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978-1-107-50491-2 - Courtauld Institute of Art: Chinese Ceramic Glazes

A. L. Hetherington

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by

A. L. HETHERINGTON

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CONTENTS

PREFACE	<i>page ix</i>
CHAPTER I	
GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	<i>page i</i>
Nature of a glaze. Nature of bodies used. Slip. Scattering of light in a glaze. Oxidation and reduction. The effect of acids and alkalis in a glaze.	
CHAPTER II	
THE IRON STORY	<i>page 15</i>
Ferrous oxide. The “iron-foot” and “brown-mouth”. Ferric oxide. Saturated solutions of ferric oxide. Ferric-oxide glazes of the Han and Tang dynasties. The temmoku glaze effects. Figured temmoku bowls. “Oil spot” glaze. Other forms of ferric-oxide glazes. Ferric-oxide on-glaze effects. Summary of ferric-oxide effects.	
CHAPTER III	
THE COPPER STORY	<i>page 36</i>
Effects from cupric oxide. The reduced copper glaze. Colloidal copper. Sang-de-bœuf glazes. Chün yao. Eighteenth-century flambés. Reduced copper as an on-glaze effect. Peach-bloom glaze. Green spots on peach-bloom glazes.	
CHAPTER IV	
OTHER GLAZE EFFECTS	<i>page 53</i>
Cobalt glazes. Manganese glazes. Gold glazes. Opalescence. Crackle. Double crackle. Disintegration of glazes. Iridescence. Bubbles in glazes. Specific gravity and X-ray analysis of bodies. Conclusion.	
GLOSSARY	<i>page 70</i>
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	<i>page 73</i>
INDEX	<i>page 74</i>

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[More information](#)

PLATES

I. A Chinese kiln at Tê-hua	<i>facing p. 5</i>
II. Vase with a glaze of ferric oxide	24
III. Temmoku bowl with hare's fur markings	28
IV. Group of trial cups with temmoku type of glaze	30
V. Modern glazes, showing result of liquation of a glaze	31
VI. Two Sung temmoku bowls	32
VII. Section of reduced copper-red glaze	40
VIII. Section of flambé glaze showing tiny crystals	47
IX. Brush bowl with flambé glaze, Ch'ien Lung period	48
X. Section of on-glaze reduced copper-red glaze	48
XI. Peach-bloom water pot	49
XII. Modern peach-bloom vase	50
XIII. Section of glaze of modern peach-bloom vase	50
XIV. Vase showing double crackle	61

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PREFACE

THIS little book attempts to convey, in as simple language as possible, the underlying scientific principles on which depend the chief glaze effects produced by the Chinese potters from the Han to the Manchu dynasties, a period extending over some 2000 years. The account does not pretend to be exhaustive, for to make it that would involve explanations of a nature which would not be readily acceptable to the general body of collectors. On the other hand, collectors often desire to know in general terms how a glaze is made, to what the colour is due and why glazes in one period are so different from those in another. Moreover, there are various characteristics, known to connoisseurs, which would be still more interesting in the light of a scientific explanation of how they arise.

The account given should furnish answers to many such questions, and it attempts to link up scientific facts with archaeological knowledge. The substance of what is here contained is a restatement of a series of lectures I was invited to give at the Courtauld Institute in February of this year and this book is being published at the conclusion of the lectures in order to amplify them in certain respects.

I must express in no measured terms the great assistance I have received from several persons, but particularly from two. I was privileged some years ago to take part in investigations made by the late Sir Herbert Jackson, F.R.S., into the chemistry of many of the Chinese glaze effects, and much of the contents of this book is based upon that work in which in the main I played the rôle of an observer. The other person to whom I owe a very great debt of gratitude is Dr J. W. Mellor, F.R.S. His name as an authority on ceramic matters from a scientific point of view is known all over the world and his contributions on the subject in the *Transactions of the Ceramic Society*—several of which are referred to herein—are outstanding additions to knowledge. He has been good enough to allow me to consult him on

all points and has been to the trouble of reading and commenting on my text. Not only that, but he has also been moved to conduct certain additional researches to clear up aspects which were in doubt.

I am further indebted to him and to the Council of the Ceramic Society for being allowed to include certain illustrations that have appeared in their *Transactions*.

I am also beholden to my old friend Bernard Moore. He was a distinguished potter with great scientific insight as well as technical knowledge, whose death deprives all concerned of a source of material assistance.

Professor W. Perceval Yetts has been to much trouble in checking the spelling of the Chinese names and ensuring that they are in the most recently accepted form.

A. L. HETHERINGTON

January 1937