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Evolution of Porcelain Tea Ware in Europe From Hizen Porcelain Tea Ware to European Porcelain Tea Service

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Introduction

Luxury beverages such as tea and coffee arrived in Europe from Asia and Latin America from the sixteenth century. It is common knowledge that tea and coffee became the fashion among Europe's upper classes, and indeed, a fixture in their lives. In this paper, I will discuss the tea ware essential to the established custom of tea and coffee drinking. In particular, I will be considering porcelain tea wares from the following four perspectives:

1. Export to Europe of tea ware produced in Hizen, Japan;
2. Forms and use of tea and coffee ware used in Europe;
3. Oriental Porcelain Tea Ware for Use as Room Decoration Catalogued on Inventories;
4. Evolution of European-made porcelain tea services for royalty and aristocrats.

1. From the Orient to Europe: Export of Tea Ware Produced in Hizen Tea Ware

The first country in Europe to import tea was Portugal, which started trading with Japan and China even prior to Holland and Britain. When the Dutch East India Company began importing Chinese tea in 1610, the drinking of tea spread rapidly to Holland, Britain, Germany, and France. From 1637, The Dutch East India Company began demanding that tea be carried on ships from Japan and China every year. The British East India Company, on the other hand, began importing tea from around 1650 via an independent route to Britain, renowned as the tea capital of the world. The Portuguese Infanta Princess Catherine of Bra-

ganza (1638–1705), who married Charles II of England in 1662, first introduced to Britain the custom of drinking tea with sugar.

Cups that are surmised to have been intended for tea have been discovered among the shards excavated from the *Witte Leeuw* (White Lion), a merchant ship of the Dutch East India Company that was shipwrecked on its way to Europe in 1613 off the south Atlantic Ocean island of Saint Helena¹⁾. We can conclude from the porcelain excavated that tea cups were being exported to Holland by this date at the latest. The cups excavated from the *Witte Leeuw* were blue and white Chinese *Kraak* porcelains. The first mention in Dutch historical documents of the export of Chinese-made tea wares was in the 1620s.

The first official cargo record, written in 1659, of porcelain exports from Japan to Holland contains tea cups. After this, about ten thousand tea cups were exported to Holland nearly every year.²⁾ Porcelain tea cups exported from China and Japan had relatively wide mouths in relation to the cups' height, and had no handles.

It is my opinion that there were no porcelain saucers exported to Europe with porcelain tea cups before the end of the Ming period (1368–1644). It was customary in China at this time to use saucers made of tin and other metals. It is also possible that saucers were brought to Europe via the Middle East, as I will discuss below in the section on coffee cups. More research is needed in this area, however.

The first examples of Japanese painted *Ko-Imari* porcelain cups with saucers that I am aware of are thought to be from the 1670s to 1690s. In contrast, the first reference in official trade documents from the Dutch East India Company clearly specifying tea saucers (200 “*thee pierings*”) is from 1659. *Ko-Imari* tea ware from the latter half of the seventeenth century listed in the cargo records of the Dutch East India Company include not only one saucer per cup, but also single cups and cup-and-saucer sets. Listings of Japanese porcelain tea cups and saucers continue

1) C.L. van der Pijl-Ketel editor, *The Ceramic Load of the 'Witte Leeuw' (1613)*, (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 1982)

2) I researched the records of the official porcelain-trade by Dutch East India Company in the original language and have published transcriptions and translations of it in the following book: Compiled by Miki Sakuraba & Cynthia Viallé, *JAPANESE PORCELAIN in the Trade Records of the Dutch East India Company*, (Kyushu Sangyō University, March, 2009).

to appear on loading lists after that.

The Dutch East Asia Company transported a great number of Hizen porcelain tea cups and saucers to Holland, and is thought to have shipped tea ware to India, Mocha (Yemen), and Malacca during this same period as well. However, to the best of my knowledge, there are no excavations reports of Hizen Tea ware to support the data of the records..

References to shipments of tea ware to Holland include detailed accounts of painted china and tea ware shapes, but after 1670 references to ship cargo headed to Holland change greatly; there are no longer detailed descriptions of decorations.

There were still exports to Holland in 1679 and 1681, from which load lists remain, but the focus shifts to pots and plates; there are no references to tea ware. Horiuchi Hideki, however, points out in his research that Oriental porcelains excavated from various Dutch sites are mainly cups and saucers. In fact, the two types of porcelain ware comprise eighty percent of all excavations. Most of the tea ware derives from China, but some of it is also Hizen ware. There tends to be commonality in the composition of the types of tea ware, indicating that cups and saucers were the primary Hizen ware products manufactured expressly for sale in Europe.³⁾ It can thus be surmised that even after 1677 exports from Japan of porcelain cups and saucers continued, and that the Dutch East India Company engaged in private trade, or that tea ware was imported on Chinese junks via Asian ports to Europe.

Coffee Ware

Coffee spread from its native Ethiopia to the Arabian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. It is said that Muslim imams later promoted coffee as a remarkable stimulant. In pre-modern times, coffee was adopted by the Ottoman Empire, the first coffee shops in the world—*Kaveh Kanes*—being opened in Constantinople

3) Horiuchi Hideki, “Oranda shōhi iseki shutsudo no toyō tōjiki—17 seiki kara 19 seiki ni okeru toyō tōji bōeki to kokunai shijō” [Oriental Porcelains Excavated from Dutch Consumer Sites: Oriental Porcelain Trade and Domestic Markets between the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Centuries], *Toyō tōji* [Oriental Porcelains], Vol. 36 (Toyō Tōji Gakkai, 2007); See also: Horiuchi Hideki, “Chinsen sekisai shiryō to Oranda shōhi iseki shutsudo no toyō tōjiki” [Sunken Cargo Lists and Oriental Porcelains from Dutch Consumer Excavation Sites], *Bōeki tōji kenkyū* [Porcelain Trade Studies], No. 27, (Nihon bōeki tōji kenkyūkai [Japan Porcelain Trade Society], 2007).

in 1554.

Coffee was later introduced to Europe by the East India Company, after which coffee houses opened one after another in large urban centers. Coffee houses were popular centers of socializing for male aristocrats and wealthy men.

Toward the end of the 1660s, the Turkish ambassador introduced coffee to Louis XIV. Eventually, coffee became the daily drink of the French court; there is even an anecdote about Louis XV making his own coffee every day. Coffee spread from the French court throughout many of the courts of Europe. Coffee cups and pots began to be manufactured in Meissen, Germany from around 1710 in order to meet the demand of the courts.

It is quite natural, given the above circumstances, to consider coffee ware to have originated in the Middle East. Actually, coffee pots did exist already in Turkey and neighboring Muslim countries. These were metal, pear-shaped pots with handles, replete with rounded lids and protruding spouts shaped like beaks. All of the pear-shaped painted porcelain pots manufactured at Meissen by Johann Friedrich Böttger, as well as his successor, the artist, J. G. Heröld, were based on the pot forms used in Muslim countries. After this time, many of the manufacturing centers carried on the tradition of the pear-shaped pots of Meissen. After the middle of the eighteenth century, however, when Sèvres Porcelain became successful, pots became even more refined in shape, and designs more varied.

The same holds true for cups. At that time, coffee was poured from pots into vessels shaped like small handle-less bowls called “Turkish cups” and drunk in Turkish fashion. Coffee cups were manufactured in Japan and China after the seventeenth century, and were shipped to Mocha, India, and other west-Asian regions in large quantities. Coffee ware was exported to coffee-producing Mocha. There are not many load lists clearly indicating coffee cups, however. Coffee cups were often designed to double as tea cups, and in many cases are simply recorded as “cups,” making definitive judgments difficult.

2. Forms and Use of Tea and Coffee Ware Used in Europe

Tea and coffee ware used in Europe differed in shape depending on the type of luxury beverage for which it was designed. Such divergences in shape arose because of differences in drinking ware styles in the locales of origins of the beverages for which they were created. I will next explain the evolution of the unique characteristics of the shapes of Oriental and European porcelain tea and

coffee ware.

Tea Ware

In the previous section I described tea ware imported from Asia; I will now discuss the evolution of porcelain tea ware manufactured in Europe. The first example of porcelain saucers and cups for tea ware were manufactured in Delft, Holland, in the latter half of the seventeenth century. The first example of porcelain tea ware was a tea cup produced during the Böttger era in Meissen just after 1710.

Cups designed for drinking tea were mainly handle-less until the 1720s for both tea and coffee until the use of tall coffee cups became established for coffee. Even after tea cups evolved into types with handles after the 1730s, wide-mouthed cups originating with Ming period porcelain exports, with or without handles, continued to be produced. Handles were necessary once it became taboo to drink from saucers; their emergence may have been linked to the establishment of etiquette for drinking tea.

Most of the teapots that were shipped to Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century were Asian porcelains. Chinese-manufactured pots were mainly comprised of colored *Jingdezhen* porcelains and *Yixing* red-clay teapots. Japanese-manufactured porcelain pots that were shipped to Europe, like their Chinese counterparts, were spherical, with spouts located on the side of the pot opposite the handles, which were attached vertically. In Europe, painted *Ko-Imari* style faience teapots were manufactured at Delft at the beginning of the eighteenth century. After 1710, imitation of Chinese porcelains were also made in Meissen as Böttger red stoneware and Böttger porcelains. All of them were spherical pots with vertically-directed handles attached to the pot side opposite the spouts, as described above. Pot shapes that had originated in China thus became prevalent in Europe, as did *Arita* ware.

Pots with fundamentally the same type of shape continued to be manufactured in a great number of porcelain factories in England, France, and Germany. Forms of the pots reached a high level of refinement through the efforts of Sèvres Porcelain around the middle of the eighteenth century.

Coffee Ware

Large quantities of coffee pots and cups were exported from Meissen to Turkey in the 1730s⁴⁾. It is clear from this fact that early European porcelains were directly related to Turkish tea wares, indicating that the Turkish cup had a strong influence on the manufactories of Meissen. These cups were tall in relationship to their width, and were so designed because of the Turkish custom of drinking the clear layer of coffee at the top of the cup. In France at the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, the drip method of extracting coffee was developed, thus eliminating the need for tall coffee cups. Perhaps as a result, the short coffee and tea cups became the signature style of Sèvres Porcelain.

It has also been claimed that cup saucers originated in Turkey. Cups with saucers are depicted in seventeenth-century Turkish miniatures. Turkish saucers at this time are said to have been made from painted wood. The manufacture of porcelain saucers from Japan can be verified by their frequent mention in the records of the Dutch East India Company in the 1660s. From the Dutch East India documents, it can be conjectured that either there were far more cups exported from Japan than saucers, that single saucers were used for multiple cups, or that saucers were made from a substance other than porcelain. In Meissen, by contrast, Böttger porcelain cups manufactured in Meissen from 1710 were always accompanied by saucers.

When and where did the cup handles that we see on the coffee cups we use today originate? They are not found on porcelains from China or Japan until the beginning of the eighteenth century. There are Oriental porcelains with silver handles and mounts, these handles themselves are not porcelain. Porcelain handles, however, were already to be found on tall cups manufactured in Meissen by 1710s⁵⁾, while handles for coffee cups did not become mainstream until the 1730s. Eventually, many Meissen-style cups with handles were manufactured in the porcelain factories throughout Europe.

Bowls Used in Tea Ware

Often coffee, tea, or chocolate services include medium-sized bowls approximately 20 centimeters in diameter. These were especially common in Britain and

4) *Dresden-Spiegel der Welt. Katalog*, (Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc, 2005), p.104

5) Ingelore Menzhausen, "*Alt-Meißner Porzellan in Dresden*", (Henschel Verlag, Berlin, 1990), Abb.30

Germany from the first half of the eighteenth century. In England there were many examples of metal ware for cups other than for tea, but because Meissen used porcelain for all pieces, other factories eventually followed suit.

According to the pictorial catalogue of the exhibit on tea wares held in 1991 at the Staatliche Kunstmuseen Dresden (Dresden State Art Collections), these types of bowls were at one time called *Spühnapf-glatt* (flat bowls for washing). The catalogue explains that the bowls were placed on tables and were used to wash out tea and coffee dregs from cups after use. This, however, is a tenuous argument, as most bowls of this variety are generally called *Kumme* (meaning “round bowl”) in Germany.⁶⁾

A Japanese exhibit catalogue labels this type of bowl a *chakoboshi* (tea spillage), which appears to be based on the English term, “slop basin,” provided for the catalogue by the curator of Russia’s State Hermitage Museum.⁷⁾ It is not difficult to imagine the necessity of having a bowl ready for disposing of coffee and tea dregs emptied at the table.

Judging from the still life of a tea Service⁸⁾ attributed to the Swiss artist, Jean Etienne Liotard (1702–1789), and painted between 1781 and 1783, there may have been heretofore unknown uses of the slop basin (fig. 1). The painting



Fig. 1 “Still Life - Tea Service” by Jean Etienne Liotard (Swiss, 1702–1789)
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles 84. PA. 57
(Source; *Tea Drinking in the West*, Nagoya/ Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 2001)

6) “*Ey! wie schmeckt der Cofee süße,*” *Meissener Porzellan und Graphik* (Staatliche Kunstmuseen, Dresden, 1991).

7) *Catalogue: Meissen Porcelain at the Russian Imperial Court. From the State Hermitage Collection*, (Asahi Shimbun, 1997)

8) *Tea Drinking in the West*, (Nagoya/ Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 2001)

shows a mid-sized bowl into which a cup, saucer, and spoon have been haphazardly stacked. The painting implies a plurality of uses for the tea bowl.

The slop basin was thus used broadly as European tea ware to meet the needs of the user. Differences in use probably also arose across nations and regions, and across social strata. We can probably conclude that unlike Japan, which had strict rituals for tea drinking, proprieties in early modern and modern Europe concerning tea were far more lax.

3. Oriental Porcelain Tea Ware for Use as Room Decoration Catalogued on Inventories

It is common in Europe for inventories to be taken to verify assets for inheritance or transfer purposes. Porcelains are catalogued along with furniture, wall tapestries, paintings, sterling silver and other metal goods, as well as crystal. It is from such inventories that we can grasp how porcelains were stored. To understand how porcelains were used in the past in Europe is to know why the porcelain was made or exported. Looking over the entries for porcelain listed in many inventories, it is clear that tea and coffee ware comprise over half; of that, cups and saucers constitute the overwhelming majority. What I have seen listed next most often are tea and coffee pots and slop basins, from which it can be deduced that of the porcelains used for room decoration, the majority were in fact tea and coffee ware. I will introduce one example each from Holland and England of inventories describing porcelains used in this manner.

3-1 Inventory from an Aristocratic English Household

There are many instances of inventories taken even by aristocratic families without extensive porcelain collections. It isn't possible to compare the inventories with the collections themselves, but we do know that the porcelains differ in the types of environments in which they were used or how they were received as opposed to the opulent collections of well-known royalty and nobility or great collectors. We can get a glimpse of their characteristically more average "transmission from generation to generation," and they contribute more information on the universal environment for passing down heirlooms. My observations in this section are based entirely on transcriptions of the inventories from Drayton House as published in *Noble Households, Eighteenth-Century Inventories of Great*

English Houses, A Tribute to John Cornforth (Cambridge Press, 2006).⁹⁾

Drayton House (Northamptonshire County)

(I) Summary

Inventory was taken based on the order of Lady Elizabeth (Betty) Germaine (1680–1769) during the years 1710 and 1724. The inventory is owned by Drayton House. Lady Betty inherited the house after her husband, Sir John Germaine, passed away in 1718. Germaine had succeeded to the Drayton estate upon the death of his first wife, Duchess Mary Mordaunt Norfolk, in 1705. It is rumored that Germaine was illegitimate, a Dutchman who was friends with his half-brother, William the Third of the House of Orange-Nassau. There is a vast number of porcelains listed in the inventory that belonged to Germaine and his first wife, the duchess of Norfolk. The porcelain was used for room decoration when the architect, William Talman, was appointed to refurbish the home. It can be confirmed from the 1724 inventory that Lady Betty purchased porcelains to add to the collection that she inherited. The 1710 inventory shows that there were porcelains in 17 of the 80 rooms in the estate, while the 1724 inventory shows there were porcelains in 19 of 82 rooms. Information on room decorations and furnishings is also provided in detail.

(II) Characteristics of the 1724 Inventory of Porcelain

References to porcelain are all recorded as “China”; there is a total of 356 such references.

There are six examples of porcelains arranged on tea tables. Such tea ware was often seen in closets, dining rooms, and housekeeper rooms, but the largest number appear on display shelves in the art gallery. They were also located in the antechamber and bed chambers.

In other words, it can be surmised that tea ware was always displayed where guests would frequent, played the role of room decoration, and were highly prized. Of course, it is also quite possible that porcelains were used for hospitality toward guests. I myself have verified from European inventories the striking prevalence of porcelains—in particular, cups and saucers—being used for both

9) Tessa Murdoch, ed., *Noble Households, Eighteenth-Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth*; Inventories transcribed by Candace Briggs, Laurie Lindey, and John Adamson (Cambridge, 2006).

room decoration and drinking.

3-2 Inventory from a Bourgeois Dutch Estate: Het Rapenburg, Leiden

Extensive research is being done on inventory from the old estates situated along the Rapenburg Canal; it is therefore possible to view many of these inventories. Research began in 1969, and has already resulted in the publication of a series of ten books in six volumes.¹⁰⁾ In book number six, there is a timeline of summaries of the owners of estates in the region, and when inventories are available, reprints of the inventories are appended. The region described in the publication is divided into 71 districts. The inventories include the furniture, clothing, jewelry, paintings, and other pieces of art belonging to local landowners. It is not unusual for porcelains to be included in the lists.

Based on a survey of the entire collection, I have summarized the trends for each period of items related to Oriental porcelains listed up in the inventories taken from the seventeenth through the mid-eighteenth centuries.

*Inventory from the beginning of the seventeenth century: for all practical purposes, no references are made to porcelains; metal tableware is conspicuous;

*From the mid-seventeenth century: a few references are made to porcelains;

*From the early to mid-eighteenth century: when there are inventories of many assets, most of the listings include porcelain. In cases of many listings of porcelain, inventories begin including a few examples of Japanese porcelains.

Here I have selected the mid-eighteenth century inventory of Willem Jacobsz. Paets (1668–1750, Leiden) to present as a case study. Willem Jacobsz. Paets was a man of power as a member of the “Council of Forty” in Leiden. Willem lived at 19 Rapenburg between 1709 and 1751, an estate he inherited from his father, Jacob Paets (1639–1709), who was also a member of the Council of Forty. Jacob lived in the home from 1669 to 1709. The year before Willem died, he took inventory. The inventory lists a large number of porcelains in a variety of rooms, including an painting gallery, antechamber, grand hall, and closets.

10) Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, C. Willemijn Fock & A.J. van Dissel, *Het Rapenburg Geshiedenis van een Leidse gracht* (Leiden, 1986).

[Excerpt of inventory of porcelains from the art gallery of Willem Jacobsz. Paets and his wife, 19 Rapenburg (1751)]¹¹⁾

<i>In de schilderij kamer beneeden:</i>	9 borden of schoteltjes met een paeuwte
30 schilderijen soo groot als kleyn	1 klein spoelkometie
13 familiestucken schilderijen	6 schooteltjes met een ojevaer
1 groote spiegel met een swarte lijst en kap	1 bruyen Saxis porcelijn coffikan met 1
1 nooteboome tafel met 5 kleyne laetjes	goud kettingje en bandjes
1 groot verlakt teeblad	1 Saxis porcelijn chocolaet kan en schoo-
1 swart verlakte coffykan	teltie
3 blauw en wit porcelijne spoelkommen	12 porcelijne kopjes, 11 dito schootel-
6 groote geribde coffykoppen	tjes, ouwervets teegoet
3 dito schooteltjes	17 dito gebloemde kopjes
6 blauw en wit porcelijne teekopjes	22 dito schooteltjes
6 dito schooteltjes	6 dito kopjes, 6 dito schooteltjes, gecou-
1 dito trekpot	leurd van buylen
2 holle agtkante schooteltjes	6 dito kopjes, 6 dito schooteltjes, geel
1 dito groot suykerbos	van buyten coffigoet
2 kleyne dito	3 sausschooteltjes met 't voogeltje etc.
6 dito theeschooteltjes	9 blauw en wit porcelijn chocolaet koppen
2 roo trekpotjes	1 dito clappmuts
Voor de schoorsteen:	2 porcelijne bakjes
4 vlerckflensen	2 roo trekpotten
2 bagijne potjes	1 groote roo dito
2 hooger dito potjes	1 roo galgtrekpot
2 flesjes	1 geamailjeerde chocolade kop
4 wit, 3 rood pleysterbeeldjes	1 dito schootel
12 nooteboome Engelse stoelen met gevlogte	6 teeschooteltjes bl(auw) en wit oud goed
linten	2 kopjes met oortjes
In de vaste kas:	4 groote bruyne koppen
1 porcelijn desert met 9 schootels	2 dito kleinder
11 porcelijne schaeltjes	5 dito schooteltjes
36 dito borden	1 wit porcelijn oly of azijnkannetje met
4 dito enkele schootels	een schooteltie daeronder
6 kleyne dito schooteltjes met 1 bloempot-	eenige pulletics en flesjes
je	eenige glazen tot desert
11 schaeltjes met 1 borduer werkje	
7 enkele schooteltjes divers	
4 saus schooteltjes, oud werk	
20 borden met een geborduert randje	
9 schaeltjes	

Summary

I must offer a caveat on the use in this book of the Dutch word, *porceliejnen*, which is somewhat vague, as I will point out below. Porcelain listed in the inventories of 1751 are mostly from China or Japan. In the mid-seventeenth century, many areas of Holland, starting with Delft, prospered by producing mock Oriental porcelain. Imitations were also mass-produced in the first half of the seventeenth century, and sold in the market. Western porcelains such as Meissen ware and others outside of Holland were also available on the market, but because European porcelains are listed in the inventories by region of origin, they are differentiated from the entry, “porcelain.” Imitations of Oriental porcelains manufactured at Delft were exceptionally sophisticated; merchants from Delft sold them as “Dutch porcelains.” It is conjectured that this is the reason Oriental and

11) Ibid., *Het Rapenburg* I, p.324–357.

Dutch porcelains are intermingled in the listings of porcelain in the inventory.

Thus, while not particularly suitable for identifying individual items, the inventory does quite well as an indicator of how the porcelains were used. Most of the porcelains listed are colored; the majority are shapes designed for tea and coffee ware, and cups and saucers comprise the largest number. The other items most frequently listed are teapots and slop basins. In other words, tea ware constitutes the majority of porcelain items. Some of the tea ware was kept in closets or in the dining room, but the area of the estate that held most of the porcelain was the display shelf in the painting gallery. Porcelains were also found in the antechamber, bed chambers, and back room, all areas where guests would frequent. They served as room decorations and were probably meant to be appreciated by the viewer, although it is also possible that they were used for hospitality purposes when guests visited. What is most striking about the inventory is that there was far more tea ware, especially cups and saucers, than what was actually necessary, and that tea ware served the dual purpose of practical use and room decoration.

4. Evolution of European Porcelain Tea Services for Royalty and the Nobility

It was common for the upper classes to own complete tea sets that were comprised of a variety of essential items for drinking tea. In Europe, a complete tea set was called a tea service. Decorated matched tea services were not popular until the mid-eighteenth century. Prior to that time, tea services were assembled one piece at a time. Most of the services were a combination of silver and porcelain; there were also sets that were a combination of Oriental and western porcelains.

Some tea services were stored in sturdy boxes lined with velvet. It is thought that these boxes were designed to be portable; royalty or the nobility could take them on vacations or hunting trips to enjoy tea at their destinations.

An old, unusual example of this type of tea service is to be found in the Louvre, and is called *nécessaire* (a necessity, a case / fig. 2). This tea service was a gift from the mayor of Paris, Henry-Nicolas Cousinet (? ~ 1768), upon the birth of the son of Louis XV and his wife, Queen Mary Lezczinska (1703–1768) in



Fig. 2 “Nécessaire”

Louvre Museum (Paris, France)

(Source; John Ayers, Oliver Impey, and J.V.G. Mallet, et.al, *Porcelain for Palaces: The Fashion for Japan in Europe, 1650–1750*, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1990.)

1729.¹²⁾ The custom at the time was to choose items freely for tea services from Japanese, Chinese, and Meissen porcelains, as well as from silver and other materials. It is not certain just when this method of selection began, but especially until the mid-eighteenth century, when most of the European porcelain manufactories were established, it was customary for the upper classes to choose one piece of each type of tea ware.

There are many examples of boxed travel sets among the Meissen porcelain tea services. Most of the oldest examples of boxed tea services come from the early 1720s. The image is of an old possession of Princess Marie Louise of Hesse-Kassel (1688–1765); it is made of porcelain produced around 1723¹³⁾. It is considered unusual to be able to determine the era when a tea service was stored in a box.

In Meissen, many porcelain services were produced from the early 1720s to be used as gifts in social settings for royalty and the nobility. There are many

12) Peter Wilhelm Meister and Horst Reber, *Europäisches Porzellan* (Office du Livre, Fribourg, 1980); See also: Jon Ea-zu, Oriva- Inpi-, J.V.G. Maretto, ed., *Kyūtei no tōjiki: Yo-roppa o miryō shita Nihon no geijutsu*, 1650–1750, Eikoku tōji kyōkaihen, Nishida Hiroko and Yuba Tadanori, trans., (Dōhōsha Shuppan, 1994). Original by John Ayers, Oliver Impey, and J.V.G. Mallet, et.al, *Porcelain for Palaces: The Fashion for Japan in Europe, 1650–1750*, (Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1990.)]

13) *The Dutch Royal Collection*, (Mainichi Shinbunsha, 2000).

examples of tea services being used as gifts for guests of state. One example is the Meissen-porcelain tea service offered by Friedrich August III, elector of Saxony (1696–1763), as a gift to Catherine the Great (1729–1796) and her husband, Grand Duke Peter, on the occasion of their wedding¹⁴. This was a grand-scale service of 400 pieces that included everything from dinnerware, coffee ware, and chocolate pots, as well as tea ware. It is decorated with a crucifix, the motif of the patron saint of imperial Russia, St. Andrew, as well as with Russia's national emblem and flowers. Today, invaluable examples of *chinoiserie* tea services manufactured in 1723–24 can be found in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (the Amsterdam Museum of Art and History), the Hermitage Palace, and the Munich Residence. Many of these tea services decorated splendid table tops called console tables; these were most certainly used as decoration.

In France, soft paste porcelain was developed in the kiln at Vincennes in northeast Paris in 1740, which was later than in Meissen. The Vincennes porcelain kiln moved to Sèvres, southwest of Paris in 1756, where it became the French royal porcelain manufactory. It was at Vincennes in 1753 that the idea for a breakfast service for tea or coffee was first formulated. This service was termed *déjeuner* (at the time the word referred to breakfast). *Déjeuner* came to signify a tea ware set that included cups, a pot, sugar bowl, and cream pot on a tray. Services for tea had existed in Meissen from before 1720 with the Böttger porcelains, but did not include matching trays. Sèvres Porcelain was the first to place tea services on trays, elevating the level of refinement of form to new levels and unifying the design of all included tea ware. In 1762, Madame de Pompadour (1721–1764), a patron of Sèvres Porcelain, purchased fourteen sets of *déjeuner*, indicating how popular the breakfast tea service was.

The number of cups in a *déjeuner* was usually no more than four. Sets for two persons were called *tête à tête*, while cups for one person were called *solitaire*.

In many cases, tea services were made as part of a larger tableware set. One representative example was the Cameo Service made for Catherine the Great. The set, manufactured in 1778–1779, was ordered by Catherine the Great's favorite court retainer, Gregory Potemkin, as a present for her. The extensive dinner tea

14) Ibid., *Catalogue: Meissen Porcelain at the Russian Imperial Court. From the State Hermitage Collection*



Fig. 3 “Cofee Service” from “The Cameo Service of Catherine II”, Sèvres Porcelain
The State Hermitage Museum

(Source; *Sèvres Porcelain of the 18th Century from the Collection of The State Hermitage Museum*, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg & Art Impression Inc., 2003)

service contains 744 pieces (for sixty people), and includes many items for tea (fig. 3). A Grecian-style arabesque is painted in gold on a Turkish-blue background; it is a neo-classical designed cameo motif. Today, about 600 of the pieces are owned by the State Hermitage Museum.¹⁵⁾

Conclusion

Porcelain tea and coffee ware imported mainly from Asia in the seventeenth century was highly evaluated by the royalty and nobility of Europe. Not only was it used for practical purposes, but was a favorite for room decorations. In other words, the function of tea far surpassed its mere use as a beverage for consumption; it held a variety of functions in European society. The upper classes most probably displayed their tea ware at tea parties with the aim of demonstrating their assets and sophisticated tastes. For this reason, tea ware served as a vehicle for social interaction among the upper classes. When kept in splendid boxes and called a service, tea ware was also often used for hospitality toward guests. Tea ware was highly valued as very rare Oriental porcelain in the seventeenth century. After the technique for manufacturing porcelain was re-discovered in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the design of elegant tea Services liberated porcelains from their strong image as Oriental ware, and eventually designs

15) *Sèvres Porcelain of the 18th Century from the Collection of The State Hermitage Museum*, (The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg & Art Impression Inc., 2003).

were Europeanized to adapt to life on the continent. It could be said that through the influence of tea ware design, the exotic image disappeared from tea and coffee altogether.