



Chinese Canton enamel tray, Qianlong (1736-95) POA

Chinese Canton enamel tray, Qianlong (1736-95), of square form with chamfered corners, decorated with a narrative scene set in a rocky landscape, with a man reading a scroll to Mu Guiying, the female warrior, who is seated in finery with long feather headpiece beside a soldier and attendant, all wearing furs, with a bordered yellow banner (Xi?nghuángqí, ???) flying overhead, all within a narrow red band, the rim decorated with stylised foliate scrollwork against a pale turquoise ground, the reverse rim similarly decorated and with a central floral motif to the base.

Notes:

The 'Yang Jia Jiang' (Generals of the Yang Family) is a collection of largely fictional novels based upon the Yangs and their loyalty throughout the battles of the Liao (907-1125) and Western Xia (1038-1227), in which they bravely fought to defend Imperial China. Depicted on this tray is Mu Guying, a legendary female hero known for her bravery and loyalty who was one of the warriors written about in the Yang Jia Jiang. Though of low birth, her martial skills earn her great respect, and she eventually leads a Song troop of female warriors northwards to defeat an oncoming Liao invasion. Here, she is depicted wearing the long feathers of a military general.

Material and Technique	Canton enamel
Origin	Chinese
Period	18th Century
Condition	Consistent with age

Antique ref: W689