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IL-KHANIDS IV. CERAMICS

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This entry deals with glazed wares and tiles of the so-called "Sultanabad" (Solṭānābād) group, lajvardina (< Pers. *lājvard* "lapis lazuli") wares, and luster wares produced in the Il-khanid period. The period extends from the fall of Baghdad in 1258 to the last dated luster tiles made in 1339 (dated pieces are listed by Watson, 1985 and Ettinghausen, "Dated Faience"). Changes in the style, technology, and iconography of tile revetments can be traced at Takt-e Solaymān (q.v.), Tabriz, Solṭāniya (modern Arāk), and several tomb complexes. Typical of changes affecting vessels are decorative, iconographic, and stylistic innovations from the Far East copied from textiles (Lane, 1971, pp. 3-6) and imported Chinese ceramics (Morgan, 1991). Usually dismissed as "chinoiserie," dragons, phoenixes, lotus blossoms, and cloud collars motifs were, in varying degrees, closely controlled symbols of Mongol imperial power. Other, largely technical, changes in ceramics were brought about by the exchange of skills between artisans drawn from different craft traditions, who were working together on Mongol architectural projects. A decline in the use of nesbas in the Il-khanid period suggests small-scale craft production diminished as major tile work commissions increased. Advances in mosaic tile work at the end of the period were probably undertaken by artisans trained in Anatolia.

Production. Despite the lack of excavated domestic sequences, earthenware and glazed earthenware vessels remained largely unchanged, whereas

stonepaste vessels and tile work were more sensitive to Far Eastern influence. The body of stonepaste wares (soft-paste porcelains, faience or frit wares in earlier works) is an artificial mixture of frit (glass), white clay, and silica. The recipe given in Abu'l-Qāsem Kāšāni's text of 1301 (Allan; Ritter et al.) is confirmed by scientific analysis (Dayton and Bowles; Mason). The treatise deals only with stonepaste wares, particularly vessels of "two firings," that is, overglaze painted and luster wares, and with underglaze painted wares. Kāšāni cautions against smoke in the kiln, recommending the use of saggars to protect overglaze decoration; to counter the smoke problem, artisans of Kāšān burned soft firewood (*hizom-e narm*), while barkless willow wood was used in Tabriz, Baghdad, and other cities (Kāšāni, p. 346). Although production in Tabriz is to be expected, it is not the case in Baghdad, where tiled monuments are scarce, as are suitable mineral resources. His remark that haft rang overglaze painted *minā'i* wares had disappeared by his time is largely confirmed by the absence of dated pieces after the last one was produced in Ṣafar 616/April 1219 (see Watson, 1994, for a list of dated minā'i wares). A restricted minā'i technology continues in lajvardina wares—cobalt blue glazed vessels and tiles decorated in a limited range of overglaze colors (red, black, and white) in a glass-based matrix, and gold leaf fixed in a muffle kiln. Kāšāni refers briefly to underglaze painting but does not mention underglaze red used on Syrian Euphrates wares.

Lajvardina wares. There are few dated Il-khanid lajvardina objects. Richard Ettinghausen listed a large star tile dated 1315 (Ettinghausen, "Dated Faience," p. 1691) and a smaller example dated 1304 (ibid., pp. 1666-96). A lotus bowl in the Preussisches Kunstbesitz, Berlin, said to have been found at Nišāpur, is dated Rajab 776/December 1374-January 1375 (Klein et al., eds., no. 222). The decoration of lajvardina wares is almost exclusively non-figural, and the remains of disassembled lajvardina tile work come largely from funerary contexts (Plate I). There are numerous frieze tiles with Koranic inscriptions. A large inscriptional tomb tile in the form of a prayer niche (*meḥrāb*) is inscribed with the name of an unidentified vizier, Jalāl-al-Din Esmāʿil (British Museum OA G, 1985, 500; see Porter, fig. 26). A comparable tile published by Friedrich Sarre may have come from Solṭā-niya (Sarre, fig. 87), where fragments of lajvardina star tiles have been found in the funerary area east of the Gonbad-e Oljāytu/Öljeitü and elsewhere on the site. Fragments of large figural plaques with hunting scenes were excavated at Taḵt-e Solaymān (Masuya, fig. 98, cat. no. 94). A large (51 x 45 cm), unprovenanced inscriptional lajvardina frieze tile with a dragon and phoenix border, almost certainly from

Taḵt-e Solaymān (British Museum OA 1896.3-13, 32; Porter, fig. 29), adds weight to the suggestion that the lajvardina style was created for Abaqa Khan's palace at Taḵt-e Solaymān. Its choice may mirror restrictions on the distribution of blue clothing in China to members of the Yüan court (Morgan, 1995). The extensive use of gold leaf can be compared with the Il-khan's unrestricted use of gold in drinking ceremonies, in elixirs, religious contexts, jewelry, and brocades. Cobalt blue colorants were amongst the most costly materials used by potters.

The last significant use of lajvardina is in the tile work of the tomb of Qosām b. ʿAbbās in the Šāh-e Zenda in Samarkand (Tomb A), dateable to about 1335. The aesthetic continued in tombs using both fired gold leaf or gold stencils and transfers: in the Timurid tombs in Samarkand, in the 15th century Masjed-e Moẓaffariya in Tabriz, in the mosaic tile portal of the tomb of Shah Neʿmat-Allāh Wali in Māhān, Kermān, and in the tomb chamber of Shah Esmāʿil I Ṣafawi in Ardabil.

Lajvardina vessels have been excavated at Taḵt-e Solaymān, Solṭāniya, and Saray Berke (the capital of the Golden Horn on the Volga); the sources of most museum pieces are unknown. Taken en masse, forms are limited, and closed vessels are copied from pre-Mongol inlaid metalwork forms, as are the decorative panels of "Y" and "T" frets. Open forms are copied from L'ung chuan celadons from southern China, particularly flat-rimmed dish and hemispherical (lotus) bowls that were produced in three sizes. The range of lajvardina bowls and dishes is similar and the usually radial decoration expanded to fit. The reduction in formal variety may be evidence of new modes of production that in China saw a decline in quality as craft production was overtaken by export-driven factory production. A piriform jug is the only lajvardina vessel that can be traced to a nomadic prototype, a strip-sewn leather bottle for holding liquids (Plate II).

Blue and white tiles. The white relief decoration of the blue and white star, frieze, and tomb tiles used to decorate tomb walls and cenotaphs is often covered with gold leaf. The earliest surviving blue and white cenotaphs are those of the Saljuq rulers of Rum in Konya made in the early 1220s. Cobalt (q.v.) is a flux and tends to run into the glaze and diminish decorative clarity. To counteract this failing, the cobalt colorant was often applied in a compartmentalized fashion around raised inscriptions and decorations. A Kāšān luster bowl with a blue and white inscription decorated by Abu Zayd (Bahrami, pp. 37, 39) is the earliest dated use of the technique (Šawwāl

609/March 1213). At Taḵt-e Solaymān the blue and white of tiles with molded decoration is frequently masked by overglaze decoration and gold leaf. The inscription around Ḡāzān's tomb in Tabriz, said by the historian Šehāb-al-Din ʿAbd-Allāh Waṣṣāf to have been blue, was probably made of blue and white tiles (Wilber, 1955, p. 126, for field evidence from Šenb, collected in 1937 and 1939). Fragmentary blue and white star tiles and cavetto moldings from tomb contexts have been found at the Rabʿ-e Rašidi in Tabriz (survey collections, British Institute of Persian Studies, Tehran) and in and around the Gonbad-e Öljeitü in Solṭāniya, and similar star tiles without inscriptional borders were used in the decoration of an Il-khanid building at Bisotun, possibly the site of Solṭānābād Čam-čemāl (the second capital built by Öljeitü at the foot of Bisotun mountain; see Luschey-Schmeisser, pp. 221-40).

Many unprovenanced star tiles and frieze tiles are probably from cenotaphs. Three large dated tomb tiles are known: Jomādā II 711/October-November 1311 (Klein et al., no. 185; 719/1319-20, Wiet, pl. II, no. 179; 722/1322, Metropolitan Museum, no. 37; see Plate III). The second example made by ʿAli b. Abi Ṭāleb b. Abi Naṣr and a foundation plaque in the Masjed-e Kala in Qohrud, a village between Kāšān and Isfahan, made by Yūsof b. ʿAli, the potter of Kāšān in 710/1310 (Watson, 1975, pl. VIIIb; Qučāni, 1992b, figs. 38-40) suggest that they are all products of Kāšān or its satellite ateliers. Large blue and white plaques with cloud-collars and lotus blossoms which once decorated the mausoleum of Bāyazid Besṭāmi (q.v.) in Besṭām (see Survey of Persian Art, pl. 350, for a distant photograph) and the blue and white chinoiserie tiles of the cenotaph of Qosām b. ʿAbbās in Samarkand, around 1335 (Bulatova et al., pl. 121), suggest that overglaze decoration was abandoned in religious structures in the reign of Ḡāzān Khan (q.v., 1295-1304). Blue and white tile cenotaphs, typified by conspicuous chinoiserie decoration, were used to commemorate religious figures in later 14th-century tombs in Ḵiva and Organj.

For technical reasons, a tradition such as that of Yüan China, using multiple shades of blue, did not fully develop in Persia until the Safavid period. Persia's contribution to the development of Chinese blue and white (after ca. 1325) lay in the export of cobalt blue colorants.

"Syrian" wares. The underglaze decorative techniques described by Abu'l-Qāsem Kāšāni must refer to the so-called "Syrian" wares (Hobson, fig. 73 and p. 65). "Syrian" wares were decorated with black (siāh qalam, mozarrad, the latter so-called after the name of a deep black stone found in Khorasan; see

Kāšāni, pp. 340, 345), probably chromite, cobalt blue, and manganese purple. In the decoration of related laqabi wares produced in Syria before 1220 (?), sgraffito outlines had been used to control underglaze colors. The same colors, used to decorate tiled cenotaphs in the Sayfiya Madrasa in Sivās, Anatolia (4 Šawwāl 617/1 December 1220; Meinecke, II, pp. 435-36), continued in use until about 1240. This style's Syro-Anatolian antecedents informed Robert Hobson's choice of terminology, but the weight of evidence suggests that they were made in Persia, perhaps by or under the influence of Anatolian or Syrian craftsmen. Despite some suggestion of later tampering, most provenanced examples were found at Taḵt-e Solaymān; and the earliest group was made during the period of the site's restoration: a lotus bowl (667/1268-69) in the Chicago Art Institute (Pope, "The Ceramic Art," p. 1637), a pilgrim flask (Rajab 671/January-February 1273) in the Reżā ʿAbbāsi Museum in Tehran (Plate IV), and a pedestal bowl (Ramażān 672/March 1274) in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Ettinghausen, 1935, pl. 13). Other pieces include a large dish (706/1306-07, Plate V) in a private collection in Geneva (Soustiel, no. 263), a unique plaque (722/1312-13) in the David Collection in Copenhagen (von Folsach, no. 151), and a bowl (729/1329) in the Royal Ontario Museum (Lane, 1947, pl. 95A). The typical decoration includes reserved inscriptions, hares, jackals, and interlaced motifs, but there are no human figures. Forms are usually related to Islamic metalwork, Chinese celadons, and Mongol metalwork and are unusually small. Many inscribed pieces have Arabic blessings in relief white on a blue ground.

Sultanabad wares. When Pope undertook an archeological survey of villages near Solṭānābād (modern Arāk) in the 1930s, he concluded that they were the nucleus of a major Il-khanid ceramic industry and that commercial excavations had uncovered complete vessels in a buried shop. These so-called "Sultanabad" wares include Colored Ground wares, ʿErāq wares, Black underglaze painted turquoise glazed wares, and blue and black Panel wares.

The underglaze blue, black, and turquoise colors used in Panel wares divide the surface into radial or vertical panels filled alternately with reserved inscriptions, interlaced palmettes, and dotted or hatched fields, a style in which Arthur Lane saw the influence of Mongol brocades such as the Heinrichsgewänder preserved in the treasury of the Alt Kapelle in Regensburg. The style, also popular in Syria and Egypt, is found on only one group of tiles, on spolia in the doorway of the tomb of Shaikh Aḥmad in Jām (Khorasan). Black underglaze painted turquoise glazed ware tiles were used to decorate a

cenotaph in the Masjed-e Kermāni next to the tomb of Shaikh Aḥmad and also are on the cavetto moldings of the tomb of Qosām b. ʿAbbās. Although Black underglaze painted turquoise vessels were developed before the Mongol period, notably on a range of fenestrated ewers produced in Kāšān around 1200-1220, this ware became more popular under the Il-khans; and complete pieces and shreds have been found at Taḵt-e Solaymān. A dated bowl (Rabiʿ I 676/August 1277) in the Victoria and Albert Museum (C. 350-1929) was probably made in Kāšān; and another one (760/1358-59) was made by ʿAli Zāhed, a potter from Ḵodāšāh, a small town about 50 km northwest of Sabzavār (Karimi and Kiāni, no. 72). Firm evidence of production at Solṭā-niya is provided by wasters (whereabouts unknown) recovered in the 1930s (Talbot Rice, pl. III), and the technology seems to have been widely dispersed after about 1325. The decoration of most pieces consists of stylized vine leaves and bunches of grapes, which, coupled with the relatively large number of storage jars in the same style, suggests that they belonged to wine sets in imitation of Chinese wares.

Colored Ground wares and ʿErāq (i.e., ʿErāq-e ʿAjam) wares probably belong to the same production cycle; and, although forms are similar, each decorative technique is dominated by a distinctive iconography. Colored Ground wares are coated with a slip usually ranging from grey to purple, to which the decoration is applied in thick white relief paint with additional fine details added in black. Forms include monumental jars, open celadon-like forms, bowls with vertical rims, jugs, and wine ewers. The borders of bowls and dishes are often decorated with pheasants or other birds (Plate VI) and occasionally with water birds pursued by hawks, a theme repeated on ceramics and metalwork found at Karakorum and one of the few specifically “Mongol” elements in the decoration of Il-khanid wares. The tondo is normally decorated with hares, deer, and Mongol figures, often wearing feathered hats and seated on a folding stool often depicted in contemporary illustrations of Rašid-al-Din Fażl-Allāh’s Jāmeʿ al-tawāriḵ. A unique bowl in the British Museum is decorated with several seated figures alternately wearing turbans or feathered hats, with a standing camel reserved on a blue ground at the center (British Museum OA, 1928, 1-21, 1). A short-tailed bird is a common subject and was widely copied on luster tiles painted in the “Sultanabad” manner (Plate VII). Archeologically attested Colored Ground wares are rare; a few sherds were found at Taḵt-e Solaymān and in surveys from Sistān and the Persian Gulf. Production probably began quite late, perhaps during the reign of Öljeitü, a supposition supported by two dated pieces. The first, dated

Jomādā I 713/August-September 1313, is in the Bāzargān Collection of the National Museum in Tehran (Qučāni, 1992b); and the other (716/1316-17) is in the Ṭāreq Rajab collection in Kuwait (Fehérvári, no. 47A-B). No tile work is known, despite attempts to identify molded luster tiles in situ on the soffit of the arch over the tomb chamber in the Pir-e Bakrān in Lenjān as Colored Ground. Although many vessels carry pseudo-inscriptions around the rim, only one legible poetical inscription has been located (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 1978.1619), a fact that may help to identify potential purchasers as non-Persian (Morgan, 1995, pls. 1 a-c). The recurring decorative themes certainly suggest that the clientele was Turco-Mongol.

ʿErāq wares, a dealer's term, appeared in Europe following their discovery during house building "near Tehran" and entered museum collections in the 1880s. The dominant colors are cobalt blue, turquoise, and black, which are applied beneath a transparent colorless glaze. Some objects are of high quality, and other evidence indicates investment in technical innovation in which cobalt blue is, for the first time, successfully modified to produce a pale blue underglaze colorant (Plate VIII). The decorative subject matter is wide ranging, but deer, hares, and pheasants are well represented, as in Colored Ground ware, although again there are no legible inscriptions. Similarly, there are no ʿErāq ware tiles, and only two installations where blue inscriptions are applied on a turquoise ground are known. The first is an unprovenanced sequence of frieze tiles with quotations from the Šāh-nāma (Melikian-Chirvani, figs. 51-62), and the second is a dated external panel (725/1325) at the base of the minaret of the tomb and ḵānaqāh of Shaikh ʿAbd-al-Ṣamad in Naṭanz.

Turquoise glazed vessels were probably widely produced; but, with the exception of sherds from Taḵt-e Solaymān, information is scant. Monochrome turquoise tiles were made at Taḵt-e Solaymān, and tomb tiles were manufactured elsewhere for both emāmzādas (q.v.) and private citizens. Iraj Afšār's work on the monuments of Yazd has shown that molded tomb tiles were personalized by the addition of the deceased person's name and that they may well have been made in Yazd. The earliest Yazd tomb tile (1257) is located in the Friday Mosque of Haftādor (Afšār, I, pp. 52, 472). Qom is equally rich in such pieces; the earliest (Moḥarram 667 /September-October 1268) is from the tomb of Šāh Jaʿfar, a grandson of Imam Musā al-Kāẓem (Modarresi Ṭabāṭabāʾi, II, pl. 15, p. 38). Monochrome turquoise tomb tiles are found throughout Persia; turquoise glazed meḥrābs are less common.

Luster ware. The output of dated luster tiles declined after the death of Jalāl al-

Din Ḵʷārazmšāh in 1227. A meḥrāb in the Āstān-e Qods-e Rażawi (640/1242) was made by ʿAli b. Moḥammad b. Abi Ṭāher at a time when Khorasan was governed by a Uighur Körgüz, a Muslim convert from Buddhism, and it indicates that Kāšān luster potters could, under favorable circumstances, produce tiles for religious institutions. After Hülegü's arrival, luster production increased visibly, and two monumental luster jars (the Hermitage and Hirsch jars) may be dated to the 1260s. The same decade saw the manufacture of large, non-figural star and cross tiles with Koranic inscriptions (October 1261 and January 1263) for the Emāmzāda Yaḥyā in Varāmin (London, 1976, no. 379) and figural star and cross tiles with poetic inscriptions for the portal of the Emāmzāda Jaʿfar in Dāmḡān (1267). The imagery and inscriptions of these are repeated on numerous star and cross tiles from Taḵt-e Solaymān made between 1269 and 1274 (Qučāni, 1992b, pp. 37-40). Thereafter, cross tiles are plain or molded turquoise and cobalt blue (but see an undated series in the Reżā ʿAbbāsi Museum, ca. 1340). Although non-figural tiles generally have Koranic inscriptions and figural tiles poetical inscriptions, a set of unprovenanced tiles with identical birds in flight (Plate VII), which have Koranic inscriptions, are probably from the tomb of a shaikh like those from the Pir-e Bakrān and the tomb of ʿAbd-al-Ṣamad in Naṭanz. Birds, the most common motifs in such contexts, are linked metaphorically to the spiritual quest, as outlined in Farid-al-Din ʿAṭṭār's Manṭeq al-ṭayr. Luster tiles with hawks attacking birds may be compared with the hawk and dove simile used in the context of the challenge to Islam posed by Buddhist monks (*baḵši*, q.v.) and shamans, rather than viewed as simple hunting scenes (Digby). The animal subject of star tiles from Dāmḡān and Taḵt-e Solaymān may be given a quasi-religious interpretation by reference to Rumi's reinterpretation of animal fables and popular stories. Although dragons and phoenixes are commonly associated with the new iconography, dragons usually do not appear on Persian vessels, with the exception of one tile other than those from Taḵt-e Solaymān.

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(PETER MORGAN)

iv. CARPETS. See CARPETS viii.

v. CLOTHING. See CLOTHING ix.