



Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter

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Editors:

Roxanna M. Brown
Pariwat Thammapreechakorn

Reporters:

Ang Choulean, Ann Proctor, Augustine Vinh, Berenice Bellina, Bonnie Baskin, Chang Kuang-Jen, Chhay Visoth, Chui Mei Ho, David Reh fuss, Dawn Rooney, Don Hein, Donald Stadtner, Edward Von der Porten, Else Geraets, Eusebio Dizon, Gary Hill, Guo Li, Heidi Tan, Horst Liebner, Ian Glover, Jennifer Rodrigo, John Kleinen, Leng Rattanak, Li Jianan, Louise Cort, Marie-France Dupoizat, Melody Rod-ari, Mohd. Sherman bin Sauffi, Ngueyn Xuan Hien, Pamela Gutman, Patrick McGlyn, Peter Burns, Philippe Colomban, Rasmi Shoocongdej, Rita Tan, Sayan Praicharnjit, Shih Ching-fei, Sten Sjostrand, Tim Hartill, Timothy Rebbeck, Tran Ky Phuong, Walter Kassela, Zheng Jin Ie

Museum staff :

Burin Singtoaj

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum
Bangkok University
Rangsit Campus
Phahonyothin Road
Pathum Thani 12120

Tel.: (66-2) 902-0299
Ext. 2892
Fax: (66-2) 516-6115

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Spanish claim that

Kinrande shipped to New World confirmed

FINDS FROM a shipwreck site off Baja California (Mexico) support a Spanish claim from 1574 that Chinese “gilt porcelain” was sent on the first Spanish galleons to Acapulco.

A small group of beachcombers began collecting shards from the area in the 1960s but the first published mention came in George Kuwayama’s *Chinese Ceramics in Colonial Mexico* (1997). Since then a Mexico-USA team has completed 4 expeditions. One of the team leaders, our informant for this article, is Edward Von der Porten who had earlier investigated remains of two Spanish cargoes from 1579 & 1595 at Drakes Bay north of San Francisco (Shangraw & Von der Porten 1981). No gilt porcelain, nor any polychrome ware, according to Von der Porten, have been identified among the Drakes Bay finds. There is also no recorded gilt porcelain from the *San Diego* (1600) shipwreck in the Philippines. Was it shipped?

The first Spanish mention of gilt porcelain comes after they boarded two Chinese junks off Mindoro in 1570 and found

[along with textiles and metal goods] “gilded porcelain bowls”, “gilded waterjugs” and “fine porcelain.” An inventory of a cargo sent to Mexico in 1574 includes “22,300 pieces of fine gilt china, and other kinds of porcelain ware.” (The 1st full commercial cargo was sent only the year before.)

Finally, with 1,043 shards from the Baja California site, there is archaeological collaboration for the Spanish claims. Some 4% of the total, according to Von der Porten, are types known elsewhere as *kinrande*, a type of polychrome ware with additional gold decoration. The gold is long gone from the Mexico shards, but there is little doubt of its original presence.

Von der Porten has recently identified the ship (only fragments have been found) as the *San Felipe* which left Manila in July 1576 and was lost.

No *kinrande* post-1600 is known, and one may wonder if its disappearance had anything to do with rejection by the new and relatively large Western markets represented

by the Portuguese at Melaka and Spanish at Manila. We look forward to future publications on this — the earliest Spanish galleon remains so far known. •



Above: *Kinrande* bowl (Von der Porten private collection) and Baja California fragment, both with distinctive red circles on which gold decoration would have been applied. Photo by E. Von der Porten.

Below: Vietnamese gilt ceramics seem to have preceded Chinese ones on the overseas market. A gilt polychrome pedestal dish (detail) in a Vietnam private collection is from the Hoi An (c.1500) shipwreck.

Letter from the editor

IMPORTANT! ! SEMESTER BREAK: MUSEUM CLOSED 3-14 MARCH 2007.

Otherwise, I expect to be meeting some readers at the Chinese Trade Wares symposium being organized by the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, for 12-14 March.— RMB



Letters to the editor

Important correction

In the last issue, December 2006, on page 4, the photographer for shots from the Sinan shipwreck symposium was Chui Mei Ho, not Shih Ching-fei. — Editor

Islamic ware in S. E. Asia

Briefly on glazed Islamic ceramics (the subject of our recent discussion), my feeling is that they started to arrive in small quantities in the late 7th century, and perhaps even some Parthian ones preceded this, and they dried up in the mid to late 9th century, driven out in a sense by the mass export of much better Chinese ceramics. The Islamic, turquoise-glazed (TGW) was probably the first brightly coloured and well-fired material to reach S. E. Asia and it must have been a revelation to people used only to dull local products. However, the quantities were always small and they are found predominantly on or near the coasts. I have not heard of any from inland Java.

I do send a photograph [below] of the only (and very small!) shard of Islamic turquoise glazed ware that I've seen from Angkor. It is rare to find any away from the coasts. This shard (shown beside an American penny) is from Christophe Pottier's work on the southern embankment of the Western Baray. There is a lot of this material in the Takuapa area, and a little at Laem Pho near Chaiya on Thailand's east coast, and elsewhere in S. E. Asia. See my article, 'West Asian Sasanian-Islamic Ceramics in the Indian Ocean, South, Southeast and East Asia', in *Man and Environment*, 27 (1): 165-77. — Ian Glover, England



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More on Sinan symposium

As expected, some papers were better than others. The focus of course was very East Asia and 14th century. The Korean scholars did a good job in presenting a deeper cultural understanding of the wreck and in organizing the event. I have never been to any meeting with better translation quality and facilities. At the end of the conference people still could not resolve the usual

doubts about dating, trade routes, or destinations.

I myself liked the section on the Present and Future of Asian Underwater Archaeology, which focussed on administration and management. Knowing that the Asian countries have come a long way in this development, it is exciting to see that China and Korea are breaking new grounds and will definitely make a difference soon.

— Chui Mei Ho, Chicago

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Nanhai I shipwreck

China is going to salvage this Southern Song dynasty wreck from this March 2007 on, according to the news. It would be taken from the water in June and then

housed in a glass museum called the 'crystal museum' where underwater archaeologists could exhibit excavation techniques for the public in the future. Visitors will see the wreck through the glass box which will be



filled with sea water in a scene that will reconstruct the site where the ship was discovered. — Guo Li, H.K.

Editor: This has been planned (& delayed) since a survey brought 4,000 artifacts from a corner of the site in 2003; it is expected to yield another 60,000-80,000 pieces. Fishermen discovered the site in the late 1980s.

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Java pots

Watching a TV program on archaeology in East Java in July 2006, I was reminded that I had visited that area with a friend several times in 1985-87. We went to Batu Jaya near Cibuaya, Kerawang. There had been excavations there since 1984 by the Universitas Indonesia. Reportedly they had found the foundations of a half dozen 5th C. Buddhist temples. The TV program reported that gold jewelry, bronzes, terracotta, beads, etc have recently been discovered. In 1985-87 one of my companions bought two jars [above] that a local man said he had bought from people who dig sand for the construction industry. Using bamboo rafts, they dig the sand from the Citarum river.

— Zheng Jin Ie, Jakarta



Champa kilns

Many thanks for the CD on the Go Hoi excavation! I had not understood how the dome as well as lower walls were reportedly made of saggars. Now I see that the saggars are buttress support and fill, but the walls (as far as I can see) are thick slab clay. Also, I knew the ceiling of the firing chamber near the 'chimney' must be low and joined to the back wall with its vent apertures. That is clear in Slides 16, 19, and 28. 'Chimney' does not seem entirely satisfactory given its association with taller things. Maybe 'vent chimney' or 'draft vents' would be better. Then I saw Slide 46 [above]. I thought I was looking at a MASW [Mon-Associated Stoneware] piece, with its shape, colour, spur marks and vertical grooves on the cavetto! Such grooves are usually on the outside wall of MASW [Hein, upper photo] and LASW [Later Stoneware] and only rarely on the inside. But MASW only has them on the inside. Could there be a Binh Dinh connection? I noticed that the ring supports (not found at Sawankhalok at all) have the spurs pinched out whereas those at Sawankhalok are usually added.

— Don Hein, Adelaide

Editor: Don Hein refers to a PowerPoint by the late Trinh Cao Tuong, *The excavation of the Go Hoi ceramic kiln site in Tay Vinh village, Tay Son district, Binh Dinh province, June 2002*. I have copies if anyone is interested. The excavation was sponsored by the Royal Museums for History & Art, Brussels with the Vietnam Archaeological Institute and Binh Dinh Museum.

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First excavations at Anlong Thom Khmer kilns



FOR THE FIRST TIME since debris was noted at the site in 1883 by Etienne Aymonier, kilns have now been excavated at Anlong Thom on Phnom Kulen. Two kilns were uncovered at Anlong Thom, and a 3rd was excavated at Sar Say at the base of the mountain. The work was done in January 2007, just in time for the first ever symposium on pre-Angkorian and early Angkorian ceramics.

The symposium 'Early Settlements in the Neolithic Period and the Production of Khmer Ceramics' was hosted by Nara Institute and APSARA Authority and held in Siem Reap this 30 January—1 February.

In recent years archaeologists have been taking a more active interest in remains in the Angkor area from before the founding of Angkor in AD 802. Mr. Heng Than, APSARA Authority, summarized 7 early sites in the area. Another participant, Sergey Lapteff, reported that looting at the Phum Snay site, has been stopped with the cooperation of local officials there. Thousands of prehistoric artifacts, including pottery and beads with gold mounts, from Phum Snay have appeared on the Thai antiques market in recent years.

Tabata Yuditugu summarized his team's work on Anlong Thom kiln 1, and Keo Sok Sovannara presented the work at Sar Sey, the kiln site at the base of Phnom Kulen.

Two papers presented recent findings from the long term Thai-Khmer Angkor Road Project which is looking at the old road from Angkor to Pimai in Thailand. Another speaker, Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, Bangkok University, discussed the types of earthenware kendi coming from Cambodia onto the Thai market.

There will be more news from the participants in coming issues of the *Newsletter*.

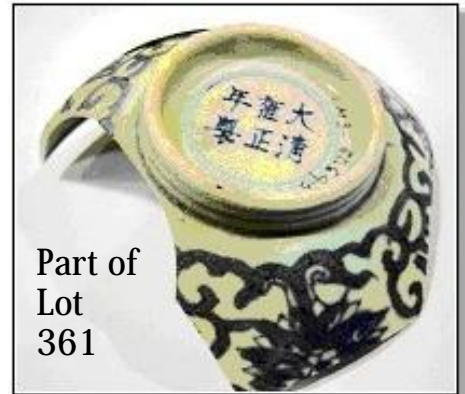
—D Rooney & R. Brown

Above & right: Anlong Thom Kiln Two. Photos by P. Thammapreechakorn

'Imperial China' sale

ALTOGETHER THE Sotheby's Amsterdam sale of 29-31 January brought about US\$3.9 million. The stunning catalog will now join bookshelves alongside Nguyen Dinh Chien's earlier report *The Ca Mau Shipwreck 1725-1735* (Hanoi 2002).

Sotheby's title choice, 'Made in Imperial China', was of course influenced by marketing concerns. A bowl fragment in Lot 361, with a 6-character Yongzheng reign mark, was probably the only strictly imperial piece offered. While most of the remainder of the 76,000 pieces were very high quality and undoubtedly made at Jingdezhen, they were intended for sale, not for the imperial court. As such they are not strictly imperial ware. As their closest example for comparison with items in the sale, the National Palace Museum, Taipei, sent a photograph of an imperial Kangxi (1666-1722) brushpot



Part of Lot 361



Lot 93

Above, clockwise: author Nguyen Dinh Chien (2nd from right); Shard in Lot 361 with 6-character Yongzheng mark; imperial Kangxi brushpot at National Palace Museum, Taipei; and Lot 93, one of 2 similar jars.



that may have inspired the designs as well as the very unusual combination of underglaze blue, underglaze red and celadon on the jars Lots 93-94 (#94 brought US\$24,577) & two dishes in Lot 495. Besides nine cups with a 4-character Yongzheng mark, 32 cups had a 4-character mark translated in the catalog as 'in the collection of Ruo Shen.' One scholar at the sale, Nguyen Xuan Hien, offered another reading: 'carefully conserved in a poor remote place.' The place was however, he says, more likely to have been a palatial home than poor and remote. The mark is known in Vietnam.

— reports from Nguyen Xuan Hien and John Kleinen in the Netherlands

Hoi An's Dragon Sea

British archaeologist and dive master Frank Pope, author of *Dragon Sea, A True Tale of Treasure, Archaeology and Greed off the coast of Vietnam* about the excavation of the Hoi An wreck in 1997-1999, spoke on January 10 at the Freer Gallery, Washington, DC. Pope confirmed that two-thirds of the cargo (even though the recovered portion was 300,000 artifacts, including about 150,000 ceramics) was left behind. It lies 70 meters down buried in deep mud. He doubts that another operation would be mounted anytime soon because of the difficulties & costs. Pope's book (USA: Harcourt, 2007) is a fascinating read for anyone interested in undersea archaeology and Vietnamese ceramics. His descriptions of dive details and personalities make a dramatic story.

—D. Rehfuss

Right: Dive master & author Frank Pope with Louise Cort at the Freer.



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.

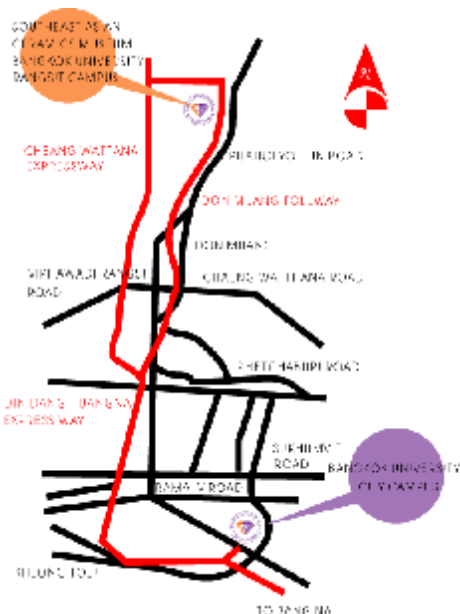
There are ceramics from production centers in Thailand as well as ceramics that were imported in older times from neighboring countries.

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.

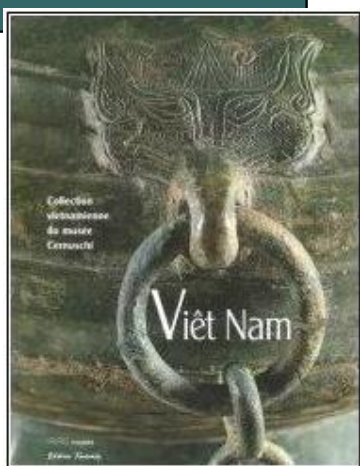
The museum formally opened to the general public on 11 May 2005.



Interior views of the museum (from upper left) show a variety of storage jars; a 5-period outline chronology for Thai trade ceramics; and an open 'sandpit' mixture of Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese ceramics made about AD 1380-1430, with Northern Thai ceramics in the background.

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum
Bangkok University, Rangsit Campus
9/1 Mu 5, Phahonyothin Road
Khlong Luang, Pathum Thani 12120
THAILAND

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Viêt Nam: Collection Vietnamiennne du Musée Cernuschi, editor Monique Crick, contributions by Monique Crick, Lê Thành Khôi, Vincent Lefèvre and Helen Loveday. Paris: Paris Musées, Editions Findakly, 2006. 152 pps, 108 color & 6 black and white illustrations. 38 drawings. ISBN 2-86805-129-4. Text in French. 26.5 X 21 cm. Soft cover. Price: Euros 33.5.

THIS BEAUTIFULLY illustrated work is a systematic description of Musée Cernuschi's Vietnamese collection, which includes bronzes and ceramics recovered by Swedish archaeologist Olov Janse in Thanh Hoa province in 1934-35. The text highlights Dong Son bronzes (ca. 1000 BCE – 200 CE) and Ly and Tran dynasties stoneware (11th-14th centuries CE). The photographs are excellent, and Janse's archaeological drawings of Thanh Hoa tombs are a valuable part of book. [The Janse collection does not include types of trade ceramics sent overseas beginning in the late 14th C.]

There are 5 chapters. The first 4 detail cultural and political history, emphasizing the Dong Son bronze age. Crick, Curator of the Baur Collection, Geneva, wrote – for ceramic lovers – the key chapter that captures the spirit and style of the wares of Red River delta, the historic well-spring of Vietnamese culture. She lays out the characteristics of the ceramics, era by era, and notes that while Vietnamese wares often followed Chinese patterns, stylistic and decorative variations clearly show their Vietnamese spirit. From the time the Chinese were defeated at the end of the 9th C through to the 15th century Red River delta ceramics flourished. They showed a “charm of tran-

quil harmony and freshness”, as a national style emerged.

This style is best seen in the 11th-14th C. brown inlaid wares of the Ly and Tran dynasties. Her view about the reason for the famous, mysterious chocolate brown wash seen on the base of many Vietnamese wares, starting in the late 13th C, must be challenged. Crick suggests that it may be a residue left from material used to stick the pieces on a potting wheel before decorating them. After having looked at hundreds of chocolate bottoms, I am certain that the brown wash is carefully brushed on intentionally, often onto a spinning vessel. Moreover, the wash is at times on the interior wall of the footring, an area not needed to be glued. No one knows why this wash was applied, as there remain no contemporaneous explanations, but it is not some kind of residue from a paste or bonding material.

The book is attractively laid-out with maps, time-lines, photographs and drawings of tombs and a glossary-index of Vietnamese names and words. Again the reviewer must remark on the extraordinary artifacts and high quality photography.

— David Rehfuss