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Elegant Empty Containers:

Hardwood Brushpots

he brushpot, varying in its capacity and style, was produced from a range of materials including bamboo, ivory, wood, lacquer, porcelain, bronze and precious stone. Its function is generally associated with the desktop where it served as practical container for brushes and hand scrolls; as a decorative base, it also housed those loftier implements like horsehair whisks, peacock feathers. and ruyi scepters. The extent of fine, hardwood brushpots in the Liang Yi Collection affords the opportunity to examine the history and characteristics of these uniquely Chinese stationery accessories which, as elegant empty containers, also came to be viewed as works of art.

The primary function of the brushpot was to hold brushes in an inverted position to protect their delicate tips. Prior to the use of hollowed, cylindrical vessels, brush holders existed as a small rack. Such is the form noted by the Southern Song (1127-1279)

connoisseur, Zhao Xigu (1170-1242):

Use ivory or ebony to make a small stand with four holes in the top and a pedestal base. After rinsing, insert the inverted brush into the stand. Then, any remaining moisture moves downward towards the base, and the tip of the brush is prevented from harm.

Similar brush stands—following ancient rack pattern traceable to the Shang dynasty (ca 1600-1000 BCE)2appear in numerous Song and Yuan paintings as writing and painting table accessories (figs. 2a-c).

Such brush racks gradually faded out of use during the Ming dynasty. During the late 16th century Gao Lian attempted to revive the tradition by extolling its archaic form, which at that time was termed a bichuang.3 Gao also elaborated upon the 'brush screen' (biping), which was constructed like a small table screen with a brush rack mounted to one side and accordingly, which had once been popular at the Song Imperial court. A rare example of this type, made





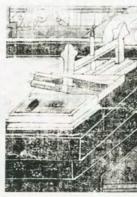


Fig. 2. Early brush racks. a) Detail from Odes of the State of Pin, Anonymous, Southern Song dynasty; b) Brush rack. Detail from Eighteen Scholars of the Tang, Attributed Liu Songnian, Song-Yuan periods; c) Brush rack. Detail from album leaf Whiling Away the Summer Beneath a Locust Tree, Anonymous, Song dynasty (960-1279).

图2. 早期的笔架。左)《豳风图》局部,无名 氏,南宋;右)笔架。《唐代十八学士图》局 部,传为宋元之交的刘松年所画;中)笔架。 册页《槐阴消夏图》局部,无名氏,宋朝 (960-1279年)。

管制材范围极广,由竹、木、象牙,到漆、瓷、铜、宝石不一而足;容量和造型也变化万千。它的基本功能是摆在案头上盛放毛笔和卷轴;也可作为装饰性的瓶插,插放拂尘、孔雀羽毛及如意棍等风雅饰物。我们将以两依藏为数可观的高级硬木笔筒为基础,对这种既可盛物、又可赏玩的中国独特文具做一番历史和特色的考察。

笔筒的主要功能是让毛笔竖立倒放,以保护纤细的笔尖不受压损。在圆柱形的中空容器问世之前,一般是将毛笔放在小型的笔架上,如南宋的鉴赏家赵希鹄(1170-1242年)所描述:

象牙乌木作小案面,上穴四窍,下如座子,洗 笔讫倒插案上,水流向下,不损烂笔心¹。

这种笔架的形制最早可上溯商代 (西元前1600-1000年)²,在宋 (960-1279年)元 (1271-1368年)两朝的画作中常常可以看到这类的案头摆设 (图2左,中,右)。

明朝时这种笔架逐渐式微。十六世纪晚期,高濂曾试图恢复这种传统,为文盛赞这种时称「笔床」3的文具深有古风,他也不厌其烦地描述「笔屏」(状似一张小型的桌上屏风,一侧装有笔架,在宋朝皇



Fig. 1. Brushpot, huanghuali, 18^{th} century, Liang Yi Collection (pl. 11)

图1. 黄花梨笔筒,十八世纪,《两依藏》图版11。





Fig. 3. Brush screen. Zitan and Dali marble, 17 x 8 x 20 cm H, Wanli period (1573-1620). Excavated from tomb of Zhu Shoucheng and spouse at Shanghai, Baoshan. After Wenwu 1992:5.

图3. 笔屏。紫檀与大理石,长17公分,宽8公分,高20公 分。万历年间(1573-1620年),由上海宝山的朱受诚夫妇合 葬墓出土。引自《文物》1992:5。

from zitan with a Dali marble panel, was excavated from a Wanli (1573-1620) period tomb (fig. 3).5 However, others such as Wen Zhenheng found both types to be inelegant⁶, and Gao appears to have failed to have received any support in his effort to preserve the outdated tradition.

Thus, the 'old-fashioned' racks gave way to the cylindrical brushpot which, by the late Ming period, had come into widespread use. From where and when this new form emerged is uncertain. Examples in the Palace Museum Collection fashioned from zitan and carved red lacquer have been attributed as early as the mid-Ming period. However, discussions of the brushpot in traditional texts on connoisseurship do not emerge until the late 16th and early 17th centuries, which is also when brushpots simultaneously appear with frequent depictions in paintings and book illustrations. An early rendering found in a mid-16th century painting depicts a brushpot of rare quatrefoil form seated upon a base, the style of which is related to the lobed huanghuali brushpot with integrated base in the Liang Yi Collection (see plate 4 and accompanying illustration).

Brushpots with base stands appear in many late Ming paintings and book illustrations (fig. 4). While surviving examples of this early style are rare, a few

are represented in the Liang Yi Collection (plates 1, 2, 4, 5). This period/style relationship is further supported by examples with early attributions at the Palace Museum, Beijing8 as well as one from a Wanli period (1573-1620) tomb at Baoshan, Shanghai (fig. 5). The excavated piece—a small zitan brushpot molded with a wide, flat beading around the rim and fitted with a footed, convex-molded base-can be compared to one of remarkably similar form in the Liang Yi Collection (fig. 7), the latter fitted with a variant-styled square base with kunmen openings. The cylindrical form with a square-base, which plays on the cosmological theme 'round Heaven above, square Earth below', is also evident in the brushpot illustrated in plate 5. Brushpots that have been shaped with base moldings of substantial profile may also simulate this early style attached with base (cf. pls. 9, 10, 13-16).

The discourses of Gao Lian (pub. 1591)10 and Tu Long (pub. 1606)11 advocated brushpots of speckled bamboo, a rarified species whose surface is patterned with finely delineated spots of reddish-color. Tu Long further noted, "when inset in a lipped base made from zitan or wumu they are exceptionally elegant inserting anything else is unnecessary!" Here is early



Fig. 4. Brushpot with base. Detail from woodcut illustration to Yangzheng tujie. Illustration by Ding Yunpeng. Ming, Wanli period, 1594.

图4. 有底座的笔筒。《养正图解》木刻插图,丁云鹏绘。明 朝万历年间(1594年)。

室曾经盛行一时[†])。万历年间(1573-1620年)之墓曾出土一个罕见却有类似形制的紫檀嵌大理石笔屏(图3)⁵。然而,其他晚明文士包括文震亨,一致认为这两种类型不够优雅⁶,因此高濂的复古努力可说是功败垂成。

于是,圆柱形的笔筒取代了「老式」的笔架,甚至广受晚明人士欢迎。这种新造型究竟是出于何时何地,仍然有待考查。故宫博物院收藏的紫檀雕刻笔筒和剔红笔筒的断代最早可溯至明朝中叶'。然而,直到十六世纪晚期/十七世纪初期,文人雅士才开始为文品评笔筒,当时的绘画和书籍插图也常有著墨。一幅十六世纪中叶的画作曾描绘一件罕有的四瓣瓜棱形笔筒立于底座之上,其风格与两依藏的一件黄花梨委角叶状形笔筒嵌入个别底座合为一体者非常相近(请见图版4及附图)。

镶底座的笔筒在晚明的绘画和书籍插图上很常见(图4),而两依藏有幸收到几件类似的罕见之作(图版1,2,4,5)。这种年代与风格之间的关系,更可以透过北京故宫博物院的几件藏品⁸和上海宝山一

座万历年间(1573-1620年)坟墓出土的笔筒(图5)。进一步得到佐证。这件出土的紫檀小笔筒口缘起宽扁的线脚,下方镶入半月形断面造型的底座,与两依藏一件锼出壶门式开光造型的底座笔筒(图7)极为神似。图版5的笔筒,取方底圆柱体的造型,展现了「天圆地方」的宇宙观。几件底座线脚装饰极为抢眼的笔筒(另见图版9,10,13-16),也可能是仿效这类早期风格。

高濂¹⁰与屠隆¹¹的论著(分别刊行于1591及1606年)都盛赞湘妃竹笔筒,这是一种表面带细致红色斑点的希罕品种。屠隆更进一步指出:「湘【妃】竹为之,紫檀乌木棱口镶坐为雅,馀不入品。」这是把笔筒视为艺术品的一个早期文献例证。尽管湘妃竹笔筒相当罕见,但是竹雕笔筒却从晚明一直流传至今¹²。自然中空的竹节很容易做成笔筒,而且竹子向来代表谦虚等多种美德,广受文人的喜爱。

出自书香世家的文震亨,也曾在成于1620年的《长物志》中品评笔筒。他呼应前人对湘妃竹笔筒的赞赏,并进一步指出栟榈笔筒最为美观¹³。在这之前



Fig. 5. Brushpot. Zitan, 15.7 diameter x 20 cm H, Wanli period (1573-1620). Excavated from the tomb of Zhu Shoucheng and spouse at Shanghai, Baoshan. After Wenwu 1992:5.

图5. 紫檀笔筒。直径15.7公分,高20公分,万历年间(1573-1620年)。由上海宝山的朱受诚夫妇合葬墓出土。引自《文物》1992:5。



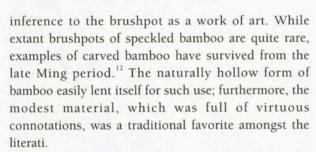
Fig. 6. Brushpot. Qinghua porcelain, 8 cm dia \times 13.7 cm H, Tianqi period (1621-1627). Ashfield Collection.

图6. 青花瓷笔筒,直径8公分,高13.7公分,天启年间(1621-1627年)。Ashfield私人收藏。



Fig. 7. Brushpot. Zitan, 17th century. Liang Yi Collection (pl.

图7. 紫檀地座小笔筒,十七世纪。《两依藏》图版1。



Wen Zhenheng, heir to a family steeped in literati traditions, also critiqued the subject in Zhangwu zhi, a work that was completed circa 1620. Wen echoed the earlier praise of speckled-bamboo brushpots, and further cited those of the coir palm (pinglu) as being the most beautiful.13 In 1562, nearly sixty years earlier, it was brushpots of palm, ivory, and cowhorn that had been amongst the luxurious holdings confiscated from the fallen minister Yan Song.14 It may well be that the earliest brushpot materials were those with naturally hollow or pithy cores, which were readily fashioned into empty containers.

Wen also pronounced, "....Zitan, wumu, and



Fig. 8. Foliate-style brushpot. Huanghuali, 17th century. 图8. 黄花梨花沿式笔筒,十七世纪。

huali are also acceptable, but avoid the eight-sided ones of foliated style..."15 These remarks coincide with the popular fashion for tropical hardwoods that spread throughout the Jiangnan region during the late Ming period. Pithy-cored zitan would also have naturally suggested itself as a brushpot material. Moreover, the rich patterning of huanghuali was best revealed in the smooth, tangential surfaces of the cylindrical brushpot, where the prized imagery of landscapes and ethereal ghost faces was fully manifest (cf. pls. 7, 11). Wen's dismissal of those shaped in a foliated style also provides a period benchmark for this type. (fig. 8).

Wen also comments on various types of porcelain brushpots. A blue and white porcelain brushpot with Tianqi period (1621-1627) reign mark is representative of a contemporary late Ming style (fig. 6). The modeling as a base-fitted brushpot, the style of which is mirrored in the painted decoration, bears similarity to the Wanli period (1573-1620) brushpot illustrated in figure 5. The use of porcelain brushpots emerges during this period, and the many examples surviving from the early Qing period16



Fig. 9. Brushpot with Zheng Fu inscription. Huanghuali, 12 diameter x 14.5 cm H, 17th C. Private collection, Taipei. 图9. 黄花梨笔筒带郑簠刻款,直径12公分,高14.5公分,十七世纪,私人收藏,台北。



Fig. 10. Brushpot with Pan Laotong inscription. Zitan, Yongzheng period (d. 1727). After Zhuke jianshang.

图10. 紫檀笔筒带潘老桐刻款,雍正年间 (1727年)。引自《竹刻鉴赏》。

的六十年,亦即1562年,权重一时的宰相严嵩垮台后被抄家,其中的贵重物品即包括棕榈、象牙和犀牛角笔筒¹¹。可以想见,最早的笔筒是取材于自然中空的材质或有髓的心材,因为它们本有天成的特性很容易做成中空容器。

文震亨也评道:「……紫檀乌木花梨(笔筒)亦间可用,忌八棱花式。"」,这些评论正值晚明江南地区掀起的一股热带硬木风潮。有髓心的紫檀自然是制作笔筒的天然材料,而黄花梨的丰富纹理在圆柱形笔筒的平滑表面上最能展露玄切面纹理的最佳效果,显现让人赞叹不已的山水风景或鬼面纹(参考图版7,11)。文震亨对于棱式造型不表赞同,却也道出这种造型在当时为基本流行风格。(图8)。

文氏也评价各类各色的陶瓷笔筒。一只带有"大明天启年制"书款的青花人物笔筒(图6)可资表征晚明当代风格。这笔筒在底端部份,塑出凸起的半月形断面的连身底座足,与图5万历时期的紫檀笔筒造型有异曲同工之妙。瓷制笔筒大致兴起于该时期,综观许多清早期的传世范例16,亦能反映出硬木笔筒风格流变的历史身影以及广为普及的事实。

十七世纪的笔筒也出现了题诗刻铭。文人艺匠喜爱的主题包括向往自由自在的隐士生涯,歌颂醇酒的美妙,以及咏叹昔日荣景下的风流事迹。两依藏中的铁力木笔筒(图版22),以隶书刻出一首七言绝句,出自集书法和刻印有成的南京艺人,郑簠(号谷口)(1623-1694年)之手。诗文之外,笔筒尺寸适中,风格简单无华无饰,腰间微微内收。另外一只带郑簠刻款的黄花梨笔筒,饰以诗文的装饰形式相似(图9);显示这类风格为十七世纪常见的笔筒流风。王世襄先生书中所介绍的紫檀书体刻铭笔筒¹⁷和两依藏图版24-25的实例,都具有刀法娴熟的雕刻书体诗文和填入青铜色料的字节,说明了此一传统风格持续通行清代不坠。

十八世纪精致化的装饰风潮催化了笔筒风格的流变。这时期的发展当以雍正和乾隆年间的瓷器为代表,并展现其装饰上远比康熙时期的制品更为精练讲究。此精练化的推论反映在雍正时期的一只潘老桐刻铭年款1727年(图10)的紫檀笔筒,它刻有精致洗练的阳线线脚装饰,风格和两依藏的一件口、足缘均起精巧线脚的黄花梨笔筒(图1)习习关联。陈增弻最近出版了另一只风格相似的黄花梨笔筒,刻款为嘉庆朝(1976-1820年),又说明了精致化的装饰传统已延续至十九世纪18。

在乾隆(1735-1796年)及嘉庆(1796-1820年) 两朝,模拟艺术也达到了史无前例的高峰,以贵重 的玉石、髹漆及陶瓷仿造较通俗材质的仿制艺术。 mirror the stylistic development and popularization of hardwood brushpots of hardwood brushpots.

Brushpots inscribed with calligraphic verse also appear during the 17th century. Favorite themes amongst the literati carvers included the idealization of the unfettered recluse, songs of praise to the virtue of wine, and romances to the glorious past. The tieli wood brushpot in the Liang Yi Collection bears a poem inscribed with clerical script by Zheng Fu (hao Gukou) (1623-1694), an accomplished calligrapher and seal carver from the Nanjing region (pl. 22). Inscription aside, the medium-sized brushpot exhibits a simple undecorated form that is shaped with a slightly waisted profile. Another huanghuali brushpot with Zheng Fu inscription that is also of similar form suggests a common 17th century style (fig. 9). Calligraphy-inscribed zitan brushpots illustrated by Wang Shixiang17 and examples in the Liang Yi Collection (pls. 24-25)—featuring skillfully incised calligraphic stanzas filled with a bronze-toned pigment-demonstrate a tradition that continued throughout the Qing dynasty.

The 18th century brought refinement to brushpot styles. Development during this period corresponds to that in Yongzheng and Qianlong porcelains, which display a marked refinement compared to those of the preceding Kangxi period. Such corollary is reflected in the finely beaded *zitan* brushpot with Yongzheng period with Pan Laotong inscription dated the year 1727 (fig. 10), the style of which is closely related to the *huanghuali* brushpot with lip and base (fig. 1). Yet another *huanghuali* brushpot of similar style published by Chen Zengbi with inscription dated to the Jiaqing period (1796-1820) further demonstrates the continuity of this traditional pattern into the 19th century.

The art of imitation also reached unprecedented heights during the Qianlong (1735-1796) and Jiaqing (1796-1820) periods in the *faux* creations made from precious jade, lacquer, and porcelain that simulated more common material. Such imitative style is also reflected in the bamboo- (pls. 17-18), jar- (pl. 13) and wicker-style brushpots (fig. 11) that were fashioned from *huanghuali* wood.

Of magnificent 18th century Imperial style is the *zitan* brushpot carved with dragons writhing through the cloud and waves (pl. 21). A *zitan* brushpot with *huanghuali* base illustrated by Wang Shixiang and Zhu

Jiajin exhibits a similar decorative theme, but is clearly of an earlier date, attributed not later than the Jiajing period (1522-1567) (see accompanying illustration pl. 21). Such work may well have provided inspiration for the example in the Liang Yi Collection, whose dragon decoration is more typical of the mid-Qing period with exceptionally fine relief carving.

Hardwood brushpots were also decorated in a finely incised and/or low relief style typical of bamboo carving. Such is the *zitan* brushpot with Yongzheng period inscription noted above (fig. 10), as well as the example illustrated in plate 20. The later depicting an inebriated lady composing herself upon a garden bench; complementary lines of poetry incised in running script read "Drunken Repose in the Peony Garden."

While brushpots are commonly associated with the male dominated *literati* culture, women skilled in the arts of the brush also required their use. A passage from the semi-fictional, 18th century novel *Hong Lou Meng* describes the room of a teenage girl who was so inclined:

A large *huali* table with a Dali marble panel stood at the center of the room and was heaped with calligraphy manuals, and scattered with dozens of inkstones, brushrests, and a small forest of writing brushes stood in an array of variously styled brushpots and scrollpots (*bihai*)²⁰.

The style and decoration of brushpots belonging to women, whose desk accessories are regularly depicted in illustrative art (cf. supplementary woodcuts cat. pls. 11, 29), may also reflect the strong gender distinctions that existed during the Ming and Qing periods.²¹

Various types of inlay were also applied to brushpots, including mother-of-pearl, ivory, wire, as well as the variegated *Zhouzhi* type comprised of variegated semi-precious materials. A particularly fine example of the latter is found in the Liang Yi Collection (pl. 39). Its animated imagery depicts a plum tree rooted in a rocky outcropping along a waterside embankment with two butterflies fluttering above an outstretched branch with blossoming plum flowers. The charming style of this decoration along with its auspicious rebuses for longevity and immaculate beauty may well reflect a material culture that existed for women. Notwithstanding such association, the above-mentioned *zitan* brushpot carved with dragons—of probable Imperial

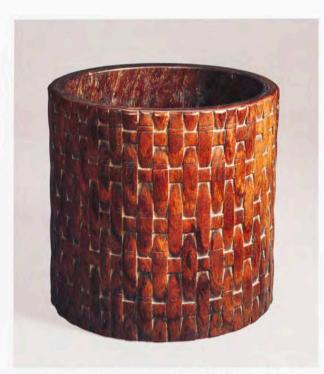


Fig. 11. Wicker-style brushpot. Huanghuali, 18th century. Liang Yi Collection (pl. 19).

图11. 黄花梨仿编藤笔筒,十八世纪。《两依藏》图版19。



Fig. 12. Root-style brushpot. Boxwood, 15.5 x 12.5 x 16.3 cm H, Daoguang period (d. 1829). Private collection. 图12. 黄杨木仿松树笔筒。直径15.5 - 12.5公分,高16.3公分,道光年间(1829年)。私人收藏,台北。

黄花梨仿竹笔筒 (图版17-18)、黄花梨仿坛罐笔筒 (图版13) 及黄花梨仿藤编笔筒 (图11) 正是这种模 拟风格的代表之作。

刻有祥龙游于云端及波浪之中的紫檀雕龙笔筒(图版21),则展现了十八世纪雄伟壮丽的宫廷风格。王世襄与朱家溍曾举例说明一件带黄花梨底座的紫檀笔筒,其装饰主题与这件笔筒极为相近,但是时间上应该更早,推测不会晚于嘉靖年间(1522-1567年)(见图版21的附图)¹⁹。两依藏的笔筒极可能是以这件笔筒为蓝本,上端的龙形为清中叶的典型风格,浮雕的技法也极为讲究。

硬木笔筒有时也会施以典型的竹刻技法,亦即以精细的阴刻和浅浮雕的形式作装饰,例如前述(图10)带雍正年款的紫檀笔筒和图版20的笔筒。后者采用仕女醉卧花园长椅的独特题材作浮雕,左上方则搭配阴刻草书款「史湘云醉卧牡丹园」的字样。

尽管一般来说,笔筒与男性当道的文人之风息 息相关,但是善于笔墨的仕女也有自己的笔筒。十 八世纪的半写实章回小说《红楼梦》就如此描述舞 文善墨的探春闺房:

当地放着一张大理石花梨大案,案上磊着各种名人法帖,并数十方宝砚,各色笔筒,笔海内插的笔如树林一般。20

在插画艺术中常见的女性案头文具中(另见图版 11,29的木刻版画),笔筒的形制与装饰也反映出明 清两朝对于两性的明显区别²¹。

笔筒上也常施以各种镶嵌,包括螺钿、象牙、金属丝,以及由各式玉石组成的周制风格。两依藏的一件笔筒(图版39)以玉石铺陈出一棵扎根于水边石上的梅树,两只蝴蝶悠游于花朵累累的梅树之上,正是周制风格的好例。其风格栩栩如生,并象徵多福多寿与冰清玉洁,可说是善于艺术之女性的物质文化写照。话虽如此,上述那件可能属于互廷之物的紫檀雕龙笔筒,口缘沿边亦镶有一层玉石装饰22。向来优雅又深富文人气息的紫檀笔筒,偶尔会有口缘精刻回纹或卷草纹,错金、银或铜丝23的考究品种,这是晚明相当常见的装饰技法24。

在中清至晚清的绘画及木刻插画中,常见巧夺 天工、天然树干状的雕塑笔筒,许多类似笔筒的实 例可能也是成于此时。如图12的黄杨木笔筒,底部 镌刻道光乙丑年款,即西元1829年制。其实,这种 树根造型传统的起源发迹更早,早在宋朝就曾以树 干、树根或藤茎来制作几和椅,为当时佛教与道教 抛弃物欲、追求虚心和自然简朴的处世传统的生活 形态器物。等到晚明时,反映佛、道精神、造型浑 然天成的器物发展已卷入追求精致品味的官宦商贾 与喜好燕闲清赏的文人的生活层级。至于雕琢精炼 provenance—was also decorated with a band of semi-precious inlays around the rim. ²² And of refined, scholarly air are the rarified *zitan* brushpots that occasionally appear with fine key-fret or scrolling-grass patterns that have been inlaid with silver, gold, or bronze wire around the rim, ²³ a decorative technique also common to the late Ming period. ²⁴

Brushpots contrived as naturalistic tree trunks appear with notable frequency in paintings and woodcut illustrations dating from the mid- to late Qing period, from which era many examples of such style also likely date. Such is the boxwood brushpot illustrated in figure 12, the underside of which bears a Daoguang inscription dated to the year 1829. However, the source of the root-style tradition had begun much earlier, and by the Song dynasty, stands and chairs were contrived from tree trunks, roots or rattan. These earliest objects reflected Buddhist and Daoist traditions, which rejected materialism and strove towards humility and natural simplicity. By the late Ming period, fashionable objects of naturalistic style had become mingled with those of refined and leisurely lifestyles. Relative to brushpots that are finely carved as tree trunks, an early tradition is evident in bamboo and hardwood examples bearing late Ming and early Qing inscriptions.25 The small zitan brushpot in the Liang Yi Collection (pl. 2) is shaped as a smooth trunk with branches of pine, bamboo, and prunus clinging in relief, of which the decorative theme and style both exhibit characteristics typical of 17th century. The imitation of knubby pine tree trunks was also a popular theme for hardwood brushpot carvers (cf. pls. 28-31). Emblematic of longevity, steadfastness, and ability to endure under adverse conditions, the noble pine was also a favorite of the literati.

Whether at an owner's request or due to shortage of material and changes in fashion, the later reshaping or enhancement of old brushpots was also practiced. In some cases, the reworked surfaces of an otherwise uninteresting brushpot improved its marketability—a situation that can be especially difficult to distinguish in the case of an original work that has been overcleaned. An original work should reveal uniform patination (aged appearance due to exposure, wear and damage) on interior as well as exterior surfaces.

Relief or incised carving that appears without the inevitable chipped or softly worn edges resulting from several generations of handling and occasional negligence should be treated with suspicion.

During the late Qing period, tea caddies (cf. pl. 38) were also resourcefully produced from older brushpots with slight modifications and added decorative wings, lid, and handle. These add-ons were often selected from alternate material and/or exhibit different qualities of patination.

Relative to its production, the typical hardwood brushpot of cylindrical form starts from a short section of a tree trunk or branch. The use of primitive woodturning lathes is occasionally evident by traces of tool marks on inner walls and/or base, which appear as ring-shaped grooves that were not entirely removed with polishing (fig. 13). The interior was quickly hollowed out by the spinning action of the blank section against a sharp tool, which also yielded a uniform cylindrical form. It is likely that brushpotturners initially produced a crudely hollowed blank with thick walls and base which, after undergoing a period of drying and reestablishment of equilibrium, underwent a secondary turning to achieve a final shape and fine polish. Additional carving, incising, and or inlay work was accomplished by specialists.

The bottom of the pot varies according to the condition of the material. Some have a solid bottom that is simply shaped from the original timber; others are fitted with a small plug inserted at the center; for some, the bottom is comprised of an entirely separate piece that is inset, or exists as a separately shaped base unit. The principal reason for these various methods is related to the condition of the center of the timber. As a tree develops, its early central core decays into a pithy material. This phenomenon occurs to a greater or lesser extent according to species of tree zitan article vol. 2, p.14, fig. 9). There is an old saying about zitan that 9 parts of 10 are hollow (shi tan jiu kong)26; however, varieties of zitan are also found with solid cores. While some value is placed upon a brushpot with a solid timber bottom, this characteristic should be considered secondary to primary aesthetic characteristics. In fact, the earliest use of an independent base may well have been associated to technique that only later developed to preserve the fragile end grain at the bottom of the brushpot, as well as the use of materials with pithy cores.



Fig. 13. Tool marks left by lathe turning on the interior walls of tielimu brushpot, Liang Yi Collection (pl. 22).

图13. 铁力木笔筒内壁的车床痕迹(图版22)。

的树干形笔筒显然是反映这段早期的传统,由一些带有晚明及清初题识刻款的竹制与硬木笔筒²⁵的实例可资证明。两依藏的紫檀雕「岁寒三友」小笔筒(图版2)做成状似一截平滑的树干,上面浮雕三友松竹梅枝桠,不论主题和风格都是十七世纪的写照。嶙峋的松树也是硬木笔筒雕工常用的流行主题(另见图版28-31);而松树象徵长寿、稳健、不畏逆境、坚韧不拔的高尚情操,也深得文人雅士的喜爱。

将旧笔筒重新改造或增色也是常有的作法,这可能是出于物主的要求,也可能是因为材料短缺或风尚变化的缘故。有时候将原本不出色的笔筒表面稍加润饰,可以增添卖相;却也造成因清理整治过度而极难分辨其原始作品的情况。原始的作品不论内、外都应显现一致的皮壳(因暴露和磨损造成的陈年外观);如果雕刻或浮雕看起来完好无瑕疵,或边缘没有因为几代的使用或偶尔的疏忽而趋于轻柔磨损,就值得起疑。

晚清时,也有人将旧笔筒稍事修改,添上装饰

性的翅翼形提耳、桶盖及把手,巧妙地改制成茶壶桶(另见图版38)。新添的构件常以不同于原材质的木料制作,也可能因此展现不同的皮壳。

在制作方面,典型的圆柱形硬木笔筒取材于一小截树干或树枝,予以加工制造。笔筒内壁或底部偶尔可见工具的凿痕,显示以原始简单的车床加工过,而留下层层的环状纹沟即使打磨后亦无法完全消除(图13)。当木块在车床快速运转的带动下,工匠用尖锐的工具钻入木块的中心一直到凿出整齐,正匠用尖锐的工具钻入木块的中心一直到凿出整齐,一个中空圆柱体为止。过程很可能是笔筒车工将木块中央凿空,形成厚壁、厚底的粗胚后,经过一段时间的风乾、自然收缩定型,才进行第二回合的转凿,直到琢磨出精确的尺寸及打磨出细致的表面为止。接下来则由专门艺师进行雕刻、刻铭或镶嵌。

笔筒的底部构造常因用料材质的状况不同而有 所不同。有些底部为实心底,与筒身同一木整圆形 出;有些底部中央有孔,则会在中心部位嵌入。 的木塞片。有些底部完全是以另一块底盖板镶嵌为 之,有些则会另设个别的底座足。笔筒的的天 以有不同的作法,最主要是由所用心材的 无。树木在成长的过程中,早材核心会逐渐既况 而形成有髓的材质,腐蚀程度则依树种有别(见册 二的紫檀论述篇,页14,图9)。俗语说「十檀九空」 ",但实心的紫檀也不是没有。尽管整凿的实间 笔简确实具有某种价值,但并非最主要的审定部 笔简确实具有某种价值,但并非最主要的审定部 量。事实上,最早期个别底座足之所以诞生很有关 系,是一种既能保存笔筒底部脆弱的横切面木纹, 也能应用有髓心树干材质的技法。

Notes 备注

- 1 Dongtian qinglu, (Song, mid 13th century), p. 255.
- 2 Ecke, Gustav. Chinese Domestic Furniture, p. 11, fig. 12.
- 3 Gao Lian. Zunsheng bajian (Eight Discourses on the Art of Living) (ca 1591), juan 15:42ab.
- 4 Gao Lian, ibid, juan 15:42b.
- 5 Shanghai shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui. "Shanghai Baoshan Ming Zhu Shoucheng fufu hezang mu." *Wenwu* 1992:5, pp. 63-65.
- 6 Wen Zhenheng. Zhangwuzhi (Treatise on Superfluous Things), juan 7, p. 257.
- 7 Zhu Jiajin and Wang Shixiang. Zhongguo meishi quanji Vol. 11, pl. 67. Zhu Jiajin and Xia Gengqi, eds. *Zhongguo qiqi quanji*: 5 Ming, pl. 54.
- 8 Zhu Jiajin and Xia Gengqi, eds. ibid, pl. 145. Zhu Jiajin and Wang Shixiang, ibid., pl. 67.
- 9 Shanghai shi wenwu guanli weiyuanhui, ibid., pp. 63-64.
- 10 Gao Lian, ibid., juan 7:30a.
- 11 Tu Long. Qi ju ji fu qian. (Notes on Utensils and Clothing for Daily Life) (published 1606), p. 201.
- 12 Zhu Jiajin and Wang Shixiang, ibid., pls. 3, 8.
- 13 Wen Zhenheng. ibid., juan 7, p. 258.
- 14 *Tian shui bing shan*, in *Biji xiaoshou daguan* 6:6, pp. 3644-3645.
- 15 Wen Zhenheng. ibid., juan 7, p. 258.
- 16 See *Ming Qing bitang* by Ma Weidu for a representative selection of porcelain brushpots.
- 17 Wang Shixiang. Zhudiao jianshang, pl. 62.
- 18 Chen Zengbi. "Qing Song Xiang kuan huanghuali bitong", p. 53.
- 19 Zhu Jiajin and Wang Shixiang. Zhongguo meishi

- quanji Vol. 11, pl. 67, also see. p. 13.
- 20 Cao Xueqin. Honglou Meng (Dream of the Red Mansion), ch. 40, p. 540.
- 21 A general discussion of gender distinction related to the material culture of the late Ming period is found in Clunas, Craig. Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China, pp. 54-56.
- 22 This and another similar, yet somewhat later brushpot with inlaid rim are both illustrated in Zhu Jiajin and Wang Shixiang, ibid., pls. 67, 68.
- 23 National Museum of History. *Splendor of Style:* Classical Furniture from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, p. 204.
- 24 A small *zitan* vessel with wire-inlaid fret designs that was excavated from the Wanli period tomb at Baoshan, Shanghai is illustrated in Zhu Jiajin and Wang Shixiang, ibid., pl. 69.
- 25 A bamboo brushpot that is finely carved as a tree trunk with pine branches, which also bears a Ming Jiajing period inscription of Zhu Songlin, father of the Jiading school of bamboo carving, is illustrated in Zhu Jiajin and Wang Shixiang, ibid., pl. 3; a small boxwood brushpot that is exquisitely carved as a prunus trunk bears a Kangxi period inscription. Tsang, Gerard and Hugh Moss, ibid., pl. 59.
- 26 Zhang Dexiang. "Zhongguo gudai jiaju muzhi de shibie ji jianding yiyi" (The discernment and appreciation of antique Chinese furniture woods, Part 1, p. 38.

- 1 赵希鹄。〈洞天清禄集〉,页255。
- 2 Ecke, Gustav. Chinese Domestic Furniture, 页11, 图12。
- 3 高濂。《遵生八笺》(约成于1591年),卷 15:42ab。
- 4 同上,卷15:42b。
- 5 上海市文物管理委员会。「上海宝山明朱受诚 夫妇合葬墓」。《文物》,1992:5,页63-65。
- 6 文震亨。《长物志》,卷7,页257。
- 7 朱家溍与王世襄。《中国美术全集工艺美术编》 第11卷,图版67。朱家溍与夏更起合编。《中 国美术分类全集:中国漆器全集第5卷明》,图 版54。
- 8 朱家溍与夏更起合编。同上,图版145。朱家溍 与王世襄。同上,图版67。
- 9 上海市文物管理委员会。同上,页63-64。
- 10 高濂。同上,卷 7:30a。
- 11 屠隆。《起居器具笺》(1606年刊印),页201。
- 12 朱家溍与王世襄。同上,图版3,8。
- 13 文震亨。同上,卷7页258。
- 14 天水冰山录。《笔记小说大观》, 6:6, 页3644-3645。
- 15 文震亨。同上,卷7,页258。
- 16 请参阅马未都《明清笔筒》一书中的瓷制笔筒 选例。
- 17 王世襄。《竹刻鉴赏》,图版62。
- 18 陈增弼。清宋湘款黄花梨笔筒,页53。
- 19 朱家溍与王世襄。《中国美术全集工艺美术编》 11卷,图67,另见页13。
- 20 曹雪芹《红楼梦》,40章,页540。
- 21 关于晚明物质文化中的两性差异,可见于 Clunas, Craig. Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China,页54-56。
- 22 这一件与另一件时代较晚、口缘有镶嵌的类似

- 笔筒,都见于朱家溍与王世襄的编著。同上, 图版67,68。
- 23 国立历史博物馆。《风华再现一明清家具特展》,页204。
- 24 这是从上海宝山一座万历年间之墓出土、上有 嵌线回纹案的小紫檀瓶,见于朱家溍与王世襄 的编著。同上,图版69。
- 25 精雕成一截树身并有松枝的竹制笔筒,上刻有明嘉靖年间嘉定竹雕流派鼻祖的朱松邻题识,亦见于朱家溍与王世襄的编著。同上,图版3。以黄杨木精雕成梅树干的小笔筒,上有康熙年间的题识。Tsang, Gerard and Hugh Moss,同上,图版59。
- 26 张德祥。「中国古代家具木质的识别及鉴定意义」。《收藏家》,页38。