

## COMPLETION REPORT

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### Subject of Research Project: **Maps on Imari (伊万里) Porcelain Plates, 1600-1900**

Based on extensive cartographic research of Imari plates deposited in Japan and Europe, this study focuses on maps depicted on such plates. Imari porcelain plate is a typical kind of Japanese porcelain, and the study examines the period from 1600 to 1900. Maps began appearing on the Imari porcelain plates in the 17th century and became popular in the 19th century. Although numerous researches have conducted on porcelain and cartography respectively within Japan, the maps on these porcelain are left unexamined. Trained in both archaeology and historical geography, I have sought to merge the approaches of cartographical history and material culture to explore the meanings of maps on Imari plates, aiming to delve into the significance of maps on Imari plates, which has been overlooked by either cartographical historians or ceramic experts.

Using maps as decorative elements seems to be a unique phenomenon in the history of traditional ceramic industry in East Asia. I deem the maps on Imari plates can be identified as decorative maps rather than functioning as wayfinding tools. This is suggested by user's indifference toward the maps' legibility, and the addition of mythological place names around the plate's perimeter, implying that the map was not primarily for disseminating geographical information.

Nineteenth-century potters chose a traditional Goyki-typed map of Japan for plate decoration, instead of more scientific maps with graticules. This preference was mainly driven by aesthetic consideration rather than a dedication to geographical precision.

Apart from carrying out a cartographic analysis, this research focuses on the production process of the maps depicted on Imari plate. According to the shape of the object, potter altered and expanded upon the selected map and eventually invented a new one. What they concerned most is the overall perfection of the imgae on the plate, with less faithfulness to the geographical facts.

The cultural significance of maps likely played an important role in the production, distribution and use of porcelain. The Imari plate map has close relationship with the Ch'onhado, a form of circular world map predominantly produced in the nineteen century Korea. Both unique and familiar to East Asians, this kind of map could, on the one hand express a sense of intimacy to the local people, and on the other hand could deliver a strong exotic flavor for foreigners.

By engaging maps with material culture perspective, rather than treating them solely as "data" in a history of geographical knowledge and map-making, this study has provided a case study in investigating the interaction between the artisans, medium, and map imagery in the productive process of Imari wares, as well as the significance of the maps for both producers and patrons.

The late half of the twentieth century has witnessed 'a material turn' in historical research. Material culture extends beyond just "objects"; it encompasses the meanings they hold for those who create, purchase, own, and consume them. Thus, this study will broaden the source material for the history of cartography on one hand, and on the other hand enhance our comprehension of the written and visual records Japan and East Asia's past.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Date: October 28, 2022

Venue: Beijing, National Museum of China

Name of Conference: Academic Forum on Ming and Qing Dynasty Map Research from Multiple Dimensions and Perspectives ( “多维度、多角度下的明清舆图研究” 学术论坛)

Title of Presentation

*A Research on the Maps on the Japanese Imari Plates*

Presenter: Huang Yijun (Prof. Dr.)

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)