Design: John McKenna.

Photography: Ricky Stevens A.I.P.P.I.

Text: Patrick Henchy LL.D., Librarian, Chester Beatty Library.

Editor: James Plunkett.

Print: Wood-Printcraft Ltd.

Production: Holden Communications Ltd.

TARA
Tara Mines Limited gratefully acknowledges the co-operation of the Chester Beatty Library in the publication of this Guide.

Cover: The Moghul emperor Akbar (1556–1605)
THE CHESTER BEATTY LIBRARY
AND GALLERY OF ORIENTAL ART
DUBLIN

The Chester Beatty Library was bequeathed to the Irish people by Sir Alfred Chester Beatty, an American with Irish ancestry, who died in 1968. He was an engineer who graduated at Columbia University and embarked on a successful career as a mining engineer in the Rocky Mountain district of Denver, Colorado. Already a millionaire, he came to England in 1911 and set up as a mining consultant. He bought Baroda House in London, a large residence where his art collections and manuscripts were kept until he brought them to Dublin in 1950. In England he set up Selection Trust in 1914, of which he was chairman, a company which eventually grew into a group of companies with an aggregate market value of one hundred and thirty-seven million pounds. Selection Trust had the diamond concession of Sierra Leone and developed the Rhodesian Copper Belt.

Chester Beatty had always been a collector, beginning, like many small boys, with stamps. As early as 1906 he was collecting Chinese snuff bottles on a large scale. From 1911 he began to spend his winters in Cairo. This introduced him to the oriental world where he bought some beautiful Korans in the bazaars. For a quarter of a century he continued to spend his summers in England and his winters in Cairo. From London he explored the bookshops of western Europe, and from Cairo he dealt at first hand with dealers of oriental items, so that his reputation spread as a collector to whom dealers brought their items. He later revealed that when in his travels he came across oriental manuscripts and precious objects he felt a duty to purchase them and keep them together; otherwise they would inevitably be scattered and, in some cases, lost. He did this, he said, so that “one day people could study them and learn from them”.

Sometimes Beatty employed an acknowledged authority to build up a collection, as in the case of the Japanese collection. Some of the major collections, however, such as the Persian, Turkish and Moghul were acquired in the sale rooms of London and Paris and by private negotiation over a long number of years. Certainly, the bringing together of his collections in the Library which he built at Shrewsbury Road, Dublin, has enabled us to view, in one place, the history of civilisation from 2700 B.C. to the present century. In geographical provenance the collections encircle the globe from Ireland, on the fringe of western Europe, to Sumatra and Japan.
THE BUILDINGS AND GALLERIES

The Chester Beatty Library and Gallery of Oriental Art consists of three buildings.

(1) The Old Library building, dating from 1953, consists of three rooms and the offices of the Librarian and Secretary. Here we find the non-oriental material on display. In the Garden Library there is a permanent display of biblical papyri and Sumerian and Akkadian clay tablets. In another room there are on display western manuscripts, including the beautifully illustrated Books of Hours and ornamental book bindings. There is also the Chinese Room with its ornamental panelled ceiling, hanging lanterns and elegant Chinese furniture.

(2) The New Gallery building, dating from 1975, consists of a lecture theatre and a gallery on the ground floor that displays items from the Far Eastern collections. On the first floor there are exhibitions of material from the Islamic collections. These exhibitions with their helpful descriptive labels are changed regularly.

(3) In the building known as the Annex there is a reference library. The Curators' offices are also in this building.

It may be pointed out that only a very small percentage of the Library's collections is on display at any one time.

The Chester Beatty Library is administered by a Council of Trustees and is financed by a state grant. It is the aim of the Trustees and its Librarian to ensure that this Library should play a full part in the cultural and educational life of the country, and to do this they set out, first of all, to make known what the Library actually contains; this is done by publishing catalogues and monographs on the collections of which there are more than forty to date. The staff arrange exhibitions, give talks to visiting groups and arrange lectures and films in the Library's lecture theatre. There are also on sale colour postcards, slides, microfilms and artefacts and it is proposed to issue history packs and books with illustrative material covering specific areas.

The first of these books is on the Islamic period beginning with Muhammad (Mohammed) who was born in the late sixth century A.D. This publication will help to bring to life the world of Islam. It shows a battle scene, the Mosque (prayer house), the Koran or Holy Book, the City of Baghdad, and tells us of the influence of the Arabs on Europe through reproducing illustrations from the manuscripts and prints in the Library.

Students and others who visit the Library will be introduced to the many paintings and drawings in the oriental collections, and it is expected that this will influence, to some extent, the teaching of art in Ireland in the years ahead. The Library also attracts scholars in their particular fields from all parts of the world. They reap the advantage of having assembled in one place so much precious material. The greater portion of the material has now been catalogued. The catalogues, compiled by scholars, with informative introductions, are on sale and are also available for consultation in the Library.

THE NEAR EAST

The ancient near eastern material in the Library shows the development of the written word from c.2700 B.C. down to early Christian times. Before the discovery of paper – a relatively recent event historically – when men wished to record information they did so on different kinds of material. One of the earliest ways was to write on wet clay and then to form the material into hard tablets by drying it in the sun, or firing it like a piece of pottery. This was the process which gave us the Sumerian and Akkadian clay tablets, the oldest items in the Library, of which there are over one hundred from c.2700 B.C. onwards. On these tablets, which are on display in the Garden Library, we find letters, bills, contracts, etc. They tell us something of the manners and customs of the period, and, as with all items on exhibition, they are accompanied with descriptive labels. The ancient Egyptians discovered how to make a rough form of paper for
writing from the large papyrus reed which grew in abundance on the banks of the Nile. The pith of the reed was dried and beaten into sheets which were very durable in the warm climate. These sheets of papyrus were used in Egypt from the time of the Pharaohs to the seventh century A.D.

The peoples of Mesopotamia had written in small wedge-shaped characters called "cuneiform"; the Egyptians, on the other hand, used a form of picture writing termed "hieroglyphics". These can be seen in The Book of the Dead of the Lady Neskos (c.300 B.C.) which gives details of how the Egyptians viewed life in the next world.

One papyrus item on exhibition (c.1160 B.C.) presents us with by far the most perfect and most intelligible specimens of the few Egyptian love-songs that have been preserved.

After Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt and the settlement of that country by the Greeks, Greek became the language of culture and administration. The Library has a large collection of Greek documents written on papyrus found in Egypt; among them is a Greek-Latin dictionary of the sixth century A.D. with its original binding.

BIBLICAL MATERIAL

Included in the Greek papyri from Egypt are what many would consider the most important of all the Library's holdings, namely, the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri. These consist of eleven codices (manuscript volumes) of the Bible, some fragmentary, others virtually complete, ranging in date from the early second to the fourth century. This material was discovered in the nineteen-twenties on the site of an ancient church near the Nile. Before the find was made public in 1929 it was examined by the leading biblical experts of the time who stated that it

BIBLICAL PAPYRUS

Part of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus Gospel of St. John, Chap. X:31–XI:10. 2nd c. A.D. One of the earliest copies of the New Testament; this was discovered in Egypt in the late 1920s.
was the most momentous discovery of a biblical text ever to have been made.

The Library has also some biblical material written in Coptic, the old language of Egypt prior to the adoption of Arabic, as well as biblical manuscripts from Armenia and Ethiopia.

THE ISLAMIC WORLD

There is a map at the entrance to the New Gallery which sets out the allocation of the collections on display there. From this map we see that the Islamic world embraces a vast area stretching from Morocco in the west to Indonesia in the east. It contains many different peoples, the most important being the Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Pakistanis and Indonesians. It also includes large areas of Africa, Asia and, at one time, included Spain and the Balkans. Despite the diversity of race and language within this territory, the religion of Islam establishes a fundamental unity.

The Chester Beatty collection of Islamic art and manuscripts is one of the world’s richest and finest. The Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts, numbering over three thousand five hundred, cover almost every branch of religion and secular literature. Many of these are illuminated with paintings by the greatest artists of the Islamic world.

THE KORAN AND CALLIGRAPHY

Among the Islamic manuscripts are more than two hundred and fifty copies of the Holy Koran (Qur’an), the sacred scripture of Islam. The Koran contains the essence of the Islamic faith and Muslims believe it to be of divine origin, revealed to mankind in the seventh century through the Prophet Muhammad,

KORAN PAGE

Final page of illumination from a copy of the Holy Koran (Qur’an) copied by Ibn al-Bawwab, one of the three great master-calligraphers of Islam, at Baghdad at 1001.
The Koran had to be written in the most beautiful possible way and this gave rise to the art of calligraphy or fine writing. The Islamic religion does not permit the use of human figures or any representational forms in the Koran, or in the mosque – the Muslim place of worship. Thus, all religious artistic endeavour was channelled into calligraphy and, to some extent, non-representational illumination, based on plant forms and geometrical configurations. Despite the absence of pictures Korans reached an unparalleled height of magnificence. The opening and closing pages (carpet pages) were covered in elaborate decoration, which often resembled that found in Celtic art; each chapter heading was illuminated and the text itself was copied out in superb calligraphy.

In the early Islamic period – the eighth and ninth centuries – Koran illumination may have been inspired by decorated copies of the Bible, which Muslims saw in the newly conquered territories of Egypt and Syria. At first, decoration was simple and the colours confined to gold and brown but later on every colour of the artist’s palette came to be used.

Calligraphy was regarded as the most important of all the visual arts in the Islamic world, and thus the works of calligraphers exchanged hands at very high prices and work by the leading masters was greatly prized. The works of all the leading calligraphers of Iran, Turkey and the Arab world are represented in the Chester Beatty collection. The greatest of these was Ibn at-Bawwab, who lived in Baghdad. It was in that city in the year 1001 that he copied a Koran which is now in the Library and is considered to be the only authentic example of his hand.

PERSIAN PAINTING

Unlike calligraphy, which was admired by all, painting did not exist outside of the royal courts of the Islamic world. One

PERSIAN BINDING

Leather binding on a work on Islamic Traditions. This is one of the finest Iranian (Persian) bindings known. It was made in Herat about 1435 and took about four years to complete.
reason for this was the religious prohibition against the use of human figures for devotional purposes and even against the painting of figures for any purpose. This, however, was disregard by royal and wealthy patrons, who had many manuscripts illustrated for their private libraries. Another reason, of course, was the enormous expense involved. All colours had to be made by hand and often had to be re-mixed each time the painter commenced work. Large amounts of gold and silver were used and ground down to make gold and silver paint.

Painting existed in the Islamic world before 1300, but it is only after this date that large numbers of illustrated manuscripts have survived to the present day. Most of these are from Iran, or Persia, as it used to be called. These early paintings are very simply painted, without any background, and with the figures tied to a strip of ground. The work most frequently illustrated was the Shah-Nama, or Book of Kings.

In the fourteenth century Iranian painters came in contact with those of China, and this lead them to experiment with Chinese ideas of painting. It was probably this contact with China that caused Iranian artists to introduce a form of perspective into their work known as 'birds-eye view' perspective, where everything is seen from slightly above ground level, with all plants and figures one above the other. Artists were now far more interested in colour – and in this they were undoubtedly masters – and meticulous detail. Persian painting reached its first peak of splendour in a manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library, painted in A.D. 1427. This is a copy of the Gulistan or Rose Garden, a series of moral tales by Iran's great poet Sa'di (1184-1295). The manuscript was painted for Prince Baysunqur (1399-1433), the leading patron of painting in fifteenth century Iran. Almost contemporary with this is a fine religious work, the Jami 'al-Usul (Traditions of Muhammad) by Ibn al-Athir.
This is bound in one of the most magnificent Islamic bindings known and must have taken several years to make. The binding has been reproduced as a table mat by the Library and is now on sale.

Another Iranian manuscript worthy of mention is the copy of the Khamsa, or Five Poems, of Amir-i Khusrav (1253–1325). This was made for Sultan Husayn of Herat (1469–1506) at the end of the fifteenth century and was illustrated by several painters, including, in all probability, Behzad, Iran’s finest artist. It is difficult to attribute Persian paintings, since the names of most artists are unknown and rarely, if ever, were pictures signed.

From the end of the sixteenth century there is a superb copy of the Shah-Nama, written for Shah Abbas the Great (1582–1629). Only a small part of this manuscript has survived, but the sixteen paintings it contains show that the finished work must have been one of the finest illustrated books ever made.

**TURKISH PAINTING**

The Chester Beatty Library is one of the few places outside of Istanbul where Turkish painting can be seen on a large scale. Turkish painting is rather similar in style to that of Iran, as Iranian emigré artists were largely responsible for the development of manuscript illustration at the court of the Sultan of Turkey. Turkish paintings, however, differ from those of Iran in some respects; the colour is usually much brighter, and simpler colour schemes are preferred. The subject matter tends to be of a political and historical character and there is a decided interest in realistic detail.

The most remarkable of the Chester Beatty Turkish manuscripts are the History of Suleyman the Magnificent, Turkey’s
The binding is of gold-tooled leather on a pigskin base and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum as the copy of "Firdawsi's Shahnama" (1253–1325). It was commissioned by Bahram Shah (1251–1506) for his son Tahmuras, who was succeeded by several others of his descendants, and is one of the finest artistically produced manuscripts from that period. The names of the painters who worked on it are not known, but the superb copy of "Tuti-Nama" (1582–1629) produced for the Mughal emperor Babur, the great-grandfather of Akbar, has been attributed to him.

The empire of the Mughals stretched from the Indian subcontinent to the borders of Persia and as far east as the Amur River in Mongolia. The Mughal court was a place of high cultural achievement and artistic patronage, with poets, composers, and painters all vying for the favor of the emperor. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Mughal court was a hub of artistic activity, with the emperor and his courtiers patronizing artists and poets.

The Mughals were known for their patronage of the arts, and the Indian collection contains numerous illustrated manuscripts and a large number of separate paintings. Most of the manuscripts are written in Persian, which was the language of the Mughal court. The Mughals were of Turkish origin, though their name means 'Mongol', since they claimed descent from Genghis Khan (d. 1227) who conquered most of the Islamic world in the thirteenth century. Persian was the language used at the Mughal court of India and it was in that language that most works were written. Best-known of the Chester Beatty Indian Mughal manuscripts is the Akbar-Nama or History of the Emperor Akbar, who ruled India in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The book was illustrated by the court artists, with several painters sometimes working on one picture. From the reign of Akbar there is another well-known manuscript, the Tuti-Nama, or Tales of a Parrot, a collection of amusing stories, lavishly illustrated.

In addition to these manuscripts, the Library has an important group of separate paintings which were produced for the successors of Akbar, his son Jahangir (1605–1627) and his grandson, Shah Jahan (1627–1658). These paintings were bound into albums which were kept in the royal palace. In some of these paintings European influence appears, as many pictures and illustrated books came to India from the west in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and these were copied by Indian Mughal artists.

Among the pictures in the albums we find many portraits of leading Mughal personalities. The painting of portraits was begun and encouraged by Akbar for a rather unusual reason. He believed that a person's character could be studied by looking at a detailed

**INDIAN PAINTING**

The Indian collection contains numerous illustrated manuscripts and a large number of separate paintings. Most of the manuscripts are written in Persian, which was the language of the Mughul (Mogul) court. The Moghuls were of Turkish origin, though their name means 'Mongol', since they claimed descent from Genghis Khan (d. 1227) who conquered most of the Islamic world in the thirteenth century. Persian was the language used at the Moghul court of India and it was in that language that most works were written. Best-known of the Chester Beatty Indian Moghul manuscripts is the Akbar-Nama or History of the Emperor Akbar, who ruled India in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The book was illustrated by the court artists, with several painters sometimes working on one picture. From the reign of Akbar there is another well-known manuscript, the Tuti-Nama, or Tales of a Parrot, a collection of amusing stories, lavishly illustrated.

In addition to these manuscripts, the Library has an important group of separate paintings which were produced for the successors of Akbar, his son Jahangir (1605–1627) and his grandson, Shah Jahan (1627–1658). These paintings were bound into albums which were kept in the royal palace. In some of these paintings European influence appears, as many pictures and illustrated books came to India from the west in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and these were copied by Indian Moghul artists.

Among the pictures in the albums we find many portraits of leading Mughal personalities. The painting of portraits was begun and encouraged by Akbar for a rather unusual reason. He believed that a person's character could be studied by looking at a detailed

**INDIAN MOGHUL PAINTING**

A painting by Bichitr showing the Moghul Emperor Akbar, d. 1605 (centre) symbolically passing the crown from his son Jahangir (left) to his grandson Shah Jahan (1627–1658).
portrait and so he had his courtiers and even his neighbouring fellow-rulers painted by artists. The best of these portraits will bear favourable comparison with the work of the great European portrait painters.

After the overthrow of Shah Jahan by his son in 1658, patronage declined at the Moghul court. It continued, however, at the courts of various local rajput princes, who were Hindus, not Muslims. The rajput paintings follow the same general principles as the Moghul ones, though they are much simpler in style and much brighter in colour. They are a sophisticated type of folk art rather than court painting and possess a charm and boldness of colour that is unique. Many of the paintings are religious in character, though there are also portraits and pictures with political or historical subject matter.

The Persian, Turkish and Arabic material has all been catalogued and the catalogues are available. Part of the Indian collection was catalogued in three volumes in 1936, and as this goes to press a new and enlarged edition, including the material acquired after that date, is being prepared for publication.

THE FAR EAST

Moving eastwards to south-east Asia we find that Burmese and Siamese art is represented in our collection of colourful Parabajis. These are the very long painted books of folk tales done on mulberry leaf paper during the eighteenth century.

From Tibet we have some fine Buddhist paintings on coarse linen cloth called tankas which are described in the published catalogue.

In the Oriental Gallery, Chinese and Japanese paintings are shown almost side by side, thus making it easy for visitors to study the two modes of painting. Paper and silk are the materials used for paintings in the east. Both Chinese and Japanese paintings use the same formats, that is, the long narrow handscroll, the large rectangular hanging scroll and the small album leaf.

NEW GALLERY - INTERIOR
The upper floor of the New Gallery (Oriental) showing part of the Islamic and South Asian collections in their show cases. The exhibits are frequently changed.
Brushes are made of animal hair or fur, and a special type of ink is used, made from pine soot and glue. As painting in ink on silk cannot be corrected by painting over, as in oil painting, the technique of applying sufficient ink to the surface requires years of practice. Unlike western painting there is no tradition of the use of oil paint; the colours are very delicate in tone and are made from vegetable or mineral extracts.

The Chinese Paintings cover a wide range of material and subjects and include over two hundred painted handscrolls and albums of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The subjects include flower and bird paintings, portraits, landscapes and scenes of daily life.

The Chester Beatty collection of one hundred and thirty Japanese Paintings contains one section which is recognised as one of the finest of its kind in the world. It consists of over fifty books and scrolls dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries called Nara-e, which means Nara pictures. It is believed that these paintings were first done by Buddhist monks in the city of Nara. They contain not only the illustrations but also the texts of popular Japanese stories. The remainder of the collection ranges from twelfth century Buddhist sutras to handscrolls showing street scenes, nature, and even paintings showing how gold was mined in Japan during the nineteenth century.

The importance of Japanese Woodblock Prints is largely due to the influence they had on western painters in the last half of the nineteenth century. Manet, Van Gogh, Gaugin, Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec and Seurat, among others, were all directly influenced in their own work by their contacts with these prints. These western artists introduced into their paintings such Japanese concepts as empty space, large flat areas of colour and, above all, unusual viewpoints and angles, all of which they discovered in Japanese prints.

The Chester Beatty collection spans the entire period of two hundred and fifty years covered by the school of art which the Japanese call ukiyo-e. It contains superb prints of all the major artists, beginning with Moronobu in the mid-seventeenth century and ending with the early twentieth century artists such as Goyo.

The collection includes black and white prints, hand-coloured prints, and polychrome prints which show beautiful women, actors, birds and flowers, landscapes, and the legends of Japan; in other words, the whole range of subjects covered by the print designers. In addition, there is a fine collection of Japanese woodblock printed books, many of them designed by famous artists of the ukiyo-e school.

There is a special type of woodblock print called surimono, of which the Chester Beatty collection – over 350 – is considered to be the finest in Europe. These prints are very rare because they were made in small numbers and never sold to the general public. These small-sized prints are generally accepted to be the finest examples of woodblock printing ever produced.

Until they had adopted western dress in the mid-nineteenth century, Japanese men habitually wore a loose-fitting garment called a kimono. Because the kimono had no pockets, it was customary to suspend a small box called an Inro by a cord from the waistband. These small boxes are divided into several airtight compartments into which the proud owner would put his small personal belongings such as seals and medicines. Inro were usually lavishly decorated, so, even when they were first produced at the end of the sixteenth century, they were very expensive.

The most usual material for inro-making is lacquer, which is built up layer by layer on to a thin core of wood. Lacquer is the sap of a tree, and has the unusual property of attaining its maximum hardness in the presence of moisture. Some items have sixty layers of lacquer brushed on to the core by hand, with a drying time of up to a month between coats. Once the lacquer base was finished and polished, the work of the inro decorator could begin. In the Chester Beatty inro collection there are examples of scores of different types of ornamentation; some are inlaid, some encrusted with tortoise shell, ivory or coral, and most have gold dust added to enhance the rich effect. All are very beautiful.

INDIAN RAJPUT PAINTING (page 13)
A painting showing an Indian raja, Maharao Umed Singh, in a tree with his chief minister, shooting a tiger. Made in Kotah, India, between 1785 and 1790.
hand-coloured and beautifully printed, particularly so in the work of Japanese artists and craftsmen. The term used by Japanese artists and craftsmen for this type of printing is surimono, which are small prints, often considered as works of art rather than items for everyday use. They are appreciated not only for their artistic value but also for their cultural significance. Surimono are often collected by connoisseurs and are considered part of Japanese cultural heritage.

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Japanese clothing was of the most expensive and most worn, often requiring frequent cleaning and mending. The texture of the clothing was also a factor in determining its quality, with the most expensive materials being used for the most formal occasions. In fact, in the time of the shogun, the most expensive and ornate clothing was reserved for the samurai, the military elite of the samurai class. These clothes were often made of silk and sometimes featured intricate designs and patterns. The most common designs were the use of landscapes and nature scenes, often featuring deer, birds, and flowers. These designs were often of the highest quality, with fine detail and careful execution.
At the top of the cord from which the intro swung as the owner walked along, there was a small toggle known as a _netsuke_ which kept the cord in place. These netsuke, which are usually made of wood or ivory, are true miniature sculptures as they are skilfully carved on every surface of the material. The Chester Beatty collection is particularly rich in netsuke carved as animals, but there are also examples depicting flowers, masks and incidents from Japanese fairy tales, to name only a few subjects.

_Chinese Rhinoceros Horn Cups_ are very rare, so we are fortunate to have the largest collection in the world which numbers two hundred and twenty items. A thousand years ago the rhinoceroses roamed the wild areas of central China but, when those animals became extinct there, the horn had to be imported from south east Asia, India and, eventually, from as far afield as Africa. Only the most skilled carvers were permitted to decorate these horns because of their rarity and value. Chinese records tell us that a large workshop existed at the imperial court in 1288 exclusively for making carvings in rhinoceros horn and ivory and that, at that date, the workshop employed one hundred and fifty men. Two popular subjects which the artist used for his inspiration were, firstly, water lilies and, secondly, landscape scenes which often show a paradise inhabited by immortals from Chinese legends. The water lily is a symbol of purity, whilst the land of immortals is the Chinese equivalent of the Christian heaven.

The Chinese admired these cups, not only for their decorative qualities, but also for their supposed magical powers. They believed that if poison were poured into the cups a white foam would bubble up, and also, that if the cup were allowed to touch...
the wound of a dying man, foam would rise from the wound and the man would feel relief. Rhinoceros horn had long been regarded as an aid to love-making, and it is this reputation above all which led to the widespread slaughter of the animal so that nowadays they are almost extinct.

Pride of place in the Far Eastern Gallery goes to our unique collection of fifteen Chinese Jade Books, the largest of its kind in the world. Each leaf of these books is a sheet of thinly cut jade engraved with Chinese characters which are then filled with gold. Their rarity is due to the fact that these books were commissioned by the Chinese emperors for their own use and were made by highly skilled craftsmen employed in the palace workshops. For this reason jade books were not normally seen by anyone outside the palace.

Jade, or nephrite as it is correctly named, is a hard translucent stone mined from mountain foothills and streams near the oasis of Khotan in Chinese Turkestan, which then had to be transported more than two thousand miles to Peking by pack animals. The jade from which these books are made is of the finest possible quality and is regarded by the Chinese as far more valuable than gold.

The colours of the Chester Beatty jade books range from white through pale grey, blue, honey yellow, all the pale and mid-greens, down to a very dark green which is almost black. It is a long and arduous task to produce articles made of jade. No other stone or metal alone can cut the nephrite; to do this one must use an abrasive. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when these books were made, steel-edged and diamond-edged instruments were used by the jade craftsmen. But, once the sheets had been cut, ground smooth, and the edges finished with the help of instruments, the engraving and finishing had to be carried out by hand.

CHINESE RHINOCEROS HORN CUP
Chinese carved rhinoceros horn cup with a landscape scene showing a man lying in bed, being fanned by his servant. The carver, Wen Shu, tells us that he copied the scene from a painting. Seventeenth century.
Some of the books in the collection are in the handwriting of the Qianlong emperor (1736-95) who was a celebrated calligrapher. Book 5 shows how his writing looked when he was a young man, whilst Book 14 shows the very different script he used when he was eighty years old. All the books are fully described and translated into English by Professor William Watson in his descriptive catalogue entitled Chinese Jade Books in the Chester Beatty Library. Dublin, 1963.

Some visitors think that the Chinese Dragon Robes are the most spectacular items in the Oriental Gallery. Although there are more than a dozen of these robes in the collection, there is not sufficient space to display more than two or three at any one time. These wonderful garments were woven from pure silk during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

Possibly the most unusual feature of the robes is their decoration and colouring which symbolises the status of the person for whom they were made. The colour yellow was reserved for the emperor himself. We have robes which were worn by the Qianlong emperor (1736-1795) in both the heat of the summer and the cold of the Peking winter – the latter robe is lined throughout with costly white fur. Few westerners realise that the weaving of these court robes is so fine that each square centimetre of material contains far more silk threads than the finest woven silks produced in the west.

SNUFF BOTTLES

It is likely that, if the Jesuit missionaries had not presented a gift of snuff to the Chinese Wanli emperor in 1582, these snuff bottles would never have been made! It seems that the emperor developed a great liking for snuff. At first, he used small medicine bottles to carry his supply around with him, but soon the ingenious craftsmen in the imperial workshops began to produce small

JAPANESE WOODBLOCK PRINT

Japanese Woodblock Print of Ladies Returning from the Bath by Torii Kiyomasa (1752-1815). The collection contains examples of the work of all the leading artists of the ukiyo-e school.
bottles made specially for snuff. The bottles are made from almost every type of precious material. Any one of them can be held in the palm of the hand, and all have a tiny spoon attached to the stopper of the bottle for extracting the snuff. Many of the bottles in the collection, of which there are more than nine hundred, are made of valuable gem stones – jade, ruby, turquoise and so forth.

**EARLIEST PRINTING**

One of the first specimens of printing in the world, dating from the eighth century (A.D. 768), may be seen. It is a Buddhist charm consisting of a Sanskrit text which was printed in Japan, using Chinese characters to represent Japanese sounds. The small wooden pagoda in which it had been kept is also in the Library. Both are in an excellent state of preservation.

**WESTERN MANUSCRIPTS**

The western manuscripts in the Library are of superb quality but space does not allow more than a brief mention of some of them. There is, however, *A descriptive catalogue of the western manuscripts* by E. G. Millar, published in four vols., 1927–30. The earliest biblical manuscript in this collection is the volume of Gospels from Stavelot Abbey, executed in Flanders c.1000. Other biblical manuscripts include a beautiful twelfth century Bible from Wallsingham Priory. A noteworthy manuscript of the Church fathers of the late eleventh or twelfth century is the magnificent manuscript of St. Augustine’s De Civitate Dei with its striking historiated initials (that is, capitals illuminated with figures of men and animals) apparently written in Nonantola,

---

**JAPANESE INRO AND NETSUKE (left)**

*A selection from our large collection of Japanese inro and their toggles, netsuke. These were carried by Japanese men suspended from their belts during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.*

**CHINESE SNUFF BOTTLES (page 19)**

*Chinese Snuff Bottles are made from almost every precious material, and there are over nine hundred examples in this outstanding collection. The spoon for extracting the snuff is attached to the lid of each bottle.*
The small figure of a robed man, with a sword, is a Buddhist figure probably made and painted in Japan, and given as an offering in the Library.

Among the superb quality wood-block prints of some of the finest wood-block printers of the western world are the stags c.1000. The collection includes the volume of the Woodcutter's Stories c.1000.

A superb fifteenth century manuscript of L'Esopo contains the famous collection of Aesop's Fables. The Illuminated Penitential Book, in Nonantola, is a famous illuminated manuscript of the thirteenth century.
Italy. The Greek manuscripts include early twelfth and early thirteenth century copies of the Gospels, each with four full-page miniatures.

Amongst the fourteenth century manuscripts is the Thebaid of Statius with its delightful illustrations, mainly in grisaille, which is a decorative painting in grey monotone to represent objects in relief, executed in Italy towards the end of the century.

The illuminated Books of Hours, which were devotional books setting out the prayers or offices to be said at appointed hours, are of dazzling brilliance and in superb condition. One of the finest, the Coëtivy Hours, made before 1445 for the great bibliophile, Prigent de Coëtivy, Admiral of France, has one hundred and forty-eight magnificent miniatures.

The Armenian Manuscripts constitute what was the richest private collection in Europe. There are nearly seventy illuminated and illustrated manuscripts in the group, ranging from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. The study of their painting and ornament is, apart from its intrinsic interest, important for a full appreciation of east Christian art and of the influence of Asiatic—especially Persian—art on that of the west.

PRINTED BOOKS

When visiting the Chester Beatty Library, or reporting on its collections, one is sometimes inclined to overlook the fine library of printed books. They include, as one might expect, a large number of books on oriental languages and culture, but there is also a large collection of rare books, including examples of the work of the earliest printers and illustrators. The numerous very fine engravings and colour plates represent the works of Dürer, Holbein, Piranesi, Blake, Bartolozzi and others; and the history of costume is extensively covered.

There are also sections on travel and topography which include the atlases of Blaeu, Ortelius, Mercator and Ptolemy. Of special interest are the beautifully illustrated books on natural history.

The fine bindings in the western section of the Library number about four hundred, and include Italian, French, German, English and Irish bindings. There is a Missale Parisiense, 1777, in a contemporary French binding with the arms of Madame de Pompadour. There is also a life of Giacinta Marescotti, 1695, with the arms of Cardinal Albani, afterwards Pope Clement XI. The binding of an English manuscript by H. Wotton, entitled Elements of Architecture c. 1760, is one of the finest extant specimens of Irish work in red morocco with featherwork decorated inlay.

This account of the Chester Beatty Library is mainly based on data supplied by the Curators, David James and Jan Chapman. It also includes some of the information previously compiled by the late Dr. R. J. Hayes for the brochure on the Library in 1971. More detailed information on some of the collections is available in the catalogues and monographs compiled by scholars and available through the distributors, Hodges Figgis & Co. Ltd. These publications may also be consulted in the Library. It is only by utilising these sources that one can get a fuller appreciation of the richness of the collections. I am indebted to all who helped in the compilation of the Guide and, in particular, to those scholars who have compiled the published catalogues.

The Library with its fabulously rich collections is a lasting tribute to Sir Chester Beatty who bequeathed it to the Irish people, and it is hoped that this Guide will give a fair idea of its contents and help to introduce it to a wider public.