



Pair of Chinese famille rose cups and saucers, Qianlong (1736-95) POA

Pair of Chinese famille rose cups and saucers, Qianlong (1736-95), decorated with cockerels perching on rockwork amongst blooming peony with butterflies in flight above.

Condition: One saucer has a minute hairline and one teabowl has a minute frit to the rim

Notes: A pair of cups and saucers of the same design can be found in the collection of the National Trust at Tyntesfield, North Somerset (NT 21032).

The tenth animal of the zodiac, roosters have featured in Chinese art for millennia. The first references to the zodiac in China date from the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE- 9 CE), and tomb figurines of roosters, believed to keep evil spirits at bay as well as serving as an offering to sustain the deceased in the afterlife, have been found across China. Over time, the rooster became an important symbol associated with the New Year, and images of roosters were often pasted onto doors on the first day of the lunar New Year to protect the household – a tradition which continues today in many parts of China. The association of roosters with good fortune stems from a homonym: chicken (ji) or rooster (gonji) serve as a visual pun on luck (ji).

More complex symbolic meaning can be construed based on the placement of the rooster. For example, two roosters shown standing with one slightly higher refers to a wish for continued success; as the combination of the words 'coxcomb' (jiguan) and 'standing' (shang ?) evokes the phrase guangshang jiaguan ('may you achieve rank upon rank'). When a rooster is standing upon a rock (shi), as is shown on these cups and saucers, the additional understanding of familial good luck (also pronounced 'shi') is evoked.

Material and Technique	Porcelain with overglaze enamel decoration in the famille verte palette
Origin	Chinese
Period	18th Century
Diameter	Diameter of saucer: 10.2cm. (4in.)