

Imitation and Innovation: the Continuity of the Development of Chicken Head Pots From the Six Dynasties to the Sui Dynasty

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Abstract:

The chicken head pot is a unique artistic expression from the Six Dynasties to the Sui Dynasty, and its rich shape contains a lot of rich traditional culture. The transmutation of different periods and different ideas and concepts and the interpretation, design and dissemination of designers in their own ways have created the diversity of chicken head pot shapes and decorations during the Six Dynasties period. Through the process of combing the development context of the chicken head pot, it is found that the chicken head pot from the Six Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties embodies the creation law from imitation to innovation in the development of shape and decoration, which is a true portrayal of “transfer and copying” on the artifacts. This article analyzes the connotation and development and evolution of the chicken head pot, in order to bring more inspiration to our future creation design.

Keywords:

Six Dynasties, Chicken Head Pot, Imitate, Innovation, Traditional Culture

1. Introduction

In the long-term historical development of the chicken head pot, it is not an isolated phenomenon that exists independently, but the product of imitation and innovation of the form of creation. From the Six Dynasties to the Sui Dynasty, the shape of chicken head pot utensils commonly found in tea and wine utensils is composed of a chicken head on one side, a chicken tail on a symmetrical side, and the upper end of the utensil is either designed as a beam, or designed as a handle, or without any design, the shape is ever-changing, and the complex mechanism and meaning of the statue of the utensil are included in the unification. Since its emergence at the end of the Three Kingdoms, the chicken head pot has evolved continuously, becoming a typical feature of Chinese artifact modeling from the Six Dynasties to the Sui Dynasty. Because of its main form and the “chicken” taken from the mimic design of the chicken head, it is called the “chicken head pot”. Regarding the relevant research of chicken head pots, Zhang Yalin believes that the evolution of the shape and function of chicken head pots is inseparable from the needs of human life [1], and further divides the development of

chicken head pots into four periods: germination, development, transformation and decline [2]. In his dissertation, scholar Kwon Kun also analyzed the development of chicken head pots in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, pointing out that “the simplification of porcelain development from the Eastern Jin Dynasty to the Southern Dynasties was the product of rulers imitating the words and deeds of the nobles and their artistic activities” [3].

Through the process of collating existing research and related materials, the author found that the chicken head pots unearthed from Yue kiln, Ou kiln, Deqing kiln and other kiln sites jointly reflect the “structure” in the historical development of artifacts, focusing on the interconnection between different cultures in the relationship between internal and external and upper and lower relations, and well explain the complexity of the process of production, replacement and abandonment of chicken head pots from the development context between inheritance, development and innovation of chicken head pot utensils, and look for special forms of utensils in this process and imitate them. In order to show the infinite potential and charm of the same type of artifacts.

2. “Chicken” Culture in Prehistoric Times

2.1. *The emergence of the “chicken” culture*

In prehistoric agricultural civilization, the relationship between animals and humans is extremely close, and chickens, as a kind of poultry, continue with human civilization and occupy a very important position in human society. The breeding history of chickens has a long history, as early as more than 8,000 years ago on Neolithic pottery, the image of chickens has appeared, and the bones of original chicken birds have been found in early Neolithic sites in Wannian County, Jiangxi, and Banpo sites in Xi'an, Shaanxi; Chicken bones have appeared in the ruins of Yinxu, the capital of the Shang Dynasty in Henan, Cishan in Wu'an City, Hebei, and Beixin in Teng County, Shandong, which shows that the domestication age of chickens has appeared a long time ago; During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the development of farming culture made chickens one of the six animals, driving the prosperity and development of chicken culture. “Zhuangzi Yi Chapter” Yun: “The chicken of Yanggou, three years old is a plant, and if he sees it, it is not a good chicken.” Wei Chensi Wang Cao Zhi's Cockfighting Poem: “Long banquet sitting guests, cockfighting idle viewing room”. Northern Wei Jia Sixun's “Qi Min Zhishu • Chicken Raising Chapter” is the earliest record of chicken raising.

2.2. *A discussion on the cultural connotation of “chicken”*

Over thousands of years, chickens have been raised and deified, and people have given their own thoughts, emotions and cultural colors to them. Chickens have been given diverse emotions since their inception, so why should people use this common poultry in the decoration of utensils? Why not replace it with other poultry? What exactly is its significance? These questions are essentially fundamental questions about chicken culture and art, that is, the interpretation of the connotation of chicken culture modeling, which is also what we need to explore when studying chicken culture and its related artifacts today.

At present, there are three aspects to discuss the connotation of chicken, one is the theory of the five elements of yin and yang contained in its surface form, on the other hand, the auspicious cultural meaning contained in it, and on the other hand, it is about the religious and cultural function it contains.

The first is the theory of the five elements of yin and yang contained in its surface form. In the twelve earth branches and zodiac signs, the chicken is matched with “unitary” and is called “unitary chicken”. Liu Wenming proposed in his paper that “according to the theory of the five elements of yin and yang, ‘the sun and the moon, yin and yang, huzang qiye’ and ‘golden wushi falling, jade rabbit rising east’, the combination of chicken and “unitary” forms the modern “unitary chicken” [4]. Zhao Shu believes in “The Year of the Rooster Says Chicken” that the arrangement of the zodiac signs is related to the number worship of the ancestors, the chicken has a special representative, enjoying the position of “perfect and perfect”, and “unitary” contains two major subjects at the same time, namely “omnipresent and omnipresent” [5].

The second is the auspicious cultural meaning contained in it. This interpretation is first manifested in ancient texts describing the symbolic meaning of chickens. Chickens are good at fighting and fighting, and have the symbolic meaning of being brave and good at fighting. Han Ying of the Han Dynasty recorded in the “Han Poem Gaiden” that as early as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, Tian Rao, a famous scholar of the State of Qi, once comprehensively discussed the character of chickens: “The first to wear a crown, Wen Ye; Footfighter, Takeya; Those who dare to fight before the enemy, brave; Tell each other, Renya; The vigil does not break faith, and the faith is also.” Chicken is a symbol of both culture, martial arts, bravery, benevolence, and faith, so the chicken evolved into a symbol of virtue such as “virtue fowl”, “righteous fowl”, “spirit fowl” in later societies, and chickens extended many elegant names in later classics, such as “Si Chen Bird” in “Tang and Song Legends” in “Laughing in the forest, except Si Chen Bird”, “Knowing the Time Beast” in “Speaking Wen Xie Zi”, “Knowing the Time Beast” in “Zhou Li • Chun Guan” records that the person in charge of chicken and animal etiquette is also doing the time signal, the “chicken man” in the vigilant night, “Announce the bird”, “The Candle Night Chicken” in “A Candle Night” in “Ancient and Modern Notes”. In addition, there is also the time and night called “Zhuangzi”, Lu Ji; The Book of Rites is called Hanyin; “Erya” called Shu and so on. Secondly, the chicken as a symbol of auspicious logistics is still known in the chicken homonym “ji”, rooster, is also auspicious. The image symbol of the chicken appeared in many paintings and documents in ancient times, such as the “Furong Jinji Chicken Picture” painted by Song Huizong, the Qing Dynasty Zou Yigui's The Rooster Picture under the Song Garden and the folk paper-cut “Rooster Window Flower”, etc., all of which have the meaning of great wealth and nobility, auspicious and peaceful. Mencius's “Dedication to the Heart” contains: “Five hens, two mothers, without losing time, the old man is enough to lose no flesh.” It can be seen that raising chickens is also a symbol of abundance.

On the other hand, it is about the religious and cultural function it contains. In the ancient use of chickens as sacrifices, Xia Shang Zhou is the most prosperous, Xia Shang Zhou is the most prosperous in the production of Xia Shang Zhou pottery, some of the vessels or imitation from poultry, or imitation from common items in daily life, such as lu, mane and other wine vessel shapes, shaped like a big rooster with its neck stretched out and singing, archaeologist Mr. Zou Heng conducted an in-depth analysis of its shape, believing that “they are all developed from the chicken Yi of the Dawenkou culture” [6]. In the “General Meaning of Customs”, it is said: “The chicken, the animal of the East, the end of the year, discern the rank of the east, and all things touch the household, so the chicken sacrifice is also.” It can be seen that the chicken as the “three sacrifices” of the year-end New Year, the “morning bird” and

the sacrifice to the gods is enough to see the importance of its function. At the same time, the chicken was revered by the ancients as the Yang Bird, a transformer of light and darkness. In the animistic ancient culture, the chicken was also used as an object of worship, and at the same time a symbol with certain symbolic significance, mixed with different regional differences in various regions, resulting in the fusion of multiple images, resulting in the so-called totem worship. For example, in the Miao language of Guizhou, housing is often compared with bird's nest and chicken nest[7], and the "Jing Chu Dynasty" contains: "The first day of the first month is the day of the three yuans, and the Spring and Autumn is called the end moon." The rooster crowed, before the firecrackers in front of the court, to avoid the evil spirits in the mountains. The ancients believed that chickens are the descendants of birds and the embodiment of good luck, which can ward off disasters and eliminate evil. It can be seen that chickens occupy an important place in the process of human social development, deeply pinning people's yearning for a better life and expectations for the future.

3. The Development of Chicken Head Pots from the Six Dynasties to the Sui Dynasty

The shape form of the chicken, as early as the prehistoric period of the elephant pottery type has begun to appear, and the chicken head pot as a new variety of ceramic family in the Eastern Han Dynasty, this type in the process of production did not fully undertake the original pottery modeling form, and in the variety of porcelain modeling presents a sometimes familiar, sometimes unfamiliar shape form, is because the ancients first imitated the things that appeared in life in the creation design, and used it as the source of creation. The production of the chicken head pot has a continuity of inheritance innovation between it and the object it imitates.

Chicken head pot, also known as heavenly chicken pot, chicken head pot, the first chicken head pot found by archaeology appeared in the Western Jin Dynasty, the early chicken head pot shape is short and round, mostly solid pot, as a funerary vessel, can be roughly divided into two types.

Type A: Chicken head pot with beam. Short neck, bulging belly, flat bottom, one end of the pot body is decorated with a chicken head, and the symmetrical face is decorated with a chicken tail, the image of the chicken in this period is extremely detailed and pays attention to realism. Specimen 1, Western Jin Dynasty celadon prickly liang chicken head pot. Gray and white tire, blue-yellow glaze, body lifting beam for the image of a tiger, the back of the tiger body is slender and arched, the head is raised high for hunting, the four legs are slender, the outer extension is extended to support the lifting beam, the body is decorated with short parallel lines of foot claws and feather patterns, the body is decorated with string patterns, bead patterns, etc., and affixed with double lineage and double paving heads (Figure 1-1). Specimen 2, Western Jin Dynasty Yue kiln Tiliang figure chicken head pot. Yellow ferret looking ahead, strong limbs, ready to go, a figure sitting cross-legged above the chicken head, the shoulders are paved with beasts, decorated with oblique checkered patterns, parallel string patterns, molded patterns (Figure 1-2), the whole shape expresses a natural beauty of harmonious coexistence between humans and animals.

Type B: Double-series beamless chicken head pot. This type of chicken head pot can be divided into two small subtypes.

Type Ba: short neck, round shoulders, shallow disc opening. Specimen 3, Western Jin Dynasty Qingglaze double-series chicken head pot. Cyan glaze, remnants of the plate, double vertical and chord on the shoulders, chicken head on the shoulder in the shape of a croak, and a chicken tail on the symmetrical part of the shoulder (Figure 1-3). Specimen 4, Western Jin celadon chicken head pot. The green glaze is yellowish, the glaze is open, the shoulders are decorated with convex chords, oblique checkered patterns, and the shoulders are double-tied in a semicircle (Figure 1-4).

Bb type: specimen 5, Western Jin green glaze double-series chicken head pot. Blue-gray glaze, straight mouth, square lip, no panic, slippery shoulders, bulging belly, lower abdomen obliquely harvested flat bottom, shoulders attached to double lineage, ornamental chords, double lineage carved leaf veins, the overall body resembles a fat rooster [8] (Figure 1-5).



Figure 1. Western Jin Dynasty chicken head pot.

During the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the neck of the chicken head pot increased, the center gradually moved down, the chicken head part was straightened, with the neck, the chicken head and the shoulder of the pot were almost at a right angle, the eyes of the chicken head were round, the chicken mouth was round, and the symbolic chicken tail disappeared, replaced by a crank-shaped handle slightly higher than the mouth of the pot, and the handle of the pot was more iconic, vivid and natural. During this period, the chicken head became the mouth of the pot and circulated with the abdomen, becoming a practical utensil in people's daily life. Specimen 1, Eastern Jin Dynasty black-glazed chicken head pot. Shoulders, bulging belly, abdomen obliquely harvested into a flat bottom, shallow pan, black glaze applied to the body, double vertical attached to the shoulders, glazed open, slender handle (Figure 2-1). Specimen 2, Eastern Jin Dynasty green glaze double-series pankou chicken head pot. The cyan glaze is yellowish, and the shape is basically the same as specimen 1, but the shoulders are bridge-shaped, and the handle is like a hand grasping the mouth of the pot (Figure 2-2). Specimen 3, the shape is consistent with specimen 1, but without a handle (Figure 2-3).



Figure 2. Dongjin Dynasty chicken head pot.

During the Southern Dynasties period, the head of the chicken was held high and the crown was prominent, as in specimen 1 (Figure 3-1). The handle and body continue to develop to a high place, and the place where the handle and the mouth of the pot are connected is mostly in the shape of a dragon, the neck is elongated, the

square bridge system, and some are decorated with lotus petals on the body, such as specimen 2 (Figure 3-2) and specimen 3 (Figure 3-3). During the Southern Dynasties, the center of gravity of the chicken head pot moved downward, the center of gravity tended to stabilize as a whole, the abdomen was gentle, the curvature of the handle became larger, and the height increased, which was convenient for holding.

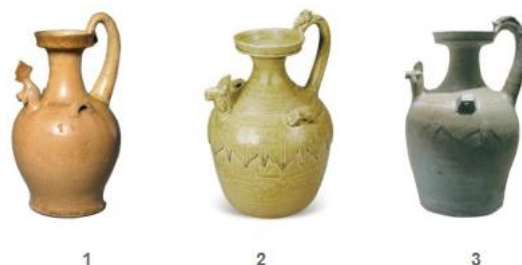


Figure 3. *Southern Dynasty Chicken Head Pot.*

During the Northern Dynasty period, the ruler set the capital city in Chang'an, the center of gravity of chicken head pot production shifted to the north, the chicken head pot body was larger than the abdomen, the height continued to develop, and the decorative patterns were diverse, and the overall style of the chicken head pot in this period was biased towards the rough and heroic of the northern nomads, and the shape was heavy. Specimen 1, slender neck, chicken head placed at one end of the shoulder, holding a green dragon to bite the mouth of the pot, neck ornamentation with three string patterns, ribbed abdomen, evenly pasted with a bird pattern of a large bird spreading its wings and flying, the body of the pot is decorated with treasure pattern and honeysuckle pattern by stacking, pasting, and scratching methods (Figure 4-1). Specimen 2, Northern dynasty blue-glazed dragon-handled chicken head pot. The tympanum has a flat bottom, a white tire, a green and yellow glaze, two convex strings on the neck, four bridge-shaped ties attached to the shoulders, slender hands, and a dragon's mouth holding the mouth of the pot [9] (Figure 4-2). Specimen 3, Northern dynasty green-glazed appliqué dragon handle chicken head pot. The body of the pot is made with green glaze, the long neck and abdomen, and the neck and abdomen are decorated with animal heads and flowers, and the dragon pattern is made by hand (Figure 4-3).



Figure 4. *Northern Dynasty Chicken Head Pot.*

During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the chicken head pot gradually decreased and became a holding pot. During the Sui Dynasty, the shape of the chicken head became a decoration, not practical, the pot was tall, the neck was mostly bamboo neck, the chicken head was close to the neck, and some of it was only a symbolic chicken head (Figure 5-1), the lower abdomen was adducted, and there was a pot bottom. The shoulder is attached to the four series (Figure 5-2) or double line (Figure 5-3), and the handle follows the previous dragon handle shape, slender to increase the difficulty of

dumping, such as specimen 2, specimen 3, decoration, lotus petal pattern is still used. During the Tang Dynasty, the shape of the chicken head was simplified to become a symbolic chicken head and tail, and the hook-shaped handle was used to connect the plate (Figure 6). During the Sui and Tang dynasties, chicken head pots were decorated with the skills of craftsmen, but lacked practicality and eventually declined.



Figure 5. Sui Dynasty chicken head pot.



Figure 6. Tang Dynasty chicken head pot.

4. Imitation and Innovation of Chicken Head Pot

4.1. Imitation of the chicken head pot

“The development of human utensils is produced in the process of using nature and transforming nature, first of all, it may be the use of natural objects to slightly modify, and then it is to simulate the natural image, in this stage, most of the natural plants, a few simulate animals and utensils, and then according to the needs of life, the original image is improved and recreated.” [10] From the Six Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the chicken head pot was first produced to imitate the natural image, and the imitation method of the chicken head pot was first imitated from the pankou pot of the Han Dynasty, comparing the pankou pot with the chicken head pot, it can be seen that the pankou pot has the same magic as the early chicken head pot, the overall shape is the pankou, the neck, the round shoulder, the drum belly, the flat bottom, the shoulder is attached, and the decorative pattern appears on the shoulder (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Celadon pankou pot unearthed from the M307 Eastern Han Tomb of Lion Mountain, Shaoxing, Zhejiang.

On the basis of the pan pot, the abdomen is widened, the width of the abdomen is greater than the overall height of the body, and decorative chicken heads and chicken tails appear, some increase the bow, or not tie, and some put a lifting beam on the pan. While the idea that chicken head pots evolved from pan pots is debated in the current study, there is no denying that there are similarities between the two. The second is imitation of poultry common in daily life, after frequent wars in the three countries, people long for social stability, happiness and well-being, chicken homonym “auspicious”, meaning auspicious, known as “auspicious bird”, can eliminate disasters, chicken culture in this period has a relatively prosperous stage. During the Two Jin Dynasties, the society was stable, and many stories and objects related to chickens

appeared. At the same time, the sudden change of social customs, hidden atmosphere, literati and doctors put their ideal revenge on things, so as to express the true emotions in their hearts and empathize with things. At this point, the shape of the chicken appeared in a large number of utensils design, so the popular chicken head pot was produced.

4.2. Innovation in the chicken head pot

Re-inheritance, reform and innovation on the basis of inheritance, which is the unique genetic gene of Chinese culture [11]. “All imitations are bound to go awry” [12], and with small changes and small improvements is the beginning of the phenomenon of innovation. On the one hand, “beauty” and “goodness” were no longer the same, and they had turned to Lao Zhuang’s thinking, that is, “Wuwei”, “retreat”, “health”, and “nothing” had absolute values. On the other hand, the infiltration of foreign Buddhist culture dictates the thinking and behavior of Taoist believers. From the available excavation data, the early chicken head pot was mainly used as a funerary vessel, not practical, and the celadon chicken head pot in this period, on the basis of the Han Dynasty pankou pot, was added or simplified in the shape and decoration of the pot body to form a new form of utensils. During the Eastern Jin Dynasty, along with the popularity of the idea of “use”, the chicken head pot body was heightened, the spout, handle, tie, pan, armrest and other subtle changes and the spout and abdomen were connected, making the chicken head pot an innovative practical vessel. After the Wei and Jin dynasties, the shape of the chicken head pot gradually developed to a high place, and the decoration was gradually diversified, reaching the dual value of practicality and aesthetics, expressing the aesthetic taste of people in different periods and the unique ingenuity of the creator.

Mr. Li Lixin once said: “In the process of the operation of the utensil, it is difficult to change, unless the process is changed, only under the change of the process determined by the material, under the specific constraints and the adaptation to the function, there will be improvement.” [13] The sudden change in social customs from the Six Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties and the emphasis on the need for “use” are the main reasons for the emergence of chicken head pots, in addition, there are social, economic, cultural, commercial and other imitation attributes, which make chicken head pots have different characteristics of the times. The chicken head pot provides a practical daily necessities for social life, although it has traces of imitation, but its imitation prototype has been forgotten in the process of transformation, and its unique characteristics have long been taken for granted. In the mechanism of imitation and innovation, the chicken head pot may not disappear, but appear in front of us in a new way, but we do not know it yet.

5. Conclusions

The development of things is traceable, are the product of “transfer copying”, imitation has existed since the beginning of human society, such as the pattern decoration on Neolithic pottery in Miaodigou imitates plants and flowers, the early appearance of Shang and Zhou bronzes imitates pottery, and the Han Dynasty pankou pot is similar to the pre-Qin copper ware in shape, etc., all of which are the products of creation design imitation. Mr. Wu Shan once wrote in his writings that “most of the basic shapes of the various utensils used in our daily lives have been handed down from the pottery ware shapes of the Neolithic period, and even some styles have not changed to this day” [10]. Whether it is prehistoric society or contemporary society,

the style of the utensil is in a saturated state, it is difficult to produce new styles, the production of new styles, most of the cases are in accordance with the traditional existing shape imitation production, designers to different perspectives to observe and think, through the recombination of design goals, to create a new image for people, make it more practical, more beautiful.

Whether it is traditional creation or modern society, the emergence of new shapes of artifacts always follows a slow cycle of development from imitation to innovation, spiraling upward. The German philosopher Leibniz said that “no two leaves in the world are the same”, therefore, in the imitation of artifacts, it is impossible to achieve the same shape, there will always be subtle changes, and the accumulation of subtle changes is the beginning of innovation

The chicken head pot has been developed through the six dynasties, and each period has new changes, which either exist in shape, exist in decoration, or are slightly adjusted to shape and decoration. The image of the chicken head pot created reflects the living and cultural customs of different dynasties (living and living, witchcraft sacrifices, etc.), although the production of chicken head pots in various eras and regions has its own independent characteristics, but there is inevitably historical continuity, and the artifacts are not separated, but have their internal continuity. In the process of development, the celadon chicken head pot has undergone minor improvements, gradually getting rid of the previous style and creating a new shape form, which is the inevitable result of the development of creation design. The creation of utensil design by the ancients has brought valuable experience to our future design innovation, and it also has certain practical significance for our decorative art creation today.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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