

Garnished heirlooms: some early silver-mounted Asian porcelain in the National Trust.

By Patricia F. Ferguson

AS a ceramics curator with broad interests in the decorative arts and their relationships with clay-based objects, I am fascinated by the connections between silver and ceramics. An early inspiration was Michael J. Vickers, *Pots and pans: Colloquium on precious metals and ceramics in the Muslim, Chinese and Graeco-Roman worlds : Papers*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art, 3, 1986, which discussed the question of 'skeuomorphism' or the use of one material to give the appearance of another. Of course, this is just one aspect linking these two interrelated materials. In ceramic studies, we frequently describe objects as having silver-shapes and try to identify the metalware source, often relying on silver scholars for advice. In my own research, I have been especially interested in metal mounts, silver or ormolu, as they reveal much of the history of an object, its biography, how it was appreciated, where it has travelled to and when, or how it has been repurposed and adapted to suit the uses of a different culture at a later time period. This is the subject of this short article based on just three objects from my publication, *Ceramics: 400 years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces*, London: Philip Wilson Publications, 2016.

The objects I have chosen are all Asian, two Chinese and one Japanese, and not surprisingly, each is exceedingly rare, particularly in the porcelain selected for mounting in precious metal, evidence of ceramic connoisseurship in the later 17th century. The mounts also appear unique, though it is clear that the techniques used by specialised silversmiths were somewhat standardized, a closer study would presumably reveal various workshops. It is also interesting to enter into the mind of the silversmith and his problem-solving skills in exploring their methods invented to attach finials, collars and handles to unfamiliar porcelain objects. While the rarity of these three early objects might suggest they were unique bespoke objects, it also seems plausible that when they were mounted, they were still relatively new, and that luxury goods retailers owned dozens of similar examples, which were all sent to the silversmith and mounted at the same time, a more economical commercial approach. Of course, there are instances, no doubt, of enlightened collectors commissioning mounts for individual objects during this period. It is a rich subject and there is still much to research.

From a Chinese Scholar's desk to a European Chimney garniture

Many innovative forms and designs appeared in the 1620s after China's Ming Dynasty collapsed. Potters in the porcelain producing centre in south China, Jingdezhen, replaced the loss of imperial court patronage with orders from wealthy merchants and cultivated scholar-gentry classes. Ornamental vases, designed to hold cut-flowers, peacock feathers or coral branches, were commissioned as single objects displayed on a



One of two cylindrical vases ('Rolwagens' or 'Rollwagons'), China, Jingdezhen, c.1645, with silver mounts, England or the Netherlands, c.1670–80

Porcelain, polychrome-painted enamels and gold; height: 46.0cm (18 1/8in) and 47.6cm (18 3/4in). Marks: unmarked

Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, NT 1127136 and 1127127

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scholar's desk for quiet contemplation. Although made for China's domestic market, in English historic collections, they are frequently found surviving as pairs—often matched up by colour—such as the two vases at Hardwick Hall, in Derbyshire, made around c.1645 (Fig. 1). Slightly tapering with a waisted neck, they were known in the seventeenth century as a 'rolwagens' after its Dutch name (rolling wagons were sometimes depicted in the decoration).¹ Almost a hundred were discovered in the cargo of a wreck, c.1643–6, of a Chinese junk sailing to the Dutch East India Company headquarters at Batavia (Jakarta) for redistribution in Europe and elsewhere.² Such non-functional forms dictated new fashions of display in Europe and typically in early interiors of the elite, these vases were initially arranged as pairs at the ends of chimneys and above cupboards. This convention is recorded in the 1641 inventory of the Pranketing Room at Tart Hall, near St. James's, home of Alethea Howard, Countess of Arundel (c.1582–1654), 'in the corners of the Chimney two Jarres'—interestingly, no rolwagens are listed as such in the inventory.³

The rare polychrome decoration of the Hardwick rolwagens includes limited overglaze enamels, red, yellow, aubergine, black and two shades of green enamels, with gilt details and no blue underglaze pigment.⁴ Their subject matter reflects the pastimes of China's cultural elite: gardening and art collecting. One vase has lotus blossoms in a vase; a *penjing* ("scenery in a pot") containing rocks and dwarf plantain; and a flower-filled basket. The other has bird and flower subjects after album paintings or woodblock-prints in the manner of Chen Hongshou (1599–1652).⁵

The colourful palette parallels the development of innovative multi-coloured woodblock printing in China around 1606—many of Jingdezhen's new patrons had profited from the publishing trade.⁶ The highly-prized palette, in which red dominates may resemble

¹By the Restoration period, phallus-shaped rolwagens were familiar enough to incite ribbald humor, as in the bawdy comedy, *The Country Wife*, 1675, by the aspiring courtier William Wycherley (c.1641–1715). In the notorious "China Scene", a rake, who despite his declared impotence, emerges from a bedroom with another man's wife, holding a large vase, boasts, "I cannot make China for you all, but I will have a Rol-waggon for you, too, another time". The courtly audience at the play, performed in the Theatre Royal, frequented by Charles II, appreciated the reference.

²Colin Sheaf and Richard Kilburn, *The Hatcher porcelain cargoes : the complete record*, Oxford, 1988, p.167.

³Juliet Claxton, "Translucent as amber, and subtler than Christall": the cultural context of porcelain in early modern England 1588-1700', unpublished PhD thesis, QMUL, 2013, p.7.

⁴The technique was used on wares made for the Japanese market (*ko-akae*).

⁵Tamara Heimarck Bentley, *The Figurative Works of Chen Hongshou (1599-1652)*, Farnham, Surrey, and Burlington, VT, 2012, fig.2.13 and p.197.

that of the '2 large, red coloured rolwagens' presented to a Portuguese Viceroy of Goa, in India, in 1649 by agents of the Dutch East India Company.⁷

To further enhance their appreciation as a pair (and possibly to conceal damage) silver collars were added to the Hardwick vases in England or the Netherlands, c.1665-80; the pair may have originally formed part of a larger set of similarly mounted vessels for display as a chimney garniture. The silver collar is folded over the rim of the neck, the interior is plain and the exterior embossed (repoussé) and chased with scrolling acanthus leaves against a matted ground, with a twisted wire band above a foliate serrated rim, a feature repeated around the foot.⁸ A comparable pair of vases or rolwagens appear in an inventory of 1675 recording the chattels of Diana Cecil, *née* Maxwell, Viscountess Cranborne (1623–75), of Hatfield House, Hertfordshire: '1pr. Rolwagings coloured garnisht 6:0:0' (the term 'garnished' implying they were metal mounted).⁹ Unmounted rolwagens are frequently found in indigenous English collections. In addition to the two Hardwick examples, there are five at Dunham Massey, in Cheshire; examples are listed in the cargo of the *Hind*, which left Macau in 1644 and arrived in London in 1646.¹⁰ The form was still highly prized in 1690, when John Hervey (1665–1751), later 1st Earl of Bristol, of Ickworth, in Suffolk, paid Sir Solomon de Medina (1650–1720), a merchant, who was the first Jew to be knighted in England, for 'a pair of old china rowlwaggon for dear wife, £7.10.6'.¹¹ The Hardwick rolwagens, apparently undocumented in the Devonshire muniments, are first recorded in a 1904 photograph of its interior.¹²

⁶Sir Michael Butler, Margaret Medley and Stephen Little, *Seventeenth Century Chinese Porcelain from the Butler Family Collection*, Alexandria, VA, 1990, pp.21–32; and British Museum, 1928,0323,0.13.

⁷T. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company as recorded in the Dagh-registers of Batavia Castle, those of Hirado and Deshima and other contemporary papers 1602–1682*, Leiden, 1954, p.105.

⁸Cf. Royal Collections Trust, RCIN 1049.

⁹Mark Hinton and Oliver Impey, *Kensington Palace and the porcelain of Queen Mary II : essays in association with the exhibition China Mania : a re-creation of Queen Mary II's display of oriental porcelain at Kensington Palace in the 1690's*, London, 1998, p.75–6; and Sir Michael Butler, Margaret Medley and Stephen Little, *Seventeenth Century Chinese Porcelain from the Butler Family Collection*, Alexandria, VA, 1990, pp.147–59.

¹⁰NT 929279 and NT 929288; Claxton 2013, p.108–14 and Appendix 7.4; and Cyril Henry Philips, *The East India Company / edited and with a new introduction by Patrick Tuck*, vols. I–VI, London, 1998, vol.1, p.329.

¹¹John Hervey, 1st Earl of Bristol, *The Diary of John Hervey, First Earl of Bristol. With Extracts from his Book of Expenses, 1688 to 1742*. The Suffolk Green Books, no. 2, Wells, 1894, p.140.

¹²Hermann Muthesius, *Das englische Haus*, Berlin, 1904–5, vol.1, p.41.

A Chinese jar metamorphosed into an ingenious teapot

By 1658, the new hot beverage 'tcha' or tea was available in London coffee houses, tapped from kegs, reheated on demand and served from tall, silver pots.¹³ Knowledge of its correct preparation was limited to those with access to costly treatises, such as Simon Paulli (1603–80), *Commentarius de abusu tabaci...et herbae thee Asiaticorum in Europa novo*, Strasburg, 1665. Paulli illustrated a teapot in the Swedish royal collection, acquired in 1656 (Fig.VIII), which had a gold-tipped spout and a chain securing the lid.¹⁴ The teapot was a small, red stoneware teapot, the type preferred by China's tea connoisseurs, made at *Yixing*, in Jiangsu province, a famous tea-growing region, such teapots were a scarce commodity in England until the late 1670s when they became ubiquitous.¹⁵



Fig. 2

Fuelled by demand for these rare red stoneware teapots, a Dutch goldsmith fabricated a clever solution: he created a teapot by adding mounts to a Chinese porcelain gourd-shaped jar and cover, made in Jingdezhen about c.1600–40 (Fig. 2). Now at Anglesey Abbey, in Cambridgeshire, this teapot is first recorded in the 1688 inventory of Burghley House, in Lincolnshire, prepared by Culpepper Tanner (d.1726) for the well-travelled collector John Cecil, 5th Earl of Exeter (c.1648–1700): '1 Brown and white relev'd Tea pott with Guilt handle, Spout Top & bottome & a little figure & Chaines on the Topp of itt'.¹⁶ The lustrous brown iron-oxide glaze on the jar is coarsely painted with chrysanthemum in white engobe (liquid porcelain).¹⁷ The rare technique applied to *Kraak*-type export wares, is also found on a pair of pomegranate-shaped porcelain ewers, c.1600–25, at Charlecote, in Warwickshire; formerly in the collection of William Beckford (1760–1844), the pair of ewers were mounted in Europe with silver-gilt collars and chains with stoppers in about 1650.¹⁸

The Burghley teapot, adapted from a brown-glazed Jingdezhen jar, China, Jingdezhen, c.1600–40, with Dutch silver-gilt mounts, c.1660–88.

Porcelain, iron-oxide glaze with white engobe; silver-gilt. Height: 21.8cm (8 5/8in), length: 19.2cm (7 1/2in). Marks: unmarked

Anglesey Abbey, Cambridgeshire, NT 513426

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¹³Victoria and Albert Museum (VAM), M.399-1921.

¹⁴Patrice Valfré, *Yixing : des théières pour l'Europe; Yixing : teapots for Europe*, Poligny, France, 2000.

¹⁵Colin Sheaf and Richard Kilburn, *The Hatcher porcelain cargoes : the complete record*, Oxford, 1988, pls.89 and 113; and NT 433394.

¹⁶Oliver Impey 'Japanese Porcelain at Burghley House: The Inventory of 1688 and the Sale of 1888' *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, vol. 37, 2002, pp.117-131, p.118.

¹⁷Fung Ping Shang Museum, *Ceramic finds from Jingdezhen kilns (10th -17th century)*, Hong Kong, 1992, cat.351, cited in Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Ming Ceramics*, London, 2001, pp.347–8.



Fig. 3 Detail of reverse of finial from Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 Detail of inside cover from Fig. 2

Between 1675 and 1725, Dutch goldsmiths specialized in mounting Asian teapots with cast figural or animal finials and adding chains with spout plugs or hinged spout covers.¹⁹ In China, some early *Yixing* teapots are known with pierced handles for attaching chains or silk cords, which may have inspired adding mounts in Europe.²⁰ Those on the Burghley teapot are among the earliest examples, having a chased and engraved spout and handle with a cast thumbpiece of a boy's head, and a finial in the form of an *amorino* holding a quiver and bow; these are attached with hinged straps with serrated details secured to collars on the neck and foot (figs 3 & 4)²¹ Similar finials on *Yixing* teapots appear in paintings attributed to the Dutch painter Pieter Gerritsz. van Roestraten (1630–1700), based in London from 1666.²²

The Burghley teapot was sold in 1888 for £73.10s.0d by William Alleyne Cecil, 3rd Marquis of Exeter (1825–95). Over the next seventy-five years it was a trophy of silver collectors,²³ and at one time in the Revelstoke,

¹⁸NT 532432; and Cf. Sten Sjørstrand, *The Wanli Shipwreck and its ceramic cargo*, Kuala Lumpur, 2007, no.7280, cited in Teresa Canepa, *Kraak porcelain: the rise of global trade in the late 16th and early 17th centuries*, London, 2008, p.179, fn.22.

¹⁹British Museum, 1927,0219.1

²⁰Phillip Allen, 'Yixing Export Tea Wares of the 17th and 18th centuries', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, vol 53, 1988-89, pp.86-94, p.90.

²¹Cf. Christie's, London, 17 April 2013, lot 353.

²²D. F. Lunsingh Scheurleer, *Chinesisches und japanisches Porzellan in europäischen Fassungen*, Braunschweig, 1980, Abb. 243.

²³History of 'The Burghley Teapot'

Exhibited: Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Exhibition of Early Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, London, 1910, cat. J.21, pl. LVIII.

Literature: R. L. Hobson, *Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, London, 1923, p. 159.

Provenance: John Cecil, 5th Earl of Exeter (c.1648–1700), Burghley House, before 1688;

By descent to William Alleyne Cecil, 3rd Marquis of Exeter (1825–95);

Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 7 June 1888, Lot 214, 'A large Fluted Brown Teapot, with flowers in white in relief mounted with handle, spout and borders of chased silver gilt the cover surmounted by a figure of Cupid', old for £73.10s.0d to a Mr. Buck;

Edward Baring, 1st Baron Revelstoke (1828–97);

Christie's, London, 28 June 1893, Lot 298, 'A Large fluted brown teapot, of old Chinese porcelain, with flowers in white in relief, mounted with handle, borders and spout of chased silver gilt, the cover surmounted by a cupid' and 'From the Burghley House collection', which sold for £42 to 'Merton';

Samuel Montagu, 1st Baron Swaythling (1832–1911);

E. L. Paget;

Sotheby's, London, 25 October, 1949, lot 22; Sydney L. Moss Ltd, Davies Street;

Huttlleston Rogers Broughton, 1st Baron Fairhaven (1896-1966), acquired in 1953.

Swaythling and Paget collections and was finally acquired in 1953, by Huttleston Rogers Broughton, 1st Baron Fairhaven (1896–1966), of Mayfair and Anglesey Abbey, who appreciated its historic importance and ingenuity.

A Japanese covered bowl elevated for royalty in exile

A rare relic of the Stuart court in exile survives at Sizergh Castle, in Cumbria, in the form of a porcelain covered bowl made in Arita, in Japan, and mounted in silver in Paris (Fig. 5). In December 1688, Lady Winifred Strickland, *née* Trentham (1645–1725), of Sizergh Castle, and her husband Thomas (1621–94), fled to France with James II and Queen Mary of Modena following William III's seizure of the English throne. They formed part of the English court in exile at the magnificently furnished château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, near Versailles, provided for them by Louis XIV until 1695; Lady Strickland served as Woman of the Bedchamber. After the Queen's death in 1718, the widowed Lady Strickland retired to Poor Clares, a nunnery in Rouen. She bequeathed her portrait, plate and 'cheney' (china) to her grandson Sir Thomas Peter Strickland (1701–54).²⁴ The bowl now forms part of a group of Jacobite heirlooms at Sizergh that includes locks of the royal chil-



Fig. 5 Arita porcelain covered bowl, Japan, c.1695–1710; mounted in silver as an *écuelle* (broth bowl and cover), Paris, 1717–22, porcelain, polychrome enamels, gold; silver.

Height: 21.3 cm (8 3/8 in), length: 27.0 cm (10 5/8 in).

Marks: Charge mark, 1704–12 an A encircled by a crown for Étienne Baligny, Fermier Général (Dennis 27) on bowl-collar; Discharge mark, 1717–22 a fleur de lys in a lozenge on cover-collar and around foot

The Hornyold-Strickland Collection, Sizergh Castle, Cumbria, NT 997917

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²⁴Henry Hornyold-Strickland, *Genealogical Memoirs of the family of Strickland of Sizergh*, Kendal 1928, p.147.



Fig. 6

Fig. 6 View across the handles of figure 5.

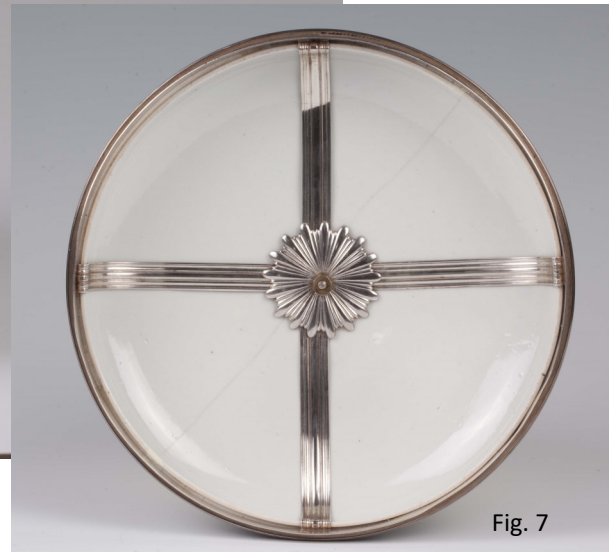


Fig. 7

Fig. 7 Underside of lid of figure 5.

dren's hair, crystal buttons with the monogram of James II and several pieces of contemporary Japanese porcelain.²⁵ Lady Strickland may have received the bowl as a perquisite from Queen Mary of Modena or her son James Francis Edward, Prince of Wales, later James III, the 'Old Pretender'.

Such useful porcelain bowls with shallow covers are rarely found in Western collections, as they were made for elite domestic market in Japan. The decoration is not typical of export wares : a continuous scroll ornamented with cord-tied bunches of chrysanthemum, peony or prunus sprays, links with three lobed solid iron-red panels with stylized lotus painted in reserve. The foliage of yellow shading to green and the field of solid purple-grey from manganese oxide, all outlined in black, are characteristic of a short-lived style associated with the Nangawara workshop in Arita, manufactured from about 1695 to 1710.²⁶ The silver mounts convert the bowl into an *écuelle*, a high-status soup bowl for beef broth (*bouillon*), usually accompanied by a

²⁵Hornoyld-Strickland 1928, p.261; and NT 997918 & 997919.

²⁶Menno Fitski, *Kakiemon Porcelain : A handbook, Leiden and Amsterdam*, 2011, p.101–5.

matching porcelain under-dish or tray, of which rare examples survive with ensuite silver mounts.²⁷ In the fashion of the French court, bouillon was served as part of the *petit déjeuner*, often during the *toilette*, while entertaining visitors.

The silver mounts both transformed the use of the porcelain and assimilated it into the repertoire of contemporary French silver tableware by means of such exotic motifs as masks and lambrequins, along with a flat, chased band around the rim with quatrefoils, husks and strapwork on a matted ground. Similar strapwork appears in the designs attributed to Pierre Masson in his book *Nouveaux Desseins pour graver sur l'Orfeverie*, published in Paris by Jean Mariette (1660–1742) before 1710.²⁸ Silver merchants, such as Masson, retained control of their designs, which were also produced in gilt-brass (*or moulu*), although silver mounts were preferred on vessels used to serve hot food.²⁹ Elements of the design of the silver on the Sizerghe *écuelle*, especially the hinged and pinned cast foliate scrolled handles (Fig. 6), appear on Chinese and Japanese porcelain acquired by the Bavarian Elector Max Emanuel from the Parisian marchand-mercier, Laurent Danet (c.1650–1720), which included '2 *Escuelles aussy garnies d'argent doré*' purchased in 1706.³⁰ Parallels with the underpinning of the finial on the cover are yet to be identified (Fig. 7).

²⁷Jules Guiffrey, *Inventaire général du mobilier de la couronne sous Louis XIV (1663-1715) publié pour la première fois sous les auspices de la Société d'encouragement pour la propagation des livres d'art*, Paris, 1885–86, vol.1, p.32.

²⁸VAM, E.5915-1908.

²⁹Timothy Schroder, *Renaissance and Baroque Silver, Mounted Porcelain and Ruby Glass from the Zilkha Collection*, London, 2012, cat. no.74; and Gillian Wilson, *Mounted Oriental Porcelain in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, Los Angeles, Calif, 1999, cat. no.5, and p.39, fn.6.

³⁰Max Tillmann, *Ein Frankreichbündnis der Kunst : Kurfürst Max Emanuel von Bayern als Auftraggeber und Sammler*, Berlin, 2009, fig. 62 and Dokument III, p.350.

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