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Objects of multiple meanings,
a provenance research of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi (Illustrations of Imperial
Ritual Paraphernalia) circulated and collected in the British Isles in the mid–
late 19th century

1 volume

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Abstract

This dissertation combines art historical analysis and provenance research and by doing so, investigates the origin order and content of the coloured versions of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi. In addition, by applying art historical understandings to the provenance research, this dissertation has tried to give some more accurate suggestions for the provenance gaps. Finally, by analysing the social experience of the object, this dissertation further investigates the changing identities of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi from a Qing imperial commission to the looted objects and finally a museum object for display.

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Finally, for a provenance research, it will always be impossible to claim that every single archives had been seen during the research especially considering the research carried only for a year. Therefore, there must be errors to be corrected and conclusions to be updated by a longer and more detailed further research. However, I shall say that I did the best I can to produce the outcomes and will take full responsibility of the quality of this research.

Introduction

Looted Objects from the Summer Palace, History of Collecting and the Understanding of Chinese Art in the Mid-Late 19th Century

Looted Objects from the Summer Palace

Looted objects from the Summer Palace is a popular topic which has attracted the attention of scholars from several disciplines, especially in recent years. The Summer Palace here refers to the Qing imperial garden complex, normally known as Yuanming Yuan, “the Garden of Perfect Brightness”.¹ The precise date of the constructing of Yuanming Yuan is unclear but it is widely understood that the garden complex was gifted by the Qing emperor Kangxi to his fourth son, who later took over Kangxi’s position as the Yongzheng emperor in 1723.² Because of this special connection, Yongzheng regarded Yuanming Yuan as precious and started to expand the garden. Under his orders, this expansion increased dramatically and Yuanming Yuan finally became an imperial residence that almost paralleled the function of the Forbidden City in the capital. The Yongzheng emperor (1678–1735) spent months every year there and even died in the palace in 1735.³ His son, later the Qianlong emperor (1735–1797) continued to expand the palaces further. In his reign, the garden complex reached its peak, and consisted of Three Mountains, the Xiang mountain, Yuquan mountain and Wanshou mountain, and Five Gardens, the Jingyi Yuan, Jingming Yuan,

¹ Tythacott, Louise, ed. *Collecting and Displaying China’s “Summer Palace” in the West: The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France*. London: Routledge, 2017, 5.

² *ibid.*

³ Wong, Young-tsu. *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Qingyi Yuan, Changchun Yuan and Yuanming Yuan.⁴ After Qianlong, the following Qing emperors continued to use Yuanming Yuan as an imperial residence, concentrating on maintenance, with only minor building repairs or changes taking place.

However, the beautiful garden complex did not last forever, as the emperors had expected. In 1860, Anglo-French troops looted and destroyed the Yuanming Yuan during the Second Opium War. There are many discussions on the factors and causes of the war, including how and why the British and the French decided to reach the Yuanming Yuan.⁵ In short, it is generally agreed that, following the arrival of the French military on 6 October 1860 and the British the following day, looting began and continued for about five days.⁶ On 18 October, following an order from James Bruce, 8th Earl of Elgin (1811–1863) the buildings of Yuanming Yuan were almost completely destroyed by fire.⁷ The actual number of objects looted is unclear, partly because of the absence of imperial inventories for the furnishings (Chinese Dang 陳設檔) of Yuanming Yuan.⁸ Nevertheless, from the contemporaneous news reports and soldiers' records, as well as later sales, a considerable amount was looted and

⁴ Although Yuanming Yuan is the name of one garden within the complex and the list of palaces consisting of Three Mountains and Five Gardens varied accordingly, the term Yuanming Yuan, or the Summer Palace in English, is widely used to refer to the whole garden complex. To avoid any confusion, this dissertation will follow this usage.

⁵ See, for example, *The Penguin History of Modern China, The Fall and Rise of a Great Power 1850–2008*. London: Allen Lane, 2008 and Wong, 2011.

⁶ Tythacott, ed., 11.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ It is generally believed that the imperial inventories for furnishings (Chenshe Dang 陈设档) were destroyed in 1860, while some scholars also argue that there may not have been such an archiving system outside the Forbidden City. See Wang Kaixi, Yuanming Yuan Shoucang ji Liushi Haiwai Wenwu Shuliang Bie lun, 圆明园收藏及流失海外文物数量别论, *Beijing Normal University Bulletin: Social Science* 4 (2016): 138–149.

brought to the west.⁹

The early arrival of Yuanming Yuan objects on the western market attracted interest from society, which led to some very early awareness and discussions of them. Almost immediately after the war in 1860, notes on the objects of the Yuanming Yuan started to appear in newspaper reports.¹⁰ Later, soldiers involved in this war started to publish their memoirs with scenes of looting and objects in the palaces recorded.¹¹ In 1966, Malone published one of the earliest books of historical research on the Summer Palace.¹² In his study, as well as explanations of the construction and development of the palace from the Kangxi period till the 1930s, a section was devoted to the looting. By collecting descriptions from almost all published diaries of the relevant soldiers, the book addresses in general the acts of looting rather than specifying what was looted. Similarly, by reviewing those published works, Mann reconstructed the whole military operation of the British troops almost day by day, which also helps our understanding of the details of the looting.¹³

⁹ Thomas, Greg M. "The Looting of Yuanming and the Translation of Chinese Art in Europe." *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 7, no. 2 (2008): 1–40.

¹⁰ See Hill, Kate, *Yuanming Yuan Index*, accessed 5/9/2018 at www.yuanmingyuanartefactindex.org/about/.

¹¹ For soldiers's memoirs, see Loch, Henry Brougham Loch Baron. *Personal Narrative of Occurrences During Lord Elgin's Second Embassy to China, 1860*. J. Murray, 1869; Leavenworth, Charles S. *The Arrow War with China*. S. Low, Marston & Company, 1901; M'Ghee, Robert James Leslie. *How We Got into Peking: A Narrative of the Campaign in China of 1860*. London: R. Bentley, 1862; Grant, Hope, Sir. *Incidents in the China War of 1860: Compiled from the Private Journals of General Sir Hope Grant*. Blackwood & Sons, 1875; Swinhoe, Robert. *Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860*. Elder, 1861; Wolseley, Garnet. *Narrative of the War with China in 1860: To Which is Added the Account of a Short Residence with the Tai-Ping Rebels at Nankin and a Voyage from Thence to Hankow*. London, Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862; Allgood, George. *China War, 1860: Letters and Journal*. New York, 1901.

¹² Malone, Carrol Brown. *History of the Peking Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing dynasty*. New York: Paragon, 1966, 180–193.

¹³ Mann, Michael. *China 1860*. Salisbury, Wiltshire: Michael Russell, 1989.

Following the increasing understanding of Chinese art history, more recent academic literature started to see the looted objects as art objects from the Qing court instead of regarding them purely as the evidence of looting, colonial war and imperialist practices. Wong's book on the history of the Summer Palace, for instance, mentioned the commission of the Forty-Views of the Summer Palace and its content referred to the design of the palace.¹⁴ However, these valuations of objects are only helpful for the modern reconstruction of the historical scene while how people, including both the Qing people and the looters, perceived them at the time, is not mentioned.

From the late 1990s onwards, scholars started to explore questions such as what was looted, why it was looted, and what happened after being looted. Hevia is probably the earliest scholar to pay attention to these issues. In his essay, not only did he remark on the Prize Auction held by the British directly after the looting, which transformed the identity of objects from looted items into commodities, but exhibitions, which are probably the earliest provenance for looted objects given in academic analysis.¹⁵ Later he further points out that the public displays of objects convey the political implications that the British authorities tried to depreciate the Chinese through descriptions of the objects to legitimise the Second Opium War.¹⁶ Similarly, in *Liberal Barbarism*, Ringmar captures some identical behaviour related to the objects, for example, soldiers would calculate the value and size to decide what

¹⁴ Wong, 2001, 48.

¹⁵ Hevia, James. "Loot's Fate: The Economy of Plunder and the Moral Life of Objects From the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China." *History and Anthropology* 6, no. 4 (1994): 319–345.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

to take considering their capacity and time for looting; although the book itself also addresses the greater historical issue of imperialist practice.¹⁷

Provenance, A Different Perspective

These historical researches investigate the implications conveyed in the practice of looting and the provenance of some objects while, without specific attention to the art historical value of them, none of them tried to explore how these looted objects were interacted with in society after being taken back to Europe. In other words, these looted objects are treated as a generalised political concept of “looted objects” within imperialist practice in the 19th century, while their artistic value, such as their form or material, and their social value in society after being looted are dismissed.

In recent years, following the growing interest in provenance research, what happened to the looted objects started to become a focus. Primarily meaning “the history of ownership of a valued object or work of art or literature” according to the dictionary, the term “provenance” itself is yet to have a confirmed definition. For a long time, the provenance, or the history of ownership in most cases, has been a matter for collectors and auction house specialists since it provides, at least partly, crucial evidence about the market value and authenticity of an object.¹⁸ More recently, curators and art historians have also started to pay attention to this issue. This is because the provenance or the “social life” of objects, aside from the issues of

¹⁷ Ringmar, Erik. *Liberal Barbarism: The European Destruction of the Palace of the Emperor of China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 72.

¹⁸ Feigenbaum, Gail, Inge Reist, and Inge Jackson Reist, eds. *Provenance: An Alternate History of Art*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2012, 2.

legal ownership and art crime,¹⁹ may not only suggest the circulation of an object within collections but reflects the transmission and even transformation of meaning, especially in the cross-cultural context.²⁰ As a result, “who collected what during which period and for what reasons” become crucial questions to consider²¹ and objects with a rich and complex social life, in this case, the Summer Palace provenance, become ideal examples for study.

In practice, a group of studies specifically focusing on looted objects from the Summer Palace were published, and different aspects of these objects were explored. Some of them take their perspective from museums and investigate how the objects entered the museum and how the museum reacted to these objects in regards to display in different periods. For instance, Droguet, Thomas and several other scholars, each investigate the formation of the collection and issues of displaying the Summer Palace objects held in modern museums.²² Some other essays explore patterns of collecting these Summer Palace looted items at various times. Tythacott, for example, explores how looted objects ended up in regimental museums with discussions on issues of their display.²³ Hill’s essay also notes the varying behaviours and interest of looters of different rank and social background.²⁴ As well as

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Steuber, Jason, and Guolong Lai, eds. *Collectors, Collections & Collecting the Arts of China: Histories & Challenges*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014.

²² See Scott, James, “‘Chinese Gordon’ and the Royal Engineers Museum”, McLoughlin, Kevin, “Rose-water Upon His Delicate Hands, Imperial and Imperialists Readings of the Hope Grant Ewer”, Thomas M. Gerg, “Yuanmingyuan on Display” and Droguet Vincent, “Empress Eugenie’s Chinese Museum at the Chateau of Fontainebleau” in Tythacott, ed. *Collecting and Displaying China’s “Summer Palace” in the West*.

²³ Tythacott, Louise, “Trophies of War: Representing ‘Summer Palace’ Loot in Military Museums in the UK”. *Museum and Society* 13, no. 4 (2015): 469–488.

²⁴ Hill, Katrina. “Collecting on Campaign: British Soldiers in China during the Opium Wars.” *Journal of the History of Collections* 25, no. 2 (2012): 227–252.

reviewing the Summer Palace provenance per se, the third group of essays focus more on the transformation of meaning and take the objects from the Summer Palace to a broader discourse on the history of collecting. For instance, Pierson notes that the looted objects provide a brand-new type of artefact, which were commissioned to the Qing emperor's taste, and which would not have been publically accessible to western consumers before this point, even though Chinese objects, especially porcelain, were familiar in society.²⁵ Later, she further investigates that these "new materials" formed a "taste" through circulating in the art market and in return, this led to the ceramic fragments with such provenance being considered collectable.²⁶ Hill also finds that the circulation of Summer Palace objects after reaching Britain, especially through a series of international exhibitions, contributed to pattern designs being transferred and localised.²⁷ In Pearce's study, not only is the reliability of provenance questioned, the surprising transformation of its identity is explored.²⁸ Although with different focuses, these studies textualise the basic social context of the mid-late 19th century in which these looted objects were encountered. Also, arguments on the patterns of collecting or circulation, the transformation of identity and their impacts on the wider social discourse provide an ideal model for future object-based studies.

²⁵ Pierson, Stacey. *Collectors, Collections and Museums: The Field of Chinese Ceramics in Britain, 1560–1960*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007.

²⁶ Pierson, Stacey. "'True Beauty of Form and Chaste Embellishment': Summer Palace Loot and Chinese Porcelain Collecting in Nineteenth-Century Britain." In Tythacott, ed., 82.

²⁷ Hill, Kate. "The Yuanmingyuan and Design Reform in Britain." In Tythacott, ed., 64.

²⁸ Pearce, Nick. "From Relic to Relic: A Brief History of the Skull of Confucius." *Journal of the History of Collections* 26, no. 2 (2013): 207–222.

Huangchao Liqi Tushi, A Case Study

Taking the above into account, a group of illustrative manuscripts, originally entitled the “Treasures of the Summer Palace”, acquired from a Mr Walter Henry Harris in the late 19th century (hereafter the Harris set) thus becomes a good example for research.

To date, only three studies have discussed the function and provenance of the Harris set in considerable detail. As early as 1959, Medley noticed the existence of a group of Chinese illustrations and manuscripts painted on silk in the Victoria & Albert Museum (hereafter V&A) collection that were marked as loot from the Summer Palace. According to her research, these illustrations are an incomplete portion of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi (the Illustrations of Imperial Ritual Paraphernalia, hereafter HCLQTS) and one set of them, acquired from a Mr Walter H. Harris in the late 19th century, contains pages with the seal mark of “Treasures of the Summer Palace” (Yuanming Yuan Bao 圓明園寶).²⁹ In 2004, Wilson reviewed Medley’s work and continued the research on the HCLQTS in the V&A collection, identifying that those plates which Medley regarded as duplicates are the same type of objects in different material, and thus represented in a very similar colour.³⁰ Specifically, her essay points to the existence of a group of HCLQTS pages held in the British Library and a smaller version held in the History Museum of China.³¹ Also, Chinese

²⁹ Medley, Margret. “‘The Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Ch’ing Dynasty’ in the Victoria and Albert Museum.” In *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 31, 1957/59, 95–105.

³⁰ *ibid.*

³¹ Wilson, Ming. “New Research on the Ceremonial Paraphernalia Album in the V&A.” In *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 68, 2003/4, 51–59. The History Museum and the Revolution Museum of China were merged into what is today the National Museum of China, while interestingly, the HCLQTS set mentioned here cannot be found on the museum website and the researcher I contacted had no permission to research the whole collection of the museum. Therefore, whether the set is held in the National Museum of

scholar Liu Lu discussed the Huangchao Liqi Tushi from the perspective of the Qing court, arguing that the Qianlong emperor's intention of building and reforming the ritual system and the production of the HCLQTS is part of a larger project.³²

These studies provide not only general provenance information for portions of the HCLQTS, including one with the Summer Palace provenance, but also some important discussions on its content, reception and production. However, considering that these studies took place decades ago when many Qing archives were yet to be published, many arguments, including around its production and reception, were limited by the evidence available at the time. New materials discovered after the publishing of these three essays make it possible and necessary to re-examine the Huangchao Liqi Tushi, especially the Harris set.

In 2004, the same year Liu and Wilson published their works, the Archives of the Qing Imperial Household Department (hereafter Zaobanchu archives), where the information on the Qianlong commission and production of the HCLQTS were recorded, was published. Also, probably because the printed version is widely known, scholars dismissed the archives of paintings in studies of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi. Recently, relevant records were found in the List of Paintings held in the Neiwubu Institution of Antiques (Neiwubu guwuchenliesuo shuhua mulu, 內務部古物陳列所書畫目錄 hereafter the *mulu*)³³ and the

China following the merger or has been transferred to another institution is yet to be confirmed.

³² Liu, Lu. "An Illustrated Manual for Regulating the Qing Society: A Discussion of Several Issues Relating to 'Huangchao liqi tushi'." *Palace Museum Journal*, no. 4 (2004): 130–144.

³³ He Yu ed. *Nei wu bu gu wu chen lie suo shu hua mu lu* 內務部古物陳列所書畫目錄 Beijing: Jing hua yin shu ju, Minguo 19 1930. I am grateful to Mr Ma for sharing this important information with me.

Additional Edition of Qianlong's Catalogue of Paintings and Calligraphies, the "Precious Book Box of the Stone Drain" (Shi Qu Bao Ji Xu Bian 石渠寶笈續編, hereafter *xubian*),³⁴ which provide valuable information about the content of two coloured versions of the HCLQTS especially because the two known sets, one held in the Palace Museum Beijing and the other mentioned by Wilson previously, are not widely accessible.³⁵

In addition to these Qing imperial archives, the development of digital databases makes it possible now to investigate not only the social activities of the former owner Walter H. Harris back to the late 19th century but also sales records, exhibitions and social perceptions of objects of a similar kind.³⁶

More importantly, the rich archival materials held in the three institutions and the details collected from the illustrations provide essential information not only for the reconstruction of the social life of these illustrations but also about their production back to the Qing period. Particularly, by accessing the actual works, provenance marks at the back of the pages could be spotted, which provide crucial evidence to support the arguments of this dissertation.³⁷

³⁴ *Qinding Shiqu Baoji Xubian* vol. 3 for index, accessed 5/09/2018 at <https://archive.org/stream/02094567.cn#page/n144>. For content vol.18, at <https://archive.org/stream/02094582.cn#page/n22>.

³⁵ The Palace Museum set is not published and the information can only be found on their website at www.dpm.org.cn/ancient/mingqing/142815.html. For the Chengde set, see footnote 31.

³⁶ I checked the British Newspaper Archives for searching the historical news reports and Ancestry.com for genealogical research.

³⁷ I would like to thank Dr Louise Tythacott and Mr Stephen Lei for arranging the viewings and the museum staff for their kind help.

Based on this new evidence, as well as the new perspectives for examining the Summer Palace objects, this dissertation will take the portion of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi acquired from Mr. Walter H. Harris as a case to explore its cultural history from its production in the Qing court until being collected by the three institutions of the British Isles in the last decade of the 19th century. For an easier understanding, chapters will follow chronological order. Chapter 1 will look at the first review of the new materials and try to reconstruct the process of production of the HCLQTS. In Chapter 2, the reception of the HCLQTS in the Qing court will be discussed based on the outcomes of the previous chapter. This chapter will also try to restore the original order of the Harris set with a discussion of the reliability of its claimed Yuanming Yuan provenance from the Qing archives. In Chapter 3, arguments will be focused on a potential provenance for and reception of the Harris set after looting. Chapter 4 will explore how Walter H. Harris encountered the HCLQTS and how it finally entered the South Kensington Museum. Finally, remaining questions and possible directions for further research will be considered briefly.

Chapter 1

Huangchao Liqi Tushi: Origins and the Production Process

Before analysing the reception of the HCLQTS and Harris set in the Qing court back in the 18th century, it is important to have an overview of this publication. As the name suggests, Huangchao Liqi Tushi, the Illustrations of Imperial Ritual Paraphernalia, is a publication of Qing imperial regulations and codes. Traditionally, the HCLQTS is believed to have two main versions, a coloured version painted by court artists and a monochrome version in woodblock prints. Because the coloured version has never been published, it is not possible to have an accurate account of the content of this version. However, by comparing the known pages of the coloured version to the printed version, scholars notice that they generally matched in the corresponding sections despite some minor differences.³⁸ Therefore, it is possible to have a rough overview of the HCLQTS based on the monochrome printed version.

Arguments in this chapter will be divided into three parts. In part one, available Qing archives referencing the production of the HCLQTS, including both the printed and the coloured version, will be reviewed to reconstruct how the whole HCLQTS production project progressed. The second part will consider the factors affecting and the outcomes of this project and analyse the reception of the HCLQTS in the Qing context. Finally, based on the discoveries in parts one and two, the third part will combine the Qing archives and the provenance marks found on the backs of the pages to argue the possibilities of restoring the original order of the pages from the Harris set.

³⁸ Medley, 95.

Based on the calculation of the printed version collected during the Siku Quanshu, the Four Treasures imperial library project, one may estimate the set contains more than 1,300 leaves of illustrations and explanatory texts. A complete set of the HCLQTS consists of six sections: Section 1, ceremonial vessels (*jiqui*, 祭器); Section 2, scientific equipment (*yiqi*, 儀器) ; Section 3, dress (*guanfu*, 冠服) ; Section 4, musical instruments (*yueqi*, 樂器) ; Section 5, insignia (*lubu*, 鹵簿) and Section 6, weaponry (*wubei*, 武備) .³⁹ In each section, objects are illustrated with corresponding explanatory texts. In most of the cases, there is an illustration of objects with corresponding explanatory texts on the other side, both written or painted on a rectangular honey-coloured silk folio made of two square plates (Fig. 1-1). When a type of object has multiple illustrations, two illustrations are painted side by side, and a long inscription occupies another whole folio (Figs 1-2; 1-3). The format matches the instructions at the beginning of the HCLQTS, written by the officials in charge of reviewing, that “[the illustrations and texts for each object] should list the measurements, material, the standard form and iconography as well as the standard in amount and relevant order of usage in detail.”⁴⁰

Today, seven public institutions across the world are known to keep pages of the coloured version of the HCLQTS. The V&A, the National Museum of Scotland, the National Museum of Ireland, and the British Library are known to have some incomplete portions of the

³⁹ Wilson, 54–56.

⁴⁰ The preface and inscriptions can be found in the printed version of the HCLQTS in *Siku Quanshu*, *Shibu* vol. 414 “每器皆列图于右系说于左详其广狭长短围径之度金玉玕贝锦假之质刻镂绘画组绣之制以及品数之多寡章采之等差无不缕析条分——胪载考”.

HCLQTS. There is another small portion kept in the British Library,⁴¹ and the Mactaggart Collection of the University of Alberta Museums also has an incomplete portion.⁴²

Despite these rather fragmentary groups of pages, there are also at least two complete sets of the coloured version. Although never published, there is a set kept in the Palace Museum Beijing mentioned in Liu's citation as well as its online database.^{43,44} Also, there is a version in a smaller size from the Imperial Summer Residence in Chengde once kept in the History Museum of China mentioned by Wilson in her study.⁴⁵

The Harris set consists of 290 pages of the HCLQTS, with 65 pages having been sent to the Royal Scottish Museum (now National Museum of Scotland, hereafter NMS), 61 pages to the Dublin Museum of Arts and Sciences (now National Museum of Ireland, hereafter NMI) and the rest in the South Kensington Museum (now V&A).^{46,47} Unfortunately, I have not been able to access the portion kept in the NMI, but based on the V&A and NMS portions, together with the descriptions from the inventory list of the NMI portion, it is clear that the Harris set is mainly the pages from Section 3, Dress (*guanfu*), with only a small number of scattered pages from Section 4, Musical Instruments (*yueqi*), Section 5, Insignia (*lubu*) and Section 6, Weaponry (*wubei*).

⁴¹ Dickinson, Gary, and Linda Wrigglesworth. *Imperial Wardrobe*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2000, 22.

⁴² Vollmer, John E. *Dressed to Rule: 18th Century Court Attire in the Mactaggart Art Collection*. University of Alberta, 2007, 2.

⁴³ Liu, 130.

⁴⁴ *Palace Museum Beijing*, accessed 4/7/2018 at www.dpm.org.cn/ancient/mingqing/142815.html.

⁴⁵ Wilson, 58–59.

⁴⁶ The format and the issue of calculating the extent will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

⁴⁷ Medley, 99–100.

Production Overview

How the HCLQTS was produced is always a key argument in studies on it and scholars provide several suggestions to answer this question. As early as 1959, Medley noticed an issue regarding the date of the HCLQTS. In her study, she noticed that the edition on musical instruments appeared later in 1760, a year after “the summer of the 1759” that Qianlong signed in the preface.⁴⁸ Furthermore, she suggests that the printed version published in 1766 was based on the coloured version, and was later collected in the Siku Quanshu in 1796 in 28 *juan* or volumes, extended from the original 18 volumes.⁴⁹

In comparison, Liu’s study in 2004 analyses the HCLQTS from another angle with some different suggestions. Instead of analysing the painted version, Liu focused only on the printed version and tried to trace the origin of the HCLQTS from the Qing archival materials. Here, she accepts the date of Qianlong’s signature, and she insists that the HCLQTS was finished by the summer of 1759.⁵⁰ Further, she argues that in 1763, four years after the completion in 1759, the HCLQTS was reviewed for the first time with some additions and in the 31st year of Qianlong (1766), a printed version was commissioned and produced in Wuying Palace (武英殿), the imperial institution for publishing in the Qianlong period. After that, in the 38th year of Qianlong (1773), the printed version was collected in the History section of the Siku Quanshu, the Four Treasures imperial library project.⁵¹ Interestingly, she

⁴⁸ *ibid*, 96.

⁴⁹ *ibid*.

⁵⁰ Liu, 139.

⁵¹ Liu, 130.

did not provide references to evidence where these dates are from. One possible explanation is that she takes the date of the inscription of the officials who oversaw the editing work, which was signed the 5th of July of the 31st year of Qianlong (1766), from the Siku Quanshu edition of the printed HCLQTS after Qianlong's preface, to be the date of the first round of reviewing and publishing. However, it is still not clear why she would claim that the first review was completed in 1763.

Despite this discrepancy, she further suggests that the earliest evidence of producing, or at least attempts to produce, the HCLQTS can be traced back to the 15th year of Qianlong (1750) when the Qianlong emperor claimed that,

as the ritual vessels suggest, [the ritual] continues for generations and will not change. The officials should follow this tradition, and a relevant instruction should thus have detailed explanations and images. I, therefore, ordered to commission such a book with both illustrations and texts based on the honour guard for the most formal ceremonies...⁵²

The question of the finishing date of the HCLQTS was seemingly solved by an “unambiguous” note in Wilson's essay, which was also published in 2004. According to this, a document dated the 25th year of Qianlong notes that one set of colour illustrations was delivered to Nanxun Palace and two sets of ink illustrations were delivered to Wuying Palace.⁵³ As the note suggests, two versions were finished at the same time. Even though Wilson found it strange, she tended to explain this as the freedom of imperial power as “the

⁵² *ibid*, 139.

⁵³ Wilson, 55.

emperor could do what he wanted”.⁵⁴

Even though divergent in finishing date, it is generally agreed by both Liu and Wilson that the Wuyingdian printed edition was made in the 31st year of Qianlong (1766) and they both connect the HCLQTS to the re-configuration of the state insignia (*lubu*) or the ritual and order for the ceremonial honour guard.

In all three studies, scholars give their suggestions on the origin of the production, whether or not the 24th year of Qianlong (1759) was the finishing date, and the connection and key dates between the coloured and the printed versions. However, none of the studies provides solid archival evidence to prove these suggestions. Considering all the essays were finished decades ago when many Qing imperial archives were not accessible, it is reasonable to re-examine these ideas with additional help from the more readily available Qing archives.

Archival Evidence

Through a brief survey of the Zaobanchu archives, records relevant to the HCLQTS can be found potentially ranging from the 13th year (1748) till the 42nd year (1777).⁵⁵ It is worth noting that not all records note the full title of the HCLQTS. In fact, the full name appeared very rarely and in most of the cases, the shorter term, *liqi tu* (禮器圖), or the Illustration of the Ritual Paraphernalia, and the titles of the sections, such as *jiqu tu* (祭器圖), the

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Limited by time, the survey did not cover the whole Qianlong era but from what I found, especially with the support of the record of the 42nd year of Qianlong (1777), the main period of production should not be beyond this.

Illustration of the Ceremonial Vessels, were used much more frequently in the archives. Occasionally, a term was not written as standard which therefore makes it hard to distinguish the relevance of some of the records. To best avoid misunderstanding, especially considering some of the writings in the archives may refer to a similar English translation, a translation of the most frequently used terms will be given, and any term other than these suggests a different text and needs to be more carefully examined.

In the Zaobanchu case, the section titles were most frequently used, although sometimes minor differences may also apply. For the six sections, the archive will normally note them as *jìqì tu* (祭器圖), the Illustrations of the Ritual Vessels; *yìqì tu* (儀器圖), the Illustrations of the Scientific Equipment; *guānfú tu* (冠服圖), the Illustrations of the Costumes; *yuèqì tu* (樂器圖) the Illustrations of the Musical Instruments; *lú bù tu* (鹵簿圖), the Illustrations of the Insignia; and *wúbèi tu* (武備圖), the Illustrations of the Arms and Armours. Specifically, both *tu* (圖) and *hua* (畫) in the archive refer to paintings or illustrations alternatively while, *tu* is much more frequently used probably because the HCLQTS is titled as a *tushi* (圖式), an illustrated schema.

Among the Zaobanchu archives records, relevant notes can be found from the workshops including the Painting Academy (*huayuan chu* 畫院處), the Painting Workshop (*hua zuo* 畫作) *Ruyi guan Studio* (*ruyi guan* 如意館), the Cloisonné Workshop (*falang zuo* 琺瑯作), the Imperial Textile Factory in Suzhou (*Suzhou zhizao* 蘇州織造), the Mounting and Boxing Workshop (*xiabiao zuo* 匣裱做) the Yearly Registers (*jishi lu* 記事錄), Wood Workshop (*guangmu zuo* 廣木作) etc. ranging from the 13th year of Qianlong (1748) to the 42nd

year. The earliest record directly related to the HCLQTS can be traced back to the 15th year of Qianlong (1750). Where “A hundred and seven pages of Illustrations of the Costumes of the Emperor (皇上冠服圖)” were mentioned.⁵⁶ Although there is no direct mention of “Huangchao Liqi Tushi”, the term “Illustrations of Costumes of the Emperor”(皇上冠服圖), which matches the section title used in the printed version as well as a large number of illustrations, makes it evident.

Interestingly, records relevant to the HCLQTS appeared in the following year but then suddenly stopped for several years⁵⁷ before production restarted and reached its peak in the 1760s. This is evident from a series of records found consecutively from the 26th year (1761) to 33rd year (1768) – for every year there are records found noting the production of the HCLQTS. After the 33rd year (1768), records appeared relatively less often, but up until the 42nd year (1777), there are still records relevant to the HCLQTS.⁵⁸

Despite the overall trend of production of the HCLQTS, the content of certain key records also provides very crucial clues which not only help in solving the starting point of production, but also provide clues to the unfolding of the whole project. For example, a record dated 5th November of the 32nd year of Qianlong (1767) gives the amount of completed and upcoming work, with an estimated duration.⁵⁹ Moreover, the record of 26th

⁵⁶ Zhongguo di 1 li shi dang an guan. *Qing Gong Nei Wu Fu Zao Ban Chu Dang an Zong Hui*. Di 1 ban. Beijing: Ren min chu ban she, 2005 Vol. 17, 355. Hereafter Zaobanchu Archives.

⁵⁷ See the full list of records in Appendix 1.

⁵⁸ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 40, 257, 260 and 381.

⁵⁹ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 31, 48.

June of the 36th year (1771) notes the packing format.

Among the records, the most exciting discovery is a note found from the 42nd year (1777) in which the Qianlong emperor asked his officials to check whether a set commissioned for the Mukden Palace (in modern-day Shenyang city) had been sent and for an update on the condition of the remaining sets. From the reply, a total of five sets of the HCLQTS were mentioned: the earliest set finished in the 16th year (1751) kept in Ningshou Palace (甯壽宮) in the Forbidden City; a set in the Yuanming Yuan, finished in the 29th year (1764); a set in the Summer Residence Chengde (承德避暑山莊) finished in the 33rd year (1768); a set in Qianqing Palace (乾清宮) in the Forbidden City finished in the 37th year (1772) and finally a set was to be sent to Shengjing (盛京), or the Mukden Palace, in the 42nd year (1777).⁶⁰

In addition to the Zaobanchu archives, the List of Paintings held in the Neiwubu Institution of Antiques (*neiwubu guwuchenliesuo shuhua mulu*, 內務部古物陳列所書畫目錄 hereafter the *mulu*)⁶¹ and the Additional Edition of Qianlong's catalogue of Paintings and Calligraphies, the *shiqu baoji xubian* (石渠寶笈續編, hereafter *xubian*),⁶² also provide essential information about the production of the HCLQTS.

⁶⁰ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 40, 381.

⁶¹ He Yu ed. *Nei wu bu gu wu chen lie suo shu hua mu lu* 內務部古物陳列所書畫目錄 Beijing: Jing hua yin shu ju, Minguo 19 1930. Thanks to Mr Ma for sharing this important information with me.

⁶² *Qinding Shiqu Baoji Xubian* vol. 3 for index, accessed 5/09/2018 at <https://archive.org/stream/02094567.cn#page/n144> For content vol.18 , at <https://archive.org/stream/02094582.cn#page/n22>.

In the *xubian*, a set of HCLQTS was recorded in Volume 3, under the category of *paintings and calligraphies by a collection of Works Done by Groups of Artists of the Present Dynasty* (*benchao jijin shuhua* 本朝集錦書畫).⁶³ Huangchao Liqi Tushi is the first piece recorded under this section, noted as Huangchao Liqi Tu, 96 volumes kept in the Qianqing Palace of the Forbidden City followed by six albums of battle paintings, the four scrolls edition of the Portraits of Periodical Offering (*zhigong tu* 職貢圖) and the scroll of the Emperor's Honour Guard (*yuding dajia lubu tu* 禦定大駕鹵簿圖).^{64,65} Considering the Zaobanchu record mentioned previously, this must be the Qianqing Palace set finished in 1772.

The catalogue entry provides a general description of the format:

Painted on silk, the illustrations are on the right and the texts are on the left, which is for explanation to the corresponding illustration. If there are two illustrations, then there will be a whole folio of two illustrations and another folio for the text.⁶⁶

After this, Qianlong's preface followed by a table of contents are given. Even though probably due to the word limit, the table of contents does not give a full list of objects, the title of the first and the last object of each volume is mentioned with corresponding page and volume number. At the end, the record mentioned the existence of "an 18-volume printed version" together with "three imperial seals", namely the *Wu fu wu dai tang gu xi tian zi bao*

⁶³ *Qinding Shiqu Baoji Xubian* vol. 3, accessed 5/09/2018

<https://archive.org/stream/02094567.cn#page/n144>.

⁶⁴ The actual content lists only 92 volumes, this issue will be discussed later.

⁶⁵ *Qinding Shiqu Baoji Xubian* vol. 3, accessed 5/09/2018

<https://archive.org/stream/02094567.cn#page/n144>.

⁶⁶ *Qinding Shiqu Baoji Xubian* vol. 18, accessed 5/09/2018

<https://archive.org/stream/02094582.cn#page/n22>.

(The Hall of Five Happiness and Five Generations); *Ba zheng mao die zhi bao* (The Seal of an Octogenarian) and *Qianlong yulan zhi bao* (Viewed by His Majesty Qianlong).

The *mulu* records the information about the Chengde set finished in 1768. The catalogue was made during the early 20th century. When the Republican governor took authority after the 1911 revolution, items once belonging to the Qing imperial court (except some kept in the Forbidden City by the former emperor Puyi) were transferred to the museum and catalogued. Probably for this reason, the descriptions here are clearer and the number of pages in each volume, including the blank page, was specifically mentioned.⁶⁷

Although the short descriptions from the two records could not help too much in decoding the actual content of each page, the size and format mentioned there could be compared to the Zaobanchu archives. There are several records noting the two sizes, the Large Size (大樣) and the Small Size (小樣) of the HCLQTS, while very few of them give the actual dimensions. In a record dated 27th October of the 23rd year (1758), additional copies of a volume of Ritual Vessels in the same size as the model copy and a copy of Large Size (大樣) were commissioned.⁶⁸ Specifically, the dimension of the Large Size was also given as “1 *chi* 3 *cun* 3 *fen* high and 1 *chi* 2 *cun* 8 *fen* wide”. Comparing this to the Qianqing Palace set recorded in the *xubian*, which is of 1 *chi* 3 *cun* high and 2 *chi* 5 *cun* 3 *fen* wide, the height is the same and the width is doubled. This is probably because the record in the Zaobanchu archives notes the size of a single leaf while the *xubian* does so as a folded page. Therefore,

⁶⁷ He, 1930.

⁶⁸ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 23, 488.

it is safe to claim this set is one of the Large Size sets and the Chengde set, which is 9 *cun* high, 9 *cun* seven *fen* wide thus should be the Small Size set.

The Starting Point of the Project

No record has been found noting the order from the Qianlong emperor marking the starting point of the HCLQTS. The earliest capture of the full title is Qianlong's preface inscription dated the summer of the 24th year (1759) and the term was not mentioned by the Zaobanchu archives until the 29th year (1764).⁶⁹ However, the starting point of the project is very early, and may be traced back to at least the 15th year of his reign (1750). As Liu notes, the commission of the HCLQTS was probably the outcome of the changing of state ritual. As she argues, in the 12th year (1747), the Qianlong emperor changed the material of the ritual vessels. Instead of using the bronze vessels, which was standardised by his father, the Yongzheng emperor, Qianlong emperor recalled the Ming (1368-1644) tradition which using porcelain as the material for ritual vessels.⁷⁰ In the following years, the emperor also reformed the *lubu*, or the regulation, standards and relevant decorative order of the guard of honour. Historically, the guard of honour can be distinguished into three levels for different purposes or levels of importance. Now the emperor merged the three into one entirety titled *dajia lubu*, or the Greatest Guard of Honour, with additional corresponding use of animals, objects and accessories.⁷¹ In the 15th year (1750), he formally claimed that due to the importance of the ritual and the correct order of the corresponding ritual vessels, a detailed

⁶⁹ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 28, 51.

⁷⁰ Liu, 139.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

illustrative volume with both the illustrations of objects and explanatory texts should be made based on the existing the *dajia lubu*.⁷² It is not clear what the *dajia lubu* here refers to. On the one hand, it may reference to a scroll bearing the same title had been commissioned just two years before.⁷³ While, the term also can be the regulation and ritual itself, so it could also be an independent volume of illustrative book. No matter which the record refers to, an illustrative book ‘having a textual explanation of the corresponding ritual’ is very much referencing the format of the HCLQTS.

Liu’s argument is further confirmed by the Zaobanchu archives. As mentioned above, the earliest record securely related to the HCLQTS is dated the 15th year (1750) and states:

A hundred and seven pages of Illustrations of the Costumes of the Emperor [皇上冠服圖] were received and [the emperor] asked to send them to the Chun Yu Shu He Painting Academy [春宇舒和] and asked two artists to paint this in detail.

Clearly, this record is not a note of starting the project but an updating report during the process.⁷⁴

Based on Liu’s suggestion above, the preparation for the HCLQTS can be traced back to the 12th (1747) and 13th year of Qianlong (1748) thus some Zaobanchu records of the 13th year (1748), although they do not specifically mention the HCLQTS, might be worth noting. For example, Wang Youdun was appointed to “send an Album of Ceremonial Vessels (祭器圖

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ See also *Qinding Shiqu Baoji Xubian* vol. 3, accessed 5/09/2018
<https://archive.org/stream/02094567.cn#page/n144>.

⁷⁴ *Zaobanchu Archives* vol. 17, 355.

冊頁) with [texts of] 12 pieces of Ritual Vessels written” to the court artists Shen Yuan and Jin Kun to paint the standard model for the emperor to check. After being checked and agreed by the Qianlong emperor, wooden models were later made and sent to the relevant workshops for the models of the actual ritual vessel under the supervision of Prince Zhuang.⁷⁵ On 13th November of the same year, it is noted that a volume of Ceremonial Implements (儀仗冊) was handed to official Wang Youdun by the eunuch from Maoqin Palace for the court artist Jin Kun to draft the painting of *lubu dajia*, which was also catalogued in the *xubian* just several lots after the HCLQTS.⁷⁶

With such brief notes, it is not possible to know the actual content and format of this Album of Ceremonial Vessels and compare it to the Ceremonial Vessels section of the HCLQTS despite their shared title. However, it is clear that the emperor ordered some kind of album in a similar theme, with an explanatory text and illustrations, as early as 1748. Also, considering the painting of the *lubu dajia* (*Imperial Guard of Honor*) should have represented the insignia of the emperor’s guard of honour with a certain level of accuracy, the volume of Ceremonial Implements (儀仗冊), although illustrative, must have had some close connection to Section 5, the Insignia of the HCLQTS at text level.

In addition, Wang Youdun is referred to in both records, and he is later one of the key figures responsible for the production of the HCLQTS. Also, Prince Zhuang, who is mentioned in the production of these ritual objects, later becomes the chef editor and administrator of the

⁷⁵ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 16, 240.

⁷⁶ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 16, 613.

HCLQTS project according to the preface of the HCLQTS. More importantly, the Maoqin Palace mentioned above, is also responsible for writing the text of the HCLQTS. Therefore, even though these albums and books mentioned above are not directly related to the HCLQTS, it is reasonable to assume that they bear the hallmarks of certain aspects of the HCLQTS.

The Issue of the Finishing Date: The 24th Year?

As well as an unclear starting point for the project, the finishing date of the HCLQTS also remains unclear. As mentioned above, most of the studies tend to suggest that the HCLQTS was finished in the 24th year. Specifically, the archive provided by Wilson, dated the 25th year, almost makes this statement solid. However, after reviewing the Zaobanchu archives, this claim becomes very confusing.

Setting the 24th year (1758) as a key time point, the HCLQTS records in the Zaobanchu archives are strikingly different before and after this year. According to my survey, there is a huge blank with not a single word noting the HCLQTS between the 16th year (1751) and the 24th year (1758). In comparison, records constantly appeared after the 24th year, almost every year for over a decade. Considering the huge contrast and an 8-year gap between the 16th and the 24th years, it is difficult to believe the archives here are lost or were not recorded for some reason. In which case, it would be very strange to consider the idea that the HCLQTS was finished in the 24th year (1759).

Also, in a note of the 25th year (1759), it is mentioned that 204 pages of *lubu quantum* (鹵

簿全圖) , which can be either understood as An Overall Illustration of *lubu* or A Full Illustration(s) of *lubu*, together with a same amount of texts were received in November of the 24th year and were later presented and reviewed by the emperor in February of the 25th year.⁷⁷ If the HCLQTS was completed in the 24th year as signed, it is very unlikely that the production record of a section was produced so late in the year and further reviewed by the emperor in the following year. Although we cannot deny that it could refer to additional commissions after finishing the first set in the 24th year, it may be a clue suggesting that in fact the set was not completed by the 24th year.

The Zaobanchu Archives after the 25th year indicate that production did not stop but continued in the following decades. Starting from the 25th year, relevant records appeared almost every year until the 42nd year, nearly two decades in total. Among them, a record of the 32nd year (1767) is surprising. In the record of the Painting Academy (畫院處) of the 5th November, Qianlong asked for an update on the progress of the project, and the response was:

There are in total 13,918 units of the added and updated work in the six sections of the HCLQTS. For six painters, it will take 2,355 days, or six and a half years to complete. If we hire six additional painters from outside [the Painting Academy or the court?], it will take three years and three months to complete.⁷⁸

Although it is not possible to know if a unit of work was equivalent to a page, it is a very solid evidence showing that even in the 32nd year, there is still a huge amount of work to be

⁷⁷ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 25, 448.

⁷⁸ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 31, 48.

done, which also confirms that the production of the HCLQTS was a much larger project than previously expected.

Knowing that the project did not finish in the 24th year (1759), could it be possible that the first set rather than the whole project was completed in that year? After reviewing the known archival materials, this suggestion is also problematic. Liu, the main supporter of the 24th year (1759) idea, argues that the commission of the HCLQTS was a part of a larger ritual reform in the Qianlong emperor's court. As she argues, the commission is based on the re-editing of the Collected Statutes of the Qing dynasty (*daqing huidian* 大清會典) finished in the 23rd year (1758) and the commission of the the Collected Rituals of the Qing dynasty (*daqing tongli* 大清通禮) finished in the 24th year (1759), two important textual sources for the Qing state ritual.⁷⁹ This is further confirmed by the archival evidence provided by Wilson, of a record noting that a painted and two printed versions had been presented to the emperor in the 25th year (1760).⁸⁰

This evidence makes the 24th year idea seem reasonable, while the Zaobanchu archives show the opposite. In the record dated the 42nd year (1777) mentioned previously, the Qianlong emperor asked to check the HCLQTS of the court and from the reply in the report it can be seen that a set held in the Ningshou Palace in the Forbidden City had been painted in the 16th year (AD 1748). Also, it is very surprising to note that the set mentioned after the 16th year one was the Yuanming Yuan set painted in the 29th year, while the 24th year was

⁷⁹ Liu, 139.

⁸⁰ Wilson, 53.

not mentioned at all.⁸¹

On the other hand, it is also very unlikely that a set was completed as early as the 16th year. As discussed previously, Liu suggests the foundation of the HCLQTS are the changes in the ritual objects and the reform of the *dajia lubu* dated the 12th (1747) and the 13th year (1748) and it was not until the 15th year (1750) that the Qianlong emperor formally stated his intention of commissioning such a work. In other words, the first set was, at the most, produced in no more than two years. Also, from the editor's inscription after Qianlong emperor's preface, the victories at the rebellions of the Junggar banner and the Revolt of the Altishahr Khojas in 1758 and 1759 were noted as a part of the reason for the commission. If this is true, how could a set have been completed years before the wars?

To clarify this issue, it is important to review the materials relevant to the 16th year of Qianlong (1751). As mentioned above, it was only in the 15th year (1750), just one year before the inscribed completion date, that a direct reference to the HCLQTS appeared in the records formally, and that year, only the Costumes section was mentioned. On the 7 February of the next year, Ruyi guan Studio reported that Prince Zhuang had ordered the official to send "eleven pages of Illustrations of the Ritual Vessel and Text" to his Majesty for approval. In the same record "one page of the Jue vessel of the Ritual Vessel" was also presented and after approval, the emperor ordered Wu Gui to guide the court artists Lu Zhan and Dai Hong to paint a copy and Zhang Ruocheng to write the text on the silk plate in 9 *cun* high, 1 *chi*

⁸¹ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 40, 381.

wide for an album (冊頁).⁸² From this, it appears a number of pages and sections are seemingly incomplete.

On the other hand, there are no records between the 16th (1751) year and the 24th year (1759). Considering the continuous records found from the 23rd (1758) to at least the 33rd year (1768), it is very unlikely that this gap was accidental. Therefore, unless production paused in the year 1751 for some reason, there is no reasonable explanation for this gap. In addition, in the note dated 3rd September of the 16th year (1751), it is recorded that the Imperial Textile Factory in Suzhou (*suzhou zhizao* 蘇州織造) was asked to follow the design from the Illustrations of the Costumes, which at indicates the part for the costumes was in use, and thus may indicate that this section at least was complete.⁸³

A Hypothesis

If we assume the record of the 42nd year (1777) is correct and accurate, which is very likely since it is a report requested by the emperor rather than a random report, I would suggest that the Ningshou Palace set was not complete by the 16th year (1751). At least, it was not as complete as we now understand from a set of the HCLQTS which consists of all six sections.

Comparing the records in the 23rd year and those in the 15th and 16th year, one may notice

⁸² Zaobanchu Archives vol. 18, 337.

⁸³ *ibid*, 409.

that only *jiqui*, the Illustrations of the Ritual Vessels⁸⁴ and *guanfu*, Illustrations of the Costumes⁸⁵ appeared in common while *wubei*, the Illustrations of Arms and Armour⁸⁶ and *yueqi*, the Illustrations of Musical Instruments⁸⁷ appeared only in the later records and *yiqi*, the Illustrations of Scientific Devices, was not mentioned until the records of the 25th year.⁸⁸ This is also evident in Liu's argument. As she noted, the commission of the HCLQTS was parallel to the re-editing of the *daqing huidian* and the *daqing tongli*, which was finished in the 23rd and the 24th year (1758 and 1759). Specifically, Qianlong's preface notes that he wanted the Arms and Armour to be added to the *daqing huidian*.⁸⁹ If the earliest set had been finished nearly a decade before the re-editing of the *daqing huidian*, it would be very strange to have this sentence in the preface. In addition, adding the pages of Ritual Vessels in Jade was specifically mentioned in the 23rd year (1758) record,⁹⁰ which might indicate two things: first, the section on Ritual Vessels was almost completed at the time and second, the jade material was not included in the earlier set. Moreover, despite the updates of costumes of the inner court, the record of the 23rd year (1758) lists a lot of newly added costumes, including the costumes from nobles to those of the lower ranked officials, and from males to females, that were presented to the emperor for review. From this evidence, it is very unlikely there was a set with all six sections by at least the 24th year.

⁸⁴ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 18, 337 and vol. 23, 488.

⁸⁵ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 17, 355 and vol. 23, 488.

⁸⁶ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 23, 488.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 25, 538.

⁸⁹ Liu, 140.

⁹⁰ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 23, 488.

Based on these notions, it is thus possible to argue that the set said to have been finished in the 16th year of Qianlong (1751) consisted of only the section of Ritual Vessels except the jade ones, the Costumes of only the Emperor and probably the *lubu*. Bearing this in mind, then, the record of the 23rd year may be understood in another way. The record notes the following had been presented to the emperor:

five pages of Ritual Vessels in jade, 24 pages of Arms and Armours, 103 pages of Musical Instruments together with 24 pages of Costumes of inner court in new type, 88 pages of Costumes of nobles, 90 pages of Costumes of officials in different ranks, 54 pages of Costumes of females in various ranks.

In reply, a copy of Large Size, with a specific indication of measurements was specifically commissioned, which means those presented pages are of the Small Size. In the note of the 16th year, officials had been asked to produce an album by silk plate in 9 *cun* high and one *chi* wide (c. 28.8 cm x 32 cm), which matches the size of the existing Chengde set. Therefore, it is very likely that the 16th year version was what is called the Small Size. So, if the pages commissioned in the 23rd year belong to sections that have never appeared before and in the same size, these pages could probably be new portions commissioned to fill the most original incomplete Ningshou Palace set.

With this hypothesis, it is possible to explain the issue of the idea that the HCLQTS was finished by the 24th year. So far, the issue here can be summarised into two questions: If a set was finished in the 24th year, why would the record of the 42nd year show that a set was completed far earlier while making no mention of the 24th year at all. On the other hand, if the set was not finished by the 24th year, why is there a record noting one painted and two

printed sets, consisting of six sections, in the record of the 25th year?

Considering the existing evidence and the hypothesis, there are two possible answers. First, the updated new costumes, the jade ritual objects together with the three sections of Devices, Military Uniforms and Weapons, and Musical Instruments were added to what was finished by the 16th year, probably following the texts of the recently updated *daqing huidian* and newly finished *daqing tongli*. The extended set consisting of all six sections was then finished by the 24th year, so the emperor had the preface dated the summer of that year.

Second, the Qianlong emperor's preface written in the 24th year is not a mark of completion, but a mark of a beginning. Having the 16th year set in use, the Qianlong emperor started to either add to and update the original content, or had separate new albums or illustrated books prepared in a similar fashion, following the recently updated *daqing huidian* and newly finished *daqing tongli*. Then, in the summer of the 24th year, he finally decided to transfer all the albums of this kind into a comprehensive illustrative instruction of the Qing rituals.

These two speculations thus make those contrasting records reasonable. First of all, it explains the huge gap between the archives of the 16th year and the 23rd year. As for the record of the 42nd year, it is probably true the first set was finished in the 16th year when it was not yet regarded as the "Huangchao Liqi Tushi" but as illustrative instructions on relevant rituals. Only after the idea of the HCLQTS appeared later, when the missing sections were filled using the archival notes, was it recorded as such because the earliest section was finished in the 16th year.

Further Productions

It is possible to verify the hypotheses above using the existing known materials. Based on a completed first set, probably finished by the 24th year as argued above, additional copies in both the Large Size and the Small Size were commissioned and their production continued in the following decades for the regional court or palaces across the empire.

There are six sets mentioned directly in the archives. Based on the record of the 42nd year (1777), four more sets were commissioned and were held in the Yuanming Yuan, Summer Residence Chengde, Qianqing Palace in the Forbidden City and the Mukden Palace, Shenyang. In addition, the record of the 35th year (1770) notes that two sets were sent to the regional palaces.⁹¹ Although the form of these two sets was not mentioned, considering they were collected in the regional palaces, I would argue that they are both painted versions rather than monochrome printed ones.

As for the format, both the *xubian* and the *mulu* confirm that the coloured version of the HCLQTS, no matter in the Large or the Small Size, contains 92 volumes. The image from the Palace Museum Beijing website gives a reference to the original wooden box. This is further evidenced by the record of 1771, which states that 46 large boxes were commissioned for holding a total of 184 volumes of the HCLQTS in the Large Size.⁹² Then, 46 boxes were made for two complete painted sets; thus, each wooden box contained two volumes. This

⁹¹ Zaobanchu Archives vol. 34, 100.

⁹² ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 34, 641–642.

result is further evidenced by the Inventory Records of Qianqing Palace which list 24 boxes holding 92 volumes of the HCLQTS.⁹³ Besides, these records also prove that the 96 volumes recorded at the beginning of the *xubian* is probably a typo.

Since I have not been able to access either the Chengde set or the Palace Museum set, it is not possible to calculate the number of sets in total based on the sections and page numbers mentioned in the archives, especially considering that multiple sets were probably produced at the same time. For example, the record of the 24th year notes that 204 pages of the illustration of Insignia and 204 pages of texts were presented to the emperor for approval.⁹⁴ However, it is not possible to know if they were made for one set or multiple sets and the record of the 32nd year indicates the potential that production took place in parallel. For this reason, the analysis here only indicates some information within the records which should be reviewed with further evidence.

The Printed Version

Unlike the coloured version, the production of the printed versions is relatively clear. The printed version was published in the 31st year of Qianlong (1766), and was collected by the Si Ku Quan Shu in the 38th year (1773).⁹⁵ The earliest note on the production of the printed version was mentioned in Wilson's essay.⁹⁶ After that, two notes dated the 27th year (1762)

⁹³ Wang Kaixi, "Yuanming Yuan Shoucang ji Liushi Haiwai Wenwu Shuliang Bielun," [圆明园收藏及流失海外文物数量别论], *Beijing Normal University Bulletin: Social Science* 4 (2016): 138–149.

⁹⁴ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 25, 448.

⁹⁵ Liu, 130.

⁹⁶ Wilson, 53.

can be found in the China First Historical Archive by searching the *liqi tu* as key words. Although I have not been able to check the content of the archives in person, the two titles found from their database dated the 27th year (1762) suggest the printed edition and woodblock cutting work was started and in process at least in that year.⁹⁷ The editing and adjustment of the content continued in the following years. According to the Zaobanchu archives of the 29th year, the section of the Ritual Vessels, including the adjustments, had been finished and the woodblocks were also ready.⁹⁸ In the following year, the sections of Devices and Musical Instruments were also mentioned for editing.⁹⁹

In addition, it is worth noting that, from many readings, it is noted that the Wuying Palace edition was in 18 volumes while the Si Ku Quan Shu version is in 28 volumes. This idea is probably from the record of the Index of the Si Ku Quan Shu (四庫全書總目). However, by checking the content of two printed versions, even though some of the volumes and number of the objects varied, they are all in 18 volumes. This is also evident from the record of the *xubian*. Therefore, it should be a typo in the Index of the Si Ku Quan Shu rather than an undiscovered extended edition.

The printed and the coloured version were probably produced based on the same original design of the set completed in 1759 but there are identical differences found between the two. Originally, it was believed that there were duplicates in the Harris set which led to the

⁹⁷ *Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dangan Guan (China First Historical Archive)* accessed 12/05/2018 at www.lsdag.com/nets/lsdag/page/topic/Topic_1697_1.shtml?hv.

⁹⁸ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 29, 54.

⁹⁹ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 29, 461.

three institutions sharing some pages they believed the same.¹⁰⁰ Wilson clarified that these were not duplicates but rather the one type of object made of different materials, which thus looked very similar when painted in colour. However, there are still minor but noticeable differences in graphic design between the printed and coloured versions despite their similarities in content. For example, comparing the coloured and printed drum in Figures 1-4 and 1-5, one may recognise that the coloured version had two long green streamers, which is not seen in the printed version. Also, the drumsticks in the coloured example are more parallel than in the printed version. This is unlikely to be a technical difficulty, and may indicate two or even more models were used during production. However, more comparisons need to be made to confirm this.

Remaining Issues

The rich archival materials found during this research provide a lot of information for analysis. For example, the Jesuit artist Ignatius Sichelbart was also involved in the project even though his name did not appear on the list of staff in the HCLQTS.¹⁰¹ In addition, only six painters were mentioned in the list of staff while the archive shows the recruiting of an additional six outside painters (外雇畫士) due to the huge amount of work to be done.¹⁰² Furthermore, a court artist like Jin Kun was both mentioned in the commission of the Forty-Views of the Summer Palace, the painting of *lubu dajia*, and the modelled image of ritual objects in the 13th and 14th year of the Qianlong, the very beginning of the project.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Medley, 97.

¹⁰¹ ZAObANCHU ARCHIVES, vol. 28, 512.

¹⁰² ZAObANCHU ARCHIVES, vol. 31, 48.

¹⁰³ ZAObANCHU ARCHIVES, vol.17, 331.

Considering the HCLQTS and the Forty-Views of the Summer Palace are similar in format, in that a page of illustration paired with a page of texts is a whole folio,¹⁰⁴ and the close connection between the HCLQTS and the regulation of *lubu dajia*, it is probably worth investigating further to clarify if there are any deeper connections between the three. However, since these questions here are beyond the main purpose of this research, this dissertation will not elaborate on arguments relevant to these themes, but note that it is an area worthy of further study.

¹⁰⁴ Li, Lillian M. "The Garden of Perfect Brightness." MIT Visualizing Cultures, accessed on 03/04/2018 at: http://ocw.abu.edu.ng/OcwExport/Akamai/21f/21f.027/garden_perfect_brightness_03/ymy3_essay_01.pdf.

Chapter 2

Reception and the Provenance Evidence of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi in the Qing Court

According to Liu, the commissioning of the HCLQTS was a part of ritual reform and involved the *daqing huidian* and *daqing tongli*. Also, she notes that the victories in the wars against rebellions during the period mentioned by the official's inscription could be another reason for having the full version of the HCLQTS ready by the 24th year.¹⁰⁵ However, much of her discussions are based on the analysis of Qing literature published during the period, and she may not be able to verify her ideas with the actual records of the production. For this reason, especially with the new understandings of the HCLQTS and its connections to other imperial illustrative works commissioned in a similar period, it is possible to add something new to her conclusion.

Based on Liu's argument, the connection between the full version of the HCLQTS and the two textual sources, the *daqing huidian* and the *daqing tongli*, is clear. However, why would the emperor decide to write his preface so early in the process? In other words, one would agree that the HCLQTS is a part of the ritual reform together with the *daqing huidian* and the *daqing tongli* but why did the preface of the HCLQTS need to be written in the summer of 1759, considering editing and adjustment continued till the 33rd year (1768).¹⁰⁶ A record dated the end of 1759 probably gives the answer; the emperor notes that "the following year will be my 50th birthday and a year after that will be the 70th birthday of the dowager

¹⁰⁵ Liu, 140

¹⁰⁶ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 31, 702. The Rain Coats for various ranks were added.

empress”. To prepare for the ceremony for these two important events, the Qianlong emperor ordered titles to be conferred to a list of his concubines and commissioned a list of corresponding gifts for celebration.¹⁰⁷ If one agreed that the materials mentioned in records of the 23rd year (1758) were newly added to the HCLQTS, it is reasonable to argue that the emperor probably specifically requested the HCLQTS to be ready before these events so that he could practice the new rituals approved by him in these two commemorative moments.

As well as this clear reason, the commission of the HCLQTS can be understood by comparing to the corresponding illustrative projects. As argued above, the starting point of the HCLQTS can be traced back to about the 15th year of Qianlong (1750). Lai’s research notices the specific importance of this year. Also in 1750, the Qianlong emperor ordered the reproduction of the Album of Birds by Jiang Tingxi (*Jiang Tingxi Niaopu* 蔣廷錫鳥譜), while at the same time, the Album of Animals (*shoupu* 獸譜) was also commissioned and in the following year, the big visual project of the Portraits of Periodical Offering (*zhigongtu* 職貢圖) also commenced at the emperor’s request.¹⁰⁸

Interestingly, these projects share a very similar design format, with an illustration on the right and text to the left. The only difference is that both the Album of Birds and the Portraits of Periodical Offering have texts in both Manchu and Chinese while the HCLQTS has only

¹⁰⁷ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 24, 607.

¹⁰⁸ Lailai, yu-chih 賴毓芝. “Qinggong dui ouzhou ziranshi tuxiang de zaizhi: yi qianlongchao shoupu weili.” “清宮對歐洲自然史圖像的再製：以乾隆朝《獸譜》為例。” [The reproduction of European Images of Natural History in the Qing court, in the example of Qianlong Album of Animals] *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica* 近代史研究所集刊 80 (2013): 1–75.

the Chinese texts. If tracing further back, one may notice that the Forty-View of the Summer Palace which was commissioned as early as the first year of Qianlong (1735) also shares a similar layout.

As well as the format, their size is also similar. The six-volume Album of Animals painted by Yusheng and Zhang Weibang, was 1 *chi*, two *cun*, five *fen* high and one *chi*, three *cun* wide.¹⁰⁹ The twelve-volume Album of Birds, also painted by Yu Sheng, is of the same size,¹¹⁰ and so too is the version of the Portraits of Periodical Offering kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF). The measurements here will be familiar to the reader because they are exactly the same as the Large Size of the HCLQTS design.

As well as being the same size, the volumes were all produced during the same period, starting roughly in the 15th year (1750). The Album of Birds and the Album of Animals were finished together in the 26th year of Qianlong (1761).¹¹¹ There is no accurate finishing date for the BnF version of the Portraits of Periodical Offering but according to Lai's study, this set would have been finished in around the 26th year (1761).¹¹² As for the HCLQTS, even though its finishing date of the 24th year is still questionable, there is no doubt that the making of relevant images paralleled other projects. This is evident by a record dated June

¹⁰⁹ Lai, 2013.

¹¹⁰ Li Shi, The Album of Birds in the Qing court. “清代宫廷的鸟谱” *Zijingcheng Journal* 紫禁城 12 (2014): 150–155.

¹¹¹ Lai, 2013.

¹¹² Lailai, yu-chih 赖毓芝. “The Empire of Images, the Production of the Qianlong's Paintings of the Portraits of Periodical Offering and the Appearance of the Imperial Capital” 乾隆朝《职贡图》的制作与帝都呈现 *Bulletin of the Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica* 近代史研究所集刊 75 (2012): 1–76.

of the 26th year (1762), where officials had reported that the amount of work on the Album of Birds, the Album of Animals and the HCLQTS was too much thus they were in need of extra outsider painters (外雇匠人).¹¹³

Sharing many similarities in format, size, starting dates, production period and especially considering that they are all illustrative on certain themes, it is reasonable to believe that they are closely connected from the beginning. In Lai's study on the Portraits of Periodical Offering, she notices that the project reflects the increasing interest in the "western theme" (西洋). According to her, a great percentage of foreigners appeared in the Portraits of Periodical Offering, which reflects the Qianlong emperor's intention to absorb the foreign as a part of the world, or the Land under the Heaven (天下)¹¹⁴ and the Son of Heaven (天子); in the Chinese context, this "world" belongs to the emperor Qianlong. This can also be seen in the Album of Birds which absorbs an image of an Emu, a bird originally from the New World, into a part of the album for the "world".

Although the HCLQTS, namely an illustrative publication for the Qing rituals, has nothing to do with the concept of western or foreign, intentions driven by similar factors can also be found in its content. As Rado notes, the emperor's archery set for the Grand Review in the section of Arms and Armours reflects a western motif, which according to her was rooted in the increasing interest in and consumption of western textiles during Qianlong's reign. By inserting western textiles into the HCLQTS, western skills were incorporated into state

¹¹³ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 27, 188.

¹¹⁴ Lai, 2012.

ceremonies, thus fabricating Qianlong's identity as the universal ruler.¹¹⁵

More importantly, Lai argues that the Album of Birds, the Album of Animals and the Portraits of Periodical Offering, each focusing on the people, birds and animals, in other words the elements of the empire, thus can be considered as a part of the larger project representing the emperor's land.¹¹⁶ The theme of the HCLQTS is more abstract in concept, though as it also reflects much realistic representation and ritual paraphernalia itself, it can also be considered as a form of what the son of heaven ought to regulate. Therefore, it is probably also suitable to include the HCLQTS this conclusion. As a result, by commissioning these rather realistic images, the emperor showed off his "accurate" understanding of the world he ruled and in return, the representation of this knowledge which is much advanced compared with similar projects in history, is evidence of the success of the emperor's rule.

The Harris Set

If the arguments above provide the identity of the HCLQTS as an entirety in the Qing court, Qianlong's specific attention on the Costume section offers a more direct connection to the Harris set since it was recognised as an "Illustrated Catalogue of the State Wardrobe of the Emperor of China".¹¹⁷ It is very interesting to spot that the pages

¹¹⁵ Zaobanchu, Mei Mei. "Encountering Magnificence, European Silk at the Qing court during the 18th century." In Chu, Petra ten-Doesschate, and Ning Ding, eds. *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges Between China and the West*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2015, 71.

¹¹⁶ Lai, 2013.

¹¹⁷ Harris Files, V&A Archives,

belongs to Costumes section in the Harris set are all the costumes of the Emperor, and the 1st ranked imperial concubine (皇貴妃), which should be from volumes 30 and 43 of the original albums according to *xubian*.¹¹⁸ The dress is traditionally rooted in the representation of power. As early as the Han, different types of dress were used to distinguish the privileged from the common people.¹¹⁹ Until the Ming dynasty, a system of dress from the emperor to the officials was established and much of the motifs and design, except the colour system, were adopted by the following Qing dynasty.¹²⁰ However, since the emperor of the Qing was ethnically Manchu, they refused to adopt the customs of the Han Chinese because they were afraid of forgetting their tradition and losing their Manchu identity.¹²¹ For this reason, the costumes for the emperor in practice continued the use of motifs such as the five-claw dragon but kept a certain distance from the Ming imperial robes. Taking this into the account then, the Costume and Accessories section in the HCLQTS thus suggests a dual function. On the one hand, the comprehensive illustrated regulations and the usages of costumes for both males and females, ranging from the top of the hierarchy, the emperor, to the bottom, the officials of the lowest rank, provide detailed guidelines of what people should do, which reflect the emperor's knowledge of the land he is ruling. On the other hand, however, the detailed regulations in the Costumes section suggest the emperor's attempts to resist corrosion from the Han-Chinese culture. This is evident in Qianlong's preface, where

¹¹⁸ As mentioned in the introduction, the Harris set was shared by the V&A and the National Museum of Scotland and the National Museum of Ireland today. I haven't be able to check the Ireland portion. But by comparing the registry list of NMI with painted pages from other two institutions, together with the help of printed version, it is possible to identify the exact content of the pages in the NMI collection.

¹¹⁹ Vollmer, 2007, 43.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ *ibid.*

the emperor notes that Manchu people should keep the tradition of their costumes. He gave examples of the Northern Wei, the Liao and the Jin dynasties, which are all dynasties that changed into Chinese robes and died out.¹²² Although there is no necessary logic between the two facts, by highlighting it, the detailed regulation of costumes thus becomes a warning. It was probably not intended that a Manchu should know all the regulations, but after seeing the publication, he or she should be reminded of their Manchu identity.

The Provenance

From the known portions of the HCLQTS in public collections at present, only the Harris set and the part from the Mactaggart Collection include pages with the Yuanming Yuan seal. The provenance of the part from the Mactaggart Collection was studied by scholars and this will be discussed further in the next chapter. As for the Harris set, it was recognised as the objects from the Summer Palace when they were acquired by the museum according to the acquisition notes,¹²³ while it is very hard to know if the provenance was noted by the seller or was recognised by the museum's staff when they found the seal marks. With the benefit of new understanding of its production process, as well as the new materials examined above, it is now possible to examine the Yuanming Yuan origin of the Harris set from another perspective.

The record of the Zaobanchu archive in 1777 is crucial because not only does it prove the existence of the Yuanming Yuan set, but it also lists others including a set in Qianqing Palace

¹²² Vollmer, 2007, 9.

¹²³ Harris file, V&A Archive MA/1/H848 'Harris, W. H.'.

and another one in Chengde. As discussed above, the archival information of these two sets is found in the *mulu* and *xubian*. However, although their records are not detailed enough, especially without a page-to-page comparison, it is still possible to recognise the differences in content between the printed and the coloured versions.

Apart from the record of the 42nd year (1777), the fragmentary commissioned pages mentioned in the Zaobanchu archives do not provide clearer indications to the content of what was painted. Furthermore, as discussed previously, the difficulties in accessing the two relatively more complete Chengde and Qianqing Palace sets make it impossible to identify what is missing in not only the Harris set but also the others. Fortunately, the marks on the V&A and NMS portions of the Harris set provide some additional clues.

As mentioned, the *xubian* and *mulu* contain a description of the content of the Qianqing Palace set and the Chengde set separately. The *xubian* notes the Qianqing Palace set has three imperial seals, the *Wu fu wu dai tang gu xi tian zi bao* (The Hall of Five Happiness and Five Generations), *Ba zheng mao die zhi bao* (The Seal of an Octogenarian and *Qianlong yulan zhi bao* (Viewed by His Majesty Qianlong). In addition, the starting and ending object and the total extent of all 92 volumes is given.¹²⁴ In comparison, the record from the *mulu* provides a more detailed description which notes not only the number of both images and texts in each volume but also the location of the seals. In addition to the three seals, two additional small seals are recorded in the first volume and the Seal of Bishu Shanzhuang (避

¹²⁴ *Qinding Shiqu Baoji Xubian* vol. 18, accessed 5/09/2018
<https://archive.org/stream/02094582.cn#page/n22>.

暑山莊) is also noted.¹²⁵

Having two independent archives made by different people at different place, eaching recording a Large or a Small version of HCLQTS, with even some descriptions on content of each volume seem to be perfect to unfold the issues of the similarities and differentces of the two versions. However, after a detailed comparision, more confusions arise. Apart from the section of *jiqu*, the Ritual Vessels, which has an exactly matched number of texts and objects, there are many notes not matching each other. For example, in volume 30, the *xubian* notes “from the Emperor’s winter hats to the court girdle 朝帶, thirty pages” while volume 30 in the *mulu* records “42 pages of illustrations, 18 pages of texts recording 11 types of objects including the Emperor’s winter hats”. Without an actual example to compare with, it is seemingly impossible to explain the differences between the page numbers from the two records, particularly as scholars noticed that the coloured version has more pages than the printed version. At this point, even with support of the printed version, it is not possible to know the actual content of the coloured version.

The marks from the back of the pages from the Harris set, however, provide the essential clue. At the back of almost every page from the Harris set I accessed, several marks can be found. Apart from the pencilled accession number, which was certainly marked after acquisition in 1896, the rest of the marks are worth noting (Fig. 2-1). As previously described, a whole page or folio of the HCLQTS is made up of two square pages normally with an

¹²⁵ He, 1930.

illustration on the right and a text to the left. Usually the back of the left page is empty except for the pencilled accession number. In contrast, several marks can be found on the back of the right page. First, there are two individual marks, one above another, both written in black ink. In some cases, they can be recognised as numbers in Chinese characters while others seems to be undefineable marks. All the marks only appeared on the back of the right page. Next to each black writings, there is a pencilled mark, attempts to translate the Chinese writings into numbers. The translations are written in Roman numerals which helps us to date it probably back to at least the mid-20th century since this style of writing is no longer widely in use.¹²⁶ Considering Medley published the first study on these HCLQTS pages in 1959, it could be her or museum staff helping who attempted to translated those marks into number. These attempts at decoding the Chinese writing were not very successful since the translated number matches neither the volume number nor the page number in the printed version. Probably for this reason, even though modern scholars certainly noticed these marks of number, it has not been mentioned in any published paper.

In addition to these black marks, there are numbers written in red ink, in most the cases on the back of both left and right pages. Since these numbers are not the accession numbers, they would not have been written after 1896. Therefore, the number in red could very possibly be the marks made by the previous owner or, more likely, a previous dealer or auctioneer. This could be further supported by the back of the page from the NMS, where an incomplete piece of a blue paper, with unrecognisable letters written in the style of the 19th-century is attached (Fig. 2-2).

¹²⁶ Thanks to Dr Tythacott for pointing this out during the viewing.

The black and red marks do not explain anything by themselves and the key to understanding them would lie with not only the marks on all the backs of the pages from the Harris set but also the information provided by the records from the *xubian* and *mulu*. The content of the Harris set was analysed by scholars long ago. It consists of pages from the sections of *guanfu*, the Costumes; *yueqi*, the Musical Instruments; *lubu*, the Insignia and *wubei*, the Arms and Armours. However, as Wilson and Medley noted, the painted set did not exactly match the printed version. Because images from separate collections cannot be viewed at the same time, no one in the past ever tried to reconstruct their order before separation. Now, with generous support from the V&A and the NMS, it is possible to list all the pages in the order of the red number, rather than the accession number.

If one follows the modern accession numbers of the V&A and NMS portion, the red numbers are in no particular order. As the museum records do not mention how the pages were shared, no one knows the original order of the pages at the time of acquisition. Also, probably because the backs of the pages were never studied altogether, these “random” red numbers did not attract attention in the past. Fortunately, I had all the back pages from the V&A and NMS, which allowed me to puzzle over all the papers not just in the order of accession number. Surprisingly, by reordering the images by the red numbers, with the support of the register of the portion in the NMI, the red marks run from 1 to 145, and from 1 to 94 unbrokenly. If one agrees that the red marks were made by the seller before the pages were seen by museum staff or even by Harris, the number may indicate how they were packed before 1896. Therefore, by listing them like this, the original 19th-century order can be

reconstructed.

Ordered this way, these pages can be grouped according to their contents. Numbers 1 to 4 are four full pages each having an imperial seal, two of them, the *Wu fu wu dai tang gu xi tian zi bao* (The Hall of Five Happiness and Five Generations) and the *Ba zheng mao die zhi bao* (The Seal of an Octogenarian) are both mentioned by the *mulu* and *xubian*. Also, there are two folios of *Yuanming Yuan Bao* (the Treasure of Yuanming Yuan). Pages 5 to 34, are the Costumes of the Emperor. From 35 to 51 are the section of the Musical Instruments. Pages 52 to 67 are from Arms and Armours. The pages from 69 to 94 are the illustrations of the Costumes of the Emperor's concubine of the highest rank. Short of time, I have not been able to sort out the rest of the numbers, but they are either from the Insignia or the Arms and Armours and very likely follow a similar order. This conclusion is not surprising since many scholars also came to the same one by connecting the content to the printed version. However, if comparing the images classified as such to the volumes indicated by the *mulu* and *xubian*, it is clear that pages 5 to 34 matching the first and last object of volume 43. Similarly, pages 35 to 51 correspond to volume 57; pages 52 to 67 match volume 81 and page 59 to 94 match volume 43. Based on this, for those single square plates that appear in both museums occasionally, I would suggest that they were cut by the staff of the South Kensington Museum (later the V&A) after the acquisition rather than by the dealers or Harris before the museum acquisition. They cut these pages probably because they were considered duplicates, thus selected them to share with the two other museums. This explains why a greater percentage of the pages in the NMS are single rather than a folio and the back numbers is jump very significantly.

Going a step further, one may check the content of the volumes by comparing the description in the *mulu* and *xubian* to the corresponding painted pages and the printed version. According to my survey, only pages of volume 30 and volume 57 are complete as they match not only the content of the first and the last object, but also the page numbers described in the *xubian*. For the rest of the groups, although they cannot perfectly match the first and the last object because the first several or the last several objects are missing, each group is matching one corresponding volumes. Not in a single case that one group of pages above corresponds to two volumes. In another words, although the Harris set were not taken orderly starting from volume one, still they must have been taken by volumes, instead of bulk of pages.

As mentioned earlier, the *mulu* and *xubian* are written in a different order in that the *xubian* gives only the extent, while the *mulu* provides extent and number of images for each volume. Specifically, they both use *ye* (頁) for page number, which in Chinese may refer to both a single leaf or a two-leaf folio. For this reason, two different page numbers are given which means it cannot be verified if they were two different interpretations or contained a different number of objects or texts. However, by comparing the contents of volume 30 and volume 57 to the records in the *mulu*, it can be seen that the content matches both the number of illustrations and of texts. As a result, it is possible to suggest that both the records from the *mulu* and the *xubian* are the same. The differences in number are only because of variation in method of calculating the extent.

Furthermore, based on the known volume number and content, it is now possible to decode the mystery of the black ink writings. The number at the top refers to the volume number of the section. For example, volume 30 is the second volume of the section of Costumes and Accessories. Then, the top number of all pages in this volume are marked 2 in black ink, although in an unusual style of writing. The number below, thus references the page number within the volume. For example, again in volume 30, the Winter Hat of the Emperor is the first object, and marked as one (see Fig. 1-6). The text of the Emperor's court girdle, no. 2, is the last page of the volume, and therefore marked as 30.

Considering the traditional Chinese reading order, which is from right to left, the back of the right page, will face the front. Also, the writing seems to be brush strokes, although far from calligraphy, thus, in my opinion, indicates that it was written in the Chinese court in the 18th century. This makes these numbers the original index for the HCLQTS and could be applied to pages of other portions to check and identify the potential missing pages, and locate the position of a page in the HCLQTS.

It is mentioned in the *mulu* that the first object in each volume was sealed with the smaller *Qianlong yulan zhi bao* (Viewed by His Majesty Qianlong). Although the first page of volume 43 in the NMI has not been checked and volume 81 is not complete, this seal can be seen in volumes 30 and 57 (see Fig. 2-1), therefore, it can be argued that any additional HCLQTS pages found with the seal could be either the first or the last page of the volume, which may help to clarify the order.

Although those numbered after 94 are yet to be examined due to the time constraints, all the matching results seem to suggest that the whole Harris set is formed of complete volumes, rather than individual pages randomly grouped. Therefore, it can be stated that they were probably from the same source.

Benefit from this discovery, clearly, is that the descriptions from both the *mulu* and the *xubian* match each other, and their records so far are relatively accurate and reliable. As a result, it is possible to compare the seals recorded in the *mulu* and the *xubian* to marks found in the Harris set to identify its Yuanming Yuan origin. By cross-checking the three, the Qianqing Palace set has three imperial seals; the *Wu fu wu dai tang gu xi tian zi bao* 五福五代堂古稀天子寶 (The Hall of Five Happiness and Five Generations), *Ba zheng mao die zhi bao* 八徵耄念之寶 (The Seal of an Octogenarian) and *Qianlong yulan zhi bao* 乾隆御覽之寶 (Viewed by His Majesty Qianlong) are all mentioned in the two archives and can also be found in the Harris set. The record in the *xubian* does not indicate the existence of the seal of Qianqing Palace while the *mulu* clearly notes the seal of the locating palace, the Seal of Bishu Shanzhuang (避暑山莊) in Chengde,¹²⁷ which is also noted by Wilson when she was able to check the original work of the set.¹²⁸ Accordingly, two folios with the Bishu Shanzhuang seal can be found in the last two pages of the first volume. In comparison, there are also two folios with the Treasure of Yuanming Yuan seal (*yuanming yuan bao* 圓明園寶) found in the Harris set.¹²⁹ Interestingly, there is also a folio with the Treasure of Yuanming

¹²⁷ He, 1930.

¹²⁸ Wilson, 58–59.

¹²⁹ See Wilson, 52.

Yuan seal in the Mactaggart Collection.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, the first volume is missing so one cannot compare the content to the record, in which additional seals were mentioned.

Although the back of the page contains the seal of *Wu fu wu dai tang gu xi tian zi bao* (The Hall of Five Happiness and Five Generations) from the Harris set, the writing says five volumes of the Musical Instruments (樂器五冊). Presumably, this could be the first page of the section of the Musical Instruments for that inscription. However, in both archives, there are seven volumes instead of five under the Musical Instruments section, and the *mulu* does not mention the seal in this volume. Therefore, the order of the seal and sometimes even the notes on the page is not yet clear.

Nevertheless, even from this result, the pages from the Harris set and the Mactaggart Collection are very likely to be parts of the HCLQTS kept in the Yuanming Yuan. Also, if we count a two-leaf folio as one page, based on the extent given in the *xubian*, a full HCLQTS consists of 2,206 pages, which is very close to the number given by the curator of the Chengde set mentioned by Wilson. However, Wilson notes that the curator claimed there were missing pages according to the comparison, although this cannot be confirmed without visiting and checking. Besides, I should admit that the verification only applies to a very small portion of the HCLQTS and one cannot deny the existence of possible differences of content without making a comparison between the record and the corresponding set.

¹³⁰ *The Mactaggart Collection*, accessed at 13/7/2018

<http://mactaggart.museums.ualberta.ca/mac/details.aspx?key=20273&r=3&t=2>.

Another benefit from the conclusion above is that by analysing the size of the known portions in modern collections and the archival records, some clues can be found to the pages without clear provenance. In Wilson's study, the modern measurement of the Chengde set is 286 mm high and 309 mm wide. In comparison, the *mulu* recorded the size of this set as nine *cun* high, nine *cun* seven *fen* wide, in the traditional standard.¹³¹ Therefore, it is possible to calculate that, in this standard, one *cun* equals to roughly 32 mm. Then, the Large Size, which is of 1 *chi*, 3 *cun* 3 *fen* high, and 1 *chi*, 2 *cun* 8 *fen* wide, is 426 mm high and 410 mm wide. Comparing this to the known examples from the modern collection, the set in the Palace Museum Beijing collection which is noted as 41cm x 39 cm, is also a Large Size set. The sets held in the V&A collection, which measures 15.625 in x 2 ft. 8.125 (422 mm x 410 mm) and the portion in the Mactaggart Collection, measuring 42.2 cm x 40.8 cm,¹³² are thus undoubtedly of the Large Size. The arguments above tend to suggest that the Ningshou Palace set in the Forbidden City is a Small Size set and the Qianqing Palace set is clearly noted as a Large Size set. So I would suggest the set now kept in the Palace Museum Beijing is the Qianqing Palace set recorded in the *xubian*.

Based on current understanding, in total seven coloured sets were mentioned. Among them, the Yuanming Yuan set and the Qianqing Palace set (or Palace Museum set) are of the Large Size. The Chengde set is in the Small Size and the Ningshou Palace set is very likely to be in the Small Size too. For the rest of them, the Mukden Palace set, two sets for Qixia Palace

¹³¹ Although the standard length varied in different dynasties, the convert rate (1 *chi* = 10 *cun* = 100 *fen*) remain the same.

¹³² The size can be found in the online database of *The Mactaggart Collection*, accessed on 13/7/2018 at <http://mactaggart.museums.ualberta.ca/mac/details.aspx?key=20247>.

and Jiangning Zhizao, based on the archival analysis, could very possibly all be the Small Size. There are no other direct indications suggesting the size of the rest of the sets although there are some records conveying relevant information, for example, according to the Yearly Registry (記事錄) of the 18th October of the 29th year (1764), five copies in the Small Size were commissioned.¹³³ In comparison, except for the known two sets, only four records throughout nearly 20 years of archives were found noting commissions of the HCLQTS in the Large Size. The earliest record was found in the 23rd year (1758) that ‘an additional copy of Album of Ritual Vessels in the Large Size’ was commissioned and two years later, it is reported that 406 pages of the Illustration of Ritual Vessels had been completed for approval.¹³⁴ After this, it is not until the 29th year (1764), that additional pages in the Large Size were painted and added.¹³⁵ The following year, 85 pages of the Illustration of the Musical Instruments had been presented for the emperor’s approval.¹³⁶ Short of additional evidence, it is not possible to make a solid conclusion but considering the huge variation between the commission records about the Large Size sets and the Small Size sets, one could suggest that the Qianqing Palace set and the Yuanming Yuan set are the only two sets in the Large Size while the rest of them are all in the Small Size. If this argument can be proved, one may be able to assume that the pages in the Large Size circulated outside of China are from the Yuanming Yuan portion.

¹³³ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 29, 51.

¹³⁴ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 23, 448 [...交出祭器图册页一本，俱照一样尺寸做册页，再照着色大样祭器图册页画一分...]and vol. 25, 538.

¹³⁵ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 29, 52.

¹³⁶ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 29, 462.

However, it is still too farfetched to come to this conclusion based on known materials. Especially, it is still unclear if there were sections or portions commissioned for specific usage. For example, it is noted that the Wuying Dian used to keep a set for producing copies for convenience¹³⁷ and that a certain number of pages were held in the Zhai Gong Palace.¹³⁸ None of them are mentioned in the report of the 42nd year, which may suggest that either they were later sent to other listed palaces or kept as only incomplete sections for the relevant functions. Nevertheless, these analyses above provide new directions for further provenance research regarding the HCLQTS pages in the collections and probably for those that appeared on the art market.

¹³⁷ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 29, 51.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

Chapter 3

The Huangchao Liqi Tushi in the West: The Circulation and Identity of the Looted Summer Palace Objects

As discussed above, one set of the HCLQTS was held in the Yuanming Yuan. Considering its large size, it was probably one of the most important and magnificent portions kept in the imperial garden complex, the Garden of Perfect Clarity, representing its glory and the rule of the emperor Qianlong. Surprisingly, however, portions of it appeared in Great Britain, almost the opposite side of the world, in the late 19th century. How could such an important imperial commission be out of the palace, incomplete, and circulated in the art market of late-19th-century Britain? How did people at the time, from various backgrounds, understand and perceive them? To answer these questions, this chapter will first investigate from where they might have been looted and how they might have been brought to Europe. Then, this chapter will discuss how the reception of items looted from the Summer Palace changes through time.

Looted from the Summer Palace

Before analysing the reception of the Harris set in late-19th-century Britain, it is crucial to know how it reached the western world, especially considering its specific importance in the Qing court. As argued in the previous chapter, despite the possibilities of commissioning incomplete sections or even volumes for specific usage, it is almost impossible to imagine such an important work would be taken out of the palace.

Of course, one cannot omit the fact that there were archive records noting that staff who

were working in the Yuanming Yuan were caught for stealing items.¹³⁹ However, this is very unlikely to be the case for the HCLQTS. First of all, the set is very large, and each pair of volumes was held in a huge decorated wooden box. Also, in the front of each page, there are index numbers, and from the survey mentioned in the last chapter, although sometimes incomplete, most of the pages are from corresponding volumes rather than in random. More importantly, this type of painting was specifically classified as court painting, which is not of the traditional literati taste. Even if someone was to dare to steal a painting from the imperial court, it would not be financially worth risking oneself for this type of painting, since no one outside the court would be interested.

Sometimes objects made for imperial usage were gifted as rewards or as diplomatic exchanges. For example, during the famous Macartney Embassy, although not successful in diplomatic terms, the Qianlong emperor gifted a considerable number of objects which were brought back to the UK, some of which are still in the Royal Collection.¹⁴⁰ However, this is very unlikely to be the case with the HCLQTS; the pages in the Harris set can be matched with certain volumes of different sections, if we assume they were gifted, it would be strange to see a volume taken randomly from the middle of a section. Also, considering a complete set took at least a year to produce, there would be no logical reason to gift this. More importantly, considering there are pages with imperial seals it would be impossible to imagine an emperor would gift portions with the most important mark of the dynasty out of

¹³⁹ Wong, 117.

¹⁴⁰ Gifts from the Macartney Embassy for the British Royal Family, see *The Royal Collection*. Accessed 3/5/2018 at www.rct.uk/collection/themes/trails/the-macartney-embassy-gifts-exchanged-between-george-iii-and-the-qianlong.

the palace. The *Ba zheng mao die zhi bao* seal was made by Qianlong to celebrate his 80th birthday in 1791, and the *Wu fu wu dai tang gu xi tian zi bao* (The Hall of Five Happiness and Five Generations) to commemorate his 70th birthday as he received congratulations from five generations of his family, the consorts, sons, grandsons, great-grandsons and great-great-grandsons.¹⁴¹ Considering such important and private meanings, it would be impossible to assume these portions to be a gift in any sense.

Based on the Zaobanchu record of 1777, the Yuanming Yuan set was securely stored there by that year at the very latest.¹⁴² Its next public appearance was in 1896 in the UK, which is before the Boxer Rebellion. Throughout the century, unless gifted or stolen by insiders, there is only one possibility left here which could have led to this type of imperial commissioned object being taken out of the Yuanming Yuan Palace and reaching Europe, that is the looting of the Summer Palace in 1860. Therefore, although there is not yet a secure first-hand provenance directly from either a witness of the looting or any marks made by soldiers, it would be surprising if they were not looted from the Summer Palace. The only issue remaining here would be where and how it was taken as well as what happened to the rest of them.

To analyse this issue, it is important to have a brief understanding of the looting in 1860. In short, as a part of what is called the Second Opium War, the Anglo-French troops reached the Yuanming Yuan in tandem. No matter which side started first, looting started to occur on

¹⁴¹ Dickinson and Wrigglesworth, 21.

¹⁴² ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 40, 381.

sixth October and continued for about three days. After that, on the 18th October, when Elgin ordered the destruction of the Yuanming Yuan, some of the British troops who were involved in the operation looted some palaces again. Unless suggested by any further evidence, the looting should occur within these two main periods.

Looting of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi

There is no record noting where the HCLQTS was looted from, though it is possible to argue where it was stored in the Qianlong emperor's reign. It is generally believed that most of the painted works in the Yuanming Yuan were destroyed together with the Imperial Library. According to a citation of Ringmar, a soldier recorded that "The soldiers broke into the Wenyuan Library, tore up scrolls, and used old manuscripts as torches or to light their pipes."¹⁴³ Finally, on the 8th October, the Library, together with many other buildings and objects, was destroyed since soldiers found many objects too large to carry.¹⁴⁴ For this reason, many arguments tend to suggest that the painting collection in the Yuanming Yuan was generally destroyed. However, the HCLQTS was probably not stored in the Imperial Library but in the Main Hall, the Hall of Rectitude and Honor (*zhengda guangming* 正大光明).

There is no inventory record found so far for the buildings of the Yuanming Yuan but from a comparison with collections of main halls of other palaces, it is possible to claim so. According to the 1777 record, two sets of the HCLQTS were collected in the palaces inside

¹⁴³ Ringmar, 71.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*, 72.

the Forbidden City, the Qianqing Palace and the Ningshou Palace. Very fortunately, the inventory record of the Qianqing Palace has been published and states, “under the East and the West wall of the central hall (明殿), there are two wood tables in *zitan* wood (紫檀), holding 24 boxes of HCLQTS, in total 92 volumes”.¹⁴⁵ From the Yongzheng period, Qianqing Palace started to be the main hall in the Forbidden City for administrative purposes¹⁴⁶ (Fig. 3-1). Ningshou Palace was believed to be a miniature version of the Forbidden City which Qianlong built for his retirement.¹⁴⁷ Construction took place from the 35th year (1771) to the 41st year (1776), when the main building was finished. Considering the court eunuch reported in 1777 that a set of the HCLQTS was held in this palace,¹⁴⁸ this was probably the case since the palace was just in operation. Unfortunately, no inventory record of this palace has been published, but it is likely that the Ningshou Palace probably shared similar interior settings to the Qianqing Palace.

Similarly, Yuanming Yuan was regarded as another important palace outside of the Forbidden City, thus may have shared certain similarities in function. Wong argues that, starting from the Yongzheng emperor, Yuanming Yuan started to function as a regional court and the Qing emperor spent months there every year. Therefore, it probably had a similar design at least in the main hall. Also, considering the function of the HCLQTS, either to act

¹⁴⁵ Wang Kaixi, “Yuanming Yuan Shoucang ji Liushi Haiwai Wenwu Shuliang Bielun”, 圆明园收藏及流失海外文物数量别论, *Beijing Normal University Bulletin: Social Science* 4 (2016): 138–149.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Zhang Shuxian 张淑娴. “A Brief Study on the Architecture of Juanqin Zhai Palace” “倦勤斋建筑略考.” *Palace Museum Journal 故宫博物院院刊* 3 (2003): 53–61.

¹⁴⁸ ZAOBANCHU ARCHIVES vol. 40, 381.

as an illustrative instruction for rituals or more to be a symbol of imperial power, which is not suitable for personal enjoyment in other palaces, it is logical to believe that the Yuanming Yuan version of the HCLQTS was also held in 24 zitan wood boxes, above two probably rectangular tables (Fig. 3-2).

The identity of the looter is complex to establish. Not only British and the French soldiers, but also local Chinese villagers as well as the workers hired by the troops for carrying goods were recorded as being involved in the looting.¹⁴⁹ However, it is unlikely to be those Chinese, rather than the French or British officers, who took the HCLQTS back to Europe. There are several reasons for this conclusion. First of all, these materials were of no particular interest to traditional Chinese taste since they are not of the literati painting style which was attractive to Chinese collectors at the time. So, compared to the value of contemporary paintings, there would be no logic in taking them.

Even if the Chinese involved had knowledge about market interests, from the perspective of capacity, it would not have been reasonable to take the HCLQTS, the sets were too large to carry compared to painting scrolls or other objects in jade, porcelain or precious metals like gold or silver. Also, after the Xianfeng emperor (1850–1861) who fled during the looting, returned, he ordered the officials to trace the looted objects circulated or hidden in the local area. According to Pei's study, as early as the 11th October 1860, only two days after the Anglo-French troops left, Qing troops arrived to search for local looters.¹⁵⁰ The search

¹⁴⁹ Thomas, 33.

¹⁵⁰ Pei Guangqiang 裴广强 "Reconsider the Burning of the Summer Palace by the Anglo-French troops"

continued for months and the last report can be found in May 1861, more than half a year after the looting.¹⁵¹ Although it is undeniable that objects could have been looted by Chinese robbers, considering the location of the HCLQTS, the size of it, the style of the painting, and even the policing after the looting, I tend not to believe it was taken by them.

The next question is, if the HCLQTS had been taken by the British or the French, who would be interested in it? Traditionally, the soldiers were described as treasure seekers who care only if the objects were valuable to them. This is evident in many soldier's descriptions of looting. For example:

The soldiers destroyed vases and mirrors, tore down paintings and scrolls, broke into the storehouse of silks and used the precious fabrics for tying up their horses; they draped themselves in the empress's robes, and stuffed their pockets full of rubies, sapphires, pearls and pieces of crystal rock.¹⁵²

Their behaviour was described by Hevia as a "wild, unregulated frenzy of destruction and theft".¹⁵³ However, Hill's study suggests a more complex pattern under the chaotic looting scene. In particular, she gave an example of silk arguing that, from the past experiences of taking the enemy's cloth as trophies, the British soldiers may have acquired some taste or interest in Chinese silk. Probably for its market value, or even just for personal interests, Chinese textiles were favoured by soldiers.¹⁵⁴ In this case, it is thus probably a factor since

“英法联军第一次火烧圆明园诸问题再考。” In *Beijing Social Science* 北京社会科学 6 (2014): 92–98.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² Ringmar, 78.

¹⁵³ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 74.

¹⁵⁴ Hill, 227–252.

25 out of 92 volumes are the sections of Costumes and pages corresponding to two volumes from the Harris sets direct reference the imperial costumes.

The situation above probably described a more common experience for both the French and the British while, if the HCLQTS had been looted by the British, the Prize Auction and the commoditisation of the looted objects might lead to a different situation. The British commander issued an order to centralise all the looted objects for an auction on 9th October, the objects were to be displayed and auctioned and the money earned would be shared by soldiers in different percentages according to rank.¹⁵⁵ Because of this, although it was possible for some soldiers to hide small objects, considering the size of the HCLQTS, it must have been auctioned if it was looted by the British. Furthermore, through the auction, the final owner of an object would not necessarily be the original looter. More importantly, considering the financial ranking among the soldiers, the larger objects tended to be owned by higher ranked officers.

The looted objects were thus transformed into commodities through this procedure.¹⁵⁶ The commoditised objects may be viewed differently – not only as war trophies or objects worth money, but as curiosities or objects of interest.¹⁵⁷ This is particularly true among higher-rank officers. For example, a pair of cloisonné vase-holding elephant statues, L: 495 mm; W: 199 mm; H: 639 mm, were brought back by James Frederick Stuart-Wortley, the First

¹⁵⁵ Hevia, “Loot’s fate”, 322.

¹⁵⁶ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 95.

¹⁵⁷ Hill, “Collecting on Campaign: British Soldiers in China During the Opium Wars,” 227–252.

Attaché of Elgin and kept in his family house in Sheffield.¹⁵⁸ Considering the size, these would not have been easy, nor economical, to transport, and in fact neither he nor his brother the later Earl of Wharncliffe, managed to sell them until the next generation in the 1920s.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, if the HCLQTS had been looted by a British soldier, it would be most likely to be owned by a higher-rank officer. This is actually evidenced by the fact that 33 pages of the HCLQTS were donated to the British Library by Sir Harry Knollys, the British Commander General Hope Grant's memoir writer, in 1926.¹⁶⁰ From this note, it seems to be reasonable to believe that Grant might have bought a portion, if not all, of the HCLQTS.

However, it is also possible that the HCLQTS could have been taken by the French. Despite the arguments over who started first, the French soldiers were also involved in the looting. Compared to the British, the French soldiers were described as acting more freely.¹⁶¹ In contrast to the British who let most of the objects go into private hands through the Prize Auction, a much greater number of objects were offered to the French emperor even though there were also many Summer Palace sales.¹⁶² Objects offered to the French emperor Napoleon III were put on display in the Tuileries Palace in 1861. After that, those classified as arms and armours were sent to the Artillery Museum, and most of the rest ended up in the Empress Eugenie's Chinese Room in the Chateau of Fontainebleau.¹⁶³ The HCLQTS could

¹⁵⁸ See Haoyang Zhao. "Objects of Multiple Identities. A Case Study of Yuanming Yuan Objects in the Lady Lever Art Gallery." SOAS, University of London, Unpublished MA thesis, 2017.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Dickinson and Wrigglesworth, 22.

¹⁶¹ Thomas, 32.

¹⁶² Hevia, *English Lessons*, 95.

¹⁶³ Droguet, 140.

not have been presented to the French emperor as it would have been displayed in the exhibitions or the room in the Chateau of Fontainebleau, thus captured by newspaper reports.

Rather than being presented to the Emperor, if the HCLQTS had been taken by French soldiers, it would probably have been kept by them after returning to France. Limited by my French ability, I have not accessed many studies of the looted Yuanming Yuan objects in France, especially for those not for the French emperor and ending up in Fontainebleau. However, the Forty-View of the Summer Palace, the only example of painting with a secure Yuanming Yuan provenance, could still be a good example to exemplify the possible fate of the HCLQTS if the set had been looted by the French. When Charles Dupin, a lieutenant-colonel who accompanied the French commander General Montauban, entered the main hall of the Yuanming Yuan, he found that “shelves around the room were loaded with more cloisonné vases, piles of delicately painted albums, and books written by the emperor in beautiful boxes”.¹⁶⁴ It is not known if the paintings described here were looted or destroyed, but it is known that Dupin took the whole album of the Forty-View of the Summer Palace back to France.¹⁶⁵ Dupin did not mention if anyone else took anything similar back and since I am not able to read the original catalogue of Dupin or any other soldier in French, I cannot check if the French took the HCLQTS back to Europe.

Although less likely, one should not omit that the HCLQTS might not necessarily have been brought back by soldiers. Although mentioned less frequently, it is possible that some of the

¹⁶⁴ Thomas, 33–36.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

looted objects circulated in the local Chinese market and were brought back to Europe later either by dealers or travellers, even years after the looting. This is evident in Hevia's writing that objects from the Yuanming Yuan started to appear on the local market almost as soon as the soldiers entered Beijing city.¹⁶⁶ For example, a porcelain vase similar to the one in the Fontainebleau collection was photographed by John Thompson who travelled China in 1870 (Fig. 3-3). In addition, Hevia notes that soldiers also sold objects at the treaty ports during the return journey and the buyers included European traders and Chinese dealers and only a year later, advertisements for the Summer Palace loot sale can be found in Hong Kong.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, without further evidence, one cannot assume the HCLQTS was brought to Europe directly after the war, thus it is not yet possible to connect the provenance of the HCLQTS from the Yuanming Yuan to the last private owner, Walter H. Harris.

The Reception of the Summer Palace Objects

Although a picture of how the HCLQTS encountered western society during its circulation in 19th-century Europe is yet to be built, its identity, however, may be argued through a comparative study of other looted materials. The looted objects witnessed a huge transformation of their identity. As Pierson argues, those objects designed for the sake of the emperor's interests, are largely different from what could be found on the European market although they were all categorised as Chinese materials.¹⁶⁸ After arriving in Europe, these items started to attract attention from various perspectives.

¹⁶⁶ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 92.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Pierson, 82.

Through being looted, these object underwent an immediate transformation of identity, becoming trophies, which conveyed the political implications no matter the style, form and even materials. This is evident by the fact that the emperor's hat, together with a Tibetan ritual cup made of a skull which was misidentified as "Sayings of Confucius", as well as a Pekinese dog named Looty, were selected to present to Queen Victoria.¹⁶⁹ Materially, they are by no means beautiful or valuable and the dog is not even an object, but because they are connected to the Qing emperor, thus linked to Qing sovereignty, they can be regarded as examples of trophies. In addition, it is argued by Tythacott that objects looted and later donated to the regimental museums, would also perform a similar role.¹⁷⁰ In the example of the Gordon's Throne in the Royal Engineer Museum, it does not even matter that the throne was not correctly restored, by placing it in the museum, it functioned perfectly to educate soldiers on their glorious history.

Not long after the war, however, since the legitimacy of the war was no longer a major issue, objects started to be viewed for their form, patterns of design, the technique of making and sometimes materials. Higher-ranked officers with better financial conditions would acquire more freely, sometimes beyond the simple calculation of monetary value. Again, citing the example of James Fredrick Stuart-Wortley, who after bringing the pair of cloisonné elephants back, his brother, the later Earl of Wharnccliffe, exhibited them, together with other cloisonné

¹⁶⁹ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 87.

¹⁷⁰ Tythacott, Louise. "Trophies of War: Representing 'Summer Palace' Loot in Military Museums in the UK." *Museum and Society* 13, no. 4 (2015): 469–488.

pieces in the Annual Conversazione of the Sheffield School of Art in 1862. Instead of taking them as war trophies completely, although neither did he deny the political property of them when he was questioned by the legal principles of the looting on newspaper, he additionally appreciated the use of colour of some looted Yuanming Yuan artefacts and regarded them as models of art to inspire the art students there.¹⁷¹ In another word, even the political implication on the Yuanming Yuan objects occupied the mainstream understanding of them, they started to be viewed as ‘art’ to at least some extent soon after the war.

Wharnccliffe’s personal account on the looted arts did not necessarily affected to a wider view from the general public, the artistic value of these imperial objects started to be observed step by step. For example, according to Hill’s study, British designers such as Owen Jones (1809–1874), started to adopt patterns from some of the looted objects for their designs.¹⁷² Rather than considering their political identity, those objects here are looked at only as examples of good design.

Probably during the 1870s, the negative political implications of the Summer Palace provenance generally faded while the artistic and technique value started to appreciate. This evident in the example of cloisonné. In 1874, South Kensington Museum organised an exhibition of the enamel wares of the world. Among them, several cloisonné pieces from the Summer Palace appeared. Although still marked “from the Summer Palace”, the catalogue,

¹⁷¹ *Sheffield Independent* – Wednesday 22 January 1862.

¹⁷² Hill, “The Yuanmingyuan and Design Reform in Britain,” 64.

however, had no negative view on the objects and only focused on the techniques.¹⁷³ This attitude is also extended to the art market. When Wortley's collection was sold in 1871 after his death, none of the objects were marked as Summer Palace loot and only people who were aware of the history would recognise the provenance through the title "late Attaché to Lord Elgin's Embassy".¹⁷⁴

However, this enthusiasm for both the Summer Palace provenance and Chinese art, in general, was largely category focused. For example, very rarely could one spot a single Chinese painting in the the auction catalogues during the mid-late 19th century in Britain, except those commissioned in Guangdong (Canton) for export specifically. The French shared a similar attitude towards paintings. It is not known why would Dupin had taken any and according to Thomas, even this type of painting was considered as a souvenir rather than a work of art. This is reflected by the experience of the Forty-Views after it was taken back to France. Dupin attempted to sell the huge albums through auctions where it twice failed to sell, until the Imperial Library, now part of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, acquired it from a book dealer for 4200 French francs.¹⁷⁵ However, in the late 19th century such items would probably not be regarded as war trophies any more, even though for the HCLQTS we have no further clues on how Harris or the former owner viewed them.

¹⁷³ Owen, P. Cunliffe, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibition of Enamels on Metal*, South Kensington Museum, London, 1874.^[1]^[2]^[SEP]

¹⁷⁴ Christie's Archives, May 1871.

¹⁷⁵ Thomas, 34.

Reception of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi in the 19th-Century Art Market

Fortunately, the provenance of the Mactaggart set may provide an example of how the HCLQTS was viewed in the 19th century. A group of folios were purchased by Sir Thomas Phillips from the sale of Puttick in 1863.¹⁷⁶ Fortunately, all the original annotated catalogues were kept in the British Library, and by checking the record, Lot 173 seems to match, describing 30 drawings of “Chinese Empress’s Ceremonial Costume”, and, “representing the gorgeous State Costume of the Empress of China” in the size of 16 3/4 in. by 16 in. (42 cm x 40 cm). More importantly, the provenance is noted: “This volume was also taken from the Emperor’s Summer Palace at Pekin. A Kind of Seal or Official is at the commencement.”¹⁷⁷ It is not clear if the seal mentioned here is the seal of the Summer Palace which can be found in the Mactaggart Collection, but from the description here, the provenance is clear. Surprisingly, for such a huge and magnificent volume, the sale price was “only” £15. Compared with Lot 257 “A Vase with Cylindrical Handles, enamelled with flowers on Crimson Ground” sold by Christie’s Mason and Wood on 30 May 30 1862 for £155,¹⁷⁸ it is clear that contemporary buyers were much less interested in paintings, even with the Summer Palace provenance.

Unfortunately, the catalogue does not record the seller, though according to Dickinson, the backs of these pages have numbers of similar order to Knolly’s set.¹⁷⁹ I have not been able to access both sets; but from this note, it seems the numbering system is not similar to the

¹⁷⁶ Dickinson and Wrigglesworth, 20–23.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Christie’s Archives, 30 May 1862.

¹⁷⁹ Dickinson and Wrigglesworth, 22.

numbers marked on the Harris set.

Based on the catalogue, the lot, together with several other Chinese materials including Lot 172 “Chinese Geography. A series of Thirteen Maps of Some Chinese Provinces”, also noted from the Summer Palace; Lot 173 “Chinese Drawings (Four) of Seaports, Harbours etc.”; Lot 174 “Chinese Drawings, Eight Delineations of the Exterior and Interior of Chinese Houses, and three Drawings of Flowers and Birds, by a Native Artist” and Lot 175 “Chronicle of the Kings of Britain dated 1811”, were all bought by Quaritch, a book seller still active in the Mayfair area. However, because their 19th-century archives are now in the Bodleian Library and not catalogued in order, I have not been able to investigate further.¹⁸⁰

Interestingly, one should not omit the fact that in the portion later acquired in 1900, there is a page with the family mark of Macartney attached (Fig. 3-4). It has been argued there is a potential provenance connection between the 1900 set and Macartney’s embassy, while Medley tends not to accept the suggestion since she found those arguments misrecognised an “M” mark, the mark for V&A, as “Macartney”.¹⁸¹ However, in the file of 1953 acquisition, a small note is attached referring to Lot 1406 on the last day of the Macartney sale at Puttick & Simpson 24–28 January 1854.¹⁸² By checking the catalogue, it can be observed that the lot was not from Macartney but an unknown gentleman. The lot reads:

Chinese Drawings. Twenty-Three Splendid Drawings by Native Artists, of Chinese Male and Female

¹⁸⁰ Thanks to Ms Katherine for her explaining the situation of the historical archives of the Quaritch.

¹⁸¹ Medley, 99.

¹⁸² V&A Archive, MA/1/W1470 “W. Wheeler & Son”.

Costume, executed with the highest delicacy of finish, some heightened with gold and silver; and Thirty-Eight Drawings (To a rather larger scale) of Females performing on various kinds of musical instruments, of similarly beautiful work. In all 61 drawings, bound in crimson morocco extra, with joints atlas folio.¹⁸³

From the description, the second part of the lot is clearly not the HCLQTS since there are figures in which do not occur in the HCLQTS. However, from only the description, the first 23 drawings could have been a set. I have not been able to check all the 1953 set thus cannot comment any further, and the description is very vague; without even a size or further provenance, one could not determine anything based only on these words which could refer to any popular painting. But still, this clue does raise a question that, even though the Harris set is almost secured, could some sets, or more likely some individual pages of the HCLQTS, have been gifted as a good instruction of Chinese rituals? At this stage, there is not enough evidence for any further discussion but this could be a direction worth further analysis.

¹⁸³ *Puttick and Simpson*, 24 January 1854, available at the British Library.

Chapter 4 Harris and the Huangchao Liqi Tushi

Without knowing when, how and why, at least 290 pages, or 145 folios were owned by Walter Henry Harris. He was born in 1851 in Clapham, Surrey into an architect's family. Probably for this reason, in the Census of 1881, he was registered as a "Brick maker & Builder".¹⁸⁴ Later, he became a member of the Stock Exchange and in 1889 he was appointed Sheriff of the City of London.¹⁸⁵ In 1892, he reached the peak of his career as a member of the British Committee of the British Commission for the Chicago International EXPO, also known as the Worlds Columbian Exposition, held in 1893. Probably as part of this role, he was also involved in several national and international exhibitions including Antwerp, 1894.¹⁸⁶ Despite these experiences, he was not connected to the art world, and his later career focuses on business.¹⁸⁷ He was knighted for his contributions to the 1893 Chicago exhibition in 1919 and died on 3 March 1922 at his residence in Clapham aged 71¹⁸⁸ (Fig. 4-1).

His father, Henry Harris, was an architect from Cornwall. He moved to London in 1839 and had the firm of Aldin and Harris in conjunction with others and was involved in development projects around the Pimlico area. After that, the company turned to brick manufacturing at Clapham, where Walter H. Harris was born. In 1864, Harris senior retired and died in

¹⁸⁴ 1881 England Census for Walter H. Harris Class: RG11; Piece: 631; Folio: 64; Page: 1; GSU roll: 1341145, accessed through Ancestry.com.

¹⁸⁵ Harris File, C 78/P81, SC/GL/NOB/C/087/18, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁸⁶ *East & South Devon Advertiser* – Saturday 9 December 1893.

¹⁸⁷ Harris File, C 78/P81, SC/GL/NOB/C/087/18, London Metropolitan Archives.

¹⁸⁸ *Kent & Sussex Courier* – Friday 10 March 1922.

Brighton in 1889.¹⁸⁹

Based on this biographical information, gathered mainly from newspapers, neither Harris nor his father were ever involved in the professional art business or collecting, nor did they have any connection to the military. Considering he was only nine years old when the looting happened, he could not have acquired the pages directly from a military source in the way Knollys did. Also, since his father also showed no sign of either collecting or a military connection, it is very unlikely he inherited such huge and delicate folios from him. Considering this, it is most likely that Walter H. Harris acquired the HCLQTS from the market. In which case, unless additional information can be found, it is most likely that he acquired the folios after he established his career in the late 19th century, at least after he became a member of the Stock Exchange.

Military Medal Collection

By reviewing Harris's activities during the period, it seems that although he never builds a good collection of paintings or other works of art as many others did, he was once described as a "well-known collector" when he decided to sell his medal collection. Noted in an advertisement from the auction house, this term could be exaggerated, but at least his medal collections are of a certain level of seriousness.

This is also reflected by the display of his medal collection which was exhibited at both the

¹⁸⁹ *Royal Cornwall Gazette* – Thursday 21 February 1889.

Royal Military Exhibition in London and the Guildhall Library in London in 1890 and 1891.¹⁹⁰ In the following year, he even took the collection with him to Chicago, which brought him a reward.¹⁹¹ I have not been able to find the catalogue of these exhibitions although he did manage to publish his versions. In the National Art Library in London, one can find his catalogue titled “Collection of Military and Naval Medals and Decorations” which is noted as “Printed for Private Circulation Only” in 1891. From the library mark, it can be seen that the catalogue entered the National Art Library on 12 October 1892, just after the display at the Guildhall Library in London.¹⁹² In addition to this, another version was printed just a year later. Despite the extended size and some images inserted, the content of the two is generally the same. Considering the preface added the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893, this version is thus probably the same as he displayed in Chicago.¹⁹³

From the catalogues, one may notice that he regarded this collection very seriously. This dissertation uses the later edition for analysis because it is larger in size with slightly more detail, although the content of lots remains the same. The catalogues generally follow chronological order, the earliest object is “Rear-Admiral James Wilkes Maurice” dated 1811 and the last, his own official chain and badge of 1889–90. Probably to avoid confusion because the war occurred so frequently during the Victorian era, the medals or decorations

¹⁹⁰ Harris, Walter Henry. *Collection of Military and Naval Medals and Decorations*, 1893, available at the British Library record no. 7757.e.60, on the preface.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

¹⁹² Harris, Walter Henry, *Collection of Military and Naval Medals and Decorations*, 1891, available at National Art Library record no. 85.E Box II.

¹⁹³ Harris, 1893.

were classified by regions in his catalogue. For those he considered important, not only the supporting documents but also footnotes are listed below a lot description. At last, there are 94 footnotes were listed at the back of the book, which occupied almost half of the book content. These footnotes cover information including the relevant history or occasions, an explanation of the person awarding the medals and sometimes even comments on the market value of medals.¹⁹⁴ It is not known if he wrote all the notes or was helped by someone since there is only the title on the preface of his catalogue, but he must have paid much attention to this collection.

Along with his interests and success in this niche field of collecting, it is worth noting that among the medals he collected, there are several lots directly relevant to China. Lot 16, described as Chinese Order of the Crystal Button is the first object related to China, followed by a group of medals awarded for the two Opium Wars. Only Lot 133, noted as “TAKU FORTS, 1860 PEKIN, 1860 James Wilson, 1st Dragn. Guards (should be the 1st Dragoon Guards)”, is directly relevant to the looting since the rest of them were medals either for the First Opium war in 1842 or for the early-stage conflicts of the Second Opium War in 1857.¹⁹⁵ However, there was also a “General Gordon’s Star”. Although this medal is for his activity in Egypt, Charles George Gordon served as a royal engineer in China in 1860. Despite his direct involvement in looting, he later served in China to help the Qing government suppress the Taiping Rebellion and was awarded “The Yellow Jacket and Peacock’s Feather of the Order of Mandarin, First Class” and later ranked Tidu, the highest military rank. As a result,

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 40.

he was called “Chinese Gordon”.¹⁹⁶ He brought back many objects which may refer to the Summer Palace looting, and many of them ended up in the Royal Engineer Museum, the most prominent example being “Gordon’s Throne” which was presented on his behalf in 1861 and is now reassembled looking like a bench, probably because of confusion or missing components from being disassembled for transportation¹⁹⁷ (Fig. 4-2). In addition to that, Gordon had a close relationship with Garnet Wolseley¹⁹⁸ who had not only published the memoirs describing his experiences during the war but also directly presented several looted objects to museums in person.¹⁹⁹ More importantly, much of Harris’ medal collection, including both General Gordon’s Star and the medal of James Wilson, 1st Deagn. Guards (1st Deagon Guards) were from the same source, the Gray Collection, as Harris explained specifically in the last line of the catalogue they were “From the collection of Mr. Gray, a high official in the War Office”.

Harris relinquished his pursuit of medal collecting and managed to sell all the collections in a London auctioneer, Willis’s Rooms of Messers. Robinson & Fisher, on 28 May 1897.²⁰⁰ Like his own catalogue, the sale catalogue did not provide any additional provenance either although, from the prices recorded, his collection did show his expertise in this field. Many

¹⁹⁶ Fearon Daniel, *General Gordon’s Khartoum*, accessed 19/08/2018 at www.britnumsoc.org/publications/Digital%20BNJ/pdfs/1965_BNJ_34_23.pdf.

¹⁹⁷ Scott James, ‘Chinese Gordon’, 91, in Tythacott, ed.

¹⁹⁸ Fearon, *General Gordon’s Khartoum*.

¹⁹⁹ For the memoirs, see Wolseley, Garnet Joseph. *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*. 1862. For the looted objects relevant to Wolseley, check V&A, accession number T.134-1917, A Cushion cover in the V&A marked “From the Summer Palace Pekin 1861 Wolseley”. Also see Hevia, *English Lessons*.

²⁰⁰ *Willis’s Rooms, Messers. Robinson & Fisher*, 28 May 1897. Thanks to Francis D. Campbell from American Numismatic Society for helping me to obtain a digital copy of this archive.

lots were sold above £20, including several Victoria Crosses above £30. Particularly, Lot 100, the Peninsular Gold Cross, sold for £360; Lot 90 “The Naval Gold Medal from the 1st June 1794 awarded to Capt. William Domett” reached £140 and Lot 98, Earl St. Vincent’s Medal sold for £70.²⁰¹

Without further clues, who this Mr Gray is and how this collection was built remain unclear. Also because medal collecting, especially at the time, is not as common as collecting arts like paintings or antiquities etc, there is relatively less publications, which might provide additional information to help identifying him. Therefore, I could not be able to trace further of ‘the Gray Collection’ thus cannot identify who the ‘Mr. Gray’ was during the research.

This gap does lead to issue buding the provenance of the pages and request a more careful and in-depth research. However, it is probably enough to sketch a rough outline of the potential provenance for the circulation of the HCLQTS. In my assumption, Harris encountered Mr. Gray during his medal collecting career and either Mr. Gray, who was from the War Office, inherited from family or acquired from another military source the portion of the HCLQTS and sold it to Harris when he purchased a set of medals from him.

It is also possible that Harris could have acquired the HCLQTS during his role on the committee responsible for British commissions for the Chicago EXPO. Although it was less likely, since most of the Summer Palace looted items would have been taken to Europe first, it is also possible that Harris could have encountered the HCLQTS through a dealer and then

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

resold it to the British institutions.²⁰² Although less studied, Chinese objects, including those looted from the Yuanming Yuan, started to reach North America in the late 19th century. The best-known example being the Bishop collection of jade, which was formed starting from the late 1870s, which was later donated to the Metropolitan Museum collection.²⁰³ Most of the provenance of Bishop's collection is not known, but at least one emerald-green jade vase from the former Brayton Ives Collection was marked 'from the Summer Palace',²⁰⁴ and one cannot deny that much of his collection is of imperial quality and thus potentially looted from the Summer Palace considering how early he built the collection.²⁰⁵ Instead of buying from the immediate Summer Palace sales, he acquired many objects from China through dealers or from other collections. For example, it is recorded that Dr S.W. Bushell who was in China during the late 19th century, helped him purchase Chinese and Japanese works of art.²⁰⁶

International exhibitions themselves are good places to encounter precious but less studied objects. Starting from the Great Exhibition in 1851, a series of exhibitions were held nationally and internationally which attracted not only visitors but also dealers. In North America, Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876 attracted attention not only for the Chinese involvement and well-funded display court, but it is also noted that some

²⁰² Medley, 99.

²⁰³ Kunz George Frederick. "Heber Reginald Bishop and His Jade Collection." *American Anthropologist New Series*, 5, No. 1 (Jan-Mar 1903): 113.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*

²⁰⁵ before 1900, objects from the Qing imperial collection were rarely available to the market except those looted from the Yuanming Yuan in 1860.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*

professional Chinese international traders appeared with goods of great interest.²⁰⁷ Although we cannot spot objects sold during the exhibition as looted from the Summer Palace without the support of further documents, the obvious financial success will have brought dealers or even owners of Chinese objects to the exhibition. This was probably also true for the Chicago EXPO. Although the Chinese government refused to attend as a protest against the Chinese Exclusion Law, local merchants still took part in and built the Chinese Theatre and Joss House, which attracted many visitors.²⁰⁸ Therefore, although less likely, the HCLQTS could have been brought to the United States and during the exhibition, shifted from the hands of a dealer, a collector or even a more ordinary owner, to Harris who was on his mission to Chicago.

Walter H. Harris was not particularly prominent in society as he was never involved in wars or known for any glorious family history. He did not publish a biography or any books of family history, and it is only possible to find very fragmentary information of his life, which limits our understanding of both his private activities, and his social network. More importantly, it is not possible to suggest if he ever had any thoughts on art collecting or in this case, these painted illustrations. Therefore, other than the guesses above, there is very limited evidence noting where and how Harris could have acquired the HCLQTS pages.

²⁰⁷ Pitman Jennifer, "China's Presence at the Centennial Exhibition, Philadelphia, 1876", *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 10, No. 1 (Fall–Winter 2002–2003): 42.

²⁰⁸ Moon, Krystyn R. *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s–1920s*. Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2005, 84–86.

Entering the Museums

Although it is not known if Harris sold off everything he had to the South Kensington Museum, after a series of conversations, a total of 290 pages of Chinese books, titled “Coloured illustrations of Chinese Costumes & and Descriptions” were sold to the the Art Library Division of the South Kensington Museum in 1895.²⁰⁹ This is known thanks to the carefully preserved archives kept in the V&A, which allow us today to reconstruct the whole acquisition from the start. The cover of the acquisition paper of the Harris set of the HCLQTS is dated 17 November 1894, which probably marked the beginning of the acquisition negotiations. This is evident from a letter from Harris to Dr John Donnelly dated 5 October 1895 where he complained that he had been waiting for the museum committee’s consideration for more than 12 months,²¹⁰ implying that in 1894, Harris had offered what he called the “Illustrated Catalogue of the State Wardrobe of the Emperor of China, taken from the Summer Palace in Pekin”. Considering his biography discussed above, it is certain that he must have known this provenance from someone else, probably from the dealer who sold it to him, or he could have got this information from Sir George Birdwood, the South Asian art specialist who, according to Harris, suggested that the drawings were worth £500.²¹¹

Clearly, Harris was not happy about waiting for so long and ten days later, “mildly exasperated”, according to Medley, he pressed the museum again to accept what he offered

²⁰⁹ V&A Archives MA/1/H848 “Harris, W. H.”.

²¹⁰ *ibid.*

²¹¹ V&A Archives MA/1/H848 “Harris, W. H.”.

and pay straight away. In doing so, he noted that “there is already more than value for the money” and regard the HCLQTS as “great works of art”.²¹²

However, the £200 Harris asked for was beyond the capacity of the museum at the time, though they certainly recognised the importance of the sets. As a compromise, the museum asked the British Museum to see if they would like to take a share by paying £100, on the same day they had received the latter letter from Harris. On 9 November, Prof Robert Douglas (1838–1913), the first Keeper of the British Museum’s new Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts created in 1892,²¹³ replied that while he appreciated the value of the “Chinese drawings”, the British Museum would not take a share. After this, a note suggested asking if “the Dublin and Edinburgh”²¹⁴ would take shares. Then, the unnamed museum staff further suggested paying the money if these two rejected it, even though the £200 “is out of our grant for drawings of works of art”. Finally, if the purchase was sanctioned, he suggested paying Prof Douglas to translate it.

Both the oriental specialist Prof Douglas and the anonymous member of the museum staff agreed on the value of the HCLQTS. Fortunately, their judgement on the quality of the set was also agreed by the colleagues in the two museums in Dublin and Edinburgh. On 16 December, a full 13 months later, the museum decided to purchase the “Illustrated Catalogue

²¹² Medley, 99.

²¹³ Brown, Yu-Ying. “Sir Robert Kennaway Douglas and His Contemporaries.” *The British Library Journal* 24, no. 1 (1998): 122–129.

²¹⁴ Dublin Museum of Arts and Science, now the National Museum of Ireland and Royal Scottish Museum, now the National Museum of Scotland.

of the Wardrobe of the Emperor of China” from Harris for £200, and the payment was made in May and July in the following year.²¹⁵

From the accession number on the V&A portion of the Harris set, it is known that these paintings were formally registered in 1897. Also, the archive suggests that on 17 February 1897, one portion of 61 sheets and another of 65 sheets were sent to Dublin and Edinburgh respectively.²¹⁶ Travelling for almost half a century after being looted, the Harris set of pages from the HCLQTS finally ended up in a safe place where they have been carefully kept to this day.

On entering the museum, the identity of the Harris set changed again. Different from the market attitude discussed above, the museum staff, although not necessarily understanding Chinese or its culture, saw its value. For example, Sir John Donnelly (1834–1902), the person Harris contacted, was the secretary of the Department of Science and Art and once served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers.²¹⁷ John Henry Middleton (1846–1896), another figure active in this acquisition, the director of the Art Museum, was also not a specialist in this field. However, after receiving a positive comment from the Oriental Specialist, Prof Douglas of the British Museum, these museum staff tried their best to keep the objects even though the asking price was over their budget. This is further evidenced by the fact that after acquisition, a careful translation was made for each of the pages with texts,

²¹⁵ V&A Archives MA/1/H848 “Harris, W. H.”.

²¹⁶ *ibid.*

²¹⁷ “Sir John Donnelly, K.C.B.” *Nature*, 10 April 1902, accessed 20/09/2018 at www.nature.com/articles/065538b0.pdf.

which can still be found in the Central Inventory for 1896.²¹⁸

However, it is probably too early to claim that the HCLQTS was acquired as a sample of Chinese painting. At the time, there was a very limited amount of Chinese painting in general in the UK. According to Wood, in contrast to the long history of collecting porcelain, there were few examples of Chinese painting in the 19th century despite those export paintings or wallpapers brought back by the East India Company.²¹⁹ In 1882, the British Museum acquired the painting collection of William Anderson (1842–1900) who had a large collection of Japanese paintings with a small portion of Chinese ones, which to Wood were, “a nod in the direction of the older traditions, as a supplement to the Japanese examples”.²²⁰ Also, it is noteworthy that Anderson formed this collection during his residence in Tokyo. Therefore, his pattern of the collecting can hardly be considered representative in British culture. Despite that, surveying the V&A collection of early Chinese painting, very few can be identified as not for foreign consumers. For example, a series of Ten Kings from Hell was acquired by the museum in 1869 according to the accession number²²¹ (Fig. 4-3). Without a further investigation of the archives, how they reached the museum is not clear.

Different from both examples, the HCLQTS is not a scroll painting, the more usual format of what was known as oriental paintings. Instead, such an album was more likely to be

²¹⁸ Central Archive of 1896 V&A Archives.

²¹⁹ Wood, Francis. “From Ships’ Captains to the Bloomsbury Group: The Late Arrival of Chinese Paintings in Britain.” In *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 61 (1996–1997).

²²⁰ *ibid.*

²²¹ V&A accession no. 1770–1869 to 1770I–1869.

regarded as a form of book, or manuscript. As mentioned previously, the Mactaggart portion was bought by a book dealer. Similarly, the HCLQTS acquired from Harris entered the Art Library Division of the museum.²²² This probably reflects a 19th-century attitude to Chinese painting where, those works were not regarded as art but manuscripts, drawings thus would not be regarded the same as oil painting or marble statues in western eyes. However, limited by time and further evidence, it is too soon to make a solid argument, and is another direction for further study.

²²² V&A Archives MA/1/H848 "Harris, W. H.".

Conclusion

The research on looted objects from the Summer Palace became a hot topic in recent years. Rather than producing a grand historical overview, scholars started to take their perspective from the looted objects to investigate their circulation and their encounters with the changing environment. Besides, provenance study and the increasing interest in the history of collection have also driven scholars to investigate how the objects circulated in society and interacted according to the different owner. Huangchao Liqi Tushi, or the Illustrations of Imperial Ritual Paraphernalia of the Present Dynasty, thus became a good example meeting the interests of both sides. This dissertation reviewed the “social life” of the Huangchao Liqi Tushi. Starting from its origin and process or production, how its identity changed from the symbol of an emperor’s knowledge of his empire and a warning to his Manchu identity, to a war trophy or commodity, and finally became a part of a museum collection is investigated. Benefiting from the new material, including both the Qing archives and the digitised historical news documents of 19th-century western society, this research tried to combine the art historical judgement and provenance research and examine how the two types of evidence may interact to each other. As a result, in this case, the original order of the HCLQTS before the acquisition in the 19th century has been successfully restored. Also, based on the understanding of Qing archival materials, additional evidence is provided to legitimise the Yuanming Yuan provenance of the Harris set as well as attempting to fill the provenance gap during its circulation in the 19th century by analysing different possibilities of potential provenance suggestions. However, it is yet to be proved that the Harris set was looted from the Summer Palace in 1860. Also, lacking of further evidence we know neither exactly how it came to Europe, nor can we understand how people regarded these types of

materials during the 19th century. Therefore, the conclusion of this dissertation is not an end, but a beginning of research in several different directions.

Figures

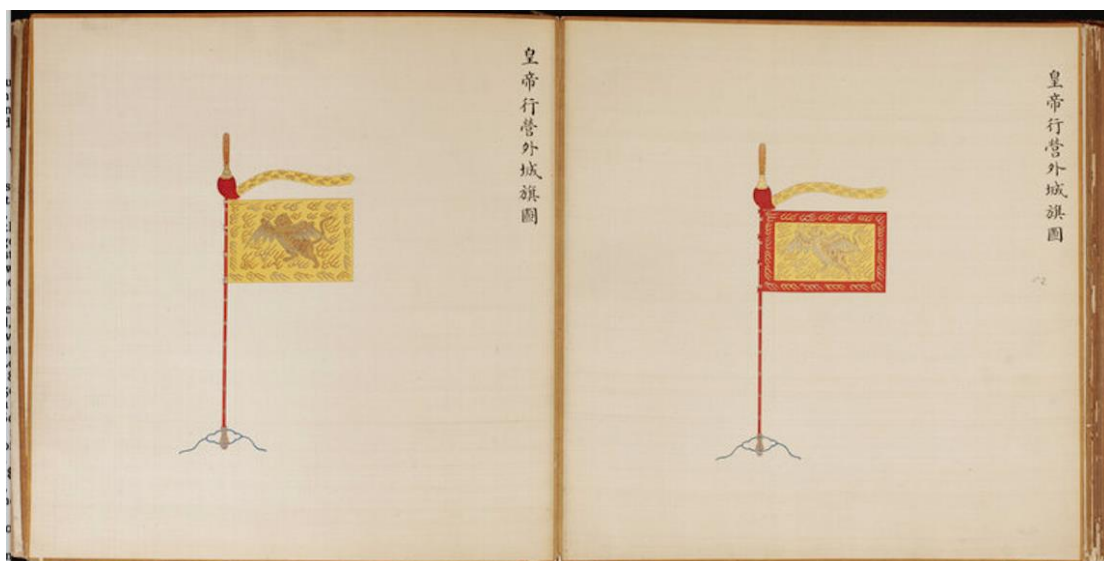


Figure 1-1 A banner flown on the outer fortifications of the imperial travelling camp V&A

873A-1896 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Figure 1-2 A banner flown at the gate of the Outer Division of the Guard at the Emperor's

travelling camp V&A 872-1896 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

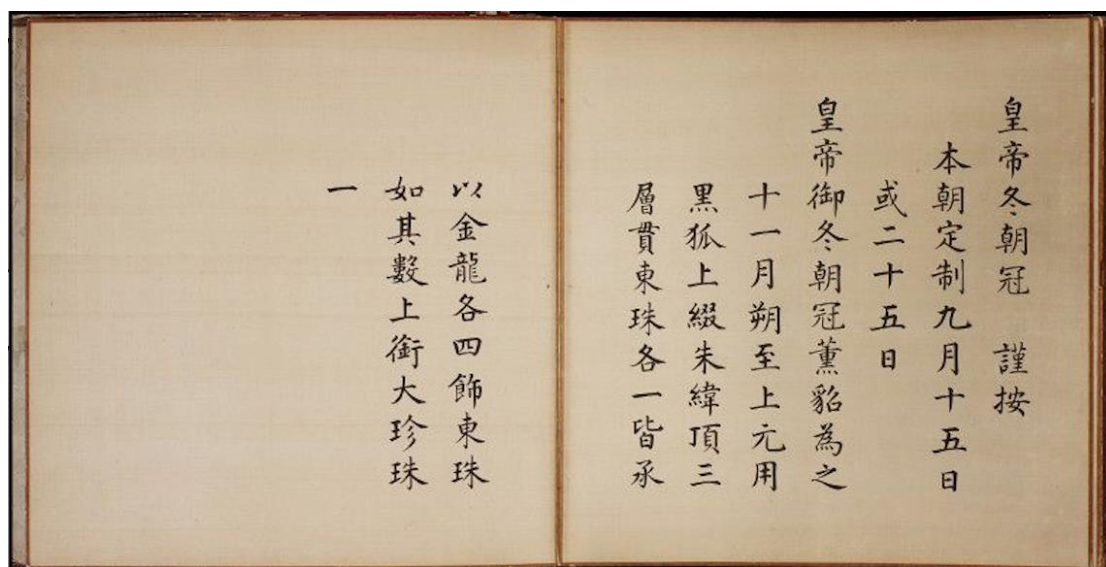


Figure 1-3 Explanatory text about the Emperor's winter court cap V&A 810-1896 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

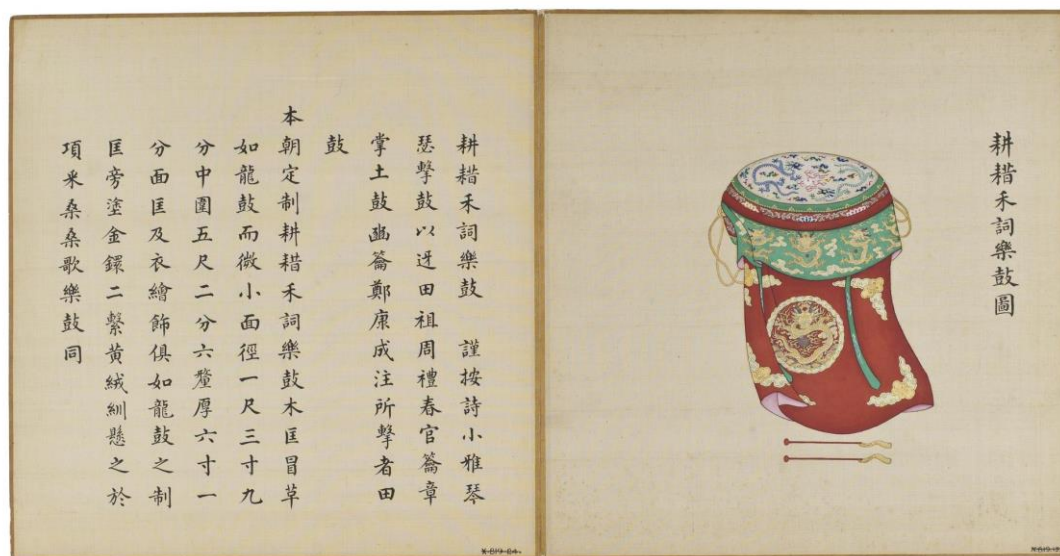


Figure 1-4 Drum for the Music to accompany the Ploughing of the First Furrow NMS A.1968.432 W



Figure 1-5 Drum for the Music to accompany the Ploughing of the First Furrow NMS

A.1968.432 W Printed version vol 9 26



Figure 2-1 Back of The Emperor's Winter Court Cap with red and black numbers 809-1896



Figure 2-1 Front of the Emperor's Winter Court Cap V&A 809-1896 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

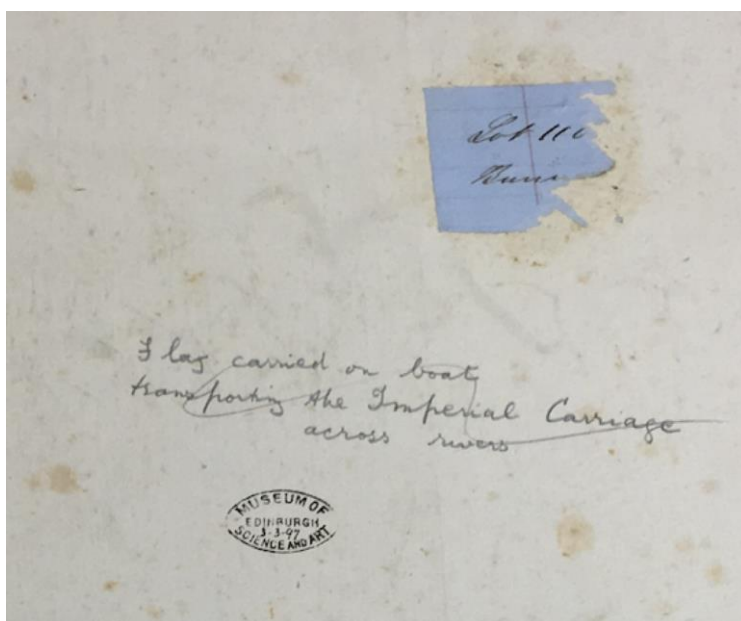


Figure 2-2 Back of an HCLQTS page with a fragment of blue paper NMS A.1968.432 Y

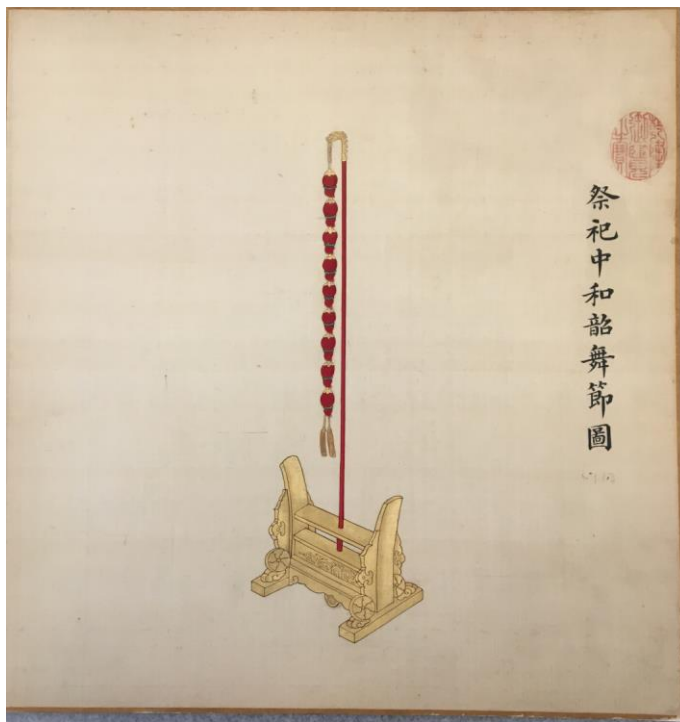


Figure 2-3a Front Timekeeper at Shao dances at the offering of sacrifices V&A 832-1896 ©

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

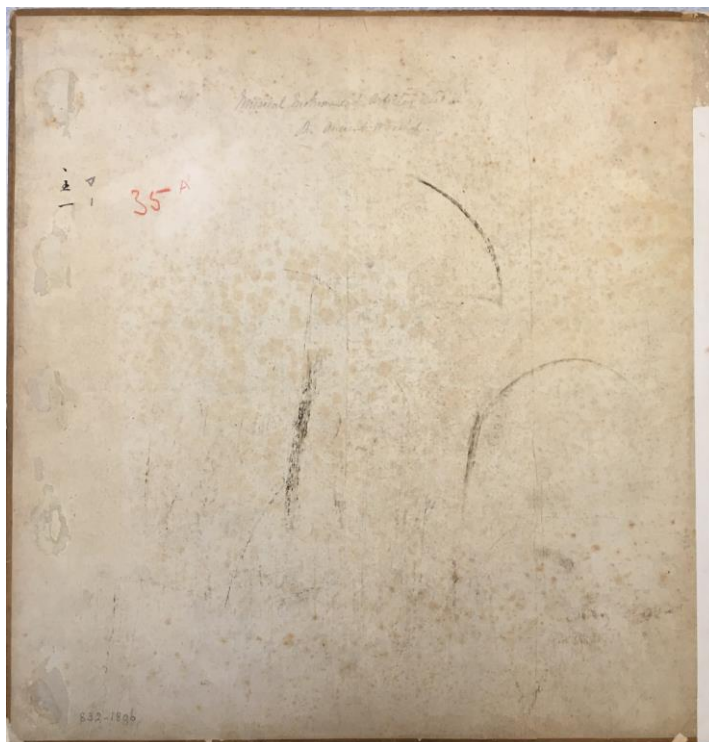


Figure 2-3b Back of 832-1896, with both black and red numbers © Victoria and Albert

Museum, London



Figure 3-1 The Restored View of Qianqing Palace, Palace Museum Beijing



Figure 3-2 Image of the Palace Museum Beijing set of the HCLQTS



Figure 3-3a Button left vase, a Chinese porcelains vase is identical comparing to a one in the Fontainebleau collection as one of the looted objects presented to the Napoleon III as gift, captured by John Thompson on his visit in Beijing in 1871, *Illustrations of China and Its People*, vol 4,



Figure 3-3b Similar vase found in the Chinese Museum at the Château of Fontainebleau, photo attributed to Pierre-Ambroise Richebourg



Figure 3-4a The python Robe of the Emperor's son V&A D.1946-1900 ©

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

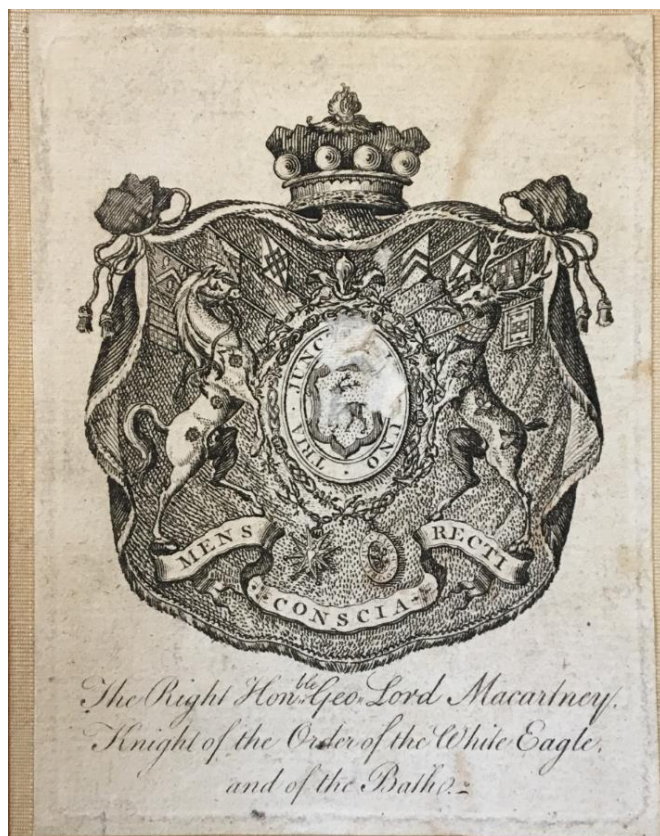


Figure 3-4b Details of the Macartney Family Mark



Figure 4-1 Photo of W.H.Harris, Metropolitan Archives SC/GL/NOB/C/087/18



Figure 4-2 The Second Opium War Case, Royal Engineers Museum



Figure 4-3 One of The Ten Kings of Purgatory (Diyu Shiwang 地獄十王) Victoria & Albert Museum (Museum No. 1770I-1869) © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Appendix 1

List of records in the Zaobanchu archives mentioning the HCLQTS.

Specifically, the green coloured field are those records with only potential but not secured connection to the HCLQTS or other projects in indirect connection to the production of the HCLQTS.

Date	Workshops mentioned	Comments	Zaobanchu References
乾隆十三年 1748			
2 月 February	畫作 The Painting Workshop	maybe	Vol 16, p297
3 月 26 日 March 26	如意館 Ruyi Studio	not sure	Vol 16, 240– 245
11 月 29 Nov 29	畫作 The Painting Workshop	maybe	Vol 16, 613
乾隆十四年 1749			
11 月 19 Nov 19	畫院處 the Painting Academy	relevant projects	Vol 17, 331

乾隆十五年 1750			
2 月 3 日 Feb 3	如意館 Ruyi Studio	relevant projects	Vol 17, 331
4 月 19 日 Apr 19	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 17, 355
七月初十 July 10	畫院處 the Painting Academy	relevant projects	Vol 17, 331
乾隆 16 年 1751			
二月初七 Feb 7	如意館 Ruyi Studio	size	Vol 18, 337
三月十三日 March 13	畫院處 the Painting Academy	direct mentions	Vol 18, 426
七月初二 July 2	畫院處 the Painting Academy	not sure	Vol 18, 428
九月初三 Sep 3	蘇州織造 the Imperial Factory of	key evidence	Vol 18, 409

	Textile in Suzhou		
乾隆十七年 1752			
九月十七日 Sep 17	記事錄 the Yearly Register	key evidence	Vol 18, 695–697
十二月初九 Dec 9	記事錄 the Yearly Register	key evidence	Vol 18, 715
乾隆二十三年 1758			
十月二十七日 Oct 27	如意館、禮器 館、南薰殿畫 院 Ruyi Studio, the institute of Ritual Vessel; Nanxun Palace Painting workshop	direct mentions/key evidence size	Vol 23, 488
十二月二十一 日 Dec 21	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 23, 503
乾隆二十四年 1759			

十一月二十一日 Nov 21	記事錄 the Yearly Register	key evidence	Vol 24, 607
乾隆二十五年 1760			
正月初五 Jan 5	畫院處 the Painting Academy	direct mentions	Vol 25, 448
十二月十五日 Dec 15	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 25, 538
乾隆二十六年 1761			
十月十三日 Oct 13	如意館 Ruyi Studio	relevant projects	Vol 26, 718
十二月二十八日 Dec 28	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 26, p732
乾隆二十七年 1762			
正月十二日 Jan 12	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 27, 169

五月 May	記事錄 the Yearly Register	relevant evidence	Vol 27, 363
閏五月二十日 Leap May 20	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 27, 187
六月 June	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 27, 188
乾隆二十八年 1763			
正月二十三日 Jan 23	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 28, 47
十月十四日 Oct 14	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 28, 73
十月二十五日 Oct 25		author	Vol 28, 512
乾隆二十九年 1764			
十月十八日 Oct 18	記事錄 the Yearly Register	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 29, 51
十月二十四日 Oct 24	記事錄/武英殿 the Yearly	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 29, 54

	Register/ Wuying Palace		
乾隆三十年 1765			
六月初十 June 10	記事錄/武英殿 the Yearly Register/ Wuying Palace	prints	Vol 29, 456
九月十九日 Sep 19	記事錄 the Yearly Register	direct mentions	Vol 29, 461
九月十九日 Sep 19	記事錄 the Yearly Register	direct mentions/key evidence size	Vol 29, 462
乾隆三十一年 1766			
八月二十六日 Aug 26	匣裱作 the Mounting and Boxing Workshop	direct mentions	Vol 30, 217
乾隆三十二年 1767			
二月十九日 Feb 19	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 30, 812

四月十八 Apr 18	如意館 Ruyi Studio	printed version	Vol 30, 822
十一月初五 Nov 5	畫院處 the Painting Academy	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 31, 48
乾隆三十三年 1768			
二月初八 Feb 8	記事錄 the Yearly Register	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 31, 702
六月十八 June 18	記事錄 the Yearly Register	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 31, 709
七月初七 July 7	記事錄 the Yearly Register	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 31, 710
乾隆三十五年 1770			
四月初七 Apr 7	雜錄檔 the Miscellany records	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 34, 100

三月初六 Mar 6	記事錄 武英殿 修書處 the Yearly Register/ Wuying Palace book publishing department	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 34, 275
乾隆三十六年 1771			
六月二十六日 June 26	廣木作 the Wood Workshop	packing format of HCLQTS	Vol 34, 641–642
乾隆三十九年 1774			
十一月二十六 日 Nov 26	廣木作 the Wood Workshop	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 37, 381
乾隆四十年 1775			
二月二十八日 Feb 28	如意館 Ruyi Studio	packing format of HCLQTS	Vol 38, 8

三月十四日 Mar 14	各處行文 the official communications	packing format of HCLQTS	Vol 39, 46
乾隆四十二年 1777			
二月十五日 Feb 15	記事錄 the Yearly Register	direct mentions/key evidence	Vol 40, 381
二月二十三 Feb 23	如意館 Ruyi Studio	size of HCLQTS	Vol 40, 257
三月十三日 Mar 13	如意館 Ruyi Studio	direct mentions	Vol 40, 260

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