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BULLETIN

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CHINESE PORCELAINS

The Museum possesses several collections of Chinese porcelains which are exhibited in two rooms—the general collection, including the bequests of Dr. Francis W. Lewis, Edward S. Clarke and Miss Cornelia Thompson, with numerous rare pieces obtained from the Chinese Commission at the Centennial Exhibition, which are arranged in the Southeast Pavilion, and the Bloomfield Moore collection, which is installed in the Northeast Pavilion. The Lewis collection was at one time considered the best of its kind in Philadelphia. Recently these collections have been reclassified and relabeled. Undesirable material has been retired and that which possesses artistic or historical value has been rearranged in accordance with the most approved method of installation.

The tendency to antedate the production of Chinese porcelain by many centuries has been general among ceramic writers, and some of the foremost sinologists have attributed to this product a fabulous and impossible antiquity. The consensus of opinion among conservative students at the present day, however, is that true porcelain first appeared during the Ming Dynasty, which would not carry it back of the fourteenth century. No examples of actual porcelain, that can with certainty be referred to an earlier date, are known to collectors, and it is reasonable to suppose that had such ware been produced before that period some few pieces at least would have survived. Examples of Chinese pottery and stoneware of considerably greater age, however, are found in European and American collections, and celadon wares (known to the Chinese as *ch'ing t'zu*—"green porcelain") of the Yuan and Sung Dynasties are comparatively abundant, but these coarse survivals of an earlier art, being composed of heterogeneous and impure materials, cannot properly be grouped with translucent white pastes. The Chinese themselves have classed all wares which possess great hardness and resonancy (which latter is an indication of vitrification) with porcelain, to which many of them, however, bear little resemblance, either in body or glaze. It is true that a porcelanous glaze was used to some extent before the general introduction of semi-transparent bodies, and the external appearance of the ware doubtless led the earlier authors to those erroneous conclusions which have been perpetuated by later writers. It has only been in recent years that students have investigated the composition

of these wares sufficiently to enable them to differentiate between the pseudo-porcelains of earlier times and the refined products of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties.

The classification of Chinese porcelains has always presented apparently insuperable difficulties to students and collectors. On account of a lack of

sufficient knowledge of the ingredients which enter into the composition of the different varieties of ware, no serious attempt has yet been made to group them according to pastes or glazes. The practise of marking Chinese porcelains with the names of the dynasties and reigns, instead of with the names or trade devices of the makers or factories, has made it impossible to follow the system of classification that has been used in the study of European porcelains. Grandier proposed a chronological arrangement which separated the wares into five consecutive periods. Jacquemart resorted to the defective and trifling system of grouping them according to the color, or other peculiarities, of the decoration, dividing the polychrome vases into families, such as the chrysanthemopæonian family, the green family (*famille verte*) and the rose family (*famille rose*). The numerous other varieties remained unclassified. This system, however, has been generally adopted in grouping porcelains for exhibition. The late Sir A.



EARLY MING VASE

Pierced Outer Shell

Bloomfield Moore Collection. No. '82-329

W. Franks, of the British Museum, improved this classification by adopting five divisions to cover all varieties of decoration after discarding the terms adopted by Jacquemart. These classes were: I. Unpainted porcelain; II. Crackle porcelain; III. Porcelain with white slip decoration; IV. Painted porcelain; V. Porcelain with pierced ornaments filled in with glaze. This grouping, while it is probably the best that has been suggested, leaves much to be desired, and it must be evident to every student of Chinese porcelains that the only systematic classification is that based on the composition and peculiarities of the ware itself, in which the ornamentation is of secondary

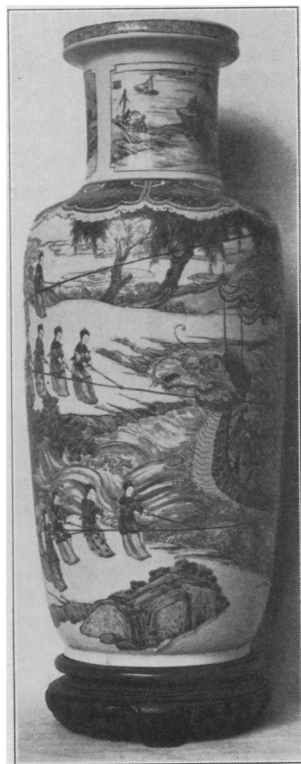
importance. Such systematization, however, can only be perfected after a more thorough study of the composition of the pastes and glazes has been made.

The Museum collections contain numerous fine examples of the blue camaieu and five-color porcelains of the Ming Dynasty, produced between the years 1368 and 1643. Of the early reigns of the present (Ch'ing) Dynasty, particularly the K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng, Ch'ien-lung and Chia-Ch'ing (from 1662 to 1820), there are many notable pieces, of which some polychrome enameled vases and plaques and monochrome glazes of the K'ang-hsi period, and a goodly number of rose-back plates and enameled vases of the Ch'ien-lung reign are among the most important. Lack of sufficient space, however, will prevent us in this article from describing and figuring more than a few of the most noteworthy examples in these collections.

A large globular stoneware vase-shaped jar, in the Bloomfield Moore collection, belonging to the early Ming Dynasty, has double walls, the outer shell being ornamented with unglazed figures, flower blossoms and cloud bands in low relief on a pierced ground, which latter is glazed in dark purplish blue and light blue ('82-329). The interior of the mouth is covered with a green glaze.

In the same collection are several examples with underglaze paintings in rich, dark blue color, attributable to the Wan-li period of the Ming Dynasty (1573-1619). One of these pieces is a double gourd-shaped vase, about twenty inches in height, with five-clawed dragon and phoenix motives. The irregular form, the archaic style of the painting and the color tone are characteristic of this period (No. '82-727). A pair of vases of similar form and coloring, with figure decoration, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are attributed to the Chia-ching period of the same dynasty (1522-1566). A second piece of the same character, but of opaque stoneware body, is a large, ovoid, eight-sided vase with figure designs representing the eight Taoist immortals ('82-325).

The invention of the highly-prized "Peach Blow," or, more properly, "Peach Bloom," glaze has been accredited to Ts'ang Ying-hsuang, a member of the Imperial Commission which was appointed in 1680 for the porcelain works at Ching-te-chen. The "Peach Bloom" (or, as the French call it, "*peau de pêche*"), known to the Chinese by the name of *P'ing-kua Hung* (apple red), belongs to the so-called "transmutation glazes" produced by the different degrees of oxidation of the copper or gold used in the coloring.



VASE (FAMILLE VERTE)
K'ang-hsi Period (1662-1722)
Centennial Exhibition. No. '76-1486

A "Peach Bloom" vase in the Bloomfield Moore collection is perhaps more remarkable for its size than for the perfection of its glaze and purity of color. It is of globular shape with long, slender neck, standing $15\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. The color of the glaze is a dark, rich, peach-skin red, changing into ashes of

roses, with delicate cloudings of apple green and mottlings of crushed strawberry ('82-1654). It may be attributed to the Ch'ien-lung period of the present dynasty. The paste is of fine quality and pure whiteness, with a soft velvety glaze surface. It has been installed in a suitable case by itself in the Northeast Pavilion, near the other Chinese porcelains of the Bloomfield Moore collection, where it has attracted much attention.

A tall cylindrical vase ('76-1486), which was purchased from the Chinese Commissioners at the Centennial Exhibition, is a noble example of the so-called *famille verte*. The design, which extends around the entire circumference, is a good example of "five-color" decoration and represents an enormous dragon-shaped barge bearing the imperial pavilion and drawn by numerous handmaidens. One view of this vase is here shown. It is referred to the K'ang-hsi period of the present dynasty (1662-1722).

A large temple censer of octagonal form ('02-730) in the



TEMPLE CENSER
Decorated in Enamel Colors
Yung-Cheng Period (1723-1735). No. '02-730

Dr. Francis W. Lewis collection is a notable example of the lavish use of enamel colors and gilding. It is irregular and angular in outline and measures twenty inches in height and thirteen inches in greatest width, being supported by eight low cylindrical feet. The prevailing color is yellow. The body, or bowl, is decorated at the top with a band of sunken gadroons, bronzed and gilded, each bordered by a heavy black enameled line on a green ground. Around the central part extends a series of relief ornaments, touched with green and red, on a canary yellow ground. The under part of the body is encircled by another band of gadroons, solidly bronzed and slightly raised, each surrounded by an inner black and an outer green line. The sloping top of the foot, or

plinth, is elaborately decorated with relief ornamentation, a conventionalized vase at each angle, from which branches out scroll-work in red, green and blue enamels on a yellow ground. On each of the eight sides of the base is a sunken rectangular panel containing relief ornamentation, the framework being decorated with gold scrolls on a dark red ground. The interior of the mouth is lined with turquoise blue. At opposite sides, on the angles of the body, are two flattened, upright, pierced, ear-shaped projections for the suspension of silken cords and tassels. The whole is surmounted by a perforated bronze cover, with lion sporting with ball, modeled as a knob. While this piece has been attributed to the reign of Yung-cheng (1723-'35), we conservatively place it in the following reign (Ch'ien-lung, 1736-'95). Such pieces were made for Siam and other countries to the south, the coloring and treatment of the vitrified enamels being strongly suggestive of the work of the Siamese potters.

Belonging to the class of plates with so-called seven borders is a deep plate of rose-back egg-shell porcelain, which was exhibited at the London Exhibition of 1851. It is profusely decorated in brilliant enamel colors and gold work ('99-688). In a large, white, six-pointed, star-shaped reserve in the centre is a beautifully painted figure scene. A seated lady holds a feather fan in her left hand. By her side stands a lady attendant, while at her feet two boys, one holding in his hand a gilded ju-i sceptre, the other a toy, are playing with two rabbits. The inner border, of turquoise blue, is diapered in black Y-pattern. The next is decorated with gilded scroll work. The third border is pink with quatrefoil diapering. On the flat rim is a broad border containing irregular medallions enclosing gilded ornamentation, and butterflies and flowers in enamel colors, on a pink ground of honeycomb diapering. The edge is tipped with a narrow belt of robin's egg blue, with sections of other colors. While this example may be classed with the seven border plates, it possesses in reality but five distinct border patterns. It belongs to the Ch'ien-lung period (1736-1795), and is exhibited in the middle floor case of the Northeast Pavilion, which contains the Bloomfield Moore collection of ceramics. There are numerous other egg-shell rose-back plates, cups and saucers in that collection which will rank, in point of decorative



BLACK LACQUERED PORCELAIN VASE
Mother of Pearl Inlaid Design
K'ang-hsi Period (1652-1722). No. '82-1896

execution, with the best wares of the same reign. Two of these (Nos. '02-842, from the Lewis collection, and '99-694, from the Bloomfield Moore collection) are exquisite examples of the same period.

The collections are particularly rich in monochrome and transmutation, or flambé, glazes, which are shown in two cases in the Southeast Pavilion, while a third case, in the Northeast Pavilion (Bloomfield Moore collection), contains an interesting group of the same class of wares. The powder blue, tea-dust and iron-rust glazes and the white and colored crackles are also well represented, while examples of rice grain decoration and white porcelain of various



No. '82-325

CHINESE VASES

No. '82-727

Dark Blue Decorations

Ming Dynasty, Wan-li Period (1573-1619)

pastes and glazes (the *Blanc de Chine* of the French ceramists), which have been loosely included by the Chinese under the head of *Fen ting*, from the Province of Fuchien (and elsewhere), form an interesting group. A large K'ang-hsi vase bearing an apocryphal mark of the Ching-hwa period (1465), in the Bloomfield Moore room, entirely covered with black lacquer, gilded and encrusted with mother-of-pearl, in a landscape design (*laque burgautée*), is a distinguished example of this type ('82-1896). One of the most effective cases in the general collection is that which contains a group of yellow and green glazes of the K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung periods, including half a dozen large

vases with dark yellow ground, on which are painted in raised enamel colors grotesque lions sporting with embroidered balls.

The collections are also rich in choice examples of eighteenth and early nineteenth century porcelains decorated in heraldic, mythological and so-called "Lowestoft" styles for the European and American markets, which completely fill two cases.

The collections, taken in their entirety, are entitled to rank with the best public collections of Chinese porcelains in this country.

E. A. B.



AN EGYPTIAN MUMMY-CASE

A fine coffin of the nineteenth dynasty (c. 1350 B. C.) obtained in Egypt by Mr. John T. Morris has been presented by him to the Museum. It is made of joined wood covered with stucco painted over with the bright yellow varnish which is so typical of the undertaker's art of the first dynasties of the New Empire.

The coffin is that of a man wearing the usual "khaft" head-dress, and is mummiform, as was usual at that period. The conventional plaited beard is missing, but the square hole in which it was once fitted is visible. The hands appear on the breast. Below the neck is an elaborately painted pectoral, consisting of rows of conventionalized lotus buds and other familiar designs in polychrome, extending down to the middle of the lid. Below is the flying sun-disk, and below again are six sections. The first is a double scene representing the defunct as Osiris holding crook and flagellum, flanked by the two-winged serpent goddesses of the North and South. The central motive of the scene is the "Kheper," the sacred scarabaeus wearing the double asp disk surmounted by the disk and double feathers, emblems of light and truth. In the second section the central motive is the deified amulet of stability—the quadruple column known as "Tat"—capped with the double feather and uraei-crown. On either side is the defunct before the seat of Osiris. The god, holding the feather of truth, confronts the defunct's soul—the human-headed hawk called "Ba." Behind, on either side, the divine solar hawk with extended wings protects it.

The third section shows the heaven-goddess, Nut-pe, with outstretched wings, wearing the disk. Above are the goddesses of the North and South, Uatit and Nekhebt, and the guardian goddesses, Isis and Nephthys. Then comes a division in ornamental designs, below which the symbolic decoration continues in three vertical columns to the foot of the coffin. The middle register represents the crowned and deified symbol of life, the "ankh," or cross, wearing the disk and uraei crown and holding in its hands its own symbol, the "ankh." This is flanked on either side with mummified figures wearing the feather of truth instead of head. Below is the deified sceptre emblem of power, also surmounted with the disk and uraei and accompanied on either side by the form of the defunct. On the foot of the coffin is the dead facing the soul-bird. On the sides, the soul-bird standing on the basket, symbol