

ловы Иоанна с открытыми, прямо смотрящими, глазами и раскрытым ртом, символизирующим скорее прерванную проповедь, нежели последний крик. Часто над левой бровью изображалась рубленая рана, нанесённая в приступе ярости Иродиадой уже по отсечённой голове Крестителя. Эта деталь практически никогда не встречается в православной интерпретации сюжета, как правило, представляющей успокоенное выражение лица Иоанна Крестителя с сомкнутыми веками и слегка приоткрытым или закрытым

ртом. В православии голова Иоанна обычно создавалась в натуральную величину, в отличие от западноевропейской традиции, где встречаются композиции с огромной отсечённой головой Иоанна Предтечи в архитектурно-декоративной пластике убранства соборов. Можно сказать, что в православных памятниках голова Иоанна трактовалась как изображение амыенской святыни, в то время как в западноевропейской традиции в XVII–XVIII веков чаще всего она представлена как иллюстрация житийной сцены.

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DOI: 10.36340/2071-6818-2022-18-3-47-51

THE INFLUENCE OF THE GRASSLAND SILK ROAD ON THE PORCELAIN STYLES OF THE YUAN DYNASTY DURING THE MONGOL-YUAN PERIOD

Summary: Mongol-Yuan period was a special time in Chinese history, with a vast territory and prosperous trade and culture. On the basis of inheriting the nomadic culture of all dynasties, the Yuan Dynasty created a larger range of cultural exchange and dissemination. Among China's Silk Roads, the Grassland Silk Road started the earliest, has the longest history, spans the longest and covers the widest area. The Grassland Silk Road has not only spread Chinese culture to the world, but also an important way to introduced foreign culture, especially the Islamic civilization through this way introduced into China

The multi-cultural and multi-ethnic integration and unprecedented prosperity of trade during the Mongol-Yuan period brought the development of the Grassland Silk Road into its heyday. The culture, technology, materials, and craftsmen of the Western Regions spread along

Background

Some studies (Li, 2018; Li, 2021) indicate that the Grassland Silk Road is the earliest and the oldest large commercial routes channel that traverses the north of Eurasia with unique northern grassland culture, as well as a link between the spread of culture, art, and technology between East and West. During the Mongol-Yuan period, the Grassland Silk Road was fixed according to the route of Mongolian expeditions heading west. Its route ran north from Central China, crossing the Daqing Mountain, following the Great Wall, over the Yanshan Mountains, passing through the Mongolian Plateau all the way west, entering the steppes of Southern Russia, northern Central and Western Asia, and on to the northern Mediterranean land of Europe. Accord-

this trade route had more influence on the decorative modeling of the porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty. The egg-white glaze, blue glaze, and blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty have all become typical representatives of the porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty, and have become great treasures that have been passed down to future generations. The porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty was inclusive and open, and innovative, not only absorbing the culture of the Western Regions, grassland culture, and the culture of the Central Plains but also integrating and developing multiple cultures, forming unique decorative modeling characteristics, which contributed to the vigorous development of the porcelain in the Yuan Dynasty.

Keywords: Mongol-Yuan period; Islamic culture; blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty; decorative modeling; integration

ing to historical records (Shi, 2019), the Grassland Silk Road was initially formed around the 5th century AD and was not officially brought under control until the period of Mongolian rule.

"Grassland Silk Road was meant a major transportation route linking trade between East and West, but the added effect of commodity exchange was inevitably an exchange and collision between cultures, and Grassland Silk Road was the very link and bridge of the culture communication between the east and the west" (Li, 2014, p. 61).

The Mongols focused on trade and established many post stations along the Grassland Silk Road, vigorously promoting trade and making this route secure. Christopher Dawson (1955) described that this route (the Grassland Silk Road), as being open

to traders and missionaries and made economic and spiritual exchanges between the West and the East possible. It had a great impact on the porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty, it was used for business circulation along this route, making it a distinctive feature of the era and enabled comprehensive reflection of the art, technology, and culture of the times.

The historical context of the Grassland Silk Road is based on the production and lifestyle of the nomadic peoples of the northern grasslands (Li, 2014), as the Mongol-Yuan culture under the Mongolian rule was naturally dominated by the grassland culture of the nomadic peoples of the north. The Mongolian rule (Sun, 2009,) also advocated the idea of "all under heaven are of one family", this highly compatible idea that was detailed in the History of the Yuan Dynasty on Kublai's imperial edict on the establishment of Yuan, "Seeing all under heaven as one family" (Song, 1976); this idea not only promoted the development of the Grassland Silk Road, connecting Europe and Asia, and fusing the culture of Western Regions, but also internally integrated the culture of the Central Plains, also making the decorative modeling of the porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty developed in this context profoundly affect the later generations.

1. Glazing color and ornamentation

In terms of the glazing colour of the porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty, a major feature of the porcelain within Mongol-Yuan culture is 'advocating white and blue'; the most representative is the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty with its egg-white glaze and blue glaze created in the Yuan Dynasty. Before the Yuan Dynasty, blue decorations were not utilised; although blue had been used on the Tang tri-colour glazed ceramics as decoration, it was limited to embellishment, and a large area of the main body used blue was not the mainstream of porcelain decoration. By the Mongol-Yuan period, blue became the main decorative colour, one reason was due to the influence of Islamic art and culture introduced along with the flourishing of the Grassland Silk Road; the second was influenced by the Mongolian advocacy for nature, the nomads relied on the grasslands, blue sky, and white clouds as the source of aesthetics; the third was due to a lot of export porcelain needs to meet the aesthetic needs of people in the Islamic region during the Yuan Dynasty, meaning that blue gradually became the main color of porcelain decoration in the Yuan Dynasty. Blue glaze was created in the Yuan Dynasty, also due to the large export of porcelain at that time, the only remaining blue glaze

porcelains were preserved in the museums of Iran, Turkey, France, and other countries. This also proves as Xie (2016) described that hundreds of blue and white porcelains of the Yuan Dynasty were preserved in the museums of Iran and Turkey, including many well-preserved, exquisitely drawn rare treasures, which also confirmed the prosperity of trade through the Grassland Silk Road at that time.

It was recorded in the History of the Yuan Dynasty white became the predominant colour used (Song, 1976). For example, Genghis Khan raised nine white flags when he founded his country; the golden silk mattresses and canopies on the imperial couch and imperial seat in the Daming Hall were mostly white; people in some of the grander banquets dressed in white; as white colour was considered a symbol of good luck and more respect. Another example was the color of the national treasure egg-white glaze printing Taixi inscription plate of the Yuan Dynasty is between white glaze and blue-and-white glaze, decorated with the dragon pattern symbolizing imperial power. The white glaze was used as the imperial palace ware, it shows that "white was taken as auspiciousness" (Xie, 2016, p. 72) by the Mongolian nobles. It was recorded in the History of the Yuan Dynasty · Sacrifice Records □ · Suburban Sacrifice I (Song, 1976) that "sacrificial ware should be pure", that is, in the Mongol-Yuan period, white sacrificial ware was favored for the sacrifice. Even after the death of Genghis Khan, the white tents for the mausoleum remained white. It can be seen that in the Mongol-Yuan period, advocating white had a strong impact on the development of porcelain.

The 'blue' and 'white' were also inseparable from the influence of Islamic culture spread through the Grassland Silk Road. As Islamic culture advocates (Li, 2005) blue, white, and green, the everyday utensils, as well as the palace, mosques and other buildings usually use blue and white; the interior of the building, the dome, or the walls are decorated with blue glazed tile mosaic with full patterns. We can find prototypes of these colors and decorative features in the blue mosques in Iran and the architectural style of the Topkapi Palace in Turkey. Thus, with the advocacy for blue and white in the Mongol-Yuan cultures and the recognition of the aesthetic unity of blue and white in the culture of Western Regions, the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty developed rapidly (Xie, 2016, p. 72).

The Yuan Dynasty had frequent trade with the four major khanates at that time, and in order to transport a large number of resources from the Persian region

into China, the Grassland Silk Road flourished like never before. Numerous Islamic merchants, Muslims, artisans, and craftsmen entered China continuously. While the traditional handicraft skills of the Islamic countries throughout Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia were more developed at that time, which brought about the spread of exotic cultures and technologies, and the cobalt materials for firing blue and white were also transported to China through this Grassland Silk Road. According to the historical data analysis of Liu (2019), although the firing center of blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty was in Jingdezhen, "Jingdezhen porcelain was transported from Jingdezhen to Beijing first, and then transferred to the post road from Beijing to Persia" (Liu, 2019, p. 100) before being exported to the countries of Western Regions; the cobalt materials were also transported from the inner route to Beijing and then transferred to Jingdezhen, this inner route also shows that no matter whether the porcelain trade of the Yuan Dynasty was the export of porcelain or the import of raw materials through the Grassland Silk Road had been greatly developed.

The spread of Islamic civilization and the import of foreign artisans and blue-and-white cobalt materials had an important impact on the creation of the unique style of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty, and what was most intuitively reflected in the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty was the decorative style with Islamic artistic characteristics. The Islamic decorative style is ornate and complex, and does not like to leave white space, which is related to the Islamic doctrine that space is where the devil appears; in order to stop the devil's activities, the white space is filled with fine ornamentation (Li, 2005). In the selection of ornamental patterns, because of the taboo of using "images" in Islam (Li, 2005; Zhang, 2019), the decoration does not involve figures or animals, but mostly uses geometric patterns, text patterns, and plant patterns (Shi and Wang, 2010). The decorative style of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty changed from the traditional composition of the previous dynasty, which was simple and sparse, to a full and vigorous composition, with clear priorities, many layers but not chaos, gorgeous, detailed and neat decoration, more oriented to the pattern and plane, and completely different from the line drawing of Song porcelain, showing an exotic way of expression, with a strong Islamic decorative art style (Huang and Zhao, 2018). For example, the typical Islamic concentric circle compos-

ition is used on many large plates and bowls, which are decorated in multiple layers.

The patterns of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty incorporated the aesthetics and elements of the Western Regions, but the porcelain was unique in that "the main motifs were influenced by traditional Chinese culture and the secondary patterns by Islamic culture" (Meng and Xiao, 2008, p. 74). The open, tolerant and compatible nature of the Mongol-Yuan culture led to its continuous absorption of various ethnic and regional cultures, which also contributed to the flourishing of Yuan opera at that time, achieving the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty that took the character stories of Yuan poetic dramas as the theme and was of great research values. Such porcelain took Yuan poetic dramas as the background for the creation, with many heroes, meritorious officials, and other characters and stories respected by the Han people used as the depicted objects, thus showing the fusion of the culture of the Central Plains and the Mongol-Yuan culture at that time. For example, the superbly crafted large jar "Guiguzi Goes down the Mountain", large jar "Zhaojun Comes out the Frontier", and prunus vase "Xiao He Chases Han Xin under the Moon" depicted delightful stories of loyalty, filial piety, family affection, and love (Li, 2013). The details of the stories on porcelain were finely and vividly depicted, and the figures were mostly tall and clean, with some auxiliary patterns breaking through the normal proportional limits, but without destroying the composition and theme of the pictures. In addition, Li (2013) and Xie (2016) both pointed that the main motif categories were Islamic in style using geometric and botanical patterns, which were frequently used and also used more often on the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty.

Most of the secondary patterns used in the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty were the twine patterns, the deformed lotus petal patterns, the water ripple patterns, the cloud patterns, and the text patterns. For example, the twine patterns resembled Islamic vines and were "in a similar way to the composition of Islamic gold vessels, weaving blankets, Persian miniatures, and mosque architectural ornaments" (Xie, 2015, p. 111). Among them, the deformed lotus petal pattern was both the evolution of the Buddhist lotus pattern of the previous dynasty, also the imitation of the arch shape in Islamic style architecture (Xie, 2016). These Islamic arch shapes were influenced by the arch shapes of the ar-

chitecture in the Byzantine period; therefore, we can see the elements of Byzantine architecture from the archway and arch shape in the Topkapi Palace architecture of Turkey. Shang (1999, p. 190) described that:

“the deformed lotus petal pattern, which has no direct origin in traditional Chinese patterns, has a very similar form in Islamic coloured pottery. The decoration of ancient arts and crafts was often imitated from architecture, so they should all be imitations of mosque archways”.

Zhou and Zhong (2020) said “Studies and Applications on the Artistic Characteristics of the Deformed Lotus Petal Pattern of the Blue and White Porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty” also suggested that the shape of the lotus petal patterns was similar to the shape of the archway of the Islamic Mosque. The deformed lotus petal patterns were often used to decorate the body and bases of vessels during the Yuan Dynasty, for example, the bottom decorative patterns on the large jars of “Guiguzi Goes down the Mountain” and “Zhaojun Comes out the Frontier”. The lotus petal pattern was also more often found on the rims and bases of large plates and bowls; these patterns were very similar to the Persian colored pottery of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This supports the belief that Islamic culture was introduced to the Yuan Dynasty through the movement of people and goods along the Grassland Silk Road and had a profound influence on the decoration and patterns of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty.

2. Porcelain Ware Shapes and Styles

The diversity in the shapes of the porcelain in the Yuan Dynasty is inextricably linked to the grassland culture found during the rule of the Mongol-Yuan empires, as well as to the influence of foreign cultures and trade exchanges that spread along the Grassland Silk Road As explained by Xie (2015, p. 111):

“Grassland culture, Islamic culture, Buddhist culture, and other foreign culture were reflected in the modeling of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty and integrated into the Chinese vessel modeling style system”.

Mongolian nomadic lifestyle and dietary habits provide the unique characteristics of the porcelain modeling of the Yuan Dynasty; Mongolian temperament is unrestricted and rugged, and Mongolian body types are strong; in order to adapt to the Mongolian using habits, the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty was generally thick and heavy, and the size of the porcelain artifacts tended to be large. Another reason for the large size of the por-

celain ware was that a large amount of porcelain was exported to the Western Regions during the Yuan Dynasty, and the porcelain ware needed to adapt to the Islamic dietary habits of sitting around and eating with many people together, so the size of the ware needed to be large. Evidence for this was found in the fifteenth-century handwritten copy of the Persian books that are collected in the Turkey Topkapi Palace Museum now. These books have illustrations depicting the Muslims sitting around eating. The museum also collected a large number of large plates and bowls of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty, the diameter of the largest rhombic-rim bowl with eight-diagram twine patterns of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty reaches 40cm across, which verifies the export history of the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty to Persia along the Grassland Silk Road.

The flat-shaped pot, the stem cups, and the jade pot spring bottles were very popular in the Yuan Dynasty; this was found to be related to the nomadic life of the grassland herdsmen, their constant campaigns, and especially the Mongolian habit of drinking wine with gusto (Liu, 2012). The stems and long handles on such vessels make them easy to be held, carried, or transported. The portrayal of the stem cups as “cups on horses” reflects the boldness of Mongolian temperament (Liu, 2012). The flat-shaped pots were one of the special ware shapes of the porcelain in the Yuan Dynasty; although there were bronze flat-shaped pots in the Spring and Autumn Period, the shapes were more standardized in the Yuan Dynasty. The blue and white porcelain flat-shaped pots were based on the shape of the flat-shaped pot carried by the nomads in the north, their double attaching lugs were designed for easy carrying, and they were influenced more by the nomadic life customs (Xue, 2020). As Han, Li and Da (2014) described that the shape of the square-mouthed flat-shaped pot was clearly a continuation of the culture of the Central Plains; it integrates with elements of exotic culture and grassland culture and is similar to the gold and silver vessels of West Asia.

Another more representative ware shape of the Mongol-Yuan period is the octagonal ware, which has eight-facets, a shape that can be found in the architecture of Islamic regions and the multangular shape of metal vessels in West Asia (Zhang, 2019). Wang (2017, p. 76) also pointed out that “octagonal patterns appear in the textiles and architecture of the Islamic region, so it can be seen that there is a cer-

tain connection between the octagonal vessels and Islamic art”, and this ware shape is to some extent easier for the nomad to carry in their accouterments compared with the rounded bottle form.

The typical porcelain modeling form of the Mongol-Yuan period proves that the porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty absorbed the essence of grassland culture and the culture of the Western Regions through the exchanges of those traveling along the Grassland Silk Road, leading to porcelain modeling that was more appropriate for the needs of the users of the artifacts during those times.

Conclusion

The porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty, through the development of the important economic and com-

mmercial Grassland Silk Road, also carried out a communication and integration of grassland culture, the culture of the Western Regions, and the culture of the Central Plains. The porcelain, based on the inheritance and development of traditions, absorbed fresh ideas brought by different civilizations, creating new colors and unique porcelain modeling forms. The exchange and convergence of Eastern and Western cultures were also highlighted in the porcelain, and the Grassland Silk Road brought not only a collision of ideas and cultures but also a fusion of art and technology, thus making the unique decorative modeling of the porcelain a colorful mark in history.

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