三城記
A Tale of Three Cities
明清時期的粵港澳灣區與絲綢外銷

Guangdong - Hong Kong - Macao Greater Bay Area and Export of Silk Products in the Ming and Qing Dynasties
引言

中國是絲綢的發源地，最早發明以蠶絲編織紡織品。早於秦漢兩代，中國絲綢通過陸路和海路向海外傳播，一直被視為最珍貴的出口商品之一。到了明清時期，歐洲商人積極拓展中西海上貿易網絡，在清朝乾隆年間（1736-1795），廣州更成為中國唯一對外開放的貿易大港，吸引洋商經海路來廣州採購大批生絲、絲織品及其他中國手工藝品，澳門及香港亦先後成為商船的停泊處。

是次粵港澳三地合作巡展匯集了香港藝術館、廣東省博物館及澳門博物館的精選藏品，呈現明清時期大灣區風貌和絲綢生產工藝，以及三地如何透過海上絲綢之路訴說中外文化交流的故事。

Introduction

China is the birthplace of silk and was the first country to produce textiles made from silkworm cocoons. As early as the Qin and Han dynasties, Chinese silk was one of the most popular commodities exported from China, through both overland and maritime trade routes. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, European merchants actively expanded the maritime trade network between China and the West. During the reign of Qianlong Emperor (1736-1795) of the Qing dynasty, Canton (present-day Guangzhou) was the only Chinese port allowed to conduct foreign trade, which attracted foreign merchants to Canton via maritime routes to purchase large quantities of raw silk, silk textiles and other Chinese handicrafts. Macao and Hong Kong became stopover points for merchant ships approaching China.

This collaborative exhibition touring Guangzhou, Macao and Hong Kong brings together selected artefacts from the collections of the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Guangdong Museum and the Macao Museum to showcase the Greater Bay Area and silk production during the Ming and Qing dynasties, as well as the story of how the three places promoted East-West cultural exchange along the Maritime Silk Road.
A voyage to the Far East with traders

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the famous Chinese silk attracted a large number of trading companies from Western countries to Canton (present-day Guangzhou) via the Maritime Silk Road. In this story, the supercargoes of the British East India Company, on their mission to export Chinese silk, tell us about the silk products they discovered during their journeys. Their ships sailed from the port of Liverpool, around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, and across the Strait of Malacca, and finally arriving at the port of the Pearl River in China after a voyage of over five months.

Currency and list of goods ordered

The first step in procuring Chinese silk was to know the main currency in international trade at the time. Silver was the main currency for trade at the time. It is estimated that more than 60,000 tonnes of silver flowed into China from Western countries in the 17th and 18th centuries, accounting for about half of the world's silver production at the time.

Demand for Chinese silk in Europe was increasing by the day. As early as February and March, we order premium silk from Chinese merchants so that our ships can take delivery when we arrive in August and September.

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銀元 is the Chinese currency used in the 18th and 19th centuries. In this story, the supercargoes of the British East India Company, on their mission to export Chinese silk, tell us about the silver products they discovered during their journeys. Their ships sailed from the port of Liverpool, around the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, and across the Strait of Malacca, and finally arriving at the port of the Pearl River in China after a voyage of over five months.

Look for the embossing machines in the gallery. Stamp the patterns of the silver coins, and collect the currency in circulation at the time.
Spanish silver coins (two selected pieces from a set of ten)
1788–1828 | Silver
Collection of Guangdong Museum

Mexican silver coins (two selected pieces from a set of ten)
1824–1806 | Silver
Collection of Guangdong Museum

Mexican silver in China is commonly known as yingyang, a new coin minted by Mexico in 1823, after it gained independence from Spain in 1821. In the mid 19th century, the Mexican silver coin gradually replaced the Spanish silver coin in the Chinese market and became the standard silver currency in circulation from the late Qing dynasty to the Republican period of China. The obverse of the coin features an eagle with a snake in its beak, standing on a cactus, an image derived from the national emblem of Mexico.
中國是最早養蠶織絲的國家之一。傳統的織綢生產重鎮江南地區及新興的珠江三角洲一帶絲綢業發展蓬勃，蠶桑養殖及絲綢生產相當商業化及專業化。18-19世紀更有外銷畫作記錄絲綢生產流程，遠銷海外。

China was one of the first countries to develop hand-reeled silk. Jiangnan and the Pearl River Delta, the traditional and emerging areas of silk manufacturing, respectively, were the centres of commercialisation and specialisation of sericulture and silk production. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many trade paintings depicting the process of silk production were exported abroad.
Types of Silk Exports

提花織物
Jacquard Fabric

中國產出的生絲和絲織品暢銷各國，廣泛應用於歐洲皇室貴胄的室內家居和服裝面料上。當中提花織物，即以織機編織出具有較大圖案的有色織物，最受洋人歡迎。外銷的提花織物以中國傳統風格的紋樣和單色或雙色為主。

Chinese raw silk and silk textiles were sold all over the world and were widely used by European monarchs and nobles for interior decoration and clothing. Most popular in foreign markets were jacquard fabrics, which were coloured fabrics with large patterns woven into them on looms. Most of the exported jacquard fabrics were designed with traditional Chinese patterns, in single or dual colours.

不同的觀感，各有特色和用途，真是大開眼界。
What an amazing array of silk fabrics! Each with its unique features and uses.
**Hand-painted Silk**

The hand-painted silk textiles produced in the Canton workshops were mainly for the export market. Silk fabrics, like sha (plain gauze), duan (satin), luo (gauze) and juan (silk taffeta) with plain, light-coloured backgrounds, were hand-painted with colourful motifs, such as flowers, insects and birds to meet the aesthetic preferences of Western customers.

**White Silk Wallpaper with hand-painted flowers and birds**

This wallpaper features hand-painted floral and bird patterns on white silk. The flowers are bright and vivid, while the branches are twisted and strong. Various birds in different postures are interspersed among the flowers, adding a sense of liveliness and three-dimensionality. Chinese export wallpapers were sold in sets, forming a series of continuous scenes that could be posted to decorate the entire room.

**Silk Embroidery**

Starting in the 18th century, Chinese silk-mania swept Europe, and large quantities of silk fabrics, clothing and accessories, as well as embroidered ornaments, were exported.
屏風
Screen

屏風具遮風、遮蔽及分割空間等功能，是受歐洲皇室貴族追捧的室內陳設之一。來自中國的屏風形制豐富多樣，有圍屏、插屏、掛屏等。
Chinese screens, whose functions were to keep out the wind, offer privacy and divide domestic space, were one of the most popular types of furniture for European monarchs and nobles. Screens imported from China came in a variety of forms, including folding, standing and hanging screens.

廣東彩元繡坊
Guangdong Cai Yuan Embroidery Workshop

白鵝地圍繞孔雀紋纏屏
Screen with a round Canton embroidered panel of peacock on white satin

清代 (1644–1911) | 木及絲緞
Qing dynasty (1644–1911) | Wood and silk
Collection of Guangdong Museum

這套屏屏由十一聯組成，以白鵝為地，彩繪八仙壽壽圖案。居中處是寬大的一屏以絲繡繪一壽星老翁，周圍有各種壽喜祥瑞長壽的圖案，左右各屏則分別繡上八仙人物。
This is a set of 11 folding panels with embroidered patterns, featuring the scene of birthday greetings from the Eight Immortals on white satin. The central panel is the widest, embroidered with the God of Longevity, amongst other auspicious patterns, and flanked by the Eight Immortals motif on both sides.

廣東省博物館藏品
Collection of Guangdong Museum

這款木雕繡屏結合了雕琢和刺繡工藝，在歐洲多用於壁爐前方，用於裝飾或防止過高的溫熱會弄花女性精緻的妝容。屏心以白鵝地纏孔雀圍屏及花鳥圖案，是廣繡中常見的題材。
This wooden pierced-style standing screen combines both carving and embroidery techniques. In Europe, this kind of screen was usually placed in front of the fireplace, as a decoration or protective screen to prevent ladies’ fine makeup from melting in the heat. The round panel features an embroidered peacock spreading its tail against a white satin background, complemented by birds and flowers. These were common motifs for Canton embroidery.
家居織物
Home Fabric

自17世紀，廣織工藝常見於歐洲宮殿或別墅內的牆壁、門窗、桌椅及床榻之上。充滿歐陸風情的室內設計配搭精緻的中式刺繡紋樣，能突顯主人矜貴優雅的氣質。

From the 17th century, Canton embroidery was a common feature found on walls, doors, windows, tables, chairs and beds in European palaces and villas. This particular ornate style, incorporating exquisite Chinese embroidery patterns in European interior designs, emphasised the prestige and elegance of the owners.

白鶴地廣織花鳥床幔
Canton embroidered bed curtain with flowers and birds on white satin

18世紀 | 織造
廣東省博物館藏品
19th century | Textile
Collection of Guangdong Museum

這件裝飾床頭幕幔的床幔，以白鶴為地，分內外兩層裝飾。內以四季花卉、孔雀開屏、荷塘清趣等圖案裝飾，外以彩繪蟬紋花卉圖飾四邊，床幔兩側裝飾同色系的格柵和流蘇。

This bed curtain was used to decorate the top of a bed frame. The white ground is ornate and the design consists of two parts. The core is embroidered with seasonal flowers, peacock and lotus pond, and the border has colourful interlocking floral sprays. The bottom is further decorated with woven grid patterns and tassels in the same colour tone.
米色地排金鋪花卉百鳥圖床罩
Gold thread embroidered bedcover with flowers, plants and birds on beige satin
19th century | Textile
Collection of Guangdong Museum

This bedcover features Chinese patterns in a Western style. Various floral patterns, such as chrysanthemums, peonies and plum blossoms, are embroidered with gold threads. The round panel in the centre is decorated with embroidered patterns of phoenixes, cranes, mandarin ducks, wagtails and yellow warblers in colourful silk threads, representing an analogy of social relationships and social roles.
潮流服飾
Silk Fashion

到 19 世紀，中式服裝成為新潮的外銷品。在歐洲有些貴婦甚至穿著帶有中國刺繡的服裝，圍巾和帽子有龍鳳、龍鳳等圖案的鞋子，將自己打扮成中國傳統大家閨秀的模樣。同時，外銷市場亦出現中西融合的時髦服飾設計，配合潮流趨勢。

By the 19th century, Chinese clothing became a new trend in Europe. Some noblewomen even dressed up as traditional Chinese women, wearing Chinese embroidered dresses, shawls and shoes embroidered with qilin (a hooved, horned mythical creature), dragons and phoenixes. Clothing designs fusing Chinese and Western elements were introduced to the export market to keep up with fashion trends.

藍緞地繡花蝶紋女服
Woman’s robe embroidered with flowers and birds on blue satin

清代 (1644–1911) | 繡繍品
廣東省博物館藏品
Ging dynasty (1644 – 1911) | Textile
Collection of Guangdong Museum

這套中式女服左右開裾，寬身闊袖，設計寬鬆自在。寶藍色緞繡面彩绣四季花卉和各式花籃圖案，寓意四季長春、花開富貴。在 19 世紀後期，中式服裝成為新興外銷商品，這類剪裁寬鬆、富有東方韻味的服裝，更成為西方女性理想的長袍和晚裝款式。

This traditional Chinese woman’s robe features a loose and comfortable design with slits on both sides and wide sleeves. The sapphire blue silk fabric is embroidered with seasonal flowers and various flower baskets, symbolising everlasting spring in all seasons, a Chinese idiom for wealth and prosperity. In the late 19th century, Chinese clothing emerged as a new category of export goods. This loose tailoring and oriental touch made this an ideal style of morning gowns and night robes for Western ladies.
繡材
Embroidery Tool

除了以中國絲織裝飾居室，在17至18世紀，歐洲上流社會的女性更將刺繡視為鍛鍊其良好教養的必修課；來自中國的女紅盒及繡緞盒亦開始大量銷往歐洲，其中以黑漆描金的款式佔絕大多數。

In addition to decorating their homes with Chinese silk textiles, embroidery was considered an essential part of the education of upper-class European women in the 17th and 18th centuries, and sewing tools made in China, such as sewing boxes and sewing tables, mostly covered in gilt decoration, began to be sold in large numbers in Europe.

漆木描金繡緞台
Lacquered wood sewing table with pattern in gold

19世紀 | 墨、木、金屬及繡緞品
澳門博物館藏品
19th century | Lacquer, wood, metal and textile
Collection of Macao Museum

這款漆木描金繡緞台，採用了洛可可風格的曲線設計，足端雕鋸鷹爪，造型精緻優雅。繡緞台內部空間分成多個小格，方便收納繡織工具。台下還附有一個紅色絲質袋狀抽屜，供存放繡織物品之用。

This black and gilt lacquer sewing table features a curved design influenced by the Rococo style, and was meticulously carved with animal claws at its base, which look sturdy and elegant. The box under the table top is divided into multiple small compartments for easy storage and there is a red silk bag-like drawer at the bottom for storing sewing tools.

經過紡織工、刺繡師和商販多個月以來的協作，我們訂購的絲織製品順利完成。滿載外銷商品的商船在澳門獲得通行證後離境回國，船外的風光映入眼簾，為此次旅程帶來美好的回憶。期待下個貿易季度再次航行遠赴中國！

After months of hard work between the weavers, embroiderers and Chinese merchants, our silk order was finally ready for shipment. Our ships, loaded with Chinese goods, are now headed home after being cleared to leave Macao. We will remember the wonderful views from the ships, when we look back on this journey with fond memories. We are already looking forward to our next voyage to China in the next trade season!
Roles of Canton, Hong Kong and Macao in China’s Foreign Trade

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, China’s silk exports were a major commodity transported around the world across the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans via the Guangdong – Hong Kong – Macao Greater Bay Area. After China’s opening up to foreign trade, the three cities, Canton, Hong Kong and Macao, thrived as transit ports, engaging with the world through their different trading positions.

Macao was first settled by the Portuguese in the mid 16th century to conduct maritime trade between Europe and Asia. Between the mid 16th and mid 17th centuries, Macao’s port and city developed rapidly, with a thriving population and commerce, and the island was dotted with Western-style buildings, barracks and forts. In 1757, the Qing government limited trading activity with foreigners to the port of Canton and closed the other ports. This change of policy shifted the centre of trade between China and foreign countries to the port of Canton. Foreign merchant ships sailing to Canton had to stop and register in Macao, making Macao the first Western gateway into China. As the Qing government forbade Western women from entering Canton, Macao became a temporary home for the families of accompanying foreign merchants.
從 1757 年至 1842 年，清廷指定廣州為唯一對外開放的通商口岸，並於廣州城西南方珠江南岸設置專營外貿的“十三行”商館區。中國各地貨物均需從廣州出口，而進口的舶來品亦以廣州為集散中心，運銷到中國各地。因此，商館區便成為全中國對外貿易最繁盛的地方。在貿易季節期間，各國商人會租住在商館區內，並在門前懸掛所屬國家的旗幟，這些場景常出現在外銷畫作中。商館區內亦開設有眾多店舖，售賣各類受洋商歡迎的外銷藝術品，豐富了中國傳統工藝的內容和形式，也促進了東西方文化的交流和融合。

From 1757 to 1842, the Qing government made Canton the only Chinese port for foreign trade and designated a restricted trading district, known as the Thirteen Factories, in the southwest suburbs of Canton city, along the Pearl River. Goods from all parts of China were exported from Canton, and imported Western goods were distributed throughout China via Canton. As a result, the Thirteen Factories district became the most prosperous place for foreign trade in China. During the trade season, foreign merchants resided in buildings called “factories”, with their national flags hanging in front of their entrances, a scene often depicted in China trade paintings. There were many shops near the factories selling trade paintings and other Chinese art popular with Westerners, expanding the rich heritage of Chinese art and crafts, while promoting the cultural exchange between East and West.

清廷實行「一口通商」政策後，外國商船到達廣州前通常會在香港仔石排灣西南的海面泊泊，稍作補給。由南丫島、石排灣和鴨脷洲所形成的海港，既有水道，又可避風，是船舶的理想停泊處。1841 年，香港開埠並進行首次土地拍賣，商行和各類中西式住宅相繼現身。當清廷在 1842 年實行「五口通商」政策後，廣州原有的對外貿易優勢便產生變化。廣州昔日的外銷店鋪相繼離開，遷移到香港皇后大道一帶。隨着香港經濟的逐漸發展，這裏成為了一個新的對外貿易中心，並在之後的歷史發展中扮演了重要的角色。

During the reign of the Qing government, when Canton was the only accessible port for foreign trade, foreign merchant ships on the way to Canton found the waters southwest of Shek Pai Wan in Aberdeen, Hong Kong, to be a good stopover point for replenishment. The harbour formed by Lamma Island, Shek Pai Wan and Ap Lei Chau was considered an ideal anchorage for vessels, as it offered both fresh water and shelter from the wind and waves. Hong Kong opened its port in 1841, and the first land sale led to the emergence of trading companies and a variety of Chinese- and Western-style residences. Canton's initial dominance in foreign trade changed in 1842 when the Qing government opened five treaty ports to foreign trade. Shops in Canton targeting the export market began to relocate to the vicinity of Queen's Road in Hong Kong. As its economy gradually developed, Hong Kong became a new centre of international trade and played an important role in the subsequent development of global trade.
試將剛買入到手的絲織品用作下頁「中國風」房間的佈置元素，讓嶺南絲織文化融入歐洲人的生活中，體驗當地流行指標！

Try using the textiles the traders just bought to decorate the "chinoiserie" room on the next page, infusing the Lingnan silk culture into European life, and experience the local trend in the past centuries!
广东省文化和旅游厅
The Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province

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