



Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter

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Past newsletters at
<http://museum.bu.ac.th>

New shipwrecks in Korea and China

Two new sites add numbers to the growing stock of shipwrecks with ceramics in Asia.

Nan Hai II surprise

According to Xinhua news, a shipwreck was discovered in early June off Guangdong province. The ship, 17-18 meters long, lies at a depth of 20 meters, and 300 ceramics were collected from the site. Archaeologists were working nearby on the Nan Hai I, a Song dynasty wreck which had been discovered in 1987, when they heard about fishermen retrieving blue and white ware from the sea.

The ceramics, which have been identified as mostly Zhangzhou ware, together with some Jingdezhen bowls, appear to be from about 1570-1600. Similar Zhangzhou pieces have been recovered from two shipwrecks in the Philippines, the Marinduque and San Isidro sites. There has been no news about whether this site will be further excavated or not.

The Nan Hai II photographs below come from Chinese news sources. □

Octopus Wreck

The story of a Korean fisherman's catch of a small octopus clinging to an antique dish made it into mainstream news reports in May 2007, but the story doesn't end there. For archaeologists, it continues to unfold.

The National Maritime Museum made a quick survey of the area and discovered an area of broken ceramics where they excavated during 2-26 June. After a short break, excavations began anew in early September and they will continue into November. Our Newsletter staff was able to contact Mr. Moon Whamsuk, head of the excavation team, by telephone on 4 September, a day before he returned to the site.

'Octopus' continued, photos, p. 4



Letter from the editor

IT WAS OUR GREAT pleasure to have Ms. Mai Trebuil [photo, right] as a museum volunteer several days a week in July to early September.

Mai was in Bangkok visiting her parents during her summer holidays from St. Andrews University in Scotland where she has one remaining year in her undergraduate art history and Spanish studies. For now her topic is the effects of Japonism on western art, but that did not stop her from learning about ceramics. She helped register kiln site shard donations from Robert and Carol Kim Retka that included pieces from the Kalong, Suphanburi, San Sai, and Singburi kiln sites. The shards increase the depth and research value of our growing Shard Archive.

Volunteers and donations are always welcome at the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum!

RMB



Mai at work with kiln shards.

Letters to the editor

Rare Burma underglaze

In reference to Don Hein's letter about underglaze decorated Burmese ware [Sept-Oct 2006 issue], I have further evidence for this. I have a Burmese celadon plate, 33 cms wide, about 15th-16th C., with an underglaze black lotus on the exterior. [photos below] It was purchased in Bangkok's Chatuchak weekend market a couple of weeks ago. According to the dealer it came from the Tak-Omkoi excavations in Thailand.

The stems of the leaves and the center of the blossom are rendered in reserve, with the center further embellished with what may be an indecipherable inscription in Burmese script.

Walter Kassela, Bangkok

Editor: This is only the 3rd example of this ware that I have ever heard about.



078 (Underglaze lotus)

Chocolate bases, more

I would like to add a further note on chocolate bases: they are very occasionally found on Chinese pieces, e.g. a Ming incense burner in (John Guy and John Stevenson, 1999) *Vietnamese Ceramics: A Separate Tradition*, #304.

John Stevenson, USA

Where are they now?

Most Vietnamese lime pots were made in Vietnam, but there are exceptions. For example, envoys of King Minh Manh (1820-40) to London ordered some Copeland and Garrett pottery, including (possibly 4) lime pots, for the court. The whereabouts of two are known. One is in a private collection in HCM City, another is at Hue Royal Fine Arts Museum. Two others are missing:

1. MKD: 'A white porcelain pot with polychrome decoration. H. 18cm, Base 11cm. Received from Thua Thiên Province. Inventory: M.K.D. 653'. See P. Jabouille and J-H Peysonnaux in *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hue*, 1929, No. 2, XXX/4.



2. '... faience lime pot with polychrome decoration, made after the Chinese originals in England, especially for Annam. Copeland and Garrett (1835-47) mark. H 18.5cm', see Huet Clément in *Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire [à Bruxelles]* (1941/4: 81).



Anyone with information about their whereabouts, please contact me at nguyenxhien@orange.nl.

Nguyen Hien, Netherlands

Ship debate

I wish to comment on Pierre-Yves Manguin's remark about the ship depicted on the Vietnamese stem plate [July-Aug issue]. The protruding keel piece does not seem to belong to that boat, but is the upper cover of a small junk in front of that ship with a man squatting on its stem. The big boat itself has an inverted triangular front

plate, very similar to the Sinan Boat of the Yuan period. What Manguin did not seem to notice were the boat's high freeboard, high bulwark, three masts with a typical slanting foremast, with cupolas on top, all hallmarks of a typical Ming-Qing period Chinese junk. He must have also missed the Chinese pagoda at the stern. I cannot quite understand how a ship so depicted can be labeled as Insular Southeast Asian.

K.L.Tam, Hong Kong



Shards identification

Can you tell if these shards could be from AD 1601 or not? I am on a field survey without reference books available.

Bobby Orillaneda, Underwater Archaeology Section, National Museum, Manila



Editor: For this question, I have asked the opinion of Tim Hartill who is fresh from doing background research for the coming book *The Wanli Shipwreck and its Ceramic Cargo* (Kuala Lumpur: 2007).

Tim Hartill: "Yes, the short answer is that these shards are consistent with a date of about 1601. They appear to be Zhangzhou (Swatow) ware; rear views would help confirm this. The shard of the water bird and the floral front is the most conclusively identifiable. It is the border pattern for a Zhangzhou copy of the Jingdezhen 'twin deer' kraak plate with one of the earlier kraak border types (see Rinaldi's *Kraak Porcelain, A moment in the history of Trade*). Twin deer plates with this border type have been found in the following wrecks. (All examples of which are the Jingdezhen rather than the Zhangzhou version in my opinion in spite

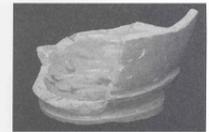
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2nd Anlong Thom kiln report

A NEWLY PUBLISHED report on a 2nd Anlong Thom kiln, like an earlier report on another kiln at the site [July-August 2007 issue], gives an 11th century date from C14 results (Calibrated BP 1,070+/-30).

This excavation, a joint Khmer-Japanese effort headed by Yukitsugu Tabata and Chhay Visoth, was conducted 27 December 2006 to 10 January 2007. The kiln was unusually small at only about 1.4 meters width, destroyed at its upper end, and built entirely of clay. It was set steeply up the side of an artificial dyke. Remnants from two older kilns were identified beneath the excavated chamber. Like other Khmer kilns, it featured clay pillars on the central axis that must have supported a roof. A large amount of waster material was collected that represents six basic product types; all were green-glazed or unglazed. No brown glazed ware was seen.

The report, written by Yukitsugu Tabata and Chhay Visoth, was published in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Archaeology* 27 (2007), a publication of the Japan Society for Southeast Asian Archaeology. □



Zhangzhou 'Swatow' in the Philippines

October 2007 – January 2008

AN EXHIBITION OF Zhangzhou ware found in the Philippines has been re-scheduled from September to 11 October 2007. Some 130 ceramics have been drawn together by Rita C. Tan for a show at the Yuchengco Museum (in Makai, Metro Manila) as a joint project with the Oriental Ceramics Society of the Philippines, Inc. The exhibits are from ceramics society members and from the San Isidro and *San Diego* shipwreck materials at the National Museum.

The exhibition, which will continue through 16 January 2008, will have a catalogue with contributions by Rita C. Tan, Li Jian'an, Eusebio Dizon and Bobby Orillaneda. The expected price is hard-cover US\$55, and soft cover US\$40.

The opening is set for 6 p.m. Thursday, 11 October. The Yuchengco Museum is situated in Makati, Metro Manila. A guided tour by Ms. Tan is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday October 20th. □



Letters, continued

of alternative attributions by some authors.): - The Drake (1579)/Cermeno(1595) recoveries, see *The Drake and Cermeno Expeditions' Chinese Porcelains at Drakes Bay, California 1579 and 1595* by Clarence Shangraw and Edward P. Von Der Porten.

- *San Diego* Wreck (1600), see *Treasures of the San Diego* (1996).

- Mauritius Wreck (1608), see Michel L'Hour, Luc Long, Eric Rieth, *Le Mauritius La Memorie Engloutie*.

Later wrecks, e.g. the Pepper wreck (1606), *Witte Leeuw* (1613), Wanli (1620s), *Sao Goncalo* (1630), *Hatcher Junk* (1644), contain no examples of this border type. The only catch, assuming the shard is in fact Zhangzhou, is that it's not possible to tell how long the Zhangzhou version appeared after the Jingdezhen original. As noted above I haven't seen any shipwreck evidence for the Zhangzhou version."



Bounty on the beach after storm

News from Valerie Esterhuizen

Recent storms, including an especially ferocious one on 19 March, on the east coast of South Africa sent shards onto a beach just north of Port Edward. This area still hides the *Sao Joao*, a Portuguese ship that sank in 1552. Some of the shards show unusual Jiajing (1522-66) reign motifs. One piece [photos left] has a coxcomb (a flower with small leaves on both sides of the stem) drawn in outline and wash technique in dark blue on the interior.

The base is unglazed and unmarked.

Two other shards [right] show Arabic script in penciled style. □



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.

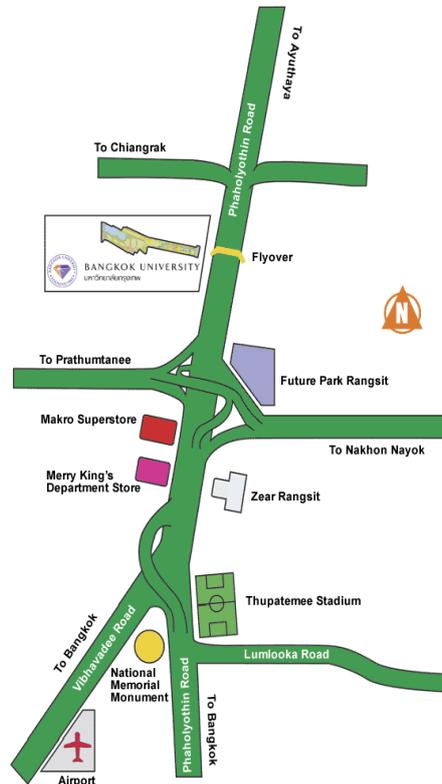
There are ceramics from production centers in Thailand as well as ceramics that were imported in olden times from neighboring countries.

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.

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For enlarged map, go to
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Mr Moon confirmed that the ceramics appear to be Korean wares from southern Kangjin province and the ship was probably en route to the Koryo dynasty capital at Kaijueng. The most likely date is 12th century. So far Korean ceramics are not known to have ever been exported overseas.

The ship lies about 8 meters deep at low tide (14 meters at high tide) in a muddy seabed. In addition to ceramics, iron pots, rope and packing materials have so far been recovered. The pack-

Octopus wreck ceramics

ing material included rice straw.

Mr Moon estimates a cargo of about 10,000 ceramics. Five to six divers are working at the site.

Initial news reports gave the estimated size of the boat itself as 7.7 meters long. The site is off Taean, southwest of Seoul. □

Photographs (below left & center from Moon Whansuk) show some of the recovered objects, including the octopus and its dish at lower right.

