

**Domesticating the Unknown:  
Defining the Export Style of Yixing Stoneware in the Late  
Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century China and  
the Netherlands**

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## Introduction

In almost every corner of the world, Chinese ceramics, as a type of unique material culture, profoundly impacted global consumption and material circulation in the early modern period. In the seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company took over the lucrative business of porcelain trading from the hands of Portuguese merchants, thus establishing a monopoly in the porcelain trade between China and Europe. Since then, a history of material and cultural exchanges between the East and the West, led by the Dutch people, unfolded gradually. The East India Company's merchant ships carried spices, silks, porcelain, tea, and a type of ceramic, long overlooked by researchers in the field: the Yixing stoneware.

Produced near Yixing City, stoneware teapots have been the ideal vessels for making tea since the sixteenth century. The Netherlands was one of the first countries to start drinking tea in the West. The prevalence of this novel drink from the East in early modern Dutch society can be observed in the paintings depicting tea-drinking activities of the time. Traditionally, scholars believe that Yixing stoneware teapots were shipped from China to the Netherlands along with tea to meet the needs of the Dutch society for exotic tea-drinking vessels.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, similar to the blue-and-white porcelain, Yixing stoneware vessels were widely imitated by the local artisans in the Netherlands. Among them, the Delft potter Ary de Milde (1634-1708), known as the “teapot baker”, stood out from his contemporaries and made a name by making earthenware teapots in the Yixing style. Most scholarly literature regarding Yixing stoneware vessels and their European imitations divides teapots into three categories: domestic-style Yixing teapots, export-style Yixing teapots, and European red earthenware teapots.<sup>2</sup>

However, the formation and legitimacy of this classification have not been studied in detail. Certainly, the terms are firmly established and widely used for the Yixing stoneware research. Nevertheless, this division has gradually become a limitation as new materials and sources continue to broaden the horizons of the field.<sup>3</sup> Under this circumstance, the main question of this thesis is: *how did the “export style” of Yixing stoneware emerge from the combined efforts of Chinese and Dutch factors in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries?* The “export style” of Yixing stoneware teapots is not an innate concept. Rather, it developed gradually during

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<sup>1</sup> Chen, 2019, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Valfré, 2000, p. 124. And Zhang, Wang, Huo and Huang, 2016, pp. 110-120.

<sup>3</sup> These new materials are represented by stoneware teapots salvaged from the dated shipwrecks and pieces that have been documented in early-modern European collection inventories. See Lam, 2007.

the cultural and material exchanges between China and the Netherlands in the early modern period. Although scholars always explain the emergence of the export style as an artistic development led by Chinese potters or a preference manipulated by Dutch traders, I will argue that the “export style” was shaped by both Chinese and Dutch potters as they tried to domesticate an unknown material culture.

## Literature Review

Since Yixing stoneware vessels did not receive much scholarly attention until the last couple of decades, secondary academic recourse related to this topic is relatively scarce, and most information usually comes from private collections catalogues, auction houses, or literature regarding tea-drinking activities. This is particularly true for Yixing stoneware vessels traded to the West in the early modern period, as these wares, tinted with a “Western flavour” are perceived by Asian collectors and researchers to be inferior in quality and aesthetics to those made for the Chinese domestic market.

One of the earliest academic publications in China that systematically presents the development of Yixing stoneware is *Yixing Zisha Zhenshang* (Treatise on Yixing Stoneware, 1992) written by Gu Jingzhou (1915-1996). In this lavishly illustrated book, the author lists skilled Chinese potters and their representative works in history. Nevertheless, not a single sentence in the book mentions the Yixing stoneware exported to the West.<sup>4</sup> In the Netherlands, Minke de Visser (1898-1966), a curator of the Groninger Museum, is the scholar who developed a special interest in Yixing stoneware during her work at the museum. In a series of texts written by De Visser in the 1950s, she tried to build up the bridge between the stoneware vessels made in Yixing and the redware teapots produced in the early-modern Delft.<sup>5</sup> As a museum curator, she had the advantage of getting access to the Yixing stoneware collection in the Groninger Museum. As a result, her academic articles present observations in a level of detail that no other Western scholar has so far achieved. Interestingly, De Visser, aware of several features unique to a certain type of teapot, did not categorize this type using terms such as “export style”. For most European scholars of the twentieth century, the only delineation of a “red teapot” was whether it was made in China or a European country. The reason behind this rather arbitrary categorization was the

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<sup>4</sup> Gu Jingzhou was considered one of the greatest Yixing stoneware artists after the collapse of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912). The primary goal of this book is, therefore, to choose the pieces that can represent the achievement of the Yixing stoneware in history and inspire the new generation of teapot artists.

<sup>5</sup> See De Visser, 1957, pp. 104-110, and De Visser, 1959, pp. 43-49.

European scholars' ignorance regarding the knowledge of the history, craftsmanship, raw materials, and production patterns of Yixing stoneware in China.<sup>6</sup>

Special scholarly attention on the style of Yixing stoneware produced for the Western markets started to emerge in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. This academic shift stems from scholars' efforts to answer several urgent questions that have long held the field back. Firstly, for Chinese scholars, accurately dating Yixing stoneware is a difficult task. Yixing stoneware has only existed in China for about five centuries from its origins to the present day. Even within this relatively short development period, numerous famous potters left a mark on the history of Yixing stoneware with their unique styles or unparalleled technical achievements. The representative works of these master potters have been continuously imitated after their death. In this context, sorting out the reliable chronology of Yixing stoneware vessels has become an urgent task for art historians and archaeologists. As a result, stoneware pieces salvaged from dated shipwrecks became the primary focus for Chinese scholars, as represented by Lam Yip-Keung and Li Shu-Yi. Lam stated explicitly in his article "Yixing Stoneware Teapots from Shipwrecks" that his goal is to "establish the chronological sequence by listing standard dating pieces".<sup>7</sup> Li furthermore added the stoneware vessels documented in the dated European collection inventories into the database constructed by Lam.<sup>8</sup> In their articles, both scholars mentioned the stylistic differences between Yixing stoneware for export and the domestic market.<sup>9</sup>

These observations made by Chinese scholars have been further developed and clarified by the younger generation of researchers from East Asia. The Taiwanese researcher Huang Chien-Liang, who is a potter well versed in Yixing stoneware craftsmanship, defines the export type of Yixing stoneware as follows: "Most of them are decorated with a large variety of Chinese motifs, which are very complex and sometimes overlapping in their composition."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in the book *Yixing Yao* (Yixing Kiln, 2016), an encyclopaedic publication providing a comprehensive history of Yixing stoneware's development, scholars from China describe the export style of Yixing stoneware as "teapots usually decorated with images of pines, plum blossoms, peonies, peaches,

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<sup>6</sup> In the Netherlands, Baron van Verschuer (dates unknown) is one of the earliest scholars who described Yixing stoneware in the early twentieth-century Netherlands. However, his writing on Yixing stoneware is based on his observation and, therefore, always inaccurate. He tried to implement the knowledge from the sinology subject to the study of Yixing stoneware. See Van Verschuer, 1916.

<sup>7</sup> Lam, 2007, p. 185.

<sup>8</sup> Li, 2009, pp. 72-73.

<sup>9</sup> Lam, 2007, p. 195. And Li, 2009, p. 72.

<sup>10</sup> Huang, 2016, p. 174.

Chinese legends, frolicking children, and dragons in all forms”.<sup>11</sup> According to these publications, the export style of Yixing stoneware teapots is characterized by the excessive and improper use of Chinese motifs in the composition, thus not favoured by the Chinese tea drinker. Interestingly, both texts define the core features of stoneware teapots produced for the Chinese domestic market as “plain”, “pursuing the literati spirit”, and “focusing on the cultural connotations of Chinese motifs”.<sup>12</sup> For the last twenty years, this definition of export and domestic styles of Yixing stoneware has been endorsed by most European scholars. A good example of this is the French scholar Patrice Valfré, who expressed similar views to those of his Chinese colleagues in his book *Yixing Teapots for Europe* (2000).<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, in previous scholarships, there have been two tendencies to interpret the stimuli behind the formation of the export and domestic styles. The first tendency explains the emergence of Yixing stoneware’s export style as a form of transcultural appropriation. This appropriation has two sources of inspiration: the decoration on the blue-and-white porcelain produced in Jingdezhen and the artistic developments of Baroque and Rococo styles in Europe.<sup>14</sup> In this narrative, Yixing potters play a major role in the appropriating processes, because, as producers, they were the main recipients of influences from Jingdezhen and Europe. Those who make these points take on the scholarships about export porcelain produced in Jingdezhen as references. However, unlike studies of Jingdezhen’s export porcelain, in which the intermediate stages of the trading patterns have been elucidated in great detail, no studies shed light on how European styles and tastes travelled across the ocean to Yixing.

Another tendency in the secondary scholarly literature is to link the export style of Yixing stoneware teapots to the tea-drinking activities that prevailed in the Netherlands in the early modern period. Scholars such as Donald Rabiner and Chen Guodong have pointed out that the underlying impetus for Yixing stoneware vessels being traded to Europe was the popularity of tea, by then a novel beverage from the East, in Western society.<sup>15</sup> These two scholars suggest that European tea drinkers chose Yixing teapots as high-class paraphernalia for tea parties to emulate the authentic Chinese way of making tea. Thus, Yixing stoneware vessels made for export should be stylistically similar to those available on the domestic market.

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<sup>11</sup> Zhang, Wang, Huo, and Huang, 2016, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. pp. 115-117.

<sup>13</sup> Valfré, 2000, pp. 124-128.

<sup>14</sup> Huang, 2019, pp. 175-176.

<sup>15</sup> See Chen, 2019, p. 31. And Huang, 2016, p. 87.



## Theoretical Framework

- a. Art historical, archaeological, and interdisciplinary perspectives on “circulation” and “domestication”

Scholars in the field of East Asian ceramics normally fall into three different categories. The first group of scholars were trained as art historians. Interestingly, the history of East Asian ceramics as a branch of the discipline of art history was established in England in the late nineteenth century. At that time, Chinese society was in the midst of increasingly frequent wars and upheavals. The two Opium Wars and the signing of several unequal treaties led to the influx of large quantities of Chinese porcelain into Europe, and many important European museums saw an opportunity to acquire Chinese porcelain. In this environment, the curators of the East Asian departments of European and North American museums became the first scholars to study Chinese porcelain systematically and survey using modern art historical approaches. These scholars, represented by Robert Lockhart Hobson (1872-1941) and John Alexander Pope (1906-1982), who did not know Chinese and rarely travelled to China, based their studies on porcelain on display in museums. These scholars were usually sensitive to the appearances, shapes, and decorative features of different ceramic types. Still, they were not concerned with the societies in which the ceramic was produced.

The second group of scholars are archaeologists, which can be further divided into kiln site archaeologists and shipwreck archaeologists. These scholars tend to pay more attention to excavated or salvaged ceramic pieces from dated sites, which can be a great advantage in determining the age of a piece compared to works in museums or the hands of private collectors. The latter two normally lost the information pertaining to the provenance of the objects. In addition, where the piece was found testifies to the extent and routes of circulation of such wares. Thus, archaeologists can often provide solid evidence for the research of the other two groups of scholars.

The third group of scholars are those with backgrounds in other disciplines, who take ceramics as their main object of study. These scholars have a natural interdisciplinary advantage in ceramic research due to their different professional backgrounds. In this research perspective, ceramics, as a material, can be combined with multiple social dimensions and cultures of other regions. Ceramic works are born in one cultural environment, and in the process of circulation, they will impact another culture and eventually become part of it. As a result, such scholars of material

culture can offer new solutions and perspectives on many issues in the history of ceramics using materials other than ceramic works. Art historians, archaeologists, and scholars studying ceramics through the interdisciplinary lens tend to adopt different theoretical perspectives and definitions of “domestication” in ceramic history.

Although the discipline of ceramics in the context of art history was first born in England, Japanese scholars were among the first to combine the two interrelated disciplines of art history and archaeology to study the history of ceramics in a cross-cultural context. Professor Ming-Liang Hsieh of The National Taiwan University is one of the scholars who inherited the research methods of Japanese scholars and carried them forward. In his recently published multi-volume series *Taoci Shouji* (Notes on Ceramics, 2021). Hsieh devotes one volume to the theme of “Interregional Exchange and Influence”.<sup>16</sup> As the title of the book suggests, the author focuses on the exchanges and influences of ceramics between different regions in his writings. However, he rarely uses the term “domestication”.

In Hsieh’s view, these exchanges and influences can be exemplified by the stylistically similar decorative motifs appearing on ceramics from different civilisations. For example, in the article “The Circulation of Ball Motifs”, the author speculates on possible interactions between ceramics from Egypt, Japan, and Korea and Chinese ceramics through the ball motifs that appear on ceramics from these regions.<sup>17</sup> The circulation of the same motifs across various cultures figures prominently in the author’s discourse. For example, when discussing the Yixing stoneware teapot, the author demonstrates how a stoneware teapot decorated with ball motifs in the Rijksmuseum collection is associated with traditional Chinese coin designs and decorative patterns common in the Byzantine Empire, which ultimately influenced European interpretations of the Yixing teapot. Hsieh begins his article with a clear statement of the research purpose: “to trace its (ball motif) origins and thus demonstrate its spread and change”.<sup>18</sup> It can be argued that the author’s focus on “circulation” refers to the dynamic flow of ceramic works between cultures, reflected in the visual elements presented in the ceramic works.

For instance, in Hsieh’s view, China embraced similar ball-shaped decorations imported from Egypt and Mesopotamia via the Silk Road while creating the ball motif. China then spread this

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<sup>16</sup> See Hsieh, 2021. This is the fourth volume of the series *Taoci Shouji* (Notes on Ceramics). Each volume contains the author’s treatises written in the past decades focusing different aspects of Chinese ceramic history.

<sup>17</sup> Hsieh, 2021, pp. 87-138.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

pattern to Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and Western Europe through porcelain trade.<sup>19</sup> The author believes that sorting out the various aspects of the circulation process and its overall development is more important than studying the acceptance of a particular material culture once it reaches its destination. This is partly due to the author's sensitivity, as an art historian, to ceramic decoration, vessel form, and other visual elements. The advantage of this sensitivity is that it allows for the presentation of a broad historical picture and the impact of different material cultures colliding. The disadvantage, however, is that it is difficult to penetrate the deeper factors behind the connections reflected in these phenomena. After all, the discovery of material cultures belonging to the other side of the globe in faraway places does not answer the question of how and for what reasons these material cultures became known to people in distant lands, and how these people with disparate cultural backgrounds perceived these materials from foreign cultures.

Archaeologists have not compensated to a greater extent for these deficiencies in the studies of traditional art historians. Whether studying material excavated from kiln sites or shipwrecks, archaeologists focus primarily on nodes in the trans-cultural circulation process. In contrast to art historians, archaeologists can use archaeological materials to connect complex circulation processes into a clear vein. For example, the famous Japanese ceramic archaeologist Tsugio Mikami (1907-1987) proposed the influential “Ceramic Road” theory.<sup>20</sup> This road is linked together by the sites of ancient civilizations where Chinese porcelain has been unearthed. Like Hsieh, Mikami shows us a macroscopic exchange of material culture across multiple cultures in ancient history. However, the course of this exchange within individual civilizations and its motivation is not the focus of Mikami’s study.

Possibly due to the limitations of the studies mentioned above, more and more scholars have begun to adopt an interdisciplinary research approach focusing on the nodes in the circulation of material culture. Interestingly, most scholars who apply the term “domestication” are also researchers who adopt an interdisciplinary perspective. These scholars are sometimes also trained as art historians or archaeologists. Unlike the more conventional researchers mentioned above, they are willing to assimilate research methods and materials from other disciplines while adhering to art history and archaeology traditions.

For example, art historian Dawn Odell, in her essay entitled “Delftware and the Domestication of Chinese Porcelain” makes the following statement about “domestication”: “I employ the concept

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<sup>19</sup> Hsieh, 2021, pp. 127-131.

<sup>20</sup> See Mikami, Tsugio. *Taoci Zhilu* (The Road of Ceramics). Beijing: Cultural Relic Publishing, 1984.

of ‘domestication’ to provide a new model for understanding the reception of Chinese visual culture in seventeenth-century Europe, one that allows for the presentation of porcelain and porcelain-like ceramics not as exotic objects but as surfaces and materials made conventional within European domestic spaces. In addition, ‘domestication’ refers to the evolving identification of blue-and-white ceramics as a specifically Dutch, rather than Chinese, national product.”<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Anne Gerritsen in her article entitled “Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands” states: “In the seventeenth century, goods from all over the world became part of the material culture of the Netherlands, and by being seen, worn and touched, they simultaneously gained local significance and bestowed global meanings on the material culture of the early modern Netherlands.”<sup>22</sup> As the two scholars demonstrated, “domestication” here focused on the story of a certain type of foreign material culture in the recipient society. Integrating foreign cultures into the local culture eventually leads to forgetting, to some extent, the exotic nature of the imported material culture. Gradually, these foreign cultures are seen as the pride of the nation in the process of domestication.

To conclude, scholars focusing on the domesticating processes of a foreign material culture normally pay more attention to the reception and imitation of material culture in different societies. This perspective largely compensates for traditional art historians and archaeologists neglecting the deeper dynamics behind circulation. However, scholars may lose their global awareness by focusing too much on the reception side of circulating material culture. Thus, they sometimes view the flow of material in a separate manner. In response to this shortcoming, in her book *The City of Blue and White* (2020), Anne Gerritsen emphasizes the importance of combining “local factors” and “global factors” in studying trans-cultural material circulation.<sup>23</sup> In this thesis, I will keep Gerritsen's words in mind, and in addition, I hope to use the theory of “knowledge production” to compensate for the research pitfalls posed by the theories of circulation and domestication.

#### b. Knowledge Production

The theory of “knowledge production” is derived from the book *Knowledge Production: A Pictorial History* (2022) by Yin Jinan, a professor at the Central Academy of Arts, Beijing. The author discusses the difference in research methods between archaeology and art history. Yin

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<sup>21</sup> Odell, 2018, p. 177.

<sup>22</sup> Gerritsen, 2016, p. 229.

<sup>23</sup> Gerritsen, 2020, p. 9.

argues that archaeology is “an academic discipline that instantly transforms the ancient into the contemporary, because the moment a tomb is opened, it is connected to the news, broadcasts, documentaries as well as the archaeological and art historical writings of the time”.<sup>24</sup> However, the relevance of the historical objects studied in art history to the times we live “is the latest relevance after countless others”.<sup>25</sup> In this context, there are distinct “systems of knowledge” and “systems of value” lurking in all traditional art historical narratives.<sup>26</sup>

Yin's theory is rooted in his reflections on the history of Chinese painting, where many of the early masters did not have reliable works that have survived to the present day. Later, art historians and connoisseurs would rely on documentary records or other materials to find works that matched the masters' style they had in mind and regarded as authentic. Over time, the original works of these masters became unimportant as their image, portrayed by later generations, has become universally accepted as common knowledge. In this thesis, I will treat the formation of the Yixing stoneware's export style as a process of “knowledge production”. The knowledge we have today about the export style of the Yixing stoneware is the latest result of countless historical attempts to localize the knowledge of the exotic material culture. Based on this, I will elucidate how knowledge about the export style of Yixing stoneware is formed, what elements come into play, and how these elements interact with each other in the process of generating new knowledge about an unfamiliar material culture.

## **Methodology**

This thesis will reflect on the previous scholarly definitions of Yixing stoneware's export style of the last two decades. Unlike previous scholars who have interpreted the interaction between Yixing and European countries as one part influencing the other, this thesis will view this interaction as a dynamic mechanism where both parties attempt to reach a state of mutual understanding. At the same time, this interaction is destined to be fraught with uncertainty and misunderstanding due to the vastly different epistemologies of the two parties. The understanding of the export style of Yixing stoneware is being developed based on the misinterpretations produced by both East and West in this process.

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<sup>24</sup> Yin, 2022, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> In Yin's debate, there is also a “system of objects”. “Objects” here refers to the artworks as the subjects of the art historical research and archaeological study. Yin reminds us that neither the “system of knowledge” nor the “system of value” is equal to the “system of objects.” See Yin, 2022, p. 3.

Firstly, I want to find out exactly what wares were traded to Europe at what time and by what means. To answer these questions, I focused on the Yixing stoneware trade documented in the East India Company archives, stoneware vessels found in well-dated shipwrecks, and pieces in European collections with dated inventories. Shipwrecks is a time capsule reflecting details of trade in the early modern period. The Yixing stoneware fragments salvaged from the shipwrecks show us not only the types and quantities of Yixing stoneware traded by the Dutch East India Company ship but also the trade routes. In addition, the proportion of Yixing stoneware objects found on the wreck to the total cargo reveals the nature of the trade.

Secondly, I will show how Yixing stoneware was used and accepted in Dutch society in the early modern period, whether as collector's items or as tea-making utensils. In this section, I will focus on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch writings on tea drinking to find traces of Yixing teapots in Dutch tea-drinking activities. Further, I will analyse Yixing stoneware in Dutch collections to discover the real use of Yixing teapots in European societies.

Unlike many previous studies, seventeenth-century oil paintings depicting Yixing stoneware are not the focus of this study. Relatively few seventeenth-century Dutch oil paintings represent Yixing stoneware. The Haarlem-born still-life painter Pieter van Roestraeten (1630-1700) is known for depicting Yixing stoneware teapots in his elaborate still-life paintings. However, most of his works were commissioned by English patrons after he moved to London in 1666.<sup>27</sup> Thus, it is questionable if his works are able to reflect the acceptance of Yixing stoneware in Dutch society.

In addition, Yixing stoneware represented in paintings is often based on the artist's understanding of this novel material culture or the need for artistic composition, and, therefore, is sometimes different from the objects depicted.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the depictions of Yixing stoneware vessels in the paintings lack information on the raw materials and production techniques, which are crucial to distinguish Yixing pieces from European imitations. Therefore, any attempt to determine the origin or type of stoneware vessels through their depiction in paintings is inaccurate. Because of

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<sup>27</sup> Segal, 1989, pp. 205-206.

<sup>28</sup> It was a common practice for seventeenth-century Dutch painters to re-adapt Chinese porcelain to better fit into their composition or design in the paintings. A good example is William Kalf (1619-1693), an established still-life painter, who always combines decorative elements from various types of *kraak* porcelain on one vessel depicted. In this way, the painter created an image of a porcelain vessel that does not exist in reality. For ceramic historians, the depicted image of porcelain can be quite misleading when tracing the types of objects being depicted.

this, oil paintings can only be used as supplementary material for studying Yixing stoneware in Dutch society.

Thirdly, I will explore the barriers to imitation between different material cultures and how Yixing and Delft potters used their familiar knowledge systems to overcome these barriers. In this section, my research perspective will focus on production. By analysing the production skills, raw materials, and decorative techniques of Delft redware teapots, I will show how Dutch potters overcame cultural differences as well as the lack of raw materials to produce replicas of Yixing teapots that were close enough to the image of the ideal teapot they had in mind. Through the thorough visual analysis of Yixing stoneware and its Delft imitation, it is possible to trace the connections between different forms, decorative patterns, and production techniques. Only by understanding the dilemmas that Delft potters encountered when replicating Yixing teapots using local materials and techniques can we further infer the reasons behind the prevalence of a certain stylistic preference in the Netherlands.

In this study, ceramic works form the basis of all discussions. Conclusions drawn from analysing non-ceramic materials must be tested on ceramic works for conviction. Furthermore, in the context of this study, style is not solely determined by the potters of Yixing and Delft. On the contrary, as a commodity, the style of Yixing stoneware is influenced by factors such as social demand, cultural tradition, the supply of raw materials, and production techniques. The formation of a certain style resulted from the coordination of these factors, a process in which both Eastern and Western potters were involved.

The issues that may have hindered this research were mainly the author's difficulty handling some of the pieces mentioned in this thesis. To study a ceramic piece in depth, it is necessary to feel and examine the material with the hands of the researcher. This is especially true of Yixing stoneware, as most features distinguishing Yixing products from European imitations are details that can only be discovered by touch. These details include weight, surface texture, and the seams inside the teapot. When writing this thesis, the author had the privilege of handling many pieces discussed in the thesis in the depots of the Groninger Museum and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. However, the authors can only obtain the related information from secondary sources for works not in these two museums' collections.

## Chapters

The first chapter will serve as a framework for analysing Yixing stoneware. This chapter will introduce the city of Yixing, the raw materials, the production process, and the relationship between Yixing stoneware and tea-drinking activities. Chapter two focuses on the trade of Yixing stoneware to European countries, especially trade manipulated by the Dutch East India Company. Only by understanding which types of Yixing stoneware reached Europe and how they came to the West can we trace the impact of export activity on the evolution of Yixing stoneware's export style. This chapter will pay special attention to material from maritime archaeology and dated European collections. These are physical evidence of Yixing stoneware export activities. In addition, the chapter will revisit the conclusions drawn by previous scholars to see if there is a type of Yixing stoneware that is produced exclusively for the Western markets.

Chapter three will focus on an extremely rare Yixing stoneware mustard pot from the Groninger Museum collection. In this chapter, I argue that this mustard pot will reveal a hitherto unknown connection between Yixing potters and Dutch East India Company traders. Chapter four will focus on the relationship between tea drinking and Yixing stoneware in the early-modern Dutch society. Previous studies have primarily focussed on the link between Chinese porcelain and tea-drinking habits. In this chapter, however, I will explore whether Yixing stoneware teapots were indeed used as tea-making vessels in the early-modern Netherlands, using literary material written by Dutch tea consumers of the time. In this way, I will challenge the theories of previous scholars who have argued that the Western tea-drinking trend was the main stimulus for exporting Yixing teapots.

The final chapter will be dedicated to the renowned Delft imitator of Yixing teapots, Ary de Milde. Through De Milde's work, I will shed light on what constitutes the ideal Yixing teapot in the eyes of a successful Dutch potter who made a name for himself with his red earthenware teapots. As one of the first European potters who successfully imitated the appearance of Yixing stoneware with local materials and production techniques, De Milde played an important role in domesticating an unfamiliar material culture and, ultimately, redefining the export style of Yixing stoneware from the Western perspective.



## Chapter One

# Prelude: The Development and Reception of Yixing Stoneware Teapots in the Early-modern Chinese Society

### 1.1 Geographical Element

Yixing is a city located on the west bank of the Taihu Lake in Jiangsu Province, southeast China. The area, covered by lush vegetation, is rich in clay resources. Thanks to its proximity to the Yangtze River, it can be easily accessed by water. Since the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Yixing City has been known as a commercial centre of the region. Starting from the Neolithic Age (10000-2000 B.C.), pottery has been produced in this area. In the past seven millenniums, the kiln fire in Yixing has never been extinguished. Today, stoneware production is still one of the pillar industries of Yixing City.

In history, Yixing City was known as “Yangxian” or “Jingxi” in Chinese writings and local gazetteers. The latter name originates from a river that flows through the city named *Jin*. Since the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the banks of this river and the surrounding area have been gradually turned into the production centre of stoneware vessels. This position was further strengthened by the densely populated Dingshu Town near the *Jin* River. Dingshu town is named after the two mountains close by. Among them, Shu Mountain is the production centre of the Yixing stoneware’s raw material—*zisha* clay. However, after centuries of exploitation, the resources of *zisha* have been depleted. Under these circumstances, from the 1980s onwards, the centre for Yixing stoneware production gradually moved to the Ding Mountain area.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.2 Clay Resource

The Yixing stoneware industry greatly benefits from a special clay called *zisha*, which can only be found in the mountainous area close to Yixing City. *Zisha*, literally interpreted as the “purple sand”, is an iron-rich compound consisting of quartz, clay and mica among others.

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<sup>29</sup> Zhang, Wang, Huo, and Huang, 2016, pp. 3-4.

Even in this region, *zisha* can only be found in mines spread over a small area in the Huanglong Mountains and the nearby Zhao County.<sup>30</sup>

Compared to ordinary clay used for pottery making, *zisha* contains more mineral elements, resulting in various colours ranging from purple to orange after firing in the kiln. The experienced Yixing potters can control the final product's colour by mixing the *zisha* with other materials or changing the temperature and phenomenon in the kiln. Because of the complex mineral composition found in *zisha*, this material has a physical strength that is much stronger than that of other pottery clay. As a result, potters can shape *zisha* clay by hand without a spinning pottery wheel. Besides, *zisha* can be used to create stoneware vessels without mixing with other types of clay. In the kiln, vessels made from *zisha* can easily withstand firing temperatures of 1150 to 1270 degrees Celsius, which is much higher than the appropriate temperature for firing ordinary earthenware.

Stoneware teapots made from *zisha* have a low water absorption rate while maintaining good air permeability. Contemporary material science and microscopic examination have revealed that when making tea with Yixing stoneware vessels, water cannot seep out of the porous stoneware surface while vapour can penetrate the tiny pores present in the material.<sup>31</sup> This special feature makes Yixing stoneware an ideal material to make tea wares. In China, tea drinkers believed Yixing stoneware teapots would help to prevent the tea from overheating.

It is worth noting that, unlike *kaolin*, the essential material for porcelain production that can be found worldwide nowadays, *zisha* remains a rare type of pottery material that can only be mined in the Yixing area in China. In the West, although potters have attempted to imitate Yixing stoneware since the second half of the seventeenth century, their products are very different from genuine Yixing stoneware in terms of both clay used and production technique.

*Zisha* ore mined from the Huanglong Mountains cannot be directly used to make stoneware. This is because the ore is too hard to be shaped and there are always impurities mixed in with the useful parts in the *zisha* mines (fig. 1). Therefore, *zisha* ore needs to be processed in several steps before it ends up on the potters' working desks. These preparatory processes

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 56-58.

<sup>31</sup> Zhang, Wang, Huo, and Huang, 2016, p. 25 & p. 65.

include crushing, weathering, removal of impurities, and ageing. It can sometimes take years or even decades to complete all the processes. In Yixing, artisans specialising in processing *zisha* clay can help stoneware artists prepare the clay blocks that are suitable for use. Potters in Yixing believe that the age of *zisha* blocks is related to the stages of balance and stabilization of all the components in the clay. For this reason, aged *zisha* clay blocks are preferred over those that have been freshly produced.

*Zisha* clay in Yixing can be divided into four classifications based on its colour after firing. These are *Purple Clay*, *Red Clay*, *Green Clay*, and *Tuan Clay*. The last type refers to the *zisha* ores found in mines that are a natural mixture of the other three varieties.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the natural forms of *zisha* clay, experienced potters sometimes like to mix different varieties of clay to achieve a better colour or texture. Thus, Chinese connoisseurs of Yixing stoneware often take the colour and lustrous surface of the vessels as the basic criterion in their writings and comments. For instance, the Ming dynasty Yixing stoneware scholar Zhou Gaoqi (?-1645) once marvelled at the texture effect on teapots that reminds people of the shape of sweet-scented osmanthus flowers.<sup>33</sup>

Based on the previous discussion, the term *zisha* contains a much broader connotation in the history of Chinese material culture than its literal translation: “the purple sand”. Besides, *zisha* in academic literature can refer to both Yixing’s special clay and the stoneware vessels made of this clay. Therefore, in this thesis, I will use the term “Yixing stoneware” to refer to the stoneware vessels produced in Yixing, reserving the term “*zisha*” exclusively for the unique clay mined in the mountains close to Yixing City.

### 1.3 Production Technique

In early-modern China, Yixing stoneware teapots were made using a technique called *Da Shengtong*.<sup>34</sup> Yixing teapots are not thrown on a pottery wheel. Instead, potters first pat the

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<sup>32</sup> *Tuan* (Ch: 团 or 段) in the Yixing dialect refers to a substance that is mixed or blended naturally or artificially, thus denoting the property of the *zisha* clay named after it.

<sup>33</sup> This skill of blending clay with different particle sizes sprouted in the late Ming dynasty. Chinese named the clay mixed with glittering mica or quartz particles as “osmanthus clay”. It is possible the potters make the connection between the texture effect of this clay and the osmanthus blooming. For the seventeenth-century literature regarding this technique, see Zhou Gaoqi (?-1645), *Yangxian minghu xi* (Teapots from Yangxian), ed. Si Kaiguo and Shang Rong, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company (2012): p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> *Da Shengtong* (Ch: 打身筒, literally “pad the body”) is the term used by the locals to describe the making process of round-shaped vessels. For vessels in square or octagonal shape, the term used for the shaping technique is *Xiang Shengtong* (Ch: 镶身筒, literally “assembling the body”). Despite the different terms used for the descriptions, these two techniques shared the basic making processes during the shaping.

clay block into a rectangular piece with the help of special wooden tools. Then, potters join the two short ends of the clay piece to form a cylindrical tube as the teapot's body. This step would inevitably leave a seam visible on the teapot's inside. After shaping the cylindrical body into a round form, the potters may attach the base, handle, and spout to the teapot body using a thin clay paste (fig. 2).

Although the *Da Shentong* technique is much less efficient than the traditional throwing technique, it liberates Yixing stoneware vessels from the round shapes that result from the turning movement on the pottery wheel. Therefore, Yixing potters have no difficulty making stoneware vessels in square or hexagonal shapes. Although the historical evidence demonstrates that the *Da Shentong* technique had matured by the end of the Ming dynasty already, this technique was never used by potters from other regions. As a unique production technique of the Yixing area, *Da Shentong* can only be applied when the physical strength of the clay is strong enough to endure the shaping processes. Ordinary pottery clay cannot withstand this process and, therefore, can only be shaped with the assistance of the spinning pottery wheel.<sup>35</sup>

In the West, seventeenth-century Delft potters encountered insurmountable difficulties in imitating Yixing stoneware, primarily due to the shortage of *zisha* and the ignorance of the *Da Shentong* production technique. As a result, all redware teapots produced in the early-modern Netherlands were thrown on the pottery wheel with local clay. Consequently, from the second half of the seventeenth century to the first two decades of the eighteenth century, no square or hexagonal teapots were successfully produced in Delft.

#### **1.4 The Origin of the Yixing Stoneware—Vessels Ideal for Making Tea**

Even though pottery production emerged in Yixing as early as the Neolithic period, the history of Yixing stoneware is much shorter than that of other ceramic traditions from that region.<sup>36</sup> Chinese scholars believe that the Yixing stoneware production began in the mid-

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<sup>35</sup> Starting from the eighteenth century, potters from the Chaozhou region in Guangdong province used Yixing *zisha* clay and local red clay to make delicate red stoneware teapots. However, the Chaozhou teapots are not produced using the *Da Shentong* technique like their Yixing counterparts, but they are produced by the traditional throwing technique with the help of the pottery wheel.

<sup>36</sup> From the Shang dynasty (1600–1046 B.C.), Yixing is the region famous for primitive, green-glazed ceramics. In the Song dynasty (960–1297), kilns were founded in the region of Yixing, but the product was different from *zisha* stoneware in terms of material, making technique, and firing temperature.

Ming Dynasty. According to historical records and archaeological findings, Yixing stoneware most likely developed between the Zhengde (1505-1521) and Jiajing (1521-1567) periods. The discovery of Yixing stoneware teapots in dated tombs confirms this assumption. For example, a Yixing stoneware teapot was found in the tomb of Wu Jing (?–1544), a eunuch who served at the Jiajing Emperor’s court. This finding confirms that Yixing stoneware production was well established by the first half of the fifteenth century.

Several books published in the seventeenth century unveiled previously unknown aspects regarding the origins of Yixing stoneware. One such book is *Yangxian Minghu Xi* (Teapots from Yangxian, Ch: 阳羨茗壺系, ca. 1640), written by scholar and teapot connoisseur Zhou Gaoqi (?–1645). This book is the earliest surviving writing dedicated to studying Yixing stoneware teapots. In the second chapter of the book, the author describes the story of Yixing stoneware teaware’s origin:

There was a monk at Jinsha Temple whose name is unknown because he died a long time ago. I heard from a potter that this monk used to make pots and urns with craftsmen in his spare time. He kneaded together relatively refined clays, soaked them in water to remove impurities, and then kneaded them together again. Finally, he kneads the clay with his hands to shape it.<sup>37</sup>

Zhou Gaoqi continues in the following chapter:

Gong Chun was the servant of Wu Yishan, an official who monitored the imperial examinations. When Wu Yishan studied at Jinsha Temple, Gongchun accompanied him and did odd jobs in his spare time. While there, Gongchun secretly purified and kneaded clay into various shapes according to the old monk's idea (of making pottery).<sup>38</sup>

In Zhou’s book, the origin of the Yixing stoneware teapot is linked to a mysterious monk who lived in a Buddhist temple close to Yixing City. Unfortunately, no signed stoneware works by this monk have survived to this day. As for Gongchun, there is a teapot bearing his

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<sup>37</sup> The original text: “金沙寺僧，久而逸其名矣。闻之陶家云，僧闲静有致，习与陶缸瓮者处，抟其细土，加以澄练，捏筑为胎。” Translated by the author. Extracted from Zhou Gaoqi (?–1645), *Yangxian minhu xi* (Teapots from Yangxian), ed. Si Kaiguo and Shang Rong (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2012), p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> The original text: “供春，学究吴颐山公青衣也。颐山读书金沙寺中，供春于给役之暇，窃窃仿老僧心匠，亦淘细土抟胚。” Translated by the author. Extracted from Zhou Gaoqi (?–1645), *Yangxian minhu xi* (Teapots from Yangxian), ed. Si Kaiguo and Shang Rong (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2012), p. 26.

inscription in the collection of The National Museum of China (fig. 3). Nevertheless, the latest research shows that this Gongchun teapot is probably a nineteenth-century forgery.<sup>39</sup>

In early-modern China, vessels made of Yixing stoneware were predominantly teapots, or at least tea-related utensils. This is related to the change in tea-drinking habits in China that occurred in the early Ming dynasty. In 1391, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398), the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, issued an edict abolishing the annual tribute of tea cakes from Fujian province to his palace in Nanjing. Shortly after, the emperor banned the practice of making tea with tea powder, which had flourished during the Song dynasty (960-1279). In this way, Zhu Yuanzhang wished to free the poor people from the laborious process of preparing tea cakes and tea powders. At the same time, the central government pushed the society to start drinking from the loose tea leaves.<sup>40</sup>

This change immediately prompted tea drinkers to start looking for tea vessels that would be suitable for the new way of drinking tea. Under this circumstance, teapots with long spouts to strain tea leaves while pouring gained unprecedented popularity. From the fourteenth century onwards, teapots became the primary vessel used by tea drinkers to make tea. This trend coincided with the birth of the Yixing stoneware in the sixteenth century. However, teapots in China can be made from various materials, including gold, silver, jade, porcelain, and tin. In this case, did Yixing stoneware teapots win the competition and become popular with tea drinkers from the beginning?

The renowned Ming connoisseur and scholar Wen Zhenheng (1585-1645) devoted a chapter to teapots and teacups in his book *Zhang Wuzhi* (The Treatises on Superfluous Things, Ch: 长物志), published around 1630:

The best teapots are made of Yixing stoneware. This is probably because this type of teapot will not affect the aroma of the tea or create an off-flavour due to the high temperature.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The latest research confirms that the teapot, long thought to be Gongchun's masterpiece, was probably also an imitation of the Qing Dynasty

<sup>40</sup> Li, 2012, pp. 2-3.

<sup>41</sup> The original text: “茶壺以砂者为上，盖既不夺香，又无熟汤气。” Translated by the author. Extracted from Wen Zhenheng (1585–1845), *Zhangwu Zhi* (The Treatises on Superfluous Things), ed. Li Ruihao, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2012, p. 275.

Interestingly, Feng Kebin (?-1644), another important tea scholar of the Ming Dynasty, also recorded it in his book *Jiecha Jian* (Annotations on Tea, Ch: 芥茶笺):

Of all teapots, Yixing stoneware teapots are considered the best. Small teapots are especially precious. Every tea drinker uses a teapot to make and drink tea alone, thus enjoying it to the fullest.<sup>42</sup>

Chinese tea drinkers in the seventeenth century had already embraced stoneware teapots produced in Yixing as ideal tea utensils. Wen Zhenheng explains in his article that the Yixing stoneware teapot can keep the tea at the right temperature, thus preserving the original flavour of the tea to the largest extent. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, this characteristic unique to Yixing stoneware teapot is related to the properties of *zisha* clay. Feng Kebin, however, compliments Yixing tea utensils from a different angle. Feng emphasizes the importance of size. He believes that teapots in smaller sizes would enhance the tea-drinking experience because tea drinkers can make their tea in such teapots.

On the contrary, Wen Zhenheng had a completely different view on the proper size of a teapot: “Shi Dabin's (1573-1648) teapot is too small. The most suitable teapot for brewing tea is one that can hold half a litre of water, with which tea leaves can be easily put into the teapot.”<sup>43</sup> In Wen Zhenheng's writing, even the teapots made by Shi Dabin, one of the most famous potters in the history of Yixing stoneware, were not ideal because they were too small to put the tea leaves in. Although Feng Kebin and Wen Zhenheng's views on the ideal teapot seem irreconcilably divergent, the two writers share the same starting point: they are both concerned with how the size of the stoneware teapot would impact the practice of drinking tea. Undoubtedly, the comments on the teapot size stem from the authors' extensive tea-drinking experience, an experience that the Dutch in the seventeenth century did not have.

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<sup>42</sup> The original text: “茶壺，窑器为上，又以小为贵，每一客壺一把，任其自斟自酌，才得其趣。” Translated by the author. Extracted from Liao, 2017, p. 26.

<sup>43</sup> The original text: “时大彬所制又太小，若得受水半升，而形制古洁者，取以注茶，更为适用。” Translated by the author. Extracted from Wen Zhenheng (1585–1845), *Zhangwu Zhi* (The Treatises on Superfluous Things), ed. Li Ruihao, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2012, p. 275.

## **1.5 Yixing Stoneware Teapots in Chinese Culture**

To conclude, Yixing stoneware has a clear cultural affiliation to tea and the tea-drinking custom in early modern China. It was associated with Buddhism and favoured by Chinese literati such as Wen Zhenheng and Feng Kebin. These cultural connotations, so tightly associated with East Asian civilizations, became difficult to understand after Yixing stoneware arrived in Europe. Therefore, the previous research perspective identifying Yixing stoneware as an art form closely associated with traditional Chinese literati culture becomes irrelevant when exploring the export style of Yixing stoneware.

Although Dutch society had a strong interest in Chinese culture and philosophy in the seventeenth century, there is no evidence that the Dutch ever associated Yixing stoneware with traditional Chinese literati art. This lack of understanding of the original cultural context of Yixing stoneware also led the Dutch to focus on it in a very different way than the Chinese. The confusion caused by the cultural differences unexpectedly sparked the birth of new artistic styles. Before discussing artistic styles, let's first clarify how Yixing stoneware made its way to Europe and determine whether the Dutch or the Chinese were more influential in this process. In the next chapter, I will analyze Yixing stoneware retrieved from shipwrecks and items from European collections to explore the export routes of Yixing stoneware and the types of objects discovered along these routes.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Export of Yixing Stoneware in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries**

#### **2.1 Yixing Stoneware in the Historical European Collections**

In contrast to seventeenth-century Jingdezhen export porcelain, the export of Yixing stoneware has always been a difficult area of scholarly research. In the last two decades, with the discovery of a rich of archaeological material from the dated Dutch East India Company shipwrecks and the objects in European collections accompanying the early-modern collection inventories, we have gained a deeper understanding of the Yixing stoneware trade that spanned East and West before the eighteenth century.



Yixing stoneware pieces may have been collected by the European upper classes as early as the early seventeenth century. The inventory of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Austria, shows that the Habsburg emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612) collected a Yixing stoneware teapot without a lid and a stoneware teacup decorated with appliquéd plum blossoms.<sup>44</sup> In addition, an uncommon stoneware teapot with two spouts is in the collection of The National Museum of Denmark (fig.4.1).<sup>45</sup> According to the inventories preserved in the museum's archives, a ribbed teapot is documented as early as 1656 (fig. 4.2), while the two-spouted teapot is first mentioned in a document dated 1701. Moreover, in Germany, Duke Anton Ulrich (1633-1714) and his wife Elisabeth Julien (1634-1704) also collected up to 50 Yixing stoneware objects.<sup>46</sup>

Another important collection of Yixing stoneware was constructed by Augustus the Strong (1670-1733). In three inventories documenting Augustus's East Asian ceramic collection in 1721, 1722, and 1779, up to 118 Yixing stoneware artefacts were recorded, many of which are still preserved in the Zwinger Palace in Dresden.<sup>47</sup> These Yixing stoneware teapots collected by the European aristocracy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are characterized by the following features. Firstly, these teapots were often more complex in decoration and form. Secondly, these teapots usually show no signs of use, and it is likely that their owners did not treat them as practical tea vessels, but rather as works of art to be displayed. For example, in the 17th-century showroom at Castle Favorite in Germany, most of the Yixing stoneware vessels are very heavy, and some teapots do not even have holes connecting the spout to the body. It can be said that they have been completely detached from the practical function of the teapot.

In addition to the Yixing stoneware collected by European aristocrats, many Yixing stoneware objects were traded from East Asia to Europe by the East India Company since the second half of the seventeenth century. For example, according to the Dutch East India Company archives, seven boxes of red clay teapots were shipped from Zhangzhou to Batavia in 1679. In addition, 1635 teapots arrived in Amsterdam in 1680. Thijs Volker believes that

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<sup>44</sup> Valfre, 2000, pp. 132-133.

<sup>45</sup> Huang, 2016, p. 88.

<sup>46</sup> See Ströber, 2002, pp. 41-69.

<sup>47</sup> The best platform to see this collection is the newly published website of the Royal Dresden Porcelain Collection: <https://royalporcelaincollection.skd.museum/catalogue/1/text/290>.

these teapots were made in Yixing.<sup>48</sup> However, we cannot exclude the possibility that these were porcelain products made in Jingdezhen.<sup>49</sup>

Records on Yixing stoneware pale insignificantly in the East India Company's archives compared to the vast number of entries relating to the porcelain trade. In addition, descriptions of these teapots are often too brief. As a result, it is difficult for researchers to determine whether the “red teapots” mentioned in the archival documents are genuine Yixing stoneware pieces or simply red-glazed porcelain teapots. Because of this, Yixing stoneware vessels recovered from the dated shipwrecks are essential in academic research.

## **2.2 Yixing Stoneware Recovered from Shipwrecks**

Yixing stoneware is not often found in shipwrecks. The earliest known European shipwreck in which fragments of Yixing stoneware teapots have been found is the Wreck of the Wanli, a Portuguese ship that sank ca. 1625. Among the many pieces of porcelain salvaged from the water, there were only four fragments of Yixing stoneware.<sup>50</sup> However, these four stoneware shards prove that the Portuguese began shipping Yixing stoneware to Europe along with other porcelains as early as the Tianqi period (1621-1627), less than a century after the origin of Yixing stoneware. Meanwhile, based on the small proportion of Yixing stoneware objects in the cargo, these objects were probably the crew’s personal belongings, rather than a bulk commodity operated by the Company.

More important shipwrecks for early modern trade between China and the Netherlands are the Chinese ship Vung Tau, which sailed from China to Batavia in 1690; the Dutch East India Company ship Oosterland, which sank on its way from Batavia to Europe in 1697; and the Dutch East India Company ship Geldermalsen, which sank in 1753 while sailing from Guangdong to Batavia.

Stoneware objects found on these ships were not the focus of trade activity. The quantity of Yixing stoneware represents a small percentage of the cargo. For example, the goods found on the Vung Tau shipwreck were divided into three main categories. Most cargo comprised

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<sup>48</sup> Volker, 1954, p.167.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, these “red teapots” recorded in the Dutch East India Company’s archives can be the so-called “Batavia brown” vessels. The glaze of this type of vessel sometimes turns red rather than brown due to the wrong firing temperature and phenomena in the kiln.

<sup>50</sup> Lam, 2007, pp.185-186.

blue-and-white porcelain from Jingdezhen, followed by wares from Dehua kilns and storage jars produced in Guangdong province. However, the Yixing stoneware pieces recovered from the Vung Tau wreck were limited to a few dozen teapot lids.<sup>51</sup> The Dutch shipwreck Geldermalsen contained some 150,000 ceramics, including merely 10 Yixing stoneware teapots.<sup>52</sup> More Yixing stoneware teapots were found on the Dutch shipwreck Oosterland, which sank off the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa coast. Among other things, 365 stoneware fragments were found on this ship, but only four complete teapots were recovered from the seabed.<sup>53</sup>

Once again, because Yixing stoneware comprised a small percentage of the ship's cargo, it is possible that these items were personal belongings of the crew. Alternatively, the crew may have used the teapots during the voyage. It is worth noting that the Dutch East India Company of the time allowed crew members to carry a certain amount of personal goods legally. Regulations issued by the British East India Company in 1734 stipulated that private individuals' total value of porcelain should not exceed £2,500. Similarly, senior crew members in the service of the Dutch East India Company were permitted to carry two large chests of "goods of friends and relatives" on their return journey.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, the company could have sold these tacitly recognized private goods on arrival in Amsterdam to supplement the crew's wages. In this case, Yixing stoneware teapots were likely shipped to Europe as part of these private goods waiting to be sold in the Netherlands. Based on the information from shipwrecks, it can be concluded that Yixing teapots were never shipped in large quantities to the Netherlands until the end of the seventeenth century. Although the archives of the Dutch East India Company contain a record of more than a thousand teapots arriving in Amsterdam, given that only three entries of this large-scale trade exist in the archives, we can infer that such relatively large purchases were occasional and often at long intervals.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>52</sup> Jörg, 1986, p. 102.

<sup>53</sup> Lam, 2007, p. 189. For detailed research on the ceramic salvaged from the Oosterland, see Jane Klose, "Excavated Oriental Ceramics from the Cape of Good Hope: 1630–1830," in *Transaction of Oriental Ceramic Society* 57, (1992–1993): 69–81.

<sup>54</sup> Jörg, 1982, p. 27.

<sup>55</sup> Hung Chien-Liang drew a similar conclusion in his research based on the trade documents and material evidence found in European collections. See Huang, 2016, p. 88.

### 2.3 The Trading Route of the Yixing Stoneware Vessels in the Early Modern Period

The places of departure of these shipwrecks also provide new material for studying the trade routes of Yixing stoneware. The archives of the East India Company mention the trading ports of Zhangzhou, Macao, and Batavia as departure points for the Yixing stoneware shipping to the Netherlands. Among them, Batavia was the most important transit point. The *Hoge Regering*, the governing body responsible for trade processes and decision-making for the Dutch East India Company, was headquartered in Batavia. It consisted of the Governor-General and the Council of the East Indies, which reported directly to the *Heeren XVII*, the company's supreme administrator.

In 1644, the Ming Dynasty collapsed. Ming loyalists, led by the military leader Zheng Chenggong (1624-1662), migrated to southern China to resist the Qing conquest from the north. In 1659, they were defeated by the Qing army in Nanjing. This compelled Zheng Chenggong to further retreat to Formosa to evade the Qing army, utilizing the island's geographical advantage. Upon arriving at Formosa, Zheng Chenggong first expelled the Dutch traders living there. These Dutch traders probably did not expect the political turmoil in China would lead to their unexpected loss of Formosa as a trading post.

In 1662, Zheng's army captured the fortress Zeelandia in Formosa. By this time, Batavia became increasingly important as an intermediate point in the Sino-Dutch trade. At the time, trade between mainland China and Batavia was dominated by a commercial activity known as the “Chinese junk trade”, which was led by Hokkien merchants in Fujian Province.<sup>56</sup> According to Leonard Blussé, an average of five Hokkien merchant ships arrived in Batavia each year before 1680. The weight of the goods they traded was likely similar to, if not greater, the total weight of the goods carried by the Dutch East India Company ships on their return journey from Batavia to the Netherlands.<sup>57</sup>

Especially after the Qing Dynasty imposed a ban on overseas trade in 1655, these Hokkien merchants, largely relying on Zheng Chenggong's power, were able to escape the Qing government's supervision and continued to supply the Dutch merchants in Batavia with Chinese commodities, tea being one of them. After 1683, tea became one of the main

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<sup>56</sup> For the Chinese Junk Trade dominated by Hokkien merchants, see Chin, 2019, pp. 83-111.

<sup>57</sup> Chin, 2019, p. 85.

commodities traded by Hokkien merchants. The goods supplied by Chinese junk ships had a significant price advantage over those purchased by the East India Company from other sources. This pattern of trade was relatively stable, and the East India Company could purchase the goods it needed at prices similar to those in the Chinese market.

Trade between China and Southeast Asia began during the Song Dynasty. It thrived especially during the Ming and Qing dynasties, largely due to the Chinese communities that settled there. Most of these Chinese groups moved to Southeast Asia from Fujian and Guangdong provinces in southeastern China, bringing Chinese material culture to these regions as well. When the Fujian merchant ships arrived in Batavia in the seventeenth century, their trading partners were both Chinese and Dutch.<sup>58</sup> In fact, the Fujian merchants who lived in Batavia at that time and the employees of the East India Company were commercial entities connected by shared economic interests. Besides engaging in trade under the supervision of the East India Company, Fujian merchants were also involved in private trading with company employees. In 1694, when the East India Company banned its employees from privately purchasing tea and porcelain, the local Fujian merchants, not the Dutch, were most affected by this decision.

In previous studies regarding the trading route of Yixing stoneware, researchers have tended to discuss Chinese ships sailing to Batavia separately from Dutch ships sailing from Batavia to Europe. Lam Yip-Keung, for example, argues that the trading partners of ships travelling from Fujian to Batavia would have been the local Chinese. Therefore, the style of Yixing stoneware teapots from this trade pattern is consistent with the Chinese domestic style.<sup>59</sup> The Yixing stoneware teapots loaded onto merchant ships sailing from Batavia to Europe would have been similar to the Yixing stoneware pieces currently found in many European museum collections.<sup>60</sup> On this basis, Li Shu-yi further deduced that the style of teapots sold in Southeast Asia would have been the same as the teapots popular in Fujian and Guangdong, while the style of teapots sold in Europe would have been very different from those sold in the domestic market.<sup>61</sup> Lam and Li base their observations on comparing Yixing stoneware pieces found in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch East India Company shipwrecks

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<sup>58</sup> Chin, 2019, p. 97.

<sup>59</sup> Li, 2009, pp. 68-69.

<sup>60</sup> Lam, 2007, p.194.

<sup>61</sup> Li, 2009, p. 68.

with Yixing stoneware found in nineteenth-century Chinese shipwrecks. Although the Yixing stoneware recovered from these shipwrecks supports these two scholars' conclusions, comparing goods from ships of different periods and origins is inappropriate.

As mentioned earlier, the Dutch East India Company's trading post in Batavia relied heavily on goods supplied by Chinese merchant ships. Thus, it is likely that the Yixing stoneware objects on the seventeenth-century shipwrecks that sailed from Batavia back to the Netherlands were originally transported to the Malay Peninsula by Hokkien traders. For example, the Vung Tau shipwreck is a Chinese merchant ship found off the coast of present-day Vietnam. The ship sank during a voyage from China to Batavia in 1690. Although no intact Yixing stoneware teapots were found in the wreck, a large number of *yao* (Ch: 铫), a utensil used to boil water for making tea, were found on the ship (fig. 5). *Yao* has been popular in China since the end of the Ming Dynasty and has become a common utensil used in the tea ceremonies in Japan and other Asian countries. At the same time, large quantities of blue-and-white porcelain were found on the Vung Tau shipwreck. Many of these were made specifically for the European market and are known in Europe as "garniture sets".<sup>62</sup> The presence of traditional Chinese wares and wares customized for the European market in the cargo of the same Chinese merchant ship was relatively common in the trade at that time.

So, what happened to these goods once they arrived in Batavia? Western scholars, as represented by Shirley Maloney Mueller, believe that Yixing stoneware vessels, upon arrival in Batavia, would have been sorted based on European tastes. Those meeting European preferences would have been shipped from Batavia to the Netherlands, while others would have been used in Batavia.<sup>63</sup> However, is this perspective accurate? To address this question, I will analyze the Yixing stoneware discovered in a shipwreck that sank on its way back to the Netherlands in the following section.

## **2.4 Defining the Export Style**

Nine years after the sinking of the Vung Tau in 1697, a Dutch East India Company ship named the Oosterland sank on its way back to the Netherlands from Batavia. Unlike the relatively small quantity of Yixing stoneware found on the Vung Tau, as many as 365

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<sup>62</sup> Lam, 2007, p. 188.

<sup>63</sup> See Mueller, 2005, p. 5.

stoneware shards and four relatively complete teapots were found on the Oosterland. These four teapots provide a glimpse of the Yixing stoneware exported from Batavia to the Netherlands at the end of the seventeenth century. In this section, I will use these four teapots as a starting point to explore how to define the export style of the Yixing stoneware vessels.

The domestic and export styles of Yixing stoneware teapots are not an innate concept. Rather, they are derived from stylistic analyses of Yixing stoneware teapots in Chinese and European collections made by previous scholars. In this context, the domestic style refers to Yixing stoneware tea sets sold primarily to the Chinese market and used for making tea. Its simplicity characterizes it. Some teapots have the name of the artisan who made the teapot engraved on the bottom, and sometimes, a poem is engraved on the bottom.<sup>64</sup>

Among the domestic styles of teapots, there is another type that is more refined and more closely associated with other traditional Chinese art genres, the literati teapot. These teapots are characterized by the fact that they are usually engraved with poems or paintings on the body of the pot. At the time of their creation, these literati teapots were usually artistic creations that belonged to a particular cultural circle or were used as elegant gifts. However, looking back at the history of Yixing stoneware, some of the famous literati teapot styles were often quickly commercialized and began to be mass-produced by Yixing potters.<sup>65</sup>

Of all the domestic styles of teapots, the rarest are those that served as tribute to the imperial family. There are many Yixing stoneware items in the Qing Dynasty's imperial collection. Some of these stoneware teapots were made in Yixing and then transported to the imperial workshops in the Forbidden City for final decoration, while others were made entirely in Yixing.<sup>66</sup> In contrast to the other two types of domestic teapots, the teapots in the palace collection reflect the imperial aesthetic of the Ming and Qing periods. The styles of these teapots were not entirely determined by potters or literati artists but were subject to the norms of imperial wares and the personal preferences of the emperor.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the concept of domestic-style teapot proposed by previous scholars includes three different categories: the teapots made for

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<sup>64</sup> Zhang, Wang, Huo, and Huang, 2016, p. 91.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>66</sup> Liao, 2017, pp. 151-152.

Chinese tea drinking, the literati teapots, and teapots made for the imperial family. There is no obvious boundary between these three styles. For example, the Palace Museum in Beijing has a collection of teapots in all three of these different domestic styles, all formerly in the imperial collection. In this sense, domestic style is an umbrella term that describes all the styles that have been popular in the Chinese market. In a way, the term was coined as a counterpart to the export styles.

Export-style teapots refer to Yixing stoneware teapots sold to Europe, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Japan since the Wanli period (1573-1620). These teapots are characterized by the extensive use of appliquéd decorations, often containing typical Chinese elements understood by foreigners. These Chinese decorations include the most common plum blossoms, cloud motifs, images of dragons and phoenixes, and relatively rare Buddhist and Taoist symbols. Some teapots have reticulated patterns on their bodies. Traces of gilt or enamelled decoration remain on many export-style teapots in European collections. In addition, many of the teapots in European collections were fitted with densely engraved silver components to protect fragile parts of the teapot, such as the spout or knob. Some of these silver decorations are believed to have been installed on teapots by European craftsmen already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>67</sup>

Does the above definition of “export style” match what is reflected in the teapots recovered from the shipwrecks? Of the four relatively intact Yixing stoneware teapots salvaged from the Geldermalsen shipwreck, only one fits the above description of the “export style” (fig. 6 & 7). On the body of this teapot, the potter used beige clay to highlight the appliquéd design, a decorative technique common on Yixing stoneware teapots exported in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

The dragon motif on Geldermalsen teapots is close to the image of a *chi* dragon in traditional Chinese culture. This motif was first used extensively on jade and bronze objects during the Shang (1600-1046 B.C.) and Zhou (1046-256 B.C.) dynasties (fig. 8.1). In addition, *chi* dragons are common decorative motifs on blue-and-white porcelain from Jingdezhen (fig.

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<sup>67</sup> Gong, 2008, p. 118.

<sup>68</sup> Appliqué is one of the traditional crafts of Yixing, in which the wooden mould is first filled with clay of the same or different colours. The mould is then filled with the same or different colours of clay, and the thinner clay is used as a medium to adhere the moulded pattern to the surface of the object.



8.2). During the seventeenth century, *chi* dragons were widely used as a popular decorative motif on porcelain, bronze, and jade. At that time, the use of *chi* dragons on objects was considered a tribute to the great Shang and Zhou cultures that laid the foundations of Chinese civilization. This cultural connotation can only be understood by educated Chinese. In the seventeenth-century West, such connotations associated with the great tradition of China may have been completely unknown. As Huang Chien-Liang observes, because of the differences between Eastern and Western cultures, Chinese decorative elements sometimes evolve naturally into an artistic style in the eyes of Europeans.<sup>69</sup> Europeans are unable and unwilling to understand the cultural connotations behind the decoration of these Yixing stoneware teapots because, under the trend of *chinoiserie*, Chinese taste in the European mentality is more important than Chinese culture itself.

Two teapots with hexagonal bodies were among Yixing stoneware artefacts on the Geldermalsen. Along with the teapots, a hexagonal lid with a knob in the shape of a lion was salvaged, and this lid would have come as a set with one of the teapots from the same shipwreck (fig. 9.3). Lions, as a traditional Chinese motif, have frequently appeared on porcelain since the Yongle period (1402-1424) of the Ming dynasty. However, this design of a reclining lion as the knob of a teapot is uncommon on all Yixing stoneware vessels of the domestic style. It is, therefore, considered a representative feature of the export-style Yixing stoneware. Archaeologists have confirmed that such lion knobs were found in the Qianlong (1736-1795) strata of the Shushan kilns in Yixing.<sup>70</sup> This suggests that these export-style teapots were produced together in the local workshops producing domestic teapots.<sup>71</sup>

The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam has a teapot with a lid similar to the Geldermalsen teapot (fig. 9.3). This teapot has a curved, square body. The sides of the body are decorated with appliqué depicting two lions chasing a ball (fig. 9.1). Interestingly, two teapots similar to the Rijksmuseum teapot are in the collection of the Mai Foundation in Taiwan (fig. 9.2 & fig. 9.4). Unlike the Rijksmuseum teapot, the lions on these two teapots are made of clay of the same colour as the body. One of the teapots has traces of gilding remaining on the lion motif.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Gong, 2008, p.175.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>71</sup> Most Yixing stoneware shards excavated from the Shushan kiln site are plain teapots with potters' marks or poems incised on the bottom.

<sup>72</sup> Gong, 2008, p. 288.

Unlike the Rijksmuseum teapot and the Mai Foundation teapot, the Geldermalsen teapot has no decoration on the body (fig.9.3 & fig. 10.2). These plain hexagonal-shaped teapots have been popular among Chinese tea drinkers since the late Ming dynasty (fig. 10.1). It can be said that this plain hexagonal teapot is a classic of the domestic style.<sup>73</sup> The Geldermalsen teapot, therefore, offers an interesting combination of two styles: the lid in the export style and the body in the domestic style.

The Zwinger Palace in Dresden houses a collection of Yixing stoneware teapots, which originally belonged to the famous Chinese porcelain collector Augustus the Strong. Thanks to a detailed inventory, we can tell when these Yixing stoneware pieces entered the collection. There are two teapots in the form of bamboo stems, and they were first recorded in the collection inventories in 1721. They may shed new light on the debate between the export and domestic styles of Yixing stoneware (fig. 11.1 & fig. 11.2). Both teapots belong to the conventional Chinese category of *Fangsheng Hu* (biomorphic pot, Ch: 仿生壺), which refers to a type of teapot made to imitate the shapes of plants and animals in nature. The Gongchun teapot in the National Museum of China collection is a good example of a teapot that mimics the shape of a tree tumour in nature (see fig. 3).

In the Dresden example, the potter skillfully designed the spout, body, handle, and knob of the teapot in the shape of curved bamboo branches. In Chinese culture, bamboo symbolises the lofty spirit the literati aspired to. However, the meaning of bamboo, which is very clear in Eastern culture, could have been confusing at the Dresden court. This teapot is recorded in the inventory as being in the shape of “the stem of a plant that looks like a pepper”.<sup>74</sup> The Zwinger Palace collection has eight teapots in the shape of bamboo stems. The large number of such teapots in European collections suggests that they may not have been rare items in Europe then. However, teapots of this type, often regarded as masterpieces of the export style, can also be found in many historical collections in China, including the imperial collection at the Forbidden City.

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<sup>73</sup> Shi Dabin (1573-1648), a significant Yixing potter who lived in the late Ming dynasty and the early Qing dynasty, once produced a teapot with a similar hexagonal shape. Since then, this type of teapot has been valued by Chinese tea drinkers as a tribute to Shi Dabin’s artistic achievement.

<sup>74</sup> Ströber, 2008, p. 152.

Two bamboo teapots in the Palace Museum in Beijing are very similar in shape to the teapot in the Dresden collection. Both teapots are from the Qing Dynasty's imperial collection. One of the teapots has an almost identical body shape to the Dresden teapot. Still, the clay used is slightly different from that of the Dresden counterpart (fig. 12.2). The other teapot, although identical in shape to the German teapot, has a gilded surface (fig. 12.1).

The fact that the same teapot can be found in the collections of both the Zwinger Palace and the Forbidden City in Beijing suggests that both Eastern and Western rulers could have favoured the same style at the time. Of course, the misinterpretation of the Dresden teapot's shape in the inventories proves that German collectors may not have understood the cultural connotations of bamboo in the Asian sense. However, this vast cultural difference did not prevent these teapots from being treasured at the court in Dresden. It is also a reminder that it is inappropriate to judge whether a teapot is of domestic, or export style based on the degree of Chinese culture embodied in it.

The Oosterland, which sank in 1697, gives us an insight into the export of Yixing stoneware at the end of the seventeenth century. Stoneware teapots salvaged from this shipwreck all have appliquéd decorations on their bodies (fig. 13.1).<sup>75</sup> A hexagonal teapot found on the wreck of the Oosterland is very similar to one in the Rijksmuseum (fig. 13.2). The handle of this teapot consists of two dragons with a pearl in their mouths. The knob on the hexagonal lid is shaped like a crouching lion. It is interesting to note that this type of teapot, which is relatively common in European collections, is almost invisible in Chinese historical collections.<sup>76</sup>

## **2.5 Reflective Remarks on the Export Style**

By analysing these Yixing stoneware teapots from shipwrecks and European collections, we can see that the previous understanding of the domestic and export styles of Yixing stoneware in the early modern period is inaccurate. These Yixing stoneware pieces that arrived in Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century can be classified into at least three categories.

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<sup>75</sup> Klose, 1992-1993, p. 77.

<sup>76</sup> Gong, 2008, p. 239.

The first category consists of teapots that are indistinguishable from the Yixing stoneware sold on the local Chinese market, as evidenced by the plain hexagonal teapots found on the Geldermalsen shipwreck and the bamboo-shaped teapots in the Dresden Collection. The second category is Yixing stoneware pieces that combine export and domestic features, represented by the square teapot with a lion knob and plain body found on the Geldermalsen shipwreck. The third is a type of teapot found mostly in European collections and largely absent in China.<sup>77</sup> This type of teapot is represented by the hexagonal dragon handle teapot found on the Oosterland.

The third category of teapots mentioned above were made by Chinese potters specifically for the European market, and as such, they truly represent the export style of Yixing stoneware teapots. However, these three types of Yixing stoneware teapots were often traded together from China to Europe. Early modern European collectors were not averse to collecting different styles of Yixing stoneware, as evidenced by the collection of Yixing stoneware in the Zwinger Palace, which contains all three categories.

At the same time, we should be aware that it is difficult to deduce a reliable and comprehensive stylistic evolution of exported Yixing stoneware teapots due to the lack of information on mid-seventeenth-century shipwrecks, the large time lag between different wrecks, and the contingent nature of the cargoes they carried. However, the existence of the Yixing stoneware produced specifically for the European market makes us wonder if there was a connection between the Netherlands and Yixing that is not yet known. On this basis, we can ask the following questions: How did the potters of Yixing accept the demand for customisation from Europeans thousands of miles away? Was this demand based on artistic pursuit or the practicality of making tea? Could potters from Yixing correctly understand the message from the West? I will answer these questions in the next two chapters.

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<sup>77</sup> In China, these types of stoneware teapots can be found only in the kiln sites of Yixing.

## Chapter Three

### **Yixing Stoneware Vessels Customised for Europe—Centered on the Mustard Pot in the Collection of the Groninger Museum**

The Qing ceramist Lan Pu (ca.1680-1733) described the export porcelain of the time in his *Jingdezhen Taolu* (Records of Jingdezhen Ceramics, Ch: 景德镇陶录, 1815) as follows: “(These porcelain vessels) were made for trading with foreigners, and they often had strange shapes and constantly changing appearances.”<sup>78</sup> This account reflects how an eighteenth-century Chinese connoisseur of ceramics viewed Jingdezhen export porcelain.<sup>79</sup> Lan Pu mentions two important features of export porcelain: on one hand, the shapes of export ware are often very different from traditional Chinese shapes and, therefore, seem strange to the Chinese; on the other, the styles and shapes of export porcelain change frequently. Implicit in Lan Pu's account is a kind of contempt for exported wares that was prevalent among the Chinese literati community. For Chinese intellectuals of the time, the ceramics used in trade with Western merchants (referred to as “foreign devils” in the *Jingdezhen Taolu*) were sometimes not even worth mentioning, which indirectly led to the scarcity of Chinese literature on export porcelain compared to that of the West.

Similarly, many treatises on Yixing stoneware circulated among the Chinese literati circles of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Nevertheless, products used for export are rarely mentioned in all the books and articles on Yixing stoneware. How did the Dutch requirements for Yixing stoneware cross such great distances and become known to potters as far away as Yixing? Due to the lack of Chinese sources, the answers to these questions may only be found by analysing export-style Yixing stoneware in European collections and the Dutch East India Company archives.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Dutch East India Company grew increasingly dissatisfied with ordering porcelain solely through Chinese middlemen. At the same time, after decades of trade, the Dutch market for Chinese porcelain was becoming

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<sup>78</sup> An, 2019, p. 84. The original text: “每与鬼子互市，式多奇巧，岁无定样。” Translated by the author.

<sup>79</sup> Lan Pu lived in eighteenth-century Jingdezhen. After Lan Pu's death, his pupil Zhen Tinggui edited and published this work.

saturated. In addition, Denmark, England, and Sweden also set up their own East India Company to challenge the Dutch monopoly in the porcelain trade.

Under this circumstance, the Dutch East India Company selected porcelain that is aligned with the latest aesthetic trends and social demands to remain competitive. These ceramics were usually decorated with patterns that the Dutch East India Company considered fashionable after market research or were designed in the most popular European styles of the time.<sup>80</sup> This type of porcelain had several common characteristics. Firstly, Jingdezhen potters were often unfamiliar with their decorative motifs or shapes. Secondly, the price of these customized pieces was often higher than that of normal export porcelain, as many distinctive European styles were unfamiliar to Jingdezhen craftsmen and required the factory to arrange production individually, based on design manuscripts or wooden models supplied by the Dutch. In addition, these customised pieces usually require higher quality and cost more to produce than typical export porcelain. Lastly, because these orders were placed closely following European market trends, these porcelains were highly time-sensitive. As soon as the European preference for current styles changes, the trade situation of porcelain in the European market will change accordingly.

A file from 1758 held in the Dutch National Archives shows that orders from Holland were accurately communicated to potters in Jingdezhen in several ways. At the time, the Dutch East India Company communicated with Jingdezhen primarily using drawings depicting ceramic shapes or patterns (fig. 14). Along with these drawings, a list indicating the name, quantity, and decoration of each variety of porcelain was sent to China. These drawings often showed schematic views of a piece of porcelain from different angles, greatly facilitating the Chinese potters' production of unfamiliar shapes.

However, as a Dutch East India Company official complained in 1729, the ceramics produced by the Jingdezhen potters from these drawings often did not exactly match the designs depicted.<sup>81</sup> The Chinese potters rendered the information obtained from the drawings as they could understand. This explains why it was necessary to send three-dimensional models to China that reflected more information and detail.

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<sup>80</sup> Jörg, 1982, pp. 94-97.

<sup>81</sup> Jörg, 1982, p. 107.

Scholars have demonstrated that models made of various materials, including pewter, Delft pottery, and wood, were sent to Jingdezhen to serve as models used by potters in production.<sup>82</sup> For example, a wooden model of a tea set was sent to Jingdezhen in 1755. According to Christiaan Jörg, Chinese potters can use these wooden models to make moulds and thus reproduce special shapes from Europe more precisely in porcelain.<sup>83</sup> The wooden models also reflect the dimensions of the ceramic products better than schematic drawings on paper. Further, the dimensions of ceramics are crucial for things like cutlery and vessels for tea and coffee. If a piece of porcelain does not match the dimensions that Europeans used in daily life, it will not be popular in the Western market. Because of the high cost and long waiting period for customized porcelain, Dutch traders used every means possible to minimize errors in the production process.

The discussion of customized porcelain above has focused on export porcelain produced by Jingdezhen workshops on commission from the Dutch East India Company. Did a similar customization process exist for Yixing stoneware? Unlike porcelain, there is no record of customization of Yixing stoneware in the existing archives of the Dutch East India Company. However, a Yixing stoneware mustard pot in the Groninger Museum's collection may shed new light on the mysteries surrounding the question of customization and export of Yixing stoneware (fig. 15).

### **3.1 Mustard Pot in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century East-West Trade**

Mustard was an indispensable condiment on the tables of people living in the north of Europe before spices from the East became widely available. In the seventeenth century, mustard pots were often found in the cargo manifests of ships bound for Holland. Pewter pots for mustard were commonly used in Europe before the introduction of porcelain mustard pots (fig. 16). Meanwhile, mustard was an unfamiliar condiment to Chinese potters, and the mustard pot was a completely new vessel type.

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<sup>82</sup> Canepe and Butler, 2021, p. 242.

<sup>83</sup> Jörg, 1982, p. 102.

In 1635, a Dutch East India Company official recorded instructions to “supply Chinese merchants with wooden models of mustard pots and teapots” in a letter sent from Batavia to Taoyuan. Mustard pots produced during this period are very different in design from those made during the late Ming dynasty. Mustard pots from the Chongzhen period (1627-1644) resemble teapots without spouts in their form. Sometimes the lid was designed with a circular hole that could be used to hold a long-handle spoon for scooping and stirring the mustard.

The bodies of mustard pots from the late Ming period were often decorated with motifs of floral branches or figures. The lids and feet of the pots were usually adorned with motifs such as banana leaves and Buddhist auspicious symbols. Although the mustard pots of this period were Western imports in form, the decorative schemes were similar to those found on the blue-and-white porcelain produced in the private kilns in Jingdezhen.

Interestingly, porcelain mustard pots commonly found in Europe today often have intricately carved silver hinges connecting the lid to the pot’s body (see fig. 17). These silver parts were probably fitted to mustard pots shortly after they were traded to the Netherlands. This also indicates that while mustard pots from Jingdezhen were likely still a relatively expensive luxury item in Europe, they would have been used. Unlike mustard pots in pewter, once the lid of a porcelain product is broken, the whole pot can no longer be used. Therefore, adding a metal hinge not only adds to the ornamental value of the mustard pot but also fulfils the function of keeping the lid secure when in use.

By the second half of the seventeenth century, there were some changes in the design of porcelain mustard pots from Jingdezhen. Many blue-and-white mustard pots were found on the Vung Tau shipwreck, which sank around 1690 en route from China to Batavia (fig. 18).<sup>84</sup> Most mustard pots salvaged from this shipwreck are similar to those from half a century earlier but with a more pronounced bulbous body. In addition, some have abandoned the characteristic high feet found on mustard pots of the Chongzhen period.

Interestingly, the lids of the mustard pots found on the Vung Tau shipwreck do not have holes for small spoons. Instead, there are knobs shaped like beads or lions, designs common on blue-and-white teapots from the same period. To solve the problem of the lack of spoon

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<sup>84</sup> Jörg and Flecker, 2001, p. 70.



holes, the mustard pots found on the Vung Tau shipwreck have small notches on the rim of the pots. These notches have irregular edges and are not covered by glaze, suggesting they were made after production. Christiaan Jörg is keen to point out that, given the location of the Vung Tau shipwreck, the notches on these porcelain mustard pots were made in China before they were shipped to Batavia or the Netherlands.<sup>85</sup>

Even for blue-and-white mustard pots produced in the late Ming period, their lids did not always have spoon holes. For example, a mid-seventeenth-century blue-and-white mustard pot from the Groninger Museum has a small vent hole in the lid and an irregular notch visible on the rim of the body (fig. 20). Apparently, the practice of working a notch into the rim of a pot to hold a spoon predates the time of the Vung Tau shipwreck.

The juxtaposition of mustard pots with and without spoon holes also reflects the misinterpretation of seventeenth-century export ceramics produced in the context of cultural differences between East and West. Although the East India Company must have sent wooden models of mustard pots to Jingdezhen as early as the 1630s, and these models were undoubtedly designed with spoon holes, it may have been difficult for Chinese potters to understand the purpose of these holes.<sup>86</sup>

At the same time, because of its similarity in shape to a Chinese teapot, the Chinese potters may have regarded it as a special kind of teapot, or at least as a vessel for serving hot drinks. For example, the lid of the mustard pot found on the Vung Tau shipwreck has no spoon hole but does have a steam hole. Teapots have similar steam holes in their lids, which equalize the pressure between the inside and outside of the pot when making tea, to ensure that the liquid inside the pot can be poured out smoothly. This function would have been useless for a vessel used to hold cold mustard. This practice of interpreting exotic vessels according to local food culture prevented Jingdezhen potters from properly understanding wooden models even when they saw them. In this case, they may have interpreted the spoon holes on the wooden models as being damaged during transport or associated them with the more familiar steam holes on teapots.

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>86</sup> The spoon hole in the knob of the lid is a feature never seen in traditional Chinese ceramic design. Nevertheless, it is very common to see vent holes in the lid of the porcelain or Yixing stoneware teapots.

### 3.2 A Hidden History Between the Dutch Trader and Yixing Potter

Mustard pots have long been regarded as typical export porcelain made only in Jingdezhen. With the discovery of a mustard pot in Yixing stoneware in the Groninger Museum's collection, it is time to re-examine the intricate connections between the Netherlands, Yixing, and Jingdezhen in the context of East-West trade.

This Yixing stoneware teapot is made of red *zisha* clay and has a rounded body with four slightly inward curving ribs, giving the entire pot a graceful melon shape. The bottom of the pot is connected to a tall, two-tiered foot. The lid is flat and round, with a steam hole in the knob. The body and the lid are decorated with traditional Chinese motifs that are applied in the appliqué technique. The pot's body is embellished with flowering sprigs and Taihu stones in relief, while the lid and foot are decorated with eight hidden symbols of Buddhism.

The decorative style of this Yixing mustard pot, particularly the sparsely rendered sprigs on the body and the banana-leaf motifs on the foot, is very different from the late seventeenth-century mustard pots recovered from the Vung Tau shipwreck, but similar to those of the Chongzhen period (fig. 19). It is interesting to note that the style of decoration on this mustard pot is very similar to that of the famous double-spouted teapot in the collection of the National Museum in Copenhagen. In addition to the similar appliqué sprigs and pine branches, the Copenhagen teapot has also been decorated with the Taihu stone motifs similar to that on the mustard pot from the Groninger Museum. However, the Taihu stone decorations on the Copenhagen teapot have worn away over time, leaving only small traces of bonding on the surface (see fig. 20).<sup>87</sup> Based on the striking similarities in clay and decoration, it is reasonable to assume that the Groningen mustard pot would have been made in a similar period to the Copenhagen teapot, most likely during the Kangxi period in the second half of the seventeenth century.

The Yixing stoneware mustard pot in the Groninger Museum's collection does not have the spoon holes in the lid that are common on blue-and-white porcelain mustard pots of the Chongzhen period. However, the Groningen mustard pot does have a delicate little notch

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<sup>87</sup> There are dotted lines in the shape of Taihu stone visible on the surface of the Copenhagen teapot. In the seventeenth century, Yixing potters used wet clay as the adhesive to stick the moulded decorations on the surface of the teapots. This is the technique that continues to this day among Yixing potters.

close to the upper edge of the body. Unlike that on the Vung Tau mustard pot, this notch is relatively regular in shape and is sized to match a small protrusion on the inside edge of the lid (fig. 21). This suggests that the notch on the stoneware mustard jar and the matching protrusion on the lid existed before the vessel was fired in the kiln.

This design on the Groningen mustard pot is common on porcelain teapots made in Jingdezhen: when tilting the teapot to pour out the tea, the protrusions on the lid would nestle into the notch of the pot to minimize the risk of the lid falling off (fig. 22). Europeans did not need to tilt their mustard pots when accessing mustard, so this design was redundant on mustard pots. Once again, Chinese potters used their familiar knowledge systems to explain material culture from different cultural traditions.

Did the Yixing potters produce this mustard pot from a wooden model sent to China by the Dutch East India Company or from a porcelain mustard pot produced in Jingdezhen? In other words, was it through the intermediary of Jingdezhen that the Yixing potters became aware of this Western shape, or was there some degree of direct contact with the Dutch traders?

As shown above, mustard pots produced at Jingdezhen since the end of the Ming dynasty either have rounded spoon holes in the knobs or irregular notches in the rim. Suppose we assume that Yixing potters were inspired by porcelain mustard pots produced at Jingdezhen when creating stoneware mustard pots. In that case, the Yixing stoneware mustard pot should be similar to the Jingdezhen blue-and-white version. However, the notch design of the Groningen stoneware mustard pot has never been found on a Jingdezhen counterpart. On this account, the Yixing potter would have consulted drawings or models rather than the Jingdezhen porcelain mustard pot when making the piece in the Groninger Museum. The Yixing potters most likely discovered the existence of the spoon hole through drawings or wooden models sent from the Netherlands. However, since they could not gain insight into the reason behind the spoon-hole design, they unconsciously transplanted a feature commonly found on Chinese teapots into mustard pots.

Another possibility is that the Yixing potters somehow obtained Jingdezhen porcelain mustard pots with notches that Dutch traders had reworked. As previously demonstrated, the notches on the porcelain mustard pots from the Vung Tau shipwreck would have been made

before the mustard pots arrived in Batavia or Holland after leaving Jingdezhen. Therefore, Dutch traders most likely made the notches close to where their trading posts were based in China.<sup>88</sup>

Whether the Yixing potters learned about mustard pots through drawings, wooden models, or similar wares from Jingdezhen that the Dutch had reworked, the Yixing stoneware mustard pots in the Groningen Museum's collection reveal the hidden connection between the Dutch traders and the Yixing potters in the 17th century. This does not mean that the connection was direct, as there was a ban on foreigners travelling within China at the time, as well as a language barrier, which made it necessary for the Dutch traders to have many intermediate links to convey information about mustard pots from their trading points on the southeast coast to Yixing. Given the lack of information, the details of these intermediate links remain to be elucidated by future research.

However, the seventeenth-century Yixing stoneware mustard pot in the Groninger Museum collection suggests that the Dutch were in a position to express their demand for wares to Yixing at that time. It is also compelling evidence that the Dutch may have influenced the export style of Yixing stoneware. Some scholars have argued that the Dutch could only buy Yixing stoneware from Chinese middlemen or shops serving foreign merchants in Guangdong.<sup>89</sup> Lurking in this view was the idea that Dutch merchants did not have complete choice over Yixing stoneware and, therefore, could not effectively influence the export style of Yixing stoneware through their commercial activities, but after the discovery of this Yixing mustard pot in the Groninger Museum, this view is no longer valid.

Since it was possible for the Dutch living in the second half of the seventeenth century to customize stoneware wares from Yixing workshops, did the drinking of tea, which was very popular in Dutch society at the time, influence this customization? Was tea a decisive factor in determining the export of Yixing stoneware, as previous scholars have suggested? Did the

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<sup>88</sup> It is not likely that this reprocessing happened in Jingdezhen or the surrounding area. If the trader discovered this imperfection close to Jingdezhen, the most logical remediation would be to tell the Jingdezhen potters about this flaw so they would improve it the next time they make a mustard pot. However, no mustard pot was produced in Jingdezhen with a spoon hole on the upper rim of the body before the firing. Therefore, Jingdezhen potters may never realise this problem at all.

<sup>89</sup> Huang, 2016, pp. 87-90.

connection between Yixing stoneware and tea further shape the export style of Yixing stoneware? I will answer these questions in the following Chapter.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Usage of Yixing Stoneware Teapot in the West: The Tea-drinking Vessel?**

#### **4.1 Tea Trade between China and the Netherlands**

The Groningen mustard pot is probably the only one made of Yixing stoneware currently in a public collection. Indeed, most Yixing stoneware artefacts preserved in European collections are teapots. Art historian Donald Rabiner has asserted that the main reason for introducing Yixing stoneware to Europe was the “large quantities of tea shipped to Europe by the East India Companies of various countries.”<sup>90</sup> In this chapter, we will discuss whether seventeenth-century Europeans truly used Yixing stoneware teapots to make tea and, ultimately, answer whether the tea was the main reason Yixing stoneware was imported to Europe and catalysed the export style.

Throughout the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century, the Netherlands was the largest tea importer in the West. Tea imported by the Netherlands from China was consumed by its people and sold to other European countries and the North American colonies. Since the early eighteenth century, the tea trade between the Netherlands and Japan declined rapidly, leaving China as its only source of tea imports.<sup>91</sup>

Until the 1820s, the Dutch East India Company in Batavia purchased goods by Chinese junk ships from Guangzhou, Xiamen, and Ningbo. However, with the rapid growth of demand for tea in Europe and the emphasis on quality, East India Company managers became increasingly dissatisfied with the shortcomings of this trade pattern. Meanwhile, the British East India Company, founded in the early eighteenth century, successfully shipped tea directly from Guangdong to Europe in sealed crates. The English competitors offered fresher tea to the market than the tea that the Dutch East India Company transhipped to Europe

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<sup>90</sup> Rabiner, 1990, pp. 115-117.

<sup>91</sup> Liu, 2013, pp. 161-162.

through Batavia, which put much pressure on the Dutch traders. Additionally, the tea market in Batavia was in turmoil and prices were unstable. This prompted the Dutch East India Company to change its trading pattern, and the result was the start of direct tea trade with China in 1729.<sup>92</sup> After that, the tea trade played an increasingly important role in the Dutch East India Company's commercial activities throughout the eighteenth century. To ensure the quality of tea, the Dutch East India Company even sent professional "tea tasters" to Guangzhou in the early 1750s to appraise the quality of the tea purchased.<sup>93</sup>

#### 4.2 Tea in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Dutch Society

The Dutch knowledge of Chinese tea was originally derived from the travel accounts and other publications of Dutch explorers and missionaries who visited China at the beginning of the seventeenth century. These writings described tea as an effective medicine that could cure diseases. Drinking tea was beneficial to human health and could cure a variety of ailments such as depression, tearfulness, and weakness.<sup>94</sup>

These records were corroborated by Dutch sailors, merchants, and officials living in Batavia. Since the Chinese living in Batavia regularly drank tea, the Dutch living there had many opportunities to observe how the locals consumed this novel beverage. For example, Philippus Baldaeus (1632-1672), a former Dutch East India Company official, wrote in 1672 that Dutch sailors sailing to Asia began drinking tea because they believed it would cure scurvy.<sup>95</sup> Nicolaas Tulp (1593-1674) was a prominent Dutch medical practitioner who was the first to recommend tea drinking from the medical profession's perspective. In his book *Observationes Medicae*, published in 1652, he suggested that tea consumption could be an effective treatment for various epidemics of the time.<sup>96</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century, Cornelis Bontekoe (1647-1685), the famous "tea doctor", claimed that he drank between one and two hundred cups of tea a day.<sup>97</sup> Bontekoe's claim was undoubtedly an exaggeration, and he was criticized and challenged by many of his peers and social celebrities.

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>93</sup> For instance, in 1752, the directors of VOC found it necessary to send out the "tea tasters", who were fully conversant with the taste of the European public. See Jörg, 1982, p. 78.

<sup>94</sup> Commelin, 1646, p. 102.

<sup>95</sup> Baldaeus, 1672, p. 184.

<sup>96</sup> Liu, 2013, p. 165.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

Later, tea evolved into an everyday drink, enjoyed by people from all walks of life. This shift first took place among the Dutch nobilities and upper classes. On 17 January 1664, Constantijn Huygens Jr. (1628-1697) sent tea from The Hague to his younger brother, Christiaan Huygens (1596-1687), suggesting he should have some tea after dinner every day.<sup>98</sup> In addition, when Huygens arrived in Harwich, England, in 1694, his luggage included a small box of tea for Queen Mary II.<sup>99</sup> Tea rapidly became popular among the Dutch middle class in the 1680s. Philippus Baldaeus (1632-1672) wrote in 1672: “I remember that in 1670 tea was unknown to the people of Dordrecht, but nowadays even children enjoy it.”<sup>100</sup> However, although most people knew tea as a novelty drink by the end of the seventeenth century, the relatively high price meant that most Dutch people still considered it a luxury. This changed in the eighteenth century, when the tea trade in the Netherlands exploded after 1750 and the wages of the average Dutch worker increased. By the end of the 18th century, everyone in the Netherlands could drink tea as a beverage.<sup>101</sup>

It is clear from the above discussion that the gradual acceptance of Chinese tea in Dutch society did coincide in time with the trade of Yixing stoneware to Europe by the East India Company. However, most of the seventeenth-century Dutch writings on tea focused on the wonders of tea as a medicine. Besides, many of the authors of these writings were physicians or prominent intellectuals, and they did not seem to have been interested in what vessels were used to make tea. There is also no evidence that these authors included Yixing stoneware tea sets in their private collections.

### **4.3 Tea Varieties and Utensils in the Early-modern Dutch Society**

Nicolaas Witsen (1641-1717), mayor of Amsterdam, regularly sent tea to Gijsbert Cuper, a teacher at the city's Deventer Athenaeum School, from 1694 to 1714, which included “a small bottle of *Wuyi* and *Bai Maofeng* of the finest quality”.<sup>102</sup> Oolong tea (a semi-fermented tea) was produced in the Wuyi Mountain region of Fujian province in the seventeenth

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<sup>98</sup> Huygens, 1893, pp.17-18.

<sup>99</sup> Liu, 2013, p. 168.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>101</sup> Jörg, 1982, p. 20. And Liu, 2013, p. 170.

<sup>102</sup> Gebhard, 1882, p. 346.

century. However, it is difficult to determine which type of tea *Bai Maofeng* refers to.<sup>103</sup> However, according to Chinese tea naming conventions, it was most likely a type of green tea.

Another record from The Hague further reveals the preference for green tea in Dutch society. In the seventeenth century, the municipality of The Hague organized annual free community dinners. According to the dinner bill, which has survived to this day, tea was served in records as early as 1679.<sup>104</sup> In 1721, when the Hofbuurt was inaugurated, the free dinner at the inauguration ceremony featured “a special green tea supplied exclusively to the Chinese royal family” to entertain the Dutch guests.<sup>105</sup>

Green tea requires more stringent transport and storage conditions than semi-fermented Wuyi tea. Since ancient times, the main production areas of green tea in China have been in the inland regions far away from the trading points of the East India Company. In this context, using green tea to entertain guests on this special occasion also shows that Dutch society recognized the preciousness of green tea.

Of course, this knowledge of the different varieties of Chinese tea may have come from the Dutch living in Batavia. In March 1717, the East India Company officials in Batavia established a standard purchase price for different tea varieties from China. This price list explicitly mentions the difference in price between *Singlo* (ordinary green tea), *Bing* (green tea as the imperial tribute), and *Bohea* (Wuyi tea).<sup>106</sup> These written accounts show that Dutch society at the time seemed to favour green tea, as it was served to guests at the most important ceremonies. Furthermore, in the Dutch accounts, only green tea was titled “tributary goods for Chinese imperial family”. Yet, almost all tea varieties in China were once sent to the emperor as tribute. This preference for green tea in Dutch society has often been overlooked in previous studies of Yixing stoneware. In the seventeenth century, the Yixing region was an important tea-producing area for black tea. The Chinese preferred to use Yixing stoneware teapots to brew fermented tea varieties. For instance, in early-modern

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<sup>103</sup> “Bai Maofeng” literally means the tender tea leaves covered with white hair. This type of tea leaves is too tender to be used to make semi-fermented or fermented tea. Thus, green tea would be the only option for tea with this name.

<sup>104</sup> Liu, 2013, p. 173.

<sup>105</sup> Betz, 1900, p. 114.

<sup>106</sup> Jörg, 1982, pp. 78-81.



Chinese writings on tea, the vessels used for green tea are often porcelain teapots from Jingdezhen or Dehua, rather than stoneware tea sets from Yixing.<sup>107</sup>

So, what kind of teapot did the Dutch use to make tea? A seventeenth-century inventory of royal possessions shows that Amalia van Solms (1602-1675), widow of King Frederick Hendrick, owned a large collection of tea utensils, which included “a gold tea caddy and a silver tea pitcher, a small silver Indian teapot, and a large porcelain teapot.”<sup>108</sup> A book titled *A Pleasant Journey to The Hague*, completed in the early eighteenth century, details how the Dutch drank tea in public. In the book, after drinking at least 50 cups of tea at a tea shop in Leiden, a peasant accidentally knocked over the table, causing all the teapots and teacups to break. Afterwards, in a statement demanding compensation, the outraged shopkeeper wrote: “These were the finest china of the time and were left to me by my grandmother.”<sup>109</sup> These written records show that the Dutch mainly drank tea from porcelain teapots. In addition, metal teapots were often used to make tea. However, there does not seem to be any mention of drinking tea from Yixing stoneware teapots in Dutch literature from the seventeenth century.

In conclusion, tea did contribute to the acceptance and popularity of teapots in Europe, but not teapots made of Yixing stoneware. Since these early-modern historical documents and writings prove that Yixing stoneware teapots were not a common tea-drinking utensil in the Netherlands, how did people treat Yixing stoneware teapots in early-modern Dutch society? Sylvestre Dufour (1622-1687), an apothecary from Lyon, wrote in his 1685 book *Three Medicines, Coffee from Arabia, Tea from the East Indies and Chocolate from the West Indies*:

The Chinese use for their infusion teapots made of red clay with impressed designs which they claim are better than any others. I do not know whether this is true.<sup>110</sup>

The book was a great success and was reprinted several times between 1685 and 1699. It was also published in Holland, Switzerland, and England after France. Two years after the

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<sup>107</sup> Appreciating the color and shape of the tea leaves is important in tea-drinking rituals. Therefore, porcelain tea vessels can better reflect the color of tea, and people can see the shape of the leaves better against the white glaze.

<sup>108</sup> Drossaers and Scheurleer, 1974, p. 244 & p. 309.

<sup>109</sup> Liu, 2013, p. 174.

<sup>110</sup> Valfré, 2000, p. 141.

publication of Dufour's book, another French author, Nicolas de Blegny (1652-1722), illustrated five Yixing stoneware teapots in his book *Le bon usage du Thé, du Caffé et du Chocolat* (fig. 23). The captions to the illustrations in De Blegny's book do not indicate that the stoneware teapots were made in Yixing. However, the teapot is very similar in decoration and shape to other Yixing stoneware teapots that were shipped to Europe by the East India Company in the second half of the seventeenth century. In addition, the illustrated teapots have S-shaped spouts, a feature never seen on Delft imitations. At the time of the book's publication, Delft was the only place in Europe capable of imitating Yixing teapots. Therefore, the stoneware teapots depicted in the book must have originated in Yixing.

De Blegny's book illustration is special because it shows how Europeans of the time used Yixing stoneware teapots. Interestingly, three of the five teapots in the illustration are equipped with European-style metal stoves. This suggests that these teapots were heated directly over a fire. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell whether these teapots contained tea in the illustration. Therefore, these Yixing stoneware teapots may have been used to boil water, or they may have been used to boil tea leaves directly over a fire.

Yixing stoneware teapots were used as utensils for boiling water in early-modern China as well. In an early seventeenth-century Chinese hanging scroll painting, the painter Ding Yunpeng (1547-1628) depicts a scholar drinking tea in a courtyard (fig. 24). A Yixing stoneware teapot sits on a working cooker beside the scholar. This type of teapot, used for boiling water, is known as the *yao* (Ch: 铫). The handle of this teapot is long and straight, making it possible to boil the water without the handle getting too hot and thus scalding the tea drinker. In contrast, the Yixing stoneware teapots illustrated in De Blegny's book have looped handles and intricate appliquéd decoration. Hence, the teapots depicted in the book are typical tea-making vessels, not water-boiling kettles. Apparently, the author utilized the Yixing teapot in a manner familiar to Europeans.

Dufour's and De Blegny's publications show the Europeans' confusion when encountering Yixing stoneware teapots. They realized the connection between stoneware teapots and tea, but could not figure out how the Chinese made tea in such teapots. Faced with the unknown, De Blegny took it for granted that Yixing stoneware teapots would be associated with the metal kettle familiar to Europeans, a thought similar to that of the Yixing potters when confronted with mustard pots.

#### 4.4. Reflecting Remarks

This chapter re-examines the links between the popularity of tea in Dutch society, the export of Yixing stoneware vessels, and the development of related styles. By analyzing literature from the early-modern period in the Netherlands, we find that although the tea trade coincided with the entry of Yixing stoneware vessels into the Netherlands, early Dutch tea drinkers were more concerned with the efficacy of the tea than with how it was brewed. This differs greatly from the Chinese literature on Yixing teapots discussed in Chapter One. As discussed earlier, the Chinese preference for Yixing stoneware was based on the material's contribution to the flavour of the tea. This emphasis came from the tea drinker's long experience of drinking tea. On the other hand, the Dutch of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had no such experience. Moreover, the emphasis on tea as medicine inevitably diminished the focus on the flavour of tea, making the advantages of Yixing stoneware in preserving the taste of tea irrelevant.

In literary works about tea drinking written at the time by authors from various social spheres, teapots are mentioned multiple times, but they are all of porcelain. The absence of Yixing stoneware teapots in early-modern Dutch literature also implies that stoneware teapots were not used as a practical tool for making tea in Dutch society. Dufour and De Blegny's book was one of the few books in Europe at the time that demonstrated the use of Yixing stoneware teapots. Still, the illustrations in the book are yet another example of European confusion about using stoneware teapots from Yixing.

In conclusion, the popularity of tea in the Netherlands during the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century was not the main driving force behind the export of Yixing stoneware, nor was it the impetus for the development of the export style. As discussed in Chapter Two, data from shipwrecks demonstrate that porcelain from Jingdezhen far outnumbered Yixing stoneware in the East-West trade of the time. It can be argued that the popularity of tea in the Netherlands did promote the use of teapots in European societies, but not the Yixing stoneware teapots. Because of this, Yixing stoneware was liberated from its function as a tea set in the Netherlands, thus providing space for Dutch potters to localize Yixing stoneware. In the next chapter, based on the work of the famous Delft potter Ary de

Milde, I will explore what an ideal teapot looks like in the eyes of a Dutch imitator of Yixing stoneware, and how De Milde reshaped knowledge of Yixing stoneware and ultimately redefined the export style in his imitation practice.

## Chapter Five

### Reconstructing Yixing Stoneware in the West: Take Ary de Milde as an Example

#### 5.1 Name the Unknown: Terra Sigillata and Red Earthenware

To this day, stoneware produced in Yixing is known worldwide as Yixing stoneware or *zisha* ware.<sup>111</sup> However, when Yixing stoneware first appeared in Europe in the seventeenth century, Europeans gave various names to this novel substance from the Far East. Among them, *terra sigillata* was the most widely known name. The term *terra sigillata* existed long before Yixing stoneware was introduced to Europe. It was originally referred to as a type of moulded pottery made in ancient Rome. *Terra sigillata* literally means “stamped clay”. From the first century to the second century, this type of earthenware was widely produced in various regions within the boundaries of the Roman Empire.<sup>112</sup> In the Netherlands, fragments of *terra sigillata* have been found in various cities and regions, such as Nijmegen, Limburg, and North Brabant.<sup>113</sup>

*Terra sigillata* was fired at much higher temperatures than ordinary pottery, up to 900 to 1000 degrees Celsius, and its surface was usually decorated with intricately carved or moulded designs, sometimes even with appliqué (fig. 25). The surface of *terra sigillata* vessel is covered with a reddish glazed-like coating containing iron.<sup>114</sup> On the one hand, this coating ensures that the vessel’s earthenware body will be waterproof, and on the other hand, it gives it a charming lustre. In ancient Rome, *terra sigillata* was considered a luxury item.

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<sup>111</sup> Valfré, 2000, p. 120.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>113</sup> See “Luxueus aardewerk: terra sigillata,” Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, accessed 2 April 2024, <https://www.rmo.nl/museumkennis/archeologie-van-nederland/nederland-in-de-romeinse-tijd/de-voorwerpen/terra-sigillata-luxe-aardewerk/>.

<sup>114</sup> Valfré, 2000, p. 122.

There are many similarities between *terra sigillata* and Yixing stoneware. Firstly, *terra sigillata* and Yixing stoneware are both red. Secondly, they are fired at much higher temperatures than ordinary pottery, resulting in a denser body. Thirdly, both have similar decorative techniques. Thus, when Yixing stoneware first arrived in Europe, these similarities likely reminded European collectors of *terra sigillata*, which had been in Europe for over a thousand years.

In the inventories of European collections containing Yixing stoneware from the early eighteenth century, the vast majority of Yixing stoneware is registered under the name of *terra sigillata*.<sup>115</sup> This phenomenon was widespread in Germany, the most famous example is the inventory of the porcelain collection of Augustus the Strong preserved in the Zwinger Palace. In the 1721 inventory documenting August's collection of East Asian ceramics, Yixing stoneware objects are recorded under *terra sigillata* (fig. 26).

Based on these facts, scholar Hsieh Ming-Liang posed the question: “For Westerners, is Yixing stoneware an exotic Eastern craft or an Asian version of *terra sigillata*?”<sup>116</sup> In a subsequent study, Hsieh further compared the similarities between the “ball motifs” and “grape leaf patterns” often found on export-style Yixing stoneware and those on Byzantine and Greco-Roman artefacts. On this basis, researcher Wang Liang-Chun put forward the idea that the winged phoenix motif on Yixing stoneware was similar to the Pegasus figure on some Greek amphorae.<sup>117</sup> However, was Yixing stoneware indeed considered an Asian version of *terra sigillata* in early-modern Europe?

In 1710, a production license issued by Augustus the Strong to the Meissen factory contained the following statement:

By the grace of God, I Frederic-Augustus, declare by this decree that by using materials which are abundant within our States, we are able to produce the type of red teapot which could surpass those from the Indies and which are made of *terra sigillata*.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ströber, 2008, p. 162.

<sup>116</sup> Hsieh, 2021, p. 133. And Wang, 2022, p.112.

<sup>117</sup> Wang, 2002, p. 113.

<sup>118</sup> Extracted from Valfré, 2000, p.121.

*Terra sigillata*, in this statement, refers to a ceramic material, not a variety. While there are many similarities between *terra sigillata* and Yixing stoneware, their differences are just as significant. Ancient Roman *terra sigillata* were never made into teapots or tea sets. In contrast, the Yixing stoneware traded to Europe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was predominately tea ware.

Although we surmised in the previous chapter that Yixing stoneware tea sets were seldom used to make tea in the early-modern Netherlands, the close connection between this type of ware and the practice of tea drinking in China would have been known then. It is the material *zisha* that puzzles Europeans. In the first chapter, we explained that the various characteristics of Yixing stoneware as well as its unique production process are all related to the nature of *zisha* clay, which can only be found in the Yixing area. European craftsmen were not aware of the existence of *zisha* at the time, nor did they have access to this unique clay. At the same time, European craftsmen were conscious of the differences between Yixing stoneware and ordinary European pottery. Faced with an unknown material, it is possible that European craftsmen naturally thought of *terra sigillata* from the Western craft tradition and borrowed its production techniques to imitate Yixing stoneware.

Of course, using *terra sigillata* as a reference for Yixing stoneware imitations does not mean that the two are equivalent in Western eyes. For example, the production license issued by Augustus the Strong describes *terra sigillata* separately from products “from Indies”. In fact, in this document, *terra sigillata* and products from Yixing are used as benchmarks for the quality of the products produced in the Meissen factory. In this context, the material cultures of China and Rome, great as they were, were significant in proving that early eighteenth-century Germany could produce works from local resources that rivalled the splendour of these two material cultures. Whether it is the “teapot from Indies” or the *terra sigillata*, both names for Yixing stoneware seem to suggest the distance of this material culture from the world in which Augustus the Strong lived. The “teapot from Indies” reflects the geographical distance between the origin of this material culture and Germany. At the same time, *terra sigillata* suggests the temporal distance between this Greco-Roman earthenware and eighteenth-century German products.

In the Netherlands, at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century, Yixing stoneware teapots were known as red earthenware teapots or redware teapots. In

Chapter One, we mentioned that Yixing stoneware could come in various colours, depending on the metal elements in the clay used. Thus, Yixing stoneware is not just red. Yixing stoneware recovered from the shipwrecks of the Dutch East India Company in the early modern period also attests to the fact that stoneware destined for the Dutch market at that time was available in a variety of colours, including yellow, purple, and red. In addition, the Netherlands, the first country in Europe other than Portugal to import Yixing stoneware, would have had the most comprehensive knowledge of this material culture at that time. In this context, the reasons behind the Dutch practice of naming Yixing stoneware as “red earthenware” (Dutch: rode aardewerk) or “redware teapot” are worth exploring.

Although the Dutch could not decipher the secrets of Yixing stoneware’s production techniques, they could easily produce terracotta. At that time, terracotta workshops centred in The Hague produced a wide range of products, including jardiniere, sculptures, and architectural components.<sup>119</sup> These terracotta products were fired at low temperatures, were highly absorbent, and had a bright red colour. Early eighteenth-century terracotta wares are strikingly similar to Yixing stoneware reproductions from Delft of the same period in terms of density, weight, colour, and decorative technique.<sup>120</sup> Meanwhile, the interiors of Delft teapots were covered with a glaze to solve the water seepage problem inherent in earthenware vessels.

Most of the potters in Delft worked in tin-glazed earthenware factories before turning to imitate Yixing stoneware. This made them very familiar with the process of making earthenware. Of course, the clay used for tin-glazed earthenware in Delft is a greyish-yellow colour, which is not present in Yixing stoneware. In this case, Delft potters likely chose red for their Yixing stoneware imitations because it was the only colour close to the genuine Yixing stoneware that could be produced using European clays and techniques. Therefore, it is understandable that the Dutch named their Yixing stoneware teapots “redware teapots” or “red earthenware teapots”.

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<sup>119</sup> Van Gangelen, Knol, Kortekaas, and Wuite, 2012, pp. 61-63.

<sup>120</sup> This is based on my experience examining the early eighteenth-century terracotta architectural compartments and teapots made by Jacobus de Caluwe in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. A technical comparison of these two materials still needs to be done. However, such examinations went beyond the scope of this thesis.

The process of naming unfamiliar things is also a cognitive process. The name of Yixing stoneware in the early-modern Netherlands reflects a compromise made by the Delft potters within their existing capabilities. In the absence of *zisha*, the red colour of terracotta became the link between the Delft potters and their counterparts from Yixing. Without realising it, this compromise reshaped the Dutch understanding of Yixing stoneware and eventually entered the realm of knowledge. To this day, many Dutch scholars still refer to Yixing stoneware as redware or red earthenware.<sup>121</sup>

The material differences between Yixing stoneware and Delft imitations somehow prompted the Delft potters to focus more on imitating the style of Yixing stoneware to make their red teapots made with local clays and techniques look more like Yixing products and less like terracotta. This is well exemplified in the work of Ary de Milde. In the following section, I will discuss how the potters of Delft were able to make their redware teapots more akin to Yixing pieces by shaping a style based on the Yixing products available on the Dutch market at the time. And how this style, moulded by the Dutch potters, ultimately reshaped our definition of the export style of Yixing stoneware in the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century.

## 5.2 Ary de Milde: A Successful “Teapot Baker”

Ary de Milde (1634-1708) was an important early potter in the Delft redware teapot industry. In 1679, he and Samuel van Eenhoorn (1655-1685), owner of the *De Grieksche A* factory, applied to the Dutch government for a patent in the hope of obtaining the exclusive right to produce redware teapots for fifteen years.<sup>122</sup> The patent was not granted. However, the Dutch government advised all Delft potters to put their trademarks on the bottom of the teapots they produced (fig. 27 & 28).<sup>123</sup> A passage of the patent reads as follows:

Since 1672, (Patent applicant) has produced copies of Chinese porcelain, and he has worked since then to copy the redware teapots, too. these were now so perfect in colour, beauty and strength.....they were as good as the original Chinese teapots.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> For this, see Van Dam, 2003, pp. 33-41. And De Visser, 1957, pp. 104-110.

<sup>122</sup> Van Verschuer, 1916, p. 9.

<sup>123</sup> Van Verschuer, 1916, p.10 & Van Dam, 2003, p. 33.

<sup>124</sup> English translation extracted from Van Dam, 2003, p. 33.



It is clear from his application documents that De Milde realised that Chinese teapots had an unrivalled advantage in terms of quality. When De Milde began to imitate Chinese teapots with local materials, he modelled his teapots after Yixing examples. Lambertus Cleffius (?-1691) was another Delft potter teapot contemporary of De Milde imitating the Yixing teapot. He advertised in the Haarlem newspaper that his redware teapots resemble Chinese teapots in “colour, strength and beauty”.<sup>125</sup> From these two primary sources, we can summarise the following points to help us sketch the profile of Delft's red teapot manufacturing industry in the last three decades of the seventeenth century.

Firstly, the ability to imitate Yixing stoneware teapots is still limited to a handful of producers, who regard the recipe and manufacturing process as a trade secret. This explains why they are all eager to apply for patent protection from the state to gain monopoly rights in the industry. Secondly, the value of teapots produced in Delft depends to a large extent on the degree of similarity to the Chinese originals. Finally, patent applications, advertisements in local newspapers, and potter's marks on the bottom of teapots reveal the fierce competition that exists in the market.

While the formulas and production techniques may have differed, the goal of all efforts, as expressed in De Milde's patent application and Cleffius' advertisements, was to emulate the Yixing teapot as closely as possible and get the product to market as quickly as possible. At the same time, it is clear from De Milde's and Cleffius's texts that, no matter how successful they were in imitating the appearance of the Yixing teapot, there were still differences between the Delft teapot and its Chinese counterpart. In their texts, they never portray their work as an indistinguishable copy of the Yixing teapot; rather, what they emphasise in their writings is how minor these differences are. These differences can only be detected by comparing their products with genuine Yixing teapots. In late seventeenth-century Dutch society, red earthenware teapots from Delft were evaluated primarily based on their similarity to Yixing teapots, as these examples demonstrate.

To what extent did the potters of Delft at the end of the seventeenth century succeed in imitating genuine Yixing teapots? As there are very few pieces with the Cleffius mark, I will

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<sup>125</sup> Van Dam, 2003, p. 34.

base my analysis on teapots made by Ary de Milde, particularly those with the “running fox” mark, which was the workshop mark used early in his career.

The redware teapot with appliquéd plum blossom decoration from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam can be regarded as a representative example of Ary de Milde's work (fig. 27). The teapot has a rounded body, a semi-circular handle, and a short, straight spout. The body of the teapot rests on a short, straight foot. Both the body and lid of the teapot are decorated with the plum blossom motif, which also appears on Yixing stoneware wares and Dehua porcelain from the seventeenth century. The bottom of the pot is stamped with the words “Ary d. Milde” and an image of a fox running from right to left. The teapot’s colour is deep red, similar to the colour of Yixing red clay teapots. However, the red slip that covers the entire teapot is peeling off in a few places on the body, revealing the darker clay body underneath it.

The De Milde teapot in the Rijksmuseum’s collection is similar in shape, colour, and decorative technique to a stoneware teapot from Yixing in the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection (fig. 29). However, there are still some differences between the two teapots. The most obvious difference is the shape of the spout. The spout of a Chinese teapot is rarely straight, as the curved lines of the handle and spout are essential to the overall aesthetic of a Chinese teapot. In addition, the appliquéd plum blossom decoration on De Milde teapots is much flatter than that on Chinese teapots. In the case of the Victoria and Albert Museum teapot, the plum’s main and secondary branches, as well as blossoms that adorn the pot’s body, are applied in varying depths of relief. In contrast, the details of the plum branches on the De Milde teapot do not vary in terms of the depth of relief. However, the other differences are insignificant when compared to the variances in material and technique between these two teapots.

The materials used in Ary de Milde's work are always heavier and denser than those of his competitors. Therefore, it is reasonable to deduce that potters, especially those who proudly put their mark on the base of their teapots, had to develop their secret recipe for clay. This trade secret made their teapots stand out and helped them achieve what De Milde described in his patent application as “not inferior to the quality and value of Chinese teapots”.

Regardless of the precise origin of the clay used by the Delft potters, Western clay contains completely different mineral elements from Yixing *zisha* clay. As a result, Western clay inevitably takes on a distinct colour after firing compared to *zisha* clay. Ary de Milde was aware of this problem, and he coated the surface of the teapot with a thin layer of iron-containing slip to disguise the colour of the Western clay (fig. 30.1 & fig. 30.2). This red coating changed not only the colour of the teapot but also its texture. Compared to Yixing stoneware, Delft's earthenware has a rougher texture and a less lustrous surface. Thanks to this coating, the teapots made by De Milde have a more “Yixing appearance” than other Delft redware teapots.

As many scholars have pointed out, the teapots made by Ary de Milde are very close to the Yixing originals in shape, decoration, and colour. However, even De Milde could not replicate the unique production techniques used by the Yixing potters. This can be seen in the interior of a De Milde teapot: there is no seam characteristic of Yixing teapots produced with the *Da Shentong* technique, only layers of circular traces left by throwing on a potter's wheel (fig. 31).

The European clay is too soft for the *Da Shentong* technique to be applied. The wheel-throwing process limits the shapes of the teapots because it is difficult to make any shapes other than a round on a spinning pottery wheel. As a result, teapots made this way are also less consistent in size than those made by the *Da Shentong* technique. Yixing potters can control the size of their teapots by measuring the size of the clay pieces used to make the body, a precision that is difficult to achieve on a spinning pottery wheel. In the teapots made by Ary de Milde, even though they have the same decoration and shape, they are always inconsistent in size.

After De Milde's death on 25 January 1708, his daughter and son-in-law inherited the factory and continued to run the red earthenware teapot business until 1717. Eventually, De Milde's daughter sold the factory in 1724 after her husband's death.<sup>126</sup> Until Meissen succeeded in producing red stoneware teapots in the style of Yixing counterparts in 1708, Delft was the only place in the West where such teapots could be produced. Of all the potters in Delft, De Milde occupied an important position even before his death. De Milde-marked Delft red

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<sup>126</sup> Van Verschuier, 1916, pp. 8-9. And Van Dam, 2003, p. 34.

teapots make up most of all potter-marked red teapots in collections worldwide today. For instance, although Lambertus Cleffius confidently advertised the quality of his teapots in the Haarlem newspapers, teapots bearing his mark are extremely rare.<sup>127</sup> The surviving teapots bearing the potters' mark indicate that during the initial thirty years of red teapot production in Delft, potters only operated on a moderate scale, with the exception of Ary de Milde.

On examining the red teapots produced by Dutch potters at the end of the seventeenth century, only those bearing the Ary de Milde mark best correspond to the look and texture of a genuine Yixing teapot. It is possible that Delft potters who could not imitate Yixing stoneware as accurately as Ary de Milde ceased to specialise in producing red teapots and turned to Delft tin-glazed pottery. For example, while redware teapots bearing the Cleffius or Van Eenhorn marks are extremely rare, Cleffius is known for owning the *Metal Pot* delftware factory, and the Van Eenhorn family operated the renowned *De Grieksche A* factory for decades.

To summarize, by the end of the seventeenth century, the quality of red teapots made by Delft potters was primarily judged by how closely their work resembled the Yixing originals. Dutch craftsmen had to use special recipes and coatings to overcome the inadequacy of the local clay in order to produce teapots that were closer in colour and texture to the Yixing originals. Meanwhile, Ary de Milde was not the only one who succeeded in using the local clay and production techniques to imitate Yixing originals. Despite this, Ary de Milde's teapots still stood out in such a competitive market. Why did his teapots stand out? I suggested that the reason lies in his imitation of the style of Yixing teapots with the appliquéd decorations.

### **5.3 Choice of Style as the Result of the Compromise**

Today, this type of Yixing stoneware teapot with sparse plum-blossom decoration is regarded by scholars as a typical export-style vessel of the second half of the seventeenth century. However, the discussion of Yixing stoneware found in early-modern shipwrecks in Chapter Two shows that Yixing teapots with appliquéd motifs were not in the majority of the cargo.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Van Dam believed none of the marked teapots by Lambertus Cleffius survived to this day. See Van Dam, 2003, pp. 33-34.

<sup>128</sup> Lam, 2007, p. 195. And Li, 2009, pp. 71-72.

Similarly, such teapots are uncommon in European collections as well. Why did Ary de Milde choose this uncommon type of Yixing teapot for his imitation? Here, I suggest that Ary de Milde's choice was based on a compromise between the traditions of European pottery and the desirable appearance of the Yixing stoneware teapot in the Dutch eyes of the time.

Dutch potters, including Ary de Milde, never made plain red earthenware teapots. Previous scholars have suggested that this phenomenon occurred because plain teapots were not popular in Dutch society.<sup>129</sup> Still, in a painting depicting an upper-class Dutch family drinking tea, the well-dressed man is holding an undecorated red stoneware teapot (fig. 32)<sup>130</sup> Thus, the impression that European society aesthetically disliked plain teapots is inaccurate. It has also been suggested that ordinary teapots were mainly used for tea in Europe, while those with appliquéd decoration were used as collectable objects.<sup>131</sup> However, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, the previous assertion that the Dutch mainly used Yixing stoneware teapots for brewing tea is unfounded. To conclude, the main reason for the popularity of Yixing stoneware teapots with appliquéd decoration in Europe should not be its practicality in making tea. Moreover, there is no functional difference between an appliquéd teapot and a plain teapot when making tea. Therefore, there must have been other reasons why the Delft potters, represented by Ary de Milde, favoured teapots with appliquéd decorations of plum blossom.

As a potter, Ary de Milde realised that his teapots could not match the Yixing originals in terms of material and craftsmanship. De Milde's teapots are much thicker than their Yixing counterparts, and the iron-rich slip applied on De Milde's red teapots often peel off over time. In addition, many of De Milde's pots in European museum collections have small cracks in the surface that are visible to the naked eye, but even so, these flawed pieces were not discarded by potters and collectors.<sup>132</sup> At the same time, it has been discussed previously that in the second half of the seventeenth century, the quality of a Delft red teapot largely depended on how closely it resembled a Yixing teapot. Thus, the conflict between the limitations of local production techniques and the desire for the likeness of the Yixing original was a dilemma that the Delft potters had to resolve. In this case, appliquéd

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<sup>129</sup> For this view, see Li, 2009, pp. 73-75.

<sup>130</sup> For the details of this painting, see Corrigan, van Campen, and Diercks (ed.), 2015, p. 214.

<sup>131</sup> Chen, 2019, pp. 83-111.

<sup>132</sup> Duysters, 2015, pp. 34-35.

decorations on the surface of stoneware vessels can be a trick to hide the imperfections caused by material limitations.

But why did Ary de Milde decorate his red earthenware teapots with appliqué when there were so many other decorative techniques? Indeed, Ary de Milde had no choice since the vast majority of Yixing stoneware of the seventeenth century was decorated with techniques mostly related to the nature of the *zisha* clay from Yixing. For example, using different coloured clays to create relief designs on the surfaces of stoneware artefacts, like the one found on the Geldermalsen shipwrecks, required a special type of *zisha* clay known as *Tuan Ni*. Moreover, teapots salvaged from the Oosterland shipwreck are decorated with delicate reticulated patterns, a technique that is only possible using *zisha* clay of high physical strength. As for square or biomorphic-shaped Yixing stoneware teapots, it would have been impossible to make them using European clays and production techniques.

Unlike the other decorative techniques described above, the appliqué technique was used in native European pottery traditions such as *terra sigillata* and terracotta long before Yixing stoneware was introduced to the West. In addition, the physical strength of European clays was sufficient for applying appliqué, and the lower firing temperatures to which European earthenware could be subjected did not affect this decorative technique as well. Most importantly, the Yixing stoneware teapots imitated by European potters using the appliqué technique are visually very similar to the Yixing originals that used the same decorative method. By applying appliqué decorations, European potters greatly enhanced the “Yixing” impression of red earthenware teapots within their material and technical comfort zone.

To conclude, rather than Ary de Milde actively choosing appliqué teapots as the predominant style for the redware teapots he produced, it is more likely that he, as a successful businessman in a highly competitive market, ultimately chose this style after weighing the constraints of his production conditions against the demands of the society. For De Milde, this choice reflected the compromises he had to make as an imitator of Yixing stoneware, but these compromises brought him commercial success. Certainly, when De Milde marketed teapots decorated with appliqué plum blossom branches, he probably had no idea that this style he was compelled to choose would impact later redware teapots in Europe, nor did he think that his choice would enter the body of knowledge and eventually put his stamp on the stylistic definition of Yixing stoneware for export.

#### 5.4 From Imitator to the Source of Imitation: The Repercussions of Ary de Milde

De Milde's work became so popular that his reinterpretation of Yixing stoneware became the new standard for imitating Yixing stoneware teapots in the West. In the collection of the Groninger Museum is a stoneware teapot dating from around 1710. The teapot's dark purple colour and the visible casting seams on the body are characteristic of the so-called “Böttger Stoneware” produced in Meissen.

Surprisingly, the bottom of the teapot is marked with a “Running Fox” surrounded by De Milde's name (fig. 33.1 & fig. 33.2).<sup>133</sup> The teapot body and lid are decorated with De Milde-style plum blossom decorations in relief. It is important to note that these plum blossoms are not applied on the teapot's body as they were on De Milde's teapots. Instead, they are part of the body of the teapot. There is no doubt that this teapot was moulded and cast from an original Ary de Milde work. Interestingly, the early Meissen potters, led by Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682-1719), chose Ary de Milde's work as a model for casting rather than the Yixing original.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the early eighteenth-century inventory of Augustus the Strong's collection reveals that the Dresden court must have had a fairly rich collection of Yixing stoneware in various styles. In this context, the Meissen potter's choice of a teapot made twenty years earlier by his colleague in Delft as an imitation model is astonishing, especially considering that no Meissen stoneware vessels have ever been found that were cast from genuine Yixing stoneware teapots.<sup>134</sup>

Outside Germany, Ary de Milde teapot replicas were also produced in Delft in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A teapot with pine branch decoration in the Groninger Museum also bears the mark typical of Ary de Milde on the base (see fig. 34, fig. 35.1 & fig. 35.2). However, the body of this teapot is much thicker than the standard work of De Milde. In addition, the clay used for this teapot is rather porous and light, whereas Ary de

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<sup>133</sup> Another similar Meissen teapot with De Milde's mark on the bottom is in the collection of the Arnhem Museum, Inv. No. AB 9024. See Duysters, 2015, p. 33.

<sup>134</sup> There are Meissen stoneware Guanyin Statues cast from the Chinese Blanc-de-chine model though, see Ströber, 2008, p.160.

Milde usually uses a denser, darker clay. The appliquéd decoration on this teapot is also stylistically at odds with Ary de Milde's genuine works. For instance, the composition of the appliquéd sprigs on the authentic Ary de Milde teapot is more horizontally oriented, and the layout tends to be sparse than that in this case. In addition, the spout of the Ary de Milde teapot is always proportionally smaller than the spout of this Groninger Museum teapot. In short, although bearing Ary de Milde's "running fox" mark, this teapot was probably copied by an unknown Delft potter, possibly Jacobus de Caluwe (?-ca.1734).<sup>135</sup>

In the early eighteenth century, Jacobus de Caluwe became the representative for red teapot production in Delft. On the one hand, De Caluwe is seen as the heir to De Milde's artistic legacy. Most teapots bearing the De Caluwe mark are similar in style to De Milde teapots. For example, they both use appliquéd plum blossom or pine tree sprig as a key decorative feature of their teapots, and the De Caluwe teapot in the Rijksmuseum Collection is typical of this style (fig. 36). The body and lid of this teapot are decorated with sparse appliqué of plum blossom. In particular, the shoulder of the teapot is decorated with flower motifs similar to that found in Ary De Milde's works.

Of course, De Caluwe also wanted to add a personal touch to his teapots. For example, on the surface of the Rijksmuseum teapot, we can see several dotted lines, which act like borders against the appliquéd decoration (fig. 36).<sup>136</sup> No art historian has yet explained the inspiration behind this style. Here, I suggest that these dotted lines may have developed based on De Caluwe's misinterpretation of the appliquéd decoration that falling off from Yixing stoneware teapots. In Yixing, applying a pattern on the surface of teapots requires the potter first to create the decorative motifs in a mould and then attach the motifs to the pot using thinner clay as an adhesive. After firing in the kiln, the clay used as an adhesive hardens, holding the motifs firmly on the teapot. However, the appliquéd motifs sometimes fall off the surface over time, leaving only dotted traces of the adhesive clay. De Caluwe noticed these dotted marks on the surface of Yixing teapots and applied them to his work as decoration. In a way, therefore, the dots on De Caluwe's works are also a by-product of his imitation of the appliquéd decoration.

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<sup>135</sup> The production technique, the glazed-like slip, and the rather porous clay of this work pointed to its Delft origin rather than Meissen or Staffordshire.

<sup>136</sup> There is also a type of De Caluwe's work that only features the dotted lines as a decoration. They were used to be considered the original De Caluwe style. For an example in the collection of the Arnhem Museum, see Duysters, 2015, p. 37.



Jacobus De Caluwe's works, based on De Milde's style and incorporating his observations of Yixing teapots, are found in museums worldwide. Researchers have long regarded teapots in this combined style as typical of De Caluwe's work. However, a collection of earthenware shards recently found in the Rijksmuseum depot has shed new light on De Caluwe's bold innovations in Delft's red earthenware teapot industry. This collection of shards, excavated from where De Caluwe founded his second workshop in Delft, shows him experimenting with colourful tin glaze on his earthenware products (fig. 37).<sup>137</sup>

Distinct from the known De Caluwe style represented by the teapot shown before, the shard collection found in the Rijksmuseum elucidates that De Caluwe was never satisfied as merely a follower of the established tradition of the Delft red earthenware teapot industry. Instead, he endeavoured to create vessels that went far beyond the restrictions set by the works of his predecessor—Ary de Milde. The teapot decorated with an abstract brown pattern under the transparent yellow glaze is a good example of De Caluwe's departure from both the works of Ary de Milde and the genuine Yixing stoneware teapots (fig. 38). Here, De Caluwe developed unique combinations of glazes and earthenware teapot bodies that had never been seen before in Delft.

The reason Jacobus de Caluwe boldly innovated his products and the inspiration behind his novel styles is not the focus of this chapter. Instead, I would like to inquire why the collectors and researchers did not know De Caluwe's innovations, represented by these shards, until archaeologists found these earthenware fragments in Delft. This group of fragments, unearthed from the site where De Caluwe's workshop was established in the eighteenth-century Delft, is the only physical evidence of the bold innovations he undertook. No works bearing the De Caluwe mark in public collections anywhere in the world that are similar in style to this group. Even among the fragments in the Rijksmuseum collection, De Caluwe has left his "running stag" mark only on works close to Ary de Milde's style (fig. 39.1 & fig. 39.2).

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<sup>137</sup> For the information about Jacobus de Caluwe's workshop in Delft, see Hoekstra-Klein, 2002, pp. 109-116. For the research of all types of earthenware found in this shard collection, see the author's previous study: Zhou Lecong, "Jacobus de Caluwe and Delft Tradition of Imitating Yixing Stoneware Teapots," *The Oriental Ceramic Society Newsletter* 32, no. 1 (April 2024): 14-17.

Based on the above description, it is reasonable to deduce that this collection of earthenware fragments most likely represents a failed attempt by Jacobus de Caluwe. On the one hand, it shows us De Caluwe's intention to revolutionise the Delft redware industry, which had been ossified since Ary de Milde. On the other hand, these teapot fragments show how difficult it was for a potter in the early eighteenth-century Delft to break away from the influence of Ary de Milde and establish his own style. Even though De Caluwe was able to create teapots with a wide range of glazes, the market preferred vessels from his collection that were similar in style to those of Ary de Milde. This was evidenced by the style of earthenware vessels with his mark found in public collections.

These three examples attest to the enduring influence of the style established by Ary de Milde in the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Reproductions of Ary de Milde teapots from Meissen and Delft potters show how redware teapot makers in the early-modern Netherlands and Germany embraced Ary de Milde's style. Fragments of De Caluwe's tin-glazed earthenware in the Rijksmuseum collection testify to the difficulties encountered by an ambitious potter trying to escape the influence of Ary de Milde. Germany and the Netherlands are both countries that have had large collections of Yixing stoneware works since the seventeenth century. However, early eighteenth-century redware teapot makers in both countries seem to have preferred to imitate Yixing stoneware by drawing on the works of Ary de Milde, rather than using the Yixing originals as direct references. In fact, in imitating Yixing stoneware, Ary de Milde also reshaped the appearance of Yixing stoneware teapots and the overall perception of this material culture in the eyes of the early-modern Europeans.

De Milde's imitation of Yixing stoneware is a process of domesticating an imported material culture with a familiar body of knowledge. It is also a process of dispelling the mystique of foreign material culture. The production licenses issued by Augustus the Strong and the patent applications of Ary de Milde demonstrate that European potters were proud to employ their techniques and raw materials to create stoneware products that were just as impressive as their Yixing counterparts. Ary de Milde's style, in this regard, stands as a testament to the European success in domesticating previously unknown material culture.

## Conclusion

Now, I would like to reiterate Professor Yin Jinan's words that I quoted at the beginning: “The relevance of the object of study in art history to the present day is the latest relevance after countless relevance.”<sup>138</sup> When we reflect on the history of the export of Yixing stoneware and the formation of the “export style” in the early modern period, we can easily observe this “latest relevance”. However, the aim of this study is not to provide an incontrovertible definition of the “export style” of Yixing stoneware or to focus on the disparities between the “export style” and the “domestic style” of Yixing stoneware. Instead, the goal is to demonstrate how knowledge of the “export style” of Yixing stoneware emerged through material imitation, mutual misunderstanding, and technical compromise between Eastern and Western potters, showcasing the relevance that existed in history but no longer exists. Only by elucidating the historical relevance underlying this latest relevance can we address the research question of how the export style of Yixing stoneware was forged through the collaborative efforts of Eastern and Western potters.

The first layer of relevance consists of trade. The East-West ceramic trade manipulated by the East India Company was the basis for the export of Yixing stoneware to Europe. Of course, the Yixing stoneware trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was complex and varied, as reflected in the Yixing stoneware recovered from shipwrecks. As a commodity, Yixing stoneware teapots were not a staple of the trade. Even among the few Yixing stoneware teapots found in shipwrecks, there were many different decorative styles and vessel types. Indeed, as I discuss in Chapter Two, in the early modern East-West trade, Yixing stoneware was often shipped in small quantities from China to Europe as private cargo. In contrast to the East India Company, private individuals did not need to be overly concerned with market preferences, forms of trade, or even prices when purchasing goods. To a large extent, an individual's choice of goods was related to his or her personal preferences, experiences and social class.

This relevance demonstrated by the East-West trade can be further categorised into macro and micro relevance. The macro-relevance involves the routes through which Yixing stoneware was sold to Europe and the players on this trade route. For instance, Batavia

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<sup>138</sup> Yin, 2022, p.3.

played a significant role in the trade of Yixing stoneware. The city not only facilitated trade as a transit point between China and Europe but also injected elements from both East and West into the trade of Yixing stoneware through the city's own complex cultural attributes. Under this circumstance, whether it was Hokkien merchants from Fujian, employees of the East India Company, or potters from Yixing, they were all involved in the export of Yixing stoneware in one way or another, but none of them had a dominant role. This diverse participation in trade activities between the East and the West is ultimately reflected in the Yixing stoneware pieces found in shipwrecks and European collections. It could be argued that these materials from shipwrecks and European collections do not so much prove the existence of what has traditionally been regarded as the "export style" as they question the legitimacy of such style. Nevertheless, as I mentioned in Chapter Two, there does exist a category of teapots that are mostly found in European collections but rarely seen in China. It is the existence of this category that has long led scholars to question the possible early modern connections between Yixing and the Netherlands stimulated by the trade of Yixing stoneware to Europe. In Chapter Three, a mustard pot made of Yixing stoneware from the Groninger Museum's collection confirms for the first time the possibility of such a contact. This easily overlooked detail of the trade, revealed through individual objects, is a micro-relevance.

Interestingly, the Yixing stoneware mustard pot reflects not a mutual understanding between East and West, but a confusion. In the macro-relevance of trade, this confusion is often dissipated by the involvement of multiple parties coming from different cultural backgrounds in the trade. However, when a type of relevance becomes increasingly specific and explicit, these confusions are magnified. For example, when a craftsman who specialises in making teapots is suddenly asked to make a mustard pot, the craftsman will often still understand the concept of a mustard pot through the same body of knowledge that he has used to make teapots. This understanding of a foreign culture through one's own familiar knowledge constitutes the second kind of relevance—the relevance between the foreign culture and one's own tradition.

Trade made it possible for different people to learn about each other's cultural traditions. However, in the early modern East-West trade, the flow of objects was much faster than the flow of knowledge. This led to the fact that people were often first exposed to objects from other cultures without having the knowledge to understand the production, use, and cultural

connotations of such objects. This is precisely what previous generations of scholars lacked when studying the export of Yixing stoneware. They tend to start from the knowledge system of their own culture and try to explain the encounter of a certain material culture in another cultural system. Interpreting the reception of Yixing stoneware in Europe through tea-drinking culture or traditional Chinese literati art are examples of this research trap. In fact, it is precisely because the recipients of material culture are often not able to form knowledge about this foreign culture immediately upon contact with it that they have the possibility and the space to create their own body of knowledge about foreign material culture from their familiar cultural traditions. For example, the naming of Yixing stoneware in the seventeenth-century Netherlands and Germany reflects the instinct of Europeans to learn about foreign material culture through their own ceramic traditions. It is important to note, of course, that this practice does not mean that Europeans of the time equated Yixing stoneware with European pottery such as *terra sigillata*. On the contrary, this relevance mainly provided technical support for the localization of Yixing stoneware. For example, when Ary de Milde first succeeded in imitating a red earthenware teapot that resembled Yixing stoneware, he did so using techniques drawn from Europe's own ceramic traditions.

The final type of historical relevance discussed in this study is that associated with function. Yixing stoneware has long been closely associated with the practical function of drinking tea in China. This functional association has also indirectly influenced the positioning of Yixing stoneware in Chinese culture. As I demonstrated in Chapter Four, Yixing stoneware was probably not widely used as a tea vessel in Europe. This also liberated this material culture from its function of making tea. As a result, Dutch potters were able to focus more on the external appearance of the teapot in their imitations. This provided a precondition for the prevalence of a certain artistic style.

To summarize, all three of the aforementioned types of relevance, as well as the factors involved, influenced Ary de Milde when he began to replicate Yixing stoneware teapots using local materials and production techniques. The trade between the East and the West led to the widespread distribution of numerous Yixing stoneware teapots in European society. De Milde used these teapots as a reference for his own style. Meanwhile, the influx of Chinese teapots also led to competition between Chinese goods and Delft counterparts. In this context, the goal of the Dutch potter was to produce a redware teapot that was “as good as a Yixing teapot”. Meanwhile, De Milde recognized the lack of understanding of the raw materials,

techniques, and decorative styles of Yixing stoneware when imitating it due to the collision of foreign cultures with their own traditions. These limitations prevented the Delft potters from imitating as much as they wanted; instead, they needed to choose a compromise path that balanced their production difficulties with the social demand for similarity to the Yixing originals.

In a way, Ary de Milde, through his successful career as the “teapot baker”, reintroduced knowledge about Yixing stoneware in Dutch society and made it the standard in the field. Following him, European potters started to mimic De Milde’s work rather than the original Yixing pieces. It can be said that it was the early-modern Delft potters, represented by Ary de Milde, who, through imitation, laid the foundation for the body of knowledge we have today about the export style of Yixing stoneware. Nevertheless, in realising this process of knowledge production, the Delft potters were inevitably influenced by the three types of relevance mentioned above, which were shaped by a combination of Chinese and Western factors. As a result, the style developed by the Delft potters is, in fact, rooted in the broader and complex East-West material cultural exchange behind it.

## Illustrations



**Fig. 1** Ores of *zisha* mined from Huanglong Mountain. Yixing Stoneware Museum, Yixing City, Jiangsu Province, China.



**Fig. 2** Diagram showing the general production processes of *Da Shentong* technique in Yixing. Photos retrieved from “ban shougong he quan shougong de qubie he gongyi tezheng” (The differences between the semi-hand-made teapots and hand-made teapots), Yihu Website, accessed 5 Oct. 2023, [https://www.sohu.com/a/123973496\\_213539](https://www.sohu.com/a/123973496_213539).



**Fig. 3** Attributed to Gongchun, Teapot in the Shape of a Tree Burl, Yixing stoneware, China. 19<sup>th</sup> century, h. 10 cm, d. 12 cm. Collection National Museum of China. Picture retrieved from [https://www.chnmuseum.cn/zp/zpml/kgfjp/202011/t20201109\\_248041.shtml](https://www.chnmuseum.cn/zp/zpml/kgfjp/202011/t20201109_248041.shtml).



**Left: fig. 4.1** Double-spouted Teapot with Appliquéd Decoration of Plum-blossom Sprigs, Yixing Stoneware. China, ca. 1700, h.15 cm. Collection National Museet, Copenhagen, inv. no. Ebc 88.

**Right: fig. 4.2** Ribbed Teapot, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1660, h. 14 cm. Collection National Museet, Copenhagen.





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**Fig. 5** Yao (water-boiling pot), recovered from the Vung Tau shipwreck, stoneware. China, ca. 1690. Picture retrieved from Christiaan Jörg and Michael Flecker, *Porcelain from the Vung Tau Wreck, The Hallstorm Excavation* (London: Sun Tree Publishing Ltd, 2001), page 91, fig. 96.



**Fig. 6** Yixing stoneware teapots recovered from the Geldermalsen shipwreck, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1750. Picture retrieved from Christiaan Jörg, *The Geldermalsen, History and Porcelain* (Groningen: Kemper Publication, 1986), p.102, fig. 104.



**Fig. 7** Teapot, recovered from the Geldermalsen shipwreck, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1750. Picture retrieved from Christiaan Jörg, *The Geldermalsen, History and Porcelain* (Groningen: Kemper Publication, 1986), p.102, fig. 104.



**Left: fig. 8.1:** Pendant in the shape of a Chi Dragon, Jade. China, Warring State (475-221 B.C.). Collection Palace Museum, Beijing, inv. no. 故 00103990.

**Right: fig. 8.2:** Lidded jar decorated with *chi* dragon, Jingdezhen porcelain. China, Kangxi period, Qing dynasty, 17<sup>th</sup> century, h. 25 cm. Collection Palace Museum, Beijing, inv, no. 新 00006775.



**Upper left: fig.9.1** Teapot decorated with appliqué decoration of two lions chasing a ball, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1750, h. 4 cm, d. 6.5 cm. Collection Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. AK-NM-6561-A.

**Upper right: fig. 9.2** Teapot decorated with appliqué decoration of two lions chasing a ball, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1750, h. 4.3 cm, d. 6.5 cm. Collection Mai Foundation, Taipei.

**Bottom left: fig. 9.3** Teapot with the lion-shaped knob, recovered from the Geldermalsen shipwreck, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1750. Image by Wang Mian, Nanjing Museum.

**Bottom right: fig. 9.4** Teapot decorated with appliqué decoration of two lions chasing a ball, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1750, h. 4 cm, d. 6.5 cm. Collection Mai Foundation, Taipei.



**Left: fig. 10.1** Hexagonal Teapot, Yixing stoneware. China, first half of 17<sup>th</sup> century. Private Collection. Picture retrieved from Zhang, Wang, Huo, and Huang, *Yixing Yao* (Nanchang: Jiangxi Fineart Publishing House, 2016), page 176, fig. 7-3.

**Right: fig. 10.2** Hexagonal Teapot recovered from the Geldermalsen Shipwreck, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1750. Picture retrieved from Christiaan Jörg, *The Geldermalsen, History and Porcelain* (Groningen: Kemper Publication, 1986), p.102, fig. 104.



**Left: fig. 11.1** Teapot in the shape of a bundle of bamboo stem, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1700, h. 11.8 cm, d. 9.2 cm. Porzellansammlung, Zwinger, Dresden, inv. no. PO 3910.

Picture retrieved from

<https://royalporcelaincollection.skd.museum/catalogue/1/object/2082?object=1230492082&type=2>.

**Right: fig.11.2** Teapot in the shape of a bundle of bamboo stem, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. 1700, h. 9.8 cm, d. 8.1 cm. Porzellansammlung, Zwinger, Dresden, PO 3895. Picture retrieved from

<https://royalporcelaincollection.skd.museum/catalogue/1/object/2082?object=1241362082&type=2>.



**Left: fig. 12.1** Teapot in the shape of a bundle of bamboo stems, gilded Yixing stoneware.

China, ca. 1700, h. 12 cm. Collection Palace Museum, Beijing, inv. no. 故 00157142.

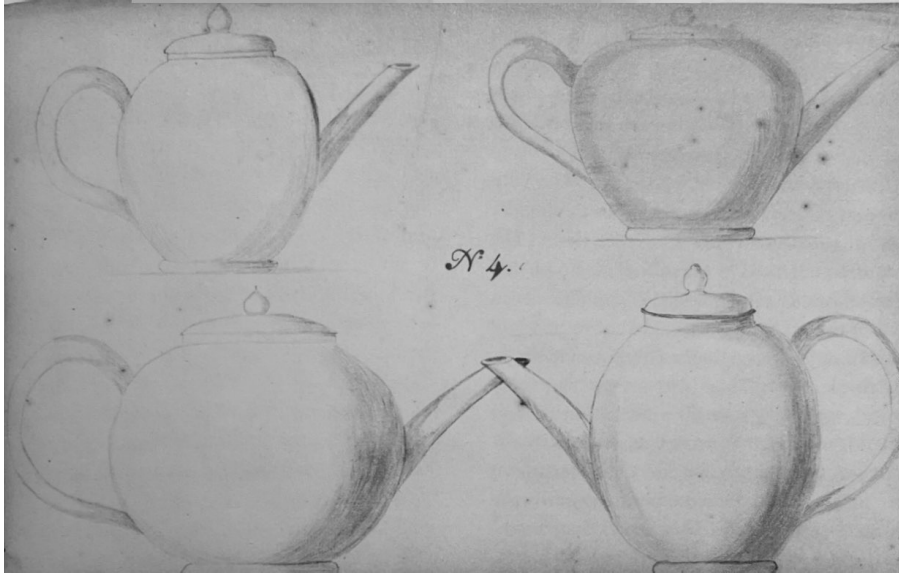
**Right: fig. 12.2** Teapot in the shape of a bundle of bamboo stems, Yixing stoneware. China,

ca. 1700, h. 9.7 cm. Collection Palace Museum, Beijing, inv. no. 故 00157143.



**Left: fig. 13.1** Teapot decorated with the impressed decoration of Kui Xing, recovered from the Oosterland Shipwreck, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. late 17<sup>th</sup> century, h.15 cm. Picture retrieved from Jane Klose, “Excavated Oriental Ceramic from the Cape of Good Hope: 1630-1830,” *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 57, (1992-1993): 77, fig. 9.

**Right: fig. 13.2** Teapot decorated with the impressed decoration of Kui Xing, Yixing stoneware. China, ca. late 17<sup>th</sup> century, h. 15.7 cm, d. 9 cm. Collection Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-NM-6573.



**Fig 14:** Drawing of Teapot Designs Sent to China by the Dutch East India Company, ink on paper. The Netherlands, ca. 1758, l. 26.5 cm, w. 14 cm. National Archives, The Hague, Guangdong Factory Archive No. 121. Picture extracted from Christian Jörg, *Porcelain and the Dutch China Trade* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 109, fig. 43.



**Fig. 15:** Mustard Pot decorated with the appliqué decorations, Yixing stoneware. China, Kangxi Period, ca.1700. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 2021-0388.



**Fig. 16:** Mustard Pot, pewter. The Netherlands, ca. 1575-1625, h. 13.5 cm, d. 7.6 cm.  
Collection Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, inv. no. OM 155.



**Fig. 17:** Mustard Pot, Jingdezhen porcelain. China, Chongzhen Period (1627–1644).  
Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 1967-0065.



**Fig 18** Mustard Pots, recovered from the Vung Tau shipwreck, Jingdezhen porcelain. China, Kangxi Period, ca. 1700. Picture retrieved from Christiaan Jörg and Michael Flecker, *Porcelain from the Vung Tau Wreck: The Hallstrom Excavation* (London: Sun Tree Publishing Ltd, 2001): 70, fig. 61.



**Fig. 19** Mustard Pot, Jingdezhen porcelain. China, Chongzhen period, ca. 1640. Collection Groninger Museum, inv. no. 2016-0213.





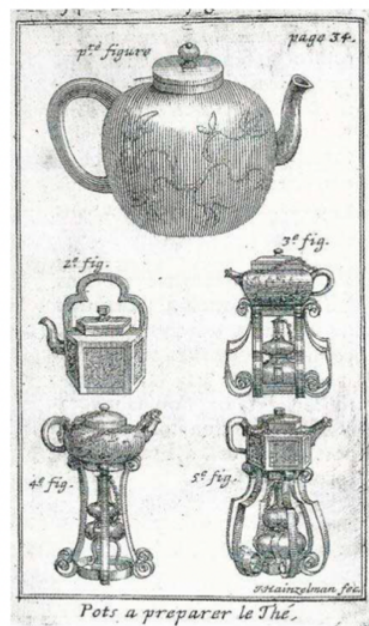
**Fig. 20:** Detail of fig. 4.1. Double-Spouted Teapot, Yixing stoneware. China, ca.1700.  
Collection National Museet, Copenhagen.



**Fig. 21** Details of the notch in the edge of the body and the bump in the lid of the Yixing stoneware mustard pot. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 2021-0388.



**Fig. 22** Teapot, Jingdezhen porcelain. China, Wanli period, 1573-1620. A similar notch is visible in the rim of the teapot's body.



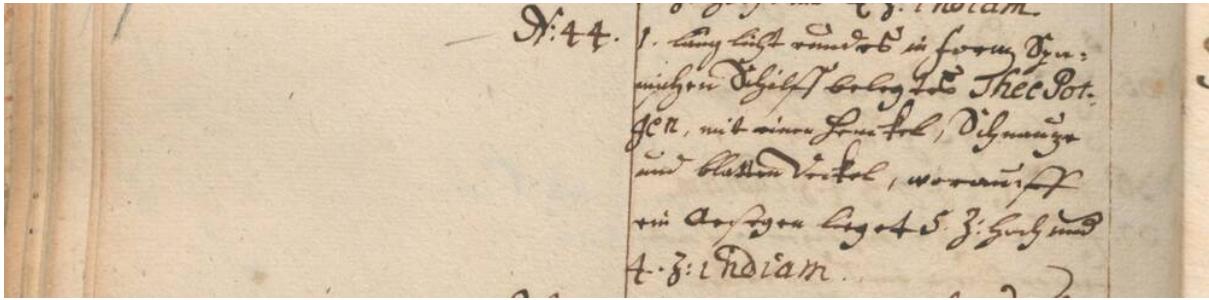
**Fig. 23** Nicolas de Blégny, Illustrations with Yixing stoneware teapots. In *Le bon usage du Thé, du Caffé et du Chocolat*, 1687. Retrieved from Patrice Valfré, *Yixing Teapots for Europe* (Poligny: Exotic Line, 2000), p.140.



**Fig. 24** Ding Yunpeng, *Yuchuan Zi Making a Tea*, ink and colour on paper. China, ca. 1612.  
Collection Palace Museum, Beijing, inv. no. 新 00145178.



**Fig. 25** Bowl with the impressed decoration, terra sigillata. 150-200 AD, h. 20 cm. Collection  
Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden.



**Fig. 26** Inventory no. 324, containing the record of Yixing stoneware vessels under the title “terra sigillata”. Inventorisation of the Palais in Alt-Dresden, 1721, No. 9, p. 580. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Dresden, Germany.



**Fig. 27** Ary de Milde, Teapot decorated with appliquéd plum blossom, Delft earthenware and silver. ca. 1700, h. 11.5 cm, d. 10 cm. Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-NM-6570.



**Fig. 28** The Detail of fig. 27 shows Ary de Milde’s trademark of a “running fox” on the bottom of the teapot.



**Fig. 29** Attributed to Hui Mengchen (dates unknown), teapot with applied plum-blossom decoration, Yixing stoneware and gilded silver. China, with the inscription of the 7th year of the Tianqi period on the bottom (1627) and mounted in Europe about 1628-1650. Collection Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



**Left: fig. 30.1** Ary de Milde, teapot with appliqué decoration of plum-blossom, Delft earthenware. Delft, ca. 1700. H. 8.5 cm. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 1949-0096.

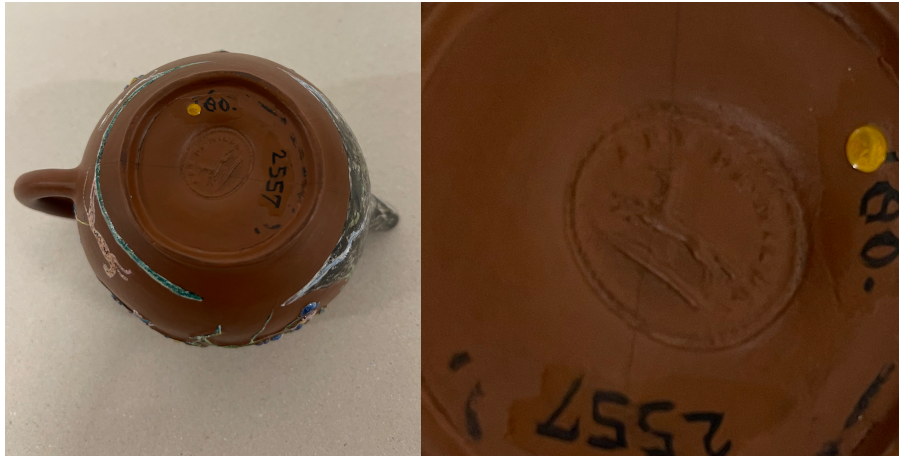
**Right: fig. 30.2** Detail of fig. 30.1 showing the red glaze-like slip and the darker clay body underneath it. Delft earthenware. Delft, ca. 1700. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 1949-0096.



**Fig. 31** detail of fig. 30.1 showing the circular traces on the inside left by the throwing process on a pottery wheel. Delft earthenware. Delft, ca. 1700. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 1949-0096.



**Fig. 32** Attributed to Roelof Koets II. *Family Taking Tea*, ca. 1680. Oil on canvas, 78.5 x 63 cm. Private collection.



**Left: fig. 33.1** Follower of Ary de Milde, Teapot with enamelled appliquéd decoration of plum-blossom, slip-casting stoneware. Meissen, ca. 1608-1610, h. 10 cm. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 1980-2557.

**Right: fig. 33.2** Detail of fig. 33.1 shows the fake Ary de Milde mark and the casting seam on the bottom of the teapot, slip-casting stoneware. Meissen, ca. 1608-1610. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 1980-2557.



**Fig. 34** Teapot with appliquéd decoration of plum-blossom sprigs and cloud motifs, Delft earthenware covered by the red slip. Delft, ca. 1705, h. 9 cm. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no.1956-151.



**Left: fig. 35.1** detail of fig. 34 showing the apocryphal mark of Ary de Milde, Delft earthenware covered by the red slip. Delft, ca. 1705. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no.1956-0151.

**Right: fig. 35.2** detail of fig. showing the applied plum-blossom covered by the thick red glaze-like slip. Delft earthenware covered by the red slip. Delft, ca. 1705. Collection Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no.1956-0151.



**Fig. 36** Jacobus de Caluwe, Teapot with appliqué decoration of flowering sprigs framed by the dotted lines, Delft earthenware and silver. Delft, ca.1700-1720, h. 18 cm, d. 12.5 cm. Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-NM-12236.

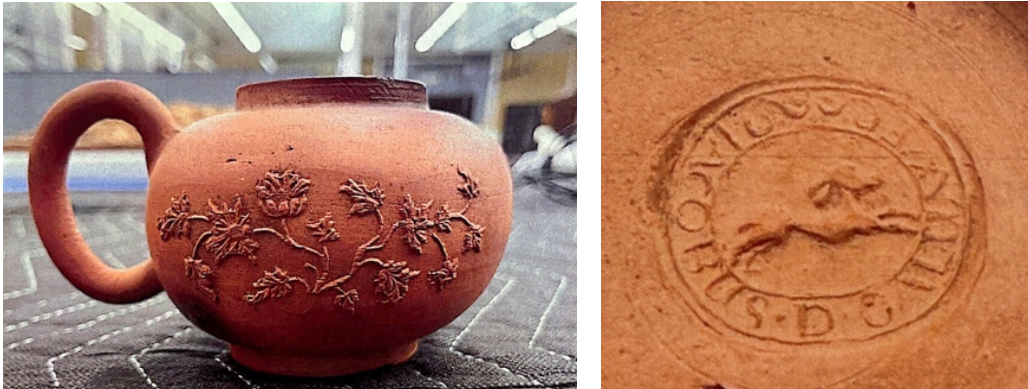




**Fig. 37** Shards collection excavated from the second workshop of Jacobus de Caluwe in Delft. Excavated in 1970s. Collection Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-1975-409.



**Fig. 38** Jacobus de Caluwe, Teapot decorated with abstract brown patterns under the transparent yellow glaze, Delft glazed earthenware. Delft, ca.1700-1720. Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-1975-409.



**Left: fig. 39.1** Jacobus de Caluwe, Teapot decorated with the appliquéd flowering sprigs, Delft earthenware. Delft, ca. 1700-1720, h. 12 cm. Collection Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-1975-409.

**Right: fig. 39.2** detail of fig. 39.1 showing the Jacobus de Caluwe’s mark of a “running stag”. Delft earthenware. Delft, ca. 1700-1720, h. 12 cm. Collection Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. no. BK-1975-409.

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