

TURKISH POTTERY IN ANATOLIA

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Anatolian pottery no less than other tile-decoration developed on the foundations laid down in previous Turkish periods. From the 11th century onwards the Karakhanids developed coloured-glaze pottery in a technique that can be regarded as native to Samarqand and Nishapur and already used in the Samanid Period, alongside with other varieties of pottery of very high quality in which the possibilities of calligraphy are exploited to the full. Ware of this type with slip decoration continued to be manufactured in the vicinity of Samarqand up till quite recent times, and the examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London date from the 19th century.

During the Great Saljuq period a coloured-glaze technique was used in Iran in the pottery known as "Laqabi". The Saljuqs successfully developed a completely new style of lustre technique which had originated in Samarra. But the chief innovation introduced by the Saljuqs in their centres of Rayy and Kashan was their discovery of the *minaî* technique. This many-figured *minaî* ware has a close affinity with the art of the miniature and the scenes depicted on them. We can see the costumes, physical types and the whole life of the Saljuqs of that times. The large bowl in the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C., and in the Berlin Islamic Museum depicting a scene of combat shows this very close connection. In Iraq, Syria and Egypt the *minaî* technique was completely unknown. It seems to have passed from Iran into Anatolia with the Saljuqs, a circumstance which plainly shows the role they played in its development. Apart from those *minaî* tiles a large quantity of Saljuq lustre pieces have been recovered, but no *pottery* of either technique has been found.

It seems that pottery with black decoration under a turquoise glaze was very popular with the Anatolian Saljuqs. The sherds of locally made and characteristic Saljuq pottery found at Kalehisar near Alaja Hüyük in Anatolia were painted in slip under a transparent coloured glaze. In the

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excavations carried out at Kalehisar, kilns and sherds were found dating from the beginning of the 13th century. A great many sherds in the sgraffito technique were also found with predominantly figural scenes.¹

Excavations at Iznik have shown that the first Ottoman pottery was made from red clay, and after being treated with a thick white slip, it was dipped into coloured-glaze and fired for the second time. The finished pottery thus has a red core. Where the glaze lies directly over this core its colour becomes dark, but where the glaze overlies the slip its colour turns pale. This technique which has been used by Saljuq potters in the beginning of the 13th century evidently passed on to the Ottomans, under whom it showed a striking advance.

Thus the first Ottoman Turkish pottery was linked to the Saljuq slip pottery known from Kalehisar. The examples appearing at Iznik from about the middle of the 14th century onwards are painted in one of four different colours: blue, green, dark or light brown. The decoration consists of arabesques, tendrils and stylized flowers; no figural decoration appears.

Along with the decoration rendered in slight relief, with white slip and monochrome glaze, there is another variation of this technique. It is achieved by applying a colourless transparent glaze over the white slip itself enriched with painting in another colour. This technique can be accepted as a transition to a subsequent group of ceramics known as "Miletus Ware" described below. Brilliantly-coloured fragments of both types together with unglazed sherds and oven-remnants were found in excavations.²

As a result of these investigations it was also proven that the type of pottery made from red clay in the second period, hitherto known as "Miletus Ware", originated at Iznik. First found by Sarre in the Miletus excavations, it was thought to have been made there, and consequently

¹ Aslanapa, O., "Scherben und Keramik Öfen aus Kalehisar." *Anatolica I*, 1967, pp. 135-42, fig. 106; Lane, Arthur, *Later Islamic Pottery*, London 1957; Lane, Arthur, "The Ottoman Pottery of Iznik", *Ars Orientalis*, vol. 2, pp. 247-81, 1957; Erdmann, Kurt, *Zu den Scherben von Kalehisar*, Zusatz zum Aufsatz von K. Bittel "Funde im Östlichen Galatien", *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40, pp. 122-124, 2 Abb.; *Noch einmal di Scherben von Kalehisar*, *ibid.*, pp. 142-143, 2 Abb., Nachtrag, pp. 148-149.

² Aslanapa, O., *Türkische Fliesen und Keramik in Anatolien*, İstanbul 1965; Otto-Dorn, K., *Türkische Keramik*, Ankara 1957.

the name became attached to it in the literature. These fabrics were produced by the under-glaze technique, coloured designs being drawn on a white engobe (slip) and then covered with a transparent lead glaze. The predominant colour is a dark cobalt verging to lapis blue; but blue, turquoise, purple and green are also used. There are also wares with black decoration under a turquoise glaze which show a connection with Saljuq ceramics. Some also display bird and fish figures which bear a resemblance to the 13th century Saljuq tiles. The decoration of this second early Ottoman-Turkish pottery was prepared in three different ways: the designs could be drawn and painted with thick contours, they might be engraved with a fine point and then painted (sgraffito) or they are brushed freehand under the glaze without any contours at all. Other important types of decoration include thick radial leaves and striations, and geometrical ornamentation with thick bands. The skill displayed in drawing different designs with a light brush is evidence of a marked originality.³ This pottery was a purely local creation manufactured on a large scale at Iznik and was exported from there to other regions. Apart from thousands of sherds with colours and designs unknown until the present day, excavations in Iznik also revealed various pieces that had been spoiled, or that had fused with one another or stuck to the tripod, together with a quantity of kiln material and unglazed pottery. However, the red clay appears to have been abandoned about 1480-90 in favour of the white clay which was used in all subsequent Ottoman pottery at Iznik.

A third period therefore begins with the blue-and-white decoration on a hard white clay, resembling porcelain. The colourless glaze is very thin, and covers the whole surface. The dark-blue colouring formerly found on the red clay ware continues to be used in this new period. Although the designs are composed of *roumîs* ("pea" leaf scrolls), *hatayîs* (Chinese floral scrolls) and stylized cloud motifs as seen in the Turkish tiles of the 15th century, they are treated here in quite a different fashion and in such a way as to give the illusion of relief. As time progresses, lighter and warmer shades of blue appear. This can be seen in a famous dragon-handled jug with an inscription under the base mentioning the name Abraham of Kütahya and the date 1510, in the Godman Collection (now in the British Museum in London). Like the colours, the designs were at

³ Erdmann, K., *Neue Arbeiten zur Türkischen Keramik*, V, pp. 191-219, 1963; Erdmann says: "Better Pieces of the Miletus Ware have Aegian gracefulness in the ease of brushwork."

first very heavy and over-loaded, but gradually became lighter. There is a candlestick belonging to this group in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

Although the colours and designs in this blue-and-white pottery are obviously influenced by Ming porcelain, Saljuq motifs also play an important role in its development. There is another group of blue-and-white pottery known as "Golden Horn Ware" which display spiral scrolls that resemble script (calligraphy). At first, long delicate leaves and dark coloured medallions of fine *roumîs* can be seen among the scrolls. Later, at the beginning of the 16th century, we see lighter and more simple designs composed only of spiral scrolls, small leaves and flowers. The Armenian inscription on the bottom of a broken-necked decanter with very delicate designs of spiral scrolls in the Godman Collection (now in British Museum in London) mentions that it was ordered and made in Kütahya in 1529. Sometimes these patterns are combined in unusual forms, the inside of the bowl being decorated with spirals and the outside with *roumîs* and *hatayîs*. Earlier tiles and book illuminations make remarkable use of fine spiral scrolls as, for instance, in the tile sarcophagus in the Green Türbe in Bursa, the window lunette in the courtyard of the Uch Sherefeli Mosque in Edirne and the Choban Mustafa Pasha Türbe at Gebze. This type of decoration can be traced back to the Saljuq Period, and seen in the Keykubadiye tiles in Kayseri. Among the very varied selection of blue-and-white pottery found during the excavations at Iznik in 1963 there were sherds decorated with sailboats, fishes, hares, birds and other animals, some of which are fighting.

In the mosque lamps belonging to the blue-and-white series, great deal of space is given up to kufic or thuluth inscriptions in white on a blue ground. Turquoise was used together with blue in a large quantity of pottery that may be approximately dated to the years 1530-40. On these we find for the first time the tulip, hyacinth and carnation designs that were to play such a large part in the later period. The cultivation of the tulip had been known among the Turks for a very long time and their representation had come to occupy an important place in the decorative arts. In 1554, the ambassador of Ferdinand I secretly smuggled out some tulip bulbs to Europe.⁴

⁴ Erdmann, K., "Die Fliesen am Sünnet Odası des Topkapı Saray in İstanbul". *Aus der Welt der Islamischen Kunst, Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel zum 75. Geburtstag am 26.10.1957*,

Small spots of red appear for the first time on two blue-and-white sherds from the excavations of Iznik, which were once parts of a large plate. The red stands out in relief and such decorations form a transition to a subsequent group of ceramics with brilliant underglaze coral thick red belonging to the last quarter of the 16th century. In the Iznik excavations, sherds of this hard white pottery were found in large quantities. The real centre of their manufacture was Iznik although Kütahya was also very important. As it is impossible to carry out excavations under the houses in Kütahya, the situation there remains obscure.

The fourth period at Iznik begins with the very rich pottery of original decoration which appeared in large quantities in the middle of the 16th century. This is the so-called "Damascus Ware" named on account of its resemblance to the tiles used in various monuments of Damascus. It evidently belongs to the blue-and-white group and is of importance as a transition to the coral red group described below. The colours become richer and besides turquoise and the three tones of blue there now appear olive or sage green, manganese and violet on a bluish background with the outlines emphasized in green and black. Along with tulips, hyacinths and carnations we find rosebuds and full-blown roses, artichokes, fish scales, rosettes and sometimes vases and metal ewers. A lamp belonging to this group from the Qubbat al-Sakhra in Jerusalem (now in the British Museum) has an inscription surrounding the circular base mentioning the names of Iznik and its decorator, Nakkash *Musli*, together with the date 956/1549.

The small Lamp (h. 38.1 cm) was made without a bottom, so that light inside would shine downward. The floral decoration is painted only in blue, turquoise, black and is not very elaborate.

The small inscription in panels around the foot says; "thou holy man who is at Iznik Eshrefzade in the year 956 (1549) on the first day of the month Jemadha (The painter (nakkash) the poor the humble Musli)".

Among the sherds of the Iznik excavations there is a small bottom piece, bearing the name of the master Musli.

There is also a document concerning the name of this master in the records of the Mühimme Defter (Registers) in the archives. According to

pp. 144-153, 16 Abb; Erdmann, K., Neue Arbeiten zur Türkischen Keramik, *Ars Orientalis* V, pp. 191-219, 1963.

this, Musli and his friends wounded Mehmet, who had carried out the Mirî Kâshî (tiles for state) and then they escaped. The document is a decree concerning the investigation of the case written to the qadi of İznik, dated Jumada. Ist 982 (1574) this is a date 25 years later than the execution of the lamp.

A considerable number of large and small sherds of this type of pottery was found in the excavations at İznik. The production of this most original pottery with its magnificent decorative blend of naturalistic and stylized flowers covered only a rather short period between about 1525-1555. As a result of the increasing manufacture of tiles with more vivid and brighter colours for architectural decoration in İznik and Kütahya, the output of pottery declined to second place from the second half of the 16th century onwards. This fifth and last great period of İznik pottery is marked by the use of bright coral red and other colours as cobalt, soft green, and turquoise on a plain white ground. We also find pink, brown, and gray which may be laid in relief on a ground which is sometimes coloured. The pigments are prevented from running by a black contour.

The outlines of so called "Damascus" and "Golden Horn" wares were in soft greenish color. But in second half of the 16th century the outlines were painted in an intense black. This can be seen on the lamp (h. 48.2 cm.) from the Süleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul (now in Victoria and Albert Museum, London). This was made eight years later from Musli's lamp in about 1557. The lotus and some of the hatayî flowers are also painted in black. The band of Roumîs around the lip in black under turquoise glaze is similar to the Musli lamp. The ground is in cobalt blue, pale turquoise is used for detail and broad areas are painted in a thin tomato red, there is no green. In the very rich tiles of the Rüstem Paşa Mosque from this period in Istanbul (1561) especially on the qubla wall, the coral red is very thick, there is much blue, turquoise and green but no strong emerald green.

Ten years later the tiles in the Sokollu Mosque (1572) show an advance in colour and quality. Here appears plenty of strong emerald green and a brilliant coral red standing out in relief, turquoise has dropped out.

The pottery developed in the same colour scheme and quality parallel to the tiles decorations.

Rich decorations composed of carnations, tulips, daisies, hyacinths, roses, violets, lilies, pomegranates and plum and apple blossoms, vines and cypresses produce an atmosphere of eternal spring. Sometimes the classical rock and wave borders from Chinese porcelain lend these designs a characteristic appearance. Chintamanis, clouds, fish scales, flowered medallions, grapes and vine leaves, birds, animals fighting, human figures and sailing boats are frequently to be seen. This pottery which is highly esteemed in the museums of the world was long designated as Rhodes or Lindos ware; this mistake was the result of a fanciful theory, now long disproved, that had been originally based on the fact that the Cluny Museum happened to buy a large quantity of such ware from the town of Lindos in Rhodes. Hundreds of sherds of this ware were found in the Iznik excavations.

At the end of the 17th century work in Iznik workshops stops entirely and the demand was met by the tiles and pottery produced in Kütahya.

In the 18th century a new, very attractive type of pottery, possessing a forceful style and modern outlook, began to be produced at that centre. The small vessels, such as cups, bowls and ink-pots with free brush designs are quite different from classical Turkish pottery. The decoration is composed of small flowers and medallions in blue, red, yellow, purple and green. This was the last original style created by Turkish potters.

