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Collecting and Display in Public and Private: A Biography of the Ionides Collection of European Style Chinese Export Porcelain, 1920-1970  
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**Collecting and Display in Public and  
Private: A Biography of the Ionides  
Collection of European Style Chinese  
Export Porcelain, 1920-1970**

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## **THESIS ABSTRACT**

This thesis constructs a biography of the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain; a collection previously unknown beyond specialist ceramic circles, but one whose objects have defined this sub-field of Chinese ceramics. Focusing on the years preceding, during and after the Second World War, this thesis investigates the appeal of art objects which materialise Sino-European cultural and commercial encounters of the long eighteenth century to twentieth century collectors, Basil and Nellie Ionides and the national museums of Britain, revealing shifting attitudes towards Chineseness, Britishness and identity politics.

The life of the Ionides Collection is considered in two distinct phases in order to explore the transformations which occurred, not only in the shape of the collection, but in the meaning of objects as they were (re)classified, displayed and interpreted in a variety of temporal and spatial contexts. First, in the private sphere of the Ionides, through their personal biographies and the historical lived interior at Buxted Park, the relationship between collecting Chinese export porcelain and interior design is explored, as part of the contemporary fashion for the Neo-Georgian, in which the collector/designer Basil Ionides played a significant role. The study of social networks linking the collectors to agents and advisors, dealers, auctioneers and museum specialists brings into focus the dynamics of collecting during this period, the taste of the Ionides and their self-fashioning as collectors.

In the public sphere of the museum, the Ionides Collection embarked on the second phase of its life, resulting in the formation of ‘micro-collections’ at the V&A and British Museum, each situated within established museum taxonomies of Chinese art, Chinese ceramics and Chinese export art and subject to post-war innovations then taking shape. This thesis considers the relationship between private collector and national museum, highlighting the impact of key actors and institutional practice which defined the status of European style Chinese export porcelain and in turn the Ionides Collection at the heart of this study.

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## THESIS CONCLUSION

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[Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:**

EIC	East India Company
OCS	Oriental Ceramic Society
NAL	National Art Library
PEM	Peabody Essex Museum
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie or Dutch East India Company
V&A	Victoria and Albert Museum

## INTRODUCTION

The collection of Chinese export porcelain at the V&A is one of the most comprehensive and important in the world, ranging from the earliest blue and white armorial pieces of the sixteenth century to elaborately modelled porcelain pagodas of the nineteenth century. Within this collection, a number of significant objects are well known, such as this punch bowl decorated in European style with a design derived from a satirical Hogarth print, which entered the V&A in 1951 from the bequest of Basil Ionides (1884-1950) (Fig.0.1 a-b).<sup>1</sup> While many objects in the bequest, and in the name of his wife Nellie Ionides (1883-1962) at the British Museum, have been separately exhibited and published, to a great extent defining the field of Chinese export porcelain in European style, for the European market, the history of the collectors and the collection have never formed the focus of academic research before and remains unknown beyond specialist ceramic circles. As a result, the role of European style Chinese export porcelain in fields as disparate as interior design in twentieth century England, British post-war museology, and collections history has remained hidden. In order to rectify this, this thesis constructs the biographies of both the collectors and the collection in a variety of temporal and spatial contexts in the public and private sphere, through a series of parallel and intersecting stories of objects, people and institutions. In doing so, the aims and motivations of the collectors and national museums are revealed, and how objects in this collection acquired multiple and often competing meanings, due to their polysemantic capacity, bringing into focus questions of Chineseness, Britishness and identity politics in the middle years of the twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> For a recent catalogue entry, see Luisa Mengoni in, Zhangshen Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Book Series for the National Museum of China International Exchange (Beijing, 2012). Pp.152-153. On Hogarth and Chinese porcelain, see Lars Tharp, *Hogarth's China: Hogarth's Paintings and Eighteenth Century Ceramics* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1997).



Fig.0.1a Punch bowl, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding, Jingdezhen, China, c.1750-55. Height:15.8, Diameter: 40.5cm, C.23-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].



Fig.0.1b Punch bowl (side detail), C.23-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

This thesis constructs a biographical archive for the collectors, Basil and Nellie Ionides for the first time, as no personal archive for either individual exists, mobilizing a range of documentary sources in order to illuminate details of their private and public persona which shaped their complex identities – ethnic, religious, cultural and sexual – and the objects they collected. The significant but largely unknown professional achievements of architect and interior designer Basil Ionides are explored, highlighting his approach to historical and contemporary design, alternative strategies of display, and the effective utilization of colour and the decorative art object within the interiors he created for his clients and the private homes he shared with his wife. The wealthy Shell heiress Nellie Ionides had indulged her passion for collecting from an early age, including Chinese porcelain, which connected her to an extensive web of individuals in the Chinese art world; specialists in museums, auction houses, dealers, agents as well as fellow collectors amongst elite society played a part in collection formation and dispersal. The individual and collective histories of the Ionides reveal the role of Chinese art objects, in particular Chinese export porcelain, within the interiors they inhabited and their self-fashioning as collectors.

In the public sphere, the history of the Ionides Collection in the British national museums is similarly unknown. On the second stage in the life of the collection, the archives of the V&A and British Museums were mined extensively, producing a micro-history of the British national museums in the post-war era.<sup>2</sup> To begin, this thesis constructs a material archive of the Ionides Collection, in order to analyse the movement and impact of objects in the bequests, defining the full scope and design history of the collection as well as identifying its contents.

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<sup>2</sup> For a recent discussion of the methodology and theoretical frameworks of microhistory and global history, see John-Paul A Ghobrial, 'Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian\*', *Past & Present* 242, no. Supplement\_14 (1 November 2019): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtz046>. On the application of 'global micro-history' to Sino-Western interactions in the early modern period, see Eugenio Menegon, 'Telescope and Microscope. A Micro-Historical Approach to Global China in the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Asian Studies* 54, no. 4 (July 2020): 1315–44, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X18000604>.

## **Defining and Situating the Collection**

### *The Material Archive: the Ionides Collection in the British National Museums*

The material archive consists of 182 objects ranging in date from the second quarter of the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century across the combined collections of the V&A and British Museum.<sup>3</sup> In order to gain a comprehensive overview of the technological, chronological, decorative and thematic scope of the collection, a variety of methodologies were utilized including research via the digital catalogue or Collections Management System (CMS) at the V&A, studying objects on display in the galleries at both museums and the detailed examination of objects over a series of study sessions organised with the assistance of museum curators, as outlined in Chapter 3. As an employee of the V&A, access to the internal object records and objects themselves was enhanced, allowing the detailed analysis of individual items and the Ionides Collection as a whole. This was the first time that such an exercise had been undertaken at the museum and a summary of the results has been produced as an Appendix to this thesis.

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<sup>3</sup> This figure includes two examples of imperial porcelain which also passed into the collections with the bequests (V&A: C-51-1951, BM: 1953,1015.7b), as discussed in Chapter 4.





Fig. 0.2 Large platter, blue and white porcelain decorated with Bacchus, Jingdezhen, China, c.1680-1700. Diameter: 37.5cm, C.66-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].



The chronological scope of the Ionides Collection allows us to observe artistic and design interactions that resulted from the commercial engagement between European trading nations and China, principally through the Dutch and English East India Companies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A pair of late seventeenth century Chinese blue and white porcelain platters, now divided between the V&A and British Museum, illustrate the transmission of designs originating in the Netherlands across a range of media, including metalwork, tin-glazed earthenware and prints; the classical god of wine, Bacchus is depicted here in a Dutch-style interior (Fig.0.2).<sup>4</sup> The transfer of European visual sources from prints to porcelain was well established by this time and the use of wooden, metal or ceramic models became increasingly common as the design repertoire of European-style porcelain manufactured in China was extended over the following century.

Blue and white porcelain represents a minor part of the collection, most of which were produced in Jingdezhen, China, but a small number of Japanese porcelains are also present, such as a pair of armorial baluster jugs dating to 1665-75, raising questions regarding the collectors' interest in or ability to accurately identify the provenance of individual items.<sup>5</sup> A number of white porcelains produced in China at the kilns of Dehua, known in Europe as 'blanc de Chine' are also included, dating from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth century, indicating the popularity of this style of undecorated porcelain in Europe, in particular single or groups of figurines, for which Dehua was known.

Figurines produced at Jingdezhen and Dehua are well-represented in the Ionides Collection, many of which reflect the evolution of the porcelain industry in Europe. The dancing couple, known as the 'Dutch dancers' or 'Tyrolean dancers' in the V&A, was manufactured at Jingdezhen between 1750-60 and reproduces in detail a porcelain design first made at Meissen, Germany around 1740, illustrating the interplay between European and Chinese designers, manufacturers, traders and consumers at this time (Fig.0.3).<sup>6</sup> The production of figurines such as these made available the latest European designs at an affordable price, when European manufactured porcelains were still prohibitively expensive. The Ionides

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<sup>4</sup> V&A: C.66-1963, BM:1963,0423.2 See catalogue entry, Jessica Harrison-Hall in Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp.122-123.

<sup>5</sup> While the two baluster jugs could be mistaken for Chinese examples (V&A: C.65-1962, BM:1963,0422.1), a flat-sided sake flask is more readily identified as Japanese (V&A: C.64-1963). Other Japanese objects include a hexagonal bowl (V&A: C.27-1951) and an apothecary-vessel (BM: 1963,0422.2).

<sup>6</sup> See catalogue entry, Luisa Mengoni in Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp.260-261.

Collection includes a number of examples of this type, replicating ceramic shapes and designs originating from Delft, Meissen, Staffordshire and Chelsea.



Fig. 0.3 Pair of dancers, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding, Jingdezhen, China, c.1750-60. Height: 14cm, C.14-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

The Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain can be characterised not only by the multiplicity of shapes and forms, reflecting the functionality of porcelain for use or display in the European interior, but by the extensive range of pictorial decorations and motifs which shine a light on contemporary European fashions and preoccupations. The range of subjects are extensive and categorised in the Appendix to this thesis according to design typology; ships and maritime themes, armorials or pseudo-armorials, literary and historical subjects, politics and current affairs, classical and mythological scenes, religious subjects, agriculture and the hunt, themes of love and *fêtes gallants* are all represented. While some objects appear wholly European in design, others juxtapose European and Chinese design elements and subjects on a single piece, such as the small Chinese landscape vignettes set within ornate European-style rococo borders on the punch bowl discussed above (Fig.0.1b), visualising the Sino-European cultural encounter. As this thesis shows, the polysemantic capacity of European style Chinese export porcelain makes it particularly receptive to multiple readings, determined by subject/object relationships and context, be that in the public or private sphere, by collector or curator, or museum visitor in London, Liverpool or latterly in Beijing.

The singular design focus of the Ionides Collection of European-style Chinese export porcelain is clear. What remains to be established in the course of this thesis are the parameters of the collection itself, first in the private hands of the collectors and later the national museums, being listed separately in the names of Basil Ionides and his wife Nellie Ionides at the present time. The question of authorship and ownership of the collection is central to understanding the motivations and aims of the collectors and constitutes an important strand of this thesis. The wording of the final Will, written in 1946, whereby Basil Ionides stated his intention to leave to the V&A, ‘my collection of Famille Rose China with European decoration’<sup>7</sup> left the bequest open to a series of interpretations. It has already been demonstrated that while many objects were in fact decorated with *famille rose* enamels with European decoration, such as the Hogarth punchbowl, numerous objects were not, being decorated in blue and white, *famille verte* or other styles of enamel decoration, while others remain deliberately undecorated. The implementation of the Will and unravelling of the bequest was problematic due to a variety of factors, discussed in full in Chapter 4, but the

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<sup>7</sup> Final Will of Basil Ionides dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1946, Principal Probate Registry of the High Court of Justice, London, accessed December 2014.

ambiguity of terminology concerning the Basil Ionides Bequest indicates at this early stage the fluidity of the boundaries of the collection.

### *Exhibiting and Publishing the Ionides Collection of European-Style Chinese Export Porcelain*

All of the aforementioned objects, once in the Ionides Collection, featured in the loan exhibition, 'Passion for Porcelain: Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum,' held in Beijing in 2012 at the National Museum of China to mark the centenary of the museum and the London Olympics taking place later that year.<sup>8</sup> In total, seventeen Ionides objects were selected, playing a significant role in the exhibition narrative which explored the interplay between Chinese and European ceramic designers and manufacturers, through cultural exchange and commerce, and the history of collecting Chinese porcelain in the British national museums.<sup>9</sup> In spite of the prominence of Ionides objects in the exhibition, 'the Hon. Mrs Basil Ionides' receives only a brief mention in the accompanying essay, 'Collecting Ceramics: London Fashion,' and Basil Ionides is entirely absent from this discourse.<sup>10</sup> The paucity of research on the Ionides Collection and the collectors is striking, a shortfall that this thesis seeks to address.

This was not the first time Ionides objects were exhibited in East Asia. Some of the same pieces featured in the loan exhibition, 'Ancient Chinese Trade Ceramics from the British Museum,' in 1994 at the National Museum of History in Taiwan, and 'Self and Other' which toured Japan in 2008-9.<sup>11</sup> Most recently, Ionides porcelains appeared in the exhibition, 'Raffles in Southeast Asia' at the Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore (2019) and later

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<sup>8</sup> Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*.

<sup>9</sup> This includes a large famille rose basin (BM:2003,1129.1), purchased by the British Museum through the Brooke Sewell permanent fund (Bonhams, 2003), formerly in the collection of Nellie Ionides. Three Ionides pieces also featured as secondary objects in catalogue entries but were not exhibited.

<sup>10</sup> Jessica Harrison-Hall, 'Collecting Ceramics: London Fashion', in *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*, ed. Zhangshen, Book Series for the National Museum of China International Exchange (Beijing, 2012). pp.39-47.

<sup>11</sup> See Regina Krahl and Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Ancient Trade Ceramics from the British Museum* (London, Taipei, 1994). Exhibited the following year at the British Museum in London, *East Meets West: Chinese Trade Ceramics in the British Museum*, 1995.

'Self and Other' toured to Osaka, National Museum of Ethnology (Sept-Nov.2008), Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Dec-Jan.2008), Hayama, Museum of Modern Art (Feb-March 2009). No catalogue was produced for this exhibition.

the British Museum (2019-20).<sup>12</sup> While small in number, totaling thirty-eight, the visibility of European style Chinese export porcelain, formerly in the Ionides Collection and now at the British Museum has been considerable.<sup>13</sup>

Taking these exhibitions together, it is clear that Ionides pieces have played a significant part in telling the story of the global trade in Chinese porcelain to audiences in East and Southeast Asia over the past twenty-five years, which for many was entirely new. Collaborations between museums and art institutions have made visible a specialist category of Chinese porcelain which ordinarily is rarely seen in that context. The political dimensions of such collaborative exhibitions cannot be overlooked, but nevertheless these exhibitions have highlighted a past era of cultural and commercial exchange which has only recently come into focus, in particular to audiences in mainland China.

In London, Ionides objects can today be seen in a variety of galleries across the V&A and British Museum, discussed later in this thesis, and have been separately published in museum catalogues. Ionides porcelains were first published as examples of ‘*Chinese Export Art and Design*’ at the V&A in 1987, to accompany the gallery of Chinese Export Art which opened at that time, but today houses Buddhist Art.<sup>14</sup> Ionides objects, including decorative carvings, textiles, Canton enamels, and glass paintings as well as European style Chinese export porcelain first appeared in the publication, ‘*Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century*,’ written by Margaret Jourdain (1876-1951) and British Museum curator, Soame Jenyns (1904-1976) in 1950, shortly before the death of Basil Ionides and the bequest was made available to the V&A.<sup>15</sup> The authors noted that, ‘This aspect of the cultural exchange between East and West has not hitherto attracted the attention it undoubtedly deserves,’ highlighting the lack of academic research in this field.

Some years later in 2011, Ionides porcelains featured extensively in the publication, ‘*Chinese Export Ceramics*,’ published to coincide with the opening of the newly refurbished suite of

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<sup>12</sup> Farish A. Noor et al., eds., *Raffles in Southeast Asia: Revisiting the Scholar and Statesman* (Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2019). See Plate 8: Large blue and white porcelain dish decorated with the baptism of Christ (BM:1963,0422.13).

<sup>13</sup> Excluding the imperial Yongzheng dish (BM:1953,1015.7.b) but including the later museum acquisition (BM:2003,1129.1).

<sup>14</sup> Craig Clunas, ed., *Chinese Export Art and Design* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1987). Gallery 47f, formerly the Gallery of Chinese Export Art, was dismantled in late 2014 and reopened as the new Robert H.N.Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art, August 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Jourdain and R.Soame Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1950).

V&A ceramics galleries in 2009-10; individual objects were also selected for the V&A publication, *Masterpieces of World Ceramics*, in 2008.<sup>16</sup> The prominence of Ionides objects in these publications indicates the significance of the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain within the wider V&A ceramics collection, and the manner in which Ionides objects have been used not only to illustrate but to define this sub-category of Chinese ceramics in the British national collections. In a similar manner, two rare Ionides figurines at the British Museum were selected to illustrate the theme, 'Copying European ceramics and prints,' in the British Museum publication, *China: A History in Objects*, (2017), once more highlighting the leading role played by Ionides porcelains in the construction of museum narratives of Chinese ceramics, global ceramics and Chinese art.<sup>17</sup>

Despite of the visibility of individual Ionides objects in museum publications, in particular at the V&A, the history of the porcelain collection within the national museums has received little attention up to this point. The only article to directly address and include the Basil Ionides Bequest within the history of collecting Chinese ceramics at the V&A was written by Luisa Mengoni in 2011 in her appraisal, 'Collecting and Redisplaying Qing Ceramics at the V&A, in which Mengoni notes conflicting attitudes towards the bequest on arrival at the museum, which will be explored in full in Chapter 4.<sup>18</sup> No further details regarding the history of the collection or the collectors are provided, but the article does at least situate the Basil Ionides Bequest within the broader narrative of collections history at the V&A.

Beyond the British national museums, Ionides objects continue to circulate on the art market and have been published in that context. The specialist dealer, Jorge Welsh Works of Art has exhibited and featured a number of pieces formerly in the Ionides Collection in sales catalogues in recent years, such as an exceptionally rare porcelain figure of the infant Jesus in, *Through Distant Eyes: Portraiture in Chinese Export Art* (2018).<sup>19</sup> Numerous publications supported by Jorge Welsh are of particular relevance to this study and could be

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<sup>16</sup> Rose Kerr and Luisa.E Mengoni, *Chinese Export Ceramics* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011). Victoria and Albert Museum, Reino Liefkes, and Hilary Young, eds., *Masterpieces of World Ceramics in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London : New York: V&A Pub. ; Distributed in North America by H.N. Abrams, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Jessica Harrison-Hall, *China: A History in Objects* (New York, New York: Thames & Hudson Inc, 2017). pp.292-293.

<sup>18</sup> Luisa.E Mengoni, 'Collecting and Redisplaying Qing Ceramics at the V&A', *Arts of Asia* 41, no. 6 (December 2011): 97–111.

<sup>19</sup> Luisa Vinhais and Jorge Welsh, eds., *Through Distant Eyes: Portraiture in Chinese Export Art*, 2018. Cat.2, pp.28-31.

cited, including ‘*European Scenes on Chinese Art*’ (2005), ‘*Christian Images in Chinese Porcelain*’ (2003), or ‘*Out of the Ordinary: Living with Chinese Export Art*’, (2015).<sup>20</sup> In 2019, Jorge Welsh Research & Publishing hosted the conference, ‘Fired to Last: The Global Reach of Chinese Export Porcelain,’ bringing together a panel of international scholars in the field, to coincide with the launch of Volume IV of the Renato de Albuquerque collection; objects formerly in the Ionides Collection had featured in Volumes I and II.<sup>21</sup>

From this brief survey of exhibitions and literature directly relating to the Ionides Collection, it is clear that whilst individual objects constitute a significant part of the British national collections and continue to circulate on the art market today, publications on this subject are confined to the non-academic field of museums and art dealers. Our attention will now turn to consider the historiography of collecting Chinese porcelain in Britain and how this has shaped the classification of Chinese export porcelain and other categories of Chinese porcelain in that context, in order to question why this category of ceramics, and in turn the Ionides collection of European style Chinese export porcelain, is absent from the primary discourse of collecting and museology in Britain.

### *Historiography of Collecting Chinese Porcelain in Britain: Export v Domestic?*

The well-established historiography of collecting Chinese ceramics in Britain has emphasized the role of individuals who pioneered the collecting of early wares from the Han to the Song dynasties, which heralded ‘a new orientation of ideas’ towards Chinese art during the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> The Seligman Collection, Barlow Collection, Eumorfopoulos Collection and the Percival David Collection, all came into being at that time

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<sup>20</sup> Teresa Canepa, *European Scenes on Chinese Art* (London, Lisbon: Jorge Welsh Books, 2005). Teresa Canepa, *Christian Images in Chinese Porcelain* (London, Lisbon: Jorge Welsh, 2003). Jorge Welsh, ed., *Out of the Ordinary: Living with Chinese Export Porcelain* (London: Lisbon: Jorge Welsh Books, 2015). pp.170-173.

<sup>21</sup> Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos, *The RA Collection of Chinese Ceramics Vol. 4. A Collector’s Vision*. (London: Jorge Welsh Books, 2019).

Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos and Luísa Vinhais, *The RA Collection of Chinese Ceramics: A Collector’s Vision*, 1. ed (London: Welsh, 2011). Vol I, pp.334-337, Vol.II.p.23.

<sup>22</sup> Bernard Rackham, William King, and R.L. Hobson, *Chinese Ceramics in Private Collections* (London: Halton & Truscott Smith Ltd, 1931).

and have constituted the focus of separate academic research.<sup>23</sup> Further studies highlight the dominance of individual collectors, museum specialists, auctioneers and dealers associated within the Oriental Ceramic Society (OCS), founded in 1921.<sup>24</sup> An earlier generation of collectors, active in the last decades of the nineteenth century are also known by name, such as George Salting (1835-1909) and William Gulland (1841-1906) at the V&A and Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897) at the British Museum; an overview of collecting Chinese ceramics at both institutions is provided by Mengoni and Harrison-Hall cited above.<sup>25</sup> Examples of Chinese export porcelain in a wide variety of styles can be found in many of these collections, from designs explicitly made for European markets and decorated in European style in the collections of Franks, Gulland and Salting, to wares manufactured principally for export to other regions of Asia or the Middle East, such as Zhangzhou or blue and white wares in the Percival David Collection. Furthermore, recent strides in maritime archaeology have shown that a variety of domestic wares including green wares and white ceramics such as those in the collections of Barlow, Seligman and Eumorfopoulos were also widely exported in earlier centuries, indicating the fluidity of classificatory boundaries, drawn up in Britain during the twentieth century, which have come to separate these two categories of wares.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Nicky Levell, 'Scholars and Connoisseurs, Knowledge and Taste. The Seligman Collection of Chinese Art', in *Collectors: Expressions of Self and Other*, Contributions in Critical Museology and Material Culture (London: The Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2001), 73–89.

Formerly on display at the University of Sussex, the Barlow Collection was transferred to the Ashmolean Museum in 2011, Oxford. See Craig Clunas and Yvonne Grout, *The Barlow Collection of Chinese Ceramics, Bronzes and Jades: An Introduction* (Sussex: University of Sussex at Brighton, 1997).

George Eumorfopoulos and R.L. Hobson, *The George Eumorfopoulos Collection. Catalogue of the Chinese, Corean and Persian Pottery and Porcelain* (London: Ernest Benn, 1925).

Stacey Pierson, 'The David Collection and the Historiography of Chinese Ceramics', *Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia* No.20 (Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation and Display, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Frances Wood, 'Towards a New History of the Oriental Ceramic Society: Narrative and Chronology', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 76 (2012 2011): 95–116.

<sup>25</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Salting Collection* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1911). For a more recent comparative study, see Konstanze Amelie Knittler, 'Motivations and Patterns of Collecting: George Salting, William G. Gulland and William Lever as Collectors of Chinese Porcelain' (Ph.D., University of Glasgow, 2011), <http://theses.gla.ac.uk/2811/>.

Leigh Ashton and William Arnold Thorpe, *Handbook to the W.G.Gulland Bequest of Chinese Porcelain: Including Some Notes on the Subjects of the Decoration* (London: Board of Education, 1941).

Soame Jenyns, 'The Franks Collection of Oriental Antiquities', *The British Museum Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1953): 103–6, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4422450>.

On museum collecting, see Mengoni, 'Collecting and Redisplaying Qing Ceramics at the V&A'. Harrison-Hall, 'Collecting Ceramics: London Fashion'.

<sup>26</sup> Rose Kerr, 'Porcelain Raised from the Sea: Marine Archaeology and Chinese Ceramics', *Apollo, The Magazine for the Arts for Connoisseurs and Collectors* 167 (May 2008): 47–51.



In fact, the classification of Chinese ceramics as ‘export’ and ‘domestic’ was only explicitly made and understood in Britain as a result of the ‘new orientation of ideas’ first articulated by V&A curator, Bernard Rackham (1876-1964) and later expanded upon by his OCS peers. The collecting of early wares in the first decades of the twentieth century was tied both to notions of authenticity and ‘Chineseness,’ which prioritized wares then arriving directly from China above those already in circulation in the West, and to the physical properties and appearance of these objects – their plastic form, simple aesthetic and non-representational decoration – which were seized upon by modernist art critic, Roger Fry (1866-1934) and his supporters.<sup>27</sup> The relationship between the aesthetics of early Chinese art and Modernism has been discussed by Judith Green and Ralph Parfect and will be revisited in the course of this thesis, highlighting the leading role played by private collectors, museums and art critics in shaping patterns of taste.<sup>28</sup>

As attitudes towards Chinese porcelain in Britain were changing in the 1920’s and 30’s, distinctions between Chinese export porcelain and domestic wares became more firmly entrenched. As William Sargent observed, ‘While collectors on both sides of the Atlantic continued to accumulate export wares, scholars ignored them, in the main, focusing instead on Chinese domestic taste and imperial production.’<sup>29</sup> The distinction here between scholars and collectors is perhaps too plainly put but the meaning is clear. While publications during this period increasingly prioritized early wares, a number of leading books continued to include Qing wares within their scope. For example, ‘*Chinese Ceramics in Private Collections*’ of 1931 by Bernard Rackham and Robert Lockhart Hobson (1872-1941), which included nine items from the collection of the Hon Mrs Walter Levy (later Ionides).<sup>30</sup>

Contrary to prevailing taste, a small number of privately published books suggest that interest amongst collectors of Chinese export porcelain persisted. Collectors Frederick Arthur Crisp

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<sup>27</sup> Roger Fry, *Chinese Art: An Introductory Handbook to Painting, Sculpture, Ceramics, Textiles, Bronzes and Minor Arts* (London, 1935).

<sup>28</sup> Judith Green, “‘A New Orientation of Ideas’”: Collecting and the Taste for Early Chinese Ceramics in England: 1921-36’, in *Collecting Chinese Art: Interpretation and Display*, ed. Stacey Pierson, Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia 20 (London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 2000).  
Ralph Parfect, ‘Roger Fry, Chinese Art and The Burlington Magazine’, in *British Modernism and Chinoiserie* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 53–71,  
<http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748690954.001.0001/upso-9780748690954-chapter-004>.

<sup>29</sup> William R. Sargent, *Treasures of Chinese Export Ceramics from the Peabody Essex Museum* (Massachusetts: Peabody Essex Museum, 2012). p.27.

<sup>30</sup> Rackham, King, and Hobson, *Chinese Ceramics in Private Collections*.

(1851-1922) and Sir Algernon Tudor-Craig (1873-1943) provided detailed analyses of designs and heraldry in their studies of armorial china in 1907 and 1925, systematically identifying by name a list of 953 services then known in Britain, their date of production and later sale where applicable, indicating the increasing availability of services on the art market in a rapidly changing socio-economic climate.<sup>31</sup> Studies of armorial wares were significantly expanded upon by the dealer David Sanctuary Howard in 1974 and 2003 and latterly his wife, Angela Howard, who presented a paper on the subject to the Oriental Ceramic Society in 2013, indicating a continued interest amongst dealers and collectors in this specialist category of Chinese porcelain.<sup>32</sup>

Another early book of particular relevance to this thesis is '*The Book of Famille Rose*', written in 1927 by G.C. Williamson, a British specialist in Western art with no prior experience of writing on Chinese art or in fact ceramics.<sup>33</sup> The book is illustrated exclusively with objects from private collections of Chinese *famille rose* porcelain in Britain, including porcelain decorated in European style, offering valuable clues to the provenance of individual objects which later passed into the Ionides Collection. For example, a porcelain saucer and dish decorated with a reclining European couple, identified here as Martin Hurst collection, was later purchased at auction by the Ionides in 1942/3, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Fig.3.3). Other named collectors include Mr. W.J. Holt, Mrs. Paterson, the Hon. Mrs Ronald Grenville, Mrs. Lightfoot, Mr. Reginald Cory, the Hon. Frederick Wallop, Mr. Williams and Mr. Jones, but none of these Chinese porcelain collections are known today, indicating that they too have remained outside the field of the history of collecting Chinese ceramics in Britain. Basil Ionides is not mentioned, suggesting he did not have a sizeable collection of *famille rose* at that time or was unknown to the author.

The first comprehensive academic survey of collecting Chinese ceramics in Britain was provided by Stacey Pierson in 2007, although Nellie and Basil Ionides remain absent from

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<sup>31</sup> Frederick Arthur Crisp, *Armorial China: A Catalogue of Chinese Porcelain with Coats of Arms* (London: Privately Printed, 1907).

Algernon Tudor-Craig, *Armorial Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Century House, 1925).

<sup>32</sup> David Sanctuary Howard, *Chinese Armorial Porcelain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

David Sanctuary Howard, *Chinese Armorial Porcelain Volume II* (London, 2003).

Angela Howard, 'The English and Their Taste for Chinese Armorial Porcelain', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 78 (2013): 47–58.

<sup>33</sup> G.C. Williamson, *The Book of Famille Rose* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1927).

this discourse.<sup>34</sup> Nick Pearce has also written extensively on collecting and collectors of Chinese art in Britain, in particular between 1850-1950.<sup>35</sup> In his study of Stephen Wooton Bushell (1844-1908) Pearce considered the contributions the physician made not only as collector and scholar but also as advisor and agent, acting on behalf of the national museums of Britain in the acquisition of objects while resident in Beijing.<sup>36</sup> The formal and informal role of agents, dealers and auctioneers in shaping the field has increasingly gained recognition, spawning the creation of research collaborations in recent years, and constitutes an important strand of this thesis which is fully explored in Chapters 3.<sup>37</sup>

Recent studies of collectors of Chinese ceramics in Britain include the biographical and encyclopaedic, *Provenance: Collectors, Dealers and Scholars: Chinese Ceramics in Britain and America*, 2011, written and published by the collector Dominic Jellinek and co-written by the dealer, Roy Davids, both specialists in Chinese ceramics.<sup>38</sup> Whilst providing a useful reference to well-known figures in the Chinese art world, including the Hon. Nellie Ionides, Basil is once more missing from this study. This publication and those mentioned above indicate the dearth of academic research dedicated to collectors and collections of Chinese export porcelain in Britain - being authored by collectors, dealers and museum specialists - in contrast to the extensive academic studies of collections of early and imperial Chinese ceramics, and associated collectors, which continues to dominate the field. By situating the Ionides Collection in the discourse of collections history and museology in Britain, this thesis asserts the importance of the specialist subject of European style Chinese export porcelain, contributing to a more balanced reading of the field and forming the basis for future academic studies.

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<sup>34</sup> Stacey Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums: The Field of Chinese Ceramics in Britain, 1560-1960* (Oxford ; New York: P. Lang, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Numerous articles could be cited, for an early example, see Nick Pearce, 'Soldiers, Doctors, Engineers: Chinese Art and British Collecting, 1860-1935', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History* 6 (2001): 45-52.

<sup>36</sup> Nick Pearce, 'Collecting, Connoisseurship and Commerce: An Examination of the Life and Career of Stephen Wooton Bushell (1844-1908)', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 70 (2007).

<sup>37</sup> On the recent collaboration between the University of Glasgow and the Smithsonian Institution, see Jane Milosch and Nick Pearce, *Collecting and Provenance: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2019). At the University of Leeds, the Centre for the Study of the Art and Antiques Market constitutes a research hub for the interdisciplinary study of the market for arts and antiques, led by Dr Mark Westgarth. Westgarth is currently the Principal Investigator of the AHRC funded project, 'SOLD! The Year of the Dealer: Antique Dealers, Art Markets and Museums, 2019-20'; a research and project-based collaboration between local and national UK museums (including the V&A) and galleries, Universities (Leeds and Southampton), and dealers.

<sup>38</sup> Roy Davids and Dominic Jellinek, *Provenance, Collectors, Dealers and Scholars: Chinese Ceramics in Britain and America* (Oxford: Roy Davids, 2011).

*Chinese Export Porcelain in North America and Continental Europe: Collecting and Research*

In contrast to Britain, named collectors and collections of Chinese export porcelain in the USA are numerous and well known, retaining the status and identity of those individuals who created them. In 2012, William Sargent noted that ‘The interest in Asian export art, porcelain in particular, has steadily increased since the mid-twentieth century,’ and many leading private collections were formed during this period.<sup>39</sup> The collections of Leo and Doris Hodroff, Mildred and Rafi Mottahedeh, Benjamin F. Edwards III, Munson Campbell, Elizabeth McCall Cain and Mrs. Lammot du Pont Copeland have stimulated interest in the field, initiating the publication of full and comprehensive monographs and enriching existing museum collections; the latter three private collections were gifted to the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), Salem and Sargent published a study of the Copeland Collection in 1991.<sup>40</sup> Studies of the Hodroff collection include those by David Sanctuary Howard in 1994 and 2005 when many items were gifted to the Winterthur Museum.<sup>41</sup> Howard also co-authored an earlier book with John Ayers, formerly of the V&A, illustrated with objects from the Mottahedeh Collection (1978) before the collection was gifted to the same museum; Ronald Fuchs published on the collection in 2005 when the transfer of objects was complete.<sup>42</sup>

Over the same period, the creation and evolution of museums dedicated to the global engagement of America through maritime trade with Asia, Africa and Oceania, namely the Peabody Essex Museum and Winterthur Museum mentioned above indicate a development which speaks directly to the American experience. These museums are today more accurately described as museums of American history, and Chinese export art and porcelain occupy a prominent place in their collections and have done so since their formation. Chinese export

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<sup>39</sup> William R. Sargent, ‘Five Hundred Years of Chinese Export Ceramics in Context’, in *Treasures of Chinese Export Ceramics from the Peabody Essex Museum* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 1–32. p.28

<sup>40</sup> William R. Sargent, *The Copeland Collection, Chinese and Japanese Ceramic Figures* (Massachusetts: Peabody Essex Museum, 1991).

<sup>41</sup> David Sanctuary Howard, *The Choice of the Private Trader: The Private Market in Chinese Export Porcelain Illustrated from the Hodroff Collection* (London: Zwemmer, 1994).

Ronald W. Fuchs, David Sanctuary Howard, and Gavin Ashworth, *Made in China: Export Porcelain from the Leo and Doris Hodroff Collection at Winterthur*, A Winterthur Book (Winterthur, DE : [Hanover, NH]: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum ; Distributed by University Press of New England, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> David Sanctuary Howard and John Ayres, *China for the West: Chinese Porcelain and Other Decorative Arts for Export Illustrated from the Mottahedeh Collection* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1978). Fuchs, Howard, and Ashworth, *Made in China*.

porcelain can also be seen in the leading collections of the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Museum of Fine Art (MFA) in Boston, but the PEM boasts ‘the largest, most comprehensive collection of its kind in the world,’ touring the exhibition ‘Views of the Pearl River Delta: Macau, Canton, and Hong Kong’ to Hong Kong, Sydney and Honolulu from 1996-97 and ‘Worlds Revealed: The Dawn of Japanese and American Exchange’ to the Edo-Tokyo Museum in 1999, in so doing reaching audiences in East Asia in a similar manner to the national museums of Britain mentioned above.<sup>43</sup>

It was the American dealer and collector, J.A.Lloyd Hyde (1902-1981), who wrote the first book dedicated to European style Chinese export porcelain in 1936 under the title ‘*Oriental Lowestoft*,’ indicating the continued use of this long defunct term.<sup>44</sup> In addition to purchases made in the USA and Europe, Lloyd Hyde visited China a number of times in his search for antique export porcelain and investigated the reproduction of historic export porcelain patterns and shapes still being made in enameling studios in Guangzhou. On visits to Guangzhou, Shanghai and Hong Kong, he was able to acquire rare examples such as large animal heads, multi-story pagodas and elaborate pieces decorated with European coats of arms unavailable in America at that time, which he supplied to wealthy clients including Henry Francis du Pont which can today be seen at the Winterthur Museum, once the collector’s childhood home.<sup>45</sup> Lloyd Hyde donated more than one hundred pieces of Chinese export porcelain to the Peabody Essex Museum, cementing his position in the history of collecting this specialist category of ceramics.

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<sup>43</sup> On the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection, see Clare Le Courbeiller, *Chinese Export Porcelain: The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003). On the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, John G. Philips, *China-Trade Porcelain. An Account of Its Historical Background, Manufacture, and Decoration and a Study of the Helena Woolworth McCann Collection* (London, 1956). Edwin J. Hipkiss, ‘Chinese Export Porcelains of the Helena Woolworth McCann Collection’, *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 41, no. 245 (1943): 46–51.

Sargent, *Treasures of Chinese Export Ceramics from the Peabody Essex Museum*. p.28.

<sup>44</sup> J.A. Lloyd-Hyde, *Oriental Lowestoft* (New York: Harper, 1936).

European style Chinese porcelain was so convincingly European in appearance that it was falsely mistaken as the product of Lowestoft on the East Anglian coast by William Chaffers who is attributed with inventing the term ‘Oriental Lowestoft’ in 1863. Though soon rejected, the term persisted in ceramic circles until the first decades of the twentieth century. See William Chaffers, *Marks and Monograms on European and Oriental Pottery and Porcelain* (London, 1863). Frederick Arthur Crisp, *Catalogue of Lowestoft China* (Privately Printed, 1907). Homer Eaton Keyes, ‘Lowestoft, What Is It?’, *Antiques* I–IV (November 1928).

<sup>45</sup> Ronald W. Fuchs, ‘A Passion for China: Henry Francis Du Pont’s Collection of Export Porcelain’, in *Collecting China. The World, China and a History of Collecting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 124–29.

In continental Europe, the centre for Chinese export porcelain studies is currently located in the Netherlands, whose connections with China through VOC trade has already been noted. Christian Jörg has led academic research in this field since the 1980's, first publishing *'Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade'* (1982), which built upon earlier studies by Volker during 1950s.<sup>46</sup> Subsequent research by Jörg illustrate multidisciplinary approaches to the study of Chinese export porcelain, including the design history of specially commissioned wares, the history of museum collections in Amsterdam and Brussels, and the study of shipwreck ceramics, demonstrating his wide-ranging interest and expertise in this field.<sup>47</sup> Teresa Canepa has also contributed significantly to the study of Chinese export porcelain over the past twenty years, publishing on specialist subjects with Jorge Welsh mentioned above, and *'Silk, Porcelain and Lacquer: China and Japan and Their Trade with Western Europe and the New World, 1500-1644,'* (2016) which is based on a PhD thesis supervised by Jörg.<sup>48</sup> Canepa recently published on the Lurie collection of late Ming Chinese export porcelain (2019), a private American collection, and is currently completing a catalogue raisonné of the British collector, Sir Michael Butler, due 2021, which will further contribute to the field.<sup>49</sup>

In recent years, academic debates between universities and museums in the USA have explored the marginal status of Chinese export art, questioning 'the paradoxical association between China and china – or more precisely – the (dis)connection between materiality and cultural connotation.'<sup>50</sup> Contributing scholars to the 2006 conference 'Collecting China. The World, China, and a History of Collecting,' adopted a variety of interdisciplinary and multicultural approaches to questions of identity, materiality, aesthetics and taste, applying

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<sup>46</sup> C. J. A. Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982). T Volker, *The Porcelain Trade of the Dutch East India Company after 1683* (Leiden, 1959). T Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company, as Recorded in the Dagh-Register of Batavia Castle, Those of Hirado and Deshima and Other Contemporary Papers, 1601-82* (Leiden, 1954).

<sup>47</sup> C. J. A. Jörg, 'A Pattern of Exchange: Jan Luyken and "Chine de Commande" Porcelain', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 37 (2002): 171–76, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1513082>.

C. J. A. Jörg, *Chinese Ceramics in the Collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: The Ming and Qing Dynasties* (London: Wilson, 1997). C.J.A Jörg, *Chine de Commande from the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels, Chinese Export Porcelain* (Hong Kong, 1989).

C. J. A. Jörg and Michael Flecker, *Porcelain from the Vung Tau Wreck. The Hallstrom Excavation* (Singapore, 2001). C. J. A. Jörg, *The Geldermalsen: History and Porcelain* (Groningen: Kemper, 1986).

<sup>48</sup> Teresa Canepa, *Silk, Porcelain and Lacquer: China and Japan and Their Trade with Western Europe and the New World, 1500-1644* (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2016).

<sup>49</sup> Teresa Canepa, *Jingdezhen to the World: The Lurie Collection of Chinese Export Porcelain from the Late Ming Dynasty* (Paul Holberton Publishing, 2019). Teresa Canepa and Katherine Butler, *Leaping the Dragon Gate: The Sir Michael Butler Collection of Seventeenth Century Chinese Porcelain* (Ad Ilissum, 2021).

<sup>50</sup> Vimalin Rujivacharakul, *Collecting China. The World, China, and a History of Collecting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011). p.16

the theories of philosopher Michel Foucault, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, and critical theorist Bill Brown, which have dominated the field of collections history since the 1980's and are particularly relevant to this thesis.<sup>51</sup> Noteworthy articles include Ronald Fuchs' study of the collecting of Henry Francis du Pont (1880-1969) and the display of Chinese export porcelain at Winterthur, which closely mirrors aspects of both the collecting and display of porcelain within the Ionides' country residence at Buxted Park.<sup>52</sup> Chinese art objects in the luxury homes of John D. Rockefeller Jr (1874-1960) and his wife Abby Aldrich Rockefeller (1874-1948) are the subject of Stanley Abe's paper and provide another useful counterpoint.<sup>53</sup> Both articles highlight the manner in which art collecting and home decoration were mobilized in the early decades of twentieth century America in order to construct social distinction and status amongst the newly wealthy American elite.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, this thesis will consider the accumulation of cultural capital by the Ionides through the ownership and display of Chinese art objects, in particular Chinese porcelain, against the backdrop of their own personal histories.<sup>55</sup>

The divergence of British and American attitudes towards Chinese export porcelain, as a serious field of academic research and collecting, may in part be attributed to the historical distinctions between Sino-British and Sino-American trading relationships during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before and after American independence (1776), and the resulting cultural connotations of Chinese porcelain.<sup>56</sup> The first 'collections' of Chinese export porcelain appeared somewhat earlier in Britain, destined for the households of leading

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<sup>51</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972). Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 1970. Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984 (New York: The New Press, 1994).

Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Bill Brown, *Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

<sup>52</sup> Ronald W. Fuchs, 'A Passion for China. Henry Francis Du Pont's Collection of Export Porcelain', in *Collecting China. The World, China and a History of Collecting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011).

<sup>53</sup> Stanley Abe, 'Rockefeller Home Decorating and Objects from China', in *Collecting China. The World, China and a History of Collecting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011). pp.107-123.

<sup>54</sup> Anna Wu observes the fashion for Chinese export wallpaper in the luxury interiors of the USA during the 1920's and 30's. See Anna Wu, 'Chinese Wallpaper, Global Histories and Material Culture' (Ph.D., Royal College of Art, 2019), <http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/3939/>.

<sup>55</sup> The concept of cultural capital was first put forward by Pierre Bourdieu and consisted of three strands: embodied, institutionalized and objectified. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

<sup>56</sup> Early examples of Chinese export porcelain for the American market often display patriotic motifs celebrating independence from colonial rule. See William R. Sargent, 'American Market Wares', in *Treasures of Chinese Export Ceramics from the Peabody Essex Museum* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 392-429.

families - the landed gentry or nouveau riche - who purchased items when newly arrived, recently manufactured and ready for use. While few family collections of this type remain intact and in situ, some case studies have focused on Chinese export porcelain in this context; Steven McDowell's study of the 'Shugborough Dinner Service,' Patricia Ferguson on 'A 'Hong' Bowl at Nostell Priory' or the case study of Osterley Park as part of East India Company at Home Project emphasise the English country house as an important site of cultural encounter, the identity of the house arguably commanding greater agency than the individuals who originally purchased or later inherited these objects.<sup>57</sup> To twentieth century designers such as Basil Ionides and their clients, Chinese export porcelain was an essential attribute of the fashionable country house interior, denoting social status and 'Britishness' amongst elite society, a subject which will be expanded upon in Chapter 2.

In conclusion, this literature review has shown that publications focussing on Chinese export porcelain in Britain have been largely restricted to non-academic circles, being written and published by private collectors, dealers and museums. While serious academic research has grown in recent years in relation to the global histories of porcelain, Anne Gerritsen and Steven McDowall providing a macro-view of porcelain as commodity up to the early modern period, this has not been matched with the academic study of collecting Chinese export porcelain in Britain.<sup>58</sup> Eighteenth-century studies have explored the agency of Chinese porcelain in European society, from Stacey Sloboda's studies of gender and taste, to Alden Cavanagh and Michael Yonan's discussions of cultural aesthetics or Maxine Berg's reflections on consumer society, further enriching our appreciation of Chinese porcelain in a range of socio-economic and cultural contexts and confirming the lack of distinction for a field of 'Chinese export porcelain'.<sup>59</sup> It is hoped that as a result of this research, the Ionides

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<sup>57</sup> Stephen McDowall, 'The Shugborough Dinner Service and Its Significance for Sino-British History', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014).

Patricia F. Ferguson, 'Canton Revisited: A "Hong" Bowl at Nostell Priory', *Apollo Supplement Historic Houses and Collections*, 2009, 48–53.

'Osterley Case Study: Material Goods – Porcelain', accessed 20 June 2019,

<https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/osterley-park-middlesex/osterley-case-study-material-goods-porcelain/>.

Margot Finn and Kate Smith, 'The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857', UCL Press, accessed 19 June 2019, <https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/88277>.

<sup>58</sup> Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello, eds., *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2016). Anne Gerritsen and Stephen McDowall, 'Material Culture and the Other: European Encounters with Chinese Porcelain, ca.1650-1800', *Journal of World History* 23, no. 1 (March 2012): 87–113.

<sup>59</sup> Stacey Sloboda, 'Porcelain Bodies: Gender, Acquisitiveness, and Taste in Eighteenth-Century England', in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920, The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting* (England: Ashgate, 2009), 19–36. Alden Cavanagh and Michael Yonan, *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain* (Ashgate, England, 2010).



Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain will achieve greater recognition as an entity and contribute to the development of literature in an under-studied field.

## **Research Methodology and Sources**

### *A Biography of the Ionides Collection*

A biographical approach to the study of individuals, objects or even interior spaces has increasingly gained favour in recent years and each of these research methodologies will be utilized in the course of this thesis. In the field of Chinese art, this approach has been applied to research as diverse as Louise Tythacott's study of Chinese bronze Buddhist statues now in the Liverpool Museum (2011) or Pippa Lacey's study of the coral network in eighteenth century China (2016).<sup>60</sup> First proposed by Appadurai and Kopytoff in 1986 as a means of teasing multiple meanings from objects traditionally categorised as ethnographic, theories emphasising the agency of objects in motion were expanded upon by anthropologist, Alfred Gell in 1998 and later scholars.<sup>61</sup> When applied to the Ionides Collection, these methodologies allow the key actors in the history of the collection to emerge – collectors, dealers, auctioneers, agents, advisors and museum specialists - bringing into focus the transformations that occurred, both in the shape of the collection and the meaning of objects, as they passed through time and space, from the private to the public sphere.

This thesis begins with the personal biographies of the Ionides, Nellie and Basil, reconstructing where possible their life stories, in order to contextualise their collecting practices, separately prior to their marriage and later as a couple. Contact with family members during the initial stages of research confirmed that no personal diaries or family archives survive and surprisingly little has been published on either individual, despite the

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Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century Britain: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>60</sup> Louise Tythacott, *The Lives of Chinese Objects: Buddhism, Imperialism and Display* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2011).

Pippa Lacey, 'The Coral Network: The Trade in Red Coral to the Qing Imperial Court in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Global Lives of Things* (Oxford ; New York: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>61</sup> Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*.

Igor Kopytoff, 'The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process', in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64–94.

Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

significant professional and personal contributions each made in the public sphere.<sup>62</sup> On Basil Ionides, architect and interior designer, the archives of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and periodicals associated with the field of architecture were consulted, namely *The Builder*, *The Architectural Review* and *Building*. On interior design, the publisher Country Life was significant, not only for supporting the books and short articles written by Basil Ionides, but for the series of features between 1934-1950 and unpublished photographic images of Buxted Park discovered in the Country Life Picture Library. In addition, the archives at the East Sussex Record Office allowed the architectural history of the mansion house to emerge, constructed here for the first time. In the absence of personal reflections on his private interior design schemes and art collections, these sources offer valuable insights into Basil's professional and private approaches to design, display and aesthetics as articulated through a range of private and commercial design projects.

Research into the life of the wealthy Shell heiress, Nellie Ionides led to the Anglo-Jewish Archive at the University of Southampton, revealing details of her early life and later social networks, which included architectural historian and personal advisor, Margaret Jourdain (1876-1951), Queen Mary (1876-1953) and other members of the British royal family, whose personal correspondence is cited in this thesis.<sup>63</sup> The Kings College Archive, Cambridge and Archives of Cambridge University Library were also consulted, identifying connections between the Ionides and fellow collectors, agents and the auctioneer, Jim Kiddell (1895-1980) of Sotheby's. Specialist periodicals *The Connoisseur*, *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society (TOCS)*, *Apollo* and *The Burlington Magazine* offered insights into the limited engagement of the couple with the Chinese art world and their self-fashioning as collectors.

In order to examine the aims and motivations of the collectors, Basil and Nellie Ionides, the matter of taste is significant to this discourse and the theories of sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) are usefully applied to the Ionides in the first chapter of this thesis, individually

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<sup>62</sup> According to Camilla Panufnik, granddaughter of Nellie Ionides from her first marriage, no personal papers for either Nellie Ionides or Basil Ionides survive. At an early meeting, she shared some personal anecdotes and memories of the couple who she visited at Buxted Park in her youth. Meeting at Riverside House, Twickenham, November 2013.

A meeting with John Ionides, distant cousin to Basil Ionides, provided useful historical context to Basil's father, Luke Ionides, but nothing directly concerning the collector. Cambridge, May 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Personal correspondence and ephemera relating to her early life was found within the Henriques Family Papers, MS371. Vivian Doris Henriques, Nellie's youngest daughter by her first marriage, married Robert David Quixano Henriques.

and later as a couple, bringing into focus the impact of ethnicity, education, gender, religion, class and culture on their personal habitus, and shared cultural capital.<sup>64</sup> The taste of the Ionides is considered in relation to contemporary trends in interior design, namely Neo-Georgian Revivalism in which Basil played a significant part, highlighting the channels through which patterns of taste were transmitted and shared amongst elite society. Finally, this thesis questions to what extent museums reflected, influenced and responded to dominant patterns of taste amongst private collecting circles.

The methodology of provenance research has been extensively employed throughout this thesis, mobilizing archival data from the national museums, dealers, agents, auction houses and specialist societies, in order to reveal the key actors who facilitated the formation of the Ionides Collection and its afterlife.<sup>65</sup> A number of London based dealers known to specialize in Chinese art, in particular Chinese export porcelain, were identified as possible sources, including John Sparks Ltd. whose archive formed the primary focus and a major part of this research. Other lesser known dealers such as D.M.&P. Manheim and Hancock were identified by extant labels on objects in the collection, but no archives have been located for either firm at the time of writing. Enquiries into the archives of Frank Partridge and Sons (now Frank Partridge Fine Arts) revealed first the destruction of pre-war records in 1942 and that later documentary records are currently inaccessible.<sup>66</sup> On Bluetts, another leading London dealer in Chinese art, Dominic Jellinek stated that ‘Basil Ionides appears rarely in the account entries’ and Nellie Ionides ‘had an account with Bluetts that was active from January

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<sup>64</sup> On the initial concept of habitus, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). For its later use in relation to the deployment of objects in social formations and aspirations, see Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

<sup>65</sup> Nick Pearce, a leading proponent of provenance research, observes that this methodology is underdeveloped in the field of Chinese art. Only two papers in the recent publication, edited by Pearce and Milosch, focus on this field. See Nick Pearce, ‘Archaeology, Fakery, and Lunacy: N.S.Brown’s Chinese Neolithic Collection’, in *Collecting and Provenance* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 127–40. Louise Tythacott, ‘Problems, Practices, and Politics of Provenancing. Objects from China’s Yuanmingyuan’, in *Collecting and Provenance* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019). On earlier projects, see Nick Pearce, ‘CARP-ON: Further Thoughts on Chinese Art Provenance Research’, in *Collectors, Collections & Collecting the Arts of China: Histories and Challenges* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2014). Also Stacey Pierson, ‘Reinventing “China”’: Provenance, Categories, and the Collecting of Chinese Ceramics, 1910-2010’, in *Collectors, Collections & Collecting the Arts of China: Histories and Challenges* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2014).

<sup>66</sup> ‘Sadly, Hitler dropped a bomb on our building in 1942 and all the records were destroyed’, private correspondence Frank Partridge, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016. Dr Mark Westgarth, (Associate Professor of Art History and Museum Studies at Leeds University), later revealed the existence of the diminished Partridge Papers which were inaccessible in 2018. Private correspondence, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

1934 until September 1956 but she did not make a great many purchases from the firm'.<sup>67</sup> Jellinek also suggested that Sparks was a dealer 'more suited to her tastes' than Bluetts, reflecting both his own attitude towards the collections of the Ionides and the respective specialisms of the two London dealers.

The auction house Sotheby's was closely involved with the Ionides Collection throughout its life, assisting in the purchase of objects, providing a valuation of the Basil Ionides Bequest in 1950/1, and orchestrating the later sale of the residue collection of Nellie Ionides in 1963/4. Leading auctioneer and specialist in Chinese art, Jim Kiddell was well acquainted with the Ionides during their lifetime and supervised the young Marcus Linell and Colin Mackay early in their careers, both of whom were interviewed in the course of this research. Whilst no official Sotheby's archive exists, the annotated sales records of the dealer and recollections of the specialists provided useful contextual details for the purpose of this thesis.

From 1950 to 1970, the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain embarked on the second stage of its life as it passed from private to public ownership in the national collections of the V&A and British Museum, which now constitutes the material archive at the centre of this thesis. The documentary archives of the V&A were essential to this research, revealing details of museum collections management and the relationship between museum specialists and the Ionides over nearly half a century. In the course of this research, it became apparent that documents pertaining to the Basil Ionides Bequest had been removed from the V&A Archives and placed under restricted access at the National Archives at Kew, obscuring aspects of the life story of the collection. Following the successful outcome of a Freedom of Information Request, missing documents were recovered which contained important information regarding the original collection and subsequent bequest, the implications of which are discussed in full in Chapter 4.

At the British Museum, archival data relating to the Ionides Collection is in contrast scarce, offering few insights into the internal workings of the museum or the former relationship with the Ionides. The number of Ionides objects here is significantly less than at the V&A, the pre-existing representation of Chinese export porcelain at the British Museum being more

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<sup>67</sup> Private correspondence with Dominic Jellinek, owner of the archive, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014. The Bluetts Archive has been bequeathed to the Centre for the Study of Art and the Antiques Market at Leeds University and is in the process of transferring from Jellinek's private address at the time of writing.

comprehensive, explaining in part the secondary importance of the Ionides Collection to the museum. On the display at both museums, photographs, museum guides, catalogues and other documentary sources were extensively mined, revealing post-war innovations in the exhibition and interpretation of the national collections which impacted the classification and (re)formation of ‘micro-collections’ of European style Chinese export porcelain from the original bequest. Articles in the professional museum press, *Country Life Magazine* and regional newspapers offered further insights into the multiple modes of exhibition and display at the V&A and across Britain, whereby Ionides objects addressed diverse audiences, from the ceramic specialist to the general visitor.

The biography of the Ionides Collection covered in this thesis ends in 1970, when the bequests of Basil and Nellie Ionides had been finalized and related activities at the museums had begun to wain; V&A touring exhibitions of Chinese export porcelain in which Ionides objects played a major part ceased soon after and galleries at both institutions would undergo extensive renovation projects in the years that followed. In the meantime, a number of objects formerly in the Ionides Collection had been sold at public auction in 1963/4 following the death of Nellie Ionides, returning once more to the private sphere where they continue to circulate today. The biography presented here is therefore incomplete, leaving episodes in the lives of the collectors and the collection presently undisclosed. Kopytoff recognised the limitations of the biographical approach in the following terms:

‘We accept that every person has many biographies – psychological, professional, political, familial, economic and so forth – each of which selects some aspects of the life history and discards others. Biographies of things cannot but be similarly partial’.<sup>68</sup>

The biography of the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain presented here is similarly partial, offering snapshots of its life in the private and public sphere in light of the evidence uncovered and constructed in the course of this thesis.

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<sup>68</sup> Kopytoff, ‘The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process’. p.68

## Structure

This thesis considers the life of the Ionides Collection in two distinct phases – first in the private sphere of the collectors and secondly the public sphere of the museum. Chapter 1 explores the individual biographies of the collectors, Basil and Nellie Ionides during their early lives and prior to their marriage in 1930. For the first time, the personal histories of these individuals are recounted, as comprehensively as possible, through the detailed study of professional, commercial, institutional and personal archives, in order to provide a framework through which their collecting activities can be understood. Social networks linking the Ionides to fellow collectors, dealers, agents and museum specialists in Chinese art, Chinese porcelain and Chinese export art are set against the backdrop of leading discourses on art, interior design and modernist aesthetics, highlighting the prominent role played by Basil Ionides between 1920-30 when he achieved considerable commercial success. The expertise of Basil Ionides as architect and interior designer is particularly significant to this thesis, and his strategies of decoration and display, as articulated through his books and publications on the subject, are studied in order to understand the utility of Chinese art objects, in particular ceramics, and their siting within the design schemes he created.

The exploration and reconstruction of the life of the Ionides collection of European style Chinese export porcelain begins in Chapter 2, which presents a case study of the Ionides country residence at Buxted Park, East Sussex. Through the detailed analysis of photographic sources and the series of articles published through *Country Life Magazine* between 1934-50, this is the first time the collection can be firmly identified. The photographic archive allows us to observe the multiple modes of display implemented by Ionides, from museum-style cabinets to the more informal placement of individual or pairs of objects in an ornamental and decorative manner, indicating the variety of visual and spatial contexts in which European style Chinese export porcelain was encountered within the private sphere of their country home. In the wider field of interior design, this chapter situates the Buxted Park project in relation to the historical development of chinoiserie and contemporary fashions, namely Neo-Georgian Revivalism, and the place of Chinese porcelain in that context.

Chapter 3 explores the provenance of objects in the Ionides Collection, as far as possible, through the archives of dealers, auctioneers and special advisors who acted on behalf of the

couple between 1930 and 1950 when the collection was formed. Through the detailed analysis of the purchase records of the London dealer, John Sparks Ltd. and the sales records of Sotheby's, this chapter examines the acquisition not only of European style Chinese export porcelain but other Chinese art objects – ivories, jades or Canton enamels - in order to establish the ownership and authorship of the collection and the separate, or overlapping, interests of the couple. Beyond the commercial sphere, this chapter considers the implications of alternative supply networks whereby art objects were purchased on the advice of personal advisors or agents, who facilitated the movement of articles from one private collection to another, bypassing dealers and the public sales rooms, simultaneously maintaining alternative modes of exchange and shared patterns of taste amongst elite society. This chapter also investigates the extent to which the collection of porcelain was systematically organised by the Ionides, cross referencing numerals which remain on many objects now in the national collections with catalogue numbers discovered in the course of this thesis. The final part of this chapter questions the engagement of the Ionides with fellow Chinese ceramic collectors, dealers and museum specialists in the pseudo-public sphere, through exhibition and participation with the specialist collecting society, the Oriental Ceramic Society, and what this reveals about their self-fashioning as collectors.

Chapters 4 and 5 chart the life of the Ionides Collection in the public realm. As Chapter 4 reveals, the transfer of objects from private collection to public institution was complex and protracted, fragmenting the once coherent collection into multiple 'micro-collections' at the V&A and British Museum, which were further subdivided on arrival, reflecting museum taxonomies and the classification of Chinese art, Chinese ceramics and Chinese export porcelain within the national collections. The transfer process, as detailed in the museum archives, shines a light on the museum/collector relationship, the internal dynamics of the museum and those forces – financial, spatial, conceptual and ideological – which shaped decisions made by museum professionals in the post-war years. The role of the auctioneer is also significant, not only for cataloguing and valuing the Basil Ionides Bequest, but for the potential influence individuals such as Jim Kiddell may have had on the collector, Nellie Ionides, in determining the fate of the residue collection and her much larger collection of Chinese and European ceramics and art objects; whether to gift to the nation or sell on the art market.

The final chapter, Chapter 5 of this thesis, studies the afterlife of the Ionides' private collection once the transfer to the national museums was complete, in doing so constructing a micro-history of the national museums in post-war Britain (1950-70). Through detailed archival research, the leading role played by museum specialists in the regeneration and remodelling of the V&A and British Museum in London is explored, situating the history of the Ionides Collection within broader developments in museum practice, gallery development and public interface. The study of newly formed 'micro-collections' at the museums highlights the manner in which European style Chinese export porcelains were inserted into pre-existing classifications of Chinese art, Chinese ceramics and Chinese export art. Beyond the capital, the active and prominent role played by Ionides objects in touring exhibitions organised by the Circulation Department demonstrate the increased public engagement between the V&A and the provinces - between centre and periphery – indicative of broader socio-political post-war aspirations. Taken together, the display strategies employed by both museums indicate how European style Chinese export porcelains, once in the Ionides' private collection, took on new identities and generated multifarious meanings in the public sphere.



## **PART I: THE IONIDES COLLECTION IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE**

### **CHAPTER ONE**

#### **Personal Histories: Collecting, Taste and Cultural Capital**

This chapter seeks to reconstruct the personal biographies of the key actors in this study, Basil and Nellie Ionides, prior to their marriage in 1930. Charting the separate trajectory of their independent lives, including family background and early career, as well as social interactions with fellow collectors and dealers, friends and associates, this chapter will explore the accumulation of cultural capital over the first decades of their adult lives, as defined by Pierre Bourdieu and outlined below, offering insights into the motivations of both individuals and the role of Chinese art objects in their self-fashioning as collectors.<sup>69</sup>

Whilst the principal focus of this research is the Basil Ionides Bequest at the V&A and associated objects at the British Museum, it soon became clear in the course of fieldwork that this ‘micro-collection’ was part of a much larger and comprehensive collection of Qing dynasty (1644-1911) Chinese porcelain collected by Basil Ionides and his wife, some of which was acquired prior to their marriage. The Ionides shared an interest in Chinese ceramics, in particular porcelain of the long eighteenth century, but I will argue that a preoccupation with European style Chinese export porcelain, as defined in the Introduction to this thesis, was principally that of Basil Ionides and he therefore forms the primary focus of this study. However, as Nellie Ionides is intimately associated with this collection and those objects now held at the British Museum in her name, it is important to situate her in relation to the collection and her husband.

Research into the personal biographies of both collectors was essential to this study, in order to examine the multifarious factors which shaped the public and private persona of each in turn, subsequently influencing individual patterns of collecting and taste. According to Bourdieu, taste can be understood as the product of a variety of social determinants and cultural interactions which generate cultural capital.<sup>70</sup> The three pillars of cultural capital are characterised as follows: first, embodied cultural capital whereby cultural attitudes and practices are integrated within an individual’s personal identity. This may include factors

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<sup>69</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

<sup>70</sup> Bourdieu.

such as ethnicity, religion, sexuality, education and class and begins from birth. Second, institutionalised cultural capital, denoting the formal recognition of an individual, be that professional, educational or otherwise. Finally, objectified cultural capital derives from material objects, as transporters of cultural meaning and is of particular significance to this thesis. This chapter will consider the cultural capital of Basil and Nellie Ionides against these criteria prior to their marriage, through their personal biographies and the objects they chose to collect at that time.

### *The Ionides Family: Collectors, Patrons and Benefactors*

Basil Ionides was born to a prominent Anglo-Greek dynasty that had by the mid nineteenth century become leading collectors and patrons of the arts.<sup>71</sup> His great grandfather Constantine Ioannou (1775-1852) (Fig.1.1), was a Greek textile merchant known by the name ‘Ipliktzis,’ meaning ‘trader in yarns and fibres,’ who had moved to Manchester in 1815 to establish a business exporting Manchester cloth to Greece and Turkey.<sup>72</sup> His fourth son and Basil’s grandfather, Alexander Constantine Ionides (1810-90), took British nationality in 1837 and was responsible for anglicising the Greek name from Ioannou to Ionides (Ion was the mythical ancestor of the Ionians, therefore Ionides means ‘the Greek’), and founding the firm Ionides and Co. Officially listed as ‘Turkey Merchants,’ the family firm prospered and traded in a variety of products including grain, cotton and dyes; later their business interests extended to banking, insurance, stockbroking and the directorship of a variety of business ventures including the Crystal Palace Company.<sup>73</sup> In 1854-66, Alexander was appointed Greek Consul-General and was later succeeded in this role by his youngest son Alexander ‘Alecco’ Ionides (1840-1898).

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<sup>71</sup> Athena Leoussi, ‘The Ionides Circle and Art’ (PhD, London, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1982).

<sup>72</sup> J Atkins, ‘The Ionides Family’, *Antique Collector*, June 1987.

<sup>73</sup> Luke Ionides, *Memories*, Second Edition (Ludlow: Dog Rose Press, 1996). Afterword by Julia Ionides, p. 69



Fig. 1.1 Constantine Ipliktzis or Constantine John Ionides (1775-1852), George Frederick Watts (1817-1904), undated, CAI.1159. Gifted to the V&A by Miss Daphne Ionides, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].



Fig.1.2 'The Family of Alexander Constantine Ionides', oil on canvas, painted by George Frederick Watts (1817-1904), c.1840, CAI,1147, V&A.  
Left to right: Mr Alexander Ionides, Aglaia Ionides, Mrs Alexander Ionides, Alexander Ionides, Luke Ionides, Constantine Alexander Ionides. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

The family moved to London in 1834, living first at 9 Finsbury Circus and later at Tulse Hill, then from 1864 at a fashionable residence at 1 Holland Park.<sup>74</sup> Alexander and his extended family were noted for their enthusiastic patronage of the arts and intimate friendship with avant-garde artists; James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) and Edward Burne Jones (1833-98) all enjoyed close and longstanding relationships with the family and shared membership of the Burlington Fine Arts Club, along with Constantine Alexander (C. A.) Ionides (1833-1900) discussed below.<sup>75</sup> George Frederick Watts (1817-1904) painted five generations of the family, including a family portrait of Alexander and his wife Euterpe Sgouta Ionides (1816-1892) with their four eldest children, now in the V&A collection (Fig.1.2). The painting reaffirms their Anglo-Greek heritage, the two eldest boys dressed in traditional Greek national costume in contrast to their parents depicted in modern European dress.

According to Basil's father, Luke, there was 'open house' at Tulse Hill and later Holland Park on most Sundays as well as evening parties where the Ionides hosted friends from across the arts.<sup>76</sup> The family home was decorated in the latest style, the entrance lined with blue William De Morgan tiles and William Morris wallpaper displayed throughout the interior.<sup>77</sup> The eldest of five children, C.A. Ionides (Fig.1.3) established a family home at nearby 8 Holland Villas Road for which the architectural drawings and interior designs of Philip Webb are now preserved in the V&A collection.<sup>78</sup> An energetic collector and patron, C.A. Ionides amassed an extensive collection of paintings, prints and drawings from Tintoretto and Botticelli to the works of contemporary Pre-Raphaelite artists and French painters including Delacroix, Millet, Degas and Rousseau who were yet to gain popular recognition.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> A.C. Ionides purchased the freehold for £4,500 and the house later passed to his son, A.A. Ionides who refurbished the house, residing there until his death in 1898. For more on the development of the Holland Estate and the Ionides' residence, see 'The Holland Estate: To 1874 | British History Online', accessed 13 December 2017, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol37/pp101-126>. On the interior decorative scheme, see C Harvey and J Press, 'The Ionides Family and 1 Holland Park', *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society*, no. 18 (1984).

<sup>75</sup> From 1866, the Burlington Fine Arts Club became an important nexus for collectors, artists and museum specialists to mix socially, discuss and exhibit art objects in their collections, including Chinese ceramics. Stacey Pierson, *Private Collecting, Exhibitions and the Shaping of Art History in London: The Burlington Fine Arts Club* (New York and London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017).

<sup>76</sup> Ionides, *Memories*, p.72.

<sup>77</sup> See Interior of 1 Holland Park, 1 Holland Park Album by Bedford Lemere & Co., ca.1898, VA/LVLH/X/95. Also, furniture for 1 Holland Park; Dressing table c. 1875 by Thomas Jeckyll, W.13:28-1972, V&A.

<sup>78</sup> According to his son, Constantine acquired the property as it housed a room large enough to accommodate a large rug he had acquired in the Near East, 'The Holland Estate: To 1874 | British History Online'. Architectural Drawings, E.105/4-1916, Design Drawings, E.414,413,340-2014, V&A.

<sup>79</sup> A Watson, 'Constantine Ionides and His Collection of Nineteenth Century French Art', *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History*, n.d.

Following his death in 1900, 1,138 pictorial works were bequeathed to the V&A, to which a further twenty were added upon the death of his wife in 1920, and displayed in accordance with his Will in a dedicated gallery. The display of objects in Gallery 81 is today based upon original photographic sources from his home in Hove, East Sussex where he lived permanently with his art collection from the early 1890s (Fig.1.4). As this image shows, paintings have been double-hung and placed alongside furniture, sculpture and other objects associated with the Ionides family including Chinese ceramics and bronze objects, the whole assemblage offering ‘a unique insight into progressive artistic taste in Victorian Britain’.<sup>80</sup>

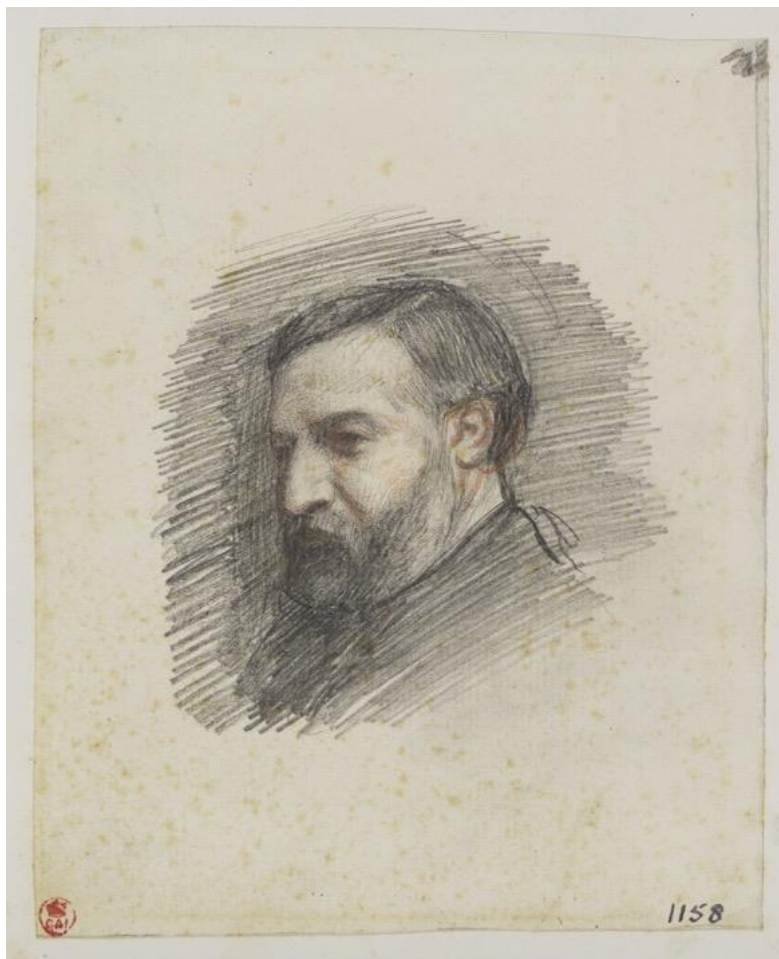


Fig. 1.3 Portrait sketch of Constantine Alexander Ionides, 1870's, Alphonse Legros (1837-1911). CAI.1158, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

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<sup>80</sup> Notable pieces include the piano, designed by Edward Burne Jones for 1 Holland Park for Alexander Ionides, brother of C.A. Ionides. V&A:W.23-1927. Also the model of Helen Ionides (1879), by Aime-Jules Dalou (1838-1902), V&A: A.10-1956.

Description taken from V&A panel text, Gallery 81, 2018.





Fig. 1.4 The Study of C.A.Ionides, Hove, East Sussex, 1870's. Photographic Album, PH.2-1980, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

The donation of the collection of C.A. Ionides 'for the benefit of the nation' is significant, being the first generation of the Anglo-Greek dynasty to do so. Whilst his forefathers had enthusiastically embraced the collecting habits of their country of residence, the first and second generations of the Ionides maintained strong bonds with Greece, supporting several educational and religious establishments; the donation by Constantine Ioannou for the foundation of the University of Athens (1844,1846) was twice as large as that of King Otto (1815-67).<sup>81</sup> However, the third generation of the family appear to identify more closely with their country of residence and birth. In leaving his art collection to the British nation and stipulating that the collection be preserved in its totality and displayed in one location, C.A. Ionides was able to secure a prominent place for the Ionides name within the national collection in perpetuity. In a similar manner, Basil Ionides would choose to leave his collection of Chinese porcelain fifty years later to the V&A, although in contrast to his uncle, objects from his bequest would be dispersed across the museum, his name largely unknown as collector and museum benefactor.

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<sup>81</sup> Leoussi, 'The Ionides Circle and Art'.

Luke Alexander Ionides (1837-1924) (Fig.1.5) was second son of Alexander and father to Basil.<sup>82</sup> His early years in Paris and the Near East are recollected in a selection of letters published shortly after his death as *Memories* (1926). Through this short and incomplete collection of writings, his intimate relationships with artists James Abbot McNeill Whistler ('Jimmy'), Edward Burne-Jones ('Ned'), and designer William Morris (1834-1896) become immediately apparent.<sup>83</sup> His literary friends included the author Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), poet A.L. Tennyson (1809-1892) and dramatist W.S. Gilbert (1836-1911), who in 1880 re-wrote the play *Sweethearts* (1874) for Luke's children to act out on Christmas Day. The book is peppered with references to leading artists and aesthetes, including the more scandalous names of Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and Simeon Solomon (1840-1905). Violet Hunt described the life of Luke as:

'...sweet, sunny, and simple, full of observation, kindness, and tolerance, the outcome of delicate cynicism! A bit parasitic, perhaps, in an honourable, hero-worshipping way. And, in return, all these great, virile, erring and wrong-headed souls loved their gentle, suave 'Lukie', got him to do things for them, wise and otherwise – ticklish jobs sometime, which he brought off with friendly discretion.'<sup>84</sup>

Following his marriage to Elfrida Elizabeth Bird (1848-1929) on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1869, the couple lived first at 16 Holland Villas Road with their seven children. For their first child, Burne-Jones, Rossetti and Morris gifted a sixteenth century Dutch cradle which they restored and personalized for their friends.<sup>85</sup> Following Luke's early success in the family firm, the family moved to 17 Phillimore Gardens which was decorated under his supervision and later described as 'avant-garde' and 'epoch-making'.<sup>86</sup> In *Memories*, he recalls a visit of Morris to the house:

'Morris once paid me a great compliment – he sent his man to see how my drawing-room was decorated, and he had Burne Jones' drawing room done with the same paper and the same colouring. He decorated the ceilings of my brother Alecco's house in Holland Park, and they were most beautiful small arabesques, painted in gold and other colours'.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Seen in Greek national dress, seated second to the right in the family portrait, see Fig.1.2.

<sup>83</sup> Personal messages and ephemera shared between Luke and his friends also survives in the private collection of John Ionides, Cambridge. Consulted 8 May 2014.

See also "The Correspondence of James McNeill Whistler: Biography," accessed May 1, 2018, [https://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/correspondence/people/biog/?bid=Ioni\\_L&initial=](https://www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/correspondence/people/biog/?bid=Ioni_L&initial=).

<sup>84</sup> Ionides, *Memories*. p. 81

<sup>85</sup> The cradle was used by four generations of the family and is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

<sup>86</sup> Julia Ionides, in Ionides, *Memories*. p. 73

<sup>87</sup> Ionides. pp. 21-22



Fig.1.5 Portrait of Luke A. Ionides (1837-1924), oil on canvas, James Abbott McNeill Whistler, 1860, 40.6 x 30.4 cm, Collection of M.O. Carruthers, New York. [Image: <https://www.pubhist.com/w40826>]





Fig.1.6. Portrait of Mrs Luke Ionides (1848-1929), Oil on canvas, William Blake Richmond (1842-1921), Exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery 1882, E.1062:1&2-2003, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

The Ionides' house embodied the ideals of what became known as the Aesthetic Movement in its interior design and decoration, as articulated by their artist friends and close associates and exemplified in the portrait of Basil's mother, Mrs. Luke Ionides by William Blake Richmond (1842-1921) of 1882 (Fig.1.6).<sup>88</sup> The ornate sofa upon which she sits featured the previous year in a book on advanced interior decoration and is here set against an oriental screen of embroidered Japanese kimono silk; her silk clothing, silver belt buckle and amber beads are all in keeping with the latest style.<sup>89</sup> The painting was acquired for the V&A in

<sup>88</sup> For an overview of the Aesthetic Movement, see Stephen Calloway et al., eds., *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011). Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996). On interior design and decoration, see Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement* (London: V&A Publications, 2010).

<sup>89</sup> Mark Evans, "An Aesthetic Sitter on an Empire Sofa: William Blake Richmonds Portrait of Mrs Luke Ionides," in *Burning Bright*, Essays in Honour of David Bindman (UCL Press, 2015), 171-79, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1g69z6q.20>.

2003 and now hangs in Gallery 81 with the C.A. Ionides collection and other objects associated with the Ionides family.

By the second half of the nineteenth century when this portrait was painted, collecting antiques had become a popular pastime for the middle and upper classes and while the negative female connotations of china collecting persisted, male aesthetes increasingly dominated the field. For many, collecting antique porcelains was now regarded as a sign of refinement, promising originality in an increasingly mass-produced world. At the same time, the fashion for collecting and displaying blue and white Chinese porcelain as articles of interior design, soon known as ‘Chinamania’, was promoted by Whistler and Rossetti from the 1860’s, whose connections to the Ionides family have already been noted. The artists developed their own jokey nomenclature for objects in their collections, describing round lidded pots as ‘ginger jars’, the classic ‘prunus’ pattern as ‘hawthorn’ and the tall, straight vases depicting female figures as ‘long Elizas’ after the Dutch term ‘Lange Leizen’ (‘long ladies’). Whistler famously placed blue and white porcelain at the centre of his paintings; in ‘Purple and Rose: The Lange Leizen of the Six Marks’ of 1864 (Philadelphia Museum of Art), a Chinese blue and white vessel absorbs the gaze of both the female sitter and the viewer.

The emphasis at that time was firmly on blue and white porcelain, ‘Nankin’ china or ‘Old Blue’ as it was known; terms commonly associated with late seventeenth century Chinese porcelain but as Anne Anderson observes could also include ceramics from Delft, Spode, Early Worcester, Caughley and Derby which by then were regarded as ‘antique’.<sup>90</sup> By 1891, A.T. Hollingsworth recorded that blue and white was prized, ‘first as an undeniably exquisite decoration for the interior of our houses, and secondly, as a thing of rare beauty in itself, and apart from all consideration of its adaptability to its surroundings’.<sup>91</sup> This remark indicates the increased engagement of men with the domestic interior and Deborah Cohen notes that by

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<sup>90</sup> On the terminology of blue and white ceramics in English, see Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*. pp.74-76.

Stephen Calloway, ‘Blue-and-White China’, in *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publications, 2011), 114–17.

Anne Anderson, “‘Chinamania’: Collecting Old Blue for the House Beautiful, c.1860-1900”, in *Material Cultures, 1740-1920, The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting* (England: Ashgate, 2009), 109–28.

<sup>91</sup> A.T. Hollingsworth, *Old Blue and White Nankin China*, vol. Odd Volumes XXVI (London: Chiswick Press, 1891). p.25

the 1880s, ‘the business of furnishing the home was almost entirely a man’s world. The earliest home decoration manuals were written by married men for married men. Decorators were men; the cause of design reform was led by men; upholsterers were men, as were the clerks on the shop floor’.<sup>92</sup> The exhibition ‘Blue and White Oriental Porcelain’ organized by members of the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1895, all of whom were male, attests to the continued popularity of these wares amongst collectors towards the end of the century.<sup>93</sup>

Blue and white Chinese porcelain favoured by late Victorian collectors, as outlined above, was earlier in date than the majority of objects in the Ionides Collection and significantly decorated in Chinese style, constituting part of the bulk sale of seventeenth century export porcelain channeled principally through the ports of the Netherlands.<sup>94</sup> Articles of European style Chinese porcelain, as exemplified in the Ionides Collection, would have been antithetical to collectors who prized what they saw as the authentic ‘oriental’ character of seventeenth-century porcelains. Conversely, ‘Old Blue’ is absent from the Ionides Collection and held no interest for the collector who focused on specially commissioned wares for the European market. An understanding of developments in taste in blue and white porcelain and its utility within interior design schemes in the late nineteenth century is significant here due to the direct personal connections between Basil Ionides, his family and leading aesthetes. The large house in Phillimore Gardens in which Basil Ionides spent his childhood years, as described by his sister Dorothea, was designed and furnished by leading proponents of the Aesthetic ideal as prescribed in *‘The House Beautiful’* which emphasized the beauty of everyday objects and was widely credited with revolutionising attitudes towards the lived environment.<sup>95</sup> There can be little doubt that Basil Ionides was familiar with Chinese porcelain, in particular blue and white, from an early age and its decorative utility within the lived interior which in turn may have influenced his own approach to interior design, display and collecting Chinese porcelain later in life.

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<sup>92</sup> Deborah Cohen, ‘In Possession: Men, Women and Decoration’, in *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 89–121. p.90

<sup>93</sup> Pierson, *Private Collecting, Exhibitions and the Shaping of Art History in London*. pp.75-81

<sup>94</sup> Whistler bought his first piece of Chinese porcelain in Amsterdam in 1863. Stacey Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums: The Field of Chinese Ceramics in Britain, 1560-1960* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007). p.62.

<sup>95</sup> The house boasted a large staff and extensive garden with glasshouses, a skating rink and tennis courts. The interior combined Persian rugs, ideal for ‘tobogganing down on kitchen tea-trays’, with contemporary design and modern conveniences. The emphasis on functionality and the hand-crafted is further evidenced by the inclusion of a large workroom, equipped with ‘lathe, circular saw, a darkroom for photography and equipment for glass-blowing’, Dorothea Butterworth, *Random Memories of Dorothea Butterworth (Nee Ionides): Born 1878 - Recorded 1960* (Unknown Binding, 1960).

Clarence Cook, *The House Beautiful: Essays on Beds and Tables, Stools and Candlesticks*, 1878.

Dorothea Butterworth (née Ionides), later recalled an idyllic childhood cut short following her father's financial difficulties of 1895:

‘In my ‘teens my father lost a lot of money; this began by accepting from a distant relative a verbal instruction, against his advice, to buy a large block of shares. The results were disastrous and the buyer repudiated his instructions, although they had been overheard and criticized by another member of the Stock Exchange. And so the loved house we grew up in was sold and we went first to Mapledurham...’<sup>96</sup>

The breakdown of the marriage of Luke and Elfrida swiftly followed, both moving to alternative lodgings and avoiding each other at social occasions for the rest of their lives. On 10<sup>th</sup> January 1900, Luke was declared bankrupt or ‘hammered’ on the Stock Exchange and left £533 when he died aged 87 in March 1924.<sup>97</sup>

#### *Basil Ionides Early Years: Family, Education and Career*

Basil Ionides was born on 20 June 1884, fourth son of Luke Ionides and the youngest child by some six years. The infant Basil showed early signs of artistic capabilities:

‘He was a lovely and most lovable baby and toddler, and though I think most of us inherited our forefathers’ love of all beautiful things, he was the only one with it dominating his personality and career!’<sup>98</sup>

According to his sister Dorothea, Basil was ‘indulged’ and spoiled’ when young, but she acknowledged that due to the financial difficulties of his father, Basil did not enjoy an elite education at Harrow like his brothers but was instead sent to Tonbridge School (a respected public school, nonetheless) (Fig.1.7). Basil spent the first sixteen years of his formative life mixing with artists and aesthetes associated with his father and wider family circle, and according to his later friend, Margaret Jourdain, ‘was brought up on the knees of the Pre-

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<sup>96</sup> Butterworth, *Random Memories of Dorothea Butterworth (Nee Ionides): Born 1878 - Recorded 1960*. p.19

<sup>97</sup> Ionides, *Memories*. pp. 94-95

<sup>98</sup> Butterworth, *Random Memories of Dorothea Butterworth (Nee Ionides): Born 1878 - Recorded 1960*.

Raphaelites'.<sup>99</sup> His early exposure to avant-garde art and design, and in particular developments in interior design is worthy of note as it was in this field that he was later to excel. Furthermore, the prominent reputation of the Ionides family as collectors and patrons of the arts, including Chinese ceramics (see Fig.1.4), no doubt familiarised the young Basil Ionides with Chinese art objects and the practice of collecting from any early age.



Fig. 1.7. Basil Ionides, (1884-1950), unidentified date and source. [Image: [http://www.christopherlong.co.uk/gen/ionidesgen/fg08/fg08\\_430.html](http://www.christopherlong.co.uk/gen/ionidesgen/fg08/fg08_430.html)]

From 1900-1903, Basil Ionides studied architecture at Glasgow School of Art where he was apprenticed to Alexander Nisbet Paterson (1862-1947). At just eighteen he designed his first building, a double villa in Winton Drive in Glasgow, and upon completion of his professional training moved to London where he briefly joined the offices of Leonard Stokes (1858-1925) and later Harold Ainsworth Peto (1854-1933).<sup>100</sup> Ionides was admitted Licentiate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (LRIBA) in 1931, being elevated to Fellow in 1938.<sup>101</sup> In 1908, Basil Ionides entered independent practice at Hadlow Down, Sussex, designing small

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<sup>99</sup> Letter from Margaret Jourdain to Arthur Elliot Felkin, 29 May 1927, AEF 3/1/86, Kings College Archives, Cambridge.

<sup>100</sup> 'Dictionary of Scottish Architects - DSA Architect Biography Report (December 20, 2017, 2:21 Pm)', accessed 20 December 2017, [http://scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200317](http://scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200317).

<sup>101</sup> RIBA Nomination Papers, L no.3832 (box 17); F no.3501 (box 24). RIBA Archive, V&A.

houses for private clients such as the poet and novelist, Maurice Hewlett (1861-1923).<sup>102</sup> In 1912, he undertook his first major restoration project for Captain Frederick Grantham (1870-1915) at the medieval Beeleigh Abbey in Maldon, Essex, described by its current owner as ‘in the main, sympathetic’.<sup>103</sup>

During the First World War, Basil served in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, initially receiving a commission which he swiftly relinquished, stating that he preferred not to give orders to more experienced men. He returned later to the forces as an ordinary seaman but was disabled in 1917, returning shortly after to practice in London. Ionides worked on a range of projects over subsequent years, including commercial premises such as the department store Swan and Edgars, Piccadilly Circus (1929), Boots the Chemist, Regent Street (1932), the exclusive car salesroom of Armstrong Siddeley, Bond Street and the historic teashop, Gunters of Berkeley Square and Bond Street. The decorative scheme for the Society of Herbalists in Baker Street was featured in his second book, ‘*Colour in Everyday Rooms*,’ published in 1934.<sup>104</sup> Ionides also designed the interiors of tube stations at Ealing Common and Hounslow West, both remodeled in the early 1930s in the latest Art Deco style.<sup>105</sup>

The most highly acclaimed and well-known achievements of Basil Ionides’ career are the interiors of Claridges Hotel (1927) and the Savoy Theatre (1929) London, both of which exemplified Art Deco style and have retained their status as British icons of this genre.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Basil Ionides, “Candidates Separate Statement (Licentiate),” Nomination Papers (RIBA, n.d.). 1931

<sup>103</sup> Founded in 1172, the ancient estate had fallen into disrepair by the nineteenth century. In 1943, the property was purchased by the collector and bookseller, William Foyle and is now owned by his grandson. See Christopher Foyle, *Beeleigh Abbey* (London: Christopher Foyle, 2012). pp. 7-31.

<sup>104</sup> See penultimate chapter: ‘Commercial Decoration’ in Basil Ionides, *Colour in Everyday Rooms: With Remarks on Sundry Aspects of Decoration* (London, 1934). pp. 101-110.

<sup>105</sup> Ed Glinert, *The London Compendium* (Penguin UK, 2012).

‘Pastscape - Detailed Result: HOUNSLOW WEST STATION’, accessed 14 December 2017, [http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob\\_id=509368](http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=509368).

Both stations were designed by London Underground architects, Stanley Heaps and Charles Holden and follow similar hexagonal layouts.

<sup>106</sup> For an overview of the Art Deco movement, see Norbert Wolf and Cynthia Hall, *Art Deco* (Munich ; New York: Prestel, 2013). Charlotte Benton et al., eds., *Art Deco 1910-1939* (London: V&A Publications, 2003). On Art Deco in London, see Arnold Schwartzman, *London Art Deco* (Manchester: Hudson Hills Press, 2006).

*Professional Recognition and Commercial Success: Claridges Restaurant (1926-7)*

The refurbishment of the restaurant at Claridges Hotel, London, received praise from within the architectural establishment and significantly raised the profile of Basil Ionides as interior designer.<sup>107</sup> It is likely that the artist William Bruce Ellis Ranken (1881-1941) contributed to the project, but difficult to verify with certainty.<sup>108</sup> Created between 1926-7, the scheme embodied the Art Deco design aesthetic then dominating continental Europe.<sup>109</sup> The innovative use of new materials and reflective surfaces combined sheet steel with coloured and glazed glass illuminated with electric lighting to create light and spacious interiors. The use of colour was a central preoccupation of designers of the time who used fabrics and textiles to enhance mood and atmosphere in a room and ‘to extend a rooms palette beyond the predictable brown tones of its wood furniture and wall paneling’.<sup>110</sup> The use of burnished gold and silver further enriched interiors with gloss and glamour.

From photographic sources surviving at the Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA), details of the original restaurant scheme can be studied, whereby Ionides introduced elements of Chinese inspiration to create a mood of exotic luxury; along the walls, engraved mirrors framed in red and gold offered a modern re-interpretation of East Asian lacquer screens (Fig.1.8), each flanked by niches of leafed gold housing large white elephants bearing silver pagodas. These sculptures closely resemble Chinese ceramic prototypes but are here carved in plaster and fitted with internal lighting, demonstrating Ionides’ appropriation of Chinese tropes to suit modern purposes.

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<sup>107</sup> Alfred C. Mambrino, ‘Reflections on Atmosphere: The Modern London Hotel’, *The Architectural Review* LXI (June 1927): 129–37.

<sup>108</sup> A successful painter of society portraits and interiors, Ranken’s work has received little recognition in art-historical circles. His first retrospective exhibition took place at the Russell-Cotes Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth, *William Ranken: Gorgeous, Stately, Splendid*, 24 September 2017 - 29 January 2018. Ranken collaborated with Ionides on his first book at this time (published in 1926), and a surviving plaque appears to link Ranken to the Claridges project, see [www.williamranken.org.uk](http://www.williamranken.org.uk). The detail of engraved glass and large modeled elephants may be his work. See ‘The Architecture of the Estate: Modern Times | British History Online’, accessed 15 January 2016, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp161-170>.

<sup>109</sup> The Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes of 1925 showcased the work of leading Art Deco interior designers, predominantly from France. Germany, the USA and Britain did not participate having just hosted the British Empire Exhibition the previous year. See Maurice Dufrene, *Authentic Art Deco Interiors from the 1925 Paris Exhibition* (London: Antique Collectors Club, 1989).

<sup>110</sup> Dufrene. p.25





Fig. 1.8. Photograph of recess in Claridges Restaurant with etched glass screen, 1930, RIBA23749, RIBApix. [Image: ©Royal Institute of British Architects]



Fig. 1.9a-b Foyer at the Savoy Hotel, recess with gold walls, large mirrors and niches of glass, 1927, RIBA23748 (left) and RIBA23745 (right), RIBApix. [Image: ©Royal Institute of British Architects]





Fig. 1.10a. Savoy Theatre, 1929, RIBA8663, RIBAapix. [Image: ©Royal Institute of British Architects]

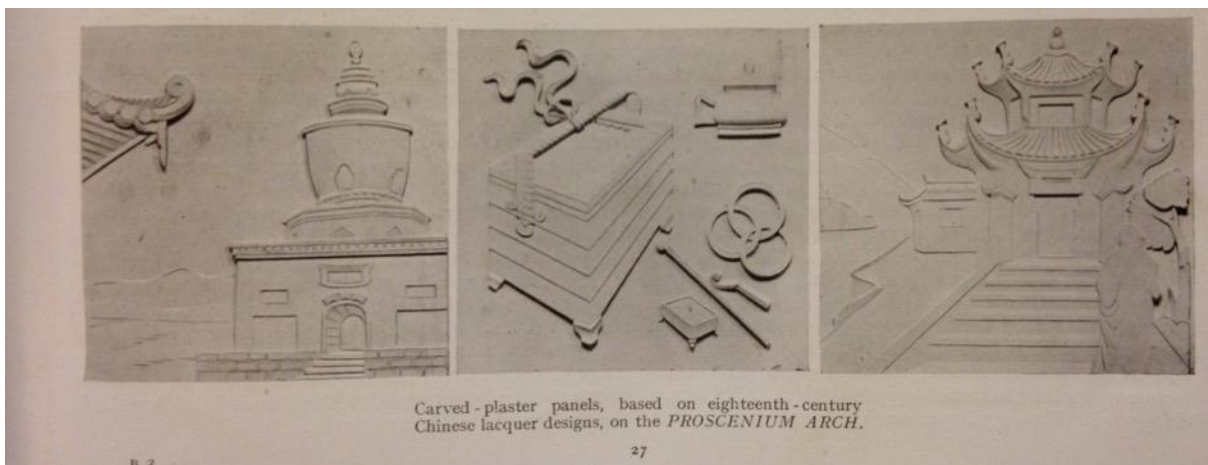


Fig. 1.10b Detail of relief panels with Chinese motifs, featured in the article, McGrath, Arthur, 'Light Opera', *The Architectural Review*, LXVIII, (Jan 1930), p.27. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in RIBA].

### *Savoy Hotel and Theatre (1929)*

At the Savoy Hotel, London, Ionides redesigned communal areas such as the Foyer, the Pinafore Room and the Ladies Reading Room in addition to a number of bedrooms. In the Foyer, the extensive use of mirrored glass and lighting was successfully employed to illuminate once dark recesses (Fig.1.9a-b). The walls were decorated in gold, hung with large mirrors and niches of glass in white, grey, gold and pink. Half-lamps reminiscent of Chinese lanterns, brought additional light to an otherwise dark space.

Arguably the most striking of all his design projects, the Savoy Theatre has been lauded as one of the great achievements of Art Deco design in England. *The Architectural Review* praised the collaborative project in the following terms:

‘To Mr. Frank Tugwell is due the great credit of revolutionizing the interior. The excellence of its decoration is due to Mr. Basil Ionides. The theatre front, and theatre signs, and the Savoy courtyard are to the stainless credit of Messrs. Easton and Robertson. This is, indeed, a fine crew with which to scour the architectural main!’<sup>111</sup>

In the article, McGrath applauds Ionides both for his attention to recent innovations in acoustic design from America, and for the ambient atmosphere of the theatre through the use of reflective surfaces, shades of gold lacquer and gilded silver. Once more, the use of colour in the fabric of the seats and curtain, and indirect lighting is a key component of the decorative scheme. Chinese style relief panels decorated with temples, lanterns, dragonflies and pheasants provide a fresh approach to traditional theatre ornamentation (Fig.1.10a-b). According to the periodical, *Building*,

‘One carries away from this theatre a memory of silver and gold, black and green lacquer; and with it the thought that there is modernism with a Chinese flavour’.<sup>112</sup>

The influence of East Asian design permeates both projects as do the visual effects of colour combinations and decorative finish such as reflective surfaces, gilded lacquer and luxurious fabrics. These themes would dominate his publications, discussed below, which offered practical design solutions to a wider public in the domestic setting. In contrast to the

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<sup>111</sup> Raymond McGrath, ‘Light Opera’, *The Architectural Review* LXVII (January 1930): 21–28.

<sup>112</sup> ‘Two Modernist Theatres’, *Building* 4 (December 1929): 527–36.

Edwardian interiors which preceded them, the design schemes developed by Ionides in Art Deco style emphasised simple, clean lines and geometric or stylized representational forms, embracing a modern metropolitan way of life which owed much to new technologies and mass-produced goods.<sup>113</sup>

The success of the design projects at Claridges and the Savoy secured Basil Ionides a place in the history of Art Deco design in Britain and 1920's chinoiserie, as discussed in the following chapter.<sup>114</sup> However, the remainder of his interior design work is absent from the literature and remains largely unknown today. For this reason, his contributions in the field of publishing will now be considered, in order to reveal the breadth and scope of his private and commercial design projects and his engagement with the discourse of interior design which increasingly came to the fore during the interwar years.

#### *Writing and Publishing: 1922-1936*

According to surviving archival data, Basil Ionides was most actively engaged in publishing during the years 1922-36 when the subject of interior design featured in a growing number of magazines from specialist periodicals such as the *Architectural Review* (1896-) to those tailored towards a wider readership.<sup>115</sup> This trend coincided with a revival of interest in contemporary architecture and interior design in Britain, stimulated through public exhibitions such as the Exhibition of the First Architecture Club held at Grosvenor House in 1923 which invited submissions from the profession with the aim of 'promoting good architecture and discouraging bad'.<sup>116</sup> The exhibition proved so successful that it was followed in 1924 by a second featuring lesser-known architects.<sup>117</sup> In the same year, Country

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<sup>113</sup> For more on the connections between Chinese design and Art Deco, see Sarah Cheang, "What's in a Chinese Room? 20th Century Chinoiserie, Modernity and Femininity," in *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain 1650-1930* (Brighton & Hove: The Royal Pavilion & Museums, 2008).

<sup>114</sup> See Schwartzman, *London Art Deco*. p.238

Cheang, 'What's in a Chinese Room? 20th Century Chinoiserie, Modernity and Femininity'.

<sup>115</sup> In 1926 Basil Ionides published a survey of recent developments in textile manufacture and design. See Basil Ionides, 'Textiles', *Architectural Review* LIX (April 1926): 182–87.

For a detailed study of the development of print source during this period, see Elizabeth McKellar, 'Representing the Georgian: Constructing Interiors in Early Twentieth-Century Publications, 1890-1930', *Journal of Design History* 20, no. 4 (2007): 325–44. Jeremy Aynsley and Francesca Berry, 'Publishing the Modern Home. Magazines and the Domestic Interior 1870-1965', *Journal of Design History* 18, no. 1 (2005): 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epi001>.

<sup>116</sup> Leader, 'Twenty Year of Architecture', *Country Life Magazine*, 10 March 1923.

<sup>117</sup> 'The Architecture Club at Grosvenor House', *Country Life Magazine*, 15 March 1924.

Life launched its own interior design competition, promoted in connection with the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, where a series of historical rooms were planned in the Palace of Arts to represent key interior design styles of the past two centuries. The competition invited contemporary designers to create designs for a suite of rooms to represent the year 1924.<sup>118</sup> Judges included notable architects Edwin L. Lutyens (1869-1944), Ellen G. Woolrich (?), Lawrence Weaver (1876-1930), P. Morley Horder (1870-1944) and artist Norman Wilkinson (1878-1971) and their final decisions published alongside the winning designs.<sup>119</sup>

### *Country Life Magazine and Publishing*

*Country Life Magazine* was an important mouthpiece for the emerging debate surrounding interior design and architecture, not only in its traditional rural heartland but in the growing metropolitan centers. Features throughout the 1920s regularly included commentaries on country estates in tandem with articles on recent developments in furniture design, lighting and the modern interior. The first article written by Basil Ionides appeared on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1922, titled 'Decoration of Country Houses'. In the piece, Ionides stated his approach:

'Country house decoration must be approached from a different point of view from town decoration. Work that looks well and quite in keeping in a London house is often far too sophisticated for the country. A London room copied in the country is seldom a success, and it is very noticeable that the great designers of the past always differentiated between these two classes of work. Therefore approach the decoration of the country house as a permanent factor and not as a reflection of the latest fashion, and do not try to superimpose any decoration foreign to the style of the house, as one sometimes sees done - Louis XVI rooms in Tudor houses and Jacobean oak paneling in Late Georgian ones.'

Basil Ionides, 'Decoration of Country Houses', *Country Life Magazine*, February 25, 1922. p.280.

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<sup>118</sup> 'Modern Room Decoration. Awards in the "Country Life" Competition', *Country Life Magazine*, January 1924.

<sup>119</sup> The panel noted in their considerations the variable quality of submissions; the designs for the hall and dining room were 'lacking in invention', and no single design considered worthy of first prize for bedroom. Ibid. pp. 46-47.

The distinction between town and country is clear; according to Ionides, interior design should be in keeping with its physical and historical context. This view was reiterated the following month in his review of the recent refurbishment of the early nineteenth century town house at No.86, Vincent Square, London, when Ionides commended the architects Oswald.P.Milne (1881-1968) and Paul Phipps (1880-1953) for preserving ‘all the feeling of the original work without slavishly copying details, and they have given it a look of importance which it did not formerly possess’.<sup>120</sup> It is perhaps worth noting at this juncture the apparent contradiction between these comments and the extensive refurbishment undertaken by Ionides on behalf of his mother at Howbridge Hall, Essex, completed in 1924.<sup>121</sup> The sixteenth century property was in a semi-derelict state before its purchase by Mrs. Ionides and became Basil Ionides’ country residence until he married in 1930. Despite the Tudor origins of the building, Ionides introduced later Georgian interior design features and one of the bedrooms was boldly decorated in early nineteenth century wallpaper, superimposing ‘decoration foreign to the style of the house’ he had warned so vigorously against.

An increased awareness and understanding of architectural and design history can be detected in the work of a new breed of architectural historian, such as the specialist Margaret Jourdain. A regular contributor to *Country Life Magazine*, Jourdain promoted a more academic approach to the interior, challenging established mores of her day and offering new perspectives in this emerging field. A prolific writer, Jourdain produced twenty books either singly or as co-author, systematically studying individual aspects of the interior from textiles and wallpaper to furniture, ironwork or carvings.<sup>122</sup> Books included detailed line drawings and photographs of case studies, including those taken by Basil Ionides for her 1923 publication, *English Interiors in Smaller Houses: From the Restoration to the Regency, 1660-1830*.<sup>123</sup> In the Preface to the book, Jourdain notes the decline of the country house, ‘having been swept away in the present century’; a growing concern in the inter-war years

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<sup>120</sup> Basil Ionides, ‘A Lesser Town House of To-Day: No.86, Vincent Square, SW.’, *Country Life Magazine*, 18 March 1922. p.388.

<sup>121</sup> R.S., ‘Howbridge Hall, Witham, Essex, and Its Restoration by Basil Ionides. I’, *Country Life Magazine*, 23 February 1924.R.S., ‘Howbridge Hall, Witham, Essex, and Its Restoration by Basil Ionides. II’, *Country Life Magazine*, 8 March 1924.

<sup>122</sup> For a selection, see Margaret Jourdain, *Decoration in England from 1660-1770* (London: B.T.Batsford Ltd, 1914). Margaret Jourdain, *English Interiors in Smaller Houses, From the Restoration to the Regency, 1660-1830* (London: B.T.Batsford Ltd, 1923). Margaret Jourdain and Anthony Frank Kersting, *English Interior Decoration, 1500-1830; a Study in the Development of Design* (London: B.T.Batsford Ltd, 1950).

<sup>123</sup> Jourdain, *English Interiors in Smaller Houses, From the Restoration to the Regency, 1660-1830*.

which will be returned to in the following chapter.<sup>124</sup> Successful collaborations included publications with V&A Keeper of Woodwork and Furniture, Ralph Edwards and British Museum specialist in Chinese art, R. Soame Jenyns.<sup>125</sup> As noted earlier, their work, '*Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century*', published in 1950, was extensively illustrated with objects from the Ionides Collection in a range of media including examples of European style Chinese export porcelain now held at the V&A.<sup>126</sup>

Another leading author who published extensively on interior design during this period was R. Randal Phillips (1878-1967). From '*The Servantless House*' in 1920 to '*Houses for Moderate Means*' in 1936, *Country Life* published nine books by Phillips and he was a regular contributor to *Country Life Magazine*. In 1928, a selection of Basil Ionides' work was featured alongside other leading designers in, '*The Modern English Interior*'.<sup>127</sup> The following year, Phillips showcased Ionides' work in the magazine alongside Ambrose Heal (1872-1959) and Serge Chermayeff (1900-1996), illustrating projects undertaken for private clients in Britain and the USA.<sup>128</sup> Ionides' design scheme for Mr McCormick of Chicago was praised by Phillips in the following terms:

'It is encouraging to find that an American has employed an Englishman, Mr. Basil Ionides, to decorate his apartment in Chicago in modern taste. America constantly employs English designers to create 'period' work in America, but it seems a new idea to come here for a modern treatment. The result has proved most successful, and the rooms are far more suitable to Chicago than any re-creations of the past could be'.

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This statement offers valuable insights into the relationship between British and American patrons and designers in the 1920s, the versatility of Basil Ionides as designer and the

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<sup>124</sup> For more on the decline of the country house, see Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, [CT]: Yale University Press, 1997). Adrian Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016).

<sup>125</sup> Margaret Jourdain and Ralph Edwards, *Georgian Cabinet-Makers* (Country Life Ltd, 1946).

<sup>126</sup> Jourdain and Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century*.

<sup>127</sup> R. Randal Phillips, *The Modern English Interior* (London: Country Life, 1928).

<sup>128</sup> R.F.B., 'Modern Furniture and Decoration', *Country Life Magazine*, 14 February 1931.

M. Dane, 'The Trend of Interior Decoration', *Country Life Magazine*, 6 December 1930.

<sup>129</sup> Randall Phillips, 'Modern Interior Decoration: An Apartment in Chicago Designed by Basil Ionides', *Country Life Magazine*, 27 April 1929.

McCormick built the block of duplex within which his apartment was located. The McCormick family of Chicago are noted as the fifth wealthiest family in America around this time. Ferdinand Lundberg, *Americas Sixty Families* (Chicago, 1937).

international status his work had achieved by the end of the decade. In 1929, Ionides was invited to write on 'Modern Interior Decoration' for the American journal, '*Creative Art Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*,' in which he discussed aspects of colour, surface and line, and the challenges facing the designer.<sup>130</sup> His skills were now such that he was able to successfully produce designs of vastly different scale, aesthetic and purpose.<sup>131</sup> While the primary focus of this thesis will be the country house interiors created for the home established by Ionides and his wife at Buxted Park, the achievements of Ionides as a 'modern' designer are significant and provide an interesting counterpoint.

### *Books by Basil Ionides*

In addition to numerous articles and features written by Basil Ionides for the architectural and 'leisure' press, the designer authored two books on interior design which constitute a key source for this thesis. As no personal archives survive, it is to these textual and visual sources that we now turn in order to discover his distinctive approach to interior design and specifically, the utility of Chinese art objects, in particular ceramics, within the schemes he created. In so doing, it may be possible to identify objects which later formed part of the private collection of European style Chinese export porcelain and the subsequent bequests in the national museums.

In 1926, Basil Ionides' first book, '*Colour and Interior Decoration*', was commissioned by founder of Country Life, Edward Hudson.<sup>132</sup> Unlike earlier works on interior design, Ionides' book demonstrates a more systematic, pseudo-scientific approach to a subject which was increasingly gaining recognition as a serious and independent field of study.<sup>133</sup> The intended readership of the book is suggested by Ionides in the Foreword, who acknowledges the

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<sup>130</sup> Basil Ionides, 'Modern Interior Decoration', *Creative Art Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* 4 (May 1929): 341–44.

<sup>131</sup> In 1928, Ionides designed a large seaside house in modernist style in Sandgate, Kent. See 'Modernist House, Sandgate, Kent', *Architectural Review*, December 1928.

<sup>132</sup> Basil Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration* (London, 1926).

Hudson was praised by architect Oliver Hill as 'the keeper of the architectural conscience of the nation' See Oliver Hill, "An Architects Debt to 'Country Life,'" *Country Life Magazine*, January 12, 1967.

<sup>133</sup> For examples of an earlier generation of writers on interior design, see Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, *The Decoration of Houses* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1897). Elsie de Wolfe, *The House in Good Taste* (New York: The Century Co., 1913), ISO-8859-1.

assumed financial limitations of his audience, in contrast to his usual portfolio of affluent clients. The theory and psychology of colour is central to his thesis, developing notions propounded by chemist Wilhelm Ostwald and other influential colour theorists, which correlated colour harmonies with emotional responses in the viewer.<sup>134</sup> Ionides explained his approach in the following terms:

‘Colour, therefore, plays a major part in decorative schemes, and with colour texture and surface should count...First, the aspect of the room should be considered; if north, then cheery light-giving colours must be chosen; if dark, then bright colours are best. If the room is very light, then delicate colours may be used and window curtains chosen that will give beautiful reflections.’

The psychology of colour effect is held to influence many people and to show character greatly. Most people do this with colour. Blues in the deeper tones are said to be restful and to tend to contemplation and philosophy. It is a peaceful colour. Green having blue in it and also yellow, which is a cheerful colour, is happy and is affected by those whose life is contented. Mauve belongs to the weak, morbid, and discontented. Pink is apt to be cruel as it has red rays in it, and red is essentially a cruel colour. Pink is often quoted as the colour of love, but it is a cruel form of love. White is held for innocence, and black is apt to fall to the lot of the vain. Purple suggests pretension, and yellow happiness, but these are only theories which the reader must be left to prove for himself by a closer examination of the subject.’

Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration*, pp. v-viii

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<sup>134</sup> See Wilhelm Ostwald, *Die Farbenfibel (The Colour Primer)* (Leipzig, 1916). Also H.B. Carpenter, *Colour* (London: B.T.Batsford Ltd, 1915). John M. Holmes, *Colour in Interior Decoration* (New York, London: The Architectural Press, 1931).





From a picture by W. D. E. Ranken, R.I.

Fig. 1.11a 'A Furnishing Scheme Showing a Successful Use of Pinks', from a picture by W.B.E.Ranken, in Basil Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration* (Country Life Publishing, 1926), Plate III, p.16. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].



Fig.1.11b 'Drawing Room in Pink, Howbridge Hall, Witham, Essex', in Basil Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration* (Country Life Publishing, 1926), p.14. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

DECORATIVE SCHEMES IN PINK.							
WALLS.	WOODWORK.	CEILINGS.	FLOOR.	CURTAINS.	COVERS.	CUSHIONS.	ORNAMENTS.
<b>For a Panelled Dining-Room :</b> Painted bright pink one coat, also covering mouldings. The flats then painted one coat fawn and the mouldings one coat of same pink. The whole, flats and mouldings, then painted one coat fawn. This will leave the flats plain fawn and the mouldings pink, glowing through fawn. <i>Pictures:</i> Old Chinese pictures in narrow gilt frames.	Same as walls.	White with faint touch of fawn. A white paper with gold stars would also be effective.	Brown - stained and varnished. Persian rugs in brown and pink (these may be got cheaply. They are modern and artificially faded).	Brown ground soft glazed chintz with pattern of pink flowers, unlined, and bound with pink braid. Next to glass, pink artificial silk edged with gold galon.	Light crimson damask fringed with pink cotton. Fringe same shade as binding of curtains. Small chairs, same as curtains but with pink cotton fringe.	Pink satin covered with cream net.	Canton enamel; gilt; pink and brown china. Lampshades of pink silk lined with pale yellow, and with gold fringes.
<b>For a Pink Bedroom :</b> Walls distempered pale shell pink carried up over the cornice. <i>Pictures:</i> Water-colours.	Ivory white and glossy.	Ivory, matte, or very pale yellow.	Dark brown stained; carpet, rose-coloured Turkey.	Pink and ivory striped chintz with pink glazed lining. Next to glass, pink net bound with yellow braid.	Old-rose wool taffeta with thick woollen fringes at base. Small chairs, to match curtains.	Shot pink taffeta edged with uncut fringe of pink and yellow, spaced.	Luneville china; pink lustre. Lampshades, white lined with pink and edged with yellow.
<b>For a Sitting-Room :</b> Grass cloth with pink threads in weaving. Cornice, gold. <i>Pictures:</i> Japanese woodcuts.	Painted ivory white and combed pink to match shade in grass cloth; surface finished glossy. Mouldings might be gold, but quality must be good.	Ivory, glossy and mottled.	Deep ivory, very glossy. Khelim rugs in tones of pink and brown.	Cretonne pattern of pink flowers on an ivory ground, unlined, but bound at edges. Next to glass, pink artificial silk with fringed edges.	Ivory horsehair on small chairs; deep red damask on sofas; both edged with aluminium fringe.	Pink taffeta with pinked ruching around the edges.	Red lustre; copper. Lampshades, ivory silk lined with pink and edged with silver fringe.
<b>For a Simple Drawing-Room :</b> Pink self-coloured striped wallpaper. <i>Pictures:</i> Coloured engravings in black and gilt frames.	Silver grey combed, the surface being left with egg-shell gloss.	Ivory white.	Grey to match woodwork. Old-rose carpet (preferably an Axminster).	Spotted muslin lined with pink glazed lining and bound with pink ribbon. Next to glass, book muslin edged with pink ribbon.	White glazed chintz with pink rosebuds piped and edged with plain pink. Small chairs, pink satin piped with silver grey.	Pink Japanese silk backed with silver grey and edged with a narrow frill of pink ribbon.	White china; pink Victorian glass. Lampshades, white fluted silk lined with pink on pink gloss stands.

Fig.1.12 'Decorative Schemes in Pink', in Basil Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration*, (Country Life Publishing, 1926), p.15. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

Taking colour as its primary concern, the book is organised thematically as the author applies his theories to case studies based largely upon his own body of work. Photographic images and paintings by W.B.E Ranken include a number at Howbridge Hall, such as 'The Blue Room' and 'The Pink Room', 'decorated by the author for himself' (Fig. 1.11a and b).<sup>135</sup> Other case studies include 'A Red Room in the house of Mr. Martin de Selincourt' and schemes created for Guy Bethel and Lionel Holland.<sup>136</sup> A table at the end of each chapter juxtaposes rooms based on location and function; is the room in the town or city? A south facing bedroom or sunny living room? Individual aspects of decoration are then addressed, in relation to the 'Walls, Woodwork, Ceiling, Floor' and for textiles the 'Curtains, Covers and

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. p.21. For a full discussion of the restoration of Howbridge Hall, see R.S., 'Howbridge Hall, Witham, Essex, and Its Restoration by Basil Ionides. I'. R.S., 'Howbridge Hall, Witham, Essex, and Its Restoration by Basil Ionides. II'.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. pp. 60-61.

Cushions' (Fig.1.12). Finally, in the category of 'Ornaments', Ionides identifies the appropriate use of glassware, metalware and most importantly for this study, ceramics. The ceramic typologies are at times specific; 'Leeds and Wedgwood 'Queens Ware' for use in a Sunny Sitting Room in Green', 'Spode for a South-facing drawing room in Purple'. Elsewhere more generic terminology is employed; 'white earthenware: Town Bedroom in Green' or 'Old English china: Panelled Room in Green'. As a whole, the book operates as an interior design manual for the novice of limited means which, if correctly followed, offers a fully integrated and coordinated lived environment to suit the demands of a rapidly modernising society. Within this scheme, ceramics are a key design accessory, accessible to the general public and readership of this book.

An interest in Chinese inspired colour combinations and decorative effects is evident; from the merits of 'black and red' or 'blue and yellow' which suggest 'a Chinese origin' or show 'the Chinese influence', to the use of decorated and plain ornament and the visual effects of gloss and sheen associated with East Asian lacquer in Ch XII.<sup>137</sup> Chinese wallpapers are separately identified and illustrated (Fig.1.13a-b) and large Chinese screens can be seen in the 'Loggia in the Chinese Manner'.<sup>138</sup> Elsewhere, Ionides states that, 'A plain coloured wall with many coloured Oriental objects against it will give a riot of colour, but a patterned wall with patterned ornaments, etc. will make too many divided colours for any of them to really tell', reducing the properties of 'Oriental' objects to colour and pattern alone, demonstrating the low value he placed on individual objects in these contexts.<sup>139</sup>

The visibility of Chinese ceramics in photographs and painted works is not immediately apparent in the publication, although ceramics are consistently mentioned in the design matrix at the end of each chapter. On East Asian ceramics, Ionides occasionally distinguishes between Chinese and Japanese wares, suggesting an awareness of different porcelain typologies and their design properties, but as no bibliography is included, it is unclear where he sourced his information.<sup>140</sup> References to Chinese porcelain typologies are non-specific

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<sup>137</sup> Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration*. p.63

<sup>138</sup> For more on the use of antique Chinese wallpaper in fashionable interiors during this period, see Clare Taylor, "'Painted Paper of Peking": The Taste for Eighteenth-Century Chinese Papers in Britain, c.1918-c.1945', in *The Reception of Chinese Art across Cultures*, ed. Michelle Ying-ling Huang (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 44–64. Anna Wu, "Chinese Wallpaper, Global Histories and Material Culture" (Ph.D., Royal College of Art, 2019).

<sup>139</sup> Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration*. p.61

<sup>140</sup> 'A little Chinese ware is red, but very little; there is more Japanese; but on the whole, red china is sadly lacking.' Ibid. p.58



and Ionides continues to employ terminology more closely associated with the late nineteenth century; ‘Nankin’ Blue was used by collectors associated with the Aesthetic movement and may have been popularized by Whistler, whose close relationship to Basil’s father has already been discussed.<sup>141</sup> The continued use of the term by Ionides in 1926 may reflect both his own personal relationship to Chinese porcelain, from childhood to adult-hood, and the divergence between the popular appreciation of Chinese porcelain, including the readership of his book, with the more scholarly and historically accurate study of Chinese porcelain which prevailed in specialist circles by that time.<sup>142</sup>



Fig. 1.13a (Left) ‘In a sitting room’, in Basil Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration*, (Country Life Publishing, 1926), p.68. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

Fig.1.13b (Right) ‘A Corner of a Bathroom’ in Basil Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration*, (Country Life Publishing, 1926). P.23. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

<sup>141</sup> Pierson, *Collectors, Collections and Museums*.p.75

<sup>142</sup> In 1925, Robert Hobson published the third in a series of scholarly surveys of Chinese ceramics. A.L Heatherington and R.L. Hobson, *The Early Ceramic Wares of China* (London: Benn Brothers, 1922). R.L. Hobson, *The Wares of the Ming Dynasty* (London: Benn Brothers, 1923). R.L. Hobson, *The Later Ceramic Wares of China, Being the Blue and White, Famille Verte, Famille Rose, Monochromes, Etc., of the Kang Hsi, Yung Cheng, Chien Lung and Other Periods of the Ching Dynasty* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1925).

The second and final book authored by Basil Ionides, *'Colour in Everyday Rooms'*, was published by Country Life in 1934.<sup>143</sup> In contrast to his earlier publication, this book is less prescriptive and more cautionary in its approach, warning the reader about 'Colour in Odd Places' Ch. VII, 'Things out of Place and Badly Mixed' Ch.VIII, and 'Good Things that are Gone and Might be Revived,' Ch. IX. Ionides states his position from the outset:

'No one agrees with his neighbor about decoration, though he may admire the efforts of others, and so it is impossible to lay down rules about what is good taste and what is bad, but there is a great deal that is really common sense, and not taste, and that is the theme that I have tried to work on in this book.'

Once more, the book is illustrated with examples drawn from his professional and private portfolio, including the town house at 49 Berkeley Square and country house residence at Buxted Park, Sussex, where he was by that time living with his wife. Other examples are striking for their modernity and diversity, from a dining room with textiles designed by artist Duncan Grant (1885-1878) and H.J.Bull, to an 'off-white' bedroom with a large white rug by Marion Dorn (1896-1964) and painting by Gluck (1895-1978).<sup>144</sup> Whilst overall Ionides presents a more considered and conservative approach, he continues to demonstrate his versatility as designer and familiarity with the latest avant-garde trends in interior design. The most interesting insights for the purposes of this study are his comments regarding the display of 'china':

'Shelves that are to receive china must, naturally, have a backing to suit the china. I have often had to do this, and it has always provoked endless argument; but as, in this case, we want it to help the room and not the china, I would suggest that some colour occurring in the china, either in the pattern of the ground, be chosen, provided that it gives the necessary contrast to the room.' p. 77

This statement once more emphasizes the subsidiary role of ceramics as an accessory to the interior design scheme. However, the photographs which accompany this statement are striking today precisely for the bold display of Chinese ceramics, systematically arranged on raised tiers and individually scalloped shelves in order to showcase selected groups of objects

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<sup>143</sup> Ionides, *Colour in Everyday Rooms: With Remarks on Sundry Aspects of Decoration*.

<sup>144</sup> The USA-born textile designer, known for her sculpted carpets, also contributed to the interiors of the Savoy and Claridges. <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp06579/marion-dorn> pp. 27 and 31.

to the viewer (Fig.1.14a and b).<sup>145</sup> Whilst precise identification of individual objects is difficult to verify, and not mentioned by Ionides, it is clear that many pieces are shaped in archaistic style in imitation of ancient Chinese bronze vessel types, or traditional Chinese forms such as the *meiping* vase. All appear to be undecorated and glazed in monochrome, possibly in the style known as ‘flambé’ in Europe after its fiery red and purple glaze which had been popular amongst collectors since the nineteenth century.<sup>146</sup> How the colour translated to the rest of the room cannot be deciphered from the black and white image, but Ionides explains in the accompanying captions that he has adapted old architectural features to modern use in the latest Art Deco style.



Fig.1.14a (Left) Set of shelves with ceramics, in Basil Ionides, *Colour in Everyday Rooms*, (Country Life Publishing, 1934), p.76. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

Fig.1.14b (Right) Georgian corner cupboard with striped shelves, in Basil Ionides, *Colour in Everyday Rooms*, (Country Life Publishing, 1934), p.78. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

<sup>145</sup> pp.77 and 78.

<sup>146</sup> First produced in China during the eighteenth-century, this style was widely copied at the French factories of Sevres in the nineteenth century. See Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp.244-245.

Despite the limitations of the photographic record, two distinct approaches to the display of Chinese ceramics and art objects may be observed through his books. First, the utility of objects as ‘ornament’, whereby pieces have been carefully selected and placed within a designated space, uncased and directly approachable by the viewer. In this context, single objects are integrated within the design scheme, selected principally for their formal qualities of colour, design, texture and aesthetic, as illustrated in the interiors of the Blue Room or the Pink Room in 1926. The displays of 1934 demonstrate a second approach, whereby ceramics have been systematically organized and arranged according to glaze type and place of origin, that is China, their shared characteristics allowing the group to form a coherent set which can be readily understood by the viewer. The formal placement of objects on shelving simultaneously separates them from the rest of the room and endows them with a ‘museum-like’ quality – these are objects to be regarded but not touched. While this display must also harmonize with the overall colour scheme, the manner of selection, placement and subject/object relationship is quite different. It is to these alternative display strategies that we will return in the following chapter.

From this brief survey, it is clear that by the late 1920s Basil Ionides had achieved considerable commercial success and professional recognition as architect and interior designer. From the detailed examination of his publications, his approach towards interior design and the display of ceramic objects within that context can be more clearly understood. The trajectory of his personal life had swung dramatically from a childhood of exceptional privilege to an adulthood driven by financial necessity. Our attention will now turn to his collecting practices during this period.

### *Basil Ionides the Collector*

In the course of this research, textual sources pertaining to the collecting activities of Basil Ionides have proved difficult to locate, as no personal archives survive, nor did he write on the subject. It has therefore been necessary to consult the archives of dealers known to specialize in Chinese art objects during the period in order to establish, where possible, the types of objects Basil Ionides purchased during the 1920s prior to his marriage. Publications in his name were also studied for visual evidence of objects in his possession, or that of his mother, during this period.

The archives of John Sparks Ltd., which by the 1920s had become one of the leading dealers in East Asian art in London, reveal that Basil Ionides began to purchase items through them prior to 1928, when three transactions can be identified.<sup>147</sup> On 9<sup>th</sup> January 1928, he acquired six pieces, all examples of ‘Canton Enamels’ in a range of forms, including a cake basket, tea pot, rice bowl and cover. Later that month on 19<sup>th</sup> January, an ‘incense burner and cover’ and ‘Tazza’ were purchased, also classified as ‘Canton Enamel’.<sup>148</sup> The term ‘Canton Enamels’ was widely used in the Britain to describe predominantly eighteenth and nineteenth century enamels on metal, usually copper, made in the port of Canton (Guangzhou) in response to European enameling techniques, principally for export to Europe but also for domestic consumption and popular at the court in Beijing.<sup>149</sup> An enameled plaque decorated with European figures, ‘from the collection of Mr and Mrs Basil Ionides’ is featured by Jourdain and Jenyns in their later publication of 1950 and may refer to one of these objects. One further transaction took place on 27 January 1928, details of which are difficult to verify, being the final purchase made through the dealer before Basil Ionides married in May 1930.<sup>150</sup>

Visual evidence of the interior design scheme at Howbridge Hall, illustrated first in *Country Life Magazine* in 1924 and later in Ionides’ book of 1926, help to identify objects situated within the country house where he lived with his mother at that time. Through these painted and photographic images, Chinese objects including Chinese export paintings and a large Buddhist sculpture can clearly be seen alongside Chinese porcelains (see Fig 1.11a-b). Whether these objects were purchased by Basil Ionides or his mother is unclear, but their

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<sup>147</sup> For a short history of Sparks, see Liz Hancock, ‘John Sparks, Sea Captain and Dealer in Japanese and Chinese Art’. <https://carp.arts.gla.ac.uk/essay1.php?enum=1370358740>, 2013.

Ching-Yi Huang, ‘John Sparks, the Art Dealer and Chinese Art in England, 1902-1936’ (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2012).

According to Ledger Book Jan 1928- Dec 1934, p103, the balance has been carried forward from an old ledger. However, the name Basil Ionides does not appear in the earlier ledger for the period Jan 1914-June 1927 due to inconsistencies in the archive. John Sparks Ltd. Archive (1826-1997), Archives and Special Collections, Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, accessed 15th August 2017.

<sup>148</sup> A Tazza is a stem cup with wide rim, originating in fifteenth century Italy.

<sup>149</sup> See Ch.V ‘Painted (Canton) Enamels’ in Jourdain and Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century*. pp.53-55.

For recent research concerning the production of enamels in Guangzhou, or ‘Guang falang’ and at the imperial workshops in Beijing, see Ching-Fei Shi, ‘日月光华 : 清宫画珐琅 Radiant Luminance : The Painted Enamelware of the Qing Imperial Court / [施静菲著]. Ri Yue Guang Hua : Qing Gong Hua Fa Lang’, 2012, <https://www.nlb.gov.sg/biblio/200659731>. Shih Ching-fei, ‘A Record of the Establishment of a New Art Form: The Unique Collection of ‘Painted Enamels’ at the Qing Court’, in International Symposium, Art in China: Collections and Concepts, University of Heidelberg and the National Palace Museum (Bonn, 21-23 November 2003), 2005.

<sup>150</sup> Transaction for the sum of £39. Further details were unavailable at the time of writing.



selection and inclusion in the publication imparts something of his taste at that time. From his 1926 publication alone, there is no visual evidence of identifiable examples of European style Chinese export porcelain which would later form part of the Basil Ionides Bequest, suggesting that most of these items were acquired at a later date. However, other items such as the gilded Buddha, can be observed in a later photograph of the Chinese Room at Buxted Park, published in *Country Life Magazine* in 1934 and discussed in the following chapter, confirming its continued ownership by Ionides following his marriage; the Buddha can no longer be seen in the later *Country Life* features of 1940 and 1950, suggesting it may have been sold or gifted elsewhere by that time.

### *Nellie Ionides – A Short Biography*

Whilst the initial focus of this research was the Basil Ionides Bequest, it soon became apparent that Nellie Ionides was a significant actor in the purchase of the collection of Chinese porcelain and its later distribution to public museums and the art market (Fig. 1.15). In fact, her reputation as collector of art and generous benefactor in the public realm resulted in the exhibitions, ‘Nellie Ionides: Collector’ (2002) and ‘Private Passions for Public Pleasure’ (2010) both held at Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham, the historic building she saved from demolition in 1926 and presented to the local community in her bequest in 1963.<sup>151</sup> Whilst neither exhibition considered her porcelain collections, taking pictorial works of local significance as their primary subject, both confirm the status of Nellie Ionides as art collector. Before discussing her involvement with the Basil Ionides Bequest, it is first necessary to briefly examine her social, economic and cultural background before her marriage to Basil Ionides in 1930 in order to establish her cultural capital independently of her future husband.

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<sup>151</sup> The Palladian villa known as Orleans House (constructed 1710) was demolished by gravel merchants in 1926. Nellie Levy purchased the remaining out-buildings, the Octagon Room and riverside land in order to prevent further industrial use and preserve the arcadian view from Richmond Hill, protected by law from 1902. A 1930 Deed of Covenant restricted future development of the land. Toby Jessel, ‘Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides - History and Connections with Twickenham’ (York House Society, Twickenham, 29 March 2000). Nellie Ionides bequeathed 467 works to Richmond Borough Art Collection in 1963. For more on her connections with Twickenham, see transcript of society lecture. Jessel. ‘IONIDES COLLECTION - Orleans House Trust’, accessed 2 May 2018, <http://www.orleanshousetrust.com/ionides-collection/4584771077>.



Fig. 1.15 The Hon. Nellie Ionides, MSA 371, Henriques family archives, 2/1/1, A3042 Nellie Samuels, Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.

Nellie Samuels was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1883, the eldest daughter of Fanny Elizabeth Benjamin (1857-1927) and Marcus Samuel (1853-1927) who transformed the family fortunes from a moderate East End business, specializing in the sale of exotic shells, to the internationally successful trade first in commodities and later in oil, founding the Shell Transport and Trading Company with his brother Samuel in 1897.<sup>152</sup> Marcus was knighted the following year, becoming Lord Mayor of London in 1902 and one of the first members of the Jewish community to be granted title as the First Viscount Bearsted in 1925.<sup>153</sup> At the age of twenty, Nellie married Walter Henry Levy (1876-1923) in the first wedding ever held at Mansion House, London, on 7 April 1903. Over 1,200 guests attended the lavish occasion in the

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<sup>152</sup> David B. Green, '1927: The Jew Behind the "Hebrew" Part of Royal Dutch Shell Dies', *Haaretz*, 17 January 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/this-day-in-jewish-history/1.697462>. 'Our Beginnings', accessed 3 January 2018, <https://www.shell.com/about-us/who-we-are/our-beginnings.html>.

<sup>153</sup> Charles Mosley, ed., *Burkes Peerage and Baronetage*, 106th ed., vol. 1, 2 vols. (Crans, Switzerland: Genealogical Books Ltd, 1999). Vol. 1, p.218. The title passed to Nellie's brother, Walter Samuel (1882-1948), who became 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Bearsted following his father's death in 1923. Walter took on the chairmanship of Shell and inherited the family fortune at that time, becoming an enthusiastic collector of artwork.

Egyptian Hall, including leading members of the Jewish community; Sir Edward Sassoon and his wife, Colonel and Mrs Golsmid and the Rothschilds are mentioned in newspaper coverage of the event, in addition to international delegations from the Japanese and Chinese Ministers to the Court of St.James.<sup>154</sup> The couple had four children over the course of their twenty-year marriage and Major Walter Levy was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.) for services during the First World War. Following the death of her first husband in 1923, Nellie lived alone until she married Basil Ionides on 23 May 1930. *The Daily Chronicle* described Mrs Ionides as ‘one of the richest women in England’ in its announcement of the event on 26 May 1930.<sup>155</sup>

### *Nellie Ionides the Collector*

Nellie Ionides was an enthusiastic collector from an early age. Her later friend and advisor, Jim Kiddell of Sotheby’s, described her in the following terms:

‘As a collector, she travelled a good deal when young and bought from famous firms in Paris and the continent as well as England – knew what she wanted and got it.

(She) started collecting at the age of 16 when she was quite well off!! As she grew up she specialized in Enamels, Chinese Porcelain and Meissen figures’.

Cambridge University Library – Hermann Papers, Box 17, File ‘Jim Kiddell’

From 1921, an interest in Chinese art objects is clear from her transactions through the London dealer Sparks. In that year, she purchased items to the sum of £484 from June to November. Purchases in subsequent years are somewhat sporadic; single transactions in 1923, 1924, 1927 and in 1926, the purchase of a single jade Buddha and glass painted snuff bottle for the sum of £154.11.<sup>156</sup> On 8 October 1928, the Hon Mrs. Levy purchased eight lots of predominantly seventeenth and eighteenth century Chinese porcelains in a variety of styles; one large *famille verte* dish (Yongzheng), two eggshell cups and saucers (Qianlong)

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<sup>154</sup> Correspondence and invitations from Marcus Samuel and his wife to the official engagement and marriage of their eldest daughter, Nellie Samuels. 2/1/1, A3042 Henriques family archives, MSA 371, Anglo-Jewish Archives, University of Southampton. Accessed 14 Sept 2015.

<sup>155</sup> Hon. Mrs Walter Levy, Part 1:1917-1948, MA/1/I245, V&A.

<sup>156</sup> See Ledger Book 37, p.325, John Sparks Ltd. Archive, Archives and Special Collections, SOAS University Library.

and a small basket shaped vase (Kangxi) are amongst the group.<sup>157</sup> One ‘*Famille Rose* Armorial Plate (Qianlong)’ is identified, confirming that whilst the majority of items were not manufactured specifically for export, she did occasionally purchase European style Chinese export porcelain prior to her marriage to Basil Ionides.

In 1925, Chinese ceramics from the collection of the Hon Mrs Walter Levy featured in the book, ‘*Later Ceramic Wares of China*’ by leading ceramic historian and British Museum curator, Robert Lockhart Hobson mentioned above.<sup>158</sup> Illustrating a variety of ceramics ‘from the best private collections rather than the public collections which are well known,’ nine examples from her collection appear alongside leading collectors including Anthony de Rothschild, Leonard Gow and founding members of the Oriental Ceramic Society, Stephen Winkworth and George Eumorfopoulos.<sup>159</sup> The book illustrates the diversity of Qing Dynasty porcelain in leading private collections during the mid- 1920s, at a time when earlier wares were becoming increasingly available and desirable to many collectors. All the pieces featured in the name of Levy date to the Kangxi period (1662-1722) and are enamelled and decorated in ‘Chinese style’ in contrast to the European style Chinese export porcelain under investigation here. Furthermore, none of the objects selected to illustrate Chapter X: ‘European Influences on Chinese Porcelain,’ originate from her collection, suggesting that this category of ceramics did not constitute a significant portion of her collection, if at all, as the author sought examples from other quarters.<sup>160</sup>

### *Social Networks*

Social networks established throughout the life of Nellie Ionides were extensive and diverse, rooted in her Jewish heritage and extending throughout British high society. One of her most high-profile friendships was that with Queen Mary, evidence of which survives in correspondence and ephemera preserved in the Anglo-Jewish Archive at the University of Southampton. A shared interest in art collecting brought together the two women who first

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<sup>157</sup> Two ivory figures also identified, Qianlong. Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Hobson, *The Later Ceramic Wares of China, Being the Blue and White, Famille Verte, Famille Rose, Monochromes, Etc., of the Kang Hsi, Yung Cheng, Chien Lung and Other Periods of the Ching Dynasty.*’

<sup>159</sup> Hobson. Introduction.

<sup>160</sup> Five objects are identified, from the collections of Manchester City Art Gallery, British Museum (Franks Collection), Mr. Anthony de Rothschild, Capt. A.T. Warre and Mr. Reginald Cory. Ibid. pp.97-103.

met in 1924 and became life-long friends.<sup>161</sup> Speaking of their respective collections, Nellie noted,

‘Her Majesty and I each had several collections of various sorts. She took not the least interest in my Chinese porcelain – of which I am very proud – while I knew next to nothing about the English porcelain factories. As I said, our first common ground was our Eighteenth Century Enamels.’<sup>162</sup>

Eighteenth century English enamels, or ‘Battersea Enamels’ as they were widely known, became an area of expertise in which Nellie Levy offered advice to other collectors.<sup>163</sup> Her extensive collection received a full review in *Apollo Magazine* in 1938 by her friend Margaret Jourdain, displayed in bespoke cabinets designed by Basil Ionides and photographed in her townhouse at 49 Berkeley Square, London (Fig.1.16).<sup>164</sup> The series of rooms seen here, with shelved alcoves and display cases, creates the formal and orderly atmosphere of a small museum rather than a private residence and home.

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<sup>161</sup> Nellie Ionides, ‘Tribute to Queen Mary’, 1953, Private Collection. Exhibited at Orleans House Gallery (2010).

<sup>162</sup> Ionides.

<sup>163</sup> A factory was established at York House, Battersea, by Stephen Theodore Janssen, and operated from 1753-56. The term was later used more broadly to refer to painted enamels on metal produced elsewhere in England during the eighteenth century. Edward Wenham, *Antiques A to Z - A Pocket Handbook for Collectors and Dealers* (Read Books Ltd, 2013).

Nellie Levy, ‘What to Avoid in “Battersea Enamels”. Some Hints by the Hon.Mrs Levy’, *The Connoisseur: An Illustrated Magazine for Collectors*, April 1925.

<sup>164</sup> Margaret Jourdain, ‘English Enamels in the Hon. Mrs. Ionides’ Collection’, *Apollo, The Magazine for the Arts for Connoisseurs and Collectors* XXVII (June 1938): 300–305.

ENGLISH ENAMELS IN THE HON. MRS. IONIDES'S COLLECTION



Fig. IX. PART OF THE COLLECTION OF BATTERSEA ENAMELS at 49, Berkeley Square, W.

Fig.1.16 Display of Battersea Enamels at 49 Berkeley Square, designed by Basil Ionides. In Margaret Jourdain, 'English Enamels in the Hon. Mrs. Ionides Collection', *Apollo, The Magazine for the Arts for Connoisseurs and Collectors*, Jan-June 1938, p.305. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

The collecting and display of Chinese objects by Queen Mary has received special attention in recent years, studied by Kathryn Jones and John Ayers in the encyclopedic publication of Chinese and Japanese objects in the Royal Collection in 2016.<sup>165</sup> She too purchased through John Sparks and visited dealers in London with Nellie Ionides as ‘a shopping partner’.<sup>166</sup> The painter Richard Jack captured the design scheme of ‘Queen Mary’s Chinese Chippendale Room,’ in 1927, encapsulating the aristocratic fashion for Chinese style in the 1920s and her own personal taste in collecting Chinese art objects.<sup>167</sup>

Throughout the 1920s, Nellie Levy was assisted in building up her collection by Margaret Jourdain, whose literary achievements have already been discussed but will here be considered for her contributions to the fields of collecting and interior design. Whilst Jourdain’s scholarly capabilities were clear from an early age, her financial circumstances necessitated she secured paid work throughout her life. From 1911, Jourdain worked with Francis Lenygon who would go on to form the noted interior design partnership, Lenygon and Marrant, publishing most of her work under male pseudonyms.<sup>168</sup> Over subsequent decades, Jourdain worked for dealers such as Acton Surgey and Phillips, obtaining pieces on commission from the trade and placing them with her own wealthy clients. From 1922 Nellie Levy was an important patron and according to her lifelong partner, author Ivy Compton-Burnett (1884-1969), Jourdain visited Nellie’s townhouse at Lowndes Square almost daily for luncheon before accompanying her on visits to the sales rooms and dealers.<sup>169</sup> In addition to her advisory role, Jourdain secured smaller jobs for interior designers such as Herman Schrieber, Derek Patmore and Basil Ionides. It was due to her introduction towards the end of the decade that Nellie Levy met Basil and invited him to ‘decorate’ her house in Berkeley Square:

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<sup>165</sup> Vol III: Introduction, Incorporating a Study of Queen Mary’s Collection of Asiatic Art,’ in John Ayers, *Chinese and Japanese Works of Art in the Collection of Her Majesty The Queen* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2016). pp.711-743.

<sup>166</sup> Sparks received the Royal Warrant of Antiquary of Chinese Art from Queen Mary in 1926. Huang, ‘John Sparks, the Art Dealer and Chinese Art in England, 1902-1936’ . p.21.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Queen Mary’s Chinese Chippendale Room’, oil painting by Richard Jack, 1927, Royal Collection. This room was also studied by Cheang, “What’s in a Chinese Room? 20th Century Chinoiserie, Modernity and Femininity.”

<sup>168</sup> Jourdain described herself as ‘the hard-up daughter of a hard-up country parson,’ and worked from necessity throughout her life. In 1911, Lenygon provided her for the first time with a living wage. For more on the life of Margaret Jourdain, see Hilary Spurling, *Ivy: The Life of Ivy Compton Burnett* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009). pp.305-348.

<sup>169</sup> From 1924, the annual sum of £100 was paid to Jourdain on the condition she made no attempt to discover its source. Hilary Spurling argues that the most likely donor was Nellie Levy, See Spurling. p. 341. Nellie Levy lived at Lowndes Square in the early 1920s before moving to Berkeley Square later in the decade.

‘Basil found himself summoned one day to build a bow window in Berkeley Square, and shortly afterwards married his client. He and Nelly dined on 23 May 1930, the night before the wedding, with Margaret and Ivy who for once both warmly approved Basils scheme for hanging up his hat in his wife’s hall.’<sup>170</sup>

By the late 1920s, the success of Ivy Compton-Burnett as author and Jourdain as architectural and furniture historian allowed the two women access to the highest social circles as well as more avant-garde literary and artistic friends.<sup>171</sup>

‘She and Mortimer (Raymond) were both entertained at parties composed otherwise entirely of Margaret’s more presentable furniture friends like the Kings, together with a choice selection of her young men – Roger Hinks from the British Museum, Leigh Ashton (eventually head of the V&A), the architect Basil Ionides and the society painter Willie Ranken: a guest list calculated to leave envoys from Bloomsbury feeling almost as flummoxed as Ivy’s own skilled impersonation of a governess of the old school.’<sup>172</sup>

The connection between Basil Ionides and William Ranken has already been made in relation to their earlier design and publishing collaborations and will be revisited once more in the following chapter. Leigh Ashton also developed a longstanding relationship with the Ionides and played a significant role in the transfer of the Basil Ionides Bequest to the V&A, as discussed in full later in this thesis. What is significant here is that all of the individuals listed as Margaret’s ‘young men’ were well known homosexuals.<sup>173</sup> While the sexuality of Basil Ionides has never been explicitly discussed, it has verbally been suggested that the marriage of the couple, in a similar manner to others of the time, was one of companionship.<sup>174</sup> Leigh Ashton also married but later divorced, whilst Ranken’s lifelong partner, the actor Ernest Thesiger (1879-1961), married his sister, Janette Mary Fernie Ranken (1877-1970) in what was described as ‘An Interesting Marriage’ on 29 May 1917.<sup>175</sup> The unconformist and

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<sup>170</sup> Spurling. pp.310-311.

<sup>171</sup> Following the success of her book, ‘Brothers and Sisters’, Compton-Burnett was introduced to Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf on 9 April 1928. Spurling. p.266

<sup>172</sup> Spurling. p.266. For more on social networks linking Jourdain and Compton Burnet to museum specialists Leigh Ashton, Soame Jenyns, and William King, see Viva King, *The Weeping and the Laughter* (London: Macdonald and Jane’s, 1976). pp.126-127.

<sup>173</sup> See ‘Roger Hinks’, accessed 4 January 2018, <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/hinksr.htm>. “Leigh Ashton - Dictionary of Art Historians,” accessed January 4, 2018, <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/ashtonl.htm>. On William Ranken, see “Ernest Thesigers Family of Choice,” accessed January 4, 2018, [http://ernestthesiger.org/Ernest\\_Thesiger/Family\\_of\\_Choice.html](http://ernestthesiger.org/Ernest_Thesiger/Family_of_Choice.html).

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Camilla Panufnik, granddaughter of Nellie Levy, 22 November 2013.

<sup>175</sup> “Ernest Thesigers Family of Choice.”



flamboyant behaviour of Thesiger was well known and according to Violet Henrique, Nellie's daughter, he delighted the children by showing them his green-painted toenails.<sup>176</sup>

The socially diverse circles in which Compton-Burnett and Jourdain moved undoubtedly informed their literary output. While the majority of Jourdain's work was of a serious and academic nature, Hilary Spurling recalls reading the transcript to the play, '*Buchanans Hotel*' of 1933.<sup>177</sup> The play is cast with professionally charming, generally well-connected but moneyless men and their patrons, mostly wealthy, much older women; the new poor preying on the nouveaux riches. At the conclusion of the play, the protagonist is unmasked as a Jew, exposing, 'the spectacle of the English upper classes ganging up against a Jewish outsider'.<sup>178</sup> Undoubtedly based upon Margaret's social circle, Spurling notes that the Ionides and others 'could scarcely have been best pleased to see themselves even faintly reflected in *Buchanans Hotel*, supposing it had ever reached the stage.'<sup>179</sup>

The literary fictions conjured up by Compton-Burnett throughout her prolific career consistently return to the interior life of the petit bourgeoisie and their financially impoverished but propertied counterparts, against the backdrop of small country estates and mansion houses.<sup>180</sup> The Anti-Victorian sentiments of her works bring issues of class, gender, sexuality and cultural identity to the fore, not in the manner of her better-known feminist literary counterparts, such as suffragist Vera Brittain or experimentalist Virginia Woolf, but in the polite language of a bygone era with a visceral humour which defies easy categorisation.<sup>181</sup> Alison Light argues that far from being traditionalists, Compton-Burnett and Jourdain may be regarded as 'moderns' at a time when notions of taste and 'Englishness' were profoundly transforming against a rapidly changing socio-cultural landscape.

The work of Jourdain, Compton-Burnett and Basil Ionides was united in its Anti-Victorianism, seeking to shed the clutter and baggage of an earlier society which no longer

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<sup>176</sup> Spurling, *Ivy: The Life of Ivy Compton Burnett*. p.275

<sup>177</sup> The typescript dated 1933 was loaned to Spurling in 1973 by Ralph Edwards, from the Furniture Department, where it had been stored among Jourdain's papers deposited there after her death in 1951. It is no longer in the departmental archives.

<sup>178</sup> Spurling, *Ivy: The Life of Ivy Compton Burnett*. p.309

<sup>179</sup> Spurling. p.311

<sup>180</sup> Compton-Burnett published nineteen novels at roughly one book every two years from '*Pastors and Masters*' in 1925 to '*The Last and the First*', 1971.

<sup>181</sup> Alison Light, 'The Demon in the House: The Novels of I. Compton-Burnett', in *Femininity, Literature and Conservatism between the Wars* (London : New York: Routledge, 1991), 20–60.

resonated in the stripped interwar world. Reactions against the Victorian took many forms; modernism in art, literature and design offered new ways of seeing and interpreting the world, promoting clean lines and emphasising function and form. In contrast, 'Jourdain was part of a group of self-styled cognoscenti and mutual admirers who found salvation from Victorian 'bad taste' in a re-invention of the eighteenth century'.<sup>182</sup> For these individuals, the Georgian was regarded as 'a superior aesthetic' and 'a new modern fashion'. This emphasis on 'newness' and 'modernity' are key to understanding the neo-Georgian not as a movement motivated by sentimental nostalgia or retrospection but as a catalyst for the reinvigoration of contemporary design to create a new design aesthetic suitable for modern life. Understood from this perspective, the progression of Basil Ionides from modernist Art Deco designer to the Neo-Georgian interiors of his later projects reflect both his adaptability and understanding of current trends in interior design and aesthetics and is in keeping with modernist trends of the day. By extension, his choice of largely eighteenth-century Chinese porcelains to furnish his private interiors is entirely in keeping with his design theorem, simultaneously Anti-Victorian and 'modern' in the context of the interwar years.

The connections between the Art Deco movement and Neo-Georgian Revivalism and Chinese art have been noted by scholars in recent years. Sarah Cheang and Clare Taylor both acknowledge the contributions made by Basil Ionides in the field of interior design in this sphere. In the 2015 publication, '*British Modernism and Chinoiserie*,' the influence of China is discussed in a range of parallel fields, from art, design and aesthetics to literature, architecture, fashion and the performing arts.<sup>183</sup> In his study of the art critic, Roger Fry and *The Burlington Magazine*, Ralph Parfect maps the relationship between the field of Chinese art in the first decades of the twentieth century, and modernist aesthetics. In this context, Fry and his peers such as artist Clive Bell, looked to Chinese art to reinvigorate the western artistic tradition, through its significant form, emphasising the principal of 'rhythmic vitality' first developed by Xie He in fifth-century China.<sup>184</sup> Fry praised the plastic qualities of Chinese art objects, made by hand, in contrast to the machine-manufactured objects which increasingly dominated the material culture of the Western world.

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<sup>182</sup> Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism between the Wars* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1991). p.35

<sup>183</sup> Anne Veronica Witchard, *British Modernism and Chinoiserie*., 2015.

<sup>184</sup> See Clive Bell in Parfect, 'Roger Fry, Chinese Art and The Burlington Magazine'. p.56

The question of definition and terminology here requires further interrogation. When Fry speaks of Chinese art, which types of objects and mediums does he mean? On closer examination, most pictorial arts he reveres are brush paintings in traditional Chinese style; ceramics are overwhelmingly of an early date, in particular objects then thought to be Song wares (960-1279) - undecorated or with an abstracted motif - which highlighted the perceived individualism of the hand-made pot and the assumed role of the artist or potter. In Fry's view, these objects emphasised 'pure form' and were simultaneously 'modern' and ancient. As Craig Clunas observes, these objects were "'modern' without the destabilising connotations of the phrase 'modern-art,' a sort of non-threatening modernism", which appealed to the British upper-classes.<sup>185</sup> The terms 'modern', 'modernist' and 'modernism' therefore overlapped and were subject to a range of interpretations in a variety of fields, from art and aesthetics to literature or interior design. It is against this backdrop that the work of Basil Ionides should be understood and the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain set. Furthermore, it was during this period that the distinction between 'Chinese art' and 'Chinese export art' emerged, placing objects including those in the Basil Ionides Bequest outside the field of serious scholarship and cultural discourse championed by Roger Fry and his peers.<sup>186</sup>

### *Conclusions*

This brief reconstruction of the pre-marital lives of Basil and Nellie Ionides has shown that both individuals commanded considerable cultural capital in the first decades of their lives, as defined by Bourdieu and outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Setting aside their contrasting financial circumstances, the three pillars of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital can be usefully applied here. First, the embodied cultural capital of Basil Ionides constituted a complex mix of identities including his Anglo-Greek heritage and his sexuality. His family and early upbringing exposed Ionides to a diverse range of avant-garde beliefs towards art and aesthetics, in which Chinese porcelain played a significant role. From the lived experience of his formative years, one could say Ionides was 'primed' for a career in art or

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<sup>185</sup> Craig Clunas, 'A Collector and Expert', in *The Barlow Collection of Chinese Ceramics, Bronzes and Jades: An Introduction* (Brighton: University of Sussex, 1997), 3–11. p.5

<sup>186</sup> Vimalin Rujivacharakul, 'China and China: An Introduction to Materiality And A History of Collecting', in *Collecting China: The World, China, and a History of Collecting* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 15–28.

design, equipped with the critical skills to challenge aesthetic norms of the day and ultimately to be a collector of art objects. Basil Ionides accumulated institutionalised cultural capital early in his professional career, becoming first Licentiate (1931) and later Fellow (1938) of the RIBA, in recognition of his academic training and success in the field of architecture and interior design, further enhancing his claims to cultural competence and status.

In the absence of primary biographical sources, it was necessary to turn to published works written by Basil Ionides in the related fields of architecture and interior design in order to ascertain his professional approach towards the lived interior - in the utility of colour, light, texture and form - and the role of Chinese art objects, including Chinese ceramics within his design theorem. In his writing, Ionides does not indicate any interest in the Chinese origin of objects, emphasizing instead their utility as ornamental articles of decoration and display. On the collecting activities of Basil, the paucity of visual or textual evidence prevents any firm conclusions being made at this stage; the inventories of the dealer Sparks offer limited insights into objects purchased during the 1920's but these are small in number, as are those reproduced in publications in his name. However, from this small body of data, the acquisition of Canton Enamels suggests an underlying interest in Chinese export art, being similar in decorative style, technique and date to European style Chinese export porcelain at the centre of this thesis.

In contrast, the collecting practices of Nellie Ionides were by the 1920s well-developed and focused in key areas; European porcelains (principally Meissen), 'Battersea' Enamels and Chinese Porcelains of the Qing Dynasty, in particular of the Kangxi Period (1644-1722). Documentary evidence provided in the 1925 publication by Hobson allows us to securely identify individual objects in her collection and gain a firm sense of her personal taste. This is further supported by archival evidence from Sparks, which suggests a broader interest in Chinese art objects in a range of media. Her taste for objects overwhelmingly eighteenth-century in origin, firmly aligns her with fellow collectors at the highest levels of society, such as Queen Mary and Anthony de Rothschild, and with design commentators such as Margaret Jourdain who championed this style. Interestingly, the 1925 publication also featured 'serious' collectors more commonly associated with early Chinese ceramics, Stephen Winkworth and George Eumorfopoulos, suggesting that Qing ceramics still constituted a significant part of these collections at that time. That Nellie Ionides didn't follow the growing fashion towards collecting early or imperial Chinese ceramics is worthy of note, as she

certainly possessed the financial capital to do so. To what extent she persisted in this course of action will be pursued in the following chapter.

The family background of Nellie Ionides was crucial to her embodied cultural capital, her Jewish identity remaining important throughout her life.<sup>187</sup> The significant wealth of her family secured her access to the highest social circles and activities, such as collecting, which she indulged from an early age. Traditional associations between female collectors and Chinese porcelain has a long history, discussed elsewhere in this thesis, but was well established as the domain of wealthy industrialist men by the first decades of the twentieth century when Nellie Ionides was building up her own collection, much like members of her own family, who had achieved astonishing wealth through their own commercial endeavors. Her socio-cultural standing was further enhanced by her title, becoming first the Hon Nellie Levy and later Ionides.

This chapter has shown that each individual constituted a complex mix of identities, which undoubtedly informed their collecting choices prior to their marriage. Whilst neither claimed status through British aristocratic lineage, both commanded considerable cultural capital manifest in different ways, as demonstrated above. In the absence of further evidence, it is too early at this juncture to draw conclusions regarding their later collecting practices. The question of objectified cultural capital will be revisited in the following chapters in light of those events which led to the formation of the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain at the centre of this thesis.

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<sup>187</sup> Nellie Ionides frequently contributed to *The Jewish Chronicle* and was buried with her first husband, Marcus Levy, and their children according to Jewish tradition in the Jewish cemetery, North London.

## **PART I: THE IONIDES COLLECTION IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE**

### **CHAPTER TWO**

#### **Private Collecting and Display: The Buxted Park Project (1930-1950)**

In 1930, the newly married Basil Ionides and his wife, Nellie, purchased the Palladian mansion and country estate at Buxted Park, East Sussex. For the next two decades, the refurbishment of the house and the display of art objects within that setting would form the principal preoccupation of the couple and constitutes the primary focus of this chapter. The following case study of Buxted Park reconstructs the biography of the house, its interiors and contents, and in so doing facilitates a critical examination of Basil Ionides as designer and his ‘capacity to turn values, desires and aspirations into visual, material and spatial ideals and realities’.<sup>188</sup> The contemporary fashion for the Neo-Georgian materialized at Buxted will be juxtaposed with the historical display of Chinese porcelain and eighteenth-century interior design trends such as chinoiserie upon which it is based, highlighting the place of European style Chinese export porcelain within that context. Furthermore, this chapter will consider the extent to which the interiors at Buxted Park bear the imprint of the lives of the Ionides, as their primary home, and how their claims to status and class were enacted through the interior space and its contents.<sup>189</sup>

The relationship between collecting Chinese art objects, in particular European style Chinese export porcelain and Chinese export art, and the display of those objects in the private interiors of the eighteenth-century mansion house constitutes an important strand of this chapter, offering insights into the motivations and taste of the collector/designer and his wife. The detailed analysis of multiple display strategies utilized by Basil Ionides which follows, seeks to identify the variety of ways in which Chinese art objects were encountered, appreciated and understood in the private realm. From cased objects to articles of decoration, this chapter will consider the importance of location - be that China Room or Library, and placement - singly, grouped or hidden from view, in determining subject-object and object-object relationships and the agency of Chinese art objects through the lens of the English country house.

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<sup>188</sup> Penny Sparke, *The Modern Interior* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008). p.17.

<sup>189</sup> Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practise*. Bourdieu, *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.

This chapter introduces the first stage in the life of the European style Chinese export porcelain collection, later known as the Basil Ionides Bequest and the Nellie Ionides Bequest in the British national museums, firmly identifying individual objects from the photographic record for the first time, mapping the accumulation of objects at Buxted Park and the formation of the collection over this twenty year period. The display of objects in relation to other collected items throughout the lived interiors indicates how this category of Chinese porcelain related to the larger collections of European and Chinese art and to what extent it can be understood as an individual or joint project.

### *Early History: From Georgian Mansion to Victorian Country Estate*

The Grade II listed mansion house at Buxted Park, now a luxury hotel, was acquired by the Ionides shortly after their marriage in 1930.<sup>190</sup> The early history of the Buxted Park Estate is discussed by Christopher Hussey in his first feature on the property for *Country Life Magazine* in 1934, who cites the earliest owners as the de Marinis or Marynes, who had ‘complained in 1279 about somebody breaking into his park at Bocstede’.<sup>191</sup> Over the following centuries, the property passed in quick succession through numerous hands until its purchase by Thomas Medley in 1722, then over the age of seventy. His son, also Thomas Medley, shortly inherited the property and undertook the building of the early Georgian property completed around 1725, which concerns us here (Figs.2.1-2).<sup>192</sup> Surviving plans of the property and estate dating from 1798 illustrate the grand and stately nature of the house before later alterations were made.<sup>193</sup> As Christopher Hussey noted, ‘fate has denied the place

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<sup>190</sup> Listed 26 November 1953, British Listed Buildings ‘Buxted Park, Buxted, East Sussex’, accessed 22 May 2018, <https://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101353483-buxted-park-buxted>. The property is currently owned by Hand Picked Hotels.

<sup>191</sup> Christopher Hussey, ‘Buxted Park, Sussex - I The Residence of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Ionides’, *Country Life Magazine*, 21 April 1934. p.404. Other sources identify Buxted as part of the manor of Framfield, dating to 1199. “Felbridge & District History Group: Buxted Park,” accessed May 22, 2018, <http://www.felbridge.org.uk/index.php/publications/buxted-park/>.

<sup>192</sup> Medley married Annabella Dashwood, daughter of the Lord Mayor of London. The arms of Medley impaling Dashwood and Medley quartering Reynes of Coneyburrows appears in the hall over the east and west fireplace respectively. For more on the family history of the Medleys, see article in full by Christopher Hussey. Ibid. p.406

<sup>193</sup> ‘Views and Plans of the Estate of Sir George Shuckburgh Evenlyn, 1798’, East Sussex Record Office, The Keep, Brighton. BMWA/15/75a.

that continuity of life which would have given it the importance in the county for which it was obviously destined by its builders'.<sup>194</sup>

From the Medley family, the estate was inherited by the third Earl of Liverpool upon his marriage to Miss Medley-Shuckbrugh-Evelyn in 1810, and famously received notable dignitaries and royal guests including the Duchess of Kent and her daughter Victoria, both as Princess and Queen.<sup>195</sup> The property later passed to the Portman family whereupon it fell into gradual decline before its purchase by the Ionides following the death of the fourth Viscount Portman in 1929. According to the *Sussex Express and County Herald*, the property was saved a fortnight before its planned demolition at a time when 'the sale of the fittings of the mansion were being advertised'.<sup>196</sup> In the auction catalogue of Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March 1930, the 'Noble Georgian Style Mansion' is described as 'Eminently Suitable for a Country Club, School or Institution'.<sup>197</sup> The private purchase by the Ionides prevented such a fate befalling the property and the transformation of the country house and its grounds by the interior designer and his wife began shortly after.

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<sup>194</sup> Hussey, 'Buxted Park, Sussex - I The Residence of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Ionides', p. 404.

<sup>195</sup> Lord Liverpool was Prime Minister from 1812-1827. Considerable alterations were made to the house from 1810, including the demolition of stables and building of the portico and colonnade on the South side. Victoria was said to enjoy feeding fallow deer on the estate. 'Felbridge & District History Group : Buxted Park', accessed 22 May 2018, <http://www.felbridge.org.uk/index.php/publications/buxted-park/>.

<sup>196</sup> 'Sussex Mansion Destroyed by Fire: Valuable Art Treasures Saved', *Sussex Express and County Herald*, 9 February 1940.

<sup>197</sup> 'A Portion of the Buxted Park Estate, For Sale by Auction' (Sales Catalogue, The Keep, Brighton, 1930), East Sussex Record Office, FHG/ACC8293/1/4.





Fig. 2.1 Buxted Park – South Front, 1934. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]



Fig. 2.2 Two Storey Hall, 1934. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]

*The Ionides at Buxted: Restoration and 'Decoration': 1930-1940*

Following their marriage in 1930, the Ionides divided their time between town and country; whilst in London they resided at 49 Berkeley Square and Riverside House in Twickenham just outside the metropolitan centre.<sup>198</sup> The country estate at Buxted Park, East Sussex offered a spacious and relaxed environment in which they entertained an extensive social network of friends and family. Regular visitors included Margaret Jourdain and artists Philip Connard RA and Dame Laura Knight.<sup>199</sup> Queen Mary had known Nellie Ionides prior to her marriage and wrote on 31 March 1938:

‘I can’t tell you how I enjoyed yesterday afternoon and seeing all your beautiful things – I never thought that there could be any collection quite so lovely – and of so many things which I admire and appreciate.’

MS371 A3042/2/5/1 Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.

Surrounded by ancient woodland, parkland and gardens, the large house and grounds provided Basil Ionides with his most ambitious restoration project to date which would occupy much of the next twenty years.<sup>200</sup> The house was featured three times by *Country Life Magazine*, in each case authored by Christopher Hussey who charted the shifting fortunes of Buxted from its first ‘rehabilitation’ in 1934, to the period following its destruction by fire in 1940, and its final restoration, reviewed in 1950 shortly before Basil’s death.

In the first series of articles in 1934, Hussey observes that despite a fall in the price of such large country estates at the time, demand for grand mansion houses remained high amongst individuals seeking substantial properties to accommodate their significant collections of art, antiques and furniture. Mr. Ronald Tree, MP is cited in his purchase of Ditchley the previous year, famously refurbished by his American wife and interior designer Nancy Lancaster of

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<sup>198</sup> Jessel, ‘Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides - History and Connections with Twickenham’.

<sup>199</sup> For a full list of visitors, see Buxted Park Visitor Book, MS 371, A3042/2/5/6, Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.

<sup>200</sup> The parkland is now designated a site of scientific interest. Accessed 24 May 2018, <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1003493&SiteName=&countyCode=14&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAAarea=>.

Colefax and Fowler, who codified what later became known as ‘Country House Style’.<sup>201</sup> On the rise of interior designers during this period, Penny Sparke observes:

‘the creation of the modern interior required a controlling hand...it was the role of ‘design’, implemented by the occupants of the interiors themselves, by engineers, architects, space planners, upholsterers, interior decorators, or interior designers, among others, to play that determining role.’<sup>202</sup>

Basil Ionides was one such designer and the project at Buxted Park combined his considerable professional expertise and personal preoccupations. Architectural salvage from properties recently sold or dispersed was used extensively throughout the house, reflecting the increased availability of architectural and interior design features during this period as a direct by-product of the sale and destruction of the English country house. While some properties were modernised or found new owners, many more fell into disrepair or faced an irreversible fate.<sup>203</sup> John Harris estimates that nearly 700 properties were demolished between the wars.<sup>204</sup> Leading dealers in the trade in architectural salvage included Lenygon & Morant, White Allom & Co., Charles of London and Robersons of Knightsbridge, many of whom established salesrooms across the Atlantic to meet demand increasingly coming from those quarters.<sup>205</sup> The availability of architectural salvage made possible design schemes then being promoted by designers, including Basil Ionides, which revived and promoted a fashion for eighteenth century-style architectural interiors. Chinese porcelain had always occupied a prominent place within that context and would continue to do so, as evidenced at Buxted Park and discussed in full below.

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<sup>201</sup> For a detailed discussion of the Ditchley Park project, see Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars*. Pp. 155-172. Martin Wood, *Nancy Lancaster: English Country House Style* (London, 2005).

<sup>202</sup> Sparke, *The Modern Interior*. pp.16-17

<sup>203</sup> See Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*.

<sup>204</sup> John Harris, *Moving Rooms* (New Haven [Conn.] ; London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007). p.93

<sup>205</sup> Margaret Jourdain was first employed by the London based, Lenygon and Morant. In 1926, Robersons of Knightsbridge listed twenty clients including Edsel Ford in Detroit, William Randolph Hearst and Mrs. Childs Frick, daughter in law of art collector Henry Clay Frick. Harris. pp.255-256. Anna Wu discusses the fashion for eighteenth-century ‘colonial-revival’ style in America, which included the restoration of historic houses and stimulated the creation of period rooms in museums, such as the Powel House Parlor (originally from Philadelphia) which was sold to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1918. See Wu, ‘Chinese Wallpaper, Global Histories and Material Culture’.

*The Eighteenth-Century English Country House: Chinoiserie, the Chinese Room and Chinese Porcelain*

The rise of the English country house in the eighteenth century can be attributed in large part to the successful colonial enterprises of the British in Asia and the Americas, porcelain constituting one of the numerous global commodities, although not the most profitable one, in trading networks which then encircled the globe.<sup>206</sup> Despite its early beginnings, it was not until 1715 that the Honourable East India Company, as it was then known, was given permission by the Chinese to establish a ‘factory’ or hong on the Guangzhou (Canton) waterfront, from where the British would dominate trade over the following century.<sup>207</sup>

Back in Britain, the newly found wealth of returning East India Servants and the booming domestic economy which prospered as a result of global trade stimulated the building of town houses in the commercial hubs in London, Bristol and Plymouth and the spa towns of Bath, Buxton, Harrogate and elsewhere. The country estate was expanded and gentrified during this period, as professional architects and landscape gardeners fashioned the English countryside in a style suited to the leisurely pursuits of the landed aristocracy and newly wealthy classes.<sup>208</sup> Design elements of Chinese inspiration could be found in the exterior, in Chinese-style bridges, pavilions or summer houses in gardens, while interior design often combined objects of European and Chinese manufacture in a style later known as chinoiserie.<sup>209</sup>

Chinoiserie first gained popularity as a decorative style in architectural interiors, paintings and art objects in continental Europe from the first decades of the eighteenth century, before reaching its peak in Britain during the 1750s.<sup>210</sup> By that time, Chinese porcelain constituted one of an expanding range of products, manufactured in Jingdezhen and decorated in Guangzhou, catering to European tastes; hand-painted Chinese wallpaper and textiles, export

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<sup>206</sup> More than a million pieces of porcelain were imported by the EIC from the late seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. This number is dwarfed by the enormous quantities of tea, spices, and Indian cottons imported as part of the Company’s trade over the same period. See Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century Britain: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*. P.56

<sup>207</sup> Anthony Farrington, *Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia 1600-1834* (London: British Library, 2002).

<sup>208</sup> Finn and Smith, ‘The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857’.

<sup>209</sup> The term was first defined in an English dictionary of 1883, then meaning Chinese conduct, or a ‘notion’ of China. David Beevers, ed., *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain, 1650-1930* (Brighton [England]: Royal Pavilion & Museums, 2008).p.13

<sup>210</sup> Beevers. Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie*, 1st pbk. ed (London: Phaidon, 1993).

paintings, furniture, carvings and other luxury goods could all be purchased in the port city to furnish the fashionable British interior.<sup>211</sup> As we have seen, one of the earliest studies of this material, known by then as Chinese export art, was published in 1950 and written collaboratively by British Museum curator, Soame Jenyns and architectural historian Margaret Jourdain, whose personal and professional connections to the Ionides are introduced in Chapter 1.<sup>212</sup> Ionides objects are illustrated extensively throughout this publication, indicating both the breadth of their interest as collectors and the manner in which Ionides objects have been used to define this field.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Chinese Room constituted an essential component of the fashionable English country house and architectural drawings of Buxted dated to 1798 confirm that a Chinese room was originally situated on the first floor, in keeping with contemporary fashion and societal practice.<sup>213</sup> Traditionally the ladies' quarters, these rooms frequently combined imported objects of Chinese, Japanese, or Indian origin with furniture, fireplaces and mirrors produced in Britain in chinoiserie style after leading British designers such as William Chambers, William Halfpenny, Mathias Lock and Henry Copeland and Thomas Chippendale, all of whom published on the subject around this date.<sup>214</sup> Chinese wallpaper, frequently depicting exotic birds and flowers or the idealized landscapes of China, provided the decorative backdrop for these assembled objects, perpetuating the fantasy of China in the European mind.<sup>215</sup> Emile de Bruijn reminds us that although there was

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<sup>211</sup> Access to 'exotic' Chinese articles was often facilitated by individuals engaged by the East India Company. For example, Elizabeth Montague furnished the interior of her Chinese Room with the assistance of her brother, William Robinson, a captain in the East India Company, who visited China in 1748 and 1752. Stacey Sloboda, "Fashioning Bluestocking Conversation: Elizabeth Montagus Chinese Room," in *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Identities and Interiors* (England: Ashgate, 2010), 129–48.

<sup>212</sup> Jourdain and Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century*.

<sup>213</sup> That the room survived to this date is also worthy of note, many chinoiserie interiors having been removed and updated in the latest neo-classical style by the end of the century.

'Views and Plans of the Estate of Sir George Shuckburgh Evelyn 1798' (The Keep, Brighton, 1798), East Sussex Record Office, BMWA/15/75a.

<sup>214</sup> 'Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, etc.', 1757. 'New Designs with Rural Architecture in the Chinese Taste', 1752. 'A New Book of Ornaments in the Chinese Taste', 1752. 'The Gentleman and Cabinet Makers Director' was first published in 1754, subtitled, 'A large collection of the most Elegant and Useful Designs of Household Furniture in the Gothic, Chinese and Modern Taste'. It was reprinted in 1755 and reissued in 1762. pp.130-2. On the design books of John Stalker and George Parker (published in London and Oxford, 1688) and Jean-Antoine Fraise (published in Paris, 1735), their circulation and influence on professional and amateur craft production, see J. Bellemare, 'Design Books in the Chinese Taste: Marketing the Orient in England and France, 1688-1735', *Journal of Design History* 27, no. 1 (1 March 2014): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/ept032>.

<sup>215</sup> Surviving examples of Chinese wallpaper preserved in their original setting can be seen in Yorkshire at Nostell Priory, Temple Newsam and Harewood House, and in Devon at Saltram. Examples such as this are rare, most Chinese wallpaper having been removed when the chinoiserie style fell out of fashion.

a long tradition of bird and flower painting and landscape imagery within China, these subjects were only produced on wallpaper in response to European demand. ‘While to Europeans these panoramic wallpapers would have looked quintessentially Chinese, to a Chinese viewer they must have seemed a radical, perhaps even transgressive innovation’.<sup>216</sup> These two dominant decorative themes frequently traverse a range of media intended for export, creating a common visual language that was recognisably exotic; black and gold lacquer known in China as ‘yang qi’ or ‘foreign lacquer’, glass and mirror-painting, Canton enamels and porcelain decorated with enamels were all produced in this style in the region of Guangzhou and can be seen in the Chinese Room at Buxted Park (Fig.2.3a-b).

Clare Taylor notes the distinction during the eighteenth century between country house propriety and London fashion, where Chinese wallpapers were deemed appropriate for the public rooms on the main floor as well as the upstairs chambers.<sup>217</sup> In Ionides’ twentieth century scheme, the Chinese Room has been transferred to the more public space on the ground floor, where many more visitors to the house would encounter the chinoiserie interior he created - heightening the profile and status of this room, its décor and displayed contents - in keeping with the latest fashions.

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<sup>216</sup> Emile de Bruijn, ‘Emblems of China: The Prominence of Landscape and Bird-and-Flower Scenery in 18th Century Chinese Export Art’, *The Oriental Ceramic Society Newsletter* 27 (May 2019): 7–11. For more on Chinese wallpaper and the English country house, see Helen Clifford, ‘Chinese Wallpaper: From Canton to Country House’, in *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857* (UCL Press, 2018), 39–67. Emile de Bruijn, *Chinese Wallpaper in Britain and Ireland* (London: PWP, 2018). Anna Wu, “Chinese Wallpaper, Global Histories and Material Culture” (Ph.D., Royal College of Art, 2019).

<sup>217</sup> Clare Taylor, *The Design, Production and Reception of Eighteenth-Century Wallpaper in Britain*, *The Histories of Material Culture and Collecting, 1700-1950* (London New York: Routledge, 2018). Sloboda observes that the Chinese Room created by Elizabeth Montague for her London townhouse produced a new hybrid space in which ‘domestic, political and intellectual culture’ mingled. See Sloboda, ‘Fashioning Bluestocking Conversation: Elizabeth Montagu’s Chinese Room’. P.133



IN THE CHINESE ROOM

Fig. 2.3a (top), 2.3b (bottom): The Chinese Room, *Country Life Magazine*, 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1934. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].



In her critical reassessment of chinoiserie and decoration ‘in the Chinese Taste’, Stacey Sloboda observes that in the absence of a shared textual or pictorial language, decorative objects constituted an important site of contact between China and the West. Chinoiserie, as a decorative style, was ‘an especially powerful and resonant connective agent’, linking objects and the people who used them into a coherent (but artificial) system. The success of decorative objects as sites of cultural encounter was due to their ‘semiotic flexibility and marginal aesthetic position, being often relegated to bedrooms and private apartments, garden buildings, and other private or peripheral rooms in the house and linked rhetorically to feminine taste’.<sup>218</sup>

Associations between women and Chinese porcelain – as collectors and consumers – were well established by the eighteenth century and widely lampooned in contemporary pictorial and textual sources during the first half of the century.<sup>219</sup> In a separate study, Sloboda observes that, ‘the mythomorphic figure of the female china collector was certainly more a literary device than a description of actual collecting practices’.<sup>220</sup> The artificial separation between the fields of porcelain consumption – indiscriminate, compulsive and female – and porcelain collecting – rational, selective and male – stereotyped gendered behavior which was in reality more nuanced.<sup>221</sup> For example, Amanda Vickery has shown that a married woman’s purchases centered around every day consumables, including Chinese porcelain, whereas men were more likely to deal with major acquisitions.<sup>222</sup> In the male purchase of Chinese porcelain, this would include commissioning armorial dinner services and other special orders, such as those represented in the Ionides Collection. Stacey Pierson notes that women also occasionally commissioned armorial porcelain, citing a sauce tureen produced

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<sup>218</sup> Stacey Sloboda, ‘Surface Contact: Decoration in the Chinese Taste’, in *Qing Encounters: Artistic Exchanges between China and the West* (Getty Research Institute, 2015), 248–65. P.250. See also Stacey Sloboda, *Chinoiserie: Commerce and Critical Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Studies in Design (Manchester ; New York: Manchester University Press, 2014).

<sup>219</sup> On the role of female royal collectors in Habsburg Spain, see Cinta Krahe, *Chinese Porcelain in Habsburg Spain* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispanica, 2016). On Chinese porcelain collecting in the Dutch Republic, see Cordula Bischoff, ‘Women Collectors and the Rise of Porcelain’, *Chinese and Japanese Porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age*, 2014, 171–89. On eighteenth century collecting and gender in England, see Sloboda, ‘Porcelain Bodies: Gender, Acquisitiveness, and Taste in Eighteenth-Century England’. p.19

<sup>220</sup> Sloboda, ‘Porcelain Bodies: Gender, Acquisitiveness, and Taste in Eighteenth-Century England’. p.19

<sup>221</sup> Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Lorna Weatherill, “A Possession of Ones Own: Women and Consumer Behavior in England, 1600-1740,” *The Journal of British Studies* 25.2 (April 1986): 131–56.

<sup>222</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentlemen Daughter: Womens Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2003).



for the widowed Countess of Macclesfield.<sup>223</sup> Large and expensive luxury items such as punch bowls were produced for the sole purpose of male group activities, in this case drinking alcohol, and as such were active agents in the assertion of newly formed and pre-existing social hierarchies in an evolving and expanding social economy. In the commercial sphere, companies and businesses commissioned porcelain objects from China, such as a large mug in the Ionides Bequest produced for the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames, c.1760-70 (C.46-1951) (Appendix Fig.2b), indicating the continued monopoly of porcelain production by China. In contrast, smaller items bearing semi-erotic themes, including those in the Ionides collection, illustrate the production of specially commissioned porcelain objects intended exclusively for the male gaze.<sup>224</sup>

The historiography of chinoiserie as outlined above charts the rise and fall of this decorative movement, which once more gained popularity in 1920s Britain. Basil Ionides' first book on interior design of 1926, is often quoted in this context, in particular with regards to the use of dramatic colour combinations and decorative surface; red and black/glossy and matt/metallic.<sup>225</sup> Sarah Cheang cites the designs of Basil Ionides as the embodiment of the 'vibrant modernity of 1920s chinoiserie' and bold design elements and motifs of Chinese inspiration constitute an important aspect of his large commercial projects such as the Savoy Theatre, as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>226</sup> In contrast, the Chinese Room at Buxted Park is distinctly traditional in approach, closely mirroring its eighteenth-century predecessor, except for the striking inclusion of the large gilded Buddha – a statement piece which would never have been seen in an eighteenth century British interior but here adds a flavour of fashionable and exotic glamour (Fig.2.3b). In his earlier writings, Ionides stressed the importance of matching each decorative scheme to its setting, be that town/country or period building/modern apartment. This intention is fully realized at Buxted Park, not only in

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<sup>223</sup> Stacey Pierson, '10. Chinese Porcelain, the East India Company, and British Cultural Identity, 1600–1800', in *Picturing Commerce in and from the East Asian Maritime Circuits, 1550-1800*, 2018, 275–92, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048535446-012>.

<sup>224</sup> Erotic scenes usually appear on the interior or base of objects, such as snuff boxes or small dishes. In the Ionides Collection, see 'Perrette et le pot au lait', (C.84-1963) which depicts the young milk maid from the classical French poem by Jean de la Fontaine. On the reverse of the dish, she lifts her skirt to reveal her underwear. Further examples of a similar type can be seen in Luísa Vinhais and Jorge Welsh, eds., *Pocket Treasures. Snuff Boxes from Past Times*. (London: Jorge Welsh Books, 2019). pp.72-73.

<sup>225</sup> Ionides, *Colour and Interior Decoration*.

<sup>226</sup> Sarah Cheang, "Whats in a Chinese Room? 20th Century Chinoiserie, Modernity and Femininity," in *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain 1650-1930* (Brighton & Hove: The Royal Pavilion & Museums, 2008).p.78

the Chinese Room but also in his use of colour throughout the property. Ionides identifies each room first by colour and function, in accordance with eighteenth-century practice; the Yellow, Crimson and Blue Drawing Rooms are clear to see on the 1798 plans.<sup>227</sup>

According to Cheang, chinoiserie both, ‘served as a location for European excess and social transgression...but also provided a reassuring set of continuities referring back to the eighteenth century’, echoing views expressed by the Neo-Georgian Revivalists, discussed in Chapter 1.<sup>228</sup> During a period of profound political and social upheaval in the interwar years, the country house was itself an important site of cultural encounter, in which objects associated with Britain’s pre-industrial and colonial past spoke of a mythical bygone era in which British citizens prospered and enjoyed the fruits of successful enterprise and international trade. In reality, the future survival of the country house was itself called into question at this time, a subject which resonated with Basil Ionides as evidenced in his final Will which lays out his intentions for the preservation of the house and its contents and is discussed later in this chapter.

### *Collectible Object/Article of Display?*

By the eighteenth century, distinctions based upon age and rarity were important factors separating collectible objects from those in use. Anna Somers Cocks cites an episode in 1778 at Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire when Lady Dashwood invited her guests to identify one piece of porcelain ‘so much more superior to the others’ in her China Cabinet.<sup>229</sup> This incident indicates the selection and privileging of individual objects in her China Cabinet, from everyday use Chinese porcelain elsewhere in the house. A preference for ‘old china’ of the seventeenth century distinguished collectible porcelain from fashionable and newly acquired contemporary European or East India porcelains which became increasingly accessible to the growing middle-classes. Specially commissioned wares, of the type represented in the Ionides collection, were distinguished not by their age but their exclusivity,

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<sup>227</sup> Ceiling height is also recorded for every room, including those on the upper floors which otherwise remain unidentified, indicating the importance attached to this aspect of the property. ‘Views and Plans of the Estate of Sir George Shuckburgh Evelyn 1798’.

<sup>228</sup> Cheang, ‘Whats in a Chinese Room? 20th Century Chinoiserie, Modernity and Femininity.’ p.80

<sup>229</sup> Anna Somers Cocks, ‘The Nonfunctional Use of Ceramics in the English Country House During the Eighteenth Century’, *Studies in the History of Art* 25 (1989): 195–215. p.211

rarity, quality of manufacture, originality of design and hence high monetary value. As such, this category of porcelain became an essential marker of status in a society where class boundaries became increasingly blurred.

Chinese armorial services were an immediately visible signifier of social rank, whereby the landed aristocracy reaffirmed established notions of patrilineality and the newly rich sought respectability and access to polite society.<sup>230</sup> Research into returning East India Servants suggests an overwhelming desire to re-assimilate into British society, aggravated by the negative public persona of prominent individuals such as Robert Clive, and other ‘Indians’, as Britons who had recently lived in India were known.<sup>231</sup> In their study of eighteenth-century properties in Harley Street and Cavendish Square (London), financed through EIC trade, Richardson and Guillery note that despite access to objects from the East, the public apartments and reception areas were surprisingly devoid of references to Asia.<sup>232</sup> This would help to explain the preference for European style Chinese export porcelain, which emphasised connectivity to domestic fashion and taste rather than the ‘otherness’ signified by Chinese decoration. By this time, the production of Chinese armorial dinner services for British consumers exceeded all other European markets, expanding in scale and complexity as the century progressed and reflected shifting fashions towards dining ‘à la Français’, whereby a series of successive courses necessitated the appropriate tableware in the latest style.<sup>233</sup>

The decoration of Chinese porcelain reflected technological developments which facilitated a wider range of colours, applied over the glaze, and shifting fashions in private trade wares towards increasingly Europeanised designs. The predilection for European decoration, shapes and forms may at first appear curious, considering the rich decorative repertoire available

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<sup>230</sup> Kate Smith, ‘Manly Objects? Gendering Armorial Porcelain’, in *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857* (London: UCL Press, 2018), pp. 113–30.

<sup>231</sup> Social and political opposition to the unregulated excesses of representatives of the Company in India, publicly played out in the controversies of 1772-3, resulted in the establishment of the India Act of 1784, establishing parliamentary control over EIC affairs for the first time. For an overview of Clive’s life, career and collecting, see Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Conquest and Collecting in the East, 1750 - 1850* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006). pp.32-39.

<sup>232</sup> Harriet Richardson and Peter Guillery, ‘At Home in Cavendish Square and Harley Street: East India Company Impact on Eighteenth-Century Marylebone’ (The East India Company at Home, London, 2014).

<sup>233</sup> For detailed studies of armorial porcelain, see Howard, *Chinese Armorial Porcelain. Tudor-Craig, Armorial Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century*. Crisp, *Armorial China: A Catalogue of Chinese Porcelain with Coats of Arms*. On the evolution of dining, see Philippa Glanville and Hilary Young, eds., *Elegant Eating: Four Hundred Years of Dining in Style* (London : New York: V & A Publications ; Distributed in North America by Harry N. Abrams, 2002).

within China, but the consumption of Chinese porcelain does not reflect an interest in China or Chinese goods, as European style Chinese export porcelain confirms, but acted as a vehicle for designs rooted in the European tradition. The emphasis on exclusivity required that designs be up to date and individual; plates and dishes were exported in the largest quantities, being the easiest to pack and transport, while more complex forms presented greater difficulty and were commensurably costly. English manufacturers at Chelsea and Bow were quick to recognise this shortfall, specialising in sauce bowls and complex forms which were used in tandem with Chinese services.

The largest quantity of Chinese porcelain was traditionally to be found out of sight in the kitchens of the English country house, or dining areas of less elevated households, stored in bespoke cabinets ready for use.<sup>234</sup> As neither area of Buxted Park featured in the *Country Life Magazine* articles, it is not possible to assess which objects were kept in these areas by the Ionides, nor how they were stored or displayed. In the more public reception rooms of the eighteenth-century house, Chinese porcelain vessels or figurines were frequently displayed in pairs on console tables, as replicated at Buxted Park. From the seventeenth century, sets of vessels or garnitures first consisted of groupings of disparate objects, put together on arrival in Europe and presented as a set above the central mantelpiece. By the eighteenth-century, garnitures of five, seven or even nine vessels were commissioned in China for a deliberately coordinated display in a range of decorative styles.<sup>235</sup> Garnitures were enthusiastically collected by late nineteenth century collectors such as William Hesketh Lever (1851-1925) or George Salting (1835-1909) who represented an earlier 'British' taste but did not appeal to the Ionides as none are represented in the porcelain collection.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> In her study of the social function of the kitchen in the eighteenth-century, Steedman observes the absence of this 'Nowhere-place' in contemporary literature. See Carolyn Steedman, "No Body's Place: On Eighteenth-Century Kitchens," in *Biography, Identity and the Modern Interior* (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013), 11–22.

<sup>235</sup> Joshua Yiu observes a similar pattern of standardization in the production of Chinese wugong altar vessels over the past 500 years in China. The Chinese display of five vessels, consisting of two vases, two candlesticks and one censer may have influenced the displays which became so popular in European interiors. See Chun-chong Joshua Yiu, 'The Display of Fragrant Offerings: Altar Sets in China' (Ph.D., England, University of Oxford (United Kingdom), 2006), <https://search.proquest.com/pqdtthss/docview/301646219/abstract/7BD0BB5492D54107PQ/1>. For more on the history of garnitures in Britain, see Patricia F. Ferguson, *Garnitures: Vase Sets from National Trust Houses* (South Kensington, London: V&A Publishing, 2016).

<sup>236</sup> Lever's collection consisted of predominantly seventeenth century Chinese porcelain. Yupin Chung, 'Lord Leverhulme and Chinese Art', *Palace Museum Monthly* 311 (2008). Yupin Chung, 'Victorian Taste: Lord Leverhulme and His Collection', *Collection & Auction* 6 (October 2008). Salting's expansive collection incorporates a wider range of material including seventeenth and eighteenth century porcelain. Victoria and Albert Museum, *The Salting Collection*. C.H. Read, 'George Salting', *Burlington Magazine*, February 1910.

The collection of ‘Chinese china with European subjects’ at Buxted Park is first mentioned by Hussey in 1934, but no individual items are singled out for special attention and cannot be firmly identified at this stage.<sup>237</sup> Other categories of Chinese art objects can however be observed in the photographic record, such as the large gilded Buddha introduced earlier, first seen in the ‘Pink Room’ at Howbridge Hall (Fig. 1.1 1a-b) and displayed in the Chinese Room (Fig.2.3b). The description and photograph of the Pink Bedroom (Fig.2.4) is also worthy of note:

‘On the walls, which are cream, glass pictures of Chinese life form a bold pattern which, about the yellow and white marble chimneypiece, is carried on by ‘blue john’ obelisks, cameo miniatures and Oriental enamel vessels. The arrangement of the latter group is especially happy...’<sup>238</sup>

It is likely that the glass pictures mentioned here are examples reverse paintings on glass, produced in Guangzhou from the eighteenth-century for export to the markets of Europe and America.<sup>239</sup> Unlike Chinese export watercolours of the same period which typically depict idealized scenes of life in China, glass paintings frequently reference European pictorial traditions and techniques, both in their material composition, utilizing oils or colours mixed with gum on a glass base, and the visual realization of European subjects in Western style.<sup>240</sup> One such example from the Ionides collection was reproduced in Jenyns and Jordain’s 1950 publication mentioned above.

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Konstanze Amelie Knittler, “Motivations and Patterns of Collecting: George Salting, William G. Gulland and William Lever as Collectors of Chinese Porcelain” (Ph.D., University of Glasgow, 2011).

<sup>237</sup> At this point, no indication is given whether the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain is associated with Basil Ionides or his wife. Christopher Hussey, ‘Buxted Park, Sussex - II. The Residence of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs Ionides’, *Country Life Magazine*, 28 April 1934. p.432

<sup>238</sup> Hussey. p.436.

<sup>239</sup> First developed in Europe, the technique was skilfully practised by craftsmen in Guangzhou by the early eighteenth-century, who had learnt to produce sheet glass from French experts in 1699. For more on this technique and the production of glass in China, see Emily Byrne. Curtis, *Glass Exchange between Europe and China, 1550-1800: Diplomatic, Mercantile and Technological Interactions*, Transculturalisms, 1400-1700 (Farnham, England ; Ashgate, 2009).

<sup>240</sup> Clunas, *Chinese Export Art and Design*.



Fig. 2.4 The Pink Bedroom, *Country Life Magazine*, 28<sup>th</sup> April 1934. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

The bracketed display of Chinese vessels mounted above and around the fireplace is of particular interest and whilst difficult to identify individual objects with certainty, three ewers seen here are striking for their profile. Originating from Near-Eastern metalware, Chinese vessels of porcelain and cloisonné of this shape began to arrive in Europe during the seventeenth century.<sup>241</sup> Identified here as ‘Oriental enamel’, this terminology may refer to Chinese cloisonné or to enamels on copper, namely Canton enamels.<sup>242</sup> Basil Ionides collected Canton enamels prior to his marriage, as evidenced in the Sparks archive (See Ch.1), and Nellie Ionides purchased a ‘Glass Painting’, formerly in the S.D.Winkworth Collection, on 28 April 1933, which may be one of those featured in this photograph.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>241</sup> Jessica Harrison-Hall, *Catalogue of Late Yuan and Ming Ceramics in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 2001). p.221

<sup>242</sup> For more details of Canton Enamels, see Ch.1.

<sup>243</sup> Lot 661, Sale of Stephen D. Winkworth, 25-28 April 1933, Sotheby’s Sales Catalogue. For details of purchase, see Day Book, April 1933, p.216, File 6, John Sparks Ltd. Archive, SOAS Archives and Special Collections, SOAS University Library.

Basil Ionides was not alone in utilising Chinese art objects for the purpose of interior design during this period; the decorators Lenygon and Morant, purchased a ‘Pair of Galloping Kylins’ (1934) and a ‘Large Ancestor [sic] Portrait of Lady Y Tung’ (1937) amongst other items from the dealer Sparks to furnish the homes of their wealthy clients.<sup>244</sup> In recreating eighteenth century historic interiors then fashionable amongst the aristocratic elite, Chinese art objects constituted an integral design component. Not only were Qing dynasty (1644-1911) art objects employed in this manner, early Chinese ceramics - which had by the 1930s become more numerous and available on the London art market - were also visible as decorative ornament in the private interior. For example, Tang Dynasty figurines and horses can be seen arranged over the mantelpiece in the 1933 painting of Warbrook Hall by W.B.E Rankin (Fig.2.5), whose professional association with Ionides was discussed in Chapter 1. At a later date, in his introduction to the OCS exhibition of Chinese Celadons in 1947, the collector Arthur Hetherington (1881-1960) remarked that ‘as receptacles for fruit on the dining table, for the display of flowers or for growing bulbs, and for adding distinction to a room containing old furniture, the celadons have no equal’.<sup>245</sup> These examples illustrate the treatment of early Chinese ceramics as articles of use and display, in contrast to the scholarly approach to this category of wares so frequently emphasized in specialist ceramic literature.

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<sup>244</sup> The first purchase is recorded on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1934, for the sum of £20. On the same day, Mrs. Basil Ionides purchased a ‘Pair of Yung Cheng porc. Rabbits’ for £45. Day Book, September 1934, p.376. The second purchase appears on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1937, for £75. Also acquired a ‘Celadon Bowl with stand, Ming’ for £18. Day Book, February 1937, p.189, John Sparks Ltd. Archive, SOAS Archives and Special Collections, SOAS University Library.

<sup>245</sup> ‘TOCS-1946-1947-Volume-22.Pdf’, accessed 19 June 2018, <http://ocs-london.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/TOCS-1946-1947-Volume-22.pdf>.





Fig. 2.5 'Hall at Warbrook', oils on canvas, by W.B.E. Ranken, 1933, FA0134, Worcester City Museums.  
[Image: <https://www.artuk.org/discover/artworks/hall-at-warbrook-52679>]



*Destruction and 'Rehabilitation' at Buxted Park: 1940-1950*

Buxted Park was featured a second time in *Country Life Magazine* on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 1940, this time titled 'Memories of Buxted: Art Treasures lost in the recent fire'. The fire in question took place earlier that month, starting on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February and taking two days to finally extinguish. According to the *Sussex Express & County Herald*, the fire started in a chimney and rapidly spread through the roof, eventually destroying the upper level of the house in its entirety and gutting the lower floor.<sup>246</sup> Due to the efforts of the Uckfield Fire Brigade, the fire was confined to the central portion of the mansion house, sparing the kitchen, stables and outer buildings including a wing which during wartime had been taken over by the Royal Society of Arts.<sup>247</sup>

Only recently, the threat of bomb damage had motivated the Ionides to move many valuable art objects from their London residences in Berkeley Square and Twickenham to Buxted in the mistaken belief they would be safer there.<sup>248</sup> Two notable paintings by Johann Zoffany (1773-1810) were destroyed in the fire, along with numerous lesser artworks as more valuable objects were prioritised in the salvage operation.<sup>249</sup> In the course of the fire, troops were placed around the property to prevent looting and a press ban enforced, indicating the severity of the event. Remarkably, Hussey notes that Mrs. Ionides' 'famous collection of Battersea enamels' and 'Mr. Ionides' collections of clocks and of Chinese porcelain made for the European market – the latter a no less unique contribution to connoisseurship' were saved. This is the first time that Hussey distinguishes between the two collectors and their respective interests. His remarks concerning Mr. Ionides and his collection of 'Chinese porcelain made for the European market' are particularly useful, offering the first affirmation that this interest was his alone. Furthermore, after ten years of marriage it seems that this portion of the collection was considered significant, suggesting that many objects were purchased between 1930 and 1940.

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<sup>246</sup> 'Sussex Mansion Destroyed by Fire: Valuable Art Treasures Saved'.

<sup>247</sup> The records of the Royal Society of Arts survived unscathed. Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> The house at 49 Berkeley Square received a direct hit at the end of war on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1945. Letter from Baroness Orczy, A3042/2/5/4, Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.

<sup>249</sup> 'The Drummund Family at Cadland' and 'The Rev. W. Hunloke and his Wife', (nd.) both by Zoffany (1773-1810). Christopher Hussey, 'Memories of Buxted. Art Treasures Lost in the Recent Fire', *Country Life*, 24 February 1940. p.191

Whilst most of the valuable art objects were saved, the carefully designed and arranged interiors were destroyed, including furniture and fittings, textiles and wallpaper, carpets and rugs. It is the loss of these ‘cleverly selected *ensembles*’ which Hussey bemoans, and which marked out Buxted Park as ‘an exceptionally interesting and attractive home rather than a collection of valuable pieces’.<sup>250</sup> The Neo-Georgian style first showcased at Buxted in the early 1930s had by this date become an established and popular interior design trend, widely known as ‘Country House Style,’ as noted above.<sup>251</sup>

News of the fire rapidly reached beyond Buxted to family and friends, including Queen Mary who sent a telegram to Nellie Ionides the following day:

4 Feb 1940

Dear Mrs Ionides

I am much distressed to read in the papers of the terrible fire at Buxted and feel deeply for you both at this catastrophe. I fear you have lost much, if not everything you loved, and what has happened to Mr Ionides’ lovely collection of porcelain – to think that that beautiful house is spoilt is a real grief to me after all the trouble you had both taken in making it so perfect and filled with such lovely things. I have such pleasant recollections of several visits there. When you have time do send me a line to say what has been saved, and how much of the house remains for I am anxious to know –

With all my sympathy  
Believe me  
Yours very sincerely  
Mary R

MS371 A3042/2/5/2(1), Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton

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<sup>250</sup> Hussey. Ibid. p.191

<sup>251</sup> Hussey observed, ‘At the time this revival of the Regency fashion for draperies was quite new, and its success is attested by the popularity that the style has since obtained.’ Ibid. p. 192

Later that month, her son King George VI wrote to Nellie Ionides in a similar manner:

Buckingham Palace Feb 17 1940

Dear Mrs Ionides

I have been meaning to write for ages to tell you how terribly sorry I was to hear of the disastrous fire – How awful for you – and I know how you must feel about it – and just when you had moved all the things down from London – I only hope the china was saved and the enamels, tho I hear both the Zoffanys are lost – I am so very sorry for you – with your wonderful and irreplaceable collection. How unlucky and I suppose due to the frost – the pipes were burst and you couldn't get any water- I wonder where you will live now on if some part of the house is left –

With again many regrets  
Yours v. sincerely  
George

MS371 A3042/2/5/1, Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton, Accessed 14 September 2015

The ambitious restoration project undertaken by the Ionides following the fire is explained in full by Christopher Hussey who published his final survey of Buxted Park over three features in August 1950, one month before Basil Ionides' death on 23 September.<sup>252</sup> In spite of continual interruptions and the war-time activities of its owners, the reconstruction of the house was achieved almost exclusively with existing or salvaged materials.<sup>253</sup> The restoration project took seven years to complete and radically altered the structure and orientation of the house, now with a flat roof and single storey. In the early years of the reconstruction, King George wrote to the Ionides stating, 'I would very much like to see what you have done to the house' (March 23, 1942).<sup>254</sup> Following his visit four years later he praised the near-complete design scheme:

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<sup>252</sup> The timing of the fire, being early in the War, allowed Ionides to gain the support of the Ministry of Health, then in charge of building, to provide work for otherwise unemployed builders in the local neighbourhood. Christopher Hussey, 'Buxted Park, Sussex-I. The Home of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs Basil Ionides', *Country Life*, 4 August 1950.

<sup>253</sup> Toby Jessel noted that his grandmother was extremely patriotic, purchasing a bomber during the War for the nation, for £20,000. Jessel, 'Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides - History and Connections with Twickenham' p.6.

<sup>254</sup> MS371, A3042/2/5/1 Letters, Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton

‘You cannot think how much I enjoyed our afternoon with you both in your beautifully reconstructed house, looking at all the lovely things in those decorated rooms arranged with such perfect taste – by you both, a marvelous and inspiring combination. Everything was a joy.’

Letter from King George VI, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1946, A3042/2/5/2 Part 2, Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.

The mansion house was now entered through a new side entrance and doorway. Once the servants’ quarters, the New Entrance Hall (Fig.2.6) was decorated in a blue and white colour scheme, the Chinese style accentuated by Dehua white porcelain figurines placed over the mantelpiece and a large blue carpet depicting a Chinese monk flanked by a tiger.<sup>255</sup> Along one wall and displayed in an original six-light cupboard, ‘Mr.Ionides’ collection of Sino-European porcelain’ can be seen and if closely observed, it is possible to identify individual objects now in the V&A collection, such as ‘Jug in the shape of a seated man’ (Fig.2.7) and a series of enameled punch bowls.<sup>256</sup> This photograph provides the most reliable visual record of the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain before its dispersal following Basil’s death shortly afterwards. Whilst not all the pieces in the bequest originate from this location, this cabinet appears to house the largest portion of the collection.

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<sup>255</sup> Hussey identifies this carpet as 18<sup>th</sup> century but this is unlikely. Carpets with large figural subjects, particularly that of a monk, would not have appealed to the Chinese domestic market and would therefore be manufactured explicitly for export to Europe or America. See Elizabeth LaCouture, ‘Inventing the “Foreignized” Chinese Carpet in Treaty-Port Tianjin, China’, *Journal of Design History* 30, no. 3 (1 September 2017): 300–314, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epw042>.

<sup>256</sup> This is the first time Hussey uses the term Sino-European to identify Basil’s collection, seen displayed in an eighteenth-century display cabinet originating from Basildon, Reading, designed by Carr of York. Hussey, ‘Buxted Park, Sussex-I. The Home of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs Basil Ionides’. p.376.



Fig. 2.6 The New Entrance Hall with display cabinets, 1950. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]



Fig. 2.7 Jug in the form of a figure, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels, made in Jingdezhen, decorated in Guangzhou, China, c.1760-80. Height: 33cm, C.6-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].



Fig. 2.8 In the Saloon, concealed display of Chinese ivories and other carvings, 1950. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]



Fig. 2.9 Concealed Display cabinet in the Library, 1950. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]



Fig. 2.10 Cup and saucer, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding, Jingdezhen, China, c.1740. CIRC.148&A-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].



Elsewhere in the house, Ionides created bespoke display cases including ‘dummy’ cabinets behind concealed doors in the Library (Fig.2.9) and Saloon (Fig.2.8) on the ground floor. In the Saloon, white ivory figurines, boxes and other small carvings are displayed in a Chinese-style shelving unit of black and gold lacquer in contrast to the horizontal shelving in the Library which is arranged according to familiar European conventions. Groups of Ionides porcelains, now in the V&A collection, can here be clearly identified, including a large group of plates, cups, jugs and other items decorated with ‘The Trumpeter’ motif which originally formed part of a tea set (Fig.2.10). Other recognizable designs include a semi-erotic reclining nude and Harlequin ‘peeping Tom’, and a monk attempting to embrace a young woman.<sup>257</sup> The display of these objects in this secret cabinet is in keeping with eighteenth century mores which restricted objects of this nature from public view. On the bottom shelf, larger items include two large and two small boars head tureen which originally provided a visual focal point for diners.<sup>258</sup>

The first floor of the house underwent considerable reconstruction at this time. Where the two-storey hall originally stood (Fig.2.2), a new China Room was created (Fig.2.11) which housed an extensive collection of predominantly Kangxi Period (1662-1722) porcelains. This room acted as the approach to and setting for the Cabinet (Fig.2.12), in which Nellie’s collection of Battersea Enamels were ‘enshrined’ and Hussey asserts constitute ‘the heart and motive of the whole’.<sup>259</sup> The arrangement of this series of rooms in the female quarters on the upper floors of the house is reminiscent of the organization and display of Chinese porcelain in some of the earliest European collections, as discussed by Canepa and Bischoff, and later eighteenth century counterparts.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> V&A: C.74-1963. CIRC.44&A 1963 and CIRC.143-1963.

<sup>258</sup> V&A: C.16-1951.

<sup>259</sup> Christopher Hussey, ‘Buxted Park, Sussex - III. The Home of Mr and the Hon. Mrs Basil Ionides’, *Country Life*, 18 August 1950. pp. 521-522.

<sup>260</sup> Canepa, *Silk, Porcelain and Lacquer*. Bischoff, ‘Women Collectors and the Rise of Porcelain’.





Fig. 2.11 The China Room, 1950. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]



Fig. 2.12 The Cabinet, 1950. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]

Formerly housed in their London residence in Berkeley Square, the ‘museum-style’ display created by Ionides at Buxted bears close similarity to his earlier design (Fig.1.16). The ingenuity with which Ionides created the Cabinet to house and display this rare collection is praised by Hussey, and the juxtaposition between the China room and the Cabinet makes clear the connection between these two areas of interest.<sup>261</sup> Nellie Ionides was a well-known authority on Battersea Enamels by this date, and her collection of predominantly Kangxi porcelains had been published as early as 1925 (See Ch.1), making clear her interest in this field.<sup>262</sup> On close inspection, many of the decorative themes popular on Battersea Enamels – portraits, picturesque landscapes and armorial devices – share similar design sources to European style Chinese export porcelain, suggesting an overlapping of interests between the couple. Furthermore, technological similarities between Battersea Enamels and Canton Enamels, collected by Basil prior to his marriage and discussed in Chapter 1, indicate an additional field in which the independent interests of each collector were closely related.<sup>263</sup>

European style Chinese export porcelain is once more encountered in the Chinese Room, which remains in the same location as prior to the fire (Fig.2.13a-c). Once decorated with hand-painted Chinese wallpaper, since lost, the room retains an eighteenth century chinoiserie aesthetic with pale green walls embellished with chinoiserie reproduction overdoors, curtain pelmets of Chinese silk and black latticework lacquer chairs, as featured in 1934. New additions include doors from Queensbury House, Richmond and the chimney piece from Clumber Hall, Nottinghamshire. The over-mantle from Stowe incorporates a Chinese painting above a mirror, in a similar manner to that seen earlier at Howbridge Hall (Fig.1.a-b). Chinese paintings of daily life, also produced for export markets, flank the doorway leading to the adjacent Boudoir and may have been transferred from the Pink Bedroom following the fire.<sup>264</sup> Clocks on the mantelpiece are identified by Hussey as the work of the eighteenth-century English maker, James Cox (d.ca 1791), who famously

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<sup>261</sup> The collector Charlotte Schreiber also shared an interest in porcelain and enamels, which were originally displayed in abutting galleries at the V&A. Personal correspondence with Michael Archer, formerly curator in Department of Ceramics, V&A, 2016.

<sup>262</sup> Levy, ‘What to Avoid in “Battersea Enamels”’. Some Hints by the Hon.Mrs Levy’.

Hobson, *The Later Ceramic Wares of China, Being the Blue and White, Famille Verte, Famille Rose, Monochromes, Etc., of the Kang Hsi, Yung Cheng, Chien Lung and Other Periods of the Ching Dynasty.*

<sup>263</sup> Eighteenth century Canton enamels decorated in European style were mistakenly identified as English Enamels on arrival at the V&A. See V&A: 4902-1901.

<sup>264</sup> Basil Ionides relocated objects salvaged from the fire to other rooms in the house during the refurbishment. These paintings are of a similar type to those seen earlier in the Pink Bedroom (Fig. 5).

supplied clocks to the Chinese court, collected by Basil Ionides.<sup>265</sup> The design of these clocks, combining decorative elements of Chinese and European origin on a single object, share some similarities with Chinese export art, but were in contrast intended for Chinese court consumption.

Elsewhere in the room, Chinese objects are displayed in newly acquired black and gold pagoda-cabinets, including Chinese porcelain which later passed to the V&A. Of particular interest to this study are two pairs of rare figurines, photographed on console tables flanking the large doorway from Felix Hall which opens towards the hall (2.13b). The large enameled figures of ‘Jewish Women’ (left, Fig.2.14) and ‘Dancing Ladies’ (right, Fig.2.15) are here displayed in pairs but were not originally intended to be viewed as such.<sup>266</sup> A male Jewish figure was also produced, possibly as a companion to the female figure, but no male dancing partner has ever been found, suggesting this figurine was originally intended to be displayed singly.<sup>267</sup> In 1963, following the death of Nellie Ionides, one example of each figurine passed to the V&A and the British Museum where they are prominently displayed today (Figs.C.1 and C.5).<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> James Cox initially produced complex and elaborate time pieces and automata popular at court during the Qianlong reign (1736-95). By the early 1780s the firm had established a workshop in Guangzhou and produced on an increasingly large scale. For more on Cox, see Catherine Pagani, *Eastern Magnificence & European Ingenuity: Clocks of Late Imperial China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

<sup>266</sup> These figures are exceptionally rare and Howard suggests may have formed part of a small, single consignment. See David Sanctuary Howard, *The Choice of the Private Trader: The Private Market in Chinese Export Porcelain Illustrated from the Hodroff Collection* (London: Zwemmer, 1994). A close print source first identifying the Jewish costumed figure was discovered in 2008, see Ronald W. Fuchs, ‘European Subjects on Chinese Porcelain’, *TOCS* 72 (2008): 35–41. For a recent catalogue entry, see Harrison-Hall in Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp.140-141. The precise print source for the dancing figure has yet to be firmly identified, but examples of a similar type depict women of Turkish origin. See Mengoni in Lu. pp.142-3

<sup>267</sup> Twentieth century collectors and dealers paired the male and female Jewish figurines, examples of which can now be seen in the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem and the Winterthur Museum, Delaware.

<sup>268</sup> V&A: C.94-1963 and C.95-1963. BM: 1963,0422.11 and 1963,0422.10.



Fig. 2.13a The Chinese Room, 1950. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]



Fig. 2.13b The Chinese Room 1950. Doorway to the Hall. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]



Fig. 2.14 Figure of woman in Jewish costume, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding, made in Jingdezhen, China, c,1730-45. Height: 42.3cm, C.94-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].





Fig. 2.15 Figure of dancing woman in Turkish dress, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding, made in Jingdezhen, China, c.1730-45. Height: 44.5cm; width 24.9cm, C.95-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

In the remodeling of Buxted Park following the fire of 1940, Ionides radically altered the earlier floorplan, repurposing rooms to support new functions on both the upper and lower floors. Some rooms remained in the same location, such as the Chinese Room which retained the spirit of its earlier chinoiserie incarnation, following historical traditions established in the eighteenth century discussed earlier. The New Entrance Hall had no such historical precedent and demonstrates Ionides' ability to adapt aesthetic fashions of the past to suit their present purpose. The blue and white colour scheme had long been synonymous with Chinese porcelain in the West, constituting a recurrent trope in interior design from sixteenth century Portugal to seventeenth century Holland. This colour scheme may have resonated for Ionides on a number of levels, referencing the late Victorian 'Chinamania' of his youth, if not directly to his own personal memories and experience, then to the design history which was well known. In contrast, blue and white porcelain represents a small proportion of the Ionides collection visible in the display cabinets, which is dominated by porcelain decorated in polychrome enamels. In this room and elsewhere in the property, Ionides demonstrates his ability to draw upon a range of interior design styles of the past and blend them with his own design idiom in order to furnish the home where he lived with his wife.

In the final feature for *Country Life Magazine* on August 18, 1950, Hussey praises the Ionides as 'hybridisers of genius' or to use the French term, 'ensemblers', in their selection of 'choice objects' and the positioning and display of art objects within the larger design scheme. The 'Art of Synthesis' is described by Hussey in the following terms:

'The relationships of things, shapes, colours and ideas to one another and to their setting are seen to be capable of building up in the observer a state of mind similar to that produced by a work of imaginative art.'<sup>269</sup>

The significance of spatial and conceptual relationships between Chinese art objects and in particular Chinese export art within the lived interior is central to this discussion and will be returned to later in this chapter.

In conclusion, Hussey notes that the entire house is in fact synthetic' – none of the portraits represent family members nor do the contents connect historically with the current occupants. All of the objects have been collected by the Ionides in their lifetime and as such embody

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<sup>269</sup> Hussey, 'Buxted Park, Sussex - III. The Home of Mr and the Hon. Mrs Basil Ionides'. pp. 518-519

their own taste, rather than that passed down to them. On collecting, Elsner and Cardinal observe that ‘Taste, the collectors taste, is the mirror of the self,’ and by extension ‘As one becomes conscious of one’s self, one becomes a conscious collector of identity, projecting ones being onto the objects one chooses to live with’.<sup>270</sup> The eighteenth century interiors created by Basil Ionides at Buxted Park and the Chinese art objects he selected to occupy the interior space embodied his distinctive personal taste and that of his wife.

### *The Death of Basil Ionides*

The death of Basil Ionides on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1950 at 7 Wilbury Road, Hove, came as a shock to those who knew the couple, suggesting he outwardly appeared to be in good health.<sup>271</sup> Collins Baker, Surveyor of the Kings’ Pictures, refers to the ‘great and sudden loss of Basil’ in his letter to Nellie Ionides and this sentiment is echoed by Queen Mary and other members of the Royal Family.<sup>272</sup>

Kensington Palace

11.10 1950

My dear Mrs Ionides

I did not like to intrude upon your grief at once, but I cannot let the days go by without telling you of my husbands and my deep sympathy in your great loss – you and your husband were always so charming and hospitable to us when we visited you with Queen Mary, and one realized what wonderful companions you two were and so happy in your joint love for and understanding of all the things that make a home gracious and beautiful. We do indeed grieve with you dear Mrs Ionides and pray that in time a measure of comfort will be yours and courage to carry on as one must alas alone –

Yours very sincerely

Mary

[Princess Mary, daughter of Queen Mary]

MS371, A3042/2/5/1, Anglo- Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.

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<sup>270</sup> J Elsner and R Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1994). p.2

<sup>271</sup> It has not been possible to identify the exact circumstances of his death at the time of writing.

<sup>272</sup> See MS371, A3042/2/5/3. Letter from Queen Mary to Nellie Ionides, 19 November 1950. MS371, A3042/2/5/1 Letters. Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.



Basil Ionides made clear his intentions for his collections – in particular his ‘Familie Rose China with European decoration’ – and the Buxted Park estate and its contents in his Will, dated 8 November 1946.<sup>273</sup> The bequest of his collection of Chinese porcelain to the V&A will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 but his stated intentions for Buxted Park are here of particular interest. Ionides stipulated that if his wife should succeed him, the estate be placed in trust for the duration of her life or be disposed of at an earlier date should she wish to do so. The Buxted Park estate should in the first instance be offered to the National Trust ‘with as little delay as is reasonably practical’. If the National Trust subsequently acquired the property, this must extend to the estate in its entirety, including out-houses, stables and other lesser buildings, and crucially to include the interior of the mansion house, with all its fittings and fixtures.<sup>274</sup> The National Trust must ‘take all necessary steps by resolution or otherwise to ensure that Buxted Park shall be held by the National Trust for the benefit of the nation and shall be inalienable’.<sup>275</sup> By this date, the National Trust had finally begun to receive the government support it had long been seeking.<sup>276</sup> The V&A, under Leigh Ashton, were also keen to acquire complete houses with contents as satellite museums and collaborated with the National Trust at Ham House (1948) and Osterley Park House (1949) in order to preserve the historic houses and their interiors, facilitating the study of decorative arts in an authentic historical context.<sup>277</sup> It is possible that Basil Ionides had a similar vision for his collection of European style Chinese export porcelain at Buxted Park.

Nellie Ionides outlived her second husband by twelve years, living at Buxted Park until her death on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1962. In her Will, made earlier that year on 21<sup>st</sup> June, no mention is made of the possible acquisition of the estate by the National Trust, rather that it should constitute part of a private sale. In a similar manner, the separate sale of the contents of the

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<sup>273</sup> A short Codicil was added on 2 March 1950, principally concerning his Collection of Old Poodle Prints and Drawings, and the selection of personal articles by the daughters of Nellie’s first marriage. p.10. Last Will and Testament, Basil Ionides Esq., accessed 10/10/2015.

<sup>274</sup> The National Trust was particularly selective during this period, acquiring a number of ‘first class’ houses such as Ham House and Cotehele in Cornwall. Nellie’s brother, Walter Samuel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Bearsted, bequeathed Upton House (Warwickshire) and his extensive art collection to the National Trust in 1948.

<sup>275</sup> Last Will and Testament, Basil Ionides, p.5.

<sup>276</sup> For a full discussion of the National Trust in the immediate post-war period, see ‘Ch.8. The Country House and the Welfare State’, in Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*.

<sup>277</sup> V&A objects continue to be displayed at Ham House today.

For a discussion of this episode of V&A history, see Anthony Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1999). p.209.

house is made clear. The bequest of Riverside House and Orleans House to the Twickenham Corporation is separately detailed.<sup>278</sup>

The ownership of Buxted Park over the past fifty years has witnessed its transformation from private house to luxury hotel, reflecting wider trends in the evolution of the English country house. The first occupants to succeed the Ionides were Heather and Kenneth Shipman, owners of Twickenham Film Studios, who entertained celebrity friends including Gregory Peck, Marlon Brando and Dudley Moore. Lady Churchill as well as members of the Danish Royal family were also guests and in 1966 the property was opened as a spa. In 1971, Sheik Ziad Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, ruler of Abu Dhabi, purchased Buxted but visited infrequently until 1987 when the property passed to the Electrical, Electronics, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union (EETPU). From 1994, a Thai based development company, Juldis Development Ltd., owned the property up to 1997. Virgin Hotels Ltd. first launched Buxted Park as a luxury hotel and since 1999 it has been known as Buxted Park Hotel as part of the Hand Picked Hotels group.<sup>279</sup>

### **Displaying in Private**

The history of the Buxted Park project, as constructed over the preceding pages, affirms the centrality of display in the selection and placement of collected objects - either singly, grouped or paired - as an essential aspect of the interior design schemes created at the mansion house. This portion of the chapter analyses and contrasts the multiple strategies employed by Ionides to frame and direct the gaze of the viewer, which shaped subject/object interactions and the meaning of objects in a variety of settings.<sup>280</sup>

#### *Cased Objects and Systematic Collecting*

This case study of Buxted Park has shown that for the Ionides, display was an important mode of consumption for objects they collected. The meaning of collected objects and their

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<sup>278</sup> Last Will and Testament, the Hon. Nellie Ionides, p.6, accessed 10/10/2015.

<sup>279</sup> “Felbridge & District History Group: Buxted Park.”

<sup>280</sup> On the collection of Charles Paget Wade at Snowhill Manor, Susan Pearce correlates the properties of the house with those of a picture frame. See Susan Pearce, *On Collecting. An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995). p. 263

spatial relationships can be understood according to a variety of criteria. Susan Pearce identifies three principle mechanisms: first, the use of lateral space, that is the deliberate placement of objects by the collector; second, spatial relationships between groups of objects or other spatial relationships and finally perceived relationships between objects.<sup>281</sup> This matrix can be applied to the Ionides Collection in a variety of contexts within their private residences. At Buxted Park and the London town house at 49 Berkeley Square, select items and groups of objects were carefully arranged and cased according to material and design typology. The collections of Battersea Enamels and Kangxi Porcelain of Nellie Ionides were housed first in central London before their relocation to the country estate at Buxted during the Second World War. In both locations, objects were displayed in bespoke cabinets designed by Basil Ionides, seen clearly in the *Apollo Magazine* article by Margaret Jourdain in 1938 and *Country Life Magazine*.<sup>282</sup> From the photographic record, objects appear to be systematically organised according to size, shape and design. Whilst the glass cabinets in the China room do not reference the eighteenth-century (Fig.2.11), being entirely modern in design, the creation of the Cabinet is in the spirit of that time (Fig.2.12). The location of these two rooms in close proximity in the private women's quarters on the first floor has a long history, as discussed earlier, suggesting that this part of the collection may have been reserved for the exclusive enjoyment of the owners and select guests. Furthermore, the intimate scale of the Cabinet draws attention to the fine detail of the enamels, typically decorated with minutely painted and expertly executed designs, which can be most fully appreciated at close quarters.

The display of European style Chinese export porcelain in the New Entrance Hall (Fig.2.6) in the post-1940 refurbishment at first glance closely replicates the eighteenth-century display on which it is modelled. Arranged in an authentic cabinet of the period, originally used to store and display tableware in close proximity to the kitchens, objects are glimpsed on shelving through wooden latticework which both interrupts the view and incorporates the objects within the room. On closer inspection, the objects seen here represent the rare and more valuable examples of their type: punch bowls large and small far outnumbering more commonplace plates and dishes which would have originally constituted a full dinner service in their place. These items have been chosen and collected as unusual exemplars of this

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<sup>281</sup> Pearce, p.256.

<sup>282</sup> Margaret Jourdain, "English Enamels in the Hon. Mrs Ionidess Collection," *Apollo, The Magazine for the Arts for Connoisseurs and Collectors*, June 1938, pp. 300–306.

specialist sub-category of Chinese porcelain and as such have been systematically organised. The placement of these objects in the New Entrance Hall indicates the public manner in which these items were immediately encountered by visitors to Buxted Park; as Marcus Linell later noted, this location was not considered ‘pride of place’, which lay closer to the private quarters of the house, but made visible the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain to all who entered the house, as a statement of discernment and wealth, contributing to the construction of the public persona of the collectors.<sup>283</sup>

In contrast, the concealed cabinets in the Saloon and the Library (Fig.2.8-9) are initially hidden from sight, heightening the intimacy for the viewer who is invited to see what lies behind. In the Saloon, carvings are displayed in a style more readily associated with Chinese display cabinets of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), whereby single or grouped objects were compartmentalised, occupying their own designated space. The asymmetrical and vertical arrangement of objects in this manner framed the view, allowing individual items to be observed more closely and was particularly appropriate for the display of small and intricately worked items such as the ivory carvings at Buxted. It is unclear from the photographic record whether the black and gold lacquer shelving was produced in Guangzhou for export to Europe, or is a European facsimile of the Japanese ‘maki’e’ or ‘sprinkled picture’ style of lacquer so popular throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>284</sup> Furniture in this style could frequently be seen in eighteenth-century chinoiserie interiors, as mentioned earlier, and here the dark display unit effectively contrasts with the light ivory carvings, focusing attention on the collected objects.

European style Chinese export porcelain in the Library is displayed according to more conventional European methods, objects placed upon evenly spaced horizontal shelving. The semi-erotic decorative motifs of a number of works, as mentioned earlier, suggest these objects may have provided amusement amongst privately invited guests. Placing these items in a concealed display simultaneously isolated them from the public gaze and endowed them with a heightened status as items worthy of special attention.

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<sup>283</sup> Marcus Linell accompanied Jim Kiddell of Sotheby’s to Buxted following the death of Basil Ionides in 1950 and recalls spending three weeks at the mansion house cataloguing the collection for valuation. Private Interview, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

<sup>284</sup> On Chinese lacquer produced for export, see Clunas, *Chinese Export Art and Design*. pp.80-95. For nineteenth-century European products, see designs Thomas Jeckyll in Frances Collard, ‘Art and Utility: Furniture Fit for Purpose’, in *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publications, 2012). pp.144-148

Elsewhere in the property, Ionides placed Chinese export porcelain within carefully constructed room settings to perform a specific visual role in terms of colour, shape, decorative surface and aesthetic. The utilisation of ‘object as ornament’ is in keeping with his earlier design thesis, whereby Ionides stipulated the inclusion of specific ceramic colours and typologies for individual room settings, depending on their light levels, function and mood (See Ch.1). In this context, the formal properties of an object were considered of paramount importance - their ‘Chineseness’ eclipsed by their identity as eighteenth-century objects in a historicist British setting.

### *Object as Artefact/Object as Ornament*

Two contrasting modes of display can therefore be observed at Buxted Park, characterised here as ‘object as artefact’ and ‘object as ornament’. In the first instance, as artefact, objects have been cased and ordered in a museum manner, setting them apart from their surroundings and emphasizing the visual, removing the possibility of touch or a close sensory encounter.<sup>285</sup> It is in this context that European style Chinese export porcelain in the New Entrance Hall should be understood; these are collected objects, selected by Basil Ionides as his own personal interest and organised according to his individual system of display which emphasised the design history of this group of objects. Staged in a historical display case, Ionides situates these objects within a visually eighteenth-century context – unlike Chinese porcelains in the modern glass displays of the China Room.

Secondly, as ornament, there are those objects valued principally for their aesthetic properties and design features which have been immersed in their physical environment. These objects could be viewed singly at close quarters or as part of the coordinated room design, from various angles and in relation to objects set around them; the immediacy of the unmediated object and the potential of a haptic or sensory experience reducing the conceptual space between object and subject. The concealed displays in the Library and Saloon function in

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<sup>285</sup> On the impact of traditional museum practices which emphasized the visual over the sensory encounter, see Fiona Candlin, *Art, Museums and Touch*, Rethinking Arts Histories (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2010). Wing Yan Ting, ‘Communicating Chinese Ceramics: A Study of Material Culture Theory in Selected Museums in Britain’ (Leicester, University of Leicester, 2008).

both capacities, constituting an integral part of the room design when closed but offering an orderly display of objects once revealed. The agency of individual Chinese art objects at Buxted can therefore be understood in drastically different terms, determined in the first instance by the context in which they are encountered; from a cased Kangxi *famille verte* vase in the China Room to a *famille rose* punch bowl in the Regency Picture Library (Fig.2.16) or a European style Chinese export porcelain figurine in the Chinese Room. Each of these objects is defined not only by its design, materiality and origin but the manner in which it is experienced; the setting is therefore transformative. In the range of display techniques employed by Ionides, the designer staged a series of personal interactions with Chinese art objects, each of which evoked a different emotional and intellectual response and phenomenological engagement in the viewer.



Fig. 2.16 Regency Library 1934. [Image: ©Alfred E. Henson: Country Life Picture Library]

The duality of Ionides' approach to interior design and the Chinese object may be considered against the backdrop of leading critical discourses which had linked modernism to Chinese art and collecting since the early decades of the twentieth century, as outlined earlier in this thesis. Early scholars of Chinese art, such as Stephen Bushell, R.L.Hobson or W. Percival Yetts promoted the 'scientific study' of Chinese objects, employing their considerable skills in the fields of linguistics, archaeology, history and ethnography to establish 'the facts'. However, on Stephen Bushell, Roger Fry stated, 'He is not an art critic', rejecting his overly scientific methodology, which was itself based on traditional Chinese connoisseurship.<sup>286</sup> In contrast, Fry embodied the 'aesthetic' approach to Chinese art, which universalised the formal properties of shape, colour, decoration and form, emphasising the 'spirit' and 'vitality' of an artwork but did not engage with China at all. Taking the scientific/aesthetic discourse as our starting point, Basil's approach to Chinese art objects can be understood in similar terms. In the formal casing and arrangement of objects in a museum manner, he adopts a 'pseudo-scientific' strategy, organising objects in the first instance by design and motif, taking into account the place of manufacture, periodisation and porcelain typology. Elsewhere at Buxted Park, the aesthetic approach is evident, thereby demonstrating the effective utility of both approaches within the private home Ionides shared with his wife.

It is worth noting at this juncture that despite the increased availability of Chinese art objects in the early decades of the twentieth century, and the heightened profile of Chinese art in contemporary aesthetic debates, little was known concerning the display and juxtaposition of Chinese art objects in their original context.<sup>287</sup> Nor was there apparently any interest in it, particularly as objects were disassociated from their origins. Neither Fry nor Ionides had access to the ample literature published from the Ming dynasty onwards, which defined 'good taste' for the Chinese literati, according to the correct placement of objects, furniture, textiles and paintings in the interior. These manuals bear some similarities to Ionides' own books, offering guidance and practical solutions in the arrangement of interior space, but would not be translated into English and explained in full until the 1990s by Craig Clunas and others.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Perfect, 'Roger Fry, Chinese Art and The Burlington Magazine'.

Bushell translated Chinese texts and employed the same methodology for his own catalogues. See Chapter 5.

<sup>287</sup> The original wooden stands on which many art objects were displayed in China were discarded on arrival in Europe or at a later date by collectors and museums. The value of these items is now more fully understood.

<sup>288</sup> Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991). Jonathan Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces: The Decorative Object in Early Modern China* (London: Reaktion, 2010).

## Conclusions

The biography of Buxted Park, reconstructed here for the first time, has mapped the life of the house, its interior design and contents from the time of its creation in the eighteenth century to the later restoration and refurbishment in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Whilst previously unknown, the architectural and interior design project undertaken by Basil Ionides is arguably the most significant of his career, spanning a period of twenty years and constituting the most personal reflection of his private life and collecting interests. The photographic record provided by the series of articles in *Country Life Magazine* and the Country Life Picture Library reveals the history of individual rooms, notably the China Room, whose life-cycle reflects significant historical events such as the fire of 1940 and the continuity of taste in its interior design and function. Whilst no photo-portraits of the Ionides at Buxted Park have yet emerged, the carefully constructed interiors bear their imprint - the published images of their collected objects displayed in their home presented as portraits of their domestic space - the interior acting as self-portrait.<sup>289</sup>

The eighteenth-century architectural interiors at Buxted Park functioned not only 'as a site to display the idealized self, but also as a continuum within which the self might be discerned or crafted such that rank, class, and even authenticity or naturalness might be seen as roles to be enacted'.<sup>290</sup> This case study of Buxted Park has shown how the Ionides actively shaped their personal, social and cultural identities in and through the architectural interiors of the eighteenth-century manor house and its contents. Jim Kiddell of Sotheby's later recalled that on complimenting the Ionides on their refurbishment of Buxted, Basil replied, 'What do you expect from the combination of a Greek and a Jew?!'<sup>291</sup> This apparently casual remark, recalling his Greek heritage and his wife's Jewishness, indicates their continued attachment to their religious and ethnic backgrounds, firmly placing them outside traditional Anglo-Saxon culture. The creation of Buxted Park in Neo-Georgian style and the accumulation of objects within its walls superficially provided a British aristocratic setting for the lives of the

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<sup>289</sup> Inga Fraser discusses the utility of photographic self-portraits by society hostess, Lady Ottoline Morrell, set within fashionable interiors, as mechanisms for shaping self-identity. See Inga Fraser, 'Body, Room, Photograph: Negotiating Identity in the Self-Portraits of Lady Ottoline Morrell', in *Biography, Identity and the Modern Interior* (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2013), 69–86.

<sup>290</sup> Denise Amy Baxter and Meredith Martin, eds., *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Identities and Interiors* (Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010). P.3

<sup>291</sup> Box 17, Frank Hermann Archive, Cambridge University Library.



Ionides which neither possessed; while both individuals commanded considerable cultural capital, as discussed in the previous chapter, neither could claim true 'Britishness'. Through this style of architectural and interior design, then the height of fashionability amongst British high society, Basil Ionides both shaped and participated in that social milieu. Collecting Chinese porcelain, including European style Chinese export porcelain, contributed to the reaffirmation of the social status of the couple and their place within British elite society.

At Buxted Park, Ionides recreated the Georgian interiors that once existed there, utilizing his specialist knowledge in this field. The Chinese Room, China Room and Cabinet are all of particular interest, referencing earlier historical interiors once built to house collections of Chinese porcelain and other collected Chinese art objects, and the eighteenth-century fashion for chinoiserie which enjoyed a resurgence in 1920s Britain. While all these rooms have a historical precedent, they are here subject to Ionides' modern interpretation; the Chinese Room in chinoiserie style is situated on the ground floor in a more prominent and public space than its historical forerunner and the modern glass display cabinets in the Cabinet resemble museum cases or even shop displays of a similar period. It is therefore not only the room configurations which Ionides manipulates, in particular his repurposing of the house following the 1940 fire, but also the shelving and cabinets used to display art objects, some of which are authentic eighteenth-century originals such as the large cabinet in the New Entrance Hall, while others are modelled to meet the requirements of a twentieth century collector, such as the bespoke Cabinet.

Ionides demonstrates the transformative potential of display at Buxted, employing a variety of strategies to elicit different responses between the individual - optic, haptic or sensory – and the object. As a result, objects take on multiple meanings and identities, determined by location, placement and subject/object interactions. Whilst the Chinese objects at Buxted Park are overwhelmingly in keeping, chronologically and stylistically, with the eighteenth-century English country house, this was not always the case. The large gilded Buddha seen in the Chinese Room of 1934 illustrates how articles of Chinese art from a variety of periods, purposes and media - be that early China, religious sculpture, ceramics or lacquered wood – were incorporated within the lived environment of the wealthy elite, introducing aspects of novelty, perceived authenticity and exoticism as was the fashion.

From the photographic and documentary archive, the role of Basil Ionides can now be more fully understood; as collector his interest in European style Chinese export porcelain and other objects associated with Chinese export trade is clear. These objects are defined by their design hybridity, whereby elements of Chinese and European origin permeate the design, materialising the interplay between traders, manufacturers and consumers of Chinese and European porcelain which stimulated the production of this distinctive category of ceramics. Many objects are characteristically decorated with pictorial motifs and recognisable border designs, appearing overwhelmingly ‘European’ to the untutored eye – only on closer inspection and with the foreknowledge of Sino-European trade can the viewer fully appreciate the Chinese origins of the object and often lengthy and complex processes which led to their production. This was perhaps part of the appeal for Ionides, who only collected the rarest specimens of this type.

The collecting practices of Nellie Ionides are more extensively documented than her husband and therefore easier to access. A well-known collector before her marriage to Basil, Chinese porcelain in her collection had been published as early as 1925, as discussed in the previous chapter. From the photographic record, Nellie’s focus on Chinese porcelains of the Kangxi period is clear; that both she and Basil continued to purchase predominantly eighteenth-century ceramics throughout their lives, at a time when earlier wares were increasingly coming to the fore in collecting circles such as the Oriental Ceramic Society, demonstrates a sustained commitment to the art and design of the long eighteenth-century. The channels through which the Ionides acquired Chinese art objects, connecting the couple to fellow collectors, dealers, agents, auctioneers and museum experts will be explored in the following chapter.

## **PART I: THE IONIDES COLLECTION IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE**

### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **The Ionides Collection of European Style Chinese Export Porcelain: Formation, Organization and Exhibition, 1930-1950**

The primary objectives of this chapter are three-fold; first, to map the formation of the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain while still in private hands, mobilizing a range of documentary sources which detail the purchase of individual or groups of objects by the Ionides and illuminate the processes involved in the acquisition and circulation of art objects between collectors, dealers, personal advisors or agents and auction houses. In order to examine the dynamic relationships within these social and commercial networks, detailed archival research was undertaken focusing first on dealers and auction houses known to specialize in Chinese art objects between 1930-1950. It was during these years of marriage that the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain came into being and the biography of the collection begins. Individual objects once dispersed across numerous private collections came to the art market at that time and auctions of Chinese export porcelain were identified as likely sources, namely the sale of the Martin Hurst Collection (1942-3) and the collection of Sir Algernon Tudor-Craig (1943). In addition, sales of collectors not commonly associated with Chinese export porcelain, such as Stephen D. Winkworth (1933) were also studied, revealing surprising details regarding the shape of the original collection and the range of Chinese art objects acquired by the couple. These sales were orchestrated by the London auction house, Sotheby's, whose expertise in the field of Chinese art came to the fore during this period under Jim Kiddell, whose association with the couple has already been mentioned and direct involvement with the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain will be discussed in full below.

On dealers, purchases made by the Ionides through John Sparks Ltd., already known to the couple prior to their marriage as discussed in Chapter 1, will be examined in order to consider the separate acquisitions made by Nellie and Basil Ionides and in turn what this can tell us about their collecting activities, the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain and other Chinese art objects they purchased. Beyond the commercial sphere, private correspondence between Nellie Ionides and Margaret Jourdain discovered in the course of this research highlights the influential role played by personal friends and advisors in bringing objects to the attention of collectors and facilitating their acquisition. These informal

yet exclusive networks maintained and reinforced relationships within elite society, constituting an alternative mode of private exchange whereby collected art objects passed from one private collection to the next, circumventing the usual channels of supply and demand and remaining outside the documentary record. This chapter will consider the implications of these alternative networks for the Ionides collection of European style Chinese export porcelain and the historiography of collecting Chinese ceramics in Britain.

The second objective of this Chapter is to consider how objects, once in the collection, were organized, if at all, by the Ionides during this 20-year period. Whilst the display of objects at Buxted Park was scrutinized in the previous chapter, this chapter will question to what extent they were systematically categorized; chronologically, stylistically or according to porcelain typology or some other criteria and what can this tell us about the motivations and aims of the collectors? In the course of this research, painted numbers were observed on the base of many objects, added prior to their arrival at the V&A and British Museum. A detailed examination of these numerals was undertaken over a series of study sessions at the V&A in order to consider their relevance to individual objects and the wider history of the collection. These numbers are here cross-referenced with archival data surviving at the V&A, the National Archives and the photographic record.

The final part of this Chapter focusses on the participation of the Ionides in collecting societies and exhibitions of Chinese ceramics in the public domain, in particular the display of articles of European style Chinese export porcelain at the centre of this study. The brief membership of the Ionides in the specialist society, the Oriental Ceramic Society (OCS), and the exhibition of objects in that sphere highlights the social networks which linked the Ionides to collectors, curators, dealers and agents in this field. This chapter will consider to what extent the Ionides participated in these social, institutional and financial networks, situating the collectors and by extension the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain in relation to contemporary trends in art theory and aesthetics, collecting and taste. The display and interpretation of objects in the pseudo-public sphere is contrasted with that in the private quarters of their home as detailed in the previous chapter, in order to demonstrate the transformative potential of display in defining object/object and object/subject interactions.

*Formation: Public Purchase - Chinese Export Porcelain at Auction*

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s against the backdrop of war, a number of leading collections of Chinese art were sold at public auction, in particular through the London auctioneer Sotheby's, facilitating the circulation of objects throughout the art market and between the private and public realm. These sales included objects in a range of media, diversity of style, date and purpose, including European style Chinese export porcelain, which were by then readily available in international art markets. Through the archives of the dealer John Sparks Ltd., it is now possible for the first time to link Ionides objects to these sales from the identification of individual transactions in the documentary record. For example, the sale of Stephen D. Winkworth's collection, a founding member of the Oriental Ceramic Society whose significance is discussed later in this Chapter, lasted four days from 25-28 April 1933 and included not only a large number of early East Asian ceramics as might be expected but examples of later European style Chinese export porcelain.<sup>292</sup> On 27 April, Nellie Ionides made three purchases from this collection through Sparks, including Lot 591, 'An Interesting Presentation Bowl' decorated in *famille rose* enamels, with the figure of 'an Englishman in eighteenth century costume below a wreath held by two cupids'.<sup>293</sup> The following day, Lot 661, a 'Glass Picture' was acquired, all with an additional 5% commission. These purchases indicate not only the presence of such objects in the Winkworth collection but suggest that Nellie Ionides may have shared her husband's interest in Chinese objects manufactured for European markets such as these or may have acquired them for him.

Other sales which can be directly linked to the Ionides include that of Dutch collector, W.F. Van Heukelom on 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> June 1937.<sup>294</sup> According to the Sparks records, Mrs. Ionides bought eight Lots from the sale at the now higher rate of 10% commission of predominantly *famille verte* and *famille rose* type. None of these items appear to be decorated in European style but are typical of objects more commonly associated with the collector, namely late seventeenth and eighteenth-century polychrome porcelain decorated in Chinese style. The

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<sup>292</sup> OCS members, including Winkworth, championed the taste for early Chinese ceramics and imperial wares. See Wood, 'Towards a New History of the Oriental Ceramic Society: Narrative and Chronology'.

<sup>293</sup> Lot 389, 486 and 591 were bought by Sparks and sold to Mrs Ionides with 5% commission. See Day Book, April 1933, p.216, File 6, Sparks Archive, SOAS Archives and Special Collections, SOAS University Library. For full description of objects, see Sotheby's Sales Catalogue, Stephen D. Winkworth Sale, 25-28 April 1933, 23.WW, NAL.

<sup>294</sup> Sotheby's Sales Catalogue, 23.UU, NAL.

range of ceramics purchased by Nellie Ionides through Sparks is perhaps surprising; Tang tomb wares, Ming ceramics and Qing monochromes can all be identified, raising questions regarding their later whereabouts. None of these categories of Chinese ceramics can be seen in the photographic record at Buxted Park or elsewhere, raising the unlikely possibility that these items were not displayed at all or else were gifted. Objects made from bronze, jade, cloisonné, lacquer, ivory and other precious stones were also acquired during this period, demonstrating a wide-ranging and diverse interest in Chinese art objects; some of these pieces can be observed in the Saloon, photographed for *Country Life* in 1950, indicating their continued presence in the larger collection of Chinese art and the manner of their display (Fig.2.8).

In the middle of the Second World War, the Martin Hurst Collection, which featured extensively in Williamson's earlier publication, was sold over two sales on 11 December 1942 and 29 January 1943 and is firmly cited as the source of one object in the Basil Ionides Bequest (Fig.3.1).<sup>295</sup> According to 'List 2: Porcelain from the Collection of the late Basil Ionides Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum', an enameled and gilded saucer and bowl originated from this collection (Fig.3.2).<sup>296</sup> A number of other items in the sale correlate to objects in the Ionides collection and it is likely these were acquired shortly after. Objects of interest include a pair of coffee pots (Lot.75) purchased by Charles Staal, and examples of the rare service known as 'La Plume' (Appendix, Fig.14a).<sup>297</sup> Figure groups and a dish with the arms of Prussia, also illustrated by Williamson, are represented in the Ionides Collection.

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<sup>295</sup> Williamson, *The Book of Famille Rose*.

<sup>296</sup> ED/BP.107/2/50, MA/1/I245, V&A

<sup>297</sup> 'Charles Staal » Antique Dealers » Antiques Dealers', accessed 4 July 2018, <https://antiquetrade.leeds.ac.uk/dealerships/36054>.

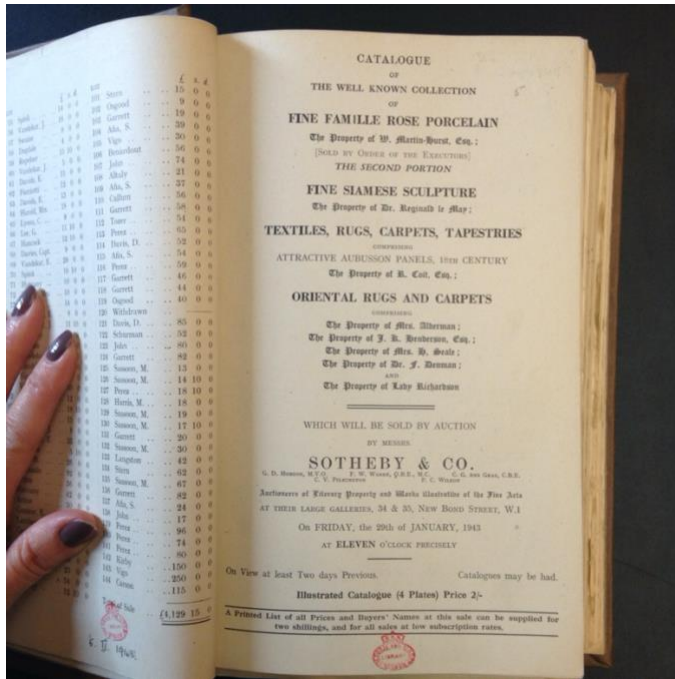


Fig. 3.1 Sales Catalogue Frontispiece: Martin Hurst Collection (Second Portion), 29<sup>th</sup> January 1943, Sotheby's Sales Catalogues, 23.XX, NAL. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].



Fig. 3.2. Bowl and saucer, porcelain decorated in overglaze enamels and gilding, made in Jingdezhen, China, c. 1730-35. Height: 5.6cm x Diameter: 15.2cm, C.51&A-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

In the second sale on Friday 29 January 1943, a large figure of a ‘Dutch woman’ (Lot.84) receives a detailed description and large photographic image in the sales catalogue, indicating the high value rare objects such as this continued to command, even in the midst of war.<sup>298</sup> Nellie Ionides had purchased two porcelain figurines of this type in 1936, as illustrated in the previous chapter (Fig.2.13b-2.14), through the dealer Sparks for the sum of £250, far exceeding in value all other items purchased that day, including a ‘Fine White Jade Ewer and Cover, KL’, acquired by Eric Morgan Esq. for £200.<sup>299</sup> Unfortunately the entry is brief and offers no further details concerning its earlier provenance.

Other auctions of particular interest to this study include the sale of Sir Algernon Tudor-Craig, specialist and collector of armorial porcelains, also sold in 1943 at Sotheby’s.<sup>300</sup> On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July, the second day of the auction, Sparks purchased Lot 242, a ‘Ling Lung’ teapot, which was sold ten days later to Mrs. Ionides.<sup>301</sup> A number of other items in the sale are similar in type to objects held in the Ionides collection and may originate from this source. The wartime sales are here notable, demonstrating the art market was still active at this time and that Nellie Ionides continued to purchase for her and Basil’s collection.

All the aforementioned sales were orchestrated by Sotheby’s, who became the leading auctioneer specialising in the sale of Chinese ceramics in London throughout this period. According to Anthony du Boulay, Director of rival auctioneer Christie’s, ‘While Christie’s was putting twenty-five lots of Chinese porcelain at the start of a furniture sale, Jim Kiddell had enough material to organize, to orchestrate, specialist sales in specific periods of Chinese porcelain’.<sup>302</sup> Described by *The Antique Collector* in 1943 as ‘the Sage of Sotheby’s’, Kiddell was praised for raising the standard of professionalism and research at the auction house and commanded a wide circle of contacts which included collectors, museum experts and

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<sup>298</sup> Figurines of this type were long mis-identified as Dutch, before the discovery in 2008 of a close print source identifying the German Jewish costume of the woman, see Fuchs, ‘European Subjects on Chinese Porcelain’. Sotheby’s sales cat. 11 December 1942, 23.XX, NAL. This figure, identified by the Martin Hurst label on its base, was recently sold at auction from the collection of Nelson and Happy Rockefeller with a male companion for \$300,000 USD, Sotheby’s New York, 18 Jan 2019.

<sup>299</sup> Described as a ‘Pair of rare famille rose standing Dutch women’, 24<sup>th</sup> September 1936, Day Book, September 1936, p.103, File 7, John Sparks Ltd. Archive, SOAS Archives and Special Collections, SOAS University Library.

<sup>300</sup> Tudor-Craig’s earlier publication on armorial wares, in particular those for the British market, remains one of the most detailed and extensive studies in the field. See Tudor-Craig, *Armorial Porcelain of the Eighteenth Century*.

<sup>301</sup> The teapot is described as having a double-walled body, perforated on the outside with enameled decoration on the exterior. See sales cat. p.29, 23.XX, NAL.

<sup>302</sup> Nicholas Faith, *Sold: The Rise and Fall of the House of Sotheby* (New York, N.Y: Macmillan, 1985). p. 118.



dealers.<sup>303</sup> Kiddell was a longstanding acquaintance of the Ionides, frequently visiting Buxted and accompanying them to sales. Kiddell purchased items on behalf of Queen Mary under the ‘nom de guerre’ of Dawson and it is likely he acted in a similar capacity on behalf of the Ionides whose name is conspicuously absent from Sotheby’s sales records.<sup>304</sup> As an active member of the OCS, he was well placed to observe the latest trends in collecting as well as the current state of the art market.<sup>305</sup>

From auction catalogues of the period, it is clear that private individuals rarely purchased directly from sales; the role of dealer as facilitator between the market and collector becomes increasingly clear and has stimulated research in this field in recent years.<sup>306</sup> As individual entries are often brief and incomplete in the Sparks archive, it is not always possible to precisely identify the source of individual items. However, a number of objects purchased on behalf of Mrs. Ionides can be matched to items on display at Buxted Park, thus providing further evidence of the conflating of the two collectors’ purchases in this bequest. For example, on 3 Feb 1937, the Hon. Mrs Ionides purchased ‘Two black ground cups and saucers, ‘buglers’, 1 bowl, 1 jug’ for £40 (See Fig.2.10). These items almost certainly formed part of the larger set in the concealed display in the Library (Fig.2.9), which later passed to the V&A. Other items such as ‘Two groups in B de C [blanc de chine] of Dutch Huntsmen 17<sup>th</sup> C’, purchased on 25 March 1938, were also bought by Nellie Ionides and now constitute part of the Basil Ionides Bequest. The number of items purchased by Nellie Ionides far outstrips those acquired by her husband through Sparks between 1930-50, whose transactions were infrequent and mostly concerned with lacquer, mother of pearl, ivory and jade articles

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<sup>303</sup> “Personalities of the World of Art and Antiques: Mr.A.J.Kiddell of Sothebys,” *The Antique Collector*, February 1943, 2–3. *The Antique Collector*, Jan-Feb, 1943. Hermann Papers, ‘File “Jim Kiddell”’, *Cambridge University Library* Box 17 (n.d.).

George Hobson (Sotheby’s Chairman), attributed much of the success of the auction house to Kiddell during this period, observing that he was on friendly terms with many collectors, museum officials, and most of the trade. In ‘The Best Expert We Have Ever Had: A Tribute to A.J.B. Kiddell, Frank Hermann, Eulogy, 1980. Hermann Papers. For more the history of Sotheby’s, see Robert Lacey, *Sotheby’s: Bidding for Class*, 1st ed (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1998). Faith, *Sold*. Frank Hermann, *Sotheby’s, Portrait of an Auction House* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1980).

<sup>304</sup> Faith, *Sold*. p.38.

<sup>305</sup> Kiddell was also a member of the English Glass Circle and the English Ceramic Circle.

<sup>306</sup> On George Eumorfopoulos, Jim Kiddell remarked, ‘He sometimes attended sales but more often he bought through his own agents, probably more than one dealer’. Some Collectors, Dealers and Notables: 1900-1950, James Kiddell, 8.3.77’, Hermann Papers, ‘File “Jim Kiddell”’.

Nick Pearce notes that John Sparks and Frank Partridge acted as agents on behalf of the collector, Sir William Burrell. See Nick Pearce, “‘‘CARP-ON’’: Further Thoughts on Chinese Art Provenance Research’, in *Collectors, Collections and Collecting the Arts of China: Histories and Challenges*, ed. Jason Steuber and Gualong Lai (University Press of Florida, 2014), 295–312, <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/93086/>.

rather than porcelain as might be expected.<sup>307</sup> Furthermore, evidence from the Sparks archive confirms that Nellie Ionides purchased only a small number of European style Chinese export porcelains from the dealer, suggesting that a large proportion of objects in the Ionides Collection were acquired elsewhere.

From the few surviving labels on objects at the V&A, it is possible to firmly identify other dealers from whom the Ionides sourced items. An early blue and white armorial dish bears the labels of both Hancock and D.M.&P. Manheim of London (Fig. 3.3a-b).<sup>308</sup> Another blue and white dish decorated with French figures has no catalogue number but also carries the Hancock label (C.69-1963). It is clear from the auction records of Sotheby's and Christie's that the dealers Hancock and Manheim were actively purchasing items from leading sales of Chinese art throughout the 1930s and 40s, in a similar manner to Sparks and other specialist dealers in the field. However, in the course of this research it has not been possible to locate the original records for either company in order to pursue this line of enquiry further.<sup>309</sup> The paucity of archival records for many dealers and smaller antique shops leaves the provenance of many objects beyond the reach of this thesis, but it is likely the Ionides purchased from a wide range of commercial sources.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> On 7 January 1941, Ionides purchased an oblong mother of pearl box and cover. On 15 Jan, 'a small ivory box, cucumber' and 'small round jade box' were purchased. Day Book, File 9, Sparks Archive, SOAS Archives and Special Collections, SOAS. Only one example of Chinese export porcelain is listed, 'Tall square vase, FR [famille rose] Portuguese Market', 11 Dec. 1937, p.332. Day Book, File 7, John Sparks Ltd. Archive, *ibid*.

<sup>308</sup> Hancock, 37 Bury Street, St.James, SW1, 8053 CTL/1/ See 'H.R. Hancock » Antique Dealers » Antiques Dealers', accessed 13 June 2018, <https://antiquetrade.leeds.ac.uk/dealerships/35897>.

D.M.&P. Manheim Guaranteed Genuine, marked Kang Hsi 17<sup>th</sup> CY. London 1932-34. See 'D.M. & P. Manheim » Antique Dealers » Antiques Dealers', accessed 13 June 2018, <https://antiquetrade.leeds.ac.uk/dealerships/35927>. In the late 19th century, there was a Manheim who worked at the Hotel Drouot auction house in Paris specializing in Chinese art.

<sup>309</sup> Dr Mark Westgarth, Director of the Centre for the Study of the Art and Antiques Market, University of Leeds, has not been able to locate the archives of either firm to date. 23 Aug. 2018.

<sup>310</sup> Toby Jessel recalled that his grandmother, Nellie Ionides enjoyed purchasing art objects from small antique shops as well as larger and better known dealers. Jessel, 'Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides - History and Connections with Twickenham'. p.4



Figs. 3.3a-b Dish with the Arms of Camphuis, blue and white porcelain, Jindgezhen, China, c. 1685-90. Diameter:25cm, Height: 24mm, C.68-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

In addition to purchases made through commercial dealers and auction houses, the Ionides acquired objects privately with the assistance of friends and special advisors. The role of Margaret Jourdain acting in this capacity on behalf of Nellie Ionides during the 1920s has already been mentioned (see Ch.1) and appears to continue in an unofficial capacity at a later date. A letter written by Jourdain to her friend offers insights into the circulation of Chinese art objects outside conventional commercial circles during the early years of the War. The letter follows her stay with Janette Ranken at Farley Hill who was ‘clearing up’ Willie Ranken’s collections following the death of her brother in 1941.<sup>311</sup> Ranken was of course known to the Ionides and had collaborated with Basil earlier in his career (See Ch.1). The society painter previously lived at the eighteenth-century manor house, Warbrook Hall, Hampshire, pictured in the previous chapter (Fig. 2.5). In the letter, Jourdain explains to Nellie that there would be no sale of the collection and a number of pieces would be available should she be interested.

‘Amongst the things there is a large pair of elephants (bought in Peking) in perfect condition, that would look well in a garden, also a large figure of a goddess in white marble (about 9 feet) that stood at one end of the studio.<sup>312</sup> It looked very well, and would be a decorator’s dream lit from behind... There is also a plate of Jesuit China (the kind Basil collects) with one of the stock subjects (the Judgement of Paris).

Do you know anyone in the humbler Chinese art line who would buy some of the stuff? (Not Spinks and Sparks and that class of dealer). There is a set of white Fukien figures of the Immortals and one larger God (God of War I think) that are in good condition (only one hand is damaged in the lot!). But most of Willie’s things are chipped and mended, and so of little use. There is one rather amusing Chinese picture on glass (bought in Peking by Willie) I have also seen and like it. It is a still life of some Chinese collection, scattered objects being packed, such as a French clock, a small scent falcon, mixed up with oriental objects! Really very entertaining.’<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Janette Ranken had known Jourdain since their years studying together at Oxford and were rumoured to have been in a relationship before Janette married the actor and artist, Ernest Thesiger (1879-1961) in 1917. The marriage was one of convenience as Thesiger, a well-known homosexual, was famed for his outrageous and camp behavior. His admiration for her brother, Willie Ranken was widely acknowledged during his life. He later became a close acquaintance and sewing partner of Queen Mary. See Hilary Spurling, *Secrets of a Woman’s Heart: Later Life of Ivy Compton-Burnett, 1920-69*, 1st edition edition (London u.a: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 1984). p.93 and 310. Joseph McBrinn, ‘Queer Hobbies: Ernest Thesiger and Interwar Embroidery’, *TEXTILE* 15, no. 3 (3 July 2017): 292–323, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14759756.2017.1294827>.

<sup>312</sup> A pair of large white elephants feature prominently in Ranken’s earlier painting, ‘Elephants at Warbrook,’ dated 1930.

<sup>313</sup> Jourdain goes on to describe her visits to other wealthy individuals including Mr Geoffrey Hart, whose art collections had been placed in storage while his house was given over to the military, like many other country houses during wartime. MS371 A3042 2/5/4 Anglo-Jewish Archive, University of Southampton.

This letter highlights the alternative pathways through which Chinese art objects circulated during the War and the apparently fluid relationships between collectors, dealers, agents, advisors and decorators in establishing informal networks of supply and demand. It is clear that Jourdain understood and differentiated between the taste of Nellie and Basil Ionides and the objects they each chose to collect, seeking Nellie's advice for individuals dealing in 'the humbler Chinese art line', which attests to her experience in this field. The Chinese items mentioned here are similar to many seen at Buxted Park, including the Chinese glass painting in European style bought by Willie Ranken 'in Peking'. That Ranken visited China is worthy of note, suggesting at least a superficial interest in the country – there is no evidence to suggest that Basil Ionides or his wife ever made that journey, or in fact were interested in the Chinese origin of the art objects they collected. At the time this letter was written, the Ionides were in the midst of the second refurbishment at Buxted following the fire of 1940 and as such may have been on the look-out for new objects to fill the recently emptied space. Jourdain further emphasises the utility of these Chinese art objects as articles of display in the exterior and interior, describing the stone sculpture as 'a decorators dream'.

The majority of art objects listed by Jourdain would now be categorized as Chinese export art, but the collection also includes examples of objects for domestic Chinese consumption; for example, the 'large figure of a goddess in white marble' was most certainly not originally produced nor intended for export but arrived in Euro-American markets with other religious stone sculpture in the early decades of the twentieth century where they were enthusiastically collected and displayed.<sup>314</sup> Whilst the presence of objects of this type in Ranken's collection may at first appear to deviate from the dominant taste of the Ionides, Basil Ionides also owned and displayed a large Buddhist sculpture in the 1920s and 30s, first in the Pink Room at Howbridge Hall (1926) (Fig.1.11 a and b), and later in the Chinese Room at Buxted Park in 1934 (2.3b).<sup>315</sup> Furthermore, it was at his home at Warbrook Hall that Ranken recorded the arrangement of Tang figurines over the mantelpiece in his painting of 1933 (Fig.2.5),

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<sup>314</sup> Photographs in the Rockefeller archive show the display of large Chinese sculptures of Buddhist bodhisattvas in the foyer of one of the private residences of the American collector, J.D. Rockefeller Jr and his wife Abby in the 1920s. See Abe, 'Rockefeller Home Decorating and Objects from China'. Buddhist sculpture was also widely collected by museums in Europe and North America at this time. See Crispin Paine, ed., *Godly Things: Museums, Objects and Religion* (New York: Frances Pinter Publishers Ltd, 1999). Chuang Yiao-hwei, 'An Investigation into the Exhibition of Buddhist Objects in British Museums' (Leicester, University of Leicester, 1993). Tythacott, *The Lives of Chinese Objects: Buddhism, Imperialism and Display*.

<sup>315</sup> The gilded Buddha appears for the last time in the *Country Life Magazine* article of 1934, raising questions regarding its later whereabouts. It is possible that it was destroyed during the fire of 1940 or removed at some other time.

indicating the coexistence and display of Chinese art objects from early China with later Chinese export art in private collections and within the fashionable lived interiors which they created.

The dispersal of private collections outside conventional commercial spheres in this manner raises questions regarding the motivations of both the former collector and ‘seller’ – in this case Willie Ranken – and the secondary owner or ‘buyer’, be that the Ionides or some other family acquaintance. From the correspondence between agent and ‘client’, it is unclear how a monetary value would be reached, should Nellie Ionides wish to purchase any articles for herself or her husband, being already on friendly terms with the Ranken family, but presumably Jourdain would negotiate a private transaction beneficial to all. Furthermore, why the Ranken family chose to follow such a course of action is unclear, although considering the high rates of commission charged by London dealers such as Sparks, it was perhaps financially beneficial to do so.<sup>316</sup> Jourdain also calls into question the condition and quality of some of the objects, suggesting that these items may not have reached the requisite standard expected of art objects at public auction, but this is not true of all articles mentioned here. Whatever the reasons for doing so, the private circulation of art objects between members of elite circles in this manner both maintained the exclusivity of social networks and transmitted prevailing notions of taste within that social milieu. The implications of these private networks for the Ionides collection of European style Chinese export porcelain are significant, as many items may have been acquired in this way and therefore remain outside the documentary record. As the Ranken collection of Chinese art objects reflected a similar taste to that of the Ionides, it is likely that articles of European style Chinese export porcelain may have passed between these collections and others of this kind; that single collections such as this never reached the sales room inhibits their later study, leaving many questions regarding their provenance unanswered.

#### *Organisation: Cataloguing, Displaying and Evaluating the Collection*

Our attention will now turn to consider what the material archive, as outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, can tell us regarding the manner in which the collection of

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<sup>316</sup> Private sales such as this also avoided taxation.

European style Chinese export porcelain was organized whilst in private hands, shedding light on the motivations of the private collectors, Basil and Nellie Ionides. Close examination of Ionides objects at the V&A and the British Museum revealed numbers in red, blue or black enamel, occasionally written in pencil, which had been added to the base of numerous objects prior to their transfer to the public collections (Fig.3.4). As no catalogue or inventory nor private correspondence survives concerning the collecting practices of Basil Ionides and his wife, and no documentary evidence concerning the Ionides Collection at the British Museum has so far been discovered, this research focussed on textual sources now held at the V&A and the National Archives, namely List 1, List 2 and the document titled, ‘Porcelain to go to the Victoria and Albert Museum’, dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 1951.<sup>317</sup> The two latter documents include catalogue numbers next to individual items, confirming the existence of an earlier catalogue, compiled by the Ionides, which no longer survives. These three documentary sources were cross-referenced with surviving numbers on many but not all of the objects, in order to identify any discernible patterns of collecting.

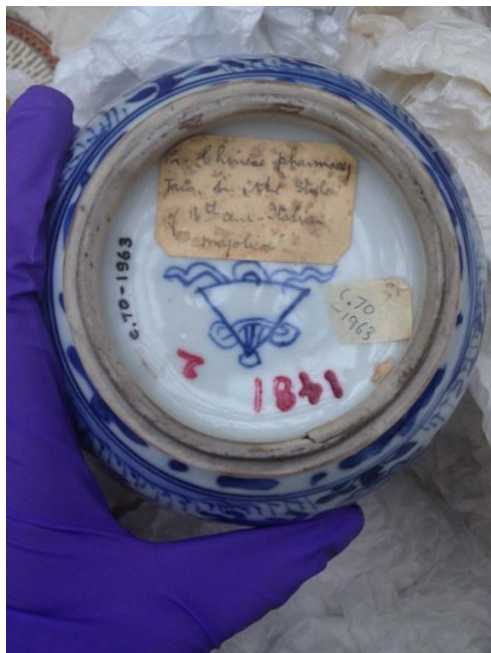


Fig. 3.4 Base of drug jar, blue and white porcelain, Jingdezhen, China, c.1660-80. Height:23.5cm, Diameter:12.7cm, C.70-1963, V&A. [Image: Photograph taken by Helen Glaister ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

<sup>317</sup> ‘List 1, The Collection of Oriental Lowestoft Porcelain’, the Probate Valuation dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950, ED/BP107/4/50(2), IR 62/2365 Bequests to the Victoria and Albert Museum: articles exempted from death duties, being of national, scientific, historic or artistic interest: B Ionides. The National Archives, Kew. List 2, ‘Porcelain from the Collection of the late Basil Ionides Now in the Victoria and Albert Museum’, MA/1/1245, V&A. MA/1/1245, V&A

At this juncture it should be noted that in the course of this research, it became apparent that files pertaining to the Basil Ionides Bequest at the V&A had been removed from the museum archives and from public access to the National Archives at Kew.<sup>318</sup> In order to examine the restricted files, it was necessary to submit a Freedom of Information Request and the files were subsequently opened to the public in September 2014.<sup>319</sup> The ramifications of this action by the V&A will be discussed in full in the following chapter but here the discovery of List 1 is significant, facilitating the reconstruction of the Ionides Collection, while still a private collection, in total and in situ, including the precise monetary value allotted by Sotheby's to individual and groups of objects at Buxted Park. Whilst the exact identification of all objects in the collection is still not possible, some descriptions being too broad and open to interpretation, significant articles can be securely recognized from this list, allowing a more accurate picture of the collection as a whole to emerge, including the manner in which it was organized and displayed at Buxted Park. By cross-referencing this document with archival data mentioned above, the photographic record and objects now held in the national museum collections, it is possible to reconstruct the shape of the private collection of European style Chinese export porcelain at this point in its life.

In order to examine the Ionides Bequest in detail, the material archive was studied over a series of viewing sessions with the assistance of V&A curatorial staff. Initially, the first sixty objects to reach the V&A in 1951 were seen, being the most comprehensively documented group of objects in the bequest, most of which included catalogue numbers. In order to check whether the catalogue numbers on the lists correlated with those on the objects themselves, a select number of objects were viewed over three separate study sessions at the V&A.<sup>320</sup> These were chosen on the basis of their prominence in the collection, such as the 'Woman in Jewish Costume' discussed earlier (Fig.2.14), or if they constituted part of a recognisable pair or group (Appendix Fig.14a-b, Fig.2.10). The remainder of objects were studied in the V&A galleries or via the V&A digital catalogue, known as CMS (Content Management System). The limitations of this approach soon became clear as not all objects were fully visible in the galleries whilst others were in storage and inaccessible. Inconsistencies on CMS meant that whilst some objects had been extensively photographed including their base, others had not.

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<sup>318</sup> IR 62/2365 Bequests to the Victoria and Albert Museum: articles exempted from death duties, being of national, scientific, historic or artistic interest: B Ionides. The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>319</sup> The files were closed for 75 years in 1966, three years after the final selection of objects by the national museums in 1963.

<sup>320</sup> Supervised by V&A Curator, Yu-Ping Luk on 27 April, 23 June and 22 September 2016.



Markings were surprisingly rough and at times unclear or indecipherable and other items remained unmarked. Furthermore, in some instances catalogue numbers appearing on the lists referred to unmarked objects, supporting the existence of an original catalogue from which they were copied in 1950. For example, of seven large bowls which appear on List 2, Nos. 1194, 964, 1285 and 956 can be matched to numbers on bowls in the collection. However, Nos. 454, 897 and 715 refer to specific bowls on the list but the objects themselves are unmarked.

The remainder of objects which arrived at the V&A in 1963 and through the Gift of Nellie Ionides were subsequently studied, subject to similar limitations as outlined above. Conclusions from the study of the entire collection of objects at the V&A are summarized below.

#### *Ionides Objects at the V&A- Outcomes of the Case Study*

The Basil Ionides Bequest of 1951 is the most comprehensively documented subgroup of objects whose catalogue numbers are listed in the museum archives. The majority of items in this group also carry numbers added to their base by the Ionides, ranging from Cat.No.194 (C.63-1951) to Cat.No.1972 (C.12-1951), suggesting the full extent of the private collection. European style Chinese export porcelains in this group are predominantly stand alone, bespoke pieces made singly or in small groups as special commissions.

Pairs of objects sharing a similar theme or decorative subject matter often have the same catalogue number, such as two vases depicting Martin Luther and Calvin, Cat. No. 1438 (Appendix, Fig.8a -b). According to List 1, these objects were displayed together at Buxted Park in the centre of the low fitted cabinet in the Long Hall, then valued at £30.<sup>321</sup> Other pairs were separated through time in their passage to the V&A, between the arrival of the first objects in 1951 and the second in 1963. For example, two cylindrical coffee-pots decorated with European figure medallions Cat. No. 1144/2, (C.40+A-1951, CIRC.163-1963). In contrast, pairs of objects originating from the same design source, such as two figures of Hercules, decorated in polychrome enamels and undecorated white porcelain (Appendix,

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<sup>321</sup> See List 1. The Collection of Oriental Lowestoft Porcelain, p.7. ED/BP107/4/50(2)

Fig.13a-b), entered the museum at the same time but bear different marks; Cat.No.597 and Cat.No.1037. These numbers suggest that the objects entered the Ionides collection at different times – perhaps first the polychrome piece followed by the ‘blanc de chine’ example, hence the higher catalogue number – but the figures were displayed together in a small lacquer cabinet in the Chinese Room at Buxted Park.

Several groups of objects, sharing the same design and catalogue number, originate from far larger tea or coffee sets. Examples in the Ionides collection include a cream jug, cup, saucer and saucer bowl decorated with the design known as ‘Le Plume’, Cat. No. 27/3 (Appendix, Fig. 14a), and a number of items decorated with ‘The Trumpeter’ motif, Cat. No. 1065/3 (Fig.2.10.).<sup>322</sup> A cup and saucer in this service also retains the label of the dealer Sparks, whose role in supplying the Ionides has already been established. These objects were displayed together at Buxted Park, in the concealed cabinet in the Library, as pictured in the Country Life photograph (Fig.2.9) and confirmed on List 1. Once more, this pattern of marking is not wholly conclusive as other groups of objects remain unmarked, such as the rare sepia-decorated discs (Appendix, Figs.11a-b).

This detailed study of the material and documentary archive affirms that a cataloguing system was in use by the Ionides at some point prior to 1950, although its inconsistency leaves many questions unanswered. Numbers relating to groups and pairs of objects suggest they were deliberately acquired or catalogued in sets. Furthermore, the display of these objects correlates with their markings, suggesting a systematic and coordinated approach to the collection and the manner in which they were displayed in the private sphere of their country home at Buxted Park.

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<sup>322</sup> Examples of the rare ‘Le Plume’ service were also represented in the Martin Hurst Collection. See Williamson, *The Book of Famille Rose*. Plate XVIII.

## *Exhibiting: Public Participation and Resistance*

The final part of this chapter will consider the extent to which the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain was seen in the public sphere whilst still constituting a private collection, through the participation and engagement of the Ionides with fellow collectors of Chinese ceramics and specialist collecting societies. The sole society for collectors of Chinese ceramics in England between 1930 and 1950 was the Oriental Ceramic Society. Founded in 1921 as a private society for a select group of enthusiastic collectors who initially met in the comfort of their own homes, the society had by 1933 expanded in membership and scope.<sup>323</sup> Whilst the Ionides did not become members until 1945, they were already acquainted with prominent members including ceramic specialists from the British Museum, the V&A and dealers in the field.<sup>324</sup> Founding member R.L.Hobson of the British Museum had written on the collection of Nellie Ionides (née Levy) in 1925 and both collectors had a pre-existing relationship with the V&A prior to their marriage which will be explored in full in the following chapter.<sup>325</sup>

Noted OCS members were instrumental in the organisation of the landmark 'International Exhibition of Chinese Art' held at Burlington House in 1935-6, including acting Director Sir Percival David and members of the Executive Committee.<sup>326</sup> Twenty-one OCS members lent to the exhibition but a small number of private collectors refused, including Nellie Ionides who stated:

'After much careful thought I have decided that really it is not worthwhile sending the few things selected from my large collection for the Exhibition - as they neither fairly represent my collection nor any period of Chinese porcelain. I am so sorry Mr Hobson had the trouble of coming here, as you were able to get so much elsewhere.'

Hon Mrs Ionides, 49 Berkeley Square: W1. RAA/SEC/24/25/8: 'Photograph lists and further correspondence relating to loans and loans refused'.

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<sup>323</sup> In 1933 the society extended to all interested in Oriental ceramics. For a recent history of the society, see Wood, 'Towards a New History of the Oriental Ceramic Society: Narrative and Chronology'.

<sup>324</sup> The first list of members appears in TOCS Vol.19, 1942-43, previously only Council Members were included. The Ionides name does not appear until TOCS Vol.21(1945-6) and then for Vols.22 and 23.

<sup>325</sup> Hobson, *The Later Ceramic Wares of China, Being the Blue and White, Famille Verte, Famille Rose, Monochromes, Etc., of the Kang Hsi, Yung Cheng, Chien Lung and Other Periods of the Ching Dynasty*.

<sup>326</sup> Jason Steuber, 'The Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House, London, 1935-6', *The Burlington Magazine*, no. CXLVIII (August 2006),

[http://burlington.org.uk/media\\_new/files/theexhibitionofchineseartatburlingtonhouse.pdf](http://burlington.org.uk/media_new/files/theexhibitionofchineseartatburlingtonhouse.pdf).

George Eumorfopoulos, Leigh Ashton, R.L.Hobson, Bernard Rackham, Major-General Sir Neil Malcolm, KCB,DSO, Oscar Raphael and Prof. W.Percival Yetts, OBE, were all members of the Executive Committee. Wood, 'Towards a New History of the Oriental Ceramic Society: Narrative and Chronology'. p.99

This polite rebuff might at first appear surprising considering the prestige in which the exhibition was held, being the first major public exhibition dedicated to Chinese art in Britain and featuring numerous loan objects travelling for the first time directly from China at the behest of the Chinese Government.<sup>327</sup> However, the sentiments expressed in these lines offer insights into the personality of Nellie Ionides, her strength of feelings towards her collection and the manner in which it should be seen in the public sphere. In short, the identity of the collection was closely bound to her own identity as collector, a role she had confidently played since her youth and had shaped her self-identity. On the reluctance of collectors to participate in organized societies and group activities, Susan Pearce notes, ‘The heart of the matter seems to be a strong sense of singularity and of the unique importance of themselves as individuals and of their collections as a part of themselves: this holy ground would be profane if others came too close to it or turned out to collect the same things in the same ways’.<sup>328</sup> The emphasis placed by Nellie Ionides on maintaining the integrity of her named collection in full would resurface some years later in relation to her bequest to the national museums and is discussed in full Chapter 4.

It is perhaps unsurprising that Basil Ionides was not approached by the organizing committee to contribute articles from his own collection to this exhibition, which emphasized the dynastic progression of domestic and imperial Chinese art up to the eighteenth-century. From the exhibition catalogue, it is clear that the history of Chinese export trade was intentionally excluded from the exhibition narrative, although examples of Canton enamels manufactured for this purpose could be found in Gallery XI, dedicated to the arts of the eighteenth-century.<sup>329</sup> A pair of Canton enamel pictures decorated with ‘Lancret Scenes’ are worthy of note, reproducing European subjects modelled on European print sources in a similar manner to articles of European style Chinese export porcelain of the same period.<sup>330</sup> Basil Ionides had

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<sup>327</sup> Earlier exhibitions were more akin to ethnographic displays, such as ‘Chinese Life and Art’, 25<sup>th</sup> July – 4<sup>th</sup> September 1901, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London.

‘1935-36 - International Exhibition of Chinese Art | Exhibition Catalogues | RA Collection | Royal Academy of Arts’, accessed 21 August 2018, <http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/exhibition-catalogue/1935-36-international-exhibition-of-chinese-art>.

<sup>328</sup> Pearce, *On Collecting. An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. p.231.

<sup>329</sup> Donors of Canton enamels included national museums such as the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam and the Royal Scottish Museum as well as private collectors Mr and Mrs Alfred Clark, Lord and Lady Aberconway and the London dealer Spink and Son, Ltd.. Most objects were decorated with Chinese motifs. See ‘1935-36 - International Exhibition of Chinese Art | Exhibition Catalogues | RA Collection | Royal Academy of Arts’.

<sup>330</sup> Nicholas Lancret (1690-1743) was an early eighteenth-century French painter and follower of Watteau. His *fêtes gallants* and conversation pieces were widely distributed through the print medium.

collected objects of this type prior to his marriage, as evidenced in the Sparks archive and discussed in Chapter 1. The Vestibule at the Royal Academy was titled, 'European Taste' and displayed five examples of pictorial arts in a range of media including 'Eighteenth-century panels of painted paper', a silk tapestry and fresco. As only two of these items were photographed for the catalogue, it is difficult to assess the visual form of the group as a whole and in fact how this constituted 'European Taste', but it is likely that the 'panels of painted paper' were examples of Chinese wallpaper produced for export to Europe.<sup>331</sup>

The International Exhibition of Chinese Art of 1935-6 was hugely successful and received the royal patronage of King George and Queen Mary, who also loaned objects from their own collections. The following year, the Queen became patroness of the OCS and would continue in this role until her death in 1953. Her longstanding relationship with the Ionides and shared interest in collecting Chinese art objects was discussed earlier in this thesis and here coincides in the context of the collecting society. The Ionides appear first as members in 1945 and participated in an exhibition shortly after. In the period immediately following the Second World War, the OCS sought new premises and moved to occupy the basement of the dealer Bluett and Sons in 1946.<sup>332</sup> Exhibitions were held in the gallery space above bi-annually and the Ionides contributed to the second titled 'Chinese Ceramic Figures', from April 8<sup>th</sup> to June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1947.<sup>333</sup> The committee for the exhibition included A.L.Hetherington, W.B.Honey, A.J.Kiddell and Bernard Rackham with Mrs. Walter Sedgwick acting as Chair. Objects on display ranged from a Han dynasty bear (206 BC-220 AD) lent by Mr.C.Lane Roberts to a pair of Tang dynasty tumblers (618-906 AD) from the collection of Sir Alan Barlow. According to the published catalogue, twenty-four items were lent by the Hon. Mrs. Ionides, predominantly of the Kangxi Period (1662-1722) and later eighteenth century, including a number of horses, birds and figurines. Only one object, a large white glazed figure of Christ, now in the V&A, was lent by Mr. Basil Ionides and this appears to be the only time he agreed to participate in such an exhibition (Appendix.Fig.9).<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Loaned by the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine.

<sup>332</sup> Commonly known as Bluetts, the OCS was based there from 1946-56. For a short history of the dealer, see Dominic Jellinek, 'Bluett Essay', 1 and 2 (2005). <https://carp.arts.gla.ac.uk/essay1.php?enum=1120119551>

<sup>333</sup> Bernard Rackham, 'Catalogue of the Exhibition of Chinese Ceramic Figures from April 8th to June 21st 1947', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 22 (47 1946): 50-97.

<sup>334</sup> V&A: C.105-1963, Cat. No. 87. Height 14 in. p.57 According to the Catalogue, 'Date and origin uncertain' but now attributed to Dehua, c.1875-1925.

The separate identification of each collector, Nellie and Basil Ionides, with their own specialist area of interest has already been noted. However, on close investigation, it is likely that some of the European-style objects listed here as ‘Lent by the Hon Mrs Ionides’ later passed to the V&A as part of the Basil Ionides Bequest in 1951 or 1963, raising questions regarding the parameters of the collection and the Basil Ionides Bequest itself, a subject which will be further interrogated in the following chapter.<sup>335</sup> Mrs Ionides is thanked in ‘Transactions for the Year’ for hosting the society to view her collection in July 1947 but Basil’s collection of European style Chinese export porcelain receives no separate mention at that time, suggesting it was considered of little interest to members or was otherwise unavailable.<sup>336</sup>

A review of ‘Chinese Ceramics Figures’ written by Bernard Rackham, formerly Keeper of Ceramics at the V&A (1918-1938), allows us to consider his personal response to Chinese ceramics of different historical periods and styles, and in turn the status of European style Chinese export porcelain at the centre of this study.<sup>337</sup> Rackham embarks on a universalist approach, as was the convention at the time, expounding upon the motivations for modelling in clay and the creation of ‘clay sculpture’, before comparing Chinese ceramics to the art and pottery of ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance, in so doing imposing a Eurocentric narrative onto the history of Chinese ceramics. He recalls the ‘revelation’ on seeing Tang tomb figures for the first time some years earlier, which he compares unfavorably to the ‘stiff, toy-like images’ of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Works of later periods such as those loaned by the Ionides are however acknowledged for their mastery of colour and glaze rather than their plastic qualities. On collecting, Rackham concedes:

‘Even if the eagerness with which such things were sought at high prices by an earlier generation of collectors may have abated, no one with an eye for colour or delicacy of material will wish to challenge their admission to a high place in the achievement of ceramic modelling’.

Rackham’s review echoes the earlier writings of Roger Fry which promoted a formalist or ‘aesthetic’ approach to the study of Chinese art, as discussed in Chapter 2.<sup>338</sup> It is clear that

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<sup>335</sup> V&A: C.17-1951, Figure of a Dutchman, Cat.No.92. V&A: C.96-1963, Pair of European figures, Cat.No.106. V&A: C.14-1951, Pair of European Dancers, Cat.No.108.

<sup>336</sup> ‘TOCS-1946-1947-Volume-22.Pdf’. p. 7

<sup>337</sup> ‘TOCS-1946-1947-Volume-22.Pdf’.

<sup>338</sup> Parfect, ‘Roger Fry, Chinese Art and The Burlington Magazine’.

by 1947, collecting figurines from later China was distinctly out of vogue, being more cheaply available than a few decades earlier. The wares of early China which by then were readily available in London were considered by Rackham and his OCS peers to be aesthetically superior to later works of Chinese art and were discussed in those terms.<sup>339</sup>

Whilst no photographs of Ionides objects in situ at Bluetts in the OCS exhibition survive, extant photographs of OCS exhibitions of a similar date suggest the manner in which they were displayed at the dealer's (Fig.3.5). From the exhibition, 'Celadon Wares' of the same year (October 20<sup>th</sup> – December 20<sup>th</sup> 1947), objects can be seen formally arranged on horizontal shelving and numbered in a museum manner (Fig. 3.6).<sup>340</sup> It is likely that OCS exhibitions were organised according to similar criteria to those at the British Museum or V&A under the supervision of museum experts who lent their academic expertise and exhibition experience to these small, specialist displays. In this context, objects from the Ionides collection were situated chronologically within the ceramic history of China, emphasising the classification and periodisation of individual works and their place of manufacture.<sup>341</sup> Five hundred 'public attendances' are cited for the exhibition in addition to those of OCS members, which then numbered three hundred and fifty. In addition to the publication of *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society (TOCS)* circulated to members, catalogues for each exhibition were also printed for sale. Limited public access therefore allowed individuals outside the society to attend the exhibitions and purchase the catalogue, although it is likely these visitors had some prior knowledge of or connection to the field of ceramics or Chinese art.

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<sup>339</sup> In his advisory role to Chinese ceramic collector, Berkeley Smith, Rackham actively encouraged him to purchase the wares of early China to make the collection 'museum-worthy'. Louise Tythacott, 'The Power of Taste: The Dispersal of the Berkeley Smith Collection of Chinese Ceramics at Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum (1921–1960)', *Journal of the History of Collections* 28, no. 2 (July 2016): 327–43, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhv033>.

<sup>340</sup> Plates 23-30 in T.O.C.S. Vol.24, 1948-49, show a number of displays for the later exhibition, 'Monochrome Porcelain of the Ming and Manchu Dynasties', whereby objects are arranged in a similar manner.

<sup>341</sup> Dehua porcelain is separately listed at the end of the exhibition catalogue and receives separate mention by Rackham.



Fig. 3.5 Bluett & Sons, 48 Davies Street, Brook Street, London. [Image: ©Department of History of Art, University of Glasgow]

PLATE 15

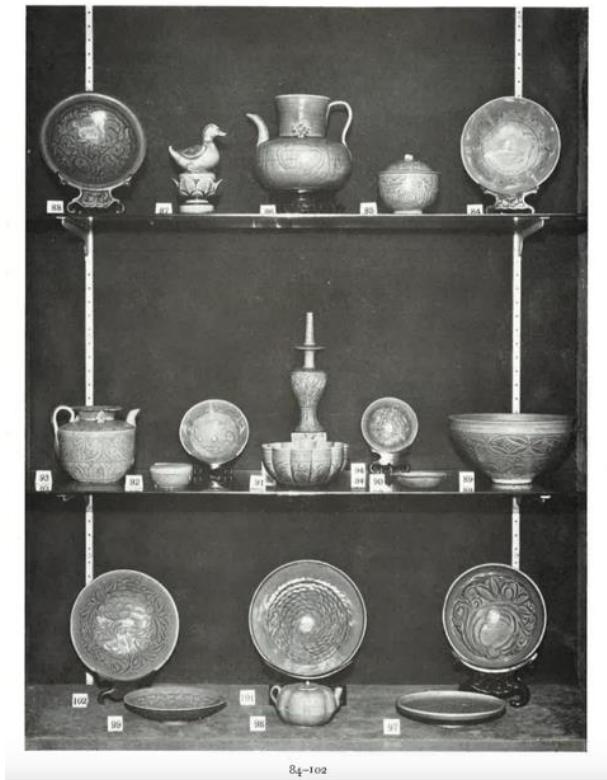


Fig. 3.6 Display of objects at Bluett's, OCS Exhibition 'Celadon Wares', Oct 20<sup>th</sup>-Dec 20<sup>th</sup> 1947, Plate 15, TOCS Vol.23. [Photographed with permission from the copy in the NAL].



The 1947 exhibition is the only occasion when the Ionides participated in an OCS exhibition or hosted the society; their membership ceased in 1949 shortly before the death of Basil Ionides the following year. However, contact between the Ionides and prominent members undoubtedly continued. Leigh Ashton, Arthur Lane and William B.Honey of the V&A were well acquainted with the Ionides as was Basil Gray of the British Museum. Sotheby's expert, Jim Kiddell knew the Ionides too and according to Toby Jessel, Nellie's grandson, 'would often bring things to her to sound out her opinion on identification and to ask her view on authenticity'.<sup>342</sup> It was Kiddell and Ashton who visited Buxted Park shortly after the death of Basil Ionides and supervised the implementation of his Will, and the selection of objects for the Basil Ionides Bequest at the V&A, which forms the primary focus of the following chapter.<sup>343</sup>

Why the Ionides chose to join the Oriental Ceramic Society in the years immediately following the War is an interesting question. The couple were already well acquainted with leading experts in the field of Chinese ceramics prior to this time and appear to have established their own areas of interest to which they remained committed, despite the increased availability of Chinese ceramics of all types. As evidenced by the Royal Academy Archive, Nellie Ionides would only agree to lend objects for exhibition on her own terms, no matter how prestigious the occasion. Perhaps the couple were encouraged by their friend and OCS patroness, Queen Mary, to join the Society as its activities resumed in the post-war period. They may have joined in order to lend to the 1947 exhibition, 'Chinese Ceramic Figures'; a subject of particular interest to the couple and this being a requirement then as now for participation in Society exhibitions. Their membership however was brief, and Nellie Ionides never rejoined in the years following her husband's death in 1950.

### *Conclusions*

In the absence of personal archives or documentary evidence concerning the collecting practices of the Ionides, this chapter has reconstructed, as far as possible, the formative stages in the life of the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain between

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<sup>342</sup> Jessel, 'Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides - History and Connections with Twickenham'. Transcript p.5

<sup>343</sup> The young Marcus Linell of Sotheby's assisted Kiddell at Buxted Park and his recollections are noted in the following chapter.

1930-50. Through detailed analysis and cross-referencing a range of primary sources, including the documentary archives of national museums and art dealers, auction records and private correspondence, it has been possible to observe the active engagement and participation of the Ionides in networks connecting them to fellow collectors, dealers, auction houses, agents and advisors in the private and the commercial field of Chinese art. The break-up of family estates immediately preceding and during the War resulted in the proliferation of sales of private 'heirloom' collections, including many rare examples of European style Chinese export porcelain which made their way into the Ionides collection at that time. While the circumstances of each sale is unclear – whether driven by financial necessity or the absence of interested heirs willing to take on the stewardship of family art collections – the auction acted as an engine of social change, dismantling the old to make way for the new. The resulting availability of Chinese art objects on the art market benefitted the Ionides who had ample funds to purchase objects for their growing collections and continued to do so during fraught socio-political times.

Simultaneously, Chinese art objects arriving directly from China, through the purchase of private individuals such as Willie Ranken or professional dealers such as Sparks, had by then expanded the range of Chinese ceramics available in the Britain, in particular in London, as evidenced through the records of specialist dealers and auction houses of the period.<sup>344</sup> This chapter has shown that the traditional distinction between scholarly or 'serious' collectors of early or domestic Chinese ceramics, and collectors of later wares, including European style Chinese export porcelain, is perhaps more fluid than we are led to believe. Nellie Ionides purchased a punch bowl decorated in European style from the collection of Steven Winkworth, OCS founder and later President, who publicly championed the wares of early China but also owned articles of European style Chinese export porcelain such as this. Furthermore, on close examination of her purchases through Sparks, Nellie acquired amongst other items Tang figurines, Ming porcelain and Qing monochrome wares, indicating a more catholic taste than might be expected. Willie Ranken's collection of Chinese art objects also incorporated a range of objects of widely divergent dates, media and purpose which bear close similarity to those collected by the Ionides, indicating a shared taste amongst at least some members of elite society.

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<sup>344</sup> During the 1920s and 30s, Sparks had a shop in Shanghai at 103 Chiao Tung Road. Huang, 'John Sparks, the Art Dealer and Chinese Art in England, 1902-1936'.

The study of the material archive undertaken for the purpose of this research confirmed the existence of a cataloguing system by the Ionides, indicating a degree of systematic collecting and object management as items were ordered and grouped according to design typology rather than periodization or place of manufacture. Through the process of cross-referencing surviving documentary archives, details of the original organization and display at Buxted Park have been expanded, enhancing our understanding of the display strategies utilized by Basil Ionides beyond those made visible through the photographic record of *Country Life Magazine* as discussed in the previous chapter. The discovery of the inventory list, known as List 1, made for valuation purposes by Sotheby's, is significant as the only document to define the full extent of the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain before the V&A made their first selection for the Basil Ionides Bequest in 1951, in so doing redefining the parameters of the collection according to criteria laid out by the national museum as opposed to the private collector. The complexity of this process and the impact of decisions made by the museum on the next phase in the life of the collection will be discussed in full in the following chapter.

For the twenty years of their marriage, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain which later formed the bequest was publicly exhibited outside the private realm of the Ionides' home, and Nellie Ionides refused to exhibit objects from her collection at the internationally significant exhibition of Chinese art at the Royal Academy, offering insights into her self-identity as collector and lack of interest in the Chinese art world. Following the War, she appears to have had a change of heart, exhibiting a select number of individual objects to the restricted and specialist audience who attended the quasi-public exhibition organized by the Oriental Ceramic Society in 1947. The brief involvement of the Ionides with the society at this time indicates perhaps a more active engagement with fellow collectors of Chinese ceramics but did not influence the objects they chose to collect. The display of 'Chinese Ceramic Figures' in the exhibition differed considerably from the private displays at Buxted Park, whereby objects were formally arranged and juxtaposed with Chinese ceramics from the collections of other OCS members in order to meet the exhibition narrative as defined by the organizing committee, in which the Ionides played no role. The exhibition presented a comprehensive and chronological ceramic history of China from ancient to modern times, as understood at that time. In the exhibition catalogue, Ionides' objects of Qing origin were critically compared

with those of the earlier Tang or Song dynasties, which may explain in part their short-lived membership of the Society and unwillingness to exhibit again.

Finally, this chapter has established the key areas of interest for the collectors. Whilst Nellie Ionides purchased many more items than her husband, Basil's interest in European style Chinese export porcelain is clear and forms the bulk of the bequest at the V&A, the principal focus of this thesis. As Jim Kiddell later remarked, 'Basil had a taste for Chinese export porcelain with European figures or scenes from Kang Hsi to Chien Lung, Nellie paid!'<sup>345</sup> This observation is supported by evidence in the Sparks Archive which suggests that Nellie may have been purchasing objects of this type in order to gift them to, or on behalf of, her husband. The importance of ownership of individual objects in the collection appears to fluctuate throughout their marriage, at times apparently of trifling significance but clearly defined and stated in other circumstances. The nebulous nature of the collection and its ownership would later result in legal confusion and disagreement between Nellie Ionides and the national museums which will be discussed in full in the following chapter.

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<sup>345</sup> Hermann Papers, 'File "Jim Kiddell"'.

## **PART II: THE IONIDES COLLECTION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE**

### **CHAPTER FOUR**

#### **From Private Collection to Public Institution: Fragmentation, Transformation and Reconstruction**

The Ionides Collection, ill-defined as it is, continued its life after the death of Basil when it was transformed from a private collection, reflecting the personal taste of the designer/collector as outlined in the previous chapters, to a significant part of the national collections at the V&A and British Museum in London. The transmission of objects from the private to the public sphere was complex and protracted, spanning a period of nearly three decades, from the first promise of the Basil Ionides Bequest to the V&A in 1935 to its final accession in 1963. The dialogue between private individual and public institution is played out in letters and official correspondence surviving in the museum archives which constitute the primary source of this chapter. Whilst the name of Basil Ionides is most closely associated with the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain at the V&A, it is notably absent from the British Museum record, where objects appear as gift or bequest of his wife, once more raising the question of ownership of individual objects and authorship of the collection as a whole. The relationship between both collectors and the national museums will therefore be considered, prior to and following the death of Basil Ionides in 1950.

Through the study of archival documents and the current museum collections, this chapter seeks to reconstruct the full extent of the original collection before its dispersal, mapping the sequence of events leading to its accession and subsequent actions that determined and defined the character of the re-formed ‘micro-collections’ at the V&A and British Museum. The division of the Ionides Collection between the national museums and the further subdivision at the V&A between the separate Departments of Ceramics and Circulation created smaller ‘capsule’ collections, each emphasizing different facets of the original collection of European style Chinese export porcelain, offering insights into the choices made by museum experts at a fixed point in time. The selection of objects, based principally on porcelain typology and design history will be considered, shedding light on the priorities of the museum and conflicting attitudes towards this category of porcelain in the post-war period.

This chapter will also consider the relationship between collector, museum and the art market. The auctioneer, Jim Kiddell of Sotheby's was not only instrumental in building up the Ionides collection, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, but played a significant part in its final dispersal and sale on the art market which is quantified here for the first time. It was Kiddell who performed the final valuation of the private collection of European style Chinese export porcelain at Buxted Park, who subsequently accompanied Leigh Ashton to make the first selection for the V&A, and later organized the sales of the residue collection following the death of Nellie Ionides. This chapter will question to what extent the auctioneer played an active role in encouraging the collector, Nellie Ionides, to sell her own collection of Chinese porcelain, once promised to the national museums, and the remainder of the collection of European style Chinese export porcelain collected by Basil Ionides on the London art market, in so doing further dispersing the once extensive collection.

#### *Private Collectors and the Museum: Early Contact Before the Bequest*

Basil Ionides and his wife both had pre-existing and independent relationships with the V&A prior to their marriage. The first correspondence with the former Hon Mrs Walter Levy dates to February 1917 and details the loan of a Japanese embroidered kimono for a period of twelve months in the Loan Court.<sup>346</sup> Over subsequent years, her catholic taste is evident in the range of material gifted or loaned to the museum; a collection of glass (including a Chinese glass bottle) in 1922 and an important carving by Grinling Gibbons, bought for the sum of £100 in 1928.<sup>347</sup> In 1930, a Japanese stupa was offered first to the V&A but subsequently passed over to the British Museum, regarded by museum experts as a more appropriate repository for the piece.<sup>348</sup> In the field of ceramics, a collection of 117 Meissen Harlequins were displayed in the Loan Court in 1930 and offered once more for display in 1931.

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<sup>346</sup> MA/1/1245, V&A Archives. The Octagon Court or Loan Court was used at that time for the mixed display of loaned objects, see John Physick, *The Victoria and Albert Museum, the History of Its Building* (London: V&A Publications, 1982). p. 191

<sup>347</sup> Lace Cravat of carved lime wood by Grinling Gibbons, W181:1-1928. Formerly in the collection of Horace Warpole and bought at the Hercules Read Sale at Sotheby's, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov 1928, Lot 528. Bought on the request of the museum by M. Spero on behalf of Nellie Ionides. Sotheby's Sale Catalogue Oct-Dec 1928, NAL 23.UU

<sup>348</sup> BM: 1930,0424.1 See MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the possible bequest of her significant collection of ‘Battersea Enamels’ dominates correspondence between Mrs Levy and the museum.<sup>349</sup> First offered in 1924, the bequest was revoked in 1927 following the publication of the Royal Commission on Museums and Galleries that gave museums discretionary powers over the dispersal of collections. Mrs Levy makes clear her intention to preserve the collection in its totality as ‘The Levy Bequest’ at this time. Despite this setback, the collector later donated a sub-collection of seventy-one English enameled wine labels and a single snuff-box in 1948, in addition to five eighteenth century porcelain cups from the Worcester porcelain factory.<sup>350</sup> A small selection of pieces were presented in her memory to the museum by her executors following her death in 1962; the remainder was sold with the rest of her extensive art collection at Sotheby’s in 1963/4.

Early correspondence between Basil Ionides and the museum alludes to his professional occupation as interior designer, reflected in his gifts to the V&A which were valued principally as study objects. In 1921, two Liverpool printed tiles and four specimens of mid nineteenth century wallpaper were welcomed by the curator, Martin Hardie, who anticipated the arrival of more.<sup>351</sup> Samples of eighteenth century wallpaper and textiles were accessioned in 1922 and 1926, and a supportive relationship appears to develop between Basil Ionides and the V&A at this time.<sup>352</sup>

‘I saw this morning a Flock Wall paper of about the date 1700, belonging to Mr B Ionides, a decorator of No 7a Grafton Street. It consists of a number of strips (H about 8ft, W2 to 3ft), decorated in flock coloured brown and green with a design of vases and scrolls with a dado below. It was removed from a house in Folkstone, but is supposed to be Dutch; there is a suggestion of Marot about the designs. Mr Ionides proposed to put up the wall-paper in a library, but thinks he may have a strip over, in which case he will let us know and present the strip to the Museum’.

O. Brackett, 23 Oct. 1922. MA/1/1245, V&A Archive

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<sup>349</sup> Nellie Ionides was an established collector of English Enamels or ‘Battersea Enamels’ as they were widely known, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. See Jourdain, ‘English Enamels in the Hon. Mrs. Ionides’ Collection’.

<sup>350</sup> V&A: C.5 to L-1948. V&A: C.92+A-1948.

<sup>351</sup> Gift submitted for approval, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1921, E.1113-1116. MA/1/1245, V&A Archives. Minute note, Martin Hardie, 18/7/21, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>352</sup> V&A: E.3614&3615-1922 Two panels of ‘Flock’ wallpaper. V&A: T.23-1926 Panel of silk damask.

Following their marriage in 1930, dialogue continued between the V&A and both collectors, independently and occasionally together.<sup>353</sup> Chinese porcelain does not feature in the correspondence until the first mention of the bequest in 1935:

‘Dear Ionides

I am afraid I have kept you a long time waiting for a definite answer to the very kind and welcome proposal which you made to me a week or two ago about your collection of Eastern ceramics with armorial decorations. I spoke to Rackham about this as soon as I had a chance (he was away at the moment) and he naturally agrees with me that there is little doubt that our successors would accept such a bequest with the greatest gratitude when it materializes; particularly as you were kind enough to imply that you did not propose to make any legal conditions as to the way in which the pieces were to be shown.

I can assure you that it is a very great encouragement to all of us when people such as you and your wife tell us of beneficent intentions like this; even though we are not ourselves in the least likely (fortunately for you!) to have the handling of them’.

Leigh Ashton, 15 November 1935, Basil Ionides Nominal File, MA/1/I245, V&A Archives.

The timing of this letter, written shortly before the opening of the groundbreaking International Exhibition of Chinese Art on 28 November 1935 in which Ashton and Rackham played a significant role, and the wording of the bequest are worthy of note.<sup>354</sup> The singular focus of the collection on armorial porcelain at this time is far narrower than that of the final bequest as specified over a decade later. Nevertheless, the interest expressed by Ashton indicates that whilst the taste amongst private collectors of Chinese ceramics had undoubtedly shifted towards objects from early China or imperial provenance, as exemplified by the Burlington House exhibition, European style Chinese export porcelain continued to hold the interest of influential curators at the leading national museums.

As Chapter 3 demonstrates, the Ionides continued to purchase Chinese art objects in the years immediately preceding and during the War, expanding the size and scope of the collection of

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<sup>353</sup> Both Nellie and Basil Ionides participated in discussions regarding the gift of two objects; a leather medallion of Louis XIV and a carved partridge in 1935. MA/1/I245, V&A Archives.

<sup>354</sup> Leigh Ashton and Bernard Rackham were both members of the Executive Committee for the 1935 exhibition. See Neill Malcolm et al., *Chinese Art: The Exhibition at Burlington House* (London: London Mercury, 1935). ‘1935-36 - International Exhibition of Chinese Art | Exhibition Catalogues | RA Collection | Royal Academy of Arts’.



European style Chinese export porcelain. In Basil Ionides' amended Will of 1946, the collection is described in the following terms:

'I bequeath my collection of Famille Rose China with European decoration to the Victoria and Albert Museum.'

Will of Basil Ionides dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 1946, Principal Probate Registry of the High Court of Justice, London [accessed December 2014].

The ambiguity of this terminology in light of the bequest is today clear, as established in the Introduction to this thesis, but was not initially deemed problematic nor was it the principal source of subsequent confusion and disagreement regarding the parameters of the bequest and its transfer to the museum, discussed in full below. Furthermore, the timing of this final Will coincided with a more public engagement between the Ionides and fellow collectors and specialists in the field of Chinese ceramics following World War II, when the couple became members of the Oriental Ceramic Society for the first time and participated in the exhibition of Chinese Ceramic Figures shortly thereafter, as discussed in the previous chapter.

### *The Basil Ionides Bequest: First Selection 1951*

Following the death of Basil Ionides on 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 1950, V&A Director Leigh Ashton visited the Ionides' country residence, Buxted Park on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1951, accompanied by Jim Kiddell of Sotheby's who had visited the property three months earlier for the purpose of valuation.<sup>355</sup> In his letter to Arthur Lane (1909-1963), Keeper of Ceramics, Ashton explains that he was invited by Nellie Ionides 'to select immediately whatever I thought desirable from her husband's collection'.<sup>356</sup> At this point, the Director believed that the entire collection had been left to the V&A, 'after her life interest' but that Nellie Ionides wished to commemorate her husband during the present generation.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Marcus Linell (Sotheby's) recalls spending three weeks at Buxted Park with his senior colleague, Jim Kiddell cataloguing the collection for valuation, noting the volume of material, which included many duplicates and damaged pieces tucked away in drawers. Private interview, 24 September 2014.

<sup>356</sup> Minute Sheet, 343, 23 Jan 1951, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives. Although Lane published on Chinese and Islamic ceramics, the majority of his literary output focused on European ceramics.

<sup>357</sup> In a letter to the Director, Nellie Ionides both thanked the museum for allowing her to keep objects from her husband's collection during her life, and her wish that when the final selection was made, following her own

Ashton praised the collection for its rarity, quality and brevity, stating:

‘The collection, which consists entirely of Chinese porcelain with European subjects, is very large and could never be made again. It represents about fifty years patient accumulation...

I selected some sixty pieces, mainly with a view to types we do not possess, though, here, a number of things may have crept in which we already have, and also in order to make a reasonable exhibition. I left out the large collection of splendid blue-and-white with European figures, mainly because of its size and also because we have so much blue-and-white already.’

Minute Sheet 343, 23 Jan 1951, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives

This comment indicates the often under-recognised forces which operated on collections and the practice of collecting in the context of the Museum. Ashton continues:

‘I am in favour of keeping Mrs Ionides happy as she hinted that she would probably leave us her other Oriental porcelain in addition to the Battersea enamels and, perhaps, some of the furniture. Heaven knows what we shall do with the Chinese porcelain but it is by far and away the most important collection in private hands and represents to satiation precisely the kind of expensive types of which we are a little short.’ Ibid.

In addition, Nellie Ionides gifted four items to the Museum: one eighteenth century Chinese bowl decorated with landscapes in the style of early Meissen, a pair of French porcelain tea caddies and two figures of Chinese mandarins by Jacob Petit of Fontainebleau.<sup>358</sup>

Following the arrival of the Ionides Collection at the Museum, Arthur Lane expressed his initial reservations. Whilst acknowledging that, ‘we have no pieces quite like those you selected from the Basil Ionides Collection of Chinese porcelain with European subjects’, he questioned whether the museum, ‘ought to devote more of our exiguous space to what are in

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death, the collection should be known as the Basil Ionides Bequest. Her name would be associated at the museum with objects from her own collections which at that time were included in her Will.

Letter from Nellie Ionides to Sir Leigh Ashton, 9 Feb 1951, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>358</sup> V&A: C.64-1951. Dish, porcelain decorated with European landscapes and gilding (exterior) and Chinese landscape (base). Currently catalogued as part of the Basil Ionides Bequest, Leigh Ashton clearly states that this piece was a gift from Mrs Ionides. Folio 241/40 (1492), 29<sup>th</sup> January 1951, MA/1/1245, V&A. V&A: C.65+A-1951. Pagoda-shaped flask, Jacob Petit porcelain c. 1840.

V&A: C.66 and 67-1951. Both these items were deaccessioned and disposed of in 1997 (28.08.1997 and 07.08.1997). V&A CMS2\_32a.

the main curiosities rather than works of art'.<sup>359</sup> Furthermore, he noted that several pieces were in poor condition and may not be suitable for permanent display, suggesting that a display of selected items in the Recent Acquisitions Court would satisfy the expectations of Mrs Ionides and, 'the rest will have to wait till the Chinese rooms on the top floor are in order'. In the Minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> April 1951, Lane frankly expresses his misgivings towards the collection and guards against 'having to take any more'. Apart from those exceptional blue and white pieces observed by Ashton on his earlier visit, the Keeper suggests that the Ceramics Department renounce any further claim to the collection. The conflict between Ashton and Lane regarding the Basil Ionides Bequest is clear from the documentary record but ultimately the Director's view prevailed, and the Museum stated it would not relinquish its right to the remainder of the collection at that time.

The partial acceptance of the bequest would initiate a complex tripartite correspondence between the Museum, the Estate Duty Office and Solicitors Messrs. Waltons & Co. acting on behalf of the Ionides which lasted over three years. Central to the matter lay the legal and financial status of those items deemed to be 'of national scientific, historic or artistic interest' and as such exempt from duty under Section 15(2) of the Finance Act 1894. As requests for clarification from Messrs. Walton & Co. grow more insistent in the V&A archive, communication concerning this aspect of the Basil Ionides Bequest becomes visibly absent from the documentary record.<sup>360</sup> In the course of this research it was discovered that files pertaining to the bequest had been removed from the V&A Archives and placed under restricted access at the National Archives at Kew, as outlined in the previous Chapter.<sup>361</sup> Once these files were released into the public domain, missing articles of the historical record were revealed, simultaneously raising questions concerning the nebulous shape of the collection and the part played by the Museum.

Initially, the selection of sixty pieces from the collection of Basil Ionides appears to suffice, the remainder staying at Buxted Park with Nellie Ionides and the rest of her collection.<sup>362</sup> Establishing the boundaries of the bequest and by extension the collections of husband and wife, as necessitated for legal purposes, would prove to be problematic, provoking personal

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<sup>359</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1951, Minute Sheet, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>360</sup> See letter from Messrs. Walton & Co., 19<sup>th</sup> January 1951, ED/B.P.107/2. MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>361</sup> IR 62/2365 Bequests to the Victoria and Albert Museum: articles exempted from death duties, being of national, scientific, historic or artistic interest: B Ionides. The National Archives.

<sup>362</sup> As confirmed by Messrs. Walton & Co. 19<sup>th</sup> July 1951, ED/B.P.107/2/1950, National Archives.

and professional oppositions within the Museum. Whilst Nellie Ionides openly discussed her husband's collection as a separate entity in the months immediately following his death, by late 1951 she claimed the collection was in fact intermingled with her own, a view supported by Leigh Ashton:

‘In the opinion of Mrs. Ionides the unraveling of her collection and her husband's was virtually impossible. I should say, myself, that this is undoubtedly the case and as Mrs. Ionides paid for everything in any case, it may well be that we should get no farther by pressing the point that we must legally be allowed to have the residue of Mr. Ionides' collection. I have therefore decided that we will accept the suggestion of the solicitor that as Mrs. Ionides has left her collection, or such of it as the Museum would accept, to the Museum on her death, I consider the Museum's interests sufficiently safeguarded by this.’

Leigh Ashton, 18<sup>th</sup> September 1951, Basil Ionides Nominal File, MA/1/I245, V&A Archives.

For the purposes of the Estate Duty Office further clarification was required; remission of Estate Duty could only be allowed on those items taken over by the museum and exemption for the remainder granted subject to further legal conditions.<sup>363</sup> A request was made, ‘to make arrangements for the articles to be available for inspection when desired’, and the museum responded accordingly. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1952, J.F. Hayward, Assistant Keeper of Metalwork, travelled to Buxted Park to be shortly followed on 20<sup>th</sup> March by Ralph Edwards, Keeper of Furniture, and Arthur Lane, Keeper of Ceramics. The three museum experts checked items in the house against a nineteen-page valuation drawn up by Sotheby's for probate on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950, referred to as List 1.<sup>364</sup> All details of this exercise and the original list had been removed from the V&A files but were rediscovered in the course of this research at the National Archives.

Arthur Lane gives a detailed account of his visit to Buxted which was the first time he had personally inspected the collection as itemized on pages 1-17 of the list. In summation, he evaluated the significance of the collection:

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<sup>363</sup> Subject to conditions laid down by S40 of the FA1930 as amended by S48 of the FA1950. See letter from Messrs Waltons and Co., 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 1952: ED/BP107/2/50 Ref: AH/C, National Archives.

<sup>364</sup> ‘List 1, The Collection of Oriental Lowestoft Porcelain’, ED/BP107/4/50(2). IR 62/2365 Bequests to the Victoria and Albert Museum: articles exempted from death duties, being of national, scientific, historic or artistic interest: B Ionides. National Archives.

‘The collection is a specialized one, of Chinese porcelain shaped or decorated in European style, and in a few cases bearing decoration added in Europe soon after arrival from the East. The period it covers is from about 1680-1800. Apart from the merit shown by many pieces as works of art, the collection is of extraordinary interest for the light it throws on European taste and on commercial relationships with the Far East during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Porcelain was not made in Europe on a large scale until the second quarter of the century, and the Chinese ware remained cheaper till the end. European silver, engravings, drawings, and objects of pottery and porcelain were sent to China as patterns; the copies and adaptations made in porcelain by the Chinese workmen show great skill but little comprehension of the subject matter, and European society and fashion are consequently represented as if in a distorting mirror, with very entertaining results.

The Collection has been built up over many years and is the most comprehensive of its kind ever made. Though some pieces are damaged, I recommend the collection as a whole for exception under the Act.’

Arthur Lane, 24 March 1952, Minute Sheet Ref: ED/BP/107/2/50, National Archives.

On the request of Nellie Ionides, a further three items were added to the list. The overall valuation was left unchanged although in Lane’s view was pitched rather low. Six hundred and eighty-seven individual objects are itemized on List 1, many of which were given detailed descriptions pertaining to decorative style, motif and condition.<sup>365</sup> The location of objects within named rooms, cabinets and even their placement on shelves was also specified, offering further insights into the original display at Buxted Park and the interior design and collecting strategies enacted by Ionides. Lane was able to cross-reference many items from List 1 and List 2 and pinpoint their precise location before being removed to South Kensington. He noted that two ‘Jacob Petit figures of Chinamen and two stands’ at the end of List 2 were originally a gift from Nellie Ionides and should be deleted from the Basil Ionides Bequest. In the opinion of Arthur Lane, List 1 constituted the entirety of the Basil Ionides Bequest left to the V&A in his Will. Furthermore, he addressed the point of Nellie Ionides’ life-interest in his Addendum:

‘Acting on a hint from the Estate Duty Office, I had the Will examined at Somerset House and learnt to my surprise that there is no reference whatever to Mrs Ionides life-interest. It appears that my Director has been laboring under a misapprehension on this point since January 1951.

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<sup>365</sup> Many pieces are described as damaged or in poor condition. Those selected for the V&A are consistently listed as ‘very rare’.

It is nevertheless convenient that the present arrangement should continue for the reasons I have stated above. Mrs Ionides is most unlikely to want to part with any of her late husband's collection as it forms an integral part of the decoration of the house. The peculiar character of the items, together with the list made for Probate, should make it easy enough to distinguish them from her own possessions when they eventually are listed and valued for probate.' Ibid.

Further questions were raised by Waltons & Co. acting on behalf of Nellie Ionides the following year:

'A number of items which have been placed on the list [of furniture] were never the property of the late Basil Ionides. They are and always have been the property of Mrs Ionides, and were not in fact included in the valuation of articles for which exemption from estate duty was not claimed, made by Messrs' Sotheby & Co., dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950, a copy of which was deposited with the Estate Duty Office.'

Letter from Waltons & Co. to The Estate Duty Office, 11 June 1952. National Archives.

This comment relates directly to furniture owned by Basil Ionides and identified against a copy extract from the Probate Valuation of 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950. As neither furniture nor metalwork were bequeathed to the museum in his final Will, the issue does not concern us here but is worthy of note. Regarding Chinese porcelain not yet handed over to the museum, the solicitor states that:

'it is proposed that the items should be identified by reference to Messrs. Sotheby's valuation as follows:- 'all the Articles of which particulars appear in Messrs. Sotheby & Co.s valuation in respect of Articles of which exemption from Estate duty is claimed dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950, with exception of those 62 Articles already in the possession of the Victoria and Albert Museum.' Ibid.

As the original Probate Valuation from Sotheby's does not survive, List 1 is the only remaining document detailing the collection in situ at Buxted Park. The disputed question of ownership regarding individual items in the bequest was never clearly settled at this time and perhaps was impossible to do so given the ill-defined nature of the collection and contradictory claims on the property of Basil Ionides. At this point, the subject of the bequest disappears from the V&A Archive until resurfacing a decade later.

*Nellie Ionides and the National Museums: 1952-1962*

Following the death of Basil Ionides and the subsequent discord surrounding his bequest, Nellie Ionides maintained an active relationship with the V&A, in 1952 gifting an eighteenth century 'Gaming Board' and loaning a 'Silver-mounted Razor Case' to the Museum. In 1953, the British Museum received eight pieces of Chinese porcelain donated by Nellie Ionides, including five sets of cups and saucers, a single coffee cup and two plates.<sup>366</sup> All constitute rare examples of European style Chinese export porcelain with the exception of a cup and saucer produced for the Yongzheng court (1723-35).<sup>367</sup> Some of these items can be matched to the aforementioned List 1, once more raising questions concerning ownership and problematizing any discussion of taste.<sup>368</sup>

In 1956, Nellie Ionides loaned examples of eighteenth century embroidered textiles to the V&A, displayed on the marble staircase in the entrance, indicating her continuing willingness to participate in the public display of articles in her collection at the national museum.<sup>369</sup> In the same year, a selection of chinoiserie rococo silverware featured in the Royal Academy Winter Exhibition but were returned in poor condition. As a result, Nellie Ionides refused a request made by the V&A in 1957 for the loan of her silverware for inclusion in a touring exhibition to continental Europe.<sup>370</sup>

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1959, V&A Director Trenchard Cox (1905-95) received a letter from Basil Gray (1904-1989), Keeper of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum, informing him that Nellie Ionides had offered to bequeath or present some pieces from her Chinese ceramics collection to the British Museum. Soame Jenyns, Deputy Keeper of Oriental Antiquities, had already visited Buxted and with her help selected certain pieces, mainly armorial porcelain, having been informed by Mrs Ionides that the V&A had selected all they wished from the collection shortly after her husband's death, and she was now free to dispose of the remainder. In swift response, Mrs Ionides was reminded by her solicitor that following the selection of sixty pieces from her husband's collection in 1951, the V&A had not released the

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<sup>366</sup> BM: 1953,1015.1-8

<sup>367</sup> BM: 1953,1015.7. a & b

<sup>368</sup> 'The Trumpeter', 'Neptune and the Tritons', 'The Errant Monk' are all recognizable designs donated by Nellie Ionides to the British Museum.

<sup>369</sup> 1 Embroidered Coverlet and 3 embroidered pillows, 'en suite,' English. MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>370</sup> Organised in conjunction with the British Council, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

remainder from possible future claim. As the situation once more appeared confused, Gray suggested that the two museums ‘make some sort of compromise’.<sup>371</sup>

In response, Arthur Lane was quick to explain the reasons for the significant shift in his personal stance towards the collection, before clarifying his department’s additional interest in ‘the enormous collection of ‘Battersea enamels’’, Nellie Ionides’ collection of Meissen porcelain figures and her extensive collection of Qing porcelain, whose bequest had been mentioned verbally but not in writing.<sup>372</sup> On the Basil Ionides Bequest, Lane reasserted the Museum’s claim to the collection, explaining the original reasons for its partial acceptance and that, ‘Mrs Ionides has no legal right to offer any Basil Ionides porcelain to the British Museum, as it is not her property’. Whilst acknowledging that the description ‘Famille rose China with European Decoration’ was unsatisfactory, he believed the sense to be clear. Furthermore, the list of items inspected for the Estates Duty Office was on the File (List 1) making identification of individual pieces belonging to both parties easily possible. He suggested that a satisfactory arrangement ought to be reached between the two museums.

Shortly following this exchange, three examples of Chinese export porcelain were donated by Nellie Ionides to the British Museum.<sup>373</sup> Whether these rare armorial pieces were amongst those identified by Soame Jenyns on his recent visit to Buxted Park cannot be established with certainty as no archival evidence survives at the British Museum, but the timing of the gift is notable. In 1962, Nellie Ionides was persuaded to add a clause to her Will to the satisfaction of both parties:

‘I give to the Victoria and Albert Museum such of my pieces of Chinese Porcelain bearing decoration in the European style or being copies of European figures which are at the date of my death at Buxted Park as the museum shall select and in consideration of the gift hereby made I request that the Victoria and Albert Museum shall transfer to the British Museum any pieces of Chinese Porcelain not exceeding 25 in number forming part of my own or my late husband’s collection which the British Museum shall select from those pieces of Chinese Porcelain not accepted by the Victoria and Albert Museum.’

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<sup>371</sup> Letter from Basil Gray to Trenchard Cox, 16<sup>th</sup> December 1959, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>372</sup> Lane pointed out that following the death of Basil Ionides, Leigh Ashton had travelled to Buxted Park without informing him, excluding him from the initial selection for the bequest. Having later seen the collection, he recognized there were many more pieces the museum would have wanted to accept. Letter from Arthur Lane, 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 1959. MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>373</sup> BM: 1960,0218.1, 1960,0218.3, 1960,0218.2.



Will of the Hon Nellie Ionides, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1962, Principal Probate Registry, High Court of Justice, London [accessed December 2014].

The settlement between the two national museums was not the only example of its kind at this time. In 1963, Brenda Zara Seligman (1882-1965) signed a codicil to her Will, placing the transfer of the Seligman Collection of Chinese Art in the hands of the Trustees of the British Museum, who were endowed with the ‘power to pass on to the Victoria and Albert Museum anything superfluous to their needs’.<sup>374</sup> She too had collected with her husband over many years, the largest part of their collection being subdivided between the British Museum and V&A.

Later in her Will, Nellie Ionides retracted the bequest of any other items in her collection, ‘on account of the inadequacy of museum premises generally for the display of objects of art already in their possession’. The publication of this statement in *The Times* newspaper on 18<sup>th</sup> December 1962, shortly after the death of Nellie Ionides on 14<sup>th</sup> November, caused concern expressed privately by Keeper of Oriental Antiquities, Basil Gray to Sir Frank Francis (1901-1988), Director of the British Museum. Gray wrote:

‘May I draw your attention to the marked passage in the enclosed notice from yesterday’s Times of Mrs. Nellie Ionides’ will. She owned an exceptionally important collection of 18<sup>th</sup> century Chinese porcelain, of which the pieces specified in the will as left to the Victoria and Albert with a possible reversion to us, formed only a very small part. Not only is it unfortunate in this particular case that the national museums thus lose the benefit of an important bequest, but the likely repercussions of a widely publicized statement of this kind can well be imagined. It comes, as I am sure I have told you, on top of a strong whispering campaign to the same effect which is fanned by the dealers who are, of course, anxious not to see too many things removed from the market’.

Letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> December 1962, MD12/1, CD107/49, British Museum Archives

To avoid any damaging repercussions, Gray suggested the Museum make a public announcement on future policy regarding the allocation of gallery space, which was acknowledged by his Director but not acted upon at this point. The influential role of dealers, as suggested by Gray, is confirmed by John Mallet, who was working at Sotheby’s under Jim

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<sup>374</sup> The collection was first to be held in trust by the Arts Council of Great Britain before its transfer to the national collections. Levell, ‘Scholars and Connoisseurs, Knowledge and Taste. The Seligman Collection of Chinese Art’.

Kiddell at the time and recalls, ‘I heard him say he had persuaded Mrs. Ionides not to leave them all [her porcelain] to the V&A as she had intended’.<sup>375</sup>

#### *Final Dispersal of the Ionides Collection: 1963-4*

On 25<sup>th</sup> February 1963, Soame Jenyns wrote once more to the V&A thanking the Museum for allowing the British Museum to choose twenty-five pieces from the collection once the V&A had made their own selection. Jenyns reaffirmed his belief that Basil Ionides, ‘had already left this collection to the V&A’, commenting that Nellie Ionides had, ‘insisted that some of them had been bought after his death, but I don’t know, with the exception of one piece which she pointed out to me, that I could identify any of these pieces, if they exist’.<sup>376</sup>

Following a final visit to Buxted Park, this time led by Arthur Lane and his colleague John Ayers, forty five items were accessioned to the Basil Ionides Bequest in the Ceramics Department on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1963.<sup>377</sup> A further six articles of European style Chinese export porcelain were gifted as part of the Nellie Ionides Bequest and fifteen examples of English Enamels presented to the department in her memory by her executors.<sup>378</sup> Describing their selection, John Ayers identified individual pieces worthy of note:

‘Among the most outstanding are the unique blanc-de-chine figures of Christ and of the Virgin and Child; the large figures of a Dutch Woman and a Dancer; and various replicas of Meissen models. Among other Chinese wares, ranging in date from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, are a number the forms of which are derived from European faience, porcelain, or silver; there are uncommon specimens with decoration based on European prints, and examples of rare table services, including a plate bearing the arms of Frederick the Great. Two unusual pieces of Japanese blue-and-white porcelain decorated with Dutch figures and an unidentified coat of arms, respectively have been selected. These acquisitions will add materially to our already rich representation of oriental porcelain designed for the Western Market.’

Letter to R.J.Charleston, Deputy Keeper of Ceramics, 17<sup>th</sup> April 1963, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives

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<sup>375</sup> Personal correspondence, 12 October 2014. Mallet entered the Department of Ceramics at the V&A soon after and recalls the disappointment of Arthur Lane and Robert Charleston once the final Will was published.

<sup>376</sup> Letter from Soame Jenyns to Arthur Lane, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1963. MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

<sup>377</sup> V&A: C.64 to C.108-1963.

<sup>378</sup> V&A: C.109 to C.114-1963. V&A: C.115 to C.129-1963. ‘Given in memory of the late Hon. Mrs. N. Ionides’. The executors also presented one ormolu tripod in 1963 (M.17:1 and M.17:2-1963), a silver shaving set in 1965 (M.18-1965) to the Department of Metalwork, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.

In summation of the 'Ionides epic', Deputy Keeper R.J.Charleston recommended the acceptance of the chosen items to the Director:

'These include some pieces of exceptional rarity which it would have been extremely difficult, or impossible, for us to acquire in any other way. The group as a whole will greatly raise the level of quality of our Chinese porcelain of this type and make it amongst the best in existence. I therefore strongly recommend the acceptance of all the items from both Bequests.'

Letter from R.J.Charleston to V&A Director, Trenchard Cox, 19<sup>th</sup> April 1963, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives

A further thirty one examples from the Basil Ionides Bequest and one figurine from the Nellie Ionides Bequest were selected for the Department of Circulation.<sup>379</sup> Described as 'an alternative museum' or 'a museum within a museum', the Circulation Collection was intended for loans to regional museums, schools and art colleges to promote British design in the post war years, extending the reach of the V&A to new audiences beyond South Kensington.<sup>380</sup> The museum stated it would make no further claim against either of the two estates.

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<sup>379</sup> V&A: CIRC. 136 to 166-1963. V&A: CIRC. 167-1963.

The Circulation Department (1909-1977) reasserted the dictum, 'Art and Design for All', in the post-war period. See Joanna Weddell, 'Room 38A and beyond: Post-War British Design and the Circulation Department', *V&A Online Journal*, no. 4 (Summer 2012).

<sup>380</sup> Weddell.p.2

*Table 1: Summary of Ceramics from the Ionides Collection at the V&A*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Number of objects</b>
1951	Basil Ionides Bequest Department of Ceramics	58 Chinese Export Wares 1 Japanese Arita bowl 1 Qianlong imperial scent bottle
1951	Gift of Nellie Ionides Department of Ceramics	1 Chinese Export Ware 3 French porcelain
1963	Basil Ionides Bequest: Department of Ceramics	43 Chinese Export Wares 1 Japanese Arita Square Bottle 1 Japanese Arita Jug
1963	Basil Ionides Bequest: Department of Circulation	32 Chinese Export Wares
1963	Nellie Ionides Bequest: Department of Ceramics	5 Chinese Export Wares
1963	Nellie Ionides Bequest: Department of Circulation	1 Chinese Export Ware

*The British Museum and the Ionides*

The relationship between the British Museum and the Ionides is more difficult to establish from the outset as very little documentary evidence survives. The name of Basil Ionides is entirely absent from the record, and the first item now catalogued as a donation of the Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides appears in 1924, prior to her second marriage.<sup>381</sup> The donation of a Battersea Enamel toilet-box mirror in 1928 coincided with her demanding negotiations with the V&A regarding the possible bequest of her much larger collection of this type.<sup>382</sup> The timing of her gifts to the British Museum of European style Chinese export porcelain in 1953 and later in 1960 must also be understood in relation to parallel events at the V&A, discussed above.

The collection of European style Chinese export porcelain received full recognition in 1965 as Soame Jenyns discussed the bequest of the Hon. Mrs. Basil Ionides in the *British Museum Quarterly*:

‘The dispersal of the Ionides collection in four sales at Sotheby’s, the last of which took place in October 1964, was a melancholy occasion for those who are interested in the study of Ch’ing porcelain. For not only did the collection contain the largest and finest group of K’ang Hsi famille verte, in particular biscuit, remaining in private hands in this country (and incidentally such rare objects as the pair of Arita eagles, which had once belonged to the Kaiser), but it also included a group of Chinese export wares made in European form or decorated to European taste, brought together by the late Basil Ionides, which must have been in its own line unrivalled.’

It is sad, in the writers opinion that it was found impossible not to accept this collection as a whole, and to place it intact on exhibition in one of the country houses belonging to the National Trust, such as Osterley, where it would have been in reach of students of these wares. For it is highly unlikely that such a collection will ever be brought together again.’

This latter comment echoes the wishes expressed earlier by Basil Ionides in his final Will, that the country house at Buxted Park and its contents should be gifted to the National Trust (See Ch.2). Jenyns goes on to describe those items selected by the British Museum to complement their already extensive holdings of Chinese export material amassed in large part

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<sup>381</sup> BM: 1924,0204.1. Italian clock, 1745-55, Britain, Europe and Prehistory.

All objects associated with Nellie Ionides are now listed in that name, rather than Nellie Levy as she was known up to 1930, indicating the process of updating museum records.

<sup>382</sup> BM: 1928,0414.1, Britain, Europe and Prehistory.

by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897) in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, as discussed in the following chapter.<sup>383</sup> A later addition to the British Museum, formerly owned by Nellie Ionides but acquired in 2003, is a Pronk-style basin which matches a covered water-fountain donated by Franks.<sup>384</sup>

*Table 2: Summary of Ceramics from the Ionides Collection at the British Museum*

Date	Source	Number of Objects
1953	Donated by Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides	7 Chinese Export Wares 1 Imperial Yongzheng Piece
1960	Donated by Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides	3 Chinese Export Wares
1963	Bequeathed by Hon Mrs Nellie Ionides	25 Chinese Export Wares 2 Japanese Objects

As no further items were bequeathed to the British Museum or the V&A, aside from a small number of objects that passed privately to family members and associates, the remainder of the property of the late Hon. Mrs Nellie Ionides was sold at Sotheby's over four sales from 1963-64 (Table 3), disentangling once and for all the complex networks of social, intellectual and commercial exchange she had cultivated so carefully throughout her life, as outlined in the previous chapters.

<sup>383</sup> Franks has been credited with the transformation of the British Museum holdings of Asian ceramics, raising the profile of ceramics as a legitimate subject for academic study. See Harrison-Hall, ed. Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*. p.41.

<sup>384</sup> BM: 2003,1129.1. Acquisition funded by the Brooke Sewell Permanent Fund. This basin matches a water cistern donated by A.W.Franks (Reg.no.F.588). Sold at Sotheby's New York, 29<sup>th</sup> Jan 1987, lot 461 and at Sotheby's Monaco, June 22, 1987, lot 1441, and previously (without a base) at Christies London, No 9-10, 1983, lot 777.

Table 3: Summary of Objects Sold at Auction through Sotheby's

The Property of the late Hon. Mrs Nellie Ionides

Date	Object description	Number of Objects
<b>Part I: Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1963</b>	'Important Chinese Porcelain' Comprising an outstanding collection of biscuit figures, important 'famille-verte' porcelain. <i>'Fine 'Famille-rose porcelain chiefly for the European market: Mandarin figures, Canton vases, Jesuit ware plates; armorial wares, a Chinese taste ruby back dish, groups of monkeys, boars head tureens and blue and white export ware with European Designs'</i>	150 lots 351 individual pieces
<b>Part II: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 1963</b>	'Important English and Continental Clocks, Works of Art, Chandeliers, Chimney Furniture and Important English Furniture' <sup>385</sup>	186 lots
<b>Part III: 11<sup>th</sup> February 1964</b>	'Continental Pottery and Porcelain'	170 lots
<b>Part IV: Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 1964</b>	'Chinese Porcelain and Works of Art' Biscuit Figures and Wares 'Famille-verte' porcelain Rare 'Compagnie-des-Indes' Porcelain Blue and white export wares, armorial porcelain, a rare figure of an angel, and a fruit stand Works of art	163 lots of Ceramics 669 individual pieces

Total Chinese Ceramic Lots in Sales: 313 lots

**954 Individual pieces of Chinese porcelain, including export wares.**

<sup>385</sup> A number of pieces in this sale were originally offered as bequest to the V&A, see list drawn up by Nellie Ionides and J.F.Hayward, June 1949. This bequest was later retracted.

This is the first study to quantify Chinese ceramics sold as ‘The Property of the late Hon. Mrs Nellie Ionides’, including European style Chinese export porcelain at the centre of this thesis, full details of which are laid out in the accompanying table (Table 3). This process allows us to appreciate the full extent and scope of the private collection, then in the name of Nellie Ionides, but it is likely to have included objects collected by Basil Ionides too. The difficulty in establishing the separate property and collecting interests of the married couple is a recurring strand of this thesis and this chapter has shown how the artificiality of the ‘Ionides Collection’ was further exacerbated by the process of accession to the museums. By incorporating objects sold at auction within the history of the collection, the sub-collection of European style Chinese export porcelain can be understood not only in relation to other categories of ceramics, Chinese and European, but to other Chinese art objects collected by the Ionides. Furthermore, the continued presence of this specialist category of Chinese porcelain in the auction sales of 1963/4 indicates which objects were passed over by the V&A and British Museum during the earlier stages of selection, bringing into focus choices made by the museums at fixed points in time.

Across the Sotheby’s sales, the total number of ceramics lots exceeded three hundred, the number of individual pieces of Chinese ceramics reaching nearly one thousand. Of these, forty-nine lots fell into categories associated with export porcelain, accounting for nearly one sixth of the entire Chinese ceramic collection. The Sotheby’s sales give a clearer picture of the Ionides Collection in its totality, the ratio of Chinese porcelain to European ceramics, and the place occupied by Chinese export porcelain within the collection. Furthermore, the scope of the collection extends beyond the field of Chinese ceramics to other Chinese art forms including decorative carvings, metalwork and Canton enamels, many of which were produced for export to Europe and collected by Basil Ionides, as established in Chapter 3.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Examples of ivory and mother-of-pearl carvings feature extensively in the 1950 publication where objects are listed as the ‘Property of Mr Basil and the Hon Mrs Ionides’. Jourdain and Jenyns, *Chinese Export Art in the Eighteenth Century*. 1950. In his letter to Arthur Lane, Soame Jenyns identifies the collection of Canton enamels as made by Basil Ionides, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1963, MA/1/1245, V&A Archives.



Through a process of cross-referencing the Sotheby's sales catalogues to List 1, and photographic sources from the Country Life Picture Library (see Ch.2), it is possible to re-connect objects across time and location, in some instances making individual identification possible and pinpointing their original site within Buxted Park. For example, a large boar's head tureen and two smaller sauce boats were originally displayed in the Front Hall. Following Basil's death, the larger piece was selected for the V&A in 1951, the others remaining at Buxted until their sale in 1963 (Lot 140). Another pair of similar type but different colouration appeared in the sale as Lot 141 and were displayed in the Library (Fig.3.10). Duplication across the sales demonstrates the Ionides collected multiple examples of a single type: the pair of figures 'Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon' appeared in the first sale of 1963 and again in the fourth sale of 1964. A further pair entered the V&A in 1963 as part of the Nellie Ionides Bequest suggesting at least three pairs in the collection.<sup>387</sup> Furthermore, it is possible to track the dispersal of a single group of objects such as The Trumpeter service first seen displayed in the Library at Buxted (See Fig.2.10). This tea set originally constituted twenty-seven pieces; five pieces passed to the V&A in 1951 and 1963 to the Department of Ceramics and Circulation, another cup and saucer to the British Museum in 1963, the remainder being sold at auction.<sup>388</sup>

### *The Ionides Collection and the National Museums*

#### *Selection Overview*

Having retraced the key events which shaped the future of the Ionides Collection in the public sphere, this section aims to identify the primary characteristics of newly created and redefined 'micro-collections' of European style Chinese export porcelain within the national museums. Through object analysis focusing on porcelain typology, decoration and design, patterns of institutional collecting emerge, highlighting the impact of individual choices and institutional priorities which determined the place of the Ionides objects within the national collections.

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<sup>387</sup> Other examples of a similar type are the blue and white European-style dish decorated with European ladies, Lot 625, Sale IV, October 13<sup>th</sup> 1964, Lot 15, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1963 and V&A: C.69-1963.

<sup>388</sup> Lot 146, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1963. Nineteen pieces from this tea service appear in the sale. This represents a deficit of two from the original twenty-seven catalogued in 1950.

The range of objects first selected by Leigh Ashton reflects the preoccupations of the museum director at the time. Focusing predominantly on polychrome enameled wares, many pieces are large in scale and illustrate a high level of workmanship. Nine large punch bowls embody the spirit of the middle years of the eighteenth century; political satire and historical or commemorative themes, hunting and harvesting, ships and maritime themes are all present in *famille rose* or sepia enamels, modelled principally on European prints but occasionally combined with traditional Chinese motifs (See Fig.0.1, Appendix, Figs.6, 10). This style of decoration can also be observed on cups and saucers, plates and other tableware.

Armorial and pseudo-armorials are few in number but combine unusual pictorial designs with armorial devices connected to individuals or merchant guilds. For example, the Wounded Hussar depicted on a cup and saucer sits beneath a shield connected to Peregrine Crust, a London merchant.<sup>389</sup> Similarly, a European mug decorated with the badge of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames incorporates a pair of rowers within a crest flanked by standing figures in red and blue (Appendix Fig. 2b).

Another interesting selection are the near-identical dishes painted with the coat of arms of William Jephson, a London based lawyer who ordered a dinner service from China around 1735 (Fig.4.1a-b). The eighteenth-century original and its later replica, probably produced at Spode in Stoke-on-Trent one hundred years later, attest to the continued use of armorial dinner services and the practice of producing porcelain replicas in England as replacements for lost or damaged originals, at a time when it was no longer economical to order directly from China. According to List 1, these two pieces were originally displayed together at Buxted Park, suggesting Basil Ionides took an interest in this aspect of their design history.

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<sup>389</sup> V&A: C.57&A-1951. The Wounded Hussar, made by the English mezzotinter Valentine Green (1739-1813) after George Carter (1737-94), published by Robert Sayer and John Bennett, June 1776. Kerr and Mengoni, *Chinese Export Ceramics*. pp.56-57.



Fig. 4.1a (left) Dish with arms of William Jephson, porcelain with overglaze enamels, c.1735, Jingdezhen, China. Diameter: 24.7cm, C.31-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

Fig. 4.1b (right) Dish with arms of William Jephson, porcelain with overglaze enamels, c.1810-40, England (probably Spode). Diameter: 24.7cm, C.32-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

The interplay between Chinese and European manufacturers of porcelain is materialized through a range of objects such as porcelain manufactured in China, at Dehua or Jingdezhen, and decorated with polychrome enamels on arrival in Europe (Fig.4.2) or Chinese porcelains modeled on European prototypes originating from Delft or Meissen, including cattle and figurines.<sup>390</sup> The rare ‘Parrot’ design in ‘Pronk-style’ seen here on a cup, saucer and vase, illustrates another aspect of the design and manufacturing process, in this case designs initiated by the Dutch East India Company in order to stimulate demand for Chinese export porcelain (Appendix Fig. 14b). Taken together, these objects suggest an interest in the origins and development of Chinese and European porcelain industries during a period of intense activity in the long eighteenth century.

<sup>390</sup> V&A: C.9-1951, C.10-1951, C.15-1951.



Fig. 4.2 Dutch merchant with monkey, porcelain decorated with enamels, porcelain manufactured in Dehua c.1700, enamels probably applied in the Netherlands shortly after. Height: 330mm, Width: 135mm, Depth: 90mm, C.17-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

Many individual pieces or sets of objects have been chosen for their rarity, such as the Calvin and Luther Vases (Appendix, Fig 8a and 8b). An exceptionally unusual example of Qianlong imperial porcelain decorated in European style is also included in the bequest (Fig. 4.3). The ‘porcelain scent bottle’ receives a simple catalogue entry which fails to differentiate between this object and the other articles of European style Chinese export porcelain. Skillfully decorated with European figural subjects, this piece illustrates the parallel fashion at the Chinese court for ‘Europeenerie’ or ‘Euroiserie’ during the eighteenth century, which has increasingly attracted scholarly attention in recent years but was little known at the time.<sup>391</sup> From the documentary archive, it appears that ceramic specialists at Sotheby’s and the V&A failed to recognize the historical significance of this piece, indicating not only an unfamiliarity with this genre of imperial Chinese porcelain in Britain, but also the high quality of finish and execution which characterises the finest examples of specially commissioned porcelain for export for which it was mistaken.



Fig. 4.3 (front and back) Bottle, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels, Qianlong period (1736-95), Jingdezhen, China. Height: 10.2cm, Diameter: 8.9cm, C.50-1951, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

<sup>391</sup> The term ‘Euroiserie’ was first used by George N Kates and later favoured by Jonathan Hay and other scholars. George N Kates, *The Years That Were Fat Peking 1933-1940* (Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1952), <http://archive.org/details/yearsthatwerefat008540mbp>. Hay, *Sensuous Surfaces*.

For recent research on imperial enamelled decoration in European style, see Ching-Fei Shih, “日月光华 : 清宫画珐琅 Radiant Luminance : The Painted Enamelware of the Qing Imperial Court [施静菲著]. Ri Yue Guang Hua : Qing Gong Hua Fa Lang,” 2012. Ching-Fei Shih, ‘A Record of the Establishment of a New Art Form: The Unique Collection of “Painted Enamels” at the Qing Court’, *Heidelberg University Library*, 2005, <https://doi.org/10.11588/heidok.00005705>. Joanna Waley-Cohen, ‘Diplomats, Jesuits and Foreign Curiosities’, in *China, The Three Emperors 1662-1795* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2006), 180–207. Jennifer Chen, ‘A Taste for Novelty: Qianlong the Collector’, in *Porcelain Stories: From China to Europe*, ed. Julie Emerson (University of Washington Press, 2000), 244–51.

*V&A Basil Ionides Bequest  
Department of Ceramics 1963: C.64 to 108-1963.*

Blue and white porcelain was selected in greater numbers for the bequest in 1963 by Arthur Lane, suggesting a shift in priorities at the museum and perhaps indicating his own personal preferences.<sup>392</sup> As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, the earliest objects in the Ionides Collection date from the second quarter of the seventeenth century and illustrate the dominance of the Dutch East India Company at that time. A mustard pot with European silver mounts illustrates the high material value and status of Chinese porcelain objects then customized for use in Europe (Fig.4.4). Other seventeenth century examples include a rare Albarello or drug jar and a large dish modeled on a Dutch Delft original (Fig.0.2). Examples from the end of the century indicate the fashion for French print sources and forms derived from metalwork.



Fig. 4.4 Mustard Pot, blue and white porcelain with European silver mounts, Jindgezhen, c. 1630-40. Height: 16cm, Width: 14cm with handle, Diameter: 9cm top trim, C.67-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

<sup>392</sup> Lane was not involved in the object selection in 1951 but Ashton was clear that blue and white was already well represented at the museum and space was scarce.

Armorial pieces are small in number but span a wide chronological and stylistic range. Examples include an early blue and white dish with Chinese and European designs c.1700, (Fig.3.5), a plate with the arms of Lee quartering Astley with views of London and the Pearl River at Canton c.1730 (Appendix Fig. 2a), and a dish with the arms of Frederick the Great of Prussia c. 1750-55.<sup>393</sup> All three pieces illustrate the evolution of armorial design from the late seventeenth century, when European and Chinese design elements frequently coexisted on a single object, towards a purely European aesthetic some fifty years later.

The inclusion of six pieces of undecorated white porcelain from Dehua indicate the importance and popularity of these wares, which received greater acclaim in European export markets than in China where they were not considered exceptional. Early figural sculpture indicates the influence of Chinese modelling, evident in the facial features of a European mounted on a horse, which has disappeared from later examples designed after Dutch genre scenes, such as a well-known group commonly but mistakenly known as ‘Admiral Duff and family’.<sup>394</sup> Nineteenth century examples are large in scale and include a figure of ‘Madonna and Child’, a figure of ‘Jesus pointing to his sacred Heart’ (Appendix, Fig. 9) as well as a Toby Jug closely modeled after English cream ware.<sup>395</sup>

The interplay of Sino-European design and manufacture is illustrated by now familiar designs such as ‘The Trumpeter’ and rarer examples such as ‘Le Plume’, both believed to be closely associated with the designs produced by Cornelis Pronk for the VOC (Figs. 2.10 and Appendix, Fig.14a). A rectangular tea caddy and cover based on a Vienna Du Paquier model of around 1730 contrasts with a neo-classical vase after a Chelsea-Derby type produced later in the century, marking a departure from earlier baroque and rococo designs and illustrating the variety of European sources which served as design models (Fig.4.5).<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> V&A: C.73-1963.

<sup>394</sup> European on horse, V&A: C.108-1963, Dutch genre scene V&A: C.103-1963.

<sup>395</sup> Madonna and Child, V&A: C.106-1963. Toby jug modelled on English cream wares, V&A: C.104&A-1963.

<sup>396</sup> Tea caddy and cover after Vienna Du Pacquier model, V&A: C.90-1963.





Fig. 4.5 Fig.4.2 Vase, porcelain with overglaze enamels and gilding, made in Jingdezhen, decorated in Guangzhou, c.1785. Height: 28.5cm. C.92-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].



Figures and animals are well represented in this group, as noted above, and include two exceptionally rare and finely modeled designs of non-Asian women, now known to represent women in Jewish and Turkish costume, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Fig.2.14-15). Originally displayed alongside duplicate examples in the Chinese Room at Buxted Park, their sister pieces were chosen by the British Museum shortly after.

In sum, the selection of objects for the Ceramics Department in 1963 included a greater number of early examples of blue and white porcelain than had previously been the case, important figurines decorated in polychrome enamels or white porcelain from Dehua, and objects which spoke directly to the ceramic history of Europe, through the imitation of European shapes, forms and decorative styles in particular during the long eighteenth century. These objects were valuable to the museum not only for their singular stories but in their ability to tell the history of ceramics from a materially based perspective as laid out in the Ceramics Galleries of the museum.

#### *Circulation Department 1963: CIRC.136 to 167-1963*

Objects selected for the Circulation Department at this time tend to be smaller in scale and produced in more commonplace forms such as cups, saucers or dishes rather than the larger, complex and rarer shapes chosen for the Department of Ceramics. Many pieces are decorated with pictorial subjects of European origin which are easily recognizable and accessible to the viewer, while others tell the story of Sino-European interactions through the manufacture, trade and consumption of Chinese porcelain. A range of decorative techniques are illustrated, including high-fired underglaze blue and white, overglaze decorated wares in a range of colour combinations and styles, and undecorated wares from Dehua. Considering the educational remit of the Circulation Department, items which forefront the history of design, technology and global exchange appear to have been selected to coherently transmit this message to a range of audiences beyond South Kensington, which will be discussed in full in the following chapter.

From the Kangxi period (1662-1722), two blue and white dishes from Jingdezhen illustrate the fashion for French print sources towards the end of the seventeenth century, framed

within traditional Chinese borders.<sup>397</sup> Maritime themes include a dish depicting a Dutch ship at anchor in China (Appendix, Fig. 3a), probably commissioned in relatively small numbers for individuals directly involved with the export trade, in contrast to a dish decorated with the waterfront at Amsterdam which was produced for wider circulation (Fig.4.6).<sup>398</sup> The inclusion of enameled figures from Dehua act as a reminder of the continued popularity of these wares for the Dutch market in the eighteenth century.<sup>399</sup>



Fig. 4.6 Dish, porcelain with enamelled and gilded decoration, c.1760, Jingdezhen, China. Diameter: 15.24cm, CIRC.152-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

<sup>397</sup> V&A: CIRC.136 and 137-1963.

<sup>398</sup> View of Stadts Herberch on the waterfront in Amsterdam, built 1662. This scene is well known but the exact print source has yet to be identified. Howard suggests it may be derived from a watercolour due to its balanced composition. As a number of examples survive, it would have originally constituted a large order. Standardised borders suggest only the central design was sent from Europe. See Howard, *The Choice of the Private Trader: The Private Market in Chinese Export Porcelain Illustrated from the Hodroff Collection*.

<sup>399</sup> V&A: CIRC.164 and 165-1963. According to the museum archive, three Dehua figures or groups were stolen but recovered prior to the Bequest; CIRC.164-163, CIRC.166-1963 and CIRC. 167-1963. MA/1/1245. V&A Archives.

Themes of love and *fêtes galantes* constitute the largest single category of designs, dating to the middle years of the eighteenth century (Appendix, Figs. 11-12). Decorated in polychrome or sepia enamels and gilding, these pieces illustrate one of the most popular styles of porcelain manufactured for export to Europe. A rare cup and saucer in the collection depicts a lady at her toilet, loosely draped in robes that reveal her state of semi-dress.<sup>400</sup> The source of this portrait is unknown and unusually occupies the lower portion of the central design, leaving the remainder blank. Sprigs of naturalistic flowers and rococo ornament in purple and gilt around the border date this piece to the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

Other objects of a more explicitly sexual nature include the cup, saucer and tea canister decorated with a monk and a young woman in a Europeanised landscape (Fig. 4.7).<sup>401</sup> Another example of this design was selected for the Ceramic Department in 1963 and Nellie Ionides donated a coffee cup and saucer with the same motif to the British Museum in 1953, indicating the full extent of objects once in the private collection.<sup>402</sup> Various descriptions as a 'monk embracing a young woman' to 'monk assaulting' or 'molesting' a woman, the design creates a sense of unease in the viewer as the woman struggles to free herself from the errant monk who has cast aside his bible and rosary which lie abandoned on the ground. It is interesting today to consider how objects from the original set were separated, why this design was selected for the Circulation Department and how each sub-set of objects would have been viewed in a variety of contexts, from South Kensington and Bloomsbury in London to provincial galleries and museums across the UK.

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<sup>400</sup> V&A: CIRC.145&A-1963.

<sup>401</sup> V&A: CIRC.143-1963, Cup and saucer.

<sup>402</sup> V&A: C.79-1963. BM: 1953, 1015.4a and b.



Fig. 4.7. Tea canister, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding, Jingdezhen and Guangzhou, c. 1740, Height: 12.7, Diameter: 7cm. CIRC.144&A-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].



Fig. 4.8 Dish, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels and gilding, made in Jingdezhen and decorated in Guangzhou, China, c.1735-40. Diameter: 22.9cm, CIRC.154-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

Armorial pieces selected for the Circulation Department are distinguished by their singularity, such as a plate decorated with the Arms of Adriaan Valckenier, depicting scenes associated with Dutch trade within its borders (Fig.4.8). A salt cellar of similar date is painted *en grisaille* with Neptune and the Tritons riding the waves; the arms and crest of MacKenzie decorate the sides.<sup>403</sup> Finally, the themes of patriotism and love are combined in the motto ‘Le Plus Loin Le Plus Serre’ (‘The Furthest, the Closest’) and ‘Pro Patria’ (‘For One’s Country’) which appears written on a rock surmounted by an armorial device on a cup and saucer selected at this time.<sup>404</sup>

A number of objects directly reference porcelain manufactured in Europe; a dish decorated with European trading scenes and two figures of Hercules (Appendix Fig. 13a and b) are all derived from Meissen prototypes.<sup>405</sup> Similarly, a cup and stand painted in underglaze blue, red enamel and gilt imitates the porcelain of Saint Cloud and bears an apocryphal mark.<sup>406</sup> The inclusion of further examples of ‘The Trumpeter’ and ‘The Parrot’ design reaffirms their place in the evolution of export design.

In addition, six items were added to the Department of Ceramics and one to the Circulation Department in 1963 from the Nellie Ionides Bequest, of which three represented Europeans in undecorated ‘blanc-de-chine’ porcelain. The most striking pieces are now catalogued as part of the ‘Basil Ionides Bequest’, contradicting listings made upon entry to the museum and highlighting the impact of collections management in defining the identity and history of objects and collections.<sup>407</sup> In a similar manner, two figures commonly referred to as ‘Louis XIV’ and ‘Madame Maintenon’ (Fig.4.9) were exhibited in her name in the OCS Exhibition of ‘Chinese Ceramic Figures’ of 1947, discussed in Chapter 3. Also dating to the turn of the seventeenth century are two large jars with covers depicting European ladies in a variety of postures within four circular medallions, set within traditional Chinese borders.<sup>408</sup> According

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<sup>403</sup> V&A: CIRC.139-1963, c.1730-50.

<sup>404</sup> The arm grasping a dagger enclosing a monogram. Yet to be identified. V&A: CIRC.142&A-1963.

<sup>405</sup> V&A: CIRC.157-1963.

<sup>406</sup> V&A: CIRC. 138-1963.

<sup>407</sup> In 1951, one item of European style Chinese export porcelain was gifted by Nellie Ionides to the Museum and this too was listed as part of the Basil Ionides Bequest (C.64-1951). Only those examples of French porcelain in Chinese style were listed as Gift of the Hon. Nellie Ionides.

<sup>408</sup> V&A: C.113&A and 114&A-1963. For a recent catalogue entry, see Mengoni in Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp.134-137.



to List 1, these originally formed part of a larger set of five and were added to the list by Arthur Lane on the request of Nellie Ionides in 1952.<sup>409</sup>

To what extent the false attribution of objects to the Basil Ionides Bequest is reflective of a gendered bias at the V&A, or indicative of the belief that these objects did in fact originate from the collection of Basil Ionides is unclear but worthy of note. Grouping objects in such a manner would appear to simplify the otherwise complex and confused matter of ownership, as outlined earlier, creating the impression of a more cohesive and identifiable ‘collection’ while simultaneously emphasizing the role of Basil Ionides at the expense of his wife.<sup>410</sup>



Fig. 4.9 Pair of Figures, porcelain decorated with overglaze enamels, Jingdezhen, c.1700. Height: 24.9cm, C.109&A-1963, V&A. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

<sup>409</sup> List 1, ED/BP/107/2/50. National Archives.

<sup>410</sup> In spite of ample evidence of collaborative collecting between married couples, little research has been conducted on this point. See Judith Green, “Britains Chinese Collections, 1842-1943: Private Collecting and the Invention of Chinese Art” (PhD, University of Sussex, 2002). Nicky Levell, ‘The Translation of Objects: R. and M. Davidson and the Friends’ Foreign Mission Association, China, 1890-1894’, in *Collectors: Individuals and Institutions*, Contributions in Critical Museology and Material Culture (London: The Horniman Museum and Gardens, 2001).

This chapter has already mentioned the paucity of records at the British Museum relating to the Ionides Collection where in contrast to the V&A, the name of Basil Ionides is entirely absent. From 1953, all gifts or donations of European style Chinese export porcelain are attributed to the Hon. Nellie Ionides and the first group consisted of eight objects, three of which had already been passed over by the V&A in 1951; ‘The Trumpeters’, ‘Neptune and the Tritons’, and ‘The Errant Monk’ were all accessioned in cup and saucer form.<sup>411</sup> The most outstanding piece donated at this time is a shallow *famille rose* bowl and dish dating to the Yongzheng reign (1723-36).<sup>412</sup> The fine enameled decoration of flowers against a white background epitomize court wares of this period, placing this piece in a different ceramic category to the rest. However, unlike the Qianlong flask mentioned earlier, this piece is decorated in traditional Chinese style and unlikely to have been mistaken for Chinese export porcelain.

Three further items were donated in 1960, including two rare armorial porcelains.<sup>413</sup> The first, a small coffee cup decorated with medallions depicting on one side a portrait bust of Christian VI of Denmark, on the other the port of Copenhagen, pictorialises Danish mercantile success as a result of East India trade.<sup>414</sup> The second, a large dish is emblazoned with the arms of the Italian family, Paravacini, identified by a black archer holding a swan.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> BM: 1953,1015.3a and b, BM 1953,1015.1a and b, BM 1953,1015.4a and b.

<sup>412</sup> BM: 1953,1015.7b.

<sup>413</sup> The third piece, a small dish decorated in Europe with the classical theme of Diana and a Youth hunting boar  
BM: 1960,0218.3

<sup>414</sup> BM: 1960,0218.1 The portrait closely follows a medal struck in 1739. This design also appears on a snuff box at the British Museum, see Franks.713.+

<sup>415</sup> BM: 1960,0218.1



*The Hon. Mrs. Nellie Ionides Bequest: 1963*

Of the twenty-five items selected by the British Museum in 1963, many are traceable via List 1 to the Basil Ionides Collection. A number have sister pieces at the V&A and were originally displayed together at Buxted Park, such as the large figurines of non-Asian women in regional and ethnic costume – Jewish and Turkish – discussed earlier (Fig.2.14-2.15). Others may have originally formed part of a set, such as the blue and white Albarello Jar with Latin inscriptions, also selected for the V&A at this time and it is likely produced as a set of four.<sup>416</sup> Some designs were already represented at the V&A and passed directly to the British Museum; dishes depicting ‘The Baptism of Christ’ and ‘The Music Party,’ and an armorial dish decorated with cherubs after a design by Francesco Bartolozzi.<sup>417</sup>

Examples of armorial porcelain illustrate decorative and stylistic developments from the late seventeenth century, from a large dish with the arms of Utrecht to an eighteenth century *famille rose* serving dish produced for the Grant family of Scotland.<sup>418</sup> Other significant objects include a dish, decorated with the Russian imperial arms, believed to have formed part of a service made for Empress Elizabeth (r.1741-62).<sup>419</sup> An unusual *famille rose* jug decorated with naked and semi-naked figures and coronets may also fall into this category (Fig.4.10). As yet unidentified, the piece may have been made for the German family Bucholtz of Brandenburg, whose coat of arms depicts a naked woman with long hair holding a coronet in her left hand.

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<sup>416</sup> BM: 1963,0422.6 Clunas, *Chinese Export Art and Design*. p.34

<sup>417</sup> BM: 1963,0422.13 ‘The Baptism of Christ’ also appears on a later dish (1715-25) decorated in red enamels and gilding, donated by Augustus Wollaston Franks, Franks.597. The V&A blue and white example is similar in scale and rendition, but is embellished with gilding, c.1725, V&A: 6786-1860.

‘The Music Party’, BM: 1963,0422.18, V&A C.781-1910, Salting Bequest

‘Armorial Dish with cherubs after Francesco Bartolozzi’, BM: 1963,0422.19. This design had been selected by the V&A in 1951. V&A: C.33-1951. See Kerr and Mengoni, *Chinese Export Ceramics*. pp. 71-72.

<sup>418</sup> BM: 1963,0423.1 The ‘klapmuts’ shape of this dish was derived from earlier kraak porcelain. See Teresa Canepa, *Kraak Porcelain. The Rise of Global Trade in the Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries* (London, Lisbon: Jorge Welsh Books, 2008).

BM: 1963,0422.16. Commissioned by Sir James Grant 1679-1747, Howard, *Chinese Armorial Porcelain*. p.242.

<sup>419</sup> BM: 1963,0422.17, See Krahl and Harrison-Hall, *Ancient Trade Ceramics from the British Museum*. p.123



Fig. 4.10. Jug, porcelain with overglaze decoration and gilding, Jingdezhen, c.1750-80, Height: 22 cm, BM:1963,0422.3. [Image: © Trustees of the British Museum].

The influence of European porcelain manufacturers is explicit in two objects selected at this time, the first a Meissen-style stand with openwork sides and four figures representing the seasons.<sup>420</sup> This piece also bears the crossed-swords of the German factory suggesting it was copied directly from an original. The second object is a vase in traditional Chinese *gu* form decorated in polychrome enamels, the aubergine and black ground reminiscent of the designs of Cornelius Pronk discussed earlier.<sup>421</sup> A diverse range of European forms include those associated with drinking tea, coffee and punch illustrating themes from classical mythology to eighteenth century English politics; biblical themes and allegories of love also appear on plates, soup tureens and vases.

In summary, objects selected by the British Museum from the Ionides Collection were far smaller in number to those at the V&A, since the majority of the Basil Ionides Bequest had

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<sup>420</sup> BM: 1963,0422.12

<sup>421</sup> BM: 1963,0422.9

already been promised there. From the museum archives, it is evident that both Nellie Ionides and her husband enjoyed a closer relationship with the curators and directors of the V&A, which had been regarded as the ‘arbiter of taste in the decorative arts’ since the nineteenth century.<sup>422</sup> European style Chinese export porcelain was already well represented at the British Museum, due in large part to the energetic collecting activities of Augustus Franks during the late nineteenth century. For this reason, rare objects were carefully selected to ‘plug the gaps’ in the collection.

### *Conclusions*

This chapter has reconstructed those events – between collectors, museums and auctioneers – which determined the life of the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain, such that it is, as it passed from the private to the public sphere, revealing the cyclical process of collection formation and dispersal across time and space. Taking the Basil Ionides Bequest at the V&A, the Nellie Ionides Bequest at the British Museum and objects sold at auction through Sotheby’s in 1963-4 as a single body, quantified here for the first time, it is now possible to appreciate the full extent of the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain before its fragmentation following the death of Basil Ionides and later his wife. The significance of the private collection, once constituting one of the largest single groups of this specialist category of Chinese porcelain in Britain, can now be understood and this research contributes to a more balanced historiography of collecting Chinese ceramics in Britain, one which includes this sub-category of Chinese export porcelain.

The process of cross-referencing the documentary and material archives of the national museums and auctioneer reveals aspects of the collecting habits of the Ionides which were previously hidden. Duplicate objects – later selected by the V&A, British Museum or sold through Sotheby’s – indicate the accumulation of sets of objects by the Ionides, some of which were visible in the photographic record at Buxted Park, others recorded in List 1 for the purpose of valuation. Furthermore, the presence of multiple examples of a single design, perhaps to improve the quality of the collection or to use as articles of display, reminds us of

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<sup>422</sup> Tythacott, ‘The Power of Taste’, p.7.

this underrecognized but significant criteria for selection in the collecting process, indicating a range of motivations which may have inspired the couple to collect.

For the collectors, Basil and Nellie Ionides, the V&A was the institution of choice, both enjoying an active relationship with the museum throughout their lives and prior to their marriage. In the case of Basil, this can be understood as an extension of his forefathers' connections to the V&A, as outlined in Chapter 1, who were well-known and generous benefactors. Consideration of early gifts, such as samples of wallpaper and textiles, highlight the role of the V&A as a museum of design history, rather than the more antiquarian and classical associations of the British Museum. Nellie Ionides was also engaged with museum activities from an early date, loaning objects for display in 1917. The emphasis and remit of each institution had differed from the outset and is acted out in the museum archives; for example, the donation of a Japanese Stupa by Nellie Ionides in 1930, discussed earlier in this chapter, was passed over by the V&A and offered to the British Museum, regarded as a more appropriate repository at that time. Correspondence between the British national museums in relation to the Basil Ionides Bequest affirms the continued cooperation between the two institutions up to 1963. However, the actions of Nellie Ionides following the death of her husband illustrate how allegiances could swiftly shift, as she turned away from the V&A towards the British Museum, leading to tensions and confusion within both museums.

The next stage in the life of the Ionides Collection was not determined by the collector-museum relationship alone. From this study, the role of the auctioneer increasingly comes into focus. Jim Kiddell of Sotheby's was personally acquainted with the Ionides throughout their lives and assisted in the purchase of art objects for their collections as discussed in the previous chapter. Kiddell also undertook the valuation of the collection at Buxted Park in 1950, assisting Leigh Ashton in the first selection of objects for the V&A soon after and supervising the final sales of the collection of Nellie Ionides in 1963/4, including the residue collection of European style Chinese export porcelain. The motivations of the auctioneer undoubtedly differed to those of the national museum and it is possible, as suggested by sources here, that Kiddell encouraged the dissatisfied Nellie Ionides to retract the earlier offer of her much larger and nationally significant collection of Chinese porcelain and Battersea enamels to the V&A in order to sell them with rest of her art collection on the London art market. Auctioneers advising clients on both buying and selling is a continuing practice that defines and fuels this aspect of the art market.

This chapter has shown how defining the parameters of the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain was problematized and aggravated over many years by contradictory claims and interpretations of the final Will of Basil Ionides and its implementation at the museums. The terminological ambiguity of the collection of ‘Chinese famille rose with European decoration’ was not, in fact, the primary source of contention, rather personal and professional priorities of museum specialists and private rivalries which remain beyond our reach. The discovery of ‘List 1’ in the course of this research would appear to settle the point, but it is clear from the archive that numerous questions remained, casting doubt over aspects of institutional practice at the museums.

Choices made by both museums indicate the practical limitations – financial, legal and spatial - which steered collecting practices over the period, and significant shifts in attitude towards this specialist sub-category of Chinese export porcelain between 1951 to 1963. The fragmentation of the collection in four directions - at the V&A between the Department of Ceramics and Department of Circulation, the British Museum and finally the Sotheby’s Sales – led to the redefinition and reshaping of multiple ‘micro-collections’, each subject to a new set of criteria. The further separation of material at the V&A between the Department of Ceramics, intended for display in South Kensington, and the Circulation Department, for a more instructive and educational use beyond the metropolitan center, indicates a dual approach to collection management and audience participation within a single institution. At the British Museum, where a full and comprehensive collection of European style Chinese export porcelain was already in place, Ionides objects were selected for their rarity and to ‘plug the gaps’ in the collection.

Each new ‘micro-collection’ born out of the Ionides’ private collection offers insights into the priorities of the museum at a fixed point in time, informed by the professional expertise of leading specialists in the field and subject to their personal choices. To what extent their views are indicative of prevailing trends towards Chinese art, Chinese ceramics and Chinese export art requires closer consideration. The status of this specialist category of Chinese porcelain had already declined in collecting circles before 1951, as established in the previous chapters, and this sentiment is evident in Arthur Lane’s initial reaction to the bequest. However, the significance of these objects to the history of ceramic design and therefore the permanent collections of the museum was recognized by V&A Director, Leigh

Ashton and his counterparts at the British Museum who praised the collection for its exceptional rarity and historical value. Unlike the private collector, museums were legally bound to the preservation of objects in perpetuity, and as such sought to build a permanent record, for the purpose of design education at the V&A and public instruction at both institutions, of the arts and material culture of countries throughout the world.

The V&A and the British Museum selected consistently rare and high-quality items in order to expand the range of their existing collections. Pieces were chosen to illustrate the interplay of Chinese and European visual and material culture through the medium of porcelain. Decorative themes and motifs, derived from European and Chinese sources, provided a window on late seventeenth and eighteenth-century European society and the defining role played by Sino-European trade. Positioned first within the Ceramics Department of the V&A in 1951, the bequest was situated within the broader tradition of global ceramics, in particular in relation to European ceramics which dominated the museum's core collection. Only at a later date, on the formation of the Far Eastern Department in 1970, were Ionides porcelains placed amongst others rooted in the Chinese tradition from which they had emerged.<sup>423</sup> The impact of these museological practices at the V&A and the British Museum on the Ionides Collection from 1950 to 1970 will be explored in the following chapter.

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<sup>423</sup> Now the East Asian Section of the Asia Department, formed under John Ayers in 1970

## **PART II: THE IONIDES COLLECTION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE**

### **CHAPTER FIVE**

#### **Museum Classification, Interpretation and Display: 1950-1970**

This chapter explores the life of the Ionides Collection following its transfer to the British national collections, constructing a ‘micro-history’ from unpublished documentary and photographic sources which shine a light on developments in museum practice and broader socio-cultural aims and aspirations in post-war Britain.<sup>424</sup> The principal focus will be developments at the V&A, the recipient of the largest part of the collection, briefly tracing developments in the years leading up to 1951 when the first objects from the Basil Ionides Bequest arrived at the Museum until 1970, when museum activities associated with the collection were most significant. This date coincides with the formation of the Far Eastern Department at the V&A in 1970, when objects from across China, Japan and Korea were grouped together under this rubric for the first time, rather than according to material.<sup>425</sup> In contrast, the British Museum Department of Oriental Antiquities had been organised along culturally specific lines since 1933, but the display of Asian art objects in Gallery 33 also underwent major refurbishment at this time.

The classification, interpretation and display of Chinese art objects, in particular European style Chinese export porcelain, will be considered and contrasted in multiple contexts, from the metropolitan capital to provincial centres around the United Kingdom in the years following the War. Within both institutions, this chapter will question the ‘polysemantic capacity’ of objects from the Basil Ionides and Nellie Ionides Bequest through their siting and contextualisation within the national collections in relation to Chinese ceramics, global ceramics and Chinese art objects.<sup>426</sup> Strategies of exhibition and display will be considered in order to highlight the alternative methodologies employed by the national museums to address diverse audiences, from specialists and collectors, designers and art students to the general visiting public. Taking the activities of the British Museum and the V&A together,

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<sup>424</sup> For a recent discussion of this methodology, see Ghobrial, ‘Introduction’.

<sup>425</sup> It was not until 1970 that curators fluent in Chinese language were employed at the V&A. Craig Clunas, ‘The Imperial Collections: East Asian Art’, in *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1997), 230–37.

<sup>426</sup> James Beattie and Lauren Murray, ‘Mapping The Social Lives Of Objects: | East Asian History’, *East Asian History* 37, accessed 1 March 2019, <http://www.eastasianhistory.org/37/beattie-murray>.

this chapter will consider to what extent a similar path was followed, illuminating areas of divergence and commonality between the two institutions.

As the principal focus of this research is the movement of objects between the private collector and national museum, items which were sold on the art market following the death of Nellie Ionides in 1962 will not be considered here but constitutes a subject for future study. These objects embarked on the next journey in their lives, towards new ownership and multiple readings and many objects formerly in the Ionides Collection continue to circulate in the art market today, as outlined in the Introduction to this thesis.

### *Post-War Activities at the V&A*

The Basil Ionides Bequest entered the V&A in 1951 during a period of intense activity under the directorship of Sir Leigh Ashton (Fig.5.1). Ashton first entered the V&A in 1922 and rose rapidly through the ranks of the Departments of Architecture and Sculpture, Textiles and finally Ceramics, becoming Director in 1945. His specialist interest in East Asian art, in particular Chinese art, has already been noted in relation to his involvement with the OCS and the pivotal International Exhibition of Chinese Art held at Burlington House in 1935-6, discussed in Chapter 3. He also wrote on Chinese art, with a special interest in ceramics, but as *The Burlington Magazine* tartly noted, 'he has the good sense to realise that his finest talents did not lie in scholarship' (Vol.97, 1955. P.335).<sup>427</sup> This somewhat disparaging remark is of course debatable, but his 'talents in showmanship' earned him considerable praise within the museum establishment, and it is for his achievements in exhibition and gallery redevelopment, design and display that he received professional recognition.<sup>428</sup> In the same article, *The Burlington Magazine* heralded Ashton's 'revolution in technique in display' which was further acknowledged a decade later by then V&A Director, Trenchard Cox (1955-66).<sup>429</sup> However, Anthony Burton reminds us that new approaches at the V&A based

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<sup>427</sup> Publications include Leigh Ashton and Basil Gray, *Chinese Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951). Leigh Ashton, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture* (London: E.Benn, 1924). Leigh Ashton, R.L. Hobson, and Mouseion Benake, *Catalogue of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 1939). Ashton and Thorpe, *Handbook to the W.G.Gulland Bequest of Chinese Porcelain: Including Some Notes on the Subjects of the Decoration*.

<sup>428</sup> Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*. p.195

<sup>429</sup> Trenchard Cox, 'The Museum in a Changing World', *Victoria and Albert Museum Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (January 1965): i.



on the ‘dual arrangement’ of objects, adopted by Ashton and outlined below, had been introduced in continental Europe and the United States around fifty years earlier.<sup>430</sup>



Fig. 5.1 Leigh Ashton arranging a showcase with curator Michael Steward, V&A Archive. [Image: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

Ashton inherited an empty museum following the War, objects having been removed and packed in safe storage, and was able to realise the ambitions expressed by many since the ‘Rearrangement’ of 1909 and reiterated by his predecessor Sir Eric Maclagan.<sup>431</sup> Reflecting on the years between the Wars, Ashton observed:

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<sup>430</sup> First proposed by Harvard Professor, Louis Agassiz in the 1860s for a more publicly accessible manner of display, the ‘dual-arrangement’ of objects was first adopted by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, becoming known as the ‘Boston System’. Benjamin Gilman, ‘Aims and Principles of the Construction and Management of Museums of Fine Art’, *Museums Journal* 9 (October 1909): 28–44.

<sup>431</sup> The Aston Webb extension of 1909 provided at least twice as much space for the Victoria and Albert (Art) Museum, east of Exhibition Road but contrary to recommendations made by the Committee of Re-arrangement for an aesthetic/historical method of display in line with continental Europe and North America, the galleries maintained the pre-existing materially based arrangement. The failure to adopt a new approach at this time was roundly criticized in the national press but the museum continued to be popular with the public. See Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp. 154–177.

‘The emphasis lay, in my view, in those years on connoisseurship and collecting: it had shifted a considerable amount from the original conception (of the museum), in which the objects were primarily exhibited for design and taste value to objects exhibited for taste only. Not that in any way the desired result of improving the taste of the public and the design of manufactured goods had disappeared, but to use a modern expression the slant had altered. In a contented and rich world the collector was considered at perhaps too high a value’.<sup>432</sup>

The disruption of the War years provided the opportunity to reconsider the role of the Museum and how the V&A collection could most successfully address a wider public. The arrival of the first group of Ionides objects coincided with the post-war transformations implemented by Ashton, which shaped the formation of newly defined and re-classified ‘micro-collections’ within the Museum and the various contexts in which they were encountered.

#### *(Re)Classification of Chinese Ceramics at the V&A*

When the South Kensington Museum was opened in 1857, it was the first museum of decorative arts in Britain to classify objects by material, believed at that time to be the most effective means of understanding the material properties of the object.<sup>433</sup> Following the South Kensington example, and intellectually underpinned by the theories of German architect and art critic Gottfried Semper (1803-1879), this method was widely implemented by decorative arts museums in continental Europe.<sup>434</sup> However, this system of classification was not universally applied across the V&A and the division of the East Asian collection by material did not take place until 1897. Prior to that date, ‘objects of Indian, Persian, Chinese, Japanese and Oriental Art generally’ had been housed in the East Cloister, which was decorated with elaborate ‘Oriental’ designs by Owen Jones between 1864-5.<sup>435</sup> It was at this juncture that

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<sup>432</sup> Leigh Ashton, ‘100 Years of the Victoria & Albert Museum’, *Museums Journal* 53 (April 1953). p.47

<sup>433</sup> 1852 is widely regarded as the foundation of the V&A, when Henry Cole was appointed superintendent of the Department of Practical Art, which moved into Marlborough House with the Museum of Manufactures and the School of Design. The museum operated as The South Kensington Museum from 1857-1899, then becoming the Victoria and Albert Museum. For more on the formative years, see Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*. Ch1-3, pp.9-41.

<sup>434</sup> Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil (Style)*, II vols (Frankfurt, 1860).

<sup>435</sup> Rupert Faulkner and Anna Jackson, ‘The Meiji Period in South Kensington: The Representation of Japan in the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1852-1912’, in *Meiji No Takana: Treasures of Imperial Japan* (London: Kibo Foundation, 1995), 152–95.

Chinese ceramics, including those manufactured specifically for export, were transferred to the Department of Ceramics.

Chinese ceramics had been present since the founding of the Museum, identified broadly as ‘Oriental Porcelain’ in the first inventory of 1852.<sup>436</sup> Of the fourteen items listed as ‘Chinese’, most are categorized as ‘Chinese Modern’ – contemporary works selected for their fine workmanship and embodiment of ‘Chinese-style’ as understood at the time. Only one item is identified as ‘Ancient Chinese’, notable for its monochrome crackled glaze in contrast to the ornately decorated surfaces common to other objects selected that year.<sup>437</sup> The characterization of Chinese ceramics in this manner offer insights into the motivations of the museum, which prioritized the acquisition of contemporary works then believed to exemplify the technological and artistic skills of the Chinese potter, and the limited understanding of the ceramic history of China at that time; the Chinese vase described as ‘Ancient Chinese’ was no more than one hundred years old.

The first gift of Chinese porcelain in the same year came from the artist and museum supervisor, Mr. R. Redgrave Esq. RA, described as, ‘Painted with flowers and a crest of Hercules kneeling holding a club over his shoulder, Chinese?’<sup>438</sup> The mythological subject matter and inclusion of an armorial device firmly place this item within the category of European style Chinese export porcelain, the primary focus of this thesis, most likely dating to the eighteenth century. Further acquisitions of Chinese ceramics in the early years of the museum, including examples of this specialist classification of porcelain, were frequently purchased as part of much larger collections in a range of media, often alongside European ceramics. Chinese porcelains formerly in the collections of Mr James Bandinel (1783-1849) and Ralph Bernal (d.1854) included a plate decorated *en grisaille* and the ‘Figure of a Joss or Deity’, both fashioned in eighteenth century European style.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Only three items are listed as Japanese, one as ‘Chinese or Japanese’. Presidents of the Board of Trade, ‘Inventory of the Objects in the Art Division of the Museum at South Kensington: Arranged According to the Dates of Their Acquisition 1: For the Years 1852 to the End of 1867’ (London: South Kensington Museum Art Division, 1868), <https://archive.org/stream/inventoryofobjec00sout#page/n141/mode/2up>.

<sup>437</sup> V&A: 672-1852 Vase, manufactured in Guangdong Province, eighteenth century.

<sup>438</sup> Richard Redgrave worked closely with Henry Cole in the early years of the museum, acting as Art Superintendent of the V&A. See Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp.26-39.

<sup>439</sup> V&A: 1455-1853, V&A: 1995-1855. Bandinel was the former Superintendent of the Slave Trade Department of the Foreign Office. The collection was dominated by European ceramics but included Chinese export porcelain, purchased in 1853 in total for £250. Bernal was a lawyer and politician, inheriting his fortune

By the 1860s, the terms ‘Chinese Modern’ and ‘Ancient Chinese’ disappear from the museum inventories but ‘Old Chinese’ was still a term widely used for historical material. By that time, the arrival of objects directly from China shortly following the sacking of the Summer Palace (Yuanmingyuan), Beijing in 1860 exposed European collectors, dealers and museum curators to a breadth of ceramic styles and porcelain typologies hitherto unseen outside China, heightening awareness within specialist circles of the full scope of Chinese ceramics manufactured for domestic and imperial consumption, in addition to the more familiar styles of porcelain that had been exported to Europe over the previous centuries.<sup>440</sup> Simultaneously, individuals based in Asia purchased ceramics directly from China which would later pass to the V&A and the British Museum, further enriching the national collections and in turn extending the academic study and appreciation of the field. Stephen Bushell (1844-1908) is particularly significant in this capacity, collecting examples of Chinese ceramics which included early wares manufactured for domestic and imperial consumption on behalf of the V&A between 1882-83, while stationed as physician to the foreign legation in Beijing.<sup>441</sup> Bushell published extensively on Chinese ceramics and Chinese art, translating numerous Chinese texts into English for the first time, notably ‘*Chinese Porcelain Before the Present Dynasty*’ from the 1774 text, and ‘*Tao Shuo*’ (*Descriptions of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*) by Zhu Yan.<sup>442</sup> Bushell provided the first comprehensive study of a single collection of Chinese ceramics outside China, based on the Walters Collection in Baltimore (USA) in 1896, and a survey of the V&A collection of Chinese art in 1905.<sup>443</sup>

As the V&A collection increasingly incorporated a broader range of Chinese ceramics, extending the chronological, stylistic, technological and decorative boundaries of the collection, European style Chinese export porcelain continued to arrive in relatively small

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from estates in the West Indies. He was a prolific collector of ‘glass, plate, ceramics and miniatures’ and his collection was sold at auction in 1855.

<sup>440</sup> Stacey Pierson, “5 ‘True Beauty of Form and Chaste Embellishment’. Summer Palace Loot and Chinese Porcelain Collecting in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” in *Collecting and Displaying Chinas “Summer Palace” in the West: The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France* (Routledge, 2017).

<sup>441</sup> Bushell purchased two groups of ceramics between 1882-3 for the sum of £500, V&A Archive, S.W. Bushell Nominal File MA/1/B3676

Pearce, ‘Collecting, Connoisseurship and Commerce: An Examination of the Life and Career of Stephen Wooton Bushell (1844-1908)’.

<sup>442</sup> Stephen W. Bushell, *Chinese Porcelain Before the Present Dynasty* (Peking, 1886).

Zhu Yan and Stephen W. Bushell, trans., *Description of Chinese Pottery and Porcelain: Being a Translation of the T’ao Shuo* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1910).

<sup>443</sup> S.W. Bushell, *Oriental Ceramic Art*, 10 vols (New York: D.Appleton and Company, 1896).  
S.W. Bushell, *Chinese Art*, vol. 2 Vols (London: HMSO, 1905).

numbers, periodically purchased from sales and at auction or as part of often much larger gifts and bequests. A number of individual items acquired in this manner are now recognized for their rarity and historical significance, such as the blue and white Portuguese ewer with the arms of Antonio Peixoto formerly in the Gulland Collection, but there is no evidence to indicate they were recognised as such when they first arrived at the museum.<sup>444</sup> European style Chinese export porcelain was neither deliberately pursued and collected, nor was it regarded as a separate category of Chinese porcelain at this time.

The shift in taste amongst ‘serious’ collectors of Chinese ceramics in Britain during the first decades of the twentieth century towards the wares of early China has been discussed elsewhere in this thesis, and was promoted at the V&A through the activities of art critics Herbert Read (V&A curator from 1922-39) and Roger Fry, both of whom published extensively through *The Burlington Magazine*, which Fry co-founded, and the Department of Ceramics.<sup>445</sup> Counter to this trend, European style Chinese export porcelain continued to arrive at the Museum from a variety of sources. In 1924, the Museum purchased an armorial dish bearing the inscription, ‘Canton in China 24<sup>th</sup> January 1791’ for the sum of £4.4. from the sale of the collector Sir A.Tudor-Craig who was first mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis.<sup>446</sup> Two years later, a large polychrome dish decorated with the Royal Arms of England and the inscription, ‘ENGELANDT’, was presented to the V&A by H.M.King George V.<sup>447</sup> While small in number, the continued acquisition of European style Chinese export porcelains at the museum indicates an appreciation of the historical significance of such objects.

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<sup>444</sup> V&A: C.222-1931. This object arrived in 1931 from the Julia Gulland Bequest, wife of collector William Guiseppe Gulland, who held the residue of the collection until her death. It is now recognized as one of the earliest examples of Portuguese armorial wares dating to the first period of direct Sino-European contact. See Lu, *Passion for Porcelain. Masterpieces of Ceramics from the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum*. pp.82-83.

<sup>445</sup> *The Burlington Magazine* was the first scholarly publication dedicated to art history in Britain and Fry was involved from its foundation in 1903. Read was editor from 1933-38. On Fry, Modernism and Chinese Art, See Perfect, ‘Roger Fry, Chinese Art and The Burlington Magazine’.

<sup>446</sup> V&A: C.1462-1924. This item had been gifted to Tudor-Craig from fellow enthusiast, Mr. F.A.Crisp.

<sup>447</sup> V&A: C.377-1926. The spelling of the inscription suggests this item was manufactured for the Dutch market. The identification of other dishes representing the provinces and cities of the Netherlands suggest the dish may have been part of a set produced to commemorate the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. See Kerr and Mengoni, *Chinese Export Ceramics*. pp.48-49.

After the War, Ashton returned to the V&A as Director in 1945, having served first in the Ministry of Information and later the British Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. From the outset, Ashton enacted new approaches to museum exhibitions and display, demonstrated in the diverse and inventive temporary exhibition programme and the remodeling of the permanent galleries.<sup>448</sup> In his first year, the loan exhibition of paintings by Matisse and Picasso (Nov 1945-Jan 1946) presented to the public material previously considered outside the sphere of the V&A and drew large visitor numbers. Later that year, the equally popular ‘Britain Can Make It’ (Autumn 1946), emphasised current achievements in British product design, laying the foundations for the ‘Festival of Britain’ of 1951.<sup>449</sup> Ashton also supported exhibitions marked for their decidedly unfashionable subject matter, notably the exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts of 1952 held to mark the centenary of the V&A. Curated by Peter Floud of the Circulation Department (discussed below), it was the first exhibition of its kind to rehabilitate Victorian art and design which had until then been held in low esteem within museum and collecting circles. Over the decade of his directorship, Ashton demonstrated his willingness to stage exhibitions then considered radical or simply out of step with current taste. This approach is worthy of note in relation to his support for the Basil Ionides Bequest, as detailed in Chapter 4, which also lay outside prevailing trends in collecting circles.

From 1948, the reorganization of the Museum began and would take over four years to complete over fifty rooms including the primary collections on the ground floor of the museum. Ashton explained his plans in the following terms:

‘The Main or Primary Museum, when re-arranged, will consist of the finest things in the Collections, arranged in a chronological and historical series in the main galleries at the front of the Museum... These Collections will be presented in the most attractive manner possible, and the scheme will be designed to give the man in the street an easily grasped view of the Applied Arts throughout the ages, with as little fatigue as possible. Western art will be separated from Eastern art, and it is hoped,

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<sup>448</sup> The V&A hosted approximately four exhibitions per year under Ashton.

<sup>449</sup> The innovative display of room sets invited visitors to imagine who would have lived in interiors organized according to class, age and gender. See Sparke, *The Modern Interior*. p. 68. For more on this exhibition and the Festival of Britain which followed, see Penny Sparke and Design Council, eds., *Did Britain Make It? British Design in Context, 1946-86* (London: Design Council, 1986).

subject to the immense difficulties of the present building, to sub-divide Western art into British and European.

The remainder of the Collections will be treated as Reserve Collections, and will be divided by material as at present. They will be housed in the back part of the Museum, and particular attention will be paid to providing student facilities of a more elaborate nature, with the end in view that the designer, the specialist, the collector or the art student, will have at their disposal a great range of types to study and enjoy....All these Reserve Collections will be available to the general public without any formality, but the emphasis on the use of these Reserve Collections will be placed on the needs of the specialist public rather than the general public’.

Minute Sheet, 8 March 1946, MA/46/6/12. V&A Archive, Blythe House

The Far Eastern Court was one of the last primary galleries to open on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1952, coinciding with the centenary of the museum and marking a new stage in its development. Chinese art objects of mixed media were displayed together in close proximity to a smaller number of Japanese and Korean objects. Centrally positioned in Gallery 44 near the main Cromwell Road Entrance, Far Eastern Art occupied a prominent place within the new museum structure which it retains today, as the T.T.Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art.

At this juncture, it is worth considering the broader historical and political context into which Ashton presented the Far Eastern Court. By 1952 when the gallery opened, China had emerged from years of war and internal political turmoil as the unified and modern nation state of the Peoples Republic of China, founded in 1949. However, the traditional and imperial Chinese objects which Ashton placed before the public at the V&A, in contrast to the nineteenth century emphasis on contemporary pieces discussed earlier, portrayed an essentialised China of the past which had by then ceased to exist. Attitudes in Britain towards China were generally positive, reflecting allegiances forged during two World Wars and in turn the gallery space accorded to Chinese art objects was generous – Japanese and Korean objects were pushed to the periphery both physically and symbolically and remained so until the creation of dedicated galleries some decades later.<sup>450</sup>

Rearrangements at the Museum featured regularly in *The Illustrated London News*, including the opening of the Far Eastern Court in 1952, which today provide useful visual and textual insights into the new display (Fig.5.2b). According to the review, the gallery was ‘dominated

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<sup>450</sup> Japanese and Korean art now occupy their own designated galleries abutting the Gallery of Chinese Art; Gallery 45, The Toshiba Gallery of Japanese Art and Gallery 47b, The Samsung Gallery of Korean Art.

by a magnificent group of Chinese Imperial robes' at the far end, flanked on either side by a large lacquer throne and cloisonné ice chest, both of which can be directly linked to the eighteenth-century Qianlong Emperor (r.1736-95).<sup>451</sup> Craig Clunas critiques the overtly 'Imperial' representation of China in this display, noting that many of these objects (apart from the cloisonné chest), came into the V&A relatively late, following the Boxer Rebellion of 1900-1 and fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, and were displayed here for the first time.<sup>452</sup> The impressive late imperial objects undoubtedly provided a visual focal point for the visitor, but the V&A Guide to the Galleries produced at this time indicates broader intentions, explaining the rationale behind the new gallery, in terms of object selection, their placement and the overall design scheme. Through the primary collection, the Guide explains that an overview of the material history of China is provided, noting key technological achievements, stylistic features and characteristics of decoration and form from different dynastic periods. Chinese ceramics are frequently mentioned, from the Neolithic to the modern period, focusing on production for domestic and imperial consumption rather than export.<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>451</sup> It is likely that both objects once stood in imperial palace buildings. The ice-chest, purchased from Professor Stockbauer of Nuremberg on 9 May, 1876, may originate from the Yuanming Yuan or Summer Palace, Beijing, V&A:255&A-1876. The throne was almost certainly commissioned for one of the Tuanhe Travelling Palaces in the Nan Haizi (Southern Ponds) hunting park, south of Beijing. V&A: W.399:1,2-1922.

<sup>452</sup> Clunas, 'The Imperial Collections: East Asian Art'.

<sup>453</sup> VA.1952.Box 0025, 'Victoria and Albert Museum Guide', Spring 1952. NAL.





Fig. 5.2a (Left) 'A Page for Collectors: A Victoria and Albert Circus', by Frank Davis, in *The Illustrated London News*, September 20, 1952, p. 468. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

Fig. 5.2b (Right) 'Art of the Far East in the V and A's New Primary Collection', *The Illustrated London News*, September 20, 1952, p.469. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].

In constructing a historical narrative that was easily digestible to the general visitor, Ashton emphasised a simplified and unified model of Chinese history which largely prevailed at that time. The history of trade, travel and cultural interactions between China and foreign nations is absent, perhaps as it complicated an otherwise linear discourse, in spite of ample evidence to the contrary and examples in the V&A collection. It is clear from the archive that Ashton valued this aspect of Chinese ceramic history, as detailed in Chapter 4 and exemplified by the Basil Ionides Bequest, but deliberately chose to situate these objects and their associated meanings elsewhere in the Study Collections of the museum.

Elsewhere in the Guide to the Galleries, Chinese objects feature within the Study Collections of material origin. In Gallery 87 in the suite of Metalwork Galleries, Far Eastern Metalwork included Chinese ritual bronzes, weapons, belt-hooks and mirrors from early China, and gold, silver and cloisonné up to the nineteenth century. The extensive holdings of ceramics in the Study Collections were displayed across galleries on the first and second floors, occupying the largest portion of gallery space dedicated to a single material. The first Ceramics

Galleries, built in 1868, had been elaborately decorated with Minton ‘majolica’ reliefs retelling the history of ceramics from 100-1715 AD, but excluded Asian ceramics until 1897.<sup>454</sup> By the early twentieth century, this densely ornamented and dark gallery environment was regarded as detrimental to the appreciation of ceramic objects. In contrast, the new Aston Webb extension of 1909 provided purpose-built galleries whose glazed roof allowed natural light to flood the gallery space, providing the optimal environment in which to observe differences in body and glaze. The collection was arranged geographically, with Middle Eastern ceramics at one end and Chinese at the other flanking European and English galleries in between. Ceramics were then differentiated by body type; earthenware, stoneware and porcelain were separated and further distinguished by typology and place of production, displayed in glazed wooden cabinets which remained in use until the full refurbishment of the Ceramics Galleries a century later.<sup>455</sup>



Fig. 5.3 Display of Chinese export porcelain in the Ceramics Galleries, 2004. V&A Photographic Archives. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

<sup>454</sup> Now the Whiteley Silver Galleries, Rooms 70a and 65-69.

<sup>455</sup> The Ceramics Galleries were fully refurbished from 2005-2010.

Chinese, Japanese and ‘other Far Eastern wares’ were displayed in Room 143 next to Continental porcelain and painted enamels in Room 142 and tiles in Room 141. Chinese export porcelain is not differentiated by name, but as curator Michael Archer later recalled was positioned at the far end of the suite of galleries next to porcelain of later China.<sup>456</sup> It is here that the first group of Ionides objects in the Ceramics Department were sited, integrated with others of a comparable type in close proximity to Chinese porcelain of a similar date, sharing many technological features but manufactured for Chinese domestic or imperial consumption (Fig. 5.3). In this context, European style Chinese export porcelain in the Ionides Bequest formed part of the materially based narrative of the ceramic history of China as articulated through the V&A Ceramics Galleries at that time. In the suite of galleries, East Asian ceramics were situated in relation to ceramics predominantly from later Europe, reflecting the shape of the V&A ceramics collection which had itself been determined in large part by the gifts and bequests of leading private collectors such as Charlotte Schreiber (1812-1893) and George Salting.<sup>457</sup> The dominance of these collections had led to historical anomalies in gallery organisation and display, indicative of power relationships and resulting legal obligations between private collector and public museum, which persisted in the post-war arrangement of the Ceramics Galleries. For example, the Schreiber Collection occupied a dedicated space in Galleries 139 and 140, juxtaposing English porcelains and enamels, a taste noted by Archer as ‘aristocratic’ and shared with Nellie Ionides and Queen Mary, as discussed in Chapter 2.<sup>458</sup> The retention of private collections in their totality was explicitly stated by many private collectors, including Salting, as a condition of their bequest and had become increasingly challenging for museums to accommodate.

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<sup>456</sup> Interview 9 May 2016. Michael Archer replaced Arthur Lane in the Department of Ceramics and Glass in 1963, becoming Deputy Keeper.

<sup>457</sup> The European ceramic collection at the V&A excludes ceramics from early Europe, such as Greek or Roman ceramics which have always been held at the British Museum. Ceramics from Africa and Mexico are also well represented at the British Museum but not the V&A, originating from collections formerly held in the Ethnographic Department.

Charlotte Schreiber gave 1,800 examples of English ceramics to the V&A in 1884. Ann Eatwell, ‘Private Pleasure, Public Beneficence: Lady Charlotte Schreiber and Ceramic Collecting’, in *Women in the Victorian Art World*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>458</sup> Archer notes that the same decorators and painters were employed in the British porcelain and enamel industries.

## *The Question of Bequests?*

The attitudes of the British national museums towards bequests had shifted by the early decades of the twentieth century as the permanent collections grew in size and scope and space became increasingly scarce. In 1937, the V&A restated the question:

‘Have we to provide for permanent separate galleries for those collections which were bequeathed to the Museum under more or less rigid conditions? The collections principally concerned are of course the Salting Bequest, the Jones Bequest, the Sheepshanks Bequest, the Schreiber Bequest, the Murray Bequest, and the Ionides and Currie Bequests.’

Some Notes on the Future Development of the Victoria & Albert Museum Site, Proposed Reconstruction of Buildings, 1937-8, ED 83/257, V&A Archive

The question posed here had not been adequately addressed by the Royal Commission of National Museums and Galleries (1927-28), whose findings were published in 1930, and the principle concerning the accommodation of bequests remained unresolved.<sup>459</sup> Of the collections named here, the Salting and Schreiber collections are of particular relevance and were displayed in full in the Ceramics Galleries of 1950. The Ionides collection was yet to arrive and the bequest of Basil Ionides was promised without any prior conditions or qualifications. However, as Arthur Lane noted later in 1959, the ‘enormous collection of ‘Battersea enamels’ offered by Nellie Ionides in 1931 had been agreed in his view on ‘embarrassing terms’ to which the museum had agreed.<sup>460</sup> In the same document, Lane discusses the verbal offer of her collection of Qing porcelain and Meissen porcelain figurines, to which a selection would preferably be made; these bequests never materialised and their loss to the nation is noted in Chapter 4.

Tensions between private collector and national museum highlight the divergence between their respective motivations; the former intent on shaping a singular collection according to intensely personal objectives, and the latter tasked with building and accommodating a permanent collection on behalf of the nation. It is against this backdrop that the Basil Ionides Bequest should be understood. In 1951, all the objects which arrived at the Museum entered

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<sup>459</sup> “Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries: Final Report, Part 2” (1930), ZLIB 29/780, The National Archives, Kew.

<sup>460</sup> No further details of the terms are offered. Letter from Arthur Lane to V&A Director, 22.12.59, MA/1/1245. V&A Archives.

the Department of Ceramics and were displayed in the materially based displays on the top floor of the museum. No examples of European style Chinese export porcelain were displayed in the newly open Primary Gallery of Far Eastern Art on the ground floor, removing this aspect of Chinese porcelain production from the primary museum discourse of ‘Chinese art’. These objects were sited within the secondary discourse of the history of ceramics in the Study Collections, facilitating the material study of Chinese porcelain and ceramics of global origin for the specialist visitor.

### *The Basil Ionides Bequest and the Circulation Department*

When the second group of objects from the Basil Ionides Bequest entered the Museum in 1963, they were subdivided between the Department of Ceramics and Circulation as detailed in Chapter 4. Those objects destined for Ceramics joined others already displayed in the materially focused galleries discussed above or were placed into storage at South Kensington. Thirty-three items, including one object from the Nellie Ionides Bequest, entered the Department of Circulation and it is to this group of objects that we will now turn.

A department for circulating objects from London to the provinces had existed since the formative years of the Museum, sending exhibitions out on a specially constructed circulating train in 1855.<sup>461</sup> The benefits of widening access to the central museum beyond the capital was clearly stated in the first year’s report written by Henry Cole to the Board of Trade, who sanctioned the borrowing of objects and purchase of duplicates for this purpose. Writing on the centenary of the Museum, Ashton noted that the Circulation Department then served 287 schools of art and training colleges, and 101 museums, art galleries and libraries throughout the country.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Peter Floud, Keeper of the Circulation Department 1947-60, cites 1848 as the start of Circulation, its origins in his view predating the Museum. For an early history see Peter Floud, *V&A Museum Circulation Department, Its History and Scope* (London: V&A, Curwen Press, 1949). Burton, *Vision and Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum*.

<sup>462</sup> In 1950, the Department held over 25,000 objects, estimated in 2012 to be over 32,000. Digital Media webmaster@vam.ac.uk Victoria and Albert Museum, ‘Room 38A and beyond: Post-War British Design and the Circulation Department’, 29 August 2012, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/research-journal/issue-no.-4-summer-2012/room-38a-and-beyond-post-war-british-design-and-the-circulation-department/>.

‘The Circulation Collections, as in Coles day, attempt to cover all the fields covered by the Victoria and Albert Museum itself, the only limiting factor being that objects must, of course, be transportable’.<sup>463</sup>

Ashton goes on to describe the breadth of the collection, noting in particular its strengths in the fields of contemporary art and design. The range of ceramics are worthy of special attention, including examples of Chinese pottery and porcelain from the Eumorfopoulos Collection discussed earlier, indicating the high quality and monetary value of objects available for loan.<sup>464</sup> A group of eighty examples of Chinese ceramics spanning 2,000 years is discussed in detail by Frank Davis in *The Illustrated London News* of September 20, 1952 (Fig.5.2a). This article appeared facing the aforementioned feature on the new Primary Gallery of Far Eastern Art, making explicit to the reader the relationship between the two areas of museum activity; as lender of touring exhibitions and objects to the provinces, and as provider of a more permanent and digestible history of the object within the newly designed galleries at South Kensington. The two public facing functions amply satisfied the educational remit of the museum. As Davis jovially remarked,

‘the Victoria and Albert Museum.... Is not the offspring of an Act of Parliament, but a department of the Ministry of Education, and is therefore honour bound to try to do us good’.<sup>465</sup>

In 1952, the department also had ‘custody’ of material from other national museums which were made available for loan. From the British Museum, Greek pottery, Roman glass and British pottery were lent via the Circulation Department at South Kensington as part of a series of mixed media shows including ‘The Arts of Ancient Rome’. In a similar manner, ‘The Arts of Japan’, ‘The Arts of India’ and ‘The Arts of China’ presented survey exhibitions which complemented the new gallery displays in the capital.<sup>466</sup> The full centralisation of a national loan collection and service, as envisaged and recommended by the Royal

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<sup>463</sup> Leigh Ashton, ‘100 Years of the Victoria and Albert Museum’, *Museums Journal* 53 (May 1953). p.44

<sup>464</sup> According to Frank Davis, objects ranged in value from £5 to £500. Frank Davis, ‘A Page for Collectors: A Victoria and Albert Circus’, *The Illustrated London News*, 20 September 1952. P.469. NAL.

<sup>465</sup> Davis.

<sup>466</sup> ‘The Arts of China’, K4, included some exceptional pieces from the Eumorfopoulos Collection. Described as Category 2: Exhibition requiring both floor and wall space. The Victoria and Albert Museum Circulation Department, ‘Exhibitions for Loan to Museums, Art Galleries and Libraries 1955-56’ (HMSO, 1954), MA/17/3/1, V&A Archive.



Commission on Museums in 1930 was never fully realised, but the Circulation Department was undoubtedly the largest and most active body of its kind in Britain.<sup>467</sup>

The Circulation Department, or Circ. as it was known, assisted provincial museums and art galleries in three principal ways; by providing travelling exhibitions, by making long loans of individual objects to fill gaps in provincial collections and by making grants towards the purchase of objects by provincial institutions. Travelling exhibitions are of particular interest to this thesis, discussed in full below, as this was the means whereby objects from the Basil Ionides Bequest were seen outside the capital. Travelling exhibitions were available free of charge to any institution that could provide adequate and secure exhibition space, cover half the cost of transportation and the cost of insurance. Each travelling exhibition was sent out as a complete self-contained unit with posters, descriptive notes and lengthy labels. According to Ashton, 'the method of presentation is frankly didactic'.<sup>468</sup> Larger exhibitions were transported by museum van whereas framed exhibitions and panel-displays travelled by train.

Ashton divided travelling exhibitions into five categories; the first and largest contained the 'cream' of the collections, incorporating three dimensional and two-dimensional works. These thematic exhibitions surveyed topics such as 'Islamic Art' or 'The Decorative Arts of the Italian Renaissance' and included objects in a range of media. The second category took a materially based approach, such as 'English Pottery and Porcelain' or 'Chinese Pottery and Porcelain' discussed above. A range of Chinese material featured in these exhibitions including Chinese cloisonné in 'Enamels' M1. Once more, these were three dimensional objects loaned for three months at a time. The third category consisted entirely of framed material for wall-display, such as 'Early English Watercolours' and 'Japanese Prints'. Chinese textiles featured in the exhibition 'Two Thousand Years of Silk' T17, which was mounted on panels, said to occupying 150 feet of wall space. These exhibitions varied in size and were loaned for a shorter period of one to two months. Small photographic exhibitions constituted the fourth category and were designed for small halls where the more valuable framed originals would be inappropriate. The final category covered small displays of three-

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<sup>467</sup> The Royal Commission on Museums had recommended in 1930 that the Department of Circulation should extend its activities and circulate loan collections from the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery and British Museum as well as its own. In 1937 these recommendations had only been partially implemented. Some Notes on the Future Development of the Victoria & Albert Museum Site', *Proposed Reconstruction of Buildings*, 1937-8, ED 84/257, V&A Archive

<sup>468</sup> Ashton, '100 Years of the Victoria and Albert Museum'. p.45

dimensional objects devoted to a single specialized theme, such as ‘Italian Maiolica’ or ‘French Lace’, set out in a single show case. These were lent for a twelve-month period.

These categories provided a framework within which the V&A could offer a range of objects and interpretations of artistic themes which mirrored the materially/aesthetically based approaches then laid out at the main South Kensington site. In 1952, Ashton estimated the total number of exhibitions on show at any one time as between 100 and 125, and the annual number as high as 400, divided across over 100 borrowing institutions. The activities of the Circulation Department constituted an integral strand of museum activity, championed by Ashton as Director as evidenced in his review of the museum centenary. Ashton had in fact promoted the activities of the department earlier in his career, arranging objects ‘For Loan to Museums’ in circular shopfront displays in Leicester Square Underground Station in 1938 (Fig.5.4). From surviving photographic sources, examples of Chinese ceramics can be seen juxtaposed with European furniture and textiles. A photograph pinned to the rear wall of the case shows museum technicians loading cases into the museum van, illustrating the means by which the museum would facilitate the movement of objects from the metropolis to the provinces.



Fig. 5.4 ‘Underground Museum Display. Exhibit at Leicester Square Station’, *Museums Journal* 38 (September 1938): pp.24-25. [Image: Photographed with permission from the copy in NAL].



The Circulation Department enjoyed a revival in the post war period which can be understood as part of a broader government initiative to promote ‘good design’ across the country. Under the ‘dynamic and visionary’ Keeper Peter Floud CBE (1911-1960), the Circulation Department became the largest single department at the V&A with an emphasis on social inclusion and access for all.<sup>469</sup> The department’s ethos has since been characterised as ‘left-wing in outlook and organization’ with many staff being members of the Communist Party of Great Britain and concerned with reaching the ‘working class’ as well as the elite scholarly connoisseur.<sup>470</sup> Political concerns were not confined to matters of audience participation but to the objects themselves and the act of making. As Weddell observes:

‘Under Floud’s leadership, we see a Departmental understanding of the ‘moral and social implications’ of different kinds of production (craft and industrial), backed by a Keeper with a commitment to social justice...working within a state milieu favouring the promotion of good modern design across the nation’.<sup>471</sup>

The Circulation Department continued to collect contemporary design as an educational resource for manufacturers, designers and the public. Floud engaged publicly in debates surrounding art and industry, craft and the machine-made object through his writings and radio broadcasts on the subject, re-assessing the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement and questioning the continuing role of museum.<sup>472</sup> Floud’s team shared his political motivations and public outlook, continuing his work under the leadership of Keeper Hugh Wakefield (1960-76) and Assistant Keeper, Barbara Morris following Floud’s sudden death in 1960.<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Joanna Weddell, “The Ethos of the Victoria and Albert Museum Circulation Department 1947-1960,” in *Design Objects and the Museum* (London: New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 15–26.

<sup>470</sup> Weddell.

Linda Sandino, ‘Art School Trained Staff and Communists in the V&A Circulation Department, C1947-1958’, in *Artists Work in Museums: Histories, Interventions, Subjectivities* (Bath: Wunderkammer Press, 2013), 92–102.

<sup>471</sup> Weddell, ‘The Ethos of the Victoria and Albert Museum Circulation Department 1947-1960’. p.18

<sup>472</sup> Floud asserted that Morris’ production was based on the principles of mass-production, inducing the same social inequalities he claimed to refute. See Peter Floud, ‘William Morris as an Artist: A New View’, *The Listener* (Third Programme, 19 September 1954). Peter Floud, ‘The Inconsistencies of William Morris’, *The Listener* (Third Programme, 25 September 1954). On the Museum, see Peter Floud, ‘The Circulation Department of the Victoria & Albert Museum’, *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, Paris, UNESCO Publication 852, Museums and Circulating Exhibitions, Museums 3.4, no. 299* (1950).

<sup>473</sup> The egalitarian approach of the department is reflected in the gender balance, offering women a more prominent role than elsewhere in the museum.

*Chinese Export Porcelain Travelling Exhibition: C27*

In 1963, the Circulation Department announced the introduction of two new travelling exhibitions of ceramics, C27 Chinese Export Porcelain and C28 Delftware, in their booklet for the forthcoming financial year (April 1964-March 1965), alongside other Category 3 exhibitions of ceramics.<sup>474</sup> The exhibition of Chinese export porcelain is described in the following terms:

‘This exhibition has been selected largely from the recent important bequest to the Museum made by the late Basil Ionides, supplemented by pieces drawn from the collections of this Department and the Department of Ceramics. It deals mainly with the wares of the eighteenth century designed in the European taste and includes several pieces made specifically for the English market. The exhibition shows the wide variety of designs in the Chinese export wares, many of which are amusingly free in their interpretation of the European prototypes’.<sup>475</sup>

C27 consisted of five cases of objects; one free-standing case, the remaining four cases designed to be shown against a wall, or back-to-back. The estimated value of the exhibition in 1963 was £6,000 for the purpose of insurance, available for the standard transport cost of £7 15s. Chinese Export Porcelain joined travelling exhibitions of Chinese ceramics already available through the Circulation Department; C5 Chinese Pottery (as discussed by Davis in 1952), comprised three cases surveying the history of ceramics from the Han dynasty to the eighteenth century and included many examples from the Eumorfopoulos collection. C11 Pottery Figures, consisted of four cases featuring Chinese examples from the Han and Tang dynasties, eighteenth century European examples from Meissen and Vienna, Chelsea and Staffordshire and one case dedicated to the work of contemporary potters in Britain, Italy and France. The introduction of the travelling exhibition of Chinese Export Porcelain in 1963 created a trio of exhibitions featuring Chinese ceramics, which now included aspects of Sino-European trade, design transfer and cultural interactions between manufacturers and consumers of Chinese ceramics in Europe, in particular England. This was later joined in 1973 by the exhibition, C.38 Chinese Blue and White, which surveyed the development of

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<sup>474</sup> C28 Delftware: From the bequest of the late Brigadier General Sir Gilbert Mellor.

<sup>475</sup> The Victoria and Albert Museum Circulation Department, ‘Exhibitions for Loan to Museums, Art Galleries and Libraries, 1964-65’ (HMSO, 1963), MA/17/5, V&A Archive.

blue and white porcelain in China from the Ming dynasty to the eighteenth century, described in the V&A catalogue as ‘the last great period of Chinese Art’.<sup>476</sup>

Chinese ceramics were also separately distributed to art schools through the Circulation Department as study collections. AP The Art of the Potter is described as ‘an anthology of thirty pots, from many countries and periods, each one of which may be thought outstanding for a different reason. Its idea is that students should articulate those reasons for themselves, through fundamental analysis of form and effect’.<sup>477</sup> Other groups of ceramics available to art schools included ‘85: Form in Pottery, 86: Ceramic Figures, 87: Floral Decoration on Ceramics’, each of which may have included Chinese examples but in the absence of hand lists no firm conclusions can be made. No objects from the Ionides Bequest were included in these sets as they were all accounted for in the travelling exhibition, C.27.

The hand list produced to accompany the exhibition of Chinese export porcelain lists sixty objects, over half of which originated from the bequest of Basil Ionides and a single item from Nellie Ionides; thirty-two objects came directly into the Circulation Department in 1963, a further two objects were transferred from Ceramics, having entered the Museum in 1951.<sup>478</sup> These objects were supplemented by existing examples in the V&A collection in order to present a more complete survey of Chinese export porcelain, from the Kangxi period (1662-1722) to the late eighteenth century. Notable inclusions are seven objects from the W.G.Gulland Bequest (accessioned in 1907 and 1931), and examples from the formative years of the V&A, such as an enameled and gilded dish from the collection of James Bandinel mentioned earlier.<sup>479</sup> Some objects duplicate those already represented in the Ceramics collection, such as a late seventeenth-century blue and white dish decorated after a French print of European musicians, which first appeared at the Museum in 1910 as part of the Salting Bequest, and later in 1963 from the Basil Ionides Bequest, which moved directly to the Circulation Department and became the leading poster image for the travelling exhibition (Fig.5.5).<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> The Victoria and Albert Museum Circulation Department, ‘Exhibitions for Loan to Museums, Art Galleries and Libraries, 1974-75’ (HMSO, 1973), MA/17/3/1, V&A Archive.

<sup>477</sup> Art School Loans, 1966-68, MA/17/5. V&A Archives.

<sup>478</sup> See Hand List: C.27, MA/15/9, V&A Archives.

<sup>479</sup> V&A: 1986-1855

<sup>480</sup> V&A: C.781-1910, V&A: Circ.136-1963

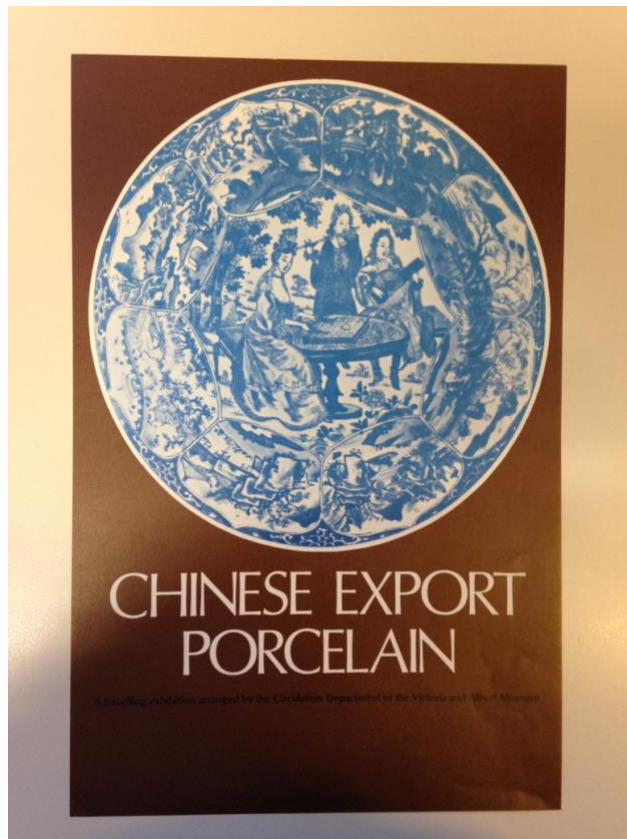


Fig. 5.5 Poster for travelling exhibition, Chinese Export Porcelain, Peter Branfield (HMSO Designer), MA/25/176/1, V&A Archives. [Image: ©Victoria and Albert Museum, London].

Objects are clearly listed according to their designated case, each consisting of between ten and sixteen items, spanning a range of dates and illustrating multifarious aspects in the development of Chinese porcelain manufactured for export to Europe. Decorative techniques of underglaze blue, overglaze enamels and gilding can all be seen in a variety of styles, including decoration added on arrival in Europe. Shapes derived from European metalwork or ceramics feature alongside designs originating from European print sources and porcelain manufacturers such as Meissen or Saint-Cloud. Armorial devices associated with individual families or the Dutch and English East India Companies are also represented, including the Dutch designs of Cornelis Pronk, further illustrating the intersection through trade between European traders and Chinese porcelain manufacturers. A variety of aspects of Chinese porcelain design and manufacture are represented in each case, indicating that whilst the didactic motivations of this travelling exhibition are clear, cased objects were not organised chronologically or differentiated by glaze and body type or decorative motif, as might have been the case. Each cased display offers the visitor an overview of the China trade; the five

‘mixed’ displays perhaps allowing greater flexibility and adaptability of the travelling exhibition to a range of locations and room configurations.

The travelling exhibition of Chinese Export Porcelain proved popular in its first year, perhaps due to the originality of the material and enthusiasms of host institutions, travelling first to the Williamson Art Gallery, Birkenhead and onward to the Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool and the Bristol City Art Gallery. Later that year, it moved on to the Public Library in Bury and south to the Alfred East Art Gallery, Kettering and finally the Luton Museum and Art Gallery.<sup>481</sup> For the next seven years, C.27 was exhibited on average six times per year in locations from Belfast to Oxford, London to Newcastle. From 1971, demand for the exhibition declined when C.27 travelled to Coventry, Sheffield and the Borough of Newham in London only. In 1974, Chinese Export Porcelain was exhibited for the last time at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle before returning permanently to South Kensington.

From the archive, the geographical range and socio-economic diversity of towns and cities who hosted the travelling exhibition is striking. The majority of locations are small and medium sized provincial towns, in many instances sited in the industrial heartlands of northern England and the Midlands, such as Gateshead, Ellesmere Port or Wallsall. In London, the economically deprived areas of Tower Hamlets, Dagenham, Newham and Enfield all hosted the exhibition in local museums or library spaces. Considering the host-locations as a whole, the egalitarian motivations of the Circulation Department appear to have been successfully met, travelling exhibitions reaching new audiences from a broad spectrum of society across the geographical span of the United Kingdom.

In order to pursue the question of audience participation and the public reception of C.27 further, a number of attempts were made in the course of this research to contact host-institutions, discovering in the first instance that many have since ceased to exist or been absorbed into larger regional cultural hubs. Furthermore, archival data relating to travelling exhibition C27 no longer survives in these provincial centres, possibly due to the reorganisation of the local authorities during the 1970s, although in some instances Circulation Department exhibitions were remembered anecdotally.<sup>482</sup> Press cuttings from

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<sup>481</sup> Van Delivery Schedule, MA/15/5, V&A Archives

<sup>482</sup> Ebony Andrews (Collections and Volunteering Officer at Calderdale Museums Service, Bankfield Museum, Halifax) noted structural changes which took place in 1974. Personal correspondence, 19 November 2016.

regional newspapers held in the V&A Archives are largely descriptive in their reviews of the exhibition, publicising the event in a positive and uncritical tone to the wider public but offering few insights into the public response to the exhibition. A number of host institutions such as the Royal Pump Room in Harrogate and The Williamson Art Gallery in Birkenhead exhibited 'Chinese Export Porcelain' more than once, suggesting the travelling exhibition returned due to popular demand.<sup>483</sup> Press photographs focus on individual objects of interest, in particular a pair of 'Dutch dancers' (Fig.0.3) and a European man riding a lion which are described by the *Ellesmere Port News* as 'amusing'.<sup>484</sup> The rarity and monetary value of the collection is also recorded but the local press articles offer few insights into the manner of display.

In 1965, V&A brochures advertising the annual museum offer of travelling exhibitions included small photographs of object groupings and their display for the first time. In C27, dishes can be seen arranged vertically against a contrasting dark background while three dimensional objects including a coffee pot, cups and saucers appear in the foreground.<sup>485</sup> By 1973, a single object, a marriage plate of around 1730 had been selected to illustrate the travelling exhibition but by this date the popularity of C27 appears to have waned, travelling to only three more destinations before its final return to South Kensington.<sup>486</sup> The Circulation Department would be dismantled shortly after in 1977, against a political backdrop of government cuts and considerable public outcry.<sup>487</sup>

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Private correspondence with Colin M Simpson (Principal Museums Officer at the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum in Birkenhead) recalled memories of V&A exhibitions organized by the Circulation Department, 21 October 2016.

<sup>483</sup> Other Museums and Art Galleries who exhibited C27 twice were the Alfred East Art Gallery, Kettering, the Victoria Public Library and Art Gallery, Brighouse, and Lincoln. The Williamson Art Gallery took the exhibition on three separate occasions between 1964-1972. Van Delivery Schedule, MA/15/5. V&A Archives.

<sup>484</sup> Ian Craig, 'These Plates Weren't Made for Using', *Ellesmere Port News*, Cheshire, 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 1967, MA/19/3, V&A Archives.

<sup>485</sup> The photograph is omitted here due to poor print quality, but the background is described as 'chocolate-coloured', *Ellesmere Port News*, 1967, MA/19/3. V&A Archives.

<sup>486</sup> Three examples of this marriage plate are represented in the V&A collection, all received from the Bequest of W.G.Gulland in 1931. Two examples were displayed as part of C27, Circ. 272-1931 and Circ.429-1931, one is photographed here. A further example remained in the Ceramics Collection, C.215-1931. V&A.

<sup>487</sup> David Hockney famously petitioned Shirley Williams, Secretary of State for Education and Science, against the closure of the Circulation Department, 15/12/1976, MA/15/37, V&A Archive.

The historical trajectory of collecting and the display of Chinese art objects and in particular European style Chinese export porcelain at the British Museum will now be briefly considered in order to understand the development and impact of different museum structures and systems of object classification into which the Ionides Bequest arrived. Chinese art objects were present in the founding collection of Sir Hans Sloane in 1753, constituting at that time exotic curiosities concerning aspects of Chinese life.<sup>488</sup> Nineteenth century debates concerning museum taxonomies placed many Chinese art objects in the field of Ethnography alongside the material culture of other non-European nations reflecting commonly held colonial attitudes pervasive at that time. At the British Museum, Chinese and Japanese pictorial works alone were elevated to the Department of Prints and Drawings, indicating a higher value attached to this category of material, although still ranking lower than European painted works which were displayed in art institutions dedicated to the Western artistic tradition, first at the National Gallery (from 1824) and later the Tate Gallery (from 1897).<sup>489</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Chinese export porcelain was enthusiastically collected through the activities of Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897), whose involvement with the British Museum and the South Kensington Museum as private collector and museum curator is now well known.<sup>490</sup> Harrison-Hall suggests that the appeal of European style Chinese export porcelain lay in designs which were ‘readily understood by a Western audience and the poor execution of the designs would have supported a view of cultural supremacy then prevalent in the United Kingdom’.<sup>491</sup> While the realisation of European print designs by Chinese decorators was at times awkward, confusing European pictorial conventions of spatial recession and chiaroscuro, this was not always the case.

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<sup>488</sup> Early collected objects included chopsticks, abacus and shoes made for bound feet. Harrison-Hall, ‘Collecting Ceramics: London Fashion’, p.40

<sup>489</sup> In 1912 the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings was created under painting specialist, Lawrence Binyon.

<sup>490</sup> The private collection built up by Franks from the 1850s was exhibited at the Bethnal Green Museum (a branch of the South Kensington Museum) in 1876 and later donated to the British Museum. Through his activities at the British Museum, the collection of East Asian ceramics was significantly expanded and by 1888, Franks believed they represented the most comprehensive collection possible at that time. The collection included European style Chinese export porcelain and armorial wares, reflecting his wider interests in European prints, European ceramics and Greek and Roman mythology. See Jessica Harrison-Hall, ‘Oriental Pottery and Porcelain’, in *A.W.Franks - Nineteenth Century Collecting and the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 1997), 220–29.

<sup>491</sup> Harrison-Hall. p.226.

Objects collected by Franks also demonstrate the expert skill whereby complex European subjects were copied in China in the medium of porcelain, decorated by hand, highlighting the extent to which Chinese manufacturers excelled in this field, far in advance of their European counterparts, who could not compete in terms of scale, cost and quality.

Sir Charles Hercules Read (1857-1929) succeeded Franks as Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography (1896-1921), which included Chinese ceramics at that time. In the early twentieth century, the British Museum underwent a major architectural expansion in a similar manner to the V&A. From 1906-14, the main gallery of the King Edward VII building was built to the designs of John Burnet and was opened on 7 May 1914 by his son King George V, just three months before the outbreak of war. The Ground Floor Gallery (now Gallery 33), extended East and West from a square central bay with large central circular opening, which is today unchanged. One of the first exhibitions in this space was the recently acquired collection of Chinese Buddhist textiles and paintings from Dunhuang (Xinjiang Province, China), acquired by Aurel Stein on behalf of the British Government, which was put on display before the gallery was given over to the permanent collection.<sup>492</sup> Gallery 33 then housed medieval collections and European ceramics in the eastern section and ‘oriental’ ceramics and glass to the west, reflecting the departmental organisation at that time. To the extreme east and west, additional bays were created which housed the Waddesdon Collection and part of the Franks Bequest respectively.<sup>493</sup> From surviving photographs of this period, European ceramics can be seen in dense cased displays within regularly spaced window bays and centrally placed cabinets along the central axis of the gallery (Fig. 5.6). Unfortunately, no images of the western end of the gallery survive, but it is likely that Chinese ceramics were displayed in a similar manner.

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<sup>492</sup> The extensive collection of objects from Stein’s expeditions was divided between the British Library, British Museum and V&A in London, and the National Museum of India in Delhi. Paintings from the Stein Collection were first displayed in London in the Festival of Empire Exhibition held in 1911 at Crystal Palace before moving to the British Museum. See ‘Early Exhibitions of the Collections of Aurel Stein: Part 2: 1911: The Festival of Empire. Susan Whitfield, ‘Silk Road Digressions’, Silk Road Digressions, accessed 3 April 2019, <https://silkroaddigressions.com/>.

<sup>493</sup> Details extracted from the Internal Conservation Plan, by conservation architects Purcell Miller Tritton, 2007, British Museum Archives.





Fig. 5.6 View European Ceramic display in the Eastern end of Gallery 33, British Museum, 1914-1939. British Museum Archives. [Image: © Trustees of the British Museum].

From this phase of gallery refurbishment, it is evident that the display strategies of the British Museum and V&A were remarkably similar. Although the British Museum had never been organised along material lines, Chinese ceramics were sited within galleries in close proximity to ceramic counterparts from Europe, allowing the visitor to make connections and comparisons between objects of different origin in terms of material, technique and decorative style. Furthermore, the addition of galleries dedicated to named collectors mirrors the treatment of bequests at the V&A discussed above. The placement of European style Chinese export porcelain within this scheme is not recorded and cannot be firmly ascertained from the photographic record but was most likely displayed within the Chinese section of the gallery or the Franks Collection, from where largest body of this ceramic category was derived.

Departmental restructuring during the 1920s realigned objects once more within museum systems of classification and Chinese ceramics were sited alongside European ceramics in the

newly formed Department of Ceramics and Ethnography in 1921 under Keeper Robert Lockhart Hobson (1921-38). The establishment of the Department of Oriental Antiquities in 1933 brought together objects of mixed media from across four different collections for the first time, producing a collection of Asian art objects which was both culturally and geographically focussed and included ethnographic material up to 1946.<sup>494</sup> Hobson retired shortly before the outbreak of war and the British Museum was subject to similar disruptions to its South Kensington counterpart, as galleries were emptied of their contents and the Museum operated on a skeleton staff. When the Museum resumed activities in 1946, the newly appointed Keeper Basil Gray (1946-1969), who collaborated with Leigh Ashton soon after, secured the King Edward VII gallery for the sole display of the Asian collections but it would be some years before his plans reached fruition.<sup>495</sup> The upper gallery was assigned for the temporary exhibition of the graphic arts of Asia, an arrangement which has continued up to the present in Gallery 91. Gray's concern for 'the enlargement of the collections while achieving greater balance', is reflected in the range of objects which was enriched by the gift of private collections, in particular in the field of Chinese ceramics due to his close association with the Oriental Ceramics Society, of which he was twice president.<sup>496</sup> Museum acquisitions increased museum holdings of early Chinese bronze and lacquer, and Yuan and Ming blue and white porcelain which was a personal interest of the Keeper.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Hermann Justus Braunholtz (1888-1963) became the first Keeper of the Department of Ethnography in 1946.

<sup>495</sup> Ashton and Gray, *Chinese Art*. In the years immediately following the War, gallery 33 acted as a temporary location for objects vacated from elsewhere in the museum, some of which had received a direct hit and needed full restoration. Personal correspondence, Marjory Caygill, formerly Assistant to the Director of the British Museum (1978) and author, 29 March 2019.

<sup>496</sup> Ralph Pinder-Wilson, 'Basil Gray 1904-1989', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 105 (2000): 439-437.

<sup>497</sup> Basil Gray, 'The Export of Chinese Porcelain to the Islamic World: Some Reflections on Its Significance for Islamic Art before 1400', *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 41 (July 1975).



Fig. 5.7 Western end of Gallery 33, 'Oriental Art and Antiquities', British Museum, post 1936. British Museum Archives. [Image: © Trustees of the British Museum].

Photographs in the museum archive reveal the impact of the arrival of prominent private collections of Chinese ceramics and the expansion of the Oriental collection during the 1930s. In Fig 5.7, objects from the Eumorfopoulos Collection can be clearly identified, such as the group of large Tang tomb figurines displayed in a centrally positioned case, which arrived in 1936.<sup>498</sup> Elsewhere in the gallery, objects of mixed media and origin can be seen; stone and metal sculpture from South and Southeast Asia and from Bay XXX, Greek pottery, suggesting a date immediately preceding the outbreak of war or soon after. The original window bay cases remain in use, but the central display has been updated with new bespoke cases, to accommodate designated groups of objects such as the Tang figures cited above, and stone plinths to display single objects. The gallery therefore demonstrates the dual arrangement of objects mentioned earlier, whereby selected items have been prominently

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<sup>498</sup> The first group of objects from the Eumorfopoulos collection were accessioned in 1936. Further objects came to the museum following his death in 1940.

arranged along the central axis of the gallery in close proximity to more detailed and dense displays of related objects in the window bays.

In a later photograph, tall, centrally positioned cases display large numbers of objects grouped according to date, origin and media (Fig.5.8). The whole gallery is now dedicated to Asian art objects, firmly dating this image to the post-war period. To the left, a large grouping of small to medium sized Tang ceramics can be identified in a crowded display. The case of Chinese porcelain in Bay XXXI, D, E, is dedicated to Ming porcelain and two tankards in European shape can be observed between other items for the Chinese domestic market. Further down the gallery in Bay XXIX D, Chinese export paintings can also be seen, suggesting that at this time, objects associated with Sino-European trade were integrated within the display of Chinese objects in Gallery 33.



Fig. 5.8 Western end of Gallery 33, British Museum, post-war period. British Museum Archives. [Image: © Trustees of the British Museum].



The British Museum approach to gallery display contrasts here with the V&A during the same period, when objects associated with Chinese export trade could only be found in the Study Collections and the Circulation Department. However, Gallery 33 appears crowded in this image as large and densely packed display cases occupy the central portion of the gallery as well as the window bays, no longer layering information for a range of visitors. A small number of Chinese porcelains could also be found in the Kings Gallery at this time, predominantly white figurines from Dehua, but this was the only alternative location in which Chinese porcelain could be encountered at the British Museum. The overall space afforded to the display of Chinese porcelain was therefore considerably less than at the V&A.



Fig. 5.9 Gallery 33, British Museum. According to caption, c.1972. British Museum Archives. [Image: © Trustees of the British Museum].

A further expansion of the collection can be observed in a later photograph of Gallery 33 (Fig.5.9) where bronze vessels are visible in what appears to be a chronological survey of the arts of China. Tentatively dated to the early 1970s, this photograph was most likely taken prior to the next phase of gallery development which took place at that time.<sup>499</sup> The physical gallery and display space here has changed little from the earlier images, suggesting no major change in approach amongst the British Museum curatorial staff. This image offers no further insights into the display of European style Chinese export porcelain, formerly in the Ionides Collection, as no examples can be firmly identified, but it most accurately depicts the Gallery of Oriental Antiquities when this small group of objects entered the museum collection. In the absence of additional evidence, no further conclusions can be drawn regarding the display of Ionides objects at the British Museum.

In the course of this research and in contrast to the V&A, no personal correspondence between Basil or Nellie Ionides and the British Museum has been uncovered, leaving the relationship between the private collectors and national museum beyond our reach. Every object associated with the couple was received in the name of Nellie Ionides, as discussed in the previous chapter, suggesting that no prior relationship existed between Basil Ionides and the British Museum. Considering his professional and private preoccupation with design history and close family connections between the Ionides and the V&A, it is unsurprising that Basil Ionides offered his bequest to the Museum at South Kensington rather than its Bloomsbury counterpart. While a small number of objects arrived at the British Museum before her marriage, all the examples of European style Chinese export porcelain received by gift or bequest from Nellie Ionides followed the death of her husband, suggesting a realignment of her loyalties in order to achieve her own personal aim, that is, to have objects in her name on public display at the national museums.

### *Conclusions*

The micro-history presented here maps the trajectory of Ionides objects at the V&A and British Museum between 1950-1970, constructed for the first time from extant documentary and photographic sources, allowing us to compare activities between the two national

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<sup>499</sup> In 1972-73 new cases were installed in the east and west end.

institutions in three key areas. First, the impact of the individual - museum curators and directors who personally chartered the direction of the museum and Chinese art objects in that context. Second, museum exhibition and display which in turn reflected museum-wide and departmental attitudes towards knowledge making and the communication of multiple meanings to a diverse set of audiences. Finally, the collections themselves, from their early beginnings to later evolution. The combination of all three factors within each institution helped to define the shifting position of European style Chinese export porcelain, physically and conceptually, within the national collections, which in turn reflect wider developments in museum practise and contemporary attitudes towards the history and material culture of China in the post war years.

At the V&A, the role played by Leigh Ashton as museum director was instrumental to gallery developments which took place at South Kensington following the War, and in promoting the work of the Circulation Department. The Chinese collections were of particular interest to the director and as such he was actively involved with this part of the collection, championing the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain at a time when it was distinctly out of vogue. At the British Museum, whilst none of the museum directors during this period had a scholarly interest or connection with Chinese art, Keeper Basil Gray was widely acknowledged as a leader in this field and according to curator Ralph Pinder-Wilson, 'The consensus was that Gray was the best Director the Museum had never had'.<sup>500</sup> The two men contributed to the organization of the 1935-6 International Exhibition of Chinese Art and in 1951 collaborated on a book dedicated to Chinese art.<sup>501</sup> Ashton engaged with current debates surrounding museum collections and display, audience engagement and accessibility with respect to the whole museum and published on the subject. The absence of documentary archives or published sources on the British Museum collections and display makes the study of Chinese art objects and Chinese ceramics in particular more problematic in that context, although surviving photographic sources provide valuable evidence. Both Ashton and Gray set about reorganising the collections, galleries and display of Chinese art objects following the hiatus of the War, according to a different set of criteria, which both reflected the

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<sup>500</sup> British Museum Directors: 1936 Sir (Edgar) John Forsdyke, 1950 Sir Thomas (Downing) Kendrick, 1959 Sir Frank (Chalton) Francis, 1968 Sir John (Frederick) Wolfenden.  
Pinder-Wilson, 'Basil Gray 1904-1989'.

<sup>501</sup> Ashton and Gray, *Chinese Art*.

historical origins and founding principles of each museum and the modern interpretation and implementation of the role of the museum in the post war years.

The archaeological focus of the British Museum had been enhanced by the addition of Chinese ceramics from early China since the 1920s and the significant arrival of objects from the collection of George Eumorfopoulos and others is evident in surviving photographs of Gallery 33. The arrangement of the gallery by dynastic progression, in a similar manner to the International Exhibition of Chinese Art of 1935-6, continued largely unchanged after the War when Gray further emphasised the ancient history of China through the display of early bronze and jade objects. Chinese export art was displayed in the post-war period, and it is likely that Ionides objects were inserted into this chronological museum narrative following their arrival in 1963. From the photographic record, little appears to have changed in gallery development up to 1972, the next phase of refurbishment, but in the absence of further archival or visual evidence, no further conclusions can be drawn.

The remit, and as a result the collection at the V&A had profoundly differed to that of the British Museum since its inception, its strengths lying in decorative arts and design history with a strong emphasis on arts education. The reorganisation and redisplay of the collections enacted by Ashton, in conjunction with Floud and the Circulation Department, facilitated a multivalent approach to Chinese art objects and in particular Chinese ceramics, which could be encountered in a culturally and geographically specific context or through the lens of the history of ceramics and design history. Objects from the Basil Ionides Bequest could be seen in a variety of settings, from the Ceramics Galleries at South Kensington to local museums across the UK, where they were exhibited in their own dedicated category. In each of these settings, the museum addressed a diverse set of audiences – defined not only by geographical location but class, education, gender and ethnicity – reflecting museum aspirations of ‘art for all’ which had laid at the heart of the museum since its formation a hundred years earlier but was reasserted at this time. While the public reception of art objects, in this case European style Chinese export porcelain, remains beyond our reach as no audience feedback is recorded or survives, the activities of the V&A in London and the Circulation Department - between centre and periphery – shine a light on the relationship between national and local museums and art galleries, elite and popular culture and broader socio-cultural and political objectives in post-war Britain.



On collecting, this chapter has brought into focus the disconnect between patterns of collecting in private circles and the national museums. The preference amongst many prominent private collectors for early domestic and imperial Chinese ceramics was well established by the 1920s and has been frequently mentioned in this thesis, and while examples of this type had been introduced to the national museums from the late nineteenth century, by individuals such as Bushell mentioned earlier in this chapter, this pattern of collecting was not visually apparent in the public museums until the post-war period. While Clunas criticises the ‘retrograde tendency’ of the V&A, a variety of external and internal factors which shaped museum practice at that time must be taken into account. First, the limitations faced by both museums prevented the overhaul of the galleries until after the War, which then offered the rare opportunity to radically refashion their galleries and displays; a moment seized upon in alternative ways which reflect their respective institutional remit. Second, the increasing reliance of national museums on private collectors for financial support and ultimately gifts and bequests placed a growing pressure on museum space and resources, producing tensions in the relationship between giver and recipient, as evident in the correspondence between Nellie Ionides and the V&A, discussed in Chapter 4. The permanence of the national collections placed increased responsibility on curators and directors who made decisions which in turn defined the shape of the permanent collections. Whilst an awareness of current trends amongst collecting circles was an essential attribute, and bearing in mind the many other factors which impact acquisitions, museum experts ideally needed to maintain a level of objectivity in the selection of objects based not on personal taste but on the space, physically and intellectually, those objects would occupy within the national collections. That Ashton enthusiastically welcomed the Basil Ionides Bequest indicates both his recognition of the historical value of the material to the nation and willingness and confidence to act in opposition to prevailing patterns of taste.

Following the next stage in the life of the Ionides Collection in the British national collections, this chapter has shown the power and impact of systems of museum classification and the display of objects on identity formation and creating meaning. European style Chinese export porcelain which previously constituted a coherent collection, as defined textually by the Lists, once separated, generated new sets of meanings in a variety of contexts, be that in the Ceramics Galleries at South Kensington, the Oriental Gallery at the British Museum or as part of the travelling exhibition, C.27. Once part of the national collections, objects were redefined by their relationship with and juxtaposition to others,

emphasizing or alternatively diminishing their 'Chineseness'. Objects at the London museums were understood both in terms of their material properties - in relation to the history of ceramics - and design history and displayed accordingly. It was perhaps those Ionides objects selected for Circulation, whose history is recovered here for the first time, displayed under the title of 'Chinese Export Porcelain' that were most able to retain their singular identity as European style Chinese export porcelain and close association with the Basil Ionides Bequest. As the remainder were absorbed and dispersed across the national collections, the identity of the Ionides Collection was subsumed and is resurrected here for the first time.

## THESIS CONCLUSION

This thesis has uncovered and constructed, as far as possible, the life histories of the collectors Basil and Nellie Ionides, and their collection of European style Chinese export porcelain, once displayed in their private country residence at Buxted Park and since dispersed amongst the national collections of ceramics and Chinese art in Britain and the art market. From the detailed analysis of museum records and archives at the V&A and British Museum and the historic sales records of Sotheby's, the full extent of the Ionides collection can now be understood, and this has been detailed here for the first time in the Appendix, providing a comprehensive record of the size and scope of the collection for future study. It is now clear that the porcelain collection is defined by the multiplicity of function, form and design which characterize Chinese export porcelain in European style, manufactured for European markets, in particular during the eighteenth century, marking it out today as one of the leading collections of this specialist category of ceramics in the world. The findings of this thesis will contribute to the diverse but interconnected fields of ceramics history, museology, collections history and interior design, developing a scholarly basis for the presently undeveloped field of Chinese export porcelain studies, helping to build a body of scholarly literature in this field, and provide new ways of interpreting this material.

The biographical approach employed here was adopted in order to interpret not just a single object or group of objects, a popular methodology utilized elsewhere, but also the collection as a whole in order to contrast the life of the Ionides Collection in its two distinct phases: first, in the private realm of the lived environment of the collectors and second, in the public sphere of the national museum. While this methodology has been used to map the biography of collections in the Euro-American art world, in particular collections of paintings of Western origin, this is the first time such an approach has been taken to consider the history of a collection of Chinese ceramics, highlighting the persistence of established hierarchies of art, craft and design within Western art museums and galleries and the related fields of collections history and museology.<sup>502</sup> This thesis shows how the practical application of this research methodology to presently unknown collectors of Chinese art, Chinese ceramics and Chinese export ceramics could enhance and recalibrate the field of the history of collecting,

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<sup>502</sup> For a recent example of an exhibition which traces the history of a private collection of paintings in the public sphere of the national museums of Russia, see 'Shchukin. Biography of a Collection', at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Art in Moscow, 19 June-15 September 2019.

in Britain and elsewhere, to reflect not only non-Western art but also collections of art objects in a range of media in the future.

A further methodology employed in the course of this research, that of collections and provenance research which mobilized the archives of museums, dealers, auctioneers and agents, has allowed the often overlapping relationship between the key actors in the life of the Ionides collection to emerge, from the private collectors, Nellie and Basil Ionides to museum specialists, Leigh Ashton and Basil Gray, the auctioneer Jim Kiddell of Sotheby's, John Sparks the dealer and personal advisor Margaret Jourdain. The conflicting but at times corresponding motivations and aims of each of these actors was explored and interrogated, contrasting relationships between the commercial/non-commercial, scholarly/amateur, private/public, elite/popular spheres, in doing so illuminating the key factors which shaped the formation of the Ionides Collection and its later place in the national collections. The activities of these actors in relation to the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain intersected in two key areas: first, collection building and dispersal, through sales and acquisitions, and second, classification and interpretation, through collection management, exhibition and display.

For Basil Ionides, the motivations for collecting European style Chinese export porcelain were enmeshed with his professional interest and expertise in the field of interior design, which in turn defined the manner in which objects were interpreted and displayed in the private interiors he created and shared with his wife, Nellie Ionides. In this context, the surviving writing by Basil Ionides on interior design, in the books and articles he published on the subject, reveal both his overall approaches towards decorating the interior – in terms of colour, texture and mood making – and his specific attitudes towards Chinese and chinoiserie decoration and the display of Chinese art objects, in particular Chinese porcelain. Through the case study of their country residence, Buxted Park, it has been possible to link textual and photographic archives, allowing a full consideration of his achievements as interior designer through the lens of Neo-Georgian Revivalism, in which he played a significant part. This is the first time an academic study of the professional and private projects of Basil Ionides has been undertaken and thus this thesis will contribute to the field of mid-twentieth century interior design in England.

Through the project at Buxted Park, this thesis has shown how the transformation of the eighteenth-century mansion house and its interiors reflected in microcosm the broader historical changes rapidly overturning traditional social hierarchies which had for centuries defined British society. The reconstruction of the house and its interiors coincided with the widespread destruction of the English country house, and the dispersal of private collections of art objects, sold at auction as discussed in Chapter 3. Basil and Nellie Ionides were able to capitalize on this situation in the years leading up to and during WWII, and constructed around themselves a setting, including Chinese porcelain and art objects, which would bolster their already elevated social status. As we have seen, neither individual claimed access to British high society through ancestry or religion, being proudly Anglo-Greek and Jewish, but both commanded considerable cultural capital and belonged to an extensive web of social networks, which included British royalty. The images uncovered in the course of this research revealed that the display of Chinese porcelain in the pseudo-eighteenth century interiors created by Basil Ionides referenced earlier trends in chinoiserie, no doubt familiar to the designer, in contrast to the systematic arrangement of objects in a ‘museum-style’, demonstrating the effect of alternative strategies of display in shaping subject/object relationships and the meaning of art objects.<sup>503</sup> Through the work of this thesis, the existence and importance of the designed space at Buxted Park for the identity of the collection and its collectors has at last been recognized.

On the display of private collections of Chinese ceramics in Britain, this thesis challenges the well-established distinction made between ‘scholarly’ and ‘amateur’ collectors and the manner in which they displayed objects in their collections. Arthur Hetherington’s remarks on the display and use of celadons in 1947, and the display of Tang ceramics on the mantelpiece at Warbrook Hall, home of artist Willie Ranken, indicates that collectors of all types of ceramics experimented with different modes of displaying, interpreting and at times utilizing art objects, whether that be in a systematic museum-style or the informal manner of

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<sup>503</sup> The historical display of Chinese porcelain in the English country house has been explored by contemporary artists in recent years, famously by ceramicist Edmund de Waal, whose architectural installations at High Cross House (Devon, 1999), Blackwell House (Cumbria, 2005), Kettle’s Yard (Cambridge, 2007) and permanent display at Chatsworth House (Derbyshire, 2007) received popular and critical acclaim. Alex Burchmore contrasts the reception of these works with the installation at Oxburgh Hall (Norfolk, 2007) by Chinese artist, Liu Jianhua, forced to close early due to public protest, highlighting issues of national identity (British and Chinese), consumerism and taste. See Alex Burchmore, ‘Oxford Art Journal Essay Prize Winner 2018 La Maladie de Porcelaine: Liu Jianhua’s Regular/Fragile (2007) at Oxburgh Hall and the History of Massed Porcelain Display in English Aristocratic Interiors’, *Oxford Art Journal* 42, no. 3 (1 December 2019): 253–81, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxartj/kcz016>.

interior design. It was therefore in scholarly discourse that such distinctions were made, dominated as it was by individuals who championed Chinese imperial and domestic wares. With this in mind, this thesis has contributed to a more balanced reading of the collecting and display of Chinese ceramics in twentieth century Britain, establishing the significance of the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain to the history of collecting and revealing alternative modes of displaying Chinese art objects in the private sphere.

In order to build a chronology for the porcelain collection and the collecting activities of the Ionides, photographic sources provided the first visual evidence of objects in situ at Buxted Park, firmly identifying purchases between 1930 and 1950 and positioning this location as a key site of consumption for the Chinese art objects they collected. Sales of Chinese export porcelain at auction during this twenty-year period were identified as likely sources, and cross referenced with details of purchases made by the dealer John Sparks on behalf of the Ionides. These sales not only identified the source of individual objects in the collection, but highlighted shifts in the art market in the years immediately prior to and during WWII, indicative of broader socio-economic trends which led to the private sale of art objects at that time. The auctioneer, Jim Kiddell, was involved with both the sale and acquisition of objects in the collection, facilitating purchases for the Ionides and undertaking the later valuation of the collection in 1950, shortly before its dispersal. As we have seen, Kiddell was also instrumental in the sale of the residue collection in 1963/4, making him the only individual actively involved with the Ionides Collection and later bequests from start to finish.

In addition, this thesis has revealed the private mechanisms for the acquisition of objects through influential agents and advisors, such as Margaret Jourdain, whose contributions to the field of collecting have been largely overlooked, but undoubtedly played a significant role in the transfer of objects between collectors and collections, a subject deserving future academic research. Museums were also actively engaged with the commercial art world in their own collection building, through the acquisition of art objects at auction or through specialist dealers in Chinese art. These same individuals were connected through membership of specialist societies, such as the Oriental Ceramic Society, reinforcing social and commercial networks which shaped evolving patterns of collecting and taste. The impact of these actors, and no doubt others who have remained outside this research, in collection formation and dispersal is clear and represents an important aspect in the life story of the collection.

Beyond their private residence, in Chapter 3, the limited engagement between the Ionides and the Chinese art world was discussed in relation to the high-profile International Exhibition of Chinese Art in London (1935-36), and their participation in the exhibition 'Chinese Figurines' (1947) organized by the Oriental Ceramic Society, of which they were briefly members. The study of these exhibitions revealed the leading role of prominent private collectors and museum experts in defining the scope of these exhibitions and as a result shaping the field of Chinese art in Britain. The minimal participation of the Ionides in these events indicates a reluctance, or perhaps indifference towards the Chinese art world. Collecting for the Ionides would appear to be ultimately a private affair and not one supported by the public collecting infrastructure. On the rare occasions when they did lend to exhibitions, such as the OCS exhibition, the objects they loaned, including those which later passed to the V&A, played a minor role in the exhibition narrative, as revealed in a review by V&A curator, Bernard Rackham who diminished the significance of these objects, indicating both his own personal attitude towards this category of ceramics and trends then dominating collecting circles in Britain.<sup>504</sup> When framed through a Chinese art lens, the Ionides collection and the collectors themselves appeared to be outsiders.

In the public sphere of the museum, the transfer of the Ionides Collection, as discovered in the museum archives, shines a light on conflicting attitudes towards Chinese art, Chinese ceramics and in particular Chinese export porcelain amongst specialists at the V&A and British Museum. Through the detailed study of exhibition and gallery design, this thesis identified post-war innovations at both institutions which reflect significant changes in museum practice and collections management. At the V&A, the Museum revived the Victorian notion of art for all, reasserting its educational remit at South Kensington and through the activities of the Circulation Department and the touring exhibition, 'C27: Chinese Export Porcelain' which was uncovered and reconstructed for the first time, highlighting alternative interpretive strategies and modes of exhibition and display. The micro-history presented here illuminates the understudied decades of post-war reconstruction at both institutions (1950-1970); a period of reassessment when the national museums reconsidered their role within society and how to most successfully address a wider and diverse public. The analysis of the exhibition and display of Ionides objects in the London museums and

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<sup>504</sup> Rackham actively encouraged the private collector Berkeley Smith of Cheltenham, to purchase ceramics from early China in order to make his collection, 'museum-worthy'. Tythacott, 'The Power of Taste'.

provincial museums and art galleries, brings into focus the relationships between the national and local, centre and periphery, elite vs. popular culture, which in turn reflect wider socio-cultural phenomena, providing new insights into post-war museology and practice, in particular the activities of the Circulation Department which are significant but have received little scholarly attention up to this point. The close interactions between the private collectors and museum professionals, as laid out in the museum archives, further adds to scholarship in the field of museology.

At the British national museums, the motivations for collection building at the V&A and British Museum in the post-war years shared some similarities, being subject to corresponding institutional, financial and spatial pressures, but the museums were built on historically different foundations. The organization of their collections was based on distinct and alternative principles from the outset which led to differences in museum structures and taxonomies and the classification of Chinese art objects, in particular ceramics, within the national collections. This thesis has shown that the national museums, in particular the V&A, were responsible for the dispersal and fragmentation of the once coherent private collection of European style Chinese export porcelain across several museum departments and sites, which led to the formation of multiple ‘micro-collections’ of objects, most of which were subsumed into the much larger national collection of Chinese ceramics, in order to serve newly reconstituted museum objectives. The Circulation Department alone maintained, to some extent, the identity of a single sub-group of objects from the Basil Ionides Bequest, in order to tell the story of ‘Chinese Export Porcelain’(C27) as narrated by the national museum, to diverse audiences across the UK.

In the course of this thesis, the journey of the Ionides Collection from elite collecting and interior design, to the public museum and a mass audience was mapped in biographical form. In each of these settings, objects were subjected to a range of interpretations, defined here by exhibition, display and subject/object relationships. This thesis has demonstrated that European style Chinese export porcelains are particularly receptive to multiple readings, due to their polysemantic capacity, through their characteristic combination of Chinese and European design which allows them to simultaneously assume multiple identities and meanings, both Chinese and European. Historically regarded as markers of status and taste, for twentieth-century collectors such as the Ionides, these objects visually and materially reinforced their already elevated status in elite society, denoting ‘Britishness’ within the



pseudo-eighteenth-century interiors created to house them. In that context, the ‘Chineseness’ of these objects was overshadowed, if not lost, to collectors who showed little interest in their country of origin.

The biography of the collection and collectors presented here therefore highlights both the successes, as noted above, and the obstacles faced in the course of this research. Restricted access to documentary sources – through their deliberate removal from public access such as the V&A files at the National Archives, Kew – was overcome, enabling the discovery of key textual evidence regarding the Basil Ionides Bequest and uncovering aspects of this story the museum perhaps did not wish to reveal.<sup>505</sup> The absence of archives at the British Museum obstructed a more detailed examination of activities there, but the possibility that these too were removed or destroyed cannot be ruled out. Other possible sources, in particular the archives of dealers in Chinese art such as Frank Partridge (now Frank Partridge Fine Arts), Hancock or D.M.&P. Manheim, were unavailable at the time of writing, or have yet to be located, limiting the scope of archival research but offering pathways for future study.

This thesis has also revealed the difficulties inherent in studying the collecting patterns of a married couple, neither of whom left personal accounts of their collecting interests or practices which would allow us to firmly identify and differentiate between their individual or shared interests. As Pearce notes, ‘when collecting is a conjugal activity it is often difficult, if not impossible to determine which spouse, if any, is the dominant consumer, the taste-maker’.<sup>506</sup> Nonetheless, as a result of this thesis, the individual areas of interest for the Ionides are now clear. European style Chinese export porcelain and Chinese export art were the chief preoccupation for Basil Ionides, and for Nellie, it was Battersea Enamels, Meissen Figurines and Qing dynasty porcelain, particularly of the Kangxi period. However, as the sales records of the dealer John Sparks showed, their purchases were not restricted to these areas alone, extending into the fields of Tang and Ming dynasty ceramics and decorative carvings in jade and ivory. Furthermore, the Sparks archives identify Nellie Ionides as the primary buyer of Chinese art objects in a range of media, style and period, including European style Chinese export porcelain, that appeared in the collection raising questions regarding the purchasing, collecting and the ownership of art objects – a recurrent strand of

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<sup>505</sup> The museum archives were also periodically ‘weeded’, in order to remove material which was believed at that time to be superfluous.

<sup>506</sup> Pearce, *On Collecting. An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*. p.229.

this thesis. Collected objects may of course be received as gifts, or purchased by one person on behalf of another, as appears to be the case with Nellie Ionides and her husband. Problems arose when the ownership of objects became contentious as they were moved into public ownership, as was the case after Basil's death, indicating both the fluidity of the boundaries of the collection and an overlapping of interests between the collectors. Questions concerning ownership were further compounded by the actions of museum professionals, who deliberately sought to delineate the parameters of the Bequest to suit their own purposes, and later by Nellie Ionides, when she claimed objects in the Bequest as her own. The legal status of objects in the collection and between Basil Ionides and his wife was undoubtedly further complicated by the property rights of women at that time, whereby much that was purchased by Nellie Ionides was regarded as the property of her husband.

Today, Ionides porcelains are dispersed across the galleries of the national museums, displayed at the V&A in the materially-focused World Ceramics Gallery, the Qing Ceramics Gallery, the Ceramics Study Gallery and the culturally-specific British Galleries and European Galleries (Figs.C.1-5), but not the T.T.Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art. Objects have been sited within the global history of ceramics, the history of Chinese ceramics and the history of the material culture in Britain and Europe, but not the history of Chinese art, indicating the continued exclusion of Chinese export objects from this museum narrative. The reconstruction of historic interiors in the recent remodeling of the British Galleries (opened 2001) and European Galleries (opened 2015) at South Kensington has built upon the thematic approach of the Primary Galleries introduced by Ashton fifty years earlier and discussed in Chapter 5, simultaneously emphasising the role of interior design and providing an invented but period-appropriate backdrop to art objects of that period, in a similar manner to those interiors created by Ionides at Buxted Park. At the British Museum, where the organisation of the galleries and collections has always diverged from that of the V&A, being predominantly geographically and culturally orientated, Ionides objects can be viewed in several spaces including the China Gallery and the Enlightenment Gallery, situating objects in relation to Chinese material and visual culture and the eighteenth-century world as seen through the eyes of British collectors, travelers, scholars and statesmen respectively. The multifarious contexts in which Ionides objects can now be encountered within the galleries of the national museums in London is indicative of museum taxonomies that have shaped the meaning and classification of Chinese art objects in Britain up to the present.



Fig. C.1 (Left) Display of Woman in Jewish Costume (C.94-1963) in World Ceramics Gallery, V&A. [Image: Photographed with permission by Helen Glaister, January 2020.]

Fig. C.2 (Right) Display of Ionides objects in Qing Ceramics Gallery, V&A. [Image: Photographed with permission by Helen Glaister, January 2020.]



Fig. C.3 (Left) Display of assorted Ionides objects in Ceramics Study Gallery, V&A. [Image: Photographed with permission by Helen Glaister, January 2020.]

Fig. C.4 (Right) Display of Figure, 'Mr. Nobody', (C.7-1951) in British Galleries, V&A. [Image: Photographed with permission by Helen Glaister, January 2020.]



Fig. C.5 Display of Dancing Woman (C.95-1963) in Europe Galleries, V&A. [Image: Photographed with permission by Helen Glaister, January 2020.]

While Chinese export porcelain has long been included in European collections, in the private and public spheres, this category of ceramics is still relatively unknown in mainland China beyond those port cities traditionally associated with Sino-European trade, namely Guangzhou (see Guangzhou Thirteen Hong Museum) and Hong Kong (Hong Kong Maritime Museum). In that context, these objects shine a light on a period of Sino-European economic and cultural engagement which has only recently gained attention; a period of often contentious global history when the continents of Europe and the Americas were linked through trade with Asia, setting in motion the circulation of objects which continues to this day. As Ionides objects are exhibited overseas and surface on the art market, they take on new identities in private collections or public museums.

### *Future Research Questions*

The questions raised by this thesis and the Ionides Collection of European style Chinese export porcelain are manifold and provide a variety of avenues for future research. First, it is now clear that collecting this specialist category of porcelain was popular in elite circles in twentieth century Britain and this subject requires further investigation in order to expand our understanding and provide a more balanced reading of the history of collecting Chinese ceramics in Britain. This thesis has demonstrated how the biography methodology, in

conjunction with extensive archival research, can successfully reclaim the history of collectors and collections, since lost or subsumed within larger museum narratives in the post-war period, and could be applied to further collections in this field and others. Some leading collectors are already known by name, such as Martin Hurst or W.J.Holt first encountered in the Introduction to this thesis, while many more have yet to be discovered. For those who collect these wares in Britain today, to what extent is their interest embedded with notions of Britishness, eighteenth century colonialism and the luxuries of elite lifestyle, as it was for the Ionides, or does this porcelain signify another set of meanings such as Chineseness?

The second new field of enquiry which arises from this thesis concerns collectors and museums in China. It is here – the country of origin – where European style Chinese export porcelain was first produced but rarely seen and apparently never considered part of the lived interior for local residents.<sup>507</sup> As China now surpasses Britain in economic and political global significance, how is this specialist category of Chinese porcelain to be interpreted and understood? More importantly, why is it being collected here? Private collectors of European style Chinese export porcelain are few in China but do exist and have never formed the basis of academic research. Similarly, collectors of this specialist category of ceramics amongst the Chinese diaspora, in Southeast Asia or elsewhere has never been researched. The study of living Chinese collectors offers the opportunity of discerning the motivations of the collector first-hand, rather than retrospectively reconstructing the biography of the collector and collection as has been necessary here, offering alternative interpretations of Chinese export porcelain and the current status of this category of ceramics in China. In turn, the study of contemporary patterns of taste, manifest in the purchase and collecting of Chinese ceramics in different regional art markets – such as mainland China vs. Hong Kong – may offer insights towards the relationship of individual collectors to their personal histories and shared notions of nationhood, and the role of Chinese export porcelain in that discourse.

Private collecting and connoisseurship has a long and well-documented history in China, but the history of the public and private museum is relatively recent, when compared to the European model, and no study has yet considered how Chinese ceramics generally and export

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<sup>507</sup> It is possible that a small number of European style Chinese export porcelains remained in the hands of Chinese merchants closely involved with trade, regarded as ‘exotic curiosities’, or the homes of resident foreigners. Both subjects have yet to be researched.

porcelain particularly has been situated in that context in relation to broader museum narratives of Chinese ceramics, the history of Chinese art and global history.<sup>508</sup> In the field of museology, questions raised in the course of this thesis concerning museum taxonomies and the classification, interpretation and display of art objects could be usefully transposed to the Chinese model, in order to explore the public interface between museums in China and a range of audiences, domestic and international, and the evolving role of the museum in contemporary China.

As a result of this thesis, another perhaps unexpected but important object discovery - the small imperial flask which slipped apparently unnoticed into the Ionides private collection and the V&A (Ch.4, Fig.4.2) - highlights the parallel although not equivalent fashion for European style Chinese porcelain at the eighteenth-century Chinese court. While clear distinctions between court wares and articles manufactured for export are usually identifiable through quality of manufacture, rarity, scale and frequently form, the appeal of objects which mix Chinese and European design elements and artistic conventions, such as the Ionides flask, has only recently formed the subject of academic research. This piece constituted the subject of an earlier conference paper, written by the author in 2018, which mapped the circulation of objects, technologies and craft between Europe and China and the role of hybrid objects in imperial self-fashioning.<sup>509</sup> While scholarship in this field has grown in recent years, focusing in particular on Qing visual arts and the imperial collections now in Beijing and Taipei, collections of court arts decorated in European style, including enamels on porcelain and copper, within the British national collections remain largely unknown and offers a rich seam of future research.<sup>510</sup> The V&A has a significant collection of enamels on copper, also a collecting interest of Basil Ionides, many of which entered the museum before

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<sup>508</sup> For an introduction to the history of collecting in China, see Scarlett Jang, 'The Culture of Art Collecting in Imperial China', in *A Companion to Chinese Art* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2016). Recent estimates of the scale of development of all types of museums in China indicate a staggering rate of growth, from around 1,400 at the turn of this century to over 5,000 to date. For an overview, see Gail Dexter Lord, ed., *Museum Development in China: Understanding the Building Boom* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019). On private museums, see Song Xiangguang, 'The Development of Private Museums in China', *Museum International* 60, no. 1–2 (1 May 2008): 40–48, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0033.2008.00635.x>.

<sup>509</sup> Helen Glaister, 'The Picturesque in Peking: European Decoration at the Qing Court', in *Circulating Craft: Art, Agency and the Making of Identities, (1600-2000)* (CAA, Los Angeles, California, 2018).

<sup>510</sup> On enamels on porcelain and metal, see Shi, '日月光华 : 清宫画珐琅 Radiant Luminance : The Painted Enamelware of the Qing Imperial Court / [施静菲著]. Ri Yue Guang Hua : Qing Gong Hua Fa Lang'. Shih, 'A Record of the Establishment of a New Art Form'. On visual culture and architecture, see Kristina Kleutghen, *Imperial Illusions: Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces*, Art History Publication Initiative (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015). Kristina Kleutghen, 'Chinese Occidenterie: The Diversity of "Western" Objects in Eighteenth-Century China', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 47, no. 2 (Winter 2014): 117–35.

the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and includes articles for export, domestic and imperial consumption, which has never been separately studied or published.

Finally, this thesis affirms the agency of Chinese art objects as articles of interior design, making a significant contribution to that field, from the historical eighteenth-century British interior to the twentieth century and beyond. Recent research has demonstrated the increasing popularity of objects broadly categorized as Chinese export art, in particular Chinese wallpaper, to furnish the fashionable interiors of contemporary restaurants or luxury hotels located in the economic hubs of Hong Kong and Macau, traditionally associated with Sino-European trade, but also in upmarket locations in mainland China.<sup>511</sup> Chinese export porcelain currently plays a minor role, if at all, in these schemes which often blend modernity with tradition, Chinese and non-Chinese style in their decoration and ornament, but a taste for such objects may stimulate an interest in this specialist category of porcelain as articles of display in the future.

Thus, the intersection of European style Chinese export porcelain, private collecting and interior design and museological practice at the V&A and British Museum has been revealed to be a fruitful site for examining the relationships between people, objects, spaces and institutions, allowing us to explore issues of identity, ‘Chineseness’ and ‘Britishness’ in mid-twentieth century Britain.

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<sup>511</sup> Contemporary case studies in Beijing and Shanghai illustrate the various ways in which newly produced Chinese export-style wallpaper, broadly based on historical prototypes, are incorporated into luxurious interior design schemes. See Wu, ‘Chinese Wallpaper, Global Histories and Material Culture’.

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