

GALERIE LAMY
CHABOLLE



A large “garlic-head” vase in celadon and
“bleu Deck”, by Théodore Deck, with
decoration attributed to Éléonore
Escallier

Glazed earthenware with underglaze decoration, “TH.
DECK” impressed

France

1869-1880

h. 56 cm (22 in.)



Born in 1823 in Guebwiller, Alsace, a chemist and sculptor by training, Théodore Deck distinguished himself at the International Exhibitions of 1862 and 1867 for his vases and services inspired by Oriental ceramics, and notably for having uncovered the secret of a turquoise blue on par with that found in Iznik ceramics, known ever since as “bleu Deck”. As early as 1869, he repeated this technical achievement by recreating the celadon of Chinese porcelain, confirming his preeminence within French ceramics at the exhibitions of 1871 and 1873.

The present vase, whose shape is inspired by the *suantouping* — *i.e.* “garlic-head” vases, a form documented since at least the Yuan dynasty — essentially synthesises all of Théodore Deck's technical feats: a celadon glaze with relief decoration, featuring a scene of a bird in flight among foliage, adorned with a frieze of *leiwen* and chrysanthemums in polychrome cloisonné of indigo, ochre, and “bleu Deck”, while the neck is decorated with ring-handles featuring stylized *shi* (獅) masks, or guardian “Fo” lions.

The decoration of a similar vase, exhibited in London in 2002, is attributed to Éléonore Escallier, a French painter born in 1827, famous in the last third of the 19th century for her still lifes of flowers and fruit as well as animal paintings primarily featuring birds. Escallier was one of the first painters to establish a long-term collaboration with Théodore Deck, for whom she executed similar scenes of birds among branches; he later hired her at the Manufacture de Sèvres as a decorative painter in 1874. A vase from this manufacture, now held at the Mobilier National and decorated by her hand, features a bird motif very similar to the one on the present vase.

LITERATURE

See Margaret Medley, *The Chinese Potter. A Practical History of Chinese Ceramics*, Oxford, 1982 ; Judy Rudoe, *Decorative Arts 1850–1950. A Catalogue of the British Museum Collection*, London, 1991 ; Bernard Bumpus, *Théodore Deck Céramiste*, London, 2002.

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