The Art of Chinoiserie of the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries in Museum Complexes of Ukraine

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The Art of Chinoiserie of the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries in Museum Complexes of Ukraine This article discusses the features of manifestations of the Chinoiserie style in Ukraine. The study focuses on architectural and artistic monuments of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, with an emphasis on interior design and garden art. The article outlines the routes of penetration of Chinese handicrafts and objects of the European Chinoiserie style and identifies the leading motifs and elements that were used in organising the subject-spatial environment of Ukrainian estates: mural painting, porcelain, furniture, park sculpture and small-scale architecture. With reference to a generalisation of the authors' field investigation results, the article outlines features of the use of elements of Chinoiserie style and their adaptation to local landscapes and cultural contexts. The main observations and conclusions of the study were obtained using methods of figurative–stylistic, formal, semantic and comparative analyses.

Keywords: Chinoiserie style, architectural and arts ensembles of Ukraine, interior design, garden art, porcelain manufacture in Ukraine

Introduction

The term "chinoiserie" (Chinese-style, from the French Chinois, i.e. Chinese) was first recorded in 1836 in the novel *L'Interdiction* by Honore de Balzac, as the name given to things made in the Chinese style. However, the phenomenon of chinoiserie itself arose at the end of the sixteenth century and acquired development and stylistic maturity in the second half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chinoiserie developed against the background of a fascination with the mysterious land of China and the exotic East more generally. Therefore, often within chinoiserie one can see Japanese, Indian, and Arabic motifs and pictorial elements

next to Chinese ones. The initial fascination with the fabulous East eventually led to the development of a European stylistic trend that interpreted Chinese and other forms and motifs of Eastern cultures within the framework of its own artistic system. Its development was supported by active trade relations with the countries of the East, as a result of which European markets were saturated with art objects that carried new plots, ornaments, and forms. Chinoiserie became a transnational style and was reflected in architecture, landscape gardening, arts and crafts, painting and costume.

The manifestations of the pan-European artistic phenomenon known as chinoiserie in the lands of Ukraine indicate, first of all, the broad connections of these lands with both eastern and western states. It was European connections that led to the appearance of the first manifestations of chinoiserie in the castles and estates of Polish rulers in the lands of modern Ukraine. Furthermore, due to historical circumstances, European influences also penetrated through the Russian Empire. Therefore, Ukraine has its own history of chinoiserie, which is still only partially explored.

Unfortunately, the dizzying stream of events of Ukrainian history destroyed a significant part of the monuments in the style under study, and the course of modern events threatens the existence of those preserved or restored through the efforts of enthusiastic researchers and restorers. Meanwhile, understanding the Ukrainian part of the pan-European artistic process will make it possible to form a more adequate understanding of its scale and specific manifestations. Thus, the purpose of this article is to highlight the features of manifestations of the Chinoiserie style using the example of architectural and artistic ensembles of the late seventeenth to nineteenth centuries on the lands of modern Ukraine, and to determine the state of their preservation.

Historiography of the issue, materials and research methods

Manifestations of the Chinoiserie style in Ukrainian art is a topic that has found only partial coverage in professional reading. Usually these are works devoted to general issues of Ukrainian Orientalism which, among other directions inspired by the passion for the art of different countries of the East, also contain individual observations on the reception of Chinese art. Among them are studies by I. Teslenko¹ and A. Ozhoha-Maslovska². The focus of these two researchers is mainly on painting and graphics by Ukrainian masters of the first third of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, respectively.

The problematic of chinoiserie in the art of Ukraine in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century was raised by Tang Qianrui.³ In the key points of her report, the author refers to works stored in the collection of Kharkiv Art Museum.

Valuable data and opinions regarding Chinese porcelain and the development of domestic production with the inevitable penetration of relevant motifs are set out in the works of

¹ TESLENKO, Iryna. "Orientalism in Ukrainian art of the first third of the twentieth century", Thesis abstract for Cand.Sci. 17.00.05 (Fine art), Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts.

² MASLOVSKA, Alla. Orientalism in the modern art of Ukraine. In: *Humanities and Social Sciences Review*, 03(03), 2014, pp. 439–444.

³ TANG, Qiangrui. «Umovnyi» Kytai v ukrainskomu «shynuazri» kintsia XIX – pochatku XX stolittia. In: *Pytannia skhodoznavstva v Ukraini*. Kharkiv: H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, 2018. Pp. 130–133.

Ukrainian researchers such as L. Bekh,⁴ T. Lytovko,⁵ T. Nechyporenko⁶ and O. Shkolna⁷. The transformations of Chinese patterns in traditional Ukrainian embroidery analysed by N. Otrokh⁸ make it possible to understand the penetration of certain Chinese pictorial motifs and their role in the development of works in the Chinoiserie style⁹.

Research published by B. Omelchuk,¹⁰ I. Pohranychna¹¹ and V. Smolynets¹² devoted to architectural ensembles, among which there are examples of chinoiserie, are of great importance in the context of the chosen topic. We note separately the collective investigation devoted to analysing the influence of Chinese-style garden layout on corresponding architectural forms in Europe¹³. Among the famous European ensembles, the authors pay attention to two outstanding park ensembles in Ukraine (Oleksandria and Sofiivka). In the next publication by these authors, the "Chinese pavilions" of Oleksandriia and Sofiivka are also mentioned as a part of a broader study devoted to European chinoiserie with a focus on the stylistic features of the pavilions.¹⁴

All the mentioned studies, to one degree or another, have contributed to the formation of a motley picture of chinoiserie in Ukrainian lands from geographical and historical perspectives.

The range of materials studied includes samples of chinoiserie pieces from museum collections in Ukraine, as well as watercolours and photographs documenting the appearance of monuments in the nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Among them there are works by famous Austrian watercolourist Willibald Richter.¹⁵

The chosen research methods were determined by the specific features of the material. In particular, in this work we used methods and techniques of formal, figurative–stylistic, semantic and comparative analysis. In addition, field research methods included photographic recording and interviews.

⁴ BEKH, Liudmyla. Farfor u pobuti ukrainskoi elity XVIII stolittia. In: Zbiór raportów naukowych. "Nauka dziś: teoria, metodologia, praktyka"(28.09.2013 - 30.09.2013). Wrocław: Wydawca: Sp. z o.o. «Diamond trading tour».

⁵ LYTOVKO, Tetiana. Skhid v kulturi Slobozhanshchyny XIX – pershoi treti XX stolittia v konteksti problem pokhodzhennia tvoriv mystetstva. In: *Visnyk KhDADM*, No. 15, 2012, pp. 71–81.

⁶ NECHYPORENKO, Tetiana. Mezhyhirskyi faians u kolektsii NMUND. Chastyna I. In: *Portseliana*, № 3, 2018, pp. 62–72.

⁷ SHKOLNA, Olha. Dukhovno-estetychnyi spadok i filosofiia farforu Kytaiu v rozvytku kultury «biloho zolota» yevropeiskykh derzhav novoho chasu. In: *Aktualni problemy istorii, teorii ta praktyky khudozhnoi kultury*, Vyp. 32, 2014, pp. 58–67.

⁸ OTROKH, Nataliia. Ornamentalni motyvy kytaiskoho shovku i yoho vplyv na transformatsiiu yevropeiskykh vizerunkiv. In: *Pytannia kulturolohii*, Vyp. 31, 2015, pp. 166–174.

⁹ chinoiserie = China style.

¹⁰ OMELCHUK, Bohdan & TOMIUK, Ihor. Palatsovyi chinoiserie Zolochivskoho zamku : z mynuloho do suchasnykh kryteriiv rozvytku. In: *Naukovi zapysky Lvivskoho universytetu biznesu ta prava*. Vyp. 14, 2016, pp. 112–116

¹¹ POHRANYCHNA, Iryna. Palatsovyi kompleks u s. Samchykakh Khmelnytskoi obl. – pryklad klasytsystychnoi yevropeiskoi arkhitektury kintsia XVIII – pochatku XIX st. In: *Visnyk Natsionalnoho universytetu «Lvivska politekhnika»*. *Arkhitektura*, № 856, 2016, pp. 186–190.

¹² SMOLYNETS, Volodymyr. Geneza palatsu u strukturi sela Pidhirtsi. In: *Visnyk Lvivskoho natsionalnoho ahrarnoho universytetu. Seriia : Arkhitektura i silskohospodarske budivnytstvo.* № 17, 2016, pp. 147–151.

¹³ ŻYCHOWSKA, Maria; IVASHKO, Yulia; CHANG, Peng; DMYTRENKO, Andrii; KULICHENKO, Nataliia; & ZHANG, Xin Mu, The influence of traditional Chinese landscape architecture on the image of small architectural forms in Europe. In: *Landscape Architecture and Art*, 18(18), 2021, pp. 59–68.

¹⁴ IVASHKO, Yulia; CHANG, Peng; DMYTRENKO, Andrii; KOBYLARCZYK Justyna; KRUPA Michal. Specifics of stylised shapes of Chinoiserie-style pavilions as the basis of their restoration. In: *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*, vol. 12, 2024, issue: 2, pp. 27–41 doi: 10.46284/mkd.2024.12.2.2

¹⁵ Richter, Willibald (Dresden, 1805–1880, Vienna) – Austrian artist, watercolourist.

The origins of chinoiserie in the lands of modern Ukraine

Relations between the Ukrainian lands and the Far Eastern countries have existed for a long time through the countries of the Middle East, primarily Persia and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Crimean Khanate. In fact, parts of the so-called "Silk Road" ran through these lands at different times. As it is known, this name itself appeared only in the nineteenth century, as a certain unifying image for trade routes that went from the Far East to the countries of the Mediterranean basin and the Black Sea region.

In Ukrainian folk songs of the Cossack period (seventeenth – eighteenth centuries), *kytaika* (nankeen cloth) is mentioned. This was the name given to Chinese-made silk fabric, predominantly blue and then red, that found its way to Ukrainian lands. Due to its scarcity and, accordingly, high cost, *kytaika* acquired the status of something unusual and special in the mass consciousness. In part, Chinese silk had a ritual significance: famous heroes and Cossack leaders were covered with a piece of *kytaika* at their funerals, as was sung in an ancient Cossack funeral song:

Лежить козак на купині,	The Cossack lies on a hummock,
Китайкою лице вкрили.	His face was covered up with a piece of nankeen cloth.

A well-known researcher of Ukrainian embroidery and traditional clothing, Natalia Otrokh, notes that Chinese silk fabrics, mainly "gilded" (with metal thread), could be found in Ukrainian lands in the second half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In China, such technology has been known since the Han era (third century BCE to the third century CE). It is possible that the art of silk sewing spread from China through Persia; certainly it became quite popular in Ukraine. Of course, the high price of silk led to the circulation of embroidered silk items among wealthy Ukrainians. But there was variety in the use of such sewing, which is found not only as an element of clothing or religious church items but also in interior design, and even in expensive horse tack.¹⁶

Natalia Otrokh points out the "universality" of some elements of Chinese embroidery ornamentation, in particular mentioning tulip-shaped flowers and butterflies. For example, the butterfly, which resembles the Chinese character for "80", was a symbol of longevity, and was also used as a symbol of the tenderness and vulnerability of existence. "In Ukraine, [the butterfly] symbol did not spread much and was found mainly on imported Chinese fabrics. In particular, Ukrainian ethnographer and art historian N. Novytska in her notes mentions a sample of Chinese fabric with butterflies dating from 1777".¹⁷

Otrokh's statement that Chinese motifs could acquire a different character over time, become stylised, and change in accordance with the understanding and tastes of the population of a particular territory¹⁸ is important for our research. The transformation of Chinese motifs that occurred during the process of adaptation in Europe (and, accordingly, in Ukraine) and the inclusion of these motifs in national ornamentation, albeit with the loss of their original meanings, is reminiscent of the processes that will later be identified in the art of "chinoiserie".

¹⁶ OTROKH, Ornamentalni motyvy ..., p. 171

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 169

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 172

Goods of oriental origin that the Cossack Ukrainian elite paid attention to included beverages such as tea and coffee. It is known that Hetman¹⁹ Bohdan Khmelnytskyi liked to start the morning with a cup of coffee, which he appreciated in his youth, when he was in Turkish captivity. Along with these beverages, the corresponding utensils also arrived in Ukraine. Researcher Liudmyla Bekh highlights this when citing documentation describing the life of the Ukrainian elite of the eighteenth century. General Flag-Bearer²⁰ Mykola Khanenko, ancestor of the outstanding philanthropist and collector Bohdan Khanenko, was very fond of porcelain. His diary repeatedly mentions the sets of china he purchased. Among the property of the Prior of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Wilno (now Vilnius, Lithuania), a Chinese porcelain teapot is indicated, and the description of the property of the Archimandrite of Saint Cyril Monastery, Kyiv, includes three pairs of Chinese porcelain tea cups.²¹

As is known, in Europe, the French monarch Louis XIV became a trendsetter for Chinese products. In his favourite "brainchild", the royal apartments at the Palace of Versailles were decorated with Chinese fabrics and porcelain. The Trianon de Porcelaine in Versailles – a building with five pavilions decorated with white and blue tiles – gave rise to the spread of a fashion for "Chinese" palaces, parlours and pavilions. This fashion gained popularity in Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century. Since then, various works of art containing references to Chinese art have been called "chinoiserie". The demand for "Chinese style" spread so far that European porcelain production began to produce local products similar to Chinese ones.

Similar processes did not spare Ukraine. Representatives of the wealthy elite paid tribute to the fashionable European chinoiserie trend as they built their residences. They purchased European products in this style, invited craftsmen from various European countries to undertake Chinese-inspired designs and subsequently founded local production of fashion products. So, let us look at Chinoiserie monuments on the lands of Ukraine.

Chinoiserie in architectural and arts complexes and porcelain of Ukraine of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries

One of the early examples of chinoiserie in the lands of Ukraine that should be considered is Pidhirtsi Castle.²² French military engineer Guillaume Levasseur de Beauplan (1595–1685) and Italian architect Andrea Dell'Acqua (1584–1656) are among its possible designers. The erection of the castle began in the 1630s by order of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's Grand Crown Hetman Stanisław Koniecpolski. Subsequently, the castle was seriously damaged during the Khmelnytskyi Uprising of 1648. It was rebuilt several times and it changed hands among representatives of various noble Polish families, such as Sobieski, Radziwill and Rzewuski. Over time, the castle lost any defensive function and acquired the features of a fashionable and comfortable secular residence for receiving and hosting guests (Fig. 1). It was in the eighteenth century, when the Rzewuski family became the owners of the castle, that baroque apartments

¹⁹ Chief military leader of the Cossacks. Head of the Hetmanate, after 1648 (*henceforth as in* Gajecky, George (1975). Cossack Terminology: Suggestions for the Study of the Hetmanate, the Ukrainian Cossack State. Український історик (The Ukrainian Historian), 12 (45–46): 120–126.

²⁰ Ukr. heneralnyi khorunzhyi

²¹ BEKH, Farfor u pobuti...

²² Today, it is known as 'Pidhirtsi Castle' Preserved Grounds and Museum, located in the village of Pidhirtsi in Zolochyv district, Lviv Oblast, western Ukraine

appeared, among them the so-called Chinese Hall.²³ The last owners, the Sanguszko princes, carried out restoration work in an attempt to preserve the ensembles laid down by the previous owners.



Fig. 1: Pidhirtsi Castle, current view. Photo 2014: Wikipedia, https://surl.li/rolikt...

Archival photographs (Figs 2 and 3) display the interior of the Chinese Hall, the main decoration of which was wooden panels with Chinese motifs. Landscape compositions with pagodas and figures of people in exotic clothing are highlighted with rocaille frames and are visually combined with images of tree branches and birds. The Chinese style of the interior is complemented by a tall longcase clock and a writing bureau, both decorated with chinoiserie motifs using the lacquer painting technique, and two screens. Unfortunately, all this remains only in photographs: during the Soviet period, a hospital was set up in the castle premises and most of the items were transferred to Lviv National Gallery; the interior decoration and, in particular, the wooden panels with relief Chinoiserie scenes were lost during the fire of 1956. When Ukraine gained independence, the residence was transferred to the control of 'B.H. Voznytskyi' National Art Gallery (Lviv) with the aim of its restoration.



Fig. 2-3: The Chinese Hall in Pidhirtsi Castle. In: Pidhirtsi Castle 140 years ago: rare photos, https://surl.li/cxnzdf.

²³ BOZHKO, Nataliia & TSUBOV, Leonid. Vykorystannia pamiatnykiv arkhitektury radianskoiu vladoiu u 50–60-ti roky XX st. yak metod nyshchennia istorychnoi pamiati ukraintsiv. [The use of architectural monuments by the Soviet authorities in the 1950s and 1960s of the XX c. as a method of destroying the historical memory of Ukrainians]. In: Aktualni pytannia humanitarnykh nauk: mizhvuzivskyi zbirnyk naukovykh prats derzhavnoho pedahohichnoho universytetu imeni Ivana Franka, Vyp. 20, T. 1, pp.16–17.

While Pidhirtsi Castle only hosted a single hall that corresponded to the fashion for the "Chinese" style, Polish King Jan III Sobieski had an entire Chinese Palace²⁴ built at his residence in Zolochiv Castle. Definitive documentation regarding the beginning of construction of this palace have not yet been discovered, but experts date the building to the end of the seventeenth century. There is also no clear answer about the original purpose of the rotunda-like in plan Chinese palace. However, it is known that Jan III professed a love for French fashion and therefore the appearance of buildings and decorations in the Chinoiserie style in his possessions was not accidental (Fig. 4). Although the interiors of Zolochiv Castle have also not been preserved, judging by the presence of family coats of arms in the design of the entrance to the Chinese Palace, outside and directly in the apartments – as well as by analogy with descriptions of the residence of Jan Sobieski in Yavoriv – researchers suggest that the building was used for celebrations, including the reception of foreign ambassadors.²⁵ In this case, filling the Chinese Palace with exotic, expensive things from the East testified not only to the status of the owners, but also to their education and closeness to the famous royal families of Europe.



Fig. 4: The Chinese Palace in Zolochiv Castle, current view. Photo 2013: Wikipedia, https://surl.li/ulphyp.

The famous Ukrainian researcher O. Shkolna recalls that the Polish elite reacted quite quickly to French fashion and decorative porcelain. Therefore, in Ukrainian lands, which in the second half of the seventeenth century belonged to King Jan III Sobieski, the production of soft-paste porcelain and faience ware was established. Zhovkva-Glinsko porcelain dishes and tiles were made according to samples of European chinoiserie. Local Glinsko tiles in the Chinoiserie style were, by order of the Polish monarch, used to decorate the Chinese Pavilion at his residence in Zolochiv Castle. The interiors of the pavilion were decorated with real Chinese products as well as chinoiserie items.²⁶ Unfortunately, both the decoration and utensils of the palace disappeared completely – the establishment of a prison within the walls of the Chinese Palace by the Austrian government in 1872 made it impossible to preserve the interiors. However, the building itself and the remains of a regular park have still been preserved almost intact; in combination with the architectural style, they indicate the representation of Chinoiserie within the framework of the Rococo style. The transfer of the castle buildings to the control of the Lviv National Art Gallery and the establishment, in 2004, of the Museum of Oriental Art in the Chinese Palace with a collection of works of fine art from the countries of the East undoubtedly contributed to the preservation of this monument.

²⁴ The castle is situated in the town of Zolochiv, Lviv oblast, western Ukraine.

²⁵ OMELCHUK, Palats chinoiserie Zolochivskoho zamku..., p. 113.

²⁶ SHKOLNA, Dukhovno-estetychnyi spadok..., p.65.

In Chudnov and Korets, which were also the part of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth at that time, porcelain production began in 1783 under the auspices of Czartoryski princes, taking European tableware as an example, including pieces in the Chinoiserie style. "In Korets this was noticeable from the shapes of the soup vases, which approximated the silhouettes of ancient Chinese motif pottery (for sacrifices)".²⁷

Production also began in the Kyiv region in the famous Kyiv–Mezhyhirria faience manufactory, which opened at the end of the eighteenth century. From the 1830s dinnerware and household items in Chinoiserie style began to appear among the manufactory's diverse output. It should be noted that the "Chinese motifs" in the manufactory's products were mainly inspired by samples received in 1834 from St Petersburg, which in turn adapted English chinoiserie products. According to these samples, in 1835 the first pieces of the so-called "Chinese Series" were made, some of which are held by the National Museum of Folk Decorative Arts. In particular, "there are soup plates and dinner ones with a scalloped edge in two interpretations: an image of a Chinese man on a bridge and a figure of a Chinese man playing with a dog standing on its hind legs. The frame around the genre scenes is twigs with berries, flowers similar to the flowers of Chinese porcelain, leaves of various shapes"²⁸ (Fig. 5). Imitation Chinese motifs such as benches (Fig. 6), Chinese garden stools, flasks and caskets, and vases covered with "thick green or turquoise-blue, bluish-purple or milky-white glaze" also appeared.²⁹



Fig. 5: Service plate. Kyin-Mezhyhirria manufacture, 1839. Nat. Museum of the History of Ukraine



Fig. 6: Garden stool. Kyiv-Mezhyhirria manufacture, 1830s. Nat. Museum of the History of Ukraine

Among the Chinoiserie products of Mezhyhirria manufactory are tea sets depicting Chinese pavilions and gazebos surrounded by gardens (Figs 7–8), the echo of which can be felt in the landscape gardening art of Ukraine, which is discussed below.

It is also worth noting that production in Ukrainian lands arose at a time when European chinoiserie was increasingly moving away from primary Chinese motifs and plots, creating its own world of a slightly bizarre fantasy of China and, more broadly, the Far East, sometimes with humorous notes.

²⁷ Ibidem, p.66.

²⁸ NECHYPORENKO, Mezhyhirskyi faians..., p. 70.

²⁹ SHKOLNA, Dukhovno-estetychnyi spadok..., p. 66.



Fig. 7: Service plate in the Chinese style. Kyiv– Mezhyhirria manufacture, first third of the nineteenth c. Museum of the History of Kyiv



Fig. 8: Tea-cup in the Chinese style. Kyin-Mezhyhirria manufacture, 1846. Nikanor Onatskyi' Regional Art Museum, Sumy

In this regard, the products of Volokytyne Porcelain Manufactory (Chernyhiv Governorate) owned by Andrii Myklashevskyi (1801–1895), a descendant of the famous Ukrainian noble Cossack family, are notable. To organise the work of the manufactory, officially founded in 1839, brothers François and August Darte – sons of the famous Parisian porcelain maker Louis Joseph Darte³⁰ who had previously worked at the famous Sèvres porcelain factory – were invited from France. The quality of its output is evidenced by the fact in the very the first year after opening the products of Myklashevskyi's manufactory were awarded a Large Silver Medal for "the art of the best porcelain things" at an exhibition in Moscow. Of course, the Chinoiserie-style products of Volokytyne complemented the porcelain palette of Ukrainian production.

The porcelain collection in Kharkiv Art Museum (*henceforth* KhAM) includes a small sculpture entitled "Chinese woman". Such "ethnographic" representations of peoples of the world were common in that era, when it was believed that works of art also had an educational function. In reliance specifically on the position of visual ethnography, the figurine seems to have carefully and in detail reproduced any of the actually existing Chinese female "types". However, these figurines also display numerous inaccuracies, including violations of etiquette in relation to Chinese people and their clothing, because in this case we are actually dealing with Europeans' fantasies about "exotic" China. Analysing a figurine from the KhAM collection, researcher Tang Qianrui cites a number of inconsistencies, in particular, a too open neck and low neckline, impossible in the conservative Chinese community of those times; the emphasis of a waistline by a belt that seems to slide down the hips, which also does not correspond to the real costume; and the too-curled toes of the shoes, which, it would seem, are the only ones that correspond to Chinese models. Even the facial expression of the "Chinese woman" is Europeanised, resulting in the effect of dressing up in Chinese clothes, a masquerade³¹.

Another item in the Chinoiserie style from the KhAM collection recalls the famous production that appeared in the Left Bank Ukraine, in Slobozhanshchina: Budy Faience Factory.

³⁰ LYTOVKO, Tetiana. Volokytynska portseliana: ukrainska fabryka v XIX stolitti vrazyla svit skulpturamy vidomykh liudei (video). In: FREEDOM – Information Portal. https://uatv.ua/uk/volokytynska-portselyana-ukrayinska-fabryka-v-xix-stolitti-vrazyla-svit-skulpturamy-vidomyh-lyudej-video/

³¹ TANG, «Umovnyi» Kytai..., p. 132.

This factory was established in 1887 and belonged to one of the most famous porcelain and faience manufacturers, Matvii S. Kuznetsov. Budy production was always directed towards mass production, as the antithesis of elite porcelain. The presence of Budy chinoiserie items once again indicates the popularity of this style even at the end of the nineteenth century. Analysis of the Chinoiserie plate, which is kept in KhAM, allows us to note another important special feature of late Chinoiserie. According to researcher Tang Qianrui, the plot of the painting on this plate, at first glance, is entirely Chinese. In the centre of it one can see man and woman figures worn in Manchu era clothing; there are also flowers, birds and butterflies similar to those often found in paintings with Chinese motifs. "However, the scene on the lower side of the plate, where a woman is depicted caring for a flower, by all indications is perceived as a Japanese motif".³²

The combination of the Chinoiserie style with Japanisme – the combination of images from different cultures united by the big concept of "East" – indicates the high adaptability of the style. As Kharkiv researcher Tetiana Lytovko notes, "Chinoiserie retains primacy among eastern stylistic movements in terms of time of origin and duration, easily survives changes in styles and finds itself perfectly after the dominance of Baroque-Rococo in Classicism, Romanticism and Modernism".³³

We find confirmation of this thesis in the estate ensembles of the corresponding period in both Right-Bank and Left-Bank Ukraine. Thus, the palace in Samchyky³⁴ is considered a typical example of Classicist architecture. Researchers distinguish three periods in the development of the ensemble. The first one began with the early buildings laid out for the residence of the Khaieckyi family in the eighteenth century. However, later changes were made, and the complex that has survived to this day was built at the beginning of the nineteenth century (architect Jakub Kubytskyi). Later, the new owners created a park area for the palace.³⁵ This park area is the location of the so-called Chinese house, which was erected to meet the need for an ice-house but at the same time, of course, suited the general appearance of the ensemble (Fig. 9). Its architecture is exclusively classicist in its with rustication, symmetry of windows, and design of the entrance portal. However, this exemplary classicism is crowned with a "Chinese roof" curved at the edges.

The assertion that the specified style combination was not accidental but met the interests and tastes of the owners is confirmed by existence of the Japanese Hall in palace's interior. Although in a damaged state, the original murals of the hall depicting Chinese and Japanese subjects have miraculously been preserved to this day.

The presence of figures of a samurai and a geisha-like figure among the paintings (Figs 10–11) testifies to the influence of Japonisme, which replaced the passion for Chinisme (Chinoiserie) at the end of the nineteenth century. In the Ukrainian version they were often combined, facilitated by the presence of Chinese elements in the system of symbols of Japanese art, which developed historically on the basis of Chinese art. Dragons, cranes, butterflies and bamboo – all of which we see in the paintings of the palace in Samchyky as leading motifs – were conceptualised and artistically interpreted within the framework of Chinese civilization and subsequently adopted by the Japanese. Above, we noted the fact that porcelain and faience (shapes and painting) made in Ukraine in the late Chinoiserie style also casually combine visual

³² Ibidem.

³³ LYTOVKO, Skhid v kulturi Slobozhanshchyny..., p. 73.

³⁴ 'Samchyky' Palace is the series of palace and gardens located near the village of Samchyky, Khmelnytskyi region. ³⁵ POHRANYCHNA, Palatsovyi kompleks u s. Samchykakh..., p. 188.



Fig. 9: Jakub Kubytskyi. Chinese house. Manor in Samchyky. Early nineteenth c. Photograph from 2015.



Fig. 11: Unknown author. Wall paintings of the Japanese hall. Manor in Samchyky. Nineteenth c. A Recent photograph.



Fig. 10: Unknown author. Wall paintings of the Japanese hall. Manor in Samchyky. Nineteenth c. Current view; photo by the author.



Fig. 12: Chinese export porcelain. Fragment of vase decoration: Phoenix, flowers and butterfly. Nineteenth c. Canton, China.

elements of Chinese and Japanese cultures, even in fantasy European versions. The design of the Japanese Hall in Samchyky manor seems to offer a similar example.

Analysis of the visual motifs decorating the Japanese Hall allows us to distinguish three sets of paintings, of which two are Chinese and one is Japanese. The ceiling painting represents images typical of the "flowers and birds" genre developed in China (Fig. 13). A silhouetted branch with a bird sitting on it decorates the central part of the plafond. It is framed by dragons depicted on a golden background, as if borrowed from Chinese porcelain (Figs 14–15). This entire composition is surrounded by a typically Chinese ornamentation that emphasises the architectural and structural basis of the hall.

The second set of images uses the model of the Chinese still-life "flowers in a vase" motif (Figs 16–17). Despite the fact that this type of still life is also present in the European tradition, its version in Samchyky manor has distinctly Chinese connotations: the framing of bowls by a cartouche, reminiscent of the Chinese fan shape; the frontality of the composition and the empty space in which the bowl is placed; and the locality of colour of the bowl with emphasised contour. This type of still life was developed in China by the Italian Jesuit artist Giuseppe Castiglione, who, on the order of the Emperor, synthesised Chinese and European approaches to painting. In addition, the artist does not show a bouquet in a bowl but rather flowers growing in a pot, which has been a consistent motif of Chinese painting for several centuries, interpreted as a symbol of prosperity and well-being. The welcoming mood of the painting system is also supported by the compositions located in the upper register of the walls: images representing



Fig. 13: Unknown author. Paintings in the Japanese Hall. Plafond. Manor in Samchyky. Nineteenth c. Recent photograph. by the author.



Fig. 14: Unknown anthor. Paintings in the Japanese Hall. Plafond. Manor in Samchyky. Nineteenth c. Recent photograph. by the author.



Fig. 15: Chinese export porcelain. Vase decoration: red dragons. Canton, China. Nineteenth c.



Fig. 16: Unknown author. Wall paintings of the Japanese hall. Manor in Samchyky. Nineteenth c. Recent photograph.

geisha and samurai are complemented by flowers, butterflies and phoenixes, also interpreted in the Chinese style. The visual source of these motifs was porcelain products, and they were an integral component of Chinoiserie-style interiors (Figs 11–12).

When characterising the artistic qualities of the paintings, we note that they differ in the level of execution. Today, it looks like only the plafond has its original appearance; it has not been restored, only covered with a thin layer of drying oil which, over time, has given a yellowish tint to the entire colour scheme. The mural painting was later fixed up and it seems this was done by local craftsmen. (Note the fact that the village of Samchyky was famous for its masters of home painting, which today is being revived by enthusiastic local artists.) At the same time, the compositional solutions of the wall paintings make it possible to trace the means of interpreting Chinese motifs on local soil. In this sense, the visual sources for ornaments, phoenixes and butterflies were clearly Chinese porcelain and its European analogues, which, as already noted, became firmly established in the everyday life of the Ukrainian elite from the seventeenth century. The development of local porcelain factories contributed to the spread of Chinese motifs, often in forms that had been adapted by Western European artists. Multiple repetitions of the "flowers in a vase" motif can be traced in a variety of high-value products



Fig. 17: Unknown author. Wall paintings of the Japanese Hall. Manor in Samchyky. Nineteenth c. Recent photograph.



Fig. 18: Edward Blore (1787–1879). Chinese cabinet (small hall). Vorontsov's Palace, 1830–40. Alupka, Crimea. Recent photograph.

and, at the same time, in local interior paintings. In Ukraine, flowers in a pot were interpreted as the Tree of Life and were used in murals, weaving, embroidery, and so on. Thus, Chinese motifs and especially the plant repertoire were easily adapted to the Ukrainian subject–spatial environment.

A Chinese cabinet is partially preserved in Vorontsov's Palace in Alupka.³⁶ (Fig. 18). Its interior was decorated with wooden panels with carved patterns and decorated with porcelain. In their upper register, the walls were decorated with bamboo mats with embroidered images of flowers in vases and large shells that echoed both Italian Renaissance decor and Chinese scrolls from the times of the Qing dynasty, a time when the floral still-life was in its heyday. Among the Chinoiserie-style utensils, a secretaire with lacquer painting has been preserved. Similar examples of Chinese-style furniture are kept today in the Museum of Ethnography, Arts and Crafts at The Ethnology Institute, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, in Lviv.

The high adaptability of chinoiserie can also be seen in the art of gardening. In the nineteenth century, parks became an integral part of the manor estate. More than 2000 years of Chinese gardening experience could not go unnoticed by Jesuit missionaries and was gradually implemented into the practice of European gardening, offering a deep understanding of nature and its forms. It was under the influence of the Chinese vision of nature that the English landscape park was formed, becoming a kind of antithesis to the French regular park dominant in Europe at that time. This style is quite justifiably defined today by many experts as "Anglo-Chinese". The concept of disengagement and naturalness in landscape "pictures" formed by lawns, hills, old trees and young groves, stones and ponds was based on the descriptions of travellers and missionaries and was nourished by picturesque views decorating the lacquer panels of screens and porcelain items.

The change in the aesthetic paradigm was manifested in the victory of the curved lines of paths, plants and architectural forms over the straight lines of a regular park. It is worth mentioning the treatise "The Analysis of Beauty" (1753) written by William Hogarth, which

³⁶ The Palace of Count Vorontsov in Alupka (Crimea), built in 1828–1846 for Prince Mykhailo Semenovych Vorontsov, served as a summer residence for his family. Since 1921, this palace and park ensemble has enjoyed the status of an architectural monument under government protection.

became the theoretical basis for this new vision of beauty.³⁷ In Ukraine, this landscape gardening version of chinoiserie was developed by landscape architects invited from Europe. Among them there were the Irish architect Dionysius McClair (Mikler in the nineteenth-century documents), who designed approximately 50 parks in the lands of modern Ukraine; French architect Muffet; Italian architect Domenico Botani; Lviv resident August Stange; Polish architect Bartecki; German architects Witt and August Jens; and the Czech architect Ranger.

The owners of estates and manors liked the idea of creating landscape paintings that corresponded to the natural Ukrainian landscapes with their plentiful mixed and leafy forests, vast meadows and various bodies of water. Among the few landscape parks in the Anglo-Chinese style that have survived to this day, we note the Arboretum 'Oleksandria' in Bila Tserkva, which belonged to the Branicki family,³⁸ and the Arboretum 'Sofiivka' in the estate of Count Potocki in Uman.³⁹ In these parks, small "Chinese" pavilions and bridges, as seen in Chinese "mountain–water" landscape paintings, symbolise the presence of man. The types of "Chinese" pavilions that appear in Ukrainian parks (Figs 19–20) are quite diverse and we must agree with Y. Liu that they have very little in common with their prototypes in China.⁴⁰ As Ivashko et al. rightly note, "Even when the architects tried to embody certain Chinese features in constructions for Chinese gardens (as in Tsarskoe Selo), they approached the design from the standpoint of a European".⁴¹

In our opinion, this is due to the lack of understanding of the Chinese order system *dou gong*, the basis of architectural design. Since European masters were inspired primarily by images of gazebos depicted in scrolls, screens and vase paintings, they developed them using familiar means, trying to achieve the external effects of line curvature reminiscent of the curves of ceilings and bridges. In the end, the Chinoiserie style did achieve the literal reproduction of Chinese forms but rather operated with images of the magical East, mostly imaginary and whimsical. In some cases, Chinese pavilions performed additional functions. For example, in Arboretum 'Oleksandria', the gazebo is an integral part of the dam bridge (Fig. 20). Among the typologies of chinoiserie-style pavilions preserved in European parks cited by researchers, we do not find similar examples.⁴²

Arranged artificial waterfalls and ponds with lilies – which were supposed to resemble lotuses, symbolising purity in China and revered in Buddhist philosophy⁴³ – continued the array associations with Chinese landscapes.

We also note that there are examples reminiscent of famous chinoiserie monuments in Western Europe. For example, the sculptures that completed the design of the "Chinese"

³⁷ HOGARTH, William. The Analysis of Beauty. London: Printed by John Reeves for the Author, 1753. 135 pp. Available: https://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/1217/1/Davis_Fontes52.pdf

³⁸ Arboretum 'Oleksandria', named after the owner, Oleksandra Branicka, is the largest dendrological park in Ukraine that has survived to this day. The period of active construction was 1793–1840s.

³⁹ Sofiivka Park (*Ukr.* Sofiivskyi Park; *Pol.* Park Zofiówka, *also* Sofijówka, *as well as known as* Park w Zofiówce) is an arboretum named by Count Stanisław Szczęsny Potocki in honour of his wife, Zofia Potocka. The period of active construction was 1796–1840s.

⁴⁰ LIU, Yu. The Importance of the Chinese Connection: The Origin of the English Garden. In: *Eighteenth-Century Life*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 2003, pp. 70–98.

 ⁴¹ IVASHKO et al., Specifics of stylised shapes of Chinoiserie-style pavilions as the basis of their restoration...p. 39
⁴² FEKETE, Albert & GYORI, Peter. Chinese pavilions in the early landscape gardens of Europe. In: *Landscape Architecture and Art*, *18*(18), 2021, pp. 78–87.

⁴³ YANKOVSKA, Dariia. On some preconditions and evolving of Eastern influences upon European fashion of the XVIII to early XX centuries. In: *The Ethnology Notebooks*, No. 5 (119), 2014, pp. 1018.



Fig. 19: Chinese gazebo, 1841. The Arboretum 'Sofivka'. **Fig. 20:** Chinese bridge. Late eighteenth to early nineteenth to ea



Fig. 20: Chinese bridge. Late eighteenth to early nineteenth c. Reconstructed by architect D. Kryvoruchko (1863). The Arboretum 'Oleksandriia'. Bila Tserkvaa, Kyiv region. Recent photograph.

location in Arboretum 'Oleksandria' are, to a certain extent, reminiscent of characters depicted on the Tea Pavilion in Sans Souci (Potsdam, Germany). The original sculptures have not been preserved (unlike the Pavilion); today, they have been replaced by bronze figures created by a contemporary artist which only vaguely resemble the originals, since the only sources for such a reconstruction – watercolour drawings by Willibald Richter dated 1830 – do not clearly convey the three-dimensional models. At the same time, Richter's paintings do indicate that the sculptures were polychrome, and that there was a small flag on the roof of the Pavilion (Figs 21–22).

We also note the presence of zoomorphic images typical of East Asian culture and art in the sculptural decorations of the parks. The manor in Samchyky is decorated with guardian lions: paired sculptures installed on both sides of the entrance to the palace (Fig. 23). In Sofivka, there is a fountain in the form of a snake, from whose mouth a stream of water flows. This figure is a kind of connotation of the dragon (Fig. 24).

Over the period spanning the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Civil War and Soviet times, the former noble estates of Left-Bank Ukraine suffered an even sadder fate than those on the Right Bank, undergoing significant destruction and disfigurement. The fact that their owners also paid tribute to the Chinoiserie style in the design of exteriors and interiors, gardens and parks is only known from the work of local historian and artist Georgii Lukomskyi and a very few photographs. In particular, G. Lukomskyi, in his work *The Old Estates of Kharkiv Province*, published in 1917, gives examples of estates of the eighteenth century belonging to the Markevych and Kukol-Yasnopolskyi families. In the first case, he recalls stoves decorated with ceramic tiles in the Chinoiserie style, and in the second he writes of "a very stylish and curious Chinese gazebo" among the park and garden houses.⁴⁴ The architectural and artistic design of the latter is reminiscent of the Chinese pavilion at Chateau de Grousset, France. It is noteworthy that the aroma of chinoiserie permeates the entire publication dedicated to the estates of eastern Ukraine thanks to the headpieces by Heorhii Narbut, executed in the style of a silhouette drawing.

Describing oriental motifs in the Kharkiv urban and artistic environment, T. Lytovko points to the diversity of their manifestations. Owing to local porcelain and earthenware production,

⁴⁴ LUKOMSKII, Georgii. *Starinnyie usadby Kharkovskoi gubernii.* Kharkov: Kharkovskii muzei gorodskoi usadby, 2015, p. 94.



Fig. 21-22: Willibald Richter. The Arboretum 'Oleksandriia'. Chinese bridge. 1828. Watercolour, paper.





of Guarding Lions. Manor in Samchyky. Early 'Sofiivka'. 1852–1859. Uman. nineteenth c.

Fig. 23: Giovanni Battista Savigliano (?) Statues Fig. 24: Unknown author. Fountain 'Snake'. The Arboretum

paintings and printed materials, chinoiserie went beyond the boundaries of the estate world and settled into the bourgeois environment. Even urban public buildings bear chinoiserie features, such as the levelling basin for supplying water in Kharkiv, captured in a photo of 1881, which has the shape of a Far Eastern temple with a characteristic roof.

The democratisation of chinoiserie affected household products. The townspeople of the nineteenth century decorated their home spaces with carpets. Among the inexpensive products designed to offer comfort and please the eye were Poltava rugs, which combined expressive Turkish and Chinese elements. One of these samples, kept in the collection of KhAM, depicts figures of people in turbans and Chinese hats, with a tent and a Chinese gazebo are located in one compositional space. The frame formed by images of roses, popular in embroidery at that time, adding local flavour to the work and introducing it into its context.

Thus, in the lands of modern Ukraine, chinoiserie was presented in the contexts of Rococo, Classicism and Eclecticism. Its high adaptability can be seen in the wide range of applications of chinoiserie elements – from architecture, landscape gardening and high-quality handicraft items to products designed to meet mass-demand.

Conclusions

Analysis of the visual and textual materials discussed in this article allows us to assert that chinoiserie, as a European style in the lands of modern Ukraine, became most widespread in the nineteenth century, representing more restrained forms, delicately diversifying the severity of classicism. In the Ukrainian version of chinoiserie, the most popular form was floral motifs: images of flowers with birds and flowers in vases which correlated with traditional motifs found in folk murals, coming together with these in a favourable symbolism. We also find typical elements of the style such as butterflies, paired lions and dragons (sometimes snakes in the local interpretation).

Some of the Chinoiserie-style interiors represented approaches typical of European practice: wooden panels with decorative inserts, porcelain items on shelves, dominant items with an expressive Chinese motif: a screen or a small lacquer closet. There are also combinations of true Chinese and Chinoiserie items, or the combination of Chinese and Japanese or Chinese and Turkish motifs, within the structure of a single composition.

Features of the Ukrainian landscape and the picturesque nature of artistic thinking were consonant with the Anglo-Chinese style in the art of landscape gardening, creatively interpreted in the local context.

Summarising the above, we note that chinoiserie in the architectural monuments of Ukraine, as a component of a broader phenomenon of Orientalism, was not merely characterised by the use of oriental motifs reflecting the skin-deep, separated-from-reality perception of the countries of the East or the borrowing of European samples: there was also reinterpretation on the local soil. The popularity of chinoiserie, which spread with a certain time lag from European countries, may be explained by the desire to somewhat diversify the monotony of classicism dominant in urban development.

Prospects for further research are seen in the analysis of the further development of Chinese motifs, the use of Chinese experience by artists of modernist and postmodernist movements, and chinoiserie inspirations in modern art and design practices.

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