



**Teapot**  
**Hard-paste Porcelain, silver**  
**18<sup>th</sup> century, China**  
**Qing Dynasty, Quianlong's era**  
**Imari's style**

## Ceramics

Human beings have always used clay to shape objects of worship for funeral purposes and utensils designed for cooking and storing goods. Containers appeared at the same time as agriculture, 8 to 10.000 BC.

### Porcelain of the Far East

Hard-paste porcelain appeared in China in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of the Tang Dynasty (618-906). Its paste was composed of kaolin : white, crumbly and infusible clay (which did not melt). It boiled between 1250 ° and 1460 °. The resulting parts were thin, white and translucent.

**Chinese porcelain**, which had often been decorated with cobalt blue since the 12<sup>th</sup> century reached its peak with the Ming Dynasty Emperors (1368-1644).

Polychromy appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> century under the Qing Dynasty. As it was forbidden in China, Europeans got their supplies in Canton (Guangzhou) where parts in a western shape like the shaving bowl or the gravy boat were produced and intended for export. Several types were introduced : blue, pink, green.

The decorations which were performed in a great variety on a pure and shining white hard-paste would continue to whet appetites and Europeans' attempts at imitation.

Porcelain was introduced in **Japan** by Korean prisoners in 1592. They brought the art of porcelain to a real Golden Age. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century, ceramists from Arita called Kakiemon, slowly started to launch gold and orange-red decoration on blue patterns. This porcelain, which was shipped to Europe from the harbour of Imari was very popular in western royal courts.

### European ceramics

#### Spain and Italy

In the Middle East, as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim potters developed the final formula for earthenware (enamelled clay) and metallic lustre, which allowed to imitate metal to compensate religious prohibitions regarding the use of gold and silver crockery. This « islamic » ceramic was introduced at first in Egypt then in Spain in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

As early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Italians made « Majoliques » lustre-earthenware, deriving from the name of Majorca (Balearic Islands). They created the « Istoriato » : decoration composed of a scenery which was inspired by mythology, the Bible or literature.

#### Germany

The sandstone (dense and impermeable paste) offered a high degree of resistance to crushing and acids, it could be covered by glaze or salty varnish. The parts did not have any decorative purpose but they were useful objects, adapted to local need.

**Meissen** was the first European hard-paste porcelain manufactory, founded in 1710 due to the discovery of a kaolin deposit. It became famous thanks to figurines from Saxony : dancers, allegories, street trades or animals.



**Bowl**  
**Cencio Maestro di Gubbio**  
**Polychrome grand feu ornament**  
**1530-1540, Gubbio (Italy)**



**Fruit bowl**  
Earthenware, polychrome  
petit feu ornament  
17<sup>th</sup> century, Delft  
(Netherlands)



**Pitcher**  
Earthenware, polychrome  
grand feu ornament  
18<sup>th</sup> century (first half), Rouen  
(France)



**Anthropomorphic pitcher or  
«Jacqueline» pitcher**  
Earthenware, polychrome  
grand feu ornament  
18<sup>th</sup> Century (second half),  
Bailleul

### The Netherlands

**Delft** imitated the designs of Far Eastern porcelain in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century . Blue was used abundantly, but from the 1710 's onward, Dutch potters created a polychrome decoration, sometimes enhanced with gold.

### England

The centre of the ceramics industry in Great Britain was based in Staffordshire, and one of its characteristic products was fine cream-colored earthenware.

The new product, which was developed by the famous potter Josiah Wedgwood in 1769 , soon conquered the world market. His name is still attached to the objects , adorned with white antique low-reliefs on a coloured background.

## French ceramics

Bernard Palissy (1510-1589) broke new ground in his ornaments by adding fruits, leaves or reptiles in relief and influenced several workshops.

### Seine

The Vincennes Porcelain Manufactory settled in Sèvres in 1756 , at Madame de Pompadour's instigation, in order to specialise in high-quality porcelain. It was famous for its flowers and its « Pompadour rose ».

### Eastern France

Niderviller's earthenware factory in Lorraine was created in 1735 ; it first produced polychrome earthenware statuettes (e.g. : the kidnapping of Helen, room A), then it made porcelain ones.

**Rouen** introduced, around 1660 , the « lambrequin » decoration (pattern that imitates embroidery) in blue and white; polychromy appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Red, a typical colour for Rouen, was obtained with ferruginous soil; Chinese designs prevailed in the middle of the century, then cornucopia decorations got bigger.

## Regional earthenware

### Lille

The enamel was thick, in a beautiful milky white and rarely cracked . The monochromes were mainly blue or manganese (purplish brown). Two powerful giants influenced the ceramic centres of the region : Delft and Rouen.

The region's factories would often copy one another as the workers were travelling from one factory to the other. However we can notice some local features:

In **Aire-sur-la-Lys** , floral decorations in black were outlined and pipes were produced. In **Saint Amand**, refinement of ornaments was searched, and in **Saint-Omer**, a meticulous design was assured by creating light yellow or blue enamel backgrounds with white patterns. In **Bailleul** such as in **Lille** anthropomorphic pots (in human shape) were realized called «Jacquots» and «Jacquelines».