PAN
AMSTERDAM

JURJEN PRONK WORKS OF ART

Moonflask

China, Qianlong period (1736–1795)
Height: 48 cm

A large porcelain moonflask of flattened circular form, painted in underglaze blue with flowering lotus blossoms among scrolling leafy stems, surrounding a central round medallion decorated with a flower head. The decoration is enclosed by a narrow band of stylised waves. The sides are decorated with sinuous chilong. The flask stands on a slightly spreading rectangular foot decorated with stylised clouds. The neck is fitted with moulded scroll handles.

The form of this type of moonflask was inspired by early Persian drinking vessels that reached China through trade routes along the Silk Road. During the Qianlong period, such large moonflasks were produced at Jingdezhen for the imperial court. Due to their considerable size and complex form, they were particularly difficult to fire. Many examples warped or collapsed during firing and were subsequently rejected. The present example exhibits a slump caused during the firing process, yet successfully passed the rigorous quality control of the Jingdezhen kilns.

The moonflask formed part of the collection of Maurice Collis (1889–1973), writer, historian and collector. Collis was based in Burma from 1912 and held various positions, including District Commissioner in Arakan and District

Magistrate in Rangoon. He returned to England in 1934. His interest in Chinese ceramics developed during his years in Burma; the British Museum records 34 objects associated with his collection, including several Chinese ceramic objects originating from the Tenasserim region. Collis also published on the trade routes of Chinese export porcelain to India and the Near East and was an active member of the Oriental Ceramic Society.

Provenance:

- Maurice Collis (1889–1973) Collection, London

- Louise Collis, London, by descent

- Roseberys, London, 9 November 2021, lot 46