



## Armorial and the Chinese Export Story with Price Guide

*Prices have remained stable for several years and it could be a good time to buy these unique antiques from a bygone age. Here is the story of how a combination of circumstances brought about their manufacture in the age of sail. By John*

To explain the high profile and high prices of armorial porcelain it will help to place these wares in the historical context of the Chinese export trade to England in the eighteenth century. The catalyst was the tea trade. By the 1780s the *Honourable East India Company* would import in one season up to twenty million pounds of tea. It was very light in weight and the *Company* considered export porcelain as vital cargo. Not only was it water resistant but heavy and could be used, stored beneath the tea as ballast, to make their vessels 'seaworthy'. Again, the figures for the 1777/8 season only, showed the *English East India Company* imported nearly 350 tons of Chinese porcelain as ballast. In the 1776 season 168,000 blue and white cups and saucers and 35,000 dinner plates were imported. The home market could neither supply the quantity or compete on price. One should consider also that at this time English soft paste porcelains were hardly as robust as the Chinese hard pastes and this must have been a factor fuelling demand. By this time Cookworthy at Plymouth had developed a 'hybrid' hard paste but it was in its infancy and it would take until the 1780s and 1790s for Newhall and other companies to produce hard paste on a commercial scale.

However help was at hand for the home trade. The dealers who bought the export porcelain in bulk from the *East India Company*, called 'Chinamen' because of this practice, fell out with the *Company*. Auctions were held twice a year. Following an auction in 1787, the dealers were accused of forming a 'combination' or 'ring' and depressing the auction price by removing competition. Not only would the dealers gain by buying at a lower figure, but all of the extra charges, including government taxes, which were based on the hammer prices, would also be reduced. The case went to court in a bitter dispute which was to drag on for about four years. The *Company* failed to make its case but in the end the battle was drawn when in December 1791, after a hundred years of trading in Chinese export porcelain, the

*Company* decided to cease their bulk imports. Chinese porcelain continued to be imported into London after 1791 but it was limited to the 'private trade' allowances of the ship's captain and crew. Following the outbreak of war with France in 1793 which caused considerable trading difficulties, and the imposition of a war rate of tax in about 1799, by 1801 the trade in Chinese porcelain dwindled to almost nothing. This explains the number of English companies manufacturing the 'hybrid' hard paste in the 1790s, the stone china of the early nineteenth century and the blue and white pearlwares with their chinoiserie designs.

### Armorial Designs

Such was the context into which the armorials and special orders fit. Outside of the bulk orders for blue and white and famille rose, special orders were also taken to Canton for European designs. Orders placed for full armorial dinner services would be collected on a subsequent visit. Wealthy families chose designs from pattern books in London. Drawings of their coats-of-arms would be faithfully copied by the Chinese. The costs for such bespoke work were considerable. Because armorial porcelain is rarer than the general export, it is more expensive but not extraordinarily so considering its pedigree. In recent years the market has been flat so it could be a good time to collect export porcelain or armorials if you can afford it. I have also included a price guide to armorials in the following pages. For comparative purposes this includes a range of armorial types that are not Chinese. In particular note the ten reproductions produced by Samson of Paris in the late nineteenth century.

*My thanks to Geoffery Godden's book which I include below. Geoffery Godden is the acknowledged expert on the subject.*

### Recommended Reading

*Oriental Export Market Porcelain*,  
Geoffery Godden, 1979.  
*Starting to Collect Antique Porcelain*,  
John Sandon, 1997.



1 Rare early English Delft armorial plate dated 1653, painted in blue, yellow and ochre with the initial letters P, M & A, 1653, 22.5cm. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Nov 01. HP: £10,200. ABP: £11,997.



2 Belleek armorial tea service of 'Echinus' design, forms moulded as sea urchins and coral, tray with crest and the motto 'Per Mare Per Teras' for the Alexander family of Co. Armagh, first period marks. (10) Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Sep 02. HP: £5,200. ABP: £6,116.



3 Antique Chinese armorial oval soup tureen, 35cm, with cover and stand, 39cm, crest of three suns, made for Pierson family. Stride & Son, Chichester. Jul 03. HP: £4,000. ABP: £4,705.



4 18thC Chinese 'Armorial' porcelain part tea service, enamelled in 'Famille Rose' colours with quartered armorials surmounted by an arm holding a sword and worded 'Pour Mon Dieu'. (10 pieces) Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Jun 00. HP: £3,400. ABP: £3,999.



5 Delft 'Gardeners Arms' armorial plate, dated 1747, probably Liverpool. Peter Wilson, Nantwich. Feb 03. HP: £2,700. ABP: £3,175.



6 Chinese famille rose armorial porcelain part service, Qianlong period, painted with coats of arms and motto 'Fidus Ad Ultimum'. (some pieces with faults) Rupert Toovey & Co, Washington, Sussex. Feb 03. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,293.



7 Italian polychrome albarello, of cylindrical form painted with a reserve of a portrait of a lady with in a shell bordered cartouche, reverse dated 1775, 24cm high, with another waisted example painted with an armorial surmounted by a crown and flanked by cherubs, reverse dated 17?2. (2) Rosebery's, London. Dec 04. HP: £1,050. ABP: £1,235.



8 18thC Canton famille rose export porcelain bowl with armorial decoration, marked Wilkes & Liberty, 10in. (f and r) Denhams, Warnham, Sussex. Jul 05. HP: £1,050. ABP: £1,235.



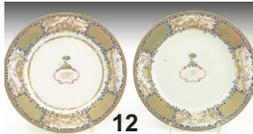
9 Late 18thC Chinese Export ivory glazed porcelain pedestal cup/cover with opposing, entwined handles, kylin finial, decorated with armorial devices and other ornament, 10.5in high. Amersham Auction Rooms, Bucks. Jun 02. HP: £920. ABP: £1,082.



10 Qianlong famille rose armorial dish, c1760, feathered cartouche surmounted by a bat and motto 'Prudentia' for Wakefield impaling Christie, 28cm dia. Hamptons, Godalming. Nov 01. HP: £620. ABP: £729.



11 Seven various 18thC Chinese porcelain armorial coffee cups, damage, 7.5cm. (7) Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £600. ABP: £705.



12 Pair of 18thC Chinese armorial plates, painted with central bearings, the borders with Chinese vignettes in peach enamel against a gilded diaper ground, 9.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Oct 05. HP: £550. ABP: £646.



13 19thC Sèvres coffee set, gilt with Napoleonic bees and armorials over the letters N and J: 8 coffee cans/saucers, milk jug, sucrier, coffee pot and cover. (20) Cheffins, Cambridge. Feb 05. HP: £500. ABP: £588.



14 Early 20thC Samson 'Chinese armorial' dessert service painted with arms related to the Jerningham family within flowers: two round tasses, two oval tazze, 2 square dishes & 11 plates. (17) Cheffins, Cambridge. Apr 05. HP: £500. ABP: £588.



15 Samson armorial vase with mask handles, 13in. (cracked) Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 01. HP: £460. ABP: £541.



16 Chien Lung armorial plate with the arms of Hussey and Jennings? within brown landscape border panels, 9.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 03. HP: £460. ABP: £541.



17 Chinese armorial tureen stand, oval form with pierced rim enamelled with the arms of Baron Mulgrave Phipps, swag and ribbon tied inner border, 27.5cm long. Qianlong. Bearne's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £440. ABP: £517.



18 Chinese porcelain barrel shaped tankard with twin moulded loop handle, enamelled in colours with armorial, bead/swag pattern borders, 6.5in high, Qianlong period, cracked. Canterbury Auc. Galleries, Kent. Apr 05. HP: £420. ABP: £494.



19 19thC Spode armorial part tea/coffee service, gilt design on white ground, with some Copeland & Garrett replacements consisting of milk jug, 6 teacups, 6 coffee cups, 16 saucers and cake plate, black script mark, some damage. Tring Market Auctions, Herts. May 02. HP: £380. ABP: £446.



20 Chinese famille rose octagonal armorial soup plate, c1755, centre with a floral spray below the arms of Grant within spearhead and sprig borders, 21.6cm. Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £380. ABP: £446.



21 Early Victorian armorial bone china 10-piece part dessert service, incl. two covered tureens and serving dish with gilded yellow and royal blue borders (tureens restored) Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 03. HP: £360. ABP: £423.



22 Pair of 19thC Samson porcelain armorial chargers. W & H Peacock, Bedford. Jan 03. HP: £340. ABP: £399.



23 Pair of 19thC Chamberlains Worcester silver shape armorial plates, latin motto. (some crazing) Locke & England, Leamington Spa. Sep 03. HP: £340. ABP: £399.



24 19thC Spanish lidded baluster vase painted with a Nelson memorial armorial with motto Junta in uno tiva. Gorrings, Lewes. Dec 00. HP: £300. ABP: £352.

## Ceramics



**25**  
18thC Chinese porcelain armorial plate and 2 famille rose plates, 23cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £300. ABP: £352.*



**26**  
Flight & Barr Worcester armorial teacup and saucer, enamelled with a peacock crest within roundel and gilded against a peach ground, rare script mark 'Manufacturers to their Majesties and Royal Family', saucer glue-repaired, 1792-1807. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jan 04. HP: £280. ABP: £329.*



**27**  
Early 19thC Chinese armorial export porcelain mug decorated with the Snodgrass coat of arms, 5in. (restored) and another mug. (a.f.) *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £260. ABP: £305.*



**28**  
Samson Chinese armorial vase with fixed ormlu mounted cover, shishi finial and floral decoration, 12.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 01. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



**29**  
Set of 5 Worcester armorial plates, 3rd qtr 19thC, painted with the armorial of the City of London, gilt jewelled cerise border; retails marked for Henry Green, Regent St, London, 26cm dia. *Rosebery's, London. Dec 04. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



**30**  
18thC Chinese blue/white footed punch bowl painted with lake landscape (chipped) 12in, and an 18thC armorial dish, 8in and a warming dish, 10in. (a.f.) *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



**31**  
18thC Chinese export armorial teapot, bearing the arms of the Lennard family, 6.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 00. HP: £220. ABP: £258.*



**32**  
Set of three Chinese armorial soup plates and other armorial dishes. *Gorringes, Bexhill On Sea. Dec 04. HP: £210. ABP: £247.*



**33**  
Chamberlains Worcester porcelain armorial plate, shaped gadrooned rim painted with flowers on a green ground, gilt embellishment, 10.25in wide. *Andrew Hartley, Ilkley. Feb 01. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



**34**  
Pair of Chinese porcelain armorial sauce boats, late 18thC, each painted with an armorial in the interior base, within blue lattice work and lambrequin borders, 18.5 - 20cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 04. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



**35**  
Yung Cheng plate, with the arms of Way impaling Page, armorial shield in thick enamels within set-pattern borders, (cracked) 9in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**36**  
18thC Oriental armorial bowl, painted with the coat of arms for Hanbury with Comyn in Pretence, 4.5in dia. (s/f) *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Nov 05. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



**37**  
Five Samson 'Chinese armorial' wares painted with various armorials within flowers and gilt blue bands: two vases 19cm high, a tea caddy and cover 12.5cm high and a tea pot and cover. *Cheffins, Cambridge. Apr 05. HP: £150. ABP: £176.*



**38**  
Set of six Victorian Daniel, London armorial dessert plates with central painted crests and motto with puce and gilt floral borders, 26.5cm. *Reeman Dansie, Colchester. Apr 06. HP: £120. ABP: £141.*



**39**  
Two armorial plates, French, late 19thC, each centrally decorated with armorial emblem within floral scroll gilt borders. 24cm. *Rosebery's, London. Apr 05. HP: £110. ABP: £129.*



**40**  
Two late 19thC Samson 'Chinese armorial' plates painted in colourful Chinese export style, 24.5cm. (2) *Cheffins, Cambridge. Apr 05. HP: £80. ABP: £94.*



**41**  
Graded set of three Samson 'Chinese armorial' mugs with another mug, each painted with armorial between gilt blue bands and coloured flowers, tallest 14.5cm high. (D) (4) *Cheffins, Cambridge. Apr 05. HP: £80. ABP: £94.*



**42**  
Collection of three Chinese coffee cups, one painted with exotic birds and flowers, one with figures looking out to sea, and one armorial. *Tring Market Auctions, Herts. Jul 04. HP: £80. ABP: £94.*



**43**  
18thC English armorial porcelain baluster mug, three greyhounds within puce scroll cartouche, bird crest, c1770, damaged, partially glue-repaired, 4.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 03. HP: £75. ABP: £88.*



**44**  
Mid 18thC Chinese export famille rose punch bowl with floral decoration and late 18thC armorial punch bowl. (2) (both distressed) *Reeman Dansie, Colchester. Apr 06. HP: £75. ABP: £88.*



**45**  
'Capodimonte' cabinet plate late 19thC, centre with an armorial of three flaming bottles, with gilded foliate scroll surround, the border with raised classical figure decoration, blue crowned n mark, 23cm. *Hampton & Littlewood, Exeter. Jul 04. HP: £74. ABP: £87.*



**46**  
Circular Samson famille rose armorial plate, the central coat of arms surrounded by floral sprigs, 11in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 00. HP: £65. ABP: £76.*



**47**  
19thC Italian maiolica two-handled vase decorated with armorial cartouche and serpent handles, 9in. *Gorringes, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £60. ABP: £70.*



**48**  
Samson armorial tea caddy and cover, 4.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 00. HP: £50. ABP: £58.*



**49**  
Samson of Paris armorial bowl, decorated with armorial shields, border with swags and garlands on a white ground, 10in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jan 04. HP: £30. ABP: £35.*