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COMMUNICATION

Chinese Instruments from the Galpin Collection at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts

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I was very pleased to read Colin Huehns's article "Dating Old Huqin: New Research on Examples of pre-1949 Instruments in Three Major British Collections," in this Journal 28 (2002): 118–73. There are many examples of these Chinese fiddles in collections throughout the world, and Huehns offers a useful first step in examining some of their relevant features. Huehns's article includes two plates from an important 1908 study by Arthur C. Moule entitled "A List of the musical and other sound-producing Instruments of the Chinese," published in the *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. It is rather unfortunate, though, that Huehns does not mention that nearly one hundred of the instruments described by Moule (including three of the fiddles shown in Huehns's article) once belonged to the English collector Francis W. Galpin and are now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

In Harrison Ryker's introduction to a recent reprint of Moule's monograph (Buren, Netherlands: Frits Knuf Publishers, 1989) he makes clear that Galpin's collection was acquired by the MFA in 1916. But Ryker follows this statement only by saying "where presumably they [the instruments] may still be seen." In an age of easy and rapid communication, it is a bit puzzling that neither Huehns nor Ryker took time to confirm the location of this large and relatively important collection of Chinese instruments in order to share that information with others. As curator of the MFA's instrument collection, I can verify that its five hundred or so non-western instruments have long suffered an unfortunate lack of visibility, although steps are continually being taken to improve that situation. Our efforts will be greatly assisted if future scholars will make a conscious effort to draw more attention to these instruments.