

China Research Seminar Series (Lent 2021)
FAMES, University of Cambridge

‘Plan, Manage, Track’

Resource Management in a Sixteenth-Century Porcelain Kiln

Professor Anne Gerritsen
(University of Warwick)



Famille Rose Plate with Ceramics Process Design. Qing Dynasty. National Museum of China

5pm (London time), 17 February, 2021 (Wednesday)
via Zoom (pre-registration required)

Please register in advance for this seminar:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEpcumqpiIrhHtVE3R7HzYI1HuO7bEMduyP>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

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Abstract

We tend to associate the management of (human and material) resources with contemporary processes, and with somewhat off-putting terms like efficiency savings, resource allocation and productivity. This talk will focus on the more mundane aspects of ceramics manufacture in Jingdezhen, based on the *Taoshu* 陶書, included in the sixteenth-century gazetteer of Jiangxi province. The document is intended to give guidance to those in charge of the kilns, and thus focuses on all aspects of the production that require management, including the safe-guarding of expensive raw materials, oversight of the production costs, including labour and materials, recruitment of skilled workers, and handling storage, packaging and transport. In other words, the ‘plan, manage, track’ terminology used in project management also describes exactly what the overseers in the Jingdezhen kilns were concerned with. The talk will focus on the elements that caused anxieties amongst the managers: securing access to the required materials and managing the skilled labour force, especially in light of pressure on production that came from the demand for goods from the imperial court, and competition with the surrounding kilns that produced for local and global markets.

Speaker Bio

Anne Gerritsen teaches in the Department of History at the University of Warwick and at the Leiden University Institutes for Area Studies and Arts in Society. Her book, *The City of Blue and White: Chinese Porcelain and the Early Modern World* came out with Cambridge University Press in 2020. She has also published *Ji'an Literati and the Local in Song-Yuan-Ming China* (Brill, 2007), and edited several books, including *Writing Material Culture History* with Giorgio Riello (Bloomsbury, second edition, 2021), *Micro-Spatial Histories of Global Labour* with Christian De Vito (Palgrave, 2018), *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Eurasia*, with Giorgio Riello and Zoltán Biedermann (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and *The Global Lives of Things: The Material Culture of Connections in the Early Modern World*, with Giorgio Riello (Routledge, 2015). She studied Chinese at Leiden University (with an exchange year in Cambridge), and holds a PhD from Harvard University.

