

In 1977, **Thierry Audric** left his position as associate professor in Geology at the École nationale supérieure des Mines in Paris, to start a career as cultural and scientific cooperation counsellor at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His duties led him to live nearly twenty years in Asia, four of which in China where he discovered the fascinating beauty of Chinese reverse glass painting.

In 2007, he decided to research this art, and discovered that it was born in the Eighteenth-century in Canton, from an artistic encounter between China and the West. Eager to make this art more widely known and appreciated, he wrote this book based on the dissertation he defended in 2016 at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

“Displaying a talent for combining aesthetic sensibility with scientific rigor, the author has given new life to something that once excited European passions: an original, non-academic art at the forefront of the ‘new technology’ of the time.

For decades, aristocrats of the Old World and then American collectors (the latter at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries) spent countless sums on the purchase of these works, which were worth a fortune. These wealthy collectors of curiosities of all types were also most certainly great dreamers seeking a worthy setting for their dreams. Unbeknownst to them, their endeavours had much greater scope, creating and nourishing the conditions for a rare encounter between two worlds: a golden age of atypical collaboration, a combined adventure between China and Europe”.

Danielle Elisseeff




PETER LANG
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Thierry Audric
Chinese reverse glass painting 1720-1820



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Chinese reverse glass painting 1720-1820

An artistic meeting
between China and the West

Preface by Danielle Elisseeff

“For over a year I have scarcely done anything else than paint on glass. A large number of beautiful large mirrors are brought from Europe, which the mandarins of Canton buy from the merchant ships and offer to the emperor... This type of painting is all the more beautiful because, when seen from a short distance, it seems as if the figures, animals, landscape or any other design is not painted on the mirror but reflected; one’s face can be seen in the gaps left by the painting, which makes for very attractive variety. This type of painting would not find disfavour in Europe, especially if it were done in good taste”.

Letter of Brother Attiret,
court painter of emperor Qianlong, 1741.


PETER LANG

PUBLICATIONS DU VITROCENTRE
2020 ROMONT

Chinese
reverse glass
painting
1720-1820

English version of the doctoral dissertation
La peinture sous verre chinoise - 1720-1820
by Thierry Audric
attended at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) on April 23, 2016.

Translation: Cadenza Academic Translations
and Thierry Audric (Appendix I and illustrations captions)
Graphic design: Anne-Marie Bourgeois / m87design
Images processing: Emmanuelle Anquetil

Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.
A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

PUBLICATIONS DU VITROCENTRE ROMONT
2020  

Published with the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation.

ISBN 978-3-0343-3821-9 (Print)
E-ISBN 978-3-0343-3980-3 (E-PDF)
DOI 10.3726/b16542



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This publication has been peer reviewed.
© Thierry Audric 2020
Peter Lang SA
International Academic Publishers

Printed in Europe

www.peterlang.com

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The pages that follow will lead you into a world of dreams: a gateway to an unsettling space where upon seeing your reflection, you will not know whether you are still in the real world, standing *in front* of an image, or already inside one, absorbed *within* a virtual landscape after going *through* the looking glass.

Displaying a talent for combining aesthetic sensibility with scientific rigor, the author has given new life to something that once excited European passions: an original, non-academic art at the forefront of the ‘new technology’ of the time. For decades, aristocrats of the Old World and then American collectors (the latter at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries) spent countless sums on the purchase of these works, which were worth a fortune. These wealthy collectors of curiosities of all types were also most certainly great dreamers seeking a worthy setting for their dreams. Unbeknownst to them, their endeavours had much greater scope, creating and nourishing the conditions for a rare encounter between two worlds: a golden age of atypical collaboration, a combined adventure between China and Europe.

Then, in the nineteenth century, changes in the global balance of power accompanied by the rise of lower quality bulk production for tourists wiped out this trend, which was forgotten as quickly as it had appeared. The time of beautiful narrative mirrors was past, as was that of their incredible journey from one country and ocean to another.

Before coming to grace our beautiful homes, these remarkable pieces were subjected to unimaginable hardship. They were transported on sailing vessels, secured to the hull’s wooden flanks and shaken by the rough waves of one ocean after another, having started their lives as unadorned mirrors made in Europe, notably in France, where glass makers perfected a cast moulding under Louis XIV that allowed them to produce larger glass plates.

The pieces made using this new technology were then transported to Canton, China where Chinese artisans removed part of the silvering that artists would later replace with paintings of pleasant scenes: landscapes or portraits that would come to life in the shifting of the light. Now their changing surfaces had stories to tell, and the mirrors were loaded onto other ships destined for Europe, by the grace of God! Those who had commissioned the works were waiting there to offer these items to their wealthy clientele.

From the commentary in this book on the production of works against the very vibrant backdrop of Canton, the hub of all commerce between China and the rest of the world in the eighteenth century, some unexpected and little known facts emerge: How a foreign art drew the attention and then the interest of the famous and highly-learned Emperor Qianlong (reg. 1736–1796); how this type of painting combining Chinese and European conventions as well as the solid framing used to support and protect it ended up changing the role and the place of painting in Chinese interiors; how ‘made in China’ counterfeits began as early as this period—which in turn inspired an American merchant in the late eighteenth century; and, much more profoundly, how this art of traveling merchants, rich Western aristocrats, and even at one time senior Chinese officials, gave birth to new themes of representation in both cultures.

Danielle Elisseeff

Acknowledgments

This research, and the thesis and this book that have emerged from it, could not have existed without the help of many people, to whom I would like to express my gratitude here.

To Professor Victor Stoichita, who kindly agreed to supervise the work of a researcher with a slightly unconventional profile, on a little-known subject.

To Danielle Elisseeff, who did me the honour of looking over my research, giving me comments and advice based on her extensive knowledge of China, serving on my thesis jury, and giving her kind attention to the writing of this work.

To Patrick Conner, director of the Martyn Gregory Gallery in London, who introduced me to eighteenth-century Canton and its pictures—which he knows so well—, and who expertly answered the numerous questions I put to him.

To Yves Jolidon, a researcher at Romont Vitrocentre and a specialist in reverse glass painting, who, along with all the team from this centre, directed by Stefan Trümpler, welcomed me (the beginner that I was) and helped to guide my first steps.

To Feng Jicai, a writer, and the founder and director of the Tianjin Popular Art Museum, who granted me an interview in 2007. It is to him that I owe my knowledge of the place occupied by mirrors in the Chinese imagination.

To Isabelle Landry-Déron, who invited me to give a talk on the state of my research to the Research Centre on Modern and Contemporary China at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) [School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences], which enabled me to present my ideas before some eminent Sinologists.

To John Finlay, who pointed me to several articles and documents in Chinese archives that were very relevant to my research.

To Jeannine Geysant, who also gave me the benefit of her extensive knowledge of reverse glass painting.

In creating the corpus, I was led to contact many museums and collections, where my requests were always graciously received. My thanks go to the following curators:

In France: Brigitte Nicolas, director of the Musée de la Compagnie des Indes at Port-Louis, who allowed me to present my research as part of her museum's programme of lectures; Christine Germain-Donat and Sophie Boulan, of the Grobet-Labadié museum in Marseille; and Virginie Frelin-Cartigny of the Musée des Beaux-Arts at Valenciennes.

In the Netherlands: Jan van Campen, who was my guide to the Rijksmuseum reserves, and who agreed to share with me his extensive knowledge on Andreas van Braam; and Paul van Dongen, of the Leiden Volkenkunde museum.

In Sweden: Maria Maxen of the Nordiska Museet; Christian Thoren of the Gothenburg Stadsmuseum; Ritwa Herjulfsdotter of the Röhsska Museet; Eva Myrdal and Michel Lee of the Världskulturmuseerna; and Susanna Allesson-Nyberg of the Sjöhistorika Museet.

In Britain: David Moffat, who was my guide to the collections at the Lady Lever Gallery in Liverpool; Gemma Roberts and Catherine Peck, who provided me with valuable information about the Chinese reverse glass paintings at Shugborough Hall and Saltram House; and Jeff Pilkington, who was my guide to the archives at Christie's auction house.

Jeanne Gauffin's translations of Swedish articles were invaluable to me.

Finally, my thanks go to my wife, for what would this book have amounted to without her numerous corrections and unconditional support?

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In the late nineteenth century, the Second Opium War forced China to open itself up to foreigners, and it was then that a few sinologists, inveterate travellers and collectors began to make the ancient art of China known in Europe. In the first museums devoted to Far Eastern art, Europe discovered the ‘classical Chinese landscape,’ which meant painting by scholars. Europeans were fascinated by it, despite or perhaps because of the fact that its intellectual foundations and artistic method were so far removed from those of Western artists. The West forgot that, just a century earlier, it had been captivated by another sort of Chinese painting, namely the reverse glass painting of Canton.

The reasons for this first infatuation were very different, and even contrary to those which would predominate in the nineteenth century. When the fashion for chinoiserie was at its height and European painters were depicting a fantasy China, European high society was, for the first time, discovering paintings made in China by Chinese painters using an original medium, the mirror. Throughout the eighteenth century, Canton was the only point of contact between China and the West and it was here that, from 1720, workshops were inventing an original kind of painting, bringing China and the West together in a real artistic meeting of minds. And for almost a century, the Western aristocracy and upper middle classes would seek out, commission and pay very high prices to acquire these lavishly decorated works.

The Emperor Qianlong also fell under their spell, and in the early part of his reign (1736-1796) he created a workshop for this art in his palace, insisting that Brother Attiret, a Jesuit painter at his court, should embark on painting mirrors.

It is a forgotten genre of painting but it also seems to be an underrated genre. This means that only a few works of reverse glass painting have been studied in the context of Cantonese workmanship of the period, finding a place somewhere in between fans and porcelains. Classified, at best, under the category of ‘minor arts,’ it has, until now, never been a subject of academic study and neither has any exhibition been devoted to it.

Rectifying this omission and altering the way this art is viewed by giving it some credibility seemed to me to be laudable and necessary objectives. Contributing to these by making this art more widely known has been the reason for my research and for this book.

This study starts by examining the origins of Chinese reverse glass painting, preceded by a description of eighteenth-century Canton and the discovery of Chinese painting by Westerners at the time. I have based my research on a collection of more than 400 works from museums, private collections, galleries, salerooms, books and magazines, all of which I have been able to examine directly or through photos. In analysing them, I have pointed out the Chinese and Western elements in these paintings, divided them into categories, and studied the techniques by which they were made and framed. This detailed breakdown has formed the basis of my thinking which, in the second part, extends to the workshops and the market for such paintings in China and the West. The influence this painting had in Asia and Europe is touched upon, and a brief history of Chinese painting from 1720 to 1820 forms the conclusion of this research.

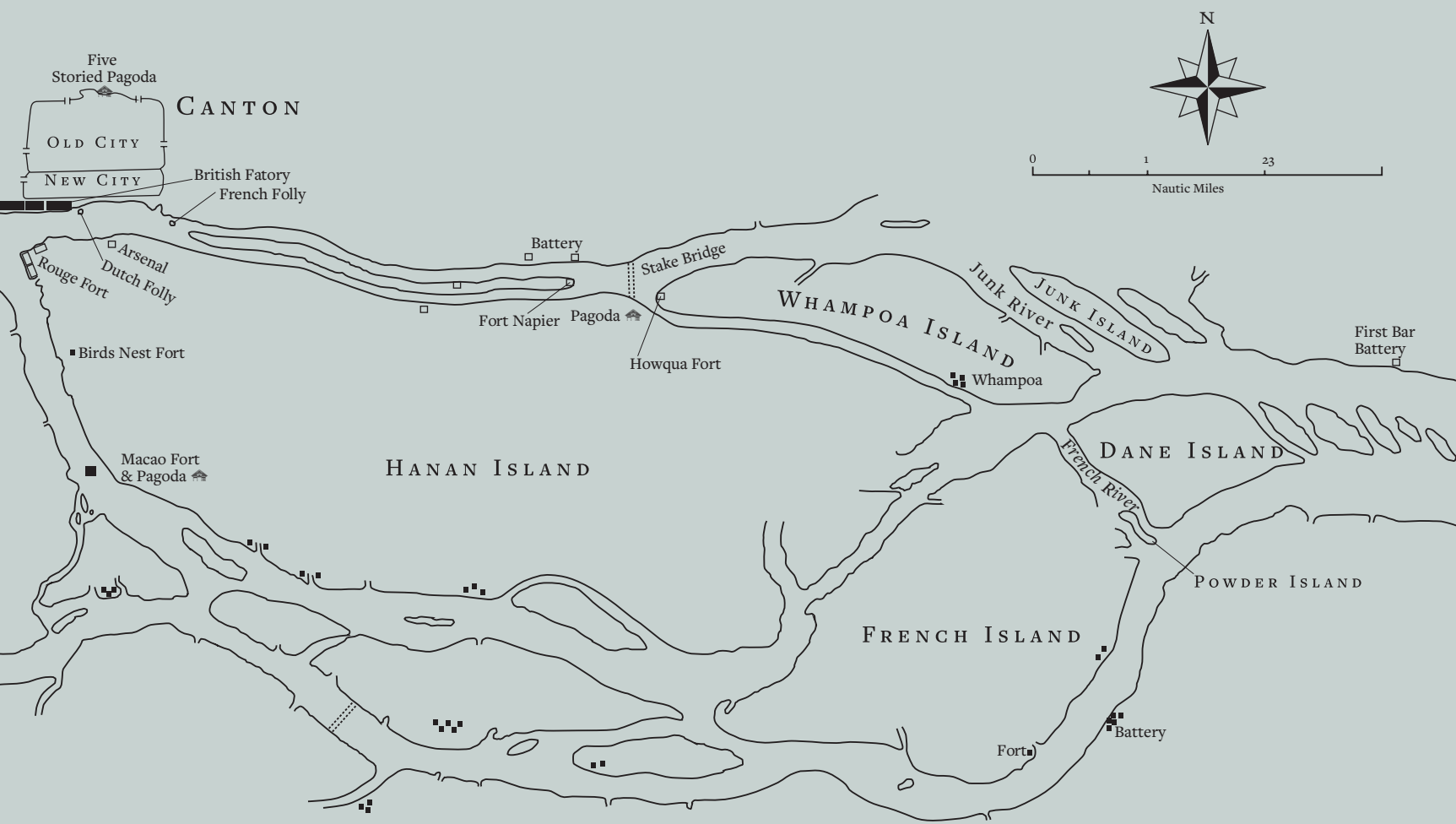
Thierry Audric

I

The Birth of an Art

“This type of painting is all the more beautiful because, when seen from a short distance, it seems as if the figures, animals, landscape or any other design is not painted on the mirror but reflected; one’s face can be seen in the gaps left by the painting, which makes for very attractive variety”.

Brother Attiret, Jesuit painter at court of emperor Qianlong
Letter to Marquis de Broissia, 1741.



Eighteenth-century Canton

The Pearl river

Whampoa! This cry from the look-out would be met with expressions of joy from the crew on the East India Company's ships. In the eighteenth century, reaching Whampoa, a little island in the Pearl River, meant you had arrived in China after a long and dangerous journey, twenty months of sailing during which sailors had to confront violent storms, dangerous currents, flat calms and reefs, but also cope with pirate raids from the Sunda or Malacca Straits. This was without counting strokes of bad luck, such as boardings for the purpose of inspection, provoked by foreign rivals.

Whampoa meant the prospect of putting in for several months in a sheltered spot, without pirates and with the opportunity to trade at the port of Canton, the sole point of contact with mysterious China. It also offered the prospect of purchasing exotic goods, so sought after that they would make the fortunes of those who brought them back to Europe. The Westerners could not continue in their ships beyond Whampoa to Canton, (Illustrations 1, 2, 3), but had to row up there in small boats. All the foreign ships wanting to do business with China were anchored there, so the new arrivals often discovered acquaintances, and even real friends who were employed by other East India Companies.

The tough negotiations with the Chinese, the exotic surroundings and the prospect of enrichment all created bonds between these adventurers. Officers and supercargoes happily welcomed each other on board, even if their respective companies were engaged in harsh and sometimes unfair competition. For example, Colin Campbell, the chief supercargo of the *Fredericus Rex Sueciae*—the first vessel of the Swedish East India Company to go to Canton—describes his arrival at Whampoa in these words:

The (English) officer told us what ships were there & who were aboard of them. Amongst other news he surpriz'd me with the very disagreeable news of the death of an intimate friend & old acquaintance of mine whom I had a great respect for, I mean Mr George Arbuthnott chief supercargo of the 4 English ships bound for China...

The wonderful spectacle of these great ships at anchor was often depicted by Cantonese painters, including reverse glass painters, as can be seen in Illustration 3. The only fear involved with being moored

on the Pearl River was sickness, which did not spare these foreigners, as is evident from the cemetery on the neighbouring island,¹ known as the 'French cemetery.'

Once here, the captain and his officers, the sole masters on board when the ship was at sea, handed over responsibility to the company's supercargoes, who would negotiate trade deals with China over the following four months. Bargaining would then begin on various aspects of the deals, the most important of which was determining the amount of heavy duties that their company would have to pay to China in exchange for the right to do business in Canton. This sum depended on the volume of cargo that the ship could contain. Consequently, upon their arrival, the supercargoes had to prepare for the *Hoppo's* visit, which always involved elaborate ceremony. He was the general customs inspector for the Canton province, and as a top mandarin received the highest marks of respect from both officers and supercargoes, with abundant exchanges of gifts. The purpose of this second negotiation was to obtain, under the best possible conditions, a warehouse on the island of Whampoa, together with victuals for the crew's four-month stay in China and materials which the ship's carpenter could use to refit the ship for its return journey.

Once agreement to these different requests had been obtained, the crew and cargo were authorised to proceed to Canton. The journey up the Pearl River from Whampoa to the port of Canton was far from monotonous. It has been described by several European visitors of the time, such as Father Prémare² and the captain of the *Empress of China*, the first American ship to reach Canton in 1784, the year after United States independence. The journal of this newly arrived American³ recounts what he saw:

We had a full view of a pagoda nine stories high which is one of the largest in the vicinity of Canton. It is a great antiquity and stand [sic] near groves of banana, orange, peach, and lichee trees, as well as plantations of rice and sugar-cane. . . The surface of the river was thickly covered with vessels of different sizes, of singular forms and rigging, many of which were painted with gay and fantastical colors.

1. It can be clearly made out on the hill in Illustration 3.
2. Prémare, Père. Paris, 1843, 15.
3. Smith. 1984, 149.



1 | *Delta of Pearl River near Canton*. Illustration after *Nautical Magazine*, 1841, 771. 2 | *Quayside at Canton*. Watercolor, gouache, paper. China. 62.23 x 119.38 cm. 1785-1815. Peabody Essex Museum, Museum purchase with funds donated anonymously, 1975. E79708. ©1996 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. Photo Jeffrey Dykes.

When approaching Canton, luxurious dwellings could be seen along the sides of the little canals, belonging to rich merchants or important governors of the province and the city. Cantonese reverse glass painters liked to portray the pleasant life in these beautiful residences⁴ and they happily used the landscape around the Pearl River, including the beautiful nine-storey pagoda, as backgrounds for their pictures. Navigation for foreigners was often interrupted by the need to show their travel documents at the different forts or customs posts along the river.

The canal finally broadened out and the traveller would pass two little round forts, called Dutch and French follies, before arriving in the port of Canton. To reach the quayside meant first of all slipping between the hundreds of commercial sampans that were busy on the river, then manoeuvring around the beautiful junks belonging to the local authorities and the 'flower boats' where rich Cantonese would dine in romantic company, before finally mooring up in the centre of the little floating town.

The cities of Canton

Canton was not one city but three. To the north, on the slope of the Pearl River's left bank was a city surrounded by ramparts whose gates were closed at night, and which Westerners called 'Chinese.' It was forbidden to foreigners except for guests of the emperor like the Jesuits who, on arriving from Europe, stopped in Canton before moving on to the Peking court. It is thanks to their descriptions, particularly those of Father Prémare,⁵ that we know a little about what this city was like at the very end of the seventeenth century:

The city of Canton is larger than Paris. The houses are very low and nearly all of them are shops; the grandest neighbourhoods are rather like the streets of the Foire Saint Germain; almost everywhere you look, there are almost as many people as there are at that fair at its busiest time; it is difficult to make your way through...

4. Cf. Chapter II, page 40: Outdoor scenes: leisure in high society.
5. Prémare, Father. Paris, 1843, 15.

You see very few women, and most of the people teeming through the streets are poor and all burdened down.

To the south, on the quayside itself, stood the famous 'factories' (*hongs* in Chinese) which were both warehouses and offices. From being simple wooden houses in the early eighteenth century, they would gradually be replaced by fine stone buildings. They belonged to the foreign companies who traded with China, but also to the Chinese merchants who were their partners. The company buildings were of European style, notably with small glass panes in the windows (the companies were keen to show off European architectural skills and techniques)—and on the esplanade connecting them to the floating harbour, displayed on tall poles, were the flags belonging to the various countries of origin of the companies present. The view of these spectacular buildings, painted from the island of Honam on the opposite bank, is one of the most remarkable subjects of Cantonese reverse glass painting (Illustration 7b and 38).

Between these buildings and the city surrounded by ramparts, a small town was gradually built, entirely devoted to foreign trade. A small suburb of Canton, it was Chinese for the eight months when the climate made the sea crossing possible between Europe and China, but cosmopolitan for the four months when foreigners were present there. It was formed of three streets running down at right angles to the harbour, known by their English names of Hog Lane, Old China Street and, after 1822, New China Street. Hog Lane was, as its name indicates, the street where all the debauchery took place: bars and brothels stood side by side, frequented by sailors from every country. Fights were common, and European naval officers had to organise policing of the street to prevent the Chinese authorities intervening and taking advantage of the situation to add fines to the already heavy taxes borne by foreigners. To reach Old China Street and New China Street, visitors coming from the harbour went through a Chinese portico before finding themselves caught up in the rapid flow of 'porters' who transported voluminous bundles on their backs or on the ends of a pole balanced on their shoulders. In them could be seen piles of porcelain objects, together with sacks of tea and silk fabrics. Little street traders mingled with the porters, crying out to passers-by the names of the goods they were offering. All along the streets were wooden booths, built to the same design with a ground floor given over to welcoming clients to the shop,

restaurant or workshop while the upper floors were warehouses and dwellings. Naval officers, supercargoes and European visitors, followed by Americans after 1784, would stroll through these streets being constantly entreated to go and see some porcelains, silk fabrics or the numerous tea varieties but also furniture or objects made of lacquer, mother-of-pearl or ivory, silk paintings and, from 1730 onwards, reverse glass paintings. Some of these objects, such as painted porcelain, reverse glass paintings or silk clothing were made in the local workshops, often targeting the export market. It was in these streets that the officers and supercargoes did their 'personal' shopping for the well-known *pacotille*, superior merchandise which they

were able to take back to Europe in the hold space reserved for them. And it was in these workshops that reverse glass painting originated and developed.

Finally, on the port's opposite bank lay a residential quarter with beautiful villas belonging to the city's top authorities and rich merchants. It was a place where sumptuous receptions were given by Chinese intermediaries (the *Hongs* or *Compradors*) for their business partners, the foreign supercargoes.



The discovery of Chinese painting by Westerners

Unlike the trade with China, which was limited to the port of Canton, the discovery of Chinese painting by Westerners occurred both at the imperial court in Peking and in the port of Canton. In fact, there were two discoveries, each of them different in spirit, but which were to interact with one another over the course of the eighteenth century.

In Peking the Westerners were Jesuits, in particular Jesuit painters who became acquainted with the Chinese painting of the Qing court; these paintings were executed in the prestigious palace workshops or commissioned from famous artists. The European painters had to adopt the methods and techniques which would please the sovereign and they described their impressions in letters sent back to Europe. In Canton, the foreigners encountered two types of Chinese painting, which they talked about in their travel journals. One of these genres, practised by professional provincial painters, was designed for local and regional high society, and was sometimes inspired by styles which were fashionable in Peking. The other genre was inspired by popular imagery, and usually took the form of a wood engraving which stood in for a lucky charm, particularly at New Year.

The absence of perspective and shading

Although neither the material used as medium, be it silk, Korean paper or rice paper, nor the rolled form of presentation gave rise to any comments, judgment of these paintings by Europeans in both Peking and Canton were, on the whole, very critical: the absence of perspective (Western, of course) and shading were considered to be notable weaknesses, in their minds relegating Chinese painting to an inferior status. Only the depiction of flowers and birds aroused admiration.

Brother Attiret, the Jesuit painter whom Emperor Qianlong had asked to paint 'in Chinese style' was particularly well placed to give his impressions of court painting. In 1741⁶ he wrote:

Everything painted in oil must be painted in the same taste, I mean polished, plain, without shading, white carnations like milk, draperies drawn together, pleated like organ pipes more or less in the taste of our ancestors; and along with that, expressionless heads, postures without movement, linear perspective without shading-off, and without any possibility of putting aerial perspective into practice.

The European visitors to Canton were not so restrained in their criticism. No sooner had the Italian painter Ghirardini⁷ disembarked at Canton in 1700 than he declared:

The Chinese know as much about architecture and painting as I do about Greek and Hebrew. They are, however, enchanted by a fine drawing, a vivid landscape that is carefully ordered, or a natural perspective; but knowing how to achieve this is not their business, they have a better understanding of how to weigh money and how to prepare rice.

Another Jesuit, Father d'Entrecolles, weighed in with his blunt opinion in a letter of 1712 to Father Orry:⁸

None of the knowledge of these painters (on porcelain), or of Chinese painters in general, is founded on any principle, and consists only in a certain routine, aided by a rather limited feat of imagination. They know nothing of any of the rules of this art.

6. Attiret, Brother. Dole, 1911, 15.

7. Ghirardini, Giovanni. Paris, 1700, 61.

8. D'Entrecolles, Père. Paris, 1819, 149.

Two synthesizing texts that appeared in Europe in 1675 summed up these impressions. Probably having seen no more than a few Chinese paintings that had arrived in Europe, Joachim Sandrart declared in his German Academy of Painting:⁹

They (the Chinese) represent everything with extreme simplicity, reproducing only the contours without shading. They create no volume and render objects with simple layers of colour. They do not know how to give relief to objects, how to depict spatial depths, and they pay no attention to the need to follow nature when painting things. They know absolutely nothing of all these things and their images depict only profiles. Frontal portrayal is unknown to them.

The article on Chinese painting in Diderot and D'Alembert's famous encyclopaedia¹⁰ was still more prone to jump to conclusions, stating that 'the sole merit of their painting is a certain neatness & a certain taste for servile imitation: but in which one sees neither genius, nor design, nor invention, nor correction.' Fortunately, there are a few exceptions to this chorus of condemnation, among them Abbé Grosier who, in 1787, wrote:¹¹

Chinese painters have long been decried in Europe. But it seems to me that in order to appreciate them properly, one should be familiar with a few of their good works and not judge them in the light of the fans and screens that we receive from Canton.

The Jesuits, anxious to introduce new knowledge into China to increase the positive impact of their evangelising mission, deemed it useful to teach linear perspective to Chinese painters:

• **By example:** According to Du Halde, it was Father Bruglio who is supposed to have made linear perspective known in China:¹²

9. Sandrart, J. Droz, 2000, 131.

10. Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers. Geneva, 1778.

11. Grosier, Abbé. Paris, 1787, 492.

12. Du Halde, Père. Paris, 1735. Vol 3, 269.

We did not forget perspective. Father Bruglio gave the emperor three pictures, in which the rules of perspective were perfectly adhered to. He displayed three copies in the Jesuits' garden in Peking. The mandarins who flocked to this great city from all parts of the empire came to see them out of curiosity and were very struck by them.

The church frescoes in Peking, painted in 1703 by Ghirardini, also had a great effect on visitors, as Father Jartoux was to note in 1704:¹³

From the point of view of perspective, the painted sides of the reredos form a continuation of the church architecture. It is a pleasure to see the Chinese move forward to visit this part of the church, which they think is behind the altar. Once they arrive there, they move backwards slightly then forwards again and feel it with their hands to find out whether it really is a flat surface with no protrusions or indentations.

• **By explaining the theory:** Ever since the time of Matteo Ricci, the founding father of the Jesuit mission in China, the Jesuits were particularly appreciated by Chinese emperors for their mathematical skills. It was therefore as part of geometry and mathematical optics that linear perspective was taught at the imperial court, very probably under Kangxi's reign. This teaching was consolidated in the 1729 publication in China of Andrea Pozzo's treatise *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum*, translated into Chinese by Nian Xiyao.

In the early part of the eighteenth century, the painter Jiao Bingzhen (1723-1736) drew for the emperor the *46 views of the Yuzhi Genzhitu*, which were gathered together in a book on farming and weaving with engravings by Zhu Gui. Francis Macouin¹⁴ discerns the influence of Western perspective here, which the court painter, Jiao Bingzhen, must have learnt from his Jesuit colleagues. This painter would later incorporate these rules with consummate skill into his portraits of young women in his magnificent album of 'palace ladies.'

The Italian painter Matteo Ripa (at the court from 1710 to 1723) introduced copperplate engraving to China at the request of

13. Jartoux, Père, 1819, 3.

14. *From Beijing to Versailles, Artistic Relations between China and France*. Urban Council of Hong Kong, 1997, 215, Illustration 79.

Emperor Kangxi. He also engraved views of the Imperial Palace at Jehol in Manchuria, in which he made still greater use of perspective. The emperor was very pleased with these engravings and distributed them widely, and it is probable that some proofs reached Canton.

Not all Chinese welcomed the technical innovation of linear perspective with the same interest as the emperor. The painter Zou Yigui is said to have expressed his scorn for painting with rulers and compasses: he judged Westerners to be 'totally lacking in (orthodox) methods (for using) a paintbrush.'¹⁵

As with perspective, the technique of shading only appeared in China with the arrival of Westerners,¹⁶ and more precisely with the arrival of European engravings imported into China by Matteo Ricci, in the early seventeenth century. The sight of these engravings provoked opposing reactions at the Chinese court, and there were a certain number of questions: to one Chinese viewer who expressed surprise at the realistic look of the persons depicted, Matteo Ricci replied:¹⁷

Chinese painting depicts light (the yang) but not shade (the yin). When you look at it, therefore, the bodies and faces seem flat, neither concave nor convex. In our country we paint with light and shade, and so faces are portrayed with both of these. A face which is in direct light will appear white and bright. But when the head is turned to one side, the part which is in the light will be white and on the other side, there will be shadows around the eyes, ears, nose and mouth. With this method we are able to create portraits that cannot be distinguished from living people.

Some reactions were even more critical. One even compared the shading to dirt:

*This idea of the emperor accords with a remark made by one of his ministers (Chinese) who came to see the portrait of his Britannic majesty that 'it was a great pity it should have been spoiled by the dirt upon the face.'*¹⁸

15. Lesbre, Emmanuelle and Liu Jianlong. Paris: Hazan, 2004, 56.

16. Except in the case of Buddhist painting in the Tang dynasty.

17. Beurdeley, Cécile and Michel. Paris, 1971, 70.

18. Barrow, John. London: L.T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1804, 325.

But a few Chinese painters were inspired by the technique, among them Zeng Jing (1568-1650), and attempted to imitate shading by accumulating layers of coloured paint along the line drawn in ink. Apart from these two major differences Jesuit painters perceived between Western and Chinese painting, there were others to report, in particular regarding the conception of the portrait desired by the emperor. His requirements gave rise to conversations of great interest, often tinged with humour. One of these is mentioned in a letter from Father Benoist in 1775:¹⁹

He (the Emperor Qianlong) explained how he wished to be painted. Indeed, Chinese taste requires portraits to be painted face on and not from a three-quarter view as is done in Europe. The corresponding parts of each side of the face have to appear equally in the portrait.

After a few comments on the shading, Father Benoist returns to the subject of the emperor's recommendations: 'His majesty also wanted the hairs of his beard and eyebrows to be individually marked out so that they could be distinguished when the viewer was close to the picture.' And the most delightful remark is the one where the emperor points out that his right eyebrow is a little thin and lacks a few hairs. A very sycophantic Jesuit painter replies:

If your majesty had not told us, we would not have noticed. Ah well, said the emperor, with a smile, then tell him (Brother Pansi, the Jesuit painter commissioned to execute the painting) to paint this defect so that it cannot be seen if one has not been told; but so that if one has been told, it is possible to see it.

The Qing emperors, and particularly Qianlong, had no hesitation in commissioning portraits of their concubines from Jesuit court painters—a man of religion painting the portrait of a concubine no doubt put them in a somewhat delicate moral predicament! But what would a Jesuit not do 'ad majorem dei gloriam,' for the greater glory of God, as their motto had it? Fortunately for them, it was the rules of Chinese portraiture which had to be applied, as they were for portraits of the

19. Benoist, Père. Paris, 1819, 394.

emperor, his wife and the nobility. In addition to the actual painting technique, the model's pose, the perspective, the shading and the very look of the female model had to conform to the rules of propriety.

Father Amyot²⁰ describes the following very significant episode:

Brother Attiret, having painted some Chinese women only to be told by the emperor that they had nothing Chinese about them, asked a Chinese painter in his workshop for an explanation. The Chinese painter told him that portraits of women included some who were servants and others who were mistresses. Attiret thought he had indeed made a distinction between these social classes by means of their dress, their hairstyles and certain other exterior signs which were recognised in the Western world from which he came. Although these differences are also renowned in China, said the Chinese painter, they are not essential. It is the shape and colour of her hands, her modesty of dress (low-cut necklines being proscribed) and especially her modesty and gentleness of bearing that single out a Chinese woman of quality.

Nature painting

Fortunately, however, there was one kind of Chinese picture that was unanimously admired by Westerners. This was nature painting and, more particularly, the painting of flowers and birds. 'What they (the Chinese) do best,' Alvarez Semedo tells us in 1642,²¹ 'are trees, flowers and birds, which they depict realistically.' 'Their painters are mainly attached to the landscape; they perfectly imitate nature,' writes Abbé Delaporte²² who, thanks to French priests, had the privilege of entering Chinese cities. And Abbé Grosier tells us that:²³

20. Amyot, Père. 1771, 406.

21. Semedo, Alvarez. Paris: Kimé, 1996, 91.

22. Delaporte, Abbé. Paris: L. Cellot, 1772, 425.

23. Grosier, Abbé. Paris, 1787, 492.



The very people who refuse to acknowledge they have a talent for successfully painting figures cannot deny them superiority in their rendering of flowers and animals. They treat these kinds of subjects with a great deal of truth, grace and ease, and they especially pride themselves on portraying details with an exactitude which might to us appear painstaking.

He goes on to cite famous examples of animals painted by highly talented Chinese artists, which men and animals looking at them have taken to be living beings. ‘They imitate flowers, birds, and insects with a degree of exactness and brilliancy to which Europeans have not yet arrived,’ the Englishman John Barrow²⁴ tells us, and the Frenchman J. Roy²⁵ adds:

The Chinese painter is able to depict butterflies, animals, flowers, fruit and fish with an exactitude that cannot be surpassed; he knows admirably well how to blend his colours and vary all the tones.

This extreme concern for detail is described humorously by Father Benoît in 1775:²⁶

On this occasion I recall that one day, Brother Attiret, whose eminent talent for painting is well known, had painted a flower. Brother Castiglione, who had been here for years, happened to glance at it and said to Brother Attiret: there are one or two leaves too many around this flower. But, said Attiret, who will think of counting them? A good painter from Europe, replied Castiglione, would find your flower perfect; but here there is no apprentice painter who, as soon as he saw it, would not immediately tell you that your flower does not have the required number of leaves around it; and, straight away, Brother Attiret was himself convinced by showing his flower to the Chinese painter.

24. Barrow, John. Philadelphia: W.F. M’Laughlin, 1805, 323.
25. Roy, J. Paris, 1850, 73.
26. Benoist, Père. Paris, 1819, 394.

The Chinese reverse glass painters of Canton were able to take account of these Western views and adapt their style to satisfy a Western clientele without disappointing their compatriots who were also enthusiastic about their painting.

Porcelain painting

In the early eighteenth century, Chinese craftsmen were masters in the art of porcelain production, as they had been for centuries. Westerners were to discover this beautiful translucent ceramic material as soon as trade with China began, when the Portuguese arrived in the early sixteenth century. They were fascinated by it and began to import huge quantities. In the seventeenth century, it was blue and white Ming pottery that was favoured by European high society. Then, with the arrival of the Qing dynasty, polychrome porcelain made its appearance.

Items of porcelain were manufactured in centres such as Jingdezhen, where a vast number of kilns functioned. The porcelain was white after the first firing, before being painted either on site or in workshops located elsewhere. European earthenware manufacturers were determined in their efforts to discover the secret of this exquisite material and they succeeded, particularly thanks to descriptions given by the Jesuit Father d’Entrecolles,²⁷ who visited the Chinese centres of porcelain production and wrote detailed accounts of the processes in his letters. I quote him here for his description of the porcelain painting workshops:

It is time to ennoble porcelain by handing it on to the painters. These Hoa-Pei [...] know nothing about the rules of this art. It must be admitted however that they paint flowers, animals and landscapes which are admired... the work of painting is shared in the same laboratory between a large number of workers. One has the sole task of making the first coloured circle that is seen near the edges of the porcelain; another draws the flowers, which are painted by a third; there is yet another

27. D’Entrecolles, Père. Paris, 1819, 149.

for birds and other animals... human figures are usually the most badly painted.

D’Entrecolles subsequently sets out in detail how the sky-blue colour is manufactured and then says: ‘Red is made with rosacea, tsao-fan: perhaps there is something peculiar to the Chinese in this; and this is why I shall recount their method.’ There follows a detailed description of the technique for manufacturing blocks of red. As for green, the author of this letter writes: ‘I would think, from the indications I have, that it is the most pure dross of beaten copper.’ He adds a few considerations on the composition of purple and yellow, before concluding: ‘All these colours applied to already fired porcelain, after being oiled, only appear green, purple, yellow and red after a second firing.’

Having imported porcelains with Chinese motifs, Westerners began thereafter to order crockery with European motifs, sending examples to China in the form of engravings. This is how Chinese painting ‘made to Western order’ began, and it would not be long before reverse glass painting became part of this. It is interesting to note, on the dish in Illustrations 5a and 5b—which shows evidence of an amazing ability to copy from engravings around 1740—that, as for all Chinese porcelain painting at this time, the grisaille painting has been applied freehand. The many little slips and the plate’s dimension compared to those of the model, engraved by Edme Jeurat (1688-1738) after Nicolas Vleughels (1668-1737) and seen in Illustrations 5a and 5b, would show whether this was necessary.

Finally, these eighteenth-century porcelain painters used Western linear perspective, which may well have originated because the director of the large and prestigious centre for ceramics production at Jingdezhen was, from 1726 to 1736, Nian Xiyao, whose knowledge of Western linear perspective we have already seen.²⁸

28. Cf. Chap. I, page 18: The absence of perspective and shading.



5a | *Immersion of Achilles*. Chinese plate. Diam: 41.7 cm. Circa 1737. © Trustees of the British Museum.

5b | *Achille plongé dans le Styx*. Edme Jeurat (1688-1738). Engraving by Nicolas Vleughels (1668-1737). 36 x 42.6 cm. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Glass in the West and in China

Glass has been known both in the West and China since earliest antiquity, but use of the technology followed very different paths in these two regions of the world.

From very early on, the prime quality Westerners were seeking in their glass production was transparency, whether they were making a container for liquid (drinking glass, carafe or scent bottle), stained-glass windows or a mirror.

Until the seventeenth century, flat glass was produced using two different processes, and Venice remained the capital for this. The first process involved the *blowpipe* method: the glass was blown using a long, closed cylindrical iron, the blowpipe. It was quickly opened along its length and the edges of the opening were extended outwards by means of heat to obtain flat glass. The other process was the *ring* method, which consisted in turning the pipe very rapidly while the glass still had the shape of a vase. The centrifugal force drew the glass outwards, consistent with a plane surface, until it ended up as a large circular glass plate. It was not possible to obtain a sheet of plate glass with more than 70-centimetre sides by using these methods.

In 1688, a third process was invented in France which would replace the two others. This was *glass casting*,²⁹ and its name describes it well. It made it possible, by the early nineteenth century, to produce glass of larger size, measuring up to two metres along the sides. As it was particularly difficult to obtain a very flat, polished surface at the edges of the glass, in the late seventeenth century master glaziers developed bevelling, which consisted in gradually reducing the glass's thickness to create a 'bevel' along a slight but constant width along the edges. The English glass factory at Vauxhall, created in 1663, had become specialised in this technique to the extent that the term *Vauxhall glass* was often used by English people to describe a slightly coloured, bevelled mirror.

During the whole of the eighteenth century, large sheets of glass were usually silvered to create mirrors. Their production costs

29. This invention is generally attributed to Louis Lucas de Nehou, the nephew of Richard de Nehou, owner of the Tournaville glassworks where Louis Lucas learned the trade of glazier. A few years later he became director of the Manufacture royale which was to become the Saint-Gobain Company.

were high, which meant these beautiful objects were reserved for very high society and for princely gifts.

The seventeenth century also witnessed the appearance of painting on these large mirrors, particularly in Germany and Holland. At first limited to a few panels, it came to occupy a more prominent place, due in particular to the influence of the painter Hans Conrad Gyger (1599-1674), of whom Joachim von Sandrart (1606-1688) said 'The large mirrors he decorated [with oil paint] were appreciated by the King of France, the Duke of Florence and the Venetian Republic.'³⁰ These painted mirrors, worthy of European courts, were thus also becoming objects fit to be offered to the court of the Chinese emperor.

From the seventeenth century onwards, therefore, Westerners who had noticed that Chinese mirrors were made of polished metal and, as well as being small gave back very little reflection, started to offer glass mirrors as gifts to the Chinese emperors, to their court and to the mandarins. We shall see³¹ the major role these mirrors played in the birth of Chinese reverse glass painting. It was under the warring kingdoms that the Chinese began to take an interest in glass imported from present-day Syria, which they did not manufacture themselves. Curiously, glass production itself did not fascinate the upper echelons of this country before the Manchu sovereigns arrived in the seventeenth century and encountered Westerners.

The manufacturing technique of sand fusion with the addition of potash (of soda in Europe) had been known for over a millennium. In 1696, doubtless influenced by the glass objects offered to the court by Westerners, Emperor Kangxi (1661-1722) decided to create a glass factory at the imperial palace, under the management of Kilian Stumpf (1655-1720), a German Jesuit who knew about this art. This workshop underwent remarkable development under the reign of Qianlong (1736-1796), when the Jesuits Pierre d'Incarville (1706-1757) and Gabriel Leonard de Broussard (1703-1758) were responsible for running it. It mainly produced prestigious and decorative objects which the emperor could offer as gifts either in China or abroad. There was no question of producing plate glass.

These objects came from the West in the form of mirrors, and arrived in such quantities that the emperor decided to remove the

30. Quotation from the Deutschen Academie der Bau, Bild und Malherrey Künste by Jolidon, Yves. 1999, 55.

31. Cf. page 26: The dawn of reverse glass painting in China.

silvering on some of them and use them as window glass for aristocratic or mandarins' residences.

You ask me whether the emperor has Venetian or French mirrors. Over thirty years ago, he had such a large quantity that, not knowing where to put them, he had many of them cut down from the size they were originally in order to create window panes for his European buildings.

So wrote Father Bourgeois³² to Monsieur Delatour. The well-known scholar Yuan Mei congratulated himself in 1766 for having had glass panes installed in his windows: he was now able to see the snow without suffering the drawbacks.³³ Emperor Qianlong noted that these window panes, although offering protection from sea spray and cold weather, created a distance between himself and nature by numbing his senses, preventing him smelling aromas or feeling the wind and heat. As we shall see, by 1727 the emperor was already having some of this glass painted.

It was in Canton that the manufacture of Chinese plate glass began. The technique had been learnt from Westerners and so soda was added. The first French merchant ship to arrive in Canton in 1700, in addition to carrying numerous mirrors, had '632 pounds 14 ounces of tin for the mirror industry' on board.³⁴ It was accompanied by mirror cutters and silverers who may have helped start such an industry in China, or at least have set up a mirror repair workshop. This plate glass manufactured in China and intended for lamps, eyeglasses, mirrors and window panes remained of modest quality compared with the glass imported from Europe, and this continued to be the case until the end of the eighteenth century. I have not been able to find a description of this Cantonese factory in the documents to which I have had access. The Westerners who were at the origin of the Cantonese glass factory or factories did not think very highly of the product. In 1751, Father Osbeck,³⁵ the chaplain of the Swedish East India Company, described mirror production in the following terms: 'The mirror-makers have some little pitiful looking-glasses.' And he

32. Bourgeois, Père, 1908.

33. Yuan Mei. Beijing, 1997, 255.

34. Savary des Brulons, Jacques. Copenhagen: Frères C.L., 1761, 858.

35. Osbeck, Peter. London: Benjamin White, 1771, 232.

went on: 'I was told of a glass-house in Canton, but never had an opportunity of going to see it.' In 1756, Emperor Qianlong refused to pay for a delivery of glass bowls from Canton as they did not appear to be of satisfactory quality.³⁶ In 1810, Monsieur Breton de la Martinière³⁷ wrote:

Canton has the only glass factory in the empire: glass for eyeglasses and mirrors is manufactured there and [the latter are] silvered using tin and mercury in the European manner; but this enterprise has proved to be a failure.

In *China, Pictorial, Descriptive and Historical*, published in London in 1853,³⁸ the anonymous author describes the state of Chinese glass manufacturing:

A recent advance is the improvement in glass manufacture which was previously carried out by mixing and heating broken pieces of glass from the West. But for the past few years, the Chinese have been making glass themselves from flint. Although this art is still very inferior to the European art, it is steadily improving and glass mirrors are increasingly replacing polished metal mirrors.

36. Yang, Boda. "A Brief Account of Qing Dynasty Glass," *Palace Museum Journal* 2, 1990, 20.

37. Breton de la Martinière, Jean-Baptiste Joseph. Vol. I. London: J.J. Stockdale, 1812, 131.

38. *China, Pictorial, Descriptive and Historical*. London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853, 211.

The dawn of reverse glass painting in China

The first references

The first mention of Chinese reverse glass painting in the West appears in a letter addressed to the Marquis de Broissia in 1741³⁹ from Brother Attiret, a Jesuit painter at the court of Emperor Qianlong:

For over a year I have scarcely done anything else than paint on glass. A large number of beautiful large mirrors are brought from Europe, which the mandarins of Canton buy from the merchant ships and offer to the emperor. Some of these mirrors have suffered in transit and lost their silvering in a few places. Since, here, nobody would know how to re-silver them, the emperor wished a way to be found to save such a precious object. I am therefore making a drawing with the outer contours exactly marked out in pencil and colour that can then be transferred. This drawing has to be applied to the back of the mirror; the pencil or coloured lines remain imprinted on the silvering only in the places to be painted and the rest is left as a mirror. This type of painting is all the more beautiful because, when seen from a short distance, it seems as if the figures, animals, landscape or any other design is not painted on the mirror but reflected; one's face can be seen in the gaps left by the painting, which makes for very attractive variety. This type of painting would not find disfavour in Europe, especially if it were done in good taste; but it is difficult and very painstaking, and the eyes suffer from it.

There is much information to be found in this text, and Brother Attiret was to repeat the main thrust of it in a letter addressed to Monsieur D'Assaut in 1743.⁴⁰ First of all, it gives a precise description of reverse glass painting as it was practised at the imperial palace during the 1740s: it involved painting under a mirror in areas which were, intentionally or not, free of silvering. This letter also foresaw the amazing success this art would have in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century. Finally, it proves that Brother Attiret was unaware of the fact that this type of painted mirror had long existed in Europe

and what is more, therefore, he had not learned the technique in France or Italy before leaving for China. Despite this, it was he and Father Castiglione, another painter at the emperor's court, who were credited with establishing this art in China by the large majority of Western authors writing about Chinese reverse glass painting.

They were encouraged in this by the following extract from a text by Pierre-Martial Cibot,⁴¹ a missionary in China, which was widely diffused in Europe. It appeared in 1786 under the section *L'Art de peindre sur les glaces*, and stated that 'the secret of reverse glass painting came to China from Europe.' If he were to continue with this text, the reader would soon realise that Cibot attributed the communication of these secrets neither to Castiglione nor Attiret. Quite the reverse, in fact, since he makes clear a few lines further on: 'Brothers Castiglione and Attiret, having received an order from the emperor to paint on a few large mirrors, wanted to see how the Chinese painters worked before venturing into this new kind of painting.' A little earlier he had described a visit to the palace workshops, saying: 'In one of these rooms, painters who had come from Canton were painting on mirrors' and adding 'painting on mirrors has only just appeared at the palace, and in Canton has become an activity which just needs workers.' A close reading of these texts enables us to establish that in Canton, Chinese painters were practising painting on mirrors before 1741—and they practised it with skill since Cibot, in the same text, had no hesitation quoting the Jesuit painters in the following words:

We have often heard them⁴² say that the exceptional ease with which the Chinese succeeded in this, ⁴³ the boldness, the lightness of touch, the rapidity with which they sketched their picture down to the last strokes, and thus advanced backwards, were particularly admirable, and this gave them an elevated sense of their talent...

Four documents, Chinese ones this time, confirm the presence of these painters in Canton as early as 1731 and probably from 1722. The first two are lists of presents sent by provincial worthies to the Emperors Kangxi and Yongzheng. In 1722 Emperor Kangxi received a set of gifts from a dignitary named Suozi. Among these were 'a pair

of mirrors with flowers along the edges,⁴⁴ a pair of glass lamps, and a pair of glass lamps with a floral decoration.⁴⁵ According to Yang Boda⁴⁶ who has studied these lists, Suozi's contains several objects imported from the West, which leads him to suppose that Suozi must have been a Canton dignitary. This list would then constitute the first known list of presents from Guangdong to an emperor.

In the ninth year of Yongzheng's reign, in 1731, Zu Binggui, the superintendent of Guangdong Maritime Customs, offered the emperor a 'screen engraved with a reverse glass painting.' Among the gifts offered in the eleventh year of Yongzheng's reign, that is in 1733, by Mao Keming, the then superintendent of Guangdong Maritime Customs, are mentioned 'two mirrors decorated with floral motifs.'⁴⁷

The two other documents are extracts from the imperial archives⁴⁸ and are a little tricky to interpret. In the first it is reported that in 1725 Emperor Yongzheng⁴⁹ asked for two (round!) glass windows to be painted with 'bamboos and magpies,' which were partly done by the painter Jiang Tingxi. The second, kindly communicated and translated by John Finlay,⁵⁰ is a quotation from the imperial archives concerning the Yuanming Yuan⁵¹ summer palace. It is an order from the emperor dated 1734 which reads:

The emperor gives the following edict: take the 'green bamboo' painting and the painting of 'Imperial Benevolence Radiates Over All'; send them to Yuanming Yuan, and have them stuck on [or above⁵²] some glass mirrors. As for the painting 'Universal Peace in the Whole Countryside,' have it stuck on [or above⁵³] a glass mirror in the Jiuzhou Quigyan [Palace⁵⁴].

44. A garland?

45. "Palace. Miscellaneous Objects Presentation List, 1277." *China First Historical Archives*. Quoted by Yang Boda, Hong Kong, 1987, 41.

46. Idem.

47. Idem, 43.

48. First Historical Archives of China. 1991, vol. 2 pl. 1170 and 1171. Quoted by Chumei Ho in Watson, William and Chumei Ho. Yale, 2007, 252, note 79.

49. Who reigned from 1722 to 1735.

50. Research partner at the Centre for Research on Modern and Contemporary China at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.

51. Yuanming Yuan, 1991. Vol. 2, 1235.

52. J. Finlay's translator's note.

53. J. Finlay's translator's note.

54. J. Finlay's translator's note.

Interpreting the expression 'have them stuck on [or above] a glass mirror' is a delicate matter. I would venture to say that it is not about something *fixed under the glass* with the document being stuck behind the glass because, during the course of my research, I have never found anything fixed in this way, nor even any mention of such a procedure being carried out in China. The order may therefore be to put these paintings under glass according to the Western practice of engravings being placed under glass—a practice that Jesuit painters might have introduced to the court. Apparently, then, from the 1720s, Chinese painters, at Canton and perhaps at court, had mastered the art of mirror painting, to the extent that some pieces they produced were judged to be of a quality worthy of being offered to the emperor himself.

Why paint mirrors that have come from Europe?

Brother Attiret⁵⁵ spoke of the need to repair mirrors imported from Europe in order to justify Chinese mirror painting at court. This was perhaps the case for some of the many mirrors brought in by the ship *Amphitrite* in 1700. Jean Jourdan, the owner of this French vessel, was in fact a 'fermier de la Manufacture des Glaces,' who would have bought all the mirrors produced by this royal glass factory and had the task of selling them on to merchants. Bouvet, one of the Jesuit fathers, had no doubt assured him that China would be an excellent outlet for his product. The East India Company was jealous of this first trading expedition to China and let it be known that the factory was getting rid of its unsold products. Indeed, 'eight mirror craftsmen' had been sent with the ship's administrative staff,⁵⁶ their presence being justified by the need to re-silver mirrors that had become spoiled or, possibly, to set up a mirror factory in Canton. Evidence of this could be found in the large cargo of tin transported by *Amphitrite*—no less than '632 pounds and 14 ounces of tin for the mirror industry.'⁵⁷ Two of the workers went to Peking while the others remained in Canton. However, even if mirror repair played a role in the emergence of mirror

55. Attiret, Frère. Dole, 1911.

56. Pelliot, Paul. Paris, 1928, 1929.

57. Savary des Brulons. Paris, 1750. Vol. IV, 258.



painting, it does not appear to me to be at its origin and neither could it have been responsible for its international success in China and then in Europe. Other causes have to be looked for.

First of all, some mirrors painted in Europe had already arrived in China, as gifts for the emperor or for Chinese dignitaries. For example, among the presents offered in 1664 to his imperial majesty by the ambassador of the Dutch East India Company, the famous *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (V.O.C.), were 'four mirrors decorated with paint.'⁵⁸ Furthermore, we know that painted mirrors, like other imported goods, were unloaded, sold and sometimes exhibited in Canton by the Chinese merchants who received them, which gave Canton craftsmen the opportunity to look at them and work out the technique used.⁵⁹

The directors of this Dutch company were, moreover, great lovers of reverse glass painting produced in their country and they readily took some of these with them to the Far East. A description of the company's Japanese post⁶⁰ informs us that the head of post had an office whose walls were covered with such paintings, depicting Dutch landscapes as well as portraits of company directors, and that he always carried on him a reverse glass painting of his wife's portrait.

It is therefore not improbable that Dutch painted mirrors were circulating in Canton and Peking at the very beginning of the eighteenth century and that Chinese dignitaries found them pleasing, for a reason relating to Chinese tradition which we shall now examine.

The place of mirrors in the Chinese imagination

The Chinese have a relationship with mirrors that is surprising to us Westerners. Before the arrival of European mirrors, Chinese mirrors were bronze plates (Illustration 6) whose reflective surfaces were

58. *Histoire générale des voyages*. Paris, 1749.

59. Yang Boda. Hong Kong, 1987, 51.

60. Screech, Timon. *Sex and the Floating World: Erotic Imagery in Japan, 1720-1810*. London: Reaktion Books, 1998. The article's author cites the business relations between the Japanese and the V.O.C. Japanese offices. These relations are themselves cited in other articles by Japanese authors: Nagaoka Hirou, "Nihon no megane." Tokyo, 1967, 63; Shibana Kokan. "Saigu nikki." Tokyo, 1986, 105; Satō Narihiro, Churyo. Manroku in "Nihon zuihitsu taisei," series 3, vol. II. Tokyo, 1929, 75.

covered with a layer of silver. They were seen to be of interest but were also regarded with a certain uneasiness and suspicion. They were of interest because of course they enabled people to see themselves and, particularly for women, to choose their makeup, hairstyle, clothing and accessories. But they were disturbing because they seemed like a window onto a world outside our own, and a trap for images.

The mirrors adorning Chinese canopy bed curtains or shamans' clothes were turned outwards in order to protect the people they surrounded from damaging influences. These could be absorbed or reflected by the mirrors and so did not reach those behind the curtain. So that others could not be victims of these traps, mirrors which were no longer used in a room were turned towards the wall or the windows.⁶¹ It also seemed wise and a protective measure to engrave the frame and back of the mirror with abstract, animal or floral motifs as good-luck charms (Illustration 6) which were supposed in principle to attenuate and domesticate this dangerous, even evil power of the mirror. Although these attitudes to the mirror, which endure to this day, are not far removed from the use made of certain mirrors in Europe such as vanity mirrors, the large mirrors sent to China had a completely different use in Europe. Designed for ceremonial rooms, they were turned inwards towards the room, which had the effect of enlarging it and creating impressive 'pictures within a picture;' they also enhanced scale, generating multiple renditions or tableaux of the activities taking place in front of these mirrors; Versailles's gallery of mirrors is the apotheosis of this theatrical conception of the mirror.

One can only imagine the perplexity and even anxiety of the Chinese dignitaries when faced with these spectacular gifts. Decorating mirrors with reverse glass painting might well have appeared to them a remarkable way of adapting them to Chinese culture, enabling them to be used while reducing the danger and threat they represented.

One might also add that reverse glass painting, being shiny and robust as well as easy to keep bright and clean, had a certain affinity with porcelain, the major decorative art of China. There is therefore

61. Interview at Tianjin in 2007 with Feng Jicai, writer, founder and director of the Tianjin popular arts museum – Williams, C.A.S. *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives*. New York: Dover Publications, 1976, 60, 61 and 274; – Doolittle, Rev Justus. *Social Life of the Chinese*. Vol 2. London: Sampson Low, 1866, 313.

every reason to think that it was indeed in Canton in the 1720s that Chinese painters created Chinese reverse glass painting, representing the first stage of this art's formidable development in China, which would become the height of fashion in Europe from the 1740s.

Porcelain painting workshops at the origin of reverse glass painting

The state of porcelain painting in early eighteenth-century Canton has been described page 22. From the years 1720-1730 onwards, sets of tableware designed for export were painted with both Chinese and European motifs, the very same ones as for reverse glass painting at its beginnings.⁶² Particularly featured were pheasants on a rock with peonies or landscapes beside water. This European contribution to porcelain painting was doubtless encouraged by the presence of Nian Xiyao on the management of the Jingdezhen porcelain factory between 1726 and 1736. He had been the author, with G. Castiglione, of the translation of Andrea di Pozzo's treatise on perspective. The connection between Canton painters and those of the imperial court had therefore already been established, which was also one of the features of reverse glass painting.⁶³

What is more, the Europeans sent them orders for sets of tableware with decorations which had to be copied from engravings dispatched to Canton by the East India Companies. We know of one engraving which was transposed on to both porcelain and glass.⁶⁴

The Cantonese porcelain painters' community was therefore quite prepared to be given orders for reverse glass paintings by Chinese dignitaries keen to 'sinicize' large European mirrors, as they were to receive orders from Westerners eager for Chinese exoticism. It thus appears very likely that the community of porcelain painters gave birth to a community of reverse glass painters. Furthermore, the closeness of the Chinese motifs painted on the two mediums

(Illustrations **7a** and **7b**), like the use of identical European engravings to paint on porcelain and under glass, prove that the workshops for these types of painting maintained close ties throughout the eighteenth century.

A European master?

Nevertheless, should we exclude the possibility of reverse glass painting being taught by a European artist or Canton craftsman in the early eighteenth century? Probably by an artist, because European visitors to Canton were relatively few in number and the presence of such a painter for a period of several months would not have failed to draw attention and be mentioned in travel writings or ships' log books. All the painters who had arrived in China by this time were summoned by the court Jesuits and stayed for only a short time in Canton before leaving for Peking. On the other hand, it is not impossible that the French mirror craftsmen who had arrived in Canton on the *Amphitrite* in 1700⁶⁵ knew about painting 'on mirrors' in France, before their departure. Those of them who remained in Canton would have been able to help teach this technique to Cantonese painters.

We will probably never know whether it was a public figure who was an arts patron or a porcelain painter who first had the idea of partly replacing mirror silvering with a painted motif. What is certain, however, is that the notables of the region, in the early 1720s, considered that mirrors painted in this way were of a quality which would appeal to the court and therefore be suitable for gifts which were likely to attract the emperor's goodwill and make him favourably disposed towards them. From the 1720s, therefore, mirrors painted in Canton were added to the list of presents that these dignitaries regularly sent to the emperor.

62. Cf. Chap. II, page 35: Paintings with Chinese motifs.

63. Cf. in particular Chap. II, page 52: 'Beautiful women.'

64. Crossman, Carl L. *The Decorative Arts of the China Trade*. Antique Collectors' Club, 1991, 214.

65. Pelliot, Paul. 1929, 258.

→ **7a** | *Hong Bowl*. Ceramic, porcelain Jingdezhen, China. 1785-1794. 14.29 x 36.83 cm. Peabody Essex Museum,

Gift of Mr. William A. Coolidge, 1986 E75076 © 2010 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. Photo Dennis Helmar. → **7b** | *View of the foreign factories at Canton*. Oil paint, watercolor, gouache, glass, enamel Asia, China. Circa 1805. Image 39.3 x 59.7 cm. Peabody Essex Museum,

Gift of The Misses Aimee and Rosamond Lamb E78680. © 2007 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. Photography by Jeffrey R. Dykes.



II

The Artworks

Concerned with being comprehensive, I have based this section on the observation and analysis of 681 Chinese reverse glass paintings of diverse origin, whether residing in public or private collections, sale rooms, galleries, antique dealers, or appearing in book illustrations. I have personally only been able to examine 162 of them individually, and those belonged to European museums and collections. The other works were either mentioned in books or articles, with no possibility of knowing the identity of the current owners, or they were mentioned in sale room catalogues and galleries scattered across the world, where they could only be seen during the few days preceding an auction.

For these inaccessible paintings, I worked solely from photos, but these were often of very high quality thanks to current digital technology.¹

To avoid repetition, or very bad quality prints and prints of unknown origin, only 410 photos were used as illustrations for this book.

1. E-catalogues and those in pdf format are able to provide quality photos from all over the world.

Analysing this corpus raised several very specific issues for me:

- The vast majority of reverse glass paintings in the world are by anonymous painters, and this is no less the case with Chinese reverse glass painting. There is generally no mention on either the painting or frame of who painted it, in what workshop, or at what date. Even a title is absent. I have therefore paid greatest attention to the few rare works that allowed me to acquire this information.

- These Chinese reverse glass paintings are rarely unique, original objects. Numerous copies could be produced and sometimes offered for sale 'in the shop,' this type of production and distribution being not dissimilar to the way engravings were handled in Europe. I therefore also devoted particular attention to the rare works that were unique, particularly portraits, and sought out the original models for paintings that had been reproduced in numerous copies.

- The technique used for a reverse glass painting (a thin layer or opaque layers laid on top of one another) can only be determined with certainty by opening up the picture and examining the back of the glass. It is very rare for the owners of such works to have had occasion to open them to make this kind of examination, or for them to have given me permission to do so. Whenever I was in possession of this valuable information about a work, I have given it, but in any other cases I have not mentioned the technique used.

- To find out the composition of a painting one needs to remove a small flake to make a chemical analysis of it. Very few owners of works wished this to be done, which is understandable. Consequently, I only have one single chemical analysis.

- The frames of Chinese reverse glass paintings can be a valuable source of information for two reasons. One is that Chinese picture-framers had, and still have, a very special framing technique that is exclusive to them.² If one discovers a work where this method has been used, it is certain that the frame, and therefore the painting, originate from China, since no European picture-framer has adopted this technique. The second reason is that Chinese paintings, particularly those done on European mirrors sent to China, were bought by the upper echelons of contemporary European society, who were anxious to have them framed according to the style that was in fashion. This makes it possible for the researcher to give an approximate date to the work.

2. Cf. page 110: Second period: European frames and 'utilitarian' Chinese frames.

- Examination of the glass itself tells us about the process by which it was made,³ but this information is not very useful either for dating or discovering its origin, since these three techniques were also used in Europe at the time, to manufacture the flat glass that was sent to China. It is possible that around the mid-nineteenth century, or at the very end of the period being studied, the Canton glass factories were capable of producing flat glass of sufficiently good quality to be painted, but only in small sizes. However, I have no proof for this assertion.

- Only a few works have been analysed in journals, books or catalogues. No overall view or consolidation has been attempted, with the exception of the short and very incomplete offering of Jourdain and Jenyns,⁴ and no academic study of Chinese reverse glass painting has been undertaken. I therefore had no recognised vocabulary or grammar, nor any research lead to follow, for all these paintings.

After several trial runs in various directions, I finally decided to analyse the paintings by origin of the main motif depicted, distinguishing Chinese motifs from Western ones. This method had the benefit of providing an understanding of how much interpenetration there was between Western and Chinese elements—a meeting of opposites that is one of the great virtues of reverse glass painting. This approach also had the advantage of enabling a certain chronology of artistic production to be established. Although they belong to Western motifs, I was able to distinguish a category where Western paintings, engravings and miniatures had been directly transposed to reverse glass paintings because they make up a uniform group for the purposes of commissions, production and distribution. I have chosen a few representative works to study in detail and photos of these appear in the text. I have in addition created appendices for each motif, with the entire range of photos shown as illustrations.

3. *Blowpipe, ring and glass casting*, processes that are described in Chap. I, page 24: Glass in the West and in China.

4. Jourdain, Margaret and Jenyns, Soame R, 1967, 37.

Paintings with Chinese motifs

Mirrors with birds and flowers

The theme of birds and flowers is a traditional and often-recurring one in Chinese painting. It is also very common in reverse glass painting, and takes a variety of forms that I have divided up in the following way:

1. Birds and flowers in a minimalist setting
2. Birds and flowers in a natural setting
3. Birds and flowers on a decorative border

All paintings on the theme of birds and flowers are shown as photo illustrations in the corpus, and numbered 1 to 40.

Birds and flowers in a minimalist setting

The scene most frequently depicted in this category of reverse glass painting is a pair of golden or silver pheasants, often standing on a rock, accompanied by natural-looking flowers or a garland of flowers.

The Pheasant Mirrors at Drottningholm Palace

These two painted mirrors, seen in illustrations **8a** and **8b**, are obviously a pair. They constitute the upper part of two tall pier glasses, in the yellow and red drawing rooms respectively, of the Chinese pavilion at the Swedish royal palace of Drottningholm in Stockholm. The frames of these mirrors are in gilded wood, decorated with the scrolls and garlands popular in Sweden during the 1750s. The bevelled glass, probably produced by casting, might well be Vauxhall glass.⁵ In both these mirrors, underneath the flowering peonies and fluttering butterflies, a couple of pheasants, silver in the yellow drawing room and golden in the red one, are standing on blue rocks that have tortuous shapes, cavities and hollows.⁶ According to the Chinese pavilion's inventory and the study in Chapter III⁷, these mirrors must have been painted in China during the 1750s.

In China, these birds were very well thought of in high society⁸ and often depicted on the move, in pairs, as in these pictures. Buffon called them the *Tricolores huppés de la Chine* (crested tricolours of China) and they were first brought to Europe (to England to be precise)

5. Cf. Chap. I, page 24: Glass in the West and in China.

6. The famous 'strange rocks' so appreciated in Chinese gardens.

7. Page 119: The first Cantonese workshops, 1740-1760, and the Swedish 'network'.

8. Petit, Karl, 127, 130; Williams, C.A.S, 1976, 322.



8a and **8b** | *Pheasants and Peonies*. Painted overmantel mirrors. Gilded wooden frame. 80 x 60 cm. Circa 1760. Chinese pavilion in Drottningholm Palace, Stockholm.

around the year 1740, i.e. a few years before these pictures were painted. These birds, both live and painted, had a great vogue among the English, and later the French aristocracy. They drew the admiration of Elie de Beaumont, a French lawyer who visited the home of the English Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, in 1763:⁹

The hothouses, the bird menagerie and particularly the pheasants from China are all very worthy of attention, but I particularly admired the mirrors sent from England to China and brought back with Chinese paintings done on the reverse of the mirror, with as much precision as if they had been done on the top.

The peony was the most highly prized flower in China, and the one most often portrayed. Considered to be the queen of flowers, it symbolised feminine beauty; the ancient poets called it ‘evening beauty.’ It subsequently became a mark of distinction and finally, from the start of the Tang dynasty, the red peony expressed wealth and nobility.¹⁰ It is therefore not surprising to see it frequently depicted in Chinese reverse glass painting intended for the European aristocracy. The butterfly could have a variety of symbolic meanings in China: philosophical reflection on the nature of reality,¹¹ longevity, a homophonic puzzle, everlasting love,¹² and finally, a little Cupid when it was flying in a garden. An old legend recounts that a young man chasing a butterfly entered the garden of a high-ranking government official, caught sight of the man’s daughter and immediately fell in love with her. He worked hard to become a high-ranking official in his turn, in order to marry her. It is this latter symbol of love that we see represented by the butterfly in Chinese reverse glass painting.

These types of mirrors decorated with birds and flowers were among the first to be painted in China and to reach Europe.¹³ They already show that the Canton painters had outstanding skill in applying the paint when creating reverse glass paintings.

Mirror with quails and magnolia

At the centre of this mirror, in Illustration 9, a flowering magnolia is painted. In it are perched two titmice observing a pair of plump

quails pecking away below, near to some white Chinese orchids. The flowers of a young camellia are entwined with those of the magnolia. The beautiful rococo gilded frame dates from around 1765 and may have been made by the famous cabinet-maker John Linnell¹⁴ (1729-1796). As in the previous work, the glass sheet could only have been produced by casting.

This splendid mirror is painted with a variety of symbols. The camellia and magnolia flowers are of Chinese origin and were only really known and cultivated in the West from the eighteenth century onwards. Both the camellia and magnolia symbolise springtime, youth, and happiness, and the two are often seen together in pairs of Chinese reverse glass paintings. Camellias were imported from Japan in the seventeenth century and began to be cultivated on a wide scale in Europe in the eighteenth; they soon came to have symbolic meaning here too, this time of melancholic beauty, as in *The Lady of the Camellias*. The delicate white orchids, which found favour with Confucius, were often depicted in ink wash paintings and were the symbol of discreet friendship, love and beauty, but also of male fertility and therefore of numerous progeny. The quail is a frequent motif because its Chinese name is a homophone of the word for peace or tranquillity, so it naturally became a symbol for these. In this picture, the brushstrokes and harmony of colour serve the symbolic meaning and from it emanates a delicate tenderness evoking the springtime of love.

Some other birds and flowers depicted in reverse glass paintings

The chrysanthemum was frequently to be found in reverse glass paintings. This flower was originally introduced into Europe in 1789 by Pierre Louis Blancart¹⁵ (1741-1826), a supercargo from Marseille, and became very widespread during the nineteenth century. In China, it was a symbol of autumn and longevity, but also of retreat from the world and of contemplative life. Narcissi also symbolised longevity, as in the picture by John Pike.¹⁶

Several painted mirrors, including numbers 20, 21, 23, 24, 51, 96, 97, 136 and 150 in the corpus, feature a red bird with blue-green wings and a blue-black cap. The significance of this particular bird is analysed in Chapter III, page 144.

9. Beaumont (de), Elie, 1895, 144 and 145.

10. Petit, Karl, 2002, 54 and 55; Williams, C.A.S, 1976, 320.

11. Zhuang Zi, 2011, chap. 9.

12. In principle, when there are two of them.

13. Cf. Chap. IV, page 160: Development of the Western market.

14. Watson, Francis, 1976, 129; Phillips, R, 2010.

15. Didier, Bernard, 2007, 17.

16. Cf. Chap. II, page 84: Portraits of Westerners.





Birds and flowers in a landscape setting

These bird-and-flower motifs can also be depicted against a background landscape that usually includes a *water's edge*.

The pair of water's edge landscapes with pheasants, shown in Illustrations 10 and 11, is characteristic of this motif. In the foreground, a couple of pheasants, gilded in one of the pictures and silver in the other, stand on a rock at the edge of a lake or river. To the left and right, a group of flowers, peonies, and small shrubs frame the scene. Several junks and sampans, which look like pleasure boats, are moving on the water, while some beautiful Chinese dwellings can be seen on the banks. A special study is devoted to this type of landscape¹⁷.

Birds and flowers used as a decorative border

Groups of birds and flowers were often used to embellish the borders of pictures whose main themes were quite different. This was particularly the case with rural scenes and portraits. Thus, such diverse motifs as the birds on the rocks just mentioned, or country scenes and portraits of Westerners described below,¹⁸ are to be found with elegant garlands of birds and flowers around them.

The theme of a single flower with foliage

This theme is very rarely represented in Chinese reverse glass painting during the period being studied. Only two are present in my corpus, numbered 34 and 35.¹⁹ It is interesting to note that these are reverse glass paintings where only the motif is painted: the parts outside the motif are neither mirror nor painting but transparent glass. In this case, the decoration consists of a wooden panel that has been painted or covered with painted paper in a plain or sky colour, and fixed about 5mm behind the glass. These paintings are not unlike no. 4 in the corpus, which is organised in the same way.

17. Henceforth known as 'water's edge' landscapes in this study. Cf. page 74: Landscape.

18. Cf. page 84: Portraits of Westerners.

19. Unfortunately, there are no photos.

Motifs much admired both in Europe and China

These bird and flower motifs have meaning for the Chinese both because of the symbols they represent and because they form a link with the long tradition of bird paintings (particularly pheasants), as well as of flowers and rocks. This tradition, dating back over seven hundred years, is represented by the *Pair of Golden Pheasants under a Wild Peach Tree*, painted by Wang Yuan in 1349.²⁰ The tradition was still very much alive in the mid-eighteenth century, as is shown by *Pheasants, Magnolia and Peonies*, painted on silk by Tchang Cheng in 1754.²¹ This motif was admired at the Qianlong court in the eighteenth century since Giuseppe Castiglione himself had used it in silk painting for the emperor.²² It is therefore probable that the motif of pheasants and flowers was one of those painted at the Chinese emperor's court to adorn the mirrors offered to him by Westerners.

The Chinese style of these paintings with their elegant realism and colours and their charming exoticism was particularly appreciated in the West, where the popularity of Chinese ways of thinking and chinoiserie was at its height. There must have been a strong demand for these paintings, both among the European aristocracy and the supercargoes or managers of the East India companies who passed through Canton. The following quotation²³ from Johan Abraham Grill (1719-1799) testifies to this. He was a commercial adviser with the Swedish East India Company who had returned to Stockholm after a journey to Canton, writing to his friend Jacob Hahr²⁴ on 14 November 1770:

Had the glass delivered, which was left by Ava or her brother Apou Venus on a mission in Canton, to have a painting done on it showing a white pheasant with its female, on a rock with flowers around it.

20. In the Forbidden City Museum collection, referred to in Lesbre, Emmanuelle and Liu Jianlong, 2004, ill. 329.

21. In the Cernuschi Museum collection, referred to in Chavannes, Edouard and Raphael Petrucci. 1912 and text format 2013, 126 to 127.

22. In the National Palace Museum collection, Taipei, referred to by Beurdeley, Michel and Cécile, 1971, 130.

23. Kjellberg, Sven T. Malmö, 1974, 165, 166 and 265.

24. A supercargo with the same company who had remained in Canton.

Outdoor scenes: leisure in high society

Out of all the motifs successfully used by Chinese reverse glass painters, there is one that has been responsible for many remarkable works. This is the motif portraying members of Manchu high society—aristocrats, mandarins, wives and concubines relaxing in nature,²⁵ usually beside a lake, a river, or in the gardens and on the verandas of their fine houses.

I have grouped these works under the theme of *outdoor scenes*, including those taking place in gardens or on verandas. These paintings are often in pairs, which means a symbolic element is added to the painted motifs, with dual concepts set against one another: old age-youth, winter-summer, music-poetry, and so on. A distinction has been made between different scenes: those in which both women and men are present are dealt with in the present chapter, while those in which women are the dominant subject, men being absent or reduced to the secondary role of enhancing the female presence, are dealt with in *Beautiful Women*,²⁶ page 52.

Numbers 41 to 108 of the corpus are grouped under this title of *outdoor scenes*.

In nature

• Cardinal de Rohan's mirrors

This pair of mirrors, in Illustrations **12** and **13**, belong to the fine collection of Chinese objects acquired by the Cardinal de Rohan to furnish the prestigious palace he had built at Saverne, in Alsace, in 1779. The gilded frames with their glazing beads are later, probably dating from the nineteenth century, and the dimensions of the glass indicate how they were manufactured, by casting. This pair of mirrors has been described by Étienne Martin.²⁷

25. I prefer the term *in nature*, which is better suited to the Chinese context than the terms *countryside* or *rural setting* used in the West.

26. This category of 'beautiful women' paintings is traditional in Chinese painting according to Emmanuelle Lesbre and Liu Jianlong in their book *La Peinture chinoise*, Paris, 2004.

27. Martin, Étienne. Catalogue 2008 and *L'Estampille-L'Objet d'art*, 2008.

Winter Scene and Old Age (Illustration **12**)

A white-bearded man, wearing the official robes of a mandarin,²⁸ is sitting on a seat at the foot of a pine tree, at the edge of a lake lined with beautiful houses, surrounded by hills from which a pagoda emerges. A young woman is on either side of him and a child observes them with a smile. The robe and blue surcoat worn by the old man are the winter ceremony garments of this high-ranking mandarin, as shown by the phoenix that decorates his 'mandarin square'²⁹ and his coral necklace. He is wearing a mandarin's or aristocrat's winter hat,³⁰ his wrists are covered by muffs and he is wearing fur boots. Sitting on a rock covered with a white embroidered cloth, he is resting his arm on a table sculpted out of white marble, on which are arranged a *qin* (a Chinese cithara), a pot of flowers, a small perfume-burner, and a box of Chinese books. The two young women accompanying him have their hair in Manchu style.³¹ One of them wears a silk muslin dress and silk jacket, and the other an embroidered green silk dress. The latter is affectionately resting her hand on the old man's shoulder while the other is playing with a branch of one of the two flowering cherries. A child wearing winter clothes observes the scene, concealing a smile behind his hand. The scene takes place beneath two intertwined pine trees, doubly symbolic in the Chinese pictorial tradition because pines are symbols of longevity, symbols confirmed by the two cranes perched on them, in accordance with the expression, 'May you have perpetual springtimes like the pine and the crane',³² and trees that intertwine are *trees of love*, a pictorial symbol of lasting affection that was quite widespread in eighteenth-century China.³³

Also present in this picture are winter's famous *three friends*: the pine, the bamboo, and the flowering cherry tree. Cold-resistant pines and bamboos, and the cherry blossoming while it was still snowing, together symbolised friendship and resistance to adversity.³⁴

28. The mandarin was a top government official in the imperial, civil, and military administrations. He would have obtained his post following an empire-wide competitive examination.

29. This embroidered silk square, covering the chest and back of a mandarin's ceremonial robes, is decorated with an animal indicating the precise rank and the administration to which this official belongs: birds represented the civil service and mammals the military administration.

30. Manchu aristocrats and mandarins wore identical hats, with fur and silk brims in winter and red straw and silk in summer.

31. Cf. page 56: Chinese hairstyles in reverse glass painting.

32. Petit, Karl, 2002, 59; Bartholomew, Terese Tse, 2006, 180.

33. Chavannes, Edouard and Raphaël Petrucci. 1912 and text format 2013.

34. Bartholomew, Terese Tse, 2006, 210.

Summer Scene and Youth (Illustration **13**)

A young man with a thin black beard,³⁵ which he is gently pulling, stands at the edge of a lake. His silk robe is richly embroidered; he is wearing a mandarin's or aristocrat's hat and holds a tobacco pipe in his hand. Not far from him, a young Manchu girl is wearing an elegant embroidered silk tunic over a pink muslin dress and sitting on a twisted rock with cavities in it, at the base of a shrubby peony. She is clutching a young child against her legs. This time, the protecting tree is not a pine but a wutong,³⁶ on which a phoenix is perched, while another phoenix flies over the scene. A young servant girl, symbolically smaller in size, is bringing tea on a tray. The water is more like a river than a lake and is spanned by a traditional Chinese bridge,³⁷ while the terraces of some beautiful houses stretch down to the water's edge. There are many feminine symbols in this picture: the wutong, the phoenix, and the shrub-like peony all make us think that in addition to the old age-youth and winter-summer polarities, the male-female dichotomy might also be present.

European influence?

At first sight these scenes appear to be typically Chinese but, if one looks more closely, there are also signs of Western influence. For example: the perspective of the landscape, the shadows in the folds of the women's clothes, the familiarity of the scenes: a young woman affectionately placing her hand on a man's shoulder, even if she is his wife or concubine, is not a gesture associated with the Chinese pictorial tradition. The same applies to the 'family photo' element, where the mother is playing with her child.

A highly skilled technique

These two works show remarkable skill in reverse glass painting. To obtain such fine detail, a sure hand was needed to apply the different layers of paint on top of one another, as well as confident brushwork to render the surfaces. For an example of the expertise demonstrated in applying the layers, let us look at the clothes. When painting those of the young woman on the right of the mandarin in the 'winter' mirror, the painter must have started by painting the branch of cherry blossom and then the gold embroidery on the jacket, before painting

35. Cf. page 56: Chinese hairstyles in reverse glass painting.

36. The wutong, *Firmiana simplex* or *Sterculia*, with plane leaves is a tree native to Eastern Asia. According to legend, it is the only tree on which the phoenix will perch. It is associated with femininity.

37. A humpback bridge.

the dress and then the jacket itself. For the jacket, the consistency and thickness of the paint layer had to be cleverly calculated to produce, in reverse, the shininess of silk. As for the brushwork, its true merit can be best appreciated on the face and the pink dress. It needed to be extremely delicate to obtain the velvety, slightly translucent texture of the skin on the face and the hint of pink in the cheeks. The painter needed the same deft brushstrokes for the pink dress, allowing him to convey the fine transparency of the fabric as well as the folds suggesting the outline of the leg. In both cases, this skilful rendering is probably the result of painting *a fresco*.³⁸ The depiction of the young woman's embroideries in the 'summer' picture also shows astounding skill. The extremely delicate little flowers were painted first, followed by the silk itself with its strikingly realistic shimmering plays of light. The shadows marking the folds of the dress are a Western technique, and are obviously a little less skilful.

• The music-poetry pairs

Outdoor scenes with an aristocratic Chinese couple playing music or reciting poetry in a natural environment are very common in Chinese reverse glass painting. These are represented by numbers 43 to 67 and 101, 102 and 108 of the corpus.

It was Jenyns³⁹ who, in 1965, first suggested that a pair of these paintings might represent complementary allegories of music and poetry, two of the scholarly arts. He named the paintings *Art of Music* and *Art of Verse* but he only showed one of the two paintings, the *Art of Verse*, as a black and white photo, number 101 in the corpus. The photo and the description of the second painting of the pair, *Art of Music*, number 108 in the corpus, appeared in another text by the same author.⁴⁰

I have in turn confirmed this hypothesis by studying several of these pairs as well as single paintings showing identical scenes. Rather than the pair studied by Jenyns, with photos only in black and white, I chose a pair of large mirrors from the wonderful Horlick

38. This *a fresco* technique consists in painting a first layer and then, before it is dry, applying a second layer of paint, allowing it to penetrate the first.

39. Jenyns, Soame R, 1965, 150, Illustration 88.

40. Jourdain, Margaret and R. Soame Jenyns, 1965, Illustration 61, 104.





collection⁴¹ to illustrate pairs of reverse glass paintings devoted to the theme of music and poetry.

Outdoor Scene, Music

This painting, seen in Illustration 14, shows a young, high-born aristocrat sitting on a rock at the edge of a lake, a tobacco pipe in his hand. With keen interest, he is observing a young girl playing the *pipa*, a form of Chinese lute. Both the young man and the girl are dressed in the greatest finery, with particularly impressive embroidery. Another young girl⁴² stands behind the musician, while a child behind the rock on which the man and musician are seated is throwing seeds to a hen and cock pair. The brown hue of the foliage, the prince's winter hat, and the fan that the second young woman, the servant, is holding under her arm, all indicate that the hot season is over and the scene is taking place in autumn. At the edge of the lake, in the distance, the presence of a palace confirms the aristocratic character of the scene.

Several symbolic animals and objects are dotted around the picture. The dragon and phoenix, on the prince's and musician's clothes respectively, symbolise their membership of the highest aristocracy (prince and princess). The phoenix in the sky and the wutong trees (one pair behind the couple) are symbols of both love and femininity. The double gourd attached to the prince's belt symbolises and promises longevity; the double jade fish hanging on the pipa player's belt is an emblem of good luck and fertility; while the white cock is a symbol of purity. The theme of the pipa player is well known in Chinese culture, notably because of

- the classic drama *Tale of the Pipa (Player)*, written by Gao Ming in the fourteenth century;⁴³
- *The Song of Pipa* by the poet Bai Juyi;⁴⁴ and
- the scroll painted by Gu Hongzhong, who was active around 960. This included a scene where the minister Han Xizai was listening to a female pipa player in the company of his guests.⁴⁵

This scene of a young aristocrat listening to a woman sitting

41. Sir James Horlick (1844-1921), a pharmacist and businessman, was a collector of Chinese objects produced in Canton for export during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With his wife, he assembled one of the finest collections of Chinese reverse glass paintings, which was recently sold at Sotheby's.

42. Perhaps a lady-in-waiting?

43. Sung-Nien, Hsu, 1932, 456-459.

44. Margouliès, Georges, 1948.

45. Lesbre, Emmanuelle and Liu JianLong, 2004, 90.

◀14 | **Outdoor Scene, Music.** Painted mirror. Chippendale style chinoiserie frame. 165 x 82 cm. Circa 1770.

Formerly Horlick's collection. Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio. ◀◀15 | **Outdoor Scene, Poetry.** Painted mirror. Chippendale style chinoiserie frame. 165 x 82 cm. Circa 1770. Formerly Horlick's collection. Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

beside him playing the pipa is common in Chinese reverse glass painting. Several paintings in the corpus—numbers 43, 45, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 54a, 58 and 108— are almost identical as regards the scene and setting, number 108 being the painting referred to by Jenyns.⁴⁶ The Western influence in these pictures can be seen in the perspective accorded to the river, but the rural scenes, although traditionally Chinese, must have also struck a chord with Westerners seeing them at the time because of their resemblance to the rural scenes so popular in eighteenth-century Europe.

Outdoor Scene, Poetry

This scene forms a pendant with *Music* in the Horlick collection, and is shown in Illustration 15. Like *Music*, it also takes place at the edge of a lake bordered by hills and villas, on which sampans and pleasure boats are sailing. An aristocrat with a small black moustache⁴⁷ is depicted wearing a fur-lined jacket and winter hat. In one hand he is holding a flower and in the other his tobacco pipe, while a double gourd hangs from his belt. Seated in front of him on a rock is a Manchu woman wearing an orange silk dress and holding a closed fan in one hand, while she too holds a flower in the other. A child is observing the couple. As in the preceding picture, we can note the presence of a wutong and two phoenixes.

In view of the frequent association of this theme with music, studied above, there is ample justification for agreeing with Jenyns's thesis that we are dealing with an allegory of poetry linked to the allegory of music.

An almost identical scene can be found in five paintings in the corpus, namely numbers 44, 48, 59, 60 and 61. Another scene that is an allegory of poetry and frequently appears in Chinese reverse glass painting (shown in numbers 46, 64, 65, 66 and 67) depicts an aristocrat with a narrow moustache and a young woman sitting side by side on a seat or rock, at the foot of a tree, holding a flower Or reading a book. The setting may vary, but most often it is a water's edge landscape where a long wall surrounding some fine buildings is visible on the opposite bank.⁴⁸

It is noticeable that music is often associated with a young unmarried girl, and therefore with youth, while poetry is linked to maturity and the married state.

46. Jenyns, Soame R, 1965, 150, Illustration 88.

47. Cf. page 56: Chinese hairstyles in reverse glass painting.

48. Cf. Chap. II, page 98: Direct transpositions of Western artworks.

• The pair of mirrors in the Rijksmuseum

One of the finest examples of these pairs of mirrors with outdoor scenes is without doubt the ones belonging to the Rijksmuseum collection, seen in Illustrations 16 and 17. They merit some attention, especially as this scene is also depicted, in identical fashion, on another beautiful pair of mirrors, number 54 of the corpus.

The gilded frames are from the Louis XV period and the size of the glass proves that it was made by casting.

Like Cardinal de Rohan's pair, studied earlier, this pair also has the dual theme of winter-summer.

Winter Music Scene

In Illustration [16], an aristocratic couple are playing music on a terrace, at the edge of a lake containing pleasure boats and bordered by fine residences. The man with the pale, smooth baby face is a young aristocrat, as seen from his elegant embroidered orange silk robe. He is playing wooden *gubans*⁴⁹ and a small tambourine. On the stone seat upon which he is sitting are laid out a dish of various fruits, difficult to recognise because of their small size, and a tray with a teapot and cup. His delicate-faced companion is seated opposite him on a small lacquered wooden seat, with her hair dressed in the style of Manchu women. She is wearing an embroidered silk dress, covered by a sleeveless tunic with a closed collar, and two fur muffs. Her necklace is decorated with a 'longevity mushroom' *Lingzhi* and she is playing a pipa, the traditional Chinese lute. The instrument is resting on a white cloth to protect the silk of her beautiful robe.

A servant, symbolically smaller than her mistress, is accompanying them on a traditional flute called the *dizi*. We can just see a very tiny shoe emerging from beneath her dress, showing that her feet are bound and she is therefore Chinese. Her Manchu mistress, on the other hand, has black and white shoes of normal size. On the strip of earth where they are sitting, bounded by a bamboo fence on the lake side and a small pond in the foreground, a few symbolic flowers are growing and a couple of turtledoves are cooing, confirming the scene's amorous note. To the right, at the edge of the lake, is a superb Chinese residence that is not unlike some of the emperor's summer pavilions. The lake is enlivened by pleasure boats and little cargo transport boats. Snow covers the hills surrounding the lake; and the scene is framed by garlands of many different flowers—peonies, passion flowers, convolvulus, and

so on—and bunches of grapes, where several varieties of brilliantly-coloured birds, such as pheasants and magpies, are perched. The flowers, especially those in the garlands, which are identical to those in the next mirror, do not respect seasonal flowering differences.

Summer Music (and Poetry?) Scene

The summer scene in Illustration 17 differs from the winter scene in only a few respects:

- It is horizontally reversed. The young woman and her servant are on the left of the man and not on his right, and the fine residence is on the right whereas before it was on the left.
- The couple and the servant are wearing summer clothes as sumptuous as their winter ones.
- The man is no longer playing percussion but is holding a little text, probably a poem, while in the other hand he has a folded fan.
- The woman is no longer playing the pipa but the *erhu*, the two-stringed Chinese violin, and the servant is no longer accompanying them on the flute but holding a bird perched on her hand.⁵⁰
- The couple are no longer sitting on seats but on a flat rock where the same dish of fruit is laid out as in the winter scene. In addition to this, there is now a tobacco pipe, a book, and a bunch of flowers in a vase.
- In the small pond, which was empty in the winter scene, there are now lotuses flowering. Amongst the birds are a couple of water birds, perhaps a variety of water hen, on the edge of the pond, and in the garland we can see pheasants and a scarlet lory bird without a black cap.

If the opposition between winter and summer is clear, that between music and poetry is less so. However, we can probably draw conclusions from the piece of paper the young man is reading.

A European influence?

At first sight, these pictures appear to be very Chinese: the figures are Chinese, they wear Chinese clothes, they are in a Chinese setting of birds and flowers and a Chinese water's edge landscape. The scene itself, featuring an aristocratic Chinese man playing bans, to the accompaniment of young women playing other instruments, is not a novelty of reverse glass painting. It is similar to a scene painted by Kou Hong-Tchong in the tenth century, cited by Watson.⁵¹ This impression of total

exoticism must have been felt by the Westerner who bought this pair in the eighteenth century. However, a slightly closer analysis reveals several elements that indicate a Western influence, the first and most significant being the perspective of the water's edge landscape.⁵² The other elements confirming this influence are:

- the presentation of birds and flowers in the form of garlands on each side of the mirror. This motif of the flower garland or bird-and-flower garland, which adorns many mirrors painted under glass, is characteristic of European influence. A traditional Chinese painter seeking to portray nature in a natural way would not have used such an artificial device; and
- the presence of the lory, a bird that is foreign to China.

These two works are of exceptional quality. The skill shown by the painter who produced them can be compared in every respect to the skill displayed in the reverse glass paintings in the Cardinal de Rohan's collection, referred to earlier. In these two works, however, there is also a kind of gaiety, a spontaneity and ardent joy emanating from the graceful scenes with their fresh colours that, by comparison, make the Cardinal's paintings seem more static, more academic.

• The aristocrat, the beauty and the falcon

My corpus includes five paintings, numbered 69, 71, 72, 74 and 75, portraying identical scenes: a young man, wearing a mandarin's or aristocrat's summer hat and holding a falcon on his gloved left hand, is addressing a young woman. The scene takes place at the edge of a vast lake lined with villas, on which a few pleasure boats are moving. This series, although it features a young woman, a man and a falcon, as in the painting of *The Shepherdess and the Falconer*,⁵³ is markedly different from that painting. In *The Shepherdess and the Falconer*, the man in the gamekeeper's habit, who must be a falconer, is hiding to watch a shepherdess. In the present series, *The aristocrat, the beauty and the falcon*, the man appears to belong to the upper echelons of society, as does the young woman he is addressing. Falconry was an aristocrat's pastime and the scene is an entertainment, perhaps even a light-hearted dalliance. These differences led me to put these works into two different categories: *The Shepherdess and the Falconer* in the



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49. *Gubans*, castanet-type percussion instruments

50. A myna bird. This songbird is highly regarded in China.
51. Watson, W, 1979, 434, Illustration 472.

52. Cf. Chap II, page 74: Landscapes.
53. Cf. Chap II, page 52: 'Beautiful women'.

▲ 18 | *The Aristocrat, the Beauty and the Falcon*. Painted mirror. Gilded wooden frame. 43 x 54 cm. Circa 1780. Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.
➔ 16 | *Winter Music Scene*. Painted mirror. Gilded wooden frame, Louis XV. 80 x 51.3 cm. Circa 1780. Courtesy Rijks Museum, Amsterdam.
➔➔ 17 | *Summer Music (and Poetry?) Scene*. Painted mirror. Gilded wooden frame, Louis XV. 80 x 51.3 cm. Circa 1780. Courtesy Rijks Museum, Amsterdam.





beautiful women series of paintings, and *the aristocrat, the beauty and the falcon* series in the present Chapter II of outdoor scenes, page 45.

This painting, in Illustration 18, has turquoise tones for the rocks, the leaves of the trees and the distant hills, and orange for the ground and some of the tree trunks. There is a certain Western influence in the perspective, a little in the shading and in the subject itself, which appears to be a seduction scene. It is possible that this scene is taken from a classical Chinese novel or opera.

In the garden and on the veranda

The grand residences of Chinese high society included vast gardens with lakes and huge verandas in front of the house. Furthermore, those in the Canton region were situated on the banks of the many branches of the Pearl River, thereby giving these villas a superb view and the possibility of having a landing stage for pleasure sampans. Life was sweet for the aristocrats and mandarins who lived there and it was these leisure scenes that the Cantonese painters liked to depict, commissioned by notables of the Guangdong region or with the aim of selling them to Westerners, who were fond of such scenes.

The paintings from this category are numbered 82 to 100 and 104 of the corpus.

• In the garden

This beautiful mirror adorning Shugborough Hall in Staffordshire, England, can be seen in Illustration 19. It is one of a pair, its pendant describing an identical scene.

A seated mandarin is stroking his thin black beard⁵⁴ and talking with a young Manchu woman standing nearby, accompanied by her servant. They are on a terrace at the edge of a lake surrounded by exquisite houses and spanned by an elegant bridge with a pavilion on it. A graceful flower garland decorates the mirror's surround. This mirror is of particular interest because, unlike most Chinese reverse glass paintings with Chinese motifs, research has been carried out on it to

54. Cf. page 56: Chinese hairstyles in reverse glass painting.

ascertain its date. A recent study⁵⁵ has in fact established that these paintings were probably not acquired by Lord Anson (1697-1762), the owner of Shugborough Hall, during his stay in Canton in 1743, but perhaps⁵⁶ formed part of a batch of Chinese objects bought by his wife to furnish the Chinese pavilion when it was built in 1747. However, the most probable theory is that these pictures were sold as lots 80 and 81 on 10 February 1780 to a Mr. Anson for the sum of £26.50.⁵⁷

Paintings numbered 85 to 94 and 105 in the corpus also show pictures of people relaxing in beautiful gardens. Scene no. 89, where a servant is bringing refreshments to an aristocratic young man, is identical to the scenes in nos. 90 and 91. The pair numbered 88 and 89 was obviously intended to be put into two frames, juxtaposed to compose a single scene, but the European framers chose a different arrangement.

• On the terrace

On a beautiful terrace overlooking a river, in Illustration 20, some children are playing with a kite, watched by their fond parents. The junk, belonging to an eminent Cantonese official, is moored on the river, while several sampans are sailing around a fort on an island in the middle of the river. The opposite bank is the port of Canton quayside where huge factories have been set up. In the distance, the fortified city of Canton can be seen, with several monuments rising above it, including the minaret of the famous *Huai Sheng Si* mosque. This painting is one of a batch of nineteen of identical size and style, belonging to the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (Netherlands), which have been studied in detail by van Dongen.⁵⁸ He has suggested a date between 1785 and 1790.

The beautiful residence whose terrace can be seen in this painting is situated on the island of Honan, a place that was very popular with Canton's rich merchants and top mandarins. The mandarin Pan Qiguan, whose reverse glass portrait shown in Illustration 37 is studied in "Portraits of Chinese dignitaries," page 72, was one of those

55. *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857*, is a three-year research project financed by the Leverhulme Trust that has been carried out at Warwick University History Department (2011-2012) and at University College, London (2012-2014). For three years, the team at the centre of the project and teams from over 300 associated projects worked together to study British stately homes in their imperial and global contexts. <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/home/>.

56. The research suggests this date but provides no evidence for it.

57. Email exchange with Shugborough's curator, Mrs Gemma Roberts.

58. Van Dongen, Paul L. F., 1995.

privileged to live here. The fort that is visible is probably the one named *Dutch Folly* by Westerners. Five paintings in the corpus, numbered 82, 83, 84, 95 and 106, also show such scenes taking place on terraces at the water's edge.

• Romantic scene on a veranda

Manchu chivalry was not confined to the garden; the veranda was also a favourite place for courtly pursuits. On a superb veranda open to the sky, thanks to its red curtain having been drawn back (Illustration 21), a young aristocrat is standing, wearing a summer hat and clothes, and holding the hand of a young woman. He accompanies his remarks by a gesture with his closed fan, held in his right hand. A servant, behind the young woman, is presenting her with a robe. A child seated at their feet holds a pipe in his hands while, on his golden perch, a black-headed lory bird observes them.

The European influence is visible from

- the blue curtain, which is open and tied back, giving the whole scene the air of a stage set;
- the bunch of flowers in a vase; and
- the black-headed lory bird.

Another painting, no. 96 in the corpus, has an identical setting apart from a few details, among which are the curtain colour and the number of stools.



This work owes its beauty, tinged with a slight air of fantasy, to the virtuosity of the composition. The small size of the figures, the pillars with no visible end to them, the absence of furniture and particularly the veranda opening on to a void, to the mirror/sky,⁵⁹ place us in an immense make-believe palace. Is it a dream or the heavenly abode of the immortals?

‘Beautiful women’

The subject most frequently depicted in Chinese reverse glass painting, since its beginnings in the eighteenth century up to the present day, is young and pretty women, in either indoor or outdoor scenes or simply as portraits. This subject was not an innovation brought about by reverse glass painting, but was traditional in Chinese painting.⁶⁰ In this book, these paintings have been divided into two broad categories:

Outdoor scenes, where the man and woman or women form a couple or are engaged in a shared activity. These have been studied in “Outdoor scenes: leisure in high society,” page 40.

Beautiful women, where a young woman is shown alone, or in the company of other women but without a male character, or with a male character whose role is simply to enhance the woman’s presence. This is the subject of this chapter, where 111 paintings of ‘beautiful women’—numbers 109 to 219 in the corpus—are gathered under this heading. Studying them has led me to distinguish the following features belonging to this group and to scrutinize them more closely:

- the beautiful woman in the straw hat
- the beautiful woman in the blue veil
- the allegories
- tales and legends
- courtesans
- notable accessories

Finally, the significance of these young women’s hairstyles has been the subject of a particularly in-depth study in “Chinese hairstyles in reverse glass painting,” page 56.

59. Let us be practical: an empty space needed to be kept to serve as a mirror.
60. Lesbre, E and J. Liu, 2004, 98.





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‘The beautiful woman in the straw hat’

Among the very numerous ‘beautiful women’ portraits, a sub-set that I have called ‘the beautiful woman *in the straw hat*’ is of particular interest because of what it teaches us about the origin of these Chinese reverse glass paintings.

The sub-set is characterised by the presence in the picture of a young woman wearing a round straw hat, with a broad brim, decorated with flowers or feathers and sometimes edged with a little veil which is open in the centre so that it can be placed on top of the traditional Chinese chignon. This headwear cannot be Chinese since women of good society never wore such a hat. It is in fact Western.

In addition to this hat, the young woman often wears one or several of the following garments:

- A silk blouse with a closed collar, often red and often embroidered. It has long sleeves, from which the sleeves of a white shirt protrude.
- A white shawl covering the shoulders and tied at the front—another accessory that is not very Chinese.
- A long skirt made of voile, embroidered or not, from which a small foot sometimes emerges. The skirt appears to be held up by braces and (or) a belt, fashioned from a scarf or cord.

Overall, this outfit is Chinese in its choice of materials—particularly the embroidered silk—but not so much in its design and certainly not in its stylish hat.

The young woman is usually shown with a dreamy air, her head often resting on her hand and wearing a melancholic expression. She is sitting on a rock at the foot of a tree, a pine or a wutong, and frequently holds a long stick in her hand. A basket of flowers, with a tall handle, has been placed next to her. A water’s edge setting usually features in the background.

Sometimes she is surrounded by sheep, justifying the title of ‘shepherdess’ that is often given to these paintings. This association between a woman and sheep is also Western.

The corpus includes twenty-one reverse glass paintings—nos. 109, 111, 114, 115, 118, 120, 121, 122, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 133, 134, 135, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143 and 144—that can be related to the theme of the beautiful woman in the straw hat. There are commentaries below on some of the paintings characteristic of this group.

It is not unusual for these paintings to be one of a pair of paintings of beautiful women, with the pendant frequently having some of the following characteristics:

- It shows a young woman with features and clothes often resembling those of the young woman with the hat.
- She is not wearing a hat but a blue veil with a floral decoration, usually of peonies.
- She may be standing or sitting in an outdoor setting quite similar to the first in the pair, including the water’s edge landscape, but she may also be inside an aristocratic house that opens on to a terrace overlooking the same water’s edge landscape. In this latter case, she is seated at a table wearing warmer, more elegant clothes than her counterpart in the other picture; she is frequently shown smoking a tobacco pipe.
- There is often a puppy playing near her.

The portrayal of the beautiful woman is dealt with in “The Allegories,” page 66.

• ‘La bonne bergère’ (The Good Shepherdess)

This painting, seen in Illustration 22, is part of the large Frieder Ryser collection⁶¹ and is on display in the Vitromusée at Romont in Switzerland. It is one of the most representative and gracious of the long series of portraits each featuring shepherdesses wearing straw hats.

At the foot of a rock and a pine tree, on the edge of a lake, a young woman is watching over her sheep. We can see, on the other side of the lake near a tower, a long wall with small windows cut into it at regular intervals, and in the distance some hills. There are shadow plays on the blue-coloured foliage. Two goats are grazing beside the young woman, who is wearing most of the attire previously described: a round straw hat with a wide brim decorated with flowers and, tied on the top, a red cord whose two ends hang down coquettishly. There is also a white scarf covering her shoulders and tied at the front, an orangey-red blouse fastening with a very modest high collar, a belt in the same red cord as on the hat, and a plain blue pleated skirt from which a very tiny red shoe is peeping out. She is also holding a long, thin stick in her hand. Everything about this young woman is graceful. The way her face is depicted follows the Chinese tradition: pale, without shadows, but with rose-tinted cheeks.⁶² The mouth is small and red, cherry-shaped according to

61. Ryser, Frieder, 1991, 225, Illustration 257.

62. Using the *a fresco* painting technique, that is to say applying a second layer while the first is not yet dry.

Chinese hairstyles in reverse glass painting

Women's and young girls' hairstyles in high society under the Qing dynasty

Under the Qing dynasty, the Manchu masters of China assigned the highest symbolic importance to hairstyles. They decreed that all men, both Manchu and Chinese, should wear their hair in a plait, and their wives were made to dress their hair in the typical *gaoliang* way. This meant that married women fashioned a chignon around a horizontal piece of wood that allowed the hair to spread out at each side. The hair was then decorated with jewels, which were often symbolic, such as the famous phoenix-shaped hairpins, and hairpins holding three pendants on each side that swung gracefully whenever the young woman moved her head. Real or artificial flowers completed this rich decoration. In this book, these hairstyles are referred to as *Manchu-style*.

But another hairstyle is often seen on reverse glass paintings. It is composed of a simple chignon standing up vertically on the young woman's head. It is held in place and decorated with hairpins, and a variety of jewels and flowers. Thus, in the painting below [ill. 11], an elegant and richly dressed young woman is putting the finishing touches to her coiffure by adding a beautiful hairpin to the fresh peonies and phoenix-shaped pin (a lucky charm) already adorning her hair.

Which women wore a simple chignon in reverse glass paintings? Were they Chinese? Or were they young Manchu women before marriage?

The pairs of portraits in Illustrations 16, 17 and 32a, 32b contain an opposition between those with Manchu-style hairstyles and those with a simple chignon. It is more probable that the contrast marked the difference between a married woman and an unmarried girl rather than between Manchu and Chinese. In the same way, the pairs numbered 179, 180 and 181, 182 in the corpus seem to link together, as equals, a woman with hair in Manchu style and another with a simple chignon, each of them wearing the same rich clothing. This argues in favour of an unmarried Manchu girl wearing a simple chignon.

However, young servant women, who were therefore probably Chinese, also wore this simple chignon, though it is less ornamented than those worn by young Manchu girls.

In this book I have made the following distinction: if a picture shows a woman with a Manchu-style hairstyle it means she is married; but, depending on the context, if she is wearing a simple chignon this indicates she is an unmarried Manchu girl or a Chinese woman.

The pilosity of male faces

In Chinese iconography of this period and in reverse glass paintings, there are three ages of man, each determined by his facial hair: a young, unmarried man is defined by his absence of beard or moustache; a thin black beard characterises the married male adult face; and a white beard is the mark of an old man. •



tradition. The frame is Chinese, in black lacquer with gilded foliation.

The glass has been made using the *ring* method. The layer of paint is thin, and a black surface, a few millimetres behind the painting, gives it depth and colour, preventing us seeing through the painting to the board at the back. The painter has worked on the contrasting styles represented in the painting: the delicate portrayal of the young woman, particularly her hands and face, and the quite rapidly sketched setting with its blue and yellow rocks, trees and hills. The Western influence is perceptible in the treatment of the drapery, with shading in the folds; perhaps too in the perspective of the lake, and also with the introduction of the tiny red shoe. We know that Westerners were surprised by this tradition of binding Chinese women's feet from childhood to make sure they remained tiny. The practice, which it has to be said is very barbaric, was not adopted by Manchu aristocrats of the Qing dynasty and was therefore not prominent in Chinese painting during this particular dynasty. However, it is conspicuous here, doubtless on account of foreign art lovers, who saw in it a taste of the exotic, with cruelty only adding to its fascination.

• The Shepherdess

This pretty pair of painted mirrors, in Illustrations 23 and 28⁶³, has a shepherdess as one of its themes, which is dealt with in this section. The other theme is 'the young woman wearing a blue veil inside her home,' which is dealt with in page 64.

At the base of a group of rugged rocks with sharp ridges, a young shepherdess, wearing a straw hat, is seated on the ground with one leg folded beneath her, gloomily resting her pretty face on her hand. Over her dress of fine white embroidered gauze, she is wearing a red jacket with a Chinese collar. A couple of sheep are lying at her feet and the scene takes place on the bank of a river that disappears towards the steep hills. The frame, in light, undecorated wood, has the shape of a flattened arch.

Once again, the picture is built around the juxtaposition of a harsh, mineral landscape achieved with large strokes of colour and a delicate young woman wearing refined clothing. The smoothness of her face and her pink cheeks are very subtly done but, unlike the Romont portrait, there are shadows shaping the face and hands.

63. *Chinese Glass Paintings & Export Porcelain*, 1966, 18.

• The Shepherdess and the Falconer

A young woman is sitting on a flat rock on a riverbank, at the foot of a wutong around which a peony is entwined. She is pensively watched by a smiling falconer, hidden by a tree, his bird perched on his hand (Illustration 24). She wears a hat with flowers that has a wide brim covered with a blue veil and an embroidered silk orangey-pink tunic over a silk muslin dress. A white scarf, tied at the front, covers her shoulders. In her right hand she is holding a long stick while her left hand rests on a basket of flowers with a tall handle. Two lambs are



64. *Shepherdess and Falconer*. One of a pair of painted mirrors. Hardwood frame. 75 x 50 cm. Circa 1770.

Courtesy Roger Keverne. Photo Rights Reserved. → 23 | *Shepherdess* and 28 | *Young Woman on her Veranda*. Pair of painted mirrors. Hardwood frame. 71.1 x 55.8 cm. Circa 1760. The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York. Photo Richard Goodbody.

61. *Woman*. Reverse glass painting. Gilded wooden frame. 45.9 x 40.4 cm. Circa 1790.

Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser). © Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Wes Eigenmann, Fribourg.





frolicking at her feet. Along the river a Chinese house can be seen, with a square tower emerging from it.

The composition is a classic one in reverse glass painting; but here, it shows evidence of fine balance, together with very pleasing brushwork. This picture is one of a pair whose pendant, number 116 in the corpus, shows two young women, one of them sitting on a flat rock in a setting almost identical to the one in the shepherdess with the falconer. It includes the basket of flowers but the sheep are replaced by a pheasant. This young woman is wearing a brown silk dress and holding a flower in her hand while the second, standing behind her, is arranging her hair in Manchu style.

The same theme can be found in a painting belonging to the fine collection at the Lady Lever Gallery in Liverpool, number 118 in the corpus.

• The origin of the beautiful woman in the straw hat: A painting by Giuseppe Castiglione

Since some of the clothes the young woman is wearing cannot be Chinese, and knowing that very many Chinese reverse glass paintings were copies of European engravings or miniatures, it seemed appropriate, following the example of Udo Dammert,⁶⁴ to look for the origin of this portrait in European iconography of the time. Although there is no lack of straw-hatted shepherdesses sitting at the foot of trees, I was not able to find a painting or engraving that might have served as a model for shepherdess paintings in the corpus. However, among the artworks created by Jesuit painters at the court of Emperor Qianlong is a painting depicting a young woman wearing a straw hat and clothes very like those in the reverse glass paintings described above.

Portrait of a Young Woman Dressed as a European Shepherdess. The Beijing Palace Museum has a portrait of a young Chinese woman in European dress (Illustration 25). It is reproduced in black and white, unfortunately without dimensions, in several works⁶⁵ on China under the title *Portrait of a Young Woman Dressed as a European Shepherdess*. This painting possesses most of the features found in reverse glass portraits of young women wearing straw hats that have been studied in the present text: the hat, of course, but also the clothes and the woman's pose, sitting on a rock at the foot of a tree.

64. Dammert, Udo, 1980.
65. Beurdeley, Michel and Cécile. Illustration 85; Sullivan, M. 1973, fig. 42; Liu, Jiaju, 2003, no. 6, 50.

In her left hand, the young woman is holding a stick with a metal plate at the end in the shape of a spade. This is a shepherd's crook, in use in Europe until the late eighteenth century, and often represented in medieval European painting up until the eighteenth century. The woman's left hand is resting on the tall handle of a flower basket. In addition to its decorative function, in China this basket symbolised one of the Taoist Immortals, Lan Caihe.⁶⁶ Cécile and Michel Beurdeley make the following comment on this artwork: 'Painting attributed to Castiglione. In fact, it can be affirmed that these three portraits (which include this shepherdess) were painted by a European artist in China and there is nothing to prove that they represent Hiang Fei.'

Hiang Fei, now written as Xiang Fei in the current official script of the People's Republic of China, was the legendary concubine of Emperor Qianlong; she also went by the name of 'fragrant concubine.' I will not list the serious historical studies⁶⁷ that have attempted to discover whether this young woman really existed; for our purposes I prefer the legend, which seems to me more pertinent to her pictorial image. She was an Uyghur princess—a people of western China—and is said to have been given to Emperor Qianlong, or captured by him, following his victory over a rebellion in this region. She was taken to the harem in the palace at Peking and the emperor was able to resist neither her beauty nor the fragrance emanating from her body,⁶⁸ and fell desperately in love with her. Nothing was too good for her—neither the construction in the palace grounds of an open-air theatre nor a mosque⁶⁹ built quite close by; but history does not tell us how she reacted. The romance ended badly because, according to legend, the young woman was assassinated by the empress who, so it was thought, suspected the concubine of wanting to kill the emperor to revenge her people.

If this heroine's existence is debatable, her role in the collective memory and in Chinese art is not. Cécile and Michel Beurdeley are cautious of attributing this painting to Castiglione and of stating that it is indeed Xiang Fei, but are careful to note that the young woman is

66. Taoist philosophy attributes the highest importance to the search for immortality. Eight mortals have succeeded in attaining this blessed state, and they form one of the bases of popular Chinese iconography. Each of them is accompanied by their symbol(s).
67. I make an exception for the most documented study, which is a real benchmark: Millward, James A, 1994, 427-458.
68. Hence her nickname.
69. She was a Muslim.

'disguised as a European.' However, the following factors seem to me to argue in favour of this affirmation.

In the eternal spring garden

The first of these is also a silk painting, the panel of a screen, shown at the 'Min Shin no kaiga (Ming and Qing Dynasty Paintings)' exhibition at the Tokyo National Museum in 1964.⁷⁰ Emperor Qianlong is seated in front of the Yuan Ming Yuan Belvedere Palace watching with obvious admiration a young woman disguised as a European. The catalogue describes her as 'Xiang Fei accompanying Emperor Qianlong at a game of ball in the Yuan Ming Yuan Belvedere Garden,' and attributes the work to Castiglione.

- Two conclusions may be drawn from this work:
- The young woman is close to the emperor and, in all probability, one of his favourite concubines, the only woman with whom he would have had himself painted—and, what is more, by his favourite Jesuit painter.
 - The disguise, according to the Beurdeleys, is none other than a European shepherdess's costume, with the little round straw hat that is very like the one in the Imperial Palace painting mentioned earlier. This image confirms the emperor's taste for festivities with exotic disguises, in this instance Western. One cannot resist a smile at this symmetry: while European monarchs were organising festivities with Chinese costumes, the Chinese emperor was dressing the pretty women at his court in European disguises.

An interesting point regarding this painting's attribution is the description of it by Peter Quennel when he visited the Imperial Palace in 1930:⁷¹

Far away in a remote corner of the palace, he (Qianlong) built his barbarian concubine a little bath house... a tiny vaulted chamber and a paved ante-room; but in the ante-room there are two pictures on the wall, portraits of the concubine herself, painted by a Western artist in the Western manner. Father Castiglione was his name... the slit-eyed Turki bed fellow of the great king is portrayed 'en jardinière' upon a knoll, wearing a wide shady hat and a laced bodice, her blue over-skirt disposed around her as she reclines, holding the slender shaft of a long hoe.

70. *Min Shin no Kaigakaiga*, Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, Kyoto Benrido. 1964.
71. Quennel, Peter, 1986, 173, 174 and 175.

The metamorphoses of Xiang Fei in reverse glass painting



There are two other portraits in existence that have been said to represent Xiang Fei.

The beautiful armour-clad woman

In the Taipei (Taiwan) National Palace Museum collections, a painting on Korean paper shows a young Asian woman wearing European ceremonial armour: its shining black glints pleasingly in the light, she wears a helmet with a red plume and she is carrying a European marshal's baton. The painting's provenance, according to the museum, is the Peking Imperial Palace and the picture is referred to by Michel and Cécile Beurdeley.¹ Apart from the brief mention by Quennel, I have found very little evidence to prove that the picture is of Xiang Fei. Recent research by Lina Lin,² a curator at the Taipei museum, has led her to believe that the young woman is more likely to be a relative of Emperor Qianlong, and that the painter was one of the European Jesuits at the imperial court. I know of only one example of reverse glass painting dating from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, which is therefore outside the period being studied in this book.

The existence of this reverse glass painting does however confirm that there was communication between the emperor's court and the Canton reverse glass painters.

The beautiful woman with the embroidered coat

Several reverse glass painters depict a young woman with a Manchu hairstyle wearing beautiful earrings and an embroidered cape, sitting with her elbow resting on a table. They were obviously inspired by a single model, which might well be the picture presented by the Beurdeleys,³ bearing the title *Portrait of a Young Woman Wearing a Red Dress*, which they describe as 'an oil painting, attributed to Castiglione. This portrait is thought to depict Xiang Fei, belonged to Mrs Tchang Kai-Chek, Tai-Pei, Tai-Wan.'

The reverse glass paintings that I have been able to see of the beautiful woman with the embroidered coat are more recent than the period being studied here. I will therefore say no more than to simply point out that enthusiasts of every period, including our own, had a strong desire to discover that the woman in their pictures was the beautiful concubine. •

1. Beurdeley, Michel and Cécile, 1971, 177, Illustration 84.

2. Lina, Lin. 2006.

3. Beurdeley, Michel and Cécile, 1971, 177, Illustration 83.



There is no doubt that it is the same picture, which Quennel⁷² thus attributes to the Jesuit painter Giuseppe Castiglione and is thought to depict the famous concubine.

The revelatory copy

I would like finally to add my own contribution to this question of attribution, by referring to the work seen in illustration 26. This painting is an exact repeat of the portrait featuring a young woman dressed as a European shepherdess, but with slightly different colours. Furthermore, and this is the most important point, in the bottom left-hand corner, the painting carries Castiglione's Chinese seal.

The practice of copying works held by the court, especially those pleasing to the emperor, was a common custom in China, as it was in Europe at that time. It appears improbable that the copyist would have invented Castiglione's signature. It therefore seems to me that the portrait of a young woman dressed as a European shepherdess is indeed by Castiglione and that it depicts one of Qianlong's favourite concubines. So why would it not be Xiang Fei? I have decided to call her by this name for the remainder of what follows.

72. Listening to his guide?

Castiglione's painting of Xiang Fei as a shepherdess repeated by reverse glass painters

Grouped side by side in the same Illustration 27, two of the reverse glass paintings of a young woman in a straw hat (Illustrations 22 and 24) and Castiglione's painting (Illustration 25) reveal many convincing similarities: it seems to me there is no doubt that the work of the Jesuit painter inspired Canton painters in their series of young women, specifically shepherdesses, with straw hats.

Why did this portrait have such a following among reverse glass painters? There are many reasons for the numerous repeats of this theme, among which are the following:

- It was a painting appreciated by the emperor and, on account of this, could not fail to please the whole of Chinese high society, who were keen to adopt court fashions.

- The portrait's delicacy and the legendary romance linked to this beautiful captive,⁷³ occasioning an artistic coming together of China and the West, was certain to charm Western high society as well as the more plebeian visitors to eighteenth-century Canton.

- The possibilities of variation on the theme of the pretty Chinese shepherdess were inexhaustible for a Westerner of the time who was a lover of chinoiserie and rural, even racy scenes.

73. Which the vendors of these works did not fail to tell their potential buyers!



27 | Similarities between the Castiglione painting [ill. 25, right] and reverse glass paintings [ill. 22 centre and 24 right].

I reversed horizontally [ill. 22]—thanks to digital photo—in order to make comparison easier.

Variations on the theme of the beautiful woman in the straw hat

No. 128 in the corpus, “Group of Shepherdesses with Straw Hats,” is a painting unique in its genre. It portrays a group of four shepherdesses with two young children, surrounded by sheep on the edge of a lake. It is one of a pair, the other (No. 129) being an indoor scene showing a concert given before a young Manchu aristocrat, in opposition to the outdoor scene of the first picture. The frames are also original, geometric in shape and made from red lacquered wood. Although the general look of them resembles the paintings already referred to, there are several differences to notice. One of the seated young shepherdesses is sporting a *décolleté* which is very un-Chinese, and allowing her bound little foot to peep out from under her dress. One of the standing young women is shown in profile, which is unknown in traditional Chinese painting. Finally, the manner of painting is also different—there is greater volume and it is more affected.

Simple portraits

The photos of these portraits are numbered 130, 133, 134, 135, 138, 139 and 140 in the corpus. The young woman wearing the straw hat is no longer a shepherdess—only her head and shoulders are depicted or she is shown sitting at the foot of a tree with a water’s edge setting in the background. The portrait is often one of a pair and the matching one is a portrait of the beautiful woman with the blue veil; its dimensions may vary between 5 cm and 50 cm. One or two feathers may be added to the flowers on the hat, and it is occasionally edged with a fabric fringe. The frames are also varied—they may be rectangular, oval or hexagonal, but are usually plain wood, neither carved nor gilded. However, they are sometimes painted with black lacquer with gilded foliation.

The beautiful woman in the blue veil

There are eighteen paintings in my corpus of a beautiful woman whose hair is covered with a blue veil.⁷⁴ They are often linked to the beautiful woman in the straw hat, either because of the clothing or because they are one of a pair, the matching picture being of a beautiful woman in a straw hat.

74. Nos. 123, 124, 131, 132, 136, 145, 146, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158 and 159, pages 182-184.

• **Young woman on her veranda**

The painting shown in Illustration 28, of a young woman with a blue veil in an indoor setting, is a pendant to the one of the shepherdess in Illustration 23. The young woman is nonchalantly sitting on the edge of a sofa, on a veranda opening onto a river or lake with a tree in the foreground, which are visible because the curtain has been tied back. Her hair is covered with a blue veil, which is not a Chinese accessory; she is wearing a blue silk dress decorated with dragon medallions and a sumptuous ermine fur coat; and she holds a tobacco pipe in her left hand. At her feet, a small dog is trying to attract her attention. Her elbow is resting on a Chinese stool near a table on which a bowl of fruit and a bunch of flowers—chrysanthemums and cockscombs—have been placed. We can see the edge of a picture showing a sky, with a flimsy blue curtain hanging over the top of it.

Everything here speaks of wealth and elegance, but also of the dreamy melancholy of a beautiful aristocratic woman. The technique is of exceptionally high quality: one only has to look at the ermine cape to be convinced of this. We are in the presence of a masterpiece of Chinese reverse glass painting.

This picture has several binary oppositions—summer-winter, town-country—that have been well described by Cummings.⁷⁵ However, I find it difficult to follow his reasoning when he talks of the opposition between wealth and poverty: according to him, the young shepherdess exudes gaiety, while the young woman in the rich ermine radiates sadness, from which he draws the powerful moral that wealth does not necessarily create happiness.

• **Portrait of a young woman in a blue veil**

This painting, seen in Illustration 29, is one of a pair, its pendant depicting a young woman with flowers on her hat. Here, a young woman is standing at the foot of a tree on the bank of a river where a sampan is sailing. It is bounded by a hill in the distance, on which stands a pagoda. She wears clothes that show evidence of Western influence, and are often worn by young women in straw hats, notably by the young woman depicted on the other picture in the pair. On her shoulder, she is carrying a basket of flowers that also contains a bottle. We have already noted the association between this basket and the women in the straw hat as a symbol of the Immortal, Lan Caihe, a mythological

75. *Chinese Glass Paintings & Export Porcelain*, 1996, 17.



Chinese figure considered to be one of the eight Immortals in the Taoist pantheon, and the presence of the bottle confirms this attribution. In this picture, however, the basket is associated with the woman in the blue veil. The link between this young woman and the woman in the straw hat, whom I have suggested might represent the concubine Xiang Fei, leads me to think that this woman in the blue veil might also be a concubine. If the shepherdess's straw hat is neither Chinese nor Manchu, the blue veil over the woman's hair is hardly any more so. But it could be an accessory worn by Muslim women, and Xiang Fei was a Muslim. So it is very tempting to see in this young woman in the blue veil one of the many depictions of the *fragrant concubine*.⁷⁶

• Other variations on the theme of the beautiful woman in the blue veil

Among the eighteen works illustrating this theme, we may note the frequency of the scene—nos. 154 to 159 and 214 in the corpus—in which the young woman is languorously stretched out in a pleasure sampan with a canopy, on a lake or a river, her head gracefully resting on her hand. In its Christmas edition, no. 28 of 1900, the English magazine *Illustrated London News* had no hesitation in describing this picture as a portrayal of the beautiful concubine Xiang Fei (no. 155 in the corpus). Unfortunately, it does not state the source of its information. The depiction of the woman in the blue veil, like that of the woman wearing the straw hat, seems to have remained highly popular for almost a century. This can be seen from nos. 148 and 149 in the corpus, which form part of the decoration at Saltram House in Plymouth, England, and therefore date from around 1760; and nos. 151 and 156, which date from the first half of the nineteenth century. Also of note is the frequency of the ermine cape, a symbol that the young woman belongs to the highest echelons of society and a symbol of winter in the pairs where the pendant shows a young woman wearing summer clothes and a round straw hat.

Lastly, a surprising pair of paintings, numbered 146 and 147 in the corpus, clearly links this woman in the blue veil to the Immortal Lan Caihe. The scene of the young woman on the raft, known as *Sea Crossing on a Raft*, is one of the most well-known episodes in the epic of this Immortal.

76. Xiang Fei was also known by this name, since her skin was said to be wonderfully fragrant.

The allegories

Like Chinese reverse glass paintings in general, those featuring beautiful women often go in pairs and frequently depict binary themes, with opposing or complementary allegories.⁷⁷ We have already seen the interior-external and winter-summer oppositions. But there are others, dealt with below, such as old age-youth, which is a frequent opposition in the pictures of beautiful women, as it is in the exterior scenes we saw in page 40, featuring the young married woman-unmarried girl duality.

• Old age-youth

This pair of paintings, in Illustrations 30 and 31, belonged to the British Royal Collection; they have been described by Granville⁷⁸ and named *The Voice of Age*, *The Voice of Youth*.

77. Which are not unlike 'parallel sentences,' a series of vertical characters which, in China, are hung in pairs on the walls of houses, restaurants or offices.
78. Granville, 1930, 367.



30 | *The Voice of Age*. 31 | *The Voice of Youth*. Pair of painted mirrors. English black lacquered frame with gilded foliation. 83.8 x 50.78 cm. Former collection of Her Majesty the Queen Mary. Photo Rights Reserved.

In a river landscape, a young woman with a straw hat is watching an old man with a long white beard who is seated next to her holding a fishing rod in his hand. Wearing a pleated muslin dress, she is holding a flower. A few ducks are swimming on the water in the foreground. The paintings numbered 111 and 112 in the corpus show an identical scene.

The Voice of Youth: In a river landscape, a young woman is dressed like the one in *The Voice of Age* but is wearing her hair in Manchu style. She is listening to a child wearing a straw hat, who is sitting next to her playing the flute. Painting no. 113 of the corpus shows a similar scene but with the addition of a man, who observes the situation from behind a tree with a falcon perched on his hand. This scene of a young woman listening to a child playing the pipe is also depicted in paintings 114, 120, 167, 168 and 169 of the corpus.

The allegory of music-poetry can perhaps be added to the old age-youth allegory that is undeniably present, with music represented by the pipe player and poetry by the woman with the flower.

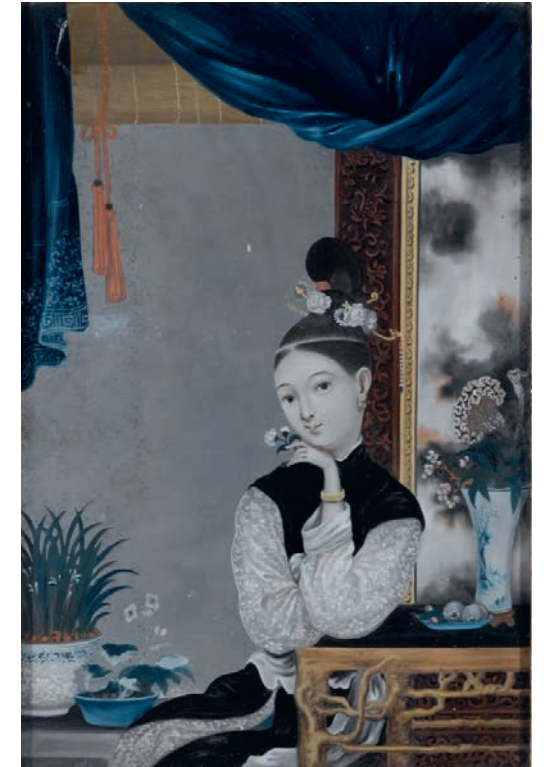
In these works, we also see the appearance of female clothing that is no longer as modest as in the early pictures of the beautiful Xiang Fei. The top of the silk muslin dress fits tightly around the young woman's bust, showing evidence of a Western influence. This item of clothing was to prove very popular in nineteenth-century reverse glass paintings of courtesans, enabling the painter to depict them both dressed and partially undressed, by taking advantage of the fabric's transparency.

• Young married woman-unmarried girl

Several paintings, in pairs numbered 157-158, 179-180, 181-182, 193-194 and 210-211 of the corpus, or in the same painting in corpus nos. 165 and 170, indicate the opposition between young married woman and unmarried girl by way of their hairstyles.⁷⁹ One of the most striking of these is the pair in Illustration 32a and 32b.

In the first painting, a young woman with Manchu-style hair, wearing a blue silk dress with a fur-edged collar, is seated on a veranda that opens onto the outside world thanks to the unclosed blue curtain. She holds a flower in her hand and a fan box is open on the table in front of her. A landscape picture is on the wall.

79. Cf. page 56: Chinese hairstyles in reverse glass painting.



32a | *Young Girl on Her Veranda* and 32b | *Young Lady on Her Veranda*. Pair of painted mirrors. 45 x 30 cm. Circa 1790. Former Horlick's collection. Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.



The setting in the second picture is almost identical. A young girl wearing a light dress and a simple chignon is sitting at a table holding a flower in her hand.

Taking into account the clothes they are wearing, with a fur collar for the young woman and a picture on the wall that seems to be a winter landscape, the winter-summer opposition could perhaps be added to that of young married woman-unmarried girl.

The pair numbered 210-211, which is perhaps more recent than the period of 1720-1820 that is being studied here, has been included in the corpus because it has the particular feature of being on two separate planes—a reverse glass painting that does not cover all the glass, and has a sheet of painted paper half a centimetre behind it. This gives the whole painting a pleasing impression of relief.

Tales and legends

We have already seen that Chinese reverse glass painters were happy to take their inspiration from scenes in legends, or stories that had become legends, especially those linked to beautiful concubines. These included Xiang Fei and her European costumes; Yang Guifei and the lychees brought from the southern reaches of the empire by order of her imperial lover, Xuanzong (reigned 712-756), Illustration 33; the play of *The Pipa Player*; and *Tales of the Butterfly*.

We should also note the presence of the Taoist Immortal Lan Caihe whose symbol, the basket of flowers with a tall handle, often accompanies Xiang Fei, but not her alone. No. 147 in the corpus, one of a pair, shows her in one her most famous adventures, crossing the sea on a raft. Her basket and bottle are on the front of the raft. Although there is no doubt about the meaning of this particular scene, I have not been able to establish the meaning of its pendant, no. 146 in the corpus, which shows a young woman fishing on a riverbank. This is all the more regrettable since two other paintings in the corpus, nos. 148 and 149, represent the same scene of a young woman standing, with her weight on one leg, holding a fishing rod on a riverbank.

This is not the only gap in my knowledge: several scenes in other paintings appear to have been inspired by legends, tales or poems whose origins I have not been able to determine. This is the case with the pair featuring a young woman mounting a horse in the first painting and a buffalo in the second (pairs 141-142 and 143-144 of the corpus). Certainly, in one of the two paintings, a young man with

a pipa in his case is near her, whereas in the second it is an old man who speaks to her, leading me to think that the pair symbolises old age-youth. As for the animals, the buffalo is traditionally ridden by the sage Laozi, who is a man, and the horsewoman is slightly reminiscent of the art of painting as it was practised in the Song period, echoing an eighth-century painting by Zhang Xuan (713-755).⁸⁰

Courtesans

The theme of racy or erotic paintings was commonplace in the eighteenth century, in China as well as in the West. And Chinese reverse glass painting certainly did not neglect this genre, as can be seen from the strong condemnations by Jesuits: ‘The Chinese have succeeded only too well in following the examples they were given, and painting cynical and loathsome filth on both large and small mirrors.’ So wrote Pierre-Martial Cibot, a missionary in Peking.⁸¹ Moreover, this type of painting was quite well suited to the buying public, which was largely composed of sailors who were out for a good time.

Although there must have been a substantial number of these works, gaining access to them today is somewhat difficult because of their relatively private nature: collectors rarely offer them for sale and museums are wary of buying them. Consequently, my corpus includes only a few photos of works—nos. 206 to 209—which are more risqué than outright erotic. The main interest of these paintings is the play on transparency in some of them—the transparency of net curtains and the different layers of the young women’s dresses show evidence of great virtuosity on the part of the Chinese painters. They must in fact have painted these layers using very thin coats of paint and ‘standing back,’ since the final picture is looked at through the glass.

The paintings in Illustrations 34a and 34b are good examples of this category of paintings and of the skill they show in the rendering of transparency. In Illustration 34a, a young woman in a light dress of blue muslin, cut low under the arms, is lying on a bed with her arms resting on a stool. Behind her, a wide window with a climbing vine creeping across it lets in the light and gives bright backlighting to the scene, which we see through a pink voile curtain. Beside

80. E-mail conversation with D. Elisseff.

81. Cibot, Pierre-Martial, 1786, 365.



her is a fan, which is also transparent. A bell of resounding stone in the shape of a fish occupies the right foreground. The second painting, in Illustration 34b, also belongs to the series of four paintings of courtesans in the Lady Lever Gallery. It too depicts a courtesan in her bedroom but the play on transparency focuses only on the contours of her pretty little breasts.

The frames of these paintings are Chinese and both are identical, made of gilded wood with a series of symbols. In addition to the Chinese character *shòu*, meaning longevity, and the bat, which is a homonym of the word *Fu* for happiness, we can make out the attributes of Taoist Immortals: Cao Guojiu's bamboo castanets, Han Xiangzi's flute, Li Tieguai's gourd and Lan Caihe's basket of flowers. So even in their most realistic paintings with the most lightweight subject matter, Chinese painters did not miss the opportunity to portray their beloved symbols and to show abundant evidence of their technical skill.

Notable accessories

- The four arts of the scholar?

The depiction of the scholar, whose four arts were music (the cithara), games (the game of Go), literary culture (books), and painting or calligraphy (the brush), is commonplace in Chinese pictorial tradition. It is rather remarkable to see that reverse glass painting associates these arts with women. Thus we see young women engaged in activities related to: music, in nos. 119, 129, 166 and 180 of the corpus, without counting the pipa players previously mentioned in the chapter dealing with outdoor scenes; books, in nos. 160, 161, 162, 163 and 207 of the same corpus; and calligraphy, in no. 199 of the same corpus.

In a painting belonging to the fine series at Saltram House, seen in Illustration 35, two young women are seated on a rock at the foot of a tree on a riverbank in a rocky landscape. One is holding an open book in front of them, while a golden pheasant is pecking away by their feet and a couple of ducks are swimming on the water in the midst of lotuses. This scene is reproduced almost identically in the paintings numbered 160 and 162 in the corpus.

The painting in Illustration 36a is a very typical example of the calligrapher's activity. In a room with an open window, an elegantly dressed young girl is standing before a table with a brush in her hand. Her calligraphy tools are spread out on the table while, at her feet, a



↑ 34a | and 34b | *Courtesans*. Reverse glass paintings. Gilded wooden frame with carved Chinese symbols. 29 x 44 cm. Circa 1815. © National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery. → 35 | *Young Girls with Book*. Painted mirror. Rococo gilded wooden frame. 42 x 26 cm. Saltram House. On the wall behind the painting, a wall-paper made in Canton in eighteenth century. © National Trust / Sophia Farley & Denis Madge.



pair of pigeons are pecking one other. This painting's composition and the young woman's pose are not unlike one of the twelve beauties in Yongzheng's *Screen of Twelve Beauties*⁸² (Illustration 36a), paintings that the Emperor Yongzheng (1723-1736) commissioned in 1709⁸³ while he was still crown prince.

Contrary to what the objects surrounding these young women might lead us to think, they by no means signify that they are scholars in the Chinese sense of the word. There is no way in which these paintings recall those portraying historical or legendary poetesses, which were painted up until the Song dynasty. Neither do they show that women had attained the status of scholar. This is the eighteenth century, and these objects mean only that the beautiful woman portrayed is not an acknowledged wife, who would have other activities, more serious and virtuous than attending to such 'cultural' occupations. 'Sometimes, the most scholarly (of these beautiful women who live in beautiful houses) had their books and old paintings brought to them, or gave themselves over to the abstract pleasures of calligraphy.'⁸⁴ In reverse glass painting, these objects probably did not even mean the

82. *Guangming Daily* website: GMW Guangming online.

83. Lesbre, Emmanuelle and Liu Jianlong, 2004, 110.

84. Elisseff, Danielle, 1988, 345.

young person could read, but rather signalled her status as a young unmarried girl or, more frequently, the status of concubine or even courtesan.⁸⁵

• Pipe smoking

There are many reverse glass paintings in the corpus where we see a young aristocratic woman holding a long pipe in her hand. Contrary to what is often written in the West, its shape reveals that it is a tobacco pipe and not an opium pipe. The presence of a pipe, even a tobacco pipe, in the hand of a pretty young woman was probably considered exotic by eighteenth-century Europeans. Tobacco smoking in long pipes was a very widespread practice in all social classes of the Chinese population in the eighteenth century,⁸⁶ and those in high society were only distinguished from the common people by the quality, price and varieties of pipes and tobaccos they consumed. Showing a pipe in a painting intended for the Chinese or European aristocracy was therefore not a sign that its holder belonged to this elite. Furthermore, eighteenth-century Chinese fashion was gradually moving towards snuff-taking, thus producing the delightful snuff boxes that were to prove very popular among Chinese high society and subsequently among collectors throughout the world.⁸⁷ Tobacco consumption in China did, however, have a distinctive feature that perhaps explains why women were to be seen holding pipes in reverse glass paintings: in this respect women were the equals of men, a fact that could not have failed to strike Westerners passing through Canton. Perhaps for this reason, the European clients of Cantonese reverse glass painters were attracted to this exotic element in women, and wished to see it depicted in the reverse glass paintings they were buying.

Portraits of Chinese dignitaries

Portraits of Westerners are by far the most frequent of Western subjects. However, portraits of Chinese people are rare in my corpus of reverse glass paintings with Chinese themes, lagging far behind birds and flowers, outdoor scenes or beautiful women. There are

85. Cf. no. 207, page 194 in the corpus.

86. Benedict, Carol, 2011.

87. The study of these objects is outside the scope of this book, although some of them are made of painted glass.



◀ 37 | *Mandarin Pan Qiguan (1714-1788)*. Painted mirror. Swedish gilded wooden frame. 98 x 67.5 cm. Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum

▲ 36a | *Calligraphy*. Painted mirror. Varnished and gilded wooden frame. 56 x 36 cm. Shugborough Hall. Photo: National Trust/Sophia Farley.

▲ 36b | One of the twelve beauties of Yongzheng's *Screen of Twelve Beauties*. Photo Rights Reserved.

two possible explanations for this: since the paintings in my corpus were collected in the West, this type of portrait was not much appreciated in the Western market. Such paintings were perhaps more frequent in the Chinese market but have since disappeared with the upheavals in China. Another, perhaps more likely reason, is that there was little demand for this type of work by Chinese dignitaries.

Some portraits were painted without any décor, as is the case with nos. 220, 221, 222, 231 and 232 of the corpus; others—nos. 223, 224, 225, 226 and 229 of the corpus—have a veranda setting, and two—nos. 234 and 235—a water's edge setting. Some of them form one of a pair, the other half being a portrait of a woman who is probably the man's wife. No. 235 shows the one and only portrait of a soldier, a cavalry officer.

The mandarin depicted in the painting in Illustration [37] is Pan Qiguan⁸⁸ (1714-1788), one of the senior civil servants in Canton's imperial administration, who was responsible for overseeing trade with the West.

He was highly regarded as a negotiator by the Swedish East India Company,⁸⁹ and gave this portrait to Niclas Sahlgren (1701-1776), one of the founders of the company and its director from 1733 to 1768. It was said⁹⁰ that Pan Qiguan stayed in Sweden at Sahlgren's invitation, but recent research⁹¹ disputes this assertion. He had a beautiful villa on Honam Island⁹² on the bank of the Pearl River, where he entertained foreigners passing through in grand style.⁹³ It is not impossible that no. 221 in the corpus may also be a portrait of Pan when he was older.

Apart from the fact that the portrait is on a mirror and in a European frame, it is perfectly Chinese as regards the character's pose, seated as he is in an official chair. He is wearing a mandarin's winter coat, fur-lined with muffs. His mandarin square showing a silver pheasant proves him to be a fifth-rank mandarin. His winter

88. Or 'Poan Key Qua,' as it was written in eighteenth-century Swedish phonetics. Chinese name Pan Wenyuan, alias Zhencheng.

89. He maintained a correspondence with Johan Abraham Grill, a supercargo of that company, which is kept in the Gothenburg University Library.

90. Wirgin, J., 1998, 219 states it had long been reported that this Hong was the first to go to Sweden at the invitation of N. Sahlgren (1710-1776), director of the Royal East India Company.

91. Söderpalm, Kristina, 2000, 9-29.

92. On the bank opposite the factories.

93. Ching May Bo, 2012, 99 to 102.

hat and coral necklace also testify to his rank. To my knowledge, this portrait is the only one representing a Chinese dignitary of known name and rank.

Landscapes

Apart from the paintings of Canton quaysides and a few reworked Western engravings, landscapes are rarely the sole subject of Chinese reverse glass paintings. They are usually the setting for outdoor scenes or the view from the veranda of a beautiful villa. However, the reverse glass landscapes in the Beijing Imperial Palace Museum are a case apart.

Views from the port of Canton and Whampoa anchorage

• Canton port

Cantonese painters enjoyed making reverse glass paintings of Canton port seen from the bank of the Pearl River opposite the factories, just as they liked painting this view using gouache on paper or oil on canvas. In Illustration 38, the painting's foreground shows the Pearl River covered with an abundant variety of ships: in addition to the commercial sampans that shuttled between Whampoa anchorage and the port, we can see the junks of important Chinese dignitaries, notably the one belonging to the Hoppo,⁹⁴ and flower boats, which were pleasure crafts upon which rich Chinese came to dine in romantic company. In the middle ground are the celebrated factories, those hangars and offices of Western companies which, from being modest huts in the early eighteenth century, gradually changed into vast and comfortable buildings, the first evidence of Western architecture in China.

Looking at the national flags flying in front of the different countries' factories normally allows paintings to be dated fairly accurately, because historians are well aware of the periods when each of these countries was present in Canton, and the designs of their flags varied over the course of the period of 1720-1860.

94. Cf. Chap. I, page 15: The Pearl River.



Thus:

- Until 1789, the French flew the monarchy's white flag; then, until 1803-1804, the flag bore a small tricoloured rectangle at the top near the mast. The flag disappeared during the revolution and the empire as France could no longer trade with China, and it was the tricolour flag that returned to Canton in 1833;
- The British flag bore the English and Scottish crosses from 1720 until 1801, the date when Ireland joined the United Kingdom and St. Patrick's Cross was incorporated into the Union Jack;
- Sweden sent its first trading ships to the Royal Swedish Company base in 1732;
- The Germanic Roman Empire was present from 1722 to 1731, through the intermediary of the Ostend Company, and then from 1779 to 1787;
- Denmark was present from 1772 onwards;
- The United States arrived in Canton in 1783;
- The Netherlands (United Provinces, Kingdom of the Netherlands) were present until 1830;
- Spain was not authorised to trade with China, which was a Portuguese-reserved area, but Portugal's decline enabled the Spanish to gain a hold in Canton in the eighteenth century, via their company in the Philippines.

By linking the dates of these flags to the evolution of the factory buildings, Carl Crossman⁹⁵ drew up a first chronology of port views, followed by a very complete chronology by Van Dyke and Kar-Wing Mok.⁹⁶

• Whampoa anchorage

Western ships were obliged to stop at the entrance to the Pearl River delta, both for the reason alleged, which was the water draught, and for real, political reasons, as the Chinese government did not wish to see these heavily armed foreign ships coming too close to the city of Canton. The reverse glass paintings in Illustration 3 and nos. 241 and 242 of the corpus are views of the anchorage from the 'French' island to the west of the island of Whampoa. The nine-storey pagoda so often portrayed in reverse glass water's edge landscapes is clearly visible in these, as, in the foreground, are the tombs of the many Westerners who succumbed to local diseases.

95. Crossman, Carl, 1991, 423 to 433.

96. Van Dyke, Paul A. and Maria Kar-Wing Mok, 2015.

Water's edge landscapes

Whatever their motifs, be they birds and flowers, outdoor scenes, beautiful women, or portraits of Westerners, a large percentage of the Chinese reverse glass paintings in the corpus have a setting composed of a stretch of water surrounded by hills and most often bordered by beautiful houses.⁹⁷ In all the preceding chapters, I have given the generic name of *water's edge landscape* to this setting. Chinese boats and sampans can usually be seen, but sometimes a junk or a Western boat too. The sampans depicted are pleasure boats and not commercial boats, as shown by paintings 154 to 159 in the corpus, where a young woman is gracefully lounging on one of the boats anchored at the water's edge.

• Views of the Pearl River?

From Canton to the sea, the Pearl River between Whampoa anchorage and Canton Port has been described previously.⁹⁸ There are many grounds for thinking that the water's edge landscapes in reverse glass painting were largely inspired by this Pearl River delta, the following two reasons being particularly important: the similarity between the known views and descriptions of this delta and these painted landscapes;⁹⁹ the handwritten text at the back of Mrs and Miss Revell's portrait in Illustration 56, which says: 'View of the river at Canton China, with portraits of Frances Revell, wife of Henri Revell, China Civil Service (for nineteen years head super-cargo to the honourable East India Company) and her eldest daughter Frances; painted about 1765'.¹⁰⁰

The depiction of the beautiful houses at the water's edge is realistic, but probably also contains an element of fantasy. They were realistic because the rich Cantonese, particularly those trading with the West who were commissioning reverse glass paintings, did indeed possess beautiful residences, some of which were by the water.¹⁰¹ Besides this, well-known pictures of this estuary often appear, showing forts, ramparts and pagodas like those of the reverse glass painting in Illustration 20, where the background is a realistic depiction of the port of Canton.

97. Mostly of Chinese architecture but some of them can look slightly Western, particularly because of their roofs.

98. Cf. Chap. I, page 15: The Pearl River.

99. Conner, P., 2009, 17 and 21, for example.

100. Granville Fell, H., 1933, 368.

101. Cf. Chap. II, page 72: Portraits of Chinese dignitaries.





But there is also a fantasy element, because we cannot fail to notice the similarity between these water's edge landscapes and the depictions of imperial country houses with numerous waterside pavilions, where the rulers came to relax and escape the stifling heat of the Peking summer.

Among all these water's edge landscapes forming a background, it is possible to distinguish several categories whose differences are due to the period in which they were painted as well as to the picture's main subject and the painter's technique.

Rudimentary depictions

When the subject is a close-up portrait of a Westerner or a Chinese person, the background landscape is merely complementary: it is more modest, and depicted in a fairly rudimentary way. This is the case with most portraits of Westerners, like for example the one of John Pike in Illustration 44, where the landscape is nothing more than a simple narrow water channel bordered by trees with two buildings in the distance, one of which might be a fort; or those by the painter Spoilum, who appears to have had two exemplars of water's edge landscapes that he used at will, or probably according to the will of the person commissioning the painting. These were a stretch of water with a hill topped by the nine-storey pagoda in the background—nos. 286 to 290 in the corpus—or a river seen from above with a Western or Chinese ship on it—nos. 293 to 299 in the corpus. In the backgrounds of some portraits of Western naval officers, the water's edge landscape looks as if it has a canal with a Western ship sailing on it, whose flag allows us to determine the officer's nationality and sometimes the period when the picture was painted. When the figures or animals are not painted close up, with a décor behind them, but are instead an integral part of a setting in which the landscape is an important element, the landscapes themselves are much more elaborate.

More elaborate depictions

More elaborate water's edge landscapes are to be found in the large mirrors of the 1780s, as backgrounds to outdoor scenes with a few pictures of birds, as in Illustration 39. Two vertical garlands of flowers and birds are often seen climbing up each side of the landscape. There also appear to be certain associations between the scene taking place in the foreground and the background landscape. The clearest of these associations is in the paintings of outdoor scenes with an alle-

gory of music,¹⁰² where a young woman is playing the pipa for a prince seated at her side, while the landscape depicts palaces in a hill setting, as, for example, in nos. 43, 47 and 49 of the corpus.

The use of Western perspective

Although the subjects of water's edge landscapes in reverse glass paintings are Chinese, the painting methods frequently include the Western convention of linear perspective, which may be more or less well executed and more or less linked to Chinese conventions of landscape representation. Western perspective was introduced into China by Jesuit painters and reached Canton by means of several different routes, such, for example, as the translation into Chinese of the manual *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* by Andrea Pozzo, or copies of Court pictures that used this convention, or, again, the porcelain painting practised at Jingdezhen. In the early eighteenth century, around 1713, the Jesuit Matteo Ripa (1682-1746)¹⁰³ introduced copper engraving to China, and Emperor Kangxi entrusted him with engraving the views from his summer palace at Jehol. As well as the copper, which was a new medium for engraving in China, one of the distinctive features of these images was the use of Western perspective, not applied fully but cleverly combined by Ripa with Chinese methods of portraying distance. The emperor liked these works so much that he had them printed in large numbers, and some of these prints reached Canton, where they were able to influence the reverse glass painters working in that city. Like Matteo Ripa, they were happy to use a clever combination of Western perspective, with a vanishing point in front of the viewer, together with Chinese conventions like a downward view seen from a high point rather than from ground level.

Dream landscapes

At the very end of the 18th century (dating from the frame) appear very particular and beautiful landscapes, which I call "dream landscapes". Illustrations 40 and no 247 of the corpus. The very refined blue gradients in the distance, and the delicate reflections in the water could be reminiscent of traditional Chinese paintings in India ink. When they are the background of a portrait, they could call to mind aerial perspective in landscapes paintings of the Renaissance.

102. Cf. Chap. II, page 40: Outdoor scenes: leisure in high society.

103. New visions at the Ch'ing Court, undated, 30.



Reverse glass paintings of landscapes in the Imperial Palace collection

There are only two pairs of reverse glass paintings in the Beijing Imperial Palace collection that I have been able to examine as photos.

One shows two European country houses surrounded by water and has no Chinese element in it apart from its frame, which is a Chinese table screen. Its flag indicates that the small boat in the foreground belonged to the British East India Company. According to the author of the exhibition catalogue written when these works were shown abroad for the first time,¹⁰⁴ it was the presence of the mirror in reverse glass paintings that is thought to have attracted the emperor, because it allowed him, through his reflection in the mirror, to enter into this exotic landscape and thus satisfy his fondness for illusion. The other painting shows two landscapes with a combination of both Chinese and European elements. The setting of steep rocky hills along a river is Chinese, as, on the whole, is the perspective. The buildings are European with the exception of a pagoda. The ships are flying the flag of the British East India Company while the figures include merchants and sailors from the company, but also Chinese porters with their baskets on poles. This pair is thought to have been among the works offered to the imperial court by a dignitary from the province of Guangdong.¹⁰⁵ Because of their references to the British East India Company, as well as their motifs, these paintings could not have been among the works painted at court by Jesuits or Chinese artists in the imperial reverse glass painting workshop. They were painted in Canton and probably given to the court. They are nevertheless of interest because they allow us to appreciate the court's taste at this time¹⁰⁶ for a certain type of reverse glass painting that was not produced in its workshops.

Finally, the magnificent work in Illustration 41, which impresses due to its size but especially due to the fascinating expertise shown in the reverse glass painting technique, may have belonged to a prominent court dignitary and perhaps been painted in the court workshop. It depicts an estuary bordered by Western-type houses, on which several fine-looking Western ships are sailing. One of them, which displays a French royal flag (white) with the city of Marseille's

104. Berliner, Nancy, plate 51, 175.

105. Yang Boda, 108, plates 91 and 92.

106. The British flag on the ships only enables us to date these works to sometime before 1800.

coat of arms, is sending a cannon salute. A few Westerners are watching the spectacle from the bank, while a couple seated on the grass are talking to each other.

Some other landscapes

This section includes four landscapes that more or less skilfully combine Chinese and European elements: nos. 244, 245, 246 and 247 in the corpus.

Other chinese motifs

This chapter includes themes that occupy a minor place in my corpus, and deal with life in Chinese society: ceremonies and feasts, agriculture and craftsmanship, musicians and still lifes.

Ceremonies and feasts

The Audience with the Emperor, in Illustration 42, is the largest known Chinese reverse glass painting (115.6 x 190.5 cm). It shows the imperial Chinese custom that Westerners had the utmost difficulty in accepting: strangers had to greet the emperor by falling to their



◀41 | *Western Ships in an Estuary*. Reverse glass painting. 112 x 71 cm. Sandalwood frame with carved symbols. Circa 1780. All Rights Reserved.

◀42 | *The Audience with the Emperor*. Reverse glass painting. Gilded wooden frame, 19th century. 115,6 x 190,5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum. All Rights Reserved.



knees with their forehead touching the ground, which was known as 'kowtowing.' Although visitors who were merchants or representatives of foreign companies had no hesitation in observing this mark of respect, Western ambassadors, especially the British ambassador, Macartney, refused to perform the action and thereby make their country appear like a vassal of China. This painting was commissioned by Richard Hall (1764-1834), an British East India Company supercargo who was in post at Canton from 1785 to 1802. Soon after his return to England, in 1803, he sent two large panes of glass to Canton to be painted with a court scene, one showing the emperor and the other the empress. This pair remained in his London residence until his death in 1834. It was bequeathed to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1936 by his great-grandchildren, Amy and John Hall.

Paintings 256, 257 and 258 in the corpus describe other imperial occasions, while nos. 259 to 263 have ceremonies and feasts as their subject.

Agriculture and craftsmanship

In order to 'see' China and make it known elsewhere, Western visitors to the Middle Kingdom commissioned Chinese artists to depict aspects of life in this society, particularly crafts linked to the products of which Europe was so fond (tea, silk, and so on). Most of these pictures were gouaches on paper known as 'rice paper,' but some of them were reverse glass paintings, such as nos. 264 to 267 in the corpus, where the breeding of silkworms and silk spinning are depicted. Illustration 43, as well as tea-growing and pottery. William Chambers (1726-1796), who was then a supercargo with the Swedish East India Company, commissioned a series of reverse glass paintings depicting Chinese costumes from a Cantonese painter.¹⁰⁷

Young musicians

In several reverse glass paintings, including a beautiful series of twelve in the Drottningholm Chinese pavilion, a young woman is playing a musical instrument. The scene is without décor and there is a different instrument in each painting; it is rather like an elegant encyclopaedia of Chinese instruments for a Western public (nos. 268, 269 and 270).

¹⁰⁷. Cf. Chap. III, page 117: Some names of Cantonese painters between 1720 and 1820.

Still lifes

This type of painting, nos. 271, 272 and some parts of nos. 273, 274 and 276 in the corpus, is quite rare in traditional Chinese painting, as it is in reverse glass painting.

Multiple mirrors

Overmantel mirrors

In Sweden, in the years 1750-1770, and in Great Britain in the period 1760-1785, overmantel mirrors with rococo frames were very fashionable ornamentations for elegant aristocratic houses. They were in fact composed of several mirrors, some of them painted in China. My corpus contains four of these—nos. 273 to 276—on which the painted motifs are all Chinese.

As these multiple mirrors played an important part in establishing workshops in Canton, there is a detailed study of them page 117.

Glass-fronted wardrobe with multiple mirrors

Amongst the beautiful wardrobes made of padauk¹⁰⁸ in eighteenth-century Canton, some had glass doors composed of several painted mirrors. No. 277 in the corpus is especially remarkable for the refinement and elegance of its paintings. On it are the Chinese motifs already described within Chapter II, pages 35-82, including birds and flowers, water's edge landscapes—including a view of one of the forts (probably the one called French Folly on the Pearl River in front of Canton)—, and two portraits of a pair of dignitaries in the centre of the windows.

¹⁰⁸. Its scientific name is *Pterocarpus*. It is a dark red wood.

Paintings with Western motifs

Portraits of Westerners

This chapter is devoted to studying reverse glass portraits of Westerners, with the exception of portraits that are merely transpositions of Western engravings. These are analysed within pages 98-102.

This category of Chinese reverse glass paintings covers a vast period and contains the greatest number of works that can be dated with a degree of certainty. Portraits were usually painted from an engraving or miniature that the painter placed in a Chinese setting, but they could also be based on a combination of engravings. A few of these portraits were copied from life.

Swedish portraits

• Portraits of Mr and Mrs John Pike

The portrait in Illustration 44 shows a three-quarter view of a man standing near a Chinese table in front of a waterside landscape. He is wearing a long wig, a fashion that was abandoned in Europe around the 1750s, and a shirt with lace sleeves and a jabot under a long, orange-coloured brocade waistcoat with low pockets. Over this he is wearing a long, navy-blue jacket with a row of buttons set closely together. He has culottes gathered below the knee, silk stockings, and dark shoes with buckles. In his left hand he is holding some gloves, while his right hand has been slipped inside the waistcoat. Lying on the marble table decorated with floral bas-reliefs are some books with European bindings and a bowl of exotic fruits, including some Buddha's hands.¹⁰⁹ Some white flowers are in the foreground and, on the right, a little dog sits looking at its master. On the left, in the middle ground, is a large blossoming tree and, in the background, the water's edge landscape that we have now seen many times in reverse glass paintings.

The glass is bevelled and the frame, in black lacquered wood embellished with gold, has a pediment with a pair of S-curves or scrolls, known as a swan's-neck pediment, centred on a cartouche of the George II period. Its back is fastened by a system of bolts¹¹⁰ characteristic of Chinese manufacture. A piece of paper is stuck to the

109. The Buddha's hand, *Cirtus medica var. sarcodactylus*, is a variety of citron, an aromatic citrus fruit. In China it is a symbol of prosperity.

110. Cf. Illustration 66 page 111.

back of the frame with a handwritten text¹¹¹ stating the provenance and names of the persons painted, namely John Pike and his wife.

In Illustration 45, Mrs Pike is seated facing us, on a terrace bounded by a balustrade. A low stone table is on her right and, on her left, a strange stone portico that we see thanks to a blue curtain having been drawn back. The portico partly conceals the tree under which she is sitting. She wears a long dress with a low neck, in a silky yellow fabric from which emerge the lacy sleeves of her white chemise. She holds a fan in her right hand, which is resting on a white scarf over her right knee, while her raised left hand holds a flower. On the table are a bunch of peonies in a long-necked vase, and a little dish filled with exotic fruits, including a pineapple. A little dog is lying at her feet. The frame and dimensions of the picture are identical to those of her husband's portrait.

We can learn several things from studying this pair of paintings:

— Dating

The text at the back of John Pike's picture is sufficiently precise about its successive owners for us to have no doubt about its origin and the fact that it is indeed John Pike, one of the Swedish East India Company's first supercargoes, and the accompanying portrait is of his wife. He was the second supercargo of the *Friedericus Rex Sveciae*, the first ship of this company to go to China in 1732.¹¹² He made three other voyages as a supercargo from 1732 to 1745, and died in 1751. These portraits were most probably painted during one of his stays in Canton, which means around 1740. A close examination of the frame enables us to deduce that its rectangular part was made in China because it is fixed with bolts, whereas the pediment was added in Europe. This type of pediment, an English shape of the George II period,¹¹³ was eagerly adopted by mid-eighteenth century Scandinavian craftsmen, thus confirming its date.

Painted around 1740, this portrait is therefore the oldest Chinese reverse glass painting in the corpus that can be dated with certainty.

— Western influence

• **The figures:** John Pike's pose is completely Western. A Chinese painter of the Qing period would usually have captured the model full-face, seated if he was a dignitary and, if he was standing, he would certainly not have had one leg in front of the other; this

111. Cf. no. 278b, page 203 of the corpus.

112. Campbell, Colin, 1996, 37.

113. Child, Graham, 1990, 90 and 91.

position was characteristic of eighteenth-century European portraits showing a person standing. The face is slightly turned to one side, which is not very Chinese, and the few shadows on it are evidence of a Western influence. As for Mrs Pike, her décolleté and her hair, which is partly falling loose, are a world apart from the traditional depiction of Chinese women, who had to be covered up to their necks and with their hair carefully arranged, usually in a chignon. The face and body have therefore neither been painted in the Chinese style nor from life, since Mrs Pike never went to China. These pictures were painted from Western models, probably using a miniature for the face and an etching or miniature for the body. This technique was not original: the Chinese painters of Canton who worked on porcelain were also familiar with reproductions of Western paintings and engravings. It is not out of the question that the colours of the clothes may have been chosen on the advice of John Pike himself, when he was in Canton. We can see on Mrs Pike's portrait that the painting of the gauze, the lace and the fan, although it does not reach the astounding levels of artistry of 1770-1780, is nevertheless amazing for painters who had probably been practising this skill for only a short time.

• **The setting:** In the setting of these portraits we can distinguish:

– The flower-filled foreground with the little dog for John Pike; pheasants and little dog for Mrs Pike;

– A middle ground with a table and objects placed on it for both paintings and, for Mrs Pike, a curious décor showing a marble portico with a curtain hanging over one side of it, and blue and white tiles below;

– A third ground with a flowering tree and birds perched on it in both pictures;

– The background composed of a mirror evoking the sky in both pictures, and a water's edge landscape in John Pike's picture.

— The foreground.

The white flowers in the foreground of John Pike's picture are probably narcissi, symbols of happiness and longevity. The birds are golden pheasants, but the small dogs with the brown coat in John Pike's picture and white coat in Mrs Pike's are not the little Pekinese seen in so many nineteenth-century Chinese reverse glass paintings. These dogs could well be continental toy spaniels, a breed that was very much in favour with Western grandees who wanted the dogs to accompany them in their portraits, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, small dogs as accompaniments to in-

dividuals are not totally absent from Chinese painting,¹¹⁴ notably in the tenth century. Finally, since the brown dog bears some similarity to the one painted in 1727 by the Jesuit painter Giuseppe Castiglione at the Chinese emperor's court,¹¹⁵ it could be a Manchu breed. This little animal brings up a point raised several times in the course of this study, namely the relationship between the emperor's court painting, particularly that of the European Jesuit painters, and the reverse glass painting that developed in mid-eighteenth century Canton.

— The middle ground.

A carved white marble table, whose shape and motifs are Chinese, is present in both paintings. In John Pike's there are books on it, with bindings testifying that they are European, and also a dish of fruit. Among the fruits are several Buddha's hands, a Chinese fruit symbolising prosperity. There are grapes too, and what could be peaches, a fruit symbolising longevity. In Mrs Pike's picture, the table is adorned with a basket of fruit and a bouquet of flowers. The fruits are Chinese: we can see a pineapple and a pawpaw. The flowers are peonies, a favourite flower in China, which is present in all aspects of the country's iconography. The vase, however, has a European shape, although it could have been made in China and intended for export.

The portico occupying the right-hand side of Mrs Pike's portrait is rather strange and perhaps clumsy. It is made of the same stone and has the same type of decoration as the table. At its base is some blue and white tiling reminiscent of seventeenth-century Delft tiles or the Portuguese ceramic tiles called *azulejos*, which were no doubt to be found in Macao. We can make out a box and two large bowls resting on the portico's frame, revealing that it is not flat but deep. Might it be an earthenware stove decorated with tiles, like those made in Northern Europe, particularly Sweden, in the early eighteenth century?

A blue curtain covers the right-hand side of the picture, as was common in European seventeenth- and eighteenth-century portraits.

— The third ground.

Two flowering trees, apparently of the same variety, are near the sitters, one on the right of John Pike and the other on Mrs Pike's left. The flowers are those of a fragrant olive, a southern Chinese tree that often accompanies the scholar and whose beautiful autumn blossom is associated with the moon, according to Taoist legend. The foliage is much less realistic, looking more like the leaves of a pine,

114. Elisseeff, D, 2010, 302 and 303 and E. Lesbre, *La Peinture chinoise*, 113 and 117.

115. *New visions at the Ch'ing Court*, undated.



the tree most often seen in Chinese reverse glass painting. I have not been able to explain the curious height of the branch at the level of John Pike's face. There are several bird varieties visible in these trees: as well as pheasants, we can make out doves and a lory bird.

— **The background.**

In the background is a lake surrounded by trees, and on its right-hand edge we can see two, apparently fortified, square towers in the distance. They are reminiscent of European fortified castles or Chinese forts like those on the Great Wall. As previously indicated, the water's edge landscape is specifically dealt with in pages 74-80.

— **In conclusion**

In around 1740 then, the supercargo John Pike commissioned his reverse glass portrait from a Chinese painter in Canton. The painter based his figure on the miniatures or engravings that Pike passed to him and the advice he gave him, and then, using his own inspiration, invented a Chinese setting, embracing both realism and



symbols. John Pike thus became a high-ranking scholar to whom was wished long life and prosperity.

• **The Beyer family portraits**

Gothenburg city museum has in its collections a reverse glass portrait of the supercargo Gabriel Fredrik Beyer (1705-1782), which can be seen in Illustration 46. A study of his life has been made by Lars-Olof Lööf.¹¹⁶ It seems likely that the portrait was painted during one of the supercargo's stays in Canton, between 1745 and 1765.¹¹⁷ It differs considerably from the portrait of John Pike, who was his predecessor in the office of supercargo for the Swedish East India Company. Beyer is painted head-and-shoulders rather than as a full standing portrait, the only décor being a mirror, and he is wearing the simple working clothes of a supercargo. Since his first two voyages were as a second supercargo and the three subsequent ones as a first, this portrait probably dates from his period as a second, otherwise he would no doubt, like John Pike, have chosen a more flattering outfit. If this hypothesis is sound, the picture would date from 1745 or 1746. The frame is Swedish.

In the same museum is a pair of portraits, nos. 281 and 282 in the corpus, depicting the supercargo Anders Gadd (1721-1767) and his wife Magdalena (1734-1803), who is none other than Beyer's daughter. From 1746 to 1759, Anders Gadd went several times to China as his future father-in-law's deputy supercargo, and subsequently, in 1762 and 1765,¹¹⁸ as a first supercargo. His portrait, like that of his wife, closely resembles Beyer's in its composition; the only differences being that the frame is oval and probably later (1762 or 1765?), and it is not a reverse mirror portrait. Like Mrs Pike, Mrs Gadd never went to China, so her portrait must therefore have been painted by copying a miniature. This was probably also the case for her husband and father. Unlike John Pike, neither Beyer nor Gadd chose to be painted in a Chinese setting, thus depriving their portraits of a somewhat exotic and original element.

• **Portraits of the Swedish royal family**

The Stockholm Nordiska Museet has in its collections two large reverse glass paintings depicting King Adolf Fredrik (1710-1771), seen

116. Lööf, Lars-Olof, 2000, 144 to 149.

117. Kjellberg, Sven T., 1974, 177 to 180.

118. Idem, 178 to 180.

in Illustration 47, and his wife Queen Lovisa Ulrika (1720-1782), No 284 in the corpus. The king is wearing shining black armour with, across his chest, the sash of the Order of the Seraphim. We can also see a fur cape hanging from the small of his back. The frame is made of gilded wood with a garland, with the royal crown sitting on top of it. According to Wirgin¹¹⁹ the frame is by Carl Harleman and the Chinese painter took a portrait of Lorenz Pasch the Younger as his model. Wirgin adds that 'this portrait was probably painted shortly after Adolf Fredrik became king in 1751.' I have searched for this model, but without success.

Lovisa Ulrika's portrait is the same size, with exactly the same kind of frame, but the glass is unfortunately broken. The queen appears in ceremonial dress and, like her husband, on a mirror background. Wirgin says: 'There was a portrait of Queen Lovisa Ulrika, painted after a portrait of Antoine Pesne.' I have in fact been able to trace this original portrait showing Lovisa Ulrika in what may be her wedding dress, in 1744.

It is tricky to date these paintings if we are to accept Wirgin's two assertions that the frame is by Carl Harleman and the paintings were executed shortly after the king was crowned, in 1751. Harleman died in 1753, which was two years after the coronation. This would mean that Pasch's and Pesne's portraits would have to have been painted after 1751, their copies made and then sent to China, where they would have been transposed on to mirrors, returned to Europe and finally put in a frame made by Harleman. Knowing that a return journey on board the company's ships lasted a year and a half, this would mean that Pasch, born in 1733, would have to have painted his picture at the age of seventeen.

In an attempt to resolve these contradictions, I would add two factors:

— Who might have suggested that the king and his wife have their reverse glass portraits painted if not a supercargo who was very familiar with this type of painting and close to the royal couple? Colin Campbell was probably this intermediary. A supercargo and founder of the Swedish East India Company, he was very well liked by the king, who bestowed the kingdom's highest titles and decorations upon him. He was also admired by the queen, and we know that she gave him a snuff box as a token of friendship. Colin Campbell died in 1757.

— Two of the company ships bore the names of the royal couple: the *Kronprinsessan Lovisa Ulrika*, whose first voyage to China

119. Wirgin, Jan, 1991, 294 and Göran Alm, 2002, 296 and 297.

was in 1748, and *Kronprinsen Adolf Fredrik*, which made its first journey there in mid-1749. To me, it makes sense that, on Campbell's instructions, it was one of these vessels that transported two beautiful mirrors and copies of the crown prince's and his wife's portraits, in order to have them painted in China. All these factors point to the reasonable deduction that these two magnificent portraits were executed between 1748 and 1757, and the frames made to measure by Harleman before the reverse glass paintings returned from Canton.

As for the portraits of Beyer and Gadd, the royal couple did not choose to have their portraits painted in a Chinese or Sino-Swedish setting.





• Colin Campbell's portrait?

We know that in Richard Milhender's collection there is a portrait, in Illustration 48, which Crossman described for the first time¹²⁰ under the title *Unidentified Englishman in a Landscape*. He dates the wig and clothing from the years 1749 to 1750, and identifies them as belonging to an English dignitary. We note the bowl of fruit, the bouquet of flowers in a vase and the water's edge landscape, which are similar to those in the Pike couple's portraits. In fact the dimensions of the glass are identical. By contrast, the chair, table and frame are Western, not Chinese. But the veranda setting with a red pillar and a curtain hooked up by a cord with a tassel is frequent in Chinese reverse glass paintings. Since Swedish supercargoes were the first to commission their reverse glass portraits in Canton, it seems possible that this painting is of a Swedish supercargo. The hypothesis is not negated by the English attire worn by this dignitary, because many of the Swedish company's first supercargoes came from the British Isles, having been recruited when the Ostend Company that employed them had to close its doors. We should also note this English dignitary's resemblance to Colin Campbell—the most famous of the Swedish supercargoes and one of the Swedish company's founders—in the portrait of him by Johan Joacim Sträng, painted in 1756 (Illustration 49): there is the same elongated face, the same rather long straight nose, the same delicate mouth, the same little round, prominent chin and, what is more, the same wig, the same scarf around the neck and the same red jacket.

I therefore suggest that Crossman's *Unidentified Englishman* is Colin Campbell, one of the great eighteenth-century heroes of Sino-European relations.

Portraits by the painter Spoilum

In Europe, the vast majority of eighteenth-century reverse glass paintings were anonymous, but the few known exceptions are often of remarkable quality. The new reverse glass painting that appeared in China at this time was no exception to the rule and, among the reverse glass painters whose names have come down to us, the most famous is the one known to Westerners as Spoilum. The reverse glass paintings in this corpus that may have been executed by Spoilum are studied in detail in "The painter Spoilum's workshop," page 127.

120. Crossman, C., 1991, 203 and 204, plate 71.

Portraits of the Van Braam family

Andreas Everardus van Braam Houckgeest (1739-1801) was a notable eighteenth-century European trader with China. A supercargo with the Dutch East India Company, the famous VOC, he had many long stays in China between 1758 and 1773, before returning to the Netherlands, having made his fortune. Fascinated by the newly independent United States, he decided to emigrate there in 1783 and adopt American nationality. But, being unsuccessful in business and affected by the deaths of several of his children, he had to return to Canton in 1790 as a VOC representative and be part of the embassy to the Chinese emperor's court in 1794, of which he provided a very full description in his journal.¹²¹ He returned to the USA in 1797, but still having little flair for business, he was forced to sell his magnificent collection of Chinese objects at Christie's in 1799. Among the artefacts were numerous reverse glass paintings. He died ruined and forgotten in 1801. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam was able to acquire several of these reverse glass paintings, among which were two portraits, of Andreas van Braam's wife and daughter. Jan van Campen, a curator at the museum, has analysed these in detail, and this chapter is based on his articles.¹²²

These two portraits are of special interest for the study of reverse glass painting because they enable us to gain a better understanding of how Chinese painters used miniatures and engravings.

• The portrait of Catharina van Braam, wife of Andreas van Braam, and of his daughter Françoise

We know the identity of the two people shown on the painting in Illustration 50, because of the words written on the back of the picture when Everarda, the elder of Andreas van Braam's daughters, bequeathed it: 'To Maria the picture containing the likeness of my mother and my sister.' Seated at the foot of a tree is a woman in a long blue dress with a deep V neckline and a white shawl over her shoulders. She is holding the hand of a little girl standing by her side, who is wearing a white dress with a pink sash and holding up a flower garland with both hands. In the distance is a hilly landscape. Apart from the two faces, the

121. Van Braam Houckgeest, Andreas Everardus, 1798.

122. Van Campen, Jan, 2005, and a conversation I was able to have with this curator when he allowed me access to the museum's reserve collection to admire the Chinese reverse glass paintings.



▲50 | *Catharina van Braam and her daughter Françoise*. Reverse glass painting. Gilded wooden frame. 63.5 x 49 cm. Courtesy Rijksmuseum. ▲▲51 Thomas Burke (1749-1815). *Lady Rushout and Daughter*. Engraving after a painting by Angelica Hauffman (1741-1807). 43 x 32.9 cm. All Rights Reserved.

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▲48 | *Unidentified Englishman in a landscape*. Painted mirror. Gilded wooden frame. 75.6 x 49.8 cm. Circa 1845. Courtesy Richard Milhender.
 ▲▲49 | Johan Joacim Sträng (1703-1763), *Colin Campbell*. Oil on canvas. Gilded wooden frame. 91.5 x 76 cm. Göteborg Stadsmuseum. Photo: Eriksson Magdalena.



picture has been directly transposed from a 1784 engraving by Thomas Burke (1749-1815), *Lady Rushout and Her Daughter*, in Illustration 51. This was itself copied from the eponymous picture of 1773 by the German painter Angelika Kaufmann (1741-1807).

Both the painting's general composition and the clothes are like those in the engraving. But the frames are different—oval for the engraving and rectangular for the painting—as are the colours and faces. Another major difference is the size, with the reverse glass painting larger than the engraving. This shows that it was executed freehand and not by directly placing the glass over the engraving. This is also confirmed by the many small differences of detail. As for the woman's face, there is no doubt that it belongs to Mrs van Braam; it was very probably painted from a miniature, which was perhaps itself a reverse glass painting, since VOC directors were in the habit of taking reverse glass portraits of their families with them to Asia.¹²³ On the other hand, it seems less certain that the little girl's portrait is a copy of a miniature of van Braam's daughter, Françoise. This is for two reasons, one being that the face is hardly any different from the one on the engraving, and the other because van Braam could not have had on him a portrait of his daughter aged four, because she was born in 1785 and van Braam left her in 1789 to go to China. And the little girl in the picture appears to be much older than four. We may well ask a final question: why did van Braam choose this engraving for his family portrait? The answer is very probably because it depicts an upper-class family, and we know how keen this man was to show that he belonged to his country's elite.¹²⁴

• Catharina van Braam's portrait

At the centre of the painting in Illustration 52, a young woman in the form of an allegory is shown presenting a medallion, in which is a head-and-shoulders portrait of Mrs van Braam leaning with her elbows on a table, holding a letter in her hands. She is wearing a white tulle dress fastened with a black bow at the front, and a thin black ribbon around her neck. Her hair is done in a plait that is wound around the back of her head. A rich fabric, on which are placed a gold censer and an anchor, runs horizontally across the picture, separating the mirror part above from the painted part below. On the left, in *grisaille*, a young woman seated on a shore is waving goodbye to a

123. Screech, Timon, 1998. The author of this article cites accounts of visits by Japanese to the VOC's offices in Japan.

124. Van Campen, Jan, 2005, *Aziatische Kunst* 35/3, 29 to 36.

ship with a Dutch flag that is moving out to sea. Below this image is an inscription: *Vota Sequuntur Euntem*,¹²⁵ and on the right are two coats of arms. As for the previous portrait, van Campen has published¹²⁶ a detailed and very complete study of this work, which I summarise below. The part with the young woman holding the medallion is inspired by a Dutch engraving by Jacobus Houbraken, after a picture by Jan Wandelaar that depicted, in the medallion, Mr Lieve Geelvinck, the mayor of Amsterdam and director of the VOC. The allegory in this engraving is of *Vigilance* which, in the reverse glass painting is turned into an allegory of Hope, through the placing of other attributes—the anchor and censer—next to it. The portrait of this high-ranking Dutch personage was reproduced on porcelain plates and bowls, testifying to the close relationship at this period between reverse glass painters and porcelain painters in Canton. Van Campen was not able to find the engraving that the painter used as inspiration for the farewell scene: he suggests it might be *Dido watching the departure of Aeneas*.

Finally, he thinks that, in the medallion, only the face is painted from a miniature of Mrs van Braam, the bust being based on an engraving. In support of this theory, he mentions the existence of a Chinese reverse glass portrait in a medallion, containing an identical bust and also holding a letter, but with a different face: this is no. 315 in the corpus.

This type of composition from engravings is not unique. A piece of rosewood furniture, made in Canton during this period, is decorated inside with a mirror, whose description by Sotheby's when it was sold leaves no room for doubt: it is the same composition, executed from engravings, but there is a mirror in place of Mrs van Braam's portrait. According to van Campen, it is probable that the first composition, painted under glass, was done under the direction of Andreas van Braam. Subsequently, it must have been reproduced several times by the workshop which had produced the first composition.

Was that the workshop of Spoilum, as Crossman suggests?¹²⁷ There is nothing to confirm this, and I am more inclined to favour another workshop, taking into account:

- The date it was produced (1794-1795), at a time when Spoilum appears to have chosen to paint portraits using oil on canvas;
- The fact that it was a composition from engravings and not a portrait from life.

125. 'good wishes accompany them.'

126. Van Campen, Jan, 2005. *Bulletin Van het, Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam.

127. Crossman, Carl, 1991, 35.

These two paintings of the van Braam family are, in every respect, masterpieces of Chinese reverse glass painting. They are the finest examples both of a particularly complex and well-chosen composition based on engravings, and of a brilliant painting technique. Thanks to van Campen's close and in-depth analysis, we know all about their history.

This picture's other great advantage is that it tells us about the technique used to paint it.

Painting technique

Mrs van Braam's portrait was restored by Simone Bretz, which meant it had to be opened up, allowing the painting to be seen from the inside (Illustration 50, right). This allowed the technique of the thin layer to be better appreciated.

The painting was not achieved by superimposing one layer on top of another, with the most recent covering the one below, and thus making the paint invisible from the inside. It is in fact possible to distinguish all the features of Mrs van Braam's face from the reverse of the opened picture, almost as well as when it is looked at through the glass.

A painting's adventures

Once the picture had been painted, Andreas van Braam returned to the Netherlands, probably intending to give it as a present to his wife. But she never saw this beautiful composition. Stopping at the Cape on his return journey, Andreas fell in love with Johanna Egberta Constantia Schuler, who was forty years his junior and, what is more, his wife's niece. He then decided to leave with her for the United States and married her three years later.

The final adventure of Andreas van Braam's paintings was that they almost became French. Médéric Louis Élie Moreau de Saint Méry, the publisher of van Braam's journal, ended the book, which appeared in 1798,¹²⁸ with the following remark:

'It is not without interest that we learn Mr Van Braam offered this precious collection to the Executive Directory of the French Republic; and that the Minister of Foreign Relations, who knows its merit, and cannot be accused of missing opportunities that arise for promoting artists and the arts, accepted this interesting tribute on behalf of the government, and the public will soon be in a position to compare the collection with the publisher's account.'

128. Van Braam Houckgeest, Andreas Everardus, 1798, last pages.

Unfortunately for France, the business was not concluded, as the Directory government presumably refused to accept the high price of this 'gift.'

Other portraits of westerners

Other portraits of Westerners¹²⁹ in the corpus are numbered 288 to 299, 302 to 313 and 314 to 316. We can see among them portraits of supercargoes and officers who spent time in China, but also women's portraits. Unlike the men's portraits, these were not able to include elements painted from life, as women could not stay in eighteenth-century Canton. The first woman to go there, in 1804 according to H. B. Morse's chronicles,¹³⁰ was Mrs Page, the wife of Captain Page. These portraits were therefore commissioned from Cantonese painters by residents or visitors, to be painted from miniatures, or perhaps engravings; they then had the pleasure in store of offering this exotic artwork as a gift to the person depicted. The Chinese painters only had an image to work from of the face or head and shoulders, and they reproduced these on a mirror or added a Chinese setting, according to the commissioner's instructions. These paintings often have amazing stories attached to them, on a par with the adventure that a voyage to China represented at that time.

The portrait of Captain Joseph Huddart, no. 302 in the corpus, is one of the finest of these portraits and the one that fetched one of highest prices at a recent auction sale. Captain Huddart (1741-1816) was a recognised geographer and invented various improvements to naval techniques. This portrait has no Chinese element other than the person who painted it who, through this work, demonstrated his remarkable mastery of Western painting methods.

The three portraits, numbered 303, 304 and 305 in the corpus, form a series that has been dispersed but which I have been able to piece together as photographs (illustrations 53, 54, 55). They tell a sad but charming story. According to family lore, Mr Lennox of Lennox Castle is said to have commissioned his portrait during one of his stays in China, around 1785. Very much in love with Miss Elizabeth Graham (1764-1820) he is thought to have commissioned her portrait too, as well as that of her twin sister, Christiane (1764-1847).

129. Which are not pure and simple transpositions of Western engravings or miniatures.

130. Morse, Hosea B, 1926-1929.

Mr Lennox did not marry Elizabeth and so these portraits remained at Lennox Castle until 1922, when the castle was bought by Helena Graham, a descendant of Mary, who was a sister of the twins.

The portraits of the two sisters show them sitting at a table covered with a red cloth in a water's edge landscape, the whole scene framed by two vertical garlands of shrubs—wutong and bamboo—as well as birds, including golden and silver pheasants. Mr Lennox is not seated at the table but painted head-and-shoulders in an identical setting. The frame is in two parts: an interior one in black lacquered wood with gilded motifs and the other, outside, in Regency-style gilded wood, which can be dated to around 1820.

We can also see the portrait of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), whose life and letters fascinated Englishmen and women of the time (no. 309 of the corpus). In one of her letters dated

1749,¹³¹ she explains the craze for Chinese painting: 'Sick of Grecian elegance and symmetry, or Gothic grandeur and magnificence, we must all seek the barbarous gaudy gout of the Chinese.'

A final painted mirror, in Illustration 56, shows two Western women, a young woman and a young girl, wearing Manchu-style clothes and hair. They are sitting at a table on a beautiful veranda with red pillars that opens on to a water's edge landscape, while two vertical garlands of shrubs and birds frame the whole. The mirror's corrosion gives this Chinese sky a rather fantastical character. The following handwritten information is on the back of the frame: 'View of the river at Canton China, with portraits of Frances Revell, wife of Henry Revell China civil service (for nineteen years head super-cargo to the honourable East India Company) and her eldest daughter Frances; painted around 1765.'

131. Cited by M. Sullivan in Sullivan, Michael, 1973, 256.



53 | Mr. Lennox, 54 | Elizabeth Graham and 55 | Christiane Graham. Painted mirror. Regency gilded wooden frame. 30 x 89 cm. Circa 1820. © 53: Sparks, 54 and 55: Courtesy Pelham.



The British East India Company archives confirm that a Henry Revell made many journeys to Canton between 1757 and 1787 and stayed there as chief supercargo from 1768 to 1787. William Hickey, who arrived in Canton in 1769, mentions¹³² Henry Revell's presence there in his memoirs. Hickey was introduced to him and dined at his home in the company of many other guests.

Other Western motifs

Few Western motifs other than portraits and transposed engravings were painted on glass in Canton. The corpus contains a few outdoor scenes and religious themes.

Outdoor scenes

The paintings numbered 317 and 318 in the corpus reveal young women day-dreaming or playing music in front of a house and in a Sino-European landscape. A rather similar picture in a table screen is one of the rare reverse glass paintings in the Beijing Imperial Palace collection.¹³³

Western paintings with religious motifs

Although the Jesuits brought numerous religious engravings to China¹³⁴ and themselves painted several of these scenes in their churches, my corpus of reverse glass paintings includes only a few Christian religious scenes. It is possible that very few of these works were commissioned from Chinese reverse glass painters, since the missionaries

132. Hickey, William, 1768, 214.

133. Berliner, Nancy, 2010, 220, cat. 14.

134. By way of example, in 1700 the French vessel *Amphitryte* brought the following etchings to Canton: Poussin's *The Seven Sacraments*; Lebrun's *Battle of Alexander*; *Susannah*, *The Judgment of Solomon*, *The Finding of Moses*, and *Moses and the Burning Bush* by Antoine Coypel; Poussin's *Moses and the Brazen Serpent*; an *Annunciation* and a *Saint Cecilia* by Mignard; *The Marriage of Moses*, *Moses defending the Daughters of Jethro*, a *figure of Christ* and *four different landscapes* by Poussin, and a *portrait of the King*. According to the *Dictionnaire universel du Commerce*. Savary des Brûlons. Paris, 1750. Volume IV: 258.

were only in Canton temporarily. But it is equally possible that these paintings, being intended for the Chinese rather than the European market, remained in China and subsequently disappeared.

Only two religious themes are present in my corpus: the Madonnas, nos. 319 and 320, and the Crucifixion, nos. 321 and 322. The Madonna in Illustration 57 is a fine example of the convergence between Western and Chinese painting. Her white dress and blue veil, her gently inclined head and hair falling loose, together with the theatrical curtain open above her, are all of European inspiration. However, her face is Chinese, her clasped hands resemble a Buddhist gesture, and in no. 320 of the corpus she is in front of a table with a bowl of fruit reminiscent of traditional Buddhist offerings. Finally, the Asian-style face appears to be very smooth, with only a hint of shadow, whereas shading is used for the folds of her clothing.



◀56 | *Portrait of Mrs. and Miss Revell in a Chinese Interior*. Reverse painting on glass. Ca. 1780. Guangzhou, China. 46.67 x 40.96 cm. Peabody Essex Museum, Museum purchase, 2000 AE85763. © 2006 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. Photo Mark Sexton and Jeffrey Dykes. ▶57 | *Madonna*. Painted mirror. 46 x 30,5 cm. French gilded wooden frame. Author's collection. Photo T. A.

Direct transpositions of Western artworks

We have seen in the preceding chapters that Chinese reverse glass painters frequently used Western engravings or miniatures, especially for portraits of Westerners. They worked by transposing on to glass the faces and/or bodies of the figures in the engravings or miniatures. They then completed the figure or figures and added a setting, often a water's edge landscape,¹³⁵ using the unpainted part of the mirror if they decided to do this.

There is another, far larger, category of reverse glass paintings. This consists of Western artworks—engravings, miniatures or pictures—directly transposed on to glass without the design being altered, at least not deliberately, since slips

135. Cf. Chap II, page 74: Landscapes.



and errors cannot be ruled out. The painter's sole contribution, besides his technique, was the choice of colours when the original engraving was uncoloured.

The corpus contains 110 paintings belonging to this category, nos. 323 to 432.

Rural and mythological scenes

Late eighteenth-century Chinese reverse glass painting was marked by the popularity of scenes from Greek mythology, which gave it licence to depict charming female nudes and rural scenes in which delightful young country girls, preferably shepherdesses, gracefully accepted tributes from young men. In portraying such scenes, the Cantonese painters were merely transposing on to glass the pictures that had been so successful in Europe and the United States, and reproduced in engravings for wider distribution.

Among the Western painters recognised for this genre, the one most frequently transposed on to glass was unquestionably François Boucher (1730-1770), through the intermediary of engravings by René Gaillard (1719-1770) and Louis Simon Lempereur (1728-1807). *L'agréable leçon* in Illustration 58, was engraved by Gaillard from Boucher's painting, *Un berger apprenant à sa bergère à jouer de la flûte*.¹³⁶ It was Boucher's most frequently transposed work, and the Chinese painter's very soft, satin-smooth technique was perfect for rendering the way the artist depicted women's skin. These paintings were often combined with another of Boucher's works to make a pair: nos. 325-326, 327-333 and 329-330 in the corpus (the last pair being part of the van Braam collection¹³⁷) can be dated to around 1780-1800.

In the mythological scenes, the Chinese show proof of their ability to adapt to styles as different as Boucher (nos. 323 to 327 and 329 to 333 in the corpus), Paolo Pagani (1665-1716) in no. 344, Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), no. 338, and Richard Westall (1766-1836), nos. 345 and 346. Some of these pictures are signed by the painter Fatqua.¹³⁸

136. A painting shown at the 1750 Salon under this title.

137. Cf. Chap. II, page 84: Portraits of Westerners.

138. Cf. Chap. III, page 134: The painter Fatqua's workshop.

Novels and the theatre

The Romantic period in Europe brought about a wealth of illustrations for novels and dramas for the theatre. Cantonese reverse glass painting followed this movement, and we therefore find painters particularly inspired by the novel *Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe (1749-1832), nos. 347 to 352 in the corpus. I have been able to find the original engravings for three of these paintings, nos. 349, 350 and 352. They were made by English engravers, inspired by English paintings, and can be dated to the 1780s. It was probably these reverse glass paintings that Goethe alluded to when he wrote in one of his Venetian Epigrams:¹³⁹

...das auch sogar der Chinese Malet, mit ängstlicher Hand,
Werthern und Lotten auf Glas?¹⁴⁰

Paul et Virginie—a painting of the characters from Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's (1737-1814) novel of the same name—, no. 353, was signed *Factua no. 2*,¹⁴¹ while, at the same time, illustrations of Shakespeare's (1564-1616) plays were coming back into fashion (nos. 354 to 356). The painters Jean-Frédéric Schall (1752-1825), Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), George Romney (1734-1802) and William Hamilton (1750-1801) also saw their works transposed on to glass.

Portraits

The portrait was one of the most appreciated and commonly practised genres in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, especially in England. They were done both using oil on canvas and as engravings. It is therefore not surprising to see portrait engravings so frequently transposed on to glass, the overwhelming majority being portraits of women. Several of these female portraits show young women wearing large hats with broad brims, nos. 358 and 359 in the corpus, which were very fashionable in England at the time.

139. I am grateful to Rupprecht Mayer for having pointed out these verses to me.

140. Translation: '... even the Chinese/ Paint, with anxious hand, Werther and Lotte on glass'

141. Cf. Chap. III, page 134: The painter Fatqua's workshop.

Two male portraits and one female portrait deserve special attention: the one of George Augustus, Prince of Wales and the future George IV, the portrait of George Washington, and the one of Madame Récamier.

Portrait of George Augustus, prince of Wales

This painting of the crown prince, the future George IV, in the regalia of a Masonic Grand Master (no. 375 in the corpus) has two inscriptions on the back of the frame. The first, '*Farqua Canton*' indicates the Chinese painter who painted it, together with the place in which it was painted. The second states the name of the person who commissioned it, and who it was intended for:

This portrait was presented by Her Royal Highness, Princess Charlotte to Miss France Lovatt, 1817 this portrait of His Royal Highness George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales etc. etc. Grand Master of the Ancient Honourable Society of Freemasons, was sent to William Forsteem Esq. by his much esteemed brother & friend, Edmund Larkin Esq. of the Shakespeare Lodge no. 131. Inspector of the Teas for the Hon. E I Company at Canton, with an earnest request that it should be humbly and respectfully presented from him to His Royal Highness as a specimen of Chinese painting.

Freemasonry played a highly important role in the Canton expatriate community of the early nineteenth century. The shipment must have reached the royal family, since Princess Charlotte was able to offer it as a gift, as explained in the inscription. The story of this painting is representative of other portraits transposed on to glass from engravings of European figures.

George Washington's portrait

In 1796, the American painter Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828) painted a portrait of George Washington (1732-1799), at that time first president of the United States. The painting's success led him to make several copies for different institutions and collectors.

One of these paintings was bought by John E. Swords, the captain of a ship trading with China. He decided to take his picture to Canton, where he had many copies of it made on to glass,¹⁴² before selling them on his return to the United States (Illustration 59). Stuart was outraged by this behaviour, which caused him to lose one of his main sources of revenue, and in 1801 he issued a summons for Swords to appear before the Eastern Pennsylvania District Court, demanding that these ‘copies’ be withdrawn from sale. A year later, the court acceded to his request, but the reverse glass paintings had all been sold already. To my knowledge, this was the first trial for a forgery ‘Made in China,’ which meant that reverse glass painting became part of the history of economic relations between China and the United States.

142. The figure of 100 has been quoted.



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But that was not the end of the affair. In 2009, one of these reverse glass portraits of George Washington was about to be donated to an American museum, and it set off a lively debate. Was it a work of art? Was it American? Did it have a place in a museum? It was then found that several of these ‘copies’ were already in other American museums and so the controversy ceased¹⁴³... The painter of these Chinese portraits may have been Fatqua.¹⁴⁴

Madame Recamier’s portrait

In a book describing his voyage around the world,¹⁴⁵ Adelbert von Chamisso speaks of the dinner he had as Captain Clark’s guest on 4 July 1816 in St Peter and Paul harbour (Siberia). In Clark’s cabin, he was able to view a Chinese reverse glass painting of Madame Récamier, whom he had met in Europe at the home of Madame de Staël. He mentions that these portraits were frequently seen on American ships.

As there is no reverse glass portrait in the corpus upon which Madame Récamier’s name appears, I have searched among European engravings depicting this celebrated young woman, which might have reached China and been transposed on to glass, and I have compared them with reverse glass portraits of young women wearing clothes of the Directoire period. This was how I discovered that Richard Cosway’s (1742-1821) engraving, depicting Madame Récamier during her stay in London in 1801, is without any doubt the origin of the portrait painted by Fatqua (no. 365 in the corpus).

Courtesans

Reverse glass portraits of Western courtesans painted in China were as well liked in the West as those of Chinese courtesans. The portrait of one of these beautiful women, Illustration 60, has three copies in the corpus, nos. 379a, 379b and 379c. A young woman with an extravagantly tall headdress, a diaphanous negligée and a seductive décolleté is sitting on a sofa. On her left is her book of appointments, which takes the form of a hanging display containing the visiting cards of her next gallants.

143. Esterow, Milton, Website Artnews, 2009

144. Cf. Chap. III, page 134: The painter Fatqua’s workshop.

145. Chamisso, Adelbert von, 2011, 78.



▲59 | **George Washington**. Reverse glass painting. Gilded wooden frame. 73.7 x 55.9 cm. Martin Gregory Gallery. Photo: Rights Reserved.

➔60 | **Courtisan**. Reverse glass painting. Gilded wooden frame. 34.5 x 24.5 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais/Michel Urtado.

Sailors' farewells

Chinese painters adapted to the market for reverse glass painting which, by the late eighteenth century, was no longer solely for the Western upper classes as it had been originally, but now included the numerous visitors and sailors who loved to have 'souvenirs.' Those most in demand were scenes of a sailor leaving his girlfriend to go off to distant climes (nos. 394 to 397 in the corpus). As we shall see,¹⁴⁶ the great artist Spoilum did not consider it beneath him to produce such paintings, or to have them painted by his workshop.

Landscapes and seascapes

Trade with China was the business of seamen, officers and supercargoes. There was naturally, therefore, a market for beautiful seascapes, among which transpositions of engravings from paintings by Joseph Vernet figured prominently. Chinese reverse glass painters excelled at these transpositions, as we can see from nos. 402 to 407 in the corpus. Engravings of English country houses were also well liked.

One of these landscapes, *Vue d'Europe* (*View of Europe*), in Illustration 61, is one of the rare examples of painting on several super-

146. Cf. Chap. III, page 127: The painter Spoilum's workshop.



61 | *View of Europe*. Reverse glass painting, several surimposed sheets of glass. Recent golden frame. 26.5 x 35.5 cm x 4.7 cm. Circa 1790. Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser). © Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg. 62 | *Nightmare*. Reverse glass painting, Chinese gilded wooden frame. 29 x 33 cm. After eponym Fuseli's painting. Author's collection. Photo: T. A.

imposed sheets of glass, each showing a different plane of the landscape. The first sheet, at the front of the picture, depicts the animals and shepherd in the foreground. The second shows the ruins—as well as the bridge over the river and the village. The third gives us the distant view of a hill, with a river running at its foot. The picture is completed by paper of a plain, pale shade, giving luminosity to the sky. The relief effect obtained by this process is striking.

Although the model was certainly a European engraving divided into sections in this way, there remains a question mark over the two trees on the right, seen to be 'embracing'—a familiar and symbolic pairing in traditional Chinese painting, which is often seen in reverse glass paintings.

Miscellaneous

Apart from the categories studied above, the corpus contains several works, numbered 411 to 432, which contain a variety of motifs. They include:

- United States history scenes;
- English cartoons;
- Genre painting;
- and the transposition on to glass of Fuseli's *Nightmare* (Illustration 62). The sombre, dramatic shapes and colours of the original have become more amenable in this pale blue world.¹⁴⁷

147. Which is somewhat reminiscent of the Chinese ghost world, seen particularly in Chinese B movies.



Painting techniques

Holding the brush and use of materials

Those who, like me, carry out research into eighteenth-century Chinese reverse glass painting, are very fortunate to have two gouaches on paper¹⁴⁸ at their disposal. As can be seen in Illustration 63, the gouache is like an actual 'photo' of the Chinese artist at work on his painting.

The painter is transposing a black and white Western engraving on to glass. The engraving has been placed on a vertical piece of wood and shows a young woman with naked breasts. The painted glass is in its frame and upon it is a small board on which the painter can rest his hand without risk of breaking the glass or damaging the painting, which is not yet dry. The brush, with its bamboo handle, is held slightly at an angle, and his materials are set out in Western style, notably including a palette of colours; the little pieces of paper on the painter's left are used for drying the brush. These gouaches are invaluable but they only tell us about the technique used by the Chinese painter to transpose a gouache on to glass.

The painter seems to be at the stage of applying the colour and the image does not enable us to see whether the drawing was reproduced in the same way, or if it has been done at a previous stage, by laying the glass on top of the engraving. An examination of the paintings gives us the answer to this: in several cases, I have noticed that the painting's dimensions are not the same as those of the original engraving and that the act of transposing it introduced several differences of detail. Furthermore, porcelain painters reproduced European engravings¹⁴⁹ freehand and it is therefore probable that both methods were used for reverse glass painting: freehand and direct copying by placing the glass over the engraving.

It is noticeable that this picture is somewhat different from the descriptions given by visitors to the Lamqua workshop¹⁵⁰ who observed that 'it is a very simple room where eight to ten artists work, their sleeves rolled up and their long pigtailed tied around their heads to prevent them getting in the way of this delicate work.'

148. As well as the one seen in Illustration 63, there is another, almost identical one in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

149. Cf. Chap. I, page 22: Porcelain painting.

150. Forgues, Émile Daurand (Old Nick), 36 to 38; Downing, C. Toogood, 90 to 108.

Finally, this gouache, which can be dated to around 1800 and shows a painter transposing an engraving, gives us no information about the method of producing paintings with Chinese, or partly Chinese motifs.

Picture-making techniques

Studying the techniques used in reverse glass painting means studying the application and nature of the paint layers, which are many and varied. The most accurate and thorough description can be found in the book *Reflets enchanteurs*¹⁵¹ which distinguishes no fewer than seventeen techniques (named A to S).

The two main ones to mention with regard to Chinese reverse glass painting are:

- Several successive covering layers, painted 'backwards' (techniques A and B in the book referred to);
- One or several thin layers (techniques C, D and E).
- To these should be added a technique (technique L) that may be additional to the preceding ones, and is described as follows: 'The first layer is of tin, which is then scratched so that these areas can be decorated with other materials.'

At the time they were being produced, there were numerous descriptions of Chinese reverse glass painting techniques, but they were not all as accurate as those in the text referred to above. Among the serious descriptions is the one by Brother Attiret¹⁵² in 1740:

I make a drawing and mark the outer contours clearly with a pencil and colour, which can then be traced; this drawing is applied to the back of the mirror. The pencilled or coloured lines remain marked on the tin; the tin is then neatly lifted off but only in the places to be painted, the rest remaining as a mirror.

151. Ryser, Frieder, 2000, 313 and 314.

152. Attiret, Frère. 'Letter to the Marquess of Brossia', 1741, in 'Un artiste comtois à la cour de Chine au XVIII^e siècle,' extract from the *Mémoires de la société d'émulation du Doubs*. 8th series, Volume IV. Dole: 1911.





This is a description of the technique referred to as L above.

The following comment is a little more surprising. It is by a French enthusiast¹⁵³ who, on examining a Chinese reverse glass painting that had arrived in France in 1745, declared he had understood the Chinese method of reverse glass painting. According to him, the painter applied the paint on to a tin sheet which he then fixed under the glass.

The third mention of the Chinese reverse glass painting technique is by Cibot,¹⁵⁴ who aimed to be exhaustive:

To paint on mirrors, you begin by drawing your subject in order to remove the tin that you do not wish to leave on. Then you paint with oil colours, sketching out your picture with the last strokes of ordinary paint, & always advancing backwards, as we have said: this way of working does not advance the task quickly enough for workers. Some Canton workers have taken it into their heads to first paint with oil on paper, moistening it with spirits of hot wine: all of which demands only art and attentiveness. Others prepare their colour with varnish, paint their picture, then apply it to the mirror, after cutting out the picture from the thin paper or kuen on which it has been painted, & which they do not fail to bury under a thick layer of colour. There are some who first paint with ordinary distemper, apply their painting to the mirror when it is very damp with alum water and glue to finish with, then put fine warm varnish behind to make it stick to the mirror better, and they only silver the mirror afterwards.

However, with complete honesty he adds: 'We only have hearsay as a guarantee of all these processes, but they do not surprise us,' before concluding sarcastically: 'As soon as Chinese industry sees profits to hope for, inventions increase dramatically.'

De Guignes¹⁵⁵ who, unlike Cibot, himself observed reverse glass painters at work during his journeys to Canton between 1784 and 1801, is more specific:

Contrary to what these authors say, the Chinese do not begin by applying light tones and neither do they finish with

153. *Dictionnaire portatif de commerce* tome 3, 1770, 175.

154. Cibot, P.-M., 1786. Volume XI, 365.

155. Guignes (de), Charles. Volume II, 239 and 240.

darker ones; they paint on glass as they would on canvas; they only take the precaution of using more highly-coloured hues, applying a single, very thin layer and blending the shades well: they turn the glass over when the paint is dry and put a blackened little board on top of it, which is fixed to the edges of the frame.

All the reverse glass paintings from the 1720-1820 period for which I have been able to see the underside of the glass confirm De Guignes' description.

Illustration 64 shows a 'stripped-down version' of a reverse glass painting which is very representative of the kind of direct transpositions described in pages 98-102. The technique of the thin layer has been used, because when you look at the back of the glass, you see practically the same scene as when you look at the front, apart from the shine due to the glass itself. I have come to the same opinion from examining *Mrs van Braam's portrait*, in Illustration 52.

Sometimes, a few layers have been superposed when the artist has started by underpainting some details he wanted to highlight. This is the case with some of the golds or embroideries on the clothes, small figures within a setting, or jewels. This thin layer technique considerably simplified the painter's work in comparison with the technique of covering layers, because it allowed corrections to be made during the course of the work. This advantage did, however, have the drawback of being transparent. It meant that, if nothing was done to remedy it, the viewer of such a painting would see straight through the painted glass to the board of the frame behind it, and its colour and design would interfere with his perception of the painting itself. The Chinese painters found an elegant solution to this problem, by placing a matt black surface behind the glass, as shown in Illustration 64. This surface could be made of paper but, most often, it was the board of the frame itself that was painted black or covered with soot.

This technique had a dual advantage: it both resolved the problem of transparency and gave more depth to the layer of paint itself. The best effect was obtained if the black surface was not in contact with the painting, but separated by a few millimetres. In order to do this, the Chinese framer used small

wedges or, more elegantly, as in Illustration 64, a thin bamboo stick bent to the shape of the glass.

It would, however, be too sweeping to deduce, from these few paintings whose undersides can be seen, that all Chinese reverse glass paintings of this time used the same technique. We should, indeed, take note of a case where the painter wished to give relief to the painted object by placing behind it a light-painted sheet of paper. The motif painted on the glass then stands out, even projecting a shadow on to the paper, and is thus thrown into striking relief. For this, the paint does not have to be applied in a thin, transparent layer but, on the contrary, in one or several opaque layers. The technique of superimposing glass plates (Illustration 61) stems from the same principle and the same quest to achieve a relief effect.

Finally, almost all the paintings whose undersides can be seen have been transposed from engravings and are not part of the first phase of Chinese reverse glass painting, featuring Chinese motifs and portraits. It is possible that in this early period, the Chinese reverse glass painters, and Brother Attiret himself, used the covering layers technique. A statement about reverse glass painting by Father Cibot¹⁵⁶ might lead us to think so:

The exceptional ability that the Chinese had in order to succeed; the daring, lightness and rapidity with which they sketched out their pictures down to the last marks, and thus advanced backwards, were all extremely admirable...

However, I have no other proof of this. In 2007, Chuimei Ho stated:

The style of commercial reverse glass paintings (those of Canton) was elegant but different from the style of court paintings. The layer of paint tended to be thin, easy to correct and less shiny than in examples from the court.

But he gives no reference in support of this affirmation.

On the other hand, at the time when it became exclusively a popular Chinese art form, a period not dealt with in this book, Chinese reverse glass painters all adopted the technique of using covering, opaque layers of paint.

156. Cibot, P.-M., volume XI, 364.

Chemical composition of the paint

All references from the period that talk about the composition of the paint used for Chinese reverse glass painting specify that it is usually oil. Brother Attiret¹⁵⁷ makes a clear distinction:

... in this way, I have been occupied for three-quarters of the time only with painting, either in oil on mirrors, or with water on silk...

Cibot is also clear:

...then we paint with oil colours.'

Finally, according to Guignes,¹⁵⁸

They¹⁵⁹ paint on glass with gum and oil, but the latter is more usual.

Isidore Hedde¹⁶⁰ specifies that in 1830, the oil used was from a *Jatropha*, and was called *tong-you*.¹⁶¹

On the other hand, the Chinese pigments from China quarries that were available in Canton at this time (1830) were the subject of several studies, under the heading of mineral colours, by Western traders who were keen to import them into Europe. The fullest of these is the one by Isidore Hedde. In it, we learn that, in the early nineteenth century, Chinese painters made use of:

- Azure,¹⁶² lapis lazuli, *ta tsian*, a double silicate of alumina and soda, which existed in several forms used in reverse glass painting in Canton;

- Prussian blue,¹⁶³ *yeong tin*, of which Hedde states there were four sorts, and explains their preparation and use in detail: 'The Canton painters used it frequently for their watercolours;'

157. Attiret, Frère, 1811. Volume XXII, 414.

158. Guignes (de), Charles, 1808. Volume VIII, 239 and 240.

159. Chinese reverse glass painters.

160. Hedde, I., 1848, 116.

161. In all references to Hedde's text, the Chinese names that are in italics here were the names in use at the time in the port of Canton, and have been transcribed phonetically by Hedde.

162. Idem, 81.

163. Idem, 80.

- Ceruse,¹⁶⁴ *unn-fann*, 'which the Chinese painters used as a white colour. They never paint flesh without first putting on a layer of pinkish ceruse;'

- *Chie-houang*,¹⁶⁵ which 'is the name of a yellow stone that is probably lead chromate. Ground into a powder, it is used in painting;'

- Malachite,¹⁶⁶ *tsia-louk*, which 'is also used in painting and, if so, it is combined with ceruse.'

- Orpiment,¹⁶⁷ *hong-houong*, a native arsenic sulphide, 'used as colouring material, rarely as a dyeing substance';

- Vermilion,¹⁶⁸ *yinn-thou*. 'In Canton, they only use the beautiful bright purplish red cinnabar, sublimated into fine needles and very friable. It is a very rich, vivid red colour, better than that of Germany and Illyria.' It was the red ink pigment used by the Chinese for their seals.

Hedde ends, however, by saying:

One has to say, in concluding this article, that the majority of good Cantonese painters had a poor opinion of most Chinese colours, and far preferred European colours.

However, they recognised the superiority of their vermilion, their orpiment yellow and their lapis lazuli. They knew how to prepare them very well and to obtain tones that were both rich and solid.

One might, however, question Hedde's definition of 'good painters.'

To my knowledge, the only chemical analysis of a Chinese reverse glass painting whose results have been published¹⁶⁹ relates to a painting of the years 1805-1810 in the Winterthur Museum collection, no. 418 in the corpus. A little fragment of paint from the blue inner frame of the reverse glass painting was removed and analysed.¹⁷⁰ It revealed 'Prussian blue and ceruse in an oil binder,' causing the article's authors to conclude that 'Chinese painters painted in oil with pigments imported from the West.' Perhaps it was rather too general a conclusion considering the amount of information provided by Hedde.

164. Idem, 82.

165. Idem, 82.

166. Idem, 129.

167. Idem, 66.

168. Idem, 262.

169. McGinn, Mary, Anne Verplanck, Noel Fahden Briceño, Amanda Rosner and Ron Fuchs. *Reverse Painting on Glass, Winterthur Primer*, www.antiquesandfinearts.com, 2007.

170. By the infrared spectroscopy method with Fourier Transform.

Frames of Chinese reverse glass paintings

If there is an area where the study of frames is closely linked to that of paintings, it is certainly in Chinese reverse glass painting. Their common history began with the arrival of European mirrors in China at the end of the seventeenth century.

First period: European frames only

The discovery in France, in 1688, of the method of glassmaking called *glass casting*¹⁷¹ made it possible to manufacture large mirrors. Their cost made them great luxury objects, worthy of kings, and gifts that were much appreciated in the royal courts of Europe, particularly after the spectacular Hall of Mirrors was created at Versailles. The mirrors were put into frames designed by top cabinet-makers, and the styles of these changed several times over the course of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries¹⁷² (Illustrations 44 and 65). Illustration 44 pag 86 is a Chinese-Swedish frame in two parts. A rectangular black and gold one made in Canton. Above a black and gold pediment, made in Sweden and inspired by the English George II style.

Such rarity at such prices made them highly suitable gifts for the emperor of China, as is shown by the lists of presents given at the Peking court.¹⁷³ If the arrival of these huge plates of reflective glass provoked many reactions¹⁷⁴ in China, the arrival of rigid frames must have been received with equal amazement by Chinese aristocrats who were only familiar with paintings fastened on to rollers, with flexible frames, or papers printed with popular imagery and fixed directly to the wall. It is certain that the first reverse glass paintings were done on framed mirrors and that the first to return to Europe did so in their original, and therefore European frames.

171. Cf. page 24.

172. Child, Graham, 1990.

173. Cf. page 26.

174. Cf. page 26.



Second period: European frames and 'utilitarian' Chinese frames

The Europeans commissioning these paintings quickly realised that it was more economical, and above all took up less space in company vessels, to send only the glass sheet to be painted in Canton. But for the return journey, since the painted sheet had to be provided with a black background a few millimetres behind it (Illustration 64), it then required a frame. So the Chinese workshops put together simple, rectangular frames, without any carving, using an original system (Illustrations 66) for fixing in place the wooden board that formed the back. This board was fastened by bolts that slid over the board and slotted into mortises hollowed out of the frame's uprights. The bolts allowed the board to be completely fastened, or else partially so that an entire side of it was secured in place by slotting it into a groove of the frame's upright. Once it had arrived in Europe, the Chinese frame was usually removed and replaced by a gilded wooden frame, of the style that was in fashion.

In Great Britain, mirrors painted in China were very sought-after during the reigns of George II (1727-1760) and George III (1760-1820) when rococo-style frames were all the rage, made by famous cabinet-makers such as Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779) or John Linnell (1729-1796). This type of framing culminated in flamboyant overmantels with multiple mirrors.¹⁷⁵ The rococo was sometimes given a Chinese flavour (Illustration 65) by the addition of European carvings with Chinese motifs: pagodas, pavilions, *ho-ho*,¹⁷⁶ and so on.

In France, it was under the reigns of Louis XV (1723-1774), then of Louis XVI (1774-1791), that reverse glass paintings came into fashion, and their framing reflected the styles of these two periods.

In Sweden, where the European fashion for Chinese reverse glass paintings probably started, Adolf Fredrik, a great lover of Chinese objects,¹⁷⁷ reigned from 1751 to 1771. He was followed by Gustav III (1771-1792) and Gustav IV Adolf (1792-1809). In two works of my corpus, the portraits of John Pike and his wife, seen in Illustrations 44 and 45, the Swedish cabinet-maker was content to complete the Chinese frame with a European pediment, inspired by the English George II style. The decoration of the Chinese frame probably had to be commissioned to allow this adaptation.

175. Cf. page 83: Multiple mirrors.

176. More or less inspired by the phoenix.

177. Cf. page 84: Portraits of Westerners.

Finally, Catherine II of Russia bought a reverse glass painting for her collections which she had framed in her court style (no. 63 of the corpus). The framing of Chinese reverse glass paintings by these great European cabinet-makers whose work was very expensive testifies to the value that art-lovers assigned to this Cantonese painting and the eminent place it occupied in their homes. It should, however, be pointed out that the value of these paintings was as much due to the rich and fashionable frame as to the painted mirror.

Third period: decorative Chinese frames

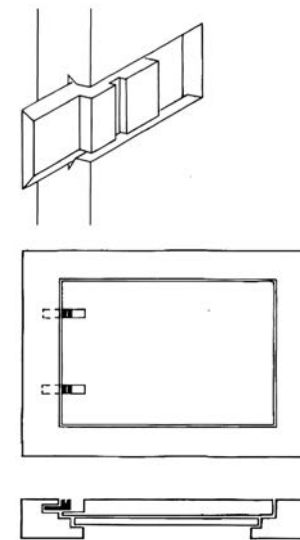
Quite soon after this period of 'utilitarian' Chinese frames, designed only to accompany the painting on its journey to Europe, frames with better-crafted decoration appeared, which was more suited to the European market. This meant the frames were acceptable in European homes, and could be taken into them without further ado.

Black lacquered frames with gilded foliation

From the seventeenth century onwards, lacquered objects made in China were imported into Europe, where they were known as 'Japan-work' and the lacquering technique as 'japanning.' It was in fact through the Dutch East India Company, based in Japan, that these first lacquered objects were imported into Europe. The method of decorating frames with black lacquer and gilded foliation was then adopted by Chinese craftsmen, as fitting surrounds for the mirrors being sent to Europe (Illustration 67). These frames were much appreciated in Europe as they suited the contemporary fashion for chinoiseries and fitted in with the highly sought-after lacquered furniture with its gilded motifs. Furthermore, they did not have to be removed and replaced with European frames.

Better still, this style was copied by European cabinet-makers who had succeeded in mastering the black- or aubergine-coloured lacquering technique with gilded motifs. These frames differed little from the original Chinese models, but included more geometrical motifs, with lattice- or diamond-shaped patterns, and they had considerable success in Europe until the late nineteenth century.¹⁷⁸

178. The French Second Empire was passionate about them.





Carved and gilded wood frames with Chinese motifs

Chinese frames of a different style were also held on to after their arrival in Europe: these were made of gilded wood and carved with Chinese lucky charm motifs (Illustration 68), such as the characters for 'happiness' or 'longevity', the attributes of Taoist Immortals, Buddhist symbols, and so on.

Frames known as Chinese Chippendale

In the 1820s, a frame appeared made of black-painted carved wood with gilded ornamentation (Illustration 69) that had an abundance of swirled effects. Curiously, the English named this style 'Chinese Chippendale'.¹⁷⁹

Copies of European frames

During the final decades of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, when Western engravings were being directly transposed on to glass, Chinese workshops would copy frames of the style then fashionable in the West. These frames were simpler, less ornate than those of the preceding rococo period. Out of all the motifs used in the West, the Chinese singled out flat frames without any motif, whether gilded or ungilded—but most often rectangular or oval frames of gilded wood that included a row of carved 'pearls'¹⁸⁰ along the glass, with a plant motif on the outer border (Illustration 70). These Chinese frames were not always elegantly made, but they suited the mass public which was becomingly increasingly attracted to these transpositions of engravings.

The Chinese painters, anxious to offer their Western clients a frame that was, as much as possible, in tune with current fashion, went as far as to paint plain navy blue- or black-coloured inner frames on the glass, as seen in Illustration 70. Sometimes these were dotted with stars or even imitated a spectacular red and gold egdomised frame, in which the back of the glass sheet was gilded.

179. Cf. Crossman, Carl, 1991, 408 and 409.

180. Style known in France as *Louis XVI*.

Emergence of a popular Chinese frame

It is interesting to note that the so-called 'pearl' frame would become increasingly widespread in China when reverse glass painting became a popular Chinese art, around the mid-nineteenth century. The frame chosen to present these paintings was an ungilded 'pearled' frame, which became known by the Chinese name of 'abacus frame', seen in Illustration 71. For almost two centuries, the frames that held glass paintings were the only rigid frames present in Chinese houses. By introducing permanent rigid frames to China, reverse glass painting therefore changed the place occupied by paintings in Chinese interiors.



III

From

the Cantonese
to Foreign

Workshop
Markets

Painters and their Workshops

Some names of Cantonese painters between 1720 and 1820

The following painters' names have come to us through documents from the period. They are classified below by date of citation, from 1749 to 1820.

Siou-Sin-Saang

The first mention of a Chinese reverse glass painter (and therefore of a workshop) by name is in the writing of William Chambers (1726-1796),¹ a Scottish architect who went to Canton in 1749 as supercargo of the Swedish East India Company. In the book he wrote on China when he returned,² he mentioned the name of Siou-Sin-Saang, a famous Chinese painter who had done some reverse glass painting for him.

Spoilum

The second painter to be mentioned, in terms of date, is the portraitist Spoilum. Some of his works are signed³ and, what is more, he is named in two documents of the period.⁴

Puqua, Cinqua, Punqua

The third mention is of lists of products bought in China by John Green, captain of the *Empress of China*,⁵ the first United States ship to go to China in 1783, and then again in 1786. Fortunately, these lists have been preserved, and they give us valuable information about reverse glass paintings and their painters.

The following names are mentioned:

In 1784 **Puqua**, who is described as a *painter on glass & ca & ca*;

In 1786 **Cinqua**, described as a *limner* (illuminator?);

1. As architect to the King of England, he played an essential role in introducing Chinese gardens, and Chinese fashion more generally, to Europe.

2. Chambers, William, 1757, 14.

3. Cf. Chap. III, page 127: The painter Spoilum's workshop.

4. Meares, J., 130, and Diary of Ralph Haskins of Roxbury, Massachusetts, cited by C. Crossman, 49.

5. Smith, Philip Chadwick Foster. 1984, Appendix B, 259-266.

In 1786 **Punqua**, simply described as a *painter*. The reverse glass paintings bought from him represent '*Empress at Nobels (?)*' (perhaps *Empress and Nobles?*).

Tonqua, Tonqua Junior, Foeiqua, Fatqua and Lamqua.

The fourth mention involves a series of names of Cantonese painters that has reached us thanks to the list compiled by Robert Waln Junior of Philadelphia, who was in Canton from September 1819 to March 1820.⁶ For each painter, his list includes the name, status (according to Waln's estimation), character⁷ (in the sense of behaviour, measured from good to average), the main occupation and the workshop's address. The painters mentioned are Tonqua, Tonqua Junior and Foeiqua on Old China Street, and Fatqua and Lamqua on New China Street.

The 'qua' ending on these artists names was granted by the Chinese government to all Chinese merchants and artists authorised to trade with foreigners. All except one of the painters cited were therefore registered. The exception was Spoilum, and perhaps Spoilum was the name by which he was known to foreigners.

Although works on canvas are known to have been painted by Tonqua, Tonqua Junior, Foeiqua, Fatqua and Lamqua, my corpus contains signed reverse glass paintings by only one of them, and that is Fatqua. In Waln's list he is classified as No. 1, the creator of *Paintings* and described as *painter and miniature*.

Relations between these artists, and especially their family ties, have been studied by Crossman⁸ and Patrick Conner.⁹ These authors appear to agree on the fact that the Chinese name Spoilum refers to Guan Zuolin and that Lamqua, the great nineteenth-century Cantonese oil painter, was one of his descendants.

Several other later lists were drawn up in the years after 1815, but they only concern painters on canvas or paper.

6. List cited and commented on by C. Crossman, 54 to 71.

7. A surprising inclusion, perhaps added to help Waln's readers in their negotiations with the painter.

8. Crossman, C, 54 to 105.

9. Conner, Patrick, 1986, 50 and 51.

The first Cantonese workshops, 1740-1760, and the Swedish 'network'

The reverse glass paintings now in the Chinese pavilion at Drottningholm Palace and in a few Swedish museums possess several features that allow suggestions to be made regarding their attribution to different workshops.

The Swedish Supercargoes' workshop

We know of the Swedish supercargoes whose portraits were painted on glass. The dates of when they stayed in Canton make it possible to date these works fairly precisely. In fact, four other supercargoes are involved in the history of Chinese reverse glass painting in Sweden: these are Colin Campbell,¹⁰ William Chambers, Jacob Hahr and Johan Abraham Grill. The dates of their stays in Canton are summarised in the table below:

Supercargo's name	Year(s) of stay in Canton and rank () among supercargoes
John Pike	1732 (4), 1736 (2), 1742 (2), 1745 (2)
Gabriel Beyer	1744 (3), 1747 (2), 1750 (1), 1753 (1), 1760 (1)
Anders Gadd	1744 (5), 1747 (2), 1750 (2), 1758 (2), 1761 (1), 1764 (1)
Colin Campbell	1732 (1), 1738 (1)
William Chambers	1748 (3)
Jacob Hahr	1759 (4), 1763 (3), 1769 à 1775 à Canton
Jean Abraham Hill	1760 (3), 1766 (2)

The workshop or workshops that produced these portraits were therefore definitely active between:

- 1732 and 1745 for John Pike, but taking into account the clothes he was wearing in the portrait¹¹ (those of a high-ranking supercargo who wants his rank to be known), the period in question is likely to be the one when he was a second-rank supercargo, that is between 1736 and 1745;
- 1744 and 1760 for Gabriel Beyer;¹²
- 1747 and 1764 for Anders Gadd.

10. Cf. Chap. II, page 84: Portraits of Westerners.

11. Brocade jacket.

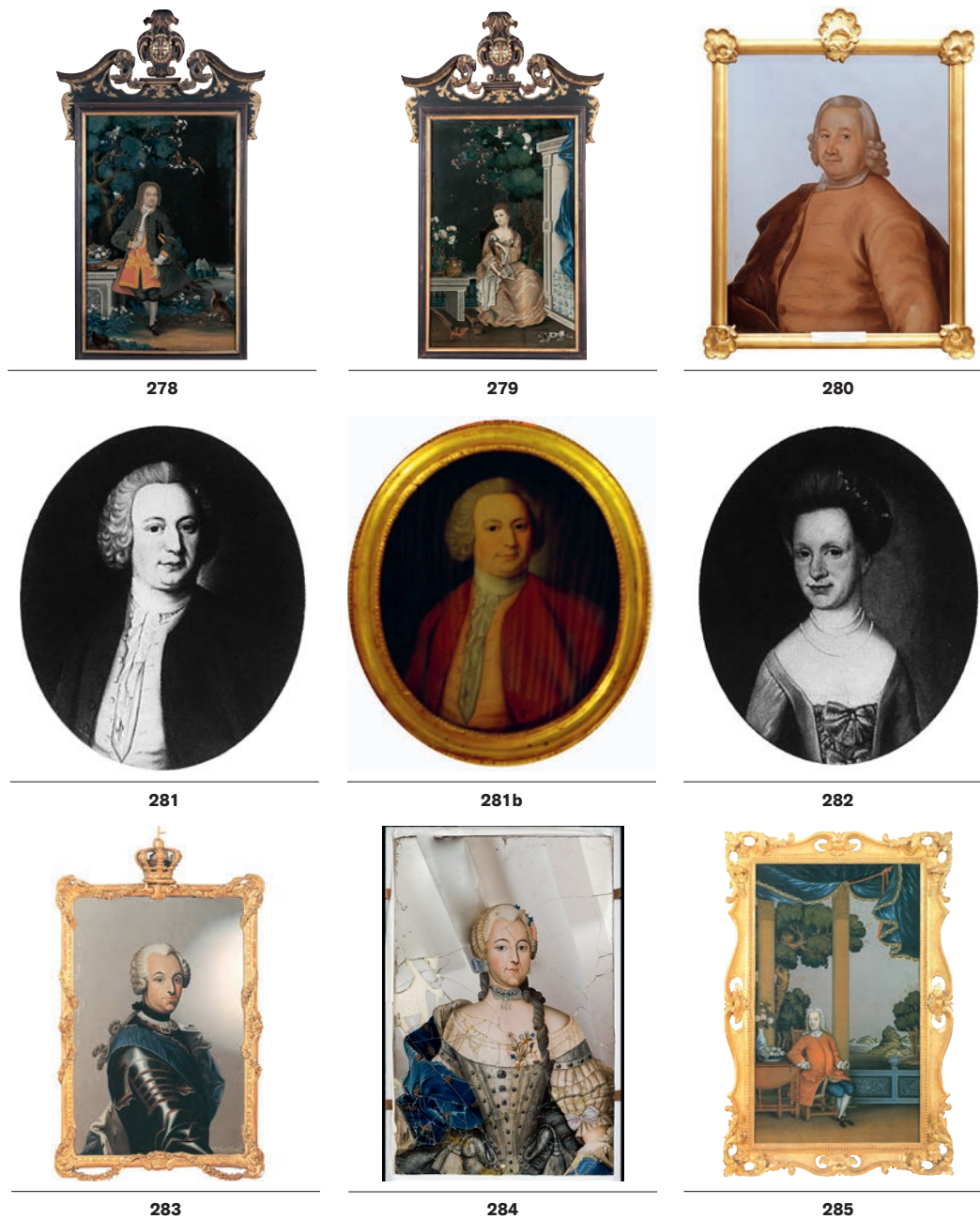
12. Cf. the remark on Beyer's rank, page 84.

A study of the portraits of King Adolf Fredrik and his wife Lovisa Ulrika¹³ has resulted in the period 1748-1757 being estimated as the date when they were painted.

As stated previously, one portrait appears to be of Colin Campbell.¹⁴ Since this supercargo was in Canton twice, in 1732 and 1738, it is possible that this portrait was painted from an engraving sent to Canton, like those of King Adolf Fredrik and his wife.

The frames of these works are all original, and they confirm the various datings suggested.

Taking into account the concordance of dates and the fact that the Swedish supercargoes must have told one another the address of this excellent reverse glass portraitist, I propose to attribute these portraits to a single workshop that I shall name the Swedish supercargoes' workshop. It was active between 1740 and 1760, at least. I attribute to it the paintings seen in Illustration 72.



13. Cf. Chap. II, page 84: Portraits of Westerners.

14. Cf. idem.

Drottningholm Chinese pavilion workshops

The Chinese pavilion given by King Adolf Fredrik to his wife Lovisa Ulrika for her birthday in 1753 was rebuilt as a permanent structure in 1763. We have no documentation to prove that the framed reverse



glass paintings now in the library of the oval room were in the first pavilion or in the present one when it was inaugurated, or whether they were added later. We can, however, affirm that the overmantels with multiple mirrors over the fireplaces in the red, yellow and south drawing rooms were put there during the construction of the second pavilion; they are in fact part and parcel of the pavilion's interior architecture. These paintings were executed in Canton before 1761, taking account of the time taken for their transport and the building of the palace.

Do these paintings have common features that would allow them to be attributed to one or several workshops?

The paintings to be examined include those on the overmantel in the south drawing room, seen in Illustration 73 (largest view page 10):

- The outdoor scene at the base of the south drawing room overmantel;
- The five pairs on each side of the south drawing room overmantel;
- The two paintings of pheasants at the top of the yellow and red drawing room mirrors.

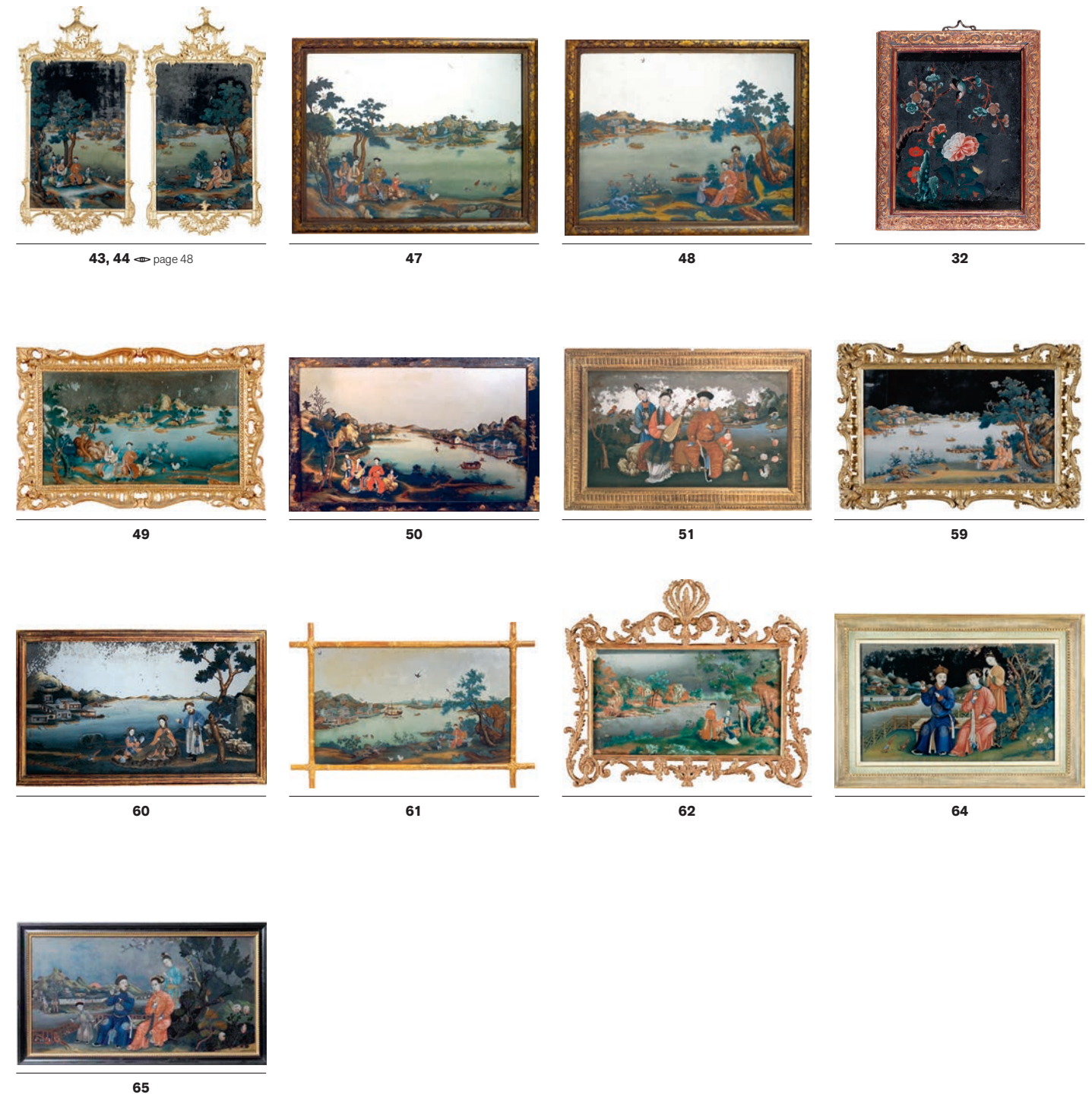
The Music-Poetry workshop

The outdoor scene at the base of the south drawing room overmantel symbolises poetry.¹⁵ It is one of a music-poetry pair, the painting on the theme of music being in the library of the same pavilion.¹⁶ This Drottningholm pair is identical to the pairs numbered 43-44 and 47-48 in the corpus, even down to the frames.

The musical component in these pairs is also linked to another poetry element, with the couple sitting on a seat in the music-poetry pair numbered 101-106 in the corpus. We can deduce that these pairs, with all their symbolic elements, probably come from the same workshop, which was active at least between 1750 and 1770. It therefore seems possible to attribute to this workshop, which I am calling *the music-poetry workshop*, the related music-poetry paintings in the corpus, i.e. nos. 43, 44, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 101 and 106, as well as the music-poetry pair at Drottningholm.

The corresponding photos in the corpus are grouped together in Illustration 74.

15. Cf. Chap. II, page 40: Outdoor scenes: leisure in high society.
16. Göram Alm, Wirgin J., 290.



Siou-Sin-Saang's workshop

The five pairs in the south drawing room overmantel are, from top to bottom and right to left:

- Pair 1: Young Manchu women on their veranda, one with a small red parrot, the other with a black and white dog, while a curtain raised to the ceiling opens up the veranda to the sky;
- Pair 2: Young girl on a veranda and young woman near a tree;
- Pair 3: Entertainment in the pavilion, game of Go and music;
- Pair 4: Mandarin wearing winter clothes with a falcon on his hand at a lakeside, young mandarin in summer clothes on his veranda. A small black and white dog adds animation to the first scene;
- Pair 5: Young girl and little black and white dog, young girl day-dreaming, both sitting in the open air.

The pairs of paintings numbered 1 and 5, depicting young women seated, are similar to several paintings in the corpus: nos. 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196 and 197. However, there is one notable difference: the other pairs of young women in the corpus usually mark a contrast between the young unmarried girl and the young married woman, in that the first wears a simple chignon while the second wears her hair in Manchu style. I am therefore tempted to think that the Swedish framers who arranged the mirrors did not do it in the order that the Chinese painter may have stipulated. In my opinion, the original pairs may well have featured a young woman in Pair 1 and a young girl in Pair 5, with this arrangement adding an indoor-outdoor contrast.

Pair 2 in the overmantel observes the indoor-outdoor contrast and the young woman-young girl pairing is identical to the one in pair no. 181-182 of the corpus, which is also in a Swedish museum. In addition to the painting quality of the embroidered silk clothing, we might note the 'flat' depiction of the peonies.

Pair 3 in the overmantel, showing young girls and young women enjoying themselves in elegant pavilions, seems to be painted rather differently, and is reminiscent of nos. 176 and 177 in the corpus.

Pair 4 in the overmantel has winter-summer and old age-youth contrasts. The rendering of the folds of embroidered silk and the little black and white dog is as remarkable as it is in pairs 1 and 5. Painting no. 234 in the corpus is very close to it, given the mandarin's pose, the falcon in his hand and the little black and white dog. The similarity is all the more interesting for the fact that this painting no. 234 dates

from around 1757-1760, to the knowledge of its first owner, Lord Clive,¹⁷ making it contemporaneous with Chambers' reference.

The very fine, elegant depiction of the gold-embroidered silk fabrics, the shaded folds of the draperies, the drawing of the faces, and also the very 'flat' representation of the flowers are characteristics shared by pairs 1, 2, 4 and 5 in the overmantel, as is the presence of the little black and white dog in pairs 1, 4 and 5. It therefore seems possible to attribute pairs 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the large Drottningholm overmantel to a single workshop, which was active from at least 1755 to 1760. Paintings numbered 181, 182, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197 and 234 might also have been produced in this workshop, which I am provisionally naming *the great Drottningholm overmantel workshop*.

Should we then attribute the portraits in Illustration 72, of supercargoes and Swedish sovereigns, to the same workshop? Perhaps for the portraits of John Pike and his wife, which share some common features with the paintings previously attributed to this workshop: among these are the landscape, the skilful drawing of the clothes, and the little dogs. Nothing enables us to link the other Swedish portraits to this workshop, apart from the fact it appears quite probable that Swedish East India Company agents would have gone to the painter whose first portraits—those of the Pike couple— they had had the opportunity to admire.

Should we, finally, link the great Drottningholm overmantel workshop to the workshop mentioned by Chambers under the name of the painter Siou-Sin-Saang?

Chambers' text¹⁸ reads as follows:

Plates XIX, XX, XXI represent various Chinese garments. Some of the drawings have been done from life, and others are copies from pictures by Siou-Sin-Saang, a famous Chinese painter whom I employed during my stay in Canton to make reverse mirror paintings of all the Chinese costumes.

A study of these plates leaves a strong impression that the figures have not been drawn by a Chinese artist but by a Westerner—very probably Chambers himself, who would have relied upon his memories, as he did for other drawings. The existence of this Chinese reverse glass painter is therefore open to doubt. However, Jan Wirgin¹⁹

17. Cf. the caption on no. 234 of the corpus.

18. Chambers, William, 1757, 14.

19. J. Wirgin in Alm, Göran, 294.



Pair 4 Right



Pair 4 Left



Pair 5 Right



181



182



186



191



192



193 ← page 58



194 ← page 58



195



196



197

notes that in 1749, an auction sale of the cargo of three ships returning from China took place in Gothenburg. Among these was the *Hoppet*, the ship on which Chambers was a supercargo, and among the objects for sale were '10 painted mirrors depicting Chinese costumes.' These were very probably the reverse glass paintings that Chambers said he had commissioned: Swedish supercargoes were indeed obliged to put any objects bought in China up for auction, to comply with the regulations of the Swedish Customs authorities.

It should be noted that the paintings surrounding the south drawing room mirror feature Chinese men and women whose costumes are portrayed with the utmost care. And, finally, that two drawings on plate XX, *Summer Apparel* and *Merchants and People of Distinction in Winter*, form a winter-summer, old age-youth pairing, an opposition which, as we have seen,²⁰ is very characteristic of Chi-

20. Cf. Chap. II, page 40: Outdoor scenes: leisure in high society and page 52: 'Beautiful women.'

nese painters' work. These drawings may have inspired Chambers because of his memory of the fourth pair of paintings on the south drawing room overmantel. All these factors lead me to think that the painter Siou-Sin-Saang very probably existed, and that the Drotningholm great overmantel workshop was his: I am therefore from now on calling it *the Siou-Sin-Saang workshop*. And why would some of the overmantel paintings, pairs 1, 2 and 5 for example, not be among those sold at auction by Chambers in 1749? Photos of the paintings thus attributed to the Siou-Sin-Saang workshop appear together in Illustration 75a and 75b.

These three workshops, the Swedish supercargoes', music-poetry and Siou-Sin-Saang's, were active during the same period and all had Swedish supercargoes as their clients. Whether they were linked together or were simply all one workshop, I do not have sufficient evidence to say.





The Painter Spoilum's Workshop

Signed portraits²¹

Among the works signed by Spoilum I have documented two portraits, one of which is on glass, and a sailor's farewell scene,²² also on glass. The portrait of Thomas Fry, in Illustration 76, presented for the first time by Conner,²³ shows a young man standing, turned slightly towards his left looking at the painter. He has short hair, without a wig, and is wearing a shirt with a jabot, over which is a long yellow waistcoat with pockets near the base. On top of this is a long, open, sky-blue jacket with buttons set close together. His blue culottes are gathered under the knee, he wears white silk stockings and dark shoes with buckles. His left hand is resting on his hip, while his right hand appears to be in the pocket of his culottes. Thomas Fry is posing against an austere interior: we see a simple wall, but no furniture. A terrace opens on to a few trees in the foreground of a water's-edge landscape, where we can see a white, nine-storey pagoda on top of an island and a pleasure sampan on the lake.

The sky is a mirror, while in the upper part of the picture a red curtain with a gold fringe is held open by cords with golden tassels.

The following words are written on the back of the picture: 'Drawn October the... at Canton in China/Spillem in the year 1774.'

This is considered to be the painter's first signature, Spillem being one of the many ways of writing his name. The most frequent version, and the one that would be adopted by Westerners, was Spoilum. A considerable number of works would be attributed to this artist, several of them reverse glass paintings. Very little is known about his life, but he may share the same identity as the Chinese painter Guan Zuolin, who was said to be a master of the portrait and was admired by Westerners.²⁴

Another of Spoilum's portraits, in oil on canvas, is also dated and signed, with the following words on the back of the picture: *Spoilum/Pinxit/Canton/ Decr. 1st 1786*. It is a head-and-shoulders portrait on a black background in an oval frame.²⁵

On the basis of these two signed works, a series of reverse glass paintings and oils on canvas have been attributed to this painter, no-

tably by Crossman²⁶ and Conner,²⁷ the two best connoisseurs of this artist's work.

Spoilum's celebrity stemmed from his portraits of Western naval officers and merchants painted from life. He painted on both glass and canvas. The reverse glass paintings possibly executed by Spoilum, and brought together in this corpus, are studied in the present chapter and classified into five series.

Series 1, five portraits

The *Portrait of Thomas Fry*, in Illustration 76, is the only 'signed' portrait.

The *Portrait of an English Gentleman*, in Illustration 77, differs by virtue of the model's three-quarter pose; his clothes of rich materials—silk and gold embroideries; his hand that is slipped horizontal-

26. Crossman, Carl, 1991, 38.

27. Conner, Patrick, 2013, 1998, 1986.



21. Or, to be more precise, portraits where the artist is named in an accompanying, handwritten text.

22. As it has been transposed, this picture is dealt with in Chap. II, page 102.

23. Conner, P. 1998.

24. Nanhai Xianzhin 1910. Cited by P. Conner, 1986.

25. Crossman, Carl, 1991, 38, Ill. 5.



From left to right and top to bottom: **78** | *Portrait of a Western Merchant in a Red Jacket*. Painted mirror. Original Cantonese frame. 27.3cm x 21 cm. Martyn Gregory Gallery. Photo Rights Reserved. **79** | *Portrait of Captain Cranston*. Painted mirror. Varnished wooden frame. 31.7 x 26 cm. Martyn Gregory Gallery. Photo Rights Reserved. **80** | *Portrait of a Western Merchant (1)*. Reverse glass painting. Lacquered frame with gilded foliation. 39.4 x 34.9 cm. Circa 1800. Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio. **81** | *Portrait of a Rich Merchant*. Gilded wooden frame. 70 x 57.5 cm. 1780. Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 153, fig. 91. **82** | *Portrait of a Western Merchant (2)*. Painted mirror. Lacquered frame with gilded foliation. 24 x 18 cm. Circa 1780. Martyn Gregory Gallery. Photo Rights Reserved. **83** | *Portrait of a Naval Officer*. Painted mirror. Red lacquered wooden frame. 45 x 33 cm. Circa 1780. © National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery. **84** | *Portrait of an Englishman*. Gilded wooden frame. 38 x 28 cm. Circa 1790. Ref. Lü Ping, introduction. Photo Rights Reserved.

ly into his waistcoat. It is noticeable that the position of the hand and the cut and colour of the waistcoat are very similar to those in John Pike's portrait. As for the *Merchant in the Red Jacket*, in Illustration **78**, he is sitting on a Chinese seat near a Chinese gaming table, upon which lies a Western book that he is touching. The face is more distinct than in the case of Thomas Fry, but it shares with him the shadow of a smile that is so characteristic of Spoilum's work.

The *Portrait of Captain Cranston*, in Illustration **79**, is similar in its setting to the portrait of the merchant in the red jacket in Illustration **78**; but the pose resembles that in the English gentleman's portrait. Conner²⁸ has attributed both these pictures to Spoilum.

The *Portrait of a Western Merchant (1)*, Illustration **80**, is very like the paintings described above: there is the same veranda, the same water's-edge landscape, the same red curtain, and the portrait itself is of similar quality. However, there are two distinct differences: the sky is no longer a mirror, it is painted; and the painter has delighted in painting a picture 'within a picture' with his water's-edge landscape. Bearing in mind these factors, I would have little hesitation in also attributing this picture to Spoilum's workshop, but dating the period somewhat later than the preceding portraits in the same series.

Series 2, four portraits

The *Portrait of a Rich Merchant*, Illustration **81**, was described for the first time by Jenyns²⁹ who also provides a photo, unfortunately in black and white. However, the accompanying description tells us about the colours. It shows a rather portly man of mature age, standing at the edge of a lake or river on which can be seen a pleasure junk. The sky is a mirror.

He is wearing a green coat and breeches, and a beautifully-embroidered white waistcoat, and holding a gold-topped cane with a tassel. From his bearing one can see that he was a man of substance, whose clothes date him to about 1780 or 1785. He was probably a wealthy trader from one of the factories at Canton.

28. Martyn Gregory Gallery, catalogues 2003 and 2016.
29. Jenyns, Soame R., 1965, 152, Ill. 91.

The portrait mentioned by Crossman,³⁰ with the description 'the man, standing with a cane, appears beside a Chinese river with a junk' is the same one, and he attributes it to Spoilum. The presence of flowers in the foreground, together with the pheasant and the picture's considerable size (70 x 57.5 cm), link it to the early 'Swedish' productions described in Chapter II, page 84. The water's-edge setting with a mirror for the sky is not very different from the portrait of Thomas Fry. For these reasons, it could be dated to the 1770-1780 period.

The *Portrait of a Western Merchant (2)*, (Illustration **82**), is very like the preceding picture. The setting is identical, with the same water's-edge landscape, the same sampan, the same golden pheasants in the sky and trees and flowers on the bank. The pose is also similar, with the merchant standing, leaning on his cane. Only the clothes are less opulent and the frame different.

The *Portrait of a Naval Officer*, Illustration **83**, belongs to the fine Lady Lever Gallery collection in Liverpool. It shows a British naval officer from a three-quarter view, wearing a long navy-blue jacket with buttons set close together, over a white waistcoat with large pockets near the base. His left hand is on his hip while his right hand is slipped horizontally into the waistcoat. This pose is very similar to those in portraits of the first series, particularly the one of Captain Cranston (Illustration **79**). The setting, too, is very like those in the two portraits of merchants previously described. These many resemblances enable me (for the first time in this book) to attribute the Lady Lever Gallery portrait to Spoilum and also to date it to 1770-1780.

The *Portrait of an Englishman*, (Illustration **84**)³¹ is comparable to the previous one in its general composition, the pose and the naval officer's uniform, and the fact of the sky being a mirror. It therefore also appears to be attributable to Spoilum.

Series 3, two portraits

Captain John Corner, in Illustration **85**, and *The Ship-Owner Audibert*, in Illustration **86**, both have a clear resemblance to the pictures

30. Crossman, Carl, 1991, 205.
31. Lü Ping, 2013, Introduction.



in series 1 and 2, particularly in the model's pose, clothing and the care taken over the face. The difference, however, is that they are not reverse glass paintings.

The *Portrait of Captain John Corner* (Illustration 85). Some words on the back of the frame state that this is a portrait of John Corner, captain of the *Carnatic*.³² This information is important for dating it, since the *Carnatic*, a vessel of the English East India Company, only went to Canton twice, in 1788 and 1791. Conner attributes this portrait to Spoilum.

Portrait of the Ship-Owner Audibert (Illustration 86). This portrait has the distinctive features of being oval and of having a very simple, natural setting of foliage beyond a terrace, unlike other portraits of the period whose settings feature a water's-edge landscape. On a piece of paper on the back of the frame, we can just make out the following words: 'Mr Audibert / portrait fait à / Guadaloppe (?) / père... grand- / mère de...' Conner attributes this portrait to Spoilum. The text, written in French, caught my attention because it indicates that the model is French. It would then be the only example I know of a Chinese reverse glass painting representing a Frenchman. I therefore conducted some research into the name Audibert.

This person was very probably one of the members of the Audibert family, who were ship-owners in Marseille, and owned ships travelling to India and Canton.³³ They were among those Marseille's ship-owners who, after the French East India Company's monopoly ended in 1769, fitted out ships and created the lucrative four-way trade, adding voyages to the West Indies to those going to the Indies and China. The word *Guadaloppe* in the text just quoted is probably connected to this original maritime route. Private ship-owners could only operate in the absence of the monopoly granted to the French East India Company, which therefore means between 1769 and 1791. And it was during this period that the portrait was painted. However, I have not unearthed any evidence to determine whether a member of this family went to Canton or if the portrait was executed from a miniature, which might explain the unusual setting. Another interesting fact is that the captain of one of the Audibert ships was Jean Joseph Blancard, who brought the first chrysanthemum plants back from China. The task of describing them, and

32. Cf. no. 297 in the corpus.

33. Blancard, Pierre, 1806, 52, note 1.



how to cultivate them, was given to the family's celebrated botanist, Canon d'Audibert de Ramatuelle.

Series 4, two portraits

This series comprises the *Portrait of a Young Englishman*, Illustration 87, and the *Portrait of a Western Gentleman*, Illustration 88.

The men in both of these paintings can be seen standing, from a three-quarters angle and turned slightly towards their right looking at the painter. Supercargoes or captains, they are wearing identical clothes, right down to the embroidery on their waistcoats. They both have a hand on their hip, but one has his other hand in his waistcoat while the other man's is hanging down beside his body. A red curtain is suspended over the upper part of these portraits. The poses and depiction of the faces link them to the previous series.

However, there are three major differences:

- They are not painted mirrors;
- A room with plain, unadorned walls forms the background.

The room is empty or furnished only with a table covered with a dark-blue cloth, on which two Western books are lying;

- The water's-edge landscape is absent: a lattice window looks out on to the sky, which is no longer a mirror.

• These portraits were attributed to Spoilum, one by Crossman and the other by Conner.

The almost abstract character of these compositions is a subject of intrigue:

- Do they signal a return to the more traditional Chinese portrait from which all setting was absent, with the model standing out against a plain background?

• Is this the décor of a room inside one of the factories? Two works cited by Conner might lead us to think so,³⁴ and several paintings of the port of Canton confirm the look of these windows;

• Should we see in these pictures the influence of a Western painter? In his benchmark article on Spoilum, Conner³⁵ notes the resemblance between these paintings and those of the English artist Arthur David (1712-1787), particularly with regard to the pose adopted, the austerity of the décor and the lattice window in the background. It

34. Conner, P, 2009, 117, Illustration 5.4, and on the Martyn Gregory Gallery website (August 2013), an oil painting on canvas entitled *Portrait of John Smith Crary*.

35. Conner, P, 1998.



85 | *Portrait of Captain John Corner*. Reverse glass painting. 30 x 24 cm. Martyn Gregory Gallery. Photo Rights Reserved.

86 | *Portrait of Shipowner Audibert*. Reverse glass painting. Oval gilded wooden frame. Martyn Gregory Gallery. Photo Rights Reserved.

87 | *Portrait of a Young Englishman*. Painted mirror. Painted wooden frame. 29.4 x 23.7 cm. Courtesy Richard Millhender. Photo Rights Reserved.

88 | *Portrait of an European Merchant*. Reverse glass painting. Gilded wooden frame. 25.4 x 20.32 cm. Circa 1775. Martyn Gregory Gallery. Photo Rights Reserved.

is not impossible that some of this artist's engravings may have inspired Spoilum, but it seems more probable that this almost abstract décor simply represents one of the rustic rooms in a factory.³⁶

Series 5, less certain attributions:

The *Portrait of a Western Merchant (3)*, Illustration 89, no. 299 in the corpus, has been claimed as the work of Spoilum. The plunging view of the water's-edge setting and the model's pose, which only lacks the cane to complete the resemblance to the Series 2 portraits, both argue in favour of this attribution. On the other hand, the painting's format, the river opening (towards the sea) and the middling quality of how the face is depicted are unusual for this artist. I would tend to attribute it rather to one of the assistants in Spoilum's workshop.

36. Martyn Gregory Gallery, catalogue 2009-2010.



As is the case whenever there is the possibility of a great artist being involved, there is a strong temptation for the owner to attribute the work in his possession to Spoilum, particularly with portraits of merchants, supercargoes and naval officers painted in China at this time. The other attributions I have been able to hunt down when the literature permitted it are mainly those involving oil on canvas, which are therefore not relevant to the present study. We might simply note that the van Braam family portraits, studied in pages 91-94, were attributed to Spoilum—an attribution that does not seem to be correct, particularly due to the fact that these portraits were based exclusively on European engravings.

Spoilum's art

From studying these portraits, a few characteristics emerge that are peculiar to this painter. Conner³⁷ summarises them as follows:

His models, whether Western or Chinese, are seen face on but slightly turned towards the right; their faces are smooth, with light but quite visible shadows, and they often have the hint of a smile. Behind them is a plain setting that nonetheless has a paler area above one shoulder.

Crossman³⁸ adds to this what he calls 'Spoilum's characteristic of not painting both eyes at the same level.'

My own contribution would be to point to the shading, which we know to be one of the differences between traditional Chinese painting and Western painting. In all these portraits attributed to Spoilum, with the exception of Thomas Fry's, the figure is on the right of the picture and the light comes from the right. Spoilum therefore naturally places a shadow over the left part of the face, but mainly the area between the eye and the base of the chin. On the other hand, he does not usually put shading on the clothes and neither does he paint any shadows cast by the models themselves.

However, two portraits present an exception to this last rule: the one of Thomas Fry, where the shadow cast on the ground makes us think the light is coming from the window, whereas neither the

37. Conner, Patrick. 1986, 52.

38. Crossman, Carl. 1991, 205.

face nor body have any shadows; and the one of Mr Audibert, which has a single shadow on the ground.

Although Conner and Crossman do not say so explicitly, their analyses can only lead to the conclusion that Spoilum painted from life, at least where the faces and clothing were concerned. This hypothesis is confirmed by two passages from travel journals. One is the journal of John Meares:³⁹ on his ship, the *Felice*, travelling from Canton towards the United States in 1788, he was returning a Polynesian prince, by the name of Tianna, to the Hawaiian island from whence he had come. In Canton, Tianna had bought many objects:

But of all the objects among his riches, Meares tells us, the one that appealed most to his imagination was a portrait of himself painted by the famous Chinese artist, Spoilum, who was perhaps the only one of his kind in the whole of this vast empire. The painter had faithfully expressed all the features of his physiognomy, but had surpassed himself in the talent with which he rendered the grace pervading the Indian's face. . . it seemed as if the face changed its expression with each brush stroke.

The other revealing quotation is in the journal belonging to Ralph Haskins of Roxbury, who describes his session spent sitting for Spoilum in the following terms:⁴⁰

While nothing else could be done, I went to Spoilum and sat for two hours to have my portrait taken. He was \$10 each and does a great deal of business in that line. I was surprised to see how expert he was in doing it.

On the other hand, it is not impossible, and is even probable, that Spoilum was inspired by Western engravings in positioning his models, and that the setting was sometimes chosen by the person commissioning the painting from among a number of settings proposed by the artist.

Having reviewed all the certain and probable datings of Spoilum's portraits, both on reverse glass and on canvas, it would seem that he started with reverse glass portraits before proceeding to paint on

39. Meares, J. Paris Year 3, Volume 1, 228.

40. Diary of Ralph Haskins of Roxbury, Massachusetts, kept at Canton, 1802, private collection, cited by C. Crossman in Crossman, Carl, 1991, 49.

canvas. From among the reverse glass portraits, two periods emerge, such as have already been seen for Swedish portraits and that can in fact be found in all reverse glass painting. The first period, around 1770 to 1780, is when Spoilum was painting reverse mirror portraits, with the mirror representing the sky. It was also the time when he was painting larger portraits. Series 1 and 2 are linked to this period, containing portraits similar to those of Mr and Mrs John Pike.⁴¹ The second period, which starts around 1780, and extends until around 1790-1800, is when the painting covers the whole of the glass: this therefore includes Series 3 and 4. Within this period, I would surmise that Series 4 is older than Series 3. These distinctions are by no means exclusive, as periods of covering the glass very probably existed outside them, in accordance with the wishes of those commissioning them. If we add the analysis of the reverse glass paintings carried out here to those which Conner and Crossman have done for paintings on canvas, we see a real personality emerging, of an artist who tends, through his own style and economy of means, to depict his models' most essential traits. No other Chinese reverse glass painter in Canton was to achieve such acuity of perception in his art. It will come as no surprise that John Meares put Spoilum in top place among 'the painters of the Empire' and that his work is still sought-after today.

Only one reverse glass painting signed by Spoilum that is not a portrait is present in my corpus: no. 429, *George Harrison and the Crew of the Alliance*. The following words appear on the back of the frame: *G. Harrison's... has'd of Spoilum in Canton, AD 1788.*⁴² Amongst barrels and bundles on a quayside, some sailors are talking while one of them bids a tender farewell to his girlfriend. The sailors' caps bear the name of their ship, the *Alliance*. This picture has been transposed from an engraving by the English painter Henry Bunbury (1750-1811). The sailors commissioned it as a souvenir of their stay in Canton and it proves only that Spoilum, the great master of the portrait, had no hesitation in painting innocuous souvenirs or, more probably, having them painted in his workshop.

41. Illustrations 44 and 45, pages 86-87.

42. Lee, Jean Gordon, 1984, 192.

The painter Fatqua's workshop

Since the transcription of Chinese names into Latin characters was not systematised in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Canton, a painter's name could have several Latin spellings, as we have seen in the case of Spoilum.

The corpus includes eight paintings whose signatures are quite similar:

- *Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus*, no. 341 in the corpus: Fatqua Canton pinxit;
- *Snake in the Grass*, no. 342 in the corpus, which, on the back of the frame, contains a veritable CV of the painter), in which he presents himself thus: 'Faiqua, painter in oil and water colours, and on glass, China Street,⁴³ Canton.' And he adds: 'Prepares boxes of assorted colours for drawing, on the lowest terms.' Finally, on a little box is written the word 'Fatqua.'

Around this, Fatqua has laid out a European palette, pots of colours, a box of colours and two interesting objects giving further information about the painter:

- A canvas depicting a Western ship, thus pointing out that he is a marine painter;
- Two painted vases: are these intended to show that he also paints on porcelain?

It is noticeable that on this 'business card' he himself uses two spellings for his name: *Faiqua* and *Fatqua*.

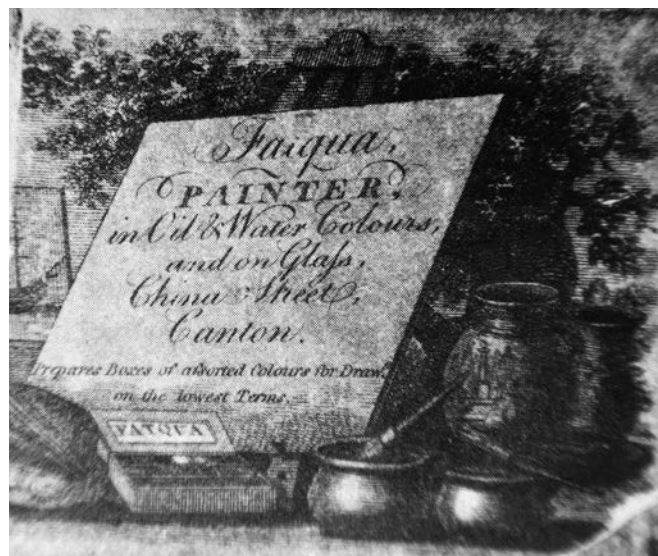
- *Hebe and Jupiter*, no. 343 in the corpus, Illustration 91: *Fatqua Canton pinxit*;
- *Madame Récamier*, no. 365 in the corpus: *Falqua pinxit*;
- *Virginia in the Grave*, no. 353 in the corpus: *Factua no. 2*;
- *Portrait of Humphrey Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester*, 374b in the corpus: *Fatqua Canton pinxit*;
- *Portrait of George Augustus, Prince of Wales*, no. 375 in the corpus: *Farqua Canton*.

These signed paintings have the following features:

- They are all directly transposed from engravings. In the case of three of them—nos. 341, 342 and 365 in the corpus—we know the picture from which the engraving was made. Note that, in no. 342, Venus's breast is modestly covered by a chemisette, whereas this is not the case either in Reynolds' original painting or in the engravings known to have been made from this picture;⁴⁴

43. R. Waln Junior specifies (page 117) that the workshop was likely to be in New China Street.

44. Cf. caption of no. 342 in the corpus.





338



339



341



342



343



345



353



365



366



374a



374b



374c



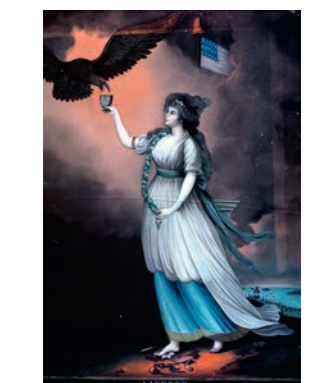
375



411



412



414

• Six out of seven of them are surrounded by an inner frame painted on the glass, with a red and gold floral decoration in Illustration 91 and nos. 341, 365 and 366, or with a gold border in nos. 353 and 375 of the corpus.

• The draperies are of two kinds: those made of quite heavy silk or satin fabrics, which Fatqua treats in a sculptural fashion, using brilliant colours such as an electric blue. This is the case with Hebe's robe, in Illustration 91, Venus's robe in no. 342 of the corpus, Virginia's robe in no. 353 and the Virgin Mary's in no. 341 –the painter creates a contrast between the strong draperies and the soft skin of the women portrayed; those made of light voile, all soft and transparent, that are used to cover the young women in paintings numbered 365 and 366.

• The women's smiles come from mouths that are pinched at the edges but whose lips are full and fleshy in the centre. The chins are round with their upper part marked by a shadow under the lip.

• Fatqua's 'business card,' in Illustration 90, is illustrated by the engraving of a Western ship. He wished to show by this that he was able to paint maritime scenes. We also have a gouache on paper of a landscape signed by Fatqua.⁴⁵

From this information, it seems possible to attribute the following paintings to Fatqua's workshop:

- *Young Woman*, no. 366 in the corpus for its resemblance to no. 365, with which it makes a pair;
- *Venus and Cupid*, no. 345 in the corpus, for the drapery and the inner frame;
- *The Apotheosis of Washington*, nos. 411 and 412, for the drapery;
- *Liberty*, no. 414 in the corpus, for the face and the robe.

All the paintings signed by Fatqua or attributed to him here are grouped together in Illustration 92, entitled *Fatqua's workshop*.

Analysis of some of these works has enabled some dates to be suggested:

• The portrait of George Augustus, Prince of Wales and the future George IV, shows him in the regalia of Grand Master of the Ancient Honourable Society of Freemasons. His Royal Highness remained Grand Master from 1790 to 1813.

• As Reynolds' *Snake in the Grass* was painted in 1785, the reverse glass painting could have been executed after 1788.⁴⁶

45. Crossman, Carl, 1991, 189.

46. Taking into account the length of journeys to China.

• Since the novel *Paul et Virginie* was published in 1789, Augustin Legrand's engraving could not have been produced until 1790, nor the reverse glass painting until 1791.

• Finally, Cosway's portrait of Madame Récamier was painted in 1802, and could not have reached Canton until 1803. We are therefore able to establish that Fatqua's workshop was active at least during the period 1785-1803.

The Shepherdess workshop

A study of the overmantel in Illustration 93 contributes some interesting information for determining workshops. The frame was made in England and specialists⁴⁷ attribute it to the Lindell Brothers' workshop, dating it to 1765. It contains twenty-three mirrors, of which nine are painted, from top to bottom and from left to right:

- Still life with vase and bowl of lychees;

47. J. Cummings in *Chinese Glass Paintings & Export Porcelain*, 1996, 26, who cites Child, G, 1990, fig. 186, *Furniture*. London: 1968, 68, fig. 128 and 129.

- Pair 1: Birds and flowers, pheasants and peonies, water's-edge landscape on the left; and, on the right, red parrot, peonies and water's-edge landscape;

- Pair 2: Still life, white and coral vase on the left; and, on the right, a vase of peonies and periwinkles;

- Pair 3: A shepherdess with her sheep in a water's-edge landscape on the left and, on the right, a young woman in an identical landscape watching a pair of ducks on the water.



493 | *Overmantel Mirror*. English gilded wooden frame, Georges III, 1765. 147 x 185 cm. Circa 1765. The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York. Photo by Richard Goodbody. 94 | *Shepherdess* (left) and *Young Woman and Flute player* (right). Pair of painted mirrors. Gilded wooden frame. 46 x 36 cm. Circa 1780. Formerly Horlick's collection. Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

The Pair 3 workshop:

- The motif in the first painting of this pair, on the left of the overmantel, belongs to the series of *Beautiful Women in Straw Hats*, a series that has received detailed study in Chap. II, page 55. The painting in this overmantel is composed of the following elements, which are shared with nos. 114, 115, 118, 120a and 120b (Illustration 94) in the corpus:

- The shepherdess, her clothing, her hair and her pose, sitting on a rock with one hand on a basket of flowers with a tall handle, and the other holding a stick;
- The sheep, a pair and a single one, identical but with their positions reversed from left to right;
- The tranquil landscape with a river bordered by trees and beautiful villas.

However, it is different in that it is narrower, and includes neither the parts depicting a falconer watching a shepherdess, nor the one with a child playing the flute at the feet of the shepherdess.

These four shepherdesses were painted in the same workshop; no. 118 is in its original Chinese frame, while the other three have been put into English frames.

The motif in the second picture of Pair 3 in the overmantel, on the right, shows a young woman seated, with her hands on a basket of flowers. It is identical to the one in no. 119 of the corpus (which forms a pair with no. 118) and also to no. 167, but narrower, and includes neither the second young woman shown in nos. 119 and 167, nor the child playing the flute, who we see in no. 167. This scene of the child playing the flute at the feet of the young woman is identical in nos. 110 and 113 of the corpus.

Proceeding on the principle that pairs of paintings were the work of a single person, it is possible to attribute the following paintings to the same workshop: nos. 109 (paired with no. 110), 116 (paired with no. 115), 109 (paired with no. 110) and 111 and 112 (close to no. 109).

It is interesting to note, in these shepherdess scenes, that the composition is based on the same elements—the shepherdess herself, the landscape, the flute player, the falconer and the little black and white dog—but put together differently. It therefore seems possible to attribute the Pair 3 paintings in this overmantel, and nos. 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120 and 167 in the corpus, to a single workshop, which I am naming the shepherdess workshop. Their photos are shown in Illustration 95, *The Shepherdess workshop*.

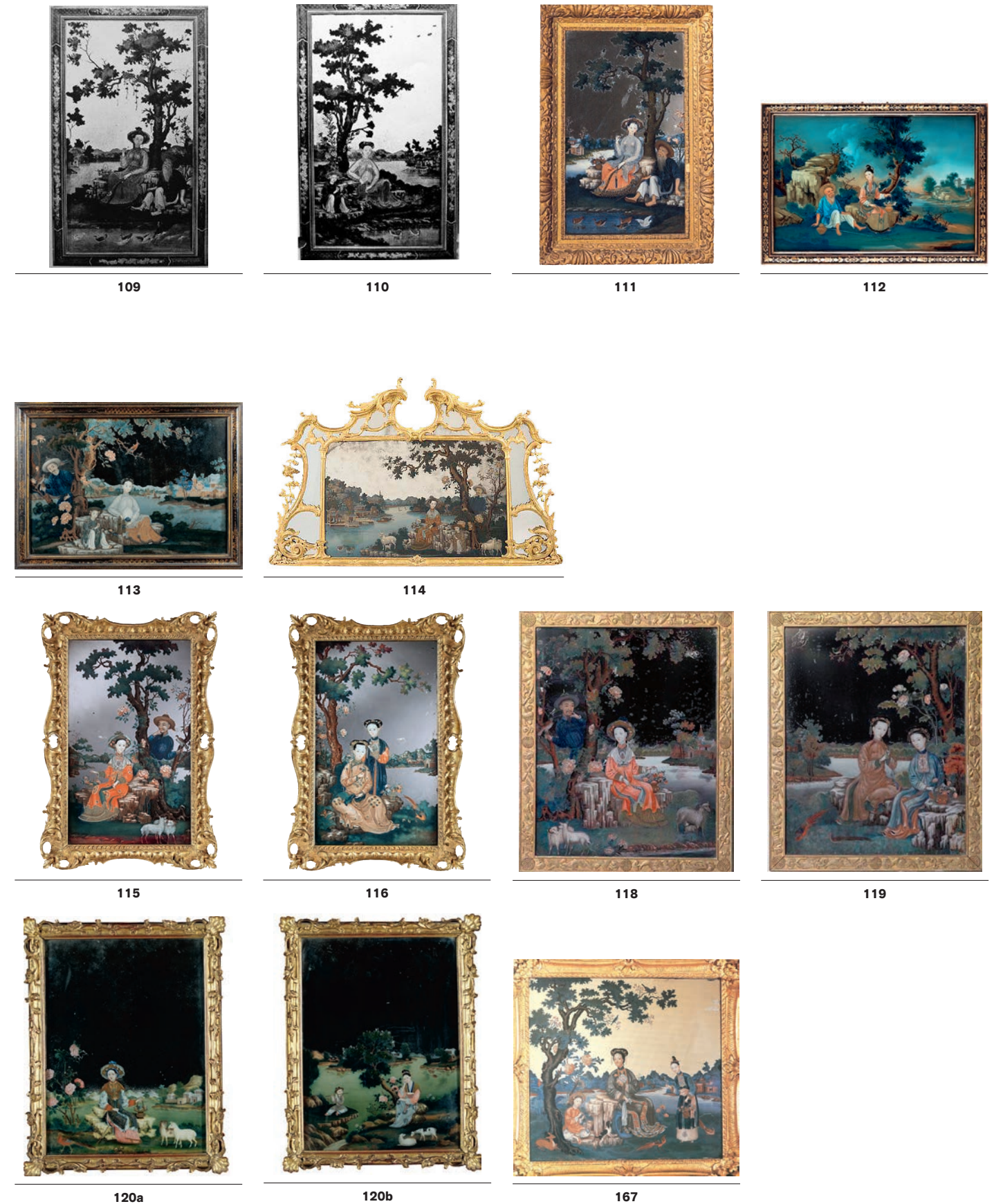
The method of composition in these paintings is not dissimilar to certain traditional eighteenth-century Chinese paintings, combining elements sometimes copied from handbooks of painting motifs such as the *Garden as large as a grain of mustard*.⁴⁸

This examination and attribution raise the question of the shepherdess workshop's relationship to Siou-Sin-Saang's workshop. They share some common features, such as:

- The presence of similar rococo-style frames, like the one on the Drottningholm red drawing room overmantel;
- The little black and white dogs.

However, these features do not appear sufficient to suggest that these two workshops are one and the same.

48. Petrucci, R. Paris, 1910.



95 | The Shepherdess workshop. Photos with corpus numbers.

The 'Leiden' workshop

The very fine series of nineteen outdoor scenes in the Leiden Ethnographic Museum in the Netherlands are all of the same size and have been fully analysed and dated⁴⁹ by van Dongen.⁵⁰ There is no doubt that they belong to a single workshop, which was active in the 1785-

49. Thanks, in particular, to a view of the Canton quaysides.
50. Van Dongen, Paul L.F, 1995.

1790 period. Its artist's (or artists') talents were expressed in a wide variety of themes: ceremonies, landscapes, occupations and feasts. The number of scenes portraying the emperor's regal activities, seen particularly in Illustrations **96** and **97**, might lead us to think that this workshop had an official standing.

N° 81, 82, 94, 95, 240, 242, 256 à 267 of the corpus make up this workshop.



↗ **96** | *The Emperor's Audience*. Reverse glass painting. Without frame. 81 x 52.5 cm. Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll.no.360-1122 XIX. Photo Rights Reserved.
↘ **97** | *The Emperor Ploughing*. Reverse glass painting. Without frame. 81 x 52.5 cm. Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll.no.360-1113 XIX. Photo Rights Reserved.

Some other series classified by workshop

Over and above the evidence provided by the workshops, it is possible to group paintings by making a comparative analysis of the works themselves, taking account, also, of the people commissioning them and those the works were intended for—if, indeed, these are known. Each group of works can be attributed to a particular workshop. They are listed under different series in this chapter.

Series 1 and 2: Pair 1 of the overmantel in Illustration 93

This birds and flowers pairing includes, on the left, a golden pheasant on a rock near a river. It is watching a butterfly and sitting underneath some large peonies and a flowering magnolia, a set of motifs that are all traditional Chinese symbols.⁵¹ The pheasant's pose, the shape of the peonies and magnolia and the frame itself mean that this painting is very similar to nos. 6, 7, 38 and 39 in the corpus. The second of the pair shows a red parrot (a lory bird?) with blue wings perched on a camellia with a vine climbing up it. Below it are some peonies and a river, while in front of it a butterfly is fluttering. This scene is very close to no. 20 in the corpus (dated 1765, like the overmantel), while the parrot itself appears in the same pose and the same colours in nos. 21 and 23 of the corpus. It is a lory bird, and more precisely a lory with a collar. Buffon describes it thus:⁵²

The whole body, including the tail, is a dark blood red, which is precisely the livery of lorries; the wing is green, the top of the head is black ending in purple on the back of the neck; the legs and the fold of the groin are a beautiful blue; the base of the neck is covered (in males) with a yellow collar, and it is by this latter characteristic that we thought we should designate this species.

He adds that these lorries are 'confined to New Guinea and the Molucca Islands': Sonnerat,⁵³ who was much travelled in this region of the Indonesian Islands, confirms in his turn that 'birds of this species (lorries) are only to be found in the Molucca Islands and New Guinea, those seen elsewhere have all been transported.' The Chinese painter

51. Cf. Chap. II, page 35: Paintings with Chinese motifs.

52. Leclerc de Buffon, G.L., 1779, 130.

53. Sonnerat, M., 1776, 173.

(or painters) who produced these mirrors had therefore seen a lory with a collar and, even more surprising, had decided to paint it in a remarkable setting, in the midst of birds that were traditional to Chinese painting, or else found on perches in elegant houses. In addition to the paintings already referred to, it is also present in nos. 24, 51, 96, 97, 136 and 150. It is possible that this beautiful exotic bird is a 'signature' corresponding to a workshop's name or sign. One factor supporting this hypothesis is the gouache on paper (Illustration 98) depicting the studio of the painter Tingqua, who was active between 1820 and 1860. On the left of the entrance to the workshop, a bird on its perch can be seen, which could well be a lory. The styles of these 'lory' paintings, like their dates of origin, are, however, very different, and could only be from the same workshop if it comprised several painters and it was kept running over time.

There are very few common features that would allow me to judge that these two workshops in the overmantel's Pair 2 were in fact one. I have therefore distinguished the following series:

Series 1: Pheasants and flowers, first element of Pair 1 of the overmantel in Illustration 93 and paintings in figures 6, 7 and no. 38 and 39 of the corpus.

Series 2: Red parrot and camellia, second element of Pair 1 of the overmantel in Illustration 93 and nos. 20, 21 and 23 of the corpus.

Series 3: The young women of Saltram House, nos. 148, 149, 161, 162, 163 and 189, to which it seems possible to add nos. 160 and 216.

Series 4: The Saltram House couples, nos. 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 212 and 213 of the corpus.

Series 5: The Lady Lever Gallery courtesans, nos. 206, 207, 208 and 209 in the corpus.

Series 6: The concubine on her sampan, nos. 154, 155, 156, 157, 158 and 159 in the corpus, to which no. 214 might be added.

Series 7: The musicians of Drottingholm Chinese pavilion: twelve paintings of young women, each playing a different musical instrument, among them no. 218, to which nos. 269 and 270 in the corpus might be added.

My analysis of the works described here, in an attempt to determine their workshops of origin, provides only a thumbnail sketch of the avenues that might be followed up in order to arrive at a convincing result. More in-depth, systematic research is necessary on this topic.

The imperial reverse glass painting workshop

This workshop is known to have existed because of the descriptions provided by court Jesuits. The Chinese texts I have been able to access in the imperial archives mention imperial commissions for reverse glass painting, but did not allow me to add anything to the Jesuits' descriptions. And, unfortunately, the few paintings now in the Palace Museum, and of which I have knowledge, are more recent than the period being studied here, besides being of Cantonese origin.

In compliance with Emperor Qianlong's order to paint on glass, Brother Attiret went to this workshop to learn the technique. During this

period, 1740, mirrors given to the court by Westerners were being painted in the palace. It is probable that Emperor Qianlong was responsible for setting up this workshop, between 1735, the date of his enthronement, and 1740, when Brother Attiret mentions it for the first time.

A more thorough investigation of the palace archives and collections would be required to establish the dates when the workshop opened and closed—a workshop that was unique in the history of reverse glass painting throughout the world.

Workshop location and premises

Location

The locations of Chinese painting workshops in Canton (not only for reverse glass painting) are given in the list drawn up by Waln⁵⁴ in 1819: they were split among Old China Street and New China Street, two shopping streets that ran at right angles to the quay. According to Waln, the reverse glass painter Fatqua worked in New China Street, which is confirmed by his 'business card' in Illustration 90. Fifty-six years later, in 1875, J.H. Gray,⁵⁵ walking through the streets of Canton, said:

Set back from this watercourse, we entered the street named Ngaan Keng Kai, or the street of spectacle glasses. In this narrow bazaar, Chinese reverse glass paintings and glass lanterns of all shapes and sizes are set out for sale in great numbers. In the small building of the reverse glass painters' guild, situated in the same street, we saw artists who were very busy painting on glass. They seemed highly amused by the interest we showed in carefully examining the results of their work.

It would seem, then, that these workshops scattered across the two main commercial streets subsequently grouped into guilds and moved to one street, in accordance with the Chinese tradition of streets dedicated to a corporate body such as a guild.

Premises

I have not been able to procure any image, painting or engraving of a reverse glass painter's workshop. There are, however, several descriptions and engravings of Cantonese workshops belonging to painters on canvas, silk or paper, including the most well-known of them, the painter Lamqua. His workshop has been described several times⁵⁶ and its frontage was drawn by Auguste Borget.⁵⁷ These descriptions date from 1830 at the earliest, which means the one that these Western visitors mentioned had been rebuilt about ten years earlier because, in 1822, a huge fire had destroyed this whole area of the city. It

was situated in New China Street, occupying a three-storey wooden building with, on its façade, a wooden sign in English, reading: 'Lamqua, handsome face painter'—a little flattery to attract the Western customer. The shop was on the ground floor, and this was where transactions with clients were conducted: commissions and purchases of works painted by the workshop, but also the purchase of artists' painting materials like paper, brushes, colours, ink and inkstones. On the first floor, several of Lamqua's assistant painters were busy. The visitors describing these scenes did not say whether each painter created a complete work from start to finish or whether, as for porcelain,⁵⁸ painters specialised in particular motifs, like figures, flowers, birds or landscapes. On the second floor, Lamqua, the master himself, would be painting the portraits of Westerners and, at the same time, conversing with them. On the first and second floors were the engravings sent from the West, ready to be transposed in colour on to another medium. This, together with portraits, was an important activity for Lamqua's workshop.

The painter Tingqua's workshop was also painted in gouache on paper, probably by the artist himself (Illustration 98).

Although the Chinese reverse glass workshops, which preceded the workshops for painting on canvas, were more rustic and probably had fewer employees than Lamqua's workshop, their organisation and arrangement of space must have been quite similar.



58. D'Entrecolles. Paris, 1819, Vol. 10, 149.

The market for reverse glass painting from 1720 to 1820: a few figures

The market in Canton

Reverse glass paintings were not among the products that the East India Companies commissioned their supercargoes with buying in Canton. Purchasing these paintings and shipping them to Europe or the United States was a personal affair for supercargoes and seamen, from officers down to simple sailors. They bought them out of their own pockets in order to embellish their houses when they returned, or else to present them as gifts or resell them in the West at a substantial profit. The paintings were therefore part of their personal possessions, the *pacotille* that they were allowed to carry in the section of the ship's hold reserved for them. For this reason, the buyers needed neither to officially register these works on the inventory of the ship's cargo, nor produce any bill for them. This procedure explains why we have been able to find very few documents noting the quantities and prices of reverse glass paintings bought in Canton. Besides which, the time available to develop my thesis, and the number of themes to be dealt with, have not allowed me to research this subject as thoroughly as it deserves by looking for additional information, notably in the company archives. I have relied only on already-published documents.

Unlike European supercargoes, the captains and supercargoes of the *Empress of China*, the first American ship to go to China in 1783 and 1786, kept quite a precise tally of their purchases, particularly in the form of receipts from their Chinese suppliers.⁵⁹ The following receipts have been found:

October 1784, from Molyneux,⁶⁰ 12 dollars for a reverse glass painting for Mrs Morris;

October 1784, from Molyneux, 4 dollars tax for various objects including Mrs Morris's reverse glass painting;

July 1786, from S. Hubbart,⁶¹ 48 dollars for reverse glass paintings;

18 September 1786, from J. Green, 54 dollars for 6 reverse glass paintings;

11 December 1786, from J. Green, 24 dollars for taxes on 12 reverse glass paintings and 3 oil paintings;

December 1786, on behalf of Mr de la Tombe of Boston, 18 dollars for 2 reverse glass painted *Venuses* (the pair).

59. Smith, Philip Chadwick Foster, 1984, 259 to 297.

60. F. Molyneux was the secretary-accountant to Captain J. Green of the *Empress of China* on its first voyage.

61. S. Hubbart was the secretary-accountant to Captain J. Green of the *Empress of China* on its second voyage.

Sullivan Dorr,⁶² who was in China in 1800, writes that he acquired two reverse glass paintings on the theme "Temple of Fame"⁶³ for the price of 16 dollars, a sum which is not very different from that paid by Green.

Analysis of these receipts therefore shows that in 1784-1786, a reverse glass painting was priced at 8 to 10 dollars, to which was added a tax of around one dollar.

This price is to be compared with the sum of 2.8 dollars for a large silk parasol, 1 dollar for a teapot or a blue and white porcelain bowl, or 20 to 30 dollars for a piece of embroidered silk. I would finally point out that, in the same year, Mr de la Tombe sold 156 bottles of champagne at 1.5 dollars a bottle to Chinese merchants.

Another comparison of interest is Spoilum's portrait of Ralph Haskins.⁶⁴ The model paid 10 dollars in 1803 for his portrait on canvas, executed in Canton (in two hours, he says!) by the famous painter.

62. Letter from Sullivan Dorr to Ebenezer Dorr Jr., January 14, 1800, cited by Crossman in Crossman, Carl, 1991, 206.

63. A title that proves it to be a transposition of one of the many engravings on this theme.

64. Diary of Ralph Haskins of Roxbury, Massachusetts, kept at Canton, 1802, private collection, cited by C. Crossman in Crossman, Carl, 1991, 49.

The western market from 1720 to 1820

The European market for reverse glass paintings involved both:

- **A closed sector**, of sales commissioned by supercargoes of the East India Companies and entrepreneurs specialising in works of art (*marchands merciers*). These latter, who received orders from the upper echelons of society, took part in the sales of cargoes or passed on orders to the supercargoes, who would carry them out. We have been able to find very few documents detailing these transactions.

- **An open sector**, of auction sales, a means of trading that was just beginning in mid-eighteenth-century Europe. Unlike sales in the closed sector, these transactions are known to us through sales catalogues listing the lots for sale and sometimes the prices for which they were sold, noted in handwriting by the auctioneer.

By consulting these French, British and Brussels catalogues⁶⁵ for the 1750-1830 period, I have been able to draw up Appendix II (page 227) showing the following information about the lots containing Chinese reverse glass paintings:

- Date of the sale and description of the lot;
- Sometimes the auction house and the seller;
- Rarely the price.

These pictures enable us to make the following observations:

France. From 1757 to 1787, auction sales took place in Paris. The first sale of Chinese reverse glass paintings, in 1757, for which we know the seller's name, involved the estate of a Mr Meignen, who was described as a *former East India Company Supercargo in China*, which testified to the role played by supercargoes in the spread of these paintings. The two largest sales were those of Mr Malenfant, described as a *former valet to the King's chamber*, in 1773 (21 reverse glass paintings) and the Prince of Conti in 1777 (15 reverse glass paintings). From 1787 to 1816, only one sale was organised, in 1799. The seller was the painter and collector Jean-Baptiste Pierre Lebrun. This weak market was due to a revolutionary period marked by the absence of aristocrats, who had been great collectors of reverse glass paintings before departing into exile.

65. Through personal visits to Christie's archives in London, Paris libraries and, on the Getty Foundation website, Getty Provenance Index Databases.

Great Britain. Between 1787 and 1836, sales took place without interruption, mainly in London. Unlike the French sales, most of the sellers were not key figures in the country. There were, however, two exceptions: Queen Charlotte Sophia, wife of George III, whose belongings were sold in 1819, the year following her death; and David Martin, painter to the Prince of Wales, whose Chinese reverse glass paintings were put up for sale in 1799.

As trade with China had resumed and the aristocrats had returned, sales started up again from 1816 in both France and England, although they were slow. The golden age was over in Europe, the public had changed and the fashion for Chinese reverse glass painting would fade permanently in the West with the First Opium War.

Brussels. In this city, which was then Austrian, part of the great art collection belonging to the Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium, Molinari, was sold in 1763. It included some reverse glass paintings.

United States. The taste for reverse glass paintings started here as soon as the first merchant ship arrived in Canton in 1783. It did not wane until the mid-nineteenth century, but I have no figures to show the number of sales or the prices paid. The only figure available is contained in the meticulous inventory of reverse glass paintings in American museums compiled by Mildred Lee Ward in 1978.⁶⁶ It records 759 reverse glass paintings, of which 91 are Chinese.

The subject most depicted in the reverse glass paintings sold at this period is of a young Chinese woman in her home, or in a landscape, holding a pipe or a fan in her hand. Birds and flowers appear to be the second subject in terms of numbers.

Also of note is that the large majority of these paintings were sold in gilded wooden frames.

66. Lee Ward, Mildred, 1978.

Sales prices

In France

Prices appear to be very diverse: the average price of a reverse glass painting varied within a range of 10 to 30 pounds per piece (the Malenfant sale in 1773) to a range of 60 to 12 pounds per piece (the Prince of Conti's sale in 1777). It might be interesting to compare these prices with those for works by recognised painters that were sold at the same period in the same auction houses. It would appear that a Chinese reverse glass painting was sold in France at a similar price to a grisaille painting by Boucher in 1770, or a picture on canvas by Fragonard in 1777.

In Great Britain

From 1787 to 1830 the price range was wide, from 0.1 to 3 pounds per piece, with a slight increase over the period. These prices are comparable to those for drawings (0.15 pounds in 1787, or paintings (3.1 pounds in 1807) by the very fashionable painter Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788). The curator of Shugborough Hall told me⁶⁷ that the two large Chinese-painted mirrors in the house⁶⁸ were probably those sold as lots 80 and 81 on 10 February 1780 to a Mr Anson,⁶⁹ for the sum of 26.5 pounds. This price was apparently very high for two reverse glass paintings, but not for two mirrors of such dimensions, which were rare at the time, and for such fine gilded frames. The Chinese painting itself probably contributed little value.

67. Email conversation with the curator, Mrs Gemma Roberts.

68. Nos. 86 and 87 in the corpus.

69. The Anson family were the owners of Shugborough Hall.

The Influence of Chinese Reverse Glass Painting outside China

The present chapter merely serves to outline a few avenues for future research which would be necessary to study the vast subject of Chinese reverse glass painting's influence outside China. This subject concerns four countries or regions: India, Europe, Vietnam and Indonesia.

India

The family portrait of an Indian noble, Shuja-ud-Daula (1732-1775), Nawab of Oudh and Grand Vizier of the Mughal Empire (Illustration 99) was painted in Canton. It was transposed from an engraving, which was itself produced from a painting by the British artist Tilly Kettle (1735-1786). The style, and particularly the inner frame with stars, allows this painting to be dated to the very end of the eighteenth, or even to the early nineteenth century. It could be attributed to Fatqua.⁷⁰ The technique of reverse glass painting did not exist in India at the time, and this painting reveals the link which had been established between the Indian aristocracy and Chinese reverse glass painters.

Another painting, no. 91 in the corpus, confirms this link: before it was sold, in 2013, it belonged to the Imperial Princess Durru Shehvar, wife of the Prince of Berar, and therefore to the royal collection of Hyderabad, of which he was crown prince.

This link has two main origins:

In the eighteenth century, Indian merchants, notably Parsees,⁷¹ were trading with China and therefore went to Canton. There, they were able to observe the Western taste for Chinese reverse glass paintings, especially for portraits.

By the late eighteenth century, India was gradually becoming part of the British Empire. The British East India Company ships would stop over in India on their way to and from China, to sell or barter Chinese products there. Because of this, Indian nobles discovered the craze for Chinese reverse glass paintings on the part of British aristocrats, particularly for portraits painted by transposing European engravings on to glass. So Indian nobles, in their turn, began to buy Chinese paintings, like the British sending their engraved portraits to be transposed on to glass in Canton.

But they went further than this and, perhaps imitating the Chinese emperor, had Cantonese reverse glass painters brought to their own court. Several of the Indian reverse glass paintings I have had occasion to see are so close to the Chinese manner of painting that they can only be attributed to a painter from that country, although the subject is Indian and the setting indisputably inspired by Mughal miniatures.

Finally, catalogue no. 90 of the Martyn Gregory Gallery features a seascape of the port of Calcutta, on canvas, painted by a Chi-

70. Cf. Chap. III, page 134: The painter Fatqua's workshop.

71. Persian followers of the Zoroastrian religion who migrated to India, producing many of India's important merchants and industrialists.



nese artist in 1842, thus confirming that Cantonese painters came to India.

Like Jaya Appasamy,⁷² it therefore appears to me reasonable to assume that the Chinese painters who migrated to India were at the origin of an art that would subsequently flourish there, in parallel with its development in China since, from being an art confined to the court, it would, in the nineteenth century, become a popular art.

Further research is necessary to confirm this hypothesis, and still more to compile a history of this art in India.

Vietnam

One of the largest temples in the city of Hué, in Vietnam, owns and displays on its walls a set of beautiful Chinese reverse glass paintings in Chinese gilded frames with lucky charm carvings. Is this an anomaly? Or is it an example of a close relationship?

Thailand

Several large Buddhist temples in Bangkok have their walls adorned with Chinese reverse glass paintings in beautiful gilded wooden frames.⁷³

Indonesia

Reverse glass painting is an art that appeared in Indonesia in the twentieth century. Among the paintings I have had the opportunity to see are some Chinese reverse glass paintings that are very similar to those painted in late nineteenth-century China.⁷⁴ They are owned by members of the Chinese community. The detailed research conducted by J. Samuel on Indonesian reverse glass painting⁷⁵ will enable us to tell whether there is a historic link between these paintings and Chinese ones.

72. Appasamy, Jaya, 1980.

73. Patterson, Jessica Lee, 2016, 153-155.

74. And therefore not included in this study.

75. Samuel, J., 2013 and 2014.

Europe

Chinese reverse glass painting was not at the origin of European reverse glass painting, which existed well before the eighteenth century.⁷⁶ However, it may well have inspired European painters. In 1758, the reverse glass painter Pierre Jouffroy⁷⁷ (1718-1796), for example, painted the portrait of the Princess of Conti 'in Chinese fashion'; the pose, the clothing and the princess's hairstyle are all inspired by reverse glass portraits of Chinese men and women, particularly by the shepherdess portraits. This link is confirmed by the fact that the Prince of Conti was a great collector of Chinese reverse glass paintings.⁷⁸

In Sweden, where Chinese reverse glass paintings started to arrive from the 1750s, the painter Lorentz Svensson Sparrgren (1763-1828) boarded a Swedish East India Company ship in 1788 with the intention of going to Canton to learn the art of reverse glass painting from the Chinese. On his return, he declared he 'had learnt to paint on glass in the East Indies and was the only one to know this art.'⁷⁹ Although his talent as a miniaturist is well known, the only work on glass by this artist that I have been able to examine⁸⁰ does not appear to have been influenced by Chinese painting.

76. Ryser, F., 1991; Geyssant, J. Paris, 2008.

77. Geyssant, J., 2013; Ryser, F., 1991, 223, Ill. 253.

78. Cf. Appendix II, Auctions in France from 1720 to 1820, page 228.

79. Quoted by J. Wirgin in Göran, Alm, 2002, 292.

80. At the Vitromusée in Romont (Switzerland).

VI

A Brief History of
Reverse Glass Painting
from 1720 to 1820

Development of the market in China and the West

The emergence of Chinese reverse glass painting, around 1720-1730, has been described in detail in Chapter I, “The dawn of reverse glass painting in China.” The way it developed, both in China and the West, will be dealt with here.

Development of the Chinese market

Qianlong, an imperial enthusiast

Although the first European mirrors were painted under the reign of Kangxi, and after that of Yongzheng, it was under the reign of his successor, Qianlong,¹ that reverse glass painting blossomed in China. This monarch had a strong liking for the Western arts and for decorative illusion.² He had many trompe-l'oeil paintings on the walls of his palaces and admired large mirrors, the sources of these illusions. He was so fond of the reverse glass paintings created in Canton that he had several of these Cantonese painters brought³ to his court, thus founding the first, and perhaps the only reverse glass painting workshop ever established by a monarch for the decoration of his palaces.⁴ It was these painters that Brother Attiret watched at work, so that he could acquire the technique and thus fulfil Emperor Qianlong's order to paint on mirrors sent from Canton. The sovereign's requests for reverse glass paintings in 1743 focused on the Chinese motifs described by Attiret:⁵

...which meant that for three-quarters of the time I was occupied only with painting, either in oil on mirrors, or in water on silk, trees, fruits, birds, fish and animals, but rarely figures.

Although, thanks to Brother Attiret, we know the motifs that were present in the early paintings of this imperial workshop, the documents I have been able to consult have not told me how long the workshop survived, nor how the motifs evolved. To my knowledge, none of the paintings produced by the workshop can be seen today, but I have not had access to the Imperial Palace's reserves.

1. Kangxi reigned from 1661 to 1722, Yongzheng from 1722 to 1735, and Qianlong from 1736 to 1796.
2. Finlay, John R., 2007, 59-193; Kleugten, Kristina, 2015; Berliner, Nancy, 2010, 175 to 191.
3. Between 1735, the date of his enthronement, and 1740, the date when Brother Attiret mentions the fact.
4. Amyot, Frère, 1771.
5. Attiret, Frère, 'Lettre à M. d'Assault', 1743, 1811, 414.

Chinese notables in Canton, patrons and art lovers

As we saw previously,⁶ Chinese notables in the Canton region, especially those trading with Westerners, were at the origin of the first Cantonese reverse glass paintings offered as gifts to the emperor. When Qianlong set up his reverse glass painting workshop, the sovereign's taste started a fashion, first at court and then in the capital. The fashion quickly reached Canton, endorsing the city dignitaries' first foray into sponsorship and creating a high level of demand for such painted mirrors among Guangdong's upper classes (Guangdong being the province of Canton). In a very beautiful Chinese interior (Illustration 100) a young woman is playing the pipa while another one is seated on the floor listening. This villa is very probably on the bank of the Pearl River, which we can glimpse through the doorways. Two reverse glass paintings adorn the wall behind the musician. The largest, in a black lacquer frame with a gilded border, belongs to the family of outdoor scenes,⁷ in which figures are seen relaxing beside a river. Could the owner have taken sophistication so far as to commission a view close to his villa? The other, smaller picture, in a lacquered frame with gold foliation, appears to belong to the flower family (perhaps also with birds).

These dignitaries (Illustration 101) did not stop at simply buying works; they also added their own mark, guiding the way this painting developed and evolved during the eighteenth century. They thus played a part in its origin, through their commissions for: water's-edge landscapes, which were those seen from their beautiful villas on the banks of the Pearl River;⁸ outdoor and garden scenes where they appeared in the company of their family or concubines; their portraits.

The men of this upper-class society were not averse to paintings of beautiful women⁹ and appreciated pairs of allegories: music-poetry, old age-youth, winter-summer, and so on. They naturally shared the emperor's taste for certain aspects of Western painting like perspective and shading, as long as they were adapted to the Chinese context. This was how several paintings produced at court by European painters, and then copied, inspired many Cantonese reverse glass paintings: the portraits of concubines, doubtless among

6. Cf. Chap. I, page 26.
7. Cf. Chap. II, page 40.
8. Cf. Chap. II, page 74.
9. Cf. Chap. II, page 52.



100 | *Two Women in an Interior*. Reverse glass painting. Black lacquered frame. 39 x 52.5 cm. Circa 1790. Courtesy of the American Museum in Britain. Photo Rights Reserved.



101 | *Bearded Hong Merchant*. Reverse glass painting. Unknown frame. Circa 1800. Martyn Gregory Gallery. Photo Rights Reserved.

them the famous Xiang Fei; pheasants and flowers; and Matteo Ripa's perspective landscapes. The dignitaries who had trading relations with Westerners, knowing their opposite numbers' taste for these paintings, were able to present them with such works, most importantly their portraits.¹⁰

It would seem that these upper-class Chinese enthusiasts of reverse glass painting became a little disengaged from it in the early nineteenth century. Very few paintings of the period intended for this social class, or depicting it, are present in the corpus. This withdrawal coincided in time with:

- the change from painted mirrors to paintings on glass without silvering;
- the predominant and almost exclusive role played by transpositions of European engravings in the domain of reverse glass painting;
- the ending of Qianlong's reign, in 1796. He was the emperor who had so appreciated this art and made such a great contribution to creating a fashion for it in his country.

But around the middle of the nineteenth century, it was a different Chinese public, the lower middle class, that would give a new impetus to reverse glass painting. This change alone, which took place outside the period studied in this book, might well be an interesting subject for research. All I will say here is that the Chinese market for reverse glass paintings became a mass market and extended to all the Chinese provinces. It often focused on small works, painted on mirrors made in China, and featuring portraits of young women, or scenes from the Taoist pantheon or from stories. Thus it was that reverse glass painting, aristocratic in origin, transformed into a popular art form.

Development of the Western Market

Arrival of the first Chinese reverse glass paintings in Europe

In 1741,¹¹ in a letter to the Marquis de Broissia, Brother Attiret had vaunted the qualities of this reverse glass painting, which was new to him:

This type of painting is all the more beautiful because, seen from a short distance away, it seems as if the figures, animals, landscapes, or any other design is not painted on the mirror but reflected; one's face can be seen in the gaps left by the paint, which makes for very attractive variety. This type of painting would not find disfavour in Europe, especially if it were done in good taste. . .

Did Brother Attiret simply have a premonition, or did he in fact play a part in the European craze for this Chinese painting, which started during the following years among the European aristocracy? This second possibility is not inconsequential when one thinks of the major role that passages of this same letter, describing the Chinese summer palace gardens, played in the emergence of Anglo-Chinese gardens in Europe.

The first mention of a Chinese reverse glass painting arriving in Europe was of '6 reverse glass paintings of Chinese origin,' brought back in 1739 by the captain of the ship *London*, belonging to the British East India Company.¹² The second involves a meeting between a French art lover and a similar painting in 1745, in Port-Louis:

When I was in Port-Louis¹³ in 1745, I saw a Chinese mirror... where you could see a Chinese lady performing her ablutions. Above her, in a corner, was a parrot on its perch, and behind it, a monkey. Dazzled by the mirror's beauty

11. Attiret, Frère, 'Lettre au Marquis de Brossia,' 1741. 1911.

12. I have not been able to consult this report referred to by J. Wirgin in Görám, Alm, 294.

13. Port-Louis was the port to which the French East India Company's ships were attached.

*and the craftsman's skill, I desperately tried to discover by what means I could imitate it.*¹⁴

This first known description of a mirror painted in China arriving in Europe highlights the fascination and enthusiasm that surrounded this new art, which would relaunch the fashion for chinoiserie that had been created in Europe in the late seventeenth century. It should be pointed out that this mirror was already very elaborate in comparison with those described in Chinese documents dating from 1722, 1731 and 1733, which only indicated floral motifs. It therefore shows that reverse glass portraits of women and compositions with exotic animals had already made their appearance.

The reverse glass paintings mentioned below are those sold in Gothenburg by William Chambers (1723-1796) on his return from China in 1749. For the first time, the painter is known: Chambers names him as *Siou-Sin-Saang*.¹⁵ In my opinion, some of the paintings in the Drottningholm Chinese pavilion should be attributed to him.¹⁶ Chambers certainly played an important role in creating the fashion for reverse glass painting in Europe, as he did for two other Chinese arts, architecture and garden design. During the same period, portraits of Swedish East India Company supercargoes were arriving in Sweden.

Europeans were sending mirrors to China to be painted from 1751, as Peter Osbeck, chaplain to the Swedish navy, noted when he was staying in Canton that year:¹⁷

Importing mirrors from Europe is forbidden. However, the Europeans bring mirrors with them and have them painted with roses or other flowers, because the Chinese are particularly skilful in doing it.

The aristocratic fashion for mirrors painted with Chinese motifs, 1750-1785

The arrival of the first paintings was followed by a spectacular craze for these works among the European aristocracy. They began to com-

14. *Dictionnaire portative de commerce*, Volume 3. Paris 1770, 175.

15. Chambers, William, 1757, 14.

16. Cf. Chap. III, page 119: 'The first Cantonese workshops, 1740-1760, and the Swedish 'network'.

17. Osbeck, Peter, 1771, 233.

mission them from China¹⁸ through the middlemen known as *mar-chands merciers*, who specialised in works of art. European aristocrats adorned their homes with reverse glass paintings, as well as buying and selling them on the European market.

In Sweden

The Swedish aristocracy was the first to become interested in this Chinese art. In 1753, King Adolf Fredrik gave his wife a Chinese pavilion, which he had rebuilt in 1763. In it, mirrors painted in China were displayed. All the principal motifs of Chinese reverse glass painting were already to be found on them: birds and flowers, outdoor scenes in pairs of allegories, and beautiful women.¹⁹ I attribute some of these works to Siou-Sin-Saang's workshop.²⁰ But the aristocracy was not alone in commissioning these paintings with Chinese motifs. On his return to Sweden, Johan Abraham Grill, for example, a supercargo with the Swedish East India Company, sent to Canton a plate of glass to be painted 'with a pheasant and its mate, perched on a rock with some flowers around them.'²¹

In England

It was in England that the Chinese market in reverse glass painting underwent the greatest expansion. At the time, the British East India Company was by far the most active of the European companies in China, and William Chambers, a former supercargo with the Swedish East India Company who had become architect to the British crown, devoted himself to spreading the word about Chinese arts, architecture, gardens and reverse glass painting.

In 1763 he had just built a pagoda and pavilion at Kew. Describing the pavilion's interior, he said: ' . . . and a gallery in which, on the wall between the windows, four large mirrors painted in China have been placed.'²²

In 1764, the well-known French lawyer, Elie de Beaumont, visiting the home of the British Prime Minister, Robert Walpole, exclaimed:

The Chinese furniture, the tiles, the hothouses, the bird menagerie and particularly the pheasants from China are

18. Cf. Chap. III, page 150: 'The Western Market from 1720 to 1820.'

19. Cf. Chap. III, page 119: 'The first Cantonese workshops, 1740-1760, and the Swedish 'network'.

20. Idem.

21. Wirgin, 1998, 284.

22. Chambers, William, 1763, 66.



*all very worthy of attention, but I especially admired the mirrors sent from England to China and brought back with Chinese paintings done on the reverse of the mirror, with as much precision as if they had been done on the top.*²³

In 1770-1780, many British aristocratic houses were graced with furniture, porcelain, screens, wallpapers and reverse glass paintings made in Canton. Some of these 'Chinese' pieces have been preserved in their original eighteenth-century state, like those at Saltram House (Illustration 102) and at Shugborough Hall. The motifs on these reverse glass paintings are mostly of beautiful women, but there are also some birds and flowers. The rococo-style frames were fashioned by well-known cabinet makers.

It was only from the 1780s that these paintings appeared on the British auction market,²⁴ and it is evident that the sellers, like the buyers, were not predominantly aristocrats, proving that the market for enthusiasts had extended to the middle classes. The prices being asked for these works could be high, comparable to those for major works.

In France

Like its English neighbours, the French aristocracy fell in love with reverse glass painting, which started appearing in auction sales in 1757.²⁵ Two important collections were offered for sale when their owners died: in 1774, it was the collection of Mr Malenfant, former valet to the king's bedchamber, and in 1777, the Prince of Conti's collection was put up for sale. Today, there is no Chinese reverse glass painting on display anywhere in France, as there was in the eighteenth century, but we do know that the two large paintings owned by Cardinal de Rohan (Illustrations 12 and 13, pages 42-43) must have been in the Château of Salerne in Alsace. They are now in Strasbourg town hall.

The taste of supercargoes and naval officers for reverse glass portraits and views of Canton

From 1740, supercargoes and naval officers passing through Canton realised that, like their aristocratic compatriots or their company directors, whose portraits, painted in Europe, adorned their country houses and offices, they too could have their portraits painted by a painter of quality, and at a price that was more than reasonable. Thus it was that reverse glass painting entered a new stage, with Westerners having their portraits painted—a stage that was to remain very active from 1720 to 1810.

Several manners of painting appeared in succession:

- The model himself was painted from an engraving or miniature, and then placed in a Chinese setting with symbols and a water's-edge landscape. The first of these that have come down to us are the portraits of Mr and Mrs Pike (Illustrations 44 and 45, pages 86-87), which were painted around 1745.

- Same procedure for the model, but in a plain, mirror setting in the initial period, as in the portraits of Adolf Fredrik,²⁶ King of Sweden (Illustration 47, page 89) and his wife, painted around 1752, and subsequently covering the whole of the glass.

- With the arrival of the painter Spoilum,²⁷ the model was, for the first and probably the last time, painted on glass from life. The setting was a water's-edge landscape, seen or not from the position where the model was posing, be it a room or a veranda. This painter had a 'very modern' period when the décor was minimalist—just a room with bare walls, a lattice window looking out at the sky and occasionally a piece of furniture. From 1780, Spoilum preferred to paint in oil on canvas, as did other Chinese portraitists who painted from life.

- Engravings or miniatures were transposed on to glass without any changes being made.²⁸

In the years around 1775, views of the port of Canton also appeared, seen from the bank opposite the factories. Painted from life, they are a valuable testimony to the way the port changed and developed throughout the late eighteenth century.

23. Beaumont (de), Elie, 1895, 144 and 145.

24. Cf. Appendix II, page 229: Auctions market.

25. Cf. Appendix II, page 228: Auctions market.

26. Cf. Chap. II, page 84: Portraits of Westerners; nos. 283 and 284 of the corpus.

27. Cf. Chap. III, page 127: The painter Spoilum's workshop.

28. Cf. Chap. II, page 98: Direct transpositions of Western artworks.

The period of engravings and miniatures being transposed on to glass, 1780-1820

From 1780, a way of reverse glass painting appeared that would rapidly take over, namely the direct transposition of engravings and miniatures. The engravings were usually in black and white and imported from Europe, and the drawing was reproduced in its entirety, either freehand, or by placing the engraving under the glass. The painters would then add colour at will.

The market was twofold: there was a market for commissions and a 'take-away' one.

The market for commissions

Aristocrats and bourgeois alike, whether European or American, had no hesitation in entrusting Chinese painters with engravings copied from fashionable paintings, but they also authorised them to transpose their portraits, or those of their family and friends, on to glass. Some of them saw a profit to be made, like the American captain who, in 1800, had Gilbert Stuart's famous portrait of Washington transposed onto glass²⁹ so that he could resell the paintings in the United States at a price akin to the original. Not everybody had this aim in view, and most people simply wished to have a quality colour reproduction of an artwork either in their home or to offer as a gift—something that they would not have been able to afford in Europe or the United States. Those who had the opportunity to go to Canton, or who knew somebody who was going there, could play a part in the composition of the work, as did Andreas van Braam when he had his wife's portrait painted³⁰ (Illustration 52, page 93). This portrait has an amazingly complex composition, based as it is on several engravings and miniatures carefully chosen by him.

The remarkable skill shown by Chinese painters in depicting female flesh made them popular for transposing mythological or pastoral scenes by François Boucher or Joshua Reynolds, or suggestive scenes known as 'racy' ones. The portrait genre was not forgotten,

29. He had bought a proof on canvas by the artist himself, who was by no means loath to make copies of his works.

30. Cf. Chap. II, page 84: Portraits of Westerners.

whether commissioned by the model himself or by somebody wanting to give it to a person with whom he wanted to curry favour. Seascapes, which certain Cantonese painters transposed brilliantly, were also very popular.

The 'take-away' market

Knowing Westerners' tastes for certain types of pictures, the Chinese painters made multiple copies of some of their transposed engravings, and offered them to visitors 'in the shop.' Among these visitors were supercargoes, naval officers and travellers, who found reproductions of fashionable works here. This allowed them to stock up with presents, but also to invest in objects that would make them a handsome profit on their return to the West.

This market also offered 'souvenirs of Canton,' mainly targeted at sailors. There was a boom in *sailors' farewells*, showing a heartrending separation on a quayside, between a departing sailor and his girlfriend who would have to wait for his return. Bawdy scenes also sold well.

Some remarks about the 1820-1860 period

This book does not describe this period, as the documents available did not appear sufficient in number to make a thorough study of it. Furthermore, the information I was able to gather did not appear to show any change that had not already been perceptible before 1820. The obvious lack of interest in this art, on the part of both the Chinese and Western upper classes, was reinforced, and the great

Cantonese painters of the time, taking their cue from European taste, now worked only on canvas or paper. Reverse glass painting was the sole preserve of workshops producing 'souvenirs of Canton.' It had lost what had been its great originality and its exceptional value to the art world, namely a successful artistic union between China and the West.

Artistic unions between China and the West are rare, and rarer still are successful attempts to create an art inspired by the two pictorial traditions, which are pleasing to both Chinese and Western art lovers. The first and best known of these productive attempts is represented by Sino-European works of architecture and painting: the summer palace European pavilions, Giuseppe Castiglione's paintings and Matteo Ripa's engravings, created by Jesuits under the reign and on the order of Emperor Qianlong (1736-1796). But a second achievement was in Chinese reverse glass painting, which was more surprising because it arose spontaneously, without being ordered by the emperor, and was destined, right from its inception, for both Chinese and Western upper classes. In one of the many porcelain painting workshops in the little streets of Canton port, the first reverse glass painting was created, around 1720—heralding works of art that would beguile Chinese and Western nobility alike, and would take their place in the most elegant houses. Royalty, aristocrats and the upper middle classes from Sweden, Great Britain, France, the United Provinces and Russia bought them for high prices or received them as gifts from the East India Companies. This success was not due simply to their exoticism or decorative qualities. It was the success of a real art, which had its golden age between 1720 and 1820, the period to which this book is devoted. The Chinese painters of

Canton showed evidence of constantly renewed creativity, increasing their output of high-quality works and combining Chinese themes and techniques with Western ones. With supreme skill, they depicted nature, flower, bird and landscape motifs, along with the symbols of traditional Chinese painting, but their compositions also achieved a fine balance between the perspective and shading techniques belonging to both pictorial traditions.

Emperor Qianlong, entranced by these mirrors painted in Canton, set up a reverse glass painting workshop in his own palace and asked Brother Attiret, a Jesuit painter, to embark on this burgeoning new art as soon as he arrived in Peking in 1740. The huge mirrors sent to China returned painted with beautiful unknown birds and blossoming tree branches of exotic elegance. Among the great pairs of paintings of outdoor scenes with a mandarin and his concubine or a musician, a motif as new to China as it was to the West was seen, namely the pairs of allegories 'balanced' against one another: winter-summer, old age-youth, and music-poetry. Where landscapes were concerned, moderate but pleasing use was made of Western perspective. The third theme of choice, already appreciated in both countries, was that of beautiful women. Famous or provincial concubines, simple courtesans with smooth faces almost free of any shadow, charmed the Chinese upper classes as they did European ones. The motifs were not only Chinese, because these painters were also skilled in painting portraits inspired by European engravings or miniatures, which they placed in a symbolic Chinese setting or, more simply, in the centre of a mirror. Merchants and naval officers passing through Canton placed orders for themselves, their families and friends, and the people of influence in their world whom they wanted to please. In his Canton workshop, a great artist by the name of Spoilum painted his European models from life.

But every golden age comes to an end.

By 1820, the workshops were devoting themselves exclusively to transposing Western engravings or miniatures on to glass, without any Chinese element. Enthusiasts were no longer to be found among the European or American aristocracy or upper middle classes, but among a much wider public ranging from the European and American middle class to sailors making merry in Canton.

The opening up of China, following the Second Opium War, heralded an amazing transformation in the fortunes of reverse glass painting. From being a product destined for the Chinese aristocracy and export to the West, it became a popular Chinese art which swept through all the provinces of the Middle Empire. This period, although not dealt with here, would certainly merit thorough investigation.

I will end this conclusion with a question that has dogged me throughout this research. What was the reason for this artistic confluence and international success for a painting medium that was hardly used in the West and not at all in China? Certainly, as we saw

in Chapter I, "The dawn of reverse glass painting in China," the mirror itself was perceived differently in each culture, and the painting of mirrors that had come from the West encouraged them to spread in China. Certainly, these works had an exotic feel that was fashionable at the time; they were not lacking in artistic qualities; and they exerted fascination through the evidence they showed of a successful artistic fusion of cultures. But I think that, beyond these attractions, reverse glass painting had a more specific appeal, as, to a lesser extent, did reverse glass painting without silvering. By virtue of its reflective nature, glass, and even more so, a mirror, allowed the person looking at it to be more than an observer: he became a participator, entering the landscape or rubbing shoulders with the person depicted. Emperor Qianlong could become part of a landscape with Western perspective; the European aristocrat could accompany the Chinese concubine. Brother Attiret's premonition was correct, when he wrote to the Marquis de Broissia in 1741:

This type of painting is all the more beautiful because, when seen from a short distance away, it seems as if the figures, animals, landscapes, or any other design is not painted on the mirror but reflected; one's face can be seen in the gaps left by the paint, which makes for very attractive variety. This type of painting would not find disfavour in Europe, especially if it were done in good taste.

It was indeed done in good taste, and I hope that the research in this book provides proof of that.

Thus it was that Chinese and Western culture reflected their images onto each other, thanks to works inspired by both cultures and created by simple Chinese artists in the narrow, bustling little streets of eighteenth-century Canton.

Conclusion

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N.B. Some chinese reverse glass paintings has been analysed in Western literature and their photos published. Because of different reasons (low resolution of the photos, conditions of copyright, etc.), these photos could not be presented here. However, it seems to me desirable to quote the books where they are presented. These references are listed, at the end of each type, under the title: 'Complementary corpus without photo.'

Chinese motifs

Mirrors with birds and flowers

1, 2 *Pheasants and Peonies.*

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frames.
80 x 60 cm.
Circa 1750.
Ref. Göran Alm, pp. 286-287.
Chinese pavilion in Drottningholm Palace,
Stockholm.
Photo: Max Plunger.

[Both paintings 3 and 4 have exactly same motif.
Size, colors and number of flowers are different.]

3 *Golden Pheasants and Camellia.*

Painted Mirror.
Carved gilded wooden frame with
palm tree motifs.
102 x 56 cm.
Circa 1780.
All Rights Reserved.

4 *Golden Pheasants and Camellia.*

Reverse glass painting, painted wood.
Gilded wooden frame Louis XV.
Circa 1790.
Author's collection.

5 *Pheasants and Peonies.*

Painted mirror.
Recent gilded wooden frame.
118 x 79 cm.
Circa 1780.
All Rights Reserved.

[Both paintings 6 and 7 have exactly same motifs]

6 *Golden Pheasants and Camellia.*

Painted Mirror.
English gilded wooden frame, circa 1900.
99 x 61.5 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

7 *Golden Pheasants and Camellia.*

Painted Mirror.
Later gilded wooden frame.
82.6 x 52.1 cm.
Circa 1770.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

8 *Golden Pheasants and Peonies.*

Painted Mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George III.
114.3 x 59.7 cm.
Circa 1760.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

9 *Golden Pheasants and Peonies.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George I.
83 x 49 cm.
Circa 1765.
Courtesy Roger Keverne.

10 *Golden Pheasants and Peonies.*

Painted bevelled mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame, circa 1765.
131 x 67.5 cm.
Circa 1765.
Pair with n°18.
Ref. Wills, p. 117, ill. 134.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

11 *Golden Pheasants, Camellia and Chrysantemum.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
99.6 x 36.8 cm.
Circa 1760.
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo by Richard Goodbody.

12 *Golden Pheasants, Butterflies and Peonies.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
58.5 x 86.5 cm.
Ref. Kjellberg, p. 265.
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

13 *Silvered Pheasants and Peonies.*

Painted mirror.
Varnished wooden frame.
39 x 41 cm.
Pair with n°22.
Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley;

14 *Golden Pheasant and Magnolia;*

Painted mirror.
Enameled copper frame with floral motifs.
Unknown size.
Ref. Kjellberg, p. 221.
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

15 *Golden Pheasants and Garlands.*

Painted mirror.
Later « gothic » frame.
33 x 64 cm.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Roger Keverne.

16 *Golden Pheasants and Garlands.*

Painted mirror.
Oval black lacquered frame with
gilded foliation.
102 x 74 cm.
Circa 1785.
Ref. Child, p. 370.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.



1 ← page 35



2 ← page 35



3



4



5



6



7



8



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10



11 ← page 111



12



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14



15



16

Chinese motifs

Mirrors with birds and flowers

17 Golden Pheasants and Garlands.

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
45 x 62 cm.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Roger Keverne.

18 Bird Dispute, Chrysanthemum and Amaranth Crest of Cock.

Painted bevelled mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame, circa 1765.
131 x 67.5 cm.
Circa 1765.
Pair with n°10.
Ref. Wills, p. 117, ill. 133.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

19 Quails, Titmice, Magnolia and Camellia.

Painted Mirror.
Chippendale period gilded wooden frame.
148 x 81.5 cm.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

20 Lory, Ducks and Pomogranate.

Painted mirror.
Irish Chippendale period gilded wooden frame, with 'chinoiserie' motifs.
152.5 x 114.5 cm.
Circa 1765.
[The frame possibly to a design by George Semple (1700-1782)].
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

21 Parrot or Lori and Camellia.

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
40 x 28.6 cm.
Circa 1780.
All Rights Reserved.

22 Falcon and Flowers.

Painted mirror.
Varnished wooden frame.
33 x 38 cm.
Pair with n°7.
Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley.

23 Parrot or Lori, Camellia and Water's Edge Landscape.

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
39 x 59.5 cm.
Circa 1780.
All Rights Reserved.

24 Cockatoo.

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
Unknown size.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

25 Pheasants in Water's Edge Landscape.

Painted mirrors.
20th century gilded wooden frame.
128.5 x 79.5 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ronald Phillips Ltd

26 Pheasants in Water's Edge Landscape.

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, circa 1880.
89 x 58 cm.
Hand written note on the back: 'A.B DANIELL & SONS 42, 44, 46 WIGMORE STREET CAVENDISH SQUARE, LONDON.'
Pair with n°84.
Ref. Child, p. 350, pl. 817.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

27a Mandarin Ducks

27b Golden Pheasants.
Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame with mirrors.
127 x 73.5 cm.
Circa 1775.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

28 Ducks and Pigeons in Water's Edge Landscape.

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George II.
110 x 87 cm.
Circa 1750.
Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 100.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

29 Ducks in Water's Edge Landscape.

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
54.5 x 87.5 cm.
Circa 1785.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

30, 31 Birds, Flowers and Fruits.

Pair of painted mirrors.
Castle Ward.
30 Dove and Currants.
Gilded wooden 'lancet' frame with mirrors.
64.1 x 53.3 cm.
31 Parrot and Grapes.
Hexagonal gilded wooden frame with mirrors.
71,1 x 46,3 cm.
Photo: National Trust, Peter Muhly.



17



18



19 page 37



20



21



22



23



24



25 page 38



26



27a



27b



28



29 page 77



30



31

Chinese motifs Outdoor Scenes

32, 33 Birds and flowers.

Reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frame.
17 x 22 cm.

Photo: Wreting, Bertil/Nordiska Museet, Stockholm.

Complementary corpus without photo

34, 35 Prunus and Bamboo.

Background painted on paper behind the glass.
Ref. N. Berliner, p. 220, cat. 17, plate 35.

36 Silver Pheasants, Mynah and Flowers.

Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 150, fig. 86.

37 Francolins and Water's Edge Landscape.

Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 150, fig. 87.

38 Golden Pheasants and Camellias.

Ref. Schiffer, 2004, fig. 275.

39 Golden Pheasants.

Ref. Child, p. 379, fig. 820.

40 Peacock and Peonies.

Ref. Child, p. 379, fig. 821.

41, 42 Outdoor Scene in Southern China.

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame with mirrors.
175 x 105 cm.
Circa 1780.

Ref. Martin Etienne, 2008.

Formerly Cardinal de Rohan's collection.
Strasbourg City Hall.

© Photo Martine Beck Coppola.

43, 44 Outdoor Scenes, Music and Poetry.

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame, Chippendale period.
165 x 82 cm.

Circa 1770.

Formerly Horlick's collection.

Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

45, 46 Elegant accomplishment.

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame.
55.9 x 44.5 cm.
Circa 1760.

Ref. Sparks, fig. D.

Photo Rights Reserved.

47, 48 Outdoor Scene, Music, Poetry.

Pair of painted mirrors.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
64.4 x 83.2 cm.

Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

49 Outdoor Scene, Music.

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
35.6 x 61 cm.
Circa 1760.

Dyrham Park.

Photo: National Trust, Seamus Mc Kenna.

50 Outdoor Scene, Music.

Painted mirror.
English black japanned frame with gold
decoration.
72 x 117 cm.
Circa 1765.

Ronald Phillips Ltd.

51 Outdoor Scene, Music.

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
78.7 x 51.4 cm.
Circa 1760.

Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 104, fig. 61.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo by Richard Goodbody.

52, 53 Outdoor Scene, Music, Poetry.

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame, Louis XV.
80 x 51.3 cm.
Circa 1760.

Courtesy Rijks Museum.

54a, 54b Outdoor Scenes, Music.

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame, circa 1780.
148.5 x 74.5 cm.
Circa 1780.

All Rights Reserved.

55, 56 Outdoor Scenes, Music.

Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frame.
40 x 30 cm.
Circa 1800.

Courtesy Roger Keverne.



32



33



41, 42 pages 42-43



43, 44 pages 44-45



45



46



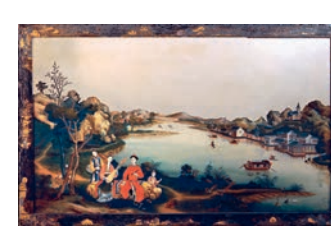
47



48



49



50



51



52, 53 pages 48-49



54a



54b



55



56

57 Outdoor Scene, Music.
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George III.
103 x 77 cm.
Circa 1800.
Formerly Horlick's Collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

58 Outdoor Scene, Music.
Painted mirror.
Oval black lacquered frame with
gilded foliation.
56 x 30 cm.
Circa 1810.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

59 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
44.5 x 73.5 cm.
Circa 1780.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

60 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Painted mirror.
Chinese hardwood frame.
66 x 40.6 cm.
Circa 1770.
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo: Richard Goodbody.

61 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame with bamboo motifs.
76.8 x 113 cm.
Circa 1770.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

62 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Painted bevelled mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
73.5 x 86 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

63 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Painted mirror.
Russian gilded wooden frame, middle of 18th
century.
172 x 52 cm.
Collection of Catherine II, Empress of Russia.
The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg,
photo: Vladimir Terebenin.

64 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
57.5 x 82.5 cm.
Circa 1780.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

65 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Painted mirror.
Varnished and gilded wooden frame.
59 x 99 cm.
Circa 1790.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

66 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame with leaf of
acanthus motifs.
45 x 35 cm.
Circa 1760.
All Rights Reserved.

67 Outdoor Scene, Poetry.
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
43.7 x 28.7 cm.
Circa 1770.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

68 Romantic Scene.
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
49.5 x 52.1 cm.
Dyrham Park.
Photo: National Trust, Seamus McKenna.

69a The Aristocrat, the Beauty and the Falcon.
69b Water's Edge Landscape.
Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame, with bamboo motifs,
George III.
67 x 66 cm.
Circa 1770.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.



57



57 (détail)



58



58 (détail)



59



60



61



62



63



64



65



66



67



68



69a page 4



69b page 4

70 *The Aristocrat, the Beauty and the Falcon.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
43 x 54 cm.
Circa 1780.

Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

71 *The Aristocrat, the Beauty and the Falcon.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
44 x 51 cm.
Circa 1800.
Ref. Child G, p. 385, fig. 840.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

72 *The Aristocrat, the Beauty and the Falcon.*

73 *Outdoor Scene.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Rosewood frame.
56.5 x 86.5 cm.
Circa 1760.
All Rights Reserved.

74 *The Aristocrat, the Beauty and the Falcon.*

Reverse glass painting.
Hardwood frame.
40 x 29.5 cm.
Circa 1800.
Photo Bukowskis Auctions.

75 *The Aristocrat, the Beauty and the Falcon.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded lineaments.
90 x 103 cm.
Circa 1780.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

76 *Emperor XuanZong and Yang Guifei.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
29 x 20 cm.
Circa 1750.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

77 *Outdoor Scene.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
82,5 x 89 cm.
Circa 1770.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

78 *Outdoor Scene.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
51 x 38 cm.
Circa 1750.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

79, 80 *Outdoor Scenes.*

Pair of painted mirrors.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
83 x 58 cm.
Circa 1770.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

81 *The Hunt.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
52.5 x 81 cm.
1785-1790.
Ref. van Dongen, fig.10.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen,
coll. n°360-1120 XIII.
Photo Rights Reserved.

82 *Kite Flying beside the River.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
52.5 x 81 cm.
1785-1790.
Ref. van Dongen, fig. 3.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen,
coll. n°360-1123 XIII.
Photo Rights Reserved.

83 *On the Terrace.*

Painted mirror.
English gilded wooden frame.
84.5 x 100.5 cm.
Circa 1750.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

84 *Outdoor Scene, Poetry.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George II.
75 x 55 cm.
Circa 1750.
Pair with n°26.
Ref. Child G., p. 350, fig. 817.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

85 *In the Garden.*

Gilded wooden frame.
84.5 x 54,6 cm.
Circa 1790.
Courtesy Roger Keverne.



70 page 47



71



72



73



74



75



76 page 68



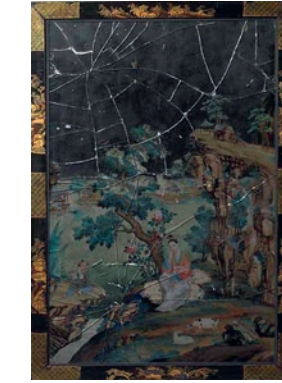
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80



81



82 page 52



83



84



85

86, 87 *In the Garden.*

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame.
115 x 83 cm.
Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley.

88, 89 *In the Garden.*

Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame.
[The two frames could be juxtaposed to compose a single scene].
139.7 x 84.5 cm.
Circa 1790.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

90 *In the Garden.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George III.
101.5 x 84.5 cm.
Circa 1760.
Ref. Schiffer H. R., 2004, fig. 274.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

91 *In the Garden.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
91,5 x 60 cm.
Formerly collection of Imperial Indian Princess Durru Shevar.
Peter Lipitch.

92, 93 *In the Garden.*

Pair of painted mirrors.
Black lacquered and gilded wooden frame.
40.6 x 57.8 cm.
Circa 1770.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

94 *Enjoying Eating Fruit*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
52,5 x 81 cm.
1785-1790.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 5.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, coll. n°360-1119 XIII.
Photo Rights Reserved.

95 *A Summer Garden Scene.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
52.5 x 81 cm.
1785-1790.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 5.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, coll. n°360-1129 XIII.
Photo Rights Reserved.

96, 97 *In the Veranda.*

[Two painted mirrors with same motif but different colors.
European black lacquered frames with gilded foliation with a triangular prop backside —table mirror?]

96 *In the Veranda.*

52 x 39.6 cm.
Circa 1780.
Ref. Child, p. 369, fig. 832.
97 *In the Veranda.*
64 x 53 cm.
Circa 1760.
Ref. Howard, p. 150, fig. 192.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

98 *In the Veranda.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
44 x 49 cm.
Circa 1790.
All Rights Reserved.

99 *Two Women in an Interior.*

Reverse glass painting.
Black lacquered frame.
39 x 52.5 cm.
Circa 1790.
Courtesy of the American Museum in Britain.

100 *In the Veranda*

Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
36.8 x 29.2 cm.
Circa 1790.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

Complementary corpus
without photo

101 *Outdoor Scene, Art of Verse.*

Ref. Jenyns 1965, p. 150, fig. 88.

102 *Outdoor Scene, Poetry.*

Ref. Conner P., 1998, fig. III.

103 *The Hunt.*

Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 153, fig. 89.

104 *In the Garden.*

Ref. Granville F., 1933, p. 370.

105 *In the Veranda.*

Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 106, fig. 64.

106 *In the Veranda.*

Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 104, fig. 62.

107 *Outdoor Scene, Music.*

Ref. Göram Alm, Wirgin J., p. 290.

108 *Outdoor Scene, Art of Music.*

Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 104, fig. 61.



86 ← page 50



87



88



89



90



91



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93



94



95



96 ← page 53



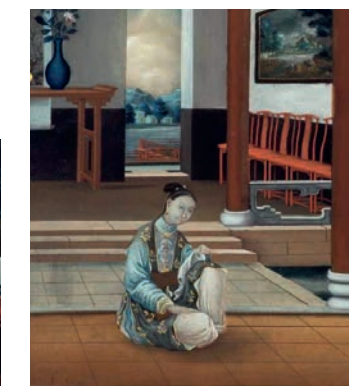
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98



99 ← page 100



99 (detail)



100

Chinese motifs 'Beautiful women'

109 *The Voice of Age.*

110 *The Voice of Youth.*

Pair of painted mirrors.
English black lacquered frame
with gilded foliation.
83.8 x 50.8 cm.
Circa 1780.

Ref. H. Granville Fell, 1933, p. 367;

Jourdain M., Jenyns S., 1967,
p. 105, fig. 60.

Formerly collection of Her Majesty Queen
Mary.

Photo Rights Reserved.

111 *Young Woman and Old Fisher Man.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
63.5 x 38.1 cm.
Circa 1780.

Ref. Spark, cover figure.

Formerly collection of Stephen Winkworth
and Dent-Brocklehurst.

Photo Rights Reserved.

112 *Young Woman and Old Fisher Man.*

Reverse glass painting.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
41 x 27.5 cm.

Photo Bukowskis Auctions.

113 *Young Woman, Flute Player and Falconer.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
54 x 87.5 cm.
Circa 1760.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

114 *Shepherdess, Flute Player and Falconer.*

Painted overmantel mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame, George III.
91.5 x 146 cm.
Circa 1780.
All Rights Reserved.

115 *Shepherdess and Falconer.*

116 *Young Woman and Servant.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame, circa 1880.
75 x 50 cm.
Circa 1770.
Courtesy Roger Keverne.

117 *Shepherdess and Falconer.*

Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame, George III.
109 x 94 cm.
Circa 1765.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

118 *Shepherdess and Falconer.*

119 *Young Woman and, Flute Player.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Carved and gilded wood frame with
Chinese motifs.
63 x 51 cm.
Circa 1770.

© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

120a *Shepherdess.*

120b *Young Woman and Flute player.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame.
46 x 36 cm.
Circa 1780.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

121 *Shepherdess.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
41 x 46 cm.
Circa 1790.
Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 102, fig. 57
and 58.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

122 *Shepherdess.*

123 *Young Woman in a Blue Veil.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Hardwood frame.
71.1 x 55.8 cm.
Circa 1760.
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo by Richard Goodbody.



109 ⇐ page 66



110 ⇐ page 66



111



112



113



114



115 ⇐ page 57



116



117



118



119



120a



120b



121



122 ⇐ page 58



123 ⇐ page 59

Chinese motifs
 'Beautiful women'

124 *Young Woman in a Blue Veil.*

125 *Shepherdess.*
 Pair of painted mirrors.
 Rococo gilded wooden frame.
 Unknown size.
 Circa 1780.
 Peter Lipitch.

126 *La bonne bergère.*

Reverse glass painting.
 Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
 40.7 x 30.5 cm.
 Circa 1780.
 Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).
 Ref. Ryser, 1991, p. 225, fig. 257
 © Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.

127 *Shepherdess.*

Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
 40,5 x 30,5 cm.
 Circa 1790.
 Steiner collection Inv. Nr. HGS 451.
 Photo Rights Reserved.

128 *Shepherdesses.*

129 *Musicians.*
 Pair of painted mirrors.
 Lacquered geometric frame.
 84 x 100 cm.
 Circa 1790.
 © National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

130 *Woman in the Straw Hat.*

131 *Young Woman in a Blue Veil.*
 Pair of painted mirrors.
 Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
 28 x 27 cm.
 Circa 1770.
 Ref. Child, pp. 367, 368, fig. 827, 828.
 Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

132 *Young Woman in a Blue Veil.*

133 *Young Woman in the Straw Hat.*
 Pair of reverse glass paintings.
 Oval black wooden frames.
 7.6 x 6.3 cm.
 Circa 1780.
 Martyn Gregory Gallery.

134, 135 *Young Women in the Straw Hat.*

Pair of reverse glass paintings.
 Octagonal wooden frames.
 4.4 x 5.1 cm.
 Circa 1800.
 Martyn Gregory Gallery.

136 *Young Woman with Lori.*

137 *Young Woman with Little Dog.*
 Pair of reverse glass paintings.
 Oval wooden frames.
 11.4 x 8.9 cm.
 Circa 1800.
 Martyn Gregory Gallery.

138 *Young Woman in the Straw Hat.*

Painted mirror.
 Rosewood frame.
 66.5 x 53.5 cm.
 Circa 1770.
 Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 103, fig. 59.
 All Rights Reserved.

139 *Young Woman in the Straw Hat.*

Painted mirror.
 Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
 52 x 39 cm.
 Circa 1780.
 Courtesy Galerie Sylvain Levy-Alban.



124



125



126 ← page 54



127



128



129



130



131 ← page 65



132



133



134



135



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139

140 *Young Woman in the Straw Hat.*

Painted mirror.
Unknown frame.
12 x 16 cm.
Circa 1790.
All Rights Reserved.

141 *Young Woman riding a horse.*

142 *Young Woman riding a Buffalo.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
65 x 45 cm.
Circa 1780.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

143 *Young Woman Riding a Buffalo.*

144 *Young Woman Riding a Donkey.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
46.8 x 42.2 cm.
Saltram House, Devon.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

145 *Old Man and Young Woman.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
46.8 x 42.2 cm.
Saltram House, Devon.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

146 *Young Woman Fishing.*

147 *Young Woman Rafting.*
Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
52 x 39 cm.
Circa 1800.

[N°147 could represent the legend of the Taoist Immortal Lang Caihe 'crossing the sea on a raft!']
All Rights Reserved.

148, 149 *Young Woman fishing.*

Two painted mirrors with the same motif.
Same rococo gilded wooden frame and different sizes:
148: 42 x 26 cm.
149: 110 x 64 cm.
Circa 1760.
Saltram House, Devon.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

150 *Young Woman with a Lori.*

Painted bevelled mirror.
Hardwood frame.
96 x 49 cm.
Circa 1770.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

151 *Young Woman in a Blue Veil.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
52 x 39.5 cm.
Circa 1800
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

152 *Young Woman in a Blue Veil.*

Painted mirror.
Carved and lacquered wood frame.
23.5 x 18.5cm.
Circa 1770.
© Bonhams.

153 *Young Woman with Little Dogs.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
71.1 x 74.9 cm.
Circa 1810.
Ref. Sparks Ill. E.
Photo Rights Reserved.

154 *Young Woman on a Sampan.*

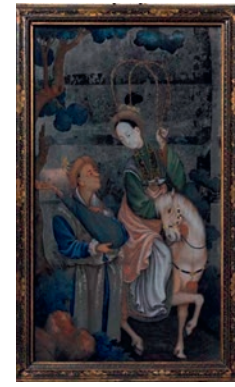
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
74 x 47 cm.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

155 *Young Woman on a Sampan.*

Painted mirror.
Carved wood frame.
Unknown size.
Ref. Child, p. 377, fig. 815
[According to the newspaper the woman would be concubine Xiang Fei (*London News*, 'Christmas,' n°20, 1900)].
Photo Rights Reserved.



140



141



142



143



144



145



146



147



148



149



150



151



152



153



154



155

156 *Young Woman on a Sampan.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
34.6 x 44 cm.
Circa 1810.
All Rights Reserved.

157 *Young Woman on a Sampan.*

Painted mirror.
« Chinese Chippendale » frame.
49.5 x 32 cm.
Circa 1820.
The two frames could be juxtaposed to compose a single scene.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

159 *Young Woman on a Sampan.*

Painted mirror.
Oval gilded wooden frame.
62 x 52.4 cm.
Circa 1800.
Ref. Child, p. 365, fig. 825.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

160 *Reading on Water's Edge.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
61 x 57 cm.
Circa 1780.
All Rights Reserved.

161 *Reading on Water's Edge.*

Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
42 x 26 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 101, fig. 55.
Saltram House, Devon.
Photo National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

162 *Reading on Water's Edge.*

Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
46.8 x 42.2 cm.
Circa 1765.
Saltram House, Devon.
Photo National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

163 *Hairdressing Session.*

Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
42 x 26 cm.
Saltram House, Devon.
Circa 1765.
Photo National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

164 *Young Woman and Bearded Man.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
50 x 40 cm.
Circa 1770.
© Bonhams.

165 *Women with Flower and Fan.*

Painted mirror.
Later gilded wooden frame.
35 x 18 cm.
Circa 1770.
Ref. Child, p. 352, fig. 822.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

166 *Woman Playing Flute on Water's Edge.*

Painted mirror.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
43 x 30.1 cm.
Circa 1775.
Ref. Child p. 366, fig. 826.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

167 *Young Woman and Flute Player.*

Painted mirror.
Later gilded wooden frame.
94 x 89 cm.
Circa 1770.
Ref. Child, p. 349, fig. 816.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

168 *Shepherdess and Flute Player.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
Unknown sizes.
Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley.

169 *Reading on Water's Edge.*

Painted mirror.
European gilded wooden frame.
53 x 37 cm.
Circa 1775.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

170 *Young Woman on Water's Edge.*

Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
130.8 x 81.3 cm.
Circa 1770.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.



156



157



158



159



160



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162



162 (détail)



163



164



165



166



167



168



169



170

171 *Child Games.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George III.
43 x 11.4 cm.
Circa 1780.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

172 *Games in the Garden.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
82.5 x 50.8 cm.
Circa 1810.
Courtesy Roger Keverne.

173, 174 *In the Countryside.*

Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Black lacquered frames with gilded lineaments.
49 x 47.5 cm.
Circa 1780.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

175 *Two Young Women.*

Painted mirror.
Oval gilded metal frame with precious stones.
26 x 12 cm.
Circa 1800.
All Rights Reserved.

176 *Princesses in a Pavilion.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
91.4 x 71 cm.
Circa 1760.
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

177 *Princesses in a Pavilion.*

Gilded wooden frame.
80 x 48 cm.
Circa 1780.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

178 *Daydream on Water's Edge.*

Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
Osterley Park and House, London.
Circa 1767.
Photo: National Trust, Christopher Warleigh-Lack.

179 *Young Lady on Water's Edge.*

180 *Lady on Water's Edge.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
42 x 37 cm.
Circa 1800.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

181 *Lady on Water's Edge.*

182 *Young Lady on Her Veranda.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Hardwood frame.
26.3 x 20.5 cm.
Circa 1760.
Ref. Wirgin, p. 296, fig.305.
© Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm.

183 *Young Mother.*

Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
110.5 x 63.5 cm.
Circa 1780.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

184 *Daydream.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
44 x 34 cm.
Circa 1800.
© Bonhams.



171



172



173



174



175



176



177



178



179



180



181



182



183



183 (détail)



184

185 *Young Woman with a Bird.*
Reverse glass painting.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
29.1 x 24 cm.
Circa 1780.
Ref. Howard, p. 152, fig.196
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

186 *Daydream.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
58.4 x 45.7 cm.
Circa 1770.
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

187 *Walk along the Water's Edge.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, circa 1900.
82 x 56 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

188 *Young Woman.*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
8.9 x 10.2 cm.
Circa 1790.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

189 *Young Woman with a Parrot.*
Painted mirror.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
110 x 64 cm.
Circa 1760.
Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 101, fig. 56.
Saltram House, Devon.
Photo: National Trust, Rob Matheson.

190 *Lady in a Garden.*
Painted mirror.
Carved wooden frame.
86 x 67.8 cm.
Circa 1750.
Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 131, fig. 69.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

191 *Woman on Her Veranda.*
Painted bevelled mirror.
Gilded wooden frame George III.
96.5 x 60.5 cm.
Circa 1775.
Ronald Phillips Ltd.

192 *Young Woman on Her Veranda.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
83 x 52.7 cm.
Circa 1765.
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

193 *Lady on Her Veranda.*
194 *Young Lady on Her Veranda.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frames.
45 x 30 cm.
Circa 1800.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

195 *Young Woman on Her Veranda.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
66 x 50 cm.
Circa 1780.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

196 *Young Woman on Her Veranda.*
Painted mirror.
Varnished wooden frame with gilded carved motifs.
49 x 39 cm.
Circa 1790.
Ref. Wirgin, p. 297, fig. 306.
Photo: Landin, Mats, Nordiska museet, Stockholm.

197 *Young Woman on Her Veranda.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
33 x 26 cm.
Circa 1760.
Ref. Child, p. 351, fig. 818.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studi.

198 *Young Woman on Her Veranda.*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
52 x 25.4 cm.
Circa 1760.
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

199 *Calligraphy.*
Painted mirror.
Varnished and gilded wooden frame.
56 x 36 cm.
Circa 1780.
Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley.



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187



188



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190



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191 [detail]



192



193 ← page 67



194 ← page 67



195



196



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199 ← page 73

200 *Breastfeeding.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
71 x 55.8 cm.
Circa 1810.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo: Richard Goodbody.

201 *Young Girl Styling.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
52 x 40 cm.
Circa 1780.

Courtesy Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers.

202 *Young Woman with Falcon.*

Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
52 x 42 cm.
Circa 1750.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo: Richard Goodbody.

203 *Young Woman with a Little Dog.*

Reverse glass painting.
Vernished wooden frame with gilded
lineament.
31.1 x 26.7 cm.
Circa 1790.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo: Richard Goodbody.

204 *Portrait de femme.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
45.9 x 40.4 cm.
Circa 1790.

Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre
Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).

Ref. Ryser, 1991, p. 226, fig. 258

© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.

205 *Young Girl with a Fan.*

Reverse glass painting.
Oval gilded wooden frame.
23 x 17.5 cm.

Rösska Museet, RKM 19-1982.

Photo: Mikael Lamgard.

206, 207, 208, 209 *Courtisans.*

Reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frames with carved symbols
motifs.
29 x 44 cm.
Circa 1815.

© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

210 *Lady and Child.*

211 *Young Lady and Child.*
Pair of reverse glass paintings, gouache, paper.
Gilded wooden frames with carved symbols.
29 x 44 cm.
Circa 1815.

© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

212, 213 *Hostess and Customer.*

Pair of painted mirrors.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
46 x 42 cm.
Circa 1780.

Saltram House, Devon.

Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

Complementary corpus
without photo

214 *Young Woman on a Sampan.*

Ref. Child, p. 377, fig. 815.

215 *Daydream on Water's Edge.*

Ref. Child, p. 381, fig. 831.

216 *Daydream on Water's Edge.*

Ref. Conner, 1986, p. 119, fig. 162.

217 *Women and Horses on Water's Edge.*

Ref. Schiffer, fig. 277.

218 *Reading on Water's Edge.*

Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 105, fig. 63.

219 *Walk in a Garden.*

Ref. Child, pp. 376, 384, fig. 844.



200



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202



203



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208 ← page 70



209



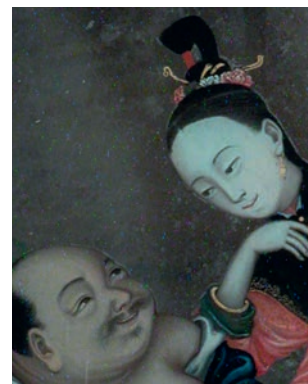
210



211



212



212 (detail)



213



213 (detail)

Chinese motifs

Portraits of Chinese dignitaries

220 *Mandarin Pan Qiguan (1714-1788).*

Painted mirror.
Swedish gilded wooden frame.
98 x 67.5 cm.
Circa 1760.
Ref. Kjellberg, 1974, p. 96, 100.
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

221 *Mandarin.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
61.5 x 55 cm.
Circa 1780.
Photo: Segemark, Peter, Nordiska museet, Stockholm.

222 *Bearded Hong Merchant.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
45.7 x 35.6 cm.
Circa 1800.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

223 *Scholar (European?).*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
92 x 57 cm.
© Fraysse et associés.

224 *Two Chinese Dignitaries.*

Painted mirror.
European gilded wooden frame.
110.5 x 61.6 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ref. J. Geysant, 2008, p. 170.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

225 *Mandarin.*

226 *Young Woman in Blue Veil.*
Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Oval black lacquered frames with gilded foliation.
9 x 7 cm.
Ref. Wirgin, 1998, p. 298, fig. 307.
© Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm, Sweden.

227 *High Rank Mandarin.*

228 *Wife of the Mandarin.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Rococo gilded wooden frames.
135 x 64 cm.
Courtesy Galerie Sylvain Levy-Alban.

229 *Young Aristocrat.*

230 *Wife of the Aristocrat.*
Painted mirrors.
Round varnished wooden frames.
Diam. 14.8 cm.
Saltram House, Devon.
Circa 1770.
Photo: National Trust, Sophia Farley, Denis Madge.

231 *Young Aristocrat.*

232 *Young Lady (Wife of the Aristocrat?).*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
36 x 30.2 cm.
Circa 1810.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

233 *Couple of Young Aristocrats.*

Painted mirror.
Varnished gilded wooden frame.
49 x 39 cm.
Ref. Wirgin, p. 297, fig. 306.
Photo: Landin, Mats, Nordiska museet, Stockholm.

234 *Aristocrat with Falcon.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
58 x 88 cm.
[Lord Clive, father of the first Duke of Powis was one of the directors of East India Company and has been posted in India in 1757.]
Ref. Howard, 1997, p. 151, fig. 194.
Formerly Powis Castle's Collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

235 *Cavalry Officer and Falcon.*

Painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frame, Chippendale period.
60 x 21 cm.
Circa 1765.
© National Trust/Sophia Farley.



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224



225



226



227



228



229



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231



232



233



234



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Chinese motifs

Landscapes

236 *View of the Foreign Factories at Canton.*
Oil paint, watercolor, gouache, glass, enamel.
39.3 x 59.7 cm.
Circa 1805.
Peabody Essex Museum, Gift of The Misses
Aimee and Rosamond Lamb E78680.
© 2007 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA;
photo: Jeffrey Dykes.

237 *The Hongs of Canton.*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
33.7 x 49.5 cm.
Circa 1830.
Ref. Conner, 2009, p. 46.
Martin Gregory Gallery.

238 *Factories in Canton.*
Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
40 x 35 cm.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

239 *Factories in Canton.*
Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
45 x 81 cm.
Circa 1810.
All Rights Reserved.

240 *The Quayside at Canton.*
Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
52.5 x 81 cm.
1785-1790.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 1.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1116 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

241 *Whampoa Anchorage.*
Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
34.2 x 54.5 cm.
Circa 1800.
© Bonhams.

242 *The Roadstead of Whampoa.*
Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
52.5 x 78 cm.
Circa 1785-1790.
Ref. van Dongen, fig. 2.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll.n°360-1119 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

243 *Western Ships in an Estuary.*
Reverse glass painting.
Sandalwood frame with Chinese motifs.
112 x 71 cm.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

244 *The Great Valley.*
Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
63.5 x 91.5 cm.
Circa 1810.
All Rights Reserved.

245, 246 *Landscapes.*
Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frames.
40.6 x 53.3 cm.
Circa 1790.
Martin Gregory Gallery.

247 *Landscape (detail).*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
35 x 27 cm.
Circa 1780.
Author's collection.

Complementary Corpus without photos

248 *Mountain Landscape.*
Ref. Granville, 1933, p. 368.

249 *The Great Valley.*
Ref. Crossmann, p. 207, fig. 107.

250 *Factories in Canton.*
Ref. Crossmann, p. 25, fig. 56.

251, 252 *Water's Edge Landscapes.*
Ref. N. Berliner, p. 75, 176, fig. 52.

253, 254 *Landscapes.*
Ref. Yang Boda, p. 139, fig. 91, 92.



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240 ⇐ page 75



241 ⇐ page 17



241 (detail)



242



242 (detail)



243 ⇐ page 80



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245



246



246 (detail)



247 ⇐ page 78

Other Chinese motifs

255 *The Emperor's Audience.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
115.6 x 190.5 cm.
1810.
Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., 1967, p. 107.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

256 *The Emperor's Audience.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 13.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen,
coll. n°360-1122 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

257 *The Emperor Ploughing.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig.15.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen,
coll. n°360-1113 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

258 *In the Palace Garden.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
52.5 x 78 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 14.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen,
coll. n°360-1121 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

259 *A Palace Feast.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 9.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen,
coll. n°360-1117 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

260 *Kowtowing.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 8.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen,
coll. n°360-1118 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

261 *Bride and Bridegroom.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. van Dongen, fig.12.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1127 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

262 *All Souls Day.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 6.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1124 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

263 *A Dragon Boat Race.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 7.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1114 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

264 *The Rice Harvest.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 16.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1125 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

265 *From Clay to Pot.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 17.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1126 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

266 *On the Tea Plantation.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig. 18.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1128 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

267 *The Silk-Spinning Workshop.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unframed.
1785-1790.
81 x 52.5 cm.
Ref. Van Dongen, fig.19.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll. n°360-1130 XIX.
Photo: Rights Reserved.



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261



261 (detail)



262



262 (detail)



263



264



265



265 (detail)



266



267 → page 83

268 Cithar Player.
Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
20 x 30 cm.
Circa 1770.

[Element of a serie of ten paintings of young women playing different chinese music instruments.]
Ref. Göran Alm, 2002, p. 293-294.
Chinese pavilion in Drottningholm Palace, Stockholm.

Photo: Max Plunger.

269 Flute (dizi) player.
Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
25.4 x 20.3 cm.
Circa 1810.

Martyn Gregory Gallery.

270 Mouth-Organ (Sheng) Player.
Reverse glass paintings.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
38.7 x 31.1 cm.
Circa 1810.

Martyn Gregory Gallery.

271 Still life.
Reverse glass painting.
Varnished and gilded wooden frame.
25.4 x 19 cm.
Circa 1810.

Martyn Gregory Gallery.

272 Still life.
Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
35.6 x 45.7 cm.
Circa 1810.

Martyn Gregory Gallery.

Multiple mirrors

273 Overmantel Mirror.
Sixteen mirrors, nine painted.
English gilded wooden frame, George III,
1765.
147 x 185 cm.
Circa 1765.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

274 Overmantel Mirror.
Twenty four mirrors, six painted.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
188.5 x 173 cm.
Circa 1765.

All Rights Reserved.

275 Overmantel Mirror.
Eleven mirrors, three painted.
Rococo gilded wooden frame.
148 x 165 cm.
Circa 1780.

All Rights Reserved.

276 Overmantel Mirror.
Nineteen mirrors, ten painted.
Gilded wooden frame.
270 x 120 cm.
Circa 1760.

Ref. Göran Alm, 2002, p. 288.

Chinese pavilion in Drottningholm Palace, Stockholm.

Photo: Max Plunger.

277 Cabinet's Windows.
Twenty six painted mirrors.
Varnished wooden frame.
153 x 51 cm.
Circa 1760.

Ronald Phillips Ltd.

Western motifs Portraits of Westerners

278a Portrait of John Pike.
279 Portrait of Mrs Pike.
Pair of painted mirrors.
Lacquered and gilded wooden frames.
278b Note on the backside:
'Enligt anteckning å en på taflans baksida fästad lapp, hvilken nu är till största delen förstörd, föreställer taflan och dess pendang Supercargören i Svenska ostindiska kompaniets tjänst John Pike och hns fru, hvilkas dotter Anna Elisabet gifte sig med Supercargören i samma kompanis tjänst Jakob von Utfall. Taflorna hafva sedan öfvergått i min farfader Bror Jakob Ramsays ägo och från honom till hans son Carl Peter Wilhelm Ramsay och från honom till mig. I mina ungdomsår kallades de afbildade personerna alltid för Lord och Lady Pike. Linköping den 15 november 1934. C H. Ramsay'

[According to the note at the back of the painting, now mostly destroyed, the painting and its twin paintings depict the Supercargo un the Swedish East India Company's service John Pike and his wife, whose daughter Anna Elizabeth married the Supercargo in the same company's services Jakob von Utfall. The paintings have since turned into my grandfather Bror James Ramsay's possession and from him to his son Carl Peter Wilhelm Ramsay and from him to me. In my youth, the depicted persons always were always called Lord and Lady Pike. Linköping, November 15, 1934. C H Ramsay] 70 X 45 cm.
Circa 1740.

Ref. Wirgin, 1991, p. 17, fig. 4;

Kjellberg, 1974, p. 50.

Photo: Anneli Karlsson, Sjöhistorika Museet, Stockholm.

280 Portrait of Fredrick Beyer.
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
99 x 77 cm.
Circa 1750.
Ref. Lööf Larsolof, Söderpalm, p. 144, fig. 1.
Photo: Lindström Uno, Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.



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273 (detail)



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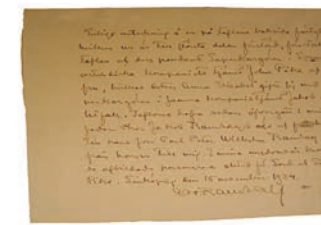
276 ⇐ pages 10 and 120



277



278a ⇐ page 86



278b



279 ⇐ page 87



280 ⇐ page 88

281 *Portrait of Anders Gadd.*

Painted mirror.
Oval gilded wooden frame.
35.8 x 29 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ref. Lööf Larsolof, Söderpalm, p. 147, fig. 3.
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

282 *Portrait of Magdalena Gadd, born Beyer.*

Painted mirror.
Oval gilded wooden frame.
35.8 x 29 cm.
Circa 1765.
Ref. Lööf Larsolof, Söderpalm, p. 147, fig. 3.
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

283 *Portrait of King Adolf Fredrick.*

284 *Portrait of Queen Louisa Ulrika.*
Pair of painted mirrors.
Gilded wooden frames by Carl Harleman.
115 x 69 cm.
1750-1759.
Nordiska museet, Stockholm.
Photo: Wreting Bertil.

285 *Unidentified Englishman in a Veranda.*

[Portrait of Colin Campbell?]
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
75 x 49.8 cm.
Ref. Crossman, p. 204, fig. 171.
Courtesy Richard Milhender.

286 *Portrait of Thomas Fry.*

Painted mirror.
Unknown frame.
38 x 25.4 cm.
1774.
Hand written note on the back: 'Drawn
October the... at Canton in China/Spillem
in the year 1774.'

Ref. Conner, 1998, fig. VI.

Martyn Gregory Gallery.

287 *Portrait of an English Gentleman.*

Painted mirror.
Hardwood frame.
38.1 x 33 cm.
Circa 1770.
Ref. Crossman, p. 34, fig. 3.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

288 *Portrait of a Western Merchant
in a Red Jacket.*

Painted mirror.
Original cantonese frame.
27.3 x 21 cm.
Circa 1770.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

289 *Portrait of Captain Cranston.*

Painted mirror.
Varnished wooden frame.
38.1 x 33 cm.
Circa 1770.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

290 *Portrait of a Western Merchant (1).*

Reverse glass painting.
Lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
39.4 x 34.9 cm.
Circa 1800.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

291 *Portrait of a Young Englishman.*

Painted mirror.
Painted wooden frame.
29.4 x 23.7 cm.
Circa 1780.
Ref. Crossman, p. 204.
Courtesy Richard Milhender.

292 *Portrait of an European Merchant.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
25.4 x 20.3 cm.
Circa 1775.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

293 *Portrait of a Western Merchant (2).*

Painted mirror.
Lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
24 x 18 cm.
Circa 1780.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

294 *Portrait of a Rich Merchant.*

Gilded wooden frame.
Painted mirror.
70 x 57.5 cm.
1780.
Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 153, fig. 91.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

295 *Portrait of a Naval Officer.*

Painted mirror.
Red lacquered wooden frame.
45 x 33 cm.
Circa 1780.
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.



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293 (detail)



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296 *Portrait of an Englishman.*

Gilded wooden frame.
38 x 28 cm.
Circa 1790.
Ref. Lü Ping, *Introduction*.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

297 *Portrait of Captain John Corner.*

Reverse glass painting.
30 x 24 cm.
Hand written note on the back: 'This painting on glass, done in China, is the portrait of John Corner Esq., captain of his own ship *The Carnatic*...'
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

298 *Portrait of Shipowner Audibert.*

Reverse glass painting.
Oval gilded wooden frame.
35 x 26 cm.
Hand written note on the back: 'Mr Audibert/portrait fait à la/ Guadeloupe[?]/ père...grand-/mère de...'
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

299 *Portrait of a Western Merchant (3).*

Painted mirror.
Varnished wooden frame.
48.3 x 45.7 cm.
Circa 1790.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

300 *Portrait of Catharina van Braam (1746-1799)*

and Her Daughter Françoise (1785- ?).
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
63.5 x 49 cm.
Engraving *Lady Rushout and her daughter Ann*, in 1784, by Thomas Burke (1749-1815), after an eponym portrait by Angelika Kauffman (1741-1807).
Ref. Van Campen, 2005, pp. 29 to 36.
Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

301 *Portrait of Catharina van Braam.*

Back side of the glass:
302 *Portrait of Catharina van Braam.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
55.4 x 45.2 cm.
Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

303 *Portrait of Captain Joseph Huddart (1741-1816).*

Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
84.5 x 66.5 cm.
[J. Huddart stayed in Canton several times during 1785-1789].
© Bonhams.

304 *Portrait of Mr. Lennox.*

305a *Portrait of Miss Elizabeth Graham.*
305b *Portrait of Miss Christiane Graham.*
Painted mirrors.
Regency gilded wooden frame, circa 1820.
130 x 89 cm.
Ref. Sparks, fig. H.
[303] Photo: Rights Reserved.
[304, 305] Courtesy Pelham.

306 *Portrait of Karl Edvard, Count of Hessenstein.*

Painted bevelled mirror.
Regency gilded wooden frame, circa 1820.
75 x 43.8 cm.
[Illegitimate son of Frederik 1st of Sweden and Edvig Taube, Karl Edvard (1737-1769) become Swedish Count in 1742].
Ref. Spark, fig. G
Photo: Rights Reserved.

307 *Portrait of an English Naval Officer.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
44 x 34.5 cm.
Musée des arts décoratifs de l'Océan Indien, Réunion, France.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

308 *Portrait of Mrs and Miss Revell in a Chinese Interior.*

Painted mirror.
46.67 x 40.96 cm.
Circa 1780.
Handwritten note on the backside of painting (Ref. Granville): 'View of the river at Canton China, with portraits of Frances Revell, wife of Henri Revell China Civil Service (for nineteen years Head Super-Cargo to the Honourable Est India Company) and her eldest daughter Frances; painted about 1765.'
Ref. Howard, Ayers, p. 648, fig. 673 ; Granville, p. 369.
Peabody Essex Museum, Museum purchase, 2000 AE85763.
© 2006 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA ;
Photo: Mark Sexton and Jeffrey Dykes.

309 *Portrait of Lady Mary Worsley Montagu.*

Painted mirror.
Lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
44.5 x 29.2 cm.
Circa 1760.
[Lady Mary de Pierrepont (1689-1762) was a famous writer. Wife of Edward Wortley Montagu, Ambassador of Great Britain in Constantinople, she brought back the smallpox vaccine from this country].
Ref. Sparks, fig. C.
Photo: Rights Reserved.



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297 (detail)



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303



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305b ← page 95



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307



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309

310 *Woman with Flowers.*
Painted bevelled mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George II.
31.1 x 29.2 cm.
Circa 1760.
Ref. Sparks, fig. A.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

311 *Portrait of Ogilvie Family.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George III.
39.5 x 63.5 cm.
Circa 1790.
Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 55, fig.93.
Formerly Horlick's collection.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

312, 313 *Portraits of Young Women.*
Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frames, gilded inner frames
painted under the glass.
21.8 x 17.1 cm.
Circa 1800.
Musée Grobet-Labadié.
CETER Ville de Marseille.

Complementary corpus without photo

314 *Portrait of Lars Hansen Swane.*
[From 1741 to 1771 Lars Hansen Swane
(1720-1781) has been a supercargo with the
Danish East India Company].
Ref. Henningsen, 1963, p. 106.

315, 316 *Portraits of Young Ladies.*
Ref. Howard, Ayers, p. 649, fig. 674.
[According to the authors, both paintings could
be after Swedish engravings].

Western motifs Other Western motifs

317 *Daydream.*
Painted bevelled mirror.
Lacquered wooden frame
with mother of pearl.
93 x 67 cm.
Circa 1810.
All Rights Reserved.

318 *Young Musicians.*
Painted bevelled mirror.
Sandalwood frame.
93 x 58 cm.
Circa 1810.
All Rights Reserved.

319 *Madonna.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
30 x 24 cm.
Circa 1770.
Author's collection.

320 *Madonna.*
Painted mirror.
Black lacquered frame with gilded foliation.
46 x 30.5 cm.
Steiner's Collection, Inv. Nr. HGS 567.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

321 *Crucifixion.*
Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
33 x 26 cm.
Musée des Arts décoratifs de l'Océan Indien,
Réunion, France.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

Complementary corpus without photo

322 *Crucifixion.*
Ref. Howard, Ayers, p. 645, fig. 670.

Transpositions of Western artworks Rural and Mythological Scenes

[**323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332** paintings are transpositions of engravings
after paintings by François Boucher (1703-1770).
323 to 327 original paintings by Boucher
were exhibited in 1750 Salon with the caption:
'*Quatre toiles de formes ovales [...] la seconde*
Un berger accordant sa musette près de sa
bergère, et la quatrième Un berger qui montre
à jouer de la flûte à sa bergère.' René Gaillard
engraved them and put a new caption: *Le berger*
récompensé for the first one, *Lagréable leçon*
for the second one.]

323 *Les amants surpris.*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
51.5 x 40 cm.
Circa 1810.
Engraving by René Gaillard (1719-1790).
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

324 *Les amants surpris.*
Reverse glass painting.
Wooden and glass frame.
32.2 x 30.3 cm.
Circa 1810.
Engraving by René Gaillard (1719-1790).
Ref. Steiner, 2009, p. 150, fig. 60.
Steiner's Collection, Inv. Nr. HGS 567.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

325 *Le berger récompensé.*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
46 x 49 cm.
Circa 1790.
Engraving by René Gaillard (1719-1790).
Musée Grobet-Labadié.
CETER Ville de Marseille.

326 *Lagréable leçon.*
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
49 x 46 cm.
Circa 1790.
Engraving by René Gaillard (1719-1790).
Musée Grobet-Labadié.
CETER Ville de Marseille.



310



311



311 (detail)



312



313



317



318



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320



321



323



324



324 (detail)



325



326

327 *Lagréable leçon.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
52 x 41 cm.
Circa 1800.
Engraving by René Gaillard (1719-1790).
Pair with **333**.
Kollenburg Antiquairs BV.

328 *Jupiter and Callisto.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
35.8 x 46.2 cm.
Circa 1810.
Engraving by René Gaillard (1719-1790).
Ref. Steiner, 2009, p. 154, fig. 62.
Steiner's Collection, Inv. Nr. HGS 363.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

329 *Sylvie guérit Phyllis d'une morsure d'abeille.*

Reverse glass painting.
Oval gilded wooden frame.
33.5 x 41.3 cm.
Circa 1790.
Engraving by Louis-Simon Lempereur (1728-1808) after paintings by Boucher, circa 1755, inspired by Le Tasse (1544-1595) novel *La pastorale Aminta*.
Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

330 *Aminte revient à la vie dans les bras de Sylvie.*

Reverse glass painting.
Oval gilded wooden frame.
33.5 x 41.3 cm.
Circa 1790.
Engraving by Louis-Simon Lempereur (1728-1808) after paintings by Boucher, circa 1755, inspired by Le Tasse (1544-1595) novel *La pastorale Aminta*.
Courtesy Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

331 *La toilette de Vénus.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
35.7 x 30 cm.
Circa 1790.
Engravings by F. Janinet (1752-1814).
Ref. Ryser, 1991, p. 232, fig. 266.
Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).
© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.

332 *Venus and Adonis.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
53 x 43.8 cm.
Circa 1800.
Engraving by Jean-Charles Le Vasseur (1734-1816) or by Pierre-Louis Surugue (1686-1762), after a painting by Boucher sold in 1773 to Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
Original painting is lost.
Musée Grobet-Labadié.
CETER, Ville de Marseille.

[Paintings **331** and **332** were in Andreas van Braam's collection.]

333 *Le mouton favori.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
52 x 41 cm.
Circa 1800.
Engraving by R. Gaillard, after painting by Ch. Eisen Fils (1720-1778).
Pair with **327**.
Kollenburg Antiquairs BV.

334 *Le mouton favori.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
51.5 x 40 cm.
Circa 1810.
Engravings by R. Gaillard, after painting by Ch. Eisen Fils (1720-1778).
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

335 *Le beau bouquet bien reçu.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
51.5 x 40 cm.
Circa 1810.
Engravings by R. Gaillard, after painting by Ch. Eisen Fils (1720-1778).
Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

336, 337 *Pastoral Scenes.*

Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frames.
27 x 35 cm.
Circa 1810.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York,
photo: Richard Goodbody.

338, 339 *Venus et Cupidon.*

Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frames.
31 x 25.5 cm.
338 Mezzotint by J. Collyer (1748-1827), printed in 1786 after *Venus and Cupid* by Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), painted in 1785.
Ref. Ryser, 1991, p. 228, fig. 261, 262.
Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).
© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg



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329



330



331



332 (detail)



333



334



335



336



337



338 (detail)



339



336 (detail)



337



338

340 *Mythological Scene: Diana in the Bath?*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
50.5 x 40.5 cm.
Röhsska Museet, RKM 1237:1-2-1952.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

341 *Mary, Joseph and the Child Jesus.*

Gilded wooden frame.
48.8 x 53.2 cm.
Signed: "Fatqua Canton Pinxit".
Ref. Howard, Ayers, p. 652, fig. 677.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

342 *Snake in the Grass.*

Chinese red lacquered wooden frame.
with black and gilded inner frame reverse glass painted.
31 x 26.6 cm.

Name card on the back side said: 'Fatqua, PAINTER in Oil and Water Colours, and on Glass, China Street, Canton. Prepares boxes of assorted colours for drawing at the lowest terms. FATQUA.'

Transposition of an engraving after *Snake in the Grass* painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) in 1785.

[So many artists as J. Raphael Smith (1751-1812), William Ward (1766-1826) ou H. Dawe (1790-1848) engraved this painting, that it's difficult to know which one was transposed by Cantonese painter. It's interesting to note that the nymph's breast, nude in the original painting and on engravings is covered by a veil in the Chinese reverse glass painting. Prudish touch of Fatqua? Or of the commissioner?]

Ref. Howard, Ayers, p. 645, fig. 671.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

343 *Hebe and Jupiter.*

Reverse glass painting.
Reverse glass painted inner frame with red and gilded foliations.
52 x 39.8 cm.
Circa 1815.
Signed: 'Fatqua Canton Pinxit.'
Ref. Crossmann, p. 214, fig. 74.
Courtesy Richard Milhender.

344 *Perseus Delivering Andromeda*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
50.5 x 40.5 cm.
Circa 1800.
After painting *Perseus delivering Andromeda* by Paolo Pagani (1661-1716).
Röhsska Museet, RKM 1237: 2-52.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

345 *Venus and Cupid.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
55.3 x 45 cm.
Engraving by Robert. A. Meadows (?-1810) after a drawing by Richard Westfall (1766-1836) in 1794.
Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 108, fig. 68.
All Rights Reserved.

346 *Sapho.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
60.3 x 47.5 cm.
Circa 1810.
After painting: *Portrait of Artist's Wife in Vestal of Sapho* by Richard Westfall (1765-1836).
Courtesy Roger Keverne.

Transpositions of Western artworks

Novels and the theater

[**347 to 352**: Paintings after illustrations of Goethe' novel: *The Sorrows of Young Werther*].

347 *Lotte and Her Siblings.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese oval gilt wood frames.
25 x 33.5 cm.
Engraving by Roze Le Noir after a drawing by Henry William Bunbury (1750-1811).
Photo: Wreting Bertil Nordiska Museet, Stockholm.

348 *Werther's First Encounter with Lotte.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese oval gilt wood frames.
25 x 33.5 cm.
Engraving by J. R. Smith (1752-1812) after a drawing by Henry William Bunbury (1750-1811).
Photo: Wreting Bertil Nordiska Museet, Stockholm.

349 *Albert, Lotte and Werther.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frames.
25 x 33.5 cm.
Engraving by Charles Knight after painting by James Northcote (1746-1831).
Photo: Wreting Bertil Nordiska Museet, Stockholm.

350 *Lotte at the Tomb of Werther.*

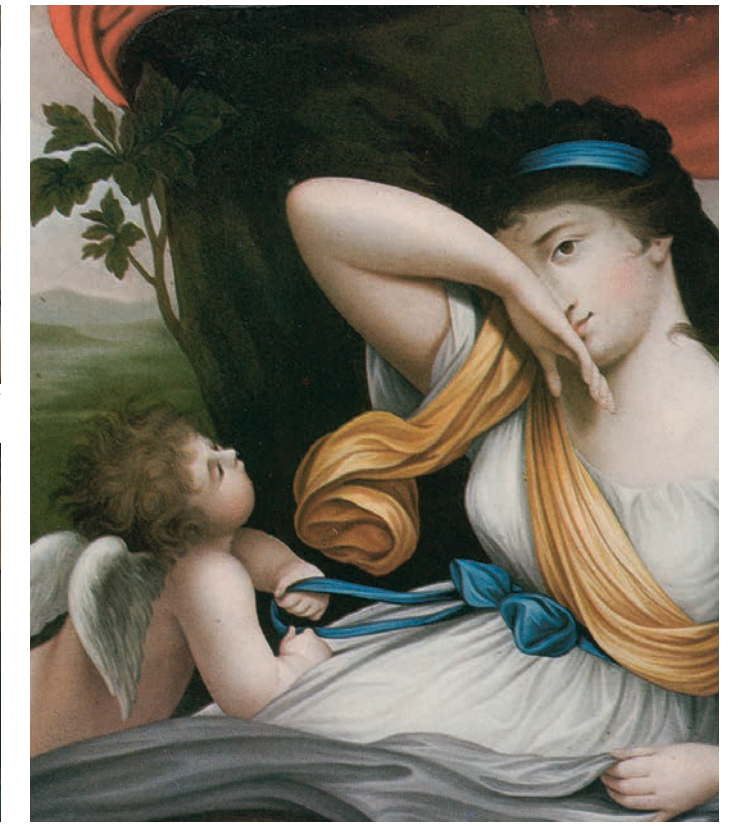
Reverse glass painting.
Chinese oval gilt wood frames.
25 x 33.5 cm.
Engraving by J. R. Smith.
Photo: Wreting Bertil Nordiska Museet, Stockholm.



340



340 (detail)



342 (detail)



341



342



343 page 135



344



345



346



347



348



349



350

351 *The Last Interview between Lotte and Werther.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilt wood frames.
29 x 23 cm.

Photo: Kristensen Karolina, Nordiska Museet, Stockholm.

352 *Albert, Lotte and Werther*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese round gilt wood frames.
Diam. 31.7 cm.
Circa 1790.

Engraving by Charles Knight after a painting by James Northcote (1746-1831).

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

353 *Virginie au tombeau*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
44 x 59 cm.
Circa 1810.

Hand written note on the back: 'Factua n°2.'

Engraving by Augustin Claude Legrand (1765-1815) after painting *Virginie au tombeau* by Jean-Frédéric Schall (1752-1825), one of the last scenes of *Paul et Virginie*, novel by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814).

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

[**354, 355, 356** Shakespeare Theater Scenes.]

354 *Hamlet.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
57.7 x 72.3 cm.
Circa 1800.

Engraving (1796) by Robert Thew (1758-1802) after today lost painting *Hamlet*, by Henry Fuseli (1741-1825).

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

355 *The Tempest.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
57.7 x 72.3 cm.
Circa 1800.

Engraving by Benjamin Smith (1754-1833), after a painting by George Romney (1734-1802).

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

356 *The Winter's Tale.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
58.4 x 73.6 cm.
Circa 1800.

Engraving by R. Thew (1758-1802) after William Hamilton (1750-1801).

Ref. Crossmann, p. 209, fig. 108, 109.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

Transpositions of Western artworks

Portraits

357 *La Dame au rouet.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
31.5 x 26 cm.
Circa 1780.

Engraving *Domestic amusement, The Lovely Spinner* by James Watson (1740-1796) after a painting by John Kaspar Heilmann (1718-1766).

Ref. F. Ryser, 1991, p. 229.

Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).

© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.

358, 359 *A Fair Nun Unmasked:*

transpositions of an engraving by John Wilson after Henri-Robert Morland (1716-1797).
Ref. Child, p. 371, fig. 834.

358 *A Fair Nun Unmasked*

Painted mirror.
Chinese lacquered and gilded wooden frame.
32 x 29 cm.
Circa 1785.

Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

359 *A Fair Nun Unmasked*

Painted mirror.
Hardwood frame.
33.6 x 29.2 cm.
Circa 1780.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.



351



352



353



353 (detail)



354



354 (detail)



355



355 (detail)



356



357



358



358 (detail)



359

360 *Caroline Walter*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
30 x 25 cm.
[Caroline Walter (1755-1826) was a Danish singer. Her agitated life, from divorces to exiles between Denmark and Sweden, finished as official singer at the Swedish Court.]

Photo: Kristensson Karolina, Nordiska Museet, Stockholm.

[**361** to **364**: *Women in Blue Hat*: these large blue hats were fashionable in Europe at the end of eighteenth century. **361**, **362**: same engraving.]

361 *Woman in Blue Hat with Child.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
29 x 24 cm.
Circa 1810.

Photo: Bukowskis Auctions.

362 *Woman in Blue Hat with Child.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
Unknown size.

Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum, photo: Persson Annika.

363 *Woman in Blue Hat.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
27.9 x 22.2 cm.
Circa 1820.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

364 *Woman in Blue Hat.*

Reverse glass painting.
European wooden frame.
28.6 x 34.9 cm.
Courtesy Walpole.

365 *Madame Récamier.*

Reverse glass painting.
Recent frame, inner frame painted under glass with gilded and red foliation.
31 x 24 cm.

Signed: *Falqua pinxit.*

Engraving (1801) by Richard Coway (1742-1821).

Ref. Jenyns, 1965, p. 155, fig. 94;

Jourdain, p. 108, fig. 67.

Photo: *China Trade, Romance and Reality*, 1979, rights reserved.

366 *Woman.*

Recent frame, inner frame painted under glass with gilded and red foliation.
31 x 24 cm.

Ref. *China Trade Romance and Reality*, 1979, p. 45, fig. A.

Photo: *China Trade, Romance and Reality*, 1979, rights reserved.

367 *Woman and Child.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese varnished wooden frame.
34.3 x 29.2 cm.
Circa 1800.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

368 *Princess Charlotte.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese varnished and gilded wooden frame.
45.4 x 35.7 cm.
After a drawing by James McArdell (1729-1765).

Courtesy Walpole.

369 *The Choice.*

370 *Hesitation.*
Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
37 x 29 cm.

Circa 1810.

Ref. Child, p. 375, fig. 843.

Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

371 *Hesitation.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
24.5 x 17 cm.

Engraving by William Ward (1766-1826), after *Hesitation*, painting by the same artist.

Photo: Wreting, Bertil, Nordiska Museet.

372 *Mandolin Player.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
33.6 x 26.6 cm.
Circa 1800.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.



360



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363



363 (detail)



364



365



366



367



367 (detail)



368



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373 *La Paix*.
Reverse glass painting.
European gilded wooden frame.
44.5 x 39.4 cm.
Circa 1790.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio

374 a, b et c *Portraits of English Aristocrats*.
Reverse glass paintings.
Gilded wooden frames.
(a) 14 x 11.4 cm, (b) 12 x 10.1 cm,
(c) 14 x 11.4 cm.
N°374b is signed: 'Fatqua Canton pinxit.'
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

375 *George Augustus, Prince of Wales, future George III*.
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
75.5 x 65.5 cm.
Circa 1810.
Two handwritten notes on the back side. First one: 'FARQUA, CANTON.'
Second one: 'This portrait was presented by Her Royal highness, Princess Charlotte to Miss France Lovatt, 1817. This portrait of His royal Highness George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales etc. etc. Grand Master of the Ancient Honorable Society of Freemasons, was sent to William Forsteem esq. by his much esteemed brother & friend, Edmund Larkin esq. of the Shakespeare Lodge No 131. Inspector of the Teas for the Hon. E I Company at Canton, with an earnest request that it should be humbly and respectfully presented from him to His Royal Highness as a specimen of Chinese Painting.'
© National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

376 *George II*.
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
55.9 x 38.7 cm.
Circa 1800.
Mezzotint (1760) by Charles Spooner (?-1767) after a german miniature by Jeremiah Meyer (1735-1789).
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

[**377, 378** *George Washington* after a painting by Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828).]

377 *George Washington*.
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
72.4 x 52.7 cm.
Courtesy Winterthur Museum.

378 *George Washington*.
73.7 x 55.9 cm.
Circa 1800.
Ref. Crossmann, pp. 219, 215, fig. 75 and 120;
Lee, 1984, p. 193, fig. 209;
Howard, Ayers, p. 647, fig. 672.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

Transpositions of Western artworks Courtesans

[**379a, 379b, 379c**: a courtesan woman with an extravagantly tall headdress, a diaphanous *négligée* and a seductive *décolleté* is sitting on a sofa. On her left is her book of appointments, which takes the form of a hanging display containing the visiting cards of her next gallants.]

379a *Jeune Femme assise sur un sofa*.
Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
34.5 x 24.5 cm.
Circa 1780.
Musée des Beaux Arts de Valenciennes.
Photo © RMN-Grand-Palais/Michel Urtado.

379b *Courtisan*.
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
52 x 46 cm.
© Bonhams.

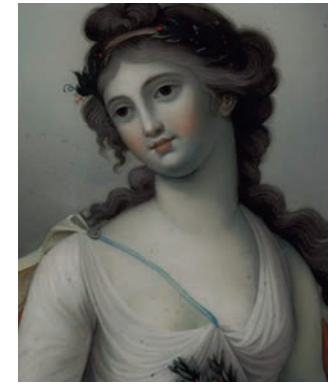
379c *Courtisan*.
Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
31.7 x 24.1 cm.
Circa 1790.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.

380 *Courtisan*.
Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
35.5 x 30 cm.
Circa 1800.
Photo: Bukowskis Auctions.

381 *Courtisan*.
Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
31.7 x 25.4 cm.
Circa 1800.
Martyn Gregory Gallery.



373



373 (detail)



374a



374b



374c



375



378



376



377 ⇐ page 100



379 ⇐ page 101



380



381



381 (detail)

[382, 383, 384: three paintings after same unidentified engraving.]

382 *Jeune femme dans un paysage.*
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
34.9 x 24.5 cm.
Circa 1810.

Musée des Beaux Arts de Valenciennes.
Photo © RMN-Grand-Palais/Michel Urtado.

383, 384 *Young Woman Unveiling Her Breast.*

Reverse glass paintings.
Chinese gilded wooden frames.
24 x 19 cm.
Circa 1810.

Photo: Bukowskis Auctions.

385 *Miss-Chance.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese oval gilded wooden frame.
26.9 x 21.7 cm.
Circa 1800.

Pair with an other painting, *Miss-Fortune.*
Musée Grobet-Labadié.
CETER, Ville de Marseille.

386 *Trying on My Brother's Breeches.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
29.2 x 24.8 cm.
Circa 1810.

Engraving by Richard Newton (1777-1798)
published in London in 1798.
Ref. Sparks, fig. B.

Photo: Rights Reserved.

387 *Risqué Scene.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
40 x 33 cm.
Circa 1775.

Ref. Howard, 1997, p. 151, fig. 195.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

388 *Risqué Scene.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
34.5 x 26.5 cm.
Circa 1810.

Photo: Wreting Bertil, Nordiska Museet.

[389, 390: same engraving and same reverse
glass painted inner frame.]

389 *At the Boudoir.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
36 x 28 cm.
Steiner's Collection, Inv. HGS 401.

Photo: Rights Reserved.

390 *Declaration of Love.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
31 x 22 cm.

Courtesy Stockholms Auktionsverk.

391 *The Unfaithful Sultana.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
31 x 22 cm.

Courtesy Stockholm Auktionverk.

392 *Vanity Fair.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
35.6 x 25.4cm.

[On the lintel of the door is graved 'Lovejoy,' name
of a famous brothel in London in the eighteenth
century. According P. Conner, this painting could
be after one the fashionable satiric engravings
named *Macaroni Fashion*. Matthew Darly was one
of the masters of this kind of paintings.]

Martin Gregory Gallery.

393 *Risqué Scene.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
Unknown size.
Musée Grobet-Labadié.
CETER, Ville de Marseille.

Sailors' farewells

[394, 395: both paintings are transposition of *The
Sailor's Farewell*, a very popular engraving in
Great Britain and United States.]

394 *The Sailor's Farewell.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
24 x 19 cm.
Circa 1810.

Ref. Crossmann, 1991, p. 212, fig. 121.

Photo: Bukowskis Auctions.

395 *The Sailor's Farewell.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
31.7 x 26.6 cm.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard
Goodbody.

396 *Crying on the Beach.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
31 x 26 cm.

[The flag is Swedish.]

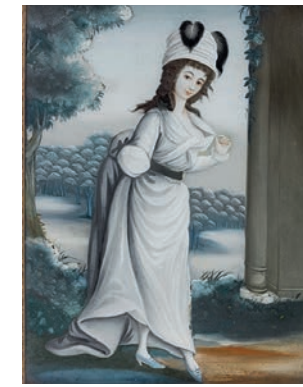
Ref. Kjellberg, p. 269.

Courtesy Göteborgs Stadsmuseum.

397 *Praying on the Seaside.*

Reverse glass painting.
Oval chinese gilded wooden frame.
49 x 42 cm.
Circa 1810.

Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.



382



383



384



385



386



387



388



389



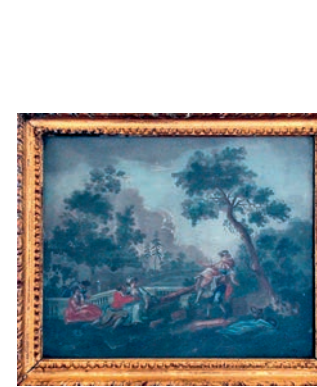
390



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392



393



394



395



396



397

Landscapes and seascapes

[398, 399 These paintings, after the same engraving, could be a scene of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe.]

398 *Soldier's Farewell.*

Reverse glass painting.
Round chinese gilded wooden frame.
Diam. 31.7 cm.
Pair with n°352.

The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

399 *Soldier's Farewell.*

Reverse glass painting.
Round chinese gilded wooden frame.
Steiner's Collection, Inv. Nr HGS 331.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

400 *The Smugglers: the Pursuit.*

401 *The Smugglers: the Creek.*
Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Oval chinese gilded wooden frame.
29 x 35 cm.
Author's collection.

402, 403 *Merchant Shipping off the Ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam.*

Pair of reverse glass paintings.
Chinese gilded wooden frames.
[402] 52 x 87 cm. [403] 52 x 84.4 cm.
Circa 1780.
After paintings by Abraham Stork (1635-1710).
The Chinese Porcelain Company, New York, photo: Richard Goodbody.

404 *The Tempest.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
40.2 x 50.5 cm.
Circa 1780.
Engraving *La Tempête* by Elisabeth Cousinet (1726- ?), after an eponym painting by C. J. Vernet (1714-1789).
Musée Grobet-Labadié.
CETER, Ville de Marseille.

405 *Night Scene.*

Reverse glass painting.
Chinese gilded wooden frame.
42 x 52 cm.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Galerie Sylvain Levy-Alban.

406 *Seconde vue des environs de Caudebec en Normandie.*

Reverse glass painting.
Gilded wooden frame.
30.4 x 43.7 cm.
Circa 1780.
Engraving *Seconde vue des environs de Caudebec* by Yves le Gouaz (1742-1816) after the painting by Philippe Hackert (1737-1807).
Ref. Ryser, p. 227, fig. 259.
Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).
© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.

407 *The Fischery.*

Reverse glass painting.
Unknown frame.
37.3 x 51.7 cm.
Engraving by William Woollett (1735-1785) after *The Fishery* by Richard Wright (1723-1775).
Ref. Steiner, 2009, p. 112, fig.45.
Steiner's Collection, Inv. Nr. HGS 338.
Photo: Rights Reserved.

408 *Radnor House.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame, George III.
61 x 92 cm.
Circa 1800.
Ref. Jourdain M., Jenyns S., p. 106, fig. 65.
All Rights Reserved.

409 *Windsor Castle.*

Painted mirror.
Gilded wooden frame.
55 x 77 cm.
Circa 1780.
Courtesy Sotheby's/Art Digital Studio.

410 *Vue d'Europe.*

Multiple layers of glass with reverse glass painting.
Recent varnished wooden frame.
26.5 x 35.5 x 4.7 cm.
Circa 1780.
Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).
© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.



398



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400 (detail)



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402 (detail)



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[411, 412 Engraving by John James Baralet (1747-1815) and Jean-Simon Chandron (1758-1846). Painting brought back in Great Britain by captain David Ockington.]

411 *The Apotheosis of Washington*

Reverse painting on glass.

66.3 x 47.4 x 16.2 cm.

Guangzhou, China.

Circa 1802-1805 after a print by J. J. Barralet and Simon Chandron which was published in Philadelphia in 1802, 1802-1805.

Peabody Essex Museum, Museum purchase, 1978 E81885.

© Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA; photo: Mark Sexton.

412 *The Apotheosis of Washington*.

Reverse glass painting.

Chinese gilded wooden frame.

85.1 x 62.9 cm.

Circa 1802-1805.

Ref. Crossman, p. 211, fig. 111.

Courtesy Winterthur Museum.

413 *Freedom*.

Reverse glass painting.

Unknown frame.

72.7 x 53.3 cm.

Circa 1810.

Text: 'When FREEDOM first her glorious DAY had won / She smiled on WASHINGTON her Darling Son / Mild JUSTICE claims him as his Virtues rise / And LOVE and HONOR still attend the Prize.'

Courtesy Winterthur Museum.

414 *Liberty*.

Reverse glass painting.

Unknown frame.

61 x 48.3 cm.

Circa 1800.

Engraving by Edward Savage (1761-1817), published in 1796 in Philadelphia, after an eponym painting by the same artist.

Ref. Crossmann, p. 217

M. McGinn, "Winterthur primer," *Reverse Paintings on Glass*, www.antiquefinearts, 2007.

Courtesy Winterthur Museum.

415 *Allegory of United States of America*.

Reverse glass painting.

Gilded wooden frame.

57.2 x 40.9 cm.

Circa 1810.

Courtesy Winterthur Museum.

416 *Battle of Lexington*.

Reverse glass painting.

Chinese gilded wooden frame.

44.5 x 60.7 cm.

Circa 1805-1810.

Engraving by Cornelius Tiebout (1777-1832) after a drawing (1798) by Elkanah Tisdale (1768-1835).

Ref. Crossman, p. 213.

Courtesy Winterthur Museum.

417, 418, 419, 420, 421 *January, April, May, September, October*.

Reverse glass paintings.

Gilded wooden frames.

65.5 x 49.5 cm.

Circa 1800.

Courtesy Winterthur Museum.

422 *Le barbier de village*.

Reverse glass paintings.

Varnished wooden frame.

18.3 x 21.4 cm.

Circa 1770.

Engraving signed Jorma, maybe François Basan (1723-1797), after a painting by David Teniers (1610-1690).

Ref. Ryser, 1991, pp. 230, 231, fig. 264, 265. Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).

© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.

424 *Nature morte, faisans*.

Reverse glass painting.

Chinese gilded wooden frame.

45.8 x 35.6 cm.

Circa 1790.

Ref. Ryser, 1991, p. 233, fig. 267.

Vitromusée Romont (loan from Vitrocentre Romont, collection R. et F. Ryser).

© Vitrocentre Romont, photo: Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg.

425 *The Nightmare*.

Reverse glass painting.

Chinese gilded wooden frame.

29 x 33 cm.

Circa 1810.

Engraving by Thomas Burke (1749-1815) after the eponym painting by Henry Fuseli (1741-1825).

Author's collection.



411



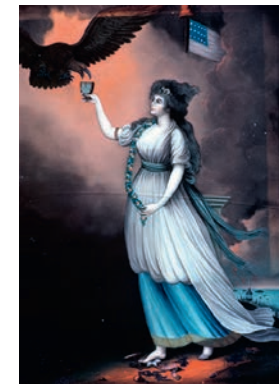
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413 (detail)



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Complementary corpus without photo

426 *Portrait of Mrs Ezechiele McShane*
(1777-1827).

Hand written note on the back side: "My mother Nancy Lynch (McShane) painted on glass in china in the year 1805 age 20 years afterward married Ezechiele McShane. Daughter of Edward and Ann Lynch Philadelphia Died April 28, 1829 in her 44 year".

The original frame: Inscribed in chalk: "Ann Lynch McShane Chinese 1805".
[Wife of american supercargo Ezechiele McShane, who stayed several times in Canton circa 1800. Transposition of a miniature presently in Library of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.]
Ref. Lee Jean Gordon, p. 158, fig. 152.

427 *George Harrison (?) and Alliance crew ?*
Handwritten note on the back side: "G. Harrison ..has'd of Spoilum in Canton, AD 1788".

Ref. Lee, p. 192, fig. 208;
Downs, Scherer, 1941, fig. 16.

428 *The Landing of Fathers at Plymouth.*
Engraving by Samuel Hill (1765-1809).
Ref. Crossman, p. 213, fig. 116.

429 *Definitive Treaty by the Hostage Princes.*
Engraving by Daniel Orme (1766-1832) after a painting by Mather Brown (1761-1831).
Ref. Crossman, p. 212, fig. 114.

430 *The Lost of the Halsewell Indiaman.*
Engraving by James Gillray (1757-1815)
published on June 4th 1787.
Ref. Crossmann, p. 212, fig. 113.

431 *The Widow of an Indian Chief watching the Arm of her deceased Husband.*
Mezzotint by John Raphael Smith (1752-1812)
after a painting by Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797).
Pair with n°**432**.
Ref. Crossman, p. 211, fig. 112.

432 *The Lady in Milton's Comus.*
Mezzotint by John Raphael Smith (1752-1812)
after a painting by Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-1797).
Pair with n°**431**.
Ref. Crossman, p. 210, fig. 110.

Appendix II Chinese reverse glass paintings in auctions 1720-1831

French Auctions

1757, Aug 17th.

Paris, Seller: Meignen.

- Six small paintings on glass.
- Four Chinese paintings on glass, golden frames.

1770, March 27th.

Remy Paris, Seller: de Bourlamaque.

- Chinese lady in a landscape*, painted on glass in China. 27 x 18 inches, 33 French pounds.
- Two other Chinese paintings on glass. 16 x 13 inches, 16 French pounds.

1773, July 21th.

Paris, Seller: Malenfant.

- Four Chinese paintings under glass, colored figures, 25 x 21 inches, 99.19 French pounds.
- Four other Chinese paintings under glass, 16 x 13 inches, 40.19 French pounds.
- Three Chinese paintings under glass, *Flowers and birds*, giltwood frame, 27 x 17 inches, 200 French pounds.
- Three Chinese paintings under glass, Chinese frame, lacquered frame, 25.7 French pounds.
- Two other figures (Chinese lady?) painted on glass, giltwood frame, 24.10 French pounds.
- An other pair of Chinese paintings on glass, *Lady with a pipe in a lanscape*, giltwood frame, 31 x 18 French inches and two other pairs of smaller Chinese paintings on glass, *Ladies*, 27 x 8 inches, 135.1 French pounds for 5 paintings.
- Little red fishes in water*, Chinese painting on double layer glass, giltwood frame, 10 x 14 inches, 24 French pounds.

1774, April 25th.

Paris, Seller: Caulet d’Hauteville.

- Three Chinese paintings on glass, *Chinese woman in her bedroom*, 290.19 French pounds.

1775, March 7th.

Glomy Paris, Seller: Brochant.

- Two beautiful paintings on glass, *Fruits and vases*, made in a finer way than usual in such Chinese workarts, 3 feets 4.5 inches x 1 foot, 7 inches, 60 French pounds, one sol.

1775, November 6th.

Remy Paris, Seller: Marquis de Gouvernet.

- Chinese Lady and Gentleman*, painted on glass, lacquered frame, 9 x 6 inches, 40 French pounds
 - Couple of golden pheasants*, painted on glass, 20 French pounds.

1777, April 9th to 12th and 14th.

Remy Paris, Seller: Prince de Conti.

- Chinese Lady seated on a sofa*, 120 French pounds.
- Flowers and pheasants*, two paintings on glass, 2 feet 7.5 inches x 2 feet, 211 French pounds.
- Ladies in their bedroom*, pair of Chinese paintings on glass, same size, 120 French pounds each pair.
- Young Chinese Ladies*, one smoking and the other seated with fan, on glass, 130 French pounds.
- Four paintings on glass, *Figures in a landscape*, 260 French pounds.
- Chinese Lady with flowers and a dog*, painted on glass, 15 French pounds

1777, February 25th.

Paris, Seller: M. de Montblin.

- Chinese woman picking up flowers*, painted on glass.

1782.

Durand Paris, Seller: M. de Montribloud.

- Painted mirror with golden and black lacquered frame, *Picture of a beautiful lady*, in a golden embroidered red dress in a landscape. he brings a basket of fruits, 1 foot x 8 inches.
- Two paintings on glass in Indian wood frame hands clasped, 9 x 7 inches. First one is a *Picture of a lady* in a embroidered red dress leaning on a balcony ; the second one is a painted mirror, *Picture of a lady*, in the same rich dress, standing, hands clasped in front of an altar.

1799, January 30th.

Baudouin Paris, Seller : J. Baptiste Pierre Lebrun.

- The Three Graces Resting in a Lanscape*, painted on glass in China, 10 Francs.
- Resting Lady*, painted on glass in China, 10 Francs.
- Composition with three and four Figures*, painted on glass in China, 12 Francs.

1818, April 17th.

Bonnefons Lavialle Paris, Seller : B. H. Loliée.

- Three Chinese paintings on glass, 8,15 Francs, *Man and Woman Seated on a Sofa*, painted on glass in China, painting amazing for its grace and expression.
- One similar painting (done in China, on glass).

English Auctions

1788, March 8th.

London, Seller:?

- Five(models), of heads and flowers, and two Chinese paintings on glass, 0.5£.

1797, December 18th.

London, Seller: Edmond Amstrong.

- Two, a fruit piece, and a Chinese painting of a lady on plate glass (THIS LOT : a fruit piece).

1799, January 28th.

Bruce London, Seller: David Martin.

- Curious Chinese painting on glass, coasting vessel with figures, black and gilt frame.

1709, February 15th.

Christie’s London, Seller: A. Van Braam.

Several chinese reverse glass painting were sold at this auction sale.

Unfortunately only one artwork is described as a reverse glas painting:

- A beautiful painting on oil, on a glass plate, 25 inches by 21 from the French engraving ‘la mère bien aimée.’

1807, August 13th.

Christie’s London, Seller: Hughes.

- A beautiful painting on glass of a Chinese villa and figures, in a gilt frame, 3.10£.

1807, August 26th.

Christie’s London, Seller: Charlotte Sophia,

Queen of England.

- A vase of flowers painted on looking glass and a pair of Chinese landscapes and figures on ditto, no frames.

1820, January 6th.

Bullock London, Seller:?

- A Chinese landscape and figures, with buildings, beautifully painted on plate glass, and framed.

1820, March 16th.

Bullock London, Seller:?

- Chinese Botanical subjects, beautifully painted on plate glass and partially silvered.

1827, December 21th.

Christie’s London, Seller: Major Scott Waring.

- Five Chinese Paintings, on glass, portrait of a child, in crayons, and three coloured Prints (THIS LOT :Five Chinese Paintings, on glass), 0.8£.

1830, June 5th.

Christie’s London, Seller: Frederic Benjamin King.

- A Chinese female in the interior of a chamber, painted on looking glass; and a group of flowers. The first 84 Lots in this Catalogue are the Property of Mr. Frederick Benjamin King, and are sold by Order of his Assignees) (THIS LOT : A group of Flowers), 1.15£ both lots.

1831, June 29th.

Phillips London, Seller: Captain Hall.

- Venus*. Painted on glass by a Chinese artist (copy by an anonymus Chinese artist after Tiziano), 8.0£.

1831, October 20th.

Foster, Seller: Charles Aders.

- Six paintings on glass, Chinese subjects.

Bruxelles Auction

1763.

Vleminckx Bruxelles, Seller: Nonce Molinari.

- A Chinese painting on glass, golden carved frame, 28 x 18 inches.
- Item , two Chinese painted mirror, golden carved frame, 31.1 x 19 inches.
- A pair of small Chinese paintings on glass, Chinese golden frame, 16.1 x 12 inches.

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In the Garden. Painted mirror. Gilded wooden frame, George III. 101.5 x 84.5 cm. Circa 1760. Ronald Phillips Ltd.

