

A M I R M O H T A S H E M I



Chinese Silver-Gilt Teapot with English Brazier by Robert Garrard II

Canton (Guangzhou), China, Late 18th century (the teapot and base)

London, England, 1839, mark of Robert Garrard II (the brazier)

Silver gilt

24cm high, 21cm wide (the teapot); 9cm high, 23cm wide (the brazier)

Stock no.: A5366

Provenance: Probably owned by the Cecil family, Earls and Marquesses of Exeter from the early 19th century.

Legacy from an Italian national trust.

A fine silver gilt teapot made in Canton for the European export market, with accompanying later European 'chinoiserie' brazier and stand. The base of the teapot is engraved with the name of the workshop, 東魯 (*Dong Lu*), Canton. Next to this is engraved a British crest, featuring lions supporting a garb (wheat sheaf), standing atop a cap of maintenance. This is the crest of the Cecils, Marquesses and Earls of Exeter. The marquess's coronet, which is above the lions, indicates that the mark cannot have been made before 1801, when the Earls of Exeter were made Marquesses.¹ The teapot and base date from the late 18th or early 19th century, so the Cecil family may have been its first owners in Europe.

The teapot is decorated with four large quatrefoil cartouches, each containing land-and-waterscapes or *shanshui* (山水) in relief against a matte background. This was achieved by hammering punch marks into the silver, an effect known in the Ming period as *shadi* (沙地) or 'sand ground'.² The cartouches

depict a couple in a rowing boat and a solitary fisherman, the latter of which was a popular theme with Wu Zhen, one of the Four Masters of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368). The second depicts two pavilions under a canopy of trees containign two monkeys and two magpies. This motif is a rebus or pictorial pun, as the Chinese word for monkey, 猴 (*hóu*), is a homophone for the word for 'nobleman' or 'marquess'. The Chinese word for magpie, 喜鵲 (*xǐquè*), shares its first character with the word for happiness, 'xì', and as such is seen as a sign of joy. The third panel depicts a couple meeting on a bridge. In the fourth cartouche, a male and female deer graze. They are watched from a pomegranate tree by a monkey. Two bees fly around their nest, which hangs from a maple tree. The monkey, used as a symbol for the nobility, is frequently used in combination with the bee, 蜜蜂 (*mì fēng*), as '*fēng*' means 'to grant a title'. The word for deer, 鹿 (*lù*) means 'good fortune', and emphasises the wish for promotion to a higher rank. This motif appears frequently in Chinese paintings and ceramics, such as a 13th-century scroll in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (accession no. [1982.1.4](#)), a Qing dynasty porcelain plate in the same museum (accession no. [79.2.378](#)). Similar motifs are depicted in a register on the shoulder of the teapot, whilst floral vines decorated the neck, lid, and handle. The base tray and teapot share similar decorative repetoire, and an identical diaper pattern.

The brazier, though seemingly made in the same style, is a later English addition by a skilled silversmith. It is stamped with the marks of London silversmith Robert Garrard II in 1839. Garrard was one of the leading producers of elaborate ornamental silver, including over 100 pieces in the Great Exhibition of 1851.³ He had undertaken such work before, creating a frame from an Asante Ghanain pendant in order to turn it into a dish (see British Museum, London, accession no. [Af1973.07.1-2](#)).

Both teapot and base are engraved with 'scratch marks', possibly inventory numbers and dates from a pawn shop in the 20th century.

[1] With thanks to Elliot Nesterman from the Heraldry Society.

[2] Eberhard, Susan. 'Metamorphic Medium: Materializing Silver in Modern China, 1682-1839.' (Doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2023), p. 88.

[3] 'The Makers Series: Garrard', *British Antique Dealers' Association*. Retrieved online via <https://www.bada.org/features/makers-series-garrard> on 06/02/2025.