

SEVERAL JAPANESE OBJECTS IN THE MODERN DECORATIVE ART COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF OLTENIA

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Rezumat: Muzeul Olteniei posedă printre colecțiile sale o frumoasă și interesantă colecție de artă decorativă din care am prezentat 3 obiecte de factură japoneză care reprezintă, de fapt, tema acestei lucrări.

Primul obiect este o farfurie decorativă japoneză din secolul al XIX-lea modelată manual din ceramică Satsuma și este pictată manual cu emailuri peste smalț și aurită. Ea este rotundă și are suport cu mâner din piele maron. Fondul farfuriei este negru și decorul îl reprezintă un împărat în costum de ceremonie cu o coroană de aur pe cap care stă pe un dragon. În jurul său sunt 4 înțelepți în costume de ceremonie și are motive geometrice și florale.

Al doilea obiect este o farfurie decorativă japoneză din secolul al XIX-lea din bronz. Ea are formă rotundă fiind gravată în relief și patinată prin tehnica Shakudo. Decorul se compune dintr-un peisaj cu munți, pagodă, 2 samurai, un cal, 4 dragoni, spice de grâu, evantaie, solzi, motive geometrice, vegetale și florale.

Al treilea obiect este o statueta japoneză în stil Shinkai din ceramică de lut care este din secolul al XIX-lea. Ea este modelată manual, arsă și smălțuită. Statueta reprezintă un nobil japonez care poartă un kimono verde și lung. El are părul negru și lung, barbă neagră și este desculț. Aceasta a aparținut familiei boierești Romanescu din Craiova care a fost foarte cunoscută în epocă și unii membrii ai săi au participat la evenimentele istorice din țară.

Abstract: The Museum of Oltenia has among its collections a beautiful and interesting collection of decorative art from which we presented 3 Japanese objects, which in fact represent the theme of this work.

The first object is a Japanese decorative plate of the 19th century, hand-made from Satsuma ceramics and is hand-painted with enamels and gilded. It is round and has a handle with brown leather. The bottom of the plate is black and the décor represents an emperor in a ceremony suit with a golden crown on the head sitting on a dragon. He is surrounded by four wise men in ceremony suits and has geometric and floral patterns.

The second object is a Japanese decorative plate from the 19th century, made of bronze. It has a round shape being engraved in relief and having a patina by the Shakudo technique. The décor consists of a landscape of mountains, pagoda, 2 samurai, a horse, 4 dragons, wheat stalks, fan, scales, geometric, vegetal and floral patterns.

The third object is a Japanese statuette in Shinkai style, of clay pottery from the 19th century. It is manually created, burned and enamelled. The statuette represents a Japanese noble who wears a green and long kimono. He has black and long hair, black beard, and is barefoot. This belonged to the Romanesque family of Craiova, who was very well known at that time, and some of its members participated in the historical events in the country.

Cuvinte cheie: Japonia, împărat, Satsuma, China, Shakudo, Shinkai.

Key-words: Japan, emperor, Satsuma, China, Shakudo, Shinkai.

The Museum of Oltenia possesses, among its collections, a beautiful and interesting collection of modern decorative art from which we will present 3 Japanese objects, representing, in fact, the theme of this work:

1. JAPANESE DECORATIVE PLATE, with inventory no. I 1.013 Satsuma style, dated in the 19th century, is made of ceramics. It was made by manual modelling, burning, hand painting, enamelling and, gilding. This is in a very good state of preservation. The plate comes from the nationalized fund and has a diameter of 19 cm. The decorative plate is round and has a handle with a basis of leather. It is marked with glazes over enamel and gilding. There is a polychromy in vivid colours. The base of the plate is black decorated with semicircles and jewel lines. At the centre of the plate there is an emperor with a white face and is dressed in ceremonial garments in red, blue,

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green, burgundy, golden, beige, yellow tones. He wears blue pants with yellow dots. He has black shoes in his legs. He has black hair with a chignon. On the head he is wearing a golden crown. Around the neck he has a golden necklace with a red agate. In the right hand he wears a bunch of lotus flowers, which are royal flowers. Clothes have geometric and floral decorative patterns. The geometric ones are rhombus, dots and lines. Around him there are sitting 4 wise men wearing ceremony clothes in burgundy, blue, red, yellow, beige, gold tones with geometric and floral patterns. The geometric ones are: dots, lines, semicircles, spirals and rhombus. The heads have golden round auras with geometrical motifs: lines and dots. The emperor sits on a dragon that is painted in green, gold, pink, white and red colours. Near the dragon are stones. The dragon symbolizes power, independence, sovereignty and it guarded the treasures. The name of the Satsuma pottery comes from the Satsuma Province of Kiushu Island, where vessels were built in the 16th century. Satsuma is the Western name given to some potter items exported during the Meiji period (1868-1912). It was a creamy clay pottery with finely cracked emails decorated with thick enamels coated with gold¹.

2. JAPANESE DECORATIVE PLATE, with inventory no. I 16.026, dated in the 19th century, has a diameter of 24 cm. It is made of bronze by engraving and patina in **shakudo** style which consists of mixing a copper alloy and a small amount of gold being applied a patina in a glossy black. It comes from the donation of the Milcovici Iulian family from Craiova. It is in a very good conservation status, being restored. The decorative plate is round and has a central medallion, slightly deepened with the gold background. In the background here is a landscape of mountains, wheat stalks and pagoda. The decoration has warlike patterns - we notice two samurai, one on the horse and second worshipping him the other, who was probably the commander. On the edges, the plate has small squares in yellow tones and brown with patina, alternately. The décor has 4 dragons, 2 on the top and 2 on the bottom on the plate. It is noticed fans, scales, semicircles and rhombus. It also has floral and vegetal patterns.

The first samurai has an iron plate armour and a richly decorated helmet. He wears trousers and leggings of hemp and leather. The shoes are of bearskin. His weapons are a long sword called katana and a short one called wakizashi, a large bow with arrow set, a dagger, a halberd, a large and a very hard wooden shield. His horse has heavy and sumptuous harnesses. The second samurai is wearing a samurai suit and bows to the other.

Pagoda is a religious temple in which relief and sacred Buddhist texts were kept. It has a multi-story tower shape. Its origin is lost in Asia. The first pagoda appeared in China during the Han Dynasty (206 BC- 220 AC). Pagodas were built of wood, stone and brick. The pagoda was influenced by the Indian stupa and the Chinese tower. Pagodas have spread to Japan, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam². The dragon in Japan used to guard the swords and symbolized intelligence, wisdom and longevity.

3. JAPANESE STATUETTE, with inventory no. I 966, Shinkai style, dating back to the 19th century, has a height of 27 cm. It is made of ceramic clay and was made by manual modelling, burning and enamelling. This comes from the Romanescu boyar family from Craiova. The statuette has a very good conservation status. It represents a Japanese noble. He has beige-colour face, black eyes, black and thick eyebrows. He wears a long green kimono with a black stripe on the edges. His hair is black and long on his shoulders. His hands are tight on his chest. His legs are crossed and he is barefoot. The statuette is empty on the inside. Over the ceramics a green enamel with a metallic polish was applied by mixing a tin enamel with copper oxide.

Ceramic clay first appeared in China and used to be burned at a low temperature. Ceramic is a harsh material that after burning remains porous and enamel is applied over the item. Usually the

¹ Atterbury, Tharp, 1998, p. 36.

² Fazio *et al.*, 2003, p. 99.

tin enamel is applied and then metallic oxides of gold, silver and copper are added to create a metallic polish³.

Romanescu boyar family was an old and important family in Oltenia in the 15th century, having its origin in the Romanăștii de pe Jiu , near Târgu-Jiu, Gorj county. Some members of the family participated in the historical events in the country, Craiova and Oltenia. Ioniță participated in the Revolution of 1821, led by Tudor Vladimirescu as pandur, collaborator and his relative. The brothers Costache - magistrate and Petrache - politician, the sons of Ioniță participated in the Revolution of 1848. Costache Romanescu participated at the Union of the Romanian Principalities on January 24, 1859, being a member of the Craiovean Unionist Club. Nicolae Romanescu, the son of Petrache, was a politician, the mayor of Craiova and he held various other public positions. He arranged the city of Craiova and contributed to its modernization and evolution. "Nicolae Romanescu" Park, named after his name, was designed by French architect Edward Redont and in 1900 received the gold medal at the International Exhibition in Paris. Ionel Romanescu, son of mayor Nicolae Romanescu, was a mathematics student, the youngest inventor of sailplanes in the world and hero-aviator in the First World War, his plane was bombed by an enemy plane on the French front on November 1, 1918, at Rethel, France, and he was killed. It was decorated post-mortem with "The French War Cross". The Romanescu family was related to some Oltenian boyar families: Balotescu, Calomfirescu, Brădescu, Buzescu, etc⁴..

Conclusions

Ceramic production has grown and refined due to the mastery of pottery artists. The first potters were Chinese and Korean, and later Japanese created pottery. The first vessels imitated the Chinese and Korean ones, then the Japanese potters made their own vessels. The pottery industry has been stimulated and these have arrived to the Arab countries. In the 18th century ceramic objects came to Europe due to the Arab invasion. Ceramic clay has spread to Italy, the Netherlands, England, Germany, France, USA. Japanese art became very popular in 1860 and spread throughout Europe and America⁵.

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³ Miller, 2000, p. 88.

⁴ Braun, Leferman, 1999, pp. 183-185.

⁵ Miller, 2000, p. 88.



Fig. 1. Statuetă japoneză în stil Shinkai, sec. al XIX-lea.



Fig. 2. Farfurie decorativă japoneză în stil Satsuma, sec. al XIX-lea.



Fig. 3. Farfurie decorativă japoneză în stil Shakudo, sec. al XIX-lea.