

## TWO COLLECTORS OF CHINESE ART AT THE DAWN OF THE ITALIAN UNIFICATION: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** *La collezione di Placido de Sangro, oggi conservata nel Museo Duca di Martina di Napoli, e quella di Vittoria Toschi Mosca, donata alla città di Pesaro e custodita nei Musei Civici, costituiscono due delle più ampie raccolte di ceramica cinese in Italia. Sebbene le due raccolte siano state formate nello stesso periodo e condividano alcuni aspetti, lo spirito e le motivazioni che spinsero i due collezionisti ad acquistare porcellana orientale furono sostanzialmente differenti e sono qui discussi nel più ampio contesto della storia del collezionismo nell'Italia della metà del XIX secolo.*


### *Introduction*<sup>1</sup>

By the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the age of great trade expeditions between Europe and China, which had actively involved all the major Western powers since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was coming to an end. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and above all in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Europe had concentrated its 'de commandé' custom on eastern Asia for ceramics, lacquerware, wallpaper and silk of contemporary production, expressly dedicated to foreign markets. The choice of materials, and indeed of decorative devices, was largely adapted to western taste while at the same time satisfying the wishes of the western aristocrats of the time to make some of the rooms in their homes fascinatingly unusual. So it was that Chinese and Japanese products found their way into the noble residences of Europe's courts, very often fitting in with *chinoiseries* produced in Europe and objects from other parts of the world in an iconographic and stylistic syncretism reflecting a generically exotic vision of the 'East' which came to flourish in the realm of rococo.<sup>2</sup>

The following century saw Chinese porcelain exports falling sharply: a number of European manufacturers were by then able to produce quality ceramics in considerable quantities. It was, however, precisely in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in particular in the second half of the century, that

Europe began to develop a more complete and more critical knowledge of Chinese art. On the one hand, in fact, artistic categories previously unknown – painting, sculpture and pre-Ming ceramics, for example – began to find attention and appreciation in the West,<sup>3</sup> while at the same time attention turned to drawing up and publishing the first scientific studies of ceramics, which would come to form the basis for the subsequent literature.<sup>4</sup>

The same period – the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – saw a burgeoning of eclectic collections in Europe as indeed in Italy. Room was made (in both private collections and museums) for categories of objects which the 18<sup>th</sup>-century museum, founded on rediscovery of antiquity alongside education and training of artists in the academies, had begun to abandon as no longer relevant. So it was that large collections of Chinese porcelain were assembled drawing on the ample supply of the antique markets, as a new interest in the 'decorative' or 'applied' arts became widespread. The areas covered by these terms remained somewhat vague, reflecting the difficulty of arriving at any final, satisfactory classification, but they included the variegated world of the arts in which the creative process focused on articles of use and furnishings. Interest in this type of production matured, significantly enough, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when, as a result of the scientific-industrial revolution, the need arose to match aesthetic and industrial criteria in the production of objects of use. The various terms used to designate this somewhat vast and – chronologically and geographically – diversified category of objects were used stressing now one aspect of production, now another, never proving entirely convincing: *applied art*, in the Anglo-Saxon world, *arts décoratifs*, in France, or *Kunstgewerbe*, in Germany.<sup>5</sup> In Italy was often and inappropriately preferred the




expression '*arti minori*' (minor arts), which had distant and indeed debatable origins going back to the dispute over primacy in the arts in the times of the Renaissance.<sup>6</sup> Whatever denomination was adopted, in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century interest in the aesthetic qualities of objects of practical use, produced in different places under different times, as well as in their educative potential, eventually found expression in various forms. Alongside the industrial exhibitions, growth was shown in the market dedicated to the decorative arts, the number of private collections, house museums open to the public and the beginnings of a scientific literature endowing the category with academic dignity. In most cases, Chinese artefacts played only a minor role, if any, in more extensive forms of display created largely with the basic criterion of variety, if not 'universality' – typological, chronological and geographical.

In this broad context, the reasons prompting Italian collectors to take an interest in Chinese ceramics in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were different, travel looming large, as in the case of Enrico di Borbone, Count of Bardi (1851-1905) and Edoardo Chiossone (1833-1898), whose respective collections were based mainly on the objects acquired in East Asia, in China and in Japan. Some chose to transform their dwellings into house museums, as in the case of Frederick Stibbert (1838-1906), whose eclectic collection also included, together with a predominance of Japanese objects, a number of Chinese artefacts, while, for art lovers like the brothers Alfredo (1827-1902) and Pompeo (1829-1900) Correale, to take but a few examples, completeness was the great aim of the collection. We may reasonably suppose that in Italy the interest in artefacts from East Asia was also stimulated by the continual transfer of objects and furnishings from the palaces and stately homes of pre-unification Italy, and in particular of the House of Savoy.<sup>7</sup>

The personages compared in this article represent two peculiar examples of different attitudes to collecting Chinese porcelain.<sup>8</sup> On the one hand, we have the example of the Duke of Martina, Placido de Sangro, a noble Neapolitan who, at the time of Italian unification, came into contact with the earliest and most important experts on Chinese ceramics of the time, developing an interest and competence in the area that led him to assemble a collection unparalleled in the whole of Italy.<sup>9</sup> Although pervaded by the taste of the period, the Duke's collection was inspired by personal passion for display in the family home. On the other hand, we have the example of the Marchioness Vittoria Tosca Mosca, whose interest in collecting developed subsequent to the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, the first Universal Expo which was held in London in 1851 and which in turn gave rise in the following year to the Museum of Manufactures, the forerunner of all the industrial art museums.<sup>10</sup> Transferred to its present premises in 1857 with the name of the South Kensington Museum, and subsequently the Victoria & Albert Museum, with its mixed and indeed vast collection of works the museum aimed at inspiring, training and educating the aesthetic choices of the working forces to reconcile the increasing needs of industrial production with the necessity to keep the traditional craft production alive and thriving.<sup>11</sup>

The experience that developed in Great Britain was rapidly transmitted to other countries and adapted to the different social-economic contexts. Industrial art museums were established in a number of Italian cities with notable examples in Rome (1873), Milan (1878) and Naples (1882). An essential aspect of these museums was the role accorded to the applied arts, and thus connections with vocational schools and professional institutes.<sup>12</sup>

The different personalities and



ambitions of the two collectors discussed here are reflected in the diverse choices they made in assembling their respective collections of Chinese ceramics. Although they were both influenced by the ideals of universal exhibitions, and, at least in part, probably bought objects on the same antique market, the Duke and the Marchioness pursued different passions and aims. Unlike the Duke of Martina's collection, which only subsequently found a museum setting for reasons that had nothing to do with the Duke's wishes or interests, the Marchioness Vittoria's was from the very outset assembled for explicitly didactic purposes.

#### *Placido de Sangro Duke of Martina*

The Duke of Martina National Museum of Ceramics, situated in villa Floridiana on the Vomero hill in Naples (fig. 1), conserves the ample and indeed precious collection brought together by the Neapolitan gentleman Placido de Sangro, Duke of Martina (1829-1891), by far the most important and refined collector of Chinese porcelain in Italy in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Subsequent to the unification of Italy, the Duke, who had connections with the Bourbon Court, moved to Paris and took up residence in the Faubourg Saint Honoré. Responding to the lively cultural climate characterising Paris in those years, the Duke discovered the delights of the decorative arts which loomed so large in the Universal Exhibitions, and in particular in the exhibition of 1867 which he must have visited, already being resident in Paris. It was in fact in the second half of the 1860s that the Duke began to acquire decorative *objets d'art*, both in auction lots and from antique dealers. And it was then that he began to take an interest in Oriental art, stimulated by the circles of connoisseurs, collectors and scholars which he frequented.


The museum conserves a great many

payment bills issued by the art merchants of Paris, evidencing the fact that the Duke was already acquiring *objets d'art* as early as 1864, some with indication of the pieces acquired, like the cups with lids of Chinese jade from Dutitre in 1866, or Chinese vessels with turquoise glazing and gilded bronze setting from Willems in 1867, where he held an account as from the previous year and, again in 1867, Chinese goblets and cups and a Japanese compote from Topenas.

As from 1868 acquisitions became increasingly frequent, although, given the generic descriptions supplied by the antique dealers, it is not always possible to identify the objects in the present museum collection. What does emerge clearly is the great interest the Duke took in Oriental art as well as Western art, giving rise to a very large and highly diversified collection.

Thanks to his connections in Paris he became a well-known figure in the world of the collectors, and eventually one of the major lenders of works for the 1869 exhibition of Oriental art organised by the *Union Centrale des Beaux Arts appliqués à l'industrie*, an association founded by Albert Jacquemart and the other contributors to the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, Paris's leading journal dedicated to the decorative arts. It was probably Jacquemart himself who inspired the Duke with his passion for Oriental art and collecting. The works that Placido de Sangro lent for the exhibition were given particular prominence, recommended and described.

In 1869 the Duke returned to Naples, but continued frequent and prolonged visits to Paris with trips to Belgium, Holland and England. So much is attested by his residence in Rue de la Madeleine 21 and the numerous acquisitions he made during this period. He bought batches of *objets d'art* from Deloris, Retouret, Bloche, Flandin and Pillet in Paris, from Boas-Berg, Abercrombie and van Hotun in Amsterdam and from the Slaes brothers in Brussels.



Besides objects, Placido de Sangro also purchased the current leading publications on the decorative arts, and in particular on ceramics. Preserved in Floridiana are a number of splendidly leather-bound volumes displaying his monogram with SM intertwined (Sangro Martina).<sup>13</sup>

The few further acquisitions documented by invoices and payment bills in the course of the 1870s still bearing the names of the most prestigious Parisian antique dealers, including Deloris, Stettiner and Dusmet, were often sent to his address in Naples in Piazza Nilo 7, Palazzo de Sangro, where his splendid collection had been arranged.

Brief notes attest to his rapid trips to Paris where he stayed in hotels, the payments he made with cheques and the crates sent to Naples. Some antique dealers invited him to Paris or offered to send him pieces for him to view in Naples.

In Naples he made purchases of Oriental and Western ceramics and came to be considered one of the leading collectors of Neapolitan art; it was in this role that he took part in the 1877 Exhibition of Antique Neapolitan Art.

After the suicide of his only son Riccardo, who had declared his intention to donate the family collection to the city of Naples, the Duke made no more acquisitions. On his death in 1891 the collection passed on to his homonymous nephew, Placido de Sangro, Count of the Marsi, who died in 1911 with no heirs. Thus it was his wife, the Countess Maria Spinelli of Scalea, who respected Riccardo's wishes by donating this important collection to the city of Naples.

The collection comprised 5,300 objects, many of which were in the course of time stolen, missing or lost due to a fire that in 1903 broke out at the Monte di Pietà (a public Institute providing secured loans) where the Count of the Marsi had transferred the most precious objects.

Villa Floridiana was acquired by the state 1919 and in 1924-25, in accordance with the wishes of the Countess, the collection was moved from Palazzo Spinelli in Rione Sirignano to the Villa.

In 1970 various other objects held by the family were donated to the museum with a bequest by Riccardo de Sangro, the last Duke of Martina.

The Oriental collection of Placido de Sangro consists of over 2,000 items, mostly Chinese and Japanese ceramics, datable between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Precious additions to the collection are represented by items in other materials, both Chinese and Japanese, including cloisonné enamels, bronzes, and items in jade, precious stones, lacquerware and ivory (figg. 2 and 3).

The Duke's choice of pieces reflects his taste as a refined collector making acquisitions amongst the most representative specimens destined for export to the West, both monochrome and polychrome. The articles were selected not as objects that might be used in everyday life but as *objets d'art* to collect, admire and display in his home in Naples. This is why no set of tableware appears in this collection, but individual plates, jugs and cups selected for the variety of decoration shown and particular forms, as well as the iconographic repertoire or the exceptional lightness and beauty of the porcelain. There are a great many ornamental objects, often in groups of three, four or five vases, or statuettes of various dimensions to adorn mantelpieces, shelves and furniture. As a collector, the Duke had a particular eye for porcelain.

The Oriental collection has seen a number of exhibitions and a great many publications which have, since the 1950s, revealed the importance of the collection to a wider public.<sup>14</sup>

Thanks to works carried out in the museum basement in the 1990s, befitting display of the collection was achieved and it was reopened to the public in 1999.<sup>15</sup>

The Chinese ceramics represent the most important section of the museum with the Duke's very personal selection of items available on the market in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus the variety of export material is well represented, ranging from the blue and white to the various "familles" into which Albert Jacquemart divided the polychrome items from the end of the Ming 明 (1368-1644) and the Qing 清 dynasty (1644-1911).<sup>16</sup>

Particular attention is due to the significantly large quantity of blue and white porcelain (*qinghuaci* 青花瓷) which includes a number of pieces that are also very precious insofar as they are unique specimens. Of these, I would like to draw attention to a *meiping* 每瓶 vase in the form of a phoenix, dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century; its lid was refashioned in the West imitating the bird's plumage which covers the body of the receptacle, alternating with flowering or budding shoots of magnificent peonies (fig. 4).<sup>17</sup> Another particularly interesting piece is a cup with small lobed handles dated 1541, a peculiar feature being a Latin inscription running along the inner rim referring to the governor of Malacca, Pedro de Faria, bearing the date, and the coat of arms of the Portuguese Abreu family on the bottom, while the outer decoration shows typically Chinese iconography with children's games. It is an early example of a foreign order made to the Chinese workshops.<sup>18</sup>

Blue and white porcelain is also represented by some ceramics of the Ming period including what are known as *kraakporselein*, characterised by Chinese ornamentation within broad and narrow panels, and by some fine examples of the Kangxi 康熙 era (1662-1722; fig. 5). Actually, the Duke shows a particular predilection for a typology of porcelain belonging to a period marking transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties, between the second half of 17<sup>th</sup> century and the early decades of the 18<sup>th</sup>. This was a period when, as a result of

political developments, the workshops of Jingdezhen 景德镇 in Jiangxi 江西, which produced a substantial part of the export material, were no longer under government control, which meant that the potters enjoyed greater freedom. The production is represented by both blue and white and, above all, polychrome, and the museum shows a splendid assortment of both types (fig. 6). The typically Chinese decoration draws on the customary repertoire of flowers and birds or, strikingly, on the Taoist world, with representation of the eight immortals and their symbols.


The subsequent official reopening of the Jingdezhen workshops gave rise to a polychrome production which was then diversified according to the dominant colour in the various *familles* – green, pink and black – of which the museum displays some particularly attractive pieces on account of both the impeccable crafting and the iconographies, drawing on the Chinese literary heritage.

A small set of 18<sup>th</sup>-century ceramics appealed to Western clients with decoration drawn from prints (fig. 7), depictions of European personages, satirical texts in Dutch for cheated shareholders, images of the French royal family and objects redecorated in Europe.<sup>19</sup>

The 18<sup>th</sup> century shows a great variety of forms, colour schemes and decoration destined for the furnishing of Western homes, both interior and external, as attested by a large tank for fish decorated with polychrome enamels of the *famille rose* type.

The museum also shows specimens with mixed decoration, as it is called, adorned with blue and white scrolls ornament or polychrome enamels of the *famille verte* and *famille rose* standing out against a monochrome background in light brown, pink or blue.

In the Duke's collection monochrome porcelain is represented by a few specimens



whose turquoise, brown, green, red or white glazing is often characterised by precious metal settings and highlighting in gold, thus adapting them to the Western tastes at a time when Baroque and rococo reigned in European dwellings. Surprising is the rarity of pieces with white glazing – the famous *blanc de Chine* – so highly prized by collectors and so widely imitated by Western manufacturers. The Duke's preferences went to the blue and white and, above all, polychrome porcelain in all its great range of colours, far more popular and sought-after in the years when he was making his acquisitions on the European market.

Particularly interesting is a set of cloisonné enamels of the Ming and Qing periods whose iconographies and polychrome colour schemes recall the coeval ceramics, while the forms are derived from both classical Chinese bronzes and Western models.<sup>20</sup>

The Duke of Martina's collection also includes a significant section of Japanese porcelain which, at the time of the Duke's purchases, was most sought-after by collectors on account of the richness and refinement of the colour schemes, initially in the blue and white much in demand on the Western market, which had temporarily lost its Chinese source with closure of the kilns during 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, Japan was famous above all for its polychrome schemes, both Kakiemon and Imari, admired and imitated by the European potters who began to produce the porcelain in those very years.

In the face of the huge popularity of Imari Japanese porcelain, on reopening the Chinese market could only come up with a similar line of production, represented by some pieces in the museum.

The bequest of Riccardo de Sangro, which found its place in the museum in the 1970s, includes an interesting group of ceramics among which are worth noting a couple of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century plates display-

ing the coat of arms of the Hamilton family, which found their way to Naples thanks to Sir William Hamilton, Ambassador of the British Court to Naples from 1764 to 1800. In addition to the group of ceramics there is a Chinese terracotta statuette with 'three-colour' *sancai* 三彩 glaze depicting a drummer on horseback, datable to the Tang 唐 period (8<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>21</sup>


#### *The Marchioness Vittoria Toschi Mosca*

The Civic Museum of Pesaro holds, mostly in storage, a rich collection of export Chinese and Japanese ceramics assembled by the Marchioness Vittoria Toschi Mosca in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Vittoria Mosca was born in Pesaro on 14 January 1814, the second child of Benedetto Mosca and the Milanese Countess Barbara Anguissola Commeno. As a family long associated with the values of the Enlightenment, the Moscas had played and continued to play a central role in the cultural life of the small town in the Marche, cultivating friendly relations with some of the outstanding figures of the time: Giulio Perticari and his wife Costanza, daughter of Vincenzo Monti, Francesco Cassi, Terenzio Mamiani and the Leopardi family, with whom they were related.<sup>22</sup>

After a long series of deaths in the family, beginning with her father in 1817, to be followed by her youngest sister and mother, in 1834, Vittoria left Florence, where she had studied, to return and live with her elder sister in the family residence in Pesaro, Palazzo Mosca; in 1842 she decided to acquire the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Palazzo Mazzolari<sup>23</sup> and start on the restoration works,<sup>24</sup> which were sufficiently advanced by 1844 for her to take up residence there, while the restructuring was only completed in 1852.<sup>25</sup>

Vittoria Mosca's move to Palazzo Mazzolari was blighted by a prolonged illness which she endured for many years; it compelled her to lead a solitary life, during



which she developed the moral and social ideals that eventually led to the dream of setting up a didactic museum.

Having at last recovered, in 1856 Vittoria married Vincenzo Toschi (1827-1885). Like her, he had a strong civil sense and philanthropic spirit, and probably shared her ideal of bringing together a varied collection of works of art and crafts for her museum project. The couple had one child, a boy they called Benedetto after his maternal grandfather.

Vincenzo Toschi died in Gubbio, where he had pursued his political activities, and where the family owned a palace which his wife would eventually convey into the hands of the town Council to create a home for the chronically ill on 16 February 1885. Vittoria did not survive the grief of this ultimate loss, and on 8 September of the same year she too passed away.

With her will, drawn up in Gubbio on 15 September 1877, the Marchioness Vittoria Toschi Mosca left Palazzo Mazzolari, complete with furnishings and a collection of about 4,500 items – including paintings, sculptures, ceramics, textiles, lace and artefacts in glass from various countries, datable between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century – to the Pesaro Town Council, to be transformed into an Industrial Art Museum with a clear educational purpose.<sup>26</sup>

In the same year, respecting the wishes of Vittoria Mosca, a school of design for artisans was set up on the ground floor premises of Palazzo Mazzolari while the museum was inaugurated in 1888, although it proved to be short-lived. Economic difficulties over maintenance of the facility and changing tastes and conceptions of museums led, as early as the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to a change in the nature and proportions of the original project, and after the Second World War the idea of the didactic museum was finally abandoned.

Today Palazzo Mazzolari, recently restructured, is occupied by the Department

of Fine Arts of Pesaro. A part of Vittoria Mosca's collection is now conserved in Palazzo Mosca (fig. 8), which houses the Civic Museum, also recently restructured with a new display sequence, while some pieces are conserved in the museum storage.


Vittoria Toschi Mosca's collection of Oriental porcelain comprises about 800 items, the great majority being Chinese.<sup>27</sup> The collection consists mainly of tableware: sets of plates, tea and coffee sets, goblets, soup bowls, trays, as well as cups and plates of various sizes, mostly datable to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (figg. 9 and 10).

Although the possibility remains that some sets of tableware conserved incomplete had actually been used, the Marchioness probably acquired the Chinese collection with the didactic project she was to promote already in mind, and its composition reflects the intention of offering a collection of samples of forms and subjects to the artisans and young artists.

Unlike the Duke of Martina's collection, consisting largely of individual items distributed over a span of time from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, together with some earlier objects, most of Vittoria Toschi Mosca's collection consists of sets of plates and tea and coffee sets datable between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Only four items in the collection represent the class known as blue and white, with decoration in cobalt blue under the glaze, most of which had been exported between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Among these we find what in all probability is the earliest and indeed one of the finest pieces in the whole collection, namely the *kraak* porcelain bowl datable between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup>

Interesting, too, although not very large is the group of objects belonging to the *famille verte*, as it is called, decorated in second firing, over the glaze, with translucent enamels dominated by shades of green



(fig. 11). Here we find above all large plates and trays exhibiting floral decoration or displaying flowers and birds, in some cases adapted for use as barbers' basins.

More numerous are the ceramics decorated with faint, opaque colours belonging to the *famille rose*, some of which find direct comparison with items in the Duke of Martina's collection. Examples of this typology are two sets of plates displaying peony patterns and various – more or less complete – tea and coffee sets, again with floral decoration. Figurative scenes find rather less representation in the collection.

The polychrome ceramics also include a particularly interesting and fairly large group of items with Chinese Imari type decoration, in which the blue under the glaze is combined with iron red and gold applied in the second firing (fig. 12); as we have seen, it enjoyed great popularity in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was then widely imitated by the European potters. It is, in fact, significant that the Marchioness's collection also includes Italian ceramics displaying decoration in the Imari colour scheme, with an eye to the Chinese models (figg. 13-16). Besides the plates and tea and coffee sets, the forms represented also include items clearly modelled on silver and pewter prototypes of European production.<sup>29</sup>

Completing the collection are other classes of polychrome ceramics, represented in varying proportions, like the receptacles with decoration in reserved panels against blue or light brown backgrounds, known as Batavia ware, the trays and soup bowls with "tobacco leaf" decoration, typical of the late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a significant although small group of Japanese ceramics.

Equally significant is the absence of certain classes from her collection, beginning with ceramics displaying decoration based on European subjects and heraldic porcelain, well represented in the collection of the Duke of Martina. Totally ab-

sent, too, is monochrome porcelain. The Marchioness does not seem to have been particularly interested in the material – porcelain – which had nevertheless been the driving force behind the export of Chinese art and the experiments in imitation carried out by Europe's major manufactures. Rather, her attention went to the decoration: subjects, compositional schemes and colour ranges which, once taken up by the local craftsmen, could lead to new decorative patterns and syntheses.

### *Conclusions*

As we have seen, a few invoices and bills of sale, occasionally accompanied by brief notes, have been preserved attesting to the purchase of Chinese porcelain by Placido de Sangro on the antique markets of Paris and Naples. On the other hand, no documents have survived attesting to the purchase of Oriental ceramics or, alas, of practically any other items in the Mosca collection. On the evidence of the written material left by the Marchioness, and of the composition of the collection itself, we can however conjecture that the purchases were made with the idea of creating a didactic museum already in mind. It is also possible that some of Vittoria Toschi Mosca's pieces were acquired in Naples, where she had a residence. The matches between some of the Chinese porcelain pieces in the Marchioness's collection and others in Placido de Sangro's, now displayed in the Duca di Martina Museum and purchased between Paris and Naples, might even suggest that the two art lovers had been in touch, or at least made some of their purchases from the same antique dealers.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, on comparing the two collections an appreciable difference emerges between the two assemblages of Oriental ceramics due to the different motivations of the two collectors. In fact, Placido de Sangro's collection consists largely of single items or small groups offering a nar-



rative continuum datable between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The value of the individual items and the variety of forms and decoration were the result of careful selection, reflecting his personal taste refined through assiduous frequentation of the major Oriental ceramic collectors and connoisseurs in Europe, and fuelled by a genuine passion for Chinese and Japanese porcelain. Thus the collection – which shows rare completeness – provides a picture of the variegated universe of export porcelain: monochrome, blue and white, and polychrome *familles* are to be observed in forms, types of decoration and subjects of both Chinese inspiration and European derivation. Different, although in many respects equally significant, motivations lie behind the collection of the Marchioness Toschi Mosca, whose assemblage of Chinese porcelain consists mainly of tableware for use and does not reflect labours of research comparable with those of the Duke of Martina, corresponding, rather, to the taste of the time and favouring solely Oriental decoration. In fact, monochrome ceramics and all the *de commande* subjects reflecting European prototypes are totally lacking. What the Marchioness clearly wished to do was to create a rich and heterogeneous collection of *objets d'art* that could offer inspiration and serve as repertoire for young artists and artisans, the Oriental ceramics representing one of the many examples of the extraordinary expressive potential provided by the decorative arts, thus giving the users the opportunity to become familiar with the products and manufactures of the distant lands.

Comparison between the two collections made in the same period serves to exemplify the different motivations that could lead to acquisition of Chinese ceramics in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also to take a new and more scientific approach to China and its artistic craftwork, superseding the conventional exoticism of the previous period and seeing in these subjects

the possibility to inspire and transmit competencies to the Italian manufacturers at the time of the Risorgimento.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The section Placido De Sangro Duke of Martina was possible only thanks to the unique contribution of Lucia Caterina, whom I thank for sharing her valuable knowledge about the collection. This article was written with a view to the research project "Mapping Chinese Art in Italy", which sees the collaboration of the School of Archaeology and Museology of the University of Beijing and the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies of the University of Naples "L'Orientale". All the photos accompanying this article are by courtesy of the Museum Duca di Martina and the municipal Council of Pesaro/Cultural Services.

<sup>2</sup> Sandra Pinto (ed.), *Arte cinese in collezioni italiane di fine secolo* (Roma, Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, 1985), pp. 8-9. See also Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay* (London, John Murray Ltd, 1961) and Cristina Mossetti, Lucia Caterina, Annalisa Porzio and Paola Giusti in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> A wider range of artistic products became available to the European public consequent upon the Second Opium War (1856-1860) and the sack of Yuanmingyuan 圓明園. See Louise Tythacott (ed.), *Collecting and Displaying China's "Summer Palace" in the West. The Yuanmingyuan in Britain and France* (London, Routledge, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> The first detailed information about porcelain production found its way to Europe at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century thanks to the letters sent from China by the Jesuit missionary Père d'Entrecolles. And yet it was only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that European scholars began to publish the first scientific volumes on the subject. Of these, the first, published by Stanislas Julien in 1856, was actually a translation of a Chinese text, the *Jingdezhen taolu* 景德鎮陶錄, published in 1815 by Lan Pu 藍浦 and Zheng Tinggui 鄭廷桂. 1862 saw the appearance of the seminal work by Albert Jacquemart and Edmond Le Blant, in which were published various objects from the collection of the Duke of Martina. Shortly after, the first catalogues began to appear, including the catalogue by Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, keeper of the British Museum, whose private collection of Chinese porcelain was first displayed to the public in 1876 at the Bethnal Green Museum. The end of the century saw the publication of two more works of exceptional importance for the information they offer on Chinese ceramics, published respectively by Ernest Grandidier in 1894 and Stephen Wootton Bushell in 1897. François Xavier D'Entrecolles, "Sur la manufacture de porcelaine en Chine", in M. L. Aimé-Martin

(éd.), *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses concernant l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Amérique* (Paris, Société du Panthéon littéraire, édition originale 1702-1776, 34 voll., rééd. 1853), voll. XII, pp. 253-357 and XVI, pp. 318-367. Stanislas Julien, *Histoire et fabrication de la porcelaine chinoise. Ouvrage traduit du chinois par M. Stanislas Julien; accompagné de notes et d'additions par M. Alphonse Salvétat, et augmenté d'un mémoire sur la porcelaine du Japon traduit du japonais par M. le Docteur J. Hoffman* (Paris, Mallet-Bachelier, 1856). Albert Jacquemart, Edmond Le Blant, *Histoire artistique, industrielle et commerciale de la porcelaine* (Paris, J.Techener, 1862). Augustus Wollaston Franks, *Catalogue of a Collection of Oriental Porcelain and Pottery* (London, George E. Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1876). Ernest Grandidier, *La céramique chinoise* (Paris, Librairie de Firmin-Didot et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1894). Stephen Wootton Bushell, *Oriental Ceramic Art, Illustrated by Examples from the Collection of W.T. Walters* (New York, Appleton, 1897).

<sup>5</sup> A point of some relevance to this article is that even in the strictest definitions of the 'decorative arts', as in the case of John Fleming, Hugh Honour, *Dictionary of the Decorative Arts* (New York, Harper & Row, 1977) Chinese and Japanese ceramics are included on account of the role they had in the West.

<sup>6</sup> Anna Maria Piras, "Arti Applicate", *Enciclopedia Treccani- VII appendice* (2006).

<sup>7</sup> See Luisa Morozzi, "Gusto eclettico e scelte esotiche alla corte sabauda nella seconda metà dell'Ottocento. Arredi delle residenze piemontesi nel Palazzo del Quirinale", in L. Caterina, C. Mossetti (eds.), *Villa della Regina. Il riflesso dell'Oriente nel Piemonte del Settecento* (Torino, Umberto Allemandi & C., 2005), pp. 102-120.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the relations between the Kingdom of Italy, constituted in 1861, and China differ from the relations characterising the colonial powers of the period like France and England, leading collection and study of the art of East Asia in

different directions.

<sup>9</sup> Lucia Caterina (ed.), *Il Museo Duca di Martina. La collezione orientale* (Napoli, Electa Napoli, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> Chiara Visconti, “Una collezione dimenticata: le porcellane orientali della marchesa Vittoria Toschi Mosca”, *Annali dell’Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”* 77 (2017), pp. 233-261.

<sup>11</sup> South Kensington Museum (ed.), *A Guide to the Art Collections of the South Kensington Museum* (London, Spottiswoode & Co., 1870). See also Julius Bryant, *Creating the V&A: Victoria and Albert’s Museum (1851-1861)* (London, Lund Humphries Publishers, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> Maria Teresa Fiorio, *Il museo nella storia. Dallo studiolo alla raccolta pubblica* (Milano-Torino, Pearson, 2018), pp. 121-135.

<sup>13</sup> See Paola Giusti, *Il Museo Duca di Martina di Napoli* (Napoli, Electa Napoli, 1994), pp. 15-20.

<sup>14</sup> Elena Romano, *Il Museo “Duca di Martina” nella Villa “La Floridiana” di Napoli* (Roma, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato - Libreria dello Stato, 1956); Pinto, *Arte cinese*; Giusti, *Il Museo Duca di Martina*.

<sup>15</sup> Caterina, *La collezione orientale*.

<sup>16</sup> Jacquemart, Le Blant, *Histoire artistique*.

<sup>17</sup> Lucia Caterina, “The Phoenix-Vase in the ‘Duca di Martina’ Museum at Naples”, *East and West*, N.S. 23, 3-4 (1973), pp. 355-361, figs. 1-5.

<sup>18</sup> Lucia Caterina, “Chinese Blue-and-White in the ‘Duca di Martina’ Museum in Naples”, *East and West*, N.S. 26, 1-2 (1976), pp. 213-222, figs. 1-22; Lucia Caterina, *Museo Nazionale della Ceramica “Duca di Martina” di Napoli. Catalogo della porcellana cinese di tipo bianco e blu* (Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1986).

<sup>19</sup> Lucia Caterina, “Chinese Porcelain with Western Subjects at the ‘Duca di Martina’ Museum of Naples”, *Ming Qing yanjiu*, vol. II (1993), pp. 9-37.

<sup>20</sup> Lucia Caterina, *Smalti cinesi nel Mu-*

*seo ‘Duca di Martina’ di Napoli* (Ercolano, Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali – Co. Be.Cam Consorzio Beni Culturali Campani, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> Paola Giusti (ed.), *La Collezione Riccardo De Sangro al Museo Duca di Martina* (Napoli, Elio De Rosa Editore, 1990).

<sup>22</sup> For fuller details and bibliography on the life of Vittoria Toschi Mosca, see Chiara Barletta, “Il mondo privato di una nobildonna pesarese dell’Ottocento. Note biografiche su Vittoria Toschi Mosca”, in C. Barletta, A. Marchetti (eds.), *Il mondo privato e l’eredità pubblica della marchesa Vittoria Toschi Mosca* (Rimini, Banca Popolare dell’Adriatico, 1994), pp. 8-31.

<sup>23</sup> Archivio di Stato di Pesaro 1882: rep. 3818, cc. 273r-315r.

<sup>24</sup> In the *Epigraph* installed inside Palazzo Mazzolari, composed by Vittoria Mosca herself, we read that “*questo monumentale palazzo rivendicava dalle ruine*” [“this monumental palace re-arose from its ruins”] (Archivio Notarile Distrettuale di Pesaro 1885: rep. 406/ 574, Attachment n. 68, letter G), and in her autograph *Will* that the Palace had been “*lasciato in vandalico deperimento*” [“abandoned to vandalistic decay”] (Archivio Notarile Distrettuale di Pesaro 1885: rep. 406/ 574, Attachment n. 68, letter B, c. 503v).

<sup>25</sup> Grazia Calegari (ed.), *Palazzo Mazzolari Mosca* (Pesaro, B.F. Editrice, 1999), p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> See the documents held in the Archivio Notarile Distrettuale of Pesaro (1885: rep. 406/574, Attachment n. 68, letter B and letter D).

<sup>27</sup> Visconti, “Una collezione dimenticata”.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 10.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, the Marchioness’s set of plates shown here in fig. 9 and the large serving dish belonging to the same or an identical set in the Duke’s collection (inv. 3996).