



# ‘Partly Copies from European Prints’: Johannes Kip and the Invention of Export Landscape Painting in Eighteenth-Century Canton

For Walter A. Liedtke (1945-2015)

• KEE IL CHOI JR. \* •

In terms of the sheer variety and volume of pieces shipped globally from the port of Canton during the eighteenth century, porcelain dominated the export trade like no other luxury commodity and remains a staple of the Chinese art market to this day (fig. 1). Yet historical, even popular perception of the place where commodities such as porcelain were actually traded has arguably been shaped more by iconic paintings of the foreign factory site which, as the historians Paul van Dyke and Maria Mok have observed, were

< Fig. 1  
*Dish, c. 1735-40.*  
Hard paste porcelain,  
diam. 38.7 cm.  
New York, The  
Metropolitan Museum  
of Art, inv. no. 62.187.2;  
Helena Woolworth  
McCann Collection,  
Purchase, Winfield  
Foundation Gift, 1962.

characterized not by diversity but rather by an ‘astonishing resemblance’ of composition and iconography from the seventeen-fifties to the eighteen-thirties (fig. 2).<sup>1</sup> The fundamental, too often overlooked art historical issue linking Chinese export porcelain to export painting is the influential role that European graphic models – especially prints – played first in the decoration of the former and subsequently in what I have described as the ‘invention’ of the latter.<sup>2</sup> The corollary is whether the paintings of the foreign factories – be they on silk,

Fig. 2  
*View of the Quay at  
Canton, China, 1773.*  
Oil on paper,  
laid on canvas,  
52 x 76 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. SK-C-1724;  
on loan from the  
Rijksmuseum  
Volkenkunde, Leiden.



canvas, paper or indeed on porcelain – should be studied as some would contend solely for their documentary value or, alternatively, as intriguing evidence of subtle artistic encounters between Europeans and Chinese from which unique genres of painting, especially landscapes, ensued.<sup>3</sup>

### ‘Partly Copies from European Prints’

In what must have been seen as one of that London season’s most exotic events, the auctioneer James Christie (1730–1803) offered the Chinese collection of Andreas Everardus van Braam Houckgeest (1739–1801) at his Pall Mall salerooms on 15 and 16 February 1799. Van Braam, a former director of the Dutch East India Company and vice-ambassador to the Dutch embassy to the Qing court, had acquired the large and diverse collection during his final sojourn in Canton between 1790 and 1794.<sup>4</sup> Select personal objects (now in the Rijksmuseum) commissioned in the neoclassical taste were left with his daughter Everarda (1765–1816) when he stopped off in Philadelphia while en route back to Holland.<sup>5</sup> They included two reverse glass portraits of his wife

Catherina (1749–1799), which were based on prints, one of which was engraved after a painting, *Lady Rushout and Daughter*, by Angelica Kaufmann (1741–1807).<sup>6</sup> Of the 114 lots offered by Mr Christie, forty-seven were either paintings or painting materials. On the first day, twenty-seven lots were introduced as ‘The following Miniatures in Oil, being original Views and Designs, and *partly Copies from European prints* are entirely executed by Chinese artists ... [my italics],’<sup>7</sup> Extrapolating from the precisely worded lot descriptions, some of the prints consulted have now been identified.<sup>8</sup> Lot 44, for example, was ‘One [painting], Venus attired by the Graces, from Angelica Kaufmann,’ and lot 56 ‘A beautiful painting in oil, on a glass plate, 25 inches by 21 [63.5 x 53.3 cm], from the French engraving of la Mère bien aimée, very finely executed’ (figs. 3, 4).<sup>9</sup> On the second day two notable lots hinted at the range of export landscapes then available in the Canton art market. Lot 16 was ‘A View of the Quay, and European factories at Canton,’ and 55 ‘A tinted drawing of the whole city of Canton, and its suburbs on a roll [i.e., handscroll] 16 feet [487.7 cm].’

The evidence of Van Braam’s sale underscores the key role played by European merchants as promoters of prints for specific works of art as well as patrons of stock genres of export painting. Lot 16 may well have been similar to a view of the foreign factories of Canton acquired through agents in the 1770s by another Dutchman, the collector and Sinologist Jean Theodore Royer (1737–1808) (fig. 2).<sup>10</sup> His painting, executed in oils, focuses upon the site of the foreign factories to the exclusion of the City of Canton and the extensive waterfront of the Pearl River upon which they had been built in a distinctive blend of European and indigenous architecture. ‘Factory’ was an eighteenth-century term of art, interchangeable with the Chinese *hong*

Fig. 3  
FRANCISCO  
BARTOLOZZI  
after ANGELICA  
KAUFMANN,  
*Venus Attired by the  
Graces*, England, 1784.  
Stipple engraving,  
450 x 500 mm.  
London,  
British Museum,  
inv. no. 1208.975.







Fig. 4  
 JEAN MASSARD  
 after JEAN-BAPTISTE  
 GREUZE, *La Mère bien  
 aimée*, France, 1775.  
 Etching,  
 554 x 663 mm.  
 London,  
 British Museum,  
 inv. no. 1886,0216.1.

and denoted a godown, trading station or warehouse (not a place of manufacturing). The site as represented by this painting had evolved as a subject of landscape in the decade following imperial decrees promulgated between 1757 and 1759 restricting foreign trade by default to Canton, and, within Canton itself, the establishment in the seventeenth-sixties of the Co-Hong, the imperially appointed merchant consortium tasked with the regulation of the trade.<sup>11</sup> European merchants who had formerly quit Canton for Macao in the off-season gradually became year-round residents of the factories that were let to them increasingly on an annualized basis. The cost of renovation or refurbishment of these buildings was borne by both the

Europeans and their Chinese landlords. As the financial outlay of the former increased, the appearance of the factories became more European in style.

Lot 55 offered a picture in a very different format and medium – a traditional handscroll of great scale rendered in translucent, water-based colours on silk or paper, a variant of which is today in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 5). It presented an encompassing panorama of the ‘whole city of Canton, and its suburbs’ in a precise documentary style.<sup>12</sup> Here the factory site is but one, albeit prominent part of the Pearl River waterfront, that incorporates the City of Canton set amongst majestic mountains and replete with its iconic landmarks: the minaret of the Huaisheng





Fig. 5  
View of the Pearl  
River and Canton,  
China, 1771.  
Ink and colours  
on silk, 95 x 368 cm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. NG-1052.

mosque, the 'flowery pagoda' of the Six Banyan temple, the Zhentai Tower or 'Five-storey pagoda' located on the ancient city wall to the north, and prominently in the Pearl River, Haizhu Island built up with a round, fortified building known to Westerners as the 'Dutch Folly Fort'. These landmarks comprised an iconography of Canton that both predated the emergence of the foreign factories as a discrete subject of landscape painting in the seventeenth century and persisted in some form down to the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

As described in Christie's sale catalogue and exemplified here by these paintings in the Rijksmuseum, two distinct formats – the single-motif picture and the panorama or prospect – had grown out of the engagement of local artists with prints and other graphic art over the creation of landscapes (as well as other genres) that their European clientele desired (figs. 2, 5). Appraising the impact of specific models upon local practice depends largely on identifying what Clare Le Corbeiller has described as '...the missing links in the icon-

ographical chain [which] could be filled in by greater knowledge of the books, textiles, prints and sketches carried in the trunks of East India company personnel...'<sup>14</sup> One such missing link survives as a mariner's journal published in Stockholm in 1773, by Captain Carl Gustav Ekeberg (1716-84) following his tenth and final Canton sojourn in 1770, as an official of the Swedish East India Company (SOIC). His *Ostindiska Resa (East India Journey)* was illustrated by engravings made by Olof Jacobsson Årre (1731-1809), three of which were based upon Ekeberg's own drawings of views of Boca Tigris, Whampoa Island and Canton that he had more than likely encountered on an earlier voyage to China, probably in the 1760s.<sup>15</sup> They depicted sites along the Pearl River through which all European merchants like Ekeberg and Van Braam had to pass on what comprised the last leg of the long voyage from Europe.

Topographical familiarity with the maritime route born of actual experience had originally spurred the rise of these motifs as the subjects of



export painting. I originally contended that Ekeberg's published views not only served as models for specific works, but that these same prints also continued to exert a formative, aesthetic influence on the practice of export landscapes in Canton. I can now propose how a copy of the *Ostindiska Resa* may have reached Canton in early 1775 – that is as part of the hand luggage of Captain Charles Chapman, master of the SOIC Indiaman *Terra Nova*, who returned to Gothenburg in June of 1776 shortly before his death later that same year.<sup>16</sup> Together with several silk-bound albums of river craft that plied the Pearl River and the south China coast, Chapman also supplied specially commissioned paintings on silk based upon Ekeberg's prints to his brother, the renowned naval architect Fredrik Henrik af Chapman (1721-1808). F.H. af Chapman later broke up the albums into ninety-six watercolours that were framed and permanently installed in a 'Chinese cabinet' at Skärvfa, his manor house built in 1785-86, near the naval port of Karlskrona.<sup>17</sup>

Diverse graphic designs reached China as loose sheets or were otherwise included in publications such as Ekeberg's journals or in compendia of images illustrating the design of the ships that they piloted to China. A now lost drawing and a chart were the sources both for extant export porcelains and an oil painting showing the unanticipated layover of the SOIC ship *Gustaf Adolph* on Hainan Island during the winter of 1784-85.<sup>18</sup> Just as Charles Chapman had done, and Van Braam would later do, a member of the ship's company furnished designs to Cantonese artisans who then fashioned souvenirs according to their patron's specifications. Another Swede conveyed a copy of *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria*, F.H. af Chapman's renowned treatise on ship design first published in 1768.<sup>19</sup> Its engraved title presenting a view of Stockholm, also engraved by Olof Jacobsson Årre, was copied in a Cantonese painting studio (figs. 6, 7).<sup>20</sup> An examination of its many plates reveals that this influential work also reached a porcelain studio, where a three-quarter view of a hull





was adapted for the decoration of a punchbowl (figs. 8, 9).<sup>21</sup>

### **Empathetic Viewing and Resonant Influence of European Prints**

Graphic sources that mirrored the personal interests, maritime experience or topography encountered by Europeans in China were indeed copied or otherwise adapted by Cantonese artists irrespective of whether they worked in porcelain workshops or painting studios. The further dissemination of the same models amongst a variety of

Fig. 6

OLOF JACOBSSON  
ÅRRE, *View of  
Stockholm Harbor*,  
Sweden, c. 1768.  
Copper engraving,  
373 x 758 mm.  
Engraved title in

Fredrik Henrik af  
Chapman, *Architectura  
navalis mercatoria*,  
Holmiæ 1768.  
Stockholm, National  
Historical Museums,  
inv. SB 1205.

Fig. 7

*View of Stockholm Harbor*,  
China, c. 1770.  
Gouaches on linen or silk,  
laid on paper, 33.3 x 71.8 cm.  
Stockholm, Stockholm  
City Museum,  
inv. no. SSM 7241.

artistic practices, including carvers of jade, ivory and lacquer, offers compelling evidence of how pervasive European print culture had become in Canton by the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>22</sup>



Fig. 8  
Detail of Plate xxxvi,  
fig. 14 in *Architectura  
navalis mercatoria*.  
Courtesy of the New  
York Public Library.

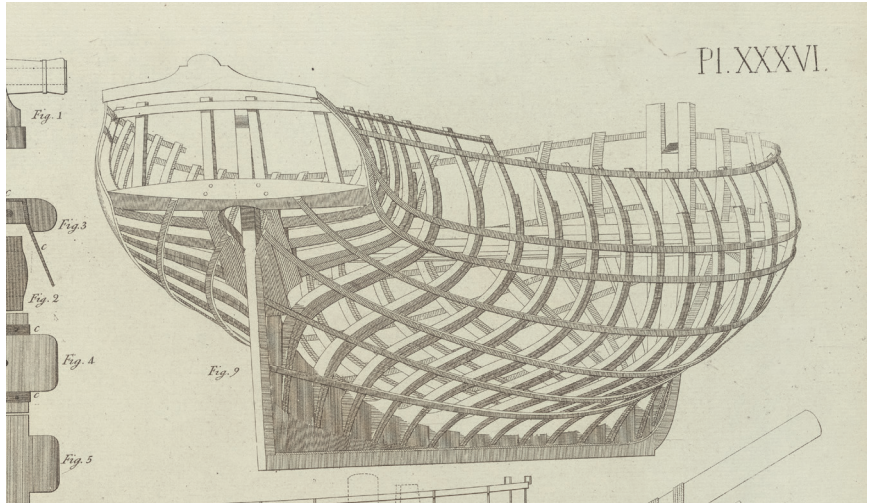


Fig. 9  
Punchbowl,  
China, c. 1800-15.  
Hard paste porcelain,  
21.4 x 285 cm.  
Salem Mass.,  
Peabody Essex  
Museum,  
inv. no. E72007;  
museum purchase  
with funds from  
Mr Lawrence  
Coolidge, Mr Augustus  
P. Loring, Mrs Anna  
Glenn Vietor, Miss  
Sarah Wheatland and  
Anonymous, 1982.  
Photo: Peabody  
Essex Museum,  
Salem Mass., 2010.  
Photographed by  
Dennis Helmar



Beyond their initial use for designated commissions is the elusive issue of how prints impacted the practice of painting in general. Can we detect in the works of art that ensued from repeated, focused viewing of these models telltale evidence of what I call the artist's 'resonance' or 'empathy' with unfamiliar approaches to otherwise familiar genres? I propose that we can begin to differentiate their intentions or choices through our own analysis of two paintings, both on export porcelain.

Brilliantly enamelled across the void of a *Dish*, as if its vitreous surface was a sheet of paper or length of silk, is a floral arrangement rendered in grisaille and gold, the sources for which were the widely disseminated botanical prints engraved by Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer (1636-1699) (figs. 10, 11).<sup>33</sup> It is tempting to regard such quality solely as extraordinary technical virtuosity employed to satisfy a discerning European client, a facile view that precludes the fact that Monnoyer's prints would have resounded with native forms of ink



Fig. 10

JEAN-BAPTISTE  
MONNOYER,  
*Floral Basket*,  
France, c. 1680-95.  
Etching, 375 x 488 mm.  
Amsterdam,  
Rijksmuseum,  
inv. no. RP-P-2011-65-11  
(image shown in  
reverse); purchased  
with the support of the  
F.G. Waller-Fonds.

Fig. 11

*Dish*, China, c. 1735-40.  
Hard paste porcelain,  
diam. 38.7 cm.  
New York, The  
Metropolitan Museum  
of Art, inv. no. 62.187.2;  
Helena Woolworth  
McCann Collection,  
Purchase, Winfield  
Foundation Gift, 1962.



painting in which floral designs were rendered abstractly against neutral grounds, such as on a handscroll by Qian Weichang (1720-1772) (fig. 12). Designated analysis of this charger and other recorded examples has revealed that the arrangements were comprised of flowers taken from multiple prints suggesting that the Cantonese artisan participated in their selection and hence the very conceptualization of these





Fig. 12  
Detail of QIAN  
WEICHANG, *Profusion  
of Flowers*, China,  
Qing Dynasty.  
Handscroll, ink and  
colours on paper,  
35.5 x 353.3 cm.  
Boston, Museum  
of Fine Arts,  
inv. no. 56.257;  
Marshall H. Gould  
Fund.

Fig. 13  
*Plaque*, China, mid-  
eighteenth century.  
Hard paste porcelain,  
26.4 x 45.4 cm.  
New York,  
The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
inv. no. 1982.128;  
Helena Woolworth  
McCann Collection,  
Purchase, Winfield  
Foundation, Gift, 1962.

compositions. Just as af Chapman's *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria* represented a rich compendium of ship design, so too would an entire volume of botanical prints have offered many variations of floral still life.

Equally illustrative is the resonance experienced by another porcelain decorator to an unidentified seventeenth-century Dutch landscape print, here transferred to the lustrous surface of a *Plaque* (fig. 13). Again, such a print exemplified a notion of how an artist from another visual culture rendered sky, water, land and a distant, hazy horizon – all deeply engrained features of the traditional Chinese river land-





scape. In reflecting upon it, Clare Le Corbeiller commented ‘Although entirely drawn in line of varying intensity, the effect is *unexpectedly painterly* [my italics]...,’ thereby signalling the decorator’s reaction to effects in the print that he perceived to be akin to traditional brushwork.<sup>24</sup> Such a close reading of what must have been a monochromatic print had clearly inspired him to employ the defining technique of his own practice in attempting to replicate a very different idea of landscape art.

### Johannes Kip’s *A Prospect of Westminster & A Prospect of the City of London*

The empathetic viewing and resonant influence of European prints in Canton long preceded the publication of Carl Gustav Ekeberg’s journals, F.H. af Chapman’s *Architectura Navalis Mercatoris* or the commissions of merchants like A.E. van Braam and Charles Chapman, and can be traced back to the inception of black enamels on porcelain under the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661-1722). Kangxi had been an avid collector of European prints, undoubtedly because they echoed the monochromatic effects of traditional ink painting. ‘Ink colour’ was indeed a taste of the Qing court and subsequently became a stimulus to the market for export wares decorated in grisaille, especially as the intake of

prints in all genres increased through the annual influx of European merchants into Canton.<sup>25</sup> Few works of export art intriguingly exemplify the convergence of European prints and traditional Chinese painting better than the armorial porcelain service made for Eldred Lancelot Lee (d. 1734) (figs. 1, 14-16).<sup>26</sup> And among export porcelains none better illuminate the fact that the designs consulted by its decorators, whether working at Jingdezhen or near Canton, were not original; they were generally derived from other graphic models, such as woodcuts and handscrolls – or what, in making the Lee service, was perceived to be a work governed by a familiar pictorial format and idiom.

Each plate is emblazoned in brilliant *famille rose* enamels with the Lee family coat of arms, a potent signifier of the English mercantile classes whose prosperity kindled the demand for luxury goods such as Chinese porcelain. But the Lees were linked to China not only through the status-affirming porcelain on their dining table, but also through the distinctive rim decoration – two pairs of scroll-like panels showing the City of London by the River Thames and the City of Canton by the Pearl River. If we rotate the plate 180 degrees, the panels read (from right to left) as the beginning and end of a topographic handscroll, ‘mapping’ the maritime progress



Fig. 14  
Detail of Plate (fig. 1):  
City of Canton and  
City of London panels  
conjoined.



between Europe and China (fig. 14). However abbreviated, it encapsulates a sea voyage of over nine thousand kilometres and hence visualizes a conduit not only of valued commodities such as the very porcelain upon which it was enamelled, but also of myriad aesthetic encounters fundamental to the creation of such paintings.

Scholars have traditionally assumed that the panel representing the City of London by the Thames had been derived from 'one of the well-known prints of this scene.'<sup>27</sup> Ronald W. Fuchs II has noted its similarity to the headpiece of the *London Magazine* of 1732, which presents St Paul's Cathedral, some of the steeples of Sir Christopher Wren's fifty parish churches, the City to the

east, and London Bridge jutting at an angle toward the south bank of the river at Southwark.<sup>28</sup> But this headpiece and especially an engraved title dated 1739 and published by Henry Overton (1676-1751), were both derived from monumental panoramas or, in the parlance of the eighteenth century, 'prospects' encompassing the full extent of the Thames from west to east, from Westminster to the City of London (figs. 17-19).<sup>29</sup> This highly influential example of topographic art was first published in 1710 by the Dutch-born, London-based engraver Johannes Kip (1653-1722) shortly after the dome of the 'new' St Paul's was completed in 1708.<sup>30</sup> *A Prospect of Westminster & A Prospect of the City of London*

Fig. 15  
Detail of Plate (fig. 1):  
City of London panel.

Fig. 16  
Detail of Plate  
(fig. 1): City of Canton  
panel.





Fig. 17  
JOHANNES KIP,  
*A Prospect of Westminster & A Prospect of the City of London*,  
Netherlands, c. 1720.  
Two engravings,  
printed from two  
plates on four sheets  
of paper, 51.4 x 234.3 cm  
(overall).  
New York,  
The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
inv. nos. 2017.128a, b;  
Purchase, Barbara and  
Howard Fox Gift, 2017.

(Kip's *Prospect*) of around 1720 was comprised of two separate prints (each two sheets conjoined) and marketed either as discrete views or as a continuous prospect measuring in total 51.4 x 234.3 cm. The complete prospect was also published in large volumes of topographic prints, many also engraved by Kip, entitled *Britannia Illustrata* or in a French edition *Nouveau Théâtre de la Grand Bretagne*.<sup>31</sup> Its archetypal design was originally derived from the double

print of *London Before and After The Great Fire* engraved by Johannes Wenceslaus Hollar (1607-1677) in 1666.<sup>32</sup> Kip adopted Hollar's horizontal composition featuring a bird's-eye point of view and a searching sense of depth that presents an artificially constructed, composite vista of the Thames that in reality is not as straight as it appears in such prints. Similarly, Kip accurately depicted actual buildings and landmarks but otherwise distorted their proximity to one another or



Fig. 18  
Detail of *A Prospect of Westminster & A Prospect of the City of London* (fig. 17).





Fig. 19  
Detail of *A Prospect  
of Westminster &  
A Prospect of the City  
of London* (fig. 17).

to the river. Hollar had positioned London Bridge jutting at an angle toward the opposite riverbank, a device Kip also repeated. A unique feature of his *Prospect* is the abstract manner by which he conceived the cityscape as a horizontal, cubist-like pattern of interlocking roofs, steeples and towers (fig. 18). This innovative feature suited the print's inherent scale because it promoted not one but multiple perspectives or viewpoints that would become revealed as the

viewer scanned its breadth. In this way, Kip's *Prospect* departs from Hollar's double print of 1666 as well as Samuel (1696-1779) and Nathaniel (1759-1774) Buck's *Prospect of Westminster and London* of 1749, the vantages of which are governed by unified points of view.<sup>33</sup>

I propose that Kip's *Prospect*, and not the derivative vignettes, served as the source for the London view rendered in grisaille on the rim of the Lee service. If we isolate the panels on the rim and imagine them as rectilinear composi-

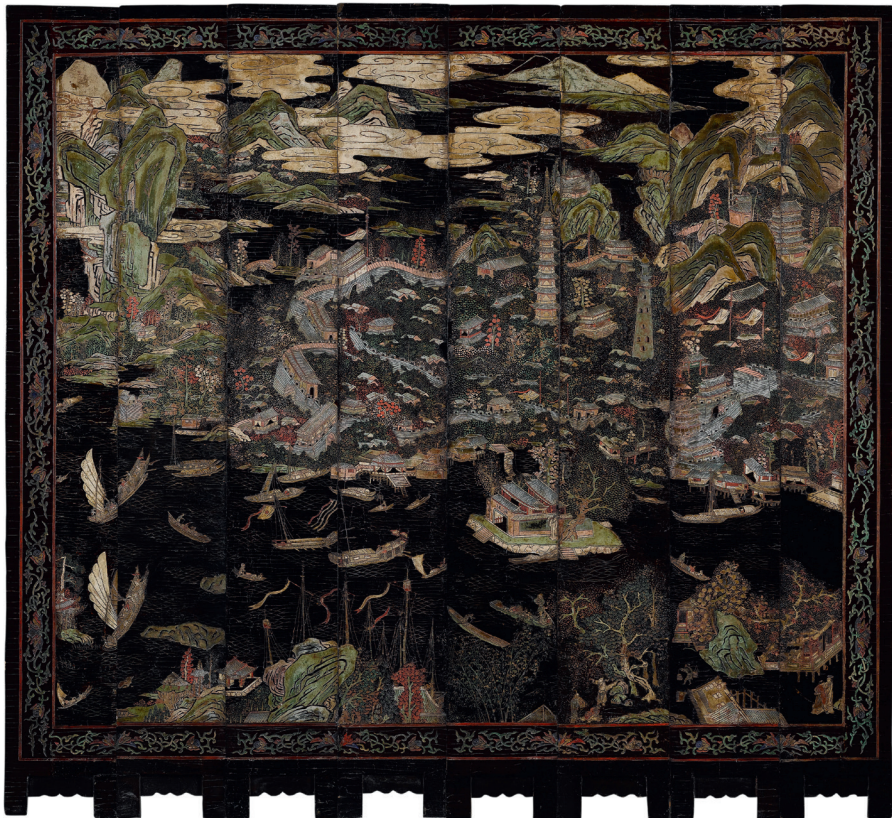




tions, their overall similarity to Kip's *Prospect* is unmistakable both as a matter of the print's commanding scale as well as of the pictorial devices which the Cantonese artisan gleaned from it to translate a view of the Thames into ink painting on porcelain (fig. 15). Due to the narrowness of the rim, he eliminated the sky and reflexively flattened Kip's composition into equivalent bands of river and cityscape that correspond with those elements in the Canton panel. He then adopted the massing of Kip's cityscape by replicating its distinctive, abstract, cubist-like mesh comprised of the interlocked roofs of small buildings and church steeples (fig. 18). Similarly, duplicating another hallmark of Kip's design, he positioned boats to mark the river's subtly shaded surface, taking care that the masts and sails did not obscure

the view of the buildings and steeples along the shore (fig. 19). The resultant painting suggests that he grasped the unique aesthetic conventions of a model in which multiple viewpoints or perspectives were stretched across a horizontal composition of imposing scale – viewpoints or perspectives that were, within his own tradition, otherwise encountered in sections through the gradual unrolling of a handscroll of equivalent or greater scale. Returning to the idea that the panels of London and Canton form a thematically unified handscroll, it is easy to imagine just how the Cantonese artist may have regarded Kip's *Prospect* as a useful model: to create a scroll, he incorporated design elements from a topographic print of authoritative scale that – through focused viewing – he had come to perceive as a scroll.

Fig. 20  
*Eight-leaf Screen  
 with a View of Canton,*  
 China, c. 1690.  
 Carved and painted  
 lacquer, h. 193 cm.  
 Hong Kong,  
 Hong Kong  
 Maritime Museum,  
 inv. no. HKMM  
 2012.0016.0001.  
 Photo: Bonhams,  
 Hong Kong





The handscroll enamelled on the Lee service cannot be considered complete without the grisaille panel depicting Canton on the Pearl River (fig. 16). It complements that of the City of London by the Thames and permits us to comprehend the totality of the long maritime voyage by visualizing its terminus or destination. In an otherwise standard river landscape, the minaret of the Huaisheng Mosque is shown inside the city wall to the left while the round, walled fort referred to earlier as the 'Dutch' folly is shown to the right in a position mirroring that of London Bridge in the Thames panel. For contemporaries, such landmarks would have signified Canton in much the same way that London Bridge or the dome of St Paul's connoted London. Their presence served to evoke a sense of a place or, as Svetlana Alpers has

suggested, the 'viewer's sense of it', in landscapes for which topographic accuracy is the informing principle.<sup>34</sup> In this respect, the Canton panel refers to that comprehensive iconography of the city to which we alluded earlier when introducing that handscroll of the seventeen-seventies in the Rijksmuseum showing a sweeping panorama of the river (fig. 5). This iconography would appear to find its earliest expressions in map-like images of Canton from the late seventeenth century illustrated here by a carved and painted lacquer screen now in the Hong Kong Maritime Museum (fig. 20). It presents the ancient walled city nestled among tall mountains with its iconic monuments, notably the Dutch folly fort, in a planometric composition that recalls Wenceslaus Hollar's *Ground Plan of Canton* of 1669 or perhaps his other

Fig. 21  
JOHANNES  
WENCESLAUS  
HOLLAR,  
*View of Montserrat*,  
Holland,  
seventeenth  
century.  
Etching,  
353 x 465 mm.  
London,  
British Museum,  
inv. no. 1888,0612.69.





more evocative city maps of the period depicting (among other places) Goa and Montserrat (fig. 21).<sup>35</sup>

But as an expression of the ‘mapping impulse,’ though diminutive in size, the handscroll enamelled in grisaille on the Lee service effectively evoked a long journey from Europe to China, and thus points to a prevalent tradition of topographic handscrolls of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the designs of which conflated traditional landscape painting and cartography.<sup>36</sup> A stylistically related example in this tradition from the mid-eighteenth century is now in Drottningholm, Sweden, and describes the *City of Canton on the Pearl River* (fig. 22).<sup>37</sup> Here the viewer also comprehends a prospect of the East-West journey, but one now drastically truncated to comprise only the stretch up the Pearl River from the South China Sea – a comparatively scalable distance of 145 kilometres. European merchant vessels are shown entering the river’s mouth called Boca Tigris and sailing toward the destination positioned in the centre of the horizontal format – the City of Canton – with its great walls and distinguishing landmarks, notably the Dutch folly fort (fig. 23). The intention of such handscrolls, be they enamelled on porcelain or painted on paper as in Drottningholm was the same: to convey to the viewer, however fictively, the momentous scale of that maritime journey which brought European merchants to China. That

journey framed the mariner’s introduction to China and thereby became a subject of painting. And as a matter of pictorial type, they resonate with and were perhaps presaged by handscrolls of actual, monumental dimensions from the early eighteenth century such as *Ten Thousand Miles along the Yellow River* (78 x 1285 cm), a work that was meant to document the vastness of one of the great rivers of China (fig. 24).<sup>38</sup> By means of a studied, sectional unrolling of its considerable length, the viewer was permitted to take the measure of actual places on that river and their proximity (however exaggerated) to one another. Like Kip’s *Prospect*, such handscrolls represent a parallel form of art as description in which facts about places, contextualized by oceans or rivers, were enshrined within imagined, horizontal map-like constructions.

### *The Canton Waterfront*

Prior to 1760, the primary subject of paintings produced for Europeans coalesced around the uniquely China trade narrative of a maritime journey linking Canton to Europe. The map-like handscrolls suited this kind of narrative. But again, as the European trade in Canton burgeoned and the balance began to tip in their favour, the very site of that trade, the very site of artistic production that gave birth to souvenirs of that trade, became the primary subject of an emergent genre of landscape painting, evoking not the

Fig. 22  
*City of Canton on the Pearl River*, China, mid-eighteenth century. Handscroll converted into an accordion album, ink and colours on paper, mounted on board, 42.5 x 330 cm. Uppsala, Kungliga Hovstaterna/ The Royal Court, inv. no. HGK701. Photo: Alexis Daflos





Fig. 23  
Detail of City of  
Canton on the  
Pearl River (fig. 22).

journey but the destination. The invention of this genre was due in part to the impact of European landscape prints such as Kip's *Prospect* upon local studio practice. The commodious, familiar, scroll-like format of Kip's extensive print allowed for its easy apprehension and adaptation by artists seeking first a descriptive model for the London panel of the Lee service and then to address a demand for panoramas of the foreign factories such as *The Canton Waterfront* (c. 1772), one of the earliest of its kind

to have survived intact (figs. 25, 26).<sup>39</sup> A handscroll comparable to *Ten Thousand Miles along the Yellow River* in terms of its extraordinary scale (83,5 x 784 cm), it focuses the viewer upon the foreign factories and the shorelines leading to them from the east, and away from them to the west. In a departure from the Drottningholm scroll, the ancient city and its familiar landmarks have essentially been relegated to the background and the vaunted China trade voyage further truncated to a





distance of seventeen kilometres from the anchorage at Whampoa Island. Situated in its centre, the foreign factories command this prospect, which when viewed from a distance reveals the formative influence of Kip's *Prospect* on its design (fig. 17). *The Canton Waterfront* presents an abstract, frieze-like expanse of green river and blue sky between which a thin strip of cityscape has been sandwiched. This comprehensive view is conveyed through a combination of long, sweeping lines, a penetrating sense of depth and impressionistic, atmospheric effects – all features of the Anglo-Dutch landscape tradition as exemplified by Kip's *Prospect*.

And as painted on the London panel of the Lee service, small boats have been positioned artificially, many parallel to the horizon, in order to enliven the subtly shaded river but not obscure the view of the factories (figs. 19, 26). As Van Dyke and Mok have observed, this convention was persistently employed in export factory paintings from the mid-eighteenth century onwards.<sup>40</sup>

When *The Canton Waterfront* is unrolled from the extreme right and encountered one section at a time, the Pearl River is revealed to the viewer from east to west through a progression of viewpoints. Tapered and enshrouded in mist at both extremes of this vast picture, the shoreline emerges into focus in much the same way it may have appeared to Europeans approaching by launch from downriver. Gradually, the landscape looms larger and more prominently

Fig. 24

Detail of *Ten Thousand Miles along the Yellow River*, China, late seventeenth century. One of two handscrolls, ink, colours and gold on silk, 78 x 1285 cm (overall length). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. nos. 2006.272a, b; Purchase, W.M. Keck Foundation Gift, The Dillon Fund Gift and gifts from various donors, in memory of Douglas Dillon, 2006.



as one nears the central motif – the foreign factories – and conversely becomes diminished as one continues further upriver. While monumental handscrolls such as *The Canton Waterfront* were probably never used as navigational aids, they were expressive of the mapping impulse because they were intended to convey facts about the shoreline, the city and the ever-changing appearance of the factories.<sup>41</sup> But when unrolled and hence experienced 'cinematically,' they may also have conjured for the viewer 'a sense of place' that signalled the ultimate end of the long voyage from Europe. While clearly rooted in different artistic traditions, Kip's *Prospect* and handscrolls like *Ten Thousand Miles along the Yellow River* share a commitment to a breadth of scale in order to impart the grandeur of their subjects

Fig. 26

Detail of *The Canton Waterfront* (fig. 25).

Fig. 25

*The Canton Waterfront*, Canton, c. 1772. Handscroll, ink and colours on silk, laid on paper, 83.5 x 784 cm. Gothenburg, Gothenburg City Museum, inv. no. GM 13239.



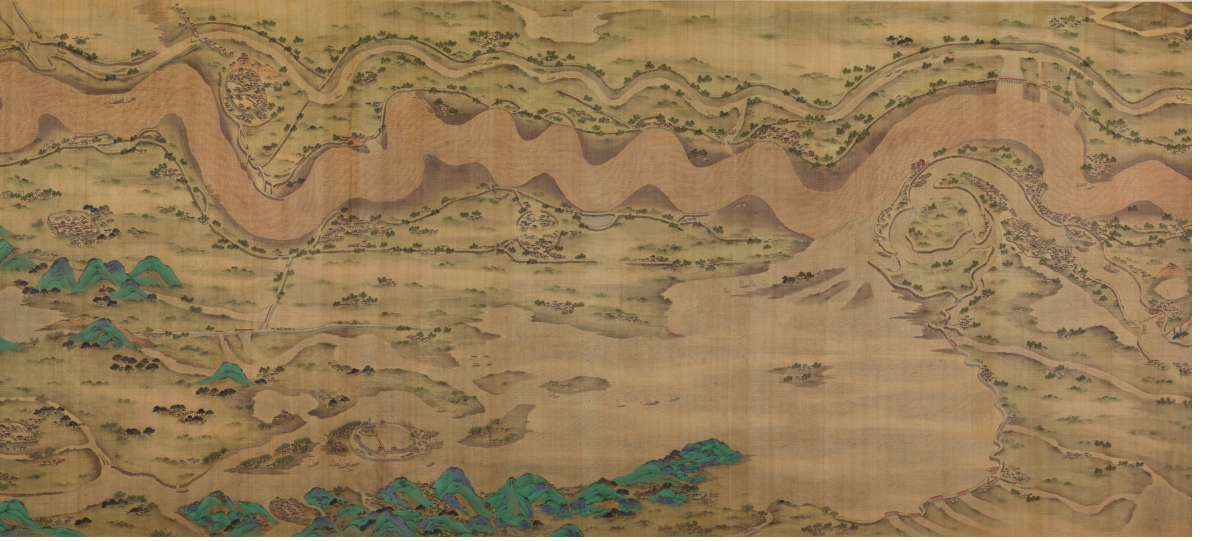






Fig. 27  
GIUSEPPE  
CASTIGLIONE,  
*One Hundred Horses*,  
China, c. 1728.  
Handscroll, ink and  
colours on silk,  
95.5 x 776 cm.  
Taipei, National  
Palace Museum,  
inv. no. PK2A000916  
N000000000.

and, as prime examples of art as description, were designed to communicate topographic facts. Given its broad dimensions and deep horizon, *The Canton Waterfront* represents a synthesis of both traditions. Its composition was derived from the aesthetic plan and devices of the Kip and its extreme monumentality from a type of handscroll that combined landscape and cartography such as *Ten Thousand Miles Along the Yellow River*. While little is known about Cantonese workshop practice in this period, its invention clearly required the informing vision of a master artist who skilfully incorporated a powerful European model into his practice. He must have first drawn in silverpoint the outlines of the landscape in meticulous detail upon the silk support that was subsequently in-painted by assistants.

The fact that it represents both an extraordinary feat of studio management as well as a synthesis of seemingly disparate notions of aesthetic practice makes *The Canton Waterfront* analogous to other handscrolls of similar scale and spatial complexity painted at the Qing court, notably Giuseppe Castiglione's (1688-1766) monumental handscroll (95.5 x 776 cm) *One Hundred Horses* of 1728 (fig. 27). Notwithstanding that it shows grazing horses, the comparison is apposite because similar scenic conventions were employed in the conceptualization of the two paintings. Both are informed by a commanding, probing sense of depth as well as by multiple

perspectives, the former experienced only from a distant vantage, the latter cinematically through the measured unrolling of their lengths. Marco Musillo has argued that Castiglione's approach here was influenced by his working familiarity with Italian seventeenth-century scenographic prints for theatrical set designs in which multiple vanishing points were employed, as opposed to just one.<sup>42</sup> As I have demonstrated above, the Chinese artisan who invented *The Canton Waterfront* had through focused, empathetic viewing come to identify Kip's *Prospect* as a scroll-like composite of similarly diverse viewpoints that only became apparent as his eye canvassed its breadth.

Craig Clunas has recently argued that painting in China during the early modern period was defined as much by those who viewed or consumed it, as by those who made it.<sup>43</sup> Its audiences encompassed the emperor and his court, the scholar, the nation, the people, and latterly the merchant who as much as any of these actors helped countless others become part of the global audience for painting in China. Through his published memoirs, Carl Gustav Ekeberg promoted engraved views of the topography of China familiar to all European traders that were later copied by Cantonese painters at the behest of Captain Charles Chapman (among others). The floral prints of Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer and the ship designs of F.H. af Chapman were employed throughout the century



in porcelain workshops and painting studios, sometimes both. The Dutchmen Jean Theodore Royer and Andreas Everardus van Braam acquired paintings, some of which were 'copies after European prints', still others which cast the foreign factories either within extensive panoramas or as single motif images. Indeed, the evidence of Van Braam's sale of 1799 at Christie's attests to the further dissemination of paintings made in Canton, the subjects of which had first encapsulated – as on the Lee service – the maritime journey from Europe to China. As the Canton trade increased in their favour and the presence of the Europeans became more pronounced, the subject of landscape further coalesced around views of the foreign factories, the very site of commerce that also brought these merchants and local artists into aesthetic dialogue. The substance of that dialogue revolved around repeated engagements with authoritative graphic

models such as Johannes Kip's *A Prospect of Westminster & A Prospect of the City of London* that resonated with the Chinese artists simultaneously as both foreign and familiar. The creative adaptation of such models into their practice resulted in the invention of iconic landscapes that came over time to symbolize not only the City of Canton but also China itself.<sup>44</sup> And for disparate audiences worldwide, such images frequently served as their introduction to the whole notion of painting in China. Remarkably, the renowned French painter François Boucher (1703-1770) owned what was precisely described in the catalogue of his 1771 estate sale as 'Une topographie & paysage Chinois, grande frise roulée.'<sup>45</sup>

#### ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the way Johannes Kip's *A Prospect of Westminster & A Prospect of the City of London* (c. 1720) furnished the design for a handscroll of the River Thames enamelled on the rim of a renowned armorial porcelain service made around 1730-40. Having thus situated an important exemplar of northern European landscape art in China by 1750, it further suggests that Kip's topographic print may well have played an influential, not to say seminal role in the conceptualization of monumental, panoramic handscrolls of the foreign factories from which ultimately the iconic landscape genre emerged. Descriptive of the site of both commerce and aesthetic exchange, these export paintings have exercised a lasting hold on the historical imagination. In as much as export porcelain signified the China trade for Westerners, export paintings came to represent Canton, if not the whole of China for a global audience.



- \* This essay was derived from a paper presented at the annual conference of the American Society of Eighteenth Century Studies in May of 2017, but originates from a long-standing interest in the influence of European prints on Cantonese artisans of the eighteenth century, a subject which I have discussed often with Jan van Campen, whose acquisition of the Van Braam Houckgeest collection for the Rijksmuseum and scholarly work on the Dutch mariner as a collector are fundamental to our work in this field. Wendy Roworth, my panel chair at ASECS and professor emerita of art history at the University of Rhode Island, and Marco Musillo, fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, read earlier drafts and offered constructive criticisms of which I have endeavoured to take good account. Femke Speelberg, associate curator of architecture and ornament in the department of drawings and prints at the Metropolitan Museum of Art generously shared her expertise on topographic prints and permitted me to examine a fine impression of Kip's *Prospect* that she recently acquired for the permanent collection. Notwithstanding the benefits that will undoubtedly accrue to my work as a result of their kindness and that of others too numerous to list here, I alone am responsible for any mistakes or omissions contained in what is to follow.
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  - 2 Kee Il Choi Jr., 'Carl Gustav Ekeberg and the Invention of Chinese Export Painting', *The Magazine Antiques* (March 1997), pp. 526-37.
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  - 4 J.J.L. Duyvendak, 'The Last Dutch Embassy to the Chinese Court (1794-1795)', *T'oung Pao* 34 (1938), no. 1/2, pp. 1-137.
  - 5 Jean Gordon Lee, 'Van Braam', in *Philadelphians in the China Trade 1784-1844*, exh. cat. Philadelphia (Philadelphia Museum of Art) 1984, pp. 81-82, for a useful summary of his life and career.
  - 6 Jan van Campen, "'The Likeness of My Mother and Sister': opnieuw een aanwinst uit de collectie Van Braam Houckgeest (1739-1801)', *Aziatische Kunst* 35 (2005), pp. 29-36, esp. pp. 30-31.
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  - 8 Jan van Campen, 'Chinese bestellingen van Andreas Everardus van Braam Houckgeest', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 53 (2005), no. 1, pp. 21-27.
  - 9 Philip Conisbee (ed.), *French Genre Painting in the Eighteenth Century*, Washington DC (National Gallery of Art) 2007, p. 202, fig. 1, for Jean-Baptiste Greuze's (1725-1805) salon painting of 1769. Engraving (fig. 3) by Francisco Bartolozzi (1728-1815) after Angelica Kaufmann (1741-1807) and etching (fig. 4) by Jean Massard (1740-1822) after Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805).
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  - 16 Sven T. Kjellberg, *Svenska ostindiska kompanierna 1731-1813: kryddor, te, porslín, siden*, Malmö 1974, p. 182.
  - 17 Kjellberg 1974 (note 16), pp. 269-70, and Kerstin Barup, *Skärva: mise en scène pour une résidence de campagne*, Stockholm 1994, pp. 95-96. Sale cat., Skarfva Manor, Uppsala (Auktions Kammare), 3 December 2014, pp. 20-27 and nos. 137-139.
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