

| Paderewski the Orientalist? Ignacy Jan Paderewski's Collection of Chinese *Cloisonné* Enamels at the National Museum in Warsaw

The *Paderewski* exhibition at the National Museum in Warsaw (17 February – 20 May 2018) focussed on one of the most exceptional and unique personages in recent Polish history. Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860–1941) rose to fame as a charismatic pianist and versatile composer, making him the world's most widely recognized Pole at the turn of the 20th century. On the centenary of Poland regaining independence, however, he was spoken of above all as a statesman, diplomat and politician. Yet, not many are aware of the passion for collecting harboured by the musician, who over the years of his eventful life amassed a splendid collection of paintings, drawings, prints, decorative art, medals and commendations, not to mention numerous photographs.¹ All of it was bequeathed to the National Museum in Warsaw and resides there today, with a sizeable part of that extraordinary gift being presented in the 2018 exhibition.²

Of all the pieces in Paderewski's collection, what particularly calls for attention and dedicated analysis is the mass of Far Eastern art with which the musician and his wife filled their villa Riond-Bosson in the Swiss town of Morges on Lake Geneva (**fig. 1**). Of these works, the majority of which originates from China, particularly noteworthy is a world-class assortment of *cloisonné* enamel wares. There is still much to be learned about the works themselves and the circumstances surrounding their acquisition. What we can say is that they constitute a cohesive group, one that was put together with care and which attests to the deep awareness governing the collector's pursuits. For this reason, taking a closer look at this subsection of the rich collection – for lack of other forms of documentation – may tell us more about the artist's love of collecting.

¹ Select bibliography on Paderewski's collection at the National Museum in Warsaw: *Muzeum Ignacego Jana Paderewskiego i Wychodźstwa Polskiego w Ameryce. Oddział Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Magdalena Karłowicz, ed., exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 1995 (Warsaw, 1995); *Kolekcja sztuki orientalnej Ignacego Jana Paderewskiego*, ed. Dorota Folga-Januszewska et al., exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2003 (Warsaw, 2003); *Kolekcja sztuki orientalnej Ignacego Jana Paderewskiego. Wybór ze zbiorów Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, ed. Anna Feliks, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw – Palace in Otwock Wielki, 2015 (Warsaw, 2015); *Kolekcja sztuki japońskiej Ignacego Jana Paderewskiego i innych ofiarodawców Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie*, Katarzyna Maleszko, ed., exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2004 (Warsaw, 2004); *Paderewski i Warszawa*, Ryszard Bobrow et al., eds, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2005 (Warsaw, 2005).

² *Paderewski*, Joanna Bojarska-Cieślak, Magdalena Pinker, Joanna Popkowska, eds, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2018 (Warsaw, 2018).

In 1929, as Paderewski awaited a risky operation that could have seriously impacted the life of the nearly seventy-year-old artist, he decided to draft a last will and testament.³ In it, he divided up his assets among various Polish institutions, with his art going to the National Museum in Warsaw. Though the maestro actually died many years later, on 29 June 1941 in the United States, his will remained unchanged. Due to the earlier passing of his wife (in 1934), the person appointed to execute his will became his sister, Antonina Wilkońska (1858–1941), who herself died a mere three months after her brother. As a result, the chief executor of the will became Antonina's primary heir and Paderewski's long-time secretary, Sylwin Strakacz (1892–1973). The Second World War and the ensuing political situation in Poland posed considerable complications to the matter of Paderewski's legacy, and the collection of art did not reach the museum until 1951. Of the eighty-two crates of artefacts, many were packed with works of Far Eastern art,⁴ including the most prized *cloisonné* enamel pieces.

These works can be seen as evidence of Paderewski's great interest, or even fascination, with Eastern art, which may come as a surprise given that, on his many travels (mainly connected with his music career), the maestro visited the Americas, Africa and Australia but never China or East Asia – Moscow being his easternmost port of call (fig. 2). So, where did his interest in Oriental art come from? Henryk Opieński (1870–1942), author of a biographical outline of the maestro as well as a composer, director of the Poznań music conservatory and long-time friend and neighbour of the pianist (himself residing in Morges from 1926 and being a regular guest at the Paderewskis' villa) mentions: "Paderewski, having once had the occasion to acquire a small collection of Chinese vases from a Swiss collector, became so enthralled by these works that he continued to grow that collection over the years, bringing it to a very impressive size."⁵ As Anna Feliks surmises, the purchase noted by Opieński took place early in the 20th century.⁶ Surprisingly, in the memoir he dictated late in his life,⁷ nowhere does the artist discuss his passion for collecting Chinese art. This is all the more curious given that in the surviving photographs taken inside his home⁸ we see display cases, shelves, window sills and tabletops abounding in Far Eastern objects. It seems that Paderewski took great pleasure in not only collecting these items but also surrounding himself with them and being close to them in his daily life. In the aforementioned pictures, what particularly catches the eye are a number of metal objects ornately decorated with *cloisonné* enamel.

The Cloisonné Technique

Though considered by many to be typical of Chinese artistic handicrafts, this exotic and original technique does not actually originate from China. Its European name derives from the

³ The various biographies on Paderewski provide differing dates for the drafting of the will – 1929 or 1930 – see Roman Wapiński, *Ignacy Paderewski* (Wrocław, 2009), p. 203; Adam Zamoyski, *Paderewski*, tr. Agnieszka Kreczmar (Warsaw, 1992), p. 253; Dorota Szwarzman, "Testament Paderewskiego," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17.01.1997; Simone Giron de Pourtalès, *Tajemnica testamentu Paderewskiego* (Kraków, 1996), pp. 30, 146; Anna Feliks, "Zbiory dzieł sztuki Ignacego Jana i Heleny Paderewskich z Riond-Bosson," in *Paderewski*, op. cit., p. 43.

⁴ Confirmation of receipt held in the NMW Archives.

⁵ Henryk Opieński, *Ignacy Jan Paderewski* (Warsaw, 1960), p. 76.

⁶ Feliks, "Zbiory dzieł sztuki...", op. cit., p. 65.

⁷ Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Mary Lawton, *The Paderewski Memoirs* (New York, 1938).

⁸ Currently, these reside in the collection of the I.J. Paderewski Polish 19th and 20th Century Music Documentation Centre at Jagiellonian University.

French word *cloison* ('cell'). The ornamental decoration results from thin bent wires being applied to the surface of a vessel to create "cells" which are then filled in with vitreous enamel paste. Objects decorated in this manner first caught the attention of Western art experts after 1860, when British soldiers perpetrated mass-scale looting of the Summer Palace in Peking (following the Opium Wars won by Britain) and brought many of the spoils to Europe. These "objects such as Europe has never seen"⁹ quickly gained the appreciation of people like Empress Eugénie of France and of many collectors. They became a huge source of inspiration, initially for the French industrialist Ferdinand Barbedienne, followed by the goldsmith and jewellery company Christofle, and the painter James Tissot.¹⁰ By the 1870s, the influence of *cloisonné* enamel on Western art aesthetics was evident. Wares decorated with this technique made their way into various collections of Far Eastern art. The collection built by Paderewski is a perfect example.

Items decorated with a technique similar to *cloisonné* enamel were being produced in Egypt already in the second millennium BC. In works of this kind, gold ornamentation fringed sections inlaid with turquoise, lapis lazuli, carnelian or garnet. Sir Harry Garner, a scholar and expert on Far Eastern *cloisonné*, believes this technique first arose around the 13th century BC in Mycenae, as suggested by 20th-century archaeological findings in Crete and Cyprus.¹¹ At the same time, he points out that technological knowledge of this kind could not have been exported from Greece directly to China, where, from the Shang dynasty (16th–11th c. BC) and arising independently of the Greek technique, encrustation with minerals and stones like turquoise, malachite and jade was used to elevate the value of bronze wares.¹²

The technique arrived in China relatively late, around the turn of the 14th century. After the conquest of China by the Mongols, who would occupy the imperial throne for nearly a century as the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), Chinese lands were absorbed into an empire spanning the Near East and extending to Russia. This engendered more vibrant contact with Islamic countries and allowed for free-flowing exchange of artistic and technical knowledge. Artisans from the Near East were thus able to pass on their knowledge and skills to their counterparts in China. In this way, likely via the southwestern province of Yunnan, governed by a Muslim governor and inhabited by a large contingent of newcomers from Central Asia, the *cloisonné* technique arrived in China. After several decades of uninterrupted production, by the first half of the 14th century, Chinese artisans had achieved a skill level that enabled them to evolve the aesthetic born out of Islamic art into a style of their own.

The first recorded mention of *cloisonné* appears in China as early as 1388 in a treatise titled *The Criteria of Antiquities* (*Ge Gu Yao Lun*) written by Cao Zhao (active 1368–98) during the reign of Hongwu, the first emperor of the Ming dynasty. The work, in which three chapters relate the beginnings of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), also speaks of various artefacts from the past: paintings, manuscripts, musical instruments, precious stones like jade as well as

⁹ Hélène David-Weill, "Preface" in *Cloisonné. Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties*, Béatrice Quette, ed. (New Haven, 2011), p. xi.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Harry Garner, *Chinese and Japanese Cloisonné Enamels* (London, 1962), p. 19.

¹² From the Shang dynasty (16th–11th c. BC) in addition to stones, the Chinese also used precious metals to encrust bronze objects. However, the first archaeological findings are from the Spring and Autumn period (770–476 BC) and the Warring States period (475–221 BC), e.g., glass beads, found in tombs in Luoyang (Henan province) – see William Watson, *Ancient Chinese Bronzes* (London, 1977), p. 74, R. Soame Jenyns, *Chinese Art III* (New York, 1981), p. 95, Charles F.W. Higham, *Encyclopedia of Ancient Asian Civilizations* (New York, 2004), p. 171.

porcelain and lacquer. It also contains a short chapter titled *Pottery from Islamic Lands under Caliph Rule – Dashiyao*.¹³ The term *yao* refers to kiln-fired pottery, therefore enamel is discussed alongside various kinds of ceramic wares. The chapter contains information on a range of vessels – censers, vases, lidded boxes, chalices, teapots – made of metal (copper) and decorated with a soluble substance forming ornamentation in five colours. This technique, as the author indicates, is reminiscent of *falang* encrusted objects.¹⁴ Many scholars confirm that *falang* is an old Chinese term for Byzantium or the Eastern Roman Empire, where richly-gilded objects decorated with ornaments encrusted with precious stones – and eventually with glass paste – were produced for the imperial court and the church. In describing *cloisonné*, Cao Zhao clearly identifies the points of origin of this technique: Islamic countries and Byzantium, from which it spread to East Asia. Modern-day study also confirms this. In 1456, Wang Zuo (active in the 15th c.) edited the treatise and expanded it to thirteen chapters. In his version, he provides information that the glistening and delicate wine goblets produced in Beijing by craftsmen from Yunnan are also referred to as “inlay work from the devil’s lands (*guiguao qian*).”¹⁵ We can presume that what Wang is talking about here is the same works that were earlier called *dashiyao*, meaning ‘of foreign origin.’ This terminological diversity is surely due to the lack of a suitable nomenclature which would precisely describe works of art or other objects from outside of Chinese culture.

Analysis of the nomenclature and archaeological findings make it possible to conclude that the technique of decorating wares with enamel reached China from the lands of the Roman Empire, Byzantium and Persia.

The *cloisonné* technique constitutes an innovative combination of metal forms and glass. The enamel itself is made from glass coloured with metal oxides which is ground into a powder and mixed with water or glue to be applied with a brush onto a smooth surface. Initially, such wares were fully cast in bronze. Later, to minimise production costs, they were made from brass or copper. Attempts with using cheaper raw materials appear relatively early on but it was only during the Qianlong period (1735–96) of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) that the use of copper was officially adopted in imperial workshops. To this day, however, bronze is still generally used in the production of wares imitating historic pieces. Paderewski’s collection contains examples of wares made from all of the aforementioned materials.

The walls of the cells were most often made from the same metal as the body of the object. Strips of metal were bent with the use of heat and then affixed with glue (with *baiji*, a mixture made from the root of *Bletilla striata*, commonly known as the Chinese ground orchid) or soldered onto the surface of the product according to a pattern sketched out in ink. The metal strips were typically one to several millimetres in thickness, with those separating individual colours being just over half a millimetre in thickness. Once the walls were in place, all of the cells were filled with enamel mass using a variety of tools. Objects prepared in this manner

¹³ Percival David, *Chinese Connoisseurship. The Kao Ku Yao Lun – Essential Criteria of Antiquities* (London, 1973), p. 143.

¹⁴ The Chinese word *falang* is used to denote decorative techniques with the use of enamel. In the case of *cloisonné* enamel, it is *qiasi falang*; *champlevé* enamel – *zantai falang*; painted enamel – *huafalang*. See Béatrice Quette, “The Emergence of Cloisonné Enamels in China” in *Cloisonné. Chinese Enamels from the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties*, Béatrice Quette, ed. (New York–Paris–New Haven–London, 2011), pp. 4–7.

¹⁵ Pengliang Lu, “Beyond the Women’s Quarters. Meaning and Function of Cloisonné in the Ming and Qing Dynasties” in *Cloisonné. Chinese Enamels*..., op. cit., p. 63.

were then fired at a relatively low temperature (680–720°C) to bind the enamel with the substrate. Because glass paste tends to shrink during firing, the filling-in process would have to be repeated even a number of times. Moreover, a piece in the kiln would have to be rotated constantly to prevent the enamel from flowing out. After the firing process, the piece would be rubbed with pumice until the surface was smooth and even. Finally, pebbles were used to add a finishing polish and the areas not covered with enamel were gilded.

Vibrant enamel wares in colours not typical of Chinese craft tradition were initially scorned by erudite and educated individuals with refined taste. They presented a strong contrast to the delicacy, restraint and certain rawness of celadon pottery, ancient bronze wares and monochrome paintings. At first, objects of this kind served only as décor in closed ladies' apartments, as mentioned by Cao Zhao. With time, however, the Chinese came to appreciate their aesthetic virtue. The growing popularity of wares decorated with this technique eventually elevated the artform to the canon of Chinese decorative arts. In all of this, we must recognise the significant contribution made by local artisans, who, upon learning the new technique were able to create a personal, distinct and recognisable style through the introduction of new forms and the use of a wide array of decorative motifs. Today, *cloisonné* enamel is something of a calling card of Chinese craftsmanship and surely, as such, it must have appealed to Paderewski the collector.

Paderewski and His Enamels

Among the items of Chinese artistic handicrafts amassed by the composer, two types of enamel wares stand out: *cloisonné* and painted enamels, mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries. It is worthwhile to point out here that painted enamel is also not a Chinese invention. It arrived there toward the end of the 17th century from the Old Continent, from France and Germany, largely thanks to Jesuit missionaries active at that time in the imperial court in Beijing. First produced in the workshops of south Canton (hence its popular name Canton enamel), it was intended exclusively for foreign buyers in Europe, Southeast Asia and the Near East. Commissions from the imperial court were handled only by the imperial workshops in Beijing.

Paderewski built his collection largely with the assistance of trusted art dealers and antiques merchants in Switzerland and France.¹⁶ While conclusive determination of the provenance of individual pieces seems like an almost futile task, we do know that a considerable number of artefacts residing in collections around the world were made in Beijing or its vicinity. Already by the 15th century, the city was home to the main production centre for items decorated with this technique. Manufactories operated within the Forbidden City and in the Kangxi period (1662–1722) of the Qing dynasty these wares acquired an imperial status which allowed them to bear official markings and information as to their date of production. Generally speaking, markings made with bent wire embedded in the enamel leave little uncertainty. Conversely, those that are engraved, soldered or rivetted cannot be deemed fully reliable as they might have been added at any time. In the absence of any markings, the production date can be approximated by an analysis of the decoration, assessment of the materials used and the colours of the enamel. This is how we are able to determine that most of the enamel wares in Paderewski's collection are from the 18th and 19th centuries despite

¹⁶ Surviving to this day are documents relating to evaluations performed for Paderewski by experts on Chinese and Japanese art – see Feliks, “Zbiory dzieł sztuki...,” op. cit., p. 67.

so few of them having markings. We must also bear in mind the possible existence of false markings antedating a given item.

Particularly eye-catching in the set of *cloisonné* works is the turquoise colour of the backgrounds as well as the ornamentation in red, black, white and green. It should be noted here that the colour of the background – rarely appearing in Chinese art prior to the ascent of the Mongolian Yuan dynasty – is a direct reference to items imported from Islamic lands, and in particular to the ubiquitous glazed pottery thereof. The collection also boasts a set of items mainly from the second half of the 19th century having different colours, which arose out of Chinese craftsmen's experimentation with mixing shades or with using pigments typically associated with pottery decoration, especially porcelain. The main and initially only motif used in *cloisonné* decoration was the lotus vine filling the entire surface of the item. Over time, it was supplemented with images of clouds and leafy branches. Gradually, this form of ornamentation evolved (as can be observed in the items from Paderewski's collection) as the repertoire of motifs grew broader. The chrysanthemum vine began to appear alongside the lotus vine. Both of these flowers hold a significant place in Chinese symbolism. Inspiration was also found in porcelain decoration, which often incorporated and expanded on patterns appearing in scroll paintings. The later pieces exhibit very elaborate decoration with colourful figural and landscape imagery along with additional appliques. On the one hand, these pieces recall ancient bronzes while in form and ornamentation they allude to porcelain or lacquer wares.

Of the pieces inspired by classical ancient bronzes, which on account of the colours of the ornamentation and background as well as the extensive gilding belong to the mainstream of enamel work, worthy of particular attention are those from the Qianlong period. That time saw a preference for rich style and for all themes associated with Chinese antiquity.

In Paderewski's collection we can admire some vibrant, richly-decorated and gilded 18th-century censers and cups – vessels that were initially cast exclusively in bronze and meant for storing and serving food (*ding*, *fangding*) or alcohol (*gu*, *yu*, *you*) but later became purely ornamental items used as décor in Chinese as well as European homes. Often, such pieces were placed atop carved wooden bases. Standing out in this group is an oval *you* vessel¹⁷ with a lid topped with a nub and a movable handle, which offers an excellent example of the tendencies described earlier (**fig. 3**). In its shape and decorative motif, it alludes to classical bronze vessels intended to store alcoholic beverages – particularly a specific type of wine which, in accordance with custom, would be poured out on the ground.¹⁸ The refined, multi-themed and symmetrical decoration consists of motifs typical of ancient bronze wares: images of mythical monsters known as *taotie* masks, stylised birds and dragons (?), geometric elements, and vertical ridges on the side walls and animal heads on the handle. Meanwhile, thanks to the combination of the rich colours of the ornamentation with the turquoise background and gilding, the piece fits squarely into the system of decoration typically employed in enamel wares. The placement of the piece on a carved wooden stand showing motifs representative of good fortune (e.g. images of coins on a string, symbolising prosperity) further raises the piece's decorative appeal. A surviving photograph of part of a room in the Paderewskis' residence shows the *you* vessel prominently displayed in the corner of the room on a special tabletop, which may indicate that Paderewski was particularly fond of it (**fig. 4**).

¹⁷ Inv. no. SKAZsz 443/a–c MNW.

¹⁸ *Piękno i rytuał. Starożytne brązy chińskie ze zbiorów Chińskiego Muzeum Narodowego w Pekinie*, text: Li Weiming et al., academic ed. Marcin Jacoby, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw, 2006 (Warsaw, 2006), p. 84, cat. no. 18.

Made during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor was the *fangding* censer,¹⁹ which like the *you*, captivates the eye with its shape inspired by ancient cooking vessels (fig. 5). The four-sided form placed atop a base is supported by four cylindrical legs. Protruding from the body decorated with a lotus vine and dominated by a motif of multicoloured blossoms, are two handles near the top edge. The piece is completed with an openwork lid topped with a nub reminiscent of a *fo* sitting lion. Besides the enamelled body, all of the censer's parts are gilded, thanks to which the vessel is perfectly consistent with the aesthetic of 18th-century Chinese wares decorated with *cloisonné* enamel. This censer had its own place on a shelf in a custom-designed display cabinet residing in the villa's entrance hall alongside other select examples of *cloisonné* pieces. For maximum viewing impact, it was placed on yet another base, this one decorated with floral motifs. It is worth adding that the hall was adjacent to the sitting room and "served as the traffic hub of the entire house, making it the perfect place for the owner to flaunt his collections and for visitors to admire them."²⁰

In addition to these archaic forms, Paderewski's collection boasts a variety of teapots, bowls, vessels for brushes, vases, containers, boxes, plates and other items, often inspired by ceramic or lacquer wares. Their sizes range from imposing to diminutive. Many of them are also characterised by very elaborate, refined and colourful ornamentation, often alluding to motifs known from scroll paintings or borrowed from the expansive catalogue of symbols, and a significant amount of gilding. Several also come as pairs, which in China is believed to symbolise good fortune and harmony. In this group of works, worthy of attention is a pair of deep bronze bowls²¹ – the oldest set of artefacts in Paderewski's *cloisonné* collection (fig. 6). The decoration of the bowls' interiors centres on tondo compositions depicting a fish surfacing out from choppy waves below a sun surrounded by clouds. This is most likely a carp, which in Chinese culture symbolises success in business – a very popular decorative motif. The bottoms of the bowls bear *cloisonné* red enamel signature markings in the shape of a square seal encircled by a colourful chrysanthemum vine. Vines also decorate the side walls of the vases – interior and exterior alike. The signature markings indicate that the bowls were made in the Jingtai period (1450–56) of the Ming dynasty,²² and were likely applied at a later date. This is suggested by the approach taken with the tondo decoration, characteristic of later eras. Yet, the use of bronze as a base and the dense lotus vine dominating the entire scene may suggest that the bowls are from the 16th century.

Metal figurines of birds and animals were also decorated with *cloisonné*. Produced from the late 16th or early 17th century, they were typically naturalistic in appearance but some were inspired by symbolism and beliefs. Often, they served as censers or candle holders used in temples. The collection includes a pair of such censers from the 19th century, in the shape of quails,²³ executed with great precision and attention to anatomical details (fig. 7). The colours

¹⁹ Inv. no. SKAZsz 699/a–c MNW.

²⁰ Anna Feliks, "Historia ukryta w przedmiotach. Pamiątki po Ignacym Janie Paderewskim w zbiorach Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie," *Niepodległość i pamięć*, no. 1 (57) (2017), p. 198.

²¹ Inv. no. SKAZsz 683/1–2 MNW.

²² Items cast in bronze and decorated with *cloisonné* achieved a high level in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), and especially in the 15th c. during the Jingtai period (1450–56), which lends its name to the term *jingtaitan* ('blue of Jingtai'), commonly used to this day in English as well as Chinese literature, first appearing in the 19th c. Currently, however, it is difficult to find suitable evidence to confirm the authenticity of the numerous artefacts dated to this time as many signature markings for this period were applied to the objects significantly later.

²³ Inv. no. SKAZsz 707/1–2 MNW.

used, however, are very fanciful. There are also figurines of frogs and a dragon²⁴ from Indonesia, which in the Far East harbour symbolic meaning as a sign of good fortune. The dragon figurine was displayed in the hall on a special shelf just below a portrait of the lady of the house painted by Charles Giron. It must be added that the dragon figurine already featured in an inventory of the collection drafted in 1913, in which it was listed as one of the most valuable pieces (appraised at 8000 Swiss francs)²⁵ (figs. 8, 9).

An interesting approach can be seen in the use of other materials on *cloisonné* wares as complementary elements, which often raised their decorative and artistic value. For example, this is the case with a ceremonial *ruyi* sceptre²⁶ with brass plates²⁷ or a box with a lid decorated with jade.²⁸ The 18th-century *ruyi* (fig. 10) is composed of a flat and curved shaft terminating in a bulb reminiscent of a *lingzhi*, a 'mushroom of immortality.' The sceptre's broader elements, including the bulb, are decorated with engraved brass plates with motifs of good fortune: a double coin tied with a ribbon and images of a bat and peach tree twigs. The parts decorated with enamel, meanwhile, are complemented with banded decoration composed mainly of lotus blossoms and leaves.

The oval *cloisonné* copper box is embellished with a jade relief composition on the lid showing a peacock and sun with clouds (fig. 11). The choice of motifs and overall style of the piece are reminiscent of bureaucratic emblems, so-called mandarin squares, in which the peacock identifies a civil servant of the third rank. In addition to the jade plate, the outer surfaces of the lid and box itself are filled in with dense lotus vines in *cloisonné* enamel.

On the basis of surviving archival photos, we can deduce that the bowls, sceptre, box, quail censers and many other exquisite enamel wares resided in a glazed cabinet in Paderewski's office on the villa's upper level, where the maestro kept his most precious objects from the Far East.²⁹

Paderewski the Orientalist?

Europeans' interest in the art and culture of the Far east – China, Korea and Japan – goes back to the 17th century, when trade between East Asia and the Old Continent grew more vigorous and Jesuit missions to China became more common. The popularity of art and architecture inspired by Chinese culture peaked in the 18th century. The European interpretation of Far Eastern art, often perceived rather stereotypically, came to be known as *chinoiserie*. Porcelain imitations of blue-and-white Ming works, Chinese furniture and pavilions appearing in the gardens of aristocrats evidenced the fascination with all things exotic and unfamiliar.

The second half of the 19th century brought a new wave of interest in the Far East. The Opium Wars (first: 1836–42; second: 1856–60)³⁰ and treaties between the defeated China

²⁴ Inv. no. SKAZsz 1491 MNW.

²⁵ Feliks, "Zbiory dzieł sztuki...", op. cit., pp. 67–68.

²⁶ "Wish-granting Sceptre" – a symbol of power and a form of protection, a guide on one's life path. In China, a *ruyi* would be given as a gift beginning in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Legend has it that it evolved out of a back scratcher.

²⁷ Inv. no. SKAZsz 712 MNW.

²⁸ Inv. no. SKAZsz 692/a–b MNW.

²⁹ Feliks, "Historia ukryta w przedmiotach...", op. cit., p. 200.

³⁰ Witold Rodziński, *Historia Chin* (Warsaw, 1992), pp. 391–402, 440–58.

and Western powers left China more accessible to traders from Europe.³¹ Likewise, Japan was compelled under the threat of the use of force by the American fleet to sign the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854, putting an end to that country's centuries-long isolation.³² The political changes in both countries along with the increased presence of Western forces meant that goods, including art, from China and Japan became more widely available in Europe.

Among those caught by the Far Eastern art bacillus was the renowned Dutch-British painter Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836–1912). Though its influences do not appear in his work, he was a great lover of Asian art and amassed an impressive collection at his home in Grove End Road in London. In photos of the residence's interior, we find a selection of 18th-century *cloisonné* wares displayed on the mantelpiece and Japanese plates on the walls. It was Japanese art that Alma-Tadema was especially interested in. In 1892, he became a member of the Japan Society in London and was elected the society's vice-president three years later.³³ But as stated, this fascination never revealed itself in his work. Only an expert's keen eye could notice the presence of a Buddhist painting in the background of some of his portraits.³⁴ This also happens to be true of the most famous portrait ever painted of Ignacy Jan Paderewski,³⁵ whom Alma-Tadema painted during the musician's visit to London in 1891.³⁶

Alma-Tadema purchased works in places like Arthur Liberty's store East India House at 218A Regent Street, which sold objects imported from Japan alongside its selection of silks from the East. Its assortment included Japanese porcelain, woodblock prints, fans, screens, *tatami* mats and *netsuke*. In fact, among the shop's clientele were some other famous artists affiliated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement – William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Edward Burne-Jones,³⁷ the last of whom also painted a now-famous portrait of Paderewski³⁸.

Henry Treffry Dinn, a painter and assistant to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, described his master's house at 16 Cheyne Walk in London this way: "The mantelpiece was a most original compound of Chinese black-lacquered panels, bearing designs of birds, animals, flowers

³¹ John King Fairbank, Merle Goldman, *China. A New History* (Cambridge–London, 2006), pp. 201–5.

³² Jolanta Tubielewicz, *Historia Japonii* (Wrocław, 1984), pp. 330–33; Richard Henry Pitt Mason, John Caiger, *A History of Japan* (Tokyo–Singapore, 1997), p. 263.

³³ Eline van der Berg, "A Glimpse of the East" in *Lawrence Alma-Tadema. At Home in Antiquity*, Elizabeth Prettejohn, Peter Trippi, eds, exh. cat., Fries Museum, Leeuwarden; Belvedere, Vienna; Leighton House Museum, London, 2017 (Munich–London–New York, 2016), pp. 115–16.

³⁴ See also Petra Ten-Doeschate Chu's article in this issue of the NMW Journal – pp. 350–73.

³⁵ This portrait resides in the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw (inv. no. M.Ob.1850 MNW), arriving there as per Paderewski's will. The Buddhist picture is visible in the background of at least three other portraits by Alma-Tadema, including those of Maurice Sons (1896) and Clothilde Enid (1896).

³⁶ Sources also provide the date of 1890. Paderewski recalls the circumstances surrounding the painting of this portrait in his dictated memoir: "At this time I was seeing a great deal of Alma-Tadema and I was asked to sit for a portrait by him. I agreed, of course. It was an honour. It was probably the most exacting and elaborate posing for a picture that has ever been done, because at the first sitting I found, to my surprise, that there were three people making my portrait! There were the Princess Louise [daughter of Queen Victoria – M.P., J.P.], Sir Laurence himself, and Lady Alma-Tadema [...] Lady Alma-Tadema, who was a gifted painter herself, had made a very small picture of me. Alma-Tadema made quite a masterpiece, as far as painting is concerned." (See Paderewski, Lawton, *The Paderewski Memoirs*, op. cit., s. 179). See also: Petra Ten-Doeschate Chu's article in this issue of the NMW Journal – pp. 350–73.

³⁷ Olive Checkland, *Japan and Britain after 1859. Creating Cultural Bridges* (New York–London, 2003), pp. 188–89.

³⁸ The portrait resides in the NMW collection (inv. no. Rys.Pol.885 MNW).

and fruit in gold relief [...].”³⁹ The trend for Far Eastern art, though prominent in the homes of British artists of the late 19th century, was not overtly reflected in their work. The pieces collected by the Pre-Raphaelite painters “were not simply seen as artistic props; they were also seen as tools that enabled social elevation.”⁴⁰

Among the works of art bequeathed to the National Museum in Warsaw in Ignacy Jan Paderewski’s will, the collection of *cloisonné* enamel holds an especially prominent place. Without a doubt, having a role in its creation was the maestro’s beloved wife, Helena, who was also a lover of Oriental art. The lack of information on the circumstances surrounding the collection’s growth means, however, that we are forced to make hypotheses on the Paderewskis’ fascination with the art of the Far East, and *cloisonné* enamel in particular. We can presume that their passion was to some degree a product of the interest in the Orient prevailing in Europe at that time. The “Eastern Trend” – particularly strong in the 19th century – also embraced much of the Islamic world, which not only stoked the imaginations of novelists and poets (Lord Byron, Adam Mickiewicz), painters and illustrators (Eugène Delacroix, Stanisław Chlebowski) and scholars (Józef Sękowski, Edward William Lane) but also influenced the look of architecture and fashion.⁴¹

We can only assume that Paderewski’s passion was spurred by the trend prevailing in the artistic circles of Europe at the time. Perhaps it was his contact with Lawrence Alma-Tadema and the visits to his home abounding in Japanese and Chinese art, including *cloisonné* enamel, that inspired him to build his own collection. The Paderewskis’ interest in Chinese art was not a result – at least, there is no evidence of this – of scholarly or expert knowledge on the cultures of Far Eastern countries. Their passion seemed to stem from a rather superficial fascination with that exotic civilisation. This manifested itself in the kind of parties the Paderewskis hosted at Riond-Bosson. Helena had recalled that to celebrate her birthday (1 August) and her husband’s name day (31 July) in 1914, they hosted a Chinese-themed party:

“At nightfall the grounds about the house were illuminated with Chinese lanterns and hundreds of tiny electric lamps in various colours. For weeks the brothers Morax⁴² had been at work preparing the Chinese cortege, which was to be the feature of the evening. We ourselves had some very fine Chinese costumes, the Schellings⁴³ had some of very great beauty, and Mr. Jean Morax had secured others with which to costume the actors. The *pièce de résistance* was a wonderful dragon, several meters long, with a most horrific head of paper-mache. It had great green eyes and from its mouth and nose issued clouds of smoke and flame.”⁴⁴

³⁹ Henry Treffry Dunn, *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and His Circle (Cheyne Walk Life)*, Gale Pedrick, ed. (London, 1904), p. 18.

⁴⁰ Karen Yuen, “Fashioning Elite Identities. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones and Musical Instruments as Symbolic Goods,” *Music in Art*, vol. 39, no. 1–2 (2014), p. 145.

⁴¹ Among the notable Far Eastern art collectors in Poland in the early 19th century were Mathias Bersohn (1823–1908), Mieczysław Geniusz (Genjusz) (1853–1920), Stanisław Glezmer (1853–1916), Henryk Grohman (1862–1939), Juliusz Heinzel baron von Hohenfels (1834–95), and Feliks “Manggha” Jasieński (1861–1929).

⁴² Jean Morax (1869–1939) – painter, stage set designer and theatre costume designer from Morges; René Morax (1873–1963) – author and playwright, founder of Théâtre du Jorat in Mézières, Switzerland.

⁴³ Ernest Schelling (1876–1939) – American pianist, composer and conductor; WWI veteran (rank of Major); student and friend of Paderewski. He likely attended the celebration with his wife, Lucie D. Schelling (née Draper).

⁴⁴ Helena Paderewska, *Memoirs 1910–1920* [online], ed. and with introduction by Maciej Siekierski (Stanford, 2015), at: <https://books.google.pl/books?redir_esc=y&id=htOsCgAAQBAJ&q=clouds+of+smoke+and+flame#v=snippet&q=clouds%20of%20smoke%20and%20flame&f=false>, [retrieved: 29 February 2020].

On the other hand, however, both the quantity and quality of the items amassed by the Paderewskis suggests that this fascination with the exotic reflected in the collection they had built was something more than a surrender to a passing trend. Despite Paderewski's rather schematic interest in Chinese culture (dragons, lanterns, colourful outfits, music), the objects he acquired, and specifically his *cloisonné* enamel wares, exude very high technical and aesthetic quality. According to Charles Phillips (1880–1933), the author of a biography on Paderewski published still in the musician's lifetime, the maestro was very proud of his Chinese art collection and liked to boast about it. To his guests he would tell an amusing story connected with one of the pieces and the circumstances surrounding its acquisition: "It is a rare *cloisonné* image of a Chinese god. It was owned by his dentist, M. Foucou; but, curiously enough, the name of the god was the same, Fou-Kou, and the special mission of that god, according to antiquarians' belief, is to attract other works of ancient art."⁴⁵ 'As you can see,' Paderewski would stress, 'Fou-Kou has done his job.'" Unfortunately, it is not possible to conclusively identify the object in question in the *cloisonné* collection residing in the National Museum. We also do not know if the author of the passage was correct in his recollection of the piece and its Chinese name, a name that cannot be definitively connected with any known terms applying to Chinese deities. The only thing that comes to mind is the Chinese word *fu* and the Japanese term *fuku*, both of which relate to luck. Phillips also discusses the maestro's interest in Chinese music. Paderewski's Swiss villa contained a music room in which numerous recordings of music from the Middle Kingdom were found. He recalls that during his visits to San Francisco, Paderewski attended performances of the Beijing opera to listen to that "puzzling cacophony."⁴⁶

Paderewski's collection of *cloisonné* enamel at the National Museum in Warsaw is the largest and, in terms of artistic and iconographic quality, finest assortment of objects produced in this technique anywhere in Poland. It gives us a glimpse at another, unknown side of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, who in the second half of his life developed an interest in collecting art from the Far East, doing so with great dedication, outright passion and admiration for the techniques employed. We need only take note of the fact that in his villa Riond-Bosson, many of the items of *cloisonné* enamel were displayed in prominent view, as seen in archival photographs. Despite the lack of definitive information on the circumstances surrounding the collection's formation, it remains an indisputable expression of the artistic sensitivity of the musician and his wife Helena, who surely had a hand in its creation. The fact that Paderewski took a liking to *cloisonné* in particular – a very labour-intensive technique requiring utmost precision – may be acknowledged as evidence of his sublime artistic taste, which, as we now know, manifested itself in not only the harmony of the music he composed and the expressiveness of his interpretations. The act of bequeathing his art collection to the National Museum in Warsaw, and by extension to the people of Poland, is further proof of the patriotism of Ignacy Jan Paderewski, whom we honoured on the centenary of Poland's regained independence.

Translated by Szymon Włoch

⁴⁵ Charles Phillips, *Paderewski. The Story of a Modern Immortal* (New York, 1934), p. 251.

⁴⁶ Ibid.