

The Transmission of Decorative Motifs in the History of Chinese Song and Yuan Ceramics Technology--On the Origin of Decorative Motifs on Yuan Blue and White Porcelain

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Abstract: *Blue-and-white porcelain suddenly appeared at the Jingdezhen kilns during the Yuan Dynasty. Regarding the subject matter and layout of porcelain decoration, the underglaze brown porcelain of the Jizhou kiln is closely related to the decoration of the blue-and-white porcelain of the Yuan dynasty. It is a reference and inheritance from the latter to the former.*

Keywords: *Jizhou kiln, Yuan dynasty, blue and white porcelain, decorative motifs*

1. Introduction

During the Song Dynasty, the economy was more prosperous, culture flourished, and the porcelain industry gradually matured with the emergence and development of underglaze painted porcelain. The Jizhou kiln was created during the late Tang Dynasty. It was an essential kiln in the Jiangnan area during the Song Dynasty, on a large scale, so the local government set up a management department and imposed taxes. With distinctive national characteristics in decorative style, Jizhou kiln coloured porcelain was influenced by the ornamental type of the northern Magzhou kiln and fired brown underglaze porcelain on a white background, which can be regarded as the crystallization of the cultural exchange of ceramics between the north and the south. In the late Song and early Yuan dynasties, when times were turbulent, many Jizhou kiln artisans immigrated to Jingdezhen, spreading the technique of underglaze porcelain on a white background to the Jingdezhen kilns and promoting the production of Yuan blue and white porcelain. In *Ming-Qing and Kang Qing*, Futing wrote: "Porcelain painted with blue has been available since the Song Dynasty, and the initial acquisition of blue was in Ji'an, Gan." (Nianfeng, 2006)^[1] *Jingdezhen pottery record* also recorded: "town porcelain in the Tang, Song is not heard of coloured ware. Yuan, Ming, it is more blue porcelain or imitation of other porcelain." (Lan Pu, 2016)^[2] Accordingly, we can see the influence of the production technology of underglaze porcelain of the Jizhou kiln on the Yuan blue and white porcelain. Underglaze blue and white porcelain suddenly appeared in Jingdezhen kilns during the Yuan Dynasty, and from the aspect of the subject matter and layout of the decoration of the wares; the underglaze brown porcelain of Jizhou kilns has a close connection with the decoration of blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty, which is the latter's reference and inheritance of the former.

2. The Decoration of the Yuan Blue and White Wares Continues the Subject Matter and Techniques of the Painted Porcelain Decoration of the Jizhou Kilns

During the Song Dynasty, custom painting achieved high achievements. It influenced the field of arts and crafts and folk painting, among which the ceramic decoration style was more obviously influenced by it (Gerritsen, 2009)^[3]. The decoration of the underglaze porcelain of Jizhou kiln is closer to that of Song Dynasty folk painting in terms of the subject matter of the patterns and ornaments, with the rich subject matter and mature techniques, conveying the simple folk life and artistic interest (Fang, 2011)^[4]. Underglaze porcelain of Jizhou kiln is mainly decorated with folklore, flowers and plants, birds and animals, etc. The patterns can be divided into animal, human and plant designs, etc. Unlike the strict and complex official kiln porcelain, the graphics are fresh and natural. The blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty is also divided into animals, figures, plants and other contents in the decorative theme, which is more similar to the underglaze porcelain of the Jizhou kiln. The motifs in the porcelain of the

Jizhou kiln, such as plum and bamboo, magpies, etc., contain simple folk symbolism and carry the people's expectations for a better life. The decoration of blue-and-white porcelain of the Yuan dynasty also contains folk-favourable themes, such as images of phoenixes and double fish, which inherited the decorative style of the wares of the Jizhou kilns(Xiaohua, 2022)^[5].

Among the botanical motifs, the incense burner with lotus pattern from the Jizhou kiln of the Song dynasty and the lid of a box with lotus pattern from the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan dynasty have a clear inheritance in terms of ornamental motifs and shapes(Pan, 2021)^[6]. The lotus pattern of the incense burner of the Jizhou kiln of the Song dynasty is painted inside the abdominal opening of the vessel, with a lotus flower on the upper part and a base or lotus leaf holding up the lotus on the lower leg. The lid of a box with the lotus motif on Yuan blue-and-white porcelain is decorated with two lotus flowers on the upper part and leaves holding the lotus flowers on the lower leg and a secondary motif of grass(Welch, 2013)^[7]. Although the images of the two do not exactly match, the subject matter and composition of the decoration are the same, which is undoubtedly the inheritance of the latter from the former.

The cloud pattern, entwining pattern, swirling pattern and scrolling grass pattern in the decoration of Jizhou kiln wares are also primarily found in Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain patterns. The string lines in Yuan blue-and-white porcelain are mainly found in the border zone of pattern decoration, further strengthening the function of dividing the picture based on the pattern strips decoration of Jizhou kilns. The string patterns used on Yuan dynasty blue and white wares, like those from the Jizhou kiln, are mostly slender lines that wrap around the porcelain, thus dividing the picture. The painted plum vase of Jizhou kiln in the collection of Jizhou Kiln Museum has a more apparent string pattern dividing the image, which is a pre-development stage of string text in the decoration of Yuan blue and white wares.

The technique of picking glaze and stacking and white flowers on a blue background in Yuan blue and white porcelain is inherited from the method of picking and paper-cutting and applique in the decoration of the Jizhou kilns. The black and brown base of the Southern Song dynasty plum vase from the Jizhou kiln is decorated with a total composition, using black and brown as the base colour and using the techniques of floral picking, paper-cutting, and pasting. Yuan blue glaze plucking white design first cut the pattern on the body, followed by cobalt colouring, wait until the glaze dries, the pattern paper removed, and finally coated with a layer of transparent glaze into the kiln firing. The Yuan blue and white porcelain plate with mixed treasure floral motifs on a blue background in the collection of the Shanghai AURORA Museum is left white at the floral motifs, while the base is coated with blue glaze, i.e. the technique of blue glaze plucked white is used(Tai, 2011)^[8]. The seawater pattern in Yuan blue-and-white porcelain, with each wave-shaped separately, has a soothing line, free and spontaneous, continuous as if the seawater is cyclically shaking. The seawater pattern has been skillfully used in decorating Jizhou kiln wares. The seawater pattern in Yuan blue and white wares is more smooth and complex, obviously inheriting the pattern style of the Jizhou kiln(Center, 2013)^[9].

3. The Decoration of Yuan Blue and White Ware Transplanted and Borrowed from the Layout form of Jizhou Kiln Painted Porcelain

3.1. The Layout of the "Open Structure" (A Common Composition on Traditional Chinese Ceramic Decoration)of the Decorative Pattern

The layout of the "open light" structure is similar to a window in composition, with lines dividing the frame and emphasizing the main decoration in the defined area to increase the ornamental nature of the porcelain surface. The decoration of blue and white porcelain in the Yuan Dynasty differed from that of the previous celadon. Instead of further developing the original decoration form of celadon, the decoration style of the under-glaze porcelain of Jizhou kiln was directly transplanted under the leadership of the immigrant artisans of Jizhou Kiln. Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain and Jizhou kiln porcelain layout style are similar, both in the abdomen of the arrangement of light decoration, full of changing lines painted into different shapes. Additional decoration is arranged outside the defined area. The decorative pattern is scattered layout, the primary and secondary clear, reasonable structure. The Yuan dynasty's decorative motifs on blue-and-white porcelain vessels are more often in the "open light" style, with the central part of the vessel delineating the open light area. The central motifs are arranged, and the secondary motifs are arranged used as supplements. The brown porcelain vase from the Jizhou kiln of the Song dynasty has a defined "open" area on the abdomen of the vessel(Kelun, 2004)^[10]. The pond scene is the central decorative pattern. The auxiliary decorative design is the foil layer by layer, which vividly sets off the primary decorative and forms a clear hierarchical structure. The eight-pronged pine,

bamboo, and plum pattern openwork jar in Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain have eight prongs on the abdomen of the vessel, forming a window effect, with the images of lotus, ducks, bamboo, and pine inside the openwork as the main decoration. The shoulders of the vessel are decorated with folded floral patterns, surrounded by a diamond-shaped round persimmon band pattern at the mouth rim, and decorated with lotus petal patterns at the bottom, forming a dense and rigorous decorative style. The eight-ribbed pine, bamboo, and plum pattern open jar and the brown-colored vase of the Jizhou kiln of the Song dynasty are more similar in terms of the shape of the openings and the skill of drawing the lines have a more obvious inheritance relationship.

3.2. Multi-layered Style of Decorative Patterns

Both Jizhou kiln porcelain and Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain use a multi-layered decoration style. The arrangement of multiple patterns on one piece established the basic decorative style of blue and white porcelain (Kessler, 2012)^[11]. In terms of the basic structure of the layout, Yuan dynasty blue-and-white porcelain draws on the ornamental type of Jizhou kiln porcelain in its multi-layered decorative patterns, and the composition of both is well-organized and varied. The main decoration is located in the composition's core, and the secondary decoration is auxiliary. At the same time, a part of the side decoration is arranged, mainly in the form of entwined branches, scrolling grasses, and shaped patterns, which play the role of dividing the picture and forming a specific decorative effect. The jar with entwined peony pattern in Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain has the interwoven peony pattern as the main decoration, the middle of the object is divided by different string patterns, the shoulder is decorated with pomegranate pattern, the neck is painted with flower and leaf pattern, the shape is full of changes and has a solid secular atmosphere. The Jizhou kiln-painted plum vase in the Song Dynasty is decorated with three layers of clear patterns. The mouth of the vase is decorated with banana leaf patterns along with the mouth, the abdomen is decorated with a solid and powerful main design of rolling grass patterns, and the bottom is decorated with cloud and thunder patterns. The pattern decoration of blue and white porcelain in the Yuan dynasty is more abundant than that of the Jizhou kiln, which is decorated with pattern strips on the mouth, bottom, and middle part of the ware to form a rich decorative effect.

4. The Yuan Dynasty's Blue and White Porcelain Decoration Inherited the Traditional Painting and Calligraphy Techniques in the Painted Porcelain of Jizhou Kiln

Song dynasty painting was one of the pinnacles of traditional Chinese painting, and Song dynasty ceramic decoration was influenced by it. The painted porcelain of the northern Cizhou kilns absorbed conventional Chinese painting and calligraphy techniques. At the turn of the Northern and Southern Song dynasties, some Cizhou kiln artisans migrated to the south, promoting the development of underglaze porcelain in the south. The Jizhou kiln was influenced by the painting style of the Cizhou kiln. It absorbed the traditional Chinese ink painting technique to paint traditional calligraphy and painting patterns on the porcelain body, resulting in brown-colored porcelain on a white background. The strong absorbency of the Jizhou kiln's clay makes it suitable for drawing on traditional ink painting techniques, allowing it to be painted with flowing and dashing strokes. All kinds of wrinkled textures can be used, making it easy to express the new and subtle artistic effects. In addition, the underglaze pigment with ochre gray color has larger particles and rough artistic characteristics, which is more suitable for conveying the distinctive spirit of traditional Chinese ink painting and the unique folk rustic atmosphere. At the end of the Song Dynasty and the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty, the porcelain makers of Jizhou kiln moved to Jingdezhen. Further, they expanded the traditional ink painting technique into the decoration of Jingdezhen kiln porcelain, resulting in a fresh, warm, and elegant style of ink painting in the decoration of Yuan blue and white porcelain, which pushed the decoration of Chinese painted porcelain to a new height.

The porcelain decoration of the Jizhou kiln combines Chinese ink painting techniques with underglaze painting techniques. The blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty further developed and consolidated this feature. The black-glazed floral vase from the Jizhou kiln of the Song dynasty is inscribed with the words "Tianqingguan" on the abdomen of the object, with a firm brush, and the porcelain surface has no other form of ink painting. Still, the brush and ink are interesting and have a certain literati temperament. Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain uses the brush, a traditional Chinese painting, and calligraphy tool, as a tool for underglaze painting, and uses local or imported blue material as the painting pigment, using the crystal white porcelain surface as the carrier, using the ink painting technique to paint, which can cause the virtual reality, and the intensity of different ink painting interest. In the Gao'an Celadon Porcelain Museum collection, there is a Yuan Dynasty Celadon High-footed Cup, on which is written in Chinese brush, "Life is a hundred years long in drunkenness, counting 36,000

scenes. " The poem is of transcendent interest. The development of traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting in ceramic decoration has been carried on from the script on the black-glazed floral vase from the Jizhou kiln to the Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain goblet with the poetic inscription.

Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain further developed traditional Chinese ink painting techniques in porcelain decoration, based on the underglaze porcelain of the Jizhou kiln. During the Yuan Dynasty(Hang, 2006)^[12], the successful development of the binary formula technique produced a whiter, more delicate body. When coated with transparent glaze, it was warm jade and more suitable for expressing the spirit of Chinese art than the underglaze brown-colored porcelain of the Jizhou kiln. The study utensils in the under-glaze painted porcelain of Jizhou kiln in Song Dynasty are mainly decorated with plum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum, representing the noble and clean aesthetic style of literati (Gerritsen, 2020)^[13]. Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain in the decorative pattern of the use of Chinese literati unique aesthetic schema, further integration of ceramic decoration and traditional painting and calligraphy art, enhance the artistic connotation of ceramic decoration, improve the status of under-glaze painted porcelain in the field of arts and crafts. Therefore, the ink painting techniques in jizhou kiln underglaze painting influenced the development of blue and white porcelain art in the Yuan Dynasty. The decorative drawings in the blue and white porcelain of the Yuan Dynasty reference jizhou kiln underglaze and traditional Chinese ink painting art.

5. Conclusion

The sudden appearance of blue and white porcelain in the Yuan dynasty was closely related to the mass migration of artisans from the Jizhou kilns to Jingdezhen. It was an important reason for the kilns' acquisition of mature underglaze techniques. Although the Jingdezhen kilns of the Song Dynasty had the foundation of celadon techniques, they did not have the skill of underglaze painting. In contrast, the painting skills of decorative patterns on Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain were more skillful, indicating that the painters must have been skilled artisans. The decorative motifs of the Yuan dynasty's blue-and-white porcelain, the layout of the painted patterns, and the artistic elements of ink painting show that they inherited the style of underglaze-painted porcelain wares from the Jizhou kilns.

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