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Catalogue entries

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Adapted from the six volume RA Collection book entries: Vols I – IV The RA Collection of Chinese Ceramics: A Collector's Vision by Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos · Vol V – The RA Collection of Enamelled Copper: A Collector's Vision by Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos, Ana Moás, Ching-Fei Shih · Vol VI – The RA Collection of Cross-Cultural Works of Art: A Collector's Vision by Helder Carita, Alexandra Curvelo, Maria Antónia Pinto de Matos, Bruno Alexandre Morais, Fernando António Baptista Pereira, William R. Sargent

Fig. 14
Inkstand, copper decorated
in *famille rose* enamels and gold,
China, Qing dynasty, Qianlong period
(1736-1795), Albuquerque Collection,
inv. no. 1038A



enamel on a copper triangular dish and its matching *cloche* (bell-shaped cover) is decorated, as all pieces in the service were, with the owner's armorial and the name 'Albuquerque' [Fig. 13].

One of the most intriguing and unique forms in enamel on copper is a butterfly inkstand [Fig. 14]. Most porcelain and enamel inkstands were of a standard rectangular form and focused on function, with sections meant to hold inks, sand, quills, and candles and, later, pocket watches. The butterfly inkstand appears to be purely sculptural and decorative, but the wings lift to reveal four removable containers. Butterflies hold a special place in Chinese iconography, referencing blessings, happiness, joy, and longevity, but if ordered by a European customer, that symbolism, as is the case in almost all Chinese-themed decorations, would have been lost to the foreign customer.

14/100

Bowl

Porcelain with underglaze blue
and incised decoration; Dutch or English
gilt copper mounts

China, Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi province

Ming dynasty (1368–1644), ca. 1610–35

Mounts: 17th century

H. 16.8 cm Rim Ø 35.5 Foot Ø 15 cm

Inv. no. 633

Another example of cross-cultural art, this bowl combines the arts of Asia, the Islamic world, and Europe. It was produced in Jingdezhen in the late Ming dynasty and decorated in underglaze blue, with an incised pattern that does not completely perforate the surface but reveals the biscuit of the body (unglazed part). This geometric motif is inspired by the Buddhist *swastika*, an auspicious symbol. The Islamic component is the presence of the *Shahada* – the profession of faith, the first of the Five Pillars of Islam – written repeatedly in underglaze blue inside six circular panels. The European component was added at a later stage, either in England or in Holland: a gilt-copper mount, with petal- and cord-shaped decorations. Metal mounts were popular in various European countries, and were applied to objects for embellishment and to enhance their artistic and financial value.

This bowl was formerly in the Edward James Collection, West Dean Park, no. 24.



