Introduction to Special Issue on “Collecting, Collections, and Collectors”, Part 2

Phillip Grimberg

Postdoctoral Fellow, Department for Chinese Studies, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg and Visiting, Research Fellow at the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (ICRH/IKGF) “Fate, Freedom, and Prognostication”, Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany
grimberg@grimberg.eu

The second part of our special issue of *Ming Qing Yanjiu* on “Collecting, Collections, and Collectors” in late imperial China brings together a total of five articles, which approach our topic from very different perspectives and with a wide range of methodologies.

In her article, “Collecting Chinese Objects in Slovenia at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”, Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik addresses the practices of collecting Chinese objects in Slovenia as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with a centre—periphery approach. She analyses how China was perceived in Slovenia through collected objects and how and to what extent these cultural contacts influenced collecting practices in Slovenia.

Katharine P. Burnett, in her contribution on the famous collector, patron, and artist Pang Yuanji 龐元濟 (1864–1949) (“Pang Yuanji, Traditionalist/Modernist”), sheds new light on the man who not only was a prominent proponent of traditionalist art circles in late imperial and republican China, but also—much less known—a “reformer and modernist” with a wide spectrum of social and cultural interests including, but not limited to, the arts.

Exploring the connections between the British collections of Chinese plants and their commissions of China Trade art during the so-called Canton System period, Josepha Richard in her article “Collecting Chinese Flora: Eighteenth- to Nineteenth-Century Sino-British Scientific and Cultural Exchanges as seen through British Collections of China Trade Botanical Paintings” elucidates Sino-Western exchanges during the late Qing dynasty, sparked by a newly

emerged interest in Chinese flora and a growing demand for detailed paintings of plants and seeds in Britain.

In his article “Collecting the *Pei Cen Stele* in Qing China”, Yan Weitian retraces the discovery of a Han period stele during the Qing dynasty. He analyses its political, social, and artistic contexts as “a symbol of prosperity, a cultural relic and a calligraphy exemplar”.

In the final contribution to our special issue, “Bibliophilia: The Passion of Ming Dynasty Private Book Collectors”, Ashton Ng illustrates how book collecting during the Ming dynasty evolved from a past-time of the elite to a popular phenomenon, which not only led to the wider distribution of books through the publication of bibliographies by private collectors and their opening of their collections to other bibliophiles, but also greatly contributed to the “systematic classification of books”.

As guest editor of this special issue of *Ming Qing Yanjiu* on “Collecting, Collections, and Collectors” I am greatly indebted to all of the authors of both issues 2020/24.1 and 2020/24.2 and the original and diverse scholarship they put out for this volume. I want to thank the editor of *Ming Qing Yanjiu*, Donatella Guida, for her trust in me and my capacities to be in charge of this special issue. Furthermore, I want to thank Federico Brusadelli as the managing editor of *Ming Qing Yanjiu* as well as Elizabeth You at Brill and copy-editor Jon Wilcox for their outstanding work.