

**HANDBOOK TO THE COLLECTION
OF BRITISH POTTERY AND
PORCELAIN IN THE MUSEUM OF
PRACTICAL GEOLOGY**

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by Museum of Practical Geology

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MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY

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WEDGWOOD VASE.

[Mounted on Pedestal near Wall Case I.]

Copy, by Josiah Wedgwood, of a large Greek Vase in the British Museum. The original was formerly in the collection of Sir William Hamilton. It belongs to the latest period of vase-painting, known as the style of the *Basilicata*, and is supposed not to be earlier than B.C. 200. [No. G. 343, p. 104.]

Presented by the late Apsley Fellott, Esq.

Great Britain — *Geol. Survey*
Memoirs

HANDBOOK

TO THE

COLLECTION

OF

BRITISH POTTERY AND PORCELAIN,

Great Britain — ^{IN THE} *Geol. Survey* —
MUSEUM OF PRACTICAL GEOLOGY,

JERMYN STREET, LONDON, S.W.



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56

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P R E F A C E.

The conditions under which a Collection of Pottery and Porcelain gradually grew up in a Museum devoted to Geology and the cognate sciences were fully explained by Sir Henry De la Beche in his Preface to the Catalogue of the Ceramic Collection, originally published in 1855. From that Preface the following passages may be cited :—

“When the sanction of the Treasury was given, in 1835, to the suggestion that advantage should be taken of the progress of the Geological Survey to form collections illustrative of the mineral wealth of the country, and of the application of its various mineral substances to the useful purposes of life, the Geological Survey was engaged upon Cornwall. Among the important substances there obtained were certain granite rocks known as *Cornish* or *China-stone*, and an artificial product named *Cornish* or *China-clay*, substances then largely employed in the composition and manufacture of porcelain and of certain earthenwares, and still more extensively used for these manufactures in the present day. The specimens of these mineral substances obtained for the Museum, then in Craig’s Court, immediately led to collections of others illustrative of the earthenware and porcelain more or less manufactured with them.

“As the progress of the Geological Survey continued, various other British mineral substances, which either had been in former times or were now employed for ceramic purposes, became known; and it was considered desirable to form a collection which should illustrate the composition and manufacture of British pottery and porcelain, from the occupation of Britain by the Romans to the present time . . .

“In forming the collection it became needful to show, to a certain extent, the progress of enamelled colours from early times. Indeed, it would have been difficult to understand that part of the subject without such specimens. Hence those showing the enamel colours found at Nineveh and Babylon, the examination of which enabled Dr. Percy, metallurgist to the Museum, to point out that certain metallic oxides and their combinations were systematically used in enamel colours many centuries before the periods usually assigned. In like manner certain Greek vases became valuable, as also specimens from Italy, commonly known as *Majolica*, and from other countries, in obtaining knowledge applicable to a proper consideration of the advance made in the composition and manufacture of British pottery and porcelain.”

After the death of Sir Henry De la Beche the Ceramic Department was greatly extended by the exertions of the Curator, the late Mr. Trenham Reeks. In forming and developing the collection, the technological rather than the artistic side of the subject has been steadily kept in view; and it is consequently believed that though many of the specimens may be less elegant and intrinsically valuable than those in other collections, yet the Ceramic Department, as a whole, is probably unrivalled, so far, at least, as British products are concerned, in educational and scientific value.

A detailed Catalogue of the Pottery and Porcelain was originally published in 1855; a second edition, greatly amplified, appeared in 1871; and a third in 1876. Experience has shown, however, that the majority of visitors do not require an inventory of the specimens in this or in any other department of the Museum. Instead, therefore, of issuing new Catalogues, or new editions of old ones, it is intended to publish a series of readable "Handbooks" to the several departments; and the present Handbook to the Ceramic Collection may be regarded as the first of the new series. It has been prepared by the Curator, Mr. F. W. Rudler, who has retained most of the descriptive matter of the old Catalogues, modifying and enlarging it where necessary, so as to form at once a guide to the Collections and a concise manual on the subject of British Pottery and Porcelain.

ARCH. GEIKIE,
Director.

Museum of Practical Geology,
28, Jermyn Street, London, S.W.,
10th February 1893.

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