

Research on Modeling Innovation of Jingdezhen Official Kiln in Qing Dynasty

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Abstract: In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the court's control over porcelain modeling reached a new height, and the shape of Jingdezhen official kiln in the Qing Dynasty was the most innovative in the whole history. Through the study of the shape of the Qing Dynasty official kiln furnishings porcelain, this paper illustrates the characteristics of the innovation of the shape of the Qing Dynasty furnishings porcelain and the factors of its innovation and development, indicating that the shape change of porcelain cannot be separated from the change of human life style and the law of social development. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to provide some reference for researchers studying the history of ceramic modeling culture, and emphasize the close relationship between ceramic modeling and social development.

Keywords: Jingdezhen, official kiln, modeling

1. Introduction

In the early Qing Dynasty, the war led to social unrest, the porcelain industry was at a standstill, and the production of official kilns was also difficult^[1]. It was not until 19 years after Kangxi that the porcelain industry gradually regained its vitality. In the 22nd year of Kangxi's reign, a unified situation was formed^[2]. At this time, the state power became stable, the national contradictions were alleviated, the development of social production was on the right track, and the official kiln porcelain in the Qing Dynasty also had a new development on the basis of the Ming Dynasty.

2. Development of official kiln ceramics in the Qing Dynasty

The establishment of the imperial kiln (ware) factory in the Ming Dynasty is a prominent feature of the imperial use of porcelain. It serves the royal family. There are also specific institutions to study and draw up the shape patterns of porcelain, and then issue them for manufacturing. On the basis of the Ming Dynasty, the shape of Qing Dynasty official kiln porcelain developed more mature.

From Shunzhi to the early Kangxi period, the ceramic industry was in the recovery stage, but in the Shunzhi period, an olive bottle was created; the modeling innovation of the official kilns in the Qing Dynasty flourished in the three dynasties of the Qing Dynasty. During the Kangxi period, most of the official kilns produced large wares, which were thick and heavy, while the small ones were light and thin, and their shapes were straight and handsome. At that time, the newly created mallet bottles were very representative. At the same time, there were willow leaf bottles, chrysanthemum petal bottles, Guanyin zun, Pipa zun, etc., and domestic porcelain such as covered bowls, bell cups, sun and moon pots, etc; The Yongzheng period mainly focused on the imitation of antiques, but there were also new bottles of appreciation, Sanyang statue, Ruyi statue, network bottle, horseshoe cup, etc; To the Qianlong Dynasty, ancient Chinese ceramic utensils tended to mature, and its bionic porcelain was particularly famous; After the prosperous period of Kanglong and Qianlong, the official porcelain production in Jiaqing period has always followed the style of Qianlong, but in general, the technology has obviously declined; The official kiln porcelain in the Daoguang period has been handed down a lot, with the "Shendetang" porcelain as the essence. The Jiaqing Dynasty was barely able to maintain itself. After the Opium War in the Daoguang period was defeated, the Treaty of Nanking was signed, which humiliated the country, and Chinese society gradually became a semi-colony; In the Xianfeng, Tongzhi and Guangxu dynasties, porcelain gradually fell to the end, and the level of porcelain production was not as good as before.

The modeling style was conservative and there was little innovation. However, the law of development of things is always moving forward. The modeling of the Republic of China has made new breakthroughs on the basis of the three dynasties of the Qing Dynasty. With the influence of the capitalist machine industry, the Republic of China introduced the injection molding method of daily porcelain, bringing new vitality to the development of ceramic modeling.

3. Innovation of the display and porcelain modeling of the official kilns in the Qing Dynasty

Seen from a large number of official kiln porcelain in the world, the decoration of official kiln ware in the Qing Dynasty was complicated and gorgeous, but its shape was more exquisite and strange. It not only imitated the famous kiln ware, but also had many new types of ware. In the Qing Dynasty, there were some new types of porcelain, such as daily-use porcelain bowls, plates, pots, etc., vases, flower statues, flower goblets, melons and fruits, animal elephant porcelain, etc., as well as stationery and entertainment porcelain, such as inkstones, pen holders, ink beds, cricket pots, etc.^[3]. Among them, display porcelain accounted for the largest proportion of palace porcelain in the Qing Dynasty, with unique shape, exquisite workmanship and great artistic value^[4].

From the perspective of function, the porcelain in the palace can be roughly divided into two categories: display porcelain and daily porcelain. Furnishing porcelain refers to porcelain used to make furnishings for people to watch. The vases, goblets, and other kinds of porcelain as display porcelain are all modeled after bronze ritual vessels. There must be a reason for the continuous development of a utensil. It can be thought, religion, folk customs and other factors, but the most basic factor is the use of aesthetic function^[6]. From the Xia and Shang Dynasties to the Western Zhou Dynasty, the design of the ritual ware was still the focus of the design of the shape of the utensil, which was widely used. In the Song Dynasty, porcelain was used as the furnishings in the palace. Gradually, the utensil lost its original role and had new functions. However, the shape would also change. As Xu Zhiheng of the Qing Dynasty said in his "Drinking and Flowing and Speaking of Porcelain", "The ancients made vessels to hold wine for the feast of gods, and sacrificed respect and elephant respect to the source. The authority of this respect is also the same. Once the respect is changed into a bottle, it is used for arranging flowers, clearing the supply, and rising from the brink."^[7]

Before the Song Dynasty, there was no record of using implements to arrange flowers, but in the paintings of the Song and Ming Dynasties, you can often see the picture of using bronze to arrange flowers. "The gut-like silver bottle and the jade like plum are not fully opened. To pity the lonely empty mountain, we call the poet several cases."^[8] This is written by the poet Yang Wanli of the Song Dynasty. It can be seen that flower arrangement in the Song Dynasty has become the elegant life of the literati. Painter Zhang Hong (1577 -?) painted a picture of using bronze goblets to arrange flowers in his "Sui Chao" (Fig.1), which shows that bronze has lost its original function as a sacrificial instrument, as well as the "Sui Chao" (Fig.2) painted by painter Xu Yang of the Qing Dynasty. The flower appreciation and flower arrangement in the Qing Dynasty are even more popular. The emperors of the Qing Dynasty continued to expand the scale of the painting academy and also participated in it personally. The period of Emperor Qianlong was even more prosperous. It can be seen from the pictures handed down from the Qing Dynasty that the emperor liked the vases. At that time, in order to win the favor of the emperor, Tang Ying and Mr. Cui Ge, the Jingdezhen supervisor of pottery, designed vases with strange shapes and auspicious meanings, such as Jiaotai vases, revolving vases, and multi-connected vases.



Figure 1: The Palace Museum Collection. Ming Zhang Hong "year toward axis" local paper, color, vertical 70.11cm, horizontal 53.4cm



Figure 2: The Palace Museum Collection, Qing Xu Yang "year toward map axis" paper, color, vertical 86.7cm, horizontal 72.3cm

In the Yongzheng period, there were many new porcelain bottles in the palace for flower arrangement. For example, Duolian bottle was one of the more special porcelain styles in this period, which was a new bottle style created in the Yongzheng Dynasty. The bottle body is a new shape made by multiple identical vials sticking to each other. Just like this six-hole bottle (Fig.3), the shape is composed of six connected Guanyin bottles, with five remaining around it; the mouth and neck of the shoulders and abdomen, gradually converging from the abdomen to the bottom, and forming a five-petal plum shape at the bottom. The bottle is unique in shape and with great ingenuity, which is a good product in the official kiln of the Yongzheng period. This kind of multi-even bottle is designed to insert different flowers into different bottles, very ornamental meaning.

There is also a more strange bottle, the bottle body is divided into the upper and lower parts, with the bottleneck as the dividing line, the upper part can be removed as an independent bottle, the lower part can be made as a large bottle, the shoulder of the large bottle with eight round holes, this wonderful shape is designed to adapt to a variety of different flower arrangement methods and design. There are also porcelain bottles designed to adapt to different flower arrangement methods, whose shape is strange, and the two bottles are combined into a bottle.



Figure 3: Qing Yongzheng Holly glazed six-hole bottle in Shenyang Palace Museum

In the Qianlong period, a pink glaze Kui dragon pattern hollowed-out Jiaotai bottle (Fig.4) was widely circulated in the Qing Dynasty. There was a copper inner liner inside the bottle to prevent the porcelain bottle from freezing and cracking. The outside of the porcelain bottle was covered with pink glaze, and the belly was decorated with a dark Kui dragon pattern, and there was a carved head shaped like an ideograph. The bottle was divided into two parts along the ideograph. The two parts were hooked together, but they could not be separated. It can be seen that the firing technology is extremely mature and exquisite. This bottle is also called "Tiandi Jiaotai bottle". A yellow ground blue and white lotus vase with twined branches and lotus patterns from the Qianlong period, which is similar to the Jiaotai vase, (Fig.5) has an open mouth, a short neck, a flat round belly, and a round foot. The inner wall of the bottle is painted with turquoise green glaze. The outer wall is decorated with yellow and blue flowers. In the middle of the abdomen is a hollowed-out inverted lotus "T" pattern. A small bottle

is sleeved inside the bottle, which is connected with the outer bottle mouth and can be rotated. Because Emperor Qianlong loved all kinds of handicrafts, the pottery inspector specially designed many novel porcelain shapes to cater to the emperor's preferences.



Figure 4: Qing Qianlong pink blue glaze Kui dragon pattern hollowed-out Jiaotai bottle Height 16 cm, caliber 6.9 cm, foot diameter 8 cm



Figure 5: Qingqianlong Huangdi blue and white vase with intertwined branches and lotus patterns Height 19.8 cm, caliber 9.2 cm, foot diameter 11.3 cm

4. Reasons for the modeling innovation of official kilns in the Qing Dynasty

The consolidation of the Qing regime, the construction of water conservancy, the temporary exemption of taxes, the abolition of the "craftsmanship" of some craftsmen, and the implementation of the "official and civilian firing" system during the Kangxi period undoubtedly promoted the development of the level of porcelain making, making the porcelain modeling of the Qing Dynasty show unprecedented prosperity; The Manchu nationality in the Ming Dynasty ruled the Central Plains as a minority, and the rulers adopted active policies to alleviate ethnic conflicts. The integration and unification of the Manchu and Han ethnic cultures in the process laid the social foundation for the development of the official kiln ceramics in the Qing Dynasty; The Qing Dynasty was different from the Ming Dynasty in dealing with sub-colored porcelain. In the Ming Dynasty, the imperial kilns were mainly smashed and buried directly, while in the Qing Dynasty, the system of changing the price of sub-colored porcelain was implemented, which made the official and civilian kilns form a market competition situation. It has promoted the continuous improvement of the production quality of the official kiln, the innovation of the modelling style, and the greater progress of the firing technology.

The ultimate purpose of the ceramics produced by the official kiln is to serve the royal family, so the preferences of the rulers directly affect the shape of the ceramics. Especially in the three dynasties of the Qing Dynasty, emperors paid more attention to porcelain and directly participated in the design of porcelain. Emperor Yongzheng would express his views on the shape of some official porcelain. During the reign of Qianlong, Tang Ying said in the "Presentation Book of the Compilation of the Cultivation Illustrations "in accordance with the Order" on May 22, the eighth year of Qianlong, "the sample pieces that were recently made by the slaves and the new porcelain samples were presented together. Please instruct the emperor to correct them so that they can be fired in accordance with the emperor's instructions." [9] It can be seen that Tang Ying's newly created utensils can only be fired after being approved by the emperor.

5. Summary

It can be seen that the production and production process of Jingdezhen official kiln ceramics in the Qing Dynasty was closely related to political system, imperial preferences, court lifestyle and other factors. The new appearance of the modeling style of the official porcelain is that it conforms to the trend of civilization development. With the long development of society, the shape of ancient Chinese utensils has gradually evolved and developed along with the way of life. This process is the result of the joint promotion of many factors, and also the embodiment of the progress of social civilization.

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