

**POTTERY AND PORCELAIN. HAND
BOOK FOR THE USE OF VISITORS
EXAMINING POTTERY AND
PORCELAIN IN THE
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART**

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Pottery and Porcelain. Hand Book for the Use of Visitors Examining Pottery and Porcelain in the Metropolitan Museum of Art by Anonymous

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NOTICE.

THIS HAND-BOOK, designed to assist visitors and students of ceramic art, is prepared with special reference to specimens which are the property of the Museum and, therefore, permanently on exhibition, and to articles loaned from two private collections in New York, whose owners have consented to lend them for some time to come, or to replace them with other specimens in such way that the hand-book may continue to be useful. Many articles in the galleries are not catalogued, because they are liable to be recalled by their owners, who have kindly placed them in the Museum for a time.

THE CESNOIA COLLECTION is the property of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and includes pottery, stone, glass, bronze, gold and other articles, the result of explorations in Cyprus, conducted by Gen. Luigi P. di Cesnoia. The pottery is in the three east rooms on the first floor, and in the Middle East Room on the second floor of the building. A few pottery heads are in the Gallery of Statuary, and others in the North-east Room, second floor.

THE AVERY COLLECTION has been formed by S. P. Avery, Esq., to illustrate the history of Chinese, Japanese, and Oriental Asiatic porcelain. The articles loaned by Mr. Avery from this collection have been selected as examples of various fabrics and styles of decoration, most important to the student, and are placed in the South-west Room on the second floor.

THE TRUMBULL-PRIME COLLECTION was formed by the late Mrs. Mary Trumbull Prime (wife of W. C. Prime, Esq.), as a general illustration of ancient and modern ceramic art. The articles loaned from this collection by Mr. Prime, are placed in the North-west Room on the first floor.

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INTRODUCTORY.

POTTERY has been made in all ages, by all nations. It has been used, from remote times, for architectural purposes, for household and other utensils, for pure ornament and for burial purposes. The potter's work furnishes opportunity for the skill of the sculptor, in moulding forms, and of the painter, in decoration. It demands the highest ability in uniting the beautiful with the useful. Eminent artists, from the days of Phidias down to our own times, have employed, and assisted in the art. Its results are more lasting than any other work of man's hands. Metals corrode, stone crumbles; pottery and porcelain, if well made, are unchanging in form, surface, and color, for ages. These reasons are ample to justify the high position given to the ceramic, among the fine arts; and, in addition to these, its historical character as the preserver of records and illustrations, its universal value as the index of comparative education and civilization of peoples, and the permanent evidence which it affords of manners and customs, make its study of the highest importance in ethnology.

Europe possesses vast collections of pottery and porcelain, ancient and modern, the results of centuries of exploration and accumulation. America has hitherto possessed none. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has made a beginning, and in the Cesnola Collection of Cypriote Antiquities possesses a series of pottery of unexampled interest and importance, since it illustrates a local history of art, by several thousand examples, covering a period of nearly or quite two thousand years. In this collection, we are enabled, as nowhere in Europe, to learn the story of the origin, childhood, and maturing of that Greek art which had its splendid triumphs in the fourth century before the Christian era. Although it is impossible as yet to arrange and classify this remarkable collection, it is sufficiently separated to enable the student to make practical use of its examples. The loan collection of the Museum furnishes extensive additions to the history of the art, in ancient and modern times. Although the combined collections afford illustration of the art history far from complete, in comparison with numerous

public and private collections in Europe, the trustees of the Museum have felt the importance of utilizing the educational means at their disposal so that these examples of art shall not be mere objects of curiosity. Many of the objects loaned are of the highest value, and there is abundant evidence already that our citizens possess ceramic treasures which would enrich any museum in the world. In place of lamenting the deficiency of our collections, it is a subject of congratulation that at so early a period in the history of a new institution, in a new country, we are able to furnish so good help to the student. Brief notes, for his assistance, will be found accompanying the fabrics of different countries and factories.

The following works, which, with others, have been freely used in forming this hand-book, are recommended for study :

HISTORY OF ANCIENT POTTERY, etc., by Samuel Birch, LL. D.

HISTOIRE DE LA CERAMIQUE, etc., by A. Jacquemart.

A HISTORY OF POTTERY AND PORCELAIN, by Joseph Marryat.

TRAITÉ DES ARTS CERAMIQUES, etc., by Alex. Brongniart.

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE of the Majolica, etc., in the South Kensington Museum, by C. Drury E. Fortnum.

HISTOIRE ET FABRICATION DE LA PORCELAINES CHINOISE, ouvrage traduit du Chinois, par M. Stanislas Julien.

GUIDE DE L'AMATEUR de Faiences et Porcelaines, etc., par M. Auguste Demmin.

MARKS AND MONOGRAMS on Pottery and Porcelain (the large octavo edition of 1874), by William Chaffers.

Besides these, various works on local fabrics are mentioned in connection with examples.

N. B.—In preparing the hand-book it has been found necessary to preserve, in many cases, the order, numbers, and descriptions of the articles in the private catalogues of the possessors who have loaned them. But the arrangement is such that the visitor will have no difficulty in finding the object described. The articles are generally numbered under the heads of the countries, classes, or factories to which they belong, and the Catalogue contains only a portion of the specimens.

POTTERY AND PORCELAIN.

Pottery is baked clay, with which sand, chalk, and other substances may be mingled, producing various kinds of pottery.

Pottery is divided into two chief classes: Soft and Hard.

Soft Pottery is easily scratched with an iron point, Hard Pottery cannot be so easily scratched. Soft Pottery is destroyed by a lower temperature of fire than Hard.

In ceramic art Soft Pottery is divided into four classes: 1st, Unglazed; 2d, Lustrous; 3d, Glazed; 4th, Enameled. Unglazed Pottery needs no description. Lustrous Pottery is covered with a thin glaze, produced by a union of silic and alkali, which may be colored by the addition of a metallic oxide. Glazed Pottery is covered with a thick glaze, usually produced by the use of lead. Enameled Pottery is baked unglazed, then covered with a coating of enamel in which tin is employed (hence called stanniferous) and baked again, the coating thus melted giving a rich vitreous surface.

Most of the ancient pottery of Phœnicia, Greece, and Rome, is Soft Pottery, and is included in the first three classes.

Egypt produced Soft Pottery and also Hard, the latter sometimes approximating to porcelain.

The major part of the Saracen, Italian, French, German, Dutch, and other modern decorated pottery is Soft Pottery enameled.

Varieties of pastes, called **Stone-ware**, are classed with pottery, and occupy a position midway between pottery and porcelain. They are also composed of clay intermingled with sand and sometimes other substances.

Fayence is pottery enameled and decorated with color or ornaments. (In France, *Faïence* includes all pottery and

porcelain.) Majolica is a term applied to Italian Soft Pottery enameled and decorated.

Porcelain is baked clay, with certain substances added.

Pottery is opaque. Porcelain is translucent. Pottery breaks with a rough granulated fracture. Porcelain breaks with a vitreous fracture. Porcelain is divided into two classes: Soft Paste and Hard Paste.

Soft Paste Porcelain is made of fine clay mingled in large proportion with silex and other substances. The composition varies in different factories.

Hard Paste Porcelain, or, as it is sometimes called, True Porcelain, is made of a peculiar clay, known to the Chinese and Europeans as *kaolin*, mingled with *feldspar*, which in China is called *petuntse*.

Soft Paste Porcelain may be distinguished from Hard Paste by its unctuous feeling and by its more readily yielding to the file, or the iron point. Articles of soft paste are usually glazed on all portions, including the bottoms and bottom rims, while hard paste articles frequently have the bottom, and always the bottom rims, unglazed.

The distinction between Soft Paste and Hard Paste Porcelain is perhaps unfortunate, for the reason that Soft Paste Porcelain is a variable paste, which, from the proportions of silex and other materials used, is harder or softer, so that the products of factories supposed to produce only soft paste sometimes approximate to hard paste, on the one hand, and sometimes to opaque glass, on the other.

Pottery has been made by man in all ages and countries. The invention of Hard Paste Porcelain is ascribed to the Chinese whose literature indicates the origin of the invention at about B.C. 200. Soft Paste Porcelain, which might, perhaps, be more intelligibly classed as translucent pottery, was made at Florence, in Italy, about A.D. 1581, but the art was lost, and was revived at St. Cloud, in France, A.D. 1695. Hard Paste Porcelain was first made in Europe, at Meissen (Dresden), A.D. 1711. Both hard and soft paste porcelain are made by many modern factories.

MARKS ON POTTERY AND PORCELAIN.

The names of many ancient potters are found on Greek and Roman work. The use of trade or factory marks is not modern. The Chinese have marked their porcelain variously, with inscriptions addressed to the intended possessor, or signifying the use of the article, or its destination; sometimes with expressions of good wishes, with favorite flowers, well-known forms of amulets, etc., and occasionally with the name of the maker. Much of their porcelain is dated, giving the reign of the king and the dynasty to which he belonged. The Japanese follow the Chinese customs in marking some porcelain, but dates are rare, and marks of any kind not so often found as on the Chinese. The Saracens used no factory or other marks. The Italian makers of Majolica usually signed their best work, sometimes with name, place, and date, sometimes with the artist's monogram or initials, or full name, and sometimes with marks now difficult to interpret. In time the chief factories of pottery and porcelain adopted marks, but these were frequently changed. Thus Dresden used the Caduceus of Mercury on some early pieces, and the initials A R in monogram on others, then adopted the crossed swords, which, in varying forms, have continued to be the mark of Saxon porcelain to the present day. Berlin porcelain was first marked with a W, the initial of Wegeley, the founder, and afterwards with the scepter, to which, in modern times, a new mark has been added. Vienna used for a mark the shield; Hochst, the wheel; Furstenberg, the letter F. Vincennes first used the interlocked double L, to which mark, before the factory was removed to Sèvres, letters were added for dates, A being 1753, B 1754, etc., until Z was reached in 1777; the letters were then doubled, A A for 1778, B B for 1779, etc. In 1801 another system of date was adopted, the double L mark having been abandoned in 1796, since which time Sèvres marks have been frequently changed. A few factory marks will be found

annexed to specimens in the Catalogue. In addition to factory marks, pottery and porcelain often bear the signatures of decorating artists, in full, in initials, or in some adopted emblem or cipher; and in a few instances, as seen on plates in the Sèvres department of this collection, directors like Brongniart approved artistic work by their signatures.

Marks are usually found on the bottoms of articles, sometimes on the bottom rim, on the inside of the cover, and (where a vase is made with a separate foot) on the bottom of the body. A few marks, like those of Herend, Wedgwood, Chamberlain, and others, are impressed in the paste, but the large majority of marks found thus impressed or scratched under the glaze are workmen's indications to identify their work when paid by the piece, or are otherwise unimportant. Marks are seldom of value, except those in color. Occasionally, in services, the mark is on the principal pieces only, and where vases were in sets of three or more, on only one. Counterfeits are common. Many of the great factories counterfeited the marks of their rivals. The Thuringian factories, several of the early English factories, and others, used the Dresden mark. The Dresden factory is now placing its own ancient marks on its modern work. In such cases only an expert can correctly assign a specimen. Counterfeits can sometimes be detected by the character of the porcelain. Sèvres marks which were never used except on soft paste porcelain are found placed by counterfeiters on hard paste articles. On Sèvres and on Dresden the mark is sometimes found crossed with a cut in the glaze. This implies that the article was sold from the factory in a white, unpainted, condition. Decorated articles having this cross-cut were not decorated at the factory. In Dresden, two or more cuts across the mark imply serious defects, reducing its quality, and one or two cuts, not crossing the mark, imply a slight defect. While articles having the cut across the mark are not specimens of Sèvres or Dresden decoration, it often occurs that their artistic merit is great. For full information on marks, etc., consult the