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Complicated Objects:
Artifacts from the Yuanming Yuan in Victorian Britain

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Abstract

The 1860 spoliation of the Summer Palace at the close of the Second Opium War by British and French troops was a watershed event within the development of Britain as an imperialist nation, which guaranteed a market for opium produced in its colony India and demonstrated the power of its armed forces. The distribution of the spoils to officers and diplomatic corps by campaign leaders in Beijing was also a sign of the British Army's rising power as an instrument of the imperialist state. These conditions would suggest that objects looted from the site would be integrated into an imperialist aesthetic that reflected and promoted the material benefits of military engagement overseas and foregrounded the circumstances of their removal to Britain for campaign members and the British public.

This study mines sources dating to the two decades following the war – including British newspapers, auction house records, exhibition catalogs and works of art – to test this hypothesis. Findings show that initial movements of looted objects through the military and diplomatic corps did reinforce notions of imperialist power by enabling campaign members to profit from the spoliation through sales of looted objects and trophy displays. However, material from the Summer Palace arrived at a moment when British manufacturers and cultural leaders were engaged in a national effort to improve the quality of British goods to compete in the international marketplace and looted art was quickly interpolated in this national conversation. Ironically, the same “free trade” imperatives that motivated the invasion energized a new design movement that embraced Chinese ornament.

As a consequence, political interpretations of the material outside of military collections were quickly joined by a strong response to Chinese ornament from cultural institutions and design leaders. Art from the Summer Palace held a prominent place at industrial art exhibitions of the postwar period and inspired new designs in a number of mediums. While the availability of Chinese imperial art was the consequence of a military invasion and therefore a product of imperialist expansion, evidence presented here shows that the design response to looted objects was not circumscribed by this political reality. Chinese ornament on imperial wares was ultimately celebrated for its formal qualities and acknowledged links to the Summer Palace were an indicator of good design, not a celebration of victory over a failed Chinese state. Therefore, the looting of the Summer Palace was ultimately an essential factor in the development of modern design, the essence of which is a break with Classical ornament.

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Thank you for waiting.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Katrina Hill

Signature:

Abbreviations

During the period covered by this study, Christie's auction house was called at different times "Mr. Christie's," "Christie, Manson & Woods," and "Messrs. Christie & Manson." For the sake of brevity and consistency this text refers to the auction house as "Christie's."

Within the footnotes, auctions and auction catalogues are referenced only by auction house, location, date of sale, and lot number, for the sake of brevity, e.g., Christie's London, Sale of July 5, 1861, Lot 102. These are keyed to the full titles of sale catalogues listed in the bibliography.

Captions for figures include all makers, dates and dimensions available.

Names of museums frequently cited are abbreviated in the footnotes thus:

MMA	The Metropolitan Museum of Art
NMS	National Museum of Scotland
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum
BM	British Museum

Introduction

Return to the Summer Palace



I-1. Ruins of the Great Fountain Main Facade in the Yuanming Yuan (1759–84),
© William Perry / Alamy Stock Photo

This study considers the spoliation of China’s “Summer Palace” during the Second Opium War, and its impact on the Victorian art world. The term “Summer Palace” refers to a group of imperial gardens six miles northwest of Beijing, which included the famed Yuanming Yuan, site of the Rococo European-style palaces known widely through photographs of their ruins today.¹ (Fig. I-1) During the endgame of the war, the army of the Xianfeng emperor (1831–61, r. 1851–61) took hostages to thwart the advance of the allied French and British armies towards Beijing. The invaders then plundered the Summer Palace and the British burned it down after learning that many of the hostages had been tortured to death.² The spoliation occurred in October of 1860 and the armies returned to Europe in early 1861 with a vast array of artifacts from the Qing imperial collections. Plundered objects soon began to appear in the marketplace and exhibition halls, where they were greeted with great enthusiasm by the public. British campaign members who had acquired looted material sometimes retained pieces in their family

¹ More specifically, the garden complex often called the “Old Summer Palace,” comprises three gardens: the Yuanming Yuan (Garden of Perfect Brightness), the Qichun Yuan (Garden of Elegant Spring), and the Changchun Yuan (Joyful Spring Garden). The northeastern area of the gardens where the European-style palaces were laid out is the Xiyang Lou (Complex of European Buildings). The Yihe Yuan (Summer Palace), is a separate garden lying to the west. Transliterations and translations of these titles are drawn from Guo Daiheng, *China’s Lost Imperial Garden: The World’s Most Exquisite Garden Rediscovered*, trans. Yawtsong Lee (New York: Better Link Press, 2016), 242–49. While British visitors prior to 1860 generally referred to areas of the “Old Summer Palace” as “Yuen-min-Yuen” or “Yue-suo-yuen,” British campaign members who entered the grounds of these separate gardens in 1860 generally referred to them collectively as the “Summer Palace.”

² Henry Knollys, comp. *Incidents in the China War of 1860 Compiled from the Private Journals of General Sir Hope Grant G.C.B. Commander of the British Expedition* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1875), 202–5.

homes, where they remained out of public view for generations. Others loaned objects for exhibit, donated treasures to museums, or sold pieces individually for cash. Widows and descendants of campaign members continued this activity. Slowly, objects were dispersed throughout the world and in diverse locations they affected collecting cultures and decorative arts. The early stage of this culture transfer is the subject of this dissertation.

The spoliation effected a large, rapid transfer of imperial artifacts to Britain, quite different from the usual imported goods. Prior to the 1860 war, only a small number of objects from the Qing court had come to Britain with the returning Macartney embassy of 1793–94. Some pieces attributed to the Summer Palace were massive works of cloisonné, which the British had never seen before, like the pair of large cisterns today in the Victoria and Albert Museum.³ (Fig. I-2) Others drew on aesthetics imported to China by Jesuit missionaries employed in court workshops, like the engraving “Main Façade of the Observatory of Distant Waters,” from the album of engravings called the *Twenty Views of the European Palaces of the Yuanmingyuan*,⁴ which was created for the Qianlong emperor (1711–99, r. 1736–95).⁵ (Fig. I-3) The folio shows one of the rococo-style villas erected at his command, rendered in a delightfully symmetric version of European one-point perspective. It was donated to the British Museum by Sir Henry Francis Brooke (1836–80), secretary to Maj.-Gen. Sir Robert Napier (1810–90), who served as commander of the 2nd Division during the Second Opium War,⁶ and was present at the plunder of the Summer Palace. Other artifacts were thousands of years old and came out of the court bronze collections, like the recently-discovered Tiger Ying, a vessel of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046–771 BC), taken from the Summer Palace by Capt. Harris Lewis Evans (1831–83), of the Royal Marines and returned to China through the marketplace.⁷ (Fig. I-4)

³ V&A, acc. nos. 254-1876; 254A-1876. Museum records show that they were purchased from Professor Stockbauer of Nuremberg in 1876 and that he attributed them to the estate. “Object history,” Victoria and Albert Museum website, accessed October 1, 2022, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O406319/vat/>.

⁴ BM, mus. no. 1916,0214,0.3.

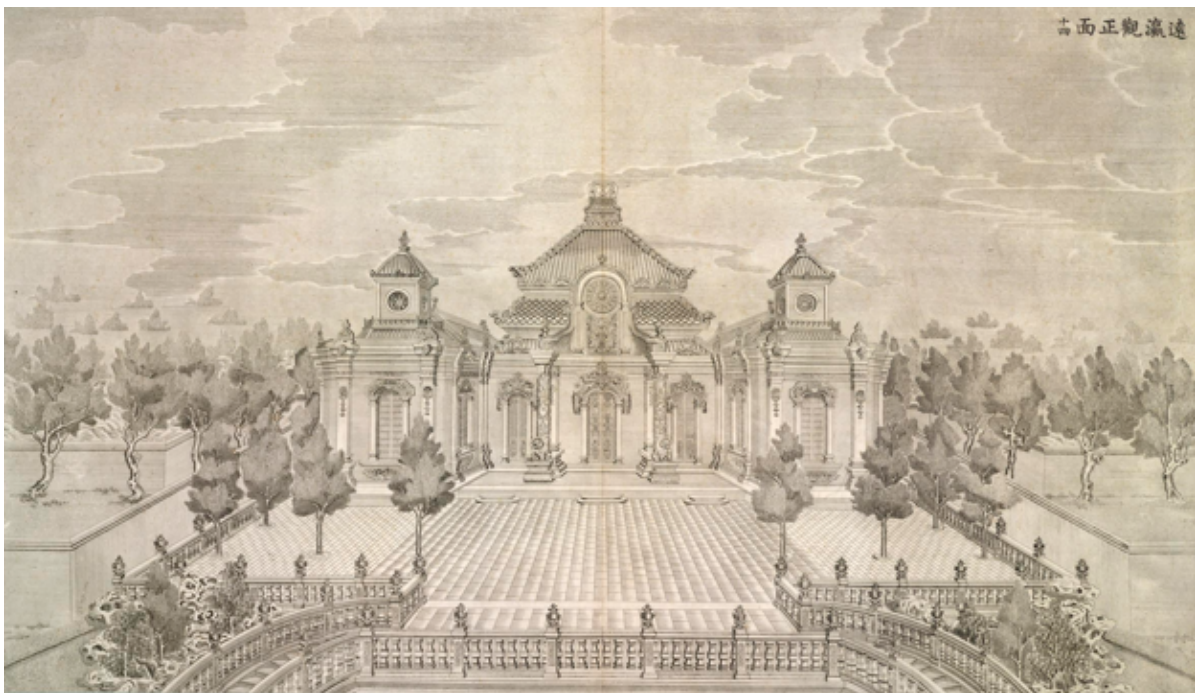
⁵ See John R. Finlay, “The Qianlong Emperor’s Western Vistas: Linear Perspective and Trompe l’Oeil Illusion in the European Palaces of the Yuanming yuan,” *Bulletin de l’École française d’Extrême-Orient* 94 (2007): 159–93, 166–70, where he looks at the involvement of missionaries in the European-style buildings and the engravings depicting these.

⁶ Michael Barthorp, *Queen Victoria’s Commanders* (Oxford: Osprey, 2000), 47.

⁷ “Tiger Ying Vessel Returns to China,” *Antique Collecting Magazine*, December 12, 2018, <https://antique-collecting.co.uk/2018/12/12/tiger-ying-vessel-returns-to-china/>.



I-2. Chinese cistern, Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), cloisonné enamel on copper, H. 57 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



I-3. Yi Lantai, “Main Façade of the Observatory of Distant Waters,” Plate 14 from *Twenty Views of the European Palaces of the Yuanmingyuan*, 1783–86, engraving, H. 50.5 cm, British Museum



I-4. The Tiger Ying at the National Museum of China in Beijing, January 29, 2019,

© Xinhua/Alamy

This heterogeneous group of works was re-valued and reinterpreted by the British public in sales, exhibitions, product designs, and collections both public and private. The circumstances of this transfer – the final act of an imperialist military campaign – complicated interpretation of the objects. They were first exhibited in public as spoils of war and trophies, not as works of art. Early reports of the plunder engendered pride among the public and sparked political comparisons between industrial Britain and China, which was considered corrupt and backward. In one smug editorial, the *Morning Post* intoned: “the superior intellectualism of Europe could not fail to penetrate into the dull mass of Chinese hebetude. China lays claim to an immense antiquity, and is, without doubt, one of the oldest nations; but through those long years has existed, in its block of proud isolation, like some imbedded reptile, shut out from the animating light of day and the invigorating breath of a fresh atmosphere, enjoying no happiness, doing no good, and accomplishing none of the purposes for which all other created things ‘live and move and have their being.’”⁸ In the politically-charged atmosphere of postwar imperial Britain, each object became a nexus of competing value systems. However, the objects, as well as their techniques, materials and styles, were ultimately assimilated as art into British culture with great enthusiasm, as will be seen in this study. Indeed, this was the beginning of Britain’s love affair with Chinese imperial porcelain.

⁸ “The Late Campaign in China,” *Morning Post*, November 14, 1861, 3.

Literature of the Summer Palace

During the twentieth century, western historians of the Opium Wars generally did not dwell on the spoliation. In *The Arrow War with China* (1901), Charles S. Leavenworth expressed brief disapproval: “The allies seized the Summer Palace, Yuan-ming-yuan, which the French had entered first. Much loot and many valuable papers were found there ... On Oct. 7th the place was a terrible scene of loot.”⁹ An account of the Second Opium War published by the Navy Records Society distributed blame between Britain and France: “it was not until October 8, when the allies were on the north wall of Peking and the French had seized the Summer Palace, that the remaining prisoners—twenty had died or been executed—were returned ... In addition the British burnt the Summer Palace notwithstanding Gros’ disagreement.”¹⁰ W. Travis Hanes and Frank Sanello based their account on the perspectives of British officers in *The Opium Wars* (2002).¹¹ In *China, 1860* (1989), Michael Mann suggested that the French did much of the looting, while acknowledging the presence of trophies from the Summer Palace in British regimental messes.¹² The issue of how much was taken separately by the French and British armies will be discussed in Chapter Three. (See 75–78.)

Then a group of publications in the 1990s and early 2000s initiated serious political dialogue in the West on the plunder and the Opium Wars. In *Deadly Dreams: Opium and the Arrow War (1856–1860) in China* (1998), John Wong conducted a carefully documented investigation into British narratives of the Second Opium War and he concluded that the famed conflict over the *Arrow* lorcha incident, in which Chinese authorities arrested the crew of a ship suspected of smuggling under a lapsed British license, was a pretext for a military operation that would win concessions from the Chinese on British opium imports. Hevia opened a critical dialogue about the looting with a reappraisal of the incident by drawing attention to the racial hostility and imperialist objectives underlying the seemingly spontaneous plunder and ultimately reaching a more negative assessment of the damage inflicted than earlier historians. Furthermore, he examined how objects taken from the site enriched campaign members and buttressed imperialist propaganda in Britain.¹³ He has followed up with an essay on the “afterlives” of

⁹ Charles S. Leavenworth, *The Arrow War with China* (London: S. Low, Marston, 1901), 174.

¹⁰ *Publications of the Navy Records Society*, eds. D. Bonner-Smith and E. W. R. Lumby, vol. 95, *The Second China War, 1856–1860* (London: Printed for the Navy Records Society, 1954), 392–93.

¹¹ W. Travis Hanes and Frank Sanello, *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another* (Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebooks, 2002), 271–88.

¹² Michael Mann, *China, 1860* (Salisbury: M. Russell, 1989), 136–40.

¹³ James L. Hevia, “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): 319–45; James L. Hevia, “Looting Beijing, 1860, 1900,” in *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations*, ed. Lydia Liu (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999), 192–213.

objects dispersed from the site and the Summer Palace itself as a site of national memory, which has great political resonance in a rapidly changing China.¹⁴ Hevia initiated discussion on the many values and political functions assigned to the looted objects in Europe and this has ironically energized discussions of imperial art. Among recent historical studies of the spoliation are *Destruction of Paradise*, in which John Roote examines the looting through the eyes of thirteen witnesses to the event.¹⁵

Several resources in English provide information regarding the history and layout of the gardens. Guo Daiheng's comprehensive study of the construction, disposition and functions of the many buildings at the site is available in translation as *China's Lost Imperial Garden: The World's Most Exquisite Garden Rediscovered*. Osvald Sirén (1879–1966) included a chapter on the Yuanming Yuan in *Gardens of China*, which describes various areas of the garden and adjacent pleasure grounds, and discusses the personal connections of Qing emperors to the site.¹⁶ Malone provided a wealth of information gleaned onsite in the early twentieth century regarding the development of the grounds, the buildings and their arrangement, as well as many historical events inside the estate, in *The History of the Peking Summer Palaces under the Ch'ing Dynasty* (1966). He also gave a critical account of the Summer Palace spoliation and concluded: "The very extensive destruction which the British forces carried out does seem to have been outrageously excessive, even in view of the horrible nature of the offense which it was intended to punish."¹⁷ In *Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan* (2001), Young-tsu Wong provides a history of the garden tradition in which the Yuanming Yuan was situated, the garden's development and layout, and the daily life of its inhabitants. Drawing on extensive archival material, Wong describes important events that took place within its walls; such as, imperial banquets, religious ceremonies and birthday celebrations, and ends with a poignant discussion of the spoliation and fire in 1860.

One group of publications provides in-depth analysis of visual resources linked with the site. Photographs of the Yuanming Yuan and nearby imperial gardens in the Percival Yetts collection at University of Durham document the condition of the gardens and their structures between the Second Opium War and the Boxer Rebellion. In a study of this collection, *Photographs of Peking, China 1861–1908* (2005), Nicholas Pearce catalogued each picture, drawing information from various historical texts, not only about the creation of the images, but the geography, architecture and history of the areas

¹⁴ James L. Hevia, "The Afterlives of a Ruin: The Yuanmingyuan in China and the West," in *Collecting and Displaying China's "Summer Palace" in the West: The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France*, ed. Louise Tythacott (New York: Routledge, 2018), 25–37.

¹⁵ John A. Roote, *Destruction of Paradise: Triumph, Tragedy, and the Sack of the Summer Palace* (Dallas: Forbidden City Books, 2017).

¹⁶ Osvald Sirén, "Yuanming Yuan," *Gardens of China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1949), 117–30.

¹⁷ Carroll Brown Malone, *History of the Peking Summer Palaces Under the Ch'ing Dynasty* (New York: Paragon, 1966), 190.

depicted, including their use by legation members after the 1860 war.¹⁸ In *Barbarian Lens: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor's European Palaces* (1998), Régine Thiriez conducted a study of the earliest photographs taken of the site after its destruction.¹⁹ More recently, Vimalin Rujivacharakul has considered the potential of newly-discovered architectural archives to fill in the existing picture of the palaces in the *Xiyang Lou* (Complex of European Buildings), assembled from known textual and visual sources, while providing back stories to their creation.²⁰ As noted above, John Finlay documents the background and incorporation of European trompe l'oeil and linear perspective into the creation of the European-style palaces and associated *Twenty Views of the European Palaces of the Yuanming Yuan*, showing how these contributed to an illusionistic, theatrical setting for the enjoyment of the Qianlong emperor.²¹ Guo Daiheng's volume is also filled with 3D renderings of the Yuanming Yuan, which are based on extensive archaeological and textual research. Liu Yang, manager at the Summer Palace park, has published with Weng Yi a volume comprising many old photographs and illustrations of the site.²²

New efforts to determine the trajectories of objects looted from the Summer Palace have been undertaken in recent years. Two conferences have looked at artworks from the Summer Palace in European collections: *The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France: Representations of the "Summer Palace" in the West*, organized by Louise Tythacott at the University of Manchester in 2013; and *Complicated Objects: Spoils from the Yuanming Yuan in British Museums*, mounted by the author with support from the Universities' China Committee in London and held at the Institute of Historical Research, London, in 2017. Tythacott has built on the Manchester conference with a multi-author book of essays on the movements and various meanings of the looted objects in Britain and France. She also provides a comprehensive overview of the estate, its collections and the spoliation in her introduction.²³ Some scholars have published studies of individual objects and collections linked with the Summer Palace. Haoyang Zhao has used the *Illustrated Album of Qing Imperial Ritual Paraphernalia*, created for the Qianlong emperor and spread among a number of institutions, as a case study in provenance research related to the Summer Palace.²⁴ Nicholas Pearce followed the trail of the famed "Skull of Confucius" from a Buddhist temple outside the Summer Palace to the Pitt Rivers Museum, relating the physical and

¹⁸ Nicholas Pearce, *Photographs of Peking, China 1861–1908: An Inventory and Description of the Yettis Collection at the University of Durham: Through Peking with a Camera* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005).

¹⁹ Régine Thiriez, *Barbarian Lens: Western Photographers of the Qianlong Emperor's European Palaces* (Amsterdam: Gordon & Breach, 1998).

²⁰ Vimalin Rujivacharakul, "How to Map Ruins: Yuanming Yuan Archives and Chinese Architectural History," *Getty Research Journal*, no. 4 (2012): 91–108.

²¹ John Finlay, "The Qianlong Emperor's Western Vistas: Linear Perspective and Trompe l'Oeil Illusion in the European Palaces of the Yuanming yuan," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 94 (2007): 159–93.

²² Liu Yang and Weng Yi, *Xiyang jing xia de sanshan wu yuan* [Diorama of Three Mountains and Five Gardens] (Beijing: China Photographic Publishing House, 2017).

²³ Louise Tythacott, "The Yuanmingyuan and Its Objects," in Tythacott, *Collecting and Displaying*, 3–14.

²⁴ Haoyang Zhao, "Art Historical and Provenance Research in a Case Study of Huangchao Liqi Tushi," *Journal for Art Market Studies* 2 (2020).

symbolic transformations worked on it along the way.²⁵ (See 101, 215.) Kevin McLoughlin examined issues of interpretation and display surrounding the gold ewer presented to Gen. Sir James Hope Grant (1808–75) by his troops, now in the National Museum of Scotland.²⁶ Liu Yang has published studies on the diaspora of objects from the site, including small art treasures, larger architectural fragments, and sculpture.²⁷

As for the marketing of Summer Palace spoils, Louise Tythacott has analyzed the sale of two important Summer Palace collections, those of the French officer Capt. Jean-Louis de Negroni (dates unknown) and James Bruce, the 8th Earl of Elgin and 12th Earl of Kincardine (1811–63), plenipotentiary for Queen Victoria (1819–1901, r. 1837–1901) in China, and the impact of display on their respective valuations.²⁸ In “The Power of Provenance: Marketing and Pricing of Chinese Looted Art on the European Market (1860–1862),” Christine Howald looks at the types of objects taken and how they were transformed from symbols of British might into commodities through the military auction at the Summer Palace, entry into the Beijing marketplace, and movement into the art markets of Britain and France; and she considers how provenance enhanced their value in the marketplace, as well as gauging the response of buyers.²⁹ Stacey Pierson considers the early acquisition and collecting of Summer Palace material as a foundational event in the history of Chinese imperial art connoisseurship in Britain, in her essay for Tythacott’s volume.³⁰

A New Look at the Spoliation and its Impact

This dissertation stands apart from other studies in the field of Summer Palace scholarship due to its wide-angle focus on the interpolation of plundered objects into the Victorian cultural landscape through a range of activities: trophy display in the military, industrial art exhibitions, product design, private collecting and interior decoration. The inquiries cited above have looked in-depth at different aspects of the plunder. This study positions the objects in the context of the Victorian art world and surrounding society, for the looted treasures played a crucial role in the public’s awareness of victory in China and

²⁵ Nicholas Pearce, “From Relic to Relic: A Brief History of the Skull of Confucius,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 26, no. 2 (2014): 207–22.

²⁶ Kevin McLoughlin, “‘Rose-water Upon his Delicate Hands’: Imperial and Imperialist Readings of the Hope Grant Ewer,” in Tythacott, *Collecting and Displaying*, 99–119.

²⁷ Liu Yang, *Shei shoucangle yuanmingyuan* [Who Collects Yuanmingyuan?] (Beijing: Jincheng Press, 2013); Liu Yang, *Yuanmingyuan liu san wenwu* [Diaspora of Yuanming Yuan Cultural Relics] (Beijing: Heritage Press, 2007).

²⁸ Louise Tythacott, “Exhibiting and Auctioning Yuanmingyuan (‘Summer Palace’) Loot in 1860s and 1870s London: The Elgin and Negroni Collections,” *Journal for Art Market Studies* 2 no. 3 (2018).

²⁹ Cristine Howald, “The Power of Provenance: Marketing and Pricing of Chinese Looted Art on the European Market (1860–1862),” in eds. Bénédicte Savoy, Charlotte Guichard and Christine Howald, *Acquiring Cultures: Histories of World Art on Western Markets* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018), 241–65.

³⁰ Stacey Pierson, “‘True Beauty of Form and Chaste Embellishment’: Summer Palace Loot and Chinese Porcelain Collecting in Nineteenth-century Britain,” in Tythacott, *Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France*, 72–86.

they had a significant impact on the British market for art and design. In fact, the successful outcome of the Second Opium War and the transport of the Qing imperial collections to Britain fed the public's conception of itself as a political and cultural force on the world stage and made manifest the benefits they drew from suppression of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, also known as the First War of Independence: a guaranteed market for opium and other colonial products.

This inquiry looks at the emergence of a new aesthetic centered around the plundered artworks after the war. First, the handling of looted art by campaign members is considered. Soldiers and diplomats returned in 1861 with fabulous objects from the Summer Palace, which they generally displayed as trophies, integrated into home decor and dress, lent for exhibition, donated to museums, or sold. All of these activities facilitated and encouraged the use of Chinese art from the Summer Palace in a similar manner among the civilian population, who displayed objects "from the Summer Palace" as trophies, collected them as artworks, and lent or donated them to cultural institutions. Second, the study looks at the display of looted artworks at exhibitions of art and industry, which played a central role in the nationwide effort to educate Victorian society in matters of taste. Third, there is an extensive examination of the manner in which looted artworks inspired Victorian designers working in textiles, ceramics, glass and metalwork, mostly in the spirit of design reform. Objects from the Summer Palace arrived at the moment when Britain was coming into its own as an imperialist state, having signed the Treaty of Yedo (1858), put down the Indian Rebellion (1857–59), and won humiliating trade concessions from China (1860). One might expect that Britain would receive the looted objects simply as the fruit of empire, but that is not the whole story. Objects from the Summer Palace played a central role in art and industry exhibitions, design innovation and collecting culture during the Victorian period, though its most enduring result is Britain's continuing fascination with Chinese porcelain and culture in general, reflected in the many publications on these subjects that continue to appear.

The Scope of this Study

While representatives of both Britain and France carried spoils home from China, the focus in this study is on the circulation and impact of British plunder within the United Kingdom, where the author's research into the subject began over a decade ago as a student at Christie's Education in London. Residence in England made the spoils of British forces a natural area of focus; but over time, the political and historical circumstances affecting the plunder and its distribution in Britain; such as, the opium trade, the Indian rebellion, and Britain's difficult political relationship with China, came to hold great interest for the author. The position of Britain vs. China as a cultural force and competitor, the culture of looting in the British Army and its growing power, and the impact of imperialism on British people, all became

areas of inquiry. So the focus here is squarely on Britain. As for the timespan, this study encompasses the two decades after the war, when significant numbers of objects from the Summer Palace appeared in auctions and exhibitions, and many designs inspired by looted Chinese objects were produced. The focus of this art historical inquiry is squarely on the looted objects themselves as this is a relatively new field, many of these objects have not been published previously, an accounting of this material in Britain is still very much up in the air, and only concrete evidence can support the goals and arguments of this study: documenting the transfer, disposition and interpretation of specific objects from the Summer Palace; gauging and contextualizing in real terms the position of looted material on British culture; and clarifying what this material meant in Victorian Britain.

Sources Consulted

The evidence in this study was drawn partly from the catalogues and archives of auction houses: largely those of Christie, Manson & Wood, where objects from the Summer Palace were sold in large quantities upon arrival in Britain. Museum archives and databases, ephemera for temporary exhibitions, nineteenth-century art publications, and memoirs of the Second Opium War penned by campaign members, also yielded information about the movements, interpretation and display of many objects. As the author resided in Zürich, Switzerland, and then the United States during the pandemic for the duration of doctoral study, museum and library websites, and online databases of books and periodicals, made this project possible. The generous assistance of archivists and curators via email with photographs and archival resources at a number of institutions was also invaluable. The reader will note as well the extensive use of newspapers as art historical sources throughout this thesis. Aware that the spoliation was both a political story and a public event, while in Switzerland the author turned to British Library Newspapers, an online repository that unexpectedly provided a large window onto the public reception of material from the Summer Palace and its circulation throughout the United Kingdom. In fact, the consultation of period newspapers throughout this project revealed important public discussions of the spoliation and looted artworks, as well as their new cultural context: an industrial economy and state bureaucracy that supported art education, exhibition culture, and collecting. Newspaper coverage of objects from the Summer Palace showed that Britain in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was receptive to new ideas and for this reason the spoliation had a wide impact across a number of sectors, from connoisseurship to design. So, research in nineteenth-century newspapers suggested the ultimate subject of this study: how Summer Palace spoils changed the landscape of Victorian art and culture.

Organization and Goals of this Study

Chapter One reviews British knowledge of the Summer Palace and imperial art in China before the 1860 war, showing that the British public had previously seen many Chinese export wares, which shaped their taste for novel imperial treasures at the estate and after the war; and that the British Army had information about the Summer Palace that may have guided their decision to loot parts of the Summer Palace. Chapter Two examines discussions and events surrounding the arrival of spoils in Britain, which were largely celebratory, but shifted blame for the spoliation to the French and otherwise minimized the damage. Chapter Three discusses what spoils soldiers brought home and how they disposed of this material, then looks at how various looted objects were interpreted by collectors, museum professionals and the general public. Chapter Four details displays of Summer Palace spoils at industrial art exhibitions around the nation, making the case that this material was front and center at these events, where it was interpolated into national discussions on art education and manufacturing and received positively by the public. Chapter Five and Chapter Six deal with the response of British designers and manufacturers to objects from the Summer Palace. On the basis of this material, a strong case will be made for the heretofore unrecognized impact of the Summer Palace spoliation on Victorian culture, as seen in the art market, collecting culture, and design.

In addition to examining concrete developments in the art world precipitated by the spoliation, this study looks at what these developments reveal about the relationship between imperialism and Victorian culture. Imperialism is generally understood as the domination and exploitation of weaker states by more powerful nations.³¹ The subject at hand is Britain's relationship to China in the second half of the nineteenth century, the "Age of Empire." At this time, the white, largely Christian, and industrialized nations of Europe and North America invaded, colonized and exploited nations of South America, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. The invasion of China in 1860 was certainly an imperialist operation; even if the British did not permanently occupy and colonize this vast, wealthy and ancient nation, outside the areas of Kowloon and Hong Kong. John Wong makes this case in *Deadly Dreams*, through his examination of the deadly bombardment of Guangzhou, the back-channel machinations of British officials in China, and the parliamentary debates around the *Arrow* lorch incident, as they related to the trade prerogatives of a revised Nanjing Treaty (1842), which the British were keen to legitimize and enforce through a military operation. (See 26.) The undeclared war in 1860 and the attacks preceding it ignored national boundaries and resulted in the deaths of innocent Chinese civilians, not to mention a disproportionate number of

³¹ Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 13.

Chinese soldiers cut down by Armstrong guns in 1860.³² All of this was intended to guarantee a market for goods produced in Britain's colony, India. Primary among these was lucrative British opium,³³ an addictive and dangerous drug that led to government corruption and social ills in China. This dissertation gives concrete evidence of how British imperialism in China created economic benefits and opportunities for British individuals and communities, not only through the generation of wealth on a national scale, but through the appropriation and sale of imperial artifacts by individual campaign members. However, the evidence laid out in this study shows that the integration of looted imperial objects into British society ultimately resulted in more positive views of Chinese aesthetics and craftsmanship, expressed through Victorian collecting, display and design. In this scenario, imperialism enabled these activities and developments, but did not circumscribe their meanings for participants and even generated contradictory results, unexpectedly challenging ideas of British cultural supremacy at the heart of the British Empire.

³² The deadly Armstrong gun was introduced during the China war and enabled the British to exact punishing death tolls on the Chinese. See Knollys, comp. *Incidents in the China War of 1860 Compiled from the Private Journals of General Sir Hope Grant G.C.B. Commander of the British Expedition* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1875), 22, 64–73.

³³ Wong, *Deadly Dreams*, 25–27.

Chapter One

Chinese Things in Britain before the Second Opium War

1. Britain's Taste for Chinese Export Goods

If we are to fully appreciate that moment when campaign members entered the gates of the emperor's estate and carried off its treasures as an aesthetic experience, then we should briefly look backwards to a time when the "Middle Kingdom" was largely veiled to British eyes, but bits of China were everywhere in British life. In fact, Britain's reception of spoils from the Summer Palace was shaped by her longstanding preoccupation with the "Celestial Empire" and its arts: a rapt fascination gradually mingled over the years with doubt and suspicion. A column in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* in 1856 noted the romantic curiosity about China among the British through the first decades of the nineteenth century, which gave way to a growing frustration over trade restrictions, which precipitated the First Opium War (1839–42):

Almost to the Chinese war in our own times, China was looked upon by Europeans as a land of wonders and mystery, from which foreigners were excluded with jealous pertinacity; a land rich in tea and silkworms; whose industrious population produced porcelain and lacquer-work by unknown processes.³⁴

Catherine Pagani discusses the impact of this hostility on British attitudes towards Chinese art in her article on the Chinese museum opened in 1842 by American businessman Nathan Dunn (1782–1844), and she concludes that a positive public response to the exhibition stemmed from a desire for Chinese goods rather than general interest in Chinese culture.³⁵ This frustration, resulting from an unrequited demand for Chinese goods, ultimately culminated in the Second Opium War, which ended with the looting and destruction of the Summer Palace.

Since the introduction of silk, tea and porcelain to England in the early modern period, Chinese products had played a large role in the consolidation, expenditure and presentation of wealth. On this development, David L. Porter writes:

The widespread consumption of chinoiserie, I would argue, signals the consolidation in the first half of the eighteenth century of a distinctive new form of aesthetic subjectivity in those oppositional spaces defined and defiled by the reigning discourses of classical taste and polite bourgeois culture.³⁶

³⁴ *Staffordshire Sentinel and Commercial & General Advertiser*, July 12, 1856, 6.

³⁵ Catherine Pagani, "Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (New York: Routledge, 1998), 28–40.

³⁶ David L. Porter, "Monstrous Beauty: Eighteenth-Century Fashion and the Aesthetics of the Chinese Taste," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 398.

Craftsmen emulated many Chinese imports or copied them outright and this process in turn sparked technical innovation. As G. Bernard Hughes wrote in *Victorian Pottery and Porcelain*, when duties on Chinese porcelain imports rose:

The Staffordshire potters seized the opportunity of evolving a more adequate substitute for the imported porcelain that would be hard, strong, durable under the strains of dinner table use, and suitable for sumptuous enamelling ... The china sellers welcomed Spode's felspar porcelain services and by 1806 he was producing magnificent table ware, perfectly potted, lavishly gilded and enamelled in brilliant unflakable colours. Owners of small services of late Chinese export porcelain could have them enlarged by ordering additional matching pieces in Spode's felspar porcelain.³⁷

British merchants and producers sought to duplicate materials like lacquer and porcelain, control silk importation and learn the secrets of silk cultivation, and reproduce or imitate Chinese designs. Aileen Dawson writes in her book on Worcester porcelain that during the pottery's early years, "Nearly all the pieces were painted either in blue and white or enamel colours with subjects deriving from Chinese porcelains, which were still coming into Britain in quantity."³⁸ The British also collected Chinese products widely and integrated these into home decor.³⁹ For over two centuries, large amounts of Chinese tea, silk and porcelain had arrived in British ports and these goods had become central to fashionable life, as seen in *An English Family at Tea* by Joseph Van Aken (ca. 1699–1749), which shows a wealthy woman and her servant making tea among a small elite party, using an imported Chinese red stoneware *yixing* teapot and blue-and-white porcelain teawares. **(Fig. 1-1)** *Yixing* teawares are stoneware vessels of naturally colored clay named for their place of manufacture, Yixing City in Jiangsu province.⁴⁰ These stoneware vessels were celebrated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for their rich colors and naturalistic molded designs, which ran from rusty red to brown and purple. They were emulated by the Elers brothers in England, among other producers.⁴¹

³⁷ G. Bernard Hughes, *Victorian Pottery and Porcelain* (London: Spring Books, 1959), 45–46.

³⁸ Aileen Dawson, *The Art of Worcester Porcelain 1751–1788, Masterpieces from the British Museum Collection* (London: British Museum Press, 2007), 17.

³⁹ Adolf Reichwein, "Rococo," chap. 2 in *China and Europe: Intellectual and Artistic Contacts in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), gives a brief history of lacquer, silk and porcelain importation and imitation in Europe, as well as the impact of Chinese goods on European style. Louise Decq, Yvonne Jones, Delphine Steyaert, et. al., "Black Lacquered Papier-mâché and Turned Wooden Furniture: Unravelling the Art History, Technology and Chemistry of the 19th-Century Japanning Industry," *Studies in Conservation* 64, no. S1 (2019): 536–39, reviews efforts by English cabinetmakers to develop a competitive alternative to Asian lacquer. Robert Fortune, *A Residence among the Chinese: Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea. Being a Narrative of Scenes and Adventures during a Third Visit to China, from 1853 to 1856* (London: John Murray, 1857), vi-vii, introduces botanist Robert Fortune's account of his visit to the silk country of Suzhou while on a tea-collecting mission for the East India Company in the 1850s. See also Leanna Lee-Whitman, "The Silk Trade: Chinese Silks and the British East India Company," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (1982): 121–41.

⁴⁰ He Li, *Chinese Ceramics: The New Standard Guide* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 272; Margaret Medley, *The Chinese Potter: Practical History of Chinese Ceramics* (London: Phaidon, 1989), 263–64.

⁴¹ Miranda Goodby and Claire Blakey, *101 Ceramic Highlights: The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery* (Stroud: Pitkin Publishing, 2013), 41, 66; R. L. Hobson, "Early Staffordshire Wares Illustrated by Pieces in the British Museum. Article II. Elers and Astbury Wares," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 3, no. 9 (December 1903): 299–301, 303–5.



1-1. Joseph Van Aken, *An English Family at Tea* (detail), ca. 1720, oil on canvas, H. 99.4 cm, Tate Britain

The first portion of this chapter considers what the British knew about the Qing court and its products; particularly, the kinds of objects held at the Summer Palace, for one goal of this dissertation is to gauge the leap in knowledge of Chinese art that resulted from the 1860 war. Prior to the conflict, elite Britons had only some contact with objects produced for and collected by the imperial family. They gleaned further information about imperial products and aesthetics through texts published by diplomats, missionaries and ceramic specialists, as will be shown below. This section also pinpoints what the British knew about the Summer Palace. Before 1860, the Qing court had largely succeeded in protecting sites of imperial power from British eyes; but diplomats and missionaries had shared their limited knowledge of the estate in letters and memoirs, which were published in Europe.

2. Chinese Export Wares in Britain

Beyond imperial products and collections, the British had over 250 years of experience with China's material culture through the importation of Chinese goods. Numerous collections of Chinese objects, dating as far back as the late sixteenth century, had been formed and dispersed many times over before the British and French armies entered the Summer Palace in 1860. As Michael E. Yonan writes in his study of the rococo *cabinet chinois*, a fashion for porcelain collecting among Dutch noblewomen in the seventeenth century spread to England during the joint rule of William (r. 1689–1702) and Mary (1689–94), so that “a spate of porcelain cabinets appeared in England in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century.”⁴² Two prominent collectors were Margaret Cavendish Bentinck, the Duchess of Portland (1715–85), who assembled an enormous group of porcelain and natural history specimens for display in

⁴² Michael E. Yonan, “Igneous Architecture: Porcelain, Natural Philosophy and the Rococo *cabinet chinois*,” chap. 3 in *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain*, ed. Alden Cavanaugh and Michael E. Yonan (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 68.

her private museum;⁴³ and later the wealthy but spendthrift William Thomas Beckford (1760–1844), whose large collection of Asian porcelain was listed throughout Christie’s catalogue for the Fonthill Abbey sale of 1822.⁴⁴ The most famous item in his collection was the “Gaignieres-Beckford vase,” a Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) reticulated vessel with a *qingbai* glaze, which was one of the earliest Chinese porcelains in Europe and is today in the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin.⁴⁵ *Qingbai* is a pale blue glaze that emerged in Jiangxi province during the Song Dynasty (960–1276).⁴⁶

Chinese export wares had figured widely in British culture since the seventeenth century, profoundly affecting social customs, dining, interior decoration, and manufacturing. Robert A. Leath writes, “As international trade expanded, the European East India companies filled the western market with Asian goods, making them more readily available and affordable to modest consumers. By 1700, the fashion for entire rooms decorated with Chinese export porcelain and Chinese lacquer paneling, previously reserved for monarchs and nobility, became popularized through the published designs of Daniel Marot ... the presence of Asian goods in European interiors became commonplace and inspired European designs for objects in the whimsical Chinese style, known as Chinoiserie.”⁴⁷ Some Chinese exports, like wallpaper, were always luxury goods.⁴⁸ As Pauline Webber and Kathryn Myatt Carey note in their study of wallpaper from Strathallan Castle in the Peabody and Essex Museum, hand-painted wallpaper sets were expensive and were hung (or stored carefully) exclusively in wealthy homes.⁴⁹ Other imports, like blue-and-white porcelain, were widely traded and collected. On this point, Le Corbeiller and Frelinghuysen note that blue-and-white vessels were imported largely for use as tablewares, including early on mass-produced *kraak* wares with their distinctive paneled designs;⁵⁰ and Rose Kerr writes, “Although less durable than coloured wares, blue-and-white porcelain continued to be manufactured in bulk, for it was both easier and to make and cheaper to buy.”⁵¹

⁴³ Charlotte Gere and Marina Vaizey, “The Duchess of Portland and Her Circle,” in *Great Women Collectors* (London: Philip Wilson, 1999), 77–87; Stacey Sloboda, “Displaying Materials: Porcelain and Natural History in the Duchess of Portland’s Museum,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 43, no. 4 (Summer 2010): 455–72.

⁴⁴ Christie’s London, Sale of October 1, 1822.

⁴⁵ Arthur Lane, “The Gaignières-Fonthill Vase: A Chinese Porcelain of about 1300,” *Burlington Magazine* 103, no. 697 (April 1961): 124–33. “The Fonthill Vase,” National Museum of Ireland website, accessed October 5, 2022, <https://www.museum.ie/en-IE/Collections-Research/Collection/Resilience/Artefact/Sponge/54194ae6-5acb-43c1-b2e8-e7c13feb508c>.

⁴⁶ Li, *Chinese Ceramics*, 337.

⁴⁷ Robert A. Leath, “‘After the Chinese Taste’: Chinese Export Porcelain and Chinoiserie Design in Eighteenth-Century Charleston,” *Historical Archaeology* 33, no. 3 (1999): 48.

⁴⁸ Helen Clifford, “Chinese Wallpaper: from Canton to Country House,” in *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857*, ed. Margot Finn and Kate Smith (London: UCL Press, 2018), 39–67.

⁴⁹ Pauline Webber and Kathryn Myatt Carey, “The Chinese Wallpaper from Strathallan Castle, Scotland, and its Peregrinations,” *Studies in Conservation* 65, no. S1 (2020): S342–43.

⁵⁰ Clare Le Corbeiller and Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, *Chinese Export Porcelain* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), 8.

⁵¹ Rose Kerr, “Ceramics Exported in Bulk,” in *Chinese Export Art and Design*, ed. Craig Clunas (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1987), 44.

Also, these prior contacts with non-imperial wares had given rise to various tastes in Chinese art, which shaped the selection of spoils and the response to these. It is true that imperial workshops and suppliers produced pieces of rare quality, including unique pieces for the royal household. Rosemary Scott characterizes imperial porcelain orders thus: “From surviving records it is clear that the emperors took a personal interest in the porcelains made for them. The undecorated porcelains sent from Jingdezhen were subject to imperial inspection, designs were dictated, and samples had to be approved—and amended if necessary.”⁵² Guangyao Wang recently wrote of the tight control over this special class of goods maintained by the court: “Qing imperial porcelain strived to guarantee a uniformity in quality and meet demands for enormous amounts of porcelain to tight deadlines. As a result, the porcelains manufactured by the imperial kilns differed from those produced in the popular kilns, as well as from those submitted as tribute by local governments,” and the court maintained control over all aspects of design: “The imperial kilns at Jingdezhen precisely followed the instructions on shape, pattern, colour, and number that were conveyed by official drafts and orders, and thereby carried out the emperor’s intent.”⁵³

However, the line between what was imperial and non-imperial was not hard and fast. Workshops outside the palaces often sent wares as tribute or were ordered to produce objects expressly for the court.⁵⁴ The Qing court also sold off second-rate porcelains to cover some production costs.⁵⁵ These activities and the proximity of imperial kilns to commercial kilns at Jingdezhen meant that materials, techniques and decorative motifs were also employed in both wares for domestic consumption and export. For example, an eighteenth-century *famille rose* ewer from Jingdezhen in the Victoria and Albert Museum is painted with lotuses, prunus branches and peonies, in a style similar to that seen on Qing imperial enameled porcelains, although the floral elements are arranged to complement the foreign shape.⁵⁶ **(Fig. 1-2)** In fact, imported Chinese products also constituted a huge body of information about Chinese culture, through the many scenes depicted in painted decoration, which showed how the Chinese arranged flowers, collected antique vessels, and wore long flowing garments, among other activities. For this reason, the British public had prior exposure to various motifs, materials and techniques employed in imperial wares, which helped them understand and enjoy the plundered pieces. Finally, the large numbers of porcelain imports showed Britain that China was a manufacturing powerhouse.

⁵² Rosemary Scott, *For the Imperial Court: Qing Porcelain from the Percival David Foundation* (New York: American Federation of the Arts, 1997), 15.

⁵³ Guangyao Wang, “Piecing Shards Together: The Uses and Manufacturing of Imperial Porcelain,” in *Making the Palace Machine Work*, eds. Martina Siebert, Kai Jun Chen, Dorothy Ko (Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 149, 151.

⁵⁴ Michael Dillon, “Transport and Marketing in the Development of the Jingdezhen Porcelain Industry during the Ming and Qing Dynasties,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 35, no. 3 (1992): 283–84.

⁵⁵ Wang, “Piecing Shards Together,” 154.

⁵⁶ V&A, acc. no. 500-1875.



1-2. Chinese *famille rose* export ewer, Qing Dynasty, mid-18th century, porcelain with overglaze enamels, H. 31.1 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

The following types of ceramics appeared in Europe between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries: porcelains glazed in a single color (today called “monochrome” wares); unglazed red *yixing* stoneware; (Fig. 1-3) and pure white *dehua* porcelains with clear glaze (also known as *blanc de chine*).⁵⁷ (Fig. 1-4) Painted porcelains include those with underglaze cobalt blue decoration;⁵⁸ (Fig. 1-5) and polychrome enameled wares in three groups: *famille verte*, wares decorated with translucent enamels in a palette dominated by green, but often including red, blue, aubergine, yellow and black; (Fig. 1-6) Chinese *imari*, featuring underglaze blue with iron red enamel and gilding; (Fig. 1-7) and *famille rose*.⁵⁹ The latter is a nineteenth-century French term that refers to the palette of painted opaque enamels characterized by pink, developed in China with the involvement of European missionaries in the seventeenth century,⁶⁰ which are called by the Chinese *yangcai* (foreign colors).⁶¹ Throughout this text, the latter term will be used, except in the cases of export wares, which were largely interpreted in European contexts. (Fig. 1-8) Styles of painted decoration included blue-and-white *kraak* wares with radiating panel designs, like a bowl once in the collection of Burghley House; (Fig. 1-9) armorial porcelains in *imari* and then *famille*

⁵⁷ Li, *Chinese Ceramics*, 272, plates 681–90, discusses *yixing* and *dehua* wares and gives specimens. See also V&A, acc. nos. C.108-1963 (*dehua*); FE.29-1970 (*yixing*).

⁵⁸ V&A, acc. no. M.220-1916.

⁵⁹ Le Corbeiller and Frelinghuysen, *Chinese Export Porcelain*, 7–15.

⁶⁰ William R. Sargent, *Treasures of Chinese Export Porcelain from the Peabody Essex Museum*. With an essay by Rose Kerr (Salem, Massachusetts: Peabody Essex Museum, 2012), 175–81 (*famille verte*), 183–95 (*imari*), 238–55 (*famille rose*). See also V&A, acc. nos. M.220-1916 (underglaze blue-painted ewer); C.1158-1910 (*famille verte* plate); 7329-1860 (*imari* plate); 658-1903 (*famille rose* plate).

⁶¹ Li, *Chinese Ceramics*, 269.

rose palettes; **(Fig. 1-10)** grisaille pieces painted with fine lines in black glaze in a manner resembling engraving, such as a cup with the arms of the Meritt family of Wiltshire; **(Fig. 1-11)** and blue-and-white transitional wares painted in deep blue, often with landscapes, including an ewer with English mounts, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁶² **(Fig. 1-12)**



1-3. Chinese *yixing* export teapot with European mounts, Qing Dynasty, 18th century, stoneware with silver mounts, H. 8.6 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-4. Chinese export *dehua* figure group, Qing Dynasty, early 18th century, glazed porcelain, H. 14.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

⁶² V&A, acc. nos. C.573-1910 (*kraak*); FE.77-1978 (armorial); FE.66-1978 (grisaille); C.577-1910 (transitional ware).



1-5. Chinese *kraak* ewer with British mounts, Ming Dynasty, ca. 1600–1610, porcelain with underglaze blue decoration and silver-gilt mounts, H. 24.1 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-6. Chinese *famille verte* export plate, Qing Dynasty, 1662–1722, porcelain with overglaze enamels, D. 27 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-7. Chinese *imari* export plate, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1710–30, porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamels, D. 34.9 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-8. Chinese *famille rose* export plate, Qing Dynasty, 1730–50, porcelain with overglaze enamels, D. 20.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-9. Chinese *kraak* ware bowl, Ming Dynasty, 1575–1610, porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, D. 15 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-10. Chinese armorial export bowl, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1755, porcelain with overglaze enamels and gilding, D. 11.7 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-11. Chinese *grisaille* armorial export cup, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1765, porcelain with overglaze enamels and gilding, D. 8.9 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-12. Chinese transitional ware export jar with British mounts, Qing Dynasty, 1630–45, porcelain with underglaze blue decoration and silver-gilt mounts, H. 23.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

Techniques in evidence during this period include painting in underglaze colors and overglaze enamels, gilding, openwork, molded and engraved decoration, as well as incorporation of movable parts.⁶³ Most imports were tablewares, but some were decorative figurines and others were display pieces. Early imports were exclusively Chinese types in profile and decoration, though demand soon arose for vessels with European shapes and decoration.⁶⁴ Through these wares, the British became familiar with

⁶³ Rose Kerr, “Ceramics Exported in Bulk,” in *Chinese Export Art and Design*, ed. Clunas, 48.

⁶⁴ Le Corbeiller and Frelinghuysen, *Chinese Export Porcelain*, 10, 12–15, 17–18, shows specimens of these wares.

standard Chinese shapes, such as the *huluping* (double-gourd vase), the *meiping* (plum blossom vase), and the *gu* (a type of ancient beaker for wine); as well as standard motifs and mythological figures, like the eight buddhist treasures, the goddess Guanyin, the plantain-leaf border, the flowering prunus branch, the stand of bamboo, and the lotus. Representative specimens include a seventeenth-century blue-and-white *kraak* ware bowl with a European coat of arms, a Latin inscription, the eight buddhist treasures and lotuses in the British Museum;⁶⁵ a Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) blue-and-white porcelain ewer with a plantain leaf border and late sixteenth-century English silver gilt mounts in the National Trust collection;⁶⁶ a *famille rose* barber’s bowl with gentlemen in a garden under a prunus branch;⁶⁷ a bamboo-shaped celadon vase with eighteenth-century European gilt bronze mounts;⁶⁸ and a mid-eighteenth century bowl from Jingdezhen with incised lotus decoration, enameled in 1756 in Europe with a bouquet and names of an English couple.⁶⁹ The last three specimens are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. The British also came to know scenes typically depicted both on Chinese export vessels and imperial porcelains; such as, ladies in gardens,⁷⁰ (Figs. 1-13, 1-14) collections of antiquities,⁷¹ (Figs. 1-15, 1-16) and ornamental plants in pots or springing from rocks.⁷² (Figs. 1-17, 1-18) Specimens of these types, both imperial and export wares, are pictured below.



1-13. Chinese *famille rose* plate for the British market, Yongzheng period (r. 1723–35), porcelain with overglaze enamels, D. 22.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

⁶⁵ BM, mus. no. 1957,1216.19.

⁶⁶ Collection of Hardwick House, National Trust, inv. no. NT 1127144.

⁶⁷ V&A, acc. no. CIRC.42-1932.

⁶⁸ V&A, acc. no. 820-1882.

⁶⁹ V&A, acc. no. C.3-1956.

⁷⁰ Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), acc. no. 2015.259; V&A, acc. no. CIRC.407&A-1931.

⁷¹ MMA, acc. nos. 60.8; 79.2.1226.

⁷² MMA, acc. no. 1976.112; V&A, acc. no. C.1459-1910.



1-14. Chinese imperial *wucai* jar and cover, Kangxi mark and period (r. 1662–1722), porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration, H. 21.6 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-15. Chinese monteith for the British market, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1715–20, porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, D. 32.1 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



1-16. Chinese imperial brush holder, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration, H. 29.8 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



1-17. Chinese export planter, Qing Dynasty, ca. 1693–97, porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, D. 33 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



1-18. Chinese imperial *yangcai* vase, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with overglaze enamels, H. 25.1 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

3. Popular Wares Collected in China by Robert Fortune

One important source for Chinese popular wares, rather than export pieces, was Robert Fortune (1812–80). “Popular wares” were ceramics produced for the Chinese market outside the court. As an affiliate of the East India Company, Fortune travelled in disguise illegally beyond the treaty ports of China in order to collect tea plants for introduction to British India. Along the way, he purchased ceramics and took extensive notes on sericulture and other subjects, which he published in his travelogues.⁷³ In Britain, he consigned many of his ceramics for auction. In 1852, Christie’s advertised his latest collection:

The collection entirely of ancient works of art, comprises fine jars, beakers, and smaller pieces of old Japan, of brilliant colours, curious old crackle, some beautiful specimens of black and gold Japan, elaborately carved ornaments of crystal, jade, and steatite, some highly interesting bronzes of a very early period, trays of gold Japan, carvings in rosewood and boxwood, writing and other boxes, opium pipes, carved bamboo match stands, and numerous minor objects, illustrating the history of Chinese art at its finest period.⁷⁴

⁷³ Robert Fortune, *A Residence Among the Chinese: Inland, on the Coast, and at Sea. Being a Narrative of Scenes and Adventures During a Third Visit to China, from 1853 to 1856* (London: John Murray, 1857), 78–92, 331–78.

⁷⁴ *Morning Post*, June 7, 1852, 8.

Publisher Henry Bohn (1796–1884) reproduced the catalogues for Robert Fortune’s sales on February 4, 1856 and May 13 and 14, 1857, as appendices to the Ralph Bernal (1784–1854) collection catalogue.⁷⁵ These show that Fortune favored monochromes: each auction presented a rainbow of glazes from “sea-green” to “amber”, with only a few pieces showing the kind of figurative decoration typical of blue-and-white and polychrome export wares. One lot seems to be *jun* ware, a type of thickly-potted vessel typically covered in a rich flambé glaze. This shows the level of sophistication Fortune had achieved in his collecting:

311 An extremely rare and fine circular vessel, of rare mottled purple and grey colour, with spots of crimson inside, on an elaborately carved stand—8 3/4 in. diameter, 3 1/4 in. high. Of great antiquity, and highly prized by the Chinese. 14l.

Apart from this lot, pieces with turquoise and crimson glazes were received the highest prices at auction, including a bottle with “turquoise crackle ... of extreme rarity,” which earned the highest bid of £50.⁷⁶ On June 23, 1859, Fortune sold for a total of £1,408 a collection that was deemed “very choice and important” in a newspaper review, which highlighted pieces glazed with turquoise, called “turquoise crackle”, including a large vase that sold for £210.⁷⁷ There were also “a beautiful yellow bottle, with dragons and clouds,” “an excessively rare bottle of openwork with flowers, of ancient sea-green crackle, 12 in., supposed to be unique,” a rock crystal vase carved with lizards, and “a very fine and rare double square-shaped vase, with elephant’s head handles, of beautiful deep lilac colour.”⁷⁸

4. Monochrome Wares in Elite British Collections

At midcentury, such monochrome pieces were esteemed in the marketplace. When Stanislaus Julien published *Histoire et Fabrication de la Porcelain Chinoise* in 1856, the *Staffordshire Sentinel* printed abstracts from the book and noted:

While Europe was passing through the troublous times known in history as “the dark ages,” the Chinese porcelain manufactory was in full activity, producing in succession “white jars brilliant as jade,” vases “blue as the sky after rain,” or “of the colour of rice,” or “red as the sun after rain.”⁷⁹

Celadon, alternately called “sea green,” was rare and highly valued in Britain, along with crimson and turquoise glazes. A small number of ceramics termed “celadon” were offered for sale in the mid-nineteenth century by elite collectors. The property of Lady Sarah Joanna Webster (1807–89), sold at

⁷⁵ Henry Bohn, *A Guide to the Knowledge of Pottery, Porcelain, and Other Objects of Vertu, Comprising an Illustrated Catalogue of the Bernal Collection of Works of Art* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1857), 498–501.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 500.

⁷⁷ *Morning Post*, June 24, 1859, 3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ “The Porcelain Manufactory of China,” *Staffordshire Sentinel*, July 12, 1856, 6.

Christie's in 1859, included "a very important collection of Oriental Celadon ... including a matchless sea-green vase from Mr. Watson Taylor's collection, and a very curious figure of an elephant of the same, and fine specimens of turquoise, crimson, lilac and other rare colours."⁸⁰ Another sale of a "very important collection of ORIENTAL and other PORCELAIN, Chinese Works of Art," featured "old crackle and celadon," along with Chinese enamels, rare eggshell, and fine large bronzes.⁸¹ The British collected Chinese monochrome pieces for display, routinely giving them the mounts that John Burley Waring (1823–75) and other porcelain scholars abhorred. In his book on the Museum of Ornamental Art at the Manchester Treasures Exhibition of 1857, Waring said of imported porcelains: "Whatever about them is bad, results frequently from the bad taste of their possessors in Europe, who have hidden the most exquisite outlines with unmeaning silver-gilt settings of wretched taste and form."⁸² A new aesthetic would arise around Chinese monochrome wares as greater access to imperial Chinese ceramics, Chinese collections, and the knowledge of Chinese connoisseurs was made possible with British victory in the Second Opium War.

5. Artworks Looted in China during the Opium Wars

During the Opium Wars, British soldiers brought home objects looted from Chinese temples, government offices and private homes, which were quite different from export wares. When a British regiment occupied any Chinese city, the inhabitants were sent packing or fled. This gave soldiers opportunities to take things from houses, temples and pawn shops. Often regiments were stationed in temples, where they stole sacred sculptures and other ritual objects, telling themselves that the Chinese had no true religious feeling and could spare these "grotesque" idols, which would make fine "curiosities" for the regimental mess or earn a good price.⁸³ Soldiers consigned pieces with British auction houses, like "a magnificent enamel incense burner and cover, on four shaped feet, an extraordinary specimen, obtained from a temple at Peking", which sold at Mr. Phillips' for £70, despite the questionable attribution.⁸⁴ In 1858, a "Capt. Airey," formerly of the *Spitfire*, sold through Messrs. Webb items looted from sacred buildings:

A most costly collection of mandarin and crackle china jars, vases, ancient enamels, and rare old bronzes inlaid with silver of the earliest period of the "Ming Dynasty" from the temples of the north of China; exquisitely carved specimens of valuable jade stone and rock crystal; rare specimens of "Soo Chow" ware ... with a large variety of the grotesque and curious manufactures of the Celestial Empire.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ *Morning Post*, January 17, 1859, 8.

⁸¹ *Morning Post*, April 25, 1859, 8.

⁸² J. B. Waring and J. R. Planché, *A Handbook to the Museum of Ornamental Art in the Art Treasures Exhibition to which is added the Armoury* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1857), 31.

⁸³ Kate Hill, "Collecting on Campaign: British Soldiers in China During the Opium War," *Journal of the History of Collections* 25, no. 2 (2013): 227–52. Includes a brief history of looting by British troops in China.

⁸⁴ *Morning Post*, April 22, 1858, 6.

⁸⁵ *Sussex Advertiser*, May 25, 1858, 4.

Evidently, the British were aware that older works of art could be obtained from temples. On August 7, 1858, the *Morning Chronicle* reviewed an auction featuring “ancient Chinese works of art,” which had taken place the day before at Messrs. Foster. The sale included fifty lots “mostly procured from the religious temples during the few hours’ sacking immediately after the late bombardment of Canton.” This group had recently arrived on the *Imperatrice*,⁸⁶ a ship that joined the British naval fleet in the Second Opium War.⁸⁷ The lots together earned £210. In his book *Collections Towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain* (1850), pottery expert Joseph Marryat (1790–1876) cited the windfall of porcelains looted by soldiers in China during the First Opium War as “old pieces of white porcelain, which were found enclosed in cases of velvet and silk, like jewels, by our troops during the late war.”⁸⁸ At that time, “Oriental” porcelains had “deteriorated in value and public estimation by the fine old specimens lately brought to light, the existence of which was not even suspected.”⁸⁹

Another piece of “ancient China” was looted in India. A large blue-and-white dish dated to the years 1400–25, during the Ming Dynasty, is at the National Trust property of Wallington Hall, Northumberland. Patricia Ferguson, National Trust Adviser on Ceramics, writes that its Mughal inscription indicates it was once in the collection of Shah Jahan (1592–1666, r. 1628–58), and had perhaps been a diplomatic gift.⁹⁰ When Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan (1807–86) of Wallington was governor of Madras (1859–60), he acquired the dish, which the British had looted from the Qaisar Bagh Palace during the Indian Rebellion, in 1857. His son, Sir George Otto Trevelyan (1838–1928), also went to India during the war and later displayed the dish above the dining room door in memory of men killed at Cawnpore in 1857. This is a precedent for the display of Chinese porcelains from the Summer Palace as trophies. (See 123–24.)

6. British Contacts with Imperial Wares

Prior to the 1860 war, the aristocracy and elite connoisseurs had seen only a few objects produced by and for the Qing court. These were jades, porcelains, silks and carved lacquer pieces presented in 1793 by the Qianlong emperor, to the British ambassador, the Earl Macartney (1737–1806), for his entourage and monarch, George III (1738–1820, r. 1760–1820), when Macartney visited the Qing court to appeal for an

⁸⁶ *Morning Chronicle*, August 7, 1858, 7.

⁸⁷ Garnet Joseph Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1862), 84.

⁸⁸ Joseph Marryat, *Collections towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain, in the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries: With a Description of the Manufacture, a Glossary, and a List of Monograms* (London: John Murray, 1850), 109–10.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁹⁰ National Trust, inv. no. 581660. “Dish,” National Trust website, accessed November 8, 2022, <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/581660>. Adapted from Patricia Ferguson, *Ceramics: 400 Years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2016).

extension of East India Company (EIC) trade. Macartney failed to attain the government's trade goals and was reportedly dismissed from the Qing court due to a diplomatic dispute over the "kow-tow," the traditional prostration made before the emperor. This the diplomat refused to perform, being a subject of George III.⁹¹ This history likely motivated campaign members to retaliate against perceived disrespect towards their monarch in 1860 by occupying the hall. (See 114.) The official list of gifts is in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle and has been published by John Ayers in his catalogue of Chinese and Japanese works in the Royal Collection.⁹² It is titled "Principal Objects Bestowed on the King," and comprises four scrolls inscribed with the original Chinese text and a Latin translation.⁹³ The British embassy made another inventory and this is housed among the India Office Records in the British Library.⁹⁴ After returning to England, three members of the embassy published narratives of their journey in which they commented on the gifts: Sir George Leonard Staunton, 1st Baronet (1737–1801), secretary of the embassy;⁹⁵ Sir John Barrow (1764–1848), private secretary to Macartney;⁹⁶ and Aeneas Anderson (dates unknown), Macartney's servant.⁹⁷ On September 14, 1793, the emperor presented Macartney and Staunton with three jade *ruyi* (as you wish) staffs, auspicious implements of ancient origin, often presented as official gifts conveying good wishes.⁹⁸ Two are pictured in the Ayers catalogue.⁹⁹ The ambassador described these in his journal and Barrow quoted the passage in his book, *Travels in China*. He wrote that one was "a whitish agate-looking stone, perhaps serpentine, about a foot and a half long, curiously carved, and highly prized by the chinese; but to me it does not appear in itself to be of any great value." The next was "an Eu-shee of a greenish-coloured serpentine stone, and of the same emblematic character." Sir George Staunton received "an Eu-shee of greenish stone," similar to Lord Macartney's.¹⁰⁰ Staunton described Macartney's *ruyi* staff as:

A gem, or precious stone, as it was called by the Chinese, and accounted by them of high value. It was upwards of a foot in length, and curiously carved into a form intended to

⁹¹ Frances Wood, "Britain's First View of China: The Macartney Embassy 1792-1794," *Royal Society of Arts Journal* 142, no. 5447 (March 1994): 59–68. Gives an account of the embassy and presents,

⁹² John Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2016), 3:1058.

⁹³ The official gift list is in the Royal Archives, ref. no. GEO/ADD31/21D.

⁹⁴ George Macartney to Henry Dundas, November 9, 1793, India Office Records and Private Papers, ref. no. IOR/G/12/20, ff. 104–88, British Library.

⁹⁵ George Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China: Including Cursory Observations Made, and Information Obtained in Travelling Through That Ancient Empire, and a Small Part of Chinese Tartary*, 2 vols. (London: G. Nicol, 1797).

⁹⁶ John Barrow, *Travels in China, Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey through the Country from Peking to Canton* (London: T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1804).

⁹⁷ Aeneas Anderson, *A Narrative of the British Embassy to China, in the Years 1792, 1793, and 1794: Containing the Various Circumstances of the Embassy, with Accounts of the Customs and Manners of the Chinese; and a Description of the Country, Towns, Cities, &c. &c.* (London: J. Debrett, 1795).

⁹⁸ "Ruyi Scepters in the Qing Court Collection," Beijing Palace Museum website, accessed October 5, 2022, <https://en.dpm.org.cn/EXPLORE/artworks/1344.html>.

⁹⁹ Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art*, 3:745.

¹⁰⁰ Barrow, *Travels in China*, 197.

resemble a sceptre, such as is always placed on the Imperial throne, and is considered as emblematic of prosperity and peace.¹⁰¹

These passages show that two sophisticated members of the aristocracy, serving as representatives of the British government, had no knowledge of jade. Macartney likened it to semiprecious hardstones known in Britain. They also wrote that the pieces were “curiously carved.” Throughout the history of British contact with China, intricately carved objects were called “curious” or “curiosities.” These terms did not in themselves connote exotic or foreign qualities, although they were often used in that sense. In the eighth edition of Dr. Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* (1799), the second and third definitions of “curiously,” are “elegantly, neatly,” and “artfully, exactly.”¹⁰² The British used the term often in describing Chinese objects. James L. Hevia writes that after the 1860 war, objects looted from the Summer Palace were called “curiosities,” except for those linked directly with the emperor, such as his throne, which were interpreted instead as evidence of British victory over China.¹⁰³

Qianlong also gave Staunton’s son, George Thomas Staunton (1781–1859), an “Imperial purse, being of plain yellow silk, with the figure of the five-clawed dragon, and some Tartar characters worked into it,” of a type intended for holding an areca or betel nut. Anderson wrote that the youth also received “a very beautiful fan, and several small embroidered bags and purses.”¹⁰⁴ George Thomas Staunton gave his father’s *ruyi* staff and the betel nut purse to the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS). The artist William Alexander (1767–1816), who accompanied the embassy, painted a watercolor of the staff and a large block of jade from the collection of the Qianlong emperor.¹⁰⁵ (**Fig. 1-19**) Alexander painted the jade a deep verdigris and termed the *ruyi* staff a “sceptre of Agate,” which suggests that he associated the stone with moss agate. Both items were exhibited in the Oriental Court at the Manchester Treasures Exhibition of 1857. John Forbes Royle (1798–1858), formerly a botanist for the EIC, mentioned these in his catalogue essay on the court as “a Chinese sceptre of good-fortune, made of jade, and the other is an embroidered purse, formerly worn by the Chinese Emperor,”¹⁰⁶ and Staunton included an engraving of the pieces in his memoir.¹⁰⁷ (**Fig. 1-20**) Visitors to the Manchester exhibition who looked through the catalogue knew that the five-clawed dragon was an imperial emblem and that the Qing court valued jade

¹⁰¹ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:232–33.

¹⁰² Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are Deduced from their Originals, and Illustrated in Their Different Significations by Examples from the Best Writers. To Which are Prefixed a History of the Language, and an English Grammar*, 8th ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1799), vol. 1. Original page is not numbered. See page 528 in the copy at the Hathitrust Digital Library, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t9s187n25&view=1up&seq=528&skin=2021&size=125&q1=curious>.

¹⁰³ Hevia, “Loot’s Fate,” 321. See also Hill, “Collecting on Campaign,” 237.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson, *Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, 148.

¹⁰⁵ BM, mus. no. 1865,0520.272.

¹⁰⁶ *Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom: Collected at Manchester in 1857* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1857), 174.

¹⁰⁷ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:235.

highly. Silks with imperial dragons were looted during the 1860 war and marketed afterwards as items connected directly with the emperor.



1-19. William Alexander, *A Sceptre of Agate and a Large block of Agate on a Marble Pedestal*, 1793–96, watercolor, ink and graphite on paper, H. 23.5 cm, British Museum



1-20. Anonymous, "A *ruyi* staff and purse presented to George Thomas Staunton by the Qianlong emperor," from *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*, 1797, engraving, H. 57 cm (page), Getty Research Institute

In 1879 the *ruyi* staff was transferred to the South Kensington Museum. The purse is no longer in the RAS collection and the archive holds no record of its transfer to another institution, although many items in the RAS collection went to other London museums.¹⁰⁸ The staff remained in the collection after the institution was renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899.¹⁰⁹ The piece was dated by Ming Wilson, formerly Senior Curator and presently Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the museum, to ca. 1790.¹¹⁰ A photograph of the *ruyi* staff reproduced here shows that the object is dark emerald green in color and has a sprig of *lingzhi* (the mushroom of immortality), carved in relief along its shaft. **(Fig. 1-21)** It is identical in design to the illustration in Staunton’s volume. Another eighteenth-century jade *ruyi* staff with a long gold tassel has been tentatively linked with the embassy.¹¹¹ Said to have been acquired by Queen Mary (1867–1953), it is moss green and carved much like Staunton’s *ruyi* staff. **(Fig. 1-22)** It is possible that this was Macartney’s staff, since it is similar to the other in color and design and the ambassador wrote in his diary that Staunton’s staff was “of greenish stone nearly similar to mine.”¹¹²



1-21. Chinese imperial *ruyi* staff, Qianlong period, ca. 1790, nephrite jade, L. 35.5 cm,
Victoria and Albert Museum

¹⁰⁸ Nancy Charley, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London, email message to author, September 1, 2020.

¹⁰⁹ V&A, acc. no. A.17-1925.

¹¹⁰ Nicholas Pearce, “An Imperial Gift: A Jade Ruyi in the V&A,” *V&A Album*, no. 4, 1985; Ming Wilson, *Chinese Jades* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2004), no. 91.

¹¹¹ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 23692.

¹¹² Barrow, *Travels in China*, 197.



1-22. Chinese imperial *ruyi* staff, Qing Dynasty, 18th century, nephrite jade with silk tassel, L. 34 cm,
Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

The emperor also sent to Macartney large balls of tea and “the richest velvets, satins, silks, and purses beautifully embroidered.”¹¹³ Staunton writes that the gifts included:

silk, porcelaine, and tea for himself, and all the gentlemen of his suite. The silks were generally of a close and firm texture, and of a grave colour, such as were worn by men. Some were woven into patterns of dresses with the four clawed dragon, or Imperial tyger; and some with the Chinese pheasant, embroidered in silk of tints more lively than the ground; the former intended for military, and the latter for civil, mandarines of rank. The porcelaine consisted of detached pieces, slightly differing in form from those which are generally exported.¹¹⁴

The “grave” colors mentioned might be midnight blue, aubergine, puce or brown (among other shades), all of which were worn by individuals at court. John E. Vollmer writes in his study of Qing dress that black and blue were worn in accordance with the *wuxing* (Five Phases system); and that, apart from the various yellow silks worn by the emperor and his immediate family, “members of the imperial clan used *qiuxiangse* (tawny incense), which actually ranged from brown to plum tones. Manchu nobles to the rank of third-degree prince wore blue; officials beneath them were assigned black.”¹¹⁵ Contrary to Staunton’s understanding, women did wear dark colors at court; but they were carefully shielded from the foreigners during the embassy, so his comment was based on incomplete information.¹¹⁶ The British were also uncertain as to whether many garments were intended for women or men. As relations with China deteriorated, they often called imperial robes “dresses,” out of confusion or a desire to depict Manchu officials as effeminate and corrupt. (See 127, 137.)

¹¹³ Anderson, *Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, 148–49.

¹¹⁴ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:238.

¹¹⁵ John E. Vollmer, *Ruling from the Dragon Throne: Costume of the Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2002), 82, 85.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 114–15 127–28. See discussion of Manchu women’s court dress.

Staunton described the tea gifts at length; for tea and silk were essential imports. While the porcelains might hold the greatest interest for the widest group of Chinese art specialists now, Macartney was on a trade mission to gain more favorable terms for importing Chinese commodities and exporting British goods. British potteries were doing their best to equal Chinese porcelain; and the embassy had brought Wedgwood's jasperware as a present for the emperor.¹¹⁷ So he may have kept short his remarks on the ceramics, calling them only "detached pieces, slightly differing in form," out of loyalty to British producers. Yet, his phrase "detached pieces" suggests that he was confronted with unfamiliar display vessels, as opposed to sets of export tablewares and garnitures with which Britons were familiar.

Only three porcelains in the Royal Collection today are counted among the Qianlong gifts. There is a massive jardiniere, Qianlong mark and period, which is painted in underglaze blue with writhing five-clawed dragons confronting flaming pearls, among clouds over a roiling sea.¹¹⁸ (Fig. 1-23) This is thought to be one of two listed in the Macartney inventory as "large blue dragon porcelain jars."¹¹⁹ The other jar may have been sold at the auction of Queen Charlotte's effects, at which many of the presents were dispersed. It is also no accident that this is one of the few remaining presents in the Royal Collection, for the five-clawed dragon was understood to be a distinguishing feature of imperial art and references to it had appeared in accounts of the Macartney embassy.¹²⁰ There is also a pair of *yangcai* double-gourd vases tentatively linked with the mission.¹²¹ (Fig. 1-24) Each vase shows eight oval medallions comprising landscapes with figures, reserved on midnight blue grounds, gilded with lotus scrolls, and bears a Qianlong mark on its base. The vases are the closest in style to the imperial porcelains seen by the British public after the 1860 war, which were very popular with the public. Among this group are three items once in the collection of Alfred Morrison, which may have come from the Summer Palace. These included a pair of vases (one pictured), with gilded patterns resembling those on the double-gourd vases,¹²² (Fig. 1-25) and two bowls with floral medallions.¹²³ (Fig. 1-26) Anderson writes that after their second interview more gifts arrived:

They consisted of large quantities of rich velvets, silks, and satins, with some beautiful Chinese lamps, and rare Porcelain. To these were added a number of callibash boxes of exquisite workmanship, beautifully carved on the outside, and stained with a scarlet colour, of the utmost softness and delicacy: the inside of them was black, and shone like japan.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ John Barrow, "Plan of the hall of audience, with the adjacent courts in the Emperor's gardens at Yuen-ming-yuen," October 1793, A collection of eighty views, maps, portraits and drawings illustrative of the Embassy sent to China under George, Earl of Macartney, in 1793, Maps 8 TAB.ca.8.73.b, British Library, London. Includes a list of royal presents.

¹¹⁸ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 78436.

¹¹⁹ Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art*, 1:202–3.

¹²⁰ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:235.

¹²¹ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 33.

¹²² V&A, acc. no. C.1487-1910.

¹²³ Christie's London, Sale 7100, November 9, 2004, Lot 38.

¹²⁴ Anderson, *Narrative of the British Embassy to China*, 149–50, 175–77.

The “callibash” boxes were lacquerwares. Thirty-three pieces of red and polychrome lacquer attributed to the embassy are in the Royal Collection.¹²⁵ These include a pair of cabinets and stands, round boxes, boxes shaped as peaches of immortality, and trays. All of them are carved with auspicious emblems and five-clawed dragons, including the rectangular tray pictured here.¹²⁶ (Fig. 1-27)



1-23. Chinese imperial dragon jar, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, H. 60.5 cm, Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023



1-24. Chinese imperial *yangcai* double-gourd vases, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with overglaze enamels and gilding, H. 66.4 cm, Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

¹²⁵ Royal Collection Trust, inv. nos. 3308, 3310–14, 26025, 10806, 10809–10, 10816, 10818, 10821, 10823, 26016–18, 26021–25.

¹²⁶ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 10809.



1-25. Chinese imperial vase, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with overglaze enamels and gilding, H. 23.2 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-26. Chinese imperial *yangcai* "medallion" bowl, Daoguang mark and period (r. 1821–50), porcelain with overglaze enamels, D. 14.6 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



1-27. Chinese imperial tray, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), polychrome lacquer on wood, L. 21.9 cm, Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

The distribution of gifts within the royal family and beyond reflects British views of Chinese culture in the Georgian period. Queen Charlotte (1744–1818) displayed the lacquers in the Green Closet at Frogmore House, which she had acquired as a private residence in 1792.¹²⁷ People outside the royal family were also able to see the gifts, for Charlotte opened the house periodically to the public for charity events and private viewings.¹²⁸ The artist Joseph Farington (1747–1821) was invited to visit Frogmore in 1797 and mentioned the presents in his diary.¹²⁹ A watercolor by Charles Wild (1781–1835), titled “The Green Closet” and dated ca. 1819, shows some of the boxes arranged around a low table at the left edge of the picture.¹³⁰ (Fig. 1-28) This display of the imperial lacquers became accessible to a wider audience with the publication in 1819 of *The History of the Royal Residences* by William Henry Pyne (1769–1843), a two-volume set, which included an engraved and hand-colored illustration of Wild’s painting.¹³¹ Those presents retained by the royal family were also kept at Kensington Palace and Brighton Pavilion, the Indo-Chinese pleasure palace built for George IV (1762–1830, r. 1820–30), while he was Prince Regent.¹³² Since these venues were opened for musical performances and other assemblages, including the 1810 birthday celebration for George while he was a prince,¹³³ people outside the royal family had some contact with imperial wares.

¹²⁷ John Cornforth, “Frogmore House Berkshire: Property of Her Majesty the Queen,” *Country Life* 191, iss. 31 (July 31, 1997): 52.

¹²⁸ William Henry Pyne, *The History of the Royal Residences of Windsor Castle, St. James’s Palace, Carlton House, Kensington Palace, Hampton Court, Buckingham House, and Frogmore*, 3 vols. (London: A. Dry, 1819), 1:2.

¹²⁹ Jane Roberts, ed., *George III & Queen Charlotte: Patronage, Collecting and Court Taste* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2004), 382–83.

¹³⁰ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 922123.

¹³¹ Pyne, *History of the Royal Residences*, 1:21.

¹³² Kara Blakley, “Domesticating Orientalism: Chinoiserie and the Pagodas of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art* 18, no. 2 (2018): 206–23. This is a recent study of Brighton Pavilion’s origins. Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie* (London: Phaidon, 1993), 188–95.

¹³³ *Statesman*, August 15, 1810, 3.



1-28. Charles Wild, *Frogmore House: The Green Closet*, 1819, watercolor on paper, H. 25.1 cm,
Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

In 1819, books and art from Queen Charlotte’s estate were dispersed through a two-part sale at Christie’s.¹³⁴ The lots included a large number of Chinese silks and porcelains. Some of the porcelains are potentially imperial, such as:

- 60 A vessel for flowers, to attach to a wall, Mazarin blue and gold, pencilled arabesques; and a pair of bottles and cover, blue, pencilled with symbols in gold, and two variously shaped and curious blue and white bottles.

Imperial wall vases of porcelain are known, including a *yangcai* piece of the Qianlong period in the British Museum,¹³⁵ and another in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹³⁶ Other lots were of the type which earned large bids at the Summer Palace sales of the 1860s and might have been imperial, including “A globular mandarin tea pot, covered with arabesque foliage and bats, of the richest enamel, the inside verditer, very rare and extra fine, and a pair of yellow ware tea pots, pencilled.”¹³⁷ The “verditer” is likely the pale turquoise glaze seen often on the interiors of imperial wares. Among the silks offered were many unfinished garments for “Mandarins,” which may have been the silks “woven into patterns of dresses,” seen by Aeneas Anderson. Within the catalogue, the only lot linked with the Qing court was “A pair of

¹³⁴ Christie’s London, Sale of May 7–11, 1819; Sale of May 24, 1819.

¹³⁵ BM, mus. no. PDF,A.807.

¹³⁶ MMA, acc. no. 79.2.815.

¹³⁷ Christie’s London, Sale of May 7–11, 1819, Lot 40.

curious basins of the Imperial five clawed dragon pattern.”¹³⁸ The sale brought imperial wares to a wider audience, which Mr. Christie described in his advertisement as “the Nobility, Gentry, and Public.”¹³⁹ During the plunder of the Summer Palace, soldiers took objects easily identified as imperial because they were covered in “imperial yellow” glaze, which Nigel Wood identifies as “an all-over iron-yellow enamel containing about 3.5% ferric oxide in a lead silicate base.”¹⁴⁰ They also looked for objects decorated with five-clawed dragons: two jade books, a lacquer box and pieces of silk, all with the “imperial dragon,” were sold at Christie’s after the war.¹⁴¹

7. Knowledge of the Yuanming Yuan in Britain

The British in 1860 had some information about the Yuanming Yuan, gleaned from letters and memoirs dating to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Descriptions of the emperor’s estate would especially have intrigued the nobility and landed gentry, who created Chinese-style gardens on their properties in the eighteenth century.¹⁴² Such landscape designs are widely understood to have been inspired by the writings and designs of architect William Chambers (1722–96).¹⁴³ The British also encountered images of Chinese gardens on export goods like wallpapers,¹⁴⁴ and ceramics, including a plate in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, said to have been made for the British market.¹⁴⁵ (Fig. 1-29) Longstanding fascination with Chinese gardens primed the British public for the glowing reports of the emperor’s estate, which appeared in newspapers after the war and created further excitement around the plundered objects.¹⁴⁶

The French Jesuit missionary Jean Denis Attiret (1702–68) served as a painter to the Qianlong emperor.¹⁴⁷ He made numerous portraits of the royal family and worked with other court artists on the original paintings for the “Battle Copper Prints,” commemorating the Qianlong emperor’s military

¹³⁸ Ibid., Lot 36.

¹³⁹ *Morning Post*, May 7, 1819, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Nigel Wood, *Chinese Glazes: Their Origins, Chemistry and Re-creation* (London: A. & C. Black, 1999), 165.

¹⁴¹ Christie’s London, Sale of July 5, 1861, 135–36, 139, 147–48.

¹⁴² Yu Liu, “The Importance of the Chinese Connection: The Origin of the English Garden,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 70–98.

¹⁴³ William Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines, and Utensils* (London: published for the author, 1757), 14–19.

¹⁴⁴ “Chinese Wallpaper in National Trust Collections,” National Trust website, accessed October 5, 2022, <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/article/chinese-wallpaper-guide>. The site provides a range of specimens in historic English houses.

¹⁴⁵ MMA, acc. no. 2015.259. Other specimens include MMA, acc. no. 79.2.174; V&A, acc. no. CIRC.640-1969; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, acc. no. 65.2268.

¹⁴⁶ “The Sacking of the Palace,” *London and China Telegraph*, December 15, 1860, 3.

¹⁴⁷ Lucia Tripodes, “Painting and Diplomacy at the Qianlong Court: A Commemorative Picture by Wang Zhicheng (Jean-Denis Attiret),” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 35 (Spring 1999): 185–200. Tripodes discusses a painting of an imperial banquet by Attiret and other court artists.

campaigns.¹⁴⁸ Attiret lived at the Summer Palace and penned a letter home describing the estate. In 1752, Joseph Spence (1699–1768) published, under his pen name “Sir Harry Beaumont,”¹⁴⁹ a translation of the letter as *A Particular Account of the Emperor of China’s Gardens Near Peking*.¹⁵⁰ In his lengthy discussion of the grounds, Attiret noted the characteristics that distinguished it from European gardens: the myriad wandering streams, koi-filled ponds and lakes that dotted the estate, including Kunming Lake, the careful planting and shaping of the landscape to create the illusion of a “Work of Nature,”¹⁵¹ the pagodas and terraces; the flowering trees, the numerous pleasure houses arranged in “beautiful Disorder,”¹⁵² and the creation of a world in microcosm through the collecting of exotic plants into a landscape varied to simulate different regions of China.



1-29. Chinese export *famille rose* plate, Yongzheng period (r. 1723–35), porcelain with overglaze enamels, D. 22.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

¹⁴⁸ Niklas Leverenz, “Drawings, Proofs and Prints from the Qianlong Emperor’s East Turkestan Copperplate Engravings,” *Arts Asiatiques* 68 (2013): 39–60.

¹⁴⁹ James Sambrook, “Spence, Joseph [pseud. Sir Harry Beaumont],” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, September 23, 2004.

¹⁵⁰ Jean-Denis Attiret, *A Particular Account of the Emperor of China’s Gardens Near Peking: In a Letter from F. Attiret, a French Missionary, Now Employ’d by that Emperor to Paint the Apartments in Those Gardens, to his Friend at Paris. Translated from the French by Harry Beaumont* (London: R. Dodsley, 1752).

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 38.

Attiret also observed that the buildings, with their glazed tile roofs, polychrome-painted woodwork, colonnades, and single-story plans, were at variance with the rules and customs of European architecture. Ultimately, he “was tempted to own,”¹⁵³ that the Chinese surpassed Europeans in the variety of their buildings, as well as the quality of their fireworks and lanterns, which were lit each winter for the New Year celebration in China. He concluded by observing that the garden was a private sanctuary for the emperor and his entourage:

This charming Place is scarce ever seen by any body but himself, his Women, and his Eunuchs ... Of all the Europeans that are here, none ever enter'd this Inclosure, except the Clock-makers and Painters.¹⁵⁴

He notes that the emperor had luxurious apartments near the gate:

Tis a sort of seraglio; in the different Apartments of which you see all the most beautiful things that can be imagin'd, as to the Furniture, Ornaments, and Paintings, (I mean, of those in the Chinese taste); the most valuable sorts of wood; varnish'd Works, of China and Japan; antient vases of Porcelain; Silks, and Cloth of Gold and Silver. They have there brought together, all that Art and good Taste could add to the riches of Nature.¹⁵⁵

Attiret noted that his status as a painter enabled him to enter areas of the estate inaccessible to “several other Europeans, who have been here between Twenty and Thirty Years without being able ever to set their Feet on any Spot of this delightful Ground.”¹⁵⁶ Guo Daiheng identifies this area as the Jiuzhou Qingyan Complex (Complex of Nine Continents Clear and Calm), the largest group of buildings in the Yuanming Yuan, surrounded by water, which was reserved for the imperial family. There they slept, held private banquets and engaged in buddhist rituals. This was also the area where the emperor kept the album *Forty Views of the Yuanming Yuan* (1844), which was taken by the French army in 1860 and is now kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.¹⁵⁷ She also identifies the “seraglio.” This was a building complex on the east side of the main residence called the Tiandi Yijia Chun Palace (Palace of Spring for One Family Under Heaven and Earth), which served as the residence for imperial consorts.¹⁵⁸ From his letter, the British would have known that the Summer Palace was a private paradise for the emperor and his family, which was dotted with palaces holding numerous treasures. All of this information may have encouraged the Anglo-French forces to target the spot in 1860, in order to force the emperor’s hand. In memoirs of the war, soldiers wrote of going through the emperor’s private apartments. (See 107, 115–16.)

¹⁵³ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 47.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁵⁷ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, doc. no. IFN-55008362.

¹⁵⁸ Guo, *China’s Lost Imperial Garden: The World’s Most Exquisite Garden Rediscovered*, trans. Yawtsong Lee (New York: Better Link Press, 2016), 47–50.

8. Memoirs of the Macartney Embassy

Members of Lord Macartney's retinue also shared their impressions of the Yuanming Yuan. Samuel Holmes, Sgt.-Maj. of the 11th Light Dragoons, was attached to the embassy as a guard and recalled the grounds in his memoir:

About noon, we were set down at a country seat belonging to the Emperor, six miles to the northward of the city, called Yuen-ming-yuen, where comfortable provision was made for us in every respect, and where we had hopes to rest some considerable time ... This place was walled around, and might be near 2 miles in extent, and contained a vast variety of elegant little buildings; in the front of most of them was a large canal for bathing, and other useful purposes. The houses, or barracks appointed for the guard, were in the middle of a thick wood, but sufficiently open and airy, and surrounded with water; nothing, in short, could be more charming and delightful; or scarcely any thing exceed our vexation, when in about five or six days, we were ordered to get ready to return to Peking.¹⁵⁹

Like other texts, his account revealed that the Yuanming Yuan was six miles from Beijing and not heavily defended. His description suggests that he had no access to areas beyond the Zhengda Guangming Complex (Complex of Rectitude and Honor), historically translated in Britain as the "Main Audience Hall" or "Hall of Audience."¹⁶⁰

Zhou Weiquan, formerly in the Department of Architecture at Tsinghua University, noted in a modern official guidebook to the estate:

According to the institutions of the imperial household, foreign envoys were not allowed to enter without permission that part of the Summer Palace where the gardens and living quarters were. So the audience halls had to be built in the front part of the palace, close to the main entrance, the East Palace Gate. Here in this precinct was an architectural ensemble consisting of the Hall of Benevolence and Longevity, the East Palace Gate, several side buildings, inner and outer waiting rooms ... To separate the audience halls from the pleasure grounds ... the designers, instead of putting up a wall, had small mounds piled up to the south of the Hall of Benevolence and Longevity.¹⁶¹

When the Da Gong Men (Great Palace Gate) was excavated in January of 2019, archaeologists discovered a canal with a stone-lined bed,¹⁶² which is likely that mentioned by Holmes. John Barrow also described the Yuanming Yuan, as well as the surrounding countryside. He felt that it did not equal accounts of Chinese gardens from William Chambers, though he was impressed by the landscape of variegated foliage, watered with lakes and streams, which were all artfully arranged to "represent the free

¹⁵⁹ Samuel Holmes, *The Journal of Mr Samuel Holmes, Serjeant-Major of the XIth Light Dragoons, During His Attendance, as One of the Guard on Lord Macartney's Embassy to China and Tartary 1792-3* (London: W. Bulmer, 1798), 134-35.

¹⁶⁰ Malone, *History of the Peking Summer Palaces*, 18; Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:300.

¹⁶¹ Beijing Summer Palace Administration Office and the Department of Architecture of Qinghua University, *Summer Palace* (Beijing: Zhaohua Publishing House, 1981), 117.

¹⁶² "Old Summer Palace Gate Being Restored," China Global Television Network website, posted January 29, 2019, <https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d514f77597a4d32457a6333566d54/index.html>.

hand of nature.”¹⁶³ He writes that his movements were circumscribed by guards, so that “All the little excursions I made were by stealth.”¹⁶⁴ From his account, the British in 1860 would have known the estate was jealously guarded from public view.

In addition to discussing the gardens, British diplomats gave detailed descriptions of the Hall of Audience in words and pictures, for it was an important site of political interaction, indicated by the fact that the emperor had directed the Macartney mission to arrange their gifts in that space. Sir George Leonard Staunton, 1st Baronet (1737–1801), who was secretary to the embassy, described the throne in the hall, where they laid out presents for the Qianlong emperor:

The throne, of which an engraving is annexed, was placed in a recess. A few steps ascended to it in front, and others on each side. It was not rich or gaudy. Over it were the Chinese characters of glory and perfection. On each side were tripods, and vessels of incense. Before it was a small table, almost to be called an altar, for offerings of tea and fruit to the spirit of the absent Emperor.¹⁶⁵

Barrow’s map of the Hall of Audience and surrounding area shows the throne centered against the north wall, so the emperor faced south according to tradition. **(Fig. 1-30)** William Alexander made a watercolor sketch of the throne, with its dais, screen and appurtenances,¹⁶⁶ **(Fig. 1-31)** and an engraving based on this appeared in Staunton’s memoir of the embassy.¹⁶⁷ **(Fig. 1-32)** John Barrow also painted an exterior view of the Hall of Audience, which showed a rectangular building with a gently curved and tiled roof extending over a colonnade of red beams.¹⁶⁸ **(Fig. 1-33)** Staunton included an engraving of this in his book.¹⁶⁹ **(Fig. 1-34)** A number of prints seemingly based on these images appeared, such as a print made in 1843 by engraver Edward Paxman Brandard (1819–98), after a drawing by Thomas Allom (1804–72). **(Fig. 1-35)** Such prints may have provided inspiration to artists who created large panoramic views of the Summer Palace for postwar victory celebrations. (See 78–86.) The material produced by members of the Macartney embassy in the form of maps and texts about the building and the wider estate may have enabled the Allies to locate it and suggested that it would be a viable, politically important military target in 1860. As we will see in Chapter Three, campaign members who entered the hall knew its importance to the emperor and made it a target of mockery.

¹⁶³ Barrow, *Travels in China*, 123.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

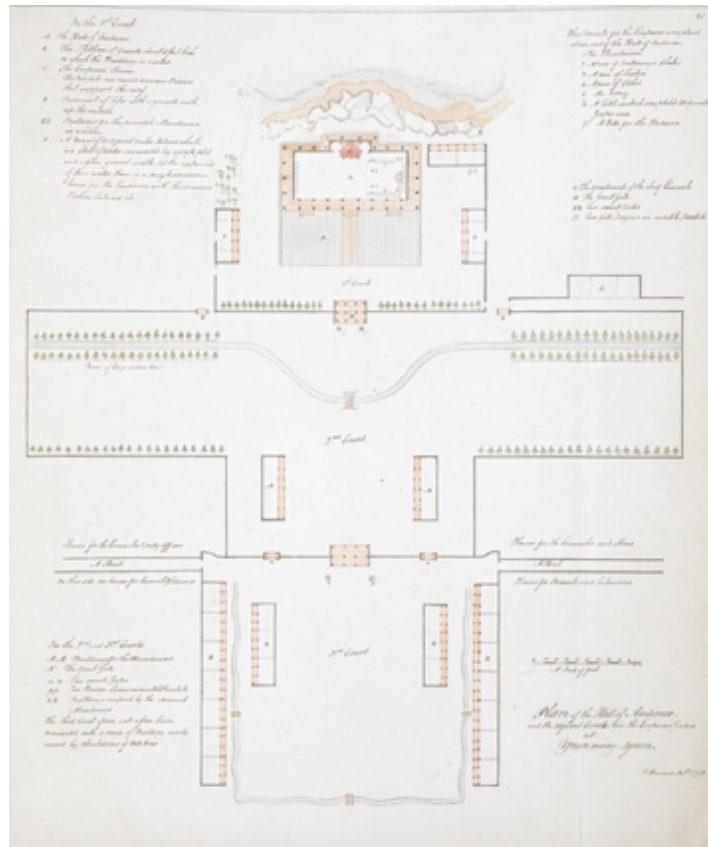
¹⁶⁵ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:128.

¹⁶⁶ William Alexander, “The Throne in the Hall at Yen Shin Yuen,” Album of 278 Drawings of Landscapes, Coastlines, WD 961, fol. 53, A collection of eighty views, maps, portraits and drawings illustrative of the Embassy sent to China under George, Earl of Macartney, in 1793; drawn chiefly by William Alexander, some by Sir John Barrow, Bart., some by Sir Henry Woodbine Parish, and one by William Gomm, Cartographic Items Maps 8.Tab.C.8, British Library.

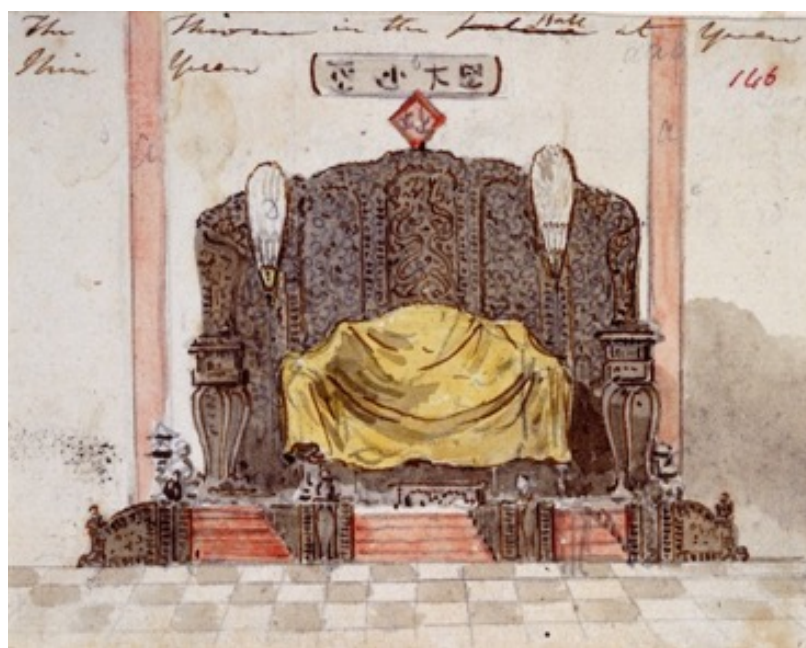
¹⁶⁷ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:129.

¹⁶⁸ John Barrow, “View of the Great Saloon, or Hall of Audience at Yuen-ming-yuen,” 1793, A collection of eighty views, maps, portraits and drawings illustrative of the Embassy sent to China under George, Earl of Macartney, in 1793, Cartographic Items, Maps 8 TAB.ca.8.73.b, British Library.

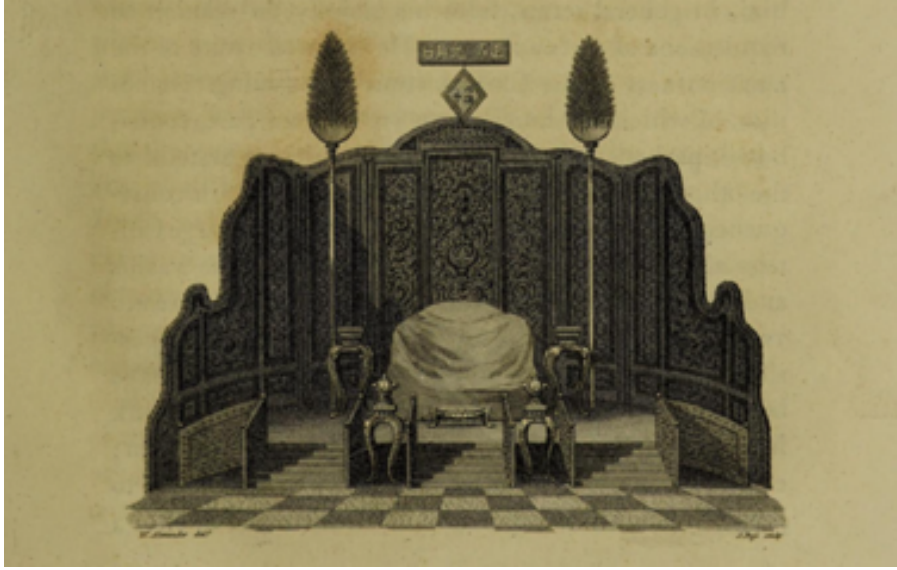
¹⁶⁹ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 3:22.



1-30. John Barrow, *Plan of the Hall of Audience*, 1793, ink and watercolor over pencil on paper, H. 58 cm, © British Library Board, Shelfmark: Maps 8.Tab.C.8.73.b



1-31. William Alexander, *Throne in the Hall at Yuen minh Yuen*, 1792–94, watercolor on paper, measurements unavailable, © British Library Board, Shelfmark: WD 961, f.53(146)



1-32. After William Alexander, "Throne of the Qianlong emperor at the Yuanming Yuan," from *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*, 1797, engraving, H. 57 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



1-33. John Barrow, *View of the Great Saloon, or Hall of Audience at Yuen-ming-yuen*, 1793, ink and watercolor on paper, H. 37.3 cm, © British Library Board, Shelfmark: Maps 8 TAB.c.8.73.a



1-34. After William Alexander, "A Front View of the Hall of Audience at the Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen," from *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*, 1797, engraving, H. 57 cm, Getty Research Institute



1-35. Edward Paxman Brandard after Thomas Allom, *Hall of Audience, Palace of Yuen min Yuen, Peking*, 1843, engraving, measurements unavailable, New York Public Library

9. British Knowledge of Chinese Reign Marks

As the market in imperial artifacts developed after the war, the business of ordering imperial artworks began in earnest. Deciphering reign marks on imperial vessels, establishing the chronology of porcelains and even identifying forgeries of imperial pieces, preoccupied the first generations of Chinese art dealers and collectors; and these specialists laid the groundwork for scholarship of Chinese art that has played a central role in British collecting culture ever since. (See 155–63.) In light of this, a brief look at what exactly the British knew about the Qing emperors and their reign marks is in order. Reign marks were barely mentioned by art specialists in catalogue notes for imperial pieces until the last decades of the century. However, numismatists and sinologists knew a great deal about reign marks and the Chinese imperial chronology before the 1860 war. In 1850 numismatist Samuel Birch (1813–85) published a short article on a private bank note from Suzhou donated to the British Museum by Sir George Thomas Staunton. He explained how the bill was printed, translated the inscription, and dated it to the 24th year in the reign of the Daoguang emperor (1782–1850, r. 1821–1850), which was 1844. Birch was an Egyptologist, who knew Classical Chinese and became keeper of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum in 1861, the very year objects from the Summer Palace began to arrive. His familiarity with Chinese language makes it likely that he was involved in one of the first scholarly efforts to date an object from the Summer Palace, a bronze tripod *ding* vessel given to the British Museum by Dr. William Freeman Daniell (1818–65), who accompanied the China expedition. (See 158.)

Another scholar of Chinese money was John Williams (1797–1874), who read before the Numismatic Society of London in 1852 a paper that sketched a history of Chinese money beginning with the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BC), traced the evolution of inscriptions on various coins, and provided a lengthy table of Chinese dynasties and their coinage, using throughout Chinese characters with romanizations for all proper names and citing Chinese-language references in the society’s library. He also published “Account of ‘Kin Ting Tseen Luh’, a Chinese work on Coins, in the Library of the Numismatic Society of London.”¹⁷⁰ This was a volume given to the library by translator Edgar Alfred Bowring (1826–1911), the son of John Bowring (1792–1872), who as governor of Hong Kong played a critical role in the *Arrow* lorcha conflict, which precipitated the Second Opium War.¹⁷¹ Williams determined that it was partly a catalogue of Chinese coins covering the Xia Dynasty (ca. 2100–1600 BC) through the Ming Dynasty, demonstrating fluency in the denominations, inscriptions and shapes of Chinese money, as well as Chinese political geography and dynastic history. These are just two of many

¹⁷⁰ John Williams, “Account Of ‘Kin Ting Tseen Luh,’ A Chinese Work on Coins, in the Library of the Numismatic Society of London,” *Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Numismatic Society* 14 (April 1851–January 1852): 155–75.

¹⁷¹ John Wong, *Deadly Dreams: Opium and the Arrow War (1856–1860) in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 5, 9–10, 22–23, 28, 68–70, 77, 79, 87–88, 98, 108, 125–26, 199, 265.

scholars who dedicated themselves to Chinese coinage within British and European numismatic circles, an area of connoisseurship recently addressed in depth by Helen Wang.¹⁷²

10. Conclusion

This chapter has laid groundwork for analysis of the 1860 spoliation and its impact on Victorian culture through review of British contacts with Chinese culture prior to the war. The evidence shows that portions of the British elite knew of the Summer Palace as a site of Qing imperial power, culture, and wealth outside Beijing, and that they had seen some products of imperial workshops. They had limited experience of popular wares manufactured for China's domestic market and wide knowledge of export goods. All of this information was gleaned from publications on China; looting of Chinese sites by the British military; exhibitions in Britain; and the purchase of Chinese goods for collections, daily use and decoration. The chapter has also shown that British manufacturers emulated Chinese products to compete with imports, sparking innovations in the craft industries. The effect of all these contacts was to predispose British soldiers and civilians to Chinese art kept at the Summer Palace, even guiding their tastes for specific types of Chinese art. However, increasing hostility towards China over frustrated trade demands soured British views towards Chinese culture in the second decade of the nineteenth century; and it is possible that information gleaned about the Summer Palace from the reports of missionaries and embassies who saw the estate factored in the British Army's decision to loot and destroy it. The succeeding chapters will show how British experience with Chinese culture prior to the war affected the distribution and use of looted Summer Palace artifacts within Victorian Britain.

¹⁷² Helen Wang, "A Short History of Chinese Numismatics in European Languages," *Early China* 35/36 (2012/13): 395–429.

Chapter Two

“Glorious news from China!”: Spoils Arrive in Britain

1. A Victorious Return from China

The news of victory in China reached the British public on December 8, 1860 and was reported in many publications, including the *Globe* newspaper:

THE WAR IN CHINA.
Capture of Peking.
Flight of the Emperor

FOREIGN OFFICE, Dec. 8 The following telegram was received this afternoon, at 3 p.m. from her Majesty's Agent and Consul General at Alexandria, dated Nov. 30, 1860:

Two of the gates of Peking are in our hands. Parkes and Loch have been returned to us. Captain Anderson and Mr. de Norman have died from effects of ill treatment. Brabazon and Bowlby unaccounted for.

The Emperor's summer palace taken and sacked, affording immense spoil. Emperor fled into Tartary. Forces to winter at Peking and Tientsin. The two Ambassadors at military headquarters.¹⁷³

As suggested here, the reaction to the sacking throughout Britain was enthusiastic. Few regretted the arson and the public was delighted by the prospect of spoils. Much of the jubilation came from a sense that justice had been done and revenge had been taken for the death of Allied hostages. On February 15, 1861, there was a debate in Parliament, during which the Marquess of Bath (1831–96), “Protested against the destruction of the Summer Palace as an ‘act of Vandalism,’ and only comparable ‘to the burning of the Alexandrian library and the sack of Rome by the Constable Bourbon.”¹⁷⁴ But this was a minority view and the peer later acquired looted items himself.¹⁷⁵ (See 147–48.) The general response to the sacking and spoils was unbridled jubilation. Prime Minister Lord Palmerston (1784–1865), wrote to Secretary of State Lord John Russell (1792–1878): “I am delighted at our having burnt down the emperor's Summer Palace. I only wish his Peking Palace had shared the same fate,” and he mused that the head of General Sengge Rinchen (1811–65) on a platter would be a suitable revenge for his role in the hostage-taking during the war.¹⁷⁶ On December 16, 1860, *Reynold's Newspaper* announced: “The entire British share including both treasure and private loot, is estimated at about 19,000*l.*” and published several letters from the Allies' camps outside Beijing, which described the rich spoils in tantalizing detail.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ *Globe*, December 8, 1860, 2.

¹⁷⁴ *Morning Post*, February 15, 1861, 2.

¹⁷⁵ *Era*, September 23, 1866, 15.

¹⁷⁶ Henry John Temple to John Russell, December 25, 1860, PRO 30/22/21, National Archives, Kew.

¹⁷⁷ *Reynold's Newspaper*, December 16, 1860, 4.

By the late spring of 1861, the majority of British troop ships had docked in various home ports. The Royal Scots, who had been tasked with burning the palace,¹⁷⁸ had already returned by the end of 1860; while some sick and wounded troops arrived early in the year.¹⁷⁹ In the second week of April, members of the Buffs, the Royal Artillery and the Queen's Royal Regiment arrived.¹⁸⁰ More members of the Queen's came home in May. The *Indomitable* docked with the *Adventure*, a screw troopship, and the *Sparrowhawk*, a screw gun vessel, from China.¹⁸¹ The second group landed on the *Alfred*, accompanied by the hired troopship *York*, carrying the 87th Royal Irish Fusiliers.¹⁸² The final troops arrived on the *Adelaide*, which docked at Spithead on May 16th.¹⁸³ Boats holding the 67th were reported to be docked at Spithead in mid-June.¹⁸⁴ Not all China troops returned that year. In June, the 31st Regiment was ordered to Vancouver Island;¹⁸⁵ in October, the 44th and parts of the 67th left for India.¹⁸⁶

2. The Official Narrative of the Sacking

Campaign leaders were celebrated as heroes for the rapid and successful outcome of the operation. Grant and Elgin appeared at the Royal Academy on May 4, 1861 and spoke of destroying the Summer Palace to loud cheers from the illustrious members assembled.¹⁸⁷ Despite the delight of the audience in the destruction of the estate, Elgin, like other campaign members, intimated that the Summer Palace and its treasures had not been so impressive as people thought:

No one regretted more sincerely than I did the destruction of that collection of summer-houses and kiosks, already and previously to any act of mine rifled of their contents, which was dignified by the title of Summer Palace of the Chinese Emperor.¹⁸⁸

He also suggested here that the French had taken the lead in sacking the estate. However, Lord Elgin had praised the grounds highly in a letter to his wife just after the capture: "It is really a fine thing, like an English park. Numberless buildings with handsome rooms, and filled with Chinese curios, and handsome clocks, bronzes, etc."¹⁸⁹

¹⁷⁸ *London Daily News*, July 9, 1873, 3.

¹⁷⁹ *Jersey Independent and Daily Telegraph*, January 16, 1861, 2.

¹⁸⁰ *Evening Freeman*, April 17, 1861, 4; *London Evening Standard*, April 16, 1861, 6.

¹⁸¹ *Brighton Guardian*, May 8, 1861, 2.

¹⁸² *Dublin Evening Mail*, May 17, 1861, 3.

¹⁸³ *Brighton Guardian*, May 22, 1861, 2.

¹⁸⁴ *London Evening Standard*, June 13, 1861, 3.

¹⁸⁵ *Longford Journal*, June 29, 1861, 3.

¹⁸⁶ Thomas Carter, comp., *Historical Record of the Forty-fourth, or the East Essex Regiment of Foot* (Chatham: Gale & Polden), 180. See *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, January 13, 1861, 1, on the movements of the 67th.

¹⁸⁷ *Morning Chronicle*, May 6, 1861, 2.

¹⁸⁸ *Morning Post*, May 6, 1861, 2.

¹⁸⁹ James Bruce, *Extracts from the Letters of James Earl of Elgin, etc., etc., to Mary Louisa Countess of Elgin 1847–1862* (Edinburgh: privately printed, 1864), 220.

Other prominent members of the diplomatic staff and the army also downplayed the charms of the Summer Palace. In the summer of 1861, the *Morning Post* reported that campaign interpreter Thomas Wade found the destruction of the library a manageable loss:

It appears that only a very few of the fine collection of books in the Imperial library of the Summer Palace have been saved by Mr. Wade. Fortunately for themselves, the Chinese have three or four duplicates of this collection; so that in burning the Summer Palace Library the loss has chiefly been our own.¹⁹⁰

This remarkable comment is of its day: the invaders would have conserved the library by carting it off to Britain if it had been valuable, but it had ultimately not been worth their while. In a similar spirit, Wolseley sniffed:

Taking Yuen-ming-yuen all in all, it was a gem of its kind, and yet I do not suppose there was a single man who visited it without being disappointed. There was an absence of grandeur about it, for which no amount of careful gardening and pretty ornaments can compensate.¹⁹¹

In 1869, Elgin's secretary, Henry Loch, published his memoir of the campaign, which was equally dismissive:

On good authority it was stated that nothing unique either in the shape of books or manuscripts was kept at the Yuen-Ming-Yuen ... The buildings in themselves possessed but little architectural beauty ... There were magnificent bronzes in different parts of the gardens ... Fortunately all these bronzes were too far from any of the buildings to be injured by the fire; indeed, only portions of the buildings themselves were burnt.¹⁹²

His comment seems to reference Wade's remark about duplicate sets of books. While Loch had been held hostage during part of the looting, he arrived in time to see the buildings still standing in the park; and he took home probably the largest collection of artworks from the Summer Palace among all the members of the British expedition, despite his expressed indifference to the estate and its treasures.

3. Transferring Blame to the French

Campaign leaders also heaped blame on the French in letters-to-editors and memoirs. Chaplain to the forces, Rev. Robert James Leslie (R. J. L.) M'Ghee (1819?–97), wrote that the French had thrown themselves on the silks and jewels at the estate, while British officers showed restraint:

Sir H. Grant gave permission to such officers as were of the party to carry away a memento with them,—anything they pleased, provided that the prize-agents did not object. Of this privilege everyone appeared to avail themselves; and while one became enamoured of a gadestone vase, another lost his heart to an embroidered robe, while a third, with an eye to the future, selected a fur-coat.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ *Morning Post*, June 14, 1861, 5.

¹⁹¹ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China*, 237.

¹⁹² Henry Brougham Loch, *Personal Narrative of Occurrences During Lord Elgin's Second Embassy to China* (London: John Murray, 1869), 272–74.

¹⁹³ M'Ghee, *How We Got to Peking*, 206.

Wolseley wrote that Gen. Grant ordered the auction because “It was naturally most riling to our soldiers to see their allies rolling in wealth, and even their own officers all more or less provided with curiosities whilst they themselves got nothing.”¹⁹⁴ The press took up the call and followed the circulation of plunder in France closely, reporting on a sensational display of trophies at the Tuileries and the museum of spoils established by Empress Eugénie (1826–1920) at the Château de Fontainebleau. One correspondent summed up the gossip: “By the way, the plunder taken by the French at the Summer Palace must have been immense, for not a day passes here without some tremendous sale of Chinese productions taking place by auction.”¹⁹⁵ In the spring of 1862, British papers reported a tidbit of gossip regarding the imminent marriage of Fanny-Valentine Haussmann (1843–1908), daughter of the Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann (1809–91), to the Vicomte Maurice Pernéty (1844–1920): “They say she will be decked with the jewels brought from the Summer Palace at Pekin.”¹⁹⁶ Napoleon III (1808–73, r. 1852–70) was to give her a wreath of pearls: “considered a most delicate acknowledgement of the famous necklace presented by Count Palikao to her Majesty on his return from China.”¹⁹⁷ “Count Palikao” is the title Napoleon gave Montauban upon his return from China, in honor of his victory at the Bridge of Baliqiao.¹⁹⁸

British newspapers had already accused “Count Palikao” of profiting from the campaign, despite a record of poor leadership. In 1862 the press alleged that his proposed annuity of £2,000, over and above his share of the loot, was really a reward for his role in the Emperor’s “early escapades at Strasbourg and Boulogne ... rather than his exploits in China, which were certainly not very brilliant.”¹⁹⁹ The *Norwich Mercury* stated that he “filled his pockets from the caskets of the Chinese Empresses,”²⁰⁰ from which he realised £50,000, more than double the prize money taken by the entire British Army.²⁰¹ The *Manchester Courier* said that his “chief merit consists in the great good luck which enabled him to be first in the Summer Palace at Pekin, because of the bravery of those British troops that dispersed the Tartar hordes by the fire of Armstrong guns.”²⁰² The press also reported that Montauban had attempted to curry favor with the French royal family by presenting the Empress Eugénie and Sophie de la Paniéga, Duchess of Malakoff (1828–90), with valuable bracelets from the Summer Palace: “One of which was made of a very rare kind of dark grey pearl, and the other of diamonds, emeralds, and gigantic rubies.”²⁰³ When a jeweler later valued the bracelet for the empress at 1.8 million francs and that for the Duchess even higher, the

¹⁹⁴ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China*, 237–38.

¹⁹⁵ “Gossip from Paris - From Our Correspondent,” *Birmingham Journal*, May 9, 1863, 7.

¹⁹⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, March 11, 1862, 7.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Liverpool Mercury*, January 1, 1861, 2; *Worcester Journal*, March 1, 1862, 7.

¹⁹⁹ *West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, March 7, 1862, 4.

²⁰⁰ *Dublin Daily Express*, March 6, 1862, 2.

²⁰¹ *Norwich Mercury*, January 2, 1861, 4.

²⁰² *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, March 8, 1862, 6.

²⁰³ *Newcastle Journal*, March 12, 1862, 3.

newspapers stated that the general “felt savage that he had thrown away a fortune.”²⁰⁴ Whether this is true or not, Montauban did consign plundered treasures for sale. In 1885, a gossip columnist for the *London Daily News* reported that the Prince of Wales had attended a party celebrating the coming marriage of the Comte Charles de la Rochefoucauld to Princess Charlotte de la Trémoille. Her trousseau was displayed at the party and the columnist noted “a pearl necklace taken in the loot of the Summer Palace, and bought at the Palikao auction for 40,000 francs by the Comtesse Duchâtel (1817–78), the bride’s grandmother.”²⁰⁵ The British pointed to sales of French spoils as evidence that their allies had taken most of the spoils. They followed a scandal involving Col. Charles Louis Désiré du Pin (1814–68),²⁰⁶ who assembled “a curious Chinese and Japanese Museum, consisting in great part of articles taken from Yuen-Ming-Yuen,” which he tried to auction in France until Napoleon removed him from active service, finding “a speculation of this nature disgraceful to the character of the officer and injurious to the dignity of the army.”²⁰⁷ Alongside such reports, the press reminded readers repeatedly that Grant, along with his division commanders, Sir Robert Napier and Sir John Michel, had given up their “share” of the prize money,²⁰⁸ without acknowledging that prize was not given to men above the rank of major, since it was an incentive for soldiers.²⁰⁹ Both men held the rank of major general during the war of 1860.²¹⁰

Were the accusations against the French valid? Napoleon received more spoils than Victoria, as the installation of looted objects at the Musée Chinois du château de Fontainebleau attests. Also, the largest collection of spoils sold publicly in Britain was made by a French soldier, Capitaine de Negroni. In 2015, the author was able to locate at the New York Public Library one catalogue of his collection, which contained 484 lots, including many precious jewels. Negroni’s collection was shown in the *French Court* [italics mine] at the Crystal Palace in the spring of 1865, then at 213 Piccadilly, and it was later auctioned through Foster’s.²¹¹ (See 166, 190, 196, 202, 205, 209, 228, 248.) The press reported that the collection was valued at £300,000 prior to the auction,²¹² and that Captain Negroni, a Corsican, had led the first French company into the palace grounds, which enabled him to put together his fantastic collection. The *London Daily News* saw it as evidence of “unparalleled treasures which were looted by

²⁰⁴ *West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, March 7, 1862, 4.

²⁰⁵ “Aristocratic Marriage in Paris,” *London Daily News*, October 19, 1885, 8.

²⁰⁶ *London Daily News*, March 8, 1862, 5.

²⁰⁷ *Bury and Norwich Post*, February 25, 1862, 3.

²⁰⁸ *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, January 1, 1861, 2.

²⁰⁹ *The Queen’s Regulations and Orders for the Army, Adjutant-General’s Office, Horse Guards, First of December 1859* (London: William H. Allen, 1859), 291–92.

²¹⁰ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War of 1860*, 18–19.

²¹¹ *Birmingham Gazette*, June 16, 1866, 4; Hevia, “Loot’s Fate,” 330.

²¹² *Gloucester Journal*, March 11, 1865, 3. The entries in the Negroni catalogue are reproduced on the author’s website www.yuanmingyuanartefactindex.org.

the French troops in 1860 ... as our troops were a few hours behind the French and only gathered up the gleanings.”²¹³

4. Accounts of the Looting from Soldiers

These accounts of the estate and the plunder are at odds with the recollections of lower-ranking officers who were present at the sacking. Capt. John Hart Dunne remembered collapsing after hours of frenzied looting and called October 8th “A memorable day in the history of plunder and destruction.”²¹⁴ His recollection is supported by another published report. In mid-December, *Bell's Weekly Messenger* reprinted letters “brought down by her Majesty’s ships *Pioneer* and *Furious*,” which had come from the “Camp of the British Army, one mile distant from the North-Eastern Gate of Peking, October 9,” and had been published in the *North China Herald* on October 20th. This report breathlessly related the scenes of looting across the estate:

no pen can describe correctly the scene that has taken place there within the two last days. Indiscriminate loot has been allowed. The public reception hall, the state and private bedrooms, ante-rooms, boudoirs, and every other apartment has been ransacked; articles of virtue, of native and foreign workmanship, taken or broken if too large to be carried away, ornamental lattice work, screens, jade stone ornaments, jars, clocks, watches, and other pieces of mechanism, curtains and furniture — none have escaped from destruction.²¹⁵

Another memoir by Surgeon General Graham Young (d. 1897), confirms that wild looting had occurred. Intent on acquiring a large group of jades, he tied a native man by his *queue* (the pigtail required of men by the Manchu government), to a post while he looted, so that he might use him as a beast of burden afterwards; but the man escaped.²¹⁶ Since Young was in the First Division, the quartermaster would have been Lieut. George Allgood, who also published an account of the war.²¹⁷

5. Public Celebrations of the Sacking

Despite the recriminations and denials among campaign members, the general public was ready to celebrate victory over China. That year, the press reported several large-scale commercial events which offered an evening’s patriotic entertainment centered around the dramatic destruction of the “Summer Palace.” While these were not government-sponsored gatherings, they enabled civilians to enjoy a sense of collective pride and closure at a moment that might otherwise have been lost, due to the circumstances

²¹³ *London Daily News*, July 19, 1865, 6.

²¹⁴ Dunne, *From Calcutta to Peking*, 128–33.

²¹⁵ *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, December 15, 1860, 1.

²¹⁶ Graham Young, *A Story of Active Service in Foreign Lands* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1888), 127.

²¹⁷ George Allgood, *China War 1860, Letters and Journal* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1901).

of the China operation. The campaign had been an armed embassy, not a full-scale war; for Britain had limited diplomatic goals and had ultimately not declared war on China. The regiments did not return all at once, as noted above, for some were sent elsewhere abroad. (See 74.) The conflict had taken place outside of Europe and word of victory reached the public by cable a full two months after the treaty-signing. Although the logistics of the invasion had been well-managed and the decisive Battle of the Dagu Forts had been an overwhelming success,²¹⁸ no battle on the scale of Waterloo (1815) had taken place and no territory had been seized. The armies had not laid siege to Beijing. The only action to be gleaned from the cable reproduced at the beginning of the chapter was the scene of wild looting and prize seizure at the Summer Palace. All of this meant that its destruction became a natural focus of attention, as retribution for the hostage-taking and a powerful message to the emperor.

All of the events discussed in this chapter are spectacles, meaning “something exhibited to view as unusual, notable, or entertaining; especially: an eye-catching or dramatic public display.”²¹⁹ Although we often refer to spontaneous, chaotic or unplanned public events like mobs, accidents or other departures from the norm as “spectacles,” we are concerned here with events orchestrated for large audiences, which celebrated publicly the destruction of the Summer Palace. These spectacles are part of the political context in which spoils from the Summer Palace arrived and contributed to the excitement surrounding the loot. Spectacles celebrating the 1860 sacking were mounted around the United Kingdom in the summer of 1861. Since the invasion had been a brief operation, compared to the Crimean War (1853–56) and the Indian Rebellion (1857–58), and the British Army had not sustained many casualties (only 34 dead and 107 wounded),²²⁰ these were not solemn moments of commemoration. Instead, they were joyous spectacles that affirmed the scope and benefits of the empire. This was, after all, a cathartic historical moment for British society. Since the reign of George III, the British had been unable to breach Chinese trade barriers, but an efficient and ruthless campaign in 1860 had forced the intransigent Chinese emperor to ratify the treaty, guaranteeing Britain unfettered access to Qing ports and officials.²²¹ The events offered a fantasy of the “Summer Palace” to the British imagination and they brought home a distant victory in a dramatic fashion, inscribing it in the British political consciousness and inspiring pride in expansion overseas. The safe return of the overwhelming majority of soldiers was also a cause for collective rejoicing among a wide swathe of society and these events reached citizens outside elite auctions in Mayfair.

²¹⁸ Henry Knollys, *Incidents in the China War of 1860, Compiled from the Private Journals of General Sir Hope Grant G.C.B. Commander of the British Expedition* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1875), 74–100. An account of the Battle of the Dagu Forts based on the diaries and letters of Gen. Grant is given.

²¹⁹ “Spectacle,” Merriam Webster Dictionary online, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/spectacle>.

²²⁰ “Empire: Opium Wars,” National Palace Museum website, accessed October 13, 2022, <https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/opium-war-1839-1842>.

²²¹ China Convention, Peace, Indemnity, Cession of Cowloon, Peking, October 24, 1860, FO 93/23/6, National Archive, Kew.

It seems that no sooner had the Allies burned down the Summer Palace than they wanted it back again. In the summer of 1861, the “Summer Palace” was resurrected in paint and light at public entertainments celebrating the victory. Pictures painted on large canvases termed “colossal” views, “dioramas” or “panoramas,” were among the offerings. The images were advertised as accurate depictions of the “Summer Palace,” and other sites in China, which would transport visitors to the emperor’s paradise for a few shillings. This type of entertainment made commercial sense at a time when Britain was routinely deploying soldiers overseas. They had been popular after the Indian Rebellion and the Crimean War, two conflicts that loomed large in the public consciousness.²²² In 1856, a newspaper advertised “MR. THOMAS, of London, will exhibit his great moving CANVAS PANORAMA of the WAR each Night ... 20,000 Feet of Canvas, and embraces the Battles of Inkerman, Alma, Balaklava, Fall of Sevastopol, our Operation in the Black Sea.”²²³ A newspaper review of a Crimean War exhibit appeared in 1856:

HAMILTON’S PANORAMA of the War. This exhibition on a large scale of the stirring scenes which have been enacted on the battle-fields of the Crimea and other parts of the East, has this week attracted numerous visitors to New Hall. Mr. Doughton, an intelligent young man, who was wounded and disabled in the fatal charge of light cavalry at Balaklava, and under whose superintendance the various scenes have been painted, many of them being also from sketches taken by himself, has added much to the interest of the panorama by the descriptions he gives of the pictures as they are before spectators.²²⁴

The accuracy of the depiction, attained through the involvement of a wounded eyewitness, enabled visitors to imagine the scene where sacrifices had been made by British soldiers, as an act of commemoration. Although such scenes could not recreate for civilians the terrifying atmosphere of combat, the scale of the battlefield panoramas at least enabled visitors to enter a simulacrum of the setting and even feel the absence of those who died at Balaclava.²²⁵ Like all spectacles, the panorama appealed to the senses as a full-scale simulation of a battlefield, instilling patriotism while recalling a military disaster. This empathetic impulse to actually enter the battlefield with the men of “the thin red line,” is captured by Tennyson in *The Charge of the Light Brigade*:

Cannon to the right of them
Cannon to the left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and thundered.²²⁶

²²² See “Marshall’s Great Panorama of the Mutiny in India,” in *Reading Mercury*, November 28, 1857, 3; “Lucknow and Delhi—Great Globe Leicester Square.—Diorama of Lucknow and the City of Delhi,” *Morning Post*, December 2, 1857, 2; “For Sale: A Panorama of the Mutiny in India,” *Era*, December 27, 1857, 1.

²²³ *Western Times*, January 5, 1856, 8.

²²⁴ *Leicestershire Mercury*, February 9, 1856, 3.

²²⁵ Ron Soodalter, “The futile charge of the light brigade: the British cavalry might have achieved glory at Balaclava in 1854-- had it not been led in the wrong direction,” *Military History* 32, iss. 6 (March 2016). Gives a short history and analysis of the battle.

²²⁶ Alfred Tennyson, *The Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate* (London: Macmillan, 1890), 222–23.

The lines together constitute a panorama: Tennyson's "Valley of Death." Published in 1854, the text still holds up as a terrifying vision of war equal to later depictions of battles in photographs and films.

Colossal views illustrating the victory in China focussed, not on scenes of battle, but the emperor's palace. They were often shown at large-scale entertainments in combination with celebratory pyrotechnic and illumination displays. In December 1860, the following notice appeared:

CHINA, PEKIN.—GREAT GLOBE.—NEW DIORAMA of the WAR in CHINA—
The City of Pekin—The taking of the Taku Forts, Entrance of the Pei-ho River,
&c., EXHIBITING DAILY.—GREAT GLOBE, Leicester-square. Admission to the
whole building and all the Dioramas, One Shilling.²²⁷

The Great Globe had wasted no time in capitalizing on the victory, which had recently been broadcast. In fact, it had erected images relating to the war earlier that year. In August, an advertisement had run for "NEW DIORAMAS of the Wars in China and Italy—Sites and Scenes in India; the Campaign in Italy; Nagasaki, Japan, Australia, Syria; a Tour up the Rhine."²²⁸ On December 27, 1860, the *Globe* newspaper reported that the theater offered "a representation of the latest scene of the gallantry of our soldiers, the Peiho River, the Taku Forts, and their capture, and the City of Pekin, an exhibition which, at the present moment, just as peace with China is announced, must be considered very opportune."²²⁹ The venue was a spectacle in itself. The Great Globe in Leicester Square was the brainchild of map maker James Wyld (1812–87): an instructional model of the earth 60 feet in diameter, which was hollow and contained a museum of ethnographic and cartographic material,²³⁰ within four galleries intended to hold 1,000–1,500 people.²³¹ Wyld had opened his theater in tandem with the Great Exhibition of 1851 and afterwards booked educational entertainments to encourage visitors. The venue was steeped in the politics of empire. When in 1852 a political dinner was given for Admiral Houston Steward (1791–1875), MP for Greenwich and a slave owner, the guest of honor joked that the new secretary for the colonies, Sir John Pakington (1799–1880), had visited the Great Globe "to find out where all our colonies are situated."²³² On July 19, 1861 at Burnley Fair in Manchester a colossal picture was on the bill with fireworks:

an entirely new Colossal Picture [of the] Summer Palace and gardens with the Hall of Audience and Adjacent Courts in the Emperor's Gardens, at Yuen-min-Yuen. At night will be presented a CHINESE FETE, or feast of lanterns, by land and water. The whole being shown amidst the most Gorgeous display of FIREWORKS.²³³

²²⁷ *London Evening Standard*, December 28, 1860, 1.

²²⁸ *London Evening Standard*, August 24, 1860, 1.

²²⁹ "Wyld's Globe," *Globe*, December 27, 1860, 4.

²³⁰ "The Improvement of Leicester-Square," *Evening Mail*, February 5, 1861, 7.

²³¹ "The Great Globe House," *Sun*, February 17, 1851, 12.

²³² "Borough of Greenwich.—Dinner to Admiral Houston Steward, M.P.," *Kentish Independent*, March 6, 1852, 5.

²³³ *Burnley Advertiser*, July 6, 1861, 2.

The painting and fireworks were also shown at the Zoological Gardens in Liverpool during that summer, with illumination of the gardens and dancing. Nightly entertainment was advertised a number of times in the *Liverpool Daily Post* and *Liverpool Mercury*.²³⁴ The latter described this spectacle as “A Great Painting covering 16,000 square feet of canvas, Being a view of the Imperial City of Pekin, and the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China, along with gigantic illuminations, fireworks and theatrical productions.”²³⁵ Now the sites that had been closed to the British for centuries were laid in front of the public for a small entry fee.

Messrs Danson & Sons also created an image shown at the Belle Vue Gardens, Manchester, in 1861. A *Guide to the Belle Vue Gardens*, published in 1872, states:

The City of Pekin formed the subject of the picture for 1861. The period selected was the Feast of the Lanterns, which of course afforded the opportunity for so much pyrotechnic display for which the Chinese are so celebrated.²³⁶

George Danson (1799–1881), was a painter of scenery and scenic views for many popular entertainment venues and he was assisted in his studio by his sons Thomas and Robert.²³⁷ The firm created many scenes celebrating British victories, including the Storming of Seringapatam (1853),²³⁸ the Siege of Sebastopol (1855),²³⁹ and the Defence of Lucknow (1863).²⁴⁰ Danson had been employed by John Jennison (1793–1869), the owner of Belle Vue Gardens, since 1851. While this author has not yet found the “Summer Palace” picture, nor any preparatory sketches or reproductions; a panorama of Manchester, as seen from the Belle Vue Gardens, was also painted by Danson in 1861 and it is in the Manchester Art Gallery today.²⁴¹ (**Fig. 2-1**) The painting shows holiday-makers riding in horse-drawn trams by the park with a line of smokestacks in the background. Its shimmering, delicate style suggests that his “Summer Palace” would have been a picturesque and brightly-hued fantasy. The “Summer Palace” picture covered a canvas 300 feet long and 60 feet high.²⁴² At the center was the Hall of Audience, flanked by imperial apartments and offices, all painted yellow. The color choice was most likely based on the understanding that Chinese tradition reserved this color for the emperor. (See 82, 94, 97, 98, 108, 115, 118, 120–21, 132, 135, 137, 138, 139, 141, 190, 198–200, 205, 224, 238, 364.) These buildings were set among splendid gardens lit by lanterns in the foreground, with “Pekin” and “the mountains of Tartary” in the distance. The painting

²³⁴ *Liverpool Mercury*, August 5, 1861, 1.

²³⁵ *Liverpool Mercury*, May 24, 1861, 1.

²³⁶ *Guide to the Belle Vue Gardens, near Manchester with a Description of the Colossal Picture. Price One Penny* (Manchester, 1872).

²³⁷ “The Late Mr. George Danson,” *Manchester Guardian*, February 2, 1881, 3; *Manchester Evening News*, January 29, 1881, 2; “George Danson,” Find a Grave website, accessed October 13, 2022, www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=139780877.

²³⁸ *Era*, June 5, 1853, 6.

²³⁹ *Morning Advertiser*, May 21, 1855, 3.

²⁴⁰ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, May 23, 1863, 9.

²⁴¹ Manchester Art Gallery, acc. no. 1947.328.

²⁴² “Whitsuntide Festivities, Preparations in Manchester,” *Manchester Weekly Times*, May 18, 1861, 7.

was mounted close to the Belle Vue lake; and each evening there was a festival of lanterns on land and water followed by “a conflagration of the Summer Palace,”²⁴³ a re-enactment of the arson at the emperor’s estate.



2-1. George Danson, *Manchester from Bellevue*, 1861, oil on canvas, H. 15 cm, Manchester Art Gallery

Entertainments celebrating victory over the Chinese were also advertised in the Manchester and Liverpool press through the early autumn. A firework display was organized around the image of the emperor’s Hall of Audience, with bizarre depictions of ferocious Chinese officials and warriors. A reporter described it thus:

A cunning mechanical arrangement, the scene quickly resolves itself into a gorgeous representation of “the Great Hall of Audience,” where are discovered revolving pyramidal tripods, richly-coloured and luminous, changing to frowning mandarins, threatening warriors, and fiery dragons. The band plays appropriate music during the representation, and the whole closes with a brilliant display of fireworks.²⁴⁴

This show traded on stereotypes of the Chinese. The fantastic scenery reflected a view widely-held at the time that Chinese art and culture were barbaric, decadent and grotesque. Keith Stewart Mackenzie, military secretary to commander-in-chief Sir Hugh Gough (1779–1869), during the First Opium War, expressed the disgust typically felt by soldiers when they encountered sacred sculptures in temples, which did not prevent them from looting the same: “In the extreme end, stood the principal altar, adorned with grotesque idols; among these figures I discovered two camp followers, busily employed in taking down a fine Joss; to serve, no doubt, to enrich the collection of Chinese curios.”²⁴⁵ In the context of the 1860 campaign, Robert Swinhoe (1836–77), described the “coolie corps” in the military train: “The dress of the

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ *Manchester Times*, May 25, 1861, 6.

²⁴⁵ Keith Stewart Mackenzie, *Narrative of the Second Campaign in China* (London: Richard Bentley, 1842), 98.

Coolie Corps, to an English eye, was somewhat grotesque ... Their pig-tailed heads were surmounted by bamboo caps of a somewhat flattened conical shape ... The officers commanding this grotesque body were mostly drawn from the Royal Marines.”²⁴⁶ Swinhoe had acted as interpreter for the British Army during the campaign and was attached to the staff of Maj. Gen. Sir Robert Napier (1810–90), Commander of the 2nd Division. He was present at the sack of the Summer Palace and recounted the event in his memoir of the campaign.²⁴⁷ (See 93, 112, 114, 115, 212.) Although he had positive things to say about Chinese objects at the Summer Palace and elsewhere, he had the usual prejudices of a British diplomat, including the racist attitudes closely bound with notions of class, as expressed above. He also felt that looting by British troops was ultimately the responsibility of the Chinese government.²⁴⁸

The figure of the Chinese “mandarin” drew on stereotypes of hostile Chinese officials, who tried to keep the British from meeting the emperor. Lord Elgin’s secretary Henry Loch recalled that an official tried to physically block their passage when they attempted to force an interview with a viceroy at Dagu.²⁴⁹ Likewise, when two officials came aboard a British ship during the Second Opium War, Garnet Wolseley sized them up. The civil magistrate “was short and vulgar-looking, without anything whatever pleasing about him. I was informed that he had purchased his rank, a proceeding to which this dynasty has had to resort from want of funds, particularly since our war of 1840, from which time they have been ever pressed for money. The military mandarin was, on the contrary, a tall, gentleman-like fellow, with a quick, intelligent eye, and good countenance, a Mussulman — strange to say.”²⁵⁰ Another show dealt with the capture and death of Allied hostages, which Elgin had cited as his reason for burning the Summer Palace.²⁵¹ This was advertised in the *Glossop Record* later that summer. Under the incongruous title “Chinese Fete,” the palace grounds – inhabited by figures of grotesque monsters and phantoms – were burnt one more time to symbolically avenge the seizure and death of the hostages.²⁵² Celebrations in parks also centered on large structures representing the “Summer Palace,” which were ritually burnt. Likely sources were the British prints of the Hall of Audience noted in Chapter One, which showed a rectangular building with a wraparound colonnade, topped by a sweeping roof covered in glistening tiles. (See 67–71.) The hall was also known as the seat of power in the Yuanming Yuan, making it a suitable focus for victory celebrations.

²⁴⁶ Robert Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China campaign of 1860; containing personal experiences of Chinese character, and of the moral and social condition of the country; together with a description of the interior of Peking* (London: Smith & Elder, 1861), 3.

²⁴⁷ *Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860*, 305–12.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 328–29.

²⁴⁹ Loch, *Personal Narrative*, 59.

²⁵⁰ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China*, 22.

²⁵¹ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War of 1860*, 2: 202, 205, 221–22.

²⁵² *Glossop Record*, August 24, 1861, 2.

Recreating the “Summer Palace” to burn it down again was an overtly political activity, but the erection of ephemeral “Chinese” structures, often combined with firework displays, had begun during the Romantic period, when chinoiserie was the height of fashion. During celebrations marking the end of the War of the Sixth Coalition in 1814, a pagoda was built on a Chinese-style bridge over a canal in St. James’ Park and fireworks were held at the site, at one point causing a fire.²⁵³ (Fig. 2-2) Fireworks in public arenas were also included traditionally in extravagant ephemeral displays for royal celebrations in Europe, many of which are discussed by Suzanne Boorsch in her essay on prints depicting firework displays for the Metropolitan Museum of Art.²⁵⁴ Among many such occasions, a firework display was held on the Thames in 1712 to mark the anniversary of the coronation of Queen Anne (1665–1714; r. 1702–14),²⁵⁵ and in 1717 fireworks were set off on the birthday of King George I (1660–1727; r. 1714–27).²⁵⁶ Firework displays were also used to celebrate military victories, since gunpowder played an essential role in warfare; and possibly because of their earlier use in allegorical dramas documented by Boorsch, who writes, “Early displays, however, were more like stage presentations than sky shows ... There was usually a dramatic conflict, more often than not a dramatic conflict between good and evil—and the forces for good invariably won. The authors of the early classic pyrotechnic manuals assumed that to stage a fireworks display one would need a battle.”²⁵⁷ Fireworks themselves were also naturally associated with China since the technology had originated there and arrived in Europe by the fourteenth century.²⁵⁸ During the reign of George III in 1769, a Mr. Fissori of Turin had given a firework demonstration to the royal family, which included “Oriental Stars, &c. with many other curious Devices, too tedious to mention; among which will be introduced a magnificent Piece representing a Chinese Portico, with a Palm-tree full of Roses, and a Cascade of Water, embellished with a great Variety of Illuminations.”²⁵⁹ So the notion of a fantastic pagoda ablaze in the night was the height of chinoiserie romance, firmly established in the British imagination. However, the change in political circumstances had transformed what had been enjoyed as an exotic celebration into a nationalistic display.

While none of these events involved objects from the Summer Palace, they contributed to the heady atmosphere in which the spoils first circulated by providing an aesthetic experience of victory. These events allowed participants to come together for celebrations of military success and enabled them to enjoy the spectacle as a wholly positive historical event, or entertainment, rather than irreversible

253 Suzanne Boorsch, “Fireworks! Four Centuries of Pyrotechnics in Prints & Drawings,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 58, no. 1 (Summer 2000): 43.

254 *Ibid.*

255 *Newcastle Courant*, April 23, 1712, 3.

256 *Stamford Mercury*, May 23, 1717, 10.

257 Boorsch, “Fireworks!,” 4.

258 Boorsch, “Fireworks!,” 3.

259 *Kentish Gazette*, September 6, 1769, 1.

destruction. The construction of one “Summer Palace” also suggested that it was a single building, rather than a large estate, reinforcing the official narrative, that nothing of great value had been destroyed by the arson. (See 74–75.) The events also enabled people outside the art world to revel in the destruction of the Summer Palace.



2-2. Frederick Calvert, *A View of the Chinese Bridge in St. James's Park as Seen at Midnight on the 1st August: In Celebration of the Glorious Peace of 1814*, 1814, print, © British Library Board, Shelfmark: Maps K.Top.26.7.qq

6. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the reaction to the sacking of the Summer Palace throughout Britain was overwhelmingly positive. Government officials and the public argued that the looting and arson were justified retaliation for the seizure and torture of hostages by Qing imperial troops; and their enjoyment of the historical moment was unclouded by concerns that would have accompanied a prolonged and bloody campaign. Victory was total and the casualty numbers amazingly low. Outside elite circles of government and the art world, citizens attended popular spectacles that capitalized on the spoliation with fireworks and illuminations of colossal panoramas depicting an imagined Summer Palace. These events drew on tropes of Chinese pavilions and their “mandarins,” which were enjoyed as exotic fantasies during the rococo period but hardened into stereotypes of Oriental corruption with increasing hostility between Britain and China. In the patriotic and even jingoistic atmosphere of postwar Britain, these events also

helped to concretize a distant victory in the public mind. Despite this almost wholly uncritical public response to the looting and ruination, British campaign members minimized the damage in their public remarks after the war and cast blame on the French army. However, their narrative was at odds with the accounts of men further down the chain of command, who recalled scenes of wild looting and wanton destruction. Possibly, expedition commanders downplayed the amount of material taken since the looting and immediate dispersal of material to the troops through the onsite auction were outside the bounds of British law and army regulations. Ultimately, Gen. Grant's unorthodox decision to give the spoils directly to expedition members would have a significant impact on Victorian culture, as the following chapters will show. While one might expect the politics of the looting as outlined above would have a negative effect on interpretations of artifacts from the Summer Palace, that was not wholly the case.

Chapter Three

Spoils for Soldiers and Civilians

1. Spoils of War and Their Uses

Armed conflicts typically produce a windfall for the victors, who select and dispose of their spoils in accordance with military policy, economic realities, political imperatives or cultural attitudes. For instance, the question of whether metals, precious or otherwise, are to be melted down or displayed turns on both necessity and politics. Under Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), the Tudor and Stuart regalia were divested of their jewels and melted down for coinage, which simultaneously redistributed royal treasure and destroyed royal emblems.²⁶⁰ As for the Crimean War, Roger Bartlett and Roy Payne have written that the British and French carted home Russian guns, bells and other “relics” from enemy fortifications. Some of these were gifted as trophies to officers and their Sardinian allies; others were distributed throughout Britain and her territories. The remainder of the guns were melted down for casting into monuments and Victoria Cross awards. Throughout this process, the relative value of items as raw material, trophies or military materiel was debated by officers, cabinet ministers and the press.²⁶¹ In other words, looting may be a chaotic activity, but it involves decisions that are of the utmost importance to the participants.

We turn now to objects plundered from the Summer Palace and the functions assigned these by campaign members upon their return home. All of the pieces considered here are found in period sources, such as auction catalogues, newspaper reports, exhibition catalogues, house inventories and guidebooks. Other objects from the site have been identified by contemporary scholars, who have applied their knowledge of imperial manufactures and collections to the subject. The chapter identifies some items taken by campaign members through a review of consignments made at auction houses, loans to exhibitions recorded in catalogues, advertisements, and descriptions of military collections in newspapers. Then there is an inquiry into the individual priorities and choices of campaign members who looted or purchased things at the Summer Palace. To this end, the chapter sifts through some primary sources for evidence of tastes, attention to fashion, and economic incentives. Some campaign members retained their spoils as “trophies,” “relics,” or works of art, until their deaths. Other men sold their plunder through auctions or private sales. Some campaign members consigned pieces for auction; others displayed them at home. They gave imperial textiles to sweethearts for needlework and gowns or donated items to charity

²⁶⁰ “The Regalia,” *Sixpenny Magazine* 11, iss. 56 (February 1866): 481.

²⁶¹ Roger Bartlett and Roy Payne, “Britain’s Crimean War Trophy Guns: The Case of Ludlow and the Marches,” *History* 99, no. 337 (October 2014): 652–69.

bazaars. In a patriotic frame of mind, men presented objects to their regiments for display in the mess, lent them to military exhibitions, or displayed them as trophies in public. All of these activities will be examined here. The collecting, display and connoisseurship of Summer Palace pieces as decorative art will be explored in the last part of this chapter.

2. The Challenge of Identifying Spoils from the Summer Palace

A complete accounting of British spoils from the Summer Palace is hard to obtain. First, period texts attributed to the Summer Palace many objects that could easily have come from other sites where soldiers were quartered or looted. Men stole things from civilian homes while stationed at Beitang, at Zhangjiawan; at various temples while en route to Beijing; and in the suburb of Haitian, between Beijing and the Summer Palace.²⁶² Some troops wintered near Beijing and would have had opportunities to loot temples and houses outside the city.²⁶³ Soldiers also purchased objects in Beijing and in Hong Kong on the way home. James L. Hevia recounts the story in his seminal work on the looting, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China*, where he cites memoirs of campaign members describing the incident and things taken.²⁶⁴ Some objects, uncounted and unpublished, may also remain in private collections or institutional stores. One piece lost in the attic, so to speak, is the rare bronze “Tiger Ying” of the Western Zhou period (ca. 1050–771 BC), which Royal Marines Capt. Harry Lewis Evans (1831–83) took from the Summer Palace with other bronze and cloisonné objects.²⁶⁵ Dealer Alastair Gibson, a consultant in Chinese art for Canterbury Auction Galleries, discovered the rare treasure “in a bungalow in a Kent seaside town,” and Canterbury sold the piece for £410,000 to an anonymous Chinese phone bidder on April 11, 2018, despite protests from China’s State Administration of Cultural Heritage and a threat from the China Association of Auctioneers to boycott the sale. The Tiger Ying is an ancient covered tripod vessel with fantastic tigers forming the spout, handle and knob, and it is covered with a pale green patina. The fitted stand of zitan wood, carved as a trefoil formed of three large *ruyi* heads, is dated by the auction house to the Qing Dynasty.²⁶⁶ Gibson notes that the Tiger Ying is one of seven such vessels known and that five are in museums; but in this case the rare bronze had been acquired by a low-ranking captain of little means. In a letter home, Evans expressed concerns about receiving his

²⁶² Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*, 94, 182; Dunne, *From Calcutta to Peking*, 127.

²⁶³ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War*, 213.

²⁶⁴ James L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 92.

²⁶⁵ Laura Chesters, “Rare Summer Palace Bronze Found in British Seaside Bungalow Returns to China,” *Antiques Trade Gazette*, December 11, 2018, <https://www.antiquetrade gazette.com/news/2018/rare-summer-palace-bronze-found-in-british-seaside-bungalow-returns-to-china/>. Lisa Movius and Anna Brady, “Bronze Looted from Summer Palace Sells for £410,000 Despite Protest from China,” *Art Newspaper*, April 12, 2018, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2018/04/12/bronze-looted-from-summer-palace-sells-for-pound410000-despite-protest-from-china>.

²⁶⁶ Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent, Sale of April 10, 2018, Lot 450.

pay, but confirmed “I succeeded getting bronzes and enamel vases that will, I hope, some day find their way [home].”²⁶⁷ Undated photographs of the Tiger Ying and other plundered objects brought home by Evans show that his family was not wealthy and that he had chosen bronzes, as well as cloisonné vessels. The photograph reproduced here shows a careful arrangement of the artifacts, suggesting that they were family treasures. A pair of *ding* vessels with ornate covers flank the Tiger Ying on a large stand with cabriole legs, all on a side table, which is covered with heavy fringed tablecloth. On the wall behind are brackets with china ornaments and a menorah, an essential part of Jewish tradition and family worship. In the foreground, a *zun* vessel is placed alone on a round table or stool. **(Fig. 3-1)** Evan had obviously selected objects that were sturdy (cloisonné), and had a relatively low market value (bronzes). One indicator of the low value bronzes had was a Christie’s sale on June 12, 1861, where objects “from the Summer Palace,” were consigned by “G. Shaw,” according to a handwritten note in the left margin. Among these were three groups of bronze figurines, which sold for £1.10, £1.15, and £.15. A cloisonné incense burner in the same sale sold for £50.8, a pair of miniature stupas went for 30 gs., and a pair of beakers was knocked down at £24.3.²⁶⁸ Other treasures from the Summer Palace may have passed out of all knowledge due to the circumstances of their removal from the estate and are sitting in attics or basements, for many men knew nothing about the objects they seized.



3-1. Vessels taken by Capt. Harry Lewis Evans from the Summer Palace, undated photograph, measurements unavailable, © Canterbury Auction House

²⁶⁷ Bo Leung, “Bronze relic looted from Summer Palace to be auctioned,” *China Daily*, March 27, 2018, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201803/27/WS5ab9343aa3105cdcf6514653_2.html.

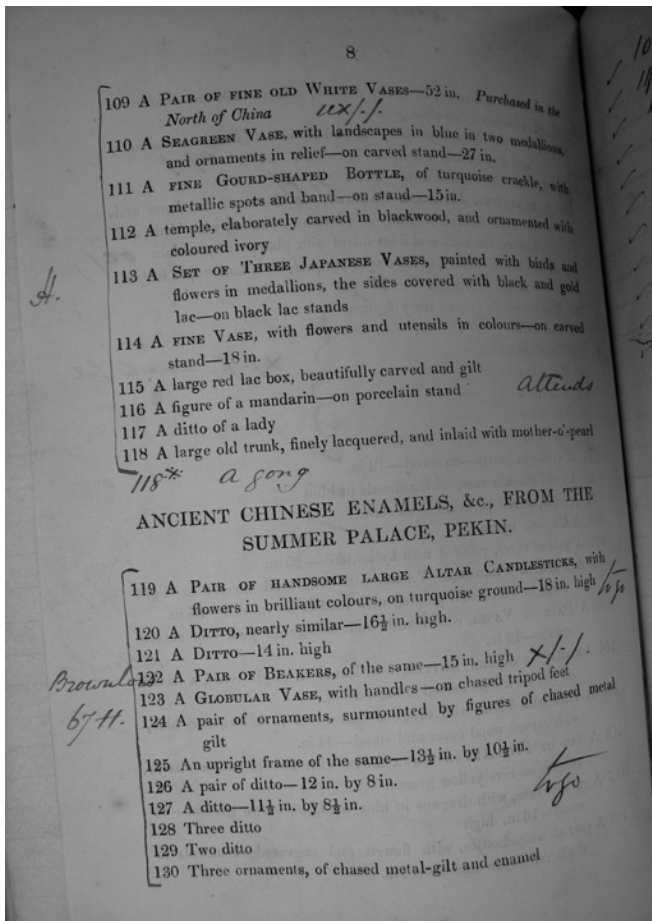
²⁶⁸ Christie’s London, Sale of June 12, 1861, Lots 172–74, 177–79.

An additional problem is that items linked with the “Summer Palace” earned high prices at auction due to their noble origins, so individuals had an incentive to lie about provenance. Five years after the war, a traveller in China recalled how unwitting buyers had been fleeced by a local merchant in the wake of the Summer Palace spoliation:

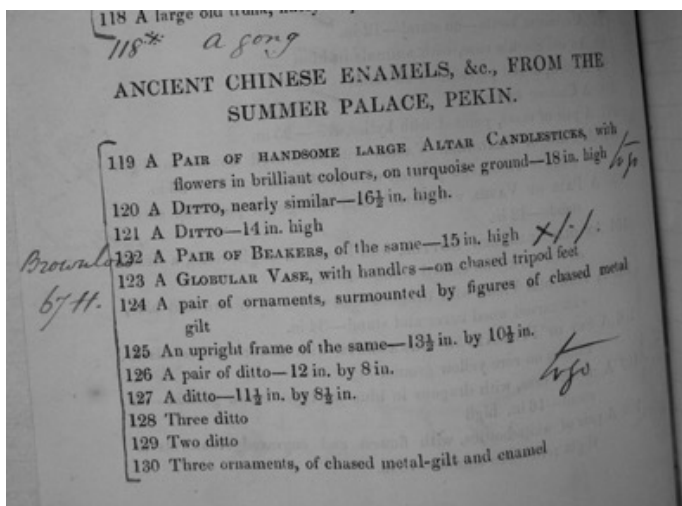
Pun-lun, with a quick eye for business, observing the great run there was on garments represented to be imperial, sent to Canton and privately bought up all the Chinese theatrical dresses that could be procured, which he disposed of at Hongkong at very high prices, as vestments warranted Imperial—clearing in the course of a few days upwards of three thousand dollars by the speculation.²⁶⁹

Finally, nineteenth-century sources like auction catalogues followed different standards for attributing objects and they can be vague. In Christie’s auction catalogues of the period, a line typically appears after a group of objects in a single consignment; however, in some instances a “Summer Palace” group is followed by a printer’s line, after which appears a group of objects that *could* be imperial. Such is the case in two catalogue pages reproduced here. **(Fig. 3-2)** After a group of articles “from the Summer Palace,” a line appears, followed by items that could be export silks, imperial items, other loot from China, or purchases from China; such as, “a yellow silk bedcover, worked,” and “A Mandarin dress; and a piece of blue and yellow silk.” At other times, margin notes in Christie’s catalogues show that a group of “Summer Palace” lots that appears to be a single consignment actually comes from many different sources. This is the case in the pages from a sale catalogue of July 21, 1862, where three names appear with brackets around groups of objects, all said to be “Ancient Chinese Enamels, &c. from the Summer Palace, Pekin.” **(Fig. 3-3)**

²⁶⁹ *Maidstone Telegraph*, January 21, 1865, 4.



3-2. Two pages from a catalogue for a Christie's sale of May 15, 1862, H. 27 cm (page), author photograph, Christie's Archives



3-3. Two pages from a catalogue for a Christie's sale of July 21, 1862, H. 27 cm (page), author photograph, Christie's Archives

3. The Spoliation of the Summer Palace

The general story of the Summer Palace spoliation has been covered in a number of publications and so does not bear repeating here, as the subject of this dissertation is the impact of this event on Victorian culture, rather than the sacking.²⁷⁰ The author has also published a brief account of the looting and an analysis of spoils taken.²⁷¹ For the purposes of this study, it will be noted here only that seizing prize on a battlefield typically involves a limited range of choices, from personal effects of the fallen to weapons, armor, flags and other pieces of military materiel; but the looting of the Summer Palace was a fundamentally different situation. The scene was an imperial estate to which the looters had varying amounts of access from October 7th through the signing of the treaty on October 24th.²⁷² Individual choices were shaped partly by the public awareness and aesthetics discussed in Chapter One, as well as personal tastes, desire for profit, portability, durability, and access. Although an atmosphere of chaos prevailed, men selected and acquired their loot in roughly three ways: seizing things during the plunder, exchanging money or objects for goods looted by other men, or bidding for items at the military auction onsite. All of these activities are documented in eyewitness accounts. During the sacking, choices made by soldiers were based largely on financial calculations. Robert Swinhoe wrote: “No one just then cared for gazing tranquilly at works of art; each one was bent on acquiring what was most valuable.”²⁷³ Maj.-Gen. George Allgood recalled the wild looting in his memoir:

The Palace of Yuen-ming-yuen was thoroughly gutted on the few following days. Everything of value that could be carried off, consisting of gold, silver, clocks, watches, enamels, porcelain, jade stone, silks and embroidery, with numerous other articles of vertu, were removed by the Allies.²⁷⁴

These looters knew that European “articles of vertu” were understood in the British art world and would find a ready market back home; so they sought bijouterie and other luxury items. Swinhoe recalled that silk was also in great demand:

The silkhouses on the right were burst open, and dozens rushed in over piles of valuable rolls of silk and embroidered dresses. These were thrown out in armfuls. There were piles on piles of them; and though plunderers were conveying them away by cartloads, still the ground was strewn with them, and there was yet more in the houses.”²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ James L. Hevia, “Beijing 1860: Loot, Prize, and a Solemn Act of Retribution,” in *English Lessons*; Erik Ringmar, “Liberal Barbarism and the Oriental Sublime: The European Destruction of the Emperor’s Summer Palace,” *Millennium* 34 no. 3 (August 2006): 917–33; Ines Eben v. Racknitz, *Die Plunderung des Yuanming Yuan: Imperiale Beutenahme im Britisch-Französischen Chinafeldzug von 1860* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013), 181–238; Roote, *Destruction of Paradise*. Multiple eyewitness accounts are given; Guo, *China’s Lost Imperial Garden*, 31–33; Tythacott, “The Yuanmingyuan and its Objects,” in *Collecting and Displaying*, 9–12.

²⁷¹ Hill, “Collecting on Campaign,” 242–48.

²⁷² China Convention: Peace, Indemnity, Cession of Cowloon, U.K.-China, October 24, 1860, FO 93/23/6, National Archives, Kew.

²⁷³ Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860*, 306.

²⁷⁴ Allgood, *China War*, 85.

²⁷⁵ Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860*, 306–7.

As for soldiers purchasing items from each other, John Hart Dunne wrote in his memoir that after getting lost on the way to the Summer Palace, he “took to buying pearls in the French camp, and a few jade-stone trifles.”²⁷⁶ Like others, Dunne wanted jewels, but valued jades less, as “trifles.” Capt. Roderick Dew of the Royal Navy told reporters in 1867 that he had purchased silks from a British soldier, who had bought them from an Indian soldier. (See 133–34.) Gen. Grant, who as commander of the forces would not have engaged directly in the looting, attended the auction:

A small, yellow Chinese tea-cup realised £22. I bought several beautiful jade-stones, and also a necklace of the finest green jade, with rubies, which, by a label attached to it, we ascertained had been presented to the Emperor by a famous Tartar chief. Nobody seemed to take a fancy to the ornament, and I paid for it only fifty dollars. I also bought a fine carving of lapis lazuli.²⁷⁷

Possibly due to his leadership position, Grant here suggests that he purchased items typically considered curiosities (a stone carving), and trophies (tribute presented to the emperor), rather than splendid enamels or porcelains, like the yellow cup. Already during the auction, there was an interest in yellow-glazed ceramics and this would only grow after the war. (See 362.) The army chaplain Rev. McGhee gave his own perspective on prevailing tastes at the sale for jade, cloisonné and silk; as well as the careful attention prize agents paid to the distribution of the latter: “The rolls of silk which had been taken from the store-rooms were assorted in lots, an imperial yellow or a silk of more than ordinary value was placed in each, and I know I paid twenty pounds for one lot because there was a piece of white crape in it.”²⁷⁸ All of this was in keeping with British tastes prior to the war, (See 35–36.) and the British market after the war, which favored cloisonné and silks initially and only gradually warmed to jade.

4. Spoils as Commodities

These financial interests played out in consignments of Chinese objects made by campaign members at Christie’s in the years after the war. Some were attributed to the imperial estate; but consignment entries suggest that they may have come from that place. “L. Oliphant” brought in “Four packages (from Shanghai),” on June 28, 1861 and these were sold on July 11th.²⁷⁹ This was Laurence Oliphant, private secretary to Lord Elgin. (See 232.) “Major Brooke” consigned a “Chinese Dress” on July 28th, which was sold November 21st. This was Henry Francis Brooke, Robert Napier’s secretary, who looted gold at the Summer Palace.²⁸⁰ On May 10, 1864, “The Excrs. of the late Earl of Elgin,” brought in “An embroidered Chinese Curtain.” This was sold with other Elgin pieces on May 18th. “Captain Delacombe 34 Wood

²⁷⁶ Dunne, *From Calcutta to Peking*, 129.

²⁷⁷ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War of 1860*, 194.

²⁷⁸ McGhee, *How We Got to Peking*, 294.

²⁷⁹ Christie’s consignment registers, vol. 8, 744H, Christie’s Archive, London.

²⁸⁰ Knollys, *Life of General Sir Hope Grant*, 2: 176–77.

Street Woolwich,” consigned a “Beaker of Chinese Enamel from the Summer Palace.” Even the chaplain to the forces, R. J. L. M’Ghee, dropped off “1 Jade Basin” on behalf of one “R. James.” On June 22, 1864, “Maj. Gen. Spence, Lime Lodge, Egham, Surrey. Chinese curiosities. 1 carving in ivory,” was entered. This was Frederick Spence, who had commanded the 31st Regiment in China.²⁸¹

Consignments attributed to the Summer Palace at Christie’s and Phillips comprised at least 1295 lots by 1900: 1023 at Christie’s and 47 at Phillips, by the author’s count.²⁸² Some of these lots included more than one object. In one case, Lot 99 in a Phillips sale of July 18, 1861 was “A box containing a quantity of beautiful carvings, in ivory, representing figures, birds, animals, insects and flowers, forming the decorations of a cabinet or screen about 75 pieces.”²⁸³ Their consignments are listed, not only in the auction catalogues, but in Christie’s consignment registers. These books show how men bundled and sold their objects, and how they were received by the auction house. Some entries support or contradict written recollections of the plunder in other sources. For this reason, they are important evidence of a different sort than auction catalogue entries. A comparison of these records with other texts of the period also shows that some men sold only a portion of their spoils or sold pieces to dealers, who then consigned them. A few entries will suffice to show the importance of this data for understanding the repurposing of spoils in Britain.

A Case Study in Commodification: The Spoils of John Hart Dunne

It is difficult to paint pictures of looting by individuals at the estate since most published accounts of the incident are quite general. But the experiences of Capt. John Hart Dunne during the spoliation and after the war are an exception, due to the existence of texts recording his movements at the estate, his acquisitions and his consignment of goods at Christie’s. Famed for presenting Queen Victoria with the Pekinese dog known as “Looty,”²⁸⁴ Dunne consigned pieces at Christie’s on April 23, 1861. Comparison of the consignment registers and catalogue entries with Dunne’s published diary of the campaign, *From Calcutta to Peking*, shows how different objects were valued first by soldiers in China and then art

²⁸¹ “Surrey Infantry Museum Medals: The Spences of the Thirty First Regiment,” The Queen’s Royal Surrey Regimental Association website, https://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/new_museum/Medals/spence_medals.shtml.

²⁸² The 1023 lots consigned at Christie’s London are: Sales of April 26, 1861, Lots 114–20; May 27, 1861, Lots 181–87; June 6, 1861, Lots 122–69; June 12, 1861, 167–96; July 5, 1861, Lots 102–53; May 15, 1862, Lots 119–45; May 22, 1862, Lots 1–56; May 30, 1862, Lots 174–297; June 30, 1862, Lots 138–41; July 21, 1862, Lots 1–199; April 1, 1863, Lots 157–83; June 11, 1863, Lots 208–10; July 1, 1863, Lots 183–86; July 20, 1863, Lots 1–178, 290–97, A–E (handwritten additions); July 6, 1864, Lots 185–91; July 14, 1864, Lots 34, 69–77, 134; July 25, 1864, Lots 1–158; June 28, 1866, Lots 89–90; March 20, 1865, Lots 131–32; June 28, 1866, Lots 89–90; January 25, 1894, Lots 1–22. [See “General Gordon’s Objects of Art. To Be Brought To The Hammer,” January 22, 1894, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7.] The 47 lots consigned at Phillips London are as follows: Sales of April 18, 1861, Lots 41–61; July 11, 1861, Lots 87–99; December 12, 1861, Lots 51, 54, 61.

²⁸³ Phillips London, Sale of July 18, 1861.

²⁸⁴ See “Looty, A Small Chinese Dog Belonging to Her Majesty,” *Illustrated London News*, June 15, 1861, 13. Includes an account and engraving of the dog. See also Hevia, *English Lessons*, 86–87.

specialists in Britain. The texts are of particular interest because they are linked with one of the earliest sales of Summer Palace material, which took place at Christie's auction house on April 26, 1861. Dunne wrote in his diary that he became lost while making his way toward the Summer Palace on October 7, 1860 to plunder and that he arrived so late that he "took to buying pearls in the French camp, and a few jade-stone trifles," and that in the French camp, "the men had thrown rolls of silk on the ground, and, for a couple of dollars, I got as many as I could carry."²⁸⁵ He regretted that he was "green about the business" of looting and says that many of his things were stolen by a "Chinaman" whom he had "intrusted" to carry his load. Indeed, the random character of the Christie's entries reflects his confusion. Determined to get some loot, he returned with a friend to the palaces for more silk, but "we had to content ourselves with about three hundred pieces of embroidered silk, each about the size of a cushion, and beautifully worked, which have since sold for about seventy pounds."²⁸⁶ He then accompanied Gen. Sir John Michel to the Yihe Yuan (Cheerful Harmony Garden), west of the Yuanming Yuan, on October 26th, two days after the treaty signing. They climbed the Wanshou Shan (Hill of Ten Thousand Ages), to enjoy the view, which he described as "just like the old familiar blue willow-pattern delf": evidence that men who looted the Summer Palace had a taste for the Chinese things and chinoiserie noted in Chapter One. "Delf" was English Delft: earthenware with a white tin-oxide glaze and blue decoration imitating Chinese imports,²⁸⁷ and the "willow pattern" was a popular chinoiserie ceramic ware.²⁸⁸ (See 317–18.) Then he returned to the Yuanming Yuan complex for more looting in some "enameled vase rooms," which had escaped the fire:

Tying my pocket-handkerchief and a piece of silk together, I made a rope; at one end fastened an old enameled vase, and at the other a large tray of the same description. After some difficulty, found the head and tail of a large bronze enameled monster, something like a dog, and finding that I could lift it, slung the other things across my saddle, filled my saddle-bags with queer small things, and with my beast in my arms, made my way with difficulty out of the ruins.²⁸⁹

This looting was entirely outside the bounds of British Army regulations, which stated that "The rewards to which the troops are entitled on seizures," were to be paid "as soon as the legality of the seizure has been ascertained," and divided according to a specific pay scale.²⁹⁰ However, it earned Dunne one of his most valuable treasures. Dunne consigned some of his loot on April 23, 1861. The entry reads:

²⁸⁵ Dunne, *From Calcutta to Peking*, 127–51.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 132–33.

²⁸⁷ Julia Poole, *English Pottery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 9, 46,

²⁸⁸ Goodby and Blakey, *101 Ceramic Highlights*, 78.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁹⁰ *The Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Army, Adjutant-General's Office, Horse Guards, First of December 1859* (London: William H. Allen, 1859), 291–92.

669G. Captain Dunne.

Junior United Service Club
Ap 26 Enamel animal {from the palace of
" bowl. {Yuen Ming Yuen}
2 carved panels. carved with the
Imperial arms taken from the Summer Palace at Peking

Ap 23 - a piece of silk
2 jade bowls
2 silver cups.²⁹¹

The objects appear in the catalogue for a sale of April 26, 1861. The entries are transcribed below, along with the winning bids, buyers and marginalia, which are given in italics:

The following Seven Lots were taken from the Summer Palace at Peking.

Captain Dunne

- 114 A VERY CURIOUS GROTESQUE ANIMAL, of ancient Chinese enamel
24.10 Hewett
- 115 A BEAUTIFUL CIRCULAR INCENSE BURNER, of the same on three
feet, chased with lions' masks
9
- 116 A PAIR OF WOODEN PANELS, carved with dragons and ornaments in high
relief
6
- 117 A roll of imperial yellow satin
worn by the imperial family 6.6
- 118 A beautifully carved jade-stone bowl & cover
36.15 Hugh [illegible]
- 119 A vase of the same
6.15
- 120 A pair of ancient cups, with inscriptions
12.10 Ripp

These entries provide examples of early practices in the cataloguing of Chinese imperial wares. First, when Dunne consigned his collection, he attributed different objects to the "Yuen-Ming-Yuen," and the "Summer Palace at Peking." This is unusual, but it is explained by his published account of the looting, in which he recalled visiting different locations. Most likely, Christie's felt that the distinction was confusing and attributed everything to "the Summer Palace at Peking," which was better known to the public. The "enamel animal" was sold as "A VERY CURIOUS GROTESQUE ANIMAL, of ancient

²⁹¹ Christie's consignment registers, vol. 8, entries G.1-1000, H.1-928, 669G.

Chinese enamel.” The words “curious” and “grotesque” were typically used to describe intricate Chinese ornament at the time. Garnet Wolseley, for instance, described a terrace he saw in China as “richly carved with grotesque figures and elaborate tracery.”²⁹² The word “ancient” was applied without explanation to many cloisonné pieces after the war.²⁹³ The animal is likely a *qilin*, a mythical horned beast; for a number of cloisonné *qilin* figures were among the spoils and appeared multiple times in catalogues for Christie’s Summer Palace sales, referred to by the term “kylin.”²⁹⁴ A well-known *qilin* figure was in the Musée Chinois,²⁹⁵ but it was stolen in 2015.²⁹⁶ This was of a pair with another *qilin* formerly in the Alfred Morrison collection.²⁹⁷ The British at this time typically knew figures of Buddhist lions well as “fo dogs.” The Royal Collection holds white *dehua* figures of “fo dogs” displayed at Brighton Pavilion by George IV, for example.²⁹⁸ So Dunne probably would have identified the beast by this term if it had been of that type. The auction house was careful to note that the roll of yellow silk would have been for the exclusive use of the emperor’s family. Indeed, as John E. Vollmer writes in *Ruling from the Dragon Throne*, the imperial family wore a range of yellow silks according to their respective ranks.²⁹⁹ The panels are said to be carved with “arms” in the consignment register, but with “dragons and ornaments” in the catalogue. This difference may be explained by the fact that the British understood the five-clawed dragon to be the emperor’s sign, so the individual receiving the consignments noted it down as “arms.” Some British coats of arms featured dragons, including that of the City of London, which shows two dragons flanking a shield with the cross of St. George.³⁰⁰ Dunne in his confusion had grabbed two items that could easily be identified as imperial. The auction results reflect a new and unsettled market. None of the men who later became major “Summer Palace” buyers bought anything; although Hewett, a well-established merchant of Chinese export wares, bought lots 114 through 117,³⁰¹ while someone possibly named “Hugh” [the name is illegible], made the largest bid of £36.15 for the jade bowl.³⁰²

As the market developed, cloisonné generally earned the highest bids, although large *yangcai* porcelains earned comparable prices. For example, on July 5, 1861, at Christie’s appeared:

²⁹² Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*, 41.

²⁹³ Christie’s London, Sales of June 6, 1861, Lot 122; June 21, 1861, Lot 178; July 5, 1861, Lots 103, 121, 125, 127, 130, 131.

²⁹⁴ Christie’s London, Sales of May 27, 1861, Lot 184; June 6, 1861, Lot 158; June 12, 1861, Lots 170, 177; May 15, 1862, Lot 145; May 22, 1862, Lots 3, 150.

²⁹⁵ Samoyault-Verlet, *Le Musée chinois de l’impératrice Eugénie*, 30.

²⁹⁶ “Chinese Art Stolen from France’s Fontainebleau Palace,” BBC News website, March 2, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31693944>.

²⁹⁷ Christie’s London, Sale of May 31, 1965, Lot 132.

²⁹⁸ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 58864.

²⁹⁹ Vollmer, *Ruling from the Dragon Throne*, 81, 84, 85, 89. The *minghuang* (brilliant yellow) was reserved for the garments of the emperor and his consort.

³⁰⁰ New York Public Library Digital Collections, image ID 461925, Shelfmark, W62-114, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-a7b9-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>; BM, mus. no. C.2.634-643.

³⁰¹ Christie’s London, Sale of April 26, 1861, Lots 114–17.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, Lot 118.

152 THE EMPEROR OF CHINA'S GREAT SEAL OF STATE, formed of a splendid large block of pale-green jade, deeply engraved with characters; the handle formed as a monster, and small characters engraved round the sides. A highly interesting and beautiful work of art.

This sold for £16.5.³⁰³ At the same sale were two rare imperial jade books. One was catalogued as:

136 SEVEN OBLONG SLABS OF GREEN JADE, beautifully engraved with the imperial dragon and characters, part of the imperial archives—in a case engraved with dragons and inscriptions. Very fine and rare.

This sold for £5.5.³⁰⁴ The cloisonné pieces earned much higher prices, including:

125 A MAGNIFICENT INCENSE BURNER, of ancient Chinese enamel, of very large size, the cover pierced and elaborately chased in metal gilt, with lions in high relief, supported on the large metal gilt figures—on carved wood stand.

This item earned £33.12.³⁰⁵ Only later did collectors like Arthur Wells and Heber R. Bishop begin collecting jades seriously. Wells bequeathed many jades, some linked with the Summer Palace, to the Victoria and Albert Museum.³⁰⁶ The monumental two-volume catalogue of the Bishop collection was published in a limited edition of 100 copies in 1906.³⁰⁷

5. Spoils as Trophies

Though campaign members generally thought of their spoils in transactional terms, some plundered objects had aesthetic and symbolic values for them. A number were displayed in Britain as trophies, a category of object with a long and difficult history. As James L. Hevia writes:

If there was a tendency to collapse all Summer Palace loot into the category of curiosities and treat it as exotica, there was also a counter impulse, one that differentiated and distinguished certain items from the totality of the plundered horde. These items were prefaced with the definite article “the,” as in “the Throne of the Emperor of China,” “the Cap of the Emperor of China,” and so on. Apparently, objects which were designated as having a physical link to the body of the emperor were not strictly reducible to the curious.³⁰⁸

A trophy has a narrative function; so its value as an object goes beyond immediate aesthetic or material qualities, although these factor in their designation as trophies and cannot be discounted. The capture confers on an object its value as a trophy, so it has no true exchange value in this mode. A trophy is validated by a narrative of capture, which lives outside the object and overlays its function prior to

³⁰³ Christie's London, Sale of July 5, 1861, Lot 152.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., Lot 136.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., Lot 125.

³⁰⁶ Chinese jades in the Wells Bequest include, u.a., V&A, acc. nos. 1652-1882; 1531A-1882 1538-1882; 1643-1882; 1528-1882; 1574 to B-1882; 1557 to B-1882; 1623&A-1882.

³⁰⁷ George Frederick Kunz et al., *The Bishop Collection: Investigations and Studies in Jade*, 2 vols. (New York: De Vinne Press, 1906).

³⁰⁸ Hevia, “Loot's Fate,” 321.

capture; so its status as a trophy is not inherent, while its aesthetic and economic values are distinct from the primary motive for taking or creating a trophy, which is political.

Many nineteenth-century references to Summer Palace material call individual objects taken by British campaign members “trophies,” and some artworks in museums, sale rooms and private collections have plaques designating them as such. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “trophy” as “A thing taken in war (as a weapon, flag, captive, body part, possession, etc.), or in hunting, exploration, etc., esp. one kept or displayed as a memorial,” and “Anything serving as a token or evidence of victory, courage, skill, success, social status, etc.; a monument, a memorial; a memento,” which derives from the Latin “tropæum”:

A structure erected (originally on the field of battle or the nearest land to a sea battle, and later in any public place) as a memorial of a victory in war, consisting of arms or other spoils taken from the enemy, hung upon a tree, pillar, etc., and dedicated to some divinity.³⁰⁹

Both ancient and contemporary definitions suggest that display of a captured object makes it a trophy. A British dictionary published in 1861 defined “trophy” as a “monument of victory; spoil of war.”³¹⁰ British newspapers of the period applied “trophy” to objects won in battle and at sporting events, as well as hunting trophies. Press coverage of a regimental dinner for the 78th Highlanders conveys the aesthetics of Victorian trophy display:

A number of deer skins ... stags’ and rams’ heads ... These, along with selections of ancient Scottish armour and weapons from the Castle and elsewhere, were formed into a gigantic Highland trophy, draped with folds of the Mackenzie tartan ... The centre and sides of the trophy were adorned with circular radii of burnished small arms, which were set upon them by various shaped gas devices placed in front of them ... The centre of the southern wall was graced by a correspondent Oriental trophy, the summit of which was topped with a blazing star (corresponding to the crown at the opposite end), supported by the initials “V.” and “A.” ... The general appearance of the Exchange, when garnished with its military and hunting trophies lighted up by almost innumerable decorative gaseliers ... was that of some vast baronial hall of the olden time.³¹¹

Here military trophies from Asia and European hunting trophies lent splendor to a gaslit banquet, over which Victoria and Albert symbolically presided. In several cases cited below, trophies of hunting and military conquest are thus combined.

Within the context of war, a trophy was anything picked up after a successful engagement as evidence of victory. During the Opium Wars, the British cut off the long braid of the Manchu *queue* on

³⁰⁹ “trophy, n.” OED Online. March 2022. Oxford University Press, accessed April 30, 2022,

<https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.lib.gla.aca.uk/view/Entry/206698?rskey=srHwqx&result=1#eid>.

³¹⁰ Hyde Clarke, *A New and Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language: As Spoken and Written* (London: John Weale, 1861), 413.

³¹¹ “The Edinburgh Banquet to the 78th Highlanders,” *Stonehaven Journal*, May 3, 1860, 4.

prisoners to wear as trophies. William Hutcheon Hall, RN (1797–1878), captain of the *Nemesis*, remembered the rollicking scene on board after a battle near Guangzhou:

exhibiting their trophies with evident pride, some rigged out in every variety of Chinese dress, from mandarins downwards; some with Chinese caps, and others with Chinese tails, with which a whole boat's crew were decorated. It appears that, when they took prisoners, they merely cut off their tails (a mark of deep disgrace to the Chinaman) and let them go about their business.³¹²

This gruesome practice, which reduced the prisoners to animals with “tails,” was not fatal; nevertheless, the British believed a Chinese man without a *queue* under the Qing government would be subject to severe punishment as a traitor or rebel and made this a subject of humor in popular culture. In 1861, a bazaar in the county of Bedford featured “a case of ribbons from Coventry, of beautiful patterns, one being somewhat humorous representing a Jack Tar in the act of cutting off a John Chinaman's tail.”³¹³ In light of this, the display at the 1862 London international exhibition of the “Skull of Confucius,” a sacred Tibetan Buddhist vessel comprising a skull mounted in gold, linked then with the Summer Palace, could arguably be seen as a trophy of human remains.³¹⁴ (See 29–30, 215.) The sacred cup was set among trophies from the Summer Palace and drew large crowds, who, thrilled over Britain's recent victory, indulged in fantasies of Oriental barbarity and listened to quack lectures on its “limited circumference.”³¹⁵

The Problem of Trophies “from the Summer Palace”

Trophies from the Summer Palace pose special challenges of interpretation because they did not come from a battle site, but instead an imperial estate. One instance of such difficulties is a pair of bronze vases sold at auction in 2007. At that time, Sotheby's Hong Kong held a sale titled “Yuanming Yuan: The Garden of Absolute Clarity,” which featured a massive pair of imperial “Dragon and Phoenix” bronze vases, mark and period of Qianlong.³¹⁶ They had come from an anonymous American collector and their provenance was given only as: “Removed from the Yuanming Yuan, Beijing, 1860,” followed by two sales at Sotheby's, Hong Kong, in April, 1997, and April, 2006. The vases are square in section, with bands of *ruyi* heads, lotus lappets and key fret. One bears a six-character Qianlong mark in relief. Sotheby's suggested they were made for a European-style palace at the estate on the occasion of a royal wedding, due to the inclusion of dragon and phoenix, representing the emperor and empress, among the

³¹² W. D. Bernard, *Narrative of the Voyages and Services of the Nemesis, from 1840 to 1843; and of the Combined Naval and Military Operations in China; Comprising a Complete Account of the Colony of Hong Kong, and Remarks on the Character and Habits of the Chinese, from Notes of Commander W. H. Hall, R.N., with Personal Observations* (London: Henry Colburn, 1844), 2:11–12.

³¹³ “Grand Industrial Exhibition & Bazaar,” *Hertfordshire Express and General Advertiser*, July 6, 1861, 3.

³¹⁴ *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 3:43; Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 3:291.

³¹⁵ *London Daily News*, August 2, 1862, 5.

³¹⁶ Sotheby's Hong Kong, Sale of October 9, 2007, Lot 1322; Sotheby's, *Yuanmingyuan: The Garden of Absolute Clarity* (Hong Kong: Sotheby's, 2007), 30. See lot notes.

auspicious cloud motifs and European-style scrollwork. An engraved inscription on at least one vase reads: “CAPTURE OF CHINESE PALACE, PEKIN, 1860.”

The vessels raise various questions. Can a pair of marriage vases actually serve as trophies? How are we to understand this inscription marking the “capture”? Did an officer buy the vases at the auction or simply take them from the estate, later inscribing them to set upon his mantelpiece or gift to a fellow officer? Why are no names inscribed? Were the vases inscribed at a later date by an owner who had no personal connection with the plunder, but wanted to record their provenance? Can we be certain that the vases are from the estate? All of these questions are also posed with the understanding that bronzes had little market value in the 1860s. For example, at a Christie’s sale of June 12, 1861, three lots comprising small groups of bronze figures attributed to the Summer Palace sold for £1.1, £1.15 and £.15, respectively. Prices for porcelain lots of comparable size and quality ranged from £2.7 to £10. A cloisonné incense burner sold for £50.8.³¹⁷ Campaign members and their families often sold valuable items while keeping less costly pieces for display as mementoes or trophies. The pair would have made an impressive and manly display; but their status as trophies is uncertain.

A “Trophy” for the Oxford City Rifle Corps

Another pair of objects designated as trophies through an inscription has a background story that suggests they were not in fact trophies. In June 1861, the Duchess of Marlborough (1822–99) presented to the Oxford City Rifle Corps a complete set of musical instruments on behalf of the ladies of Oxford. Among them was a pair of cymbals “from China’s Summer Palace at Peking, presented by Captain the Hon. S. Annesley, and four beautiful little flags worked by Mrs. and Miss Grant.”³¹⁸ The Oxford City Rifle Cadet Corps had been established in February of 1861 as a part of a national effort to thwart any invasion by the French.³¹⁹ The donor was the Hon. Algernon Sydney Arthur Annesley (1829–1908), who had served in the 16th Lancers, but left the army after he attained the rank of lieutenant. In 1858, Annesley was aide-de-camp to the Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands. When his father died in 1864, he became the 10th Viscount Valentia and inherited the estate of Bletchington Park. He was also a Justice of the Peace for Middlesex and London. He died on September 6, 1908 at Barten Grove, Hungerford.³²⁰ In 1854, he had become a captain in the Oxfordshire Militia (4th Militia Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry) and

³¹⁷ Christie’s London, Sale of June 12, 1861, Lots 172–74 (bronzes), Lots 183–91 (porcelains).

³¹⁸ *Morning Post*, June 11, 1861, 6.

³¹⁹ Giles Hudson, “Shots of Shots: Photographs of the Oxford Volunteer Rifle Corps,” *Matters Photographical*, December 1, 2012, <https://mattersphotographical.wordpress.com/2012/12/01/shots-of-shots-photographs-of-the-oxford-volunteer-rifle-corps/>.

³²⁰ *Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette*, January 2, 1864, 5; *London Evening Standard*, October 12, 1864, 7; *Berkshire Chronicle*, September 12, 1908, 16.

steadily made his way up to the rank of colonel.³²¹ In 1860, he served as private secretary to Lord Rosmead, governor of Hong Kong. Most likely, he obtained the cymbals while in this position.



3-4. Cymbals attributed to the Summer Palace, before 1861, brass, measurements unavailable,

© Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

The cymbals are now in the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, formerly the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Museum, which was founded at the Cowley barracks in 1925.³²²

(Fig. 3-4) Retired soldier Campbell Macknight of Canberra recalled seeing the cymbals on display at the barracks in a communication with the author:

I was, I claim, the most junior member of Her Britannic Majesty's armed forces as a bandsman in the Territorial Army section of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry in 1965. The base was somewhere on the outskirts of Oxford. Each fortnight I would duly line up to be paid — the object of the exercise — beside a glass case containing, among other trophies, a pair of cymbals, “a trophy from the Summer Palace, Peking.”³²³

Photographs of the cymbals provided by curator Peggy Ainsworth at the museum show this inscription:

A TROPHY
AD 1860
FROM THE SUMMER PALACE OF THE EMPEROR OF CHINA
and presented in (June 1861)
TO THE SECOND OXFORD RIFLE VOLUNTEER CORPS
by the honourable Algernon Sydney Arthur Annesley
of Bletchington Park

³²¹ *Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette*, March 7, 1868, 8; *Reading Mercury*, May 25, 1872, 4; *Reading Mercury*, October 24, 1874, 4.

³²² Campbell Macknight, email message to author, August 24, 2017.

³²³ *Ibid.*

The inscription confirms that the cymbals were presented as a trophy, even though they had not been taken on a battlefield and there is no evidence that they are imperial. Indeed, the gift pays homage as much to Bletchington Park as to victory in China.

The presence of the cymbals in England may have more to do with the practice soldiers made of taking musical instruments like gongs and bells during the Opium Wars. Capt. Arthur Cunynghame (1812–84), recalled the theft of a gong from a temple during the First Opium War in his memoir.³²⁴ An 1861 *Illustrated London News* engraving of French spoils displayed in the Tuileries depicts a bell taken by the French army in 1860.³²⁵ In 1861, the “valuable bell from one of the joss-houses,” was marched into Chatham garrison with Gordon’s “throne” from the Summer Palace. The bell is in the Royal Engineers Museum and it is visible in the photograph of Gen. Gordon’s “throne.” (See 118.) In 1865, Christie’s sold “A FINE BELL OF GOLD BRONZE, the surface covered with ornaments in high relief, a monster forming the handle. From the Summer Palace.”³²⁶ These were a type of ancient ritual bell called *bo zhong*. These were copied for the Qing court in gilt bronze and Yu Huichun has written that such bells were kept at the Yuanming Yuan.³²⁷ The British and other Europeans also depicted Chinese figures with cymbals and gongs, as well as temples hung with bells, on porcelains and other object types during the rococo period.³²⁸ One specimen is a soft-paste porcelain figure group of Chinese musicians produced by the Chelsea Porcelain Manufactory in the mid-eighteenth century.³²⁹ Such designs were partly drawn from Chinese export art, which featured images of Chinese people engaged in many cultural activities, like music-making. One specimen shows a Chinese woman about to strike a pair of cymbals.³³⁰ **(Fig. 3-5)** Against this background, it is possible that a soldier took the cymbals for a lark and that they were transformed into a trophy through the inscriptions.

³²⁴ Arthur Cunynghame, *An Aide-de-Camp’s Recollections of Service in China, a Residence in Hong-Kong, and Visits to Other Islands in the Chinese Seas* (London: Saunders & Otley, 1844), 204.

³²⁵ Hevia, “Loot’s Fate,” 328.

³²⁶ Christie’s London, Sale of March 20, 1865, Lot 131.

³²⁷ Yu Huichun, “Qianlong’s Divine Treasures: The Bells in Rhyming-the-Old Hall,” *Asia Major* 22, no. 2 (2009): 135.

³²⁸ Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, 51, 60, 63, 79, 99, 122.

³²⁹ MMA, acc. no. 64.101.474.

³³⁰ MMA, acc. no. 1990.289.11.



3-5. Chinese export painting of a musician playing *bo*, Qing Dynasty, late 18th century, watercolor on paper, H. 43.2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Trophies Linked with the Xianfeng Emperor

The most important trophies from the Summer Palace were items connected with the Xianfeng emperor. These were crucial evidence of victory, since he refused to meet the Allies throughout the war. Frustration with his understandable intransigence stemmed partly from longstanding grievances over China's refusal to import British goods, noted in the introduction, (See 174.) and fascination with the enigmatic figure of the Chinese emperor, expressed most famously in the poem "Kubla Khan" (1816) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834):

And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.³³¹

The stereotype of the Oriental despot is also seen in British commentaries on diplomacy and war with China, including a newspaper report in 1860 that the Xianfeng emperor had offered a bounty for British

³³¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan," Poetry Foundation, 1816, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43991/kubla-khan>.

and French heads before fleeing the Summer Palace.³³² Within the British Army, vexation with the emperor turned to anger as his officials repeatedly refused the Earl of Elgin an imperial audience or a signature on the British trade treaty.³³³ Then the Qing army took Allied hostages on September 17th and the invaders were outraged. By their own accounts, when they found the hostages' horses at the Summer Palace during the plunder, they concluded that the emperor had presided over their torture and that he was a despot as they had believed.³³⁴ Their anger was joined by amusement and disgust when they learned that Xianfeng had fled his luxurious estate. When the British Army entered the Summer Palace they found memorials written by Qing court officials to the emperor debating whether he should flee the advancing Allied troops, which caused some levity among officers.³³⁵ All of these events contributed to their choice of trophies. Typically, trophies seized from enemy commanders were signs of defeat in battle. Such was Napoleon's horse Marengo, who was taken at Waterloo, died in 1831, and is preserved in the National Army Museum.³³⁶ But Xianfeng had no military role in the 1860 war and the British had pieced together a somewhat contradictory image of him as a weak and cowardly tyrant; so officers looked for trophies that could represent his failed rule. For this reason, the objects were of two types: emblems of state power and signs of personal weakness, which signaled that the Qing monarchy was a dictatorship stultifying under an ineffectual ruler.

Imperial Emblems for Queen Victoria

Leading members of the 1860 expedition presented emblems of Xianfeng's power to Queen Victoria upon their return to Britain. In fact, one could say that Victoria received trophies instead of loot, while the British Army and diplomatic corps received the lion's share of the spoils. Her noble counterparts across the English Channel received fabulous spoils by contrast. Hevia writes that these were publicly displayed in Paris before their installation at Fontainebleau; so Victoria would have been keenly aware of the gifts.³³⁷ He also notes that "very few objects made their way from China to their 'rightful owner,' the British Crown."³³⁸ A British feature on the Empress Eugénie's "Chinese museum" at Fontainebleau noted: "In this Museum are nearly the whole contents of the Buddhist temple of the Summer Palace ... The collection is nominally valued at 20,000l., but its actual worth is probably four times that sum."³³⁹

³³² *Exeter Flying Post*, January 9, 1861, 5.

³³³ Bruce, *Extracts from the Letters of James Earl of Elgin*, 206–21. Elgin gives an account of his negotiations with representatives of the Qing court.

³³⁴ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*, 266–71; Robert Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign of 1860*, 319–24. Both texts give representative accounts of the British response to the hostage-taking.

³³⁵ Wolseley, "Précis of the Chinese Official Documents Found in the Yuen-Min-Yuen," chap. 9 in *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*. Wolseley's commentary expresses the general attitude among officers.

³³⁶ National Army Museum, London, inv. no. 1963-09-89-1.

³³⁷ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 95–96.

³³⁸ Hevia, "Loot's Fate," 327.

³³⁹ *Graphic*, January 3, 1874, 5.

The most important gift to Queen Victoria in the eyes of officers was a *ruyi* staff. British and French soldiers recalled in their memoirs the portioning of gifts for their monarchs in the Hall of Audience, in keeping with a prize treaty signed before the war:³⁴⁰ one *ruyi* staff for Napoleon and the other for Queen Victoria.³⁴¹ Gen. Montauban chose a *ruyi* staff with large cabochons of bright green jadeite set in gold,³⁴² perhaps because this was more like a European sceptre, such as the Sovereign's Sceptre in the Crown Jewels of Britain. Grant recalled the incident in his memoir as follows. He entered the Yuanming Yuan grounds to find the French camped by the Hall of Audience and men robbing the "principle Palace." The Hall of Audience was just inside the south gate to the Yuanming Yuan. Before it lay a large plaza, where French soldiers could have assembled easily. Behind the hall was an artificial mountain, which served as a boundary between the public-facing hall and the private quarters of the emperor and his consorts, a group of palaces called the "Nine Continents."³⁴³ (See 65, 120.) Grant most likely was referring to the Nine Continents when he spoke of the "principal palace."

One room only in the palace was untouched. General de Montauban informed me he had reserved any valuables it might contain for equal division between the English and French. The walls of it were covered with jade-stones, and with ornaments of various descriptions. ... The French general told me that he had found two "joes", or staves of office, made of gold and green jade-stone, one of which he would give me as a present to Queen Victoria, the other he intended for the Emperor Napoleon.³⁴⁴

On June 5, 1861, Lord Elgin wrote the Foreign Secretary Lord John Russell to say that General Grant had a "Joey Stick" and an enamel bowl for Queen Victoria and he was wondering how these should be given to her. In the end, Henry Hope Crealock presented the *ruyi* staff and an enamel dish, but the location of the latter is uncertain.³⁴⁵ Grant recalls that the staff was presented with a jade bowl before a dinner at Buckingham Palace in May 1861:

Her Majesty retired and, after her departure, Colonel Biddulph was sent with a message from the Queen that she was much obliged for a beautiful jade bowl from the Summer Palace which I had sent her, and that she regretted she had not thanked me for it when she spoke to me. I was also the bearer of a green jade and gold imperial sceptre, presented by the French General Montauban, for which her majesty directed a letter of thanks should be written.³⁴⁶

Biddulph also took from the Summer Palace the famous silver raft cup, which is now in the Cleveland Museum of Art.³⁴⁷ The jade bowl has not been identified; but the sceptre is in the Royal Collection. It is of gold foil, worked in repoussé with a floral scroll, over a core thought to be of wood. **(Fig. 3-6)** The

³⁴⁰ China Expedition: Agreement with France, on Joint Captures, U.K.-France, 1859, TS 45/195, National Archives, Kew.

³⁴¹ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War of 1860*, 129–30.

³⁴² Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 70708.

³⁴³ Guo, *China's Lost Imperial Garden*, 20–21 (map of Yuanming Yuan), 38–41 (Hall of Audience), 47–50 (Nine Continents).

³⁴⁴ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War of 1860*, 128–29.

³⁴⁵ Rachel Peat (Assistant Curator, Non-European Works of Art, Royal Collection), email message to the author, July 10, 2019.

³⁴⁶ Knollys, *Life of General Sir Hope Grant*, 210.

³⁴⁷ Cleveland Museum of Art, acc. no. 1977.7.

gold is set with emerald-green jade plaques and semi-precious stones.³⁴⁸ As noted in Chapter One, when Qianlong presented Macartney in 1793 with three deeply carved jade *ruyi* staffs, these had been received with some coolness as “curiosities.” (See 54–57.) Jadeite set in gold was a real treasure. Also, since the British saw the staff as a sign of rulership, like a sceptre, its removal was tantamount to stripping Xianfeng of his regalia. John Ayers wrote in his recent publication on Japanese and Chinese objects in the collection of Queen Elizabeth II that Crealock acquired the sceptre at the military auction and presented it to Queen Victoria in 1861.³⁴⁹ This author has no explanation for the discrepancy between the accounts of its removal from the Summer Palace.



3-6. Chinese imperial *ruyi* staff, Qianlong period (r. 1736–95), gold sheet, jade and semiprecious stones, L. 52.5 cm, Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

Crealock presented other trophies to Victoria at different times after the war. Some of these were ancient bronzes later given to the London City Museum by Queen Mary (1867–1953), which are now lost.³⁵⁰ A bronze figure of a duck remains in the Royal Collection.³⁵¹ There were also two gifts that seem to have been chosen as trophies, which symbolized the vanity and indulgence of the Qing court. One gift comprised two hand mirrors in yellow silk sleeves embroidered with the imperial dragon.³⁵² (**Fig. 3-7**) A photograph on the Royal Collection website shows one sleeve with a label, sewn irreverently upside down, which states that Crealock presented the items in 1891, the 30th anniversary of the troops’ return

³⁴⁸ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 70708. The sceptre is visible in a photograph of a display case with jade articles, dated November 1910, in the Grand Corridor, north-east section, Windsor Castle. Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 2401882.

³⁴⁹ John Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2016), 3: 814.

³⁵⁰ Rachel Peat, Royal Collection, email message to the author, 4/11/2020.

³⁵¹ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 70002.

³⁵² Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 98195.

home from China. The small size of the mirrors, their perceived connection with women and traditional associations with vanity, as well as the embroidered silk sleeves, made this gift at once a sign of the emperor's weakness and a seemingly appropriate item for a female ruler.

James Hevia writes of the presentation to Victoria of objects with special status for the British, "objects which were designated as having a physical link to the body of the emperor were not strictly reducible to the curious."³⁵³ These included a small silk cap said to be the emperor's. A photograph on the Royal Collection website shows that the cap is adorned with enameled metal, agate, feathers, silk knots and tassels, and auspicious *shou* (longevity) characters formed of wires strung with seed pearls, among tiny figures looking out over a balcony formed by the brim. It is dated 1800 to 1860. The item was placed in the North Corridor at Windsor Castle with other trophies from China,³⁵⁴ and Richard R. Holmes included an illustration of the cap by William Gibb in his volume *Naval and Military Trophies and Personal Relics of British Heroes* (1896). Garnet Wolseley wrote, "His small cap, decorated with the character of longevity embroidered upon it, lay upon his bed; his pipe and tobacco pouch was upon a small table close by."³⁵⁵ This would have suggested to expedition members a life of retirement for the emperor. It is also definitely not a crown, such as Queen Victoria's Imperial State Crown, since the Qing emperors did not wear these. This fact, along with its small size and softness, also hints that the Xianfeng was effeminate and lacked legitimacy as a ruler.



3-7. Chinese imperial slip case for a hand mirror, Qing Dynasty, 1800–60, embroidered silk with brass plaque, D. 14.5 cm, Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

³⁵³ Hevia, "Loot's Fate," 321, 327, 329.

³⁵⁴ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 62902.

³⁵⁵ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*, 236.

Another gift was most likely presented as a reminder that the British Army had routed the emperor from his seat of power. This was a group of seat fragments, reportedly once linked with the emperor's throne, which Crealock presented to Queen Victoria in 1891. (Fig. 3-8) They were made into a settee, which remains in the Royal Collection.³⁵⁶ The panels are carved in bas relief with scenes of a Qing hunting party. Scenes of the hunt are used in many cultures to represent the power of the nobility, not the least that of the Qing court. Examples of such images include *The Qianlong Emperor Attending Imperial Hunting Games* by Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), in the Palace Museum Beijing; and *A Hunt in the Mountains of Heaven*, which has been dated to the late Ming Dynasty or early Qing Dynasty, and features parties of huntsmen within a rocky landscape.³⁵⁷ The association between hunting and war, and even the scene of men on horseback – archaic from the perspective of a Victorian – may have suggested to Crealock that the seat was a suitable trophy for the queen, because it signaled the backwardness of the Qing court and the emperor's flight. However he made his choice, he again reinforced the connection between hunting and war seen elsewhere with trophies from the Summer Palace. (See 123, 147, 154.)



3-8. John Wesley Livingston, photograph of a seat fragment linked with the Xianfeng emperor's throne, ca. 1860–1900, L. 134.5 cm (settee), Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

The small amount of spoils granted to Queen Victoria illustrates the powerful position of the British Army after the war. The situation would have been made clear to her by other events as well. After all, the first auctions of loot had already taken place in Mayfair,³⁵⁸ and the press was reporting the cornucopia of treasures that the French army had presented to Napoleon and Eugénie, by the time

³⁵⁶ Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 21614.

³⁵⁷ Art Institute of Chicago, ref. no. 1953.280.

³⁵⁸ By the end of May 1861, sales of material from the Summer Palace had taken place at Phillips on April 18, 1861 and July 18, 1861; and Christie's on April 4, 1861 and May 27, 1861.

Victoria received her gifts. The empress was reported to have enough treasures to open a museum, which she promptly did.³⁵⁹ The *Birmingham Journal* printed all the scuttlebutt from the Continent:

By the way, the plunder taken by the French at the Summer Palace must have been immense, for not a day passes here without some tremendous sale of Chinese productions taking place by auction. Every house of note has become a museum of Chinese curiosities: the Tuileries is gorged with them even after the liberal distribution which had been made to the various public collections, and a whole suite of rooms at Fontainebleau has been fitted up with real Chinese taste.³⁶⁰

The queen also would have known from press reports that Grant's men had presented him with a solid gold ewer. In the words of the *Morning Chronicle*: "A gold jug of great value was presented to the Commander-in-Chief by the army," and the *Express* newspaper of London reported "a handsome gold claret jug, of Chinese manufacture, intrinsic value 128l."³⁶¹ It is possible that this imbalance was the reason campaign members downplayed the amount of treasure that had been at the estate. (See 74–75.) While campaign members were not forthcoming about the true extent of their plunder and destruction, their ability to keep the spoils rather than allowing Her Majesty's Government and Parliament to oversee a sale and dispersal of prize, according to army regulations and the law, shows how much their power had grown with the British Empire.

A Sign of Failed Rule: The Emperor's Crutch

After the war, the press reported that the British Army had found the emperor's crutch or crutches at the Summer Palace and suggested that he was too sickly and pampered to rule China effectively, as a retroactive justification for the spoliation. On December 18, 1860, the *Caledonian Mercury* announced that campaign members had found: "Costly robes, trimmed with gold and embroidered with the imperial dragon, a gold crutch supposed to have been used by the Emperor,"³⁶² despite the impracticality of a gold crutch. On January 15, 1861 the *Dublin Daily Express* and many other papers ran a story "From the Times' Correspondent," dated November 7th, which ridiculed the emperor's role in an annual agricultural rite at the Temple of Heaven, the imperial altar in Beijing, and made the one crutch into many:

The Emperor visits this temple once a year, especially to plough and sow grain, to show he still retains the simplicity of life of his ancestors. He is very lame, having nearly lost the use of both legs; in all his apartments at the Summer Palace pairs of crutches were found.³⁶³

³⁵⁹ Colombe Samoyault-Verlet, *Le Musée chinois de l'impératrice Eugénie* (Paris: Eugénie Reunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994). The volume is a general guide to the museum.

³⁶⁰ "Gossip from Paris - from our correspondent," *Birmingham Journal*, May 9, 1863, 7.

³⁶¹ *Morning Chronicle*, December 15, 1860, 6; *Express*, December 28, 1860, 2.

³⁶² *Caledonian Mercury*, December 18, 1860, 4.

³⁶³ *Dublin Daily Express*, January 15, 1861, 4.

The source of this story is unclear to this writer, for Thomas William Bowlby (1818–60), the *Times* reporter covering the campaign, was taken hostage and died in captivity; but Robert Swinhoe wrote in his war memoir that the British met at the Summer Palace an old eunuch, who said the emperor “was a very sickly man, and had lately suffered much from dropsy in one leg, which necessitated his using a crutch.”³⁶⁴ “Dropsy” is an archaic term for edema, linked then with heart failure, syphilis and cirrhosis of the liver.³⁶⁵ Victorian doctors also knew that dropsy was often confused with pregnancy;³⁶⁶ so campaign members might have taken the emperor’s illness as another sign of his effeminacy and corruption.

While the discussion around this object was highly subjective, one crutch from the Summer Palace was in fact presented to Lord Elgin by Thomas Adkins (1836–65), an interpreter and diplomat with the Chinese Consular Service. He served in the irregular cavalry under Maj. Walter Fane (1828–85) and Maj. Dighton Macnaghton Probyn (1833–1924), who have been connected with looting at the Summer Palace in various sources;³⁶⁷ and he took home two red lacquer boxes with Qianlong reign marks. They are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum and one is shown here. **(Fig. 3-9)** Intriguingly, registration records state that Adkins himself took the boxes on October 8th, which makes this a documented instance of irregular looting by a diplomat.³⁶⁸



3-9. Chinese imperial carved lacquer box, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), H. 22.2, Victoria and Albert Museum

³⁶⁴ Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign*, 209.

³⁶⁵ S. Messenger Bradley, “On Syphilitic Renal Dropsy,” *British Medical Journal* 1, no. 527 (February 4, 1871): 116–17.

³⁶⁶ “The Diagnosis of Ovarian Dropsy,” *British Medical Journal* 1, no. 174 (April 28, 1860): 320–23.

³⁶⁷ Pearce, “From Relic to Relic,” 214–17. Christie’s London, Sale of June 6, 1861. The auction featured items taken from the Summer Palace by Col. Luard of Fane’s Horse. M’Ghee, *How We Got to Peking*, 203–4. The author states that Probyn took enameled vases from the Hall of Audience.

³⁶⁸ V&A, acc. no. W.69A/1-1935.

Adkins was from Milcote, near Weston-on-Avon. The Warwickshire County Record Office holds a letter to his mother in which he states that he took the emperor's crutch from his bedroom and presented it to Lord Elgin.³⁶⁹ When Elgin loaned Chinese objects to the South Kensington Museum in 1861, the crutch was entered in the loan register as:

18 January Crutch in wood mounted in bronze gilt and engraved.³⁷⁰

The entry shows that museum records should not be trusted automatically. None of Elgin's loans in the register were attributed to the Summer Palace, but Adkins told his mother that the crutch came from the estate. Newspaper coverage of the war must also be treated with skepticism: the item was not solid gold as reported; the intake agent wrote that it had gilt bronze mounts. Despite its notoriety and entry into the South Kensington Museum loan collection, the crutch is not mentioned in catalogues of the exhibitions to which Elgin's objects were loaned and it disappeared from view as discussion of the sacking faded. However, a quarter of a century later, a reporter attended a reception for Queen Victoria's golden jubilee at the Elgin family seat, Broomhall House, where they noticed:

A crutch with a gold head, used by the Emperor of China, a picture and fire-screens from the Empress of China's room, all found in the Summer Palace, Peking in 1860, were also shown, and near them stand two large bronze storks of fine workmanship also from the Summer Palace, and presented to Lord Elgin by his Staff.³⁷¹

In the same room were "various specimens of art and manufacture from China and Japan, India, and Canada."³⁷² Sydney Checkland later mentioned the crutch in his book on the Elgin family: "Two thousand visitors who gathered to celebrate Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887 at Broomhall seem not to have been surprised to have been shown a crutch which had belonged to the Empress of China."³⁷³ Formerly a sign of the emperor's weakness, the crutch was now associated with his consort, known posthumously by her honorific Empress Xiaozhenxian (1837–81). Few individual items from the Summer Palace received such press attention as the crutch. At a distance of 170 years it seems that the British, not satisfied with taking the emperor's throne and worldly goods, had stolen his crutch as a final act of gratuitous humiliation and cruelty. The appropriation of the crutch left the emperor a helpless invalid in the eyes of the British public, answering the ancient human urge to disable the vanquished, leaving them unable to seek revenge.

³⁶⁹ Thomas Adkins to Temperance Adkins, October 9, 1860, Adkins Family of Milcote, Weston-on-Avon, CR3554/36, Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick.

³⁷⁰ South Kensington Museum loan registers, ref. no. MA/31/1, January 18, 1861, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

³⁷¹ *Dunfermline Saturday Press*, July 16, 1887, 2.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ Sydney Checkland, *The Elgins, 1766-1917: A Tale of Aristocrats, Proconsuls and Their Wives* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), 209.

Entry into the Hall of Audience

On October 7, 1860, the Allies entered the south gate of the Yuanming Yuan, the garden at the west end of the Old Summer Palace complex, and went to the Hall of Rectitude and Honor, which the British called the “Hall of Audience.” Members of the British Army discussed the Hall of Audience in their war memoirs. Army chaplain Rev. M’Ghee described it as:

A magnificent building, in which, in his imperial chair, the Emperor gave audience to those few and great ones who were honoured by admission into the ‘vermilion’ presence ... A large and most elaborate plan of the Palace Gardens nearly covered the wall at one end of the room. About half-way down one side stood the imperial dais, which was ascended by three steps, and upon it was placed the chair of state, richly carved in dark wood, and cushioned in rich embroidery.³⁷⁴

Robert Swinhoe recalled:

We could well imagine the awe it was calculated to inspire on the chosen few who were privileged to draw near on ceremonial days ... How different the scene now! The hall filled with crowds of foreign soldiery, and the throne floor covered with the Celestial Emperor’s choicest curios, but destined as gifts for far more worthy monarchs.³⁷⁵

He clearly knew the history of the building, which he possibly gleaned from the memoirs of the Macartney embassy mentioned in Chapter One, (See 63–71.) and relished the idea that they had entered the inner sanctum of a man they condemned as a despot, who took flight as their armies approached.

“The Throne of the Emperor”

As these writers noted, the essential power symbol was the emperor’s throne. Standing before it, soldiers derided the emperor for fleeing; but they also examined it closely and described it in their memoirs at greater length than any other object in the Yuanming Yuan. In early 1861 an anonymous account of the sacking disseminated in British newspapers reported “The carving on this throne is quite a work of art. The floor of the throne was carpeted with a light red cloth.”³⁷⁶ Swinhoe wrote of the dramatic moment when they ventured into the hall: “We entered its central door, and found ourselves on a smooth marble floor, in front of the emperor’s ebony throne. The carvings on the throne consisted of dragons in various attitudes, and was quite a work of art; but the material, on closer examination, proved to be of some inferior wood painted to imitate ebony.”³⁷⁷ His comment was typical of the British, who often stated that Chinese objects and buildings were either superficially beautiful or of high quality, but poorly

³⁷⁴ M’Ghee, *How We Got to Peking*, 203–4.

³⁷⁵ Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign*, 294–96.

³⁷⁶ *Greenock Advertiser*, January 1, 1861, 3.

³⁷⁷ Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign*, 294–95.

maintained: a sign of corruption and decline. Garnet Wolseley took this attitude in sizing up the Hall of Audience:

Its carving, gilding, and painting was fresh and clean; its tiling was in perfect order, and looked quite new; its doors swung easily upon their hinges, and altogether it had none of that tumble-down look of dilapidation, which is so universal with all public buildings in the “flowery land,” that it would almost appear as if such was a part and parcel of the original design ... Imagine such a scene. The Emperor is seated on his ebony throne, attired in a yellow robe.³⁷⁸

Wolseley also described the throne and interior of the hall:

The imperial throne was a beautiful piece of workmanship, made of rose-wood. It stood upon a platform raised about eighteen inches above the other part of the hall, and was surrounded by an open-work balustrading, richly carved in representation of roses and other flowers. Upon each side of the throne stood a high pole screen decorated with blue enamel and peacocks’ feathers, upon which small rubies and emeralds were strung ... To leave the hall and get into the gardens, you passed out behind a screen at the back of the throne.³⁷⁹

Gen. Charles George Gordon (1833–85), who arrived in China after the battle at the Dagu Forts, just in time for the march on Beijing,³⁸⁰ said “You would scarcely conceive the magnificence of this residence, or the tremendous devastation the French have committed. The throne and room were lined with ebony, carved in a marvelous way.”³⁸¹ Surgeon Graham Young, who wrote about looting jades at the Summer Palace, recalled: “There is a raised dais in the centre of the hall, on which stands a throne of rich carved ebony, and beautiful lamps and ornamental vases of bronze and enamel.”³⁸² These passages suggest that the throne was of dark wood carved with dragons. Armand Lucy (19th–20th century? d. after 1883), an interpreter for the French, wrote that the throne screen was of precious wood, deeply carved with fantastic designs. He decided to take it home and went to find a means of conveyance, but when he returned with a cart it was smashed to pieces.³⁸³

This author has not found any other evidence regarding removal of the throne from the Hall of Audience and the issue is complicated by the presence of other imperial seats on the estate. Robert Swinhoe mentioned one in the emperor’s private quarters near the Hall of Audience: “a large, double-seated throne, covered with gaudily coloured cloth, and having red drapery in the rear, which formed a curtain to a waiting recess.”³⁸⁴ Guo Daiheng identifies the Jiuzhou Qingyan Hall within the Nine Continents area as the principal apartments of the imperial family. She writes also that the emperor sat on

³⁷⁸ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*, 231–33.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 235.

³⁸⁰ A. Egmont Hake, *The Story of Chinese Gordon* (London: Remington, 1884), 31–32.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

³⁸² Young, *A Story of Active Service in Foreign Lands*, 126–29.

³⁸³ Armand Lucy, *Lettres Intimes sur la Campagne de Chine en 1860: Souvenirs de Voyage* (Marseille: Jules Barile, 1861), 104.

³⁸⁴ Swinhoe, *Narrative of the North China Campaign*, 297.

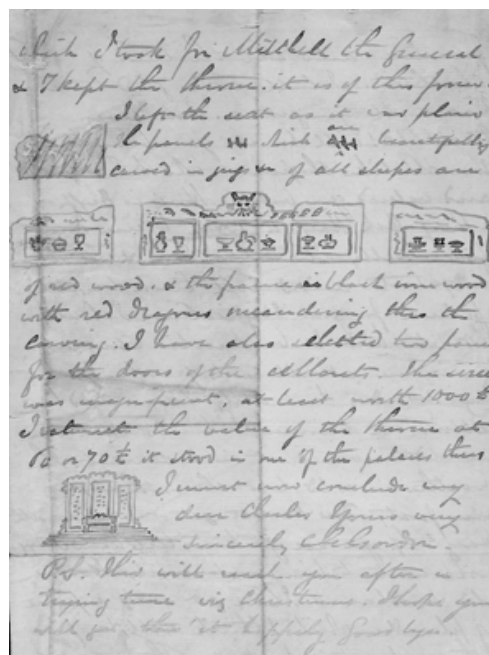
a throne in the Fengsan Wusi Hall within the same complex for family banquets.³⁸⁵ However, one throne screen and parts of an imperial seat from the Summer Palace did come to Britain directly after the war. Gen. Gordon took the items, which he mentioned in a letter to Col. Charles Elwyn Harvey (1834–85), a brother officer in the Royal Engineers. Gordon said that he had taken “part of a throne out of the Summer Palace,” though not the Hall of Audience, leaving the seat because it was plain. He described the pieces and told Harvey what he meant to do with them:

I took [it] for Mitchell the General & I kept the throne, it is of this [illegible]. I left the seat as it was plain. The panels [illegible] are beautifully carved in [illegible] of all stripes are of red wood & the panel is black [illegible] wood with red dragons meandering thro the carving. I have also selected two panels for the doors of the [illegible] The screen was magnificent, at least worth 1000 £. I estimate the value of the throne at 60 or 70 £ it stood in one of the palaces thus. I must now conclude, my dear Charles.

Yours very sincerely,

ChGordon.³⁸⁶

He sketched a carved throne on a dais before a massive tripartite screen with tracery in its panels suggesting carved dragons. He also drew the backrest and armrests as three separate panels laid flat, possibly after separating them for transport. **(Fig. 3-5)**



3-10. Gen. Charles Gordon, letter concerning a throne and screen from the Summer Palace, October 25, 1860, measurements unavailable, © British Library

³⁸⁵ Guo, *China's Lost Imperial Garden*, 47–48.

³⁸⁶ Charles George Gordon to Charles Elwyn Harvey, October 25, 1860, Add MS 87369-87370, British Library, London.

The panels show relief decoration of antiquities, which resembles that of an imperial throne screen depicted in the handscroll *Pictures of Ancient Playthings*, completed in 1728 for the Yongzheng emperor (1678–1735, r. 1722–35).³⁸⁷ (Fig. 3-11) The painting depicts antiquities alongside an imperial throne and screen, which suggests that seats with such decoration were not for public halls, but private rooms where the emperor viewed objects from his collection. Gordon presented the seat parts with other carved panels to the Royal Engineers. These were made into a couch, now in the Royal Engineers Museum. When the couch was reassembled, the armrests were moved to the back and the seat was extended with Gordon's extra panels. It is a long couch with a dark wooden frame carved with dragons. Panels of lighter wood set in the back are carved with antiquities, as depicted in Gordon's sketch; the panels supporting the seat are carved with prunus branches and other floral motifs. (Fig. 3-12)



3-11. Anonymous artists of the Qing court, *Pictures of Ancient Playthings* (detail), Yongzheng reign period, 1728, handscroll (ink and colors on paper), H. 62.5 cm, British Museum

³⁸⁷ BM, mus. no. PDF,X.01. On loan from the Percival David Foundation.



3-12. Seat made of wood panels taken by Gen. Charles Gordon from the Summer Palace, assembled after 1860, carved wood, H. 133 cm, © Royal Engineers Museum

In May of 1861, newspapers reported that the 23rd company of Royal Engineers, returned from China, marched into Chatham garrison and “Among the items of interest brought home,” were “the emperor’s throne, taken from the Summer Palace before it was burnt, and also a valuable bell from one of the joss-houses. The throne will be deposited in the officers’ new mess room.”³⁸⁸ However, they were carrying either Gordon’s wooden panels or a seat made from them, not “*the emperor’s throne*” [italics mine]. The real seat of imperial power was the “dragon throne,” located in the Taihe dian (Hall of Supreme Harmony), in the Forbidden City.³⁸⁹ **(Fig. 3-13)** The presentation of Gordon’s seat and screen to the public as essential signs of Chinese imperial power is the most spectacular case of the fictions and half-truths that often establish the status of objects as trophies.

Years later, the seat was displayed as “the curiously-carved throne of the celestial monarch,” in the War Trophies Court at the 1887 Liverpool Royal Jubilee Exhibition, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria’s accession. The *Liverpool Mercury* described it as:

A handsome throne, which was acquired by General Gordon at the Summer Palace at Peking in 1870, and presented by him to the Engineers’ mess. The throne is a work of art, and the carving of flowers and dragons upon the panels above and below the yellow silk cushions is executed with an exquisite finish that is now seldom to be met with either in Japan or China.³⁹⁰

The throne sat under a portrait of Gordon by Val Prinsep (1838–1904), with mementoes from his campaigns. It was a poignant tribute to the general, killed in Khartoum two years prior, which affirmed

³⁸⁸ *Derby Mercury*, May 29, 1861, 3.

³⁸⁹ Wan-go Weng and Yang Boda, *Das Palastmuseum Peking: Die Schätze der Verbotenen Stadt* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1982), 50–51.

³⁹⁰ *Liverpool Mercury*, May 31, 1887, 5.

his contributions to the British empire and the military achievements of the Royal Engineers in Asia as servants of Queen Victoria. The events in question were now so far in the past that the newspaper mistakenly gave the date as “1870.” The display reportedly sparked discussion of hard-fought campaigns among visitors; but equally important is the writer’s insistence that the throne was “a work of art,” of a quality no longer seen in Chinese craft. Like other critics of the period, the reviewer never acknowledged the potential impact of invasions, civil war and opium imports on craft production in China; but they showed some appreciation for Chinese craftsmanship. In the late nineteenth century, trophies of the 1860 war appeared at many industrial art exhibitions, where their beauty and workmanship were praised. Chapter Four deals with this unexpected turn of events.



3-13. The Dragon Throne in the Hall of Supreme Harmony, Forbidden City, 1900–1927, photograph, measurements unavailable, Image courtesy of Adam Scott Armstrong, University of Bristol Library

A Throne Screen for General Michel

After receiving the throne screen from Gordon, Gen. Sir John Michel (1804–86), commander of the 1st Division in China, lent it to the 1862 International Exhibition in London,³⁹¹ where it sat among other trophies and “curiosities” from the Summer Palace. (See 116.) In 1870, Gen. Michel lent a few objects from the China campaign to an exhibition at the Blandford Literary Institution, which included “a saucer from the Emperor of China’s tea set and a Chinese household god, found hung up in a cottage in one of

³⁹¹ *The International Exhibition of 1862. The Illustrated Catalogue of the Industrial Department, vol. 3, Colonial and Foreign Divisions* (London: Printed for Her Majesty’s Commissioners, 1862), 43.

the towns taken by the British in China.”³⁹² This is important evidence that a division commander allowed troops to loot civilian homes, but the throne screen is not mentioned. Michel may have kept it at his family seat, Dewlish House, where he and Lady Michel (née Louisa Anne Churchill, ca. 1820–1905), remained until their deaths. The general left his Chinese objects to his wife:

I bequeath to my said wife the sum of five hundred pounds [illegible] and the following effects in or about my mansion house at Dewlish ... to be her own absolutely as indeed I consider many of them already are namely:

- (1) All articles of Chinese and Japanese construction.
- (2) All pictures and other articles brought to Dewlish by her as having originally belonged to her father.
- (3) All pictures and household furniture or ornament purchased or acquired by me since our marriage.
- (4) All plate and plated goods, linen, glass, china, wines and consumable stores.
- (5) All horses, carriages, harness, dogs, plants and stable and garden utensils.³⁹³

Intriguingly, Michel put his Chinese things at the top, even above portraits from his father-in-law. Like many soldiers, he built a collection of looted and purchased Asian art, which he gave to his wife. Lady Michel in turn left all household goods to their son, Maj. Horace John Michel, who resided at Dewlish House until his death in 1925.³⁹⁴ Whether the throne remained in the family or was sold is still unknown to this writer.

Silks for the Emperor: “Imperial Yellow”

The British left the Hall of Audience through the rear door and entered the emperor’s private apartments in the Jiuzhou Qingyan Complex (Complex of Nine Continents Clear and Calm) area. Guo Daiheng in her informative volume on the Summer Palace, writes that this complex of buildings included the imperial bed chamber, libraries, studies, and residences for the women of the imperial family; and that it was a site of private imperial banquets and buddhist ritual, bounded by streams and lakes. She states also that the *Forty Views of the Yuanmingyuan* album taken by Gen. Montauban was kept in the Fengsan Wusi Hall (Hall of Pursuing Selflessness) within this area.³⁹⁵ In the emperor’s private residence, officers went through his personal effects and were drawn to the so-called “imperial yellow” silks embroidered with five-clawed dragons, as signs of entry into the private imperial domain. Then Lieut.-Col. and later Field Marshal Garnet Wolseley recalled: “The cushions upon the chairs and sofas were covered with the finest

³⁹² *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, January 29, 1870, 2.

³⁹³ Gen. Sir John Michel, undated will, proved July 6, 1886, Principal Registry, London, no. 647.

³⁹⁴ *Western Gazette*, June 19, 1925, 4.

³⁹⁵ Guo, *China’s Lost Imperial Garden*, 47–50.

yellow satin embroidered over with figures of dragons and flowers. Yellow is the Imperial colour, and none but those of royal birth are permitted to wear clothes made of it.” Wolseley, as a high-ranking officer, took a number of these; and after his death, his widow gave some to the Victoria and Albert Museum, including the cushion cover pictured here.³⁹⁶ (Fig. 3-14) Soldiers also divested the emperor of the imperial robes that set his body and person apart from his subjects, through color and arrangement of auspicious emblems. One of these is a yellow silk robe embroidered with imperial emblems in the Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum. (Fig. 3-15) The display label identifies the garment as an “Embroidered silk robe which once belonged to the Emperor of China. Taken from the Imperial Palace by Capt. Henry Ely of the 99th Regiment.” The robe has a “Mandarin” collar and cuffs, which suggests that it was taken from the Summer Palace uncut and finished in Britain.



3-14. Chinese imperial throne cushion cover, Qing Dynasty, 1760–1820, embroidered silk, L. 73.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

³⁹⁶ V&A, acc. no. T.135-1917.



3-15. Chinese imperial robe, Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), embroidered silk, author photograph, measurements unavailable, Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum

Trophies in the Regimental Mess

As the presence of the robe in the Wiltshire museum suggests, items at the Summer Palace were also taken as part of the British Army tradition of accumulating trophies and memorabilia while stationed abroad and displaying them in the regimental mess.³⁹⁷ Many of these are still housed in regimental museums today. Some men presented objects to their regiment or commander as a special token of allegiance and respect, so many have plaques identifying the donor and give provenance of the object. Some of these were large or shiny objects, which made for splendid displays. Others had limited sale value because they had been damaged or did not appeal to British taste. Trophies from China in 1860 that sit in regimental museums are almost entirely works of art. Louise Tythacott has published an in-depth critical article on these displays,³⁹⁸ and the author herself published a piece on ceramics in British regimental museums, so the subject will only be touched on here.³⁹⁹ However, an examination of some objects will illustrate typical challenges and other features of trophies. Their stories suggest that the designation of these items as trophies must always be approached critically and even with skepticism; for soldiers often created a heroic glow around the circumstances of their plunder through narratives and the act of display itself.

³⁹⁷ Hill, “Collecting on Campaign,” 227–52.

³⁹⁸ Tythacott, “Trophies of War,” 469–88.

³⁹⁹ Katrina Hill, “Chinese Ceramics in UK Military Museums,” *Oriental Ceramic Society Newsletter*, no. 20 (2012): 11–14.

The officers' mess was a home away from home: a place where men could relax and engage in recreation with their fellows. The type of festivities that typically took place in the mess are represented by an 1856 order sent out by the Duke of Cambridge (1819–1904), commander-in-chief of the British Army, to the effect that officers should no longer be granted credit by local merchants.⁴⁰⁰ In the mess, silver plate and objects taken in past conflicts were conversation pieces that inspired stories of past victories; as such, they were sources of regimental pride and collective memory. A photograph dated to 1937 in the National Army Museum gives a good sense of the role trophies played in regimental social life. This shows officers of the 10th Battalion, 1st Punjab Regiment, sitting in their regimental mess while attended by Indian servants. On the table and mantelpiece are trophies of hunting and sport.⁴⁰¹ **(Fig. 3-15)**



3-16. *The Officer's Mess of the 10th Battalion, 1st Punjab Regiment, ca. 1937, photograph, measurements unavailable, National Army Museum*

Another photograph dated to 1886 in the British Library shows a table laid in the mess of the Wiltshire Regiment in Peshawar. **(Fig. 3-17)** In the foreground a porcelain *ding*, a tripod incense burner, has been laid as part of the centerpiece. A gilt bronze figure of a deity appears to be at the other end of the table and hunting trophies are displayed nearby, for soldiers hunted while stationed overseas and they liked to display trophies of hunting and war together. The *ding* is one of three in the Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum today. **(Fig. 3-18)** They are all Qing Dynasty *yangcai*-enameled pieces painted with lotus scrolls, of a type pictured in the John Burley Waring catalogue of the 1862 London Exhibition.⁴⁰² (See 219–21.) They would have sat at the center of a five-piece *wugong* altar garniture,⁴⁰³ which always

⁴⁰⁰ *Nairnshire Telegraph and General Advertiser for the Northern Counties*, October 29, 1856, 2.

⁴⁰¹ National Army Museum, inv. no. NAM. 1965-04-69-40.

⁴⁰² Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 2:35.

⁴⁰³ Sotheby's New York, September 21, 2021, Sale N10748, Lot 58. MMA, acc. no. 21.175.16a, b; Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. no. 1882-1330. The museum specimens are comparable *ding* vessels.

comprised a *ding* incense burner; two *gu* vessels, based on ancient bronze beakers; and two candlesticks; but these were often separated during the plunder. One such set was sold through Christie's in 1862 by Edwin Wadman (dates unknown), who had resided in China for some years. It was catalogued as "A SET OF FIVE ALTAR ORNAMENTS, with flowers and scrolls in colors on rare yellow ground,"⁴⁰⁴ with no attribution to the Summer Palace.



3-17. Lieut.-Col. Charles Lacon Harvey, *Mess Room, Wiltshire Regt. Peshawur*, 1886, photograph, H. 14.4 cm, © British Library Board, Shelfmark: Photo 154/(10)



3-18. Chinese imperial *ding* vessel, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), enameled porcelain, measurements unavailable, author photograph, Rifles Berkshire and Wiltshire Museum

⁴⁰⁴ Christie's London, Sale of May 15, 1862, Lot 106. See also catalogue cover, where Wadman's collection is said to have been made "During Seventeen years' residence in China and Japan."

A sense of the atmosphere created by displays of looted art in the regimental mess is seen in a feature published in the *Aldershot Military Gazette* in late 1861. A reporter at that time visited the 12th Royal Lancers' new regimental coffee room, where he noted: "numerous painted screens, banners, idols, &c. &c. with which the room was tastily decorated, and which made us imagine it was a Chinese exhibition we were in."⁴⁰⁵ This shows how trophies brought an exotic note to a mess, which was enjoyed by the public as windfall of the army's postings in Asia. On what basis the reporter attributed the objects to China is uncertain, since the 12th Royal Lancers were never stationed there. They may have acquired the items during the suppression of the Indian Rebellion under the command of then Lieut. Gen. Sir George Cornish Whitlock (1798–1868).⁴⁰⁶ The regiment had even been involved in a dispute between Whitlock and Sir Hugh Rose (1801–85) over treasure seized at Kirwee.⁴⁰⁷ Certainly, they would have found banners and figures of deities in India. Mervyn Wingfield acquired sculptures of deities in India, which will be discussed towards the end of the chapter. (See 149–50.)

Soldiers and sailors often seized flags as trophies, so a number of these are in British military museums. The National Army Museum, London, holds a silk fragment reportedly from a Sikh flag taken during the 1st Afghan War in 1842.⁴⁰⁸ The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, holds two flags seized during the Napoleonic Wars: a French republican banner taken from the vessel *L'Amérique* by Vice Adm. Lord Hugh Seymour, R. N. (1759–1801), commander of the ship *Leviathan*, in the Battle of the Glorious First (1794), and a Spanish naval ensign taken from the *San Ildefonso*, by the *Defence* at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805).⁴⁰⁹ One flag captured by the 98th (The Prince of Wales's) Regiment of Foot in China during the First Opium War is at the Staffordshire Regiment Museum, Lichfield. (**Fig. 3-18**) This features an imperial dragon appliquéd on a yellow ground beneath a red sun. Angela Tarnowski, curator of the Royal Lancers Museum, Darby, writes that the 12th Royal Lancers had significant postings overseas before settling at Aldershot in 1861. They participated in the 8th Xhosa War in South Africa (1851–53) and the Crimean War (1853–56), in addition to the suppression of the Indian Rebellion; but she confirms that the regiment no longer holds any items like those mentioned in the *Aldershot Gazette*, although a flag captured by the 9th Lancers from an Oude Infantry regiment is now in the collection.⁴¹⁰ It is possible that the reporter's interpretation of the objects was affected by the opening ceremony, in which Rev. Hugh Huleatt (1821–98), a veteran of the Battle of Canton, gave an "amusing lecture" on China, enlivened by the appearance of a British soldier dressed as a Chinese pirate, "at the sight of whose pigtail

⁴⁰⁵ *Aldershot Military Gazette*, December 14, 1861, 2.

⁴⁰⁶ P. F. Stewart, *The History of the XII Royal Lancers* (Prince of Wales's) (London: Oxford, 1950), 148–54.

⁴⁰⁷ *The Case of the Banda and Kirwee Booty. Published by the Authority of the Prize Agents of Sir G. C. Whitlock's Force* (London: Harrison, 1864).

⁴⁰⁸ National Army Museum, inv. no. 998-06-205-1.

⁴⁰⁹ National Maritime Museum, inv. nos. AAA0564; AAA0567. See also Hill, "Collecting on Campaign," 230.

⁴¹⁰ Angela Tarnowski, email message to author, September 26, 2022.

hanging down to his knees, the laughter was so loud that the lecturer was unable to proceed.”⁴¹¹ All of this was in keeping with the recreational function of the regimental mess, if not our present modes of cultural engagement.



3-19. Qing imperial flag, Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), ca. 1842, unidentified textile with appliqué, measurements unavailable, Staffordshire Regiment Museum

When the laughter subsided, Huleatt concluded: “To the young soldiers he thought the room would be of the greatest advantage as affording them recreation free from the fatal temptations which are so common in the neighbourhood of camp.”⁴¹² This points to another function of the mess: keeping men from the temptations of town – gambling, prostitution, and drink – during their postings throughout Britain and abroad. A newspaper report of a court case involving a Lieut.-Col. Dickson, noted that officers were “allowed by the regulations to drink a moderate quantity at mess daily, at a rate compatible with the daily pay of the rank of each officer.”⁴¹³ As Wolseley wrote in regard to the looting at the Summer Palace: “The Frenchman is naturally more thrifty than the careless Britisher, who squanders his money in drinking, and ‘standing drink’ to his comrades.”⁴¹⁴ In the nineteenth century, the British Army took a new interest in reforming and educating soldiers after the failures of the Crimea, which were found to have been caused by lack of organization and inadequate troops.⁴¹⁵ This development gave rise to a

⁴¹¹ *Aldershot Military Gazette*, December 14, 1861, 2.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*

⁴¹³ *Globe*, June 20, 1863, 4.

⁴¹⁴ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*, 227.

⁴¹⁵ Brian Bond, “Prelude to the Cardwell Reforms, 1856-68,” *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* 106 (May 1, 1961): 229–36. Discusses the origins of the Cardwell Reforms.

number of military exhibitions, where items from the Summer Palace were displayed. The comparison of the coffee room to a museum, then, is partly a response to these efforts. The hope, however futile, was that men would drink coffee in an uplifting and even educational environment, surrounded by Chinese (or Indian) art, instead of “going ’round to the pub.”

Trophies at Military Exhibitions

Some soldiers displayed plundered objects as trophies at military exhibitions. In 1861, a weeklong “Grand Exhibition of Arms” took place at the Royal Naval School, New-cross,⁴¹⁶ a school for the children of naval officers.⁴¹⁷ The event was a fundraiser for the 34th Kent Volunteer Rifles: one of a few instances in which spoils from China were integrated into events promoting the recently formed volunteer forces for home defense. (See 102–3.) The show included “trophies of objects from the great battles of the present century; arms and armour of Tippoo Saib; splendid loot from Delhi, Lucknow, the two Burmese wars, and the Summer Palace at Peking; including dresses of the King and Queen of Delhi, Emperor of China, &c.” In 1864, a similar industrial exhibition took place at Aldershot Military Camp. The *Dorset County Chronicle* reported that soldiers’ handiwork and inventions appeared there with “Dresses that once adorned the proudest of Mandarins, vases, bronzes, tulwars, shields, and other trophies,” which “give ocular demonstration that the English soldier has within the last few years stormed Lucknow and Delhi, sacked the summer palace of the Emperor of China, and spoiled the Daimios of Japan.”⁴¹⁸ The term “dresses” used in the coverage of both events suggested that Asian heads of state were effeminate and even sexually interchangeable with their wives. The *Morning Post* reported that an image of Ye Mingchen (1807–59), called “Commissioner Yeh” and despised for his opposition to opium by the British, “was examined with very great interest, and also were a number of miniature portraits of the family of the last King of Delhi.”⁴¹⁹ The reporter did not mention that Ye Minchen had died in British captivity, or that the British had brutally executed family members of Bahadur Shah II (1775–1862, r. 1837–1857), after seizing Delhi.⁴²⁰

This author has located a catalogue for only one of these exhibits; but some information about the displays can be gleaned from press coverage. As noted elsewhere in this study, the garments of Asian monarchs were usually termed “dresses” to suggest effeminacy, the corruption of an eastern harem, and failed leadership. After the siege of Delhi it was reported that the aged Bahadur Shah had lived with a

⁴¹⁶ *Morning Post*, July 17, 1861, 1.

⁴¹⁷ *Naval & Military Gazette and Weekly Chronicle of the United Service*, November 16, 1833, 3.

⁴¹⁸ *Dorset County Chronicle*, July 21, 1864, 9.

⁴¹⁹ *Morning Post*, July 7, 1864, 6.

⁴²⁰ Arshad Islam, “The Backlash in Delhi: British Treatment of the Mughal Royal Family Following the Indian ‘Sepoy Mutiny’ of 1857,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31, no. 2, (2011): 197–215.

harem of 1000 women.⁴²¹ The mix of trophies and “loot” from various conflicts in Asia shows that the practice of plunder was being carried from conflict to conflict. Regiments that had looted at Lucknow and Delhi looted again at Summer Palace. This led Capt. John Hart Dunne to complain that he was unschooled in the art: “Not having been at Delhi, Lucknow, or any good sack, I own to being very green about this business.”⁴²² These exhibitions also affirmed the privilege of looting itself. The *Dorset County Chronicle* was inspired to quote Horace: “the spoils of the East more plainly show that here in England we may say—*captivum portatur ebur, captiva corinthus*: [Ivory carried captive, captive Corinth],” fully embracing the plunder of artworks in addition to weapons.

That same year, Her Majesty’s 12th Regiment (2nd Battalion) held an industrial exhibition at the Rotundo in Dublin. The catalogue cover is reproduced here. **(Fig. 3-20)** It was a high-profile event, for the opening was attended by the elderly 1st Viscount, Hugh Gough (1779–1869), who had been commander in chief of British forces during the First Opium War.⁴²³ The exhibit centered on articles made by rank-and-file soldiers, who were encouraged to sell their work for extra income; and its chief goal was to encourage soldiers to employ their trades and handicrafts for the army “in a young colony or a foreign country.”⁴²⁴ A review of the exhibition emphasized that the participants had created their pieces “as their taste and abilities dictated,” language that reflects the general interest in raising the level of taste in the British marketplace during the manufacturing boom of the nineteenth century. As Henry Cole stated in an 1857 address on the goals of the government’s Science and Art Department, “Whether or not the garment, the hangings, the tapestry, and the carpet gratify the taste, is altogether dependent on the application of the laws which regulate beauty. To offer to every one in this kingdom the elementary knowledge whereby his labour may have the best chances of fruitful and profitable development appears to be the aim, in its broadest sense, of all public expenditure on behalf of Science and Art.”⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ *Montrose Standard*, January 22, 1858, 8.

⁴²² Dunne, *From Calcutta to Peking*, 130.

⁴²³ Michael Barthorp, *Queen Victoria’s Commanders* (Oxford: Osprey, 2000), 8.

⁴²⁴ *Dublin Evening Mail*, January 13, 1864, 3.

⁴²⁵ Henry Cole, “Extracts from an Introductory Address on the Functions of the Science and Art Department,” in *Fifty Years of Public Work of Sir Henry Cole, K.C.B., Accounted for in His Deeds, Speeches and Writings* (London: G. Bell, 1884), 2:289.



3-20. Cover of a catalogue for a military exhibition at the Rotundo, Dublin, 1864, printed paper pamphlet, measurements unavailable, Dublin City Archives

Higher-ranking men did not display handiwork. Instead: “The contributions of officers, hung round the walls, include some curious objects collected by them during the course of their service in various parts of the world.”⁴²⁶ These included hunting trophies, what might be considered ethnographic material from Africa lent by various officers, and “a Collection of Chinese and Japanese articles,” from a Lieut. Simon Bagge Triphook (1840–87), who served also in New Zealand and Afghanistan and eventually rose to the rank of major.⁴²⁷ Staff Surgeon Thomas Knox Birnie (1827–89) lent Chinese objects, catalogued as:

- 8 fur and embroidered dresses; &c., taken at the capture of the Emperor of China’s Summer Palace, near Peking, October, 1860.
- 1 Jade Stone vase
- 4 Jade Stone figures, from the Summer Palace
- 1 Tea caddy from Canton

Hart’s *New Annual Army List and Militia List* for the year 1861 states that Birnie was an Assistant Surgeon with the 1st (the Royal) Regiment of Foot, who had received a medal for his service during the

⁴²⁶ *Dublin Evening Mail*, January 13, 1864, 3.

⁴²⁷ *Newcastle Chronicle*, October 22, 1887, 7.

Siege of Sebastopol in 1855.⁴²⁸ Although it mentions no service in China, Birnie's obituary stated that "he served throughout the campaign in North China and was present at the storming and capture of Sinho and Tangku and the surrender of Peking," and received a medal with two clasps.⁴²⁹ In 1861, Birnie also sent a letter to the Botanical Gardens, Kew, regarding plant specimens in northern China, of which he collected about 50 at Dalian Bay.⁴³⁰ Whether Birnie participated in the plunder or bought these items at auction is unknown to this writer; but the small size of the group, together with his choice of hard jade and silk, suggests that portability and durability were his priorities. Within the military exhibition, he and Lieut. Triphook were gentlemen collectors, who exhibited "taste" through the selection and display of objects, which could be experienced as trophies and works of art in the grand setting of the Rotundo. The brainchild of Col. Ponsonby of the 12th Regiment, the show was intended to give "those who were willing to work for it something to amuse and instruct them during their leisure hours," to provide income for soldiers, and to show the public "that the soldier is not a useless member of society." The catalogue introduction affirmed that "the project has already produced a most beneficial effect on the morals and discipline of the regiment," and that men had turned from criminality and drink as a result.

These exhibitions coincided with the reforms undertaken by the British Army in the late nineteenth century, which were intended to build the pool of enlisted men and capable officers. They showed men the financial advantages of service, boosted regimental pride, appealed to potential recruits of higher quality, and showcased soldiers' achievements in wholesome pursuits. All of this was essential to building the army at a time when soldiers were eschewed. As Albert V. Tucker writes in his critical examination of the Cardwell Reforms, "The low social position of the soldier made him an object of discrimination; on railways and boats, in theatres and restaurants, he was always a third-class citizen, whether his rank was private or sergeant-major."⁴³¹ Military exhibitions could counter such prejudice. The *Lancaster Gazette* reviewer declared that "Some of the privates send watercolour sketches which are equal to any in the collection," and "The soldiers wives beat the officers wives in lace and fine work."⁴³² However, these events also affirmed the high social status of the officer corps, which was threatened by calls for abolishing the purchase of commissions in the interest of enlarging their ranks. Indeed, when Sir Charles Trevelyan (1807–86), produced his first report on this issue in 1857, resistance ran deep among

⁴²⁸ Henry G. Hart, *The New Annual Army List and Militia List, for 1861 (Being the Twenty Second Volume Containing Dates of Commissions, and a Statement of the War Services and Wounds of Nearly Every Officer in the Army, Ordnance, and Marines, Corrected to the 27th December, 1860, with an Index)* (London: John Murray, 1861), 219–20.

⁴²⁹ *Home News for India, China and the Colonies*, January 10, 1890, 27.

⁴³⁰ Thomas Knox Birnie to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, May 25, 1861, Directors' Correspondence, Indian Letters, DC/56/31, Royal Botanic Gardens Library and Archive, Kew.

⁴³¹ Albert V. Tucker, "Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms," *Journal of British Studies* 2, no. 2 (May 1963): 136.

⁴³² *Lancaster Gazette*, July 9, 1864, 3.

officers.⁴³³ On this point, Tucker explains: “Their wealth enabled them to maintain the rigid notion of class, of the officer as a higher and separate being from the ranks,” and this encouraged enlistment of wealthy and educated men.⁴³⁴ In light of this, it would seem that giving officers a venue in which to display looted objects as collections raised their profiles as gentlemen with the public. The “nabob” had likewise returned from India to England a sophisticated and wealthy man of the world, if something of a pariah; and his ostentatious displays of new wealth accrued through corruption and unknown dealings in eastern courts were revolting to elites. As Margot Finn and Kate Smith write in their introduction to *The East India Company at Home*: “Deployed in Britain as a term of abuse, ‘nabob’ described an EIC official who had lived on the subcontinent, amassing a large fortune as well as a taste for Asian luxuries, practices and women.”⁴³⁵ Soldiers might also return from a campaign as rich men, who had a special knowledge of foreign lands. Unlike the nabobs, however, they were embraced as heroes and the provenance of their loot was not questioned.

These events were similar in their objectives and organization to industrial art exhibitions promoted by the British government during the later nineteenth century to educate and support both workers and manufacturers. Against this backdrop, the Aldershot reviewer noted “In this age of industrial displays and international competitions it was not to be expected that any class would long escape the attractive influence of the contagion,”⁴³⁶ and praised it as “one of a series of steps which kind and thoughtful officers at the camp have been taking ... to improve the condition of the soldier.”⁴³⁷ However, in military exhibitions objects connected with the Chinese emperor were interpreted in an overtly political manner, both by organizers and reviewers. In this way, they are quite different from other industrial art exhibitions, where objects might be displayed as trophies but the context also encouraged apolitical responses from reviewers. These shows will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four.

Silks as Trophies and Decoration

Numerous imperial garments, throne covers, carpets, *kesi* tapestries, embroideries and unfinished pieces of silk from the Summer Palace arrived in Britain after the war. The author’s research of auction catalogues from the period 1861–66, together with other texts dated 1861 to 1867, yields a total of

⁴³³ “Report on the Purchase and Sale of Army Commissions,” *Exeter Flying Post*, August 27, 1857, 3.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴³⁵ Margot Finn and Kate Smith, “Introduction,” *The East India Company at Home, 1757–1857*, ed. Margot Finn and Kate Smith (London: UCL Press, 2018), 7–8.

⁴³⁶ *Lancaster Gazette*, July 9, 1864, 3.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

roughly 580 textiles attributed to the Summer Palace.⁴³⁸ Soldiers had seized “imperial yellow” silks embroidered with five-clawed dragons because they believed these were reserved for the emperor’s immediate family, which gave them extra symbolic and financial value.⁴³⁹ Yellow silk was also a shiny material like gold. A splendid metallic shine, beyond the economic value of precious metals, was desirable in trophies since they were meant to be displayed, often with metal armor and weapons. Although trophies had an overtly political purpose, the line between trophies and decoration was often blurred by soldiers. This was especially the case in the use and display of silks; for silk had long been enjoyed as a luxury good in England and yellow silks were identified with the imperial family. Investing objects with such double meaning is seen elsewhere in the British empire. One example is a brooch comprising tiger claws in a silver mount, which was produced in British India.⁴⁴⁰ (Fig. 3-21) But this was especially the case with silk because it was an essential trade item and its production in Britain involved numerous challenges. According to S. R. H. Jones, the English silk industry at midcentury was plagued by structural difficulties and competition from France was a constant concern, particularly after the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1860.⁴⁴¹ (See 239.) Within this market, there was a sector devoted to the highest quality silks for furniture and dress, beyond the silks mass-produced on power looms.⁴⁴² Qing imperial silks heavily embroidered with flowers and auspicious emblems would easily have fit into this area of the market, creating a fashion for wearing and displaying looted imperial silks, enabled by a British military operation.

⁴³⁸ Total number of pieces sold at auction: 246 [Christie’s London, Sales of April 26, 1861, Lot 117; July 5, 1861, Lots 141–149b; May 15, 1862, Lots 136–41; May 22, 1862, Lots 153–54; July 21, 1862, Lots 19–24, 180, 194; December 1, 1862, Lots 113, 120–21; April 1, 1863, Lots 182–83; July 20, 1863, Lots 290–97, A–E (handwritten); May 18, 1864, Lots 9–10; July 14, 1864, Lot 34; July 25, 1864, Lots 135–58; *Catalogue of Capitain de Negroni’s Collection of Porcelain, Jade, Jewels, Silks, Furs, Stones, &c., from the Yuen-Min-Yuen (The Summer Palace) Peking* (London: McCorquodale, 1865), Lots 424–63, 480–82. Advertisement for an auction at Foster’s, *Morning Post*, June 14, 1861, 16. Total accessions in the V&A: 19 [acc. nos. T.138&A-1917; T.142-1917; T.136-1917; T.140-1917; T.139-1917; T.134-1917; T.137-1917; T.135-1917; CIRC.71-1917; CIRC.72-1917]. Total number of pieces documented in exhibitions: 1 [the carpets sold at Christie’s on December 1, 1862 are not counted again]; Atkinson, *Hand-Book to the Bristol Exhibition*, 39]. Other references: 14 [*Northampton Mercury*, June 1, 1861, 7; *Morning Post*, July 17, 1861, 1; *Northampton Mercury*, January 11, 1862, 5; *Sherborne Mercury*, May 19, 1863, 4; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, October 9, 1863, 3; *Dundee Courier*, February 29, 1864, 4; *London Standard*, February 11, 1867, 3]. Estimated numbers: 13 [*Morning Post*, August 21, 1861, 6; *Bury and Norwich Post*, August 27, 1861, 2; *Inverness Courier*, September 19, 1867, 5]. Dunne, *From Calcutta to Peking*, 63. Dunne writes in his war memoir that he and another officer took about 300 squares of embroidered silk, which were likely rank badges, from the Summer Palace.

⁴³⁹ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860*, 236.

⁴⁴⁰ V&A, acc. no. IS.33-2012.

⁴⁴¹ S. R. H. Jones, “Technology, Transaction Costs, and the Transition to Factory Production in the British Silk Industry, 1700–1870,” *Journal of Economic History* 47, iss. 1, March 1987: 80–93.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 93.



3-21. British India, brooch, 1830–66, tiger claws in a silver mount, W. 6.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

Silks were displayed at military functions as trophies. For the Colchester Garrison Grand Ball in 1863, the Town Hall was decorated with evergreen branches, flowers, weapons, and the colors of the British flag. The *Chelmsford Chronicle* reported:

The whole was canopied with elegant yellow silk drapery, on which were elaborately-worked dragons, taken during the Chinese war from the Emperor's Summer Palace at Peking, and kindly lent for the occasion by Brigade-Major Baldwin ... The principle entrance at the top of the staircase displayed a most magnificent and valuable cloth of gold curtain, with Chinese figures and flowers wrought in floss silk, taken from the royal palace at Peking, also the property of Major Baldwin, the whole illumined by Chinese lanterns and at the centre of the balcony the royal initials of QV wrought in flowers. The decorations were the work Mr. Josiah Parish, artist, of Colchester.⁴⁴³

The large size and bright hues of these textiles, embellished with shiny metallic threads, made them well-suited to public display. The use of the term “cloth of gold,” associated with the nobility across the Eurasian continent since the Middle Ages, suggests the impression these silks made. The fierce dragons may also have reminded the public that the seemingly invincible emperor had suffered a humiliating military defeat on his own soil and caved to British demands.

Campaign members also integrated textiles from the Summer Palace into interior decor as trophies. In 1867, newspapers reported on the official trial at Portsmouth of the *Lord Clyde*, an iron-clad ship of war:

In Captain Dew's cabin are six magnificent specimens of Chinese embroidery in gold-coloured satin of great value. These form the coverings of superbly-carved chairs and lounges; they were pillaged by the Seikhs from the Emperor of China's Summer Palace, and, purchased from a party who bought them from the Seikhs for some spirits, by the present possessor. The cabin is a museum in itself, wherein admirers of Eastern art and Oriental curiosities might easily spend several hours with much gratification.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ *Chelmsford Chronicle*, October 9, 1863, 3.

⁴⁴⁴ *London Standard*, February 11, 1867, 3.

The *Hampshire Telegraph* reported that Roderick Dew had “played a prominent part in the celebrated march to Peking,” and “commanded the expedition which drove the Taepings from Ningpo.”⁴⁴⁵ The manner in which Dew came to possess them was complicated: “they were pillaged by the Seikhs from the Emperor of China’s Summer Palace, and, purchased from a party who bought them from the Seikhs for some spirits, by the present possessor.” Dew was possibly at pains to emphasize that he had not looted them, but purchased them outside the army auction. He had engaged during the campaign in looting that violated navy regulations on blockades and capture, according to a passage in the diaries of Charles Deyman Baillie, now in the British Library:

About a fortnight ago Capt. Dew of the “Encounter” found that a number of large junks carrying grain, peas, oil bales of cotton, furcloaks and many other things were going as is supposed up towards Peking so he captured them, and looted the best part of everything and then the other ships looted a good deal, and then it was wasted by oil and peas &c being thrown overboard, till this wanton throwing away of necessaries that would be useful to the Expedition was stopped by the Commissariat officer ... Very strict orders have been published forbidding any looting.⁴⁴⁶

In his cabin, surrounded by his art collection, Dew was not a looter, but a man of the world and a gentleman collector of Asian art; for the reporter saw the spoils and other artworks of unknown provenance as part of his personal museum, stating: “The cabin is a museum in itself, wherein admirers of Eastern art and Oriental curiosities might easily spend several hours with much gratification.”⁴⁴⁷ Like soldiers who presented their collections of looted art at military exhibitions, Dew’s status was raised in the public eye through plunder.

Textiles were also worked into the decor at Broomhall, the Elgin family seat, in the nineteenth century. In 1893, the *St. Andrews Citizen* reprinted one of a series of articles on “Gentlewomen at Home,” in the periodical *Gentlewomen*. The article included a description of the drawing room:

The mansion is replete with valuable historical relics ... in the drawing room ... A pair of very handsome bronze storks, mounted on elaborately-carved pedestals, keep guard at the drawing-room door. These, along with several fans, belonging to the late Empress of China, formed part of the “loot” from the Summer Palace at Tient-tsin.⁴⁴⁸

Since Lord Elgin had passed away soon after the war in 1863,⁴⁴⁹ it is possible that his wife Mary Louisa Bruce, Countess of Elgin and Kincardine (1819–98), had them displayed in his memory. Historian Sydney Checkland wrote that, in the 1910s, the spoils were disposed thus:

⁴⁴⁵ *Hampshire Telegraph*, April 6, 1867, 7.

⁴⁴⁶ Journal entry by Charles Deyman Baillie, summer 1860, Journals of Capt. (afterwards Lieut. Col.) Charles Deyman Baillie, 1857-1874, MS 50954-50955, vol. 2, 79, British Library, London.

⁴⁴⁷ *London Standard*, February 11, 1867, 3.

⁴⁴⁸ “The Countess of Elgin and Kincardine at Broomhall,” *St. Andrews Citizen*, December 30, 1893, 6.

⁴⁴⁹ *Scotsman*, November 30, 1863, 8.

The arch between the library and the ballroom was draped with the robes of the Emperor of China, in blue, while the ballroom windows were hung with the golden robes of mandarins, taken from the Summer Palace outside Peking before Elgin had it burned.⁴⁵⁰

Textiles matching this description appear in a recent Broomhall brochure. In the drawing room, imperial gold embroidered silks are hung above windows and a swag of embroidered blue silk is over the doorway to the library. The blue silk appears to be an uncut robe. A pair of bronze *qilin* figures flank the door inside the drawing room and the pair of bronze storks is just inside the library on either side of the door.⁴⁵¹ The drapes and pelmets are formed from generous swaths of silk, the dull sheen and cool colors complementing the Neoclassical decor. Although the blue swag over the door is small enough to have been made from a robe, the drapes over the windows are sewn from large “imperial yellow” silks trimmed with heavy fringe.

A robe from the Summer Palace was reported to be in Castlewellan Castle, County Down, Northern Ireland, in 1896. In that year, the *Dover Express* printed a story on the Countess of Annesley, the wife of Hugh Annesley, 5th Earl Annesley (1831–1908), née Priscilla Cecilia Armytage Moore (1870–1941). The story reported that the castle “held many curiosities. One of the portières is made from a gown worn by the Empress of China, and taken from the Summer Palace. It is of dark silk, embroidered with butterflies.”⁴⁵² How Hugh Annesley obtained the robe is yet unclear. He came from an aristocratic family and was an MP for the County of Cavan in the years 1857 to 1874. He was also a professional soldier, who fought with the 43rd (Monmouthshire) Regiment of Foot in the 8th Xhosa War (1850–53) and was heralded when he returned on leave in 1853 for being wounded in “the last successful encounter with that savage race,” by a local newspaper.⁴⁵³ He was then appointed to the Scots Fusiliers Guards by the Duke of Cambridge,⁴⁵⁴ and fought in the Crimean War. He was wounded at the Battle of Alma (September 20, 1854), and wrote a compelling account of his experiences to his mother, which was published in the *London Evening Standard*.⁴⁵⁵ However, he did not fight in China.⁴⁵⁶ On May 19, 1860 Annesley was promoted to the ranks of captain and lieutenant-colonel by purchase;⁴⁵⁷ however, he requested leave from a posting in Canada in 1862 to attend Parliament, then “yielded to the attractions of the locality,” and “devoted himself to moose shooting.” With the prospect of an investigation looming, he offered to retire.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁰ Checkland, *The Elgins, 1766–1917*, 262.

⁴⁵¹ *Broomhall: The Home of the Family of Bruce*, 3, 7, accessed May 3, 2022, https://issuu.com/broomhallhouse/docs/broomhall_house_brochure?e=28569486/45532019.

⁴⁵² *Dover Express*, April 17, 1896, 3.

⁴⁵³ *Downpatrick Recorder*, April 16, 1853, 2.

⁴⁵⁴ *London Evening Standard*, February 23, 1854, 1.

⁴⁵⁵ *London Evening Standard*, October 16, 1854, 1.

⁴⁵⁶ *Army and Navy Gazette*, April 28, 1860, 2.

⁴⁵⁷ *Army and Navy Gazette*, May 19, 1860, 3.

⁴⁵⁸ *Army and Navy Gazette*, March 22, 1862, 9.

Since Annesley served in the Crimean War with regiments that went on to China, it is likely that another officer gave or sold him the robe. The Buffs (Royal East Kent Regiment); the 31st (Huntingdonshire) Regiment; and the 44th (East Essex) Regiment of Foot were all in the Crimea and China. He seems to have known the John Strange Jocelyn, whose brother, the Hon. William Nassau, was attached to the Earl of Elgin in China from 1858 to 1859.⁴⁵⁹ Hugh Annesley was an amateur photographer and took many pictures of Castlewellan. Albums and copies of his work are in the Public Record Office and also in the Ulster Museum.⁴⁶⁰ One album holds images from the South Africa, showing a “Kaffir’s skull,” an ivory necklace, and an *assegai* (South African spear). For the British “kaffir” was a pejorative term for African people.⁴⁶¹ The National Army Museum holds three *assegai* spears taken during the Zulu War (1879), one of which came from the site where Prince Louis Eugene Napoleon (1856–79) was killed.⁴⁶² The collection of these objects by Annesley shows, not only the interest of soldiers in trophy documentation and display, but the great differences between trophies from China and other conflicts. A weapon, ivory and skull from South Africa represented violence against native people and even the hunting of them like big game. Summer Palace treasures were displayed as art and “curiosities.” The contents of Castlewellan Castle were sold at auction in 1964 through John Ross & Co., and the author has not been able to determine whether the robe was among the lots offered.⁴⁶³

Silks for Fancy Dress

Officers and their wives also wore imperial garments for fancy dress occasions. When a bal masque took place at Brighton in 1872, Capt. C. F. Dashwood (d. 1895), “whose robes were part of the spoils taken from the Summer Palace of Peking,” appeared as “his Celestial Majesty the Emperor of China.”⁴⁶⁴ During the Advent season of 1875, the International Gun and Polo Club gave a fancy-dress ball at the Royal Pavilion in Brighton. A newspaper report on the soirée noted:

⁴⁵⁹ “William Nassau Jocelyn, attaché to Lord Elgin and photographer,” VH02-080, Vacher-Hilditch Collection, Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol, accessed May 3, 2022, <https://www.hpcbristol.net/visual/vh02-080>.

⁴⁶⁰ Ulster Museum, ref. no. PRONI - T3774.

⁴⁶¹ Cornel Verwey and Michael Quayle, “Whiteness, Racism, and Afrikaner Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa,” *African Affairs* 111, no. 445 (2012): 565–66.

⁴⁶² National Army Museum, inv. nos. 1963-10-166-1, 1957-02-37-3, 1965-05-81-1. See notes for 1963-10-166-1, where the provenance of the spear is discussed: “Assegai recovered from the vicinity of the Prince Imperial’s body, 1 June 1879,” National Army Museum, accessed September 22, 2022, <https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?q=searchType%3Dsimple%26resultsDisplay%3Dlist%26simpleText%3Dassegai&pos=1&total=11&page=1&acc=1963-10-166-1>.

⁴⁶³ National Library of Ireland, call no. MS 41,905; *Castlewellan Castle, County Down, Northern Ireland: Catalogue of French and English Antique Furnishings, Oil Paintings, Porcelain, English and Continental Silver, Sheffield Plate, Tapestries and Library to be Sold by Auction* (Belfast: John Ross (Morgans) Auctioneers and Valuers, 1964). Attempts to obtain the catalogue have so far proved unsuccessful.

⁴⁶⁴ *Morning Post*, January 31, 1872, 3.

Amongst the dresses worthy of being particularised was that of an Empress of China, worn by the wife of a distinguished military officer, and which possessed the more value that it had been looted from the Summer Palace at Peking.⁴⁶⁵

When a Grand Fancy Dress Ball took place at the Regent Hotel in 1878, the *Leamington Spa Courier* detailed the costumes of those present, including:

Colonel Dunne—Taou-Kwancj, Emperor of China—1821–1850. Dress taken by the wearer from the Summer Palace, near Peking in 1860.⁴⁶⁶

This was John Hart Dunne, who had written about looting textiles at the Summer Palace in his memoir. (See 95–96.) This re-use of imperial silks may have been a means of ridiculing the Qing court, since the British had denounced both the Xianfeng emperor and his “mandarin” officials for their long “dresses,” harems, eunuchs, and other perceived signs of indulgence and corruption. When the Xianfeng emperor died in 1861, British newspapers reprinted commentary from the *North China Herald* on the “lascivious disposition” of the young ruler, who had “preferred the harem to offices of state, living in oriental luxury and indolence,” until he died “in a state of embecility—like his contemporary suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey ... amidst effeminate luxury.”⁴⁶⁷ This stereotype of the effeminate Chinese was further reinforced by continuing confusion over the gender of Qing court costume. At a bazaar in 1862, for instance, one stall featured what a reporter dismissively referred to as “a hat and dress that belong—had actually been worn it was said, by the late Emperor of the Flowery Land—the Son of Heaven when under the sun, and an inhabitant of the Summer Palace, at Peking. This appeared to have been a part of Somebody’s loot, the dress being of the imperial yellow, and valued at £30.” Another featured “A Chinese silk dress from the ‘Summer Palace’ at Peking,” without assigning a gender to the garment.⁴⁶⁸ One might also interpret this practice of wearing the enemy’s garments as a symbolic flaying, just as a hunter displays trophy pelts, like those on the walls of Wiltshire Regiment’s Mess Room in Peshawar. (See 123–24.)

6. Spoils for the British Public

This chapter ends with the circulation and interpretation of spoils among the British public as a transition to a wider consideration of plunder in civilian contexts. Returning to Christie’s Archives, we find some evidence that material from the Summer Palace was quickly dispersed among the civilian population. Already in the early 1860s, objects attributed to the Summer Palace were consigned by parties with no apparent connection to the British Army. On May 23, 1861, David Hanbury, Esq., Plough Court,

⁴⁶⁵ *London Evening Standard*, December 3, 1875, 3.

⁴⁶⁶ *Leamington Spa Courier*, January 26, 1878, 4.

⁴⁶⁷ *Newcastle Courant*, November 1, 1861, 6.

⁴⁶⁸ *Western Times*, September 13, 1862, 6.

Lombard Tr.,” consigned “a watch by Kendrick London, the stand with musical movement from the Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen.”⁴⁶⁹ This was catalogued and offered as:

85 A CABINET-SHAPED STAND, with columns and panels of agates and bloodstone, containing a musical movement, and a watch by Kendrick, London, ornamented with garnets and other stones. This object was taken at the sacking of the Palace of Yuen-min-Yuen.

On June 12, 1861, “Dr. Shaw, 1 Kensington Park Terrace North, Notting Hill,” brought in “Models of Pagoda in the Winter Palace Garden Pekin—taken from the summer palace,” with other material. These were sold on July 5th.⁴⁷⁰ On May 5, 1863, “Edward Best, Esq., 23 Jermyn Street,” consigned “An enamel stand (from the Summer Palace),” which was sold May 15th. On January 28, 1864, Messrs. Smith Elder, 65 Cornhill E., consigned “The Emperor of China’s Coat taken from the Summer Palace,” which was sold that February 18th. Then “Henry Ganeden Esq of 3 Charlton Place, Islington,” left on June 28th “1 watch set with pearls in case from the Summer Palace, Exhibited at the International Exhibition, 1862.” By mid-decade, objects linked with the site were somewhat dispersed. In 1865, a Mrs. Downie of 41 Leamington Road consigned a “yellow satin curtain from the Summer Palace, £20.”⁴⁷¹ Edward Webb, of Tooting Commons, Surrey, brought in “A Necklace of Jade Beads from the Summer Palace.”⁴⁷² The entries reflect the interest in silk, European objets d’art and cloisonné, which had a central place in the market after the war. The sale at Phillips on July 18, 1861, included 11 European objets d’art from the Summer Palace.⁴⁷³ Another sale featured “ANCIENT CHINESE ENAMELS, &C., FROM THE SUMMER PALACE, PEKIN.”⁴⁷⁴

Trophies for the Public

This includes objects linked with the Summer Palace that were called or used as trophies in nonmilitary contexts, which show that British society responded to messages from the army and government regarding the war and spoliation. One case of a looted object used as a trophy for sport is seen at the “Grand Western Archery Meeting of 1866” in Weymouth. There, a Mr. Field of London offered as a prize for women competitors: “a curious perforated Chinese scent bottle from the summer palace at Pekin.”⁴⁷⁵ The piece is possibly a reticulated snuff bottle, which may have seemed to the organizing committee or the owner a fitting prize for women, due to its diminutive size and perceived function. In 1863, the *Sherborne Mercury* reported that a Mr. Solomon Sly “presented to the Weymouth Museum,

⁴⁶⁹ Christie’s consignment registers, vol. 8, entry 737G, Christie’s Archive, London.

⁴⁷⁰ Christie’s consignment registers, vol. 8, entry 860G (Sale of July 5, 1861), Christie’s Archive, London.

⁴⁷¹ Christie’s consignment registers, vol. 10, entry 906N (Sale of June 28, 1866), Christie’s Archive, London.

⁴⁷² Christie’s consignment registers, vol. 10, entry 907N (Sale of June 28, 1866), Christie’s Archive, London.

⁴⁷³ Phillips London, Sale of July 18, 1861, Lots 87–95, 97.

⁴⁷⁴ Christie’s London, Sale of July 5, 1861.

⁴⁷⁵ *Dorset County Chronicle*, July 19, 1866, 9.

two very interesting trophies from the Emperor of China's Summer Palace." One was "A very curious coat, of extraordinary dimensions, the exterior being of some yellow material, very curiously figured, and having fur cuffs, whilst it is lined with a very large quantity of wool." The other was "a robe beautifully made of coloured silks and gold."⁴⁷⁶ The description of the garments as trophies likely rests on the British Army's practice of taking garments as such. The fur-trimmed garment appears to be a winter court coat of a type worn by Qianlong in a number of formal portraits. A well-known handscroll in the Cleveland Museum of Art shows the Qianlong emperor with his wives in imperial robes with fur collars.⁴⁷⁷

(Fig. 3-22) Many fur-trimmed winter court robes can also be seen in *The Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Present Dynasty*, a manual created for the Qianlong emperor, which was taken from the Summer Palace in 1860.⁴⁷⁸



3-22. Giuseppe Castiglione and Qing court artists, *Portraits of the Qianlong Emperor and His Twelve Consorts* (detail), Qianlong period, 1736 – ca. 1770s, handscroll (ink and colors on silk), H. 53 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art

There are also examples of looted objects sold as trophies by merchants. In 1864, the jewelry establishment of Messrs. J. and E. Hackett displayed some "interesting ornaments" taken from the Summer Palace, most importantly:

Two large bracelets in pure gold, of such a massive and valuable character that they weigh no less than one pound, two ounces. These bracelets are simple coils of golden wire, not at all unlike pieces of the Atlantic telegraph cable in their construction; but so devoid of alloy that they can be freely bent in any way without being in the least degree injured. As specimens of the rude yet magnificent ornaments of the Chinese we have never seen anything more interesting. Along with these are a number of rings, seals, &c., also borne away as trophies from the Summer Palace, and also of a remarkably interesting nature.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ *Sherborne Mercury*, May 19, 1863, 4.

⁴⁷⁷ Cleveland Museum of Art, acc. no. 1969.31.

⁴⁷⁸ V&A, acc. no. 820-1896. The album comprises a number of folios with fur-trimmed robes.

⁴⁷⁹ *Cork Examiner*, March 23, 1864, 2.

The comparison of these bracelets to the new Atlantic cable, the attention to their massiveness, and the description of them as “rude yet magnificent,” suggests the barbarity of an eastern court, which had collapsed under the weight of its own stultifying splendor. While Messrs. Hackett and Hackett may not have intended to convey this message, Orientalist paintings of Middle Eastern or West Asian harems, like *Odalisque* by Jean-Joseph-Benjamin Constant (1845–92),⁴⁸⁰ often depicted nude women with bracelets and armbands. The most famous case is *Mort de Sardanapale* (1827) by Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), in which King Sardanapalus reclines among his treasures, watching attendants execute his female slaves, whose jewelry cuts into their flesh, heightening the sense of sadistic eroticism.⁴⁸¹ The British tended to conflate the cultures of various Asian courts, condemning them all as corrupt and decadent; and this view encompassed the Summer Palace under the Xianfeng emperor. (See 127–28, 137, 268.)

Finally, the connection between trophies of war and hunting was promoted in the commercial sphere. William Bishop, agent to gun manufacturer Westly Richards, maintained a highly successful shop at 170 New Bond Street, earning over the years the moniker “Bishop of Bond-Street.”⁴⁸² After his death in 1871, his stock was dispersed. The *Morning Post* reported that his merchandise included exotic beasts, stuffed and mounted; portraits of sportsmen; guns and pistols; and “Amongst the curiosities will be found a tile from the Summer Palace of Peking, a Japanese chief’s dress, a rat-tail snake from St. Lucia, and sundry other articles.” The commentary suggested similarities between hunted animals and products of nonwhite cultures.⁴⁸³ On June 16, 1871, the *Clerkenwell News* reported that, among his taxidermy specimens and the like, the tile almost went unsold: “A lot including a tile from the roof of the Summer Palace at Peking and a preserved salmon tin, found by Captain Inglefield, R.N., on Beechy Island, was about being passed by, when 1s. was offered, and it was knocked down at that price.”⁴⁸⁴ The British had first arrived at the island in 1819 and made it a base for Arctic exploration. Commander Inglefield had stopped there during his search for Royal Navy officers Sir John Franklin (1786–1847) and Sir Edward Belcher (1799–1877).⁴⁸⁵ Thus were fragmentary traces of British imperialism – one from an ancient civilization and the other from an uninhabited island – joined at auction.

⁴⁸⁰ MMA, acc. no. 2017.202.4.

⁴⁸¹ Louvre Museum, numéro principal, RF 2346.

⁴⁸² “The Bishop of Bond-Street and His Hat,” *East London Observer*, April 1, 1871, 7.

⁴⁸³ “Relics of the Late ‘Bishop of Bond-Street’,” *Morning Post*, June 10, 1871.

⁴⁸⁴ *Clerkenwell News*, June 19, 1871, 5.

⁴⁸⁵ “Arrival from the Arctic Regions,” *John o’ Groat Journal*, November 12, 1852, 3.

Silks for Decoration and Fancy Dress

Members of the British public also used imperial textiles for dress and furnishing, due to the long-held admiration for Chinese silk in Britain.⁴⁸⁶ On June 14, 1861, Messrs. Fosters advertised for sale at auction:

112 Pieces of Rich CHINESE SILKS, taken during the late war from the Emperor's summer palace at Peking. These silks, made exclusively for the imperial princes and mandarins of high rank, comprise in colours yellow, orange, light blues, dark blues, greens, purples, reds, and browns. They are admirably adapted for dresses, dressing gowns, curtain, chair and sofa coverings, &c.⁴⁸⁷

In 1879, Messrs. Woodhams & Son at St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, offered for auction the contents of a private home, which included "silk needlework screens from the summer palace, Peking."⁴⁸⁸ The use of Chinese images and even Chinese silk for firescreens here likely comes out of the rococo fashion for chinoiserie screens, which featured Chinese landscapes, (Fig. 3-23) or flowers in Chinese pots.⁴⁸⁹

(Fig. 3-24)



3-23. English fire screen, 1760–70, mahogany and Chinese paper, H. 143.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

⁴⁸⁶ Verity Wilson, "Silk," in Clunas, *Chinese Export Art and Design*, 22–33. Chapter gives an overview of Chinese silk imports to Britain.

⁴⁸⁷ *Morning Post*, June 14, 1861, 8.

⁴⁸⁸ *Hastings and St Leonards Observer*, December 28, 1878, 4.

⁴⁸⁹ V&A, acc. nos. T.2-1929; W.35-1953.



3-24. English fire screen panel, 1725–50, satin with silk embroidery, H. 55.88, Victoria and Albert Museum

There are also many cases of imperial garments gifted to or altered by women for use. In 1861, the *Northampton Mercury* printed a letter to a Mr. Ball from a traveler named “Harby,” which had accompanied a “memento” of the Chinese war:

One of the Empress of China’s dresses, obtained by me from a Sikh soldier, after the sacking of the Summer Palace ... I hope it will not be too gaudy for you wife to make something out of it; at any rate, I trust the novelty will render it acceptable to her ... There were thousands of Mandarins dresses and rolls of silk taken from the palace, but I have not seen a handsomer one than the one I send.⁴⁹⁰

By “gaudy” Harby must have meant a brightly hued silk with polychrome embroidery. The intense hues of imperial garments (if the garment was in fact imperial), may not have been to his taste, but many women had begun to wear brightly-colored garments after the invention of synthetic dyes, like the purple called “Perkin’s Mauve.”⁴⁹¹ Fashion notices in the press suggest that bright new chemical dyes were wildly popular among women. Even Queen Victoria wore a dress of mauve violet and a corsage adorned with the Koh-i-noor for the wedding of her daughter Victoria (1840–1901), the Princess Royal, in 1858.⁴⁹² However, an opinion piece in *The Field, The Farm, The Garden* on British textiles dating to 1855 opened with a xenophobic complaint about the rude tastes of manufacturers and their customers: “It would seem as if public taste was still in great want of refinement. The negroes of the Gold Coast are said to admire nothing so much as the most tawdry Manchester goods, blotched with the most brilliant reds

⁴⁹⁰ *Northampton Mercury*, June 1, 1861, 7.

⁴⁹¹ Anthony S. Travis, “Mauve: Ancestor of the Organic Chemical Industry,” *Technology and Culture* 31, no. 1 (January 1990): 51–82.

⁴⁹² “The Royal Marriage,” *Morning Herald*, January 26, 1858, 4.

and yellows and blues; the delicate tracery of the Indian loom is looked upon with contempt.”⁴⁹³ Bright colors, then, were associated in some quarters with nonwhite cultures. For the sake of good taste, the use of color had to be controlled. One admirer of Perkin’s Mauve wrote in the *Morning Advertiser*: “The proper complimentary colour to mauve is a greenish yellow color, not an orange. And this is well for ladies to know who do not understand that Nature is inexorable in her laws of colours, and will not be trifled with, with impunity.”⁴⁹⁴ In the later nineteenth century, muted colors were fashionable among members of the Aesthetic Movement. Rebecca N. Mitchell notes in her study of satires on Aesthetic dress, that “artistic colour” was then all the rage; and she quotes author Mary Eliza Haweis (1848–98), on the importance of wearing unconventional colors: “When you see a colour which is moderately dull in tone, and so far indescribable that you question whether it is blue or green, green or brown, red or yellow, grapple it to your soul with hooks of steel: it is an artistic colour, and will mix with almost any other artistic colour.”⁴⁹⁵ Harby’s “dress” might also have appealed as a fashionable loose-fitting garment. As the decades wore on, women began to favor loose robes with Asian prints in pale or bright colors. Three examples of this fashion can be seen in *Lady in a Chinese Dress* (1865) by the Pre-Raphaelite painter Simeon Solomon (1840–1905); and well-known images of women in kimonos: *Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen* (1864), and *La Princesse du pays de la porcelaine* (1863–65), both painted by James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) within five years after the 1860 war.⁴⁹⁶

At a grand bal costume “for the benefit of the sick poor of the town,” a reporter noted that “Mrs Beatty’s Marquise a la Pompadour was a very beautiful character—the material of the dress being embroidered satin, taken from the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China a few years ago.”⁴⁹⁷ A *Robe à la Française* of Chinese silk was in keeping with eighteenth-century luxury dress, including numerous extant “sack back” dresses of imported silk; such as, a dress dated to the mid-eighteenth century in the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁴⁹⁸ Another dress of Chinese painted silk in the same collection was altered for fancy dress in the years 1870 to 1910 (roughly the period under consideration here), at which time the skirt was gathered and lifted to create a *polonaise*.⁴⁹⁹ Thus, Mrs. Beatty’s costume was in keeping with a fashion for eighteenth-century French fancy dress. An embroidered silk robe in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is linked with the Summer Palace in registration records, was likely modified for

⁴⁹³ *The Field, The Farm, The Garden: The Country Gentleman’s Newspaper*, July 21, 1855, 9.

⁴⁹⁴ *Morning Advertiser*, September 22, 1859, 3.

⁴⁹⁵ Rebecca N. Mitchell, “Acute Chinamania: Pathologizing Aesthetic Dress,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture*, 14, iss. 1 (April 2014): 45–64.

⁴⁹⁶ Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, acc. no. F1903.91a-b; Philadelphia Museum of Art, acc. no. Cat. 1112.

⁴⁹⁷ “The Fancy Ball in Wexford,” *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, July 21, 1866, 6.

⁴⁹⁸ V&A, acc. nos. T.593:1 to 5-1999.

⁴⁹⁹ V&A, acc. no. T.30-1910.

everyday use as a dressing gown.⁵⁰⁰ (Fig. 3-25) At some point, it was given a pointed flat collar, a lining and cord tie; and the sleeves were shortened; so that it resembles many nineteenth-century dressing gowns in public collections, including Japanese “Yokohama” gowns for export, western garments made with Asian textiles, or garments made with western textiles featuring patterns of Asian origin. (Fig. 3-26) Sarah Cheung has done a lengthy study of this robe and argues that “The alteration of Chinese garments for Western uses can be read as out-and-out imperialistic appropriation,” but places its appearance and modification in Britain within the wider history of adapting Asian dress in Europe, and she ultimately calls for “discussion that needs to go beyond the West and its Others, engaging both center and periphery as sites of transformation and hybridization and attending to the power structures between and within societies.”⁵⁰¹ In this scenario, imperialist appropriation does not ultimately affirm cultural superiority but leads to destabilization of cultural conventions relating to gender, national culture, and even notions of “East and West.” The emulation of Chinese imperial art after the war, covered in Chapter Five and Chapter Six of this study, is another example of the destabilizing power that cultural transfer and hybridization potentially have.



3-25. Chinese imperial robe, Qing Dynasty, silk, cotton and wool with silk embroidery, measurements unavailable, Victoria and Albert Museum

⁵⁰⁰ V&A, acc. no. 12-1881. See the accession entry on the museum website for the attribution to the Summer Palace, “Robe,” Victoria and Albert Museum website, accessed September 22, 2022, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O486036/robe-unknown/>.

⁵⁰¹ Sarah Cheung, “Fashion, Chinoiserie, and the Transnational: Material Translations between China, Japan and Britain,” in *Beyond Chinoiserie: Artistic Exchange between China and the West during the Late Qing Dynasty (1796–1911)*, ed. Petra ten-Doesschate Chu and Jennifer Milam (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018), Section 2, para. 4; Section 3, para. 2.



3-26. Japanese export dressing gown, ca. 1875, silk, measurements unavailable, Victoria and Albert Museum

Looted Objects at Fairs and Charity Bazaars

In addition to selling looted objects or displaying them at home, soldiers and civilians also lent looted objects to church bazaars and country fairs, which were mounted to raise money for charity or a community project, such as a costly church roof repair. While these sites may seem marginal to the art world in which imperial treasures were exchanged and displayed, Leslee Thorne-Murphy writes, “The bazaar was perhaps the most quintessentially Victorian of all fundraising efforts. It first came into prominence in the 1820s, at roughly the same time as the commercial bazaar, and the number of charity bazaars increased as the century progressed.”⁵⁰² She states further that bazaars were sites where people of all classes mixed in “a slightly carnivalesque milieu.” In a study of nineteenth-century English charity bazaars, Franklyn Kimmel Prochaska noted that the bazaar originated in western Asia and became an important and even fashionable vehicle for charity during the second quarter of the nineteenth century in England, where it became a largely Christian enterprise led mostly by women.⁵⁰³ Bazaar organizers raised money beyond sales in merchants’ stalls by selling tickets, which sometimes allowed entrance into a

⁵⁰² Leslee Thorne-Murphy, “The Charity Bazaar and Women’s Professionalization in Charlotte Mary Yonge’s *The Daisy Chain*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900* 47, iss. 4 (Autumn 2007): 881–99. See section: “The Charity Bazaar and Professional Exchange,” para. 3.

⁵⁰³ F. K. Prochaska, “Charity Bazaars in Nineteenth-Century England,” *Journal of British Studies* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 78.

temporary museum within the bazaar grounds. In these sites, objects from the Summer Palace were sometimes jumbled up with “ethnographic” material from New Zealand or shawls from India as uncatalogued “curiosities,” and their perceived value was accordingly impacted.

In August 1866, a “Fancy Bazaar” was held on the grounds of Sanquhar House in the parish of Forres, county of Elgin, for liquidation of a church debt. There in a stall presided over by ladies of the Fraser-Tytler clan were banner screens, two or three of which “were made from silk taken at the ‘looting’ of the summer palace at Pekin.”⁵⁰⁴ At Mrs. Grant’s stall nearby were “some gorgeous specimens of Chinese embroidered cloth, one or two banner screens, and a foot-stool, the covering of which was made from a portion of the Emperor of China’s robe [sic] sofa cushions.”⁵⁰⁵ In 1863, the Bradpole Bazaar was held at Bridport to fund the improvement of the church buildings. A reporter covering the event noted, “Among other objects of attraction was a large vase taken from the Summer Palace at Pekin, and presented by the Rev. William Beach, late chaplain to the Bishop of Hong Kong.”⁵⁰⁶ Sometimes the items were even displayed as trophies. The *Sheffield Independent* reported in 1864 that visitors to the makeshift “curiosity shop” at the Grand Bazaar to aid Wesleyan Chapel, “have an opportunity of inspecting an official robe of the notorious Governor Yeh, from the Summer Palace, Pekin; a valance of the late King of Delhi, a Russian musket and helmet from Sebastopol.”⁵⁰⁷ The display is quite similar to that seen in military exhibitions, particularly in the link drawn between Ye Minchen and Bahadur Shah II, who both died in British captivity.⁵⁰⁸ (See 127.) In 1875, a fundraising bazaar for the Newland Congregational Church included “a rich collection of Chinese porcelain, glass, and stone bottles (many of which are richly ornamented), some of them being from the summer palace at Pekin.”⁵⁰⁹ When in 1878 a bazaar was held at Berry Pomeroy Castle to raise funds for a church nearby, Rear Admiral Wilmot contributed, among other “curiosities,” was displayed “a large vase from the summer palace at Pekin.”⁵¹⁰ The numerous instances of Summer Palace objects at bazaars makes interpretations of them in these contexts as significant within Victorian Britain as interpretations in museums or auction houses, even if these contexts might be marginal within the history of Chinese art in Britain today. For many British citizens outside the art world, Summer Palace material was a feature of community culture, which was yet little understood.

⁵⁰⁴ *Elgin Courier*, August 31, 1866, 8.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Dorset County Chronicle*, July 30, 1863, 8.

⁵⁰⁷ *Sheffield Independent*, June 15, 1864, 3.

⁵⁰⁸ “Death of Commissioner Yeh,” *Wolverhampton Chronicle and Staffordshire Advertiser*, May 25, 1859, 2; Arshad Islam, “The Backlash in Delhi: British Treatment of the Mughal Royal Family Following the Indian ‘Sepoy Mutiny’ of 1857,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31, no. 2 (2011): 197–215.

⁵⁰⁹ *Stamford Mercury*, June 4, 1875, 4.

⁵¹⁰ *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette Daily Telegrams*, June 20, 1878, 2.

Decorating with Trophies: A Brazier at Longleat

The large quantity of ceramics and cloisonné taken by campaign members from the Summer Palace reflects the longstanding taste for Chinese porcelain among the British public. A review of auction catalogues dating between the years of 1861 and 1866 shows that roughly 1142 porcelains were sold, although an attribution to the Summer Palace does not guarantee provenance and cataloguing in these early sales is often vague.⁵¹¹ This group of objects from the Summer Palace became an important feature of prosperous households during the later years of the century, both as decor and collected material. One practice among wealthy men was to display large vessels of cloisonné as trophies, often with hunting trophies or images of hunting. This fashion followed the military tradition of displaying trophies of hunting and war together; but wealthy members of the nobility integrated such displays into the princely collections of large estates. One instance of such display is the Marquess of Bath and his cloisonné vessels. As noted in Chapter Four, the press reported that the Marquess had lent to the Frome Art and Industrial Exhibition “a massive ‘brazier’ of beautifully enamelled metal, taken from the summer palace at Pekin,”⁵¹² (See 73.) along with “early enamelled bronzes, candlesticks, [and] a square Chinese bronze, very curiously carved.”⁵¹³ The vessel is an impressive 47" tall and has an ornate reticulated cover. The Marquess displayed it on the grand staircase at Longleat, the ancient seat of the Thynne family, and kept two massive censers in the Saloon above, according to an inventory made after his death, which describes the first piece as “A large circular centre cistern to match the above [the ice chests now in the Saloon] on gilt ormolu cabriole feet on carved wood base in imitation of rock work and serpent, open work brass cover with horn Monsters,” and the others as a “Pair of large square Chinese cloisonné enamel caskets and covers surmounted [by] gilt ormolu kyilins on gilt ormolu feet, mask head and ring side handles – height 34 inches each.”⁵¹⁴ These are not attributed to the Summer Palace, but they are similar to a pair of censers taken by the French army from the estate in 1860.⁵¹⁵ An undated postcard reproduced here shows all three pieces on the landing and illustrates their visual impact. **(Fig. 3-27)** The censers were shown

⁵¹¹ Porcelains attributed to the Summer Palace appeared at the following sales. [The total number of pieces in each sale are given in parentheses after each sale date.] Phillips London, Sales of April 18, 1861 (10); December 12, 1861 (1). Christie’s London, Sales of April 26, 1861 (2); June 6, 1861 (8); June 12, 1861 (65 porcelains and 6 seats of enameled metal or ceramic); July 5, 1861 (6); May 15, 1862 (1 porcelain or enameled metal); May 22, 1862 (2); May 30, 1862 (328); July 21, 1862 (51); April 1, 1863 (18); July 20, 1863 (366); July 25, 1864 (206); Messrs. Foster London, Sale of June 20, 1866 (84 porcelains and 5 vessels of porcelain or enameled metal). The last sale listed is the Negroni sale.

⁵¹² *Bristol Mercury*, September 15, 1866, 3.

⁵¹³ *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, September 22, 1866, 6.

⁵¹⁴ Dr Kate Harris and Dr. James E. H. Ford, Curators, Longleat Historic Collections, email messages to the author, October 19, 2018.

⁵¹⁵ *Illustrated London News*, April 13, 1861, 334. Shows an engraving of one censer. Currently displayed at the Le Musée Chinois du Château de Fontainebleau. The lid of a matching vessel is fitted as a chandelier. A similar censer from the collection of Henry C. Gibson was offered for sale by Heritage Auctions, Sale of June 25, 2020, Lot 78250.

under a painting by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), titled “The Lion Hunt,” thereby linking trophies of hunting and war. Another copy of the painting in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, is shown here.⁵¹⁶

(Fig. 3-28) The censers seem to have made a strong impression on visitors. In 1887, a newspaper feature on Longleat for the series “English Homes” noted, “There is rare and beautiful furniture too: the old ebony cabinets in the drawing room, the rich buhl, and the lovely blue enamel “looted” from the Summer Palace at Pekin.”⁵¹⁷



3-27. Photograph of the Grand Staircase at Longleat, undated postcard, H. 15 cm, collection of the author



3-28. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Lion Hunt*, 1621, oil on canvas, H. 248.7 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

⁵¹⁶ Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. no. 602.

⁵¹⁷ “English Homes: IX,” *Illustrated London News*, February 5, 1887, 27.

Trophies of Hunting and War at Powerscourt

Mervyn Wingfield, the 7th Viscount Powerscourt (1836–1904), acquired pieces from the Summer Palace and kept them at Powerscourt, his family seat in Wicklow, Ireland. In Powerscourt’s collecting and display of these pieces, we see a civilian engaging in the practice of trophy display. In 1903, Wingfield published *A Description and History of Powerscourt*, a room-by-room tour of his magnificent estate, in which he mentioned Chinese pieces he had acquired in India. Wingfield had served in the 1st Regiment of Life Guards and made a shooting expedition to India with his brother officer Capt. Richard Bateson (1828–1905). They arrived in Mysore in November 1860, just after the conclusion of the China operation. As noted previously, the 44th Regiment and parts of the 67th Regiment had been sent to India and they most likely took along objects from the Summer Palace. (See 74.) The 67th had taken part in the operations around Beijing; and members of the regiment, like the army surgeon Alexander Clarke Ross, (See 203–5.) had come away from the imperial estate with loot but did not return to Britain directly.⁵¹⁸

How Wingfield acquired some of these objects is not settled, but he did visit Maj. Francis Cunningham (1820–75) of the Madras Army, who came from a well-known and cultured family with deep roots in British India. His brother, Maj.-Gen. Sir Alexander Cunningham (1814–93), was a British Army engineer and renowned archaeologist, who had published extensive surveys of India and amassed a huge collection of Asian antiquities, many of which are now in the British Museum.⁵¹⁹ Francis Cunningham presented his visitor with a custom-built chumpawood library table, which Wingfield later placed in the Entrance Hall at Powerscourt among suits of armor and hunting trophies.⁵²⁰ In 2018, it was sold at auction.⁵²¹ So it is possible that Wingfield acquired Chinese pieces through a member of the Cunningham family, who could easily have acquired these from an officer newly arrived in India, ready to convert his loot to cash. However, Wingfield acquired pieces with difficult provenance from other sources, including a temple lamp from an unnamed location in Mysore,⁵²² so Cunningham is not the only potential source. After noting “wonderful carvings in stone” at temples around Mysore, Wingfield asked a Capt. Johnson, Commissioner of Irrigation in that city, “to get me a specimen or two of these beautiful works of art.” Johnson then brought him two figures of Indian deities, which he displayed in his summer house on the grounds of Powerscourt. Wingfield seems to have felt pangs of guilt over the business:

⁵¹⁸ Thomas Carter, comp. *Historical Record of the Forty-Fourth, or the East Essex Regiment of Foot* (Chatham: Gale & Polden, 1887), 180. *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, January 13, 1861, 1; *Inverness Courier*, January 16, 1862, 5. Gives the movements of the 67th.

⁵¹⁹ BM, mus. nos. 1887,0717.47; 1887,0717.54; 1887,0717.57; 1887,0717.64.

⁵²⁰ Mervyn Wingfield, *A Description and History of Powerscourt* (London: Mitchell & Hughes, 1903), 16.

⁵²¹ Christie’s London, December 7, 2018, Sale 16217, Lot 601.

⁵²² Wingfield, *Powerscourt*, 25.

He sent me these two, saying that he had persuaded the Brahmin in charge of the temple to allow them to be taken away. The Brahmin would not take any money for them, so I sent him an illustrated copy of the works of Shakespeare, with which he was very much pleased. I believe the British Government will not now permit any of these relics of ancient times to be removed, which is quite right, as the shrines which they decorate would soon have been destroyed, so that I do not suppose such statues as these could be obtained now.⁵²³

Whether the Brahmin truly enjoyed the Shakespeare volume or was simply being polite cannot be known, but he had clearly been offended by the officer's overtures and had parted with the statues without giving him the opportunity to salve his conscience with money. Still, Johnson was effective in his business and Wingfield may have asked him to locate Chinese material as well.

But Wingfield spent most of his time hunting in an area he called "the Beelgharungum Hills,"⁵²⁴ and he returned home in June 1861 "well satisfied with the trophies which we had secured."⁵²⁵ These included elephant heads, stuffed birds, an elephant foot umbrella stand, and rugs made from the skins of a female leopard and her cubs, all of which he had shot; along with artworks from the Summer Palace. Wingfield did not display his Chinese pieces together as a collection, but integrated them with the eclectic decor about his palatial residence, giving them different stylistic functions in various rooms where they sat. In his book, the viscount noted the various pieces in each room as if he were leading a visitor on a tour about the house. Some items were in the Morning Room, in which he had gathered objects of special significance to his estate and family; such as, bookcases from an oak tree fallen by the famed Powerscourt Waterfall.⁵²⁶ The chamber was hung with portraits illustrating the noble history of the Powerscourt dignity, dating back to the Tudor period when the Wingfields had allied themselves with the English monarchy. Through the pictures, he recounts stories illustrating his family's close relationship with the ruling dynasties of England. Then he adeptly brings the discussion into the present through objects representing his own efforts to conserve and build the collection, such as a bronze miniature of the Fontana del Tritone by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), which he had seen in the Piazza Barberini. He had the fountain copied for his estate, but he replaced with the Powerscourt arms those of Pope Urban VIII (1568–1644) of the Barberini family, who had granted the original commission.⁵²⁷ With this alteration, the viscount possibly meant to reaffirm the Wingfield family's allegiance with the Protestant monarchy of England and his lack of deference to the papacy. In any case, this kind of collecting was the stuff of grand European tours, a tradition among the British upper classes since the seventeenth century. But Wingfield had also placed in the Morning Room items signifying the intersection of family history

⁵²³ Ibid., 91.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 31–32.

with the British Empire: an Egyptian bronze cat stolen after the Battle of Tell El Kebir (1882) by his brother Lewis Strange Wingfield (1842–91), who served in Egypt as a correspondent for the *Times* during Garnet Wolseley’s campaign;⁵²⁸ and “some Cloisonné enamels and vases on the bookcases which I brought from India, and had been looted from the Summer Palace at Pekin.”⁵²⁹ Thus, the story of the Powerscourt family history was woven into history of the British empire.

In the small drawing room, Powerscourt mixed chinoiserie ornament with looted objects. He writes that a copy of a Chippendale pier-glass depicting the fable of the fox and the grapes hung over the fireplace.⁵³⁰ Although this design is not in *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker’s Director* (1754), it was most likely an ornate chinoiserie piece like the dazzling gilt mirror in the Metropolitan Museum of Art shown here.⁵³¹ **(Fig. 3-29)** The collector hung Dutch and Italian Old Masters on two walls with the following items:

Portrait of the Maharajah of Mysore, given to Lord Powerscourt by him 3 April, 1861. Pen and ink drawing of an interior, by E. J. Poynter, R.A., 1871. Large Chinese yellow vase, painted with Chinese junks, figures, etc., brought from India by me in 1861, having been looted from the Summer Palace at Pekin. Two bronze statuettes on Sienna marble bases of Rousseau and Voltaire. A small bronze group, Hercules throwing Hylas into the sea (after Canova), bought by me at Venice.⁵³²

More signs of empire, this time from India and China, are displayed together within a princely collection of Old Masters and bronzes. The vase is most likely a Qing Dynasty *yangcai*-enameled vase with a river scene around the body and in parts enameled with lotus scrolls on a yellow ground. A vase of this type was sold through Christie’s in 2018. It is a yellow-ground “Hundred Boys” vase, Qianlong mark and period, which shows boys celebrating the Chinese New Year along a river.⁵³³ **(Fig. 3-30)**

⁵²⁸ Ibid., 30.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 28–32.

⁵³⁰ Ibid., 56.

⁵³¹ MMA, acc. no. 55.43.1.

⁵³² Wingfield, *Powerscourt*, 58.

⁵³³ Christie’s Hong Kong, Sale 16956, Lot 2752.



3-29. English pier glass, ca. 1760, glass mirror set in carved and gilded linden wood, H. 289.6 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



3-30. Chinese imperial *yangcai* "Hundred Boys" vase, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95),
porcelain with overglaze enamels, H. 38.8 cm, © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images

Although Wingfield did not mention objects from the Summer Palace in the main Drawing Room it is possible that such items were placed there at some point. A picture of this room shows a somewhat cluttered and overstuffed version of eighteenth-century French-Chinoiserie decor: The cabinet full of Sèvres is topped with export porcelain jars and a gilt Chippendale pier glass is above the chimney piece. **(Fig. 3-31)** On the mantel an export figurine stands with a number of small Chinese porcelain bowls. The picture is blurry, but there are five small bowls arranged in a line with three of what appear to be palace bowls, propped against the mirror. Two of the bowls are monochrome pieces, one shows a writhing dragon, and another is possibly a Qing Dynasty *yangcai* bowl enameled with flowers. In 1899, Wingfield's Chinese pieces drew the attention of a reporter for a "Celebrities at Home" newspaper feature, when he toured the large Drawing Room: "The two pietra dura tables were bought at Florence, and the large quantity of Sèvres turquoise china in one of the cabinets was collected by the fourth Marquis of Londonderry, while not a few of the Oriental ornaments were looted from the Summer Palace at Peking."⁵³⁴



3-31. Robert French, *The Drawing Room, Powerscourt House Co. Wicklow* (with detail of mantelpiece), 1865–1914, photograph, measurements unavailable, Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

⁵³⁴ *Dublin Daily Nation*, January 4, 1899, 7.

Wingfield also directed the reader to a magnificent cloisonné vessel in his ballroom or “Saloon.” Like the Marquess of Bath, (See 147–48.) he had placed his largest and most sturdy piece in an area for public receptions:

The large circular Chinese incense burner came from the Summer Palace at Peking, with others that are in the Morning Room. The skin of the leopard on the floor is that of one shot by me in Mysore, South India, in 1860. The skins of her two cubs are there also.⁵³⁵

Here Powerscourt was displaying his piece as a trophy next to the skins of leopards he had hunted, for he was a man who enjoying sharing stories of the chase – whether for art or animals – with visitors.

(Fig. 3-32) Another reporter who visited Powerscourt in 1899, informed readers that “Your host is pretty sure to show you the skulls of two elephants shot by himself in Mysore in 1861, when he was on a hunting expedition.”⁵³⁶ Beyond these looted pieces, Wingfield appears to have acquired no other Chinese works. Philip McEvansoneya writes that he concentrated on acquiring European paintings and decorative arts for the National Gallery of Ireland and the Dublin Museum of Science and Art (today the National Museum of Ireland).⁵³⁷



3-32. Robert French, *The Saloon at Powerscourt, 1865–1914*, photograph, measurements unavailable, Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

⁵³⁵ Wingfield, *A Description and History of Powerscourt*, 49.

⁵³⁶ “Viscount Powerscourt, K.P. at Powerscourt, Wicklow,” *Public Opinion: A Comprehensive Summary of the Press Throughout the World on All Important Current Topics* 75 (January–June 1899), 21.

⁵³⁷ Philip McEvansoneya, “A Collector’s Passion,” *Irish Arts Review* 29, no. 1, 2012.

7. Connoisseurship of Spoils: Dating a Bronze from the Summer Palace

British connoisseurship of Chinese imperial art also begins with the looting of the Summer Palace. Stephen W. Bushell (1844–1908), served as a doctor for the British Legation in Beijing from 1868 to 1900,⁵³⁸ and in that capacity made himself a leading specialist in the new British field of Chinese art. Elgin had forced the Qing court to accept the establishment of a British consulate in Beijing with the 1860 treaty,⁵³⁹ so Bushell's collecting and study of Chinese material was wholly enabled by the 1860 invasion. In his publication on the Victoria and Albert Museum collection, he noted the role of the spoliation in the transfer of ceramic specimens to British museums:

The coloured glazes are used in combination, as well as singly, as may be seen in a variety of objects in European museums brought from the summer palaces at Yuan Ming Yuan which were burned in 1860, such as large images of Kuan-Yin enamelled with turquoise blue and other soft colours posed on purple pedestals, smaller Buddhist images once built in the brick walls of temples, dragons, k'ilians, phoenixes, and other grotesque figures that once formed antefixal ornaments of walls.⁵⁴⁰

Bushell may have been referring to fragments of Guanyin sculptures taken from the tiled facade of the Hall of the Sea of Wisdom and the Glazed Tile Pagoda of Many Treasures in the Wanshou Shan, near the Yuanming Yuan. The has reported that many of these were taken by soldiers.⁵⁴¹ One of these was taken after the war and displayed in the Surrey Regimental Museum until 2015, when the building was destroyed by fire. A. W. Franks donated others to the British Museum.⁵⁴²

Museums had the collections and professional resources to support in-depth study of Chinese art. Central to this development was the challenge of dating and classifying imperial art, which would preoccupy new collectors for the remaining decades of the century and beyond. Bushell expressed the prevailing concerns regarding authenticity of collectors in his day: "It is well to be fairly familiar with the Chinese marks, although they are not always to be implicitly relied upon, being attached sometimes to indicate the peculiar style of decoration, sometimes even with a deliberate intention to deceive."⁵⁴³ This collecting history cannot be handled adequately within the space of this study, but one story will illustrate the issues connoisseurs faced and discussed in texts of the period. In the summer of 1861, a simple bronze

⁵³⁸ Yu-Jen Liu, "Stealing Words, Transplanting Images: Stephen Bushell and the Intercultural Articulation of "Chinese Art" in the Early Twentieth Century," *Archives of Asian Art* 68, no. (October 2018).

⁵³⁹ Convention: Peace, Indemnity, Cession of Cowloon, Commerce, U.K.-China, Oct. 24, 1860, FO 93/23/6, at 2, National Archives, Kew.

⁵⁴⁰ Stephen W. Bushell, *Chinese Art* (London: Wyman & Sons, 1906), 2:7.

⁵⁴¹ Beijing Summer Palace Administration Office and the Department of Architecture of Qinghua University, *Summer Palace* (Beijing: Zhaohua Publishing House, 1981), 66–67, 78–79.

⁵⁴² BM, mus. nos. Franks.459.a; Franks.1614.

⁵⁴³ Stephen Bushell, preface to *A History and Description of Chinese Porcelain*, by W. Cosmo Monkhouse (London: Cassell, 1901), xi–xii.

ding censer entered the British Museum, where it remains today.⁵⁴⁴ (Fig. 3-33) On June 29th it was noted, along with a pair of brass hinges and a memorandum book, in the accession register as:

- 1 Chinese memorandum book
- 2 Bronze three legged vessel with two handles stamped with seal character at the bottom being the date of the Seuentih Period. H 4 in. D. 7 1/2 in
- 3 Two door plates with two holes in each taken from the doors of Palace of Yuen-Ming Yuen Presented by Dr. Daniels? Castlemore Ireland.

2-3 From the Yuen-Ming-yuen Palace Peking.⁵⁴⁵

The pages, which are reproduced here, (Fig. 3-34) show sketches of the censer and the reign mark on the bottom of the vessel, which the intake agent attributed to the Xuande emperor (1399–1435, r. 1425–35). In the margin, someone has also noted an alternate spelling of Xuande: “H-s-ü-a-n-t-e” in another hand. The register lists as the donor “Dr. Daniels?” with a question mark and gives his residence as Castlemore, Ireland. The censer was then entered in the museum’s “Book of Presents’ on July 27th, 1861 as a “Chinese bronze vase dated in the reign of Suentih A.D. 1436, taken from the Summer Palace at Peking. Brass door plates (two) taken from the Yuen Ming Yuen Palace at Peking.” Presented by Dr. Daniels.”⁵⁴⁶





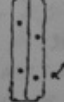
3-33. Chinese imperial *ding* censer, Qianlong period (r. 1736–95), copper alloy, H. 9.3 cm, author photograph, British Museum

⁵⁴⁴ BM, mus. no. 1861,0629.2.

⁵⁴⁵ Register of Antiquities – Ethnographical – vol. 1, Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum, 29 June 1861.

⁵⁴⁶ Book of Presents, 1854–1861, BM/1/200, British Museum.

1861 June

Date.	No.	Description.
6-29	1	Chinese memorandum book being a band of paper in twelve folios with red paper outside, enclosed in a case covered with blue cloth & with a red label. $2\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$.
	2	Bronze three legged vessel with two handles  stamped with seal character at its bottom being the date of the Sientai Period. H. $6\frac{1}{2}$ D. $7\frac{1}{2}$ 
cc. Hsinan ¹⁶	3	two door plates with two holes in each taken from the doors of Palace of Yuen-Ming-Yuen.  L. $16\frac{1}{2}$

How Acquired.	Pass ^d .	Bill.	Inc ^t .	Cat ^d .	Observations.
Presented by Dr. Daniels? Customs, Peking					<p>2) - Original Det. 1866</p> <p>2-3 From the Yuen-Ming-Yuen Palace Peking</p> <p>3) Coll. & Exam. 1866</p>

3-34. British Museum accession register entry, June 29, 1861, author photograph, measurements unavailable, British Museum

The register entry is good evidence for what antiquarians working in the preeminent national museum knew and didn't know about Chinese reign marks and bronzes right after the war. The intake agents wrote that the reign mark was stamped, though it was likely cold worked. However, they correctly identified the mark as seal script, recognized the emperor's name, and knew two different romanization systems. The primary writer appears to be using the system codified by the missionary Robert Morrison (1782–1834), in his *Dictionary of the Chinese Language* (1820).⁵⁴⁷ The note in the margin follows the system of Thomas Francis Wade (1818–95), as laid out in his book *A Progressive Course in Colloquial Chinese* (1867). Wade had accompanied the expedition as an interpreter and had translated the treaty for printing.⁵⁴⁸ He was also commended by the press for saving manuscripts from the fire at the Summer Palace.⁵⁴⁹ While the agents could read the inscription, they incorrectly identified the vessel as a “vase,”

⁵⁴⁷ Robert Morrison, *Dictionary of the Chinese Language in Three Parts* (Macao: Printed at the Honorable East India Company's Press, 1820).

⁵⁴⁸ *London Evening Standard*, November 29, 1860, 5.

⁵⁴⁹ *Morning Post*, June 14, 1861, 5.

possibly because it had no cover. In fact, it was an incense burner. Exhibition and auction catalogues of the period identified censers with perforated covers correctly. For instance, Christie's sold "A VERY FINE OBLONG BRONZE INCENSE BURNER AND COVER, on four feet, and with upright handles; inlaid with ornaments in gold and silver," soon after the war.⁵⁵⁰ Some museum staff would even have seen an eighteenth-century woodcut once in the collection of Hans Sloane (1660–1753), which showed a vase of flowers and *ding* censer with burning incense.⁵⁵¹ But the British had also seen *ding* vessels holding flowers before in export art from China. Evidence includes a chinoiserie plate by Minton transfer-printed and painted with antiquities, which shows a *ding* holding oversized flowers.⁵⁵² Moreover, Rose Kerr relates in an article on later Chinese bronzes that the Ming Dynasty scholar Wen Zhenheng (1586–1645) promoted the use of Xuande censers for flower arrangements in his *Treatise on Superfluous Things*.⁵⁵³

The writer has not yet been able to positively identify the individuals who entered the objects in the register; but there are likely candidates. The British Museum archive says that each department within the museum handled their own accessions and reported these to the museum trustees.⁵⁵⁴ In 1860 the Department of Antiquities was split into the Department of Coins and Medals and the Department of Oriental, British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography.⁵⁵⁵ The "List of Establishment," the official overview of the museum structure, states that in 1861 there were only three members in this department: the keeper, Samuel Birch; a first class assistant, Augustus Wollaston (A. W.) Franks (1826–97), and a second class assistant, who was not named.⁵⁵⁶ The handwriting in the accession register doesn't match samples for Birch and Franks, which the author has obtained;⁵⁵⁷ but it is possible that one or both of them dictated to the 2nd-class assistant. Samuel Birch was a sinologist; so he most likely oversaw the attribution.

⁵⁵⁰ Christie's London, Sale of July 5, 1861, Lot 102.

⁵⁵¹ British Museum, London, inv. no. 1906,1128,0.23. Transferred from the British Library in 1906.

⁵⁵² V&A, acc. no. C.14-2013.

⁵⁵³ Rose Kerr, "Rethinking Some Later Chinese Bronzes," *Arts of Asia* 43, no. 6, (2013): 94.

⁵⁵⁴ Francesca Hillier, Senior Archivist, British Museum Archive, email message to the author, December 2, 2020.

⁵⁵⁵ Joanna Bowring, *Chronology of Temporary Exhibitions at the British Museum*. British Museum Research Publications, no. 6 (London: British Museum, 2012), 6.

⁵⁵⁶ British Museum, *List of the Trustees, of the Standing Committee, and Sub-Committees; with Dates of Appointment, Election, etc.: also the Establishment of the Museum Generally, Shewing the Names and Salaries of the Officers, Assistants, Attendants, etc.; with the Dates of Their First Appointment or Employment, and of Their Promotion to Their Present Places*, May 2, 1861, 10, British Museum Archive.

⁵⁵⁷ Samuel Birch to Octavian Blewitt, May 4, 1863, Loan 96 RLF 1/1623/5, Royal Literary Fund - Case Files, Western Manuscripts Division, British Library; Augustus Wollaston Franks to John Edward Price, November 1, 1886, Loan 96 RLF 1/2250/5, Royal Literary Fund - Case Files, Western Manuscripts Division, Royal Literary Fund - Case Files, Western Manuscripts Division, British Library; Samuel Birch to Arthur Llewelyn Roberts, December 11, 1889, Loan 96 RLF 1/2149/21, Royal Literary Fund - Case Files, Western Manuscripts Division, British Library.

The donor was probably William Freeman Daniell (1818–65), an army surgeon, who had gone to China in 1860 with the 31st Regiment of Foot, which was in the First Division under the command of Sir John Michel, who also had things from the Summer Palace. (See 119–120, 219–20, 215, 224.) The *Army and Navy Gazette* had reported on April 6, 1861 that members of the 31st were at Chatham, so Daniell was home in time to visit the British Museum in June. In fact, explorer Robert McCormick (1800–90) wrote in his diary on June 15th: “Accompanied by my old friend Dr. Daniell to the British Museum, where he gave me a specimen of the New Tartary oak he discovered, and had named after me.”⁵⁵⁸ It’s odd that two or three literate professionals presiding at the intake couldn’t confirm the correct spelling of donor’s name; but R. W. D. Nickalls, who published a biography of Daniell in 2013, reports that Daniell’s parents recorded their names in his baptism register as “George and Mary Daniel,” with a single “l,” so there was variation in the spelling even within Daniell’s family.⁵⁵⁹ Daniell was a man of science in the British imperialist tradition. Nickalls further lays out his many activities: the numerous scientific publications to his name, his medical research and gathering of botanical specimens while posted overseas with the army in West Africa, Jamaica and elsewhere; and his many donations to the British Museum. Daniell’s obituary reported that in China: “his enthusiastic love of his favorite pursuit, botany, led him to make some additions to our knowledge of the Flora of that interesting region, more especially a fine new species of Tartary oak.”⁵⁶⁰ So the doctor may have brought the objects to the museum in that spirit, as subjects of scholarly interest.

The Oriental Antiquities staff dated the censer on the basis of the reign mark, but they didn’t know about the gnarly problem of Xuande bronzes, which continues to fascinate and perplex people to this day. As Li Mijia, researcher at the Palace Museum, writes: “The disputes over the Xuande incense burners have continued for hundreds of years. Some think that it is very possible that the incense burners cast in the 3rd year under the reign of Xuande did exist, however very rare and very precious even at that time. Some say that most of the incense burners with the mark of Xuande were later copies.”⁵⁶¹ This is the group of bronze tripod censers dating to the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty, which bear Xuande reign marks like the British Museum vessel. **(Fig. 3-35)** Some have been attributed to the Xuande period.⁵⁶² Most are dated later. These bronzes have been related to designs in the *Xuande yiqi tupu* (Illustrated

⁵⁵⁸ Robert McCormick, *Voyages of Discovery in the Arctic and Antarctic Seas, and Round the World: Being Personal Narratives of Attempts to Reach the North and South Poles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2: 351.

⁵⁵⁹ R. W. D. Nickalls, *William Freeman Daniell (1817–1865)*, December 17, 2013, 1.
<http://www.nickalls.org/dick/papers/daniell/DaniellwfBook.pdf>.

⁵⁶⁰ McCormick, *Voyages of Discovery*, 2:351.

⁵⁶¹ Li Mijia, *Qingong jiu cang “xuan tong” qi shiyi* [Explanation of doubts about “Xuan Bronze” Implements in the Old Collection of the Qing Palace], and “Incense Burners of the Xuande era Collected by the Qing Court,” in *Ming yongle xuande wenwu tu dian* [Splendors from the Yongle and Xuande Reigns of China’s Ming Dynasty], comp. by the Palace Museum (Beijing: *Gugong chuban she* [Forbidden City Publishing House], 2012).

⁵⁶² Rose Kerr, “Preliminary Note on Some Qing Bronze Types,” *Oriental Art* 26, 4 (Winter 1980/81): 447.

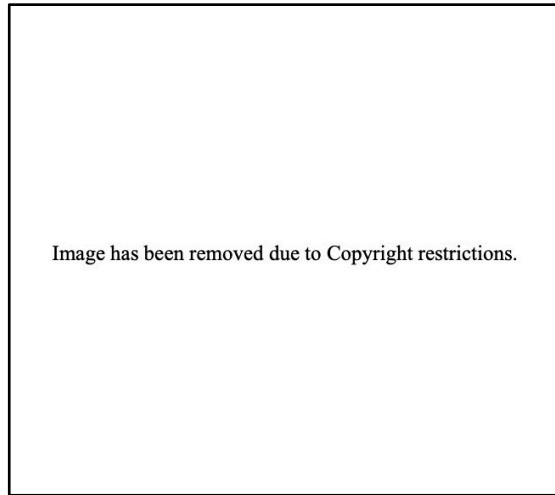
Catalogue of Xuande Sacral Vessels), a large order for imperial bronzes attributed to the Xuande emperor, which a number of scholars have deemed apocryphal.⁵⁶³ The intake team took the reign mark at face value and dated it to the Xuande period.

However, it was likely produced for Qianlong, for two reasons. First, many so-called “Xuande bronzes” bear Xuande reign marks in *kaishu* (regular script); but the reign mark on the British Museum *ding* is in archaistic spider seal script, which can be seen on many objects produced for Qing emperors in different materials. Two pages from *A History and Description of Chinese Porcelain* (1901), by poet and art critic William Cosmo Monkhouse (1840–1901), show that Chinese porcelain scholars in Britain, based on material available to them, believed that most Ming Dynasty marks on porcelain were in *kaishu*, while Qing Dynasty marks were rendered in seal script. **(Fig. 3-36)** Monkhouse even included a figure of Xuande reign mark, stating, “This is a six-character mark of the period of the Emperor Hsüan-tê. It reads, *ta ming hsüan tê nien chi*, ‘great Ming Hsüan-tê reign period made.’”⁵⁶⁴ Also, the Qianlong emperor took a great interest in bronzes, both those dating to the ancient dynasties of China and later periods, including the reign of the Xuande emperor. During his reign, he oversaw the production of the famed *Xiqing Gujian* (Illustrated Catalogue of the Xiqing Antiquities), and other massive catalogues of the imperial bronze collection.⁵⁶⁵ The emperor’s interest in this specific kind of *ding* can be seen in the painting “One or Two?” This shows him seated on a daybed surrounded by antiquities in the imperial collection, along with a bronze tripod censer resembling the British Museum specimen. **(Fig. 3-37)** Whether the identification of the censer at its accession was correct or not, the essential fact is that the first effort to date an artifact from the Summer Palace known to this author was not made by art specialists at an auction house, but by sinologists and antiquarians at a museum. The focus was a looted object with low market value, but great scholarly interest. The individuals who participated in this historic event would not be the last to confront such difficulties.

⁵⁶³ Rose Kerr, *Later Chinese Bronzes* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1990), 18–19; Robert D. Mowry, *China’s Renaissance in Bronze: The Robert H. Clague Collection of Later Chinese Bronzes 1100-1900* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1993), 82–93.

⁵⁶⁴ Cosmo Monkhouse, *A History and Description of Chinese Porcelain*. With notes by S. W. Bushell (New York: A. Wessels, 1901), 141.

⁵⁶⁵ Thomas Lawton, “Rong Geng and the Qing Imperial Bronze Collection: Scholarship in Early Twentieth-century China,” *Apollo* 145, iss. 421 (March 1, 1997): 12–13.



3-37. Anonymous court artist, *One or Two?*, Qianlong period (r. 1736–95), ink and colors on paper, H. 76.5 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing.

In Chapter One, it was noted that a circle of antiquarians fully acquainted with Chinese language, history and reign marks was operating in Britain at mid-century; but their work appears to have had no impact on the identification of Chinese imperial porcelains directly after the war. Auction catalogues did not identify reign marks on porcelains that were attributed to the Summer Palace and were clearly imperial in the early 1860s, although sometimes they mentioned the presence of stamps or seals. In a sale of December 1, 1862, “A FINE TRIPOD INCENSE BURNER, with upright handles, in eight foliage pattern compartments, inlaid with silver, a stamp on the bottom— 7 in. high,” and “A BEAUTIFUL SMALL BOTTLE, with flowers in colours, on turquoise ground—a stamp on the bottom,” were sold.⁵⁶⁶ At a Phillips sale in 1861, “A fine old bronze INCENSE BURNER, with embossed dragons and clouds, on tripod feet and inscription underneath; *from the Summer Palace*,” was offered.⁵⁶⁷ But this was atypical. No marks are mentioned in Christie’s sales catalogues in the years after the war.⁵⁶⁸ A typical palace bowl, catalogued as “A yellow basin, enamelled with dragons in green,” was sold at Christie’s in 1863. This would have had a reign mark, but none is mentioned.⁵⁶⁹ As Stacey Pierson has noted, for the marketplace and early collectors of Chinese imperial artworks, provenance “from the Summer Palace” was a sufficient guarantee of quality and status.⁵⁷⁰ A sea change occurs with the Burlington Fine Arts Club catalogues for its exhibitions of blue-and-white and colored porcelains in 1895 and 1896, where porcelain marks are explained at length and marks on individual porcelain exhibits are duly noted. In the 1895 catalogue, a “pair of long-necked bottles,” with “conventional decoration of lotus and sprays,” was dated as “Mark:

⁵⁶⁶ Christie’s London, Sale of December 1, 1861, Lots 51, 79.

⁵⁶⁷ Phillips London, Sale of December 12, 1861, Lot 61.

⁵⁶⁸ Christie’s London, Sales of April 26, 1861; May 27, 1861; June 6, 1861; June 12, 1861; July 5, 1861; May 15, 1862; May 30, 1861; June 30, 1862; July 21, 1862; June 11, 1863; July 20, 1863; July 6, 1864; July 14, 1864; July 25, 1864.

⁵⁶⁹ Christie’s London, Sale of April 1, 1863, Lot 157. Cf. BM, mus. no. 1926,1124.1; V&A, acc. nos. 71A-1883; 612-1907.

⁵⁷⁰ Pierson, ““True Beauty of Form,” 75–79.

Seuen-tih, 1426–35, but probably of a later date.”⁵⁷¹ When Monkhouse’s *A History and Description of Chinese Porcelain* appeared posthumously [note the inclusion of “History” in the title], a detailed discussion of imperial date marks on porcelain was included;⁵⁷² and when Stephen Bushell published his *Chinese Art* in 1906, he included a lengthy chapter on the Chinese ceramics of different dynasties and an appendix on porcelain marks, arguing that chronological classification of Chinese ceramics should be the primary focus of connoisseurs.⁵⁷³ However, decades of study lay between the Daniells bronze accession and these publications.

8. Conclusion

In this chapter the author consulted nineteenth-century evidence for the removal of objects from the Summer Palace during the spoliation, as well as the functions and meanings imposed on the looted objects by campaign members and the public directly after the war. The large amount of material taken (although difficult to quantify with certainty), and its distribution among the troops at the Summer Palace, indicate the growing power of the British Army, which led and enforced imperialist expansion overseas. This political context encouraged overtly political interpretations of the looted material among the army and the civilian population. Total victory over the Xianfeng emperor was celebrated through the selection and display of some objects among the spoils as trophies: evidence that the British Army had routed a seemingly failed and corrupt tyrant. Several of these were presented to Queen Victoria as signs of the Xianfeng emperor’s constitutional and political weakness relative to her own. Other objects were donated to regiments or displayed publicly in military exhibitions as trophies.

However, the provenance of these objects at the imperial estate complicated their status as trophies, as the author has shown through case studies. This complexity is compounded by the history of Britain’s importing Chinese goods as luxury items since the seventeenth century, discussed in Chapter One. (See 37–49.) In fact, established tastes for Chinese things contributed to the choices men made while looting the estate and their disposition of the spoils in Britain. Campaign members, their relatives and the general public displayed looted objects in their homes as part of the decor. They modified and donned imperial garments for fancy dress. They loaned or donated objects to museums and charity bazaars, or sold them through auction houses and private dealers. Dispersal of the looted material in this way led to new interpretations of them as art, antiquities and craft specimens, to be collected, displayed, studied and copied within the Victorian art world, as the following chapters will show.

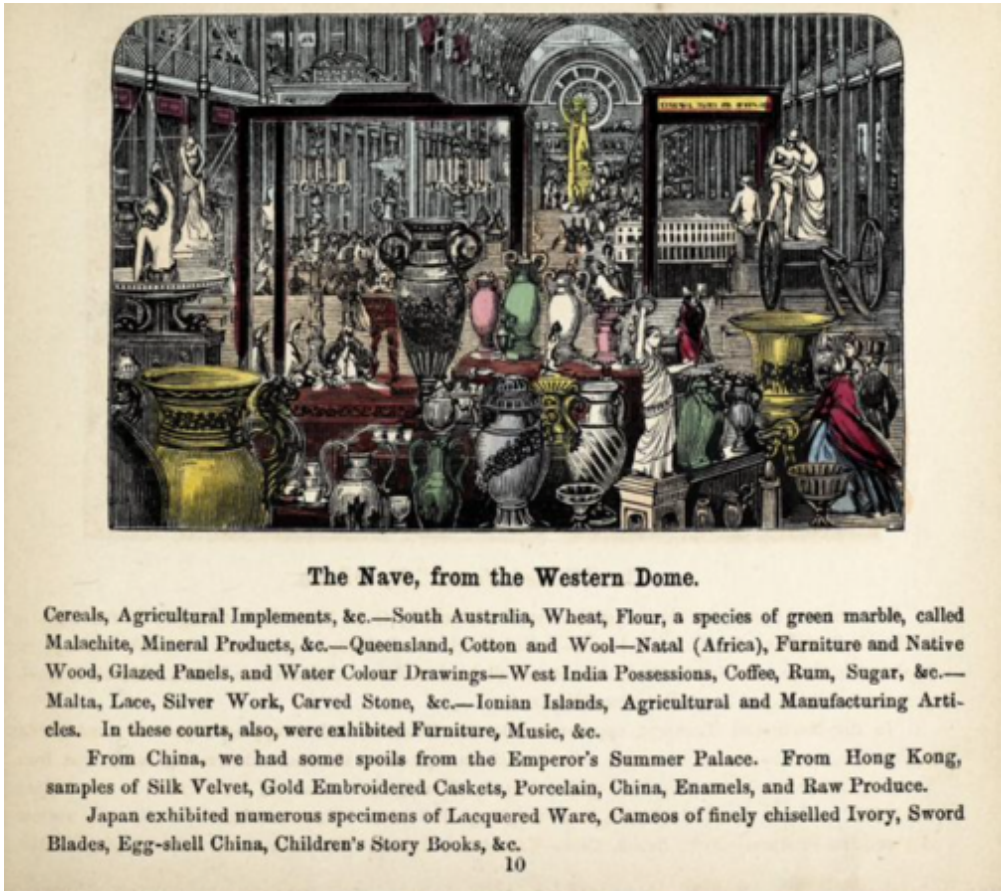
⁵⁷¹ W. Cosmo Monkhouse, *Catalogue of Blue and White Oriental Porcelain, Exhibited in 1895: Burlington Fine Arts Club* (London: Printed for the Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1895), 9.

⁵⁷² Monkhouse, *A History and Description of Chinese Porcelain*, 140–51.

⁵⁷³ Bushell, *Chinese Art*, 2:49–58.

Chapter Four

Objects from the Summer Palace at Exhibitions of Art and Industry



4-1. "The Nave, from the Western Dome," from *Remembrances of the Great International Exhibition, 1862*, 1862, printed booklet, H. 14 cm, Getty Research Institute

1. An Accounting of Spoils at Public Exhibitions

Of all the British citizens who saw material from the Summer Palace in the decade after the war, the majority encountered it first at large exhibitions of art and industry. In other words, the British public first experienced imperial Chinese objects mostly by looking at them in large, crowded exhibition spaces, rather than acquiring them through dealers or viewing them in elite venues like auction houses and private galleries. Art and industry exhibitions were typically celebrations of commerce and empire: vast displays of contemporary art and manufactures, often accompanied by "ethnographic" material and products from colonial outposts, assembled in large public spaces. The British readily inserted looted objects into these shows without critical consideration of their politics and provenance. A souvenir guide to the 1862 International Exhibition reproduced above stated casually, "From China, we had some spoils from the

Summer Palace.”⁵⁷⁴ (Fig. 4-1) In the decade after the war, Summer Palace material appeared at many such events. British newspapers of the 1860s noted objects “from the Summer Palace,” at 13 industrial art exhibitions. Three were museum exhibitions: a display of silks from the Summer Palace at the South Kensington Museum (1861); the Exhibition of Industrial and Decorative Art, Edinburgh (1861); and the Bristol Exhibition of Industrial and Ornamental Art (1861).⁵⁷⁵ Six were provincial exhibitions connected with art schools and tradesmen’s clubs: the Hull School of Art exhibition, Yorkshire (1862); the Mechanics Institute Exhibition, Berkhamstead (1863); the Dudley Geological Society Industrial Exhibition (1866); the Exhibition of Industry and Fine Arts at the Hartley Institution, South Hampton (1866); the Frome Art and Industrial Exhibition (1866); the Exhibition of Art and Industry at Inverness (1867); and the Exhibition of Fine Arts, Brighton (1867)].⁵⁷⁶ Material linked to the Summer Palace also appeared at conversazione held in the School of Art, Sheffield (1862); the Town Hall, Montrose (1863, 1864); the Sheffield Mechanics’ Hall (1866); the Literary Institution at Stowmarket (1864); and other locations.⁵⁷⁷ Two were international exhibitions: the International Exhibition of the Industrial Arts and Manufactures, and the Fine Arts of All Nations, London (1862); and the Dublin International Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures (1865).

The list of shows indicates that these goods were quickly dispersed through the United Kingdom and were shown in diverse venues. Some settings were port towns; others were manufacturing hubs or centers of government. Some shows were great international exhibitions involving nations around the globe; others were local affairs connected with government schools of art, augmented by private collections from leading citizens and travelling collections from the South Kensington Museum. In catalogues and reviews of these exhibitions, Chinese objects were often catalogued indifferently; but these shows encouraged serious and positive engagement with imperial Chinese art. Many objects in these shows were displayed as trophies or spoils, but they were received with great enthusiasm by a public ready for new and different approaches to design. Indeed, the British affinity for Chinese imperial art is one of the most surprising outcomes of the 1860 war. This chapter draws on exhibition catalogues, images, and press coverage for information about the displays and the public response, while examining the dispersal of spoils, their role in Victorian exhibition culture, and the meanings given them in various

⁵⁷⁴ *Remembrances of the Great International Exhibition, 1862* (London: Read, 1862), 10.

⁵⁷⁵ “Exhibition of Industrial Art in the National Gallery,” *Caledonian Mercury*, November 12, 1861, 3. Covers the Edinburgh show. “Exhibition of Industrial and Ornamental Art,” *Western Daily Press*, July 26, 1861, 2; “Art Exhibition,” *Hull Packet*, January 24, 1862, 26. See for coverage of the Bristol exhibition.

⁵⁷⁶ Sheffield (1862): “Annual Conversazione of the School of Art,” *Sheffield Independent*, January 22, 1862, 3; Yorkshire (1862): “Hull School of Art Exhibition,” *Hull Packet*, February 7, 1862, 5; Berkhamstead (1863): “Mechanics’ Institute Exhibition,” *Bucks Herald*, April 4, 1863, 7; Dudley (1866): “The Dudley Industrial Exhibition,” *Era*, September 23, 1866, 15; South Hampton (1866): “Hampshire and Isle of Wight Loan Exhibition,” *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, July 28, 1866, 6; Frome (1866): “Frome Industrial Exhibition,” *Bristol Mercury*, September 15, 1866, 3; and Inverness (1867): “Exhibition of Art and Industry in Inverness,” *Inverness Courier*, September 19, 1867, 5.

⁵⁷⁷ *Sheffield Independent*, January 22, 1862, 2; *Dundee Courier*, February 28, 1863, 4; *Dundee Courier*, February 29, 1864, 4; *Bury and Norwich Post*, May 23, 1865, 8.

contexts. Carol Duncan has written that spoils taken by Napoleon's armies were displayed at the Louvre, where "treasures, trophies, and icons became objects of art history, embodiments of a new form of cultural-historical wealth."⁵⁷⁸ Summer Palace material was likewise transformed at industrial art exhibitions.

2. The Scope of This Inquiry: Exhibitions of Art and Industry in Focus

This inquiry is restricted to shows where Summer Palace spoils were displayed as specimens of art manufacture and it concentrates on industrial art exhibitions and conversazione in the years between 1861 and 1867. There are several reasons for this time frame. First, the bulk of shows in which objects attributed to the Summer Palace were displayed as spoils took place within those years. This period also corresponds roughly with the bulk of Summer Palace auctions, which occurred as soldiers returned from China and put their plunder up for sale.⁵⁷⁹ Together, the art market and exhibition culture of this period encouraged both connoisseurship and design focussed on Chinese imperial art, which developed during the last three decades of the century.

This chapter leaves out shows that are outside the category of art and industry exhibitions. This includes the astonishing pre-auction showing of the spectacular collection formed by a wealthy Corsican, Capt. Negroni, who had led the first French company into the palace and took at least 484 articles estimated to be worth over £500,000.⁵⁸⁰ (See 77, 190, 196, 202, 205, 209, 228, 248.) The author was able to locate a catalogue for the auction at the New York Public Library during the course of this research and made it accessible to the public on her website, Yuanming Yuan Artefact Index, to facilitate international provenance research on the Summer Palace.⁵⁸¹ Louise Tythacott wrote study of its marketing and media coverage in her recent article on the Elgin and Negroni collections.⁵⁸² As she recounts, Negroni showed his collection at the Crystal Palace in 1865 and sold it through Foster's in 1866. In 1868, he was accused of obtaining loans on the basis of inflated estimates as to the collection's value, was tried for fraud, and found guilty.⁵⁸³ The exhibit is not included in this chapter because it was not formed by an Englishman,

⁵⁷⁸ Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals* (London: Routledge, 1995), 26–27.

⁵⁷⁹ Christie's London, Sales of April 26, 1861; May 27, 1861; June 6, 1861; June 12, 1861; July 5, 1861; July 18, 1861; May 15, 1862; May 30, 1862; June 30, 1862; July 21, 1862; December 1, 1862; April 1, 1863; June 11, 1863; July 1, 1863; July 20, 1863; May 18, 1864; July 6, 1864; July 14, 1864; July 25, 1864; March 20, 1865; June 28, 1866. Phillips London, Sales of April 18, 1861; July 18, 1861; December 12, 1861. Foster's London, Sale of June 20, 1866.

⁵⁸⁰ *Gloucester Journal*, March 11, 1865, 3.

⁵⁸¹ "Yuanming Yuan Artefact Index," Kate Hill, February 21, 2016, www.yuanmingyuanartefactindex.org. The library has since placed a digitized copy online. *Catalogue of Capitain de Negroni's Collection of Porcelain, Jade, Jewels, Silks, Furs, Stones, &c., from the Yuen-Min-Yuen. (The Summer Palace) Peking* (London: McCorquodale, 1865); New York Public Library digital collections website, accessed November 10, 2022, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/ba3346a0-dfcc-0133-654b-00505686a51c>.

⁵⁸² Tythacott, "Exhibiting and Auctioning Yuanmingyuan."

⁵⁸³ *Liverpool Daily Post*, July 11, 1868, 5.

it was not an industrial art exhibition, and the displays were viewed by the public as imperial treasures rather than specimens of art manufacture.

This chapter also leaves aside colonial exhibitions mounted in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which celebrated the consolidation of the British empire and the extraction of wealth from colonial possessions; such as, the Indian and Colonial Exhibition of 1886. These exhibitions did not focus on principles of “free trade” and internationalism that underlay earlier shows of industrial art, as problematic as those ideals were in practice. Finally, this chapter does not deal with Summer Palace material at exhibitions of private collections, such as the A. W. Franks show at Bethnal Green in 1878,⁵⁸⁴ or the Burlington Fine Arts Club porcelain shows of 1895 and 1896.⁵⁸⁵ These later exhibitions represent efforts to organize Chinese material on scholarly bases and are better dealt with in a study of late-nineteenth century Chinese art connoisseurship, for which there is unfortunately no room here. Such classification was not attempted at industrial art shows, where organizers had no interest in, nor real grounds for, ordering Chinese objects beyond visual evidence. They arranged and catalogued objects on the basis of material, style and technique to stimulate innovation in manufacture, rather than showcase collections of connoisseurs or make sense of Chinese art traditions.

3. Industrial Art Exhibitions in Victorian Britain

The great exhibitions of the nineteenth century reflected in their ambitious scope and spectacular venues the defining changes of this long century: industrial innovation, global expansion, growth of urban populations, and movements for social progress. These shows demonstrated for the public advances in applied science and manufacturing through displays of new consumer goods, industrial products and commodities; and they touted the benefits of global trade and empire through arrays of foodstuffs, “native” handicrafts, natural resources, manufactured goods, antiquities, military trophies and even living human beings. These diverse displays appeared in grand civic spaces, where they were viewed by large crowds of people participating in the new economy: consumers, textile magnates, designers, clerks, craftsmen and factory workers. Civic leaders encouraged attendance as a profitable use of leisure for all classes. The world was on display and the world was allowed in. Glittering arcades filled with dazzling arrays of objects and thronged with visitors created spectacles above and beyond the experience of individual exhibits.

⁵⁸⁴ Augustus Wollaston Franks, *Bethnal Green Branch Museum. Catalogue of a Collection of Oriental Porcelain Lent for Exhibition*, 2nd ed. (London: George E. Eyre & William Spottiswode, 1878).

⁵⁸⁵ Monkhouse, *Catalogue of Blue and White Oriental Porcelain*. W. Cosmo Monkhouse, *Catalogue of Coloured Chinese Porcelain Exhibited in 1896* (London: Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1896).

The evidence presented below shows a number of things. Pieces of decorative art in these contexts were presented as manufactured goods, rather than works of imagination; although they often appeared alongside sculptures and paintings, for these exhibitions typically encompassed what were considered the fine arts. But the exhibits were not designed for communion with individual works of genius. Instead, they encouraged visitors to marvel at the achievements of “civilized” nations, which were represented by the number and variety of displays, and to develop good taste through engagement with arrays of manufactured objects. While the circumstances surrounding each show differed, the civic groups that organized these events all had similar pedagogical goals: educating laborers, producers and consumers. Exhibitions would uplift laborers by granting them access to objects and social experiences that were previously available only to the wealthy. Most shows were promoted as a way to spread the cultural benefits of the industrial revolution to laborers, who inhabited manufacturing hubs plagued by overcrowding, disease, pollution, poverty, and industrial accidents. There was also a hope that educated workers would stay out of pubs to remain sober on the job; for drunkenness led to the evils of shoddy work, insubordination, and trade unionism.

In this spirit, reviews of provincial exhibitions often listed loans made by elite collectors and praised them for sharing their collections with public. Such condescension is long out of date; but it was fully in step with the liberal politics of the day. Until passage of the 1867 Reform Act, the franchise was restricted to male property owners,⁵⁸⁶ and it was only in the 1860s that the government began to look seriously into the subject of public education. At the same time, the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education established cultural institutions for the benefit of working people.⁵⁸⁷ When they undertook to build a museum for laborers at Bethnal Green in the suburbs of London,⁵⁸⁸ Honorary Secretary, philanthropist and fossil hunter Sir Antonio Brady (1811–91),⁵⁸⁹ wrote to Lord Granville (1815–91), Lord President of the Council, to argue for Bethnal Green on the grounds that public transportation made it accessible to workers and that the land had been set aside for the poor. He concluded:

In any plan of a museum that may be adopted for the improvement of the working classes, we submit that if they are to benefit by it to the fullest extent, it must be placed in a neighborhood accessible to them, and must be open of an evening. We submit that it be made educational in the widest sense of the word, and that convenient and comfortable refreshment-rooms be added to the other attractions of the place.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁶ “Provisions of the Reform Act,” *Clerkenwell News*, August 20, 1867, 2; “Second Reform Act 1867,” UK Parliament website, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/houseofcommons/reformacts/overview/furtherreformacts/>.

⁵⁸⁷ J. L. Alexander, “Lord John Russell and the Origins of the Committee of Council on Education,” *Historical Journal* 20, no. 2 (June 1977): 395–415. Takes a critical look at John Russell’s formation of the committee within the context of debates over religious instruction.

⁵⁸⁸ *Sun & Central Press*, June 25, 1872, 3. One example of press coverage for the Bethnal Green Museum opening ceremony.

⁵⁸⁹ *Stratford Times and South Essex Gazette*, December 14, 1881, 8.

⁵⁹⁰ Henry Cole, “The Bethnal Green Branch of the South Kensington Museum,” in C. C. Black, *Catalogue of the Collection of Paintings, Porcelain, Bronzes, Decorative Furniture, and Other Works of Art, Lent for Exhibition in the Bethnal Green Branch of the South Kensington Museum, by Sir Richard Wallace, Bart. June 1872*, 3rd ed. (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1872), viii.

If these leading citizens were paternalistic, they were effective. Henry Cole (1808–82), then director of the South Kensington Museum, included Brady's appeal in his introduction to Charles Christopher Black's catalogue for an exhibition of art collections belonging to Sir Richard Wallace (1818–90), which included his Sèvres, Old Master paintings and eighteenth-century French furniture, and opened at the Bethnal Green Museum in 1872. Art was no longer the purview of a small elite, which could be found only in private homes or forbidding galleries.

Producers would also benefit from exhibitions, which provided exposure to diverse crafts, styles and technologies. Supporting the manufacture of attractive goods was essential at a time when innovations in such areas as ceramic and textile technology were making it possible to mass-produce new items for markets at home and abroad. The goods had to appeal to consumers or overproduction would bring ruin. As David Cannadine writes in *Victorious Century*, there were “anxieties expressed by contemporary commentators, namely that British workers were among the least well trained, and that British manufacturers were among the worst educated in western Europe. This meant that the United Kingdom might be mass-producing larger numbers of inexpensive goods than any other country in the world, they were often of inferior quality compared to the better finished and better designed artefacts being turned out on the continent, especially in France and Prussia.”⁵⁹¹ Newspaper reviews exhorted manufacturers to examine the products of different cultures and international competitors for inspiration. Concerns over the poor design of many manufactured goods moved the government to establish throughout the country numerous schools of art, where a new generation of designers would be trained to make the most of Britain's industrial innovations. Paul A. C. Spool writes in his study of government-sponsored arts education that Parliament established the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures in 1835, which concluded on the basis of public hearings and extensive research, that a nationwide program of art education should be instituted to train designers, while informing the tastes of manufacturers and consumers.⁵⁹² These artists would have positions wholly different from eighteenth-century craftsmen like Thomas Chippendale (1718–79), who worked only for wealthy patrons. Since exposure to various techniques, materials and styles was seen as critical to artistic education, these exhibitions were often launched in conjunction with the opening or expansion of art schools and organized around travelling collections of global decorative arts from the South Kensington Museum.

Design leaders also understood that the desires of consumers had to align with those of producers to ensure profit. Beautiful products would go unsold if the buying public did not want or could not appreciate them. Thus an effort to educate consumers in matters of “taste” emerged in tandem with the

⁵⁹¹ David Cannadine, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800–1906* (London: Penguin Books, 2018), 257.

⁵⁹² Paul A. C. Spool, “Matters of Taste and Matters of Commerce: British Government Intervention in Art Education in 1835,” *Studies in Art Education* 35, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 105–13.

movement to reform British design; and commentary surrounding exhibitions often stressed the importance of instilling “taste” in visitors. Good “taste” is never clearly defined in the many exhibition reviews and catalogues published around the middle of the century, partly because this was not a settled issue. But leading designers agreed that good taste rejected all attempts at realism, which was more properly of concern to the fine arts: sculpture and painting. In *Principles of Decorative Design*, Christopher Dresser advocated flat patterns for any flat surface, including ceilings, complaining:

On the Continent we very frequently meet with ceilings on which large pictures have been painted, as in the Louvre and the Luxembourg in Paris; and the authorities of the South Kensington Museum are making efforts to introduce this style into England, but such pictorial ceilings are in every way wrong.⁵⁹³

He also noted that designer Richard Redgrave had celebrated Indian textiles for their geometric, flat designs, in a report to the commissioners of the 1851 International Exhibition, stating:

The ornament is always flat, and without shadow; natural flowers are never used imitatively or perspectively, but are conventionalised by being displayed flat and according to a symmetrical arrangement; and all other objects, even animals and birds, when used as ornament, are reduced to their simplest flat form.⁵⁹⁴

Growing displeasure with illusionistic wallpapers and carpets moved Henry Cole to establish his famed “Chamber of Horrors,” during the 1851 exhibition in London, which demonstrated that design must be true to its function and position in the hierarchy of arts.⁵⁹⁵ Beyond these principles, proponents of exhibitions and design reform promoted the view that “taste” was a faculty acquired through exposure to works of art and craft, rather than the innate sensibility of an individual or an elite class of patrons. It was a democratic if somewhat paternalistic approach to taste, which answered the needs of an expanding economy.

4. Exhibitions and Imperialism

While nineteenth-century proponents of international exhibitions argued that displays of foreign goods would encourage “free trade,” inspiring innovation and creating competition for the benefit of Britain and humankind, courts for European colonies at international exhibitions displayed fruits of empire: products and natural resources processed by cheap native labor. Such displays ultimately shifted center as Britain and other nations walked away from their “free trade” ideals and developed closed relationships with their colonies later in the century. Contemporary critics have shown how these events reinforced notions of European cultural superiority and many studies have documented the role of public exhibitions in promoting imperialism. In his study of colonial exhibitions, Peter Hoffenberg writes:

⁵⁹³ Christopher Dresser, *Principles of Decorative Design* (London: Cassell Petter & Galpin, 1870), 82.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁹⁵ Suga Yasuko, “Designing the Morality of Consumption: ‘Chamber of Horrors’ at the Museum of Ornamental Art, 1852–3,” *Design Issues* 20, no. 4 (Autumn 2004): 43–56.

They were also part of and the early sign for a ritualized and integrated community, founded upon a particular participatory practice of culture. Such imperial pictures encoded racial, aesthetic, and economic oppositions and hierarchies, but also suggested the empire and nation as reconciling pictures.⁵⁹⁶

Colonial exhibitions established fictional relationships between colonial powers and subject peoples that allowed visitors at the imperial center to participate in its grand project, understand its benefits, and see the colonies as part of the European imperial fabric. In *Colonialism and the Object*, Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn looked at exhibits of British colonial products, the effect of colonial power relationships on interpretations of these, and their impact on art production in Britain. This inquiry, they argued, went beyond the deconstruction of imperialist images and texts:

While representations of all kinds have been subjected to critical scrutiny within the general project of post-colonial enquiry, the broader category of functional, non-representational three-dimensional objects (whether considered as ‘the applied arts’, ‘the decorative arts’, or less restrictively as ‘material culture’) has largely been ignored in the context of debates about colonialism.⁵⁹⁷

In other words, the creation, positioning and interpretation of myriad objects outside the realm of propagandistic image-making should be critically reexamined. This chapter focusses specifically on such material, as it was presented at exhibitions.

Critics have argued that international exhibitions allowed European citizens to experience an illusion of global knowledge essential to an imperialist sense of authority. In *Spaces of Global Knowledge* (2015), Finnegan and Wright wrote that “making, circulation and reception of knowledge,” about empire supported “this process of worldwide integration, whether manifest in the expansion of formal empires, the creation of informal empires and spheres of influence or the intercultural processes of exhibition, encounter and exchange that imperial enterprise occasioned.”⁵⁹⁸ Paul Young shows in *Globalization and the Great Exhibition* how international exhibitions promoted British colonialism as benevolent capitalism and “free trade”: an international system of production and exchange, which brought progress and prosperity, linking nations in a global community. He writes: “mid-nineteenth-century representations of globalization cast market forces with relation to goodwill and fellow-feeling, allowing the self-interest of man the economic animal to be transfigured as a form of brotherly love that guaranteed human recognition.”⁵⁹⁹ This benign picture, he argues, denied the reality of British imperialism, which was

⁵⁹⁶ Peter Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 30.

⁵⁹⁷ Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, “Introduction,” in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (New York: Routledge, 1998), 3.

⁵⁹⁸ Diarmid A. Finnegan and Jonathan J. Wright, *Spaces of Global Knowledge: Exhibition, Encounter and Exchange in an Age of Empire* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 4.

⁵⁹⁹ Paul Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition: The Victorian New World Order* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 21.

represented at these shows by colonial departments, often located near Chinese displays. “Free trade” was usually effected through military intervention, as in the cases of Japan and China.

5. Exhibitions and Orientalism

Some scholars have looked at nineteenth-century “Oriental” courts in art and industry exhibitions, showing how they represented Asian cultures negatively: reinforcing notions of “the Other,” framing Asian objects as evidence of backwardness and degeneracy, divesting Asians of their histories, and situating ancient civilizations like China and Egypt within the Eurocentric chronology of “progress.” In her book *Oriental Visions*, Nicky Levell looks at displays of non-white cultures, including China, within the Crystal Palace reconstituted at Sydenham after the 1851 Great Exhibition and finds that the exhibits were based on “eurocentric classification, which served to position and fix the Orient in distant antiquity, in contrast to Europe’s successive advancements through historical time.” The ancient monuments of Egypt, the ornament of India, the Chinese collection of John Henry “Archdeacon” Gray (1828–90), and the “natural history” of the Malays and the Dyaks of Borneo, were all integrated into a vision of a “primitive” world outside modern Europe through displays of craft and human exhibits.⁶⁰⁰ Lara Kriegel shows how the India Court at the 1851 exhibition allowed visitors to enjoy the fruits of colonialism, arranged around an ivory throne presented to Queen Victoria, which is still in the Royal Collection.⁶⁰¹ Paul Young discusses the romantic fantasies of the East that encircled displays of Asian material at the same 1851 exhibition, arousing in crowds a lust for “Oriental” jewels, considered dangerously out of control and at odds with the professed goals of enlightened capitalism at the heart of the exhibition movement. He concludes: “The display of Eastern goods at the Crystal Palace, coupled with the exotic manner in which they were represented both visually and textually, can be understood to have sharpened Orientalist tastes and desires.”⁶⁰²

Franceska Vanke compares the courts for China and the Ottoman Empire at the 1851 exhibition. Noting Britain’s alliance with Turkey against Russia and the more difficult trade relationship with China (exacerbated by British opium), she concludes that politics shaped the displays, producing an incoherent and indifferent response to China and an affinity for Turkey.⁶⁰³ Catherine Pagani looks at changes in British attitudes towards China and Chinese culture from the eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries.

⁶⁰⁰ Nicky Levell, “The Crystal Palace at Sydenham: An Alhambra of Pleasure,” chap. 1 in *Oriental Visions: Exhibitions, Travel, and Collecting in the Victorian Age* (London: Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2000). Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 1561.

⁶⁰¹ Lara Kriegel, “Narrating the Subcontinent in 1851: India at the Crystal Palace,” in *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Louise Purbrick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 146–78.

⁶⁰² Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition*, 120–25.

⁶⁰³ Franceska Vanke, “Degrees of Otherness: The Ottoman Empire and China at the Great Exhibition of 1851,” in *Britain, the Empire and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, ed. Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 191–205.

Initially, she writes, consumers imagined China as an exotic paradise of happy pigtailed people; but their attitude hardened during the First Opium War into hostility towards Chinese culture. However, the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 and the opening of the Chinese Museum by American businessman Nathan Dunn (1782–1844), that year renewed the public’s curiosity. The exhibition enjoyed great success, for Britain as an ascendant colonial power was open to China as a source of commodities, if not as an equal.⁶⁰⁴ This idea of China as a subservient and isolated trade partner is embodied in the “Chinaman” seated with a tea canister in the sculpture group “Asia” by John Henry Foley (1818–74) for the Albert Memorial, engraved for the *Art Journal* issue on the 1871 international exhibition. The sculpture is dominated by a semi-nude “Oriental” beauty, who suggestively lifts a veil from her head while riding an elephant, as the subjugated and sexually available figure of India.⁶⁰⁵ (Fig. 4-2)



4-2. Richard Austin Artlett, “Asia,” from *Art Journal*, 1871, engraving, H. 34 cm (page), Community Library

⁶⁰⁴ Catherine Pagani, “Chinese Material Culture and British Perceptions of China in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” in Barringer and Flynn, *Colonialism and the Object*, 28–40.

⁶⁰⁵ “The International Exhibition, 1871,” special issue, *Art Journal*, n.s., 10 (London: Virtue, 1871): 168.

6. China at Industrial Art Exhibitions

China had a unique status within nineteenth-century exhibitions as a nonwhite and non-Christian nation, which was also an ancient civilization and a manufacturing powerhouse that had exported precious silk, lacquer, porcelains and tea for centuries. Chinese porcelain had been displayed as a wonder in early curiosity cabinets,⁶⁰⁶ collected by the nobility and other wealthy elites, (See 37, 38, 50–51.) and eagerly emulated by British manufacturers since the seventeenth century. (See 36.) China was also a special case in the history of British imperialism. While the British dominated native peoples in colonies like New Zealand, India and Jamaica; they had no desire nor ability to take over China, even though they had wrested the territory of Hong Kong and new trade privileges from the imperial government during the Opium Wars. As historian John Darwin writes, China is best understood as a part of Britain's informal empire, a system in which weaker countries were not overtaken and colonized, but adapted to its political and economic goals through cooptation and threats.⁶⁰⁷ Still, China stood aloof as a mature and populous nation of immense territory, which refused to join the industrial revolution and could not be dominated culturally.

Though Britain had devoured Chinese imports, which had inspired innovation in ceramics and textile production and generated huge profits (in the best spirit of international competition); China had steadfastly refused to join the global “free trade” movement, which was a cause of much complaint from the British. George Staunton, in regard to the treatment of traders in Canton, wrote “There was little scruple in laying those restrictions on foreign trade, the government of China not being impressed with any idea of its importance to a country including so many climates, and supplying within itself, all the necessaries, if not all the luxuries, of life.”⁶⁰⁸ But China, with its huge agricultural and manufacturing sectors, felt that it had no need of British products, causing resentment among manufacturers. The trade imbalance had ultimately spurred Britain to become the world's biggest opium producer and make numerous incursions into that country in order to force open ports and obtain treaties favorable to British traders. Olivia L. E. Blessing writes that in 1797, the British were exporting 4,000 boxes of opium to China per year, and that the number had risen to 6,500 by 1820.⁶⁰⁹ In *Deadly Dreams: Opium and the Arrow War (1856–1860) in China* (1998), John Wong investigated British narratives of the Second Opium War and concluded that the famed conflict over the *Arrow* lorcha incident, in which Chinese

⁶⁰⁶ Curtis P. Schuh and Wendell E. Wilson, “Rumpf’s Ambonese Curiosity Cabinet (1705) and the first color-plate illustrations of minerals,” *Mineralogical Record* 38, iss. 6 (November/December 2007): para. 8; Jean-Dominique Augarde, “The Scientific Cabinet of Comte d’Ons-en-Bray and a Clock by Domenico Cucci,” *Cleveland Studies in the History of Art* 8 (2003): 82.

⁶⁰⁷ John Darwin, “Britain’s Empires,” in *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, ed. Sarah Stockwell (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2008), 14–15.

⁶⁰⁸ Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 1:15.

⁶⁰⁹ Olivia L. E. Blessing, “China Weeps: the Opium Wars and China’s Stolen History,” *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals* 11, iss. 1 (Winter 2015), para. 9–10.

authorities arrested the crew of a ship suspected of smuggling under a lapsed British license, was a pretext for a military operation that would win concessions from the Chinese on British opium imports.⁶¹⁰ Historian of empire Andrew Thompson writes that even the radical “free traders” of Manchester supported “deployment of armed forces to extend Britain’s markets during the Opium Wars.”⁶¹¹

So, objects from the Summer Palace at international exhibitions had been looted as part of a military campaign to force opium and trade concessions on China; but they filled in for Chinese trade goods at a time when the Chinese government had no inclination to join celebrations of international trade. At the 1851 Great Exhibition, importers like Hewett & Co. had provided the exhibits; China had declined to send goods to Britain, which it considered an adversary.⁶¹² Intentionally or not, spoils also stood as a warning to any nation that refused to deal with Britain on British terms. Displays of spoils made a distant victory visible to civilians, illustrated the material rewards of imperialism and created spectacles that inspired national pride. In *Spaces of Global Knowledge* (2015), Finnegan and Wright argue that the “making, circulation and reception of knowledge,” was part of “this process of worldwide integration, whether manifest in the expansion of formal empires, the creation of informal empires and spheres of influence or the intercultural processes of exhibition, encounter and exchange that imperial enterprise occasioned.”⁶¹³ Ordering looted objects in public exhibition halls enabled the British to know and interpret China on their own terms. But the displays ultimately had a beneficial impact on Britain’s awareness of Chinese culture.

7. Summer Palace Treasures at Exhibitions

Imperial Chinese art inspired British manufacturers at a time of national discussion regarding the importance of good design in manufacturing. Chapter Three discussed the silks taken by soldiers from the Summer Palace and these were soon put on public display. What appealed to design leaders and the general public most was the use of color in textiles and other mediums by Chinese craftsmen. In reviewing an exhibition of Chinese “dresses” from the Summer Palace at Madame Tussaud’s, the *Morning Post* was emphatic:

Nothing can surpass in brilliancy and tone of colours, richness of material, and purity of design, the dresses captured at the taking of the Summer Palace at Peking ... The manufacturers of Lyons have, it is believed, the best claim to perfection in their art, and some things have been produced in this country entitled to great praise; but they are clearly inferior to these Chinese silks, both in design and in texture. The most gorgeous and magnificent effects are

⁶¹⁰ John Wong, *Deadly Dreams: Opium and the Arrow War (1856–1860) in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁶¹¹ Andrew Thompson, “Empire and the British State,” in *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, ed. Sarah Stockwell (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 45.

⁶¹² Vanke, “Degrees of Otherness,” 195–96.

⁶¹³ Finnegan and Wright, *Spaces of Global Knowledge*, 4.

produced, yet the mode of treatment of the colours has prevented all that in most hands would have been tawdry.⁶¹⁴

The comment about “tawdry” color reflects designers’ concern over color in manufacturing, seen in other commentaries on color in Summer Palace material. (See 206–7, 256.)

Despite the political overtones of many postwar exhibits, imperial Chinese objects were quickly caught up in the nationwide effort to improve British manufactures, a natural development of a longstanding taste for Chinese export goods and practice of copying Chinese wares among producers in Britain. Chinese ceramics had been important to producers in Britain since the days of English Delftware and imitation *yixing* in the seventeenth century, when they imitated the shapes, materials and decorative motifs of Chinese export ceramics to compete with these. (See 36.) One example is transferwares, which enabled potteries to place complex designs on ceramics to compete with Chinese painted imports, even if they had no skilled painters. (See 317–18.) Eventually, this dearth of craftsmen in manufacture inspired the design reform movement to invest in exhibitions and art schools. Ultimately, the looted artifacts set a new standard for Chinese exhibits. When the *London Evening Standard* reported in 1874 on the “private exhibition of Archdeacon Gray’s splendid collection of Chinese curiosities,” which he had collected during “twenty years’ research among the art-factories of China,” the paper stated “It is not so rich as the famous collection from the plunder of the Summer Palace, but it is more varied and extensive.”⁶¹⁵

8. Spoils at Museum Exhibitions

Silks at the South Kensington Museum (1861)

The South Kensington Museum hosted the first exhibition of objects linked with the site. It was installed for four months in the Animal Products Museum, then just three years old. It was a display of “Chinese Silks and Embroidery ... obtained by British troops at Peking during the Chinese war.”⁶¹⁶ The *Evening Freeman* ran a short notice in May of 1861: “The South Kensington Museum has received a valuable addition to its curious stores by the present from Maj. Green, of the 77th Regiment, of silks, richly embroidered, and obtained by the major from the summer palace of Peking, which it was thought necessary to plunder and destroy.”⁶¹⁷ At this time, the British public viewed the sacking and arson as a response to the hostage-taking, when in fact the actions were undertaken for different reasons. Henry Knollys writes in his compilation of Grant’s commentary on the 1860 war that the French army had

⁶¹⁴ *Morning Post*, August 21, 1861, 6.

⁶¹⁵ *London Evening Standard*, August 10, 1874, 6.

⁶¹⁶ Elizabeth James, *The V&A: A Bibliography and Exhibition Chronology, 1852–1996* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), lists “vx.1861.001, Chinese Silks and Embroidery obtained by British troops at Peking during the Chinese war,” from the *Ninth Report of the Science and Art Department* (1862), 121, 519.

⁶¹⁷ *Evening Freeman*, May 14, 1861, 2.

begun the looting alone, but that Grant had allowed it to continue in order to secure prize for the British Army and individual soldiers.⁶¹⁸ As for the arson, Knollys published Grant's reasons:

In consequence of the murder of the greater number of our captured countrymen, and the barbarities committed on all. Lord Elgin and I thought it was necessary that the Tartar Emperor should be visited with some severe punishment and signal mark of retribution, and we therefore decided to burn his splendid Summer Palace to the ground.⁶¹⁹

So the plunder was not a punitive operation; but the arson was. The man who loaned the items was Edward Lister Green (1827–87), who served as Deputy Assistant Adjutant General for the 1st Division of the 1860 China expeditionary force.⁶²⁰ He was listed as a captain in the 77th Regiment of Foot in Hart's *New Annual Army List* of 1861,⁶²¹ but was promoted to the rank of major in early 1861.⁶²² The *Dublin Daily Express* reported:

The Annual Product Collection, at the South Kensington Museum, has received a valuable addition in a collection of silks, obtained by Major E. L. Green, of her Majesty's 77th Regiment, from the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China. The collection consists of several pieces of plain and ornamented silk, with dresses, table-covers, collars, and various articles of dress and use. Some of these specimens are remarkable for their beautiful colours and texture, whilst others exhibit the highest attainment of the art of embroidery. Of embroidered specimens, a table-cover, with the Imperial dragon done in gold, with various colours, is very remarkable. Some of the specimens are 250 years old. The collection will be found interesting on account of the intrinsic merits, as well as the light it throws on the state of the art of silk manufacture in China.⁶²³

As was shown in Chapter Three, soldiers looted many textiles because they were portable and highly valued in Britain. Silks with five-clawed dragons were taken as trophies because they were easily identified with the emperor. (See 120–22.) This is likely why the first "Summer Palace" display after the war comprised textiles exclusively. Green would have transported the silks home and delivered these to the museum with relative ease.

The articles lent by Gen. Grant and Lord Elgin to the South Kensington Museum in early 1861 had a major role in two other exhibitions that year at Bristol and Edinburgh,⁶²⁴ and they were later sent to exhibitions at Yorkshire in 1862,⁶²⁵ and Berkhamstead in 1863.⁶²⁶ An annual report for the museum stated: "Two extensive and valuable collections of Oriental Art ... [from] the Earl of Elgin and Sir Hope Grant have been thus ... [lent] for exhibitions at Edinburgh and Bristol."⁶²⁷ The loan collection was

⁶¹⁸ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War*, 129–30.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁶²⁰ *Army and Navy Gazette*, June 30, 1860, 5.

⁶²¹ Hart, *New Annual Army List and Militia List for 1861*, 58.

⁶²² *Edinburgh Gazette*, February 19, 1861, 247.

⁶²³ *Dublin Daily Express*, May 7, 1861, 3.

⁶²⁴ South Kensington Museum loan registers, ref. no. MA/31/1, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

⁶²⁵ "Hull School of Art Exhibition," *Hull Packet*, February 7, 1862, 5.

⁶²⁶ "Mechanics' Institute Exhibition," *Bucks Herald*, April 4, 1863, 7.

⁶²⁷ James, *The V&A: A Bibliography and Exhibition Chronology*, 519.

intended to assist smaller institutions around the country lacking the resources of a national museum. On June 14, 1861, an entry was made for loans from Grant under the heading: “One hundred and fifteen various objects of Chinese and Japanese manufacture as under.”⁶²⁸ These included 7 wood carvings, 14 jades and other hardstones (4 pieces of rock crystal; 1 piece of amber, 2 lapis lazuli carvings and 2 agate); 28 pieces of porcelain; 34 bronzes and other metal pieces; and 11 miscellaneous items (6 hanging scrolls with bird-and-flower paintings). Some porcelains and bronzes were identified as Japanese. Most objects were attributed to Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, although some had no provenance. Only the following objects were said to be from the Summer Palace:

Vase and cover in white jade decorated with ornaments in bas relief and griffins terminating in scrollwork. . . .

Piece of lapis lazuli carved with a landscape & engraved with a poem said to be by the Emperor of China. . . .

Pair of small vases with raised ornament, in white metal decorated with champlevé enamel. . . .

Pair of vases and covers, light green ground painted with flowers &c. . . .

Cylindrical vase or jar in white crackle ware. From the Emperor’s Summer Palace, said to be 400 years old.⁶²⁹

On June 27th the ewer presented to Grant by his men was entered in the register:

Water ewer and cover in gold engraved with foliage &c and with the inscription “Presented to Lieut. General Sir Hope Grant G.C.B. by the officers of the army in China, Peking October 1860”⁶³⁰

Lord Elgin sent loans in groups: on January 18, 1861, the crutch noted in Chapter Three, (See 111–13) nine carved jade pieces, an earthenware vase, and a vase of cloisonné; on January 20th, a large bronze vase; on August 23rd, bronze incense burners shaped as cranes attributed to Japan; an enameled bronze tripod vessel and cover; and on November 26, 1862 a silver-gilt ewer with filigree and jewels.⁶³¹ None were attributed to China.

Imperial Cloisonné in Bristol (1861)

The Bristol Exhibition of Industrial and Ornamental Art of 1861 was the first major public show in Britain with pieces from the Summer Palace. Local newspaper reports in January on preparations for the

⁶²⁸ South Kensington Museum loan registers, ref. no. MA/31/1, ff. 39v, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

⁶²⁹ South Kensington Museum loan registers, ref. no. MA/31/1, ff. 39v, 40v, 41v, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

⁶³⁰ South Kensington Museum loan registers, ref. no. MA/31/1, f. 45v, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

⁶³¹ South Kensington Museum loan registers, ref. no. MA/31/1, ff. 56v, 63v, 72v, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

show drew attention to the Chinese loans. The *Hull Packet* reported, “A variety of articles taken from the summer palace of the Emperor of China are kindly deposited by Lord Elgin and General Sir Hope Grant.”⁶³² A report in the *Western Daily Press* rhapsodized, “Sir Hope Grant has likewise liberally given his unrivalled collection from China, which will be further augmented by spoils taken in the recent expedition from the Summer Palace at Pekin.”⁶³³ Whether Lord Elgin’s loans to the South Kensington Museum were included is uncertain, for he is not listed in the exhibition catalogue, *Hand-Book to the Bristol Exhibition of Industrial and Ornamental Art*. Elgin had no claim to any material from the site, since war prize was only granted to soldiers who participated in a capture; (See 77.) so there may have been genuine confusion over the issue or reporters may have felt free to make provenance claims that the Bristol museum handled with greater discretion on Lord Elgin’s behalf. While Gen. Grant is noted in the catalogue, his loans are not identified. Instead, the volume states that one case of “Chinese and Japanese Works” contained large jades, porcelains, metalwork and carvings, and featured “an unrivalled collection from China and Japan, obtained in great measure during the late war, at the taking of the Summer Palace, Pekin.”⁶³⁴ In a large gallery nearby, collections from the South Kensington Museum were displayed with loans from seven individuals, including the high-profile connoisseurs Samuel Addington (1806–86) and John Webb (1799–1880). This arrangement placed Asian material – some of it looted – next to European cabinetry, bronzes, engravings, pottery, and ivory; thereby encouraging interpretation of the objects as decorative art, rather than trophies or curiosities.⁶³⁵

However, in a room nearby, two imperial objects attributed to the Summer Palace – “a fine example of Chinese Enamel, a Candlestick taken from the Summer Palace, Pekin,” and “a rich Lady’s Dress from the Summer Palace” – were jumbled together with “curiosities,” and articles for daily living. These included figures of “josses” (deities), specimens of printed Chinese, embroidered rank badges, opium pipes, a tiny Chinese lady’s shoe, and ivory carvings.⁶³⁶ Objects like carvings and figurines of deities were at this time often seen as “curiosities”: unusual, exotic or puzzling objects, which were typically displayed in drawing rooms and other places for socializing or study; and they were prominent in the British conception of Chinese culture. The catalogue for the Nathan Dunn show, discussed by Catherine Pagani, lists many cases with a similar range of objects. (See 35.) These included “Chinese shoes,” “joiners’ tools,” “Chinese books,” and “specimens of silk.”⁶³⁷ The cataloguing of this material

⁶³² *Hull Packet and East Reading Times*, January 24, 1861, 5.

⁶³³ *Western Daily Press*, July 26, 1861, 2.

⁶³⁴ J. Beavington Atkinson, *Hand-Book to the Bristol Exhibition of Industrial and Ornamental Art*, 4th ed. (Bristol: John Wright, 1861), 29.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15–32.

⁶³⁶ Atkinson, *Hand-Book to the Bristol Exhibition*, 38–39.

⁶³⁷ William B. Langdon, “Ten thousand Chinese things.” *A descriptive catalogue of the Chinese Collection, now exhibiting at St. George’s Place, Hyde Park Corner; with condensed accounts of the genius, government, history, literature, agriculture, arts, trade, manners, customs, and social life of the people of the Celestial empire* (London: Printed for the proprietor, N. Dunn, 1884), 9.

shows that objects linked with the Summer Palace were often not understood. The robe could have been for an empress or emperor because both wore five-clawed dragon emblems and yellow silk robes.⁶³⁸ The similar cut of court robes for women and men also caused confusion and encouraged the stereotype of the effeminate Chinese emperor after the war. (See 127–28, 137, 142.) The candlestick was likely a sacred object. Many turquoise-ground “enamel” candlesticks appeared at auction after the war, sometimes in pairs, including two at Christie’s:

119 A PAIR OF HANDSOME LARGE ALTAR CANDLESTICKS, with flowers in brilliant colours, on turquoise ground—18 in. high

These were cloisonné candlesticks from a five-piece *wugong* altar set, like the garniture sold at Christie’s in December of 1862:

57 A SET OF SPLENDID ALTAR ORNAMENTS, consisting of two-handled tripod incense burner, a pair of beakers, and a pair of candlesticks, covered with flowers.⁶³⁹

A *wugong* altar set comprised one *ding* incense burner, two *gu* vases and two candlesticks; but some were broken up during the plunder of the Summer Palace. One cloisonné set of the Kangxi period, reputedly from the Summer Palace, is in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, New South Wales.⁶⁴⁰ A Qianlong-period *wugong* set was sold through Christie’s in 2013.⁶⁴¹ Two cloisonné candlesticks from a *wugong* set, which could have been looted in 1860, arrived at the South Kensington Museum during the 1870s.⁶⁴²

The decision to send the Chinese loans to Bristol was likely related to the recent establishment of the Fine Arts Academy, the town’s first art gallery, which was housed in a new Greek Revival building erected in 1858. **(Fig. 4-3)** The exhibition itself was an annual event originating in the 1850s. The port city of Bristol had grown wealthy in the eighteenth century by outfitting ships for the slave trade and exporting finished goods to British colonies. This prosperity had fueled a generation of building and innovation in the art manufactures for the export trade, specifically ceramics and glass. While Bristol was eventually challenged by competing ports, it continued to grow steadily in the first half of the nineteenth century, encouraging arts patronage and further building.⁶⁴³

⁶³⁸ V&A, acc. no. T.766-1950. This is representative specimen.

⁶³⁹ Christie’s London, Sale of December 1, 1862, Lot 57.

⁶⁴⁰ Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, obj. no. A6080.

⁶⁴¹ Christie’s New York, March 21, 2013, Sale 2803, Lot 906.

⁶⁴² V&A, acc. no. 1469-1870; 510-1875 (pictured).

⁶⁴³ Kenneth Morgan, “Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century,” *English Historical Review* 107, no. 424 (July 1992): 626–50.



4-3. Undated photograph of Victoria Wesleyan Chapel and Royal West of England Academy of Art, ca. 1880s, measurements unavailable, Bristol Archives

Bristol would have responded with interest to imperial Chinese porcelain. Since the eighteenth century it had been a center of pottery and glass manufacture, engaged in imitating Chinese export wares; and native Richard Champion (1743–91) had even acquired a patent for hard-paste ceramics in 1772, for the purpose of making “Chinese porcelain in England.”⁶⁴⁴ Bristol became particularly known for its soft-paste “stone china” and more durable steatite-heavy “white china” or “old china” produced by the legendary Loudin’s China House.⁶⁴⁵ Potters also decorated vessels with underglaze blue, overglaze enamels, and transfer printing, while often copying Chinese designs outright to compete with export wares. One instance of efforts to recreate white *dehua* wares at the pottery of Lund and Miller in Bristol was cited by R. L. Hobson in his article on the Trapnell collection of Bristol and Plymouth porcelains:

Two curious figures marked “Bristol 1750” ... are clearly made from a cast taken from a Chinese Fukien porcelain figure of Lü Tung-pin and the mark of the Chinese potter is still faintly visible on their backs.⁶⁴⁶

Two such Lund and Miller figures of the scholar immortal Lu Dongbin, made in imitation of white *dehua* and pale blue *qingbai* figures, are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Other specimens associated with Benjamin Lund are in the British Museum.⁶⁴⁷ The casting of a Chinese figure is typical of British potteries in the eighteenth century, for the point of copying Chinese design was simply to provide a

⁶⁴⁴ Richard T. Haines Halsey, “A Bristol Porcelain Cup and Saucer,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 11, no. 8 (August 1916): 171–73; Hugh Owen, *Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol, Being the History of the Manufacture of “The True Porcelain” by Richard Champion* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1873).

⁶⁴⁵ William Pountney, “Loudin’s (Alias ‘Lowris’) China House,” *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 32, no. 181 (April 1918): 151–53.

⁶⁴⁶ R. L. Hobson, “Bristol Porcelain in the Trapnell Collection,” *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 20, no. 108 (March 1912): 324, 328–30.

⁶⁴⁷ BM, mus. nos. 1938,0314.77.CR; 1981,0101.394.

domestic alternative to imports. After 1861, British designers copied Chinese ornament, not to compete with imports, but to transform British aesthetics.

The arrangement and cataloguing of Chinese porcelains at Bristol may come out of this long-term involvement with ceramics. While none of the pieces can be linked with the Summer Palace, it is worth mentioning the porcelain display, as it represents a new type of exhibition design in which imperial porcelains would figure in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Certainly, it set a new exhibition standard for Chinese material. The catalogue states that “Oriental Porcelain” was displayed at one end of a long case, which also held European porcelains, while “fine Oriental vases” were arrayed on top. A local paper also reported that Chinese vases were displayed alongside “several very rare specimens of Sèvres china of great value from the Queen.”⁶⁴⁸ The display was clearly designed to encourage comparisons of European and Chinese wares. Like the Manchester exhibition of 1857, this display included pieces from the important collections of Robert Fortune (1812–80) and William Beckford (1760–1844), former owner of the Gaignières-Fonthill Vase,⁶⁴⁹ who attained the greatest heights of connoisseurship prior to the 1860 war. Their collections of Chinese monochromes contributed to the taste for these vessels after the war.⁶⁵⁰

Atkinson himself demonstrated only limited knowledge of Chinese porcelain, for his expertise lay mostly in Christian art and Northern European painting. He set down no history of Chinese porcelain manufacture, stating only: “Its origin was in the East, in China and Japan. In China, the manufacture is supposed to have attained its perfection about the year A.D. 1000,” without identifying sources for his statement.⁶⁵¹ He was likely relying on Joseph Marryat (1757–1824), or Stanislaus Julien (1797–1893), who had discussed the establishment of imperial porcelain manufacture at Jingdezhen during the Song Dynasty (960–1279), and identified several wares as the “ancient porcelains” most highly revered by the Chinese. Atkinson was most taken with Chinese monochromes:

Oriental china may be characterised as fine, hard, and translucent, and in colour brilliant and harmonious. The designs partake of the barbaric. Two of the more celebrated kinds of porcelain are the “Crackle,” from the network of cracks upon the surface, and the “Egg Shell,” so called from its slight translucent thinness ... All European porcelain is derived from the Oriental ... Attention is specially directed to a Tea Service of rare “Ruby China,” formerly belonging to Mr. Beckford; also to a group of “Crackle Ware,” and a large citron-colour “Egg-shell” Vase. Along the top of the case is ranged a series of fine Oriental Vases. Special attention may be directed to four in monochrome, one mounted in ornolu, foliate pattern in low relief, celadon porcelain, was in the collection of Mr. Fortune; all supposed to be of early date in Chinese manufacture.⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁸ *Hull Packet and East Reading Times*, January 24, 1861, 5.

⁶⁴⁹ John Rutter, *A Description of Fonthill and Demesne* (Shaftesbury: John Rutter, 1822), 61.

⁶⁵⁰ V&A, acc. no. C.393-1910.

⁶⁵¹ Atkinson, *Hand-Book to the Bristol Exhibition*, 9.

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, 9–10.

This may be Fortune's "magnificent bottle of rare green crackle 27 inches high," sold through Christie's in 1859.⁶⁵³ Atkinson's interest in such monochrome pieces is in keeping with the aesthetics of his day, which explain several developments in British pottery that occurred later in the century, due specifically to the plunder of the Summer Palace. The terms "crackle" and "eggshell" were used routinely to describe delicate, thinly-potted wares and those with craquelure glaze. His interest in the "citron" and "ruby" glazes reflected the understanding among connoisseurs that red and yellow glaze colors were most prized in China, which was validated by the arrival of imperial monochrome ceramics after the war. His statement that "The designs partake of the barbaric," was based on long-held perceptions of Asian art and culture. Within Victorian aesthetics, "barbaric" meant, not simply primitive or rough, but crudely ornate; and the term was often applied to Asian metalwork. British writers also used it routinely in reference to Asian courts they condemned as despotic and corrupt. An exhibition review in 1862 found in the paintings of August Schoefft (1809–88), "all the barbaric splendour of the court of 'The Lion of Lahore'," as the Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780–1839) was known.⁶⁵⁴ Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), in his racist tract *China*, argued that "Mathematics wasn't necessary to a barbaric and authoritarian government."⁶⁵⁵ Even European adherents to chinoiserie were tainted. A newspaper feature on the renovation of Brighton Pavilion in 1864 recalled "its gorgeous, if barbaric, magnificence," when George IV (1762–1830, r. 1820–30) held court there.⁶⁵⁶ Atkinson himself suggested that "barbaric" artworks were produced by races and cultures outside the Christian tradition in his discussion of frescos in the Cathedral of St. Sophia, Kiev:

If of real antiquity they will have to join company with other semi-barbaric products in metal, etc., which prove, as we have seen, that Russia has two historic schools, the Byzantine, on the one hand, debilitated and refined, as of periods of decline, and, on the other, a non-Byzantine and barbarous style, strong and coarse as of races still vital and vigorous.⁶⁵⁷

On what grounds Atkinson applied the term to Chinese porcelain is not clear. The delicate potting and decoration of Chinese vessels in the Europe certainly met and even surpassed the highest Victorian standard of elegance, represented then by Minton, Wedgwood, Chelsea and Sèvres; but the writer may have found the silhouettes incomprehensible because they were outside the western Classical tradition.

The careful attention to Chinese cloisonné in the exhibition reflects Atkinson's knowledge of this material. He had wide experience with enamelling, which is evident in his work elsewhere. He discussed Russian and Italian enamel technology at length in his book *An Art Tour to Northern Capitals of Europe*, published in 1873, in which he consulted mosaic samples he "collected" from Orvieto Cathedral in

⁶⁵³ *Morning Post*, July 18, 1859, 8.

⁶⁵⁴ *Surrey Comet*, August 23, 1862, 2.

⁶⁵⁵ Thomas De Quincey, *China* (Edinburgh: J. Hogg, 1857), 10–11.

⁶⁵⁶ *Morning Post*, October 18, 1864, 6.

⁶⁵⁷ J. Beavington Atkinson, *An Art Tour to Northern Capitals of Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1873), 407–8.

Umbria and St. Mark's in Venice.⁶⁵⁸ The enamel display at Bristol is the second exhibit that included pieces from the Summer Palace as specimens of craft techniques, rather than as trophies or curiosities: In one case was an “unrivalled collection from China and Japan, obtained in great measure during the late war, at the taking of the Summer Palace, Pekin ... The case contains several valuable examples of Chinese cloisonné enamel, already mentioned under ‘Enamels.’”⁶⁵⁹ Sadly, they are not thoroughly catalogued. Elsewhere, Atkinson arranged the enamels so that visitors could compare work from different cultures. In a vitrine with a Russian bowl he placed:

a Pilgrim's Bottle (2057) of chinese cloisonné enamel, and close beside a modern French manufacture ... Immediately above, on top of the case, is a small Elephant,—a fine and interesting example of cloisonné enamel.⁶⁶⁰

These were shown alongside further painted and champlevé enamels from Russia, France and elsewhere, dating from roughly the Renaissance onward. Both the pilgrim bottle, also known as a “moonflask,” and the elephant figurine are types associated with the Summer Palace. A significant number of cloisonné moonflasks appeared at auctions in the 1860s, including:

- 16 A beautiful pilgrim's-bottle, of ancient enamel, with flowers and ornaments in colours on turquoise ground, a chasing of dragons in relief on one side

This was sold at Christie's in the summer of 1864 to Murray Marks for £15.10.⁶⁶¹ Two cloisonné elephants once in the Arthur Wells collection and today in the Victoria and Albert Museum have been linked with the Summer Palace as well.⁶⁶² One is shown here. (**Fig. 4-4**) Atkinson was the first to use the term “cloisonné” in any postwar discussion of Summer Palace spoils, for auction catalogues of the period typically used the term “enamel” to cover both cloisonné and enameled porcelain. At a spectacular Christie's sale in the summer of 1862, several outstanding “enamelled” porcelain pieces were offered, including:

- 56 A VERY RARE AND BEAUTIFUL BOTTLE, of elegant form, green ground enamelled all over with plants and ornaments in brilliant colours, with four perforated medallions of dragons, with revolving neck and foot of rare crimson enamelled with ornaments in brilliant colours; turquoise inside—on wood stand—15 1/2 in. high.⁶⁶³

The piece is one of a rare group of revolving vases produced first for the Qianlong emperor. It was certainly porcelain, due to the presence of crimson and turquoise glazes, for a number of revolving vases with crimson glaze in parts are known and the interiors of many Qing Dynasty porcelain vessels are

⁶⁵⁸ Atkinson, *Art Tour to Northern Capitals of Europe*, 316–35.

⁶⁵⁹ Atkinson, *Hand-Book to the Bristol Exhibition*, 29.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁶¹ Christie's London, Sale of July 25, 1864, Lot 16, Christie's Archives, London.

⁶⁶² V&A, acc. nos. 1660-1882; 1659:1 to 3-1882.

⁶⁶³ Christie's London, Sale of July 21, 1862, Lot 56.

covered with turquoise glaze.⁶⁶⁴ By contrast, the 1861 sale of items “Taken from the Summer Palace at Peking” by Henry Loch included:

- 185 A MAGNIFICENT PAIR OF VASES AND COVERS, with upright handles of ancient enamel, with flowers and ornaments in brilliant colours, on turquoise ground, with chased rims and top, on tripod feet formed as elephants’ heads, of metal gilt.⁶⁶⁵

The pair were certainly cloisonné, for many such pieces are known. One covered vase on tripod elephant-head feet with a four-character Qianlong mark, formerly in the collection of George Walter Vincent Smith (1832–1923), was sold at Christie’s, Hong Kong, in 2021.⁶⁶⁶ A. W. Franks donated a similar vase with European mounts, linked with the Summer Palace and dated to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), to the British Museum in 1889.⁶⁶⁷ Atkinson wrote of enamelling in Asia that “It was at an early period practiced in Persia, India and China,” and his remark anticipates a style of ornament that emerged in the later nineteenth century, which reflected the movement of enameling technology and styles across Asia during the formation of successive empires. Vessels modeled on Iznik wares, the turquoise-glazed wares of Kashan, the enamelling of Mughal India, the tilework of Safavid Iran, and the cloisonné of the Ming and Qing courts, appeared in the 1860s and 1870s. Much of the Chinese enamel work came from the Summer Palace. But at the time of the exhibition, Atkinson knew that his readers were not familiar with Chinese cloisonné and so informed them of the basics:

Of Eastern enamels, Sir Hope Grant's case affords several important illustrations. They belong to the division termed Cloisonné, and lines of thin metal work will be seen intersecting the enamel and forming boundaries between the colours and the subjects. A richly coloured china jar in the same case, with much body of colour, may serve to show the analogy and the difference between the arts of enamel and porcelain.⁶⁶⁸

As recorded in the Victoria and Albert Museum loan register, Grant sent to the museum seven cloisonné vessels, two tripod “vases” (which were probably *ding* censers). Five were attributed to “Peking,” but the “pair of small vases with raised ornaments, in white metal, decorated with champlevé enamel,” were linked to the Summer Palace.⁶⁶⁹ The inclusion of the enameled ceramic vessel in the case is also significant, because manufacturers attempted to produce the look of cloisonné in metalwork after the opening of China and Japan, but ceramic was ultimately considered a more practical and cost-effective medium for reproducing Asian enamel designs. (See 331–38.) Atkinson’s engagement with the material also reflects the immense popularity it had after the war. Of all the spoils from China, large pieces of enamel received the highest bids from dealers and collectors. One indicator of their value is a sale at Christie’s in 1861, where “A MAGNIFICENT INCENSE BURNER, of ancient Chinese enamel,” was

⁶⁶⁴ Christie’s London, June 15, 1999, Sale 6135, Lot 99.

⁶⁶⁵ Christie’s London, Sale of May 27, 1861, Lot 185.

⁶⁶⁶ Christie’s Hong Kong, May 27, 2021, Sale 19677, Lot 2906.

⁶⁶⁷ BM, obj. no. 1889,0507.23.

⁶⁶⁸ Atkinson, *Hand-Book to the Bristol Exhibition*, 22.

⁶⁶⁹ South Kensington Museum loan registers, ref. no. MA/31/1, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

sold for £33.12, while “THE EMPEROR OF CHINA’S GREAT SEAL OF STATE” in jade was knocked down for £16.⁶⁷⁰ Contacts with Chinese cloisonné also inspired porcelain manufacturers to move away from naturalistic and painterly designs to boldly coloured geometric patterns favored in the later nineteenth century. Owen Jones and Christopher Dresser turned to these pieces for inspiration in the 1860s.



4-4. Figure of an elephant attributed to the Summer Palace, Qing Dynasty, 18th or 19th century, cloisonné, H. 38.1 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

⁶⁷⁰ Christie’s London, Sale of July 5, 1861, Lots 125, 152.

The Grant and Elgin Collections at Edinburgh (1861)

The Grant and Elgin pieces were next featured at the Exhibition of Industrial and Decorative Art at the National Gallery of Scotland in 1861, which opened November 12, 1861. William Borthwick (W. B.) Johnstone (1804–68) acted as art superintendent and authored the catalogue. In his introduction, he explained the premise for the show. While many industrial art exhibitions were mounted for the benefit of manufacturers:

In this Exhibition, however, the specimens of decorative art of former epochs greatly preponderate over those of the present time ... the benefits ... are not rewards for skilful works, but simply advancement of taste, by showing what can be done in art manufacture, and affording the skilled artisan and the public generally, an opportunity of inspecting, comparing, and studying works of the highest class, produced at various periods, in countries where taste and technical execution were carried nearest to perfection.⁶⁷¹

As a result, the National Gallery did not include the latest goods from local manufacturers, offer cash prizes, or purchase any objects displayed. Johnstone saw his audience as prosperous citizens and artisans who served them, whose aesthetics would be expanded and enhanced through contact with different art traditions. Through this mode of display, Johnstone was also promoting a concept of national culture or national “schools,” which was widely held among art critics and factored in the great international exhibitions of the period.

The catalogue shows that Grant lent a total of 87 pieces: 35 bronzes and other metalwork pieces, 22 porcelains, 23 jades and other carvings, five enamels, one helmet and one weapon. Elgin lent 32 pieces total: 10 bronzes, seven porcelains, five enamels, three ivories, three jades and other carvings, three lacquer and wood pieces, and one weapon. The figures show that each collection was heavily weighted toward bronzes, with smaller groups of porcelains, hardstone carvings and enamels. There were also rare enamels and metalwork: large cloisonné incense burners from Elgin and two figures of birds from Grant. As at Bristol, the provenance of individual Chinese pieces in the collections of Grant and Elgin is unclear. A local newspaper reported that the Edinburgh loans were mainly “articles of vertu taken by the conquerors from the Summer Palace at Peking,”⁶⁷² but the exhibition catalogue linked only two of the 116 loans with the Summer Palace: a “Bottle-shaped vase, light green ground, from the Palace, Peking,” and a “Cylindrical vase, white crackle ware, 400 years old, from the Summer Palace, Peking.” Both were from Grant. However, in both shows Grant exhibited one carving in lapis lazuli; and this had to be the lapis carving he recalled purchasing at the military auction, mentioned by James Hevia,⁶⁷³ so the catalogue might not be reliable. Cataloguing of other pieces also raises questions. James Hay Chalmers (1829–67),

⁶⁷¹ W. B. Johnstone, *Official Catalogue of the Exhibition of Industrial and Decorative Art 1861*, 6th ed. (Edinburgh: Murray & Gibb, 1861), 5.

⁶⁷² *Caledonian Mercury*, November 12, 1861, 3.

⁶⁷³ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 85.

an Aberdeen lawyer, archaeologist, and member of the Society of Antiquaries known for his collection of native antiquities,⁶⁷⁴ lent pieces that were catalogued as “looted at Pekin” or “from the Summer Palace.”⁶⁷⁵ Also, the catalogue lists:

859 Two smoke-coloured Chinese jars, with imperial mark on them.—
J.T. Gibson Craig, Esq.

However, no reign marks are mentioned in the cataloguing of the Grant and Elgin loans.⁶⁷⁶ James Thompson Gibson Craig (1799–1886), was a writer, bibliophile, and antiquarian, who likely determined that the mark was imperial. Lord Wharncliffe also contributed enamels without provenance,⁶⁷⁷ but he later lent Chinese enamels for an exhibit in Sheffield, which his brother had brought from the “Summer Palace.”⁶⁷⁸ (See 206–7.) Whether these were the same pieces is unknown at this point.

For Johnstone the most important Chinese items in the show were porcelains. In the catalogue, he praised older wares: “Ancient porcelain is distinguished for graceful form, and colouring sometimes rich and deep, sometimes of a delicacy never equaled in European porcelain.”⁶⁷⁹ This was the received view of Chinese ceramics in 1861: “ancient porcelain” was prized above nineteenth-century export wares, which were considered to be of poor quality. But Johnstone was also writing in the wake of Marryat, Chaffers, and possibly knew of Jacquemart and Le Blant, whose groundbreaking volume on porcelain was published in 1861.⁶⁸⁰ He noted that “porcelain, the most perfect species of pottery, was manufactured in China at a remote period; while in Europe, it is of comparatively modern date,”⁶⁸¹ and he included in the catalogue a longer history of Chinese porcelain than had Atkinson, writing that it was

in common use about A.D. 600, and had attained its greatest perfection A.D. 1000. The pure white porcelain of Fokein is reckoned the oldest; when held to the light, fishes, flowers, etc., are seen through it. The next is that of Nankin, blue on a white ground; then the sea-green crackled, made at King-te-sing, where the finest ware is still manufactured.⁶⁸²

This was the same chronology offered in the Manchester 1857 catalogue.⁶⁸³ The Chinese objects were displayed in the center of a large gallery hung with important tapestries, including a Gobelins piece lent by Queen Victoria; large cartoons for window and mural designs; ornate furniture; and articles of vertu.

⁶⁷⁴ *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, May 1, 1867, 8; *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, December 12, 1891, 8.

⁶⁷⁵ Johnstone, *Official Catalogue of the Exhibition*, 73–75.

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁶⁷⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, January 22, 1862, 2, 3.

⁶⁷⁹ Johnstone, *Official Catalogue of the Exhibition*, 18.

⁶⁸⁰ Joseph Marryat, *Collections Towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain: in the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries: with a Description of the Manufacture, a Glossary, and a List of Monograms* (London: John Murray, 1850); Albert Jacquemart and Edmond Le Blant, *Histoire artistique, industrielle et commerciale de la porcelaine* (Paris: J. Techener, 1861).

⁶⁸¹ Johnstone, *Official Catalogue of the Exhibition*, 10.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, 15–16.

⁶⁸³ *Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom: Collected at Manchester in 1857* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1857), 144.

Indian silks were placed on the lower parts of the walls; nearby were medals from the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and other conflicts, lent by Gen. Grant and others. The context gave a double meaning to the Summer Palace pieces as decorative art and spoils of the British empire: a duality seen in other Summer Palace displays, including that in the China Court at the 1862 international exhibition in London. (See 214–24.)

9. Spoils at Provincial Industrial Art Exhibitions

Summer Palace material also appeared at many provincial shows, which were modeled on the larger international and national exhibitions of art and industry that took place in the decades after the 1860. Provincial shows are critical to this study because they were a large part of Victorian exhibition culture and material from the Summer Palace played a significant role in these events. In these smaller-scale public settings, thousands of working- and middle-class people were able to see objects from the Summer Palace as a part of a wider cultural experience, which otherwise would have been inaccessible. These shows also reflect widespread views of China outside the art world of London and provide windows on the collecting cultures of small towns. In these provincial shows, objects from the Summer Palace were alternately shown as trophies, specimens of craft, features of colonial displays, and “curiosities,” within a wide variety of displays assembled by local collectors, sometimes supported by travelling loan collections from the South Kensington Museum. The shows are also evidence for the geographic distribution and collecting of Summer Palace material in the postwar years: newspaper reviews contain descriptions of objects linked with the estate and names of the many individuals who collected them.

The location of various Summer Palace displays within these smaller exhibitions reflects opinions among the public regarding China’s position among world cultures. While larger international shows organized objects within discrete departments by nation, the comparatively small amount of material in these provincial shows called for different methods of organization. Sometimes looted objects were presented with European objects of vertu. At the 1866 Frome Art and Industrial Exhibition in the Mechanics’ Hall appeared “a massive ‘brazier’ of beautifully enameled metal, taken from the summer palace at Peking, and contributed by the Marquis of Bath.” It was mounted on a platform at the center of the hall, in front of a “curiously carved cabinet,” with a blue cloth and two plated rosewater dishes, surrounded by musical instruments produced in Bath.⁶⁸⁴ This was the massive incense burner with an ornate openwork lid, which the Marquess displayed on the grand staircase at Longleat.

⁶⁸⁴ *Bristol Mercury*, September 15, 1866, 3.

All of these events were part of the national effort to educate the public through contact with the products of art and industry. Imperial Chinese objects at the Hull Mechanics Institute exhibition were “arranged for the instruction and improvement of the public taste.”⁶⁸⁵ At the opening ceremony of the Frome Art and Industrial Exhibition at the Mechanics’ Hall, the prominent Liberal politician Chichester Fortescue (1823–98) affirmed that exhibitions were a “valuable contribution to the cause of popular instruction,”⁶⁸⁶ and a reporter found: “It was not a mere jumble of curiosities, but a carefully and usefully arranged aggregation of objects calculated to convey instruction as well as amusement.” There was a room for dissolving views, a stereoscope for viewing metals, a table of minerals, a display on textile manufacture and demonstrations of potting and paper-making. Mr. W. Shoesmith also “contributed a dress from the Summer Palace at Peking, said to have belonged to the Empress of China, of gorgeous yellow silk, richly ornamented with an essentially Chinese pattern.”⁶⁸⁷ This is a departure from the political rhetoric surrounding military exhibitions, where the emperor’s garments were routinely termed “dresses.” In Northampton, the reviewer believed (for some reason not disclosed) that the “dress” belonged to “the Empress,” and he advised the reader that its pattern was “Chinese.” It is a small detail, but one that reflects the growing interest in the arts of Chinese and other Asian cultures. As will be seen in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, Chinese pattern became an important source of inspiration for British designers in the 1860s and 1870s.

Likewise, the Dudley and Midland Fine Arts, Scientific, and Industrial Exhibition was intended to “draw large numbers to Dudley to be amused and instructed at the same time,” and to that end, featured a gallery of pictures, “supplemented by an assemblage of the scientific objects peculiar to the district.”⁶⁸⁸ The Dudley Geological Society had organized the show, which featured specimens ranging from “a lump of coal to a Snuffbox from the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China.” Whether the snuffbox was of porcelain or hardstone is not known; but it was one of many objets d’art gifted to the Chinese emperors by European monarchs, which were looted wildly by soldiers looking for small items with obvious sale value back home.⁶⁸⁹ Many bijoux, including small boxes of hardstone, appeared at sales after the war; such as, “A small snuff-box, with a cornelian, lightly shaded with white, set in the cover,” at the Negroni exhibition;⁶⁹⁰ and Lot 279 at Christie’s on May 30, 1862, an “agate etui case, covered with gold trellis work, and with gold-mounted instruments.” A Phillips catalogue of 1861 offering “Summer Palace” treasures includes a box and necessaire of cornelian, as well as an etui of variegated agate, all mounted in

⁶⁸⁵ *Hull Packet and East Reading Times*, January 24, 1862, 5.

⁶⁸⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, September 15, 1866, 3.

⁶⁸⁷ *Northampton Mercury*, January 11, 1862, 5.

⁶⁸⁸ *Birmingham Gazette*, January 13, 1866, 6.

⁶⁸⁹ *Era*, September 23, 1866, 15.

⁶⁹⁰ *Catalogue of Captain de Negroni’s Collection*, no. 188.

gold.⁶⁹¹ At Dudley, the snuffbox seems to have been displayed as a geological specimen. If so, it was not the only object from the Summer Palace collected or exhibited as such. A British Museum annual accession report of 1863 listed “A magnificent turquoise, weighing 4 lb. 3 oz., green, from the Summer Palace, Pekin.”⁶⁹²

The pedagogical agenda was directed partly at workers. An article on an 1861 exhibit at Aston Hall stated:

while its salient features may be hastily glanced at by the visitor who wants simply an hour of amusement, with the least possible taste of instruction, the collection will amply repay minute study on the part of the connoisseur, the designer, or the workman who desires to avail himself of a series of admirable lessons in exquisite form, and wonderful executive skill.⁶⁹³

In other words, the exhibition would educate on three levels: edifying the working classes, expanding the decorative and technical vocabulary of producers, and informing the tastes of the prosperous classes who purchased their products. The events would bring citizens of all classes together in the cause of civic pride and improvement. Mingling politely in public venues, laborers, merchants, and members of the gentry, could all celebrate the collections of local “amateurs” and prominent citizens. The Yorkshire Fine Art and Industrial Exhibition of 1866 included “Chinese curiosities from the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China, furnished by Mr. J. P. Brown-Westhead, of Lea Castle, Kidderminster,” along with decorative objects loaned by the South Kensington Museum, machinery, architectural models, natural history specimens, and Old Master paintings. Joshua Proctor Brown-Westhead (1807–77) was heavily involved in railroads and at the time MP for York. Everything was housed in a purpose-built structure that resembled, incongruously, an oversized Swiss chalet. The reviewer affirmed that this was “one of the largest provincial gatherings of the kind that has ever been held in this country,” second only to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857.⁶⁹⁴ The *Western Daily Press* found the Bristol exhibition of 1861, where Summer Palace objects from Sir Hope Grant and Lord Elgin were displayed, “almost unprecedented in its attractions for all classes of the community.”⁶⁹⁵

This tiered program was also embraced by the organizers of the Frome Art and Industrial Exhibition, who had originally intended to organize a flower show but enlarged their goal to civic improvement. Chairman Maj. Gen. Sir H. C. Rawlinson (1810–95), who opened the proceedings, felt that “in their exhibition the moral, material, and intellectual would be found combined ... inform ignorance, encourage skilled labour, and stimulate invention.” The city was decked with festoons of greenery for the

⁶⁹¹ Phillips London, Sale of July 18, 1861.

⁶⁹² *Caledonian Mercury*, June 22, 1863, 4.

⁶⁹³ *Birmingham Gazette*, May 25, 1861, 5.

⁶⁹⁴ *Leeds Times*, July 28, 1866, 3.

⁶⁹⁵ *Western Daily Press*, July 26, 1861, 2.

opening, at which “a fashionable assemblage” gathered. The entrance to the hall was draped with a royal standard and a banner reading “May peace our onward progress guide, and teach us how to live.”⁶⁹⁶ Attending an exhibition was both was an act of civic virtue.

In 1863 an exhibition took place at the Mechanics’ Institute Exhibition in Berkhamstead. The *Bucks Herald* noted that among the “curiosities” on display, “Two oxidised silver jugs were shown by T. Whateley, Esq., and E.W. Ernie, Esq. These jugs, we were informed, were part of the looting produce of the Emperor of China’s Summer Palace.” The review praised such generous loans from “the gentry of the neighborhood, who were always ready and willing to do all in their power to instruct and elevate the working classes.” The popularity of the exhibition was attributed to the low admission price “to suit the working classes and the children,” and the press championed their good behavior, declaring: “to the credit of the labouring classes ... not a single case of disorder took place, nor a single act of damage was done.”⁶⁹⁷ In 1862, the *Hull Packet* reported on a forthcoming Great Exhibition at the Hull Mechanics’ Institute, where “A variety of articles taken from the summer palace of the Emperor of China are kindly deposited by Lord Elgin and General Sir Hope Grant,” and they approved plans of the organizing committee to encourage “attendance of that class of society whose social position does not enable them to possess and study works of art,” for “if the attention of the artisan be thus directed to the pursuit of intellectual enjoyment, he will forsake the pernicious allurements of the ale-house, and seek more rational occupation than may have previously claimed his hours after work.”⁶⁹⁸

Fine Arts at Brighton (1867)

When an “Exhibition of Fine Arts” opened at Brighton, Sussex County, on June 24, 1867, Summer Palace material had been in circulation throughout the United Kingdom for six years. Large groups of spoils had been sold to the first generation of Summer Palace collectors, and some of these items “from the Summer Palace” showed up at Brighton. Within the entire spectrum of art and industry exhibitions, the Brighton show, like that at Edinburgh, leaned more towards the arts than to industry. While most exhibitions considered in this chapter were linked with the industrial arts, this exhibition had nothing to do with manufacturing. It had been organized by the new Southern Counties Association, which was dedicated to improving local agriculture. To that purpose, the show at Brighton was mounted in conjunction with a show of livestock and farm equipment at Hove. The Fine Art Department for the event was intended to “indirectly advance the Society’s objects by enabling the Committee to offer a more

⁶⁹⁶ *Bristol Mercury*, September 15, 1866, 3.

⁶⁹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, April 4, 1863, 7.

⁶⁹⁸ *Hull Packet and East Reading Times*, January 24, 1862, 5.

liberal prize sheet,”⁶⁹⁹ through ticket sales. The catalogue explained that Brighton “is not a commercial county and has no Manufacturers to urge her inhabitants to the pursuit of practical Science; consequently the present Exhibition is mainly of an Artistic character.”⁷⁰⁰ Loans had been solicited through an advertisement in a local paper, so the exhibit represents what people in Sussex County were selling and collecting, rather than the vision of a curator or organizing committee. The show was also organized within a very short timeframe, which was often the case with provincial exhibitions. The catalogue introduction stated that only “fourteen working days” were allotted to “select, classify, catalogue and get into perfect order such a varied and valuable collection.” Rev. James Beck (a. 1842–86), Secretary of the Fine Arts Department for the organizing committee, received the applications and entries from exhibitors and oversaw the final arrangements.

The provenance and presentation of objects in this exhibit shows a widening taste for beautifully crafted “Oriental” pieces, not as curiosities, but as objects of vertu. There is a marked interest in bronzes; smaller pieces of Chinese cloisonné; and even jade, which had initially received a cold response from buyers after the war. Lenders have also acquired specimens of Asian ceramic types and integrated these pieces into wider pottery collections. All of this is evidence that the appearance of Summer Palace spoils in the British marketplace had brought in a new era Asian art collecting. Also, the collectors at Brighton operated outside the aristocracy and ultra-wealthy, who took advantage of lower initial prices for bronzes and jades. Local interest in Chinese art is suggested by the presence of Hewett & Co. at the exhibition. They had established a warehouse at Brighton after their venue in London was demolished in 1866.⁷⁰¹ A small but serious group of Asian art collectors around Brighton contributed to the show, including a large number of people who lent “Oriental Enamels,” which had been so popular after the war. While the porcelain cases were arranged as in some art and industry exhibitions to help patrons compare the use of one material in different traditions, this exhibit grouped together works in different luxury materials. It was also devoid of anything relating to social history, with the exception of the opium pipe and window sash lifter, which had noble provenance. There were no printing blocks, no Chinese bibles, no Chinese ladies’ shoes, no coins, no textiles or works on paper, as had appeared at Bristol. (See 179, 212.) The result was an opulent mix of richly worked materials: green and white jade; the vivid blue, red, green, white, yellow and pink of cloisonné; dark bronze with hints of gold; red and black lacquer, and ivory. These were the collections of men who wanted beautiful “Oriental” objects for display.

⁶⁹⁹ *Brighton Gazette*, April 11, 1867, 5.

⁷⁰⁰ Southern Counties Association for the Encouragement of Agriculture, Arts, Science, Manufactures, and Commerce, in the Counties of Hants, Berks, Oxford, Surrey, Sussex, and Kent, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry, Exhibited at the New Assembly Rooms, Royal Pavilion Grounds, Brighton 1867* (Brighton: John Beale, 1867), 4.

⁷⁰¹ *Brighton Gazette*, October 4, 1866, 4.

The venue of Brighton Pavilion provided a fittingly artistic atmosphere. **(Fig. 4-5)** While most art and industry exhibitions outside national museums were housed in civic halls or mechanics' institutes, the Indo-Saracenic extravaganza had been a royal pleasure house for George IV. In 1850, Queen Victoria had sold the pavilion to the city of Brighton, which had repurposed the rooms for public events, since the seaside town was also a destination for pleasure seekers travelling by rail from London. Much of the show took place in a covered courtyard adjacent to the stables, which the Borough Surveyor, Mr. Philip Causton Lockwood (1821–1908), had converted into an exhibition hall. The paintings were housed in “The Dome,” a cupola with Mooresque decoration, erected over the stables. **(Fig. 4-6)** Designers Frederick Crace (1779–1859) and Robert Jones (a. 1815–33) had decorated the interior of the pavilion in a fanciful Chinese-Indian style.⁷⁰² The pastiche lent an exotic “Oriental” ambience to the array of Asian objects, including “some very curious specimens taken from the Summer Palace of Pekin and the palace of Prince Satsuma in the recent operations against China and Japan.”⁷⁰³ These works were integrated uncritically into the exhibition. The catalogue even celebrated the looting of Satsuma ware in the Anglo-Satsuma war 1863:

Specimens of curious Japanese ware, taken from the Palace of Prince Satsuma; reminding one of Hosea Biglow's dictum—

That bombshells, grape an' powder 'n' ball
 Air good-will's strongest magnets;
 That peace, to make it stick at all,
 Must be druv in with bagnets.⁷⁰⁴

The mixture of ceramics from East Asia, Mughal architecture, and interior ornament from Islamic courts is in keeping with the fashion for pan-Asian in design and interior decoration at this time. (See 258, 293, 350, 352.)



4-5. Caleb Robert Stanley, *Brighton Pavilion: Garden Front*, 1845, watercolor, H. 25.3 cm,

Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2023

⁷⁰² John Dinkel, *The Royal Pavilion Brighton* (London: Scala, 1983), 34–38, 68–70.

⁷⁰³ *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, June 29, 1867, 7.

⁷⁰⁴ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 68.



4-6. Photograph showing the interior of “The Dome” at Brighton Pavilion, ca. 1866, monochrome print, H. 86 cm, © The Regency Society James Gray Collection

A good number of Chinese pieces were displayed as articles of vertu: a new approach to these objects in exhibitions at the time. Among the exhibits were pieces in precious metal looted from the Summer Palace. Mr. Moseley, jeweler of King’s Road, was one of many dealers with a stall at the show. He exhibited “antique gems, curiosities, and articles of vertu,” including “Gold and silver opium pipes, formerly belonging to the Emperor of China, and taken in the sack of the summer-palace.”⁷⁰⁵ Messrs Hunt & Roskell, manufacturers of jewelry and plate in Bond Street, lent with other items a “Mortuary Vase of pure gold, representing a tomb, containing long tresses of hair. From the Summer Palace.”⁷⁰⁶ (Fig. 4-7) The object was purchased from the firm in 1876 by the British Museum, where it is today catalogued as a gilded bronze reliquary of Empress Xiaodexian (1831–50) and attributed to the imperial estate at Chengde.⁷⁰⁷ It seems that campaign members sold works in precious metal to jewelers and other merchants, rather than consigning them for auction.

⁷⁰⁵ *Brighton Gazette*, July 4, 1867, 7.

⁷⁰⁶ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 84.

⁷⁰⁷ BM, mus. no. 1876,0313.1.



4-7. Chinese imperial reliquary, Qianlong period (r. 1736–95), gold or gilt bronze, satin and hair, measurements unavailable, British Museum

The exhibition catalogue lists a number of objects with “Summer Palace” provenance in Case No. IV, titled, “Oriental Enamels and Lacquerware,” which also included white and green jades, bronzes (mostly Japanese), Chinese and Indian ivory carvings, and other decorative objects.⁷⁰⁸ The total number of objects in this opulent display was fifty-seven. Mr. G. Dudell, a member of the Fine Arts Department for the Southern Counties Association,⁷⁰⁹ contributed 11 pieces in all. He lent a “Seal of Rock Crystal, in the form of a grotesque animal on a square pedestal, taken at the Summer Palace,”⁷¹⁰ along with four cloisonné, two jade, one black lacquer piece, one ebony carving, two rock crystal carvings, and a jeweled ivory card case. Imperial seals and rock crystal carvings were extremely rare at this time. Capitaine de Negroni had only three seals in his collection (one reportedly for death warrants and one of jade), and four crystal pieces in his collection.⁷¹¹ One jade seal from Lord Elgin’s estate was sold at Christie’s.⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁸ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 80–84.

⁷⁰⁹ *Brighton Gazette*, July 25, 1867, 8. Mr. Dudell’s full identity remains unknown to this writer. A search of the British Library online newspaper database spanning 1850 to 1876 yields no information. The East Sussex Records Office holds no information on Dudell. He did not donate any items to the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum. A search of the Brighton museums database yields no information.

⁷¹⁰ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 83.

⁷¹¹ *Catalogue of Capitaine de Negroni’s Collection*, 17, 18, 20.

⁷¹² Christie’s London, Sale of May 18, 1864, Lot 7.

Another was lent to the London International Exhibition in 1862,⁷¹³ by J. A. Olding, a businessman in Hong Kong,⁷¹⁴ and member of the Royal Asiatic Society of China.⁷¹⁵ Summer Palace items were presented here as rare objects in precious materials within an opulent display of metalwork and stone carving. Despite the short time available for mounting the exhibition, the case was carefully arranged to stunning effect.

At Brighton as elsewhere, the British were more interested in porcelain than any other medium within the Chinese craft tradition. The catalogue introduction noted, among all Asian material, only porcelain glazes: “The richness and harmony of colouring, as applied to the decoration of Porcelain, may be seen in the Oriental collection.”⁷¹⁶ A case of “Oriental Porcelain” stood next to vitrines for British ceramics. The vessels were both Chinese and Japanese; and fifty-six detailed entries for them appeared in the catalogue. Thirty-four Chinese pots showed painted decoration and the others were monochrome-glazed wares: mostly blue, red, azure, and celadon, which were favored by collectors.⁷¹⁷ One reviewer described the display: “The specimens of ceramic art were continued in four large cases, the first being devoted to Chelsea, Plymouth and Bristol china; the second to Oriental porcelain; the third to Wedgwood ware; and the fourth to Worcester and Derby porcelain.”⁷¹⁸ The noted collector Henry Willett (1823–1905) may have been involved in organizing the ceramic section, for Rev. Beck thanked him in the preface to the catalogue.

The catalogue shows that knowledge of the Chinese porcelain chronology among connoisseurs and collectors in Brighton was still limited. It does not attempt to date pieces or identify reign marks for Chinese pieces, beyond stating that some are “early.”⁷¹⁹ By contrast, sections on British ceramics discuss porcelain marks. The introduction to the Oriental porcelain section also begins by repeating a popular, but erroneous theory about the dating of ancient Chinese porcelain bottles found in Egyptian tombs.⁷²⁰ Information on porcelain types is also minimal. Wares are described with general words like “celadon,” “crackle,” “terra cotta,” “enamel,” and “mandarin.” Techniques and materials are hard to identify. Pieces

⁷¹³ *The International Exhibition of 1862. The Illustrated Catalogue of the Industrial Department*, vol. 3, *Colonial and Foreign Divisions* (London: Printed for Her Majesty’s Commissioners, 1862), 43. Biographical Dictionary of Residents of Hong Kong, the First Ten Years (1841–1850) website, “Oolding, J. A.” posted August 14, 2014, <http://hkr1841-50.blogspot.com/search?q=oolding>.

⁷¹⁴ *Thacker’s Overland News for India and the Colonies*, September 18, 1860, 32.

⁷¹⁵ *Transactions of the China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Hong Kong: Printed at the Office of the China Mail, 1847), 77.

⁷¹⁶ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 4.

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 64–68.

⁷¹⁸ *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, June 29, 1867, 7.

⁷¹⁹ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 65–67.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

of “pure white paste,” could be porcelain with a clear glaze or white glaze. A “brown thick crackle,” could be a *ge* or *café au lait* glaze. (See 200.) One reviewer was baffled by the variety of techniques:

The method of raising and enameling flowers, &c., in a paste of another color, called “Celadon,” seems originally to have been adopted for the purpose of imitating in an easier and cheaper manner the cups, basins, and figures which in China are usually covered in steatite or jade. There is a very extensive and varied collection of this description of porcelain. Mr. H. Willett especially has a very extensive variety.⁷²¹

Marryat mentions white porcelains resembling jade and celadon glaze, like pale green glass, was used to imitate jade; as in the case of celadon *cong* vases. However, the writer’s comment about “raising and enameling flowers,” betrays confusion over this glaze type.

The catalogue and local press highlighted the impact of Chinese ceramics on British producers. They noted the white *dehua* “kylins,” said to be inspiration for Cookworthy’s hard-paste porcelain, and a Chinese enameled vase copied by Wedgwood. They also decried forgeries of imperial wares appearing in the marketplace:

Base imitation for the purpose of deception is an evil which follows excessive demand, and in No. 2 Case will be found two specimens of “clobber'd ware,” ie. porcelain originally of a blue and white pattern, but which have been in this country richly painted, or gilt and refired, to pass for true Oriental at high prices.

The “clobber’d ware” included pieces that seemingly imitated the imperial yellow porcelains mentioned above: “One deep and two shallow basins, green inside, yellow outside, enameled in Kylins and dragons. (These are of imitation English enamel on oriental base),” a “Small Vase, height 6 in., English clobbered ware, i.e., painted and refired in rich yellow on an original base of common blue white China. False,” and another vase “of the same deceptive character.”⁷²² It seems that someone was producing fake “Summer Palace” pots to capitalize on the postwar market for looted imperial wares. Whatever the case, the Brighton catalogue shows that Chinese imperial porcelains were having new impact on British ceramic production, a subject that will be explored at length in Chapter Six.

Collector Henry Willett (1823–1905) made the largest contribution to the show with 22 entries in the oriental porcelain display. These appear to have been selected as study pieces, for they included a wide range of Chinese and Japanese wares, along with the aforementioned clobbered wares and European porcelains. Willett, like his associate A. W. Franks, had formed a comprehensive collection of ceramics (along with fossils and paintings), which linked ceramics with social history. Among many pieces once in his collection and now in the British Museum are Chinese export wares and many early English ceramics, including English Delft, eighteenth-century chinoiserie blue-and-white wares, and white salt-glazed wares

⁷²¹ *Brighton Gazette*, June 27, 1867, 7. See Marryat, *Collections Towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain*, 196, 201, 203, 204.

⁷²² Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 66.

in the style of Chinese *dehua* porcelain. In fact, his collection alone included many specimens representing links between Chinese and British ceramics that the exhibition organizers clearly hoped to demonstrate. The second largest lender was Rev. James Beck, who contributed more than seven ceramic pieces (mostly Japanese); two Chinese- and eight Japanese bronzes; three lacquerware pieces; one Indian buckle (displayed in the enamels case); Indian and Japanese arms; one pair of incense burners; and one enamel.⁷²³ A sketch of his activities in antiquarian circles provides a sense of the collectors who were handling objects from the Summer Palace in various towns. Beck had studied at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and had been involved in many exhibitions previously.⁷²⁴ He lent a stone celt and a bronze Roman key to an archaeological exhibition at Parnham in 1859;⁷²⁵ worked on a show at the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in London in 1861;⁷²⁶ and then collaborated with J. C. Robinson, A. W. Franks and William Chaffers on an exhibition of the South Kensington Loan Collection in 1862; so he came into contact with other connoisseurs who had handled material from the Summer Palace.⁷²⁷ He sent objects to a loan exhibition at the Public Hall in Reigate and oversaw arrangement of its Archaeological Department in 1863.⁷²⁸ That same year, he lent metal work and miniatures to an antiquarian exhibition.⁷²⁹ He attended meetings for a portrait exhibition in 1865,⁷³⁰ and was involved in a display of British art for the 1866 Paris Exhibition.⁷³¹ Beck also showed commitment to the social uplift promised by exhibitions with his support for the admission of “inmates of the Workhouse and children of the Industrial Schools,” to the show, but this was denied.⁷³² However, the Brighton show included a display and lecture on cottages for workers, so it shared some of the social goals of other art and industry shows.

James S. Turner (dates unknown), a landowner involved in local politics, loaned eight ceramic pieces linked with the Summer Palace: “One basin and two 9 1/2 in. plates, imperial yellow-etched with dragons, part of the table service of the Emperor of China, taken from his Summer Palace,” likely resembling the dish shown here.⁷³³ **(Fig. 4-8)** Turner also loaned “One saucer and two basins, yellow ware, with flowers and dragons painted in green. From the Summer Palace.” Such wares were for consorts of the second and third ranks: *guifei* (imperial consort) and *fei* (imperial concubine) respectively.⁷³⁴ A specimen is shown here. **(Fig. 4-9)** Finally, there were “Two shallow basins, brown

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, 80–84, 100.

⁷²⁴ *Sussex Agricultural Express*, March 12, 1859, 5.

⁷²⁵ *Carlisle Patriot*, August 6, 1859, 2.

⁷²⁶ *London Standard*, April 11, 1861, 2.

⁷²⁷ *London Standard*, December 26, 1862, 3.

⁷²⁸ *Brighton Gazette*, April 9, 1863, 6.

⁷²⁹ *Illustrated Times*, August 15, 1863, 4.

⁷³⁰ *London Standard*, July 14, 1865, 6.

⁷³¹ *London Daily News*, November 14, 1866, 5.

⁷³² *Brighton Gazette*, August 1, 1867, 5.

⁷³³ V&A, acc. no. FE.133-1975.

⁷³⁴ Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics, Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1998), 26.

crackle ware. From the Summer Palace.”⁷³⁵ These could have been Song Dynasty *ge* ware, characterized by crackled brownish-grey celadon glazes and produced at Longquan, or Qing Dynasty imitations.⁷³⁶ They might also be palace dishes covered in a simple opaque brown glaze or a café au lait glaze, such as the two bowls shown here.⁷³⁷ (Fig. 4-10) Like many collectors during this period, Turner wanted porcelain dishes glazed yellow and decorated with dragons; for it was known that dishes covered with yellow glaze were reserved for the use of the emperor, empress and empress dowager,⁷³⁸ while a yellow glaze on the exterior only was reserved for concubines of the first rank.⁷³⁹ As Joseph Marryat had noted, “The citron-yellow ware, made for the exclusive use of the emperor, and which is not permitted to be in the possession of any subject, is extremely rare.”⁷⁴⁰ Vessels with yellow glazes featured prominently at auctions after the war. These included yellow-ground palace dishes for imperial banquets painted with dragons,⁷⁴¹ plain yellow-glazed wares,⁷⁴² yangcai-enameled wares with yellow grounds.⁷⁴³ Yellow glazes also inspired ceramic designers like Christopher Dresser. (See 368–72.)



4-8. Chinese “imperial yellow” dish, Daoguang mark and period (r. 1821–50), glazed porcelain, D. 17.2 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

⁷³⁵ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 66.

⁷³⁶ Li, *Chinese Ceramics*, 134, 266–67, 336; Plates 261–62, 519–20.

⁷³⁷ British Museum, mus. no. PDF,A.572.

⁷³⁸ Marryat, *Collections Towards a History of Pottery and Porcelain*, 215.

⁷³⁹ Anne Walthall, *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 141.

⁷⁴⁰ Marryat, *History of Pottery and Porcelain*, 215.

⁷⁴¹ Christie’s London, Sales of May 30, 1862, Lots 217, 218, 222; July 21, 1862, Lot 42; April 1, 1863, Lots 157, 159, 161, 166; July 20, 1863, Lot 13,

⁷⁴² Christie’s London, Sales of July 21 1862, Lot 50; July 20, 1863, Lot 12; July 20, 1863, Lot 106.

⁷⁴³ Christie’s London, Sales of July 5, 1861, Lot 150; July 21 1862, Lots 25, 57, 58; July 20, 1863, Lot 52; July 25, 1864, Lots 24, 27, 28, 32.



4-9. Imperial “dragon” dish, Kangxi mark and period, glazed and enameled porcelain, D. 12.6 cm,
© Christie’s Images / Bridgeman Images



4-10. Two imperial bowls, Qianlong mark and period, glazed porcelain, H. 8.3 cm, British Museum

Of all the lenders only Turner seems to have had a political interest in objects from the Summer Palace. He was a steward of the 4th Sussex (Lewes) Rifle Volunteers and at one point the bailiff of the town of Seaford.⁷⁴⁴ During the 1860s, the *Brighton Gazette* frequently listed him as a participant in agricultural and hunting events. He was a member of the Sussex Archaeological Society,⁷⁴⁵ but no newspapers of the period mention him in connection with any other exhibition. Turner loaned more objects from Summer Palace than any other patron: eight ceramics; a “Large Chinese Bronze Urn, in the

⁷⁴⁴ *Brighton Gazette*, January 10, 1861, 5.

⁷⁴⁵ *Brighton Gazette*, August 20, 1863, 6.

form of a bird, encrusted with gold and enamel, from the Summer Palace,”⁷⁴⁶ “The private banner of the emperor of China, taken at the sack of the Summer Palace,”⁷⁴⁷ and a “Window sash lifter of the carriage presented to the Emperor of China by HM Government, through Lord Macartney, cut from it whilst in flames, at Yuen Ming Yuen Palace.”⁷⁴⁸ This object may come from one of two carriages by John Hatchett of Mess. Hatchett, Son & Co.⁷⁴⁹ The sash lifter is an anomaly among spoils from the Summer Palace. Many gifts presented to the Qianlong emperor by Western monarchs and other European objects appeared in the British marketplace after the war; but these were invariably jeweled luxury items like etui cases or elaborate timepieces. This group included 34 spectacular lots of watches, snuff boxes, necessaires, enamels and other luxury objects offered for sale by Capt. Negroni at Foster’s in 1866.⁷⁵⁰ Another group of similar objects “from the Emperor’s Summer Palace, at Peking,” was sold at Phillips in 1861.⁷⁵¹ An exhibition-goer who had read the accounts of British embassies to China might have seen the sash lifter as a reminder of Britain’s technological superiority over China. When the Earl Macartney had presented the carriages to Qianlong, his courtiers had been flummoxed by the seemingly undignified position in which this mode of conveyance would have placed their ruler, as told by George Staunton:

When the mandarins found out that so elevated a seat was destined for the coachman who was to drive the horses, they expressed the utmost astonishment that it should be proposed to place any man in a situation above the Emperor.⁷⁵²

Members of the embassy hoped that Qianlong would forego his sedan chair in favor of the carriage, but members of the 1860 expedition found them stored away.⁷⁵³ While the Brighton show was not political in the manner of a military exhibition, men like Turner saw the victory in 1860 as an important moment in the history of British imperialism.

Silks and Tartans at Inverness (1867)

Chinese imperial textiles appeared at an Exhibition of Art and Industry held to raise funds for the new Government School of Art in the Scottish Highland town of Inverness in September 1867. This was the first such show in town and it featured small collections from local citizens and producers, rounded out with loans from Queen Victoria and the South Kensington Museum. The exhibit was installed at the Music Hall, Union Street, in a mere two days. The *Inverness Courier* reported that loans were still streaming in after the catalogue had gone to press. Among these were treasures from the Summer Palace,

⁷⁴⁶ Southern Counties Association, *Catalogue of Works of Art and Industry*, 80.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁷⁴⁹ Barrow, *Travels in China*, 113.

⁷⁵⁰ *Catalogue of Captain de Negroni’s Collection*, Lots 142–74, 396–97.

⁷⁵¹ Phillips London, Sale of July 18, 1861, Lots 87–97.

⁷⁵² George Staunton, *Authentic Account of an Embassy*, 2:164–65.

⁷⁵³ Knollys, *Incidents in the China War*, 128.

which unfortunately arrived too late for inclusion in the catalogue. Pictures of the show were taken by professional photographer Joseph Collier (1836–1910), who later emigrated to America; but their whereabouts are still unknown to this writer despite an extensive search.

Though the textiles weren't catalogued,⁷⁵⁴ they were most likely among the “Chinese works” loaned by Mr. Ross of Portland Place, “some of them exceedingly rare and curious.”⁷⁵⁵ Ross was an ex-bailie (alderman) whose son, Alexander Clarke Ross (1827–79), was an army surgeon attached to the 67th regiment in the 1860 campaign.⁷⁵⁶ The 67th stayed on at Tianjin over the winter of 1860, where Dr. Ross participated in a Hogamanay dinner on New Year's Eve.⁷⁵⁷ In 1863, Ross sent a trophy home, which was described in the local press:

A CHINESE CUP.—Dr. Ross, staff-surgeon, has transmitted from China to his father, Bailie Ross, Inverness, a handsome silver cup, inscribed, “Hong Kong Volunteers. Won by Dr. A.G. Ross, Staff-Surgeon.” The cup is richly chased, exhibiting a number of figures, animals &c., which do credit to Chinese workmanship.⁷⁵⁸

In 1867, he pursued an application for the Victoria Cross, which he ultimately did not receive, despite a recommendation from Gen. Grant.⁷⁵⁹ He died in 1879 at Brighton and was listed as lately of the Royal Scots Regiment.⁷⁶⁰ Since no other Inverness native attained Ross's stature in the British military, it is likely that the large group of spoils from the Summer Palace in the exhibition was from him.

In 1862, the *Courier* reported that Dr. Ross had forwarded fabulous spoils to his father. These were described at length in the *Inverness Courier* in 1862:

SPOILS FROM THE SUMMER PALACE OF THE EMPEROR. — We had lately an opportunity of inspecting a very interesting and valuable collection of curiosities, part of the spoil taken at the sack of the Emperor's Summer Palace in Peking, which has been forwarded by Dr Ross of the 67th Regiment, now stationed in China, to his father, our worthy townsman Bailie Ross. The loot consists chiefly of silks, furs, dresses, chinaware, and curiosities the shape of chop-sticks, coins, &c. Their intrinsic value must be very considerable, and being bona fide spoils from the palace of a Chinese Emperor, will no doubt be long treasured by Bailie Ross and his family as interesting memorials of a remarkable episode in the history of British arms. One of the dresses is a robe of the finest silk, elaborately overlaid with gold brocade, worked into a multitude of devices, in which the Imperial Dragon is everywhere conspicuous; it was undoubtedly a dress of the Emperor, or one of the Royal Family, as it is distinguished from the dresses of high mandarins and others by ornaments, the use of which was limited to the Emperor and his nearest relatives. The silks, without exception, have the Imperial dragon interwoven in the texture; they are double the ordinary width, and have been valued, we believe, at about

⁷⁵⁴ *Catalogue of the Inverness Exhibition of Art and Industry Held in the Music Hall September 1867 under the Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen* (Inverness: Printed at the Advertiser's Office, 1867).

⁷⁵⁵ “Exhibition of Art and Industry in Inverness,” *Inverness Courier*, September 19, 1867, 5.

⁷⁵⁶ *Naval & Military Gazette and Weekly Chronicle of the United Service*, May 14, 1879, 22.

⁷⁵⁷ “Hogamanay Dinner,” *Inverness Courier*, May 9, 1861, 3.

⁷⁵⁸ *Inverness Courier*, October 8, 1863, 5.

⁷⁵⁹ *Inverness Courier*, August 22, 1867, 4.

⁷⁶⁰ *London Standard*, April 24, 1879, 1.

guinea a yard. The chinaware is of the rarest and most costly workmanship; in the days when China ornaments, like rare tulips, were objects of an insane fancy, no price would have been grudged for the splendid loot which Dr Ross secured at Peking. The selection has been made with much taste, and gives an admirable idea of the state of art and manufactures in China.⁷⁶¹

The passage shows how the status of officers as men of “taste” and sophistication rose on the basis of “selection” of loot at the Summer Palace. After returning home, Ross consigned some of his spoils at Christie’s. These appear in a consignment register at Christie’s Archives, London:

4 December

634K A. C. Ross Esq MD.
Staff surgeon
1 Portland Place
Inverness

Oct 20th 1 Box
 4 Enamel Vases from the Summer Palace (injured)
 1 Bronze do (do)

facing page:

put in first sale
Dec. 4 Sold.⁷⁶²

The entry suggests that Ross was disposing of broken and otherwise less valuable pieces.

The *Courier* reported that among the Ross collection were “Some splendid specimens of Chinese tapestry taken in the sack of the Emperor of China’s summer palace at Peking,” and that “rich articles of royal Chinese dress are displayed on a side wall.” The imperial dragon was “interwoven in the texture” of some. This description of the hangings and robes suggests that some were *kesi*, or “carved silk” tapestries, sometimes augmented with metallic threads, wool or even painting.⁷⁶³ Apart from the dragons, the hangings might have shown gatherings of immortals or bird-and-flower scenes. Though calligraphy and esoteric buddhist imagery also appeared in large works, their alien style made them unlikely candidates for display as specimens of textile design.

The rarity of imperial tapestries made them precious prize, which would have caused a sensation at Inverness. While embroidered silks and “mandarin” robes turned up in a number of auction catalogs and exhibitions of the postwar period, Chinese tapestries are not mentioned in any campaign memoirs penned by soldiers and they appeared infrequently in nineteenth-century British estate sales and

⁷⁶¹ *Inverness Courier*, January 16, 1862, 5.

⁷⁶² Christie’s London consignment registers, vol. 9, Jan 1863–June 1865, Christie’s Archive, London.

⁷⁶³ Dieter Kuhn, ed., *Chinese Silks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 286–93.

exhibitions. The famed Negroni exhibition of 1865 included only two *kesi* pieces: mantles of the “imperial yellow” with dragons worked in gold thread. The Negroni catalogue stated that “when held up to the light the texture displays an infinity of designs.”⁷⁶⁴ Chinese tapestries created an atmosphere of oriental luxury in the most elite settings. When George V of Hanover (1819–78) stayed at the villa of the Duke of Brunswick (1806–84) outside Vienna, the primary salon was decorated in a chinoiserie style with rows of bells and “Chinese tapestry” on the walls; his bedroom was hung with tartans.⁷⁶⁵ Likewise, the silks at Inverness were shown alongside bright tartans by Macdougall & Co. and newfangled sewing machines hummed in the background.⁷⁶⁶ This was the kind of display intended to promote local manufactures and spark innovation; and it would have been of great interest to locals, for Inverness hosted an annual wool market and was a port city that relied partly on this trade. MacDougall had taken a medal at the International Exhibition of 1862 and boasted patronage of the royal family for their highland dress and fine woven fabrics. Here the firm’s best tartans were juxtaposed with Chinese imperial silks.

Nearby was a figure of a Highlander at the Battle of Culloden (1746), the final engagement of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, which had taken place at Culloden Moor, just east of Inverness. The figure was draped with tartan, bringing a martial note to the textile display. The tartans of Highland clans had been banned after the Jacobite uprising;⁷⁶⁷ however, they became a subject of fascination in England as Highland regiments were integrated successfully into the British Army. The visit of George IV in 1822 sparked a rage for tartans, further encouraged by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert (1819–61), who decorated Balmoral in a “Highland Style” two decades later. Tartans were also incorporated into ladies’ fashions and decorative objects.⁷⁶⁸ But tartan was still a crucial part of regimental and clan heritage. It was used in uniforms and in martial displays as bunting, combined with greenery, muskets and flags for officers’ balls or public ceremonies.⁷⁶⁹ So the exhibit may have reminded visitors that Scottish regiments played a crucial role in the British Army: The Royal Scots participated in the operations at Beijing,⁷⁷⁰ and the China expedition was led by two Scotsmen, Lord Elgin and Gen. Grant.

⁷⁶⁴ *Catalogue of Captain de Negroni’s Collection*, nos. 479, 480.

⁷⁶⁵ *Northampton Mercury*, November 18, 1882, 3.

⁷⁶⁶ *Inverness Courier*, September 19, 1867, 5.

⁷⁶⁷ Matthew P. Dziennik, “Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People ca.1870–2000,” *Past & Present*, no. 217 (November 2012): 122.

⁷⁶⁸ I. H. Mackay Scobie, “The Scottish Tartan Manufacturers and Bonnet Makers,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 21, no. 82 (Summer 1942): 64–70. Gives an introduction to Scottish dress in the British Army. Aonghus Mackechnie and Florian Urban, “Balmoral Castle: National Architecture in a European Context,” *Architectural History* 58 (2015): 159–96. Discusses Highlandism at Balmoral. Iain Zaczek, *The Complete Book of Tartan: A Heritage Encyclopedia of Over 400 Tartans and the Stories That Shaped Scottish History* (London: Anness Publishers, 2006), 48–49, 62–63, 74–75. The text covers the prohibition and revival of tartans.

⁷⁶⁹ *Inverness Courier*, October 27, 1859, 6; *Inverness Courier*, May 23, 1867, 5.

⁷⁷⁰ A. Michael Brander, *The Royal Scots: (The Royal Regiment)* (London: Cooper, 1976), 47.

10. Conversazione

As noted in the introduction, groups of Summer Palace material appeared at many conversazione throughout the United Kingdom. These were evening salons for the public in large civic spaces, which included events like lectures, musical performances and lantern shows; along with displays of natural history specimens, inventions, and artworks. There appears to be no significant literature on this ritual of nineteenth-century British life, but it can be said that the atmosphere was distinctly genteel and that these events were mounted as polite social gatherings, where the focus was on culture and science. The term first appears in British newspapers early in the nineteenth century, in reference to evening salons, often with music and food, which were hosted by wealthy women in their homes. Such was a conversazione held by Mary Amelia Cecil, the Marchioness of Salisbury (1750–1835), who illuminated her great banqueting room one evening and had members of the nobility in for conversation and late supper “in the usual style of splendid hospitality.”⁷⁷¹ By mid-century these events were public affairs in civic buildings where leading citizens mingled and shared objects from their collections with the community.

“Oriental” Manufactures at Sheffield (1862)

The annual conversazione in 1862 at the School of Art in Sheffield is an instance in which looted artworks were dealt with as art manufacture specimens. The *Sheffield Independent* reported that Lord Wharncliffe opened it with a tribute to the late Prince Albert, stating that his support for British manufacturers had raised design from “a most degraded state.” He then drew the crowd’s attention to “some very large and magnificent copper enamels captured at the Summer Palace in Peking, and brought to this country by my youngest brother, who was on Lord Elgin’s staff,” and received a cheer. His brother was the Hon. James Frederick Stuart Wortley (1833–70), who had served as an attaché to Lord Elgin. As one of the diplomatic staff, he had no right to spoils at all. The review described the pieces only as “four large vases, contributed by Lord Wharncliffe, two of Chinese porcelain and two of metal of oriental manufacture.” Wharncliffe was enthusiastic:

You will see that the forms are pleasing and graceful, the colouring bold, and yet that there is a stamp upon them of the nation who designed and executed them. They are further remarkable for their size, as we have no European enamels approaching to them in that respect.⁷⁷²

He urged that Asian ornament be studied, particularly for its colors:

in the Eastern nations those who have attained to the greatest knowledge of the treatment of colour, particularly in their designs for textile fabrics. Unable to draw correctly, as they almost always are, yet they appear to have an intuitive acquaintance with the principles of

⁷⁷¹ *Morning Post*, June 10, 1818, 3.

⁷⁷² *Sheffield Independent*, January 22, 1862, 2.

colouring, and to apply them with a boldness and success to which European nations cannot attain ... If we go still further East, to a country now happily on a better footing with us than it has ever been before, we see that although the form and taste in art is grotesque, yet that there are signs of extensive former knowledge of Ceramic Art, as also that of enameling.⁷⁷³

Praise for Asian ornament was often paired with negative assessments of Asian painting, particularly their approach to perspective, or condescending suggestions that their facility with color came from “instinct” or their closeness to nature. Still, Wharncliffe expressed the general admiration for cloisonné shared by men of his class, collectors and designers.

Chinese Rarities at Montrose (1863)

In 1863, a reporter noted at a conversazione in Montrose: “There was a very fine specimen of Chinese art – a porcelain picture of the Summer Palace of the Emperor of China – considered to be a great curiosity, and which represents several buildings stretched along the river, and a procession passing along.”⁷⁷⁴ This was said to be owned by members of the Hoile family. Another review of the same exhibition stated: “A good deal of the Chinese rarities were ‘looted’ from the Summer Palace at Peking, and from the numerous articles ticketed as the contributions of Drs. Hoile, those gentlemen seem to have acquired a very handsome share of celestial plunder.”⁷⁷⁵ Hart’s *New Annual Army List and Militia List, for 1861* lists both men as British Army medical staff and notes Edmond Hoile’s posting in China.⁷⁷⁶ Other doctors who acquired things from the Summer Palace were Alexander Clarke Ross, (See 203–4.) Thomas Knox Birnie, (See 129–30.) Graham Young,⁷⁷⁷ (See 78, 115.) and William Freeman Daniell.⁷⁷⁸ (See 155–59.) At this time Dr. Edmond Hoile (b. 1837) and Dr. David Hoile (1831–65) were prominent in Montrose newspapers.⁷⁷⁹ Edmond Hoile was a member of the Montrose Natural History and Antiquarian Society, to which he lent objects. So it seems that the Hoiles integrated their looted art into collections of historical, cultural and scientific interest. In 1871, Dr. Hoile sold his house and his movements afterwards are unknown to this writer.⁷⁸⁰ At this point it can only be said that documentation of smaller shows yields names of small-town collectors and descriptions of their collections, providing fertile ground for further research.

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ *Dundee Courier*, February 28, 1863, 4.

⁷⁷⁵ *Dundee Courier*, March 2, 1863, 4.

⁷⁷⁶ Hart, *New Annual Army List and Militia List, for 1861*, 426, 534.

⁷⁷⁷ Young, *A Story of Active Service in Foreign Lands*, 127.

⁷⁷⁸ BM, mus. no. 1861,0629.2. Daniel donated a bronze incense burner and other items to the British Museum.

⁷⁷⁹ *Montrose Standard*, July 15, 1853, 1; *Montrose Standard*, March 13, 1863, 5.

⁷⁸⁰ *Montrose, Arbroath and Brechin Review*, July 7, 1871, 1.

Curiosities in Leeds (1863)

Spoils also appeared with other Asian objects as “curiosities.” In 1863 a *conversazione* was held to mark the opening of a new national school at Horsforth, Leeds. A local printer, “B. W. Sharp,” lent “a collection of curiosities from China, Japan, India, and other distant parts,” which included: “four idols taken from the summer palace at Peking; cigar cases, neck-laces, bracelets &c., of the most beautiful workmanship, from China; Japanese coins, a mandarin’s belt of costly make, etc.”⁷⁸¹ The idols were possibly small gilt bronze Buddha figures, which soldiers often stole from temples where they quartered during the Opium Wars. For example, Christie’s sold figures of deities “taken from a temple of Chusan by the troops,” in 1859.⁷⁸² Men enjoyed these as trophies and grotesqueries, not artworks, for their wrathful expressions and gestures were not to British taste. Capt. John Hart Dunne recalled:

Walked down to the Lhama Temple in the afternoon ... In some of them there are the most disgusting and indecent figures ... At first we rather respected the place, but the temptation was too much for the Punjaubees, and I fear much some “curio” collectors amongst the officers also succumbed. The consequence is that every portable god and goddess, as well as all small things pertaining to the mythology, have disappeared.⁷⁸³

Some figures are in regimental museums. A gilt bronze buddha, reputedly taken from the Summer Palace by Lieut. Walker and Lieut. Barker of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, is in the Royal Marines Museum collection.⁷⁸⁴ The Royal Lancers’ coffee room was likewise decorated with “idols.” (See 125–27.)

Specimens of Craftsmanship at Rotherham (1866)

At other times, objects from the Summer Palace were interpreted as models of craftsmanship. A review of an 1866 *conversazione* at the Rotherham Literary and Scientific Society held in the Mechanics’ Hall stated:

At one of the centre tables, a small portion of the spoils of the Summer Palace at Peking was shown in the shape of two superb sets of ivory chessmen. The Chinese are a long way ahead of European workmen in the art of carving in ivory, and the delicate beauty of the workmanship of these chessmen far exceeds anything we had previously seen.⁷⁸⁵

The acquisition of the chess sets had likely come out of the taste for intricate Chinese ivory work among the British. Carved ivory, including “concentric balls,” fans and even chess sets, had been imported and enjoyed as curiosities for many years.⁷⁸⁶ Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753) had Chinese figures of ivory,

⁷⁸¹ *Leeds Intelligencer*, February 7, 1863, 7.

⁷⁸² Christie’s London, Sale of March 31, 1859, Lots 139–40.

⁷⁸³ Dunne, *From Calcutta to Peking*, 141.

⁷⁸⁴ Royal Marines Museum, inv. no. RMM M/2/88. The museum is closed indefinitely.

⁷⁸⁵ *Sheffield Independent*, May 9, 1866, 3.

⁷⁸⁶ Craig Clunas, “Carving,” in Clunas, *Chinese Export Art*, 96–105.

which entered the British Museum collection in 1753.⁷⁸⁷ Despite this taste for Chinese ivory, only a small number of carvings seems to have returned with the troops, most likely due to their fragility; for the author has found few other references dating to the decade after the war. On July 18, 1861, the auctioneer Mr. Phillips offered:

98 A pair of beautifully carved ivory trays, with raised coloured ornaments.

99 A box containing a quantity of beautiful carvings, in ivory, representing figures, birds, animals, insects and flowers, forming the decorations of a cabinet or screen about 75 pieces.

These were said to have been “taken from the Emperor’s Summer Palace, at Peking.”⁷⁸⁸ The Summer Palace collection of Captain Negroni contained only six carved ivories, including a model boat and an elephant of “coloured ivory,”⁷⁸⁹ and a pair of ivory panels were offered for sale after the war:

On sale.— Mr. J. J. Hall, of 28 London-road, has two very valuable and singularly curious CHINESE PICTURES. The subjects are architecture, with numerous figures, all worked in ivory most exquisitely carved. These pictures were taken from the Emperor’s Summer Palace, near Peking, on the 19th of October, 1860, a few days before it was set on fire by the allied Powers. It is seldom indeed that pictures of this class can be met with. In addition to which the historical associations connected with them add considerably to their intrinsic value.⁷⁹⁰

Possibly, these come from the estate, since panels with palace scenes are still in the imperial collections. Chess sets were made for foreigners at Guangzhou. In 1907, a Mrs. Taylor donated one intricately carved set, dated 1850 to 1880, to the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁷⁹¹ Another set, tentatively attributed to nineteenth-century Beijing and once in an English collection is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁷⁹² So it is possible that the ivory chess sets were made within the export trade, but sent to the court as tribute.

11. Spoils at International Exhibitions

One special subset of industrial art exhibitions was the international exhibition, a mega-event that drew exhibitors from the world over. While provincial exhibitions were geared toward promoting local industry, international exhibitions exposed British manufacturers to the opportunities and challenges of global expansion and competition. As Paul Young writes in *Globalization and the Great Exhibition*, the organizing theme of international exhibitions was “free trade” among nations: an international system of production and exchange, which continually generated progress and prosperity, linking nations into an ideal global community. Proponents argued that displays of art and manufactures from countries across

⁷⁸⁷ BM, mus. nos. SLMisc.84; SLMisc.1004.

⁷⁸⁸ Phillips London, Sale of July 18, 1861.

⁷⁸⁹ *Catalogue of Captain de Negroni’s Collection*, 41–42.

⁷⁹⁰ *Liverpool Daily Post*, July 9, 1861, 7.

⁷⁹¹ V&A, acc. no. 294-1907.

⁷⁹² MMA, acc. no. 48.174.75a–p, aa–pp.

the globe would inspire comparison, innovation and competition among producers, ultimately to the benefit of Britain and what was considered the civilized world. Young writes that “mid-nineteenth-century representations of globalization cast market forces with relation to goodwill and fellow-feeling, allowing the self-interest of man the economic animal to be transfigured as a form of brotherly love that guaranteed human recognition.”⁷⁹³ This benign conception of free trade was at odds with the political realities of Britain’s global relationships and imperialist ambitions, which were represented at these shows by “colonial” departments, often located near Chinese displays. “Free trade” often meant exploiting natural resources, local markets, and native labor of less powerful countries by Western European nations; and it was sometimes effected through military intervention, as in the cases of Japan and China.

From Trophies to Art Specimens in London (1862)

Historian John R. Davis has argued that the International Exhibition of 1862 in London has received little scholarly attention, compared with the Great Exhibition of 1851, because it was overshadowed in its day by that earlier formative effort and it was mounted in a political atmosphere less sympathetic to the idea of “free trade,” which had fired the collective British imagination a decade prior.⁷⁹⁴ Despite this perceived failure in a broader sense and the lack of contemporary scholarly attention to Asian art at the 1862 exhibition, the China Court featured an important display of art from the Summer Palace, due to its contents and documentation. Not only was there extensive press coverage of the event, which supports provenance research on some artworks, but numerous images of the China Court and its contents enable us to see parts of the display. Lengthy press commentaries on the objects further enable us to gauge the complex reaction of the public. Altogether, the response to this display reflects the general shift in attitudes towards Chinese culture, from cultural antipathy to enthusiastic embrace.

Contributors to the China Court

The contributors listed in the catalogue alone would suggest that the exhibit represented a British view of China, rather than China itself. Among the many prominent lenders were export merchants and other stakeholders in China. Messrs. Hewett and Company (“Hewitt” in the catalogue), offered their usual “Mandarin jars; tea &c. services and enamels. &c.”⁷⁹⁵ Rémi, Schmidt, & Co. mounted a more dramatic

⁷⁹³ Paul Young, *Globalization and the Great Exhibition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 21.

⁷⁹⁴ John R. Davis, “The Origins of the 1862 Exhibition and Its Place in History,” in “Almost Forgotten: The International Exhibition of 1862,” ed. John R. Davis, *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850 - the Present*, no. 38 (2014): 8–19.

⁷⁹⁵ *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 3:43.

display of items possibly acquired through their branch in China.⁷⁹⁶ This included “Raw silks, vases, bronzes, lacquer ware, cups of jade and agate, carpets from the Summer Palace &c.”⁷⁹⁷ These were not itemized in the exhibition catalogue, but were entered individually in the Christie’s catalogue for the Remi sale at Christie’s on December 1, 1862.⁷⁹⁸ Other lenders were diplomats, merchants, missionaries and soldiers, who represented Britain’s main interests in China: trade and missionary work. Robert James (R. J.) Forrest (1838–1902), was then HM Acting Vice Consul at Zhenjiang, later the British Consul at Tianjin, and Chairman of the China Famine Relief Committee during the Great Famine of 1876–79.⁷⁹⁹ He lent items connected with the Taiping Rebellion, including: “Autograph of the first rebel chief; coins made by the rebel authorities at Nanking.”⁸⁰⁰ He had reported on the chaos at the rebel capital of “Tianjing” in his article “The Taipings at Home,” and argued against Western intervention, stating “It will not do to look at it in the light of the spread of Christianity against Heathendom, as some people would have it, nor will it be well to consider altogether the individual and temporary damage done to foreign commerce.”⁸⁰¹ Rev. James Legge (1815–97), the Scottish missionary and sinologist, contributed “Specimens of Chinese types,”⁸⁰² which were “prepared at the foundry of the London Missionary Society, Hong Kong.”⁸⁰³ In addition to publishing his multivolume work *The Chinese Classics*, Legge was a founding member of the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade. Capt. William Hutcheon Hall, RN (1797–1878), commander of the *Nemesis* steamship, contributed “Chinese pictures.” He had written a memoir of his travels in China during the First Opium War in which he admitted the evils of opium while defending Britain’s corruption of officials who benefitted from its sale.⁸⁰⁴ While all of these men ultimately served British interests in China, their personal histories indicate the potential for more sympathetic engagement among the British public, which enabled exhibition visitors to acknowledge the achievements of Chinese civilization.

But men who participated in the 1860 China campaign or supported aggressive engagement with China on behalf of British interests also participated. A “Capt. Malcolm, C. D.” of the Royal Engineers lent carved ivory chessmen.⁸⁰⁵ This was Edward Donald Malcolm (1837–1930),⁸⁰⁶ the brother of Col.

⁷⁹⁶ Marjorie Hobin, “Dominique Rémi: Le pionnier de la Concession française de Shanghai,” *Le Souvenir Français* (October 2010): 4–5. Gives a brief history of the firm.

⁷⁹⁷ *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 3:44.

⁷⁹⁸ Christie’s London, Sale of December 1, 1862.

⁷⁹⁹ Denise Austin, *“Kingdom-Minded” People: Christian Identity and the Contributions of Chinese Business Christians* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 21.

⁸⁰⁰ *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 3:43.

⁸⁰¹ Originally published in the *North China Herald*, October 19, 1861. Reprinted in Thomas Wright Blakiston, *Five Months on the Yang-tsze; with a Narrative of the Exploration of Its Upper Waters, and Notices of the Present Rebellions in China* (London: John Murray, 1862), 54.

⁸⁰² *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 3:43.

⁸⁰³ *Morning Post*, April 30, 1862, 5.

⁸⁰⁴ Bernard, *Narrative of the Voyages and Services of the Nemesis*, 1:182–86.

⁸⁰⁵ “C.D.” was a typographic error. The correct initials are “C.B.” for “Counter-Battery.”

⁸⁰⁶ Hart, *New Annual Army List and Militia List, for 1861*, 197.

John Wingfield, 1st Baron Malcolm of Poltalloch (1833–1902).⁸⁰⁷ He served during the Crimean War, the Indian rebellion and in China, among other places,⁸⁰⁸ was elected to the Royal Geographic Society in 1861,⁸⁰⁹ and ultimately attained the rank of colonel. A “Capt. Jacob” of the 99th Regiment, exhibited “sundry articles.”⁸¹⁰ This was Eustace Wilberforce Jacob (d. 1871), who left the army in 1862, worked as a missionary in Natal and became a clergyman.⁸¹¹ Although his things were not attributed to the Summer Palace, other members of his regiment, Capt. Dunne and Capt. Ely, had taken objects from the estate. (See 95–98, 121–22.) Lieut. Charles Henry Cox (d. 1885) lent enameled wares, which will be discussed below. He was a graduate of the Royal Military College and began in the 57th Foot,⁸¹² had served during Indian Rebellion and then joined of the 60th (the King’s Royal Rifle Corps),⁸¹³ which was part of the Second Division of the China Expeditionary Force.⁸¹⁴ Robert Swinhoe, identified in the catalogue as “H. M. Vice-Consul, Taiwan-foo, Formosa,” contributed “Various articles from Formosa.” American historian Philip B. Hall writes that Swinhoe in fact set up a “Formosan booth,” for which he won a medal and a cash prize.⁸¹⁵ A group of implements linked with him in the British Museum may have been on display in 1862, including bamboo baskets from Taiwan.⁸¹⁶ He was also a naturalist who donated specimens of deer killed at the Summer Palace to the Zoological Society of London in 1861.⁸¹⁷

The China Court: Textual vs. Visual Evidence

If our understanding of the China Court relied entirely on the exhibition catalogue, the importance of this display for the history of Chinese art in Britain would be lost. The China section does not begin with an essay on Chinese craft. It contains 26 entries, which are vague and disorganized. The display seems a random assemblage of utilitarian objects, curiosities and export wares, rounded out with loot from the Summer Palace. Objects linked by the lenders with the Chinese emperor, such as his throne screen and jade seal for “certifying literary proficiency,” were mixed up with “Sundry articles,” “Chinese pictures,” “Carved ivory chessmen,” and an “Ancient bronze censer and two candlesticks,” lent by soldiers. While exhibition catalogues often place a contributor’s name after their object, the names came first here: it seems the owner was most important. The emperor’s signs of power were thus devalued and reordered.

⁸⁰⁷ *Highland News*, April 26, 1902, 3.

⁸⁰⁸ *Newry Telegraph*, May 23, 1896, 3.

⁸⁰⁹ *Saint James’s Chronicle*, June 19, 1862, 8.

⁸¹⁰ *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 3:43.

⁸¹¹ *Star*, August 8, 1871, 2.

⁸¹² *Inverness Courier*, January 1, 1857, 7.

⁸¹³ Hart, *New Annual Army List and Militia List, for 1861*, 330.

⁸¹⁴ *Army and Navy Gazette*, June 30, 1860, 5.

⁸¹⁵ Philip B. Hall, “Robert Swinhoe (1836-1877), FRS, FZS, FRGS: A Victorian Naturalist in Treaty Port China,” *Geographical Journal* 153, no. 1 (March 1987): 37–47.

⁸¹⁶ BM, mus. no. As1960,10.445.

⁸¹⁷ *Reading Mercury*, June 22, 1861, 2.

Visual evidence in the form of engravings, chromolithographs and photographs shows that splendid objects from the Summer Palace were in fact front and center in the China Court. The London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company produced stereographs of the display, which show stunning artworks of likely imperial provenance. One stereograph titled *No. 203.—Chinese Court, The International Exhibition of 1862 (1)*, depicts a vast display table filled with Chinese art. **(Fig. 4-11)** A boy kneels in front, presumably for scale; though his inclusion seems intended to illustrate the interest that these novelties aroused. Such figures are not typical in stereographs of the exhibition. At the edge of the table, reading left to right, are an ornately carved wood frame; a Qing Dynasty ancestor portrait; a vitrine containing jades (including a buddha figure and a vessel with sculpted handles); a group of scrolls and possibly textiles; a pair of cloisonné *gu* vases with scroll handles flanking a framed bird-and-flower painting; a bronze pitch-pot with cylindrical handles; a massive enameled *ding* with cover; and a pair of extraordinary *hu* vases with intricately painted *yangcai* enamel decoration. The *gu* vases resemble those in a *wugong* garniture from the Summer Palace presented to Napoleon and Eugénie.⁸¹⁸ The *gu*, *ding* and *hu* vessel types had emerged in the bronze culture of ancient China, and were produced in different materials, like jade and porcelain, throughout China's history. The *gu* was a tall vase-like vessel, with a trumpet mouth; the *hu* was a jar-like vessel with a small neck and swelling pear-shaped form. In early China, they were used for storing, drink and offering libations of wine. The *ding* was a cauldron used for ritual food offerings, which had two handles and sometimes had a tripod form. Behind this, reading left to right, are two bronze storks flanking a vitrine, which is topped by a large export vase; a garment of fine net hanging above; an enameled *penba hu* on a carved stand; and a large model of a pagoda with a label that reads "porcelain pagoda." Stereograph *No. 204.—Chinese Court*, taken from the right side of the display, brings other objects into focus. **(Fig. 4-12)** Behind the ancestor portrait is a carved wooden screen and at the back is Hewett's stall. The pattern on one of the *hu* vases is clearer and the other side of the bronze pitch-pot can be seen. A landscape is just visible on the lacquer screen. What among these objects came from the Summer Palace cannot be determined with certainty, though some pieces are clearly imperial.

⁸¹⁸ Le Musée chinois de l'impératrice Eugénie, inv. nos. 1328 C; 1332 C; 1735 C. Samoyault-Verlet, *Le Musée chinois de l'impératrice Eugénie*, 62–63; Quette, *Cloisonné*, figs. 3.48, 3.49.



4-11. London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company, No. 203.—*Chinese Court, The International Exhibition of 1862 (1)*, stereograph, H. 8 cm (images), Courtesy of Graham Wood



4-12. London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company, No. 204.—*Chinese Court, The International Exhibition of 1862 (2)*, stereograph, H. 8 cm (images), by kind permission of the Brian May Archive of Stereoscopy

Trophies from the Summer Palace in the China Court

James L. Hevia has shown how public displays of spoils celebrated the Allied victory in China, including the exhibition at the Tuileries in April of 1861 and the London International Exhibition of 1862. These shows, he writes, concretized the provenance “from the Summer Palace” for the public as a “reminder of the British triumph over China’s haughty monarch and mandarins and humiliation of their exaggerated

sense of superiority over all foreigners.”⁸¹⁹ He further suggests that the transport and display of objects closely linked with the emperor, such as his throne screen, “added another layer of humiliation to a monarch already brought low by the sacking of his palaces.”⁸²⁰ Hevia has researched the organization of the court and found that the original plan had been for a lavish display of loot like that in the Tuileries, but this did not materialize. He writes: “only a carved screen ‘from behind the Emperor’s throne,’ donated by Gen. Michel, a small collection of bronzes, vases, cups, etc. put on display by a commercial company, and a skull said to be that of Confucius mounted as a drinking cup were supposed to be from the Summer Palace,” were displayed with a random assortment of Chinese things which made little impression on the public.⁸²¹ Nicholas Pearce has done a lengthy case study of the “skull of Confucius,” illuminating its journey to Britain, its significance for the public and its misattribution to the Summer Palace. (See 29–30, 101.) The information presented below supports Hevia’s conclusions about the court; however, other pictorial and textual evidence shows that the display included other fabulous objects, which elicited a strong response.

The exhibit was dominated by the massive throne screen presented to Gen. John Michel by Gen. Gordon. (See 119–20.) It was also given pride of place as the first entry in the China section of the catalogue, and described as “A carved screen, from behind the emperor’s throne in the Summer Palace; jars.”⁸²² Amazingly, this splendid object was followed by “Copland, C. — Backgammon board.” Such was the indifference or hostility of the organizers towards China. The *Illustrated London News* published an engraving that depicted what was in fact a screen fragment, (**Fig. 4-13**) which must have been separated from its base during the looting since that object would have been extremely heavy.⁸²³ The engraving shows a tripartite screen comprising three panels with the reliefs of Chinese antiquities drawn by Gen. Gordon, surrounded by wide borders of alternating dark and light molding and ornamented at the sides and top with deeply carved dragons among clouds. This was presented to the public as “the” throne screen of the emperor; however, as noted in Chapter Three, the emperor had numerous thrones and throne screens, the most important of which stood in the Forbidden City. (See 115–16.)

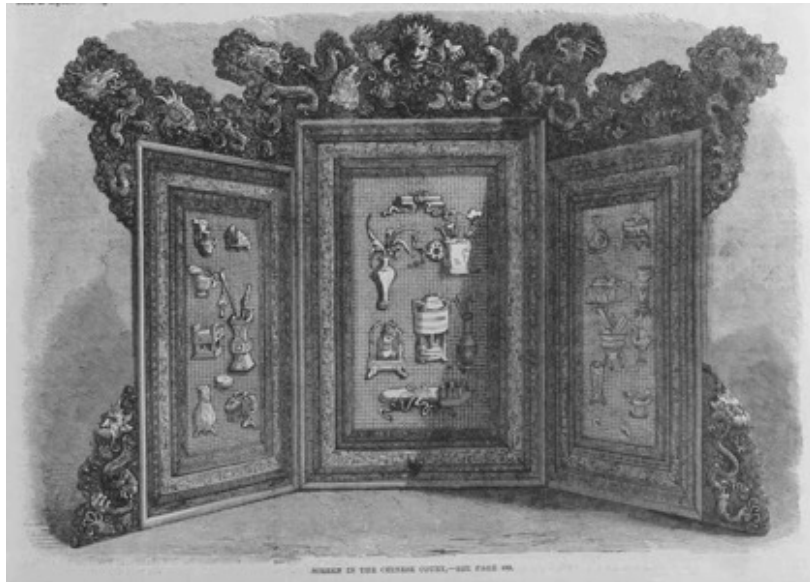
⁸¹⁹ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 98–99.

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸²¹ Hevia, “Loot’s Fate,” 330.

⁸²² *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 3:43.

⁸²³ Hai-sheng Chou, email message to author, October 24, 2020.



4-13. "Screen in the Chinese Court," from the *Illustrated London News*, November 1, 1862, engraving, measurements unavailable, © Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library

Two other massive objects linked closely with the emperor were displayed in the court and treated as evidence of his personal weakness. One was the massive *ding* in the stereographs. This apparently drew much interest from visitors, for an engraving of the Japan Court in the *Illustrated London News* includes a glimpse of the China Court, where a gentleman looks closely at the vessel. (Fig. 4-14) The tripod *ding* emerged in ancient China as a cooking vessel, first in pottery and then in bronze, and it was an essential part of sacred ritual and foundational mythology.⁸²⁴ However, one reporter saw it as evidence of the emperor's great appetite:

The other is the most enormous china vase ever beheld. One wonders how it ever reached England in safety. It is circular like a cauldron, and of vast capacity, standing on a tripod of three curved legs, and surmounted by a top like that of some large tureen—the Emperor might have had his soup out of it daily for anything we know.⁸²⁵

This passage trades on the stereotype of the fatted and lazy Oriental potentate, which also contributed to rumors about the emperor's crutch. (See 111–13.) The stereotype is represented also by a satirical print depicting the Macartney embassy's visit to the court of Qianlong.⁸²⁶ (Fig. 4-15) However, formal portraits of the Xianfeng emperor depict him as slender and even slight of build,⁸²⁷ and photographs of his brother, Prince Gong (1833–98), suggest that these are accurate images.⁸²⁸ (Fig. 4-16) The other object

⁸²⁴ Ma Chengyuan, "The Splendor of Chinese Bronzes," in *The Great Bronze Age of China: An Exhibition from the People's Republic of China*, ed. Wen Fong (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 1–19.

⁸²⁵ *Southern Times and Dorset County Herald*, June 28, 1862, 10.

⁸²⁶ BM, mus. no. 1868,0808.6228.

⁸²⁷ See "Picture of Merrymaking of the Xianfeng Emperor in Casual Clothing," ca. 1850–61, Palace Museum, Beijing. Yi Gu, "Prince Chun through the Lens: Negotiating the Photographic Medium in Royal Images," *Ars Orientalis* 43 (2013): 133, fig. 7. Includes a reproduction.

⁸²⁸ J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 2007.26.209.18.

linked by the press closely to the emperor was a massive tripod incense burner with elephant-head feet. The *Illustrated London News* published an engraving of it alongside the throne screen.⁸²⁹ (Fig. 4-17) The censer was 137 cm (54") tall and said to be one of the largest pieces brought to England. Christie's offered it for sale in 1862 and again in 1863, identifying it as a stove from the emperor's library.⁸³⁰ This very specific provenance signified entry into the emperor's inner sanctum, as well as a life of leisure and comfort-seeking. Of course, the risks and impracticality of having a large ornamental stove in a library means that this provenance was imaginary.



4-14. "The International Exhibition, the Japanese Court," (detail) from the *Illustrated London News*, September 20, 1862, engraving, measurements unavailable, © Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library



4-15. James Gillray, *The Reception of the Diplomatique and His Suite*, 1792, color print, H. 71.1 cm, British Museum

⁸²⁹ "Chinese Stove," *Illustrated London News*, November 1, 1862, 470, 473.

⁸³⁰ Christie's London, Sales of June 30, 1862; June 11, 1863.



4-16. Felice Beato, *Prince Kung*, November 2, 1860, albumen silver print, H. 13.7 cm,
J. Paul Getty Museum



4-17. "Chinese Stove," from the *Illustrated London News*, November 1, 1862, engraving,
H. 142 cm (incense burner), © Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library

Even though objects from the Summer Palace were displayed as trophies in the China Court, the public generally enjoyed them as good design. In 1863, J. B. Waring published *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862*, a three-volume catalogue of the show with chromolithographs and commentaries on those objects he considered most important. Waring included images of Chinese enameled wares and addressed their provenance. One image featured Japanese works from Rutherford Alcock (1809–97), and Chinese objects from Remi Schmidt: a small tripod *ding* with lotus scrolls on a black ground, a flattened circular vase with a lattice pattern comprising auspicious *shou* emblems, and a ritual *gu* vase from a *wugong* altar garniture.⁸³¹ (**Fig. 4-18**) (See 180, 213.) While all of the pieces could have come from the Summer Palace, the *gu* must have been created for a palace. It is covered with lotus scrolls on a ground that Waring specifies as gold. Gold-ground *wugong* sets were exceedingly rare, but a complete set was sold at Sotheby's in 2021;⁸³² and the layout of the patterns on the Remi Schmidt and Sotheby's vessels is identical. This is the type of lotus scroll later depicted by Owen Jones in his book *Examples of Chinese Ornament*, which is discussed in the Chapter Five. (See 244–55.) In catalogue notes for the Sotheby's sale, Regina Krahl cites imperial records that document delivery of sixteen sets to different palaces for the Qianlong emperor, though not to the Summer Palace.⁸³³ Possibly the Remi *gu* had been part of a complete *wugong* at the estate, since it was looted and gold *wugong* sets were so rare. One of these was sold by the firm at the Christie's sale that December:

57 A SET OF SPLENDID ALTAR ORNAMENTS, consisting of two-handled tripod incense burner, a pair of beakers, and a pair of candlesticks, covered with flowers and ornaments in brilliant colours on gold ground—14 1/2 in. high.⁸³⁴

Richard Rhodes bought the set for £74.11.⁸³⁵

Another plate in Waring's book shows three enameled vessels: a blue-and-white vase with elephant-head handles, a cloisonné *yenyen* vase, and a porcelain tripod *ding* incense burner with a mismatched lid, which may have come from a cloisonné vessel.⁸³⁶ (**Fig. 4-19**) Waring praised the vessels and provided crucial evidence of their provenance:

The tripod vase on the right is of thick earthenware, the other two of copper; and to these the remarks we shall make on cloisonné enamel particularly apply. The colours of all these metal enamelled vases are peculiarly brilliant and harmonious; and the extent to which the

⁸³¹ J. B. Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862* (London: Day & Son, 1863), 3: 248.

⁸³² Sotheby's New York, September 21, 2021, Sale N10748, Lot 58.

⁸³³ Regina Krahl, "Five Golden Offerings to the Buddha, Important Chinese Works of Art," Sotheby's website, accessed June 15, 2022, <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2021/important-chinese-art-5/an-exceptionally-rare-gold-ground-famille-rose>.

⁸³⁴ Christie's London, Sale of December 1, 1862, Lot 57.

⁸³⁵ Ibid. See bid on facing page. Christie's Archive, London.

⁸³⁶ V&A, acc. nos. M.3-1970; 13-1894. MMA, acc. nos. 29.110.66a, b; 81.1.625a, b; 29.110.50a, b; 04.23.1a–c.

art is applied was well represented by the magnificent vases from the Emperor's Summer Palace, contributed by Lady Michel and Lieutenant Cox; the great incense burner, or stove, in this last collection being upwards of four feet in height, and the devices of the most minute and intricate design.⁸³⁷

Gen. Michel gave his Chinese objects to Lady Michel in keeping with the military tradition of gifting Chinese spoils to spouses and other female relatives. (See 120.) Her “magnificent vases,” listed as “jars” in the catalogue, may be the *hu* vases in stereograph *No. 203.—Chinese Court, The International Exhibition of 1862*. Waring also named Lieut. Charles Henry Cox (d. 1885) as the owner of the massive incense burner. How a soldier of low rank managed to acquire such a magnificent piece deserves some explanation; but he was the son of prominent lawyer G. H. Richardson Cox, Mackintosh of Dalmunzie (1813–62);⁸³⁸ and a newspaper notice after the war states that he was highly regarded:

Lieutenant Cox was not only several times most honourably mentioned in Colonel Brinde's (of the Horse Artillery) despatches for his gallant conduct in India, for which he received his medal, but also for the late campaign in China, in which he was engaged, and for which he also received a medal.⁸³⁹

So Lieut. Cox had the means and the stature to acquire the censer in some way. Sadly, the press reported that his father fell ill after visiting the China Court and died soon after:

Mr. Cox had been staying in London ... and on Thursday week went to the International Exhibition to see his son's enamels, which had been placed there that day for the first time for exhibition. He exerted himself too much and left the Exhibition about four o'clock in the afternoon.⁸⁴⁰

Apart from this unfortunate event, the notice is of interest because it explains why the enamels were not listed in the catalogue: they arrived late. Afterwards, they were offered for sale twice at Christie's.⁸⁴¹ Cox retired from the 60th Regiment of Foot in 1864.⁸⁴² In 1885 he committed suicide by jumping off a cliff at Muchalls, near his home, Elswick House.⁸⁴³ The stereograph *No. 85—Enamels, The International Exhibition of 1862* shows the enameled *fengweizun* (phoenix tail), or *yenyen* vase and Cox incense burner, (**Fig. 4-20**) which matches the “Chinese Stove” in the *Illustrated London News* engraving. Alfred Morrison, the leading collector of enamels from the Summer Palace, acquired it at some point. It appears in the catalogue for the Fonthill collection sale at Christie's in 1971. (**Fig. 4-21**) The lot notes state that an identical censer was sold at Sotheby's in 1961.⁸⁴⁴ The flanged *yenyen* vase to the left of the incense burner matches the central vase in the chromolithograph “Chinese Enamelled Vases,” and the vessel with

⁸³⁷ Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 1:35.

⁸³⁸ *London Evening Standard*, May 8, 1856, 1.

⁸³⁹ “Arrival of the 60th Rifles,” *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal*, March 7, 1862, 5.

⁸⁴⁰ “The Late G. H. R. Cox, Esq.,” *Derby Mercury*, July 23, 1862, 5.

⁸⁴¹ Christie's London, Sales of June 30, 1862, Lots 138–141; June 11, 1863, Lots 208–10.

⁸⁴² *Army and Navy Gazette*, July 2, 1864, 2.

⁸⁴³ *Leighton Buzzard Observer and Linslade Gazette*, June 16, 1885, 7.

⁸⁴⁴ Christie's London, Sales of May 30, 1961, Lot 424; October 18, 1971, Lot 102, Plate 16.

dragon-headed fish handles at the right appears in the catalogue for the Morrison collection sale of 1965.⁸⁴⁵ (Fig. 4-22) Waring concluded his remarks on enamelling by urging British manufacturers to revive the art:

As to the excellence and beauty of these Chinese enamels, both in design and colour, there can be no question, and they are often miracles of minute and laborious workmanship ... It is high time that our manufacturers should look to it, and endeavor to revive, on a large scale, one of the most beautiful and durable decorative processes with which we are acquainted.⁸⁴⁶

As will be shown in Chapter Five and Chapter Six, designers and manufacturers responded strongly to Chinese enamels, applying imperial cloisonné designs to ceramics, textiles and glass.



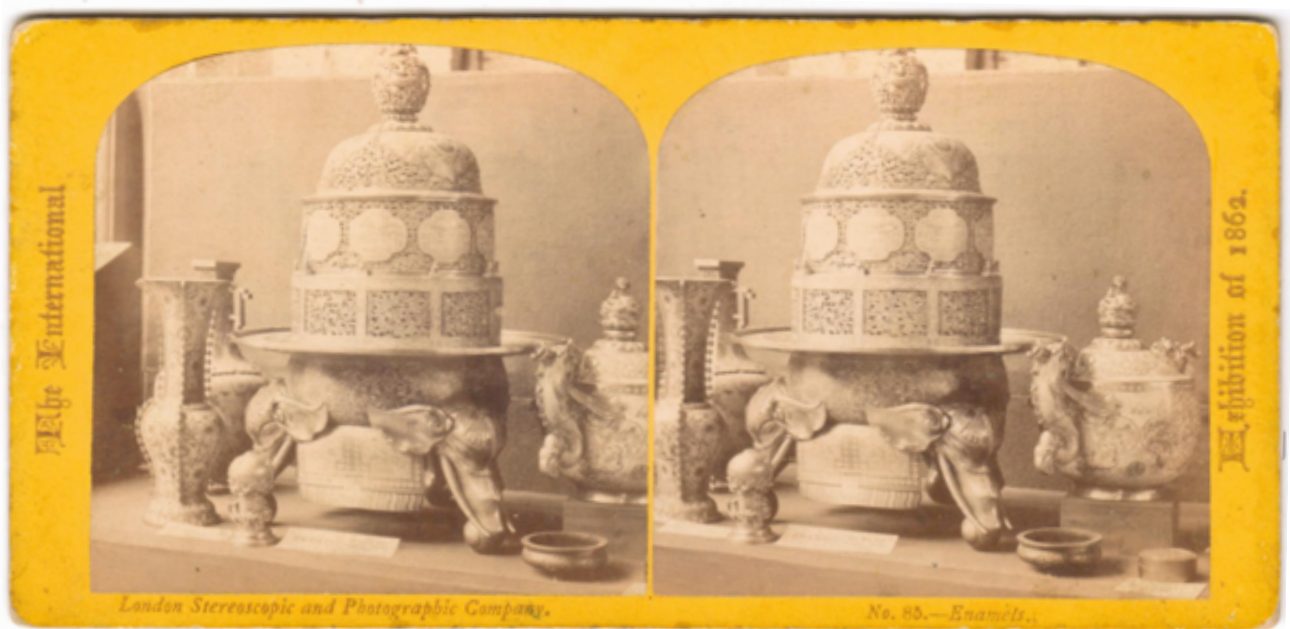
4-18. Day & Son, "Japanned & Enamelled Ware," from *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862, 1863*, chromolithograph, H. 43.8 cm (volume), Collection of K. K. Venugopal

⁸⁴⁵ Christie's London, Sale of May 31, 1965, Lot 135.

⁸⁴⁶ Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 1:35.



4-19. Day & Son, "Chinese Enamelled Vases," from *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862, 1863*, chromolithograph, H. 43.8 cm (volume), Collection of K. K. Venugopal



4-20. London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company, No. 85—Enamels, *The International Exhibition of 1862*, 1862, stereograph, H. 8 cm (images), Courtesy of Graham Wood



4-21. Photograph of a Chinese imperial cloisonné incense burner from a Christie's catalogue for a Fonthill sale, 1971, measurements unavailable, © Christie's



4-22. Photograph of Chinese imperial cloisonné vessels from a Christie's catalogue for a Fonthill sale, 1965, H. 99.06 (pair of censers), W. 78.74 cm (censer with dragon-head handles), © Christie's

A display of two carpets attributed to the Summer Palace by Remi Schmidt also sparked comments about the achievements of Asian craftsmen. Remi sold the carpets at Christie's that December and the entries for them give a good sense of their appearance:

120 A MAGNIFICENT CARPET, of silk velvet, embroidered all over with funghoangs and other ornaments in gold lace and coloured silks—8 3/4 yards by 3 3/4 yds. From the Summer Palace.

121 A DITTO, of Imperial yellow, richly embroidered with coloured silks—6 1/2 yds. by 3 yds.⁸⁴⁷

In a long discussion of Kidderminster carpets at the show, a reporter for the *Birmingham Journal* regretted that “the lessons which might have been learnt from the Oriental textiles displayed in such rich profusion [in] 1851, a nearer and more complete recognition of true principles might have been hoped for,” and drew attention to the imperial carpets:

In passing, we may direct attention to (not as an example worthy of imitation, but of great brilliancy of colour) the rug or carpet from the summer palace of the Chinese Emperor which formed a portion of the “loot” taken therefrom. It is remarkable for the strangely metallic, bronze-like hue which pervades it, two colours only being introduced, i.e., a rich black and a bronze yellow ... The importance of good and correct design to our manufactures has induced us here to introduce these remarks.⁸⁴⁸

The *North Devon Journal* also covered the exhibition and devoted an article to displays of products from “Oriental Nations.” The paper praised the exhibit on China, noting: “curious articles were procured at the sacking of the Emperor's Summer Palace.” Among them was Gen. Michel's throne screen: “curiously carved with grotesque yellow aquatic monsters.” The writer affirmed, not that the British military was superior, but that Asian craft workers exceeded those of the West in “decorative design ... so combining lines and forms as to produce in a very high degree the effect of variety and intricacy, and in so placing colours in juxtaposition as to produce exquisitely harmonious chromatic results. In these respects we are their humble imitators,” and warned readers: “until our manufacturers and art workmen” follow the example of the Orient, “we must be content to put up with the glaring violations of taste which, whether in or out of this exhibition, examples are too common.”⁸⁴⁹

Chinese Art and Colonial Products at Dublin (1865)

At the 1865 Dublin International Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures, objects linked with the Summer Palace were shown in an atmosphere dedicated more to industry and colonialism than art. In the exhibition catalogue, organizing committee chairman Gilbert Sanders (dates unknown) wrote “preference has been given to the inventor, the producer, and manufacturer” in the “ordering of industrial displays.”

⁸⁴⁷ Christie's London, Sale of December 1, 1862.

⁸⁴⁸ *Birmingham Journal*, October 25, 1862, 7.

⁸⁴⁹ *North Devon Journal*, July 17, 1862, 6.

Most exhibits covered industry and a separate gallery held European painting.⁸⁵⁰ However, the Chinese court showcased Chinese objects as artworks, while the India department focussed on the colony's military subjugation and products. The contents and organization of the exhibition catalogue make it clear that the show offered an imperialist vision of Asia as a source of raw materials, cheap labor, manufactured goods, and closed markets for the finished products of Britain, some of which had been secured by British military intervention. The exhibition organizers divided the world outside Britain into "Foreign" courts, which showcased the advanced products of Europe, and stalls for "Colonial Possessions," with agricultural products, raw materials, crafts and manufactures. The two largest departments outside the British division represented the recently unified Kingdom of Italy and Britain's most important colony, India, over which it had consolidated power in 1859 after crushing the Indian Rebellion.

As for the China court, two published images give us a glimpse of the department and its location within the show. A color lithograph from the *Illustrated London News* shows at right on the second floor of the arcade a small stall for China, with shelves of stacked export wares. **(Fig. 4-23)** A map in the exhibition catalogue shows a small court for China and Japan squeezed between galleries for Turkey and the British colonies, catercorner from the India gallery, relegating them to the periphery of the British empire.⁸⁵¹ **(Fig. 4-24)** The catalogue listed no organizing committee for the China and Japan courts, unlike most departments. Instead, it seems that Hewett & Co. arranged the stall. An advertisement for their contribution appeared at the back of the catalogue:

Visitors to the EXHIBITION are requested to inspect the CHINESE COURT ... where can be seen a very large assortment of beautiful Chinese Porcelain, Lacquered Ware, Carvings in Ivory, &c, &c, MANUFACTURED IN CANTON EXPRESSLY FOR W. HEWETT & Co.⁸⁵²

The court held a combination of Chinese export works, looted art and other artifacts available after the 1860 war. Out of 16 exhibits, Hewett contributed 14. There were the usual curiosities: "Nests of the esculent swallow; opium pipe; models of a Chinese lady's feet."⁸⁵³ Similar displays at Bristol and London had confirmed British stereotypes of the "curious" Chinese as opium lovers who ate strange foods and bound their women's feet. Export wares included "Modern Chinese painted porcelain of the finest quality, manufactured at king-te-chin." This reference to the famed porcelain center Jingdezhen suggests that Hewett was repositioning its export wares alongside the more valuable pieces now available. In contrast to the London exhibition of 1862, where their stall contained only export wares, they offered "Rare ancient Cloisonné enamel, the art of manufacturing which has been lost for centuries, supposed to

⁸⁵⁰ *Dublin International Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures, 1865. Under the Special Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen. Official Catalogue*, 2nd ed. (Dublin: John Falconer, 1865), xviii–ix, 1–31.

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xxii.

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*, 82–83.

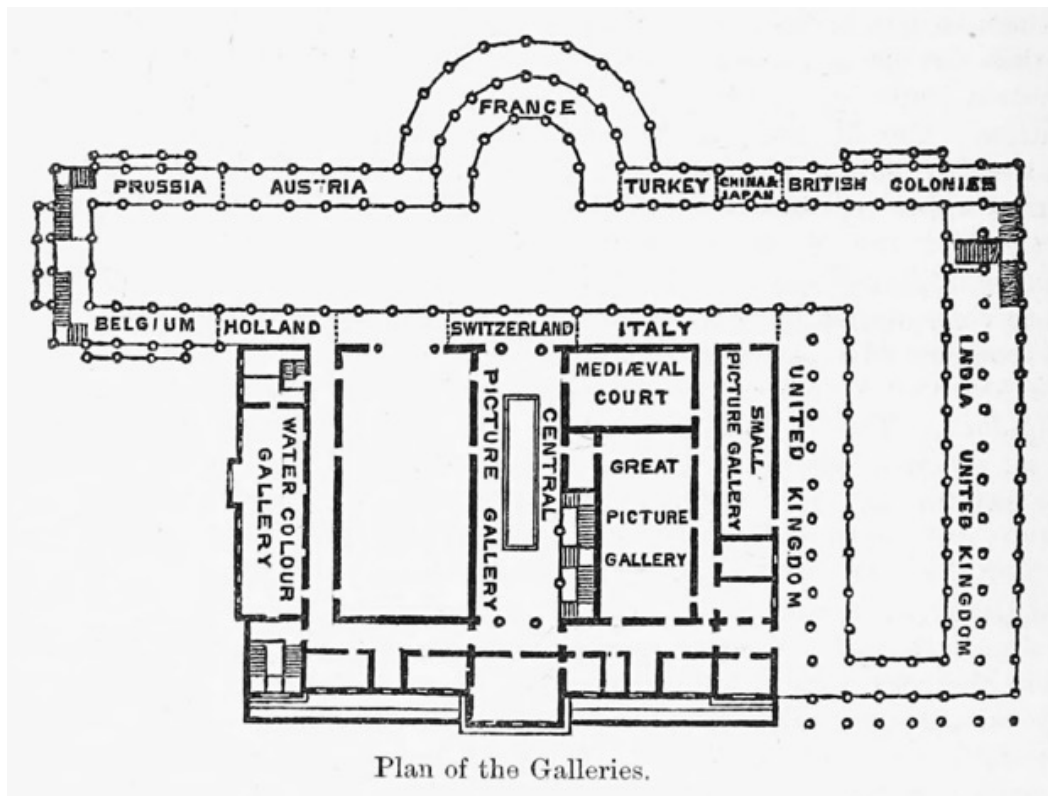
be 800 years old, consisting of a font, small vases and bowls,” “Ancient Chinese bronze vases, incense burner, and a pair of curious griffins,” “Ancient porcelain; turquoise, crimson, cream-colour, mottled and painted mandarin porcelain; balloon lanterns,” and hardstone carvings. Some of these may be depicted in an engraving of ancient bronzes, jades and other Chinese treasures from the China Court in the catalogue.⁸⁵⁴ (Fig. 4-25) The cataloguing speaks to the broadening interest in Chinese art, especially cloisonné and monochrome porcelains. Even the term “mottled” shows an interest in Chinese variegated glazes, such as peachbloom and *jun*, which would attain great popularity among collectors in the late nineteenth century. (See 363.) The dating of “800 years old” and related claim that the art of cloisonné had been “lost for centuries” cannot hold, the remarks reflect the movement towards the serious connoisseurship that would emerge in the last quarter of the century.⁸⁵⁵



4-23. Leighton Brothers, “The International Exhibition, Dublin,” from the *Illustrated London News*, August 19, 1865, chromolithograph, H. 46.6 cm, Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

⁸⁵⁴ Henry Parkinson, *The Illustrated Record and Descriptive Catalogue of the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865* (London: E. & F. N. Spon, 1866), 399.

⁸⁵⁵ Béatrice Quette, “The Emergence of Cloisonné Enamels in China,” in Quette, *Cloisonné*, 3–17. The essay discusses early cloisonné in China.



4-24. "Plan of the Galleries," from *Dublin International Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures, 1865. Under the Special Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen. Official Catalogue, 1866*, woodcut, measurements unavailable, Getty Research Institute



4-25. "Ancient Chinese Vases," from *The Illustrated Record and Descriptive Catalogue of the Dublin International Exhibition of 1865, 1866*, engraving, measurements unavailable, Getty Research Institute

Along with this material, several items connected with the 1860 war appeared. Dr. Charles M. Scott of “Swatow” (Shantou in Guangdong Province), contributed a large and nondescript group of weapons, “crockery,” metalwork and textiles, such as “Ten pieces of blue grass cloth, fine and inferior; fifteen pieces of white grass,” which appear to be for sale. Scott was the son of a merchant in Hong Kong, who had worked in India and also served in the office of the Superintendent of the Civil Hospital, Hong Kong, where he cared for British troops during the 1860 invasion. After its conclusion, Rear-Adm. Sir James Hope, RN (1808–81) sent him a letter of thanks “for the care he took of British troops which he brought out to China at an early period in the late Chinese war.”⁸⁵⁶ There were also:

3. Books of rice-paper paintings; carvings in bamboo; manuscript books looted from the empress’s apartment at the palace of the Yueso-Ming-Yuen, by a French officer.

It is possible that the manuscripts were looted by a Frenchman from the apartment of the Empress Xiaozhenxian, for Capt. Negroni took a number of paintings and albums from the estate.⁸⁵⁷ However, only a handful of manuscripts from the Summer Palace are known and the British had previously tried to shift blame for the looting to French soldiers. What these manuscripts are is a mystery.

Perhaps the most impressive object in the court was a “Chinese state bedstead, elaborately carved, and ornamented with raised figures and devices in rich gilt work, taken from a city in the north of China during the late war.”⁸⁵⁸ This is one of only a few pieces of furniture said to have been looted at or near Beijing. Apart from the plundered throne parts and throne screen, (See 116–19.) there is only a carved red lacquer cabinet attributed to the Summer Palace, acquired by Charles John Canning, 1st Earl Canning (1812–62), and sold with his estate at Christie’s in 1863.⁸⁵⁹ There were also two tables displayed nearby:

2. Taylor, Mrs. Hillbrook, Castleknock. – Pair of enameled tables, brought from the Emperor of China’s summer palace, Peking, by J. M. Taylor, F.R.C.S.I., Royal Artillery.

Joseph Marmaduke Taylor (1835–82) was an assistant surgeon with the Royal Artillery who served in the 1860 war.⁸⁶⁰ A Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, he resided in Dublin.⁸⁶¹ Possibly, Taylor’s mother lent the tables; since his first wife, Margaret Jane,⁸⁶² died at the young age of 20 after premature delivery of a still-born daughter in early 1864.⁸⁶³ He then married Mary Ellen Worrall (dates unknown) in 1867.⁸⁶⁴ Either way, the loan reflects campaign members’ practice of giving Summer Palace material to female relatives. The only other tables linked to the estate were owned by Lord Elgin’s

⁸⁵⁶ “Irishmen Abroad,” *Dublin Evening Packet and Correspondent*, December 4, 1861, 4.

⁸⁵⁷ *Catalogue of Capitain de Negroni’s Collection*, 43–44.

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 82–83.

⁸⁵⁹ “Earl Canning’s India Collection,” *Morning Post*, March 18, 1863, 3.

⁸⁶⁰ William Johnston, *Roll of Commissioned Officers in the Medical Service of the British Army* (Aberdeen: University Press, 1917), 401.

⁸⁶¹ *Dublin Medical Press*, December 28, 1864, 19.

⁸⁶² *Evening Freeman*, June 8, 1863, 4.

⁸⁶³ *Dublin Medical Press*, March 2, 1864; *Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail*, March 5, 186, 10.

⁸⁶⁴ *Morning Post*, June 8, 1867, 8.

brother, Thomas Charles Bruce (1825–90), which he lent to the South Kensington enamels exhibition in 1874.⁸⁶⁵ (Fig. 4-26) Tables like these can be seen in images of throne rooms, like the photograph of the Taihe dian in Chapter Three, (See 119.) and an engraving of the throne in the Hall of Audience published in Staunton’s account of the Macartney embassy. (See 69.) Possibly, Lord Elgin was presented with tables flanking the throne in the Hall of Audience as trophies, but regifted them to his brother.



4-26. Two enameled tables attributed to the Summer Palace, from *Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibition of Enamels on Metal Held at the South Kensington Museum in 1874, 1875*, H. 28.5 cm (plate), University of Michigan

Five years after the London exhibition, the politics surrounding Summer Palace spoils had dissipated. Dealers and visitors enjoyed ancient enamels and fine porcelain from Jingdezhen, looted and not. In this way the Dublin and Brighton shows are alike. One review of the Chinese Court noted a “variety of most interesting articles, which are never without their group of admirers. Among these there is a Chinese state bedstead, elaborately carved, which was looted at Peking.”⁸⁶⁶ The attitude towards the subcontinent remained deeply exploitive by comparison: the India display celebrated British military dominance over her colony and the extraction of its resources.

⁸⁶⁵ Owen, *Catalogue of the Special Loan Exhibition of Enamels*, 132, nos. 1169, 1170.

⁸⁶⁶ *Morning Post*, April 13, 1865, 2.

12. Conclusion

The evidence presented above has documented both the presence of specific objects from the Summer Palace at different exhibitions and the movement of these items through the hands of various owners throughout Britain and the meanings they accrued in different contexts. It has shown that spoils from the Summer Palace played a significant role at exhibitions of art and industry in the decade after the 1860 war. Some looted objects were displayed as trophies, but evidence in the form of catalogues and newspaper reviews shows that they were interpreted variously as curiosities, craft specimens and models of good taste by exhibition organizers and visitors. In fact, the display of looted artworks at exhibitions factored in the growing awareness and understanding of Chinese ceramics, bronzes and other cultural objects during the late nineteenth century. This development is partly due to the special status China held in the British consciousness, relative to its colony India and non-white cultures elsewhere. While Britain's claims regarding its "free trade" agenda in China were totally disingenuous, the interest in Chinese products among the British public had only grown since looted imperial treasures began to arrive in Britain. The next two chapters will show that this interest bore fruit in the design world as artists began to emulate imperial pieces displayed in exhibitions or collected by private individuals.

Chapter Five

The Summer Palace and Design Reform

1. The Long Shadow of Japonism

The profound impact of the 1860 war on British design has not been given the full recognition it deserves; but this chapter is intended to fill some of that void. While much has been written about the influence of Japan on European art in the later nineteenth century with good reason,⁸⁶⁷ Japan's on nineteenth-century European art has overshadowed the contribution of Chinese imperial objects, leading sometimes to generalizations about linkages that don't exist. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art presents on its website a Royal Worcester Chinese-style moonflask, (See 344.) as an emulation of Japanese design:

With the establishment of the Royal Worcester Porcelain Company in 1862, the company gradually gained recognition for its Japanese-inspired designs, which formed part of Japonism, a collective fascination with Japan that took place in Europe and the United States following the opening of Japanese markets to the West by Commodore Perry in 1853.⁸⁶⁸

However, the lotus scroll that covers its surface is adapted from Qing imperial porcelain.⁸⁶⁹ Possibly, the political and historical circumstances of Chinese imperial art in Britain, or the closing of China in the middle years of the twentieth century, have led indirectly to such discrepancies, which will likely be corrected as westerners become more attuned to Chinese culture and the history of the spoliation in the coming years.

Another explanation is that the spare, elegant designs of Japan were thought more fashionable than Chinese-inflected design in the nineteenth century and that this view endured. Victorians also knew that Chinese civilization was ancient and identified it with the past. They called Chinese objects “quaint,” which meant “fanciful” and “antique.”⁸⁷⁰ The British even called the Chinese “quaint.” Capt. William Hutcheon Hall of the Royal Navy, who served in China and published a memoir about his travels and collecting there, fancied them sons of Noah:

⁸⁶⁷ For example: Douglas Cooper, “Two Japanese Prints from Vincent van Gogh's Collection,” *Burlington Magazine* 99, no. 651 (June 1957): 198, 204–5, 207; Martin Eidelberg, “Bracquemond, Delâtre and the Discovery of Japanese Prints,” *Burlington Magazine* 123, no. 937 (April 1981): 220–25, 227; Paul Reeves, “The Anglo-Japanese Buffet by E. W. Godwin: Variations on and Developments of a Design,” *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society*, no. 18 (1994): 36–40; Elizabeth Kramer, “Master or Market? The Anglo-Japanese Textile Designs of Christopher Dresser,” *Journal of Design History* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 2006): 197–214.

⁸⁶⁸ MMA, inv. no. 2018.62.92, accessed May 2, 2022, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/771045?ft=2018.62.92&offset=0&rpp=40&pos=1>.

⁸⁶⁹ Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong: *Qing Porcelain from the Palace Museum Collection* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 1989), 345, 359, 361, 376, 379. Shows specimens of Qing imperial porcelains with lotus scrolls.

⁸⁷⁰ Chauncey A. Goodrich and Noah Porter, *Dr. Webster's Complete Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1864), 1070.

It having been my lot during the last five years to cruise about the country where the quaint figures that are familiar to us on porcelain have a real existence, and man appears under such an extraordinary aspect as to have led some writers to doubt whether Noah might not have settled in China with a fourth post-diluvian born son, and with that prospect of a long sea voyage before me, I thought I might beguile the tedium of it by arranging the following few notices of what I saw and heard in China.⁸⁷¹

Hall saw and heard as much as he could in China and later contributed items he collected there to the 1862 International Exhibition. (See 211.) Porcelain collectors also sought out “old china.” Laurence Oliphant mentions it several times in his memoir of their mission to China before the 1860 war: Shanghai “is chiefly celebrated for old China,” at Ningbo “Occasionally old China may be picked up,” at Tianjin “I saw no good old China,” and at Hankou “Our searches for old china, bronzes, and curiosities proved vain.”⁸⁷² Also, art critics often compared Chinese and Japanese craftsmanship in the nineteenth century and found the latter more refined. Charles Wyllys Elliott (1817–83) expressed the received view on Japanese porcelain: “it went forward to perfection, and rivalled or excelled the best work of China ... In China, then, we shall find more original invention and greater variety; in Japan, more finish. The best work of Japan is often superior in the paste and in the glaze to the Chinese.”⁸⁷³ The impact of Japanese images on fine art also reinforced the link between Japan and the avant garde, since a revolution in painting occurred in the late nineteenth century, led partly by the “Japoniste” painters mentioned above.



5-1. After Utagawa Kunisada II, “A Winter Scene in Japan,” from *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin’s Mission to China*, 1860, chromolithograph, H. 23 cm (volume), Getty Research Institute

⁸⁷¹ Bernard, *Narrative of the Voyages and Services of the Nemesis*, 1–2.

⁸⁷² Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin’s Mission to China*, 149, 152, 288, 565.

⁸⁷³ Charles Wyllys Elliott, “Household Art. IV. The Porcelain of Japan,” *Art Journal* 2 (1876): 50–54.

The impact of Japanese images on European painting and printmaking would have reinforced this link between Japan and the conception of what was new. In the nineteenth century, Chinese painting held little interest for the British, unlike Japanese images. While a high-end market in Chinese wallpapers and a broader trade in Chinese export paintings had existed since the eighteenth century, these items were consciously enjoyed more as exotic scenes of Chinese life, not as fine art or painting.⁸⁷⁴ The British had no comprehension of the Chinese landscape tradition nor appreciation for Chinese modes of representation in painting, including the approach to the figure. Laurence Oliphant, private secretary to Lord Elgin during his mission to China, captured the widespread attitude:

The Japanese are one of the few so-called uncivilized nations who really seem to have an intuitive appreciation of the picturesque. Even the Chinese, who occasionally venture upon representations of scenery, choose some uninteresting subject, and invariably make it subservient to a scene of domestic or military life in the foreground, displaying, moreover, an entire ignorance of perspective.⁸⁷⁵

The frontispiece to an 1860 edition of Oliphant's memoir of his travels with Elgin even featured a scene of Japanese ladies walking in snow, said to be "from a Japanese drawing". (**Fig. 5-1**) In fact, it was a copy of a print by Utagawa Kunisada II (1823–80).⁸⁷⁶ Japanese prints had won great popularity after the opening of Japan in 1853, partly through the writings of Britain's earliest diplomat in Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809–97).⁸⁷⁷ Japanese prints also inspired artists working in Britain, like James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903)⁸⁷⁸ and Mortimer Menpes (1855–1938),⁸⁷⁹ to abandon conventions of realism to which artists had generally adhered since the Renaissance. The British Museum acquired enough Japanese prints to mount an exhibition in 1886; and on that occasion a reviewer acknowledged that Japanese image-making in fact drew on the Chinese tradition of woodblock printing, stating: "This exhibition brings out one point which cannot fail to strike every one who examines it; and that is, that the groundwork of the art in all its branches is essentially Chinese."⁸⁸⁰ For all of the differences between the pictorial traditions of these eastern nations, this comment reflects the previous indifference towards Chinese painting. Lord Wharncliffe had said at the *conversazione* in Sheffield that they were "Unable to draw correctly." (See 206–7.) British soldiers who fought in China during the Opium Wars had made

⁸⁷⁴ Craig Clunas and Verity Wilson, "Wallpaper," in Clunas, *Chinese Export Art*, 112. On Chinese wallpapers in Britain, see also Charles C. Oman and Jean Hamilton, *Wallpapers: A History and Illustrated Catalogue of the Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: Sotheby Publications, 1982), 58–61, 214, 229–56; Emile de Bruijn, *Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2018); Emile de Bruijn, Andrew Bush and Helen Clifford, *Chinese Wallpaper in National Trust Houses* (Swindon: National Trust Enterprises, 2014); and Helen Clifford, "Chinese Wallpaper: From Canton to Country House," in *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857*, ed. Margot Finn and Kate Smith (London: UCL Press, 2018), 39–67.

⁸⁷⁵ Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China*, 416.

⁸⁷⁶ Museum of Fine Arts Boston, acc. no. 11.21744.

⁸⁷⁷ Rutherford Alcock, "Chiaroscuro – Colour – Perspective," in *Art and Industries in Japan* (London: Virtue, 1878).

⁸⁷⁸ Toshio Watanabe, "Eishi Prints in Whistler's Studio? Eighteenth-Century Japanese Prints in the West before 1870," *Burlington Magazine* 128, no. 1005 (December 1986): 873–80.

⁸⁷⁹ Mortimer Menpes and Dorothy Menpes, *Japan: A Record in Colour* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1901).

⁸⁸⁰ *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, December 22, 1886, 2.

negative statements about the Chinese approach to perspective.⁸⁸¹ In his memoir of the 1860 war, Garnet Wolseley described the map of the Summer Palace grounds in the Hall of Audience thus:

An immense painting covered the upper portion of the wall upon the left hand as we entered; it was a representation of the summer palaces and surrounding gardens done in isometrical projection, at which the Chinese are rather clever, considering the childish house-that-Jack-built-like attempts which they make at ordinary perspective in their landscape drawings.⁸⁸²

Chinese painters were also criticized for being too literal and lacking imagination. One journalist wrote in 1866 that the Chinese artist “accurately copies all blotches and deformities.”⁸⁸³

The windfall of artifacts from the Summer Palace had an impact on later Victorian design equal to that of art from Japan. Artists, manufacturers and craftsmen saw images of Chinese cloisonné, porcelain and textiles published in books and displayed at the exhibitions discussed in Chapter Four, and they responded with copies of Chinese designs and decoration inflected with Chinese elements. Imperial cloisonné and *yangcai*-enameled porcelains with dense lotus scroll patterns sparked imitations in enameled metal, ceramics, wallpaper and textiles; and monochrome ceramics were widely emulated by British potteries. Evidence for the style impact is found both in design pieces of the period and textual evidence, like commentaries in art journals and newspapers. The renewed fascination with Chinese ornament was an unexpected consequence of the British incursions into China, which was at odds with political commentary regarding their former adversary. As Sino-British relations had soured during the Opium Wars, negative attitudes towards Chinese culture had hardened and easy victory over the Xianfeng emperor had confirmed a widespread view that the British nation was superior. As Garnet Wolseley remarked at the end of his war memoir, “In 1858 we had only a treaty to depend upon in our relations with China; we have now the prestige of our victories, and of our military display within the very walls of Peking to rely upon.”⁸⁸⁴ The British saw themselves as heirs to the cultures of the classical Mediterranean and Renaissance Europe, and leaders of what they called Christian civilization and progress.⁸⁸⁵ Their modern military and transportation technologies had enabled them to exact important diplomatic and trade concessions from China;⁸⁸⁶ and similar progress had been achieved in manufacturing. As historian E. A. Wrigley wrote of the mid-nineteenth century economy: “By the start of Victoria’s reign it had become, briefly, the most advanced of any economy world-wide. The Great Exhibition of 1851 symbolized this fact. At the time of the Exhibition the scale of output achieved in the industries that were

⁸⁸¹ Hill, “Collecting on Campaign,” 241.

⁸⁸² Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China*, 234.

⁸⁸³ *Pall Mall Gazette*, November 29, 1866, 6.

⁸⁸⁴ Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China*, 391.

⁸⁸⁵ See John Ruskin, “The Relation of Art to Religion,” chap. 2 in *Lectures on Art Delivered before the University of Oxford in Hilary Term, 1870* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1870). Ruskin here articulates this view.

⁸⁸⁶ See Knollys, *Incidents in the China War*, 22, 64–73. The deadly Armstrong gun was introduced during the Second Opium War and enabled the British to exact punishing death tolls on the Chinese.

particularly associated with the industrial revolution in Britain so far exceeded that of other European countries.”⁸⁸⁷ However, the products from Qing imperial workshops that arrived after the war showed British designers that they still had things to learn from China.

2. Spoils and the Design Reform Movement

Spoils from the Summer Palace had an immediate impact on British design due both to their qualities and the state of the British craft industries at the time of their arrival. This was a period of intense experimentation and competition in textiles, ceramics, enamel wares and glass. Most importantly, the design reform movement was in full swing and the emerging class of professional “ornamentalists” was determined to break with European style conventions it considered impractical and unattractive. As Guillermo Juberías Gracia puts it: “El auge industrial vino ligado al desarrollo del diseño, sin embargo, a partir de los años 30 del siglo xix se apreció un decaimiento en la calidad de las producciones industriales, lo que dio lugar a un cierto escepticismo acerca de la calidad del arte decorativo británico.”⁸⁸⁸ Christopher Dresser expressed the movement’s ethos in *Principles of Decorative Design*: “we get little worthy of praise from the all-conquering Romans—how the sunny climate and religious superstitions of the East called forth the gorgeous and beautiful developments of art which have existed, or still exist, with the Persians, Indians, Turks, Moors, Chinese, and Japanese.”⁸⁸⁹ Officials involved in developing British craft industries were trying to raise the taste level of manufacturers and consumers by establishing art schools, study collections and museums.⁸⁹⁰

Sir Henry Cole was a guiding light of the movement. He established Summerly’s Art Manufactures, a partnership of artists and manufacturers; encouraged improvements in patent laws to protect designs and inventions; assumed leading roles in the management of many international exhibitions, both in London and in Paris; reformed the Government School of Design; created both the South Kensington Museum and the Department of Practical Art; and founded the *Journal of Design and Manufactures*. The success of his sublimely simple “Felix Summerly” tea service – designed for the 1845 Society of Arts competition and produced by Minton – convinced Cole that “an alliance between fine art and manufactures would promote public taste.”⁸⁹¹ The tea service represented Cole’s design credo: form

⁸⁸⁷ E. A. Wrigley, *The Path to Sustained Growth: England’s Transition from an Organic Economy to an Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 182.

⁸⁸⁸ Guillermo Juberías Gracia, “El orientalismo en la producción cerámica de William de Morgan (1839-1917): las corrientes persa, iznik y andalusí,” *Monográfico* 11 (2020): 55.

⁸⁸⁹ Christopher Dresser, *Principles of Decorative Design* (London: Cassell Petter & Galpin, 1870), 11.

⁸⁹⁰ Lara Kriegel, *Grand Designs: Labor, Empire and the Museum in Victorian Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); and Amy Woodson-Boulton, *Transformative Beauty: Art Museums in Industrial Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012). These are two in-depth studies.

⁸⁹¹ Cole, *Fifty Years of Public Work*, 1:104–7.

for function, truth to nature, and design for all. Samuel T. Davenport (1783–1867) of the Society of the Arts, remarked thus on the service:

They could be manufactured at a very cheap rate, as cheaply as the blue articles which accompany them ...

Of course it must be borne in mind that all forms, where the beauty depends on the truth of the lines and variety of parts, must of necessity be somewhat more costly than where beauty is less considered ...

The Cup being *deep* rather than *wide*, offers least scope for the radiation of heat and will keep the tea warm...

The Milk Pot has three lips like some articles of Etruscan Pottery, enabling the liquid to be poured at both angles, right and left, which requires only a motion of the wrist, whilst the usual method needs the lifting of the arm. The plate is smaller than usual in the rim, because much size in that part is needless.⁸⁹²

All of Cole's efforts were undertaken together with artists like his associate Richard Redgrave (1804–88),⁸⁹³ business leaders, and officials, who were endeavoring to make British goods more competitive, as well as enable British consumers to enjoy prosperity and beautify their homes in accord with established ideas of good taste. For all of these reasons, leaders in the industrial arts were receptive to novel design approaches.

Several factors encouraged the absorption of Chinese ornament into this British design trend. As we saw in Chapter Four, numerous artifacts attributed to the Summer Palace appeared at industrial art exhibitions in the decades after the war. In these events, they were displayed as models of tasteful craftsmanship and studied by leading designers. Chinese art collecting also gave impetus to Chinese-inspired design, as it suggested potential demand for products in various Chinese styles that would complement Chinese pieces, for both the higher and lower sectors of the market. Finally, British manufacturers often followed the lead of French producers, who embraced Chinese ornament after the war, as noted by Odile Nouvel-Kammerer in her essay on French enamelling after the war, where she writes that "In 1855, the only certainty was the urgent necessity to look elsewhere, to go beyond the ground that had been surveyed too often, in the hope of finding fragments of foreign know-how that might literally be consumed and absorbed into Western culture."⁸⁹⁴ Additional inputs of Japanese, Indian and Middle Eastern design into the art market contributed to a taste for Pan-Asian eclecticism. The style

⁸⁹² Ibid., 2:178–79.

⁸⁹³ See Frances Collard, "Richard Redgrave and the Summerly Art-Manufactures," *Burlington Magazine* 136, no. 1094 (May 1994): 314–16. Gives a short account Redgrave's involvement with Summerly's.

⁸⁹⁴ Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, "The Revival of Cloisonné Enamel at the End of the Nineteenth Century," in ed. Quette, *Cloisonné*, 171–85.

is well represented by the “Oriental” aesthetics promoted by Arthur Liberty in his famed department store, described in an interview with the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1885:

The dearest treasure of a Mikado, the delight of a Sultan, the apple of a Shah’s eye have become Mr. Liberty’s property. His stuffs are collected from the mystic temples of the East, the bazaars of India, the harems of Constantinople, the pagodas of China—all have been ransacked at his call ... Here are ancient Chinese tapestry, with golden dragons, fierce and open mouthed, altar cloths worked in the sixteenth century taken from some Japanese temple, the state robes of a Chinese mandarin, tapestries of velvet, silk sashes from Morocco, shawls from Cashmere, and hangings from Chinese temples, embroidered with dragons and beasts and birds. One passes through labyrinthine passages of flowered palampores into Eastern divans, lined with yielding couches, or one peers through lattice work taken, perhaps, from some Cairo harem.⁸⁹⁵

The suggestion of looting in sacred structures did nothing to dim the reporter’s fantasies of exotic sensuality in an eastern palace. The imperialist foundation of this Orientalist eclecticism is manifest in the mixing of material appropriated from different sites across Asia, where the British Army was engaged during the nineteenth century.

However, the response to material from the Summer Palace laid some of the groundwork for twentieth-century design by contributing to the simplification and abstraction of decorative forms. While designers did appropriate Chinese ornament in postwar design, they were ultimately more interested in its formal qualities, not in its “Chinese”-ness. First, British designers quoted Chinese patterns, which was a type of exotic pastiche favored in the 1870s. In this way, their emulation of Chinese ornament was comparable to the replication of blue-and-white porcelain designs of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Julia Poole in her *English Pottery* writes, “Chinese blue and white porcelain of the late Ming Dynasty, imported by the Dutch East India Company and English East India Company, was creating a demand which European designers attempted to satisfy by imitating its decoration on the white surface of tin-glazed earthenware,” and she cites an 1628 English Delft jug from Southwark, painted in an energetic but uneven style with the “bird on rock” motif in cobalt blue, as an early example, followed by later blue-and-white vessels and polychrome tiles that show the improvements in potting and painting that came from decades of copying Chinese wares.⁸⁹⁶ These vessels all show Chinese-inspired designs: birds in gardens, pavilions in the countryside, and Chinese people doing exotic things. While selling these fantastic images, British potteries developed new wares with the intention of being fully competitive with Chinese imports and finally established a new aesthetic that was rooted in European and Classical tradition. By the later nineteenth century, designers had adopted a new formalism in textiles, ceramics and glassware within the Design Reform, Arts and Crafts, and Aesthetic movements, which eschewed the

⁸⁹⁵ *Pall Mall Gazette*, November 14, 1885, 1.

⁸⁹⁶ Julia Poole, *English Pottery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18, 32, 46, 48.

realism and design vocabulary inherited from the Classical and Renaissance periods. In early products of these movements, the Chinese origins were evident, but their styles slowly metamorphosed into the organic forms of Art Nouveau and then the sleek shapes of Art Deco in the early twentieth century.

Exposure to the Qing imperial collections presented new challenges and sources of inspiration. These included sacred vessels used in Qing court rituals, such as the enameled *ding* vessels taken by the Wiltshire Regiment. (See 123–24.) There were also daily tablewares for the imperial family, such as “two yellow basins, enamelled with dragons in green,” which were sold at Christie’s in 1863 as part of a collection “from the Summer Palace and Peking.”⁸⁹⁷ This was likely a type of imperial dish featuring writhing five-clawed dragons among clouds, painted in green on yellow ground. (See 200–1.) Many such dishes can be seen in public collections and the marketplace.⁸⁹⁸ There were also intricately painted *yangcai* porcelains, including the spectacular pieces once owned by Alfred Morrison, which were first sold at Christie’s in 1965 and 1971, including:

A LARGE YELLOW GROUND BALUSTER VASE, reserved in famille rose enamels with formal flowering foliage and trophies, the shoulder with pale blue lappets outlined in pink, the lip and base with similar decoration, the neck with bats suspending ribbons and with formal flowering foliage on a yellow ground.⁸⁹⁹

One of these pieces was “A BOTTLE, OF ELEGANT FORM, enamelled with flowers and foliage in pink and green on imperial-yellow ground; turquoise inside—14 in. high—on wood stand. A specimen of great beauty and rarity,” which was sold to Henry Durlacher for an incredible £99.15 at Christie’s in 1862.⁹⁰⁰ None of these object types had been seen previously by the British public. These novel items entered the British art world at a time when designers and manufacturers were looking for inspiration outside of European sources and designs, which would be suitable for mass production and represented the highest taste. This and the following chapter focus on several areas of design in the later nineteenth century: textiles, ceramics, glass, and enameled metal wares. It also looks at three design leaders of the period: Owen Jones (1809–74), Christopher Dresser (1834–1904), and William Morris (1834–96), all of whom interpolated Chinese motifs and styles in their work and wrote extensively about design.

⁸⁹⁷ Christie’s London, Sale of July 20, 1863, Lot 13.

⁸⁹⁸ Christie’s New York, September 15, 2016, Sale 13753, Lot 968.

⁸⁹⁹ Christie’s London, Sale of May 31, 1965, Lot 91.

⁹⁰⁰ Christie’s London, Sale of July 21, 1862, Lot 58.

3. The “Pekin Ribbon”: Patriotism vs. Free Trade

This study begins with a product that had more political than design significance, for it was the first commercial item directly linked with the spoils and, of all products connected in any way with the Summer Palace, it was the most heavily advertised. This was the “Pekin Ribbon”, which was reportedly based on a ribbon found at the Summer Palace. Queen Victoria commissioned the ribbon to support Coventry weavers, whose cottage industry had been crushed by the Cobden Treaty with France, which eliminated a 15% trade tariff on imported ribbon.⁹⁰¹ At the time, ribbon was used liberally in ladies’ voluminous dress; so a successful product might bring some relief to weavers, while showing the public that the queen empathized with their plight. In early 1861, the *Illustrated London News* reported on the dire situation of the Coventry ribbon weavers, which they attributed to weak demand and overproduction, exacerbated by the recent treaty. The paper stood firmly on the side of “free trade,” and against the ensuing strikes, which ultimately failed.⁹⁰² But William Henry Leigh, 2nd Baron Leigh (1825–1904), Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, led a relief effort in the district, which included a prize for the best ribbon design at the Coventry School of Art and a fund for impoverished families.⁹⁰³ Newspapers reported that fashionable ladies were taking up the weavers’ cause:

In this they are but following the example of the highest lady of the land, who has not only headed the subscription-list with a magnificent donation, but has commissioned the manufacture of a ribbon to be called the Pekin Palace pattern, because copied from one found in the Emperor’s Palace in Peking.⁹⁰⁴

The editors noted that Warwickshire firms were improving their manufactures to “meet foreign competition” and hoped that Coventry ribbons in the future would be so fashionable as to no longer be promoted as Swiss or French products. The *Morning Post* informed the public that Messrs. Hood and Ward of Nuneaton had overseen the manufacture:

the pekin ribbon, the fac-simile of the piece found in the Summer Palace at Peking, and sent by her Majesty to Messrs. Hood and Ward of Nuneaton to manufacture. PETER ROBINSON has already had the honour of supplying many ladies with this ribbon, and will be happy to forward patterns free on application. 103 to 108, Oxford-Street, London.⁹⁰⁵

Numerous merchants throughout the United Kingdom advertised the product in the spring of 1861,⁹⁰⁶ emphasizing the involvement of Queen Victoria in its conception.⁹⁰⁷ These included S. Dixon of

⁹⁰¹ *Coventry Standard*, April 21, 1860, 4.

⁹⁰² “The Coventry Strike,” *Coventry Standard*, September 7, 1860, 4.

⁹⁰³ *Morpeth Herald*, February 2, 1861, 7; *Illustrated London News*, February 9, 1861, 6; *Aris’s Birmingham Gazette*, September 28, 1861, 6.

⁹⁰⁴ “The Distress in Coventry and Its Neighborhood,” *Illustrated London News*, February 2, 1861, 104. See also Alan Griffin, “Coventry Ribbons, Leamington’s Aid for Destitute Weavers,” Leamington History Group website, March 8, 2015, <https://leamingtonhistory.co.uk/coventry-ribbons-leamington-aid-for-the-destitute/>.

⁹⁰⁵ *Morning Post*, February 12, 1861, 1.

⁹⁰⁶ *Hampshire Chronicle*, March 2, 1861, 4; *Glasgow Free Press*, March 9, 1861, 12.

⁹⁰⁷ *Aberdeen Journal*, March 13, 1861, 4.

Glasgow, who offered “the Pekin ribbon as ordered by her Majesty,”⁹⁰⁸ Arnott & Co., Glasgow;⁹⁰⁹ Milne, Sons, & Co., Aberdeen; J. Rae at Laurencekirk;⁹¹⁰ I., E., & E. Townsend; The Ulster Arcade;⁹¹¹ and James N. Hardy, London House.⁹¹² Dunn & Co. ran a long notice assuring customers that the ribbon was “patronised by all the leading nobility in England.”⁹¹³ Joseph Hall of Ryde emphasized the social and economic distress of weavers: “the Ribbon Trade having suffered so much during the past year by the alteration in the late Commercial Treaty with France.”⁹¹⁴

Despite this heavy promotion, the “Pekin Ribbon” received mixed reviews. The *London Correspondent* mused: “may I ask what has become of the “Pekin ribbon pattern” we heard so much about a few months ago? Has Le Follet frowned on the “celestial” innovation?”⁹¹⁵ The *Dublin Express* reported in its “London Correspondence” that the ribbon:

... has not yet been received by the fair sex with the hearty welcome usually awarded to novelties in female costume or embellishment. In saying this I am paying a compliment to the ladies’ taste, for the article is by no means elegant. Here and there in upholsterers’ windows I observe paper-hangings having an imaginary resemblance, I presume, to the Chinese material for wall-covering. Like the ribbon, they are, for the most part, very ugly.⁹¹⁶

The writer here refers to chinoiserie wallpapers, produced to compete with luxury Chinese papers, which had been so fashionable in the eighteenth century. A National Trust study by Emile de Bruijn and Andrew Bush located 149 specimens in National Trust properties. Helen Clifford found another 20 papers after their publication appeared in 2017. Craig Clunas and Verity Wilson write that 2,236 pieces of wallpaper were carried to Britain in one East India Company ship alone in 1775.⁹¹⁷ But by the mid-nineteenth century, papers in this style would have been quite old-fashioned. At that time, the bold neo-Gothic wallpapers of Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–52) hung in the Houses of Parliament. These featured stylized floral patterns drawn from Gothic textiles and led the movement away from illusionistic designs toward two-dimensional patterns of limited color range, which could be easily produced with machine

⁹⁰⁸ *Hampshire Chronicle*, March 2, 1861, 4.

⁹⁰⁹ *Glasgow Free Press*, March 9, 1861, 12.

⁹¹⁰ *Aberdeen Journal*, March 13, 1861, 4; *Montrose, Arbroath and Brechin Review*, March 22, 1861, 4.

⁹¹¹ *Northern Whig*, April 3, 1861, 7.

⁹¹² *Ballymena Observer*, April 20, 1861, 1.

⁹¹³ *Newcastle Journal*, May 14, 1861, 1.

⁹¹⁴ *Isle of Wight Observer*, March 16, 1861, 1.

⁹¹⁵ *Downpatrick Recorder*, May 18, 1861, 4.

⁹¹⁶ *Dublin Daily Express*, May 21, 1861, 5.

⁹¹⁷ Craig Clunas and Verity Wilson, “Wallpaper,” in Clunas, *Chinese Export Art and Design*, 112. See also Charles C. Oman and Jean Hamilton, *Wallpapers: A History and Illustrated Catalogue of Collection of the Victorian and Albert Museum* (London: Sotheby Publications, 1982), 58–61, with specimens shown on 214, 229–56; Emile de Bruijn, *Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2018); Emile de Bruijn, Andrew Bush and Helen Clifford, *Chinese Wallpaper in National Trust Houses* (Swindon: National Trust Enterprises, 2014); and Helen Clifford, “Chinese Wallpaper: From Canton to Country House,” in *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857*, ed. Margot Finn and Kate Smith (London: UCL Press, 2018), 39–67.

printing.⁹¹⁸ As Joanna Banham writes in her essay on Pugin’s wallpapers, at midcentury when machine printing was introduced, “Artificial realism and meretricious ornament held sway,” but that his designs revealed “his unswerving commitment to conventionalization and two-dimensionality.”⁹¹⁹

This movement away from a preference for exoticism and illusionism towards a new conception of “taste,” or rules for design, represented a significant change in the production and consumption of consumer goods. Thus, the *Leigh Chronicle* panned the novelty:

the dull stripes of red, green, and yellow can nothing detract if they cannot heighten and enhance the value of beauty. Everyone is crying out to the Coventry weavers to put a little more taste into their abominably old-fashioned productions.⁹²⁰

The *Coventry Herald* explained its failure:

her Most Gracious Majesty in selecting the “Pekin” ribbon to be manufactured at Coventry, made choice of a style, that from its extreme peculiarity, could never become a favourite, and be universally worn by our fair countrywomen.⁹²¹

The *Kentish Mercury* concluded:

The future of the trade must now, as a matter of course, depend upon the skill and enterprise of individual manufacturers, and we believe great exertions are being made to improve, in every possible way, the character of our staple product.⁹²²

Neither a sense of patriotism nor promotion by Queen Victoria could save domestic producers from international competition.

The author has not been able to locate an image or sample of the ribbon. The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, has confirmed that there are no references to a commission for the ribbon within the indexes to Victoria’s papers and that no specimen of the ribbon survives in the Royal Collection.⁹²³ Institutions around Nuneaton, as well as important national design collections, hold no specimens nor any records related to its production.⁹²⁴ Research has turned up only one case of a ribbon linked with the Summer Palace in the nineteenth century. In early 1870, a domestic servant named Mary Ann May (dates unknown) was arraigned for theft of articles from the household of a “Col. Luard” and his family at

⁹¹⁸ Pugin created over 100 wallpapers for the Houses of Parliament. Many of his original designs are in the V&A, including acc. nos. D.624-1908; D.720-1908; D.723-1908; D.741-1908; E.155-1976.

⁹¹⁹ Joanna Banham, “Wallpaper” In *Pugin: A Gothic Passion*, ed. Paul Atterbury and Clive Wainwright (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1994), 119–26. 120–21.

⁹²⁰ “From Our London Correspondent,” *Leigh Chronicle and Weekly District Advertiser*, March 9, 1861, 2.

⁹²¹ *Coventry Herald*, April 6, 1861, 4.

⁹²² “Provincial Intelligence,” *Kentish Mercury*, April 20, 1861, 6.

⁹²³ Julie Crocker, Archivist, Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, email to the author, May 23, 2016.

⁹²⁴ Email communications from Becky Harvey, Assistant Museum Officer, Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery, March 15, 2016; John Burton, Coton Heritage Centre, March 13, 2016; Huw Jones, Curator (Human History and Visual Arts), Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, March 15, 2016; Rachael Marsay, Warwickshire County Record Office, March 18, 2016; Beatrice Behlen, Senior Curator (Fashion and Decorative Arts), Museum of London, October 8, 2020; Ali Wells, Curator (Natural Sciences and Human History), Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, October 16, 2020.

Farnam, where she had been employed briefly. Among the items found in May's lodgings was a ribbon identified by the officer's daughter, Miss Susan Luard.⁹²⁵ However, the defendant was acquitted. In covering the proceedings, the *Surrey Comet* noted the "seven yards of Chinese ribbon, which came from the Emperor's Summer Palace at Peking, the property of Miss Susan Leward."⁹²⁶ [The name "Leward" here is a misspelling of "Luard".] Then Col. Frederic Peter Luard (1835–1917) was a member of Fane's Horse, who had participated in the action at the Dagu Forts and the surrender of Beijing. He also sold 48 lots of porcelain, jade and other materials "brought from the Summer Palace at Peking," through Christie's on June 6, 1861.⁹²⁷

So it is unlikely that the ribbon was inspired by one from the Summer Palace. Garments for the Qing court were often trimmed with decorative bands that could be called ribbons. Some were wide strips of silk with auspicious emblems or geometric designs.⁹²⁸ A Qing Dynasty festival robe for an emperor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art has just this kind of trim: woven and embroidered strips of silk.⁹²⁹ **(Fig. 5-2)** The complexity of these designs, together with descriptions of the "Pekin Ribbon" itself, suggest that a ribbon from the Summer Palace was not the inspiration for this product. Sources state only that the ribbon had dull red, green and yellow stripes and this suggests that the patriotic design was inspired instead by British war medal ribbons, which usually featured particolored stripes running lengthwise. In March of 1861, concurrently with the appearance of the "Pekin Ribbon," Queen Victoria ordered that medals be issued for soldiers who had served in China, with clasps for "China, 1857," "Taku Forts, 1860," and "Pekin, 1860."⁹³⁰ The UK Forces War Records website reports that the Second China War medal was issued on March 6, 1861 and that the original ribbon was "32mm wide, the original issue had five equally spaced stripes reading from the left blue, yellow, red, white and green. This was later replaced by one of crimson with yellow edges."⁹³¹ Recently on sale with Stack's and Bowers Galleries, New York, is a Second China War medal of silver with "China 1842," "Fatshan 1857," "Canton 1857," and "Taku Forts 1860," clasps on a ribbon with multicolored stripes matching the order of the first design. The auction house believes it is the original.⁹³² **(Fig. 5-3)**

⁹²⁵ *Surrey Advertiser*, March 19, 1870, 8.

⁹²⁶ *Surrey Comet*, March 26, 1870, 3.

⁹²⁷ Christie's London, Sale of June 6, 1861, Lots 122–70.

⁹²⁸ John E. Vollmer, "In the Service of the Dragon Throne," chap. 4 in *Ruling from the Dragon Throne: Costume of the Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2002). Several specimens are shown.

⁹²⁹ MMA, acc. no. 30.75.5.

⁹³⁰ *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, March 12, 1861, 2.

⁹³¹ "Second China War Medal," Forces War Records, accessed January 8, 2022, <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/second-china-war-medal>.

⁹³² Stack's Bowers Galleries, New York, Sale of January 17, 2022, Lot 5045.



5-2. Chinese imperial robe, Qing Dynasty, 17th century, *kesi* tapestry (silk and metallic thread), L. 142.2 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



5-3. William Wyon, Second China War medal, 1861, silver and grosgrain ribbon, D. 3.6 cm (medal),
© Stack's Bowers Galleries

The “Pekin Ribbon” was not important as a designed object to consumers in 1861. However, the failure of this product as a patriotic initiative – targeting both China *and* France – shows that trade wars and political conflict did not always inspire patriotism in consumers. While it is logical to inscribe design responses to the China war within the schema of imperialism; other factors, like tastes and marketplace pressures, were equally important. Neither involvement from Queen Victoria nor appeals to a sense of charity moved women to purchase the ribbon. The unpopularity of the ribbon (called “dull” by one reviewer), also represents forces at work in British manufacturing at the time; namely, a growing consensus that producers had to offer designs of better “taste” if they were going to compete with imports. This was the “free trade” ethos: manufacturers should avoid trade imbalances by producing higher quality designs, rather than relying on tariffs for protection; though no one had worked out how

to support laborers when inevitable shifts in the market occurred and no one owned up to the fact that trade barriers sometimes had to be struck down with Armstrong guns. This imperative encouraged manufacturers to continue copying Chinese wares as they had since the seventeenth century; but they had to do better. In the end, a significant number of workshops and factories created products of great beauty and quality, partly through their ongoing engagement with Chinese imperial art.

4. Owen Jones and the Summer Palace

A leading figure in the design response to Chinese spoils was Owen Jones (1809–74), who developed a new set of art principles after studying this material in British collections after the war. A number of scholars have discussed Jones's interest in "the Orient." Sarah Searight writes that Jones's "grand tour" of Egypt, Turkey and Spain came partly out of the earlier European engagement with notions of the East; namely, the Turcomania of the Romantic period and Neoclassical Egyptomania; but that his studies therein inspired a new approach to design emphasizing geometry and color, as well as rules about the use of vegetal forms in ornament, culminating in his publication of *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra* (1842) and *The Grammar of Ornament* (1856). She concludes:

It was largely thanks to the impact of Jones' *The Grammar of Ornament* that strong primary colours--blues, reds, yellows (or gilding)--became such a distinctive feature not only of architectural decoration but also of late Victorian interiors, furnishings and even clothes.⁹³³

As the following material will show, Jones's ideas about vegetal designs and color were impacted by his contact with objects looted from the Summer Palace. The architect had dismissed Chinese design in *The Grammar of Ornament* where he argued that all design sprung from architecture, the foundation of all cultures, and that the Chinese had made no important contributions to the area.⁹³⁴ This left them stalled at "an early stage of civilisation," because "In their decoration, both painted and woven, the Chinese possess only just so much art as would belong to a primitive people." Still, they had the "happy instinct of harmonising colours."⁹³⁵ His attitude was laden with racial prejudice. But after the 1860 war, Jones was engaged in two projects that gave him the chance to study imperial and non-imperial wares in depth and these sparked in him new appreciation for Chinese material. In 1863, he designed the Oriental Courts for the South Kensington Museum.⁹³⁶ Working with collections held by the museum, Jones studied export ceramics and art from the Summer Palace. He also installed at Fonthill the collection of imperial wares owned by Alfred Morrison, who had purchased numerous plundered artworks from Henry Brougham

⁹³³ Sarah Searight, "Owen Jones: Travel and Vision of the Orient," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 2 (2006): 140.

⁹³⁴ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day & Son, 1856), 85.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁹³⁶ V&A, acc. nos. E.3607-1931 – E.3612-1931, MISC.5882, MISC.5883, MISC.5887. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn, *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998), 15–17.

Loch.⁹³⁷ (See 75, 184, 249, 328.) The result of these studies was *Examples of Chinese Ornament Selected from Objects in the South Kensington Museum and Other Collections* (1867),⁹³⁸ a collection of patterns on Chinese vessels reproduced as flat designs in 100 chromolithographs. **(Fig. 5-4)** In his preface, Jones noted the recent windfall of Chinese objects: “The late war in China, and the Ti-ping rebellion, by the destruction and sacking of many public buildings, has caused the introduction to Europe of a great number of truly magnificent works of Ornamental Art.”⁹³⁹



5-4. Owen Jones, title page from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

Sources for *Examples of Chinese Ornament*

Jones was silent on the Summer Palace and British involvement in any recent “destruction and sacking”; and none of the objects from which the patterns were drawn are attributed to the imperial estate. Some designs come from export wares. Other designs are of a kind seen on Qing imperial porcelains: intricate lotus scrolls – sometimes dotted with bats, chimes, butterflies and fruit – that run seamlessly around the

⁹³⁷ Michael Darby, “Fonthill House,” *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* 94 (2001): 230–34.

⁹³⁸ Owen Jones, *Examples of Chinese Ornament Selected from Objects in the South Kensington Museum and Other Collections* (London: S. & T. Gilbert, 1867).

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

vessel on a brightly colored ground.⁹⁴⁰ There are also a good many cloisonné patterns of an archaic style seen in pieces for the Qianlong emperor.⁹⁴¹ Jones also thanked a number of men for allowing him to study their collections:

I have had the advantage of access to the National Collection at South Kensington, and the unrivalled collection of Alfred Morrison, Esq., of Fonthill, who has secured the finest specimens from time to time, as they have appeared in this country. From the collection of Louis Huth, Esq. exhibited in South Kensington, and from many objects in the possession of M. Digby Wyatt, Esq., Col. De La Rue, Thomas Chappell, Esq., F. O. Ward, Esq., Messrs. Nixon and Rhodes, and others, the bulk of the compositions have been obtained. My thanks are especially due to Messrs. Durlacher and Mr. Wareham for the liberal loan of many objects, which I have been thus enabled to copy in the quiet of the studio.⁹⁴²

Sadly, Jones did not attribute the individual pieces to their owners in his volume. But some of these men owned or handled objects linked with the Summer Palace during the period 1861–67. Others were involved in art connoisseurship or ceramic manufacturing, which were both in different ways impacted by the arrival of Chinese imperial wares.

Among the latter group was architect Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820–77), who acted as an art referee for the South Kensington Museum beginning in 1867, and in this capacity oversaw purchases of some materials from the Summer Palace.⁹⁴³ Wyatt and Jones had been involved in the building of the Crystal Palace for the 1851 exhibition;⁹⁴⁴ and when Wyatt published his volume on the show, he had included a plate showing Chinese enamels collected by Charles de Montigny (1805–68), the first French Consul at Shanghai,⁹⁴⁵ which Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809–97) secured for display.⁹⁴⁶ Louis Huth (1821–1905) was a businessman, patron of the Aesthetic Movement, and porcelain collector known for his blue-and-white china.⁹⁴⁷ In 1864, a newspaper feature on exhibits at the South Kensington Museum noted “Mr. Louis Huth’s case of old Nankin porcelain”,⁹⁴⁸ for collectors had prized most highly these non-imperial wares before the sacking of 1860. He also lent pieces to the groundbreaking Burlington Fine Arts Club

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid., plates 19, 35, 49–60, 62, 65–68, 73–79, 81–82, 84–89, 91, 95–97, show decoration typical of imperial enameled wares.

⁹⁴¹ Jones, *Chinese Ornament*, Plates 12, 39, 40, 61.

⁹⁴² Ibid., Preface.

⁹⁴³ See for example, Wyatt’s entry for a filigree court cap attributed to the Summer Palace. Report of Art Referee: Sir M. S. Wyatt, 44339, November 1871, Art Referees’ reports, 1863–86, MA/3, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive..

⁹⁴⁴ *Illustrated London News*, June 2, 1877, 518.

⁹⁴⁵ *Reading Mercury*, May 19, 1855, 8; *Caledonian Mercury*, November 1, 1862, 8.

⁹⁴⁶ Matthew Digby Wyatt, *The Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century. A Series of Illustrations of the Choicest Specimens Produced by Every Nation, at the Great Exhibition of Works of Industry, 1851* (London: Day & Son, 1851), Plate 127, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e3-84aa-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>. See also plate 118 for Chinese jades.

⁹⁴⁷ Anne Anderson, “‘Fearful Consequences . . . of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women, and ‘Cultchah’ in the English Aesthetic Movement ca. 1870–1900,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37, no. 1 (2009): 225. Mentions Louis Huth among patrons of the Aesthetic Movement. Branka Nakanishi, “A Symphony Reexamined: an Unpublished Study for Whistler’s Portrait of Mrs. Frances Leyland,” *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 159–60. Discusses a portrait of his wife, Helen Huth (1837–1924), painted by James McNeill Whistler. “Crowds at Christie’s: the Prunus Vase,” *Daily Telegraph & Courier*, May 17, 1905, 9. Discusses Huth’s famed blue-and-white vase.

⁹⁴⁸ “South Kensington Museum,” *Illustrated London News*, October 22, 1864, 17.

porcelain exhibitions of 1895 and 1896.⁹⁴⁹ “Col. De La Rue”, was William Frederick de la Rue (1824–70), who served with the 4th Tower Hamlets Rifle Volunteers until 1865.⁹⁵⁰ He was also the brother of Warren De la Rue (1815–89), the well-known inventor, photographer, chemist and astronomer.⁹⁵¹ Both men were members of their father’s firm, Thomas De La Rue & Co., stationers.⁹⁵² Owen Jones designed a line of playing cards for the firm, which is discussed below. (See 261.)

Two of the men who loaned objects to Jones were involved in ceramic manufacturing. “F. O. Ward” was Frederick Oldfield Ward (ca. 1818–77), who had contributed an essay to Jones’s *Designs for Mosaic and Tessellated Pavements* of 1842,⁹⁵³ which promoted his designs for the firm of John Mariott Blashfield (1811–82). Ward related the designs to the movement among British manufacturers to create attractive, durable tile flooring; and commended Blashfield’s tesserae as easy to install, extremely hard and brightly hued, the beauty of the designs unmarred by any cement within their interstices.⁹⁵⁴ The tiles were made of colored porcelain powders compressed between steel dies, which were developed by Richard Prosser (1804–54) of Birmingham and manufactured by Blashfield with his associates at Minton and the cement manufacturers Wyatt, Parker & Co.⁹⁵⁵ The attraction of this material for Jones is obvious: the bright but limited palette and interlocking quality of the tessellated designs were exactly what would later draw him to Chinese cloisonné. The architect’s bold tilework designs were based on classical and “Moorish” sources, rendered in the clear hues of blue, yellow, red and green, with black and white. Ward concluded that compressed porcelain tesserae “for the purity and brilliancy of their colours,” could not be matched.⁹⁵⁶ This interest in pure, bright colors is seen also in the collecting and imitation of Chinese imperial monochrome porcelains later in the century.

Thomas Chappell Brown-Westhead (ca. 1837–82), after serving in the Worcestershire Militia, joined John Ridgway, Bates, & Co., manufacturers of earthenware and porcelain in Staffordshire.⁹⁵⁷ He rose to the position of partner and remade the firm as T. C. Brown-Westhead, Moore, & Co., with William Moore (d. 1815–65/66) and James Moore (d. 1881) in 1862. Brown-Westhead handled business

⁹⁴⁹ W. Cosmo Monkhouse, *Catalogue of Blue & White Oriental Porcelain, Exhibited in 1895: Burlington Fine Arts Club* (London: Printed for the Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1895), 5, 15, 16, 24, 26, 28, 35, 38, 54; Monkhouse, *Catalogue of Coloured Chinese Porcelain*, 15, 19, 24, 36.

⁹⁵⁰ *Shoreditch Observer*, August 13, 1864, 2; *Shoreditch Observer*, December 10, 1864, 3; *Colburn’s United Service Magazine and Naval and Military Journal* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1865), 2: 306, 469; J. P. Kelleher, comp. & ed., *Volunteer Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers (The City of London Regiment 1859–1908)* (2013), 19, <https://fusiliermuseumlondon.org/download?id=12392>.

⁹⁵¹ *London Evening Standard*, April 22, 1889, 3.

⁹⁵² *Sun*, August 16, 1866, 5; *Era*, August 28, 1870, 14.

⁹⁵³ Owen Jones, *Designs for Mosaic and Tessellated Pavements of 1842*. With an Essay on Their Materials and Structure by F. O. Ward (London: John Weale, 1842).

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1–6.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁵⁷ *Morning Post*, June 1, 1882, 1.

affairs and the Moores oversaw the pottery. In 1872 the firm took over the Royal Victoria Works and entered the field of majolica manufacturing. Within a decade it was a leading ceramic manufacturer in Britain.⁹⁵⁸ At the time of his death in 1882, Brown-Westhead was on the executive committee for the Royal College of Music and his firm was participating in an “Exhibition of English Pottery,” at the Society of Arts, London. The show illustrated “recent progress in artistic pottery,” and involved other firms that had been impacted by the influx of Chinese imperial ceramics: Doulton, Worcester, Minton, Wedgwood, Linthorpe, and Maw.⁹⁵⁹ One can say on the basis of these brief biographies that leading craft manufacturers responded to Chinese design during the 1860s by collecting Chinese enameled ceramics and metalwork, some of it imperial.

Some of the men whom Jones thanked were art dealers. Although they were prominent in their day, little trace of them remains outside their surnames and winning bids in auction records and sale coverage in newspapers. However, Mark Westgarth has published an invaluable and comprehensive encyclopedia of information available on many firms, including those of William Wareham and Henry Durlacher, both prominent dealers,⁹⁶⁰ who bought many items linked with the “Summer Palace” at Christie’s: Wareham upwards of 90; Durlacher at least 36 objects.⁹⁶¹ Durlacher also sold imperial pieces to Alfred Morrison. Among a number of objects that could be imperial due to their evident quality, a receipt from Durlacher dated July 23, 1863 included “2 basins yellow ground green dragons 5.5.” Such wares were for imperial consorts of the second and third ranks: *Guifei* and *Fei*.⁹⁶² Another receipt dated November 2, 1863, listed a “gold embroidered throne cover.” Finally, a receipt of September 27, 1866, includes “2 small Oriental basins & covers purchased at Capt. Negroni’s sale.”⁹⁶³ Among these are pieces that could have been sources for *Chinese Ornament*. Nixon & Rhodes were art dealers with prominent clients like Lord Wharncliffe (who owned cloisonné vessels brought by his brother from China),⁹⁶⁴ and Lady Charlotte Schreiber.⁹⁶⁵ They acquired a number of objects from “Summer Palace” sales, which Jones might have rendered for *Chinese Ornament*. When Mr. Phillips held a sale of items attributed to

⁹⁵⁸ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, December 14, 1861, 8; “Brown-Westhead, Moore & Co,” A-to-Z of Stoke-on-Trent Potters website, accessed May 3, 2022, <http://www.thepotteries.org/allpotters/195.htm>.

⁹⁵⁹ *St. James’s Gazette*, January 5, 1882, 11; *Wellington Journal*, May 27, 1882, 4.

⁹⁶⁰ Mark Westgarth, “Antique & Curiosity Dealers with Full Explanation and Plates,” *Journal of the Regional Furniture Society* 23 (2009): 90–91, 180. Gives information on the Durlacher and Wareham firms.

⁹⁶¹ Notes in auction catalogues show that William Wareham acquired upwards of ninety and Durlacher bought at least thirty-six “Summer Palace” pieces at Christie’s in the period 1861–66. For Wareham purchases, see Christie’s London, sales of May 27, 1861; June 6, 1861; July 5, 1861; May 15, 1862; May 30, 1862; July 21, 1862; July 20, 1863; July 14, 1864; July 25, 1864. For Durlacher purchases, see sales of May 30, 1862; July 21, 1862; July 20, 1863; July 25, 1864; June 28, 1866; Christie’s Archive, London.

⁹⁶² Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics: Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty* (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 1998), 26.

⁹⁶³ Accounts and Vouchers, File F/2/1130, Fonthill Estate Archives, Salisbury.

⁹⁶⁴ Messrs. Nixon and Rhodes to Lord Wharncliffe, letter concerning two mirrors, 1874, General correspondence (mainly non-estate) of the 1st Earl of Wharncliffe, Wh M/418, National Archives, Kew.

⁹⁶⁵ English ceramics purchased by Lady Schreiber from Nixon & Rhodes are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. See V&A, acc. nos. 414:352-1885; 414:584-1885; 414:640-1885; 414:673/A-1885.

the “Summer Palace” in May of 1863; someone wrote “Nixon” in the catalogue next to Lot 88, “A magnificent vase and cover, of the finest enamel, with top and handles in metal gilt, designed as dolphins, the ground work of a brilliant blue, richly ornamented with flowers in various rich colours, a splendid work of art-120 guineas.”⁹⁶⁶ Rhodes appears as the buyer for 86 items attributed to the “Summer Palace” in Christie’s auction catalogues.⁹⁶⁷ On May 30, 1862, “Rhodes” appears next to one fluted vessel with polychrome floral decoration, two enameled metal basins, and an enameled incense burner shaped as a monster.⁹⁶⁸ On July 20, 1863, “Rhodes” is recorded as the buyer of numerous porcelains, like “A FLAT-SHAPED BOTTLE, with characters and plants in compartments and ornaments in colours on a green ground”; and a handled moonflask with enameled “flowers and ornaments” on a white ground.⁹⁶⁹

Alfred Morrison acquired a huge group of spoils from Henry Brougham Loch and designs in *Chinese Ornament* were drawn from vessels in Morrison’s collection. (See 75, 184, 244–45, 249, 328.) Some of these were sold at Christie’s in 1965, 1971, 2004 and 2010; and among this group are vessels that match pieces in Chinese imperial collections or imperial pieces sold at auction. Plate 54 shows two yellow-ground floral patterns. **(Fig. 5-5)** The right-hand pattern may be from a pair of *yangcai* bowls with identical decoration and marks of the Daoguang emperor, catalogued by Christie’s in 2010 as once owned by Morrison and reputedly acquired from Loch.⁹⁷⁰ **(Fig. 5-6)** The left-hand pattern matches that on a pair of *yangcai* bowls with Qianlong marks and of the period, sold in 1971,⁹⁷¹ **(Fig. 5-7)** as well as a bowl in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has a Daoguang mark and is of the period.⁹⁷² **(Fig. 5-8)** Plate 83 of *Chinese Ornament* **(Fig. 5-9)** matches Lot 58 in the 1971 sale: a *yangcai* vase of the *meiping* type with a Qianlong mark, showing flowers on a ruby graviata ground, **(Fig. 5-10)** which is close to a *meiping* in the Palace Museum, Beijing.⁹⁷³ **(Fig. 5-11)** Plate 62 **(Fig. 5-12)** matches a vase produced under the Qianlong emperor,⁹⁷⁴ **(Fig. 5-13)** and Plate 73, **(Fig. 5-14)** matches the cavetto of a bowl showing the imperial dragon and phoenix, dated to the Yongzheng period. Both vessels are in the same museum.⁹⁷⁵ **(Fig. 5-15)** Qing emperors were closely involved in producing these costly wares. They ordered the

⁹⁶⁶ “Ancient Chinese Enamel Ware,” *Loughborough Monitor*, May 28, 1863, 7.

⁹⁶⁷ Christie’s London, Sales of May 27, 1861, Lot 185; May 15, 1862, Lots 128, 129; May 30, 1862, Lots 220, 236, 251, 280, 295; July 5, 1861, Lot 106, 110, 112, 120, 124; July 21, 1862, Lots 13, 60, 61, 62, 64, 73, 82, 95, 96, 102, 108, 118, 124; December 1, 1862, Lots 71–74, 76, 81, 85, 88, 91, 96, 100, 106, 107; July 20, 1863, Lots 18–21, 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 98, 101, 104, 109, 113, 117, 121, 125, 126, 134, 136, 146, 151, 153, 162, 164; July 25, 1864, Lots 3, 23, 28, 35, 66, 73, 102, 135, 137, 139, 143–51, 153, 164.

⁹⁶⁸ Christie’s London, Sale of May 30, 1862, Lots 220, 236, 251, 280, 291.

⁹⁶⁹ Christie’s London, Sale of July 20, 1863, Lots 18, 75, 77, 82, 86, 104, 105, 115.

⁹⁷⁰ Christie’s Hong Kong, December 1, 2010, Sale 2838, Lot 2982.

⁹⁷¹ Christie’s London, Sale of October 18, 1971, Lot 77, Plate 11.

⁹⁷² MMA, acc. no. 79.2.536.

⁹⁷³ *Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong: Qing Porcelain from the Palace Museum Collection* (Beijing: Forbidden City Publishing House, 1989), 361, no. 42.

⁹⁷⁴ *The Complete Collection of the Treasures of the Palace Museum*, vol. 39, *Porcelains with Cloisonné Enamel Decoration and Famille Rose Decoration* (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1999), 136, no. 119.

⁹⁷⁵ *Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong*, 203, no. 32; Asian Art Museum San Francisco, obj. no. B60P269, are two specimens.

pieces and monitored the court workshops, some of which were located in the Summer Palace,⁹⁷⁶ the primary imperial residence and place of business since the reign of the Yongzheng emperor.⁹⁷⁷ Even though the pieces copied in Jones's book were given no specific Chinese provenance, we can be sure that a significant number came from the estate.



5-5. Owen Jones, Plate 54 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

⁹⁷⁶ Rose Kerr and Nigel Wood, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5, *Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, Part 12, *Ceramic Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 639–46; Ching-fei Shih, “A Record of the Establishment of a New Art Form: The Unique Collection of ‘Painted Enamels’ at the Qing Court,” *Collections and Concepts*, no. 7 (2003), http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/5705/1/Ching_fei_Shih_fertig.pdf.

⁹⁷⁷ Wong, *Paradise Lost*, 74–77.



5-6. Chinese imperial *yangcai* bowls, Daoguang mark and period (r. 1821–50), enameled porcelain, D. 14.8 cm, © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



5-7. Photograph of a Chinese imperial *yangcai* bowl from a Fonthill sale catalogue, 1971, H. 18.5 cm (bowl), © Christie's



5-8. Chinese imperial *yangcai* bowl, Daoguang mark and period (r. 1821–50), enameled porcelain, H. 8.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



5-9. Owen Jones, Plate 83 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



5-10. Photograph of a Chinese imperial *yangcai meiping* vase from a Fonthill sale catalogue, 1971, H. 37.5 cm,
© Christie's

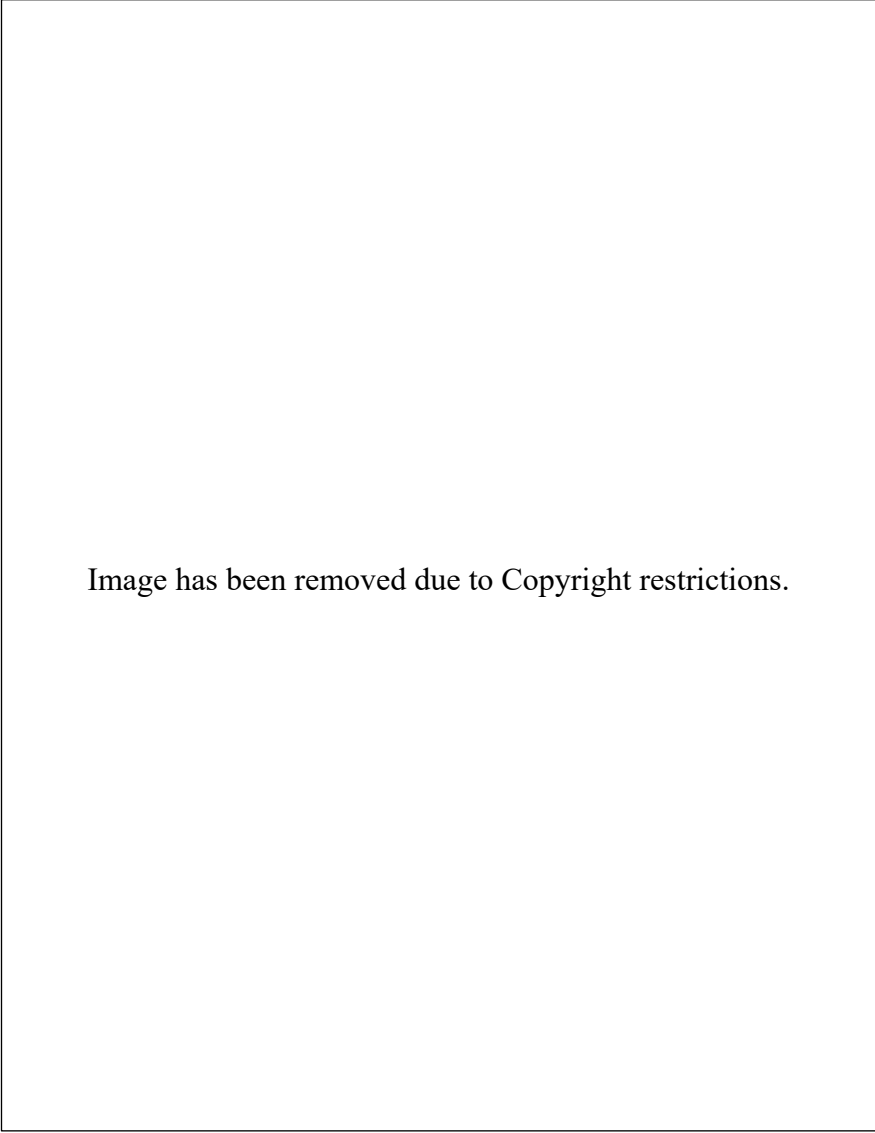


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5-11. *Falangcai meiping* vase, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1735–96), enameled porcelain, H. 36.5 cm,
Palace Museum, Beijing



5-12. Owen Jones, Plate 62 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

Image removed due to Copyright restrictions.

5-13. Chinese imperial *yangcai* vase, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), enameled porcelain, H. 44.5,
Palace Museum, Beijing



5-14. Owen Jones, Plate 73 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

Image has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

5-15. Chinese imperial *doucai* enameled dish, Yongzheng mark and period (r. 1723–35), enameled porcelain,
D. 44.5 cm, Palace Museum, Beijing

Owen Jones on Chinese Design

What Jones admired most about Chinese design was the manner in which Chinese craftsmen arranged areas of color: “There is nothing crude or harsh in any of their compositions; the eye is perfectly satisfied with the balance and arrangement of both form and colour.”⁹⁷⁸ The large number of plates depicting cloisonné designs suggests that he saw in this craft the most felicitous use of intense clear colors, which he preferred in all of his work. His remarks also reflect the interest of British collectors in this material, which is seen in other commentaries on cloisonné and the high prices it earned at auction after the war. A sampling of the highest prices for cloisonné during this period includes £24.10 for a figure of a mythological beast;⁹⁷⁹ £35.10 for a table screen;⁹⁸⁰ at one sale, £50.8 for a large incense burner, 30 gns. for a pair of miniature stupas, and £24.3 for a pair of “fine beakers,” which were likely *gu* vessels;⁹⁸¹ £63 for an incense burner;⁹⁸² £55 for a vase;⁹⁸³ 41 gns. for a flattened double vase;⁹⁸⁴ and £80.17 for a double-gourd vase.⁹⁸⁵ As for porcelains, Jones reproduced mostly lotus scroll designs from blue-and white or painted enamel vessels.⁹⁸⁶ All of the patterns in the *Chinese Ornament* conformed to his well-known design propositions, which he originally published in *The Grammar of Ornament*. Of these, he reprinted 10–13 in *Chinese Ornament*. The first three propositions stipulated the correct arrangement of linear elements. In seeming accord with these, Jones noted that the Chinese artist conceived a design on a grid of triangles, placed motifs on it at regular intervals, then threaded them together with a flowing line that introduced variation and movement into the rigid structure, achieving an even tone throughout the pattern.⁹⁸⁷

⁹⁷⁸ Jones, *Chinese Ornament*, 8.

⁹⁷⁹ Christie’s London, Sale of April 26, 1861, Lot 114.

⁹⁸⁰ Christie’s London, Sale of June 6, 1861, Lot 122.

⁹⁸¹ Christie’s London, Sale of June 12, 1861, Lots 177–79.

⁹⁸² Christie’s London, Sale of July 5, 1861, Lot 113.

⁹⁸³ Christie’s London, Sale of May 22, 1862, Lot 150.

⁹⁸⁴ Christie’s London, Sale of May 30, 1862, Lot 290.

⁹⁸⁵ Christie’s London, Sale of July 21, 1862, Lot 91.

⁹⁸⁶ Jones, *Chinese Ornament*, Plates 2, 4, 5, 23, 24 (blue-and-white lotus scroll designs); 19, 20, 29, 35, 52, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 73, 74, 75, 79, 81, 82 (*yangcai* lotus scroll designs).

⁹⁸⁷ Jones, *Chinese Ornament*, 5–6.



5-16. Owen Jones, Plate 11 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page), Getty Research Institute

Jones reproduced numerous cloisonné patterns illustrating this design technique. One of these is in Plate 11, (Fig. 5-16) which he described thus:

The large flowers are arranged in triangles, crossed by smaller flowers in the opposite direction, and all connected by a continuous stem throwing off leaves and stalks to fill up the ground; all geometrically arranged, and yet not in a manner so apparent as to interfere with the freedom of the composition. The system of triangulation is still further kept up in the coloring.⁹⁸⁸

One important aspect of Jones's work is his insistence that what was best about Chinese pattern was not Chinese, but "Mohammedan" in origin:

We have long been familiar with the power of the Chinese to balance colours, but we are not so well acquainted with their power of treating purely ornamental or conventional forms; and in the chapter in the *Grammar of Ornament* on Chinese Ornament I was led, from my then knowledge, to express the opinion that the Chinese had not the power of dealing with conventional ornamental form; but it now appears that there has been a period in which a School of Art existed in China of a very important kind. We are led to think that this art must in some way have had a foreign origin; it so nearly resembles in all its principles the art of the Mohammedan races, that we may presume it derived from them. It would be no difficult task to take a work of ornament of this class, and, by simply varying the coloring and correcting the drawing, convert it into an Indian or Persian composition.⁹⁸⁹

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid., 5.

He was perhaps being defensive, since he had publicly revised his opinions on the quality of Chinese ornament; but he was to an extent correct, since the lotus scroll patterns he favored were a synthesis of Song Dynasty floral scrolls and arabesques from the Near East, which occurred in Chinese porcelain painting during the Yuan Dynasty.⁹⁹⁰ Other important sources for the decoration of imperial Qing enamels were the acanthus scrolls ubiquitous in Italian design, which Italian Jesuits introduced to Qing court workshops.⁹⁹¹ Other important sources for the decoration of Qing Dynasty imperial enamels were the polychrome acanthus scrolls seen in Italian manuscript illumination, which Jesuits introduced to Qing court workshops. One example of such decoration is the floriated “C” by Lorenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni) (ca. 1370–1425), shown here.⁹⁹² (Fig. 5-17) A similar synthesis of European and Italian styles is the rococo-style carved stone ornament in the engraving Dashuifa Zhengmian (The Great Fountain Main Façade), which depicts one of the palaces designed by Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766) and Michel Benoist (1715–74).⁹⁹³



5-17. Lorenzo Monaco, *The Last Judgment in an initial C*, ca. 1406–7, tempera and gold on parchment, H. 31.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

⁹⁹⁰ Margaret Medley, “The Yüan-Ming Transformation in the Blue and Red Decorated Porcelains of China,” *Ars Orientalis* 9 (1973): 89–101; Priscilla Soucek, “Ceramic Production as Exemplar of Yuan-Ilkhanid Relations,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 35 (Spring 1999): 125–41. Discusses East-West interactions under Mongol rule in China.

⁹⁹¹ Marco Musillo, “Brother and Qing Imperial Painter,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 42, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 45–59; Basil Gray, “Lord Burlington and Father Ripa’s Chinese Engravings,” *British Museum Quarterly* 22, no. 1/2 (1960): 40–43. The texts discuss Jesuits in Qing workshops.

⁹⁹² MMA, acc. no. 1975.1.2485.

⁹⁹³ BM, mus. no. 1916,0214,0.4.

Proposition 13 dealt with the kinds of illusionistic designs that the Design Reform movement rejected. (See 267.) Jones posed as an alternative flat designs based on “conventional” images of plants and other decorative elements.

Flowers or other natural objects should not be used as ornament, but conventional representations founded upon them sufficiently suggestive to convey the intended image to the mind, without destroying the unity of the object they are employed to decorate.⁹⁹⁴

A realistic depiction of a complex flower was too detailed and literal for design work. Clarity of shape and line would be achieved by flattening and simplifying the form. In other words, “conventional” for Jones meant slightly abstracted renderings of three-dimensional objects, which were instantly recognizable.



5-18. Owen Jones, Plate 82 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

Plate 82, later adapted by Royal Worcester for a porcelain moonflask, (See 344.) adheres to Jones’s ideal representation of the natural world for design. **(Fig. 5-18)** Leaves and petals are flattened. Depth is suggested by color and line, not highlights and shade created by an illusory light source, which might conflict with a true one. More intense colours are confined to smaller areas. This produces even tone throughout, as Jones explained:

⁹⁹⁴ Jones, *Grammar of Ornament*, 4–5.

We think in this style the Chinese have reached the extreme limit of the representation of natural objects. They have, however, in none of our examples, by light or shade, endeavored to express relief, though in many of the examples, it is suggested both by colour and form.⁹⁹⁵

With this remarkable publication, Jones articulated an entirely new approach to Chinese design. Ever since blue-and-white wares arrived in Britain, craftsmen had tried to compete with Chinese wares by emulating Chinese porcelain technology and quoting Chinese designs. Designers continued to imitate Chinese pieces after the war, but Jones argued that they should not engage in mere quotation, but attend to the solutions of Chinese craftsmen to the essential formal problems of design. Designers should forego the realism that had captivated western artists since the classical period and the national adherence to sculpture as the artistic ideal.

The volume promoted Design Reform aesthetics with harmonious combinations of bold color, flat designs, and non-western historical sources. In this spirit, Jones offered it as a sourcebook: “a valuable and instructive aid in building up what we all seek, — the progressive development of the forms of the past, founded on the eternal principles which all good forms of Art display.”⁹⁹⁶ However, it differed from a book like *The Gentleman and Cabinet-maker’s Director* (1754), which Thomas Chippendale (1718–79) published to raise his own profile as a designer and gain some independence from noble patrons. As Ulrike McGregor writes in his study of Chippendale’s efforts to promote his publication, he “proved highly effective in promoting his name and business at the time and maintaining his name recognition through subsequent generations,” through an advertising campaign for subscriptions unprecedented among furniture makers.⁹⁹⁷ Jones offered, for the price of his volume, anonymous designs (stolen from the Qing court), for the national cause of better design. Jones published the designs specifically for dissemination among craft producers. To this end, he reproduced ornament on imperial vessels as flat patterns, which could be easily adapted by textile and wallpaper manufacturers (although many patterns were again wrapped around vessels in various materials). These included many blue-and-white and two-color designs, which could serve as patterns for less expensive single- or two-color printing. His work contributed to a style of British design that flourished in the 1870s, which drew on and synthesized different traditions of Asian ornament. (See 258, 350–52.) The wealth of products derived from his publication makes Jones the main link between art from the Summer Palace and British design of the later nineteenth century.

⁹⁹⁵ Jones, *Chinese Ornament*, 7.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹⁹⁷ Ulrike McGregor, “Thomas Chippendale, Ingenious Business Leader and Promoter of the Cabinet-Maker’s Craft in Eighteenth-Century London: New Insights from the Burney Collection of Newspapers,” *Furniture History* 54 (2018): 43–46, 48.

Examples of Chinese Ornament and Paper Goods

Simultaneously with the publication of *Chinese Ornament*, Owen Jones designed a line of playing cards for the stationer Thomas De La Rue. Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812–95) bequeathed a group of these to the British Museum and one card shows a lotus scroll (**Fig. 5-19**) likely based on Plate 81 of *Chinese Ornament*. (**Fig. 5-20**) In 1868, the *Field* newspaper ran a short feature on new playing cards introduced by the firm, effusing:

Two of the greatest novelties are the Chinese flower pattern and the Indian (? Chinese) frieze pattern. These are inspirations from that peculiar Chinese ornamentation which has been chiefly made known to us through the loot of the Summer Palace, since when numerous objects in enamel and porcelain have been imported from China, bearing a most original style of ornamentation.⁹⁹⁸

This is only one of many instances in which the Summer Palace “loot” entered the visual life of Victorians and this development was acknowledged. The impact of Chinese imperial wares on British wallpaper appears at this point to be small. While scenic Chinese wallpaper had been a luxury in British homes during the eighteenth century, the fantastic scenes of “curious” figures among oversized exotic flowers did not conform to notions of good taste among Design Reform advocates and the rococo associations may have made the idea of a Chinese-inspired paper seem passé. Chinese wallpaper was even held up as an example of bad art in a comical feature for *Household Words*, where a Mr. Crump realizes to his shame after visiting the Department of Practical Art in Marlborough House that the wallpaper in his parlor “contains four kinds of birds of paradise, besides bridges and pagodas.”⁹⁹⁹ However, two wallpaper patterns by the Arts and Crafts designer Lewis Foreman Day (1845–1910),¹⁰⁰⁰ appear to contain elements from *Chinese Ornament*. One wallpaper featuring stylized camellia blossoms,¹⁰⁰¹ (**Fig. 5-21**) seems to be based on a pattern of lotus scrolls in Plate 83. (**Fig. 5-22**) The bicolor pattern titled “Mandarin,” which appears in a Jeffrey & Co. sample book of ca. 1887–ca. 1900,¹⁰⁰² (**Fig. 5-23**) seems to be loosely based on a blue-and-white porcelain pattern in *Chinese Ornament*, specifically the Plate 67. (**Fig. 5-24**) The red-and-white color scheme is drawn from Chinese red-and-white porcelains, most likely as represented in *Chinese Ornament*. Several plates show such designs, including Plate 65. (**Fig. 5-25**) That pattern is comparable to one on a deer head-shaped *zun* produced for the Yongzheng emperor, which is in the Palace Museum, Beijing.¹⁰⁰³ Some evidence that Day studied

⁹⁹⁸ *Field*, October 10, 1868, 293.

⁹⁹⁹ Henry Morley, “House Full of Horrors,” *Household Words* 6, no. 141 (December 4, 1852). Reprinted in Henry Cole, *Fifty Years of Public Work*, 1:286.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Elizabeth Rycroft, “Lewis Foreman Day (1845-1910) and the Society of Arts,” *RSA Journal* 140, no. 5428 (April 1992): 333–36. Gives a short professional biography of Lewis F. Day.

¹⁰⁰¹ V&A, acc. no. E.2327-1932.

¹⁰⁰² V&A, acc. no. E.23126-1957.

¹⁰⁰³ *Kangxi, Yongzheng, Qianlong*, 193.

Jones's work is his discussion of Chinese enamel techniques in his book on enamelling, in which he referred to a massive cloisonné dish, almost a yard wide, which arrived at the South Kensington Museum in 1858.¹⁰⁰⁴ This shows two *fenghuang* birds within a scalloped border, comprising *gui* dragons derived from ancient bronzes. **(Fig. 5-26)** Jones reproduced the scalloped border in Plate 64 of his book, **(Fig. 5-27)** and Day included an engraving showing a segment of the same, which seems to be based on Jones's chromolithograph rather than the plate itself, for it seems closer to Jones's image than the actual plate.¹⁰⁰⁵ **(Fig. 5-28)**



5-19. Owen Jones for Thomas De la Rue, playing card, ca. 1868, chromolithograph, H. 9.3 cm, British Museum



5-20. Owen Jones, Plate 81 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

¹⁰⁰⁴ V&A, acc. no. 4785-1858, published in Susan Weber, "The Reception of Chinese Cloisonné Enamel in Europe and America," in Quette, *Cloisonné*, 190–91.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Lewis F. Day, *Enamelling, a Comparative Account of the Development and Practice of the Art* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1907), 83.



5-21. Lewis Foreman Day for Jeffrey & Co., wallpaper, late 19th century, color woodblock print on paper, H. 102 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



5-22. Owen Jones, Plate 83 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page), Getty Research Institute



5-23. Lewis Foreman Day for Jeffrey & Co., “Mandarin” wallpaper, ca. 1887–1900, color machine print on paper, H. 57.7 cm (sample book), Victoria and Albert Museum



5-24. Owen Jones, Plate 67 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), H. 35 cm (page), Getty Research Institute



5-25. Owen Jones, Plate 65 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



5-26. Chinese cloisonné basin, Qing Dynasty, 18th century, D. 77.47 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



5-27. Owen Jones, Plate 64 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



5-28. Lewis Foreman Day, "Detail of Chinese cloisonné, of the Ming period," from *Enamelling, a Comparative Account of the Development and Practice of the Art*, 1907, engraving, Getty Research Institute

Examples of Chinese Ornament and Textiles

As recounted in Chapter Three, imperial embroidered silks and garments were displayed as trophies by regiments and military families. But the British had a taste for silk as a luxury good as well and Chinese spoils also arrived at a time when a debate over textile design was taking place in Britain. Figures like Henry Cole, Christopher Dresser and Owen Jones were advocating a new approach to pattern, which eschewed the illusionistic style seen in Cole's Museum of Horrors. One example of this style can be seen in the floral furnishing fabric pictured here.¹⁰⁰⁶ (Fig. 5-29) As an alternative to the fashion for illusion, British textile designers developed new patterns based on *Chinese Ornament*.



5-29. English furnishing fabric, ca. 1850, printed cotton, H. 49.5 cm (swatch), Victoria and Albert Museum

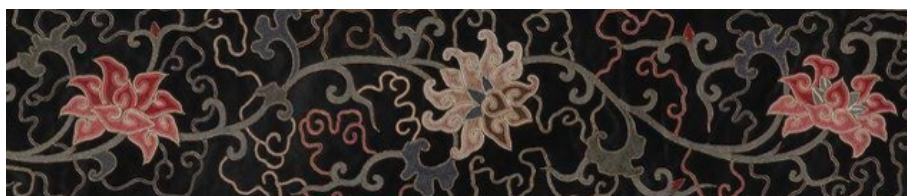
Owen Jones himself applied the dense lotus scrolls from cloisonné and enameled porcelains in *Chinese Ornament* to his fabric designs for Warner & Sons, a textile manufacturer producing fine silks in Spitalfields, which was established by Benjamin Warner (1828–1908) in 1870.¹⁰⁰⁷ Whether Jones also looked to imperial silks for these designs is not clear at this point in the research. His textiles do show lotuses comparable to those on imperial textiles, including a border on a Daoist robe in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is embroidered with imperial five-clawed dragons, dated 1800–1911, and attributed to a temple under court patronage.¹⁰⁰⁸ (Fig. 5-30) Many embroidered imperial silks, which possibly had similar designs, were sold at auction during the 1860s. However, the focus on enameled wares in *Chinese Ornament*, rather than textiles, makes it likely that Jones took inspiration largely from imperial vessels. Examples of his work in the Victoria and Albert Museum are covered with Chinese lotus designs. Swatches of his “Culross” pattern, dated 1870–74, show large roundels, each comprising

¹⁰⁰⁶ V&A, acc. no. T.11-1933.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Hester Bury, “The Archive of Warner & Sons Ltd,” *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1890-1940*, no. 4 (1980): 26–27.

¹⁰⁰⁸ V&A, acc. no. T.755-1950.

three lotuses radiating from a floral center.¹⁰⁰⁹ (Fig. 5-31) The motif was drawn from Plate 61 in *Chinese Ornament*. (Fig. 5-32) Jones also created two half-drop patterns featuring lotus blossoms with the style and morphology of lotuses in *Chinese Ornament* for furnishing fabrics. (Fig. 5-33) These were produced by Warner & Sons and the specimens are all woven silk.¹⁰¹⁰ One is called “Sultan.” (Fig. 5-34) This was a traditional title for a Muslim ruler, although the lotus motifs are Chinese; so it is in keeping with the stereotype of the luxury-loving Oriental prince, which was applied to eastern rulers without acknowledgement of geographic, political and religious differences. Jones most likely used the lotus in these textiles because the evolving representation of the flower was an ideal illustration of his own design Proposition 13: “Flowers and other natural objects should not be used as ornaments, but conventional representations.”¹⁰¹¹ In Chinese designs, they were typically pressed almost flat, stylized but recognizable, with scrolling tendrils unifying the pattern.



5-30. Chinese imperial daoist robe, Qing Dynasty, 1800–1911, silk with metallic thread and seed pearls, L. 127.64 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



5-31. Owen Jones for Warner & Sons, “Culross” furnishing fabric, 1870–74, woven silk, L. 94 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

¹⁰⁰⁹ V&A, acc. nos. T.94-1930; T.157-1972; T.158-1972.

¹⁰¹⁰ V&A, acc. nos. C.294-1953; C.295-1953; T.163-1972.

¹⁰¹¹ Jones, *Chinese Ornament*, 7.



5-32. Owen Jones, Plate 61 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



5-33. Owen Jones for Warner & Sons, 1870–80, woven silk, L. 80 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



5-34. Owen Jones for Warner & Sons, "Sultan" furnishing fabric, 1870–74, woven silk, L. 186.7 cm,
Victoria and Albert Museum

5. William Morris and *Examples of Chinese Ornament*

The textiles of William Morris (1834–96) are known for their dense patterns of natural elements resembling medieval tapestry. Each design has a magical quality deriving from the sense of dappled light in a dense forest or shrubbery. They sparkle with color, but are impenetrable; they are lively and peaceful. They represent the natural world around us, shaped gently by human hands. Sources of inspiration for Morris have been identified by many writers. Prime among these was Gothic art, which fulfilled both his social and aesthetic ideals, as Tom McAlindon writes: “Being the most truly popular, it was also the most organic art the world had ever known,” allowing craftsmen creative freedom in making art and design for the communities in which they dwelt.¹⁰¹² Even Classical subject matter was interpreted in a medieval style, as in his Woodpecker tapestry of 1885.¹⁰¹³ A number of writers have discussed Morris’s drawing from local sources. Sarah Mead Leonard shows that Morris took many botanical elements and forms directly from the countryside surrounding Kelmscott Manor, his country house on the Thames. She notes as well that Morris, while eschewing fashionable illusionistic designs, held equally negative views of the flat patterns designed by Owen Jones and others; and brought a sense of space to his design through color.¹⁰¹⁴ Philip McEvansoneya has written that Morris had studied illuminated manuscripts in the British Museum, including the “Harley Froissart,” which features intricate foliate designs in its margins.¹⁰¹⁵ **(Fig. 5-35)** and Barbara Morris notes that he donated illuminated manuscripts to the South Kensington Museum.¹⁰¹⁶ In her study of Morris’s lengthy professional relationship with the institution, she shows how he drew on Renaissance tapestries in the collection, including the “Three Fates” hanging;¹⁰¹⁷ **(Fig. 5-36)** as well as Persian carpets he examined as a referee for the museum. Prime among those was the Ardabil carpet from Safavid Iran, in which Chinese lotuses featured prominently.¹⁰¹⁸ **(Fig. 5-37)**

¹⁰¹² Tom McAlindon, “The Idea of Byzantium in William Morris and W. B. Yeats,” *Modern Philology* 64, no. 4 (May 1967): 311–12.

¹⁰¹³ Caroline Arscott, “William Morris’s Tapestry: Metamorphosis and Prophecy in The Woodpecker,” *Art History* 36, iss. 3 (June 2013): 609–25.

¹⁰¹⁴ Sarah Mead Leonard, “Printed Ecologies: William Morris and the Rural Thames,” *British Art Studies*, iss. 22 (April 2022).

¹⁰¹⁵ Philip McEvansoneya, “Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Harry Ward and illuminated manuscripts,” *Burlington Magazine* 157, no. 1350 (September 2015): 599–601. British Library, shelfmark: Harley MS 430.

¹⁰¹⁶ Barbara Morris, “William Morris and the South Kensington Museum,” *Victorian Poetry* 13, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 1975): 174.

¹⁰¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 161–62.

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 167–69. V&A, acc. no. 272-1893.



5-35. Workshop in Bruges, the Harley Froissart (f.6r), ca. 1470–72, parchment with pigment and gilding, H. 42 cm (page), British Library



5-36. Netherlandish workshop, Three Fates (detail), early 16th century, tapestry of wool and silk, H. 304.8 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



5-37. Safavid workshop, Ardabil Carpet (detail), 1539–40, wool and silk, L. 1032.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

Linda Parry also points to the Near East and Italy (a nexus of East-West trade) as a source of Morris designs in the 1870s, which she says were “dominated by repeating single and interlocking motifs – stylized pomegranates and artichokes in particular – derived from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century embroideries, woven velvets and silks of Persia, Turkey and Italy.”¹⁰¹⁹ Elements from all of these traditions are present in Morrison’s textiles: the handling of polychrome floral design from Iran;¹⁰²⁰ **(Fig. 5-38)** the ogee structure from Turkish textiles;¹⁰²¹ **(Fig. 5-39)** and the use of foliate scrolls, flowering buds and confronted beasts in Italian ornament.¹⁰²² **(Fig. 5-40)** Morrison himself wrote:

Go to the South Kensington Museum and study the invaluable fragments of the stuffs of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of Syrian and Sicilian manufacture, or the almost equally beautiful webs of Persian design, which are later in date, but instinct with the purest and best Eastern feeling; they may also note the splendid stuffs produced mostly in Italy in the later Middle Ages, which are unsurpassed for richness and effect of design.¹⁰²³

In light of the Italian sources for Morris designs, it is worth noting again that Italian Jesuits working at the Qing court introduced Italian foliate scroll designs into Qing imperial porcelain decoration. (See 258.)

While these sources for the flowered grounds and undulating patterns are clear, some Morris designs featuring stylized lotuses and other plants within dense interlocking scrollworks, seem inspired partly by lotus scrolls on imperial enameled porcelain and cloisonné. Parry has recognized the Chinese lotus in her discussion of a hand-knotted wool rug designed by Morris ca. 1880: “The design, with pale camel colouring, tightly curving leaves and profiled flower-heads shows Chinese influence, especially in the

¹⁰¹⁹ Linda Parry, *William Morris Textiles* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2013), 26.

¹⁰²⁰ V&A, acc. no. 364-1897.

¹⁰²¹ V&A, acc. no. CIRC.319-1929.

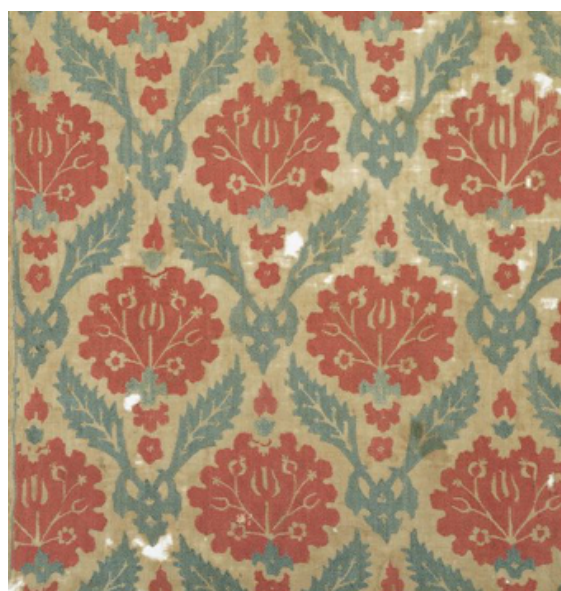
¹⁰²² V&A, acc. no. 529B-1884.

¹⁰²³ William Morris, “Importance of Pattern in Carpet-Weaving,” *Decorator and Furnisher* (February 1, 1889): 143.

pastel colouring and peony motifs of the inner border.”¹⁰²⁴ (Fig. 5-41) Although these sources are disparate they make sense. Contacts with European ornament through Jesuits employed in Qing imperial workshops resulted in porcelain decoration that combined traditional lotus scrolls with foliate designs seen in the European illuminated manuscripts of which Morrison was so fond. However, beyond the presence of a distinctly Chinese lotus in these textiles, the author has not been able to locate evidence for direct connections between Morrison and Chinese imperial art from a position outside the United Kingdom.



5-38. Iranian carpet (detail), 1600–1700, cotton, silk and wool, L. 283.2, Victoria and Albert Museum



5-39. Turkish textile, 1500–1699, linen and embroidered silk, L. 52 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

¹⁰²⁴ Linda Parry, ed., *William Morris* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 279.



5-40. Italian furnishing fabric, 1600–40, woven silk and cotton, L. 52 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



5-41. William Morris, rug, c. 1879–81, knotted wool on cotton warp, L. 248.8 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, reproduced from *William Morris*

The designer likely saw the latter in *Chinese Ornament* or the Chinese Court of the 1862 International Exhibition, where his first firm, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., had a stand.¹⁰²⁵ The Morris company pattern “Lotus,” seen here in a wall hanging embroidered by Margaret Beale, (**Fig. 5-42**) shows a color scheme and foliate design comparable to Plates 51 and 57 of *Chinese Ornament*.¹⁰²⁶ (**Fig. 5-43**) Other wealthy women also purchased the pattern for home decor projects, including Frances Glessner (1848–92), who had the Decorative Arts Society of Chicago produce curtains embroidered with it.¹⁰²⁷ Morris’s “Artichoke” pattern also shows blossoms with turned leaves on grounds of tight scrollwork in the manner of Chinese lotus scroll decoration.¹⁰²⁸ (**Fig. 5-44**) Linda Parry writes that Ada Phoebe Godman (1850–1900) commissioned the “Artichoke” embroidery design, which she then worked into wall hangings for her drawing room at Smeaton Manor. Philip Webb (1831–1915) had designed the house in Northallerton for herself and her husband, the Hon. Col. Major Arthur Fitzpatrick Godman (1843–1930), of the 1st Volunteer Battalion (V.B.) Princess of Wales’s Own Yorkshire Regiment.¹⁰²⁹ However, Morris retained the copyright for the design, which became a popular pattern in the late 1870s and 1880s.

The intricate patterns on imperial porcelains might have appealed to Morris as a designer who advocated for the creative spirit in the midst of industrial capitalism. These designs were not simple full-drop or even half-drop repeats. They were complex scrolls that had to be developed and resolved in a manner that was convincing, elegant, organic, and lively. As Jeffrey Petts writes in his study of Morris’s “good work” aesthetics: “The process or mode of production is everything because the process determines aesthetic value.”¹⁰³⁰ Such “good work,” was of course possible only in workshops where a complex division of labor operated under strict imperial authority,¹⁰³¹ which would have posed a theoretical difficulty for Morris in his aesthetics had he been aware of this fact. Ruth Kinna notes in her study of the designer’s socialist ideals concerning work and leisure that Morris was unable to resolve this tension between the industrial division of labor and creativity in his own work.¹⁰³² However, he was sincerely committed to the progressive ideals of Design Reform and national schools of art, which emphasized the essential role of an informed public in the art world. In his address to the Birmingham Municipal School of Art he argued: “In order to have a living school of Art, the public, in general must be interested in Art; it must be a part of their lives; something which they can no more do without than water

¹⁰²⁵ Parry, *William Morris Textiles*, 22.

¹⁰²⁶ V&A, acc. no. T.192-1953.

¹⁰²⁷ Chicago Institute of Art, ref. no. 1918.298.

¹⁰²⁸ V&A, acc. no. T.586-1919.

¹⁰²⁹ J. Brandon-Jones, “Notes on the Building of Smeaton Manor,” *Architectural History* 1 (1958): 31–60.

¹⁰³⁰ Jeffrey Petts, “Good Work and Aesthetic Education: William Morris, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and Beyond,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 42, no. 1 (Spring, 2008): 35.

¹⁰³¹ Wang, “Piecing Shards Together,” 149–50.

¹⁰³² Ruth Kinna, “William Morris: Art, Work, and Leisure,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 61, no. 3 (July 2000): 494–95.

or lighting.” This meant careful study of the most pleasing ornament: “a Persian carpet, or an illuminated book of the Middle Ages.”¹⁰³³ Morris’s strong views on capitalist industrial England, beg the question of his views on British imperialism and the colonized world as a source of design. Patrick Brantlinger writes: “while Morris's evolution from Pre-Raphaelite to Marxist made him critical of imperialism and far more sympathetic to India than was Ruskin, he never advocated Indian independence or escaped from some version of Orientalism,” while decrying British rule as tyrannical and exploitive. Indeed, Morris himself wrote that Persian craftsmen “Carry the art of mere pattern-designing to its utmost perfection, and it seems somewhat hard to call such an art uncivilized.”¹⁰³⁴ Colonial India for Morris was a dumping ground for goods mass-produced in England, which would supplant native crafts produced in an ideal pre-industrial India.¹⁰³⁵ Although Morris says little about China, it is probable that he took a dim view of the 1860 invasion and treaty, meant to force British products on the Chinese.



5-42. William Morris (design) and Margaret Beale (embroidery), “Lotus” wall hanging, 1875–80 (designed), 1880–91 (made), canvas with silk embroidery, H. 241.4 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

¹⁰³³ William Morris, *An address delivered by William Morris at the distribution of prizes to students of the Birmingham Municipal School of Art on Feb. 21, 1894* (London: Longmans, 1898), 2, 23.

¹⁰³⁴ William Morris, “Making the Best of it,” in *Hopes and Fears for Art: Five Lectures Delivered in Birmingham, London, and Nottingham, 1878-1881*, 4th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, 1896), 149.

¹⁰³⁵ Patrick Brantlinger, “A Postindustrial Prelude to Postcolonialism: John Ruskin, William Morris, and Gandhism,” *Critical Inquiry*, 22, no. 3 (Spring 1996): 468–79.

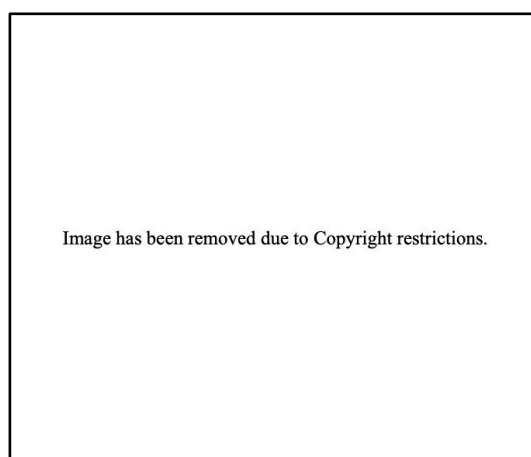


5-43. Owen Jones, Plates 51 and 57 (details) from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithographs, H. 35 cm (pages), Getty Research Institute



5-44. William Morris (design) and Ada Phoebe Godman (embroidery), "Artichoke" wall hanging, 1877 (designed), 1877–1900 (made), wool embroidery on linen, H. 207.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

Ada Phoebe Godman (1850–1900) commissioned the “Artichoke” embroidery design, which she then worked into wall hangings for her drawing room at Smeaton Manor.¹⁰³⁶ Philip Webb (1831–1915) had designed the house in Northallerton for herself and her husband the Hon. Col. Arthur Fitzpatrick Godman (1843–1930), of the 1st V. B. Princess of Wales’s Own (Yorkshire Regiment).¹⁰³⁷ A drawing by Post-Impressionist painter Frank Bramley (1857–1915) of Mrs. Godman at work on the “Artichoke” pattern is shown here.¹⁰³⁸ (Fig. 5-45) This pattern is similar to Chinese lotus scroll designs on enameled porcelains in its ogival structure and representational style, although the artichokes stand out boldly against the scrollwork, in a manner unlike Chinese patterns. Three parts of the hangings are in public collections: the William Morris Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Fitzwilliam Museum.¹⁰³⁹ Morris retained the copyright for the design, which became a popular pattern through the late 1870s and 1880s. Another specimen of this embroidery was completed by Mrs. Margaret Beale with her daughters for their home, Standen.¹⁰⁴⁰ Morris seems attracted to the interlocking arrangements of foliate tendrils that defines the patterns in *Chinese Ornament*. His translation of this style allowed him to maintain a denseness that was never cluttered, but full of energy; and to achieve tightly structured patterns with natural rather than geometric elements. Finally, he seems to have understood that Chinese lotus scroll designs for round vases had to be seamless and flowing, even if their structures were strong. This feature made them ideal for any designer hoping to retain a sense of flow throughout a design and minimize the look of vertical bands.



5-45. Frank Bramley, *Portrait of Mrs. Ada Phoebe Godman (née Bell), working on the embroidered panels, designed by William Morris, for Smeaton Manor, Yorkshire, undated, pencil on paper, H. 22.2 cm, © Artnet*

¹⁰³⁶ “Wall Hanging,” Victorian Albert Museum website, accessed October 14, 2022, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78757/wall-hanging-morris-william/>.

¹⁰³⁷ J. Brandon-Jones, “Notes on the Building of Smeaton Manor,” *Architectural History* 1 (1958), 31–60.

¹⁰³⁸ “Portrait of Mrs. Ada Phoebe Godman,” Artnet website, accessed November 10, 2022, <http://www.artnet.com/artists/frank-bramley/portrait-of-mrs-ada-phoebe-godman-nee-bell-FIdQCxRpKkZ18581uNkpyw2>. The sketch was offered for sale through Artnet in 2006, but went unsold.

¹⁰³⁹ Parry, *William Morris Textiles*, 29.

¹⁰⁴⁰ V&A, acc. no. T.192-1953.

6. The Summer Palace and Art Embroidery

Morris created these patterns as a leader of the movement to revive traditional embroidery techniques, which had fallen into disuse with the rise of “Berlin Work”. This kind of needlework had originated in Berlin during the early nineteenth century, when German manufacturers began to sell printed patterns, which could be recreated on canvas with uniform stitches. The patterns presented no opportunities for individual expression, since the needlework was forced into a grid of tiny squares, and the designs were often ugly; but they were enormously popular and many specimens survive in British institutions.¹⁰⁴¹ The movement to raise the quality of amateur needlework in Britain had begun with the publication of *Ecclesiastical Embroidery* (1848) by architect George Edmund Street (1824–81). In 1863, he gave a lecture on “ancient embroidery”, in which he attempted to “induce some of his fair hearers to imitate their sisters of a past age, and give up their miserable cross-stitch and crochet, and imitate some of the ancient embroidery which was full of beauty.”¹⁰⁴² It involved the sale of modern designs to embroiderers and the establishment of embroidery schools, like the Royal School of Art Needlework in 1872, where Morris worked as a designer. In 1879, Elizabeth Wardle (1834–1902), the sister of a Morris employee, founded the Leek Embroidery Society, which produced dense floral patterns.¹⁰⁴³ Writer and Asst. Secretary to the Royal Society of the Arts, Henry B. Wheatley (1838–1917), discussed this trend in his “Revival of Art Needlework as Decoration” of 1882:

The spirited endeavor of these lady workers to raise the standard of art, has been greatly helped by the wide Aesthetic revival of our day ... Some leading artists attached to the movement, as Mr. William Morris ... have assisted the work of the school by designing some of the most charming works ... it is something to know that the embroidery of today can be made to aid in the decoration of our rooms and that it is largely used for that purpose.¹⁰⁴⁴

Through this movement to “professionalize” a craft generally practiced by women, designers strengthened their position in the marketplace. They trained needle workers for their ateliers and they opened a new market for their patterns, which extended their value beyond commissions and finished goods. In 1879, notices appeared in the *Art Amateur* under the headings “ART INSTRUCTION BOOKS”, “DESIGNS IN OUTLINE. FOR ART NEEDLEWORK”, and “ART NEEDLEWORK FOR DECORATIVE EMBROIDERY”, next to advertisements for Ruskin’s lectures, and books for collectors, ornamentalists, craftsmen, and china painters.¹⁰⁴⁵ “DESIGNS IN OUTLINE” allowed a needle worker to combine stitches to produce their unique desired effect. Likewise, the *Art Amateur* ran a feature in 1880 on basic stitches, which an embroiderer might combine to create an embroidery of their own design, rather than

¹⁰⁴¹ V&A, acc. nos. E.2031-1935; E.2036-1935 (pictured); E.1429-1983; E.3678-2007.

¹⁰⁴² *Newcastle Journal*, June 11, 1863, 2.

¹⁰⁴³ Anna Buruma, “Liberty & the Business of Embroidery,” *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850 - the Present*, no. 33, Decorative Art and the World of Fashion (2009): 83.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Henry B. Wheatley, “Revival of Art Needlework as Decoration,” *Decorator and Furnisher* 1, no. 1 (October 1882): 16.

¹⁰⁴⁵ “Back matter,” *Art Amateur* 1, no. 6 (November 1879).

slavishly following a pattern with uniform stitches.¹⁰⁴⁶ Chinese embroidery basics were also disseminated in art magazines during this period.¹⁰⁴⁷ Anna Buruma shows in her study of Liberty embroidery that in the commercial arena, needlework schools provided a pool of embroiderers for Liberty London, which promoted its heavily embroidered clothes, along with embroideries from China and other eastern nations, to the elite at the end of the century.¹⁰⁴⁸

The Peking Curtain

As seen in previous chapters, British soldiers brought home Chinese imperial textiles, which appeared at many art school exhibitions and church bazaars, where women engaged in home needlework would have seen them. (See 145–46, 315.) As a result, a needlework design attributed directly to a looted silk was published in a manual of the art embroidery movement. In 1880, Emily Sophia Hartshorne published *Designs for Church Embroidery and Crewel Work, From Old Examples*.¹⁰⁴⁹ The book included 18 patterns from British and foreign sources, including one titled “Peking Curtain,” which is dated “August 1880” and shows a group of four floral motifs. Moving clockwise from the upper left they are: a peony with a lotus; a narcissus (the blossoms rendered very flat with rounded petals); two asters; and a crab apple branch. **(Fig. 5-46)** These are all flowers typically seen in Chinese decorative arts, but they were muddled somewhat in the translation. Although it is not certain that the design was imperial, the fact that Hartshorne reproduced decorative elements rather than a total design raises the possibility that imperial emblems, like the five-clawed dragon, were removed because they were considered inappropriate for decorative use in British homes. An imperial scroll cover in the Metropolitan Museum of Art shows gold embroidery of the five-clawed dragon among peonies, asters and lotuses; so this is possible.¹⁰⁵⁰

(Fig. 5-47)

¹⁰⁴⁶ “Art Needlework,” *Art Amateur* 2, no. 5 (April 1880): 102–3.

¹⁰⁴⁷ “Art Needlework: Chinese Embroidery,” *Art Amateur* 4, no. 2 (January 1881): 40–41.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Buruma, “Liberty & the Business of Embroidery,” 75, 83–84.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Emily Sophia Hartshorne, *Designs for Church Embroidery and Crewel Work, from Old Examples* (London: Griffith & Farran, 1880), plate 9. *Star*, September 30, 1880.

¹⁰⁵⁰ MMA, acc. no. 41.123.2.



5-46. Emily Sophia Hartshorne, "Pekin Curtain" embroidery pattern, 1880, printed paper, H. 50 cm,
National Art Library



5-47. Chinese imperial scroll cover, Qianlong period (r. 1736–95), *kesi* tapestry (silk and metallic thread),
H. 34.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

However, the division of the pattern components was also in keeping with the art embroidery agenda, which encouraged inventive and independent approaches to needlework. Hartshorne's text accompanying the floral designs addressed their provenance:

The date of these patterns is somewhat uncertain; they are copied from curtains taken at the Summer Palace of Peking. The curtains are of red crape, the designs being worked in shaded blue silks. These patterns may be made available for various purposes, or may be reproduced on any material, and in any variety of color.¹⁰⁵¹

The term "crape" (from the French "crêpe"), in 1880 was defined as: "A thin, transparent stuff, made of raw silk gummed and twisted on the mill, woven without crossing. It is much used for mourning garments, also for gowns and the dress of the clergy."¹⁰⁵²

Emma Hartshorne was the daughter of Lieut.-Col. Arthur George Hartshorne (1841–94) of the British Army.¹⁰⁵³ He had begun as an ensign in the Bengal Infantry in December 1860, achieved the rank of major by 1880, and served in Abyssinia and Afghanistan.¹⁰⁵⁴ It is possible that Lieut.-Col. Hartshorne received the textile from a confrère and gave it to his daughter; but the author has yet to establish this. At any rate, Hartshorne's work is another instance of a domestic needlework project involving looted imperial textiles. (See 146.)

One art critic for the *Star* newspaper placed Hartshorne's text squarely in the Design Reform movement; stating that one might not be wildly enthusiastic about the works of Jones and Whistler; but:

Whatever we may think, in other departments, of the modern "aesthetic revival," there can be no question that in the matter of fancy work it has effected on the whole a good and useful change... the revival of crewel-work and other art embroidery of the new school is a great improvement upon the hopeless and meaningless Berlin wool patterns of the last generation.¹⁰⁵⁵

The promising fashion for crewel work allowed more ingenuity and freedom in the choice of stitch. The movement also recognized that "needlework cannot produce good pictures" and abandoned all attempts at realism, which had involved attempts to render paintings by Landseer and Millais in needlework:

Of course, the little mannerisms of the aesthetic clique could not be wholly kept out of the new work. Most of it was prescribed to be wrought in the dull "low tones" so dear to the heart of Mr. Morris; and artificial laws as to the necessity for conventionalizing flowers or fruits, and the original wickedness of directly imitating nature, were laid down with the tone of

¹⁰⁵¹ Hartshorne, *Designs for Church Embroidery*, 9.

¹⁰⁵² Noah Webster, *Webster's Complete Dictionary of the English Language ... New Edition of 1880* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1886), 309.

¹⁰⁵³ "Legal Notice," *Bognor Regis Observer & West Sussex Recorder*, January 2, 1895, 4.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Henry G. Hart, *The New Army List, Militia List, Yeoman Cavalry List for 1884 (Being the Forty-Fifth Annual Volume)* (London: John Murray, 1884), 451; *Uxbridge & W. Drayton Gazette*, January 27, 1894, 5.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *Star*, September 30, 1880, 4.

dogmatic certainty which gives to the aesthetic utterances of Miss Rhoda Garrett the air of a modern Athanasian Creed.¹⁰⁵⁶

In 1877, the cousins Rhoda Garrett and Agnes Garrett had published their small volume of principles for creating a functional and beautiful modern interior on a modest budget. At this early stage of mass production and an expanding consumer base it seems many felt that guidance, more than encouragement, was required to help people live beautifully, as the *Star* suggested. The Garretts' prescriptions for wall hangings emphasized the textiles and papers of the Design Reform movement:

It must never be forgotten that in decorating the surfaces of walls and ceilings, the panels of doors and shutters and other architectural details of the design must be treated decoratively and not pictorially. Exact representations of animal and vegetable forms, naturally shaded and coloured, are out of place when thus employed, though they might be very admirable pictures framed as such, and hung upon the walls. Although this is an established principle in decorative art, it is one that is most commonly disregarded both by those who produce, and those who purchase, the wall papers and carpets and draperies covered with naturalistic floral designs which violate at every turn all the proprieties of ornamental art. From Persia, Japan, and other oriental nations we obtain specimens of art manufactures, which give examples of the true application of this principle; though European influences are now busily at work teaching the natives to lay aside their own artistic instincts and traditions and to introduce mauve and magenta into their textile fabrics, and bouquets of roses, and bunches of ribbon into the designs of their marble mosaics.¹⁰⁵⁷

As was often the case in commentary on Asian craft during the Victorian period, the achievements of eastern craft workers were put down to “instinct,” (See 207, 244, 273.) but the Garretts' politics and aesthetics were radical for the time. The Garretts were concerned that British producers, instead of taking inspiration from eastern craft traditions and responding to the challenges of free trade, instead saw their colonies as dumping grounds for mediocre surplus goods (including textiles dyed with the controversial Perkin's Mauve). Indeed, this trend towards closed colonial markets was at odds with the free trade movement that rejected the Pekin Ribbon, with which this chapter opened.

Conclusion

Following on the history of Summer Palace material at industrial art exhibitions, this chapter has shown that looted Chinese objects inspired leading British designers in the late nineteenth century. While British manufacturers had previously emulated Chinese goods like porcelain to compete with Chinese imports, this was not a concern in the years following the 1860 war, when Britain saw its primary competitor in decorative arts as France. However, the story of the failed “Pekin Ribbon” shows that patriotic sentiment was not enough to sustain a market for weak designs. Within this context of European “free trade”, art

¹⁰⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Rhoda Garrett and Agnes Garrett, *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork, and Furniture* (London: Macmillan, 1877), 44–45.

schools, exhibition organizers, government officials and designers led the charge to overhaul the British craft industry, which they saw stultifying under the dominant aesthetics of the fine arts and inadequate to the demands and opportunities of mass production. Members of the Design Reform movement promoted and adopted styles, colors, shapes, motifs and materials they encountered in Chinese imperial art to create products that were distinctly modern next to those rooted in Classical European tradition. Owen Jones facilitated the study and outright copying of patterns on Chinese imperial porcelain and cloisonné with his publication *Examples of Chinese Ornament*, which reproduced patterns on vessels that were likely looted from the Summer Palace, due to their owners' links to such material, their similarity to imperial pieces in Chinese collections, and the fact that they would have been otherwise inaccessible to the British. Lewis Foreman Day and Jones himself used the publication as a sourcebook for textiles and paper goods designs, and William Morris may have drawn elements from its pages for needlework projects. His work played a leading role in the Art Needlework movement which promoted Chinese embroidery techniques through publications aimed at woman needleworkers. As a part of this trend, Emily Sophia Hartshorne published an embroidery pattern based on a textile attributed to the Summer Palace.

Chapter Six

Chinese Ornament on British Enamels, Glass and Ceramics

1. A Postwar Renaissance of Enameled Metalwork

The study of exhibitions in Chapter Four showed that Chinese cloisonné fascinated the British. (See 183–86, 219–21.) J. B. Waring in his exhibition catalogue urged British designers to study Chinese cloisonné and revive the art of enamelling:

As to the excellence and beauty of these Chinese enamels, both in design and colour, there can be no question, and they are often miracles of minute and laborious workmanship ... It is high time that our manufacturers should look to it, and endeavor to revive, on a large scale, one of the most beautiful and durable decorative processes with which we are acquainted.¹⁰⁵⁸

Silver manufacturer Elkington & Co. led efforts to produce new kinds of enamel work in Britain. Founded by George Richards Elkington (1801–65) and Henry Elkington (1810–52) in Birmingham, the company specialized in the new technology of silver and gold electroplating.¹⁰⁵⁹ Alistair Grant provides an excellent history of Elkington's electroplating and enamel work in his dissertation for the University of Sussex, in which he discusses their interpretation of Chinese and Japanese cloisonné enamels.¹⁰⁶⁰ He writes:

They are intricately designed, exquisitely crafted, and exotic looking, perfectly convincing impressions of the real thing. But they are allusive hybridizations of an imagined real rather than strict pastiche. They seem to be Chinese or Japanese, but the eclectic syntheses of stylistic elements, subjects and motifs are submerged and abstracted to a point that the cultural origins and traditional symbolism from which they were seemingly appropriated has become abstruse and arcane to the point of being immaterial.¹⁰⁶¹

While appreciating this conception of an imagined Chinese artifact, the author does believe that the Chinese-style pieces would have been understood as direct references to looted imperial pieces during the period of their manufacture. Elkington created enameled wares in the style of Chinese cloisonné with modern techniques: electroforming objects with ready-made “cloisons” in bronze or copper, then electroplating them with gold. In this way, their work was more like *champlevé* than cloisonné, which involves soldering individual wires to a vessel in a pattern of cloisons. At the time of the 1862 exhibition, Elkington was already engaged in enamelling and presented in their stall a 13-piece parcel-gilt dessert service enhanced with small amounts of *champlevé*. Waring included a chromolithograph of the set in his catalogue, noting that it had been conceived in a Graeco-Pompeian style by the Frenchman Auguste

¹⁰⁵⁸ Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 1:35.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2:211.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Alistair Grant, *Elkington & Co. and the Art of Electro-Metallurgy, circa 1840-1900* (PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2014), 266–71. Grant provides a comprehensive history of Elkington's advances in the field of electroplating and their application to design. http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/54159/1/Grant%2C_Alistair.pdf.

¹⁰⁶¹ Grant, *Elkington*, 273.

Adolphe Willms (1827–99), their lead designer.¹⁰⁶² (**Fig. 6-1**) The service shows figures personifying Peace, Commerce and Agriculture, both in bas-relief and in the round, with enameled palmetto borders of red, white and blue. Elkington also produced a simpler five-piece garniture of cut crystal and enameled silver plate, Pompeian in style as well.¹⁰⁶³ (**Fig. 6-2**) These works show that Elkington confined the enamelling to small portions of their designs in the early 1860s and that they were relying heavily on French expertise, as did other manufacturers at the time.



6-1. Day & Son, “An Enamelled Dessert-Service by Messrs. Elkington & Co., London and Birmingham,” from *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862, 1863*, chromolithograph, H. 43.8 cm (volume), collection of K. K. Venugopal

¹⁰⁶² Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 3:211; Grant, *Elkington*, 263.

¹⁰⁶³ The garniture was recently offered for sale by M. S. Rau Antiques, Louisiana, <https://rauantiques.com/products/elkington-co-garniture-set?variant=33478413779079>.



6-2. W. Albert Willms for Elkington, five-piece garniture, ca. 1864, silver plate, crystal and champlévé enamel, H. 47 cm (large pedestal), Courtesy of M. S. Rau, LLC, New Orleans, LA USA

Elkington was part of a larger cloisonné revival led by French firms like Barbedienne and Christofle prior to the 1860 war, which Grant details in his study.¹⁰⁶⁴ In an essay for Béatrice Quette’s comprehensive cloisonné catalogue, Odile Nouvel-Kammerer writes that French soldiers also returned from the war with cloisonné pieces:

Four hundred precious objects from this imperial complex, including superb cloisonné enamels, arrived in Paris in February 1861 and were presented to Empress Eugénie by the victorious French forces. These pieces, “the likes of which had never before been seen in Europe,” were immediately exhibited in the Pavillon de Marsan of the Louvre, where visitors found the cloisonnés especially fascinating.¹⁰⁶⁵

¹⁰⁶⁴ Grant, *Elkington*, 261–65.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Nouvel-Kammerer, “The Revival of Cloisonné,” 171.

Nouvel-Kammerer writes that Barbedienne even converted a cloisonné vessel from the *Summer Palace* into a chandelier for Empress Eugenie and shows that French enamellers produced pieces in Chinese and Japanese styles.¹⁰⁶⁶ Cloisonné pieces were also sold at auction in Paris and these had an impact on French designers.¹⁰⁶⁷ The following notice appeared in 1892:

ART SALE IN PARIS—The total proceeds of the four days' of sale of the Barbedienne collection of objects d'art from China and Japan at Durand Ruel's gallery have amounted to 88,725 francs. Most of these works of art have gone to America, particularly the jades, which M. Barbedienne acquired at small cost after the taking of the Summer Palace at Peking by French troops in 1860. The highest price, realized for a milky jade in the form of a spherical goblet, decorated in relief with circular medallion composed of flowers, was 7000 francs (£280).¹⁰⁶⁸

The catalogue for the Barbedienne collection had an entire section devoted to "Emaux Cloisonnés de Chine," which featured both "ancien émail cloisonné de Chine" and enamels by the firm imitating Chinese wares, such as:

384 Jardinière oblongue en ancien émail cloisonné de Chine, fond bleu turquoise, dessin en couleur; monture en bronze doré et repercé, sur quatre pieds élevés, branches de bambou. Travail de la maison Barbedienne. Collection de Barbedienne.¹⁰⁶⁹

No pieces of enamel were attributed to the Summer Palace; but one piece featured an imperial emblem:

389 Coupe ronde sur piédouche en ancien émail cloisonné de Chine, fond bleu turquoise, avec médaillons fond gros bleu au dragon jaune impérial: encadrement à entrelacs en couleur; à intérieur doré.

while another showed that Barbedienne was attempting to recreate imperial Chinese pieces:

393 Petit brûle-parfums en émail cloisonné de Chine, fond jaune impérial, à fleurs de couleur; couvercle en bronze fumé et frotté repercé à jour, de la maison Barbedienne.

This leading foundry exhibited enameled wares at the 1862 International Exhibition in London, where they were acclaimed by critics and won medals in the areas of furniture, iron and brass, and precious metalwork. Waring included several Barbedienne pieces in his *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, noting that the revival of enamelling was due to "French taste and enterprise."¹⁰⁷⁰ One exceptional Barbedienne piece was a massive amphora (2' 7") in a Graeco-Egyptian style, pictured in Waring's book. This shows that Barbedienne had already achieved excellence in champlévé work on a large scale. The vase is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹⁰⁷¹ (Fig. 6-3) Elkington's representatives at the 1862 exhibition would have toured the massive hall and studied the new French enamels, along with enamelling in the Japanese and

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ibid., 172.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Howald, "The Power of Provenance," 263–65. See also digitized catalogues for sales at Hotel Druout May 8–9, 1862, Désignation Sommaire: no. 5 cuivre émaillé, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1242485v/f1.item>; December 2, 1862, Lots 86–88, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k12439728/f6.item>.

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Morning Post*, June 13, 1892, 5.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Barbedienne Paris, Sale of June 7, 1892, 49–55.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 1:139.

¹⁰⁷¹ V&A, acc. no. 8026:1, 2-1862.

Chinese courts. Imperial cloisonné could also be seen in auction houses and other exhibition venues during the 1860s and 1870s. Contacts with all of these wares and other Asian material, spurred Elkington to produce more elaborate enamelling in Japanese, Persian and Indian styles,¹⁰⁷² as well as Chinese.



6-3. Day & Son, “Enamelled Vases by Barbedienne, Paris,” from *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862, 1863*, chromolithograph, H. 43.8 cm (volume), collection of K. K. Venugopal

An Elkington catalogue in the Victoria and Albert Museum Archive contains an illustration titled “Chinese Jardinières,” which is dated February 8, 1875.¹⁰⁷³ It is a footed rectangular vessel of gilt metal and enamel, having feet shaped as bamboo wrapped with flowering prunus. (**Fig. 6-4**) However, the enamel decoration is not Chinese. Instead, the rendering of the flowers and the ogival compartment are drawn from Central Asian illuminated manuscripts. Two such specimens are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: a folio from the Qur’an of Ibrahim Sultan (1394–1435), dated 1427; (**Fig. 6-5**) and another Qur’an attributed to Ottoman Turkey, fifteenth–sixteenth centuries, on the basis of inscriptions and the design of the cover.¹⁰⁷⁴ (**Fig. 6-6**) This is the kind of culturally synthetic design that firms like Elkington created in their search for new styles.

¹⁰⁷² BM, mus. no. 1999,0704.1 (Japanese-style vase); V&A, acc. no. (perfume burner with Persian-style ornament), Bonhams London, Sale of July 6, 2011, Lot 226 (an elephantine inkstand with Indian ornament).

¹⁰⁷³ Elkington & Co., Drawing Book 10, fol. 43, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

¹⁰⁷⁴ MMA, acc. nos. 13.228.1; 68.179.



6-4. Elington, design for a jardiniere, undated, ink and watercolor on paper, H. 15 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive



6-5. Ibrahim Sultan, folio from a Qur'an, 1427, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, H. 20.6 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-6. Ottoman Turkey, folio from a Qur'an, 15th or 16th century, ink, watercolor and gold on paper,
H. 41.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Other Elkington pieces show elements drawn entirely from imperial Chinese cloisonné patterns, which were depicted in *Chinese Ornament*. There is a footed compote,¹⁰⁷⁵ (Fig. 6-7) which follows the design in Plate 13. (Fig. 6-8) A square enameled dish sold through McTear's in 2015,¹⁰⁷⁶ (Fig. 6-9) includes elements from Plate 10 and Plate 91, although the general type of scrolls on the dish are seen in other plates of the book. (Fig. 6-10) A round box of gilded and silvered cast bronze with champlévé and cloisonné enamel by Elkington, (Fig. 6-11) shows lotuses similar to those in Plates 16, 29 and 31.¹⁰⁷⁷

¹⁰⁷⁵ Royal Antiques of Pasadena, California, Sale of April 16, 2016, Lot 248.

¹⁰⁷⁶ McTear's Glasgow, Sale of November 17, 2015, Lot 957.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Austrian Museum of Applied Arts, inv. no. EM 9.

(**Fig. 6-12**) An inkwell sold in 2014 has Chinese lotuses and strapwork patterns on a turquoise ground, (**Fig. 6-13**) which might be loosely drawn from Plate 91 (above) and other plates in the book, such as Plate 39.¹⁰⁷⁸ (**Fig. 6-14**) Widar Halén writes that Elkington’s cloisonné wares are mostly attributed to Léonard Morel-Ladeuil (1820–88) and Auguste Adolphe Willms, and that these became popular in the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁰⁷⁹ It is likely that this work was inspired not only by Jones’s *Chinese Ornament*. Grant writes that Henry Elkington’s nephew, Frederick Elkington, collected Chinese and Japanese enamels, which may have provided source material for the firm’s cloisonné pieces, and that Willms “was uniquely advantaged in being able to draw upon Frederick Elkington’s personal collection of Chinese and Japanese cloisonné enamels, which contained examples of both Chinese and Japanese cloisonné enamels.” These he says, included “ancient Chinese bronze dishes and vessels, especially vases.”¹⁰⁸⁰ Grant also sees the synthesis of different Asian design traditions mentioned elsewhere. (See 258, 350–52.) He writes, “Many of Willms’s designs are an allusive syntheses of Chinese, Japanese, and European motifs, rather than explicit imitations, in which East Asian motifs are often represented by European substitutes.”¹⁰⁸¹ The small number of surviving specimens, as well as the uneven quality of manufacture and design, suggest that Elkington struggled to develop projects with Chinese decoration. Like many other design firms, Elkington turned to the fashion for Japonism. As Grant notes, after Rutherford Alcock’s display of Japanese objects at the London international exhibition of 1862, “the fashion for Japanese art developed from the avant-garde whimsy of a few British aesthetes and collectors until by the time of the Exposition universelle of 1867 the South Kensington Museum was acquiring its first Japanese cloisonné enamels.”¹⁰⁸² The firm showed Japanese-style enamel wares at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, some of which can be seen in the stereograph reproduced here. (**Fig. 6-15**)

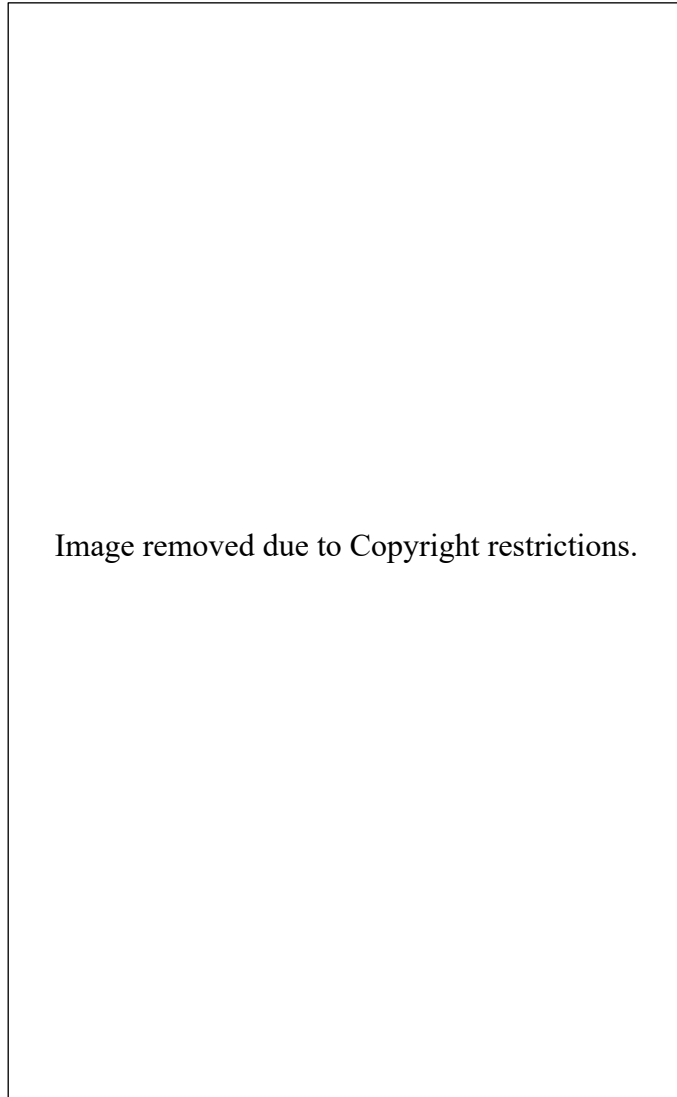
¹⁰⁷⁸ Charterhouse Auctioneers & Valuers, Sherborne, Sale of July 4, 2014, Lot 262.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Widar Halén, *Christopher Dresser: A Pioneer of Modern Design* (London: Phaidon, 1990), 146.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Grant, *Elkington*, 268, 271.

¹⁰⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹⁰⁸² *Ibid.*, 270.



6-7. Elkington, tazza (detail), 19th century, enameled metal, H. 11.4 cm, © Royal Antiques



6-8. Owen Jones, Plate 13 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph,
H. 35 cm (page), Getty Research Institute



6-9. Elkington, dish, 19th century, enameled metal, W. 19 cm, © McTear's



6-10. Owen Jones, Plates 10 and 91 (details) from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithographs, H. 35 cm (pages), Getty Research Institute



6-11. Elkington, box, 1866, enameled metal, H. 14.5 cm, Austrian Museum of Applied Arts



6-12. Owen Jones, Plates 16, 29 and 31 from *Chinese Ornament* (details), 1867, chromolithographs, H. 35 cm (pages), Getty Research Institute



6-13. Elkington, inkwell, late 19th century, enameled metal, © Charterhouse Auctioneers & Valuers



6-14. Owen Jones, original artwork for Plate 39 of *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1866–67, gouache and gold paint on paper, H. 35 cm (page), Victoria and Albert Museum



6-15. Centennial Photographic Co. Philadelphia, *International Exhibition, 1876, 1876*, stereograph, H. 11 cm, Free Library of Philadelphia

A report by art historian Jacob Falke (aka. Jacob von Falke, 1825–97), on the exhibition stressed the importance of Chinese cloisonné for European producers:

The French, especially Barbedienne, were the first to apply this kind of enamel (the *champlevé*), formerly exclusively confined to ecclesiastical art, to domestic articles, lamps, chandeliers, vases, plates, inkstands and other objects. Elkington of London next followed their example. It was not, however, until the use of Chinese cloisonné enamel upon large copper articles became known, that these works came into any great industrial vogue, but with imitations of these, enamel came into a certain fashion for domestic vessels of costly character.¹⁰⁸³

His remarks reflect a general agreement that large cloisonné pieces, many of them likely looted from the Summer Palace, played a crucial role in the European cloisonné revival and that this was an elite taste. The impact of Chinese pieces can also be seen in French wares, like an enameled Barbedienne lamp base showing lotus scrolls on a black ground.¹⁰⁸⁴ (**Fig. 6-16**) The scrolls are comparable to those of *yangcai* porcelains and cloisonné decorated with lotus scrolls. The color palette is drawn from a type of black-ground cloisonné of which there is one specimen in Plate 17 of *Chinese Ornament*. (**Fig. 6-17**) Such specimens reflect the dedication of French enamellers to elaborate luxury work.

¹⁰⁸³ Jacob von Falke, “The Vienna Exhibition in Connexion with Art-Industry. VIII. Leather and Enamel,” *Workshop: A Monthly Journal, Devoted to Progress of the Useful Arts* 7, no. 3 (1874): 33–35.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Modernism Fortuna, Saint-Ouen, through Incollect, ref. no. 319426, accessed May 6, 2022, <https://www.incollect.com/listings/furniture/lighting/ferdinand-barbedienne-ferdinand-barbedienne-xix-cloisonn-table-lamp-319426>. The lamp base is dated to the nineteenth century and signed “F.barbedienne.”



6-16. Ferdinand Barbedienne, base of a table lamp, 1880s, enameled metal, H. 45 cm,
© Modernism Fortuna



6-17. Owen Jones, Plate 17 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

The commentary also reflects an essential difference between British and French interpretations of Chinese art. French designers tended to create luxury objects and favored more extravagant styles; however, as Grant writes, “the British market for such outré design was small.”¹⁰⁸⁵ One instance is a pair of gilt bronze urns with enamel inlay designed by Louis-Constant Sévin (1821–88) for Maison Barbedienne, dated ca. 1867, in the Walters Art Museum.¹⁰⁸⁶ (Fig. 6-18) Another specimen of such work can be found in the collection of Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire. This is a spectacular Leroy et Fils

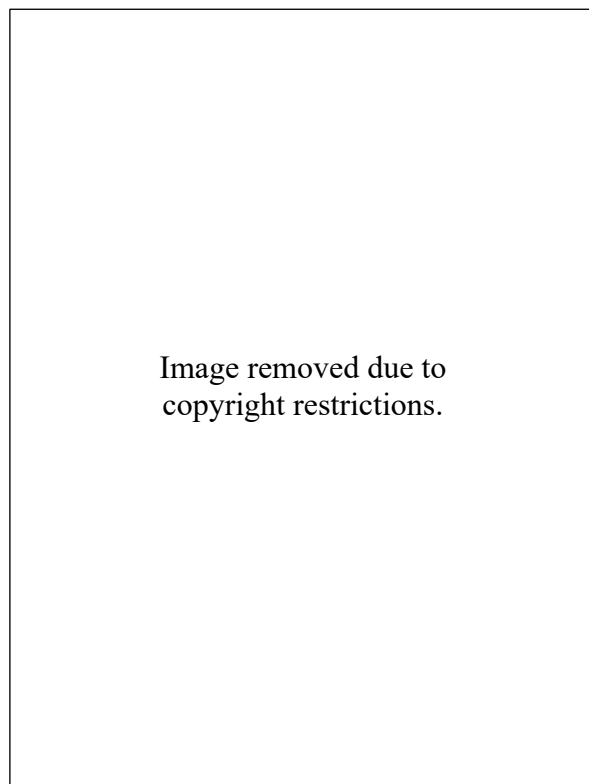
¹⁰⁸⁵ Grant, *Elkington*, 264.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Walters Art Museum, acc. no. VO.132 (44.670, 44.671).

cloisonné clock, which has a lyre shape terminating in swans' heads, flanked by putti, and is dated broadly to the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁸⁷ (Fig. 6-19) No British workshop would have conceived a piece so flamboyant. Instead, British potteries took the lead in adapting Chinese cloisonné designs to ceramics, which could be produced more quickly and sold more widely.



6-18. Louis-Constant Sévin for Maison Barbedienne, pair of urns, ca. 1867, enamel and gilt bronze, H. 37 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-19. Leroy & Fils, clock, 1800–1900, cloisonné enamel and gilt metal, H. 34 cm, Nostell Priory, © National Trust / Robert Thrift

¹⁰⁸⁷ National Trust, inv. no. 959359.

A letter to the directors of Elkington regarding enamel work displayed at the Paris International Exhibition of 1878, which is signed “C. J. Hammerton,” shows the preeminent position of French and Japanese enamelling in the marketplace.¹⁰⁸⁸ “C. J.” was Charles James Hammerton (1847–?). His father Stephen Hammerton (1818–95) had married Emma Elkington in 1856 (d. 1865), after the death of her first husband, Henry Elkington (1810–52), who founded the firm with his cousin George Richards Elkington (1801–65).¹⁰⁸⁹ Companies like Christofle and Tiffany were striving for the kinds of complex, variegated surface effects in their Asia-inspired creations that would characterize Art Nouveau ceramics and glass. Examples include a Christofle bronze jardiniere with gilded and silvered floral decoration,¹⁰⁹⁰ and a Tiffany vase with Japanese-style “drip” design of carefully worked precious metals, both in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹⁰⁹¹ Hammerton noted metal surfaces alternately etched or sandblasted to make them sparkle or shine dully, as well as enamel colors that flowed into each other like colored water. The colors of Chinese cloisonné pieces were, for the most part, strictly ordered in the small interlocking pieces of the design, although sometimes enamellers might mingle two colors within a cloison. One specimen that shows a melting of different colors within cloisons is a moonflask attributed to the Summer Palace in the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹⁰⁹² Hammerton stated that the process of combining colors was a subject of prime importance, then compared Elkington’s products to those of various European countries and Japan:

The latter more especially connected with the blending of colours + the adaptation of their style to the English market, as a too close imitation of their manner of working would but be entering upon a field of competition in which we should in a short time find, the market to a great extent glutted but there is still much to be learnt in the new fields thrown open to us more especially in the matter of ground works by replacing the ordinary chasing by etching roughly or by combinations of metals, either left with their natural colours or bronzed as in the marbling of surfaces by Tiffany.¹⁰⁹³

Hammerton felt that if Elkington tried to compete directly with Japanese enamellers, they might fail miserably. The firm would do better to concentrate on improving their metal finishes and new enamel techniques. His detailed comments on the work of various firms show that Elkington was looking for new ways to work the surfaces of metal and enamel to produce different levels of sheen and modulate the tone of the materials. He considered France and Japan leaders in this area: “I have no doubt various French + Japanese bronzes we require are also at your service besides the process of surface painting in enamel.” Furthermore, the firm was not above directly copying Japanese products: “I do not know if the finish of

¹⁰⁸⁸ History of Elkington & Co., ref. code Elkington-1, vol. 8, 229, Victoria and Albert Museum, Archive of Art and Design, London.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Mark Hammerton, “Hammerton and Sykes Family History Sheet,” August 24, 2006, <http://www.hammerton.uwclub.net/ps01/ps01306.htm>.

¹⁰⁹⁰ MMA, acc. no. 1991.88a, b.

¹⁰⁹¹ MMA, acc. no. 2019.44.

¹⁰⁹² V&A, acc. no. 256-1876.

¹⁰⁹³ History of Elkington & Co., ref. code Elkington-1, vol. 8, 229–31, Victoria and Albert Museum, Archive of Art and Design, London.

Papier Machee [sic] figures in relief on Trays is sufficiently good for taking impressions but if so large a number of good models would be ready to hand.” Ultimately, the cost of cloisonné was prohibitive and Elkington ceased production of these wares in the 1880s. The firm later formed a partnership with Christopher Dresser, a leading interpreter of looted Chinese art, and produced his streamlined tablewares; while British manufacturers interpreted Chinese cloisonné in other materials.

2. The Cameo Glass Revival

British cameo glass is another area in which Chinese spoils sparked new designs. Cameo glass vessels are made much like carved cameo glass of the Classical period, like the Morgan Cup in the Corning Museum of Glass, which is dated to the Augustan period by Kenneth Painter and David Whitehouse. In an essay on early Roman cameo glass, they write that it is of white over blue glass, “Cast or blown; covered with white overlay; carved, cut, ground, and polished.”¹⁰⁹⁴ (Fig. 6-20) In all cameo glass, a glass blank consisting of two or more glass layers of different colors is made. The upper or outer layers of glass are carved and etched to reveal a pattern in relief against the ground of the bottom layer. The effect is much the same in appearance as *pâte-sur-pâte* porcelain, except that cameo glass is often translucent rather than opaque, reflecting and refracting light simultaneously like a jewel. The carving is done in such a way that the successive layers enhance the illusion of depth through varying translucency and color. Some Chinese-style cameo glass is opaque and sometimes it is tinted to resemble jade, as will be seen in specimens discussed below. Cameo glass originated in ancient Rome and enjoyed a renaissance in Britain after the arrival in 1783 of a cameo glass amphora produced in the early first century AD, which was said to have been found in the Monte del Grano, mausoleum of the emperor Alexander Severus (AD 208–235).¹⁰⁹⁵ It was acquired by the Duchess of Portland and thus came to be known as the “Portland Vase.”¹⁰⁹⁶ (See 37.)

¹⁰⁹⁴ Kenneth Painter and David Whitehouse, “Early Roman Cameo Glasses,” *Journal of Glass Studies*, 32 (1990): 141.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Milo Keynes, “The Portland Vase: Sir William Hamilton, Josiah Wedgwood and the Darwins,” *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 52, no. 2 (July 1998): 237.

¹⁰⁹⁶ BM, mus. no. 1945,0927.1. The vase was loaned to the British Museum in 1810, which purchased it in 1945.



6-20. Roman Empire, The Morgan Cup, cameo glass, H. 6.2, AD 1–50, CMoG 52.1.93. Image licensed by The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org), under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

A number of manufacturers engaged craftsmen in an effort to replicate the vase; and this effort gained urgency after 1845, when the vessel was smashed by a visitor to the British Museum, where it was on loan.¹⁰⁹⁷ Josiah Wedgwood (1735–95); Benjamin Richardson (1802–87), leader of the Stourbridge glass industry; glassmaker John Northwood (1836–1902), who worked for Richardson; and Phillip Parteger (1826–1906), owner of Red House Glass Works; were all engaged to varying degrees in this project.¹⁰⁹⁸ On this development, Kenneth Painter and David Whitehouse wrote that “The leading promoter of the revival was Benjamin Richardson (1802–1887) of Wordsley, who employed many of the most talented glass engravers, etchers, and carvers of the day. Richardson not only bought one of Wedgwood’s replicas of the Portland Vase to inspire his craftsmen, but also offered £1000 to anyone who could reproduce it in cameo glass.”¹⁰⁹⁹ These efforts contributed to a wider resurgence of the art, which centered in the later nineteenth century around the glass center of Stourbridge, west of Birmingham, in the “Black Country.”¹¹⁰⁰

A number of important creative and financial partnerships formed and dissolved during this period of experimentation, which are beyond the scope of this study.¹¹⁰¹ Most important to the discussion here are the firm of Thomas Webb & Sons and the artist George Woodall (1850–1925), who created many

¹⁰⁹⁷ “Destruction of the Portland Vase,” *Morning Post*, February 8, 1845, 5.

¹⁰⁹⁸ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Benjamin Richardson,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Published: January 1, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benjamin-Richardson>; David Whitehouse, “John Biddle, Apsley Pellatt, and the Portland Vase,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 54 (2012): 259–60.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Kenneth Painter and David Whitehouse, “III. The Vase in England, 1800–1989,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 32 (1990): 73. “Important Acquisitions from the Rakow Collection,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 35 (1993): 138. The text shows copies of the Portland Vase once in the Rakow collection.

¹¹⁰⁰ David Whitehouse, *English Cameo Glass in the Corning Museum of Glass* (Corning, New York: Corning Museum of Glass, 1994), 7.

¹¹⁰¹ Whitehouse, “John Biddle,” 259.

Chinese-style designs.¹¹⁰² George and his brother Thomas Woodall (1849–1926) attended the Government School of Design in Stourbridge,¹¹⁰³ founded in 1852: just one instance of the crucial role such institutions played in nineteenth-century craft manufacture. Like other ancient crafts revived during the industrial revolution; such as, enamelling, cameo glass production incorporated new techniques that lowered expenses and speeded production: radiography for monitoring the quality of glass blanks, machine etching, and etching with toxic hydrofluoric acid.¹¹⁰⁴ The Classical roots of cameo glass encouraged manufacturers like Benjamin Richardson to incorporate elements of ancient Greek and Roman mythology in their designs. Likewise, Wedgwood and Minton drew on Greek bas reliefs and vase painting for their *pâte-sur-pâte* glaze decoration. For instance, Ray Grover and Lee Grover note that sculptor John Flaxman (1755–1826), drew heavily on Classical mythology when designing the Pegasus Vase for Wedgwood, which was then copied in cameo glass by John Northwood.¹¹⁰⁵ But artists looked to the East as well and art from the Summer Palace, disseminated through *Chinese Ornament*, was a source of ideas. The market for cameo glass peaked in the 1870s, just when enameled wares based on Chinese cloisonné and *yangcai* porcelains decorated with lotus scrolls were achieving great popularity.

Thomas Webb & Sons

In his volume for the Corning Museum of Glass, New York, archaeologist David Whitehouse (1941–2013) noted that Thomas Webb & Sons produced many pieces comparable to Chinese cameo glass and Japanese snuff bottles, and that they drew decoration for a number of their pieces from plates in *Chinese Ornament*.¹¹⁰⁶ Intriguingly, those patterns had come from round vessels, which were then replicated as flat patterns by Jones, and finally wrapped around vases and bowls again. A comparison of Chinese enameled porcelains and British glass shows why the Asian patterns were readily adapted by glassmakers. The gentle shading of the flattened lotuses on Chinese porcelains was perfectly suited to glass carving in low relief; and the multi-colored original patterns were clearly delineated, so they worked equally well when silhouetted by filtered light. The shapes of Chinese imperial porcelains and cloisonné were also adopted by Thomas Webb and other glass manufacturers.¹¹⁰⁷ For example, the shape of a

¹¹⁰² Ray Grover and Lee Grover, *English Cameo Glass*, 51–69. Gives a short discussion and list of George Woodall's work for Thomas Webb. Chrysler Museum of Art, obj. no. 2001.35. The "Vase in the Chinese Taste," dated 1885–90, is a specimen of Chinese-style work by Thomas and George Woodall.

¹¹⁰³ Grover and Grover, *English Cameo Glass*, 51.

¹¹⁰⁴ N. I. Petrushevskaja, "Technological Aspects of Design of the European Cameo Glass," *Theory and Practice of Design*, no. 3 (2013): para. 5.

¹¹⁰⁵ Grover and Grover, *English Cameo Glass*, 12. British Museum, mus. no. 1786,0527.1 (Flaxman vase); Smithsonian Institution, obj. no. 1929.8.242 (Northwood vase).

¹¹⁰⁶ David Whitehouse, *English Cameo Glass in the Corning Museum*, 7.

¹¹⁰⁷ Cf. Grover and Grover, *English Cameo Glass*, 29, fig. C28 (double-gourd vase); MMA, acc. no. 29.110.57 (Qing Dynasty cloisonné garlic-head vase).

Thomas Webb cameo glass vase shown at the Paris Exhibition of 1889, which was sold at Christie's in 2014,¹¹⁰⁸ is based on the *dan ping*, or “gall bladder shaped” vase, a traditional Chinese vessel shape.¹¹⁰⁹

George Woodall created three important pieces with designs from *Chinese Ornament*, which were shown with other vessels at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris.¹¹¹⁰ These were the Great Tazza, the Great Dish, and a lamp base. The Great Dish (**Fig. 6-21**) features a complex lotus scroll taken from Plate 77, (**Fig. 6-22**) within a border of *ruyi* heads adapted from Plate 20. (**Fig. 6-23**) It comprised five layers of glass, ordered from inside out: dark green, white, light green, white and pink. The carving revealed the ground of dark green, which was complemented by carnation pink in the blossoms and outlines of the *ruyi* heads, layered over white for brightness. The tendrils were carefully carved in the lower white layer, so as to appear pale bluish-green, while retaining their dimensionality. The lamp base comprises three layers: purplish brown with overlays of white and yellow. (**Fig. 6-24**) It is carved in a foliate scroll drawn from Plate 58. (**Fig. 6-25**) The Great Tazza was also formed from five glass layers, ordered from the inside out: dark green, white, green, white and brilliant ruby red. (**Fig. 6-26**) The decoration of the piece is furthest from *Chinese Ornament*. The lotus flower may be based on the lotus in Plate 77, modified to fit the medallion, while matching that on the Great Dish. The flattened flowers may be related to those in Plate 57. (**Fig. 6-27**) The color schemes and foliate scrolls of these three pieces also relate to European models. The contrast between the dark grounds and the glittering colors of the scrolls recall Renaissance Italian *pietra dura* work; such as, the border of an Italian hardstone tabletop dated to the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹¹¹¹ Due to their size and craftsmanship, they are arguably the most splendid objects inspired by the spoils from the Summer Palace.

¹¹⁰⁸ Christie's New York, November 18, 2014, Sale 2897, Lot 23.

¹¹⁰⁹ Specimens include MMA, acc. no. 14.40.15; Museum of Asian Art San Francisco, acc. nos. B60 P30, B60 P2328, B60 P23. The San Francisco pieces are published in Li, *Chinese Ceramics*, figs. 550, 560, 577.

¹¹¹⁰ Whitehouse, *English Cameo Glass in the Corning Museum*, 9, 33–35, 39, 52.

¹¹¹¹ MMA, acc. no. 62.259.



6-21. Thomas Webb & Sons, The Great Dish, ca. 1889–95, cameo glass, D. 38 cm, CMOG 92.2.9. Image licensed by The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org), under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0



6-22. Owen Jones, Plate 77 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



6-23. Owen Jones, original design for Plate 20 in *Chinese Ornament*, 1866–67, gouache and gold paint on paper, H. 13.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-24. Thomas Webb & Sons, lamp base, ca. 1889–95, cameo glass, H. 45.9 cm, CMOG 82.2.16. Image licensed by The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org), under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0



6-25. Owen Jones, original design for Plate 58 in *Chinese Ornament*, 1866–67, gouache and gold paint on paper, H. 13.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-26. Thomas Webb & Sons, the Great Tazza, ca. 1889–95, cameo glass, H. 38.9 cm, CMOG 92.2.8. Image licensed by The Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY (www.cmog.org), under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0



6-27. Owen Jones, Plate 57 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page), Getty Research Institute

Thomas Webb also produced less elaborate Chinese-style cameo glass vessels with fewer layers, which Ray Grover and Lee Grover published in *English Cameo Glass*.¹¹¹² These were generally composed of only two glass layers and featured white and pale yellow overlays of lotus scrolls, bands of lotus lappets and modified *ruyi* heads drawn from imperial *yangcai* porcelains, on grounds of garnet red, yellow, cerulean and other intense colors. Specimens include a plaque in the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹¹¹³ **(Fig. 6-28)** The order of these layers was sometimes reversed and the darker glass would be carved against a pale ground. Shapes of vessels featuring both Asian and European ornament were often drawn from Chinese porcelain silhouettes and have the refinement that characterizes imperial wares. Some of these items are reproduced here. One is a vase dated ca. 1890–1900, which has a long neck flaring slightly towards the mouth. This was sold by Christie’s in 2014.¹¹¹⁴ **(Fig. 6-29)** The shape is seen in Qing glass, including two vases in the Robert Clague collection and others in the Bristol Museum.¹¹¹⁵ One is opaque yellow and bears a Qianlong mark; the other is white with the kind of bird-and-flower decoration seen on *yangcai*-enameled porcelains.¹¹¹⁶ The form appears in Central Asia and the Middle East during the pre-Islamic era. Exchange of this shape between China and the Middle East is evidenced by a Qing-period specimen with an Arabic inscription, published by glass specialist Phelps Warren.¹¹¹⁷ Another specimen is a footed bowl based on a Chinese *ding* vessel. This was produced by Thomas Webb in 1884 and is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is of mustard glass with an overlay of foliate scroll in white. **(Fig. 6-30)** One vase, shown here, **(Fig. 6-31)** has a lotus scroll on a stippled ivory ground probably derived from Plate 57 in *Chinese Ornament*, (See 309.) with gilt borders comprising an archaistic Chinese strapwork, likely drawn from Chinese cloisonné.¹¹¹⁸ There is also a covered ginger jar, dated 1890–1900, formerly in the collection of Millikin University, Decatur.¹¹¹⁹ This shows bands of lotus scrolls in white beneath borders of lotus lappets on a deep raisin-colored ground. **(Fig. 6-32)**

¹¹¹² Grover and Grover, *English Cameo Glass*, figs. C9, C77, C285, C292, C383.

¹¹¹³ V&A, acc. no. 87-1885.

¹¹¹⁴ Christie’s New York, November 18, 2014, Sale 2897, Lot 4.

¹¹¹⁵ See also Peter Hardie, “The Origins of Chinese Carved Overlay Glass,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 25 (1983): 231–37, figs. 2, 3.

¹¹¹⁶ Claudia Brown, Donald Rabiner, Yang Boda and Chang Lin-sheng, *The Robert H. Clague Collection: Chinese Glass of the Qing Dynasty 1644–1911* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1987), nos. 39, 50.

¹¹¹⁷ Phelps Warren, “Later Chinese Glass 1650–1900,” *Journal of Glass Studies* 19 (1977): 106.

¹¹¹⁸ Andrew Jones Auctions, Los Angeles, Sale of July 26, 2020, Lot 115, accessed May 24, 2022, <https://www.andrewjonesauctions.com/auction-lot/a-thomas-webb-sons-ivory-cameo-glass-vase-circa-1-4C84B6A8D0>. Grover and Grover, *English Cameo Glass*, I.569, shows a line drawing of this pattern in a George Woodall sketchbook.

¹¹¹⁹ Hindman Auctioneers, Sale of May 1, 2015, Lot 25.



6-28. Thomas Webb & Sons, plaque, 1884, cameo glass, H. 9 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

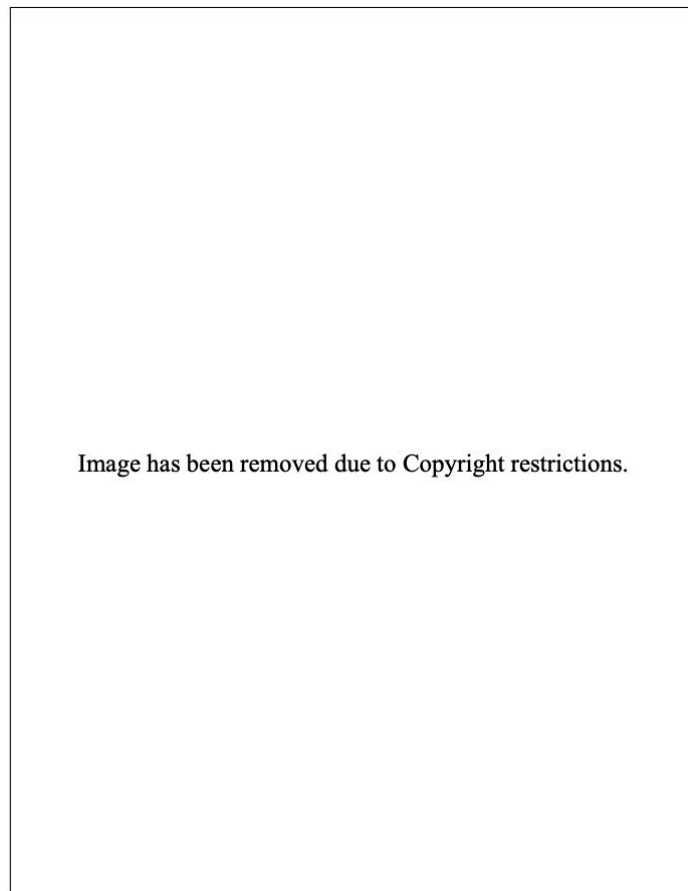


6-29. Thomas Webb & Sons, vase, ca. 1890–1900, cameo glass, H. 18.4 cm,

© Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



6-30. Thomas Webb & Sons, tripod vessel, 1884, cameo glass, H. 9 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-31. Thomas Webb & Sons, vase, ca. 1880, cameo glass, H. 16.5 cm, © Andrew Jones Auctions

Image removed due to Copyright restrictions.

6-32. Thomas Webb & Sons, covered jar, ca. 1890–1900, cameo glass, H. 29.2 cm, © Hindman Auctioneers

A subset of Thomas Webb carved glass comprises monochrome pieces of light green glass imitating pale celadon jade. These include three vases: one dated 1889 carved with a pair of rabbits under a vine,¹¹²⁰ (**Fig. 6-33**) another carved with small animals beneath a squash plant,¹¹²¹ (**Fig. 6-34**) and a third vase with the form of a rectangular *hu* vessel, which shows an archaistic strapwork pattern over a floral ground of roses and narcissus. (**Fig. 6-35**) This appeared at auction in 2013; but in *English Cameo Glass*, Ray and Lee Grover provide an illustration of the same vase (or an identical specimen), which was in a private collection at the time of publication.¹¹²² The archaistic ornament is similar to that seen on an imperial jade that appeared in London after the war, which was once owned by the British banker and collector William Cleverly Alexander (1840–1916). This Qianlong mark and period vase was sold in 2014 through Christie’s, which identified it as a flattened *hu* vase of pale greenish-white, worked in an archaistic style.¹¹²³

¹¹²⁰ Christie’s New York, November 18, 2014, Sale 2897, Lot 18.

¹¹²¹ Skinner Auctions, Boston, Sale of December 14, 2017, Lot 163.

¹¹²² James D. Julia, Auctioneer, Maine; “Important Lamp & Glass Auction,” Sale of June 19, 2013, Lot 146A. James D. Julia closed in 2018 and the lot information is no longer available online. “Julia Auctions Ends Maine Run With a Bang,” *Antiques and the Arts Weekly*, April 3, 2018, <https://www.antiquesandthearts.com/julia-auctions-ends-maine-run-with-a-bang/>. Grover and Grover, *English Cameo Glass*, 156, C174, shows an identical specimen.

¹¹²³ Christie’s Hong Kong, May 27, 2014, Sale 3322, Lot 3370.



6-33. Thomas Webb, vase, ca. 1889, cameo glass, H. 16.5 cm, © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



6-34. Thomas Webb, vase, 1880–1900, cameo glass, H. 16.5 cm, Image courtesy of Bonhams Skinner Auctions

Image has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

6-35. Thomas Webb & Sons, vase, undated, glass, H. 20.3 cm, © James G. Julia Auctioneers

The degree to which British cameo glass was based directly on imperial glass is uncertain. This writer has located only limited references to Chinese glass from the Summer Palace in texts of the later nineteenth century. In 1875, a fundraising bazaar for the Newland Congregational Church included “a rich collection of Chinese porcelain, glass, and stone bottles (many of which are richly ornamented), some of them being from the summer palace at Pekin.”¹¹²⁴ No objects at “Summer Palace” sales of the 1860s are identified in catalogues as glass. Snuff bottles were among the spoils sold and these were often made of glass; but only a group of “Three blue and white snuff bottles,” sold in 1863, could have been the kind of blue-and-white cameo glass produced by the Qing court.¹¹²⁵ A small vessel of this type is in the British Museum.¹¹²⁶ **(Fig. 6-36)** The collection of Henry Bohn (1796–1884) also included an unusual object catalogued as:

206 A very singular square jar, of highly vitrified Yellow Porcelain, inlaid with four coloured picture-subjects on glass. With the dynasty mark. Height 5 ½ in., diam. 4 in.¹¹²⁷

¹¹²⁴ *Stamford Mercury*, June 4, 1875, 4.

¹¹²⁵ Christie’s London, Sale of July 20, 1863, Lot 156.

¹¹²⁶ BM, mus. no. PDF,A.803.

¹¹²⁷ Christie’s London, Sale of March 21, 1876, 24.

The object is possibly an imperial vase of opaque yellow glass with painted enamel designs. Sotheby's sold one such vase, produced under the Qianlong emperor, in 2019. It is in the form of a pouch closed with a red ribbon and it is painted with phoenixes and peonies.¹¹²⁸ It is also possible that objects in opaque glass were mistaken for porcelain, which is vitrified, or a stone like jade. From ancient times, after all, the Chinese had turned to glass as an alternative to celadon jade.¹¹²⁹



6-36. Chinese vase, Qianlong period (r. 1735–96), cameo glass, H. 8 cm, British Museum

Yang Boda provided an informative overview of Qing Dynasty glass manufacture in his essay for the Robert H. Clague collection catalogue, where he wrote that the Kangxi emperor founded a glassworks within the Forbidden City in the Hall of Mental Cultivation. He states that the Yongzheng emperor then created a glass workshop on the grounds of the Summer Palace and that glass was produced there with the involvement of European missionaries.¹¹³⁰ Pieces of imperial glass entered British collections in the later nineteenth century, which suggests that British producers did see specimens and studied their shapes, designs and techniques. All of the specimens cited here, listed in chronological order of accession, bear Qianlong marks. Two glass vessels entered the British Museum in 1869: a blue-and-white cameo glass bottle and a jar of opaque cream-colored glass with red overlay, carved with crab apple and auspicious signs at the foot and shoulders.¹¹³¹ The first piece was bequeathed as part of a large collection of glassware by the executors of collector Felix Slade (1790–1868). A short, globular vase carved with a

¹¹²⁸ Sotheby's Hong Kong, Sale of October 8, 2019, Lot 1.

¹¹²⁹ W. B. Honey, "Early Chinese Glass," *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 71, no. 416 (1937): 211–13.

¹¹³⁰ Yang Boda, "A Brief Account of Qing Dynasty Glass," in *The Robert F. Clague Collection: Chinese Glass of the Qing Dynasty* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1987), 71–93.

¹¹³¹ BM, mus. nos. 1869,0120.19; 1869,0620.18.

lotus flower and marine creatures in cinnamon-colored glass on a ground of robin's egg blue, was bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum by George Salting (1835–1909).¹¹³² Another bowl of opaque light blue glass in the museum was purchased by Steven Bushell (1844–1908), during his time with the British Legation in Beijing.¹¹³³ In 1901, a blue-and-white cameo glass vase with a flaring neck was transferred to the same institution from the Museum of Practical Geology, Jermyn Street.¹¹³⁴ A plain blue bottle with a flaring neck was donated by Frank Green in 1916.¹¹³⁵ A mold-blown blue bottle was given by R. Clarke Edwards in 1918.¹¹³⁶ British collections formed in the early twentieth century, like that of Wilfred Buckley (1873–1933), also contained imperial glass collected in Britain. Buckley bequests to the Victoria and Albert Museum include two pieces with Qianlong marks: a yellow globular jar with carved foliate scrolls on the shoulder,¹¹³⁷ and a bottle with a long neck of blue-and-gold marbled glass imitating aventurine.¹¹³⁸ All of this means that imperial Chinese glass was in Britain during the later nineteenth century, but this writer has yet to find direct connections between this material and British glass.

3. Chinese Spoils and British Ceramics

In his book on Staffordshire pottery, Josiah Clement Wedgwood (1872–1943) discussed the dire situation at Minton in the first half of the nineteenth century and efforts to raise production quality under Herbert Minton (1793–1858) in the 1840s:

The financial success of common blue printed ware had done away with any inducement to improve ornamental ware. The brilliant natural art of Whieldon had been forgotten; the classic style of Wedgwood fell out of favour under the Regency; and instead we find the gaudy decoration of old shapes by artists ever more mechanical and less artistic. As M. Solon has said: “Worse and worse became the shapes and models; lower and lower sank the work of the decorators; nor could this deplorable state of things be altered by the inspiring study of fine works of art. The Potteries were situated very far from the artistic centre; good examples and good advice were equally wanting. It is not to be denied that all that remains of the most pretentious examples of the pottery of that period (1800–1850) bears the stamp of unmitigated bad taste.”¹¹³⁹

Wedgwood echoed the concerns of Henry Cole: Minton was suffering from complacency, isolation, and lack of trained designers. In 1845, *Punch* ran their cartoon “The School of Bad Designs,” which expressed the general fatigue with “common blue printed ware.” (Fig. 6-37) This depicted an art student

¹¹³² V&A, acc. no. C.1525-1910. Salting also bequeathed V&A, acc. no. 122-1883; 4395-1901; CIRC.198-1916; C.332-1918; C.677-1936; C.694-1936.

¹¹³³ V&A, acc. no. 122-1883.

¹¹³⁴ V&A, acc. no. 4395-1901.

¹¹³⁵ V&A, acc. no. C.130-1916.

¹¹³⁶ V&A, acc. no. C.332-1918.

¹¹³⁷ V&A, acc. no. C.677-1936.

¹¹³⁸ V&A, acc. no. C.694-1936.

¹¹³⁹ Josiah Clement Wedgwood, *Staffordshire Pottery and Its History* (New York: McBride, 1913), 182–83.

copying a platter with the popular “Willow Pattern,” a transfer-printed chinoiserie design based on Chinese underglaze blue decoration seen on export wares. One of these platters is shown here.¹¹⁴⁰ (Fig. 6-38) Captioned “The Study of ‘High Art’ at Somerset House,” the illustration ridiculed the new Government School of Design and its initial program for decorative art study, which many found impractical due to its focus on fine art.¹¹⁴¹



6-37. “The School of Bad Designs,” from *Punch*, 1845, woodcut, H. 12 cm, University of California

¹¹⁴⁰ “The School of Bad Designs,” *Punch* 9 (1845): 117, Hathitrust Digital Library, accessed May 24, 2022, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.32106011982235&view=1up&seq=127>. Reprinted in Lara Kriegel, *Grand Designs: Labor, Empire and the Museum in Victorian Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 42.

¹¹⁴¹ Historic Deerfield, acc. no. HD 90.198. The photograph reproduced here is flipped horizontally to match the *Punch* cartoon.



6-38. Staffordshire “Willow Pattern” platter, 1824–45, earthenware with transfer-printed underglaze blue decoration, L. 43.8 cm, Historic Deerfield

But the investment in exhibitions and art schools would ultimately yield results on a national scale and a new source of inspiration would soon arrive: spoils from the Summer Palace. The arrival of looted ceramics, together with the pattern renderings in *Chinese Ornament*, had a huge impact on British ceramics, which can be seen in pieces with cloisonné-style decoration, bird-and-flower imagery, lotus scroll designs drawn from eighteenth-century *yangcai*-enameled porcelains, pan-Asian exotic designs, and monochrome glazes. Vessel shapes were also adopted from imperial porcelains. In the late nineteenth century, the *York Herald* recalled the impact of Chinese cloisonné on British ceramics:

Among the many art treasures which were brought to light at the sacking of the Summer Palace in Peking in 1860 [*sic*], and which subsequently served as models in European porcelain and pottery factories and aided in re-awakening an enthusiasm for the beautiful products of art industries, were some cloisonné enamels on copper of the Ming dynasty. These are the oldest Chinese enamels extant of which we have any knowledge, and they probably date back from 300 to 600 years.¹¹⁴²

Expertise in cloisonné had developed since 1861, when “ancient” was the only dating assigned to this material.¹¹⁴³ The writer in this case is roughly correct. It is generally thought that cloisonné emerged in China during the Yuan Dynasty.¹¹⁴⁴ They were also right to note that Minton and other potteries created ceramics based on Chinese cloisonné and painted enamels in the 1870s. Spectacular porcelain vases with intricate painted decoration appeared at auction during this time. While identifying individual objects

¹¹⁴² “How Cloisonne Enamel is Made,” *York Herald*, January 5, 1892, 2.

¹¹⁴³ Christie’s London, Sales of April 26, 1861, Lot 114; May 27, 1861, Lots 184–85; June 6, 1861, Lot 122.

¹¹⁴⁴ Béatrice Quette, “The Emergence of Cloisonné Enamels in China,” in Quette, *Cloisonné*, 8–9.

among numerous vague catalogue entries and advertisements can be difficult, some known object types among the spoils can be discerned. In 1862, Christie's sold:

56 A VERY RARE AND BEAUTIFUL BOTTLE, of elegant form, green ground enamelled all over with plants and ornaments in brilliant colours, with four perforated medallions of dragons, with revolving neck and foot of rare crimson enamelled with ornaments in brilliant colours; turquoise inside—on wood stand—15 1/2 in. high.¹¹⁴⁵

This would have resembled the revolving vase in the collection of Samuel P. Avery (1822–1904), which was in his collection until 1879; and it shows the kind of lotus scroll depicted by Owen Jones in *Chinese Ornament*.¹¹⁴⁶ (Fig. 6-39)



6-39. Chinese imperial *yangcai* revolving vase, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), enameled porcelain, H. 29.8 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

¹¹⁴⁵ Christie's London, Sale of July 21, 1862, Lot 56.

¹¹⁴⁶ MMA, acc. no. 79.2.658.

Minton and Chinese Porcelain

In 1848, Herbert Minton (1793–1858), engaged the French artist and chemist Léon Arnoux (1816–1902), to improve his manufactures. They endeavored first to develop a superior hard paste porcelain, but finally settled on native English bone china, which emerged in the early nineteenth century.¹¹⁴⁷ At the 1862 International Exhibition, Minton had a stall in the North Court and showed wares in simple Chinese shapes, some with colorless crackle glazes.¹¹⁴⁸ In J. B. Waring's catalogue, Arnoux argued that Minton's bone china was the best ground for their experimental glazes:

The chief beauty of the *pâte tendre* consists in the complete amalgamation of the colours with the glaze, and also in its capacity of receiving certain tints which cannot be applied to any other kind of porcelain; such as turquoise-blue, emerald-green, and *Rose du Barry*. If our porcelain combines these in the highest degree, if its whiteness and transparency have been increased by employment of phosphate and lime, who has any reason to complain?¹¹⁴⁹

Minton scholar Joan Jones enumerates the pieces displayed:

A tall vase with lion head handles in pink-crackled china, a small vase in the same shape in blue crackled china, a bottle vase and jar in brown-crackled china, and a tall vase with no base in lilac-crackled china. Other vases of Chinese inspiration included a pair of bottles, on *Rose du Barry* ground, which were decorated with Chinese scrolls; a pair of Chinese tripods, decorated with black and gold border and pink and gold stars; and Chinese lantern, with pink ground.¹¹⁵⁰

Minton had copied the *rose du Barry* and *bleu céleste* glazes for their imitation Sèvres, including three pieces in the Victoria and Albert Museum: a teacup and plate,¹¹⁵¹ (**Fig. 6-40**) and a covered Neoclassical vase featured in the 1851 Great Exhibition.¹¹⁵² (**Fig. 6-41**)

Turquoise became an important color in British, French and American ceramics during the late nineteenth century and turquoise-glazed vases were prized by collectors, including George Salting (1835–1909), who left many such vessels to the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹¹⁵³ Its use in avant garde ceramics is well represented in Christopher Dresser's moon-shaped bowl, designed after his trip to Japan.¹¹⁵⁴ (**Fig. 6-42**) Juxtaposed with the Minton covered vase, Dresser's bowl also illustrates the radical change in British design that followed new contacts with Asian cultures. Minton used turquoise glaze on a group of

¹¹⁴⁷ Joan Jones, *Minton: The First Two Hundred Years of Design and Production* (Shrewsbury: Swan Hill Press, 1993), 80.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper Exhibitor; Containing about 300 Illustrations, with Letterpress Descriptions of All the Principal Objects in the International Exhibition of 1862* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1862), 24. Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 3:228. Includes Waring's comment on the celadon piece.

¹¹⁴⁹ Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 3:228.

¹¹⁵⁰ Jones, *Minton*, 83, 89.

¹¹⁵¹ V&A, acc. no. 2734&A-1901. See also V&A, acc. no. 4323&A-1857; Royal Collection Trust, inv. no. 28955. Jones, *Minton*, 96–97.

¹¹⁵² V&A, acc. no. 2778&A-1901.

¹¹⁵³ V&A, acc. nos. C.434-1910 – C.452-1910; C.455-1910; C.456-1910; C.459-1910; C.461-1910; C.462-1910; C.463-1910; C.464-1910.

¹¹⁵⁴ MMA, acc. no. 2001.549.

jardinieres based on Chinese *ding* vessels decorated with patterns drawn from *Chinese Ornament*, as well as their Majolica and Persian wares,¹¹⁵⁵ while a number of potteries employed turquoise glazes on vessels that imitated ceramics of the Middle East and Central Asia, which were also widely copied in Britain during the later nineteenth century. These include works by William De Morgan, like a plate and a tile with foliate designs in an Iznik style.¹¹⁵⁶ The Aesthetic Movement adopted the peacock as their emblem and turquoise was mingled in its iridescent plumage.¹¹⁵⁷ (Fig. 6-43)



6-40. Minton, teacup and plate, mid-19th century, enameled bone china with gilding, measurements unavailable, Victoria and Albert Museum

¹¹⁵⁵ Jones, *Minton*, 146, 150, 172. Christie's, New York, April 16, 2015, Sale 3731, Lot 183. A Minton Majolica jardiniere glazed with colors of Chinese *fahua* and Timurid *cuerda seca* tiles.

¹¹⁵⁶ MMA, acc. no. 23.163.1; Mount Holyoke Art Museum, acc. no. MH 2013.35.4.

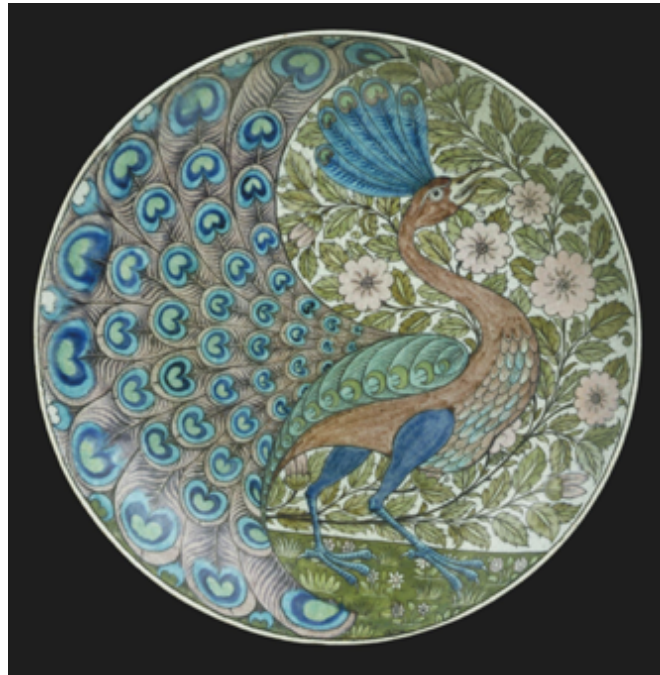
¹¹⁵⁷ Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 2011), 56–59.



6-41. Minton, vase and cover, ca. 1851, enameled bone china with gilding, H. 38.6 cm,
Victoria and Albert Museum



6-42. Christopher Dresser for Linthorpe, "Wave" bowl, ca. 1880, glazed earthenware, H. 17.8 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-43. William De Morgan, dish, ca. 1888–98, lead-glazed earthenware, D. 41.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

The response to the display was generally positive. Waring praised a “celadon vase from a Chinese model, with perforated neck and stem, very gracefully ornamented with foliage, butterflies, &c;”¹¹⁵⁸ which is in the Victoria and Museum. **(Fig. 6-44)** It is one of many beautiful Minton celadon pieces with *pâte-sur-pâte* decoration, which reflect partly the importance of Chinese glazes for British potteries at this time.¹¹⁵⁹ The *Birmingham Journal* was enthusiastic:

There are in the Minton display also some exquisite imitations of the porcelain of the Celestials; whether these were produced by the immolation of a potter in the kiln which fired them, as is stated to have been the case in China, we know not; at all events, they are as delicate, fragile, and pretty—the crackle and its reticulations as regular and minute—as the most enthusiastic diletanti could desire; the colours are as delicate. Taken as a whole, the display of Messrs. Minton & Co. is of unapproachable general excellence, and worthy of the fame and reputation of their worthy predecessor.¹¹⁶⁰

The reference to self-immolation drew on the trope of a Chinese craftsman who committed suicide or was condemned to death after failing to meet an emperor’s exacting standards;¹¹⁶¹ but it also represents a Britain grappling with new artistic challenges from China. The response from the *Times* of London was decidedly negative: “Minton has added ... some imitations of the famous, but ugly, crackle china of the East.”¹¹⁶²

¹¹⁵⁸ Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*, 3:228.

¹¹⁵⁹ V&A, acc. no. 8090-1863.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Birmingham Journal*, November 1, 1862, 7.

¹¹⁶¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, May 30, 1887, 5. The tale of an emperor and imperial jade carver is recounted.

¹¹⁶² *Staffordshire Advertiser*, May 17, 1862, 6.



6-44. Minton, vase, 1862, glazed porcelain with *pâte-sur-pâte* decoration, H. 30.5 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

Minton Moonflasks

The South Kensington Museum bought an early hard-paste porcelain moonflask with a crackle glaze imitating Chinese *ge* ware in 1864. (Fig. 6-45) *Ge* wares had cream or celadon glazes with black and brownish crackle.¹¹⁶³ The Victoria and Albert Museum now tentatively links it with the Minton Chinese-style “crackle” wares shown at the 1862 International Exhibition. Whether Minton exhibited the moonflask at the 1862 exhibition or not, British potteries used the shape widely in the later nineteenth century. The Minton flask shape is based on the Chinese moonflask, a vessel with a flattened spherical body and vertical loop handles attached at the shoulders and cylindrical neck, such as the Yongzheng specimen shown here.¹¹⁶⁴ (Fig. 6-46) Some have a bulbous neck, like a Yongle-period vessel in the British Museum.¹¹⁶⁵ (Fig. 6-47) Similar vessels, called “pilgrim bottles,” are found in Europe and Central Asia from ancient times onward. Among these is a specimen from Renaissance France in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.¹¹⁶⁶ (Fig. 6-48) But the Minton vessel is based squarely on the porcelain moonflasks of Ming and Qing China, which generally have an elegant lentoid form, a small neck, and handles either scalloped or scrolled, including another Yongzheng mark and period vessel painted with overglaze enamels in the *doucai* style in the British Museum.¹¹⁶⁷ (Fig. 6-49)

¹¹⁶³ Li, *Chinese Ceramics*, 336.

¹¹⁶⁴ BM, mus. no. PDF.824.

¹¹⁶⁵ BM, mus. no. 1968,0422.29.

¹¹⁶⁶ MMA, acc. no. 41.49.9a, b.

¹¹⁶⁷ BM, mus. no. PDF,A.733.



6-45. Léon Arnoux, moonflask, ca. 1862, porcelain with crackle glaze, H. 19.7 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-46. Moonflask, Yongzheng mark and period (r. 1723–35), porcelain with overglaze enamels, H. 29.3 cm, British Museum



6-47. Moonflask, Yongle period (r. 1403–24), porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, H. 25 cm, British Museum



6-48. Workshop of Antoine Syjalon, pilgrim bottle, 1581, tin-glazed earthenware, H. 38.1 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-49. Chinese imperial *doucai* moonflask, Yongzheng mark and period (r. 1723–35), porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration, H. 18.2 cm, British Museum

Moonflasks were among the porcelain and cloisonné lots offered at Summer Palace auctions, each catalogued as a “pilgrim bottle.” For instance, Christie’s offered on July 20, 1863, one blue-and-white and three polychrome-enamelled porcelain moonflasks, as well as one cloisonné moonflask.¹¹⁶⁸ There was obvious interest in the cloisonné piece, which had the longest catalogue entry:

170 A MAGNIFICENT PILGRIM-SHAPED BOTTLE, with metal-gilt handles and lip, enamelled with flowers and ornaments on brilliant turquoise and dark-blue ground in medallions —19 in. high

Other moonflasks linked with the Summer Palace have been identified in British collections. A cloisonné moonflask in the Victoria and Albert Museum was acquired from Prof. Stockbauer of Nuremberg and at the time of its accession was attributed to the Summer Palace.¹¹⁶⁹ A porcelain moonflask once in the Alfred Morrison collection, possibly purchased from Lord Loch, was sold at Christie’s in 2004.¹¹⁷⁰

¹¹⁶⁸ Christie’s London, Sale of July 20, 1863, Lots 57, 82, 97, 116, 170.

¹¹⁶⁹ V&A, acc. no. 256-1876. Museum Register No. 57. Science and Art Department, 1 to 277, MA/30/91, 256, Central Inventory Registers, Victoria and Albert Museum Archive. The entry relates the accession information regarding Prof. Stockbauer.

¹¹⁷⁰ Christie’s London, November 9, 2004, Sale 7100, Lot 47.

(Fig. 6-50) During the later nineteenth century, Minton and other potteries produced many moonflasks, which featured a wide range of designs in Chinese, Japanese, and European styles. Some flasks were of the shape shown in 1862; but many styles with different feet, neck and handles were produced. These include a flask with a Japanese floral design in blue-and-white produced by the Doulton Manufactory between the years 1878 and 1882;¹¹⁷¹ and a moonflask by James Hadley (1837–1903) for Royal Worcester, painted in enamels with a scene of Chinese potters at work, with square handles and feet in the form of a carved wood stand.¹¹⁷² The Minton moonflasks include one decorated by Louis Marc Emmanuel Solon (1835–1913) in the *pâte-sur-pâte* technique over “Peacock Blue” glaze on a Chinese silhouette.¹¹⁷³ **(Fig. 6-51)** Some British moonflasks resembling those of Minton had feet composed of scrollwork or sculpted *ruyi* heads. One such vessel by Royal Worcester is covered with a Japanese-style design, dotted with floating leaves and flowers, with scalloped handles and a scrolled foot.¹¹⁷⁴ **(Fig. 6-52)** One clear attraction of the moonflask for designers was its flattened form, which created an ideal space for painted decoration.



6-50. Chinese imperial *yangcai* moonflask, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with overglaze enamels and gilding, H. 15.5 cm, © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images

¹¹⁷¹ MMA, acc. no. 2018.62.158.

¹¹⁷² V&A, acc. no. 845A-1872.

¹¹⁷³ V&A, acc. no. 573-1877.

¹¹⁷⁴ MMA, acc. no. 2018.62.93.



6-51. Louis Marc Emmanuel Solon for Minton, moonflask, 1875, glazed porcelain with pâte-sur-pâte decoration, H. 26 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-52. Royal Worcester, moonflask, 1879, bone china with enamels and gilding, H. 37 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Minton's experiment with Chinese-style designs at the 1862 exhibition reflected the knowledge and taste of Arnoux. Formerly, the pottery had produced European and chinoiserie decoration on their wares. But Christopher Dresser took Minton in an entirely new design direction when he arrived in the 1860s. Drawing on his background in botany,¹¹⁷⁵ he introduced elements from the natural world – flower petals, insects and bird wings – combined as semi-abstract graphic elements and rendered, not in the painterly mode of Sèvres, but in a delicate linear style.¹¹⁷⁶ All of this gave his work a magical or otherworldly quality that was totally new. Dresser also began to integrate Egyptian and Japanese elements into the designs, in step with the interest in exotic ornament of the 1870s.¹¹⁷⁷ As time went on, Dresser looked to Chinese design for inspiration. In the 1870s, Minton produced a vast array of cloisonné-style porcelains, many of them attributed to him.¹¹⁷⁸ The designer used *Chinese Ornament* as a sourcebook, both appropriating entire designs and combining elements from different plates.

A number of art historians have looked at connections between Dresser's designs and Chinese cloisonné. Christopher Morley recalls that Dresser was able to look at Rutherford Alcock's collection of Chinese and Japanese ornament before the 1862 exhibition, then acquired some of the pieces afterwards; and he affirms that Minton's cloisonné pieces exemplified the "progressive development" of design that Jones had hoped to promote with his publication of *Chinese Ornament*.¹¹⁷⁹ Susan Weber writes that the sacking of the Summer Palace and the publication of *Chinese Ornament* inspired designers like Christopher Dresser and various collectors.¹¹⁸⁰ Widar Halén includes images of Dresser's cloisonné-inspired ceramics and notes the impact of Asian enamels on Minton's designers, though he does not pinpoint *Chinese Ornament* as a source.¹¹⁸¹ Harry Lyons relates that Dresser designed some, though not all, of Minton's cloisonné pieces and shows specimens of his work.¹¹⁸² However, the role of material taken during the Second Opium War must be emphasized. As noted elsewhere, the imperial enameled wares that arrived after the war made a great impression on the public. (See 183–86, 206–7, 219–23.)

¹¹⁷⁵ Michael Whiteway, ed., *Christopher Dresser: A Design Revolution* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2004), 11; Christopher Dresser, "The Ministrations of Plants to Ornament," chap. 2 in *The Art of Decorative Design* (London: Day & Son, 1862); Stuart Durant, *Christopher Dresser* (London: Academy Editions, 1993), 11–13.

¹¹⁷⁶ Stuart Durant, "Dresser's Education and Writings," in *Christopher Dresser*, ed. Whiteway, 47–60. Discusses Dresser's designs and their relation to his botanical research.

¹¹⁷⁷ Jones, *Minton*, 92, 94, 95, 105. Plates show some of Dresser's Egyptian- and Japanese-style designs.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 94–95, 100, 102, 109. Plates show cloisonné designs attributed to Christopher Dresser.

¹¹⁷⁹ Christopher Morley, "Reform and Eastern Art: The Origins and Progress of the New English Art, or Aesthetic, Movement, 1851 to 1878," *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society. The Aesthetic Movement*, no. 34 (2010): 117, 121.

¹¹⁸⁰ Susan Weber, "The Reception of Chinese Cloisonné Enamel in Europe and America," in *Cloisonné*, ed. Quette, 191–94, fig. 10.8.

¹¹⁸¹ Widar Halén, *Christopher Dresser: A Pioneer of Modern Design* (London: Phaidon, 2000), 120, figs. 102, 104, 105, 134, 140.

¹¹⁸² Harry Lyons, *Christopher Dresser: The People's Designer 1834–1904* (England: Antique Collectors' Club, 2005), 101, 103, 104, 106.

The Minton archive at Stoke-on-Trent contains ample evidence of Dresser's work with Chinese patterns, as rendered by Owen Jones. One group comprises cloisonné-style designs, including a line drawing for a lotus scroll pattern next to a design for a spill vase labelled "1103."¹¹⁸³ (Fig. 6-53) One of these vases, showing the archived pattern on a turquoise ground, is in the National Museum of Scotland.¹¹⁸⁴ (Fig. 6-54) The sketch and final pattern are largely an adaptation of a painted porcelain decoration in Plate 74 of *Chinese Ornament*. (Fig. 6-55) However, the colors are altered to match the usual cloisonné palette, while the lotus at center is closer to a blossom in Plate 73, (Fig. 6-56) and the decorative bracket is adapted from Plate 39. (Fig. 6-57) Dresser also copied the *ruyi* cloud border from Plate 73. Three identical Minton bone china vases attributed to Dresser are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Two are a pair, dated ca. 1870–80, and the other is dated to 1872.¹¹⁸⁵ One is pictured here. (Fig. 6-58) The design of two birds flanking a lotus comes from a pattern drawn from a *gu* vessel in Plate 33 of *Chinese Ornament*. (Fig. 6-59) Dresser also created designs that were related to, but not drawn directly from, Jones's book.

One such specimen is a vase produced ca. 1870, which was formerly in the collection of Minton dealer Thomas Goode & Co.¹¹⁸⁶ (Fig. 6-60) Dresser's sketch for the piece is in the Minton archive, Stoke-on-Trent, and it bears no resemblance to any plate in *Chinese Ornament*, beyond general style.¹¹⁸⁷ (Fig. 6-61) One immediately sees the appeal of cloisonné to a Design Reform advocate like Dresser: it provided an ornamental vocabulary and style distinct from conventional Renaissance and Rococo decoration, which he eschewed. Cloisonné designs could easily be treated in the flat, geometric style advocated by himself and other Design Reformers. On this point in his guide to the International Exhibition of 1862, he quoted Richard Redgrave, who praised "the great superiority of the designs of Indian and Turkish carpets, both in the arrangement and general tone and harmony of the colours, and the flat treatment and geometrical distribution of the form."¹¹⁸⁸ Dresser also used the lines of cloisonné to accentuate vessel shapes. The tailfeathers of the birds on the moonflask sweep up the center of the pot and diverge along its curve, while the *taotie* mask, a motif drawn ultimately from ancient Chinese bronzes, on the Thomas Goode vase narrows to a point as the vessel tapers towards the foot.

¹¹⁸³ Untitled sketch, Christopher Dresser portfolio, SD 1705/MS6000, Minton Archive, Stoke on Trent City Archives.

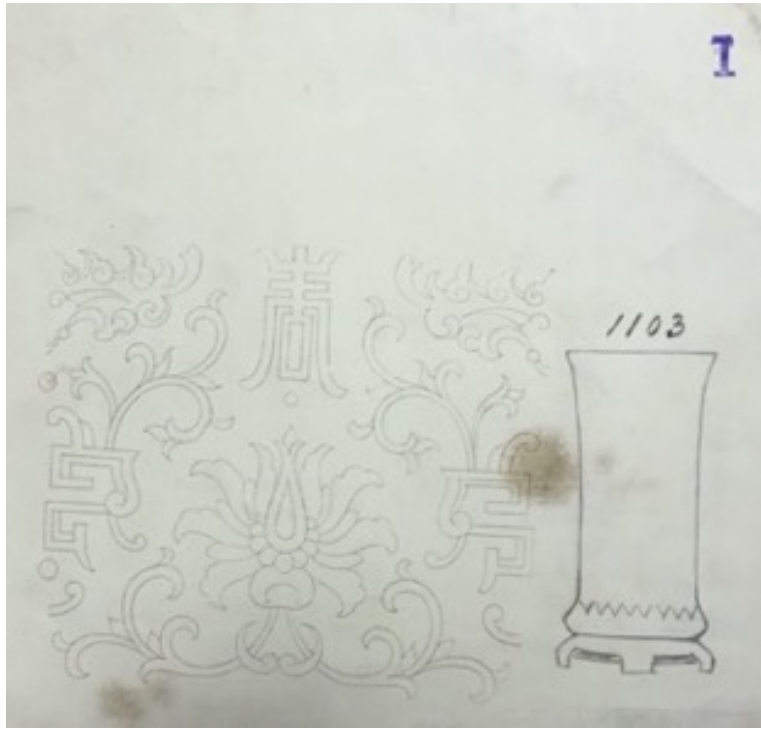
¹¹⁸⁴ National Museums of Scotland, inv. no. K.2014.51.

¹¹⁸⁵ MMA, acc. nos. 2016.178.2.1; 2016.178.2.2; 2018.62.6.

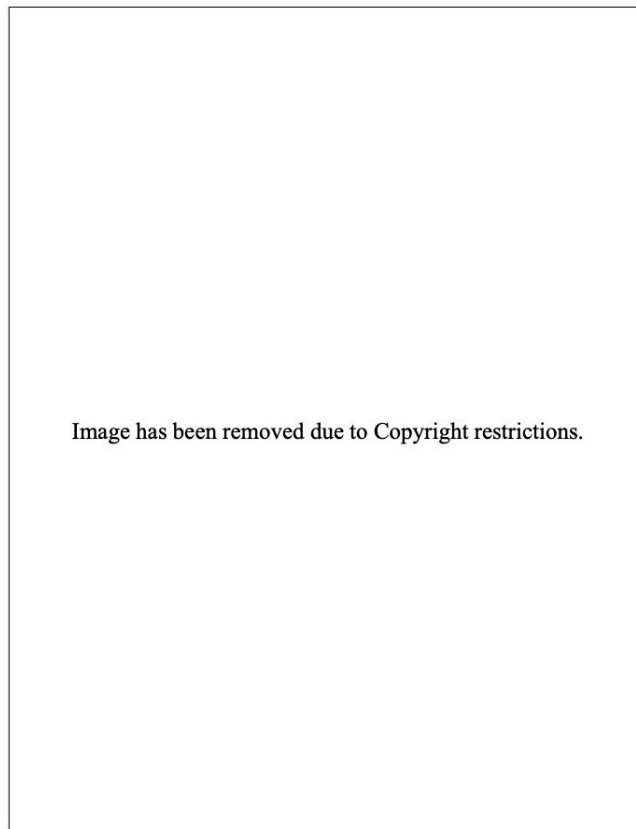
¹¹⁸⁶ Jones, *Minton*, 94–95.

¹¹⁸⁷ Untitled sketch, Christopher Dresser portfolio, SD 1705/MS6000, Minton Archive, Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.

¹¹⁸⁸ Christopher Dresser, *Development of Ornamental Art in the International Exhibition* (New York: Garland, 1978), 78.



6-53. Christopher Dresser for Minton, design for a vase, before 1873, pencil on paper, author photograph, Minton Archive



6-54. Christopher Dresser for Minton, spill vase, 1873, bone china with enamel decoration, H. 16.5 cm, National Museum of Scotland



6-55. Owen Jones, Plate 74 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



6-56. Owen Jones, Plate 73 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



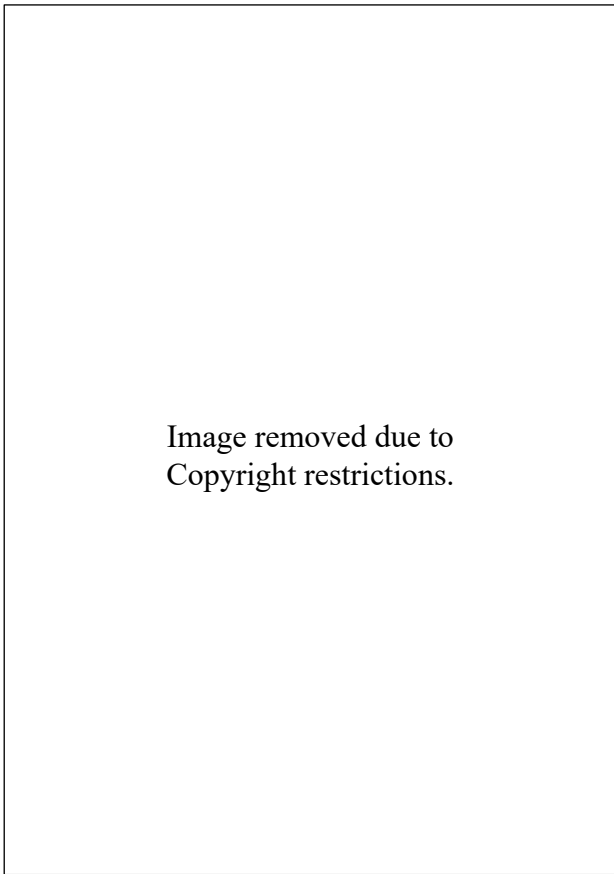
6-57. Owen Jones, Plate 39 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



6-58. Christopher Dresser for Minton, moonflask, 1872, bone china with enamels and gilding, H. 25.7 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-59. Owen Jones, Plate 33 from *Chinese Ornament* (detail), 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



6-60. Christopher Dresser for Minton, vase, ca. 1870, bone china with enamels and gilding, © Royal Doulton Ltd.



6-61. Christopher Dresser for Minton, design for vase decoration, opaque watercolor on paper, undated, author photograph, Minton Archive

For Minton, cloisonné-style wares gave the firm a new area in which to use their fashionable glaze colors, while responding to an interest in Chinese cloisonné and turquoise-glazed ceramics among wealthy collectors. (See 147–48, 154, 321–22.) This collecting is likely the reason that Minton achieved success with their cloisonné pieces, and they were only one of many producers pursuing the fashion for Asian ornament. An art critic at the 1873 Vienna Exhibition put Minton’s cloisonné porcelains in the wider context of art manufactures in Britain and France:

But not only upon metal work has the influence of Oriental art asserted itself, for on earthenware it is even more apparent. A few specimens of Persian pottery reached Europe a short time back (I exceedingly regret that no porcelain is shown by the Persians in their Vienna exhibit), and several ornamental tiles have since come to hand, and these specimens have done more to alter the character of our earthen vessels than anything that has occurred for many years past. The ornament found on these Persian vessels was new, and was also appropriate to the objects on which it was wrought. The most enterprising potters, notably Minton of England, caught the novelty, and successfully applied the new form of ornament, and produced beautiful objects. This was followed by certain French potters (particularly Collinot, and also to an extent by Th. Deck, both of Paris), producing works in the Arabian and Japanese styles, and now Minton shows examples in the style of the Chinese enamel vases and of works from other Eastern nations. Yet Minton does not simply copy the examples in enamel and apply them to earthenware or china, but he in most cases so modifies the ornament as to render it suitable to his individual wants. I do not think Minton’s utilisation of Eastern art quite so clever, not being so original, as that of Christofle, nor of Barbedienne, yet it is good; but for novelty combined with excellence I think that the Royal Works of Worcester must, this time, stand first.¹¹⁸⁹

¹¹⁸⁹ *London Evening Standard*, September 30, 1873, 5.

The historically deep connection between Persian and Chinese ceramics goes part way towards explaining this contemporaneous appeal they had for ceramic manufacturers. The reference to “several ornamental tiles” represents this connection, which is seen also in Central Asian tiles, including an Ilkhanid tile with a Chinese *fenghuang*, or phoenix,¹¹⁹⁰ and a star-shaped Timurid tile decorated in the *cuerda seca* technique.¹¹⁹¹ The color scheme and *cuerda seca* (dry cord) style, using raised lines of slip to separate areas of color, are also seen in *fahua* vessels of the Ming Dynasty, including a *guan* wine jar in the British Museum.¹¹⁹² *Fahua* vessels feature low-fired polychrome glazes in a palette dominated by blue and turquoise.¹¹⁹³ In finding Minton’s work not so “clever,” the critic also identifies a problem that still plagued British design in the 1860s, when many provincial art schools were in their infancy: reliance on foreign inspiration and craftsmen, particularly Frenchmen like Léon Arnoux and Marc-Louis-Emmanuel Solon.

Imperial *Yangcai* Porcelains and British Design

Minton and its competitors, Coalport and Royal Worcester, also produced porcelains with designs drawn from painted *yangcai* enamel porcelains in *Chinese Ornament* . Established in the late eighteenth century,¹¹⁹⁴ Coalport Porcelain had produced its share of Asian-inspired porcelains;¹¹⁹⁵ but in the mid-nineteenth century its style was decidedly French and highly ornate. The firm was known for its fantastic rococo modeled flowers clambering up the sides of its pots and Coalport applied its sweet, fanciful style to its Chinese-style wares.¹¹⁹⁶ Like many potteries that used molds in their manufactures, Coalport applied a Chinese pattern to a western shape in their repertoire: a Neoclassical covered vase. A pair of these vases show oval medallions with paintings of flowers and birds on grounds of mazarin, a design steeped in the Sèvres tradition.¹¹⁹⁷ **(Fig. 6-62)** But Coalport also applied to this shape patterns drawn from Plate 85 of *Chinese Ornament* . **(Fig. 6-63)** One design features a pale blue lotus framed by blue and green foliate scrolls on a red ground. The other pattern shows butterflies, blossoms and gourds among leafy vines on a lapis lazuli ground. A pair of vases decorated with these patterns is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which dates them to ca. 1865.¹¹⁹⁸ **(Fig. 6-64)** The designs were first transfer-printed, then painted with enamels and gilded. Around the edges of the Coalport vessel runs a border of modified *ruyi*

¹¹⁹⁰ MMA, acc. no. 12.49.4.

¹¹⁹¹ MMA, acc. no. 17.143.1.

¹¹⁹² British Museum, mus. no. Franks.195+.

¹¹⁹³ Li, *Chinese Ceramics* , 335.

¹¹⁹⁴ William Chaffers, *The Collector’s Handbook to Keramics of the Renaissance and Modern Periods; Selected from His Larger Work, Entitled the Ceramic Gallery* (London: Gibbings, 1909), 271.

¹¹⁹⁵ BM, mus. no. 1902,0725.1.

¹¹⁹⁶ BM, mus. no. 1925,0408.1.CR; MMA, acc. no. 1980.202.1; V&A, acc. nos. C.1205&A-1917; C.554-1935.

¹¹⁹⁷ V&A, acc. nos. C.53-1964; C.1363-1919. These are similar vessels with painted scenes in gilt cartouches on mazarin grounds.

¹¹⁹⁸ V&A, acc. nos. C.564&A-1935; C.564B&C-1935.

heads and lotuses. This is one of a number of cases in which a designer used patterns from *Chinese Ornament* that appeared either on the same plate or adjacent plates. The piece itself is busy in true Coalport fashion and the pattern does not augment the form; but it is still charming. The vases were previously dated to ca. 1865, but should be dated to 1867 or afterwards, on the basis of the link to *Chinese Ornament*. Since the two patterns came from different vessels, one can dismiss the possibility that a Coalport designer and Jones copied the same specimen prior to 1865. Coalport also created a pair of moonflasks showing a delicate design of lotuses with scrolls, (**Fig. 6-65**) from a design in Plate 34, although the colors in the chromolithograph were sweetened for the moonflask: the ground was changed from turquoise to periwinkle. (**Fig. 6-66**) In 2011, Christie's sold two specimens, which they dated ca. 1870.¹¹⁹⁹



6-62. Coalport Porcelain Factory, covered vases, ca. 1870, porcelain with enamels and gilding, H. 43 cm,
© Hyde Park Antiques

¹¹⁹⁹ Christie's South Kensington, September 6, 2011, Sale 2589, Lot 73.



6-63. Owen Jones, original artwork for Plate 85 in *Chinese Ornament*, 1866–67, gouache and gold paint on paper, H. 34.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-64. Coalport Porcelain Factory, covered vases, ca. 1867, porcelain with enamels and gilding, H. 43.8 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-65. Coalport, pair of moonflasks, ca. 1870 (later light fixtures), bone china with enamels and gilding, H. 43.1 cm,
© Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



6-66. Owen Jones, Plate 34 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

Royal Worcester is known as the oldest porcelain manufacturer in England. Chemist John Wall (1708–76) founded the pottery in 1751 and was granted a royal warrant in 1788.¹²⁰⁰ The firm initially manufactured a heat-proof, lead-glazed soft paste body, and is credited by some with introducing transfer printing to pottery. In the mid-nineteenth century, Royal Worcester was manufacturing bone china and porcelain with decoration borrowed from Continental and Asian ceramics.¹²⁰¹ At the 1873 exhibition in Vienna they showed Japanese-style wares, including moonflasks, teapots with bird-and-flower imagery and gilt dragon handles, and tableware with elaborate gilt and molded cartouches, shown in the engraving reproduced here. **(Fig. 6-67)** They also emulated Chinese forms. Their moonflask with a design of dandelions and butterflies appeared in *Connoisseur* in 1886.¹²⁰² **(Fig. 6-68)** Royal Worcester even decorated moonflasks with lotus scrolls in the style of *yangcai* enameled porcelains. The Metropolitan Museum of Art holds three bone china moonflasks with scalloped handles and bases formed of molded *ruyi* heads, which were produced by the firm in the 1870s.¹²⁰³ As noted previously, such scalloped handles are sometimes seen on Chinese moonflasks, as in the case of a blue-and-white specimen dating to the reign of the Yongle emperor (1360–1424, r. 1403–24), in the Percival David Collection at the British Museum.¹²⁰⁴ **(Fig. 6-69)** The pieces in the Metropolitan Museum of Art are three colorways of the same design, which features a large lotus at the center of leafy scrolls, with a Greek meander around the neck. **(Fig. 6-70)** The lotus is taken from Plate 82 of *Chinese Ornament*, although the red shading on each petal of the original yellow version is switched from its interior to its exterior on the vase. **(Fig. 6-71)**



6-67. Thomas Sulman, “Worcester Japanese Porcelain at the Vienna Exhibition,” from the *Illustrated London News*, November 1, 1873, engraving, measurements unavailable, © Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library

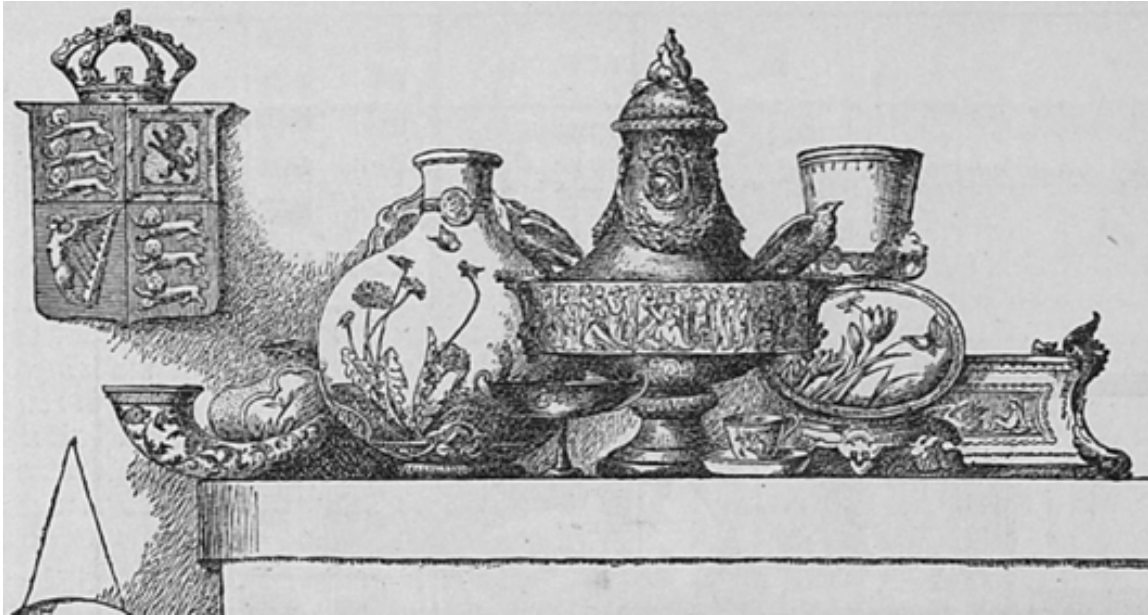
¹²⁰⁰ J. Victor Owen, “The Geochemistry of Worcester Porcelain from Dr. Wall to Royal Worcester: 150 Years of Innovation,” *Historical Archaeology* 37, no. 4 (2003): 84.

¹²⁰¹ W. P., “Worcester Porcelain,” *Connoisseur* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1886): 33–44; C. Louise Avery, “Worcester Porcelain: The Lockwood Collection,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 35, no. 1 (January 1940): 1+4–8. Maude Haywood, “The Royal Worcester Porcelain Works,” *Decorator and Furnisher* 13, no. 5 (February 1889): 154–55.

¹²⁰² P., “Worcester Porcelain,” 33.

¹²⁰³ MMA, acc. nos. 2018.62.90; 2018.62.91; 2018.62.92.

¹²⁰⁴ BM, mus. no. PDF,A.612.



6-68. Illustration of Royal Worcester porcelains from *Connoisseur*, 1886, engraving, H. 18 cm, Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-69. Chinese moonflask, Yongle period (r. 1403–24), porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, H. 30.8 cm, British Museum



6-70. Royal Worcester, moonflask, 1870s, bone china with enamels and gilding, H. 20 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-71. Owen Jones, Plate 82 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute

Minton Jardinières

Minton also created a line of earthenware jardinières with decoration of lotus scrolls, lotus lappets and meanders, partly adapted from *Chinese Ornament*. The vessels were usually decorated with Minton’s “Persian” glazes in the shades of mazarin, turquoise, ochre and yellow; which were used to create the look of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain; *fahua* ware of the Ming Dynasty, including a *guan* (jar) for wine in the British Museum,¹²⁰⁵ (Fig. 6-72) and the turquoise-and-black fritware of Central Asia.¹²⁰⁶ (Fig. 6-73) The shape is based on a type of *ding* that is an essential part of the Chinese repertoire, which features a galleried rim, cabriole feet emanating from lion masks, and flaring handles, such as the Qianlong-period specimen pictured here.¹²⁰⁷ (Fig. 6-74)



6-72. Chinese *guan* wine jar, Ming Dynasty, ca. 1488–1522, glazed porcelain, H. 43.5 cm, British Museum

¹²⁰⁵ British Museum, mus. no. Franks.195+.

¹²⁰⁶ V&A, acc. no. C.737-1909.

¹²⁰⁷ V&A, acc. no. C.397&A-1920.



6-73. Iranian jar, 12th–13th century, fritware with painted decoration and turquoise glaze, H. 187.7 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-74. Chinese imperial *ding* incense burner, Qianlong period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, measurements unavailable, Victoria and Albert Museum

As noted in Chapter Three, *ding* censers were taken by soldiers from the Summer Palace. (See 123–24.) In the nineteenth century, their provenance at the Summer Palace was generally accepted. However, connoisseur William Giuseppe (W. G.) Gulland (1842–1906) owned a *ding* of this type and compared it to the Wiltshire regimental museum vessels in the catalogue of his collection, raising the issue of uncertainty surrounding Summer Palace provenance for collectors:

This incense burner was picked up in an old china shop minus its cover. The second battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment, then the 99th Foot, was present at the sacking of the Summer Palace, and became possessed of several of these tripod incense burners, variously coloured and decorated, which are still preserved by the officers' mess, but all are without covers. These probably had been removed, the better to allow the perfume to escape through the palace, so were overlooked and left behind. It will not do, however, to conclude that all incense burners without covers have emanated from the Summer Palace.¹²⁰⁸

While direct descent of this design from a looted object has not been established, the interest *ding* vessels generated as large display vessels is evident from Gulland's remarks and members of the Minton firm most likely saw *ding* censers from the Summer Palace at the 1862 exhibition. As noted in Chapter Four, two *ding* vessels with lotus scrolls were displayed in the China Court. One was massive and appeared in a stereograph of the court. The other was illustrated in Waring's *Masterpieces of Industrial Art*. (See 216, 219.)

The Minton vessel has a cylindrical form slightly tapering toward a rounded base. The heavy, straight rim is galleried and horizontal loop handles are attached at the shoulders. Although the original Chinese form has flaring handles, the firm likely changed these to accommodate plants and minimize breakage. The feet are formed of lion masks over giant stylized paws: shape number 1798 in the Minton stock. The number is impressed on one of two such vessels, differing only in their color, which were offered at Christie's in 2012, (**Fig. 6-75**) and 2015.¹²⁰⁹ (**Fig. 6-76**) These show lotus scroll patterns adapted from Plate 2 in *Chinese Ornament*, molded around the sides and painted in several colors. (**Fig. 6-77**) A similar jardiniere shape has sculptural elements ultimately drawn from ancient bronze *gui* vessels, used for ritual food offerings, including zoomorphic handles similar to those on the *gui* of the Western Zhou Dynasty, pictured here.¹²¹⁰ (**Fig. 6-78**) The pot is covered with a turquoise glaze and transfer-printed with the same lotus scroll from Plate 2. (**Fig. 6-79**) This was sold by Christie's in 2011.¹²¹¹ The vessel also has a quality common to interpretations of designs across cultures: the muddling of a motif in translation. In this case the volute that appears midway between the handles is based on a type of molded bat head seen on ancient bronzes like the British Museum *gui* vessel. Another version of

¹²⁰⁸ W. G. Gulland, *Chinese Porcelain*, 2nd. ed. (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899), 233.

¹²⁰⁹ Christie's New York, Sale 2566, June 7, 2012, Lot 315; Christie's New York, Sale 3731, April 16, 2015, Lot 183.

¹²¹⁰ BM, mus. no. 1984,0531.1.

¹²¹¹ Christie's South Kensington, October 25, 2011, Sale 2352, Lot 252.

the jardiniere was printed with a floral scroll featuring blossoms formed by an ovoid center with two large petals emanating from each side like insect wings and one smaller petal at the base, which is not derived from *Chinese Ornament*. However, the scrolling vine has the dimensionality and lushness of lotus scrolls seen on Qing imperial *yangcai* enameled pots. One specimen of this jardiniere in the British Museum is glazed turquoise and printed in black.¹²¹² (Fig. 6-80) Another such vessel is in the Henry B. Plant Museum. This shows a blue-and-white Persian design and is reported to have a date mark for 1889.¹²¹³ These are only some of the jardiniere combining various elements of Asian design that Minton produced in this period. Minton displayed their tripod jardiniere at the London International Exhibition in 1871.¹²¹⁴



6-75. Minton, jardiniere, 1879, glazed earthenware, H. 43.1 cm, © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



6-76. Minton, jardiniere, ca. 1879, glazed earthenware, H. 48.2 cm, © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images

¹²¹² BM, mus. no. 2005,0401.1.

¹²¹³ Henry B. Plant Museum, inv. no. 1998.073.

¹²¹⁴ George Wallis, *The Art Journal Catalogue of the International Exhibition* (London: Virtue, 1871), 54.



6-77. Owen Jones, Plate 2 from *Chinese Ornament*, 1867, chromolithograph, H. 35 cm (page),
Getty Research Institute



6-78. Chinese *gui* vessel, Western Zhou Dynasty, 11th century BCE, H. 14.8 cm, British Museum



6-79. Minton, jardiniere, 1876, glazed and transfer-printed earthenware, D. 66 cm,
© Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



6-80. Minton, jardiniere, 1878, glazed and transfer-printed earthenware, H. 51 cm,
British Museum

The vessels were also shown at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia and appear in a stereograph of the Minton stall.¹²¹⁵ **(Fig. 6-81)** Apparently they were successful, for Henry William Taunt (1842–1922) photographed two of them in a washroom at Blenheim Palace in 1900. **(Fig. 6-82)** Placement of these vessels in domestic spaces was in keeping with Orientalist, cosmopolitan fashions in decoration, which typically involved the importation (often appropriation), repurposing and emulation of art from the East. These include the lush Orientalist interiors with dizzying “Mooresque” tilework, like the “Arab Hall” at Leighton House, where artist Frederic Leighton displayed the collection of glazed tiles he formed during and after his travels in the Middle East.¹²¹⁶ Mary Roberts has recently discussed the sourcing of these tiles and issues involved in the appropriation and copying of architectural ceramics from sacred structures in the Middle East and Western Asia by Europeans, noting that “British artists collaborated to equal and surpass their historic sources by synthesizing early modern Eastern material culture into contemporary British Aestheticism.”¹²¹⁷ A tile from Leighton House in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which is attributed to Cairo or Damascus but shows a Chinese-style design of a crane among clouds in underglaze blue, is one example of this synthesis.¹²¹⁸ **(Fig. 6-83)**

¹²¹⁵ Centennial Photograph Company, “Centennial Exhibition Philadelphia 1876,” 1876, The Library Company of Philadelphia website, <https://digital.librarycompany.org/islandora/object/digitool%3A120595#page/1/mode/>.

¹²¹⁶ Dante Vanoli, “The Arab Hall, Leighton House Museum,” *Journal of Architectural Conservation* 18, no. 1 (2012): 29–31. Provides a discussion of the recent restoration.

¹²¹⁷ Mary Roberts, “The Resistant Materiality of Frederic Leighton’s Arab Hall,” *British Art Studies* iss. 9 (2018): 9–13, 44. <https://britishartstudies.ac.uk/issues/issue-index/issue-9/leighton-arab-hall>.

¹²¹⁸ V&A, acc. no. 222-1896.



6-81. Centennial Photographic Company, Philadelphia, *Daniels China Court*, 1876, photographic print, The Library Company of Philadelphia



6-82. Henry William Taunt, photograph showing Minton jardinières at Blenheim Palace, 1900, H. 32 cm, © Alamy



6-83. Tile attributed to Damascus or Cairo, ca. 1500, fritware with underglaze blue decoration, L. 20.6 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

An Aesthetic Movement fashion for decorating interiors liberally with Chinese blue-and-white porcelains also arose among artists and businessmen, a development panned in some quarters as “Chinamania.”¹²¹⁹ The synthesis of styles from different cultural traditions, particularly those of Asia, is also an essential characteristic of British ceramics in the 1870s and 1880s. The tiles of William De Morgan (1839–1917), inspired by various ceramic traditions of the Islamic world, are one example of this trend.¹²²⁰ Many Morgan tiles of this type are in the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹²²¹ A specimen of porcelain synthesizing Japonism and Central Asian style is a pitcher by Royal Worcester in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It is transfer-printed with a pattern resembling a Japanese textile, and has a gilt raised arabesque design around the spout.¹²²² **(Fig. 6-84)** Another specimen in the Metropolitan is a Coalport moonflask, dated ca. 1861–75, which is identical in shape to Minton’s Chinese-style moonflask and is decorated with a gilt pattern based on Central Asian manuscript illuminations.¹²²³ **(Fig. 6-85)** One instance of such source material is the frontispiece of the *Mantiq al-tair* (Language of the Birds), painted by Persian artist Zain al-’Abidin al-Tabrizi, ca. 1600, in the same collection.¹²²⁴ **(Fig. 6-86)** These varying blends of art traditions reflect growing contacts with other cultures and the desire of manufacturers to produce new styles that responded to the growing sophistication of their customers.

¹²¹⁹ Anne Anderson, “‘Fearful Consequences . . . of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women, and ‘Cultchah’ in the English Aesthetic Movement c. 1870–1900,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37, no. 1 (2009): 219–54. Clive Wainwright, “‘A Gatherer and Disposer of Other Men’s Stuff’: Murray Marks, Connoisseur and Curiosity Dealer,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 14, no. 1 (2002): 165–67.

¹²²⁰ Gracia, “El Orientalismo en la producción cerámica De William De Morgan,” 53–81.

¹²²¹ V&A, acc. nos. CIRC.513-1962; C.153-1980; 361-1905; C.6-1931.

¹²²² MMA, acc. no. 1996.80.

¹²²³ MMA, acc. no. 2018.62.148.

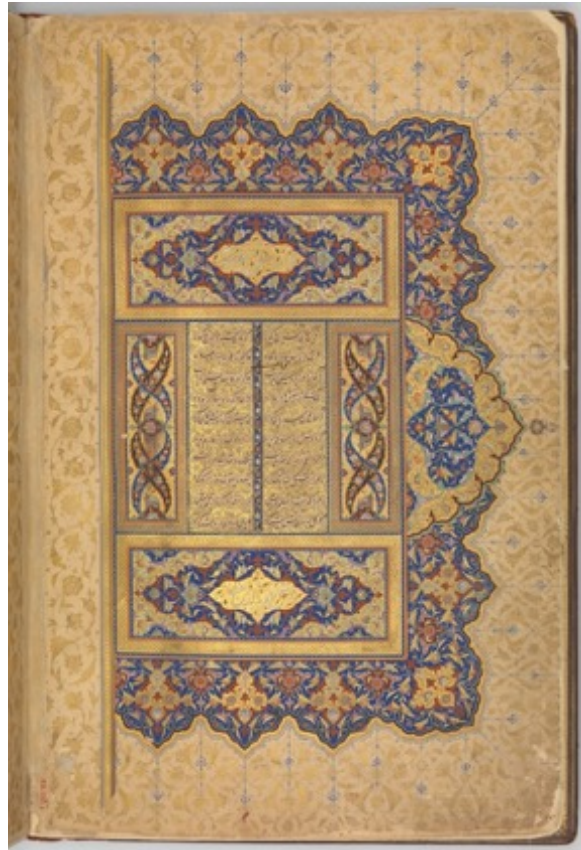
¹²²⁴ MMA, acc. no. 63.210.1



6-84. Royal Worcester, pitcher, 1880, transfer-printed bone china with gilding, H. 19.7 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-85. Coalport, vase, ca. 1861–75, bone china with enamels and gilding, H. 26.5 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-86. Zain al-'Abidin al-Tabrizi, frontispiece of a *Mantiq al-tair* manuscript, ca. 1600, ink, colors, silver and gold on paper, H. 19.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Imperial Monochrome Porcelains and British Ceramics

Before 1860, British potteries generally did not produce fine monochrome porcelains comparable to Chinese monochrome wares; but they did make some simple, elegant vessels in different materials without painted decoration. Dutch émigrés David Elers (d. 1742), and John Philip Elers (1664–1738), made vitreous red stoneware with molded and tooled decoration imitating Chinese *yixing* wares,¹²²⁵ (**Fig. 6-87**) Josiah Wedgwood made an unglazed vitreous black stoneware called “Black Basalt” ware,¹²²⁶ (**Fig. 6-88**) a silver lustre glaze is seen on some Staffordshire wares,¹²²⁷ (**Fig. 6-89**) and William Littler (1725–84) is credited with developing a blue slip-glazed stoneware manufactured by Aaron Wedgwood IV (1718–82). A “Littler Blue” milk jug bequeathed by Lady Charlotte Schreiber to the Victoria and Albert Museum is shown here.¹²²⁸ (**Fig. 6-90**) Decorative pottery covered in a single glaze usually had

¹²²⁵ R. L. Hobson, “Early Staffordshire Wares Illustrated by Pieces in the British Museum. Article II. Elers and Astbury Wares,” *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 3, no. 9 (December 1903): 299–301, 303–5. For a mug produced by the Elers brothers, see MMA, acc. no. 2014.712.14.

¹²²⁶ MMA, acc. no. 11.60.54a, b.

¹²²⁷ Manchester Art Gallery, inv. no. 1923.955.

¹²²⁸ V&A, acc. no. 414:1011/&A-1885.

molded decoration. A jug by John Lockett (1773–1835), and Thomas Lockett (1809–54), with a bacchanal in relief under a dove blue glaze is one example.¹²²⁹ (Fig. 6-91) The British porcelain industry had emerged to compete with Chinese export wares when these were mainly white vessels covered in clear glazes, often decorated with designs in blue. Consumers accordingly prized white, translucent porcelains and exotic images of China. Potteries strove to create a competitive porcelain-like material for some time, initially creating earthenware vessels with opaque white tin-oxide glazes, decorated in blue with chinoiserie designs,¹²³⁰ (Fig. 6-92) then trying different recipes through the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the 1760s, Josiah Wedgwood developed “Queen’s Ware,” a cream-colored earthenware covered with a cream white glaze. Next, Wedgwood added cobalt oxide to the glaze for a blue porcelain-like cast and dubbed it “Pearl Ware.”¹²³¹ During the 1820s, “White Ware,” distinguished by the addition of blue to the porcelain body for a cool white tone, achieved great success.¹²³² Against this background Henry Cole’s white “Summerly” tea service, manufactured by Minton, is a culmination of the drive to perfect the white porcelain body, a critical step towards monochrome wares.¹²³³ (Fig. 6-93) Minton’s presentation of white Chinese-style vessels at the 1862 exhibition is another important moment in this history. (See 325–26.)



6-87. Elers Brothers, mug, ca. 1695, red stoneware, H. 17.5 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

¹²²⁹ V&A, acc. no. CIRC.289-1973.

¹²³⁰ V&A, acc. no. C.21-1949.

¹²³¹ V&A, acc. no. 30&A-1904.

¹²³² Kayla Marciszyn, “Creamware, Pearlware and Whiteware,” *CART Bi-Weekly Update*, February 17, 2017, <https://cartarchaeology.wordpress.com/2017/02/17/creamware-to-whiteware/>; George L. Miller, “Classification and Economic Scaling of 19th Century Ceramics,” *Historical Archaeology* 14 (1980): 2–3. *Saunders’s News-Letter*, February 10, 1775, 2; *Saunders’s News-Letter*, June 9, 1780, 2. Early mentions of these wares appeared in both editions of the *News-Letter*.

¹²³³ V&A, acc. no. 2743&A-1901. Michael Leapman, “Henry Cole,” *RSA Journal* 149, no. 5503 (October 2003): 32.



6-88. English teapot, early 19th century, "Black Basalt" ware, H. 13.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-89. English jug, ca. 1810–20, earthenware with silver lustre glaze, H. 11.3 cm, Manchester Art Gallery



6-90. Aaron Wedgwood (?) and William Littler (?), jug, ca. 1760–65, salt-glazed stoneware with blue slip, H. 15.9 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-91. John Lockett and Thomas Lockett, jug, ca. 1852, glazed stoneware, H. 18.7 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-92. English Delft tankard, 1632, tin-glazed earthenware with painted blue decoration, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-93. Henry Cole, "Summerly" tea service, 1846 (designed), 1846–71 (made), glazed earthenware, H. 5.9 cm (teacup), Victoria and Albert Museum

Cultural factors also encouraged painted decoration. British potteries producing anything beyond utilitarian lead-glazed earthenware looked to Classical and Renaissance ceramics, which were usually painted. Rococo style, which reigned during the early years of the British porcelain industry, delighted in fantastic ornament. So the tablewares and figurines of Chelsea, Bow and their competitors, were most often delicately painted and gilded. Any large areas of colored glaze were applied as borders or grounds for reserved designs. In these cases, color was applied evenly for smooth texture and consistent opacity. Interest in Classical sculpture and architecture during the Neoclassical period also encouraged development of a pure-white ceramic body; for it was widely believed that Greek marble was unpainted. Indeed, Owen Jones encountered fierce resistance when he argued for polychrome decoration of architectural replicas in the Greek Court at the Crystal Palace.¹²³⁴ This ideal of white Classical sculpture found expression in Parian ware, an unglazed pure-white biscuit used in Neoclassical statuettes and busts,¹²³⁵ (Fig. 6-94) as well as *pâte-sur-pâte* designs by John Flaxman (1755–1860) for Wedgwood jasperware.¹²³⁶ The covered vase shown here is decorated with a scene of Apollo and the Nine Muses. (Fig. 6-95) All of this is to say that British potters knew a colorful glaze was best used on a pure white body and it took many years to achieve this.



6-94. Copeland, *Apollo*, 1861, Parian ware, H. 36.2 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

¹²³⁴ Owen Jones, *An Apology for the Colouring of the Greek Court in the Crystal Palace* (London: Bradbury Evans, 1854).

¹²³⁵ *Morning Advertiser*, March 4, 1847, 3. V&A, acc. no. CIRC.178-1964.

¹²³⁶ V&A, acc. no. 2416&A-1901. A specimen of Flaxman's jasperware designs for Wedgwood.



6-95. John Flaxman for Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, covered vase, ca. 1790, jasperware with pâte-sur-pâte decoration, H. 41.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

New Contacts with Chinese Monochrome Wares

The influx of imperial monochrome vessels after the war inspired British potteries to experiment with the shapes and colors of vessels taken from the Summer Palace. The fascination with Chinese monochromes on the part of the British is seen in the repetition of a myth about the Chinese horned beast called a *qilin* in a review of an art exhibition that took place in 1861:

The grotesque figures in Nos. 857 and 861 represent the “kylin” or potter’s god of the Chinese, regarding which there is a most melancholy legend of a potter who flung himself into the kiln because he could not produce a colour the Emperor wanted, upon which the articles in the kiln came out the desired colour, and his ghost assumed the funny shape now worshipped by Chinese potters. This figure will also be found largely introduced in the Chinese bronzes at the other side of the room.¹²³⁷

Between 1861 and 1864, a significant number of monochrome-glazed vessels linked with the Summer Palace appeared at auction: 23 lots of white vessels, some with crackle glazes; 20 turquoise; 14 grey; 12 yellow; 6 deep blue; 6 brown; 4 sea green; 3 crimson; and 1 pink.¹²³⁸ Others were displayed at the industrial art shows discussed in Chapter Four. The majority of vessels seen after the war at auction were white and the next largest group were turquoise, followed by yellow.

¹²³⁷ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, December 21, 1861, 2.

¹²³⁸ Christie’s London, Sales of June 6, 1861; May 22, 1862; May 30, 1862; July 21, 1862; July 20, 1863; May 19, 1864; July 25, 1864. Some of these lots were pairs of vessels.

The emergence of monochrome-glazed wares was partly due to this arrival of Chinese imperial monochrome vessels and the increasing interest among collectors in these wares towards the end of the century, which will be shown below. These imperial wares exposed the British to a completely different ceramic aesthetic. The public had seen celadon, deep blue, red, turquoise and other glazes on a comparatively small number of vessels exported prior to the 1860 war, as in the case of the Robert Fortune and Lady Sarah Webster collections. (See 49–51.) But they had not encountered the spectacular range of monochromes from imperial workshops, which varied widely in color, texture, thickness. One example of the kind of monochrome porcelains that became available is a vase taken by Col. Mark Walker, V.C. (1827–1902), which was in the Buffs Regimental Museum, Canterbury, and is now in the National Army Museum.¹²³⁹ This is a Qing Dynasty *yuhuchunping*, or pear-shaped vase, with a glossy copper-red glaze, of which there are many specimens in public collections.¹²⁴⁰ (Fig. 6-96) The lip was broken on the voyage home in 1866, so the silversmiths Messrs. Cook and Kelvey provided a silver mount, inscribed: “1860 LOOTED AT PEKIN AND PRESENTED to the mess of his Regt. By [...] Colonel Walker V.C. 1st Battn The Buffs.”¹²⁴¹ Such was the interest in this trophy vessel that a small feature on it was printed in the *Homeward Mail* fourteen years after the war.¹²⁴²



6-96. Chinese *yuhuchunping*, Qing Dynasty, 18th or 19th century, glazed porcelain, author photograph, Buffs Museum Canterbury / National Army Museum

¹²³⁹ National Army Museum, inv. no. NAM 2002-10-8-1.

¹²⁴⁰ V&A, acc. no. 623-1907; BM, mus. no. Franks.47.

¹²⁴¹ National Army Museum, “NAM CABAL Concise Report with Negs,” digital object information sheet.

¹²⁴² “The Buffs’ Chinese Trophies,” *Homeward Mail from India, China and the East*, November 16, 1874, 7.

Not only had the Chinese mastered a range of intense and technically challenging red glazes used on monochrome pieces during the Ming and Qing periods, which Nigel Wood reviews in his study of copper red wares,¹²⁴³ but they understood how to combine color and form for maximum harmony and impact. A matte cherry red could lend a sense of mass to a vessel, as in the case of a Qianlong mark and period jar once owned by George Salting, which would have been used for offerings at the Temple of Heaven.¹²⁴⁴ **(Fig. 6-97)** A variegated glossy red glaze could make a form shimmer, as in the case of the *guanyin zun*, or baluster vase, of the Kangxi period, covered with an ox-blood red glaze, which was once in the Benjamin Altman (1840–1913) collection.¹²⁴⁵ **(Fig. 6-98)** On that vase, the glaze is colorless at the mouth and runs to bright red at the bottom. A “peachbloom” glaze might be speckled green or shade to grey. This was a technically challenging glaze effect that Rose Kerr described in her book on Qing ceramics for the Victoria and Albert Museum, where she stated that the peachbloom is created with a metallic copper-rich red glaze between layers of clear glaze, through which the red breaks in parts and oxidizes green; while flambé glazes were copper-red with lead, and dappled magenta-blue surfaces due to the uneven application of copper and other minerals.¹²⁴⁶ The brilliant “imperial” yellow immediately attracted the eye and could give a vessel the seeming lightness of a balloon. Two imperial vessels in the British Museum illustrate respectively the visual impact of yellow-glazed vessels and the interest these had for collectors in the late nineteenth century: a dish bearing a Hongzhi mark and of the period (r. 1488–1505), **(Fig. 6-99)** and a ritual vessel with animal-head handles, Qianlong mark and period.¹²⁴⁷ **(Fig. 6-100)** One folio in *The Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Present Dynasty* shows this type of yellow-glazed *zun*, here called “The Zun for Holding Offerings in the Altar of the First Farmer,”¹²⁴⁸ meaning that it was intended for rites at the Temple of the Earth in Beijing. **(Fig. 6-101)** The Qianlong emperor took great interest in ceremonial regulations for these rites, over which he presided 60 times at the Temple of Earth and Temple of Heaven.¹²⁴⁹ The British Museum website states that two different surgeons owned the second vessel before it was acquired by A. W. Franks. One was Hugh Welch Diamond (1809–86), also a photographer and collector of ceramics and prints. The other was Ernest Abraham Hart (1835–98), who collected Japanese prints and paintings. The provenance of these vessels reflects an interest in collecting Asian material among professionals and intellectuals, apart from noble landowners, wealthy industrialists and financiers.

¹²⁴³ Nigel Wood, “The Evolution of Chinese Copper Red,” in ed. Rosemary Scott, *Chinese Copper Red Wares*, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art Monograph Series (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1992), 22–30.

¹²⁴⁴ V&A, acc. no. C.483-1910.

¹²⁴⁵ MMA, acc. no. 14.40.113.

¹²⁴⁶ Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics: Porcelains of the Qing Dynasty 1644–1911* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986), 74–75.

¹²⁴⁷ BM, mus. nos. 1947,0712.291; Franks.91.+.

¹²⁴⁸ V&A, acc. no. E.1734-1953.

¹²⁴⁹ Piero Corradini, “The Worship of Heaven and of Earth during the Qing Dynasty,” *Ming Qing Yanjiu* 12, iss. 1 (2003): 44.

The fascination with monochrome “crackle” at the time of the Second Opium War is seen in the cataloguing for a Chinese vase lent by William Hamilton, the 11th Duke of Hamilton (1811–63) to an exhibition in 1861:

The curious cracklin ware—a manufacture peculiar to the orientals—has several representatives—of which No. 870, showing bands of colour on a crackle bottle, may be noticed, this being one of the secrets of eastern manipulation which has not yet been attained in this part of the globe.¹²⁵⁰

It seems that the glaze had been allowed to flow to the foot, changing color as it thinned, and it developed a fine craquelure, in the style of *sang de boeuf* glazes, which would attain great popularity in the later nineteenth century. The *Pall Mall Gazette* expressed the new interest in monochrome porcelains in their report on a Christie’s auction in 1890:

The amateur will feel as much curiosity about the beaker of rare crushed, strawberry colour which is sold to-day at Christie’s as Rosamund did in Miss Edgeworth’s story of “The Purple Jar;” and to the purchaser it may be as severe a lesson in political economy also. The beaker is fresh in colour, it stands about a foot high, and it is plainly mounted in metal gilt. The decoration of the pot consists of incised quaint designs, arabesque in character. Since the sale of the renowned Morgan peach-bloom jar no such rare piece has come under the hammer ... In the same collection also will be found other fine specimens of ceramics, several being from the Summer Palace at Peking.¹²⁵¹

The public was newly attuned to the beauties of variegated peachbloom and crushed strawberry glazes, which had been unknown forty years prior; moreover, a new aesthetic around monochrome porcelains and those from the Summer Palace had emerged, as Stacey Pierson argues in her essay on early imperial porcelain collecting in Britain.¹²⁵² The “Morgan peach-bloom jar” is the famed “Three-String” peachbloom vase once owned by Mary J. Morgan (1823–85), which was sold to William T. Walters (1820–94), in 1886 for the incredible sum of \$18,000 and is today in the Walters Art Museum.¹²⁵³ Around this time, the Burlington Fine Arts Club held a show of “Coloured Chinese Porcelain,” which included many monochrome vessels, like a “Double-gourd Bottle. Bright coral red. Chicken-skin texture. On thin white porcelain,” and a “Porcelain Bottle. Covered with *sang de boeuf* glaze passing into peach colour.”¹²⁵⁴ Here it is evident that British connoisseurs have absorbed both Chinese and French glaze aesthetics. On this point, Edith Wharton warned collectors: “no one should venture to buy works of art who cannot at least draw such obvious distinctions as those between old and new Saxe, between old Italian and modern French bronze, or between Chinese peach-bloom porcelain of the Khang-hi period and the Japanese imitations found in every ‘Oriental emporium.’”¹²⁵⁵

¹²⁵⁰ *Edinburgh Evening Cormorant*, December 21, 1861, 2.

¹²⁵¹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 23, 1890, 3.

¹²⁵² Pierson, “‘True Beauty of Form and Chaste Establishment,’” in Tythacott, *Collecting and Displaying*, 75–78.

¹²⁵³ Walters Art Museum, acc. no. 49.155.

¹²⁵⁴ Monkhouse, *Catalogue of Coloured Chinese Porcelain*, 204, 239.

¹²⁵⁵ Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, *The Decoration of Houses* (New York: Scribners, 1907), 187.

In publications on Chinese ceramics that emerged around the turn of the century, connoisseurs expressed new awareness of Chinese monochrome glaze aesthetics. William Giuseppe Gulland, for instance, carefully catalogued a specimen of *sang de boeuf* in his book *Chinese Porcelain*, arguing for correct use of the term among connoisseurs and characterizing the glaze effect: “As is generally the case in this class, the glaze has receded from the rim of the vase, thus forming a purple band, below which begins the proper *sang de boeuf* shade of yellowish blood-coloured red.”¹²⁵⁶ Cosmo Monkhouse wrote at length about yellow and red glazes in his book *A History and Description of Chinese Porcelain*:

Celebrated as was the “blue” of Hsüan-te, the “red” was prized still more highly. So brilliant was it that Tzū-ching states, no doubt erroneously, that it was derived from powdered rubies. It was sometimes used to colour the glaze, sometimes for painted decoration under colourless glaze. Specially celebrated were the cups with red fish or peaches on a white ground, or with red dragons in high relief coiled round the top. It is variously described in the following description as “the colour of fresh blood,” “brilliant red colour dazzling to the eyes,” and “vermilion,” and, according to Dr. Bushell, was a copper silicate. The prices paid for fine specimens of it in Tzū-ching’s time were very large.¹²⁵⁷

On the subject of yellow glaze, Monkhouse was equally expansive:

During the reign of Hung-chih (1488-1505), says Tzū-ching, light yellow was the colour most highly valued, but enamelling in other colours was also employed. There were several shades of yellow. That of a freshly husked or boiled chestnut seems to have been the favourite. Others of the colour of the hibiscus flower and of orange are also mentioned. Yellow glazes were continued in the subsequent reign of Chêng-tê (1506-1521).¹²⁵⁸

The awareness of so-called “imperial yellow,” which was sought out by the British Army at the Summer Palace, has now evolved into an understanding of the techniques, categories and chronology of yellow glazes produced for the court.

The Design Response to Imperial Monochrome Wares

The sublime combinations of form and colour in imperial, monochrome vessels, as well as the complexity of glazes and their application, constituted entirely new models for glazing vessels. Copying the foreign shapes of these vessels also enabled producers to work outside the Classical forms of ancient Greece and create something new within the European context. Brightly-coloured glazes were a new form of decoration for mass-produced earthenware that could be easily integrated into the modern “designed” interior for non-elite customers. Martha Crabill McClaugherty has written an excellent study of the “Household Art” movement in which she shows how leading cultural figures linked with the design reform movement, like Charles Eastlake, advised middle class consumers on the furnishing and

¹²⁵⁶ W. G. Gulland, *Chinese Porcelain*, 2nd ed. (London: William Clowes, 1899), 141–42.

¹²⁵⁷ W. Cosmo Monkhouse, *A History and Description of Chinese Porcelain* (London: Cassell, 1901), 29.

¹²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

arrangement of their homes through publications codifying rules of good taste; and notes that Asian craft held a vaunted place in this movement:

Critics lauded the decorative qualities of inexpensive oriental imports so abundant in the shops. Indeed, the oriental method of patterning, suggestive but not imitative of nature, was deemed most suitable for decorative surfaces. As one English author explained, decoration on an oriental vase allowed it to blend into the room as an element in a picture; while that on a Sevres vase was agreeable in itself but was too assertive as a room decoration and created a confused mass.¹²⁵⁹

Simple monochrome vessels would blend harmoniously into a modern artistic interior. They could also be made quickly with molds and didn't require time-consuming painted decoration or even transfer printing; so a monochrome ceramic vessel could involve less labor and material, but still be tasteful. The boldness of its color and form would make a sufficient statement. Altogether, the arrival of imperial vessels inspired designers to create pots that looked like Chinese monochrome wares, explore new combinations of shapes and colors, and emulate Chinese glaze effects.



6-97. Chinese imperial *zun* altar vessel, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), porcelain with iron-red glaze, H. 27 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

¹²⁵⁹ Martha Crabill McLaugherty, "Household Art: Creating the Artistic Home, 1868-1893," *Winterthur Portfolio* 18, iss. 1 (April 1983): 8.



6-98. Chinese imperial baluster vase, Kangxi period (r. 1662–1722), glazed porcelain, H. 25.4 cm,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-99. Chinese "imperial yellow" dish, Hongzhi mark and period (r. 1488–1505), glazed porcelain, D. 17.8 cm,
British Museum



6-100. Chinese imperial *zun* altar vessel, Qianlong mark and period (r. 1736–95), glazed porcelain, H. 28.6 cm, British Museum



6-101. Leng Jian, “The Zun for Holding Offerings in the Altar of the First Farmer,” from *The Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Present Dynasty*, Qianlong period (r. 1736–95), ink and colors on silk, H. 42.3 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

Christopher Dresser was a leader in monochrome ceramics, paying homage to the glazes and forms of imperial vessels and responding to the interest in red and yellow glazes among connoisseurs. In his work, Dresser reconceived the ceramic vessel as pure colored form or sculpted color, not as a replica of classical pottery or a space for painting nosegays and fluttering ribbons. Michael Whiteway writes that Dresser, the first western designer to visit Japan, took inspiration from the many potteries he visited there.¹²⁶⁰ Likewise, Harry Lyons acknowledges the impact of Dresser's voyage to Japan on his work, evident in the innovative glazes he developed with Linthorpe.¹²⁶¹ However, he went to Chinese sources for the bright glazes seen in some of his boldest ceramic pieces. Dresser's monochrome pots and glass pieces were essential steps towards his later abstract work in metal. He explored the forms of ancient glass, studying the role of refracted and reflected light in the perception of form. In other glass and metal tableware, he removed all historical references, paving the way for his proto-Art Deco designs. Some of his yellow- and red-glazed pots were inspired by Chinese imperial wares. For William Ault, he designed a pitcher with a bright yellow glaze that runs to mustard at the base,¹²⁶² **(Fig. 6-102)** and a buoyant round basket covered in a glossy sunshine yellow glaze. One basket specimen was sold at Christie's in 2005;¹²⁶³ another is published by Whiteway.¹²⁶⁴ **(Fig. 6-103)** Dresser may also have designed for Minton a jardiniere molded with a leaping carp, an auspicious motif in China and Japan, which is covered in a glaze resembling Chinese "imperial yellow."¹²⁶⁵ **(Fig. 6-104)** There is also the famous spiralling vase for Ault Faience with a glaze that runs from clear and colorless to cherry red towards the base, in a manner similar to the glaze on the Kangxi-period baluster vase cited above.¹²⁶⁶ **(Fig. 6-105)** Among Dresser's red wares is an elegant *suantou ping*, or garlic-head vase, with a long neck, covered in a glossy deep red glaze, for Linthorpe.¹²⁶⁷ **(Fig. 6-106)** The garlic-head vase is an ancient Chinese vessel form, which appears widely in Chinese ceramics. One specimen is the Qing Dynasty iron red-glazed vase once owned by collector and politician the Hon. Mountstuart William Elphinstone (1871–1957), which is pictured here. **(Fig. 6-107)** It was then acquired by Percival David (1892–1964), and is in the British Museum.¹²⁶⁸ There is also a vase with a mottled raspberry glaze, which Dresser designed for Ault Faience. This is thought to have been designed between the years 1879 and 1892.¹²⁶⁹ **(Fig. 6-108)** The vase may be based partly on a Kangxi peachbloom *taibai zun*, or beehive water pot. One such pot, formerly owned by Percival David, is now in the British Museum.¹²⁷⁰ **(Fig. 6-109)**

¹²⁶⁰ Michael Whiteway, *Christopher Dresser, 1834–1904*, with a text by Augusto Morello (Milan: Skira, 2001), 80.

¹²⁶¹ Harry Lyons, *Christopher Dresser: The People's Designer 1834–1904* (England: Antique Collectors' Club, 2005), 70–71.

¹²⁶² V&A, acc. no. C.35-2018.

¹²⁶³ Christie's London, June 30, 2005, Sale 5712, Lot 8.

¹²⁶⁴ Whiteway, *Christopher Dresser: A Design Revolution*, 214–15, fig. 286.

¹²⁶⁵ MMA, acc. no. 1995.273.

¹²⁶⁶ V&A, acc. no. C.27-1971.

¹²⁶⁷ V&A, acc. no. C.21-1971.

¹²⁶⁸ BM, mus. no. PDF B517.

¹²⁶⁹ Indianapolis Museum of Art, inv. no. 2008.791.

¹²⁷⁰ BM, mus. no. PDF.580.



6-102. Christopher Dresser for Ault Pottery, pitcher, ca. 1890, glazed earthenware, H. 18.2 cm,
Victoria and Albert Museum



6-103. Christopher Dresser for Ault Faience, basket, ca. 1893, glazed earthenware, H. 21.5 cm,
© Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



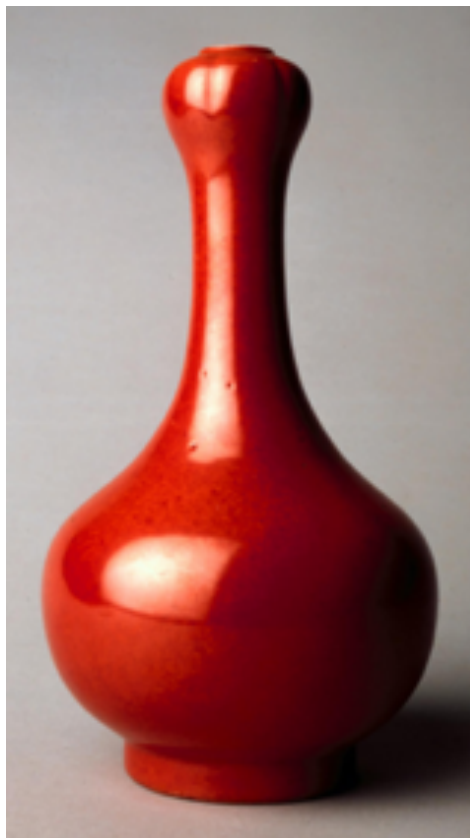
6-104. Minton, jardiniere, 1883, glazed earthenware, H. 44.5 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



6-105. Christopher Dresser for Ault Faience, vase, 1892–95, glazed earthenware, H. 31.1 cm,
Victoria and Albert Museum



6-106. Christopher Dresser (designer) and John Harrison (maker) for Linthorpe Pottery, vase, 1879–97, glazed earthenware, H. 18.4 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-107. Chinese garlic-head vase, Qing Dynasty, 1700–1800, glazed and enameled porcelain, H. 21.6 cm, British Museum



6-108. Christopher Dresser for Ault Pottery, vase, 1879–92, glazed earthenware, H. 7.6 cm,
Courtesy of the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields



6-109. Chinese imperial water pot, Kangxi mark and period (r. 1662–1722), glazed porcelain, H. 89 cm,
British Museum

Maw & Co. also produced monochrome vessels. Established in 1850, Maw & Co. was a global leader in tile manufacturing, which began producing art pottery in the late nineteenth century and hired Walter Crane (1845–1915) to design his well-known red lustre pieces.¹²⁷¹ Their monochrome earthenware vessels were glazed in bright colors like yellow, emerald green, tomato red and vibrant turquoise.¹²⁷² Some had Neoclassical shapes and others had Chinese profiles. Specimens dating to the 1870s are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. One vase, dated ca. 1871, is based on a Greek amphora, but it is glazed bright yellow.¹²⁷³ **(Fig. 6-110)** Then there is a footed beaker with lion mask handles: a simplified Sèvres *vase à bandes*, glazed all over in colors a range of colors, including turquoise and tomato red.¹²⁷⁴ **(Fig. 6-111)** Maw also made garlic-head vases with dragons running around the sides, covered in two-tone glazes. One pictured here is glazed blue and turquoise.¹²⁷⁵ **(Fig. 6-112)** Finally, they produced a version of the Chinese *hu* vase with dragon handles, covered here in a mottled red glaze.¹²⁷⁶ **(Fig. 6-113)**



6-110. Maw & Co., footed vase, 1871, glazed earthenware, H. 17.8 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

¹²⁷¹ V&A, acc. nos. CIRC.312-1953; CIRC.313-1953. BM, mus. no. 1983,1011.1.

¹²⁷² V&A, acc. no. 3469J-1901.

¹²⁷³ V&A, acc. no. 3399-1901.

¹²⁷⁴ V&A, acc. nos. 3406-1901; 3408-1901.

¹²⁷⁵ V&A, acc. nos. 1219-1872; 3397-1901.

¹²⁷⁶ V&A, acc. nos. 3403-1901; 3404-1901. The museum website states that the design is based on a vessel in Pierre d'Hancarville, *Antiquités Etrusques Grecques et Romaines* (Paris: David, 1787), 2:49; but this plate shows a red-figure design of a seated woman with a platter and is titled "Indication de Bacchus."



6-111. Maw & Co., vase with lion mask handles, 1871, glazed earthenware, H. 21.3 cm,
Victoria and Albert Museum



6-112. Maw & Co., garlic-head vase, 1871, glazed earthenware, H. 32.7 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-113. Maw & Co., vase with dragon handles, 1871, glazed earthenware, H. 17.7 cm (blue) and 17.5 cm (red),
Victoria and Albert Museum

Later in the century, Cosmo Monkhouse praised the new “school of modern pottery which relies for attraction on simple shapes covered with simple colors,” and he suggested that this movement owed much to Chinese imperial monochromes:

the palm for form must be given to Greece, and the palm for color to China ... One of the most successful and enterprising of modern ceramists has, however, approached as near to it as is possible in faience. This is Clément Massier, of Vallauris. If he cannot attain the splendour of the Imperial Yellow, or the pellucid loveliness of Agate Blue, he can coat his vases with a fine Peacock tint, a rich dark original red, and many other striking and peculiar colors ... In England, several manufacturers, aiming at similar effects, have started up of recent years ... At a recent exhibition in the room of the Society of Arts there was a striking display of the more recent productions of the Linthorpe factory, mainly Oriental in character. Though not so crude and gaudy as the startling pots of Messrs. Maw, the Linthorpe coloring did not err on the side of sobriety or amenity.¹²⁷⁷

Monkhouse quite accurately describes some of the Maw vessels – Greek in form, Chinese in color and arguably gaudy – as well as the interest among potteries in duplicating imperial glazes and the particular challenge of “imperial yellow.” Clement Massier (1845–1917), who had English clients, is known today

¹²⁷⁷ W. Cosmo Monkhouse, “Vallauris and Its Allies,” *Decorator and Furnisher* 12, no. 4 (1888): 118.

for his unusual iridescent earthenware vessels. Some Massier pieces with Chinese-style shapes and glazes entered the Victoria and Albert Museum in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁷⁸ Others are in the collections of the National Trust.¹²⁷⁹ These include vases glazed with red and the “peacock tint” so prized by the Aesthetic Movement.¹²⁸⁰ (Fig. 6-114) One is a *changjing ping*, or long-necked vase, with a pale turquoise glaze running to sage green in the collection of Standen House, the Arts and Crafts residence designed by Philip Webb (1831–1915) for James Beale (1840–1912) and Margaret Beale (1847–1936). Decor for their home at 32 Holland Park and Standen exemplifies the changes indirectly resulting from the arrival of Chinese spoils in Britain and their integration into the Arts and Crafts aesthetic. As noted in Chapter Five, Margaret Beale embroidered hangings for Standen using William Morris’s “Lotus” pattern.¹²⁸¹ (See 279.) Also, Rhoda Garrett and Agnes Garrett, (See 284.) designed for the Beales a type of cabinet often used for displaying Chinese ceramics and art pottery in the late nineteenth century. This is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹²⁸² The concern over “gawdy” color that we saw among critics at the beginning of our design discussion has remained; but designers like Dresser, who worked at both Linthorpe and Ault, had managed to create a “striking display ... mainly Oriental in character,” while avoiding the gaudiness of Maw & Co. Above all, the “Imperial Yellow” remained the greatest challenge for potteries and these were produced in the smallest numbers.



6-114. Clement Massier, vase, ca. 1900, glazed earthenware, H. 31.7 cm, © National Trust

¹²⁷⁸ V&A, acc. nos. 356-1871; 526-1897; 527-1897.

¹²⁷⁹ National Trust, inv. nos. 834081; 1213529 (pictured); 1213634.

¹²⁸⁰ V&A, acc. nos. C.224-1918 (red-glazed vase); 675-1878 (turquoise-glazed vase); National Museum of American History, acc. no. 16602, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_594630.

¹²⁸¹ V&A, acc. no. T.192-1953.

¹²⁸² V&A, acc. no. W.14-2017.

The continuing interest in yellow-glazed wares is seen in the collecting of designer Edward William (E. W.) Godwin (1833–86), who acquired imperial monochrome ceramics. In an essay of 1876, he described his London home:

In and around the buffet a certain golden atmosphere was attained by the use of different yellows. Besides the gold lines on the panels there were a large round brass tray in the shadow, a large imperial yellow jar, two smaller yellow jars from Cannes, a bit of Chinese gold embroidery on yellow satin, and some yellow-green plate.¹²⁸³

Around the time he penned this essay, Godwin also filled a sketchbook with designs for shelves, which are filled with imperial yellow-glazed ceramics.¹²⁸⁴ In the two sketches shown here are long-necked red vases that resemble imperial pieces, a yellow double-gourd vase, and a large yellow *tianqiu ping*, or “globular vase.” (Fig. 6-115) Imperial vessel types similar to some depicted in his drawings are known. Two specimens are a double-gourd vase with a yellow glaze,¹²⁸⁵ (Fig. 6-116) and a *dan ping*, or “gallbladder-shaped vase,” with a long neck covered in a “sacrificial red” glaze.¹²⁸⁶ (Fig. 6-117) Both are in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Another vase with a deep golden glaze in the same museum is a response to the type of yellow *tianqiu ping* seen in the righthand Godwin sketch. This was produced by Pilkingtons Tile and Pottery Company in 1903 or 1904. (Fig. 6-118) This is one of many Chinese-style shapes manufactured by the pottery and it demonstrates the continuing influence of Chinese ceramics in Britain.



6-115. E. W. Godwin, designs for shelves, 1872–79, from a sketchbook (pencil, pen, ink, watercolor and gouache), H. 15.2 cm (volume), Victoria and Albert Museum

¹²⁸³ E. W. Godwin, “My Chambers and What I Did to Them,” *Architect and Building News*, 16, July 1, 1876, 4–5, quoted in Anne Watson, “Not Just a Sideboard: E. W. Godwin's Celebrated Design of 1867,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 4, no. 2 (Spring–Summer 1997): 65.

¹²⁸⁴ V&A, acc. no. E.233-1963.

¹²⁸⁵ BM, mus. no. PDF,A.563.

¹²⁸⁶ V&A, acc. no. 664-1907.



6-116. Chinese imperial double-gourd vase, Jiajing mark and period (r. 1522–66), glazed porcelain, H. 43.7 cm, British Museum



6-117. Chinese imperial gallbladder-shaped vase, Yongzheng mark and period (r. 1723–35), glazed porcelain, H. 21 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum



6-118. Pilkington's Tile Company, vase, ca. 1903–4, glazed earthenware, H. 14.4 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the spoliation of the Summer Palace had far-reaching consequences for British design in the late nineteenth century. Patterns on imperial cloisonné and *falangcai* porcelains were reproduced and disseminated by Owen Jones, whose sourcebook on Chinese ornament had a significant effect on British decorative arts in the 1870s and 1880s. A leading interpreter of this material was Christopher Dresser; but major manufacturers of glass, enamels and ceramics also applied patterns from imperial artifacts to their products. Beyond these developments in pattern design, the arrival of imperial monochrome vessels in Britain also caused a sea change in British pottery, which had formerly been steeped in European Classicism. The newfound interest of British connoisseurs in Chinese glaze aesthetics and artists' contacts with imperial pots opened a new area of ceramic design, which emphasized the formal properties of shape, color, transparency and texture; and ultimately paved the way for the studio pottery movement of the early twentieth century.

Epilogue

Complicated Objects Forever?

The sacking of the Summer Palace was a significant event in the formation of imperialist Britain. Victory in China confirmed the nation's position as a dominant and hostile power in Asia after the challenges of the Crimean War and the Indian Rebellion. With the spoliation of the emperor's palace, Britain showed its ruthless determination to impose its international "free trade" agenda on a massive and ancient civilization, penetrating with destructive force its very capital and the emperor's private estate. During the 1860 war, the British Army had "threaded the needle," with a small, well-equipped land force that took advantage of China's military isolation and weakness with the limited goal of gaining trade advantages rather than holding territory. This efficient and successful overseas operation culminated in the blaze at the Summer Palace, which destroyed any remaining treasures and the context for the looted objects within the Qing collections. Public discussion of the event in and outside official channels effused all the confidence, jingoism and presumption of a European nation with an expanding global empire. Newspaper coverage shows that the British public was jubilant over the victory and ready to celebrate at public entertainments and other assemblies in the summer of 1861. Spoils from China were but one portion of the economic advantages Britain as an imperialist power reaped from the invasion of China and they were readily accepted and exploited by the British public.

The British Army also demonstrated its power vis-à-vis Parliament and Her Majesty's Government by distributing the spoils among campaign members instead of handing them over to official prize agents for public auction. Within regiments, looted imperial objects became the focus of trophy display practices and commemorative traditions. As individual actors, campaign members drew financial and social benefits from the spoliation, by selling plundered material or raising their profiles in British society through public display of their spoils. Their loans and donations of Summer Palace material to fundraisers and public exhibitions held by the British Army and quasi-governmental organizations throughout Britain confirmed British military power, while their publications and public statements justified the spoliation. The sale and resale of soldiers' war spoils, the entry of looted objects into public institutions and private collections, and the manufacture of many products inspired by looted artworks, all extended the economic and cultural benefits resulting from the sacking. These transactions and other events also normalized the plunder, making artifacts looted in an irregular military operation part of legitimate events and institutions of the art world.

Apart from yielding financial and social benefits for campaign members, looted Summer Palace artifacts brought significant, positive changes to Victorian culture. The positive response of the public was probably partly due to the low impact of the 1860 war on Britain, in contrast to the losses of the Crimean War or the crushing of the Indian Rebellion. Looted imperial cloisonné and porcelain vessels, silks and jades, among other materials, were acquired avidly in the art market, which promoted their imperial provenance. A new type of connoisseurship formed around these Chinese objects, particularly imperial porcelain. Collectors associated with this movement absorbed Chinese ceramic aesthetics through study of porcelain texts and specimens. They grappled with the Chinese ceramic chronology and issues of authenticity, through study of reign marks and pieces from the Summer Palace. Between the spoliation of 1860 and the Burlington Fine Arts Club shows of the 1890s, they codified new ceramic groups and developed new modes of talking about porcelain, which relied partly on French and Chinese scholarship. Collectors and art institutions also relied for information on people like Stephen Bushell, who were embedded in the new diplomatic corps at Beijing and had access to information and expertise that were unavailable in Britain. This new group of collectors, antiquarians and critics included professional men outside the British nobility and landed gentry. They threw themselves into the research, classification and scholarly discussion that were integral to a new collecting field characterized as much by specialist knowledge and international connections as wealth and financial outlay. Alongside this new collecting culture of businessmen, museum specialists, doctors and art critics, members of the nobility acquired small amounts of material from the Summer Palace, especially massive pieces of cloisonné. They integrated looted objects into large households decorated according to established modes of elite collecting and arts patronage focussed largely on Europe, through modes of display drawn from the traditions of the princely collection, the royal hunting lodge and the regimental mess.

At industrial art exhibitions, objects from the Summer Palace were displayed in the interest of art education for the British public, including designers, manufacturers, workers and consumers. In these settings, they were interpreted variously as craft specimens, products of Asian culture, trophies from China, luxury objects, and curiosities. Exhibition catalogues and coverage of industrial art exhibitions in newspapers shows that public displays of these objects generated great interest among the general public and members of the art world, which was not bracketed by ideological concerns regarding China and was generally more positive than assessments of products from other nonwhite cultures. Outside the military and soon after the war, objects from the Summer Palace received high praise from critics and curators for their design and use of materials. Leading designers also responded to looted objects by appropriating, emulating and responding to their patterns, shapes, and color schemes. They applied elements from imperial Chinese porcelain and cloisonné to new British goods in an effort to break away from Classical modes of design.

Objects appropriated from the Summer Palace were thus integrated into important sectors of the Victorian art and design world within the political and economic context of an imperialist Britain. Their very movement to the center of the British empire contributed to a national awareness of British military supremacy and domination of China. This political outcome requires evaluation of the developments outlined above in relation to British imperialism. Outside the material and social benefits mentioned above, the use and interpretation of objects looted from the Summer Palace ultimately did not affirm British cultural supremacy across the board, although news of the plunder itself was received uncritically and even celebrated. Soon after the war, objects decorated with “imperial yellow” and five-clawed dragons were eagerly sought in the marketplace as “trophies” and guarantees of imperial provenance. Objects from the Summer Palace were displayed at exhibitions and in private homes as trophies. But this kind of demand was quickly joined and ultimately outstripped by interest in Chinese craftsmanship and style, as exemplified by enameled metalwork and porcelain, particularly pieces with the kinds of complex polychrome designs favored by the Qing court. More slowly, the marketplace embraced monochrome ceramics and jades. Commentary on all such objects in auction catalogues and the press was uniformly positive and alive to the achievements of Chinese craftworkers. Owen Jones even revised his negative and racially hostile views on Chinese ornament on the basis of his contacts with Chinese imperial art, while collectors vied for imperial objects at auction. While the removal of objects from the Summer Palace, as well as its destruction, should be condemned; there is little evidence to suggest that the collecting, display and interpretation of looted material among the general public in Victorian Britain were consciously undertaken to validate the war or notions of British cultural supremacy.

What about designers’ response to treasures from the Summer Palace? Should their products be condemned or critiqued as imperialist appropriation? The author has yet to locate clear expressions of support or condemnation for the 1860 war (or the looting of the Summer Palace), from the designers and art critics discussed in preceding chapters, although these may exist somewhere in unpublished material.¹²⁸⁷ The exception is the Pekin Ribbon, which failed commercially; thereby showing that patriotism was only one of many factors determining consumers’ choices regarding goods linked with the Summer Palace. Be that as it may, no British artist or designer publicly criticized the destruction of the estate. Such silence from the art community would be inconceivable in the age of UNESCO, when there is widespread agreement on heritage preservation. Intriguingly, it was two architects, John Burley Waring and Owen Jones, who acknowledged the spoliation in print as a source of artworks and inspiration. Waring was unreserved in his praise for looted

¹²⁸⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the author from visiting Britain for final research on this and other issues.

objects acquired by Charles Henry Cox and Lady Michel, (See 212, 215, 219–20.) while one *could* say that Owen Jones was intentionally vague in his remarks, (See 245.) while his very publication of *Examples of Chinese Ornament* was a tacit acknowledgment of the plunder. Possibly, the tone and substance of their comments can be attributed to their professional positions, which involved regular contact with government officials and public-facing statements on exhibitions and art education. This involvement in public programs could have affected their public remarks on the war. Jacob Falke, (See 298.) and E. W. Godwin, (See 377.) alluded to the presence of imperial objects in Britain in brief and neutral terms. Whether they felt that criticism of the government would be misplaced in an art publication or had no strong feelings on the issue cannot be gleaned from the texts cited. The most concrete and significant evidence for any impact the war had on British designers is in fact the publication *Examples of Chinese Ornament*, a tacit public statement by Jones that contact with looted imperial treasures forced him to reevaluate his prejudiced and unjustly negative views about Chinese decorative art.

Also, none of the designers discussed consciously adapted Chinese designs to products celebrating British victory. In this way, they are different from entities like Danson & Sons, Bellevue Gardens, and the Great Globe discussed in Chapter Two, which produced firework displays and images of the Summer Palace for spectacles celebrating the arson, which were not marginal events but indicate instead wide support for the invasion and destruction of the estate, as well as the existence of an imperialist aesthetic targeting China in Britain. The difference between these events and the products created by Design Reform leaders cited can be clarified with a thought experiment. If Dresser *had* created a collection of decorative ceramics based on items looted from the Summer Palace and called it “Victoire Chinoise” or “Pleasures of Peking,” one could say unequivocally that he was consciously engaging in cultural appropriation to celebrate and profit from an imperialist war. Instead, artists emulated, adapted, copied and otherwise responded to the flood of imperial treasures from China, partly in an effort to “cash in” on their popularity among collectors. While this activity certainly was appropriation and sometimes plagiarism, they were operating no differently than they had in copying Sèvres porcelains or the Portland vase. Moreover, they were copying Chinese objects as exemplars of good taste, often for elite consumers. If they had uniformly developed cheap products employing patterns and styles of Chinese imperial wares a different conclusion could be reached.

At a time when conventions regarding heritage preservation and restitution are changing rapidly, the journeys of many Summer Palace objects are still being pieced together and their futures are unknown. Today, they sit in museum cases around the world, somewhat clouded by history, but with many things still to teach us. Truly, they were and are complicated objects.

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Coventry Standard
Daily Telegraph and Courier
Derby Mercury
Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal
Dorset County Chronicle
Dover Express
Downpatrick Recorder
Dublin Daily Express
Dublin Daily Nation
Dublin Evening Mail
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Dundee Courier
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Edinburgh Evening Courant
Edinburgh Gazette
Elgin Courier

Era
Evening Freeman
Evening Mail
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Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Auction Catalogues

Organized by auction date.

Christie's London, Sale of May 7, 1819

A Catalogue of the First Part of a Magnificent Collection of Oriental Curiosities and Porcelain, &c &c &c which will be removed to Mr. Christie's Great Room, Pall Mall, and will be sold by Auction, by Mr. Christie, on Friday, May 7, 1819, and Three Following Days (Sunday excepted), each day punctually at one o'clock.

Christie's London, Sale of October 1, 1822

Magnificent Effects at Fonthill Abbey, Wilts. to be Sold by Auction, by Mr. Christie on the Premises on Tuesday, October 1, 1822, and Nine Following Days.

Phillips London, Sale of April 18, 1861

A Catalogue of a Valuable and Interesting Collection of Objects of Chinese Art from the Summer Palace at Peking, the Property of an Officer. Including Vases, Beakers, Incense Burners of the Ancient Enamel; Also, Ancient Crackle, Egg-Shell & Enamelled Porcelain, Vases, Bottles, Cups and Figures, in Green and White Jade, Embroidered Dresses, Covers for the Table, &c. A Pair of Magnificent Oriental China Vases & Covers, 4 ft. 7 in. high, Beautifully Enamelled in Colors, Pheasants, Birds, Flowers, &c. the Belts Engraved on a Pink Ground; and a Set of Five Oriental Jars and Beakers, Fine Old Chelsea Figures, and Other Fine Specimens from the Country. Which Will be Sold by Auction by Mr. Phillips at His Great Rooms, 73, New Bond Street, on Thursday, the 18th day of April, 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of April 26, 1861

Catalogue of an Assemblage of Silver & Silver-Gilt Plate, Oriental, Chelsea, Worcester, and Other Porcelain, Italian and Chinese Bronzes, Wedgwood and Cologne Ware, Japan Lacquer Ware, &c. &c. Which will be Sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Friday, April 26, 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of May 27, 1861

Catalogue of a Beautiful Collection of Japanese Porcelain, Bronzes, Lacquer Ware, Cabinets, Boxes, &c.; and Some Beautiful Chinese Enamels, Crystals, &c., from the Summer Palace, Peking, the Property of a Gentleman. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Monday, May 27, 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of June 6, 1861

Catalogue of the Valuable Collection of Ancient Porcelain, Enamels, Bronzes, &c., &c., Formed with Taste and Judgment during a Long Residence in China by W. R. Adamson, Esq; Choice Cabinet of Carvings in Jade, and other Chinese Works of Art and Curiosities, The Property of an Officer, of Fane's Horse, Brought from the Summer Palace at Peking. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Thursday, June 6, 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of June 12, 1861

Catalogue of a Valuable Assemblage of Fine Old Dresden, Berlin, Vienna, Copenhagen, Furstenberg, Sevres, and Fayence Porcelain; Also a Splendid Service of Old Capo Di Monte Porcelain, a Few Pieces of Fine Old Silver and Silver-Gilt Plate, Bijouterie, Snuff-Boxes, and Bonbonnières, Etais, Carvings In Ivory, Watches, Rings, &c., &c., and Some Fine Chinese Curiosities. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Wednesday, June 12, 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of July 5, 1861

Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of the Finest Old Japan Lacquer (Including Specimens of Great Rarity and Beauty) Received from That Well-known Traveller and Connoisseur, Robert Fortune, Esq. and Some Magnificent Enamels, Bronzes, &c., From the Summer Palace at Peking. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Friday, July 5, 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Phillips London, Sale of July 18, 1861

A Catalogue of a Consignment of Interesting Objects from Peking Including A Gold Box, with Watch inserted, and Musical Movement, others with Agates and Rare Stones, Ancient Gold Watches, by Champion and Acton, Agate and Gold Necessaire, A Figure Chased in Gold, Carvings in Ivory, also, a Casket of Jewellery, Consisting of Necklaces, Bracelets, Rings, and Ornaments of the Person, Enriched with Diamonds, Rubies, Opals, Turquoise and Other Stones; Valuable Mechanical Bird Cage Table Service of the Best Sheffield Plated Ware, including Soup and Sauce Tureens, Entrée Dishes and Dish Covers, Epergnes, Candlesticks and Branches; Silver and Silver Gilt Plate, Old Chased Bread Basket, Coffee Urn, Tea Equipage, Cruet Frames; Dressing Cases with Silver Fittings, &c. Which will be Sold by Auction by Mr. Phillips at his Great Rooms, 73 New Bond Street, on Thursday, 18th July 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Phillips London, Sale of December 12, 1861

Catalogue of a Consignment of Beautiful Ancient Chinese Enamels & Porcelain Consisting of Vases, Tripods, Incense Burners, Ewers, Model of an Elephant, in Rare Colours, and Other Decorative Pieces, White and Green Jade Ornaments, Ancient Bronzes, Japanese Lacquer Ware, Cabinets and Porcelain Collected by a Gentleman of Known Taste and Judgment, and Received direct from Shanghai, per Challenger. Which will be Sold by Auction, by Mr. Phillips at his Great Rooms, 73, New Bond Street, on Tuesday, 12th of December, 1861, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of May 15, 1862

Catalogue of a Collection of Oriental Porcelain, Bronzes, Jade and Soapstone, Ornaments & Japanese Lacquer, Formed by Edwin Wadman, Esq., During Seventeen Years' Residence in China and Japan; Also, Some Fine Enamels and Silks, Taken from the Summer Palace at Peking, by Officers in Her Majesty's Service, &c., &c. Which will be sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at Their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Thursday, May 15, 1862, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of May 22, 1862

Catalogue of a Collection of Bronzes, Porcelain, Lacquer Work & Curiosities From Japan and China, The Property of a Gentleman; Also, Some Magnificent Enamels, Porcelain, and Silks, Taken from the Summer Palace at Peking. Which will be sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at Their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Thursday, May 22, 1862, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of May 30, 1862

Catalogue of an Assemblage of Oriental, Sevres, Dresden, and Chelsea Porcelain, Delft and Wedgwood Ware, Porcelain, Jades, and Bronzes, from the Summer Palace; Clocks, Candelabra, French Bronzes and Decorative Furniture, Also Some Ornamental Objects and Chippendale Furniture, the Property of Joseph Humphrey, Esq., Q. C., Removed from Barnes. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Friday, 30 May, 1862, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of June 30, 1862

Catalogue of an Assemblage of Sevres, Dresden, Oriental, and Other Porcelain, Japanese Bronzes and Lacquer Work, Decorative Furniture, Tapestry; Carvings in Ivory and Wood, and Some Magnificent Enamels from the Summer Palace at Peking. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Monday, June 30, 1862. And following day, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of July 21, 1862

Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of Ancient Chinese Porcelain Enamels and Carvings, and Jade, Including Specimens of Extreme Rarity and Beauty, and All Brought from the Summer Palace at Peking by an Officer; Also a Very Beautiful Vase, of the Finest Old Sevres, a Pair of Magnificent Bronze Busts of Henry IV, and Sully and a Pair of Ebony and Or-Molu Pedestals of the Time of Louis XIV. Which will be sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Monday, July 21, 1862, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of December 1, 1862

Catalogue of the Splendid Collection of Chinese and Japanese Works of Art, Contributed to the International Exhibition by Messrs. Remi, Schmidt & Co.; The Carved Furniture, Jewellery, &c., from Ceylon; Mr. Harry Emanuel's Trophy; A Large Collection of Beautiful Ornamental Objects Exhibited in the Zollverein and French Courts; and Splendid Billiard Table, Willoughby; Also, a Fine Collection of Old Silver and Silver-Gilt Plate, &c. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Monday, December 1, 1862, And following days, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of April 1, 1863

Catalogue of a Large and Valuable Assemblage of Oriental Porcelain, Beautiful Inlaid Bombay Work, Carvings in Jade, Ivory, and Wood; Bronzes, Fabrics, and Curiosities; Including Some Choice Specimens from the Summer Palace. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Wednesday, April 1, 1863, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of June 11, 1863

Catalogue of an Assemblage of Fine Old Oriental, Sevres, Dresden, and Vienna Porcelain, Beautiful Old French Furniture, Clocks and Candelabra, Carvings in Ivory, Bronzes, Magnificent Chinese Enamels, Marble Statuettes, &c. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Thursday, June 11, 1863, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of July 1, 1863

Catalogue of a Quantity of Exquisite Carvings by That Unrivalled Artist, Mr. Rogers; Also Beautiful French Decorative Furniture; Oriental, Sevres, Dresden, Capodi Monte, and Chelsea Porcelain; Capital Plated Article, Table and Bed Linen; Clocks and Candelabra, Bronzes, and a Great Variety of Ornamental Objects. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, Wednesday, July 1, 1863, And following day, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of July 20, 1863

Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of Ancient Chinese Enamels, Bronzes, Carvings in Jade, and Porcelain, Collected During the Two Years' Occupation of Tiensin, all from the Summer Palace and Peking. Which will be sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at Their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Monday, July 20, 1863, And following day, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of May 18, 1864

Catalogue of a portion of the choice objects of art, collected in China and Japan by the late Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, recently exhibited at the Kensington Museum; also a few bronzes, Oriental Porcelain, &c. the property of the late George Roake, Esq.; and Some Fine Enamels, Porcelain, Carvings in Jade, &c., recently received from China. Which will be sold by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at Their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Wednesday, May 18, 1864, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of July 6, 1864

Catalogue of a Large Assemblage of Sevres, Dresden, Oriental, and Other Porcelain, Bronzes, Clocks, Decorative Furniture, Old Wedgwood Ware, Two Capital Double-Barrel Guns By Lancaster; A Choice Collection of Oriental Porcelain and Bronzes, Formed at Pekin by Lieut.-Colonel Muter: Also, Carvings in Ivory and Jade, from the Summer Palace. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Wednesday, July 6, 1864, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of July 14, 1864

Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of Oriental Porcelain and Enamels, Old Japan, Lacquer Boxes and Cabinets, Japanese Bronzes, Carvings in Ivory and Jade, etc., Formed by a Gentleman During a Visit to Japan; Also Japanese Cabinets, Carvings in Ivory and Jade, Embroidered Shawls, Enamels and Porcelain, from Other Sources. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Thursday, July 14, 1864, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of July 25, 1864

Catalogue of a Collection of Oriental Porcelain, Old Japan Lacquer, Carvings in Jade, Furs and Silks, Ancient Enamels, from the Sumer Palace at Pekin; Also, Porcelain and Ornamental Objects, Plate, Etc. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Monday, July 25, 1864, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of March 20, 1865

A Very Choice Collection Of Old Sevres, Dresden, Italian, English, And Oriental Porcelain, The Property Of A Gentleman; Also, Fine Old Bronzes, Beautiful Miniatures, Snuff-Boxes, Carvings In Rock Crystal, And Other Objects Of Art. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Monday, March 20, 1865, at one o'clock precisely.

Christie's London, Sale of June 28, 1866

Catalogue of a Choice Assemblage of Chinese and Japanese Curiosities, Comprising Incense-Burners and Vases of Ancient Enamel, of Unusual Size and Quality; Carvings in Jade and Ivory, Ancient and Modern Porcelain, Lacquered Ivory Cabinets, Bronzes, a Splendid Suite of Carved Ningpo Furniture, etc., etc. Which will be sold by Auction by Messrs. Christie, Manson & Woods at their Great Rooms, 8 King Street, St. James's Square, on Tuesday, June 28, 1866, at one o'clock precisely.

Barbedienne Paris, Sale of June 7, 1892

Catalogue des Objets d'Art de la Chine et du Japon, Pièces Importantes en Jade et Autres Matières précieuses, Porcelaines — Poteries — Faiences — Bronzes — Émaux — Laques — Albums — Objets Variés. Marbres par Clésinger et Aizelin, Groupe en Terre Cuite de Clodion, Horloge Monumentale en bronze doré et matières précieuses, chef d'oeuvre de la Maison Barbedienne. Pièces d'Orfèvrerie Artistique, Bronzes Moulés sur Nature Exécutés par la Maison Barbedienne. Grand Meuble en Bois Sculpté Orné de Bronzes, Style Renaissance, Composant la Collection de Feu M. Barbédienne et dont le vente aura lieu 1° Aux Ateliers de la Maison Barbedienne 63, Rue de Lancry, 63. Le Mardi 7 Juin 1892 à deux heures, Paris.

Christie's London, Sale of May 31, 1965

Catalogue of Important Chinese Porcelain & Cloisonné Enamels the Property of The Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, A Collection of Fine Chinese Jades and Hardstones the Property of Miss A. L. Soffer and Fine Chinese Ceramics and Jades the Properties of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Harewood and from Various Sources Which Will be Sold at Auction by Christie, Manson & Woods. On Monday, May 31, 1965.

Christie's London, Sale of October 18, 1971

The Collection of Chinese Enamelled Porcelain, Cloisonné and Canton Enamels and a Jade Brush Pot Formed by the Late Alfred Morrison, Now Sold by Order of The Rt. Hon. The Lord Margadale of Islay, T. D., Removed from Fonthill House, Tisbury, Wiltshire Which Will be Sold at Auction by Christie, Manson & Woods. On Monday, October 18, 1971.

Archival Material

Adkins Family of Milcote, Weston-on-Avon, 1855–79. Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick.

Art Referees' reports, 1863–86. Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

Baillie, Charles Deyman. Journals of Capt., afterwards Lt.-Col., Charles Deyman Baillie (1857–1874).
British Library, London.

Book of Presents, 1854–61. British Museum, London.

Central Inventory Registers. Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

China Convention, Peace, Indemnity, Cession of Cowloon, Peking, U.K.-China, October 24, 1860. National Archives, Kew.

China Expedition: Agreement with France, on Joint Captures, U.K.-France, 1859. National Archives, Kew.

Christopher Dresser portfolio, Minton Archive. Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, Stoke-on-Trent.

A collection of eighty views, maps, portraits and drawings illustrative of the Embassy sent to China under George, Earl of Macartney, in 1793; drawn chiefly by William Alexander, some by Sir John Barrow, Bart., some by Sir Henry Woodbine Parish, and one by William Gomm. Many of them are engraved in Sir George Staunton's Narrative of the Embassy, published in 1797, Cartographic Items Maps 8.Tab.C.8. British Library, London.

Consignment registers. Christie's Archives, London.

Directors' Correspondence. Indian Letters. Royal Botanic Gardens Library and Archive, Kew.

Durlacher, Henry. Accounts and vouchers sent to Alfred Morrison, 1863–1868. Fonthill Estate Archives, Wiltshire.

General correspondence (mainly non-estate) of the 1st Earl of Wharncliffe. National Archives, Kew.

Gordon, Charles George. Letters to Col. Charles Elwyn Harvey, 1859–1883. British Library, London.

History of Elkington & Co., ca. 1829–1950. Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

India Office Records and Private Papers. British Library, London.

List of the Trustees, of the Standing Committee, and Sub-Committees; with Dates of Appointment, Election, etc.: also the Establishment of the Museum Generally, Shewing the Names and Salaries of the Officers, Assistants, Attendants, etc.; with the Dates of Their First Appointment or Employment, and of Their Promotion to Their Present Places, May 2, 1861, British Museum Archive, London.

Loan Register A, 1860–86. Victoria and Albert Museum Archive, London.

Register of Antiquities – Ethnographical – vol. 1, Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum, London.

Royal Literary Fund - Case Files, Western Manuscripts Division. British Library, London.

Vacher-Hilditch Collection, Historical Photographs of China. University of Bristol, Bristol.

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Contemporary Sales

Christie's London, June 13, 2002, Sale 6584
Important European Furniture, Sculpture & Tapestries

Christie's London, November 9, 2004, Sale 7100
Chinese Porcelains and Enamels from the Alfred Morrison Collection, Fonthill House, Sold by order of the Lord Margadale of Islay.

Sotheby's Hong Kong, October 9, 2007, Sale HK0260
Yuanming Yuan: The Garden of Absolute Clarity

Christie's Hong Kong, December 1, 2010, Sale 2838
Imperial Treasures from the Fonthill Collection

Christie's Hong Kong, June 1, 2011, Sale 2861
The Imperial Sale

Bonhams London, Sale of July 6, 2011
Fine European Furniture, Sculpture and Works of Art including the Beurdeley Collection

Christie's South Kensington, September 6, 2011, Sale 2589
500 Years: Decorative Arts Europe Including Oriental Carpets

Christie's South Kensington, October 25, 2011, Sale 2352
Christie's Interior Sale

Christie's New York, June 7, 2012, Sale 2566
500 Years: Decorative Arts Europe Including Oriental Carpets

Sotheby's London, July 4, 2012, Sale L12307
Treasures, Princely Taste

James D. Julia, Auctioneer, Maine, Sale of June 19, 2013
Important Lamp & Glass Auction

Christie's Hong Kong, May 28, 2014, Sale 3322
The Imperial Sale: Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art

Charterhouse Auctioneers & Valuers, Sale of July 4, 2014

Christie's New York, November 18, 2014, Sale 2897
The Opulent Eye: 19th Century Furniture, Sculpture, Works of Art, Ceramics, Glass and Carpets

Christie's New York, April 16, 2015, Sale 3731
The Opulent Eye: 19th Century Furniture, Sculpture, Works of Art, Ceramics, Glass and Carpets

Hindman Auctioneers, Chicago, Sale of May 1, 2015
20th Century Decorative Arts

McTear's Auctioneers, Glasgow, Sale of November 17, 2015

Works of Art, Medals, Militaria and Furniture

Royal Antiques of Pasadena, California, Sale of April 16, 2016

Property From a Pasadena Collector

Christie's New York, September 15, 2016, Sale 13753

Collected in America: Chinese Ceramics from the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Skinner Auctions, Boston, December 14, 2017, Sale 3045B

20th Century Design

Christie's Hong Kong, May 30, 2018, Sale 16956

Three Qianlong Rarities: Imperial Ceramics from an Important Private Collection

Christie's London, December 7, 2018, Sale 16217

The Eric Albada Jelgersma Collection Sale

Sotheby's, Hong Kong, Sale of October 8, 2019, Sale HK0894

Important Chinese Art

Heritage Auctions, Dallas, June 25, 2020, Sale 8001

Fine and Decorative Asian Art Signature Auction

Andrew Jones Auctions, Los Angeles, Sale of July 26, 2020

Design for the Home and Garden

Sotheby's, New York, September 21, 2021, Sale N10748

Important Chinese Art

Stack's Bowers Galleries, New York, Sale of January 17, 2022

January 2022 NYINC Auction, Session F: The Gem Collection of British Military Medals