

An Appreciation of Chinese Silver

By Peter Kaellgren

This paper is based on a talk on Chinese silver that I presented at the monthly meeting of the Silver Society of Canada in March, 2023. That talk provided me with an opportunity to review and refine the material for an April lecture which was part of the "Silver Linings" evening organized by the Bishop White Committee at the Royal Ontario Museum. Subsequently, Arts of Asia, a journal published in Hong Kong, asked me to write about Chinese silver at the Royal Ontario Museum. Research for that article and the two talks has generated a range of new information and ideas. A number of them are presented in the article that follows. I would like to thank Gwen Adams of the Far Eastern Department, Jennifer Kinnaird of the European Department and Paul Eekhoff, Head ROM photographer, for assisting me with images for the presentations and for this article. The majority of photos in this article are Courtesy of ROM, (Royal Ontario Museum) Toronto, ©ROM

My examination of Chinese silver is from the perspective of a decorative arts curator with a speciality in silver. Research for "Chinoiserie in English Silver," my MA Thesis in Museum Studies (University of Toronto, 1971), provided an introduction to English silver. Chinese-inspired decorative motifs and forms contributed to the design of English silver, especially in the 1680s and in the Rococo period circa 1735-1770. My thesis inspired a secondary interest in studying and collecting Chinese silver. Research into Chinese silver was just beginning in the 1970s. Little was known and pieces were often ignored or under-priced because of a lack of information. The situation has changed considerably since then.

For over 2,000 years, Chinese silversmiths have been skillfully hand-crafting useful articles and jewellery from silver. Silver versions of everyday articles like tea and wine bowls were luxury items or reserved for special occasions. Examples dating before 1700 are rare. Precious metals like silver and gold were often melted down to use as currency or to create new articles. Most surviving pieces of Chinese silver date from the 1800s when Chinese silversmiths were working throughout East Asia and travelling foreigners would order or purchase silver from them because the cost of the labour was far lower than in

the West. The Royal Ontario Museum holds an extensive collection of Chinese silver which provides a survey of selected historic pieces as well as Chinese Export Silver which often follows traditional techniques, designs, and craftsmanship.

Silver and gold have been valued since antiquity because they are scarce, and they look beautiful. Coins of defined weight and purchasing power began to be struck from them in ancient times. By the Middle Ages, in Europe and Britain, the regulation of coins and the precious metal content became a national concern. For example, the London Assay Office was established by Royal Decree in 1300 with all silver coins and silver objects legally required to be of an alloy that was 92.5% pure silver. This became known as the Sterling standard. The name was derived from the master craftsmen or “Esterlings” who came from the east of Europe and introduced an alloy that was both durable for coins and useful objects as well as acceptable for public use. In 1363, a maker’s mark, usually some kind of a device, was often struck on English silver. Town marks, date letters and maker/workshop marks came into use as time progressed. Until the establishment of banks in the early 1800s, many prominent families acquired silver table wares often referred to as “plate” for dining and other silver objects and utensils. These could represent a significant part of the family’s wealth.

In Britain and Europe, the standard of the silver and quality of workmanship were usually guaranteed by the goldsmiths’ guild and hallmarks which were struck on the piece by the assay office after it was made. Goldsmiths’ guilds, assay offices or hallmarks did not exist in China and East Asia. Although reign marks are found on the finest porcelain made for Imperial use, no such marks appear on silver. In the case of Chinese silver, the metal might be of a standard considerably higher than sterling. Gold articles could be of 22 carat or higher content. The absence of marks on East Asian silver made before 1800 and the repetition of models and decorative motifs make it difficult to date pieces. Sometimes dating can be determined by provenance and style. The forms and decorative motifs usually imitate those of comparable objects in ceramics, bronze, lacquer, or other media. The silver may be considered a luxury version of something that was more utilitarian. Ultimately, around 1800, workshop marks and imitations of British hallmarks started to appear on silver made in China and the cities where foreigners traded. By the late 1800s, a range of Chinese marks including one indicating “pure silver” appeared on objects coming from these sources.

A select number of pieces in the ROM collection document the early history of Chinese silver. (Figure 1) These were made using a range of techniques, many of which were still being used by Chinese silversmiths in the 1800s. They are much rarer than their everyday,



Fig.1

Fig.1 Comb, parcel gilt silver. Chinese, Tang Dynasty, 8th Century CE Width 12.8 cm This acquisition was made possible by the generous support of the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust. 2004.73.1, ROM2019_17328_37



Fig.2

Fig.2 Bowl and Cover, silver with gold leaf and flat-chased decoration. Chinese, Tang Dynasty, probably c. 750-800 CE. Diameter 24.5 cm. Weight 1.25 kg. Inscription scratched on the bottom recording the weight and an untraced collector's mark. From the Collection of Viscount and Viscountess Lee of Fareham Collection; given in trust by the Massey Foundation to the Royal Ontario Museum. 997.158.128.1-2, ROM2023_19050_1

functional prototypes in ceramic, lacquer, bronze or other materials. Often, they are small or made for personal use like this comb in silver with repousse or raised relief decoration which has been enhanced by coating selected areas with gold leaf, an extremely thin sheet of gold.

The Lee Collection at the Royal Ontario Museum includes several pieces of Chinese metalwork. One of the more exceptional ones is this bowl with a cover from the Tang Dynasty. (Figure 2) The covered bowl form was apparently inspired by contemporary serving bowls from Iran. This suggests the wide range of contacts that China enjoyed during this period.

Again, the decoration here includes areas that have been covered in gold leaf and traditional designs of lotus plants and pomegranates which were executed by flat chasing. Flat chasing is a technique whereby the pattern is created by impressing outlines into the silver or stamping the surface with a small metal die, usually to create a textured ground. Unlike engraving, which is commonly used by Western silversmiths for linear decoration, initials and coats of arms, no silver is cut away from the surface in the flat chasing process and the weight of the piece remains intact. The linear, flat-chased designs can be quite elegant and understated.

Jewellery and small costume accessories were made in silver and gold. (Figure 3) Hair pins were one of the most common forms in Chinese silver as fashionable women and ladies of the court often required them for elaborate coiffures. This example is enhanced with silver filigree, a technique where fine strands of silver or gold wire are used to construct a small object or provide decoration. Different gauges of wires could be bent into various shapes and joined or soldered into place. Filigree techniques were brought to perfection in China with Guangzhou (then known as Canton) developing into one of the most accomplished centres of production in the 18th and 19th centuries. Jewellery usually represented the wealth of the woman and was her property.

Chinese silver articles dating earlier than the Qing Dynasty are rare. Simon Kwan in his 2018 book, *Chinese Export Silver* offers an interesting explanation:

“The basic techniques of *repousse*, *filigree* and *chasing* were very matured by the Tang dynasty, but silver was never a mainstream household product, and only fell under the category of artwork for appreciation. Their volume was insignificant compared to silk, tea, and ceramics, and they are mentioned in very few texts. China did not mine much silver, and most was used for currency. The conditions did not exist for large exports of silver, and there are extremely few examples of early Chinese export silver within China today.”¹

Silver was used only for luxury, artistic items. Many were likely melted down in the fiscal



Fig. 3

Fig.3 Hair Pin, silver with filigree sections. Chinese, Song Dynasty, c.960-1279 CE. L 12.5 cm The George Crofts Collection. 918.7.197, ROM2023_19058_57

1.Simon Kwan, *Chinese Export Silver*. Hongkong: Muwen Tang Fine Arts Publications Ltd., 2018, page 47.



Fig.4 Teapot and cover, silver. Chinese, circa 1680. London hallmarks for 1682-83. Collection of the Peabody Essex Museum. Museum purchase, made possible by an anonymous donor 1989 E82766.AB H 13.97 cm Courtesy the Peabody Essex Museum

Fig. 4

chaos that plagued the Ming Dynasty. With the rise of the Qing Dynasty and increasing trade with Europe, the quantity of silver in China was augmented. One of the earliest surviving documented examples of this rising trade is a teapot in the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. (Figure 4) Silver scholars have known about this teapot since the early 1900s. It has aroused considerable interest. Current opinion suggests that it was made in the south of China possibly about 1680. It was struck with London hallmarks in 1682-83 and a maker's mark "TA" in a monogram. This was likely the mark of the London silversmith who submitted it to Goldsmiths' Hall to be assayed. Royal regulations in England required all silver to be assayed. If it was not assayed and hallmarked, it was supposed to be melted down.

Because of the importance of this teapot, I flew down to New York in April, 1989, when it was being sold from the Sam Wagstaffe Collection. The Peabody Essex Museum (formerly known as the American Museum of the China Trade) specializes in documenting the American China Trade in the post-Revolutionary period. The PEM purchased the teapot to add to its collection of Chinese Export Silver. The shape and decoration of the teapot were apparently inspired by red stoneware teapots made at Yixing, China. Chinese scholars considered red stoneware teapots from Yixing to be ideal for brewing the finest tea. They often had panels of low-relief decoration or applied Chinese motifs. The relief panels making up the teapot were individually cast as thick pieces of silver, the details chased with tools, and then soldered together to make the body. Such demanding hand work is rare in English and European silver. In China, labour was cheap and hand techniques were affordable.

This teapot is often presented as an icon of the trade that was developing with China in the late 1600s. Trade in the 1600s was dominated by the Dutch East India Company or VOC founded in Amsterdam in 1602. The Dutch were well established with a trading

station in Nagasaki set up in 1616 that gave them exclusive access to Japan, and other trading stations that included Batavia (modern-day Indonesia), Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon) and by the early 1700s, having driven out the Portuguese, a trading station in the Malay States. The British East India Company, founded in 1603, was hot on their heels and by the 1700s, because Britain boasted the largest fleet of ships, began to dominate trade with China and the East. Other European nations like France and even Sweden developed their own versions of the East India Company. Trade was very profitable, not only because of the growing popularity of tea produced in China but because of the silks, porcelain, spices, jewels, exotic woods, and other products that appealed to the Western market. By the early 1700s, the main access to Chinese products was Canton where each of the trading companies maintained warehouses (“*hongs*”) and did business with Chinese merchants.

Trade with China presented interesting problems and opportunities. One quarter of the total population of the globe was living in China at the time.² Nothing comparable to the Chinese cities with a million or more inhabitants existed in Europe. Usually that would mean there was a market for imported European goods but not so! The Chinese were fairly self-sufficient when it came to the agricultural and manufactured goods they consumed. The one thing they wanted was silver.

Bronze currency began circulating in China sometime between the 8th and 5th centuries before the Common Era. By the 12th century of the Common Era, commerce was suffering because there was a shortage of copper for coins and the coins had only limited value. To satisfy the need for high denomination currency to use in transactions, the Imperial Government introduced paper money, the first in the world! Its value was guaranteed by the Government. But when too much paper money was printed for circulation, the result was inflation. The Song Emperors were unsuccessful in using paper money to finance wars against the invading Mongols. By the time of the Ming government (1368-1644), uncoined silver was being used to pay taxes and for commercial transactions. After the Qing Dynasty assumed power, silver became the key to trade. Europeans had to bring it to China if they wanted to purchase anything. Oddly enough, there were interesting discrepancies in the values of precious metals. In Europe an ounce of gold could be purchased for fourteen ounces of silver. In China, seven ounces of silver might be exchanged for an ounce of gold.³ Such was the demand for silver as currency!

² Lindsay Shen, *Silver, Nature and Culture*, London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2017, p. 104, footnote 11; Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, “Born with a ‘Silver Spoon’: The Origin of World Trade in 1571,” *Journal of World History*, Vol. 2 (Autumn, 1995), p. 208.

³ *Ibid.*, p.104.



Fig.5 Brazier with alcohol lamp, silver. Mounted with Chinese silver panels likely produced in the Malay States. Brazier created in the London workshop of David Willaume I, hallmarks for 1698. 16.3 x 25 cm Gift of Norman S. And Marian A. Robertson. Certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act. 988.254.3.1-2, ROM2023_19058_49

With its huge population, China required large quantities of silver. Much of it came directly or indirectly from trade with the Spanish Empire and the Americas. Some of it arrived from the Japanese silver mines of Iwami Ginzan which were very productive in the 1500s. As British trade with China grew in the 1690s, the British East India Company was exporting significant quantities of silver and gold bullion every time a new fleet of ships left London. Most of the currency in Britain was silver and this drain reduced the coinage in circulation. At the time, silver served as an indicator of family status and wealth. New objects like teapots, forks, punch bowls, etc. began to be made in silver. The price included the cost of the silver as well as the cost of making or fashioning the piece in the latest style. This is the origin of the word “fashion.” A combination of silver leaving the country for trade with the East and the use of silver for luxury goods created a currency crisis in Britain.

To prevent sterling silver coins from being melted down and made into objects, His Majesty’s Government instituted a special law which was in effect from 1697 through to 1719. Any new objects were to be made of a silver alloy with a higher content, 95.9% silver as opposed to the 92.5% used in Sterling silver. This did not stop wealthy consumers from continuing to order new silver to add to the family plate. A figure of Britannia was struck on silver of the new standard. It is found on a rare brazier made by the prominent Huguenot silversmith David Willaume I in 1698. (Figure 5) This is one of the treasures of the European Department. It was donated by Torontonians Norman S. and Marian A. Robertson. This brazier has a number of interesting facets.

First, the brazier form used on tables for heating food and beverages was popularized by the Spanish and the Dutch. In Spanish and Dutch still life paintings from the 1600s, one often sees small, red clay braziers for burning charcoal to cook or heat up food set on a tabletop surrounded by food, dishes, drinking glasses, and cutlery. In this case, the primary purpose of this silver brazier was likely to keep a large silver pot of water for



Fig.6

Fig.6 Octagonal bolster cushion endplate ("*buntal pelok*"), silver. Straits Settlements (Malaya), Chinese silversmith, 1800s or earlier. Width 11 cm Reproduced from Ho Wing Meng, *Straits Chinese Silver: A Collector's Guide*. Singapore: Times Books International, 1984, page 74, Fig. 45 Relief decoration includes flowers representing the Four Seasons as commonly found in Chinese decorative arts.

making tea at the boiling point. Imported Chinese tea was an expensive luxury and originally served with a combination of silver utensils and imported Chinese porcelain tea bowls and saucers.

Nine oblong, oval panels with pointed ends are mounted around the brazier body as decoration. Each shows a different Chinese design ranging from landscapes to flowers and cranes in a garden. These thin sheets of silver with hand-worked decoration were apparently created by a Chinese craftsman. The thin gauge of the silver and the detailed decoration suggest that they were designed to be sewn onto a textile item.

Similar panels, created to be sewn onto the ends of small bolster cushions covered in rich fabric, are documented as having been made by Chinese silversmiths working in Malaysia. (Figure 6) A number of different shapes by Chinese silversmiths are documented by Dr. Ho Wing Meng as having been made in the Malay States, an area that was important for the spice trade. Dr Meng illustrates a range of these "*buntal kepala*" or "*buntal pelok*" panels which have been preserved by established families in Malaysia, in the past often referred to as the Straits Settlements.⁴ Dr. Meng explains that:

"It was customary for the *peranakan* Chinese, in days gone by, to attach specially crafted pieces of silver plates to the opposite ends of pillows and bolsters intended for the bridal bed. This was a practice which the traditional Straits Chinese borrowed from the natives of Malacca. The custom was not indigenous to China, for pillow and bolster plates were never used in ancient China."⁵

⁴ Ho Wing Meng, *Straits Chinese Silver: A Collector's Guide*. Singapore: Times Books International, 1984, Chapter 4, "The Various Categories of Straits Chinese Silver," "Buntal Plates and Pillow Ends," pp. 64-76; Figures 32 to 47.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 64.

⁶ *Ibid*, p.65.

Dr. Meng describes such silver panels as being “among the most commonly encountered samples of Straits silverwork, . . . ”⁶

While studying the ROM Collection, I was able to identify two pairs of the rectangular “buntal kepala” pillow cushion panels that have been in the Museum since 1924. (They were originally identified as 17th-century Venetian panels designed to be mounted on book bindings.) (Figure 7) Dating from the 1800s or earlier, this pair of cushion end panels was made for the members of the Muslim community as they have no naturalistic Chinese decorative motifs. The panels in the Willaume brazier may have arrived in London through trade with the Malay States. What better way to show off such small exotic imports to your guests than to mount them in a large silver brazier used when serving a formal tea! The London hallmarks indicate its the panels were produced and brought to England by 1697.

One of the best-documented, early pieces of Chinese Export Silver was recently discovered and acquired for the Palace of Versailles. [Unfortunately, we are not able to illustrate it because of the high cost of reproducing a photo from Versailles. For an illustration online, see the paper by Susan Eberhard cited below.] In September, 1686, an embassy from King Phra Narai of Siam (Thailand) met with Louis XIV in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The King of Siam was seeking European alliances to protect his kingdom. This Embassy had been preceded by several smaller ones and was carefully planned with the French diplomat Abbe Timoléon de Choisy in Siam advising on the selection of appropriate gifts from the rich treasure houses of imported goods that Phra Narai had accumulated. Apart from textiles, lacquers and other items, the formal, diplomatic gifts included 80 pieces of gold and silver. The one surviving piece which bears an engraved inventory number



Fig.7 Rectangular pillow endplate (“*buntal kepala*”), silver. Straits Settlements (Malaya), Chinese silversmith, 1800s or earlier. 8 x 20 cm Museum purchase. 924.64.6a

indicating that it was part of the French Royal Collection is a silver ewer. In contemporary records, it is described as a “chocolatiere” or pot for serving hot chocolate, a fashionable beverage that had recently been introduced from the Americas. However, the form of the pot is not appropriate for preparing hot chocolate. The name was possibly chosen to make the silver ewer sound even more exotic. The ewer was also recorded as being from Japan (“du Japon”). Recent research by John Hawkins indicates that Chinese silversmiths were working closely with Japanese metalsmiths connected with the Dutch trading station at Nagasaki.⁷

Susan Eberhard, an American scholar who specializes in Chinese silver, has intensively researched the silver ewer.⁸ All of the tiny relief motifs were individually cast and finished and then meticulously soldered onto the surface. The combination of bamboo, pine and flowering plum branches are Chinese emblems of spring and resilience from surviving the winter and represent traditional scholarly virtues. The diplomatic gift of silver and the visit of the Siamese Embassy to the Court of Versailles was regarded as an extremely important event and is illustrated in the royal Almanack for the following year.

Dr. Ho Wing Meng appears to have been the first to correctly identify this pot form as a wine ewer.⁹ He illustrates an example from an old Chinese collection in the Malay States and dates it to the late seventeenth century or early eighteenth century.¹⁰ Meng suggests that the scenes of horsemen and scholars in its relief panels were inspired by events recounted in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. The finial is a carefully modelled “ch’i-ling” or mythological lion.

The travelling exhibition *Treasures of Catherine the Great* in 2000 revealed a surprising number of pieces of Chinese silver from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that had been presented to Romanov rulers. Teapots, wine ewers, matching wine bowls, incense burners, solid silver and gold Chinese figures and exceptional examples of silver filigree are stored and displayed in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Solid evidence for dating survives in period inventories. In the exhibition catalogue, Dr. Maria Menshikova illustrates and describes a similar wine pot which can be dated to the last

⁷ John Hawkins, “Chinese Silversmiths Working in Nagasaki between 1660 and 1800,” *Silver Studies: The Journal of the Silver Society*, no.33 (2016-2017): 139-158.

⁸ Susan Eberhard, “The Asian Silver Chocolatiere: The Transpacific World in a Diplomatic Gift,” *Journal 18: a journal of eighteenth-century art and culture*. Issue #14 Silver (Fall, 2022): 1-25.

⁹ Ho Wing Meng, *Straits Chinese Silver*. Singapore: University Education Press, 1976, page 252, Figure 134, and pp. 87-88. Dr. Ho Wing Meng seems to have been the first to associate this wine ewer form with the silver example in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum (VAM M6912 1955). The V&A dates it anytime between 1680 and the earliest decades of the 1700s. The finial is a gnarled flowering branch with cherry blossoms.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-159, Figure 126.



Fig.8



Fig.9

Fig.8 Wine Ewer, silver. South China, circa 1680-1700. H 15.5 cm Weight 611 grams. Gift of Norman S. And Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.293.1-2 All silver from the Robertson Gift that is illustrated below in this article was Certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act.

Fig.9 Interior view of Wine Ewer in Figure 8. Photo courtesy Jennifer Kinnaird.

¹¹ Maria Menshikova, "Oriental Rooms and Catherine's Chinese Collections," in Natalya Guseva and Catherine Phillips, *Treasures of Catherine the Great*. Exhibition catalogue. London: Hermitage Development Trust, 2000, p. 221, no. 368, small illustration. Hermitage Collection, Inv. No. L S 87 a,b. A set of six silver cups with removable covers is associated with the winepot.

¹² *Ibid.*, page 221, no. 369; illustrated page 222, Inv. No. L S 162 a,b and 163 a,b.

quarter of the seventeenth century.¹¹ She also illustrates two from a set of six silver cups with covers that came with the pot.¹² Meng and Men-shikova both suggest that these wine sets were likely produced by silversmiths in the south of China. The Hermitage Collection provides useful documentation because all of the pieces can be checked against period inventories. The servants in the Imperial Household, whether at The Hermitage or the Kremlin, were very careful to safely preserve the collections. This is one of those important instances where provenance helps to date silver when there are no marks.

Fortunately, the silver collection donated to the ROM by the late Norman and Marian Robertson includes one of these rare wine pots. (Figure 8) Although originally described as a teapot or a coffee pot, the ivory insulators in the handle of this solid silver pot are later additions made in Europe. Chinese teapots usually had a small vent hole in the cover to allow steam to escape from the boiling water used to brew the tea. In this case, there is no vent hole. This and the fact that the handle was originally solid silver which would have conducted the heat of boiling water almost unbearably to the hand of the person pouring from the pot indicate that this was a pot for serving wine at room temperature.

The manner in which the body of the pot has been created is unlike anything found in Western silver. (Figure 9) Apparently, a thick slab of solid silver that was twisted into shape and joined along the edge with the decoration being carefully worked by hand using a range of tools. Normal practice in Western silversmithing would be to raise the body from an ingot or a sheet of silver using hammers



Fig.10

Fig.10 Small Round Box, silver. Chinese, workshop of Cutshing, c.1800-1825. Diameter 7 cm 86 grams. Gift of Norman S. and Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.294.1-2 Engraved Latin motto: "VESTIGIA NULLA RETROR SUM. FINE" and a cap of maintenance surmounted by a wyvern.

Fig.11 Rosewater Sprinkler, silver. Chinese, workshop of Lynchong, Canton, c.1800-1825. H 28.9 cm 328 gm Gift of Norman S. And Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.295.1-2



Fig.11

and other tools. If relief decoration or surface textures were wanted, the body was then filled with pitch (a resinous mixture that supported the silver and could easily be melted and removed) and worked from the outside with a set of smaller tools.

For the study of post-1800 Chinese silver, it is useful to consider examples from the European Collection and other areas of the Royal Ontario Museum. Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars when the British Navy and British merchant ships dominated the seas, there seems to have been a huge flowering of Chinese silver made for export. Surviving pieces from this later period are what most often survive and appear on the market. There was also an increasing production of silver objects for the rich and nobility in China, in part stimulated by the proceeds of commerce and the need to appear equal to Westerners.

This small box looks like it was produced to serve as part of a travelling dressing table set. (Figure 10) The marks on the bottom indicate that it was made in the workshop of Cutshing of Canton about 1800-1825. The engraved family crest, a mythological wyvern standing on a cap of maintenance and the motto "VESTIGIA NULLA RETROR SUM. FINE" were most likely added in England.

At 28.9 cm (12 inches) tall, this rosewater sprinkler is a good example from the same period of production. (Figure 11) The pierced mushroom cap screws off to allow the vessel to be filled with rosewater. The silver is of good weight and of a quality comparable to contemporary British production. The outside of the foot is struck with the mark used by the workshop of Lynchong of New China Street, Canton, between 1800 and 1825, as well as pseudo hallmarks imitating those found on English silver. These include a monarch's



Fig.12

Fig. 12 Tankard, silver. Cutshing Workshop, Canton, c. 1840-1860. 11 cm Museum purchase. 967.11

head, an L, a crowned leopard and the lion passant as used by the London Assay Office. These imitation hallmarks may have pleased clients at the time because they raised fewer questions if the silver object arrived in Great Britain. This rosewater sprinkler is particularly interesting because Norman S. Robertson purchased it when he was in Cairo, Egypt. Chinese rosewater sprinklers found a good market throughout the Far East, the Indian subcontinent, in the Middle East and in Iran where it was customary to use rosewater as an air freshener and a tonic when temperatures were high. Chinese porcelain and glass rosewater sprinklers were produced in large quantities.

One of the first pieces of Chinese Export Silver that was acquired by the Royal Ontario Museum is this tankard. (Figure 12) It was purchased by Heri Hickl-Szabo, Head Curator in the European Department, from a Ward Price auction in Toronto in January, 1967. Tankards are a distinctly British form of drinking vessel that was used for consuming beer, ale, and cider. These beverages were unknown in China. The tankard bears the mark of the workshop of Cutshing, Canton, and likely dates sometime between 1840 and 1860. The Cutshing workshop was still operating in 1875. On the front of the tankard, there is a round medallion where one can still distinguish the engraved name of its original owner: John Herbert d'Almeida. He was most likely Portuguese and may well have been a resident of Macau, the Portuguese colony and trading base near Canton. In the course of my research, I discovered that this tankard had been illustrated in *Chinese Export Silver* (1975) where its ownership was given as "Ex collection Ward-Price, Ltd., Toronto, Canada."¹³

The workmanship is of exceptional quality with the applied reliefs of birds, bamboo and plum blossoms

¹³ H. A. Crosby Forbes, John Devereux Kernan and Ruth S. Wilkins, *Chinese Export Silver 1785 to 1885*. Milton, Mass.: Museum of the American China Trade, 1975; catalogue entry page 101; illustrated page 204, Fig. 138. Kang-mei Wang, Librarian in the Bishop White Committee Library at the Royal Ontario Museum drew this to my attention.

being cast individually and then meticulously soldered onto the surface of the tankard. The bamboo borders at the top and bottom were also separately cast as was the handle comprised of twisted bamboo and a branch of flowering plum. English silversmiths have always found it challenging to neatly solder cast motifs or a layer of silver onto the surface of a piece of silver. This technique first appeared on English silver around 1700 when it was referred to as “cut card work” because the layer of silver often looked like it had been cut from cardboard. Chinese silversmiths like those associated with the workshop of Cutshing were obviously far more adept at the soldering technique.

Another simpler tankard from the Cutshing Workshop in the ROM Collection is ornamented with bamboo and insects. (Figure 13) The marks on the bottom were intended to suggest British hallmarks. Certainly, the quality of the workmanship and the silver alloy equalled the best work in England at the time.

One of the other major silver workshops in Canton was operated by Khecheong. (Figure 14) These two goblets about 17.2 cm tall from the Robertson donation are evidence of the quality of his productions. The one on the left has cast figures taken from scenes in traditional Chinese stories or theatrical performances. The goblet on the right is decorated with flat chasing, a technique that dates back to the Tang Dynasty. Even though these goblets follow a European form, they are enhanced by the Chinese decoration.



Fig.13

Fig.13 Tankard, silver, double-walled with gilt interior. Chinese, attributed to the workshop of Ta Hsing, Canton, c.1840-1860. H 10.1 cm 230 gm Round boss opposite the handle engraved “Annie Grant”. Gift of Norman S. and Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.296



Fig.14 Two Goblets, silver. Khecheong Workshop, Canton, c.1850-1860. H. 17.4 and 17.2 cm Wt. 354 and 262 g Gift of Norman S. And Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.298 and .299



Fig.15



Fig.16



Fig.17

Fig.15 Egg-shaped Needle Case, silver with fine repoussé and chased decoration. Chinese, unmarked, probably a workshop in Canton, c. 1840-1860. H 7 cm Gift of Norman S. and Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.297

Fig.16 Calling Card Case, silver filigree with gilded clouds. Chinese, Canton, c.1850-1880. H 10 cm Gift of Susan Zalai. CHN2022-003.1.1

Fig.17 Calling Card Case, silver with repoussé decoration of chrysanthemums and cherry or plum blossoms. Chinese, struck with two marks, initials AW and a Chinese character, workshop to be determined, c. 1860-1890. H 8 cm Purchased from Gorevic, New York City. Gift of Norman S. and Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.300.1-2

Many of the objects produced by the silver workshops in Canton and other treaty ports were small souvenirs suitable for taking home to mothers, wives, and other loved ones. (Figure 15) This needle case is a good example. It is about 4 centimetres high. The ring at the top allowed it to be hung from a chain on a lady's chatelaine, the group of keys and small household tools that a well-off homemaker often carried suspended from the waist. The egg form opens to reveal a hollow spool for winding on convenient lengths of thread. Sewing needles might be stored in the hollow centre of the spool. The relief design on the outside shows five small squirrels leaping around a grape vine. This is a traditional design often found in Chinese decorative arts. The Chinese considered the design motifs to signify abundant offspring because squirrels reproduce easily and grapes contain large quantities of seeds. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Robertson purchased this piece from Heri Hickl-Szabo about 1988 when he was operating an antique shop following his retirement.

Another type of object that would have appealed to fashionable Victorian men and women was the calling card case or "carte de visite" case. (Figure 16) Up to the early 1900s, it was customary in Western society to have small cards printed with your name which you could give to new acquaintances, use on a variety of social occasions, and insert in gifts. This particularly elaborate silver filigree example with relief dragons and small silver-gilt clouds that tremble around them was recently donated to the Far Eastern Department. Silver filigree is easily damaged. Most of these silver filigree creations originally came in hand-made boxes with the printed label of the workshop or retailer on them. One does not know whether such silver filigree was reserved for special occasions or simply displayed in a cabinet for the family

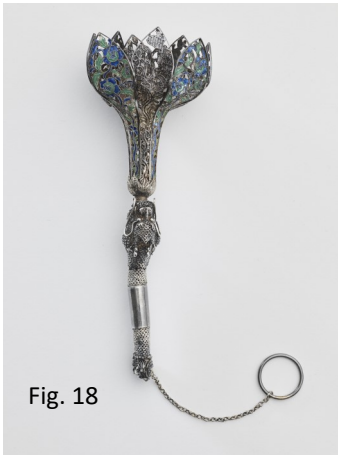


Fig. 18 Posy Holder, silver filigree with enamel decoration. Canton, c.1850-1880. 16 cm Textile Department Collection. 925X94.7

and guests to admire. (Figure 17) This other calling card case with decoration of relief cherry blossoms is more practical for carrying in the purse or pocket. Part of the Robertson donation, it dates to about 1860 and is struck with maker's initials AW and a Chinese character.

Another example of these small luxury gifts is this posy holder of silver filigree with enamel decoration from the ROM Textile Collection. (Figure 18) The funnel-shape to hold the small bouquet is mounted in the mouth of a dragon's head. Dragons were a very common motif on Chinese Export Silver made between 1850 and 1940. This delicate posy holder was likely made in Canton and originally came in a box where it was stored when not in use.

Posy holders in silver, base metals and sometimes gold were introduced into European fashion in the late 1830s. They were considered an elegant lady's accessory for carrying a small bouquet at a ball, the theatre and on other formal occasions. The chain with the ring allowed the lady to dangle the bouquet while dancing. Many of them had a second chain with a large pin which was inserted crosswise through the metal network to hold the bouquet in place. Posy holders went out of style as a fashion accessory in the 1880s. Between the Textiles, European and Canadiana Departments, the Royal Ontario Museum has a collection of approximately sixty that includes some exceptional examples.

By the late 1800s the quantity of silver circulating in the world had greatly increased. Those Chinese who could afford it were purchasing items made of silver. One of the less admirable sidelines of the British East India Company was the opium trade. Despite Imperial Edicts beginning in 1729, prohibiting its importation, the trade grew along with the number of addicts in China. Chinese efforts to combat the trade triggered two European invasions of China, the first between 1839 and 1842.¹⁴ The second invasion by the British



Fig.19



Fig.20



Fig.21

Fig.19 Opium Box, silver with flat-chased decoration. Chinese, Sichuan Province, mark of the silversmith Yu Shu He, 19th century. 3.8 x 3.8 cm Gift of H. J. Eiley. 992.172.9.1-2 The boxes in Figures 19, 20 and 21 were all Certified by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act.

Fig.20 Opium Box, silver with applied cast reliefs of orchids, plum blossoms and a bat. Chinese, marked He, 19th century. 3.6 x 3.6 cm Gift of H. J. Eiley 992.172.1-2

Fig.21 Opium Box, silver with enamel decoration. Chinese, 19th century. 4.8 x 4.8 cm Gift of H. J. Eiley. 992.172.13.1-2

and French occurred between 1856 and 1860, when the old Summer Palace was looted and burned. To-day this unfortunate addiction is documented by various paraphernalia for taking opium.

Chinese silversmiths produced small silver boxes for carrying the opium. In 1992, Mr. H. J. Eiley presented the Royal Ontario Museum with an unusual collection of fifty-three silver opium boxes. They demonstrate the range of traditional Chinese silver techniques and popular motifs. (Figure 19) One of the plainer examples is decorated with flat-chased boughs of plum blossoms and bamboo. Kang-Mei Wang of the Far Eastern Library has identified the mark as being that of Yu Shu He, a silversmith working in Sichuan Province. (Figure 20) Others have relief decoration. The panels of orchids and plum blossoms on this box are emblems of spring and an auspicious bat appears on the top. (Figure 21) Others are highlighted with colourful enamels that are fired on to be permanent. There is a delightful butterfly on the top of this one. Kang-Mei identified the characters on this box as Lan Hua Ting Zhi, the name of a pleasure pavilion called the Lily Pavilion, probably located in a park. Some of the forms of these small boxes may have been suggested by syreh sets made in the Malay States for storing and preparing betel nuts for chewing.¹⁵ Syreh sets often included small cylindrical containers which held lime paste which was consumed when chewing pieces of betel nut.

The second opium war led to the opening of ports like Shanghai and Hong Kong where the production of silver had become big business by around 1900.

¹⁴ "Opium Wars," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Opium-Wars> (accessed January 10, 2024).

¹⁵ Ho Wing Meng, 1984, pp. 132-142, "Betel-nut or sireh boxes," Figures 104-112. Silver versions of these sets were traditional wedding gifts in the Malay States. They included small round and small cylindrical boxes.



Fig.22



Fig.23

Fig.22 Centrepiece or Comport, cast and pierced silver. Chinese, Hong Kong, workshop of Wang Hing, circa 1890-1920. H. 31 cm 1245 g Purchased from Gorevic, New York City. Gift of Norman S. and Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.301

Fig.23 Three Piece Tea Set, silver with decoration of birds and bamboo. Chinese, Hong Kong, workshop of Wang Hing, c. 1900-1925. H (teapot) 10.9 cm Total Weight of 3 pieces 703 g Purchased from Gorevic, New York City. Gift of Norman S. and Marian A. Robertson. 993.53.302.1-3

One of the major producers in Hong Kong was the Wang Hing workshop. Its creations are usually clearly marked with the initials "WH." (Figure 22) The Robertson donation included two examples: a particularly elegant Victorian style centrepiece 31cm or about 12 inches tall. The pierced dish is mounted on three outward curving bamboo columns with cranes at the bottom. (Figure 23) The other is a typical small tea service with decoration inspired by bamboo. Small sized tea services and, by the 1920s, cocktail shakers were common production pieces for these workshops. The quality of the silver and the workmanship is always excellent.



Fig.24

A wide variety of smaller pieces came from the Wang Hing workshop. (Figure 24) This goblet with a sea dragon stem likely dates to between 1900 and 1930. In the 1940s, a lady donated it to the Seafeld School in the south of England to serve as a school colour cup. It came on the antique market in Brighton, England, in the early 1970s and joined the ROM collection in 1982. Originally, it may have been part of a larger set.

Fig.24 Goblet, repoussé and chased silver bowl with cast stem. Chinese, Wang Hing Workshop, Hong Kong, c.1900-1930. H 6 cm Gift of Dr. Peter Kaellgren. 982.224.1



Fig.25 Miniature Chinese Chair, silver. Chinese, Wang Hing Workshop, Hong Kong, c.1900-1930s. H 5 cm Museum purchase. 991.30.4

Fig.25



Fig.26

Fig.26 Tea Set, silver. Chinese, Chengdu, Sichuan, c.1925, mark of the silversmith Chong Qing. H (jug) 18 cm Gift of Dr. and Mrs. J. J. Mullett. 997.69.43.1-.5

Many prominent people including Queen Mary, the wife of King George V, collected miniature silver articles during the first half of the 20th century. These were displayed in cabinets, doll houses or as small decorative objects in the home. (Figure 25) The Wang Hing workshop created a whole range of these miniatures. This tiny silver model of a Chinese chair with a bat on the top rail is representative of what the Wang Hing workshop could do. It was purchased at Portobello Market in London for the European collection at the ROM where there is an important group of English silver toys that were made as doll house miniatures around 1700. A Chinese chair was selected for acquisition because Louise Hawley Stone, who founded the Bishop White Committee, wrote her Master's Thesis for the University of Toronto on the evolution of the Chair in China.¹⁶

By the 1920s, foreigners who visited China or lived there for any period of time often acquired locally made silver. Silver, especially tea services, was considered a status symbol and used for entertaining important guests. (Figure 26) This tea service has an additional pot which could be used for either hot water or even coffee, if desired. The open bowl was used to hold spent, loose tea leaves and cold tea because tea bags were not yet in common use. This allowed for more pots of tea to be brewed with fresh leaves. Kang-Mei was able to identify the maker as being Chong Quing, another silversmith working in Sichuan Province. She suggested that the proliferation of silversmiths working in Sichuan may have developed from the "Silk Road" which

¹⁶Louise Hawley Stone, "The Chair in China," MA thesis, University of Toronto, 1950.

passed through the area in past centuries transporting Chinese products by land through the Middle East to Europe.

Accompanying the tea service is a small cylindrical container about 9 cm tall. (Figure 27) It may have been used to hold the dry tea leaves. It is particularly interesting because it shows many of typical Chinese silver working techniques and traditional motifs. The cover with the dragon's head was likely formed by stamping the sheet of silver over a hard metal die and then finishing the details with chasing tools. The side shows floral patterns including lotus, probably orchids and apparently cockscomb, all traditional Chinese flowers. These were executed using the flat chasing technique.

If you look into the interior of the cylinder, you can see the evidence of flat chasing. (Figure 28) A sheet of silver of the desired size was placed on a supportive surface. The floral panels were indented using sharp metal rod. The background was stamped using a small punch. Once the designs were completed, the sheet of silver would have been heated and curved to form a cylinder with the join being soldered. A disk of silver was soldered into the bottom. The soft, faded texture of the flat chasing contrasts with the robust relief of the cover.

In the 1890s, when people were travelling more and taking vacations, it became popular in the US and Britain to collect silver souvenir spoons. These could be used at home when serving tea to friends or displayed in cabinets or on wooden racks. Chinese silversmiths were quick to cater to the tourist trade. (Figure 29) The six souvenir spoons shown here are recent



Fig.27



Fig.29

Fig.27 Cylindrical Container, silver with flat-chased decoration. Chinese, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, c.1925, probably from the workshop of Chong Qing. H 6 cm Gift of Dr. and Mrs. J. J. Mullett. 997.69.44.1-2

Fig.28 Interior of the cylindrical container in 19 showing the impressions from flat chasing. 997.69.44.1



Fig.29

Fig.29 Six Silver Souvenir Spoons. Five left examples, Chinese, unmarked, various workshops, c. 1920s -1940. Far right example with niello, Thailand, 1940s or 1950s. L 13 cm Anonymous Gift in memory of Danuta Buczynski. CHN2023-005-.1-.6 Gwen Adams photo.



Fig.30

Fig.30 Fork for thin lemon slices for tea, silver. Chinese, unmarked, probably 1920s. L 11.5 cm Private Collection. Photo by Gwen Adams.

donations to the ROM Far Eastern collection in memory of Danuta Buczynski. The pagoda may represent one in a particular city. Pagodas were erected as observation towers in many Chinese cities. They were used to observe troop movements and to detect potential fires that needed to be extinguished. The one with the octagonal disk at the end of the handle is ornamented with the character for Happiness. These spoons likely date somewhere between the 1920s and 1940. The Bangkok souvenir spoon with niello decoration was made in Thailand probably in the 1940s or 1950s.

Chinese silversmiths also made useful utensils. (Figure 30) This small fork with a teapot finial was designed for serving thin slices of fresh lemon with your tea. It probably dates to the 1920s. There is an example from the Cassels family of Toronto on display in the European Galleries at the ROM (Accession no. 980.108). This second one came from the family of Chief Justice Robertson of Toronto.



Fig.31 Pair of articulated Dragon Bracelets, silver. Chinese, 1920s. D. 6.7 cm Gift of Mr. and Mrs. G. G. Hinton. 998.43.2.1-2



Fig.31

Considerable quantities of Chinese silver, silver gilt and some gold jewellery survive from the first half of the 20th century. Some pieces are mounted with jade, coral or pearls or enamelled. Often the silver jewellery is attributed to Canton, though other production sites are being identified. The standard of the silver and the craftsmanship can be excellent. Here are a few, selected examples from the ROM collection. (Figure 31) This pair of articulated dragon bracelets displays a standard Chinese motif, two dragon heads devouring the celestial pearl. They date from the 1920s.

Buckles are a recurring theme in Chinese silver. In the Malay States, an elaborately decorated oval form, sometimes referred to as a "pindang," served as a sign of status and was



Fig.32

Fig.32 Bracelet, silver with applied filigree and granulation. Chinese, acquired in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, c. 1920. 6.6 x 6 cm Gift of Dr. and Mrs. J. J. Mullett. 997.41.4



Fig.33

Fig.33 Dragon Brooch, silver filigree. Chinese, acquired in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, c. 1920. Width 7 cm Gift of Dr. and Mrs. J. J. Mullett 997.41.12

used on a belt at the waist. This bracelet of buckle form was made in China in the early 1900s. (Figure 32) With its applied silver filigree and small beads of silver known as granulation, it is a bold “statement” piece of jewellery. It is decorated with two Chinese characters that would make it special for the wearer. The oval panel shows the character for “Long Life” and the other characters stand for “Happiness.”

Our study concludes with the archetypal Chinese form, the dragon. (Figure 33) Here it is presented as a silver filigree brooch from the early 20th century. It almost seems to undulate as the wearer moves. As always, the craftsmanship is superb and represents many centuries of practice and achievements by Chinese silversmiths.

THOUGHTS ON FURTHER RESEARCH

Since the 1980s, in part because of the collecting and research at the Peabody Essex Museum (formerly known as the American Museum of the China Trade), Chinese Export Silver has attracted a growing audience of collectors which now includes many Chinese. In the 1970s, Asian silver was largely ignored by collectors and serious scholars. For example, the Seafeld School Colour Cup (Figure 24) which was made in the Wang Hing Workshop was purchased in Brighton, England for about \$15.00 Canadian in the mid 1970s. Today, Sotheby’s and Christie’s sell Chinese Export Silver. And prestige dealers like Koopman Fine Art located in the Silver Vaults in London often retail exceptional pieces and offer informed lectures on the topic.

This is an exciting time to be researching Chinese silver. It has become valuable enough that pieces are appearing in auctions where they are well documented. There is still much to learn about Chinese silversmiths working in

East Asia. Further research focussed on specific topics will enable us to better appreciate their work in the context of world silver production. For example, workshop practices and techniques for European and British silversmiths have been handed down through apprenticeships and are well documented. Today, we know little about how Chinese silversmiths were trained, their workshops, techniques, or tools. A better understanding of these aspects would allow us to assess individual pieces more accurately.

As part of this research, one needs to consider the possibility that master patterns were likely kept by workshops in order to cast frequently used component parts by the lost wax process. It also appears that there may have been master dies (relief patterns) cast of hard metal over which thin sheets of silver might be applied and pounded on to more easily create relief patterns of consistent quality. A good example of this is the “*buntal pelak*” or pillow cushion end panel in Figure 7. There are two of them, nearly identical in the ROM collection, along with another pair of a different design. The relief designs on each member of a pair are the same, and there is minimal hand chasing to enhance the details. This suggests that the panels were produced using a die rather than individually hand-crafted. Hand work would have been highly demanding considering the fine details of the design and the cost of the working time involved. The dragon motif on the top of the cylindrical container (Figure 27) also looks like it was made using a die. Such a dragon motif would have been useful for a number of different articles produced in the silver-smith’s shop.

Silver filigree is often confusing because similar techniques were employed over a number of centuries in different countries, and it is seldom marked. John Hawkins in his paper “Chinese Silversmiths working in Nagasaki between 1660 and 1800” (2017)¹⁷ indicated his intention to publish a second paper on silver filigree made by Chinese craftsmen working under Dutch patronage in Batavia (Indonesia) from the early 1600s to about 1740 when domestic turmoil led to the massacre of most of the Chinese population. According to Hawkins, those filigree craftsmen who escaped founded the filigree industry in Canton. When Mr. Hawkins’ paper on the topic appears, it will be truly ground-breaking as exceptional filigree from Canton was owned by celebrities like Catherine the Great and Queen Charlotte.

¹⁷ Hawkins, *Ibid.*, page 139.

European silver is easier to assess and identify since medieval and later pieces bear hallmarks. These usually correspond to the alloy of the silver and can be helpful in determining whether an unmarked piece is from Continental Europe, Britain, or France. Marks representing the standard of the silver only began to appear on Chinese silver in the late 1800s. To assess the alloy of most pieces it is necessary to employ XRF or chemical analysis. It could prove useful to compile an accessible record of these analyses as the alloy may be key to determining the origin and date of an early piece. With its collection of over 800 examples of Chinese silver, the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts might be the appropriate base to begin those analyses and records. Karina Corrigan, Associate Director – Collections at the PEM, informed me that their records in this area are limited,¹⁸ though what they have on file suggests that the standard of silver produced could vary from Sterling to an even higher content.

In Britain and Europe, it was standard practice for clients ordering new silver from a silversmith to bring in old and damaged household plate and coins that could be melted down to create the new items. Only a limited quantity of silver was mined in China. This meant that Chinese silversmiths had to depend on imported silver bullion or coins for their products. For the study of Chinese silver, it could be useful to chemically analyze the silver alloys of the coins in circulation in the 1600s through to the early 1800s. These would have included Spanish Reales, Austrian “Maria Theresas,” Japanese coins, English coins, and others. Depending on where the coins were minted, it may be possible now or at some future date to detect trace elements which could indicate what coins were melted down to create the silver and for which market a piece might have been made. The Chinese appetite for silver currency remained strong well into the 20th century. Many of the Chinese artifacts that the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada acquired prior to 1940 were purchased from Chinese vendors with Mexican silver dollars, at the time a precious metal currency that was easily available and widely recognized.

A small number of the early Qing examples of Chinese Export silver were struck with the marks of silversmiths or workshops in England or Europe. These silversmith’s or workshop marks do not appear to have been researched or identified in the literature. A good example of this is the teapot in the Peabody Essex Museum (Figure 4) which is described as being hallmarked in London in 1682-83 and struck with the maker’s mark TA co-joined. A mark following that description was illustrated by Sir Charles James Jackson,

¹⁸ Karina Corrigan, email to Peter Kaellgren, December 16, 2023.

the first scholar to seriously attempt to decipher all of the marks on silver made in Britain. It is recorded on two pieces hallmarked in London in 1682-83.¹⁹ Over the last thirty-five years, considerable progress has been made in identifying the silversmiths or workshops that used these marks. It would be interesting to use that information to interpret these early pieces of Export Silver as the status of the silversmith who presented the piece to the assay office and possibly the identity of their clients might shed further light on the China Trade.

Another example of how marks struck later in Europe suggests trade patterns relates to two of the wine pots. The Southern Chinese wine pot (Figure 8) bears a Dutch assay mark stamped on second-hand silver sold via the antiques trade between 1814 and 1953. Does this mean that it has a history of ownership in The Netherlands? A similar pot with Dutch silver marks c. 1781 was sold by Sotheby's, New York.²⁰ Are both of these wine pots artifacts that document Dutch trade and diplomatic activities in the Far East? Did they originally come with a set of up to six silver cups like the one in The Hermitage collection? Dr. Ho Wing Meng has illustrated examples with a history of ownership in the Malay States. Around 1700, the Dutch drove out the Portuguese who dominated the spice trade there. Might this have been the source of these silver wine pots made in South China?

As more Chinese Export Silver comes on the market and is documented, it may be possible to begin grouping pieces in terms of workshops or where they were produced. Although many of the examples are modest, the range of pieces that can be attributed to Sichuan in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum suggests that this was an important production area and documents the skills of silversmiths in the region. Dr. Ho Wing Meng's two books on Straits' silver indicate that studies of local production can provide helpful insights and also identify types of objects commonly used in a region.

¹⁹ Sir Charles James Jackson, *English Goldsmiths and Their Marks*. Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1921, page 140, found on "The 'Stockton' Cup: [Collection of the] Innholders' Company." Further down the column, an identical monogram (identified as IA) is recorded as being on a "Wager cup: Messrs. Crichton Bros." [a prominent London dealer]

²⁰ Sotheby's, New York, 28 October, 1992, Lot 221. Illustrated. With commission, this "coffee pot" sold for \$7,150.00 U.S.

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Dr. Peter Kaellgren served as curator in the European Department at the Royal Ontario Museum from 1972 until the end of 2009. During his career, he worked on ceramics, furniture, design graphics, metalwork, and increasingly focussed on silver from 1984 onwards.

Dr. Kaellgren received a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in 1987 with a doctoral dissertation on the evolution of the console table in England from the seventeenth century to c.1800. He has lectured widely and taught courses of the history of European ceramics and glass at the University of Toronto. His articles have appeared in scholarly and popular publications. He is a member of the Silver Society (England) and a founding member of the Silver Society of Canada. Upon his retirement in 2009, he was granted Curator Emeritus by the Royal Ontario Museum. Since 2013, he and his partner, the photographer John Alexander, have become increasingly involved in searching for native orchids in Canada and in documenting them.