

VANDERVEN ORIENTAL ART



Dresden Bottle

Famille Verte Porcelain, Height: 21.9 cm, China, Kangxi Period (1662-1722)

A bottle with a spherical bulbous body and tall cylindrical neck. It is decorated with thick glossy *famille verte* enamels on a plain white body, with two large cavorting Fo dogs. One has a yellow body and head with a red tail; the other with a body and tail in green and an aubergine head, both having aubergine-coloured fur around their legs. Circling the mouth of the bottle, is a border of stylized *lingzhi* fungus (*ju-i*) in red and green. The underside of the bottle bears the distinctive blackened engraved number N:139 I, from the collection inventory of Augustus the Strong, The symbol 'I' denotes the category 'Green Chinese porcelain' under which both the *famille verte* and *famille rose* porcelains were classified.

Augustus the Strong, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony (1670 – 1733), amassed around 25,000 pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain; his agents scouring Europe to buy for the collection.

Uniquely, several inventories of the Dresden porcelain collections were made during the 18th century. The first was written during the lifetime of Augustus the Strong in 1721, the others were made after his death in 1735 and 1779. Each piece of porcelain was painstakingly recorded and

engraved with an inventory number and symbol - now referred to as a palace number - ordering each object into a category. It is unclear how or when the bottle left the Dresden collection, from which many pieces were lost or sold over the years. Happily there are still over 8,000 pieces of porcelain in this significant collection.

Latterly the bottle was sold by scholar-dealer Jacques van Goidsenhoven to a private collector. Goidsenhoven wrote several key works on Chinese ceramics including *La Céramique Chinoise sous les Ts'ing 1644-1851* in 1936. Identical bottles with the same number are also in the Porzellansammlung Dresden (inv.nr PO3308 & PO4637). The Burrell Collection, Glasgow, also has a pair of bottles with the same decoration (inv.nr. 38.765 & 6). The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge has a pair of a similar shape, but with differing decoration of rocks and flowers (inv.nr.OC.14A-1938). The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam has a much larger bottle with comparable decoration of cavorting Fo Dogs (inv.nr Ak-RBK15882).