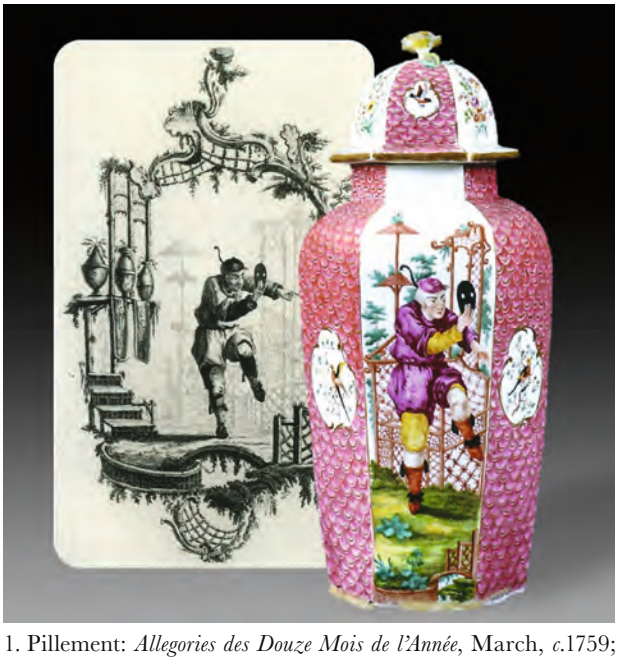
The influence of Jean-Baptiste Pillement's art on ceramics

A paper by Loren L. Zeller, presented online on 6 August 2020

While much has been written about Jean-Baptiste Pillement's art and its role in the decorative arts in general, little attention has been given to the artist's profound influence on ceramic design. The one exception is Marie Gordon-Smith who, in her monograph titled *Pillement*, pointed to the international importance of the artist's work in the field of ceramics.[1] My initial research was focused on the identification of examples of Pillement's chinoiseries appearing on ceramics. The result was the discovery of an impressive number of designs that can be confidently attributed to the artist (**1**). To some degree, that was the easier task, thanks to the many resources available today through the Internet and in many digital collections now made available free-of-charge for research and non-profit publications. The more challenging analysis that followed was to gain an understanding of why his designs were so popular with pottery and porcelain factories and why they generated consumer interest throughout Europe and as far east as Imperial Russia. This research led me to the observations and conclusions that are put forth in this paper.



1. Pillement: *Allegories des Douze Mois de l'Année*, March, *c.*1759; Worcester hexagonal jar and cover, *c.*1765–70; Lady Binning collection, Fenton House, London, The National Trust (FEN/C/128)

Jean-Baptiste Pillement was born in Lyon in 1728 and returned to the same city in 1789, remaining there until his death in 1808. He was a fourth-generation painter whose father was a textile artist employed at *La Grande Fabrique*, Lyon's royal silk manufactory. In 1743, at the young age of fifteen, he was sent to Paris to study with the painter Daniel Sarrabat (1666–1748) and to work as a designer of tapestries. He began work as an apprentice at the Gobelins textile factory where he must have been introduced to chinoiserie designs. Just two years later, he moved to Spain where he began to sell his paintings to wealthy clients and gained contracts to paint murals and other decorations in their mansions. He then moved on to Lisbon, where he worked for the King's Secretary of State, ultimately turning down the position of First Painter to the King, still in his twenties. More interested in learning and travel, he left Portugal for London in 1754. Arriving in London at just 26 years of age, he worked for a short time for the printmaker Matthew Darly (1741–78). During the next eight years, he quickly developed his own style consisting of a mix of rococo and chinoiserie.

By 1758, with the support of Pierre-Charles Canot (*c.*1710–77), an engraver and publisher living at that time in London, and other engravers and publishers like Robert Sayer (1725–94), Pillement's work had become well known. His early success was also due in great part to the patronage of a compatriot, Charles Leviez (1708–78), choreographer and ballet master of Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Leviez's partner and

manager of the theatre was the renowned actor David Garrick (1717–79), who became an important client of Pillement.[2] Upon retiring, Leviez moved back to Paris where he engaged in selling and reproducing chinoiserie designs by Pillement and others. While Pillement's designs were published in both London and Paris, it was through Leviez's business in Paris that the artist's work was more broadly distributed across Europe.

Many of Pillement's designs were included in Robert Sayer's popular book of designs titled *The Ladies Amusement or, Whole Art of Japanning Made Easy,* first published in 1759.[3] Sayer's book also became well known to designers across Europe. Pillement's reputation as an accomplished artist and designer gained him contracts that made it possible for him to travel extensively. Leaving London in 1762, he spent time in France, the Netherlands, Rome and Milan in Italy, as well as in Vienna, Berlin and Warsaw. These early travel experiences and the work he produced for well-known clients like the King of Poland, Stanislaw August, created a favourable reputation within the decorative arts community. His chinoiseries were viewed as having good commercial value and were broadly distributed. Ultimately, his travels took him back to France, and Portugal where he taught art. After revisiting Spain, he then moved back to Lyon in 1789 where he remained for the rest of his life working as a drawing master and designer of silks.

While much of his oil on canvas work was in the rococo style, the scope and varied subject matter of his *oeuvre* is impressive. It ranges from chinoiserie designs for decorative purposes, to oil on canvas rococo landscapes, as well as elaborate exotic imaginary scenes like the *Market Scene in an Imaginary Oriental Port* (**2**), believed to have been created while in Vienna in 1764.

Pillement and the rise of the chinoiserie style

To understand as well as appreciate the appeal of Pillement's distinctive style, it is helpful to begin by briefly reviewing the developments in the fine and decorative arts that contributed to the 18th-century consumer's attraction to all things Chinese. By the beginning of the century, the growing fascination with the Orient created demand for both Chinese export art and decorative objects, all of which contributed to the commercial success of the East India companies. This near obsession with life and culture in the East prompted Western artists to interpret the Chinese style, ultimately resulting in the development of their own version of what was the art and culture of the Orient. The latter was, of course, a creatively imagined version of the original.

2. *Market Scene in an Imaginary Oriental Port*, *c.*1764; J. Paul Getty Museum (2003.20)

By the first half of the 18th century, Chinese export porcelain, with its durable white body, shiny glaze, and fresh designs, had gained considerable popularity in most European markets. Domestic factories, keen to find ways to compete, chose to produce 'home grown' versions of Chinese ceramic motifs, hoping to gain a greater share of the market. In addition to the many landscape and floral designs, there were those presenting genre scenes, some with children, like the boy seen on this dish (**3**) often referred to as the 'Jumping Boy'. The whimsical, juvenile-like characteristics of the 'Jumping Boy' pattern could be found

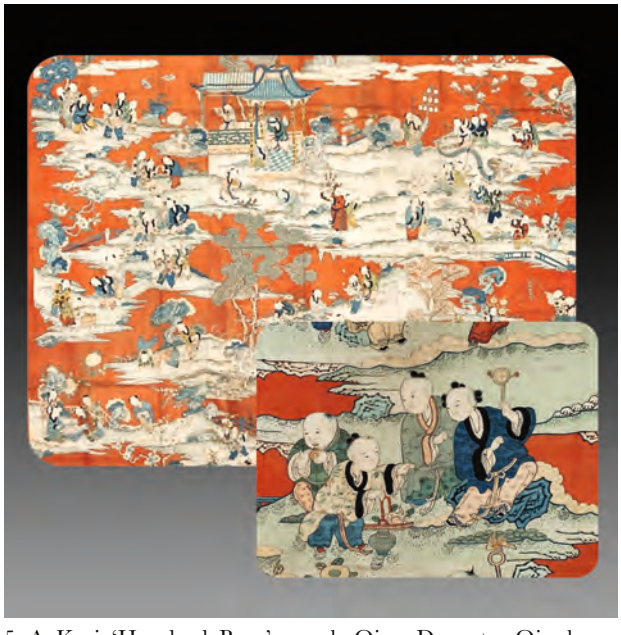
3. Chinese export porcelain dish, *c.*1700–50 with 'Jumping Boy'; private collection

4. Coffee cup and small dish, Liverpool, Richard Chaffers' factory, *c.*1756–60, variation of 'Jumping Boy'; private collection

in a variety of Chinese ceramic designs as well as in other export art and decorative art media. It is this same playful spirit that assumes an important role in Pillement's chinoiserie designs, which frequently found their way onto ceramics. Concurrent with the appearance of Pillement's early drawings and engravings published in small collections as early as 1756, these same themes were being explored by designers in Britain's porcelain factories. One example is the jumping boy motif found on this dish and cup (**4**) produced by Richard Chaffers at his Liverpool factory, *c.*1756–60.

Another popular Chinese design involving children was that of the 'Hundred Boys', an example of which can be seen on the exquisite silk panel (**5**). This theme was particularly popular in China in the 16th and 17th centuries and could be found on porcelain, silks, and other media in the decorative arts. Westerners may not have been cognisant of the deeper symbolism embedded in this design, intended to articulate adult concerns about prosperity, longevity, status, and well-being, but they must have been captivated by the charming images of children at play and they would have recognized some of their activities.

The 'Hundred Boys' theme could also be found on Chinese porcelain, as in the case of the jar (**6**) which manages to accommodate the full and complex pattern. This design served as inspiration for similar



5. A Kesi 'Hundred Boys' panel, Qing Dynasty, Qianlong; Sotheby's

6. Jar, Chinese, with 'Hundred Boys' pattern, Wanli period, 1572–1620; Sotheby's Hong Kong

7. Bough Pot, Sinceny, *c.*1740–60; private collection

8. Plate, Worcester, *c.*1752–54, 'Boys at Play'; Bonhams

chinoiserie patterns in the West and it was one that may have inspired Pillement to portray children in many of his chinoiseries. Indeed, by the first half of the 18th century, the 'Hundred Boys' motif was already being re-interpreted in Europe. One example is the design on this charming bough pot (**7**) attributed to the Sinceny manufactory, established in 1737. Later, the subject of children at play became a popular chinoiserie theme throughout Europe. Interest in designs that explored scenes of children engaged in playful activities is also exemplified by the rare Worcester plate known as 'Boys at Play' (**8**), a design that may have been inspired by a Chinese original or by the 'Hundred Boys' design.

In her book titled *Chinoiserie*, Dawn Jacobson described the style that evolved during the rococo period as having a character all its own: 'It's a wholly European style whose inspiration is entirely oriental'.[4] What I believe Jacobson meant by 'European style' was that artists, relying on images of objects, figures and actions that were already familiar to the western psyche, endeavoured to present them in the context of what was believed to be the Chinese culture. In doing so, they could stimulate the consumer's fascination for the distant Orient. British designers were eager to incorporate 'a style after the Chinese' in an already maturing taste for things rococo in style. Some, like Edwards and Darly, in their publication titled *A New Book of Chinese Designs Calculated to Improve the Present Taste, Consisting of Figures, Buildings & Furniture … and Ornaments, &c.* relied on this new style to 'Improve the consumer's Taste'.[5]

9. Chocolate pot, Meissen, *c.*1735; Sotheby's

10. Jean-Baptiste Pillement, from collection titled *Livre de Chinois*, *c.*1758; Getty Research Institute

To understand Pillement's distinct chinoiserie style, it is helpful to view it in the context of the work of his predecessors – the Meissen decorator Höroldt, the French artists Watteau and Boucher, along with Delacour, and the designers Ingram, Edwards and Darly. Johann Gregorius Höroldt's decorating workshop at Meissen was an important early manifestation in the West of the chinoiserie style on ceramics.[6] The 'dame' who appears on this delightful Meissen chocolate pot (**9**) provides an excellent motif through which we can observe the evolution of the chinoiserie style in 18th-century Europe. In fact, when we compare the Meissen image of the 'Lady with Parasol' accompanied by a child with Pillement's design (**10**), published more than twenty years later, the similarity becomes apparent. Indeed, it presents an interesting perspective on the relationship between the decorative and the fine arts – and their influence, one on the other.[7] The scene depicted on Meissen's chocolate pot represents a notable departure from the typical Chinese genre scenes involving a parasol.

The Chinese export porcelain plate (**11**) presents the traditional use of the parasol. In Chinese culture, parasols were typically held *over* the person they shaded rather than carried by the same person who is shaded. In (**12**), we see a different version in which the horseman is followed by a servant on foot holding a large sunshade over the rider. Caughley reproduced this design on porcelain *c.*1782–94, as seen in this illustration.[8]

While the Dutch designer Cornelis Pronk (1691–1759) may have been aware of the significance of the parasol in the psyche of the West, the design he created for the Dutch East India Company in 1735, to be produced in Batavia for the European market, remained faithful to the iconic Chinese image of the servant holding the parasol. The plates (**13**) are two of many examples that were produced based on Pronk's original design.[9]

11. Plate, Chinese, Kangxi, *c.*1700–20; Google Images

12. Tea canister, Chinese, Qianlong, *c.*1780; plate, Caughley, plate, *c.*1785, printed 'Temple' pattern; TCC Database of Patterns & Sources

13. Two plates, 'Dames au Parasol', Qianlong, *c.*1736–38; Winterthur Museum, Leo A. & Doris C. Hodroff gift (2000.0061.124, .021)

14. Mug, Worcester, *c.*1755–65; TCC Database of Patterns & Sources

15. Octagonal plate, Bow *c.*1760–65; mug, Derby, *c.*1765–70; TCC Database of Patterns & Sources

The Worcester pattern printed overglaze on this mug (**14**) is also faithful to the Chinese version.[10] While Worcester may have been the first to produce this pattern, Bow and Derby marketed similar versions (**15**) on different shapes, as did Richard Champion, a little later at Bristol, *c.*1774–78. Variations of this motif were also produced on tin-glazed earthenware and, around the turn of the century, a version inspired by Pronk's original design was produced on this earthenware transfer-printed plate by Rainforth (**16**), to which additional features were added. Rainforth and other factories used this pattern successfully on a variety of wares.

The examples just illustrated replicate, to varying degrees, the iconic parasol motif, whether inspired by original Chinese porcelains or through Pronk's exquisite interpretation of it. By the beginning of the 18th century, a solitary lady with parasol, *one who shades herself*, had become a motif used by Western artists to depict the exotic life of the Far East. Antoine Watteau's (1684–1721) figure from his suite of *Chinese Figures c.*1708, seen in this 1731 engraving (**17**) was, perhaps, the first important example. While the artist's 'Girl from the Kingdom of Ava' may be dressed

17. *Girl from the Kingdom of Ava c.*1731, Edmé Jeaurat after Antoine Watteau; © The Trustees of the British Museum (1838,0562.2.136)

16. Plate, pearlware, 'Parasol and Birds', Rainforth, *c.*1800–14; private collection

18. *Dame Chinoise*, François Boucher, *c.*1735; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund (53.600.1018)

19. *La Maitresse du Jardin*, John Ingram after Boucher, *c.*1741–63; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Elisha Whittelsey collection (66.628.4)

20. Jean-Baptiste Pillement, *c.*1759; Getty Research Institute

21. 'July', from *The Twelve Months*, 1781; © The Trustees of the British Museum

in Chinese-like attire, the young lady herself is more European in appearance than Chinese.

Watteau's figures may have inspired François Boucher (1703–70) to create his *Suite of Chinese Figures* in 1735. Boucher's *Chinese Lady* (**18**) is a lady of leisure, elegantly attired, now more Chinese in appearance. Her interaction with the dog introduces an activity in the scene that would be familiar to his Western consumers. A decade later, we find the artist John Ingram reinterpreting Boucher's *Dame Chinoise* in the engraving seen in (**19**). In Ingram's version, her parasol appears more Continental than Chinese.

In 1759, Pillement produced a collection tilted *Allegories of the Twelve Months of the Year.* Representing the month of March (**20**), Pillement's Chinese lady, when compared with the images created by his predecessors, signals an evolution in the interpretation and focus of the figure that had become a symbol of what was considered 'in the Chinese style', or chinoiserie. The idea of the exotic expressed in these European interpretations of *La Dame Chinoise* who holds her own parasol points to an important distinction between the art of the Orient and how it was seen through the eyes of the West. Pillement's lady is demure and modestly dressed. She stands in a rustic setting and holds a fishing net. Her basket rests on the post on which she leans. Formality is abandoned and, yet this young lady possesses an innocence and charm with which her Western viewers could easily identify. Placing the iconic parasol in the hands of a solitary female figure signals the West's vision of the Orient, its own interpretation of the Chinese style.

By the 18th century the parasol or umbrella had already become part of the Western psyche. For Westerners, it served as both a useful accoutrement for protection from the sun, and in some cases the rain, and it had also become a statement of fashion as exemplified in this hand-coloured mezzotint published in 1781 by Carrington Bowles (1724–93) (**21**). As such, it is easy to see how its shape, not its function, now in the hands of a lovely young Chinese lady, could visually and emotionally connect the viewer from the West to the culture in the East.

Pillement regularly incorporated the parasol into his designs. Richard Chaffers' use of the artist's work, seen in (**22**), was faithfully and quite elegantly reproduced on this early Liverpool porcelain jug. The same design was employed on the earthenware

22. Pillement, *The Ladies Amusement* (later coloured version), *c.*1762; jug, Liverpool, Richard Chaffers' factory, *c.*1760–62; private collection

23. Jug and mug, transfer-printed pearlware, 'Chinese Figures and Playful Dog', maker unknown, *c.*1800–10; private collections

jug and mug (**23**), printed underglaze in blue. In the latter examples, the parasol motif is just one of three separate Pillement designs that were used to construct this panoramic scene. The jug and mug are good examples of an innovative ceramic pattern in which the features of three Pillement designs appearing in *The Ladies Amusement* were used. The designer of these printed pieces followed the advice Sayer offered to his readers: 'All [designs are] adapted in the best Manner for joining in Groups or being placed in single objects'.[11]

Ceramic designers in the West, influenced by European chinoiserie artists, began creating patterns that featured the solitary lady holding her own parasol, as in this rather spectacular French interpretation of the motif on a Sinceny dish (**24**). It was almost as if they were liberating these new *Dames Chinoises*, placing the parasol in their own hands, claiming this vision as their own. The Liverpool factory of James Pennington repeated the same motif on this painted mug (**25**). Versions could soon be found in abundance across Europe on painted creamware (**26**), tin-glazed earthenware (**27**), and on pearlware (**28**). Around the turn of the century, examples also appeared printed underglaze in blue, like the earthenware plate with scalloped and feather edge by Thomas Hawley, *c.*1790–1800 (**29**).

24. Dish, Sinceny, *c.*1740–60; Musée des Arts Décoratifs (23299)

25. Mug, Liverpool, James Pennington's factory, *c.*1767–73; private collection

26. Loving cup, creamware, unmarked, British; *c.*1770–90; Google Images

27. Stein, tin-glazed earthenware, unmarked, German, *c.*1750–80; private collection

28. Jug, pearlware, unmarked, British, *c.*1770–90; private collection

29. Plate, earthenware, Hawley, English, *c.*1790–1800; TCC Database of Patterns & Sources

30. *First Book of Ornaments*, William Delacour, *c.*1741; Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (1962-126-1)

To fully understand and appreciate Pillement's unique style, it is helpful to compare his work with the chinoiserie inspired rococo designs popular in the second decade of the 18th century. The frontispiece from William Delacour's (1700–67) *First Book of Ornaments* (**30**) serves as a good example for comparison.[12] In Delacour's design we find a combination of elaborate scrolls and columns with neoclassical elements notably present in the robed figure holding the book's title, all characteristic of the rococo style. Added on the left, almost as if an afterthought, are Chinese figures and artefacts along with a mythological bird-like creature, all considered to be chinoiserie motifs. The asymmetric scrolls and an element of fantasy seen here in Delacour's frontispiece were characteristics of rococo and chinoiserie. Ten years after Delacour published the *First Book of Ornaments*, Pillement introduced his own *New Book of Chinese Ornaments*. The first version of designs was engraved by himself and published in 1755. The book contained just six large chinoiseries. Working with Robert Sayer, he then published a second version in London in 1756. This was only two years after the young artist arrived in London. These designs represent a considerable departure from Delacour's style. In the design (**31**), Pillement creates a sense of movement that Delacour's massive rococo scrolls were

31. *A New Book of Chinese Ornaments*, Pillement, *c.*1756

32. George Edwards & Matthias Darly, *A New Book of Chinese Designs Calculated to Improve the Present Taste*, *c.*1754; Victoria & Albert Museum (E.6592-1905)

33. *A New Book of Chinese Designs*, Edwards & Darly; coffee cup, Worcester, *c.*1758–60; New Hall saucer and pickle dish *c.*1785–90; private collections

also intended to do, but Pillement accomplishes it by using different, organic elements such as vines, joined by ladders and steps that seem to climb delightfully into the sky while defying any sense of gravity. His very Chinese figure precariously hangs from a branch high above while holding the collection's title which is also tethered to the other-worldly figure perched below him. In contrast, Delacour's neoclassical figure, who performs a similar task, is presented in a more traditional rococo style.

It is also helpful to consider the work of Edwards and Darly, England's self-appointed missionaries of good taste. In 1754, they produced one of the earliest and finest English pattern books of Chinese-inspired designs, which included this print (**32**). As the book sub-title affirms, their designs were 'Calculated to Improve the Present Taste' by adapting the chinoiserie style. The design (**32**) was used on painted as well as printed English porcelain. Examples from Worcester and New Hall can be seen here in (**33**). The delightful gazebo with its hanging bells featured in Pillement's arabesque design (**31**) represented a notable departure from the formality of the traditional pagoda, perched on the unbalanced rock formation featured in his contemporaries' work.

The designs in Pillement's *New Book of Chinese Ornaments* published in 1756, while still retaining traces of a rococo form, are imaginative and free of formality, whimsical and yet sophisticated. These characteristics are what makes his work unique and their singular appeal has made his work popular candidates for ceramic patterns. In defence of this new chinoiserie style, Robert Sayer wrote in his introduction to *The Ladies Amusement:* 'With Indian and Chinese Subjects, greater liberties may be taken, because luxuriance of fancy recommends their productions more than propriety, yet from their gay colouring and airy disposition, [they will] seldom fail to please.'[13] In effect, Sayer was informing his readers that it was time to move on, and that the new patterns included in his book would enable designers to delight consumers in a new, unorthodox way. Indeed, the abundance of Pillement's designs and of those of artists in the chinoiserie style serves as proof that ceramic designers eagerly embraced this new 'unorthodox way'.

Pillement's designs on ceramics

Regrettably, no catalogue raisonné of Pillement's work has ever been compiled. The content of his design was broad in scope and varied in style. I am indebted to the Getty Research Institute, which holds the most comprehensive collection of the artist's work, for enabling free access to the collection. This source proved especially useful for my research. Given the absence of any consistent categorization of the artist's work destined for use in the decorative arts, I have organized them into nine broad groups or categories. Many designs contain landscapes, waterscapes, or genre scenes. Others feature adults with children and some of his early designs published in *The Ladies Amusement* contain animals, insects, and reptiles. A small group includes fanciful, imaginary scenes commonly referred to as 'arabesques'. The latter appear to have been the choice of the French porcelain factory at Sèvres, and the faience factory in Marseilles (Veuve Perrin), as well as the Italian faience manufactory at Lodi. Pillement also produced several collections containing exotic floral and botanical designs as well as trophies. His collection of Chinese Children's Games titled *Recueil de Plusiers Jeux d'Enfants Chinois* was by far the most popular in terms of use on ceramics. The number of ceramic patterns that relied on the artist's work is extensive. The examples included in this article are intended to illustrate both the variety and international scope of the artist's influence, but they are certainly not all the items I have found to date.

Individual figures in landscape

The design seen in (**34**) is from Pillement's *Livre Chinois* *c.*1758 and was engraved by the artist's colleague, Pierre-Charles Canot. It is an interpretation of the Chinese bell toy motif. The centre pattern on this faience dish from the Strasbourg factory follows very closely the artist's design. A similar version of the same design appears on the attractive two-handled tray from the Luneville factory (**35**). These and other French examples to follow are representative of designs commonly referred to as 'Le Décor au Chinois', that began to appear in the early 1760s.[14]

34. *Livre Chinois*, *c.*1758; oval platter, Strasbourg, Alsace, *c.*1760; Musée National de Ceramique de Sèvres

35. Two-handled tray, Luneville factory, *c.*1780; private collection

The magnificent Worcester hexagonal jar decorated in the atelier of James Giles relied on work from Pillement's series titled *Allegories des Douze Mois de l'Annee.* The jar is now owned by the National Trust. Pillement's designs were engraved by Pierre-Charles Canot in 1759. Three designs were chosen by Worcester for the jar. March is (**1**) with the artist's interpretation

36. *Allegories des Douze Mois de l'Année, Avril*; Lady Binning collection, Fenton House, London, National Trust [see (**1**) above]

37. *Allegories des Douze Mois de l'Année, Juillet*; Lady Binning collection, Fenton House, London, National Trust [see (**1**) above]

of a masked dancer. The figure in the second design (**36**) represents April and the third (**37**) relies on Pillement's design for the month of July. The latter two are of female figures in a garden setting. The painter rather faithfully copied Pillement's figures themselves, while reinterpreting the setting in which they are found.

Adults with children

In Pillement's collection titled *Livre du Chinois c.*1758, previously discussed (**10**), children were paired with adults. The Worcester mug shown here (**38**) relied on a second engraving by John June of the artist's work, which appeared in the 1762 edition of *The Ladies Amusement*. The Worcester engraving was done by Robert Hancock.[15]

38. *The Ladies Amusement*, *c.*1762; mug, 'La Promenade Chinoise', Worcester, *c.*1775; TCC Database of Pattern & Sources

Landscapes and waterscapes

The waterscape seen here (**39**) is one of a group known as *Chinese Genre Scenes in Gazebos Along the Shore* that were engraved and published by Canot in 1759 in London. This group was just one from a larger category of landscape and waterscape engravings that were used on ceramics by many factories. Sometime between 1815 and 1835, Davenport chose to rely on this small group of drawings to produce a series for dinnerware that became known simply as 'Chinese Gazebos'. The plate (**40**) is from that series. While other designs from Pillement's *Chinese Genre Scenes in Gazebos Along the Shore* appear on Davenport's dinnerware, I have included just one more example (**41**) to illustrate how faithfully Davenport followed the artist's original work.

Albeit in a different medium, this enamelled plaque (**42**) from an unknown factory demonstrates that Davenport was not the only factory that was so inspired by Pillement's work that they replicated it in every aspect.

39. *Chinese Genre Scenes in Gazebos Along the Shore*, London, *c.*1759

40. 'Chinese Gazebo' series, Davenport, *c.*1815–35; TCC Database of Patterns & Sources

41. 'Chinese Gazebo' series, Davenport, *c.*1815–35; private collection

42. Enamel plaque, attributed to South Staffordshire region, late 18th century; private collection

43. From *Livre de Chinois*, *c.*1758

Genre scenes

The genre scene (**43**), commonly known as *La Pêche*, appeared in Pillement's collection titled *Livre de Chinois*. The designs in this collection were engraved by Canot and published in 1758. This popular scene proved to be the choice of ceramic factories in England and across Europe. Indeed, just two years after the collection was published, it appeared in the design on this maiolica tray (**44**) made by the Antonibon Factory in Nove (Vicenza). The example is proof of how rapidly the artist's work was distributed across Europe.

44. Two-handled tray, Nove (Vicenza), Antonibon's factory, *c.*1760–90; Museo della Ceramica G. Gianetti

Those familiar with printed Worcester and Caughley patterns will recognize the design (**45**) on mugs from these two factories. This well-known pattern often appears printed on mugs with *La Dame Chinoise* appearing on the other side.

45. Mug, Worcester, *c.*1770–85 (upper right); mug, Caughley, *c.*1776–92 (centre); TCC Database of Patterns & Sources

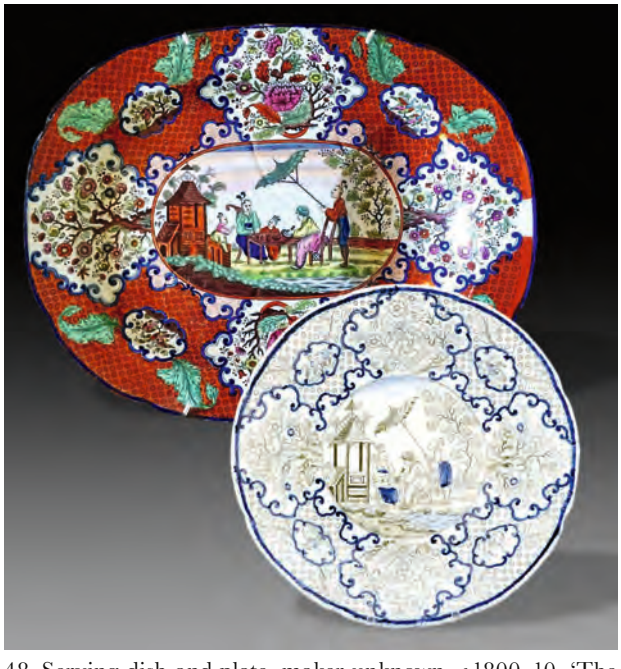
46. Plate, faience, Aprey, *c.*1770; Musée National de Ceramique de Sèvres

The pattern that appears on the plate from the French factory in Aprey (**46**) presents an interesting interpretation of another Pillement design, also from *The Ladies Amusement.* On it, the painter closely replicates the two musicians in Pillement's rural scene but could not resist adding rococo scrolls painted in blue around the original setting. Birds and floral sprays were added to further enhance the pattern. This is the only example of this design that I have found.

The two plates featured in (**47**) were produced at the Indeo Pottery. The factory's designer closely copied another of Pillement's signed and engraved designs found in *The Ladies Amusement.* This pattern is commonly referred to as 'The Apothecary'. Pillement's works were produced without any attempt to provide a design for framing them. As it was customary to include a border pattern for most ceramic items, the factories created their own border designs. This accounts for the many different border types used. These borders tend to reflect the characteristics of the patterns being produced in any given period. Thus, we find that on earlier wares border patterns in the chinoiserie style were used. These relied on geometric shapes and symbols, sometimes accompanied by floral sprays. In the examples (**48**), the pattern used for this rather spectacular meat dish was printed and enamelled with bold colours, while the plate was produced with limited decoration, save for the outline of the bold border medallions which was painted underglaze in blue. The meat dish and the plate produced in the first decade of the 19th century signal a change in border designs. In these two examples we find that the much larger and enamelled border lessens the emphasis on the centre pattern derived from Pillement's design.

Another popular genre scene created by Pillement is the one known as 'The Precarious Chinaman' (**49**). The design was published in *The Ladies Amusement* in 1759 and was produced in several variations and on a variety of shapes by the Cambrian Pottery. Other factories also may have used it. The two examples (**50**) were made by the Cambrian Pottery.

47. Pillement, *The Ladies Amusement*, 'The Apothecary', soup plate, Bovey Tracy, *c.*1790–1800 (upper right); private collection; plate, (lower centre), TCC Database of Patterns and Sources



48. Serving dish and plate, maker unknown, *c.*1800–10, 'The Apothecary'; private collections

49. Pillement, 'The Precarious Chinaman', from *The Ladies Amusement*, *c.*1759

50. Plate and punch bowl, two pattern variations, Cambrian Pottery, *c.*1800–05; TCC Database of Pattern & Sources

Small parasols

Pillement created this frontispiece (**51**) for a group of engravings titled *Petits Parasols Chinois*. The drawings were engraved by J. J. Avril and published in Paris in 1773. The collection contains a small number of drawings frequently referred to as 'arabesques'. These designs are larger in format and somewhat more complex in terms of features. While they can frequently be found on other media such as murals and screens, fewer examples of their use on ceramic forms exist. It is possible that they were viewed as more challenging or costly to interpret on ceramics. There are, however, a limited number of extant examples serving as proof that they could be applied successfully to ceramic bodies. One such example is this maiolica plate from the Lodi factory (**52**) that replicates the original with considerable skill. The fact that this arabesque was produced by the Italian factory in Lodi also serves as proof of the extent to which the artist's designs became known across Europe shortly after their publication.

The Veuve Perrin factory in Marseilles was another pottery that elected to use designs from this group. The source for the pattern illustrated on the plate in (**53**) also came from *Petits Parasols Chinois*. While some French faience manufactories could closely replicate Pillement's designs, as in this example, most relied on them for inspiration,

51. Frontispiece for *Petits Parasols Chinois*, engraved by J. J. Avril, *c.*1773

52. *Petits Parasols Chinois*, plate, maiolica, Lodi factory, Italy, *c.*1775–80; private collection

53. *Petits Parasols Chinois*, plate, faience, Marseilles, Veuve Perrin, *c.*1748–93; Google Images

54. Dish, faience, Marseilles, Veuve Perrin, *c.*1770–93; private collection

55. *Petits Parasols Chinois*, Liverpool delftware printed tile, signed Green, *c.*1775; Lady Charlotte Schreiber Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum (414: 834/4-1885)

producing ceramic patterns *in the style of Pillement*, a style that became known as *Le Décor au Chinois*. One example is the beautifully decorated dish (**54**), produced by the Veuve Perrin manufactory. The dish's imaginative pattern could easily be mistaken for a Pillement design.

Even the early English developers of transfer-printing, Sadler and Green, chose to replicate a few of Pillement's designs and relied on others for inspiration. The tin-glazed earthenware tile (**55**), signed Green, was clearly inspired by the artist's design from *Petits Parasols Chinois*. It was printed overglaze with enamel decoration added and, as in the case of the plate from Aprey (**45**), it was framed with a border of traditional rococo scrolls. It is probably safe to say that rococo scrolls never appear in the artist's original chinoiserie designs.

Arabesques

The group of Pillement designs referred to as arabesques were also large and more complex in content. The collection of designs published with the title *Cahier de Balancoires Chinoises* was produced somewhat later in his career, *c.*1770–73. These designs, an example of which is (**56**), were used by the Sèvres factory. The first example (**57**) is one of a pair of spectacular matching pot-pourri vases. They were originally acquired by George IV and were at Carlton House. Chinoiserie was a favourite style of the Prince Regent. The vases remain today in the Royal Collection. The patterns on these vases closely followed Pillement's designs.

The second vase was decorated with another of the artist's arabesques from the same collection (**58**). These delightful patterns were rendered in two tones of gold and platinum on a black ground. The ornamental gilded bells added to these pieces would seem to echo those often found on the buildings that appear in Pillement's work. Sèvres also used these arabesque designs for dinner and coffee services. The plate (**59**), with the corresponding engraved design source, was decorated with a slightly modified version of the pattern seen on the pot-pourri vase (**57**).

Animals, insects and reptiles

Included in the 1762 edition of *The Ladies Amusement* are several pages containing images of extraordinary animals, insects and reptiles. The amusing bird seen in (**60**), faithfully guarding her nest from a menacing viper, is one of several imaginative designs published in the book. It was used for this porcelain tea plate, which was part of a tea service, with the pattern printed and painted on the plate. The same pattern was used for all pieces in the set. The creatures found in Sayer's book were sometimes included in other Pillement designs, as in the soup plate (**47**).

56. *Cahier de Balancoires Chinoises*, *c.*1770–73; engraved by Demonchy

57. Pot-pourri vase, Sèvres, *c.*1791–92; Royal collection (RCIN 2347)

58. Pot-pourri vase, Sèvres, *c.*1791–92; Royal collection (RCIN 2347)

59. Plate, Sèvres, *c.*1791–92; Christie's

60. Plate, bone china, probably Staffordshire, *c.*1815 maker unknown; private collection

Children

In 1759, the same year in which the first edition of Sayer's book *The Ladies Amusement* appeared, Pierre-Charles Canot engraved and published Pillement's collection of designs titled *Recueil de Plusiers Jeux d'Enfants Chinois* (**61**). Here are twelve of the fourteen engraved drawings in the folio (**62**). While there is no evidence to support it, one wonders if Pillement was inspired by the 'Hundred Boys' motif discussed and illustrated earlier (**5**) when he created these designs.

This collection of designs was the most popular of all the artist's work intended for use in the decorative arts, especially on ceramics.[16] Although the children featured in this collection are Chinese in appearance, the activities in which they are engaged would have been familiar to 18th-century consumers across Europe. Indeed, many of the games portrayed in the collection were represented more than a century earlier in a collection of engraved prints titled *Les Jeux et Plaisirs de l'Enfance* by Claudine Bouzonnet-Stella after the work of her uncle, Jacques Stella (1596–

61. Frontispiece, *Recueil de Plusiers Jeux d'Enfants Chinois*, *c.*1759

62. Selection of twelve of fourteen designs from *Recueil de Plusiers Jeux d'Enfants Chinois*, *c.*1759

63. Minton tea and coffee service, pattern no. 539, *c.*1810; Bonhams

1657). [17] Given that Pillement did not use titles for the designs, I have assigned each a name descriptive of the activity in which the children are engaged. Included here is a selection of patterns that found their way on to ceramics and enamels.[18] The group of beautifully painted Minton wares (**63**) exemplifies the appeal of the artist's designs when used on ceramics. Minton assigned the number '539' to this series of patterns. While they depict children engaged in playful activities within rustic settings, Minton ironically used them for dessert and tea services intended for adults. The series was a commercial success for Minton and the patterns were soon copied by others including Wedgwood. In 1815, Minton began producing the same designs for a dinner series printed in blue and, occasionally, with enamels painted overglaze.

64. Skittles, *Recueil de Plusieurs Jeux d'Enfants Chinois*, *c.*1759

65. Dish, faience, attributed to Saint Amand, mid-18th century; Google Images

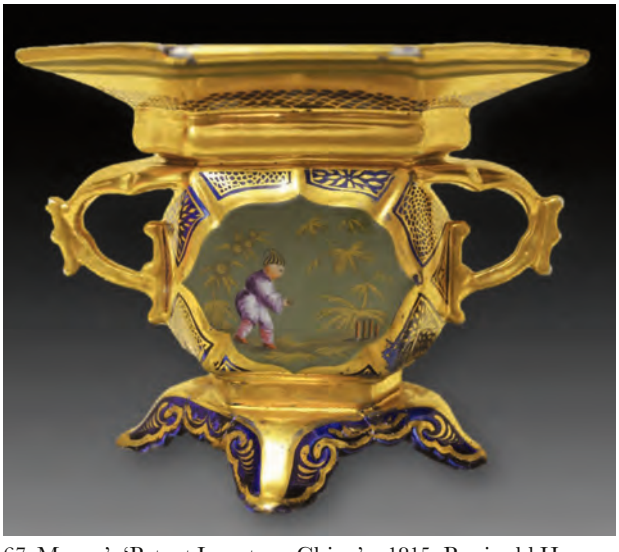
It is important to emphasize the fact that these were not uniquely Chinese games the children were playing. Indeed, they were played and enjoyed by children and adults across Europe. By incorporating these games into his designs, Pillement was able to create new patterns in the Chinese style that would appeal to the western psyche – they serve as excellent examples of the style and technique of chinoiseries discussed earlier in this paper. In this first example (**64**), children are engaged in the game of skittles, sometimes referred to as nine pins. The game itself appeared on other ceramic forms during the 18th century, as seen on this delightful faience dish (**65**), attributed to the Saint-Amand-les-Eaux factory.

No other factory copied so faithfully Pillement's design than did the producer of the lovely enamel plaque (**66**). Regrettably, the maker is unknown. It is one of two held in the reserve collection of the

66. Plaque, enamelled, probably South Staffordshire, *c.*1760–65; Lady Charlotte Schreiber Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum

Victoria & Albert Museum, from the Lady Schreiber Collection. The second relies on another of Pillement's designs from the same folio.

The size and shape of ceramic items often dictate whether all or only a portion of a design source can or will be used. Such is the case with the striking small vase (**67**), one of a pair, produced by Masons. One figure from four different designs from Pillement's collection was used to decorate the two sides of each vase. In this example, the figure holding the ball from the 'Skittles' design was used. The vases, previously in the Reginald Haggar Collection, are now held in the Potteries Museum.



67. Mason's 'Patent Ironstone China', *c.*1815; Reginald Haggar Collection, The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

68. *Whipping the Top*

69. *Le Sabot*, Augustin de St Aubin; Minton Archives

70. Comport, bone china, Wedgwood, pattern 784, *c.*1812–20; Wedgwood Museum

In the design (**68**), the children are playing a game known as 'whipping a top'. It was a children's game popular throughout Europe and patterns involving the game were often used on ceramics. The engraved print published *c.*1770 by the French artist Augustin de St Aubin (1736–1807) (**69**) with a title *Les Différens Jeux des Petits Polissons de Paris*, provides evidence of the popularity of this game and, at the same time, points to a similar interest in publications of engraved scenes of children's games for commercial use. It was surprising to find three prints by Augustin de St Aubin that portrayed children engaged in outdoor games in the Minton Archives, including this one representing the same game of whipping a top. I am not aware of Minton's use of this artist's engravings for its ceramic production, but one wonders if their designers had considered them. The presence of these prints in the archives is, at least, evidence that children's games were of interest to Minton's designers.

Wedgwood was quick to follow Minton with their own version of Pillement's collection. Their bone china series was recorded as No. 784 and was produced sometime between 1812 and 1820. This bowl (**70**) is the only example from the series in the Wedgwood collection.[19] Like the Minton version, Wedgwood's interpretation closely follows the artist's original design. The boy holding a whip on the left in Pillement's design was also used for one pattern on the pair of rare Mason's vases just mentioned (**71**).

The Pillement design (**72**), accompanied by Wedgwood's version of it, presents Chinese children engaged in the game of hopscotch. Wedgwood's Design Book 2 retains this original-coloured version of the same pattern, one intended for the number 784 series. It is, to my knowledge, the only design from this series to be found in the museum's archives. Attempts to locate other versions of Wedgwood 784 series have been unsuccessful. Given that only one example from this series exists in the museum and only one original design remains in the archives, it is possible that the Wedgwood version of the pattern was not as successful as was the Minton series. Perhaps other examples will come to light and disprove this hypothesis. Minton's version of the pattern (**73**) is printed in blue with coloured enamels added overglaze. Minton also used this design earlier on bone china. Readers will observe that, in the printed version, Minton used a wide border on flat pieces like plates and dishes that

71. Vase, Mason's 'Patent Ironstone China', Reginald Haggar Collection, *c.*1815; The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

72. Wedgwood Design Book 2, pattern 784; Wedgwood Museum

73. Plate, 'Hopscotch', Minton, pattern 539, *c.*1815–20; TCC Database of Patterns & Sources

74. 'Riding in a Cart'; Minton Archives

included miniature versions of several of the Pillement designs printed in the series.

One of the most popular designs in this collection was 'Riding in a Cart' (**74**). The Minton Archives retain a nearly complete set of Pillement's original engraved designs. At some point in the past, probably with intent to preserve them, they were pasted on larger sheets and numbered. The number '36' appearing on the sheet with the source print shown here is one added by Minton and has nothing to do with the original plate numbers in the folio produced by Canot. These valuable originals confirm that they served as the source of Minton's series. All of Pillement's designs in this collection follow a similar format: each includes three Chinese children, skilfully framed in a rustic setting of flowers, plants and rocks. The flowers and plants are often large and exotic in appearance and are characteristic of those found in the artist's collections of floral and plant designs. In the background are distant objects and trees. This framing device added dimension and interest to each scene.

The Russian Imperial Porcelain Factory produced a series of eight plates relying on Pillement's collection. While I have not had the opportunity to confirm it, the example in the Hillwood Museum Collection (**75**) and seven more with other patterns from the series are said to be held in the State History Museum in Moscow. The fact that it was produced no more than two years after the artist's work was published points, again, to the speed with which his designs were disseminated across Europe and even to the Russian Empire.[20]

The French faience dish (**76**), produced two decades after the publication of the folio, relies on the same Pillement design. It also serves to document the widespread use of the artist's work. This same design was also used by the Sèvres factory on the dinner plate (**77**). As in the case of the pot-pourri vases discussed earlier, the plate was rendered in two tones of gold and platinum on a black ground.

The only original surviving design from the Minton Pattern Book 2 is here (**78**). It features the figure pulling a cart, and is a design intended for a bute-shaped cup. It is illustrated with Minton's original copy from the Pillement-Canot folio. Minton used the full design for a large dish printed in blue and enamelled over the glaze with colours (**79**). Because of the size of the dish, an additional figure from another source in the collection was added on the right to complete the pattern.

75. Plate, Russian Imperial Porcelain Factory, *c.*1760–62; Marjorie Merriweather Post collection, Hillwood Museum, Washington D.C.

76. Serving dish, attributed to Strasburg, *c.*1785–95; Google Images

77. Sèvres, gilded by Jacques Dieu, *c.*1792; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

78. Pillement, *Riding in a Cart*; below left, Minton Design Book 2, *c.*1810–12; Minton Archives

79. Serving dish, Minton, 'Riding in a Cart', *c.*1815–20; private collection

80. Saucer, Meissen, *c.*1725–30; private collection

81. 'See-saw', *c.*1759

82. Plate, 'See-saw', bone china, Minton, *c.*1810–12; private collection

83. Serving dish, 'See-saw', earthenware, Minton, *c.*1815–20; private collection

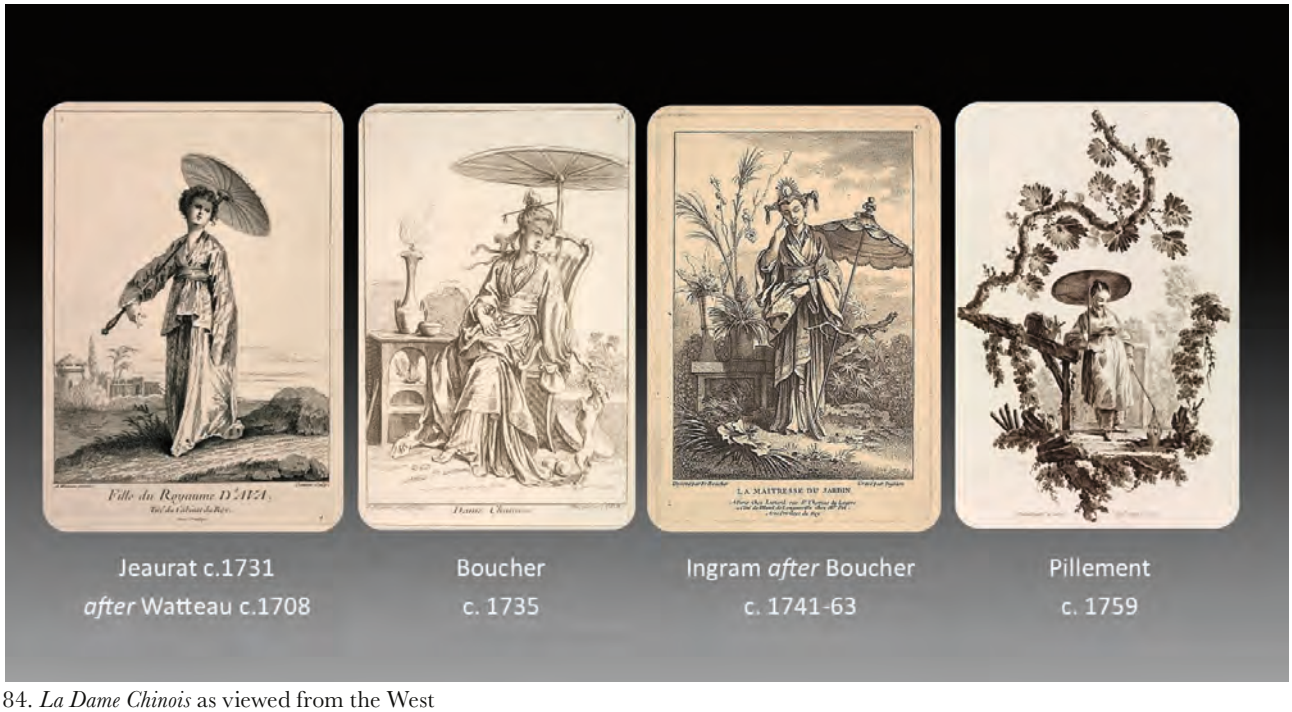
Years prior to the publication of Pillement's series of designs depicting children's games, Meissen used the see-saw motif on its porcelain. An example of its version of the theme can be found on this early saucer (**80**). The similarity between the earlier Meissen pattern and Pillement's design (**81**) is worth noting. A third figure positioned in the middle between the other two children appears in both designs. It is just one more example indicating that these playful activities were well known around the world and that they appeared in designs for the decorative arts. That the Meissen design may have served as inspiration for Pillement's initial drawing can only be considered speculation. The see-saw design was a favourite of the French factories. Minton produced both bone china (**82**) and earthenware versions of the pattern. The large 17-inch dish (**83**) relied on two additional figures to fill the space.

Pillement in perspective

By 1775, Pillement had abandoned work on his chinoiseries. He returned to Lyon in 1789. His second wife, Anne Allen, produced several small collections of colour engravings. Inspired by his earlier designs and with his signature, they were meant to renew interest in the artist's work created for the decorative arts. However, it does not appear that these later engravings found their way onto ceramics. Sadly, Pillement, a successful artist earlier in his life, died a very poor man in 1808.

Fifty-one years after the publication of Watteau's *Figures Tartar*, Pillement produced his own collection of *Chinese Figures in Landscape*. By focusing on the lady with parasol, one of many artistic motifs during that period, we are able to witness a gradual evolution in the 'rococo chinoiserie style', one that was soon to appear on ceramics (**84**). Pillement's chinoiseries represented a significant change in the direction of that evolution, one in which we witness a shift from formality to informality, from a stylised interpretation of the Westerner's view of the Orient, to the creation of humble and demure figures engaged in joyful activities familiar to all, and to scenes that were inventive and tickled the consumer's fancy.

Meissen's design featuring a lady with parasol and child (**85**) may or may not have provided inspiration for the creation of Pillement's design, but the vision



84. *La Dame Chinois* as viewed from the West

85. 'The Lady with a Parasol', a timeline

of both Meissen's designer and that of Pillement was undoubtedly a Western artist's concept of a lady of the Orient, and it represented more than just an interesting decorative design. They were images of a new Chinese lady, one who holds her own parasol. It was a design motif that would be familiar to the Western psyche and, at the same time, it would fuel the West's fascination for the distant Orient. This same vision soon found its way onto Worcester's porcelain mug, printed from an engraved copperplate by Pillement's own contemporary, Robert Hancock.

Pillement's chinoiseries ushered in a new style, one that Robert Sayer hailed to his readers in the introduction to *The Ladies Amusement.* In effect, with these designs Sayer was proclaiming a new era in the decorative arts. It was a time to move on to a new kind of luxuriance, one with which designers could delight their consumers in surprisingly unorthodox ways. Nothing, in my view, exalts this new style more exquisitely than does the Sèvres factory's use of his design as seen on this pot-pourri vase (**57**) produced towards the end of the 18th century.

Through a close review of the artist's chinoiseries one can gain an appreciation for the important role Pillement played in the decorative arts in general, and in ceramics in particular. This graphite drawing (**86**), created later in Pillement's life, embodies the creative genius and the appeal of his work throughout

86. Pillement, *Chinoiserie Fantasy*, *c.*1770–90; The Cooper-Hewitt Collection (1931-70-29)

the decorative arts from the 18th century until today. In it, we find winged ships precariously tethered with garlands to mountain tops. They hover like hot air balloons over a landscape of pure fantasy. Pillement's unique style broke from the formality of that of his predecessors. His chinoiseries fuelled the consumers' imagination, inviting them to escape to a world of innocent fun and fantasy. Translating his ingenious and popular designs onto ceramics was often a recipe for commercial success.

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NOTES

[1] Gordon-Smith (2006).

[2] Gordon-Smith (2006), p. 38. As a result of Leviez' patronage, Garrick also became an admirer of Pillement's work and purchased a number of his paintings.

[3] Sayer (1759), 1st edition (London); (1762), 2nd edition (London); a facsimile of the 2nd edition was first published in 1959.

[4] Jacobson (1993), p. 7.

[5] Edwards & Darly (1754), a book of designs engraved and published by the authors. Pillement, shortly after arriving in London for the first time, worked with Darly and is believed to have made contributions to the book of designs.

[6] Johann Gregorius Höroldt (1696–1775) began work at the Meissen porcelain factory in April 1720. For the next 50 years he was the dominant figure in the decorating workshop at Meissen. He was responsible for both the recruitment and training of a team of painters and for the development of the colours used.

[7] All digital images of Pillement's original engraved chinoiserie designs were provided by the Getty Research Institute or from my personal copy of prints in the 1962 facsimile edition of *The Ladies Amusement*. From (**10**) forward, the source of these design images will not be cited.

[8] See also The Caughley Society (2012), p. 180. The 'Temple' pattern was also used by Worcester.

[9] In 1734, Pronk was commissioned by the Dutch East India Company to produce designs to be produced in China, then shipped to Europe for sale. Pronk created four different designs, the most popular of which was known as 'The Parasol Ladies'. While his contract with the Dutch East India Company ended in 1740, Pronk's designs remained popular and were frequently copied.

[10] A pull sheet from the copperplate of this design can be found in the Caughley Rag Book held in the Wedgwood Archives.

[11] This pattern with all three source prints is documented in Halliday & Zeller (2018), pp. 310–11.

[12] William Delacour was born either in France or in Great Britain to French parents. From historical records, it is known that he was active in the field of the arts in Great Britain from 1741 until 1767.

[13] Facsimile of the 1762 Edition (1959), p. 4.

[14] '*Le Décor au Chinois* was first created at the Strasbourg manufactory in Alsace.' Gordon-Smith (2006), p. 320. It was soon adopted by various factories in the east and south-east of France: Luneveille, Niderviller, Les Islettes and others.

[15] Branyan *et al.* (1989), p. 313.

[16] 'It became one of the most successful of his folios reproduced by several French faience manufactories, French Sèvres porcelain, English Minton porcelain, as well as the Imperial Russian Porcelain Manufactory', Gordon-Smith (2006), p. 42.

[17] Jacques Stella, like Pillement, was born into a family of artists in the city of Lyon. As such, he was probably introduced to Stella's work at a young age.

[18] A more comprehensive review of the many patterns in this group can be found in Zeller (2016).

[19] Gaye Blake-Roberts, pers. comm.

[20] 'The demand for prints was from all of Europe, from Portugal to Russia, and they were circulated in the tens of thousands annually. England provided an important source of engravings to the international market…', Gordon-Smith (2006), p. 34.

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