

The Potter "Al-Siwan" New look through a signature being published for the first time

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Summary:

It is known that the regions of the Islamic state in the Middle Ages from China in the east to Morocco and Andalusia in the west were not isolated from each other, as the current political borders did not exist back then, and Muslims moved through these vast regions easily, and wherever they settled, they are in the land of Islam.

In addition, craftsmen moved completely freely between the various Islamic regions, and their movements were in search of stability, safe living and the abolition of giving from art sponsors from rulers and others. The art of making and decorating Islamic ceramics in the Middle Ages did not depart from this rule, as makers and artists of ceramics industry and decoration played a major role in transferring artistic, industrial and decorative styles during their continuous movement from one place to another.

The few remaining examples of the Muslim potters' signatures, that they recorded on some of their products are considered the main source for identifying them, their proper names, their original homeland, their artistic styles, specializations, and status among other craftsmen. As the contemporary historical literature rarely mentioned the definition of the artisans and artists, or their history. Mameluke ceramics were characterized by recording the signatures of their manufacturers. This paper aims to shed some light on an unknown potter called "Al-Siwan" depending on his signature, which found on an unpublished fragment of pottery, now stored at the Gayer Anderson/Bait al-Kiritliyya Museum in Cairo (No. 164).

Research terms: Mamluk era, Pottery, Al-Siwan, Ibn Al-Siwan Al-Shami.

Research Methodology: Descriptive - Analytical - Comparative - Documentary.

Previous studies:

- Daniel Fouquet, Contribution à l'étude de la Céramique Orientale, Le Caire, 1900.
- Armand Abel, Gaibi ET Les grand faienciers Egyptiens d'epoque Mamluk, Le Caire, 1930.
- Ali Bahgat, & Felix Massoul, La Céramique Musulmane de l'Egypte, Le Caire, 1930.
- Arthur Lane, Later Islamic pottery. Persia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, London, 1957.
- Esin Atil, Renaissance of Islamic Art in the Mamluk Era, Washington, 1981.

Introduction

The Mamluk era (648-923 AH / 1250-1517 AD) was famous for wealth and money, which led to a life of opulence and elegance experienced by the Mamluk sultans and princes and the desire to acquire antiques. Appreciation and good pay motivated artists to exert more effort and care. Therefore, the Mameluke era was characterized by a great artistic renaissance that left its traces in all its aspects, where the golden age in Egypt and the Levant considered many applied arts whose industry flourished, including the manufacture and decoration of ceramics of various kinds that moved in the path of evolution over great distances.

In the Mamluk ceramics motifs, we see three streams of external artistic influences. The first is Iranian and appears in artifacts attributed to the second half of the 7th century AH / 13th AD and even the first half of the 8th century AH / 14th AD, and this is evident in the Mamluk ceramic pots imitating the Sultanabad ceramics, and the second was the Chinese, and its appearance began around the middle of the 8th AH / 14th AD century., and it continued throughout the 9th A.H / 15th AD century, and this is evident in the Mamluk ceramic pots painted in blue and white, as the Mamluk ceramics have been influenced since the middle of the 8th century AH / 14th AD century by shapes, motifs and colors Porcelain and celadon porcelain imported from China, this effect began as being simple and was simulating tradition and was an attempt to copy in the 9th A.H / 15th AD century, and the third was the Andalusian and appeared in artifacts dated in the second half of the 8th AH / 14th AD century, and the early 9th A.H / 15th AD century.

In the late 9th AH / 15th century, the Mamluk ceramics industry began to diminish, as the Chinese porcelain utensils were flooded with larger quantities and people began to use them, so it became difficult for the Mamluk potters to compete with these beautiful inexpensive pots, compared to lesser local products.

Objectives of the study:

The industrial organizations had an important role in pushing the development of arts and industries in general forward, as well as the reasons for the progress and prosperity of the Mamluk ceramics industry a large number of skilled craftsmen and potters. Therefore, this research aims to:

- Shed light on one of the unknown potter known as "Al-Siwan."
- Study his artistic style.
- Determine the period during which he worked with this workmanship. Determine his original homeland through his signature that he recorded on the ceramic bottoms which is the subject of this study

It is known that Mamluk ceramics are characterized by the abundance of the signatures of its industry, including, but not limited to: Al-Tawrizi, Ghaibi Ibn Al-Tawrizi, Ibn Ghaibi Al-Tawrizi, Egyptian Professor, Sheikh Al-Sanna, Ghazal, Ghozael, Al-Khabbaz, Ibn Al-Khabaz, Ajami, Muhandam, Naqash, Al-Hormozi, Abu Al-Ezz, Darwish, Dahin, Al-Baqaili, Sons "Abnaa" of Al-Fakhoury Al-Masryyn, Ibn Al-Malik, Servant of the Poor "Khadem Alfokaraa", Ghazi, Al-Shaer, Al-Ajeel, Al-Barani, Al-Iraqi, Al-Shami, Barir, Qoronfoli, Ibn Zaitoun, Al-Faqir and others.

Also, these signatures were not limited to male potters, as signatures belonging to women who worked in the manufacture and decoration of ceramics on an equal basis with men were found, for example from these potteries, for example Quttaitah, Intisar Set Al-Roumi, Al-Dar, Umn and others. The Gayer Anderson Museum in Cairo maintains the bottom of an irregular shaped pot of white and blue painted ceramic inside and outside in imitation of Chinese porcelain (pl.1) - the porcelain bottom under study – was made of good white material and painted with clear glass paint, and the decoration of the inner surface of the bottom (pl.1 / A) was decorated with plant formations as a central flower in the middle of the bottom with nine completely colored petals in blue stems from the ends of five petals, including floral motifs which are simple branches bearing pointed leaves (Fig.1) that spread on the products of porcelain china in white and blue in the century 9th AH / 15thAD (pl.2), and these branches are touched by a circle in blue surrounding the previous decorative composition, followed by an outward circle with another blue color that took the beginning of starting the motifs of the rest of the lost vessel.

Likewise, the outer surface of the aforementioned ceramic bottom (pl.1 / b) is decorated with floral formations in the style of securitization, in blue on a white floor in a circular shape that wraps around the bottom section of the bottom near the base, as recorded inside the circular ring of the bottom in blue on a white floor a letter representing the name of the potter. The creator of the piece, we can read it in the form of "making a pinna", as the signature are completely clear in the Naskhi calligraphy and in relatively large size until they almost fill the circular ring of the ceramic bottom (Fig.2).

The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo also maintains the bottom of a Mamluk porcelain pot painted in white and blue imitation of Chinese porcelain - (Record No. 13064) - (Pl. 8 / A, B) plated with transparent glass paint inside and outside, adorning the inner surface of the vessel (Pl.8 / A) With delicate floral formations in the style of securitization (Fig. 3) distributed regularly within eleven repeated geometric formation regularly from a rectangle that wraps around a central area in the middle of the bowl separating them from the previous formation a well-drawn geometric plexus, the central region is decorated with vegetative formations of securitization of palm trees and halves Palm fans, triple and five-lobed leaves are reserved in white on a blue background (Fig.4), and are recorded in the center of the circular bottom of the bottom from the outside (Pl.8 / b) Signing the pottery in the form of "pinna making" which is the same place in which the signature of the potter on the bottom of the subject under study is recorded, in the same formula as "Al-Siwan ", however, the breakdown of some parts of the glaze paint on this bottom made the writing unclear.

The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo also maintains the bottom of a Mamluk porcelain pot painted in white and blue imitation of Chinese porcelain - The record number of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (1940/544) - bearing the signature of the potter in the form of "Al-Siwan " inside the bottom from the outside and it is the same place in which it has registered the potter's signature on the bottom of the study under the same formula which is also " Amal Al-Siwan".

From the foregoing it has become clear to us the decorative style of the "Al-Siwan" pottery, as it executed its decorations in blue on a bright white floor inside and outside the pot, and, like other Mameluke ceramics, he used plant formations according to Chinese traditions that spread extensively within the Mamluk ceramics in the 9th century AH / 15th AD, (Pls. 9, 10, 11), which is the method used by most of the Mamluk potters, especially the famous potter Ghibi Ibn Al-Tawrizi (Pls. 4, 7, 11), Ibn Ghibi Al-Tawrizi (pl.5), Abu Al-Ezz, Dahin, Khabbaz, Ibn Al-Khabbaz (pl.9), Ajami, Muhandam, Naqash, Al-Hormozi, Darwish, Al-Buqaili (pl.10), Ibn Al-Malik, Servant of the Poor, Ghazi, Al-Shaer, Al-Ajeel, Al-Barani, Al-Iraqi, Al-Shami, Barir, Qronfoli, Ibn Zaytoon, Al Fakeer. Depending on the way this potter recorded his name on the inside of the outer bottom ring of the pot, it is the preferred position of the Mamluk potters in registering their signatures (pls. 3,9, 10, 11, 12), the use of blue Naskhi and Thulth calligraphy in his signature, as well as the Chinese-style plant motifs executed on the inner and outer surface of the bottom of the study in question, which was painted in blue on a white floor under the transparent glass coating, and it was the same method used by the Mamluk potters in imitating Chinese porcelain utensils in the late 8th century AH / 14th AD and throughout the 9th century AH / 15th AD (pls. 9, 10, 11). we suggest that the "Al Siwan" potter worked with the manufacture and decoration of Mamluk porcelain painted in blue and white in imitation of Chinese porcelain in the 9th AH / 15th AD century. The ceramic vessels are being distinguished by the use of white and blue colors only and the use of local materials, as was the use of the Naskhi and Thulth calligraphy in recording his signature on his utensils.

Likewise, we suggest that "Al-Siwan" potter is the father of the potter whose name was recorded in the form of "The Work of ibn Al-Siwan Al-Shami" (Fig.6). We also suggest that he is a Shami of

origin, not an Egyptian, and he migrated from the Levant to Egypt according to what stated at the end of his son's signature, "Al-Shami". It is known that a person is not attributed to his country unless he is outside it, and the formula for the ratio to the homeland was repeated at the end of the signatures of the potters in the Mamluk era, where the potter attributed the same metaphysical in his signatures to the city of Tabriz at the time in the form of "the work of Ghaybi son of Al-Tawrizi" (pl.6) or as "The work of Ghaybi Tawrizi" (pl.7), and to the Levant at other times in the form of "metaphysical Shami" (pl.11), and among the Mamluk potters who restricted his signature to his production with the title of proportion to his home only in the form of "work of al-Shami" (Fig.7), and in the midst of the competition in Fustat between the local potters and the immigrant potters - some local potters attributed themselves to their country "Egypt" as did the "al Ustaz Almasri" (Pl.12). Thus, we expect this "Al Siwan" to be the head of an artistic family specializing in the manufacture and decoration of ceramics in Mamluk era in the 9th century AH / 15th AD in Fustat city after they migrated to it from the Levant, their original homeland, also his son, "Ibn Al-Siwan al-Shami".

The most important results:

- The study added two new names to the list of Islamic pottery craftsmen in general and Mamluk ceramics manufacturers in particular who worked in this field and in particular during the AH 9th / AD 15th century in Al-Fustat city, where their production was found.
- The study suggested that the potter "Al-Siwan" might represent the head of an artistic family that specialized in manufacturing and decorating Mamluk ceramics during the 9th AH / 15th century. may other names of this family's pottery will be revealed in the future by revealing more of their ceramic products during archaeological excavations in Fustat city.
- The study proved that the potter "Al-Siwan" his native land is the Levant not Egypt despite finding his production in Al-Fustat, confirms that the signature of his son in the form of "The work of "Amal" Ibn Al-Siwan Al-Shami".
- The study proved that the potter "Al-Siwan" production was influenced by the Chinese ceramic production methods, whether in decorations or colors, especially Chinese porcelain painted in blue and white in the AH 9th / AD 15th century, as it appears from the two pieces under study.
- The study demonstrated that the potter "Al-Siwan" used the same industrial and decorative methods that were used by his colleagues from the Mamluk era pottery, whether in terms of raw materials, colors, decorations, or the method of recording his signature on pots in Naskhi and in a Thulth calligraphy on a white floor and in the outer ring of the bottom.

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