

International Symposium
**ORPHANED OBJECTS: THEORETICAL AND
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE
RESEARCH OF EAST ASIAN OBJECTS**

Ljubljana, 18 September 2023



KOPER 2023

**International Symposium ORPHANED OBJECTS: THEORETICAL AND
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE RESEARCH OF EAST ASIAN OBJECTS
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INTRODUCTION

The socio-political circumstances of the 20th century, with two world wars and the political transformations, end of multinational empires and the making of national states, often led to the loss of the traceable history of individual art objects and other collectibles. Bereft of their context, they ended up in museum collections, often condemned to a dormant life in storage. The position of Chinese and other East Asian objects is even more problematic, especially in the marginal regions of former colonial powers, as curators and museum professionals lacked the specific knowledge to deal with such items, which in turn led to neglect in determining not only their provenance, but also their material and physical properties that would define the typology of each object and the original location of production. Such objects were often placed in other collections or were considered lost, while long-term storage in museum depots without proper documentation and treatment often led to their damage.

The concept of an “orphaned” object developed in archaeology as a response to trafficking in fragments of ancient Greek vases and other archaeological artefacts. These soon became widely sought-after collector’s items and consequently the target of looters and traffickers who sent such objects to the art market without any accurate information about their origin. Originally, the term orphaned was used primarily for objects of unknown archaeological origin, which was closely related to the practice of tomb raiding and the looting of archaeological sites. At the same time, the term orphaned has also been applied to entire collections that lost the support of curators or were abandoned by their owners.

The past few decades have also seen increased attention being paid to orphaned objects, which have long presented problems for museums. Surprisingly, however, there are only few studies on orphaned objects or collections in the field of East Asian studies, despite the fact that the turbulent history of the 20th century even increased the amount and variety of orphaned East Asian objects in the European and North American collections.

The symposium will address these issues by presenting relevant research of a number of experts in the field of East Asian collections, while also providing a platform to discuss the theoretical and methodological approaches in such research situations.

PROGRAMME

International Symposium ORPHANED OBJECTS: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE RESEARCH OF EAST ASIAN OBJECTS

Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana
18 September 2023

9:00–10:30

METHODOLOGIES AND CHALLENGES OF PROVENANCE RESEARCH

Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik: Issues and challenges of provenance research: How East Asian objects in Slovenia became “orphaned”

Bogdana Marinac: Are East Asian objects from seafarers’ collections orphaned?

Maja Veselič: Extending the metaphor: Searching for the “original” family of objects in the Skušek collection

Klara Hrvatin: The periphery of the periphery

10:30–11:00 Coffee break

11:00–12:30

ORPHANED OBJECTS THROUGH HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Michaela Pejčochová: Portrayals of Qing battles: Two famous Chinese paintings orphaned during the tumultuous 20th century

Kexin Ma: From the Qing Court to the museum vitrine: On the acquisition and display of the Guwan tu Handscroll in the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection

Helena Motoh: Exploring the biography of a missionary scroll in the Celje Regional Museum

Minhee Ahn: The different targeting of the Korean collection in the late 19th–early 20th century

12:30–14:00 Lunch break

14:00–15:30

ROLE OF ORPHANED OBJECTS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

Davor Mlinarič: An attempt to reconstruct the provenance of museum objects kept in the Collection of objects from Asia and South America in the Celje Regional Museum

Ariane Perrin: Lost outside the Shaman's shrine: The challenges of identifying Korean Shamanist paintings in museum collections

Zara Arshad: Museums, co-production, and hidden labour: The Samsung Gallery of Korean Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum (1990–1993)

Sheri Lullo: From cultural symbol to campus “idol”: A Chinese stone lion at Union College

15:30–16:00 Coffee break

16:00–17:50

“LOST AND FOUND” – CASE STUDIES

Chikako Shigemori Bučar: A Yokohama photo album in the National and University Library in Ljubljana

Antonio De Caro: Historiographical notes on now-lost “Chinese Christian” artefacts Fr. Pasquale M. D’Elia S.J. (De Lixian 德禮賢, 1890–1963) and his search for “Chinese Christian” artworks

Jingyuan Zhang: The relationship between wall paintings with panoramic battle scenes, Wuchen hall 武成殿 and Ziguangge 紫光閣

Haoyang Zhao: Unexpected contributions of provenance materials in art history, an experimental case study of “orphaned” pages of Qing imperial illustrations, Huangchao Liqi Tushi in the western collections

Maria Szymańska-Ilnata: Indonesian collection of Andrzej Wawrzyniak – tracing the dispersed objects

17:50–18:00

CLOSING REMARKS





ABSTRACTS

(in alphabetical order)





THE DIFFERENT TARGETING OF THE KOREAN COLLECTION IN THE LATE 19TH - EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Minhee AHN

In 2023, the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation revealed that 229,655 items of Korean cultural heritage are located outside of the Korean peninsula. Since the foundation was established in 2012, it has been carrying out the NRICH's project to identify Korean objects overseas, including through on-site surveys. This project helps to know the distribution of Korean objects in numbers.

The next question is: How is this considerable number of Korean artworks distributed around the world? To reveal the diverse reasons of transmission of Korean art objects, the foundation recently launched a new project regarding their provenance research.

This paper would like to outline the different targeting of foreign collecting practices of Korean collections between the late 19th and early 20th centuries by different foreign nations, especially comparing the collections in the UK and Germany as an example.

Although it is hard to generalise, the majority of Korean collections in Germany and the UK seem to contain different daily life objects and ceramics. We argue that there were different reasons for collecting Korean objects in the UK and Germany and this led to the different types of Korean collections there today. Moreover, investigating the approaches to build the Korean collection in this certain period, the role of foreign visitors such as missionaries and diplomats, and their network's effects on collecting the objects will be examined.

MUSEUMS, CO-PRODUCTION AND HIDDEN LABOUR: THE SAMSUNG GALLERY OF KOREAN ART AT THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM (1990–1993)

Zara ARSHAD

Museum collecting practices are often understood to be strategic and formalised. Aligning with institutional collecting strategies, museum curators justify new and potential acquisitions by considering objects already in their collections: new acquisitions may complement existing materials, or be used to address or fill gaps in collections. These practices, moreover, are documented in museum records that reflect an objective or neutral set of internal processes.

This paper will draw on the case of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London to explore museum collecting and curating as outcomes of collective negotiation and co-production, and even serendipity. The paper will focus on the V&A's acquisition of Korean material and visual culture in the early 1990s, when this museum was preparing to open its first gallery devoted to Korean heritage. The gallery curator was Beth McKillop, a China specialist, who drew on a wide professional network (of experts based in South Korea, the United Kingdom and elsewhere) to efficiently source objects representative of "Korea". Details of this collecting network are not well represented in V&A documentation and have, consequently, been recovered through oral histories for the first time in academic scholarship.

This study will demonstrate that while agency and power within and across such networks are not evenly distributed, as echoed in their lack of representation in printed museum records, collecting – and curating more broadly – at the V&A was facilitated by collaborative sets of relations. Ultimately, the paper will situate museum curating within a broader set of entanglements comprising both people and things, which are in constant dialogue and flux.

**HISTORIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON NOW-LOST “CHINESE
CHRISTIAN” ARTEFACTS – FR. PASQUALE M. D’ELIA S.J.
(DE LIXIAN 德禮賢, 1890–1963) AND HIS SEARCH FOR “CHINESE
CHRISTIAN” ARTWORKS**

Antonio DE CARO

On 22 September 1958, Fr. Pasquale M. D’Elia S.J. (De Lixian 德禮賢, 1890–1963), a celebrated professor at the Collegio Romano in Rome and an erudite Jesuit missionary, received an intriguing letter from an art-dealing company based in Florence. According to this letter, the company possessed four canvases encompassing a group of paintings directly related to the Jesuit missions in China during the 17th century. Attached to this letter there was a photograph showing one of these canvases that was sent to D’Elia (Fig. 1). After receiving this letter, D’Elia sketched a few lines concerning this artwork, but he did not provide any further information. This was the last evidence of the existence of these four canvases that are now lost or untraceable.

Earlier, in the 1920s and the 1930s, D’Elia received another series of letters from another art dealer, Gino Spada, who claimed to possess a silver chalice dating to the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). D’Elia, in this case, wrote extensively on this silver chalice, known as the ‘Feng Chao 馮朝 chalice’, that he also attributed to the Franciscan missions during the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, upon closer stylistic analysis, the chalice seems likely to be a silver export chalice dating from the 19th century produced in Guangdong province and then circulated from Hong Kong to Europe. Interestingly, after the 1940s, the object went missing and it remains lost or untraceable.

My paper mainly focuses on the historiographical story of these two fascinating objects and provides an insight into the methodological claims adopted by D’Elia during his research. It will also foster a dialogue on the possible manufactured narrative promoted both by the “owners” and Pasquale D’Elia concerning these unique objects. Finally, this work will also be an opportunity to discuss with the participants the possible biases and challenges related to the reconstruction of the network of Catholic artwork coming from East Asia, in general, and China in particular.

THE PERIPHERY OF THE PERIPHERY

Klara HRVATIN

On the basis of individual East Asian objects from the Slovenian suburbs, which were not the subject of an organised form of collecting, but were in the possession of individuals, we will reconstruct a picture of the cultural and material connections between the Slovenian suburbs and the East Asian region, relying on oral tradition. We will be particularly interested in who the owners were and what kind of East Asian objects they kept in their homes. Can we even speak of “typical” East Asian objects in Slovenian households? Moreover, through the biography of the objects, we hope to reconstruct their meaning and role in Slovenian society of that time and thereby understand what kind of understanding of the East Asian space and the possible paths of the objects they point to. The subject of the research are mainly objects that fall in the period of the late 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, which coincides with the period when the most representative Slovenian collectors, such as Alma Karlin (1889–1950), Ivan Skušek Jr. (1877–1947), Viktor Kristan (1876–1947) and Ivan Jager (1871–1959), gathered objects that today form the bulk of East Asian collections in Slovenia.

FROM CULTURAL SYMBOL TO CAMPUS “IDOL”: A CHINESE STONE LION AT UNION COLLEGE

Sheri A. LULLO

A sculpture known as “The Idol” was, until the summer of 2021, prominently displayed on the campus of Union College in Schenectady, NY. Since the late 19th century, this sculpture had been coated with countless layers of paint by rival student groups as part of yearly campus rituals. Few in the community were fully aware, however, that the work is a venerable stone guardian lion from late imperial China, which was gifted to the college by an alumnus in 1874. The stone lion may be considered as an “orphaned object” in at least three ways. First, there is no official documentation of its excavation, provenance or transfer to the United States. Second, it is a singular fragment of an original pair – Union College possesses the “female” lion of the customary male–female dyad of stone guardian lions from Chinese tradition. And finally, veiled and rendered amorphous by a thick coating of paint for over a century, the work’s agency as a guardian and Chinese cultural symbol was denied as it was re-imaged through rituals that served to mediate student identities. This paper explores the rich life history and changing agency of Union College’s Chinese stone lion within the context of the introduction of Chinese art to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

FROM THE QING COURT TO THE MUSEUM VITRINE: ON THE ACQUISITION AND DISPLAY OF THE *GUWAN TU* HANDSCROLL IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM COLLECTION

Kexin MA

In the T. T. Tsui Gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum, a handscroll entitled *Guwan tu* (Pictures of Ancient Playthings) is on display with a selection of items associated with the Qing court. Dated to 1729, the scroll is recognised as a pictorial record of the imperial collection under Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723–35). The lack of direct textual or visual evidence, however, makes it difficult to confirm the scroll’s purpose or uncover its life story, leaving it as an “orphaned” work open to interpretation. In the meantime, the scroll is widely used as a visual reference for testifying the imperial origin of certain museum or auction objects, due to the high degree of naturalism achieved in its depiction of the objects. The emphasis on the painted objects has contributed to the reconstruction of the scroll’s biography in relation to Qing imperial collecting practices. Meanwhile, as a court product travelling from China to Britain, the scroll has experienced a multidirectional life journey, much more complicated than a linear life cycle bounded by its “birth” at the Qing court and “death” when it was brought out of the court and lost its original function.

This paper explores the story of the scroll after it departed from China. The museum acquisition file will be consulted to unveil the network behind the transaction of the work. By examining the dialogues between different stakeholders during the acquisition, the paper aims to penetrate the mechanism by which museums in Britain acquired for purchasing artworks, especially those from military officers, and the controversies involved in such transactions. In turn, the paper will reexamine the contemporary display of the scroll and discuss how a museum, as a socially and politically engaged institution, should exercise its agency in choosing how to tell the story of an “orphaned” artwork.

ARE EAST ASIAN OBJECTS FROM SEAFARERS' COLLECTIONS ORPHANED?

Bogdana MARINAC

The Piran Maritime Museum houses a number of East Asian objects. Most of them were brought back from sea travels, particularly by members of the Austro-Hungarian navy. Only a handful of objects are of completely unknown provenance. However, even those objects for which we know who brought them from East Asia and when have lost much of their narrative power about their original contexts. Based on the seafarers' objects from the Piran Maritime Museum and other Slovenian museums, as well as objects kept by the seafarers' descendants, this paper discusses the acquisition, storing and use of East Asian objects among mariners and their family members in Slovenia of today. The paper examines widespread and popular were particular types of objects, while it also attempts to determine to what extent seafarers were familiar with the production, uses and significance of these objects in their original environments. It further explores how these objects may have contributed to the spread of knowledge about foreign cultures or shaped perceptions of them. In conclusion, the paper aims to determine whether mariners' objects can be considered orphaned and, if so, to what extent.

AN ATTEMPT TO RECONSTRUCT THE PROVENANCE OF MUSEUM OBJECTS KEPT IN THE COLLECTION OF OBJECTS FROM ASIA AND SOUTH AMERICA IN THE CELJE REGIONAL MUSEUM

Davor MLINARIČ

This paper attempts to provide a new perspective on the provenance of the objects of East Asian origin held by the Celje Regional Museum. The first part of the paper focuses on the legislative and institutional frameworks that provided for ownership and physical transfer of objects of cultural heritage – transforming of private property into public property in Yugoslavia after 1945. Objects of Asian and South American provenance were taken over by the Museum from the Celje District Collection Centre and made part of its collection. We can take as an example the Japanese armour pieces that were likewise acquired from the District Collection Centre. The origin and provenance of the objects are unknown and remain a matter for further research. Parts of the Japanese armour were first presented to the public at the 2017 *Paths of the Samurai* exhibition at the National Museum of Slovenia. At the same time, the accompanying paper included the information that “1 Japanese knight’s equipment” was taken from Lemberg Castle. From then on, all 13 pieces of equipment, which are listed under the common inventory number A 144, were considered to have come from Lemberg. However, an alternative possibility emerged when this issue was further explored.

Based on the partially preserved museum documentation and archive documents, the second part of the papers tries to reconstruct from where and from whom the objects were taken. The fact that the armour became part of the museum collection is a consequence of both Nazi and Communist confiscations. After having transformed the area of Lower Styria into a temporary regional administrative unit on the territory of present-day Slovenia right at the beginning of occupation, the Germans began confiscating movable cultural heritage there. The Germans used the Capuchin Monastery in Celje as a warehouse. The post-war authorities retained the monastery as one of the warehouses of the Celje District Collection Centre, where the confiscated property was stored. As mentioned in the introduction, the Celje Museum later took possession of objects of Asian and South American provenance through the District Collection Centre, and arranged them into its own collection.

EXPLORING THE BIOGRAPHY OF A MISSIONARY SCROLL IN THE REGIONAL MUSEUM OF CELJE

Helena MOTOH

The paper explores the history of a printed scroll in the Asian and South American collection of the Regional Museum of Celje. The scroll, most probably made in Shanghai Tushanwan orphanage workshops in the late 19th century, consists of three printed and hand-coloured images, pasted on a single vertical scroll. The Asian and South American collection that the scroll belongs to was formed from objects confiscated by the government commissions of the newly founded Socialist Yugoslavia after the Second World War, while any information of its previous owners is unknown. In the paper, I present the research of the potential origin of the scroll in the Celje region, based on the archival material of the 1945–1948 confiscations. Based on the archival evidence, I further explore the possibilities of mapping the history of this object between its known origin in Shanghai around 1880 and the first catalogisation in the museum in 1964, while also reflecting on the potential of provenance research of similar objects in other collections of confiscated objects.

PORTRAYALS OF QING BATTLES: TWO FAMOUS CHINESE PAINTINGS ORPHANED DURING THE TUMULTUOUS 20TH CENTURY

Michaela PEJČOCHOVÁ

In the collection of the National Gallery in Prague are two depictions of Qing dynasty battles with local armies during the seizure of frontier areas, which later became part of the Qing Empire. These famous paintings were studied by researchers (Zhang Hongxing, "Studies in Late Qing Battle Paintings", *Artibus Asiae*, 2000/2, pp. 265–296; or more recently by Niklas Leverenz at <http://www.battle-of-qurman.com.cn/>), but the complex historical background of their acquisition and moves between Western collections were never clarified. Also, the sad process of their becoming orphaned from the matching inscriptions, which were still present with the paintings in the mid-20th century, has not been described before. After making new discoveries in the archives of institutions and individual collectors, the paper proposes to discuss in detail the moves of the paintings among collections and their place in the period collecting discourse throughout the 20th century. Their biography is in fact a vital testimony to the complex processes of looting, appropriation, confiscation, damage and rediscovery, which affected numerous artworks throughout the tumultuous 20th century.

LOST OUTSIDE THE SHAMAN'S SHRINE: THE CHALLENGES OF IDENTIFYING KOREAN SHAMANIST PAINTINGS IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Ariane PERRIN

This paper focuses on one piece of a shaman's paraphernalia – the paintings of spirits – dating to the late Chosŏn period (19th–20th century). Chosŏn Korea produced a large and varied repertoire of paintings of shamanic spirits that can be broadly classified according to their function, protective power and appearance. Commissioned by a shaman, the paintings were used in his/her shrine or as portable devices used in rituals outside the shrine at the request of clients. Rituals were performed to ensure good fortune but also to determine the cause of a misfortune in the most significant events in one's life: birth, marriage, illness and death.

The identification of the shamanic spirits faces challenges due to the intrinsic nature of these sacred images that are often undated. The painting, as the seat of the spirit, is closely associated with the ritual practices of the shaman who most often personally commissions the paintings and requests a specific iconography. Using several case studies from European collections, this paper addresses methodological issues pertaining to the iconographical study and identification of shamanic spirits by showing the various impediments and reasons that prevent the accurate identification of the shamanic spirits once the original ritual context has been lost. It also investigates the possible channels through which these sacred objects found their way into museum collections abroad, and question in one particular case, whether one series of painting is actually connected to shamanic ritual practices.

A YOKOHAMA PHOTO ALBUM IN THE NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN LJUBLJANA

Chikako SHIGEMORI BUČAR

Yokohama was one of the first Japanese ports open to the western visitors after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The first Japanese photographers, e. g. Kusakabe Kinbei, soon learned the technology of photography from the westerners such as Felice Beato (1832–1909), and produced many photos of landscapes, people and lifestyles from all over Japan and sold them in attractive albums as souvenirs for foreigners visiting Japan. There is one example of the “Yokohama photo albums” also in the National and University Library in Ljubljana. Similar ones are found in many other cities in Europe, but this one is probably the only example found in today’s Republic of Slovenia. Against the background of the production of these Yokohama photo albums in the 1880s and 1890s, this paper analyses the specific example in relation to the format, kinds of photos included in it, and by comparing it with other albums stored in other parts of the world.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF PROVENANCE RESEARCH: HOW EAST ASIAN OBJECTS IN SLOVENIA BECAME “ORPHANED”

Nataša VAMPELJ SUHADOLNIK

During the systematic research of East Asian collections in individual museums in Slovenia as part of two national projects that began in 2018, it emerged that quite a number of objects and entire collections were deprived of their context and often condemned to a dormant life in museum storage. In the course of attempts to trace their biographies and reconstruct their paths, it emerged that many records that could prove their provenance had been lost or misplaced, or that their sparsely documented records did not provide enough information to trace the original “family”.

These circumstances are closely related to the processes that led to the orphaning of the objects. Only an understanding of the circumstances under which objects lost their “primary” identity can help us search for additional sources to tackle and address provenance research questions. Therefore, in this paper I discuss what happened to East Asian objects in Slovenia, why and how they were deprived of their context, and what circumstances led to the loss of records that could prove an object’s provenance. Through these different processes, I further discuss the issues and challenges of provenance research and show how an understanding of the processes can help us in our search for additional material.

INDONESIAN COLLECTION OF ANDRZEJ WAWRZYNIAK – TRACING THE DISPERSED OBJECTS

Maria SZYMAŃSKA-ILNATA

Andrzej Wawrzyniak (1931–2020) was a sailor, diplomat and, most notably, the founder of the Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw. Already as a child, he was fascinated by collecting. He pursued the passion during his then-year stay in Indonesia (1961–1971). Over the period, he collected more than 3,000 objects representing different areas of the life of local inhabitants. They included textile pieces, masks, puppets, weapons, sculptures, paintings, everyday objects and ceremonial items. In 1973 he gifted the collection to the Polish state and the newly opened Museum of the Nusantara Archipelago. The institution was later renamed as the Asia and Pacific Museum with Andrzej Wawrzyniak as its director. He remained at the helm until 2013.

When we look closer to the collection donated by Andrzej Wawrzyniak to the museum, we see that there are only 2,899 objects from the over 3,000 that he brought to Poland. Where are the rest? That is the topic of my paper. I try to trace objects from the first collection of Andrzej Wawrzyniak, who was collecting Indonesian artifacts almost until the end of his life.

EXTENDING THE METAPHOR: SEARCHING FOR THE “ORIGINAL” FAMILY OF OBJECTS IN THE SKUŠEK COLLECTION

Maja VESELIČ

Orphaned objects are usually considered to be objects whose previous ownership is not documented or (in archaeology) the precise location where they were found is unknown. The question arises, however, to what extent does this differ from objects whose last owner is known, but nothing is known about how they obtained the objects. As discussions of provenance over the past two decades have shown, shorter or longer lists of owners and places are never exhaustive information about the itineraries of objects. This paper heeds the calls to use provenance as a window into social biographies of objects and collections. It also touches upon another set of debates, namely those that link provenance (or lack thereof) with the notions of cultural property.

This paper uses the scarce existing information on the provenance of the largest collection of East Asian, predominantly Chinese objects in Slovenia, to explore its “prehistory”. The objects were acquired by Austro-Hungarian navy intendant Ivan Skušek during his internment in Beijing between 1914 and 1920 and eventually donated to the Slovene Ethnographic Museum. Almost nothing is known about how Skušek was able to obtain the objects – neither where they specifically came from nor how he was able to purchase them or pay for the shipment of several dozen crates from Beijing to Ljubljana. By examining the experiences of other foreign sojourners – collectors, military personnel, expatriates, etc., during Skušek’s stay in Beijing – as well as in the preceding decades, this paper presents an exploration into the possible earlier itineraries and biographies of the objects that make up the collection, while simultaneously addressing the potentially uncomfortable questions of earlier ownership.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WALL PAINTINGS WITH PANORAMIC BATTLE SCENES, WUCHEN HALL 武成殿 AND ZIGUANGGE 紫光阁

Jingyuan ZHANG

A rare form of large-scale wall painting (贴落大画) describing panoramic battle scenes was invented during the Qianlong period. There are at least three of them being made during the Qianlong era and restored in Germany: “Painting of the Taiwan Campaign / 台湾全图”, “Painting of the Annan Campaign / 安南全图” and “Painting of the Gurkha Campaign / 廓尔喀全图”. This paper introduces the historical background and development of these large-scale wall paintings and their exhibition place – Wuchen Hall, a building in the back of Ziguangge. And it also attempts to restore when and how these paintings were displayed in the Wuchen Hall. Since the Qianlong period, Ziguangge and Wuchen Hall started to have wall decorations for commemorating military achievements. Due to the restriction of the class of building, the space of Wuchen Hall and Ziguangge was limited. Compared to a wall painting with only one battle scene, a wall painting that portrays multiple battle scenes could save more space and thus come into being. But at the same time, the building’s wall area and structure limited the wall paintings’ size and where to hang them.

Based on the record of things placed or held in Wuchen Hall and Ziguangge of the Tongzhi period, this paper further argues that the first floor of Ziguangge was more of a space for public events, like holding banquets or imperial examinations on military knowledge and skills, or meeting with foreign envoys, while the second floor was usually for the displays of goods. Wuchen Hall collected more artifacts related to poems and essays created by Qianlong about wars, making it a place to commemorate the imperial power and military victories. In addition, Wuchen Hall was found to have sedan chairs and beds for the emperor, making the building a place for Qianlong to rest or have meals.

UNEXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS OF PROVENANCE MATERIALS IN ART HISTORY, AN EXPERIMENTAL CASE STUDY OF “ORPHANED” PAGES OF QING IMPERIAL ILLUSTRATIONS, HUANGCHAO LIQI TUSHI IN THE WESTERN COLLECTIONS

Haoyang ZHAO

Huangchao Liqi Tushi (皇朝禮器圖式) or the Illustrated Regulations for Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Present Dynasty, is an illustrated encyclopaedic manuscript of the Qing ritual and regulations, commissioned during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–1795). Produced in multiple formats, including coloured and printed editions, it was recognised as an important visual reference of Qing imperial regulation. However, since the two complete coloured editions in China have never been fully published or digitalised, the incomplete, scattered pages found in several western collections became the main source of colourful images, supplementing the monochrome printed edition with even fewer illustrations. As a result, even though Huangchao Liqi Tushi itself is well-known and widely cited in publications, without enough context and evidence, questions on its production process, visual representation and even its function in the Qing court remain unclear.

Surprisingly, the provenance research on one of the portions few years ago opened a whole new window to the struggles on analysing these “orphaned” pages. The idea of building an “object biography” direct the study to collect the information of all known pages, including the detailed images of individual pages from the collection or which once appeared in the art market, the provenance of a specific portion in mid to late 19th century Britain, and the records from the Qing imperial archives. By positioning all materials together at once, the volume and page indicator was accidentally discovered, which further allows me to re-attribute pages into the original 92-volume order as it was in the Qing court, including several volumes from the Costume and Ritual Objects sections found nearly complete, which give a lot of additional context to analyse the connections between the pages and among volumes. In addition, the research gives a chance to examine individual page closely, which allow me to notice the ultra-fine and accurate representation of materials on each page. More importantly, it is discovered that some ritu-

al objects are depicted in a “used” condition, which is completely opposite to the original understanding as it showcases the ideal images of objects in the Qianlong emperor’s mind. Clearly, aside from discoveries on provenance itself, outcomes during the research on these “orphaned” pages brings unexpected rich materials, which shows a lot of potential for further studies.

Notes

