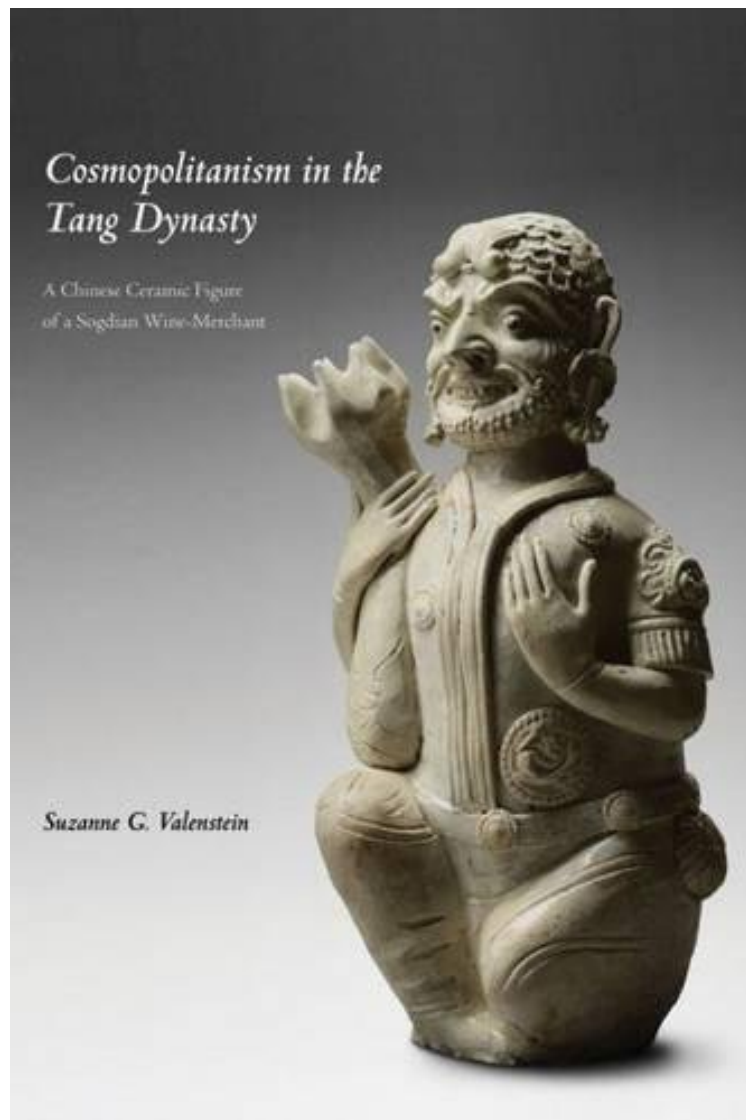


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Cosmopolitanism in the Tang Dynasty: A Chinese Ceramic Figure of a Sogdian Wine-Merchant

Suzanne G. Valenstein
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Suzanne G. Valenstein : Cosmopolitanism in the Tang Dynasty: A Chinese Ceramic Figure of a Sogdian Wine-Merchant before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Cosmopolitanism in the Tang Dynasty: A Chinese Ceramic Figure of a Sogdian Wine-Merchant*:

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This research monograph investigates the aspects of a large Tang dynasty (618-907) porcelaneous mortuary figure of an ethnic Sogdian that belongs to a small, cohesive group of Chinese ceramic figures depicting foreign wine merchants. As key merchants on the famous Silk Road, the Sogdians, an Eastern Iranian people, played a significant role in China's exposure to Western cultures. The interaction among the Chinese, the Sogdians, and the Turkic Eurasian nomads left an indelible mark on Tang China as well. The book also considers the history of alcoholic beverages in China; ceramic technology; and the background of Chinese mortuary furnishings, known as mingqi. Various decorative motifs on the present figure and its analogous examples are traced both chronologically and geographically to their origins. Most of these motifs can be found in the West and most can also be associated with Buddhism, which came to China by way of Central Asia.

This lavishly illustrated work is a tour de force study very much in the mold of the same author's *Cultural Convergence in the Northern Qi Period: A Flamboyant Chinese Ceramic Container*, a research monograph (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007). Both of these volumes focus on a single ceramic piece, but -- by assiduously tracing the origins and parallels of the motifs on them -- the author is able to explicate the Eurasian wide cultural connections that they embody. You probably won't be able to find any reference to Cosmopolitanism in the Tang Dynasty anywhere for a while yet, but do keep your eye open for it, since this is a signal publication for anyone who is interested in Sogdians, Turks, the history of wine, mortuary figures, and ceramic technology during the medieval period. Victor H. Mair, Professor of Chinese Language and Literature, University of Pennsylvania

About the Author
Suzanne G. Valenstein is currently a research scholar at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She is retired from the Metropolitan's department of Asian art, where she was curator of Chinese ceramics for thirty-five years.