



# Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter

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## Cirebon wreck a lashed-lug ship

News exclusive!!

ABOUT 2001-2002 local fishermen in the Java Sea caught ceramics in their drag nets. Surveys revealed a sunken vessel that was jointly explored and salvaged by a Dubai-based firm and an Indonesian commercial company in 2004-2005. The site is called the Cirebon wreck from the name of the nearest sizeable town on Java, about 110 nm S. [Previously called the Nan Han wreck in these pages.] The cargo is varied. About 75% of hull's volume was filled with tightly stacked, mostly Chinese ceramics. About 10% of the cargo is Near East & Indian glassware (now mostly shattered), gemstones and various raw materials. The remainder is iron ingots, iron goods, and other

### Letter from the editor

OUR FILES for the *Newsletter* are full to overflowing, so instead of falling too far behind, we present this special end-of-2006 issue as a gift to our readers. Even though it contains two full pages of Letters to the Editor, there are still plenty more to appear in our Jan-Feb 2007 issue. In fact we considered monthly issues in the new year, but a typical issue takes up a full week of office time, and we can't quite spare that many days regularly every month. We thank everyone who sent news in 2006. Perhaps you noticed that, once someone does send news, we keep the name on our mast-head permanently thereafter. It's our great pleasure to do this! We hope to add many new names in 2007. RMB

metals. Although none survived, textiles were probably a major cargo item. Thousands of pierced gemstones point to embroidered cloth. A bowl with a cyclical date for 968 and coins from the Nan Han (917-942/971) period suggest the ship sank in the 10<sup>th</sup> C.

Surprisingly, about 30% of the hull was in good condition. Wooden dowels and frames lashed onto *tambugu*-lugs clearly identify

a Western Austronesian [presumed Srivijayan] 'lashed-lug' vessel of the type defined by P.-Y. Manguin (1980, 1995) and others. Preliminary finding will hopefully be published in 2007. Altogether the ship carried 500,000 to 600,000 ceramics. — Horst Liebner, Expert, Agency for Marine & Fisheries Research, Dept of Marine Affairs & Fisheries, Indonesia



Cirebon shipwreck ceramics include (from above) Chinese glazed kendi, 'Dusun' storage jars (both Cosmix Ltd photos), and (below) a large number of unglazed earthenware kendi of unknown origin (Horst Liebner photograph).



## Letters to the editor

### Important correction

I wish to make a correction: The (worldwide famous) Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde is located in Leiden, not in Amsterdam [Letters, Nov-Dec 2006]. Specifically, the inscribed limepot is at the museum conservation depot at 's-Gravenzande, about 15 kms southwest of Leiden and Leiden is about 60 kms south of Amsterdam. -Nguyen Xuan Hien, The Hague

Editor: My mistake! So sorry!!

### Chinese stone anchors

Concerning the Jepara Wreck findings [Sept-Oct 2006], a similar stone anchor was found during the recovery of a Song dynasty wreck found S.W. of Palawan in the Philippines. [Breaker Reef wreck] The anchor stock was a stone slab, 3m. in length, in the shape of an angular column thickening at the middle and narrowing at both ends (cf. Dupoizat 'The Ceramic Cargo of a Song Dynasty Junk Found in the Philippines and its Significance in the China-South East Asia Trade,' in R. Scott & J. Guy (eds), *South East Asia & China: Art, Interaction & Commerce*, Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia No.17, Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, London, 1995, p. 207). At the middle section there were ruts and notches which acted "as a mortise and tenon for the fixing of a wooden component" (Yang Qinzhang, 'A 12-13th century stone anchor of Southern Song recently discovered on the coast of the South China Sea', *Bulletin of the Australian Institute for Maritime Archaeology*, 1989, 13/2, p. 27). Similar stone anchors have also been discovered in other places for the 12th-13th centuries, such as Quanzhou Bay (Houzhou, Fashi) or in Guangzhou Bay (Shenmei) in China, as well as in the Japanese archipelago, specially in the Bay of Hakata, such as those left after the wreckage by a typhoon of the fleet sent by the first emperor of Yuan to conquer Japan (Yang, *ibid.*, p. 30; and Yang Qinzhang & Chen Dasheng, *Recentes decouvertes Quanzhou (Zaitun)*, 39, Paris, 1990, pp. 81-91). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that a stone anchor of a sea-going ship is clearly shown in a bas-relief on the exterior gallery of the Bayon of Angkor.

— Marie-France Dupoizat, Paris

16th C. Vietnam ceramics  
I enjoyed Prof. Hien's letter about the inscribed limepot [Letters, Nov-Dec 2006]. Let me add more on this subject. During the Vietnamese Mạc dynasty (16<sup>th</sup> C.) there was a famous master potter, Đặng Huyền Thông. He worked only on order of Buddhist customers making lamp stands, incense burners (*luu hu o'g*) and vases for use in temples. His works are an exception in Asian ceramic history and truly first-rate: large in size, multicolored, and using both incised and molded decoration in single creations (no duplicates). All are dated, with his name and often his wife's name too, his village name, the name of the temple for which it was ordered, and/or the names of the donors (up to 12), and the reason for making it – all on the exterior, not hidden in the base. Since Đặng was an exceptional local intellectual (Master of Literature), information about his life can be found in his home village at the local ancestors' shrine on an epitaph. His unique ceramics remain: 24 perfect ones recorded within Vietnam, and others broken and imperfect. The Hanoi Museum of History has 12, the Hai Duong Museum 7, and there are a few other. Only two of Đặng's works are recorded outside Vietnam: a censer in the collection of Jochen May, Germany, but recently sold to a Californian collector (see *Hidden Treasures* by the Berlin Museum, #110). The one illustrated here is now in a private collection in Seoul, Korea – the largest of all known works, 54 cm in height and in perfect condition. — Thomas Ulbrich, Hanoi



### Kendi

The grey-paste kendi illustrated in your last newsletter [Nov-Dec 2006] is very similar to those found along the foreshore in Palembang, which as you know had an immigrant Chinese population from at least the c14th or possibly earlier. There could well be a Chinese connection involved.

E. Edwards McKinnon, Indonesia

### More kendi

On the kendi from Cambodia: I have found sherds of such kendis in two archaeological sites, both late 17th-early 18th century: York Fort, Bengkulu, Sumatra; and Bintan, Riau. I had not however seen one with the bulbous pouring spout on the shoulder before, which I suspect would indicate that this piece is a little older. My own view remains that these objects were made in the Straits of Melaka area; that kind of bulbous spout shows up most frequently in the region of north Sumatra-Aceh-southern Thailand. —John Miksic, Singapore

### Bencharong ceramics

I would like to announce that the Bencharong ceramics from The Jim Thompson Museum can now be seen on the Rooney Cultural Archive at <http://rooneyarchive.net/ceramics/intro-bencharong.html>. There is information on their meaning, function, decoration, dating etc. All 90 pieces from the collection are illustrated. A 3-minute movie takes one inside the Jim Thompson House to see them in the setting of this beautiful home. I hope you enjoy viewing this selection of Bencharong ware as much as I enjoyed putting it together!

—Dawn Rooney, Bangkok

### Kendi from Guangdong

This kendi was found in Guangdong. What is your opinion on



its dating and provenance etc?

— Sharon Wong Wai Yee

Editor: If you can find the production site for this ware, Sharon, we will give you a Page 1 story. Ceramics with similar (or more brownish) glaze and lightweight gray body are found on shipwrecks circa 1400-1488. Bowls, jars and covered boxes are more common than kendi. Unglazed kendi with a lobed body something like this were found in the Ko Si Chang 3 wreck (c. 1470-1490). ■



Letters to the editor, continued [museumnewsletter@bu.ac.th](mailto:museumnewsletter@bu.ac.th)

## Yaoli kilns visit

With the idea that some of the shipwreck ceramics from the Hongzhi (1488-1505) reign might be from the Yaoli kilns on the outskirts of Jingdezhen, I visited there about three weeks ago. Rather to my surprise I did not find anything I could definitely attribute to the mid-Ming or later periods at all. Everything I saw came from the later Song/Yuan through early Ming periods and appeared to be for domestic consumption. Personnel from the Jingdezhen Ceramic Research Institute told me that the Yaoli kilns closed during the mid-Ming period at the very latest and production moved to Jingdezhen. Certainly, looking at the relative abundance of mid-Ming pieces at Jingdezhen kiln sites and relative dearth of *minyao* early Ming pieces found there, I would go so far as to speculate that the bulk of lower quality early Ming *minyao* blue and white was actually produced at Yaoli. I've seen various book references claiming that bowls of this or that pattern

[Yaoli, continued] match ones found at Yaoli. However I wasn't able to find a match for any of them! Perhaps there are other sites in the Yaoli area that I didn't visit, but since the Jingdezhen folks don't know about them (and they would have to have been significant sites to supply the S. E. Asian market in the mid-Ming) then I am skeptical. Certainly the absence of unglazed stacking rings on most Ming blue and white found in S. E. Asia speaks against a Yaoli (where unglazed rings are the norm) origin and I found plenty of mid-Ming



[Yaoli, continued] shards at Jingdezhen kiln sites which do match pieces in S. E. Asia. I attach photos of the most common type of Yaoli blue and white bowl fragments (all with unglazed stacking rings on the interior).

— Tim Hartill, USA

## Chinese Ceramics in Africa

Regarding the shards from East Africa [Nov-Dec 2006 issue], a Chinese archaeologist, Qin Dashu, has been conducting research on Chinese ceramics found in that region. His contacts are: Qin Dashu Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology, Peking University, and Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology at Peking University, Beijing 100871, P.R. China. Dr. Pradines should get in touch with him. He has excavated in Egypt and Kenya.

—John Miksic, Singapore

## Palembang Changsha confirmed

In regard to your request about evidence at Palembang concerning the earliest bulk shipments of Chinese ceramics, the full reference to my paper is 'Sriwijaya and the Early Trade in Chinese Ceramics, Observations on Recent Finds from Palembang (Sumatra)' in *Report, UNESCO Maritime Route of Silk Roads, Nara Symposium '91*. Nara: The Nara International Foundation, 1993, pp.122-133.

It contains, however, a big blunder. I thought we did not have Changsha and Ding ware in our 9th assemblage, and therefore tried to understand why. In fact, the next year I double-checked the local analysis of the shards after I found a few Changsha shards in the

[Changsha, continued] field ... and found a reasonable amount of Changsha ware that had been incorrectly identified. The rest of the article is alright, and was confirmed by further excavations at the Museum Badaruddin site, by Chui Mei Ho's identifications of all the ceramic material from there, and by her own earlier excavations with Bennet Bronson at Ko Khor Kao and Laem Pho in Thailand. I do not have the exact percentages with me, but Guangdong ware amounts to almost 90% of the 9th c. assemblage at the Museum Badaruddin site in Palembang. I attach a photograph of a Changsha ewer shard from Phase A (i.e. late 8th to 9th c.) at the Museum Badaruddin site in Palembang, from controlled excavations in 1993.

— Pierre-Yves Manguin, EFEO, Paris



Editor: The correspondence with Dr. Manguin provides one piece of the evidence I used to argue that the *deva-*

*raja* cult of Cambodia was a reaction to the increased power brought by the bulk trade in Chinese ceramics being in the hands of the Malay world of Srivijaya. Our Page One confirmation [this issue] that yet another early ship is S. E. Asian, rather than Chinese, supports the case for Malay shipping power originally formulated by Manguin [SPAFA, 1984]. The most likely beginning date for the bulk trade is *circa* AD 800-850; the *deva-raja* cult was instituted sometime toward the end of Jayavarman II's (802-850) reign. My paper ('The Ming Gap and Angkor') on this subject was presented in Sydney at the Landscape, City & Temple, a Conference on New Directions in Research at Angkor, 17-22 July 2006.

Incidentally, the relatively small finds of Changsha ware at land sites emphasize the rarity of the Belitung wreck cargo ['Tang Wreck', March-April 2005 issue]. In another e-mail Pierre-Yves estimated the amount of Changsha ceramics from the Museum Badaruddin site for the 9th-10th C. at about 14%. In fact, since neither of two known 10th C. shipwrecks (Intan, Cirebon) have Changsha ware, it may have been exported only in the 9th c. [end]

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum

The museum houses an initial collection of 2,050 ceramics donated by Mr. Surat Osathanugrah. With few exceptions, these ceramics were all found in Thailand. There is pottery from as early as about 3,000 BC and as late as the 19th century.

There are ceramics from production centers in Thailand as well as ceramics that were imported in older times from neighboring countries.

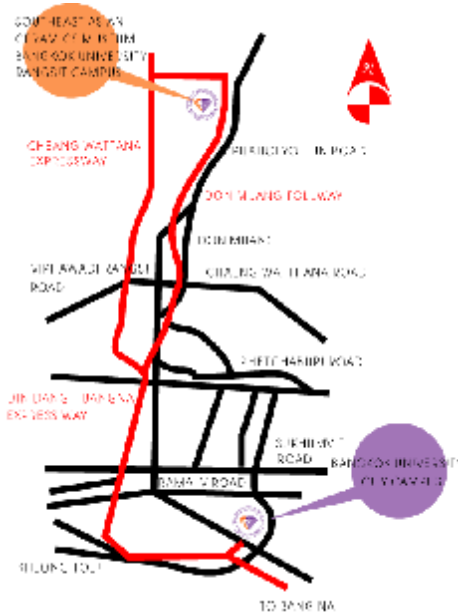
Khmer ceramics from old kilns presently located within Thailand are represented. There are also Vietnamese ceramics, a great variety of Chinese ceramics, Burmese, Lao and Japanese ceramics.

Display galleries show all the types of ceramics found in Thailand and the technology involved in local Thai production. The museum collections include kiln site wasters and fragments that are essential for teaching ceramics dating and identification.

It is also home to one of the largest collections of ceramics from the 14th-16th centuries Tak-Omkoi sites of western Thailand.

The museum formally opened to the general public on 11 May 2005.

Interior museum views



The displays seen here show (upper left) a variety of storage jars (upper right) an outline chronology for Thai trade ceramics (forefront, lower right) the mixture of Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese ceramics made about AD 1380-1430.

The Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum is located at the Rangsit campus of Bangkok University.

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum  
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Sinan shipwreck conference, Korea

AN INTERNATIONAL symposium to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Sinan Wreck Excavation, 'Sinan Underwater Relics and 14th Century Asian Marine Trades', was held in Seoul on 17-19 November 2006. It was organized by the National Maritime Museum of Korea together with the Institute of Island Culture, Mokpo National University. Asian shipwreck archaeology began in 1974 when both the Sinan (c. 1325) and Ko Khram (c. 1450, Thailand) ships were discovered. ‡



Left: A memorial was held at the shipwreck site. Photo by Shih Ching-fei.