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Museums and Exhibitions

The Editor would be grateful if news of exhibitions, lectures, new publications and all information of interest to those devoted to the arts of the East could be sent to 27 Clarendon Drive, London S.W.15.

Studies in Connoisseurship

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

In an unprecedented and stunning exhibition which began at the Princeton Art Museum in December, 1973, "Studies in Connoisseurship" displays 41 Chinese paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler collection in the New York Metropolitan and Princeton, which cover the finer aspects of Chinese painting of the last 600 years.

The exhibition is a scholar's and a collector's dream, one the likes of which has not previously been staged in public. Being a study in the traditional aspects of connoisseurship—a subject hardly touched upon in the West—this endeavour brings to our attention the Chinese literati and true connoisseur's way of seeing: the inner eye which through long training and experience learns to distinguish the "hand" of one master from another. Far from relying on structural morphology alone (which can be trace-copied to perfect "likeness"), we are introduced to the finer dimensions of brush-and-ink (*pi-mo*) which in China identified an artist to a connoisseur the way a voice like Callas' or Sills', to an aficionado, cannot possibly be taken for that of Tebaldi or an imitator.

No less than six works are mounted in "multiple version", all having to do with Tao-chi: an album with its line-for-line copy, a handscroll with two less faithful copies, Tao-chi's admitted "copy" of a presumed lost Shen Chou painting, together with a less laudable deliberate fake, an album of four landscape leaves and accompanying calligraphy, with large photos of identical subject-and-text versions from Japan and Germany, and the famous "Letter to Pa-ta" with a large photo of its Japanese pretender. Not only this, a four-leaf landscape album with Tao-chi signature, seals and inscriptions identified as the work of the remarkable Chang Ta-ch'ien, is surmounted over photos of genuine Tao-chi works that had most probably provided the visual inspiration.

At the entrance to the exhibition a giant "eye-area" map of the Chiang-nan district is mounted, showing the various localities where artistic groups sprang up, thus adding the geographical dimension to the study of school-influences. Wherever possible, the artist is placed in his geographic-artistic milieu, and his work accompanied by photos of relevant works (whether space- or time-oriented.)

This presentation is quite the most admirable this reviewer has seen. In effectiveness of moulding of environment to subject matter, only the Yamatane Museum in Tokyo, designed to display the difficult, specialized art of Nanga painters and their modern followers, comes to mind. The usually cluttered space of the lower Princeton gallery was transformed into a serene, spacious and well-illuminated area for contemplation, for comfortable entry into the painter's world. There was neither the gaping lugubrious chill of the Met, nor the reverberating cross-fire of objects, usual irritant of smaller halls.

The architect of the display is none other than the architect of "Studies" itself, the brilliant but relatively unknown young man from the National Palace Museum, Fu Shen—surely far-and-away the forerunner among younger scholars. In the inner spaces of the lower galleries which usually effect claustro-

phobia, Fu faced the problem of mounting 13 hanging scrolls, 6 handscrolls (stretched full-length in standing cases), 6 fans mounted as album leaves, and 16 albums (which total 148 leaves in all).

Mounting the exhibition was no routine task, involved as it was with forgeries and copies as well as stylistic lineages which the authors demonstrate in series and in parallel. It is a uniquely aesthetic and edifying exhibition. Moreover, it is a terribly "Chinese" exhibition, leaning heavily toward the *wen-jen* or scholar-painter camp, where even works from Lan Ying (who is rightly put out of the Che School and restored among the *wen-jen*) were exquisite exercises in reverence to "Southern School" masters; and Ch'iu Ying's figure-painting comes straight out of Li Kung-lin. (In "school" homogeneity, therefore, the Sackler Collection faces the same "threat of monotony" as do most Japanese collections where works of the opposite camp dominate: where ubiquitous "coarse and vulgar brushwork" of Che or monk painters give a totally different "flavour" to Chinese painting.)

The Fus' problem was: how to line up 173 works of various dimensions but which to a man bow to the brush-conscious tradition of the literati, where sensitive dry lines acknowledge membership to the élite and where poetry and encomiums are de rigueur.

A saving fortune is that 15 of the 41 works exhibited are by the irrepressible genius who embodies the best of both Great Traditions—Reverence and Irreverence—Tao-chi. Many of the works are in lively colours imbued with dynamic motion and breathtaking invention. Indeed Tao-chi is the superstar of the show and graces it with choice samples from the last 30 years of his creative life. He is also the main subject of a detailed and impressive study which sets a new high watermark in the study of Chinese painting and calligraphy. (Although the so-called "catalogue", "Studies in Connoisseurship" will be treated in a separate article, let it be said here that it contains the most lucid, the most cogent and compelling dissertation on calligraphy ever written in any language. At \$45 from Princeton University Press it is not only a must, it is a bargain when one considers what is learned in graduate schools about calligraphy at several thousand times the price.)

To return to the exhibition, Fu Shen suggested, dickered, pleaded, fought for—and finally won—permission to back each work with a dark brown fabric panel running the height of the museum walls (scrolls singly and albums as a set). This ingenious device not only gave each work its containment, it served to "pace" the works, setting them at discreet distances that are easy on the eye and inviting to the mind. Fu further flattened the works with plexiglass plates screwed onto the brown panels. In spite of this, the lighting was flawless, without the slightest glare anywhere. A miracle by standard museum standards.

I have never been in an "environment" as inviting and congenial as this, (with the single possible exception of the Yamatane—a museum made by "experts"). The gallery was bright but not garish, and the dark verticals running at gentle intervals gave the paintings dignity, a time-space each its own, a sovereignty unthreatened by its neighbour. For this Fu Shen must be cited as exhibitor-extraordinaire.

The exhibition is ostensibly a display of important Chinese paintings in the Sackler Collection. But like the Calligraphy show of winter, 1971, the Met's C. C. Wang show this Spring, it is yet another showcase for the discerning eye and purchasing



Fig. 1. Album leaf from *Plum Branches*; Tao-chi. c.1705–1707. Ink on paper, from an album of eight leaves.

muscle of Wen Fong, the Sol Hurok of Chinese Art events. Three precedent-setting exhibitions within 24 months reveal Fong both as a man of impeccable taste for quality (authenticity aside), and as a formidable buyer of Chinese art for whom there are few equals. As entrepreneur he is unique. As talent-scout he is both sharp and decisive: he managed to spirit away the crown prince of the Kukung scholars. In Fu Shen Fong recognized a superior eye, training and experience to which he has had the grace and wisdom to defer. For this too Fong is to be congratulated.

Speaking as critic alone I found most of the works a delight to behold, of superior interest and quality. As previously mentioned, a good deal of *wen-jen*-derived aesthetic governed the artists, and brush-consciousness is keen. There is much of what is called in the trade “calligraphic brushwork” and, I would add, truly *good* brushwork most of the time. There is no mistaking the exalted, rarified atmosphere of the literati’s studio—hallmark of the élite. One breathed cultivation in the galleries.

Legends accompanying the displays spared no pains to explain something of the workings of the brush (wrist-movements, pressure, etc.—though I wonder how much could possibly mean anything to one unused to Chinese brush-practice). Highlighted also are stylistic tradition, idols and followers, not to mention the vital locales. Thus each artist is firmly planted in a human time-place setting and artistic milieu. These too, were tastefully mounted next to the paintings.

Many pieces are of great beauty, meriting several revisits, growing more irresistible with each new encounter. Chief among these are Tao-Chi’s works from his mature period such as a dramatic 8-leaf album of ink-plums-and-poetry (Fig. 1). Each leaf is a boldly composed work, a striking and effective arrangement of branches, blossoms and poetry (written in a distinctive suitable calligraphic script). The artist had set

very strict limits on this exercise of theme-and-variations, using the same highly absorbent paper throughout, most branches are done in double ink layers, one grey and one black, and punctuated with resounding dots. Only two leaves showed *double*-petalled blossoms. In basic schema two leaves are L-shaped and inverted, two N-shaped in a more curved form, two sprinkle inwards from the left, one a downward splash broken (reflected moonlight?) in the middle and another, using an essential V-shape, indicating recession in space.

But the “simplicity” of conception in this case marks the experienced Master. Each leaf is a tour-de-force in abstract composition, in juxtaposition of ink-tones, space and void, and the inter-relationship of plum-patterns and calligraphy: each leaf is a lively dialogue, a *gigue*. All eight leaves (with the possible exception of “E” which lacks some of the inner sap) must have been done in one sitting, as the same lively spirit carries through every stroke: each branch thrusts forth with palpable life-energy, growing with the vital juices flowing before our very eyes. (In the catalogue the Fuses are a bit too scholarly, I feel, in devoting so much attention to the content of the poems which are often totally unrelated except for the word “plum” and which were clearly of little import to the artist as he sat thinking of old verses through which to write calligraphy. How often calligraphers must have bemoaned the inevitability that calligraphy meant words and words had to mean something concrete—when their artistic intent was purely abstract!) This album is dated 1705 and belongs to his last period. It is among the more inspired and magnificently successful plum paintings in his oeuvre. A hoary vigour, a brusqueness which pierces through the thoroughly accomplished brushwork reveals also a touch of harshness (perhaps a stiffness in the joints?) which permeates all his later works.

Another breattaker is the 1707 album of 12 leaves in colour, “Reminiscences of Nanking (Chin-ling)” (also of the Princeton

Art Museum) (Fig 2). Unlike the strict theme-and-variations mentioned above, here no holds are barred. We are treated to open vistas of lake-scenes, an intimate view of men "washing inkstone", a magical scene of a rider ascending a gorge along rapids, with a swirling cloud of a tail-wind rising to envelop him. Tao-chi's composition here reaches the stage of *distillation* which some take for mere reduction; the expressive range and vigour are among the most startling and poignant. There is an inimitable grandeur mixed with resignation, and nostalgia is held in check by dignity. The brushwork is strong and weighty throughout. Strokes are stubbier, faltering (as a giant falters) here and there, their vigour piercing through the paper—but gone are the long, lyrical, sustained and limpid "solo lines" of

the forties, (such as in "The Echo" of 1677-8), those comparable to Pa-ta. This is the heroic farewell of a mighty warrior. Another noteworthy Tao-chi landscape album (11-leaves, one of the inscriptions, also of Princeton) is dated 1701. This is interesting not only as another later work, (lines already harden, though never losing momentum), but all ten landscapes are done uniformly in very fine, dry lines and dusted with the palest of subtle pastels. All the landscapes employ favourite "trademark" motifs, loaf mountains, upsidedown pines, wind-blown layers of vegetation, but the inscription in this case appears only at the end: a relief to those who are dismayed by Tao-chi's versifications.

One of the most striking works is a brand-new-looking



Fig. 2. Album leaf from *Reminiscences of Nanking*; Tao-chi, dated 1707. Ink and colour on paper, from an album of 12 leaves.

Tao-chi album containing 12 leaves of "Vegetables and Flowers" belonging now to the Met, which the authors have dated c. 1697. Its vibrant coloration and its Ta-feng-t'ang provenance have scared off buyers for years. Yet each leaf is a memorable masterpiece. There is great variety in techniques, in calligraphy scripts and styles, subject matter and compositional schema. It is a singularly exhibitionistic work, with little restraint or *han-hsi*. The calligraphy is masterful and sometimes with uncommon abandon and "show". In leaf D "On Painting Bamboo" in ink-monochrome, a sprig of young bamboo overhangs a six-line treatise written in a fluid running script which resembles a gurgling stream flowing over boulders. The changing character-size perfectly echo the alignment of big-and-small in bamboo-leaf size. The entire leaf is done in ink of one single intensity, without permitting the slightest gradation. This is all the more remarkable when we remember what the master can do when he pulls all stops and lets loose his varieties of black and greys. Here he shows sheer *brush*, ink is held in abeyance. Some of the other leaves are sheer ink—rather, sheer colour, and no "brush": "River Bank of Peach Blossoms" is an aggregation of colour splash-dots which anticipates Parisian activities by some 200 years.

Fong's old war horse, "Tao-chi's Letter to Pa-ta-shan-jen" is trotted out and given suitable prominence, supported by enlarged photographs of the Chang Ta-ch'ien forgery in the Nagahara Oriharu collection in Japan. Calligraphy is a subject which has lacked adequate attention in the West, let alone

another authentic manuscript of poems by Tao-chi in Shanghai, published in 1962.

"The forger of the Nagahara letter has been identified as Chang Ta-ch'ien, whose album after Tao-chi also appears in this exhibition (no. XXXV)."

For the viewing public Marilyn Fu brings in just enough scholarship to open the eyes to calligraphy. The Fus discuss brushwork in detail and at great length in the catalogue, however. The legends bear an admirable balance of come-on and real meat. This too is a feature which has made this exhibition so successful. In another legend the Fus dip more deeply into this elusive art: in the adorable little Tao-chi album leaf "The Echo" (*K'ung shan hsiao-yü*) bearing a Su Shih couplet and dated 1677-8:

"... Round, sensitive brushstrokes in dry ink carve out the mountains and clouds and the trees and stone bridge are drawn in fine, tremulous lines. This is the earliest painting by Tao-chi in a Western collection; it tells us much about his artistic development in Hsüan-ch'eng, Anhwei, before he moved to Nanking. "When this leaf was first shown in 1969 it was thought by some to be a work of Cha Shih-piao* (1615-1698). But Cha's brush-style . . . is more angular and wet, with none of the dry, flowing strokes appearing here and in other Tao-chi works. We later discovered this leaf to be a part of a genuine Tao-chi album dated 1677-78, which was exhibited in Hong Kong in 1970. Painting style, calligraphy, seals, measurements, and materials of this leaf all



Fig. 3. *Searching for Plum Blossoms*: handscroll; Tao-chi, dated 1685. Ink and slight colour on paper.

calligraphy forgeries. Here is how the Fus tackled the problem in writing the legend for the exhibition:

"... A second letter to Chu Ta, now in the Nagahara collection, Japan (see photographic enlargement), has created some confusion because its contents point to a different birth date. The falsity of that version and the authenticity of the Sackler letter is based on the following points (see exhibition catalogue, pages 210-224, for full details and illustrations). (1) The letter format of Tao-chi's genuine letters is such that the form of address, "hsien-sheng", is above the margin as a sign of politeness; (2) the signature in his genuine letters show that he writes his name "Chi", quite small, placed to one side of the column, and in the correct cursive form—none of these features appear in the Nagahara version; and (3) the 1641 birth date is verified by

agree with the other leaves of this album."

In this way we are introduced to some of the subtler aspects of brush-work in painting: dry, wet, flowing, halting, angular, rounded, dimensional, flat, oblique—all part of the inner consciousness of the artist-connoisseur—but "Greek" to the viewer unfamiliar with writing calligraphy. I well remember this bewitching Hong Kong album in 1970. It reveals the artist already secure in his techniques and, though not entirely original, sure of his inner vision. In this early period, surely freer from illness, his brushlines are flowing, extended without a break in inner vitality, the tensile strength which gives it so much dynamism virtually sings of its own grace: here it approaches that of Pa-ta, and is a direct tribute to the Yüan masters who, so to say, opened the Pandora's box for the calligrapher-would-be-painter.

However, thrilling as the brushwork in this album leaf (and its companion leaves in Hong Kong) may be, sharp disappointment sets in when we are confronted with No. XX "Flowers and Figures", and album of eight leaves in ink and occasional colour, dated by an accompanying colophon to 1695—nearly twenty years after the above album!—which is disconcerting in its insipidity, its lacklustre brushwork, its clumsy composition and its singularity for want of other genuine Tao-chi works of like poverty. The series is surmounted over a line-for-line "copy" (the authors assume, of itself) done by the 20th century Tao-chi devotee Li Jui-ch'ü, brother of Chang Ta-ch'ien's teacher Li Jui-ch'ing. The "copy" is not really drastically inferior—in the "Bamboo" leaf it's a toss-up—though the calligraphy is indeed even worse than the "original".

Here we come to the art-historical problem: when confronted with two identical works stamped with the same seal/signature, must the relatively "better" one necessarily be the "authentic" one?

Definitely not, the Fus emphasize. Quality and authenticity are separate matters. The viewers' preferences have nothing to do with authenticity. Each artist has not only his range of expressive qualities (especially for a giant like Tao-chi), he has his good and bad moments too. It is perfectly possible for a great master to produce a disaster. The Fus have spent three solid years studying the Sackler collection and have not given the stamp of "authentic" upon this album lightly but only upon, in Fu Shen's words, "conclusive evidence" of authorship. With due respect for Fu's profound knowledge and long experience, I cannot accept this piece and will discuss it further in a separate article. As it is, their discussion of No. XX in the catalogue is only the classroom demonstration of how Li's work is "inferior" to that of "Tao-chi's" but they do not take the "original" and its many elements and compare them with other genuine Tao-chi plums, figures, mass-void dynamics calligraphy, etc.

Another at first "suspicious" work, No. XVIII, "Searching for Plum Blossoms", an ink-monochrome handscroll with a long inscription including nine poems, dated 1685 (Princeton Art Museum), on the other hand, is a different matter entirely (Fig. 3).

What offends one at first is the ghastly brushwork which upon closer inspection turns out to be retouching. The composition is bold, original, wild and unprecedented, full of expressive vigour, and the untouched, original brushwork is vibrant, piercing through the paper like a rapier. Left almost entirely un-retouched is the stunning calligraphy, a rare example of Tao-chi in marvellous tight restraint and such long sustaining power. Each stroke in his archaized character is drawn with weight and deliberation, withholding the least ostentation. A deliberate awkwardness (*cho*) which inspires that beloved antique feeling (*ku*) is maintained throughout.

There are two other versions of this composition, one in Princeton of rather recent vintage and of such obvious inferiority that it has apparently been a delight to teachers and students when considering forgeries.

Another gorgeous Tao-chi album from the Princeton group is an eight-leaf coloured one of flowers dated by the Fus c. 1698. In spite of repairs much of the freshness remains in these lively portraits of nature's inhabitants: hibiscus, plum, lotus, and a luscious interpretation of peonies whose black borderlines dance upon their pink petals when still wet, seeping into the paper. (This album is close to the 1695 album in date and subject matter—they appear hardly works of the same eye or century . . .)

Another exciting duo is a signed, *genuine copy* of a Shen Chou work by Tao Chi, and a similar anonymous attempt which is a *genuine fake*, side by side. Tao-chi captures Shen Chou's appearance and some of his elongated cadences and spirit of quietude in the calligraphy. And yet Tao-chi imposes his own expansive imprint on this presumed lost "Bronze Peacock Ink-slab", where as the anonymous forger produces a mannered, tight, pathetic little "copy" in which only the "signature" "Shen Chou" brings that master to mind.

There are also less impressive Tao-chi works, "Orchid, Bamboo and Plum" c. 1700, and "Bamboo, Vegetables and Fruit" dated 1705 which equally have been thoroughly studied by the Fus. At best they show the artist in some of his weaker

creative life of a genius.

An incredible "find" is No. XXIV "Eulogy of a Great Man", a handscroll of calligraphy written in the small regular *hsiao-k'ai* in the Ni Tsan manner. The text is a variant of the thousand-word-classic and represents probably the longest calligraphy scroll by Tao-chi in a Western collection. Remembering Tao-chi as the volatile, inventive giant whose inscriptions so often change style with every line—and then looking at the sustaining power contained in this scroll—we recognize another awesome dimension of this man.

For me, as I imagine for most viewers, Tao-chi was the focal point which set the pace, against whom all else was seen. This is unfair to the other artists represented. For among their 26 works there are many unforgettable pieces.

There is an exquisite Wen Cheng-ming "Chrysanthemum, Bamboo and Rock" scroll dated c. 1535 where the artist who usually works in the meticulous, effete manner his school later perpetuated, here lets loose his basically harsher brush and successfully creates a standing, rocky rock, behind which a neatly grouped clump of chrysanthemums blush. A 10-leaf landscape album in pale dry ink by Hung-jen is dated 1660 and reflects the influence of Mt. Huang-shan upon the artist. There is a rare Ni-style scroll by Ch'eng Chia-sui, and a charming and rare Ch'iu Ying hand scroll illustrating the saga of friends rallying to buy a donkey for a Mr. Chu, followed by important inscriptions by pledgers such as T'ang Yin, Chu Yün-ming and other Su-chou luminaries of the day (this is a social document as well).

There is a splendid and unusual Lan Ying album done in the manner of the ancients. This is not his usual craggy, too-swift angular brushwork but a tender, reverent brush caressing the paper, the brush held at ease, reserving the sharper bites only for the leaves after Li Ch'eng, Huang Kung-wang (but why?), and Wu Chen (to whom I find him best suited). His lyrical fabrication "after Kao K'o-kung" is reproduced in actual size/colour and may be framed.

Homage is paid to the Wen-Shen tradition with a fan by Ch'ien Ku, "Scholar under Banana Plant" which is quite free and imaginative. Toward the end of the line we see the dying gasp of this effete heritage in a "twee" mounted fan by Ch'ien Tu, "Contemplating Poetry by a Snowy River" whose value is mainly academic in providing the "missing links" we search for so thirstily.

A Met album of eight leaves by Fan Ch'ü of landscapes exemplifying the Nanking School "... contains a sentiment that is both poetic in feeling and realistic in detail. The use of meticulous brushstrokes and colour to create volume and shade are unusual in Chinese painting, where continuous outline is more common . . . A Precocious work, this album was painted when Fan was thirty-one . . . He shows a sensitivity to Western techniques of spatial recession and cast light, which suggests that he was acquainted with the European prints and paintings brought to Nanking by the Jesuits . . . In his artistic interests, Fan resembles Kung Hsien . . . the leader of the Nanking circle . . ."

This is a dull work. It is minutely described, covered with moss-dots transformed into a Fan K'uanesque rock texturization. Every inch is filled, even the "void" seems heavy with planning. In colour and composition it recalls more Wu Li (a Catholic convert) but with none of the latter's freshness and impetus. It is a purely pedantic work. Borrowing all the elements of poetry apparently within his grasp, Fan alas lacks the vital ingredient: poetry itself.

But an exciting, original and variegated 6-leaf album by Kung Hsien done close to his death immediately upgrades the reputation of the Nanking School. Full, as Fan Ch'ü, of dots and dashes, Kung's masses cohere magnetically and his voids have a whoosh of vacuum that drags the viewer asunder. His energetic, parallel and numerous dots form a "continuo", a "basso sostenuto" which tightens each work with inner dynamism. Kung Hsien, Tao-chi, after Tung Ch'ü-ch'ang and Wang Hui, understood the power of repeated, insistent parallel strokes, executed like a drum solo to set a particular pulse. More than "leaves", "grasses" or "moss"—they are compelling abstract forces which polarize the composition and pull in all the elements. Few later painters understood this.

On behalf of primarily *scholar* painters, who do manage to creep above pedantry, mention must be made of an exquisite album of delicate and fascinating landscapes and flowers by Wan Shou-ch'i. His paintings, while not bold or original are not dull, and we note in particular, more than the composition, the careful, loving and aristocratic brushwork in both painting and calligraphy. Two leaves depict flowers superbly in *pai-miao*—and here we see China's ideal of meritocracy fulfilled. For at the other end of the room is a handscroll of flora in *pai-miao* by the indefatigable Emperor Ch'ien-lung who reveals himself, next to the loyalist Wan, in "brush-and-ink" at least, a commoner.

Many other works not discussed here are nonetheless worth seeing, and the catalogue "Studies in Connoisseurship" should be ordered from the Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 08540, immediately. It is a *must* for all who love Chinese art and at \$45, I repeat, it is a bargain. Ideally you should have read the book before going to the exhibition.

This monumental work has advanced the field by at least ten years, a short review following will demonstrate why. To my mind, the exhibition, spectacularly mounted as it was, is but an illustration to the Fus' fabulous "Studies".

There have been innumerable requests that the show return to Princeton. Many Princetonians are peeved as it slipped by during their holidays away. Perhaps by late 1975 it will be possible to have the show back where it was first conceived. By then most Princetonians will have read the book and the exhibition will doubly meaningful.

JENNIFER S. BYRD

Princeton: December 1973–February 1974
Cleveland: 10th July–2nd September, 1974
Los Angeles: 15th September–3rd November, 1974
New York: Spring, 1975

*It is perhaps the first time that the correct pronunciation of this artist's name has been spelled out in the West.

Sir Alan Barlow's Chinese Collection at Sussex University

It is a pleasure to record that the famous Barlow Collection of Chinese ceramics, bronzes and jades, given to Sussex University by the late Sir Alan Barlow, Bt. and Lady Barlow, opens there this June. It will be on show in a specially designed gallery in the Library building of the University, equipped with spacious show-cases allowing for a large proportion of the Collection to be on view at any one time. Study facilities will be provided for research workers by appointment with the Curator.¹ It is intended to vary what is on view each term to show different aspects of the Collection.

The bequest brings to Sussex almost all Barlow's acquisitions—over four hundred ceramic items alone. Readers will remember Professor Michael Sullivan's extensive published catalogue of 1963.² Also at Sussex now there are thirty ceramic pieces not catalogued by Sullivan, together with the bronzes and jades, also somewhat augmented since the appearance of the catalogue.

With the Barlows the term "private collection" had seemed in one sense beside the point because for some years before Sir Alan's death in 1968, Boswells, the Barlows' home at Wendover, became open house for scholars and collectors. Sir Alan also lent indefatigably to exhibitions in Britain, France, Italy, Canada and the United States. Twenty-two Barlow pieces were in the First Chinese Exhibition at Burlington House in 1935–36. Sixty-nine were shown by the Arts Council in 1953 and toured Bolton, Birmingham, Newcastle, Norwich and Southampton. The Collection provided key pieces for series of Oriental Ceramic Society exhibitions culminating in the Jubilee year of the Society in 1971. As many as sixty items

(as Sullivan records) were lent for study and display to the White Wares Study Group of the Society in 1961–62.

But if this generosity makes the term "private collection" seem a misnomer, in another sense it is exact. For this is a highly *personal* collection. In spite of its extraordinary spread and equally remarkable depth in certain areas, it is full of private enthusiasms: there is none of the "gap-filling" mentality here. This article will return to these enthusiasms and in particular Barlow's attitude to collecting, for he had decided views on this.

In another sense too the Barlow Collection, in "going public", will continue to bear a particular personality as public collections built up from heterogeneous origins can hardly do in the same way. Not only can it be seen to be the product of personal taste and enthusiasm, but it is also to be at Sussex in a total sense a permanently preserved landmark of collecting. How many private collections have had the good fortune to stay not merely intact but as geographical entities? Rather as in very different contexts and at different levels William Weddell's collection at Newby or John Soane's in his own house remain as monuments to their creators and their respective times, so Barlow's, like David's, will increasingly be seen as a collection of *its* time, as the fruit of knowledge and flair applied to a unique phase of discovery—the discovery in the West of early Chinese ceramics—which came and went in the first half of the 20th century. In itself that phase is worthy of visible commemoration, as the activities of so many gifted individuals—Eumorfopoulos, David, Raphael, Schiller, Ingram and the rather younger Barlow—were bound up in it.

Barlow played an influential part in that eventful and now strangely remote Age of the Collector. The T'ang amber-glazed jar from his collection used as the colour illustration on the cover of the Oriental Ceramic Society's 1971 Jubilee exhibition, commemorating fifty years of the Society, was an apt choice for more than one reason. For twenty-eight of those years Alan Barlow had been a member of its Council, and for eighteen of them (1943–61) he had been the Society's president, a record unlikely to be equalled, as Sir Harry Garner has remarked.³ Barlow succeeded in the presidency to the pioneer collector of the early wares, George Eumorfopoulos, and the pioneer exponent of their historical sequence, R. L. Hobson, whose centenary has just passed. Barlow's reflections on the roles of collecting and scholarship in the appreciation of the arts and of Chinese ceramics in particular, embodied in a paper presented to the O.C.S. in 1937 and reprinted on his retirement from the presidency,⁴ make it clear that he regarded the collector's role as a social one. True collecting has its corollary in the dissemination of knowledge and the increase of awareness in others; by such an aim it is distinguished from mere private accumulation. "Purposive" collecting in Herbert Read's sense⁵ was very much Barlow's kind of collecting, the purpose being the spreading and sharing of knowledge. The exercise of "Linnaean assiduity" in forming a collection of structured balance Read saw as a necessary attribute of the professional museum man collecting for the purpose of educating. Barlow, working from the standpoint of an amateur in the literal sense of the word, nevertheless had something of the same aim, and his collection is a framework rich in horizontal and vertical spread, in its adumbration of relationships between, say, Ting and *ch'ing-pai*, between the T'ang potter and his Sung successor.

But when this had been said, it is still the personal enthusiasms which animate the structure: the black wares of North China and the succession of *ch'ing-pai* types stand out here. Masterpieces cluster in the celadon and *kuan* range, one of the richest areas of the Collection (nearly a hundred examples, Figs. 1 and 2): but besides these there are atypical or problem-pieces such as the distinguished green-glazed bowl with Ting-like decoration (Sullivan C. 139, pl. 142d), which have none of the indifferent execution often found in problem-pieces. There are also pieces of the utmost singularity, as unexpected, probably, as anything the recent discoveries of the Cultural Revolution have produced, such as the bowl with nineteen-character inscription in brown slip on white and probably of the date it bears, A.D. 961, but in any case a fascinating historical document (C. 202, pl. 58a). There is also at least one breathtakingly beautiful kiln-waster (C. 77).

Readers of *ORIENTAL ART* will need no reminding that the