



## The Chinese Ceramics Unearthed from the Site of Jahan Nama Palace

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(99-125)

### Abstract

As an important type of ancient artwork, the Chinese blue and white porcelain entered Iran through the artists and merchants during the Safavid era (1501–1736 AD), and it strongly influenced the Islamic ceramic industry at that time. Chinese blue and white porcelain wares can be considered as the most decorative ceramic art. Bowls and plates with a floral rim and teacups were exported from China to the overseas markets. The influence of this art and its motifs can be seen in the examples obtained from the excavations at Jahan Nama Palace in the old city of Farahabad. Not only the Chinese ceramic finds from this excavation show the long-distance trade from China, the artistic imitation in the porcelain manufacturing and porcelain also can be seen in different areas of Iran. According to the historical sources and accounts, the Farahabad historical complex is a part of the city with the same name, which was built on Tahan village by the order of Shah Abbas I, and the early history of this city dates to 1612 AD in an area of about 40 hectares along the Tajan River and close to the littoral area of the Caspian Sea. The purpose of this research is to study and discuss the blue and white porcelain of Jahan Nama Palace and the extensive trade and port status of the important city of Farahabad in the Safavid era.

**Keywords:** Mazandaran, Farahabad, Jahan Nama, blue and white porcelain.

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## **1. Introduction**

For both archaeologists and museum curators, the Persian blue and white ceramics are considered as one of the finest artworks of the Safavid period. Not only did it strongly link to the trade of East Indian Company at the contemporary period, it was also impacted by the Chinese blue and white porcelain imports. The development in commercial and cultural relations between Iran and China led to a great evolution of the art of pottery of the Islamic ceramic industries. The impact of this well-growing relationship on the art of painting and pottery can be clearly demonstrated both directly and indirectly by the remains and artworks from the industrial and artistic centres of cities such as Isfahan, Kerman, Tabriz and Mashhad. Economic and cultural exchanges with foreign countries also had a huge effect on the art of pottery during this period. For example, the Safavid kings were interested in a type of Irani local pottery that was directly influenced by the ceramic imports from the Ming China (1368–1644 AD). This is known well that Chinese ceramics was imported in large quantities from the Far East, and the Iranian potters imitated Chinese ceramics and produced similar Irani local pottery (Mohammadifar, 2008: 95).

While the art of Ming China was featured by the fine porcelains and the high-quality decorative calligraphic paintings, this was also the golden age of Islamic blue and white ceramics. During the Qing period (1644–1912), a political continuation of the Ming period, the ceramic industry still flourished. The visual features of Islamic blue and white ceramics continued to develop until the early Eighteenth century AD (Nafisi, 2005: 11), and was as influential as the art of pottery in the Safavid period.

Shah Abbas (1571-1629 AD), the fifth Safavid Shah of Iran, gathered art masters in his great empire, settled them around Isfahan, established numerous royal industrial workshops and aided small craftsmen and private industries. When he heard from the merchants and representatives of the Dutch East India Company (the VOC), which had a fortress on Hormuz island in the Persian Gulf where they were busy trading Chinese porcelain, he invited Chinese merchants to send their beautiful porcelain to Iran by land for re-exporting to Europe. Therefore, there was strong competition in ceramic trade between Iranian ceramic industries and the Dutch East India company.

Shah Abbas invited some 300 Chinese potters to Iran to train the local potters in the porcelain industry (Woolf, 1993: 134). He played an important role in promoting ceramic industries of Iran. With his ingenuity and tact, he created a great change in the Iranian art and pottery industry, and generated economic growth in this period. Since the reign of Shah Abbas, namely the period of the Ming China, blue and white porcelain had become the most important type of trade ceramics in the commercial market (Sarmadi & Masoumeh, 2010: 114; Zhang, 2016: 295-297). With important cities such as Ashraf, Sari, Amol, Natel, Barforosh and the newly built city of Farahabad of the Caspian Sea, Mazandaran also became an important centre in commercial, artistic and cultural exchanges. Palatial buildings were built in this city, and their inhabitants were the major consumers of the luxurious commodities and artworks.

Although the historical background of the Persian blue and white ceramics had been well-studied, the chronological difficulties of them are problematic for archaeologists and historians. Different types of chronological classifications are introduced from 1950s to 2000s, and sometimes the identification and dating of Persian blue and white porcelain were mainly based on the Chinese ceramic imports (c.f. Lane 1957; Crowe 2003). Rare archaeological evidence could be able to directly investigate the technical and cultural communications between ancient Iran and China. This paper, therefore, aims to provide an initial understanding on the ceramic finds from Jahan Nama Palace of Farahabad. By no means this paper is going to provide a conclusive and all-inclusive chronological development of Persian blue and white ceramics, it only hoped that the well-dated Chinese ceramic finds could enhance the understanding of all artefacts unearthed from the site, and give some paralleled evidence for supporting the further investigations of the Persian blue and white ceramics.

In 2007 and 2011, due to the importance of the old city of Farahabad, surface surveys and excavations were carried out and, as a result, parts of architecture and related decorations, including bedding and tiling, as well as beautiful pottery and porcelain from the Safavid period were found. It appears that the artistic style of the Isfahan school was quite evident in these works (Razeghi and Solhjoo, 1399: 8). The evidence unearthed from the archaeological excavations of Jahan Nama Palace in Farahabad clearly shows the cultural exchange between Iran and China. On one hand, porcelain finds and Irani local pottery yielded from surface surveys and excavations of the Jahan Nama Palace show the decorative and ceramic firing technical influences from Chinese ceramics; on the other hand, the Irani local made pottery utensils surpassed Chinese ceramics in terms of ceramic shapes, patterns, variety of functions, colours and decorations. They had therefore been exported to other countries in a large quantity. This intensified the artistic independence of artists and potters in the ceramic centres of Iran during the Safavi period. In the excavations of the old city of Farahabad and Jahan Nama Palace, a large number of pieces of blue and white porcelain and Irani local pottery were found. Selected examples of these are introduced in this article, and they are categorised as remarkable pottery and top findings. By examining the historical accounts, the authors will attempt to outline and analyse the role of the motifs used in this porcelain, and discuss their roles in the cultural exchange between Iran and China.

## **2. A brief history of Jahan Nama Palace**

A number of European tourists and businessmen have seen the Jahan Nama Palace up close and described it in their travelogues. In his travelogue, Stoddart describes this palace in the period of prosperity as follows:

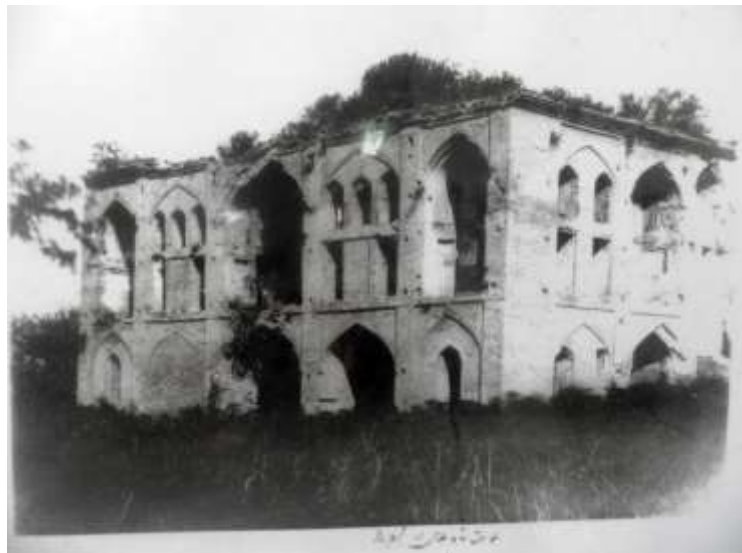
It was a great and pleasant place, the gate is very simple and has nothing interesting (Figure 1). After going through a yard full of greenery that was planted with trees on both sides of the road, we reached another gate that was as simple as the first one. After passing through it, we reached a very pleasant garden full of orange and orange trees.

There are several beautiful pools in the middle of this garden and in the middle of the pool there was a room made of beams and wood and it was the place for the king. On one side of the garden is his harem which has beautiful and interesting rooms. The sizes of these rooms are exactly the same. Their floors are furnished with Turkish carpets. The walls and tops of the rooms are gilded and painted with photos of men and women and painted traditionally in gold and other colours. Some rooms are filled with interesting porcelains for drinking coffee and wine while having fun among his wives (Sardnis, 1960: 197).

In 1844 AD, Holmes visited Jahan Nama Palace in Farahabad and described its increasingly desolate state as follows:

This palace has a central hall. And in the corners of this palace, there are rooms with smaller rooms inside them. On the lower and upper floors, there are many rooms and some of which are categorized. This categorization shows the main purpose of this palace, which is for different people, as inhabitants say, this special palace has been for women in the harem. All these rooms are decorated with different types of arts. Not only painting such as flower, bush and imaginary decorations had been seen, but also the calligraphic arts including contrary to Muslims' belief, pillars and ledges in form of sculptures. But they have been damaged so much by the wind and rain that they can be hardly discerned. From what I could see, I came to a conclusion that these subjects or painters must have been Chinese because instead of stiff drawing seen in Iranian paintings, these paintings were very soft and fluid (Sotoudeh, 1985: J4, 583).

Jahan Nama Palace has become famous for its architectural grandeur and integration of Eastern and Western art, which is in the form of paintings on walls.



**Figure 1: Remains of Jahan Nama Palace from Nasreddin Shah's album (Archival source of historical city, Farahabad)**

### **3. Investigations at the site of Jahan Nama: Preliminary results from the**

**auger-hole survey:**

In order to gain some preliminary understanding, 24 auger-holes are drilled in 2007 in different parts of the site of Jahan Nama, including the main walls of the palace, architectural remains and the brick pavement area (Figures 2 & 3). Along the bank of Tajan River of the City, a part of remains of the main wall is survived, and it is the most important architectural components of the site.



**Figure 2: An Overview of the Site of Jahan Nama**



**Figure 3: A Part of the Survived Wall Remains of the Jahan Nama Palace**



Several insights are gained from the post-archaeological processes of the auger-holes survey. A significant number of the broken sherds consisting of varied types of glazed potteries, such as plain pottery, polychrome pottery and blue and white pottery tiles with geometric pattern, are obtained. This preliminary discovery delivers some key clues to re-construct the details of these buildings of the site, including the architectural decorations, potteries for display, the plasterwork and colourful tiles. All of these details can be well identified to the arts that were created by Safavid artists. It is also interesting to see that the pottery findings and tiles from the survey were all in the imitations of the contemporary Chinese and Ottoman ceramics.

It can be seen that this survey is against the well-known historical backdrop of the Old City of Farahabad, which describes that the site of Jahan Nama Palace is with a historical and cultural greatness of the architectural remains, including bridges, mosques, bathrooms and so forth (Figure 4).

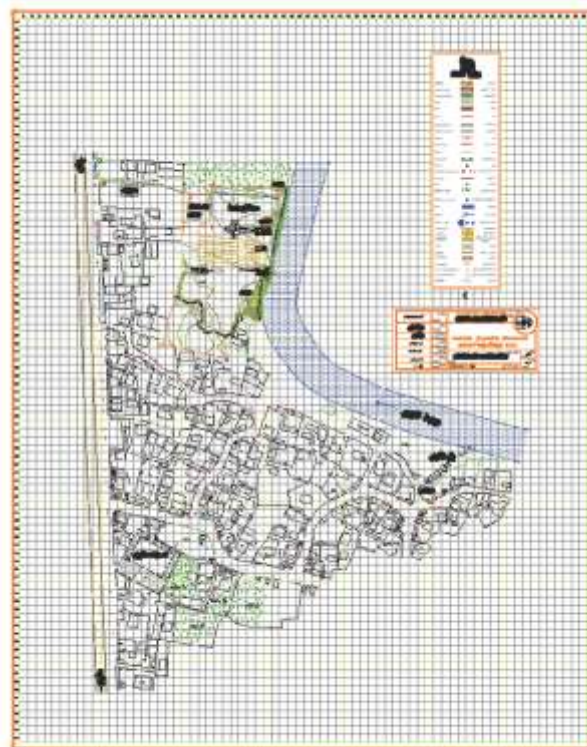


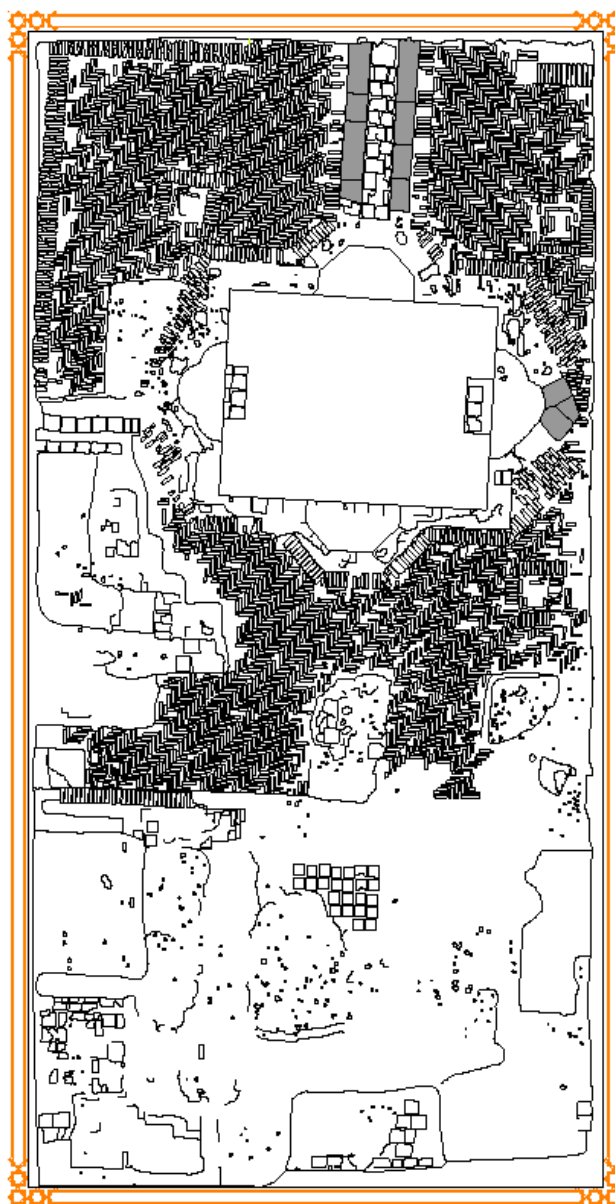
Figure 4: Location of the Site of Jahan Nama in Farahabad

Therefore this survey can suggest that the economic and cultural exchange activities of the City of Farahabad are well demonstrated by the survey findings including these

Safavid period dated ceramic imports, the local potteries and decorations from the gardens and buildings of the Jahan Nama Palace. The economic and cultural environment of the city was clearly comparable to the other cities at Safavid period.

#### **4. Excavation of Jahan Nama Palace in 2011**

In order to further explore the Jahan Nama Palace's history, culture and art, excavations are conducted to reveal different areas of the site. The architectural style, decorative arts of the palace are therefore being able to be confirmed to the Safavid period, by recording and identifying the arrangements of the palace architectural structures. According to the results of the excavation, brick-floors, a prey-niche, and an unidentified structure are yielded (Figure X4).



**Figure 5: Plan of the Excavated Area of the Jahan Nama site**

A summarised description of the excavated structures is outlined below: (1) one of the key featured patterns of floor arrangement is the herringbone pattern that laid out in the middle and was outlined by the running bond pattern (Figure 6); (2) the most complete prey niche is excavated. It was built with bricks and bonded by sandy lime mortar [25 height  $\times$  25 width  $\times$  5 depth] (Figure 7); (3) an important but unidentified platform structure with a height of 46 cm is discovered, and on which the blue and white pottery tiles dated to the Safavid period are decorated (Figures 8 & 9).





**Figure 6: Floor Brick Arrangement Pattern of the Site Jahan Nama**



**Figure 7: A Well Preserved and Completed Prey Niche**



Figure 8: Platform with Tile Decorations



Figure 9: Glazed Pottery Tiles

More importantly, the purpose of this archaeological excavation is to investigate the cultural and historical artifacts in the past, because a great number of archaeological findings are obtained, including local produced glazed potteries, imported ceramics from China and so forth (Figure 10 and see below). The Chinese ceramic imports will be introduced and discussed in the following sections.



Figure 10: Local produced pottery wares

### 5. Chinese porcelain unearthed from Jahan Nama Palace

With the economic and diplomatic development between Ming China and the Safavid Iran, especially during the reign of Shah Abbas, large quantities of blue and white porcelain earthenware entered Iran and were traded in a number of newly built small and large cities. Based on the archaeological evidence, one of cities dated to this period, Farahabad in Sari, was involved in the contact with Ming and Qing China regarding ceramic imports. Following the surveys and excavations carried out at the site of Jahan Nama Palace, many finds of blue and white porcelain are yielded. The Irani local pottery that were strongly influenced by Chinese art were found as well. The trade, art and economy of the city developed considerably.

Seven assemblages of broken Chinese porcelain wares from the excavation of the site of Jahan Nama are classified into four groups. They are listed below with an introductory description and archaeological dating evidence. The description aims to introduce the bodies, glazes, shapes, decorations or patterns and marks of these wares, and the archaeological dating evidence is used in the discussion of the possible dating ranges:

#### A. Group 1

**Name:** Blue and white porcelain bowls

**Possible dating:** From the mid-sixteenth century to the early seventeenth century AD

**Place of manufacture:** Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China

**Shape:** Plates

**Description**

In the grounds of Jahan Nama Palace, a very thin and fine blue and white porcelain sherd was discovered. This sherd has a pure white, fully fused porcelain body with a smooth shiny glaze with a fine surface (Figure 11). It has a floral rim and on the thin and flattened edge, the square-shaped panels, called *kaiguang* (开光) in Chinese, can be seen. The inside of the panels is decorated with repeating geometric patterns and a

simplified sea wave. There is also a plant motif that has an Iranian identity, which is the chrysanthemum, with pointed petals of dark blue colour and abundant leaves. The prints are all enclosed within blue lines. Another Iranian motif is the Shah-Abbasi flower, which is used inside the dish. On the back of the dish, it can be seen that branches and leaves of trees are painted in cobalt blue. This type is usually called the Kraak porcelain, which comes from the blue and white porcelain wares that were found in the cargo of the Portuguese merchant ship called *Kraaken* (carracks) in Dutch. This ship was captured in the seventeenth century by sailors from Holland and Zeeland (Van der Pijl-Ketel, 1982: 46).

## 6. Dating evidence and discussion

In the middle of the Ming dynasty, the city of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi Province in southern China became the capital of Chinese porcelain production (cf. Jiang, 1991: 47; BJDXXKGWBXY *et al.*, 2009; Chen, 1973; GGBWY *et al.*, 2007). It has been found that the Kraak style was manufactured at kiln sites in the Guanyin Ge and Luoma Qiao site of Jingdezhen (BJDXXKGWBXY *et al.*, 2009: 57, Qin, Gao & Weng, 2020: 90-92).

Van der Pijl-Ketel discussed the porcelain found in the Witte Leeuw shipwreck (dated to 1613 AD) and stated that the panel patterns first occurred in around 1595 AD and were popular until at least 1613 AD ((McElney, 1979, p. 50; Van Der Pijl-Ketel, 1982). Similar dating can be confirmed by the kiln sites of Luoma Qiao, and it is suggested that a small amount of the Kraak type was produced between the 1620s and 1644 AD, namely the late Ming dynasty (Qin, Gao & Weng, 2020). A very similar type can be observed within the Bennebroek shipwreck assemblage dated to 1713 (Klose, 2000), and it is suggested that this type lasted until the early eighteenth century.

The ceramic technique exchange between Iran and China can be seen in the gradual integration of designs on porcelain pottery in Iranian production centres. The pottery found in the grounds of Jahan Nama Palace is similar to the ware discovered in the excavations of Abbas Abad Garden in Behshahr (Figure 12). By covering the pottery interior with patterns, the Iranian potter has attempted to avoid from the influence of Chinese art. The application of the Chinese herbal and geometric designs became less popular. In general, according to the surface surveys and excavations carried out in Jahan Nama Palace, we encounter an abundance of porcelain and Irani local pottery. By using the pattern and theme of Chinese motifs on Chinese ceramic imports, and trying to represent designs and decorations, the Iranian potters of this period gradually formed their own different styles on ceramic making and decorations. Some of these Iranian porcelain dishes were manufactured so carefully and delicately. By naked-eye examination it is hard to distinguish the Irani made and Chinese porcelains. However, the technique of Irani local pottery shows a clear difference from the Chinese porcelain wares, in terms of the clay, the form of wares and the designs. Iranian local pottery was manufactured in important kilns of Mashhad, Kerman and Tabriz and exported to different parts of the Safavid territory.



Figure 11: Pottery piece No.14 (Archival source of historical city, Farahabad)



Figure 12: Blue and white pottery in Behshahr and Abbas Abad (Archival source of Abbas Abad Garden)

## **B. Group 2**

**Name: Blue and white porcelain bowls**

**Possible dating: From the mid-seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century AD**

**Place of manufacture: Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China**

**Shape: Bowl**

### **Description**

In this group, there are two types of Chinese blue and white porcelain ware. The first type consists of a couple of blue and white porcelain sherds, which can be reconstructed into a bowl. They have a fine body fabric: white, dense, hard and thin. No inclusion can be on the body. The glaze is transparent with a very slight bluish-white tone. The glaze



is very thin and evenly applied on the body. The cobalt blue pigment pattern is finely outlined and filled with lighter blue pigment. The pattern is decorated with the so-called 'Eight Daoist Immortals Crossing the Sea (八仙过海)'. In terms of the painting styles of these figures, it can be seen that they all have thin eyes and a smiling face, and some of them have a beard and are dressed in billowing robes to indicate that they are men. Some of them are holding Chinese musical instruments in their hands. All these features are rooted in the Chinese traditional religion and customs (Figure 13). A mark with a double-circled outline on the base of this porcelain bowl has the content of *Daming Chenghua Nian Zhi* (大明成化年制) (Figure 14), which can be translated as 'manufactured during the reign of Chenghua Emperor of the Great Ming Dynasty'.

The second type is a small assemblage of blue and white porcelain sherds. It can be reconstructed into a bowl, and the fabric and firing techniques are very similar to the former type. On the inside of the bowl, a pattern of an immortal is outlined with a double circle. This immortal has small almond-shaped eyes, a beard and a headband. In his right hand, there is a gourd-shaped container that is probably used to carry liquids. He is dressed in a billowing robe and is in a cloud. The main motif on the outside of the ware has been lost, and there is only the remains of an incomplete sea wave pattern, on which some incomplete figures can be seen. This could indicate that the outside motif is probably linked to the theme of the immortals crossing the sea. On the base, a Chinese mark is positioned within a double-lined rectangular frame. The content is written in cobalt blue, showing six Chinese characters of *Daming Chenghua Nian Zhi*, the same as the mark on the other type (Figure 15).

## 7. Dating evidence and discussion

This decorative motif of 'Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea' is a simplified version of the similar sense on the imperial porcelain wares dated to the early Qing dynasty, although its first application on Chinese ceramics was dated from the fourteenth century (Harrison-Hall & Krahl, 2009) and, like the cobalt blue decoration, might start from the late Ming dynasty (late sixteenth century to early seventeenth century AD) (Xiong, 2003: 68). Developed from the Taoist tales dated around the middle of the seventeenth century, this Taoist tale was finally formed and developed into the sense of the eight immortals attending the Peach Festival of the Queen Mother of the West. Similar bowls with the imperial qualities testify to the great developments of this story on porcelain products during the reigns of Kangxi and Yongzheng (1661–1735 AD). As one of the earliest examples, a bowl with a similar but exquisitely painted motif housed in the Art Museum of Tsinghua University, Beijing, is dated to the Kangxi period. Moreover, a very similar but also exquisitely painted motif on an imperial blue and white porcelain bowl housed in the Gardiner Museum in Canada (object number: G99.19.18) is dated to the Yongzheng period (Figure 16).

In terms of the mark on the base of these two bowls, Chenghua is the reign name of the eighth emperor of the Ming dynasty named Zhu Jianshen, who ruled Ming China from 1465 to 1487. However, it is well known that the Chenghua reign mark on Chinese blue and white porcelain was also used by the later emperors, including the Wanli Emperor in the Ming dynasty (1620-1573) and the Kangxi Emperor and Yongzheng Emperor in the Qing dynasty. According to the mark on this bowl, this is a clearly a later imitated mark rather than the mark that can be dated to the Chenghua reign of the Ming dynasty. In summary, according the motif, manufacturing techniques and marks on the bases, this group of sherds can be safely dated from the mid-seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century AD.



**Figure 13: Pottery piece No.1 (Archival source of historical city, Farahabad)**



**Figure 14: Pottery piece No.1 (Archival source of historical city, Farahabad)**

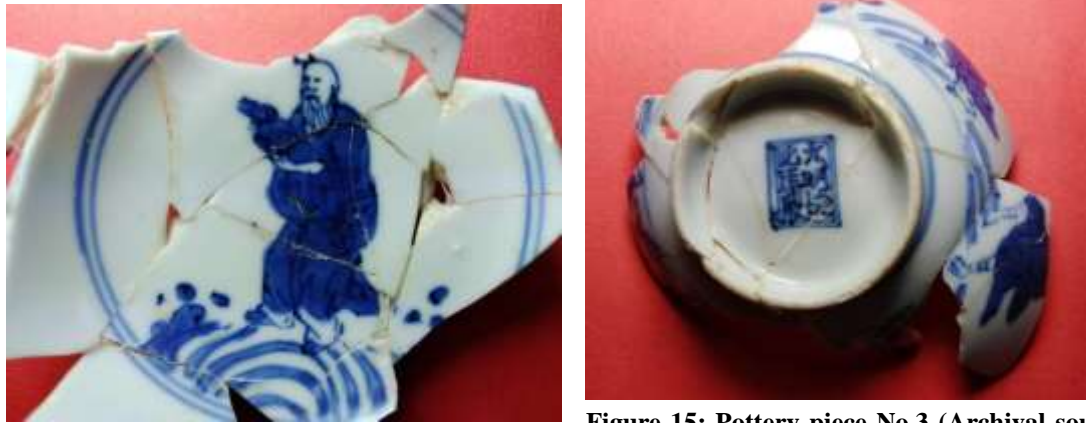


Figure 15: Pottery piece No.3 (Archival source

of historical city, Farahabad)



Figure 16: An imperial blue and white porcelain bowl with the exquisitely painted motif of 'Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea', Gardiner Museum, Canada (object number: G99.19.18) (Do we need to consider the copyright? If so we should delete this figure).

### C. Group 3

**Name: The Batavia porcelain wares**

**Possible dating: From the mid-seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century AD**

**Place of manufacture: Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China**

**Shape: Cups and bowls**

#### **Description**

In this group, there are two types of the so-called Batavia porcelain, which are featured with a brown glaze coated on the outside of wares. The first type refers to a cup that was discovered on the site of Farahabad. It has a very fine, white, dense, thin and hard body fabric. The brown glaze on the outside is not evenly applied. This cup has a straight rim, a round body and a short, thin foot ring. On the base, there is a mark with four Chinese characters of Cheng Hua Nian Zhi, meaning 'Manufactured in the reign of Chenghua' (Figure 17). The second type is a bowl unearthed from the excavation of Jahan Nama Palace. It has the same glaze and fabric as the other type, but on the brown glaze, there is a white-colour decoration in the form of a tree-like pattern (Figure 18).

## **9. Dating evidence and discussion**

As mentioned above, this group is known as the Batavia porcelain (Figure 19). This type might have been in production from the late Ming dynasty, and its circulation in the Indian Ocean trade might have lasted until the middle Qing dynasty. This means that the earliest example of the Batavia type can be dated to the late seventeenth century, though most examples are from the eighteenth century. Similar examples were found in a number of late seventeenth century wrecks, such as the Wanjiao No. 1 (cf. Zhang, 2008), Vung Tau (Jörg, 2001) and Osterland (Klose, 2000). The type appears to have become more common in the eighteenth century, and the material from this later phase includes examples with reserved panels in white on the exterior combined with an underglaze painted cobalt blue on white or polychrome enamel painted decoration. This is because that the Batavia porcelain appears to have been produced particularly for the export market to Europe and is especially associated with the Dutch East India Company operating via Batavia (Jakarta). There are many finds also coming from the middle-eighteenth century examples, such as the Cà Mau wreck (1723–1735) (Chien, 2002), the Gotheborg wreck (1745) ((Wästfelt, Gyllensvärd, & Weibull, 1991) and the Geldermalsen wreck (1752) (Jörg, 1986). Further examples are known from the Gulf area from al-Ain (Power, 2015: 12–14, 19 ‘BATAVIA’), Al-Hamara of Ras al-Khaimah in the UAE (Priestman and Zhang, 2021, forthcoming), Freiha in Qatar (Bystron, 2015: 106–07, Fig. 8.21), and six coastal sites in southern Iran (Priestman, 2005: 313, pl. 268). Furthermore, similar to the marks of group one, this group has the mark read as Cheng Hua Nian Zhi. However, according to its writing, this mark is dated from the late seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century rather than the reign of Chenghua Emperor of the Ming dynasty.

The use of the porcelain motifs and the pottery transparency on both interior and exterior surfaces imitates the images on wares with slight changes in the production technique. The use of these materials to make Iranian porcelain vessels and Irani local pottery started in centres such as Kerman, Mashhad and Tabriz. Imitation of human, animal, plant and abstract motifs and natural elements was gradually found on Iranian porcelain products and Irani local pottery. It should be noted that the form and shapes of pottery produced in these centres are varied, including hollow plates, plates with smooth edges, cups, porcelain bowls and wares with a floral rim.



Figure 17: Pottery piece No.2 (Archival source of historical city, Farahabad)



Figure 18: Pottery piece No.6 (Archival source of historical city, Farahabad).



Picture 19: The famous Batavia bowl (Li, 2012: 29)



#### D. Group 4

**Name:** Monochrome blue porcelain

**Possible dating:** From the mid-seventeenth to the early eighteenth-century AD

**Place of manufacture:** Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province, China

**Shape:** Cups and bowls

#### 10. Description

In this group, these two samples have the same dimension and size, as well as the same form and characteristics. They have a pure, refined white porcelain body with no voids or inclusions and a glassy matrix. The outside of these two wares is coated with pure monochrome cobalt blue. The white and tree-like overglaze decoration can also be seen. On the bases of these two bowls, there are two similar marks within a square frame. The content of the marks is fu, meaning auspicious luck (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Pottery pieces No. 4 and No. 5 (Archival source of historical city, Farahabad)

#### 11. Dating evidence and discussion

The class appears to be closely related stylistically and in terms of the dating of production to Batavia ware (group 3, see above). Most vessels are small cups and bowls that can be monochrome cobalt blue on the exterior or have reserved panels of white and further decoration added with enamel or gilding. Similar examples have been recovered from the middle-eighteenth century Umm Lajj wreck in the central northern Red Sea off the coast of Saudi Arabia (Visconti, 2018: 105, Fig. 6). On the Griffin shipwreck, monochrome blue porcelain vases had been found (Goddio *et al.*, 1999: 266-69, pls XLI and XLII).

#### 12. Discussion: economic and cultural exchanges of ceramics in the Safavid era Iran and Ming-Qing China

The large-scale economic, cultural and technical exchanges between ancient Iran and China could trace back to Abbasid Caliphate /China's Tang dynasty (c.f. Lin and Zhang 2018; Northedge and Kennet 1994; Qin 2013; Wen 2018; Zhang 2013). During the

ninth and eleventh centuries AD, the cities of Neishabour and Samarkand, where the caravan merchants were vastly travelling around, gained a privileged position for the trading between ancient Iran and China. Due to this long-distance trade and cultural exchanges, the influence of Chinese ceramics on Iranian pottery could be firstly seen. The decorations of the Irani local potteries were often in a concentrated manner and on a cream-coloured background with brown, yellow, brick-red and green splashes, sometimes along with the incised decorations.

In the sixteenth century AD (tenth century AH), the Safavid kings were interested in a type of Irani local pottery that was created directly under the influence of the Ming dynasty. Large quantities of this pottery were imported into Iran. Iranian potters imitated the Chinese imports and produced local types of Irani ceramics. Rather than only Chinese ceramics, a rich diversity of ceramic imports, such as Ottoman Iznik pottery in Anatolia and pottery from Europe dated to the middle and late eighteenth century, were traded to the Near East in a large quantity. The coarse quality Irani local pottery trade was therefore in decline during the Zand dynasty and the Qajar dynasty (Fehérvári, 1973: 135). Among the pottery products in Kerman and Mashhad, so-called blue and white pottery with the imitation patterns of Chinese motifs could be seen in abundance. More importantly, however, it should be noted that during the Safavid period these Irani local potteries were not merely the imitations of Chinese ceramic imports, because they had a richer, finer, and more diversified decorations and patterns than the high-fired Chinese imports (Friehe, 1374: 267).

In the study of blue and white pottery in the Safavid period, some differences can be seen between Mashhad and Kerman, two ceramic industrial centres. In particular the Mashhad's potteries were more influenced by Chinese motifs, and two shades of blue colour were used in their patterns. Plates, bowls and dishes were copied from similar Chinese ceramic imports. In their decorations, Chinese landscape motifs and Buddhist symbols were vastly imitated (Fahuri, 1388: 75). Conversely, it is believed that the result of this Iranian artists' experiment in the Safavid period led to the production of blue and white pottery and it can be well distinguished from Chinese blue and white porcelain. This is known well that many Chinese porcelain items were imported into Iran during the Safavid period. It is very clear that the Iranian potters were familiar with Chinese designs and decorations, and they adapted some decorative designs from Chinese porcelains. However, the firing techniques of Iranian blue and white porcelain were very different from Chinese ceramics (Karimi & Mohammad, 1986: 63). The pottery kilns of Kerman and Mashhad in the seventeenth century AD did have the design of porcelain on dishes that was impacted by the transitional period dated Ming Chinese ceramics, and in many cases, the six Chinese characters as the marks on wares were replaced by some un-readable signs (Figure 21). Otherwise, at Kerman and Mashhad kilns they also produced new types of pottery with Iranian motifs (Salehi *et al.*, 2013: 8).



**Figure 21: Iranni pottery sherds with un-readable signs on the base to imitate Chinese marks (The Williamson Collection of the Survey in south Iran, housed at Durham University, UK)**

The evidence gained from archaeological excavations at Jahan Nama Palace in Farahabad clearly shows the cultural exchange in this city during the Safavid period. In particular, the Chinese porcelain wares, including the Chinese ceramics dated to the late Ming dynasty and early Qing dynasty, are parallel to the Timurid and Safavid periods in Iran. All these wares were made at the kiln sites of Jingdezhen in China, and the Dutch East India Company based in Indonesia had the monopoly for exporting them from China. This shows that Iran had extensive trade with the Far East and that Farahabad was involved in these extensive relations in Safavid.

Otherwise, these Irani local pottery discovered from the site of Jahan Nama was highly likely manufactured in the important Iranian pottery centres in Safavid period, such as Mashhad, Kerman, Tabriz, and even Farahabad. It can be found out that not only did some of these potteries entirely imitate Chinese ceramics, and are strongly impacted by Chinese art and designs, but also in many cases they could surpass the Chinese ceramic imports in terms of appearance, pattern designs, vessel shapes, colours and decorations. Sometimes, it is very difficult to distinguish the local Irani potteries from Chinese ceramic imports. This may show the artistic independence of Safavid artists in these ceramic production centres. Otherwise, the coarse quality local potteries also had been found from the site. By retaining the basis of making blue and white pottery, the Irani local artists also tried to include creativity, innovation and motifs in the utensils in a traditional way.

### 13. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can therefore be suggested that on the basis of these art works, Farahabad was a centre for importing artistic and luxury products from the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD. Research on artefacts from archaeological excavations reveals the dark corners of the city and proves the descriptions and definitions of this city and Jahan Nama Palace in the travelogues. Due to the great interests of Shah Abbas I, the architectural decoration arts and the exchanges of technologies in the pottery industries between Iran and China were experiencing a great development in the old city of Farahabad.

More than the archaeological contributions as mentioned above, the importance and value of the survey and excavation of the site of Jahan Nama clearly not only deliver a better environment for the further research and conservational works, it is also hoped that these works could offer a good demonstrate of tourist facility, as a museum site, for the archaeological education to public.

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## چینی‌های آبی و سفید شهر قدیم فرح‌آباد

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### چکیده

شاه عباس اول (۱۵۸۷-۱۶۲۸ میلادی) پس از تسلط بر مازندران به سال‌های ۱۵۹۶ میلادی همواره این منطقه را به عنوان استراحتگاه سلطنتی در نظر داشت. این منطقه در سال ۱۵۹۹ میلادی با فرمانی به ایالت خاصه بدل شده و به عنوان ملک شخصی شاه تحت نظر حکومت مرکزی درآمد. با دستور شاه عباس به سال ۱۶۱۲ میلادی دهکده طاهان در نقطه تلاقی رودخانه تجن و دریای مازندران به شهری بزرگ و بندرگاهی مهم بدل شده و فرح‌آباد نام گرفت. از جمله سیاحان خارجی که در این دوره از شهر دیدن کردند، پیتر و دلاواله ایتالیایی می‌باشد که در سال ۱۶۲۸ میلادی در زمان سلطنت شاه عباس صفوی به ایران آمد و مدتی در فرح‌آباد اقامت گزید، وی در سفرنامه خود، فرح‌آباد را مانند رم و قسطنطنیه بسیار وسیع حتی از آنها بزرگ‌تر و از آن به‌عنوان یکی از شهرهای مهم بندری مازندران نام می‌برد و به بناهای ساخته شده در این شهر و هم‌چنین کاخ جهان نما نیز اشاره کرده است. در مازندران عصر صفوی در کنار شهرهای مهمی همچون اشرف، ساری، آمل، نائل و بارفروش، شهر تازه شکل گرفته

فرح آباد در کنار دریای مازندران نیز به مرکز مهمی در داد و ستد تجاری، هنری و فرهنگی تبدیل شده و بناهای فاخری در آن ساخته شده بود که ساکنان آن مصرف کننده عمده آثار هنری زمان خود بودند.

محوطه کاخ جهان نما یکی از این بخش‌های مهم مجموعه تاریخی فرح آباد بود که در سال‌های ۲۰۰۷ و ۲۰۱۱ مورد مطالعه و بررسی قرار گرفت و طی گمانه زنی و کاوش در آن، بخش‌هایی از معماری و تزیینات وابسته به آن شامل گچ‌بری و کاشی‌کاری؛ همچنین ظروف سفالی و چینی به دست آمد که الگوبرداری از سبک هنری مکتب اصفهان در آن کاملاً مشهود است. شواهد به دست آمده در کاوش‌های باستان‌شناسی صورت گرفته در کاخ جهان نما فرح آباد به خوبی نشان دهنده این پویایی فرهنگی است. پرسش اصلی این تحقیق این بود که ظروف به دست آمده در محوطه کاخ جهان نما در کجا تولید شده اند و دارای چه ویژگی‌هایی از نقطه نظر طرح، رنگ و فرم هستند؟

نتایج این تحقیق نشان داد که آثار چینی به دست آمده از کاخ جهان نما به دو گروه کلی تقسیم می‌شوند: گروه اول ظروف تولید شده شهر «جینگ دزن» و یا ظروف معروف به باتاویا هستند. آثار به دست آمده تجارت گسترده ایران با شرق دور را نشان داد. گروه دوم شامل ظروف چینی و بدل چینی‌هایی است که در مراکز مهم سفالگری ایران دوره صفوی همچون مشهد، کرمان و تبریز ساخته شده است. سفالگران ایرانی این دوره با الگو و دست‌مایه قراردادن نقش‌مایه‌های چینی در کارگاه‌های تولیدی سفال و با کوشش در بازنمایی طرح‌ها و تزیینات، مکتب‌های هنری زیادی را سرمشق و سرلوحه خود قرار دادند.

پرسش‌های این پژوهش عبارتند از:

- ظروف به دست آمده در محوطه کاخ جهان نما در کجا تولید شده اند؟
- این ظروف دارای چه ویژگی‌هایی از نقطه نظر طرح، رنگ و فرم هستند؟
- مضامین و نقوش و خطوط ظروف به دست آمده در کاخ جهان نما چیست؟

در این مقاله شیوه تحقیق تاریخی و با روش میدانی با ابزار مشاهده و همچنین کتابخانه ای با ابزار بررسی اسناد و مدارک برجای مانده بود.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** مازندران ، فرح آباد ، جهان نما ، چینی آبی و سفید.

