

On the Origin and Development of Three Terms for Qing Dynasty Overglazed Enamels: *Falangcai, Yangcai, and Fencai*

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Abstract

Nomenclature is both the most fundamental and most challenging aspect of researching objects. In many cases the limitations of primary sources or the varying interpretations of different times make it difficult for scholars to name an object properly. In the field of Chinese ceramic studies, research on Qing dynasty overglazed enamelware frequently employs the terms *fanglangcai*, *yangcai*, and *fencai* despite a lack of consensus about what these words specifically mean. Some scholars follow the conventions, while others employ the terminology of Qing court documents. Derived from different techniques and raw materials, or associated with certain visual qualities, the varying etymologies of these terms have generated considerable confusion and inhibited the establishment of scholarly conventions.

This paper analyzes the origins of this chaotic nomenclature by examining the historical and textual contexts in which these terms were used. By using published archival material and contemporary scientific examinations to situate the development of Qing overglazed enamelware in these contexts, the authors identify the different ways in which the terms *fanglangcai*, *yangcai* and *fencai* have been historically associated with material objects. In so doing they hope to illuminate key issues in the research of Qing overglazed enamelware as a foundation for future studies.

In addition, this paper reemphasizes that the most important development of Qing overglazed enamelware is the transformation from the palette of traditional mineral glazes to enamel pigments. This transformation involved not only the new visual styles and glaze ingredients that scholars have already identified, but also a systematic change in overglaze technology that included the introduction of new ingredients, painting and firing techniques, and kiln types. The *fanglangcai* ware that was enameled in the Imperial

Workshops in Beijing, the *yangcai* ware enameled in the Imperial Kiln in Jingdezhen, and the *fencai* ware enameled by commercial kilns in Jingdezhen might have been developed in different contexts, but the most critical cause of their appearance was the revolutionary transformation of palette. This revolution and the development it caused is the most important milestone in the development of the Qing ceramic industry and Chinese overglazed ware.

Keywords: *famille verte*, *famille rose*, *yangcai*, *falang cai*, *fencai*, *yangci*, painted enamel