

Introduction to the Oriental Art Collection at the Burrell

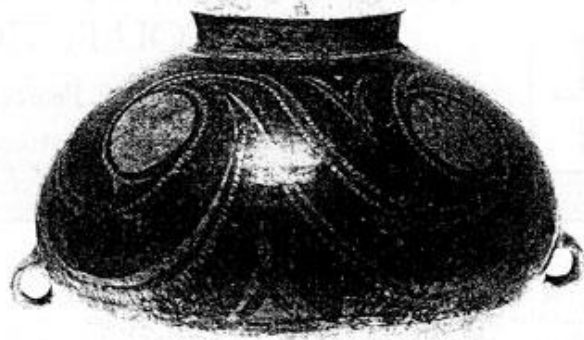
THE ORIENTAL SECTION of The Burrell Collection comprises well over two thousand objects and contains perhaps one of the most wide-ranging collections of Oriental items ever to be acquired by one man. There have been greater collectors in the field of Chinese art—for example, Sir Percival David, George Eumorfopoulos, Sir Alan Barlow and Oscar Raphael—but even these men's collections do not match the breadth of Sir William Burrell's. The collection contains artefacts from Egypt and Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq); Chinese ceramics, bronzes, jades and sculpture; Turkish and Persian ceramics and metalwork; Turkish, Persian, Central Asian and Indian carpets and other textiles; and a small collection of Japanese woodblock prints.

Although very little is known about Burrell's early collecting years (it was only after 1911, when Burrell was in his fifties that he began recording his purchases), a rough pattern can nevertheless be established. Chinese ceramics of all periods and Chinese bronzes seem to have been collected consistently throughout his life, with an upsurge in buying in the middle to late 1940s. The carpet collection was all but complete by 1940, with the Central Asian suzani (embroidered hangings) and related textiles all being purchased in 1925. Most of the Near Eastern ceramics and metalwork, and the Chinese jades, were bought after 1944, as were the Egyptian and Mesopotamian pieces. By 1944, Burrell was seeking to strengthen those parts of his collection which he believed were lacking. "I think it is better to fill gaps," he once said, "than bid for better specimens of what we already have."

What provoked Burrell into collecting Oriental material in the first place, will probably never be fully known. Of course he was not alone in collecting Oriental and particularly Chinese material during the first half of the twentieth century. Mention has already been made of Sir Percival David, George Eumorfopoulos, Sir Alan Barlow and Oscar Raphael. To these British collectors can be added Henry Oppenheim, Charles Seligman and George Salting, to name but three. Closer to home in Scotland, Leonard Gow and Arthur Kay, two Glasgow business men and close friends of Burrell, were also keen collectors. Gow's collection, some of which was later acquired by Burrell, consisted of mainly Chinese ceramics of the K'ang Hsi period (1662-1722), while Kay's boasted a number of fine early Chinese bronzes. No doubt Burrell was influenced in his collecting habits by both men and it seems likely that he was aware of those great British collectors already mentioned; in fact a number of Eumorfopoulos pieces were bought by Burrell when they were auctioned by Sotheby's in 1940.

Unlike many of the big collectors, however, Burrell never travelled to the Far East, or, for that matter, Near East. This is in spite of the fact that many of the ships of Burrell and Son regularly traded in those areas. Instead, he bought almost exclusively in Europe, as did George Eumorfopoulos, very often relying on the advice of eminent specialists in the field like Sir Percival Yetts, whom Burrell approached on several occasions. Nevertheless, he was one of the first collectors to recognise the significance of some of the early archaeological material that began to flow out of China at the turn of the century. As a result, the collection possesses forty examples of neolithic pottery, mostly of the Yang-shao and associated cultures, and probably the largest collection of Bronze Age ritual vessels outside London. No doubt the Burlington House Exhibition of 1935—1936 had an impact on Burrell as we see his purchases in these areas rise during the 1940s.

Historically, China's Neolithic period began somewhere around 5000 B.C., with the so-called Yang-shao culture of the central-northern and northwestern province regions of Shensi, Honan and Hupei, and later Kansu. All The Burrell Collection's neolithic pottery comes from Kansu and the Ma-chia related cultures of Pan-shan, Ma-ch'ang and the later culture of Ch'i-chia. They all have the common characteristics of being of a reddish clay, made by the coiling method and of a lightness in weight due to the thinness of the potting.



5



6



7



8

5
Storage jar, Yang-shao culture, Pan-shan type. Earthenware with painted decoration. China, Kansu province, millennium B.C. Height 33.6 cms. ;

6
Two-handled jar, Ch'i-chia culture. Earthenware with impressed design. China, eastern Kansu province, 3rd millennium B.C. Height 33 cms. 38

7
Storage jar, Yang-shao culture, Pan-shan type. Earthenware with painted decoration. China, Kansu province, millennium B.C. Height 20.9 cms. ;

8
Two-handled bowl, Yang-shao culture, Pan-shan type. Earthenware with painted decoration. China, Kansu province, millennium B.C. Height 10.7 cms. ;



9



10

9
Storage jar, Yang-shao culture, Ma-ch'ang type. Earthenware with painted decoration. China, Kansu province, millennium B.C. Height 30.4 cms. ;

10
Hu (vase). Cast bronze with gold and silver inlay. China, Sung dynasty (1127-1279). Height 25 cms. 8/132

5. Storage Jar
6. Two Handed Jar
7. Storage Jar
8. Two Handled Bowl
9. Storage Jar
10. Hu (Vase) 8-132

This storage jar(5) is a typical example of the Pan-shan type with a globular body rising from a narrow base and closing round an equally narrow neck. Lugs or handles are usually positioned either on the neck, or as here, on either side of the waist. Because most of these jars would have been viewed from above, only the top half of the jar is decorated with the characteristic swirling pattern made up of alternate wide and narrow serrated bands of unfired mineral pigments. Large vessels like this are complemented by smaller jars of a similar shape, or those which are almost cup-like in form. This jar(7) is closely related to the previous vessel, except for its elongated neck and a slightly different handle formation, but is almost half the size. It also illustrates other designs in the Pan-shan potter's repertoire—in this case, more angular and geometric and less fluid. The next example, however, shows yet another variation(8): a low wide-mouthed bowl, it displays its painted decoration inside rather than on the external surface area, because it would be the inside that was seen from above.

Ma-ch'ang culture, an offshoot of Pan-shan, is represented by a number of vessels in the collection, including the one illustrated here(9). Slightly smaller in scale than the Pan-shan jar in the first illustration, the characteristic shape is nevertheless much in evidence, but with the decoration executed in a simpler, less vibrant way. With the Ch'i-chia type(10), the transition into the Bronze Age is made apparent by the lack of painted decoration and a shape that owes a great deal to a metal prototype.

The collection's Chinese bronze artefacts number 172 pieces, with the majority dating from the Shang (circa sixteenth to eleventh century B.C.), Western Chou (1027-771 B.C.) and Han (202 B.C.-A.D. 220) dynasties. A number of vessels from these periods are discussed in a separate article in this issue. However, a small part of the bronze collection includes a number of fine later pieces, including a Sung dynasty (960-1279) *hu* vase(10) in an archaistic style derived from a late Chou original. Its monster-mask ring handles, a high foot-ring and general shape, have much in common with its archaic predecessors, but the inlaid gold and silver design is only a pastiche of an earlier style.



11
Tsung (ritual object). Nephrite jade. China, south or southeast region, 3rd millennium B.C. Height 19 cms. 22/62



12



12
From left: ceremonial ko (halberd) with nephrite jade blade and bronze tang inlaid with turquoise. China, Shang dynasty, 13th–11th century B.C. Length 13.9 cms. 22/126. Ceremonial dagger of nephrite jade with bronze handle. China, Shang dynasty, 13th–11th century B.C. Length 21.5 cms. 22/123. Unhafted axe blade of nephrite jade. China, Western Chou dynasty, 11th–8th century B.C. Length 28.5 cms. 22/7



13

13
Huang (pendant) in the form of a perching bird. Nephrite jade. China, Western Chou dynasty, 11th–8th century B.C. Length 10.1 cms. 22/47



14

14
Champion vase (ying-hsing-p'ing). Nephrite jade. China, 13th–15th century. Height 9.5 cms. 22/35



15

15
Libation cup. Mottled nephrite jade. China, 13th–15th century. Height 8.2 cms. 22/34



16

16
Seated ch'i-lin (back), recumbent mythical beasts (sides), and melon ornament (front). Nephrite jade. China, 13th–15th century. Height of ch'i-lin 7.6 cms. 22/128, 130, 97, 51



17

17
Wine ewer and cover. Mottled blue nephrite jade. China, Ming dynasty, 17th century. Height 19 cms. 22/24

11. Tsung 22-62

12. Ceremonial Ko 22-126, Ceremonial Dagger 22-123, Unhafted Axe Blade 22-7

13. Huang 22-47

14. Champion Vase 22-35

15. Libation Cup 22-34

16. Seated Ch'i lin 22-128, Recumbent Mythical Beasts 22-130, 22-97, Melon Ornament 22-51

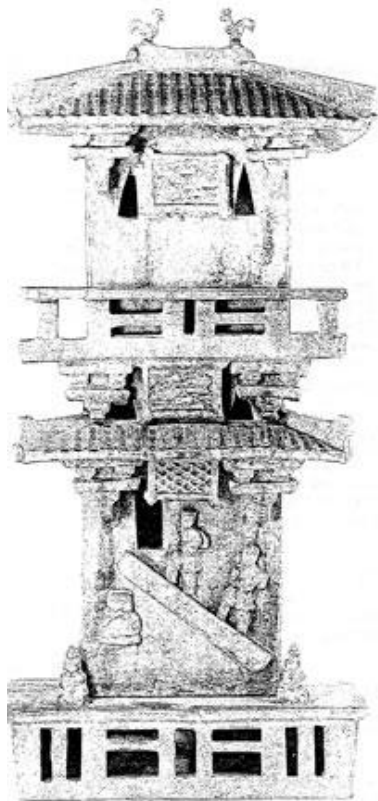
17. Wine Ewer 22-24

Jades of all periods form another significant part of The Burrell Collection. Though Burrell collected some jade prior to the Second World War and it was maintained by one of his pre-First World War captains operating in the Far East that jades were brought back for Sir William, most of his acquisitions were made from dealers after 1944. Included among these later purchases are a group of neolithic jades from the jade working culture of south or southeast China. Both *pi* (jade ring) and *tsung* (jade tube) ritual objects are represented, with the *tsung* illustrated(11) revealing a particularly strong natural surface decoration. Bronze Age jades for ritual, ceremonial, or decorative use, are also well represented. Grouped here(12) are a halberd (*ko*) with a bronze handle inlaid with turquoise, and a dagger, again with a bronze handle, both dating from the late Shang dynasty (thirteenth to eleventh century B.C.), and an unhafted axe blade dating from the Western Chou period. Also Western Chou in date is this pendant (*huang*)(13) in the form of a perching bird in profile, highly stylised and including much of the decorative repertoire of bronze pieces of the period.

Perhaps the finest piece of jade in the collection is this so-called "champion vase"(14) dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth century A.D. Formed of an eagle standing on a bear betwixt two cylinders, its shape is derived from a bronze vessel, an example of which is in the collection. Carved from a predominantly white stone with pale brown striations, its low relief decoration, like so many jade vessels of this period, owes its origins to archaic bronze work. The drinking cup(15) also owes some of its design to archaism, this time by the use of a translucent mottled jade imitative of horn and the lizard-like *ch'ih* dragons, one of which forms the handle while two decorate the sides. Other vessels include this much larger wine ewer and cover(17), worked from a mottled grey-blue jade. Like the champion vase, it is derived from a metalwork prototype.

The sculptural possibilities of jade are best realised in the small animal figures and the copying of forms from nature. Some of the best pieces of this kind are here illustrated as a group(16). Unlike perhaps the seated *ch'i-lin* (a mythological composite animal), whose body seems to stretch upwards in an imperious manner, formed as it is of an unblemished pale green jade, the two recumbent beasts and the pair of melons still retain the intrinsic pebble-like quality of the unmarked stone. In these pieces too, the shape and markings of the original pebble so much condition the resultant form.

The largest single part of the Oriental collection is the Chinese ceramics. The neolithic pottery has already been discussed, but The Burrell Collection is fortunate to possess examples of practically all the main types of ceramics made over the last thousand years. As with the bronzes, the Sung wares will be dealt with in a separate article following this introduction, they being quantitatively and qualitatively a very important part of the collection. Pre-Sung wares are also well represented, particularly those from the years roughly covering the Han and T'ang (618-907) dynasties.



18



19



20



21



22



18
Model of a storehouse. Earthenware with lead glaze which has degraded to iridescence during burial. China, Han dynasty (202 B.C.–A.D. 220). Height 95.2 cms. 38/98

19
Lotus-shaped censer with bird finial (left) and model of a well-head. Earthenware with lead glaze which has degraded to iridescence during burial. China, Han dynasty (202 B.C.–A.D. 220). Heights 24.7 cms and 33.6 cms. 38/51, 52

20
Ewer with chicken-head spout and dragon-head handle (left) of earthenware with san-ts'ai glaze. Height 50.8 cms. 38/187. Tripod dish (upper right) of earthenware with cobalt blue and san-ts'ai glaze over incised body. Diameter 24 cms. 38/1398. Jar (lower right) of earthenware with cobalt blue glaze. Height 16.1 cms. 38/1399. China, T'ang dynasty, 8th century

21
Bactrian camel. Earthenware with san-ts'ai glaze. China, T'ang dynasty, early 8th century. Height 83.1 cms. 38/119

22
Pair of fang-hsien tomb guardians. Earthenware with san-ts'ai glaze. China, T'ang dynasty, 8th century. Heights 93.9 cms. 38/183, 184

18. Storehouse Model 38-98

19. Lotus shaped censor 38-51, Wellhead 38-52

20. Ewer 38-187, Tripod dish 38-1398, Jar 38-1399

21. Bactrian Camel 38-119

22. Pair of Fang-hsien tomb guardians 38-183, 38-134

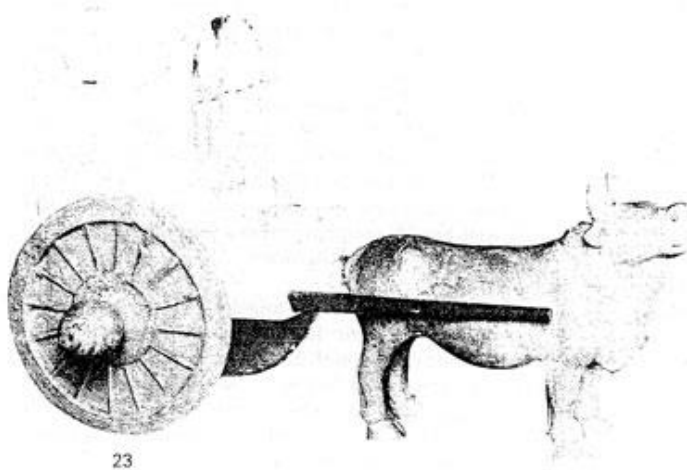
Both the Han and T'ang dynasties are associated with objects made primarily for funerary purposes. *Ming-ch'i*, as they are known in Chinese, were made in great numbers and with a great deal of technical sophistication. Han *ming-ch'i* tend to be models of quite mundane domestic

objects like animals, well-heads and cooking stoves. This storehouse(18), of low-fired earthenware covered with a green lead-fluxed glaze, is one of the more elaborate pieces in the collection, divided as it is into three sections and displaying considerable architectural detail. Less elaborately conceived is the model of a well-head(19), seen here with a lotus-shaped censer. Again both are of earthenware with green lead-fluxed glazes.

During the succeeding T'ang dynasty, funerary items became less domestic in what they represented and more flamboyant in both design and colour. Best known are the camels and horses in *san-ts'ai* (three colour) glazes, examples of which were collected by Sir William(21). Other finely moulded animals, though on a lesser scale, include this model of an ox pulling a wagon(23). The ox has a cream-coloured glaze, while the wagon has what remains of unfired mineral pigment. The grotesque figures in armour(22) represent the genie *fang-hsien* and would have been placed in a tomb to frighten away evil spirits. Fearsome gestures and facial expressions at one time made doubly fearsome by pigmentation which has all but disappeared, combine with a vivid brown, cream and green *san-ts'ai* glaze, to make figures of striking sculptural quality.

As well as figures, vessels of all kinds were also produced and a selection varying in shape, size and function are shown here(20). The unusual chicken-head ewer is one of a pair. Raised on a high splayed foot, the spherically shaped ewer has a dragon emerging from the shoulder to form the handle, its arms clutching the elongated neck while its head arches over the mouth of the vessel as if to drink. The jar and tripod dish were only recently acquired for the collection by Sir William Burrell's trustees. The dish is of earthenware covered with *san-ts'ai* and cobalt blue lead glazes over an incised pattern and wax-resist decoration, while the ovoid jar is covered with a rare T'ang cobalt blue glaze. Only four other jars of this type are known to the author, those in the Yale University Museum and the Popper, Barlow and Ataka Collections.

The Burrell Collection possesses a number of fine T'ang and Sung monochromes, some of which will be described in the article on tenth to fourteenth century wares further on in this issue. This introduction now turns its attention to the ceramics of the Ming (1368-1644) and Ch'ing (1644-1911) dynasties.



23
Model of an ox and wagon. Earthenware, ox covered with cream glaze and unfired pigment, wagon with unfired pigment. China, T'ang dynasty, 7th-8th century. Height 20.3 cms. 38/239



24
Stemcup. Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue decoration. China, Ming dynasty, 16th century. Diameter 14.9 cms. 38/442



25
Mei-p'ing (prunus vase). Porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration. China, Ming dynasty, 16th century. Height 39.3 cms. 38/452



26
Lobed ewer and cover. Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue and overglaze wu-ts'ai enamel decoration. China, Ming dynasty, circa 1600. Height 19 cms. 38/513



27
Tankard. Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue decoration. China, Ming dynasty, early 15th century. Height 18.7 cms. 38/443

23. Model of Ox and Wagon 38-239

24. Stemcup 38-239

25. Meiping Vase 38-452

26. Lobed ewer and cover 38-513

27. Tankard 38-443

The stemcup(24), with figures in a landscape painted in underglaze cobalt blue, is typical of finely potted and decorated porcelain of the sixteenth century. Another equally fine piece of the same period is this *mei-p'ing* (prunus vase)(25), decorated with four cartouches containing Arabic script alternating with the floral designs on the main band of decoration. Though most of the painting has been applied in cobalt, there are touches of overglaze green and tomato red enamels. Of earlier Ming blue and white porcelains in the collection, this tankard(27), dating from the early fifteenth century, is perhaps one of the finest. It was made for the Near Eastern market and based on a Near Eastern metal-work shape, with an evolved decorative repertoire first seen on fourteenth century Yuan (1271-1368) dynasty porcelains made for export to the Near East.

Ming polychromes in the collection include this lobed ewer and cover(26), dating from about 1600 and just one example of a *wu-ls'ai* (five colour) enamel decorated piece combined here with underglaze cobalt blue. The blue is used both to delineate lines and as an integral part of the decoration, including on the neck, a dragon on one side and the *shou* (longevity) character on the other.



28. Fa-hua

29. Copper-Red Bowl

30. Seated Lohan

31. Saucer dish with a pale yellow transparent glaze

32. Saucer dish with yellow glaze over incised decoration of peach, pomegranate and finger citrus

The Burrell Collection also has a large number of Ming *fa-hua* (cloisonne-type ceramic) ware popular with collectors at the turn of the century. A less than common example is this temple vase with animal-head handles which is one of a pair(28). Made of a stoneware body with cloisonne-like lines drawn in slip, the enamels have been applied on the biscuit. In terms of shape and decoration, it has much in common with similar temple vases of the fifteenth century in blue and white, examples of which are in the Percival David Foundation (dated 1496) and the Victoria and Albert Museum and Musee Guimet (a split pair). It seems likely that the Burrell temple vases were dated prior to their firing, as remains of an inscription obliterated by an excess of glaze can clearly be seen beneath the handles. Both vases were originally inscribed and both inscriptions have been obliterated in the same manner.

One of the most famous pieces in the collection has to be the life-size figure of a seated Lohan, or disciple of Buddha(30). Again of stoneware, with enamels applied on the biscuit, this Ming period figure displays a polychrome colouring reminiscent of earlier T'ang san-ts'ai pieces. Related to two similar figures in the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum, this Lohan also has a full inscription dating it to the twentieth year of Ch'eng Hua's reign (1465—1487), with information on who made it and for whom. The full inscription reads:

*Ch'eng Hua twentieth year mid autumn.
Made on an auspicious day, the believer
Wang Chin-ao, his wife Miao-chin and his
son Wang Ch'in and the priest Tao-chi.
The workman Liu-chen*

As well as blue and white and polychromes, the collection has a large number of fine monochromes both of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. The copper-red bowl(29), which bears the reign mark of Hsuan Te (1426-1435). is a superb example of the fine quality of copper-red glaze that could be achieved by the potters of the fifteenth century. This deep red glaze is contrasted with the saucer dish with a pale yellow transparent glaze(31). In cobalt blue on the base is the six-character mark of Hung Chih (1488-1505). It is one of a set of four dishes, all four being originally in the possession of a certain R. G. Vivien who, according to an original label attached, bought them "...at Peking, China, 19th April, 1870".

Ch'ing dynasty monochromes include this K'ang Hsi (1662—1722), marked saucer dish with a yellow glaze applied over an incised decoration of peach, pomegranate and finger citrus (or Buddha's hand), collectively known as the Three Abundances of Longevity, Children and Happiness(32). Seen in the same illustration is a thinly potted bowl with clear glaze of bluish hue, with on the inside, a relief decoration of warriors galloping on horseback. A thin iron-brown dressing covers the rim. It dates to the reign of the first Ch'ing Emperor Shun Chih (1644-1661). Ceramics of the Ming and Ch'ing periods from kilns other than Chingtechen, include those from Te-hua, in Fukien province and from the kilns of Shih-wan (Shekwan), in Kwangtung province(33).



33



35



34



36

28
Temple vase (one of a pair).
Stoneware with fa-hua enamel
decoration on the biscuit. China.
Ming dynasty, late 15th century.
Height 66.6 cms. 38/516

29
Bowl. Porcelain with copper-red
glaze. China, Ming dynasty, marl
and reign period of Hsuan Te (1494-
1505). Diameter 18.4 cms. 38/7

30
Seated Lohan. Stoneware with
polychrome enamel decoration on
the biscuit and traces of gilding.
China, Ming dynasty, dated to 21
year of the Ch'eng Hua Emperor,
1484. Height 127 cms. 38/419

31
Saucer dish. Porcelain with yellow
glaze. China, Ming dynasty, marl
and reign period of Hung Chih (1505).
Diameter 21.5 cms. 38/6

32
Saucer dish (left) of porcelain
with translucent yellow glaze
over a "dry glaze". China, Ch'ing
dynasty, mark and reign period of
K'ang Hsi (1662-1722). Diameter
27.6 cms. 38/687. Bowl (right)
porcelain with transparent glaze
relief decoration. China, Ch'ing
dynasty, Shun Chih period (1644-
1661). Diameter 11.1 cms. 38/5

33
Vase. Stoneware with blue speck
glaze. China, Ch'ing dynasty, 18
century. Probably made at the Si
wan kilns in Kwangtung province.
Height 23.4 cms. 38/342

34
Rouleau vase. Porcelain with un-
glazed cobalt blue decoration. Ch'
Ch'ing dynasty, K'ang Hsi period
(1662-1722). Height 45.7 cms.
38/1025

35
Lantern. Porcelain with overglaze
famille verte enamel decoration.
China, Ch'ing dynasty, K'ang Hsi
period (1662-1722). Height 22
cms. 38/758

36
Dish. Porcelain with underglaze
cobalt blue and overglaze famille
verte enamels. China, Ch'ing
dynasty, K'ang Hsi period (1662-
1722) with Ch'eng Hua mark.
Diameter 40 cms. 38/919

28. Temple Vase 38-516

29. Bowl 38-7

30. Seated Lohan 38-419

31. Saucer dish 38-6

32. Saucer dish 38-5

33. Vase 38-342

34. Roulou Vase 38-1025

35. Lantern 38-758

36. Dish 38-919

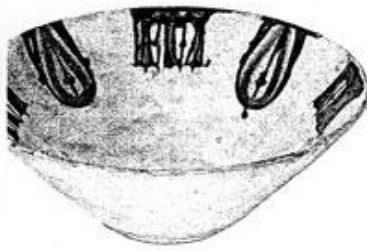
K'ang Hsi period and later blue and white and polychrome porcelains form another significant part of the collection. This rouleau vase is a typical example of good underglaze cobalt blue painting of the K'ang Hsi period, with in this case a lively scene of fishermen casting their nets(34). Fine painting and extra-fine potting characterises the lantern(35). The overglaze famille verte enamels cover a porcelain body of eggshell translucency. To finish the discussion of Chinese ceramics, is an illustration of a dish which combines the techniques of underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration(36). In the well of the dish is seen the sorceress Ma K'u, fleeing to the mountains after quarrelling with her father. On the reverse, are the "hundred characters" of longevity and on the base, the reign mark of Ch'eng Hua, though of course, it is of K'ang Hsi date.



37 A bedroom in Hutton Castle, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, home of Sir William and Lady Burrell between 1915 and 1958. Covering the bed is a suzani from Shakhrisabz, South Uzbekistan, 19th century. 30/4

37. Suzani 30-4

Near Eastern and Central Asian textiles form another important section of The Burrell Collection and as with the Chinese bronzes and Sung ceramics, will be dealt with in separate articles. It might be of interest to readers to learn that as with much of the collection, Sir William saw a utilitarian value in his carpets and embroideries. He and Lady Burrell used a great many of them to furnish their home, Hutton Castle, near Berwick-Upon-Tweed, on the borders of England and Scotland, as can be seen from this early photograph of one of the bedrooms(37). A Central Asian suzani can clearly be seen masquerading as a bedspread.



38

38
Bowl. Earthenware decorated in coloured slips under a clear glaze. Khurasan or Transoxiana, 9th–10th century. Diameter 25.4 cms. 33/220



39

39
Two bowls and a jug. Fritware with "silhouette" slip and glaze design. Persia, 12th century. From right: diameter 18 cms. 33/1; height 12.7 cms. 33/126; diameter 21.2 cms. 33/128

40
Star and cross tiles. Earthenware with opaque white glaze decorated in lustre. Persia, Kashan, late 13th–early 14th century. Width of star tiles 31.1 cms. 33/54, 55

41
Dish. Fritware, slipped and painted under a transparent lead glaze. Turkey, Iznik, 16th century copy of a 15th century Chinese prototype. Diameter 41.9 cms. 33/67



41

42
Dish and tankard. Fritware, slipped painted under a transparent lead glaze. Turkey, Iznik, circa 1650–1700. Diameter of dish 28.5 cms. Height of tankard 20.3 cms. 41/29, 38

43
A fisherman smoking his pipe beside a stream, a self-portrait by Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849). Coloured surimono woodblock print. Circa 1835. 21.3 x 18.3 cms. 37/13

44
Shoki the demon queller by Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1865). Coloured woodblock print. Circa 1849–1853. 35.8 x 24.1 cms. 37/4

45
Courtesan sitting with a book by Cikugawa Eizan (1787–1867). Coloured woodblock print. Circa 1804–1829. 36 x 21.3 cms. 37/5



42



38. Bowl 33-220

39. Two bowls and a jug in Silhouette ware 33-1, 33-126, 33-128

40. Star and cross tiles 33-54, 33-55

41. Fritware dish (underglazed blue - Iznik Stage 1) 33-67

42. Dish and Tankard (Iznik stage 3) 41-29, 41-38

43. Fisherman smoking his pipe 37-13

44. Shoki the demon queller 37-4

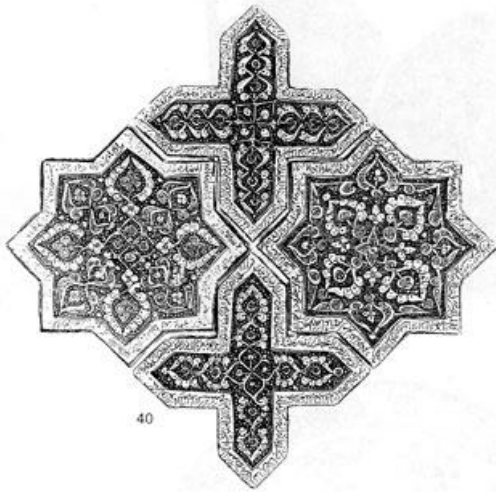
45. Courtesan with book 37-5

It has already been mentioned that much of the Near Eastern collection of ceramics and metalwork was purchased after 1944, a time when Burrell was concentrating on "filling the gaps". As a result, the collection has examples of wares dating from the ninth to the seventeenth century and from the areas of Central Asia, Persia and Turkey. The earliest ceramic examples come from Khurasan or Transoxiana and were made during the ninth to the tenth century when the area was controlled by the Samanids. The bodies are of earthenware with slip made from mineral pigments. The colours used on the bowl illustrated are red, brown and yellow, over a pale cream ground(38).

A great use was made of slip in Near Eastern pottery because of the nature of the clays used: either earthenware or fritware (ground silica mixed with clay). The various techniques of sgraffito, the application of one or more slips of different colours and then creating a pattern by carving through the top slip to the body or slip beneath, were exploited to the full. Seen here are a group of "silhouetted" wares from North Persia, so-called because they made use of a black slip which is carved through to the body and then applied with a colourless or, as in this case, turquoise glaze(39).

The collection also has a number of fine Persian monochromes and polychromes, the latter including examples of *minai* (enamel) and *lajvardina* (lapis lazuli), wares made between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Persian lustrewares are represented both by vessels and tiles(40). The lustre effect is achieved by painting a design in an overglaze mixture of silver and copper oxides, sulphur, red or yellow ochre and vinegar over an already fired and glazed body. After a second firing the ochre would be rubbed off to reveal the unique metal sheen. The set of tiles were made at Kashan in the thirteenth century and probably come from the tomb of the saint Imamzadeh Yahya at Vermin, southeast of Tehran. Other tiles from the tomb are to be found in a number of other museum collections.

The influence of Chinese ceramic designs and techniques on Near Eastern potters is seen clearly on a number of pieces. Both celadon and underglaze blue and white wares were copied. The dish is a clever imitation by Turkish potters of Iznik—of Chinese cobalt blue decorated porcelains made during the early Ming dynasty for export to the Near East(41). The Chinese of course could obtain a highly vitrified pure white porcelain body on which to apply the cobalt. For the Turkish potters to achieve a simulated effect, a white slip needed to be added over the fritware body. More typically Turkish designs can be seen on the Iznik dish and tankard(42). Again on a fritware body covered with a white slip, the designs of serrated leaves, tulips and carnations are vividly drawn in blue, green and scarlet outlined in black and covered with a transparent glaze.



Finally, a brief word should be said about the Japanese collection, which is represented by a small group of thirty woodblock prints. They seem to have been acquired as a group, probably at the turn of the century and long before Sir William kept any record of his purchases. However, it seems likely that they originally formed all or part of the collection of the artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), who had close associations with Glasgow. The prints all date from the eighteenth and nineteenth century and many of them display the great subtleties of the mature print-maker's art. All are figure subjects (there are no landscapes), and depict ladies, courtesans, actors and legendary and religious characters. Most of the famous artists of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century are represented in the collection, including Kunisada, Utamaro, Kuniyoshi and Hokusai. Sir William seems to have been particularly fond of Hokusai, as there are a number of his works in the collection, including a print of the artist himself disguised as an old fisherman smoking his pipe(43).

Kunisada is represented by this dramatic print of Shoki, the demon queller(44). Shoki is seen in characteristically fierce pose, flourishing his sword with one arm and holding an *oni*, or demon, under the other. To end this introduction, is a print of a figure in more contemplative mood: Eizan's depiction of a courtesan sitting, a book in her lap, pinning her hair(45)