

“Miniature Mountains: Landscape Constructions in German *Handstein* and Chinese *penjing*”

Many early modern *Handstein*, hand-sized rocks sourced from local mines that became part of courtly collections, were decorated to represent miniature landscapes. Some of them include fragments of maritime material culture such as corals and shells. Equally, numerous Chinese miniature landscapes (*penjing*) employ natural rocks as miniature mountains and corals as trees. Early modern texts from both cultures present the ocean as treasury and counterpart to mines and subterranean spaces full of riches, the diving for maritime goods finds terminological and conceptual equivalences in descriptions of digging. Based on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artifacts, collection inventories and texts that address aspects of oceanic and subterranean exploitation this paper explores the connections between ocean objects and mined minerals, (under)waterscapes and mountainous sites from a transcultural perspective. It compares the cosmological ideas and material constituents that underlie *Handstein* and *penjing* constructions to discuss potential connections between both with a focus on the use of stones as mountains and coral pieces as trees. In early modern Chinese and European records the spaces where pearls, corals and shells originate blur distinctions between real and imagined topographies, territories of foreign tribute givers on the one hand and mythological realms of sacred sea creatures on the other, including the Dragon King's and Poseidon's underwater palaces, the Daoist island Penglai and the affluent spaces of Ovid's Ethiopia. This allows for an understanding of miniature landscapes that employ maritime material culture as mythological and real, oceanic and terrestrial.

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