ruby colour of later Yongle reds was due to an increased calcium content which made the glaze more fluid at high temperatures. This in turn enabled gas trapped in the glaze to escape preventing the formation of bubbles, and meant a greater percentage of

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.176.

batch material could dissolve in the glaze. Also, the amount of copper used in the glaze was reduced which resulted in a purer colour. Another reason put forward for the improved red colour was that the Chinese began to use oxidised bronze as the tinctorial agent in copper-red glazes. It is likely that trace elements of tin and lead in the oxidised bronze aided the formation of colloidal copper, hence the production of a brighter red.<sup>63</sup>

*Fresh red* Xuande glazes were stiffer and less prone to run during firing. Because the glaze was viscous it trapped many bubbles which imbued the surface with a pitted texture similar to 'orange peel' where bubbles had burst at high temperatures. However, the increased viscosity of Xuande glazes restricted the movement of copper during firing. The suspended copper particles masked the colour, making bright reds elusive. Taking the increased viscosity into account, it has been suggested that the most brilliant Xuande reds were the result of slight over-firing. According to Nigel Wood, a small 'colour' kiln was discovered at Jingdezhen used for the firing of early Ming copper-red glazes. It is possible that this kiln was built to fire Xuande *fresh reds* at above average temperatures in the region of 1300°C.<sup>64</sup>

The secret of producing these *fresh reds* disappeared in the late Ming dynasty between the late 15<sup>th</sup> –17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Exactly why this happened is still subject to speculation, but possible reasons include the exhaustion of a raw material and the fickle nature of the glaze. Bushell's translation of the *T'ao Shuo* claimed that coral-red became fashionable in the **Jiajing period, (1522-1566)**, and

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.177.

'supplanted' high-fired copper-red because more reliable, less costly results were obtained using iron.<sup>65</sup>

## Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) Copper-Reds

### Sacrificial reds

Attempts were made to revive the *fresh red* glaze at Jingdezhen during the reign of **Kangxi (1662-1722)**. The Qing potters were successful in their ambition and in addition, invented two derivations of the copper-red glaze: *peach-bloom* and *flambé*. The *T'ao Shuo* refers to a range of Kangxi imperial reds, the deep red known as *chi hung*, "*the base of the sang de boeuf, 'peach-bloom,' and other monochrome glazes so highly appreciated by collectors.*"<sup>66</sup>

Imitation 'fresh reds' were called *chi hung (jihong)*. 'Chi' meant 'sacrificial' and was used to describe the ruby-red colour of the wine vessels used by the Emperor Hsuan-te (Xuande period 1426-1435) in rituals on the Altar of the Sun.<sup>67</sup> Coral-red or iron-red was described in China as *fan-hung*, and crimson as *tzu*.<sup>68</sup>

Qing dynasty copies are more numerous than the 15<sup>th</sup> century originals, but can be distinguished from them. The Qing glaze often appears watered down; it is generally thinner and paler in comparison to the Xuande originals. Longer

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.179.

<sup>65</sup> **Bushell, S.W:** *Oriental Ceramic Art - illustrated with examples from the Collection of W.T. Walters*, London, Frederick Muller, 1981, p.142. Bushell's *Oriental Ceramic Art* was first pub. in 1896.

<sup>66</sup> **Bushell, S.W:** *Description of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, 1977, p.5.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.5, & **Bushell, S.W:** *Oriental Ceramic Art*, 1981, p.196.

firings at Jingdezhen in the late-17<sup>th</sup> and early-18<sup>th</sup> centuries gave some Qing copies a glassier appearance.<sup>69</sup> Qing potters sought to prove their technical skills in mastering the 15<sup>th</sup> century copper-red glaze rather than attempting to produce fakes. Rare examples of Kangxi *sacrificial red* do not appear to carry the Kangxi reign mark, but are sometimes given Ming Xuande reign marks of which there is a specimen in the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art.<sup>70</sup>

### Langyao Reds

Early in the Kangxi reign there was much civil unrest as the Manchus fought to consolidate their rule in the south of China. The imperial kilns were destroyed and rebuilt in 1677, heralding the start of a technical renaissance at Jingdezhen. In the 1720's, Jingdezhen - the 'Potteries' of China – adopted a new approach to ceramic manufacture. The management structure of the kilns was reorganised and a system of testing new materials and technical experimentation was inaugurated. The imperial manufactory was managed by governors of the province. Governor Lang Tingji was one of the most highly regarded and credited with reinventing the copper-red glaze of Hsuan-te (1426-35). He acted as director of the imperial kilns from 1705-1712. One theory suggests the glaze was named *Langyao* (Lang ware) in his honour. It was known throughout the West as '*sang-de-boeuf*'.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Bushell, S.W: *Description of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, 1977, p.6.

<sup>69</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.180.

<sup>70</sup> Ayers, John: 'The 'Peachbloom' Wares of the Kangxi Period (1662 –1722)', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 4, 1999-2000, p.42.

Wood, Nigel: '*Chinese Glazes*', 1999, Ch. 9, p.181 & Bushell, S.W: *Oriental Ceramic Art*, 1981, p.42.

The *langyao* red was similar in composition to the Kangxi *sacrificial red* copies of the *xianhong* glaze, although the glaze appears thicker, the red brighter and the texture very glassy. This has been attributed to thicker applications of the glaze and higher firing temperatures. As a result, *langyao* glazes were probably more fluid during firing, hence prone to run down from the mouth leaving a broader white rim. Colourless or white areas on a copper-red glazed piece are attributed to the evaporation of copper at a point where the glaze runs thin. Generally, the *langyao* glaze was applied to contemporary forms of the Kangxi period.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike the uniform *xianhong* reds, the *Langyao* or *sang-de-boeuf* glaze is distinguished by its tendency to 'clot' and streak, giving the appearance of blood, hence its Western name. *Sang-de-boeuf* glazes are generally deep red in colour and have a crackled texture. The feet are characterised by a rim of "apple-green (crackle), ... rice-coloured (crackle), or ... plain white porcelain."<sup>73</sup> The Kangxi *langyao* glaze did not tend to run quite so readily as later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century heavily fluxed copper-red and *flambé* glazes which frequently had to be ground down at the foot. The materials used in the production of *langyao* or *sang-de-boeuf* seem coarse in comparison to the Kangxi sacrificial reds, and rarely (if ever) display the Kangxi reign mark. It is possible that a proportion of the *sang-de-boeuf* output came from private rather than imperial kilns, corresponding with a change towards its more popular status.

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<sup>72</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, p.181.

<sup>73</sup> Bushell, S.W: *Oriental Ceramic Art*, 1981, p.161.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was some confusion in the West between the terms that described the copper-red glaze. W.G. Gulland highlighted this inaccurate nomenclature in his description of a *sang-de-boeuf* glazed Qianlong (1736-1795) bottle where, “*the glaze has receded from the rim of the vase, thus forming a purple band, below which begins the proper sang de boeuf shade of yellowish blood-coloured red*”, and which appears “*speckled or clotted*” in the light, is contrasted with the clear wine-red of another glaze.<sup>74</sup> According to Gulland, the term *sang-de-boeuf* was applied to both, despite the distinctive nature of each glaze. As well as the colour differentiation, the wine-red vessel appeared highly fluxed and glossy, “*so highly glazed that it is very difficult to photograph...*”<sup>75</sup> Gulland dated the *sang-de-boeuf* bottle ‘Keen-lung’ (Qianlong) as opposed to ‘Kang-he’ (Kangxi 1661-1722) because Kangxi examples did not show the purple band where the glaze had receded.<sup>76</sup> It is possible to find glazes bearing each of the characteristics mentioned above with no distinctive hue which are still termed ‘*sang-de-boeuf*’. In some instances over-firing and use of different raw materials made the same base glaze appear markedly different. When reading Gulland’s comments it is worth noting that scientific scholarship was in its infancy at the time of publication in 1898.

### **Peach-bloom**

*Peach-bloom*, occasionally referred to as ‘*peach-blow*’, is part of the same family of copper-red glazes inasmuch as copper is used as the main tinctorial

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<sup>74</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. I, London, Chapman & Hall, 1898, p. 141.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p.141.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p.142.

agent.<sup>77</sup> Its chemical composition and application differs from that of copper-reds as discussed earlier. It is believed that the manufacture of *peach-blooms* dated from the late Kangxi period c. 1712-1722. The 'Eight Prescribed Forms' of Kangxi *peach-bloom* were designed to be used as a set of standardised accessories for the scholar's desk. More exquisitely refined in material, shape and finish than *langyao* reds, *peach-blooms* also bear the Kangxi reign mark, hence their obvious imperial status. The *peach-bloom* glaze may have been discovered during experimentation to reproduce the sacrificial reds. An example of a supposed 'pre-peachbloom' bowl is resident in the Baur Collection, Geneva and carries the Xuande mark (1426-35), although it probably dates from the later Kangxi period (c.1705-1715). Another such bowl can be found in the Percival David Foundation.<sup>78</sup> In 1680 a board of commissioners were selected from officials of the Imperial Household to superintend the production of imperial porcelain, or *Kuan Yao*. Among the officials was Ts'ang Ying-hsuan (Tang Ying), appointed to Jingdezhen in 1728 and famed for his development of high-fired monochrome glazes and the invention of "*peach-bloom*", also known as *peau-de-peche*, or 'crushed strawberry' – *fraise ecrasee*.<sup>79</sup> Like other copper-red glazes, *peach-bloom* is derived from copper, but is much paler:

"... becoming pink in some parts, in others mottled with russet spots, displayed upon a background of light-green celadon tint. The last colour occasionally comes out more prominently and deepens into clouds of bright apple-green tint." <sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Chats on Oriental China*, London, T.Fisher, Unwin, 1908, p.170.

<sup>78</sup> Ayers, John: 'The 'Peachbloom' Wares', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 64, 1999-2000, pp. 42-43. Percival David Foundation 1989, Acc. No. 528.

<sup>79</sup> Bushell, S.W: *Oriental Ceramic Art*, 1981, p.42.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.163.

The glaze was known as *p'ing-kuo hung* or apple-red, and further categorised by the distinction between *p'ing-kuo ch'ing*, apple-green clouds and *mei-kuei tzu*, rose-crimson mottling. The association with apples is further emphasized in the forms of certain peach-bloom objects, especially the 'apple-jar'. The *T'ao-Shuo* also records the name *chiang-tou hung*, or 'haricot-red' for the *peach-bloom* glaze, the colour of a brown-spotted pink bean grown in China.<sup>81</sup> Other Chinese names for the glaze included *beauty's blush*, *baby's face* and *drunken beauty*.<sup>82</sup>

### Flambé

W.G. Gulland used the term 'celadon' to describe high-fired "*single-coloured glazes*" or monochromes, although he is aware of its other meaning; "*indicating that particular range of greens known by this name.*"<sup>83</sup> Writing about celadon in the former context, Gulland lists the different colours and shades he encountered, several of which are applicable to the copper-red glaze:

*"Sang-de-boeuf*  
*Mule's blood, less clotted than the above*  
*Pigeon's blood, more of a ruby red*  
*Liver colour*  
*Peach bloom*  
*Crushed strawberry*  
*Purple...*"<sup>84</sup>

The *flambé* or furnace transmutation glaze was a Qing invention known to the Chinese as *Yao Pien* – literally translated '*the changing of colour in the kiln.*'<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.163.

<sup>82</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.182.

<sup>83</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. I, 1898, p. 138.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.139.

The term '*flammé*', which later became *flambé*, was purportedly originally coined by the French glaze chemist Taxile Doat (1851-1939), during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century – at least he was among the first ceramists to apply the word to specific high-temperature glazes. In his book *Ceramics of the Grand Feu: A Practical Treatise on the Making of fine porcelain and grès*, under the heading '*FLAMMES or FLAMBES*', Doat stated:

*"This name is given to glazes which derive their colouring power from copper and iron, and which during firing are submitted to the constantly changing influence of the flames which circulate in the kiln."*<sup>86</sup>

*Flambé* is characterised by vibrant streaks of colour, often crimson and blue shading into purple. These striking patterns are thought to form in the glaze at high temperatures during firing before the glaze has sealed over.<sup>87</sup> The Chinese in Jingdezhen referred to these glossy red glazes as '*jun reds*', which developed from c. 1727 in response to imperial orders to reproduce Song *jun* glazes. *Jun reds* were chemically dissimilar to their Song predecessors, which were achieved with a copper-pigment wash. They were high-fired glazes and contained lead – a significant difference between *flambé* and alternative copper-reds.<sup>88</sup> To achieve the glossy surface, *jun red* compositions included various opaque Chinese glasses mixed with a traditional porcelain base glaze.

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<sup>85</sup> Bushell, S.W: '*Oriental Ceramic Art*', 1981, p.196.

<sup>86</sup> Doat, Taxile: *Grand Feu Ceramics: a practical treatise on the making of fine porcelain and grès*, Syracuse, New York, Ceramic Studio Publishing, 1905, Ch. 10, p.172.

<sup>87</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.184.

<sup>88</sup> Kerr, Rose: *Chinese Ceramics – Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911*, London, V&A Pubs., 1998, p.75.

Previously, Chinese potters had simply added small amounts of copper to a standard stoneware or porcelain base glaze.<sup>89</sup>

The 'Official List of the Designs and Colours Produced at the Imperial Manufactory in the Reign of Yung-Cheng' (Yongzheng 1723-1735), compiled by Hsieh Min, governor of the Kangxi province between 1729-1732, recorded the 'copies' of ancient specimens sent to the imperial palace from the imperial kilns. Number 5 reads, "*Mule's liver mingled with horse's lung (Lo kan ma fei),*" and also "*(9) Furnace-transmutations, or flambés (Yao Pien).*" Of specific interest are the 'Reproductions' of Xuande copper-red porcelain listed as two distinct varieties, "*(1) The clear red (Hsien Hung)*" and "*(2) The ruby red (Pao-shih Hung).*"<sup>90</sup>

According to Nigel Wood, somewhere between the mid-18 -19<sup>th</sup> century, *jun reds* supplanted *langyao* and *chi hung* as the standard monochrome copper-red glaze. These jewel-like, heavily leaded copper-red glazes were often applied to heavy vases which became characteristic of the late Qing dynasty. It seems that Jingdezhen potters, obsessed with ever-brighter reds, adopted increasingly fluid glaze compositions.<sup>91</sup>

W.G. Gulland presumed the *flambé* glaze resulted from direct application to the 'paste', and through exposure "*to the extreme heat of the first firing... (which) often caused the glaze to change colour, hence the variegated hues... known to*

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<sup>89</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.185.

<sup>90</sup> Bushell, S.W: *Oriental Ceramic Art*, 1981, pp. 194, 196.

<sup>91</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.184.

*the French as flambé, and to us as 'splashed.'* " <sup>92</sup> He hinted at the Chinese practice of adding other oxides to the copper glaze to produce *flambé* 'at will'. This theory has been verified in recent research into the composition of Qing dynasty *flambé* reds where traces of cobalt were found on a Qianlong piece.<sup>93</sup> Another method of 'improving' the streaked or mottled effect was to apply copper more thickly in certain areas. However, by no means were all *flambé* pieces produced in this way. Some were the result of unpredictable interaction between glaze elements during firing.

Staffordshire based Clement Wedgwood attempted to reproduce '*Chinese Flame Red*' in May, 1866. His diary recorded that he understood '*Flame Red*' was achieved using a "*suboxide of copper*", and observed that the "*violet tone must be given by a re-glaze of blue on the red.*"<sup>94</sup> This assumption was not far from the truth in certain cases, as noted above with regard to the addition of cobalt. Wedgwood's experimentation, based on the research of Ebelmann and Salvétat for Sèvres – a *Memoir* on the composition of the materials used in the manufacture and decoration of Chinese porcelain published in 1852<sup>95</sup> – was unsuccessful, achieving only a "*simple green glaze.*" The failure was apparently due in part to a misunderstanding of the reduction process necessary for copper-reds, for he wrote: "*Tried deoxidizing by boiling with vinegar... It came out green.*" <sup>96</sup> Because Clement Wedgwood based his research on Salvétat's analysis, he also used a very high percentage of copper oxide in his

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<sup>92</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Volume I, 1898, p. 138.

<sup>93</sup> Kerr, Rose: '*Chinese Ceramics*', 1998, p.75.

<sup>94</sup> Wedgwood, Clement: *Diary - Book I, Mems*, Vol. I, 1862, p.103. The Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston, Staffordshire.

glaze – 5 per cent is recorded – which no doubt contributed to the strong green colour of the oxidised glaze and his overall lack of success.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at the chemical components and reactions that constitute the copper-red glaze. The scientific research of Nigel Wood, Robert Tichane, Professor Collie, Dr. Mellor and others has been used to explain and examine the nature of this elusive glaze. It has been necessary to establish a scientific foundation because it is precisely these scientific and technological developments which contributed to and drove cultural and economic change. These shifts in knowledge and cultural capital not only influenced artistic design, but also created substantial wealth.

The historical development of the copper-red glaze within China serves to illustrate its allure, born partly from a desire to master complex chemistry and also for a simple admiration of the rich, red colour. The copper-red glaze evolved within China throughout the centuries, assuming different guises in terms of form and composition. It even acquired different names. The Chinese potters created the glaze without recourse to Western science and were determined that the copper-red glaze ‘recipe’ and its derivatives remained secret.

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<sup>95</sup> Ebelmann, J.J. & Salvétat, L.A: ‘Researches on the Composition of Chinese Porcelain’, *Ann. Chim. et Phys.*, - Part 2, Vol. XXXV, p.312 -, 1852. Translated and republished in Tichane: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, pp.207-211.

<sup>96</sup> Wedgwood, Clement: *Diary*, Vol. I, 1862, p.103.

Meanwhile, European and British ceramists were eager to re-create copper-red using a combination of industrial espionage and independent experimentation. The results were diverse. Some closely imitated the Chinese high-fired copper-reds in style and chemical composition while other examples displayed obvious signs of dilution, pandering to a Western aesthetic. In Britain, independent experimentation resulted in commercial and studio versions of the copper-red glaze. British manufacturers were aware of the research published in France and Germany, especially the work of Hermann Seger in Berlin, published in his *Collected Writings* of 1902. In France interest in the copper-red glaze had been intense since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Jacques-Joseph Ebelmann and Salvétat pioneered the first French attempt to fire high-temperature copper-reds c.1848-49. Alphonse-Louis Salvétat published his influential technical book *Leçons de Céramique* in 1857, followed by a selection of his experiment notes in 1877, *Tracte des Arts Céramiques*. Meanwhile, Paul Ebell published 'Copper-Red Colouration in Glasses' in *Dingler's Polytechnische Journal* in 1874. Lauth and Dutailly made their first high-fired copper-red trial at Sèvres in 1882 – continuing their experimentation until 1885, from which selected pieces were exhibited at the *Union Centrale* in 1884 and at *d'Anvers* in 1885. Only from around 1880 had the Sèvres process been sufficiently refined to produce good reds on a commercial scale. Head of the Sèvres laboratories Georges Vogt published his analyses of Chinese copper-reds in 1899. The French studio-potter Theodore Deck (1823-91), first exhibited high-fired transmutation glazed porcelains in Paris in 1880, the same year Hermann Seger exhibited his first successful *flambé* on *Seeger-Porzellan* in Germany. However, commercial quantities of *flambé* could not be manufactured at the Berlin Porcelain Factory

until 1884. Deck's second group of copper-transmutation wares were exhibited at the *Paris Exposition Universelle*, 1889 - the series that won him popular acclaim and established Deck's reputation as a ceramist. Louis Franchet published his paper 'The Development of Copper-Red in a Reducing Atmosphere', in *Transactions of the British Ceramic Society* in 1907. Even the Post-Impressionist painter-turned-potter Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), experimented with *flambé* from the late 1880's under the direction of the French studio-potter Ernest Chaplet (1835-1909). The pair became acquainted in 1886 and from then onwards Chaplet fired all Gauguin's ware. Chaplet worked with stoneware and porcelain bodies and fired his first significant *sang-de-boeuf* pieces in 1885. By 1887, at *Choisy-le-Roi*, he specialised in *flambé* and *sang-de-boeuf* glazes on Chinese-inspired vases. French art potters Dammous (1848-1926), Delaherche (1857-1940) and Dalpayrat (1844-1910) also experimented with high-fired transmutation glazes from the late 1880's, examples of which can be seen in Chapter 3 on Style. A. Clement and Patrick Nordstrom were pioneers of high-fired glazes in Copenhagen, while Hugh Robertson (1844-1908) in America strove towards the same goal at the Chelsea Keramik Art Works.

British experimentation worked in conjunction with this body of European scientific research and the accompanying international exhibitions to create the highly individual interpretations discussed in Chapter 3 on Style. Western research into the nature of the Chinese copper-red glaze was applied to British methods of manufacture, the subject of the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **METHODS OF MANUFACTURE**

This chapter focuses on the production techniques of copper-red manufacture both within China and the West. Much has been written on the pre-glaze preparation of clay bodies: Mixing and kneading the clay, throwing, casting, turning and polishing. Post-glaze techniques have also been dissected: Glazing the ware, the use of enamels, firing, gilding and so on. But this chapter will concentrate on the two most important aspects of manufacture specifically relevant to the success of the copper-red glaze - glaze application and firing. The previous chapter discussed glaze composition and the chemical mechanisms that produced the red colour. However, without patient application and the correct firing conditions the glaze fails. It is the firing process which has traditionally held potters of all cultures to ransom, and was thought the most difficult aspect of copper-red production in both China and the West. As the thesis centres on British productions of copper-red, comparative techniques are mostly drawn from British rather than continental sources. As with Chapter One, this description of the methods employed is a necessary baseline for what is to follow on aesthetics and culture.

## Glaze Application

"...there is a lot of art in the way in which porcelain is glazed, both for putting it on without any more defects than are necessary, and for spreading it equally on all sides. "<sup>1</sup>

These words are taken from Pere d'Entrecolles letter of 1712, and highlight the importance of this process. Glazes can be applied to ceramic bodies in many ways; dipping, pouring, spraying, brushing and painting being the usual methods. Paper, wax, latex and masking tape can be used to *resist* the glaze. Copper-red silhouette ware was first made at Jingdezhen during the Xuande period (1426-1435), probably using a combination of paper-resists and stencils, although the glaze could have been painted on the porcelain between clear glaze applications. Misfired areas on rare silhouette specimens prove the technical difficulties experienced when decorating a porcelain base glaze with the notoriously unreliable copper-red.<sup>2</sup>

Before applying glazes to a ceramic body, the surface must be smooth. Pere d'Entrecolles noted the Chinese polished the surface of their porcelain with a damp feather brush before applying the glaze.<sup>3</sup> After the glaze had dried, the feet were hollowed out and a circle of glaze applied to the foot, often including a painted Chinese character. This was the last stage before firing.

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Xavier d'Entrecolles (1712) – 1<sup>st</sup> Letter from Jingdezhen to Pere d'Orry. Translated and republished in Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen – Views of a Porcelain City*, New York, New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1983, p.87.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes – Their Origins, Chemistry and Recreation*, London, A&C Black Pubs., 1999, Ch. 9, p.179.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Xavier d'Entrecolles (1712) – 1<sup>st</sup> Letter. Translated and republished in Tichane: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p.87.

*Soufflé red* derived from a liquid red glaze and was sprayed onto the ware using a bamboo tube with fine gauze attached to one end. The end of the tube was dipped into the coloured glaze to 'charge' the gauze. The tube was blown towards the porcelain, planting 'tiny red spots.' This potentially hazardous technique made *soufflé red* porcelain 'more expensive and rare than... (*sang-de-boeuf*) because its execution is most difficult, since one must guard against... many problems.'<sup>4</sup>

*Soufflé red* was another copper-red glaze, often maroon with crimson or pink mottling. It was sometimes confused with peach-bloom, but is more uniform and without the green patches. The *soufflé red* is applied to a white ground; there is no evidence of the celadon tints seen on most *peach-blooms*.

In 1981, when Robert Tichane visited Jingdezhen he observed that the *soufflé* effect continued to harness lung-power, but most spraying was done using a compressor.<sup>5</sup>

Modern scholarship on *peach-bloom* glazes is still undecided whether the effect was achieved with a copper-lime pigment sprayed between clear glazes, or whether a copper-lime pigment was applied to a biscuit body beneath a clear glaze.<sup>6</sup>

Tang Ying's description to Illustration No. 13 – "*Dipping into the Glaze and Blowing on the Glaze*", (c.1743), elaborated on the glaze application process:

"... The ancient method of putting on the glaze was to apply it to the surface of the vase, ... with a goat's-hair brush filled with the liquid glaze, but it was difficult to distribute it evenly in this way. The round ware, both large and small, and the plain round vases and sacrificial vessels used to be dipped into the large jar which held the glaze, but they failed by being either too thickly or too thinly covered...

<sup>4</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, pp. 82-83.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.82.

<sup>6</sup> Wood, Nigel: *Chinese Glazes*, 1999, Ch. 9, p.182.

*In the present day the small round pieces are still dipped into the large jar of glaze liquid, but the vases and sacrificial vessels and the larger round pieces are glazed by the soufflé process... The number of times that this process has to be repeated depends partly on the size of the piece, partly on the nature of the glaze, varying from three or four times up to seventeen or eighteen. These are the two distinct methods of glazing: by immersion and insufflation. "*<sup>7</sup>

Stephen Bushell wrote that during the Xuande period or 'reign of Hsuan-Te' (1426-35), the copper-red glaze was applied on biscuit porcelain as a plain monochrome glaze, "sometimes chiseled with ornamental designs; or in combination with the white glaze; or painted on in decorative designs, in a similar way to the cobalt blue..."<sup>8</sup>

Writing about the *yeou-li-houng* or underglaze red in 1882, Scherzer recorded that it was applied to the raw porcelain beneath an ordinary porcelain glaze. He also commented on the *kun-houng* glaze, which was assumed to be a lesser quality, heavily fluxed red derivative of the *chi-hung*, or *sang-de-boeuf* glaze. The *kun-houng* glaze was applied to the "biscuit, at first by immersion, and then by sprinkling."<sup>9</sup>

From Scherzer's description, we understand that the *kun-houng* red was applied on biscuit fired porcelain. Georges Vogt's later analysis of this porcelain proved that it had been fired in a reducing atmosphere. According to Scherzer, immersion consisted of holding the vessel 'neck down' in the liquid glaze for five minutes, allowing it to dry in the sun and subsequently brushing on three more layers of

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<sup>7</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 156. 'The Twenty Illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain' by Tang Ying; Illustration No.13 - translated by S.W. Bushell.

<sup>8</sup> Bushell, S.W: *Oriental Ceramic Art – illustrated by examples from the collection of W.T. Walters*, London, Frederick Muller, 1981, p.107. Originally published in 1896.

<sup>9</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 35, p.274.

glaze, leaving each to dry before the next application. An extra layer of glaze was added to the rim and upper vessel to ensure even colour in the event of glaze flow.<sup>10</sup>

Scherzer's notes confirm Robert Tichane's view that some copper-red glazes were applied in multiple coats.<sup>11</sup>

Louis Franchet's paper of 1907 describes the advantages of painting the glaze on the biscuit ware, "*On account of the irregularities produced...*" He 'pencilled' the glaze on his ware to a depth of around 2 millimetres, hence avoiding the uniformity achieved by dipping or spraying.<sup>12</sup>

It is generally acknowledged that copper-red glazes need to be thicker than an ordinary porcelain glaze for the colour to develop. Robert Tichane suggested that a '*moderate glaze thickness*' spread evenly over the body is the best way to avoid patchy copper-reds, where the colour has evaporated completely or paled.<sup>13</sup>

Spraying is recommended as the best way of applying a '*narrow thickness*' to obtain transparent ruby copper-reds.<sup>14</sup> It was the method employed by William Howson Taylor for his exceptional '*red kiln*' glaze, which he sprayed directly onto the biscuit body.<sup>15</sup> Unlike dipping, spraying enables grading without demarcation. Generally, a thicker glaze is applied to the top and vertical areas of the vessel, becoming thinner towards the bottom. In this way, the loss of colour associated with glaze flow might be avoided. As already mentioned, avoiding a glaze composition with an excessive flux content is essential. Although an alkali flux

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Ch. 35, pp. 276-277.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Ch. 4, p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> Franchet, Louis: 'On the Development of Copper Red in a Reducing Atmosphere', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. VII, Stoke-on-Trent, Session 1907-8, p. 75

<sup>13</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 27, p.183.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.181.

improves the copper-red colour, using too much makes the glaze prone to run. Lime is an alternate, effective flux which helps to maintain glaze viscosity.<sup>16</sup> Although thicker glazes are thought to produce better copper-reds, an over-thick glaze will result in dark, muddy reds, while a glaze that is too thin will produce no colour. Varying the concentration of copper over 0.5 per cent does not improve the brilliance of the red, in fact quite the reverse.

As mentioned above, firing temperatures are extremely important in maintaining glaze thickness. Over-firing at a temperature which is too high, or for too long, can result in glaze running and pooling. Firing is one of the most difficult aspects of producing copper-reds, and has been subject to various innovations.

### Firing

*"But there is nothing more mysterious, nothing more risky or more incomprehensible, than the art of firing. Science and study and research, united with every precaution, are often at fault, and have to admit defeat from this formidable force, ..., which devours, ... and annihilates, and can turn the potter's work either into a masterpiece of art, unique in colour and in material beauty, or into an unlovely thing, dry and hard and dull and commonplace."<sup>17</sup>*

Ming Chinese copper-red wares were fired in a gourd-shaped kiln, a forerunner to the egg-shaped kiln in use at Jingdezhen by the end of the Ming dynasty. It had a spacious front chamber, low rear chamber and a separate chimney. The later *zhenyao* (egg-shaped) kilns in use during the Qing Dynasty were designed to overcome the unpredictability of the gourd prototype. They were oval in shape with

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<sup>15</sup> **Ruston, James H:** *Ruskin Pottery*, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, first pub. 1975; this ed. 1990, p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> **Tichane, Robert:** *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 27, p. 184.

a sloping roof, making the height inside the kiln irregular. At the time of Pere d'Entrecolles second letter in 1722, the kiln height "*was three and a half metres, the length double the height, and the breadth equal to the height.*" In 1882, Scherzer recorded an expansion, the height being over five metres, the length twice the height (around ten metres), and the width approximately four metres. He made a sketch and wrote:

*"The side dimensions are given in Chinese 'feet'; ... the Chinese 'foot' of Ching-te-Chen is about 0.34 meters, which is neatly the same as our ancient 'foot'.*

*The furnace is 32 'feet' (10.88 m.) from the door to the base of the chimney, which is 8 feet in diameter at the base, three feet in diameter at the top and thirty feet high; the greatest width of the furnace is 13 feet (4.42 m.) its greatest height is 19 feet (6.46 m.). \**

*\* According to the translation of Stanislas Julien (p.66), the ancient Chinese furnaces had a height of 10 feet, and a length of 20 feet. One sees from that that the dimensions of porcelain furnaces have gotten larger in China... " <sup>18</sup>*

Such a design was in stark contrast to 19<sup>th</sup> century bottle ovens in use throughout Europe where the flames were directed around the kiln through evenly spaced firemouths, creating a uniform firing environment.

The shape of the *zhenyao* kiln contributed to the difference in temperature and atmosphere between the front and back of the kiln; the front was situated next to the furnace and the back next to the chimney. It had a tall chimney stack which enabled a greater draft, hence the ability to reach a fierce temperature quickly. This meant the firing cycle was reduced to 36 hours and it took less fuel for each firing.<sup>19</sup> One

<sup>17</sup> Mourey, Gabriel: 'The Potter's Art; with Especial Reference to the Work of Auguste Delaherche', *The Studio*, Vol.12, 1898, p.113.

<sup>18</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, pp. 184 & 266 - Scherzer's sketch of a Jingdezhen kiln (1882).

<sup>19</sup> Kerr, Rose: *Chinese Ceramics - Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911*, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, first pub. 1986, this ed. 1998, p.39.

of the major advantages was that the firebox was fixed inside the firing chamber, limiting loss of heat externally. Vents known as stoke-holes in the door of the firing chamber were used to feed fuel into the firebox. Opening and closing these vents and those along the top of the kiln created a reducing or oxidising atmosphere by altering the amount of oxygen entering the firing chamber.

Most importantly, egg-shaped kilns allowed different bodies and glazes to be fired together within the temperature range 1000-1300°C. Next to the crackle glazes at the very front of the kiln came high-fired glazes such as celadon and copper-red. These glazes needed the smoky, reducing environment created near the firebox. Pere d'Entrecolles maintained that the '*red glaze*' and '*soufflé red*' had to be fired in a '*cooler spot of the kiln*', behind the first three rows and at least a foot, maybe a foot and a half off the floor, (approximately 6-9 inches). He claimed if placed too high in the kiln, the glaze would melt too fast and be prone to run.<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, the Chinese imperial workshops did not fire their own products. A public-private partnership developed. Imperial ware was given the best position within private kilns. Owners were obliged to compensate for the loss or failure of imperial ware in each consignment. The kilns were wood-fuelled as '*coal turned the porcelain yellow*'. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, deforestation of the hills surrounding Jingdezhen meant that fuel had to be imported from hundreds of miles away.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Francis Xavier d'Entrecolles (1722) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter. Translated and republished in Tichane: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Kerr, Rose: '*Chinese Ceramics*', 1998, p. 42.

In Britain a variety of kilns have been used. Initially, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, firms such as Royal Doulton and Bullers who were experimenting with the *flambé* glaze would have used a *downdraught* bottle oven. It was developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to produce greater heat more quickly. Like the earlier *updraught* bottle oven, a dome-shaped inner oven (or firing chamber) was enclosed within an exterior structure – the chimney shaped *hovel*. *Firemouths* (similar to the Chinese firebox where the fire was lit) had flues and bags to transport the heat to the centre of the oven and up through the *setting*, (the carefully placed contents of the oven). The *downdraft* differed in that the heat first ascended, but was then forced down through the setting and out through holes in the oven base. The smoke then travelled up a straight chimney which usually served several ovens.<sup>22</sup>

Placing the saggars was a skilled job. They were piled from floor to ceiling in columns known as *bungs*, working from the outside walls towards the centre. Over the *well hole*, the hole in the centre of the oven floor, bottomless saggars were placed to form a chimney which allowed smoke to escape. This was called the *pipe bung*. As was the case for the Chinese egg-shaped kilns, different parts of the bottle-ovens reached different temperatures, hence ware was placed in specific locations. Before firing could begin, the door of the oven (or *clammings*) was bricked up in a similar way to the entrance of Chinese firing chambers – they both had to be dismantled afterwards. Fires were lit in the bottle oven firemouths (the openings around the base of the oven), and fed around every four hours. The temperature was kept low during the early stages of firing. This was known as smoking and removed residual moisture from the ware. After about 48 hours, the

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<sup>22</sup> Gladstone Working Pottery Museum information leaflet: 'Bottle Ovens', not dated.

temperature peaked between 1000 – 1250°C. At this stage the fire was left to *soak* for 2 – 3 hours, then allowed to die.<sup>23</sup>

According to Tang Ying in c.1743, the firing process in Jingdezhen usually took three days, *'from the time of putting it in (the porcelain), to that of taking out.'* Early in the morning on the fourth day the ware was *'drawn'* from the kiln while it was still hot, except for very large pieces. This dangerous practise enabled the Chinese to resolve the problem of residual moisture in unfired porcelain by placing the next consignment of ware into the furnace while it was still hot from the last firing. Hence the new porcelain dried out gradually and was *"rendered less liable to be broken into pieces or cracked by the fire."*<sup>24</sup>

We read in Louis Franchet's paper of 1907 that removing the copper-red ware from the kiln while still hot may also have been a necessary precaution adopted by the Chinese to prevent the fluid glaze from re-oxidising and turning green. Franchet was producing copper-reds in a factory rather than a studio, an essential difference between him and Bernard Moore. His preferred kiln for firing copper-red glazes was a down draught oven of two cubic metres capacity with a damper placed at the base of the chimney to facilitate reduction. Franchet wrote:

*"As the resources at the disposal of the factory would not allow us to build a special oven we were compelled to use the one we already had. In several parts of our oven it was impossible to keep the atmosphere in the necessary reducing condition, since, on account of the size of the oven, the cooling is much slower... The glaze therefore remains in a fluid condition for a comparatively long time and*

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 162. 'The Twenty Illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain' by Tang Ying; Illustration No.16 – 'Opening the Kiln When the Porcelain has been Fired' - translated by S.W. Bushell.

*in direct contact with an oxidising atmosphere. Under these conditions the copper in the glaze is re-oxidised, and a green colour is obtained in place of the red."*<sup>25</sup>

Based on an average firing time of 20 hours, Franchet believed a balance of oxidising-reducing time was essential for the production of good copper-reds, typically 8-9 hours of reduction and 10-12 hours, not exceeding 15 hours, of oxidation. He used hard wood, '*dry oak... cut in big logs*' to achieve reduction, not coal which had a tendency to block the kiln flues. The firemouths remained closed during reduction which lasted until cone 0.12 was reached (860°C). At this point oxidation commenced, the firemouths were opened and loaded with '*Cardiff*' coal. Oxidation lasted until the end of the firing, or when Cone 10 was reached, (1320°C).<sup>26</sup>

In China and Britain, the fireman was an important figure. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the firing was done by trial and error. The colour of the flame was used as an indication of progress. Another means of testing the stage reached in the firing was by observing trial samples of the ware being fired. In 1722, Pere d'Entrecolles reported from Jingdezhen:

*"The porcelain is judged to be done firing when, looking through the opening on top: one sees the porcelain glowing red; the piled pieces of porcelain are distinguishable, ... and the colours are incorporated into the porcelain."*<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Franchet, Louis: 'On the Development of Copper Red', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. VII, 1907-8, p. 73.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>27</sup> Francis Xavier d'Entrecolles (1722) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter. Translated and republished in Tichane: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 126.

In the case of a Staffordshire bottle-oven, a trial piece would be placed in a saggar with no side-wall. The fireman was able to remove a loose brick inserted into the oven wall and remove the trial with an iron poker. In Britain during the mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> century Josiah Wedgwood pioneered the use of pyroscopes using pottery test pieces to measure contraction. Pyroscopes were pieces of blended ceramic ware designed to warp, melt or shrink at a given temperature. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the introduction of Seger Cones - tall pyramids which distorted at given temperatures. *Bullers Rings* (measured against a scale of contraction), *Staffordshire Cones* and *Holdcroft Bars* (designed to sag at specific temperatures) were developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Potters such as William Howson-Taylor and Moorcroft used muffle ovens for their respective copper-red and *flambé* glazes. A muffle oven was much smaller than either the updraught or downdraught ovens, and was traditionally used in China and Europe to fire delicate lustre or enamel decorated wares at lower temperatures than required for biscuit to glaze firing. Muffle ovens differed from other types because the flames did not enter the firing chamber directly. Instead, flames and gases were directed around the chamber by a series of flues. Moorcroft fired their *flambé* in a coal-fired muffle approximately '6ft [1.8 m] deep, 4 ft [1.2 m] high and 3 ft [0.91 m] wide'.<sup>28</sup> Sadly, the oven was demolished in 1974.

Ruskin *sang-de-boeuf* and *flambé* was fired in the 'red kiln', the details of which remain secret. Howson-Taylor conducted his initial experiments in a small coal-fired kiln (probably a muffle design), until he built the red kiln used only for *rouge*

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<sup>28</sup> Interview with W. John S. Moorcroft, Friday November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2000 at the Moorcroft Museum, Sandbach Rd., Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent.

*flambé* and reduced copper transmutation glazes. Firing the red kiln took a minimum of twelve hours and sometimes lasted for nineteen. Like the test kiln, the red kiln was coal-fired and small, 'with a capacity of about only a dozen vases.'<sup>29</sup> From 1933-34, during the last twelve months of manufacture, the kiln switched from coal to gas fuel. The red kiln is thought to have reached temperatures between 1,300 and 1,600°C, although I would suggest these temperatures were exaggerated. Pitch was apparently used to aid the creation of a smoky, carbon rich atmosphere.<sup>30</sup>

Although the type of kiln used by Bernard Moore remains unknown, one source suggested he used a large exterior gas muffle kiln. Other sources claim it was an interior kiln, not a coal-fired bottle-oven traditionally associated with the Staffordshire pottery industry. Owning a copy of Seger's *Collected Writings* (1902), Moore would have been aware of the benefits of using a small gas fired test-kiln. It is likely that Moore took advantage of the lower costs, shorter firing times and versatile control afforded by a gas-fired laboratory kiln. It is also known that Moore's maximum temperature for firing porcelain was 1300-1400°C. During the firing cycle he alternated between a mild and heavily reducing atmosphere, varying the temperature between the maximum and room temperature, leaving the glaze to soak between the two.<sup>31</sup>

The firing temperature for a glaze depends on the type of clay body and glaze. As the temperature increases, the glaze melts and fuses with the body. The region of contact where body and glaze materials interact is called the 'interface'. Copper-red

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<sup>29</sup> Ruston, James H: *Ruskin Pottery*, first pub. 1975, this ed. 1990, p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>31</sup> Dawson, Aileen: *Bernard Moore Master Potter (1850-1935)*, London, Richard Dennis Pubs., 1982, Ch.3, pp. 30-32.

is a *high-temperature glaze*; a glaze fired above 1200°C, inferring stoneware or porcelain temperatures. Reduction is essential to develop lustre and high-fired glazes such as copper-red, usually between the temperature range of c.1250-1300°C, (*Staffordshire cones 8-10 or Seger Cones 7-9 c.1260 – 1300 °C*).

Technically, this means the kiln atmosphere is starved of oxygen and is therefore rich in carbon monoxide. A reducing atmosphere can be achieved by physically restricting the amount of oxygen entering the kiln, or by burning wet, resinous fuel. Oxygen deprivation during firing changes the colours of metal oxides in glazes and clay bodies when, starved of oxygen, the fuel seeks supplies in the oxide contents of bodies and glazes. Forced to release oxygen, the oxides are reduced to a purer metallic form.

Timing is a crucial element of the firing procedure. Most contemporary ceramists recommend reduction firing during the middle temperatures; *the soak* – a sustained optimum temperature which allows the glaze to mature. Some prefer alternate oxidation-reduction firing. The latter imitates conditions that would have existed in a Chinese wood-burning kiln where the addition of slow burning fuel such as green wood and rice husks were used to start the reduction process. Materials such as leather, mothballs and coal dust have also been used in the West to achieve a carbon-rich environment, giving rise to the term *smoking*. After consumption of these materials, the atmosphere would have re-oxidised, and is it likely that the Chinese practise would have alternated between mild and heavily reduced atmospheres without attaining total oxidation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> **Emms, Derek:** Interview, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2000 at Mossfield Cottage, Hayes Bank, Nr. Stone, Staffordshire.

Today, reduction firing takes place in fuel-burning kilns using gas, wood, oil or solid fuel, whereas electric kilns are used to produce an oxidised atmosphere which allows unrestricted air circulation. A reduction atmosphere is achieved in a modern kiln by restricting the secondary air from entering the firing chamber- the oxygenated air supply which specifically assists flow and combustion. The secondary air is drawn from outside the kiln and is restricted by gradually closing kiln bungs and air vents.<sup>33</sup>

Some ceramists believe in a final oxidation firing, as opposed to a continual firing in mild reduction. It has been proven that a superior colour can be achieved if copper-reds are fired in reduction until the glaze has sealed over, then finished in oxidation until the desired maximum temperature is reached.<sup>34</sup> This situation would have occurred incidentally in many of the large Chinese kilns and Victorian bottle ovens. Because large kilns are slow to cool, glazes receive a final oxidation whether intentional or otherwise. In the case of small domestic or test kilns, a final oxidised firing is often necessary.

In 1896, the chemist Hermann Augustus Seger published his experience of reduction firing at the Konigliche Porzellan-Manufaktur, Berlin. His work was translated for American manufacturers in 1902, and gave us this account:

*" After the ware is glazed... and has been set so that smoke can reach it freely, at first, a fire as oxidizing as possible is maintained. As soon as a dark red heat shows in the kiln, as much smoke as possible is to be produced and continued up to a temperature at which the glaze commences to vitrify. This is followed by short periods of oxidizing fire, kept up at short intervals, about one to two minutes for each quarter of an hour; between these however, a strongly reducing kiln*

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 12, pp. 74 -75.

*atmosphere must prevail. This mode of firing must be continued until the glaze has become dense and somewhat glossy. Thereupon the burning may proceed with oxidizing or reducing kiln conditions up to the close of the burn.*"<sup>35</sup>

In 1937, this extract on reduction firing appeared in a Wengers Catalogue, international 'colour' suppliers to the pottery industry. The extract referred to low-fired reduced copper-lustre red which, although very different in nature to high-fired Chinese *flambé*, shared the same reduction process:

*"In recent years there has been a revival among potters of the desire to reproduce the ancient Chinese, Moorish and Italian Smoke Lustres, which were produced by the reduction of Metallic Oxides on and in the glaze.*

*This 'smoking' or reduction of the Metallic Oxides must be produced at the exact moment when the metals commence to volatilise; the process therefore is extremely complicated and requires great art and care, and it is most difficult to reproduce exactly the same effect again owing to the variation of temperature and atmosphere.*"<sup>36</sup>

Reduction atmospheres are responsible for *transmutation* glazes, known to the Chinese as *yao-pien*. This is the term given to the array of colours and textures produced when strong reducing agents such as carbon monoxide attack the surface of the glaze. The results on copper-red glazes are particularly striking. The second letter from Pere d'Entrecolles in 1722 records his uncertainty as to how this glaze was produced:

*"This transmutation happens in the kiln and is caused by a defect, or from excess heat or some other unknown cause. This piece which, in the opinion of the worker, was not successful, and caused by pure chance, is less beautiful or prized. The*

<sup>35</sup> **Seeger, H.A:** *The Collected Writings of Hermann August Seger*, Vol. II, USA - Easton P.A., The Chemical Publishing Company, 1902. (Ch. B. V. (7) 'The Red and Flamed Cuprous Oxide Glazes', p. 741). This ed. was edited and translated by **Albert V. Bleininger**.

<sup>36</sup> **Wengers Trade Catalogue:** *Wengers Colours – English Price List*, No. 66, Wengers Ltd., Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent, 1937, p.45.

*worker had planned to make soufflé red vases. One hundred pieces were lost, and the one which I spoke of came from the kiln resembling a piece of agate.*"<sup>37</sup>

This description of the transmutation glaze also sheds light on traditional Chinese notions of value, a subject addressed in later chapters.

### **Saggars Firing**

A saggars is a lidded container fashioned from fireclay or other refractory material into which wares are packed during firing. It contains combustible material such as sawdust, and is used to protect the ware from the kiln's atmosphere. Saggars can be used to produce 'local' reduction in an oxidized atmosphere. The Chinese used perforated saggars placed within an enclosed saggars, the space between filled with charcoal. During firing the charcoal produced carbon monoxide, thereby acting as a local reduction agent.<sup>38</sup>

Pere d'Entrecolles first letter from Jingdezhen in 1712 described how the porcelain was embedded in sand at the bottom of the saggars so it would not touch the saggars wall. He recorded how the colour of the glaze was protected '*against the ravages of the fire*' by the '*thick screens*' of the saggars wall. Pere d'Entrecolles also noted how saggars in China had no cover; they were simply stacked in columns, the top saggars being left open. He went on to observe that it was rare for a furnace firing to be entirely successful, and even occasionally to be disastrous when porcelain and

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<sup>37</sup> Francis Xavier d'Entrecolles (1722) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter. Translated and republished in Tichane: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 120.

<sup>38</sup> Collie, J.N: 'A Monograph On The Copper-Red Glazes', *T.O.C.S.*, 1921, p.25.

saggars were reduced to a "single mass, ... hard as a rock, because of too fierce a fire."<sup>39</sup>

In 1743, Tang Ying, superintendent of the Imperial kilns at Jingdezhen, was summoned to Peking by the Emperor Qianlong. On his arrival he was confronted with 20 illustrations – woodcuts from the Jingdezhen *Tao-lu* - detailing the processes of porcelain manufacture. He received an imperial request to order the illustrations and to return them to the imperial library with annotations. None of the illustrations are dated. Illustration no. 15: 'Putting the Finished Ware into the Kiln', described the use of saggars and placement of wares:

*"The porcelain, when finished, is packed into the saggars and sent out to the furnace men. When these men put it in the kiln they arrange the saggars in piles, one above the other, in separate rows, so as to leave an interspace between the rows for the free passage of the flames. The fire is distinguished as front, middle and back; the front of the fire is fierce, the middle moderate, the back feeble. The different kinds of porcelain are placed in the furnace according to the hard or soft quality of the glaze with which they are coated... When the saggars inside the furnace have attained a silvery red colour (white heat) the firing is stopped, and after the lapse of another twenty-four hours the kiln is opened."*<sup>40</sup>

Monsieur Scherzer, employed to collect samples from Jingdezhen for the Sèvres Porcelain works in 1882, wrote that the glazed ware was placed on 'two round patties' in the saggars, 'isolated by a layer of carbonized rice hulls.' The ware was further 'isolated from the top patty by a layer of the same material.' The patties rested on an 8 mm bed of fine gravel made from crushed brick and saggard debris.

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<sup>39</sup> Francis Xavier d'Entrecolles (1712) – 1<sup>st</sup> Letter. Translated and republished in Tichane: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 96.

This layering prevented the ware from sticking to the sides of the saggar and filtered the flow of excess glaze.<sup>41</sup>

A few years later in 1888, Lauth and Dutailly published their 'Research on Copper-Reds and Celadons'. They claimed it was necessary to stand the ware on a clay-dusted block of porcelain to prevent the glaze from adhering to the saggar. They suggested "... one ought to keep a [glaze-free] zone at the foot of a vase of about one centimetre in width,..." and believed partially luted saggars were necessary to allow the gases to permeate the interior freely. Too much exposure was not permissible either, "... because... when we fired one vase in the full force of the flames, without saggaring it at all, then we found on opening the furnace that the glaze was completely devoid of copper (which had volatilized)."<sup>42</sup>

Louis Franchet, who based his own research upon the work of Lauth and Dutailly, advocated the use of 'entirely closed' saggars, sealed by a roll of wet wad clay. Although this meant that reduction was slower, it reduced the time the ware was exposed to oxygen, hence prone to re-oxidising.<sup>43</sup>

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Royal Lancastrian Pottery used saggars to achieve reduction for their red lustre earthenware. Abraham Lomax, chemist at the works from 1896-1911, wrote:

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<sup>40</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 160. 'The Twenty Illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain' by Tang Ying; Illustration No.15 – 'Putting the Finished Ware into the Kiln' -translated by S.W. Bushell.

<sup>41</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 35, p. 277.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., Ch. 33, p. 248.

*"The pieces were usually fired in saggars in an ordinary glost oven and sometimes in a [gas] muffle kiln. The saggars were double walled with the intervening space filled with a mixture of rice carbon and granular flint to produce a reducing atmosphere and their tops were covered with lids. Later, carbon impregnated saggars, produced by saturating the walls and base with concentrated sugar solution, were used."*<sup>44</sup>

Traditionally in the Staffordshire pottery industry a full sagger weighing approximately half a cwt was carried into the firing oven on a man's head or shoulders. To protect their heads they wore *rolls* - rings made from old silk stockings. A Staffordshire bottle oven held around 2,000 saggars. As soon as the kiln had cooled men entered to remove or *draw* the saggars from the oven. Evidence exists to suggest that men had to enter ovens which had not cooled sufficiently, covered with wet rags on their hands and faces. This was also the case in China:

*"After a time the workmen who open the kiln, with their hands protected by gloves of ten or more folds of cotton soaked in cold water, and with damp cloths around their heads, shoulders, and backs, are able to go in to take out the porcelain."*<sup>45</sup>

Writing in 1985, Robert Tichane recorded the advantage of coating saggars with copper-oxide. During the course of his experiments he noted that copper-reds fired inside saggars suffered less from the effects of volatilization, unless the entire kiln was closely stacked with copper-reds to counteract the loss of copper. Tichane

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<sup>43</sup> Franchet, Louis: 'On the Development of Copper Red', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. VII, 1907-8, p. 76.

<sup>44</sup> Lomax, Abraham: *Royal Lancastrian Pottery 1900-1938*, Bolton, Ainsworth House, 1957, p. 67.

<sup>45</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen*, 1983, p. 162. 'The Twenty Illustrations of the Manufacture of Porcelain' by Tang Ying; Illustration No. 16 - 'Opening the Kiln When the Porcelain has been Fired' - translated by S.W. Bushell.

proposed the use of a copper-oxide coating on the interior saggar walls to maintain an environment which minimised loss through evaporation.<sup>46</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a technological foundation to complement the scientific and historical overview given in the previous chapter. It has explored manufacture of the copper-red glaze and its derivatives in China and the West, showing how the application and firing processes represented the two most crucial and hazardous aspects. Comparisons have been drawn between the respective methods employed according to each tradition. The chapter provides essential background for subsequent chapters, and contextualises discussion of the aesthetic, cultural and sociological aspects of the copper-red glaze in the following chapters, beginning with Style.

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<sup>46</sup> **Tichane, Robert:** *Reds, Reds, Copper Reds*, New York, New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1985, Ch. 19, p. 133.

## CHAPTER 3: STYLE

### Britain

#### Introduction

The search for authenticity is futile. All cultures are open and dynamic, and art culture is no different. Art is open to new styles and technologies, and shifts in response to them. Therefore, the question should not be whether an object can be considered of 'authentic' Chinese aesthetic but when, why and how certain Chinese forms and techniques were adopted. Before contemplating the various manufacturers, it is necessary to address the broader stylistic context from which British *flambé* emerged during the late 19<sup>th</sup> –early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

From around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Western ceramists had been keen to recreate the glazes seen on 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese ceramics, especially the *peach-bloom* and *sang-de-boeuf*. In part, this was driven by financial reward; the Chinese wares were fetching high prices at auction. In 1901, a fine *sang-de-boeuf* vase could fetch up to £15 and more. The John Sparks archive records the prices of some of these items. In 1902, a fine *peach-bloom* Chinese vase sold for £10 and a pair of fine *sang-de-boeuf* vases for as much as £63. In 1903, a very fine *sang-de-boeuf* bowl reached £65 and a fine *sang-de-boeuf* bottle, £40. In the same year a fine old '*splash*' vase fetched £20 and a *flambé* pilgrim £15.<sup>1</sup> The competitive desire for industrialised, 'progressive' nations to master Chinese chemistry was similarly motivating.

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<sup>1</sup> John Sparks Archive: *Day Sales Book: Jan 1901 – July 1906*, courtesy of The Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, SOAS, University of London. 13<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1901, Alfred Trapnell Esq., 1 fine *sang-de-boeuf* vase – 15.0.0, p.10. 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1902, Mr Duveen, 1 *peach-bloom* Chinese vase – 10.0.0, p. 125. 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1902, R.H. Benson Esq., 1 pair of fine *sang-de-boeuf* vases – 63.0.0, p.134. 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1903, G.R. Davis Esq., 1 very fine *sang-de-boeuf* bowl – 65.0.0, p.213. 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1903, J.C. Harrison Esq., 1 fine old '*splash*' vase – 20.0.0, p.231. 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1903, Alfred Trapnell Esq., 1 fine *sang-de-boeuf* bottle – 40.0.0, p.243. 7<sup>th</sup> Dec., 1903, Mrs Hardy, 1 fine *sang-de-boeuf flambé* pilgrim – 15.0.0, p.269.

Around 1860, a 'ceramic revival' swept through continental Europe and Britain. The major industrial ceramic factories in Europe exerted considerable influence on taste and were responsible for initiating styles and the necessary science to create the desired effects. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, technical virtuosity appeared to replace the basic principles of good design. Pastiche became the norm. From as early as 1850, the main European factories became concerned with reasserting a sense of national prestige through the manufacture of distinct, well designed, well-made products. Of these, Sèvres in Paris was perhaps the first and most determined establishment to reform, closely followed by the Berlin Porcelain Factory, Rörstrand in Sweden and the Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Manufactory. Figures 4-6 illustrate late 19<sup>th</sup> century *flambé* glazed wares from these European factories.<sup>2</sup> British firms soon followed suit, particularly Doulton and Company in South London, Wedgwood and Minton in Staffordshire as well as a number of smaller British concerns.

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<sup>2</sup> Sèvres was possibly the most influential factory in the drive to reproduce the high-fired Chinese *flambé* glaze c. 1848-49. Being state-owned it had access to the best practitioners and was responsible for developing new ideas and techniques. The earliest successful Western attempts at high-fired *flambé* came from Sèvres, attributed to the joint efforts of Ebelmann and Salvétat. The processes of manufacture were described in a *Memoir on the Composition of the Materials used in the Fabrication and Decoration of Chinese Porcelains*, 1852. There is little doubt that Salvétat's publications stimulated contemporary taste and experimentation throughout France and beyond. Only around 1880 was the process sufficiently controlled at Sèvres to produce good reds commercially. This was thought to be due to the introduction of a softer-paste body – '*pâte nouvelle*' – devised by Georges Vogt. By this time other European potters had mastered the art of firing successful *flambé* reds in quantity.

**Fig. 4**

**Royal Porcelain Manufactory of Berlin**

- **Vase, porcelain, decorated with *flambé de grand feu, bronze patiné*.** Made by the Royal Porcelain Manufactory of Berlin. Monture designed by Otto Eckmann (Hambourg 1865 - Badenweiler 1902), and executed by Otto Schulz (Berlin 1848 – Berlin 1911). Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1981.



**Fig. 5a**

**Manufacture nationale de Sèvres**

- **Jattes (bowls), porcelaine 'nouvelle' covered in *flammée de grand feu*, 1885.** Manufacture nationale de Sèvres. Given by Sèvres to the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1893.



**Fig. 5b**

- **Coupes (fruit-dishes) de 'Tarente', porcelaine 'nouvelle' covered in *flammée de grand feu*, 1881. Manufacture nationale de Sèvres. Given by Sèvres to the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1893.**



**Fig. 6**

**Rörstrand Manufactory, Lidköping, Sweden**

- **Vase, porcelain. *Flambé* glaze used to depict an octopus, c. 1900. Rörstrand Manufactory, Lidköping, Sweden. Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1998.**



The design reform momentum gathered pace throughout Europe during the 1860's and '70's in an effort to improve the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century aesthetic confusion, seen by many as a by-product of rapid industrialisation. In ceramics, earthenware and more especially stoneware were elevated to rank alongside porcelain, producing a flood of affordable decorative artwares which avoided the connotations of decorative artifice levelled at porcelain. Abstract high-fired glaze designs formed part of this trend. In general, the period 1875-1885 was one of fervid experimentation with high-temperature glazes. Britain lagged behind Europe in this field. In 1898, when the Ruskin Pottery was founded and began to produce 'true' transmutation glazes, high-temperature *flambé* was already being produced in France, Germany, Denmark and America.

It is interesting to consider the reasons why, at a time when naturalistic representational imagery was so popular, there was a strong desire among Western studio and commercial ceramists to produce *flambé*. Part of the answer must lie in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century search for novelty in the fine and decorative arts. Source material was gleaned from a variety of cultures; indigenous and 'exotic', past and present. Designers "*restlessly [sought] renewal and reinvigoration through contacts with other traditions...*" Both East and West were engaged in design "*processes of mutual modification*", which is no less true of today.<sup>3</sup>

Owen Jones' *Grammar of Ornament* (1856) was conceived with scientific rigour, though it is not unreasonable to suggest it may also have served as a stylistic reference manual by designers and manufacturers eager to 'borrow' motifs from different

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<sup>3</sup> MacKenzie, John M: *Orientalism – History, theory and the arts*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995, 209.

cultures. It was the Age of Empire, a period when artefacts from an array of cultures and periods entered Europe and Britain. Artists and designers were open to new influences. Oriental sources enlivened the decorative arts with “... *revolutionary approaches to ornament, different ways of handling space, colour, composition, texture, even a reversal of the ‘scientific’ developments of western art and design in perspective, optical adjustments and visual accuracy.*”<sup>4</sup>

Japanese culture had an impact on Western taste and style before the emphasis shifted once more to Chinese art and design. Japan opened up to the West in 1853, influencing the *Aesthetic Movement* of the 1860’s. The Japanese influence was diverse; simple, asymmetric design offset by the use of luxurious materials, detailed decorative motifs and bright colour. In Britain new design principles were formulated by John Ruskin (1819-1900) and William Morris (1834-96), who promoted *truth to materials* and decoration which complemented rather than obscured the form. They shared a preference for ‘honest’ stoneware covered in traditional glazes, though not necessarily of the high-fired type. Chapter 5 on Taste refers to Morris in more detail.

Around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there developed throughout Europe two distinct types of designer; the imitator and the researcher. Imitators merely copied decorative features. Researchers delved into the cultural, historical and technological background of the objects. The cult of the designer-scientist became a phenomenon during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in France, Germany and Denmark. The ‘research’ concept was slow to take root in Britain and seemed to be of less interest in Spain and Italy (with the exception of metallic lustre techniques) during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Eastern Europe the arts were influenced not so much by external cultures

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.209.

as by a sense of national pride. Even within Western Europe, nation states were consolidating and constructing identities which had a profound affect on design. Norse and Celtic mythology, folk tales, a superficial medievalism associated with notions of chivalry, simplicity, fine workmanship and intimacy with nature were part of the Western cultural corpus. Later, with particular reference to Art Deco, the art of Africa and Oceania added further diversity to this rich body of influence. The impact of the Far East on design was just one of many competing elements.

British designers were poised halfway between serious cultural investigation and a passing interest in novel ideas. The British attitude towards new cultural influences in design and manufacture can best be described as the 'veneer' approach. At least initially, convincing exteriors masked a lack of knowledge concerning the aesthetic principles governing the exotic designs of other cultures. Near Eastern Islamic motifs were occasionally amalgamated with Chinese and Japanese design elements:

*"As with all other 'Orientalisms', the concern [was]... not with genuine oriental artefacts transmitted to the West, but their reflection and reworking in western art."*<sup>5</sup>

Decorative effects were often applied using industrial techniques in place of time consuming traditional methods. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century wore on the veneer was replaced with a solid carcass of knowledge. In some pockets however, cultural distortion and confusion persisted.

British *flambé* is not easy to define. Unlike European and Chinese versions, British *flambé* glazes decorated earthenware, stoneware and bone china. There were *flambé* glazed porcelain bodies; Bernard Moore is known to have decorated Continental and

Oriental porcelain blanks, but these were rare. With the exceptions of Ruskin Pottery *flambé* and its modern counterpart Cobridge Stoneware, rare pieces by Moore, Buller's Ltd., and examples by later 20<sup>th</sup> century studio-potters such as Derek Emms, British *flambé* was mostly applied as a low-fire copper-oxide slip.

British interpretations of copper-red and *flambé* are the central concern of this study and will be discussed in comparison with Chinese, and where appropriate, European *flambé*. Distinctions will be drawn between British commercial and studio ceramics. British *flambé* varied in terms of glaze, form and decorative treatment. The thesis focuses on key players who offered chemical and stylistic alternatives: Royal Doulton, Bernard Moore, Moorcroft, Ruskin Pottery, Bullers Ltd. and Derek Emms. A network of individuals from the different firms encouraged a climate of friendly scientific competition and artistic exchange. British *flambé* manufacturers have been chosen to illustrate both technical and aesthetic developments over time, focusing on where the research material is strongest. Before addressing the companies and individuals involved, it is requisite to discuss what is meant by the term 'style' and how it is to be used in this thesis.

### **What is Style?**

Style is a difficult term to define and the subject of much debate among art and design historians. It is widely interpreted as a manner of expression associated with individuals or historical periods. By examining the diversity of copper-red ceramics produced in Britain this chapter will reveal the extent of various 'cultural' influences, and assess how far the products conform or contrast with contemporaneous

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., Preface, p. xiii.

developments. Whether a style can be truly 'individual' will be discussed alongside the extent to which Western manufacturers of copper-red and *flambé* glazed ceramics were influenced by the underlying principles of design, traditional practices, social and economic factors.

This chapter will apply Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's concept of style as a *Zeitgeist*<sup>6</sup> to demonstrate the idea that historical periods embody distinct styles evident across the whole spectrum of the arts, allied with and in response to scientific developments and technological progress. Critics of this theory argue that there are exceptions which exist outside the period aesthetic – if indeed there is a definite aesthetic in any one period. While there are such examples, large numbers of objects survive which undoubtedly express a 'unified spirit' within a given time frame. There is sufficient evidence of dominant stylistic features to represent a 'spirit'. This concept is primarily what the study defends, hence the selection of examples chosen to illustrate this chapter exhibit 'period characteristics' in combination with individual flair reflecting contemporary scientific progress. The objects discussed do not capture the Chinese 'age' from which they originated, but rather the 'spirit of the age' in Britain when the Chinese idiom was elevated and admired, even though these objects sometimes laid claim to authenticity.

The word style is derived from the Latin meaning *stilus*, a writing tool. From this came a definition of 'individual style' since handwriting was thought to express character - a concept known as '*the signature theory*'.<sup>7</sup> A personal style, sometimes described as inherent or innate, is thought by some to express the mind-set or define

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<sup>6</sup> Elkins, James: 'Style: Development of the Concept'. From Ed. Jane Turner: *The Dictionary of Art*, Vol. 29, London, Macmillan, 1996, p. 879.

<sup>7</sup> Walker, John A: *Design History and the History of Design*, London, Pluto Press, 1989, p.154.

the personality of an artist or designer – a form of personal imprint that can be detected throughout their career. This definition is not without flaws. It is difficult to define ‘personal’ style as innate preferences often combine with changes in technique, use of alternative mediums, an altered psychological state, ageing or different geographical location which may result in a *variety* of styles. How far the style of an individual or corporation echoes the style of the period in which the artefact is made is open to question, as is the influence of individual artists or designers on ‘period style’.

It is often the case that a work of art may contain more than one stylistic influence. In fact, this is often how forgeries are discovered, resulting from a mis-match of period details or lack of style. Many examples of objects purposefully combine a medley of sources; they are works formed in imitation of a past style(s) by replicating the period details – a *pastiche*. Rarely, if ever, do such objects capture the spirit of the age of the originals, but reflect the era which upheld the pastiche. Stylistically composite pieces tend to verge on caricature with undue emphasis on the salient features.

Style can be described as an evolution of different schools of thought, not necessarily more successful or progressive, but formed through different ways of seeing and responding to the society and culture of which they form a part. Whether it is possible to completely dispense with past stylistic traditions is a matter for further discussion. It follows that a style can never be developed autonomously without reference to what has gone before. Contrary to the stark series of period styles portrayed in some texts, elements of stylistic overlap are inevitable.

To an extent, the concept of the *zeitgeist* grounds 'style' in a broader social, cultural and technological context. For instance, High Victorian notions of connoisseurship emphasised the intuitive appreciation of the fine and decorative arts. Works of art were shrouded in mystery, complementing the spiritualism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hard facts and empirical analysis which might have shed light on cultural, historical or sociological phenomenon were largely absent. The vagaries inherent in this branch of art history appeared to dilute style analysis well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Around the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, artistic style analysis became inextricable from wider sociological and technological issues. The marriage between style and cultural values has developed steadily throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that the notion of style itself, divorced from a particular period or aesthetic, has become a Western obsession since the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As in centuries past, style continues to provide a means of social demarcation and identification. Style can be used to reinforce or deconstruct traditional values. Inspiration derived from Far and Near Eastern cultures enacted:

*"...a dramatic liberation from existing conventions and constricting restraints; and in each of [the arts]... the repeated appeal to a different cultural tradition infused radical movements more frequently than it propped up existing conservative ones."*<sup>8</sup>

The concept of '*lifestyle*', the freedom to choose value systems and the products to express them will be discussed in Chapter 5 on Taste.

### **Ceramics and Style**

In ancient civilisations - Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Roman, etc. - as knowledge and skills developed the pottery became more refined and decorative.

Certain ceramic types became elevated to an art form and used for ceremonial rituals. Around the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in tandem with the development of the Rococo style in Europe ceramic forms became overwhelmed by decoration, occasionally obscuring the object type. This trend continued in certain quarters throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But there remained a vocabulary of basic shapes which, subject to minor variations, permeated a host of cultures across the centuries and retain universal appeal today. For instance, Sung Dynasty (960-1279) forms remained popular in China throughout the succeeding Imperial dynasties and permeated Western culture as more became known about China's domestic ceramics. These 'classical' shapes are still produced throughout the East and West.

A 'classical' shape can be defined as a clean curvilinear form. As I hope to demonstrate, contemporary potters have injected these classical forms with the *zeitgeist* of the age. Sometimes this is achieved through alteration of the form but in the case of copper-red ware, interpretations have more often played with combinations of colour and styles of surface decoration. As the ceramist Peter Lane confesses, '*... it is now virtually impossible to be totally original in making pottery vessels*'.<sup>9</sup> None of the pieces discussed in this thesis are purely imitative, whether intentional or the result of inaccurate scholarship. They are the products of artistic, scientific and cultural interpretation.

Production costs and technical knowledge inevitably affect the style of a product, particularly in the field of ceramics – a craft in which science forms an integral component of the art. For instance, *off-the-shelf* ready mixed glazes and 'artificial reduction' copper-red glazes have opened the field to more potters, commercial and

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<sup>9</sup> MacKenzie, John M: *Orientalism*, Manchester, 1995, p.209.

individual. Pressures of the market cannot be ignored either, as both studio and commercial manufacturers choose to adapt their work to render it 'acceptable' to public taste. However, the fact remains that there are universally popular forms and glazes which transcend barriers of time and culture.<sup>10</sup>

Contemporary Britain seems to support a range of stylistic options catering to consumer demand in both niche and mass markets. There does not appear to be a clearly defined 'period' style, although Minimalism returned in the early 1990's, possibly as a reaction to the clutter generated by materialistic Western society. The simplicity of domestic Chinese ceramics can be seen to conform to recent Minimalist trends. It is a Minimalism which harks back to the Modern Movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century where the emphasis was on function and quality rather than the 'disposable' Minimalism of the 1960's. It can be observed that product designs in a range of media including ceramics derive from a range of sources to portray a stylistic *pick-and-mix* reminiscent of Victorian eclecticism.

It could be said that 21<sup>st</sup> century reproductions of domestic Chinese ceramics are more accurate, owing to the accessibility of museum collections, sale catalogues and images from the internet. This considered, there is still a lust for pseudo-Chinese paraphernalia. British ceramics provided and continue to perpetuate the most robust examples of mid-18<sup>th</sup> and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century chinoiserie that had and have little in common with indigenous Chinese design. The flora, fauna and pagodas, etc. depicted on such pieces catered more for the British fondness of romantic naturalism than they reflected Chinese society past or present.

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<sup>9</sup> Lane, Peter: *Ceramic Form – Design and Decoration*, London, A&C Black, 1998, p.8.

<sup>10</sup> Copper-red glazed forms have proved universally popular and timeless; dishes, bowls, trumpet and *meiping* vases, etc. The forms are sometimes given contemporary features.

The search for originality, an 'original' or personal style is usually associated with or the product of a specific time and culture. Certainly in the West, there are studio-potters who strive for originality through the creation of increasingly outlandish forms and surface treatments. Their aim is to achieve notoriety. Within this trend there are also potters who concentrate on updating classic forms. Copper-red interpretations tend to fall into the latter category. Indeed, both the monochrome copper-red glaze and the forms to which it was originally applied during the Ming dynasty have pretensions to immortality. This conservative approach towards copper-red interpretation and its continued appeal will be factors discussed throughout this chapter. It is well to remember that the drive to find 'original' forms was not confined to Western shores. Cultural exchange was a two-way process. Pere d'Entrecolles writing from Jingdezhen records:

*"... the mandarins, who know of the ability of the Europeans to make inventions, have asked me to get from Europe new and original designs, that could be presented to the emperor as something unique."*<sup>11</sup>

Western Europeans were as eager as the Chinese in their search for novelty and originality, hence the type of chinoiserie mentioned earlier. The Chinese were clearly very inventive, but adhered to strict rules of conduct in terms of social etiquette and religion. These rules tended to dictate the form and style of certain vessels. The same could be said of Western culture, particularly during the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the 'art' versus 'function' debate governed style through specific philosophical beliefs. It was to be expected that the East-West cultural collision would result in a measure of cross-fertilisation.

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<sup>11</sup> Francois Xavier d'Entrecolles (1712): 1<sup>st</sup> Letter sent from Raozhou in Jiangxi to Pere d'Orry. Translated and republished in Tichane, Robert: *Ching-te-Chen – Views of a Porcelain City*, New York, New York State Institute for Glaze Research, 1983, Ch. 3, p.102.

It is surprising that the copper-red glaze has exercised such a grip over consumers and manufacturers, especially today when it is easier and less expensive to buy a shiny red plastic vessel. Perhaps this is connected to perceived notions of value, quality and expertise, the desire for status and demonstration of skill - subjects discussed in Chapter 5 on Taste.

Although most of us can intuitively sense when an object looks 'right' stylistically, albeit a personal judgement conditioned by experience and emotion, there are people, such as Bernard Leach, who have confined 'style' to a form of spirituality to be assessed in terms of a harmonious assemblage. Leach was admired by Japanese potters for his attempts to:

*"... knit together western and eastern arts, not only in technique and design, but also through a particular philosophical approach to pots and nature."*<sup>12</sup>

This form of spirituality was imported in large measure from the Far East – China and Japan. In relation to copper-red glazes, the spiritual content of these vessels for sacrificial rites was made manifest through the use of balanced form, and through the expression of *qi* on Song *jun* ware and its interpretations.<sup>13</sup>

Style is highly subjective. It is easier to reach a verdict on craftsmanship than it is to evaluate style. In terms of ceramics it might be defined as the end product of creative thought realised through the skilful application of technology. We have to decide what 'styles' we admire and why that is so, because there is no 'correct' style. Most ceramic manufacturers seem to gravitate towards an acceptable norm in terms of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

shape and decoration. Strikingly avant-garde products often only appeal to minority taste, although in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been increased interest in modern craft and greater tolerance of an undiluted Chinese aesthetic. At this point it is necessary to mention the Anglo-Oriental aesthetic promoted by Bernard Leach and his followers. Leach championed the return to 'classical' form discussed earlier, but from the 1980's onwards his dictatorial design philosophy has been subject to criticism. Nevertheless, for some he continues to represent:

*"... the most celebrated instance of profound eastern influence upon a western artist in the twentieth century, but the search for syncretic forms was to be a characteristic of other artistic developments... These ... attempts to seek inspiration through hybrid arts have survived, and have even been encouraged by the divisions or war and decolonisation in the twentieth century."*<sup>14</sup>

Leach's uncompromising beliefs combined with his powers as a competent self-publicist achieved a level of public acceptance from which later potters have benefited enormously. His influence is debated in Chapter 5 on Taste.

A proportion of styles carry iconographic decorative significance, but by no means all. Occasionally design motifs are misunderstood and used inappropriately.

Sometimes they serve no other purpose but to prettify an object, as is the case with most commercial tableware. Often, as was the case with many examples of copper-red made in the West, the original significance of the colour, form and decoration was either ignored or sacrificed in translation for a largely oblivious public. British manufacturers avidly imposed Western iconography onto Chinese forms and glazes to render them 'acceptable' for consumers.

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<sup>13</sup> Song *jun* ware was commonly decorated with random copper-pigment splashes to illustrate 'qi', the Chinese concept of universal energy.

<sup>14</sup> MacKenzie, John M: *Orientalism*, 1995, p. 132.

For whatever reasons, it seems that classical Chinese forms decorated with the copper-red glaze will continue to be made, appreciated, used and 'interpreted' for years to come. Responding to copper-red ware in this way is an act of recreation, not imitation. This chapter hopes to explain how tradition and innovation can co-exist in symbiosis. Before moving on to discuss the output of different British firms, the words of studio-ceramist Peter Lane summarise the theme of stylistic interpretation:

*"...the techniques I employ... are no more than adaptations of age-old methods adjusted to my own personal needs. More importantly, they provide me with a kind of 'vocabulary' which, like all others, can be used by anyone else in various and divergent ways to express totally different ideas."*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Lane, Peter: *Ceramic Form*, 1998, p.125.

## Introduction to Case Studies

British 'research' ceramists experimenting with *flambé* in the 1890's included Cuthbert Bailey and Charles J. Noke from Royal Doulton, Bernard Moore, William Burton from the Royal Lancastrian Pottery<sup>16</sup>, Hugh Allan of Allander Pottery<sup>17</sup> and John Vivian Goddard of Geo L. Ashworth & Bros.<sup>18</sup> The first 'true' high-fired *flambé*

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<sup>16</sup> **William Burton**, directing head of the **Royal Lancastrian Pottery**, was passionately interested in Chinese ceramics. He was well acquainted with Bernard Moore having met him at the Wedgwood factory between 1887-1892, and admired his attempts to recreate Chinese glazes, notably *flambé* and turquoise. Experimental Lancastrian *flambé* first appeared in April 1901 after William Burton had seen the *flambé* display at the Paris Exhibition of 1900. Production continued until May 1904, when it was not resumed until January 1906 following the introduction of a muffle kiln for lustre glazes. The *flambé* was also to be fired in the muffle kiln. An exhibition of Lancastrian pottery in Liège, 1905 displayed examples of the Lancastrian *sang de boeuf* glaze, 'the largest' specimen of which was purchased by the Japanese commissioner. It is claimed that the Royal Lancastrian 'flushed' or *flambé* glaze lacked the variegated tonal depth of high-temperature Chinese *flambé*. It was nearer in uniform colour to the *rouge flambé* of Royal Doulton, a low-temperature glaze stained with copper-oxide and fired in a reducing atmosphere. Both Royal Doulton and Royal Lancastrian *flambé* were considered technical feats because of the flawless reds that were produced in commercial quantities. Although, the first Lancastrian exhibition catalogue records the red "splashed, streaked, or veined with yellow...grey, and with purple." ('First Exhibition of the Lancastrian Pottery at Graves' Galleries', 6, Pall Mall, London W. (1<sup>st</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> June, 1904), p.23. Catalogue courtesy of the Manchester City Museum and Art Gallery Decorative Arts Dept, Curator - Ruth Shrigley. ) As was the case with Bernard Moore, Doulton and Moorcroft low-temperature *flambé*, the Royal Lancastrian glaze ranged from bright cherry red to a pale strawberry pink, sometimes referred to as *crushed strawberry*. One of the marked features of all these early 20<sup>th</sup> century British *flambé* glazes was their faint lustre - or "burnished metallic reflection." (Lomax, Abraham: *Royal Lancastrian Pottery 1900-1938*, Bolton, 1957, p. 67.)

<sup>17</sup> The **Allander Pottery** was founded in 1904 by **Hugh Allan**. It was situated outside Glasgow at Milngavie on the banks of the River Allander. Hugh Allan set out to manufacture 'artistic' earthenware using lustre, crystalline and *flambé* glazes. The pottery was short-lived, closing in 1908. Many of the pieces use brightly coloured glazes in abstract patterns. They can be compared to Ashworth's *Lustrosa* ware in a variety of ways; both manufacturers used earthenware bodies and experimented with copper and other lustre glazes. They both exhibited a degree of control over the so-called unpredictable effects. Allander and *Lustrosa* ware were fired at relatively low temperatures. Both firms used simple shapes. *Lustrosa* ware was visibly influenced by a Chinese aesthetic while Allander Pottery forms tended to be more robust and expressive, pre-empting Art Deco with their use of vivid colour and abstract decoration. *Lustrosa* ware was finer in form and decorative glaze effects. Whereas J.V. Goddard produced some matt metallic glazes, Hugh Allan's glazes were predominantly of the heavily leaded, glassy lustre type. (Fleming, J. Arnold: *Scottish Potter*, Glasgow, 1923, p. 117)

<sup>18</sup> **John Vivian Goddard** was trained in the art and manufacture of ceramics. From c.1900 - 1920 he experimented with various glazes, working alongside Ashworth's respected chemist - **Dr. Basch**. At the outbreak of war in 1914, Dr. Basch returned to his native Austria leaving Goddard to continue their experimental work. However, after Dr. Basch's departure it appears the *Lustrosa* and *Estrella* ranges were discontinued. Both Basch and Goddard typified the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century chemist-potter associated with artistic ware. An article in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* recorded the experimental 'Staffordshire lustre' shown by Goddard in London over 'the last few years'. It stated that Mr. Goddard 'apparently' worked exclusively with copper lustre, and described pieces "...in which the copper oxide has developed, as it were accidentally, with both turquoise blue and a deep ruby red, the contrast subtly harmonised by the sheen of lustre..." The author mentioned a type of peach-bloom lustre on "... a vase quite like a peach which has ripened on one side... It varies from a deep blush pink

is thought to be the work of William Howson -Taylor at Ruskin Pottery, with examples dating from c.1903.<sup>19</sup> Bernard Moore also produced a small number of 'true' pieces between 1905-1915. There seems to be some confusion over the date Moore began producing *rouge flambé*. Writing in 1920, J.F. Blacker insinuated that Bernard Moore "*cleverly imitated*" the "*well-known Chinese ruby glaze... rich and full in colour,*" at St. Mary's Works in Longton which would date production earlier than 1905. Blacker further elaborated:

*"The sang-de-boeuf is a marvellous red, and the transmutation vases, where that colour is veined and splashed with others, resemble a beautiful veined red jasper, and that famous peach-blow, or should it be peach-bloom? ... Then Moore's haricot, rouge flambé, which is the veined red I have mentioned, and the whole range of splashed or transmutation glazes strike a collector with delight..."*<sup>20</sup>

It could be that Blacker compiled his book from secondary sources and had not visited St. Mary's works in Longton which closed in 1905. Bernard Moore ceased trading as

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*on the one hand to a pale greenish yellow on the other. Some ...pale tints are flecked with little spots of pink..."* ('Arts & Crafts - New Lustre Pottery', *Journal of the RSA*, Vol. LVII, Friday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1909, p.692.)

*The Connoisseur* compared 'Lustrosa Ware' to Chinese transmutation glazes, praising Ashworth's recreated "... mottled colour - delicate plum blossom, red and orange flambé, green and white - which are jewel-like in their brilliance and lustre." (*The Connoisseur: 'Porcelain & Pottery - Historic English Potteries'*, Vol. 35, April, 1913, p. 258.)

*Lustrosa* and *Estrella* ware were reported to have 'reproduced' the "*mottled, streaked and variegated glazes, ... [from] the great potters of the East.*" ('Buyers' Notes - Geo L. Ashworth & Bros.', *The Pottery Gazette*, No. 385, Vol. 34, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1909, p. 789.) This is typical of the overtly enthusiastic publicity literature of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Ashworth glazes were in fact dissimilar in terms of body and glaze composition in relation to Chinese copper-red and transmutation glazes.

John Vivian Goddard first exhibited the 'new' artistic 'Ashworth Ware' at an exhibition in the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London, during June-July 1909. The new glazes were also exhibited at the Louvre, Paris in 1914 where the accompanying catalogue stated the pieces were designed by J.V. Goddard. ('Mason's - The First Two Hundred Years', *Summer Exhibition at the Wedgwood Visitor's Centre*, Barlaston, Staffordshire; June - Nov. 1996, p.120.)

<sup>19</sup> Sotheby's: *The Albert Wade Collection: Part 1*, Olympia London, 2 May 2002, p.128. Lot 263 - "*A high-fired vase c.1903, with streaked purple, green, lavender and red glazes pooling to ivory around the rim, impressed RUSKIN POTTERY, WEST SMETHWICK, 1903, 20 cm; 8 in.*"

<sup>20</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Nineteenth-Century English Ceramic Art*, London, Stanley Paul & Co., 1920, pp. 224 - 227.

an independent potter in Stoke about 1915. Blacker's book was published five years afterwards in 1920, lending credibility to the theory that he did not witness Moore's *flambé* production first hand. The confusion is understandable however, as the Moore Bros. did produce 'Oriental' art wares at Longton from c.1870 until closure. They were noted for their metallic lustre glazes in imitation of Chinese cloisonné-enamel bronzes.<sup>21</sup>

Paul Atterbury says Bernard Moore presented his first pieces of '*Chinese flambé on porcelain*' to the British Museum in 1902.<sup>22</sup> However, this study is not distinctly concerned with the exact date of production, but rather the *style* of the products and the reasons behind their manufacture. Whoever is credited as being the first British manufacturer of 'true' high-fired *flambé* depends on the definition of technique and materials used.

### **Royal Doulton of Burslem, Staffordshire**

Royal Doulton was the first 'commercial' manufacturer of British *flambé*, affording the opportunity to observe the production of *flambé* spanning almost a century between c.1904-2004. From the outset Doulton produced far larger quantities of *flambé* than other concerns. The Doulton team worked in collaboration with Bernard Moore (1850-1935) to introduce the ware. Dr. Mellor's classic paper on the copper-red glaze discussed in Chapter 1 was dedicated to Moore's unpublished research. Much has already been written on Bernard Moore's *flambé* glazes, hence the decision to consider his work in relation to the products of Royal Doulton, especially as he

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.227. Blacker referred to the Moore Bros. metallic lustre glazes as '*gold flambé*', a technically incorrect term which serves to highlight the lack of scientific knowledge such writers and collectors possessed in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

became the firm's consultant. Moore's *flambé* can be categorised into low and high-temperature glazes with decorative variations. These will be discussed in relation to their similarity with Royal Doulton's products.

### **Royal Doulton**

The Burslem factory was headed by a large creative team; John Slater - Art Director; John C. Bailey - Works Manager; Cuthbert Bailey - chemist; Charles J. Noke - modeller, designer and glaze chemist. They were supported by a complement of other designers and craftsmen; Harry Nixon, Cecil Jack Noke, and so forth.

### **Doulton *Flambé* – Composition**

In terms of body composition, Doulton commercial *flambé* was applied to a bone-china rather than hard or soft paste porcelain body. According to Eyles, *'About 1915 a new much thinner and much lighter body was perfected for the flambé wares. On [which]... new lustred 'opaline' effects, combined with the flambé treatments, were introduced...'*<sup>23</sup> Doulton Chang Ware developed c. 1925, was supported on a *'... heavier type of refractory body...'* akin to stoneware.<sup>24</sup>

The glaze compositions varied according to body type. Generally, like most *'Staffordshire flambé'*, Doulton probably used an oxide glaze painted onto the ware and fired at the modest temperatures of c.1250°C, maybe less. For instance, Wenger's Ltd. sold:

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<sup>22</sup> Atterbury, Paul, Denker, Ellen & Batkin, Maureen: *Miller's Twentieth-Century Ceramics*, London, Octopus Publishing, 1999, p. 138.

<sup>23</sup> Eyles, D: *Doulton and Burslem Wares*, London, Bartie and Jenkins, 1980, p.56.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.62.

*"Prepared Smoke Lustre Preparations: To be mixed with water and painted thickly on the glazed articles and then fired in a reducing atmosphere at 500 °C." Of which, "No. 259 D – Red, Ruby Flambe [cost] 1s. per oz."*

Alternatively, they offered *"Glazes Which Produce Smoke Lustre Alone Without Other Preparations: [To be] applied thickly, direct on the biscuit ware, then fired at the temperature given below, in the ordinary Glost Oven, after which the fired glazed goods are re-fired and "smoked" with a reducing atmosphere at about 500 °C."*

This range included:

*"1523 G – Ruby Flammé Glaze, for reducing atmosphere (Plumbic) 950 °C., Cone 010... 1b... 2s. 6d.*

*1668 G – Golden Red Flammé Glaze, 950 °C., Cone 010... 1b... 4s. 6d.*

*960 G – Crimson Flambé Glaze (Leadless) 950 °C., Cone 010... 1b... 2s. 6d."*<sup>25</sup>

Examples of Doulton *flambé* used in this study exhibit low-temperature soft glazes, easily scratched. This would account for the small scuffed patches on some pieces.

*Sung Ware* generally possessed an opalescent sheen more associated with ruby lustre than with high-temperature Chinese *flambé*. *Sung ware* of this sort was and still is often referred to as '*flambé lustre*', creating yet another spurious category of British *flambé*. *Chang Ware* is different. The *Chang* glaze is lava-like, crazed and thick.

Returning to the subject of painted *flambé* glazes as described in the Wenger's catalogue, William Burton claimed this technique was also practised by the potters of Jingdezhen. He suggested that the *flambé* glazes produced during the reign of Kangxi and afterwards, '*...particularly ... the peach-bloom, crushed-strawberry, and such-like delicate tints*' were applied to pre-fired, white glazed porcelain. '*An enamel-colour containing copper was applied on this, and reduced at a much lower temperature.*'<sup>26</sup>

This painting process may explain one method of attaining the characteristic pure white interiors and the neat white borders at the foot and rim of some Chinese *flambé*

<sup>25</sup> Wenger's Colours – English Price List, No. 66, 1937, p.45.

porcelain. In this respect, Doulton *flambé* is comparable to some Qing dynasty Chinese *flambé*.

Another aspect of Doulton *flambé* is the glassy appearance of the glaze. Bernard Moore's low-temperature *flambé* exhibits the same hard gloss and it appears on Moorcroft *flambé* to a similar extent, yet it is not found on Ruskin high-temperature glazes or Bullers Ltd. experimental pieces. Commenting on the differences between European and Chinese glazes, Philip Rawson wrote:

*"[Even on] the glossiest monochromes of Imperial wares from eighteenth-century China... the hardness and gloss of the glaze is rarely so obtrusive [as seen on 'European aristocratic wares'] ... The complex glazes such as the [Chinese] peach-bloom or flambé, however vitreous they may actually be, never have that gem-like brilliance which was the European ideal; they may have minute crackle and bubbling, and their colours may be complex and ambiguous in a special way."*<sup>27</sup>

Rawson speculated that the European preference for highly glossy ceramics was an ostentatious expression of ambition.

### **Doulton Flambé – Introduction to the Examples**

Writing in 1898, W.G. Gulland categorised Chinese ceramic shapes, dividing them into designs for the domestic market and those for export to the West.<sup>28</sup> This section is primarily concerned with the shapes and decoration used for British *flambé* in an attempt to draw comparisons with traditional Chinese examples produced from the 15<sup>th</sup> –19<sup>th</sup> centuries for its indigenous clientele.

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<sup>26</sup> **Burton, William:** *Porcelain – It's Nature, Art & Manufacture*, London, B.T. Batsford, 1906, p.136-7.

<sup>27</sup> **Rawson, Philip:** *Ceramics, The Appreciation of the Arts / 6*, London, Oxford University Press, 1971, pp.133-134.

<sup>28</sup> **Gulland, W.G:** *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. 1, London, 1898, pp.116-130.

Doulton *flambé* dishes and bowls rather than plates appear frequently in public and private collections. In China, the copper-red glaze was mostly applied to stem cups, vases, bowls or dishes originally intended for sacred rites. The Chinese *flambé* glaze is commonly, although not exclusively found on vases while *peach-bloom* glazed items were confined to a set of eight shapes designed for the scholar's table. Most of the Doulton *flambé* output covered vases, and what the Chinese would call bottles, beakers and jars. Grotesques and animals were also coated with *flambé*, many of which strayed far from the Chinese idiom.

In terms of decoration, the Doulton range is varied. Some *flambé* remained free from decoration, relying on the glaze itself for effect as is also true of Doulton *Chang Ware*. It is to be remembered that examples of early Ming copper-reds exhibited incised dragon or lotus designs under the glaze.<sup>29</sup> And mentioned previously, white porcelain Chinese stem cups were known to carry copper-red fish designs although in an abstract rather than Western representational style.<sup>30</sup>

Underglaze printed or hand painted Doulton subject matter depicted *exotic* imaginary birds; eagles, peacocks and the mythical phoenix. Deer – a favourite Art Deco motif, dragons, fish, flowers and foliage were employed. Occasionally, geometric border patterns were used in conjunction with these motifs. Examples of painted or engraved-plate printed landscapes, often in black, can also be seen on Doulton *flambé*.

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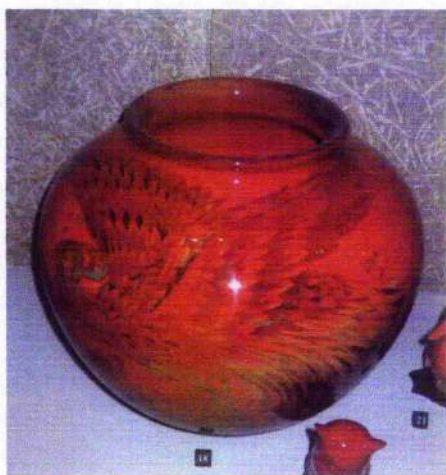
<sup>29</sup> Medley, Margaret: *Illustrated Catalogue of Ming and Qing Monochrome Wares in the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art*, Section 6, Revised Edition, 1989, SOAS, University of London, p.14, no. 520: 'Copper Red Bowl...decorated with an incised band of lotus panels outside at the base... Ming, Xuande period, 1426-35.' p. 22, no. 560: 'Copper Red Saucer... decorated inside with moulded anhua dragons... Ming, early 15<sup>th</sup> century.'

<sup>30</sup> Medley, Margaret: *Illustrated Catalogue of Underglaze Blue and Copper-Red Decorated Porcelains*, Section 3 – The Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, Second Edition Revised 1976, SOAS, University of London, p.20, no. 628: 'Red and White Stem Cup... decorated outside with three copper-red fish... Ming, late 16<sup>th</sup> century.'

Coloured underglaze painting seemed to be a feature of *Sung Ware*. This section sets out to identify the cross-cultural fusion of form and decoration.

**Fig. 7**

- **Bone China Sung Ware Vase**, with hand painted decoration of an exotic bird under a *flambé* glaze. Painted by Harry Nixon, NRD. Backstamped with the Lion and Crown mark, the printed monogram *HN* and **NOKE**. Moulded 7425 Royal Doulton, Burslem, c.1920-40. Acc. No. 94P 1985. ( Mr. John Pierpoint bequest, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on -Trent)



### Form

Bulbous forms dominate the Doulton repertoire. The large *Sung* vase shown above would fit more accurately in the 'jar' category, even with no lid attached. In fact, its very rounded body is more of Persian than Chinese inspiration. The outward flared lip is a feature more generally found on European ceramics. Chinese necks or lips tend to be less pronounced or straight, especially in the case of a jar where is usually has to accommodate a lid.

### Decoration

In 1907 responsibility for the *flambé* range passed to Charles Noke. During the 1914-18 War when business was slow he developed the transmutation glaze which resulted in *Sung Ware*. Using repeated oxidation-reduction processes combined with the

addition of other minerals such as cobalt and possibly manganese, Charles Noke succeeded in improving control over the dramatic qualities of the *flambé* glaze. These mottled and veined effects are apparent on some of the earlier *flambé*, but now they could be produced at will. The *Sung* label was not used on the pieces until 1919.

In some cases the *flambé* glaze covered *Titanian* glazed wares. The *Titanian* glaze was developed around the same time as *Sung Ware*, so called because of the titanium oxide which gave the glaze its grey-blue tint. *Flambé* and lustre glaze effects were used in combination with stunning results. In 1921, J.F. Blacker wrote:

*"Regarding the name "Sung" glaze applied to this ware, I can safely assert that the Sung dynasty, which lasted from 954 to 1279 A.D., never saw any porcelain as wondrous as this, and that the King-te-chin manufactories in their best periods produced nothing like it... You will remember "Sung" and thus the name will fulfill its mission."*<sup>31</sup>

This last sentence is fundamental to understanding British industrial *flambé*. It was conceived and developed to generate profit, to market affordable, acceptable *exotica*. The name *Sung* sounded 'Oriental', thereby suggestive to the consumer. In the 1920's Chinese Song wares were relatively new to Europe, having started to trickle into Britain during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Song dynasty *flambé* is a misnomer. The Song copper-splashed *jun* ware, sometimes referred to as the forerunner of later Chinese transmutation glazes, was a glaze of radically different character to its Doulton namesake. The Chinese *jun* glaze was:

*"A really deep glaze, ... thick and unctuous... [and] seems... to draw the attention within its own translucent thickness. Its depth gives us a sense of the internal mutual reflections of its glaze particles with their different colours; the eye is not forced to accept the outer surface as a coloured sheen."*<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Eyles, D: *Doulton and Burslem Wares*, 1980, p.59.

<sup>32</sup> Rawson, Philip: *Ceramics*, 1971, pp.135.

Although Doulton *Sung Ware* was largely composed of various layers of 'coloured sheen', this by no means detracted from its originality or beauty. *Sung Ware* was illustrative of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century manipulation of competing stylistic influences. Importantly, it was an innovative alternative to other ware produced at the time. Some consumers may have preferred decorative Doulton *Sung Ware*, such as the vase in fig. 7, to the heavier, plain Chinese alternative. This preference is no less true of early 21<sup>st</sup> century British taste. Doulton *Sung Ware* represented that peculiar brand of British chinoiserie exported worldwide.

#### Painting and iconography

This vase has been hand-painted under the glaze with a '*phoenix rising from the ashes*'. The entire piece has a fiery theme enhanced by the use of a silver- grey base, ochre mottling and smooth red body. It has an opalescent sheen seen on many *Sung Wares* of this type. The Chinese did not decorate their *jun reds* or *flambé* in this way. This vase represents a decorative Western approach to *flambé*.

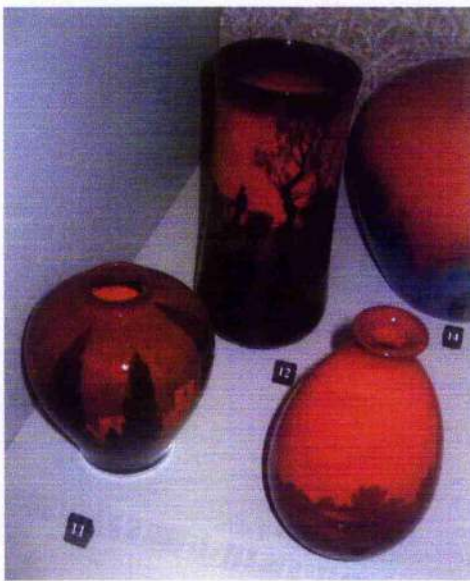
**Fig. 8**

- **Bone-China beaker vase** with agricultural landscape, printed and painted in black beneath the *flambé* glaze. Lion and Crown printed mark with **FLAMBÉ**. Also written are the letters **B OCK**. Moulded 1300. Royal Doulton, Burslem, c.1960's. Acc. No. 402P 1986.

**Bone-China ovoid vase** with woodland landscape, painted and printed in black beneath a *flambé* glaze. Lion and Crown mark printed with **FLAMBÉ**. Moulded 7777. Royal Doulton, Burslem, c.1960's. Acc. No. 405P 1986.

**Bone-China *flambé* baluster vase** depicting a 'Moorish' landscape. Lion and Crown printed mark with **FLAMBÉ**. Also written – **B OCK**. Impressed **DOULTON 6948**. Acc. No. 404P 1986.

(The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent – Part of the Mrs Shelia Mary Sheldon Bequest).



### Form

The gentle curving sides and very slightly flared rim of the beaker vase would put it among the Chinese beaker category, although it does not fit any Chinese beaker shape exactly.<sup>33</sup> Most Chinese beakers have a more pronounced flare at the foot and mouth. A similar shape was used by Art Nouveau glass and ceramic designers. It is an East-West fusion of form.

<sup>33</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. 1, 1898, p.125.

### Decoration

As seen in the photograph above, this piece has been underglaze printed in black with a pastoral landscape. It has also been painted black at the mouth and base to effect a vignette, leaving a broad band of *flambé* on the upper body. The Chinese would not have depicted an 18<sup>th</sup> century British rural idyll on their domestic monochromes. Again, this beaker caters for Western taste. It cannot be classed as an example of chinoiserie, rather a portrayal of romantic nostalgia still popular today.

Also seen in fig. 8 is an ovoid bone china vase with a woodland landscape, painted and printed in black beneath a *flambé* glaze, c. 1960's.<sup>34</sup> It appears to be influenced by Chinese ceramic shape, the narrow flared mouth being similar to those found on Chinese *meiping* vases. It is similar in shape to the wine bottle/ jar depicted by Gulland, particularly the mouth, although the body is more rotund.<sup>35</sup>

Like the previous vase, this piece is decorated with a rural landscape. In this case, the landscape appears to have been painted rather than printed under the glaze. The tonal gradations are far softer. The scene fades into the pure red *flambé* of the upper body without the use of the dense black banding present on the beaker. In fact, the painting is grey rather than black, the tone darkening towards the base. This piece is predominantly of British inspiration, owing only the red colour of the glaze to Chinese *flambé*. It says more about British affection for the countryside than anything remotely Oriental.

<sup>34</sup> **Bone China Vase** with woodland landscape, painted and printed in black beneath a *flambé* glaze. Lion and Crown mark printed with **FLAMBÉ**. Moulded 7777. Royal Doulton, Burslem, c. 1960's. Acc. No. 405P 1986. Part of the Mrs Shelia Mary Sheldon bequest, (The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery).

<sup>35</sup> **Gulland, W.G:** *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. 1, 1898, p.127.

The vase with a 'Moorish' landscape, also seen in **fig. 8**, is similarly painted and printed in black under the glaze. The Chinese-inspired form supports a Hispanic theme. The date of this piece is interesting, made c. 1950's when Continental tourism was increasing. The Doulton designers were not simply portraying an 'exotic' landscape, but an inspiration.

Another Doulton landscape *flambé* vase is held by the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.<sup>36</sup> It has a swollen ovoid body tapering into a short narrow neck. The *rouge flambé* glaze has a high gloss. The vase differs from previous examples as it is an earlier piece, acquired by the WAG in 1906 and is marked **ROYAL DOULTON FLAMBÉ** in black on the base. The rural scene appears to be printed and painted in black under the *flambé* glaze. The thatched cottages have Arts and Crafts connotations but nothing suggesting an Oriental influence. On another vase Egyptian scenes were depicted in black under the *rouge flambé* glaze.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Doulton landscape *flambé* vase, the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Acc. No. WAG 3936 – Ht: Approx. 7.5 in.

<sup>37</sup> *Flambé* Jardiniere - the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Acc. No. WAG 3947, ACQ. 1909, Royal Doulton, Burslem.

**Fig. 9**

- **Bone China Flambé Vase** with coloured glaze effects known as '*Veined Flambé*'. Devised by Jo Ledger, Art Director for Royal Doulton's in the 1960's. The base is printed with the Lion and Crown mark with **FLAMBE**  
**VEINED**  
**1616**

Moulded 1616. Royal Doulton, Burslem, c.1960's. Acc. No. 409P 1986.  
(Part of the Mary Shelia Sheldon Bequest, PM & AG)



### Form

This bulbous vase has an oviform body with a short, stout neck, much shorter than the neck of a Chinese water bottle.<sup>38</sup> The vase represents an Anglo-Chinese amalgamation of forms.

### Decoration

The most striking feature of this '*Veined Flambé*' vase is the swathe of colour sweeping upwards from the base. Pearl grey and turquoise veining sweeps the lower body leaving a pure red neck and shoulders. Effects such as these were achieved on high-fired Chinese transmutation glazes, but here they may have been engineered using additional oxides. As discussed in Chapter 1, there is evidence to suggest the Chinese also added oxides to the copper glaze for the same reasons. Unlike high-fired

Chinese *flambé*, Doulton pieces have scratched and worn in places suggesting a lower-temperature, softer glaze and are comparatively glossy.

The techniques employed to create the various *flambé* effects and colours were later controlled and developed, but were unpredictable in early Doulton *flambé*. An early example with transmutation effects exists in the Walker Gallery, Liverpool.<sup>39</sup> It is of tapering ovoid shape with a short cylindrical neck. The *rouge flambé* glaze of this vase is clouded with blue and mauve around the neck and upper body. It was purchased by the WAG for the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition in 1914, (**fig.10**). The overall glazed effect is slightly iridescent. Unlike the previous example of '*Veined Flambe*' from The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, this piece is less flat and uniform. The clouding and mottling are vivid; the blues, greens and mauve more striking. Also, the shape is closer to Chinese prototypes.

**Fig. 10**

- **Tapered ovoid vase with transmutation effects; bone china. Royal Doulton *Flambé*, c. 1910-14. Acc. No. WAG 3950. The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.**



<sup>38</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. 1, 1898, pp. 126-127.

<sup>39</sup> Acc. No. WAG 3950

**Fig. 11**

- **Doulton *Flambé* Vase**; bone china. Cylindrical vase with square shoulders, waisted neck and flared rim. Crystalline *rouge flambé* glaze. Printed on the base in black – **ROYAL DOULTON FLAMBÉ**. Made by Royal Doulton, Burslem. Acc. No. WAG 3953. Acq. by the WAG in 1914 for the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition.



The cylindrical vase in the photograph above (**fig. 11**) is covered in a *rouge flambé* glaze with turquoise crystalline effects, also a feature of Bernard Moore's *flambé*. The Doulton-Moore connection will be discussed later.

Further clouded effects in red, purple and turquoise are seen in a globular Doulton *rouge flambé* vase with a narrow neck and everted rim.<sup>40</sup> This also belongs to the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool and was purchased by the institution in 1917 for the Liverpool Autumn Exhibition, (**fig. 12**). It is typical of the earlier, vivid transmutation effects of the Doulton *flambé* glaze. I have not seen any Chinese copper-red or *flambé* glazes applied to this globular shape.

**Fig. 12**

- **Globular vase with transmutation effects; bone china. Royal Doulton *Flambé*, c. 1917. Acc. No. WAG 3955. The WAG, Liverpool.**



**Fig. 13**

- ***Flambé* Vase; bone china.** A shouldered ovoid body tapering towards the base and terminating in a short neck with a narrow mouth. Covered in a smooth, uniform rouge *flambé* glaze. Marked in black on the base, **DOULTON ROUGE FLAMBÉ**. Acc. No. WAG 3942. Acq. By the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool in 1906. Ht. approx. 8in.



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<sup>40</sup> Acc. No. WAG 3955, marked on the base in black with **ROYAL DOULTON FLAMBÉ**.

### Form

**Fig. 13** above is a restrained form with the mouth of a lantern vase and an ovoid body. The shape is Chinese in inspiration.

### Decoration

This vase is one of the rare examples of Doulton *flambé* reliant on the pure red glaze for effect. The vase is decorated with a low-temperature soft *flambé* glaze and has a high gloss. There is no streaking, mottling, veining, painting or printing. It is beautiful in its simplicity, as were the original Chinese copper-red glazes. The vase does not reveal any unglazed surface; even the base is entirely red. Kangxi and later Chinese reds often left white foot and mouth rims. Sometimes the interior of the Chinese pieces would be white, but not in this case. Throughout my visits to museum collections I have not yet seen the Chinese use this exact shape for the copper-red or *flambé* glaze, although some early Ming Hongwu (1368-1398) pieces were entirely covered in the copper-red glaze.

The simplicity of this vase is staggering for its time, c. 1904-06. It pre-dates the International Modern Movement that developed c.1919 by more than a decade and was conceived at a time when the curvilinear decoration of Art Nouveau was rampant.

**Fig. 14**

- **Bone China Flambé Vase;** extended ovoid form on a splayed foot. It has a painted design of four 'Honesty' sprays in white and gold by artist W.G Hodgkinson. Marked on the base in black – **ROYAL DOULTON FLAMBÉ** and signed. Royal Doulton, Burslem – c.1900-1909. Acc. No. WAG 3946, purchased by the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool in 1909.



### Form

**Fig. 14** depicts a Chinese-inspired ovoid vase. The slightly splayed foot tends to be a feature of Western ceramics – the Chinese tend to use straight feet. Also, the neck is much shorter than those found on most Chinese vases, except for 'lantern vases'.

Perhaps the Chinese ceramics seen by Doulton's designers had cut-off necks. Broken vases often had their necks cut down, sometimes deliberately to accommodate lamp fittings.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> **The John Sparkes Archive in the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art** records a number of examples. The *Day Sales Book* for 1919-1925, p.106; July 1919 – H.B. Harrison Esq. purchased '*Lang yao cut sang-de-boeuf Vase*'; p.274, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1922 – H.C. Phipps Esq. purchased '*Large cut Flambé vase*.'

The '*Day Sales Book*' 1925-30, p.380; 5 March, 1929 – Hon. Mr. Buller purchased a '*Purple Flambé vase as lamp*'. The *Day Sales Book* 1930-35, p. 251 – Mrs Langton required Sparkes to mount a '*white Doulton vase for lamp* [and supply a] *cinnamon coloured silk shade*.' (Possibly a Doulton *blanc-de-chine* vase). P. 265 of the same book, Oct., 1933; S.P.D. – Sir Percival David – purchased a '*M'ted Chun (As lamp)*'. P. 547, 26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1935; Geoffrey Blackwell Esq. returned a '*flambé vase as lamp*'. P. 559, 5<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1935; Mrs Tabor purchased a '*Red vase mounted for lamp K.L. [and a] skin shade*'. Also, p. 563, 11<sup>th</sup> Dec., 1935; Mrs Tabor purchased a '*sq. red vase mounted for lamp*'.

## Decoration

The painted design represents another type of decorated Doulton *flambé* using white enamel outlined with gold. Beneath the gilt lip is a swirling gilt wave in keeping with Art Nouveau curvilinear decoration. The abstract, asymmetrical design is clearly of Japanese inspiration seen in the balance between the white leaves and dark red background. The 1900-1909 production date would corroborate this theory as there were many Japanese elements within Art Nouveau design (c.1890-1914). The white enamel petals traced in gold may also be seen to imitate Chinese cloisonné enamelling. Moreover, the mottled glaze of this *flambé* vase gives it the appearance of Chinese *sang-de-boeuf*. It is much darker in tone than most of the bright, cherry red Doulton *flambé*. Later Doulton *flambé* appears to become bright red, increasingly glossy and uniform. **(Compare earlier examples of Doulton *flambé* with the post-war *flambé* animals illustrated in figs. 23-27).**

It is highly unlikely that the subject matter of such a design would carry the same connotations today as it did for consumers in the early 1900's. Moral inscriptions or symbolism were popular across the decorative arts in Victorian Britain. This vase can be seen to represent the waning moral tradition. Presumably at the time of production people would have understood the reference inferred by the white flowers, motifs also used by the Victorian sentimental jewellery industry. Without the title '*Honesty*', the message would be lost on many contemporary observers. Overall, the vase portrays the stylistic bricolage characteristic of much Victorian design - a phenomenon that has penetrated design of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

**Fig. 15**

- **Bone China *Flambé* Vase;** ovoid form on a straight foot. Hand painted with a gilt design of goldfish and lily leaves. Marked on the base in black – **ROYAL DOULTON FLAMBÉ** and signed. Royal Doulton, Burslem – c.1900-1909. Acc. No. WAG 3948, purchased by the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool in 1909.



### Form

The Chinese inspired shape of this vase is similar to that discussed previously. It is a little more bulbous with an exaggerated flared lip. The shorter, bulbous nature of the vase and the squat neck Westernise the form.

### Decoration

The fine gilt painting of goldfish weaving towards a whorl of lily leaves is typical Art Nouveau subject matter. Goldfish were painted on Chinese and Japanese porcelains, but not on the monochrome copper-reds or *flambé* ware. In terms of composition, the asymmetry, simplicity and ‘floating’ nature of the design has more in common with Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints. French fine artists, particularly the group which became known as the Post-Impressionists, were responsible for reviving interest in Japanese prints during the 1880’s.<sup>42</sup> This interest filtered through to the French decorative arts

<sup>42</sup> **Honour, Hugh:** *Chinoiserie – The Vision of Cathay*, London, John Murray, 1961, p.219.

and was subsequently absorbed by the British. *Japonisme* and Art Nouveau motifs comfortably intermingled as ceramic decoration. The date attributed to this vase would make the gilt design fashionable and acceptably exotic. The choice of gilt decoration also makes connections with Japanese Satsuma ware popular at the time and more elaborately imitated by other Staffordshire firms. The decoration is altogether different to the naturalistic fish illustrated on later Doulton *flambé*, examples of which can be seen in Richard Dennis' Doulton exhibition catalogue.<sup>43</sup>

### The Moore-Doulton Collaboration

Before discussing Doulton *flambé* models and *Chang Ware*, it is appropriate to compare the *flambé* ceramics of Bernard Moore (1850-1935) to those produced by Royal Doulton. Moore became a consultant to Royal Doulton from c.1901, helping Cuthbert Bailey, Slater and Noke to develop a reliable low-fired *rouge flambé* suitable for commercial production. The results were made public in the St. Louis International Exhibition of 1904.

Bernard Moore's *flambé* glazes can be divided into groups. '*Red lustre*' *flambé*, sometimes called '*lustre flambé*', was often characterised by a red design on a silver-grey or 'mushroom' ground. Such an example can be seen in a globular vase painted with red birds on a mushroom ground in the collection of Buxton Museum and Art Gallery.<sup>44</sup> Subject matter is often naturalistic, mostly flora and fauna, birds, fish, etc.

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<sup>43</sup> Dennis, Richard: *Doulton Pottery From The Lambeth and Burslem Studios 1873-1939*, Part II, 24 June-5 July, 1975 at New Bond St., London, Pub. by Richard Dennis, London. pp. 128-129. Lot 356 – 'A *Sung* vase painted with two *John Dory* fish by A. Eaton, the background with a bright purple and red glaze', (c. 1920-1939). Lot 359 – 'A pair of *Sung* vases each painted with an eagle attacking a leaping salmon, in shades of red above blue wave scroll', (c.1920-1939).

<sup>44</sup> Moore 'Lustre Vase', earthenware: Globular body with short, narrow neck and flared lip. Painted red birds on a mushroom ground. Painted by Hilda Beardmore. Painted monogram of initials H B on

Another group uses the same type of glaze as the first, but the *flambé* tends to be **monochrome**. The bodies of these pieces are generally fine earthenware or bone-china. Both groups can be classed as 'low-temperature' *flambé* glazes. They are probably painted copper-oxide glazes fired at around 1250°C and below. Moore and Royal Doulton low-fired *flambé* probably used the on-glaze lustre technique described earlier in connection with Wenger's *flambé* glazes. The lustre effect or 'iridescence' could have been removed by a slightly higher firing temperature and would result in the 'opalescent' effect of low-temperature *flambé*. This theory makes sense with reference to an account of the 'polishing' process quoted by Aileen Dawson from a letter by Hilda Carter, one of Moore's paintresses at Wolfe Street, Stoke:

*" ... The Rouge Flambé was mixed into a grey slurry with a medium I suspect contained ball clay, mixed to a consistency which enabled the paintress to produce intricate designs, always visible during the decorating process against the white glazed background of the piece. The medium was not affected at the first firing except to deposit the Rouge Flambé which dried on as a grey deposit. This was finally "polished" off to reveal the typical red pattern. Any banding on neck or base was applied in the same medium..."*<sup>45</sup>

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the base. Dated c.1905-1915, Stoke-on-Trent. Ht: 12 cm, Dia: approx. 11 cm. Acc. No. DERSB: 469 - Buxton Museum & Art Gallery. Part of the Frank Ollerenshaw bequest.

<sup>45</sup> Dawson, Aileen: *Bernard Moore*, London, 1982, p.77.

**Fig. 16**

- **Earthenware *Flambé* Jar**, printed **Bernard Moore** on base. Stoke-on-Trent, c.1905, (The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery)



The photograph above (**fig. 16**) shows an example of a uniform *flambé* glaze almost identical to that on the Doulton Modernist vase of c.1904-06.

A comparatively small proportion of Moore's *flambé* are 'true' high-fired glazes on porcelain or porcellanous stoneware, (**figs. 17 & 18**), which he often signed on the base. Moore is known to have used English, Continental, Chinese and Japanese blanks for his *flambé* glazes. One of his documents in the Victorian and Albert Museum stated the maximum firing temperature for Moore's 'true' transmutation, copper-red and '*peach-blow*' glazes was c.1300-1400°C.<sup>46</sup>

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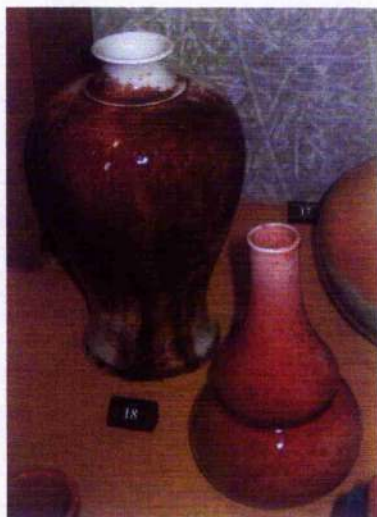
<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.32. (Ceramics Dept. of the V&A, Document Ref. No. Lit. Mat. 276)

**Fig. 17**

- **Bernard Moore vase**, porcelain. Mottled (high-temperature) *Sang-de-Boeuf* glaze, c. 1905. Acc. No. 456P 1935.

**Bernard Moore vase**, porcelain. Speckled (high-temperature) red *flambé* glaze, c. 1903-15. Acc. No. 514P 1936.

(The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery)



**Fig. 18**

- **Porcelain bottle-vase**; Flared lip and globular upper neck tapers into squat, globular body with broad concave foot. The rouge *flambé* glaze is streaked towards the base, a characteristic associated with 'hare's fur' in China. Although not evident in the photograph there is a gaping wound in the glaze revealing a thickness of approximately 3mm in cross-section. The interior is also glazed with patchy *rouge flambé*. Dated c.1905-15.

Ht: 21.5 cm (approx.) Base painted in blue with **BERNARD** and underlined.

**MOORE**

The base is encrusted with remnants of kiln furniture and globules of glaze where it has overrun the base. The Acc. No. is painted in red on the base – 512P.36 (PM&AG)



The bottle-vase depicted above is an imperfect example of Moore's rare high-fired *flambé* on porcelain. Moore's high-temperature *flambé* is considered by some to be less technically accomplished than his lower temperature *flambé*.

Possibly the most creative and beautiful examples of Moore's *flambé* glazes are his mottled ground pieces with jewel enamelling. Usually red, the mottled ground can also be various shades of yellow or orange. The enamelled designs are depicted in reds, yellow, orange and turquoise often traced in gold. Moore appears to use the abstract glaze markings to suggest and enhance his design, although there is also an element of glaze draughtsmanship as in the case of some Doulton ware. These pieces use a low-temperature metallic glaze and are generally of a fine earthenware body. They are considered Moore's most creative and influential *flambé*. Examples of this type of *flambé* can be seen in the photographs below, (figs. 19 & 20).

In the creative manipulation of naturally occurring glaze effects it could be said that Moore was following the tenets of the Arts and Crafts Movement being '*true to materials*'. The Chinese were also noted for their use of natural features in design, particularly in relation to jade carving. The designs on many of Moore's enamelled *flambé* wares were of Japanese inspiration while some clearly owed a debt to the Art Nouveau Movement.

**Fig. 19**

- **Fine earthenware baluster vase** covered with turquoise and yellow enamel, with patches of red *flambé* glaze. Abstract cloud and landscape outlined in gold. Cherry-red *flambé* interior. Broad gilt lip. Dated c.1905-15. Printed Mark **BERNARD** on base.  
**MOORE**

Acc. No: 3728 (PM&AG)



**Fig. 20**

- **Fine earthenware bottle-vase** covered with streaked and mottled dark red low-temperature *flambé* glaze with low-relief turquoise enamel in abstract floral design. Decorative gilt scrolling. Cherry-red *flambé* interior. Broad gilt lip. Dated c.1905-15. Printed Mark **BERNARD** on base.

**MOORE**

Acc. No: 3725 (PM&AG)



### Bernard Moore: Comparison with Chinese *Flambé*

Bernard Moore's enamel *flambé* might reasonably be construed as a thoroughly Western decorative approach to the interpretation of Chinese copper-red and transmutation glazes, although an interesting example of Chinese *sang-de-boeuf* in J.F. Blacker's *Chats on Oriental China* provides evidence to the contrary. Here is a "brilliant red" *sang-de-boeuf* vase of the *Lang-yao* class in the shape of a:

"...fungus of the genus *Agaricus*, the emblem of longevity, because it was practically indestructible. It was also emblematical of fertility... The fungus is used as a mark, as decoration, and ... in vase form. Probably its shape and symbolism gave rise to the *Joo-e* sceptre and to the wide adoption of the *Joo-e*-head form in ornament." <sup>47</sup>

In fact, large fungi were dried and "preserved in the temples... painted and modelled with figures of the immortals". They were also "found in the mouth of the deer, another emblem of longevity." <sup>48</sup> The fungus 'vase' is marked on the base with the *Chenghua* reign mark (1465-1488), although Blacker states it is from the *Yongzheng* period (1723-1735).

This example illustrates the significance of the form and decoration within the culture it was produced. To the best of my knowledge, there are no examples of preserved fungi in British churches or temples, not least because the hardy specimens described by Blacker do not thrive in the British climate. Hence the association with longevity is lost in British culture. Also interesting is Blacker's reference to the *Joo-e* sceptre and *Joo-e* head form in ornament, probably inspired by the fungus. The same decorative

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<sup>47</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Chats On Oriental China*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1908, p. 157 – photograph of vase, p.162 – quote.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156

devices reproduced on British ceramics would lose all connotations of longevity or fertility for designers and consumers alike.

The primary reason this example of Chinese high-temperature *sang-de-boeuf* can be compared to Bernard Moore's low-temperature *flambé* lies in the surface decoration. The base of the vase is covered in a narrow band of patterned lacquer inlaid with pearl shells. This rare style of Chinese decoration is known as "*Lac burgauté*". It is not dissimilar to Moore's application of jewelled enamels, although the pattern is formal and geometric as opposed to Moore's abstract and naturalistic designs. However, this piece illustrated that the Chinese also made decorative additions to monochrome red glazes. Being highly speculative there is a possibility the fungus vase was intended for use in Chinese temples as a substitute for the natural alternative. Again, beyond novelty value, the fungus shape of the vase would not have the same meaning for prospective British owners.

Dr. Stephen Bushell also illustrated a '*Cylindrical Beaker of laque burgauté of the K'ang hsi period*' in his catalogue of the Walters Collection.<sup>49</sup> Another piece in Bushell's catalogue showed a '*Vase with moulded floral decoration painted in blue and maroon relieved by a crackled sang-de-boeuf ground of brilliant tone.*'<sup>50</sup> These vases provide evidence that Chinese copper-red glazes occasionally supported surface designs. In the use of coloured naturalistic decoration, Bushell's vase with moulded floral designs had similarities with the decorated *flambé* ceramics of Bernard Moore, Royal Doulton and William Moorcroft. According to Blacker, Japanese ceramics commonly exhibited:

<sup>49</sup> Bushell, Dr. S.W: *Oriental Ceramic Art- illustrated by examples from the collection of W.T. Walters*, London, Frederick Muller, 1981; Fig. 315, p. 263. Originally pub. in 1896.

*"... cloisonné enamel ... applied ... with or without the metal cloisons. Lacquer, too, may be frequently found as a coating – black with flowers in gold and silver; black with Ito-Ito birds and flowers; a rich red; brown; green; gold, etc. Nearly all of these pieces are comparatively modern Japanese ware..."*<sup>51</sup>

It could be that Moore was influenced by these early 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese ceramics rich in naturalistic enamel detail. In fact, it was very likely that he would have seen examples of modern Japanese ceramics which inspired him, particularly because:

*"By 1866 Japanese ambassadors in bowler hats and morning coats had made their appearance in most European capitals... Within a few years Europe was flooded with imports from Japan – lacquer boxes, painted fans, Satsuma porcelain, embroideries, ivories, bronze vases, and, most important of all, wood-block prints."*<sup>52</sup>

Another point to make concerns the exchange of ideas from West to East from the 1880's onwards. The Japanese were aware of Western design trends, especially the pervasive elements of Art Nouveau, which although partly derived from a parodied version of Japanese artistic culture, may well have been re-assimilated by the Japanese and been the inspiration behind the type of ceramics discussed above.

Oliver Impey described this cross-fertilisation of ideas at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

*"Much has been said of the Japanese influence on art nouveau. In reality it was more the effects of japonisme returning to Japan producing a parallel development in Japanese art, than a direct influence. Both japonisme and Japanese crafts were changing in the direction of art nouveau. The Japanese pieces that seem influential on the style were, in fact, more or less contemporary with it. Art nouveau has few characteristics of earlier Japanese art, it has much of the rococo."*<sup>53</sup>

Bernard Moore's low-temperature enamelled *flambé* illustrated Impey's observation.

It represents a stylistic bricolage of *japonisme*, Art Nouveau, traditional Japanese and

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, Fig. 207, p.162

<sup>51</sup> **Blacker, J.F:** *Chats On Oriental China*, 1908, p. 156, p. 157 – photograph of vase.

<sup>52</sup> **Honour, Hugh:** *Chinoiserie*, London, 1961, p.210

<sup>53</sup> **Impey, Oliver:** *Chinoiserie - The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration*, London, Oxford University Press, 1977, p.191

Chinese elements. The use of scroll gilding on some Bernard Moore *flambé* is reminiscent of the European rococo style, as can be seen in **fig. 20**.

Writing on Bernard Moore in the *Pottery and Glass Trade Review*, John Adams clarified some of the techniques used by Moore in the production of low-temperature *flambé*.<sup>54</sup> Adams worked in Bernard Moore's Wolfe Street studio between 1909-10 while studying at art school. He was employed to paint lustre and *flambé* pieces. Adams corroborated the fact that Moore concentrated on "*flambés and lustre, Persian blues, aventurine and crystalline effects*" at the Wolfe Street studio in Stoke, although he made the point that much of the experimental work on lustre glazes was already done at the St. Mary's Works in Longton.<sup>55</sup> An example of Moore's low-temperature *rouge flambé* superimposed with a crystalline glaze is illustrated below in **fig. 21**.

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<sup>54</sup> Adams, John: *The Pottery & Glass Trade Review*, Nov. 1949, pp. 31-34

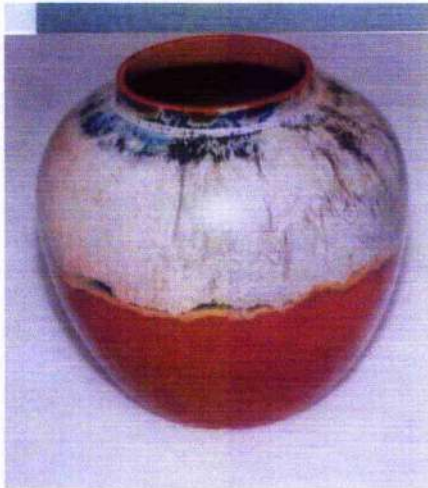
<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31

**Fig. 21**

- **Fine earthenware barrel vase** covered with uniform *rouge flambé* glaze. A grey crystalline glaze has been superimposed on the upper body and neck. Purple, blue, green and violet are seen through the crystalline matting, especially on the shoulders. A band of ochre borders the crystalline glaze. Interior glazed with uniform *rouge flambé*. The glazes have been layered to produce the effects, a process adopted by Charles Noke at Royal Doulton in his development of the more robust *Chang Ware*.

Ht: Approx. 16 cm. Printed in black on the base with **BERNARD  
MOORE**

Dated c. 1905-1915. Decorated by Bernard Moore in the Wolfe Street Studio, Stoke-on-Trent.  
Acc. No: DERSB: 504 (Part of the Frank Ollerenshaw Bequest, Buxton Museum and Art Gallery)



The *rouge flambé* glaze of this piece is typical of the low-temperature variety used by Moore, Doulton and other British manufacturers. Because it was comparatively soft, there was a tendency for the glaze to wear and scratch. There was evidence of scratching and scuffing on the base and lower body of this vase. Pictured below in **fig. 22** is another example of Moore's low-temperature *rouge flambé* superimposed with an ochre-gold glaze.

**Fig. 22**

- **Fine earthenware vase;** ovoid body, short, straight neck and flared lip, narrow, straight foot. Interior and exterior covered with a dark red mottled and veined *flambé* glaze. Parts of the neck and upper body are randomly superimposed with ochre-gold patches, some of which shade into green. Base printed in black with **BERNARD 1904.**

**MOORE**

Dated 1904. Ht: Approx. 24 cm

Acc. No. 173P.1966 (PM&AG) Gift of Mrs Amy Isaacs.<sup>56</sup> The shiny rouge *flambé* glaze on this piece is very similar to Doulton *flambé*. Pitting is minimal. The glaze is smooth and glassy.



The ware was fired in a 'large gas muffle [kiln] in the yard of the [Stoke] premises... The pieces were thrown and turned to special designs by a Fenton factory'.<sup>57</sup> This would suggest that Moore designed some of his own Chinese-inspired shapes as well as using blanks. According to Adams paper sketches were never made. Decorative designs were simply marked onto the 'glost surface in Indian ink which fired away... and then painted in light and dark red *flambé* and in silver lustre... The grey ground occurred through the penetration of gases during reduction into the earthenware glaze'.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Mrs Amy Frances Isaacs gave a total of 58 pieces to the P.M. & A.G. in 1966. They are mostly of Ruskin Ware. The Acc. No's range from 148P.66 – 206P.66.

<sup>57</sup> Adams, John: *The Pottery & Glass Trade Review*, Nov. 1949, p. 31

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31

Because of the nature of this spontaneous process, each piece was original. The only duplicated pieces known to have been made were the ones repeated 'from memory' to replace those lost in the fire at the Brussels Exhibition of 1910. Reflecting on Bernard Moore's *flambé* produced c.1905-15, Adams writes from a post-war stylistic perspective when the fashion for vibrant *flambé* and lustre glazes had been replaced with muted pastel and natural colours:

*"Whatever may be thought of that kind of design in these more sophisticated, and possibly more enlightened days, it was fresh and direct in its brushwork and it was trekking away from the stereotyped factory design."*<sup>59</sup>

Analogous with Royal Doulton, Bernard Moore *flambé* glazed a number of Oriental grotesques, monkeys, elephants, owls, Dogs of Fo, etc.<sup>60</sup> He used blanks from China, Japan, the Minton factory in Staffordshire and possibly from the Continent.<sup>61</sup> These were very similar to the ones produced by Royal Doulton from 1908 onwards, especially in terms of glaze composition. Although Moore ceased trading as an independent potter in 1915, *flambé* pieces are known to have turned up on Minton blanks dated 1920.<sup>62</sup> Pictured below are examples of Royal Doulton *flambé* models.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 31-32

<sup>60</sup> **Louis Taylor Auction Catalogue:** *Two Day Fine Art Sale*, Monday & Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2000, p.27: **Lot 694** – A 'Flambé Figure group' modelled as 'Two Elephants' and a 'Flambé Tortoise'; **Lot 695** – A 'Flambé Owl' and a 'Character Monkey'; **Lot 696** – A 'Flambé Figure group' modelled as a 'Cluster of Monkeys.' All Bernard Moore.

<sup>61</sup> **Dawson, Aileen:** *Bernard Moore*, 1982, p.43.

## Doulton Flambé Models

**Fig. 23**

- **Seated Flambé Rhinoceros:** Model 615, backstamped 'Veined Flambé' and painted with initials P.D. Details are painted in black under the *flambé* glaze. This model was introduced in 1970. Acc. No: 378P.1986 (Part of the Shelia Mary Sheldon Bequest, PM&AG)  
Dimensions: Length Approx. 44cm  
Highest Point Approx. 25 cm



Doulton animals first appear in the sale catalogue for 1908. A total of four *flambé* animals are illustrated with Chinese-style wooden stands: A frog made in three sizes; a lop-eared rabbit; three fledgling birds and a mouse on a cube.<sup>63</sup> The range proliferated and after 1920, the *Sung* glaze was applied to animals and figures. In 1921, Charles Noke produced a *Smiling Buddha* in *Sung* and *flambé* glazes.<sup>64</sup> Foxes, hares, pigs, elephants, ducks, pigeons, *Dogs of Fo*, cats, mice, salmon, bears, peacocks, crabs, lions, bulls, owls, dragons, monkeys, etc. were produced, some with more of a Chinese flavour than others.<sup>65</sup> Models of 'grotesques, spooks, witches and

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.86; (Minton Manuscript 1453).

<sup>63</sup> **Louis Taylor Auction Catalogue:** *Two Day Fine Art Sale*, Monday & Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2000, p.12: **Lot 295** – 'Mouse seated on a Cube'; **Lot 299** – 'Leaping Salmon'; **Lot 301** – 'Guinea Fowl'; **Lot 303** – 'Lop Eared Rabbit' and a 'Duckling Swimming'; etc... (All Royal Doulton *Flambé*).

<sup>64</sup> **Dennis, Richard:** *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 132-133. **Lot 369** – 'A model of a smiling Buddha with a tiny figure sitting on his knee, the red *Sung* glaze with mottled purple and blue markings.' **Lot 370** – 'A *flambé* figure of Buddha wearing a loose robe, the red glaze with black details.'

<sup>65</sup> **Lukins, Jocelyn:** *Doulton Flambé Animals*, Devon, Jocelyn Lukins, 1983, pp. 8-23.

immortals are also recorded.<sup>66</sup> A *flambé* 'Carpet Vendor' (HN 38, 1914) was modelled by Noke, but is rare – only two models are known to exist. Noke also modelled a *flambé* Boy on a Pig (HN 1369, 1930) and a Boy on a Crocodile (HN 373, 1920). Definitely not in the Chinese *flambé* idiom, Leslie Harradine's rare *Classical Nude* (HN 604) was introduced into the 'HN' *flambé* range in 1924, as was H. Tittensor's *Japanese fan* (HN 399) in 1920. *The Geisha Girl* (HN 3229) and a large *Stalking Flambé Tiger* (HN 1082) are illustrated in **figs. 24 and 25**, the former figure displays a flat, uniform *flambé* glaze. The tiger is covered in a much richer glaze similar to the rhinoceros in **fig. 23**. Lukins felt that "standard production models were sometimes given *flambé* glazes in small experimental batches which were never repeated."<sup>67</sup> Of stylistic interest is Lukins' description of *flambé* animals which had been:

"... adapted as silver-rimmed bowls; a fox model surmounts a pillar formed to make a thermometer stand; and some models are mounted on onyx bases for use as ashtrays." <sup>68</sup>

**Fig. 24**

- **Royal Doulton *Flambé* figure: *The Geisha Girl***, HN 3229. Lot no. 443, 'Royal Doulton and Beswick Auction', *Potteries Specialist Auctions*, Wed. 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov., 2004 at 10 am, p. 20.



Lot 443

<sup>66</sup> **Dennis, Richard:** *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 120-121: **Lot 321** – 'A Spook, with black cap, red face and mottled blue robe... Circa 1918.' Pp.124-125: **Lot 336** – 'A grotesque figure smoking a pipe and seated on a rock or potato, with lustrous red flambé glaze.'

<sup>67</sup> **Lukins, Jocelyn:** *Doulton Flambé Animals*, Devon, 1983, p.6.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

**Fig. 25**

- **Royal Doulton *Flambé* model: *Stalking Tiger***, HN 1082. Lot no. 384, 'Royal Doulton and Beswick Auction', *Potteries Specialist Auctions*, Wed. 1<sup>st</sup> Sept., 2004 at 10 am, p. 14.



Lot 384

During the 1950's, '60's and '70's the range was standardised and streamlined. New models were introduced to replace those withdrawn, but by the 1980's only 18 *rouge flambé* models remained in production. These included the *Dragon*, *Owl*, and the *Rhinoceros* illustrated above - all introduced in 1970, and a *Cat* introduced in 1977. In the 1980's Doulton Art Director Eric Griffiths *flambé* glazed his model of the *Cavalier* (HN 2716), while a *flambé* egg was introduced in North America.<sup>69</sup> As mentioned previously, the majority of *rouge flambé* Doulton models owed little to Chinese influence, situated more in the Euro-British tradition of chinoiserie. They simply adapted the *rouge flambé* glaze to cater for Western sentimental taste. Some of the Doulton animal models did feature symbolically in Chinese ceramics, either pictorially or in three-dimensional form, but were not generally decorated with copper-red, *sang-de-boeuf* or *flambé* glazes. There were instances of inscribed dragons chasing pearls on Ming dynasty monochrome copper-reds, but the decoration appears to have been abandoned. The Doulton approach seems to have been to assimilate vague notions of Chinese culture and repackage them in attractive, but not

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

authentic designs. Post-war Doulton models became increasingly uniform. By the 1980's:

*"Continuous experimentation led to... processes where constituents, temperatures, techniques [were] all controlled with modern precision. The element of chance [had] almost been eliminated..."*<sup>70</sup>

**Figs. 26 and 27** below show examples of post-war Doulton *flambé* animals with the 'uniform' red glaze.

**Fig. 26**

- **Pigs, hand painted details under a *flambé* glaze.**  
Model no. 61. Lion and Crown printed mark with **FLAMBÉ** and **NOKE**  
Royal Doulton, Burslem, c.1947-1950. Acc. No: 397P 1986 (Part of the Mrs Shelia Mary Sheldon bequest, PM&AG)



<sup>70</sup> Lukins, Jocelyn: *Doulton Flambé Animals*, 1983, p.6.

**Fig. 27**

- (Bottom right): **Fox, hand painted details under a *flambé* glaze with *Sung* glaze on the tail.** Model no. 14 HN 2634. Marked on the base with 4Ds, SUNG NOKE and with the monogram of Fred Moore – *FM*.  
Royal Doulton, Burslem, c.1927-1957. Acc. No: 385P 1986
- (Central): **Fox, hand painted details under a uniform *flambé* glaze.** Model no. 102.HN 2634. Lion and Crown printed mark with **FLAMBÉ**.  
Royal Doulton, Burslem, c.1962-65. Acc. No: 382P 1986

(Both part of the Mrs Shelia Mary Sheldon bequest, PM&AG)



Before discussing *Chang Ware*, it is worth noting that Doultons of Lambeth, famed for sanitary, chemical and electrical stoneware continued to produce artware throughout the inter-war period. The Studio Magazine mentions:

*"Pots, straight from the "thrower's" hands... invested with delicate nuances of amber, apple green, crystalline blue, peach blow in varying surfaces of matt to semi-matt or brilliant glaze... Certain "peach blow" effects are hardly to be distinguished from those of some of the most treasured Chinese specimens..."*<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> 'Modern British Manufactures – The Royal Doulton Pottery', *The Studio Magazine*, Vol. 97, London, April 1929, p.268.

This quote highlights an area of production within the Doulton corporation which might possibly have been a 'true' high-fired *peach-bloom* glaze on stoneware, quite unlike the low-temperature bone-china *flambé* made in Burslem.

### Chang Ware

In 1925, Doulton introduced *Chang Ware* to their range of transmutation glazes. Charles J. Noke, his son Cecil Jack and Harry Nixon worked together to develop the glaze. *Chang Ware* necessitated the use of a much heavier body from coarse refractory marl to sustain the thick lava-like glaze coatings. During the mid-1930's the marl was replaced with a bone china body. Shapes tended to be simple and chunky. Although the glaze was considered unsuitable for small animal models, a range of vases, dishes, lamps, flower-bowls and snuff-bottles were produced. Some pieces of *Chang Ware* were modelled in relief such as Noke's 'dragon' and 'lizard' vases or 'lotus bud' bowls. Illustrated in Richard Dennis' catalogue – no. 398, is an example of Noke's "*sinewy dragon, glazed blue, red and green, sliding over the mottled red and white Chang glaze on a green and blue flambé ground. Script mark, P.B.M., signed Noke and monogram of Harry Nixon. 8.5 in.*"<sup>72</sup> In the same catalogue, no. 397 illustrates:

*"A lamp, modelled with an oriental potter seated cross-legged on the ground glazing a variety of vases under an umbrella of trees, with a thick green and white glaze and splashes of red and yellow. Script mark, signed Noke and monogram of Harry Nixon, impressed date 1930. 12 in."*<sup>73</sup>

There is little evidence of Chinese inspiration in this piece. Apart from the fact it is an electric lamp, the potter depicted is a turban-clad 'Oriental' gentleman. Neither does

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<sup>72</sup> Dennis, Richard: 'Doulton Pottery', Part II, 1975, pp. 140-141.

the *Chang* glaze bear any resemblance to Chinese copper-red or *flambé*. In terms of shape and decoration, *Chang Ware* owes more to Art Deco than the East. Using the name '*Chang Ware*' was an attempt to provide it with a spurious Oriental pedigree. The term itself referred to a Song dynasty potter – *Chang the Elder*, credited with production of *Ko-Yao*, "*which means 'Elder-brother's ware' ... a glazed-ware of Celadon type...*"<sup>74</sup>

The basic *flambé* glaze formed the base on top of which were imposed three or more thick coloured glaze layers. These glazes randomly dripped towards the base, varying in thickness and pattern. The example illustrated below from the Royal Museum of Scotland shows where the glazes have run over the base. Superimposed over the three layers was often another coat of the basic *flambé* glaze. The top glaze layer was crackled. Often pieces were also pitted. The technique produced vibrant coloured effects incorporating reds, yellows, blues, browns, greens, greys, black and white. *Chang Ware* was withdrawn from production in the early 1940's.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-141.

<sup>74</sup> **Burton, William:** *Porcelain – Its Nature, Art & Manufacture*, London, 1906, p.57.

**Fig. 28**


- **Vase, special refractory body** similar in composition to stoneware. Several glaze layers, the top layer heavily crazed. Flattened oviform truncated at the top with small circular aperture for mouth. There is nothing overtly Chinese about the shape. The vase is covered with a red *flambé* glaze streaked with blue, overlaid with a heavily crazed thick white glaze mottled with ochre, brown and red, ending in an irregular contour around the lower body. The red *flambé* and blue glazes are strongly iridescent.

Ht. approx. 3 5/8 in.; diam. approx. 5.5 in.

Base is marked in black with **Chang** and signed **NOKE**

**Royal**

**Doulton**

(And monogram) - 

Royal Doulton *Chang Ware*, c.1930-1935, Burslem.

Acc. No: 1956.1204, National Museums of Scotland – The Royal Museum – Granton Stores, Edinburgh. Bought for s.15 / - from Alex Johnston, 28 Grassmarket, Edinburgh 1.



The Royal Museum Accession register recorded interesting details appertaining to

*Chang Ware*:

*"Chang ware ... was first introduced at [the Royal Doulton Burslem] factory in the early part of the present century but it has not been in production during the last 20 years, apart from certain experimental work... The late Charles J. Noke, Art Director for many years up to the time of his death, and who had been with Doulton's for 52 years, had a pioneering influence on Chang ware in collaboration with Mr. Cuthbert Bailey who at the time was Director and General Manager of this Burslem factory. Charles J. Noke died in 1942 and was succeeded by his son, the late Mr. Cecil J. Noke, who died in 1954, ... Monogram "H.N." ... refers to Harry Nixon, one of our best artists who worked with Mr. Noke from the 1930's onwards in the decoration of these special glazed wares including Sung and Rouge Flambé."*<sup>75</sup>

As seen in **fig. 28** above, the *Chang* glaze was applied to simple, heavy forms that conformed to contemporary Art Deco design. *Chang ware* had resonance with the more earthy forms and thicker glazes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French studio-potters who experimented with high-fired transmutation glazes – '*grès flambés*' – on stoneware. Among these potters were Ernest Chaplet (1835-1909), Jean Carriès (1855-94) and Auguste Delaherche (1857-1940). Reviewing an exhibition of Carriès work in the '*Salon of 1892*', Gabriel Mourey described his use of imaginative form:

*"His pots were in the shape of strange deformed fruits – gourds like an aubergine or a pumpkin, whose form and colour he sought to reproduce. And the simple ornamentation of these curious productions consisted of thick overflowings (coulées) of enamel, skilful glazing which the action of the fire had invested with the most sumptuous colourings..."*<sup>76</sup>

Similarly, the pots of Auguste Delaherche were said to maintain "... the strictest simplicity of shape, in which one can always note the impress of the workman's hand. A pot, to please him, must... have come straight from the potter's fingers... One looks

<sup>75</sup> Extract from a letter by F.W. Karry, Doulton Fine China Ltd., Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, dated 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1956. (Royal Museum of Scotland Archives, Ceramic Dept., Curator – Rose Watban)

<sup>76</sup> Mourey, Gabriel: 'The Potter's Art', *The Studio Magazine*, Vol. 12, 1898, p. 113.

*in vain in Delaherche's works for the eccentricities indulged in by others under the pretext of modernising an art which has no need of being modernised...*"<sup>77</sup>

Both Doulton *Chang Ware* and the 19<sup>th</sup> century French studio-potters had more in common with Chinese Song dynasty stoneware than the later highly finished Imperial copper-reds and *flambé*. The work of Ernest Chaplet (1835-1909), Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat (1844-1910), Albert Dammouse (1848-1926) and Auguste Delaherche (1857-1940) is illustrated below, each piece exhibiting the characteristic heavier forms of the French ceramists able to withstand experimental high-temperature glazing. The pieces also demonstrate their competence with the *flambé* or *flamée* glaze of the *grand feu*, (figs. 29-32).<sup>78</sup> Noke's *Chang Ware* was similarly robust, a departure from Doulton's refined bone-china *flambé* forms.

**Fig. 29**

**Albert Dammouse (Paris 1848 – Sèvres 1926).**

- **Divinité marine, stoneware. Grès émaillé and flambé de grand feu, c. 1898-1900.** Albert Dammouse (Paris 1848 – Sèvres 1926). Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1988.



<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>78</sup> **Ed. Greenhalgh, Paul:** *Art Nouveau 1890-1914*, London, V&A publications, 2000, p.195. This catalogue illustrated three stoneware vases with high-temperature glazes and gold; (left) Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat, (1893-1900); (centre) Auguste Delaherche, c.1890-92; (right) Georges Hoentschel, 1895.

**Fig. 30**

**Auguste Delaherche (Beauvais 1857 – Paris 1940)**

- **Vase, stoneware, *Grès émaillé and flambé de grand feu*, c. 1892.** Auguste Delaherche (Beauvais 1857 – Paris 1940). Exposition des Arts de la Femme, 1892. Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1892.



**Fig. 31a**

**Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat (Limoges 1844 - Paris 1910)**

- **Cheminée, *Grès émaillé, peuplier noirci* (popular blackened wooden surround).** Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat (Limoges 1844 - Paris 1910). Salon of the Society of Beaux-Arts, 1894. Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1894.



**Fig. 31b**

- **Vase, Grès émaillé and *flambé de grand feu*, c.1895.** Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat (Limoges 1844 - Paris 1910). Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay, Paris in 1895.



**Fig. 32a**

**Ernest Chaplet (Sèvres 1835 – Choisy-le-Roi 1909)**

- **Vase, hard paste porcelain, decorated with *flambé de grand feu*, c.1893.** Ernest Chaplet (Sèvres 1835 – Choisy-le-Roi 1909). Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay from the Ernest Chaplet bequest, 1910.



**Fig. 32b**

- **Vase, hard paste porcelain, decorated with *flambé de grand feu*, c.1900.** Ernest Chaplet (Sèvres 1835 – Choisy-le-Roi 1909). Acquired by the Musée d'Orsay from the Ernest Chaplet bequest, 1910.



### **Concluding Remarks: Royal Doulton *Flambé* and Bernard Moore Ware**

*"...For very many years experiments have been made by leading manufacturers to reproduce the glowing ruby red glazes made by the wonderful Chinese potters of the Kang-Si [sic] dynasty... The Chinese themselves have practically lost the secret, their modern productions bearing very poor comparison with the magnificent examples to be seen in private collections. Both the Royal houses of Sèvres and Copenhagen have produced fine examples, but the rarity of the output seems to suggest they are more the result of accident than design, and it has been left to the Burslem works of Messrs. Doulton to fathom the secret so as to produce the real thing at will..."*<sup>79</sup>

This extract was taken from an article reviewing the Doulton contribution to the St. Louis Exhibition of 1904. It is typical of the congratulatory fervour directed towards English *flambé* at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in its tone of one-upmanship, scientific advantage and unrivalled technology. In fact, Sèvres had been producing high-temperature *flambé* porcelain on a commercial scale since the 1880's. Royal Copenhagen had mastered the secret of *sang-de-boeuf*, but were more interested in developing underglaze painted designs and crystalline glazes. More importantly,

<sup>79</sup> 'Doultons' And The St. Louis Exhibition', *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, 1904. Miscellaneous press cutting from the Doulton Archive, Minton House, London Rd., Stoke-on-Trent.

Doulton's commercial bone-china *flambé* was not the same type as their Chinese or European counterparts. The glaze Doulton produced '*at will*' was a low-temperature painted oxide glaze, the same used by Bernard Moore for the majority of his fine earthenware *flambé*. The central vase of the *flambé* display at the St. Louis Exhibition was described as:

*"... a wonderfully deep blood-red colour. The glaze is smooth, even, and almost, if not entirely, one depth in tone. It is a triumph to all engaged in its manufacture..."*<sup>80</sup>

The same article continued: *"... The difficulty which most of the European potters had to contend with was that their paste of porcelain, as well as their glazes and firing, were so different to those of the Chinese as to afford them little help towards a solution of the problem..."*<sup>81</sup>

In the case of Royal Doulton *flambé* the solution came in adapting traditional Chinese methods and materials to suit commercial production in Britain. Innovative certainly, but the resulting products could not be considered authentic versions of Chinese high-temperature *flambé* porcelain. Royal Doulton *flambé* can however be considered a highly accomplished, creative British pastiche, as can the low-temperature *flambé* of Bernard Moore.

Messrs. Doulton invested considerable time and energy in the creation of their *rouge flambé* glaze, *"building and rebuilding... special ovens for the purpose,..."* and were influenced by Chinese ceramic form, manufacturing a range of shapes *"... as satisfying to the eye as those fabricated in the country of the Celestials."*<sup>82</sup> As already discussed, Doulton *flambé* was an amalgam of East-West stylistic inspiration.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

Possibly the most beautiful aspects of high-temperature transmutation glazes are their tonal depth and variety, especially true of Kangxi and later Chinese *sang-de-boeuf* glazes. Neither Chinese or European high-fired reds were as glassy-smooth as most Doulton and Moorcroft *flambé*, the former exhibiting various degrees of pitted texture. Achieving 'one depth in tone' was to betray the Chinese idiom, but it is evident that some examples of early Doulton *flambé* do exhibit a tonal range and the accompanying splashing, mottling and streaking associated with their Chinese predecessors. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Doulton glaze became flat and uniform as production processes and kiln control improved. Collectors argued that the post-war *flambé* had become 'too commercial'.

By the early 1950's, Doulton had ceased to manufacture 'experimental *flambé*'. In 1955, Jo Ledger succeeded Jack Noke as the Burslem Art Director and introduced 'Woodcut *Flambé*' – reproducing 18<sup>th</sup> century engravings by Thomas Bewick. Also around 1955 Royal Doulton presented *Rouge et Noir* followed by another version of *Veined Sung* in 1963.<sup>83</sup> These glazes decorated new shapes which moved further away from Chinese-inspired forms, as can be seen in some of the post-war *flambé* vases illustrated in this chapter.

As far as iconography is concerned, both Royal Doulton and Bernard Moore used Chinese motifs adapted for Western taste. As J.F. Blacker stated:

"... [In] Oriental decoration where history and mythology furnish many of the designs, ... almost every flower and colour has its own meaning."<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> **McKeown, Julie:** 'The Burslem Artwares', *Gallery - Doulton Collectors' Club magazine*, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1999, p.4

<sup>84</sup> **Blacker, J.F:** *Chats On Oriental China*, 1908, p.17.

Consumers of British *flambé* would probably have had little knowledge of the traditional Chinese meaning of these pictorial devices. This might also have been the case for the designers. However, there were possibly some collectors of Chinese art who were fully aware of the significance behind these Chinese-inspired designs, connoisseurs who chose British *flambé* for its creative interpretation rather than authenticity. Issues related to authenticity, taste and collecting will be discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 7 respectively.

The dragon, phoenix or '*bird of paradise*', fish and horses are among the decorative devices seen on Doulton *Sung Ware*. Chinese cloud motifs and a bewildering array of flora and fauna are also portrayed. There were different types of dragon illustrated in Chinese art; the dragon of the sky, dragon of the sea and dragon of the marshes, dragons with horns and dragons without, scaly dragons and winged dragons. Dragons with five claws were used as emblems by the Emperor, first and second rank princes. According to Blacker, princes of the third and fourth rank used the four-clawed dragon while fifth rank princes and mandarins were appropriated the four-clawed serpent. The dragon commonly used for decorative purposes in China was the three-clawed dragon, often depicted chasing the 'flaming' or 'sacred' pearl which is meant to bestow immortality. The pearl was generally divided into '*Yin and Yang*', the feminine and masculine characteristics of nature.<sup>85</sup> Dragons in Chinese art were also fertility symbols, thought to bring rain for the crops.

The dragons painted on Doulton *Sung ware* did not display prominent claws, the number varying according to the designer's whim. Almost certainly, the British public would not have substituted the 'Emperor' for a dragon, a concept which makes sense

of Chinese expressions such as 'dragon's seat' or 'dragon's head', etc... An example of a "Sung vase by C.J. Noke, painted with a dragon in brilliant hues of red, purple and yellow, the base and neck with sponged blue waves", can be seen in Part II of Richard Dennis's *Doulton Pottery 1873-1939* exhibition catalogue.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the Chinese did not paint these pictorial designs on their transmutation or *flambé* glazed ware. Although some early Hongwu (1368-98) copper-reds did exhibit moulded and incised dragons under the glaze, successive emperors seemed to prefer undecorated ware. With the help of public subscription the British Museum acquired one such bowl from the George Eumorfopoulos Collection:

*"... decorated beneath the glaze with moulded images of sinewy five-clawed dragons with horns pursuing each other around the cavetto, and separated by ruyi clouds. In the centre is an incised undulating ruyi cloud. Outside it is incised above the foot with lotus-petal panels. The interior and exterior are covered with a copper-red glaze..."*<sup>87</sup>

Another example of Hongwu dragon-decorated copper-red ware in the British Museum was bequeathed by Mrs Walter Sedgwick:

*"This shallow dish... is incised with three ruyi clouds in the centre and with moulded five-clawed stocky dragons separated by individual clouds in the cavetto. These dragons have closed jaws, long whiskers and horns and their scales are indicated by circular dots..."*<sup>88</sup>

It is reasonable to conclude that the dragons on these early copper-red porcelains had five claws because they were reserved for imperial rites. However, the dragon does have resonance with Western as well as Eastern artistic traditions. In Christian iconography the dragon represented Satan, often appearing beneath the feet of the

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.54

<sup>86</sup> Dennis, Richard: *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp.118-119

<sup>87</sup> Harrison-Hall, Jessica: *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum*, London, The British Museum Press, 2001, p. 86-87; Accession No. OA 1936.10-12.107.

Virgin Mary. In fact, the Latin word *draco* means both dragon and snake. Portrayed in chains or underfoot, the dragon has been symbolic of conquest over evil. Various Greek warriors and Christian saints are portrayed slaying dragons or sea-serpents. Particularly relevant to England is the image of the Patron Saint dragon-slayer, St. George. As in the case of the Phoenix, whether the more explicit classical or Christian references would be as widely recognised today compared with the late-19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is a matter for contemplation.

If dragons were treated differently in Britain, so was the phoenix or '*bird of paradise*', (see **fig.7**). In China the *Fung-Hwang*, phoenix or Ho-ho bird was famed for its '*elegance and benevolence... [It harmed] neither living insects nor growing herbs, but lived in the highest regions of the air, and only descended to earth as the harbinger of good tidings – happy events to individuals, prosperous reigns to emperors...*'<sup>89</sup> The phoenix was often portrayed on Chinese porcelain in combination with rocks or foliage, though was not painted on Chinese copper-red ware. Again, the Chinese significance of this '*fabulous animal*' was interpreted differently in the West.

The legendary Phoenix was first mentioned by Herodotus in his description of Egypt, but also featured in the classical literature of Ovid and Pliny the Elder. It was likened in form to an eagle with red and gold plumage, and was rumoured to live for 500 years. According to Pliny the Elder, on sensing death the Phoenix built a nest of aromatic plants in which to die. From the nest a new Phoenix would emerge and carry its parent to the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis. Another version of classical mythology claimed the Phoenix placed itself on the burning altar at Heliopolis. After

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pp.86-87; Accession No. OA 1968.4-22.37.

<sup>89</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Chats On Oriental China*, 1908, pp.57-58.

cremation a new beast emerged from the ashes. Early Christian culture adopted the Phoenix as a symbol of Christ's Resurrection. During the Middle Ages the Phoenix became identified with Christ's Crucifixion. It was also a popular symbol in pagan mystery cults. The Victorians and Edwardians would have understood the classical references inferred by the Phoenix, perhaps more so than contemporary society. For example, D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) not only wrote a poem about the Phoenix, but so strongly identified with it that his tombstone was embellished with a '*phoenix mosaic*'.<sup>90</sup> Both the Phoenix and the dragon convey specific meanings according to the cultural context in which they are observed, meanings which often shift over time. Symbolic meanings of particular decorative motifs may also have shifted within China.

In Richard Dennis's Doulton catalogue, no.'s 375-380 depict various Chinese motifs, some of which are outlined in gold.<sup>91</sup> As previously discussed, the use of gilding was also a feature of Bernard Moore's ware. It did not generally apply to Chinese copper-red and *flambé* glazes, although some Chinese pieces were decorated with gilt lacquer – for instance, Blacker's example of the *sang-de-boeuf* fungus vase.<sup>92</sup> The storks seen in no. 376 symbolise longevity.<sup>93</sup> The swallow seen in no. 380<sup>94</sup> was considered by the Chinese an emblem of '*approaching success*', a sign of '*prosperous change*'.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>90</sup> **Lawrence, D.H.**: 'St. John', a poem about the Phoenix as an 'Eagle of Revelation'; *Birds, Beasts, & Flowers*, London, Secker, 1923. From: **Davidson Reid, Jane** with the assistance of **Rohmann, Chris**: *The Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990's*; Vol. 2, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 898-900.

<sup>91</sup> **Dennis, Richard**: *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 134-135.

<sup>92</sup> Another example of *Laque burgauté* is described in the *Bethnal Green Branch Museum Catalogue of a Collection of Oriental Porcelain & Pottery lent for exhibition by A.W. Franks*, Second Edition, London, 1878, p.111: "Small Cup. White Chinese porcelain, coated externally with black lacquer, on which are inlaid dragons in mother-of-pearl, called by the French, *Laque burgauté*, see Jacquemart, page 148.H. 1 ½ in., diam. 2 in. (No.) 664."

<sup>93</sup> **Dennis, Richard**: *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 134-135.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

<sup>95</sup> **Gulland, W.G.**: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. I, 1898, p.97

Chinese cloud motifs appear at random as well as the ubiquitous prunus blossom, a device indiscriminately employed on Western ceramics throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>96</sup> In China a sprig of peach blossom was traditionally placed in doorways at the start of a New Year to keep homes free from 'evil demons'. It was known as the 'peach charm'.<sup>97</sup> The decorative imagery seen on the Doulton pieces described above has resonance with contemporary illustration of the Greenaway-Rackham school, especially the treatment of the birds on vases 375 and 376.<sup>98</sup>

The richly decorated shapes of these Doulton *flambé* examples have a heavier appearance than their Chinese counterparts. They lean towards Art Deco rather than traditional Chinese forms. No. 364 in the catalogue is a large *Sung* vase of a shorter, heavier Art Deco form, most notably in its short, broad neck and flared, flat lip. The vase is decorated with blue scrolls and a peacock on a mottled red ground.<sup>99</sup> The freedom, placement and interpretation of the stylised peacock motif suggest an Art Deco rather than Chinese influence. The significance of the peacock was probably largely ignored by designers and consumers alike. In China the peacock's tail feathers designated official rank. Blacker wrote:

*"A piece of coral and two [peacock] feathers indicate the promotion of a mandarin three steps at a time, a similar coral and four feathers means five steps at a time."*<sup>100</sup>

Also in the catalogue is a '*Sung vase by Noke, painted with a pixie and toadstools...*', while another *Sung* vase is bordered with an Etruscan frieze with four deer beneath

<sup>96</sup> Dennis, Richard: *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 134-135; no's 377-380.

<sup>97</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Chats On Oriental China*, 1908, p. 304.

<sup>98</sup> Dennis, Richard: *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 134-135.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 130-131.

<sup>100</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Chats On Oriental China*, 1908, p. 86.

trees, the deer representing longevity and/or prosperity in Chinese iconography.<sup>101</sup>

Earlier in the chapter, **fig. 15** portrayed a Doulton *flambé* vase with fish, a Buddhist symbol commonly associated with domestic happiness. Carp and perch are often found on Chinese porcelain, though not on copper-red ware. To draw attention to how far the Doulton *flambé* aesthetic departed from anything remotely Chinese it is worth noting No. 387 in the Dennis catalogue:

*"A Sung glazed model of a parrot on rockwork, predominantly blue, the bird with a red head and breast... This model was made with other glazes, and with the Sung glaze it was made as a wireless loudspeaker for the Spanish firm ARTANDIA LTD."*<sup>102</sup>

Similarly, there is no Chinese inspiration evident in No.389, except possibly in the shape:

*"A Sung vase painted by A. Eaton with a plough pulled by four horses, in a field with two men burning stubble... signed Noke, impressed date 1923..."*<sup>103</sup>

The Henry Doulton Gallery, part of the Nile St. Burslem factory, exhibits a startling variety of *flambé* produced throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are *flambé* figures of 'Buddha', 'The Moor – An Arab' (1913), animals, female nudes, a *Mother-and-Child*, a Japanese *Samurai* and *Geisha* (see **fig. 24**), conical *flambé* cruet sets, a *flambé* Toby Jug, a *Sung Dragon vase* by Charles Noke (c.1919-20), a *Sung jar* with an 'elephant' knob, a floral *Sung vase*, gourd-shape plain *flambé* vases and a set of small plain *flambé* coffee cans in press-cut silver metal mounts, (c.1908-1910).

<sup>101</sup> Dennis, Richard: *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 122-123: no.'s 325 & 331.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-137

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 138-139

Royal Doulton produced an infinite range of *flambé* wares. There are records of over three hundred vases, not including the numerous bowls, ashtrays and figurines. The most unlikely *flambé* pieces were the coffee and tea services - the copper-red or *flambé* glaze was never used for this purpose in China. Because *flambé* manufacture is unpredictable, matching the pieces was problematic hence sets were made in limited numbers. According to an Australian journal in 1912:

*"Purchasers who can only sigh in longing for a splendid Chinese rouge flambé jar at £450 will find consolation in a beautiful Royal Doulton rouge flambé tea-set at £6 / 17/ 7 -destined to be some happy woman's imperishable pride."*<sup>104</sup>

Generally, earlier *flambé* tended to be closer in shape and decoration to the Chinese ideal while some of the later departures were clearly unrelated. Doulton *flambé* produced between c.1904- 1920 was stylistically and technically similar to that of Bernard Moore, including Doulton's use of red painted decoration on brown or grey ground as seen in No. 318 depicting a 'frieze of stags in red flambé on a cream ground'.<sup>105</sup> The same painted red *flambé* technique is used on a vase 'Made to commemorate the visit of King George and Queen Mary to Bernard Moore's studio in April, 1913', although the subject matter is different on this occasion being reminiscent of the Bayeaux Tapestry.<sup>106</sup> The colours and style of *Sung Ware* departed from Moore's influence, but in terms of iconography – scrolls, clouds, fish, birds - especially the phoenix and peacock - blossom, etc., *Sung Ware* employed the same repertoire.

<sup>104</sup> Eyles, D: Doulton and Burslem Wares, 1980, p. 55.

<sup>105</sup> Dennis, Richard: *Doulton Pottery*, Part II, 1975, pp. 118-119.

<sup>106</sup> Adams, John: Article on Bernard Moore; one of a series on famous Staffordshire Potters. *The Pottery and Glass Trade Review*, Nov. 1949, p.33

Shared vessel forms were evident, as were similarities between the red monochrome models. Moore made *flambé* coffee-cans and modelled elephants, owls and monkeys - themes produced and repeated by Royal Doulton.<sup>107</sup> Moore's low-temperature gilt and enamel *flambé* wares were very close in chemistry, form and decoration to those made by Doulton.

The use of crystalline glazes over *flambé* appears to have been more common on Bernard Moore Ware. Overall, Bernard Moore's *flambé* tended to be more refined. Doulton *flambé* shapes became heavier as the fashion swung towards Art Deco. It is at this point that the Doulton glaze started to lose vitality. Post-war Doulton *flambé* is clearly distinguishable from Bernard Moore examples where:

*"... the colour deepens and lightens over the piece, passing from the faintest grey to the richest brown or a vivid ruby red, by imperceptible gradation, recalls the colouring of ... precious sardonyx of jasper, and is the final reward of days and nights of labour spent at the potter's kiln."*<sup>108</sup>

Also, Bernard Moore did not and probably would not have used 'shire horses' on his pots or modelled *flambé* 'wireless loudspeakers' in the form of a 'parrot seated on rockwork'. Perhaps his aim matched the objectives of the Chinese potter who used decoration 'not alone to please the eye, but to elevate the mind', but neither Doulton or Moore's pieces attempted to symbolise '... the highest aspirations of religions with which we are but imperfectly acquainted'.<sup>109</sup> In Britain, the philosophy seemed to be 'decoration for decoration's sake', moving away from the original Chinese imperial

<sup>107</sup> Louis Taylor Sale Catalogue: *Two Day Fine Art Sale*; 11-12<sup>th</sup> September 2000, p.27. Lots 694 – 698.

<sup>108</sup> Burton, William: Extract from *English Porcelain*, taken from a Bernard Moore Ware publicity leaflet, c.1910, p. 3. Hanley Reference Library: P.738.94246 MOORE

<sup>109</sup> Blacker, J.F: *Chats On Oriental China*, 1908, p. 299.

and religious significance. Although as stated earlier, the purpose and symbolic interpretation of decoration shifted over time within Chinese artistic culture.

However, Bernard Moore's studio-based *flambé* ranges and the commercial output of the Royal Doulton factory differed in terms of scale and clientele. The products reflected this distinction. In terms of talent and originality, both manufacturers were equal and both employed talented art school graduates with flair and ability. Because of examples presented to the British Museum in 1902, it is known that Bernard Moore had perfected low-temperature *flambé* glazes before Doulton produced their earliest *flambé* in 1904. Just how far collaboration with Moore made this possible is not fully known, bearing in mind that unlike Moore, Royal Doulton had to struggle with issues of consistency in the commercial, rather than studio production of *flambé*. Moore may have devised the chemical formula but it had to work on pieces in large-scale firings using bottle-ovens rather than a smaller scale gas-muffle kiln. The debate concerning who was the first potter to produce high-temperature *flambé* in Britain, whether it was Moore or Howson-Taylor does not enhance or detract from the beauty or originality of their work, and in any case, they were only a few years apart – maybe less.

To engender exoticism and create identity Royal Doulton employed an elaborate method of marking *flambé* alongside the use of conventional backstamps. Of particular interest were the *Sung* and *Chang Ware* marks, (see **fig. 28**). The *Chinese Jade 'Script Mark'* was conceived for the same purpose, and although not applied to *flambé* ware added to the sense that Royal Doulton were manufacturing their own brand of 'Orientalism'. The scripts used were possibly intended to imitate Chinese

calligraphy. This had been the case in advertising and graphic arts since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and possibly before. Oliver Impey described how the...

*"horrible convention of making capital letters a pastiche of Chinese calligraphy... has not died out even today and is often used for book titles or theatre posters."*<sup>110</sup>

In the world of commercial manufacture these small details can however provide that extra 'touch', the means by which a product is elevated from commercial kitsch to a unique 'collectable' item. Such marks represent a clever and successful attempt to manipulate consumer psychology.

In conclusion, Doulton *flambé* and Bernard Moore Ware found a wealth of admirers at home and abroad. The sale catalogue of *The Important, Comprehensive and Interesting Shorter Collection* (of the late Mrs. Clarice Cliff Shorter), recorded:

*"A miniature rouge flambé group of five monkeys, probably by Bernard Moore... A Bernard Moore ovoid shape rouge flambé vase, ht. 7 in... [and] A Royal Doulton rouge flambé Vase with copper rim, ht. 13in."*<sup>111</sup>

The admiration of consumers and manufacturers for early 20<sup>th</sup> century Doulton and Moore *flambé* renewed British taste for 'exotic' monochrome glazes and decorative chinoiserie. They were not alone – De Morgan Lustre, Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Lustre and Wedgwood's Fairyland Lustre, (see **fig. 33**), contributed to this trend which reached its apogee in the 1920's. Significantly, Doulton and Moore *flambé* may have influenced Wilkinson's *Rubaiyat*, *Oriflamme* and *Tibetan* wares.<sup>112</sup> 'A FINE

<sup>110</sup> Impey, Oliver: *Chinoiserie – The Impact of Oriental Styles On Western Art and Decoration*, London, Oxford University Press, 1977, p.191.

<sup>111</sup> Louis Taylor and Sons Sale Catalogue: 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1973, p.32; Lots 309-311 – Hanley Reference Library – P738.94246.

<sup>112</sup> Clarice Cliff worked for Messrs. Wilkinson throughout her career as a ceramic designer.

*WILKINSON TIBETAN VASE AND COVER decorated in gilt, blues and greens, signed Clarice Cliff, ht. 15in...* ' is mentioned in the sale catalogue of the Shorter Collection.<sup>113</sup> Royal Doulton and Bernard Moore *flambé* wares of the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were not only influential, but represented an elevated, creative interpretation of Chinese transmutation glazes. Some of those which followed, including examples of later Doulton *flambé*, gradually became less and less concerned with the Chinese aesthetic, resulting in kitsch chinoiserie, (see **fig. 34**).

Royal Doulton *flambé* is unique in so much as it represents almost a century of continuous production reflecting to some extent the vicissitudes of fashion in terms of shape and decoration throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Doulton's contemporary *flambé* will be discussed in the next chapter on Stylistic Reinterpretation. The spectrum of Doulton *flambé* illustrated the mid-century shift away from a strict Chinese aesthetic towards a more commercial anglicised product, before returning for inspiration from Chinese Imperial copper-reds and curiously, from Doulton *flambé* of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p.32; Lot 312.

**Fig. 33**

- **Pair of Wedgwood Fairyland Lustre Vases**, c. 1920's. **Sotheby's Olympia: British and European Ceramics**, 2 April 2003, **Lot 297**, p. 153.



**Fig. 34**

- **A Crown Devon Lustre Tapered Vase** decorated in an 'Oriental' dragon pattern on orange ground. Marked 2078 on the base. H: 25cm. Estimated reserve price £100-150. **Potteries Specialist Auction: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Collectable Ceramics**, Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2004 at 11 am: **Lot 93**, pp. 8 & 13.



**Lot 93**

## MOORCROFT

Moorcroft provides an early 20<sup>th</sup> century comparison to Royal Doulton, Bernard Moore Ware and Ruskin Pottery, although Moorcroft's *flambé* production did not commence until c.1919 and ceased in 1970. Moorcroft *flambé* differed in production methods, chemical composition and the type of clay body to which it was applied. These physical factors combined to produce distinct *flambé* of a style anomalous to that of contemporary manufacturers.

### William Moorcroft (1872-1945) & *Flambé* Production

William Moorcroft (1872-1945) first attended the Burslem School of Art before studying at the Royal College of Art in South Kensington, from which he graduated with an Art Masters degree. He returned to Stoke-on-Trent with the intention of teaching but was sought by James Macintyre & Company of Burslem. It was here that he developed the distinctive *Florian Ware* in 1898, incorporating Arts and Crafts elements with Continental Art Nouveau. Florian Wares quickly gained an international reputation. They were sold at Liberty's London from 1899, Tiffany's in New York and Rouard in Paris. He was awarded a first Gold Medal at the St. Louis Exhibition in 1904. The Liberty family recognised his talent and helped Moorcroft set up his own factory in 1913.

While a student in London William Moorcroft had the opportunity to see a lot of ceramics at the South Kensington Museum. He studied and sketched the work of Chinese, Greek and Roman potters, particularly what he called '*Pompei shapes*'.

Later he was to reinterpret these shapes using his own colouring and decorative techniques. It is thought that Moorcroft's production of *flambé* was inspired by the Chinese ceramics he admired, despite his awareness of the difficulties involved. His simple hand-thrown shapes were widely acclaimed.

During the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the main *flambé* manufacturers were Ruskin Pottery, Royal Doulton and Moorcroft. William Moorcroft arrived on the scene comparatively late. He started experimenting with *rouge flambé* glazes while working for Macintyre & Co. in the early 1900's, but it was not until 1920 that the results were commercially available. A report on 'The Pottery Show at the Crystal Palace' mentioned Moorcroft Pottery under the subheading '*Form and Colour*'. It praised the "...refined thrown shapes – no better are to be found in this exhibition – and rich, harmonious colour found in the paste, and being in that respect true ceramic colour." The article continued to describe "...vases and bowls in powder-blue, with no adjunct but...their pure form... Other wares introduced ornament as well as variety in colour, ranging from warm grey to deep translucent blue, or finding variety in rich ruby." <sup>114</sup>

It is known that Moorcroft had built a kiln specifically for *flambé* glazes by 1919. From this date Moorcroft concentrated his efforts on *flambé* glazes rather than lustre monochromes. During the 1920's and '30's William Moorcroft achieved considerable recognition for his *flambé* wares. Unlike Royal Doulton's bone-china *flambé* and William Howson-Taylor's high-fired transmutation stoneware glazes, William Moorcroft used an earthenware body. Ex-director William John Moorcroft suspected

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<sup>114</sup> 'The Pottery Show at the Crystal Palace', *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup> 1920, p. 2.

that Doulton and Moorcroft used a similar low-temperature process. Moorcroft *flambé* was fired in a coal-fired muffle kiln approximately '6 ft deep, 4ft high and 3ft wide' at temperatures between 800-900°C, whereas Ruskin Ware was fired in the region of 1200 -1600°C.<sup>115</sup> William John Moorcroft stated that the Clean Air Act of 1956 combined with the introduction of natural gas into the factory put an end to *flambé* production.<sup>116</sup> The Cobridge *flambé* kiln was demolished on site in 1974. In his opinion coal fuel produced the best *flambé* results. Recent experiments from 1998-2000 using coal gas proved there were '*too many variables to re-introduce flambé*'. Electricity has now replaced the coal-fired bottle ovens with one exception.<sup>117</sup>

Moorcroft *flambé* like other types relied on reduction firing. The reduction atmosphere rich in carbon monoxide resulted from piping coal gas into the 'oven' or firing chamber. The gas pipe was inserted through a loose brick at the front of the kiln. The gas was lit to burn up oxygen. A good seal was necessary to prevent gases escaping from the chamber. When the flame went out the reduction atmosphere was known to be attained. William Moorcroft liked to take control of the *flambé* firings, working days and nights. Because the kiln was without a temperature gauge, William - joined in 1935 by his son Walter - estimated the stage of firing by checking the colour of the flame in the firing chamber. As soon as the glazes began to melt the kiln dampers were closed to cut off the oxygen supply to the firing chamber, thus initiating the reduction cycle. Once reduction had been achieved they left the kiln on a 'dropping temperature' – or stopped stoking the fire. Finally, when the kiln had

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with William John Moorcroft at the Cobridge factory, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2000.

<sup>116</sup> The Clean Air Act of 1956 was designed in response to the six-day smog in December 1952. It set out the use of cleaner fuel and controls on domestic smoke pollution with the introduction of smokeless zones in urban areas. The revised Act of 1968 placed further restrictions on industries burning coal, gas and other fuels. Requirements included extended chimneys with a minimum legal height.

cooled the ware was drawn. William Moorcroft refired *flambé* glazed pieces until the desired colour had been achieved. According to William John, Walter Moorcroft, who had worked closely with his father, used the analogy of an expanding balloon to describe the process:

*"It's just like a balloon; one keeps blowing until the whole thing explodes. If not properly 'cooked' to a desirable red, the ware was fired repeatedly. But, once over-cooked it turned irreversibly black."*

The process was fickle and the results inconsistent, an aspect of *flambé* production consumers were assumed to understand and appreciate. William Moorcroft did not try to achieve the uniform red characteristic of Royal Doulton *rouge flambé*.<sup>118</sup>

The *flambé* glaze was applied as a muddy paste. After firing the paste residue was removed with a soaped bristle brush to reveal the colour beneath. On the *flambé* team, one and the same lady was employed to apply the red *flambé* colour and wash it off after firing. The *flambé* kiln was only fired once a month, hence she had one month to prepare a kiln's worth of *flambé*. William Moorcroft infused red into the glaze using similar processes to those adopted by Bernard Moore for his low-temperature *flambé* and for William De Morgan's ruby lustre.<sup>119</sup> These 'paste' lustre glazes or in Moore's case '*lustre flambés*' were achieved by the deposition of a metallic film onto the glaze. Copper oxide was dissolved in acid and combined with a lubricant before it was painted on the piece. During reduction firing the metallic film would attach itself to the ceramic vessel. The lustrous finish was achieved by burnishing and 'polishing'. This was certainly the case with Bernard Moore's low-

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<sup>117</sup> Interview with William John Moorcroft at the Cobridge factory, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2000.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

temperature *flambé*, as discussed previously. Lustre glazes are fired at a low heat, usually between 600-900°C.

The exact formula for William Moorcroft's *flambé* has never been recorded, since *'Father did not keep technical records. We just experimented with different quantities of the ingredients, as one does if baking without scales'*.<sup>120</sup> His *flambé* glaze composition mixed oxide of copper with an *'ordinary earthenware glaze'*, the only difference being that a *'thicker coating of ordinary glaze was applied to make the red stronger'*.<sup>121</sup> Each piece was given an extra glaze firing before the *flambé* process.<sup>122</sup> In the opinion of William John Moorcroft *'better' flambé* results were obtained with lead glazes than with low solubility glazes because the lead was softer and could be applied more smoothly and quickly. The use of lead in ceramic glazes is largely prohibited nowadays because of health and safety regulations.

William Moorcroft experimented with the *flambé* glazes, developing different shades of red, brown and yellow. He produced plain and decorated pieces; the *flambé* glaze was superimposed over underglaze painting. Moorcroft designs which used the *flambé* glaze included *Leaf and Berry*, *Claremont*, *Pomegranate*, *Landscape*, *Fish* and *Wisteria*. *Flambé* was particularly appropriate for creating rich, autumnal landscapes. Large plain *flambé* pieces do not feature on the archive price lists as they were rare, sales often negotiated directly at trade fairs or exhibitions. Plain William Moorcroft *flambé* fetched *'good prices although undecorated because it was unique'*. The

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

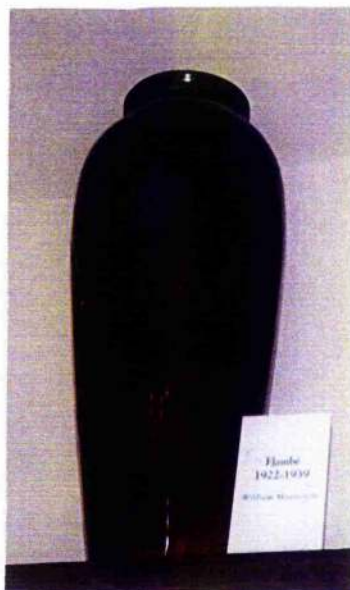
<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> **Glost** – or glazed state. A **glaze firing** is one in which biscuit ware receives a glaze.

Museum at Cobridge contains a few superb examples of *flambé* of which William Moorcroft was too proud to sell.<sup>123</sup>

**Fig. 35**

- **Tall *flambé* vase, *sang-de-boeuf*** with green-blue mottling around the neck and shoulders, earthenware, c.1922-1939. (Moorcroft Museum, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent). An obviously Chinese inspired form although very elongated, with a soft, slightly iridescent glaze.



**Fig. 36**

- **Large *flambé* oviform jar with dome cover (ginger jar),** earthenware, c.1922-1939. The form is of Chinese origin. The bright red glaze is streaked and mottled with darker tones. A glassy glaze with slight iridescence and probably a high lead content. (Moorcroft Museum, Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent).



<sup>123</sup> Interview with William John Moorcroft at the Cobridge factory, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2000.

Some Moorcroft pottery sold with mounts, (see **figs. 37-38**). William Moorcroft had been introduced to the idea through his friendship with Arthur Lasenby Liberty (1843-1917). The success of Liberty's 'Tudric' pewter made by W.H. Haseler & Co., Birmingham, inspired Liberty to commission decorative metal mounted ceramics. Moorcroft's pewter and silver-plated copper mounts were manufactured by Francis Arthur Edwardes (1869-1944) who ran the Duchess of Sutherland's Cripples Guild in Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent.<sup>124</sup> Edwardes also produced pictorial enamels on copper and silverware, usually stamped on the base with a coronet and the initials DSCG. According to William John Moorcroft, the mounts were made before the ceramic vessels, which were then thrown and turned to fit the diameter. Electroformed mounts were produced in America (San Francisco) for some Moorcroft pieces. Metal mounted Moorcroft ceramics were a third more expensive than those without.<sup>125</sup> As was the case in earlier centuries both in Britain and France, valuable porcelains, particularly monochromes, received metal mounts to assert and enhance their value.

<sup>124</sup> **Adams, D.W:** *Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland and the Potteries Newcastle Cripples Guild*, 1978, Accessions Pamphlets 2003. PDF in the William Salt Library, Stafford.

**Francis Arthur Edwardes (1869-1944)** – was a close friend of William Moorcroft. He modelled a range of birds, bears, seals, owls and grotesques for the Pottery. These pieces were limited in number but a proportion were *flambé* glazed. Edwardes also made silver-plated copper and pewter mounts for the ceramics of Moorcroft and Bernard Moore. He was a tutor at the Burslem School of Art highly regarded not only for his craft skills, but also for talent as a fine artist and enameller. Locally he organised The Duchess of Sutherland's Cripples Guild.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with **William John Moorcroft** at the Cobridge factory, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2000.

**Fig. 37**

- **Moorcroft *flambé* lamp** with metal stand and fittings; earthenware, c.1922-1939. (Moorcroft Museum, Sandbach Rd., Cobridge, Stoke-on-Trent).



Flambé with  
metal mounts  
1922-1939

William Moorcroft

The mounts in **fig. 37**, including the Palladian base, were made in Canada. The peculiar handle fitting forms the appearance of an ill-proportioned jug. The ceramic body is painted with the *Leaves and Berries* pattern beneath a *flambé* glaze. The design is bold and naturalistic but not representational. It makes striking use of the warm *flambé* palette of reds and browns. Fine slip-trailing has allowed the colours to spread outside their cloisters and blend with others to create tonal variations. The effect, which is smouldering and mysterious, is in keeping with Continental Art Nouveau. It is difficult to detect any Chinese inspiration in this object. The lamp in its overall form is typical of the High Victorian Renaissance style. It represents the

confused, over-elaborate mid-19<sup>th</sup> century design abhorred by William Moorcroft. According to William John the lamp was purchased at auction for the Moorcroft Museum, Cobridge.<sup>126</sup>

**Fig. 38**

- **Red and black mottled *flambé* trumpet vase** with Art Nouveau hinged pewter mounts - *Tudric Moorcroft* - earthenware, c.1922-1939. William Moorcroft. (Moorcroft Museum, Cobridge)



The form of the trumpet-shaped vase seen above was taken from the Chinese repertoire. However, the mount is derivative of Celtic-strapwork; ancient heritage was a ripe source of inspiration for the Arts and Crafts Movement. In this way Moorcroft pledged his allegiance to the style. Chinese mounts, where they existed for copper-red ceramics, were mainly carved in wood and of a totally different aesthetic. Examples of wooden-mounted Doulton *flambé* past and present are more faithful to the Chinese example. Early Doulton mottled *flambé* vases are illustrated in contemporary periodicals mounted on traditional-style Chinese stands.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> 'Porcelain and Pottery – Historic English Potteries', *The Connoisseur*, Vol. XXXV(35), April 1913, p. 243. Photograph captioned: '*Flambé* Mottled Vases By Doulton'.

Doulton's modern *flambé* ranges include similar wooden mounts. The *Decorative Sung Osprey Vase* (1999) stands on a wooden base inspired by traditional Chinese design. The modern stands are also 'borrowed' from older Doulton examples and are modelled by a specialist firm.<sup>128</sup>

**Fig. 39**

● *Flambé jar and cover with pewter mounted base and pewter lid; earthenware, c.1922-1939.*



<sup>128</sup> **McKeown, Julie:** 'The Burslem Artwares', *Gallery – Magazine for Royal Doulton Collectors' Club*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 1999, pp. 4-5. The *Osprey Vase* measures approx. 35 cm in height and was produced in a limited edition of 75.

The deep red, *sang-de-boeuf* jar illustrated above has a glassy, faintly iridescent glaze. The pewter mount and lid were made by Francis Arthur Edwards (1869-1944). An engraved poppy design is common to both using the repeated motif of a flower head. The base mount has a decorative edge that follows the curves in the poppy petals. The shape of the jar and style of the lid is unmistakably Chinese. The poppy decoration shares the curvilinear organic features of Continental Art Nouveau, while it is also true that designers working in the Arts and Crafts idiom used repeated floral motifs in surface pattern designs.

William Moorcroft's mounted *flambé* can be seen to represent the *spirit* of early British 20<sup>th</sup> century design in its eclectic approach. Chinese ceramics have been mounted in a variety of materials and styles in Europe since they were first imported. It is interesting to compare Moorcroft with examples mounted in France during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>129</sup>

Arthur Lasenby Liberty sold Moorcroft and Doulton *flambé* alongside imported Far Eastern ceramics and other arts. No British manufacturers were credited, the wares were simply stamped 'Made for Liberty & Co.' Apart from retailing at Liberty's of London, Moorcroft *flambé* was exported for sale the world over; Rouard in Paris, the Houston-Bay Co. in Canada, San Francisco, Tiffany's in New York, South America, Moscow and Australasia. Being hand crafted the ceramics were not exported in mass quantities. Moorcroft correspondence revealed that retailers stocked only small numbers of *flambé* at any one time because it was not easy to reproduce on a large scale. Until 1980, 66 per cent of the Moorcroft business revolved around export

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<sup>129</sup> See Chapter 7 on Collectors and Collecting for examples of mounted *sang-de-boeuf* and *crushed strawberry* glazes from the Lever Collection and the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

sales.<sup>130</sup> By the end of the Second World War, 90 per cent of business was through export because the Staffordshire pottery industry was forbidden to sell '*first*' ware on the home market, only '*seconds*' or faulty ware.<sup>131</sup>

According to William John Moorcroft, pressure on employees was kept to a minimum as it was recognised they were manufacturing artistically delicate products and workers needed time to prepare and complete work to the best of their ability, as remains the case today. Wages were and are commensurate with the industry, in fact workers could and can earn '*well over the odds*'. No time clock was installed at the factory until the 1950's when one was requested by the workers themselves.<sup>132</sup>

In 1928 William Moorcroft was given the Royal Appointment as Potter to Her Majesty the Queen. It represented the crowning achievement of his most successful decade. By the late 1930's a climate of political uncertainty struck the collective conscious. As if to reflect the pessimism British taste became correspondingly '*lack-lustre*', to quote a Potteries' colloquialism. When William's son Walter returned from service in Germany in 1945, the Royal Warrant was conferred to him after his father's death. This was considered generous of Queen Mary as Walter had yet to prove himself as a potter. It is reported that she took an active interest in Moorcroft and made an annual visit to the stand at the 'British Industries Fair' whatever her schedule.

In 1962 William John Moorcroft took over the family business after working two years for ICL. When Moorcroft's wife died, Arthur Lasenby Liberty sent his young

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<sup>130</sup> This is no longer the case because of the 'strong pound' among other factors.

<sup>131</sup> Interview with **William John Moorcroft** at the Cobridge factory, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2000.

niece to William to help care for his two young children aged nine and eleven years. The inevitable happened, they married and 10 years later William John arrived, the last in the family line. Educated at Rugby and Oxford, he worked through every factory department before joining the sales team. William John was responsible for the introduction of sale catalogues in the 1970's. Previously people had only bought on sight. His half-brother Walter, who took control of the business after his father's death in 1945, had thought it adequate to send or show photographs of new ranges to interested parties.

## Style

### William Moorcroft's *Flambé*

William Moorcroft Pottery represented a curious blend of Art Nouveau, Arts and Crafts, Near and Far Eastern inspiration. At a time when many of William Moorcroft's contemporaries looked to Japan and Persia as sources of design - and even though he used elements from each of these cultures - William Moorcroft preferred Chinese ceramic design, particularly the use of striking monochrome glazes on beautifully proportioned forms. Contemporary Moorcroft Pottery retains a strong stylistic resemblance to those conceived by William Moorcroft in 1913. His use of simple shapes has continued, although the shapes are now slip-cast rather than individually thrown. Moorcroft's use of naturalistic, organic design has remained a feature of the ware alongside the introduction of modern patterns using the same slip-trailing technique. Whatever the nature of the design it can be observed to 'follow the form' rather than merely provide a covering. In this way William Moorcroft and his successors adhered to one of the fundamental concepts of the Arts and Crafts

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

Movement. William Moorcroft adhered unswervingly to his original design philosophies, skilfully maintaining individual design and craft production within an industrial setting. This measure of integrity no doubt contributed to the success and longevity of Moorcroft through the generations. Batch rather than mass production is still the order of the day.

William Moorcroft's 'Orientalism' can be seen in the Chinese-inspired shapes of his pieces, while the decoration was a cocktail of William Morris and Continental Art Nouveau incorporating elements from the Near and Far East, particularly Japan. Moorcroft and Morris were certainly equally talented surface pattern designers. William Moorcroft's imaginative and striking use of colour enhanced his reputation not only at Liberty's, but was also recognised at national and international exhibitions.

Decorated William Moorcroft *flambé* has more resonance with luxurious Art Deco than Chinese ceramic design. Arriving relatively late on the scene, his experimental *flambé* of the 1920's and 1930's was possibly a response to the popular appreciation of these glazes during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The outbreak of the Second World War had a sombre effect on the decorative arts and taste became more subdued.

As well as being competent at marketing and product promotion, William Moorcroft was acutely aware of shifts in taste and adapted accordingly. The introduction, adaptation and withdrawal of *flambé* illustrated William and Walter Moorcroft's business acumen. And, although Art Nouveau met with resistance in England, Royal Doulton, William Moorcroft working for Macintyre & Co. (c.1898-1912), and the

Minton factory were willing to design in a more overtly Continental Art Nouveau style – a style which continued to influence William Moorcroft's production. His distinctive art nouveau fusion became advantageous in terms of overseas sales, and gave the firms a cosmopolitan reputation. William Moorcroft maintained total responsibility for all processes of manufacture. He was the sole designer as well as the publicity, sale and marketing manager. In design terms, this created a stylistic unity possibly unique to Moorcroft.

Like many designers in other media, William Moorcroft was searching for a 'new' style and a personal voice. This process began in French ceramics in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and likewise commenced in Britain after the Great Exhibition of 1851 when a feeling of general despair at the state of indigenous design pervaded all strata of society. By the late 1880's the British ceramic industry, factories as well as studios and individuals, had accepted the challenge and were busy developing their answer to the avant-garde – a fresh vision. Intelligent eclecticism remained a feature of early 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramics. Earthenware and especially stoneware were now considered appropriate materials for artistic purposes. Designer-makers such as William Moorcroft were referred to as 'artists', bridging the gap between fine art and design.

William Moorcroft's early 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramics were indeed avant-garde, but like Doulton and to a lesser extent Bernard Moore, his work was highly commercial. In keeping with the 'spirit of discovery' inherent in Continental Art Nouveau and in the indigenous Arts and Crafts movement, William Moorcroft worked to maintain local pottery traditions and pursued the most difficult techniques, including reduction *flambé*. In the same way that the late 19<sup>th</sup> century French studio-potters such as

Chaplet and Delaherche found inspiration in the materials and techniques themselves, so William Moorcroft experimented with different clays and methods of firing.

**Fig. 40**

- **Jar; tall ribbed ovoid, earthenware: Deep red *flambé* glaze.** *'This glaze is created by keeping oxygen from the surface of the pot by covering it with a clay mixture and by making the inside of the bottle oven very smoky from time to time during the firing.'* Thrown on the potter's wheel. Signed W. Moorcroft in blue on the base with a paper label of the Royal Arms - **POTTER TO H.M. Queen Mary.**

Made by William Moorcroft, Cobridge, 1929. Acc. No. 21P 1979 (Moorcroft family gift to PM&AG)



**Fig. 40** depicted above is a rare example of large-scale Moorcroft *flambé*. The glaze has the appearance of dried blood in russet patches, as well as purple and ochre mottling. The shape is of Chinese inspiration, although I have not seen any ribbed copper-red vases or jars. Unlike Chinese *flambé*, the glaze is glassy, soft and slightly iridescent. I suspect this glaze has a heavy lead content and only in this respect can be compared to the Chinese '*jun reds*' described in Chapter 1.

William Moorcroft's painted designs beneath the *flambé* glaze were stylistically diverse. *Flambé* colours ranged from deep red to pale pink and covered a variety of

subjects. *Fish* – commonly derived from Japanese prints, were popular motifs on British ceramics during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other patterns included 'Claremont', a toadstool pattern; 'Leaves and Berries'; English landscapes with tall trees and rolling hills;<sup>133</sup> floral designs such as 'Wisteria', 'Poppies' and 'Waratah' were vigorously depicted in strong colours.<sup>134</sup> In Richard Dennis' Moorcroft exhibition catalogue there is a bottle vase painted with 'spiral foliate designs under a flambé glaze',<sup>135</sup> and a pair of flambé vases 'painted with foliate peacock feather panels, containing floral sprays'.<sup>136</sup> There are examples of undecorated flambé; a 'Flared vase with a mottled flambé glaze',<sup>137</sup> and a 'Pair of plates with a plain flambé glaze'.<sup>138</sup> A 'Teapot with a plain flambé glaze', is also listed.<sup>139</sup> This last piece is particularly interesting because of its unreservedly Western form. Plain flambé tableware, including plates and teapots, was popular with customers but like the Royal Doulton equivalent, was problematic in the production

<sup>133</sup> The Moorcroft flambé landscape has its origins in the 'Hazledene' landscape pattern William developed for Macintyre & Co. in 1902. The russet browns, reds and ochres of the flambé landscapes gave rise to the name 'Eventide' for this colour scheme. There were other landscape colour schemes in greens and blues. Similarly, the 'Claremont' toadstool design was designed for Macintyre & Co. and introduced in 1903.

<sup>134</sup> Dennis, Richard: *William Moorcroft and Walter Moorcroft (1897-1973)*, Catalogue of an exhibition of pottery at the Fine Art Society, 4-15<sup>th</sup> December, 1973, New Bond Street London, Richard Dennis, London 1973.

•For a flambé example of Claremont (toadstool design) - No. 366, a 'Pompeii-shape' two-handled vase, pp.98-99.

•For a spectacular flambé example of Leaves and Berries; No. 382, a giant jar and cover of Chinese inspired form – ginger jar. "Painted with a band of leaves and berries, under a magnificent flambé glaze in tones of burgundy, blue, purple, the cover similarly decorated. 18 in. Dated 1930." pp.102-103.

•For a flambé example of a landscape "painted with bright red and green trees in a predominantly purple landscape" - No. 365, a bulbous ovoid vase with round shoulders tapering into a concave neck with flared rim, pp.98-99.

•For flambé examples of Wisteria - No. 367, a 'Pompeii-shape' two-handled vase & 368, a tall ovoid vase, pp.98-99.

•For a flambé example of Poppies - No. 370, an ovoid vase with short, flared neck, pp.98-99.

•For a flambé example of Waratah (flowers) - No. 371, a trumpet-shaped vase of Chinese inspired form, pp.98-99.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.No.376, pp.96-97

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. No. 377, pp.96-97

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. No.374, pp. 96-97

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. No. 379, p.100

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. No. 378, pp.100-101

of matching sets. This did not greatly concern William Moorcroft who was less intent on pursuing a uniform red glaze than his counterpart, Charles Noke. The catalogue also illustrated a magnificent and '*Rare Flambé Owl, naturalistically modelled, and seated on dark rockwork, the bird brilliantly red. 8.5 in.*'<sup>140</sup> This was modelled by Francis Arthur Edwardes (1869-1944) for Moorcroft. It is difficult to make an assessment of the glaze from the monochrome photograph, but it would appear that Charles Noke's various 'Owls' for Royal Doulton were modelled with greater attention to naturalistic detail.

**Figs. 41-43** show examples of William Moorcroft's patterned *flambé* from 1922-1939. Underglaze decorated patterns include '*Blackberry & Leaf*', '*Landscape*', '*Claremont*', '*Cornflower*' and '*Waratah*' (1932). Tonally diverse, there are a range of hues on each piece. Seen against plain Moorcroft *flambé*, decorated examples look darker in tone. A British Art Deco plain *flambé* teapot and two vases of Chinese-inspired form can be seen, as well as three plain *flambé* finger dishes and/or ashtrays. Plain *flambé* 'Nō masks' of Japanese inspiration are evident and, as far as I am aware, original to Moorcroft.<sup>141</sup> These pieces highlight the Chinese-Japanese stylistic fluidity, sometimes deliberate, prevalent in the West - especially Britain - during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even today. The pieces are displayed in cabinets made by Liberty for Moorcroft. The cabinets were first used in the British Empire Exhibition of 1924 where Moorcroft exhibited in the 'Palace of Industry.'<sup>142</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. No. 381, pp. 102-103.

<sup>141</sup> 'Nō masks' of many different materials; wood, ivory, etc., were worn by Japanese actors in Nō plays based on an aristocratic drama originating in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>142</sup> Interview with William John Moorcroft at the Cobridge factory, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Nov., 2000.

Figs. 41, 42, 43

- William Moorcroft's *flambé*, 1922-1939.  
Fig. 41



Fig. 42



Fig. 43



The *flambé* glazed shapes reflected both Chinese and Classical influences – the latter evident in the two-handled vase seen above. Moorcroft called these '*Pompeii shapes*', although his interpretation was more in keeping with the curvilinear forms of contemporary Continental Art Nouveau. As was also true of Royal Doulton, Moorcroft's later 20th century *flambé* drifted further away from the Chinese ideal. Some shapes became more robust with shorter, less elegant proportions. Like William Howson-Taylor, William Moorcroft decorated more unusual shapes; cigarette boxes, candlesticks, clockcases and even toast racks, although I have not come across *flambé* examples of these items. And, whether he was inspired by Ruskin Pottery or conceived the idea independently, William Moorcroft developed sets of ceramic buttons and a range of small brightly coloured plaques to be mounted and worn as brooches during the 1920's. In this way he was pledging allegiance to the Art Nouveau Movement, making use of attractive, inexpensive materials as a substitute for precious alternatives.

With reference to the glaze, William Moorcroft *flambé* was of the same low-temperature variety as Royal Doulton and a proportion of Bernard Moore Ware. Moorcroft *flambé* was fired at a lower temperature than the Doulton and Moore glazes, and was also slightly more iridescent. Whereas Doulton decorated bone-china, William Moorcroft used earthenware bodies as did Bernard Moore for some of his pieces. William Howson-Taylor's high-temperature transmutation glazes on stoneware were of a different order altogether.

William Moorcroft's underglaze decorated *flambé* was less traditionally Chinese in content than the mythological symbolism often employed by Royal Doulton and

sometimes by Bernard Moore. Dragons, deer, the phoenix and carrion crow, etc. were not subjects depicted by William Moorcroft. Instead he chose English abstract and naturalistic devices, mainly flowers and landscapes. And, even within the floral ranges there were no *flambé* prunus blossoms, peaches or bamboo. English flowers were boldly treated. More 'exotic' floral subjects such as orchids and the waratah were introduced as the glaze colours developed and improved. The use of fish, mushrooms and peacock feathers was not confined to William Moorcroft *flambé*. Similar subjects appeared on Doulton and Moore *flambé*, the lustre ware of William De Morgan, Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Pottery and Wedgwood's 'Fairyland Lustre' designed by Daisy Makeigh-Jones. Alan Caiger-Smith described this late 19<sup>th</sup> -early 20<sup>th</sup> century Oriental romanticism as:

*"... more than a passing fashion: all of these people were responding to the same kind of inspiration that had periodically stirred the imagination of Islamic [Chinese or Japanese] decorators themselves for the last nine hundred years. The Garden of Delights is universal: the fish in the moonlit pool, the peacock under the swaying cypresses, the glint of gold and the flashing of dark eyes in the perfumed dusk belong as much to the secrets of human sensibility as to any geographical region of the globe."*<sup>143</sup>

Slip-trailed floral *flambé* was a typically English response to the naturalistic forces of Continental Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts Movement, combined with a search for the exotic which had been explored seriously in ceramics since the 1880's.

Moorcroft *flambé* of the 1920's and '30's is more vibrant Art Deco than classical Chinese. The striking colours and bold, abstract designs echo inter-war glamour. Both Moore and Moorcroft used Francis Arthur Edwardes to mount appropriate pieces in the Arts and Crafts idiom. Comparisons are less easily drawn between Royal Doulton and William Moorcroft.

**Fig. 44**

- **Silver mounted *sang-de-boeuf* and cobalt blue claret jug by Bernard Moore.** Mounted by Francis Arthur Edwardes who worked with Moore at The Duchess of Sutherland's Cripples Guild. Ht: 12 ¾ in. 1907. From the Kent Collection.  
*"Considered superior to any pieces he gave or left to the British museum, Moore managed to incorporate the two things he spent much of his life striving to perfect – the Oriental rich red sang-de-boeuf glaze and a deep, almost cobalt blue glow 'cracked ice' glaze."*<sup>144</sup>



Although *flambé* declined in popularity as the outbreak of the Second World War changed the environmental, political and emotional climate of Britain, Moorcroft *flambé* will be remembered as a novel English expression of Arts and Crafts with a sprinkling of Orientalism. It represents a decorative hybrid somewhere between the chemical and technical accuracy of Ruskin Ware and the highly commercial, more uniform products of Royal Doulton. Having set out as an 'art potter' in the early 1900's, by the late 1920's William Moorcroft was becoming firmly established as an industrial manufacturer of art pottery. In reality the key to his success was Moorcroft's ability to straddle both worlds, choosing the best from each. On retirement, his son William John stated:

<sup>143</sup> **Caiger-Smith, Alan:** *Lustre Pottery*, London, 1985, p.166

<sup>144</sup> [www.claretjugs.com](http://www.claretjugs.com) The Kent Collection

*"I recognise our customers want something that is individual rather than mass produced. And it is something my father recognised. He saw that if you had a good shape then it does not need decoration. And if there is decoration it must flow around the design."*<sup>145</sup>

During the 1960's and '70's, general interest in art pottery gave way to more utilitarian designs. Earthy studio-pottery became fashionable. Moorcroft was able to ride the storm through its Commonwealth markets where the products were perceived as '*traditionally English*'. Throughout the 1980's, two-thirds of Moorcroft's annual turnover came from export sales. The increasing strength of the pound gradually made this position untenable. Failed attempts were made to move the business towards volume production. The answer to Moorcroft's problems came in the form of Hugh Edwards, a London lawyer who had for many years maintained a collector's interest in Moorcroft and was collaborating with Richard Dennis on a book about the Pottery. Edwards, Dennis and their wives bought the Company shares. Edwards became Chairman in 1993 while John William Moorcroft took the role of Managing Director and 'ambassador'. Profits have been growing steadily since then. Canada and the United States remain substantial markets for Moorcroft. William John retired as Managing Director in April 2003, remaining as a non-executive director. He was reported to have no qualms about relinquishing the family business:

*"At one time I was concerned that although you can recruit people who can make good designs, I was not sure if it would fit in with the Moorcroft brand. But with the in-house design team and the management we have, I'm sure that my father would be delighted that we are still following the **spirit** of the designs he created a century ago."*<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> **Elks, David:** 'John Bequeaths a Family Legacy', *The Staffordshire Sentinel on Sunday*, April 6<sup>th</sup> 2003, p. 26.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

## RUSKIN POTTERY

Ruskin Pottery arguably provided the only consistent examples of 'true' early 20<sup>th</sup> century reduced copper transmutation glazed stoneware in Britain. For this reason it is necessary to include the *flambé* of William Howson-Taylor to comment on stylistic approach.

### Richard Taylor's *Flambé* 'Art Wares'

William Howson-Taylor (1876-1935) came from a Staffordshire potting family dating back four generations to George Howson, who opened a sanitary ware factory near Hanley in 1865. It was working at the Eastwood factory for his uncle that William Howson-Taylor learned the basic potting skills which enabled him to set up his own factory in 1898. Richard Howson, the youngest son of George, became director of his father's business and, partly encouraged by his cousin's results, decided to create his own range of artistic pottery. To realise this ambition Richard Howson needed to employ a ceramic technician, hence the arrival of Edward Wilkes at Eastwood in 1910. Wilkes had previously been engaged by Bernard Moore as a glaze chemist and designer. He brought knowledge of Moore's *flambé* firing techniques and supervised the construction of two kilns for this purpose. *Flambé* production began in earnest from c.1911-1916, although Wilkes continued to manufacture his own *flambé* until c.1930 developing a distinctive '*mottled green and red, and oily lustrous effects.*'<sup>147</sup>

Like Moore, Wilkes used white porcelain blanks from other factories. He even used some of the same shapes as Bernard Moore. Unsurprisingly therefore, Richard

Howson's art ware *flambé* closely resembled that of Bernard Moore in technique and form, (see **fig. 45**). Most of it was apparently sold or given to family, friends and local patrons. It is estimated that only 500 pieces were made. Richard Howson's *flambé* provides an interesting contrast to that of his cousin, William Howson-Taylor. Although I have not examined a specimen at first hand, I suspect it is the low-fired *flambé* type characteristic of Moore, Doulton and Moorcroft. Richard appeared to act on a whim, having limited practical experience. The venture was not profitable and relied on the skill of one man rather than a dedicated workforce of specialist staff. The consequences of war appear to have terminated the experiment. William Howson-Taylor's artistic experiments were longer term and not related in technique to those of his cousin Richard. William Howson-Taylor did not set out to manufacture art pottery as an adjunct to making sanitary ware, as a subsidised venture. Chemical experimentation and the manufacture of art pottery absorbed most of his adult life. It was his life.

**Fig. 45**

- **Two Howsons *flambé* pottery vases, c. 1912.** Each covered in a lustrous red glaze, painted marks HOWSONS 1912, with numerals 200 and 243. Each approx. 26 cm high; glued repair to one foot. **Sotheby's Olympia: Applied Arts & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Design**, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2002. **Lot 417**, p. 159.



<sup>147</sup> **Atterbury, Paul:** 'A Forgotten Art Pottery', *Country Life*, May 6<sup>th</sup> 1976, p.1200.

## Shape

Early Ruskin shapes were based on Edward R. Taylor's designs '*hand-made on the potter's wheel* ...'<sup>148</sup> The advertisement (c. 1900) illustrates 24 shapes, some of which could be ordered in slightly different forms – with or without handles, etc. The shapes are largely of Chinese inspiration, although elements of classical Greek, Persian and organic Art Nouveau design can be observed.<sup>149</sup> The designs were representative of the eclectic response to form during the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, also a feature of many other ceramic manufacturers such as Royal Doulton, Moorcroft, Ashworth and Moore. The range of shapes expanded throughout the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and came to include '*covered biscuit jars and jam jars, sweet dishes, pot-pourri, plaques ... candlesticks ... hat pins, sleeve links, buttons ... and enamels for insertion in jewellery, metalwork and furniture*'.<sup>150</sup>

For the most part, especially in relation to vases, William Howson-Taylor adhered rigidly to a repertoire of traditional Chinese forms for Ruskin pottery, seldom attempting original interpretation with the exception of a selection of ungainly Art Deco shapes produced during the late 1920's and '30's. About this time moulded items were produced alongside individually thrown and turned pieces in an effort to remain competitive as demand for art pottery, particularly *flambé*, began to dwindle. Lamp stands were one example of the cast forms. Of his '*use of form*', L.B. Powell

<sup>148</sup> *Forms In Pottery*, c. 1900. An advertisement which depicted a range of vases, bowls, dishes, jugs and cups "*especially suited for teaching drawing and design, by Edward R. Taylor,*" available from W. Howson-Taylor at the Birmingham Tile and Pottery Works. (Wednesbury Art Gallery and Museum)

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, *Form 10* – a 2-handled vase is particularly Art Nouveau, sharing similarities with the organic designs of C.R. Ashbee. Forms 16 & 17 – vases, are robust Arts and Crafts in inspiration, in part derived from medieval English pottery shapes. Forms 3 & 13 – jugs or water pitchers, and forms 6, 8 & 9 – vases, are more Persian in origin. Form 4 is a vase or amphora of classical Greek design. Forms 1 – a vase, 7 & 22 – bowls, are clearly of Chinese inspiration, as are the smaller bowls A & F and the small bud vase B.

considered Howson-Taylor '*nearer to the Oriental than Hellenic spirit... Nymphs and shepherdesses, character-group and Toby jugs, made no appeal to his sense of the significant*'.<sup>151</sup>

Later post-war shapes tended to be more bulky and less finished with evidence of throwing rings on some examples. In this respect Ruskin ware was appealing the inter-war taste for articles obviously hand-made. Potters such as Bernard Leach (1887-1979), Shoji Hamada (1891-1978), Michael Cardew (1901-82) and William Staite Murray (1881-1962) had arrived on the English pottery scene by the 1920's. With them came the philosophy of the *studio-potter* – the person who was in control and involved in every aspect of the production process from digging the clay to packing the ware. Their hand-made ceramics created a new aesthetic which eschewed artifice. Howson-Taylor cannot be considered a studio-potter because he used a team of specialist labour to produce the ware. His adherence to John Ruskin's '*honesty*' in design and William Morris's '*truth to materials*' philosophy placed Howson-Taylor within the Arts and Crafts 'Art Pottery' Movement, whereas his clear reliance on Chinese sources gave him a foothold in the exoticism of Art Nouveau. The decision to name the products after Ruskin was an indication of Howson-Taylor's sympathy with his views, obtaining permission in 1904 and registering the name in 1909. Ruskin's pre-industrial ideals of craftsmanship were a strong English influence on both Richard Taylor and his son who '*In spirit ... belonged more to medieval times than to the twentieth century*'.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Howson-Taylor, William: *Ruskin Pottery*, illustrated catalogue, 1913, p. 8. (Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery)

<sup>151</sup> Powell, L.B: *Howson Taylor: Master Potter – A Memoir with an appreciation of Ruskin Pottery*, City of Birmingham School of Printing, Central School of Arts and Crafts, Margaret Street, 1936, pp. 16-17.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.10.

## Body and Glaze

William Howson-Taylor was, above all else, a first-rate paste and glaze chemist. The *Westminster Gazette* reported:

*"Messrs. Taylor make a lighter body with even more delicacy of colour. Some of their pieces almost reproduce the markings of a blackbird's egg, and the flambé ware is of rare quality."*<sup>153</sup>

Initially Howson-Taylor, true to the Arts and Crafts ideal of using cheaper local materials where possible, mined his clay from a disused Oldbury pit mound. It was discarded in favour of a white, porcellanous stoneware capable of being thrown egg-shell thin. The lighter body was composed of ball clay, china clay, china stone and calcined flint. Ruskin ware's range of coloured glazes were enhanced and illuminated through the new clay body.<sup>154</sup>

Howson-Taylor's affiliation with the Arts and Crafts Movement was evident in the fact that he looked to nature for inspiration in the use of colour, patterning and texture. It is also probable that he was inspired by the ceramics arriving in London from China. Howson-Taylor deliberately set out to recreate the glaze colours and textures seen on Chinese Song, Ming and Qing wares. However static the nature of his forms, Howson-Taylor was an innovative chemist. His results were largely the product of instinct and reliance on the carefully compiled data recorded after each experiment in the manner of many Arts and Crafts practitioners, (see the section on

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<sup>153</sup> **Howson Taylor, William:** *Ruskin Pottery*, illustrated catalogue, 1913, p. 4. (Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery)

<sup>154</sup> 'A Famous West Smethwick Pottery', *Smethwick Telephone*, April 7<sup>th</sup> 1934. (Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery)

networks at the beginning of Chapter 1). Howson-Taylor destroyed his meticulous notes and records of glaze composition and firing on his retirement in 1935.

The Ruskin catalogue for 1913 describes the three types of Ruskin glazes: Group 1 – *Soufflé wares*, Group 2 – *Lustres*, and Group 3 – ‘*REAL FLAMBÉ WARE, each piece being unique and unrepeatable.*’ A variety of ‘colourings’ are mentioned, ranging from:

“...*peach bloom, crushed strawberry, deep ruby, rouge Flambé (some... having green markings), ivory with pigeon’s blood cloudings, purple-blue with turquoise cloudings, snake-green with... mauve or pigeon’s blood diaperings, turquoise gradating to purple with ruby veinings, dove-grey with diaperings, ...*”<sup>155</sup>

From the onset, the pottery used leadless glazes, a feature they were keen to stress. During the late 1920’s–’30’s as the popularity of *flambé* glazes declined, Howson-Taylor continued to experiment producing some of the most spectacular effects, notably dove grey glazes blushed with pink. These later examples are highly sought after by collectors today. It is thought that the Ruskin *flambé* range, including the copper-red, green and grey glazes were fired between c.1400 – 1600°C in the ‘Red kiln’. Often firing would take place on a Sunday to ensure utmost secrecy.

Of interest in the catalogue is Howson-Taylor’s assertion that *Ruskin Flambé* and the ‘*Old Chinese Flambé*’ are of a different nature to the ‘*brilliant transparent red glaze pottery made for many years in Germany, America, etc...*’ According to Taylor, his high-temperature transmutation glazes displayed ‘*the full interpenetrative and*

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<sup>155</sup> **Howson-Taylor, William:** *Ruskin Pottery*, illustrated catalogue, 1913, p. 7-8. (Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery)

*palpitating colour effects ... textures, veinings, and diapers, so characteristic of old Chinese*'.<sup>156</sup>

### Comparisons

Ruskin Pottery offered the only British high-fired early-20<sup>th</sup> century *flambé* apart from a limited selection of Bernard Moore Ware. It stands comparison with Hugh Robertson's high-fired *flambé* from the Chelsea Ceramic Works in America, and with examples of the high-temperature glazes from Copenhagen and France – particularly the work of Ernest Chaplet from c.1884, (see **figs. 32a, 32b, 46 & 47**).<sup>157</sup>

### Fig. 46

- **Dish, stoneware: Mottled pale blue and purple 'jun' glaze.** Marked: 572 20310 impressed, wave motif in underglaze blue. Made by the Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Co., Denmark, 1930's. Manufacturer's gift. Acc. No: 716P1937. (The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery)



<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>157</sup> See also **Ernest Chaplet: *Flambé* and *Sang-de-Boeuf* vases**; stoneware, c. 1884-90. 'Chaplet - Master Potter'; *The Connoisseur*, June 1976, p. 128.

**Fig. 47**

- **Vase, porcelain with *sang-de-boeuf* glaze.** Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Co., Denmark, c.1937. Printed Royal Copenhagen factory mark. Acc. No: 713P1937. (The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery)



The ox-blood glaze on the vase above (**fig. 47**), is dull and has a brown tinge. It does not compare to the vivid, curdled transmutation reds seen on Ruskin ware.

Patrick Nordstrom (1870-1929) was the architect behind Royal Copenhagen's high-temperature stoneware glazes. He joined the factory in 1912 having previously worked as a carver in Paris. He had visited the Paris Exhibition of 1900 and seen the *flambé* stoneware of Chaplet and Delaherche. From then on Nordstrom decided to conduct his own glaze experiments and on his return to Denmark in 1907 he established a studio in the Copenhagen suburb of Vanlose and built a kiln.

Working for the Royal Copenhagen Manufactory Nordstrom used simple, organic forms. Being self-taught his methods were those of trial and error and in this way similar to the experimental approach of Howson-Taylor. His *sang-de-boeuf* glaze was highly acclaimed. After Nordstrom's retirement in 1922, his assistant C. Halier took over glaze research and development at the factory, carefully preserving Nordstrom's

legacy. He introduced new shapes and glazes, retaining Nordstrom's Far Eastern inspiration. In 1921 the fine artist and sculptor Jais Neilsen joined the factory. Some of his Biblically-inspired figures, including *'The Good Samaritan'* were covered in a *sang-de-boeuf* glaze.<sup>158</sup>

The stoneware *'jun'* dish in **fig. 46** above is most likely the work of H. Madslund, Head of Royal Copenhagen's Technical Department until his death in 1947. Christian Christensen's obituary stated:

*"... using the old classic glazes as a pattern, he created new ones that might well have been the envy of even the most fastidious of the Chinese masters..."*<sup>159</sup>

Madslund was credited with the introduction of a new copper-red glaze to replace that created by Nordstrom. He was responsible for the Danish *jun* glaze, having discovered it was achieved through the compound ferric oxide; the purple markings the result of reduced copper oxide.

Howson-Taylor's *jun* glaze was similar in nature to Madslund's version. Both are high-temperature glazes on a stoneware body. Like Madslund, Howson-Taylor's work drew *'direct'* comparisons *"between... the rich rose-purple pieces of Sung Chun..."*<sup>160</sup>

<sup>158</sup> **Bech, Emil:** 'Chinese Influence on Danish Pottery and Porcelain', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 22, 1946-7, p. 31.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32-33.

<sup>160</sup> **Powell, L.B:** *Howson Taylor: Master Potter*, 1936, pp. 21-22.

At the 1906 International Exhibition in Milan, a Japanese expert pronounced Ruskin ware ‘... worthy of the first award as it was equal to some of the best Ming Dynasty’.<sup>161</sup> Writing in 1936, Powell suggested:

“ [Regarding] The comparison of his work with that of the Ming period... I think a more just comparison may be made with some of the best examples of the Sung period. The maker of Ruskin Ware was nearer in spirit and craftsmanship to the wares of the Sung Dynasty than to those of any other period... He had much of the classic dignity, the breadth and power of form which characterized Sung work, and his colours and glazing, if they were not absolutely the equal of Sung ware, came as near to it as any ceramic art since created.”<sup>162</sup>

**Fig. 48**

- **Bowl, stoneware:** Thrown by William Staite Murray at Rotherhithe, Copper-red glaze with specks of iron oxide, c. 1919-20. Acc. No: 1999.C.15.
  - Jar, stoneware:** Thrown by William Staite Murray at Rotherhithe, Copper-red glaze over wax resist decoration, c.1919-20. Acc. No: 1999. C. 13.
- (Part of the Henry Bergen Collection, PM&AG)



<sup>161</sup> **Howson-Taylor, William:** *Ruskin Pottery*, illustrated catalogue, 1913, p. 2. (Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery)

<sup>162</sup> **Powell, L.B:** *Howson Taylor: Master Potter*, 1936, p. 21.

Neither of the pieces in **fig. 48** can be compared to William Howson-Taylor's superb *flambé* or *sang-de-boeuf* glazed wares. Murray's copper-reds are of a more robust, obviously hand-crafted aesthetic. Around 1910, William Staite Murray (1881-1962) enrolled at the recently started pottery course at the Camberwell School of Arts. He established a pottery c. 1919 at his brother's engineering works, Rotherhithe, London and was influenced by Oriental, particularly Song Chinese, ceramic styles. However, his stoneware was also inspired by earthy English medieval pottery. W.S. Murray started experimenting with stoneware glazes from the early 1920's. Murray met Bernard Leach for the first time in 1921. They collaborated through the exchange of glaze recipes and Leach often asked Murray to do test firings. However, Murray's friendship with Shoji Hamada was closer. During visits to St. Ives, Murray learned about oriental techniques of brush decoration and how to make foot-rings.<sup>163</sup> Unlike Howson-Taylor, Murray was a 'true' studio potter working alone, and it could be said that although his work lacked the technical finish of Ruskin ware, he did develop original forms that married Oriental and vernacular British traditions.<sup>164</sup>

Nevertheless, examples of Murray's work illustrated in *The Studio* share common characteristics with Ruskin stoneware. The white glazed stoneware vase with gold and scarlet markings demonstrated considerable skill and control over the firing process. The stoneware *sang-de-boeuf* and 'persimmon red glaze' pots are very similar to Ruskin's stoneware *flambé* in terms of the simple, Chinese-inspired use of form,

<sup>163</sup> Haslam, Malcolm: *William Staite Murray*, Crafts Council / Cleveland County Museum Service, 1984, pp. 75, figs. II-VI – stoneware vases, 90-91.

Rice, Paul: *British Studio Ceramics in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1989, pp. 68-75.

<sup>164</sup> Near and Far Eastern.

'...yielding to no delusive temptation to seek originality in shapes foreign to the genius of clay...' thereby adopting an essential Arts and Crafts tenet.<sup>165</sup>

All Murray's pieces illustrated in the article owe a clear debt to Chinese ceramics alongside other 'ancient potters', examples of which he studied in the national museums. However, Murray set out to interpret ancient cultures rather than produce 'slavish imitation[s]'. The author stated that in trying to produce high-fired Chinese transmutation glazes many potters of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century:

"...took short cuts...thinking by various simulative expedients to achieve the effect of the wares they would emulate; the results... inevitably lacking in the qualities of surface and depth of tone with which the stern rigours of an intense firing-temperature have endowed the Eastern wares."<sup>166</sup>

This is not the case with either Ruskin or, it would seem, W.S. Murray's *Flambé* stoneware.

**Fig. 49**

- **W.S. Murray, Stoneware Vase:** White glaze with gold and scarlet markings. (Reproduced in *The Studio* by courtesy of W.Guthrie, Esq.) From **Rackham, Bernard:** 'W.S. Murray's Flambe Stoneware', *The Studio*, 1924, p. 321.



<sup>165</sup> **Rackham, Bernard:** 'W.S. Murray's *Flamé* Stoneware', *The Studio*, 1924, pp. 318- 321. Pages torn from volume – Ref. No: P.738.942; Hanley Reference Library.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.

**Fig. 50**

- **W.S. Murray, Stoneware Pot:** *Sang-de-boeuf* with purple flush. (Reproduced in *The Studio* by courtesy of Leicester Galleries). From **Rackham, Bernard:** 'W.S. Murray's *Flambé* Stoneware', *The Studio*, 1924, p. 320.



**Fig. 51**

- **W.S. Murray, Stoneware Pot:** Persimmon red glaze on white body. (Reproduced in *The Studio* by courtesy of F.L.S. Murray Esq.) From **Rackham, Bernard:** 'W.S. Murray's *Flambé* Stoneware', *The Studio*, 1924, p. 320.



William Howson-Taylor understood the value of his technical and chemical expertise. A packed Ruskin *Red Kiln* often contained transmutation glazed ware to the value of one-thousand pounds. It is understood that Howson-Taylor insured one of his finest pieces for eight-hundred and fifty pounds.<sup>167</sup> Many of his pieces were sold on the American and Far Eastern markets. The British Royal family purchased examples for their collection as did other prominent British citizens and museums. However, in common with most of the art pottery manufacturers during the inter-war period, sales of Howson Taylor's Ruskin ware slumped. But the excellence of Ruskin ware had been recognised during Howson-Taylor's lifetime having achieved the Grand Prize Medal in the 1904 St. Louis Exhibition followed by a succession of awards at International Exhibitions in Milan (1906), London (1908) and Brussels (1910). The photographs below demonstrate the unrivalled beauty of William Howson-Taylor's high-fired reduced copper-oxide transmutation glazes.

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<sup>167</sup> Powell, L.B: *Howson Taylor: Master Potter*, 1936, pp. 24-25.

**Fig. 52**

- **Vase and stand, porcellanous stoneware:** High-temperature reduced copper-oxide transmutation glaze, predominantly purple with green speckles. The vase is badly damaged; the pieces are glued together leaving a brown stain. The glaze is patchy revealing a white body. The Chinese-inspired vase rests on a heavily, if not awkwardly potted stand that gives the piece more of an 'Arts and Crafts' than Chinese aesthetic. Vase ht: approx. 10 cm. Red and purple stand outer ring dia: approx. 10 cm, inner ring dia: approx. 8.8 cm, also damaged.

Inscribed RUSKIN ENGLAND on the inner ring of the stand. Acc. No. 189P.1966.  
'RUSKIN' printed in purple on the vase base, c.1905-35. (Part of the Amy Frances Isaacs bequest, P M&AG)<sup>168</sup>



<sup>168</sup> Mrs Amy Frances Isaacs of Warrick Rd., Solihull, West Midlands gave a total of 58 pieces to The Potteries Museum in 1966. The collection was mainly of Ruskin ware but it also included some Bernard Moore.

**Fig. 53**

- **Globular apple-shaped vase with narrow spool neck and straight narrow foot; porcellanous stoneware:** High-temperature reduced copper-oxide transmutation glaze, predominantly purple with red mottling and green speckles. The white body is revealed in patches. A Chinese-inspired form, possibly taken from the *peach-bloom* water pot shapes used by Qing scholars as desk accessories.<sup>169</sup>

Ht: approx. 10 cm. Inscribed RUSKIN ENGLAND on the base, c. early 20<sup>th</sup> century.  
Acc. No: 463P.1935. Presented to The PM&AG by the Contemporary Arts Society, London in 1935.



**Fig. 54**

- **Flambé ovoid vase and matching three-legged stand, porcellanous stoneware:** High-temperature reduced copper-oxide transmutation glaze, ruby red with purple streaking and green speckled green. No foot. Vase ht: approx. 11 cm. Base of stand has paper label printed:

**RUSKIN POTTERY  
MADE IN  
ENGLAND**

*This colour scheme cannot be repeated*

Date c. early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Acc. No: 462P.35 (The PM&AG)



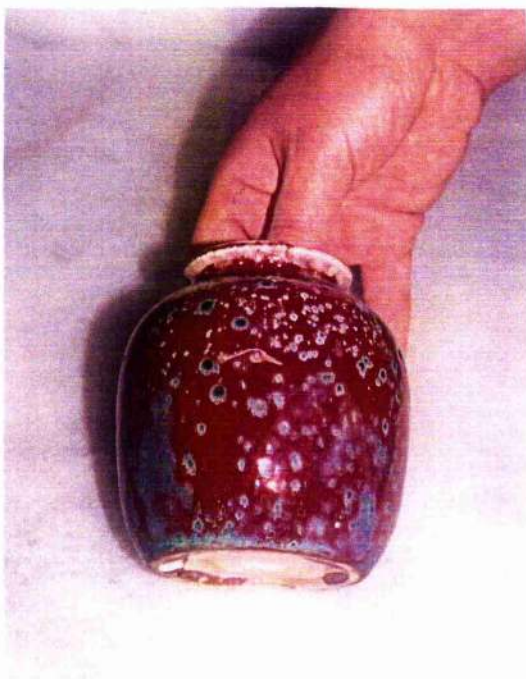
<sup>169</sup> Ayers, John: 'The 'Peachbloom' Wares of the Kangxi Period (1662-1722)', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 64, 1999-2000, p. 47, Fig.32 – Waterpot from the Havemeyer bequest; Kangxi Period (1662-1722), Metropolitan Museum, New York.

The ovoid vase pictured above is of similar conception to the example in **fig. 53**, having a ceramic 'Arts and Crafts' stand rather than a carved wooden stand of Chinese inspiration. The glaze is magnificent, representative of many Ruskin '*sang de boeuf* pieces [which] have a brilliance of colour and warm depth of glazing which combine to yield a decorative richness capable of holding its own beside the best Chinese examples'.<sup>170</sup>

**Fig. 55**

- **Barrel-shaped vase, porcellanous stoneware:** High-temperature reduced copper-oxide transmutation glaze, ruby red with mauve and turquoise patches, flecked with green and spots of metallic copper in its purest reduced state. Narrow, slightly flared lip and no foot. Ht: approx. 11 cm. Diam: approx. 5.7 cm. Inscription impressed on base RUSKIN ENGLAND. Date inscribed on base – 1933. There is evidence to suggest the glaze had overrun the base which has possibly been ground down.

Acc. No: DERSB: 503. Part of the Frank Ollerenshaw bequest of studio-pottery to Buxton Museum and Art Gallery in 1949.

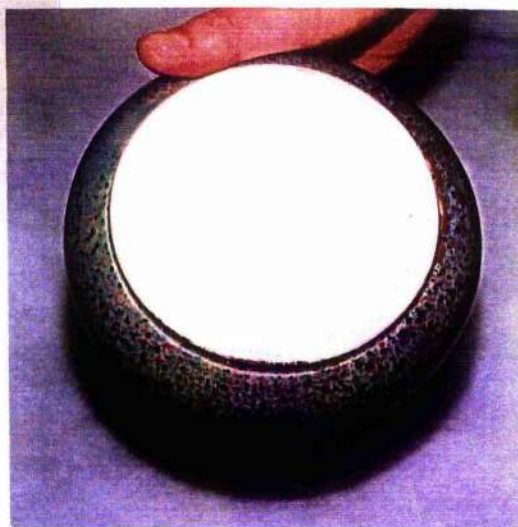
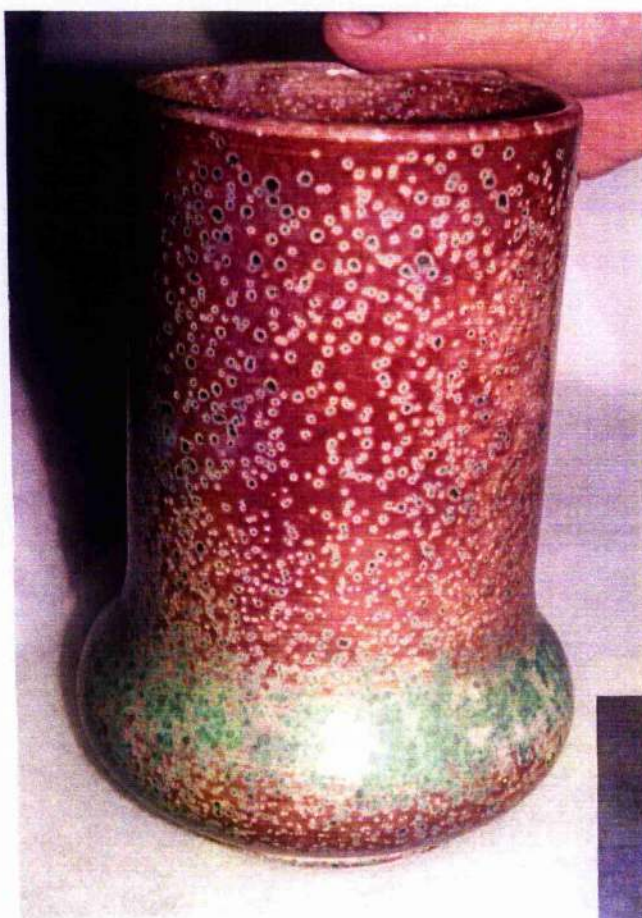


<sup>170</sup> **Powell, L.B:** *Howson Taylor: Master Potter*, 1936, p. 22.

**Fig. 56**

- **Vase; porcellanous stoneware:** Tall vase of Art Deco form, long trunk neck with thick bevelled lip and squat bulbous body. Very narrow foot rim. A good example of Howson-Taylor's departure from Chinese form towards the solid, exaggerated shapes of the Art Deco Movement. Although the form is clumsy in appearance, the glaze is exquisite. It is one of the best specimens of his reduced copper-oxide transmutation glazes; the neck predominantly red, shading to pink in areas, flecked with green and spots of pure reduced metallic copper. Spanning the circumference of the bulbous body is a band of green copper speckling with pale apple-green patches. Beneath the green band the red colour reappears towards the foot. Throwing rings are visible around the body and neck. Ht. Approx. 20 cm. Diam. Approx. 11.3 cm. Date: 1933.

Impressed inscription on the base RUSKIN ENGLAND 1933. Acc. No: DERSB: 471 (Part of the Frank Ollerenshaw bequest of studio pottery to Buxton Museum and Art Gallery in 1949). Unlike the previous example, the glaze does not appear to have overrun the base and there is no evidence to suggest the foot has been ground down.



## Wedgwood & Sons.

The Wedgwood Company has not commercially manufactured the *flambé* glaze, although there were similarities between its products and those of other firms, namely the lustre wares decorated by Daisy Makeig-Jones, (see fig. 33). 'Wedgwood Fairyland Lustre' used low-temperature metallic oxide glazes. Designs incorporated chinoiserie and tended to be narrative. The rich combination of gilding and gem-like colour shared properties with some Royal Doulton and Bernard Moore low-temperature *flambé*.

William Burton, then employed at the Wedgwood factory, had seen the superb ruby lustre ware of Italian Pietro Gaj at the 1862 International Exhibition in London. With the backing and support of other managers and technical staff, Burton pursued the issue and a series of negotiations began with Gaj relating to production rights and methods of manufacture. Money and technical details changed hands but the experiments proved unsuccessful.<sup>171</sup>

Norman Wilson's 'Unique Ware' introduced a more specific Chinese aesthetic including high-temperature *flambé* glazes from 1928, a selection of which were shown at the 1936 'Wedgwood Exhibition' at the Grafton Galleries. The date of this exhibition is significant because it took place only one year after the 1935 Exhibition of Chinese Art at the Royal Academy. It was probable that the Royal Academy Exhibition stimulated manufacturers' taste, or that they saw an opportunity to capitalise on the recent public interest in Chinese art and culture. Whatever the

motivation, it seemed that these high-temperature glazes were never put into commercial production.

### Norman Wilson (1902-1985)

Norman Wilson was Wedgwood's Works Manager at Etruria from 1927, becoming Production manager in 1946. He was an excellent chemist and potter, having been placed in charge of his father's china business at the age of 19 while studying at the North Staffordshire Technical College, graduating as a silver medallist. At the age of 24 working as a 'bronco buster' in Canada, Wilson received a cable from Major Frank Wedgwood asking him to join the firm. Bernard Moore (senior) and Dr. Mellor, then principal of the North Staffordshire Technical College, had recommended Wilson to Major Frank.<sup>172</sup>

During the period 1928-1963, Wilson created a number of new glazes and bodies, including interpretations of Chinese glazes on adapted Chinese forms which he admired for their simplicity. This range was known as 'N.W. Unique Ware', among which were examples of *temmoku*, *hare's fur*, *celadon*, *flambé* and other transmutation glazes. They were studio wares sold either through exhibitions or to family and friends. In 1936 Wedgwood staged an exhibition at the Grafton Galleries which included Norman Wilson's 'Unique Wares'. Wilson's shapes were inspired by Chinese and Korean ceramics, many of which were intended for his 'weekend

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<sup>171</sup> Letters detailing the transactions between **Pietro Gaj** and **William Burton** dating from 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1862 – 29<sup>th</sup> May 1864., Acc. No.'s range from 11320-12 / 11331-12. (The Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston, Staffordshire)

<sup>172</sup> **J.W.**: 'Profile – Norman Wilson Esq., F.I. Ceram.', *Wedgwood Review*, Volume 1, No.5, Nov. 1958, p. 9.

experiments'.<sup>173</sup> Some shapes were cast but most were thrown. Selected shapes used for the Unique Ware were later used for more commercial designs, while some of the glazes – excluding high-temperature *flambé* – decorated a range of mainstream Wedgwood shapes.

The catalogue for the 1936 Wedgwood Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries records '*Stoneware and Earthenware Vases in Special Glazes*'. Adding, '*These are unique pieces which will not be repeated*'.<sup>174</sup> All the glazes listed are 'by Norman Wilson'. There were a number of *high-temperature copper* and *transmutation* glazes among the *black fur*, *celadon*, *smoke-grey*, *duck-egg*, *silver fox fur* and *claire de lune*.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>173</sup> Batkin, Maureen: *Wedgwood Ceramics 1846-1959*, London, Richard Dennis, 1982, p. 226.

<sup>174</sup> Victor Skellern's Scrapbook: Wedgwood, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent. Wedgwood 1936 Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries; 6 Grafton St., W1: April 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 12<sup>th</sup> 1936. Description and price lists, some photographs of the exhibition and press cuttings. '*Stoneware and Earthenware Vases*' are listed from Nos. 130-171.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. 147: Vase in High Temperature Copper glaze by N.W. 6 gns.  
151: Vase in Transmutation glaze by N.W. 3 ½ gns.  
154: Vase in High Temperature Copper glaze by N.W. 4 gns.  
155: Stoneware Bowl in Transmutation glaze by N.W. 1 gn.  
161: Vase in Transmutation glaze by N.W. 6 gns.  
163: Vase in High Temperature Smoke glaze by N.W. 6 gns.  
171: Vase in High-Temperature *Flambé* \* not for sale, by N.W.

**Fig. 57**

**Grafton Galleries *Flambé* exhibits. Victor Skellern's Scrapbook:** Wedgwood, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent. Wedgwood 1936 Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, 6 Grafton St., W1: April 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1936.



Norman Wilson and Victor Skellern's '*individual pieces*' of the exhibition were reported by the London Bazaar to have been made '*partly for their own pleasure and partly in pursuit of the widest knowledge of glazes*'. And made the assumption that '*Modern pottery of this kind is well worth the collector's interest, for each piece is unique, and ceramically 'right*'.<sup>176</sup> Another article described:

*"...such fine ornaments as Norman Wilson's 'Vase in High Temperature' with its smouldering red and grey, ... [created to] express a virile beauty of traditional purpose along with that of line and form."*<sup>177</sup>

<sup>176</sup> 'Table Talk by Fortunatus', *London Bazaar*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1936. From **Victor Skellern's Scrapbook**: Wedgwood, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent. One of several press cuttings.

<sup>177</sup> **Earp, T.W.**: 'Grace and Utility in Pottery – The Wedgwood Exhibition', *The Daily Telegraph*, 29<sup>th</sup> April 1936. From **Victor Skellern's Scrapbook**: Wedgwood, Stoke-on-Trent.

From photographic evidence and descriptions of Wilson's high-temperature glazes, and from the quality of his *hare's fur* and *aventurine* glazes in the Wedgwood Museum collection, it is likely that Wilson's copper transmutation glazes would have been similar to William Howson-Taylor's stoneware *flambé*. The significant difference was that Wilson did not produce the quantity of successful transmutation glazes that were made by Howson-Taylor. In essence, Norman Wilson's *flambé* was experimental studio ware made within a highly commercial environment in the same way that Bullers artwares were created. Wedgwood did not take up the 'Unique' high-temperature transmutation glazes commercially.

### **Bullers Ltd. (1932-1952)**

Moving towards the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Bullers Ltd. Art Studio adopted an experimental rather than commercial approach in its manufacture of hard paste porcelain ceramics. Among its Chinese inspired ware were attempts at the *rouge flambé* glaze. Unlike the carefully controlled experiments of Norman Wilson at Wedgwood and Sons, Bullers 'Artwares' were manufactured alongside and of the same material as the porcelain electrical insulators. The nature of the material, methods and scale of manufacture contributed to a unique aesthetic in British ceramics. Although not as accomplished or 'finished' as other examples of British *flambé*, Bullers pieces represented the trial and error inherent in studio-pottery.

Bullers was a manufacturer of insulator porcelain in Milton, a village outside the five main towns of Stoke-on-Trent. In 1932 an Art Studio was established within the

factory in response to a suggestion by Gordon Forsyth, Principal of the City of Stoke-on-Trent Schools of Art. One of the owner's sons, Guy Harris, was interested in art pottery and instrumental in persuading the company to fund a studio. Mr Harris was both Director and chemist for the firm. Forsyth and Harris knew Cecil Noke of Royal Doulton who had been involved in successful *flambé* production since the early 1900's. They were also well acquainted with Bernard Moore and admired his work with Chinese glaze effects. Both Forsyth and Harris were keen to conduct their own experiments. Alongside his research into electrical insulator porcelain, Harris developed a range of Chinese-inspired glazes including high-temperature *celadon*, *hare's fur*, *aventurine*, *jun*, *crackle*, *oil-spot* and *flambé*.

The insulator porcelain was heavy with little plasticity. Resulting pieces tended to appear clumsy or lop-sided. A composition of approximately thirty per cent ball clay, twenty per cent china clay, twenty-three per cent feldspar and twenty-five per cent quartz made a thick, opaque body not especially suitable for throwing.<sup>178</sup> Until its closure in 1952, the Bullers Studio produced the only British hard-paste porcelain ware.

Anne Potts, a 16 year-old modeller fresh from the Burslem School of Art was recommended by Gordon Forsyth as a design manager for the venture. She used the hard-paste to advantage in modelling streamlined figurines. Potts left Bullers in 1939 to get married and the Studio closed temporarily.

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<sup>178</sup> **Interview with Graham Bell:** 11, Bartholomew's Close, Norton, Stoke-on-Trent, 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct., 2001. Mr Bell joined Bullers as a laboratory technician in 1953. By 1980 he was the 'chief' and only ceramist. He worked at the factory for 45 years. After leaving Bullers, the second studio manager Agnete Hoy went to live in London with her husband and became a lecturer in ceramics at Farnham College of Art. Every year she would return to Bullers with a group of students for a tour around the factory with Mr. Bell.

In 1940 Agnete Hoy succeeded Anne Potts as design manager. In the summer of 1939 she had decided to tour Britain after completion of an Art and Design degree specialising in ceramics at the Copenhagen College of Arts and Crafts. Unable to return to Denmark at the outbreak of war, she had travelled to the Potteries in search of work. Fortunately, she met Forsyth at the Burslem School of Art who introduced her to the Bullers Studio – the start of a twelve-year collaboration.

Hoy had been a pupil of Ms. Nathalie Krebs, an influential Danish art potter. Having qualified as a chemical engineer at the National Polytechnic Institute of Copenhagen, Krebs joined Bing & Grøndahl under the chief engineer, then H.A. Madslund. Later she started her own pottery partnership manufacturing high quality stoneware under the name '*Saxbo*'. Krebs conducted ceaseless experiments to improve the quality of her high-fired Chinese-style glazes. This was possibly where Hoy acquired her fascination and experience with high-temperature glazes, something she was able to share with Guy Harris when she joined the Bullers Studio.<sup>179</sup>

Agnete Hoy changed the nature of production. The emphasis shifted from unique experimental work towards standardisation. Each shape was recorded, numbered and repeated as were the glaze formulas. The shape and glaze numbers were always inscribed into the base. Each shape was designed and thrown by Hoy as a prototype<sup>180</sup> before it passed to Harold Thomas, '*the best thrower in the country*'<sup>181</sup>, to produce in series. Decoration was often left to her team of assistants; the more competent allowed to sign their work.

<sup>179</sup> **Bech, Emil:** 'Chinese Influence on Danish Pottery and Porcelain', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 22, 1946-47, p. 34.

<sup>180</sup> **Atterbury, Paul:** 'Made in England by Bullers', *Antique Collector*, Feb. 1977, p.34

<sup>181</sup> According to Graham Bell, these were the words of Gordon Forsyth.

Wartime restrictions forbade the manufacture of decorative ware, hence Hoy's first designs were for oven-to-table ware, coffee and tea sets. Post-war decorative ware continued to use Hoy's simple, functional shapes in a deliberate attempt to expose the glazes without distraction. Some of the shapes were Chinese-inspired while others conformed to traditional English pottery prototypes resonant of Leach and his followers. Bullers shapes looked and were hand crafted, an asset in terms of the contemporary vogue for studio-pottery. Some of the shapes were similar to Keith Murray's (1892-1981) utilitarian designs for Wedgwood during the 1930's.<sup>182</sup> Art critic Herbert Read and Bernard Leach were known to have visited the Studio as did Leach's students Norah Braden and Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie.

Together Hoy and Harris experimented with oxide glazes. Although Hoy preferred greys, *celadon* olive greens and iron browns, high-temperature reduction glazes including *jun*, *sang-de-boeuf* and *peach-bloom* were given trial firings, albeit not always successfully.

### Firing

*Flambé* pieces were reduction fired in the same kilns as the insulator porcelain, contained in saggars, '*little special muffle kiln[s]*'<sup>183</sup> for protection. Inside the saggars ware was placed on setters made from the same body as the pot to keep it straight during the firing. Using the same clay for the pot and setters was necessary to ensure an equal shrinkage rate. The maturing temperature for Bullers insulator porcelain until

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<sup>182</sup> **Bullers Flambé. (c.1936) Vase – hard paste porcelain.** Upper two-thirds of body ridged from the shoulder, the ridging becoming tighter towards the base. Acc. No: 2P. 1959. The vase seen in **fig. 61** represented the type of simple, utilitarian shape with horizontal ridges similar to Keith Murray's austere matt-glazed Wedgwood ware. Murray's vertical and horizontal fluted designs tended to be more precise and highly finished, giving a machine rather than a hand crafted aesthetic.

1980 was c.1240°C,<sup>184</sup> although Hoy maintained that the temperature for a glost firing was c.1350-80°C.<sup>185</sup> The Chinese-effect glazes were mostly reduction fired in a draught gas kiln. Hoy also had access to various laboratory kilns which had disappeared by 1953.<sup>186</sup> Jack Benton was the skilled fireman who placed the ware and monitored the kiln atmosphere using a water gauge he invented.<sup>187</sup> The Studio was permitted to use the tunnel ovens but as these fired with oxidizing atmospheres, only certain glazes could be passed through. As Hoy stated:

*"... we always wanted to use the tunnel kiln when we didn't have the reduction kiln because the reduction kiln was set... we could set [the reduction kiln] exactly as we want[ed] it and Mr. Guy Harris would move around the bottom bricks if he thought there was something. You know he would not tell us about it,... but Jack Benton would know about these things..."*<sup>188</sup>

## Glazes

The insulator porcelain used a felspathic glaze which, during Hoy's time at the factory, came from Narvik in a lump which was then crushed and shipped to the ceramic suppliers Harrison Mayer in Runcorn. The Narvik felspar had high concentrations of soda and potash in the right proportions. For a transparent felspar glaze the ideal ratio for insulator porcelain was potash:soda, 4:1.<sup>189</sup> Post-1940 after Agnete Hoy joined Bullers Studio, the glaze colours became more accurate. Improvements were noticeable in the *celadon* where the greens became more blue than grey, and the olive green developed a richer tone. It is reported that a lustre

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<sup>183</sup> Transcript of interview with Agnete Hoy, courtesy of the National Electronic & Video Archive of the Crafts, University of the West of England, Bristol. (Curator – Matthew Partington)

<sup>184</sup> Interview with Graham Bell – 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct, 2001.

<sup>185</sup> Hoy, Anita: 'Art Among the Insulators', *Ceramic Review*, No. 69, 1981, p.11.

<sup>186</sup> Interview with Graham Bell – 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct., 2001.

<sup>187</sup> Transcript of interview with Agnete Hoy, National Electronic & Video Archive of the Crafts, Bristol.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

*flambé* glaze mug trial was made by Guy Harris c.1934-39.<sup>190</sup> They were heavily potted and ribbed.

Bullers Art Studio had never operated commercially and had relied on subsidy from the mainstay of the business - insulator production. After twenty years of 'no return' Bullers felt they could no longer be patrons of artistic pottery. Guy Harris was older and less influential, markets had become more competitive and philanthropy had become unfashionable. Bullers Art Studio closed in April 1952 at short notice. It had been '*a rare achievement in studio-pottery, namely the support of an art studio by an industry with no artistic pretensions whatsoever*'.<sup>191</sup> The Bullers Studio represented an intermediary between the roughly hewn aesthetic of Leach and the machine-finish of Keith Murray's ware for Wedgwood. Technically studio-pottery, Bullers artware continued the tradition of fine craftsmanship combined with an individuality and experimental approach impossible under the constraints of highly commercial enterprise. The photographs below portray Bullers rare experimental *flambé*.

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Interview with **Graham Bell** – 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct., 2001.

<sup>191</sup> **Atterbury, Paul:** 'Made in England by Bullers', *Antique Collector*, Feb. 1977, p.34

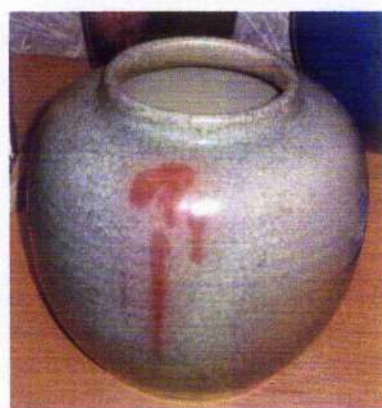
**Fig. 58**

- **Bullers *Flambé*. (c. 1934-1941)**  
**Tall ovoid vase with narrow collar neck** – hard paste porcelain. *Sang-de-boeuf* glaze on the lower body and right side of the vase. The reduced copper glaze is patchy revealing the white porcelain body beneath. Other areas are dense red and appear ‘clotted’. Acc. No. 433.2P1941 (PM& AG)



**Fig. 59**

- **Bullers *Flambé*. (c.1934-1941)**  
**Jar** – hard paste porcelain. Cracked, stained glaze with streak of *peach-bloom*. Acc. No: 433. 1P1941. (PM&AG)



**Fig. 60**

• **Bullers *Flambé*. (c.1936)**

**Vase - hard paste porcelain.** Upper two-thirds of body ridged from the shoulder, the ridging becoming tighter towards the base. Decorated with streaked rouge *flambé* on white body with transparent felspathic glaze. The glaze gives the surface a shiny pitted texture reminiscent of salt-glazed stoneware. Ht: 24 cm.

Inscribed V34 (shape no.) and standard printed BULLERS ENGLAND on base. Acc. No: 2P. 1959. (Purchased in 1959 for £2 from a Louis Taylor sale, PM&AG)



**Fig. 61**

• **Bullers *Flambé*. (c.1934-1941)**

**Shallow dish - hard-paste porcelain.** Thickly potted shape of Chinese-inspiration. Covered with pale *jun* glaze of grey tint. Slight surface crazing with brown specs and purple rim. Narrow raised foot which has been hollowed out on the underside in a manner similar to many Chinese ceramic vessels. Ground foot rim. Diam: 13.5 cm approx.

Base inscriptions blurred by glaze. Acc. No: 433P.1941 - Part of the Bullers Collection of 22 pieces with various Chinese glaze effects including two examples of *sang-de-boeuf*, presented to PM&AG by Guy Harris and Gordon Forsyth in 1941.



**Fig. 62**

- **Bullers Flambé. (c.1934-1941)**  
**Experimental Flambé Vase – hard-paste porcelain.** Short ovoid shape with bulbous base. Narrow raised foot. White body glazed with crazed transparent felspathic glaze; areas of patchy *rouge flambé* shading to brown and green. The whole surface covered with a pitted sheen. Ht: Approx. 14.5 cm

Inscribed on base 375 and marked in paint 295. Acc. No: 130P.1962 (Purchased by PM&AG for £3 from Mr. Rhead in 1962)



Other examples of Bullers *flambé* and '*chiün decoration*' are recorded in an exhibition catalogue of 1977, most of which came from private collections, (see Appendix II).<sup>192</sup>

Also listed in Appendix II are the corresponding glaze compositions for some of the glaze numbers quoted in the catalogue descriptions. The glaze formulae and numbers are taken from Agnete Hoy's hand-written records of glaze recipes developed by Guy Harris.<sup>193</sup>

<sup>192</sup> Atterbury, Paul & Batkin, Maureen: *Art Among The Insulators – The Bullers Studio 1932-52 – An Exhibition at the Gladstone Pottery Museum. Stoke-on-Trent, 1<sup>st</sup> March-14<sup>th</sup> April 1977.*

<sup>193</sup> Interview with Graham Bell – 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct., 2001. In 1985 Agnete Hoy paid her last visit to the factory and told Mr. Bell to save her handwritten records of Guy Harris' glaze recipes for posterity. Apparently she was somewhat eccentric – a lady who enjoyed a pint of bitter and had a penchant for lilac taffeta skirts and peep-toe sandals. He handed the notes to me at the time of the interview. They are now in the Potteries Museum. The H in the glaze numbers refers to 'Harris'.

## DEREK EMMS (1929- 2004 )

Studio-potter Derek Emms steadfastly maintained a traditional Chinese aesthetic from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. His Chinese-style copper-red, *sang-de-boeuf* and *rouge flambé* pieces are among the most faithful British interpretations. His work was sold nation-wide and internationally. It was because of his stylistic adherence to traditional Chinese prototypes that he has been included in this series of case studies. What follows is largely derived through an interview with him in his home studio.<sup>194</sup>

The fifth of eight children, Emms came from a large family. In 1944 he commenced training as a printed and woven textile designer at the Accrington School of Art and Crafts.<sup>195</sup> Work for the Intermediate and National Diploma Exams was sent to London in May to be assessed, the results of which were not to be available until July. Staff members recommended that students used the intervening two months for experimentation in different media. Emms and a friend, the studio-potter Frank Hamer,<sup>196</sup> took the opportunity to use the clay workshop and potters wheel which had not been touched since before the War. They discovered a book in the limited school library, part of the *Studio -How to do it- Series* titled *Making Pottery*, which included subjects as diverse as silversmithing and dressmaking. The author, Walter de Seger

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<sup>194</sup> Interview with **Derek Emms**: Mossfield Cottage, Ilaves Bank, Nr. Stone, Staffordshire, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept., 2000. Since then I have visited his workshop several times.

<sup>195</sup> From 1944-1950 Derek Emms studied at the Accrington School of Art and Crafts. He obtained an M. of E. Intermediate Examination in Art & Crafts – 1947; also an M. of E. National Diploma in Design, List B, (Printed Textiles – Hand), 1948.

<sup>196</sup> **Frank Hamer** also became an influential studio potter. He shares a studio in rural Wales with his wife Janet. They were founder members of the South Wales Potters in 1964. In 1982, Frank Hamer left full-time teaching to dedicate himself to his own work. He specialises in plates and dishes painted with layered slip and pigments under a transparent glaze, being particularly fond of fish motifs. Frank and Janet Hamer's *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques*, London, A&C Black, is currently in its fourth edition (1997), first published (1975).

gave instructions for manufacture alongside stage-by-stage photographs. Using modeling clay they made crude bowls and ashtrays fired in a gas muffle kiln.<sup>197</sup>

Having achieved their National Diplomas in Design, Emms and Hamer were given an evening class of part-time students supervised by the Regional Inspector for Further Education. Simultaneously the Inspector organized an evening course to train part-time teachers at Burnley Municipal School of Art. Required to attend the teaching course Emms and Hamer learned that the Principal at Burnley taught pottery to NDD level. Emms disclosed that after watching the Principal, Mr Thornton, throw '*what seemed to us a huge pot probably about 10 inches tall... I just had to do it*'. Emms and Hamer subsequently transferred to Burnley to complete the NDD in hand ceramics.<sup>198</sup> It was here that Emms was introduced to Bernard Leach's influential *A Potter's Book*.

After leaving Burnley Emms enlisted for National Service.<sup>199</sup> He joined 'Pay Accounts' in the R.A.F. While completing National Service Emms decided to write to Bernard Leach at St. Ives to ask about the possibility of a placement.<sup>200</sup> Just before he was due to leave the RAF Emms applied for a position at a Roman Catholic school in Accrington. Although his application was eventually successful the decision was

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<sup>197</sup> Modelling had been one of the subjects for the Intermediate exam, hence the clay workshop and potters wheel. The subject was not then offered at the Accrington School because of the wartime staff shortage. Emms and Hamer used the local reference library for information on glaze recipes and techniques. They mixed glaze batches according to the raw materials they could find '*on the shelves*' at the school. Unfortunately the small gas-muffle kiln would only reach temperatures of around 1050°C, fired by very small burners equivalent to "*...about 12 bunsen burners, but we managed to achieve something shiny and crazed.*"

<sup>198</sup> 1950-1951: Derek Emms attended the Burnley Municipal School of Art and was awarded the M.of E. National Diploma in Design, List B, (Pottery – Hand), 1951.

1951-1952: Emms attended Leeds College of Art and obtained an M.of E. Examination in the Principles of Teaching – Art Teachers Diploma, 1952.

<sup>199</sup> 1952-1954 : National Service in the RAF (Pay Accounts), Bridgnorth, Salop. During National Service Emms attended Wolverhampton College of Art under the Forces Education Scheme, taking part-time evening classes in the Pottery Dept.

<sup>200</sup> Emms wrote to Leach at St. Ives about 18 months before he was due to finish National Service. Bernard Leach replied that he could not plan so far in advance.

delayed because Emms was not a Catholic. On his to return to 'camp' he found a postcard asking him to phone the pottery at St. Ives. Following an interview Emms accepted the offer of an apprenticeship without hesitation. Figs. 63-72 show Emms working at the St. Ives pottery during his apprenticeship.

Derek Emms worked as one of several apprentices for Bernard Leech at St. Ives from 1954-55. He earned £3 a week, £2.50 of which covered his board and lodgings. After weekly tax and National Insurance contributions of around 1/8 s, he claimed there was just enough for a packet of cigarettes. He worked alongside Bernard's third wife, Janet and his son David. After eighteen months at St. Ives '*when my shoes and trousers were wearing out*', Emms secured a teaching post at Stoke-on-Trent School of Art and later at the North Staffordshire Technical College, working as a studio-potter in his spare time.<sup>201</sup> For seven years from 1956-1962 he returned to St. Ives during the summer vacation for a period of six weeks while visiting the relatives of his first wife.<sup>202</sup> While at St. Ives Emms also worked with Shoji Hamada's son, Atsuya Hamada, who made several visits to Stoke to spend time throwing pots with Emms' students.

Always interested in Chinese ceramics, Emms experimented with various Song-inspired glazes. Among his range were examples of *celadon* – northern and southern greens, *temmoku*, *hare's fur* and *jun* ware. For decoration he used underglaze brush painting on *temmoku* ware, copper pigment splashes on *jun* glazes and inscribed floral

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<sup>201</sup> Emms started work at the Stoke-on-Trent College of Art in 1955. He taught hand pottery at Intermediate and National Diploma levels. During this time he established a flourishing pottery dept. at the Longton branch of the College of Art. From 1965 he lectured at the North Staffordshire Technical College. The College later became Staffordshire Polytechnic. From 1991-2 it became known as Staffordshire University. In 1985 after 30 years' service Derek Emms retired from the institution to devote time to his own work.

designs on the interior of *celadon* dishes, sometimes in conjunction with engraved exterior banding.

Emms' copper-reds are among the purest interpretations, retaining the Chinese simplicity of form and colour. Initially his copper-red and *rouge flambé* glazes were red internally and externally until Emms was asked by a Shrewsbury doctor to imitate his Kangxi originals. After that Emms remained faithful to the white-rimmed, white-glazed interior, copper-red exterior, (see **fig. 73**). The interior of his copper-red bowls and dishes were often engraved with a lotus flower design. His copper-red glaze formula is sold pre-prepared from a national materials supplier, (see **fig. 75**). Emms claimed he was fondly regarded by friends and colleagues as '*The Doyen*' of the Craft Potter Association in London.<sup>203</sup>

**Figs. 63-72**

- **Bernard Leach's Pottery at St.Ives, c. 1955.**

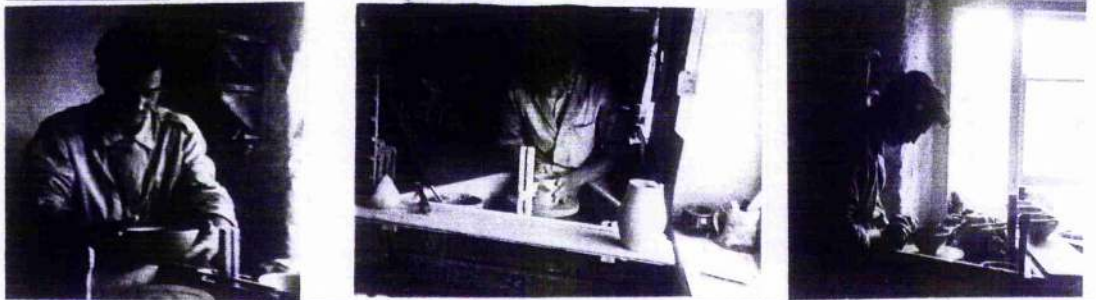
**Fig. 63** Bernard Leach supervising the 'dipping' process.



**Fig. 64** A Studio at St. Ives.



**Fig. 65a, b & c** Derek Emms throwing a conical bowl.



<sup>202</sup> This relieved members of the St. Ives team to take a holiday during a busy period. During this time Emms threw 'standard pots' as well as his own pieces.

<sup>203</sup> Interview with **Derek Emms**: Mossfield Cottage, Hayes Bank, Nr. Stone, Staffordshire, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept., 2000. Emms was a member of several organisations: The Society of Staffordshire Artists; The Red Rose Guild of Craftsmen; The Society of Designer Craftsmen; The Crafts Centre of Great Britain; The Council of the Society of Designer Craftsmen; The Council of the Crafts Centre of Great Britain.

**Fig. 66** Three perfectly thrown vases – the shape similar to the vases Emms produced throughout his career.



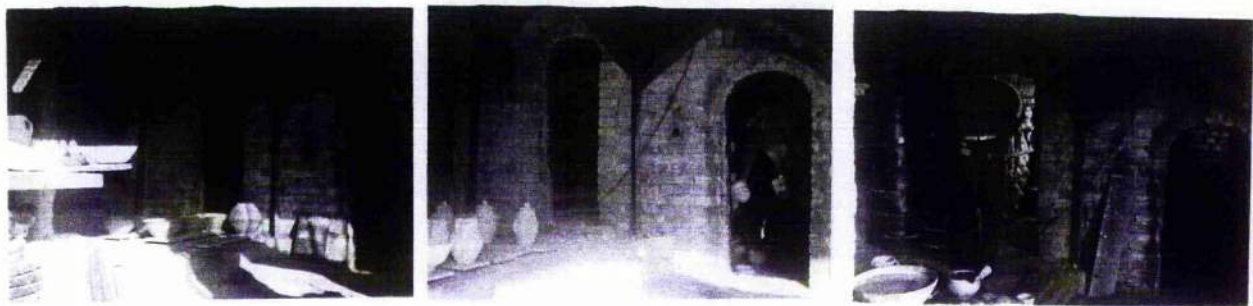
**Fig. 67** Ware stacked to dry before being fired.



**Fig. 68** Ware waiting to be loaded into the kiln.



**Fig. 69a, b & c** Loading the three-chambered climbing kiln at St. Ives.



**Fig. 70** A loaded chamber.



**Fig. 71** Fired ware inside the chamber.



**Fig. 72** Fired ware inside the saggars.



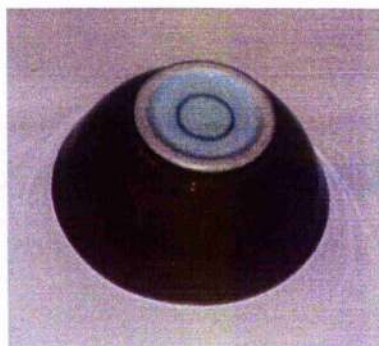
**Figs. 73 a-d**

- **Derek Emms: Copper-Red Dish** with white, engraved interior of lotus design, 2000.

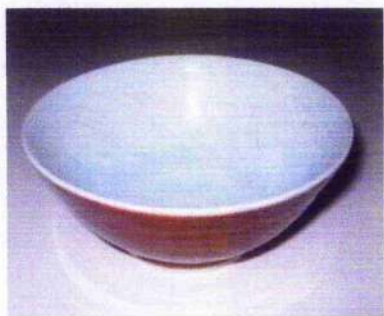
a. Interior



b. Base



c. Three-quarter profile



d. Side view



### **Copper-Reds**

Derek Emms copper-red glazes were fired in an ordinary gas-fired kiln, although he thought a muffle kiln was useful for reduction firing. As stated in Chapter 2 of this study, it is not economical to perform reduction firing in an electric kiln.<sup>204</sup>

Emms produced both low and high-temperature copper-reds, but preferred the high-temperature glaze. For low-fired reds Emms used a low-temperature alkaline glaze containing 1-2 per cent copper which gave an oxidised turquoise. When refired in a muffle kiln in a heavily reducing atmosphere at c.700-800°C, the glaze resulted in a

<sup>204</sup> Derek Emms claimed that mothballs or woodchips could be placed in an electric kiln to create a reduction atmosphere although this caused the electric elements to burn out rapidly. Electric kilns build up oxidising layers after each 'oxidised' firing. A reduction firing has to be followed by several oxidised firings to rebuild the oxidising layers before another reduction firing can take place. This process is not considered economical.

reduced red.<sup>205</sup> He also described his earthenware copper-lustre glaze technique.<sup>206</sup>

An opaque white tin-glaze was applied to the body and fired, subsequently painted with copper oxide mixed with a small amount of clay and gum. The pot was then fired in reduction to about 650-700°C. When removed from the kiln the clay dust was scrubbed away to reveal the red pattern beneath. This was the same method used by William De Morgan for his later 19<sup>th</sup> century lustre ware.

For high-temperature copper-red glazed porcelain Emms started reduction at around 1000°C, reducing steadily all the way up to 1280°C. It took approximately twelve hours to fire the porcelain to 1280°C, although the kiln could not usually be emptied until 24 hours later. According to Emms, the reduction firing was dependent on the *burners* in the kiln.<sup>207</sup> He did not encase the pieces in saggars, but open-fired them. Because copper-red glazes reduce and oxidise easily the ware needed protection from the air (oxygen) that entered the kiln through the burners, hence copper-reds were fired on the top shelf.

Emms used 0.5 per cent copper oxide to produce a good, strong red. His high-fired copper-red glaze also included between 4 and 5 per cent tin oxide and a small amount

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<sup>205</sup> Emms mentioned that copper reduced and re-oxidised easily. Very low-temperature copper-glazes such as the striking sawdust reds and bronzes on Raku ware (generally fired between 850-950°C, Cone 013-08), tend to be unstable because the surface glaze remains porous, and are therefore prone to re-oxidise over the years and turn green.

<sup>206</sup> An earthenware glaze usually contains lead and borax to act as fluxes which, unlike felspathic glazes, cannot stand the high-temperatures of c. 1280-1300°C needed to fire porcelain.

<sup>207</sup> There are two types of 'air' that enter the kiln via the burners. Primary air is mixed with the fuel for combustion. In many gas-kilns the air is forced into a venturi tube – a short piece of tube between wider sections for measuring flow-rate or exerting suction. The air is forced into the tube by gas pressure on the burner. The smaller the aperture on the burner, the smaller the volume of air that can ignite with the gas. Secondary air enters the kiln to assist flow and combustion and is normally placed away from the burners. It plays an important part in determining the kiln environment.

of iron, approximately 1-2 per cent.<sup>208</sup> Emms' unfired copper-red glazes were a pale biscuit colour due to the yellow iron oxide. He preferred to use copper oxide – a black powder – rather than green copper carbonate to colour the glaze. Either copper compound can be used in a copper-red glaze, but copper carbonate is weaker than the black powdered oxide requiring the addition of 1 per cent. Summarising, the main components of Emms' copper-red glaze were iron, copper-oxide and tin added to 'an ordinary' transparent felspathic glaze.

Emms' felspathic glaze was a mixture of ground felspar rock, china clay or *kaolin*, *whiting* or calcium carbonate and flint or quartz. An approximate formula for his transparent felspathic glaze - a standard glaze of its type - is shown in the table below.

Basic Flux (To soften and lower the melting temperature. All basic oxides are monoxides).	Amphoteric Oxides (Binders, capable of acting as acid and base. When added to the glaze they increase the viscosity, helping the glaze to adhere to the clay body).	Acidic Oxides (Glass formers - they have high/raise melting temperatures).
K <sub>2</sub> O	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	6 SiO <sub>2</sub>
Potassium	Alumina	Silica

<sup>208</sup> Emms believed that a good, red colour was achieved partly through the use of iron oxide, because iron is more greedy for oxygen than copper. He used iron oxide for other glazes: 8 per cent for a rich black; 2 per cent for an olive green; 0.5 per cent for a *Yingqing* blue-green.

## Body

After experimentation Emms concluded that the '*clearest colours*' were obtained on a white background. He found the brown cast of stoneware bodies was visible through the glaze, hence he chose white porcelain for a '*good, strong copper-red colour*'. He bought porcelain clay from local suppliers as there was '*no space*' to mix his own. Porcelain clay is rich in silica embedded in the china clay or *kaolin*. Silica expands in the heat and contracts during cooling, thus in order to correspond to the expansion rate of the clay body, the glaze must have a similar silica content.<sup>209</sup> Emms added a small quantity of molochite to the porcelain body to facilitate transparency in the clay.<sup>210</sup>

Emms threw and turned his own shapes. Copper-red, *temmoku* and other glazes rely on a certain amount of fluidity, hence Emms turned the foot to hold the glaze. His copper-red interiors were often decorated with carved or incised designs. He did not fire the ware until it was dry – a one or two day process in damp winter conditions- and there was enough to fill the kiln. The clay bodies were then fired to biscuit at c.1000°C. In the 'soft biscuit' state clay bodies absorb a lot of glaze.

Applying the glaze required experience. If the glaze was too thick the pieces stuck to the kiln shelf; if the glaze was too thin it became patchy and streaky revealing the white body beneath. Emms poured the glaze onto his pots to avoid colouring the

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<sup>209</sup> **Silica** is amorphous (uncrystallized) – it lowers the expansion rate of the glaze to fit porcelain bodies.

<sup>210</sup> **Molochite sand** is a highly refractory white 'grog' – pulverized ceramic material, sand, quartz or calcined clay- added to clay to introduce openness of texture in bodies, to aid plasticity and in some cases to enhance transparency. The addition of grog or 'pitchers' to clay is commonly used to prevent distortion during firing. Emms used molochite sand as grog because it is relatively free from iron impurities, advantageous where whiteness and translucency are important. Sometimes molochite is added to the clay by the supplier.

interior. He applied the copper-red glaze directly onto the biscuit porcelain then coated it with transparent felspathic glaze, although mentioned that other potters preferred to apply a transparent base glaze first, a method that could lead to white streaks. Glaze was wiped free from handle seals, etc. Emms poured the felspathic glaze into the interior before the external red glaze was applied. It was crucial that the internal felspathic glaze was dry before coating the exterior. His underglaze copper-red painted pieces were decorated using the same principles. The copper-red glaze was painted onto the biscuit ware under the transparent felspathic glaze which had a bluish tinge due to the presence of small quantities of iron and zinc.<sup>211</sup> Emms experimented with *rouge flambé* glazes applied over transparent glazed porcelain and stoneware.<sup>212</sup> The ware was fired to glost, the *flambé* glaze fired subsequently. This glaze contained more lead and was prone to run, especially if the *rouge flambé* glaze had received a transparent upper coating.

### Jun Glaze

This glaze was developed by Emms after a student of his mixed a *jun-type* glaze using damp felspar particles. He recreated the glaze using iron, felspar, quartz, whiting, 7.5 per cent lead bisilicate and 2.5 per cent borax frit. Emms used stoneware bodies for the *jun* glaze, as there was no need to use a translucent body for such a dense opaque glaze. A potters' catalogue which advertised Derek Emms' glazes listed his *Chun-Blue Stoneware Glaze* (P2306):

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<sup>211</sup> Emms' felspathic glaze had a bluish tinge due to the presence of small quantities of iron and zinc. The blue tinge was the effect of the reducing atmosphere on these molecules. To quote Emms: "*The presence of zinc favours the Fe position ions producing bluer tones...*" This transparent felspathic glaze with 0.5 per cent iron oxide produced Emms' *celadon blue*.

*"Under oxidising conditions this glaze produces a warm mustard yellow glossy glaze... [it] really excels under reduction conditions producing a splendid chun-blue effect where thickly potted applied over the otherwise speckled mottled green background... At 1270-1280°C the rich chun blue will develop, but if overfired to 1300°C or over it will change to a glassy, runny smooth shiny surface. The blue colour is deeper when used on an iron bearing clay or over an iron slip."*<sup>213</sup> (See fig. 74).

The same catalogue listed an *'Ilmenite Speckled Chun-Blue Glaze (P2307)'*. In a reduction atmospheres this glaze *'produces a speckled chun-blue glaze somewhat darker in colour than P2306'*.<sup>214</sup> The Emms *'P2309 Copper Red 1260-1280°C'* also featured in the catalogue. We are told the copper-red glaze turned a semi-opaque pale, turquoise-blue under oxidising conditions. In reduction it produced a *'deep red colour which can be used on its own or in conjunction with P2306 chun blue glaze by pouring or painting the copper-red on to the chun glaze'*.<sup>215</sup> Of these glazes Derek Emms explained: *'I would normally reduce from 1000°C up to 1280°C with a short period of oxidation at the end of the firing'*.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Derek Emms high-temperature copper-red glaze was applied onto a biscuit body **under** the transparent felspathic glaze, whereas his *flambé* glaze was applied **over** a transparent felspathic glaze which was sometimes sandwiched between a *'top coat'* of clear glaze.

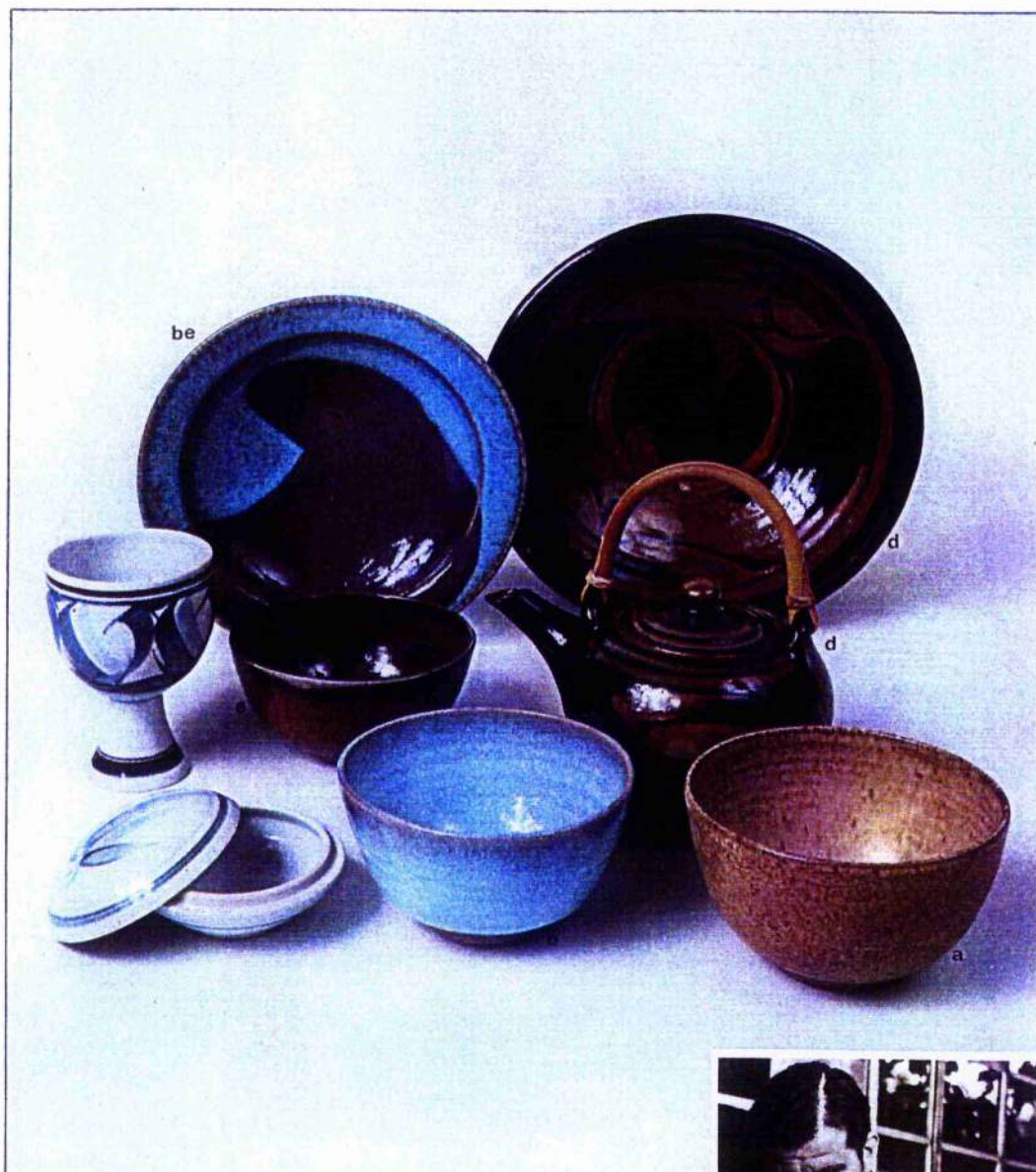
<sup>213</sup> *Potteryworks Ltd.*, 'Derek Emms Glazes', Materials and Equipment Catalogue, Podmore & Sons, Etruria, 1977, p. 21.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

**Fig. 74**

- *Potterycrafts Ltd., 'Derek Emms Glazes', Materials and Equipment Catalogue, Podmore & Sons, Etruria, 1977, p. 21.*



## Derek Emms Glazes

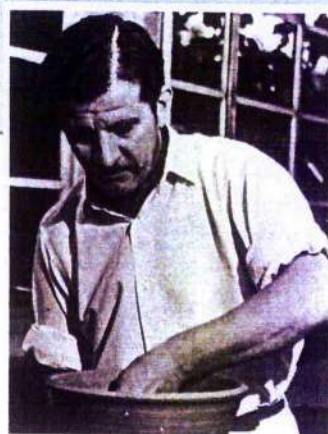
Stoneware Glazes 1250-1280  
a— P2305 Matt White  
Stoneware Glaze 1250-1280°C

b— P2306 Chun-Blue  
Stoneware Glaze

c— P2307 Ilmenite Speckled  
Chun-Blue Glaze

d— P2308 Blue Black Tenmoku

e— P2309 Copper Red 1260-  
1280°C.



<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p.21.

**Fig. 75**

- *Potterycrafts Ltd.*, 'Glazes in Powder Form - Derek Emms Stoneware & Porcelain Glazes', Materials and Equipment Catalogue, Podmore & Sons, Etruria, 2000, p. 17.

#### DEREK EMMS STONEWARE & PORCELAIN GLAZES

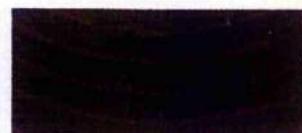
These glazes can be used in oxidised firing but better colour and surface quality can be obtained in reduction firing. Reduce from 1000°C to 1280°C with a short period of oxidation at the end of firing.



**Matt White Stoneware P2510**  
1250-1280°C cone 7-9  
Fires matt white under oxidising conditions; and a creamy green in a reducing atmosphere.



**Ilmenite Speckled Chun-Blue P2514**  
1280°C cone 9  
Best suited to reduction firing producing a speckled chun-blue glaze.



**Blue Black Tenmoku P2515**  
1280-1300°C cone 9-10  
Primarily intended for reduction firing. When thinly applied it will break to give a rust colour, and where thick it will produce a smooth black surface.



**Copper Red P2516**  
1260-1280°C cone 8-9  
Deep red colours are obtained under reducing conditions whereas a pale turquoise colour will result if fired under oxidation.



**Porcelain P2517**  
1270-1280°C cone 8-9  
Specially developed for porcelain body. Ideally suited to underglaze or inglaze 'cobalt blue' decoration.

#### Marks

Derek Emms' mark was a boxed incised combination of his initials - 'DE' - in use from the 1980's. He used an incised oval containing his initials during the 1970's. A seal was carved from leather hard clay and biscuit fired to be used on damp impressionable clay. The seal was stamped on a raised mound, usually on the base, and kept free of glaze to avoid obscuring the mark. It is interesting that Derek Emms did not sign his work initially because he thought his pots should be recognised by their style and technical competence. This approach continued until he was asked for a teapot from an American lady leaving London within a three-week period. The pot was completed but was not purchased because it was not signed. Thereafter, Emms always signed his work.

Fig. 76

• **Derek Emms Monograms**

Seal from c. 1970



Seal from c. 1980's



**Chinese Inspiration**

While a student Emms took an interest in Chinese ceramics exhibited in various national and provincial museum collections: *'My work has an Oriental influence, I just loved them when I was a student'*.<sup>215</sup> Emms persistently adhered to a traditional Chinese repertoire of form in much the same way as the master potter William Howson-Taylor. He did not see the need for 'novelty' or invention in the pursuit of originality, rather his core values were function and simplicity, as well as the need for the pots to be 'attractive'. Emms' shapes included a range of *prunus* or *meiping* vases, ovoid vases, conical bowls, shallow dishes, water-pots and cups with 'Western' handles. His wares often had straight, raised feet, another Chinese feature. Emms appeared not to have been influenced by Leach's obviously hand crafted aesthetic and said of his work:

*"Sometimes you get the impression that if it is hand-made it is a bit rough, but I have a high degree of finish... which is possibly influenced by working in Stoke-on-Trent for many years."*<sup>216</sup>

<sup>215</sup> **McMillan, Paul:** 'Fifty years on, and Derek still hasn't lost his sheen', *The Evening Sentinel*, Staffordshire, Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup> 2001, p. 74.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

Some of Emms glazed pieces included Chinese-inspired brushwork. This was true of his underglaze copper-red and cobalt blue designs, and his splashed and brushed *jun* wares. For painted decoration he used pure sable brushes which gave good definition. As far as his attachment to Chinese glazes, Derek Emms first became interested at college while he experimented with oxidised glazes fired in an electric kiln. He grew curious about reduction glazes and was introduced to them and 'reduction kilns' at St. Ives.<sup>219</sup> He preferred the quality and variety of reduction glaze effects, a preference which transformed into a lifelong passion.

Emms exhibited and sold his ware from the Craft Potters Association shop in London.<sup>220</sup> 'Through this organisation and the Crafts Council he exhibited nationwide.'<sup>221</sup> He maintained '*Pottery is a virus; once infected it remains with you for life*'.<sup>222</sup>

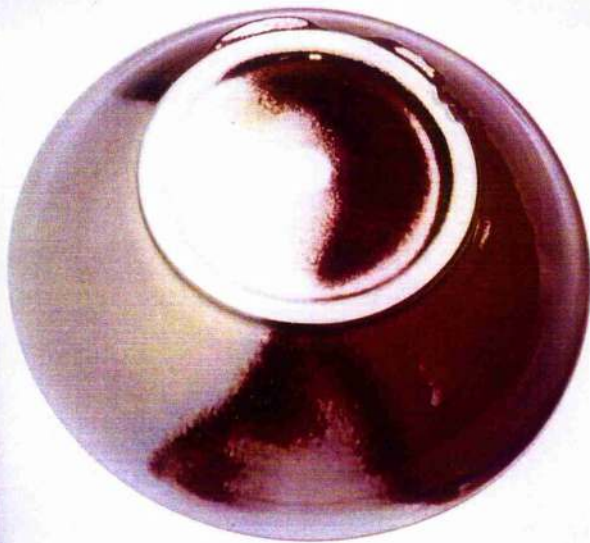
<sup>219</sup> At St. Ives Emms was introduced to a three-chambered climbing kiln fired with oil and some wood fuel. The wood was used to leave a deposit on the exterior of unglazed pots. The first and second chambers were used to fire glazes, the third chamber for biscuit firing.

<sup>220</sup> Craft Potters Association, 1 Marshall St., London.

<sup>221</sup> He was included in many national exhibitions from 1957 onwards: 1957 – *Designer Craftsmen Exh.* at the V&A; 1958 – *Studio Ceramic Gallery Manchester* – one man show; 1960 – *Under Thirties Exh.*, Crafts Centre London; 1963 – *International Conference on Crafts* at Attingham Park, Nr. Shrewsbury, org. by the Society of Designer Craftsmen; 1963 – Keele University, Joint Exh. with three other potters; 1964 – Northern Crafts Centre, Manchester; 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Dec., 1994 Staffordshire University Flaxman Gallery; Sept. – Oct. 2000, St. Ives, etc. He exhibited annually with the Society of Staffordshire Artists, the Red Rose Guild of Craftsmen at the Northern Crafts Centre, Manchester and the Crafts Centre London. His patrons included H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother; The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery; Accrington Museum & Art Gallery and a host of private national and international collectors.

**Figs. 77**

- **Derek Emms' Copper-Red and other wares at his home studio in Stone, Staffordshire, 2000.** Note the example of the mis-fired high-temperature copper-red porcelain bowl.



<sup>222</sup> Interview with **Derek Emms**: Staffordshire, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2000.

## Conclusion

Pottery manufacturers grasped the advantages of adopting the scientific and technological developments of their time. The late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century preoccupation with colour was one facet of this advance. Fine art painting followed a similar trajectory as the Impressionists observed the transient effects of light on colour, and their successors delved into pointillism and 'pure' colour abstract designs.<sup>223</sup>

The reasons surrounding the adoption and popularity of the *flambé* glaze in British ceramics will be discussed in Chapter 5 on Taste. An important aspect of dissemination centred on the development of manufacturing networks. Many of the chemists, designers and managers of various firms were connected through trade unions, societies, social events and often participated in the same exhibitions and trade fairs. The availability of chemical knowledge in the form of published papers and journals contributed to the climate of scientific experimentation, as did the establishment of enthusiastic teams of dedicated chemists and designers who wanted to create something new and vibrant. Many of those involved believed in Arts and Crafts philosophy, particularly the value of skilled input over and above industrial manufacture. The creation of *flambé* glazed ware, even the commercial versions, attempted to satisfy this conviction.

In order for British *flambé* to be successful there needed to be a receptive market. This had been created in part through the Chinese ceramics that had entered Britain,

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<sup>223</sup> **Pointillism** was the use of small dots of different colours to give the optical illusion of one colour or tone observed at a distance.

Europe and America in increased quantities since the sacking of the Summer Palace in Peking, 1860. The British Empire was hugely influential as a source of 'exotic' design ideas and was also essential in terms of export markets. In the case of China, although Britain only laid claim to an 'informal' empire, missionaries and travellers brought back artefacts from the interior. More importantly, China provided the West directly and indirectly with a wealth of technical and chemical knowledge.

The case studies in this chapter represent a spectrum of British *flambé*, some closer to the traditional Chinese aesthetic than others. The same stylistic mix of Chinese-Art Nouveau characterised Moorcroft, Royal Doulton and Bernard Moore *flambé*. Simple forms were culled from Chinese, Persian and Greek shapes as well as those based on natural, organic forms. Moorcroft, Moore and Royal Doulton shared this eclecticism, while Ruskin Pottery tended to concentrate on Chinese-inspired form with hints of Art Deco. Other Ruskin shapes emerged from the act of throwing, allowing the clay to assume its own form, while Bullers *flambé* forms were suggested in part by the limitations of insulator porcelain.

Moorcroft and Doulton *flambé* artists often signed their work. Moore and Howson-Taylor occasionally signed their pieces, but more often used a printed or impressed mark. The main retail outlets for these *flambé* wares included Liberty's of London and Tiffany's of New York as well as other department stores in Europe. King George V and Queen Mary embarked on their trip north in 1913 to encourage the manufacturing industries and took a keen interest in the production of British *flambé*. They had acquired pieces from Bernard Moore, Royal Doulton, the Royal Lancastrian factory, Moorcroft and Ruskin Pottery; two out of the five were in receipt of a Royal Warrant,

Moorcroft followed later. In keeping with the times, leading figures of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century took a great interest in new artistic developments and paid visits to various ceramic factories, often encouraged to 'try their hand' at decoration. Patronage was very important for the development and continuity of British *flambé*. Respect for the monarchy and their taste may have stimulated public interest in the products, but this was no doubt in conjunction with the increase in middle-class disposable income. The success of pre-war British *flambé* reflected the buoyant economy and luxurious taste of the Late Victorian - Edwardian era.

The Great Depression of the late 1930's took its toll on decorative art markets, particularly ceramics. In addition, the purchase tax on decorative ceramics increased to 125 per cent, restricting choice to functional items.<sup>224</sup> Moreover, the relatively high costs of producing *flambé*, a lengthy and precarious process even with modern kiln technology, made the ware expensive. Many of the larger, more extravagant examples were beyond the means of the average working person. In many instances *flambé* ware was the preserve of affluent upper-middle class patrons. The price of an 'ordinary' early 20<sup>th</sup> century *flambé* vase would probably have cost approximately a week's wage for someone on average earnings. A larger, more elaborate piece would have cost as much as one month's wage.

The sale of artwares during the inter-war period gradually decreased, making way for a less extravagant aesthetic and corresponding change in public taste. The new economic, profit-driven emphasis curtailed designers' freedom and led to more

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<sup>224</sup> It was not until 1951 that purchase tax was reduced to 50 per cent, enabling decorative ceramics to be made in greater quantities.

‘commercial’ products. Manufacturers were less willing and able to subsidise non-profitable artistic enterprises.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century Arts and Crafts emphasis on the virtue of ‘craftsmanship’ may have lain dormant while some factories concentrated on mass-manufacture, but it was by no means redundant. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century manufacturers of *flambé*; W.S. Murray, Norman Wilson, Bullers Ltd., and Derek Emms represented individual rather than commercial approaches, although it could be argued that Bernard Moore, William Moorcroft and William Howson-Taylor straddled both camps. These individuals demonstrated advanced understanding of firing technology and chemical reactions, and illustrated the seriousness with which potters strove to recreate Far Eastern ‘style’ ceramics.

This rigorous, academic approach underpinned the studio and art pottery movements of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, a characteristic not especially prevalent among larger commercial manufacturers. Being able to recreate high-temperature Chinese *jun*, copper-red and transmutation glazes became a test of skill and dedication. Pastiche was for amateurs and the undiscerning. Highbrow interpretations were intended for cultured niche markets.

The case studies chosen for this chapter provide an overview of 20<sup>th</sup> century British *flambé* in its creative diversity; both material and stylistic. In fact, the materials and techniques used in production gave each product its distinctive characteristics. The *Zeitgeist* is present in many different guises, influencing not only successive interpretations of British *flambé*, but also the wider artistic, social and economic

culture. This chapter illustrates that product replicas such as *flambé* ware can never be exactly reproduced outside the context of their time bearing the same aesthetic values and meanings. Instead they reflect the broader contemporary culture of which they form a part, a subject to be discussed in the following chapters on Stylistic Reinterpretation and Taste.

## CHAPTER FOUR: STYLISTIC REINTERPRETATION

Many artist-craftsmen of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century believed it was not possible to develop a 'new' period style, seeking instead to *revive* the styles of ancient and medieval cultures both vernacular and oriental. The Near and Far East provided inspiration. Stylistic interpretation is not a new artistic phenomenon. On being told his work was subject to plagiarism, William De Morgan replied, "*imitation is the sincerest form of pottery*".<sup>1</sup>

'Imitation' is a term which can be construed as a derogatory remark implying a lack of originality. Although it can be accurate to describe an article as 'imitative', the term 'interpretation' has been chosen instead as a basis for stylistic comparison.<sup>2</sup> And, as seen in the previous chapter, stylistic interpretations are no less creative, beautiful or original in conception than their ceramic predecessors.

Chinese potters have imitated and reinterpreted ceramic shapes, decorations and glazes for centuries. It is well known that reign marks on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese porcelain were copied from earlier periods, especially the Chenghua (1465-1487) mark during the reign of Yongzheng (1723-1735). This was to demonstrate respect and appreciation for previous master-potters rather than an intention to deceive; imitation as a form of flattery. As William Burton wrote:

*"As to the marks on porcelain, they are generally so unreliable in themselves – or every collector might revel in the possession of pieces from the most famous periods*

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<sup>1</sup> Stirling, A.M.W: *William De Morgan and His Wife*, London, 1922, p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> During the course of my research I wrote to a particular factory for information on their 'imitation' copper-red ware. The respondent interpreted 'imitation' as a derogatory remark implying the ware lacked originality.

*... the first thing the forger imitates, and generally the easiest thing for him to imitate, is the mark."*<sup>3</sup>

Rose Kerr referred to the desire of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Emperors Yongzheng and Qianlong to 'reproduce' Song *jun* ware. These reproductions often carried contemporary reign marks and were considered to be technical 'improvements' on original pieces. Kerr also referred to important differences in Chinese and English terminology. The Chinese definition of 'imitation *jun* ware' was often cited as '*flambé*' by Westerners.<sup>4</sup>

The Chinese copper-red glaze was subject to various interpretations from the reign of the Ming Emperor Hongwu (1368-1398) onwards, as outlined in the first chapter.

Burton drew attention to the reinterpretation of copper-red wares within 19<sup>th</sup> century China:

*"When M. Scherzer visited Ching-tê-Chên in 1883, he found that one family of potters still possessed the secret of the old glazes, and modern wares of this kind are now finding their way into Europe in quantity, as well as pieces made in Kuang-tung province, on a dense stoneware body; but none of these possess the finish or refinement of the old wares, though they are often sold as old pieces at prices far beyond their value."*<sup>5</sup>

Western interpretations of the high-fired copper-reds began to appear around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Attempts became more refined as the century came to a close and by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the techniques had been mastered by a few determined potter-chemists. Once again during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the fascination with Chinese glazes seems to have erupted, resulting in 'reinterpretations' of the early 20<sup>th</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Burton, William: *Porcelain – Its Nature, Art and Manufacture*, London, B.T. Batsford, 1906, p.137.

<sup>4</sup> Kerr, Rosemary: 'Jun Wares and their Qing Dynasty Imitation at Jingdezhen', p. 157. Ed. Scott, Rosemary E: *The Porcelains of Jingdezhen, Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia*, No. 16, June 15-17 1992. Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, SOAS, University of London, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> Burton, William: *Porcelain*, 1906, p.137.

century 'interpretations' of Chinese ceramic technology and style. Ceramist Nigel Wood is of the opinion that:

*"There is... no absolute value in authenticity for its own sake – it is the way in which these reconstructed glazes and bodies are used that is important. The spirit of Chinese ceramics is often as well served by reinterpretation as by reconstruction."*<sup>6</sup>

This chapter will study examples from four commercial manufacturers to examine the concept of reinterpretation: Royal Doulton, Dartington Pottery, Cobridge Stoneware and Poole Pottery. It will briefly look at examples of 'studio' copper-reds and reduced copper transmutation glazes which are strongly contemporary in style, using traditional techniques and materials as a vehicle to express new ideas. In these instances the emphasis is placed on creative innovation.

### **Royal Doulton Ltd.**

In 1996, *flambé* production at Doulton's Burslem factory ceased. Its declining popularity was partly levelled at the quality of the glaze itself, a uniform, flat red lacking the vivacity of earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century pieces. But in 1998 a decision was taken to reintroduce Royal Doulton *Flambé* as part of *Burslem Artwares*, Royal Doulton's Millennium Collection, hence their reappearance in the Spring of 1999. Melvyn Crane and his team had returned to the '*Flambé Room*' to recreate the '*unpredictable*' transmutation glazes. Production techniques remain shrouded in secrecy yet *Gallery* – the Doulton Collectors' Club Magazine, reported the new glazes are painted onto biscuit fired and plain white glazed bodies. The new shapes appear to conform to a Chinese aesthetic but must also be suitable for commercial production and firing at

1260-1270°C. The shapes are cast in bone china, even the large pieces. As Charles Noke discovered decades earlier, modern *Chang Ware* still requires shapes that will withstand several thick glaze coatings as had also been the case with Chinese Song dynasty *jun* ware. It was reported that some of the contemporary *Sung* glazed items need to be fired six times, 'including two *Flambé* fires.'<sup>7</sup> Although health and safety regulations no longer permit the use of lead in ceramic glazes, every effort is taken to recreate the brilliant reds of early 20<sup>th</sup> century experimental *flambé*. Modern trials are apparently constantly checked against early Doulton ware in the factory museum.

Inspiration for the new *Flambé* came from the 'archive pots and contemporary catalogues' owned by the Sir Henry Doulton Gallery as well as ideas gained from visits to the Percival David Collection of Chinese Ceramics in London. The new *Artwares* are divided into similar categories to their early 20<sup>th</sup> century predecessors: '*Chang Ware; Decorative Sung Ware; Oriental Sung Glaze Ware; Sung Ware and Jade Ware.*'<sup>8</sup> The only difference is that *Sung Ware* has received further classification. Julie McKeown, curator of the Sir Henry Doulton Gallery suggested that:

"Charles Noke and all the 'original team' would be more than pleased to endorse this contemporary interpretation of their work... [which] look[s] forward to the future whilst paying a fine tribute to its past."<sup>9</sup>

*The Doulton and Company Direct Spring 2002 Catalogue* illustrated examples from the *Burslem Artwares* range.<sup>10</sup> The introductory text stated that the *flambé* technique

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<sup>6</sup> Wood, Nigel: 'Eastern Promise', *Ceramic Review*, No. 139, 1993, p.35.

<sup>7</sup> McKeown, Julie: *Gallery – Doulton Collectors' Club Magazine*, Vol.19, No.1, Spring 1999, p.5.

<sup>8</sup> See the Glossary for a definition of terms and glaze types.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> *The Doulton and Company Direct Spring 2002 Catalogue*, the *Burslem Artwares* range, pp.4-5.

can be traced back to the Chinese Sung dynasty (960-1279), which is slightly misleading. If referring to Sung dynasty *jun* ware transmutation glazes then it is possible to justify. But the *flambé* produced by Royal Doulton has few if any similarities with the Chinese *jun* glazes in terms of technique, composition or appearance.

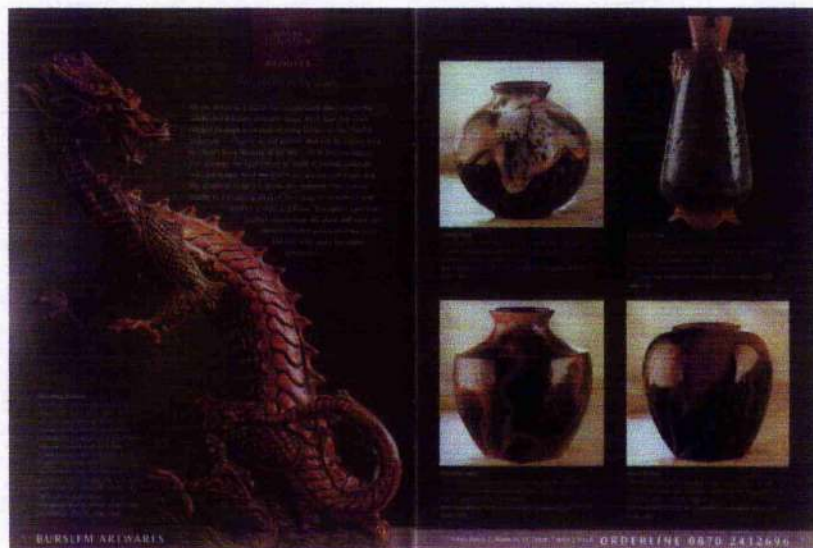
**Fig. 78a**

- (a) *The Doulton and Company Direct Spring 2002 Catalogue*, cover page.



**Fig 78b**

- (b) *The Doulton and Company Direct Spring 2002 Catalogue*, the *Burslem Artwares* range, pp. 4-5.



The Chinese traditionally did not use the copper-red glaze to cover models of dragons, at least not during the Ming and early Qing dynasties. The *Chang Yantai* vase has little in common aesthetically or chemically with Chinese copper-red or *flambé* glazes. The shape, classical masks and scrolling of the *Jianyang* vase has more in common with Late Victoriana; the shapes of the Sung *Shantou* and *Nanhai* vases are reminiscent of Chinese-inspired Art Deco – the abstract black and red marbling far removed from Chinese monochrome copper-red, *sang-de-boeuf* or *flambé* glazes.

Overall, Doulton's new *Artware Flambé* is an attractive contemporary interpretation of Noke's early 20<sup>th</sup> century experimental glazes. It is inspired by but does not seek to reproduce Chinese examples, offering a lively and creative interpretation. Doulton have given their pieces Chinese names to emphasise the source of inspiration. Consumers of the new *flambé* may not be so interested in the novelty or authenticity

of the glaze as their forebears, partly because variations have been produced in Britain for over a century. However, the new Doulton *flambé* appears to satisfy a fresh taste for the 'exotic.'

To conclude, the advertisement below taken from the Telegraph Magazine aptly depicts an instance of contemporary stylistic misrepresentation.<sup>11</sup> It illustrates a 'Noble [*Flambé*] Steed of the Tang Dynasty' designed to appeal to misplaced popular notions of authenticity. This model is inaccurate because Tang (618-907) horses were often left unglazed or were straw-glazed. Polychrome Tang pieces were glazed with three colours – green, brown and ochre – known as *Sancai* wares. The Chinese copper-red glaze was developed later during the Ming dynasty and, as stated before, this glaze would not have been applied to such a form in China centuries after the Tang dynasty. Typically, Chinese Tang horses were often crisply modelled and highly detailed with some degree of stylisation. This is especially evident in the heads of Tang horses. Crisp detail of the horse's mane is lacking in the Doulton version. Also, Doulton's 'Tang Steed' is less expressive of movement than many of its Chinese Tang counterparts, apparent in the static legs. Spurious Chinese associations appear to work as an effective marketing tool.

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<sup>11</sup> *Telegraph Magazine*: 'Noble [*Flambé*] Steed of the Tang Dynasty', 8th September, 2001.

**Fig. 79**

- ‘Noble [*Flambé*] Steed of the Tang Dynasty’, Royal Doulton. *Telegraph Magazine*, 8th September 2001.

**THE NOBLE STEED OF THE TANG DYNASTY**

Through subtle nature in authentic looks this beautifully recreated representation captures the true essence of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty.

**The History of the Tang Horse.**

Centuries of wealth and power, centuries of horses along with many other riches would be lost if the essence of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) is not a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. It is the history of the Tang Dynasty and the exquisite beauty of these glowing creatures that attract the attention of serious collectors of Chinese art and the world over. This piece has been issued especially to commemorate 20th the Chinese year of the horse.

**A rare opportunity for collectors of Chinese art.**

The authentic look of this magnificent piece is achieved by employing ancient glazing techniques. Techniques that were unknown until many years for the Tang Dynasty in England. Due to the complexity of the glazing process, referred to as *flambé*, only those pieces are ever the same and few will ever be achieved. Making these rare and very much to be desired.

**Low edition of 250 pieces worldwide – yours for just £1,000 a month.**

Don't let this opportunity pass you by. This is the only chance to own a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty.

**Call to now to place your order**  
**0870 241 2996**

Don't let this opportunity pass you by. This is the only chance to own a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty.

**THE TANG HORSE – RESERVATION FORM – SEND NO MONEY NOW**

Please enter the information for the noble steed of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty. The noble steed of the Tang Dynasty is a masterpiece of the Tang Dynasty.

**ROYAL DOULTON ARCHIVES**

**DOULTON COMPANY**

## Cobridge Stoneware

The second study of this chapter focuses on the contemporary *flambé* of Cobridge Stoneware. In 1993 Hugh Edwards, a London lawyer, together with Richard Dennis and their wives bought shares in Moorcroft Pottery and saved the factory. Edwards had long been a collector of Moorcroft and had been writing a book on the subject in collaboration with Richard Dennis when proceedings began. Edwards became Chairman of Moorcroft and immediately cast around for a designer sympathetic to Moorcroft's traditional organic naturalism. Rachel Bishop was appointed in 1993 and was joined in 1997 – the year of the Moorcroft Centenary – by eight other designers

establishing the Moorcroft Design Studio. Annual turnover increased from around £245,000 in 1993 to £8 million in 2003.

Because the 'original' Moorcroft was so successful, Edwards developed a 'sister' art pottery in 1998 - Cobridge Stoneware, which sadly closed in August 2005. Moreover in January 2003, Moorcroft launched a second 'Art Pottery' - Black Ryden - conceived to manufacture innovative earthenwares. For this study it is appropriate to consider the products of Cobridge Stoneware relevant to the theme of re-interpretation, concentrating on those influenced by the work of William Howson-Taylor.

Cobridge Stoneware Plc. was a subsidiary of Moorcroft but its products were different in every respect, most obviously because Moorcroft uses a fine earthenware body. The stoneware was marketed and sold separately under the 'Cobridge' label. In 1996 Hugh Edwards conceived the idea of resuming the work of William Howson-Taylor. By 1997 he was joined by Justin Emery, Moorcroft's former works manager and Robert Watson, an artist potter and thrower. His objective was:

*"to create stoneware decorated in a way that required the chemistry of clay, metallic oxide colours and special glazes to work in a manner alien to their natural tendencies, to create high-fired ceramics decorated with recognisable designs"<sup>12</sup>. The result is something totally new, and only made possible by a hand-built and computer-controlled experimental gas kiln."<sup>13</sup>*

The factory derived its name from the first design to emerge from the kiln in the spring of 1998. Drawn by Philip Gibson it depicted 'old Cobridge' bottle ovens,

<sup>12</sup> It is difficult to ensure a 'design' remains intact at the high-temperatures involved in firing stoneware as the painted metallic oxides can be destroyed by the heat.

<sup>13</sup> *Moorcroft Collectors' Club Newsletter*: 'Cobridge Stoneware', August 1998, No. 19, p. 23.

hence the decision to call it 'Cobridge' from which the pottery took its name. The choice of name avoided any reference to 'Ruskin', avoiding the threat of a curse on anyone who called their products by the same name.<sup>14</sup> Hugh Edwards' research would have revealed the letter written by Howson-Taylor to Mr. W. V. Turner in 1935 which expressed his fear of commercial degradation:

*"... I have finished my work and... nobody shall ever make Ruskin Pottery which perhaps to you as a business man seems wrong. Perhaps when you see it in my light it is different. Why let another firm make rubbish and call it Ruskin?"*<sup>15</sup>

The Cobridge factory's Phoenix Works were officially opened on the 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1998. It took the team fifteen months and around 3,000 trials to achieve abstract patinated high-fired glazes in the style of Howson-Taylor before conquering new techniques. Cobridge Stoneware manufactured three distinct types of product; reduction glazed stoneware, oxidised patterned stoneware and modelled stoneware, the latter heavily influenced by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century designs of the Martin Brothers. This section will concentrate on the work most closely allied to the style and technique of Ruskin Pottery. Before moving on to discuss these glazes, it is necessary to appreciate that from the outset Cobridge Stoneware aimed to reinterpret rather than reproduce Ruskin Pottery. The Cobridge designers and chemists were aware that *'vibrant colour creating design on its own never became a feature of William Howson-Taylor. The skills, knowledge and firing techniques were simply not available.'*<sup>16</sup> While it was acknowledged that Howson-Taylor made *'attempts to*

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.22: William Howson-Taylor reputedly *"threatened a curse on anyone who called his pottery 'Ruskin'."*

<sup>15</sup> Smale, Courtney V: 'Ruskin Pottery – The Closure'. *Sotheby's: The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part II*, Olympia London, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2002, p.120. Letter sent to Mr. W.V. Turner dated 25<sup>th</sup> Jan., 1935.

<sup>16</sup> *Cobridge Stoneware Catalogue: 'Giftware and Table Lamps'*, 2001, p.1 – Introduction.

*decorate his stoneware [and] only a few simplistic pieces have survived',<sup>17</sup> it was also claimed 'in the area of decorating stoneware... Cobridge... moved on to succeed where William Howson-Taylor, by his own high standards, appears to have failed'.<sup>18</sup>*

William Howson-Taylor did not have access to the advanced technology available to Cobridge, crucially the computer-controlled kiln able to monitor the exact moment when the reduction and cooling processes should begin. However, the decorated ware Howson-Taylor produced –subtle stencilled floral designs, etc. – was in keeping with his philosophy of decoration *following the form*; decoration intended to enhance rather than detract from the glazed shape. It is questionable whether Cobridge adhered to this philosophy. It is possible that Howson-Taylor did not want to develop 'decorated' ceramics, preferring to remain true to the plain Chinese high-fired prototypes reliant on the glaze itself for qualities of abstract design. Moorcroft and other potteries were acquiring reputations on the strength of surface pattern – there was no pressing need for Ruskin Pottery to compete.

The Cobridge factory used slip casting alongside hand throwing techniques akin to Dartington Pottery. The pieces were turned on a potter's lathe to perfect the shapes, and were hand glazed.<sup>19</sup> The ware was of course reduction fired, (see **fig. 80**).

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<sup>17</sup> *Moorcroft Collectors Club Newsletter*: 'Cobridge Stoneware', August 1998, No. 19, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23

<sup>19</sup> **Evans, Marie**: 'A Word from your new Collectors' Club Secretary', *Cobridge Stoneware Bulletin*, Cobridge Collectors' Club, Feb. 2003, front cover.

**Fig. 80**

- Cobridge Stoneware High-Temperature *Sang-de-Boeuf* glazes (2001) and Transmutation glazes (2003). *Cobridge Stoneware Catalogue*: 'Giftware and Table Lamps', 2001, p. 27 & 2003, p. 31.



## **Shape**

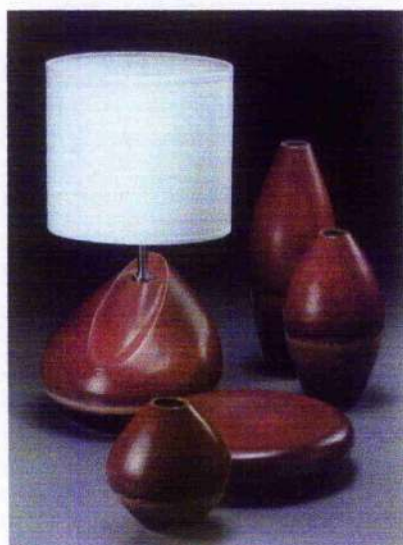
Cobridge decided there was '*little point in re-inventing the wheel*'. Their shapes were described as 'adaptations' of Ruskin Pottery forms.<sup>20</sup> Howson-Taylor's repertoire had been designed for high-fired stoneware glazes, thus form contours and feet would have been able to accommodate Cobridge glazes, especially those prone to run. Cobridge designer Lee Critchlow designed a new range of shapes for the high-fired reduction glazes. They had a sleek organic quality reminiscent of 1960's design and represented a departure from the Ruskin aesthetic in terms of shape if not glaze. These new reduced copper transmutation glazed designs were named *Crimson Desert*, inspired by the Middle Eastern landscape, (see **fig. 81**). The advertising copy reads:

<sup>20</sup> *Moorcroft Collectors Club Newsletter*: 'Cobridge Stoneware', August 1998, No. 19, p. 23.

*"Shades of reds, dark shadows, sun bleached sands, and sunsets in natural, unpolluted skies have been used in this unusual creation. The unique offset elliptical shapes of the table lamps create different looks simply by turning the lamp, just as the sun's journey around the earth creates colour variances, and ever moving shadows over magical sands."*<sup>21</sup>

**Fig. 81**

- **Crimson Desert** designed by Lee Critchlow. *Cobridge Stoneware Collectors' Club Bulletin*, December 2003.



## **Glazes**

*"... look at the depth of colour in these pots with the density due to glaze runs and the blue mottling... Proof positive that Cobridge Stoneware glaze effects pottery pieces are far, far more than merely, red, blue or green pots."*<sup>22</sup>

Cobridge glazes are very like Ruskin Pottery high-fired stoneware glazes in texture and density of colour. Examples of Cobridge *sang-de-boeuf* are perhaps slightly 'runny', resulting in a glaze with a high gloss that is more glassy than most of Howson-Taylor's pieces. The Cobridge glazes appear to vary in texture, particularly the later productions.

<sup>21</sup> *Cobridge Stoneware Bulletin*, Cobridge Collectors' Club; Dec. 2003, p.3.

In late November 2003 a new set of Cobridge transmutation glazes were exhibited. Works chemist Justin Emery introduced a range of twelve new shapes each with a different effect produced by glazes that '*pull and fuse over each curve in the white-hot heat of the kiln.*'<sup>23</sup> All the glazes used copper as the colourant but were coated with different base glazes of varying thickness, and fired at different levels of reduction for specific times. They share a '*frosted white*' or '*coffee-cream*' background. The range included the glaze effects *Aubrietia*, *Forget-me-Not*, *Speckled Rose*, *Rose Blush* and *The Cobridge Rose*.

Two base glazes overlaid the copper pigment glaze to achieve *Aubrietia*, which was then fired in a heavily reducing environment. This oxygen-starved atmosphere acted to impair '*copper evacuation*' which in turn allowed the purple, mauve, pink and lavender colours to surface.<sup>24</sup> *Forget-me-Not* was a product of the same glaze exposed to a light reduction firing resulting in lavender, green and turquoise-blue speckling.

*Speckled Rose* used different base glazes over the same copper pigment glaze and was fired in light reduction. It was characterised by speckles of black cherry, dark and light browns, copper-greens, turquoise-blue and purple. If the copper pigment glaze had been applied over the base glazes of *Speckled Rose*, the outcome would have been a predominately green glaze of various tones. The application of the copper-pigment glaze under the base glazes enabled the copper-greens to be absorbed by them, facilitating the appearance of the reds and purples. *Rose blush* used the same glaze as

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<sup>22</sup> Niblett, Kathy: 'Making History', *The Cobridge No.3*, Cobridge Collectors' Club, March 2000, p.21.

<sup>23</sup> *Cobridge Stoneware Bulletin*: 'The Cobridge Glaze Exhibition: Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November – Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November', Cobridge Collectors' Club, Nov. 2003, front cover.

*Speckled Rose*, but exhibited a different effect. It is a more dense glaze of mottled ruby and chestnut, described as unique, a creation of the kiln. Cobridge chemists claimed they were probably not able to reproduce the effect. This was true of the *Chestnut* glaze which they were 'never able to replicate again, even slightly'.<sup>25</sup> The *Cobridge Rose* on the '100/10' vase was a glaze of depth and variety, a vibrant high-fired transmutation glaze in the style of William Howson-Taylor. Dark cherry red, chestnut and chocolate browns, strawberry pink, copper-green spots, purple and silver-grey are present in the dappled, swirling pattern. Justin Emery's research at Cobridge not only led to the recreation of Howson-Taylor's ' $3 \times 3 = 9$ ' glaze formula, but in late 2003 he devised a new formula - ' $9 \times 9 = 81$ '. As a result he had a staggering eighty-one glaze combinations to work with, (see **fig. 82**).<sup>26</sup>

**Fig. 82**

- **Cobridge Stoneware High-Temperature Transmutation glazes:** *Speckled Rose*, *Rose Blush*, *Cobridge Rose*, *Aubrietia*. *Cobridge Stoneware Collectors' Club Bulletin*, Nov. 2003.



<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.2

## Influence

Apart from William Howson-Taylor's obvious influence, Cobridge manufactured a range of more contemporary products sold as Cobridge Stoneware. One example was *Sweet Valentine* representing romantic kitsch of a type alien to Howson-Taylor.<sup>27</sup> This commercial piece was designed by Anji Davenport to commemorate Valentine's Day and was introduced as a limited edition. The design portrayed heart 'panels' with reduced streaked-purple and mauve grounds. The vase displayed an overall iridescent sheen, (see fig. 83).

**Fig. 83**

- 'Sweet Valentine' designed by Anji Davenport. Numbered edition 253/6 vase. Price: £55. HT: 6 in. (15 cms). *Cobridge Stoneware Collectors' Club Bulletin*, January 2004.



*Sweet Valentine by Anji Davenport*

<sup>26</sup> *Cobridge Stoneware Bulletin*: 'Launching A New Era.' Cobridge Collectors' Club, Jan. 2004, front cover.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

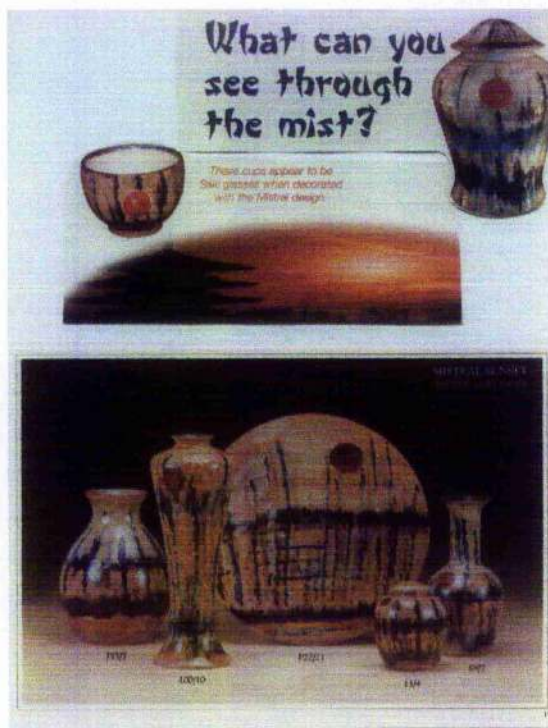
Some of the decorated Cobridge Stoneware designs used interesting Far Eastern subject matter. This type of stoneware was oxidised rather than reduced. A design which capitalised on oriental inspiration was *Mistral*. It was originally conceived to capture the 'Carnival atmosphere of Venice'. Collectors however assumed the design to represent the 'Empire of the Sun', chiefly because they associated the glowing red dot in the centre of the pieces with the Japanese flag. The surrounding cinnamon and blue colours were thought to illustrate the hazy evening Japanese sky. Designer Anita Harris stated: *'My job is merely to tease the imagination – the rest is up to you!'*<sup>28</sup> The forms to which the glaze is applied include *'an oriental pagoda topped vase'*, and *'cups which appear to be Saki glasses when decorated with the Mistral design.'*<sup>29</sup> The design can therefore be thought to represent a Western interpretation of the Far East. It had little in common with traditional Chinese or Japanese ceramics, and certainly rests outside the scope of William Howson-Taylor's inspiration for Ruskin ware. Even the technique was a departure; pieces were fired three times in an oxidised atmosphere. The design was applied to a body which had been high-fired twice. Most of the patterned stoneware designs used the *sgraffito* technique to prevent the colours running and mixing. The 'red sun' on the Mistral pagoda-topped vase may have been incised to maintain a sharp sphere of colour, (see fig. 84).

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<sup>28</sup> *Cobridge Stoneware Bulletin*: 'What can you see through the mist?' Cobridge Collectors' Club, Feb., 2004, p.2.

**Fig. 84**

- **Cobridge Stoneware 'Mistral', designed by Anita Harris.** *Cobridge Stoneware Collectors' Club Bulletin*, Feb. 2004, & *Cobridge product catalogue*, 2004, p. 15.



### **Product Launch and Marketing**

Cobridge conducted a formal launch of their '*unique decorated stoneware*' at the British Museum on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1998, including a lecture given by David Gaimster, '*a world authority on stoneware*', admission by ticket only.<sup>30</sup> Cobridge initiated its own Collectors' Club in the same year, partly to sell special editions to collectors but also to disseminate information on technical processes, exhibitions, sales, auctions and new ranges. Collecting will be considered in Chapter 7, but suffice

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> *Moorcroft Collectors Club Newsletter*: 'Cobridge Stoneware', August 1998, No. 19, p.25. Tickets were priced at £6, including the cost of the lecture and a reception at the British Museum's Medieval Galleries. Interestingly, cheques were made out to the '*British Museum Society*' rather than '*Cobridge Stoneware*', serving to link Cobridge Stoneware and historical artefacts.

it to mention that the creation of a collecting club so soon after the product launch questions notions of antiquity in relation to collecting. It is probable that it is the response to a market where 'antiques' of a reasonable price are becoming increasingly difficult to find -- hence the creation of antiques for the future.<sup>31</sup>

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 1998, the Cobridge Phoenix factory was opened by Government Minister, Richard Caborn. This included a tour of the Moorcroft factory before a walk to the Phoenix Works with an entourage of new employees, re-enacting the '*...great walk of 1913 when William Moorcroft led his team from James Macintyre's Washington Works to the then new Moorcroft Works in Sandbach Road*'.<sup>32</sup> The event was given press and TV coverage. The ambition of Cobridge to create '*something totally new, something never achieved in the world before*', was equated with William Moorcroft's novel idea of combining the 17<sup>th</sup> century slip-trailing technique with the application of metallic oxides to raw clay.<sup>33</sup>

These marketing strategies were probably conceived with the objective of establishing a link between Moorcroft and Cobridge Stoneware. It certainly does not have a precedent in the newspaper publicity of the reclusive William Howson-Taylor. However, markets have changed and as Stephen Course, Director of Dartington pottery agreed, the sales climate has become increasingly competitive. The idea of heritage creation is not new. Take for instance the *flambé* pots presented to the British Museum by Bernard Moore in 1902, and contemporary products purchased from

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<sup>31</sup> Antiques are officially considered to be not less than 100 years of age although of late the age restriction has become more widely defined. For instance, Art Deco items are sold at *antique* fairs. Since the 1960's '*Modernism*' has been commonly used as an umbrella term to refer to the style rather than the age of certain objects.

<sup>32</sup> *Moorcroft Collectors Club Newsletter*: 'Cobridge Stoneware', August 1998, No. 19, p.27.

<sup>33</sup> '*Something new*' being the oxidised decorated Cobridge Stoneware.

various international exhibitions by the V&A, thought to be examples of 'good design', worthy of study and inspiration.<sup>34</sup> Although William Howson-Taylor was dedicated to his craft, the creation of the beautiful and technically excellent, it must be remembered he made considerable profit from his endeavours as did the William Morris workshops. To be an artist was not to be a pauper. In fact the Arts and Crafts tenets included the necessity - with varying degrees of success - to manage a sustainable enterprise.

Unlike Dartington Pottery, Cobridge Stoneware appeared to be made to a price, essentially for the collectors' market rather than for broader retail. Cobridge products were subject to marketing hype with regard to the 'launches' and media coverage, the requisition of museums and academics to promote the ware. Some practising potters claim that Ruskin Pottery itself was not a work of genius, that Howson-Taylor was simply prepared to experiment and gather experience. They claim the glaze recipes are fairly easy to achieve but that kiln timing - firing times- are harder to establish. On that basis Cobridge should have experienced little difficulty in mastering high-fired glazes with their hand-built computer-controlled kiln, despite protestations to the contrary. Although not a new phenomenon, capitalising on industrial mythology has become increasingly important for many ceramic and giftware manufacturers. The title of a Collectors' Club article, 'Making History', says everything in respect to the late Cobridge marketing philosophy.<sup>35</sup> Even the geography of the Cobridge site had historical associations:

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<sup>34</sup> Purchased after the 1851 Great Exhibition onwards, initially for the South Kensington Museum. The V&A are still purchasing modern design hence in a sense are involved in the business of heritage creation.

*"...the site of Cobridge's Phoenix Works is on land formerly owned by James Macintyre & Co. Limited at the end of the last century. The Cobridge team have even made a few pieces of pottery out of the clay dug from foundations of the new Works."*<sup>36</sup>

And so, through the conscious efforts of industrialist Hugh Edwards, the memory and influence, and if not in every respect 'the style' of Ruskin Pottery lived on in creative reinterpretations, if only for a few years (1998-2005). However, reinterpretations rarely, if ever, capture the aura of the original work, objects rooted in a specific time and place. Reinterpretation appears to be more than the retention or re-creation of a *Zeitgeist*, as Alan Caiger-Smith explained:

*"To what extent can any creative potter claim to make use of the principles of design, or to apply the knowledge of ceramic chemistry? Beyond a certain point such knowledge becomes restrictive. There is simply too much of it... Even if it could all be assimilated, it still does not offer access to the ageless process by which an inner conviction imparts a kind of life to a material object. The real secrets... are hidden not in chemical records or firing schedules, nor in any universal principles of design, but in the maker's own life."*<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Niblett, Kathy: 'Making History', *The Cobridge No. 3*, Cobridge Collectors' Club, March 2000, pp. 19-23.

<sup>36</sup> Niblett, Kathy: 'Cobridge Stoneware', *Moorcroft Collectors' Club Newsletter*, August 1998, No. 19, p.28. James Macintyre & Co. Ltd. were William Moorcroft's employees until he set up his own factory in 1913.

## Dartington Pottery

### Brief History

In 1925 Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst purchased the South Devon Dartington Hall Estate. They wanted to rejuvenate the Dartington community, setting a precedent for other patrons in similar rural locations. Together they restored the estate and started a school and College of Arts. Sponsored initiatives embraced a diverse range of projects in agriculture, forestry, education and the arts, including the Dartington International Summer School of Music.<sup>38</sup> In 1931 the Dartington Hall Trust was formed to help in the administration of the school and various funded projects.

Dartington Pottery is situated within the South Devon Dartington Hall estate. It forms part of a legacy dating back to 1927 when Sylvia Fox-Strangways established a small experimental pottery behind the Barn Theatre, and '*taught with passionate commitment*' from 1927-29.<sup>39</sup> In 1932 Bernard Leach became the pottery teacher at the Dartington School. Leach constructed his studio on the site of the old quarry at Shinnars Bridge where he worked to perfect traditional slipware techniques. In 1933 a larger building to house the pottery studio was erected. This is where Leach wrote '*A Potters Book*', which Harrod describes as '*the most tangible achievement of the Dartington years*'.<sup>40</sup> It was at the expense of the Dartington Research Grants Board that Leach travelled to Japan in 1934 to research the manufacture of stoneware which

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<sup>37</sup> **Caiger-Smith, Alan:** *Lustre Pottery*, London, 1985, p. 176.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with **Stephen Course**, Director of Dartington pottery, Shinnars Bridge, Dartington, Totnes, Devon; 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

<sup>39</sup> **Harrod, Tanya:** *The Crafts in Britain in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Yale, Yale University Press, 1999, p. 141-142.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

he then planned to make on a large scale at Dartington.<sup>41</sup> It was this trip that inspired Leach to write his book published in 1940. Leach retained a base at Dartington until 1949. After the Second World War the studio workshop was run by Marianne de Trey and Sam Haile (d. 1947). The Pottery then continued to operate as a teaching studio, but had lost the impetus originally envisioned by Leach to become a self-supporting rural stoneware factory. Harrod summarises the position of the Elmhursts' pre-war ambition with post-war reality. The Pottery was one of several '*melancholy*' craft projects where '*On the whole the economics did not add up*'<sup>42</sup>, although economic success is perhaps not the only method of evaluating a venture.

Recognising the potential of the resource, David Leach and David Canter reopened the studio as the Dartington Pottery Training Workshop in 1975, the year commemorating the Dartington Trust's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Through their efforts studio apprenticeships were provided for people with no previous experience or qualifications, and for ceramic diploma students intending to set up their own workshop. Initial funding and support came from the Crafts Council and Dartington Hall Trust.<sup>43</sup> Although the project fulfilled training requirements it was not commercially viable, mainly because apprentices left as they became 'useful'. In 1984-85 managers Peter Cook, Stephen Course and Peter Hazel bought the workshop from the Dartington Hall Trust to form an independent company - *Dart Pottery*. The decision came after a partnership was formed between Janice Tchalenko and the Dart Pottery workshop. Tchalenko knew Stephen Course from the Harrow Vocational

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 143. It is also interesting that Dartington subsidised Leach's St. Ives Pottery through paying the wages of at least two recruits. By 1937 he had brokered a deal which made available a grant of £3,000 to the St. Ives Pottery over three years to finance experiments manufacturing stoneware.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>43</sup> In 1980 the Dartington Hall Trust became incorporated as a charitable company and the Dartington North Devon Trust was set up.

Pottery course. In 1979 she held an exhibition of '*vulgar reduced stoneware*' at the John Hinchcliffe Gallery, London. The exhibition sold out before it was staged. The revelation of colourful pattern on British studio ceramics received a remarkable reception. Her work was to typify the 1980's with loud ethnic patterns and strong shapes. Unable to meet the demand, Tchalenko approached Stephen Course at Dartington and a compromise was reached; the Pottery would manufacture her designs under the name *Dart*. In 1992 the studio returned to its original title – *Dartington Pottery*.

### **Contemporary Dartington**

Today Dartington Pottery consists of five full-time local employees, 4 apprentices and a selection of visiting and freelance artists. Visiting potters are generally concerned with developing new shapes, sometimes with improving practical skills. Freelance artists are mainly involved with surface-pattern design. Course stressed the importance of training in terms of design, manufacture and business administration. The full-time employees provide a core of people with a valuable skill base which facilitates training apprentices.

Dartington Pottery combines the manual with the mechanical. It has chosen to specialise in reduction stoneware partly for marketing purposes. The Pottery and its reduction glazed stoneware can be labelled 'unique', concentrating on the manufacture of contemporary tableware. Stephen Course explained the difficulties of marketing indigenous products against the tide of cheap foreign imports, hence the importance of advertising and branding. Selling hand-made ceramics can be a difficult

process in an age driven by perfection. As Director, Course said part of his task was to try and 'educate taste', as *'Nothing can be perfectly matched within a range... because it's not an industrial pottery... but the overall look is important'*. Some customers have apparently struggled with this concept. The Dartington Pottery 'Seconds Shop' keeps the works afloat. In effect, the 'seconds' subsidise the 'firsts' sent out to retailers.

Course studied Vocational Pottery at the Harrow College of Art in the early 1970's. The course, run by professional potters Victor Margrie and Michael Casson, taught students to become individual studio-potters. Although studio-pottery is essentially personal, its makers remain open to external influence. Studio-potters are not easily able to supply high-street retailers because the size of their premises, number of workers and scale of productivity, and are therefore unable to keep pace with the changing demands of fashion. They also have less expertise to call on. Because it is a bigger enterprise, Dartington Pottery is better equipped to survive the vicissitudes of the market.

### **Methods of Manufacture**

Hand throwing has largely been replaced by hand jigger-jollyng, although larger or more individual items are still produced on the wheel. Slip-casting is also carried out and there is a press for producing geometric shaped vessels and tiles.

The ware is reduction fired in a modern "100 cubic feet gas-fired glost kiln", usually once a week. There is a smaller electric bisque kiln in constant use. The ware is fired

to biscuit at around 980°C before receiving the base glaze(s). *Ruskin Red/Blue* glazes are 'double-dipped' by hand, the *Blue* is under-glazed red and over-glazed blue; the *Red* has a purple under-glaze and red over-glaze. All glazes in use are lead-free.

According to the Dartington Pottery website:

*"The depth of the glaze is produced by two different glazes reacting together. The glazes have to be applied at specific thicknesses to get an optimum result."*<sup>44</sup>

After glazing the pots are fired in a 'controlled reduction atmosphere' in excess of 1300°C. They are subsequently cooled slowly to promote the formation of crystals in the glaze. The ware is extremely durable, advertised as '*microwave, freezer, dishwasher and oven-proof*.'<sup>45</sup>

### **Clay Body**

The Pottery has devised its own vitreous white stoneware body using the ball and china clays from Devon and Cornwall. This is also because they believe in using local materials, not dissimilar from William Howson-Taylor. The formula has been published by *Ceramic Review*.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> [www.dartingtonpottery.co.uk](http://www.dartingtonpottery.co.uk)

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> **Eds. Cooper, Emmanuel & Lewenstein, Eileen:** *Clays and Glazes – The Ceramic Review Book of Clay Bodies and Glaze Recipes*, London, Craftsmen Potters Association of Great Britain – *Ceramic Review*, 1988 ed., pp. 16-17, 'Dart Pottery Workshop'.

BBV Ball Clay 80, Nepheline syenite 20. The 'stained body' is composed of: BBV Ball clay 56, At Ball clay 35, Sand (Leighton Buzzard) 5, Nepheline syenite 5, Red iron oxide 0.4, Black iron oxide 0.4. '*Both bodies mixed by dough mixer, stored for as long as possible and then plugged. The stained body has black iron added because it is a nauseous pink colour if one uses all red iron oxide. The sand gives it some texture and also makes it more suitable for raw glazing. The white body, although very plastic, is not very suitable for big pots unless a grog is added*'.

### Ruskin Red / Ruskin Blue

These glazes developed as a result of collaboration between Stephen Course and Roger Law – a friend who was involved with the production of the popular 1980's 'Spitting Image' television series. Law suggested exploring the concept of the 'Seven Deadly Sins' through the language of *Spitting Image* for an exhibition at the V&A. The modellers would work with Dartington Pottery stoneware clay. Stephen Course decided to take advantage of the rare opportunity for a liaison between sculptors and studio-potters. Being responsible for all the glazes at Dartington, Stephen Course was faced with the challenge to develop a series of reduced stoneware glazes suitable for use on modelling. The glazes had to be runny to reveal areas of relief. Dartington glazes had previously been applied to a white base glaze in the manner of a high-fired maiolica, but this was discarded. The test glazes were fluid, exposed relief details and imparted some colour.

An associate of Law who had taken an interest in the project – Richard Dennis, sent Course his book on Ruskin Pottery. Dennis is an authority on Victorian ceramics. The book proved a worthwhile source of inspiration. Course read about William Howson-Taylor's admiration for and adaptation of Chinese glazes. Not only was he interested in Ruskin glazes, but felt an affinity with the philosophy of the factory, hence the decision to develop *Ruskin Red and Ruskin Blue* for what became the 'Modern Antiques Exhibition' in 1995, showing a range of sculpted limited editions. Stephen Course commented:

*"The glazes were named Ruskin in 1995 because the Dartington Pottery 'set-up' and 'working philosophies' were similar to their namesake, and because the trials echoed*

*the work of Howson-Taylor. These Ruskin-like glazes have moved away from studio pottery; in fact they defy categorisation."*

The glazes were developed using influence and skills from people outside Dartington, serving to engineer a fresh direction and generate renewed interest in the Pottery.

Unlike the Ruskin factory, Dartington does not use saggars in a coal-fired kiln, but does share the use of similar materials. Stephen Course suggested that Ruskin Pottery glazes were due to experimentation and experience rather than brilliant chemistry on the part of William Howson-Taylor. It took time to develop 'variety' in the glazes from the gas-fired kiln at Dartington. Howson-Taylor himself tried to switch to gas, the new fuel of the 1920's, but failed to obtain the coal-fired effects.

Even before *Ruskin Red/Blue*, Stephen Course had developed a stable red glaze for Janice Tchalenko's first design 'Poppy Red' in the mid-1980's, an 'improved version of Janet's glaze using mostly copper.' As students in the 1970's at the Harrow College of Art neither Course nor Tchalenko used colour in reduced glazes. During that period studio-pottery glazes tended to be fashionably earthy in the rustic style of Bernard Leach. It was the efforts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French studio-potters and the late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> century British ceramists who worked to develop high-temperature glazes from China which opened the way for Leach, the Harrow College of Art, the expanding studio-pottery movement and potteries such as Dartington. There is an obvious continuity from the early glaze chemists to those of the later 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. *Ceramic Review* has published details of some Dartington glazes, including the formula of Janice Tchalenko's 'Copper Red 1260 °C Reduction' glaze.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ed. Emmanuel Cooper: *Clays and Glazes. The Ceramic Review Book of Clay Bodies and Glaze Recipes*, London, Ceramic Review, 2001 ed., pp. 234-235. Potash Feldspar 301.07, Calcium borate frit 35.02, Whiting 46.97, Copper Oxide 1.47, Tin Oxide 3.83.

The successful reception of *Ruskin Red /Blue* glazes has meant increasing contact between Dartington and the 'Art Pottery' business, particularly as the products are classified as 'unique' reduction stoneware. However, Stephen Course presented several differentiating factors between Dartington and other 'Art Potteries', including:

*"The dedication of the staff working within teams to share skills rather than operating as individuals. The motivation of employees is different – they come to work because they want to, not for financial reward. Employees are prepared to invest extra time to develop new glazes, shapes and techniques."*

He claimed that unlike some studio-pottery establishments Dartington is interested in the use of machinery where appropriate, yet in contrast to larger Art Potteries the products require considerable manual input. Another difference was that Dartington had chosen to specialise in reduction stoneware, the reduction glazes being developed on site rather than imported from abroad or purchased from British ceramic suppliers. Most manufacturers pursue the latter options.

In terms of ethical practice, Dartington ploughs a higher percentage of profit back into the business than is the case for other concerns, resulting in a narrow profit margin. On the other hand, many studio-potteries close because they are not commercially viable. The Dartington system of selling *all* products, hence the seconds' shop, reduces wastage and now supports the near-perfect products for High-Street retail.

It is interesting to consider the time frame of events surrounding Dartington pottery. When Bernard Leach set up his workshop on the Dartington Estate he was only a few miles away from the site where William Howson-Taylor was buried. Howson-Taylor had closed his factory in 1934 and retired to Devon with his wife. Sadly he lived just one year of his

retirement until his sudden death in 1935. This coincided with the period (1930-35) when Bernard Leach was establishing the Pottery with the backing of the Dartington Hall Trust. Another coincidence came decades later in 1995 when Stephen Course was approached to manufacture a '*runny flambé*' glaze which became known as *Ruskin Red/Blue*, thus completing a circle of influence.

## Forms

Until recently most of the Dartington Pottery range has used Janice Tchalenko's shapes because it is expensive to create new forms and the accompanying moulds. Stephen Course is primarily interested in glaze and surface-pattern and tends to delegate shape design. However, for *Ruskin Red/Blue* tableware a new set of forms were designed. Over the past few years Danish apprentice Tavs Jorgensen has made new moulds for new shapes for which he has won various awards. His contemporary shapes are covered in the *Ruskin* glazes. Some of these shapes are more angular than traditional Chinese forms, even perhaps inspired by 1950's British ceramic design. Some are distinctly 'English studio-pottery' forms. Course perceives them as a '*minimal*' tableware range which '*don't look Victorian.*' He gave the task of designing new shapes to Tavs because he wanted to see the results of a '*Danish versus British studio-pottery aesthetic*', hence *Ruskin Red/Blue* tableware shapes are of mixed stylistic influence, (see **figs. 85 & 87**).

Interestingly, although the plain-glazed new shapes designed by Tavs are acknowledged to be '*good designs*', they do not sell as well as the decorated pots. Stephen Course suggested that people have a tendency to confuse them with cheap imports on a broader market, but claimed the plain pieces sell better when exhibited in

galleries to a design-aware public. In March 2002 *Ruskin Blue* was shortlisted for the *Homes and Gardens Classic Design Awards*, and has been generally well-received. Course emphasised its minimal, contemporary aesthetic: '*By developing a glaze with a double-dip, Ruskin Red and Blue has a cleaner look with no decoration*'. It is hoped that this range will raise the perceived value of tableware in Britain, which is apparently '*relatively low*'.

**Fig. 85**

- **Dartington Pottery, stoneware: *Ruskin Red*, 2002.** The coffee can and saucer were purchased from Birmingham Museum and Art gallery. The fact that Dartington have chosen to retail through museums has reinforced the historical associations of their products. ([www.dartingtonpottery.co.uk](http://www.dartingtonpottery.co.uk))



**Fig. 86a-b:**

- A range of Dartington Pottery products for 2005 featured on the company website: [www.dartingtonpottery.co.uk](http://www.dartingtonpottery.co.uk)
  - (a) **Tornado** – Janice Tchalenko's new glazed stoneware range
  - (b) **Miniature Bottles** – variously glazed stoneware.

(a)



(b)



Fig. 87

- Dartington Pottery Tableware retail price list for 2005 illustrating the forms available for Ruskin Red/Blue.

TABLEWARE		PATTERNS					
		white	ruskin red	blue	black	green	
	2001 Teapot	£14.95		£14.95			
	2002 Teapot	£14.95		£14.95			
	2003 Teapot	£14.95		£14.95			
	2004 Mug	£14.95		£14.95			
	2005 Mug	£14.95		£14.95			
	2006 Mug	£14.95		£14.95			
	2007 Plate	£14.95		£14.95			
	2008 Plate	£14.95		£14.95			
	2009 Plate	£14.95		£14.95			
	2010 Bowl	£14.95		£14.95			
	2011 Bowl	£14.95		£14.95			
	2012 Bowl	£14.95		£14.95			
	2013 Cup	£14.95		£14.95			
	2014 Cup	£14.95		£14.95			
	2015 Cup	£14.95		£14.95			
	2016 Saucer	£14.95		£14.95			
	2017 Saucer	£14.95		£14.95			
	2018 Saucer	£14.95		£14.95			
	2019 Dish	£14.95		£14.95			
	2020 Dish	£14.95		£14.95			
	2021 Dish	£14.95		£14.95			
	2022 Tureen	£14.95		£14.95			
	2023 Tureen	£14.95		£14.95			
	2024 Tureen	£14.95		£14.95			
	2025 Pitcher	£14.95		£14.95			
	2026 Pitcher	£14.95		£14.95			
	2027 Pitcher	£14.95		£14.95			
	2028 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2029 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2030 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2031 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2032 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2033 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2034 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2035 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2036 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2037 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2038 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2039 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2040 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2041 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2042 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2043 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2044 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2045 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2046 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2047 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2048 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2049 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2050 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2051 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2052 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2053 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2054 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2055 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2056 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2057 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2058 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2059 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2060 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2061 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2062 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2063 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2064 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2065 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2066 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2067 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2068 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2069 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2070 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2071 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2072 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2073 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2074 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2075 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2076 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2077 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2078 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2079 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2080 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2081 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2082 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2083 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2084 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2085 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2086 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2087 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2088 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2089 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2090 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2091 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2092 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2093 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2094 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2095 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2096 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2097 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2098 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2099 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2100 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2101 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2102 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2103 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2104 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2105 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2106 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2107 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2108 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2109 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2110 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2111 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2112 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2113 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2114 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2115 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2116 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2117 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2118 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2119 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2120 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2121 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2122 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2123 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2124 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2125 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2126 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2127 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2128 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2129 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2130 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2131 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2132 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2133 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2134 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2135 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2136 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2137 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2138 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2139 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2140 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2141 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2142 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2143 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2144 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2145 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2146 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2147 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2148 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2149 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2150 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2151 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2152 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2153 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2154 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2155 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2156 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2157 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2158 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2159 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2160 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2161 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2162 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2163 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2164 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2165 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2166 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2167 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2168 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2169 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2170 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2171 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2172 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2173 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2174 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2175 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2176 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2177 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2178 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2179 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2180 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2181 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2182 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2183 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2184 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2185 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2186 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2187 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2188 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2189 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2190 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2191 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2192 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2193 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2194 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2195 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2196 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2197 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2198 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2199 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2200 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			
	2201 Jar	£14.95		£14.95			

Revised 2005

Illustrations are not to scale. The actual size of the products is given in the accompanying text.

Jingdezhen to develop a constant programme of new glazes and ideas. Because Dartington specialise in reduced stoneware – an advantage in terms of production – it has been able to develop a ‘unique’ selling point. As mentioned previously, the ‘Seconds’ Shop’ is a necessity, a means of subsidising the Pottery. The seconds’ rate is around five per cent per kiln, although it can be as much as forty per cent in the event of a technical catastrophe. Stephen was concerned for the future of British ceramic manufacture at all levels:

*“Products from the Developing World and Far East coming into the UK have made it difficult to sell indigenous ceramics and other commodities. This is increasingly evident in the garden pots with reduced stoneware glazes flooding into garden centres around Britain – you could call it a by-product of globalisation.”<sup>48</sup>*

Dartington now sell considerable quantities of stock to John Lewis among other retailers and galleries. Through the work of Dartington Pottery, Stephen Course hopes to continue permeating the ‘Art Pottery’ market in order to make available and promote particular styles of British hand-crafted pottery to a wider audience.

### **Contemporary Innovation**

There are, of course, copper-reds, *flambé* and transmutation glazes which do not lay claim to the past so directly. Techniques and materials may be traditional to a greater or lesser degree, but the objects do not overtly convey allegiance to historical figures, factories or movements. The ceramics of High-Street stores such as Habitat and Marks and Spencer have recently manufactured a range of contemporary, often low-

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with **Stephen Course**, Director of Dartington pottery, Devon; 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

temperature transmutation glazed wares in an attempt to combine modern minimalist trends with current interest in Eastern spirituality and culture, (see **figs. 88-89**).

**Fig. 88**

- **Silk – Habitat glazed ceramic cylindrical vases.** These transmutation glazed vases were sold in four colours; Bamboo, Blue, Mauve and Pink. Ht: 24 cm. (Price £8). *Habitat Catalogue Autumn/Winter 2003*, p.73.



**Fig. 89**

- **'Radiant' – Habitat glazed ceramic vase.** 'Reactive glaze finish.' Red/Green. Ht: 40cm. (Price £20). *Habitat Catalogue Autumn/Winter 2004*, pp. 112-113.



### **Poole Pottery**

Poole Pottery has recently manufactured an interesting range of innovative *flambé*. In the late 1990's Poole invested around £4.5 million on a new factory and revamped their image for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The fresh direction focused on recent consumer

interest and demand for abstract glaze effects. Already having a reputation for unique, hand-crafted ceramics, the 'Living Glaze' range gave Poole Pottery 'a look plus a story', an easily identifiable signature range essential in today's competitive art pottery markets.<sup>49</sup> In this respect they have pursued a similar strategy to Cobridge Stoneware. The difference is that Poole has based their 'story' on techniques developed by or for the company in the 1960's. Because of this time frame, new Poole art ware has been cast in the 'retro' category while Cobridge Stoneware remains 'historical' because of its association with the technical and aesthetic influence of the *earlier* 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup>

The new 'art' *flambé* range of Poole Pottery is applied to slip-cast earthenware bodies. It is not the same type as the reduced copper transmutation wares of Cobridge and Dartington. It is probably a commercial on-glaze *flambé* available from national and international ceramic suppliers, Italy and Germany being major exporters. According to advertising literature, the 'Living Glaze' technique was pioneered around forty years ago in an effort to capture the 'Delphis' look.<sup>51</sup> Part of the Living Glaze range was designed by Janice Tchalenko, the ceramist associated with Dartington Pottery. *Living Glaze* effects are the result of different glazes reacting with each other during firing. Each piece is therefore described in the advertising literature as 'unique', '(of) an entirely different character ensuring no two items are ever exactly the same'.<sup>52</sup> The literature goes on to state that the 'Fine surface "cracking" is a natural

<sup>49</sup> Stephen Course's description of Poole Pottery's marketing strategy. Interview – 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

<sup>50</sup> *The Guardian Weekend Magazine*: 'Space Handbook: The Future's... Retro Modern -1970's', 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2003, p. 44. 'Sunburst ceramic vases, by Poole Pottery, small, £30, and large, £60...'

<sup>51</sup> **Poole Pottery**: 'LIVING GLAZE – INSTANTLY COLLECTABLE', advertising literature, 2001. The phrase 'Instantly Collectible' suggests the same notion of heritage creation expressed by Cobridge Stoneware.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

*result*’ of the glaze reactions, and that the *‘antique effect will continue to develop as the piece matures, adding to its character’*.<sup>53</sup>

It is interesting how the advertising literature emphasised the *‘antique effect’* and also the rarity value of a *‘unique’* product in an age of mass production. Significantly, Poole products like those of Dartington and Cobridge are made in Britain, a powerful sales tool in a market saturated with imported ceramics. The products may be more expensive than those manufactured abroad, but by way of compensation their indigenous roots ensure niche status, thereby attracting the type of customer who will pay more for an individual object. An object made in limited numbers to become collectable – an *‘instant antique’*.

Of interest is the recent work of Anita Harris at Cobridge, formerly the senior designer at Poole Pottery. She has used her knowledge of reactive glazes to create *Blue Decade* for Cobridge, a glaze effect *“where burning reds and ambers have been fused together with waves of cool blues”*, similar to some of those in Poole Pottery’s *Living Glaze* collection.<sup>54</sup> A selection of Poole Pottery’s *Living Glaze* range are pictured below alongside Harris’ glazed ware, (see **figs. 90-92**), illustrating the cross-fertilisation of ideas that has always existed in the domestic and industrial manufacture of ceramics.

A recent review of new products from selected factories described Poole’s approach as *‘very in tune with the zeitgeist’*. It goes further to suggest that even with the *Living Glaze* range...

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

*"there is no single product to which consumers can point and say, "That's Poole". Such instant recognition is vital because, in an over-crowded market, people look for what they know. We may no longer want a 40-piece dinner service, but if we buy British Pottery (and there is plenty of cheap and chic stuff coming in from the Far East), we want it to **look** like British pottery as we have always known it. Only with a modern twist."*<sup>53</sup>

Poole Pottery's living Glaze could be described as *Retro modern* – British pottery using established glaze techniques '*with a modern twist*'. The interpretation or reinterpretation of past styles is becoming increasingly significant on the current wave of nostalgia. *Retro style* has become serious business. *Retro style* and nostalgic design 'copying' past styles appears to be a British specialism across the artistic spectrum, a characteristic of British design which existed long before Arts and Crafts medievalism.

It seems that the *flambé* ware offered by manufacturers such as Poole and Habitat are no longer particularly interested in a 'faithful' Chinese aesthetic, abandoning the classic Chinese shapes traditionally associated with monochromes. Correspondingly, consumers find appeal not in the Chinese aspect of the ceramics, but in the knowledge they have been made in Britain. Since the early 1990's, interest in indigenous (British) 'art ware' and craftwork has to an extent superseded the desire to own a vessel reflecting Chinese culture. What appeared 'authentically' Chinese now appears 'authentically' British. This shift in consumer taste highlights the fluidity of origins and styles, which is intensified by the eclectic nature of the ceramics themselves. Whether of British or Chinese inspiration however, the consumer search for the 'authentic' continues unabated.

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<sup>54</sup> *Cobridge Stoneware Bulletin*: 'The Cobridge Exhibition of Designs by Anita Harris – Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> June to Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2004; 'Blue Decade', June 2004.

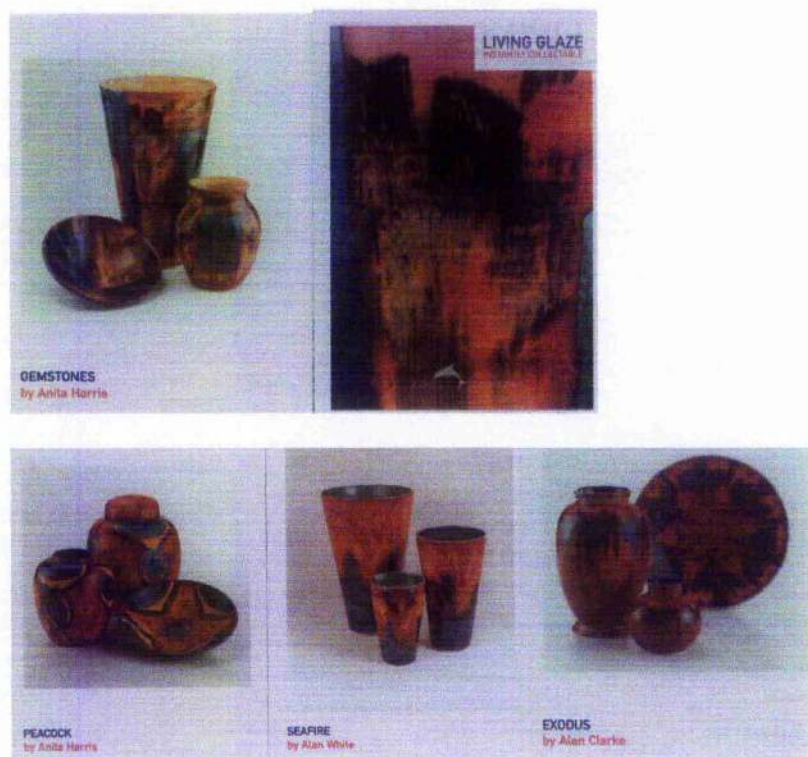
**Fig. 90**

- Cobridge Stoneware, 'Blue Decade' designed by Anita Harris. *Cobridge Stoneware Collectors' Club Bulletin*, June 2004.



**Fig. 91**

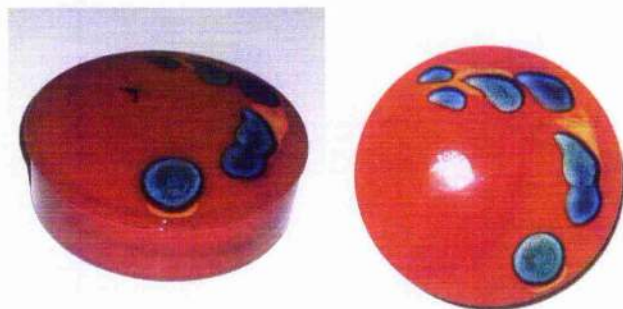
- Poole Pottery designer earthenware: 'Living Glaze Instantly Collectable', advertising leaflet c. 2001



<sup>55</sup> Abrahams, Charlotte: 'Adapt to Survive', *The Guardian Weekend*, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003, p.69.

**Fig. 92**

- **Poole Pottery designer earthenware lidded pot 'Odyssey': *Living Glaze* series, 2001**



### **Innovative Studio *Flambé***

Although consumer tastes may have shifted or exist in confusion, many studio-potters remain interested in China and try to recreate with some accuracy the technical and stylistic aspects of Chinese ceramics. The work of Rupert Spira (b. London 1960), Israel Bankir (b.1943, Russia), and Antoni Cumella (Spain 1913-1989), furnish examples of alternative approaches towards the historical reduced copper glaze, (see **figs. 93-97**). These recent individual reinterpretations differ widely from the styles of the more commercial manufacturers.

**Fig. 93**

- **Rupert Spira, (b. London 1960):** Group of Five Porcelain Bowls, wheel-thrown **copper-red reduction fired glaze**. Large bowl Dia: 27cm; 15 cm; 13 cm, **Lot 38**. 'Twentieth Century International and Israeli Studio Ceramics', Sotheby's Tel Aviv, Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1998.



**Fig. 94**

- **Rupert Spira:** Group of 5 Matching Straight Cylindrical Vases, wheel-thrown **copper-red reduction fired glaze**. Ht: 27 cm, 23 cm, 21 cm, 20 cm, 18 cm, **Lot 41**. Sotheby's Tel Aviv, 1998.



**Fig. 95**

- **Rupert Spira:** Pair of Fine Porcelain Matching Bottle Vases, wheel-thrown **copper-red reduction fired glaze**. Ht: 27 cm, 22 cm, **Lot 42**. Sotheby's Tel Aviv, 1998.



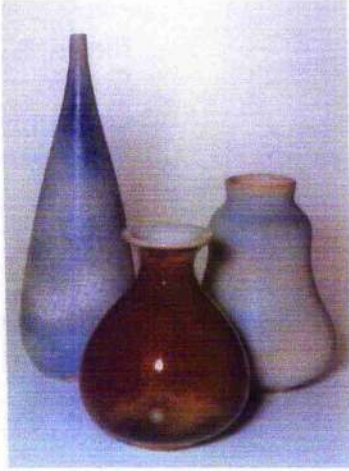
**Fig. 96**

- **Israel Bankir, (Israel. Born 1943, Russia):** Matching Pair, Tall Bottle Vase and Bowl, stoneware. Fine tall, long-necked, wide-rimmed vase and wide rimmed matching bowl, peach blossom, reddish-pink and dark blue reduction-fired glaze, **Lot 136**. Sotheby's Tel Aviv, 1998.



**Fig. 97**

- **Antoni Cumella, (Spain, 1913-1989).** Very Rare Fine Stoneware Vase. This rare bellied vase with cylindrical neck and wide rim has a fine *sang-de-boeuf* glaze with golden and black hues. Ht: 25 cm, **Lot 195.** Sotheby's Tel Aviv, 1998.



Christine-Ann Richards is another artist-potter who has worked with Chinese monochrome and crackled glazes on thrown porcelain for over twenty years. She fires the vases, bowls and lidded jars in an oxidising atmosphere to around 1260°C. Her sporadic aesthetic finds a welcome reception with the public in galleries and at exhibitions. It is a *style* which enhances the minimalist décor of modern homes. In a sense these pieces express the 'qi' or universal energy philosophy discussed earlier in connection with copper-pigment splashed *jun* ware, (see **fig. 98a-e.**)

**Fig. 98a-e**

- (a) **Christine-Ann Richards Thrown Porcelain:** Vase, *peach-bloom* on transparent crackle glaze. Ht: 33 cm.
- (b) **Lidded Jar, *peach-bloom*** on transparent crackle glaze. Ht: 28 cm.
- (c) **Vase, *peach-bloom*** on transparent crackle glaze. Ht: 17 cm.
- (d) **Flat dish, *peach-bloom*** on white crackle dish. Dia: 37 cm.
- (e) **Box, *peach-bloom*** on transparent crackle glaze. Ht: 7 cm x Dia: 13 cm.  
([www.christineannrichards.co.uk/porcelain/thrown\\_porcelain\\_5.htm](http://www.christineannrichards.co.uk/porcelain/thrown_porcelain_5.htm))

(a)



(b)



(c) & (d)



(e)



Richards initially trained at the Harrow College of Art in 1971-73 under Michael Casson before working for a time with David Leach. It is likely that she knows Stephen Course, the Director of Dartington Pottery. Richards' Chinese aesthetic, however modern it may appear, was inspired by the traditional and contemporary ceramics she studied on her first trip to China in 1978. Since then she has pursued Chinese studies and made regular visits to China. Richards is representative of certain 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century studio-potters who have adopted not only the techniques and stylistic influence of Chinese ceramics, but have also engaged with Eastern philosophy on a personal level.<sup>56</sup> Her thrown porcelain vessels decorated with 'splashes' of *peach-bloom* represent a more 'authentic' interpretation of Chinese ceramics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Rupert Spira and Christine-Ann Richards are among numerous individuals working with reduced copper glazes to reinterpret and update Song, Ming and Qing dynasty ceramic aesthetics. Their eclectic innovations reflect the global culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, raising the question of what makes a pot essentially Chinese or British. It may be that such innovative reinterpretations could better be defined through the origins and identities of the makers themselves rather than by the *style* or *styles* they choose to present.

Although Western interpretations of Chinese ceramics can be compared to 'traditional' Song, Ming and Qing dynasty examples, the Chinese themselves were influenced by a welter of stylistic approaches that gave rise to a dynamic artistic culture. Margaret Medley wrote that during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century,

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<sup>56</sup> [www.christineannrichards.co.uk](http://www.christineannrichards.co.uk)

*"different forces were at work, elements of Ming style persisting alongside those of Japanese and even of European origin... while at the same time [the Chinese were] introducing new ideas of their own."*<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, the Chinese aesthetic was not so dissimilar from the stylistic mix evident in British ceramics. Nevertheless, the Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) had a restraining influence on stylistic eclecticism. During his reign monochromes enjoyed a renaissance including reinterpretations of the Ming copper-red wares and Song *jun* among others. Indeed, re-created *Guan* ware was reportedly 'so good' as to make attribution to the Song or Qing difficult, often established in relation to shape rather than glaze.<sup>58</sup> Thus, aesthetic reinterpretation is neither a recent nor Western concept.

In the photograph below Maguire has played with the aesthetic of copper-splashed Song *jun* ware to create a range of sky blue and purple lustre vases.

**Fig. 99**

- **Vases by John Maguire.** Applied Arts Scotland, 6 Darnaway Street, Edinburgh, 2000.



<sup>57</sup> Medley, Margaret: 'Patterns of Taste in Chinese Ceramics', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 52, 1987-88, p.79.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

## Conclusion

Interpretation can be defined as giving an object a contemporary meaning while claiming an affinity with its original intention. An object of art is necessarily rooted in the age and culture in which it was produced. Reinterpretation can cause the meaning of an object to shift considerably over time.

For centuries craftsmen and artists have adapted, imitated, reproduced, interpreted and reinterpreted works of art. Some such work was and is a blatant attempt at forgery.

Other examples are not deliberate forgeries but simply *'pieces that have been slavishly copied from the old'*.<sup>59</sup> From his visit to The Royal Copenhagen Factory Bech reported that *'good copying'* by *'... true artists seeking inspiration from the old masters and making full use of modern techniques to find the secrets of the ... materials which they discovered'*, can be used *'... in accordance with ... [the artist's] personal creative power'*.<sup>60</sup> The Royal Copenhagen Factory wanted their patrons to consider these Chinese-inspired glazes as *'... modern Danish ceramic art -- and then... [to] question ... if the Danish ceramists have been good or bad pupils of the great old Chinese masters'*.<sup>61</sup>

Taking the stance that authority is derived through the life history of an object it follows that the creation of *immediate* authenticity is not possible in artistic terms, even though consumers want to believe it. For instance, how authentic is a reinterpretation of Ruskin high-fired ware or similar which has been made for a collector's market, some pieces of which are *only* sold through a collectors' club, by

<sup>59</sup> Bech, Emil: 'Chinese Influence on Danish Pottery and Porcelain', *T.O.C.S.*, 1946-47, Vol. 22, p.36.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

passing the natural selection process of ageing. Ceramics is not the only area subject to the later 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon of 'instant antiques'. These goods trade on past histories of objects, their makers and techniques. In a sense, what consumers are purchasing is not a work of art so much as a product of historical mythology.

If the '*authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history it has experienced*',<sup>62</sup> it would appear interpretations derive their authenticity and authority not directly from '*historical testimony*' but from their associations with it. Depending on the context, these associations can be referred to as mythology. The need to create mythology to enhance the product image reinforces the argument that authentic objects have a case history, a collection of associations not present in items of recent manufacture.

Reinterpretations of past ideas do however put objects into a wider domain. In this context such reinterpretations circulate within reach of consumers who would not be able to afford either the Chinese original or its Ruskin interpretation, catering for those who want something not quite mass-produced. In this way such objects can be said to '*meet the beholder halfway*'.<sup>63</sup>

On a different note, rarity value may be diminished if reinterpretations '*substitute a plurality of copies for a unique existence*'.<sup>64</sup> An undiscerning consumer may not

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<sup>62</sup> Benjamin, Walter (1892-1940), Edited and Introduced by Hannah Arendt; *Illuminations*, London, Pimlico, 1999, p.215. From the essay, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.214.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.215.

distinguish so readily between the authentic and its interpretation if they are close in appearance. Nevertheless, Cobridge Stoneware's high-fired transmutation copper glazes and Dartington Pottery's *Ruskin Red and Blue* offer creative reinterpretations that have not only moved a long way from the original Chinese inspiration, but cannot easily be confused with the Chinese-inspired early 20<sup>th</sup> century *flambé* such as that by William Howson-Taylor. The authority of Howson-Taylor's interpretations of traditional Chinese forms and glazes has remained intact.

## CHAPTER 5: TASTE

### Taste

Taste is a construct formed through human agency and is therefore subject to continuous change:

*"By a merciful dispensation of providence public taste is always changing. For the moment there is little enthusiasm for the cold symmetry of classic shapes, or for the sober tones of jasper ware or basalt. In these restless days of speeding and jazz, eccentric novelties of form and daring colour schemes are popular; but at any time there may come a reaction, and we may find repose for jaded nerves in contemplating such restful sights as a blue jasper ware vase with Flaxman's stately Muses encircling it in white relief."<sup>1</sup>*

A number of individuals, groups, societies and institutions were influential in the dissemination of a Chinese aesthetic in Britain. What follows in this chapter is a discussion of the creation of taste and its formation in relation to Chinese ceramics, particularly the copper-red glaze. The following chapter explores the role of exhibitions in taste formation.

Preceding the commercial scientific research of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were a handful of British collectors in the possession of Chinese Imperial monochromes, including copper-reds. These had largely been made available to the West in the years succeeding the sacking of the Summer Palace in Peking c.1860. Rarity and the 'novelty' values of copper-reds contributed to their desirability and in turn influenced taste. The difficulties inherent in the production of the copper-red glaze contributed to its mythology both in China and later in the West. Copper-reds were also objects of

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<sup>1</sup> Hobson, R.L: 'Josiah Wedgwood', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc. – The Wedgwood Bicentenary* 1930, pp. 405-406.

historical and scientific scholarship providing information on Chinese life and culture, influencing 'Orientalism' – a discipline which developed steadily throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The popular notion of 'taste' assumes a faculty for discerning and enjoying beauty and excellence, often specifically associated with art, music or literature:

*"Taste in its wide sense is an affair of discrimination, and discrimination itself is generally affected by, if not actually based on, the influence of fashion."*<sup>2</sup>

In practice taste is more than an innate characteristic because it demonstrates the ability to make informed choices. There has always been a range of choices, but prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century adherence to one particular taste tended to prevail for a season. The Industrial Revolution and accompanying mass-production unleashed goods in various 'tastes' and the idea of loyalty to a specific style became unfashionable. Taste implies common consensus, majority or minority unanimity towards a style. It is also a term applied to behavioural conduct - the adoption of appropriate etiquette. Taste is more about the consumer than the object. Indeed, the object may be designed in a particular style, dictated or preferred by the consumer.

Taste can only exist in a society where there is a diversity of products of similar function and nature. Taste is a phenomenon of advanced civilisation where increasing numbers of people with disposable incomes have purchasing power over a profusion of commodities. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the relative cost of consumer durables decreased. Today the range of goods and corresponding methods of payment is

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<sup>2</sup> Steegman, John: *The Rule of Taste from George I to George IV*, London, The National Trust of Great Britain, first pub. 1936, this ed. 1986, p. 191.

bewildering compared to only twenty years ago. Consumer preferences can influence manufacture, hence society is generally influenced by mass rather than minority taste. Modern consumer society has enabled people to follow their own taste, regardless of accepted notions of what constitutes the 'good' or 'bad'. Since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the increase in disposable income throughout society has enabled the '*...largest and richest section[s] of society... to impose their demands on the producers, the creators*'.<sup>3</sup>

Most people participate in a semi-autonomous selection process during the act of consumption, buying things that give personal pleasure in aesthetic design, colour, texture, form and technical competence. That choice is often individual, expressive of innate preferences. However, these predilections may be swayed or formed to some extent by exterior influences; peer pressure, tradition, advertising, available material and economic resources, '*environment, upbringing or susceptibility to a prevailing atmosphere*'.<sup>4</sup> Acknowledging these factors presents the dilemma of whether taste is inherited, learned, or a combination of these responses. The phrase '*no accounting for taste*' suggests spontaneous appeal, whereas we also read of '*acquired*' or '*refined*' taste, the latter carrying elitist associations divorced from mainstream consumer society. The influence of mass-production on taste is important. By definition, mass-production has to engineer short cuts in terms of materials, design details and craftsmanship, sacrificing uniqueness for numerous cheaper imitations. This type of mass-production can and often does lead to a relativity of values, particularly in the case of reinterpreted Chinese ceramics adapted for 'a' British taste. The politics of distortion and consequent loss of inherent value, monetary and cultural, is addressed

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.184.

with relevance to copper-red and *flambé* glazes in the previous chapters on Style and Stylistic Reinterpretation.

Tastes can define certain social groups or sub-cultures. This definition further disturbs the notion of individual taste. It is true that personal taste is formed to an extent by the society of which we are a part. Tastes indicate value systems – the personal and public values of people within a society. Taste considered in relation to preferences touching the main aspects of life; choice of food, drink, sport, hobbies, décor, etc. gives shape to a *lifestyle*. Lifestyles often spring from the choice of certain values or philosophies influenced by factors such as education, profession, income and cultural background. *Right* and *wrong* taste does not exist, although there is a notion of 'tastelessness', these products being labelled '*kitsch*'. There are instances where 'good' taste values are distorted and considered uninspired. But taste is not purely about design values, it must encompass monetary worth, the function and value of an object in sentimental terms.

Tastes are subject to fashions and trends which occasionally create stylistic revivals, reinterpretations and re-evaluations. Some 'tastes' linger long after they have ceased to be fashionable. Alternatively the *design-classic* refers to a design of acknowledged excellence which sets a standard little affected by changes in fashion. Classic forms tend to be suited to their purpose; simple, harmonious, well-proportioned and beautifully finished. Classic design has connotations of superior style associated with the serious and conventional, incorporating at least some elements of restrained classical antiquity. Examples of design-classics have included various Parker pens,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

the E-type Jaguar sports car, the Coco Chanel No. 5 perfume bottle, etc. However, in comparison with the vast amount of objects produced there are relatively few classic items deemed beyond the fluctuations of taste. Design classics were often seen as the property of 'professionals' although this distinction is more difficult to maintain in the growing market for imitation counterfeit goods.

Another aspect of taste allied to the idea of the design-classic is the way in which the value of an object changes over time. The social anthropologist Michael Thompson referred to these changing perceptions as a '*social process*' rather than one confined to monetary or aesthetic values.<sup>5</sup> His '*Rubbish Theory*' concerned two object types: *transient* and *durable*. Transient objects lose value after purchase and steadily depreciate with few prospects of resurrection. Durable objects depreciate immediately after purchase until they reach a plateau or '*zero*' economic value, whereupon certain artefacts are redeemed from the rubbish pile and slowly begin to appreciate. They acquire a 'vintage' and become 'antique', both factors of value in themselves. This concept can be illustrated by the later 20<sup>th</sup> century fervour for *Victoriana*. In the 1920's the value of Victorian goods was decreasing. By the 1940's in most cases Victorian products were almost worthless. But by the 1960's specific items began to acquire a cachet – they were re-evaluated because of the quality of workmanship or for aesthetic reasons – hence their cultural and monetary value began to increase. Consequently, certain types of Victorian ceramics are today very expensive, redeemed from 1960's household debris. It is interesting to note that monetary and cultural values appear to appreciate or depreciate in tandem.

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<sup>5</sup> Walker, John A: *Design History and the History of Design*, London, Pluto Press, 1989, p.193.  
Michael Thompson, 'Rubbish Theory', 1979.

Allied to the concept of the Rubbish Theory, Thompson suggested that durable objects serve to perpetuate elites as durable goods, more expensive at the time of purchase than those considered transient, tend to be owned by the wealthier sectors of society.<sup>6</sup> For example, a mass-produced transfer-printed earthenware mug will always be worth less than an individually crafted porcelain vase with a recognised potter's mark. Unless the transfer-printed mug achieves 'cult' status, it will steadily decrease in value. Conversely, the porcelain vase will possibly reach the zero-plateau before it may be plucked from obscurity and begin to appreciate in value as time passes. Nevertheless, it seems that '*at any one time a large number of artefacts exist in store in a kind of value-limbo*'.<sup>7</sup> What follows in this chapter is an analysis of how individuals, groups and societies ascribed aesthetic, cultural, and monetary value to copper-red glazes.

Previous chapters have outlined the thread of scientific competition, the need to prove it was possible not only to reproduce the Imperial copper-red glaze, but to adapt it to the processes of mass-production. Scientific research was driven in part by the prospect of financial reward on behalf of the larger British manufactories, which in turn was propelled by and encouraged the consumer desire for novelty, for '*exotica*' and the perpetual British affection for chinoiserie. Chinese copper-reds were fetching very reasonable sums at auction and through London-based dealers from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The stylistic and technical distortion inevitable in transplanting the Imperial copper-red glaze into British ceramics has been addressed in the previous chapters on Style and Stylistic Reinterpretation.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

## Contemporary Taste

Taste is generated by contemporary values and can therefore be said to express the value systems of a particular society in a particular period. Such values can resurrect elements from the past according to the cultural and aesthetic interests of the time, and affect not only individual works of art but the general course of production. The social implications of taste relating to possession, enhanced status, the impression of wealth and demonstrable 'refined' taste may be said to represent the desire for social pedigree and respect. However, there appears to be no clear correlation between social group and specific tastes. Ceramic exploration at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century established a relationship with historical, philosophical and scientific research which combined to shape taste in that area.

The *design business* has an important role to play in taste formation. Arthur Lazenby Liberty (1843-1917) established his Regent Street store in 1875 which was to have a huge impact on the taste of the late Victorian middle and upper classes. Previous to this Liberty had been...

*"manager of Farmer and Roger's Oriental Warehouse, which had set up trading in the late 1860's, with the stock of Japanese objects remaindered from the International Exhibition of 1862, and Liberty's new shop became a centre of new oriental taste, providing at the same time machine-made products such as textiles, (ceramics) and furniture which reproduced some of the qualities of their handmade equivalents."*<sup>8</sup>

Liberty imported Persian, Chinese, Japanese and Indian art. By the 1880's commissioned work from leading British artists and designers combined with imported oriental goods resulted in an eclectic, 'exotic' taste associated with

modernity. In 1889 Liberty opened a store in Paris and the 'Liberty' taste spread throughout Europe. His store sold Chinese ceramics alongside Doulton and Moorcroft reinterpretations. Arthur Lazenby Liberty was an Aesthete who combined entrepreneurial skills with the ideas of the Arts and Crafts Movement and other industrial design reformers. In fact, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century design was heavily influenced through *institutional* design reform. Metropolitan and provincial schools of art and design were set up to improve the taste of the nation. Alongside the schools public museums of art were founded to furnish art students with examples of excellence from which to draw inspiration.

A later 20<sup>th</sup> century counterpart of Liberty's is the Habitat store. Habitat's designers are keen to promote a 'well-designed' aesthetic using quality materials and where possible, as with a selection of his ceramics and textiles, handcrafted items. He has produced ranges of glazed stoneware and earthenware, some of which have included a reduced red copper glaze. Similar to the original intent of Liberty's of London, Conran aims to combine imported handicrafts with mechanisation, the difference being that the products themselves incorporate a fusion of techniques. Liberty's of London might have influenced taste while Habitat appears to be engineering a specific East-West aesthetic. An advertising leaflet for *Habitat* spring/summer 2001 clearly stated these aims:

*"Thanks to its worldwide supply network, Habitat has always been able to offer hand-made ceramics, baskets, glass and textiles from countries like Thailand and India. But, this Spring/Summer season we've combined our craft expertise with our grasp of modern materials and technology to produce a collection with a 21<sup>st</sup> century spin which we call TechnoCraft."*

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<sup>8</sup> Denvir, Bernard: *The Late Victorians – Art, Design and Society 1852-1910*, London, Longman,

*TechnoCraft embraces East and West, old and new, natural and synthetic, hand-worked and machine-made. Sometimes the mismatch is in the styling... Sometimes unlikely materials or processes are juxtaposed in one product - ... classic white china is adorned with delicate computer generated images.*

*TechnoCraft also means finding new uses for unfamiliar everyday things: beakers and bowls from Indian chemists are reborn in the kitchen...*

*... We believe that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century pre-conceived notions of good taste are waiting to be challenged... ”<sup>9</sup>*

The universally recognised beauty of a design or series of designs can influence taste.

The Ming and Qing dynasty copper-red Chinese porcelains have been admired for centuries for their forms, colour, glaze texture and craftsmanship. However, responses to taste shift over time. Innovation is often accompanied with breaking away from tradition to introduce change, or at least adapting tradition to render it open to new sets of values. While the objects themselves remain the same our perception of them alters. Fashion is a continual cycle where stylistic changes correspond to changes in value. Each generation place different values on certain objects including their perceptions of past styles. Occasionally, contemporary style and value systems collide with those from a previous era resulting in *revival* – a constructive evaluation of a past style. However, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, it is possible to revive a style without resurrecting the accompanying value systems. The fashion cycle was summarised by Aubrey Beardsley in 1897:

*“We first of all reach the high-water mark of narrow minded bigotry, and then follows the reaction. Rabid Puritanism comes in like a high wave and is immediately followed by a steady ebb-tide of brutal coarseness.”<sup>10</sup>*

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1986, p.18.

<sup>9</sup> **Dixon, Tom:** Head of Design for Habitat. An advertising leaflet for *Habitat* Spring / Summer 2001.

<sup>10</sup> **Lawrence, Arthur H:** ‘Good Claret & Sermons’, interview with Aubrey Beardsley in *Tomorrow*, January 1897. From **Denvir, Bernard:** *The Late Victorians*, 1986, p.230.

Rarity is one of the factors which affect cultural and monetary value and therefore taste, commonly allied to notions of authenticity. The mechanical processes of mass-production have affected the rarity value of certain objects. Mechanised reproductions of 'unique' goods can enhance or detract from the original value of an object. In the case of the reinterpreted Chinese copper-red ceramics, the original Chinese artefacts have soared in value, even beyond the reach of some national institutions. At the same time, their late-19<sup>th</sup> – early-20<sup>th</sup> century British reproductions have appreciated, disseminating a Chinese aesthetic to a wider audience thereby influencing public taste. The latest commercial interpretations, most of which are based on earlier British reproductions of Imperial Chinese porcelains, have been made in limited quantities to elevate their value in a competitive contemporary market. Such marketing strategies can also be seen as an attempt to cultivate specific tastes.

Certain rare and eagerly sought after objects can encourage competitive rivalry among collectors, creating a 'craze' for specific artefacts. However, before purchasing a prized item authentication is often desirable. It has to be discerned whether the piece is original, an imitation or fake, all of which have a direct bearing on monetary value. The piece has to be placed historically in a period or culture, and it is the classification of art products, partly for investment purposes, which has driven scholarship throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Scholarship has been influential in shaping the taste of private British collectors of Chinese art, latterly impacting national taste as a proportion of these collections have passed into public institutions.

In order to verify an object, to test its authenticity, elaborate techniques have been evolved. Scientific technology in the form of x-ray fluorescent testing can pinpoint

the age of a piece without reference to stylistic oddities. This non-invasive yet expensive technique developed c.1955 and to some extent dispensed with art-historical expert opinion. The technique revealed the extent of forged items in some of the world's greatest public and private collections.<sup>11</sup> In the case of Chinese copper-red and *flambé* porcelains forgery was hardly worth the effort because of the difficulties in mastering the glaze technology, hence was mainly confined to Han and Tang burial goods. However, X-ray fluorescence was used to analyse copper-red and *flambé* glaze compositions and the clay bodies to which they were applied. According to one source, Chinese forgers can now dupe the X-ray thermoluminescence test results on stoneware with clever molecule manipulation whereby certain chemical compounds are added to the glaze and body.<sup>12</sup> Microphotographs and microscopes have also influenced the research and work of the connoisseur-scientist. The dissemination of scientific and art historical knowledge on the internet has played a formative role for collectors and scholars of the later 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and consequently their influence on 'taste'. However, the taste for chinoiserie in Britain has a greater historical depth.

## **Tradition**

### **'Novelty Value' – the Taste for Chinoiserie in Britain**

The European and British *chinoiserie* tradition has been a '*process*' of absorbing '*foreign influence into the native tradition, and not vice versa*'.<sup>13</sup> Chinese influence

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<sup>11</sup> **Stuart J. Fleming** described the X-ray fluorescent process in *Authenticity in Art: The Scientific Detection of Forgery*, London, 1975.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with **Dominic Jellinek** collector and former employee of Bluett's: 70 Ledborough Lane, Beaconsfield, Bucks, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

<sup>13</sup> **Steegman, John**: *The Rule of Taste*, first pub. 1936, this ed. 1986, p.189.

has steadily pervaded Europe since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century when the Dutch despatched an embassy to Peking with intent to establish diplomatic and trade agreements. Although Dutch ambitions were frustrated, the mission had important repercussions in the form of Johan Nieuwhoff, steward to the Dutch Ambassador. Nieuwhoff penned a series of drawings including those of the porcelain tower of Nanking and Peking's Imperial gardens. Subsequent publication in Europe gave a curious audience a glimpse of China for the first time. These drawings became an important source for chinoiserie – the European style inspired by the Far and Near East. From the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch merchants in the Far-East had exported Chinese and Japanese porcelain back to Europe, but it took many years to become fashionable. This porcelain mainly found its way into the hands of wealthy patrons in Holland and France. Britain discovered China through tea rather than porcelain where:

*"The Orient... became the vogue; it had already become so in France... 'le Trianon de Porcelaine',... having been built in the 1670's. What was fashionable in Paris became in due course, but after something of an interval, fashionable in London."*<sup>14</sup>

Chinoiserie became more popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when China opened to the West. This trend was most evident in Britain, France and Holland in the acquisition of *blue-and-white* porcelain and lacquered chests. But there was a feeling that chinoiserie of the 1740's – 60's was frivolous, that it was an *exotic* novelty, excessive and unrestrained, an attempt to escape the monotonous regularity and rigorous academia of the neo-classical style. In fact, the taste of persons who adopted the style was certainly called into question. Chinoiserie portrayed...

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.37.

*"a world where mandarins, rajahs and elephants wandered round the walls of boudoirs, among weeping willows and pagodas." A "world [which] existed behind ... dignified and very English Georgian facades" distanced from "entrance halls" and "State apartments", confined to "some ante-room or bed-chamber, ... [where] it might be possible to be a little less English, ... to depart from the traditional and experiment with something that was not included under the safe heading of "Good Taste".<sup>15</sup>*

Chinoiserie artefacts – ceramics, furniture, metalwork or embroidered wall hangings were often displayed in special rooms alongside Chinese export porcelain against Chinese wallpaper. Chinese 'rooms' were a feature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to be distinguished from later tendencies to display Chinese merchandise and chinoiserie in rooms of contemporary décor. Examples include the *Chinese rooms* at properties such as Calke Abbey in Derbyshire and Erddig near Wrexham. Hogarth wrote scathingly at the time:

*"There is at present such a thirst after variety that even paltry imitations of Chinese buildings have a kind of vogue, chiefly on account of their novelty."<sup>16</sup>*

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Gerald Reitlinger wrote about how the sense of Eastern novelty had gained particular status in Britain:

*"Nowhere was this sense of novelty more appreciated than in England, which had become the overlord of a third of India, of the Eastern seas, and of most Eastern commerce. It was in the 1770's that English collectors began to take the Indies and Far East seriously. By the end of the wars, when a breath of wind from the Continent had made the Renaissance art expensive and fashionable, the English market was still paying more for the latest Oriental oddities. In fact, the first decade of the nineteenth century had a distinct resemblance with the 1870's, when Chinese blue-and-white porcelain became more sought after in England than the maiolica and Limoges enamels that were then at the height of fashion on the Continent..."<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 48. Extract from **Hogarth's** *Analysis of Beauty*, 1753, p.45.

<sup>17</sup> **Reitlinger, Gerald:** *The Economics of Taste*, Vol. II, *The Rise and Fall of Objets D'Art Prices Since 1750*, London, Barrie & Rockliff, 1963, p. 58.

Chinoiserie of the 18<sup>th</sup> century tended to be decorative rather than structural. British designers working around 1750 were inspired by and used decorative motifs portrayed on imported Chinese wallpapers. For instance, the furniture designer Thomas Chippendale incorporated the latticework, bells, birds and pagodas into his essentially rococo designs to give them a Chinese flavour. It may be that the asymmetry of Chinese art influenced the rococo style. The Brighton Pavilion (completed between 1802-1821), is generally recognised as the apogee of 18<sup>th</sup> century British chinoiserie, where...

*"from the floor to the top of the great cupola... the eye sees nothing but a vision of a legendary China; Africa and Hindustan are banished, and Persia is borne by dragons from mirror to mirror round the walls."*<sup>18</sup>

This quote highlights another important point in relation to 18<sup>th</sup> century chinoiserie which was 'generally Oriental' in character, rather than 'precisely Sung or accurately Tang.'<sup>19</sup> In fact, chinoiserie of both the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries often incorporated and amalgamated design elements from China with those of Japan, Africa, India and the 'romantic' Near East. Occasionally, this European Chinese style bordered on the grotesque, a bricolage of motifs loosely connected through intricate latticework or swirling arabesques. And leaping from the excesses of the 18<sup>th</sup> century towards the severity of neo-classicism and the Regency period style, chinoiserie may have fallen out of fashion in a fantastic sense, but it remained dilute in the consciousness of designers until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Rococo Revival which re-established chinoiserie's credibility. However, the passing vogue was fashionably short-lived only to be supplanted by Japonaiserie from c.1860.

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<sup>18</sup> Steegman, John: *The Rule of Taste*, first pub. 1936, this ed. 1986, p. 45.

## British Chinoiserie and the Taste for Chinese Ceramics

Ceramics have had a specific effect on the development of British chinoiserie and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the 'educated' British taste for an undefiled Chinese aesthetic. Initially, Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, Dutch and English tin-glazed earthenware of a similar aesthetic were included as part of an overall decorative scheme. From around 1690-1720 these 'architectural' ceramics were a feature of British stately homes. The reign of William III and Mary II (1688-1702) heralded a transition in English architecture and design. The increased prosperity of England during this period was reflected in a corresponding movement in design towards comfort and elegance. This change partly came about through French influence; the Palace of Versailles and Louis XIV's interest and patronage had a profound impact on European decorative art. British art and design was also affected by the influx of Huguenot craftsmen forced to leave France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Many of the refugees sought asylum in Holland before coming to Britain, one such being the architect-designer Daniel Marot (1663-1752).<sup>20</sup> In 1685 Marot left Paris for Holland where his prodigious talent was recognised and he became the 'senior' designer for William of Orange. In 1694 Marot arrived in London with the new English King - William III, where he was employed at Hampton Court. Marot is generally credited with introducing a less exuberant form of the Continental Baroque style to Britain, designing spare, monumental Baroque interiors with 'gaps' or alcoves for ceramics. Kangxi *blue-and-white* porcelain was favoured at the time to add colour to bland white or light interiors. Later, Chinese *famille verte* and *famille rose* porcelains were displayed.

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<sup>20</sup> Architects of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> Baroque style such as Marot became more interested in the overall aesthetic of their interiors, hence their interest in furnishings. A number of architects designed their own furniture. Interiors were *architect-designed*.

By the mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> century polychrome enamelled Chinese porcelain adorned British interiors as a complement to the European rococo style. This porcelain was largely made at Jingdezhen and decorated with enamels in Canton before being shipped to Europe. From around 1735-65 and later, 'clobbering' Chinese porcelain became a popular practice to render the ware more attractive to a European or British market.<sup>21</sup> Some factories imported blank white Chinese porcelain to decorate according to indigenous taste. The German factories, notably Meissen and Nymphenburg, developed a range of chinoiserie figurines – chinamen, monkeys, etc...

In line with the excesses of the rococo, Chinese (and European) porcelain was often gilded and the finest monochrome specimens received elaborate ormolu mounts. In some cases the ormolu mounts became more valuable than the porcelain. This was not due to craftsmanship alone. Gilding bronze mounts by mercurial evaporation was costly in lives as well as raw materials. Reitlinger used Lazare Duvaux's accounts for 1750 to illustrate the French preference for mounted monochrome Chinese porcelain:

*"two magots, ... probably seated figures of the gods delicately painted on the biscuit, cost £9 12s, whereas three plain vases of green crackle porcelain, suitable for mounting, cost £31 8s.*

*In 1751... Four tall powder blue vases cost M. de Julienne £23, to which is added the sum of £8 12s for cutting their necks down to add an ormolu swag or two. Seven tall blue-and-white vases cost only sixty francs between them..."<sup>22</sup>*

Mme de Pompadour played an important role in shaping not only the taste of the French court, but later British taste. Between c. 1745-1758 her influence over the King and desire to decorate her numerous chateaux gave rise to a highly feminine,

<sup>21</sup> *Clobbering* refers to the mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> century European practise of overpainting underglaze-decorated porcelain with enamels.

<sup>22</sup> Reitlinger, Gerald: *The Economics of taste*, Vol. II, 1963, p.35.

frivolous taste in design. In the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when the French Rococo of Louis XV revived, the taste for mounted 'mottled' and *flambé* porcelains returned unabated:

*"It is even possible that the cult of the medieval prototypes, including the big prices paid for Chun ware of the Sung Dynasty in Paris [and Britain] in the 1920's, were due to Mme de Pompadour."*<sup>23</sup>

The fervour for Chinese *blue-and-white* and enamelled porcelain in Britain raged throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This export ware fuelled the vogue for ceramic chinoiserie produced by the leading English factories of the day; Minton, Royal Worcester, Coalport, Mason's, Royal Doulton, etc. However, the Chinese may have produced export art for the west but only collected ceramics reflecting their native culture. The respect for and veneration of indigenous antiquities, tradition and scholarship is a significant feature of Chinese culture. But it was not until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Chinese domestic ceramics entered the West in appreciable quantities thereby prompting a shift in taste.

### **Taste-Makers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> –20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Individual taste-formers often attached themselves to or else founded groups and societies in which to express their aesthetic interests and preferences. Groups of like-minded individuals spurred each other on to collect and share information. Although chiefly concerned with aesthetics, the philosophies of such groups frequently drew from contemporary thinking and this in turn affected their design ideals. In so far as specific groups within society incorporated the intellectual and aesthetic leaders of the time who had the power to attract other influential figures to their cause, such groups

exercised an influence which far outweighed their numerical membership. The later 19<sup>th</sup> century with an expanding, educated bourgeoisie eager to be *informed* and express their opinions allied with and supported different movements.

Pertinent to the theme of 'taste' in British ceramics were numerous individuals operating within various groups, societies and movements: William Morris, Arthur Lazenby Liberty<sup>24</sup> and the Arts and Crafts Movement; Oscar Wilde and James McNeil Whistler associated with the Aesthetic Movement; Roger Fry and the Omega Workshops; The Oriental Ceramic Society; metropolitan and provincial museum societies such as 'The Subscribers' in Birmingham; the Crafts Council and Crafts Potters' Association, etc. This list is by no means exhaustive. In addition there were a host of dealers, collectors, critics, scholars and scientists who contributed to the taste of the nation, not least the role of the consumer. This section will take key figures relevant to the evolution of British taste for Chinese ceramics and their various interpretations. As far as possible, the subject will be treated in chronological order. Chapter 7 will deal more specifically with the influence of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century collectors and collecting.

### **William Morris and the Arts & Crafts Movement**

William Morris (1834-96) furnishes a suitable example of an individual who can be said to have influenced period aesthetic. Morris was adamant that form should follow function and that surface decoration should complement the form. The Chinese were practising this doctrine for centuries beforehand. Arts and Crafts ideals permeated

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>24</sup> The role of Arthur Lazenby Liberty has been acknowledged earlier in this chapter.

studio and commercial ceramics with considerable success, the fruits of which can be seen in copper-red and *flambé* ware made throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But, the influence of the French art-potters, in turn stimulated by a range of scholarly Chinese translations and scientific research, were equally influential in Britain alongside the desire to capitalise on a fresh craze for things 'oriental'. John MacKenzie provided a working definition of this frequently mis-used term:

*"The word 'Orientalism' has ... been used since the early nineteenth century to describe a genre of painting, pioneered by the French, but developed by artists from Britain and several other European countries, with predominantly Middle Eastern and North African subjects. Historians of architecture and design have occasionally adopted the word to embrace work which has an oriental inspiration, ... often Islamic, sometimes Indian, occasionally Chinese or Japanese. In this sense it has been used to identify the cross-cultural influences upon patterns, textiles, ceramics, furniture and certain building styles."*<sup>25</sup>

An important aspect of Morris' Arts and Crafts Movement was the quasi-religious zeal with which it expounded a mixture of social, moral and aesthetic philosophies. In fact, it was primarily a socialist rather than an aesthetic movement.<sup>26</sup> Later, as the Arts and Crafts Movement became more concerned with art objects, their products were seen by some to lose the socialist values they were thought to embody, hence the Movement lost some of its radical, liberal support.

Because Morris saw beauty in the value of work – manual work – it is natural that he supported the craft potter. Espousing his socialist values he viewed a '*work of art*' as

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<sup>25</sup> MacKenzie, John M: *Orientalism – History, theory and the arts*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995, p. xiii.

<sup>26</sup> Tillyard, S.K: *The Impact of Modernism – The Visual Arts in Edwardian England*, London, Routledge, 1988, p. 15.

a 'well made thing, that is all.'<sup>27</sup> Morris believed that lack of pleasure in daily work resulted in all manner of vulgar trivia. He went further to suggest that even...

*"artists, the aim of whose lives it is to produce beauty and interest... are driven into seeking their materials in the imaginations of past ages, or... by sentimentalising and falsifying the life which goes on around them; and so... produce little which is not contemptible when matched against the works of the non-commercial ages."*<sup>28</sup>

Morris saw mass-produced art as dishonest, divorced from the integrity of manual participation. He failed to comment on the commercial nature of ceramic manufacture in China – and the beautiful, 'mass-produced' porcelain made in such an environment. But manufacture in China was not mechanised, and it was perhaps this aspect of production which most offended Morris. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the impossibility of a return to large-scale craft guilds became increasingly apparent, but Morris' stance had encouraged a return to simple, functional design, the appropriate use of materials and renewed interest in craft skills. Ceramic design was affected by Morris' ideas and taste was directed towards hand-made and glazed, if not specifically Chinese pottery. The decorative lustre pottery of William De Morgan is often associated with Morris chiefly because of his repetitive surface-pattern designs. De Morgan's reintroduction of the Middle Eastern lustre technique could be said to have inspired an 'oriental' taste in British ceramics.

Morris ascribed the absence of pleasure and beauty in life to *'the development of commercialism'*, in addition to its *'first gift of a propertyless proletariat.'*<sup>29</sup> He believed that art needed to be *'born-again'*, a concept only possible through the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.22.

<sup>28</sup> **Morris, William:** 'The worker's share of art', *Commonweal*, April 1885. From: **Denvir, Bernard:** *The Late Victorians*, 1986, pp. 72-73.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

adoption of Socialism. That *'not only the worker, but the world in general, will have no share in art till our present commercial society gives place to real society – to Socialism.'*<sup>30</sup>

Whatever the nature of Morris' social leanings the products of his company were, although beautiful, functional and made of quality materials, beyond the means of the worker. Some contemporary manufacturers and designers saw his stand as essential and purist. It was a 19<sup>th</sup> century response to address the gulf between the working and leisured classes – to make 'good' design available to all – but dogmatic and idealistic compared to 20<sup>th</sup> century movements. In effect, Morris wanted to change the structure of civilisation through art. His campaign to transform taste saw art as a means of social salvation. Morris favoured radical transformation of the structure of society rather than through palliative attempts at redistribution and social improvement. Perhaps Morris' most precious legacy to British ceramic taste was his notion that purity of form was inherent in a hand-made object, hence that object could be considered a work of art. This idea possibly contributed to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century interest in Song and Pre-Song Chinese ceramics, and no doubt fostered a strong British studio-pottery movement which continues to flourish today.

### **Whistler and the Aesthetic Movement**

Considered part of the 1860's Aesthetic Movement, James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) started to acquire Kangxi *blue-and-white* porcelain around 1863.<sup>31</sup> He used the porcelain to invoke Far Eastern associations in his portraits. On a personal

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-74.

level Whistler displayed the porcelain to add a note of stark colour to his otherwise sombre interiors and is known to have admired the sparse, well-balanced designs. Although *blue-and-white* Chinese porcelain had been in vogue for periods prior to the 1860's, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century imports were mainly of the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese export ware. The Kangxi ware that Whistler collected had been in Europe from around 1670, but not in the same quantities as later export art. It could be said that Whistler's interest in Kangxi porcelain was chiefly *aesthetic* rather than historical, stimulated by a need to furnish — admired for its decorative as well as intrinsic value.

In as much as Whistler introduced Kangxi Chinese *blue-and-white* ceramics to the Aesthetic Movement, adherents of which were influential figures of the time, he influenced British taste. To what extent is debatable. For instance, many mid and later 19<sup>th</sup> century collectors remained eager to obtain 'pairs' of export vases, jars, plates, etc. of a radically different, crowded aesthetic. It was this type of export ware collected for status and as investment that Oscar Wilde satirised when he claimed: '*One must live up to one's blue china.*'<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the Aesthetic Movement was associated more with Japanese than Chinese art which probably generated confusion among its adherents. In fact many people, including museum curators, often did not know the difference. However, Whistler did anticipate the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century shift away from highly commercial export wares towards a taste for the historic domestic arts of China.

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<sup>31</sup> **Gray, Basil:** 'The Development of Taste in Chinese Art in the West 1872-1972', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 39, 1971-73, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> **Ed. Ellman, Richard:** 'Wilde at Oxford', *Oscar Wilde*, London, Hamilton, 1987, pp. 43-44. Ellman wrote: 'Its authenticity has been questioned, but Oscar Browning records that when he met Wilde in Oxford in 1876 Wilde was already famous for the remark ... The *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduate's Journal* confirms this in a satirical piece on Wilde as 'O' Flighty' on 27<sup>th</sup> February

Another influential aspect of the Aesthetic Movement of the 1860's-80's was its search for 'Aesthetic' experience in art. In this sense it paved the way for Early Modern Movements such as the Omega Workshops established by Roger Fry. Apart from Whistler's contribution, the Aesthetic Movement may not have directly influenced British taste for Chinese ceramics but it did much to enlarge public perception of 'Eastern' art and rouse general interest.

Pertinent to 'Aesthetic' experience, philosopher Henri Louis Bergson (1859-1941) shared philosophical theories with Aesthetes and Early Modernists; Oscar Wilde and Roger Fry furnishing respective examples. Influential among these philosophies was the idea that a work of art was as much the creation of the viewer as the artist. Wilde saw a work of art as a '*starting-point for a new creation.*' He suggested a finished work had '*an independent life of its own, and may deliver a message far other than that which was put into its lips to say.*'<sup>33</sup> The concept of a new creation implied that a work of art had different meanings for individuals which according to Bergson, was based on interpretation related to past and present experiences.<sup>34</sup>

Bergson proposed that *all* aspects of life were *aesthetic*, not simply the creation and admiration of art objects, but any experience which facilitated perception and discernment. Bergson believed that real art is an experience of life – an aesthetic

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1879, which commented, '*How often I feel how hard it is to live up to my blue china*' is a favourite remark of his."

<sup>33</sup> Wilde, Oscar: *The Critic As Artist*, 1883. From: Denvir, Bernard: *The Late Victorians*, 1986, pp. 60-61.

<sup>34</sup> Gillies, Mary-Ann: *Henri Bergson and British Modernism*; Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996, pp. 10-13. Bergson's notion of *durée*, or mode of being, attempted to explain existence as a continuum in which a state of mind or inner world of experience was neither permanent nor recurring. Bergson reasoned that because humans need social interaction they construct an external reality using science to '*spatialize*' time in order to understand and analyse their inner experience of *durée*. Pivotal to Bergson's alternative theory of time and space was the idea that the sum of inner

experience produced when an audience intuitively perceives a work of art and 'rediscovers' the original emotions and creative force that gave it life. In so doing the viewer was not only drawing closer to understanding the 'essence' of a work, but also reclaiming the artist's experience through personal interaction, drafting the object from an external to an internal world.<sup>35</sup> This philosophy contributed to the contemporary realisation that art need not conform to conventional notions of beauty. Theorists such as Bergson and other Modernists were redefining and extending the early 20<sup>th</sup> century approach to aesthetics in relation to what was *beautiful* and what held artistic value.

This philosophy was not unique to the West. For centuries the Chinese held the view that objects were able to communicate things other than their formal subject matter, conveying the artist's expression of emotion but also issues surrounding class and status. The Preface to *The Helen D. Ling Collection of Chinese Ceramics* elaborated on the central role of Chinese ceramics in wealthy 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese society as described in the Chinese novel of manners – *The Story of the Stone* by Cao Xueqin (c. 1715 – 1763), Chapter 40:

*"Indoors... it was stark and bare. The only decoration in Bao-chai's room was a vase of the cheaper kind of Ding ware on the table, with a few chrysanthemums in it. Apart from the flowers there were only a few books and some tea-things on the table... 'This child is really too self-effacing!' Grandmother Jia muttered, evidently shocked by what she saw."*<sup>36</sup>

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experiences became the source of life, effectively creating existence and directly affecting how we see and relate to an external world constructed to reflect inner life experience.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>36</sup> Ed. Kuo, Jason C: 'Preface' to *The Helen D. Ling Collection of Chinese Ceramics*, exh. cat. January 18 – March 9, 1995. Pub by The Art Gallery in association with The Dept. of Art History and Archaeology, University of Maryland, College Park. Distributed by The University of Washington Press, Seattle & London, 1995, p. xvii.

A poem about a sprig of plum blossom in a *meiping* vase in Chapter 50 reaffirmed the importance of aesthetics in Chinese society. When brought before the characters the vase became the focus of attention and a vehicle for literary expression. Aesthetics were thought to represent admirable qualities in human nature, hence the objects can be said to have reflected and embodied the 'artistic sensibilities' of the characters in the story.<sup>37</sup>

Bergson was important because his aesthetic theory possibly influenced Roger Fry who exercised a strong influence on the nation's taste. Fry also believed in the creation of meaning by which the audience enters into the experience of the artist. Bergson and Fry thought art or aesthetic experience encouraged people to view the world in different ways; shocking and placating, a means of nourishing the inner life or spiritual existence. Art was seen as a means to unite people, to expand their horizons and acknowledge difference. Art was the point of connection between the creator and the perceiver, between the material and the spiritual, spatial time and *durée*. In contrast to the earlier Arts and Crafts Movement and Early Modernism, Bergson saw art as '*non-utilitarian*', able to exist independent of function. For Bergson, life was most acutely manifest in Art through the acts of creation and participation.<sup>38</sup> Bergson's contribution to British taste during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was in his promotion of a broader definition and acceptance of 'art', even that of other cultures.

Perhaps the most influential product of the Aesthetic Movement was that it encouraged an interest in applied art, not simply painting and sculpture. This was

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. xvii.

<sup>38</sup> Gillies, Mary-Ann: '*Henri Bergson and British Modernism*', 1996, p. 23.

accompanied by the realisation that environment can have a profound effect on the sub-conscious. Aesthetes shared the Arts and Crafts notion that ugly surroundings were damaging to psychological and physical health. It was the attention to the sub-conscious, the psychological nature of art which was possibly more influential than an aesthetic promotion of a broad interest in Chinese art and culture. Public perception tended to confuse the influence and ideals of the Arts and Crafts, Aesthetic and Early Modern Movements, as well as with what was seen as *continental* Art Nouveau. To varying extents these groups became stylistically and philosophically enmeshed during the fashion conscious 1890's and early 1900's. Such Movements were possibly more influential on *ways of living* than through the products chosen to express fashionable ideas. Fashion and the threat of social ostracism determined taste rather than preference for a *style* or a genuine historical and cultural interest.

### **Roger Fry (1866-1934)**

*"But we are concerned here not with the origin, but with the vision... Those who indulge in this vision are entirely absorbed in apprehending the relation of forms and colour to one another... Suppose... we are looking at a Sung bowl; ... the shape of the outside contour, the perfect sequence of the curves, ... we realise that the precise thickness of the walls is consistent with the particular kind of matter of which it is made, its appearance of density and resistance; and finally we recognise... how satisfactory for the display of all these plastic qualities are the colour and dull lustre of the glaze... [T]here comes to us... a feeling of purpose; ... that the pot is an expression of an idea in the artist's mind."*<sup>39</sup>

This lengthy quote illustrates Roger Fry's perspective as an art critic and self-styled philosopher on the public acceptance of, and interest in Chinese art in Britain, especially Chinese ceramic art. Although not an oriental specialist in the sense that Bushell, Hobson, Eumorfopoulos and Sir Percival David were, Fry nevertheless

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<sup>39</sup> Fry, Roger: 'The Artist's Vision', *Vision and Design*, London, Penguin Books Ltd., First pub. 1920, this ed. 1961, pp. 47-48.

influenced British taste to tolerate difference – particularly a non-western aesthetic – praising what he called the *primitive arts* of Byzantine Europe and Africa, as well as the painting and decorative art of China and Japan. Fry championed a return to the basic principles of '*formal design*' inherent in the handcrafted arts of these cultures.<sup>40</sup> The above quote highlights the salient points of Fry's aesthetic theory in relation to art in general, but which are especially applicable to Song dynasty ceramics. During the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century limited numbers of Song Dynasty ceramics had entered London and aroused curiosity among scholars and collectors. By the 1920's they had become *fashionable* and regarded with a measure of superiority over later, particularly 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese export ceramics. Song ceramics were admired for their aesthetic as well as historical appeal. Scholarship had made considerable strides by 1935 at the time of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London.

Fry was preoccupied with the notion of *order* through *unity*; unity between the great *periods* of art, *cultural* unity and unity *within an individual work of art* in which the '*relation*' of forms and colours should '*cohere*'.<sup>41</sup> Fry thought unity could be achieved through the use of natural form – forms which had not been corrupted by superfluous decorative features resonant of cultural, social or economic significance. Fry considered *natural* or *pure* form to be the '*essential quality*' of a work of art, and such qualities to be *universal*.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 'Retrospect', p. 227. Fry was of the opinion that '*formal design*' had been abandoned since the Early Modern Period in Western Europe in the '*fervid pursuit of naturalistic representation*'.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 'An Essay in Aesthetics', p. 34. Fry asserted the importance of unity in an art object as '*necessary for our restful contemplation of the work of art as a whole...*'

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 'Retrospect', pp. 230-231.

Fry attempted to order what he conceived to be the essential, '*emotional elements*' of design, of which the first was...

*"the rhythm of the line with which the forms are delineated... The second element... mass. When an object is so represented that we can recognise it as having inertia, we feel its power of resisting movement... The third element... space... The fourth element... that of light and shade... The fifth element... that of colour... The possibility of another [sixth] element... the inclination to the eye of a plane..."* Fry considered these "*emotional elements of design... connected with essential conditions of our physical existence...*"<sup>43</sup>

All the qualities or elements mentioned above can be directly applied to Song dynasty ceramics. However, Fry was using such criteria as a vehicle to promote his belief that pure or 'only form', stripped of artifice, 'simple' and 'naked' (revealing structure), could express the emotion of the artist and reflect the culture from which it came, acting as a form of spiritual barometer. For Fry and the Early Modernists sparsity became a virtue, a means of drawing closer to the *truth*. Spare forms therefore acquired integrity, were seen as elegant and well-proportioned. A serious and *sincere* approach to the study and application of aesthetics was deemed necessary to achieve 'pure' form. These intentions resonate with those often attributed to William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Fry's approach to form was not unlike that of Chinese connoisseurs, as it was known that Song ceramics were regarded as 'classic' prototypes, revered by the Chinese scholar elite and widely reproduced during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The emotional content invested by Fry into works of art -- his own and those of other cultures, provided an early 20<sup>th</sup> century antidote to the 19<sup>th</sup> century obsession with empirical science and technological progress.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 'An Essay in Aesthetics', p. 36.

His reference to the '*essential conditions of our physical existence*' points Fry's aesthetic philosophy in another direction. The Early Modernists, Fry among them, were keen to create a form of transcendental art which could exist beyond the boundaries of time and space, hence their interest in the philosophical theories of Henri Bergson with regard to the concept of *durée* and the role of the viewer as creator. Fry supported '*the idea of the freedom of art from all trammels and tyrannies*', presumably including freedom from the constraints of physical relativity – from time and space.<sup>44</sup>

The emphasis and value Fry placed on the hand-made was another point of connection with Arts and Crafts. He believed in using the correct medium for particular designs and exposing the innate characteristics of the material in a further attempt to reveal nature, beauty and truth. Fry valued the dignity of labour and thought that mechanised art lacked expression, even that it could not sustain peoples' psychological needs indefinitely. Fry related the emotional content expressed in Post-Impressionist painting through the use of pure form and colour to that of Song pottery, which he viewed as sculpture. This view of what constituted a work of art justified the exhibition of ceramics alongside paintings at the 1910 Post-Impressionist Exhibition for which Fry was responsible. Although the Chinese had long considered certain ceramic types as an art form, the concept was breaking new ground in the West. Arts and Crafts philosophy that gave utilitarian objects artistic status was adopted and expanded by Fry and the Early British Modernists. It was hoped that a fusion and transference of values would attach themselves to the paintings and pottery

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 'Art and Socialism', p. 53.

in the Exhibition – that the pure forms and planes of colour in Post-Impressionist painting would be recognised in three-dimensional forms.<sup>45</sup>

*Rhythm, plastic coherence* and *unity* became key words for Fry and his followers. Ceramic glazes and decoration had to be seen to complement these design attributes, to correspond to the form of the vessel and its intended function. It can be argued that Fry intellectualised the potter's art to rationalise his approach to ceramic design and generate ideological reasons for craft practises to continue in the machine-age, although many Omega ceramic designs were applied to Poole Pottery blanks which involved manual and mechanical processes. The Omega Workshops established by Fry in 1913 attempted to return to a type of guild system of production not dissimilar to Arts and Crafts endeavours three decades earlier.

As far as contributing to the taste for Chinese ceramics in Britain, Fry exercised a considerable influence as an art critic and as editor of the *Burlington Magazine*. He wrote an introductory review to the *Burlington Magazine Monograph on Chinese Art* in 1925 and contributed to articles on the 1910 Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition of Early Chinese Pottery and Porcelain. He loaned his statue of *Wei Kuan-yin* to the Burlington Chinese Art Exhibition of 1915.<sup>46</sup> Fry was simultaneously acquainted with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century collections of Chinese art in America.

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<sup>45</sup> Post-Impressionist artist **Paul Gauguin (1848-1903)** modelled stoneware from c.1886 in the studio of Ernest Chaplet (1835-1909). Like Chaplet, Gauguin experimented with high-fired reduced glazes including the *sang-de-boeuf* glaze. From **Bodelsen, Merete: Gauguin's Ceramics- A Study in the Development of his Art**, London, Faber & Faber, 1964, Ch. III – 'Brittany 1888 & after', pp. 115 & 117. Figs. 80 (profile) & 81 (frontal) show Gauguin's self-portrait in stoneware, 1889, Ht: 19.3 cm, Museum of Decorative Art, Copenhagen. The piece is streaked with high-fired copper-red. Examples of Chaplet and Gauguin *sang-de-boeuf* glazed ceramics can also be seen in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. See Chapter 3: Style for photographs of Chaplet's work.

Although not an initiator, Fry was an opportunist. His promotion of Chinese art and ceramics swayed taste through his attempts to connect it with modern British art, the contemporary *avant-garde*. Using his lectures and skill as a writer, as well as his foundation of the Omega, Fry dedicated himself to raising an awareness of aesthetics outside the conservative Western tradition – of teaching his adherents to reinterpret and re-evaluate Medieval and non-western art. In that capacity Fry can be considered successful. The Omega products catered for those who wanted to buy objects with ‘art status’, a concept that had not faded from consciousness since the demise of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In this sense Fry can be said to have capitalised on Morris’ evangelism, but made the leap from a return to the vernacular to an exotic, *modern* aesthetic. Therefore, inadvertently perhaps, Fry influenced taste not only towards the acceptance of Chinese Art but in his continued support for the virtues and desirability of contemporary, hand-crafted design including studio-pottery. And as was the case for Morris, it was the enlightened, socially mobile middle and upper-classes that subscribed to Fry’s philosophy.

Before discussing other influences on the British taste for Chinese ceramics, it is necessary to mention Fry’s elitist approach to aesthetics which can hardly have endeared him to a large section of the general public. He was capable of the patronising tone redolent in a healthy proportion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature on art collecting and matters pertaining to tasteful discrimination. Fry’s essay on ‘*Art and Life*’ stated:

*“... the artist of the new movement is moving into a sphere more and more remote from that of the ordinary man. In proportion as art becomes purer the number of people to whom it appeals gets less. It cuts out all the romantic overtones of life which*

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<sup>46</sup> Gray, Basil: ‘The Development of Taste’, *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 39, 1971-73, p. 28. Fry purchased the statue from Charles Vignier’s (1863-1934) Paris exhibition of Chinese painting and sculpture in 1913.

*are the usual bait by which men are induced to accept a work of art. It appeals only to the aesthetic sensibility, and that in most men is comparatively weak.*"<sup>47</sup>

Which brings the question of the acceptance of the 'purer' aesthetic of early Chinese pottery and porcelain back into focus. On one level Fry was correct in his beliefs; many collectors and consumers did indeed prefer the highly decorative, sometimes romantic associations of later Chinese porcelain and continue to do so. But the purity of an aesthetic is a highly value laden judgement and essentially a matter of choice. It is reasonable to assert that a singular preference cannot universally exist in any given period or culture, especially given Britain's Imperial legacy and the diverse aesthetic influences that vied for attention.

Fry's friendship with Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson was also significant. Dickinson and Fry were members of the Cambridge 'Apostles', a coterie which admired Chinese art and culture irrespective of prevailing public perception.<sup>48</sup> Dickinson embarked on his first trip to China as an *Alphonse Kahn* fellow in 1912. Established by the Parisian dealer Charles Vignier (1863-1934), the fellowships were created to dissipate European prejudice that existed towards China among the influential intelligentsia. Similarly, Arthur Waley - another Cambridge 'Apostle' - made Chinese culture accessible to a broader audience in his post-Second World War translations of Chinese poetry which were accompanied by biographical narratives on the Chinese authors. Waley's first volume of Chinese poetry translated into English was published in 1918.<sup>49</sup> Fry was not therefore working or thinking in an intellectual vacuum, but

<sup>47</sup> Fry, Roger: 'Art and Life', *Vision and Design*, first pub. 1920, this ed. 1961, pp. 21-22.

<sup>48</sup> In 1901 G.L. Dickinson published *Letters from John Chinaman*, which was critical of British condescension towards the Chinese and their culture.

<sup>49</sup> Gray, Basil: 'The Development of Taste', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 39, 1971-73, pp. 30-31.

could be regarded as one of the key figures instrumental in turning the tide of taste towards a more favourable, respectful evaluation of Chinese art and culture.

### The Oriental Ceramic Society

On the 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1921 at the home of Stephen Winkworth a decision was taken to unite twelve disciples with a common interest in Chinese ceramics, and in Far Eastern arts generally. The foundation of the Oriental Ceramic Society was testimony to the pre-occupation with ceramics in London among a small elite. This has been partly attributed to the durable nature of ceramics which made scholarship and dating easier than in other areas of art collecting. Meetings were convened monthly except during summer vacations. The idea to form a Society was suggested by A.L. Hetherington in response to the new and growing interest in Song and pre-Song ceramics. Prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, collectors were acquainted with Tang and other pre-Song ware only through descriptions in Chinese literature.<sup>50</sup>

In 1921 membership of the OCS increased from twelve to fourteen, including George Eumorfopoulos - who was elected as the first president, A.L. Hetherington, R.L. Hobson of the British Museum, H.J. Oppenheim, Bernard Rackham from the V&A, Oscar Raphael and Ferdinand Schiller. By 1927, the membership numbered eighteen to include John Norman Collie and Sir Herbert Jackson who brought a scientific aspect to the study of Oriental Ceramics.<sup>51</sup> Because meetings were held in members' homes further expansion was hampered through lack of space.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hetherington, A.L.: 'A History of the OCS', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 23, 1947-48, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> Chapter 1: Science and Development of the Copper-red Glaze - discusses the paper delivered to the OCS by Collie and Jackson on this subject.

<sup>52</sup> Hetherington, A.L.: 'A History of the OCS', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 23, 1947-48, p. 9.

In its early years the Society comprised an influential group of scholarly and experienced collectors and students. From the outset its aims were to further and disseminate knowledge pertaining to Chinese art, particularly ceramic art. Members and guest experts gave two or three papers each year. These papers together with descriptions of important ceramic pieces were published in the annual *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*. It was through the publication of their research and because their membership included representatives from the major national collections that the OCS exerted such a strong influence on British artistic taste and broader culture. Additionally, the OCS filled the Loan Court cabinet of the V&A with specimens from members' collections - a public presentation of private pieces. The OCS was successful in stimulating and directing the tastes and purchases of members as well as external collectors and curators - collections that reflected the knowledge and availability of objects during the 1920-30's. The taste of the group during this period was predominantly focused on Song ceramics. It was their activities which led to the 1935 Royal Academy Exhibition of Chinese Art and a number of subsequent exhibitions on differing scales. Moreover, a proportion of the collections of early OCS members have passed into Britain's public institutions, thereby broadly impacting taste and contributing to the wider transmission of knowledge. The 1935-36 Royal Academy Exhibition subsequently travelled to Auckland, New Zealand and can therefore be said to have influenced international taste.

The 1935 Exhibition was heralded as a key point in the development of taste. Sir Percival David's familiarity with the Chinese Imperial Collection played a crucial role in its organisation. Assisted by Eumorfopoulos, Raphael and Hobson, he selected pieces from the Imperial Collections and arranged for them to be transported to

London. The Exhibition was considered to have stimulated new directions in taste towards early *blue-and-white* Chinese porcelain and fine art painting, although the interest in and identification of Yuan *blue-and-white* ware was established by Hobson as early as 1929.<sup>53</sup>

By 1933 there was a call to review the membership structure. Subject to approval by the Board of Trade under the Companies Act, the OCS became a registered company with a 'Memorandum and Articles of Association'.<sup>54</sup> Although in agreement with the move towards enlarged membership the earlier members decided to found their own coterie within the Society. '*The Dragons*' as they were known, met thrice annually until the outbreak of the Second World War.

The OCS continued to meet throughout the War despite the deaths of several high-profile members including Eumofopoulos in 1939 and Hobson in 1941. Sir Alan Barlow became the President during this unsettled time. It was Barlow in conjunction with the OCS Council who took the initiative to hold a series of twice yearly exhibitions in Messrs Bluetts' basement to display objects from members' collections, the first of which took place in October 1946. In 1948, Hetherington noted that despite the failure to make a profit, the exhibitions invigorated membership of the Society, attracting people from abroad, particularly America, although it appeared the British public showed only nominal interest.<sup>55</sup> Accompanied by detailed catalogues, the exhibitions provided students and others with opportunities for comparative research.

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<sup>53</sup> Gray, Basil: 'The Development of Taste', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 39, 1971-73, pp. 30-31.

<sup>54</sup> Hetherington, A.L.: 'The Development of Taste', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 23, 1947-48, p. 10.

The post-war increase in membership of the OCS could be seen as part of the broader culture of egalitarianism. Nevertheless, the endeavours and resources of the small closely-knit group of its initial period bequeathed a legacy of knowledge for the benefit of the wider community. Mid-later 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeological excavations and scientific testing verified earlier aesthetic, art-historical and comparative scholarship.

Before discussing more general factors which influenced the British taste for Chinese ceramics it is necessary to mention the element of academic snobbery that persisted within collecting circles. It has already been made clear that the OCS favoured Song and pre-Song ware during the inter-war period. It is probable that an aesthetic preference for later wares, particularly those post-Kangxi, was frowned upon as the taste of the uneducated – or possibly more accurately – the uninitiated. In this respect, the OCS was hugely influential, especially considering that its membership consisted of museum curators responsible for acquiring exhibits for national collections.

Sensing this trend, V. Wethered courageously wrote that:

*"... it seems to me the habit of thinking in periods may easily be overdone... if we... regard primitive, ancient, and modern art as equally a manifestation of the same human spirit striving to express itself under different conditions. These conditions must be taken into account; and, unless this is done, our appreciation and enjoyment are likely, instead of being progressive and intelligent, to become precious and dull."*<sup>55</sup>

Bernard Rackham supported Wethered's warning against the adoption of an exclusive valuation of Chinese ceramics. Rackham went further than his counterpart in

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>56</sup> **Wethered, V:** 'Some reflections on Artistic Value', *T.O.C.S.*, No.2, 1922-23, p.23. The early date of this paper is key. It expressed the early and continuing OCS predilection towards objects of historical rather than purely aesthetic value.

suggesting a financial motive behind the vicissitudes of fashion. He urged collectors to detach themselves from...

*"such changes of fashion in artistic appreciation, too often engineered for the benefit of dealers. They lead to some strange vagaries, such as the rage for gaudy Satsuma ware in the early 1880's." But later added: "This particular change of fashion, however, seems to me to be sane and right; ... although Ming is only now coming into its own, and Kang Hsi will lose nothing when reviewed in better perspective, the beauties of Tang and Sung are likely to command our lasting admiration."*<sup>57</sup>

The prejudice towards later Chinese porcelain, particularly of 19<sup>th</sup> century manufacture, remains a feature within certain contemporary collecting circles, although more recent scholarship has attempted to redress the balance. This issue will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 7 on Collectors and Collecting.

### **Bernard Leach (1887- 1979)**

Bernard Leach's key influence on taste was his support for and promotion of studio-potters that he felt embraced shifts in both taste and changing notions of value. He believed that studio-pottery achieved a different kind of aesthetic - an *honest, vital* character rarely evident in mass-production. As Leach recorded, the studio-potters incorporated Far Eastern ideas, specifically those from Song dynasty China:

*"... during the last twenty-five years a far-reaching change in aesthetic judgement has come about, not only in England, but ... all over the civilised world. A new type of craftsman, called individual, studio, or creative, has emerged, and a new idea of pottery is being worked out by him as a result of an immensely broadened outlook. Another wave of inspiration has come to us through the Far East, and out of the tomb-mounds of long-dead Koreans and Chinese, looted and disturbed by the*

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<sup>57</sup> Rackham, Bernard: 'The Earliest Arrivals of Pre-Ming Wares In The West', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 3, 1923-24, p. 16.

*encroachment of Western commercialism, has arisen a new appreciation of ceramic beauty.*"<sup>58</sup>

Bernard Leach and his students exerted an enduring influence on the British taste for Chinese, Japanese and British studio-ceramics. His impact dates chiefly from the publication of *A Potter's Book* in 1940, which disseminated his aesthetic philosophies beyond England and Japan throughout Europe and the United States. The book contained a synthesis of technical, historical and aesthetic information and description. It addressed the philosophical role of a potter and crucially, Leach's desire for unity between the ideas and traditions of East and West.

The dominant themes of Leach's aesthetic theory can be compared to those espoused by Roger Fry; essentially that pottery was an art form. Fitness for purpose, the importance of tradition – tradition which was thought to impart beauty and integrity to art objects, were primary criteria. The maintenance of tradition in terms of both style and technique was seen as a time proven filter of aesthetic values. Leach used similar descriptive terms to those employed by Roger Fry; words such as *unified, plastic, rhythmic* and *natural* were used to characterise form. Leach shared Fry's admiration for the inherent 'truth' of so-called *primitive art*, especially pottery from Africa, Japan and early Chinese cultures.

In accordance with Roger Fry, Leach recognised that any given culture had specific notions of beauty which may change over time – *'that the criterion of beauty is a living thing and constantly in flux ...'*<sup>59</sup> In effect, Fry and Leach embraced the view that art could not be separated from the society and traditions from which it emerged.

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<sup>58</sup> Leach, Bernard: 'Towards A Standard', *A Potter's Book*, London, Faber & Faber, 1940, pp. 12-13.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7

Art reflected, expressed and built on the '*spirit and culture of the workers*' – their rituals and symbolism.<sup>60</sup>

Like Fry and Morris, Leach was concerned with the adverse effects of mass-production on art for which he blamed profit-driven conservative manufacturers disinterested in 'good design.' Similarly, he lamented the general lack of direct contact with materials and design – removal from the creative act of making – that influenced British taste of 20<sup>th</sup> century:

*"The want of artistic initiative on the part of the manufacturers must be ascribed to the general lowering of taste under conditions of competitive industrialism. The public is ever increasingly out of touch with the making of articles of everyday use ... in spite of the cheerful assurances of buyers and travellers, that he must cater to bad taste, that one of the chief reasons why 'the public ... likes' tawdry utensils, is because as a rule it can get no others."*<sup>61</sup>

A recurrent theme in Leach's writing was his notion of the superiority and sincerity of oriental communal art over the individual, self-conscious approach of Western artists.

Likewise Roger Fry asserted that *"the greatest art has always been communal, the expression- in highly individualised ways, no doubt – of common aspirations and ideals."*<sup>62</sup> Leach regretted the loss of communal production as practised throughout medieval Britain and Europe. Through his pottery and writing Leach influenced and encouraged the taste for ceramic folk-art and the type of studio-pottery made to conform to a set of communal aesthetic principles. Leach recorded his admiration for a Sung dynasty pot in the Tokyo Museum:

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.11

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>62</sup> Fry, Roger: 'Art and Socialism', *Vision and Design*, first pub. 1920, this ed. 1961, p. 57.

*"... wondering how an individual potter of to-day could possibly appropriate to himself a beauty so impersonal ... – the patient unassuming outcome of centuries of tradition gradually developing through the experience of material and increasing complexity of need... far from there being any unity of purpose and faith, at the present moment there is such an obsession with the individual point of view among English craftsmen, that one often hears them ridicule the very idea of a new communal standard."*<sup>63</sup>

The constituents of a 'good pot' adhered closely with Fry's design philosophy. Leach wrote a series of constructional guidelines relating to form:

1. *"Lines are forces...*
2. *Vertical lines are of growth, horizontal lines are of rest, diagonal lines are of change.*
3. *Straight line and curve, square and circle, cube and sphere are the potter's polarities, which he works into a rhythm of form under one clear concept.*
4. *Curves for beauty, angles for strength.*
5. *Enduring forms are full of quiet assurance."* And in tune with the doctrine of Arts and Crafts and Early Modernism, Leach agreed that *'Overstatement is worse than understatement'*.<sup>64</sup>

Leach took the view that the *'fundamental laws of proportion and composition'* extended to the Far Eastern practice of designing a pot which considered the relation of the texture and colour of the clay to the glaze.<sup>65</sup> 'Vigorous' abstract decoration was applied to complement, not detract, from the form.

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<sup>63</sup> Leach, Bernard: 'Towards A Standard', *A Potter's Book*, 1940, p.16

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 23-24

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 23

An important aspect of Leach's influence on taste was his abhorrence of a technically perfect, flawless finish. He maintained that *'In our time technique, the means to an end, has become an end in itself, and has thus justified Chinese criticism of us as a civilisation 'outside in.''*<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Leach condemned the Japanese practise of fabricating *'deliberate imperfections and overstatements of technical characteristics'* as a form of *'intellectual snobbery... expected from groups of second-rate tea-masters, and a very different thing from the sanded foot of Ming porcelains or the Korean foot-ring, spur-marked with quartz, whose virtue was the virtue of necessity'*.<sup>67</sup>

Many early 20<sup>th</sup> century potters, collectors, scholars and critics held the cultural and technical achievements of Song dynasty China in the greatest esteem. Certainly, Leach thought the period represented the successful 'synthesis' of Greek and Buddhist philosophy with indigenous Confucian and Taoist ideas.<sup>68</sup> The simplicity and 'humility' of Song ceramics was much admired. Song monochromes were especially valued for their technical achievement – the quality of the clay and potting, the well-proportioned shapes, and subtle, unctuous glazes.

For Leach, Fry and others the Song was an era of 'unification', a concept of immense value to Early Modernists, particularly during the inter-war years. Fundamentally, Leach believed that only a *'unifying culture'* was able to nurture *'fresh traditions'*. He doubted that *'... any solution aiming at less than the full interplay of East and West can provide either humanity, or the individual potter, with a sound foundation for a*

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 14

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 24

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 14

world-wide culture'.<sup>69</sup> The fusion of East -West philosophy and values was imperative in Leach's understanding of cultural - including aesthetic - progress. He wrote that every artist, every potter had to '*find his own world-synthesis of thought and action.*' He described stoneware pots '*from coast to coast which [were] mixtures, 'Bauhaus over Sung, free-form – unintegrated'.* And asked, '*Can they integrate? Can the free geometry of the post-industrial era assimilate with organic humanism of the pre-industrial?*'<sup>70</sup> At the time of writing, Leach felt that such a fusion between East and West was most developed in Japan.<sup>71</sup>

The direct connection between Bernard Leach and Roger Fry was their shared investment of emotional qualities in ceramic forms. Fry recorded his views on the subject in *Vision and Design*, (1920). The essays, edited and revised, had invariably been written earlier in the century. As discussed previously, Fry urged the visitors of the First Post-Impressionist Exhibition of 1910 to transfer emotions from the paintings to the accompanying ceramics. Leach openly aired his view that:

*"Pots, like all other forms of art, are human expressions: pleasure, pain, or indifference before them depends upon their natures, and their natures are inevitably projections of the minds of their creators."*<sup>72</sup>

Like Fry, Leach also recognised universal qualities of ceramic form which were described in terms of human attributes such as '*nobility*', '*strength*', '*breadth*' and '*subtlety*', etc.<sup>73</sup> Leach thought the appreciation of an art form came from an intuitive

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 10

<sup>70</sup> Leach, Bernard: *Beyond East and West – Memoirs, Portraits and Essays*, London, Faber & Faber, 1978, p. 241.

<sup>71</sup> Leach, Bernard: 'Towards A Standard', *A Potter's Book*, 1940, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 13

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 19

sense rather than an over-intellectualised rationale.<sup>74</sup> He did not share Fry's theory that the *aesthetic experience* was only given to a sensitive chosen elite, an enlightened few.

Leach educated national taste through his writing, lectures and pottery which promoted Far Eastern philosophy and aesthetic principles beyond Britain into Western Europe and America. He was instrumental in fostering a taste for and acceptance of early Chinese, craft-based Japanese and British studio-ceramics. The Dartington Hall experiment in arts education combined with Leach's establishment of the pottery at Shinnars Bridge were both important because of their influence on the development of art teaching in secondary schools.<sup>75</sup> More specifically, Leach's influence emphasised the importance of developing a child's creative and practical skills.

On a personal level Leach was chiefly concerned with translating the ideas of the East into the West, or at least into some aspects of Western culture. With regard to ceramics it could be argued that Leach was moderately successful in the promotion of a Song dynasty aesthetic of organic simplicity, but perhaps because he was one of other key figures such as Roger Fry and members of the Oriental Ceramic Society who promoted similar aesthetic ideals during the inter-war period. Leach's potteries at St. Ives and Shinnars Bridge each represented working examples of the Eastern communal ideal he thought responsible for 'great art' - like-minded people working together with shared philosophical as well as aesthetic ideas. According to Leach, the

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 18

<sup>75</sup> Bernard Leach began teaching at Dartington Hall, Devon in 1932. In 1934 he was invited to Japan by the National Craft Society. In 1935 Leach visited Korea before returning to Dartington Hall in 1936 to work in the newly built pottery at Shinnars Bridge where he taught the art to senior children. It was here that Leach wrote *A Potter's Book*, published in 1940. (*The Dartington Hall Trust: Dartington Hall - A Guide*, Devon, Dartington Hall Trust, n/d, pp. 10 & 18).

Eastern philosophical approach generated the '*honest*', '*vital*' aesthetic evident in his work which combined technical and aesthetic influences from Japanese and Song Chinese craft traditions.

Bernard Leach, his apprentices, co-potters and students paved the way for other studio-potters, particularly those who believed in community -- the craft commune.<sup>76</sup> Fry had also supported communal art, hence his establishment of the Omega. Fry and Leach were only too aware of the difficulties of making a living from the arts and crafts. It was partly through the generosity of Leach's patrons, Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst, that he was able to live out his philosophies and make the sort of pottery that was not immediately accessible or even desirable to majority taste. His students and later followers persevered in the craft tradition despite poverty and hostility. They influenced taste through a craft reaction against the disposable, increasingly materialistic culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Particularly in the 1960's and '70's, this movement carried with it romantic notions of rural bliss -- of individuals or groups making wholesome pots liberated from the pressures of urban life. To some extent this notion persists, and in so doing has influenced taste as people seem to want to buy into the idea of escapism. In this, the appeal of Leach's studio-pottery aesthetic is no different from the motivation behind the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century acquisition of Chinese *blue-and-white* porcelain representing *the* Oriental idyll of an alternative, more relaxed existence. Perhaps Leach could be said to have influenced *lifestyle* as much as

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<sup>76</sup> Stephen Course, Director of Dartington Pottery on the Shinnars Bridge site holds fast to the '*communal value*' of contemporary handcrafted pottery. As far as possible, Course has maintained Leach's desire to marry East and West in technique, aesthetic and working methods. Similarly, although a studio-potter in the individual sense, Derek Emms potted at St. Ives with Bernard Leach's son -- David. Working at St. Ives Emms shared the communal philosophy of '*the essential dignity and integrity of physical labour*' while he gained valuable practical experience. Both Course and Emms have been discussed in detail in Chapters 3 & 4 on *Style* and *Stylistic Reinterpretation*. (Interview with

aesthetic taste. By direct and indirect association with Leach's communal ideals and his sense of shared interests, the later 20<sup>th</sup> century 'hippy' movement, New Age and ecological groups have contributed to the perceived value of contemporary 'craft' goods including studio-pottery.

Perhaps only through the efforts of people such as Bernard Leach and Roger Fry were Terence Conran and his competitors able to influence the nation's taste. Conran's approach to contemporary design reasserted much of the Leach-Fry philosophy – chiefly that the relationship between art and life is inextricable:

*"Terence Conran... delivered more than just practical and functional home products. By mixing the love of your home, with the joy of colour, the love of food, art and all the good things in life – Habitat had invented the thing we now call 'Lifestyle' ...Habitat since 1964."*<sup>77</sup>

Leach is perhaps best known for his belief that physically engaging with each process of manufacture enables the maker to experience an affinity with nature, to attain a form of enlightenment. The techniques involved in making pottery by hand are common to all cultures, thus promoting the notion of *universality* which consumed much of Bernard Leach's life and thought.

## **Conclusion**

Taste appears to be a relative concept reflecting the prevalent attitudes, prejudices and values of a culture during specific periods. Of particular relevance here is the importance of buying a name, a personality rather than a beautiful pot. In a

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Stephen Course at the Dartington Pottery, Shinnars Bridge, Dartington, Totnes, Devon: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2002).

contemporary context it seems taste is associated with the 'label' culture; the coded meanings and inherent value of labels are seen not only as proof of quality and a means of identification, but often as a guarantee of taste. Translated into ceramic marks and backstamps, branding has been in existence for centuries. It follows that people with more disposable income will purchase the most prestigious labels thus perpetuating the desire and taste for certain objects.

The concept of taste in ceramics is not exclusive to the West. Within China various ceramic wares have fluctuated in popularity. In fact, the stylistic development and connoisseurship of Chinese ceramics depended on changing tastes, which as they related to '*... any other decorative art, cannot be isolated except in relation to those changes in society.*'<sup>78</sup>

In the early 15<sup>th</sup> century the Chinese taste for monochromes was conservative. After the overthrow of the Ming dynasty, the Chinese taste for ceramics underwent a period of transition before the stability of the Qing dynasty heralded new influences and reasserted a taste for classical 'favourites'. By the early 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese taste for ceramic types had become clearly delineated and a marker of social status. In general, the Chinese scholar elite favoured the conservative ceramics of the court, while more flamboyant popular ceramics tended to be the preserve of the adventurous merchant class.

Political upheaval subsided while the Qing dynasty gradually established their rule under the emperor Kangxi (1662-1722). Monochromes returned to popularity in the

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<sup>77</sup> 'Try and Think Back 40 Years to 1964', *Habitat Catalogue*, Autumn-Winter 2004, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> **Medley, Margaret:** 'Patterns of Chinese Taste in Porcelain', *T.O.C.S.*, 1987-1988, Vol. 52, p. 72.

later 17<sup>th</sup> century after decades of being usurped by the taste for *blue-and-white* and polychrome porcelain:

*"Of the older monochromes, copper-red achieved great popularity not only in large and small forms, but also in the immensely successful firing of this very difficult colour."*<sup>79</sup>

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the overall quality of Chinese ceramics deteriorated as if to mirror the crumbling Chinese economy struggling to compete against the effects of western industrialisation. This situation was thought to be reflected in the popular taste for 'vulgar' polychrome enamel ceramics. Margaret Medley summarised that:

*"When central government was strong, imperial taste dominated, and when central control weakened, it was the popular taste that broke through and drove developments forward."*<sup>80</sup>

This chapter has considered individuals and their networks who have variously contributed to the British taste for Chinese ceramics and their recreations in the later 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Their impact needs to be situated within a broader socio-economic context, not least two World Wars, which altered value notions and therefore shifts in taste; what was deemed to be acceptable, respectable or degenerate. An initial elitism which allocated taste to a few superior individuals with unique sensibilities gave way to greater tolerance.

The effect of the Modern Movement throughout Britain and Europe in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was particularly significant. Although it did not directly promote the arts of other cultures, emphasis on functional simplicity and decoration to enhance the form

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

were highly influential. These characteristics were seen to be exemplified in non-western art, particularly Song ceramics, which had not been polluted through the processes of industrialisation. By promoting the values associated with the Modern Movement, Roger Fry, Bernard Leach and early members of the Oriental Ceramic Society can be considered part of it. Sherman Lee wrote that *'The new ceramic taste was... a part of the general change that occurred in the 'thirties; the Bauhaus was both a cause and an effect, not an isolated phenomenon'*.<sup>81</sup>

In conclusion, Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905), who conceived the idea of the *kunstwollen* or artistic intention which drives taste in parallel with cultural developments in science, philosophy and social reform provided the most appropriate definition of taste for this study. Riegl postulated that in order for an artefact to have meaning it needed to be set within a recognisable cultural framework using contemporary symbolism invested with universal values; values which remain true throughout time but are given different weighting in different periods.<sup>82</sup> The following chapter discusses how these universal values affecting taste were reflected in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century Exhibition Culture.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-81.

<sup>81</sup> Lee, Sherman: 'The Changing Taste for Chinese Ceramics', *Apollo*, Vol. 97, 1973, p. 250.

<sup>82</sup> Iversen, Margaret: *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, London, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1993; p.5, p.11. (Riegl: 1966, p. 210; Riegl: 1927, p. 401).

## CHAPTER 6: EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions were a feature of the age of Empire; of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century desire to map and classify the world to facilitate its governance and aid commercial exploitation.

Also, exhibitions represented a more insidious desire stimulated by scientific racism to create hierarchies of race and civilisation which legitimated imperial dominance.<sup>1</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, exhibitions were a medium used to shape taste and express diverse cultural and aesthetic influence.

Exhibitions of art and design serve to inspire artists and manufacturers, and can also be used as a tool to educate and promote a cultural understanding and appreciation between nations. The Victorians were keen to exploit the educational aspects of exhibitions, even if the instruction at times became propaganda. The element of propaganda was particularly apparent in the *1842-44 Chinese Collection* and the *1851 Great Exhibition*. The psychological effects of an exhibition include morale boosting and distraction from social and political events. The *1935 Exhibition of Chinese Art* was held in the wake of the Great Depression, the *1944 Exhibition of Chinese Art* in Glasgow during the Second World War. Although art exhibitions are essentially cultural and educational, they can have economic effects. The Exhibitions of Chinese Art may have stimulated the sales, appreciation and therefore the cultural and economic values of Chinese antiquities, artefacts and their reinterpretations. Whatever the long-term effects, the immediate impact of an art or design exhibition on individuals is possibly its most valuable asset in terms of stimulating ideas and improving taste.

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<sup>1</sup> McClintock, Ann: *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context*, London & New York, Routledge, 1994.

Exhibitions have traditionally been associated with ways of stimulating thought and activity. They usually incorporate an element of self-promotion often relating to a specific 'cause' or set of ideals. In this way, exhibitions differ from impersonal museum displays. Exhibitions can also have commercial functions, but perhaps most importantly, they provide opportunities for comparative study and research. International exhibitions facilitate information exchange regarding the latest developments in art, design and technology while the inclusion of a few foreign objects in a national exhibition often draws attention to them from a perspective of difference. Visitors play an important role in the life of an exhibition. They may visit for amusement, cultural enlightenment or, depending on the exhibition type, to conduct business. It is often felt that there is no substitute for viewing objects in the round.

### **Archaeology and Availability**

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the continuation of the international exhibition culture and also marked the beginning of a widespread popular interest in archaeology. The discovery and excavation of the tomb of Tutankhamen in 1922 by Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter inspired a range of Euro-Egyptian design. The case in China however was different with respect to excavation techniques. Tomb robbers and engineers employed to construct China's rail network had little use for meticulous scientific method. Excavations made available a range of artefacts in sufficient quantity to stimulate early 20<sup>th</sup> century exhibition culture across Britain, Europe and America.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that Sigmund Freud's (1865-1939) purported third 'obsession' besides travelling and smoking, was collecting antiquities. Freud amassed almost 3,000 objects. His Tang

It was acknowledged that most of the recent artefacts and corresponding information came as a consequence of opening the overland route into China from Siberia, thereby facilitating a greater number of visitors to the Far East. The incursion of railways into Northern China had revealed a wealth of evidence in burial goods previously known to the West only through Chinese literature. Often, the excavated material was wrenched from the ground without a detailed survey of the location, neither was the provenance passed on to subsequent dealers and collectors. That the West was in effect subsidising the plunder of Chinese national heritage was not alluded to in the Exhibition literature. In 1935 Rackham wrote:

*"Deplorable as, ... this turn of events might seem, it has seemed at times doubtful whether these treasures of ancient art would be as carefully and safely preserved in China itself as they are in the hands of Western collectors and Museums."*<sup>3</sup>

This remark illustrated a latent attitude that had persisted since European Imperialism, undermining the capacity of China and her neighbours to preserve their artistic heritage. At the same time however, Western scholars were interested in and wrote

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wares included a model of *Guan Yin*, a fearsome warrior figure, a Tang horse, Bactrian camel and a Han dynasty vase. Freud also collected Egyptian and Classical antiquities. He saw these artefacts as witnesses of ancient cultures, and regarded them as companions overseeing his psychoanalytical and writing activities. Freud transformed his Viennese practice rooms into an 'archaeological cabinet', the objects crowded onto his desk, on shelves and in cabinets – a mode of presentation which became unfashionable among later 19<sup>th</sup> century collectors who preferred more selective displays. In 1938 the collection accompanied Freud to 20, Maresfield Gds., London. A letter from Freud in London to Margaret Stonborough-Wittgenstein dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 1938 confirmed the end of Freud's collecting ambitions: *"All our belongings have arrived undamaged, my collection has much more space and looks much more impressive than in Vienna. It is true, the collection is dead now, nothing is being added to it any more ..."* Freud's critics have since made numerous cross-references between psychoanalysis and archaeology, their effects on the popular culture and art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On a related topic it is also interesting to read Freud's comment on his visits to the Vienna World Fair of 1873 in a letter to Emil Fluss dated 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1873: *"I have been to the exhibition twice already... A great comprehensive panorama of human activity, as the newspapers profess to see; I don't find in it, any more than I can find the features of a landscape in a herbarium. On the whole it is a display of the aesthetic, precious and superficial world, which also for the most part visits it."* **Visit to the Sigmund Freud Museum, Berggasse 19, A-1090 Vienna, July 2003.**

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

about Chinese collecting culture and their respect for antiquity throughout successive dynasties.

Inexpert excavation bred scepticism concerning authenticity. Patina became desirable as a means of verification, although even this was subjective. It was also noted that many artefacts were damaged in the effort to hasten the process of excavation which later became illegal. Nevertheless, were continued to be smuggled into the hands of eager collectors willing to pay handsome prices. Orvar Karlbeck reported the situation as witnessed during his trips to China between 1934 and 1938 on behalf of a number of individuals and public institutions known as the *Karlbeck Syndicate*. He wrote that the peasants in the North of China had begun...

*"grubbing in ancient burial places. This activity had its modest beginnings when the first railways were built in a region which in its dim past comprised old China. Many ancient tombs were found to contain the most marvellous treasures; these were disposed of for prices which for those times (1910-1920) were high."*<sup>4</sup>

Karlbeck did not neglect to mention the desecration of objects assumed intrinsically valueless. 'Digging a well in the town of Hsinchênghsien, south of Kaifêng' a number of valuable artefacts had been unearthed, mostly ritual bronzes. The landowner was required to surrender the excavation to soldiers with catastrophic results:

*"A number of clay pots had also been found, but as the soldiers would not concern themselves with anything so inferior they were smashed to pieces. A bronze-mounted wooden chariot met with the same fate. It was whole when uncovered and was then chopped up for firewood."*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Karlbeck, Orvar: *Treasure Seeker in China*, London, The Cresset Press, 1957, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 95

We are told how Feng Yu-hsiang, the 'Christian General' governor of Loyang province had decreed that grave robbery was...

*"an offence punishable by death. However, the peasants went on digging, though now by stealth and often at night... all the travellers who left the town by train had their luggage searched."*<sup>6</sup>

But perhaps most applicable in the context of influencing taste was not simply increased supply through fair means and foul, but the shift in attitudes that began to favour artefacts for their historical as well as aesthetic value. As described in the previous chapter, an educated interest in historical wares came to distinguish accepted taste in certain areas of connoisseurship. Roger Fry expressed his ambivalence towards the taste for fashionable *patine*:

*"... the adventitious material beauty which age alone can give, has come to be the object of reverence greater than that devoted to the idea which is enshrined within the work of art."*<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, the growing taste for Chinese burial wares fuelled prices and demand, which in turn encouraged the forger's hand. Karlbeck described Tang figures manufactured in the village of Nanshihshan with an iridescent patina -- a much prized guarantee of authenticity by Western and Chinese collectors:

*"Kao... told us how he produced the patina and the antique appearance. After firing the figures he broke off an arm or a leg, ... then buried them in the fields, which were full of alkaline salts. More salts were added to the soil that was thrown in on top of them, and they were left there for some months, the earth above them being watered from time to time, after which the figures were considered ripe. They were dug up and mended and were then ready for the market. By this time they had been partly coated*

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 102

<sup>7</sup> Fry, Roger: 'Art and Socialism', *Vision and Design*, London, Penguin Books Ltd., first pub. 1920, this ed. 1961, p. 54.

*with a thin layer of salts which closely resembled the iridescence of the genuine figures.*"<sup>8</sup>

Ts 'ao Chao's edition (1388) of the *Ko Ku Yao Lun -- The Essential Criteria of Antiquities*, described a similar, albeit much earlier, process of faking bronzes for the domestic market in China whereby an application of *'thickened vinegar and fine sand'* was smeared over the surface of the vessel:

*"When its colour has turned to a dark brown, like the powdered tea of Fukien, or black like lacquer, or green, (the vessel) is soaked in water and then held over a straw fire till it is covered with smoke. Afterwards, it should be polished with a piece of clean cloth, or brushed. Cinnabar lacquer spots may be painted on it. But all these operations can only affect the surface; none of them affect the body (of the vessel). They are easy to detect."*<sup>9</sup>

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century drive to acquire Song and Pre-Song ceramics was partly due to the mistaken belief that burial wares were rare and would cease to enter the West.

Karlbeck noted the effect this view had on their cultural and economic value:

*"The first figures were discovered relatively recently; that is to say, during the first decade of this century. They attracted a great deal of attention and high prices were paid for what we should now consider quite ordinary things; for finds were few and buyers were many."*<sup>10</sup>

In this context it is necessary to distinguish taste from fashion, especially as the latter can increase the importance given to certain objects – even conferring cult status – thereby inflating prices paid for them. This was certainly the case for a proportion of Chinese ceramics exported to the West, particularly in Britain.

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<sup>8</sup> Karlbeck, Orvar: *Treasure Seeker*, 1957, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup> Ts 'ao, Chao: *Chinese Connoisseurship. The Ko Ku Yao Lun. The Essential Criteria of Antiquities*, translated and edited by Sir Percival David with a facsimile of the Chinese text of 1388, London, Faber & Faber, 1971, p. 10. Sir Percival David began translation in earnest in 1955 but sadly did not live to see the work completed.

<sup>10</sup> Karlbeck, Orvar: *Treasure Seeker*, 1957, p. 97

## The Taste for Display

It was not only the objects themselves but also their display that became subject to tasteful discrimination. There was a vogue for symmetrical arrangement among mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century collectors of Chinese porcelain. Objects were often displayed in pairs or garnitures on tables, open shelves or in cabinets. The concern for symmetry appeared to outweigh the merits of individual pieces. This trend was particularly evident in private displays of *blue-and-white* wares from different periods. William Lever, a collector of Chinese porcelain from c.1894-1924, was practically obsessed with exhibiting a 'symmetrical' collection. Lever's correspondence to James Orrock negotiating the purchase of a 'hawthorn' jar stated:

*"... if I could purchase yours [hawthorn jar] making [my collection] ... into six I could use them on two Cabinets in balance, three in each cabinet. At present I am rather hampered in placing them because if I place two pairs I have the odd one to place elsewhere, which does not always produce the best effect..."<sup>11</sup>*

W.G. Gulland elaborated further, suggesting a series of becoming effects for the display of Chinese ceramics, even to the extent of differentiating optimum effects according to period and classification. He implied that 'the cabinet' was no longer considered to provide the best means for display. Shelving and plates wired to hang on the wall were clearly his preference. He noted that single-colour backgrounds were more suitable than patterned wallpaper, 'Indian red' for *blue-and-white* and 'yellow for the other descriptions'.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Impey, Oliver: 'Lever as a collector of Chinese porcelain', *Journal of the History of Collections* 4, no. 2, 1992, p. 228. Lever's letter to James Orrock was dated 2 April, 1903.

<sup>12</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. I, London, Chapman & Hall, 1898, p. 244.

Gulland advised against the display of Chinese porcelain with other types except *blue-and-white* ware, where “*for decorative purposes, suitable pieces of Japan or Delft ware may, if necessary, be employed.*”<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, he asserted that Chinese polychrome enamelled porcelain should be exhibited separately from the *blue-and-white*, and even within this category, “*mandarin pieces cannot be mixed to advantage with the earlier styles.*” Gulland favoured the display of Chinese porcelain according to classification, the various types preferably housed in different rooms.<sup>14</sup>

This section in Gulland’s text is illustrated with examples of wall, shelf and ‘overmantel’ displays arranged in highly symmetrical order, a characteristic of collectors which seems to have dissipated towards the 1920’s. However, prescriptive rules for display were not confined to the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent years interest in ‘Eastern’ philosophy, spirituality and culture has spurred a new era in British taste. Objects can be displayed in a room according to the principles of ‘*Feng-Shui*’ in an effort to promote a sense of unity and tranquillity. The Japanese idea of arranging items on asymmetrical shelving – referred to as ‘*chigai-dana*’ or *broken mist* – has become popular.<sup>15</sup> Less attractive to British taste appears to be the Chinese practice of displaying selected objects in preference to an entire collection, although in keeping with Chinese custom, art objects have for centuries been rotated in display throughout the home. Some have embraced Japanese *tokonoma*-style alcove displays, not for the purposes of ancestor veneration, but for reasons of aesthetic preference.<sup>16</sup> The Far Eastern concern with ‘asymmetrical balance’ and repetition in display remains largely unexplored on a popular level in Britain.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>15</sup> **Hoppen, Kelly:** *East Meets West – Global Design For Contemporary Interiors*, London, Conran Octopus Ltd., 1997, p. 72.

## **The Role of Exhibitions in Taste Formation**

As far as shaping taste is concerned, it was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that exhibitions began to have serious impact on the standards of design in Britain. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a series of small exhibitions exerted considerable influence over the arts chiefly because they targeted sensitive, reform conscious individuals. Many of these exhibitions were organised by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, one of the first bodies founded to fuel design reform and heavily influenced by the ideas of William Morris. Established in 1886, the society began to hold exhibitions from 1888.

This section discusses a range of exhibitions relevant to the promotion of Chinese art and design in Britain. The exhibitions are addressed in chronological order to chart some of the changing attitudes towards China and Chinese art throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. 'The Chinese Collection' exhibited in Hyde Park, London between c.1842 – 1844 was possibly the first and certainly the largest exhibition of Chinese art in England. It was quite major and was followed by a spate of others including the Chinese section of the Great Exhibition in 1851.

The Chinese Collection roused public interest partly because it coincided with the first Opium War (1839-42) and the consequent cessation of the 'China trade'. The Collection had been amassed by the American merchant Nathan Dunn before his retirement in 1830. Dunn exhibited the Collection in the newly established Philadelphia Museum in 1838. The Collection came to London in 1842 under the

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-71.

directorship of William Langdon. After Dunn's death in 1844 the Collection toured England before returning to America.<sup>17</sup>

Dunn had created an exhibition of Chinese artefacts with which he wanted to educate the public. The exhibition was not confined to the art and lives of Chinese people, but also purported to represent Chinese moral character. While the Collection emphasised the notion of the Chinese as *exotic* and '*other*', Catherine Pagani makes the important point that Dunn's view of 'real China' was derived from *his* interpretation of *his* collection and was consequently far from objective. However, the exhibition was admirable for its time in both its scope and the breadth of accompanying information.<sup>18</sup> Langdon expanded and revised Dunn's earlier exhibition catalogue when the Collection arrived in London to present factual rather than romanticised information.

During the 1840's attitudes towards China and Chinese culture were mixed. The exhibition of artefacts in Hyde Park illustrated a refined, artistic culture whereas press reports throughout the Opium war were determined to portray a nation of degenerate, corrupt opium addicts.<sup>19</sup> Pagani states that both views enforced the notion of China and the Chinese as a commodity to be exploited rather than a culture to be

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<sup>17</sup> Pagani, Catherine: 'Chinese material culture and British perspectives of China in the mid-nineteenth century'. Eds. Barringer, Tim & Flynn Tom: *Colonialism and the Object – Empire, material culture and the museum*, London, Routledge, 1998, p.34.

<sup>18</sup> The Chinese collection consisted of 1,341 objects including paintings, porcelain, enamels, examples of Chinese dress, etc. However, it was still far from truly representative of Chinese culture.

<sup>19</sup> *The Illustrated London News*: 'The Opium Trade', July 8<sup>th</sup> 1843, p. 21.

"Opium smuggling is still carried on... and such is the infatuation of the Chinese, that they will endeavour to procure the drug at all hazards; and as it is paid for in cash or silver exceeding the amount we give for our teas, it naturally follows that there must be a great drain of dollars and silver from the empire."

appreciated.<sup>20</sup> It is also important to contextualise this exhibition in terms of an appetite for the sensational that swept through mid-Victorian Britain. An avaricious public lusted after natural and scientific 'curiosities'. The Romantic Movement did much to foster this appetite for the supernatural and extraordinary. The Chinese Collection passed into new hands during the late 1840's when it became increasingly concerned with the sensational aspects of the exhibits, particularly bound feet and the effects of opium smoking. It came to include live Chinese modelling various robes, among which were two children.<sup>21</sup>

Another reason the public were attracted to the Chinese Collection was because it was plunder from Empire.<sup>22</sup> It afforded the opportunity for the expression of national pride preceding the Great Exhibition of 1851. Education through schools and the press had encouraged notions of racial superiority. In *Race & Class* Marika Sherwood detailed prevalent attitudes towards the 'other':

*"In a crib to accompany his textbook, 'New History of England and Great Britain' (1895), John Meiklejohn, Professor of Education at St. Andrews University, stated, for example:*

*'... 1860: The Convention of Peking. The allied armies of England and France entered Peking; and the Emperor agreed to all they wanted.'*

*... John Ruskin, Slade Professor of Fine art at Oxford, in his 1870 inaugural lecture spoke of the 'destiny now before us... we are still undegenerate in race... [England] must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able... seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground.'*"<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> **Pagani, Catherine:** 'Chinese material culture and British perspectives of China in the mid-nineteenth century'. Eds. **Barringer, Tim & Flynn Tom:** *Colonialism and the Object*, 1998, p.36.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>23</sup> **Sherwood, Marika:** 'Race, empire and education: teaching racism', *Race and Class*, Vol. 42, January-March 2001, No. 3, pp. 12-13.

The admission price to the Chinese Collection was a source of controversy. On opening in London, Dunn proposed a charge of 2s 6d, '*higher than the customary one-shilling*', which was attacked in the press for pricing out those who might greatly benefit from seeing the artefacts. It was thought that members of the upper-middle and upper classes already had access to private collections or the means to travel. However, it was not until after Dunn's death in 1844 that the price was reduced to one-shilling. In this respect, the Chinese Collection can be claimed to have highlighted an important debate addressing the availability of public museums and galleries for the working classes. An advert in the *Illustrated London News* stated:

*"For nearly two years this unique Collection has maintained its position as the most attractive Exhibition in the Metropolis, having been honoured not only by visits of Her Majesty and Prince Albert – of the chief part of our Nobility, and the distinguished foreigners sojourning in this country... The Proprietor, anxious to increase the popularity of this most extraordinary Collection, by enabling all classes to become acquainted with its wonderful contents, has reduced the price of admission TO ONE SHILLING EACH PERSON..."*<sup>24</sup>

In 1851 the Collection moved to Albert Gate, Hyde Park under new directorship.<sup>25</sup> By this time the sensationalist aspects of the exhibition had thoroughly degraded the virtues of the Chinese and their art to a public who were increasingly obsessed with the idea of industrial, especially technological 'progress'. The Chinese were seen as a disorganised, even backward nation incapable of progressing according to Western standards. Moreover, by c.1860 general public interest in China and reliance on Chinese trade had decreased.<sup>26</sup> The furore surrounding the First Opium war had been

<sup>24</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, February 10<sup>th</sup> 1844, Vol. 4, January-June, 1844, p.95.

<sup>25</sup> Pagani, Catherine: 'Chinese material culture'. Eds. Barringer, Tim & Flynn Tom: *Colonialism and the Object*, 1998, p.40.

<sup>26</sup> Trade suffered again during the Second Opium War. After the First Opium War fighting resumed in 1856 and in 1860 an Anglo-French force seized Peking.

quenched and Chinese publicity dropped out of the public gaze. Once again, Britain sought new sources of inspiration.

The Chinese display in the *Great Exhibition* of 1851 lacked the coherence of the *Chinese Collection* of 1844. The 1851 event was a jumbled mass of artefacts probably culled from the contents of merchants' homes. The objects were mostly decorative and accused of lacking any signs of industrial progress.<sup>27</sup> The intricate details of the pieces were thought to represent a retrograde society engaged in the production of trivia. The 1851 Exhibition set out to promote the British Empire and further trade. It revelled in Britain's technological progress since the Industrial Revolution -- unremarkable given the full title, '*The Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations*'. By 1851 it seemed the British had become more interested in what their Empire could provide in terms of material wealth rather than its artistic heritage. Empire as commodity was perhaps the underlying theme, a similar if more aggressive version of the sentiment expressed in the 1842-1844 Chinese Collection Exhibition. However, profit from ticket sales to the 1851 Exhibition was used to buy the site of what became the Victoria and Albert Museum. Hence the Exhibition was to have a profound and lasting impact on the taste of the nation. Directly relevant was the purchase of objects from the exhibition to establish the Museum's core collections. A government grant was made available for this purpose, half of which went on Continental designs thought worthy examples for British industrial designers to study. The next largest portion was spent on items from the East India Company, far

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<sup>27</sup> Pagani, Catherine: 'Chinese material culture'. Eds. Barringer, Tim & Flynn Tom: *Colonialism and the Object*, 1998, p. 39. The range of artefacts included Chinese lacquer, textiles, bronzes, carved ivory and 'fragile porcelain' as well as an assortment of Japanese objects.

outweighing the amount devoted to British items.<sup>28</sup> The East India Company selection was largely comprised of Indian objects, but no doubt there were Near and Far Eastern artefacts.

### **British Exhibitions of Chinese Art**

Later 19<sup>th</sup> century exhibitions marked the shift in emphasis towards object classification and the promotion of scholarship, particularly evident in smaller, specialist displays. The exhibition of a 'Collection of Oriental Porcelain and Pottery' at the Bethnal Green Museum in 1878 illustrated a more enlightened view of China and its arts. The intervening 27 years after the Great Exhibition of 1851 had seen the growth of a more serious attempt to understand foreign cultures, particularly China. The ceramics of China once more came into vogue among scholarly collectors. A total of 1,700 specimens were exhibited of which the majority dated from the reign of Kangxi and later. The exhibition was important in scope and for its rigorous classification. It was unhindered by the academic snobbery towards 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese porcelain apparent in later exhibitions. Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-97), Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum, wrote in the *Preface to the First Edition* of the Exhibition catalogue in 1876:

*"...this collection has not been limited to choice or ancient specimens, but that even common and modern examples have been included when they illustrate the subject. It is probably, moreover, the first time that any attempt has been made to exhibit Oriental porcelain divided into classes, and to distinguish the respective productions of China and Japan."*<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Barringer, Tim: 'The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project'. Eds. Barringer, Tim & Flynn Tom: *Colonialism and the Object*, 1998, pp.12-13.

<sup>29</sup> Franks, A.W: 'Preface To The First Edition', May 1876. *Catalogue of A Collection Of Oriental Porcelain And Pottery* lent for exhibition by A. W. Franks, Bethnal Green Branch Museum, Science and Art Dept. of the Committee of Council on Education, South Kensington, London, 1878, second ed.

Around this time Japan rivalled Chinese artistic influence and found favour with collectors. The acquisition of knowledge became as important as the pursuit of actual objects. The *Preface to the Second Edition* explained how rapidly knowledge concerning Japanese ceramics was being disseminated:

*"Much light has been thrown on these subjects by the numerous importations of old and curious specimens, accompanied by explanations, more or less correct, of their origin. The Report, however, which accompanied the Japanese collection exhibited at Philadelphia, and acquired by the South Kensington Museum, has furnished the most trustworthy and valuable information as yet obtained..."*<sup>30</sup>

Franks was also aware of forgery, especially since it was known that the Japanese as well as the Chinese produced "imitations of their older wares, and also copies of Chinese porcelain; so [it was] difficult to be sure of the exact age of many of the specimens."<sup>31</sup> Franks stated he was unable to agree with 'many of the conclusions' reached by A. Jacquemart in *Histoire de la Céramique* published only three years previously.<sup>32</sup> Franks realised that to advance knowledge of Chinese ceramics it was necessary for 'some European residing in China' who had a fluent grasp of the language to gain 'access to the stores of native collectors.'<sup>33</sup> Dr. Stephen Wooten Bushell serving for the British legation in Peking answered Franks call in his epic *Oriental Ceramic Art* illustrated by examples from the W.T. Walters Collection, originally published in 1896. According to Nick Pearce, Bushell was in contact with A.W. Franks from c. the early 1870's and made purchases for Franks' collection.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 'Preface To The Second Edition', November 1877, p. vii.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 'Preface To First Edition', May 1876, p. x. Franks referred to A. Jacquemart: *Histoire de la Céramique*, Paris, 1873.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. x.

Franks was also responsible for recommending Bushell to the South Kensington Museum, providing them with specimens in 1882-83.<sup>34</sup>

Class I Section B of the Franks exhibition was devoted to Single Coloured Glazes:

*"among the most original and decorative objects produced in porcelain, and were much appreciated by the collectors of the last [18<sup>th</sup>] century."<sup>35</sup> The 'red glaze of considerable antiquity' is mentioned and 'One tint, the sang-de-boeuf...' described as "much valued in China. A specimen, possibly genuine, is exhibited as No.44."<sup>36</sup>*

The catalogue description for No. 44 is given below. It does not date the piece.

"BOTTLE. Chinese porcelain; covered with a deep but brilliant red glaze. H.8 1/2 in.

*This specimen is from Mr. A. B. Mitford's collection, and is thus described in the catalogue:- 'A bottle: Lang yao tzé, porcelain from the Lang furnace. The Lang family were a family of famous potters who possessed the secret of this peculiar glaze and paste. They became extinct about the year 1610; and their pottery is highly esteemed, and fetches great prices at Peking. The Chinese have never been able successfully to imitate this ware.'"<sup>37</sup>*

It is likely that No. 44 is a *Lang-yao* copper-red glaze, Lang Tingji being in charge of the imperial kilns from 1705-12, hence the name 'Lang ware' or 'Lang red'. It may well have been made later in the 18<sup>th</sup> or even early 19<sup>th</sup> century. No. 44a, another Chinese porcelain bottle with '*globular body and narrow neck, covered with a light red glaze*' Kangxi (1661-1722), appears to be the earliest dated copper-red piece in the exhibition catalogue.<sup>38</sup> It may be that the pale liver glazed jug with a flat band handle terminating in raised ornaments is from the period '*Seuen-tih, 1426-1436*',

<sup>34</sup> **Pearce, Nick:** 'The Collector', *Photographs of Peking, China 1861-1908*, Studies in Photographic Arts No. 6, USA, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005, Ch. 3, p. 49. It appeared that Bushell sold Chinese porcelain anonymously through Christie's, Manson & Wood of King St., London from the 1880's - 1890, mostly contemporary reproductions of *blue-and-white* Kangxi porcelain catering for late 19<sup>th</sup> century taste, pp. 61-62. The sale of these items made more than Bushell's annual salary on at least one occasion.

<sup>35</sup> **A.W. Franks:** *Catalogue of A Collection Of Oriental Porcelain And Pottery* lent for exhibition by A.W. Franks, Bethnal Green Branch Museum, London, 1878, p.5, second ed.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p.6.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8. Mitford was a cultural attaché in Beijing in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

although it is known that later examples were given earlier reign marks and without access to the piece it is difficult to speculate.<sup>39</sup> More convincing is the shallow bowl 'covered with a maroon glaze, slightly iridescent from age.' Attributed to 'Kea-tsing, 1522-1567', the date of the piece is again open to question.<sup>40</sup>

No. 47, a deep red pair of bottle-vases are notable for their comparatively recent date of manufacture, marked with the 'character' *Taou-kwang*, 1821-1851.<sup>41</sup> The exhibition also features a number of possible *sang-de-boeuf* or *rouge flambé* glazed pieces. No. 49 describes a vase with a glaze varying from deep liver to pale grey, while No. 51 -- a flat bottle -- is covered with a mottled grey and red glaze. Neither example is dated.<sup>42</sup> Transmutation glazes were included, examples given are described in No. 716 -- an oviform vase with a 'deep violet glaze... [with] an irregular streak of lighter colour', and No. 717 -- a vase with 'a streaky glaze of greyish blue; the neck of an olive colour'.<sup>43</sup> Franks made the important point that 'variegated and mottled glazes... may be included' with single-colour glazes, "as they owe their appearance not so much to a difference in the colouring matter as to the mode in which it is applied. They are called by the French *flambé*..." Perceptively he also noted that many of the single-glazed pieces were of a "course ware, rather a kind of stoneware than true porcelain." <sup>44</sup>

The exhibition was incomparably more advanced in the information presented to visitors in the catalogue. It made serious attempts at dating and classification, even

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 115 -- Section B -- Single Coloured Glazes, No. 707.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.202 -- Addenda -- No. 1467.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 116. -- No. 717 was attributed to the Song Dynasty, and may be a specimen of *jum* ware, p.7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.7

though it appeared preferable in some instances to leave examples undated rather than risk incorrect attributions. This exhibition catalogue illustrated the shifting attitudes towards Far Eastern culture since 1851. A new breed of scholars were eager to comprehend and present their view of the 'real China' to the public.

### **Early-Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Exhibitions of Far Eastern Art**

Commercial exhibitions and those with a more cultural focus have always run simultaneously. Whether commerce stimulated interest in the arts of other cultures or *vice versa* is difficult to assert, but it is not unreasonable to claim that each had some influence on the other. In 1910 the Japanese-British Exhibition was held at White City, London. It was effective in encouraging the taste for Japanese products and *Japonisme* while at the same time acted to strengthen the Anglo-Japanese alliance as the Franco-British Exhibition had consolidated the *Entente Cordiale* two years previously. These Exhibitions were as of equal value politically and culturally. Artefacts from the Imperial Japanese Collection were sent to Britain for the first time for public display, presenting new opportunities for study. Roger Fry suggested why the 1910 Japanese-British Exhibition was important:

*"There are signs that the present rapidly increasing preoccupation with Oriental art will be more intense, and produce a profounder impression on our own views, than any previous phase of Orientalism... we are more disillusioned... with our own tradition, which seems to have landed us at length in a too frequent representation of the obvious or the sensational. To us the art of the East presents the hope of discovering a more spiritual, more expressive idea of design."*<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Fry, Roger: 'Editorial Articles – Oriental Art', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 17, 1910, p. 3.

This Exhibition reinforced a modern approach to art and design in Britain. It presented an alternative set of 'rules' and ideas. Although, in the same article Fry feared that Japanese '*commercial traducers*' might be over represented to the detriment of a traditional Japanese aesthetic.

Two other exhibitions were held in 1910 which each complemented the Japanese-British Exhibition and reinforced the 'Oriental renaissance'. Although not associated with the Far East, the First Post-Impressionist Show which opened on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1910 in London's Grafton Galleries did much to encourage a more catholic approach towards art in Britain before the First World War. It had a considerable influence on British taste and perception, particularly in response to form and colour. Roger Fry was instrumental in the organisation. He was keen to promote what he saw as 'universal truths' in art and design, a sense of harmony and simplicity. Fry believed the bold contours and flat, pure colours of the Post-Impressionists represented these 'truthful' qualities. In essence, Fry viewed Post-Impressionism as a reaction against the formless, sensationalist paintings of the Impressionists. These views on fine art stimulated Fry's interest in design, specifically his drive to recover the purity of 'primitivism'; an ideal not far removed from the rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Roger Fry has been discussed in the previous chapter on Taste, but it is important to link his search for and promotion of purity in design – particularly as seen in earlier non-western cultures - or 'Modernism' as critics came to call it, to the aesthetic acceptance of early Chinese pottery and porcelain in Britain. Given Fry's appreciation of the simplicity of Chinese ceramics it is not surprising that he

published an article on the 1910 Burlington Fine Arts Club Summer Exhibition devoted to 'Chinese pottery of the Sung and Ming Dynasties'.<sup>46</sup>

The aim of the 1910 Burlington Exhibition was to show the "*older Ceramic wares of China*".<sup>47</sup> The author states that there was no public collection in Europe that consisted of a comparable series of early pottery, and that it would have been impossible to assemble such a collection '*two or three years*' previously.<sup>48</sup> However, it was acknowledged that scholarship was still in its infancy and that '*great gaps... still remain[ed] to be filled up in the history of Chinese ceramics*'.<sup>49</sup> Dillon wrote that porcelain from the 17<sup>th</sup> and later centuries had been wrongly and '*of late much too generally*' attributed to the Ming Dynasty, and that the instance of pre-Ming wares in British or Western collections could be '*counted on the fingers*'.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, exhibition organisers were able to accrue a collection of Chinese ceramics reflecting 2,000 years of Chinese potting history, of which a small number were '*no doubt... representative rather than genuine specimens of the early wares*'.<sup>51</sup>

The shift in taste since the 1878 Exhibition of Chinese ceramics in the Bethnal Green Museum was evident in a taste for "*the simpler and ruder early wares*", and was recognised as a "*change that occurs in the annals of art collecting with the regularity of a law of nature – [to have] coincided with a notable increase in the supply*".<sup>52</sup> The supply of Song, Tang and Han pottery was largely due to the disturbance of tombs during the construction of railways. Similarly, the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 saw

<sup>46</sup> Roger Fry was editor of *The Burlington Magazine*.

<sup>47</sup> **Dillon, Edward:** 'Early Chinese Pottery And Porcelain At The Burlington Fine Arts Club', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 17, April 1910, p. 210.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

'many old native collections' disbanded. However, even if these wares were entering London in greater quantities, in 1910 they had 'so far appealed to but a few collectors.'<sup>53</sup> A few people were keen to accumulate the earlier Chinese ceramics which reflected an increasing archaeological interest. They were also motivated by a simultaneous shift in general aesthetic taste towards less ostentatious design promoted by critics such as Roger Fry. It seemed that by 1910, more people were "prepared to discover qualities - strength of design and strange harmonies of colour..." apparent in early pottery and "...looked for in vain in the fine white porcelain of later days."<sup>54</sup>

The earliest ceramics represented in the 1910 Burlington Exhibition were those from the Han dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.) and a 'few' pieces "tentatively attributed to the Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.)... various in character, and scarcely [of] help... in forming any definite conception of what was being produced at this time."<sup>55</sup> Overall, the fact that among the exhibits there were 200 ceramic specimens "which, if not necessarily in every instance of earlier date than the foundation of the Ming dynasty (1368)," were enough to "establish the importance and novelty of the collection" in 1910.<sup>56</sup>

Neither were the Provinces content to let London be the sole venue for the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Oriental renaissance. The City of Manchester Art Gallery held an 'Exhibition of Chinese Applied Art' in 1913, partly to address the condescension of earlier exhibitions of Chinese artefacts. This Exhibition was held shortly after the collapse of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and the establishment of the People's Republic in 1912.

William Burton's opening sentence of the Exhibition catalogue refers to this tumultuous period:

*"The eyes of all civilised peoples are turned on China at the present moment with the utmost sympathy and respect. An ancient civilisation, ... [China] has suddenly thrown off its patriarchal form of government, ... and is determined... to walk in a new path more closely parallel with those of the Western civilisations... Within little more than an ordinary life time the ideas of Western nations with regard to the Chinese peoples have undergone a profound change for the better." Gone was the "ignorance which allowed us to look down with ... pity and contempt" on the peoples of China.<sup>57</sup>*

The 1913 Exhibition in Manchester presented China as a nation of progress. The range of artefacts on display – bronzes, pottery and porcelain, carved jade and other stones, enamels, lacquer and assorted textiles – covered a substantial period and enabled the visitors to acquire a sense of China's rich cultural history. The earliest example in the Manchester Exhibition was a bronze vase loaned by Mr. Eumorfopolous which was thought to date c.1000 B.C., accompanied by a number of other vases from the Chou Dynasty (1150-250 B.C.)<sup>58</sup> Many of the exhibits were on loan from collections 'from London and the South.'<sup>59</sup> In terms of the periods represented and diversity of artefacts, the Manchester Exhibition provided an admirable forerunner to the 1935 Royal Academy Exhibition of Chinese Art.

Although Han, Tang, Song, and Ming ceramics were represented at the Exhibition, it was "richer in [the] fine works of ... [Kangxi 1662-1722] than of some preceding Dynasties."<sup>60</sup> It also comprised a substantial selection of 18<sup>th</sup> century ceramics from

<sup>57</sup> **Burton, William:** 'Introduction', *Catalogue of An Exhibition of Chinese Applied Art*, City of Manchester Art Gallery, Summer, 1913, p.7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

the reigns of Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795), including those of *'pure Chinese spirit'*, some of which were representative of the *'archaistic productions'* made to imitate the work of Song and Ming potters.<sup>61</sup> Effort was made to avoid the exhibition of Chinese export porcelain.

Above all, the Exhibition of 1913 was at pains to show the development of Chinese art and its assimilation of foreign influences throughout the centuries – how China was able to blend 'foreign' elements with indigenous tradition.<sup>62</sup> In this respect the aim of Manchester City Art Gallery in 1913 was not unlike that of the Royal Academy in 1935. However, with respect to 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese artefacts the Exhibition was severely deficient. In this it reflected a trend that was to last throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and still exists today. It was thought that 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese products were decadent representations of fastidious execution over creative spontaneity. This view softened during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century as academic snobbery gave way to a selective re-evaluation of 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese porcelain.

The 1913 Exhibition displayed a considerable spectrum of Chinese copper-red, *sang-de-boeuf* and *flambé* glazes. The catalogue stated that *'flambé, or transmutation glazes ... appear to have originated, possibly accidentally, as early as Sung times'*, presumably referring to the copper-splashed *jun* wares. The catalogue's author, William Burton, acknowledged the use of underglaze copper-red during the Ming dynasty and went on to say the *'extended use... [of copper-red] only came back again with the introduction of the magnificent Lang Yao blood-red glaze... [during] the late*

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

17<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>63</sup> Hence it was claimed that most copper-reds in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Western collections were of late 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century origin.

No. 326 in the catalogue described a white porcelain wine cup decorated with three underglaze red fish from the Xuande period (1426-1435), *'probably unique in Europe.'*<sup>64</sup> Another example of Ming underglaze red decoration was No. 451. The *'flat round jar... probably cut down at the rim'*, painted with a *'floral arabesque design'*, loaned by George Eumorfopoulos.<sup>65</sup> He also loaned *'one of the most striking pieces in the Exhibition'*, a *flambé* glazed *'flat circular plate'* with *'purple splash on the front and greyish white finely crackled glaze on the back'*, of late 17<sup>th</sup> century date.<sup>66</sup> And was the lender of a Song *jun* *'Lobate Bulb Pot'* with a *'brilliant claire de lune glaze... the rim and... outside... of rich opalescent mulberry colour... probably the most beautiful specimen of this type of ware in the Exhibition.'*<sup>67</sup>

A late 18<sup>th</sup> century bottle vase of *'coarse porcelain'* was described as having a *'strongly marked transmutation glaze'* with *'patches of blood-red, ... bands of white and brownish yellow mingled with purplish blue opalescence.'* An 18<sup>th</sup> century white porcelain bottle with a *"mouse-coloured flambé effect; probably an attempt to produce the famous... 'peach blow'"*, was lent by Eumorfopoulos. R. H. Benson lent a *blood-red* Qianlong (1736-1795) porcelain bowl with two applied *'lion head knobs'*, and crackled blue-white glazed interior.<sup>68</sup> A fine white Kangxi (1662-1722) porcelain

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 102; No's 537 and 541 respectively.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 149; No. 742 – An example of numbered Song *jun* ware, incised with *Yi* (one) and two lines of Chinese characters on the base. Property of Eumorfopoulos.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 100; No.'s 527, 530 and 531 respectively.

bottle vase with '*magnificent blood-red glaze leaving a white band at the top*' was also lent by Benson.

A Qianlong (1736-1795) '*mulberry flambé*' glazed flat bowl, painted on the interior to '*simulate an ancient piece*', was the property of W.C. Alexander.<sup>69</sup> Another unusual piece was a small incense burner with lion head handles covered with a grey-pink crackled *flambé* known to American collectors as '*ashes of roses*'.<sup>70</sup> A tall baluster-vase of early Kangxi date with a cut down trumpet-shaped neck was catalogued as a '*Solid Sang-de-Boeuf glaze*'.<sup>71</sup> The selection of copper-red and *flambé* glazed ceramics from the 1913 Manchester Exhibition represented a diverse set of specimens. It was a commendable attempt on behalf of the City of Manchester Art Gallery to present the 'real China' to the Provinces, even if not so rich in 'early' Chinese pottery as the 1910 Burlington Fine Arts Club Exhibition.

By the time of the second Manchester 'Chinese Art Exhibition' (3 April-16 May, 1936), "*A good deal of water [had] flowed under the bridges of the Yangtse and the Irwell since 1913*"... when the majority of collectors had "*specialised in porcelains produced ... from the 13<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> centuries; [and only] a few were buying the pottery... of Han and Tang dynasties. Little was [then] known of Chinese works of art that dated further back than that.*"<sup>72</sup> Chinese artefacts from the 'pre-Christian' era were now of growing interest to Western scholars and collectors, hence the second Exhibition's emphasis on 'early' art. This interest had steadily developed during the previous thirty years. The Manchester Exhibition of 1936 "*enabled the public in and around*

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p.105, No. 555.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.107; No. 565, the property of G. Eumorfopoulos.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p.117; No. 605, the property of G. Eumorfopoulos.

Manchester to share some of the privileges enjoyed by those who ... visited Burlington House."<sup>73</sup> Held in the year after the 1935 Royal Academy Exhibition of Chinese Art, Manchester's exhibits of early Chinese history were loaned by collectors who contributed to the former alongside objects from Provincial donors.

The 1936 Exhibition in Manchester promoted the same idea as its earlier counterpart. They each set out to exhibit '*Chinese Art in all its phases and give the world an opportunity of estimating its true value.*'<sup>74</sup> Bronzes of the Shang (1766-1122B.C.) and Chou (1122-249 B.C.), Chou and Han jades and pottery, Tang pottery and metalwork, Song and Ming paintings and ceramics, the arts of the Kangxi and later periods were similarly well represented. The pottery and porcelain exhibits were described as '*the backbone of any exhibition of Chinese art... the largest... most representative, and... most spectacular*' of the second Manchester Exhibition.<sup>75</sup> Some '*superb*' examples of Kangxi porcelain came from the Leonard Gow Collection. Other ways of representing '*Chinese skill and taste*' were seen in Chinese lacquer, glass, enamelling, carved wood and ivory. These products portrayed the Chinese as a '*nation of craftsmen*', and substantiated the claim that '*a representative exhibition of their art is an all-round education, no less than an aesthetic treat.*'<sup>76</sup>

Where Chinese copper-red and *flam  * glazes were concerned the 1936 Manchester Exhibition was less representative and prolific than that of 1913. This was possibly a result of the inclusion of more 'early' Chinese pottery, although Song *jun* ware, Ming

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<sup>72</sup> Haward, Lawrence (Curator, City Art Gallery, Manchester): 'Prefatory Note', Manchester City Art Gallery *Chinese Art Exhibition*, 3<sup>rd</sup> April - 16<sup>th</sup> May 1936, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Hobson, R.L.: 'Introduction', Manchester City Art Gallery *Chinese Art Exhibition*, 1936, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p.8.

copper-red and 18<sup>th</sup> century *flambé* were all displayed. A 14<sup>th</sup> century vase decorated with underglaze red was lent Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark.<sup>77</sup> A Song *jun* six-lobed flower pot with 'opalescent glaze of purple and crimson and bluish-grey', was lent by Sir Percival David.<sup>78</sup> A Song *jun* bubble-bowl with 'dappled purple glaze' was on loan from Sir Alan Barlow.<sup>79</sup> Also catalogued was a porcelain bowl with 'deep red glaze' incised with the Ming dynasty Xuande reign mark (1426-1435).<sup>80</sup> A porcelain dish with 'purple glaze shot with grey. Probably Ching-te-Chen ware in Chun style. Ming dynasty or earlier'; was another specimen from Sir Percival David's collection.<sup>81</sup> Two separate and one pair of Qianlong (1736-1795) porcelain vases with *rouge flambé* glazes were represented, each the property of the Corporation of Manchester.<sup>82</sup> Thus Manchester's 1936 Exhibition of Chinese Art represented the full chronological range of reduced copper-red glazes and can be viewed as another 20<sup>th</sup> century attempt to illustrate Chinese cultural history with accuracy.

Between the 1913 and 1936 Chinese Art Exhibitions in Manchester the 1925 'International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Art' was held in Paris. Although Germany and America were absent from the Exhibition it was probably the most important and effective exhibition of design held during the inter-war years. It was devoted to innovation and can be claimed to have popularised 'modern' design, the fine arts included only as part of a decorative scheme. At the time the 1925 Exhibition was criticised for its focus on luxury objects, many of which were specially commissioned. Utilitarian products and those seen to represent traditional

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 31; No. 163.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 38; No. 218 – An example of numbered *jun* ware, inscribed with *erh* (two) on the base.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 38; No. 219.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 49; No. 303 – lent by Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 50; No. 312 – lent by Sir Percival David.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 52, 54, 55; No's 331, 347 and 352 (the Pair of Vases).

aesthetic values were discarded in search of originality. Nevertheless, the Exhibition impacted taste worldwide. It was in this climate of luxurious exuberance that the taste for British interpretations of Chinese *flambé* reached its apogee. Among other influences the 1925 Exhibition promoted a vivid 'exotic' aesthetic culled from African, Near and Far Eastern sources.

In 1929 the Royal Academy began a series of exhibitions on the arts of foreign countries, starting with an Exhibition of Dutch Art. Of them all, the Chinese Art Exhibition which opened on November 27<sup>th</sup> 1935, was the most remarkable in terms of organisation and the range of objects exhibited. It exhibited selected items from China's Peking Palace Collections seen in Europe for the first time. The treasures were transported to London in HMS Suffolk, a warship lent by the British Government. Other exhibits were loaned from public and private collections the world over to ensure the Exhibition was truly representative of Chinese Art spanning a period of thirty-five centuries (1700 B.C. – A.D. 1800). In *Chinese Art – An Introductory Handbook to Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes and Minor Arts*, Bernard Rackham stated:

*"... during the present century knowledge of China and its people and understanding of their philosophy and art have made greater progress in the West than in the whole course of the ages that went before."*<sup>83</sup>

Interest in China was no longer confined to a few travellers, scholars and connoisseurs.

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<sup>83</sup> Rackham, Bernard: 'Ceramics', *Chinese Art – An Introductory Handbook to Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes and Minor Arts*, London, Batsford, 1935, p. 28.

The Exhibition was arranged in chronological sequence. As discussed above in relation to the 1936 Manchester Exhibition of Chinese Art, there were no 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese exhibits. It is also interesting that the Royal Academy Exhibition was accompanied by a series of lectures dealing with specific aspects of Chinese art and culture, thereby cultivating taste through education.

The Royal Academy Exhibition was the most representative as far as *jun*, copper-red, *sang-de-boeuf* and *flambé* glazes were concerned. Ming dynasty copper-reds were mostly the property of the Chinese Government. For instance, the Ming stem-cup of '*chi-hung* [sacrificial red] glaze' with '*raised decoration of two pearl-pursuing dragons*', bearing the Yongle (1403-1424) period mark.<sup>84</sup>

Described in the RA Exhibition Catalogue are copper-red monochromes and underglaze reds from the Xuande (1426-1435) and Chenghua (1465-1487) periods, and a '*seal vermilion box*' with '*deep red*' glaze, '*Chinese attribution; Ming, but probably Kangxi period (1662-1722)*'.<sup>85</sup> The contested attribution is not confined to one example. A '*flower vase*' with '*deep ox-blood glaze, in the form of a bamboo fire-cracker*' was attributed to the Ming dynasty, but the catalogue stated it was '*probably Kangxi period*'.<sup>86</sup> An incense-burner, a jug, small bowls, dishes and a sauce pot are among the Ming copper-red items.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Chinese Art 1935-6*, London, the Royal Academy of Arts, first ed., p. 134, No. 1615.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134; No. 1610 – lent by the Chinese Government.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137, No. 1646 – lent by the Chinese Government. There were other instances of dual attribution in the catalogue; p. 137, No. 1643 – a bowl of foliate form with deep red glaze and gilded copper rim. Chinese attribution Ming / Period Kangxi (1662-1722), etc.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 134-135, 136.

More generally, the earliest objects shown in the Exhibition were the *Shang-Yin* bronzes (c. 1766-1122 B.C.) Pre-Han pottery of archaeological significance aroused considerable interest. Included was the painted Neolithic pottery from Kansu and a 'glazed vessel of bronze form', which 'suggested' a late Chou date. Han and Tang dynasty pottery was represented by a 'series of striking specimens'.<sup>88</sup>

Comparable artefacts were displayed in small groups, some in cases or compartments, larger articles were divided by screens. This was done to try and retain the Chinese tradition of showing one piece at a time to visitors as:

*"Chinese objects of art do not naturally lend themselves to exhibition en masse. In China, as in Japan, works of art are shown to the privileged guest one by one."*<sup>89</sup>

According to Sir Percival David, the Royal Academy emphasised the ceramics of the Sung dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) and the "*delicate famille rose porcelains of the Ku Yüeh type.*" Both were "*at once less familiar... and more peculiarly Chinese in taste... [and] truly reflect[ed] the spirit and ideals of their age, the former in their dignity and austerity, the latter in their elegance and ... refinement.*"<sup>90</sup>

The Exhibition did not merely present the most comprehensive view of China to the public. It enabled scholars to compare the works on display and formulate more accurate classifications with respect to ceramic type and period attributions. The Burlington Magazine stated:

<sup>88</sup> Hobson, R.L.: 'The Exhibition of Chinese Art – The Ceramics', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 68, Jan. 1936, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> David, Sir Percival: 'Exhibition of Chinese Art – A Preliminary Survey', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 67, 7<sup>th</sup> Dec., 1935, p. 239.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

*"...researches into the origins of early Chinese ceramics, earnestly pursued by members of the Exhibition Selection Committee, have resulted in the definite identification and dating of the Ju and Chi-chou wares of the Sung Dynasty."*<sup>91</sup>

By 1935, literature on Chinese art had become less romanticised. The Exhibition Catalogue included more factual knowledge gained from expeditions to China, tomb and kiln site excavations. Scientific knowledge had developed in tandem with art historical research. In fact the analytical science concerning ceramic bodies and glazes was in many ways more advanced, especially where copper-red and *flambé* glazes were concerned.<sup>92</sup> Knowledge of Chinese art was augmented by the growth of imports entering Britain, Europe and America, bringing with them opportunities of comparative study. By the time of the Exhibition in 1935, investigation of various Chinese kiln and burial sites had informed the West of 'classic' Song (960-1279 A.D.) culture, of which ceramics were the most prominent and prolific artefacts.

The '*big three-coloured vases with their telling masses of violet blue, aubergine and turquoise*' were less popular in 1935 than they had been with the 'Ming Millionaires' during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the popularity of Ming copper-red glazes remained unaffected. In an article reviewing the 1935 Exhibition, R. L. Hobson wrote that the most acclaimed Xuande period (1426-1435) monochrome glazes were the *chi hung* or '*sacrificial red*' glaze, and the *chi ch'ing* or '*clearing sky*' blue. The Xuande (1426-1435) '*red fish stem cups*' were said to exemplify '*real refinement*' which implied '*real technical skill*'. Hobson noted the two Xuande sauce pots carved

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>92</sup> Dr. J.W. Mellor's paper, 'The Chemistry of the Chinese Copper-Red Glazes', *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, June 1936, pp. 364-378 - has been discussed in Chapter One. Mellor's paper succeeded a wealth of late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century scientific literature on the copper-red glaze.

with a lotus petal relief in *chi hung* and *chi ch'ing* glazes represented in the Exhibition.<sup>93</sup>

### The 1944 Chinese Art Exhibition at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow

In 1944 a Chinese Art Exhibition was '*presented by the British Council in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy*' at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow. It was part of a series of Exhibitions "*sponsored by various Allied Nations (to afford the people of Great Britain the opportunity of entering into closer relations with the cultural life and achievements of our Allies)*", serving as an '*Open Sesame*' to the cultural life of a nation.<sup>94</sup> Objects and paintings in the Exhibition came from the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, the Chinese Embassy and from several private collections. As the catalogue asserted, by 1944 attitudes towards Chinese art had changed considerably...

*"as European art practice [had] itself been steadily moving away for a quarter of a century or more from its earlier conventions, the newcomer to Chinese Art should to-day find little difficulty in adjusting himself to the slightly different forms presented."*<sup>95</sup>

China was no longer seen as 'other', but as a nation with different but equally valid perceptions.

<sup>93</sup> **Hobson, R.L.**: 'The Exhibition of Chinese Art – The Ceramics', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 68, Jan. 1936, p.10. The *chi hung* 'sacrificial red' sauce pot was illustrated in Plate IV, B; Xuande Period (1426-1435). The Sauce Pots, No.'s 1612 – red, and 1614 – blue, both lent by the Chinese Government, are described in the Royal Academy 1935 Exhibition Catalogue, p. 134.

<sup>94</sup> **Strachan, Douglas**: 'Foreward', *Chinese Art – An Exhibition Presented by the British Council in collaboration with The Chinese Embassy*, Glasgow Art Gallery, Kelvingrove, 1944, p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

As with previous Exhibitions of Chinese art, the Kelvingrove set out to promote further '*understanding of the mental attitude to life of the people and artists under consideration; the elements... they most value*'. Chinese art was seen to be characterised by a '*childlike charm and elegance; sense of the leisured life; a serene urbanity...*'<sup>96</sup> In a sense, the romanticised view of China present at the 1842-44 'Chinese Collection' was echoed in the *Forward* to the 1944 Glasgow Exhibition a century later.

The Kelvingrove Chinese Art Exhibition may have been smaller in scale than that of the Royal Academy in 1935 and the Manchester Exhibition of 1936, but was equally representative of early periods – Han, Tang and Wei pottery – and of Song, Ming and Qing porcelain; the only exception being the absence of Neolithic pottery seen in London. There were representative specimens of Song *jun* copper-splashed ware, Kangxi and later *sang-de-boeuf* and *flambé* glazes.

A Kangxi porcelain water-pot decorated with chrysanthemums in underglaze red was lent to Glasgow by 'Messrs. John Sparks and Co.'<sup>97</sup> A pair of 19<sup>th</sup> century porcelain *sang-de-boeuf* vases enamelled with peony sprays were lent by Mrs. John Houston.<sup>98</sup> A vase with a transmutation '*sang-de-boeuf*' glaze was incorrectly attributed to the Song dynasty, unless it was a piece of Song *jun* heavily suffused with copper. This theory is given some credence by the fact that the vase was described as '*Ex. Eumorfopoulos collection*' – a collection known to have contained numerous examples of Song and 18th century *jun* ware. A '*sang-de-boeuf plate*' from the Ming

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 37, No. 384.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 55, No.'s 605 & 609.

dynasty was also exhibited.<sup>99</sup> Mrs J.C. Paterson lent two Yongzheng (1723-1735) porcelain stem- cups with *peach-bloom* glazes.<sup>100</sup>

Apart from ceramics, the 1944 Glasgow Exhibition contained examples of jade, wood and soapstone carving, marble, early bronzes, Imperial robes, lacquer, enamels, carpets and paintings.

### Conclusion

National and international exhibitions influenced taste alongside the writing and activities of individuals and learned societies. The spate of Chinese Art exhibitions during the 20<sup>th</sup> century were as much the product of availability of supply as the proselytising activities of taste formers. Increased supply meant that private and public collectors had access to a greater range of artefacts of which little was known. Exhibitions provided excellent opportunities for comparative scholarship, often relying on pieces from private collections.

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century exhibitions encouraged the 'acceptance' of certain art forms such as Song and pre-Song ceramics, bronzes and jades. Post-war exhibitions were successful in stimulating an interest in Chinese painting and culture generally. Through exhibitions collectors both created and responded to the taste of the time. In 1911, A.W. Bahr wrote that '*Peach-bloom has obtained an extraordinary vogue amongst collectors and fetches absurd prices. A small vase 8" high was sold long ago*

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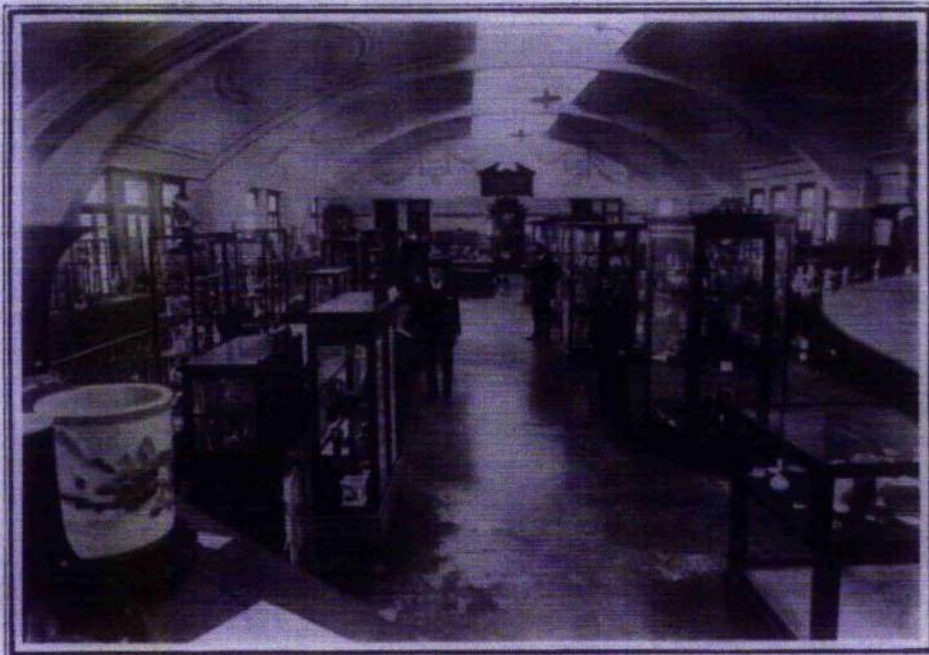
<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 56, No. 613 – lent by Sir David Home, & No. 614 – lent by Mrs. John Houstoun.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 57, No's 624 & 626.

for £3,000'.<sup>101</sup> (See **fig. 100**) And it is on Collectors and Collecting that the next chapter will focus.

**Fig. 100**

- **'Shanghai Exhibition, 1908'.**  
**Bahr, A.W:** 'Being Description and Illustrations of Articles Selected from an Exhibition held in Shanghai, November 1908', *Old Chinese Porcelain & Works of Art in China*, London, Cassell, 1911.

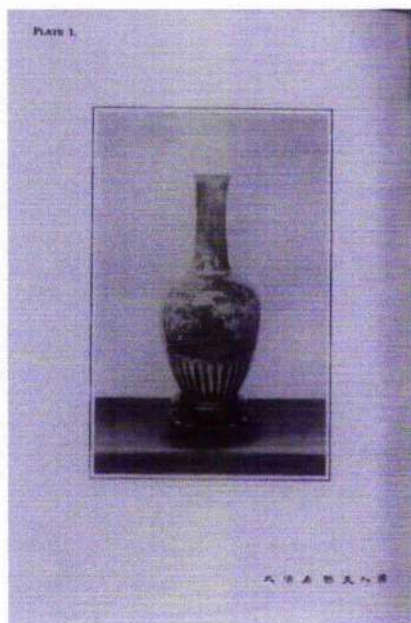


SHANGHAI EXHIBITION—1908

<sup>101</sup> **Bahr, A.W:** 'Being Description and Illustrations of Articles Selected from an Exhibition held in Shanghai, November 1908', *Old Chinese Porcelain & Works of Art in China*, London, Cassell, 1911, p. 10. Plate L, p. 91; Plate LII, p. 93.

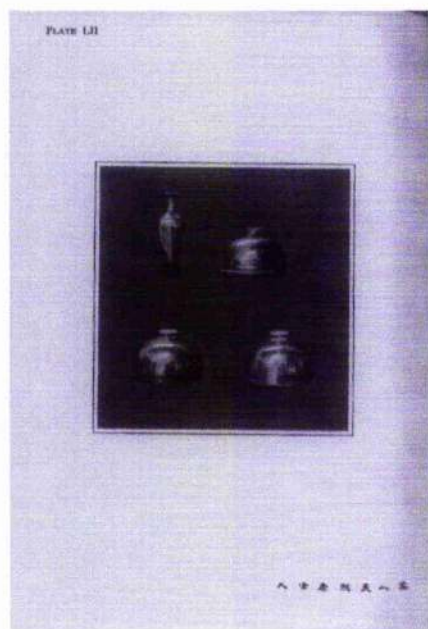
**PLATE L Vase.**

*"Bottle shape, with long cylindrical neck. Peach-bloom glaze, with splashes of green, on a pink-tint ground of various shades. A large specimen of this class of peach bloom variety."*  
Ht: 7 ins. Kangxi. **Bahr, A.W:** *Old Chinese Porcelain*, p. 91.



**PLATE LII Vase and Writer's Water Bottles. Peach bloom.**

*"All of good colours, with prominent green spots and splashes. The high esteem of this class held by the Chinese is well known, and it is increasingly in favour; no Chinese collector can boast of a porcelain collection if it does not include at least one specimen of this class."* Ht: Vase 6 ins. Ht: Water Bottles 3.5 ins, Dia: 5 ins. Kangxi. **Bahr, A.W:** *Old Chinese Porcelain*, p. 93.



## Chapter 7: Collecting and Collectors

This chapter will deal with collecting and collectors, each influential in shaping taste and notions of value as discussed in the previous chapters on Taste and Exhibitions. Collecting is a wide ranging and of late, 'fashionable' subject. This chapter will focus on the collecting and collections of Chinese ceramic monochromes, particularly the copper-red, *sang-de-boeuf* and *flambé* glazes and their British interpretations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. A chronology of British collectors form the majority of case studies while international partnerships such as that of Bushell and Walters, the international dealer Edward Chow, and the reinvigoration of Japanese and Chinese collectors are included to highlight the increasingly global nature of art markets and collecting. Collecting clubs and societies are covered as part of the continued interest in collecting in Britain, which in turn has fed the nostalgia market discussed in Chapter 4 on Stylistic Reinterpretation.

### Choice of Collectors

The choice of collectors of Chinese ceramics in this chapter has been governed by use of the John Sparks Archive in the Percival David Foundation. The selection criteria were restricted to collectors of glaze type, (i.e. copper-red), and the number of pieces acquired. Using other museum archives, chiefly in Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh, collectors from outside London were selected in order to redress the Metropolitan emphasis often found in collecting literature.<sup>1</sup> As far as possible, the collectors have been discussed chronologically.

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<sup>1</sup> This bias is understandable, as many of the most prestigious collections are to be found in and around London. Also, the larger Metropolitan institutions often have more income to fund publications on their collections.

Later 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors of Chinese copper-reds may not have set trends, and indeed were not commonplace, but they did awaken the vision of commercial manufacturers, thus creating a related 'taste' for various interpretations. In many instances, copper-reds were found only in the collections of discerning enthusiasts of Chinese art, more especially ceramic art. Unlike the ubiquitous Kangxi and later *blue-and-white* wares which were often collected for ornamental purposes, copper-reds never achieved the same degree of popularity as interior décor, and were not discussed in design journals except with reference to chemical composition and the technical aspects of manufacture.

Although it does not appear that Chinese copper-reds were generally in high-demand during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, interest in the glaze was stirred through commercial manufacturers who were in turn provoked by a desire to 'prove' they were capable of recreating with Western scientific rationale, what the Chinese had developed centuries beforehand through a combination of instinct, trial and error, and an intimate knowledge of native materials. In this sense, collecting Chinese copper-reds formed part of a larger context of scientific discovery and classification which characterised the later stages of the Age of Empire (c.1875-1914).<sup>2</sup> Private and public British collections gathered a representative selection of Chinese copper-reds throughout this period, but in parallel with a growing middle-class and changes in the political and social arena, it seems the general public were more enamoured with the affordable decorative British *flambé* alternatives.

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<sup>2</sup> Hobsbawm, E.J: *The Age of Empire 1875-1914*, London, Weidenfeld And Nicolson, 1987, p. 56.

Individual collectors can be seen to represent different collecting interests. For instance, William Burton, Bernard Moore and John Norman Collic were early 20<sup>th</sup> century glaze chemists who collected Chinese ceramics for aesthetic and technical reasons. Towards the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Henry Bergen collected Chinese ceramics alongside contemporary studio-pottery; the former, mostly Song ceramics, inspired his own pottery designs while he used the latter in preference to commercial tableware because of its functional beauty.

E.S. Thornhill took a different approach to collecting. Although he probably took a historical interest in the wares, he later evidently saw them as an educational resource for ceramic students in Staffordshire, hence the inclusion of many broken and ‘imperfect’ specimens to represent certain ceramic types. Thornhill’s collection is in marked contrast to Lord Lever’s collection of perfect, often-matching Chinese porcelains intended for the dual purposes of visual status and fashionable décor. Lever’s interest in copper-reds was limited to a few pieces with one memorable pair mounted in ostentatious ormolu. W.C. Alexander was probably also motivated by aesthetics, his collection was particularly rich in Song and later *jun* wares, but it appeared he also had an interest in their history. His position as an early 20<sup>th</sup> century *transitional* collector of Chinese ceramics rests on a chronologically diverse collection not so heavily defined by Kangxi and later *blue-and-white* and enamelled wares as was the prerogative of many of his contemporaries.

An academic interest in Chinese ceramics *and* culture was evident in the writing and collections of S.W. Bushell, W.G. Gulland, George Eumorfopoulos and Sir Percival

David.<sup>3</sup> Sir William Burrell however, clearly regarded Chinese ceramics as a sound financial investment. In the case of Chinese copper-reds, Burrell appeared to want to amass a fully representative collection of Ming and Qing monochromes.

George Salting and later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone and Professor Edward Hall, were obviously attracted to the aesthetic appeal of copper-red and *flambé* glazes, while a study of the copper-reds in Edward T. Chow's Collection suggests he was particularly interested in rare pieces which strongly reflected Chinese domestic culture. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese and Chinese collectors have been distinguished by their focus on Imperial porcelains – a 'trend' illustrative of a desire to reclaim their national heritage, often at tremendous cost.

It seems that the late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors were primarily reliant on what came out of China, legally or otherwise, to shape their collections. Ming monochromes were not as numerous as their Qing dynasty counterparts, hence the prevalence of Kangxi and later copper-reds in Western collections. Later 20<sup>th</sup> collections were largely shaped by their disbanded predecessors, hence the taste of the '*First Generation*' directly impacted that of the '*Second*', and so on. Many collections or parts of them have been gifted to national institutions, another factor which has distinctly influenced the character of more recent collections.

Late 19<sup>th</sup>–early 20<sup>th</sup> century technological interest in copper-reds was no doubt stimulated by examples seen in private and public collections; for instance specimens from private collections seen in the Loan Court cabinets or from the George Salting

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<sup>3</sup> The fact that William Walters commissioned Bushell to write a catalogue of his collection indicated that alongside an aesthetic appreciation, Walters had an academic and historical interest in his

Collection at the V&A. In turn, interest in the glaze chemistry and the desire to reproduce it commercially may have stimulated the acquisition of 'genuine' Chinese copper-reds.

Individuals and firms such as Bernard Moore, William Howson-Taylor, Royal Doulton and Moorcroft interpreted the glaze to produce commercial *flambé* in quantities that outstripped Chinese exports, and at much lower, but not cheap, prices. These early British interpretations have themselves become collectable as the Chinese prototypes have become even more scarce and expensive. The Albert Wade Collection was representative of this later 20<sup>th</sup> century collecting phenomenon.

### **Collecting: Social Significance**

Unlike hoarding or simply accumulating objects, collecting implies strategy and order. A collection is a construction and has both public and private roles. In the same way that certain objects express values and ideologies, collections can also reflect the historical, social and economic preoccupations of a society. The value of a collection is created through culture, age and origin - notions of the *other*, the *exotic* and the rare. During the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been a shift towards collecting objects from popular culture of little intrinsic value alongside the established tradition of collecting designated works of art. The ingredients which transform an artefact into a 'masterpiece' or 'work of art' differ according to cultural perceptions of the beautiful, sacred and meaningful. The move towards collecting popular culture is thought to represent a more accurate reflection of society than the limited selection of expensive, unique and handsomely crafted material. The post-war objective of creating a more

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investments.

egalitarian society may have contributed to this interest in popular culture. However, the collecting process can also be considered *counter-cultural* as the collector does not receive the immediate gratification inherent in spontaneous consumer consumption.<sup>4</sup> His is a process of waiting, of careful selection for a deliberate purpose. Part historical document and part monument, collections shape and maintain individual and national power networks as will be discussed.

Collections therefore represent an assemblage of ideas. And, as discussed in the chapter on Stylistic Reinterpretation, objects always retain a connection with their original context. The significance and meaning of a collection changes in relation to the context in which it resides. Meaning is expressed through objects providing historical evidence of periods, attitudes and values. In public spaces collections represent and reflect shared values; in the domestic interior they display personal taste. Arranging objects in a collection produces meaning. Collections are inter-relational; lone objects lose or have less significance. All objects have careers in terms of manufacture and ownership which can alter their value and meaning over time. Kopytoff's concept of a '*cultural biography*' can be applied to specific objects in relation to ownership. It gives rise to questions such as:

*"Where does the thing come from and who made it? ... What are the recognised "ages" or periods in the thing's "life," and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?"*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Culture in this instance can be defined as social custom and the desire to assess notions of value against shared contemporary ideas of 'cultivation'. Culture in this sense can be used to reaffirm individual positions, evaluate other societies and social groups. It is linked to, but not the same as the traditional interpretation of 'culture' as the possession of refined taste.

<sup>5</sup> Kopytoff, Igor: 'The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process'. From Ed. Appadurai, Arjun: *The Social Life of Things: commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 66-67.

With regard to collections, object sets or types, longer-term shifts of value and demand can occur which transcend the specific biography of an object, causing significant shifts in meaning:

*"... what is significant about the adoption of alien objects... is not the fact that they are adopted, but the way they are culturally redefined and put to use."*<sup>6</sup>

It seems that changes in value are stimulated by and tend to develop in tandem with new technologies. Renfrew has argued that the social and cultural role of objects, hence their associated meanings, cannot be extricated from questions of technology, production, and trade:

*"Some technological innovations... resulting in the development of new products and sometimes of new materials, such as pottery or metal... do not work in the technological sphere alone. They imply, and sometimes arise from, developing social systems... This means... that we cannot discuss commodities or the development of the economy without considering such embedded social concepts as value and demand."*<sup>7</sup>

The nature of the merely 'collectable' as opposed to the 'collected' is complex. The idea that specific objects are 'worthy' to be set apart from mundane, utilitarian paraphernalia - objects removed from their context or '*decontextualized*', taken out of circulation - has choice as its essence. Objects are selected by '*taste-makers*' and '*diverted*', '*where value, in the art or fashion market, is accelerated or enhanced by placing objects and things in unlikely contexts...*'<sup>8</sup> Within a collection an object receives immortality and exists in stasis. Collections demonstrate a measure of creativity, the ideas behind them often more significant than the objects themselves.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Renfrew, Colin: 'Varna and the emergence of wealth in prehistoric Europe'. From Ed. Appadurai, Arjun: *The Social Life of Things*, 1986, pp. 142-143.

<sup>8</sup> Ed. Appadurai, Arjun: 'Introduction: commodities and the politics of value', *The Social Life of Things*, 1986, pp. 28, 32.

Collections are formed for varied reasons; sometimes purely aesthetic, sometimes to fill gaps in existing collections. This study will chiefly be concerned with *Systematic Collections* underpinned by logic, order, the desire to classify and display scholarly understanding.<sup>9</sup> The 'systematic' approach can be said to impart a form of cultural power to the collector - the power of knowledge which transforms objects into artefacts of interest concerning their place and date of origin, manufacture and intended purpose. The systematic or *typological* approach was the main mode of display in public and private collections from c. 1700-1950. Objects were organised into ranks according to chronological and geographical origin. This approach was often used to compare and contrast cultures and periods. Typologically objects or object sets were, and sometimes continue to be exhibited to display their position in relation to a global scheme decided by the curator, a mode of exhibition particularly evident in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.<sup>10</sup>

During the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and in contemporary museum practice there has been an emphasis on 'contextualising' objects to enable the viewer to see them as they were used or displayed in their society of origin. The contextualised approach can be seen in institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum and the Ivy Wu Gallery of Far Eastern Art in the Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh. Contextualisation represents the cultural significance of objects rather than merely their classified status or evolutionary progress in manufacture and technique. Recent literature on Chinese art elaborated on the importance of a contextualised approach:

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<sup>9</sup> Pearce, Susan M: *On Collecting – An investigation into collecting in the European tradition*, London, Routledge, 1995, pp. 269-270.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

*"... in both the Chinese and Western intellectual traditions, 'art' and questions of function have been mutually exclusive categories until quite recently; since the nineteenth century, a work of art has been something without a function, or something considered in the light of the removal or concealment of its function... [In] the contexts of the tomb... the courts of rulers, the temples and altars of religious observance, [etc.]... It has... been a priority to show how constructions of meaning in a given object have changed over time."*<sup>11</sup>

Collecting however is not peculiar to Western Europe, although not all societies have made systematic attempts to collect works of art. China was among those who adopted collecting practices as far back as 977 and 981, when the Emperor Taizu (960-76) ordered the collection of calligraphy and paintings. The decorative arts followed suit. These collecting projects were part of the first concerted attempt during the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127) to conserve China's cultural traditions.<sup>12</sup> Similar conservation processes were taking place in the philosophical and political arena in China at that time.

That the Chinese have collected their native culture for centuries is one of the significant features of Chinese civilisation. Collecting domestic ceramics reflected the Chinese interest in antiquity, national culture, tradition and scholarship. Chinese ceramics made for an indigenous market did not enter the west in any quantity until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century highly decorated enamelled wares were bought by 'Ming Millionaires' as they became known, despite the fact that these ceramics were mostly from the Qing dynasty.<sup>13</sup> Vast sums were paid for *famille verte*, *famille rose* and *famille noire* on behalf of private collectors and museums. Such wares did not represent what the Chinese considered to be of good taste. The sacking of the Summer Palace in Peking, 1860 resulted in a trickle of

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<sup>11</sup> Clunas, Craig: *Art in China*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 13

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

domestic Chinese ceramics reaching British shores. The collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 increased the trickle of 'Imperial' wares entering Britain to a steady flow.<sup>14</sup>

And just as collecting was not a purely Western phenomenon, neither was faking or the deliberate reproduction of archaistic styles. Although it was not until the Ming dynasty that Chinese pottery and porcelain became collectable, classified according to regional origin, porcelain made for the early Ming court had become desirable works of art by the later 16<sup>th</sup> century, copper-reds among them.<sup>15</sup> The manufacture of ceramics in imitation of earlier, rare types was not uncommon at Jingdezhen, the creation of 'instant' antiques not dissimilar from 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary British practices. When Chinese elites had exhausted the supply of 'genuine' artefacts, the desire for ownership, especially among the Chinese merchant class, was assuaged by the production of 'collectables' evident in the multitude of 18<sup>th</sup> century Qing copies of 'classical' wares.<sup>16</sup> Reproductions and objects *made to be collected* carry acceptable historical associations while not being from the past. Chinese and British potters have both capitalised on the myth of contact with the past attractive to consumers. With reference to 19<sup>th</sup> century European and British ceramic reinterpretations Gerald Reitlinger commented:

*"The long series of sales which began in 1869 created a revolution in the home. Though Sèvres mounted urns were out of the question, no mantelpiece was complete at the end of that decade without a garniture of some kind or another... Moreover,*

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<sup>13</sup> 'Ming Millionaires' were represented by figures such as John Pierpont Morgan, Louis Huth, Lord Lever, etc.

<sup>14</sup> **Pearce, Nick:** 'Soldiers, Doctors, Engineers: Chinese Art and British Collecting, 1860-1935', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, Vol. 6, 2001, pp. 45, 48.

<sup>15</sup> **Kerr, Rose Editor:** *Chinese Art & Design – The T.T. Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art*, London, V&A, 1991, p. 228.

<sup>16</sup> The Qing dynasty *sang-de-boeuf*, *jun red* and *transmutation* glazes were imitations and developments of the early Ming dynasty *sacrificial* copper-red glaze.

*from the 1840's onwards the general spread of collecting encouraged a great deal of commercial copying."*<sup>17</sup>

During the Qing dynasty, the 18<sup>th</sup> century emperors were the most enthusiastic collectors. Their desire for accuracy not only influenced court taste but also resulted in the scholarly cataloguing of the Imperial Collections – the first attempt since the Song dynasty.<sup>18</sup> The Qianlong Emperor (1736-1795) created a 'canon' of works which even today shape our perceptions of art in China.<sup>19</sup> Whereas the Ming emperors and elite wore and used objects from remote phases of Chinese culture, Qing emperors and scholar-collectors took a more detached view of historical objects. Qianlong classical scholarship, particularly the translation of inscriptions, established the foundations of subsequent study of Chinese art and archaeology in the East and West.<sup>20</sup>

Sometimes known as palace or temple states, the Ming and Qing dynasties used the fine and decorative arts to distinguish social hierarchies and were often patrons of artists and craftsmen. As a result, successive Chinese emperors accumulated large collections in central repositories such as the Summer Palace complex in Peking. Antiquities and works of art in the Imperial Collections were more than simply decorative objects. They were thought to embody '*lingbao*', to be treasures of religious power ratifying a heavenly mandate with an earthly ruler, hence the secret nature of their holdings. The Imperial Collection served its political function through the selection criteria. Works that were not considered to represent China's cultural or

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<sup>17</sup> **Reitlinger, Gerald:** *The Economics of Taste: The Rise and Fall of Objects D'Art Prices Since 1750*, London, Barrie & Rockliff, 1963, p. 164.

<sup>18</sup> *The Imperially Ordained Mirror of Antiquities prepared in Xiqing Hall* completed in 1749, became a reference source for new objects based on past models.

<sup>19</sup> **Clunas, Craig:** *Art in China*, 1997, p. 81.

<sup>20</sup> **Kerr, Rose Editor:** '*Chinese Art & Design*', 1991, p.238.

political traditions were often rejected, hence the Imperial influence on the course of art history.<sup>21</sup> A considerable proportion of Imperial Chinese art treasures were removed from China and deposited in Taiwan before China fell to the Communists in 1949 because they were regarded as proof of political legitimacy.

Excavated objects including ceramics from Chinese burial hoards expressed the same sacred qualities evident in later collections. The deposition of chosen artefacts was an ancient method of legitimising and maintaining inherited status in this world and the next. The divinity attached to the emperor was thought to transfer to the objects buried with him, and was also a reason why imperial tombs had remained intact until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Essentially, burial hoards held state property to bolster the Imperial claim to divine origins and immortality. The status and quality of the objects were assumed to guarantee the emperor's position among his ancestors in the afterlife.<sup>22</sup>

Because inherited property and business interests in the Western European tradition passed to the eldest legitimate male heir, rivalry between younger sons was not uncommon. The careers of 'younger sons' in commerce and finance often generated sizeable incomes which were then used to display comparative wealth through property and works of art. Younger sons were generally more able to pursue interests other than those connected with the family business or estate. Richard Glynn Vivian, youngest son of John Henry Vivian the 'copper king', was at liberty to travel

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<sup>21</sup> Ledderose, Lothar: 'Some Observations on the Imperial Art Collection of China', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 43, 1978-79, pp. 34, 36.

<sup>22</sup> Pearce, Susan M: *On Collecting*, 1995, p. 85.

extensively and amass a collection of Welsh, English, European and Oriental ceramics.<sup>23</sup>

### **Collectors: Motivation**

*"The chief personal motives for collecting are the search for beauty, the desire for continuity with the past and for the power of an age that has gone, the wish to participate even at second-hand, in the creation of works of art, fetishism, the passion to complete a series, and the need to escape from standardisation; of these the search for beauty should always be dominant."*<sup>24</sup>

The above quote summarises the driving forces behind collecting. To these motivations can be added competitive instinct, compulsive-possessive behaviour, the desire to manipulate and order a material environment as well as collecting for investment purposes, intellectual and scientific curiosity and study.<sup>25</sup> The collecting instinct has sometimes been likened to hunting, or to predatory sexual conquest with its heady mix of temptation, spontaneity and perseverance.<sup>26</sup> A collection can be influential in forming identity and therefore be considered autobiographical.<sup>27</sup> And it appears that collectors can be attracted to objects because of their association with the past, particularly if they represent a period of cultural renaissance or economic strength. Collectors may even identify themselves with the perceived attributes of antiquities. For instance, collectors from the Qing court looked to the Ming dynasty as a model for imperial porcelain production and commissioned ceramics which sought

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<sup>23</sup> Paisley, Robin M. & Wilstead, John Owen: *Glynn Vivian Art Gallery Information – The Ceramic Collections*; Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, City and County of Swansea, 1996. The Gallery opened in 1911 'through the gift and bequest of Richard Glynn Vivian'.

<sup>24</sup> Eccles, Lord: *On Collecting*, London, Longmans, 1968, pp. 40-41.

<sup>25</sup> Pearce, Susan M: *On Collecting*, 1995, pp. 178, 187.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254.

to visibly surpass Ming technical and aesthetic achievements.<sup>28</sup> This was particularly obvious in the many Qing interpretations of the Ming copper-red glaze.

'Emotional' collectors are seen as those who make eclectic purchases without specific regard for period or style. Such collectors are driven by the tactile qualities in a work of art, the triumph of aesthetic and sensual appeal over intellectual rationale.

Emotional collectors are frequently driven by personal perceptions or ideas surrounding an object rather than its function.<sup>29</sup> Emotional collectors recognise the artistic as well as the historical value of artefacts.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of collectors, particularly those of the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century, are reluctant to include unidentifiable objects within a collection. Such objects are likely to be kept separate from the main collection until they can be properly 'classified' or ordered to create meaning among the group. A 'name' or documented category is clearly important in the selection, possession and mastery of objects.<sup>30</sup>

The desire for prestige is a common motivation for collectors. In 1919, Arthur Hayden wrote:

*"The worship of the antique is something that has seized the moneyed man here of ancestors. The 'old stuff' around him gives a glamour to his personality... It is a curious psychological development to amass the ancestral belongings of somebody else... there is a naïve touch of romance in it. It is as though the nouveau riche quaintly imagined that the belongings of a defunct knightly house would endow him with some of its patrician spirit."*<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Clunas, Craig: *Art in China*, 1997, p. 78.

<sup>29</sup> Pearce, Susan M: *On Collecting*, 1995, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 270.

<sup>31</sup> Hayden, Arthur: *Bye-Paths in Curio Collecting*, London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1919, p. 81.

Many businessmen acquired a pedigree through association with the material culture of past elites. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed these collections increasingly encompassed the decorative arts as the fashion shifted. Addressed later in the chapter, William Burrell (1861-1958) furnished an interesting example of a Glaswegian ship-owner turned collector.

It seems that prestige, political power and the cult of personality – even deification – often fuse within a collection. This has been significant in China from the time of the Emperor Tang Taizong (627-49), and can equally apply to contemporary western collectors such as Saatchi and Saatchi.<sup>32</sup> Collecting therefore provides a means to forge relationships and influential contacts, to build and control material empires. Indeed, 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors were frequently involved in the construction and administration of Britain's Empire overseas and, as a result of their collecting activities, consolidated the foundations of Empire in Britain through bequests to national institutions. Stephen Wootton Bushell (1844-1908), one of Britain's early and most influential pioneer collectors of Chinese art, particularly ceramics, formed a collection of Chinese art for the South Kensington Museum in 1882 while employed as physician to the British Legation at Peking.<sup>33</sup>

Peer pressure is a widely acknowledged factor of motivation in collecting circles which proliferated throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, collecting societies expanded numerically and in terms of the diversity of subject alongside collectors' magazines, television programmes, and an ever-increasing number of antique fairs, markets and shops. Most collecting societies incorporate amateurs and

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<sup>32</sup> Ledderose, Lothar: 'Some Observations', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 43, 1978-79, pp. 34, 36.

professionals; scholars, dealers and dilettantes. Some groups are more interested in serious study and discussion than others, a proportion publish papers, newsletters or journals. Many collecting organisations are funded through subscriptions. In the decorative arts, meetings and lectures are often supplemented through study trips and handling sessions.

Collecting societies are primarily important because they provide individuals with a collective identity, especially if the subject is esoteric. Members gain access to forums from which they are able to disseminate knowledge within a receptive context. News of potential acquisitions is often shared. Vying for position is almost inevitably a characteristic of such groups, but mostly they engender a sense of solidarity.

Collecting societies legitimate the practice, challenging the popular perception of the hoarding hermit, encouraging the recognition of the benefit of collecting to the wider community in terms of heritage preservation and interpretation.<sup>33</sup> The Oriental Ceramic Society discussed in the previous chapter is representative of the more serious, scholarly approach to collecting and interpreting its subjects. There are many other groups which support a more popular, essentially aesthetic approach to collecting.

In a paper delivered to the Oriental Ceramic Society in 1937, Sir Alan Barlow debated the moral grounds for collecting works of art, possibly in response to the growth of the socialist left and the Labour Movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

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<sup>33</sup> Rackham, Bernard: 'The Earliest Arrivals of Pre-Ming Wares in the West', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 3, 1923-24, p. 11.

<sup>34</sup> Pearce, Susan M: *On Collecting*, 1995, p. 231.

*"Is it fair or socially desirable that one man or woman should be in a position, after having fed, clothed, and housed himself in abundant comfort, to gather round himself beautiful things, possibly for his sole private delectation, while many others of his fellow citizens may have barely enough of the necessities, and no effective chance of the amenities of life?"*<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, Barlow also questioned the role of collectors in transforming works of art into *'banker's draft[s]'* and *'piece[s] of framed ostentation... a matter of "snobisme", the pursuit of rarities as such and the accumulation of expensive labels,'* lamented by experts in various fields.<sup>36</sup> However, in defence of collecting he asserted that *'Our museums have largely been built up by the gifts of private collectors, great and small.'*<sup>37</sup> Although in reference to George Eumorfopolous, Barlow contradicts his earlier statement in his applause for the private collector who, when through choice or circumstance is forced to part from his collection, decides to auction the contents rather than *'sterilizing it in a museum'* to afford others the chance of *'acquiring, enjoying, and learning from the things which he has himself enjoyed...'*<sup>38</sup>

Private collecting can encourage scholarship which, if disseminated widely, is of benefit to the wider community – what Barlow termed *'the diffusion of amenity.'*<sup>39</sup> Barlow claimed the *'collector of Oriental China'* played a *useful* role in consumer education and elevating *'public taste to demand and to recognise beauty in every-day crockery,'* which he believed most effectively achieved through the appreciation of early Chinese pottery.<sup>40</sup> Bequests to state museums and publications of private research were certainly pivotal to the British public understanding of China and her arts.

<sup>35</sup> Barlow, J.A.N: 'The Collector And The Expert', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 14, 1936-37, p. 87.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

The last section of Barlow's paper was devoted to distinguishing the *expert* from the *collector*. Chinese ceramic experts came in academic and chemical guises, and a measure of collaboration often proved useful in order to verify particular theories. Indeed, Oriental Ceramic Society members included chemists, collectors and academics who frequently dabbled in each other's field.<sup>41</sup> The distinction between the 'connoisseur' – which 'as his name implies, knows about an object of art, its author, style, date, worth, and so on', and the collector – who 'feels about an object... [whose] feelings, or ... taste, are often out of line with the connoisseur's knowledge', is in certain circles no less contentious today than it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>42</sup> Barlow cautiously summarised that the connoisseur needed the chemist's 'particular realm of truth' to correct or confirm his judgement, as much as science was indebted to the *instinctive judgement* of the connoisseur who can be as useful to the collector as the collector can be beneficial to the community.<sup>43</sup>

A certain amount of scepticism surrounds collections purchased wholesale – the notion of the 'instant' collection as fraudulent – because collections can be interpreted

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 94–95.

<sup>41</sup> For example, **J.N. Collie** (1859–1942) was a chemist-scholar-collector as illustrated by his paper 'A Monograph on Copper Red Glazes', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 1, 1921–22, pp. 22–32. Collie became Professor of Organic Chemistry at UCL from 1896–1913, and from 1913–1928, Director of Laboratories, retiring as Professor Emeritus. A 19<sup>th</sup> century porcelain *Lang Yao* red vase of *meiping* shape with Kangxi mark and scaly dragon motif incised around the shoulder now in the Burrell Collection is described as 'Ex-Collection of Professor J. Norman Collie'. It was purchased by Burrell on 16.10.46 for £65; Register No. 38/717; Inventory No: 1098.

**A.L. Hetherington** (1881–1960), provided another example of a scholar-chemist-collector whose interest in Oriental art was probably stimulated while serving as Principal of the Govt. Collegiate School in Rangoon (1905–7), then as assistant Director of Public Instruction, Burma, before working 21 years as assistant Secretary in the Dept. of Scientific and Industrial Research. (**Bluett, E.E.**: 'Arthur Lonsdale Hetherington', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 32, 1959–60, p. viii). Hetherington's last position no doubt fostered and aided his interest and research in Chinese ceramic glazes, hence his often cited text: '*Chinese Ceramic Glazes*', Cambridge University Press, 1937; Second Revised Ed., USA South Pasadena, P.D. and Ione Perkins, 1948. Recorded in the John Sparks archive 'Day Sales Book' 1918–1925, A.L. Hetherington purchased '*I small splash (flambé) coupe*' for £6.0.0.

<sup>42</sup> **Eccles, Lord**: *On Collecting*, 1968, p. 124.

<sup>43</sup> **Barlow, J.A.N.**: 'The Collector', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 14, 1936–37, p. 102.

as the record of a life, the acquisition of objects to mark the passage of time.<sup>44</sup>

Inherited collections which are often re-shaped to reflect present ownership appear to be exempt from criticism. Chinese emperors throughout the centuries have added to and subtracted from the Imperial Collection to as a means of asserting their moral and cultural authority.<sup>45</sup>

Although John Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913) has been credited with the formation of *'the greatest single private collection comprehending all ages'*, and that his appetite was thought responsible for *'the American domination of the world art market in the early 1900's'*, it was noted that Morgan's rapid and successful accumulation was due in part to his acquisition of European collections. For instance, in 1902 Morgan purchased the Garland Collection of Chinese porcelain from Henry Duveen for around £200,000.<sup>46</sup> In 1906, Morgan purchased *'the first collection of decorative arts and medieval art formed by Georges Hoentschel, a Parisian architecte décorateur, and launched the Decorative Arts Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.'*<sup>47</sup>

Henry Walters (1848-1931) also purchased 'en bloc' occasionally. In 1911, from William M. Laffan's estate, *"he bought twenty-four Chinese porcelains, mostly the celadons and other monochrome wares that he and Laffan had favoured."* He also acquired pieces from the sale of Robert Hoe's collection, *"which yielded Chinese cloisonné enamels and bronzes, a couple of small Tibetan deities in gilt-bronze, and a Siamese seated Buddha."*<sup>48</sup> Henry apparently preferred to procure works of Far

<sup>44</sup> Pearce, Susan M: *On Collecting*, 1995, p. 235.

<sup>45</sup> Ledderose, Lothar: 'Some Observations', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 43, 1978-79, p. 36.

<sup>46</sup> Reitlinger, Gerald: *The Economics of Taste*, 1963, pp. 228, 230.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.276.

<sup>48</sup> Johnston, William R: *William and Henry Walters, The Reluctant Collectors*, Baltimore USA & London, The John Hopkins University Press in association with The Walters Art Gallery, 1999, p. 189.

Eastern art through international exhibitions rather than visit the Far East as other American collectors such as Charles Lang Freer and Ernest Fenollosa had done.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps the most attractive reason to collect is because it offers immortality, especially if the collection is accepted for deposition in a museum. Collectors may also seek '*a real, if temporary defence against the insecurity of life in the possession of beautiful things.*'<sup>50</sup> As many of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors of Chinese pottery and porcelain were men of mature years, the idea of preservation through a collection was an appealing if subliminal factor in their choice of acquisitions. There was little point in collecting for public recognition and immortality if the objects were not wanted by museums. In effect, collectors often became part of their collections.

Through default or design, exceptionally wealthy collectors have occasionally chosen to establish museums in their place of residence or other purpose built space. The Alfred Baur (1865-1951) Collection of Chinese and Japanese works of art, Geneva and the Museum of East Asian Art, Bath founded in 1993 by Brian McElney (b. 1932), are both privately funded museums. Although private establishments can take time to be acknowledged, many renowned institutions began in this way. Essentially, the collector's activities are voyeuristic, using objects to unlock the past and reveal distant cultures. The looting and excavation of sealed tombs provide the most obvious examples of voyeurism. Because the collector structures his very existence in pursuit of his passion through travel, study, research, exhibitions and society meetings, collecting has to be considered a labour of love as much as a means of investment.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 189-190.

<sup>50</sup> Eccles, Lord: *On Collecting*, 1968, pp. 4-5.

## Collecting Chinese Porcelains

Collecting, collections and provenance have become subjects of increasing interest, particularly at the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when curators and researchers are re-interpreting the histories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the identities that shaped it through ambition, discovery and the collection of material goods.

The collectors cited are predominantly British, including those that are relatively small and provincial, hence less publicised. The re-emergence of Japanese and Chinese collectors and their impact on the global art market of the later 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries is also discussed.

Although it appears *Imperial Yellow* porcelains were eagerly sought after by early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century collectors such as Lord Cunliffe, the same was not true of copper-reds.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Richard Glynn Vivian purchased Imperial Yellow Ming saucer dishes, a dragon bowl, and set of four fine dishes "... in Peking, April, 1870, ... probably Palace pieces."<sup>52</sup> In addition to *powder blue*, *blanc de chine* and various enamelled porcelains, Vivian also had eighteen Qing dynasty copper-reds, but it is not stated that these were Palace wares.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> John Sparks Archive, the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, (SOAS). *Day Sales July 1906 – December 1911*, p. 436. It is interesting that one of the most expensive items recorded between these dates, certainly for porcelain, was '1 Fine Old Yellow Ming Vase' sold on 8 June, 1911 to a P. Ralli Esq. for the vast sum of £850. By comparison, p. 442 records that on 10 July, 1911, Frank Partridge Esq. purchased '1 sang-de-boeuf vase' for only £7 and '2 Fine Famille Verte Jardinières' for £165.

<sup>52</sup> Sotheby & Co: *Catalogue of Chinese And European Ceramics - Sold by Order of the Trustees of the late R. Glynn Vivian, Esq.* (Annotated 'Printer's Copy'); New Bond Street, London; Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1944, p.235-236. (Lots 16, 17 & 18) Lot 16, the 'Ming Saucer Dish', sold for £50 to Messrs. Bluet; Lot 17, 'A Ming Yellow Dragon Bowl' and 'yellow Saucer Dish' sold for £32 to Messrs. Sparks; Lot 18, 'Four Fine Ming Dishes with Imperial egg-yellow glaze', sold for £68.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p.235.

11. "A 'Lang Yao' Bottle with depressed globular body and tubular neck, covered with a rich cherry-red glaze ... and a sang-de-boeuf Bottle of similar shape with flambé markings round the neck... 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Although colour specific collections are virtually unknown, *blanc de chine* and *powder blue* porcelains were highly prized and collected in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

However, there were collectors who bought according to size, date or reign mark. And peach-blooms were collected by set, most obviously seen in the W.T. Walters Collection, the Baltimore Museum, USA.<sup>54</sup>

Scarcity was perhaps the reason so few people actively engaged in collecting *copper-red* and *sang-de-boeuf* porcelains.<sup>55</sup> Some collectors may even have found early copper-red saucers and stem-cups ugly, particularly if they were early Ming 'muddy reds' manufactured before the bright cherry-red colour was perfected later in the dynasty. The 'uneducated' preferences of some collectors was a view upheld by Western, Chinese and Japanese connoisseurs alike:

*"The beauty of Chinese ceramic ware, particularly of the Ching Dynasty, may easily be appreciated by Westerners, but that of the Sung dynasty in China and some Japanese and Korean ware is often not appreciated by them."*<sup>56</sup>

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12 *A Lang Yao Vase of baluster shape, the neck cut down, cherry-red to ashes of roses tint...; a set of four Saucer Dishes with liver-coloured glaze...; another pair, lighter... and a set of three, smaller... Ch'ien Lung seal mark.*

13 *A Saucer Dish with red glaze simulating that of Hsuan Te... the six character mark of Ch'ien Lung within a double ring; a pair of larger Saucer Dishes... [with] Ch'ien Lung seal mark; a 'sang-de-boeuf' Vase (mei p'ing),... a Bottle similarly glazed ... and another with rich cherry-red glaze... Ch'ien Lung seal mark."* Qianlong (1736-1795).

Lot 11 was sold to Messrs. Bluett for £50; Lot 12 went for £15 to 'Sellick' and Lot 13 for £42 to Messrs. Sparks. These copper-red pieces were not as expensive as the Ming Imperial Yellow ware discussed above.

<sup>54</sup> The *W.T. Walters Collection* and that of *Lord Cunliffe* will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

<sup>55</sup> A paper read to the Oriental Ceramic Society, 'Oriental Ceramics Excavated in North Sumatra' recorded that no copper-reds, either monochrome or underglaze red, were found in the area. This would appear to underline the fact that the Chinese did not deal or exchange them. (Edwards McKinnon, *E.P.: T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 41, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1976).

Another paper, 'Fourteenth Century Chinese Porcelain From a Tughlao Palace in Delhi' also recorded that no copper-red pieces were excavated in Delhi, only 44 *blue-and-white* dishes, 23 *blue-and-white* bowls and 5 celadons. (Dr. Ellen S. Smart: *T.O.C.S.*; Vol. 41, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1976).

<sup>56</sup> Okuda, Seiichi: 'The Characteristics of Oriental Ceramic Ware'; *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc., Wedgwood Bicentenary* 1930, pp. 119-120.

Kangxi *sacrificial reds* of incredible beauty were possibly far more attractive to later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors. In any case, few Ming copper-reds, Kangxi and later *sacrificial reds*, *sang-de-boeuf*, *flambé*, etc. would have entered the West before the sacking of the Summer Palace in 1860. In an attempt to replenish an exhausted treasury after China's defeat in the *Sino-Japanese* war of c.1894-95, and also during the fifteen transitional 'twilight' years, particularly after the death of the Dowager Empress Cixi (1835-1908), pieces from the Imperial Collection of porcelain from the Summer Palace were put up for sale or dispersed according to more clandestine methods.<sup>57</sup> During the subsequent Boxer Rebellion of 1900 many indigenous art collections were broken up and sold to the West. For example, the Oriental Ceramic Society purchased a '*Beautiful Chun bulb-bowl*' for the Victoria and Albert Museum:

*"... said to have been brought from China by a French officer in 1900, at the time of the Boxer Rebellion. That event, at the turning-point of the centuries, may perhaps be taken as marking the beginning of the flood of ancient wares which now flows so steadily, not altogether untainted by forgery, into Western collections."*<sup>58</sup>

By 1905 relative peace had been re-established, despite crippling conditions imposed by Western powers. Hardship affected not only the Chinese but Western missionaries and diplomats resident in China who were similarly forced to sell their collections. The eventual collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1910-11 further increased the flood of Imperial Chinese ceramics entering Europe and Britain, including copper-red and *sang-de-boeuf* porcelains. Availability and the taste of Western dealers with Far-Eastern contacts thus dictated the scope of many 19th and early 20th century collections of Chinese ceramics. Few private or public collectors travelled to China in

<sup>57</sup> Kerr, Rose: *Chinese Ceramics*, London, V&A, 1986, this ed. 1998, pp. 32-33.

Chunas, Craig: *Art in China*, 1997, p. 87.

<sup>58</sup> Rackham, Bernard: 'The Earliest Arrivals of Pre-Ming Wares In The West', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 3, 1923-24, p. 16.

search of wares, especially prior to the construction of an interior rail network.<sup>59</sup> It is also significant that Chinese export ware, rabidly collected in the West, barely exists in China's national collections. Karlbeck reported his perspective on the situation in China during the 1930's:

*"If one wants to buy the kind of porcelain that has most appeal for people at home, ... famille verte and famille rose, then one should not look for it in China. Little of it remains there, and what there is costs at least as much as it would in Europe ...*

*As regards bronzes, jade and monochrome pottery the situation is different. There were far more of these in the 'thirties than there had been at the beginning of the century, although a great deal had been exported to Europe and the United States."*<sup>60</sup>

Before discussing specific case studies it is important to acknowledge significant shifts in collecting activities. Taste for certain wares changed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, partly in response to and reflecting innovative creative developments in art and design, particularly the influence of Modernism and the Bauhaus. While 17<sup>th</sup> century imports of *blue-and-white* Chinese porcelain were chiefly valued for their capacity to highlight and soften symmetrical Baroque interiors, during the 18<sup>th</sup> and into the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Chinese export ceramics were valued as status symbols and fashionable accessories by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. From c.1860, Kangxi and earlier *blue-and-white* was adopted by the Aesthetic Movement for its 'look' and because it reflected Aesthetic design philosophies. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the acquisition of Chinese export porcelain in considerable quantities of varying quality and often dating from the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Certain types of enamel

<sup>59</sup> Karlbeck, Ovar: *Treasure Seeker in China*, London, The Cresset Press, 1957, p. 17.

The national galleries and museums were dependent on British and European contacts during the late 19<sup>th</sup> –early 20<sup>th</sup> century. (E.g: Ovar Karlbeck who brought wares from China on behalf of a European Syndicate of museums and private collectors). The 'Glasgow Art Galleries' and 'Edinburgh Museum' are mentioned several times in the *John Sparks Day Sales Books* during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *Day Sales Book for July 1906 – December 1911*, p. 71, noted that the Glasgow Art Galleries purchased a *sang-de-hoeuf* vase for £20 on 8 March, 1907.

<sup>60</sup> Karlbeck, Ovar: *Treasure Seeker*, 1957, p. 17.

decorated Ming ceramics were also popular with collectors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Status was the predominant motivation in acquisitions of this type.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the emergence of ‘discerning’ collectors keen to demonstrate knowledge and scholarship, hence the pursuit of ‘excavated’ Han, Tang and Song ceramics of archaeological interest. Early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century collector-scholars, referred to as the *First Generation*, included Sinologists such as Sir Percival David who learned to read original Chinese texts and were therefore able to identify the ware arriving in London. Primarily, the Oriental Ceramic Society was founded in 1921 to disseminate the growing corpus of knowledge and debate the identities of specimens belonging to *First Generation* scholar-collectors; most of whom were men of commerce, military officers and senior civil servants. The *Second Generation* who collected Chinese ceramics from the mid-century were greatly helped by the scholarship of the *First*; collectors such as Cunliffe (d.1963), Reginald Howard Reed Palmer (1898-1970), and Carl Kempe (1884-1967).<sup>61</sup>

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, throughout the 1940’s, ’50’s and even 1960’s Chinese porcelain could be snapped up for ‘bargain’ prices by today’s standards. Later 20<sup>th</sup> century prices for Chinese porcelain rocketed, especially for Imperial ware such as Ming and Kangxi blue-and-white palace bowls and monochromes. Of course, because many pieces have been taken out of circulation, ensconced in private and public collections, subsequent rarity values have further escalated prices.

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<sup>61</sup> Interview with **Dominic Jellinek**, (Ex-Bluett’s); Beaconsfield, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the formative collectors of Chinese porcelain were the aristocracy. As the century progressed a greater proportion of wealthy middle-class professionals began to collect.<sup>62</sup> Towards the later 20<sup>th</sup> century the collecting process democratised in the sense that British interpretations of Chinese-inspired monochromes produced earlier in the century became 'collectable' alongside contemporary 'made to collect' wares and the authentic Chinese porcelains.

From the 1970's renewed interest emerged from Far-Eastern collectors as Japanese and subsequently Chinese collectors reclaimed their national heritage. Chinese Imperial monochromes, particularly copper-reds, continued to be much sought after by these collectors. Consequently their monetary value is now beyond the means not only of private British collectors, but also of some public institutions.<sup>63</sup>

The collection of broken pieces was another phenomenon of mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century collecting. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century broken ceramics were sold very cheaply or else discarded. As the amount of Chinese pottery and porcelain in circulation decreased throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, broken pieces became acceptable. Many contemporary collections consist of restored items, although even the renowned early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century collections of Eumorfopolous (1863-1939) and Sir Percival David (1892-1964), contained a number of restorations.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

## Late Victorian Collectors

*"It is always a matter of surprise to find what type of collector is interested in a particular subject. Whatever may be a man's profession, his hobby should indicate his real self. One starts with the premiss that Lord Kitchener collected blue and white Chinese Kang-He porcelain."*<sup>65</sup>

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinese porcelain was seen as a status symbol. Highly decorated enamel wares of the *famille verte*, *famille rose* and *famille noire* types were prized by 'Ming Millionaires', even though many pieces were of the Qing period. Vast sums were paid for these ceramics on behalf of private collectors and museums. In 1907 Maurice Jonas wrote:

*"In collecting china three important things should be borne in mind – namely colour, modelling and shape, and only the very finest and most beautiful pieces should be added to one's cabinet... It seems strange that the ugly Chinese figures, with their horrible contortions, should appeal to the European collector, but immense prices are asked and obtained, which prove they must be greatly in demand."*<sup>66</sup>

As has already been discussed in the previous chapter on Taste and throughout the case studies detailed below, collectors' tastes shifted throughout the century, but not in every case. There was an early 20<sup>th</sup> century bias towards the technically perfect and aesthetically beautiful as well as a European taste for Chinese representations of the grotesque. Heavily decorated underglaze blue and enamelled export ware was not what the Chinese considered to be in 'good' taste, but had been enthusiastically collected in Britain and Europe. For reasons outlined above, it was not until the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that Imperial monochrome porcelain entered Britain in any significant quantity.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Hayden, Arthur: *Bye-Paths*, 1919; 'Introductory Note'.

The Swiss collector A.W. Bahr (1865-1951) was interested in Chinese monochromes.<sup>67</sup> Bahr noted that the Kangxi 'rare apple green' and "even more celebrated ruby red or *sang-de-boeuf*, ... [a] revival of the 'sacrificial red' glaze of the Ming Dynasty", were admired and 'costly'.<sup>68</sup> He was of the contemporary opinion that monochromes of the 'Yung-Cheng and Ch'ien-Lung' periods (1723-96), did not surpass the Kangxi wares and were in fact generally inferior. He acknowledged the 'special attention' given to Chinese *flambé* glazes during the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, and conveyed a rudimentary understanding of the chemistry and processes of manufacture.<sup>69</sup> However, typical of many collectors and connoisseurs of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and later, Bahr implied a disregard for Chinese ceramics of the 'Modern Period, from 1796'. He claimed it was:

"... a period of decadence, and though many beautiful pieces were turned out during the reigns of Chi-Ch'ing and Tao-Kwang, and especially for use in the palace at Peking, it hardly demands detailed description."<sup>70</sup>

The Republic of China established in 1912 decided to modernise China by building a rail network across the country. During construction many artifacts, including Tang pottery and porcellaneous Song monochromes were unearthed. Tombs were encountered which unlike those in Egypt, the Chinese, partly through superstition and respect for their deceased ancestors, and partly because 'pottery' had no intrinsic value, had not been plundered. From the 1920's and possibly earlier to a limited extent, a flood of archaeological ceramics were enthusiastically received by a Western

<sup>66</sup> Jonas, Maurice: *Notes of an Art Collector*, London, 1907, pp. 17 & 20.

<sup>67</sup> John Sparks 'Day Sales Book, 1918-1925'; Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, (SOAS), London; p. 411 - '12 Aug. 1924; A.W. Bahr Esq., (bought) 1 set 12 miniature *s-de-b* cups' for £10.

<sup>68</sup> Bahr, A.W: 'Being Description and Illustrations of Articles Selected from an Exhibition held in Shanghai, November, 1908', *Old Chinese Porcelain & Works of Art in China*, London, Cassell, 1911, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

market for which archaeological ceramics from Han, Tang and Song dynasties were previously unknown. Moreover, since the looting of the Summer Palace in Peking c.1860 Western collectors had been eager recipients of Ming and Qing wares of 'pure' Chinese taste. Therefore, the majority of mid-later 19<sup>th</sup> century collections were comprised of Qing dynasty and later wares. Export porcelains had been popular and decorative, valued for their aesthetic appeal. Earlier examples of Ming porcelains were rare, as were Tang and Song examples. Although not collected exclusively or in quantity, many collections formed towards the later 19<sup>th</sup> century included *sang-de-boeuf* specimens of the Kangxi and later periods.

### **S.W. Bushell**

In 1882 Stephen Wootton Bushell (1844-1908) sent a consignment of 'early' wares to the Victoria and Albert Museum. These included a Song *ding* wine-pot and piece of Yuan *jun*, the former in a 'silk-lined case', evidence that it had been prized by a Chinese collector.<sup>71</sup> It was not until W.G. Gulland's gift in 1905 that the museum received other pre-Ming ceramics, notably "*a fine mottled Chün dish of which the true nature was not at first suspected.*"<sup>72</sup> After Bushell's death in 1908, the Victoria and Albert Museum purchased six pieces of 'early' Chinese pottery from his collection, three of which were reputedly Han dynasty ceramics acquired from the Chinese antiquary *Liu Hsi-hai*.<sup>73</sup> Subsequently, only two of the three Han wares have been authenticated. It has been suggested that Bushell's early specimens were purchased before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Bushell can certainly be regarded as a

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<sup>71</sup> Rackham, Bernard: 'The Earliest Arrivals', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 3, 1923-24, pp. 11-13.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14. (From the description it seems that the piece referred to is probably an example of Song *jun* rather than *Kuan* ware.)

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

pioneer Western collector regarding the choice and date of his acquisitions. Writing later in the century Rackham recorded that he was "*able to discover very little evidence of the presence of pre-Ming wares in French collections in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*"<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.15. Dr. Bushell's catalogue of W.T. Walters of Baltimore collection of '*Oriental Ceramic Art*' documented in considerable depth the arrival of 'early' specimens in America, including examples of *jun*, copper-red and *flambé* glazes. The catalogue does not give records of when pieces left China and interestingly, there are no examples of Tang and only one example of Han pottery. Walters did make trips to London and Europe, particularly Paris, to visit collections, exhibitions and make purchases: "*The Exposition Universelle was his goal when William Walters embarked on his fourth trip to Europe in the spring of 1878. Arriving in Paris, he joined cronies Lucas and Avery on a hasty tour of the Lowlands and several German cities, visiting artists' studios, dealers, and collectors. Given his involvement with Oriental art, William must have taken particular interest in the splendid porcelains of the Morren collection in Brussels, the holdings of the Japanese Museum at The Hague, [etc.]...*" (Johnston, William R: *William and Henry Walters: The Reticent Collectors*, Baltimore USA & London, The John Hopkins University Press in association with The Walters Art Gallery, 1999, p. 76).

It is known that Walters acquired the nucleus of his collection around forty years before Bushell published the catalogue, thus the majority of pieces must have arrived in America from the 1870's until his death in 1894. Walters is generally credited as the first American to create a substantial collection of Oriental ceramics.

The Walters Collection is famed for its set of peach-bloom porcelains. It also comprises a "one-twig" copper-red soufflé vase, Kangxi c.1705-1712.<sup>74</sup> Walters has seven of the eight standard peach-bloom shapes that were made to attend the scholar's desk. All have Kangxi (1662-1722) reign marks in under-glaze blue on the base, and were made probably manufactured between c. 1712-1722. These sets were made for the court elite, therefore it is not surprising that "*three of the Walters vases descended in the family of Prince I, the Kangxi emperor's thirteenth son.*" (The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland: *Peach Bloom*; information leaflet, not dated. The soufflé process as described by Pere d'Entrecolles in his letter of 1712 is described in the chapter on *Methods of Manufacture*).

The collection also holds the "*rarest of the (peach-bloom) shapes... the 'coiled dragon vase', on which a green-glazed dragon is entwined around the neck,*" as well as the "*best known... peach-bloom shape*" the '*three-string vase*'. Represented are two other vases; one with a long trumpet neck and collar of relief lotus-petals rising from the foot, the other - the smallest vase in the set of four - has a narrow oval body, cylindrical neck and trumpet mouth with straight prominent lip. A small covered box for red seal paste, a beehive pot and saucer dish with concave rim for washing brushes are included in the collection. The missing peach-bloom is an apple-shaped water-pot. On the death of her husband in 1878, Mrs Mary J. Morgan purchased a three-string peach-bloom vase claimed to have been in the family of Prince I, and was described in the sale catalogue of her collection as "*being the finest specimen of its class in existence*". (Walters Gallery leaflet: *Peach Bloom*; Sale Catalogue of the Mary Morgan Collection, New York, 1886).

Walters bought the Morgan vase for \$18,000, a price so incredible at the time that it inspired the glass manufacturer Hobbs, Brockunier & Company to produce a cheaper interpretation. (Ayres, John: '*The 'Peachbloom' Wares of the Kangxi period (1662-1722)*', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 64, 1999-2000, p. 36.). The glass vase is illustrated in the exh. cat. *After the Chinese Taste -- Chinese Influence in America 1730-1930*, Peabody Museum of Salem, 1985. (Plate 4 - 'Vase on stand, ca. 1890', Hobbs, Brockunier & Co. (1863-1891), Wheeling, West Virginia, 'Vase of blown cased glass with pressed glass stand', Ht: 10 ins, D. 3 ins. Gift in memory of Arnold G (Jay) Buckle, 1979; Acc. No: 79.2AB, Huntington Galleries, West Virginia).

Stephen Bushell wrote the catalogue descriptions for The Walters Collection of Kangxi and later copper-reds. In *Oriental Ceramic Art*, Bushell recorded a Kangxi beaker-shaped vase with crackled *sang-de-boeuf* glaze (Plate I), two Qianlong transmutation splash vases, one of hexagonal section with two lug handles (Plates XVI and LXXXVIII), a mottled *flambé* 'Kuang Yao' figure of Bodhidharma (Plate XVI), a Qianlong brilliant *flambé* quadrangular vase, (Plate XLVI), and three vases of Kangxi *Lang Yao* type (Plates LVI, LVII, LIX). From his descriptions it is evident Bushell was well aware of the variety of reduced-copper glazes; tint, texture, techniques and even acquainted with the use of specific pastes.<sup>75</sup> Such was Bushell's knowledge of the copper-red glaze that unlike those collectors less well informed, he was able to distinguish Kangxi and other 18<sup>th</sup> century specimens from modern reproductions:

*"On a visit to a curio-shop in Peking... I was shown a small sang-de-boeuf vase, the lower part of which displayed the richest colour, but the upper two inches of the neck were a glassy white, and I remarked that, were it not for the neck, it might well pass for an old piece. A month later I was invited to see a collection... and in the most prominent position was exhibited the same little vase... Two inches of the neck had been sawn off, and the place had been so carefully rounded and polished that no suspicion of the fact had occurred to the purchaser..."*<sup>76</sup>

### George Salting

In many ways George Salting (1835-1909) typified late Victorian collectors of Chinese ceramics. In 1910 he bequeathed 1, 405 pieces of Qing dynasty porcelain to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Mirroring the taste of other late 19<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>75</sup> **Bushell, Stephen:** *Oriental Ceramic Art, illustrated by examples from the collection of W.T. Walters*, London, 1981. Originally published in 1896. 'Coloured Plates – Descriptive List of the Illustrations', pp. 377, 379, 382, 383, 384, 388.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

collectors, Salting's preference for highly finished delicate porcelains was clearly evident in his choice of blue-and-white, enamelled and monochrome specimens.<sup>77</sup> However, R.L. Hobson illustrated a single Kangxi (c. 1712-1722) peach-bloom water-pot from the Salting collection displaying a cut-down mouth/neck with metal collar.<sup>78</sup> Salting continued to collect in the last few years of his life and there is evidence to suggest that his taste was broadening. According to the John Sparks *Day Sales Book* for July 1906-December 1911, on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1907, Salting purchased '1 old vase – Han dynasty' for the considerable sum of £105.

### **W.G. Gulland**

In contrast to Salting, William Giuseppe Gulland (1841-1906) collected pieces more akin to Chinese taste. Between 1905 and 1932, Gulland and his wife, Julia Clementina gave 916 pieces to the Victoria and Albert Museum. And, whereas it is thought that Salting was chiefly interested in the aesthetic appeal of his pieces, Gulland's initial gift to the museum in 1905 of 'coloured glazes' was an attempt to form a collection to inspire British designers. As well as various Qing monochrome porcelains, Gulland had a penchant for *famille rose* of the Yongzheng (1723-35) and Qianlong (1736-1795) periods. Unlike many of his British contemporaries, Gulland was able to source

<sup>77</sup> In *Chinese Ceramics – Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911*, pp. 23 –24, Fig. 9, **Rose Kerr** has illustrated a magnificent *sacrificial red* vase from the Salting Collection: " 'Altar Vase' in ritual form 'Zun', made for use at the Temple of the Sun in Peking. Mark and Period of Qianlong (1736-95). Ht: 27cm, Acc. No: C.483-1910."

<sup>78</sup> **Hobson, R.L.** *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II, London, 1916. This ed. reprinted by Dover Publications, New York, 1976, p. 177; Plate III, Fig. 2: "Water vessel for the writing table of the form known as T 'ai-po tsun after the poet Li T 'ai-po. Porcelain with faintly engraved dragon medallions under a peach bloom glaze; the neck cut down and fitted with a metal collar. Mark in blue of the Kangxi period (1662-1722) in six characters. Height 2 ¾ inches." Hobson referred to Bushell's text concerning the form; 'Bushell, O.C.A., p. 318.' Hobson also noted that "practically all the features of the peach bloom glaze...can be produced by chrome tin fired at a high temperature. I have seen examples of these chrome tin pinks made by Mr. Mott at Doulton's, which exhibit practically all the peculiarities of the Chinese peach bloom." And correctly he stated, "It does not, of course, follow that the Chinese used the same methods or even had any knowledge of chrome tin." The chemistry of the

examples from his visits to the Chinese treaty ports and Hong Kong while on business for his employers. Although the nucleus of his collection was formed during his working life, Gulland continued to collect avidly after his retirement in 1884.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to building his collection, W.G. Gulland wrote two early and eminent books on 'Chinese Porcelain' addressing the history, manufacture and classification of Chinese ceramics.<sup>80</sup> Each volume contains illustrated examples of Gulland's Qing dynasty copper-derived red glazes. In Gulland's first volume, No. 210 is described as a:

*"Bottle covered with sang de boeuf glaze. Height 14 inches. No mark. Base and inside coated with white glaze; wide flat unglazed stand rubbed very smooth, showing this piece to be made of grey-coloured porcelain. As is generally the case in this class, the glaze has receded from the rim of the vase, forming a purple band, below which begins the proper sang de boeuf shade of yellowish blood-coloured red... This is probably a Keen-lung (1736-1795) piece. In those believed to belong to the Kang-he (1661-1722) period the colour, although it recedes from the neck, shows no purple band."*<sup>81</sup>

The above quote demonstrates Gulland's considerable knowledge of Qing dynasty ceramics, the knowledge of an early scholar-collector. The same volume illustrates three 'Splashed Pieces' or *flambé* / transmutation glazes. Gulland did not assign a date or reign period to them, but they are likely to be post-Kangxi (1662-1722) pieces. In

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peach-bloom glaze is discussed in the chapter on the 'Science and Development of the Copper-Red Glaze'.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. **Rose Kerr** in *Chinese Ceramics*, 1986, p. 27, Fig. 1- Acc. No: 591-1907, has also illustrated two examples of Qing dynasty copper-reds from the Julia C. Gulland Gift:

" 'Imperial bowl', painted with underglaze red in the Ming dynasty style. Mark and reign period of Yongzheng (1723-1735). Dia: 15. 3 cm."

" 'Bowl' with copper -red glaze, mark and period of Yongzheng (1723-1735); dia. 15.5 cm." (pp. 32-33, Fig. 16, Acc. No: 633-1907)

<sup>80</sup> **Gulland, W.G:** *Chinese Porcelain*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1898 Vol. I; 1902 Vol. II.

<sup>81</sup> **Gulland, W.G:** *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. I, 1898, pp. 140-142.

the text they are described as: "No. 212 ... blue with red. No. 213... red over yellow. No. 214... fawn splashed with red."<sup>82</sup>

Gulland's second volume illustrates further copper-red pieces and also makes some interesting remarks about the general nature of collecting in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not least the fear that many good examples of Chinese porcelain were going to American collectors:

*"At the present time England and the United States of America are the chief holders of Chinese porcelain, and the growing prices testify to the esteem in which this ware is now held in both countries; but there is every reason to fear that ere very long the Americans will have outstripped us in the race, as the finest pieces, as they come onto the market, are taken for America at prices beyond the reach of most people on this side... and we will awake one day to realise the fact that we have allowed the most beautiful things to pass into the hands of our more discerning cousins."*<sup>83</sup>

From Gulland's comments on American collections and various specimens of reduced copper glazed ware (see Appendix III), it can be assumed that Gulland had built a corpus of knowledge corresponding to the different classifications of Chinese porcelain in terms of date, shape, glaze and methods of manufacture. W.G. Gulland can be regarded as a pioneer scholar-collector with an in-depth knowledge of copper-red glazes or '*Céladon Reds*' of the Qing dynasty.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, pp. 142-143.

<sup>83</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. II, 1902, pp. 349-350. See Appendix III.

## W.C. Alexander

Mr William Cleverley Alexander (d. 1916) had '*one of the first of what we may call the modern type of Chinese collections.*'<sup>84</sup> W.C. Alexander's initial interest in Japanese art gave way to a more systematic appreciation of China's decorative arts, described as '*the well-spring of Japanese inspiration.*'<sup>85</sup> His collection comprised mostly Qing dynasty ceramics from which we might assume W.C. Alexander's interest was primarily aesthetic rather than historical. However, although the collection is not abundant in Tang burial wares, Hobson recorded a selection of Sung dynasty examples of 'outstanding merit' which 'strongly' appealed to Alexander, particularly *ding* and *jun* wares.

The W.C. Alexander Collection included a sizeable and important representation of *jun* wares. Among Chinese connoisseurs, unblemished blue-green *jun* wares were held as an ideal. It was Western collectors who cultivated a taste for the '*famous violet splash, so much coveted by amateurs.*'<sup>86</sup> Alexander proved no exception as typical 'good' specimens exhibited '*large, even suffusions of purple on the exterior, and well defined markings.*'<sup>87</sup>

Evidently, selected Ming wares were collected for quality rather than quantity by Alexander, including choice blue-and-white and polychrome enamel porcelains from Jingdezhen. It was the narrative *famille verte* and *famille rose* porcelains of the Qing dynasty which captivated Alexander, and in particular those of the Kangxi period.

<sup>84</sup> Hobson, R.L; Rackham, Bernard & King, William: *Chinese Ceramics In Private Collections*, London, Halton & Truscott Smith, Ltd., 1931. Hobson: Ch. 1 – The Alexander Collection, p. 3.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>86</sup> Rackham, Bernard: 'The Earliest Arrivals', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 3, 1923-24, p. 15.

Qing wares formed the bulk of his collection, not omitting a 'cabinet of monochrome porcelains'. Hobson indicated that:

"... the lang yao reds are represented by a bottle with a sang-de-boeuf glaze and by a particularly fine specimen of the crushed strawberry red..." In the catalogue he also remarked on "... a beehive-shaped water-pot... clothed in peach-bloom red with green markings..." Another piece with a "vivid red glaze... between peach bloom and liver colour, and broken, like the peach bloom, by passages of green, an unusual type;... [as well as] several kinds of flambé reds."<sup>87</sup>

Bluett purchased two lang yao pieces from the W.C. Alexander Sale in 1931, examples which later found their way into the collection of Alfred and Ivy Clark.<sup>89</sup>

W.C. Alexander's purchases from John Sparks of London are recorded in Day Sales

Books from 1901 to 1913, among which are several 'splash' and sang-de-boeuf

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<sup>87</sup> Hobson, R.L.; Rackham, Bernard & King, William: *Chinese Ceramics*, 1931. Hobson: Ch. 1 – The Alexander Collection, p. 16.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 21. Hobson illustrated Alexander's 'Bottle-shaped vase with crackled underglaze red of deep crushed strawberry tint... Height 10 3/4 inches', in 'Chinese Pottery and Porcelain', Vol. II, London, 1916. This ed. reprinted by Dover Pubs., New York, 1976, Plate 88, Fig. 2.

In the same text, Plate 124, Fig. 1 shows a 'Magnolia Vase with flambé glaze of crackled lavender with red and blue streaks. Ch' ien Lung period. Height 7 inches', from the Alexander Collection.

<sup>89</sup> Sotheby and Co: 'Catalogue of Imperial Chinese Ceramics. The Property of Mrs Alfred Clark', London, Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1975, pp. 130-131. Lot. 144 – "A FINE LANG-YAO BOTTLE with pear-shaped body and slender cylindrical neck, covered with a deep, mottled, crushed strawberry coloured glaze, changing to celadon around the footrim and lip, the base with a pale bluish celadon glaze, 9 3/8 in. From the W.C. Alexander Collection, sold in these rooms 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1931, lot 234. Illustrated: *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II, pl. 88, fig. 2..." The bottle was bought by Bluett's for £135 in 1931.

The Clark sale also included Lot 145: "A BRILLIANT LANG-YAO VASE with ovoid body and cylindrical neck. Slightly flared at the rim, the glaze of rich cherry-red colour, shading to white at the rim and through darker mottled strawberry colour to crackled celadon on one side of the shallow footrim, the interior of the neck and base covered with a finely crackled, off-white glaze, 13 3/4 in., K'ang Hsi. From the W.C. Alexander Collection, sold in these rooms 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1931, Lot 235." This vase was bought by Bluett's at the Alexander Sale for £420.

Lot 143 of the Clark Sale Cat., p. 129, represented another copper-red specimen, a bowl with "flared sides, covered inside and out with a crimson glaze, shading to flecked pink below the white-edged rim, the slightly domed base covered with a bluish-white glaze, 4 7/8 in. wide, engraved four character mark of Hsian T'z, K'ang Hsi"; Exhibited in London at the 1935 Exhibition of Chinese Art at the Royal Academy, cat no. 1513, and at the 1936 Exhibition of Chinese Art at the Manchester City Art Gallery, cat. No. 303.

wares.<sup>90</sup> It is worth noting that up until c.1911, the John Sparks *Day Sales Books* record many more Japanese objects of art, including porcelain, possibly even a fifty per cent division between Chinese and Japanese artefacts in the very early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The occurrence of Japanese works in the Day Sales Book of 1918-25 is considerably reduced to less than a third of the items recorded.

### **Alfred Trapnell and Robert Henry Benson**

Other early 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors interested in Chinese Imperial monochromes were Alfred Trapnell and Robert Henry Benson (1850-1929). In 1902, the John Sparks *Day Sales Book* for January 1901-July 1906 recorded the sale of '1 pair of fine sang-de-boeuf vases' for £63 to R.H. Benson.<sup>91</sup> R.L. Hobson illustrated a Song *jun* flower-pot from the Benson Collection, 'of grey porcellanous ware with opalescent glaze of purple tints flecked with grey.'<sup>92</sup> Alfred Trapnell purchased numerous Chinese monochrome porcelains, among them a 'fine sang-de-boeuf vase' and 'fine sang-de-boeuf bowl' each for £15 in 1901. In 1902 he bought '1 sang-de-boeuf cup and stand' for £4, and in 1911 a copy of the 'Burlington Catalogue' - presumably of the 1910 Exhibition - for £4.4.0. The comparatively expensive price for the last item highlighted the importance of exhibition catalogues as an essential resource for

<sup>90</sup> The John Sparks Archive in the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, London, *Day Sales Book, Jan. 1901- July 1906*, p.57, 27 June 1901 - 1 small Liver coloured box and cover, 2.10.0; p. 344, 23 November 1904 - 2 Imperial Yellow bowls for the extremely reasonable price of 1.10.0; p. 476, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1906 - 2 Fine sang-de-boeuf Imperial Vases - 15.0.0; p. 519, 25 June 1906 - 1 fine sang-de-boeuf bottle - 15.0.0, 1 Ming Purple Splash Bowl Tripod - 10.0.0; 1 Peach Dragon on White Vase - 15.0.0; p. 526, 16 July 1906 - 1 Splash Gourd Triple Bottle - 17.0.0.  
*Day Sales Book July 1906 - Dec. 1911, 2 Jan. 1907*, p.53, 1 Fine Peach Splashed Celadon - £6; p. 67, 26 Feb. 1907 - 1 Fine Peach Bloom Pot - 115.0.0; p. 281, 9 Sept. 1909, 1 Fine Kangxi Splash Vase - 10.0.0, 1 Fine Purple Vase - 9.10.0.

*Day Sales Book Jan. 1912 - Jan. 1918*, 21 June, 1913, p. 158, 1 sang-de-boeuf bowl - 30.0.0, p. 159 bowl returned 27 June 1913. From this last date we can assume that W.C. Alexander was an active collector almost until the year of his death in 1916.

<sup>91</sup> John Sparks *Day Sales Book Jan. 1901-July 1906*; p. 134, 10 May, 1902.

serious collectors.<sup>93</sup> Lord Lever's Collection was to incorporate specimens from that of R. H. Benson.

### **William Hesketh Lever**

One of the most significant late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors of Chinese porcelain was **William Hesketh Lever** (1851-1925), first Viscount Leverhulme. Specimens were culled from other well-known collections; the Orrock, Bennett, Trapnell, Benson and Kennedy.<sup>94</sup> The Lady Lever Catalogue of Chinese ceramics recorded that:

*"... the beautiful monochrome felspathic glazes which reached their zenith in the Sung dynasty (960-1279 A.D.), are... unrepresented except by Nos. 25 & 25 A, and one or two imitative pieces."*<sup>95</sup>

Lever's collection of Chinese porcelain is best represented by the Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795) periods, predominantly by Kangxi *blue-and-white* and enamelled pieces. He amassed the collection between 1894-1925, and like A. W. Bahr, it seemed that Lever was aware of the 'marked

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<sup>92</sup> **Hobson, R.L.**: *Chinese Art*, London, Ernest Benn Ltd., 1927, Plate X. (H. 6.5 ins.) Although Hobson attributed this piece to the Song dynasty, from the catalogue description it may have been of later, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century date.

<sup>93</sup> **John Sparks Day Sales Book Jan. 1901-July 1906**; pp. 10, 84, 154 respectively. **John Sparks Day Sales Book July 1906 – Dec. 1911**; p.450 - '30 Aug., 1911, Burlington Catalogue, 4. 4. 0.'

<sup>94</sup> **Hobson, R.L.**: *Chinese Porcelain & Wedgwood Pottery with Other Works of Ceramic Art - A Record of the collection in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, formed by the first Viscount Leverhulme*, Vol. II, London, Batsford, 1928, pp. 22-23. Lever added pieces from the R.H. Benson Collection listed as **Nos. 25 – 29 B.**

**25 – 25 A**: Tang *sancal* earthenware; 25 – horseman; 25 A – Bactrian Camel.

**26 – 29 A**: Ming colour glazed pieces.

**29 B**: Kangxi (1662-1722) figure with coloured glazes; dappled green / yellow, aubergine and white.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. The imitative specimens of *jun* ware are **Nos. 2 & 293.**

**No. 2** is described as a "FLASK-SHAPED BOTTLE – with bulbous mouth moulded in 8 lobes. On the sides are 4 bosses; and on each face, moulded designs in low relief – the 'yin-yang' in the centre surrounded by the 8 Trigrams (*pa kua*). Hard buff pottery with thick opalescent glaze of lavender turquoise colour with a purple splash. *Yi-hsing* ware in imitation of *Sung*. 18<sup>th</sup> C. H: 5 ½ ins." (p. 20)

*deterioration*’ and avoided *‘porcelain of later reigns’* felt to be a difficult area for the *‘amateur’*.<sup>96</sup> The Collection contains only three later Ming *blue-and-white* wares.<sup>97</sup> Lever and many other late 19<sup>th</sup> –early 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors valued the furnishing potential of the porcelain as much as its intrinsic worth, chiefly as a means to complement interiors decorated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century taste.

Lever’s Chinese Porcelain Collection contained few Qing monochrome glazes, those included listed as numbers 285 – 318 in the Catalogue.<sup>98</sup> High-fired, *‘medium-fired’* and enamel monochromes are among the specimens recorded. The high-fired glazes include examples of *‘whites, cobalt-blues, celadon greens, greys, buffs, mirror-blacks, lustrous coffee-browns and copper-reds.’*<sup>99</sup> Out of a total of thirty-three monochromes, there are only five examples of post-Kangxi *‘ox-blood’* copper-red glazes; Nos. 300-304, (see Appendix III). There is only one specimen of celadon green from the S.E. Kennedy Collection, several good examples of the mirror-black glaze and two pieces of *‘Nanking yellow’*.<sup>100</sup> Although Lever’s taste remained essentially conservative, after taking the decision to establish a gallery in 1913 he began to collect such items as Ming *‘fahua’* porcelain, Chinese lacquer, glass pictures, cloisonné enamels and carved headstones, etc.

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No. 293 is described as a *“WATER VESSEL – peach-shaped, with streaky lavender glaze imitating a Sung ware. The body of the ware, where it shows through, is of brownish colour. Ivory stand mounted on wood. (Plate 34). S.E. Kennedy Collection. Ch ‘ien Lung Period (1736-95). Length, 3 ins.”* (p. 52)

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., Hobson, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 51-55; Nos. 285 – 318 are recorded in Chapter VII, *‘Porcelain with Coloured Glazes of the Qing Dynasty’*. There are only 33 examples of Qing monochromes in the Lever Collection.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., Celadon green – No. 286. Mirror-black – Nos. 294, 295, 296, 297. *‘Nanking yellow’* – described as a *‘high-fired glaze often used in combination with blue or coloured decoration; Nos. 288 & 468.’*

With the exception of No. 303, these pieces are all visible in the photograph below taken in Room twenty-six of the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, (Figs. 101-102). No. 304, the Qianlong ormolu mounted bottle-vases can be clearly seen on the second row; a similar shaped water vessel to No. 303 can be seen on the same shelf, except this example has a *'streaky lavender glaze imitating a Song ware'*, also of the *'Ch'ien Lung period (1736-95)'*, and was from the S.E. Kennedy Collection. The lower shelf exhibits Nos. 300-302; No. 300 to the right, No. 301 to the left, No. 302 is central. Unusually, the wooden stands supporting the porcelains have been retained. Western collectors and curators in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries tended to discard the stands because they were thought to distort the overall effect. Whereas from the Ming dynasty onwards, stands for porcelains and other works of art have been considered an integral design feature among Chinese connoisseurs. To an extent, this display of 'ox-blood' or *sang-de-boeuf* copper-reds illustrates in microcosm Lever's preoccupation with symmetrical display. Other photographs of Lever's *Famille Noire* and *blue-and-white* export porcelain also illustrate his tendency to buy and exhibit in pairs, (figs. 103-104).

**Figs. 101-102**

- The Lever Collection of *Sang-de-Boeuf* and *flambé* Chinese porcelain. Courtesy of The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight.

**Fig. 101**



**Fig. 102**



**Figs. 103-104**

- Lever's *Famille Noire* and *blue-and-white* export porcelain illustrate his tendency to buy and exhibit in pairs. Courtesy of The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight.

**Fig. 103**



**Fig. 104**



Lever was one of the late Victorian philanthropists who decided to use his collection to enrich the cultural life of the wider community. The Lady Lever Art Gallery at Port Sunlight opened in 1922, a central feature of the village Lever conceived for his Port Sunlight employees. The Gallery and its collection stand as a monument to late Victorian and Edwardian taste.

## Leonard Gow

The Collection of Leonard Gow (1859-1936), was built on similar lines to that of Lever. The Collection catalogue recorded 421 pieces, counting the paired porcelains as one. Monochrome porcelains are represented by Nos. 100-110, a total of ten examples, of which only four are recorded as Kangxi (1662-1722) 'ox-bloods', a Kangxi *peach-bloom* and a Qianlong (1736-1795) *flambé*. There are no examples of 'pictorial' underglaze copper-reds.<sup>101</sup>

The Collection catalogue is compiled according to type; *blue-and-white*, monochrome and enamel wares – the last, most numerous section, sub-divided into enamel applied onto biscuit porcelain and enamel applied onto glazed porcelain, including a sub-group of *powder blues*. Quoting from the catalogue, Leonard Gow stated:

*"... how, living as I do... within a mile of the Firth of Clyde and three miles from Loch Lomond, so far removed from collectors' haunts of busy King St. and Bond St., I should have become interested in Chinese porcelain.*

*... [There is] nothing in ceramic art, either in Europe or the East, at any epoch, comparable to the superb products of the Chinese kilns, and especially those of the K'ang Hsi period, of which the Collection almost entirely exists."*<sup>102</sup>

The collection also included a limited selection of Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795) wares.

R.L. Hobson, author of Leonard Gow's catalogue, had specific knowledge of reduced copper glazes. He suggested that "*control of the (copper-red) glaze is one of the tests*

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<sup>101</sup> Hobson, R.L.: *Catalogue of the Leonard Gow Collection of Chinese Porcelain*, Hayston, Glasgow, 1931, p. 25.

*of general Kangxi specimens, on which it will be found to stop in an even line at the base of the vessel, whereas the later and less controlled red glazes over-run the base - rim in drops which have to be ground off."* He claimed that the bases of Kangxi *sang-de-hoeuf* specimens tended to exhibit a "*crackled glaze of oatmeal colour, and under the crushed strawberry bowls a crackled glaze of watery green.*"<sup>103</sup> For a description of the copper-reds in Gow's collection refer to Appendix III.

Devoid of earlier specimens, Leonard Gow's Collection of Chinese Porcelain was praised for its diversity of Kangxi wares, although monochromes did not feature significantly. In this respect Gow represented the majority of late Victorian – Edwardian collectors.

### **E.S. Thornhill**

An untypical collection formed between 1905-1936 was that of Ernest S. Thornhill (1868-1944). The Thornhill Collection of mainly Chinese ceramics - 270 pieces in all - was remarkable for its diversity. The earliest examples range from the Shang (c.1700-1028 B.C.) and Zhou (c.1027-221 B.C.) dynasties to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and include a few Korean and Japanese ceramics. Thirty of the pieces came from Bluett and Sons. A Bluett's purchase list from 1928-1936 revealed that Thornhill paid the modest sum of around £10 for each item, the most expensive purchase recorded at £42 10s.<sup>104</sup> The only documentation accompanying the Collection is Thornhill's

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., *Foreward* by Leonard Gow, *Camis Eskan*, Helensburgh, Scotland.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., *Hobson*, 1931, pp. 25-26.

<sup>104</sup> *Sun-Bailey, Suning*: 'The E.S. Thornhill Bequest of Chinese Ceramics At The North Staffordshire Polytechnic', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 48, 1983-1984, p. 65.

notebook commenting on prices and previous owners.<sup>105</sup> Although little is known about his life, Thornhill was on the register of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain from 1890. In 1927 Thornhill wrote to the Governors of the North Staffordshire College of Mining and Ceramic Technology offering the Collection as an accessible study resource for students of ceramics. He also pledged to supplement the Collection to the value of approximately £100 per year. The College received the Collection in 1928.

The Thornhill Collection was remarkable even in the 1930's considering the tentative scholarship and scarcity of information, particularly on pre-Song Chinese ceramics:

*"Chinese neolithic ceramics were not discovered until the 1920's and... publications in English on these wares, let alone actual specimens, did not become widely available until the 1930's and early 1940's when Thornhill had already almost completed his collection."*<sup>106</sup>

It is known that Thornhill sought advice from R.L. Hobson at the British Museum and was familiar with its collections and those of the Victoria and Albert Museum. In her paper to the Oriental Ceramic Society on the 'Thornhill Bequest' Suning Sun-Bailey wrote:

*"... if one reads either Chinese pottery and Porcelain by Hobson published in 1915, or the Art of The Chinese Potter by Hobson and A.L. Hetherington, published in 1923, the latter mentioned by Thornhill, one could almost detect the blueprint for his collection."*

Thornhill was described as a *"shrewd collector with foresight, his progressive... collection having stood the test of time and changing tastes."*<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> I have been unable to locate Thornhill's notebook at Staffordshire University or the Potteries Museum.

<sup>106</sup> Sun-Bailey, Suning: 'The E.S. Thornhill Bequest', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 48, (1983-1984), pp. 65-66.

The Qing section also comprises good specimens of 18<sup>th</sup> century Dehua *blanc de chine* and some fine underglaze blue and red wares.<sup>108</sup> Thornhill collected a diverse range of Qing monochromes including examples of *tea-dust*, *robin's egg*, *sang-de-boeuf*, *flambé*, blue, pale lustre yellow, bright yellow, *iron-rust*, brilliant black, crazed apple-green, turquoise and a deep violet *meiping* vase.

Thornhill's acquisition of eight high-fired reduced copper-reds is particularly relevant to this study. Not listed in the Thornhill Exhibition Catalogue are two porcelain *sang-de-boeuf* vases of 19<sup>th</sup> century date – one with a stout ovoid body, gently tapered neck and flared mouth, the other of globular body with cylindrical neck and small, straight mouth – and an 18<sup>th</sup> century *meiping* porcelain vase with *sang-de-boeuf* glaze.<sup>109</sup>

Other thickly potted porcelain reds include a pear-shaped vase of *crushed-strawberry*, 18<sup>th</sup> century or later Qing period; a gourd-shaped *sang-de-boeuf* vase, Qing 18<sup>th</sup> century; a fine 18<sup>th</sup> century *sang-de-boeuf* vase with garlic mouth, and a robust pear-shaped *flambé* vase reign marked Yongzheng and of the period (1723-35). Thornhill even managed to secure a *peach-bloom* brush washer – a shallow bowl with convex inverted sides – with the Kangxi period mark.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>108</sup> *Out of the Orient' – An Exhibition of the E.S. Thornhill Bequest of Oriental Ceramics*, Stoke-on-Trent City Museum and Art Gallery, January 16<sup>th</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup> 1988. No. 93 – "Pear-shaped vase. Porcelain decorated with peaches, pomegranates and banana leaves in underglaze red. Jingdezhen. H 32.4 cms. Qing dynasty, 18<sup>th</sup> century." No. 96 – "Vase. Porcelain decorated with finely drawn dragon and phoenix amid peonies and leaves in underglaze red, and blue for the eyes. Jingdezhen. H 31.5 cms. Qing dynasty, 18<sup>th</sup> century."

<sup>109</sup> Visit to Staffordshire University Art & Design Archives, The Thompson Library, College Rd., Stoke-on-Trent, May 2001. Respective Acc. Nos. STC 367 / T. 209, Ht: 14.3 cms; STC 341 / T. 212, Ht. 34.3 cms; STC 484 / T. 214, Ht: 13.7 cms.

<sup>110</sup> *Out of the Orient*, Stoke-on-Trent City Museum and Art Gallery; January 16<sup>th</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup> 1988. No. 121, Ht: 20.3 cms; No. 117, Ht: 31.8 cms; No. 118, Ht: 33 cms, Ex. Seymour Clarke Collection, purchased from Bluett & Sons; No. 119, Ht: 24.8 cms, Ex. Seymour Clarke Collection, purchased from Bluett & Sons; No. 120, D: 12.1 cms.

In its breadth, particularly with respect to pre-Song and the selection of certain Ming wares, the Thornhill Collection is progressive for its period while being representative of the broader interest in Chinese art and culture that developed among early 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors.

### **Provincial Collecting in Manchester and Birmingham**

The public collections of Manchester and Birmingham were largely the result of the wealthy motivated middle-classes who believed it was their duty to provide the less fortunate with opportunities to improve their education. Museums and galleries were built to impress the public – temples dedicated to preserving the past, often the very best and most luxurious material culture. In a sense, the quality of the material collected enforced the status quo and consolidated their roles as arbiters of taste and refinement. In turn, their views were passed onto the visiting public and could therefore be said to have exercised a subtle form of cultural control. Although certain modes of display and choice of *what* to collect mirrored the ideological thrust of the era, public collections did provide a form of overall explanation of the modern world at a time when mass media communications were not so developed.

So far, the collectors discussed above were those who resided in London. Even Ernest S. Thornhill was London based though he decided to donate his collection for educative purposes to the North Staffordshire College of Mining and Ceramic Technology without former connections to the institution or area. Industrialists, many of whom were not London-based, collected art to reflect their wealth and pride. Collecting was therefore not purely metropolitan. Provincial cities were keen to

establish public galleries often in response to and supported by generous bequests from local collectors. There were also many provincial collecting societies such as the Manchester Arundel Society meeting for the first time in 1917, with the objectives of:

*"bringing ... collectors and friends of art generally into touch with each other, and make their collections of educational value by comparison and careful study. In that way it was possible to do good service by kindling interest in pursuits other than those merely relating to bread and butter, and so help in raising the standard of taste."*<sup>111</sup>

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the City of Manchester Art Gallery received several gifts of Far-Eastern ceramics, the most important being those of Leicester Collier in 1917 and George Beatson-Blair in 1940.<sup>112</sup> There are approximately 580 pieces of Chinese porcelain in the Gallery holdings, principally from the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong periods.<sup>113</sup>

In a previous chapter on *Exhibitions*, the 1913 Manchester Exhibition of Chinese Applied Art has been discussed in detail. A significant feature of this Exhibition was that it relied heavily on the efforts of William Burton (1863-1941), Director of the Pilkington Royal Lancastrian Works, to select the exhibits. The Exhibition attracted

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<sup>111</sup> **Author Unknown:** *City News*, Manchester, 0:12:17. News cutting in the Leicester Collier file; Manchester City Art Gallery, Archives of the Decorative Arts Dept., Curator Ruth Shrigley.

<sup>112</sup> **Author Unknown:** 'Introduction', *A Century of Collecting 1882-1982*, Exhibition Catalogue, Manchester City Art Galleries, Manchester, 1983, p. 27.

**Sir John Scurrell-Randles**, a neighbour of Leicester Collier, donated a smaller collection of Qing porcelain and some Ming wares in 1953. 69 Ming cloisonné Chinese enamels were bequeathed by **Sir William Boyd Dawkins** in 1920. Parts of **Thomas Coghlan Horsfall's (1841-1932)** Collection was transferred to the Manchester City Art Gallery in 1918 including Egyptian, Indian, 'Oriental' and European ceramics. **Dr. David Roberts** collection, principally of metalwork, included a selection of Chinese 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century cloisonné enamels and porcelain along with 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century English porcelain and glass (220 items) – bequeathed in 1920. The **Earl Egerton of Tatton Park** also bequeathed his collection of 'Oriental' arms and armour to the Gallery, 'particularly strong in Near Eastern material. The Earl wrote the standard work on the subject.'

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

an astonishing 70,000 visitors.<sup>114</sup> Burton illustrated the close link between manufacturing, commerce and collecting. He was the author of several books on ceramic manufacture and through these communicated an interest in ceramic world history, as well as being a collector of Chinese pottery and porcelain.<sup>115</sup> Burton was known to have enjoyed a special relationship with the Manchester Gallery.

### Leicester Collier

Leicester Collier (1843-1917) bequeathed his collection of fine and decorative art to the Manchester City Art Gallery in 1917. The porcelain collection comprised European and Oriental ware – ‘*Persian and Rhodian wares*’ included among the larger selection of Chinese porcelain. Of the latter, a small but fine collection of Ming dynasty porcelain was outnumbered by Qing dynasty – mostly Yongzheng – examples:

*“... a notable collection of blue and white of the Kang-he , Yung Cheng, and Kien-Lung periods, and of famille rose of the two latter periods, besides specimens of mazarin blue, powder blue, rouge flambé, splashed and transmutation glazes...”*  
- A total of 467 pieces.<sup>116</sup>

The bequest also included a ‘*collection of books on Pottery and Porcelain... about fifty volumes, which include some of the best and most valuable works on the*

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>115</sup> Ed. Burton, William: *Catalogue of An Exhibition of Chinese Applied Art – City of Manchester Art Gallery 1913*, p. 161:

“ 790. SHALLOW VASE ‘HIZEN’ ...early porcelain, on three short feet, and with two applied handles; soft celadon glaze broadly crackled... Sung Ming. Lent by William Burton, Esq.”

“792. BOTTLE-SHAPED VASE ... early porcelain... bright green celadon glaze broadly crackled... Sung. Lent by William Burton, Esq.”

p. 162: “ 796. SHALLOW BOWL OF EARLY PORCELAIN, ... oily green celadon glaze... lined and mounted with pewter, probably in modern times, to make an ink pot... Early Ming. Lent by William Burton, Esq.”

“798. SMALL SAUCER of elegant shape, early porcelain... much crackled green celadon glaze ... Sung. Lent by William Burton, Esq.” Etc...

<sup>116</sup> Author Unknown: ‘Music And Art’, *Yorkshire Post*, 18:01:18. Leicester Collier file, Manchester City Art Gallery, Archives of the Decorative Arts Dept., Curator Ruth Shrigley.

subject...<sup>117</sup> Leicester Collier's notebook recorded Hobson's *Chinese Pottery & Porcelain* – 2 vols., Monkhouse – *Chinese Porcelain*, Jacquemart – *Histoire de la Ceramique*, Manchester Exhibition Catalogue of Chinese Art – 1913, Gulland – *Chinese Porcelain* – 2 vols., Blacker – *Chats on Oriental China*, Franks Collection of *Oriental Porcelain*, Bushell – *Chinese Art* – 2 vols.<sup>118</sup>

In a letter to Councillor Todd, Joseph Burton – one of the 'experts' entrusted with cataloguing and valuing the Chinese porcelain stated:

*"The Oriental Collection contains in all some 447 pieces... valued by Mr Charles Jackson and 'myself' to be worth £5605. The estimate is certainly not on the light side."*<sup>119</sup> One newspaper article claimed that *'his entire collection of porcelain and old glass ... cost him fully £6,000...'*<sup>120</sup>

The Leicester Collier 'china' Collection was described as being of: *"special interest and importance, being the first Oriental pottery, except some pieces of cloisonné ware, that has come into the possession of the city."*<sup>121</sup>

Collier's Chinese porcelain was subject to scrutiny and evaluation, the number of pieces finally entering the Gallery numbering 352 items.<sup>122</sup> Bernard Rackham was assigned the task of evaluating the British and Continental ceramics. In a letter dated April 1918, Rackham listed modern or fake items; for instance, *'2 green glazed vases*

<sup>117</sup> **Author Unknown:** 'Our Latest Art Treasures. Councillor Todd's Memorial Scheme'; *City News*, Manchester; 12:01:18. Leicester Collier file; Manchester City Art Gallery.

<sup>118</sup> *Leicester Collier Notebook*, n/d., Leicester Collier file; Manchester.

<sup>119</sup> Letter from **Joseph Burton**, younger brother of William Burton, from Springfield House, Pendlebury, Manchester dated 19:12:17. Letter addressed to Mr Todd, a City Counsellor in Manchester Town Hall. Joseph Burton also wrote the Introduction for the *Catalogue of Chinese Porcelain* of the Fletcher Moss Museum, Didsbury – a Manchester branch gallery; n/d. Leicester Collier file, Manchester.

<sup>120</sup> **Author Unknown:** 'Pictures And Porcelain – Another Bequest to the City'; *City News*; Manchester, 08:12:17. Leicester Collier file; Manchester.

<sup>121</sup> **Author Unknown:** 'Our Latest Art Treasures', *City News*, Manchester; 12:01:18. Leicester Collier file; Manchester.

by *Théodore Deck, modern and of no merit.*<sup>123</sup> Lawrence Haward, the Manchester Gallery Director sold '*unwanted and fraudulent*' items from Collier's bequest in 1931 to '*reduce it in size, whilst increasing its quality and importance.*'<sup>124</sup> The sale was delayed because Haward was keen to avoid further publicity soon after the 'Hilditch' affair of 1914. In that year, Haward was requested to exhibit 56,000 art works belonging to the '*bogus mandarin*' Hilditch in an attempt to '*rival the recently successful show put on by William Burton in 1913 ...*' London-based scholars Hobson and Rackham stepped in to advise Haward against action, and '*stopped Hilditch after a ten year battle, finding his collection contained hardly a single case of pottery worth exhibiting. Rackham believed Hilditch to be a 'diseased mind'*'...<sup>125</sup> The circumstances surrounding the sale highlight the lack of 'Oriental' scholarship during the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Leicester Collier (1843-1917) arrived at Skiddaw Lodge, Keswick, Cumbria in 1896 from Manchester and took an active part in the community. In 1894 he became an elected manager of Keswick Savings Bank and in 1898 a Trustee, was a Governor of Keswick School and took a keen interest in the School of Industrial Art. He became president of the Keswick Cricket Club.<sup>126</sup> Adjoined to the Lodge was a large hothouse

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<sup>122</sup> 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition *The City Art Gallery, Past, Present and Future*, May 17–June 16, 1973; Manchester City Art Galleries. Loose unnumbered pages in the Leicester Collier file, Manchester.

<sup>123</sup> Bernard Rackham - Letter to Lawrence Haward, Director of the Manchester City Art Gallery, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

<sup>124</sup> **Gray, Richard:** 'The Case of Collier's Bequest', *Antique Collector* 1/83, p. 66. From Bernard Rackham's report and the relevant London auction catalogues for 1931 it seemed that '*About half the collection of some 800 ceramics and glass were rejects and sold.*' (p. 69) **A Messrs Foster Sale Catalogue**, 54 Pall Mall, London; 01:10:31, pp.14-18 – recorded Lots 193-261 '*removed from the Provinces are one [Leicester Collier's] property*', of which Oriental porcelain featured alongside English and Continental ware. **William Batho** from the City Art Gallery, Manchester was responsible for selling the property. The lots 193-261 sold for £118.7.

<sup>125</sup> **Gray, Richard:** 'The Case of Collier's Bequest', *Antique Collector* 1/83, p. 66.

<sup>126</sup> **Author Unknown:** 'Obituary', *Mid Cumberland and N. Westmorland Herald*; Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1917. Leicester Collier file; Manchester. Collier bequeathed £1,000 for 2 scholarships for

where Collier pursued another interest – cultivating ferns. According to acquaintances he had a reputation for ‘eccentric dress.’<sup>127</sup>

It appeared that Collier housed a portion of his collection in the first floor sitting room of Skiddaw Lodge in two glass-fronted cupboards with overhead fan lights, as well as in a cabinet in the ground floor dining room.<sup>128</sup> A photograph in the Collier file, also portrayed in the *Antique Collector*, shows a display cabinet in Skiddaw Lodge, the symmetrical arrangement not unlike of the ones illustrated by W.G. Gulland.<sup>129</sup> The Collier cabinet contained “*only part of the collection which included Oriental and European ceramics valued at over £8,000 in 1917 by Manchester’s experts Joseph Burton and Charles Jackson.*”<sup>130</sup> The cabinet is totally overcrowded, the display indiscriminate. Apart from symmetry, no attempt was made to organise objects into different types or according to chronological arrangement – a far cry from the traditional mode of Chinese display focusing on the beauty of single objects. The ebonised cabinet conformed to the Aesthetic japonisme of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Collier was on friendly terms with his neighbours Sir John and Lady Scurrah-Randles who purchased Skiddaw Lodge from Collier’s executors in 1918.<sup>131</sup> Among Leicester

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boys and 2 for girls already attending the Keswick School – the ‘Collier Scholarships’. He also gave £1,000 to the Keswick Cottage Hospital.

<sup>127</sup> Typed notes recording the comments of Mr Shaw, a retired farmer in his late 70’s who delivered milk to Skiddaw Lodge and was a member of the cricket team. Leicester Collier file; Manchester.

<sup>128</sup> Typed notes of information supplied by Miss Sarsfield-Hall who lived at Skiddaw Lodge from 1937. Leicester Collier file; Manchester City.

<sup>129</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. I, 1898, plates 424, 423 & 425.

<sup>130</sup> Gray, Richard: ‘The Case of Collier’s Bequest’, *Antique Collector* 1/83, p. 68.

<sup>131</sup> Accession details for Sir John Scurrah-Randles, Keswick in the Manchester City Art Gallery. The Accession Register for June 1953 records a bequest of Chinese porcelain; Nos. 1953.142 – 1953.203, a total of 61 pieces, mainly Qing wares supplemented with Song and a few Ming examples. Of particular interest are Nos. 1953.151 – ‘Jar. Gourd shaped with sang-de-boeuf glaze. H. 7 ¾ ins. W. 8 ins. Qianlong period.’ 1953.152 – ‘Vase. Bulbous body on foot, sang-de-boeuf glaze. H. 11 ½ ins.’ 1953.186 – ‘Vase. Bulbous body, sang-de-boeuf glaze. H. 16 ½ ins. D. 8 ins. Qianlong period.’

Collier's Collection that eventually entered into the Gallery holdings there are several copper-reds. Accession numbers and catalogue descriptions are listed in Appendix III.

The 1917 inventory lists of the Collier bequest for insurance purposes prior to the selection and disposal of items record his purchases of a *Ruskin lustre bowl* valued at 10 shillings, and a *Bernard Moore ruby lustre vase and cover* valued at £1. In this respect Collier was typical of many late Victorian-Edwardian collectors in that his purchases were diverse and not confined to a particular category or country of origin. Some of the London collectors were specialists in the sense that they chiefly focused on Far Eastern art. However, although less scholarly and progressive in his tastes, Collier's scope resonated with the respected collector George Eumorfopolous (1863-1939) who maintained an interest in British and European ceramics including 'modern' studio pottery alongside his passion for Chinese works of art.<sup>132</sup>

### **George Beatson-Blair**

A later bequest of Chinese porcelain arrived at the City of Manchester Art Gallery through the 1941 bequest of George Beatson-Blair (1860-1940), the eldest of three brothers who all worked for the family cotton business. The firm had relocated from Scotland to Manchester, trading under the name 'Barbour Brothers Exporting House'. At the time of the 1881 British Census, the brothers, their parents and several domestic staff were resident at Whalley House Wood Road, Withington, Lancashire.<sup>133</sup> The brothers remained at Whalley House living together as wealthy merchant batchelors, using their income from trade to finance their acquisitions of

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<sup>132</sup> Sotheby's London Sale Catalogue: *Modern pottery, modern sculpture and bronzes, bronzes by Epstein and Frank Dobson, an important Greek marble torso of Aphrodite from the studio of Praxiteles*; June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1940. Named Subjects/Art Collections: **Eumorfopolous, George, (1863-1939).**

'cultural artefacts.' James Thomas Blair (1863-1917) left his fine art collection to the Manchester Gallery unconditionally, except that care should be taken to preserve the luminosity of his Turner watercolours. George Beatson-Blair left over 30,000 objects to the Manchester Gallery in 1941 comprising 5,000 paintings, British, European and Oriental porcelain, ivories, jade and hardstones, lacquer, enamels, glass, furniture, silver, pewter, carved woodwork, textiles and embroideries. The brothers appeared to be hoarders more than collectors- neither produced related papers or publications, stashing the collection throughout their home in the *"five large entertaining rooms, 22 other rooms, 3 cottages in the grounds, ample stabling, cowbyres and pig styes, having even a private [defunct] brewery."*<sup>134</sup> A report to the Selection and Purchasing Committee stated that for sixty years Blair had collected:

*"anything and everything that took his fancy... [and] discarded nothing, but when he tired of anything... merely sent it to the Maids' rooms... attics or... capacious cellars... two of the most interesting items outside of the pictures are the large and varied collection of old English Silver and Oriental Pottery..."*<sup>135</sup>

George Beatson-Blair stipulated that the Manchester Corporation select *"such of the pictures, articles of virtue and other articles of special interest as they may within six calendar months from my death..."*<sup>136</sup>

An initial selection of 4,087 objects was made by Gallery representatives before being removed from Whalley Range and stored for safety in Derbyshire and Lancashire throughout the Second World War. Fortunately, by 11<sup>th</sup> March 1941, *'the day of the last big "blitz"'*, over sixty per cent of the selected works had been distributed between five safer locations. On the same day however, three *'high explosives'* landed

<sup>133</sup> 1881 British Census report; Manchester City Art Gallery.

<sup>134</sup> **Author Unknown;** *Report to the Selection and Purchasing Committee* 16:04:41, Manchester City Art Gallery.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> **Manchester City Art Gallery;** *150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition – The City Art Gallery, Past, Present and Future*, Exhibition Catalogue; May 17<sup>th</sup> – June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1973.

in the grounds of Whalley Range damaging part of the house and its contents, an estimated loss of £15,000. Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Dowson subsequently worked among the remaining items to select 'only' the 'very best examples of their kind.' A 'second weeding out' was considered 'essential', to be followed by an effort to seek the 'best expert advice available'. Such proposals were to be postponed until after the War. The Trustees of the Collection were therefore obliged to apply to the *Court of Chancery* for a six month extension of the terms outlined in the Will, as well as permission to obtain such 'exhibition cases and ... books as the Curator thinks useful for the Gallery...' <sup>137</sup>

It was not until 1947 that the final selection of 458 objects was made from the George Beatson-Blair bequest, including 71 items of Chinese pottery and porcelain. <sup>138</sup> He also left '4/36ths' of his estate - £15, 731 10s 9d – to the Manchester Gallery for an extension. The money remained untouched for sixty years before contributing towards recent Gallery extensions and renovation. <sup>139</sup> A letter from Manchester Town Hall to the Manchester Gallery Corporation dated 22:01:48 stated that the 'total value' for insurance purposes of the George Beatson-Blair Collection was £57, 700; the 'Corporation's selection' valued at £21, 504. <sup>140</sup>

<sup>137</sup> **Author Unknown:** *Report to the Selection and Purchasing Committee* 16:04:41, Manchester City Art Gallery.

<sup>138</sup> Printed list of the final selection of Chinese ceramics dated 1947; George Beatson-Blair file, Manchester City Art Gallery.

<sup>139</sup> **Manchester City Art Gallery:** *Free Trade Exhibition Guide*; 25 May 2002 – 23 February 2003. A project by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska which brought together the selected George Beatson-Blair bequest. The objects were displayed without classification, reference to specific media or period of manufacture. Each item exhibited a tag with its 1947 valuation when £1 was equivalent to £23 in 2002/3.

<sup>140</sup> **Author Unknown:** *Letter from Manchester Town Hall to the Manchester Gallery Corporation*, 22:01:48, George Beatson-Blair file, Manchester.

An interesting feature of the Beatson-Blair bequest was that a large number of his purchases were made in Manchester as well as from London based auction sales and dealers John Sparks, Spink & Son and H. Blairman & Sons. From Dr. Charles A. Jackson – Dealer in Works of Art, 7 Police Street Manchester, Blair bought '*1 Ming figure*' for £160 on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1926.<sup>141</sup> Dr. F.W. Wright of 3, Watergate Street, Chester sold a '*Chinese blue dish*' to Blair for £3 10s on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 1931.<sup>142</sup> From Herbert Wragg, jeweller and silversmith, he purchased a '*Large Oriental Famille Verte vase and cover*' for £110 on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1917. On 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1916, Blair acquired a '*fine pair of flambé kylins*' doubtfully attributed to the Ming dynasty from the Leslie Thompson Collection for £39.<sup>143</sup> An '*Old Chinese Goddess Celadon Splash*' from the 18<sup>th</sup> century Mossley Hill Collection was bought for £7 15s on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1907. Mention is also made of the Sir Oswald Mosley Collection from which Blair purchased an '*Old Chinese famille verte figure on a stand-seated*' for £25 in 1907.<sup>144</sup>

The 1947 inventory of George Beatson-Blair's 71 Chinese ceramics destined to enter the Gallery revealed a ratio of wares typical of many early -mid 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors, (see Appendix III). Included in the final selection were only two examples of monochrome reds; accession no. 1947.549 described a bowl with a '*coraline outside, white inside, 18<sup>th</sup> century*', but which was in fact a Qing dynasty interpretation of the copper-red glaze, valued at £3.0s.0d in 1947. Accession number 1947.559 recorded a bowl with '*reddish brown glaze. 18<sup>th</sup> century*', possibly a mis-fired copper-red. More significant are the fine examples of *jun* ware culled from the

<sup>141</sup> George Beatson-Blair – '*Oriental Ceramics Receipts*', listed as (c); George Beatson-Blair file, Manchester.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. (d).

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. (k) L.Roach of 75-76 Navigation St., Birmingham, a 'private' collector-dealer. Other provincial dealers mentioned were W. Marton of 12 A London Rd., Manchester; Charles Myers,

Blair bequest. The 1947 typed inventory listed number 536, a Song-Yuan *jun* bowl with 'mottled blue glaze, soft clam ware' valued at £10. Numbers 538 and 539, described as a pair of Song-Yuan *jun* 'bulb bowls on three scrolled feet [with] mottled blue glaze[s]' were valued at £100 each and are also the subject of a letter from William Burton of Pilkington's to George Beatson-Blair:

*"... two dishes of Ancient Chinese porcelain from the collection of Prince Ch' ing. D: 9 ½ ins. H: 3 ½ ins. The dishes are commonly known as tripod bulbs because each are supported on three carved feet, and are of a type of ware known among collector's as 'Imperial Sung.' Such wares in a variety of colours were manufactured under the Sung (960-1279) and Yuan (1280-1367) dynasties. I am of the opinion that these examples are of the earlier period and should date them as 12<sup>th</sup> century pieces of the best type. Each bowl bears the incised mark (~ Yi) = one, and other pieces bearing this and other Chinese numerals are known and are generally referred to the Sung factory at Chün-Chou in the Honan province (see Burton & Hobson p. 137)... The glaze also shows what the Chinese call "crab-claw" marks which in their eyes is an absolute certificate of antiquity... the subtle beauty of the glaze colour is such that they resemble bowls carved in some lovely natural stone. The better example of the two is the most exquisite colour of any known to me... and... stands apart from any other bowl in this particular class."*<sup>145</sup>

The 1912 date of this letter suggests a relatively early comprehension of the various types of Chinese ceramics by William Burton who appeared to have been well acquainted with George Beatson-Blair and willing to advise on his purchases. Burton was regarded as Manchester's authority on the subject, hence his involvement in the selection of wares for the 1913 Exhibition of Chinese Applied Art at the City Gallery.

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Prince of Wales Galleries, 29 Broad St., Birmingham; **Artinstall & Hind's Ltd.** Auctioneers of 45 Princess St., Manchester and **C.W. Provis & Sons Auctioneers**, 40 Brazenose St., Manchester.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. (L) & (M) respectively.

<sup>145</sup> Letter from **William Burton**, Director of Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Factory to George Beatson-Blair, dated October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1912. *Oriental Ceramics Receipts*, George Beatson-Blair file, Manchester.

Wares not included in the 1947 selection were sold at auction in London.<sup>146</sup>

Unselected items from the wider Blair bequest had been sold in a series of local sales from 1941-1946.<sup>147</sup> Overall, the George Beatson-Blair Collection was one of quantity rather than quality, although after much 'weeding out' a fine selection of Chinese ceramics has enriched the predominantly Western wares of the Manchester City Art Gallery.

### The Birmingham 'Subscribers'

There is little information relating to The Birmingham 'Subscribers' except that they purchased thirty-four pieces of Chinese porcelain for the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in 1929.<sup>148</sup> Several specimens in this public collection have particular relevance to this study, notable among which are the pair of copper-red porcelain 'Pricket Candlesticks', described as 'Exceptionally rare. Probably from the Temple of the sun. Ming Dynasty; period of the Emperor Wan Li (1573-1619). H. 9 7/8 in.'<sup>149</sup>

They are examples of the *xianhong* fresh red glaze. Potsherds from excavations of Chinese kiln sites have proved that there was a considerable failure rate in the manufacture of this glaze. Reputedly solely for Imperial use, Ming copper-reds

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<sup>146</sup> **Christie's, London:** *Chinese Carvings in Hardstones, Objects of Art & Porcelain of the late George Beatson-Blair Esq.*, on Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> 1947. The Chinese porcelain was sold on the second day of the sale, Lots 165-190. The first day of sale included Blair's collection of Chinese jade, several examples of which had come from the W.C. Alexander Collection. George Beatson-Blair file, Manchester.

<sup>147</sup> Local sales included:

**C.W. Provis & Sons:** *Pottery & Porcelain*, July 3rd, 1941, pp. 22-34. Lots 232-371 sold at Whalley House, Whalley Range, Manchester.

**C. W. Provis & Sons and Capes, Dunn & Co.** at Platt Hall, Wilmslow Rd., Rusholme, Manchester: Two Day Sale: 10<sup>th</sup> December 1946, *Oriental Blue-and-White and Other Decorative China and Glass*, Lots 1-299, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1946, *Decorative China (Including Oriental)*, Lots 300-369.

<sup>148</sup> I have been unable to find a sole collection from where the pieces might have come, but suspect they were part of a collection rather than being randomly selected from various sales. The fact that they were all gifted in 1929 partly justifies this assumption.

acquired a rarity value which has not diminished within China and has been transferred to Western collectors. Other pieces are recorded in Appendix III.

The collection complemented the predominantly British and Continental ceramics, thereby promoting the original intention of the Museum inscribed above the visitors' entrance: *'By the gains of industry we promote Art'*.<sup>150</sup> Although Birmingham was not rich in Oriental, particularly Chinese ceramics, there was sufficient interest in the subject among the Subscribers to donate a moderate selection of examples to the Museum, among which were a few fine copper-reds. **Figs. 105-108** illustrate examples from the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery Collection.

**Fig. 105**

- **Artist's Water Vessel; porcelain with peach-bloom glaze, Kangxi (1662-1722).** D: 4 ¾ ins. Acc. No. 435/6'29 (Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery)



<sup>149</sup> Registration Nos. 447/8'29, Acc. Nos. 1929 M 447/8; received in 1929 as a gift from the 'Subscribers'. Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery – Accession Registers; Decorative Arts Curator Zelina Garland.

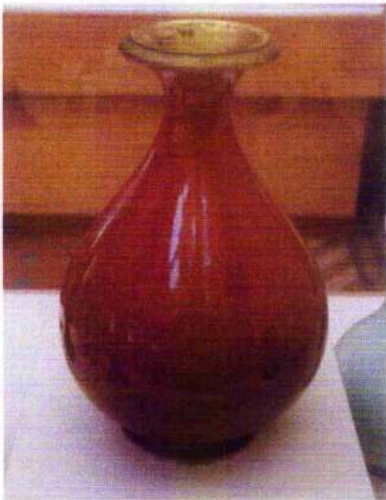
<sup>150</sup> The BM&AG ceramics collection also holds some interesting Near and Middle Eastern and Egyptian pieces from different periods.

**Fig. 106**

- **Bottle-vase; porcelain with strawberry-red glaze and French ormolu mounts** from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Qianlong (1736-95). Acc. No. 236.'32

**Pair of copper-red porcelain 'Pricket Candlesticks'**, described as "*Exceptionally rare. Probably from the Temple of the sun. Ming Dynasty; period of the Emperor Wan Li (1573-1619). H. 9 7/8 in.*" They are examples of the xianhong fresh red glaze. Registration Nos. 447/8'29, Acc. Nos. 1929 M 447/8; received in 1929 as a gift from the 'Subscribers'.

(BM& AG)



**Fig. 107**

- **Two porcelain *flambé* brush washers**, each with carved wooden stand. One of beehive shape: H: 15 cms; Base:12 cms. The other a shallow bowl with convex sides: H:4 cms; Dia:10 cms. Acc. Nos: 1962 S166/7-217 (BM & AG)



Figs. 108a & b

- Views of the porcelain *flambé* brush washers described above in fig. 107. (BM & AG)

Fig. 108a



Fig. 108b



## Collectors of the Mid and Later 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### George Eumorfopoulos

George Eumorfopoulos began collecting ceramics in earnest in 1891 after 'a false start', and can be said to represent a transitional collector active from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century until the 1930's. Initially, his British and Continental ceramics were supplemented with a few 'Oriental' pieces which eventually supplanted the Western collection. As a late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century collector, Eumorfopoulos wrote in the preface to Volume One of his collection catalogues:

*"In ... the last decade of the nineteenth century, "Oriental" meant Ch 'ing porcelain, with just a few pieces of Ming thrown in...*

*The Ming we knew then was a little blue-and-white and some of the coarser enamelled wares. The delicate decorated Ming wares – the cabinet pieces so dear to Chinese collectors – which even now are so rare in the West, were then unknown, and if seen would scarcely have been credited as being of Ming date. On the other hand, it was quite usual to see typical K'ang Hsi porcelains labelled as Ming. Even the Ming san-ts 'ai vases were rarely met with, and I cannot recall seeing one appear in an auction room before 1907."*<sup>151</sup>

The Eumorfopoulos Collection was well represented with Ming and Qing examples with the notable exceptions of *"imposing sets and series of vases, which, as a rule, form the backbone of collections of this date."*<sup>152</sup> The Collection's strength lay in the Song and pre-Song wares, the Yongzheng and Qianlong enamelled wares, particularly the *famille rose* palette, were less well represented. Eumorfopoulos evidently

<sup>151</sup> Hobson, R.L.: *The Catalogue of the George Eumorfopoulos Collections of Chinese, Korean and Persian Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. 1, London, Ernest Benn, 1927. 'Preface', G. Eumorfopoulos, May 1925, p. v.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

preferred Qing monochromes. Even though he had been acquainted with tomb wares for the first time in 1906, Eumorfopoulos did not purchase objects purely in recognition of their archaeological or historical significance, but maintained that they had to have aesthetic appeal, hence the limited numbers of Han pottery in his Collection. Eumorfopoulos recorded that it was not until 1908 that burial wares arrived in increasing numbers to enter British collections culminating in the Burlington Fine Art Club Exhibition in the summer of 1910, 'Early Chinese Pottery and Porcelain'. Interestingly, it was not until three weeks after the Exhibition opened that a case containing Tang '*camels, horses, and riders*' arrived from China by arrangement with Mr Julius Spier of Messrs S.M. Franck & Co.<sup>153</sup>

Eumorfopoulos collected Chinese ceramics at a time when information about them was scant and exhibitions were a means of encouraging comparative scholarship. The breadth of the Eumorfopoulos Collection and his scholarship into these works of art rank him as possibly the most erudite British pioneer collector. The fact that six lavishly decorated catalogues were compiled as a record of his first collection is testament to his pre-eminence in the field.<sup>154</sup> The catalogues detail ceramics according to their chronological order of production ranging from the Chou Dynasty to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hobson told us that the earliest specimen in the Collection was No. 1 – a Chou pottery (1122-255 BC) '*Cauldron {LI}, of bronze form, with three short splayed*

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>154</sup> The Catalogue comprises six volumes detailing the Eumorfopoulos Collections:

Vol. I – 'From The Chou To The End Of The T'ang Dynasty'

Vol. II – 'From T'ang to Ming Ju, Kuan, Ko, Lung – Ch'üan & Chien Wares'

Vol. III – 'From T'ang to Ming Chün, Ting and Tz'ü Chou Wares'

Vol. IV – 'The Ming Dynasty'

Vol. V – 'The Ch'ing Dynasty Porcelain, K'ang Hsi, Yung Chêng, Ch'ien Lung, & Later Periods'

Vol. VI – 'Chinese Pottery, Corean and Persian Wares, And Recent Additions'

Inside the cover of each copy a small paragraph stated that only 725 copies were printed on 'Van Gelder mould-made paper' of which 600 were for sale. A further 30 copies were printed on

legs which are hollow inside, and wide mouth-rim bent outwards and upwards. Hand-made pottery of reddish-buff colour, black on surface and decorated on the outside with deeply impressed corduroy pattern: earth incrustations.<sup>155</sup> J.G. Andersson is known to have unearthed this type of pottery, and possibly this piece, in the Neolithic settlement at Yang Shao in Honan c. early 1920's.<sup>156</sup> Burial wares arrived in Britain in order of excavation – Han, then Tang and Wei pottery.

Eumorfopoulos had many copper-reds in his collection ranging from the Ming to Qing dynasties. Included are two Ming stem-cups decorated with 'crimson red fishes' on a 'greenish-white' glaze, and five underglaze copper-red painted porcelains.<sup>157</sup> He also had a superb collection of 'Numbered' *jun* wares from the Song, Yuan and Ming periods.<sup>158</sup> 'Soft Chün' Wares from the Song to the Ming are represented, and 'Kuan Wares of Chün Type', from the Song dynasty.<sup>159</sup> Among the Kangxi monochromes were twenty-one examples of *sang-de-boeuf*, *strawberry red* and *peach bloom* vases, bowls and cups, (see Appendix III). Yongzheng (1723-35) period monochromes were not as numerous in the earlier Eumorfopoulos Collection. Those included ranged from imitation Song *jun* wares streaked with *flambé* red, deep maroon and *peach bloom* reds, (see Appendix III). Qianlong monochromes comprised mainly *flambé* glazed pieces, (see Appendix III). Unlike other collectors, Eumorfopoulos included

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'Batchelor's Kelmscott hand-made paper', of which 25 were for sale. The catalogues have in turn become collectable in their own right.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., Hobson, Vol. 1, p. 1, No. 1.

<sup>156</sup> Andersson, J.G.: 'An Early Chinese Culture'; *Bulletin of the Geological Survey of China*, No. 5, Peking, 1923.

<sup>157</sup> Hobson, R.L.: *The Catalogue of the George Eumorfopoulos Collections of Chinese, Korean and Persian Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. IV, London 1927, pp. 10-11; D. 47-48 and D.49 – D. 53 and D. 55. The 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century stem-cup, D. 48, remained in the Collection and was eventually sold at Sotheby's in 1940 to 'Hancock' for £52, (Lot 325).

<sup>158</sup> Ibid; p.4-8; C.I – C. 27. 'Chün Wares, Sung and Later'; are described as Nos. C.30 – C. 96, pp. 8-17.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid; p. 17, 'Soft Chün' Wares, Song-Ming, C. 100 – C. 107. Vol. II – 'From Tang to Ming Ju, Kuan, Ko, Lung-Chuan & Chien Wares' – p. 18; 'Kuan Wares of Chün Type', Song: B. 73 – B. 102, many of which were splashed with the characteristic purple-crimson splash.

Nineteenth Century wares in his Collection irrespective of its low status in the opinion of many of his contemporaries. Among the copper-reds of this period was a pear-shaped bottle of coarse porcelain with:

*"crimson flambé glaze splashed with blackish red and purple flecked with bluish grey. Glaze ground off at the base..."* Another pear-shaped bottle is described as having an *'intense sang-de-boeuf red shoaling into buff on the neck. The glaze has been ground off the edge of the base...'*<sup>160</sup>

All the examples noted above formed part of Eumorfopoulos' first collection which he was forced to sell in part rather than gift to the National Museums c.1936 during the Depression. Subsequently he began to build a second collection which was sold at Sotheby's in 1940.<sup>161</sup>

The second collection also included a *'superb collection of important Chün Wares, of which twelve are illustrated – a series probably unequalled in any private or public collection, (lots 168-196) ... and a considerable range of Monochrome porcelain's of the 18<sup>th</sup> century'*.<sup>162</sup> Ming 15<sup>th</sup> century copper-red wares and a specimen of *Yi Hsing jun* (lot 335), were represented. The 1940 sale catalogue lists many examples of the Ming and Qing monochromes described in Hobson's earlier catalogue of the Eumorfopoulos Collection, (see Appendix III). Most of the copper-red monochromes appear to have been reserved by Eumorfopoulos during the Depression of the 1930's when he was forced to sell parts of his Collection. This may indicate that Eumorfopoulos was particularly fond of them, or that they did not find a buyer willing

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., Vol. V: 'The Nineteenth Century', p. 61; E.465 and E. 464. E.468, Another pear-shaped bottle with two scroll handles and a deep coral-red glaze, c. 1800, represented an 'iron red' monochrome.

<sup>161</sup> Hobson, R.L.: Sotheby's & Co., London: *The Eumorfopoulos Collections*, Tuesday May 28<sup>th</sup> – Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1940. (This copy from the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, contained William Burrell's annotations including buyers' names and sale prices).

to match the reserve price. Two of the most expensive copper-reds were Lots 358-359, Kangxi *Lang yao* vases, the former described as:

*"superbly coloured... with a brilliant and rich cherry... glaze coagulating round the foot with moss markings... the lip rim repaired", the latter covered with a 'fine "sang-de-boeuf" glaze... an unusual narrow red band round the lip... "*

Of these vases, illustrated in the 1940 sale catalogue, Burrell wrote: *'Mr Partridge wrote of these 2 pieces "Not high class specimens"'*, also noting that Bluctt's purchased both vases – Lot 358 (17 ½ ins.) for £50, Lot 359 (17 ¾ ins.) for £70. Each vase was recorded in Hobson's 1927 catalogue as Nos. E. 247 and E.249 respectively, (see Appendix III). With the exception of Sir Percival's Collection formed slightly later, Eumorfopoulos had the most extensive range of Ming and Qing copper-red monochrome wares. Both of these men were pioneer scholar-collectors of the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Percival David Collection of Chinese ceramics deserves a brief mention at this juncture, which although highly significant in terms of its size, diversity and quality, has been extensively researched since the Foundation opened to the public on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1952.

### **Sir Percival David**

Sir Percival David (1892-1964) amassed a superb collection of Chinese Imperial monochromes dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They form the *'second largest class'* of ceramics in the Foundation, a substantial proportion of which had formed part of the former Imperial Collection sold off as collateral by the Empress Dowager to the Yui Yeh Bank. After much wrangling, the pieces became Sir Percival David's

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid: Preface, May 1940. Second Day of Sale, pp. 54-65; Lots 169-196.

property. In 1930 he returned to China to make a detailed catalogue of the artefacts in various Imperial halls and palaces with the intention of organising exhibitions of the treasures within China. During this time Percival David was also able to supplement his personal collection through Chinese contacts. By 1924 Sir Percival David had acquired a firm grasp of written Chinese and believed that the only way to fully appreciate Chinese art was by studying art connoisseurship within China, hence his interest in the Imperial Collection. It was through Sir Percival David's connection with the Imperial Collection that the idea for a major international exhibition of Chinese art to be held in London came to fruition. Along with Chinese art sent via invitation from around the world, the 1935 exhibition displayed some of the Imperial wares Percival David had catalogued and exhibited in the 'Forbidden City'. It was the first time that examples of Imperial porcelain, particularly monochromes, had been seen together in numbers which facilitated comparative scholarship in the West. Sir Percival David can also be credited with developing the study of Chinese Art into a recognised academic discipline by establishing a Chair of Chinese Art & Archaeology at the Courtauld Institute, a post held from the early 1930's until 1946 by Professor Perceval Yetts.<sup>163</sup>

The Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone Gift of 1952 enhanced the Sir Percival David Collection with a gift of 150 18<sup>th</sup> century monochromes, including copper-reds.<sup>164</sup>

Whereas Elphinstone appeared to have collected pieces of fine technical quality,

<sup>163</sup> Scott, Rosemary E: *Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art - A Guide to the Collection*, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1989, pp. 12-15.

<sup>164</sup> Medley, Margaret: *Illustrated Catalogue of Ming and Qing Monochrome Wares In The Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art*, University of London Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, SOAS, Revised Edition, 1989, pp. 60-63. Various copper-red saucer-dishes, bowls and vases from the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong periods are listed as acc. Nos. C502-C519. No. C503 is catalogued as a **Ming copper-red saucer dish, early 15<sup>th</sup> century**, 'with moulded decoration on the inside of two dragons round the sides and with three incised clouds at the centre'. It is the only Ming copper-red monochrome included in the Elphinstone Gift.

Percival David was often more attracted to pieces of historical or documentary interest, hence it contains more inscribed and marked specimens than most other collections worldwide. These complementary collections serve to make the Percival David Foundation an excellent base for scholarly research and reference. It comprises all the major types of the copper-red glaze dating from the 14-15<sup>th</sup> century, 16<sup>th</sup> century, 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Kangxi Period, 18<sup>th</sup> century, and '*peach bloom and related glazes*'.<sup>165</sup> The most numerous wares are the 20 pieces of 18<sup>th</sup> century reds, but each section is fully representative of its type.

### Sir William Burrell

Although not on the same scale or of uniform superlative quality, Sir William Burrell (1861-1958) was known to have taken an interest in Chinese ceramics and bronzes at least from 1905-6, as a photograph of his drawing room at 8, Great Western Terrace, Glasgow showed three Kangxi *famille noire* vases on the mantelpiece.<sup>166</sup> Among other fields such as medieval tapestries from Northern Europe, English oak furniture and stained glass which conformed with Burrell's reconstruction of a baronial lifestyle in Hutton Castle, Chinese art was to become a significant area of his collecting activity. His interest may have been stimulated through business connections with William Hesketh Lever, George Eumorfopoulos and Leonard Gow, the latter both involved in marine commerce.<sup>167</sup> Burrell was later to purchase several items from Gow's mainly Kangxi collection. However, it was only with the Scotsman

<sup>165</sup> Medley, Margaret: *Illustrated Catalogue of Ming and Qing Monochrome Wares*, Revised Edition, 1989, pp. 1 & 6.

<sup>166</sup> Marks, Richard: *Burrell - A Portrait of a Collector; Sir William Burrell (1861-1958)*, Glasgow, Richard Drew Pub., 1983, p. 90.

<sup>167</sup> Leonard Gow (1859-1936), discussed earlier in the chapter, was director of the shipping business 'Gow, Harrison & Co.'

Arthur Kay that Burrell shared his preference for Chinese bronzes. Burrell's *Purchase Books* dating from 1911-1958, record that during the early years from 1911-16, purchases of Chinese ceramics were less prolific than those of Chinese bronzes.<sup>168</sup> During this period moderate quantities of pottery and porcelain from the Zhou to the Qing dynasty entered the collection, each represented by a few pieces. Burrell was more attracted to the simpler, earlier Chinese ceramics of substantial appearance, hence 18<sup>th</sup> century *famille rose* porcelains are entirely absent from the collection, and more surprising given his interest in stained glass, armorial porcelain was also neglected.

Burrell bought his ware direct from dealers or through them at auction. He tended to buy earlier Chinese ceramics from T.J. Larkin and Bluett and Sons, while late Ming and Kangxi wares came mostly from S.M. Franck & Co., Frank Partridge and H.R. Hancock. Until the later 1940's Burrell was renowned for his critical inspections, generally preferring to purchase single items or small groups from various sources. Like Henry Walters of Baltimore, Burrell rarely made bulk purchases from famous collections because of the inflated prices they often attracted, with the exception of a selection of items from the Leonard Gow and Randolph Hearst Collections in 1938.

During the inter-war years *famille noire* and *jaune* porcelains which had been popular with wealthy British industrialists and American millionaires from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the Great War lost value – culturally and financially. Burrell shrewdly took advantage of the depressed prices of the inter-war period, although he continued to face competition from British collectors such as Sir Percival David and

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<sup>168</sup> Marks, Richard: *Burrell*, Glasgow, 1983, pp. 90-91. Burrell's spending on all areas of his collection drastically increased from February 1916 after the sale of 'Burrell & Son's' fleet.

Sir Alan Barlow. The Transatlantic threat was offset through Burrell's geographical proximity to vendors, and his willingness to travel to London and Europe in search for additions. And, his American rivals had similarly suffered during the recession of 1929-33. The London art market was particularly adversely affected from 1931-35. Burrell's collecting aspirations were allowed to flourish in this depressed climate on a scale that would have been impossible at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Burrell's collecting strategy of the later 1940's was markedly different, especially in the bulk purchases from auction. He had items sent by dealers on approval to Hutton Castle, sometimes relying solely on a photograph or owner's word for proof of authenticity. This led to several inevitable mistakes. Burrell consistently added Chinese pottery and porcelain to his collection each year. From 1945-1948 Burrell's acquisitions of Chinese porcelain numbered over a hundred pieces annually.<sup>169</sup>

Despite his personal fortune, Burrell did not rely on the invested assets derived from his shipping transactions, but continued his early practice of exchange and sale to raise capital. One example concerns a pair of Kangxi '*tapered black vases*' bought in 1934-35 for the healthy sum of £7, 750 from Frank Partridge – a rare extravagance for Burrell.<sup>170</sup> In 1937 he parted with the vases for £8, 000 making a modest profit in order to finance other acquisitions.

Burrell is rumoured to have been keen to secure a bargain. In part, this ambition drove his collecting policy and it has been stated that he could have 'collected better' if he had not been so keen in this pursuit. However, he was spectacularly lucky on several occasions, obtaining rare and beautiful porcelain for a fraction of its market value.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p.168. In 1945 Burrell purchased 146 pieces of Chinese porcelain; 1946–154; 1947–122; 1948 – 130.

One such item was the acquisition of a 14<sup>th</sup> century copper-red ewer in 1947 for the ludicrous price of £85.<sup>171</sup> In contemporary terms, at least four more noughts could be added to this figure, particularly as most copper-reds of this date and quality are ensconced in public collections. Burrell also acquired a series of Neolithic wares from the N.S. Brown Collection, one piece for as little as £11. Interestingly, in 1945 Burrell paid £3, 045 for a *famille noire* vase and a pair of beakers at the R.W.M. Walker Collection Sale.<sup>172</sup>

Although Burrell's post-war ambition was to build on the nucleus of his early Chinese pottery, bronze and jade collections, he nevertheless acquired some significant Qing dynasty copper-reds. The Burrell Collection contains twenty-one examples, mostly *Lang yao* reds of the Kangxi and later periods. Record cards reveal they were purchased at prices ranging from £10-£85 throughout the 1940's. Burrell's selection included two *peach-bloom* washers, one of Kangxi and the other of possibly later date, and a Kangxi *peach-bloom* vase of inverted pear shape with a lobed lower body, repaired with silver and with a silver neck. There are *meiping*, pear-shaped and bottle vases, a *sang-de-boeuf* beaker of 'Ku' shape; five bowls including a tripod bulb bowl, bowl with fluted sides and metal rim, and a shallow 18<sup>th</sup> century *sang-de-boeuf* dish, (see Appendix III).

From the record cards and purchase books it is clear that Burrell collected copper-red porcelains only as part of a wider collecting scheme. He possibly admired the strong colour and simplicity of the copper-red porcelains, but with the exception of Registration No. 38/734, the 18<sup>th</sup> century *Lang yao* shallow dish purchased in 1921,

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

all the other specimens were bought throughout the 1940's while post-war prices remained depressed. Therefore, how far these acquisitions were the result of a genuine affection for the wares or bought because they were reasonably priced is difficult to surmise.

Burrell could be described as 'Second Generation' - a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century collector of, among other things, Chinese porcelain. His Chinese porcelain collection was sourced mainly from pre-existing British and European collections which by the 1940's were being broken up and sold. The consignments of porcelain shipped direct from China during the 1920's and 30's had become far less frequent by the 1940's. These shipments had largely shaped the 'First Generation' collections of Sir Percival David and George Eumorfopoulos, etc. And, although by the 1950's a considerable number of collections had in part or entirety entered public collections, there were still many opportunities to collect for the Second Generation.<sup>173</sup> Rolf Cunliffe (d. 1963), fell into this emerging post-war collecting category.

### Cunliffe

Resident in London as a RAF officer during the later war years, Cunliffe developed a taste for collecting Chinese pottery and porcelain as a form of diversion from wartime preoccupations. At that time it was still possible to secure pieces for prices that were commensurate with the purchasing power of a professional wage. In fact, the relatively abundant supply and reasonable prices gave rise to Cunliffe's idea of

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>173</sup> Sir Percival David's Collection has passed into a public institution. Other collections were disposed at auction, e.g. The Alfred Clark Collection alluded to earlier in the chapter and the Eumorfopoulos

forming an Imperial Yellow dinner service. He acquired his first piece from Bluett & Sons on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1944 - a small iridescent glazed Han jar for the moderate sum of £15. Cunliff was to purchase over 400 specimens from Bluett & Sons over the next twenty years.

Like Burrell, he collected chiefly through London-based dealers who from c.1910-1960 held an international pre-eminent position in the Chinese works of art market.<sup>174</sup> By 1944, the dating of all Chinese ceramics, particularly early pottery had made considerable progress, although mistakes were still made and the scientific technology available to verify attributions was not as advanced as today. The OCS and the 1935 Exhibition of Chinese Art had both been highly influential in the dissemination of scholarship.

In the later years of his collecting career Cunliffe turned to Japanese pottery and porcelain, both influential on the style of Bernard Leach. The Cunliffe Collection also came to include examples of Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada. In this sense, Cunliffe shaped the British post-war taste for the 'country wares' and studio-pottery championed by potters such as Leach. Such rustic pottery was at that time regarded as unsophisticated by the Chinese, hence not revered or collected whereas in Britain, chiefly because of Leach and his followers, this type of ware became popular c.mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>175</sup>

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Collection - disposed of in 1936 and 1940, a large proportion of which passed into the V&A and British Museum.

<sup>174</sup> During this time some of the larger dealers had branches in Shanghai and Peking - latterly Beijing.

<sup>175</sup> The information given above on Rolf Cunliffe (d. 1963), was derived from **Colin Sheaf's** lecture 'Collecting in Context: Lord Cunliffe, Chinese Ceramics and English Taste', Bonhams, 101 New Bond Street, London, 8 November 2002.

The sale of 'The Cunliffe Collection' contained two copper-red porcelains.<sup>176</sup> Lot 83:

*'A Fine Copper-Red-Decorated Baluster Vase, meiping 18<sup>th</sup> Century; painted around the slender baluster body in deep copper-red with a pair of phoenix with wings outstretched amidst scrolling peony branches... Cunliffe Collection no. PC23.*

Lord Cunliffe noted that: "*P. David thought 17<sup>th</sup> Century or earlier; Basil Gray and Sir Harry Garner thought 18<sup>th</sup> Century.*"<sup>177</sup>

Note the difficulty to decipher a definite date of manufacture. Lot 84 furnished another example of confused attribution. It is catalogued as a Kangxi 'Copper-Red-Glazed Saucer Dish' with 'incised Xuande' reign mark, 'low curved sides rising to the short wedge foot covered overall with a rich red glaze thinning to white at the rim, reserved white rim within the foot (small rim chips)... Cunliffe Collection no. PM126.'<sup>178</sup>

The dish entered Britain when Bluett & Sons purchased it from the dealer 'Yuan' on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1936 for £40. Bluett & Sons sold the piece to Alfred and Ivy Clark on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1936 for £70. At the Sotheby's sale of the Clark Collection on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 1953, the dish was purchased by Cunliffe through John Sparks as 'Xuande mark and period' for £252.<sup>179</sup> This was a considerable sum in 1953, possibly due in part to the assumed date of manufacture.

It seemed that Cunliffe was not over-excited by copper-red porcelains but was rather more interested in monochrome Imperial Yellow wares, a number of which he

<sup>176</sup> Bonhams: *The Cunliffe Collection of Chinese Ceramics and Jade Carvings*; Monday, 11 November 2002, New Bond Street, London.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., Lot 83, pp.106-107. The vase was purchased from Vandekar by Bluett & Sons on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1946 for £7.10.0, later to be purchased from Bluett & Sons on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1946 for £30.0.0. The vase was recently sold on 11:11:02 for the sum of £50,000 - well in excess of its £10,000 - 15,000 reserve value.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., Lot 84, p.108.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., Lot 84, p. 108. The estimated reserve for the dish was between £1500-2500. On the day of sale 11:11:02, the dish went for £2200.

acquired from the Frances Howard Paget Collection after 1945. However, like Eumorfopoulos, Cunliffe's later interest in Japanese and British studio-pottery represented and even pioneered a significant trend in British taste and collecting activities of the mid-later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Mid & Later-20<sup>th</sup> Century Collectors of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and British Ceramics**

An earlier cross-cultural collector, Henry Bergen (b.1873, New York -d. 1950), foreshadowed Cunliffe in his tastes for Chinese and Japanese pottery. Having graduated in 1906 with a Doctor of Philosophy in modern languages and literature from Munich University, Bergen came to London, chiefly to the British Museum to pursue various writing and translation projects. In 1921 he encountered Bernard Leach at an exhibition of the latter's work in the Artificers Guild, London. The previous year Leach had returned from Japan to England with his Japanese companion, Shoji Hamada. Leach and Hamada were in the process of establishing the St. Ives Pottery and had built a traditional stoneware Japanese climbing kiln to fire the ware. Bergen was soon to visit the St. Ives pottery and become intimately acquainted with Leach and the pupils he apprenticed; Michael Cardew was resident at St. Ives from 1923, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie from 1924. Bergen even made some pieces with Hamada with whom he stayed in contact after Hamada's return to Japan. These friendships endured into the 1940's. It was the combination of practical creativity and intellectual debate that Bergen found stimulating at St. Ives, and later when he visited

Pleydell-Bouverie at her pottery in Coleshill from 1929 and at Michael Cardew's Winchcombe Pottery from 1926.

It seemed that Bergen not only liked to buy studio-pottery for daily use, but was keen to design and decorate his own pieces. Michael Cardew threw many large dishes for Bergen, some of which he decorated with '12<sup>th</sup> Century animals', particularly fawn with folded legs and running deer -- a motif used by many commercial manufacturers during the 1930's.<sup>180</sup> Bergen decorated his pots using the ancient Chinese and Japanese technique of paper stencils which would resist the slip poured over them. He also engraved a complete alphabet of Roman capitals and numerals into 'small seal-like chunks of cheese-hard clay', which after being soft-biscuit fired were used as stamps to make inscriptions around the edges of dishes before being slip glazed. Cardew disapproved of Bergen's method and creative approach, criticising it for being too intellectual, the motifs for being too static, '*too much like engravings in metal for slipware*'.<sup>181</sup> Cardew had clearly been influenced by Leach in his thinking that designs should be arrived at through the process of making rather than abstract thought.

However, Bergen's friendships and working relationships with the various studio-potters throughout the 1920's-40's were useful in terms of his wide circle of influential acquaintances with representatives from museums, his affiliations with the Arts and Crafts, other potters such as Nell and Charles Vyse, and most significant - wealthy private collectors. It was Bergen who introduced Bernard Leach to George Eumorfopoulos, R.L. Hobson and Bernard Rackham, and who asked Bernard Leach

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<sup>180</sup> Hampson, Eileen: 'Henry Bergen: Friend of Studio-Potters', *Journal Of The Northern Ceramic Society*, Volume 8, 1991, p.77.

to educate curators Soame Jenyns and E.A. Lane with a practical knowledge of manufacture.<sup>182</sup>

Before returning to Japan, Shoji Hamada held two exhibitions of his work in London towards the end of 1923. These were successful and pieces were sold to numerous discerning collectors. It was obvious that tastes for early and modern Chinese and Japanese pottery alongside medieval and contemporary English studio-pottery were converging, possibly because they shared an earthy aesthetic counter to the increasing emphasis placed on mass-manufactured ceramics.<sup>183</sup> Hamada was pleased with the outcome of the exhibitions because:

*"... men like Eumorfopoulos came the first day, and each bought something, not like in Japan where they come in gangs. These men bought thoughtfully."*<sup>184</sup>

Bergen's influence on potters and collectors alike cannot be underrated. In 1933 he was chiefly responsible for selecting ceramics for the Japanese Exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. In 1935 he recorded his seventh or eighth visit to the R.A. Chinese Art Exhibition with 'Henry and Irina Moore'.<sup>185</sup> Although Bergen was interested in early oriental and medieval English pottery, his collecting energy seemed to focus on contemporary English studio-pottery, possibly due in part to his limited finances. During the 1930's disposable income became restricted, even among wealthy collectors such as Eumorfopoulos.

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 79. Bernard Rackham and E.A. Lane were former curators at the Ceramics Department of the V&A, the latter from 1936; R.L. Hobson and Soame Jenyns of the British Museum, the latter succeeding Hobson in the 1930's.

<sup>183</sup> The Chinese were not traditionally interested in collecting 'rustic' Japanese pottery as they considered it unsophisticated.

<sup>184</sup> Hampson, Eileen: 'Henry Bergen', *J.N.C.S.*, Volume 8, 1991, p. 80. (B. Leach: *Hamada Potter*, Tokyo, 1975, pp. 67-68).

In 1938 Bergen loaned 26 pieces of pottery to the Potteries Museum and Art gallery for a 'Stoneware Exhibition'. Of Geoffrey Benrose, the curator of 'Stoke' Bergen wrote:

*"... of all the Museum people he has the most feeling for pots – is especially fond of early English pots, slipware and old Chinese. He is interested in Cha-no-yu (tea ceremony) pots too..."*<sup>185</sup>

The Exhibition was opened by Guy Harris, chief chemist of Bullers Ltd., who is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 on Style. During his stay in Stoke Bergen also met Adolph Wenger of Wenger's Colours, Etruria, another important link in his chain of acquaintances.<sup>187</sup> Bergen managed to span the divide between intellectuals, theorists, practising potters, designers, manufacturers, men of commerce and collectors.

Apart from his designing and collecting activities, Bergen took responsibility for editing Bernard Leach's *A Potter's Book*, the contract for which Leach signed in 1936 with Faber and Faber. Leach asked Bergen because he wanted a person who understood pottery as both a practical and philosophical discipline. As an editor Bergen was meticulous and pedantic, a necessary counterbalance to Leach's rhetoric and repetition. Bergen preferred plain language, clarity and good writing style. The fact that *A Potter's Book* made it to press was largely the result of Bergen's persistent attempts to structure the text into a coherent format. Bergen had to constantly remind Leach not to be too dismissive of and irreverent towards mass-produced ceramics, because mass-production had become a permanent feature of modern society enabling more people access to consumer durables. Moreover he noted that good design was

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid. Hampson, p.81.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

the most desirable aspect in terms of production, which could only be achieved through the employment and accreditation of talented designers in factories. As this was the case for some English manufacturers Leach was advised to curb his vehemence as well as his tendency towards unnecessary autobiography.

In November 1948, Bergen gave his Collection of 556 pieces of Chinese and Studio-Pottery to what is now the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery. The Collection comprised 112 pieces marked with Bergson's own mark – H.B., as well as a selection of early Chinese pottery including one or two pieces of Song dynasty celadon and *jun* glazed ware; and pottery by Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, Michael Cardew, Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, Norah Braden and William Staite Murray.<sup>188</sup> Of particular relevance to this study are two stoneware pots – a bowl and jar – thrown and decorated by William Staite Murray with a copper-red glaze. The bowl is speckled with iron oxide, the jar copper-red glazed over wax resist decoration.<sup>189</sup> This significant collection bridged the gulf not only between China and Japan and its respect for a less uniform, less technically perfect aesthetic, but also made vital connections between the Orient and English medieval and later 20<sup>th</sup> century studio-pottery prior to the vision of post-war collectors such as Cunliffe.

### Japan & China

Throughout the 1960's-70's, Japan gradually superseded London and America as the third geographical centre of 'Oriental' collecting. During this period the Japanese

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<sup>187</sup> The Wenger 'Colour' firm is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2 on Manufacture.

<sup>188</sup> **Hampson, Eileen:** 'Henry Bergen', *J.N.C.S.*, Volume 8, 1991, p.89.

<sup>189</sup> Bowl – Acc. No. 1999.C.15; Jar – Acc. No. 1999.C.13 – The Henry Bergen Collection, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

avidly sought to invest in early Chinese art, hence Sotheby's decision to open a Hong Kong branch in 1972 because of its proximity to Japan. Japanese domination of the market lasted for almost a decade until newly wealthy Chinese communities overseas could afford to renew their interest in Chinese works of art. Entrepreneurs from Hong Kong, Taiwan and elsewhere, deprived of a cultural inheritance, were eager to assert their national identity. Reign-marked Chinese porcelain, even the 19<sup>th</sup> century pieces previously shunned by Western collectors, became highly sought after and correspondingly expensive, as did scholarly Mandarin paraphernalia in a range of materials. In addition, a fresh wave of antiquities were smuggled out of China into Hong Kong c.1979-80. Among the thousands of early bronzes and pottery flooding onto the market, new 'types' were distinguished provoking vigorous interest.

By the time of Japan's economic downturn of the 1990's, the Chinese filled the vacuum. It was at this time that a growing number of Chinese, particularly Chinese Diaspora, abandoned the ancient prohibition of handling objects unearthed from disturbed tombs. Since the 1990's, a new generation of Chinese collectors have taken an liberal interest in the Oriental art market, creating new areas and expanding existing ones with corresponding shifts in cultural and economic value. Chinese dealers have been instrumental in the 'internationalisation' of the Chinese art market. In the current climate where increasing importance is attached to the provenance of pieces, the global character of the Chinese market is clearly evident. A Chinese collector-dealer who to some extent facilitated the international base the Chinese art market currently enjoys was Edward T. Chow.

## Edward T. Chow

Edward Chow (1910-1980), started his career working for John Sparks in Shanghai. It was here at the age of 13 that Chow began his lifelong study of Chinese art and history and met the Danish collector Jacob Melchior who became an invaluable mentor. Melchior encouraged Chow to take an international interest in collecting activities and to follow three particular 'creeds' pertinent to rarity, technical and aesthetic excellence and condition of the piece. Chow looked for perfection in his choices, not only of ceramics but in all aspects of Chinese art – bronzes, jades, furniture, cloisonné and paintings. When the Chinese Communist Government came to power in 1949, Chow left for Hong Kong leaving behind a sizeable part of his collection which became State property. Chow rebuilt his collection in Hong Kong and developed his international trade connections.

Before entering Chow's collection newly acquired objects were thoroughly cleaned and catalogued to include details of the purchase price and vendor, provenance and historical background. He had boxes and stands made for each piece and subject to the same standards of perfection. Chow's wife and children were also involved in the organisation and maintenance of his collection.<sup>190</sup>

The Edward T. Chow Collection was sold at Sotheby's London and Hong Kong in 1980. The London sale of *Early Chinese Ceramics and Ancient Bronzes* reflected British interest in that field. In Hong Kong a large section of Ming and Qing porcelains were offered for auction as well as works of art in jade, ivory, glass, bronze

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<sup>190</sup> Atterbury, Paul: 'For Sale: The Edward T. Chow Collection'; *The Connoisseur*, December 1980, pp. 260-267.

and enamel.<sup>191</sup> The Hong Kong sale represented the burgeoning interest of Japanese and Chinese collectors eager to acquire Imperial porcelain.

The Chow Collection was remarkable for its quality. Of particular relevance to this study was his Song and Yuan *Junyao* wares described in Lots 261 – 267. Some of the pieces are from British collections formed earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lot 262, a pair of small Song *Junyao* censers came from the Collection of Mrs Enid Lodge and the late F. Brodie Lodge sold at Sotheby's London on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1978 as lot 123.<sup>192</sup> A *Junyao* dish, Lot 272, came from the Alfred and Ivy Clark Collection, and a 'fine splashed *Junyao* bowl' previously in the Malcolm Collection was sold at Sotheby's London on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1977 as lot 141.<sup>193</sup>

The Chow Collection was similarly rich in copper-red wares, of which the earliest described in the sale catalogue was a 'Late Fourteenth Century [Underglaze] Copper-red Decorated Dish' with a key-fret border; the central well painted with stylised chrysanthemums and a central peony medallion. The underside of the everted rim decorated with a band of 'formal lotus petal lappets'. The pale copper-red pigment becoming 'smoky grey on the rim', from the Hongwu (1368-1398) period.<sup>194</sup> See Appendix III for other examples.

<sup>191</sup> Sotheby's London Sale Catalogue: *The Edward T. Chow Collection – Part Two; Early Chinese Ceramics and Ancient Bronzes*, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 1980 at 10.30 A.M.

Sotheby's Hong Kong Sale Catalogue: *The Edward T. Chow Collection – Part Three; Ming and Qing Porcelain and Various Works of Art*, Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 1981 at 2.30 P.M.

<sup>192</sup> Sotheby's London Sale Catalogue: *The Edward T. Chow Collection – Part Two*, Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 1980 at 10.30 A.M., p. 68. They were exhibited at the OCS Exh. of 'Song Dynasty Wares, Chün and Brown Glazes', 1952. (Nos. 213-214). The reserve price for Lot 262 was between £3,000 / 4,000 (1980).

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.; pp. 74-76. Lot 272 was also exhibited at the OCS Exh. of 1952. The reserve price for Lot 272 was between £7,000 / 9,000 (1980).

<sup>194</sup> Sotheby's Hong Kong sale catalogue: *The Edward T. Chow Collection – Part Three*, Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 1981 at 2.30 P.M., pp. 64-65, Lot 448. The hammer price, subject to a 10 % premium was 340000.00 HK\$.

Qing dynasty copper-reds were represented by some rare and beautiful pieces including Lot 491 – a pair of Qianlong copper-red winecups with mottled deep pink exterior and white glazed interior, and Lot 492 – a copper-red saucer dish with white rim and *'minutely pitted' 'good liver-red glaze with... greenish-beige speckling on the interior of the well...'* The dish is of the Yongzheng period (1723-1735) and bears the Emperor's double circle character mark.<sup>195</sup>

*Peach-bloom* wares are represented by Lots 493-496. Lot 493 is described as a *'compressed circular'* brushwasher with *'mottled glaze of dark pink... with areas of paler mushroom speckling...'*, Kangxi (1662-1722) character marked and of the period. Appendix III lists other examples.

Chow's selection of Qing dynasty copper-red monochromes was complemented by two choice examples of Kangxi copper-red decorated wares. Lot 539 is a globular copper-red and enamel decorated waterpot painted with delicate rose blooms and buds in *'pinkish copper-red'* on green enamel stems. Lot 540 is a copper-red decorated waterpot with *'inturned rim'*. Copper-red peony, chrysanthemum and lotus flowers are depicted above a band of pointed leaves around the base, separated by a thin underglaze blue line. On this piece the Kangxi *'nianhao'* has been *'incised into the porcelain...'*<sup>196</sup> On account of their rarity, Lots 541 and 542 are of particular interest; a *'Rare 17<sup>th</sup> Century Copper-red Decorated Double-Gourd Vase'* and a rare Kangxi blue-ground bowl with *'brownish'* copper-red dragons chasing flaming pearls, (see Appendix III).

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., pp. 95, 99, 103. Lot 491 - The hammer price, subject to a 10 % premium was 24000.00 HK\$. Lot 492 - The hammer price, subject to a 10 % premium was 28000.00 HK\$.

The Hong Kong Sale of the Chow Collection in May 1980 demonstrated a significant interest in period marked Ming and Qing monochromes on behalf of buyers from Europe, America, Japan, China and Hong Kong. Monochromes vary in value according to the overall rarity, quality, shape and colour of the glaze. Monochromes, particularly copper-reds, display a diverse range of tints, some considered more desirable than others especially if a piece has been 'misfired' or has a dull glaze. Chips and cracks at the rim or base can adversely affect the price of an item, as can the absence of a period mark. In fact, some collectors will not consider monochromes without a mark. For instance, a fine *flambé* vase with a Kangxi (1662-1722) mark is worth more than a similar version with a Yongzheng mark, possibly because the former represents the reinvigoration and invention of the Jingdezhen potteries during the Kangxi period. The Yongzheng (1723-1735) mark is mostly worth more than the Qianlong mark, the former representing twelve years of artistry, invention and technical excellence. Qianlong (1736-1795) *Lang yao* and *flambé* vases are also far more numerous detracting from their value. Although unmarked pieces are generally much less expensive they are not necessarily of inferior quality, hence the growing interest in this area among later 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors of moderate means.

**Professor Edward Thomas Hall (b.1924, London – d. 2001, Oxfordshire)**

E.T. or 'Teddy' Hall, the son of a former MP for Beacon and Radnor, spent his childhood at Shipton Court, Oxfordshire. Educated at Eton, in 1943 he joined the RNVR as an ordinary seaman ferrying commandos to France. After the War Hall

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., pp. 126-127.

gained a place at New College Oxford to study chemistry. He later switched to physics and was awarded a DPhil in 1953. Hall's doctoral research laid the foundations of his future career in archaeometry.

During the 1950's E.T. Hall devised ways to detect and analyse microscopic particles of contaminants found on certain previously organic artefacts. His techniques were based on those associated with x-ray fluorescence and subsequently became standard procedures in the field of forensic science. In 1955 with the backing of Oxford University, Hall established a research laboratory for archaeology and art history.

Using x-ray fluorescence techniques Hall was able to prove that the Piltdown Fossils did not belong to a lost species of homosapien, but was the jawbone of an orang-utan stained with potassium dichromate to simulate age, while the presence of microscopic iron filings suggested the teeth had been filed down. In the 1970's Hall and his research team expanded their interests to include radiocarbon dating.<sup>197</sup> In 1988, having been invited to take samples from the Turin Shroud for radiocarbon dating, Hall concluded that this object was in fact a medieval fraud dating from c.1260-1390.<sup>198</sup> His involvement with radiocarbon dating and x-ray fluorescence techniques, both of which could be used to date ceramic artefacts, makes Hall an interesting collector and raises the question if he was as competent an art historian as he was a scientist as it was surely not always possible to test wares before acquisition.

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<sup>197</sup> **A Note on Radiocarbon Dating** This technique relies on the theory that the radioactive element 'carbon-14' decays over time to form nitrogen. Radiocarbon is formed as a result of natural reactions in the Upper Atmosphere; the rate of formation and overall quantity remains relatively constant. Carbon-14 composes only a minute percentage of the total carbon present in the earth's atmosphere, it can be measured in previously organic materials such as bone, wool, linen, clay (fired), parchment, wood, etc to reveal their age.

A catalogue compiled by Dominic Jellinek recorded E.T. Hall's collection during the early 1990's.<sup>199</sup> Jellinek described it as one of the finest collections of Chinese monochrome porcelains he has seen. The Collection comprised 455 wares from the 14<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The 'cases' were numbered and classified according to colour, (see Appendix III).

Of interest to this study are the Copper-Red and *Flambé* cases, see (figs. 109-110). Of the 27 pieces represented in the former, Hall's earliest piece was a 14<sup>th</sup> century copper-red dish with moulded decoration, a red back and unglazed base.<sup>200</sup> Describing the wares in chronological order, the next piece of interest was a plain red saucer dish with white rim marked Xuande (1426-1435) in underglaze blue and of the period.<sup>201</sup> The Imperial Kangxi bowls decorated with phoenix roundels in copper-red were interesting in that they had not been a part of any of the collections detailed in this chapter.<sup>202</sup> There were two medium copper-red bowls, a large copper-red dish and two copper-red stem cups with white interiors of the Yongzheng mark and period, the stem cups marked inside the foot.<sup>203</sup> The most recent specimen was a *peach-bloom* vase with a ribbed lower body described as 'Not old', possibly of 19<sup>th</sup> century manufacture.

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<sup>198</sup> *The Guardian*: 'E.T. Hall', Obituary, August 20<sup>th</sup> 2001.

<sup>199</sup> Interview with Dominic Jellinek (Ex- Bluett & Sons) at 70, Ledborough Lane, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.

<sup>200</sup> D: 19.6 cm. Described as having minor chips at the rim and evidence of crawling at the glaze centre. No. 5 in the Hall Collection, purchased for £150, 000.

<sup>201</sup> D: 18.3 cm. This piece was described as having 'no damage'. No. 18 in the Hall Collection, purchased for £40, 000.

<sup>202</sup> No. 17 in the Hall Collection; Small bowl decorated in copper-red with phoenix roundels; Kangxi mark and period; an accompanying note states: 'Sold at Sotheby's HK for HK\$ 235, 570 (Lot 524)'. No. 23 in the Hall Collection is the same type of ware marked Kangxi, but possibly not of the period. No. 12 (D: 14.8) in the Hall Collection, a medium bowl of the same type, Kangxi mark and period, purchased for £10, 000. An accompanying note states: 'Sold at Sotheby's HK for HK\$ 258,750 (Lot 525)'.  
<sup>203</sup> The large Yongzheng (1723-1735) copper-red dish was No. 20 in the Hall Collection.

The *Flambé* Case contained 29 pieces from the Kangxi (1662-1722) to the Daoguang (1821-1850) periods. Taking a chronological approach, there were 8 Kangxi pieces including 2 *peach-bloom* beehive waterpots, 2 *peach-bloom* seal-paste boxes and covers, 2 *peach-bloom* brushwashers and 2 tall *flambé* vases, (see Appendix III). No. 441 in the Hall Collection was a *flambé* glazed vase impressed with the Yongzheng seal mark and of the period.<sup>204</sup> There were also 3 Qianlong seal marked *flambé* vases of the period; a vase of 'bronze form', a large vase of 'Gu' shape purchased from 'Marchant' with the price label of £18, 500 still fixed to the base, and a *flambé* glazed vase from the J.M. Hu Collection.<sup>205</sup> Later pieces include an 'Ex. Marchant' bronze form *flambé* vase seal marked Daoguang (1821-1850) and of the period, and a 'modern copy' of a *peach-bloom* seal paste box.

<sup>204</sup> H: 25.7 cm, 'No damage'; purchased for £8, 000. Sold at Sotheby's HK for HK\$ 638, 250, Lot 536.

<sup>205</sup> The *flambé* vase of bronze form was recorded as 'Ex. Bluett & Sons, (bought in Japan by BM)'; purchased by Hall for £12, 000; Sold at Sotheby's HK for HK\$ 672, 750. The *flambé* vase from the J.M. Hu Collection was bought at Sotheby's New York by Bluett & Sons; after being in Hall's ownership it was sold at Sotheby's Hong Kong for HK\$ 718, 750, Lot 564.

**Fig. 109**

• **E.T. Hall: The Copper-Red Case**



Fig. 110

• E.T. Hall: The *Flambé* Case



From the descriptions above, it can be asserted that Professor E.T Hall's Collection was one of the best later 20<sup>th</sup> century British collections of Chinese monochrome porcelains. Moreover, it contained two most impressive cases of copper-red, outstanding in terms of the quality of the glazes, condition and authentication of the pieces and in the chronological range of specimens. It is significant that this later 20<sup>th</sup> century collection, now mostly dispersed, included a small proportion of 19<sup>th</sup> century wares not incorporated into the earlier and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century British collections of Chinese ceramics.

### **British Collectors of English Art and Studio Pottery**

From around the 1960's onwards, in parallel with the formation of Chinese ceramic collections enlightened pioneers began to acquire, research and classify the wares of the late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century British art potteries. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, studio-pottery of the Leach idiom had become an established taste. Together with his followers, Bernard Leach developed a taste for earthy stoneware, contributing to the neglect of the vibrant factory wares of the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. By the 1960's a coterie of dedicated scholar-collectors worked to redress the balance; Richard Dennis, Paul Atterbury and institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum did much to restore and resurrect the profiles of various art potteries and their pots. In 1959 the Victorian Society was established prior to a spate of highly influential exhibitions and their accompanying catalogues throughout the 1970's.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> The Victorian Society was led by high profile public figures such as John Betjeman and Nikolaus Pevsner. Although primarily interested in Victorian architecture, the Society also encouraged a favourable reappraisal of Victorian - Edwardian decorative arts.

In 1971 and 1975 Richard Dennis organised two ground breaking exhibitions on Doulton & Co., the latter held at the Fine Art Society in London. In 1979 the Victoria and Albert Museum exhibited 'The Doulton Story' accompanied by a well researched catalogue by Paul Atterbury which possibly led to the formation of the Royal Doulton Collectors Club in 1980.<sup>207</sup> In 1972 the Museum held an exhibition of Moorcroft Pottery to commemorate the birth of William Moorcroft, an exhibition which laid the foundations for future research in terms of its efforts to establish a chronology and group the wares into different types. In the following year, 1973, Dennis organised another Moorcroft exhibition, the catalogue for which became the standard reference text for collectors.<sup>208</sup> In 1975 the Victoria and Albert Museum held a major retrospective of Ruskin Pottery, a proportion of which subsequently toured the rest of Britain. Glenys Wild from the Birmingham City Art Gallery hosted 'Taylor Made' in 1976, an exhibition dedicated to the work of 'all' the Taylor family.<sup>209</sup> Exhibitions such as these did much to vindicate the belief of pioneer collectors in the quality of Late Victorian and Edwardian art wares. The selling exhibitions often gave new collectors the chance to build 'instant' collections; each exhibition serving to stimulate interest in a previously neglected field, which in turn tended to stimulate museums to mount displays and acquire collections of their own.

In general, there were few interested collectors of factory art wares in the 1960's.

However, this lack of interest meant an abundant supply for those willing to risk

<sup>207</sup> **The Royal Doulton Collectors' Club** is very much alive today, publishing a quarterly collectors' magazine which includes a range of articles covering every aspect of Doulton ware.

<sup>208</sup> Initially attentive to the promotion and exhibition of Doulton Stonewares and Moorcroft Pottery, **Richard Dennis** later highlighted the profile of Charles Vyse, Doulton Burslem Wares (including *flambé*), and Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian Lustreware. **Paul Atterbury** published his research on the Minton, Bullers Ltd. and Howson potteries. The V&A also held exhibitions of Minton ware, Poole Pottery and Keith Murray's products for Wedgwood.

<sup>209</sup> Many pieces and supporting documentary material from the 1975 V&A and 1976 B'ham M&AG Exhibitions of Ruskin Pottery were loaned from **Robert Ferneyhough's Collection**.

entering uncharted territory to create new markets. Today information is readily accessible in terms of publications or electronically. The fact that many wares have been snapped out of circulation to reside in public or private collections has also meant that substandard popular or 'ordinary' wares have flooded the market, creating new areas of collecting which focus on products of the mid and later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Albert E. Wade**

One collector willing to enter this new field of ceramic collecting was Albert E. Wade, (b. 1932). As a boy Wade had collected stamps and military souvenirs. Later, while working as a messenger for a City stockbroker, Wade discovered the largest antique store in London, and possibly in Europe at that time – Austin's of Peckham - while travelling to play cricket nearby. Having completed National Service, Wade returned to the City, eventually becoming a dealer in the London Stock Exchange, attending courses at Goldsmiths College to further his knowledge of the fine and decorative arts. From 1976-1984 Wade worked in Kuwait.

From the 1960's Wade collected British Art Pottery, relying on instinct and perception to select the rare and beautiful, but also to categorise and distinguish various patterns, particularly those of Moorcroft, his first area of collecting activity. Throughout the late 1960's and early 1970's, his interest expanded to Ruskin Pottery and Bernard Moore wares. In conjunction with a handful of other interested pioneers, Wade was instrumental in gaining an international reputation for British art pottery. Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century this interest in British art pottery also awakened contemporary manufacturers to the potential of stimulating sales through collectors' clubs and the production of limited edition 'ready made' collectables.

Wade collected the Macintyre ware, William and Walter Moorcroft pieces, and although he selected many rare items he was not detracted from his ambition to represent a complete picture of Moorcroft's manufacturing history. Within this collection, Wade had a large selection of low-temperature Moorcroft *flambé*. Pieces included a Cobridge *flambé* mask c. 1925; a Cobridge *flambé* tube-lined 'Fish' vase c. 1930; a Cobridge *flambé* 'Leaf and Blackberry vase' c. 1928-34, and a tube-lined Cobridge *flambé* 'Waratah' trumpet vase, c. 1928-35. More unusually, the collection comprised a set of three 'lustred' *flambé* items including a bowl, rectangular box with cover and an ovoid vase c. 1916-35.<sup>210</sup> Early examples of Macintyre Liberty Lustre - a 'ruby lustre Hazeldene vase c. 1910' and a 'ruby landscape vase c. 1907-10' were represented.<sup>211</sup> 'Wistaria', 'Poppy' and 'Iris' patterned *flambé* vases c. 1925-30 also featured in the collection.<sup>212</sup> Lot 186, a tall vase c. 1925, is a less common example of mounted Moorcroft *flambé*. The vase is covered with a low-temperature mottled red glaze with an embossed and engraved gilt metal cover and stand. As well as the impressed Moorcroft mark and blue signature, the vase had retained its original factory paper label.<sup>213</sup>

Ruskin pieces from the Wade Collection again reflect the rare and abundant. The pre-First World War Ruskin *flambé* examples date from 1903, (see Appendix III).<sup>214</sup> Post-

<sup>210</sup> Sotheby's Olympia, London: *The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part I- Three Artist Potters: Session I*, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002, pp. 74-75. Lots 146 £200-300 reserve price, 148 - £500-800 r.p., 149 - £700-900 r.p., 150 - £1,000 - 1,500 r.p., 147 - £100-150 r.p.

<sup>211</sup> Sotheby's Olympia, London: *The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part II, Session I*, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2002, p. 40, Lots 78 - £600-800 reserve price and Lot 80 - £600-800 r.p.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p. 78: Lot 182 'Wistaria' two-handled vase c. 1928 - r.p. of £1,000-1,500; Lot 183 'Poppy' vase, c. 1925 with 'broad crazing and some staining' - r.p. of £400-600; Lot 184 'Iris' vase, c. 1930 - r.p. £300-500.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p. 79: Lot 186 - Overall height: 80 cm / 31.5 ins. Height excluding cover & stand: 63.5cm / 25 ins., r.p. - £1,000- 1,500.

<sup>214</sup> Sotheby's Olympia, London: *The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part I: Session II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002. Lots 250-255 (c. 1905-1920), pp. 124-125. Lots 262-267 (c. 1903-1915), pp. 128-129. Lots 282-287(c. 1905-post 1915), pp. 136-137. Reserve estimates ranged from £400- 3,000. All the ware carried impressed Ruskin marks, often with the date. Lot 283 is impressed with the WHT monogram.

war Ruskin high-fired *flambé* were also numerous in Wade's Collection. Lots 232-236 furnish impressive examples ranging from c. 1920's-1927.<sup>215</sup> Lots 332 and 333 were from the Ferneyhough Collection, probably acquired by Wade from the Sotheby's sale of *The Adam Ferneyhough Collection of Ruskin Pottery* in April, 1993. Lot 332 comprised a '*glazed cup and sauced, c. 1925, glazed in mottled deep reds, blues and lavender on a grey ground*'; lot 333 catalogued as '*Three small high-fired bowls, 1920's... glazed in red, purple, green and ivory... one rim chipped*'.<sup>216</sup> Other examples of Ruskin's high-fired Post-war *Flambé* were illustrated in 'Session II' of the Wade sale, (see Appendix III).

Providing a contrast to Ruskin high-fired ceramics, Wade collected the low-temperature *flambé* and crystalline wares of Bernard Moore dating from c.1905-1915. A range of examples are represented among Lots 151-159, 169-174, 194-195.<sup>217</sup> Of particular interest among the gilt and painted *flambé* vases are the models of a cockerel '*standing before a jardinière*' with a '*Mintons date code for 1910*', and a '*crouching lion dog, dated 1902*', both covered in a '*mottled red glaze*', (see Appendix III).<sup>218</sup>

Wade's collection of Bernard Moore incorporated many and various *flambé* and crystalline wares dating between c. 1905-1915. Among the most interesting was Lot 190, a large jardinière painted by Reginald Robert Tomlinson with '*three flying fish and a dragon among rolling waves, in silver/ruby lustre against a deep inky blue*

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., pp. 158-159.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p. 158. Lot 332 – No. 140 in the Ferneyhough Collection, also exhibited in the 1976 'Taylor Made' exh. at B'ham M&AG. Reserve price of £200-300. Lot 333 – Nos. 285 and 287 in the Ferneyhough Collection, r.p. of £400-600.

<sup>217</sup> Sotheby's Olympia, London: *The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part 1, Session II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002; pp. 84-87; 90-91; 100-101.

ground, the interior of red and smoky tones painted with a single central fish... 29 cm high... [estimated at] £1,000-1,500'.<sup>219</sup> Also, a large jardinière made as a reproduction of one consumed by fire at the Brussels Exhibition in 1910, painted by Reginald Robert Tomlinson with his design of 'three bottle kilns, flanked by figures of Britannia, the reverse with a galleon... 33 cm high... [estimated at] £4,000-6,000'.<sup>220</sup> Appendix III contains other examples.

In all, the Wade Collection comprised forty-four pieces of Bernard Moore ware, Lots 151-195. Taken as a whole, Wade's ceramic Collection contained many examples of *flambé* from Moorcroft, Ruskin and Bernard Moore, a selection of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century potters and potteries who strove to reproduce Chinese glaze effects of the 17<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> century. In turn, the potters' dedication to production transferred to later 20<sup>th</sup> century collectors in their desire to accrue examples that demonstrated the range of earlier chemical experimentation. This was true of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century collection of Robert Ferneyhough (d. 1977)<sup>221</sup> and the Harriman Judd Collection of British Art Pottery.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>218</sup> Ibid; pp. 100-101; Lots 194 - cockerel, 195 - crouching dog.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p. 97, Lot 190.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 99; Lot 193, dated 1911.

<sup>221</sup> **Bennett, Ian:** *Ruskin Pottery - The Work of William Howson Taylor (1876-1935)*, Catalogue to accompany the Exhibition of Ruskin Pottery at Haslam and Whiteway, Church St., London, April 13<sup>th</sup> - May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1981. Antique dealer and restorer from Henley-in-Arden, Robert Ferneyhough (d. 1977), was entrusted by William Howson-Taylor to care for his 'documentary' collection. This included pieces Taylor did not want to sell, either because they were of exceptional quality or because he feared he would be unable to reproduce the specific effects of particular pieces - it was Taylor's self-selected collection of what he considered to be his masterpieces. The catalogue written to accompany the selling exhibition at Haslam and Whiteway in 1981 described two hundred pieces of Ruskin Pottery from the Robert Ferneyhough Collection, among which were a large selection of high-temperature transmutation wares. Robert Ferneyhough's younger son retained a portion of this outstanding Collection after his father's death, the remainder of which came to auction in 1993. (*Sotheby's London: The Adam Ferneyhough Collection of Ruskin Pottery*, Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> 1993. It was from this sale that Albert Wade purchased several superlative examples).

<sup>222</sup> **Sotheby's New York:** *The Harriman Judd Collection of British Art Pottery*, Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2001. The formidable American partnership Allen Harriman and Edward Judd amassed one of the most comprehensive later 20<sup>th</sup> century collections of British Art Pottery which incorporated many examples of British *flambé* including pieces from Doulton, Moore, Moorcroft and Ruskin Pottery.

Later 20<sup>th</sup> century collections of British Art Pottery reflected an era when developments in science and technology partly determined the course of artistic progress from the Industrial Revolution onwards. A burgeoning middle-class who took particular interest in the arts as a means of social regeneration and education also heavily influenced British Art Pottery from around the 1860's into the later 1930's.

### Collecting Clubs

Throughout the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly from the 1980's onwards, manufacturers have realised the potential of collecting clubs to *'attract a whole new type of customer.'*<sup>223</sup> A Moorcroft publicity leaflet states: *'Made by hand in England for Collectors around the World'*, and is keen to stress that *'The method of production originated by William Moorcroft is almost exactly the same today.'* Such statements serve to enhance the validity of contemporary collections. We are informed that *'Old pieces now fetch substantial sums in the major salesrooms of the world while some pieces sold less than five years ago have more than doubled in value.'* Reiterating that *'Every piece of Moorcroft is individual and made entirely by hand, just as it has always been for more than a century'*, and that *'Each year the Moorcroft Design Studio offers to collectors a selection of special limited editions'*, may appeal to prospective collectors seeking affordable original designs.<sup>224</sup>

For an annual membership fee, the Moorcroft Collectors' Club entitles their international membership to free *Newsletter Magazines*; copies of Moorcroft Pottery

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<sup>223</sup> **Elks, David:** 'John [Moorcroft] bequeaths a family legacy', *The Sentinel on Sunday*, Staffordshire, April 6<sup>th</sup> 2003, p. 26.

<sup>224</sup> **Moorcroft** publicity leaflet: *Made by hand in England for Collectors around the World*, n/d.

catalogues with information of *'new limited editions and discontinued designs.'* Free factory tours, a ten per cent discount at the factory shop, advance notice of Moorcroft promotions and the chance to purchase specially designed pottery for the Collectors' Club are listed as other perks. Members are also informed of advance appearances of Moorcroft family members or designers, and *'of the special vases only available at these events.'* They can *'Apply to attend'* an annual *'Open Weekend'* at the Cobridge factory for *'Members only. Events include lectures by guest speakers, an auction of rare and unusual pieces...'* Overall, the *'Value received more than outweighs the modest cost of the Club Membership'*.<sup>225</sup>

Founded in 1980, the Royal Doulton Collectors' Club, promises a similar range of benefits including a Members' magazine issued quarterly with *'news and special features on Royal Doulton products past, present and future, ensuring you'll be one of the first to know about all that is going on...'* In addition, a *'historical enquiry service'* has been set up to provide members with *'free access'* to information on their Royal Doulton wares as well as free admission to the Visitor Centre and factory tours. Members are also privy to a range of *'Exclusive offers'*, which enable them to buy *'special Royal Doulton collectables... unique to Club members (two of each item per member), only available for a strictly limited period...'*<sup>226</sup> Members are invited to attend special events. On enrolment at a 'Royal Doulton Collectors Club Centre', new members receive a *'Membership Pack including [a] complimentary gift... a certificate of membership and a membership card...'*<sup>227</sup> The certificate and card lend a sense of official verification to collectors of contemporary products. Manufacturers' collecting

<sup>225</sup> *Moorcroft Collectors' Club* - leaflet with integral application form, n/d. The Moorcroft Collectors' Club was founded in 1987. From the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002, the annual joining fee was £20.

<sup>226</sup> *The Royal Doulton Company International Collectors' Club* - leaflet with integral application form, n/d. Annual Membership for 2003 was 'only' £30.

clubs perform the same function as other, high-culture organisations such as The Oriental Ceramic Society, namely that they provide an environment of support, encouragement and information exchange. This is borne out in the statement of the Honorary President, Michael Doulton: '*As a member of the Royal Doulton International Collectors Club you will join a select group of fellow enthusiasts, spread across the globe.*'<sup>228</sup> The international scope of both the Moorcroft and Royal Doulton Clubs emphasise the increasingly global nature of the art market and collecting interests made possible in part through cheaper travel and the internet.

### **Conclusion**

Collecting activities have been subject to transition, particularly during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The lack of specimens in circulation combined with rising prices have put Late Ming and Qing Chinese copper-red and *flambé* wares out of the reach of all but extremely wealthy private collectors, and even beyond the resources of national institutions. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even when such wares were more plentiful and affordable, there were collectors of British interpretations of the Chinese porcelains. Collectors of these wares were probably among the affluent middle classes, not quite able to stretch to afford the Chinese 'versions' - perhaps they were not familiar with Chinese porcelains or actually preferred the more decorative anglicised *flambé*.

By the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, the notion of what was *collectable* had been challenged. The traditional definition of an 'antique' – an object of at least a hundred years old – no

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., the membership card carries a 'Membership Number'.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. Michael Doulton is the great-great-great grandson of John Doulton - founder of Doulton & Co., 1815.

longer stood as the benchmark of collecting. Contemporary material including that purchased from normal retail outlets became collectable. This had been the case since before the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with regard to the Doulton and Moorcroft *flambé*, etc., sold at high-street stores such as Liberty's of London. Often, contemporary commercial ceramics of this kind are purchased as an investment.

In addition, the growth and range of 'antique' shops has greatly increased since the 1960's, many outlets holding the more recently defined 'collectable' objects. Participation and attendance at car-boot sales has become a national pastime. Mail order catalogues advertising reproduction or contemporary 'limited editions' have proliferated. Collectors' fairs, markets and specific interest clubs have similarly contributed to one of the most significant phenomena of contemporary culture.

And, in terms of the genuine article, the BBC Antiques Roadshow, *Miller's Guides* and publications such as the *Antiques Trade Gazette* as well as a plethora of glossy magazines dedicated to collecting - chiefly aimed at the acquisition of sufficient knowledge to avoid being duped - have induced a form of collecting mania.

Extending the collecting boundaries is a way of creating meaning, or at least redefining certain private and corporate values associated with particular objects. Moreover, the more people engaged in collecting process, the more diverse the range of meanings engendered by certain objects or exhibitions. In certain instances, traditional meanings are being replaced by new sets of values. New collecting habits and the increasing range of objects collected are gradually gaining recognition in museum culture. Collecting contemporary objects for future posterity is particularly

relevant in the areas of studio and art pottery, which although sold for use and for its decorative appeal, in many instances is primarily manufactured to be collected; a type of collecting which occurs outside the jurisdiction of museum culture.

Contemporary collecting demonstrates a form of eclectic freedom as previous hierarchical standards and ideas of what constitute items worthy of collecting are gradually being reconstructed, thereby reducing the perceived distance between high and low culture. This democratisation of collecting could possibly parallel the collapse in traditional values related to the family and established institutions, notably a post-modern willingness to question authority and accepted ideas, giving rise to a less deferential society.

Many national museums emerged in tandem with the development of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century free-market economy when philanthropic and intellectual values coincided. Free-trade, the first step towards contemporary globalisation, persisted throughout Empire into an age where the nation state has dissipated in economic power and tends to form policy to conform to the demands of multinational corporations. As local manufacture has been transferred overseas, new service and cultural industries have become the source of economic strength. Museums and galleries have shifted from being a consequence of economic growth to its derivation.

In a sense, the popularisation of collecting is simply a consequence of the growth of consumer durables throughout the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since c. 1950's, subsequent decades of capitalist enterprise have combined with cheap travel to multiply the diverse range of artefacts available. Increased disposable income and the lower prices

of many mass-produced consumer goods, particularly those manufactured abroad, may have meant that more people can afford a greater number of 'things'. However, volume production has also worked to fuel a desire for antique and contemporary unique, hand crafted objects perceived to embody alternative sets of traditional values. This craving for stability and identity has given birth to a healthy nostalgia market, an important factor within an ageing society.

It appears that the desire to accumulate is a persistent trait of human nature, irrespective of contemporary Western material wealth. It seems that individuals have a need to assert their identity through material possessions as well as using them to make sense of their environment to create and establish order.

The price of Ming and Qing copper-red and *flambé* porcelains may well be beyond the average and even the wealthy private collector, but the desire to collect ceramics decorated with this glaze has found expression in a range of 'antique' reproduction and contemporary British and Chinese alternatives.

## Conclusion

This study has analysed the technical and stylistic interpretations of the Imperial Chinese copper-red and later *flambé* glazes in Britain. It has also considered taste formation in relation to exhibitions, private and public collections. Finally it has explored the popularisation of collecting habits and the eclectic, global character of much contemporary design.

British, or particularly English *flambé*, was altered chemically and stylistically to conform to commercial modes of manufacture and British 'taste'. This taste, as we have seen, tended to be more decorative and required embellished surfaces -- in many instances far removed from the plain glazed Chinese copper-red wares. For instance, the numerous examples of Bernard Moore gilt and over-glazed enamelled low-temperature *flambé* and Doulton's use of various pictorial and abstract designs. Other factories did not consider it commercially worthwhile to pursue the technically precarious procedures involved in the manufacture of *flambé* and copper-red glazes, among which were Wedgwood and Bullers Ltd. Firms such as Wedgwood and Pilkington, although they conducted a range of *flambé* experiments, decided to concentrate on the production of art Lustrewares. It was predominantly through the efforts of William Howson-Taylor, Bernard Moore and later Derek Emms that genuine high-fired *flambé* or transmutation and copper-red glazes entered British ceramics.

The distinction between 'authentic' high and low-fired *flambé*, the nature of the ceramic body and style of decoration -- whether or not it conforms to what is generally regarded as 'traditional' Chinese domestic taste -- has been an underlying theme of the

study. It is possible to assume that objects made in specific cultures within specific periods absorb elements of that era. Taking Chinese copper-red wares as a model, the early Ming wares were different in shape, glaze colour and texture to those produced later in the dynasty. The engraved and moulded decoration gave way to plain glazed copper-red wares. There followed a period when the knowledge to produce the copper-red glaze was lost or abandoned until it was re-interpreted during the Qing dynasty; firstly with '*sacrificial red*' glazes which were a highly successful attempt to replicate the *fresh red* Ming glazes, but subsequently evolving into several different glaze types. Thus, high-fired transmutation or *Yao pien* glazes were developed throughout the Qing dynasty as well as the much revered *sang-de-boeuf* and reduced copper *peach-bloom* glaze. Gradually, the original protected Imperial status of copper-red wares appeared to diminish as the glaze became produced in greater quantities, but not necessarily greater quality within in China. The heavy lead content in later *jun reds* and transmutation glazes made them increasingly glassy with a tendency for the glaze to run off the body during firing and coagulate around and over the foot, hence many later wares were ground down at the foot. Stylistically, Qing shapes differed from earlier Ming copper-red glazed wares as they became heavier and larger, although some of the shapes remained constant. It is reasonable to suggest that wares or object types cannot remain static even within their culture of origin. This is evident in the similar process of stylistic evolution of the copper-red and *flambé* glaze within Britain.

As far as possible, this study has charted the various permutations of the use of the copper-red glaze which led to stylistic change in Britain. The interest in these wares appeared to have arrived in Britain from France as part of the international cultural

exchanges that were engendered through exhibitions, trade, Empire and easier travel, particularly the development and extension of railway networks both within Britain, across Continental Europe and in the Far East. Adaptation is one consequence of cultural exchange and, although this thesis centres on the copper-red glaze, similar developments could have been traced with other items in different media; embroidered bedspreads, woven rugs, the futon, etc. 'Authenticity' or the perceived notion of cultural purity is therefore as open to interpretation as the wares themselves. British versions of the Chinese copper-red and *flambé* glazes display an eclectic mix of influences, but this very fact gives them a homogeneous British character reflecting the age of mass-production in which they were conceived. However, this is not to suggest that certain motifs or features of the ware were not thought of as distinctly 'Oriental', a judgement often founded on romantic misconceptions. British ideas of what the Far East represented - or 'Orientalism' -- were heavily influenced through political propaganda and popular if inaccurate press reports, illustrations and export design.

Trends in collecting and the formation of diverse collecting clubs have facilitated the adaptation and assimilation of Chinese copper-red glazed ceramics into British 'high' and 'low' artistic culture. British reinterpretations have shifted popular versus elitist notions of the 'collectable'. Indeed, the boundaries between what constitutes high and low artistic culture are in a state of constant flux. The various British interpretations of the Chinese copper-red and *flambé* glazes have helped erode this cultural distinction.

This study has outlined individuals who have influenced the assimilation of Chinese art and culture in Britain, often operating within larger groups. 'Taste' or consensus of the acceptable, was shaped by a number of prominent self-publicists who often worked to change mass-opinion of what constituted 'good' taste. Some were scholarly pioneers who shifted taste or engineered acceptance of Chinese art through the publication of their research, among them Stephen Wootten Bushell, Robert Lockhart Hobson of the British Museum, George Fumorfopoulos, Sir Percival David and others. British manufacturers such as Doultou, Bernard Moore and William Howson-Taylor interpreted Chinese wares for commercial purposes also played a part in introducing them to a wider public spectrum. And then came those who worked to stimulate public taste in the direction of their personal aesthetic and philosophical principles, notably Bernard Leach and Roger Fry.

Many of these individuals were members of larger societies or movements – the Aesthetic Movement, Arts and Crafts Movement, etc. - and were keen to divert taste or artistic appreciation from its contemporary course. Some of them were frequently derogatory about mass-production and culture such as Roger Fry, the leading figure of the Bloomsbury community, a group operating within the broader context of early English Modernism, and Bernard Leach, the force behind St. Ives Pottery and the growth of the British studio-pottery movement. Some of the individuals operating within larger groups such as the Oriental Ceramic Society were specifically responsible for a respectful re-evaluation of Chinese cultural heritage in Britain. Contemporary British culture has continued to support and encourage the production of *chinoiserie* - the adaptation of traditional Chinese design elements to suit popular

taste. As discussed in Chapters 5-7, a number of factors have influenced the current acceptance and influence of reinterpreted Chinese design.

The taste for Chinese products, including those of Western manufacture inspired by Chinese artistic culture, re-emerged in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century as cheaper, faster travel facilitated the cross-cultural exchange of ideas. From the 1950's developments in transport, particularly air travel, has meant East and West have come closer together. The increased pace of travel has melded aspects of various cultures. However, there is the possibility of returning to the imperial stance of the Occident versus the Orient as China, Japan, Tibet, Vietnam, Burma, India and Africa are fused to represent a mystical exoticism commonly regarded to be lost in the materialistic West. However, the challenge to retain an identity in the homogenising 21<sup>st</sup> century affects all nations, including Britain and Europe.

The advent and development of new technologies has also meant that influence occurs in each direction; East to West and West to East, exposing national tastes to global consumers. Information and images now travel through internet connections and the television. Films, books, digitised museum collections and e-catalogues provide access to artefacts thousands of miles apart, which would otherwise take years to see. However, imagery viewed in this way can represent the bias of the archivist or recorder, especially in books. There is a tendency to exaggerate certain cultural characteristics while omitting others.

The East-West, West-East directions of influence can clearly be seen within China itself, especially over the last decade. Recent architectural developments in Shanghai

such as the 420m *Jingmao tower* represent the hybrid nature of contemporary design, described as:

*"the fourth –tallest building in the world... designed in a style that quotes traditional Chinese pagoda design while echoing the art deco of Manhattan's most beautiful skyscrapers... emblematic of the mingling of western and eastern creative forces..."*<sup>1</sup>

The tower was officially opened and blessed by a 'Feng Shui grandmaster' in 1999.

But this is not the first instance of cross-cultural fertilisation. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the British and French built many houses in Shanghai modelled on the Chinese principal of rooms around a central courtyard, 'but squashed together in British-style terraces'. These were known as *longtangs*.<sup>2</sup> The diverse cultural impact on modern architectural design in China has not been received with universal enthusiasm as residents feel character, unity, and identity is being sacrificed at the expense of modernity and expansion. In a recent paper given at the Shanghai Design Biennale, Thomas Chow outlined 'Five Ways to Ruin a City', lamenting the...

*"rapid pace of wholesale importation of foreign imagery (which) has resulted in a scary, perverse, and at times ridiculous trend of turning modern cities into Disneyland... The urban landscape is being littered with wholesale copies and replications of foreign styles- a Dutch style villa complex in Pudong... a Spanish-style home, English-style gardens, the list goes on."*<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the salient characteristic of the contemporary popular taste for an 'Eastern' look is the absence of discrimination between objects from different cultures, resulting in a stylistic medley not far removed from that of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A popular approach resists the adoption of cultural values, philosophies and attitudes

<sup>1</sup> Jeffries, Stuart: 'Where Blade Runner meets Las Vegas', *The Guardian*, G2 in China – Architecture, 08:11:04, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

that give rise to particular modes of display and styles of decoration, preferring to adapt them to accommodate an established lifestyle, hence the stylistic borrowing. This East-West melee is manifest in the contemporary fascination with interior design – designing a ‘look’ which mirrors or aspires to a way of life or *lifestyle*. Contemporary emphasis is clearly one of superficial interpretation in which the ‘look’ has become the overriding concern:

*“Shelves can be chosen to complement or contrast with a collection – a set of Provençal baker’s shelves or a Regency bookcase would be as good a display case for a collection of Chinese or Thai celadon ware as a contemporary Japanese-designed set of shelves.”<sup>4</sup>*

Alternatively, *“Perhaps your room is a symphony of cream and white... A dramatic splash of red, perhaps in a neat pile of Chinese lacquered boxes in ascending sizes, will give a corner impact. Or you may have a simple, blank wall which would be the perfect canvas for the sculptural outline of a distinctive silhouette – a glossily serene Buddha, a curvaceous terracotta pot or a bronze sculpture will add interest and elegance.”<sup>5</sup>*

In this context, the objects have lost intrinsic value, performing much the same escapist function as 18<sup>th</sup> century and later *chinoiserie* through their evocation of Far-Eastern exoticism. At intervals since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century Western Europeans have romanticised and represented China as an idyll. Interestingly, these romantic escapist tendencies have been echoed in 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. James Hilton’s *‘Lost Horizon’* (1933) furnished such an example, telling the story of four people accidentally finding an earthly Paradise – a hidden valley known as *Shangri-La* – the inhabitants of which personified an eastern philosophical approach to life. To some extent, three of the visitors who found themselves in the *‘Valley of the Blue Moon’* typified the driven

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Hoppen, Kelly: *‘East Meets West – Global Design for Contemporary Interiors’*, London, Conran Octopus, 1997, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

pragmatism associated with western ideology. The lead protagonist 'Conway', is portrayed as a man searching for meaning, a person willing and able to find solace in eastern philosophies after enduring the horrors of trench warfare in the 1914-18 War. He was also recoiling from the demands of an increasingly bureaucratic and mechanistic society which appeared to be heading for future conflict. Hilton drew this character as a man who recognised harmony and beauty which the East, particularly Chinese culture, offered:

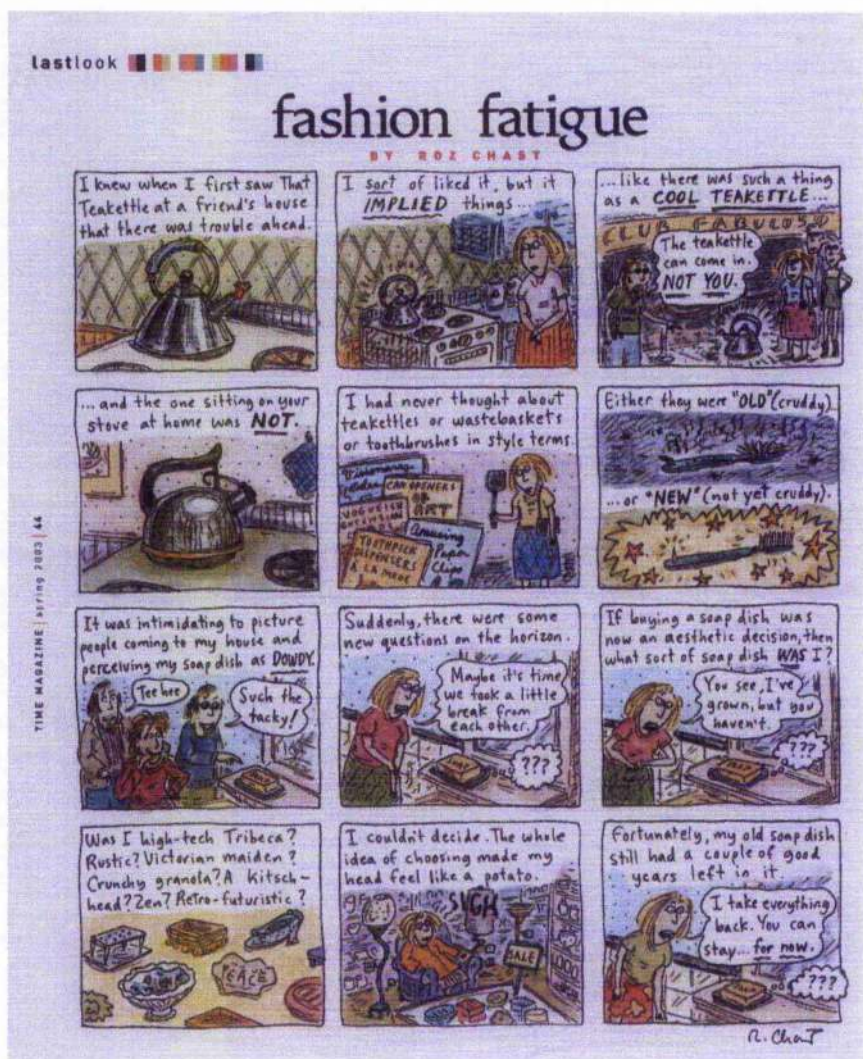
*"It was not so much any individual thing that attracted him as the gradual revelation of elegance, of modest and impeccable taste, of harmony so fragrant that it seemed to gratify the eye without arresting it... A world of incomparable refinements still lingered tremulously in porcelain and varnish... There was no boastfulness, no striving after effect..."*

*Conway did not collect; he lacked both money and the acquisitive instinct. His liking for Chinese art was an affair of the mind; in a world of increasing noise and hugeness, he turned in private to gentle, precise, and miniature things."*<sup>6</sup>

The current obsession with aesthetics is not lost on cartoonists who have satirised the way 'looks' have become crucial for the style-conscious. The taste for specific art objects and even utilitarian items imply certain values and occasionally belief-systems which comprise a lifestyle. The cartoon strip below (fig. 111) depicts the status attached to even mundane items such as toothbrushes and kettles, and summarises general attitudes towards design and 'taste' in affluent sectors of 21<sup>st</sup> century society.<sup>7</sup>

Fig. 111

- Chast, Roz: 'Fashion Fatigue', *Time Magazine – Style and Design Supplement*; Spring 2003, p. 44.



<sup>6</sup> Hilton, James: 'Lost Horizon', New York, Pocket Books - Simon & Schuster, 1933, pp. 93-94.

<sup>7</sup> Chast, Roz: 'Fashion Fatigue', *Time Magazine – Style and Design Supplement*; Spring 2003, p. 44.

As China's manufacturing sector expands posing a threat to American economic global dominance, we can only speculate about China's impact on world taste.<sup>8</sup> An article in *The Guardian* questioned if 'China has found a new third way, neither the Soviet-style, totalitarian planned economy, nor western-style democracy and a free market?' It described the potentially far-reaching effect China could have on world culture and trade:

*"It is no longer an obscure question about a far-off country. What happens in China now affects us all. The signs are everywhere, whether it is the 32,000 Chinese students studying at British colleges and universities...; the likelihood that next year China will overtake the UK as the world's fourth largest economy, and in less than a generation overtake the US as the world's largest; the 'Made in China' stickers on something you are wearing or using or have within reach..."*<sup>9</sup>

In 2003 Britain reportedly imported goods to the value of £8.3 billion, surpassing exports from Japan. As *The Guardian* suggests, Chinese films are beginning to infiltrate and challenge Hollywood's supremacy; for instance, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2001) and *House of the Flying Daggers* (2005). In the 2004 Olympics China was not far behind America in the 'medals table', and perhaps most controversial is the rate at which China is rapidly consuming raw materials such as coal and oil – a factor which has inflated global prices for these commodities. A considerable proportion of recycled waste generated in Britain – glass, plastic, paper, card, metal (particularly aluminium) and e-waste – is shipped to China to be salvaged and reconstituted.

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<sup>8</sup> Meek, James: 'One Week in the life of the Chinese miracle', *The Guardian* – G2 'Portrait of the new China. A week-long special report'. 08:11:04, pp. 2-4. This article comments on China's rapid industrial growth and its social as well as economic impact.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-3.

Global trade has certainly affected taste throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. US branding strategies have made inroads into many cultures and consequently impacted taste partly through a re-definition of cultural values. Trade links have recently been established between the 'Potteries' in North Staffordshire and the ceramic manufacturing equivalent in China – Jingdezhen. One reason for this was to address issues relating to plagiarism as some Chinese factories have purportedly been replicating rather than re-interpreting the designs of Staffordshire products.<sup>10</sup> Michael Boyle, a senior director of Waterford Wedgwood stated that:

*"...copying was a problem for all companies in China, including even Chinese manufacturers, although the authorities were beginning to 'look seriously' at the issue. He confirmed Wedgwood did not display any Barlaston-produced bone china on its stand at a pottery fair in the city of Jingdezhen, the opening of which ... was attended by the Potteries' delegation, partly to highlight the issue of copying. Mr Boyle said: 'I've spoken to many other companies, and they are at the point where they don't put their product out at fairs either because of copying... It takes away some of the importance of coming up with some of the designs.'"*<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the outcome of the trading agreements, it appears that events have turned full circle as China once more regains her reputation and status as a world centre of ceramic manufacture. Manufacturers in Jingdezhen are currently trying to cast off their reputation of being *'makers of high-volume, low-quality wares'*. It is an aim which coincides with China's proposed entry into the World Trade Organisation which *'could pose a new threat to firms in the [Staffordshire] Potteries who rely on their brands to sell wares'*. China's ambitions to recast itself as a ceramic manufacturer of quality rather than quantity has been treated with scepticism by British business leaders, partly because of China's *'cheap labour rates'*. The

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<sup>10</sup> Houghton, Steven (business editor): 'Chinese Turn A Blind Eye to Pottery Fakes – Officials accused of treating counterfeiting as a joke', *The Sentinel* (Staffordshire), Monday October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004, front page headline.

following quote from the Chief Executive of the British Ceramic Confederation illustrates the importance of branding on global manufacture, acceptance and therefore taste:

*"If you look at the best of the unbranded ware produced worldwide, some of it is remarkably good. But without the brand, you don't get the value. How you get the brand and value is not as easy as it looks. If China had its own brands, everybody would still know they were made in China. What price are they going to pay for them?"<sup>12</sup>*

Among other factors, industrialisation and the advent of new materials has created a profusion of material goods to fit into ever decreasing spaces. Many British homes are now designed with smaller proportions than their bourgeois Victorian counterparts. Lower ceiling heights are a classic illustration of the need to conserve energy and space. In fact, so overwhelming is the abundance of material possessions that a movement towards less cluttered living, or minimalism, has been in force during the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly since the 1990's. There is a shift towards fewer unique, often handcrafted items among some consumers. The contemporary taste for pared down forms, including those of Chinese origin and inspiration, has been a conscious or maybe sub-conscious reaction against the mass-production of indifferent – both in terms of quality and design - consumer goods. Moreover, ecological and ethical concerns have of late played an important role in shaping taste, particularly the shift away from disposable culture. Ethical considerations have raised consumer questions regarding product origin and methods of manufacture. The taste for hand crafted ceramics of various origins, including those 'Made in Britain', is acquiring virtuosity among those keen to display their conscience.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Houghton, Steven (business editor): 'Far East firms turn attention to quality ware – Chinese take a brand new look at their future', *The Sentinel* (Staffordshire), Wednesday October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004, p. 7.

The recent interest in 'Eastern' culture has been popularised through theories such as *feng-shui*, an exercise in ordering the living environment to energise and harmonise the self while encouraging prosperity and longevity.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the adoption of ordered symmetry, use of natural materials and respect for craftsmanship has been influenced through various interpretations of Buddhist theology throughout East and West as nation states become increasingly multi-cultural. Buddhism in particular recognises spirituality in the way art and utilitarian objects are made and arranged.<sup>14</sup> In fact, certain products from the 'East' – India, China, and Japan, etc., have become associated with simple handmade designs using 'pure' materials. In this context, Eastern artistic ideals can be compared to those of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Arts and Crafts Movement. Contemporary taste reflects the more cosmopolitan aspects of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century while retaining an appreciation for traditional values of skilled craftsmanship, the quality of materials, well-proportioned form and symbolic decorative motifs. However, irrespective of the more recent interest in Buddhist, Taoist and other Eastern philosophies, it seems that the earlier Western approach to reinterpretation - chiefly through the distortion of traditional significance and meaning- remains characteristic of 21<sup>st</sup> century attitudes towards the design of other cultures.

The prevailing contemporary East-West eclecticism combines aesthetic values and 'tastes' from across the world using centuries of source material. It embraces the unique and multiple, the antique and modern, the utilitarian, luxurious and ritual objects. It could be argued that single, specific aesthetic tastes belonging to nation states have never existed. Instead, taste can be said to represent regional, religious and

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<sup>13</sup> Hale, Gill: *'Feng Shui – a complete guide to harmonious modern living'*, London, Hermes House, 2003, pp.4-9.

sub-cultural groups within a society. Riegl's assertion that there is no such thing as 'absolute' artistic values resonates in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century globalisation, clearly manifest in the retail outlets and catalogues promoting styles from many periods and cultures encouraging consumers to mix and match.<sup>15</sup> *Past Times* publish a mail order catalogue in which the contemporary stylistic fluidity – the element of choice – is apparent in the categorisation of its products: 'Art Nouveau', 'Historic Britain', 'Distant Lands', '18<sup>th</sup> Century', 'Victorian', '20<sup>th</sup> Century', etc. Under 'Distant Lands', the copy states: 'For centuries, the British have filled their homes with exotic goods from far-off places'.<sup>16</sup>

Sub-divided according to country of stylistic inspiration, the catalogue promotes 'Colonial Indian' merchandise, among which is a 'Mughal Elephant' and 'Ganesha Statue', the latter featured alongside a paragraph concerning its original significance by television presenter Tony Robinson. In this way, a taste for Eastern inspired objects is created through their associations with celebrity figures, a trend that existed previously through Royal and noble patronage, but which appears to be expanding in parallel with media communications of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the same catalogue, 'Eastern Lands' exhibits a comparable range of decorative artefacts, soft furnishings and furniture. This section is more definitely 'Oriental' in character, a fusion of Japanese and Chinese inspiration. Objects include 'miniature

<sup>14</sup> Gillet, Roy: *Zen For Modern Living*, London, Caxton Editions, 2001, pp. 6-21, 56-63.

<sup>15</sup> Iversen, Margaret: *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory*, London, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1993, p. 7. Riegl formed the theory that there is no such concept as 'absolute' art-value at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was also an early advocate of broadening the range of objects studied by art historians to include the applied arts and ornament alongside fine art and sculpture. Riegl's ideas coincided with Britain's Arts and Crafts Movement and the Secession in Vienna which fostered a climate favourably disposed towards serious treatment of the crafts and design.

<sup>16</sup> *Past Times*, Autumn Catalogue, 2004, p.26.

*cloisonné vases*, *'Oriental Dancer Statues... made to represent the dancers who entertained the Chinese emperor at the Imperial Court in Beijing*', a *'Chinese Lacquer Jewellery Casket*', *'Pagoda Curio Cabinet*', and *'Oriental Side Table*', all with more than a hint of British kitsch.<sup>17</sup> The *'Foo Dogs*' in marble polyresin, a *'Laughing Buddha... Known in China as Mi Lo Foh... [who] changes all the problems of the world with happiness*', and ceramic statue of the *"Happy Buddha... believed to bring prosperity and good fortune"*, make popular gifts.<sup>18</sup> And, there is a sense that those who buy them have some concern for their meaning beyond trinket value, especially if they are gifts for others. Perhaps in this small way, the original significance has established permanence.

*Past Times* noted the *'18<sup>th</sup> Century*' as a period when, *'In matters of taste and style, Europe looked to the French Court at Versailles and great patrons such as Louis XIV, Madame de Pompadour and Queen Marie-Antoinette*'.<sup>19</sup> William Chambers' (1728-1808) quote emblazoned across the page: *'... extravagant fancies that daily appear under the name of Chinese*', could equally be used to describe *Past Times* contemporary merchandise where associations with the past are firmly implanted. The assortment includes a *'Cherry Blossom Scarf*', *'Turandot Dressing Gown*', and a *'Louis XV (1715-1774) Carved Bed*', as well as hand-painted polyresin *'Chinoiserie Bird Plaques... inspired by Chinese silks and the work of Jean-Baptiste Pillement (1728-1808), one of the pioneers of Chinoiserie*'.<sup>20</sup> *Past Times* and other retailers trading in nostalgic paraphernalia currently represent a curious blend of historical accuracy with a measure of stylistic license, a combination manufactured to induce

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 30-31.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 32. Hence *Past Times* merchandise is inspired by European rather than Chinese designers.

the consumption of contemporary British versions of popularly perceived 'authentic' Chinese merchandise. From the descriptions given above, it can be seen that taste can be shaped through the forces of marketing, misconception and nostalgic sentimentality.

Gerald Reitlinger remarked on the growing trend of promotion of art through marketing and publications in the 1960's. The profusion of literature made available during the 20<sup>th</sup> century on issues relating to taste and collecting, especially from mid-century, emphasised art as an investment, hence the growth of publications for 'speculators'. In order to promote new markets and impart scholarly respectability to the artefacts, glossy sale and exhibition catalogues became supremely important. Reitlinger wrote of the effect such publications had on later 20<sup>th</sup> century taste. His comments originally concerned the highbrow art market but are equally applicable to contemporary markets of all levels:

*"The real corruption of aesthetic values lies not... in the serenading of everything that is put on the table, but in that peculiar symptom of the later sixties, a proliferation of books which teach the tyro not how to acquire a discriminating taste, but how to get a return on his money... The deliberate and indoctrinated confusion of artistic appreciation with self-interest means something far worse than that, namely the corrosion of what is left of civilised life."*<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps somewhat elitist in his approach, Reitlinger went on to say:

*"It is quite easy under present conditions to fall into a state of trauma in which one loses sight of the existence of taste altogether in the compelling belief that organised publicity alone can promote anything on earth, and that, once promoted, the competition for anything on earth must continue till scarcity is followed by dearth and dearth by extinction."*<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Reitlinger, Gerald: *'The Economics of Taste'*, Vol. Three, *The Art Market in the 1960's*; London, Barrie & Jenkins, (1970), p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

The influence of scholarly and 'coffee-table' literature - not aimed directly at product sales but at the dissemination of styles, techniques and ideas - has contributed to 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century British taste more broadly. For instance, the previously mentioned *Ceramic Review* and the equally respected *Crafts Magazine*, (the first issue of the latter published in 1973), were influential in the promotion of a taste for later 20<sup>th</sup> century studio-pottery.

Throughout history availability of art objects has impacted taste through connoisseurship and collecting. And, it seems logical that if an object is attractive to collectors and connoisseurs, popular versions will be produced for the market. Fakes, reproductions and re-interpretations circulate widely in response to increased demand. This process of popularisation and redistribution has the effect of disseminating styles and tastes among a broader audience. It can also be seen as a process of corruption; distorting original values to conform to an acceptable, affordable taste, transforming unique works of art into marketable commodities reflecting little value beyond their price tag.

The current British vogue for the 'East' in terms of material and spiritual culture has influenced modes of production, aesthetics and even ways of living. Contemporary appreciation can be seen as an extension of earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century pioneers who delved beneath superficial aesthetics to gain a more profound understanding of Eastern thought. The return of Minimalism from around the 1990's has been tempered with Western individualism, but in terms of design offers in some areas a more accurate interpretation of Chinese and Japanese artefacts than represented earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, British and European interpretations of Chinese artefacts are

competing with an increasing range of Far-Eastern exports in 'domestic' taste including high-fired *flambé* and *sang-de-boeuf* porcelains from Jingdezhen. Even within China there is a new middle-class 'interior décor' market estimated at 180 million people for studio-ceramics based on traditional models and 'reproductions'. The Chinese Museum Service are reported to oversee the 'copy market' and break pieces in all styles, including monochromes, not considered good enough to pass for the real thing. The Chinese view these technically and stylistically excellent copies as tributes to their ancestors rather than fakes. China's Museum authorities have stated that in many cases chemical analysis was the only partly reliable method of checking authenticity. Jingdezhen's contemporary output of high-fired porcelain copper-reds demonstrate very controlled kiln conditions and a superb mastery of the glaze. They are able to apply the glaze even to very tall vases without the associated colourless patches and draining of colour from the vessel lip.<sup>23</sup>

In Britain it seems there is a simultaneous vogue for discovering and engaging with aspects of Eastern spirituality and creativity most commonly expressed in home décor schemes. Although household interiors have always been a refuge from the outside world, in the contemporary culture of excessive stimuli it may be that there has been a shift away from visual clutter, a reaction against the material 'culture of excess'. Pastiche aesthetics appear to be mirrored in pastiche spirituality. In the contemporary global age, cultural values have in some instances become heterogeneous and with them, so have styles and tastes, of which 21<sup>st</sup> century British *flambé* is no exception.

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<sup>23</sup> Andrew Watts, Ceramics Development Officer for the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery: *Ceramics in a Chinese Landscape*, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2005 at the PM & AG, Stoke-on-Trent. The lecture reported on his trip to Jingdezhen in October 2004. Mr Watts formed part of the Potteries delegation invited to attend the celebrations commemorating 1000 years of porcelain production in Jingdezhen.

## Appendix I

### Elements in the Base Composition of the Copper-Red Glaze

#### Silica

Silica is the main agent in *vitrification*, the term given to the fusion of ceramic material during firing, hence it provides the bulk of the glaze - around 60-74 per cent. The higher the glaze is fired, the more silica is needed to prevent the glaze becoming glassy and prone to run. It is desirable to have a high silica percentage in copper-red glazes because it helps the glaze maintain its colour in direct contact with the porcelain body. Unfortunately, high silica content in a glaze considerably increases firing temperatures. Because of the loss of copper through *volatility* - evaporation through heat, a limit of 70 per cent silica is recommended for use in a copper-red glaze.<sup>1</sup>

#### Alumina

Alumina acts as a glaze thickener. It is the substance *which "causes glazes to be different from glasses."* Alumina is added to a glaze to increase the viscosity, thus preventing it from running. It is also used to prevent the de-vitrification of some glaze elements during cooling. Alumina is commonly introduced into glazes using clays with a high alumina content, often ball or china clay. Rather than adding clay to the glaze, Robert Tichane prefers to include only the alumina inherent in feldspar and that which may be derived from the glaze frit. Copper-red glazes rarely contain concentrations of alumina above 10 per cent. Higher concentrations may improve

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<sup>1</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, Wisconsin, USA, Krause Publications, 1998, Ch. 11, p.66.

the glaze texture, but has the simultaneous effect of diluting colour from crimson to pinker tones.<sup>2</sup>

### Alkalies

Alkalies are the fluxing agents and colour enhancers. Fluxes provide the melting power and promote the fusion of material; the formation of a glass at lower temperatures. Often, several fluxes are used in a glaze. The alkaline earth **calcium oxide (CaO)**, often referred to as lime, is the most common flux used in high-temperature glazes and is usually added to copper-red, although excess can result in dulling, opalization and unwanted *flambé* effects. It is known to produce bright glazes with a good 'glaze fit', but is not as effective at temperatures below 1170°C. Chinese sources of calcium oxide generally come from limestone and wood ash. Western European sources of calcium oxide are added to glazes in the form of the calcium carbonate or whiting (crushed chalk).

Fluxing agents can be added using a range of *feldspars* or *frits*. Frits are stabilizers - glaze ingredients that help control volatile substances and usually include silica (sand or quartz), and a flux such as soda or potash. Their uniform melting point enables frits to aid in the amalgamation and fusion of the various glaze elements. In the case of copper-red glazes the frit may include the colourant, copper oxide. When heated these materials form a glass which becomes insoluble in water. Copper-red glazes vary in soda : potash ratios. Generally, a low-soda, high-potash ratio results in better colours. Most successful copper-red glaze compositions use a

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 66-67.

combined alkali content of about 10 per cent. The choice between ratios appears to be relatively unimportant.<sup>3</sup>

Feldspar is a white crystalline mineral resulting from the erosion and breakdown of granite rock. Feldspar is composed of silica, alumina and a flux – soda, potash or lime, and melts unaided at approximately 1260°C. In theory feldspar can be used alone as a flux, frit or glaze, but most stoneware and porcelain glazes are created by adding small amounts of china clay (alumina), quartz (silica), and whiting (calcium) to the oxides contained within.

**Magnesium oxide** can be also be added in the region of 1-3 per cent to assist in fluxing high-temperature glazes without affecting the colour, and is usually included in the form of magnesium carbonate. At low temperatures (below c. 1170°C), magnesium oxide acts as an opacifier in ceramic glazes. It is known to produce striking mauve colours in contact with cobalt oxide. Excessive amounts of magnesium oxide in the copper-red glaze can lead to glaze crystallization and matting, resulting in a paler red. This is because only a small amount of magnesium oxide dissolves, leaving many white refractory particles suspended in the glaze. As discussed in the Chapter 1, this is advantageous for *peach-bloom glazes*, a Qing dynasty derivative of the copper-red.

Magnesia is often added to a glaze as an auxiliary flux. It creates a ‘late fluidity’ which is responsible for the flecking and mottling sometimes observed in Chinese *‘jun reds’*. For these effects, magnesia would be present in a lower layer of the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-65, 67-68.

glaze. The upper glaze layer melts and fuses first, hence the surface is *sealed*. The under layer containing magnesium starts to melt only after the surface glaze has sealed. The colouring of this lower glaze layer then bursts into the surface. In order to withstand the invasion, the surface glaze has to be very fluid and able to seal quickly. In short, patches of an isolated glaze become suspended in a more fluid glaze. This process is otherwise known as 'phase separation'.

Similarly, **boron** acts as a flux in lowering the fusion temperature of high-fired glazes and is a good alternative to lead, but like other fluxes, too much is not desirable as far as the colour is concerned. The boron minerals or 'borates' include borax, boric acid, boracite, colemanite and ulexite. Boron can be added to glazes using borax or colemanite. Small quantities of colemanite tend to intensify the colours created by oxides in a similar way to sodium and potassium. Generally, borax is added to copper-red glazes in a frit composed of borax and silica. The borax contains soda and boric oxide; the former acting as a flux, the latter as a glass-former. Together they flux the silica to form a glass at a low temperature. Because borax has a low melting point it is often used in feldspathic glazes to compound various elements of the glaze. It is similar in function to silica – a glass-former – hence responsible for a proportion of the glass melt which absorbs other oxides. Boric oxide is also added to glazes to prevent crazing. In contrast to magnesium oxide, the low melting point of boric oxide means matt glazes are unlikely to develop. Once melted, boric oxide has time to react with the alkalis in the glaze material and prevent the formation of crystals. But, like magnesium oxide,

boric oxide encourages phase separation during cooling, giving rise to the blue opalescence and *flambé* effects of some copper-red glazes.<sup>4</sup>

### Other Elements

**Lead** and **zinc** each have a profound effect on the glaze. Lead is a powerful flux capable of producing jewel-like colours when used with metallic oxides. It is known that 19<sup>th</sup> century copper-red glazes contained lead in greater quantities than their earlier counterparts. Additions of 5 to 10 per cent lead oxide to a copper-red *ox-blood* glaze often results in a paling of colour. The same is true of zinc. Contemporary studio potters try to avoid the use of lead, especially as copper colourants increase the amount of lead released from the glaze, not particularly desirable as far as victuals are concerned.

**Iron oxide** is another important mineral. Early Chinese raw materials all contained iron oxide as a contaminant.<sup>5</sup> In early Chinese copper-red glazes iron oxide is thought to have performed the same role as **tin oxide** in modern glazes. Both these oxides are auxiliary agents in the oxidation-reduction process. In reduction, up to 12 per cent iron oxide can itself yield a rich brown red. Some modern ceramists believe iron causes colour distortion, and although a proportion of examples of earlier Chinese glazes containing iron are quite brilliant – 15<sup>th</sup> century copper-reds from the Yongle and Xuande periods - it is apparent that **tin oxide** is capable of producing brighter reds. Writing in 1907, Louis Franchet asserted that the copper-red glaze “*must contain alkalis, lead and a quantity of tin-oxide greater than the*

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp.67-68 & **Hamer, Frank:** *The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques*, London, Pitman Publishing, 1975, pp. 32-33, 188-189.

<sup>5</sup> **Tichane, Robert:** *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 11, p.69. & **Wood, Nigel:** *Chinese Glazes – Their Origins, Chemistry & Recreation*, London, A&C Black Pubs., 1999, Ch. 9, p.167.

*compound of copper*".<sup>6</sup> Whereas iron oxide was sometimes assumed to make the glaze muddy, tin oxide was noted for its role in the production of transparent ruby red, because it "*completely dissolved in the glaze at cone 10*", (1320°C).<sup>7</sup> This is in contrast with the role of tin oxide as an opacifier. Tin oxide does not usually melt completely in the glaze, filling it with white particles which make it opaque.

Franchet obtained successful results from a copper-red glaze containing 10 per cent lead oxide, 3 per cent copper-oxide and 8 per cent tin oxide. As chemical research developed a lower percentage of copper oxide was recommended, in the region of 0.5 – 1 per cent, although the principle of using more tin-oxide than copper has been adopted by potters throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and today. The contemporary writer Robert Tichane advocated a molecular ratio of tin to copper of 1:1, or a weight ratio of 2:1.<sup>8</sup> Lead was only used by the Jingdezhen potters to produce the 18<sup>th</sup> *flambé* or *jun reds* and continues to be employed in the production of modern commercial and some studio *flambé*, as distinguished from copper-reds of the more traditional sort.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Franchet, Louis: 'On the Development of Copper Red in a Reducing Atmosphere,' *Trans. Brit. Cer. Soc.*, Vol. VII, Stoke-on-Trent – the County Pottery Laboratory, Session 1907-8, p.74.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.74

<sup>8</sup> Tichane, Robert: *Copper Red Glazes*, 1998, Ch. 16, p.108.

<sup>9</sup> This applies to contemporary British and Chinese *flambé*.

## Appendix II

### Bullers Experimental *flambé*

#### Catalogue Descriptions (1977)

- **Vase, hard paste porcelain, cylinder shape, with a mottled *flambé* glaze, c.1935.**  
Ht: 17.5 cms. Marks: Standard printed mark, incised 122B (body no.), printed 259 (glaze no.)<sup>1</sup>
- **Vase, hard paste porcelain, ovoid shape, with a mottled blue *flambé* glaze, c.1935.** Ht: 12 cms. Marks: Standard printed mark, incised 21L CB (body no.), painted 259, (glaze no.) *'This, and the previous vase, show how the same glaze could produce quite different results in the reduction firing.'*<sup>2</sup>
- **Small bottle vase, hard paste porcelain, with a mottled red *flambé* glaze, c.1936.**  
Ht: 10 cms. Marks: painted 373 (glaze no.) *'In Guy Harris's glaze record book, he said of this glaze, 'a very fine flambe, correctly fired.'*<sup>3</sup>
- **Large bottle vase, hard paste porcelain, with splashed *flambé* glaze, c.1936.**  
Ht: 32 cms. Marks: Standard printed mark, incised 375, painted 245, (glaze no.'s).<sup>4</sup>
- **Jug, hard paste porcelain, ovoid shape, with mottled *flambé* glaze, c.1935.**  
Ht: 21 cms. Marks: Standard printed mark, incised 259 (glaze no.)<sup>5</sup>
- **Biscuit Barrel and cover, hard paste porcelain, barrel shape, with a celadon glaze and chün decoration, c. 1942.** Ht: 14 cms. Marks: Standard impressed marks.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Atterbury, Paul & Batkin, Maureen: *Art Among The Insulators – The Bullers Studio 1932-52 – An Exhibition at the Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent, 1<sup>st</sup> March-14<sup>th</sup> April 1977*, p.12. **Section B – Guy Harris; no. 11** Collection: Ted Smith.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.12, **Section B – Guy Harris; no. 12** Collection: E Bentley.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.12, **Section B – Guy Harris; no. 14** Collection: Mrs H D Harris.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.12, **Section B – Guy Harris; no. 15** Private Collection.

- Two cups, hard paste porcelain, with celadon glazes, one with red and blue stripes, the other with brush style decoration in chün style, c.1948. Ht: 8 cms. Marks: Standard impressed marks.<sup>7</sup>
- Dish and Cup – both hard paste porcelain decorated with chün decoration over a celadon glaze; c. 1944 and 1943 respectively.<sup>8</sup>
- Vase, hard paste porcelain, Chinese bronze shape with four ring handles, chün decoration over a finely crazed celadon glaze, c.1941. Ht: 9 cms.  
*'The bronze shape and the northern celadon style make this unusually close to the Chinese models; it also matches them for quality.'*<sup>9</sup>

### **Bullers Glaze Compositions: Base Glazes and *Flambé***

**Interview with Graham Bell** – 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct., 2001. In 1985 Agnete Hoy paid her last visit to the factory and told Mr. Bell to save her handwritten records of Guy Harris' glaze recipes for posterity. He handed the notes to me at the time of the interview. They are now in the Potteries Museum. The **H** in the glaze numbers refers to 'Harris'.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.13, **Section C – Tableware; no. 1.** Collection : A W Jeffery.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.14, **Section C – Tableware; no. 16** Collection: Agnete Hoy.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.18, **Section D – Agnete Hoy; no. 13.** Private Collection.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 19, **Section D – Agnete Hoy; no.'s 27 – Dish & 29 – Cup.** Collection(s): Agnete Hoy & A W Jeffery respectively.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.19, **Section D – Agnete Hoy; no. 28.** Collection: James Rushton.

### Felspathic base glaze components

#### **Glaze H.189. 1934**

Soda Spar	48
Quartz	23
Calcine H.190	22
Gum Tragacanth	2
Grind all 40 hours.	

#### **Calcine H. 190. 1934**

Barium Carbonate	197
Quartz	60
Calcine in T.O. 2 (Tunnel Oven 2)	

*'This glaze is no use by itself, but is an essential part of some very fine flambé glazes.  
For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

#### **Fritte H. 208 1934**

Pearl Ash	69
Whiting	50
Barium Carbonate	98.5
Borax	191
Boric Acid	62
Flint of Quartz	270

*'Mix by hand, and calcine in well washed saggar in radio brown fire, then pulverise to pass 40 lawn (sieve). An essential part of many good flambé glazes. And at least one good celadon.'*

**N.B:** *Radio Brown* was the lowest end of the firing temperature. It was equivalent to Bullers ring 4-5, approximately 35 – 40°C.<sup>10</sup> *Radio Brown* was the name given to dark brown porcelain components fired in Tunnel Oven 2 (T.O. 2) for an American company *Ohio Brass*, a colour which could only be achieved at certain low temperatures.

### **Flambé glaze formulae**

#### **Glaze H. 246. 1934**

H. 189 glaze	75
H. 208 fritte	25
Copper Carbonate	1.5
Bentonite	1

Grind 24 hours. *'Can produce a good red in a reducing atmosphere. For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

#### **Glaze H. 259. 1935**

H. 135 glaze	75
H. 208 fritte	25
Copper Carbonate	1
Tin Oxide	2

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<sup>10</sup> Bullers rings are worth approx. 7 °C each, hence Bullers ring 5 indicates a temperature of around 35°C.

Grind 24 hours. *'A very fine flambé. Fire reducing to Cone 10-12. For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

**Glaze H. 288. 1935**

H. 135 glaze	75
H. 208 fritte	25
Copper Carbonate	1.5
Tin Oxide	2
Cobalt Oxide	0.4

Grind 16 hours. *'A blue and purple flambé, fire reducing. For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

**Glaze H. 350. 1935**

H. 189 glaze	75 Previously ground 4 hours
H. 208 Fritte	25
Copper Carbonate	1.5
Tin Oxide	2
Dolomite	5

Grind all 24 hours more. *'Can produce brilliant reds, in a reducing fire. For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

**Glaze H. 351. 1935**

H. 189 glaze	65 Previously ground 4 hours
H. 208 fritte	35
Copper Carbonate	1.5
Tin Oxide	2

Grind all 24 hours more. *'Also can produce good reds, fired reducing. For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

**Glaze H. 373. 1935**

H. 189 glaze	75
H. 208 Fritte	25
Copper Carbonate	1.5
Tin Oxide	2
Silver Chloride	2
Dolomite	5

Grind 20 hours. *'A good flambé red, fired reducing to Cone 9-12. For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

**Glaze II. 458. 1936**

II. 189 glaze	70
II. 208 fritte	30
Copper Carbonate	0.75
Tin Oxide	2

Grind 8 hours. *'A good flambé, fired reducing, Cone 9-12. Can produce brilliant reds. For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

**Glaze H. 514. 1938**

W10 A ground 4 hrs	100
Barium Phosphate	3
Lithium Carbonate	2
Quartz	15
Iron Oxide	1

Grind 3 hours

*Chin* blue, fired reducing at Cone 10.

Decorate with Copper Carbonate, or with	Copper Carbonate	1
	Tin Oxide	2.5

*'For Art Ware. Not altered'.*

The glazes listed above may record the lustre *flambé* glaze mug trial allegedly made by Guy Harris c.1934-39. In any case, it seems Agnete Hoy kept and referred to his notes.

### Appendix III

#### Collecting and Collectors

##### W.G. Gulland

With reference to a lady's collection of *'beautiful... bottles of self-coloured reds... ranging from 'Peach blow' to "sang de boeuf", about sixteen in all'*, with an average of 10 inches in height and which *'cost a great deal of money'*, Gulland urged private collectors to *'take up a particular class and exploit it thoroughly'* so that the collection would *'be more interesting and more valuable than one of odds and ends'*.<sup>1</sup>

In relation to peach-bloom glazed porcelain Gulland noted that *'Our American cousins were the first to bring peach bloom into fashion, and it occupies in the United States much the same position as sang de boeuf does in France'*.<sup>2</sup> A pair of peach-bloom *'long-necked bottles'* are illustrated, *'most elegant in form; the porcelain is very white and of fine quality.'* Each vase is decorated with a dragon in relief which curves around the lower neck to drape the shoulder. The peach-bloom glaze is *'flecked'* with green to suggest scales. Each have the six-character Kangxi reign mark. Gulland cannot recall *'ever having seen duplicates in any of the collections I have visited'* and interestingly remarked that *'Many of the small vases made towards the end of this reign are most beautifully shaped, apparently owing to European influence, most of them being decorated in lovely "whole" colours.'*<sup>3</sup> This last statement contradicts the notion that Chinese taste had favoured simple, elegant shapes centuries before European contact and intervention. In fact, as is widely

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<sup>1</sup> Gulland, W.G: *Chinese Porcelain*, Vol. II, London, 1902, p. 358. The porcelain collection referred to presumably came from Boston, USA.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 362.

acknowledged, European design requests had a detrimental effect on Chinese export porcelain.

A copper-transmutation glazed bottle appears as No. 616 in Gulland's text. It bears the Kangxi reign mark and *'At places it is a rich bright madder, which turns by degrees into smoke-coloured clouds'*.<sup>4</sup> Also of interest are dishes 698 and 699, which according to Gulland were *'part of the late loot, as they had yellow tickets upon them when they arrived in this country, which, however, have unfortunately been washed off'*.<sup>5</sup> The porcelain dish or stem-cup No. 698 was not marked. The interior is plain white porcelain with a double blue line at the rim. The exterior is decorated in *'blue and white, with four red five-claw, roughly drawn, dragons round the sides, and one on the stand, all disporting themselves midst blue waves.'*<sup>6</sup> The red varies from a rich yellow to pale peach hue. Gulland noted that the pieces had a *'Yung-ching look'*, but concluded that it was a *'borderland piece'* that might be of Kangxi manufacture.

No. 699 is another stem-cup with white foot and mouth rims covered with an exterior and interior *sang de boeuf* glaze, although *'as seems usual in the Yung-Ching and early Keen-lung pieces, (there is) an absence of the yellow shade common in the hue known by that name'*.<sup>7</sup> As with No. 698, Gulland was cautious in dating the unmarked piece:

*"As Yung-ching only reigned thirteen years, where not actually marked, it is often difficult to decide whether pieces such as this belong to the end of the Kang-he period,*

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 362 – Nos. 620 & 621 illustrated opposite; Kangxi peach-bloom bottles belonging to Mr. G.R. Davies.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 358 – photograph opposite; No. 616.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 404.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 404 – Photograph opposite; No.'s 698 & 699.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 404.

*the Yung-ching, or are early Keen lung. This piece (699) has a look of the latter, but does not seem to show that sort of blue 'feeling' that can generally be noticed on the reds of the Keen-lung period when held so that the light falls at an angle.*"<sup>8</sup>

### **R.L. Hobson**

Hobson described one piece of Song *jun* in the W.C. Alexander collection as the...

*"rare type which, to judge from the characteristic flat base, should belong to the Tang dynasty... (a) gourd-shaped vase... which has a high-fired flambé glaze of opaque greenish-grey splashed with mottled purple. The body of this piece is a fine buff stoneware."*<sup>9</sup>

The methods of manufacturing *jun* ware seemed to be unclear to Hobson who was unsure whether the purple pigmentation was '*due to a copper ingredient ... (or) to opalescence...*', but recognised that '*the glaze is full of bubbles which deflect the light and the red colour forms in streaks and mottlings*'.<sup>10</sup> The *jun* specimens also included a rare example of a modelled dog.<sup>11</sup> Soft and numbered *jun* wares were represented ranging from the Song to Qing dynasties. Hobson recorded an early 18<sup>th</sup> century *jun* bulb-bowl with '*a flambé glaze copying the crimson Chün... absolved from forgery... (through the use of) honest white porcelain*'.<sup>12</sup> *Jun* ware was still being manufactured in the '*Kaifêng district of Honan*' in 1931, some '*masquerading as old Chüns*' in Europe.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 404. Kang-he, Yung-ching and Keen-lung correspond to Kangxi (1662-1722), Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795) respectively.

<sup>9</sup> Hobson, R.L.; Rackham, Bernard; King, William: *Chinese Ceramics in Private Collections*, London, Halton & Truscott Smith, Ltd., 1931. Hobson: Ch. I – The Alexander Collection; pp. 3-4. The mention of a fine buff stoneware body may indicate a later date for the piece. It is known that Song *jun* wares were recreated during the Kangxi and later Qing dynasty with finer, lighter bodies. Many earlier *jun* wares from the Song dynasty have heavier, dark bodies. Also, Tang shapes were widely reproduced during the Qing dynasty. The description of the glaze would make the vase later than the Tang dynasty.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 16. Later chapters on *The Science & Development of the Copper-Red Glaze and Methods of Manufacture* discuss the physical chemistry of the *jun* glaze in greater depth, but it is now widely known that reduced copper produces the purple and crimson splashes.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 15. *Jun* dog. Fig. 33. Ht: 2 7/8 ins.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

### William Hesketh Lever

The Collection was rich in paired specimens of Qing dynasty blue-and-white ware represented by Nos. 30-234 in the Catalogue, and in *powder blue* porcelain from the Kangxi period, Nos. 250-265.<sup>14</sup>

The Collection is richly represented in *Famille Verte* – ‘porcelain enamelled on the biscuit’; *Famille Verte* enamels ‘combined with underglaze blue’, *Famille Noire*, *Famille Rose* and has several examples of Japanese Porcelain.<sup>15</sup> *Famille Noire* and *blue-and-white* hawthorn jars became prohibitively expensive in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but towards the 1920’s there was a shift in taste towards ware from earlier Chinese dynasties.

No. 300 is described as a “*VASE with slender oval body, straight cylindrical neck, and spreading foot. Brilliant ox-blood red glaze which has run thin at the neck and formed thickly at the foot. Under the base and inside the mouth, buff crackle. (Plate 32 in the Lever Collection Catalogue). Ch ‘ien Lung period (1736-95) H: 9 ¼ ins.*”<sup>16</sup>

No. 301, another ox-blood vase of “*similar form... the colour has fled from the neck and formed in streaks on the shoulders. Buff-coloured glaze under the base and inside the mouth. Ch ‘ien Lung period (1736-95) H: 14 ¾ ins.*”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Hobson, R.L: *Chinese Porcelain & Wedgwood Pottery with Other Works of Ceramic Art – A Record of the collection in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight formed by the first Viscount Leverhulme*, Vol. II, London, Batsford, 1928,

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., *Famille Verte* – porcelain enamelled on the biscuit; Nos. 330-365. *Famille Verte* enamels combined with underglaze blue; Nos. 460-500. *Famille Noire*; Nos. 370-396. *Famille Rose*; Nos. 520 – 547. Japanese Porcelain; Nos. 560 – 566.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

No. 302, catalogued as a *"VASE, bottle-shaped, with globular body, tall neck, and spreading mouth. Ox-blood red glaze which has run from the neck and formed thickly at the foot rim, where it has been ground off. Base unglazed. Ch 'ien Lung period (1736-95) H. 14 ins."*<sup>18</sup>

No. 303 recorded a *"WATER VESSEL, in the form of a peach with stalk handle in low relief. Porcelain with uneven glaze of dull liver colour. Carved wooden stand. Ch 'ien Lung period (1736-95) Length, 3 1/4 ins."*<sup>19</sup>

No. 304 catalogued a *"PAIR OF BOTTLES with globular body and straight neck. Flambé glaze of mottled crimson, with occasional streaks of purple. The colour has disappeared at the mouth rim. Mounted in ormolu. Ch 'ien Lung period (1736-95) H. 14 3/4 ins."*<sup>20</sup>

### **Leonard Gow**

No. 100 in the Leonard Gow Collection catalogue described a *Kangxi Lang yao* *meiping* vase *"with high-shouldered, oval body and small mouth cut down and fitted with a metal band. Porcelain with intense cherry red glaze... Ht: 12 5/8 ins. Ex. Sanderson, Sir James Linton and Lyne-Stephens Collections."*<sup>21</sup>

Another *Kangxi Lang yao* example is catalogued as No. 101; *"BOTTLE, with fine cherry red glaze; flattened globular body with slender neck, cut down and fitted with*

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>21</sup> **Hobson, R.L:** *Catalogue of the Leonard Gow Collection of Chinese Porcelain*, Hayston, Glasgow, 1931, p. 29.

a metal band. Buff crackled glaze on the base... Ht: 3 ½ ins.<sup>22</sup> No. 102 is recorded as a Kangxi *sang-de-boeuf* vase "with baluster body, high neck and flaring mouth; spreading base. Porcelain with deep clotted red glaze. Buff crackle inside the mouth, white glaze on base... Ht: 17 ½ ins."<sup>23</sup> No. 103 is described as a Kangxi dark strawberry glazed porcelain bowl with a bound metal lip and 'fluted sides', D: 7 ¼ ins. No. 104 catalogued as a Qianlong porcelain 'purple and red' *flambé* bottle "with depressed globular body and tall neck spreading at the lip... Ht: 13 5/8 ins."<sup>24</sup> John Sparks *Day Sales Book* for January 1901-July 1906 noted that Leonard Gow Esq. purchased '1 fine *sang-de-boeuf* bottle' for £25 and '1 fine *sang-de-boeuf* bowl' for £12 on 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1903.<sup>25</sup> These items may correspond to Nos. 103 (bowl) and 101/102 (bottle) in the Collection catalogue, depending on the definitions of *sang-de-boeuf* and *bottle* used by Sparks and Hobson.

No. 105 is catalogued as a *peach-bloom* brush washer, described by Hobson as 'Another red glaze for which Kangxi potters are justly famous' which on 'inferior specimens' is a 'dull liver red', on better pieces a 'pinkish red of a ripe peach' and on the best specimens, 'for which competition among collectors is desperate – the peach red is broken by areas of apple green and occasional spots of russet brown'.<sup>26</sup> Gow's superior specimen is of 'depressed globular form with wide mouth. The sides covered with peach bloom glaze with a few spots of russet and green. Kangxi mark in blue... D: 4 ½ ins.'<sup>27</sup> For collecting purposes, Hobson was also aware that a white glazed

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., Hobson, p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Hobson, p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Hobson, p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> John Sparkes Archive, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, University of London, SOAS. *Day Sales Book, January 1901-July 1906*, p. 192.

<sup>26</sup> Hobson, R.L: *Catalogue of the Leonard Gow Collection of Chinese Porcelain*, Hayston, Glasgow, 1931, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Hobson, p. 29.

base with an underglaze blue Kangxi reign mark 'written in 'mannered' style...

*seem[ed] to have been de rigueur on all 'peach-bloom' porcelains'.<sup>28</sup>*

The Gow catalogue recorded another type of red monochrome - a pair of *coral red* rice bowls, a soft, low-temperature 'muffle-fired' iron red more prone to wear than copper-reds. The bowls are described as having an underglaze blue painted interior of a 'lotus and stork... medallion' and 'trellis border'. The exterior is 'Deep coral red', the base marked Kangxi in a 'double ring', D: 4 ½ ins.<sup>29</sup>

### **E.S. Thornhill**

The Thornhill Collection is particularly rich in pottery burial wares or *mingqi* from c.1-10<sup>th</sup> centuries; 21 Han lead glazed wares (206 B.C. – A.D. 220); 18 examples of Sui (A.D. 581-618) and Tang (A.D. 618-906) pieces including straw coloured and *sancai* glazed wares; a spittoon jar and rare cock's comb flask from the Liao dynasty (A.D. 907-1125).<sup>30</sup> It contains substantial holding of Northern and Southern *minyao* or common wares from the Song (A.D. 960-1279), Jin (A.D. 1115-1234) and Yuan (1280-1368) dynasties. Classic Song ware of *jun type* with 'crimson red patches' is also represented in the Collection alongside *Ding*, *Longquan* and *qingbai* ware.<sup>31</sup> Rare outstanding pieces include a Ming *blue-and -white* stem cup with the Xuande reign mark (1426-1435), and a *blue-and -white* export 'Albarelllo' drug jar of mid-late 17<sup>th</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Hobson, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Hobson, p. 30; No. 110.

<sup>30</sup> Sun-Bailey, Suning: 'The E. S. Thornhill Bequest of Chinese Ceramics at the North Staffordshire Polytechnic', *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 48, (1983-1984), p. 73: "Liao tombs and kilns, especially those in Manchuria, were first excavated by the Japanese during their occupation in the 1930's and publications were not available until after the Second World War in the late 1940's."

<sup>31</sup> *Out of the Orient – An Exhibition of the E.S. Thornhill Bequest of Oriental Ceramics*, Stoke-on-Trent City Museum and Art Gallery, January 16 February 28 1988. No. 45; "Dish (broken in two halves). Oatmeal coloured stoneware covered with greyish blue glaze splashed with crimson red patches. Northern Jun ware, probably from Henan province. D: 16.3 cm Song / Yuan dynasty, 12-14<sup>th</sup> century."

century date inscribed '*Cons. Cass. Fistul*' relating to a Cassia laxative used by Europeans.<sup>32</sup> Other Ming wares in the Collection include blue-and white pieces from the Jiajing (1522-1566) and Wanli (1573-1619) periods, and *wucai* - (five colour) underglaze blue and overglaze enamel wares – from the Transitional period (c.1620-1683). Characteristic of Edwardian collectors of Chinese porcelain, Thornhill's Ming 1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) pieces:

*"... constitute almost half of the collection... The wares are more or less equally divided among porcelains with underglaze blue decoration, wares with overglaze enamelled decoration and wares covered in monochrome glazes, mainly from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province."*<sup>33</sup> And, although Thornhill's *"first acquisition was an eighteenth-century famille rose export ware in European taste, the finest examples among his (Qing) polychrome enamelled wares... are in the Chinese taste."*<sup>34</sup>

### **Leicester Collier**

1917. 548 Bottle (HH 2.2) Red Monochrome – Qianlong.

1917. 549/2 Bottles (HH 2.5) Red Underglaze Copper – Kangxi.

1917. 550/2 Vases Underglaze Red decoration on White porcelain with stands

– Ht.7 ins. Qianlong. Valued in 1917 at for £15 each.

1917. 598/2 Vases/Beakers (HH 2.2 (1) ) Monochrome *Rouge Flambé* Red

– H.12 ins. Qianlong. Valued for insurance in 1917 for £15 each.

1917. 610 Bottle Monochrome *Rouge Flambé* Red , H. 20 ins. – Qianlong.

Valued at £50 in 1917.

1918. 243 Dish (HH 2.2 ) Monochrome Onglaze Coral (iron) Red with Cover -

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Nos. 76 and 90 respectively.

<sup>33</sup> **Sun-Bailey, Suning:** 'The E.S. Thornhill Bequest of Chinese Ceramics At The North Staffordshire Polytechnic'; *T.O.C.S.*, Vol. 48, (1983-1984), p. 78.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.81.

Qianlong. Valued at £15 in 1917.<sup>35</sup>

### **George Beatson-Blair**

Twenty-five Kangxi porcelains ranging from *blue-and-white* ware, powder blue, *famille verte*, olive green monochromes and variously glazed figures. Four *jun* pieces from the Song-Yuan period, one Han vase, three Tang burial wares, one 'Tan Kuang' or Daoguang period (1821-50) bowl, a Yuan-Ming celadon bowl and four Ming polychrome wares including a 'Wan Li' bowl – 1947.574, and an 'Equestrian figure, galloping horseman, ridge tile' – 1947.575, valued at £15 each. Most numerous were the 32 Chinese porcelains of the later 18<sup>th</sup> century from the Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795) periods, most simply attributed to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Birmingham Subscribers**

A Kangxi porcelain 'Artist's Water Vessel' with 'peach-bloom glaze of exceptional depth and purity; white interior... Diam. 4 3/4 in.' is companion to another Kangxi porcelain brush pot with a *clair-de-lune* glaze in the Birmingham Collection.<sup>36</sup>

Identical in shape, both are shallow bowls with convex sides. The Subscribers also gifted a Qianlong (1736-1795) porcelain *flambé* glazed 'Fabulous Animal', 10 ins. by 7 1/8 ins.<sup>37</sup> Another interesting purchase is the porcelain bottle-vase decorated with a *strawberry-red* glaze, marked Qianlong in a square seal in underglaze blue and of the

<sup>35</sup> *Stock Book of Works of Art – Leicester Collier Bequest; 1917.320 – 1917. 672* (352 items) – not all relating to Chinese porcelain, Manchester City Art Gallery. Also, the Leicester Collier file contains a stock list of insurance values compiled in 1917 before any artefacts were disposed. In addition to the objects listed in the text above, No. 206 in the 1917 insurance inventory records a 'Vase. *Splashed transmutation glaze. H. 7 ins. (10.0.0) Qianlong.*' No. 109 – 'Rouge Flambé vase, handles. H. 11 ins. (25.0.0) Qianlong with stand.'

<sup>36</sup> Registration Nos. 435/6'29, Acc. Nos: 1929 M 435/6); received in 1929 as gifts from 'The Subscribers', Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

<sup>37</sup> Registration No. 441'29; received in 1929 as a gift from the Subscribers, BM & AG. This item is in the Green Drawing Room at Aston Hall, described as a 'Fu Dog'.

period. The accession cards record that both the lip and foot had French ormolu mounts of the first half of the 19th century, but only the lip mount remains. Unlike the other pieces described, the bottle-vase was purchased with the aid of the 1932 *Reproduction Fund* for £4 10 s from 'The Antique Shop', Burlington Arcade, London.<sup>38</sup>

Other pieces in the Birmingham Collections include two porcelain *flambé* brush washers, one of beehive-shaped body with narrow neck, H.15 cms, Base 12 cms; the other in the form of a shallow bowl with convex sides, H.4cms, Diam.10 cms. Each brush washer had a wooden stand with heights of 2.5 cms and 6 cms respectively.<sup>39</sup>

### George Eumorfopoulos

**Hobson, R.I.:** *The Catalogue of the George Eumorfopoulos Collection of Chinese, Korean and Persian Pottery and Porcelain*; **Vol. V – 'The Ching Dynasty Porcelain, Kang Hsi, Yung Cheng, Chien Lung, and Later Periods'**, London, Ernest Benn, 1927, pp. 35-38. **E. 247- 256:**

No. **E. 257** (*flambé*), **E. 258** (pinkish red), **E.259** (pale crushed strawberry tint), **E.260** ('ashes of roses'), **E.261**(peach-bloom red passing into 'ashes of roses'), **E.262** (peach-red glaze dappled green and russet spots), **E.263** (water-pot of beehive shape with three incised coiled dragon medallions covered with peach-bloom red, streaked and spotted with dark brown and brownish yellow, the Kangxi mark in blue on the

<sup>38</sup> Registration No. 236'32, Acc. No. 1932 M 236; received 1932. Many Qing monochrome wares were imported and mounted in ormolu mounts during the later 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to furnish – at least initially – French interiors. In the main, such mounted pieces came to Britain from France. BM & AG.

<sup>39</sup> Acc. Nos. 1962 S166/7 -217 for both washers, all measurements approximate. They have been catalogued as belonging to the Science Collection at the old Science Museum, Newhall St. Other

base), **E.264** (smoky-grey glaze passing into greyish green and peach bloom passages of dappled red and pale grey), **E.265** (dull peach bloom), **E. 266** (deep peach-red passing into light pinkish grey), **E. 267** (Beaker, flattened bulb on stem, flaring mouth with foliate edge, fluted (petal) sides covered with greenish-white glaze suffused with irregular areas of pinkish red, early 18<sup>th</sup> century).

**Ibid, Hobson, 1927: 'The Yung Cheng Period (1723-35)', pp. 39-43.**

**E.304 and 305** (Imitation Song jun wares). **E.306** (Fish bowl with dapples pink glaze passing into lavender and brown above the base). **E.307** (Vase with exterior bubbly deep maroon red glaze and white interior). **E.308** (Saucer dish with maroon-peach glaze, many bubble holes, white mouth rim). **E.309** (Pear-shaped vase with exterior peach bloom red glaze powdered with speckling, white glazed interior – the 'Hsüan Tê' mark in blue on the base). **E. 310** (Saucer dish with interior and exterior dull underglaze red 'in tone' between peach bloom and maroon, white rim. 'Hsüan Tê' mark in blue double ring on base).

**Ibid, Hobson, 1927: 'The Chien Lung Period (1736-95)', pp. 50 – 54.**

**E. 368** (Bottle, pale lavender glaze crackled and suffused with red. Metal band on lip). **E.389** (Vase, deep crimson *flambé* glaze streaked with purple and bluish grey). **E. 390** (Bottle, *flambé* glaze of purple and pinkish red streaked with grey). **E 391** (Vase, *flambé* glaze of purple streaked with blue, buff and grey: impure yellow glaze inside). **E.392** (Dish, deep red *flambé* glaze flecked with blue, and shoaling into buff on the lip. Ex-Beurdeley Collection). **E.393** (Pear-shaped bottle of coarse porcelain with deep crimson *flambé* glaze streaked with bluish grey and buff. Glaze ground off at the

base). **E.394** (Water-pot, depressed globular form, interior blood red *flambé*; exterior streaked with purple, bluish grey and red shoaling into green-yellow. Glaze ground off at base). **E.395** (Shallow dish, crimson red sides and buff crackle on base. Base rim ground down). **E. 396** (Brush pot with sides in the form of a 'knotted tree trunk', *flambé* red streaked with purple and blue-grey. Glaze ground off the edge of the base). **E.397** (Saucer-dish with crackled grey glaze smeared with brown and mottled with large patches of red *flambé* glaze 'in the style of Sung Chün ware'). **E. 398** (Mini meiping with violet purple, blue-grey, and 'buff blotched with blood red' *flambé* glaze. **E. 399** (Bottle with *flambé* glaze of grey streaked with red and purple. Celadon green on mouth and base). **E 400** (Vase of meiping shape with thick dappled lavender glaze 'clouded with pale red and strewn with dark red specks. White glazed interior).

**Hobson, R.L. Sotheby's & Co., London: *The Eumorfopoulos Collections*, Tuesday May 28<sup>th</sup> - Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 1940.** (This copy from the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, contained William Burrell's annotations including buyers' names and sale prices).

**Lot 335** – a reproduction Song *jun* 'Yi-Hsing' bowl with a dappled lavender glaze of 17-18<sup>th</sup> century date was recorded as **E. 171 in Volume VI of Hobson's 1927** catalogue. **Lots 272-274** described Ming underglaze decorated copper-reds of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, **lots 352-372** as '*Underglaze Copper-Red and Peach Bloom Glazes From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*'.<sup>40</sup> Apart from **lot 352**, the '*Rare (Ming) 15<sup>th</sup> century Saucer Dish ... covered with a thick red glaze and decorated with two five-clawed dragons among clouds round the sides in low relief... with three cloud scrolls incised*

<sup>40</sup> **Hobson, R.L. Sotheby's & Co., London: *The Eumorfopoulos Collections*, Tuesday May 28<sup>th</sup> - Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1940.** (This copy from the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, contained William Burrell's annotations including buyers' names and sale prices). Pp. 112-116 – Third Day of Sale, Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1940.

*in the centre...'*, lots 353 and 354, a '*Hsuan Te Saucer Dish*' with fresh red '*hsien hung*' glaze '*decorated an hua with dragons*' and '*Yung Cheng copy of the above*', are present in Hobson's earlier catalogue.<sup>41</sup>

**Hobson, R.L. Sotheby's & Co., London:** *The Eumorfopoulos Collections*, Third Day of Sale, Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> May 1940, pp. 113-116: Other Lots sold in 1940 which corresponded with Hobson's earlier Catalogue (Vol. V) are given below with sale prices and name of buyer:

**Lot 356**, an 18<sup>th</sup> C. *Lang yao* brush washer - catalogued by Hobson as E. 395 in 1927 - purchased by Captain Taylor for £13.

**Lot 357**, an 18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> C. *Flambé* pear-shaped bottle - E.465 - Bluett for £13.

**Lot 360**, a Qianlong *Flambé* dish - E.392 - Bluett for £10 10s.

**Lot 361**, a Kangxi *Lang yao* bowl with silver mounted rim - E. 254 - Pope for £3 10s.

**Lot 362**, a Kangxi *peach bloom* saucer dish - E. 262 - Bluett for £18.

**Lot 363**, a Kangxi pear-shaped bottle with pale strawberry glaze - E. 252 - Bluett for £8 10s.

**Lot 364**, a Kangxi *peach bloom* pear-shaped bottle - E.264 - Boode for £6 10 s.

**Lot 365**, a Qianlong *meiping* vase with splashed lavender glaze - E. 370 - Spink for £6.

**Lot 366**, a Kangxi foliate beaker of archaic bronze form with irregular patches of pink-red on the interior of the mouth - E. 267- Spink for £32.

**Lot. 367**, a Yongzheng pear-shaped *sang-de-boeuf* vase - E. 307 Boode for £16.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 112, Lot 353 - E. 310 (sold for £68 to Sparks); Lot 354 - E.308 (sold for £5 10s to Moss) in the 1927 catalogue.

**Lot 368**, a 'rare set' of six Kangxi *Lang yao* cups – E. 256 – Colnaghi for £22.

**Lot 369**, a fine Kangxi *peach bloom* brush washer, the 'rim turned over and folded inwards' – E. 258 – Pope for £13.

**Lot 370**, a 'massive' Kangxi *Lang yao* pear-shaped vase with rich strawberry glaze – E. 250 – Sparks for £15 10s.

**Lot 371**, a good Kangxi *Lang yao* bowl with double ogee sides decorated with a rich strawberry glaze – E. 253 – Bluett for £31.

**Lot 372**, a 'fine quality' Kangxi ovoid vase with varied glaze of deep peach red shading into pink-grey, 'brilliant condition', - E. 266 - Boode for £18.

### Sir William Burrell

The Burrell Collection Archives, Pollockshaw, Glasgow. Curator - Liz Hancock.

Date of Visit: 25:10:02. (Record cards of copper-red porcelains in the Burrell Collection). The relevant objects are listed below:

**Registry No. 38/ 717 Inventory No: 1098 – Meiping Vase**, poor *peach-bloom* glaze, incised scaly dragon round the shoulder. Slight green mottling. Probably of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin although Burrell catalogued it as Kangxi. Purchased on 16:10:46 for £65, Ex-Collection J. Norman Collie. Literature – Purchase Book, 1946, p. 68. Grade 'B' quality.

**Registry No: 38/718 Inventory No. 876 – Qianlong *sang-de-boeuf* bottle vase** with globular body and wide flaring mouth. Purchased from Frank Partridge & Sons (Lot 165) for £10 on 02:05:45. Literature: P.B., 1945, p. 32. Grade 'B' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/719 Inventory No. 737** – Kangxi *Lang yao* bottle vase mounted on a wooden plinth. Purchased from Frank Partridge & Sons for £38 + 15 % commission on 21:07:42. Literature: P.B. 1942, p.25. Grade 'A' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/720 Inventory No. 1600** – Kangxi *sang-de-boeuf* vase of slender pear-shape. Bought from H.R. Hancock for £85 on 19:07:48 - the most expensive copper-red specimen in the Collection. Literature: P.B., 1948 (II), p.19. Grade 'B+' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/721 Inventory No. 816** – Kangxi *sang-de-boeuf* vase of pear-shape with truncated neck. Cut down at the mouth. Wood stand and cover. Bought from Partridge & Sons for £75 on 22:06:44. Literature: P.B., 1944, p. 86. Grade 'C' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/722 Inventory No. 1721** – Fine 18<sup>th</sup> century *Lang yao* pear-shaped vase with cylindrical neck; body tapering into spreading foot. Purchased from Sydney L. Moss for £75 on 04:12:48. Literature: P.B., 1948 (III), p. 21. Grade 'B' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/723 Inventory No. 919** – 18<sup>th</sup> century *flambé meiping* vase. Purchased from Partridge & Sons for £70 on 24:06:45. Literature: P.B., 1945, p.43. Grade 'C' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/724 Inventory No. 61** – 18<sup>th</sup> century *Lang yao meiping* vase. Glaze has overrun the base. No date or price recorded. Insured for £15. Grade 'B' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/725 Inventory No. 459** – 18<sup>th</sup> century *Lang yao* bowl. Purchased from S.M. Franck for £80 on 04:12:25. Literature: P.B., 1925, p.27. Grade 'B' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/726 Inventory No. 793** – Kangxi *Lang yao* bowl with everted lip and wooden stand. Literature: P.B., 1943, p.64. Bought from Frank Partridge and Sons for £60 on 11:10:43. Grade ‘A-’ quality.

**Reg. No. 38/727 Inventory No. 874** – 19<sup>th</sup> century *Lang yao* tripod bulb bowl; strawberry red glazed exterior, white interior. Wood cover. Catalogued as Burrell as ‘Kangxi’. Bought from Partridge & Sons for £22 on 02:05:45. Literature: P.B., 1945, p.32. Grade ‘C’ quality.

**Reg. No. 38/728 Inventory No. 799** – Kangxi deep red *Lang yao* bowl. Painted with ‘Tisüan-te’ (1426-1435) reign mark in underglaze blue on the base. Wooden stand. Literature: P.B., 1943, p.67. – which states that the bowl is ‘*Lang yao*. *Ming Dynasty*.’ More recent attribution on the record card appears undecided whether the bowl is of Ming or Kangxi date, but the latter seems more accurate. Bought from John Sparks for £35 on 23:10:43. Of exceptional grade ‘A’ quality.

**Reg. No. 38/729 Inventory No. 771** – Kangxi *Lang yao* ‘strawberry red’ fluted bowl with brass sheath on lip concealing damage. Buff crackled base. Wooden stand. Ex-Leonard Gow Collection – Cat. No. 103. Acquired from Frank Partridge & Sons for £50 on 13:05:43. Literature: P.B., 1943, p.53. Grade ‘B+’ quality.

**Reg. No. 38/730 Inventory No. 1722** – Kangxi *Lang yao* bottle vase with squat globular body and tall cylindrical neck. Shoaling to pinkish white towards the mouth and interior. Glaze on lip imperfect. Wood plinth. Purchased from Sydney L. Moss for £20 on 04:12:48. Ex-Bennett Collection. Literature: P.B., 1948 (III), p. 21.

(Burrell had an exceptional collecting year in 1948, hence the 3 purchase books).

Grade 'B' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/731 Inventory No. 56** – Qianlong *Lang yao* **bottle vase** with very high gloss; pinkish white at the top and inside. No date or price of purchase. Possibly a gift. Grade 'A' quality. Insured for £15. A more recent attribution on the record card states the piece is of Kangxi rather than Qianlong period, although the latter seems more accurate.

**Reg. No. 38/732 Inventory No. 826** – 19<sup>th</sup> century mottled strawberry red glazed **vase with globular lobed body** and cylindrical neck. Burrell catalogued as Kangxi. Wood plinth. Ex-Edward Kurks Collection. Bought from Partridge & Sons for £46 on 16:11:44. Literature: P.B., 1944, p.7. Grade 'B-' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/733 Inventory No. 828** – 19<sup>th</sup> century mottled *sang-de-boeuf* **beaker of bronze 'Ku' shape**. White glazed lip and foot rim. Catalogued by Burrell as Kangxi. Ex-Edward Kurks Collection. Literature: P.B., 1944, p. 8. Bought from Partridge & Sons for £56 on 16:11:44. Grade 'C' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/734 Inventory No. 124** – 18<sup>th</sup> century *Lang yao* **shallow dish** with white chipped rim. Catalogued by Burrell as Kangxi. Purchased from W. Dickenson & Son for £25 on 25:04:21. Literature: P.B., 1921, p.26. Grade 'B' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/737 Inventory No. 827** – Kangxi *peach-bloom* **bottle vase** of inverted pear shaped body and cylindrical neck. Repaired with silver and with silver neck

mount concealing repairs – 19<sup>th</sup> century repair. Ex-Mrs Edward Kurks Collection.

Literature: P.B., 1944, p.7. Bought from Partridge & Sons for £25 on 16:11:44. Grade 'B' quality.

**Reg. No. 38/735 Inventory No. 796** – Fine Kangxi *peach-bloom water-pot* of beehive shape with three medallions of incised cloud decoration. Kangxi mark on base in underglaze blue. Carved wooden stand. Literature: P.B., 1943, p. 66. Bought from John Sparks for £55 on 23:10:43. Related works: Sotheby's Hong Kong, 20:11:85 & refs.

**Reg. No. 38/736 Inventory No. 815** – 18<sup>th</sup> century *peach-bloom water-pot* of beehive shape with white lip and interior. Three incised medallions of cloud decoration. Carved wooden stand. Catalogued by Burrell as Kangxi. Literature: P.B., 1944, p.85. Bought from Partridge & Sons for £47 on 16:06:44. Related works: Sotheby's Hong Kong, 20:11:85 & refs. More recent attributions record that this water-pot is later than Reg. No. 38/735 and of lesser quality. Grade 'B' quality.

### **Edward T. Chow**

**Lot 449**, '*A Very Rare Fifteenth Century Red-Glazed Dragon Dish of saucer shape*', was covered inside and out with a '*speckled bean-red glaze thinning slightly at the rim and on the foot*'. Two resist technique dragons chasing a flaming pearl decorate the exterior in a '*paler silhouette on the red ground*'. The technique was used on the interior to illustrate three clouds; the base was glazed white.<sup>42</sup>

Lot 494 is a domed *peach-bloom* waterpot with three engraved dragon medallions, '... two suffused with areas of pale mushroom colour and emerald-green flecks, beneath ... overall glaze of mottled dark rosy pink ... 'of Kangxi mark and period.<sup>43</sup>

Lot 495 is another Kangxi *peach-bloom* waterpot of beehive shape similar to the previous lot, the glaze of darker 'purplish tone'. Lot 496 was a Kangxi *peach-bloom* seal box with cover of 'compressed circular form'. The cover of a lighter 'mushroom-pink' glaze becoming 'violet-grey' towards the rim; the darker base with a bluish band around the footrim; white glazed interior and base.<sup>44</sup>

Lot 541 is catalogued as '*A Rare Copper-red Decorated Double-Gourd Vase*'; with squat lower bulb beneath slender upper bulb. The vase is decorated with '*a continuous meander*' of flowers and leaves interconnected via scrolling stems with '*spiral tendrils*'; the base unglazed and dated 17<sup>th</sup> century. Lot 542 is a rare bowl with '*brownish*' copper-red dragons chasing flaming pearls on a lightly incised rich blue ground; white glazed interior. The bowl is of the mark and period of Kangxi.<sup>45</sup>

### **E.T. Hall**

Case 1: Copper-Red Case (27 pieces)

Case 2. Claire de Lune Case (26 pieces)

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<sup>42</sup> Sotheby's Hong Kong sale catalogue: *The Edward T. Chow Collection – Part Three; Ming and Qing Porcelain and Various Works of Art*, Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 1981 at 2.30 P.M., pp. 66-67, Lot 449. The hammer price, subject to a 10 % premium was 310000.00 HK\$.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 96-97. Lots 493 & 494 – hammer prices, subject to a 10 % premium were 180000.00 & 230000.00 HK\$ respectively.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 98-99. Lots 495 & 496 – hammer prices, subject to a 10 % premium were 16000.00 & 24000.00 HK\$ respectively.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 128, 131, 157.

Case 3. First Celadon Case (20 pieces, including a Kangxi ribbed celadon vase from the E.T. Chow Collection).<sup>46</sup>

Case 4. First Blue Case (19 pieces)<sup>47</sup>

Case 5. Yellow Case (30 pieces)<sup>48</sup>

Case 6. Iron Red Case (24 monochrome and decorated pieces, 10 fine white porcelains)

Case 7. *Flambé* Case (29 pieces)

Case 8. Turquoise Case (26 pieces)

Case 9. White Case (32 pieces)

Case 10. Guan Case (18 pieces of Guan ware, 1 example of *Robbin's Egg* glazed ware and 7 *Café au lait* pieces)

Case 11. Tea Dust Case (26 pieces)

Case 12. Second Blue Case (32 pieces)

Case 13. Green Case (24 pieces including apple-green vases, 1 example of *blanc de chine*)

Case 14. Pink Case – including ruby back dishes, (1 chrysanthemum white glazed dish, 4 other white pieces, 13 pink pieces and 5 dark and pale aubergine wares).

Case 15. Second Celadon Case (25 pieces)

Case 16. Lemon Yellow Case (33 pieces; 14 monochrome lemon yellow, 4 yellow wares decorated with overglaze green enamel, 1 dark ochre yellow and 1 example of a translucent enamel green monochrome).<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Lot 98, Sotheby's Hong Kong, November 1980. Sold for HK\$ 12, 000. Catalogued by Hall as 'Iron in the Fire', No. 84 (£8, 000).

<sup>47</sup> Dating from the Kangxi to Qianlong periods, also including a 19<sup>th</sup> century piece.

<sup>48</sup> Marked and of the periods from Hongzhi (1488-1505), Zhengde (1506-1521), Jiajing (1522-1566), '17<sup>th</sup> century', Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong, to Daoguang (1821-1850) and the '19<sup>th</sup> century'.

<sup>49</sup> This case also includes an example of pale celadon and Guan ware, 2 tea dust vases, 2 monochrome green glazed wares, 1 coral red monochrome, 3 monochrome blue pieces and one white glazed vase.

Case 17. Individual Large Items (18 pieces altogether, including a *flambé* glazed double gourd vase, Ex. Alice Bowey Collection, purchased by Hall for £10, 000).

**No. 175** in the Hall Collection; *Peach-bloom* beehive waterpot, Kangxi mark and period. No damage, 'small adherence on body near neck', purchased for £19, 000. **No. 16;** as above; but with 'Tiny chip and short crack to mouth (firing crack, not through glaze)', purchased for £15, 000; Sold at Sotheby's HK, Lot 518. **No. 177** in the Hall Collection; *Peach-bloom* seal-paste box and cover, Kangxi mark and period; 'Minor chip inside', purchased for £3,000. Sold at Sotheby's HK for HK\$ 603, 750, Lot 517. **No. 178;** As above with 'Short stained crack at rim of box'; purchased for £2, 500. **No. 166** in the Hall Collection; *Peach-bloom* brushwasher, Kangxi mark and period, 'No damage', purchased for £7, 000; Sold at Sotheby's HK , Lot 519. **No. 167,** As above; 'No damage', purchased for £8, 500. **No. 184** in the Hall Collection; Tall shouldered *flambé* vase, classic shape, unmarked, crackled base, Kangxi. H: 36.4 cm, 'No damage', purchased for £12, 000. **No. 183;** As above, pear-shaped vase, Kangxi. H: 40.8 cm, 'Proto-chip at the mouth', purchased for £10, 000.

### Albert E. Wade

**Sotheby's Olympia, London:** *The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part I*; Session I - 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002.

High-fired Ruskin *flambé* specimens are characterised by Lots 262, 263, 266 and 267 of the Wade Collection. **Lot 262** was catalogued as a '*high-fired trumpet vase, post-1915, with ox-blood, purple and green speckles over a beige/ivory ground*', with a reserve estimate of £400-600. **Lot 263,** a '*high-fired vase, c. 1903, with streaked*

*purple, green, lavender and red glazes pooling to ivory around the rim... restored*’, carried the same reserve estimate as the previous lot. **Lot 266**, a *‘high-fired vase, c. 1915, in deep ruby with flecked green/turquoise inclusions pooling to ivory at the neck’*, had been no. 24 in the Ferneyhough Collection – the value of the provenance probably reflected in the reserve price of £1,000-1,500. This vase was also exhibited at the 1975 touring exhibition of ‘*Ruskin Pottery*’ organised by the Victoria and Albert Museum. Another *‘high-fired bottle-vase, c. 1909, with a deep red, purple and lavender speckled glaze pooling to white on the rim... (with a) particularly rare and desirable’* glaze, came from the Ferneyhough Collection, advertised for a reserve of £2,000-3,000. This vase was displayed at a ‘*Haslam and Whiteway*’ selling exhibition in 1981.

The second sale of the Wade Collection contained more Post-war Ruskin *flambé* dating from c.1920-1932 with reserve estimates between £250-1,200.<sup>50</sup> For instance, **Lots 362-368 and 419-423**, dated from c.1920-1932 with reserve estimates ranging from £250-350 for a group of variously dated high-fired plaques to £3,000-5,000 for a *‘high-fired mallet shaped vase, dated 1924, covered in an evenly mottled purple and green glaze... 15in. high.’*<sup>51</sup>

**Lot 366**, a high-fired vase, dated 1925, is interesting because its *‘cylindrical sides’* show the exaggerated potting rings which became a feature of some of the later Ruskin pottery. The vase displayed a *‘mottled and fissured’* red glaze over a grey and ivory ground.<sup>52</sup> **Lot 367**, a high-fired bottle vase dated 1925, is worthy of a mention

<sup>50</sup> Sotheby’s Olympia, London: *The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part II: Session II - 8<sup>th</sup> November 2002*, pp. 160-16, Lots 362-368; pp. 176-177, Lots 419-423.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160 – Lot 363 & p.177 – Lot 423.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161; Lot 366 had an estimated reserve of £800-1,200.

for its spectacular 'mottled grey ground with patches of red clouding and spots of green and black.'<sup>53</sup> Lot 421 provided an example of a late 1920's-30's moulded electric lamp base with '*clouded grey ground covered in mottled red/lavender glaze speckled in green.*'<sup>54</sup>

It is known that Moore occasionally used Minton blanks on which to apply his glazes. The reserve estimate for the cockerel was £800-1,200 while the crouching dog was estimated to be worth between £2,500-3,500, possibly because of its rarity - Moore may have even modelled the dog himself. It is interesting that many of the vases, for example Lot 173, the bottle vase c. 1905 painted by Evelyn Hope Beardmore '*with a broad band of anthemion devices, the cylindrical neck with a band of Classical figures, with a painted (Bernard Moore) mark and artist's signature,*' were estimated only within the £250-350 price band.<sup>55</sup>

#### **Interesting Bernard Moore lustre *flambé* wares, c. 1905-15.**

Lot 191, a '*large vase, dated 1910, painted by John Adams with deep red and pink lustre fish swimming among weed on a smoky ground... 41 cm high... (estimated at) £1,500-2,500.*'<sup>56</sup> Lot 189, a '*baluster jar and cover, c.1904-15, decorated in silver lustre with a single bird in flight among prunus and bamboo against a deep inky blue and mottled red ground, the flat cover with further prunus within chevron band... 34 cm high... (estimated at) £1,000-1,500.*'<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 161; Lot 367 had an estimated reserve of £800-1,200.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 176; Lot 421 had an estimated reserve of £800-1,200.

<sup>55</sup> Sotheby's Olympia, London: *The Albert E. Wade Collection: Part I - Session I*. Some vases were estimated at between £200-300, some between £400-600; Lot 174 - a jar and cover c. 1905, '*painted in deep red with fish among weeds and bubbles on a smoky ground, the domed cover with further weed and bubbles*', between £700-1,000, p. 91. Prices were obviously dependent on rarity, the quality and execution of the design and glaze, maybe on size to some extent.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 191; Lot 191.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 96; Lot 189.

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