



504. Eggshell Cups & Saucers

China, Yongzheng Period (1723-1735)

Saucer Ø: 11.5 cm

Cup H: 4 cm

A pair of very finely enamelled porcelain cups and saucers with foliate edges, moulded with petal-shaped panels. They are delicately decorated with overglaze enamels in the famille rose palette, each shaped panel outlined in underglaze blue and gold. The six central panels, decorated with flower sprays on a white ground, radiate out from a central medallion with a finger citrus in gold. The outer border panels have alternating light blue and lime green chain diaper, with either a single peony or plum blossom. The undersides are undecorated, but have a plethora of labels from various owners, dealers and an exhibition.

This seemingly fairly ordinary porcelain, truly comes alive when we start studying its history. The earliest owner we can trace, is Alfred Trapnell. This English industrialist, who had been a sea captain to the East, amassed a comprehensive collection of Chinese porcelain in the late 19th century. He sold it to London dealer Edgar Gorer in 1906, who published a special limited edition illustrated catalogue for the occasion. The next owner appears to be eminent London physician Alphonso Cumberbatch. Having probably acquired them from Mr. Gorer, the cups and saucers were subsequently published in his seminal publication *Chinese Porcelain & Hard Stones* in 1911. They also went on loan for an exhibition in Manchester in 1913. 480 pieces of the large Cumberbatch collection were dispersed by dealer Frank Dickinson in 1918, another part sold at Christie's in 1929. William Martin-Hurst, was the following owner. He was thought to have one of the largest collections of eggshell porcelains in Britain and he collaborated with George Williamson on his famous book on famille rose porcelain. His collection was sold at Sotheby's in three batches 1942-43. The final label is one from famous dealer Spink's in London.

The Victoria & Albert Museum (London) has an identical cup and saucer from Salting collection (acc.nr.C.1448&A-1910).

Provenance:

- Alfred Trapnell Collection (label 1894)
- Cumberbatch Collection with Dickinson, London (label nr 333)
- Martin Hurst Collection, USA (label nr. 1050)
- With Spink & Son, London (label)
- With Vandervan & Vandervan 2000 (label)
- Private Collection, The Netherlands 2018

Exhibitions:

Manchester City Art Gallery 1913 (label)

Literature:

E.Gorer & J.F Blacker, *Chinese Porcelain and Hard Stones*; Volume II, London, 1911, pl.228 nr.2

