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## CHINA ISSUE



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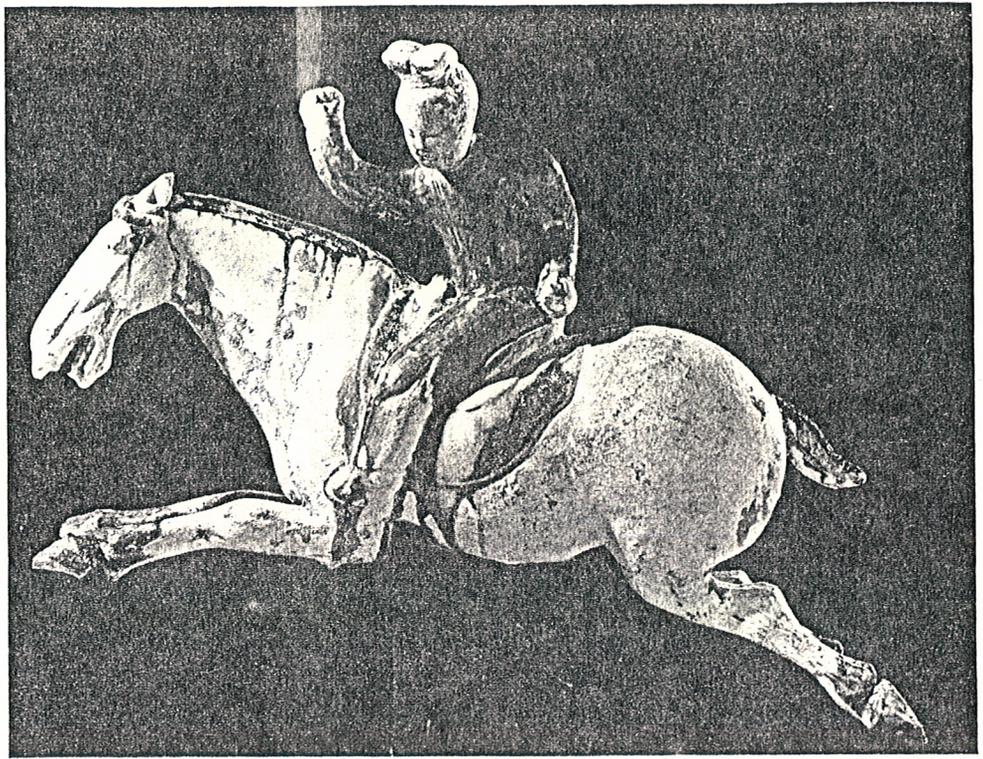
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Girl polo player  
in earthenware covered with lead glazes.  
Between 684 and 779.  
Length: 0.38 m.  
*Private Collection.*

## Chinese Ceramics

*By Michel and Cecile Beurdeley*

*Translated by Katherine Watson*

317 pages, 159 illustrations,  
111 colour plates, line  
drawings and maps

London: THAMES AND HUDSON

£25.00

This sumptuous publication, by two leading experts in Chinese ceramics, covers the early Neolithic period to the twentieth century. The authors have taken into account the recent, scientifically controlled, excavations in the People's Republic of China, which have provided so much information on precise attribution and dating. Special mention must be made of the general appearance of this book which makes it such a pleasure to read – the illustrations in particular are to be praised for their clarity and reproduction of colour.

## Studies in Connoisseurship

*Chinese Paintings from the  
Arthur M. Sackler Collection  
in New York and Princeton*

*By Marilyn and Shen Fu*

375 pages, numerous illustrations  
with colour plates

New Jersey: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

£18.40; \$45.00

Chinese application in literary tasks must always astonish us. The Essay in a Thousand Characters (no one of which was repeated) was written in the sixth century in a single night, though the writer's hair turned white with the effort; in the Ming dynasty, possibly a thousand years later, another scholar took seven days to write the Biography of a Great Man, using the same thousand characters,

but in a different rhyme scheme, and with no two characters in the same order as in the Essay. About 1698, Tao-chi, at the height of his powers as a painter and calligrapher, chose the Biography of a Great Man as a vehicle for a stunning display of his calligraphy in small, yet monumental characters; and now Shen Fu, aided by his wife Marilyn, has brought us *Studies in Connoisseurship*, in which thanks to the enterprise of Wen Fong and the indefatigable collecting of Arthur Sackler, forty-one works from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Princeton Art Museum are identified, dated and explained with exemplary thoroughness and clarity.

Shen and Marilyn Fu's discussions of individual paintings not only place the artist in the context of his background and circle of acquaintance, but are able to place all aspects of the work involved in its stylistic and creative context. This is of great importance in a field where western descriptions and judgements have often had to be made on the basis of insufficient evidence, on perhaps a handful of works representative only of one aspect of an artist's *oeuvre*. In this catalogue generous space has been afforded for visual comparisons of related works, as well as for copies and forgeries, some of which are included in the catalogue. The riches of Chinese painting which lie as yet undiscovered or only partially explored are attested by the number of works referred to where it is still necessary to put 'Collection unknown', as a single reproduction or pre-war publication may be our sole source of knowledge of works as important as for example, Li Kung-lin's 'Five Tribute Horses'.

The illustrations, whether in colour or black and white, are excellent; the occasional double-page spread offers the opportunity of grasping a work in original scale (as do several of the album leaves), and in many instances the juxtaposition on the same page of original and copy or forgery allows the reader to form an immediate judgement of quality before following the detailed arguments of the text. In this context, the discussion of calligraphy (especially the calligraphy of Tao-chi) provides for the reader, even if he does

Chinese Ceramics

Studies in Connoisseurship

View of Chinese Rugs

Eighteenth Century Gunfounding

Oriental Ceramics of the  
Age of Good Hope

The Baur Collection, Geneva

not know Chinese, a chance to appreciate the qualities on which this, hitherto the most elusive as well as the foremost of Chinese arts, may be judged. The comparative material includes a table lining up twenty-eight series, each of a single character (or two or more of similar structure) from a total of thirty of Tao-chi's inscriptions, arranged as far as possible in chronological order. He who wishes in future to assess an undated piece of writing by Tao-chi will have this tool, with its accompanying detailed analysis, to form an immediate preliminary opinion on its authenticity and probable date.

*Studies in Connoisseurship*, as its title implies, is not merely the catalogue of a collection: four introductory sections (Geography: The 'Eye Area' in Chinese Painting; Issues in Connoisseurship; Case Studies in Connoisseurship; Tao-chi) provide a necessary geographical background as well as detailed analyses of the many different categories into which a single painting may fall. The section on Tao-chi, both here and in the catalogue entries, is the largest and adds a great deal to what we already know of this seventeenth century master from the exhibition held at Ann Arbor in 1967. In particular, the study of his calligraphy will be of immense value to scholars and connoisseurs. By their work, the Fus, and those working with them in New York and Princeton, enable us to discover excellence and subtlety of meaning as well as great beauty in these works. No single theme links the paintings in the collection; they range from a landscape by Ma Wan (fourteenth century) to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's somewhat insipid flowers (eighteenth century) and two or three small album paintings of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Tao-chi's works apart, they include some examples which will certainly be outside the range familiar to western eyes: the delightful *A Donkey for Mr. Chu: Soliciting Pledges for Its Purchase* by Chiu Ying, is one instance; the gigantic *Snow-Capped Peaks* by an early Ch'ing artist hitherto unknown is another; Hung-jen's album of ten *Feng River Landscapes* a third. The collection grew even while the catalogue was being written, so that we are promised further publications by the authors on the works by Sheng Mao-yeh, Lan Ying, Cha Shih-piao, Fan Ch'i and Kung Hsien. In one case, this promise has already been honoured, in the publication by the Metropolitan Museum of *The Wilderness Colors of Tao-chi*, by Wen Fong and Marilyn Fu. Here in this brief notice there has been little space to do justice to the paintings themselves and the poems which accompany them; so to conclude let a line of Tao-chi's hint at the magical powers of brush and ink in the hands of a master:

*One disgusting parched worn-out brush!  
But add fragrant ink, and the luxuriant shadows  
hover...*

RODERICK WHITFIELD

## A View of Chinese Rugs

from the seventeenth century  
to the twentieth century

By H. A. Lorentz

60 illustrations and diagrams,

95 colour

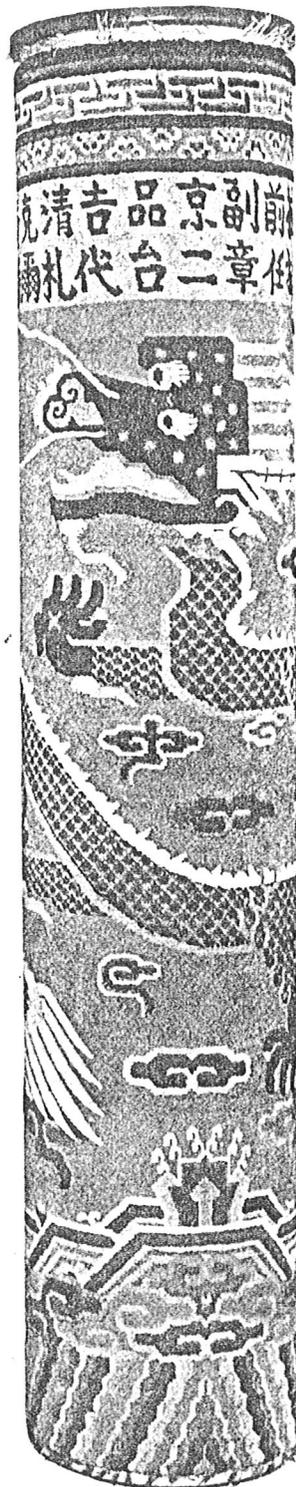
London: ROUTLEDGE AND KEGAN PAUL

£18.00

Dr. Lorentz lived in China from 1922 to 1949.

with his research in China and, more recently, in Europe has resulted in this fascinating study of a hitherto neglected field. His observations include manufacturing technique, the use of symbols, colouring and materials, as well as why Chinese rugs differ fundamentally from all other Oriental rugs. Also included are the peculiar style and setting of rugs from the border regions of Kansu, Suiyan, Tibet and Mongolia.

One of a pair of Chinese pillar rugs,  
1885 AD, with inscriptions  
in Mongolese and Chinese.  
3 feet 8 inches × 6 feet 4 inches.



## Eighteenth Century Gunfou

The Verbruggens at the Royal Brass Foundry  
A chapter in the History of Technology  
By Melvin H. Jackson and Carel de Beer  
183 pages, over 50 illustrations  
Newton Abbot: DAVID AND CHARLES  
£5.25

The title of this book is misleading. It is true that the processes of eighteenth century gunfounding as applied in Northern Europe are discussed in some detail, the book is primarily with the lives and works of the two bronze founders Jan and Pieter Verbruggen, father and son, who were appointed joint Founders at the Royal Brass Foundry, Amsterdam, in 1770. Not a very exciting story perhaps, though there is no lack of human interest in the account of their struggles and disappointments in their native land before coming to England; it is brought vividly to life by a collection of watercolours recently on exhibition at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. The drawings, which can be dated to c. 1770, with great accuracy and charm the operations of gun casting, boring and grinding, as conducted at the Woolwich Foundry under the Verbruggens' direction. Reproduced in a book with excellent technical notes and illustrations – but not, alas, in colour or with the clarity – they are not only documents of technological significance but present a puzzle to the art historian, for they are exactly two centuries after their creation and still await conclusive attribution.

The drawings are all of sunlit interiors of a still existing foundry which was built in 1770 from plans attributed to Sir John Smeaton. Technical and architectural details which were observed are nearly always brought into a pleasing composition of framed arches and patterns and vistas through open doorways. Figures of the workmen and overseers performing their tasks, are depicted with all the attendant dispassionate placidity of Dutch genre painting. Who then was the artist? Jan Verbruggen (1781), the father, is known to have studied with the minor Hague watercolourist Jan van Younger and throughout his life as a technical founder and engineer continued to produce ship drawings and maritime paintings to the extent of exhibiting in this country. The authors are confident that some of the drawings in the Sheepvaart Museum, Rotterdam, are consistent in style with the drawings. This, however, is an opinion which may be challenged by art critics. They are owned by a private archive in Holland. Family tradition has always associated the work of Jan's son Pieter (1735–1786), although there is evidence to suggest that he was an accomplished draughtsman more than an *Album Amicorum* of his student neighbour of the Verbruggens and master at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich was Paul Sandby (1725–1809), tempting to consider that Pieter may have become one of his pupils. Certainly some of the drawings suggest aspects of Sandby's mannerisms. But, of course, Sandby had accomplished pupils who would have had the requisite technical knowledge to produce a series of unusual watercolours.

So much for the Verbruggens. Enough examples of the Verbruggen