NEW PERSPECTIVES ON KINRANDE

LINDA ROSENFELD POMPER

Panel with swans, plain-weave silk brocaded with metallic thread, China, Jin dynasty (1115–1234), 58.5 x 62.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Anne Eden Woodward Foundation Gift and Rogers Fund, 1989, 1989.282

Chinese porcelain bowl painted with overglaze enamels in red and green, interior painted in underglaze blue, 16th century, diameter 9.2 cm. Museum Het Princessehof, Leeuwarden. Photo: Johan van der Veer
GLOBALISATION is not a new phenomenon.

Usually categorised as “made in the Jiajing period (1522–1566)”4, “made primarily for the Japanese market” and “rare in Europe”, its presence in Latin America sites and in European 16th century inventories raises issues of dating and taste. In Harry Garner’s discussion of the collection at Schloss Ambras near Innsbruck (formed in the latter part of the 16th century by Archduke Ferdinand II (1529–1595), inventoried in 1596 and probably a gift from his cousin Philip II of Spain), he dated kinrande to the Jiajing period by means of stylistic criteria, and because three of the pieces in the collection have Jiajing marks on them. Some kinrande pieces have monochrome decoration on them with gold leaf added, like this spectacular ever (1), while some have polychrome decoration on the exterior and gold leaf decoration added to red medallions (2).

Kinrande means “gold brocade type”, a term adopted for brocade fabric used for the mounting of scrolls or to describe bags or pouches for tea ceremony utensils in 16th century Japan, and then for ceramics during the 17th century. Gold foil was fastened to the surface of the vessel by an adhesive, possibly lacquer. Brocade textiles were imported from China until the late 16th century “when a Chinese weaver established looms at Dakai near Osaka”. When Hideyoshi became Shogun in 1585, he encouraged the establishment of new looms, but some kinran continued to be imported from China. The designs on kinrande porcelain relate to brocades of the Jin (1115–1234) and Song (960–1279) dynasties (3, 4),5 which continued to be produced. The old styles persisted, because wood blocks remained in use for centuries. There are forty-four kinrande and kinrande-type pieces in the Topkapi Saray in Istanbul.6


4Shojiro Nomura, An Historical Sketch of Nishiki and Kinran Brocades, Boston, 1914, p. 16.


6Regina Krahl, Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul: A Complete Catalogue, Vol. II: Yuan and Ming Dynasty Porcelains, Sotheby’s, 1986, cat. nos 1646–1665. Of these pieces twenty-seven are kinrande, thirteen are kinrande type, and only one cat. no. 6556 has a Wanli mark.

---

Two views of a desk stand in the form of a screen with relief, polychrome enamel and gilded decoration, Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, Ming dynasty, circa 1540–1600, height 27 cm. The British Museum, Given by Sir A.W. Franks, OA.F.1482

Plate, Spanish, Valencian, earthenware, tin-glazed, 15th century, diameter 44.5 cm, Arms of the Morelli of Florence. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 1956, 56.171.136
The well-known Manderscheidt bowls, one kinrande and one kinrande type, were brought from Turkey in 1583, indicating a Middle Eastern origin for such pieces.\(^7\)

Although it has been thought that kinrande wares were only made for export, a kinrande water dropper and brush stand may have been made for a Chinese patron. It has a cyclical date which can be interpreted as either 1513 or 1573. The date of 1513 is unlikely, so that this piece may have been made in 1573.\(^8\) A desk stand in the form of a screen is an “item for the scholar’s table”, which Jessica Harrison-Hall dates to 1540–1600 (5).\(^9\) There are also several kinrande pieces in the Shanghai Museum, including an incense burner on animal legs\(^10\) and a kinrande ewer which has been found in the drainage dish of a temple in Shaanxi province.\(^11\) Kinrande continued to be made long after the Jiajing period, and we will see that there were surprisingly large amounts of it in both Latin America and Europe in the 16th century.

It is possible that the gilding on kinrande wares was meant to copy lacquer. A red kinrande piece would have been fired, then covered with iron-red enamel and fired again. Gold leaf was cut and then affixed with an adhesive to the surface of the vessel. The finer examples, such as (1) would have had a design drawn on them with a brush dipped in adhesive, thin sheets of gold were applied, and the surplus was brushed or blown away. Since so many kinrande pieces are dense, pieces handed down through many generations in Japan, they were most likely made in response to Japanese taste and for use in the tea ceremony. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), one of the important feudal daimyos, had a portable Golden Tearoom made in 1586 as a display of wealth and power. It was made for a tea gathering held for Emperor Ogimachi at the Imperial Palace. Kinrande “may have been imported for the regional military leaders of the day”. This was the prevalent warlord (daimyo) taste, “heavy with gilt decoration and filled with conspicuously expensive objects”. Flamboyantly-decorated kinrande wares would have been suitable for use in this type of tea ceremony. The production of kinrande “probably continued [after the Jiajing period] and into the latter decades of the 16th century when Japanese taste for the sumptuous and ornate was at its height”. The simple wabi taste with rustic vessels promoted by Sen no Rikyu (1522–1591) was a deliberate contrast. Taste changed again under Furuta Oribe, who replaced him in 1592. Kinrande wares had “shapes and designs that did not depart far from the Chinese norm”, and thus were quite different from the rustic wares made for the wabi-style tea ceremony.

The kinrande taste appealed to Chinese, Japanese, Iberian and Ottoman consumers at the same time. Gold on ceramics would have been attractive to the Spanish, who were used to Hispano-Moresque lustre ware. Turkish Iznik wares, which were blue and white, included a bright tomato red from the 1560s on. An Iznik dish of about 1575 has red roundels on it reminiscent of the red roundels in kinrande-type wares, relating to the introduction of red from kinrande. Conversely, perhaps kinrande was created to satisfy Ottoman patrons who were accustomed to bright red used in textiles and in rugs.

Since a number of wares with jewelled decoration date from the same period as kinrande wares, from the second half of the 16th century, it is possible that the two tastes were related, and that kinrande was made in response to the taste for this opulent ware. Both the porcelains themselves and their jewelled decoration are known to have been made from the second quarter of the 16th century until the mid-17th century, with most dating from the second half of the 16th century. Many bowls with jewelled decoration on the exterior also have the blue trellis-work decoration inside the rim typical of kinrande bowls. The taste for sumptuously-jewelled wares could have been both Mughal and Spanish, since pietre dure cups in the Prado in Madrid, made in either Turkey or Mughal India in the late 16th century, thought to be from the Spanish royal collections, are decorated with jewels and gold in the same way as were the porcelain bowls in the Topkapi with jewelled decoration.

There is evidence of kinrande in Portugal in the 16th century. A red bowl with gilt decoration on the exterior, blue and white on the interior, and a Jiajing mark, has been found in excavations of a monastery in Coimbra, and most likely dates from the 16th century. The Italian merchant Carletti, who was in the Portuguese colony of Macau from 1598–1601, mentioned that porcelain colours were varied “to suit the taste” of the purchaser, and that although the most common colour was blue and white, some were “painted and worked with gold”, indicating that kinrande was still being made at this time.

Mexico, or New Spain as it was then called, was conquered by the Spanish under Cortez during the first quarter of the 16th century. The Spanish explorers found gold in
Two views of a bowl with silver-gilt mounts, porcelain painted in underglaze blue, with blue glaze and gold decoration, mark: Wan fu you tong, Ming dynasty, mid-16th century, Jiajing period, diameter 12.1 cm, German mounts, circa 1590–1610. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase by subscription, 1879, 79.2.112

Peru, and even more importantly, in 1546 the silver mine at Potosí (now in Bolivia, then in Peru) was discovered, and some of the veins of ore near the surface contained as much as 50 per cent pure silver. In the same year, silver was discovered at Zacatecas, 300 miles northwest of Mexico City. Spanish traders in the Philippines quickly saw an opportunity to send Chinese silk, lacquer and porcelain to the American colonies in exchange for sending silver to China, where domestic production was not sufficient. A gallon crossed the Pacific from Manila to Acapulco each year beginning in 1565, but large shipments of porcelain did not reach Acapulco until 1573. In Acapulco an annual fair was held in January, and buyers came from all over New Spain. Some of the porcelain was carried on muleback to Vera Cruz and then to Europe via Puebla, while most of it was taken to Mexico City. This influx of silver may have been a significant factor in the dynamic economic expansion in China at the end of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which also benefited the ceramic industry, so that production at Jingdezhen increased steadily throughout the 16th century.27

There is a resemblance between decoration on the Riukyu lacquer bowl at Schloss Ambras and kinrande bowls (Garner, op. cit., plate 14A), and the “Pope’s trunk” made in Bengal during the second half of the 16th century of carved wood, lacquer and gilding, with red ground with gold decoration on the interior. Both are reminiscent of kinrande with a red ground with gold decoration. This piece could have been referred to in the inventory of Rudolf II (1607–1611). Pedro de Moura Carvalho in Exotica: Portugals Entdecken im Spiegel fürstlicher Kunst-und Wunderkammern der Renaissance (May 2000) in Jahrbuch des Künstlerhistorischen Museums Wien, Band 35, suggests that both the bowl and the trunk could have been influenced by the decoration on Chinese textiles (“Oriental Export Lacquerworks and their Problematic Origin”, pp. 247–262, p. 251, fig. 3 and p. 259, fig. 9).

Rogers, op. cit., p. 116.


Ibid., p. 97, plate 78.

Krahl, op. cit., p. 833, and ibid., cat. nos 1807–1817 and 1819. The British Museum jewelled piece with gold and gem overlay has traces of kinrande gilding on the foot, but has an English history: it was “given by the Turkish Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamia II (reigned 1876–1909) to Sir Austen Henry Layard in 1877” too late for our purposes. However Harrison-Hall, op. cit., p. 244, mentions a will of the Elizabethan period (1391) in which a bowl “set (s) with stones” is mentioned, as evidence for such a piece being in England.

Oriente en Palacio/Tesoros Asianos en las colecciones reales españolas, Palacio Real Madrid, March–May 2003, Patrimonio Nacional, X5.


After an amalgamation process, using mercury facilitating the extraction of silver from ore, was developed in the 1550s and then used in Potosí beginning in 1572, New World silver production began to increase dramatically. Since silver production in Latin America fluctuated during the period during which kinrande was most likely made, an association between silver production and the production of kinrande can be made. Large shipments of porcelain did not reach Acapulco until 1573, after the Jiajing period had ended. Economic historians disagree about the amounts of silver that actually flowed between Acapulco and Manila, partly because “illegal mining, smuggling and official corruption were endemic in Spanish America”. Some scholars do believe that “the peak of silver production was reached in 1608, and then after 1615 dropped”, coinciding with the production of kinrande, beginning in the second half of the 16th century and most likely ending during the second decade of the 17th century.

Shards of Chinese porcelain have been found in excavations in many Spanish colonial sites. A shard from San Gabriel, in present-day New Mexico, datable to the period 1598–1610, is painted in red on one side and blue on the other, and therefore can be identified as kinrande. A shard from a similar type of bowl has been found in excavations in southern Peru, in a context datable by a volcanic eruption which took place in that year. At Panama Vieja, there are two specific finds that can be identified as kinrande. One is a small shard from a bowl from an early 17th century context. The foot is slightly concave, making the interior of the bowl convex, and there is a scrolled decoration in the centre of the bowl in underglaze blue which can be compared to the interior of the bowl in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (10). The exterior of the bowl has a tiny remnant of red enamel on it. Furthermore, two shards from a bowl have been found in Panama Vieja in a context datable to 1580–1600. Another example of kinrande at Panama was found in excavations at the house of the Genoese slave traders. A shard from Leon Viejo, the first capital of Nicaragua, has the red circle on it typical of kinrande-type wares. Because of an earthquake in 1610, the site was abandoned, so that the site “is a slice of time between 1524 and probably 1580, and at the outside 1610”.33

Recently, some shards of Chinese porcelain having the red medallions typical of kinrande-type ware have been found off the coast of Baja California that may have come from the wreck of a Manila galleon dating from the Wanli period (1573–1620). Porcelain in red with gilt decoration
is mentioned as being in the collection of Queen Isabelle de Valois, third wife of Philip II of Spain, which was inventoried in 1569 after her death; an ewer of porcelain gilded on the outside on a red ground may have been like the Salem ewer (1), and could have come via the Portuguese since it predated the 1573 Manila galleon.

The collection of Philip II of Spain (reigned 1556–1598) contained over three thousand pieces of porcelain, which could have come via the Manila galleon trade. The two galleons that came to Acapulco in 1573 are recorded as having carried “22,300 pieces of fine gilt China and other porcelain wares.” Illustrating the taste of the previous period, the 1527 inventory of the collection of the Venetian Bernardin di Redaldi, who formed his collection between 1480 and 1525, contains celadons and blue and white wares, but no gilding was mentioned. The collection included bronzes from the Middle East, indicating that the porcelain may also have come from that source. In a recent book about the Medici collections, Francesco Moreno illustrates a bowl of kintrande type which is unusual: it is white with a wide red band inside and outside the rim with large red circles; it is quite large, diameter 22 cm, and there are red and green petals on the base. It has a Jiaying mark on it and is presently in the Museo degli Argenti, Florence. Spallanzani has hypothesised that it may have been part of the collection of Cardinal Ferdinando de’ Medici (1549–1609), who assumed the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1587, and formed a collection of five hundred pieces of porcelain between 1571 and 1590. More pieces are mentioned that are probably kintrande in the Inventory of the Guardaroba of Ferdinand I (1587–1590). He made a gift to Christian I of Saxony in 1590 which included two kintrande bowls (9), one coral the other green, with lotus blossoms and gold, which provides further evidence for the presence of kintrande in Italian collections. This princely gift must have included pieces in the latest taste, so it is likely that these pieces were new in the 1590s.

Philip II of Spain was a Habsburg and therefore connected to many of the princes of Central Europe. The two kintrande bowls at Dresden given by Ferdinando de Medici and two kintrande bowls with 16th century German mounts: one at The Metropolitan Museum in New York (10) and the other in the British Museum, as well as the Manderscheidt bowls, attest to the presence of kintrande ware in Central Europe.

Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor, who reigned from 1576–1612, was the head of the junior Habsburg line and lived for several years at the court of Philip II. Baron Hans Khevenhüller, the imperial ambassador in Spain from 1574 to 1606, was the “official representative in the Iberian peninsula for Habsburg patrons and collectors in both Munich and Prague. . . . He had a network of dealers, merchants and agents both in Iberia and abroad.” He also lived in Portugal from 1582–1583. Therefore, it is not surprising that Rudolf would have had kintrande pieces just as Philip did. There are many porcelain pieces in the inventory of Rudolf I that are painted or decorated with gold. Fifty porcelain objects are described as painted or decorated (worked) with gold. If there is intact gold-leaf decoration as in (1), you can actually see incising in the gold leaf that would be more accurately described as “worked with gold” rather than painted.
An important inventory of the kunstkammer in Munich was compiled in 1598,\(^{48}\) which includes about 195 porcelain items that came either “via the Fuggers and foreign trading ports or were presents, especially from the Medici: in 1572 Cosimo I sent to Munich part of the exotic cargo from a ship newly berthed at Livorno”. The collection dates mainly to the time of Albrecht V (who died in 1579), but it was enlarged under his son Wilhelm V. Albrecht V wrote letters asking for gifts “as, for example, when he wrote to the Queen of Philip II of Spain, requesting exotic objects”.

There were a few pieces of porcelain in 16th century England, including the covered cup from the Untermyer Collection with little gold remaining (11), at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York which has mounts dated to 1565–1570.\(^{49}\) It was given to Queen Elizabeth by Mr Lytchfeld in 1588 and is described as: “Item one Cyp o Purseline thonesyde paynted Red theoute and Cover sylver guilt poiz all, a Ringe Lyk a snak on the top of the Cover (sic)”\(^{50}\).

English privateers, such as Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, captured ships which had porcelain as part of their cargo. Drake landed in Plymouth late in September 1580 after his circumnavigation, and the Queen asked him to bring a few samples of his treasure to her.\(^{51}\) Shards of kinrande have been found in archaeological excavations in Plymouth,\(^{52}\) in Devon, in the vicinity of the old harbour where in 1587 the San Felice, the royal carrack of Philip II of Spain containing 1800 pounds of porcelain, was taken.\(^{53}\) Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury (1563–1612), had “a cabinet of China gilt all over”, which was likely to have been kinrande.\(^{54}\) Although kinrande wares, and porcelain in general, were rare in northern Europe during this period, shards of kinrande (12) were found in recent archaeological excavations in Copenhagen, Denmark.\(^{55}\) The prevalence of kinrande wares in so many European and Latin American collections and inventories indicates that it was not only made for the Japanese, and that it certainly was not rare in European collections in the 16th century, and it may have been made after the Jiajing period and into the Wanli period.

\(^{48}\) Lorenz Seelig, “The Munich Kunstkammer, 1656–1807”, Impney and MacGregor, op. cit., pp. 101–119, p. 108, no. 95 and p. 110, no. 129. However, she died in 1568, so it must have been Anna of Austria, Philip’s fourth wife, who was the recipient of this request. Johann Baptist Ficker, Das Inventar der Münchner herzoglichen Kunstkammer von 1598, Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, München, 2004. I am indebted to Elke Bjoek for sending me copies of the inventory.


\(^{50}\) A. Jeffries Collings, Jewels and Plate of Queen Elizabeth I: The Inventory of 1574, The British Museum, 1955, p. 592.


\(^{54}\) Adam Nicolson, God’s Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible, Harper Collins, 2003, p. 18. His father, William Cecil, Queen Elizabeth’s treasurer, owned some blue and white porcelain pieces which were beautifully mounted, now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, formerly in the J.P. Morgan Collection.


Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank Dr Miyeko Murase for her invaluable advice about Japanese taste.