

The University of Hull

Economic Interaction between China and the Malacca Straits Region,
Tenth to Fourteenth centuries A.D.

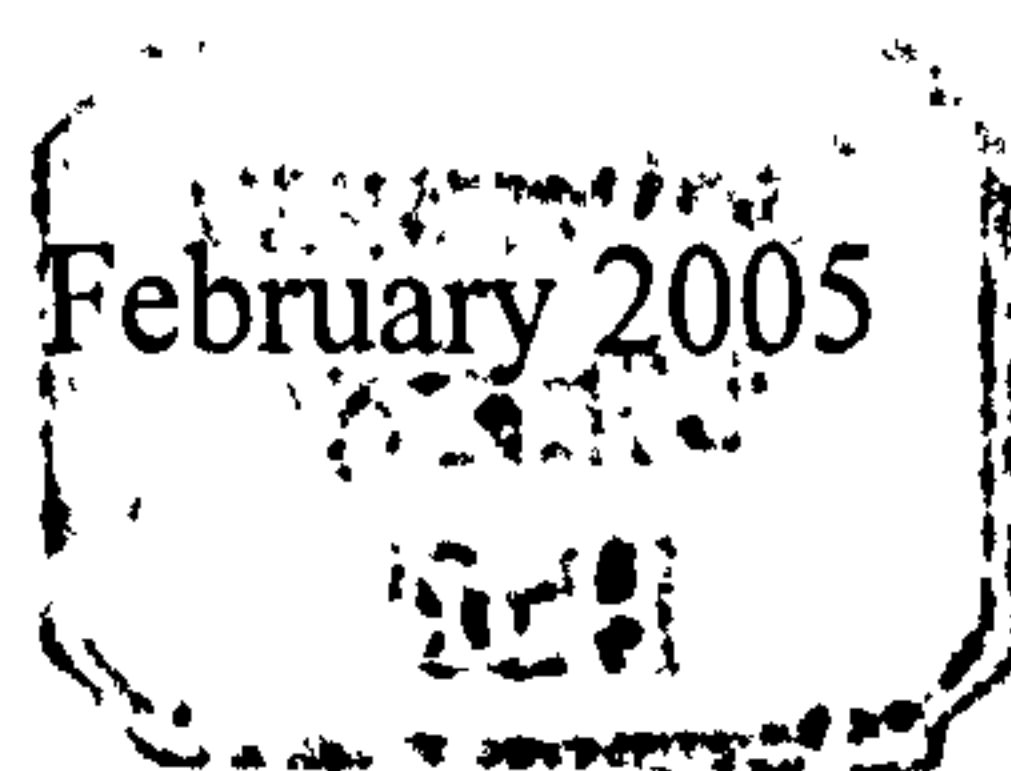
Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

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by

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Content

Tables and Illustrations	ix
Abbreviations	xxii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: The Chinese Textual Sources on the Economic Relations between China and the Malacca Straits Region (Song and Yuan Periods)	
2.1 Introduction	20
2.2 Song Period Texts	20
2.2.1 Pingzhou ketan (PZKT)	21
2.2.2 Lingwai daida (LWDD)	23
2.2.3 Yunlu manchao (YLMC)	27
2.2.4 Zhufanzhi (ZFZ)	28
2.2.5 Songhuiyao jigao (SHY)	30
2.3 Yuan Period Texts	32
2.3.1 Wenxian tongkao (WXTK)	33
2.3.2 Songshi (SS)	35
2.3.3 Dade nanhaizhi (DDNHZ)	36
Translated Entries of the Dade Nanhaizhi	38
2.3.4 Yuandianzhang (YDZ)	51
2.3.5 Daoyi zhilue (DYZL)	53
2.3.6 Yuanshi (YS)	54

Chapter 3: Sources of Archaeological Data on the Economic Relations between China and the Malacca Straits Region (Chinese Kiln Excavations and Shipwreck Excavations)

3.1	Introduction	57
3.2	Kiln Sites in South China	57
3.2.1	Guangdong	60
3.2.2	Fujian	70
3.2.3	Zhejiang	81
3.2.4	Yixing	83
3.2.5	Jiangxi	84
3.3	Shipwreck Excavations: A Brief Overview	88
3.3.1	Intan Wreck	91
3.3.2	Pulau Buaya Wreck	94
3.3.3	Java Sea Wreck	101
3.3.4	Quanzhou Wreck	103
3.3.5	Turiang Wreck	105

Chapter 4: Sources of Archaeological Data on the Economic Relations between China and the Malacca Straits Region (Excavations and Surveys of Malacca Straits Region Sites)

4.1	Introduction	108
4.2	South Kedah	111
4.2.1	Sungai Mas	113
4.2.2	Pengkalan Bujang	119
4.3	Tioman Island	126
4.4	Kota Cina	129
4.5	Temasik—Fourteenth Century Singapore	130
	<i>Fort Canning Hill Excavation (1984)</i>	133

	<i>Fort Canning Hill Excavation (1988)</i>	134
	<i>Empress Place Excavation (1998)</i>	134
	<i>Old Parliament House Excavation (2002)</i>	135
4.5.1	Coarse Stoneware in the Temasik-Period Sites	136
	<i>Framework and Process of Classification</i>	137
	<i>Range of varieties</i>	139
	1) Guangdong-type	141
	2) Dark Body Sherds	146
	a) Grey 1	146
	b) Grey 2	148
	c) Grey 3	149
	d) Grey 4	150
	3) Brittle-Type	152
	a) Small-mouthed bottle-type	153
	b) Brittle	155
	c) Grey-Slipped Interior	156
	d) Sugary Texture	157
	e) Red-Hue	158
	<i>Coarse Stoneware Ceramics in Historical Context</i>	159
4.5.2	Fine Stoneware Ceramics in the Temasik-Period sites: An	
	Overview	162
4.5.3	Other Small Finds	167

Chapter 5: Chinese Maritime Trade during the Song and Yuan Periods

5.1	Introduction	171
5.2	The Development of Chinese Maritime Trade Administration during the Song and Yuan Periods	171

5.2.1	The Northern Song Period	172
5.2.2	The Southern Song Period	187
5.2.3	The Yuan Period	197
5.3	Commercial Responses to Administrative Changes	204
5.3.1	Small-Scale Private Shipping and Chinese Participation in Intra-Regional Trade in Southeast Asia	205
5.3.2	Product Quality Grading	209
5.3.3	Region and Product Specialization	214
 Chapter 6: Malacca Straits Region's Maritime Trade with China		
6.1	Introduction	219
6.2	Tribute Missions and their Role in Diplomatic and Commercial Interactions during the Song Period	219
6.2.1	Patterns of Diplomatic and Economic Contact between Srivijaya and China in the Tenth Century	223
6.2.2	Changing Patterns of Diplomatic and Economic Contact in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries	232
6.2.3	Patterns of Diplomatic and Economic Contact during the Southern Song Period	248
6.2.4	Diplomatic Relations between the Malacca Straits Region and China during the Yuan period	258
6.3	Malacca Straits Traders in South China	264
 Chapter 7: China's Trade in Malacca Straits Products		
7.1	Introduction	278
7.2	China's Trade in Malacca Straits Products during the Song Period	278

7.3	China's Trade in Malacca Straits Products during the Yuan Period	299
Chapter 8: Chinese Products Imported by the Malacca Straits Region		
8.1	Introduction	307
8.2	China's Export of Metals to the Malacca Straits Region	308
8.2.1	Precious Metal Articles and Bullion	309
8.2.2	Copper	315
8.2.3	Iron	319
8.3	Currency: Copper Coins	323
8.4	Textiles	328
8.5	Ceramics	333
8.5.1	Fine Stoneware Ceramics Trade	336
8.5.2	Coarse Stoneware Ceramics Trade	346
8.5.3	The Overall Importance of Ceramics in China's Export Trade to the Malacca Straits Region	352
 Chapter 9: Conclusion		 356
Appendices		
Appendix A:	Individual Studies on Malacca Straits Products	374
	Lakawood Incense	374
	Imitation Dragon's Blood	379
	Jiangzhen	382
 Bibliography		 387

Tables and Illustrations

Tables

Table 4.1:	Summary of Artifacts Recovered from Site 32, Phases 1 - 6, Sungai Mas, Kuala Muda, Kedah.	114
Table 4.2:	Summary of Artifacts Recovered from Site 32, Phase 8, Sungai Mas, Kuala Muda, Kedah, with Relative Percentages to the Total Small Finds.	114
Table 4.3:	Summary of Ceramic Finds Recovered from the Empress Place Site (1998).	135
Table 4.4:	Summary of Ceramic Finds Recovered from the Old Parliament House Site.	136
Table 4.5:	Summary of Coarse Stoneware Ceramics, Empress Place Site (1989).	141
Table 4.6:	Summary of Coarse Stoneware Ceramics, Old Parliament House Site (2002).	141
Table 6.1:	Frequency of tribute missions from seven major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states in the tenth century.	226
Table 6.2:	Frequency of tribute missions from six major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states in the eleventh century.	239
Table 6.3:	Frequency of tribute missions from six major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states in the early twelfth century.	247

Table 6.4:	Frequency of tribute missions from six major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states between the founding of the Southern Song court and the end of the twelfth century.	254
Table 7.1:	Malacca Straits region products listed in the 982 list of products declared as state monopolies or to be freely traded by Chinese citizens.	280
Table 7.2:	Malacca Straits Region products listed in the 1133 list of foreign products permitted to be sold directly by traders at the Chinese ports.	286
Table 7.3:	Fine category (high value) Malacca Straits Region products listed in the 1141 customs duties list recorded in the SHY.	287
Table 7.4:	Coarse category (low value) Malacca Straits Region products listed in the 1141 customs duties list recorded in the SHY.	287
Table 7.5:	List of Malacca Straits Region products shipped to Quanzhou by ports in Maritime Southeast Asia in the early thirteenth century.	294
Table 7.6:	Indigenous products exported by key ports in the Malacca Straits Region, recorded in the ZFZ.	295
Table 7.7:	Malacca Straits Region products imported by China through Guangzhou at the beginning of the 14 th century.	301
Table 7.8:	Indigenous products made available for export by Malay Peninsula ports in the mid-fourteenth century.	303
Table 7.9:	Malacca Straits region products made available for export ports in the Riau-Lingga Archipelago and Malacca Strait Region.	304

Table 8.1:	Chinese gold and silver items imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the early thirteenth century.	314
Table 8.2:	Chinese gold and silver items imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century.	315
Table 8.3:	Chinese iron products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century.	323
Table 8.4:	Chinese textile products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the early thirteenth century.	330
Table 8.5:	Chinese textile products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century.	331
Table 8.6:	Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean textiles imported by ports in the Malacca Straits region and on the Malay Peninsula during the fourteenth century.	332
Table 8.7:	Chinese ceramic products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the early thirteenth century.	335
Table 8.8:	Chinese ceramic products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century.	335

Illustrations

Fig. 1.1:	Trade Routes linking the Indian-Subcontinent, Southeast Asia & China during the 10 th to 14 th Centuries.	2
Fig. 1.2:	Malacca Straits Region and Malay Peninsula coastal port-polities that maintained trade with China in the 10 th to 14 th centuries.	4
Fig. 3.1:	Song & Yuan Period National Kiln Centers in South China.	59
Fig. 3.2:	Song & Yuan Period Kiln Districts in Guangdong.	61
Fig. 3.3:	Bowl sherds with molded floral scroll decoration, celadon glaze, Xicun kiln. Guangzhou Museum.	63
Fig. 3.4:	Green-glazed bowl, Song period, incised decoration. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976.	63
Fig. 3.5:	Green-glazed bowl, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976.	63
Fig. 3.6:	Green-glazed bowl, impressed outer decoration, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976.	64
Fig. 3.7:	Green-glazed bowl, incised floral scroll, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976.	64
Fig. 3.8:	Green-glazed bowl, moulded floral scroll, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976.	64
Fig. 3.9:	Qingbai bowls with incised floral decorations, Song period. Excavated at Bijiaoshan kiln, Chaozhou, 1972.	65
Fig. 3.10:	Bowl with incised floral scroll, a central parrot design and iron-spots. Xicun. Diameter 31cm.	65
Fig. 3.11:	Line drawing of bowl in Fig. 3.10.	65
Fig. 3.12:	Qingbai Phoenix-headed ewer. Xicun. Height 36 cm.	66

Fig. 3.13:	Line drawing of the phoenix head of the qingbai ewer in Fig. 3.12.	66
Fig. 3.14:	Qingbai lotus bowl, Chao-an kilns, Chaozhou. Diameter 13.6cm. Art Gallery, Chinese University of Hong Kong.	66
Fig. 3.15:	Qingbai bowl with incised patterns of overlapping leaves. Xicun.	66
Fig. 3.16:	Black-glazed jarlet, Shiwan kilns, Foshan. Height 3.6 cm.	67
Fig. 3.17:	Black-glazed bowl, Xicun. Guangzhou Museum.	67
Fig. 3.18:	Basin, Xicun.	68
Fig. 3.19:	Olive-brown glazed basin with three impressed stylized flowers in the center. Diameter 27 cm, height 8 cm.	69
Fig. 3.20:	Fragment of a storage jar with impressed characters denoting the date AD 1116. Recovered at Qishicun, Foshan.	69
Fig. 3.21:	Large globular storage jar decorated with incised floral scrolls and wavy bands, Guangdong. Height 36.5 cm.	69
Fig. 3.22:	Guangdong storage jar sherds with molded decoration depicting the body of a dragon. Excavated at the Old Parliament House site (2002), Singapore.	70
Fig. 3.23:	Guangdong storage jar sherds with incised floral decoration. Excavated at the Old Parliament House site (2002), Singapore.	70
Fig. 3.24:	Song & Yuan Period Kiln Districts in South Fujian.	71
Fig. 3.25:	Line drawing of sherds from various qingbai covered-boxes, Nan'an.	72
Fig. 3.26:	Qingbai covered box, Nan'an.	72

Fig. 3.27:	Line drawing of a qingbai dish sherd with incised floral sprays, Nan'an.	72
Fig. 3.28:	Line drawing of a qingbai bowl sherd with incised scroll of clouds, Nan'an.	72
Fig. 3.29:	Line drawing of a qingbai bowl with incised floral decoration, Anxi.	73
Fig. 3.30:	Qingbai sherds, Anxi.	73
Fig. 3.31:	Line drawing of qingbai bowl with incised decoration, Tong'an.	73
Fig. 3.32:	Qingbai bowl shreds with incised and relief-molded decoration, Tong'an.	73
Fig. 3.33:	Line drawing of green glazed bowl with incised decoration, Tong'an.	73
Fig. 3.34:	Green glazed bowl sherds with incised and stamped decoration, Tong'an.	73
Fig. 3.35:	Brown glazed sherds with molded, stamped and carved decoration, Jinjiang.	74
Fig. 3.36:	Unglazed stoneware vase sherds with relief-molded floral band, Jinjiang.	74
Fig. 3.37:	Line drawings of relief-molded decorations of qingbai box covers, Dehua. Song period.	75
Fig. 3.38:	Line drawings of relief-molded decorations of qingbai box covers, Dehua. Yuan period.	75
Fig. 3.39:	Qingbai box with relief-molded decoration, Dehua. Song period. Diameter 21.3 cm.	76
Fig. 3.40:	Qingbai ewers with relief-molded decoration, Dehua. Song period. Height 13.8 cm & 16 cm (left to right).	76

Fig. 3.41:	Qingbai bowl with molded decoration, Dehua. Yuan period. Diameter 7 cm.	76
Fig. 3.42:	Black glazed kendi. Jinjiang.	78
Fig. 3.43:	Brown glazed kendi, brown glazed ewer and sancai glazed kendi (left to right). Jinjiang. Height 18 cm, 17 cm & 12.5 cm respectively.	78
Fig. 3.44:	Brown-glazed storage jar. Jinjiang. Height 39.3 cm, diameter 37.7 cm.	80
Fig. 3.45:	Small-mouthed bottle, Cizao kilns, Jinjiang. Height 18 cm, base 5cm, mouth 2cm.	80
Fig. 3.46:	Rubbings of molded dragon motifs applied on small squat storage jars, Cizao kilns, Jinjiang.	81
Fig. 3.47:	Celadon-glazed bowl with molded lotus decoration, jarlet and dish with relief-applied double fish motif (left to right), Longquan, Zhejiang.	83
Fig. 3.48:	Black glazed jar with four vertical lugs and everted rim. Yixing. Height 28.5cm, base 8cm.	84
Fig 3.49:	Qingbai dish with incised motifs of two boys, a floral spray and three cloud sprays. Jingdezhen. Diameter 17.2 cm.	86
Fig. 3.50:	Qingbai dish with incensed floral scroll. Jingdezhen. Diameter 18.1 cm.	86
Fig. 3.51:	Qingbai ewer with molded floral decoration. Jingdezhen. Height 11 cm.	86
Fig. 3.52:	Qingbai box with relief-molded floral decoration, Jingdezhen. Diameter 10.8 cm.	86
Fig. 3.53:	Qingbai cup and six-petaled stand. Jingdezhen. Height 7.9 cm, diameter 11.7 cm.	86

Fig. 3.54:	Small blue & white bowl, Jingdezhen. Yuan period.	88
Fig. 3.55:	Location of 10 th – 14 th Century Shipwrecks in Maritime Southeast Asia.	90
Fig. 3.56:	Chinese bronze mirror recovered from the Intan wreck.	93
Fig. 3.57:	Southeast Asian bronze mirrors recovered from the Intan wreck.	93
Fig. 3.58:	Silver ingot with inscribed Chinese characters, recovered from the Intan wreck.	94
Fig. 3.59:	Iron concretion recovered from the Intan wreck.	94
Fig. 3.60:	Earthenware kendi, possibly of Mainland Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	97
Fig. 3.61:	Earthenware kendi, possibly of Mainland Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	97
Fig. 3.62:	Earthenware pot, possibly of Island Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	97
Fig. 3.63:	Earthenware jar with zig-zag incised decoration; possibly of Island Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	97
Fig. 3.64:	Ring-shaped copper ingots. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	98
Fig. 3.65:	Copper slab ingot. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	98
Fig. 3.66:	Semi-circular tin or lead bars. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	100
Fig. 3.67:	Truncated pyramidal tin or lead ingot. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	100

Fig. 3.68:	Slab ingot with Chinese characters, possibly of lead or zinc. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	100
Fig. 3.69:	Iron wok of Chinese origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck.	100
Fig. 4.1:	Sites in Java where Song & Yuan Period Ceramics have been recovered.	109
Fig. 4.2:	Location of Archaeological Settlement-Sites in the Malacca Straits Region.	110
Fig. 4.3:	Archaeological Sites in South Kedah (9 th – 14 th Centuries).	112
Fig. 4.4:	White-glazed jarlet with molded lotus decoration; Guangdong. Excavated at site 32, Sungai Mas, Kedah.	117
Fig. 4.5:	Splashed-sgraffiate Middle Eastern ware sherds. Excavated from Pengkalan Bujang.	126
Fig. 4.6:	Base & lug sherds of the splashed-sgraffiate Middle Eastern ware. Excavated from Pengkalan Bujang.	126
Fig. 4.7:	Excavated Sites of the Temasik Period at the Singapore River Bank and Fort Canning Hill (Singapore).	133
Fig. 4.8:	Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds, brown outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.	142
Fig. 4.9:	Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds, black outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.	142
Fig. 4.10:	Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with lugs; Old Parliament House site.	143
Fig. 4.11:	Guangdong-type, storage jar rim sherds; Old Parliament House Site.	143
Fig. 4.12:	Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds, bases; Old Parliament House site.	143

Fig. 4.13:	Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with inner glaze or wipe; Old Parliament House site.	143
Fig. 4.14:	Guangdong-type, porous off-white paste, storage jar sherd, base; Old Parliament House site.	143
Fig. 4.15:	Guangdong-type, porous off-white paste, storage jar sherd, body sherds; Old Parliament House site.	143
Fig. 4.16:	Guangdong-type, basin, rim sherd; Old Parliament House site.	144
Fig. 4.17:	Guangdong-type, basin, base sherd; Old Parliament House site.	144
Fig. 4.18:	Guangdong-type, basin body sherd; Old Parliament House site.	145
Fig. 4.19:	Guangdong-type, basin sherds with angular rims; Old Parliament House site.	145
Fig. 4.20:	Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with molded decoration; Old Parliament House site.	145
Fig. 4.21:	Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with incised decoration; Old Parliament House Site.	145
Fig. 4.22:	Grey 1-type, body sherds with glazed inner surfaces; Old Parliament House site.	147
Fig. 4.23:	Grey 1-type, body sherds with glazed outer surfaces; Old Parliament House site.	147
Fig. 4.24:	Grey 1-type, base sherds; Old Parliament House site.	147
Fig. 4.25:	Grey 1-type, rim sherds with lugs attached; Old Parliament House site.	147
Fig. 4.26:	Grey 2-type, cross-sectional view of a body sherd; Old Parliament House site.	148

Fig. 4.27:	Grey 2-type, body sherds with iridescent brown slip-like layer; Old Parliament House site.	148
Fig. 4.28:	Grey 3-type, body sherds with brown outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.	149
Fig. 4.29:	Grey 3-type, body sherds with brown inner glaze; Old Parliament House site.	149
Fig. 4.30:	Grey 3-type, base sherd; Old Parliament House site.	150
Fig. 4.31:	Grey 3-type, rim sherds with lug attached; Old Parliament House site.	150
Fig. 4.32:	Grey 4-type, foot ring sherd; Old Parliament House site.	151
Fig. 4.33:	Grey 4-type, body sherd with wiped interior; Old Parliament House site.	151
Fig. 4.34:	Grey 4-type, body sherds with faint iridescent brown slip-like outer layer; Old Parliament House site.	151
Fig. 4.35:	Small mouth-type, storage jar sherds containing grit & black inclusions; Old Parliament House site.	154
Fig. 4.36:	Small mouth-type, storage jar sherds containing only black inclusions; Old Parliament House site.	154
Fig. 4.37:	Small mouth-type, rim sherd containing grit & black inclusions, Old Parliament House site.	154
Fig. 4.38:	Small mouth-type, storage jar base sherd containing grit & black inclusions; Old Parliament House site.	154
Fig. 4.39:	Brittle, rim sherd exhibiting inner glaze; Old Parliament House site.	155
Fig. 4.40:	Brittle, rim sherd with no outer glaze; Empress Place site.	155

Fig. 4.41:	Grey-slipped interior-type, body sherds exhibiting inner grey slip layer; Old Parliament House site.	156
Fig. 4.42:	Grey-slipped interior type, body sherds exhibiting degraded outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.	156
Fig. 4.43:	Sugary texture-type, body sherds with lug attached; Old Parliament House site.	158
Fig. 4.44:	Sugary texture-type, rim sherd; Old Parliament House site.	158
Fig. 4.45:	Red hue-type, rim sherd; Old Parliament House site.	159
Fig. 4.46:	Red hue-type, base sherd exhibiting unglazed outer surface; Old Parliament House site.	159
Fig. 4.47:	Red hue-type, rim sherds; Old Parliament House site.	159
Fig. 4.48:	Red hue-type, body sherds; Old Parliament House site.	159
Fig. 5.1:	Percentage of incoming maritime cargo that was levied by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies as customs duties (960-1278).	194
Fig. 5.2:	Percentage of net cargo (after levying of customs duties) compulsorily purchased by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies during the Song period (960-1278).	195
Fig. 5.3:	Proportion of the Chinese domestic trade in high value foreign products in private and state hands during the Song period (960-1278).	196
Fig. 5.4:	Proportion of the Chinese domestic trade in low value foreign products in private and state hands during the Song period (960-1278).	196

Fig. 5.5:	Proportion of the Chinese domestic trade in luxury foreign products in private and state hands during the Song period (960-1278).	196
Fig. 5.6:	Geographical distribution of the twelve products graded by Wang Dayuan.	218
Fig. 6.1:	Port-polities in the Malacca Straits region that maintained diplomatic relations with China during the Song and Yuan periods.	259
Fig. 8.1:	Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese gold and silver bullion and articles in the 10 th and 14 th centuries.	313
Fig. 8.2:	Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese copper and copper articles between the 10 th and 14 th centuries.	318
Fig. 8.3:	Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese iron and iron articles between the 10 th and 14 th centuries.	322
Fig. 8.4:	Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese textiles between the 10 th and 14 th centuries.	333
Fig. 8.5:	Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese ceramics between the 10 th and 14 th centuries.	353

Abbreviations

DDNHZ	Chen Dazhen 陳大震, <i>Dade nanhaizhi</i> 大德南海志, 1306 (Zhonghua shuju bianjiaobu 1990: vol. 8, 8413-8453).
DYZL	Wang Dayuan 汪大淵, <i>Daoyi zhilue</i> 島夷志略, circa. 1349 (Su 1981).
LWDD	Zhou Qufei 周去非, <i>Lingwai daida</i> 嶺外代答, 1178 (Tu 1996).
PZKT	Zhu Yu 朱彥, <i>Pingzhou ketan</i> 萍州可談, 1116 (Zhu 1984: 1038, 273-312).
SHY	<i>Songhuiyao jigao</i> 宋會要輯稿, 1236 (Zhonghua shuju bianjiaobu 1957).
SS	Tuo Tuo 托托 et. al., <i>Songshi</i> 宋史, 1345 (Zhu 1984: 280,1 – 288,912).
WXTK	Ma Duanlin 馬端臨, <i>Wenxian tongkao</i> 文獻通考, 1307 (Wang 1936).
YDZ	<i>Yuandianzhang</i> 元典章, 1321-1324 (Fudan daxue tushuguan gujibu 1995: 787,1-650).
YLMC	Zhao Yanwei 趙彥衛, <i>Yunlu manchao</i> 雲麓漫鈔, 1206 (Zhu 1984: 864,259-409).
YS	<i>Yuanshi</i> 元史, 1370 (Zhu 1984: 292,1 – 295,739).
ZFZ	Zhao Ruguo 趙汝适, <i>Zhufanzhi</i> 諸蕃志, 1225 (Chen & Qian 2000).

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Straits of Malacca, a waterway separating the east coast of Sumatra and the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, has been an important maritime passage throughout history, linking the Indian Ocean to the South China and Java Seas. The pattern of monsoon winds also made the Malacca Straits region a natural meeting place where sailing vessels could await the change of the monsoon wind direction and merchants from East and West could exchange goods. Numerous ports have emerged along the coastlines bordering the Straits throughout history to capitalize on the shipping and trade that congregated in or passed through the region.

Unlike land-based polities, which had internal economies based on agrarian hinterlands that enabled them to be self-sufficient, the coastal polities of the region did not extend very far inland. The mountainous interiors of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula have been occupied by groups who were ethnically and even linguistically distinct from the coastal societies along the Straits¹. Although the coastal and inland groups interacted with each other economically, the prosperity and political stability of the coastal groups were determined mainly by their ability to capitalize on the international maritime trade that flowed through the Straits.

The ports of the region participated in the international trade in three ways. The first was by acting as an entrepot hub in the trade between the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and Island Southeast Asia. The second was by carrying transshipped products to states bordering these seas. The third was by making available indigenous products from the inland areas of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula to the international shipping trade and by obtaining foreign products for the inland groups in return.

¹ See Bronson (1977).

From the middle of the first millennium AD onwards, the Malacca Straits region was able to capitalize on the region's advantages. Between the late seventh and early thirteen centuries, under the leadership of Srivijaya, a port-polity located initially at Palembang and later in the eleventh century at Jambi near the southeastern coast of Sumatra, the region functioned as a hub for shipping and trade between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, and transshipped foreign products in high demand in the Chinese, Indian and Island Southeast Asian markets. By the early thirteenth century, however, the transshipment role played by the Malacca Straits region gave way to that of supplying both international and indigenous products to the various Asian markets, in particular that of China, and a number of ports operating as international emporiums began to emerge.

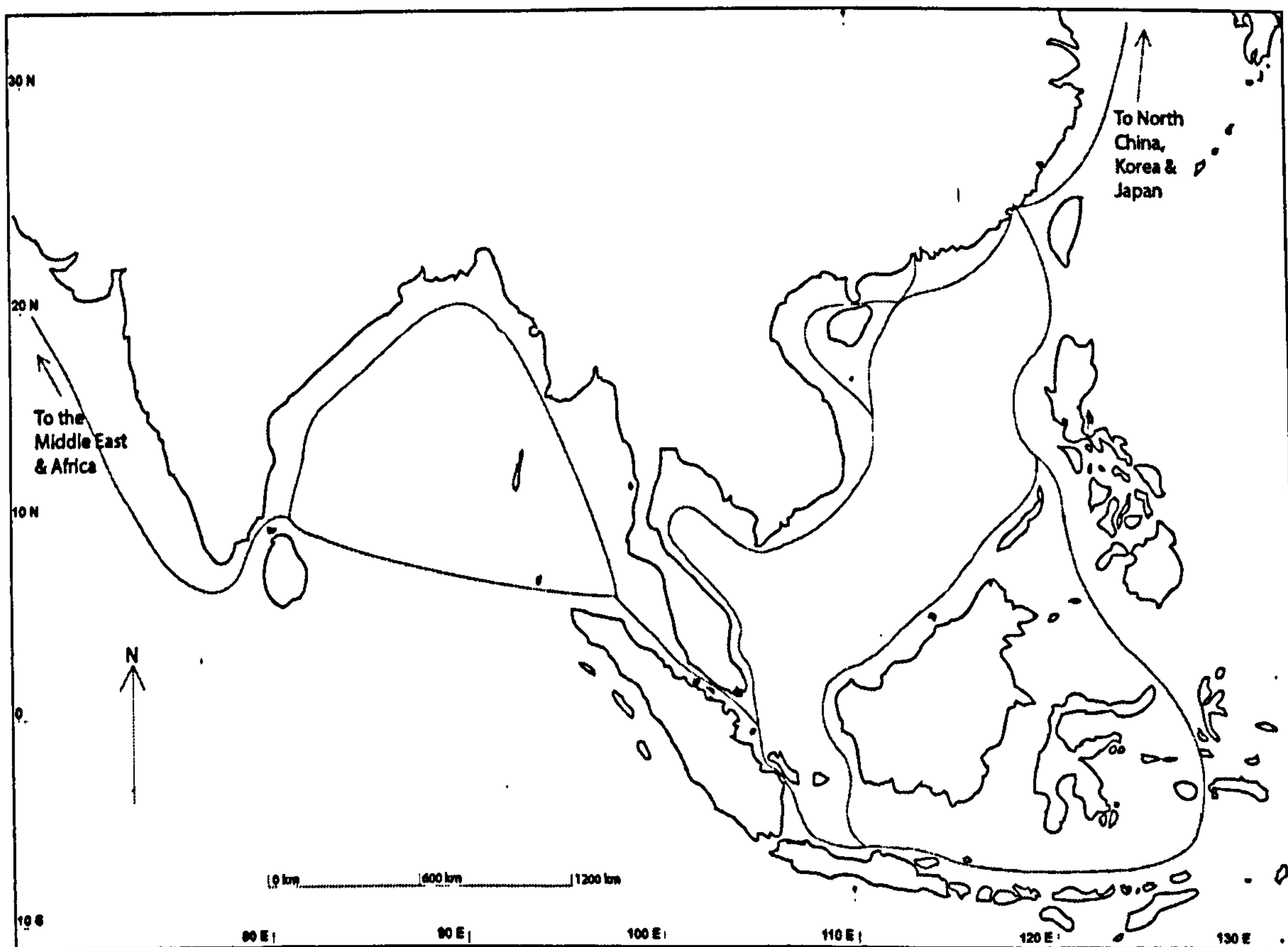


Fig. 1.1: Trade Routes linking the Indian-Subcontinent, Southeast Asia & China during the 10th to 14th Centuries.

This change in economic function was essentially a response to changes in the international trade that occurred through the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries.

Beginning in the late tenth century, Asia was experiencing an economic boom, and the cycle reached its peak during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. This upswing in the Asian economic cycle was closely linked to the rise of major Asian states during the tenth centuries, namely the Abassid Caliphate in the Middle East, the Cholas in South India, and the Song dynasty in China. By the thirteenth century, however, due to the decline of these key Asian states, a decline in international trade began to set in.² Changes in the political fortunes of key Asian states, which determined the economic outlook and policies of these states, therefore affected the overall state of the international economy of Asia. This, in turn, had a direct impact on the interaction of the Malacca Straits region with the international maritime trade, and on the fortunes of the region's individual ports.

Throughout much of the first and second millennium AD, China was an important player in the Asian economy, and an important market that the Malacca Straits region catered for. China's economic policies, and developments in the Chinese market, were important factors that shaped the organizational structure of the Malacca Straits region's port-polities, and the manner in which the region's ports conducted their trade with China, and the products that were exchanged.

At times when Chinese traders did not or were not permitted to actively participate in the trade in the Maritime Southeast Asian sector, and China instead relied on state-level trade exchanges in conducting its maritime trade, one port-polity would emerge from amongst the Malaccan Straits ports to represent the region in its trade with China. Maritime trade carried out by maritime traders from the Malacca Straits region would be conducted under the auspices of this chief port-polity. Other ports in the region would support this chief regional port by serving as collection centers of indigenous and foreign products. Each of these collection centers would have a number of feeder ports located within its sphere of influence under its patronage, and would gain access to indigenous forest products that could be

² For a more detailed discussion of this Asian economic cycle, refer to Wisseman Christie (1998).

harvested from these feeder ports' immediate hinterland and supply these to the chief regional port. The economic benefits that the collection ports obtained from the chief regional port, or regional emporium, in turn ensured that they continued to align themselves under the political and economic authority of the chief regional port-polity³.

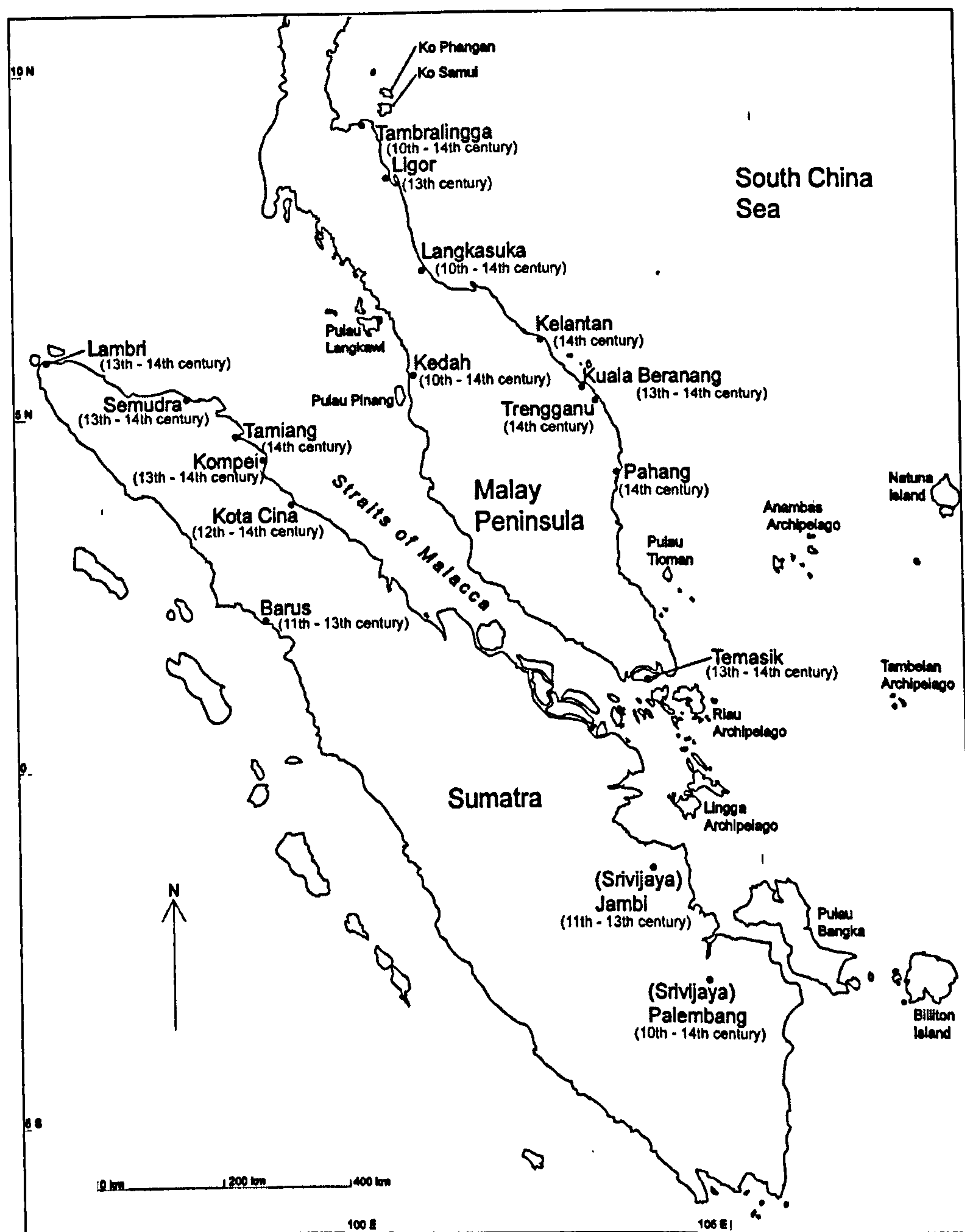


Fig. 1.2: Malacca Straits Region and Malay Peninsula coastal port-polities that maintained trade with China in the 10th to 14th centuries.

However, at times when China relied on its own maritime traders or foreign traders to carry its trade with Southeast Asia, rather than through state-level trade exchanges, the need

³ For a detailed discussion of the role of regional emporiums, collection centers and feeder ports, refer to Leong (1990).

for one port to represent the Malacca Straits region in its economic interaction with China would no longer exist. Collection centers of the Malacca Straits region, which had previously played a supporting role in the Malacca Straits region's trade with China, would break away from the chief regional port and attempt to establish direct economic ties with China, while maintaining their hold over their feeder ports to ensure that their supply of indigenous products continued to remain secure⁴.

The products that were traded between China and the Malacca Straits region were also different at different points of time. Such factors as the nature of the markets in both regions that the maritime trade was catering for, the value of the trade that took place between the two regions, the volume of shipping, knowledge of market demands, and knowledge of the availability and marketability of products that were being made available by the ports in both regions, would have determined the type of products that were exchanged, and the volume at which the exchanges occurred.

By the tenth century, the Malacca Straits region had established firm economic links with China. During the Song and Yuan periods (960-1278 & 1279-1368 respectively), China was perhaps the most important state with which the Malacca Straits region maintained economic ties. This four-century period witnessed a number of important developments in China. Politically, China experienced the rule of two dynasties, one of which was non-Chinese, and the dynastic capital shifted to three different cities. Economically, China underwent a revolution, characterized by the monetization of the Chinese economy, regional specialization in agricultural products and product manufacturing, the rising importance of the merchant class and increasing sophistication of mercantile trade in China, and the increasing importance of international maritime trade within the Chinese economy. Socially, China's population became increasingly urbanized. These developments affected the way in

⁴ See Bronson (1977) & Hall (1986).

which China's external economy, including its maritime trade, was viewed and conducted by the Song and Yuan courts.

The economic interaction between the Malacca Straits region and China clearly did not remain static throughout the tenth to fourteenth centuries. What were the changes that occurred in both China and the Malacca Straits region, which consequently had an effect on the maritime trade between the two regions? What were the channels of trade, and how did these evolve in response to the changes in the maritime trade context? What were the commodities exchanged between the two regions, and how did the nature of the commodities trade evolve over the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries?

A large body of literature on China's and the Malacca Straits region's maritime trade during the tenth to fourteenth centuries exists. Most, however, deal separately with the histories of the two regions' maritime trade. In addition, these works do not examine in detail the changes in the two regions, and the impact of these changes on the economic interaction between the regions. The gaps in the body of literature are thus important in shaping the themes that the present study intends to address.

Important studies of China's Song and Yuan period economy include works by Lawrence Ma⁵, Shiba Yoshinobu⁶, Peng Xinwei⁷, Wang Shengduo⁸, H. F. Schurmann⁹ and Angela Schottenhammer¹⁰. Their studies explore, in considerable detail, the development of China's economy, including such aspects as China's monetary system, the sources and administration of state finance, and the commercialization of the Chinese economy. These works, however, tend to center predominantly on the Song period. The key exception is H.

⁵ Ma (1971).

⁶ Shiba (1970).

⁷ Peng (1988).

⁸ Wang (1995).

⁹ Schurmann (1967).

¹⁰ Schottenhammer (1999a & b).

F. Schurmann's work, which examines the administration of the Chinese economy during the Yuan period. These works also tend generally to be descriptive, comprising passages collated from Chinese texts of the Song and Yuan periods related to the Chinese economy. In addition, these works, with the exception of those by Angela Schottenhammer, deal with the administration of the Chinese economy at the state-level, and not at the provincial level.

Another key gap in these works lies in the fact that they do not link the developments in China's economy to its maritime economy. This is in spite of the maritime economy developing to become a crucial aspect of the Chinese economy during the tenth to fourteenth centuries.

The study of China's maritime economy during the Song and Yuan periods has, instead, been taken up by a number of other scholars. Of these, Gang Deng's works are important in furthering our understanding of key aspects of China's maritime activities through the course of the last two millennia¹¹. They draw upon historical texts as their primary source of information, reconstructing the institutional framework, economic linkages and the relationship between the Chinese state, China's maritime trade, the hinterland economies of China's international port-cities, and the evolution of China's maritime and seafaring technology. Nonetheless, while Gang Deng's works provide an important overview of China's maritime structures and economy, it does not explore the notion of change over time. One of the critical assumptions that Gang Deng conveys is that Chinese maritime institutions, and the nature of the interaction between the international economy, the Chinese port-cities and the hinterland economies of the Chinese port-cities, remained relatively unchanged over the course of the second millennium AD. There is therefore not much discussion of the changes and development in China's maritime trade economy within this time frame, much less within a much narrower time frame of the tenth to fourteenth centuries.

¹¹ Gang (1997 & 1999).

One of the earliest works to explore the institutions, structures and nature of China's maritime trade specific to the Song and Yuan periods is J. Kuwabara's seminal work "On P'u Shou K'eng"¹². This work explores almost all aspects of China's maritime economy and institutions through the collating and brief annotating of all the Chinese textual information available on the topic at the time that it was written¹³. It concentrates mainly on the institutions of the maritime trade and the role of foreign traders and foreigners resident in China, and leaves out such issues as the products involved in the trade, the nature of the trade, and the characteristics of the economic relationship between China and her trading partners. Significant portions of the annotations are also no longer current, and have been updated by scholars in more recent works. Its study of the Chinese maritime trade economy is therefore not complete. Nonetheless, this work remains highly important even to present-day scholars of Chinese maritime history, as it is a fairly assessable starting point for textual references to China's maritime economy.

China's maritime economy of the Song and Yuan periods has been explored in greater detail since the 1950s by a number of Chinese scholars. Of these, Lin Tianwei and Yu Changsen's works on China's maritime trade during the Song and Yuan periods respectively stand as important studies¹⁴. These explore the institutions of maritime trade, as well as the nature of Chinese maritime trade participation, the products trade, and the characteristics of China's economic relationship with its foreign trading partners. Lin Tianwei's work, in particular, examines in great detail the import trade in aromatics conducted by China during the Song period, and the tributary relations between China and its maritime trading partners with regards to this trade. Yu Changsen's work, on the other hand, focuses on the role that private and state capital played in China's maritime trade during the Yuan period. Both works rely almost exclusively on Chinese texts for their historical data.

¹² Kuwabara (1928).

¹³ Kuwabara (1928).

¹⁴ Lin (1959) & Yu (1994).

Lin Tianwei and Yu Changsen's works, however, explore China's maritime trade mainly from the Sino-centric perspective. Another gap of these works is that they focus exclusively on either the Song or Yuan period. As such, changes that occurred over the course of the two dynastic periods are not addressed at all. Even within each dynastic period, the works do not explore the changes that occurred in China's maritime trade. Finally, these works look at China's maritime trade economy at the state-level. Apart from sporadic instances in Lin Tianwei's work, they do not explore the topic at the provincial or port level at all.

The gap in the study of China's provincial maritime history has been filled by a significant body of literature that has been published over the last two decades. These works focus on the maritime trade economy of the South Chinese region, in particular Guangdong and South Fujian. Of those written on Guangdong, Guan Luquan's¹⁵ work stands out as an important study on the complementary roles that the bureaucratic administration, private traders, foreign community and traders and the hinterland of Guangdong played in promoting Guangzhou's maritime trade during the Song period. This work also addresses the effect that an increasingly monetized Chinese economy had on the maritime trade economy of Guangzhou through the course of the Song period.

Three major gaps, however, are apparent in Guan Luquan's work. The first is the absence of any study on the Chinese administration's changing role in maritime trade through the course of the Song period. How private traders responded to changes in China's maritime trade context is also not examined. In addition, Guan Luquan's work focuses only on the Song period. The impact of the Song-period developments in the administration and conduct of maritime trade on the Yuan period has therefore been left untouched. Finally, Guan Luquan's work relies exclusively on textual information, ignoring the growing body of archaeological data from such related Song-period industrial sites as the kiln districts of

¹⁵ Guan (1994).

Guangdong, as well as epigraphic data that have been recovered from Guangzhou and its vicinity and accruing since the 1950s.

Better integration of both textual and archaeological information has been carried out in western-language studies on Quanzhou and the economic interaction between this port-city and its economic hinterland of South Fujian. These include works by So Kee Long¹⁶ and Hugh Clark¹⁷. So Kee Long's work examines Quanzhou's maritime economy, its role as the regional center, and the impact that the maritime economy had on the spatial layout and demographic distribution of Quanzhou and South Fujian during the Song and Yuan periods. Hugh Clark's work, on the other hand, concentrates on the nature of Quanzhou's maritime trade, and the impact that it had on South Fujian's economic activities, such as agriculture, food processing and such artisan crafts as the manufacture of ceramics, textiles and paper products.

The gap in Guan Luquan, So Kee Long and Hugh Clark's works lies in the fact that the discussions are confined largely to China itself, and do not sufficiently take into account the role that China's foreign trading partners played in the maritime trade of Guangzhou and Quanzhou. These works extend the discussion beyond China to include only brief, cursory discussions on the role that states in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral played in Quanzhou's maritime economy. Even So Kee Long's work, which discusses the economic interaction between Quanzhou and the Malacca Straits region with reference to South Fujian's export ceramics industry and trade, is very brief in this respect. This is due largely to the type of sources that have been utilized by these scholars, which comprise Chinese historical texts and Chinese archaeological reports, with almost no foreign sources of historical data being used. Such an approach is inevitably one-dimensional, and does not

¹⁶ So (2000).

¹⁷ Clark (1991a).

provide a complete picture of the economic interaction that the Chinese ports and regions experienced with its foreign trading counterparts.

A number of studies have attempted to explore the economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region during the Song and Yuan periods. These studies approach the topic from two angles. The first deals with historical geography and the identification of Malacca Straits region ports and the development of trade routes between South China and Maritime Southeast Asia during the Song and Yuan periods. Such scholars as Freidrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill¹⁸, George Coedès¹⁹, Paul Wheatley²⁰, J. V. C. Mills²¹ and Roderich Ptak²² have contributed greatly to this aspect of the China-Malacca Straits region trade history of the tenth to fourteenth centuries, identifying key ports as well as minor ones that maintained direct or indirect trade contact with China during this period.

However, with the exception of Roderich Ptak's works, these studies were published before the 1980s. As a result, they have relied almost entirely on historical texts, in particular those from China, and epigraphic and philological data from the Malacca Straits region and the Middle East, with archaeological data being distinctly absent from the body of information. With the increasing amount of archaeological research carried out at Malacca Straits settlement sites over the last thirty years, these works, though still important, are in need of being updated.

The second approach is that of commodities studies. Such studies enquire into the products that were carried by the trade in great detail, including the varieties of a particular product, their sources, and their uses in both China and Southeast Asia. Of these, Paul Wheatley and

¹⁸ Hirth & Rockhill (1966).

¹⁹ Coedès (1918, 1930 & 1936).

²⁰ Wheatley (1973).

²¹ Mills (1970).

²² Ptak (1992, 1996 & 1998b).

Roderich Ptak's works stand as the most important of such studies. Paul Wheatley's work²³ provides introductory information on a large number of products that were traded between China, the Indian Ocean littoral and Southeast Asia during the Song period, relying almost exclusively on Chinese historical texts of the Song period as the source of information. This work continues to be important to present-day scholars working on the history of China-Southeast Asia trade during the Song period, as it remains the only one of its kind, providing a broad overview of the products that were involved in the trade. However, it does not explore the evolution of the commodities trade through the course of the tenth to thirteenth centuries. It also does not extend the study to the Yuan period, of which the nature of the commodities trade during this period was the culmination of the developments of the commodities trade in the Song period.

In contrast, Roderich Ptak's works²⁴ explore the development of the trade in individual products through the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries, relying exclusively on Chinese historical texts as the source of information for the studies. Products explored include cloves, coral and tortoise shells, all of which were regarded as high value or luxury products by China during this period. However, these works do not explore the developments within the macro-level context. Another gap of this work, including that by Paul Wheatley's, is that they do not sufficiently take into account the role that the Malacca Straits region played in shaping the changes in the commodities trade between China and Southeast Asia.

The structure of the Malacca Straits region's involvement in and response to international trade during the tenth to fourteenth centuries have been dealt with by a number of scholars. Amongst these, Kenneth Hall and Bennet Bronson's works²⁵ explore the response and adaptation of the region's coastal port-polities to international maritime trade, and the

²³ Wheatley (1959).

²⁴ Ptak (1990, 1991 & 1993).

²⁵ Hall (1986) & Bronson (1977).

interaction between these coastal port-polities and the inland groups located in their respective upstream hinterlands as a response to the international trade's demand for the region's indigenous products, and the foreign products that the international trade in turn made available to these two groups. However, the theoretical frameworks proposed by these scholars assume that international trade that flowed between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean remained relatively unchanged up until the arrival of the Europeans in Asia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Thus, the approach is inadequate in examining and explaining how the region's port-polities reacted or were affected economically, socially and politically by changes that occurred outside of the Malacca Straits region, in such key Asian economies as China and the Indian Sub-continent.

A number of important works that attempt to address the impact that key Asian economies had on the Malacca Straits region are available. Of these, the works of two scholars stand out. Jan Wisseman Christie's works integrate historical data from a number of sources, including archaeological, epigraphic and textual, to piece together the nature of the Malacca Straits region's maritime trade, and its impact on their respective societies²⁶. These works are important in that they number amongst the few published works that have attempted to integrate types of data that are, on their own, fairly difficult to interpret and utilize, and have put together a picture of certain aspects of the maritime trade economy that would otherwise have been impossible to achieve had only one source of information been utilized.

Jan Wisseman Christie's works also explore the role that traders and states of South India played in the Malacca Straits region's maritime economy, drawing on Indian textual and epigraphic data in her studies²⁷. Unfortunately, her works do not adequately address the role that China played in the regional and international trade of the Malacca Straits region. This may be accounted for by the minimal use of Chinese primary sources, thereby confining her

²⁶ Wisseman Christie (1982, 1985, 1990 & 1995).

²⁷ Wisseman Christie (1998 & 1999).

studies to the Malacca Straits region's economic interaction with South India. The impact of political and administrative changes in China, and changes to the structures of the Chinese maritime trade economy, on the Malacca Straits region and its individual port-polities, which depended on trade with China for their survival and prosperity, is not explored in sufficient detail.

This gap in scholarship is filled to a large extent by the works of O. W. Wolters²⁸. O. W. Wolters' works are largely centered on Srivijaya, the pre-eminent Malaccan Straits region port-polity that existed between the seventh to thirteenth centuries AD. They explore the factors leading to the rise and fall of this polity as the region's emporium along the international maritime trade circuit, and the role that it played as the representative in the region's economic and political interaction with China during its seven-century existence.

One of the most important aspects of the Malacca Straits region-China interaction that O. W. Wolters' works deal with is state-level trade. O. W. Wolters explored state-level trade as the main channel through which the Malacca Straits region, under the auspices of Srivijaya, conducted its trade with China, and examined the economic, social and political implications that this channel of trade had for Srivijaya and the Malacca Straits region during the tenth to thirteenth centuries. He also examined in detail Srivijaya's pursuit and maintenance of this representative role for the purpose of accruing material and political dividends within the Malacca Straits region's political and economic framework.

However, O. W. Wolters placed too much emphasis on the importance of state-level trade as the main channel through which trade was conducted with Song China²⁹. In particular, he based his arguments on the assumption that the Song court's regard for, administration and conduct of maritime trade had remained largely unchanged throughout the tenth to thirteenth

²⁸ Wolters (1967, 1970, 1983 & 1986).

²⁹ Wolters (1970, 1983 & 1986).

centuries for this official channel of trade to continue to function. The impact of changes in the conduct of maritime trade by the Chinese, and China's maritime trade institutions and structures, on Srivijaya's conduct of its maritime trade with China, was not taken into account.

Nor did O. W. Wolters satisfactorily explain the continued flourishing of trade between the Malacca Straits region and China despite the complete decline of tribute missions from Srivijaya to China by the latter half of the twelfth century. His works do not place sufficient emphasis on the role of Chinese private traders in China's maritime trade, and the impact that increasing private Chinese participation in this trade had on the Malacca Straits region.

O. W. Wolters was, by the 1980s, aware of the inadequacies of his earlier works. He subsequently raised them in an article published in *Indonesia* in 1986³⁰. He acknowledged that China's maritime trade during the tenth to thirteenth centuries was characterized by a continuous process of change in the administration and conduct of this trade, and contended that trade between Srivijaya and China would not have necessarily declined after the twelfth century, when state-level trade between the two states went into complete decline. Nonetheless, he did not manage to resolve these inadequacies.

O. W. Wolters' works deal predominantly with Srivijaya, and do not explore the interaction between smaller port-polities of the Malacca Straits region and China. These works also rely almost entirely on Chinese historical texts, dated to between the Tang and Song periods, as the source of historical data. Archaeological data, which have become an increasingly important source for the study and understanding of the economic interaction between the Malacca Straits region and China during the tenth to fourteenth centuries, is not fully represented or utilized in these works.

³⁰ Wolters (1986).

These gaps have been filled by a number of studies that have been carried out on individual ports in the region. These include research on Kota Cina³¹, South Kedah³² and Singapore Island³³, as well as Barus³⁴ on the northwestern coast of Sumatra. The focus is primarily archaeological, since textual information concerning such smaller ports tends to be very sparse or even non-existent. They are important in revealing certain characteristics of the region's international trade at the port level, such as the material culture of the polities' population, and the port's trade in such non-perishable products as ceramics and metal-items.

However, no single site spans the entire period of the tenth to fourteenth centuries, periods when the sites were active normally spanning only between one and two hundred years. There has also not been any synthesis carried out on the data and conclusions derived from these individual port-polity studies. Thus, no longer-term overview of the region's economy at the port level, based on archaeological data, has yet been assembled.

A number of gaps in the present body of literature pertaining to the economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region during the tenth to fourteenth centuries have thus been identified. Firstly, the economic relationship between the two regions needs to be explored from the perspective of both regions. In addition, the administration of trade, the means by which trade was conducted and the commodities exchanged need to be explored as aspects of this economic relationship that underwent significant change over the course of time. Also, the economic relationship between the two regions needs to be examined at a number of levels, such as the region, state, port and individual. There is a need to examine the Song and Yuan periods together, as the development during the Song period had a significant and direct impact on the nature of maritime trade of the Yuan period, with the

³¹ McKinnon (1984).

³² Wales (1940), Wales & Wales (1947), Lamb (1959a, 1959b, 1960, 1961 & 1966), Peacock (1970 & 1974), Leong (1973), Unit Arkeologi Jabatan Muzium dan Antikuiti (1985), Allen (1988).

³³ Miksic (1985 & 1989).

³⁴ Dupoizat (1996) & Guillot (1998).

Yuan period representing a continuity rather than a change from China's maritime trade during the Song period. Finally, these gaps need to be filled, not by relying exclusively on only one source of historical data, such as textual, epigraphic or archaeological information, but by integrating data from a broad range of historical sources.

The present study aims to address these gaps by exploring three key themes. These are: 1) developments in the administration of maritime trade and their impact on the economic relations between the two regions; 2) the levels of trade, the channels through which these were conducted, and how they emerged or receded in importance over the course of the four centuries; and 3) changes in the patterns of trade and the goods exchanged between the two regions.

The data used in this study fall into two main groups. The first comprises textual information. Chinese records from the Song and Yuan periods, as well as later texts that provide information on the maritime trade of these two dynastic periods, form the bulk of this first group. Other complementary sources of information include Middle Eastern accounts and Indian and Chinese epigraphic data that shed additional light on the themes that the present study will explore.

The second body of information comprises archaeological data from South China and Maritime Southeast Asia. These sets of data fall into three groups. The first comprises data from shipwreck surveys, which provide snapshots, some of which are precisely datable, of the trade between China and the Malacca Straits region. The second set comprises data from excavations conducted at settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region. This reflects the nature of the trade between specific ports and specific areas of South China. When read collectively, the data also provide an overview of the patterns of trade at the regional and sub-regional levels. The third set comprises data from excavations conducted at South Chinese kiln sites. This body of data reflects one aspect of the broader manufacturing sector

of China's economy, which also included textiles, foodstuffs and metals, that was affected by China's trade with the Malacca Straits region.

Each group of data has its strengths and weaknesses. Textual data provide a good understanding of the structures of the economic relationship between the two regions from the Chinese perspective, in particular the administration of trade. Textual data also remain the only source of information on certain types of products carried by the trade, in particular those that were perishable. However, as Chinese texts provide the bulk of this group of data, the information reflects a Chinese perspective on this economic relationship.

Archaeological data, on the other hand, provide, where available, information on the development of trade in such non-perishable products as ceramics, currency and metals. In addition, quantitative data on these groups of products are often made available, supplying information that the texts do not provide. This information may be used to link the Malacca Straits ports to key areas and ports in South China, where these products were produced and from which they were exported. However, key external factors such as changes in the administration of trade in China, and development in the manner in which China conducted its maritime trade, are not easily inferred from archaeological data. Thus, by integrating the two groups of information, a more complete picture of the China-Malacca Straits region trade during the tenth to fourteenth centuries may be obtained.

There are nine chapters in the present study. Chapter one consists of the introduction. Chapters two to four contain brief surveys of the sources from which the present study draws much of its primary information. Chapter five details the changes in the administration of maritime trade in China, and the impact that it had on the role of maritime trade in the Chinese economy and on Chinese maritime trade practices. Chapter six focuses on the Malacca Straits region's maritime state-level diplomatic and trade exchanges with China, against the backdrop of changes in China's view and administration of maritime

trade. Chapter seven examines the general trends that occurred in the trade in Malacca Straits region products to China. Chapter eight details the developments in the trade of key categories of Chinese products to the Malacca Straits region, and examines the changing patterns of the Chinese products trade at the regional and sub-regional levels. Chapter nine serves as the conclusion, drawing together the strands of information in the preceding chapters, and providing an overview of the changing patterns of trade between the two regions over a period of four centuries.

Chapter 2: The Chinese Textual Sources on the Economic Relations between China and the Malacca Straits Region (Song and Yuan periods)

2.1 Introduction

Chinese texts constitute a key source of data for the study of the nature of, and changes in, the economic relations between China and the Malacca Straits region during the Song and Yuan periods. These texts provide both contemporaneous information and later syntheses of, and commentaries on, information concerning such topics as the products that were traded, the administrative structure of China's maritime trade, and the practices of those involved in the trade between China and the Malacca Straits region.

Although a number of these texts have been drawn upon by scholars of Chinese in their discussions of China's history, not all have been translated into Western languages¹. As a result, important as they are as a source of information on Southeast Asia's early history, many of these texts are not accessible to Southeast Asian historians. The present study is based upon a reading or re-reading of all the texts used, although, due to space constraints, translations have been included only of those texts not already available elsewhere in English translation.

2.2 Song Period Texts

¹ The texts used in the present study have been translated into English by the present author, although they have not been included here due to constraints of space.

Although a total of sixty-three texts published or written during the Song period, which contain information on Southeast Asia, have so far been identified², only a few contain information pertaining to the Malacca Straits region, and to China's economic and political relations with the polities in the region. Amongst these, five have been focused upon in the present study. These are the *Pingzhou ketan*, *Lingwai daida*, *Yunlu manchao*, *Zhufanzhi* and *Songhuiyao jigao*. They provide information on this relationship between the two regions from the late eleventh to thirteenth century.

Even though the authors of the texts discussed in this chapter, with the exception of the author of the *Songhuiyao jigao*, wrote and published their literary works on a personal basis, they were employed in various capacities during their lifetime by the Song bureaucracy. As a result, these texts mainly reflect the Chinese administrative perspective on China-Malacca Straits region relations and China's maritime trade. Hence, any use of these texts in the study of Malacca Straits region history has to be undertaken bearing in mind this unbalanced perspective.

2.2.1 Pingzhou ketan³

The earliest text used in the present study is from the early twelfth century. Written and published in 1116 by Zhu Yu, the *Pingzhou ketan* (henceforth PZKT) is a record of matters pertaining to the governance of the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi during the Northern Song period. Consisting of three chapters, the text comprises a series of eye-witness accounts based on the author's observations as well as the experiences of his father,

² See Gu (1990). Works in Western languages that contain translated segments of Song period texts include Groeneveldt (1876), Kuwabara (1928), Hirth & Rockhill (1966), Shiba (1970), Ma (1971), Watson (1972), Wheatley (1973), Netolitzky (1977), Wolters (1983), So (1998) and Ptak (1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1998a & b, & 1999).

³ The version of the text used in the present study is found in the SKQS compendium. Zhu (1984: 1038:273-312).

who was initially sent to Chuzhou after successfully obtaining a *youshi* degree (右史) during the Yuanfeng period (1078-1085), and was subsequently promoted to the position of Administrator of Guangzhou. These accounts contain details of aspects of local administration of the two provinces that were of substantial importance to the respective local governments. Additional fragments of information relevant to the eyewitness accounts, such as local oral traditions, hearsay and gossip in the administrative circles, have been added by Zhu Yu to the various sections to substantiate or provide interesting comments on the accounts.

The resulting text is so disjointed that it was placed in the 'novel' or 'little sayings' (小說) genre of the *Siku quanshu*⁴ (四庫全書, henceforth SKQS) compendium of historical writings. The PZKT provides a perspective on Chinese history that differs from the more formal courtly traditions and official sources, presenting information that does not occur in any of these types of texts, and filling some of the gaps in the overall picture. As Zhu Yu relied on information from his father, as well as his personal experiences, the PZKT reflects the state of affairs from the late eleventh to early twelfth century.

One of the aspects of local government dealt with in Zhu Yu's account is the administration of international mercantile trade and shipping centered on the port of Guangzhou during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Subjects dealt with by Zhu Yu include the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency of Guangzhou, the administration of Chinese maritime territorial sovereignty, the administrative framework and procedures for implementing import taxation, specific functions of the official markets, the description of Chinese ocean-going ships and related sea-faring practices, the activities of foreigners in Guangzhou and descriptions of the foreign quarter, the office of headman of the foreign quarter and certain issues arising from the co-existence of foreigners in Guangzhou, as well

⁴ Zhu (1984).

as a brief description of the trade exchanges between the maritime trading polity of Srivijaya and the port of Guangzhou. While the information concerning these aspects of China's international trade may not be all-encompassing, it has been regarded by scholars as an important supplement to that found in the texts of the 'official' genre.

The PZKT is a text that has been much used by scholars studying the various aspects of Chinese maritime trade. However, to date, it has not been translated into any Western language, although sporadic translations of selected paragraphs have been published⁵. The relevant entries used in the present study come entirely from the second chapter of the text.

2.2.2 Lingwai daida⁶

The second text used by the present study, the *Lingwai daida* (henceforth LWDD), was written sixty years after the PZKT was published. The LWDD was published in 1178. The author Zhou Qufei was appointed in 1174 to the post of magistrate of Guilin (Guangxi), a part of the administrative region of Jinjiang that extended eastwards to Gaozhou, Maoming, Leizhou Peninsula and Qiongzhou (northern Hainan Island). Foreign shipping often used Yongzhou and Qinzhou in Guangxi as their first Chinese landfall before proceeding northwards to Guangzhou and Quanzhou. Zhou Qufei thus came into contact with foreigners and Chinese maritime traders, and obtained the information for the LWDD in this manner.

The LWDD, which originally comprised twenty chapters, was lost after the Ming period. However, when the SKQS was compiled, 294 scattered entries derived from the LWDD were extracted from the *Yongle dadian* (YLDD), a compendium of Chinese texts collected

⁵ These are Hirth & Rockhill (1966), Wolters (1983), Ma (1971), Watson (1972) and So (1998).

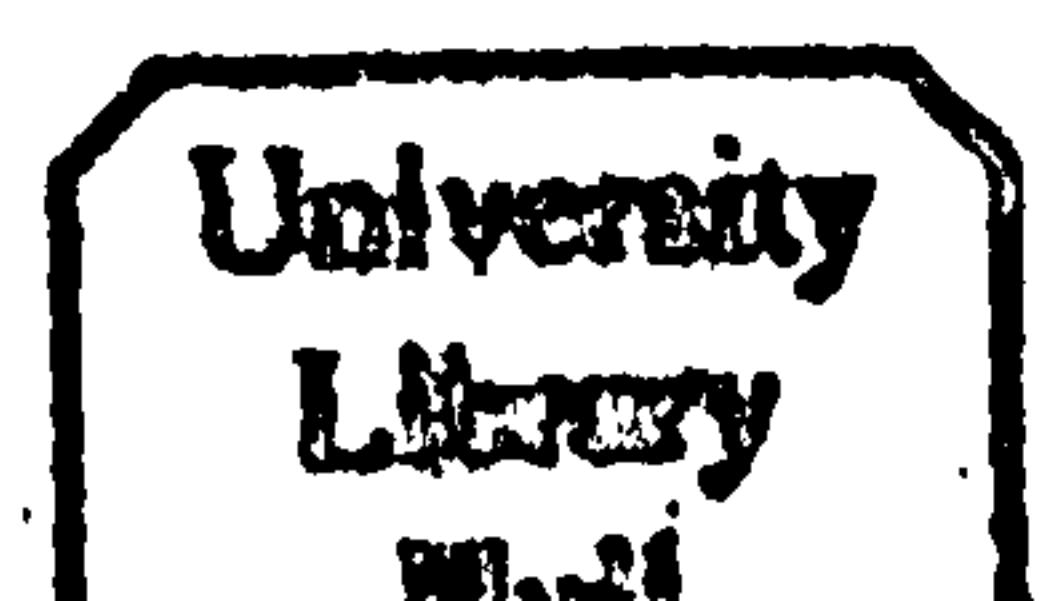
⁶ The version of the text used in the present study is the one annotated by Tu Youxiang. Tu (1996).

together during the Yongle period of the Ming dynasty, and reassembled into a complete text. This text can be found in the “history” section, under “geography”. The SKQS version is the earliest extant version currently available to scholars, and consists of ten chapters that provide details pertaining to the late twelfth century geography of the Chinese heartland and empire, international geography, trading strategies and markets, commodities, botany and zoology. The contents of the ten chapters are as follows:

- 1) Geography: Internal geography of China, including a brief history of the political geography of preceding dynasties, the then current boundaries of China up to the Tarim Basin, and the borders beyond Yunnan Province.

 Military incursions: Chinese troop movements into the border regions to the south of Guangxi.
- 2) Foreign Countries: Geography and description of foreign countries westward as far as the Indian Subcontinent.
- 3) Foreign Countries: Geography and description of foreign countries to the west of the Indian Subcontinent, including the Middle East, Near East, East African Coast and Andalusia. Also various entries on the islands in the oceans and the Mainland Southeast Asian hill tribes.
- 4) Local traditions: Various local practices of the immediate border areas of Guangxi Province, including Hainan Island. No entry concerning Southeast Asian countries.

- Judicial information: Again concerning the border regions of Guangxi Province.
- 5) Commercial strategy: Horse-buying, the market system in Guangxi.
- 6) Equipment/Tools: Including description of various metal weapons produced by the hill tribes, equipment for writing and tea ceremonies, and leather.
- Clothes: The different textiles produced in Guangxi Province and their uses.
- Food: Tea, wine etc., and betel nut chewing.
- 7) Incense: Incense produced and exported from Chenla, Champa, Annam, but predominantly the products of Hainan Island.
- Musical instruments: From the hill tribes and Hainan Island.
- Precious materials: Including pearls, rhinoceros horns and dragon's blood.
- Precious stones & metals: Including gold, silver (lumps and beads), bronze, emeralds, rubies, etc.
- 8) Botany: Flora of Guangxi and the bordering areas, including Hainan Island.



- 9) Birds and Animals: Fauna of Guangxi and the bordering areas, including Hainan Island. Includes sporadic entries on exotic animals such as the peacock.
- 10) Insects & fish: Of Guangxi and the bordering areas, including Hainan Island.
- History of places: History of specific places and cities within the Song Chinese borders.
- Barbarian traditions: Of the border regions of Guangxi and Hainan Island.
- Miscellaneous: An appendix of certain concepts or terms used in the text, written by the author himself.

The LWDD is important as the earliest textual source of information on the states that were in contact with China during the Song period. Chapters two and three contain entries on key polities in Southeast Asia, India and the Middle East with which China conducted its maritime trade, such as Java, Srivijaya, Chola India, Kollam, and the Arab Middle East. The information appears to reflect the state of affairs in these polities in the second half of the eleventh century, since it seems not to have been lifted from earlier texts. However, very little direct reference is made in the text to China-Southeast Asia maritime trade. There is very little mention of the trade with the Malacca Straits region, aside from the entries on “jian” and “chen” gharuwood⁷. Nonetheless, certain characteristics of China’s maritime trade may be inferred from this text, in particular the rising importance of the Southeast

⁷ For information on gharuwood incense, refer to p. 38, footnotes 38 – 40.

Asian commodities trade in China by the second half of the twelfth century, and a corresponding decline in the importance of the Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern commodities trade.

Because of the importance of these scattered entries to the study of China-Southeast Asia relations, English translations of various entries are available⁸. However, the only Western language translation of the entire text exists in German⁹.

2.2.3 Yunlu manchao¹⁰

The third text used in the present study, the *Yunlu manchao* (henceforth YLMC), dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century. The YLMC, published in 1206, is a collection of entries containing information on issues, in particular dealing with civil administration, pertaining to Song China. Originally comprising ten chapters and named the *Yonghui xianzhi*, it was later cut down to five chapters and republished in 1206 as the YLMC. Maritime trade features in one entry of the text. The author, Zhao Yanwei, served as magistrate of Huizhou during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and was thus familiar with persons who were connected to the maritime trade economy at Quanzhou.

The text is useful as a source of information on the China-Southeast Asia maritime trade during the late twelfth-early thirteenth century period. It contains an entry pertaining to China's maritime trade under the entry on "Fujian Mercantile Shipping Superintendency". Located in chapter 5, the entry contains a list of polities that maintained maritime shipping links with Quanzhou port at that time, and the key products they were known to ship to that port. Although the entry is brief, it contains the first Song textual reference to a number of

⁸ Hirth & Rockhill (1966), Wheatley (1973), Wolters (1983) and So (1998).

⁹ Netolitzky (1977).

¹⁰ The version of the text used in the present study is found in the SKQS. Zhu (1984: 864:259-409).

minor port polities located in the Malacca Straits region that were involved in China's maritime trade, with specific reference to their commercial contact with Quanzhou. A translation of the entry "Fujian Mercantile Shipping Superintendency" has been provided by So¹¹.

2.2.4 Zhufanzhi¹²

The fourth text used in the present study is the *Zhufanzhi* (henceforth ZFZ). Completed in 1225, the text is a treatise on the foreign polities that had maritime trade relations with China during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. It was written by Zhao Ruguo, a Song imperial clansman who was appointed Superintendent of the Quanzhou Mercantile Shipping Superintendency in 1218. The information in the text was derived from Zhao's intimate contact with the maritime traders, both foreign and Chinese, who called at, or based their commercial operations in, Quanzhou, as well as foreigners who were resident in the port-city.

The text was not published after it was completed in 1225, and it was thus not widely circulated. The version currently available was originally obtained from the Ming period YLDD compendium, and was placed under "geography" in the history section of the SKQS. While the text contains a large quantity of original information pertaining to the maritime trade and foreign polities with which China had contact during the Southern Song period, Zhao also copied substantial amounts of information from a number of earlier texts, such as the LWDD and the *Nanfang caomuzhuang*¹³.

¹¹ So (1998: 303).

¹² The version of the text used in the present study is the annotated one published by the University of Hong Kong. Chen & Qian (2000).

¹³ Li (1979).

The ZFZ is divided into two chapters. The first contains entries on the foreign polities that were known to, and had contact with, China during the Southern Song period. The individual entries include a brief description of the political structure of the polity and a list of dependencies, the attire and dietary habits of the locals, the polity's local products, products available for export from the polity, and a list of products in demand in the polity. The second chapter contains entries on the key foreign products that China imported. The individual entries include a brief description of the product and its use by the Chinese, the sources of the product, and references to the quality grades of the product, where applicable.

The ZFZ is the earliest text to provide detailed information concerning the Malacca Straits region-China trade of the Song period. In particular, the information on China's economic interaction with the minor polities of the Malacca Straits provides insight into the region's trade that was conducted outside of the purview of Srivijaya, about which textual information is lacking elsewhere. It is also an important source of information concerning the products involved in China's maritime trade during the Song period, and the use of quality grading for products imported by China.

The information contained in both these chapters by and large reflects the state of China's maritime trade with its trading partners and key trading regions during the early thirteenth century. However, significant portions of the text contain recycled information from the twelfth century or earlier. Substantial sections of the entries on Srivijaya and lakawood incense appear to have been copied from earlier texts. In addition, scholars studying China's maritime economy of the Song period believe that the port of Quanzhou may have been experiencing a local economic crisis early in the thirteenth century. Thus, the ZFZ may not be entirely accurate in its portrayal of the early thirteenth century trade centered at

Quanzhou as vibrant and prosperous¹⁴. The information thus has to be used with care as a source of information on China's maritime trade in the early thirteenth century.

Despite its defects, the ZFZ remains an important source of information for Southeast Asian historians. An English translation and detailed annotation of the full text, which was published in 1911 by Hirth and Rockhill, was reprinted in 1966¹⁵. Selected entries on port polities of the Malay Peninsula have also been translated and commented upon by P. Wheatley¹⁶.

2.2.5 Songhuiyao jigao¹⁷

The *Songhuiyao Jigao* (henceforth SHY) is a compendium of administrative information compiled by the Mishusheng (Secretariat of Records) of the Song court through the course of the Song period, in the tradition of the *Tanghuiyao* (Records of the Rites of the Tang [Dynasty]) and the *Wudai huiyao* (Records of the Rites of the Five Dynasties). Its information is drawn from the Guoshi shiluyuan (Center for the Recording of State Affairs) and the Rilisuo (Center for Daily History). Thus, the information that it contains is very detailed. From 1030 onwards, the SHY was updated and edited a total of ten times, and at its peak contained more than 2200 chapters. The final update was carried out in 1236, when it was recompiled into a volume containing 585 chapters.

The final edition of the text was never published and was therefore not circulated, but kept in storage in the imperial palace. Following the advent of Yuan rule, the text was moved to Beijing, and was relied upon as the key source of information for the compiling of the

¹⁴ Schottenhammer (1999a & b); So (1991).

¹⁵ Hirth & Rockhill (1966).

¹⁶ Wheatley (1973: 65-69).

¹⁷ The version of the text used in the present study is the one edited and published by Zhonghua shuju. Zhonghua shuju bianjiaobu (1957).

Songshi in the fourteenth century. By the early Ming period, 10% of the text had already been lost, and the remainder was incorporated into the YLDD.

In 1809, the Qing scholar Xusong, while recompiling the *Quantangshu*, extracted the entries of the SHY from the YLDD as well. Before he managed to recompile the SHY into its proper order, Xusong died. Thereafter, the unfinished work passed through several hands before it was eventually obtained by the Beiping (former name of present-day Beijing) Library in 1931, and recompiled and published in 1935. To date, this 1935 version is the only one available to scholars¹⁸. Although the text has been available since 1935 in Chinese, the absence of translations into Western languages has limited access to this important source.

The SHY contains a wealth of information concerning Song China's maritime trade and its relations with its foreign trading partners. Very detailed information is available about the Chinese administration of maritime trade, much of which cannot be found in any other text. Since the text is focused upon the edicts and administrative policies pertaining to maritime trade implemented by the Song court, and the reactions of administrative officials to these policies, the information is Sino-centric in nature, with limited reference to the impact that the policies and edicts had upon foreign trade, states or traders. Nonetheless, the text provides valuable insight into the structure of China's maritime trade, and into the Chinese context in which the economic relations of foreign polities and regions with China were developed. In addition, the SHY is unique in that its information does not reflect a specific narrow period of time, a characteristic of most textual sources produced by a single author, but contains information that was recorded as it was gathered, throughout almost the entire Song period.

¹⁸ Gu (1990: 134-136).

Information on China's maritime trade with the Malacca Straits region is contained in chapter 44 of the Monograph on Administration¹⁹, which constitutes the entry on the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency. In addition, information on the tribute missions dispatched by Srivijaya to the Song court can be found in the Chronological Record of the Presentation of Tribute to the Imperial Throne, in the Monograph of the Foreign Barbarians²⁰. The SHY also contains entries, in the SHY FY, that describe the key polities with which Song China maintained economic and diplomatic relations. Srivijaya is not, however, featured as one of the entries in this Monograph.

At present, no full translation of the SHY is available in any Western language. English translations of the entries relevant to the present study have been published by J. Kuwabara²¹. The only other information from the text that has been examined in detail pertains to the tribute presented by foreign states to the Song court during the Song period, a list of which has been published by Grace Wong²².

2.3 Yuan Period Texts

Yuan period texts containing information pertaining to China's relations with the Malacca Straits region fall into two general groups. The first comprises texts that provide an account of this relationship in the Song and Yuan periods. These consist mainly of historical studies that contain sporadic references to the China-Malacca Straits region relationship, in particular the trade and diplomatic exchanges that took place between the two regions. Although these texts are considered to be primary documents, they are in themselves historical works, even if the authors or editors of these works lived through part of the

¹⁹ *Songhuiyao jigao, Zhiguan*, henceforth SHY ZG.

²⁰ *Songhuiyao jigao, Fanyi*, henceforth SHY FY.

²¹ Kuwabara (1928).

²² Wong (1979). Other scholars, such as P. Wheatley, have also used the SHY in their work on China's maritime trade. Wheatley (1959).

period in question. They were assembled entirely from earlier textual sources. The texts thus present a late thirteenth or fourteenth century interpretation of the earlier historical data. The *Wenxian tongkao*, *Songshi* and *Yuanshi* are texts that belong in this category. The first two are Yuan period historical works containing information on the Song period, the third being an early Ming period work containing information on the Yuan period.

The second group of texts comprises works that were contemporaneous accounts of China-Malacca Straits region relations during the Yuan period, containing information that reflects the state of affairs around the time that they were written. Three texts of this group have been used in this study—the *Dade nanhaizhi*, *Yuandianzhang* and the *Daoyi zhilue*. The first, written by a Chinese official, reflects the personal perspective of a Chinese official on the trade centered at Guangzhou. The second, an administrative guide written and published under the auspices of the Yuan court, provides the perspective from the political center of Yuan China. The third, an eyewitness account of the ports and areas in Southeast Asia written by a Chinese trader, provides a unique view of the China-Malacca Straits region trade from the perspective of a Chinese participant of the trade who was operating outside of China.

2.3.1 *Wenxian tongkao*²³

The first Yuan period text used by the present study is the *Wenxian tongkao* (henceforth WXTK), written by Ma Duanlin, a historian writing at the very beginning of the Yuan period. Work on the text began in 1283 and was completed in 1307. The WXTK was written to fill the 530-year gap following the publication of the *Tongdian*, which contains information up until 755. The text contains historical information concerning the Tang and

²³ The version of the text used in the present study is the one edited by Wang Yunwu. Wang (1936).

Song periods, as well as sporadic information on topics relating to periods as early as the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties.

The text comprises 348 chapters, grouped into twenty-four monographs. Information pertaining to China's maritime trade and its relations with Southeast Asia can be found amongst the entries on maritime trade in chapter 20, in the discussion of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency in chapter 62, and in chapter 331 on the polities in the South Seas.

Although the WXTK was heavily relied upon by the compilers of the *Songshi*, the *Songshi* does also contain information that is unique to itself. Each of these texts fills the gaps in information that are apparent in the other, particularly in numerical data. The two texts thus complement each other and together they provide a coherent historical account of China's maritime trade and its economic and diplomatic relations with foreign polities and regions through the course of the Song period.

The information these two texts contain was obtained from earlier texts, some of which no longer survive. This is particularly so in relation to the entry on Srivijaya. No entry on Srivijaya can be found in any surviving Song period text that was written under the auspices of the Song court. The SHY, for example, does not contain an entry on Srivijaya. The entry on Srivijaya in the WXTK is thus a historical comment by Ma Duanlin, using data from texts that were written under imperial auspices or otherwise, but which no longer exist.

Although the WXTK provides important information for the study of Song China, there is as yet no Western language translation of the entire text. The only English translations that have been published are the selected entries from the text provided by J. Kuwabara²⁴.

²⁴ Kuwabara (1928).

2.3.2 Songshi²⁵

The second Yuan period text used in the present study is the *Songshi* (henceforth SS). Edited by Tuotuo and Ou Yangxun, the text was classified as an official dynastic history in the SKQS. It was a project that was originally initiated in the time of Yuan Shizhu (1260-94), but which only began in earnest in 1343 under the patronage of the emperor Shundi (1333-68). Completed in 1345, the SS contains a total of 496 chapters, grouped into several monographs, including ones on trade, administration and foreign politics.

The SS is a key retrospective textual source for the study of Chinese maritime trade with the Malacca Straits region. Information contained in the entry on Mercantile Shipping Regulations in the Monograph on Trade, and in the entry on the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency in the Monograph on Administration, is largely similar to that found in the SHY. This is because, in writing the SS, the compilers and editors relied heavily on the SHY as their chief source of information. However, the information in the SS is more limited and less detailed than that found in the SHY. In addition, the entries on the key politics with which Song China had relations, placed in the Monograph on Foreign Countries, appear to have been largely copied from the WXTK. Thus, most of the information the SS contains is not unique. In addition, a number of inconsistencies, probably resulting from a misreading or misinterpretation of the WXTK by the compilers of the SS, has led to a number of slight differences in certain minor details in the entries in this monograph. Nonetheless, as a complement to the WXTK, it is an important historical work, providing a good general survey of China's maritime trade and its relations with the Malacca Straits region through the course of the Song period.

²⁵ The version of the text used in the present study is found in the SKQS. Zhu (1984: 280:1 - 288:912).

There is currently no Western language translation of the entire SS. However, coherent translations of entries pertaining to China's maritime trade have been provided by Kuwabara²⁶. Entries with information concerning the Malacca Straits region have been translated by W. P. Groeneveldt²⁷.

2.3.3 Dade nanhaizhi²⁸

The *Dade nanhaizhi* (henceforth DDNHZ) was written and published less than three decades after the end of the Song dynastic period. Completed in 1304 by Chen Dazhen (1271-1333), the text originally comprised twenty chapters. However, the original text was entirely lost by the Ming period, with only one segment of it surviving in the YLDD compendium. The Beijing Library, after having analyzed the *Guangzhoufu zhi* segment of the YLDD, concluded that the section pertaining to the Dade era (1297-1308) must originally have comprised chapters six to ten of the DDNHZ text.

Information concerning China's maritime trade and its relations with the Malacca Straits region is found in chapter seven of the surviving portion of the DDNHZ. The information probably reflects the state of affairs during the Dade era, around the turn of the fourteenth century. The chapter contains two key sections with information of interest to the present study. The first is a list of the foreign products that were shipped to Guangzhou, classified under different categories. This information provides an impression of the foreign maritime trade based at Guangzhou port about twenty years after the Yuan dynasty established its rule over the southern coastal provinces in 1278, highlighting the continuities in the import trade of South China after the change in dynastic rule. The categorization of the imported

²⁶ Kuwabara (1928).

²⁷ Groeneveldt (1876).

²⁸ The version of the text used in the present study is the one edited and published by Zhonghua shuju. Zhonghua shuju bianjiaobu (1990: vol. 8, 8413-8453).

products is the first mentioned in a Chinese text, and it provides a guide to understanding the basis upon which the Chinese administration, represented by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency, and possibly the Chinese maritime trade community, classified foreign products into the various product groups.

The second section consists of a list of foreign polities organized according to the respective spheres of influence of the key polities in each of the foreign regions. These regions were in turn grouped under four maritime zones. It is clear that this geo-political organization was based on Chinese knowledge and impressions of these regions and polities that had been developed at the end of the thirteenth century. While the geographical grouping is largely coherent, the political grouping does not appear to be a completely accurate reflection of the state of affairs in these various regions at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The description of the sphere of influence of Srivijaya, for example, which is geographically accurate, is incorrect in respect to the political state of affairs in the early fourteenth century, since the capital of Srivijaya—Jambi—had been sacked by Majapahit Java in 1275 and its hold on the Malacca Straits region had consequently disintegrated. The Malacca Straits region was, in fact characterized at that time by the proliferation of smaller polities with smaller, competing political and economic spheres of influence. Nonetheless, the information in the text provides readers with an impression of the foreign regions and polities from a Chinese perspective, as well as an understanding of Chinese impressions of the geography and regional political alignment of the foreign maritime regions²⁹.

Despite the fact that this text is a key source of primary information concerning China's maritime trade and its economic relations with external trading partners, there is no translation available in any Western language. The following translation, based on the text

²⁹ For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see Chen (1986).

published by Zhonghua shuju³⁰, comprises the lists of maritime trade products and foreign countries found in chapter 7 of the text.

Translated Entries of the Dade Nanhaizhi (DDNHZ 7:17a – 20b)

(DDNHZ 7:17a) *Maritime Products*

It is said that the shipping of goods into the country is overseen by the [imperial] censor. The lands and seas are regarded as a vast area, harboring precious products that are shipped out [to other regions]. [These products], which are not those normally produced in China, are shipped [by traders who] sail and congregate at various places. [Official] encouragement of trade was absent. In the past, beneficial regulations for the trade and shipping of these [products] were absent. Guang[zhou] is the meeting place of foreign ships. Precious products are stored by the provincial administrations. The list of names of the various states of the barbarian isles is inexhaustible. More than forty are recorded in the following section.

According to imperial decree, there are places in the four oceans where departures and arrivals occur daily and monthly. All have genuine [exotic products]. As a result of [the existence of unique] creatures [in the places of] the maritime peoples, different products, such as dragon [camphor], pearls, and rhinoceros horns are accumulated by the administrations of these places. Of the products that are seen, and which are precious, those that can be named and are from within the borders of the empire have been placed in the previous section (DDNHZ 7:17b). Maritime products are in the following section.

³⁰ Zhonghua shuju bianjiaobu (1990: vol. 8, 8413-8453).

(DDNHZ 7: 17b) *Precious Products*

Elephant tusks (ivory)³¹

Rhinoceros horns³²

Hornbill casques³³

Pearls³⁴

Coral³⁵

Emeralds³⁶

Kingfisher feathers³⁷

Turtle carapaces³⁸

Tortoise shells³⁹

³¹ Elephant tusks were obtained from two sources. The first was the Indian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), which is found in India, Mainland Southeast Asia, the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. The other was the African elephant (*Elephas africanus*). The tusks of the Indian elephant are generally smaller than those of the African elephant, and during the Song and Yuan periods, the Chinese graded ivory according to their weight. Ivory was regarded as a state monopoly item by the Song court in the early Song period. By the late eleventh century, tusks that weighed more than thirty *jin* (katis) were regarded by the Song court as state monopoly items, while those weighing less than thirty *jin* were permitted to be freely imported and traded in the Chinese market. Ivory was used in the production of audience tablets throughout the Song period. PZKT 2:1b-2a, WXTK 20:201,3, SS 186:31b, Wheatley (1959: 111 & 112) & Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 232).

³² Rhinoceros horns could have been obtained from Mainland Southeast Asia and the Malay Peninsula from the *Rhinoceros sumatrensis*, from Java and Sumatra from the *Rhinoceros sondaicus*, from India from the *Rhinoceros unicornis*, or from the Zanzibar coast from the *Rhinoceros bicornis*. During the Song period, the Chinese graded horns that were more white than black as those that were of the highest quality. Although the Chinese presently use rhinoceros horns both for decorative carvings and for medicinal purposes, during the Song and Yuan periods, these horns had purely decorative purposes. As early as the late tenth century, the Song court declared rhinoceros horns as a state monopoly item, as it was used in the production of officials' belt buckles. WXTK 20:201,3, SS 186:31b, Wheatley (1959: 77), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 233).

³³ This product was a substitute for ivory. Burkill (1966: 1214 & 1215).

³⁴ During the Song and Yuan periods, pearls were obtained from the Middle East and the Indian Ocean (from the *Pinctada vulgaris*), Maritime Southeast Asia (from the *Pinctada margaritifera*), and from the Philippines (from the *Pinctada maxima*). This product was regarded by the Song court as a highly valuable item, and was declared a state monopoly item. Wheatley (1959: 89 & 90), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 229 & 230) & SHY ZG 44:2a.

³⁵ For a detailed discussion of China's trade in coral, refer to Ptak (1990).

³⁶ There is no other Song or Yuan period information on this product.

³⁷ This item, typically obtained from birds of the family *Alcedinidae*, was imported by China during the Song and Yuan periods mainly from Khmer Cambodia. These feathers were regarded by the Song court as ornaments to be worn only by the highest elite of the Song state, and were thus regarded as a state monopoly item. A ban was imposed in 1107 prohibiting officials from wearing them. Wheatley (1959: 99), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 235) & SHY ZG 44:2a.

³⁸ For a detailed discussion of China's trade in turtle's carapace, refer to Ptak (1991).

³⁹ For a detailed discussion of China's trade in tortoise shell, refer to Ptak (1991).

(DDNHZ 7: 17b) *Textiles*⁴⁰

White foreign cloths

Decorated (patterned) foreign cloths

Grass cloth

Scissor-cut satin sheets (low pile)

Scissor-cut satin sheets (long pile)

(DDNHZ 7: 17b) *Aromatics*

Chen gharuwood incense⁴¹

Su gharuwood incense⁴²

Huangshou gharuwood incense⁴³

Dabai incense⁴⁴

Anba incense⁴⁵

⁴⁰ For a detailed discussion of the textiles imported by China during the Song and Yuan periods, refer to Lee (1994) & Wisseman Christie (1993).

⁴¹ Also known as eaglewood or aloeswood, gharuwood incense is the pathologically diseased, fragrant wood yielded by certain trees comprising the genus *Aquilaria*. A variety of trees in Southeast Asia were the sources of the gharuwood incense that China imported from Southeast Asia, the chief source from the Malay Peninsula being *Aquilaria malaccensis*, *Aquilaria agallocha* in Sumatra and *Aquilaria baillonii* and *Aquilaria crassna* in Cambodia.

During the Song and Yuan periods, the Chinese graded gharuwood incense according to their aromatic qualities and appearance, and in turn named them according to such physical and visual characteristics as weight and colour, and not according to their botanical sources.

Chen gharuwood incense, or “sinking” incense, was the best quality gharuwood incense. Its density was higher than water, and it was highly pungent. Its colour ranged from black to yellow, with those that were black being regarded as superior to those that were yellow.

Wheatley (1959: 69-72), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 204-208) & (Burkill 1996: 198-215).

⁴² Su gharuwood incense was second in quality to chen gharuwood incense. Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 207).

⁴³ Huangshou gharuwood incense, third in quality amongst all gharuwood incense, was yellow and hard, with the best quality being those with black traces in them. Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 207).

⁴⁴ This product is recorded only in one other Yuan period text—the *Daoyi zhilue*. According to the *Daoyi zhilue*, only Pahang exported this product. It is not known what product is being referred to in both the DDNHZ and the *Daoyi zhilue*. Su (1981: 96).

⁴⁵ This product has not been identified, and is not recorded in any other Song or Yuan period text.

Champa [incense]⁴⁶

Muskwood⁴⁷

Black incense⁴⁸

(DDNHZ 7: 18a) Myrobalans⁴⁹

Lakawood incense⁵⁰

Sandalwood incense⁵¹

Rong incense⁵²

Rose water⁵³

Frankincense⁵⁴

⁴⁶ This product has not been identified, and is not recorded in any other Song or Yuan period text.

⁴⁷ Used during the Song and Yuan periods as timber for furniture making, this product was most likely obtained from the *Excoecaria agallocha*, a tree found along the coasts from tropical Africa to Australia, although Southeast Asia, including the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, appears to have been the source of those imported by China during the Song and Yuan periods. The newly felled tree has a sappy odor, while the wood from the decayed tree produces an aromatic fragrance. These characteristics were known to Chinese traders by the thirteenth century. Wheatley (1959: 124), Burkill (1966: 1006-1008) & Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 212).

⁴⁸ This product has not been identified.

⁴⁹ A product from Gujarat, India, this is the fruit of the *Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia belerica*, *Terminalia arguna* and *Terminalia paniculata*. The dried astringent fruit contains high levels of tannin, and is used for medicinal purposes and for tanning. During the Song and Yuan periods, the Chinese used it only for medicinal purposes. Burkill (1966: 2173-2180) & Wheatley (1959: 106).

⁵⁰ For a detailed discussion of this product, refer to Appendix A, Lakawood Incense.

⁵¹ This is an aromatic wood obtained from the *Santalum album*, found in Eastern Java to the Lesser Sunda Islands to Timor. An Indian variety of sandalwood—*Pterocarpus Santalinus*—was traded very early in history. The product was used as incense by the Chinese, although the Malays and Indians used it as an astringent as well. The Chinese graded sandalwood according to its appearance, as the fragrance of all the different grades of this product was largely the same. The best quality was those with a purplish-hue, while yellow sandalwood was the most common grade. Those with a speckled appearance were deemed the lowest grade. In addition to whole lengths of timber, broken pieces that had fallen to the ground were also harvested and traded into China. Wheatley (1959: 65), Burkill (1966: 1986-1990) & Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 208).

⁵² In the *Daoyi zhilue*, "Rong" refers to a port located in South Thailand, possibly Chumphorn or Jumbara. It is likely that the product here refers to an item that was exported by this South Thai port. It has not been identified, and is not recorded in any other Song or Yuan period text. Su (1981: 106).

⁵³ This product originated from the Middle East, and was transshipped to China during the Song period by such Southeast Asian ports as Srivijaya. Wheatley (1959: 107).

⁵⁴ This product is the gum-resin of the *Boswellia carterii*, a plant that grows on the hills of Somaliland and Arabia, and the *Boswellia frereana*, which is found only in Somaliland. It was used solely as incense by the Chinese during the Song and Yuan periods, although it came to have medicinal uses in later periods. By the thirteenth century, frankincense was accorded thirteen grades. Whole lumps were graded higher than broken bits. The manner in which the product was harvested also affected its grading, with whole lumps that were plucked off the plants being preferred over those that flowed and were collected in a pot or bag. Wheatley (1959: 47-49), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 195-196).

Sweet Benzoin⁵⁵

(DDNHZ 7: 18a) Medicinal Products

Camphor⁵⁶

Asafoetida⁵⁷

Myrrh⁵⁸

Pepper⁵⁹

Cloves⁶⁰

Nutmeg⁶¹

⁵⁵ This product is gum benjamin, the pathological resinous product of the trees comprising the genus *Styrax*. The source in Sumatra is the *Styrax Benzoin*, while the source in Thailand is *Styrax Tonkinense*. It was used as an aromatic by the Chinese, and often mixed with other aromatics to improve their fragrance. Sweet benzoin was graded by the Chinese according to its visual appearance. Yellow and black were the two main types of this product. Those that had snow-white interiors were of the highest grade. Those with sand or other impurities encrusted in them were of the lowest grade. Wheatley (1959: 55-59), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 198) & Burkill (1966: 2139-2146).

⁵⁶ Camphor is an important Southeast Asian aromatic that was imported into China from the Tang period onwards. Camphor products were derived from two main plant sources, *Dryobalanops Sumatrensis* (formerly known as *Dryobalanops aromatica*), or Barus camphor, which is resinous and found in Sumatra, Borneo and on the Malay Peninsula in Tregganu, Pahang, Johor and Selangor, and *Blumea balsamifera*, which was traded with China in the form of oil and powder and is obtained from Nepal, Island Southeast Asia and the Philippines. During the Song period, camphor was primarily the product of Borneo, although Barus was also an important source of good quality camphor. Other sources of Song China's supply of camphor included northeast Malay Peninsula. Tibbetts (1979: 31-33, 37, 41 & 49), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 193-194), Wheatley (1959: 101-103), Burkill (1966: 337-342 & 876-882) & Soerianegara & Lemmens (1993: 186 & 187).

⁵⁷ This product is a gum-resin derived from the *Ferula narthex*, *Ferula aliacea*, *Ferula foetida* and *Ferula scorodosma*, all of which are found in Southwest Asia, such as Iran and Afghanistan. There is no record of its use during the Song and Yuan periods, except in the DDNHZ, where it is merely included in the trade category of "medicinal products". Wheatley (1959: 117-118) & Hirth & Rockhill (1965: 224).

⁵⁸ This is the gum-resin of the *Commiphora molmol*, a plant native to Somaliland, and *Commiphora abyssinica*, which is native to the Middle East. Myrrh was shipped to China via Southeast Asia during the Song and Yuan periods. Apart from the general knowledge of it being a medicine, its actual use by the Chinese during the tenth to fourteenth centuries is not known. Wheatley (1959: 73), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 197) & Burkill (1966: 656).

⁵⁹ The most common type of pepper imported by China from Southeast Asia was that obtained from the *Piper nigrum*. This was an important Javanese product that was exported to China during the Song period, although, by the fourteenth century, this pepper was made available to the Chinese market by Sumatra as well. While listed as a medicinal product, pepper was most likely used by the Chinese as a spice as well. Hirth & Rockhill (1966:222) & Wheatley (1959: 100-101).

⁶⁰ For a detailed study of the trade in cloves, refer to Ptak (1993).

⁶¹ This product is the seed of the *Myristica fragrans*, which is native to the islands east of Java. In Maritime Southeast Asia, nutmeg is traditionally used as a stimulant in Southeast Asia, and not as a

Cardamoms⁶²

Mace⁶³

Wudieni⁶⁴

Aniseed⁶⁵

Sulphur

Dragon's blood⁶⁶

Putchuck⁶⁷

Edible fungi⁶⁸

Margosa bark⁶⁹

Foreign orris-root⁷⁰

Realgar⁷¹

culinary spice. Its use by the Chinese during the Song and Yuan periods is not known. Wheatley (1959: 100), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 210) & Burkill (1966: 1550-556).

⁶² This product was obtained from such plants as the *Amomum kepulaga* and *Amomum dealbatum*, native to Java, the *Amomum aromaticum* and *Amomum subulatum*, native to India, and the *Amomum Krervanh* and *Amomum xanthioides*, native to Siam and Indo-China. Its exact use in China during the Song and Yuan periods is not known, although it was more likely used as a medicine than as a spice. Wheatley (1959: 87-89), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 221), & Burkill (1966: 132-138).

⁶³ Known to the Chinese during the Song and Yuan periods as nutmeg flower, rather than as an outgrowth from the base of the seed, this product is the dried outer layer of the nutmeg. Wheatley (1959: 100).

⁶⁴ This product has not been identified.

⁶⁵ This is the fruit of the *Pimpinella anisum*, a herb that was widely cultivated in the Middle East, and was transhipped to China during the Song and Yuan periods via Southeast Asia. Wheatley (1959: 106).

⁶⁶ For a detailed discussion of this product, refer to Appendix B, Imitation Dragon's Blood.

⁶⁷ This product is the sun-dried rootstock of the herb *Saussurea lappa*, which grows in the Himalayas. It is used in Maritime Southeast Asia as a tonic, and may have been similarly used in China during the tenth to fourteenth centuries. In terms of product grading, the Chinese regarded those that resembled chicken bones to be of the highest quality. Wheatley (1959: 62), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 221) & Burkill (1966: 2003 & 2004).

⁶⁸ It is not known which fungi these are.

⁶⁹ This product is most likely the bark of the *Melia Indica*, a plant found in South India, Java and the Lesser Sunda Islands, of which all parts of the plant are harvested for various medicinal purposes. Its exact use by the Chinese during the Song and Yuan periods is not known. Wheatley (1959: 63), Burkill (1966: 1465-1469) & Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 73).

⁷⁰ Orris-root, the fragrant rootstock of the *Iris florentina*, or Florentine iris, is from Kashmir. Its use in China and Southeast Asia is not known. From the use of the term "foreign" in the DDNHZ to denote orris-root, it is possible that the Chinese may have had a local equivalent, although where this "local" orris-root may have been sourced from is not known. Wheatley (1959: 87).

⁷¹ This product is red arsenic (arsenic disulphide AS₂S₂). Burkill (1966: 243-244).

Liquid storax⁷²

Cubebs⁷³

(DDNHZ 7: 18a) *Various Timber [Products]*

Sapanwood⁷⁴

Gharuwood timber⁷⁵

Ebony⁷⁶

Red-purple [timber?]⁷⁷

(DDNHZ 7: 18b) *Leather Products*

Shark leather

Leather stalks

⁷² The product of the Berbera Coast, Baghdad, Ghazni and Asia Minor, it is obtained from the bark of the *Liquidambar orientalis*. It was used by the Chinese during the Song and Yuan periods as an astringent, and in perfumery. Wheatley (1959: 108-109) & Hirth & Rockhill (1966:200).

⁷³ This product is the fruit of the *Piper cubeba*. Although the plant is native to Maritime Southeast Asia, the ZFZ records that it was introduced into Kediri (Java), and cultivated as a cash crop. Its use in China during the Song and Yuan periods is not known, although it is likely that it was used, as in Maritime Southeast Asia, as a tonic. Wheatley (1959: 107), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 224) & Burkill (1966: 1773).

⁷⁴ This product, known to European traders as brazil or brezile wood, is the dark-red heartwood of the *Caesalpinia sappan*. Found throughout Southeast Asia, the key sources of this product for the Chinese market during the Song and Yuan periods included Cambodia, Java and North Sumatra. Sapanwood was used in China for dyeing. Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 217), Wheatley (1959: 108) & Burkill (1966: 394-397).

⁷⁵ It is not known what product is being referred to. The DDNHZ is the only text of the Song and Yuan periods that contains a record of this product.

⁷⁶ This is a fancy wood, which, during the Song and Yuan periods, was likely obtained from Southeast Asia and India. From Mainland Southeast Asia, this wood is obtained from the *Diospyros embryopteris*, *Diospyros kaki* and *Diospyros lucida*. On the Malay Peninsula, it is obtained from the *Diospyros buxifolia*, *Diospyros scortechinii*, *Diospyros clavigera*, *Diospyros graciliflora* and *Diospyros lucida*. South Indian sources include the *Diospyros melanoxylon* and *Diospyros ebenum*. Supplies were generally small, and this product was therefore valuable. Burkill (1966: 838-847), Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 216) & Wheatley (1959: 75).

⁷⁷ This is possibly the construction timber that was known to European traders as blackwood. For a further discussion, refer to Appendix A, Jiangzhen.

Leather pillows

Seven-scales leather

(DDNHZ 7: 18b) *Buffalo Hooves and Horns*

White buffalo hooves

White buffalo horns

(DDNHZ 7: 18b) *Miscellaneous Products*

Beeswax⁷⁸

Feng you zi (風油子)⁷⁹

Purple canes (rattan)⁸⁰

Ground ink powder

Cao zhu (草珠)⁸¹

Patterned white paper

Rattan stalks

Rattan staffs

Cowrie shells

⁷⁸ This product was obtainable, during the Song and Yuan periods, throughout Southeast Asia. By the thirteenth century, the Malacca Straits region had become China's most important source of beeswax. Hirth & Rockhill (1966:238 & 239) & Wheatley (1959: 125).

⁷⁹ This product has not been identified.

⁸⁰ This product is the stem of climbing palms of the genera *Calamus*, *Daemonorhops*, *Ceratolobus*, *Calospatha*, *Plectocomia*, *Plectocomiopsis* and *Korthalsia*. It is not known where the Southeast Asian sources were, although the ZFZ does note that Lambri and Champa were sources of white rattan during the early thirteenth century. Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 48, 72 & 73) & Wheatley (1959: 107 & 108).

⁸¹ This product has not been identified.

Peacock feathers⁸²

Large blue(?)⁸³

Parrots

Ba dan zi (巴淡子)⁸⁴

(DDNHZ 7: 18b) *The Various Foreign States*⁸⁵

The State of Tonkin (Jiaozhi) is in charge of:

Tuan shan⁸⁶

Ji zi (Cat Hai?)

(DDNHZ 7: 19a) *The State of Champa is in charge of:*

Ni yue (Nhat?)

Wu li (Ulik?)

Jiu zhou (Chien Dong [Amaravati])

Xin zhou (Cha Ban, Vijaya)

Gu wang (Can Mong?)

Min tong long (Panduranga?)

Bin tong long (Phan Rang)

⁸² This product was derived from either the *Pavo muticus*, which is native to Southeast Asia, or the *Pavo cristatus*, which is native to India. Wheatley (1959: 55).

⁸³ This product has not been identified.

⁸⁴ This product has not been identified.

⁸⁵ The identification of the place-names is based on Chen (1986), Su (1981) & Chen & Qian (2000).

⁸⁶ The location of this place has not been identified.

(DDNHZ 7: 19a) *The State of Khmer Cambodia (Zhenla) is in charge of:*

Zhen li fu (Chantaburi?)⁸⁷

Deng liu mei (Nakhon Srithamarat)

Pu gan (Pagan)

Rong li (Chumphon?)

Luo hu guo (Lobpuri?)

(DDNHZ 7: 19a) *The State of Thailand (Xian) is in charge of:*

Shangsui sugudi (Sukhothai?)

(DDNHZ 7: 19a) *The State of Tambralingga is in charge of the Small Western Ocean:*

Ri luo ting (Ranong?)

Da la xi⁸⁸

Song gu luo (Songkla?)

Ling ya su jia (Langkasuka)

Sha pi (Surat Thani?)

Fo lo an (Kuala Beranang)

Ji lan dan (Kelantan)

Yan tou (Endau?)

(DDNHZ 7: 19b) Ding jia lu (Trengganu)

⁸⁷ This polity dispatched a total of three tribute missions to the Song court, in 1180, 1202 and 1205. Wong (1979: 11).

⁸⁸ The location of this place has not been identified.

Po jia (Paka?)

Peng xiang (Pahang)

Kou lan dan (Kuantan)

(DDNHZ 7: 19b) *The State of Srivijaya is in charge of the Small Western Ocean:*

Long ya shan (Fort Canning Hill, Singapore River, Singapore)

Long ya men (Keppel Harbor, Singapore)

Bian shu (Panchor?)

Lan bang (Lampung?)

Peng jia (Bangka?)

Bu li dong (Billiton)

Gan pi (Kompei)

Ya li (Deli?)

Ting ting (Dindings?)

Bu la (Perlak?)

Wu si xin (Pasei?)

Shen mei tuo luo⁸⁹

Nan wu li (Lambri)

Bi si ma⁹⁰

Xi lan (Sri Lanka)

Mei li pa du (Muaraputus?)

Bin zuo (Barus?)

⁸⁹ The location of this place has not been identified.

⁹⁰ The location of this place has not been identified.

(DDNHZ 7: 19b) *The State of Borneo (Boni) of the Eastern Ocean is in charge of the Small Eastern Ocean:*

Ma li lu (Manila)

Ma yi (Mait)

Mei kun (Manukan?)

Pu duan (Butuan)

Su lu (Sulu)

Sha hu chong (Siatan?)

Ya cheng⁹¹

Ma na luo nu (literally “Ma na luo slaves”)⁹²

Wen shi ling⁹³

(DDNHZ 7: 20a) *The State of Tanjungpura is in charge of the Large Eastern Ocean:*

Lun du (Lundu?)

San ya si (Sambas?)

Sha luo (Saratok?)

Ta by xin di (Tebedu?)

Sha peng (Sipang)

Jian li⁹⁴

Bian nu si (Bengkayang?)

Wu li xin⁹⁵

⁹¹ The location of this place is not known.

⁹² It is possible that this place-name refers to “[the place where] Ma na luo (Malano?) slaves [originate from]”.

⁹³ The location of this place is not known.

⁹⁴ The location of this place is not known.

⁹⁵ The location of this place is not known.

Wan pa hua (Mempawah?)

Du lu xing (Pontianak)

Luo (Laut?)

Xi yi jian⁹⁶

Zhi li (Djelai?)

Gu mei (Kumai?)

Qi ding ying (Kotawaringin?)

Hu lu man tou (Karimata?)

Pa she (Passir?)

Gu ti⁹⁷

Bu di xian (Pontianak?)

Meng jia shi⁹⁸

Wu tan ma (Watampone, Sulawesi?)

Su hua gong (Sulawesi?)

Wen li gu (Maluku?)

Meng ya (Banggi, Sulawesi?)

Pan tan (Banda?)

(DDNHZ 7: 20a) *The State of Java is in charge of the Large East Ocean:*

Sun tiao (Sunda?)

Tuo xa (Tunda, Java?)

Bai hua wan⁹⁹

Dan mo (Demak?)

⁹⁶ The location of this place is not known.

⁹⁷ The location of this place is not known.

⁹⁸ The location of this place is not known.

⁹⁹ The location of this place is not known.

Xi ning (Serang?)

Luo xin (Lasem?)

Chong jia lu (Janggala?)

Bu zhi gan (Prajekan?)

(DDNHZ 7:20b) Tuo da (Tuban?)

Pu pan (Blimbing?)

Bu ti (Pati?)

Bu zhe luo gan (Pekalongan?)

Da gong (Pakong)

Pa li¹⁰⁰

Gu luan (Gurun)

Huo shan (Lit. Mountain of fire; Gunung Api?)

Di man (Timor?)

2.3.4 Yuandianzhang¹⁰¹

The second Yuan period text used in the present study of the Yuan period is the *Yuandianzhang* (henceforth YDZ). Published by the Yuan court during the Yingzong era (1321-1324), the text was compiled, printed and dispatched to all governmental offices and departments of Yuan China to serve as a guide for all officials and administrators in the execution of their civil responsibilities and duties. It contains sixty chapters grouped into ten monographs, which contain regulations and stipulations established by the Yuan court covering all areas of civil administration during the period between 1260 and 1320, covering the reigns of Shizhu, the Mongol emperor who unified North and South China under

¹⁰⁰ The location of this place is not known.

¹⁰¹ The version of the text used in the present study is found in the SKQS. Fudan daxue tushuguan gujibu (1995: 787:1-650)

Mongol rule, to that of Renzong, whose reign witnessed the return to the imperial court of control over the Chinese economy from the hands of the Ortaq cliques.

Information concerning China's maritime trade comes in the form of twenty-three stipulations found in the entry on maritime trade, in the Monograph on the Board of Revenue¹⁰². These stipulations were formulated and reformulated, during the tumultuous years between 1284 and 1324, when the Yuan court's attitude towards private maritime trade oscillated dramatically between the two extremes of, on the one hand, fully permitting private trade, and on the other, imposing a complete state monopoly. However, the dramatic changes that characterized the period between 1284 and 1324 are not apparent from the list of stipulations. This is because the YDZ only deals with the administration of maritime trade after the policy debates were finally resolved. In addition, no direct reference is made to China's economic dealings with the Malacca Straits region. Nonetheless, the stipulations affected the administration of the China-Malacca Straits region maritime trade, and must have had a significant impact on the dynamics of the economic relationship between the two regions.

The information in the text is important, in that it provides an understanding of the basis for Yuan maritime trade administration, and its differences from, and continuities with, that established during the course of the Song period. In addition, the text also provides the administrative context in which the mid-fourteenth century maritime trade between China and the Malacca Straits region, as reflected in texts such as the *Daoyi zhilue*, may be understood. A summary of the twenty-three stipulations in the entry on maritime trade has been provided by H. F. Schurmann¹⁰³.

¹⁰² *Yuandianzhang Hubu* (henceforth YDZ HB), chapter 22.

¹⁰³ Schurmann (1967: 226-227).

2.3.5 Daoyi zhilue¹⁰⁴

The third Yuan period text used in the present study of Yuan China's maritime trade relations with the Malacca Straits region is the *Daoyi zhilue* (henceforth DYZL). Written by Wang Dayuan, a Chinese trader who traveled outside of China twice (in 1330 - 1334 and 1337 - 1339). The DYZL was originally published as part of the *Qingyuan xuzhi*. It was later published by Wang as a text in its own right. The date of completion and publication of the text is not known, although it is believed to have been after 1349.

Wang was recognized during the Qing period as one of the few Chinese historical voyage figures, and the DYZL is therefore an important source of data on the regions outside of China during the fourteenth century. The text is important for the study of China's foreign maritime trade not only because of the entries on polities and ports of Southeast Asia that do not appear anywhere else, but also because it was written by a person whose participation in the maritime trade economy was private rather than official.

The text contains ninety-nine entries on foreign polities and areas in the Asian and African continents. Fifty-six entries are on Southeast Asian polities and areas, of which thirty-five appear for the first time in a Chinese text. It does not seem likely that Wang had visited all ninety-nine places himself. However, the level of detail in the information contained in the entries on Southeast Asia and the Indian sub-continent suggests that he had in fact visited many of the places in these two regions. Thus, unlike other texts that precede it, such as the LWDD or the ZFZ, which depended on second-hand accounts and information, the DYZL consists of information written by the eyewitness himself. The information, in particular the entries on polities and areas in Southeast Asia can thus be dated specifically to the mid-fourteenth century.

¹⁰⁴ The version of the text used in the present study is the one annotated and edited by Su Jiqing. Su (1981).

The DYZL is undoubtedly an important textual source for the study of Southeast Asian states and their relations with China in the mid-fourteenth century. It contains information on the politics and administration of foreign polities, along with ethnographic information relating to the attire, food and drink customs, as well as other peculiar or unique practices of these places¹⁰⁵. In terms of trade, it provides information on the products available for export from these places, as well as the products, not confined to Chinese ones but also including Indian and Southeast Asian products, in demand in local markets. The text is particularly useful for the study of such Chinese trade practices as product quality grading, of intra-regional trade, and of the geographical distribution of sources of individual Chinese and foreign products that together fed the maritime trade between Southeast Asia and China.

An English translation of the entire text has been provided by Rockhill¹⁰⁶. In addition, translations of, and comments on, entries concerning polities and places on the Malay Peninsula have been provided by Wheatley¹⁰⁷.

2.3.6 Yuanshi¹⁰⁸

The final text used in the current study is in fact a post-Yuan period text written about the Yuan period. The *Yuanshi* (henceforth YS) was a project sponsored by the nascent Ming court in 1369 as an attempt to elucidate the historical lessons that could be learned from the rise and fall of the first foreign dynasty to rule the whole of China. The text was completed and presented to the throne in 1370. Comprising 210 chapters, the text is grouped into four

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of the literary basis of the DYZL, refer to Ptak (1995).

¹⁰⁶ Rockhill (1914 & 1915).

¹⁰⁷ Wheatley (1973: 75-87).

¹⁰⁸ The version of the text used in the present study is found in the SKQS. Zhu (1984: 292:1 - 295:739).

monographs. It covers the period corresponding to the reigns of Taizhu to Shundi (1206 – 1368) of the Yuan dynasty.

Information on China's maritime trade can be found in chapter 94 under the entry on maritime trade. The entry includes information on the changes in the customs duties and secondary taxes levied on imported products between 1284 and 1324, as well as brief information on the oscillation of the Yuan court's stance between fully permitting private trade and completely monopolizing the Chinese shipping trade. There is also an entry on Java in the Monograph on Foreign States, describing the Yuan military expedition to Java at the end of the thirteenth century.

The importance of the YS to the study of China's maritime trade relations with the Malacca Straits region during the Yuan period is similar to that of the SS for the Song period, in that it is primarily a historical work concerning the Yuan period. Since this history draws upon the YDZ as well as the records of the proceedings of the Yuan imperial court, the result is that for the entry on maritime trade, the information is confined to the period between 1284 and 1324, when the governance of maritime trade was undergoing significant and constant changes. In this respect, the YS is important as a primary source of information on the process of change and oscillation in policies that characterized China's administration of maritime trade during the first five decades of Yuan rule. This information can only be found in the YS, making it an important text for the study of Yuan China's maritime trade economy.

An English translation of the entry on maritime trade has been provided by H. F. Schurmann¹⁰⁹. A translation of the entry on Java has been provided by W. P. Groeneveldt¹¹⁰. Additional information on Java may also be found in the entries on Shiba and Yike Meisu,

¹⁰⁹ Schurmann (1967: 230-234).

¹¹⁰ Groeneveldt (1876: 20-25).

both of whom were generals who led the Mongol expedition against Java at the end of the thirteenth century, found in chapters 162 and 131 respectively in the YS. Translations of these entries have also been provided by Groeneveldt¹¹¹.

¹¹¹ Groeneveldt (1876: 25-28 & 28-30).

Chapter 3: Sources of Archaeological Data on the Economic Relations between China and the Malacca Straits Region (Chinese Kiln Excavations and Shipwreck Excavations)

3.1 Introduction

Archaeological data form the second major body of information utilized by the current study. The data are derived from the two geographical regions with which the discussion in the following chapters deals—Maritime Southeast Asia, and South China. The sites upon which this thesis draws fall into three categories: kiln sites in South China; shipwrecks found both in Chinese and Southeast Asian waters; and settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region. Both the Chinese kiln sites and the Maritime Southeast Asian settlement sites were in use for relatively lengthy periods of time, and most cross the temporal boundaries between the Song and Yuan periods. The shipwreck sites, on the other hand, provide important snapshots that can often be dated quite precisely. This chapter includes an overview of archaeological data from kiln sites in South China dating to the Song and Yuan periods, and of data from key shipwreck sites in Maritime Southeast Asian and Chinese waters that fall within the tenth to fourteenth century period. Settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region are discussed in chapter 4.

3.2 Kiln Sites in South China

Remains in the port cities of Guangzhou and Quanzhou that provide information concerning relations with Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East include epigraphic records on tomb stones and the remains of places of worship of foreign religions, such as mosques and temples. However, the archaeological data most useful for the study of China-Malacca Straits region patterns of trade are derived from kiln site excavations. The ceramic remains from such sites can be directly compared with the

ceramic finds in shipwrecks and settlement sites in Southeast Asia. This also provides insight into the economic links between the Chinese ports and their economic hinterlands within which the kiln sites were located.

Archaeological reports on Song and Yuan period kiln sites in South China are primarily concerned with the fine stoneware ceramics produced by these kiln districts. A good deal is currently known about the types of fine stonewares, and the glazes, forms and decorative techniques associated with various kiln districts. While there was a general exchange of knowledge between potters concerning ceramic production, witnessed by similarities in decorative techniques, forms, glazes and kiln construction, differences in the physical characteristics of the wares from different kiln districts are discernible, and that has enabled the provenance of many excavated sherds and whole examples to be fairly confidently assigned. The sources of fine ceramics found at Southeast Asian archaeological sites can therefore be fairly accurately identified at the Chinese provincial and in some cases even the district level.

The study of coarse Chinese stoneware ceramics has focused on vessel forms and on types of decoration, such as molded and incised motifs, character and motif stamping and decorative lugs. However, most of the forms and the types of decoration used by Fujian and Guangdong kilns were not exclusive to any particular district or even province, and many of the kilns produced a wide range of forms and decorations that were similar to those produced by other kilns. The clay body thus stands as the best means of distinguishing the different sources of coarse stoneware ceramics. Unfortunately, no scientific analysis of the body material used by the different kiln districts has yet been conducted, and the precise nature of variations in the clay used by the potters is still unclear. The classification of coarse stoneware ceramics from Guangdong and South Fujian is thus based upon visual identification of clay body types currently recognizable and known, and upon vessel forms that are attributable to a particular kiln area or district.

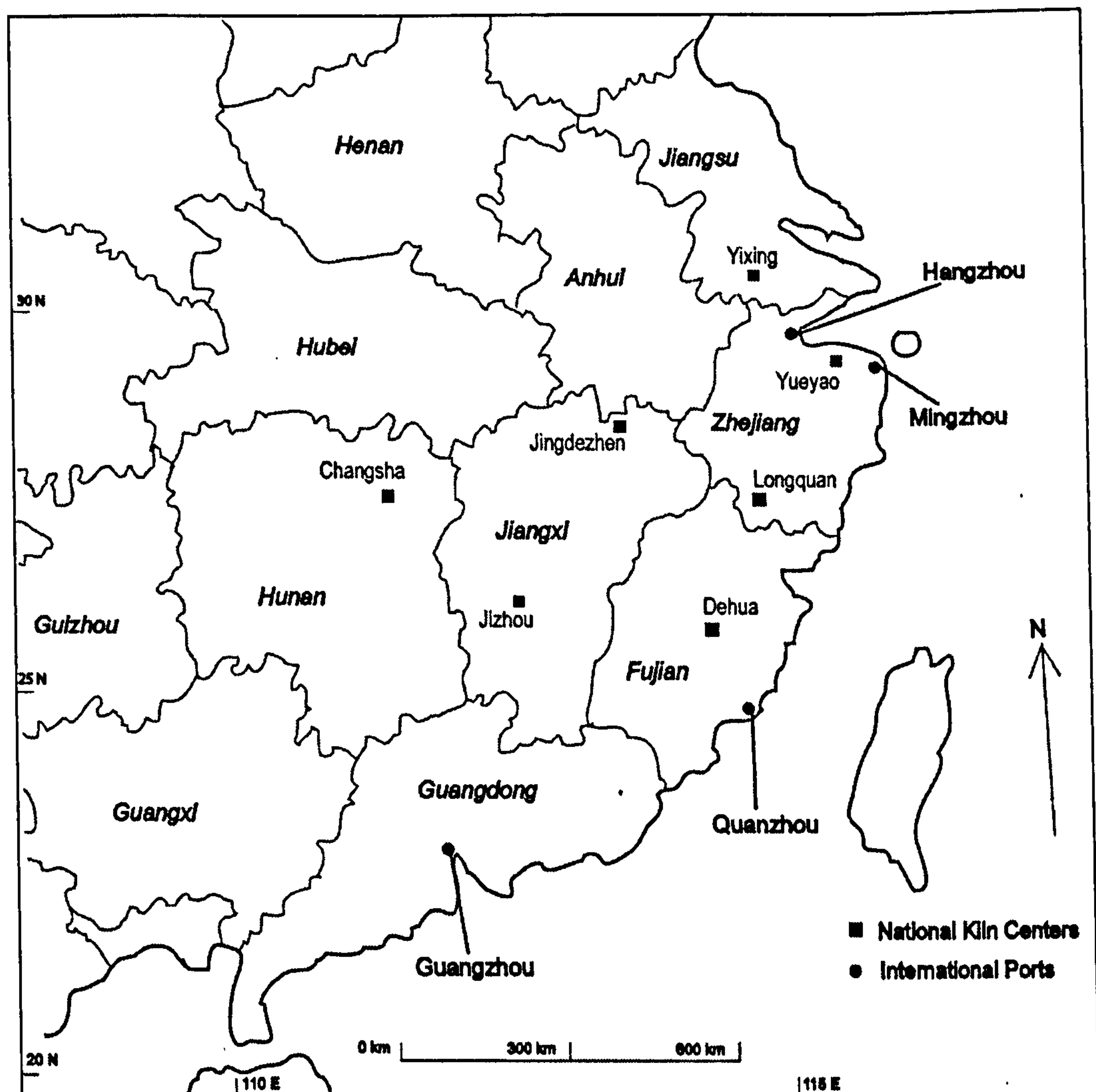


Fig. 3.1: Song & Yuan Period National Kiln Centers in South China.

The only South Chinese area in which a study has been made both of the development of the ceramics industry and of the role that local ceramics played in domestic and international economy is South Fujian¹. No major study has yet been made of the Guangdong ceramics industry, nor for that matter of those of provinces north of Guangdong and Fujian, such as Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Jiangsu. Chinese historians have only briefly discussed the implications of the archaeological data for Chinese export trade. Most of the studies of the role of the South Chinese kilns in the Southeast Asia-China trade of the tenth to fourteenth centuries have been carried out by Southeast Asian archaeologists and historians, with a heavy reliance on secondary sources, since most of the reports resulting from the archaeological surveys on the South Chinese kiln districts conducted by Chinese

¹ So (1994) and Ho (2001).

archaeologists remain unpublished. Our present understanding of the economic links between South China and Maritime Southeast Asia, and in particular the Malacca Straits region, remains limited².

3.2.1 Guangdong

A number of excavations and studies of kiln sites in Guangdong have been conducted under the auspices of the Guangdong Provincial Museum since the 1960s, published in a series of reports by Zeng Guangyi³, by the Guangdong Provincial Museum and by the Foshan City Museum⁴. The kiln districts investigated included Foshan, Huiyang, Chao'an, Xinhui, Zhuhai and Santou. These reports were collated and summarized by P. Lam, Zeng Guangyi and Gu Yunquan in 1985⁵. It is from the data contained in these published reports that our present knowledge of the Guangdong ceramics industry of the Song and Yuan periods, in particular the aspect of the industry that was catering for the Southeast Asian market, is derived.

The studies and surveys of the Guangdong ceramic industry of the tenth to fourteenth century period have largely centered on the Song period. All the kilns and the ceramic remains of the excavated sites have been assigned a Song period date. In addition, the studies have been undertaken almost exclusively from the art historical angle. There has thus been no study of the historical development of the Guangdong ceramics industry as a sector of the province's economy, or of its role in the international maritime trade of the tenth to fourteenth century, comparable to the studies of the South Fujian ceramics industry of the same period. In addition, the developments in the decorative styles and types of

² Past studies of Chinese ceramics found at Southeast Asian sites that were carried out by Southeast Asianists without access to more recent studies of Chinese kiln sites lack the precision that is now possible. Such studies included those by Moore (1970), Harrison (1986) and Chin (1988).

³ Zeng (1962, 1963, 1964a & b & 1985).

⁴ Guangdong Provincial Museum (1979 & 1981); Foshan City Museum (1978).

⁵ Zeng (1985), Gu (1985) & Lam (1985).

ceramics produced by the Guangdong kiln districts between the Song and Yuan periods remain unclear, as information on the Yuan period is lacking.

Nonetheless, the art historical studies of the ceramics industry of the Song period have made it possible to trace sherds and vessels recovered from Southeast Asian sites to their place of production in Guangdong based on the decorative styles and techniques. While there were various overlaps between the Guangdong and South Fujian kiln districts in the types of ceramics produced, in particular during the early phases of South Fujian's industry in the Song period, Guangdong ceramics are generally recognizable at the district level and can be distinguished from their South Fujian and other South Chinese coastal counterparts through the decorative motifs and techniques employed, as well as the glaze and clay body material.

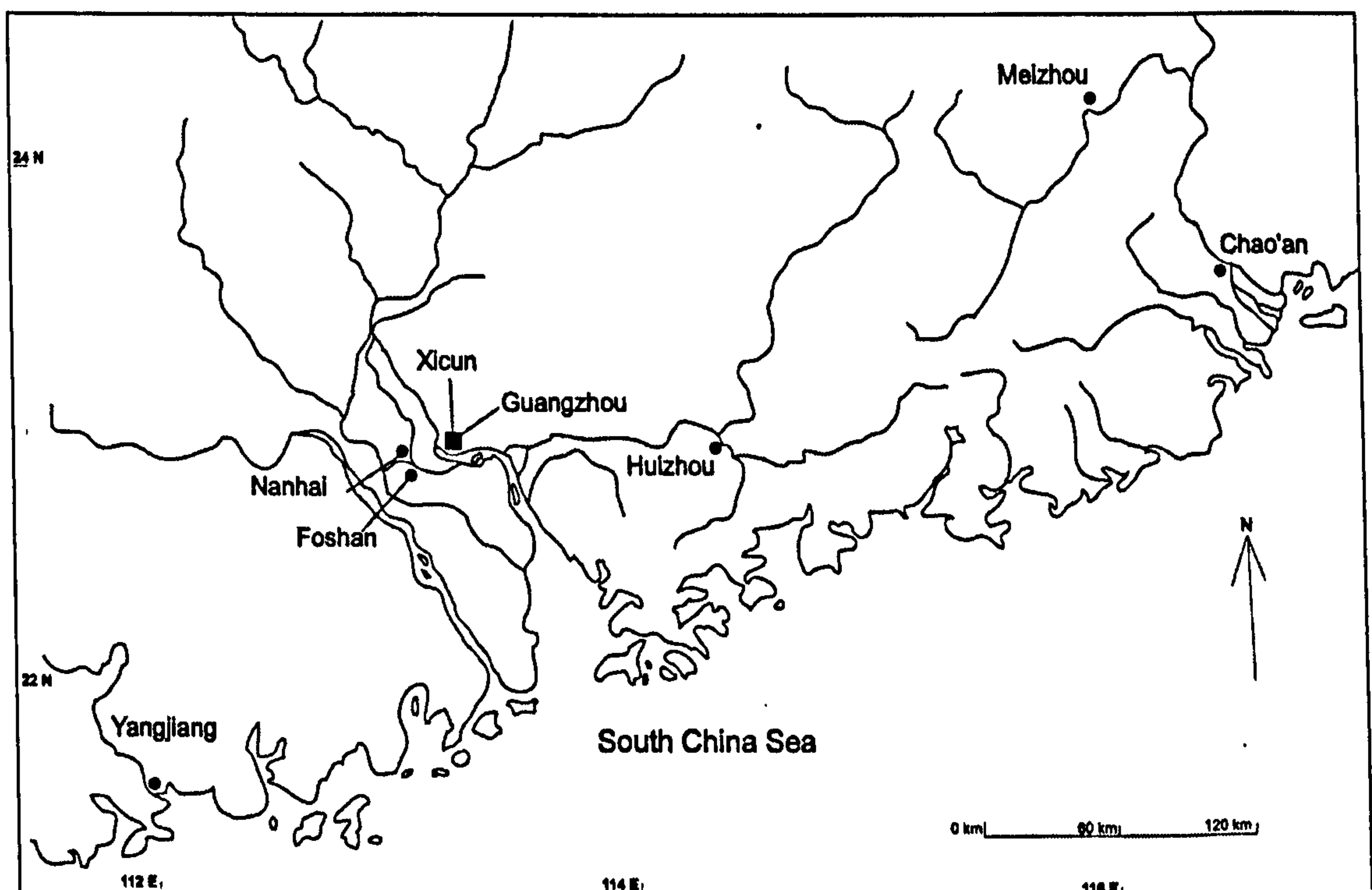


Fig. 3.2: Song & Yuan Period Kiln Districts in Guangdong.

There were three key kiln districts in Guangdong that produced wares for the Southeast Asia trade, all of which operated during the Song and Yuan periods. These were Guangzhou, which included such kiln areas as Xicun; Nanhai district, which included areas

such as Qishi and Foshan; and Chao'an, which included areas such as Bijiaoshan⁶. All enjoyed waterway access to Guangzhou port.

The ceramics that the Guangdong kiln districts produced included bowls, plates, dishes, ewers, teacups, carved cups and cup stands, vases and pillows⁷. Such specialty items as basins, pestles and large storage jars were produced only by the Xicun and Foshan kilns in Guangzhou and Nanhai districts⁸.

The material used by the potters for the production of fine stoneware ceramics was predominantly white porcelaneous clay with a very low iron oxide content. This clay mainly produced a grayish white body when fired in a Guangdong-type kiln, although the fired body color of Guangdong wares could range from white and grayish white to yellow, yellow orange, and brick red, the brick red body color being the most rare. The Guangdong wares generally have very compact and hard bodies, with only occasional pieces containing grit or inclusions.

In terms of glazes, the Guangdong kilns produced green-glazed, qingbai, white, black, brown, lead-green and white-slip wares. The most common types produced by the Guangdong kilns were celadon green wares, followed by qingbai wares and black-glazed wares⁹.

Celadon green wares were produced by all three Guangdong kiln districts, Xicun and Huizhou being the main producers. The most common decorations on these wares were relief molded and incised floral scrolls¹⁰. The decorative styles and techniques appears to

⁶ Watt (1989: 35-46).

⁷ Zeng (1985: 64).

⁸ Zeng (1985: 63 - 66).

⁹ Zeng (1985: 68).

¹⁰ See Fig. 3.3, Fig. 3.7 & Fig. 3.8.

have been adopted from the Yaozhou kilns, imitating the Yaozhou celadon wares of Sha'anxi province, possibly copied from wares that made their way to Guangzhou through the domestic trade networks, some of which may have been exported.

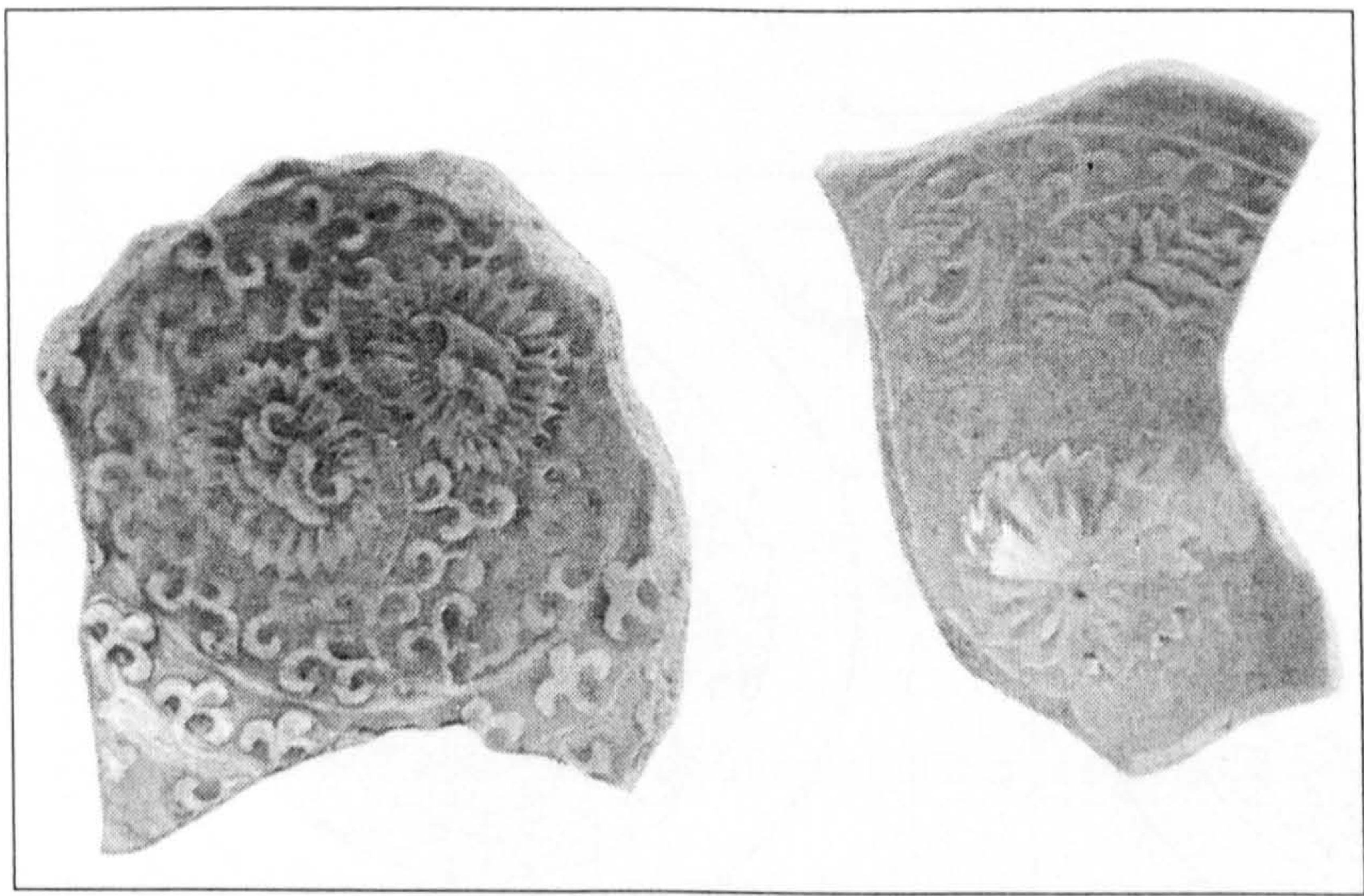


Fig. 3.3: Bowl sherds with molded floral scroll decoration, celadon glaze, Xicun kiln. Guangzhou Museum (Lam 1985: Fig. 26)

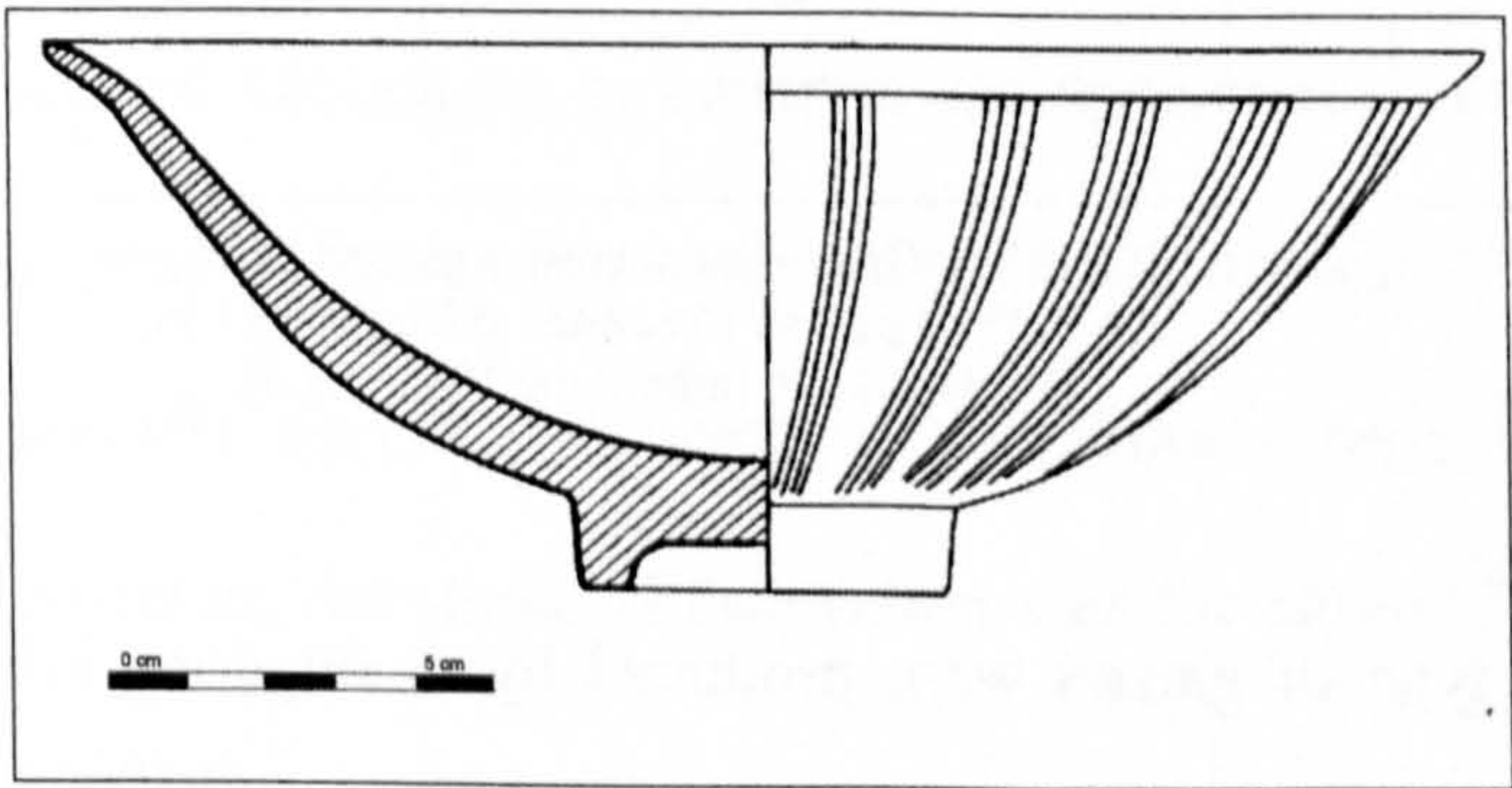


Fig. 3.4: Green-glazed bowl, Song period, incised decoration. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou 1976 (after Zeng 1985, Fig. III).

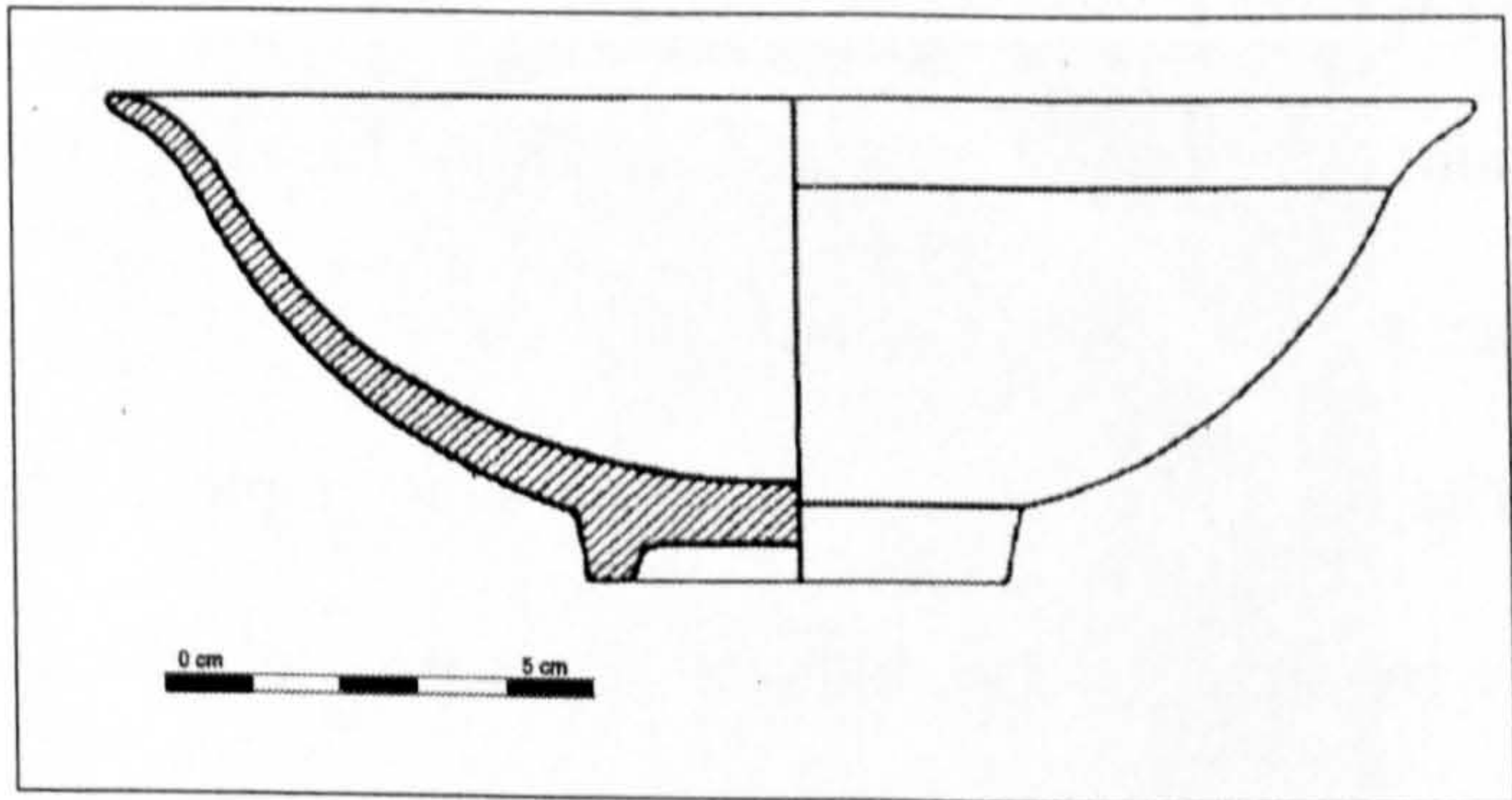


Fig. 3.5: Green-glazed bowl, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976 (after Zeng 1985, Fig. I).

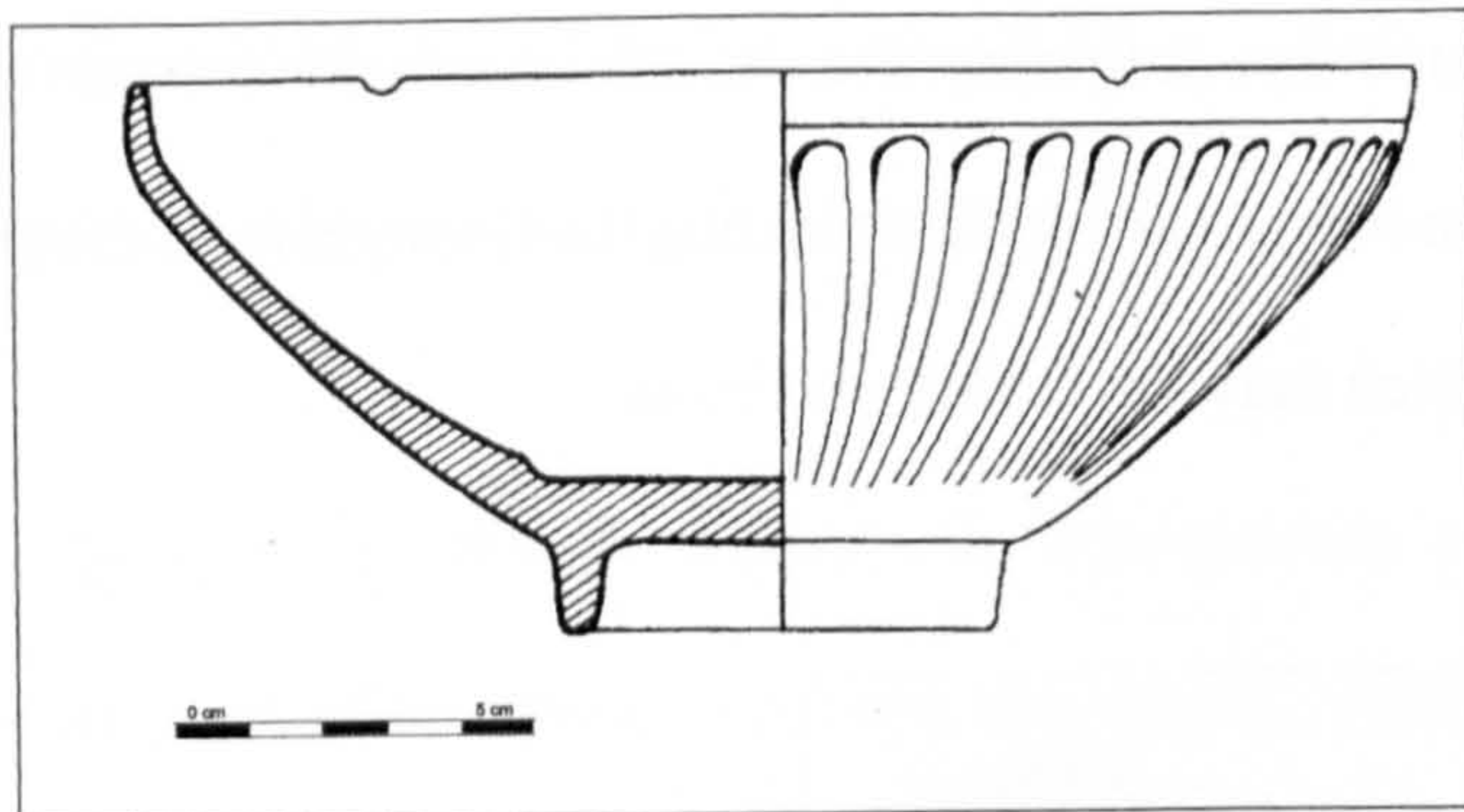


Fig. 3.6: Green-glazed bowl, impressed outer decoration, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976 (after Zeng 1985, Fig. II).

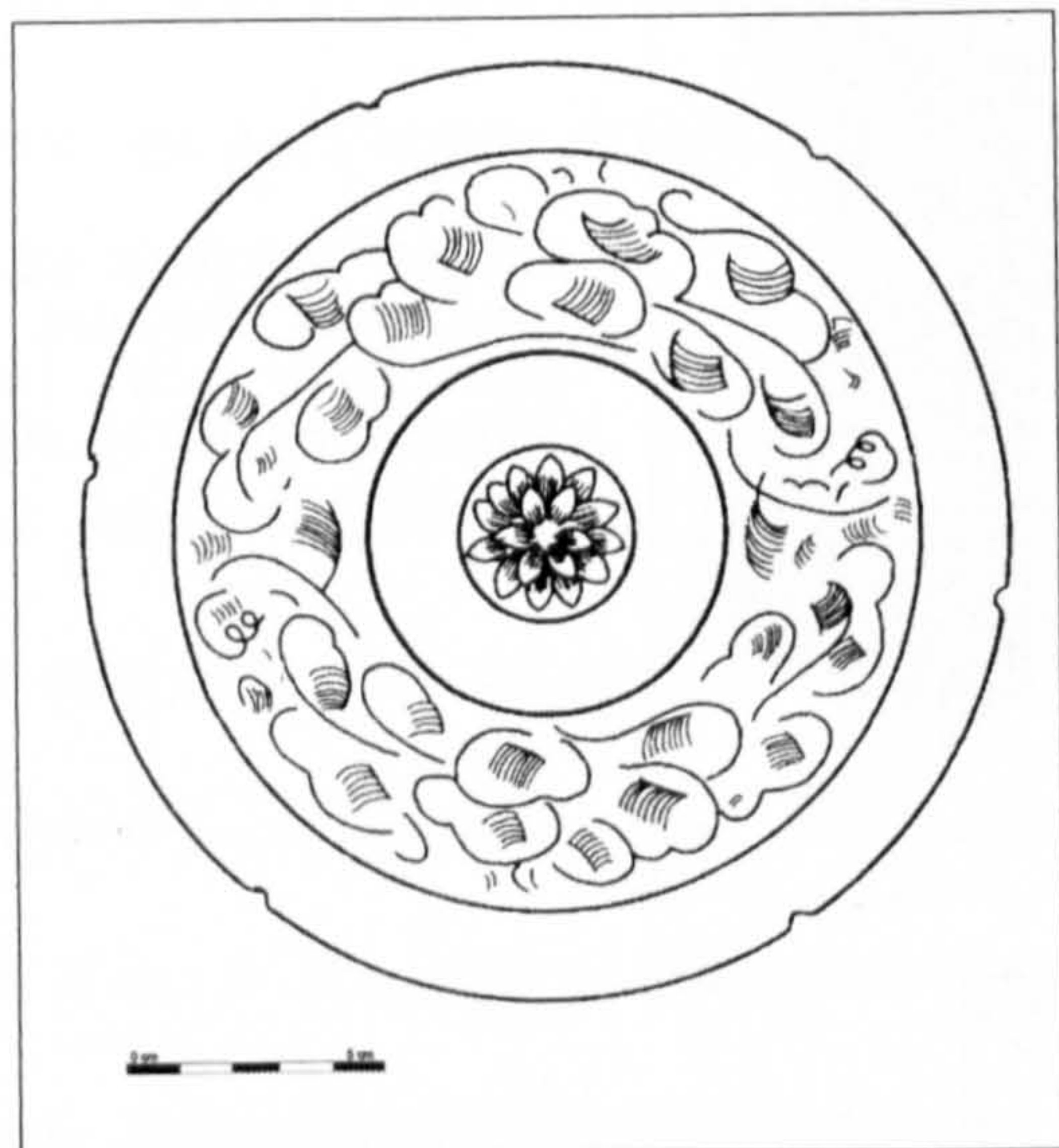


Fig. 3.7: Green-glazed bowl, incised floral scroll, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976 (after Zeng 1985, Fig. II).

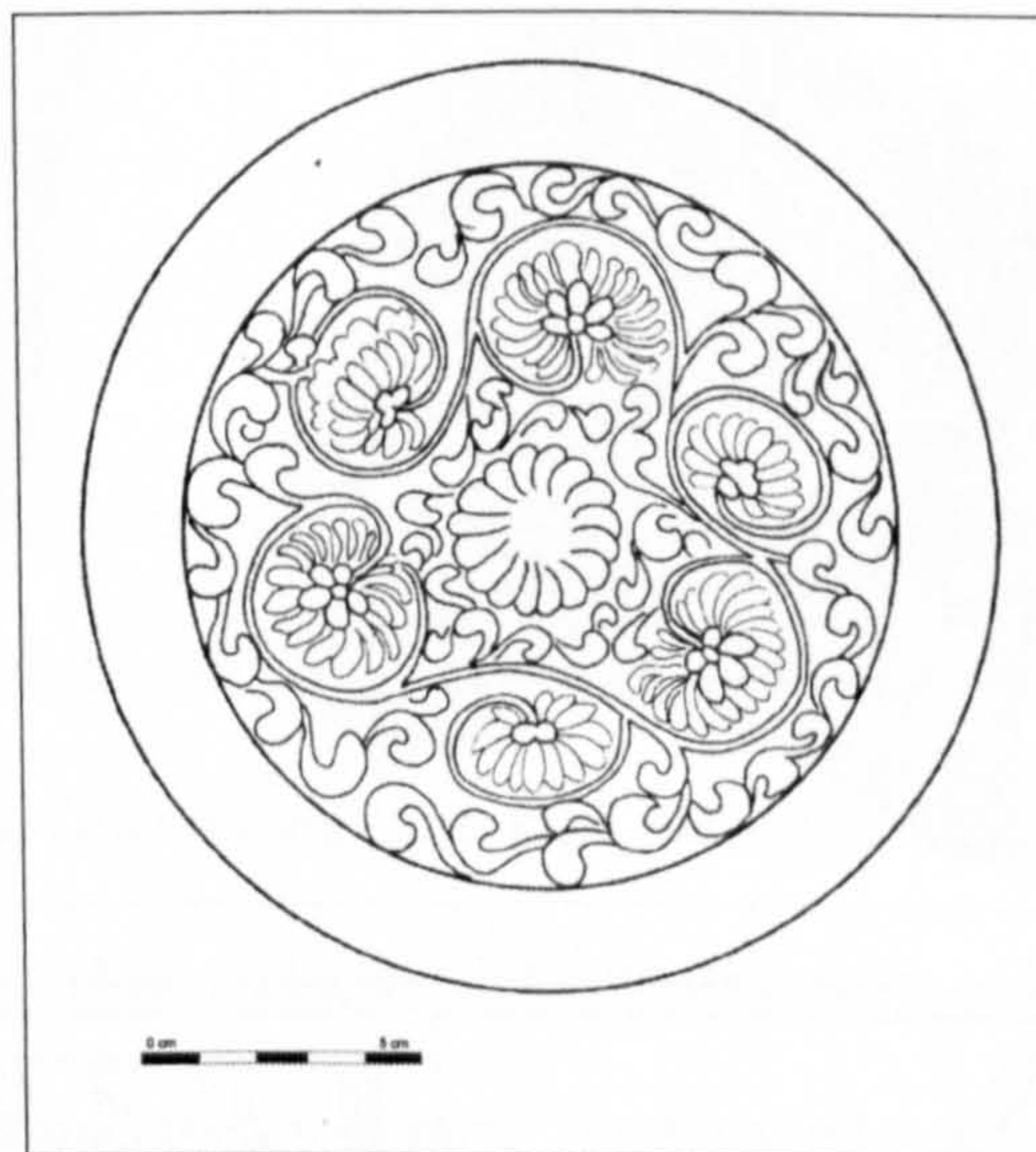


Fig. 3.8: Green-glazed bowl, moulded floral scroll, Song period. Excavated at Dongping kiln, Huizhou, 1976 (after Zeng 1985, Fig. I).

Qingbai was the next most common type of glazed ware produced by Guangdong kiln districts. The Chao'an district kilns were the key producers of this type, with qingbai sherds accounting for 43.15% of the total remains recovered in excavations of kilns located in this district¹¹. By contrast, only small quantities of qingbai sherds have been recovered at Shiwan in Yangjiang and at Xicun. The decorative styles and techniques employed by Guangdong potters for this ware type were more diverse, although incised floral patterns were the main decoration used¹².

¹¹ Zeng (1985: 67).

¹² See Fig. 3.9.

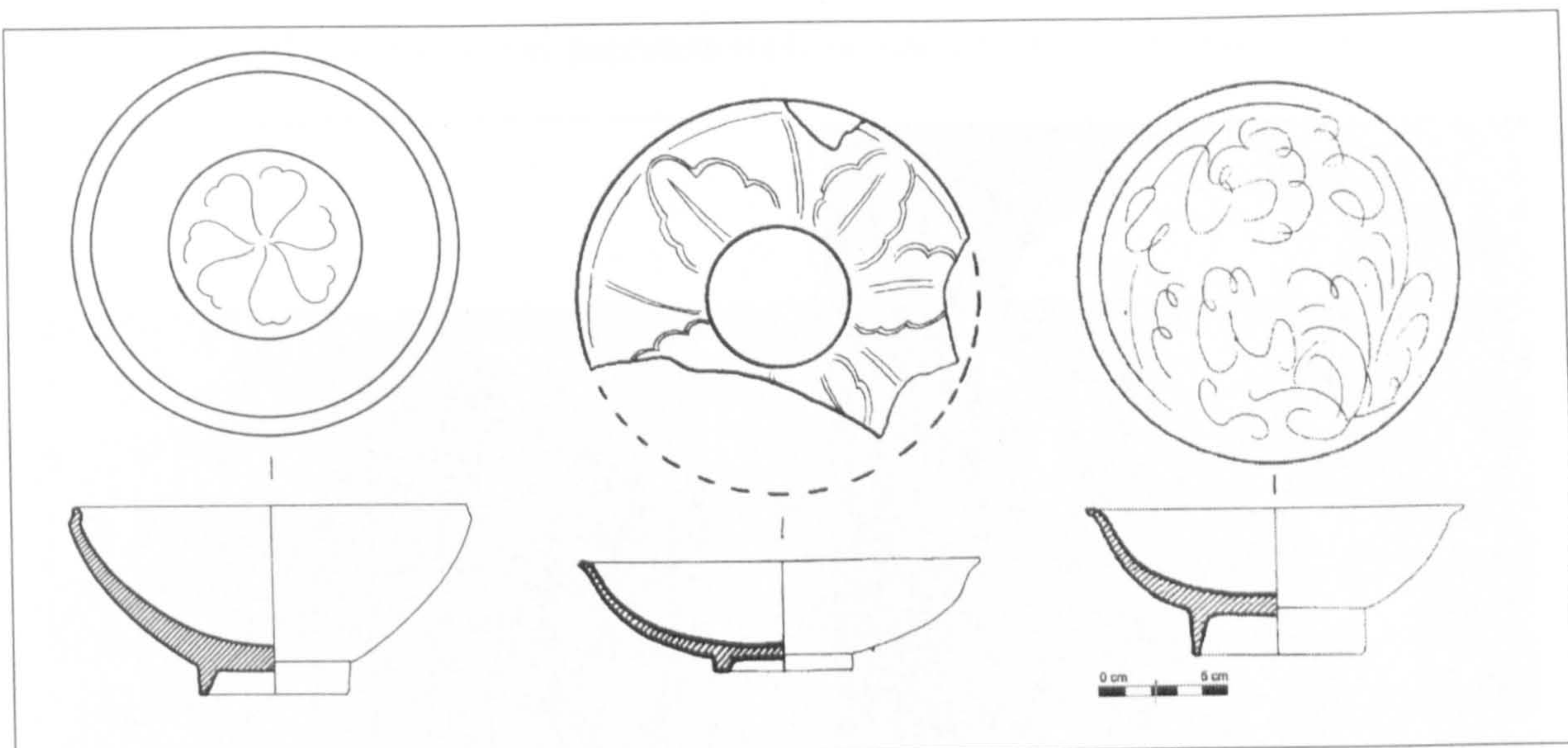


Fig. 3.9: Qingbai bowls with incised floral decorations, Song period. Excavated at Bijiaoshan kiln, Chaozhou, 1972 (after Zeng 1985: Fig. IX & X).

This diversity of decoration of qingbai wares is apparent from the products of the kilns in Chaozhou, Guangzhou and Nanhai. Iron-oxide brown spots were sometimes added to the incised decoration to enhance the appearance of the ware, but the use of this technique appears to have been confined to the Xicun kilns¹³. Certain decorations were used only for specific ware forms, such as the phoenix head used as the top of ewers¹⁴. For bowls, however, the standard decoration was the carved lotus petals or incised leaf pattern on the exterior¹⁵.

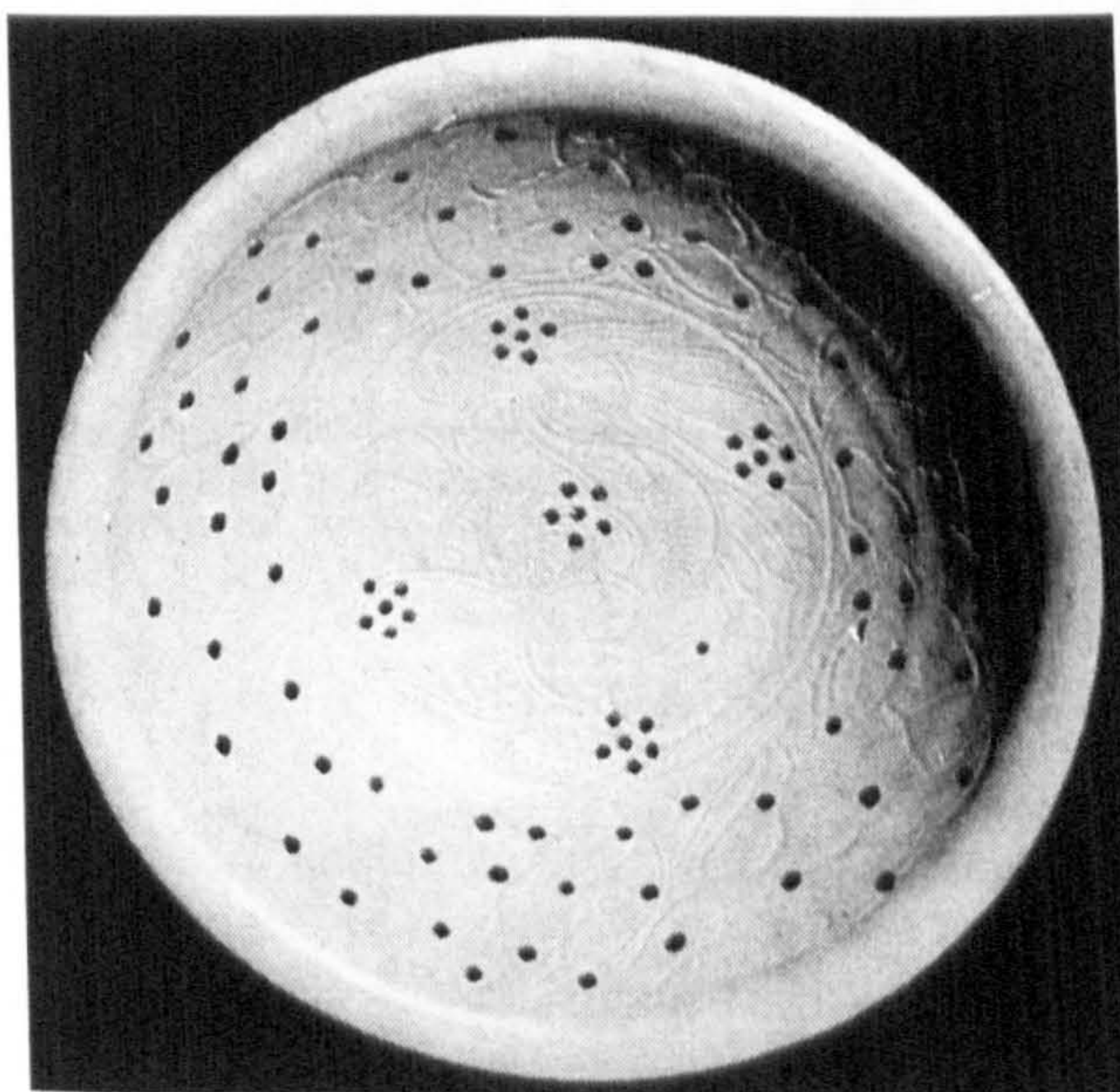


Fig. 3.10: Bowl with incised floral scroll, a central parrot design and iron-spots. Xicun. Diameter 31cm (Lam 1985: 43a).

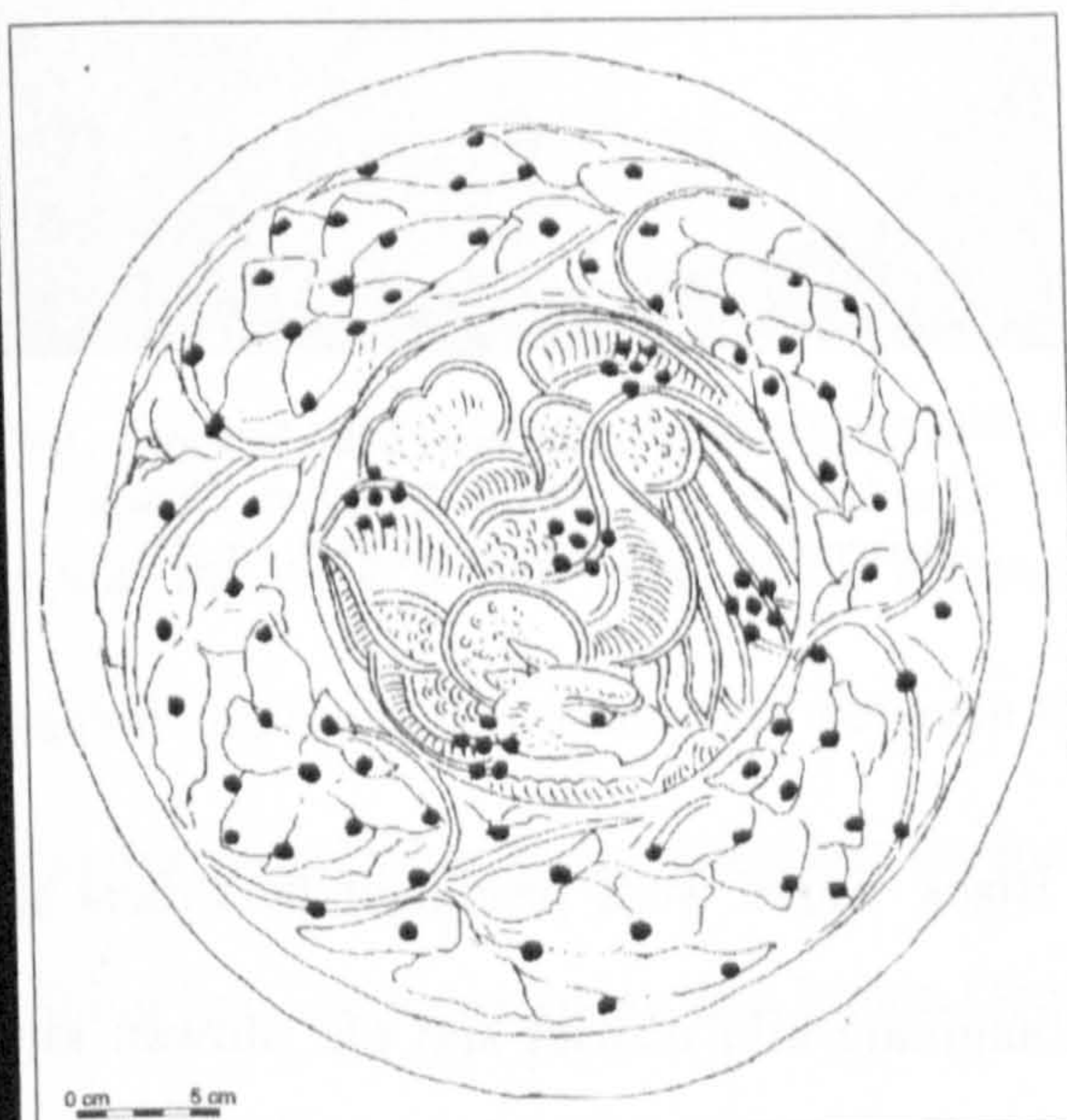


Fig. 3.11: Line drawing of bowl in Fig. 3.10 (after Lam 1985: 43b).

¹³ See Fig. 3.10 & Fig. 3.11.

¹⁴ See Fig. 3.12 & Fig. 3.13.

¹⁵ See Fig. 3.14 & Fig. 4.15.

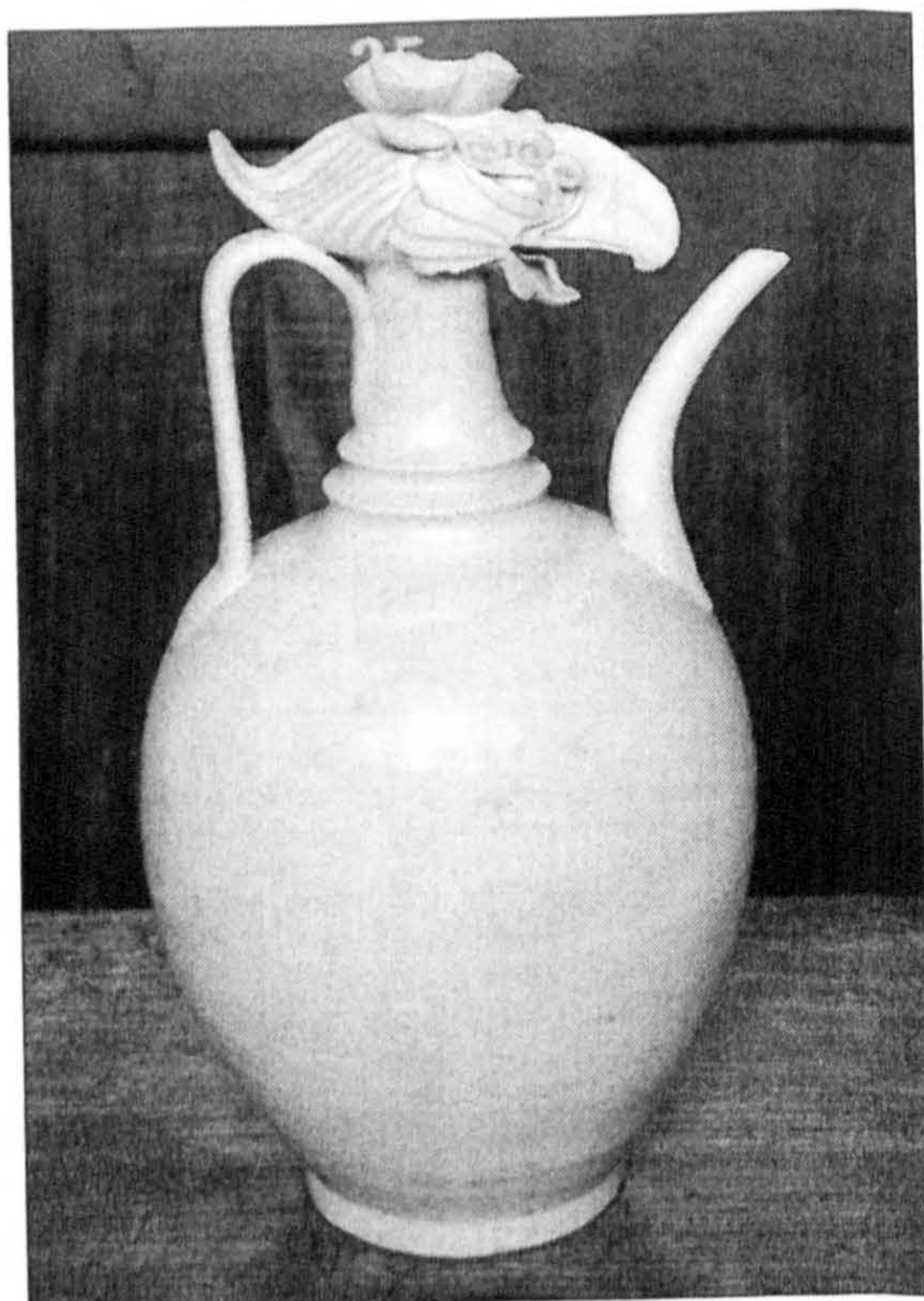


Fig. 3.12: Qingbai Phoenix-headed ewer. Xicun. Height 36 cm (Lam 1985: Fig. 60).

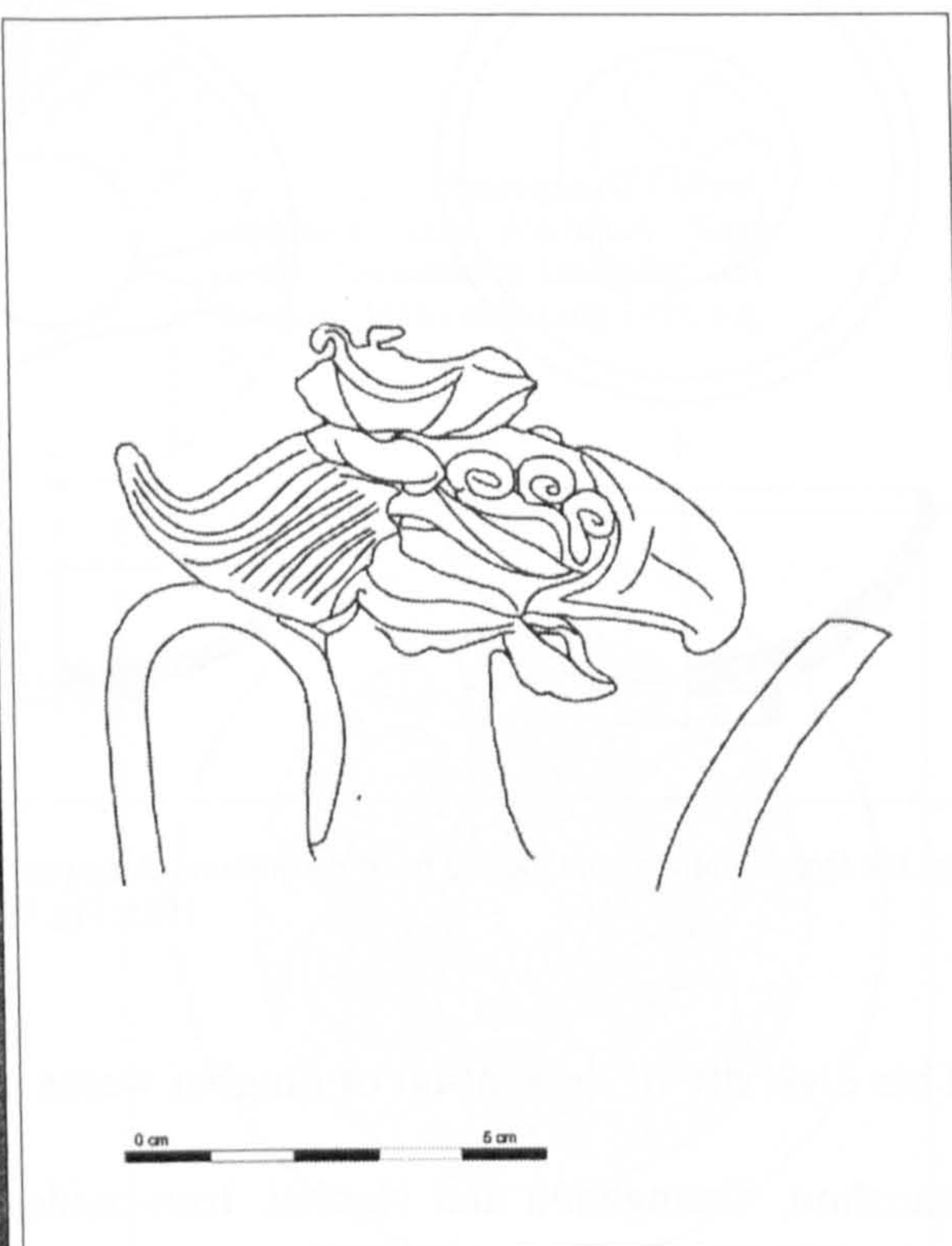


Fig. 3.13: Line drawing of the phoenix head of the qingbai ewer in Fig. 3.12.

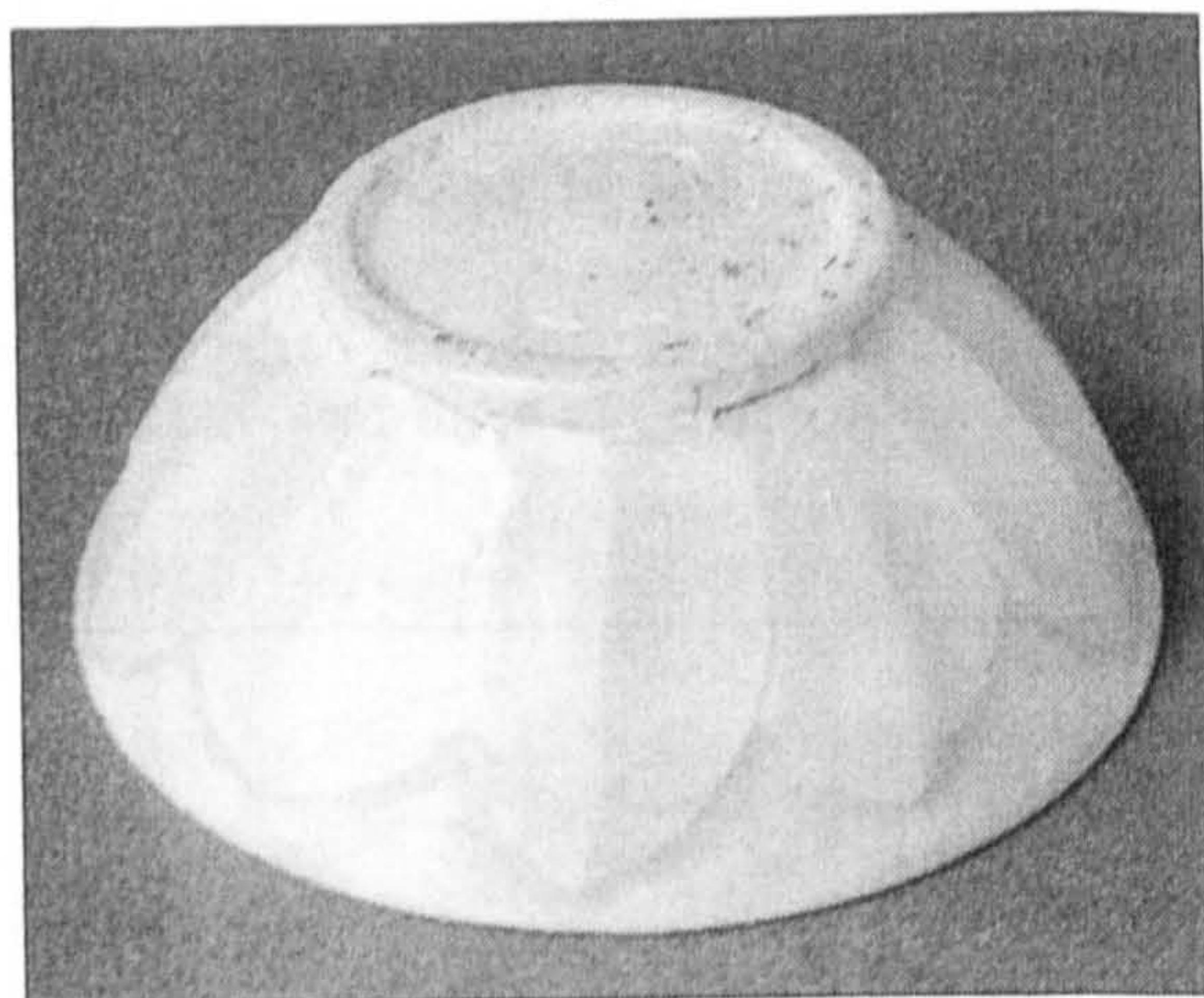


Fig. 3.14: Qingbai lotus bowl, Chao-an kilns, Chaozhou. Diameter 13.6 cm. Art Gallery, Chinese University of Hong Kong (Lam 1985: Fig. 58).

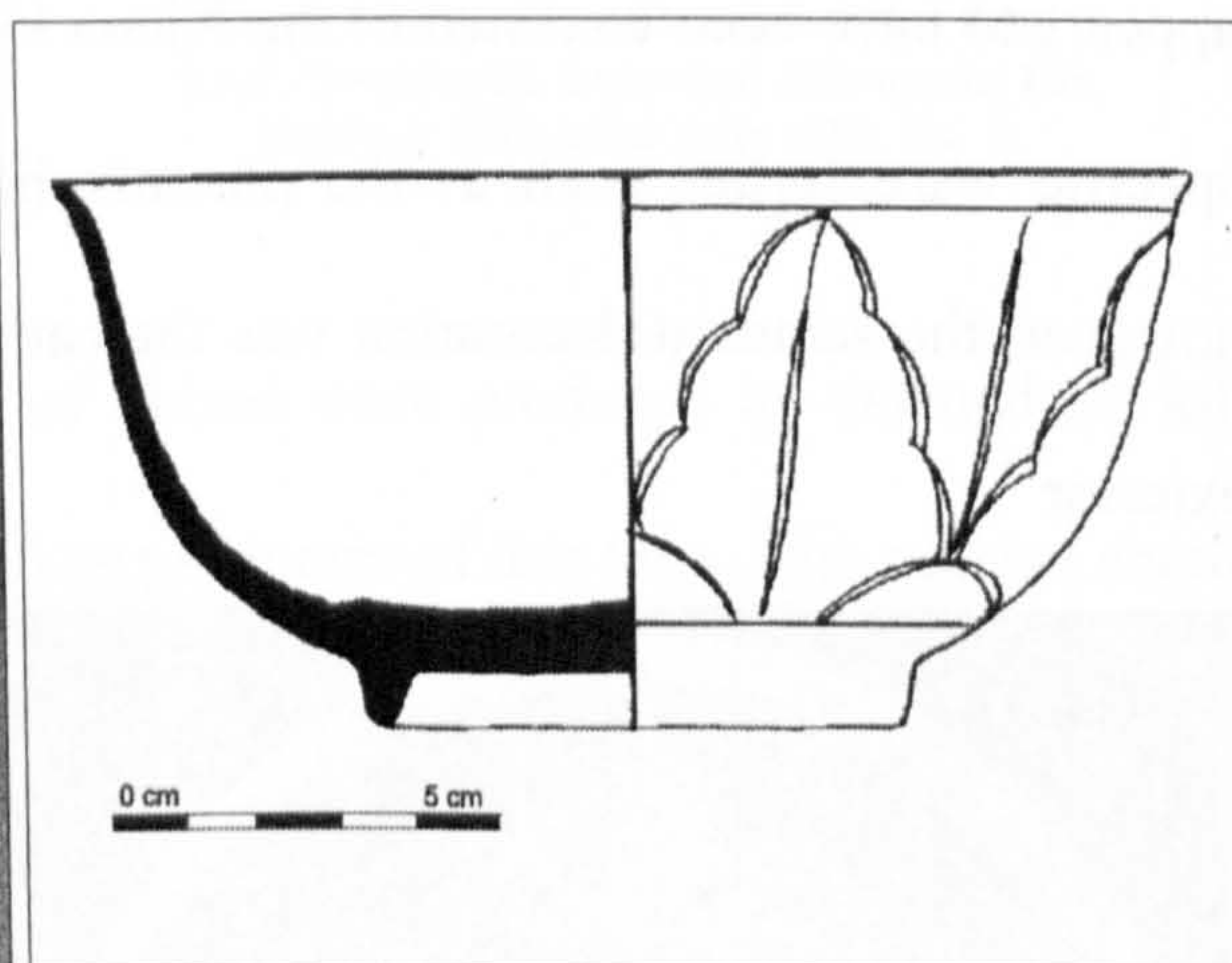


Fig. 3.15: Qingbai bowl with incised patterns of overlapping leaves. Xicun (After Carswell 1985: Fig. 2)

Black wares were produced in almost the same quantities as the qingbai wares. The Yangjiang kiln district and the Shiwan kilns at Foshan in Nanhai district were the main producers of this type of ware, which accounted for over 60% of their total output¹⁶. The appearance of the glaze was sometimes enhanced with brown or purple spots, achieved

¹⁶ Zeng (1985: 67 & 68).

through the application of metal pigments such as manganese on the glaze surface prior to firing¹⁷.



Fig. 3.16: Black-glazed jarlet, Shiwan kilns, Foshan. Height 3.6 cm (Southeast Asian Ceramics Society [W. Malaysia Chapter] 1985: Fig. 371).

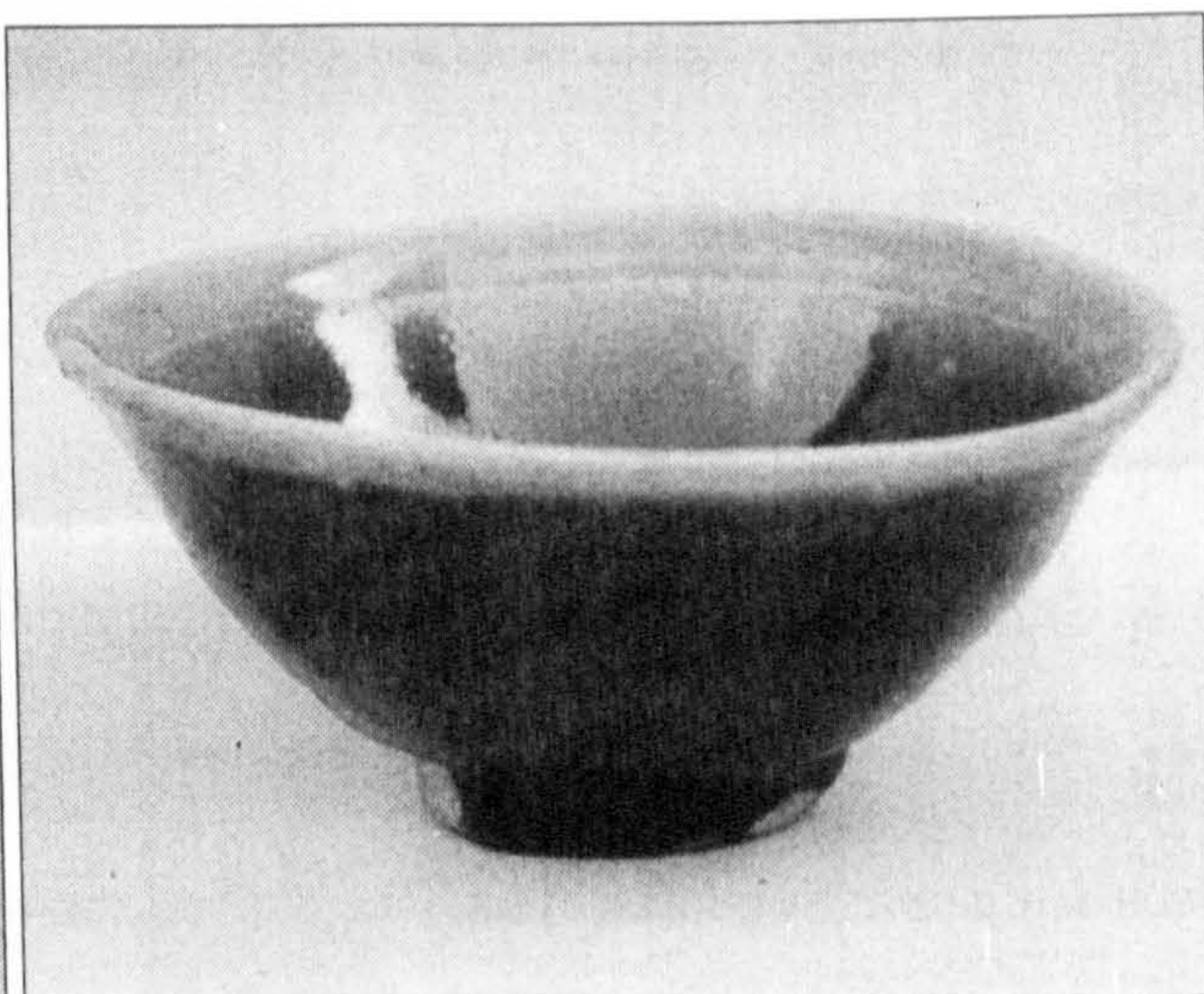


Fig. 3.17: Black-glazed bowl, Xicun. Guangzhou Museum (Lam 1985: Fig. 29).

The chronology of the production of the different types of wares by the Guangdong kilns is still rather poorly understood. Data from the surveys conducted at key Guangdong kiln districts suggest that production of the three dominant types of fine wares noted above commenced at around the same time in the Northern Song period, and that all three continued to be produced until the end of the thirteenth century. Finds at kiln sites such as ceramic sherds with reign dates impressed or incised on them¹⁸ and tools bearing inscriptions, the discovery of a coin hoard at a kiln in Huizhou containing coins dated to the first reign of the Southern Song period and earlier, and the presence of Guangdong wares in a tomb near Chaozhou dated to 1126 suggest that the peak of the Guangdong ceramics industry at the key kiln districts of Chao'an, Nanhai and Guangzhou occurred between the tenth and thirteenth centuries. This corresponds to the period when Guangzhou was the most important port on the South Chinese coast servicing the Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean littoral trade. The decline of the Guangdong ceramics industry coincided with the advent of

¹⁷ See Fig. 3.16 & Fig. 3.17.

¹⁸ A jar sherd excavated at Qishicun at Shiwan, Yangjiang, in 1976 bears the mark "sixth year of Zhenghe" (1116). Foshan City Museum (1978: 195).

Yuan rule, when Quanzhou took over the role as the most important port in this trade through official designation by the Yuan court, thus precipitating a boom in South Fujian's ceramics industry during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Despite the overall decline of Guangdong's ceramics industry during the Yuan period, it would appear, from the ceramic finds recovered at Southeast Asian sites dating to the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that coarse stoneware ceramics continued to be produced in large numbers by the Guangdong kilns, in particular those located near to Guangzhou port. The ceramics produced were basins¹⁹, pestles, jars and large storage jars²⁰ known as matarban jars in Southeast Asia. The earliest recorded date for the production of the storage jars is the Jiayou era of the Northern Song dynasty (1056-1068)²¹. Production was centered at the Foshan and Xicun kilns, and appears to have continued uninterrupted for at least three hundred years.

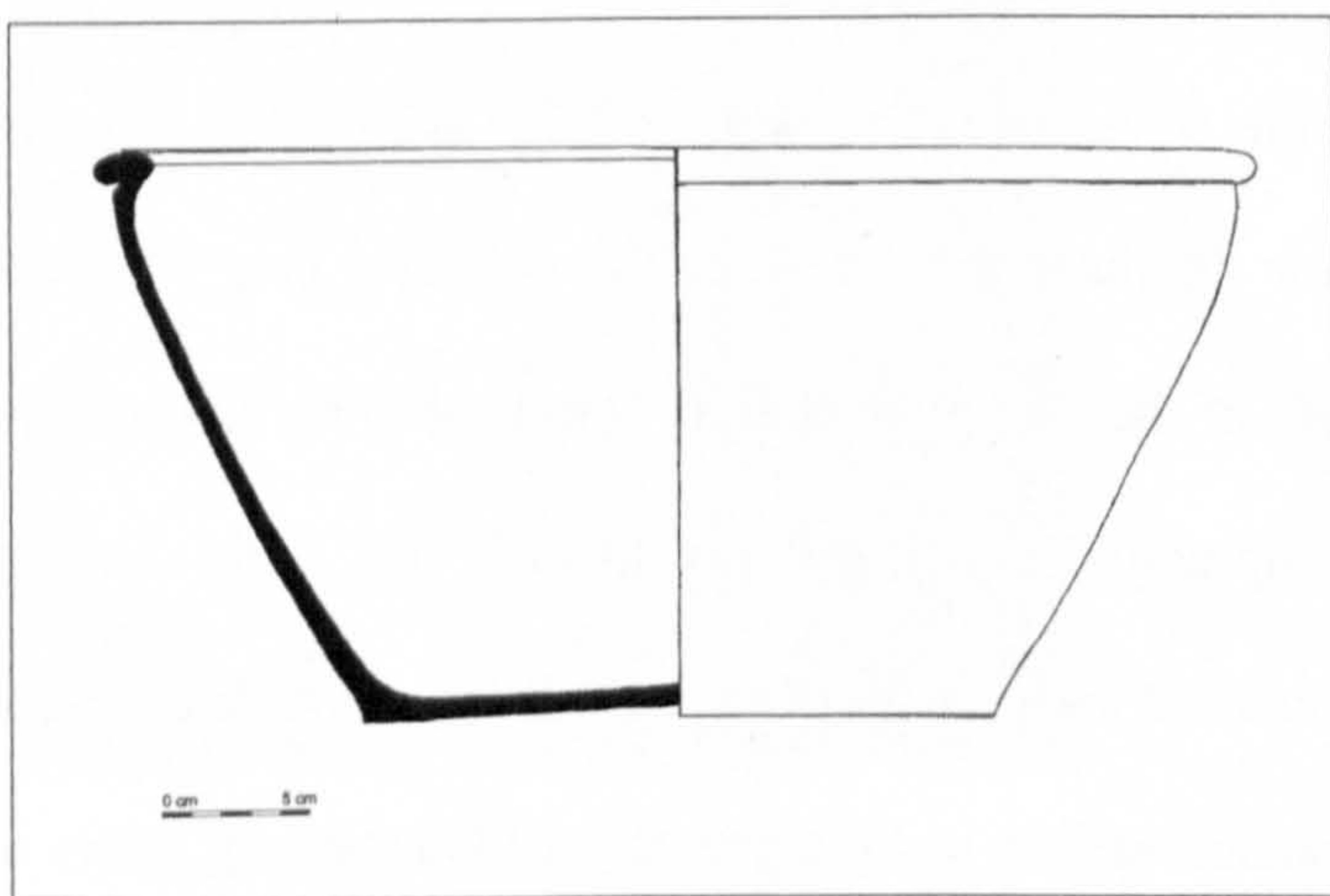


Fig. 3.18: Basin, Xicun (after Carswell 1985: Fig. 6).

¹⁹ See Fig. 3.18 & Fig. 3.19.

²⁰ See Fig. 3.21.

²¹ Lam (1985: 8).

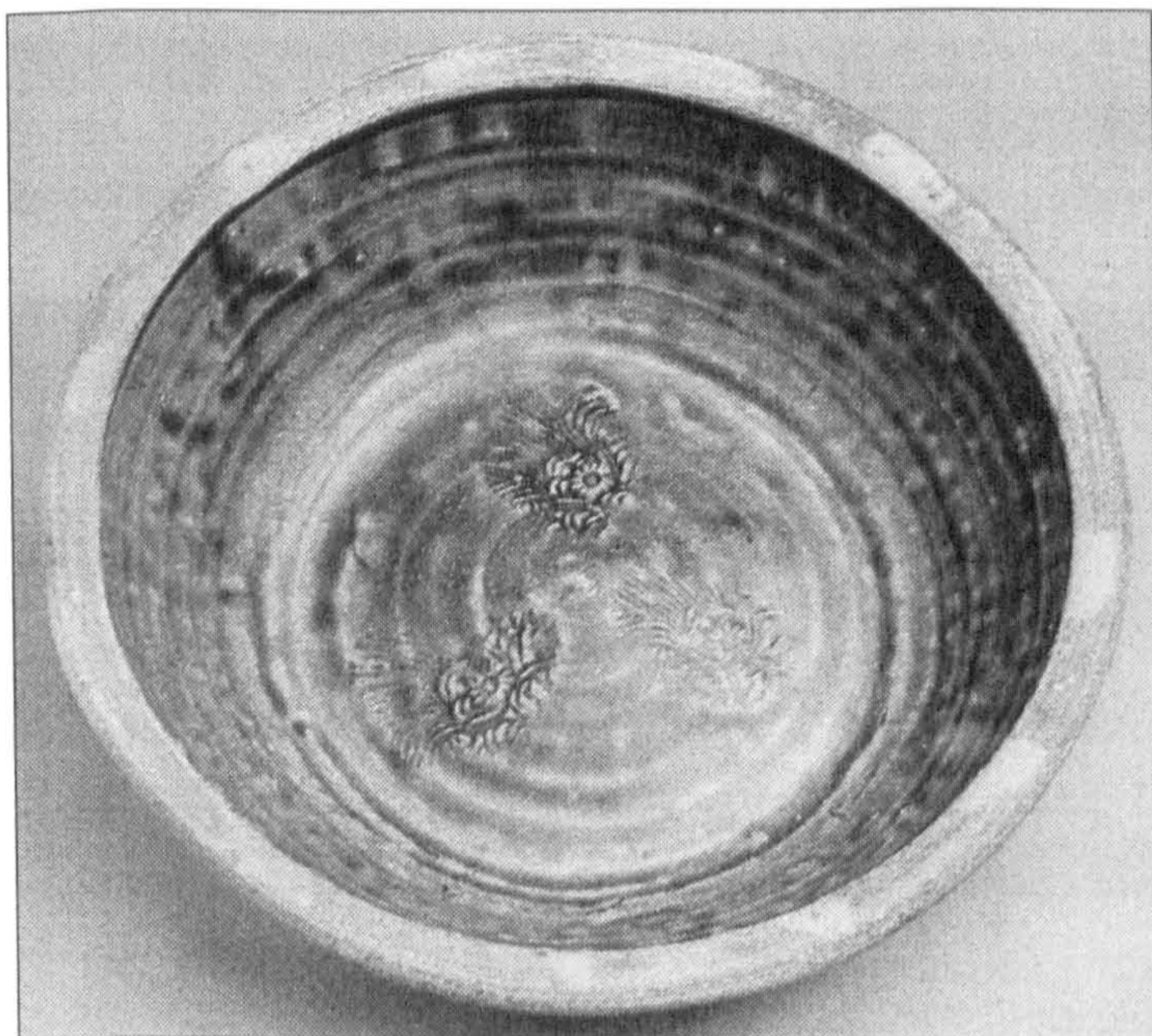


Fig. 3.19: Olive-brown glazed basin with three impressed stylized flowers in the center. Diameter 27 cm, height 8 cm (Southeast Asia Ceramics Society [West Malaysia Chapter] 1985: Fig. 189a).

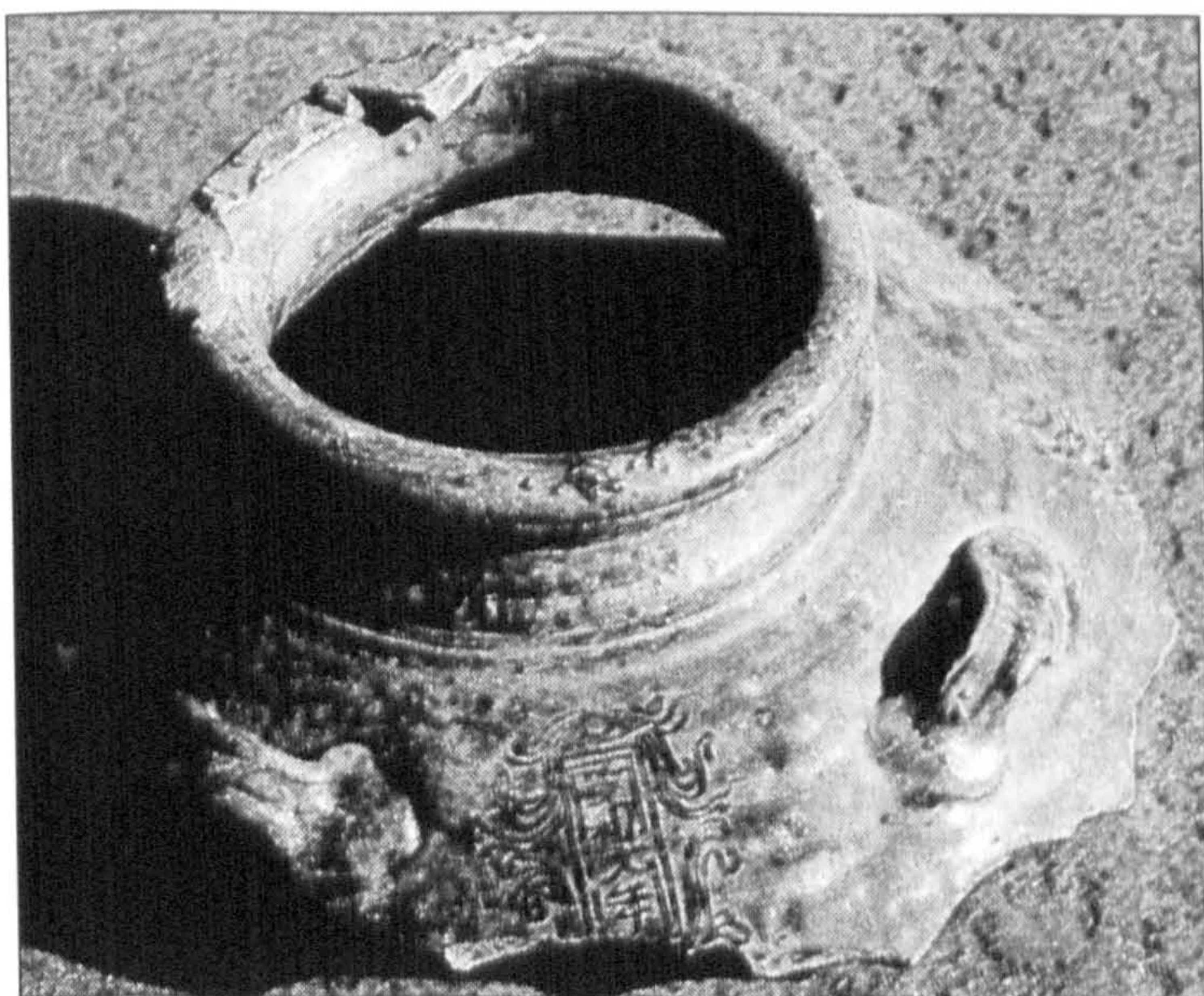


Fig. 3.20: Fragment of a storage jar with impressed characters denoting the date AD 1116. Recovered at Qishicun, Foshan (Lam 1985: Fig. 77).



Fig. 3.21: Large globular storage jar decorated with incised floral scrolls and wavy bands, Guangdong. Height 36.5 cm (after Lam 1985: Fig. 81).

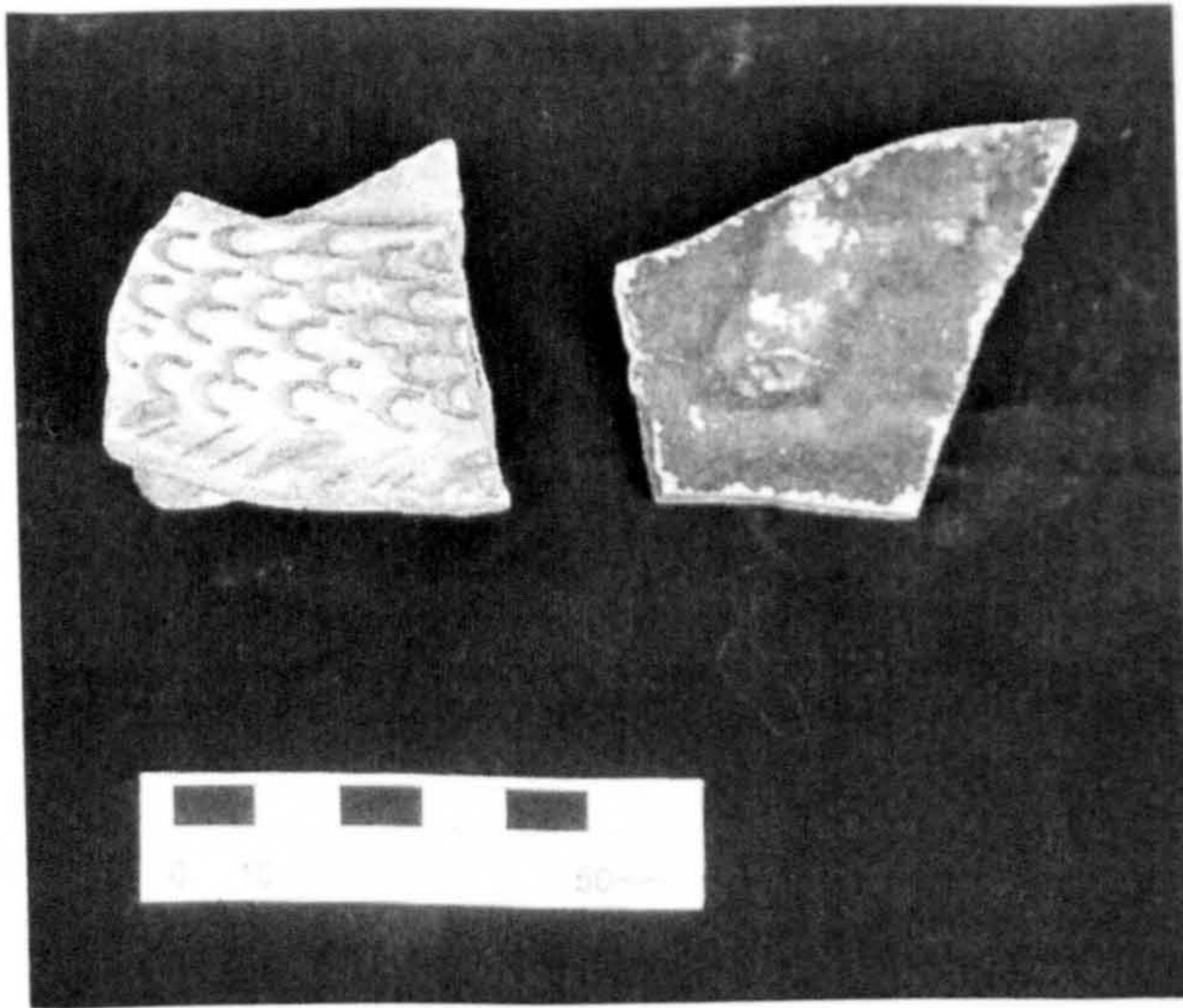


Fig. 3.22: Guangdong storage jar sherds with molded decoration depicting the body of a dragon. Excavated at the Old Parliament House site (2002), Singapore.

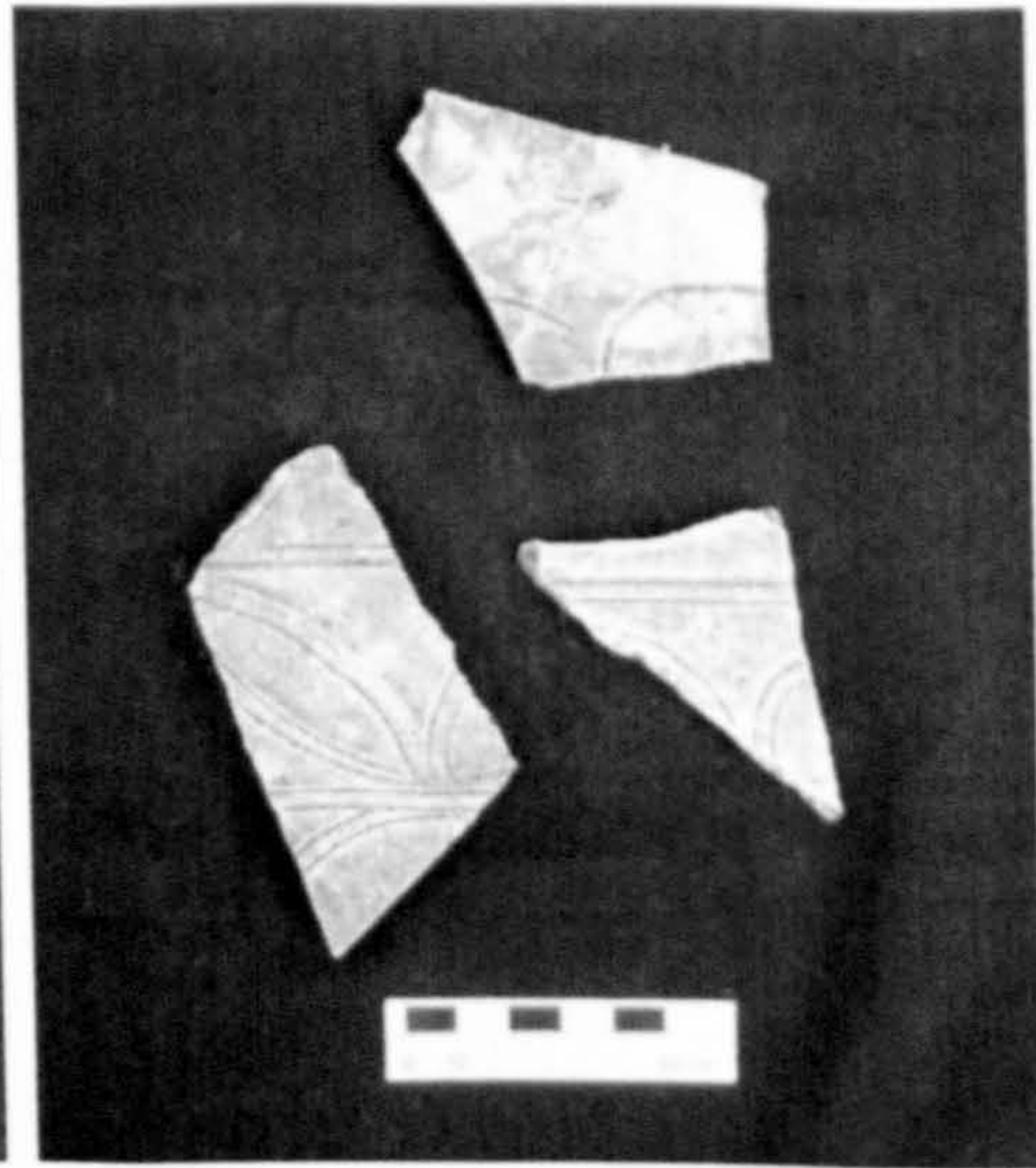


Fig. 3.23: Guangdong storage jar sherds with incised floral decoration. Excavated at the Old Parliament House site (2002), Singapore.

The clay material used by the Guangdong potters for the production of coarse stoneware ceramics was of a coarser, though mainly uniform, texture. The fired bodies are buff to yellow-orange in color, the majority of the wares having compact, sandy textured bodies, although a smaller proportion contain grit and black inclusions, or possess bodies with bubble cavities. Incised and impressed decorative motifs such as floral sprays²², incised horizontal wavy bands²³, and occasionally impressed molded animal motifs²⁴, were commonly used. Chinese characters were sometimes impressed onto the jar surface as well²⁵. During the Song period, the basins were often decorated with impressed floral or animal motifs. This practice, however, appears to have been discontinued by the Yuan period.

3.2.2 Fujian

Although a number of early kiln sites have been located in the Fujian region, there is strong evidence to suggest that the expansion of the ceramics industry in South Fujian was

²² See Fig. 3.19 & Fig. 3.23.

²³ See Fig. 3.21.

²⁴ See Fig. 3.22.

²⁵ See Fig. 3.20.

linked to the establishment of a Mercantile Shipping Superintendency at Quanzhou in 1087²⁶, an event which officially enabled Quanzhou port to participate in China's maritime trade with Southeast Asia, India and the Middle East.

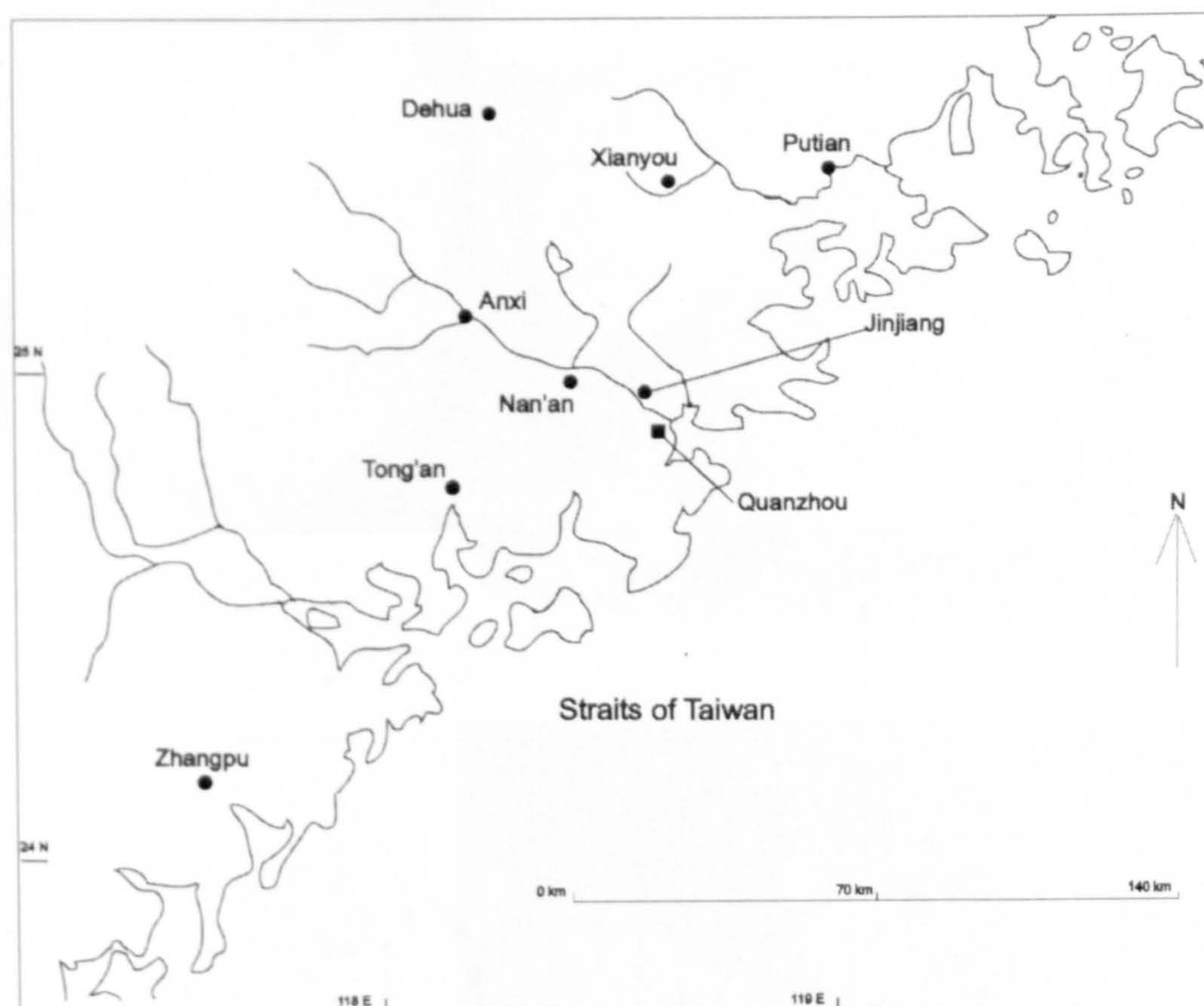


Fig. 3.24: Song & Yuan Period Kiln Districts in South Fujian

The first center of production was in Zhangpu district, which, although situated some distance to the south of Quanzhou, had easy waterway access to the South Fujian coast and Xiamen, from which the ceramic products were no doubt transported to Quanzhou. Production began around the middle of the eleventh century, the ceramics produced by the kilns being qingbai-type wares. The ceramic technology and styles appear to have been borrowed from the Chao'an kilns of North Guangdong²⁷.

The production at Zhangpu, however, was short-lived. When Quanzhou became an international port at the end of the eleventh century, the center of ceramics production

²⁶ Ho (2001: 258).

²⁷ Ho (2001: 246 & 261).

shifted northwards to Nan'an. By the late eleventh century, the kilns in Nan'an were producing qingbai-type wares²⁸. The industry was able to exploit the easy waterway access that it had to Quanzhou to feed into the maritime trade centered at that port-city²⁹.

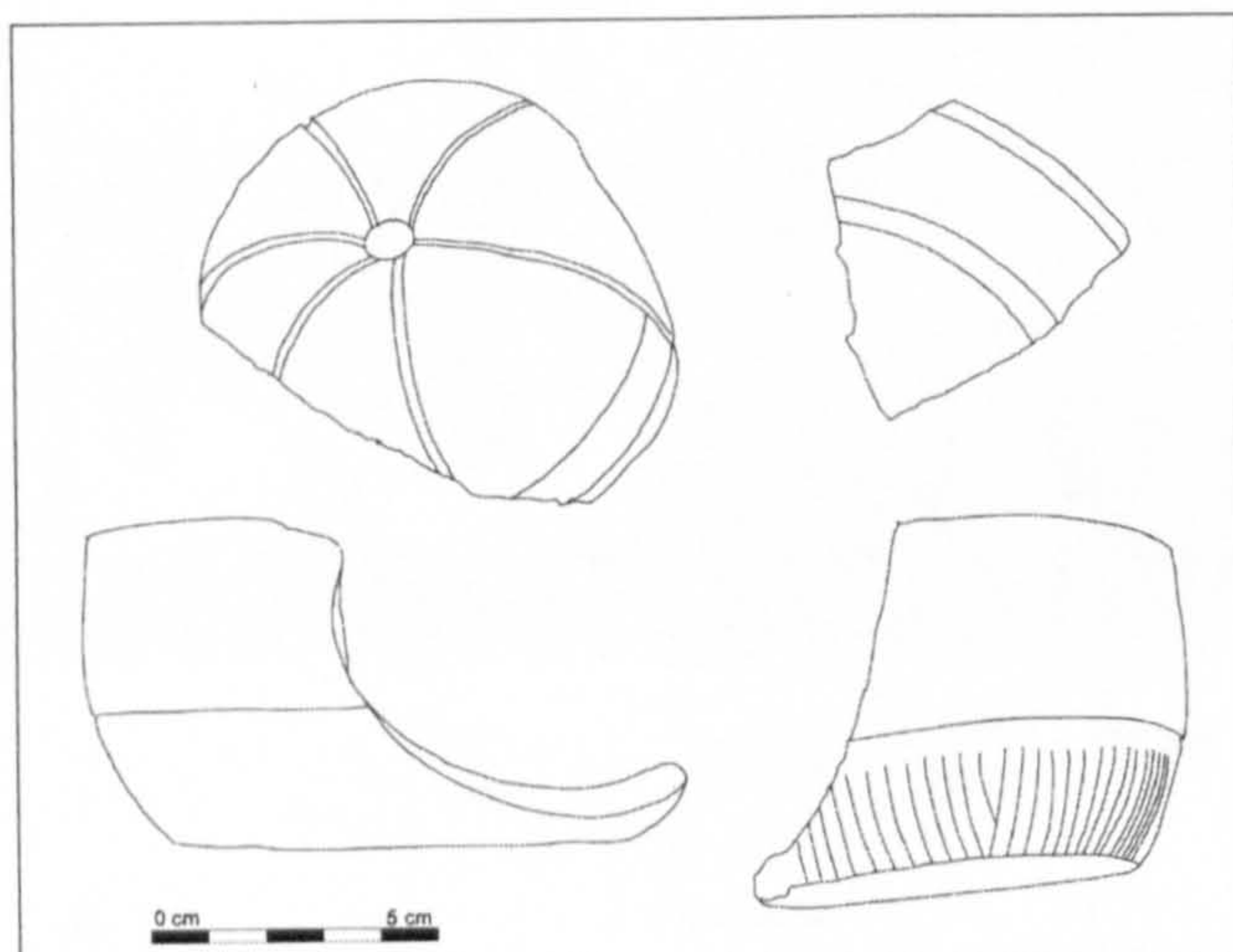


Fig. 3.25: Line drawing of sherds from various qingbai covered-boxes, Nan'an (after Liu 1991: 247).

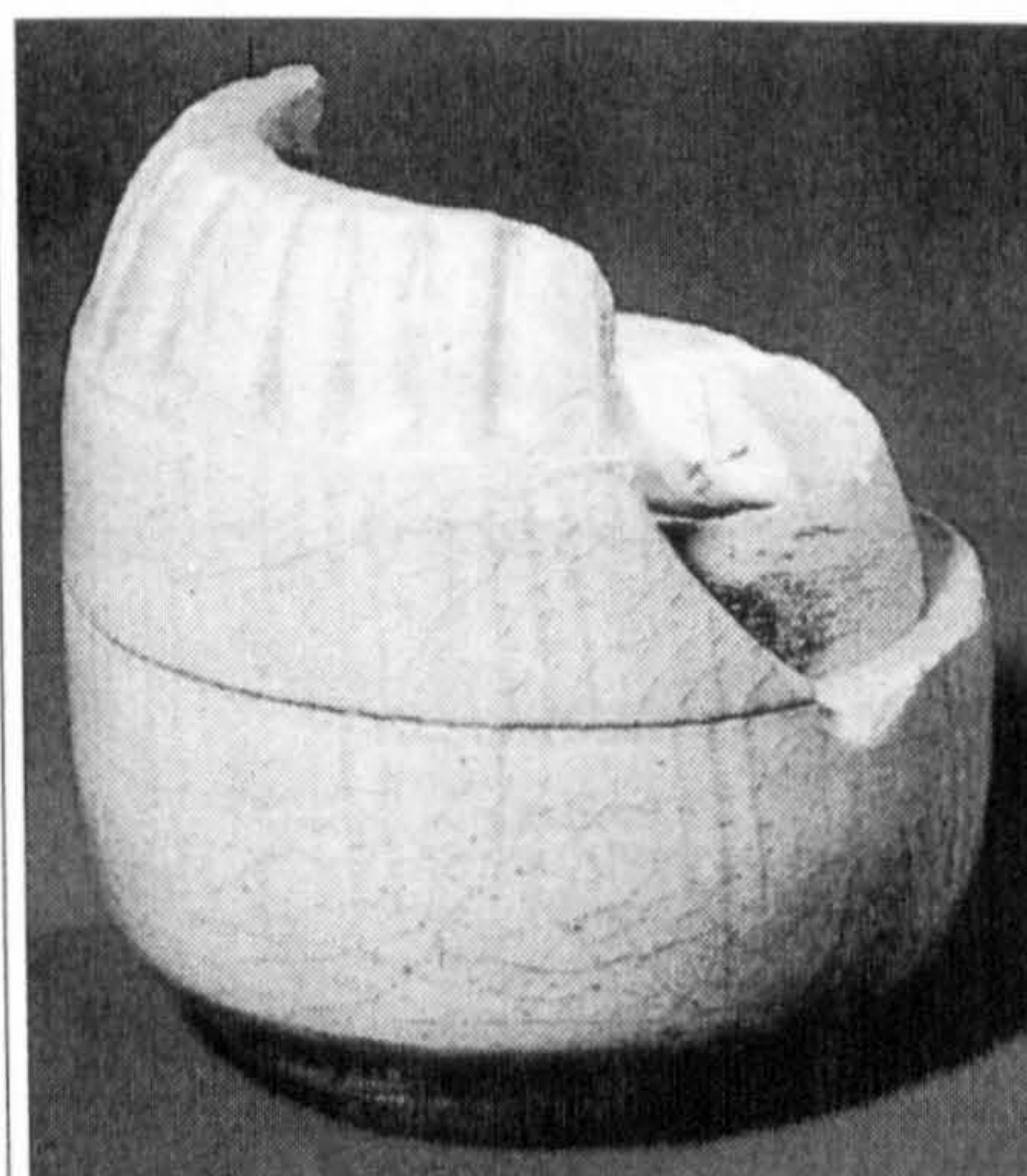


Fig. 3.26: Qingbai covered box, Nan'an (Liu 1991: 246).

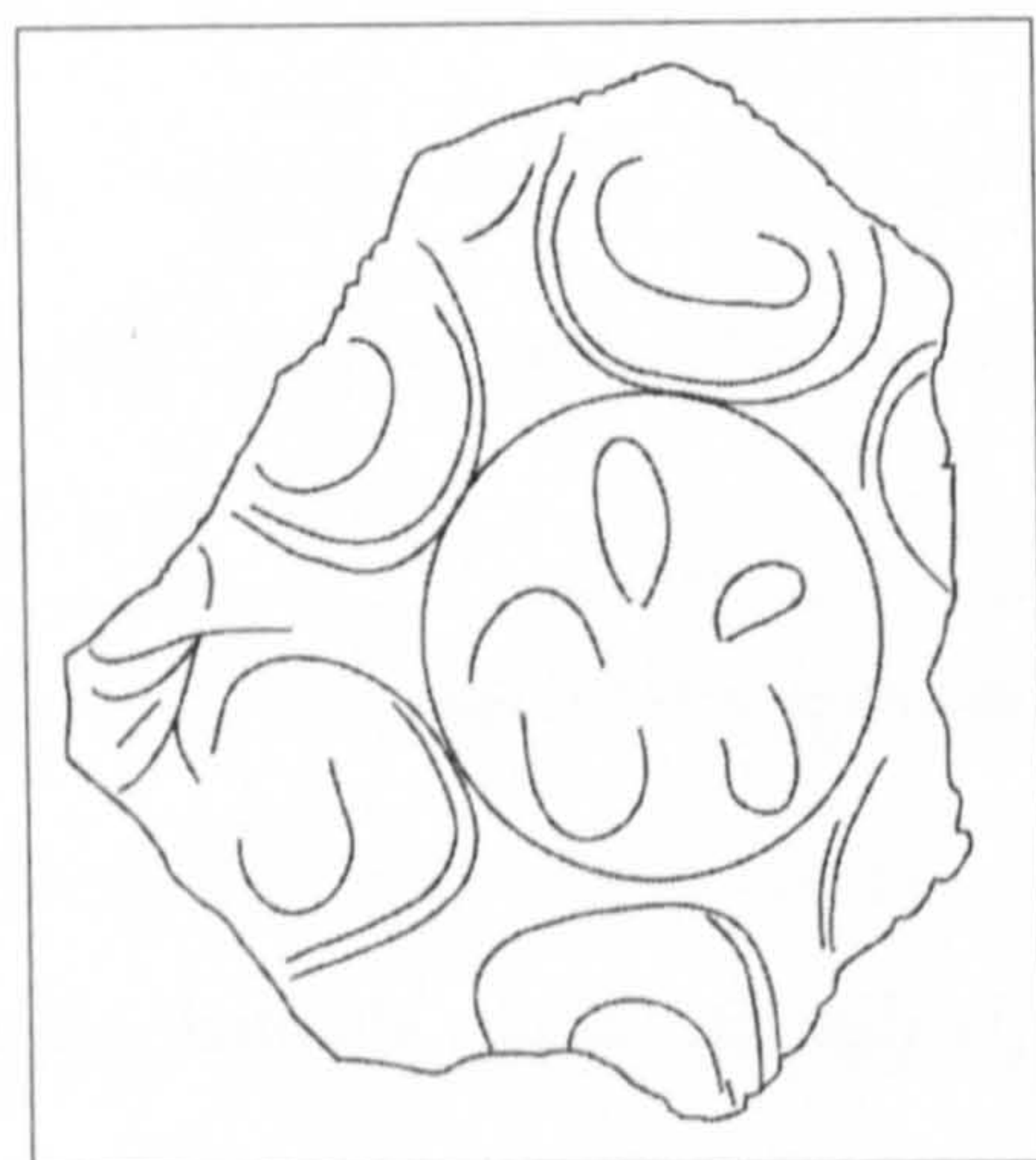


Fig. 3.27: Line drawing of a qingbai dish sherd with incised floral sprays, Nan'an (after Liu 1991: 246).

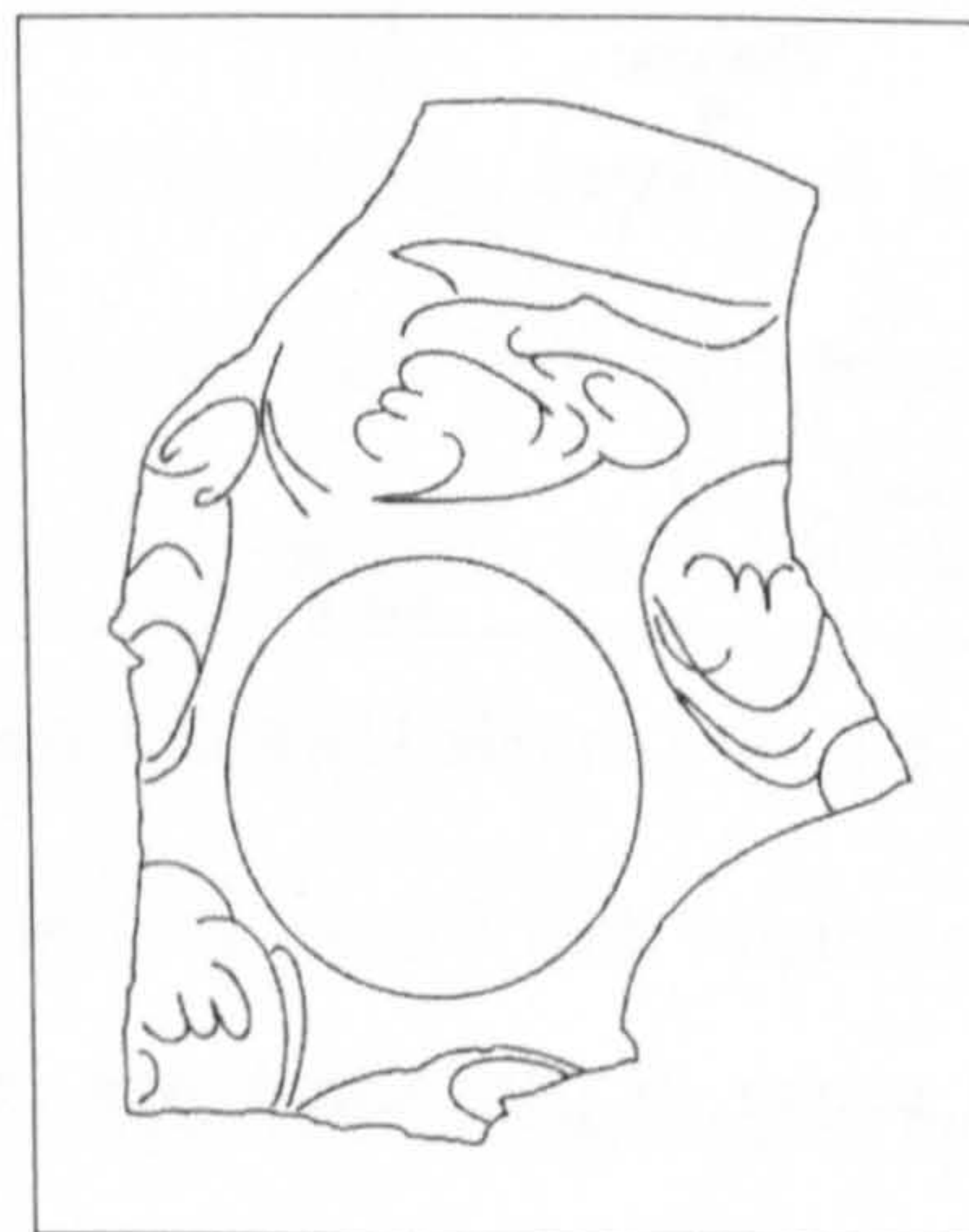


Fig. 3.28: Line drawing of a qingbai bowl sherd with incised scroll of clouds, Nan'an (after Liu 1991: 246).

By the Southern Song period, South Fujian's ceramic industry had spread to the districts of Nan'an, Anxi³⁰, Tong'an³¹ and Jinjiang³². All these districts were near to Quanzhou and had easy access to the port via river transport. The expansion of South Fujian's ceramic industry, which occurred during this period, took place on the back of the boom in Quanzhou's

²⁸ See Fig. 3.25 – Fig. 3.28.

²⁹ Ho (2001: 262 & 263).

³⁰ See Fig. 3.29 & Fig. 3.30.

³¹ See Fig. 3.31 – Fig. 3.34.

³² See Fig. 3.35 & Fig. 3.36.

maritime trade in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. The ceramics produced by the kilns of these districts were generally low quality copies of products produced by kilns in regions outside of South Fujian³³. The products do not appear to have been intended for local consumption, but rather for the export market.

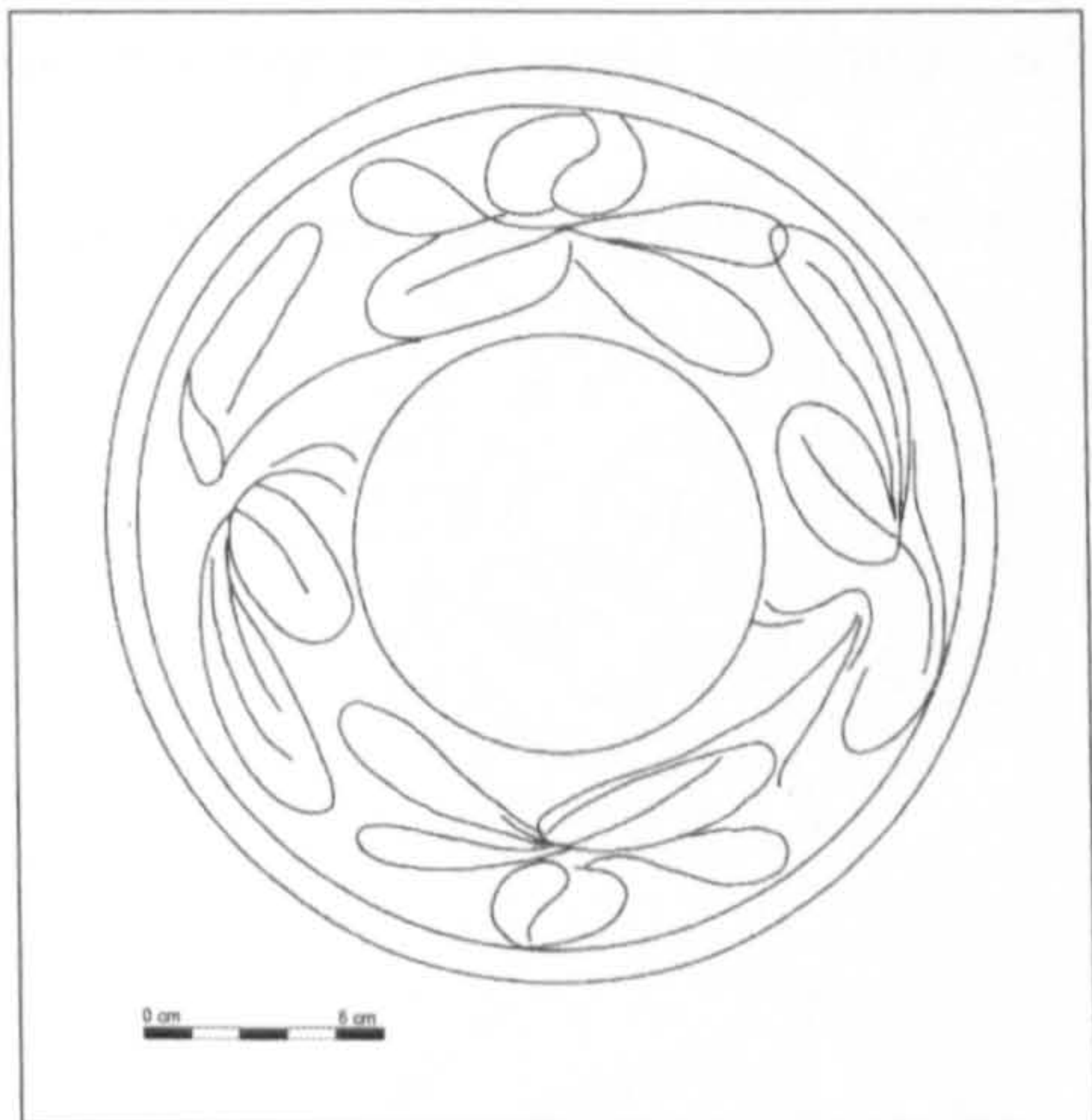


Fig. 3.29: Line drawing of a qingbai bowl with incised floral decoration, Anxi (after Southeast Asia Ceramics Society [West Malaysia Chapter] 1985: Fig. 242).

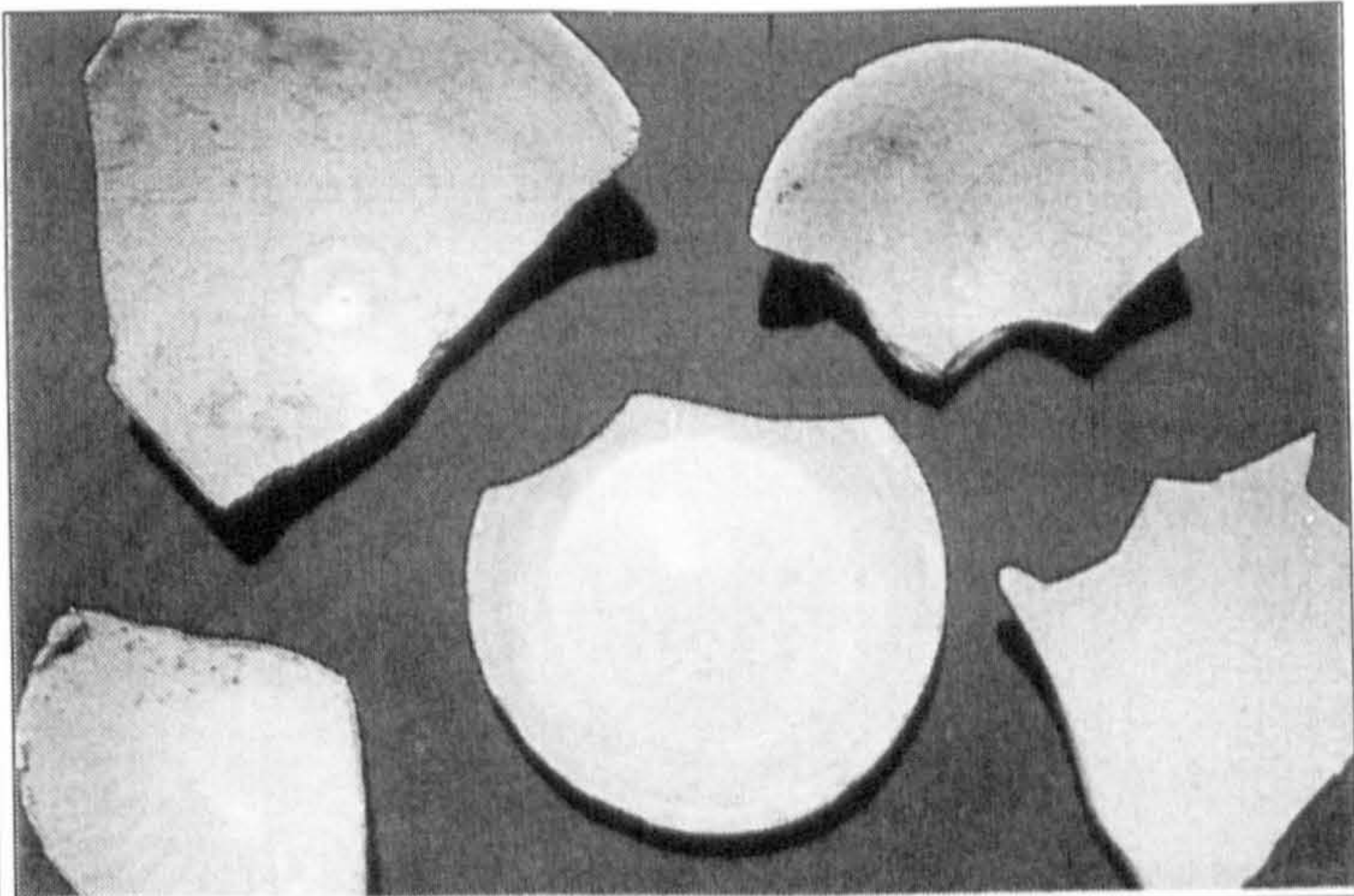


Fig. 3.30: Qingbai sherds, Anxi (Liu 1991: 247).

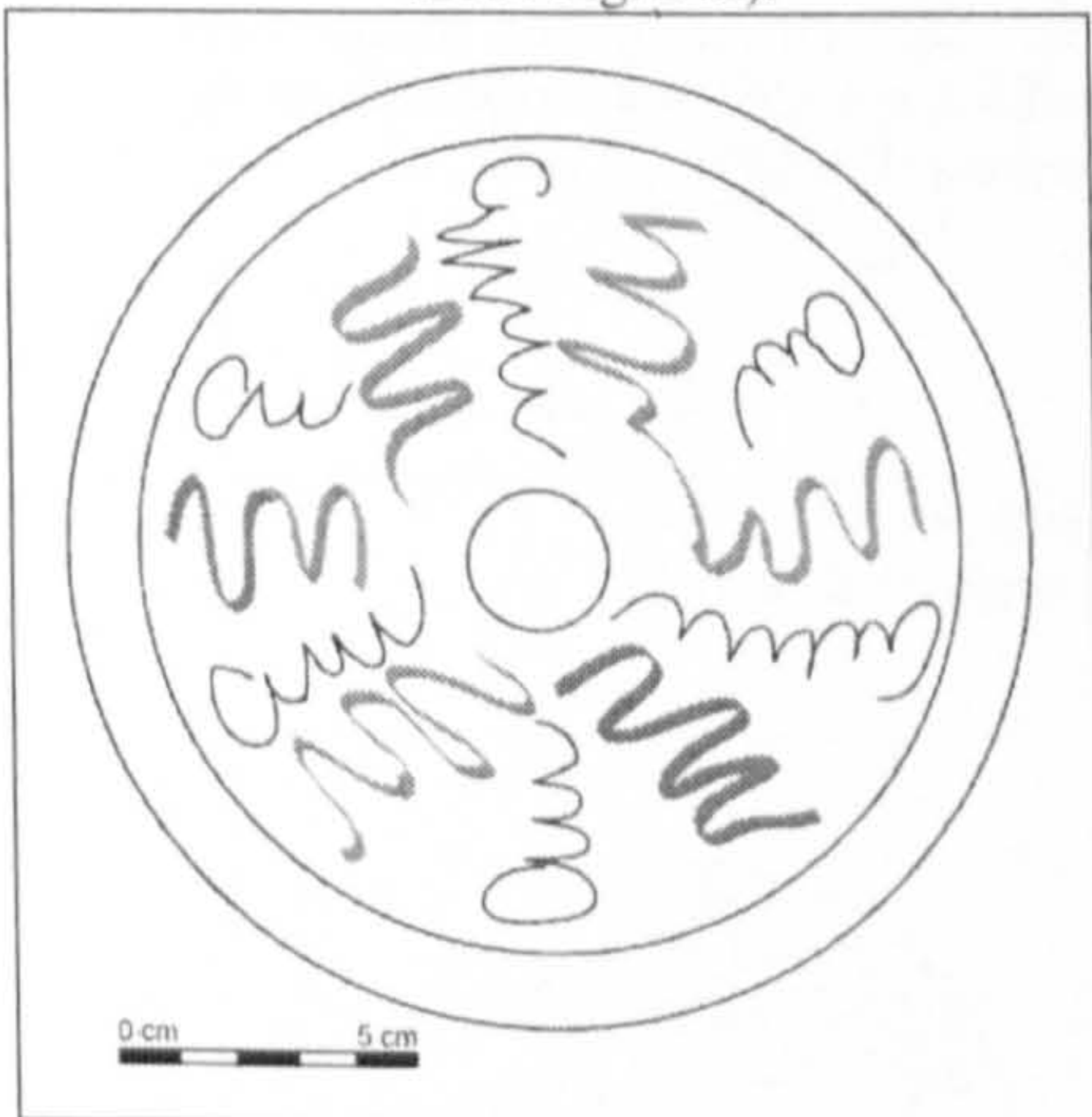


Fig. 3.31: Line drawing of qingbai bowl with incised decoration, Tong'an (after Liu 1991: 246).

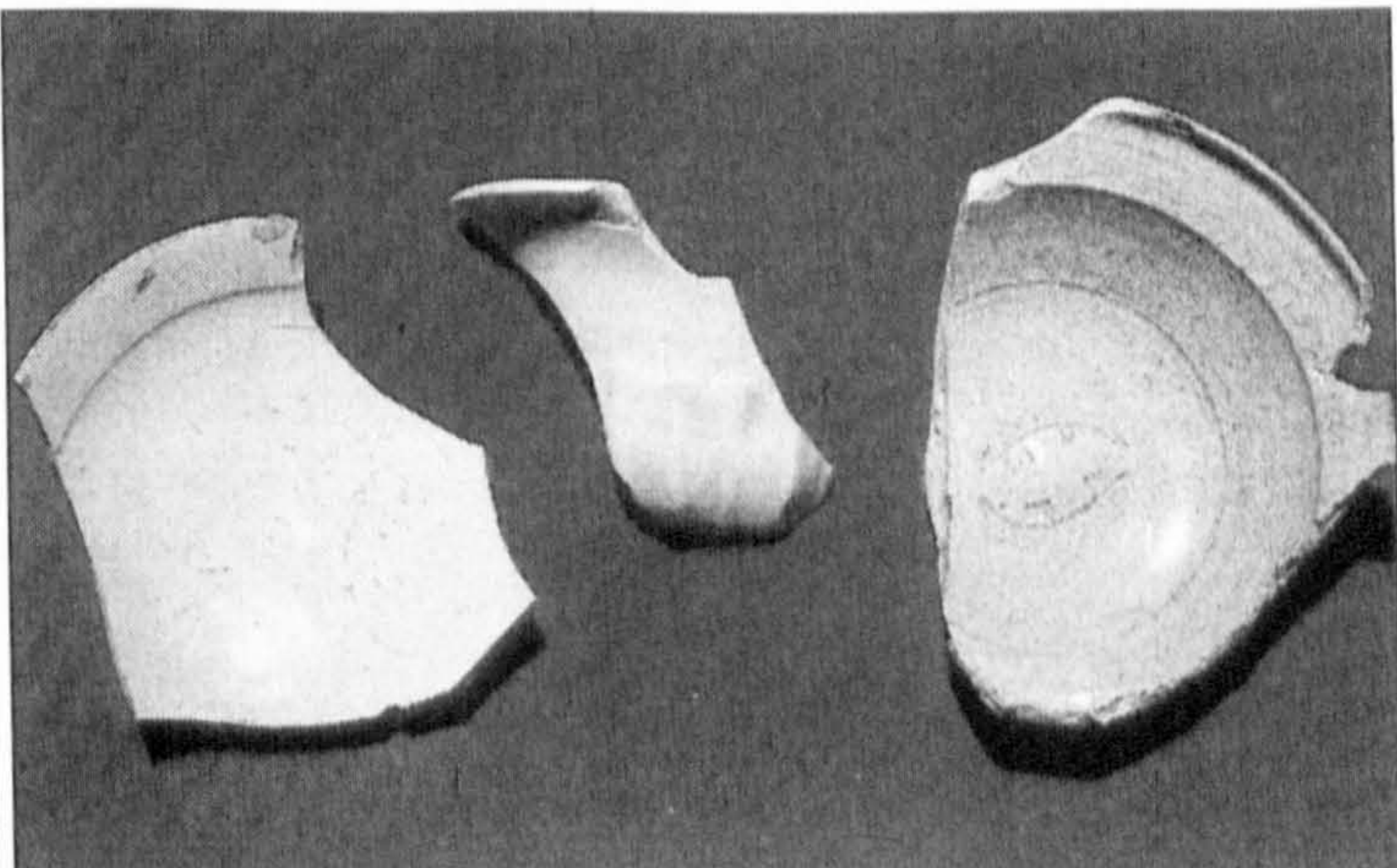


Fig. 3.32: Qingbai bowl shreds with incised and relief-molded decoration, Tong'an (Liu 1991: 246).

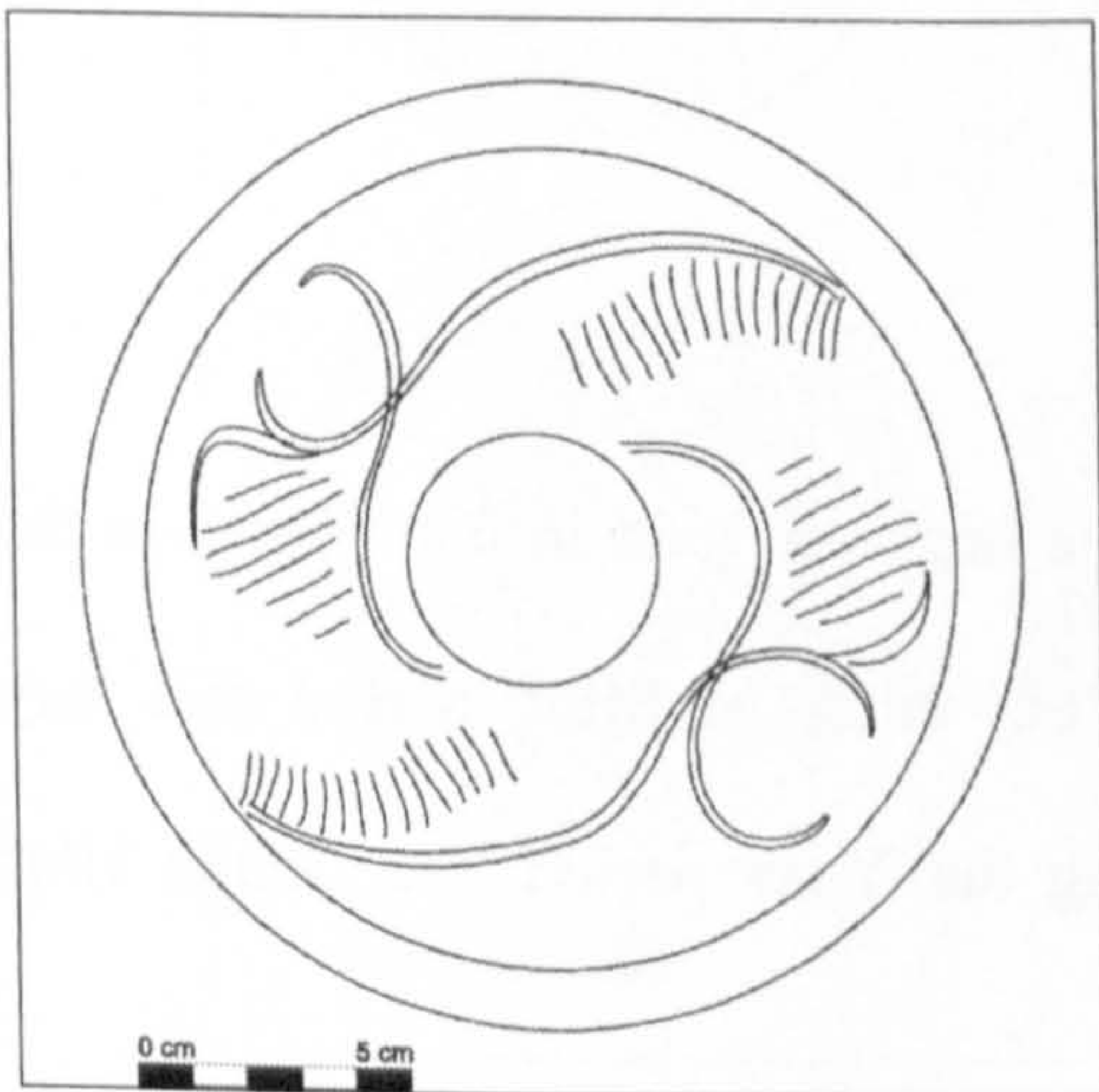


Fig. 3.33: Line drawing of green glazed bowl with incised decoration, Tong'an (after Liu 1991: 242).



Fig. 3.34: Green glazed bowl sherds with incised and stamped decoration, Tong'an (Liu 1991: 242).

³³ Ho (2001: 262 & 263).

By the Yuan period, the South Fujian ceramics industry had shifted inland to the hinterland areas north of Quanzhou. During this time, the key kiln districts were Anxi and Dehua, although kilns centered at Cizao in Jinjiang, near Quanzhou, were also active³⁴. Production at the Anxi and Jinjiang kilns was a continuation of the Southern Song development, the former kiln district continuing to produce green-glazed wares and the latter continuing to produce lead-glazed and black-brown glazed wares.

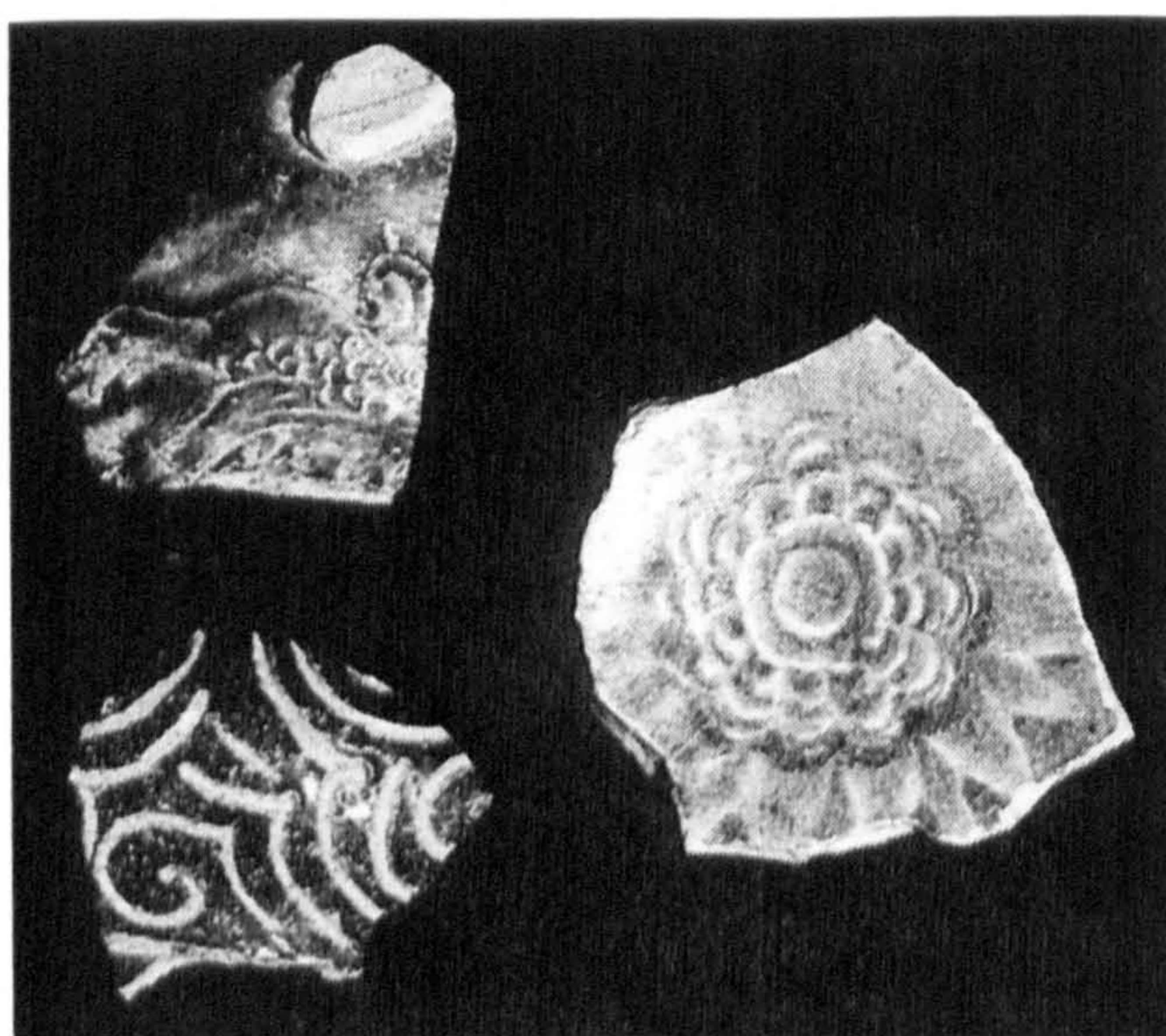


Fig. 3.35: Brown glazed sherds with molded, stamped and carved decoration, Jinjiang (Liu 1991: 243).



Fig. 3.36: Unglazed stoneware vase sherds with relief-molded floral band, Jinjiang (Liu 1991: 242).

The Dehua kilns, on the other hand, had by this time begun to gain in importance in the larger ceramics industry of China, although it was not until the Ming period that they became a national ceramic production center. During the Yuan period, the Dehua kilns

³⁴ Ho (2001: 264 – 267).

produced qingbai and white wares³⁵, numerous fragments of the latter type having been recovered from archaeological sites in Maritime Southeast Asia. South Fujian's ceramic industry thus appears to have begun to supply both the domestic and export markets, with different kiln districts supplying niche sectors of these markets.

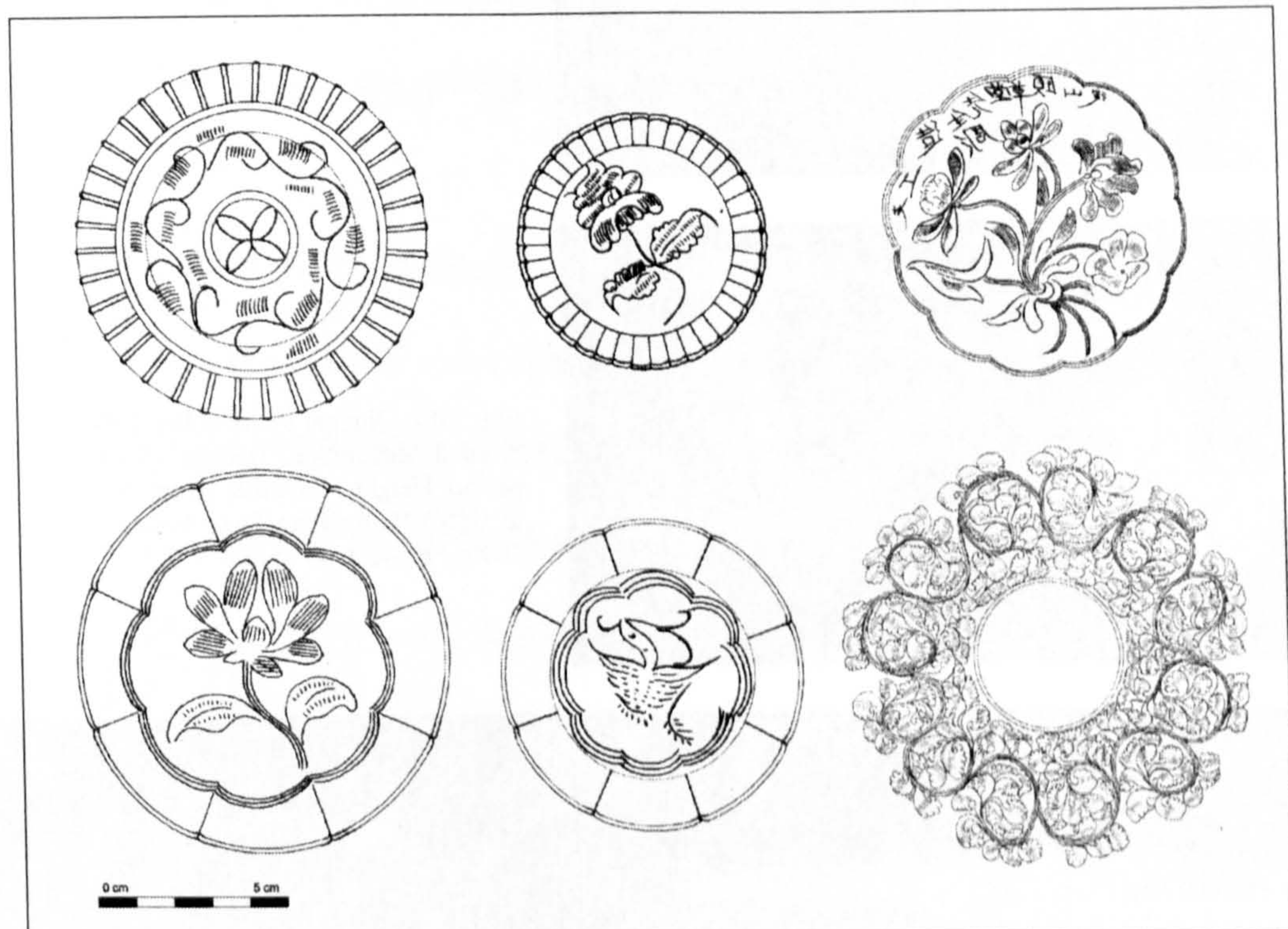


Fig. 3.37: Line drawings of relief-molded decorations of qingbai box covers, Dehua. Song period (after Fung Ping Shan Museum 1990: 53, 55, 65 & 69).

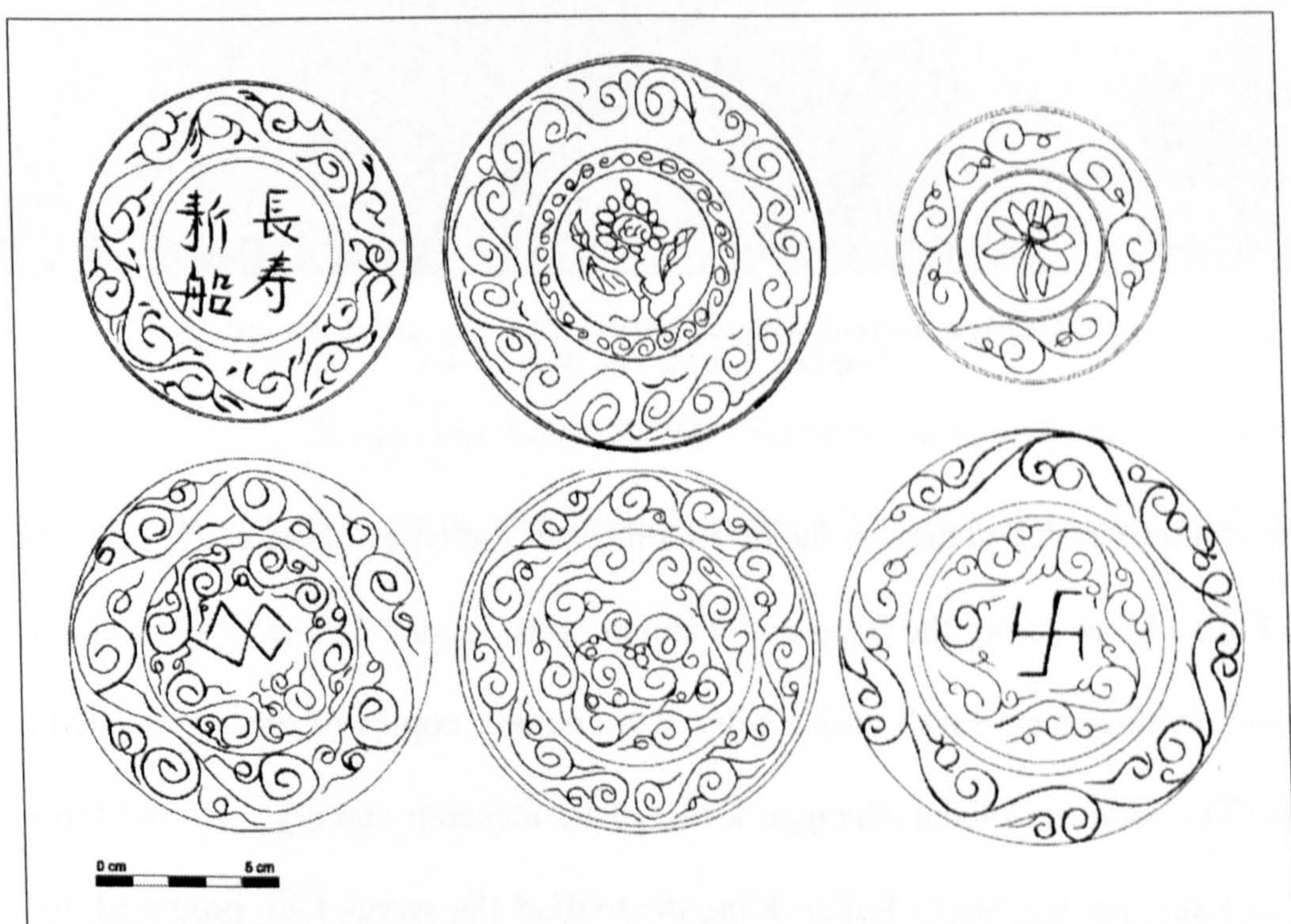


Fig. 3.38: Line drawings of relief-molded decorations of qingbai box covers, Dehua; Yuan period (after Fung Ping Shan Museum 1990: 101, 103, 105 & 107).

³⁵ Fupingshan Museum (1990: 86 – 112).

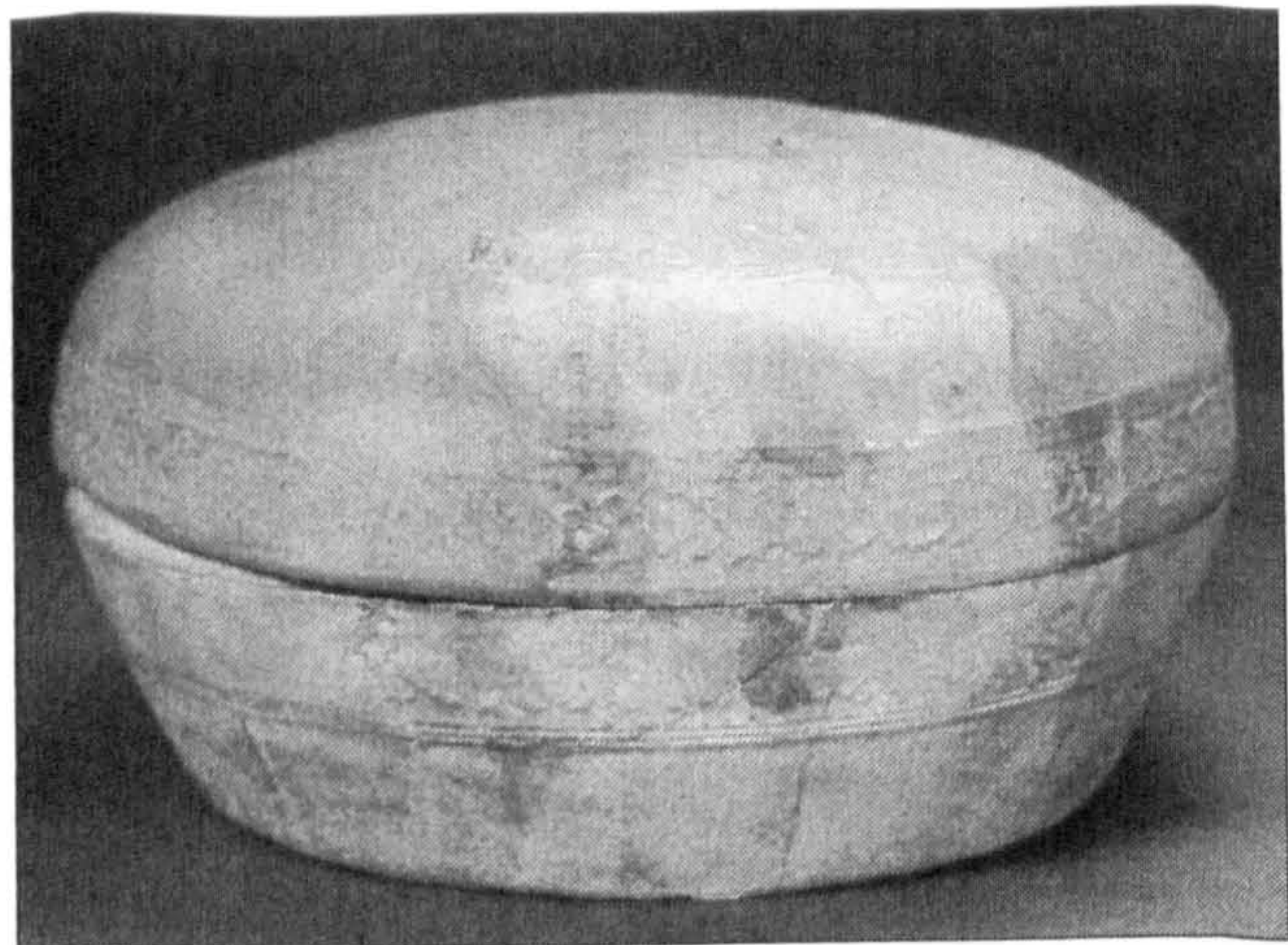


Fig. 3.39: Qingbai box with relief-molded decoration, Dehua. Song period. Diameter 21.3 cm (Fung Ping Shan Museum 1990: Fig. 24).



Fig. 3.40: Qingbai ewers with relief-molded decoration, Dehua. Song period. Height 13.8 cm & 16 cm (left to right) (Fung Ping Shan Museum 1990: Fig. 46 & 47).

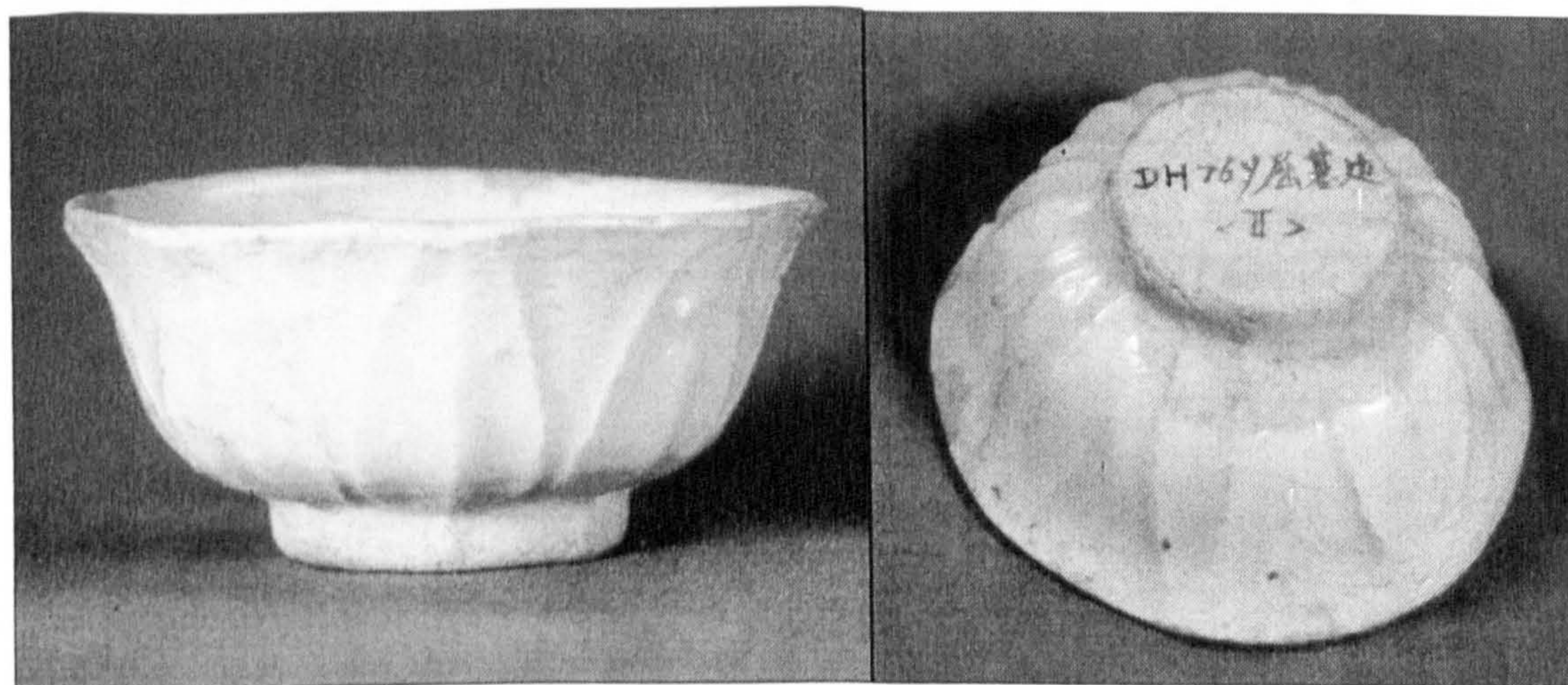


Fig. 3.41: Qingbai bowl with molded decoration, Dehua. Yuan period. Diameter 7 cm (Fung Ping Shan Museum 1990: Fig. 46).

There is a discernible pattern in the development of the types of ceramics produced by the South Fujian kilns during the Song and Yuan periods. Up until the end of the Song period, the wares produced by South Fujian kilns were mainly copies of those produced in other regions. The products of the Zhangpu kilns in the eleventh century mirrored those of the Chao'an kilns. As the South Fujian kilns diversified the wares they produced during the Southern Song period, they began to emulate wares from other regions. The Tong'an green

wares, for example, with incised combed decoration³⁶, appear to have copied ceramics produced in South Zhejiang during this time. The black-brown tea bowls produced by the kilns in Jinjiang were probably inspired by the products of the kilns in Jianyang, North Fujian³⁷. However, the South Fujian copies were in general of lower quality than those produced by the kilns in other regions. Very few of these wares have been found in Chinese tombs dated to this period, suggesting that they were produced mainly for the export market.

At the beginning of the Yuan period, however, the South Fujian kilns began to specialize in specific wares designed to meet specific tastes and demands of both the domestic and export markets. The Cizao kilns of Jinjiang, near Quanzhou, for example, produced a wide range of export ceramics, based on the lead glazed and black-brown glazed ware tradition that the kiln district had developed during the Southern Song period³⁸. General forms that were manufactured by most of the kilns in the district included bowls, dishes, small jars, and bottles, or tableware and household containers, for distribution to both Maritime Southeast Asia and the domestic Chinese market³⁹.

Product specialization extended to the kiln area level as well. This is apparent in the kilns of the Cizao district. The Tuwei'an kilns, for example, produced kendis, water vessels that were commonly used in Maritime Southeast Asia but not in China⁴⁰. The production of kendis by only one kiln area in the district indicates that the manufacture of this form was highly specialized. The Tongzishan kilns, on the other hand, specialized in the production of large platters and basins⁴¹, while the Zhengongshan kilns only produced small-mouthed

³⁶ See Fig. 3.31 – Fig. 3.34.

³⁷ Ho (2001: 244 & 245).

³⁸ See Fig. 3.42 & Fig. 3.43.

³⁹ Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987).

⁴⁰ Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987: 16).

⁴¹ Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987: 8).

bottles⁴², often called “mercury jars” in Maritime Southeast Asian archaeological reports. The Gongqianshan kiln 2 only produced large storage jars⁴³.



Fig. 3.42: Black glazed kendi. Jinjiang (Liu 1991: 242).

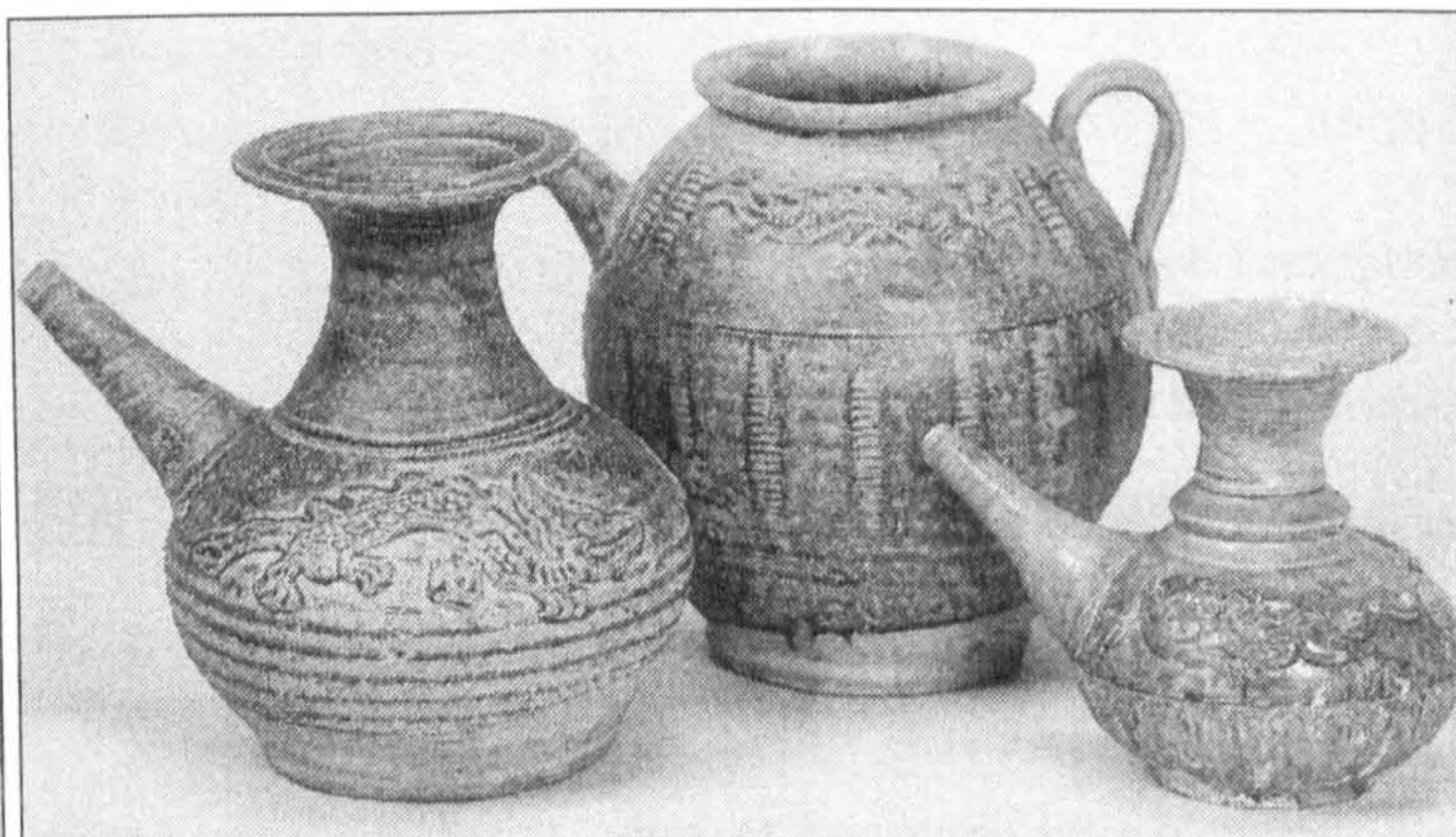


Fig. 3.43: Brown glazed kendi, brown glazed ewer and sancai glazed kendi (left to right). Jinjiang. Height 18 cm, 17 cm & 12.5 cm respectively (Southeast Asia Ceramics Society [West Malaysia Chapter] 1985: Fig. 222-224).

Cizao district’s ceramic industry was clearly geared towards supplying Quanzhou’s export trade to Maritime Southeast Asia. Cizao wares generally correspond with the ceramic finds in such shipwrecks as the Java Sea⁴⁴ and Pulau Buaya⁴⁵ wrecks, suggesting Cizao’s importance as a source of ceramics exported to Maritime Southeast Asia. The production of ceramic wares specifically for use by this region, such as the kendi, indicates that specific demands from this market were catered for, although the range of tableware the kilns produced suggests that local consumption in China was also an important factor in determining the ceramics that this kiln district produced during the Yuan period.

The rising importance of the Chinese domestic market during the Yuan period is also apparent in the products supplied by the Dehua district kilns. By the fourteenth century, this district had begun to produce ceramics with a fairly low-fired white clay stoneware body and creamy white glaze. This type of ceramic was not copied or produced anywhere else in

⁴² Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987: 23).

⁴³ Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987: 24).

⁴⁴ Flecker (2001).

⁴⁵ Abu Ridho & Mckinnon (1998).

China⁴⁶. Thus, domestically, the Dehua kilns were marking themselves out as a unique center of ceramic production. This ware was also in demand in Maritime Southeast Asia.

These developments had an impact on the overall value of the South Fujian wares. Some, like the Dehua wares, were no longer cheap substitutes for more expensive products from kiln districts that were further afield, but were able to compete successfully in terms of quality and uniqueness, thereby becoming higher value ceramics. The production of some low value substitute products continued during this time: the Anxi kilns, for example, continued to produce green ware for the export market⁴⁷. However, in the face of superior ceramic technology employed by expanding inland kiln districts such as Dehua, the kiln districts near the South Fujian coast and in the vicinity of Quanzhou were largely unable to survive the local competition by the Yuan period, and declined in the process. Only the Cizao kilns of Jinjiang, which catered for niche markets, continued to thrive.

While our knowledge of South Fujian fine stoneware ceramics is fairly comprehensive, very little research has been done on the coarse stoneware production of this region. Thus, while there is now sufficient information upon which an understanding of the fine stoneware ceramic trade between South Fujian and Southeast Asia can be built, very little is known about the trade in coarse stoneware ceramics between the two regions, or about the products they may have contained when exported.

However, a report on the excavations conducted at Cizao in Jinjiang district, published in 1987⁴⁸, provides important data concerning the role of provincial kilns in the ceramics export trade of Quanzhou during the Song and Yuan periods. The coarse stoneware ceramics found at the site include storage jars and bottles, which were used as containers for the trade in other products such as foodstuffs or smaller ceramic wares. Since reports of past

⁴⁶ Zeng (1990: 27-31, 33 & 34).

⁴⁷ So (1994: 8).

⁴⁸ Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987).

surveys elsewhere in the South Fujian kiln districts lack information on coarse stoneware, our present knowledge of South Fujian coarse stoneware ceramics is confined largely to the Jinjiang district.

The Cizao kilns produced a number of vessel forms, fragments and occasionally whole examples of which have been recovered by archaeologists at Maritime Southeast Asian sites. These include small squat storage jars with molded decorative motifs⁴⁹, and the small-mouthed bottles⁵⁰. In addition, sherds with lead glazes, similar to those recovered from the Cizao kiln area, have been recovered from sites in the region.



Fig. 3.44: Brown-glazed storage jar. Jinjiang. Height 39.3 cm, diameter 37.7 cm (Southeast Asia Ceramics Society [West Malaysia Chapter] 1985: Fig. 230).

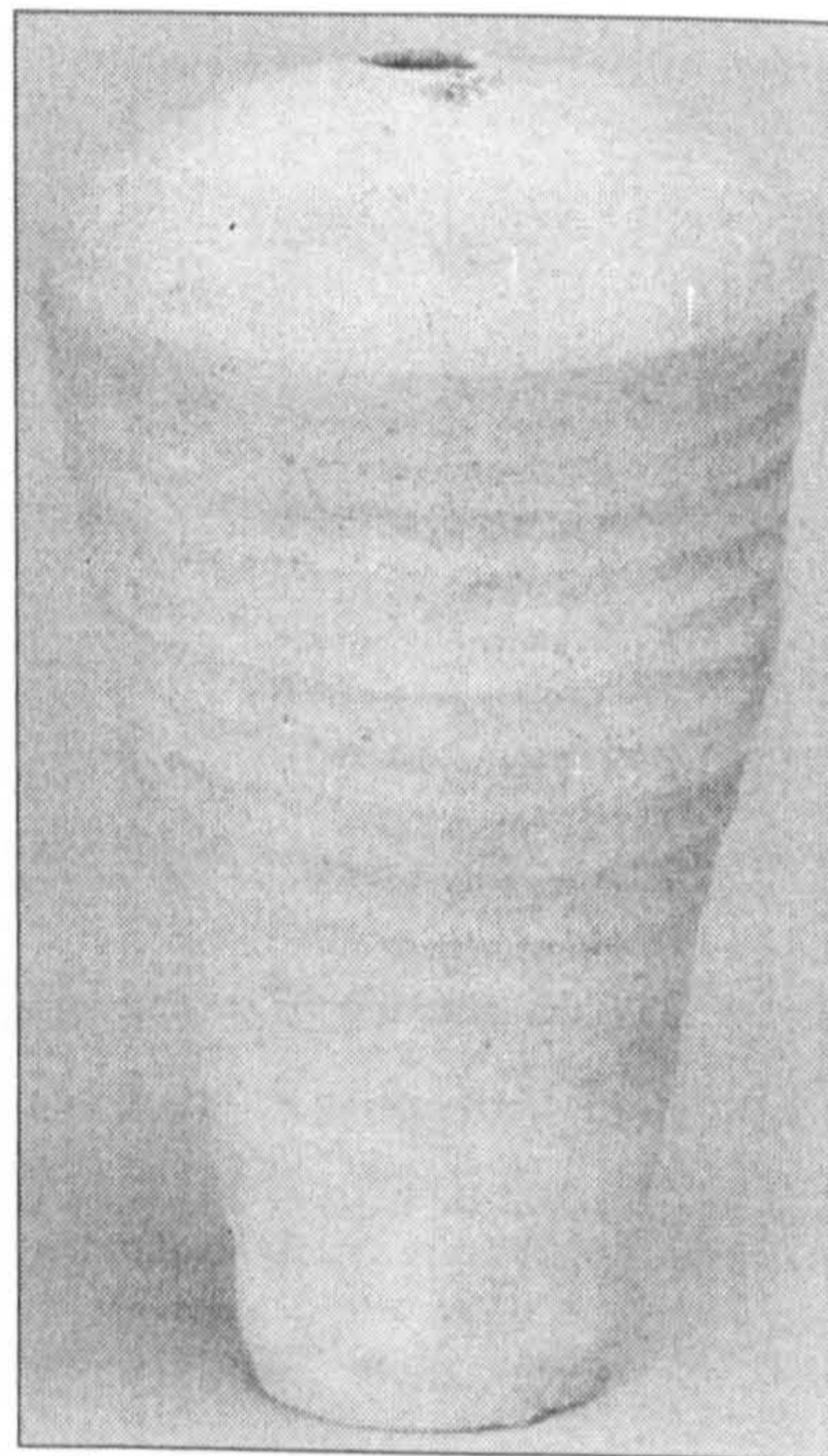


Fig. 3.45: Small-mouthed bottle, Cizao kilns, Jinjiang. Height 18 cm, base 5cm, mouth 2cm (Southeast Asia Ceramics Society [West Malaysia Chapter] 1985: Fig. 238).

⁴⁹ See Fig. 3.44 & Fig. 3.46.

⁵⁰ See Fig. 3.45.

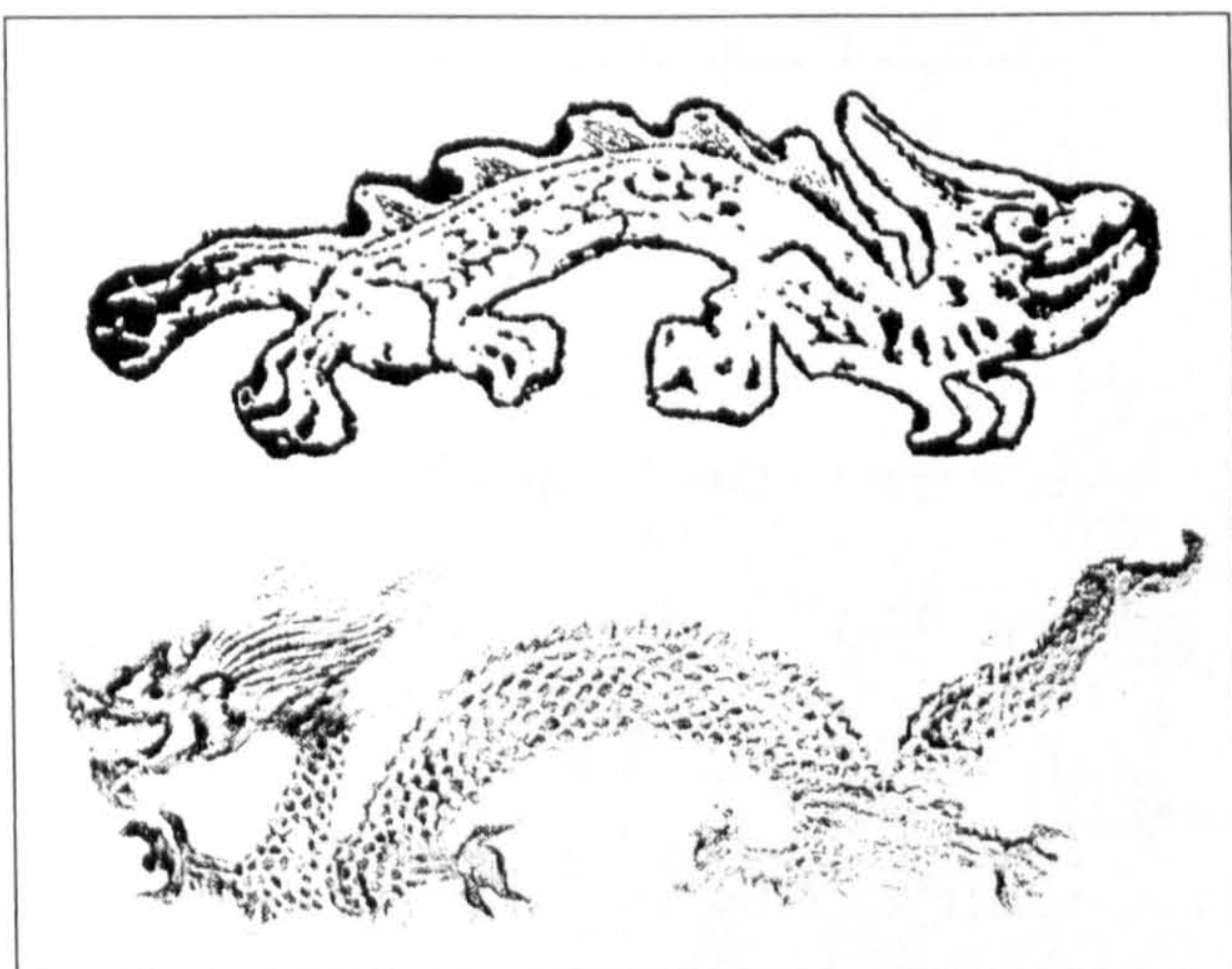


Fig. 3.46: Rubbings of molded dragon motifs applied on small squat storage jars, Cizao kilns, Jinjiang (after Southeast Asian Ceramics Society [West Malaysian Chapter] 1985: Fig. 226 & 234).

The forms of most of the ceramics recovered from Malacca Straits region settlement sites cannot be reconstructed because the sherds are too fragmented. However, remains of small-mouthed bottles recovered from thirteenth to fourteenth century sites are made of clay used by the Cizao potters that contains grit and black inclusions, as are sherds of other vessels found at the same sites. The high proportions of these sherds in the sites' assemblages strongly suggest that Cizao was an important source of the coarse stoneware ceramics imported by the region. This important commercial link extended to include such fine stoneware ceramics as dishes, bowls and small bottles and jars, sherds of a number of which have been recovered from the Temasik-period sites. The importance of the economic relationship between the Cizao district and such Malacca Straits region port settlements such as Temasik, and by extension, the importance of Quanzhou to the region in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, cannot be understated.

3.2.3 Zhejiang

The ceramic industries of Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Jiangsu were important contributors to the development of the South Chinese ceramics tradition during the Song and Yuan periods. Specific kiln districts in each of these provinces produced a variety of high-value wares during this time. Some varieties of these wares managed to find their way into the export

trade of South China, and were shipped in significant quantities to Maritime Southeast Asia⁵¹.

The products of the Zhejiang kilns are the best known of this group. Zhejiang potters had been known since before the Song period for their production of Yue ware, the precursor of the green glazed fine stoneware ceramics that were subsequently produced by South Chinese potters during the Song and Yuan periods. Kilns in Zhejiang province were renowned for the iron-oxide green-glazed stoneware ceramics that had been produced as early as the late Tang period⁵². This type of ware continued to be produced during the Song and Yuan periods.

By the Southern Song period, the kilns in Longquan had begun producing wares with celadon glazes⁵³ that were immediately popular in both the domestic and export markets. No other type of ware is comparable to Longquan celadon ware in the extent of its technical and artistic influence on regional Chinese ceramic traditions. Celadon production at Longquan appears to have reached its height in the middle of the Southern Song period, during which time the Longquan kilns began producing high quality wares⁵⁴. This followed the shift of the Song capital from Kaifeng southwards to Hangzhou in 1127, which led to a huge demand in South China, particularly within close proximity to Zhejiang and Longquan, for high quality ceramics by officials and wealthy households⁵⁵. By the end of the Southern Song period, the production of Longquan-type celadon had spread to neighboring districts in Zhejiang province, as well as districts in South Fujian and Jiangxi, and its popularity continued through the Yuan period and into the early Ming period⁵⁶.

⁵¹ Vainker (1991: 136).

⁵² Liu (1991: 157-159).

⁵³ For a description of the technical aspects of the production of Longquan celadon ware, refer to Liu (1991: 162-163).

⁵⁴ Liu (1991: 167).

⁵⁵ Liu (1991: 157).

⁵⁶ Liu (1991: 169).

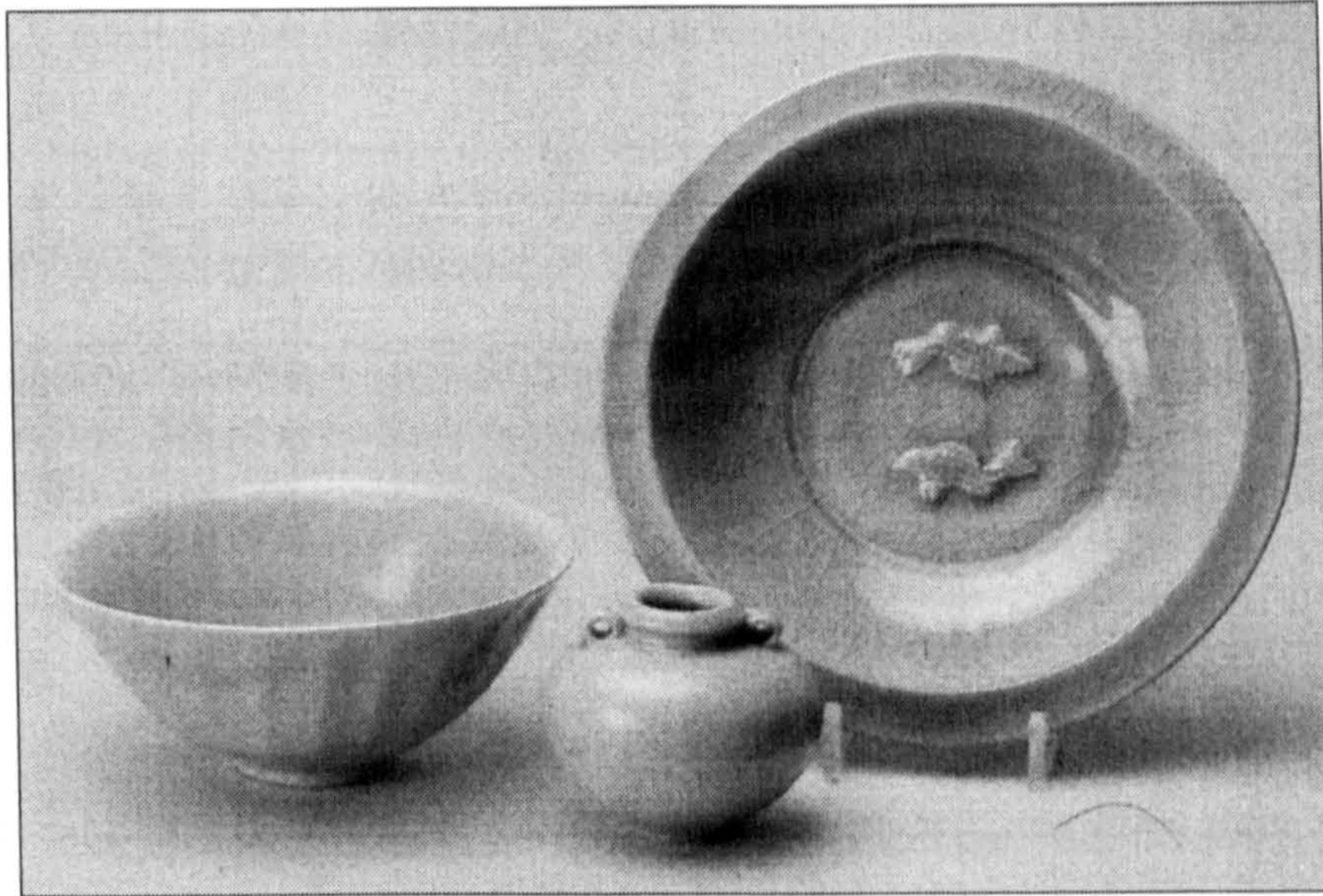


Fig. 3.47: Celadon-glazed bowl with molded lotus decoration, jarlet and dish with relief-applied double fish motif (left to right), Longquan, Zhejiang (Southeast Asian Ceramics Society [West Malaysian Chapter] 1990: Fig. 266-268).

Longquan celadons also remain unsurpassed in terms of volume of ceramics exported by a national kiln during the Song and Yuan periods. These celadons were in high demand in Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, Japan and Korea. Celadon dishes, bowls, plates, platters, cups and jarlets⁵⁷ were imported in substantial quantities by the Malacca Straits region. The proportion and quantity of Longquan sherds recovered from archaeological sites in the region attest to the importance of this type of ware in the region's trade with China.

3.2.4 Yixing

The kilns of Yixing in Jiangsu are traditionally renowned for their purple-clay ceramics⁵⁸. Few products of this kiln district were exported to Maritime Southeast Asia because Yixing was too far from Guangzhou and Quanzhou to capitalize on China's maritime trade with the region. Nonetheless, one type of ceramic product from this district—a small storage bottle—has been recovered from settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ See Fig. 3.47.

⁵⁸ Refer to Lo (1986).

⁵⁹ Kwan & Martin (1985b: 76). Also refer to chapter 4, (grey 3).

This type of jar has a broad folded mouth rim and four small lugs attached vertically near to the rim; the glaze is black-brown and the body is dark grey and granular. Whole examples have been recovered from a kiln site at Yixing and an excavated well at Jingdezhen, both dated to the Southern Song period⁶⁰. The production of these jars continued into the Yuan period.



Fig. 3.48: Black glazed jar with four vertical lugs and everted rim. Yixing. Height 28.5cm, base 8cm (Southeast Asian Ceramics Society [West Malaysian Chapter] 1990: Fig. 252).

3.2.5 Jiangxi

The key kiln district in Jiangxi during the Song period was Jingdezhen, located near the northeastern border of the province. Although the production of ceramics in Jingdezhen had begun by the late Tang period, it was in the early eleventh century that the ceramic products of Jingdezhen were recognized and appreciated by the Song court, and the district became

⁶⁰ Wuxishi bowuguan (1983: 49) & Jingdezhen taoci lishi bowuguan (1980: 40 & 41).

an officially administrated ceramic production center⁶¹. This status and official administration was resumed in the late Yuan period, and continued through the Ming and Qing periods. The major kiln areas in Jingdezhen during the Song and Yuan periods were Hutian, Shengmeiting and Xianghu⁶², which had begun ceramic production prior to the Song period. Zhushan, Liujiawan and Nanshijie became established as kiln areas only during the Song and Yuan periods⁶³.

During the Song period, the main type of ceramic produced by the Jingdezhen kilns was qingbai ware. Although the best quality qingbai wares produced by the Guangdong kilns were very similar to the products of the Jingdezhen kilns, Jingdezhen products were much more thinly potted than their Guangdong counterparts because of the high plasticity of the clay used by the Jingdezhen potters. This clay contains low levels of iron oxide, and there are no traces of impurities such as grit or inclusions. The clay, composed of kaolin (China clay) and dunzi (porcelain clay), when fired at very high temperatures in a reducing atmosphere, produced a highly porcelaneous and compact white body. The reducing atmosphere also produced a bluish-white glaze due to the low iron oxide content in the glaze, as compared to the grayish-green glaze of the Guangdong qingbai products, which contained a higher iron oxide content.

The vessel forms produced by the Jingdezhen kilns during the Song and Yuan periods included vases, ewers⁶⁴, cosmetic boxes⁶⁵, dishes⁶⁶, cups⁶⁷ and bowls⁶⁸. The decorative techniques used on dishes and bowls included incised or relief-molded motifs such as floral

⁶¹ Liu (1991: 257-8).

⁶² Liu (1991: 257).

⁶³ Liu (1991: 257).

⁶⁴ See Fig. 3.51.

⁶⁵ See Fig. 3.52.

⁶⁶ See Fig. 3.50.

⁶⁷ See Fig. 3.53.

⁶⁸ Liu (1991: 286).

sprays and animal motifs as well as decorative bands⁶⁹. Impressed motifs were not used by the potters in decorating the wares they produced.



Fig 3.49: Qingbai dish with incised motifs of two boys, a floral spray and three cloud sprays. Jingdezhen. Diameter 17.2 cm; (Liu 1991: 300).



Fig. 3.50: Qingbai dish with incised floral scroll. Jingdezhen. Diameter 18.1 cm (He 1996, Plate 287).

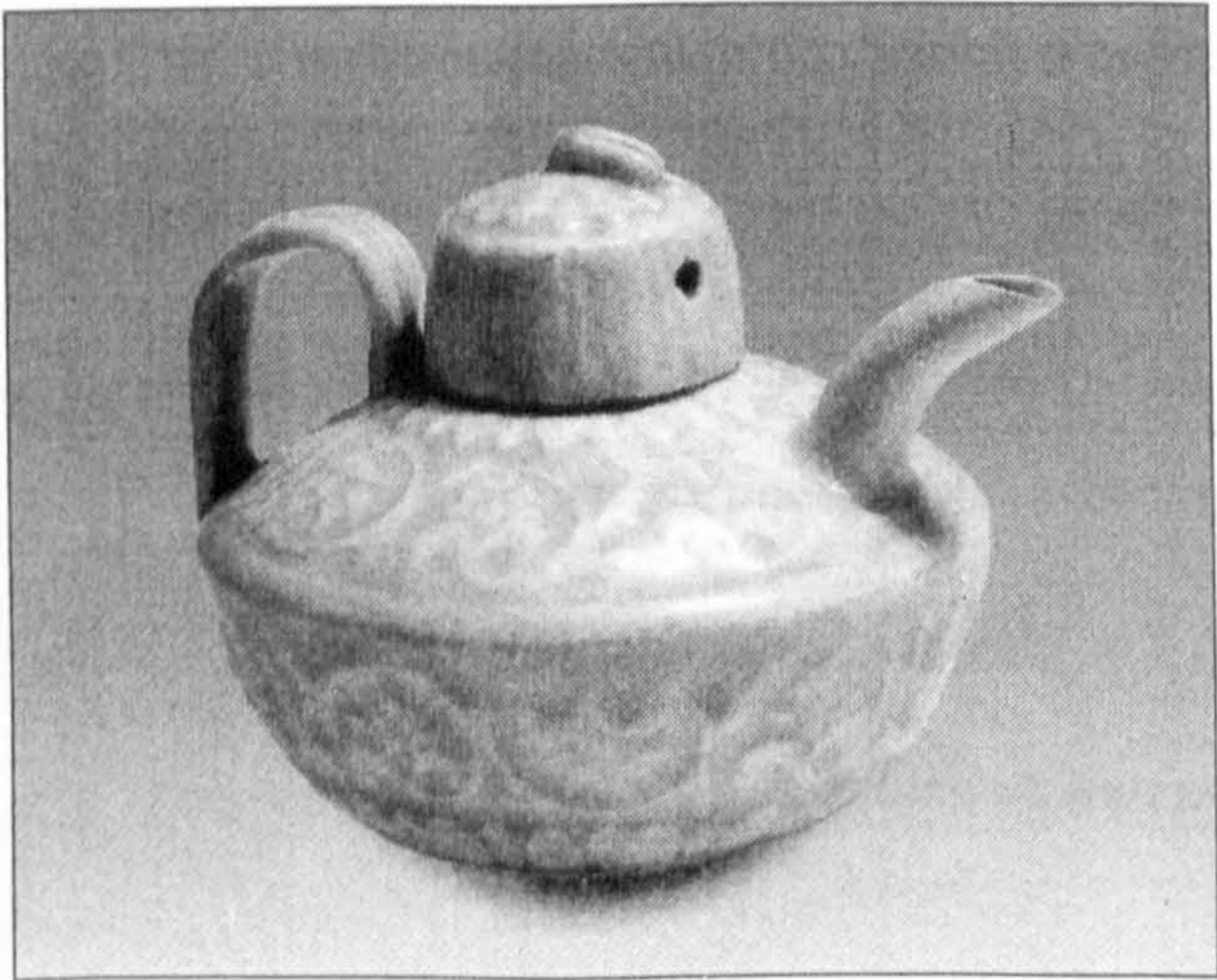


Fig. 3.51: Qingbai ewer with molded floral decoration. Jingdezhen. Height 11 cm (Liu 1991: 287).



Fig. 3.52: Qingbai box with relief-molded floral decoration, Jingdezhen. Diameter 10.8 cm (Liu 1991: 293).

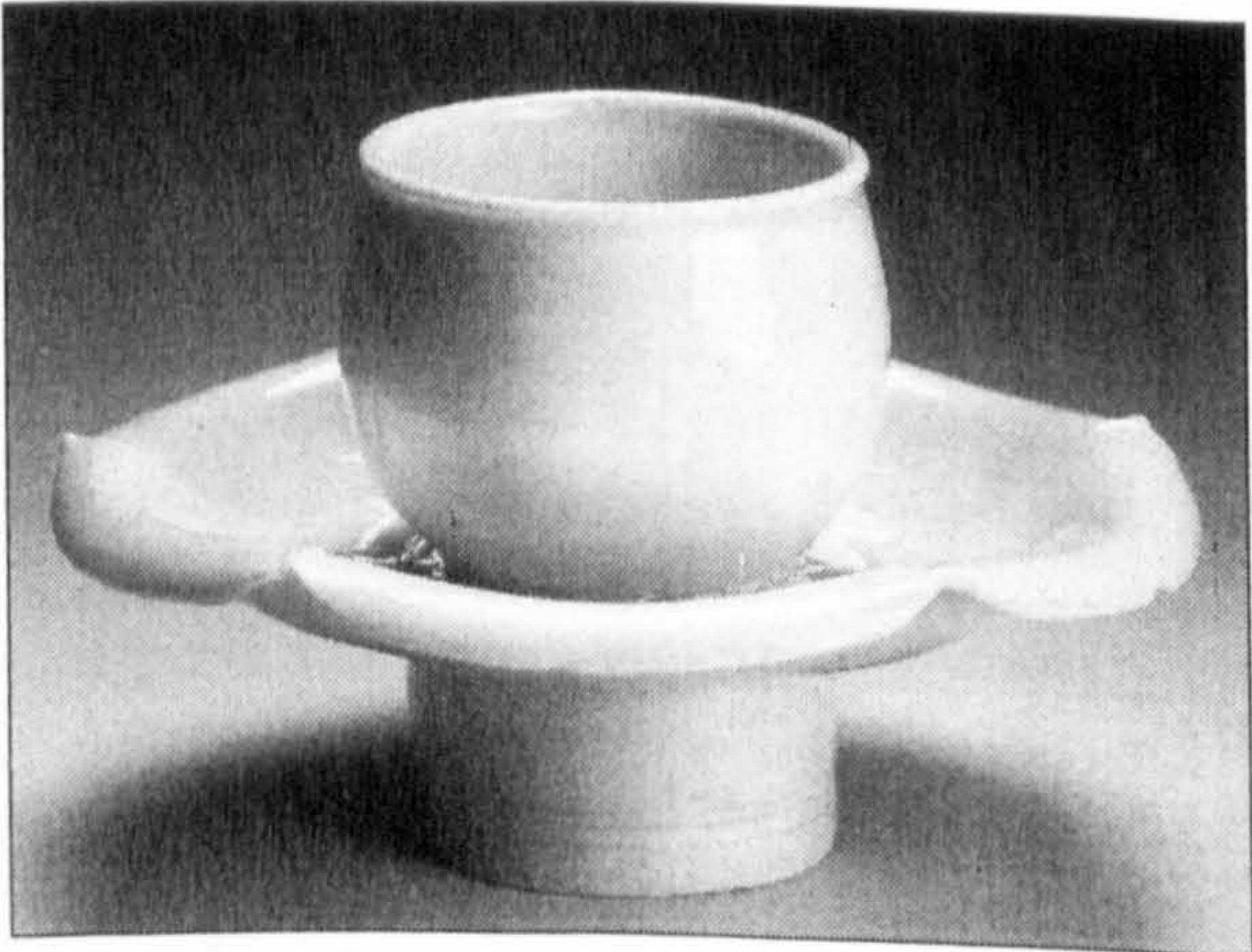


Fig. 3.53: Qingbai cup and six-petaled stand. Jingdezhen. Height 7.9 cm, diameter 11.7 cm (He 1996: 285).

⁶⁹ See Fig. 3.49 & Fig. 3.50.

Qingbai wares continued to be produced by the Jingdezhen kilns during the Yuan period. As a result of a lower calcium oxide and higher alkali metal content in the glaze, a mellow, more translucent glaze was produced during this period than the transparent qingbai glaze produced during the Song period. In addition, the mix of kaolin and dunzi used by the Jingdezhen potters of the Yuan period resulted in ceramics with heavier potting, but with a more compact body and a higher specific gravity than the Song period wares⁷⁰. These general clay and glaze characteristics are also apparent in the other wares produced during the Yuan period by the Jingdezhen kilns, such as the shufu-type white ware and the blue and white ware.

The unique type of ceramic ware produced by the Jingdezhen kilns during the Yuan period was blue and white ware. Sporadic finds of cobalt-decorated white ware sherds and whole examples have been recovered at Yangzhou and Loyang, attributable to the Tang period⁷¹, and there are Song period examples from Longquan⁷². However, with the reopening, during the Yuan period, of the overland trade routes between China, the Middle East and Central Asia, and in particular with Iran, high quality cobalt pigment became fairly easily available to Chinese potters⁷³.

Blue and white wares produced during the Yuan period were not intended for the Chinese domestic market, which regarded these brightly decorated pieces as vulgar⁷⁴. These ceramics were decorated with floral and geometric scrolls, floral sprays and animal motif decorations that appear to have appealed to foreign markets. Yuan blue and white ceramics were generally large vessels. The forms produced included large serving platters, jars and

⁷⁰ Liu (1992: 156 & 157).

⁷¹ Vainker (1991: 82).

⁷² Liu (1992: 168).

⁷³ Vainker (1991: 138).

⁷⁴ Vainker (1991: 138).

vases. However, smaller tableware forms were also produced, such as bowls and stem-cups. The forms, too, appear to have catered for foreign tastes. Large platters and jars were probably produced for the Middle Eastern market, while bowls and stem cups were suited to the preferences of the Maritime Southeast Asian market⁷⁵. This is evident from the Yuan period blue and white ceramics recovered from Southeast Asian sites⁷⁶, and from complete examples in such Middle Eastern collections as those in the Ardebil Shrine and the Tokapi Saray Museum⁷⁷.



Fig. 3.54: Small blue & white bowl, Jingdezhen. Yuan period (Lovell 1984: Plate. 125).

The difficult transport connections between Jingdezhen and China's key export gateways to Maritime Southeast Asia—Quanzhou and Guangzhou—limited the export of Jingdezhen's products to the Malacca Straits region to very small quantities. The high cost of transporting these ceramics to Guangzhou and Quanzhou appears to have prevented Jingdezhen products from playing a greater role in China's ceramic export trade during the Song and Yuan periods. This is reflected in the minute quantities of Jingdezhen ware sherds recovered from Malacca Straits region settlement sites.

3.3 Shipwreck Excavations: A Brief Overview

⁷⁵ See Fig. 3.54.

⁷⁶ See for example Miksic (1985) & Stargardt (2001: 349-350).

⁷⁷ Pope (1956); Ayers (1986).

Shipwreck excavations provide a different form of archaeological data for the study of the economic interaction between China and Maritime Southeast Asia. Data from shipwrecks reflect the shipping patterns and characteristics of the shipping trade that was taking place between the two economic regions at the time that the ship foundered, as well as types of products traded at that time. The snap-shot nature of shipwreck data allows, with data from a sufficient number of wrecks spread over a substantial period of time, a picture of the development of this maritime trade to emerge.

In dating wrecks, both the ship's contents and its hull are relied upon. Coins, in particular Chinese copper cash bearing reign marks, along with trade wares such as ceramics or metal wares, the decoration and forms of which often reveal their period of manufacture, and any other items that may have inscriptions or stylistic characteristics to which a date or period may be attributed, form the bases upon which an approximate date may be assigned to a wreck. When parts of a vessel are recovered, the organic samples may be sent for radiocarbon dating for an approximate dating. The resulting composite date can often be precise to within a few decades, and occasionally to within a few years or even months.

Five wrecks have been drawn upon in this study for information concerning the maritime trade patterns between the Malacca Straits region and China. The Intan⁷⁸, Pulau Buaya⁷⁹, Java Sea⁸⁰ and Quanzhou⁸¹, and Turiang⁸² wrecks span the period from the tenth to fourteenth century. They have been assigned to the tenth, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively. Collectively, the data from these wrecks provide snapshots of the development in the shipping and products trade between the two regions at fairly even intervals over four centuries.

⁷⁸ Flecker (2001).

⁷⁹ Abu Ridho & Mckinnon (1998).

⁸⁰ Flecker (1997).

⁸¹ Merwin (1977), Nanjing Yaoxueyuan (1983) & Shanghaishi weishengju yaoping yenjiusuo (1983).

⁸² Brown & Sjostrand (2000).

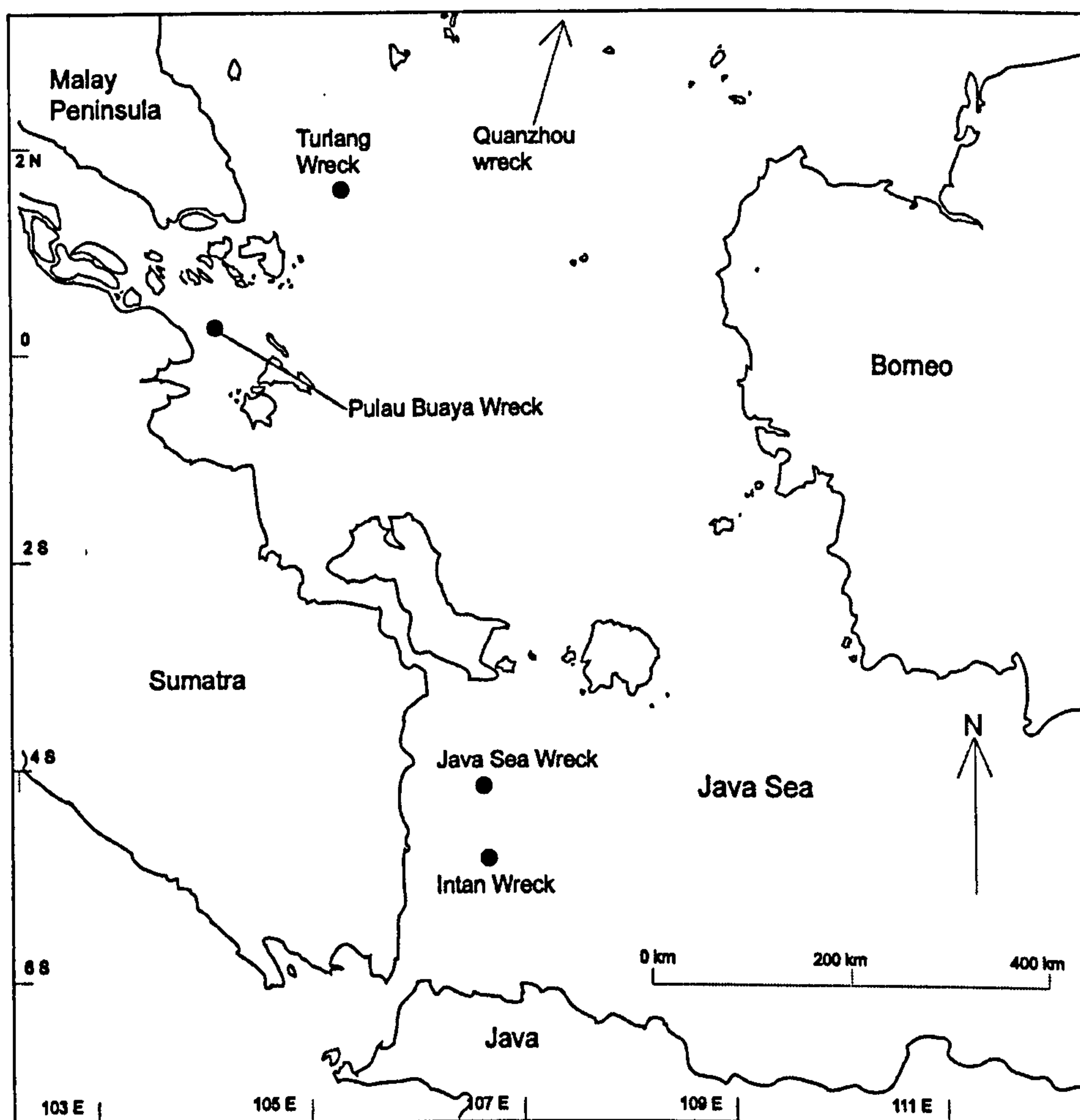


Fig. 3.55: Location of 10th – 14th Century Shipwrecks in Maritime Southeast Asia

The ships were not all from the same place. The Intan and Java Sea wrecks appear to have been Southeast Asian vessels, while the Quanzhou and Turiang wrecks were probably Chinese vessels. Whence the Pulau Buaya ship originated is not known because of the absence of any hull structure at the wreck site.

Also, these ships sank in different areas. The Intan, Pulau Buaya and Java Sea wrecks were discovered in the Java Sea off the east coast of south Sumatra. The Quanzhou wreck was discovered in Houtu Harbor in Quanzhou Bay, South Fujian. The Turiang wreck was discovered off the southeastern coast of the Malay Peninsula.

These ships were not all on the same routes. While the contents of the tenth century Intan wreck reflect the types of goods exported from the Malacca Straits region to Java, the Pulau Buaya, Java Sea and Turiang wrecks reflect the types of goods imported by the Malacca Straits region, largely from China and Mainland Southeast Asia. The Quanzhou wreck provides an important counterpoint to this otherwise one-dimensional view of the Malacca Straits region's participation in international maritime trade. Thus the picture that these wrecks provide is not focused upon one segment of the maritime trade between China and Maritime Southeast Asia, and it does not reflect the flow of goods in one direction alone.

Some general points concerning patterns of trade between China and the Malacca Straits region seem clear from the wreck sites. Data from the wrecks suggest that China's export trade to the Malacca Straits region shifted from one involving small but nonetheless significant quantities of relatively high value Chinese products during the tenth century to one largely comprising products of low value by the thirteenth century. The majority of outbound cargoes from China comprised iron and ceramic wares, though the finds in the wrecks also suggest that foodstuffs were an important type of Chinese product exported to the Malacca Straits region. Also, the ceramic data from the wrecks support the documentary evidence that the Malacca Straits region's commercial interaction with China was largely confined to the southern provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. Although trade in certain specific Chinese products was conducted with areas outside of these two provinces, the absence of a broad range of products from areas outside of South Fujian and Guangdong is a strong indication that this trade was probably an indirect one, with Quanzhou and Guangzhou acting as the transshipment points from which products of other regions were dispatched to Maritime Southeast Asia.

3.3.1 Intan Wreck

The Intan Wreck, discovered in the northwestern part of the Java Sea near the Intan Oil Field, was excavated in 1997⁸³. It is believed to have sunk between 918 and 960⁸⁴. A Southeast Asian vessel of about twenty-five to thirty meters in length, the ship carried a wide range of Southeast Asian and foreign products. Artifacts recovered include such ritual articles of bronze as figurines, vessels, scepters, bells and moulds, some at least of which appear to have been of Indian origin. Finds of Chinese origin include ceramics, copper coins, bronze mirrors and iron articles. Other artifacts include Middle Eastern glassware, Southeast Asian ingots of lead, silver, tin and bronze, such foodstuffs as candle-nuts, and other organic material including tiger bones, sambar antlers, an elephant tooth and tusk, worked ivory pieces and pieces of benzoin. The ship appears to have been in transit from the Malacca Straits region—probably from the entrepôt of Srivijaya in Sumatra—to Java, bearing a mixed cargo of international origin.

The bulk of the Chinese products carried by the ship comprised fine and coarse stoneware ceramics. The fine stoneware ceramics included Yue and Yue-type wares, white ware, qingbai ware, brown ware and green ware. The 190 white ware ceramics⁸⁵, 648 qingbai ceramics⁸⁶ and 1079 Yue and Yue-type ceramics⁸⁷ were all fine or small pieces. The coarse

⁸³ Flecker (2001: 1).

⁸⁴ Flecker (2001: 304-307).

⁸⁵ The white wares recovered were 3 bottles (all of different form), 31 bowls, 5 covered boxes (all differently decorated), one cup, 4 sizes of dishes measuring 8 to 21 cm totaling 132 pieces, 3 ewers and 7 types of small jars of between 1 and 4 examples each, totaling 15 pieces. Flecker (2001: 272–278).

⁸⁶ The qingbai wares recovered were 3 lotus covered boxes, 4 box bases (2 types), 2 box covers (2 types), and 2 types of dishes numbering 219 and 420 pieces respectively. Flecker (2001: 278–280).

⁸⁷ Yue and Yue-type wares recovered were 32 bottles (10 types), with 19 of one particular form; 97 bowls (8 types), the majority of which are undecorated, with diameters measuring between 6 and 18 centimeters; 4 different boxes with covers; 45 box bases (7 types); 64 box covers (13 types); 5 cups (3 types); 62 dishes (4 types), of which 56 have everted rims with lightly incised or no decoration, measuring between 10 and 15 centimeters; 148 ewers (7 types), of which 2 types constitute 136 pieces, both with trumpet mouths, strap handles, curved spouts and flared foot-rings; 4 kendis (2 types); 301 small jars (14 types), of which 3 types constitute 208 pieces; 311 lids (10 types), of which 3 types constitute 246 pieces; 2 decorated spouts, 2 pillows of different forms, 1 water dropper and 1 whistle. Flecker (2001: 248–271).

stoneware ceramics comprised 4936 green and brown ceramics⁸⁸. The storage jars were used to transport such foodstuffs and resins as the candlenuts and benzoin recovered from the wreck, while the pots were most likely trade items.

Chinese metal objects recovered from the site were of three types—iron, silver and bronze. Aside from a small number of coins, the only Chinese bronze items were mirrors, of which 95 fragments and 21 intact examples were recovered⁸⁹. These were of higher quality than the 200 mirrors of Malacca Straits region origin that were also recovered⁹⁰. No Chinese bronze as raw material was found amongst the large quantities of ingots and scrap metal recovered from the wreck, which was most likely of Southeast Asia origin.



Fig. 3.56: Chinese bronze mirror recovered from the Intan wreck (Flecker 2001: Fig. 5.15.2).

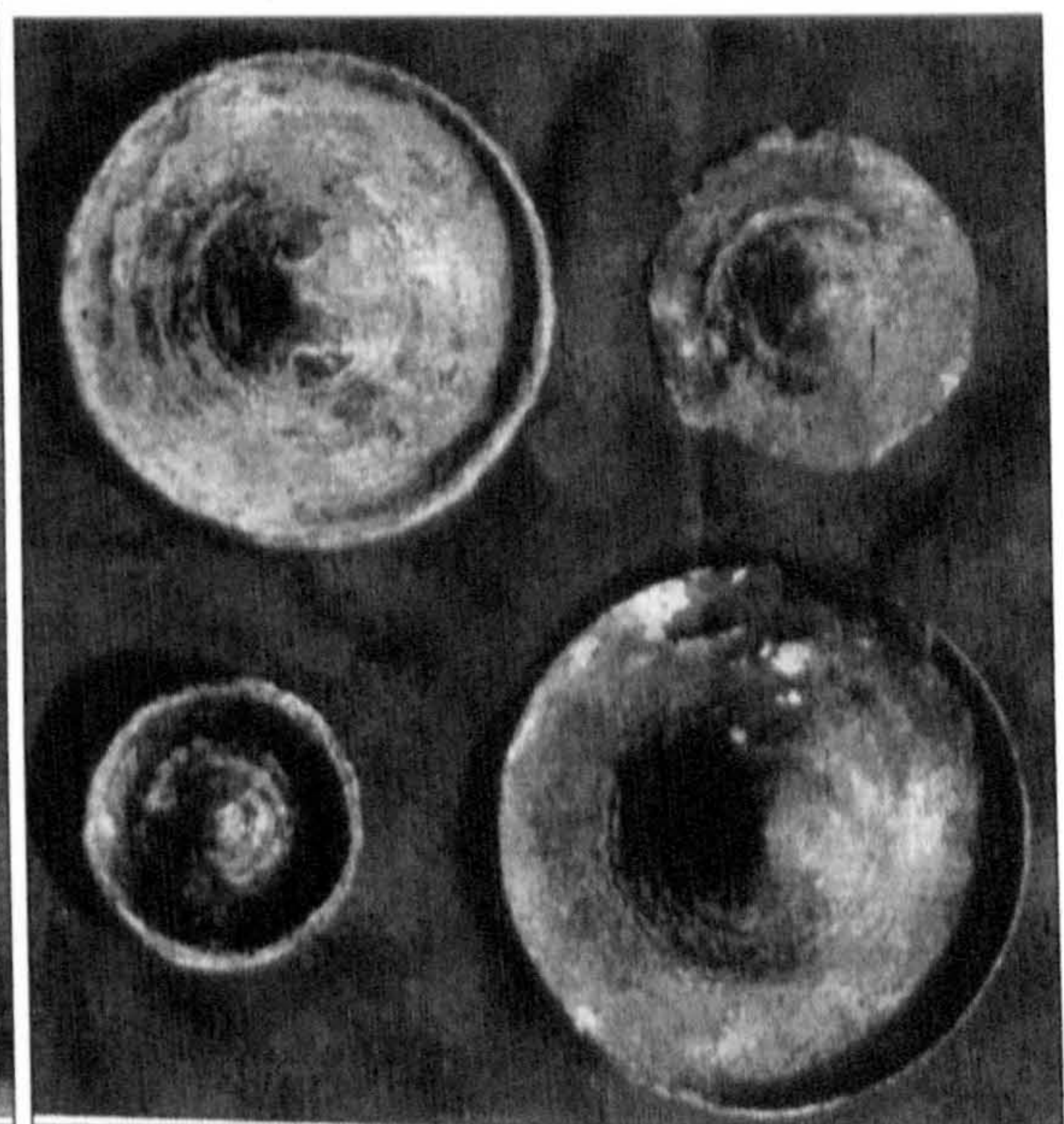


Fig. 3.57: Southeast Asian bronze mirrors recovered from the Intan wreck (Flecker 2001: Fig. 5.14.1).

Other metal items of Chinese origin found in the wreck include 94 silver ingots⁹¹. These were probably intended to be used either to make ceremonial objects or silver-alloy currency in Java. A small number of Chinese cast-iron articles, identified from the presence

⁸⁸ The brown and green wares recovered were 4855 pots of two types, with diameters of between 10 and 15 centimeters; 39 Guangdong-type storage jars of heights between 30 to 50 centimeters; another 33 storage jars (7 types); 8 basins (1 type); and 1 bottle. Flecker (2001: 281–284).

⁸⁹ See Fig. 3.56.

⁹⁰ Flecker (2001: 135–141). See Fig. 3.57.

⁹¹ Flecker (2001: 202–206). See Fig. 3.58.

of sulphur in the iron, were also recovered. Ten iron concretions were identified at the wreck site⁹². The types of products identified in them include blades of about 30 centimeters in length, rods of about 40 centimeters in length, and slightly longer concretions with singular pointed ends⁹³. The amount of iron found in the Intan wreck is significantly less than that recovered from wrecks assigned a later date.

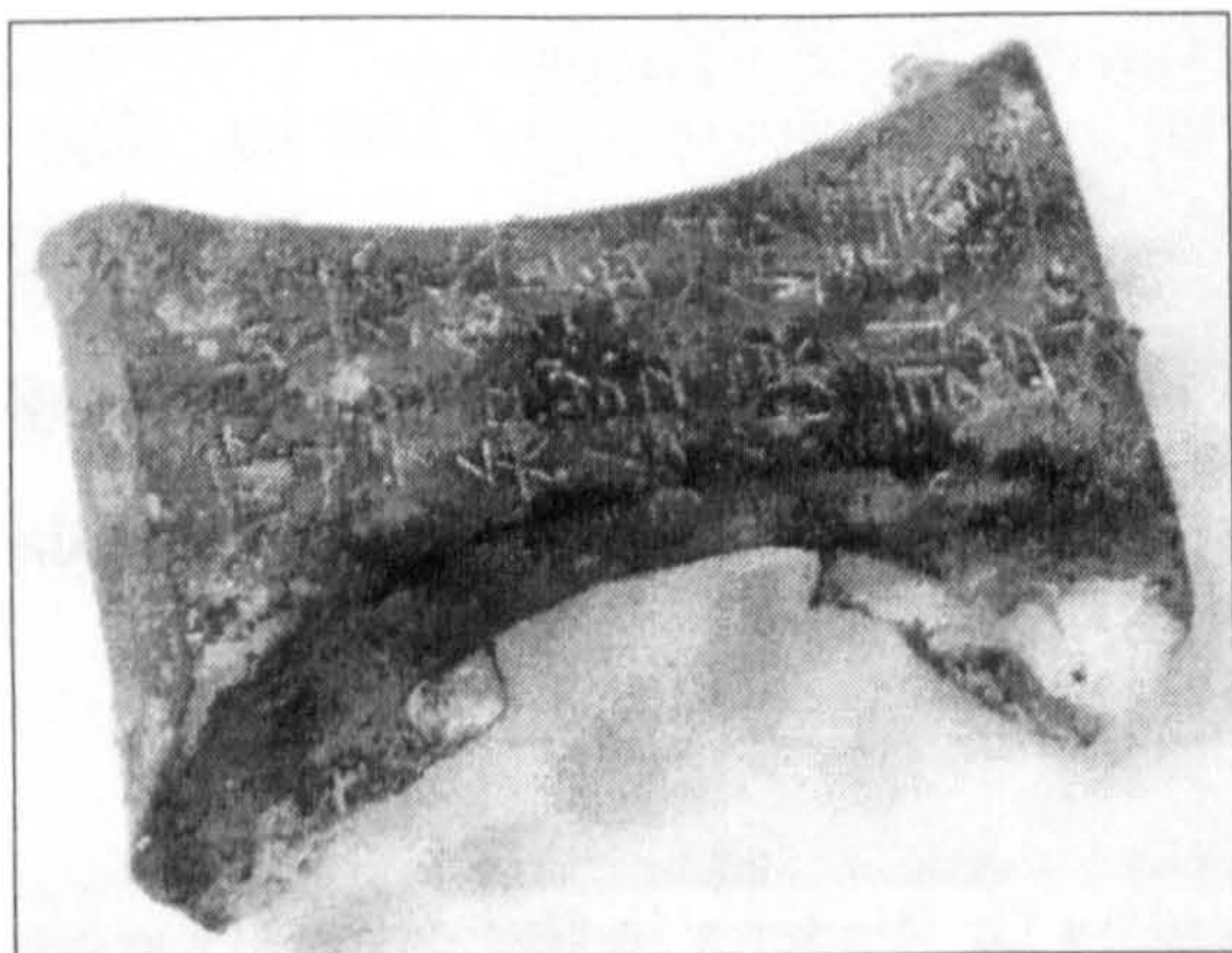


Fig. 3.58: Silver ingot with inscribed Chinese characters, recovered from the Intan wreck (Flecker 2001: Fig. 5.28.1).

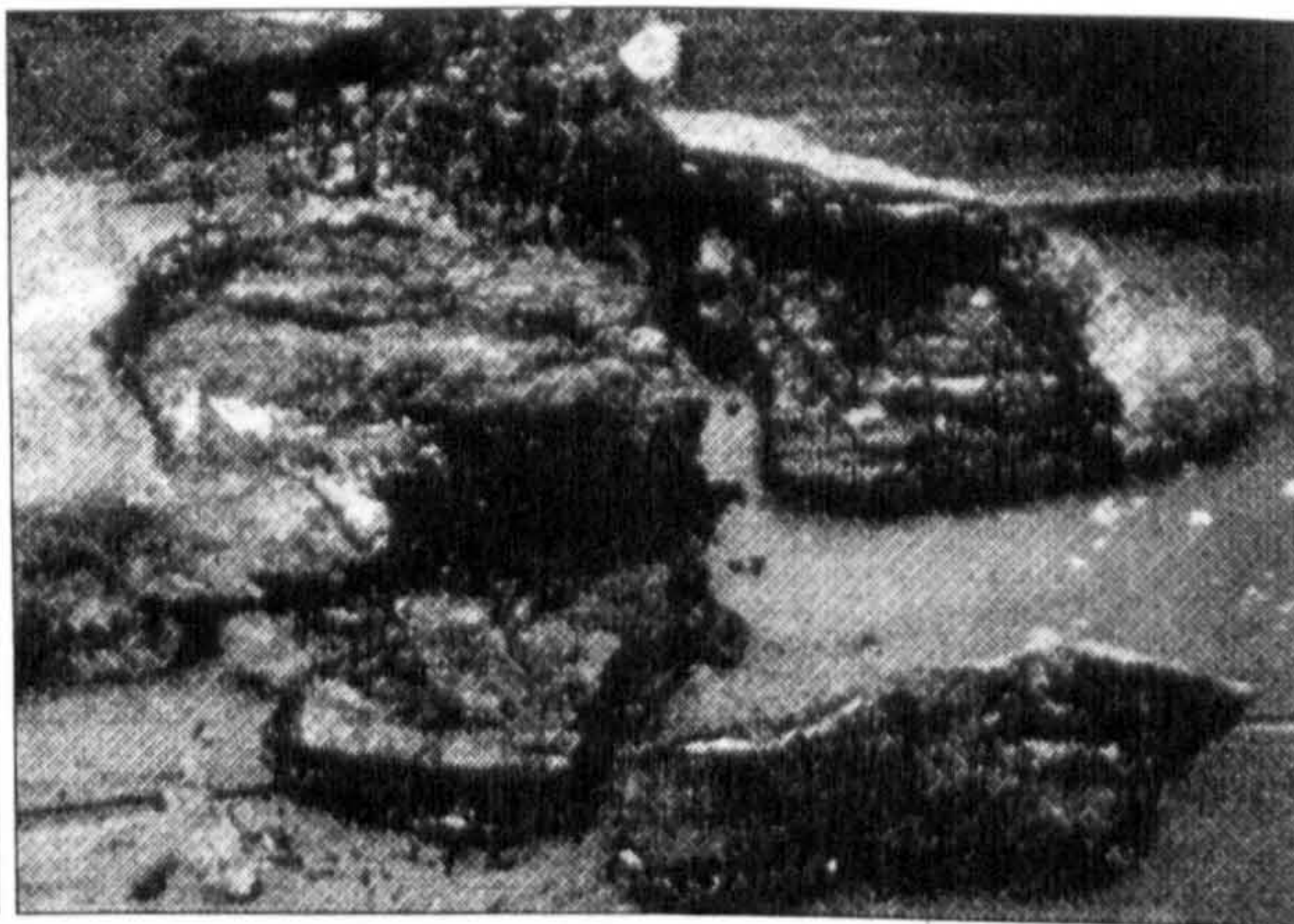


Fig. 3.59: Iron concretion recovered from the Intan wreck (Flecker 2001: Fig. 5.29.2).

It is interesting to note that only two groups of Chinese products—ceramics and metals—were recovered from the Intan wreck. While it is likely that most perishable products would not have survived, the Chinese products present in the wreck, with the exception of ceramics, suggest that the tenth century trade between China and Maritime Southeast Asia, at least that transshipped to Java from the Malacca Straits region, focused upon relatively high unit value products.

3.3.2 Pulau Buaya Wreck

The Pulau Buaya wreck, located off the coast of Pulau Buaya Island in the Lingga Archipelago, Indonesia, has been dated to the late Northern-early Southern Song period, no

⁹² See Fig. 3.59.

⁹³ Flecker (2001: 207–211).

later than the mid twelfth century⁹⁴. The ship carried more than 32000 Chinese stoneware ceramics, along with small quantities of fine-paste Southeast Asian earthenware, a number of pieces of glassware, and a number of metal items, including copper-slab ingots, bronze gongs and large copper rings, tin pyramidal ingots, rectangular slab ingots (tin, lead or zinc), two Chinese copper coins, and iron bars and woks. It appears to have been heading for the southeastern coast of Sumatra when it sank. It is not known whether the ship was a Chinese or Southeast Asian vessel, as the wreck site no longer contained sufficient physical evidence of the ship's form, material used in its construction, or the construction techniques employed by the ship's builders. The types of items used by the crew for cooking on board, however, suggest that the ship was probably Southeast Asian.

Ceramics formed the largest group of trade products in the ship's cargo. The largest group of ceramics found in the wreck comprises bowls and dishes. Of these, the majority are of the qingbai-type, followed by those with green glaze. Almost all the wares in this group were from Guangdong and South Fujian kilns, with a very small number of singular examples of qingbai-type bowls possibly from Jingdezhen⁹⁵. Vases and ewers constitute the next largest group of ceramics. These were almost entirely of qingbai-type, although utilitarian ewers with a white slip layer and olive green glaze were also recovered from the wreck. Various small pots and jars were also recovered, including numerous short and tall grey stoneware bottles of meiping form with grey-green glaze, and several small glazed jars with lugs and a yellowish grey-green or grey-green glaze⁹⁶. A small number of covered boxes with qingbai-type glaze were recovered. Two of these are believed to have been products of the Jingdezhen kilns, while the provenance of the rest is uncertain. A number of varying sizes were recovered from the wreck. With the exception of two jars that are reminiscent of

⁹⁴ Ridho & McKinnon (1998: v).

⁹⁵ Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 6-35).

⁹⁶ Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 49-50).

Dusun-type jars⁹⁷, all the storage jars exhibit forms and decorative motifs that were commonly used by the Guangdong kilns⁹⁸.

With the exception of the small jars, which are glazed grayish-green, all of the fine stoneware ceramics, which formed the overwhelming part of the ceramic cargo, were of qingbai-type. Stylistically, the wares have been dated to the late eleventh-early twelfth century. The absence of Longquan celadons in the wreck suggests that it would not have dated much later than the beginning of the Southern Song period, from which time Longquan celadon ware began to be mass produced and exported from Zhejiang⁹⁹.

It would appear from the ceramic cargo that the trade carried by the ship was largely confined to the exports from Guangdong and South Fujian, rather than from a wider catchment area of the South Chinese ceramics industry. Even though the ceramic cargo was dominated by 'fine' qingbai wares, the unit-value of the types carried by the ship was apparently fairly low, since most of them were simple, mass produced items rather than high quality crafted items. These were products of the Guangdong and South Fujian kiln districts that were in operation during the late eleventh to twelfth century. The only exception to this is the small number of higher-value qingbai wares from Jingdezhen.

Two groups of earthenware were also recovered from the wreck. The first group comprises seventeen examples of high-fired fine-paste kendis, which were most likely of Mon or Cham origin¹⁰⁰. The second group of earthenware comprises coarse earthenware pots with paddle-marks and simple incised decoration. These included a bottle-like vessel, a squat open-mouthed cooking vessel, four wide-mouthed cooking pots, a pot cover with a flatten

⁹⁷ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 58).

⁹⁸ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 52–57).

⁹⁹ Miksic (2003: 7).

¹⁰⁰ This classification of the kendis was provided by the authors of the excavation report. Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 64).

knob and a stove of archaic form¹⁰¹. These were probably made in the Malacca Straits region, and were apparently part of the crew's equipment. This suggests that the crew were from the Malacca Straits region, which in turn suggests that the ship was Maritime Southeast Asian in origin.

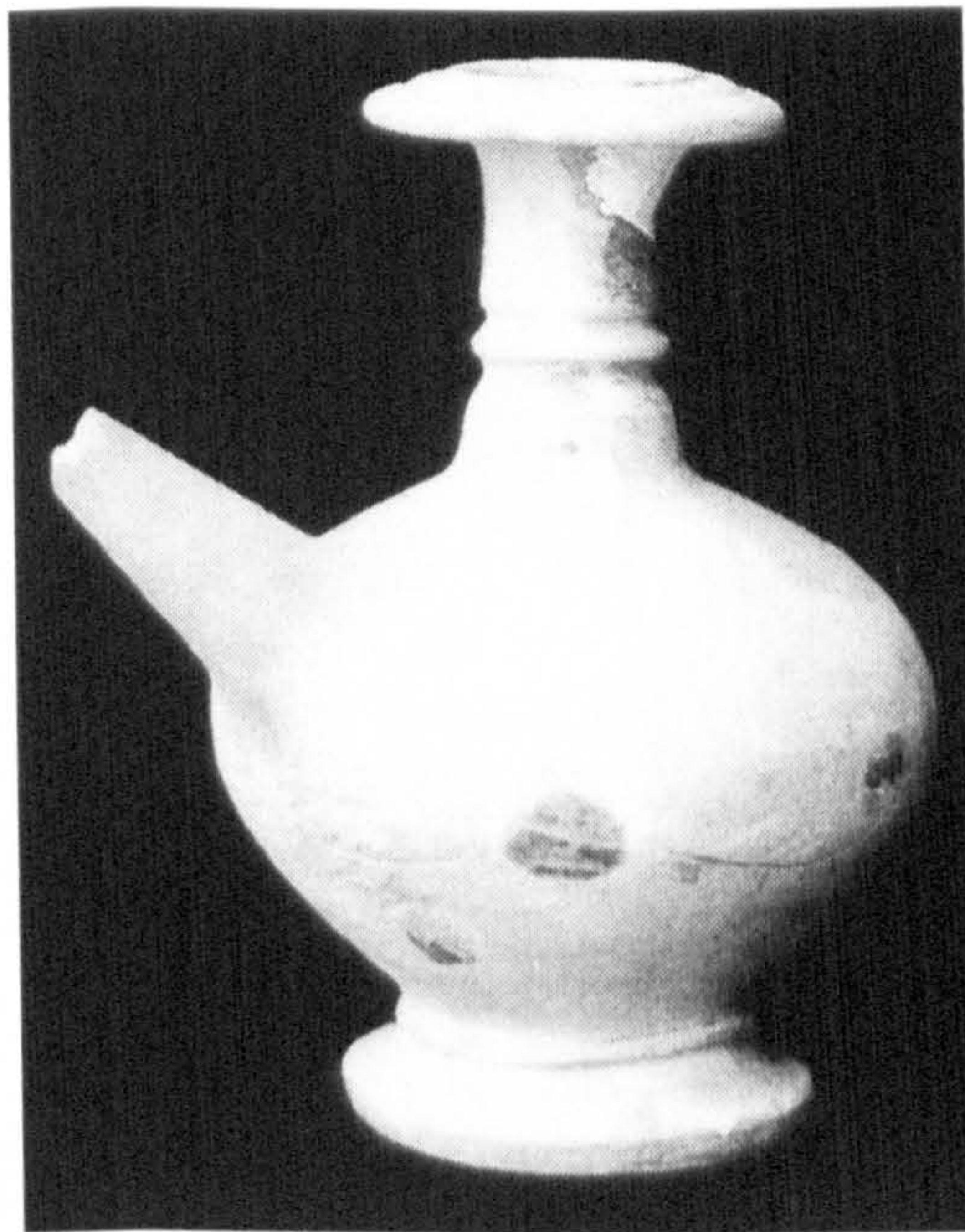


Fig. 3.60: Earthenware kendi, possibly of Mainland Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & Mckinnon 1998: Fig. 41b).

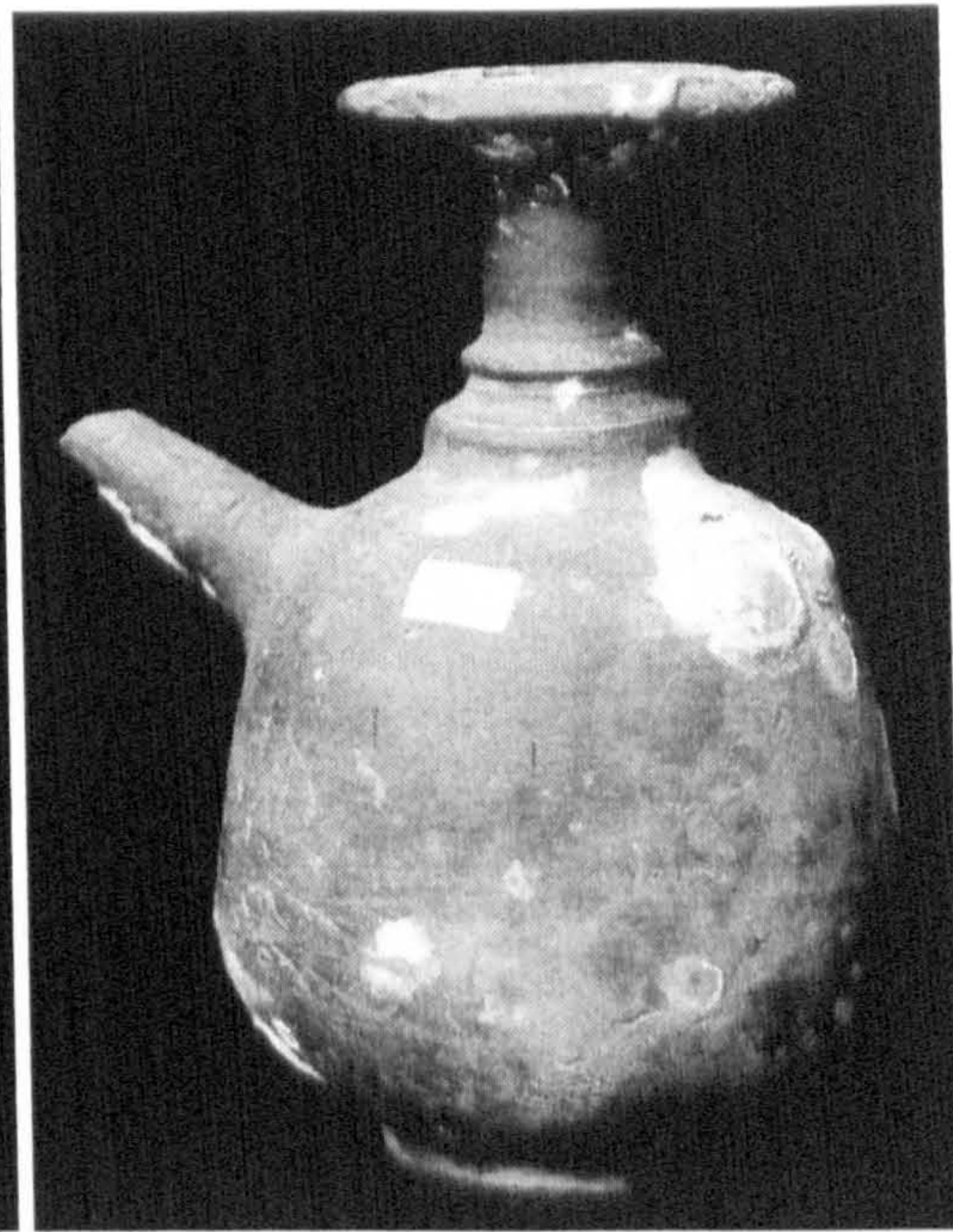


Fig. 3.61: Earthenware kendi, possibly of Mainland Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & Mckinnon 1998: Fig. 42).



Fig. 3.62: Earthenware pot, possibly of Island Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & Mckinnon 1998: Fig. 46).

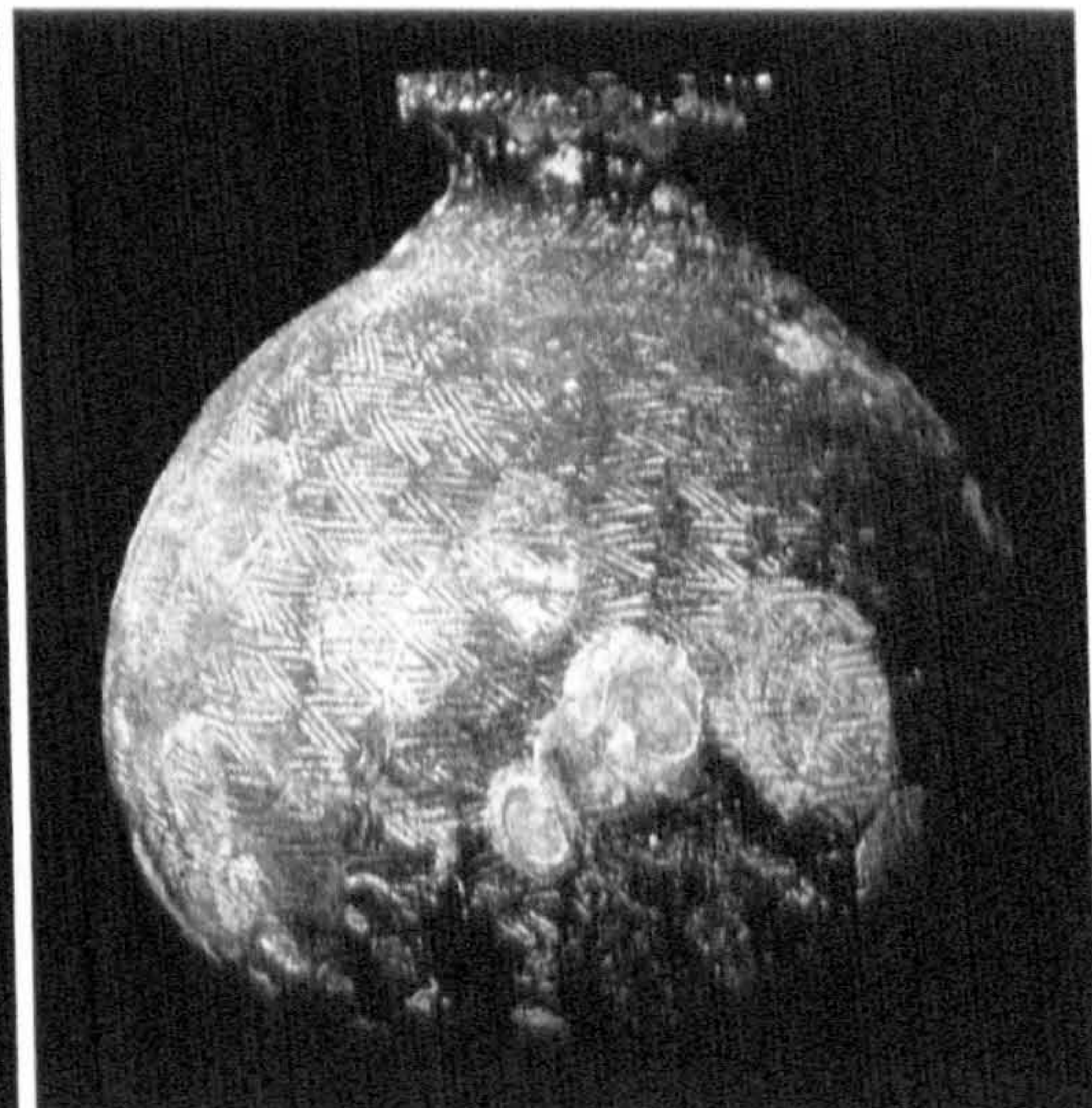


Fig. 3.63: Earthenware jar with zig-zag incised decoration; possibly of Island Southeast Asian origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & Mckinnon 1998: Fig. 44).

Metal items form the next most significant component of the ship's cargo. A substantial number of copper and bronze items were recovered from the wreck. A number of pure

¹⁰¹ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 70-74).

copper ingots, weighing 4.6 kg each, were recovered¹⁰², along with eight bronze gongs, each with a central protuberance¹⁰³. The other substantial group of copper finds comprises 129 ring-shaped copper ingots of 6 to 8 cm diameter, which were 0.5 to 1.2 cm thick¹⁰⁴. Other items recovered include a rim fragment of a large bronze basin (1.5 to 2 cm thick)¹⁰⁵ and a bronze eight foliate lobed mirror (8 cm diameter)¹⁰⁶.

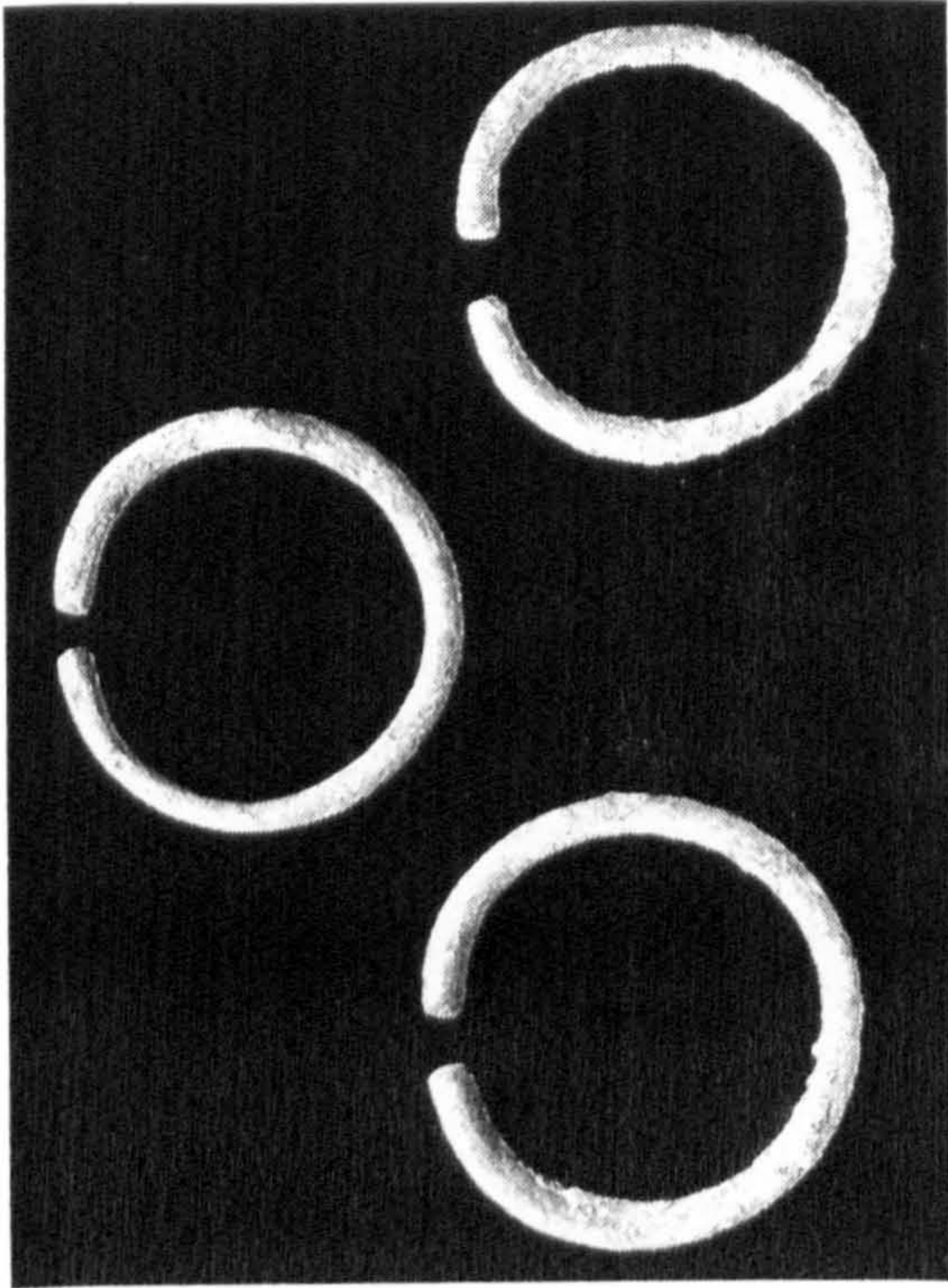


Fig. 3.64: Ring-shaped copper ingots. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & McKinnon 1998: 51).

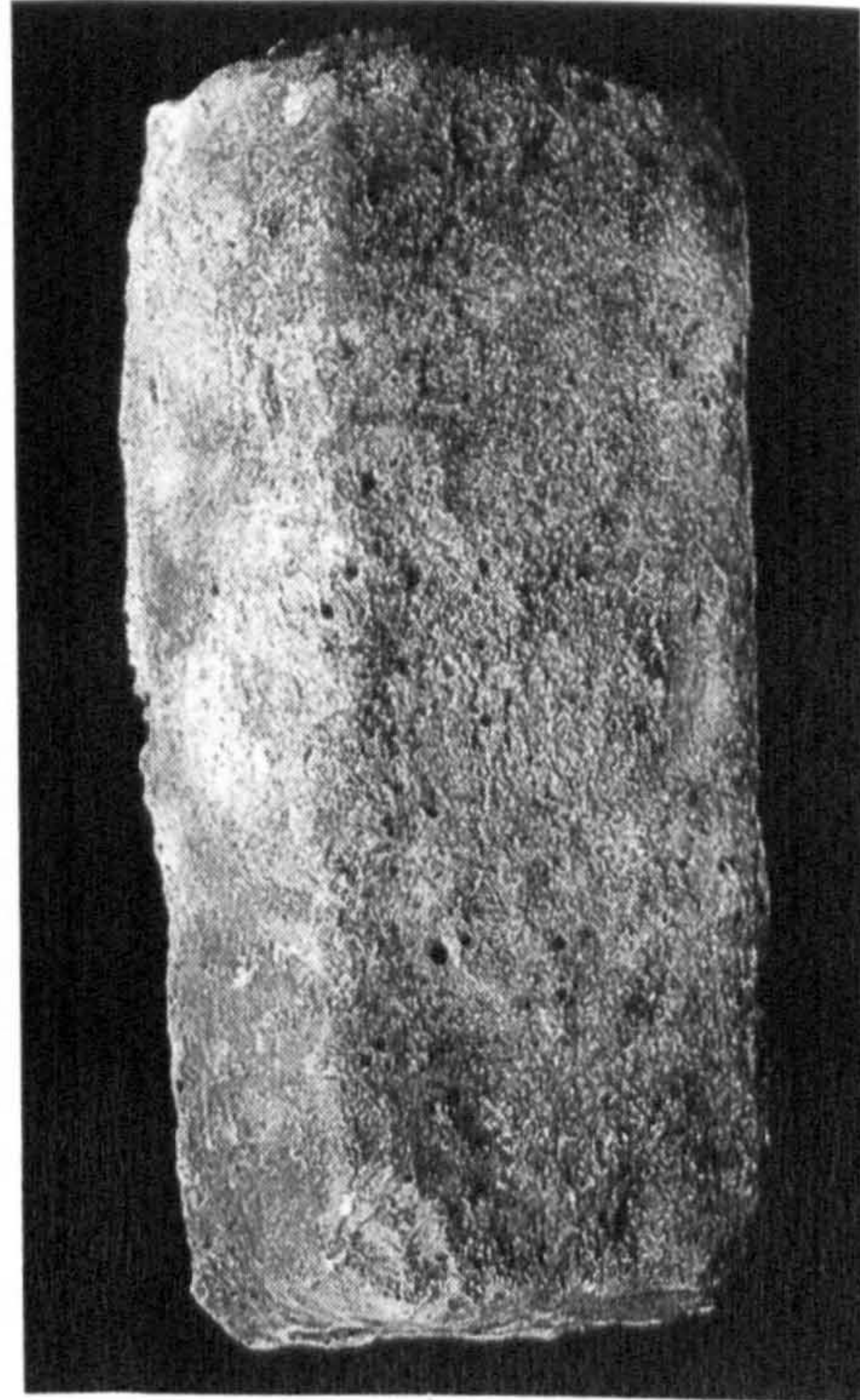


Fig. 3.65: Copper slab ingot. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & McKinnon 1998: Fig. 49b).

These copper and bronze items may be divided into two groups. The first comprises manufactured items, the origins of which are attributable. These include the foliated bronze mirror and eight gongs. The mirror's style is reminiscent of the Chinese tradition, while a gong of similar form with punched Chinese characters has been recovered from Candi Kembar Batu (Muara Jambi), with a Song reign date of 1231 inscribed on it¹⁰⁷. These copper wares were thus probably of Chinese origin.

¹⁰² Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 76, plates 49a & b).

¹⁰³ Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 78, plate 50).

¹⁰⁴ Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 78, plate 51).

¹⁰⁵ Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 85).

¹⁰⁶ Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 82, plate 62).

¹⁰⁷ Wolters (1983: 61).

However, the origin of the numerous copper ingots carried by the ship, all of which are unmarked, is uncertain. The purity of these ingots is very high, containing less than 1% of metal impurities¹⁰⁸. Chinese records indicate that following the lifting of the ban on the export of copper in 1074, coins were melted down and the pure copper extracted was cast into vessels and implements and exported, but there is no mention of the export of copper in the form of ingots. Any large-scale export of Chinese copper probably only took place between 1074 and 1126. This would tally with the approximate dating of the ceramics cargo. It is thus possible that the copper ingots were Chinese export items.

Mainland Southeast Asia would be the next most likely source of the copper ingots. The ship's cargo of fine-paste kendis, possibly from central or southern Thailand, suggests either that the ship had called at least one port in that region. Some of Island Southeast Asia's demand for copper appears to have been met by Mainland Southeast Asian sources, as is evident from the copper finds in the Intan wreck. Thailand, in particular, is known to have been an important source of copper for the Maritime Southeast Asian market for much of the first and second millennia. It is thus possible that the ship picked up its cargo of copper ingots from a port on the coast of Thailand. The ring-shaped copper ingots were probably also from Southeast Asia.

Other metal ingots were also recovered from the wreck. Eighteen rectangular slab ingots with molded or incised Chinese characters were recovered, of which the metallic content has not been ascertained¹⁰⁹. The finds also include forty-eight unevenly cast semi-circular bars (length 15 to 25 cm; width 2 to 2.5 cm; thickness 0.7 to 1 cm), similar to bars of tin solder used in present day Indonesian workshops¹¹⁰. Forty-five truncated pyramidal ingots,

¹⁰⁸ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 76).

¹⁰⁹ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 80).

¹¹⁰ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 82, plate 60).

probably of tin, of two distinct varieties, similar to those excavated from Malacca Straits sites¹¹¹, and a cylindrical ingot (diameter 6 cm; height 3.5 cm)¹¹², were also recovered.

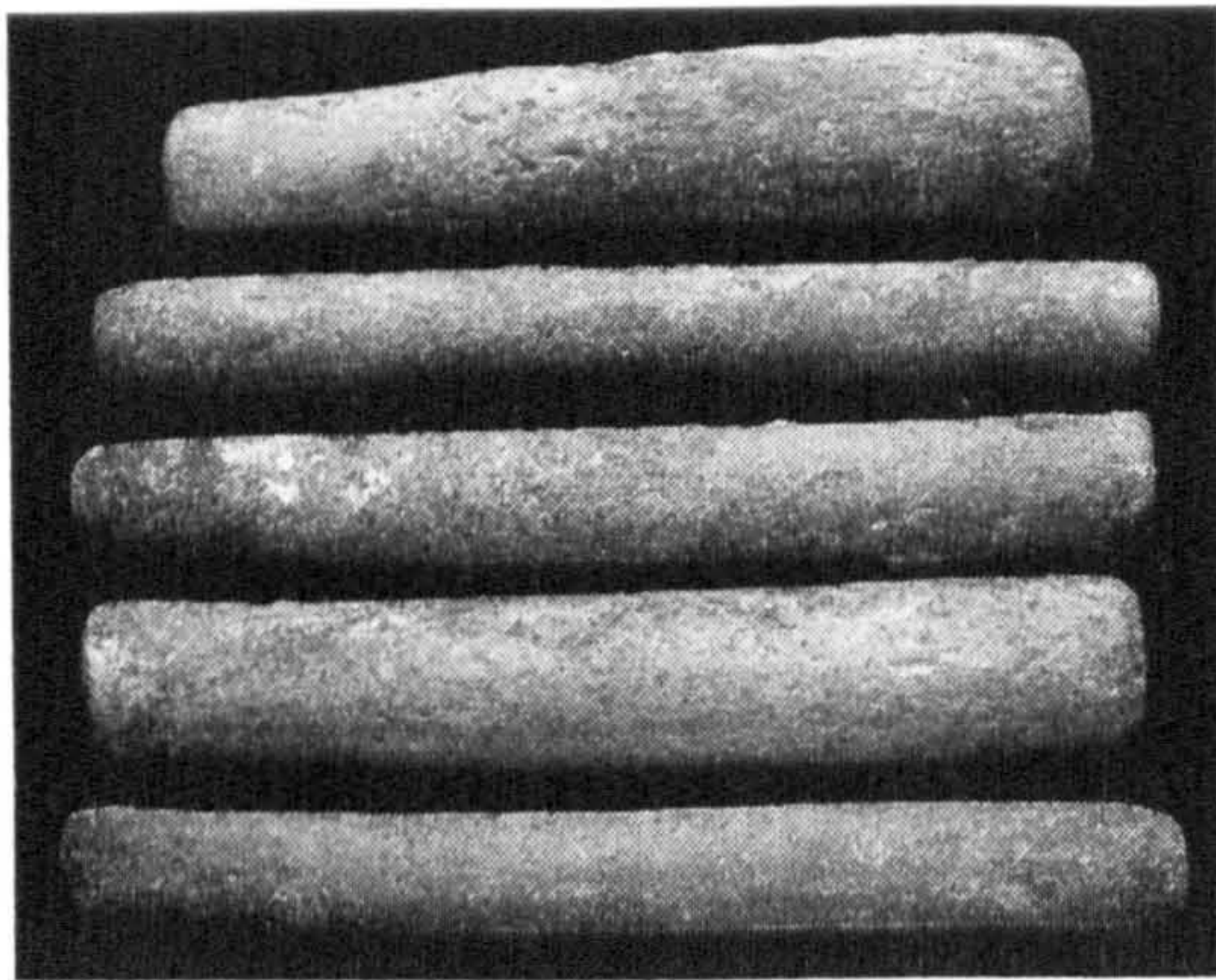


Fig. 3.66: Semi-circular tin or lead bars. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & McKinnon 1988: Fig. 60).

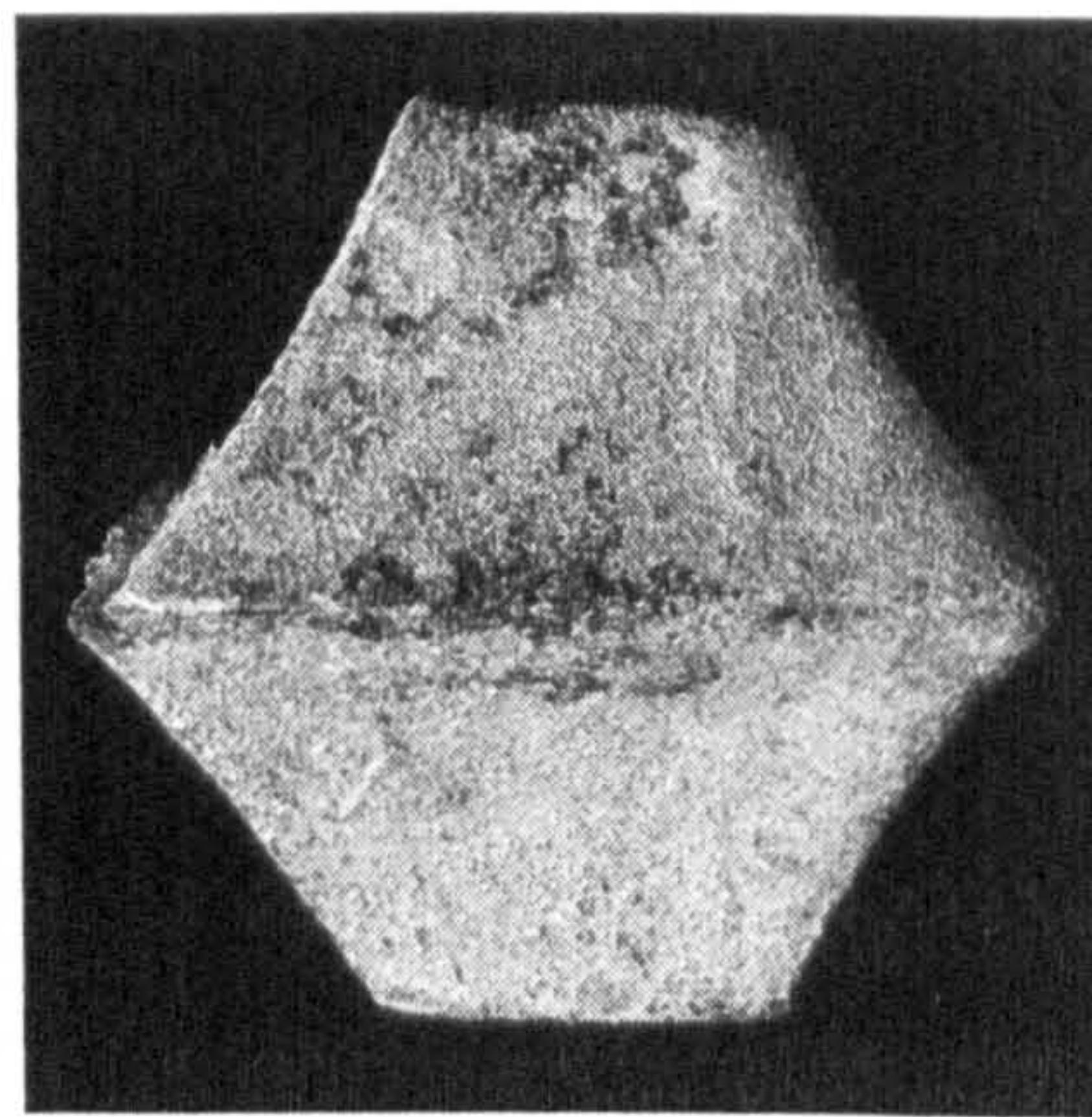


Fig. 3.67: Truncated pyramidal tin or lead ingot. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & McKinnon 1988: Fig. 61).

China was, however, the source of the slab ingots, probably of zinc or lead. These were Chinese export items, since they had incised or moulded Chinese characters on them. These include characters such as “guan” (official), “mairen” (sellers) and “qu” (district or locality), indicating that the export of this metal was officially permitted by the Song court. The metal bars, which appear to have been cast of the same metal as the slab ingots, are also similar in appearance to the Chinese iron bars recovered from Song period Southeast Asia wrecks, such as the Java Sea wreck.



Fig. 3.68: Slab ingot with Chinese characters, possibly of lead or zinc. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & McKinnon 1988: Fig. 54).

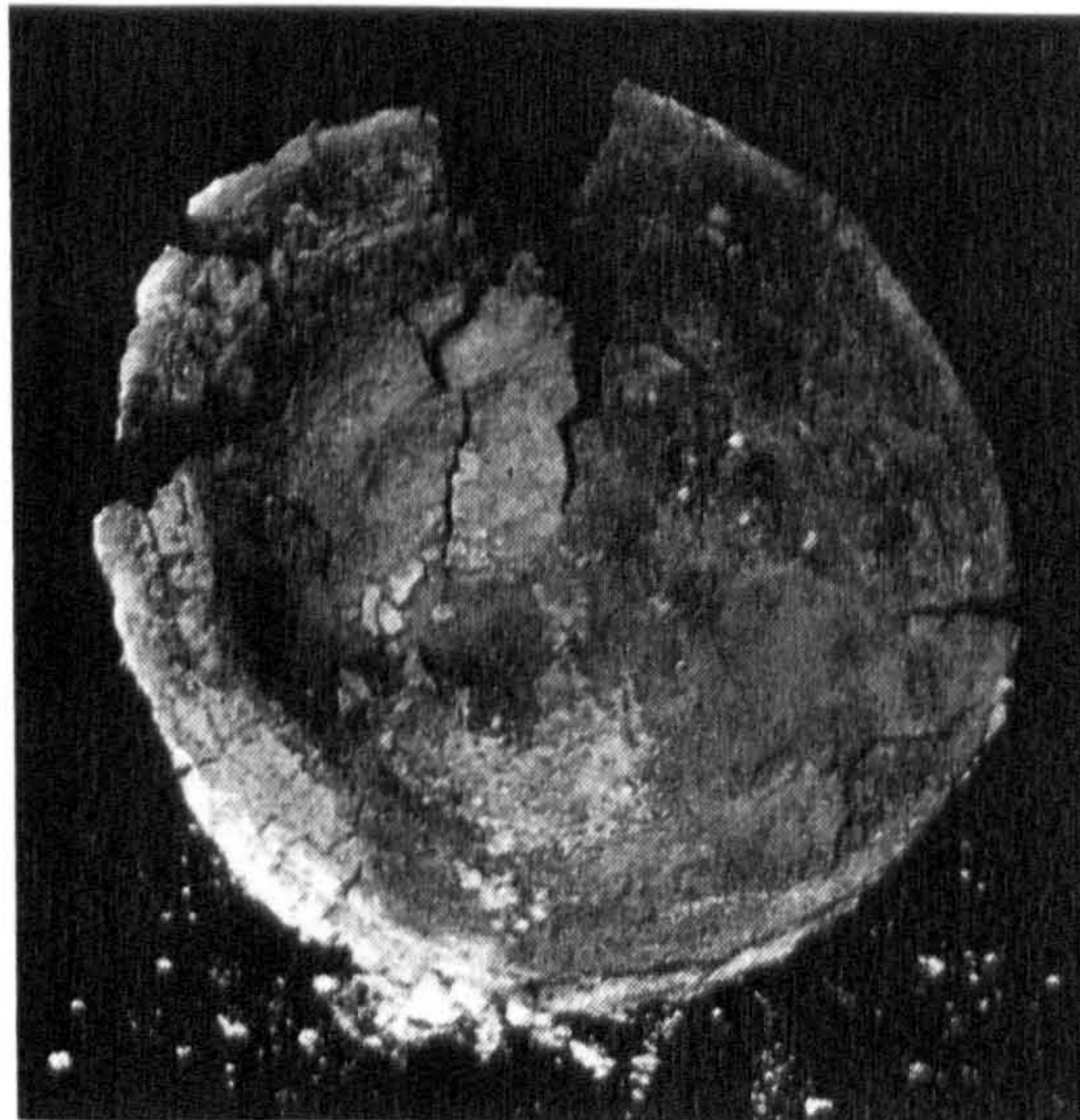


Fig. 3.69: Iron wok of Chinese origin. Recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck (Ridho & McKinnon 1988: Fig. 64).

¹¹¹ Peacock (1958) & Sieveking (1956).

¹¹² Ridho & McKinnon (1998: 82).

The ship also carried a number of pieces of ironware. A number of stacks of woks, and one bundle of iron bars with trapezoidal cross-section¹¹³, have been identified. The actual quantity of iron products that was carried by the vessel, however, has not been ascertained, as these had become concretions covered with coral. The iron lamp standard that was also recovered was possibly part of the crew's property¹¹⁴.

3.3.3 Java Sea Wreck

The Java Sea wreck, located in the northwest region of the Java Sea, off the coast of Sumatra, is believed to have been a Southeast Asian vessel dated to the late thirteenth century¹¹⁵. The ship measured approximately twenty-six meters in length, with a displacement of 300 to 400 tons. The cargo consisted predominantly of Chinese products, namely ceramics, iron articles, and possibly two bronze gongs, as well as a small number of Southeast Asian products, including eight pieces of resin, three copper ingots, sixteen elephant tusks and 31 kendis made in Peninsular Thailand¹¹⁶. In addition, two bronze figures and two finials of Maritime Southeast Asian origin, a set of copper alloy weights, two balance bars, six copper alloy items and five glass fragments were recovered from the wreck site; all of these appear to have been the crew's possessions. The vessel appears to have been traveling from South China to Java, having apparently stopped at a port in Peninsular Thailand before foundering in the Java Sea.

¹¹³ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 84, plates 64 & 65).

¹¹⁴ Ridho & Mckinnon (1998: 86, plate 66).

¹¹⁵ Flecker (1997: 182).

¹¹⁶ Flecker (1997: 77–94).

The Chinese ceramics recovered from the wreck consist of both fine and coarse category wares, and comprise 95 painted wares¹¹⁷, 46 black-glazed bowls, 1839 white wares¹¹⁸, 13 qingbai wares probably of Jingdezhen origin¹¹⁹, 32 Fujian qingbai wares¹²⁰, 135 celadon wares¹²¹, 8019 green-glazed wares¹²² and 472 brown-glazed wares¹²³. With the exception of the brown-glazed wares, the majority of which were containers, the ceramic assemblage consists predominantly of tableware, followed by lidded-boxes and vases.

The predominance of low-value products in this ship's cargo is emphasized by the 190 tons of iron products found at the wreck site. These include stacks of iron woks of various sizes, and rectangular and trapezoidal iron bars, which form the majority of the iron cargo¹²⁴.

The only other products possibly of Chinese origin were the two bronze gongs. Bronze gongs of Chinese origin have occasionally been found in Maritime Southeast Asia, one such being that with an inscription dated to 1231 found at Muara Jambi¹²⁵. The recovery of only two bronze articles of possible Chinese origin suggests that the involvement in the Chinese bronze trade by the traders on board this vessel was incidental. The high value of Chinese

¹¹⁷ The painted wares consist of 4 bowls (2 types); 3 dishes; 48 covers (5 types), of which 3 types comprise 42 examples; 27 ewers (1 type); 1 wine pot; covered boxes; 3 bottles (3 types); 1 jar; 3 vases (3 types); 5 ambrosia bottles. Flecker (1997: 116–130).

¹¹⁸ The white wares consist of 70 vases (1 type); 1 bottle; 268 boxes with lids (4 sizes); 600 box covers (various sizes); 900 box bases (various sizes). Flecker (1997: 131–136).

¹¹⁹ The Jingdezhen qingbai wares consist of 2 dishes (2 types); 2 covered boxes; 1 box cover; 1 vase; 7 dishes (1 type). Flecker (1997: 137, 140–141, 144).

¹²⁰ The South Chinese qingbai wares consist of 2 vases (2 types); 6 dishes (4 types); 3 bowls (1 type); 13 ewers (2 types), of which 10 are of 1 type; 3 bottles (2 types); 1 jar; 4 covers (1 types). Flecker (1997: 142–148).

¹²¹ The celadon wares consist of 131 bowls (8 types), of which 115 are of 4 types; 4 dishes (1 type). Flecker (1997: 149–152).

¹²² The green-glazed wares consist of 911 dishes (3 types), of which 900 are of 1 type; 350 bowls (2 types, evenly distributed); 80 lobed bowls (2 types, evenly distributed); 692 bowls with simple combed decoration (3 types), of which 650 are of 1 type; 1250 bowls with comb-incised cloud decorations (1 type); 4390 undecorated bowls (4 types); of which 4000 are of 2 types; 280 bowls with everted rims (2 types, almost evenly distributed); 50 lobed dishes (2 types, 2:3 distribution); 16 covers (7 types). Flecker (1997: 153–164).

¹²³ The brown-glazed wares consist of 6 bowls (1 type); 14 basins (1 type); 29 bottles (1 type); 5 pouring vessels (1 type); 3 jarlets (2 types); 89 jars (8–16 cm high, 3 types), of which 80 are of 1 type; 6 mercury jars (2 sizes); 80 jars with 4 lugs (wide-mouth, Quanzhou type); 2 covers (1 type); 2 ewers (2 types). Flecker (1997: 165–171).

¹²⁴ Flecker (1997: 77–80).

¹²⁵ Refer to Salmon (2003).

copper and the repeated bans on its export from China by the Song court from 1163 onwards would have made the trade in Chinese bronze articles both expensive and difficult to conduct. The gongs in the Java Sea wreck were undoubtedly to be used for ceremonial purposes rather than melted down for their metal content.

3.3.4 Quanzhou Wreck

The discovery and excavation of a ship wreck at Quanzhou Bay, Fujian province in 1973¹²⁶ provided a different perspective on China's trade with Southeast Asia at the end of the thirteenth century. This ship, which was incoming from Southeast Asia, was discovered in Houtu harbor, one of the key harbor points of Quanzhou port, located several kilometers from Quanzhou city. The approximate depth of the harbor at high tide in the late thirteenth century is believed to have been seven meters, and the harbor was well sheltered, allowing easy anchoring for an ocean-going vessel¹²⁷. The vessel, originally measuring 35 meters by 10 meters, was of Chinese construction¹²⁸. The ship's hull, when excavated, did not reveal any sign of damage, nor were any human remains recovered from the site.

Perhaps the most important finds recovered from the Quanzhou wreck are the wooden tags. Ninety-six of these have been recovered, of which seventy-six indicate ownership of the ship's cargo, one indicates a product (pickled cucumbers), eight have no characters surviving on them, and ten have characters that are undistinguishable¹²⁹. Of the seventy-six ownership tags, eighteen relate to the southern Song imperial clan, eight relate to four princely clan families, and twenty-two tags denote administrative roles of private business concerns. Another ten probably belonged to the ship's crew, and ten others possibly belonged to passengers, of whom one, indicated by the characters "ya li", was most likely a

¹²⁶ Merwin (1977: 18 & table 1). Also refer to Nanjing Yaoxueyuan (1983) & Shanghai weishengju yaoping yenjiusuo (1983).

¹²⁷ Merwin (1977: 6-10).

¹²⁸ Flecker (2001: 325-326).

¹²⁹ Fu (1989: 77-83).

foreigner¹³⁰. These tags indicate that most of those investing in this ship's trading voyage were Chinese.

The tags belonging to the imperial clansmen were recovered mainly from holds 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 13, with the largest numbers recovered from holds 5 and 6¹³¹. The bulk of the cargo belonging to these clansmen was thus held in these five holds. The other ownership tags, which probably denoted the presence of other private Chinese traders and possibly one foreign trader, were mainly recovered from holds 10, 12 and 13, with the largest number from hold 10¹³². This suggests that while Chinese trading vessels operated with the commercial capital of Song imperial clansmen, who had the necessary capital to fit a ship and send it on trading voyages to Southeast Asia, a proportion of the cargo space was leased to other private traders. This confirms the comment of Zhu Yu concerning Chinese trading vessels in the PZKT¹³³.

Amongst the artifacts recovered are 504 copper coins and 7 iron coins, the latest reign mark on the copper coins dating to 1272. Thus, the vessel must have foundered after that date. Given the Song imperial connections of some of the owners of the cargo, the ship's voyage must have been undertaken before the end of the Song period in 1278. The wreck can thus be dated to the mid or late 1270s. It is possible that the vessel returned to harbor just as the city fell to the Mongols.

The recovered remains of the ship's cargo include 2.5 metric tons of incense wood comprising gharuwood, lakawood incense and sandalwood. In addition, five liters of peppercorns, 51 betel nuts, one tortoise shell, 6.3 grams of frankincense and 1.1 grams of

¹³⁰ Fu (1989: 79-80).

¹³¹ Merwin (1977: Table 2).

¹³² Merwin (1977: Table 2).

¹³³ PZKT, 2:2b-4a. See also Shiba (1970: 31-32).

ambergris were recovered¹³⁴. The wreck is currently the only archaeological evidence pertaining to Song China's import trade of Southeast Asian products. Apart from the frankincense and possibly the ambergris, the bulk of the cargo was from Maritime Southeast Asia. Gharuwood and lakawood incense were key products exported by the Malacca Straits region and the northeastern tracts of the Malay Peninsula. The ship's cargo therefore suggests that the Malacca Straits region had been the destination of the vessel's outbound trading voyage from China. The presence of frankincense onboard the ship suggests that the vessel had called at a Malacca Straits region port that had trade links with the Indian Ocean littoral.

The cargo carried by the vessel comprised almost entirely Maritime Southeast Asian products, the bulk of which were of low value. This low-value trade, however, was not confined to traders at the lower levels of the Chinese trade hierarchy. The presence of twenty-six tags denoting ownership of cargo by the Song imperial clansmen provides evidence for the involvement of this group of Song social elite, who were closely connected with the imperial court, in the bulk trade in low-value Malacca Straits region products¹³⁵.

Two types of artifacts found in the wreck appear to have been remnants of the Chinese products exported by the traders of the Quanzhou wreck to the Malacca Straits region. The first are the small-mouthed jars, of which 401 sherds have been recovered¹³⁶. These may reflect the export trade in South Fujian wine to the Malacca Straits region. The other is a single wooden tag denoting pickled cucumbers. Together, these two bits of information suggest that Chinese foodstuffs were exported to Maritime Southeast Asia during the late thirteenth century.

3.3.5 Turiang Wreck

¹³⁴ Merwin (1977: 18 & table 1).

¹³⁵ For the involvement of imperial clansmen in maritime trade at Quanzhou, refer to Chaffee (2001).

¹³⁶ Xu (1983).

The Turiang wreck is located approximately one hundred nautical miles from the east coast of Johor, Malaysia. The vessel was constructed using iron nails and clamps rather than lashing or wooden dowels, and was partly constructed of pinewood, indicating that it was of Chinese origin. Measuring 26 meters by 8 meters, the vessel was carrying a mixed cargo. The recovered artifacts include 6475 ceramic vessels, Southeast Asian foodstuffs, 3 or 4 elephant tusks, sphalerite (a substance containing zinc sulfide, which may have been used as a cosmetic), eggs and lumps of oxidised iron¹³⁷.

Of the ceramic cargo, which dates to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, 46% were products of the Sukothai kilns, 11% were from Sawankhalok, 8% consisted of Vietnamese underglaze decorated bowls, and the remaining 35% consisted of Chinese ceramics, almost all of which were from Guangdong¹³⁸. It is apparent that a large proportion of the original cargo had already been exchanged for local ceramics by the time the ship left the Gulf of Thailand and headed for Maritime Southeast Asia.

The Turiang wreck thus provides unique archaeological evidence for Chinese participation in the intra-regional Southeast Asian trade during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. A substantial intra-Southeast Asian trade in Thai ceramics, and a select trade in Vietnamese ceramic bowls, was apparently conducted by Chinese traders. The presence of fish bones and eggshells in a number of large Thai storage jars of 75-litre capacity, which were originally loaded beneath other trade ceramics¹³⁹, and therefore formed part of the ship's commercial cargo rather than the food supply of the ship's crew, indicates that foodstuffs were by this time an important category of products of this trade. The cargo also

¹³⁷ Brown & Sjostrand (2000: 17, 18 & 39).

¹³⁸ The Chinese ceramic assemblage consisted of bowls (2 types), jarlets (1 type), covered boxes (1 type, 3 sizes), dishes (1 type), storage jars with narrow necks and small rims (2 types), and large storage jars (1 type). Brown & Sjostrand (2000: 32-34).

¹³⁹ Brown & Sjostrand (2000: 18).

included such traditional products as ivory, as well as such minerals as zinc sulfide, which was transported in ten storage jars of Suphanburi (Thailand) origin¹⁴⁰.

The Chinese ceramic cargo, approximately 91% of which comprised low value Guangdong ceramics and 9% of which consisted of celadon pieces probably of Longquan type, suggests that the export trade in ceramics carried out by the owners of the ship consisted primarily of low value pieces obtained from the immediate hinterland area of the port of Guangzhou. Nonetheless, a limited trade in high value Chinese ceramics, similar to the proportions reflected by the data of earlier wrecks, continued, and it is possible that many of the more valuable Chinese ceramics had been off-loaded before the ship sank.

Significant quantities of lumps of oxidized iron have been recovered from the wreck site, indicating that Maritime Southeast Asia's import of iron continued into the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. However, the iron, which is in the form of granules, is in a different form from the iron recovered from the Java Sea and Intan wrecks, suggesting that the Maritime Southeast Asia's import of cheap workable iron may have diversified beyond China to include sources in Southeast Asia.

Although the wreck falls just outside of the time frame with which this study is concerned, its cargo provides a snapshot of the maritime trade conducted by Chinese traders in Southeast Asia not long after the fall of the Yuan.

¹⁴⁰ Brown & Sjostrand (2000: 39).

Chapter 4: Sources of Archaeological Data on the Economic Relations between China and the Malacca Straits Region (Excavations and Surveys of Malacca Straits Region Sites)

4.1 Introduction

Land-based excavations and survey reports from the Malacca Straits region form the third important source of archaeological data utilized by the present study. This chapter focuses upon data derived from sites of tenth to fourteenth century ports in the Malacca Straits region that provide information concerning trade with China that was specific to these individual ports. Land-based archaeological data only provide information concerning the trade in imperishable commodities, such as ceramics, glass and metals. Other commodities, such as textiles, are absent from the body of data. Even the identity of the commodities that were transported in ceramic containers can only be inferred, and conclusions are not definite. The picture of the trade between China and the Malacca Straits region ports, as reflected by the data from land-based archaeological excavations, is therefore not a complete one. Nonetheless, it is important.

A number of settlement sites along the coasts of the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and eastern Indonesia, and around the Indian Ocean have yielded Chinese ceramics of the Song and Yuan periods. While remains of other trade goods have been found, it is the ceramics that at present provide the most information concerning China's export trade during these periods.

The extent of the trading networks connecting South China, Maritime Southeast Asia and South India is evident from the Chinese ceramics that have been recovered from settlement sites along the southeastern coast of India. Chinese ceramics attributed to the Song and

Yuan periods have been recovered from Periyapattinam and Kayal. These included green ware from Longquan and Fujian, white and blue and white wares from Jingdezhen, dehua white ware and Guangdong brown ware¹. Along the Kerala coast, thirteenth and fourteenth century sherds, such as blue and white shufu and Longquan wares, have been recovered from Pandalayini². At Kollam, Longquan sherds have been recovered, most of which date to the fourteenth century³. These ceramics must have reached the Indian Ocean via either the Malacca Straits or the Sunda Straits.

Numerous sites in Java have also yielded Chinese ceramics of the Song and Yuan periods. These finds include green-glazed and celadon glazed wares from South Fujian and Longquan, dehua and qingbai wares from South Fujian and Jingdezhen, lead-glazed ceramics from Jinjiang in South Fujian, and iron-spotted white glazed ceramics from Guangdong⁴. Given the evidence provided by shipwrecks, it appears that some of these were transshipped from the Malacca Straits region.

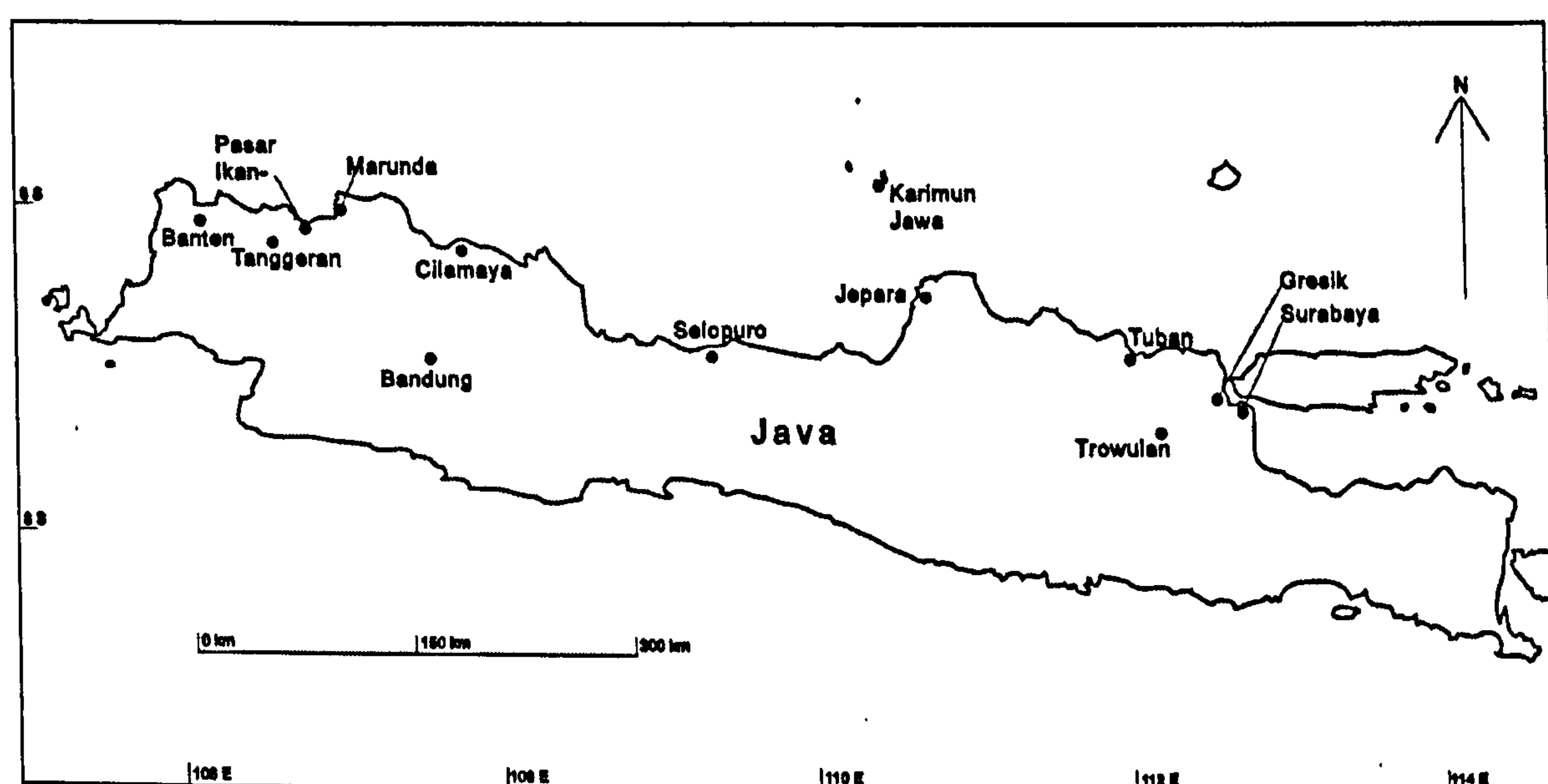


Fig. 4.1: Sites in Java where Song & Yuan Period Ceramics have been recovered

¹ Sengupta (1996: 100-113).

² Subbarayalu (1996).

³ Sengupta (1996: 113).

⁴ Adhyatman (1990).

Settlement sites on the coasts of Sumatra corresponding to the Song and Yuan periods include Palembang, Muara Jambi⁵, Kompei⁶, Lobu Tua⁷ and Kota Cina⁸. Of these, a detailed report is available only for Kota Cina. Fine stoneware ceramics recovered from these sites included Yue-type, Longquan celadon, dehua white, qingbai and Guangdong ware. Coarse stoneware ceramics include South Fujian and Guangdong wares.

Several sites in the Malacca Straits region that are attributable to the tenth to fourteenth centuries will be discussed in some detail. These include South Kedah and Tioman Island in the Malay Peninsula, Kota Cina in North Sumatra, and Temasik (Singapore Island) at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. Ceramics form the main object of the study in this chapter, although other small finds that have been recovered at these sites will be included in the discussion as well.

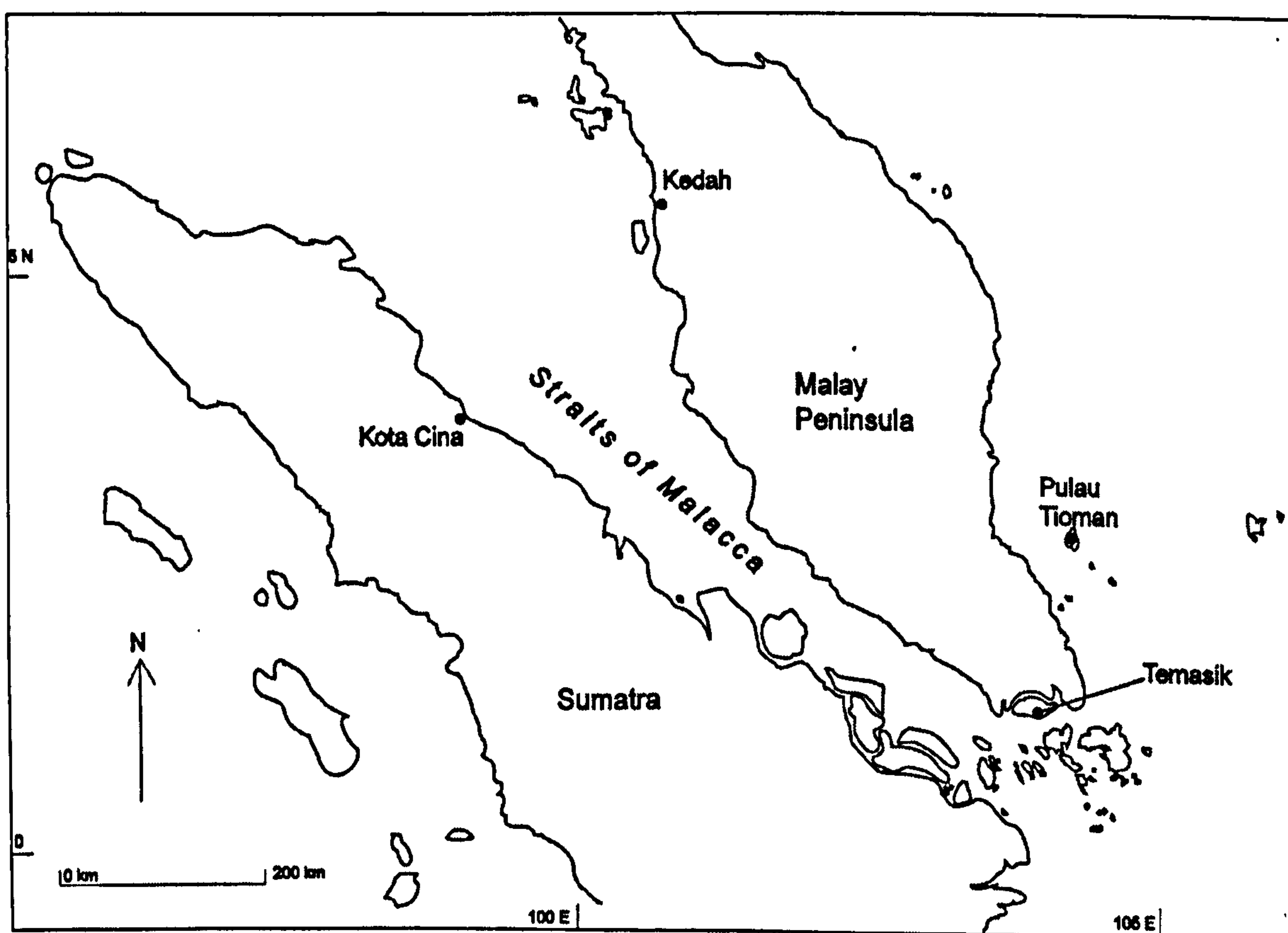


Fig. 4.2: Location of Archaeological Settlement-Sites in the Malacca Straits Region

⁵ Ridho (1995).

⁶ McKinnon & Sanar (1981).

⁷ Guillot (1998).

⁸ McKinnon (1984).

The data relating to most of these sites have been obtained from published sources or, in the case of the South Kedah sites, through brief surveys of museum collections. The material from the Temasik sites, however, represents original data from on-going excavations. This material will be discussed in detail as a port-level case study of the Malay region-China trade during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with emphasis on the ceramics trade between China and this port-settlement. The issues that arise from such a detailed study include the networks of trade with South China, and the nature of Temasik's import trade in Chinese commodities. These will be discussed in chapter 9.

4.2 South Kedah

Apart from the Temasik sites in Singapore, the sites at Pengkalan Bujang and Sungai Mas in South Kedah are the only tenth to fourteenth century sites on the Lower Peninsula that have been systematically excavated and studied. Archaeological research in South Kedah began in the 1920s, and was followed by excavations conducted by Quaritch-Wales⁹, Alastair Lamb¹⁰, B. A. V. Peacock¹¹, Leong Sau Heng¹², Nik Hassan Shuhaimi¹³ and J. Allen¹⁴. The finds include monumental remains and inscriptions; sculpture and images in stone, bronze, gold foil and terracotta; ceramics from China, Southeast Asia and the Middle East; and other trade goods such as glass beads and fragments of glassware¹⁵.

The archaeological data indicate that two successive ports operated on the Kedah coast between the ninth and fourteenth centuries—the earlier at Sungai Mas and the later a few

⁹ Wales (1940); Wales & Wales (1947).

¹⁰ Lamb (1959a & b, 1960, 1961 & 1966).

¹¹ Peacock (1970 & 1974).

¹² Leong (1973).

¹³ Shuhaimi (1984) & Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990).

¹⁴ Allen (1988).

¹⁵ Leong (1973); Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990: 43-86).

kilometers to the north at Pengkalan Bujang¹⁶. It appears that, due to river silting, the port settlement shifted from the Sungai Mas site to the Pengkalan Bujang site in the twelfth century. Archaeological evidence suggests that the port maintained important commercial ties both with China and with the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East. This is not surprising, considering the role of the northwestern tracts of the Malay Peninsula as a landfall for ships sailing across the Bay of Bengal from the late prehistoric period onwards.

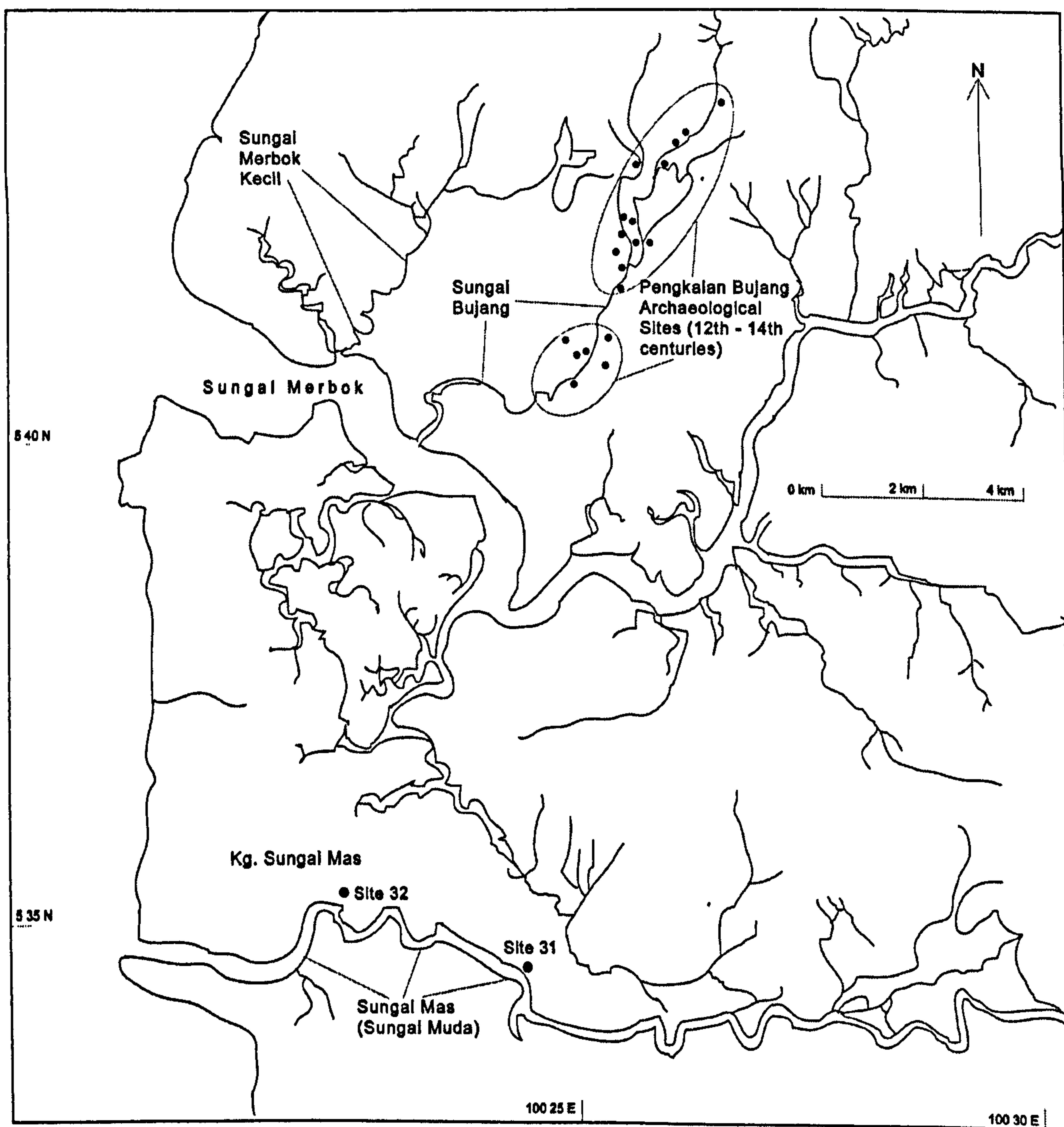


Fig. 4.3: Archaeological Sites in South Kedah (9th – 14th Centuries)

¹⁶ Lamb (1961: 83); Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990: 94); Jacq-Hergoualc'h (1992: 304).

4.2.1 Sungai Mas

The Sungai Mas settlement, centered in Kota Kuala Muda and Kampong Sungai Mas, but extending to include Kampong Simpor Tambang and Kampong Sireh, is the earliest known trading port settlement in South Kedah. A settlement somewhere in the area is believed to have begun no later than the fifth century¹⁷, and the Song-period phase is characterized by temple platforms built along the Sungai Mas River. Two sites in this area provide an example of the Sungai Mas period of Kedah. The first is site 32, situated in Kampong Sungai Mas in Kota Kuala Muda, which is near the mouth of the Sungai Mas. The second is site 31, located at Kampong Matang Pasir along the Simpor River, approximately six kilometers from Kampong Sungai Mas up the Sungai Mas River. The first provides some insight into the economic activities of the coastal settlement area of the port polity at Sungai Mas, while the latter provides some insight into the impact of the coastal economic activities in the port catchment region.

The main archaeological finds upon which the present study is focused are the ceramics and glass, both of which provide clues to the economic exchanges in which the Sungai Mas settlement was engaged. The key categories of ceramic finds are earthenware and stoneware. Most of the former were produced locally, while the latter were imported. Of the imported wares, the key categories are Chinese green and white wares, and wares that appear to be from the Middle East.

Several categories of ceramics were recovered from site 32¹⁸. Two groups of green ware have been identified—Yaozhou-type and grayish-green wares. For white ware, the key groups have been identified by glaze characteristics—greyish-white and qingbai. Finally, there is only one group of coarse stoneware sherds in the assemblage—Guangdong-type

¹⁷ Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990: 89).

¹⁸ See Table 4.1 & Table 4.2.

ware. Sherds of Ming period blue and white porcelain are also present. Lead glazed ceramic sherds, most likely of Middle Eastern origin, have also been recovered.

Artifact	Beads	Earthenware		Imported Ceramics						
		Decorated	Non-decorated	Stone-ware	Porcelain	Middle Eastern	Green ware	Qingbai	White ware	Others
Phase										
1	45	2456	573	176	236	-	19	-	-	-
2	303	4508	508	71	120	-	112	-	-	127
3	1612	20291	4790	1576	597	-	245	-	-	191
4	485	9237	2188	564	412	60	144	-	-	-
5	5480	35254	8415	1832	1558	127	535	-	-	-
6	2229	8224	2840	312	289	75	353	119	22	-
Total	10154	79970	19314	4531	3212	262	1408	119	22	318

Table 4.1: Summary of Artifacts Recovered from Site 32, Phases 1-6, Sungai Mas, Kuala Muda, Kedah (Kamaruddin Zakaria [1995: Table 1])

Artifact	Beads	Earthenware		Imported Ceramics		
		Decorated	Non-decorated	Stoneware	Porcelain	Green ware
	3737g (15.8%)	3230g (13.6%)	12530g (52.8%)	852g (3.6%)	447g (1.9%)	626g (2.6%)
Total	3737g (15.8%)	15760g (66.4%)		1925g (8.1%)		

Table 4.2: Summary of Artifacts Recovered from Site 32, Phase 8, Sungai Mas, Kuala Muda, Kedah, with Relative Percentages to the Total Small Finds (Abd Aziz Abdul Rashid [1995: Table 1])

The Yaozhou-type group consists of sherds with an olive-green glaze of good quality that is transparent and highly vitrified. There is very little evidence of crazing or crackling of the glaze. The clay body is white or whitish-grey, with no impurities. The incised decoration on the vessels from which the sherds are derived consists of an animal motif such as a flying goose, set against a background of floral scrolls. These sherds have been tentatively classed as Yaozhou-type because the style of the decoration is reminiscent of the incised decorations executed by the Yaozhou (present-day Sha'anxi) potters on their green wares using an angled bamboo scalpel¹⁹, although the tone of the glaze of the sherds from site 32 is of a slightly warmer hue than those produced by the Yaozhou kilns. If this attribution is

¹⁹ Vainker (1991: 112).

correct, then Guangdong, which produced Yaozhou-type wares during the early Song period, was the source of the wares from which these sherds were derived, and the site may be assigned to the tenth to twelfth century.

The second group of green ware sherds in the site 32 assemblage comprises those that have a greyish-green glaze that exhibits crazing or crackling. The clay body is white or buff, with very few impurities. Several base sherds have a stylized radial floral medallion composed of repeating wavy petals. This group of ware also appears to have been produced by the Guangdong kilns during the Song period.

Amongst the white ware sherds, the qingbai-type sherds can be identified both by their glazes as well as the use of such incised decorations as cloud bands, and the presence of motifs formed from circular punch marks. Certain base sherds, which have glazes that have a fairly strong blue tint, have an impressed or incised floral motif of a stylized peony on the base. The decorative techniques evident on these sherds, in particular the use of circular bamboo punch marks, indicate that the qingbai sherds were most likely derived from the products of the Xicun kilns in Guangzhou, although Chao'an may have been another possible source of these ceramics. They can be assigned to the northern Song period.²⁰

The second group of white ware sherds consists of those that have a white-grey glaze. The clay body is white to buff, with very few impurities. These have been identified by Nik Hassan Shuhaimi as the so-called Samarra white ware, which is believed to have been produced in Hunan²¹. This type of ware is also believed to date to the Tang period.

The last group of fine stoneware sherds in the site 32 assemblage are the blue and white sherds. From the under-glaze cobalt blue decoration on the sherds, it appears that these are

²⁰ Lam (1989: 59).

²¹ Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990: 73).

derived from wares that were produced by the Jingdezhen kilns during the late Yuan and Ming periods. They appear to indicate a later reoccupation of the site.

Amongst the coarse stoneware sherds, only one group has been identified—the Guangdong-type coarse stoneware. The forms of vessels evident from the sherds include basins and storage jars. The former are characterized by rolled rim edges²², while the latter are characterized by both brown and black glazes²³. Like the Guangdong-type sherds recovered from the Temasik sites in Singapore and those classified by Eine Moore²⁴, the glazes on this group of sherds have largely disintegrated, except for the sherds with black glaze, on which the glaze has remained largely intact, albeit with numerous scratches.

While the ceramics recovered from site 32 comprise a *mélange* of different groups of green wares, white wares and blue and white porcelain, the ceramics recovered from site 31, which is about six kilometers up the Sungai Mas estuary from Kampong Sungai Mas, is more limited in its range of groups. Only green ware and white ware sherds have been recovered from the site, amongst which only one group of green ware and two groups of white ware have been identified.

In terms of the green ware, sherds with grayish-green glazes that are often crazed or crackled are the only type recovered. The clay body is buff, and contains very few impurities. The sherds do not exhibit very high firing or vitrification. This group of sherds appears to be similar to the Guangdong grey-green sherds identified in the site 32 assemblage.

Qingbai ware sherds form one of the groups of white ware recovered from site 31. Vessels include vases that are decorated with molded petals on the body. Plain qingbai bowls with a

²² See Fig. 3.18.

²³ See Fig. 4.8 – Fig. 4.15.

²⁴ Moore (1970: 29-56).

slightly blue-tinted white glaze have also been recovered. From the decoration on the vases and the glaze on the sherds, these wares appear to have been products of the Chao'an or Xicun kilns in northeast Guangdong.

White glazed ware form the other group of white ware sherds recovered from site 31. A complete example of this group, a jarlet that is decorated with carved lotus petals on the body, was recovered from the site²⁵. From the jarlet, it would appear that this ware was produced by the Chao'an kilns as well.

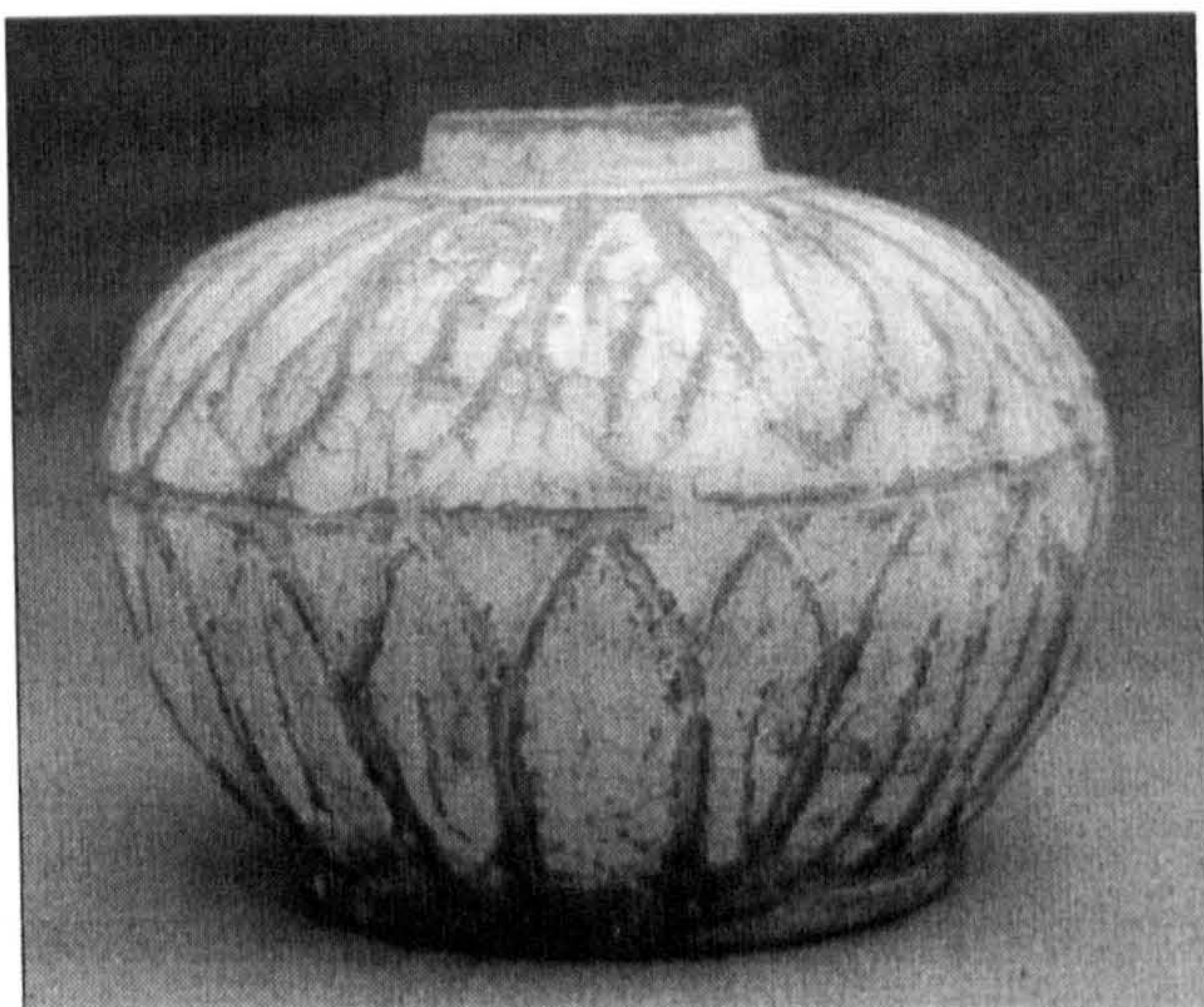


Fig. 4.4: White-glazed jarlet with molded lotus decoration; Guangdong. Excavated at site 32, Sungai Mas, Kedah (Shuhaimi & Yatim 1990: Plate 33).

In terms of coarse stoneware sherds, brown glazed ware sherds of the Guangdong-type were recovered from the site. An almost complete example of a spouted jar with matt brown glaze was also recovered. As at site 32, no other types of coarse stoneware sherds have been recovered.

From the above information, several characteristics may be noted about the assemblages of sites 31 and 32. The majority of the sherds appear to have been derived from wares that were produced by kiln districts in Guangdong. These include the Yaozhou-type sherds, the Xicun qingbai sherds, the Chao'an sherds, and the Guangdong-type storage jars and basins.

²⁵ Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990: 33). See Fig. 4.4.

The types of wares represented are those that were produced by the Guangdong kilns in the late Tang, Five dynasties and Northern Song periods.

The ceramics from the two sites at Sungai Mas date to the tenth to twelfth centuries, the period of production of these wares by the Guangdong kilns, although some of the decorative techniques, such as the carved lotus petals on the outer body of one ceramic piece, continued to be used into the thirteenth century. The presence of large numbers of early Song Guangdong ware sherds is complemented by the presence of sherds of white ware produced in Hunan. These were a major export item, along with Changsha ware, during the late Tang period. The absence of Changsha ware, found in quantities at the Laem Pho and Ko Kho Khao sites in Peninsular Thailand, however, suggests that sites 31 and 32 were not active prior to the tenth century. At the same time, South Fujian and Zhejiang ware sherds are very rare in the assemblages, with only two sherds that are possibly of Zhejiang-celadon type found at site 32.

It would thus appear that the site began establishing trade links with China during the tenth century. The predominance of Chinese ceramics attributable to the first half of the Song period suggests that the peak of the trade links with China occurred during the tenth to early twelfth centuries. The near absence of South Fujian and Zhejiang ceramic sherds indicates that trade links with China declined some time before the mid-twelfth century. The Sungai Mas area may have been largely abandoned by its inhabitants by the mid-twelfth century at the latest, when external trade appears to have been taken over by the newly established settlement at Pengkalan Bujang. The presence of late Yuan and early Ming blue and white sherds at Sungai Mas site 32, however, suggests that the area was reoccupied during the late fourteenth century.

Although Sungai Mas maintained some links in its ceramics import trade with the Indian Ocean Littoral, as indicated by the presence of Middle Eastern sherds, South China was

clearly the chief source of its ceramic imports. It appears that the Sungai Mas settlements' ceramics trade with South China during the tenth to early twelfth centuries was largely focused upon the port of Guangzhou. The kiln districts of Xicun in Guangzhou, and Foshan in Nanhai district, were in the immediate vicinity of Guangzhou, while Chao'an had easy domestic maritime access to the international port via the domestic port of Chaozhou.

4.2.2 Pengkalan Bujang

The Pengkalan Bujang port settlement sites, centered in the vicinity of Kampong Pengkalan Bujang, a few kilometers north of Kampong Sungai Mas, and extending up the Sungai Bujang, have been dated to the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Archaeological finds from the sites comprise such monumental remains as temple platforms, associated finds such as foundation reliquaries and inscriptions, and such small finds as imported ceramics, earthenware and glass. The associated finds suggest that the temples established in the Pengkalan Bujang area were Hindu.

A classification of the ceramic sherds recovered by Alastair Lamb from the Pengkalan Bujang area was conducted by Leong Sau Heng²⁶. This classification has been used in the present study as representative of the ceramics from the Pengkalan Bujang area. The Chinese ceramics assemblage may be subdivided into coarse and fine stoneware, each of these categories comprising distinct sub-groups.

Three groups of coarse stoneware have been recognized in the assemblage. The first is the Guangdong-type ware, similar to the type identified by Eine Moore from the Santubong sites in Sarawak²⁷, and similar to the Guangdong-type sherds recovered from the Temasik-

²⁶ Leong (1973: 130-219).

²⁷ Moore (1970: 29-56).

sites in Singapore. The vessel forms include storage jars and basins. Judging by the size of the base and angle of lower body, the storage jars appear to have ranged from medium-sized to large. The bodies of the jars are decorated with incised motifs, stamped characters, and occasionally molded animal motifs²⁸. The decorative motifs are similar to those used by Guangdong potters of the Guangzhou and Nanhai kiln districts in the production of storage jars during the Song period²⁹.

Two types of basins appear in the assemblage. The first includes those that are glazed on their inner wall and base. These are similar to those cited by Eine Moore³⁰. A key difference between the Pengkalan Bujang and the Santubong basins is the near absence of bases with an impressed motif in the Pengkalan Bujang assemblage³¹. In this respect, this type of basin recovered from the Pengkalan Bujang area is more closely related to basins recovered from the Temasik sites, where as yet no basin base with an impressed motif has been recovered.

The second type of basin has incised vertical lines along the inner walls, and is usually not glazed on the inside. Such basins appear to have been used as mortars, the incised grooves facilitating grinding. These mortars have also been recovered from the Santubong and Temasik sites.

The second group of coarse stoneware sherds is the brittle-type. These sherds are similar to the brittle-type cited by Eine Moore³², and may be similar to several groups of dark body³³ and small-mouthed type sherds recovered from the Temasik sites³⁴. The forms of these wares imported by Kedah included storage jars and basins. Of the former, the form is generally more ovoid and squat than those of the Guangdong-type jars. The latter however,

²⁸ See Fig. 3.20 – Fig. 3.23.

²⁹ Lam (1985: 8).

³⁰ Moore (1970: 42).

³¹ Leong (1973: 145).

³² Moore (1970: 8).

³³ See chapter 4, pp. 117 – 122, & Fig. 3.47.

³⁴ See chapter 4, pp. 124 & 125.

appear to be similar to Guangdong products. The main decorations found on this group of sherds include incised horizontal bands of wavy lines, molded animal motifs, in particular the dragon, and stamped characters³⁵. This group of wares was most likely produced by South Fujian kilns.

The third group of coarse stoneware sherds is the lead glazed green ware with a low-fired yellow-orange body, produced by the Cizao kilns in Jinjiang³⁶, South Fujian. The quantity of these sherds is not very large. Lead glaze ware production at the Cizao kilns was at its peak during the Southern Song period, but tapered off during the Yuan period.

Fine stoneware ceramics from China were imported by Kedah in large quantities during the Pengkalan Bujang phase. Green ware, white ware and black-brown glazed ware were recovered from the Pengkalan Bujang area.

The green ware sherds can be divided into three groups. The first comprises Longquan-type celadon sherds. These are of fairly high quality in terms of their glaze and clay body. The glaze is very high fired, with no sign of crazing, attesting to the superior technical knowledge of the potters in the production and matching of the glaze flux with the clay used for potting. Minute bubbles are evident throughout the glaze, resulting in a translucent effect. The clay body is produced from a very fine paste, and is light grey. The edges of the sherds are very sharp, and the body is very hard. From glaze and clay characteristics, it is likely that this group of wares is the product of the Longquan kilns of Zhejiang. The forms imported by the Pengkalan Bujang inhabitants included bowls, dishes, jarlets, vases, ewers, jars and jar lids³⁷. Bowl sherds form the largest proportion of Longquan-type sherds,

³⁵ See Fig. 3.35, Fig. 3.43, Fig. 3.44 & Fig. 3.46.

³⁶ See Fig. 3.43.

³⁷ See Fig. 3.47.

followed by dishes. The proportions of sherds of vases, jars, lids and jarlets are significantly smaller. Only one example of an ewer was present in the assemblage³⁸.

The second group of green ware sherds have glazes that are transparent instead of translucent, normally forming a thin layer on the clay body. The glaze thickens in recesses around decorative motifs or near the base of the vessels, indicating that the viscosity of the glaze was fairly low. The clay body is grayish white to white, high fired, and does not contain any impurities. The quality of the wares is generally lower than those of the Longquan-type. The vessel forms of this group of wares present in the assemblage include bowls, dishes, round-lidded boxes and jarlets. The main decoration of the bowls is the carved lotus petals on the external body of the bowls³⁹. While no provenance has been assigned to this type of green ware, the use of the carved lotus petals as decoration on the bowls, suggests that these vessels were produced by the Guangdong kilns. The absence of any impurities, and other clay body characteristics, such as the grayish white to white color, also suggests that these wares were more likely produced by Guangdong kilns than South Fujian kilns.

The third group of green ware sherds comprises examples with rather heavy bodies that were potted from fairly coarse clay. The main decorations on these sherds are incised floral motifs, which are simple and fairly free in their expression⁴⁰. These sherds appear to belong to the Tong'an type of green ware that was produced in the South Fujian kiln districts of Tong'an and Anxi during the Southern Song and Yuan periods⁴¹.

A small number of white ware sherds were identified in the assemblage. The glaze of these sherds ranges from creamy white to a transparent white with a blue tint. On the creamy

³⁸ Leong (1973: 192–202).

³⁹ Leong (1973: 202–207).

⁴⁰ Leong (1973: 208–215).

⁴¹ See Fig. 3.33 & Fig. 3.34.

white sherds, the glaze tends to be opaque rather than transparent. Some of the sherds display decorations formed by thin lines in relief. The forms include bowls, teacups, boxes and vases⁴². This group of white ware was probably produced by the Dehua kilns⁴³. Another group of white ware is represented by sherds that have a white glaze with a green tint. Leong Sau Heng suggests that this group of white ware is from Hunan and dates to the late Tang-Five Dynasties period⁴⁴. However, it seems more likely that this group of wares was produced in Guangdong or South Fujian, given the proliferation of white-ware producing kilns in both provinces during the Song period. Finally, the sherds with a transparent white glaze with blue tint are similar to the Jingdezhen qingbai ware⁴⁵, but may have been produced by the South Fujian or Guangdong kilns as well.

An even smaller number of black-brown glazed stoneware sherds are also present in the ceramic assemblage. These sherds fall into two distinct groups. The first consists of sherds whose bases have shadowy brown floral motifs. Vertical feathery rust-red streaks moving down towards the base of the wares are visible on the sherds. The rims tend to thin off, and are on average about twelve centimeters in diameter. The clay body is a light buff color. The second group consists of sherds that have a light grey clay body. Vertical feathery rust-red streaks moving down towards the base of the wares are also evident in this group of sherds. The rims tend to be grooved, and are smaller in diameter than those of group 1. In both groups, only one form—the small tea bowl—appears to have been imported⁴⁶. From the leaf image and rim profiles, Leong Sau Heng has concluded that the sherds with the floral motifs and buff clay body were from wares that were produced by the Jizhou kilns in Jiangxi, while the sherds with the grooved rims and light grey clay body were from wares that were produced by the Jian kilns of Fujian province⁴⁷. However, it is also likely that the Jinjiang

⁴² Leong (1973: 216–219).

⁴³ See Fig. 3.37 – 3.41.

⁴⁴ Leong (1973: 219).

⁴⁵ See Fig. 3.49 – 3.53.

⁴⁶ Leong (1973: 186–191).

⁴⁷ Leong (1973: 191).

kiln district in South Fujian was a source of these black-brown glazed wares, since the products of the Jinjiang kilns were modeled on those of the Jian kilns in North Fujian⁴⁸.

There is no detailed information on the quantities of the various categories and groups of ceramic sherds in the assemblage. Nonetheless, it is clear that earthenware sherds account for the majority of the sherds recovered from both the Sungai Mas and Pengkalan Bujang areas, with imported ceramics, of which those from China form the overwhelming majority, accounting for 20% to 30% of the ceramics recovered⁴⁹. Chinese ceramics comprised only 28% off all ceramics recovered from the cutting at site PB1 in the excavation conducted by Leong Sau Heng at Kampong Pengkalan Bujang in 1973⁵⁰. The proportions of the different groups of coarse stonewares are not known, although Guangdong and brittle type sherds appear to be the two largest groups of coarse stoneware sherds in the Pengkalan Bujang assemblage.

The exact proportions of the different groups of fine stonewares are also not known, although green wares constitute the largest category of fine Chinese stoneware sherds in the Pengkalan Bujang assemblage. It is not possible to conclude precisely where the majority of the green ware originated. Nonetheless, it would appear that South Fujian and Guangdong, together, were the main exporters of green ware to Kedah during the Pengkalan Bujang phase.

White ware sherds form the second largest category of fine stoneware sherds, although the quantity of sherds is much smaller than that of the green ware sherds⁵¹. Again, the proportion of the various groups of white ware sherds in the total assemblage is not known.

⁴⁸ Ho (2001: 245).

⁴⁹ Leong (1973: 109).

⁵⁰ Leong (1973: 109).

⁵¹ Leong (1973: 216).

However, these sherds are greater in number than the black-brown glazed sherds, of which there are less than thirty examples in the assemblage⁵².

The ceramic assemblage provides a number of clues as to the dating of the Pengkalan Bujang phase. Firstly, the absence of Yuan blue and white sherds in the excavation carried out in 1973 by Leong Sau Heng⁵³, and the absence of these sherds in the assemblage recovered by Alastair Lamb in 1961, suggests that the period of occupation in the Pengkalan Bujang area did not extend beyond the mid-fourteenth century, when blue and white ceramics began to be exported to Southeast Asia. The absence of significant quantities of Guangdong fine stoneware sherds, coupled with the large quantities of South Fujian fine stoneware sherds, suggests that the beginning of the Pengkalan Bujang phase coincided with the eclipse of the Guangdong export ceramics industry by the South Fujian ceramics industry during the twelfth century. The insignificant quantity of white ware sherds also suggests that the Pengkalan Bujang area was occupied after the peak period of white ware production and export by South China, which occurred between the tenth and eleventh centuries. Ceramic data suggest that occupation of the Pengkalan Bujang area began some time during the twelfth century, and continued until the early fourteenth century at the latest. The peak of habitation appears to have occurred during the late twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

The Chinese ceramics recovered at the Pengkalan Bujang site overlap with the types recovered in Singapore. This suggests that the sources of the Chinese ceramics imported by the Pengkalan Bujang settlement during its later phase were largely the same as those of Temasik. However, the presence of Middle Eastern ceramics, including one type that has a dark green, light green or pale yellow lead glaze⁵⁴, in the Pengkalan Bujang ceramics assemblage, and the absence of such examples in the Temasik assemblages, indicate that the

⁵² Leong (1973: 187 & 188).

⁵³ Leong (1973: 110).

⁵⁴ Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990: 80). See Fig. 4.5 & Fig. 4.6.

port at Pengkalan Bujang came into existence before Temasik did by approximately two hundred years.

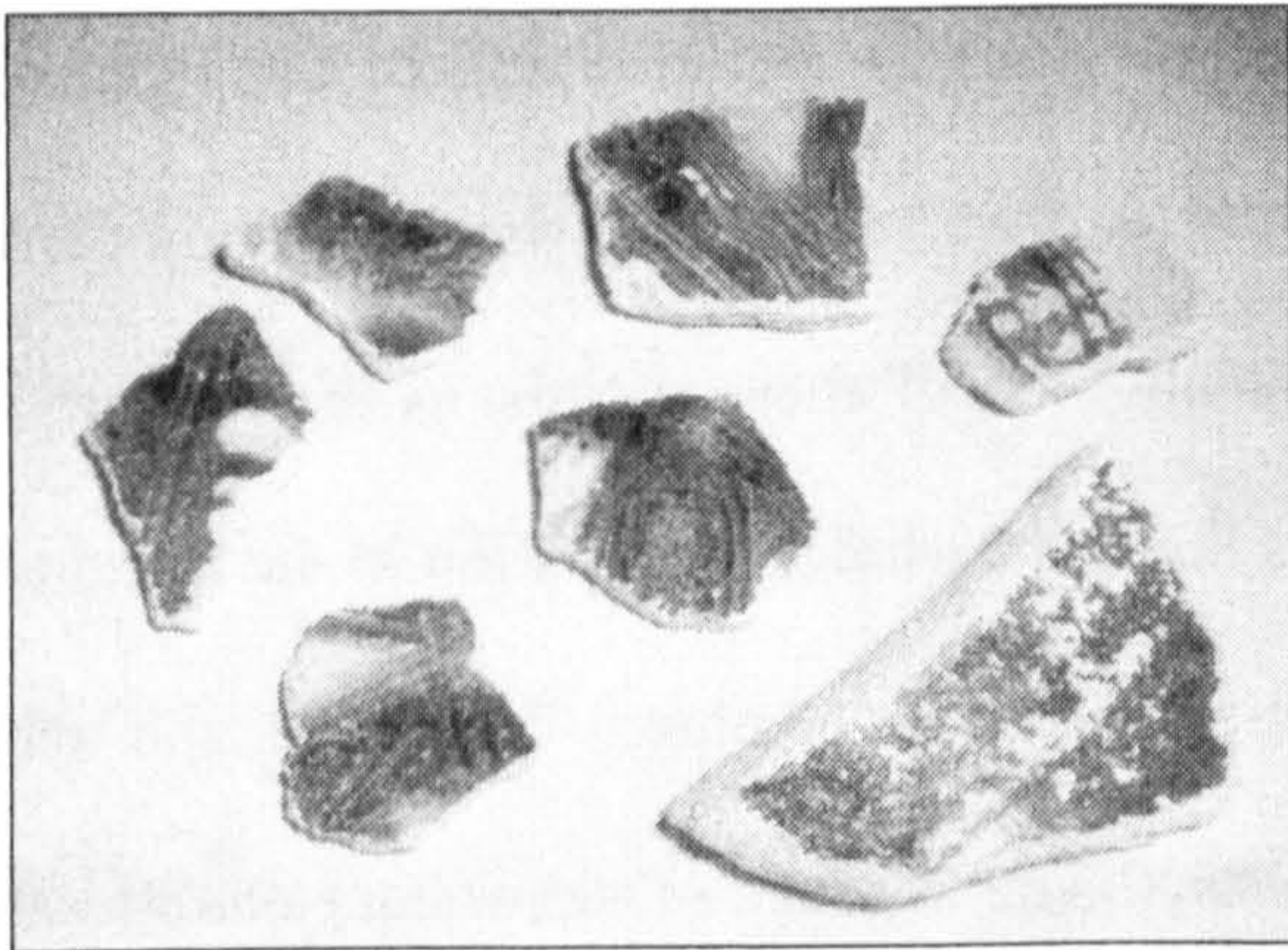


Fig. 4.5: Splashed-sgraffiate Middle Eastern ware sherds. Excavated from Pengkalan Bujang (Shuhaimi & Yatim [1990: 80]).

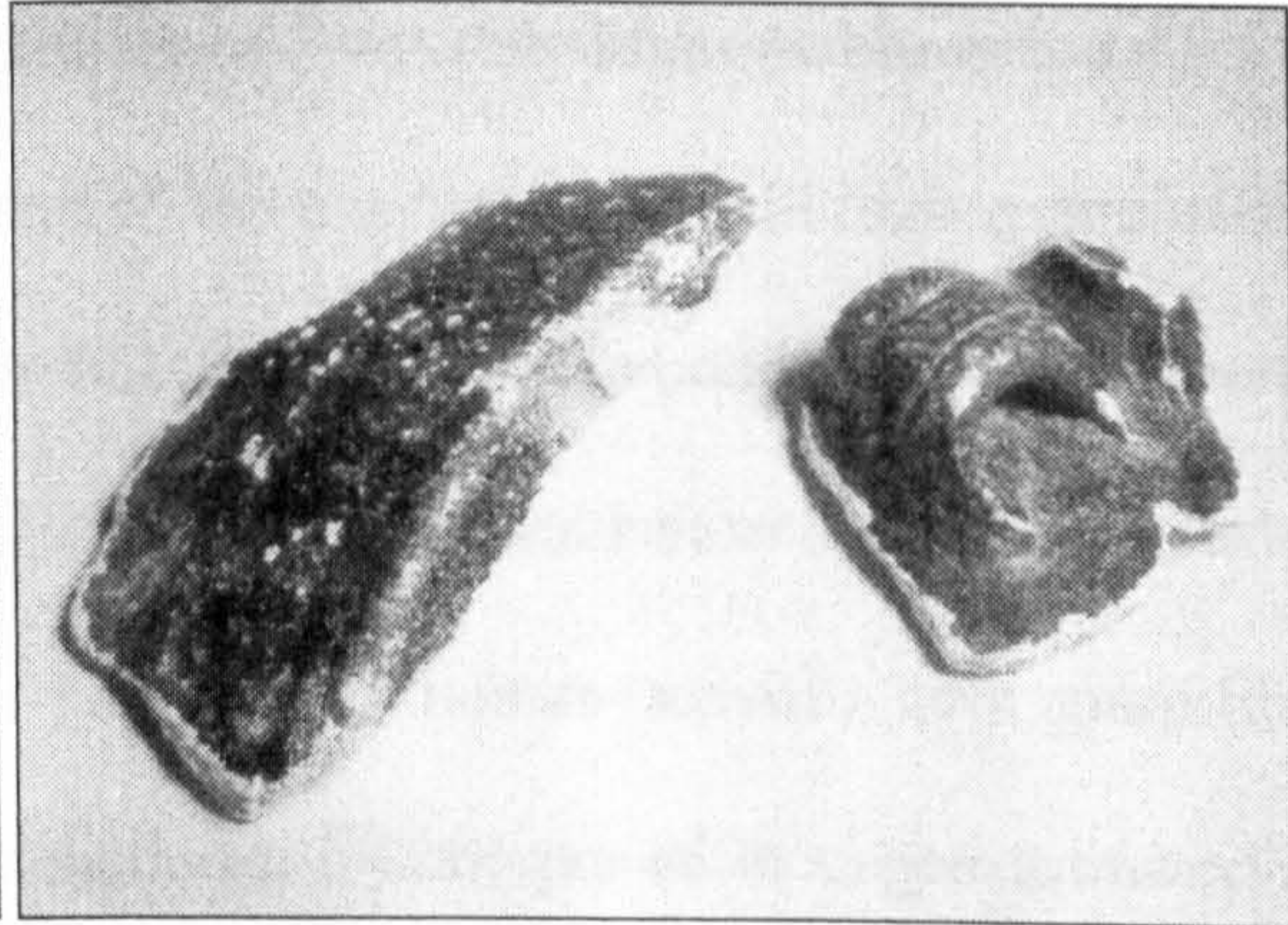


Fig. 4.6: Base & lug sherds of the splashed-sgraffiate Middle Eastern ware. Excavated from Pengkalan Bujang (Shuhaimi & Yatim [1990: 80]).

The archaeological data from Pengkalan Bujang are important in that it is the only site dating to the late Song-Yuan period on the Malay Peninsula that has been systematically excavated and studied. It seems not to have fallen under the economic influence of Tambralingga, and appears to have pulled free from Srivijaya, its period of ascendance probably occurred between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The data thus cover the period prior to that of Temasik, while also providing information on the China-Southeast Asia trade in an area of the Malay region that was not inextricably linked with the Java Sea region as part of its regional trade network.

4.3 Tioman Island

Unsystematic retrievals of ceramic remains have been conducted at Tioman Island, off the east coast of the present-day state of Pahang, in Peninsular Malaysia. Ceramic sherds ranging in date from the eleventh to the nineteenth centuries have been recovered, of which a significant portion date to the eleventh to fourteenth centuries. These may be divided into

several categories according to their place of production—Guangdong, South Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Jiangsu.

From the combined assemblage of ceramic sherds recovered from Telok Nipah, Gua Serau and Tekek, it is apparent that Guangdong ware sherds constitute the largest portion of the assemblage, accounting for almost half of the total number of sherds recovered from the three sites. The overwhelming majority of the fine stoneware sherds are of white ware type, followed by a very small number of brown-black glazed ware sherds. Bowls, both decorated and plain, were the most common form of ware, followed by plain or decorated dishes. Only a very small number of sherds of more complicated forms such as ewers, kendis, covered boxes and jarlets have been recovered from the sites. The decorative techniques used on the wares include brown underglaze and overglaze painting, incised motifs, scrolls and stylized petals. No green ware produced by the Guangdong kilns has been identified in the assemblage⁵⁵. The sherds from these sites appear to date mainly to the northern Song period.

A significant number of Guangdong-type coarse stoneware sherds have also been identified in the assemblage. The forms of the wares include storage jars and basins. The jars were decorated with incised motifs and stamped characters, while the basins had impressed floral motifs on the bases⁵⁶. Again, most of these appear to date to the northern Song period, although it is possible that such ceramics were imported during the Southern Song period as well.

Minute quantities of South Fujian fine ware ceramic sherds from Dehua, Anxi and Tong'an have been recovered. The main form of these wares is the bowl, although the Dehua ware also includes covered boxes. Coarse stoneware sherds from small-mouthed bottles, bowls and large storage jars are also present in the assemblage. The sherds appear to date from the

⁵⁵ Southeast Asian Ceramics Society (1985: 146).

⁵⁶ See Fig. 3.19. Southeast Asian Ceramics Society (1985: 146).

twelfth to fourteenth centuries. A small number of Longquan celadon sherds from Zhejiang have also been recovered. The forms imported include bowls, dishes and jarlets⁵⁷. The decorations and glazes on the sherds suggest that they date from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.

One last group of ceramics has been identified in the assemblage. This comprises one sherd from the Yixing kilns, Jiangsu. The sherd has a small mouth with a flat rim, and lugs attached vertically on the shoulder⁵⁸. The original vessel would have been a bottle with a vertical profile⁵⁹. The clay body is dark grey, granular, and contains a lot of grit. To date, this type of ceramic has only been recovered from two Southern Song period sites in South China, and at Temasik, a fourteenth century Malacca Straits region port settlement. This sherd recovered from Tioman may therefore be relegated to the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

The presence of South Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangsu ware sherds indicates that, on the whole, Tioman Island's import trade in Chinese ceramics was not confined to the tenth to twelfth centuries, but extended to the fifteenth century. In fact, the presence of Chinese ceramics datable to the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, and European ceramics datable to the nineteenth century, indicates that the import of foreign ceramics by the settlements on Tioman Island did not discontinue at any point after it commenced in the tenth century.

The lack of properly conducted archaeological excavations and surveys on Tioman Island necessarily imposes a limit on the inferences that may be derived from the data obtained from the ceramic sherds recovered from Telok Nipah, Gua Serau and Tekek. Nonetheless, the data do provide a general picture of the import trade in Chinese ceramics that was conducted by a stopover point between South China and Maritime Southeast Asia.

⁵⁷ Southeast Asian Ceramics Society (1985: 146-147).

⁵⁸ Refer to Chapter 3.2.4.

⁵⁹ Southeast Asia Ceramics Society (1985: 119 & 147).

4.4 Kota Cina

Located on the northeastern coast of Sumatra, six to seven kilometers inland from the modern-day port of Belawan Deli, the site of Kota Cina, which was active during the twelfth to early fourteenth centuries, was an anchorage and export point of forest products obtained from the Karo Plateau and the Bukit Barisan Mountain range. Excavations have been conducted at several locations. A range of artifacts has been recovered, including several carved images, finds indicative of gold and silver working, a number of bronze items, including statuary, vessels, a lamp, fish hooks, mirrors, bell fragments and a ring, as well as iron and lead items. A significant number of Chinese coins have also been recovered. These date from the Sui to Southern Song periods. Of these, 87% are from the Northern Song period⁶⁰. Seven other coins, of Sri Lankan origin, have also been recovered, along with one unidentified copper coin⁶¹. A number of glass beads and glass fragments⁶² have also been recovered, which are similar to those recovered from the Pengkalan Bujang sites in South Kedah⁶³.

The ceramics recovered from the excavations include earthenware, and both fine and coarse stoneware. The earthenware sherds have been attributed to a number of sources, depending on the clay body characteristics. Suggested sources include local producers, producers from the immediate area such as Aceh, Mainland Southeast Asia, which was most likely the source of the fine paste ceramics, the Middle East, and India. There appears to be an overlap in some forms with those found at the Pengkalan Bujang site in Kedah.

⁶⁰ Mckinnon (1984: 106-112).

⁶¹ Mckinnon (1984: 111).

⁶² Mckinnon (1984: 116-8).

⁶³ Mckinnon (1984: 112-6).

Three key groups of fine stoneware ceramics were recovered. The first are the green ware sherds. These include Longquan celadon-glazed ware, Zhejiang-type green ware, Yue-type ware, and South Fujian green ware. The second group comprises white ware sherds. These include qingbai ware from both South Fujian and Jingdezhen, white glazed ware from Anxi and Dehua in South Fujian, and sherds with a grayish glaze, possibly from Guangdong. The third group comprises black ware sherds. These include black ware from Jinjiang in South Fujian, and brown-painted ware from Jizhou, Jiangxi. Green ware sherds form the largest group in the fine stoneware assemblage, followed by white ware. Black ware sherds form the smallest of these groups.

The coarse stoneware sherds have been attributed to South Fujian and Guangdong. Of the former, the wares include basins and small-mouthed jars. The latter include storage jars and basins. The range of coarse stoneware sherds in the ceramics assemblage is fairly limited, and appears to be similar to that of the Pengkalan Bujang assemblages.

The ceramics assemblage comprises 13% of fine stoneware sherds and 26% of coarse stoneware sherds, all of which are from vessels produced by South Chinese kilns. The remainder of the ceramics assemblage comprises earthenware sherds⁶⁴.

4.5 Temasik—Fourteenth Century Singapore

The north bank of the Singapore River was the location of the main settlement of the Malay port-polity of Temasik. The polity is believed to have existed from 1292 to the end of the fourteenth century. The archaeological data from the sites associated with Temasik thus provide information concerning trade during the Yuan and early Ming periods.

⁶⁴ Mckinnon (1984: 189).

The first recorded archeological find in Singapore Island was made in 1926, when a cache of gold jewelry in Majapahit style was discovered near the summit of Fort Canning Hill on the east slope near the Kramat⁶⁵. The first proper archaeological excavation of a Temasik period site was conducted in 1984 on Fort Canning Hill⁶⁶. Since then, five other excavations have been conducted. These were at Fort Canning Hill (1988)⁶⁷, the Parliament House site (1995)⁶⁸, Empress Place site (1998)⁶⁹, Colombo Court site (2000) and Old Parliament House site (2002). Apart from the Fort Canning Hill excavations, the excavations took place within the plain-area enclosed by the north bank of the Singapore River, the foot of Fort Canning Hill and present-day Stamford Road.

The Temasik-period layers at the plain-area and Fort Canning Hill sites are consistent and easily identifiable. In the plain-area sites, the layer is composed of black beach sand, which lies beneath a layer of topsoil and clay at least one meter thick. In the Fort Canning Hill sites, the Temasik-period layer is composed of sandy loam, lying under black humus and reddish-brown topsoil, culvert and oxysol, and above yellow clay with iron nodules⁷⁰. At both the Fort Canning Hill and plain-area sites, the soil beneath the Temasik-period layer is sterile and contains no artifacts.

No organic samples were available from the two Fort Canning Hill excavations for radio-carbon dating. However, two ceramic samples from the Fort Canning excavation (1984), a stoneware jar and an earthenware rim sherd, were sent for thermo-luminescence testing. These yielded results of 440 (+90 years) and 550 (+110 years), translating to approximate

⁶⁵ Winstedt (1926).

⁶⁶ Miksic (1985).

⁶⁷ Miksic (1989).

⁶⁸ Miksic (2004: 47).

⁶⁹ Miksic (2004: 47).

⁷⁰ Miksic (1985: 52-54); Miksic (1989: 35).

dates of 1450-1630 and 1320-1540 respectively⁷¹, suggesting that the last firing date of the ceramic sherds took place around the time of the Temasik-period. While samples are available from the plain-area sites for radiocarbon tests, these have not so far been conducted. Thus the dating of the Temasik-period layer of all the sites is based primarily on the fine Chinese stoneware sherds that have been recovered from that layer. These comprise, when the layer is intact and not previously disturbed, Chinese celadon, green, white and blue and white wares of late thirteenth and fourteenth century styles. In particular, the decorative styles of the blue and white Chinese sherds recovered from the Fort Canning Hill excavations are all attributed to no later than the Yuan period.

At all the sites, ceramic sherds form the majority of the material recovered. With the exception of the Fort Canning Hill excavation (1984), coarse stoneware sherds form the largest group of ceramic remains, followed by fine stoneware ceramics, then earthenware for all the sites in the plain-area and Fort Canning Hill excavation (1988). Chinese coins and iron slag were also recovered from all the sites in the plain-area and on Fort Canning Hill. Glass items, such as vessel fragments and beads were recovered during the two Fort Canning Hill excavations, while gold fragments and copper prills and wire were recovered during the Parliament House site excavation. Detailed data are available for four of the excavated sites.

⁷¹ Miksic (1985: 89).

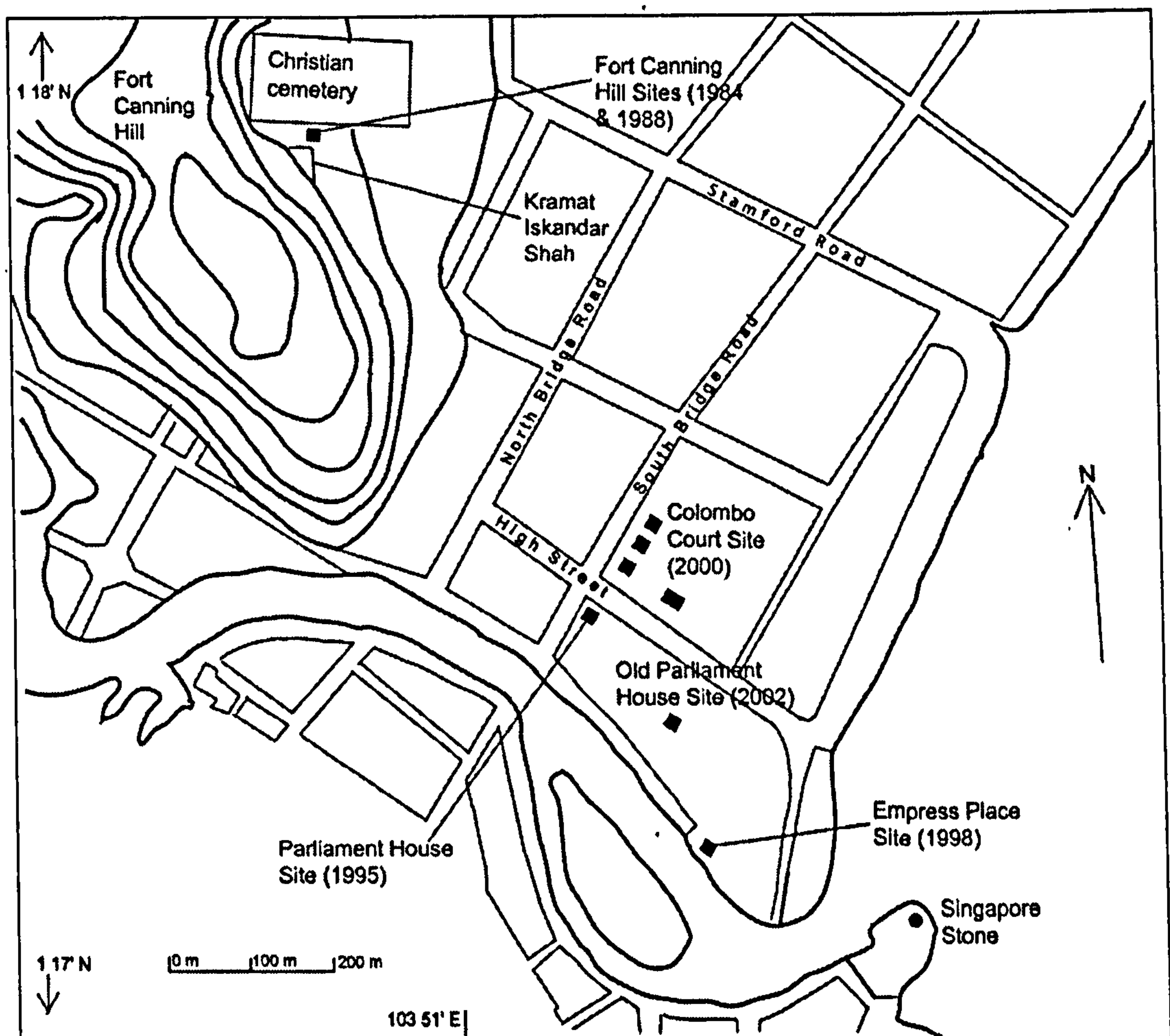


Fig. 4.7: Excavated Sites of the Temasik Period at the Singapore River Bank and Fort Canning Hill (Singapore).

Fort Canning Hill Excavation (1984)⁷²

The Fort Canning Excavation (1984) consisted of eight sampling squares located around the Kramat Iskandar Shah on the east slope of Fort Canning Hill. Of these, three squares—1, 5 and 6—yielded fourteenth century artifacts⁷³. While the Temasik-period layer of square 1 could not be distinguished⁷⁴, the Temasik-period layer of squares 5 and 6 was clearly stratified and almost completely intact. Ceramic sherds were the only Temasik-period finds recovered from squares 1, 5 and 6. Coarse stoneware sherds formed the largest group of

⁷² Miksic (1985).

⁷³ Miksic (1985: 55).

⁷⁴ Miksic (1985: 48-9).

ceramics (68.3% in weight), followed by earthenware sherds (18.5% by weight) and fine stoneware sherds (13.2% by weight)⁷⁵.

*Fort Canning Hill Excavation (1988)*⁷⁶

The Fort Canning Excavation (1988) was located north of the Kramat Terrace. Consisting of six squares measuring 5 by 2 meters, the site measured 30 meters in length, with the east-west line of squares 1 to 4 on one side of the footpath continued five meters away on the other side with squares 5 and 6. Ceramics formed the largest group of finds, accounting for 95.8% of the total weight of all the finds recovered. Coarse stoneware sherds formed the largest group of ceramics (51.8% in weight), followed by fine stoneware sherds (28% in weight) and earthenware (16% in weight)⁷⁷. The composition of the ceramics assemblage differed from those of the plain-area sites in that the percentage of fine stoneware sherds was significantly higher. In particular, the assemblage contained a higher percentage of the highest quality fourteenth century Chinese fine ceramics—Jingdezhen blue and white porcelain—than did the assemblages of the plain-area sites. Apart from ceramics, 565 grams of glass finds were recovered, consisting of vessel fragments and beads; 756 grams of iron were also recovered.

*Empress Place Excavation (1998)*⁷⁸

The Empress Place excavation (1998) was located in front of the main entrance to the current Asian Civilizations Museum (Empress Place). It covered an area of 40 by 8 meters, comprising a line of eight rectangles (A to H) measuring 5 by 8 meters arranged in a

⁷⁵ Miksic (1985: 88).

⁷⁶ Miksic (1989).

⁷⁷ Miksic (1989: 39).

⁷⁸ Miksic (2004: 47).

southeast-northwest orientation. Each rectangle was further divided into four, each sub-rectangle measuring 5 by 2 meters. Of the eight rectangles excavated, A and B were the only two in which the Temasik-period layer was largely intact. The Temasik-period layer in C, D, and E appears to have been substantially disturbed, and included a large number of post-fourteenth century sherds. The Temasik-period layer in F to H was only partially excavated before the excavation was halted. Ceramics formed the largest group of finds recovered from the Temesik-period layer at the site.

	Earthen-ware	Coarse Stoneware (Chinese)		Fine Stoneware Ceramics						
Percentage of weight		Small-mouthed Jar Sherds	General (including post-14 th century sherds)	Chinese green ware		Chinese Blue & White		Chinese white ware		
				Long-quan	Others	Yuan	Others	Dehua	Shufu	others
	113.6kg	81kg	984kg	58kg	18.4kg	0.5kg	64.8kg	5.3kg	6kg	28.7kg
Within Category	-	-	-	-	-	0.9%	99.1%	13.2%	15.1%	71.7%
Within Sub-Assemblage	-	7.6%	92.4%	31.9%	10.1%	0.3%	35.7%	2.9%	3.3%	15.8%
Within Assemblage	8.4%	6%	72.3%	4.3%	1.4%	<0.1%	4.8%	0.4%	0.4%	2%

Table 4.3: Summary of Ceramic Finds Recovered from the Empress Place Site (1998).

Coarse stoneware formed the predominant group of ceramics (78.3% by weight), followed by fine stoneware ceramics (13.3%), and earthenware (8.4%). A significant portion of the assemblage, however, consisted of post Temasik-period ceramics, and this is reflected in the proportions noted above. This is particularly so for the blue and white ceramics, the majority of which are from the Ming and Qing periods. The white and green ware sherds also include significant quantities of post Temasik-period examples.

Old Parliament House Excavation (2002)

The Old Parliament House excavation (2002) was conducted within the premises of the former Parliament House building situated along the north bank of the Singapore River. Over thirty squares were opened within the parliament hall. Due to time constraints, the

Temasik-period layer was excavated in thirty-centimeter layers instead of the usual ten-centimeter layers. Only seven squares, P2, P11, P12, P14, P15, P16 and P31, yielded intact Temasik-period layers containing fourteenth century artifacts. The ceramic samples from these squares are by far the most intact Temasik-period ceramic samples to have been recovered and analyzed.

Percentage of weight	Earthen-ware	Thai/Vietnamese/Burmese ware	Coarse Stoneware (Chinese)		Fine Stoneware Ceramics (Chinese)					
			Small-Mouthed Jar Sherds	General	Green Ware	Blue & White		White Ware		
						Yuan	Ming	Dehua	Shufu	Qingbai
	42kg	<0.3kg	89kg	185kg	39kg	0.9kg	0.9kg	3kg	9.5kg	0.8kg
Within Category	-	-	-	-	-	50%	50%	22.6%	71.4%	6%
Within Sub-Assemblage	-	-	32.5%	67.5%	72.1%	1.7%	1.7%	5.5%	17.5%	1.5%
Within Assemblage	11.4%	<0.1%	24.1%	50%	10.6%	<0.1%	<0.1%	0.9%	2.7%	0.3%

Table 4.4: Summary of Ceramic Finds Recovered from the Old Parliament House Site.

Coarse stoneware sherds formed the largest group of ceramics (74.1% by weight), followed by fine stoneware (14.5%) and earthenware sherds (11.4%). Five kilograms of metal finds, 3.7 kilograms of organic remains, largely bones, and less than 100 grams of glass pieces were also recovered. During renovation works that took place after the excavation ended, fragments were recovered of over fifty stoneware jars of various forms and clay bodies, several of which were large enough to exhibit the profiles of the original jars.

4.5.1 Coarse Stoneware in the Temasik-period Sites

A detailed post-excavation classification and analysis of the coarse stoneware ceramics from the Empress Place and Old Parliament House sites has been conducted for this study.

The total quantities of coarse ceramic sherds in the two assemblages are 984 kilograms and 185 kilograms respectively, accounting for 78.3% and 74.1% of the ceramics from the two sites⁷⁹, including imported and local pottery. In comparison, only 54% (in weight) of the total ceramic assemblage recovered in the 1988 Fort Canning excavation⁸⁰ comprised coarse ceramics. These figures exclude the type of sherds called 'mercury jars' in some Southeast Asian archaeological reports, which are labeled 'small-mouthed bottles' in current Chinese archaeological reports⁸¹. These bottles are distinct from the meiping form, as the rim is joined to the shoulder directly, without a neck in between.

Neither the Empress Place nor the Old Parliament House coarse stoneware assemblage has been completely classified due to the sheer volume of material. The sample discussed here consists, for the Empress Place site material, of the sherds recovered from squares A and B. This sample was considered representative of the entire assemblage, as the Temasik-period layers of the squares were largely intact and were excavated down to the sterile layer. The size of the sample was also reasonably large, weighing a total of 55.702 kilograms. In the case of the Old Parliament House site material, only the sherds recovered from the seven squares with intact Temasik-period layers, all of which were excavated down to the sterile layer, have been classified. The total sample weighs 59.029 kilograms.

Framework and Process of Classification

Differences in clay body characteristics of ceramics may be linked to the clay sources of the different kilns. A kiln would probably have used, for its production of low-value utilitarian vessels, clay that was obtained from very localized sources. Thus, even if the wares represented by the sherds recovered at the Empress Place and Old Parliament House

⁷⁹ Refer to Table 4.3 & Table 4.4.

⁸⁰ Miksic (1989: 39).

⁸¹ For a description of these jars, see Xu (1983).

sites were from the same district or prefecture, there are expected to be some visible differences in clay body characteristics of the products of individual kilns. These differences, however, would normally be less dramatic than those between the products of kiln areas in different districts.

The coarse stoneware assemblage posed some problems in classification because of the sheer volume and diversity of sherds it contained. While two key groups of sherds—the Guangdong and brittle types—were easily recognizable and had already been discussed by ceramicists⁸², a large number of types of sherds had not previously been individually identified. The Guangdong-type sherds, which had been identified in such earlier reports as that by Eine Moore⁸³, were easily recognized because of the abundance of whole and partial examples found both in Southeast Asia and South China. However, detailed reports of the types of sherds that fall into the “brittle-type” category are not available. These sherds, which generally have buff-grey clay bodies containing grit or black inclusions, have been grouped together and not further divided into more detailed types in previous studies⁸⁴. The diverse characteristics of this group of sherds clearly indicate that their classification in previous studies as one broad group is too general to provide any meaningful information.

The aim of the classification process was therefore to identify a larger number of types of coarse ceramics than just the Guangdong and brittle-type groups into which assemblages from Southeast Asian sites have hitherto been divided. The process began with the division of the sherds from each square and spit into smaller general groups. The color of the clay body was used for this first level of sorting, the sherds being separated into three broad groups: a) Guangdong-type sherds; b) dark body type sherds; and c) brittle-type sherds, which included all sherds with buff-grey clay bodies. This first stage was important in providing an impression of the general make-up of the assemblage. The intention, at this

⁸² Moore (1970: 1-78); Harrison (1986); Chin (1988).

⁸³ Moore (1970: 29-56).

⁸⁴ Moore (1970: 7-29); Leong (1973) & Miksic (1989: 34-56).

point, was not to identify specific types of wares, but to create smaller groups of sherds so that recurring types might be noted.

The second stage of the process was to divide each broad group into subgroups. Several criteria were used, including the clay body characteristics, the presence of grit or black inclusions in the clay body, the type of glaze, the presence of slip layers, decoration and potting techniques. Reports on coarse stoneware ceramics currently available rely heavily on complete examples. However, the Empress Place and Old Parliament House assemblages are entirely composed of sherds, from which the precise forms of the original vessels cannot always be determined. Therefore, clay body characteristic was adopted as the chief criterion for the second stage of the classification process. Other criteria such as glaze, decoration, and potting technique were then used as secondary characteristics to reinforce the identification of sherd types. It was through this process that the classification of sherds shown in tables 4.5 & 4.6 was carried out.

Range of varieties

The variety of coarse stoneware sherds in the two assemblages is large. While the Old Parliament House site assemblage is almost entirely attributable to the fourteenth century, since the fourteenth century layer of the excavated site is completely undisturbed, the Empress Place site assemblage includes not only fourteenth century sherds, but also a few intrusive sherds of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The intense habitation and usage of the north bank of the Singapore River after the fourteenth century, particularly from the colonial period onwards (1819-), have led to the presence of post-fourteenth century sherds above, and sometimes, within the fourteenth century layer.

The variety of coarse stoneware ceramics presented in this study was established because they were consistently present in all the squares and spits that were excavated. The sample from the Old Parliament House site was used to establish these ceramic types because the site was almost completely undisturbed. In selecting the types of wares to be included in the data tables, consistency in distribution was the main criteria.

The three general groups—Guangdong, dark clay body, and brittle—into which sherds from the Empress Place and Old Parliament House sites have been divided, can be further divided into fifteen subgroups. These subgroups accounted for 94.2% of the Empress Place sample and 92.4% of the Old Parliament House sample⁸⁵. These fifteen types of sherds occur in all squares, and in most of the spit layers. The total weight of each group was not a criterion, since this would have been affected by such characteristics of the wares as the thickness of the body, the size of the original vessels, and the denseness of the clay used.

The majority of coarse stoneware sherds at sites of this period appear to belong to Guangdong and South Fujian wares. Approximately 30% of the total ceramics assemblages comprise Guangdong coarse stoneware sherds. The main producers of these ceramics were kilns at Xicun, Foshan and Qishi, although North Vietnam may also have been another possible source. Approximately 28% of the total ceramics assemblage comprises South Fujian coarse stoneware sherds, including small-mouth jar sherds. The bulk of these came from the Quanzhou area, in particular the Cizao kiln district. Sherds from vessels produced in this region are characterized by the presence of black inclusions in the buff clay body. Sources of a small proportion of the coarse stonewares not made in Fujian and Guangdong include the Yixing kilns (Jiangsu), from which the grey 3 type ceramics originated. The coarse stoneware assemblages of the Empress Place and Old Parliament House sites thus suggest that Temasik's trade links brought in ceramics from a number of provinces in China, although those from Guangdong and Fujian clearly dominated the trade.

⁸⁵ Refer to Table 4.5 & Table 4.6.

Sherd-Type	Total Weight	Total Number of Sherds	Percentage of Classified Coarse Stoneware sherds (by weight)	Percentage of Coarse stoneware Assemblage (by weight)
Guangdong	24458g	1731	46.6%	43%
Guangdong, basin	4209g	219	5.4%	7.5%
Guangdong, grit & black inclusions	4741g	274	6.8%	8.5%
Grey 1	2720g	231	5.7%	4.9%
Grey 2	267g	45	1.1%	0.5%
Grey 3	3562g	235	5.8%	6.4%
Grey 4	868g	84	2.1%	1.5%
Small-Mouth Bottle Type, grit & black inclusions	2245g	211	5.2%	4%
Small-Mouth Bottle Type, black inclusions only	510g	85	2.1%	0.9%
Small-Mouth Bottle Type, grit only	711g	62	1.5%	1.3%
Grey, slip inside, small grit	1762g	245	3.3%	3.2%
Grey, slip inside, small grit, black inclusions	1755g	161	3.3%	3.2%
Brittle	2343g	229	5.7%	4.2%
Sugary texture	1015g	115	2.8%	1.8%
Red-hue type	1313g	106	2.6%	2.4%
Total:	52479g	4033	100%	94.2%

Table 4.5: Summary of Coarse Stoneware Ceramics, Empress Place Site (1989).

Sherd-Type	Total Weight	Total Number of Sherds	Percentage of Classified Coarse Stoneware sherds (by weight)	Percentage of Coarse stoneware Assemblage (by weight)
Guangdong-type	25510	1313	48.4%	43%
Guangdong-type, basin	4075	66	2.4%	6.9%
Guangdong-type, grit & black inclusions	6289	205	7.6%	10.6%
Grey 1	4337	194	7.1%	7.3%
Grey 2	724	58	2.1%	1.2%
Grey 3	2234	101	3.7%	3.8%
Grey 4	1695	93	3.4%	2.9%
Small-Mouth Bottle Type, grit & black inclusions	2714	220	8.1%	4.6%
Small-Mouth Bottle Type, black inclusions only	475	45	1.7%	0.8%
Small-Mouth Bottle Type, grit only	853	99	3.6%	1.5%
Small-Mouth Bottle Type, no grit or black inclusions	130	27	1%	0.2%
Brittle	1362	45	2.7%	2.3%
Grey, slip inside, small grit	838	76	2.8%	1.6%
Grey, slip inside, small grit, black inclusions	1464	73	2.7%	2.5%
Sugary texture	682	41	1.5%	1.2%
Red-hue type	1175	57	2.2%	2%
Total:	55427	2713	100%	92.4%

Table 4.6: Summary of Coarse Stoneware Ceramics, Old Parliament House Site (2002).

1) Guangdong-type

The Guangdong-type⁸⁶ sherds form the largest category of coarse stoneware in the assemblages. They account for 59.9%⁸⁷ and 60.5%⁸⁸ (by weight) of the Empress Place and Old Parliament House samples respectively. The largest proportion of these consists of storage jar sherds, followed by basins.

The clay body of the Guangdong-type sherds is of uniform coarse texture, and may include grit and black inclusions. Clay body colors range from off-white to buff and light blue-grey, depending on the kiln's oxidization or reduction atmosphere during firing. The outer surfaces of the vessels were normally glazed brown, ochre or black. With the exception of the black-glazed sherds, the glazes of the excavated examples are largely or completely degraded. The inside surfaces of the wares were sometimes wiped with glaze, although a consistent pattern for this practice cannot be determined from the present assemblages.

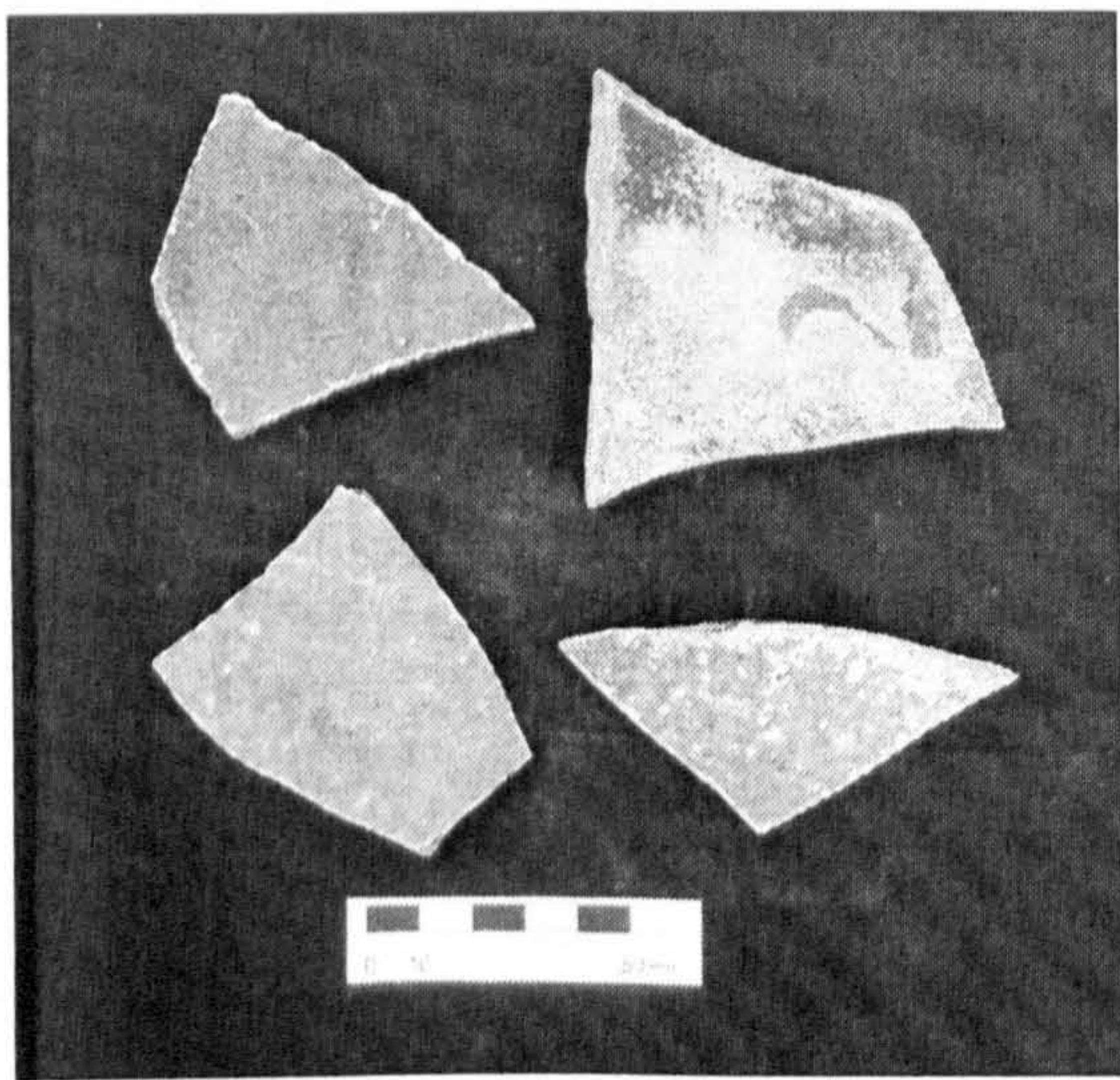


Fig. 4.8: Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds, brown outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.

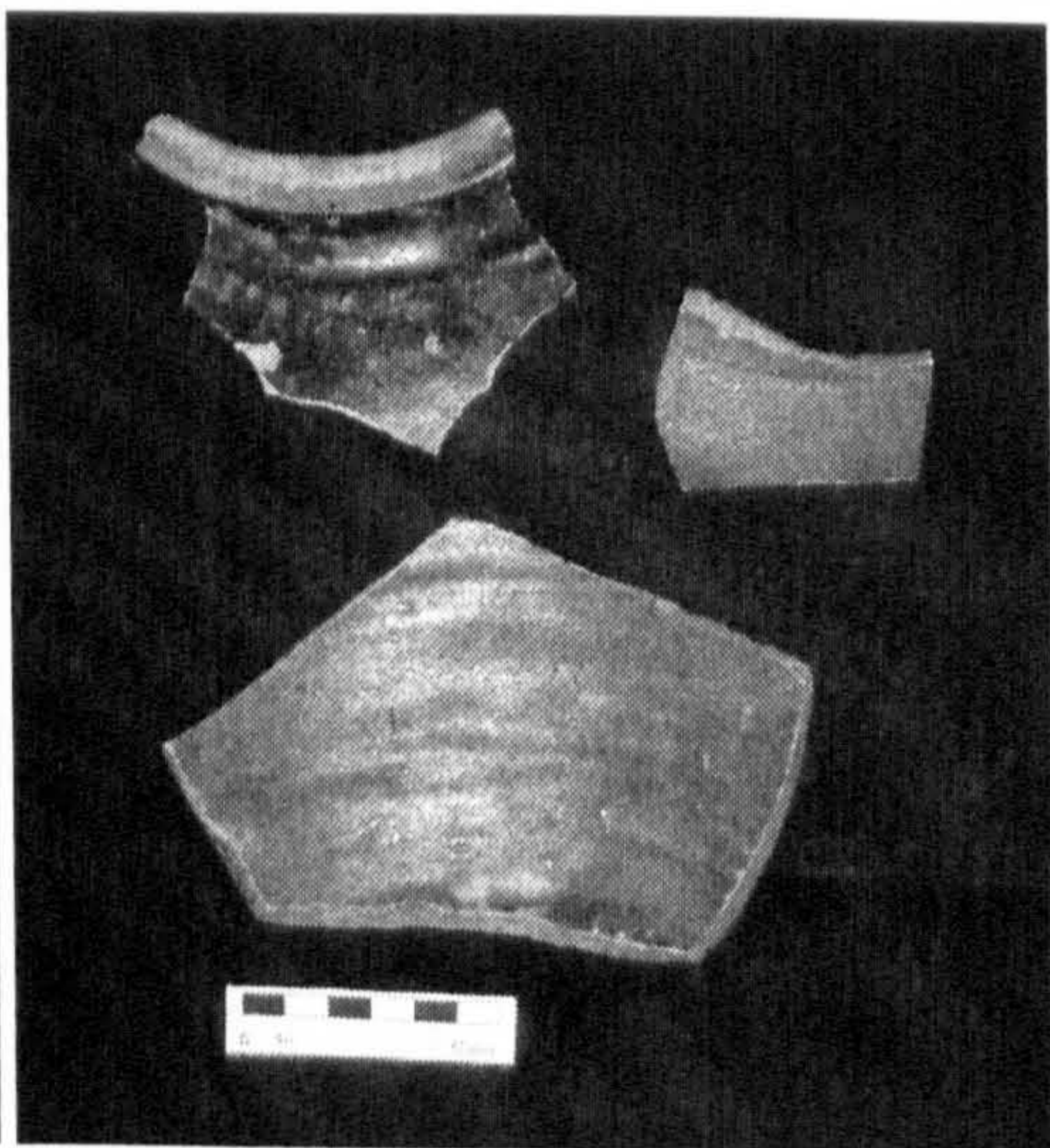


Fig. 4.9: Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds, black outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.

⁸⁶ See Moore (1970: 29-56).

⁸⁷ See Table 4.5.

⁸⁸ See Table 4.6.



Fig. 4.10: Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with lugs; Old Parliament House site.



Fig. 4.11: Guangdong-type, storage jar rim sherds; Old Parliament House Site.

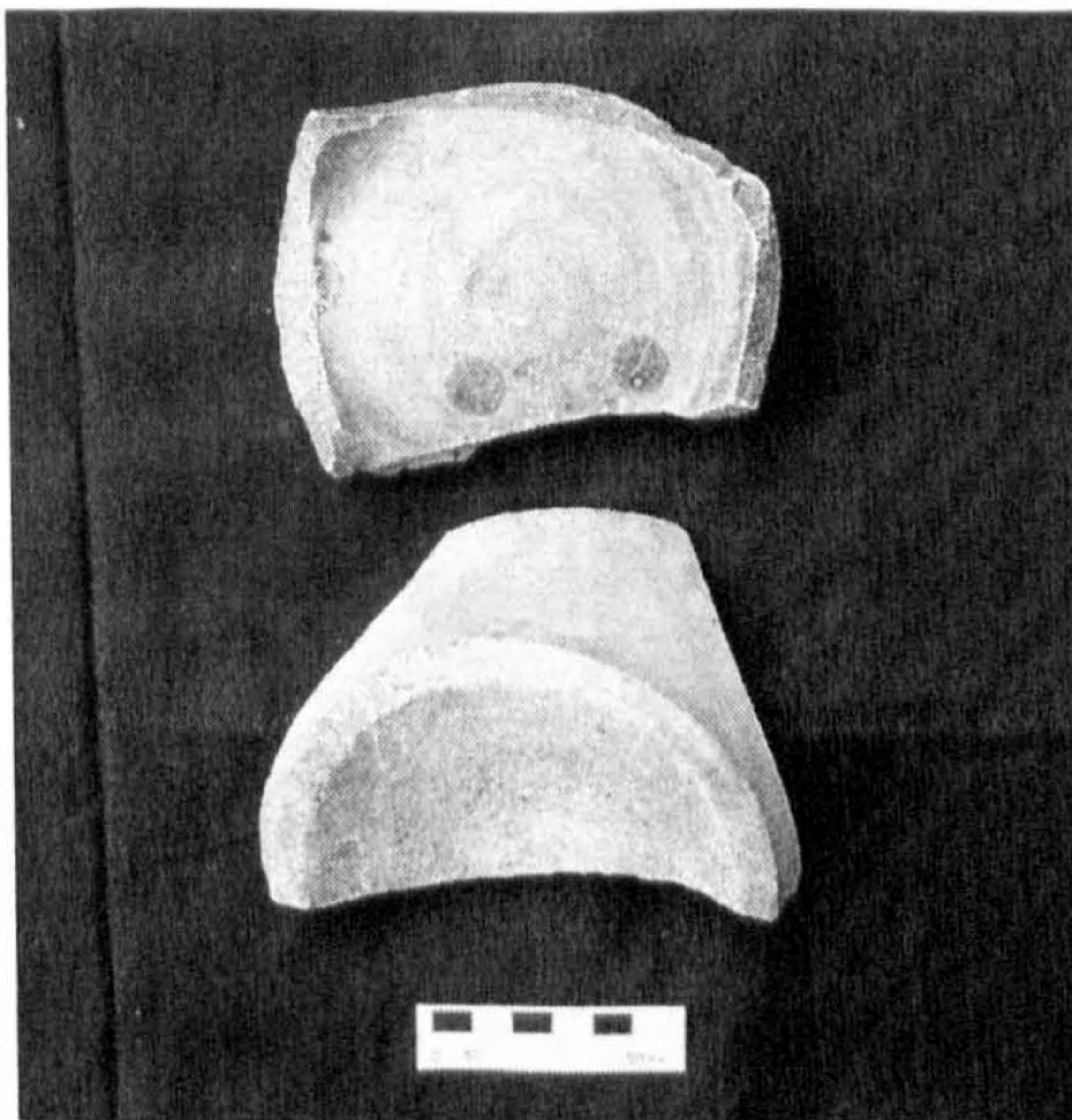


Fig. 4.12: Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds, bases; Old Parliament House site.

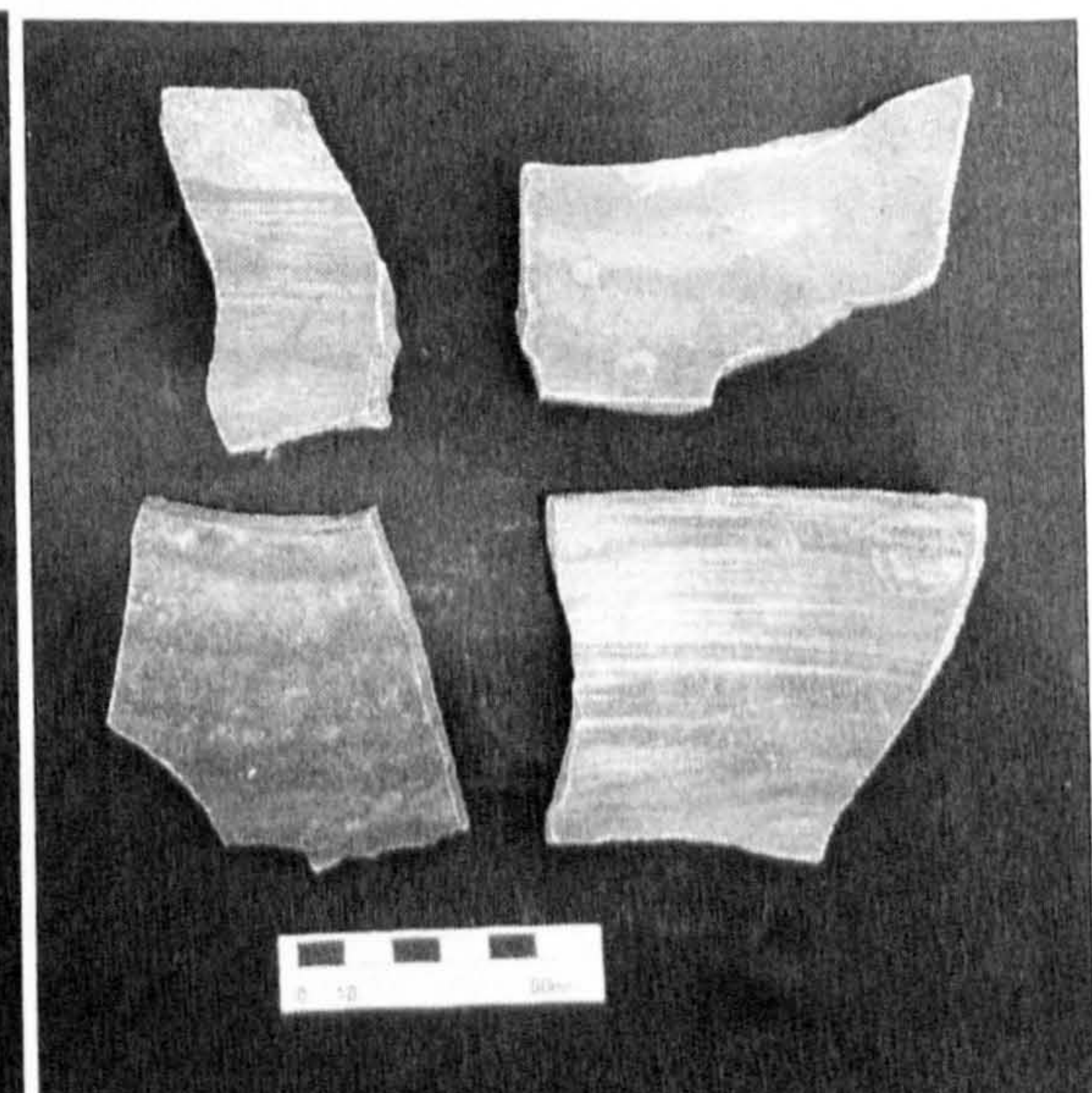


Fig. 4.13: Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with inner glaze or wipe; Old Parliament House site.

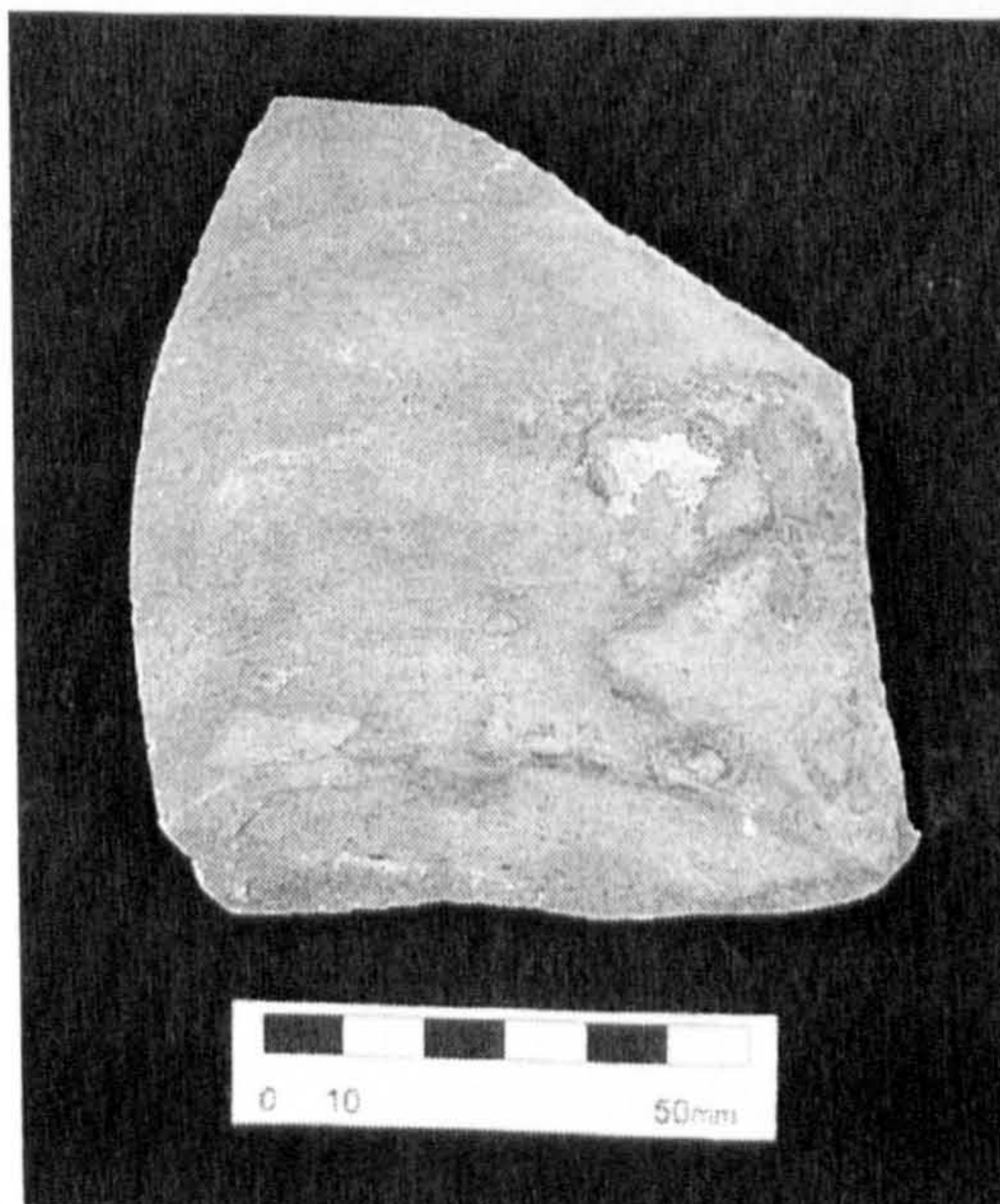


Fig. 4.14: Guangdong-type, porous off-white paste, storage jar sherd, base; Old Parliament House site.

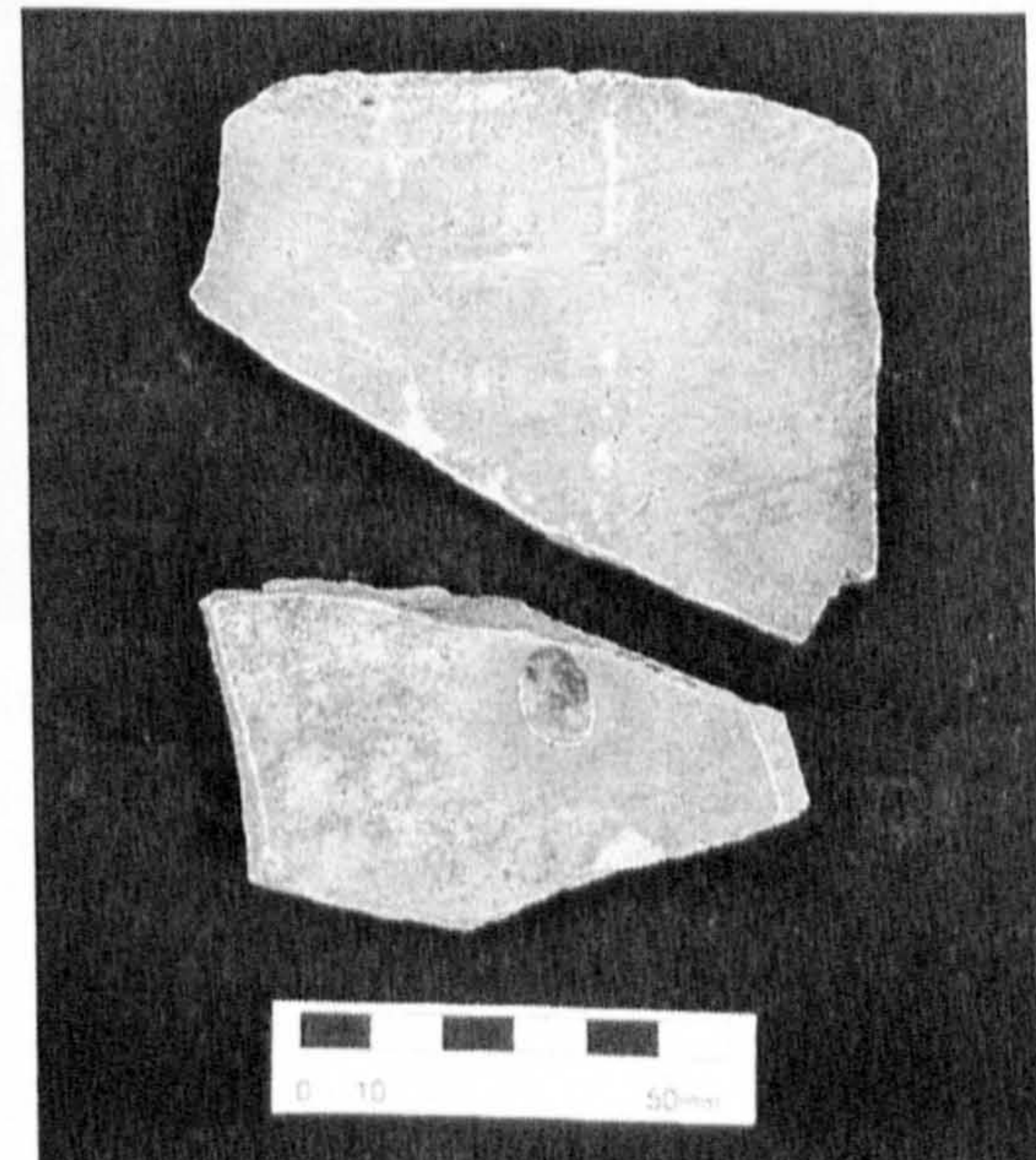


Fig. 4.15: Guangdong-type, porous off-white paste, storage jar sherd, body sherds; Old Parliament House site.

The Guangdong-type sherds have been sub-divided into three types—Guangdong; Guangdong with grit and black inclusions; and Guangdong-type basin. This division is based not just on the form of the vessel, although the first two types consist entirely of storage jars, and the third entirely of basins, but also on differences in potting techniques and firing conditions.

The Guangdong-type wares found at the sites are predominantly storage jars of various sizes. However, there are also a large number of basin sherds with Guangdong-type body. Sherds belonging to basins have been identified based on the dark purple-black glaze on the inner walls of the body sherds⁸⁹ and by the type and circumference of the rims. The rims fall into three types—the piecrust rim; the large, angular rim with a right-angle profile⁹⁰, and the small rounded rim⁹¹. Generally, Guangdong-type basin sherds have small black inclusions, and are higher fired than the Guangdong-type storage jars.



Fig. 4.16: Guangdong-type, basin, rim sherd; Old Parliament House site.



Fig. 4.17: Guangdong-type, basin, base sherd; Old Parliament House site.

⁸⁹ See Fig. 4.18.

⁹⁰ See Fig. 4.19.

⁹¹ See Fig. 4.16.

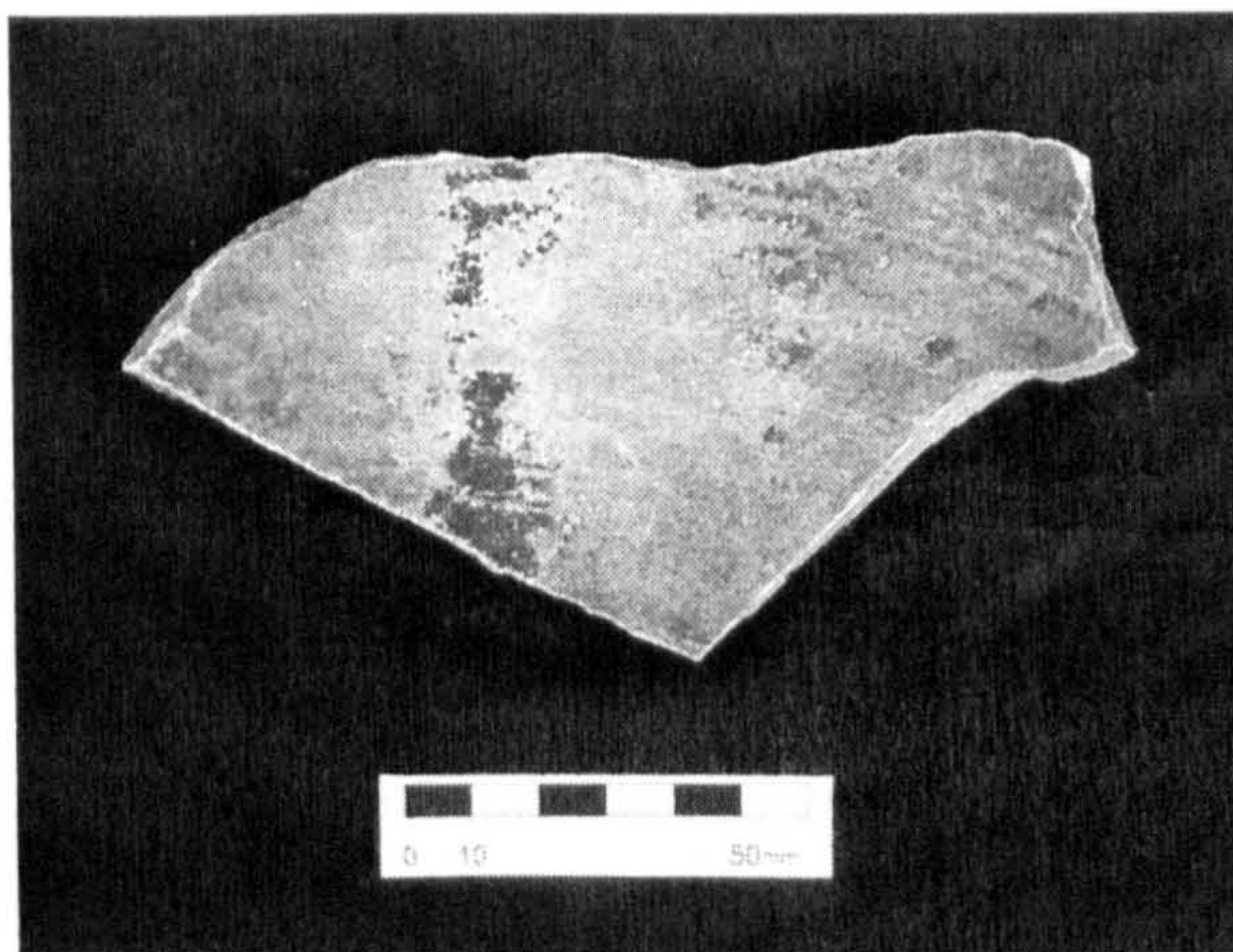


Fig. 4.18: Guangdong-type, basin body sherd; Old Parliament House site.

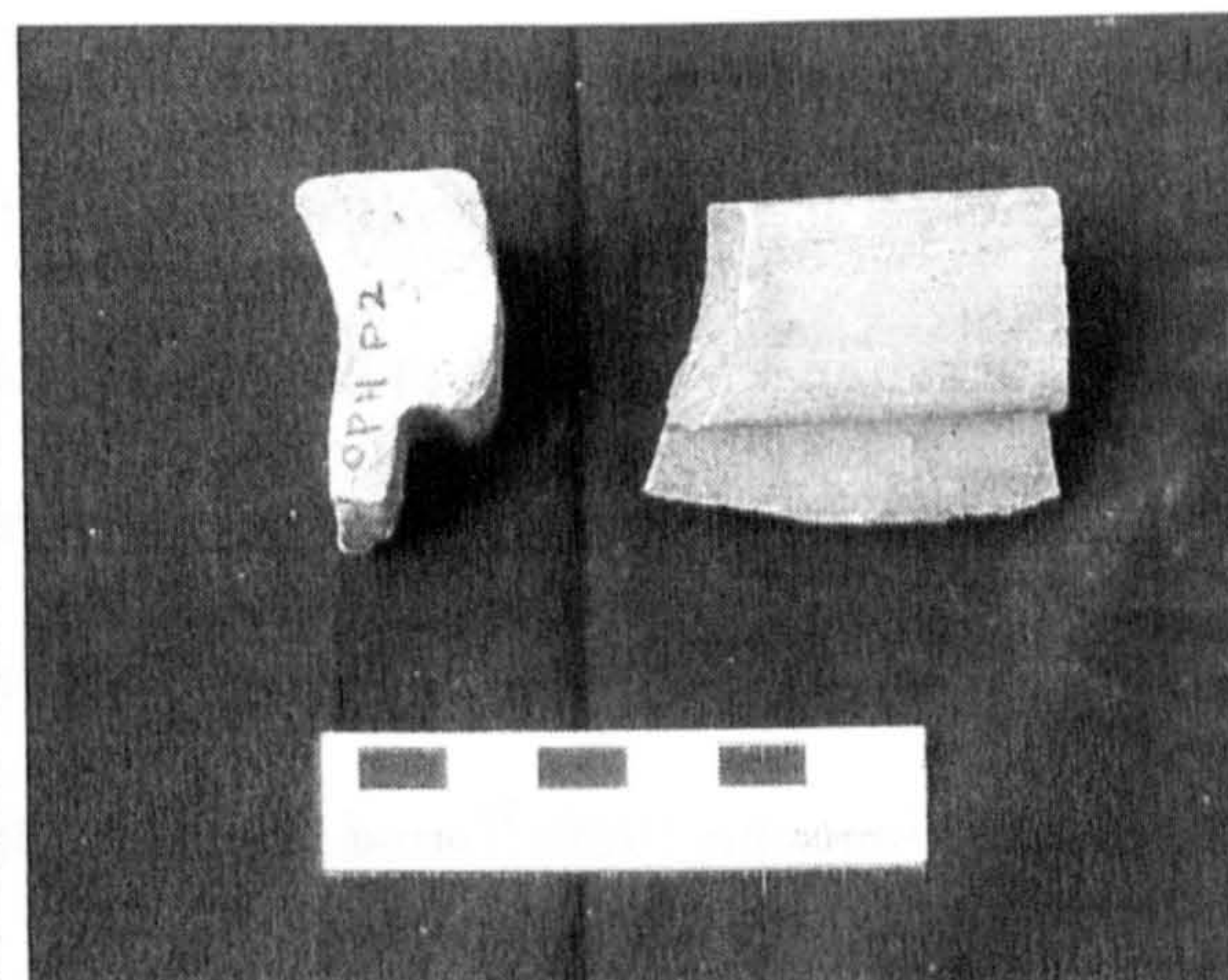


Fig. 4.19: Guangdong-type, basin sherds with angular rims; Old Parliament House site.

The jars of this type had four lugs attached horizontally to the shoulder⁹². The decoration on the jars includes incised floral motifs, incised horizontal lines and character stamps⁹³. There are only two examples of a mould-appliqué dragon⁹⁴. The repertoire of decoration represented in the assemblages from the Temasik sites is smaller than that known to have been used by the Guangdong kilns during that period.

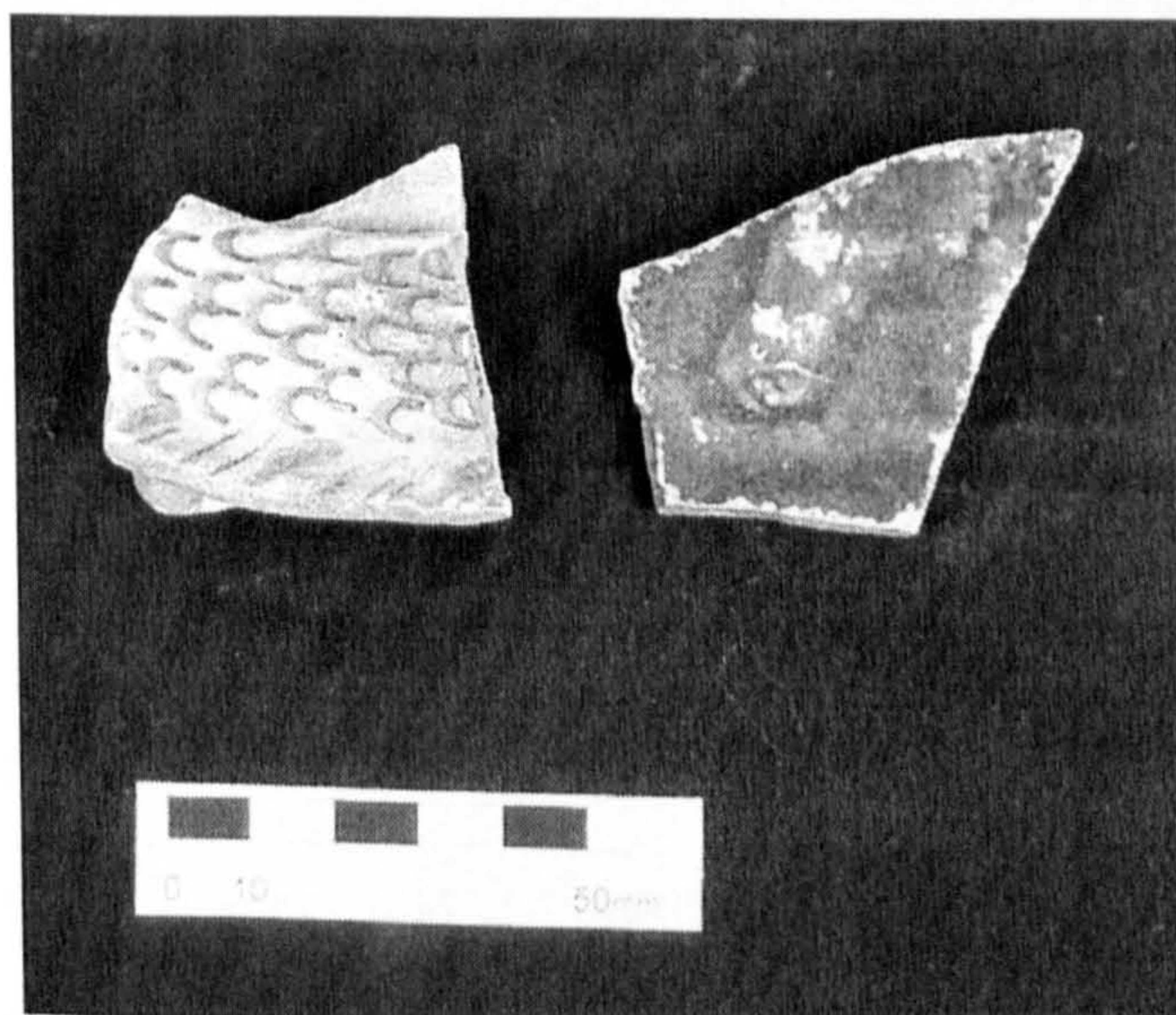


Fig. 4.20: Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with molded decoration; Old Parliament House site.

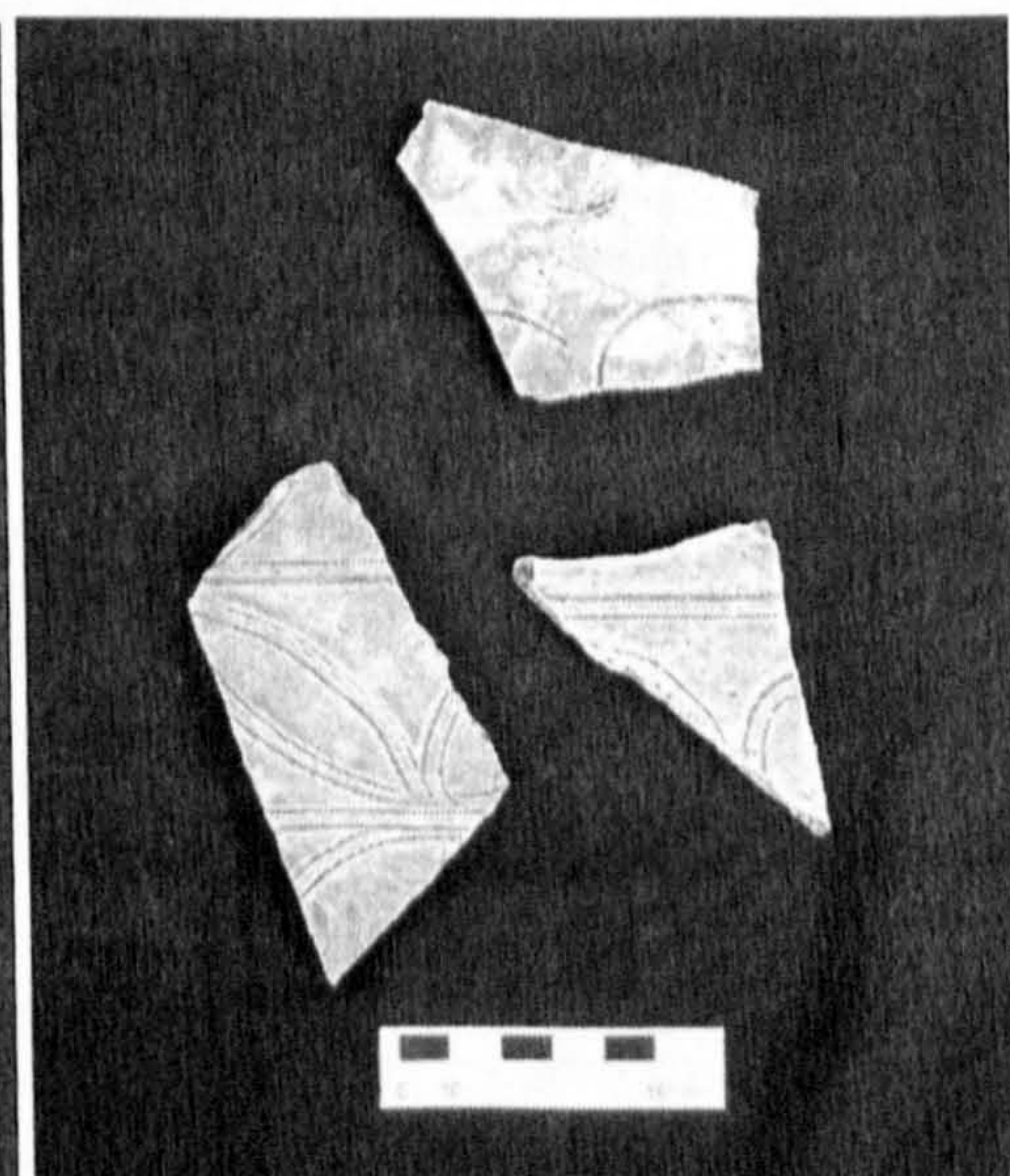


Fig. 4.21: Guangdong-type, storage jar sherds with incised decoration; Old Parliament House Site.

⁹² See Fig. 4.10 & Fig. 4.11.

⁹³ See Fig. 4.21.

⁹⁴ See Fig. 4.20.

The immediate hinterland of the port of Guangzhou was the main production area of the Guangdong-type coarse stoneware ceramics during the tenth to fourteenth century. In particular, kiln areas in Nanhai district and Guangzhou prefecture, such as Foshan and Xicun, were the main centers of production of the wares that found their way to Maritime Southeast Asia. This has been substantiated by a number of kiln excavation reports produced since the 1960s⁹⁵, and assessments of these reports by such scholars as Peter Lam, Zeng Guangyi and Gu Yunquan⁹⁶.

2) Dark Body Sherds

Dark body sherds form the second broad category of the coarse stoneware in the assemblages, accounting for 13.3%⁹⁷ of the Empress Place site sample, and 15.2%⁹⁸ of the Old Parliament House site sample. These sherds have darker clay bodies than the Guangdong and brittle-type sherds. Four main sub-types, which occur consistently through the entire assemblage, have been identified.

a) Grey 1

The grey 1 type forms the second largest type of dark body sherds of the assemblage, accounting for 4.9%⁹⁹ and 7.3%¹⁰⁰ of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively. The sherds share a fine uniform clay body, with small black inclusions. The sherds are both low- and high-fired, the low-fired ones having a powdery

⁹⁵ Zeng (1962, 1963, 1964a & b, 1985); Guangdong Provincial Museum, (1979); Foshan City Museum (1978).

⁹⁶ Zeng (1985); Gu (1985); Lam (1985).

⁹⁷ See Table 4.5.

⁹⁸ See Table 4.6.

⁹⁹ See Table 4.5.

¹⁰⁰ See Table 4.6.

texture, and the high-fired ones having a hard, non-powdery texture. The body is either orange-red or blue-grey, depending upon oxidation or reduction kiln atmosphere during firing. The vessels of this type appear to have been originally glazed, although the examples in the assemblages retain only a slip-like iridescent brown layer on the outer surface¹⁰¹. From the curvature of the body sherds, it would appear that tall, narrow jars were the predominant forms of this type of ware. This is also evident from the base sherds, all of which appear to be thickly potted¹⁰².

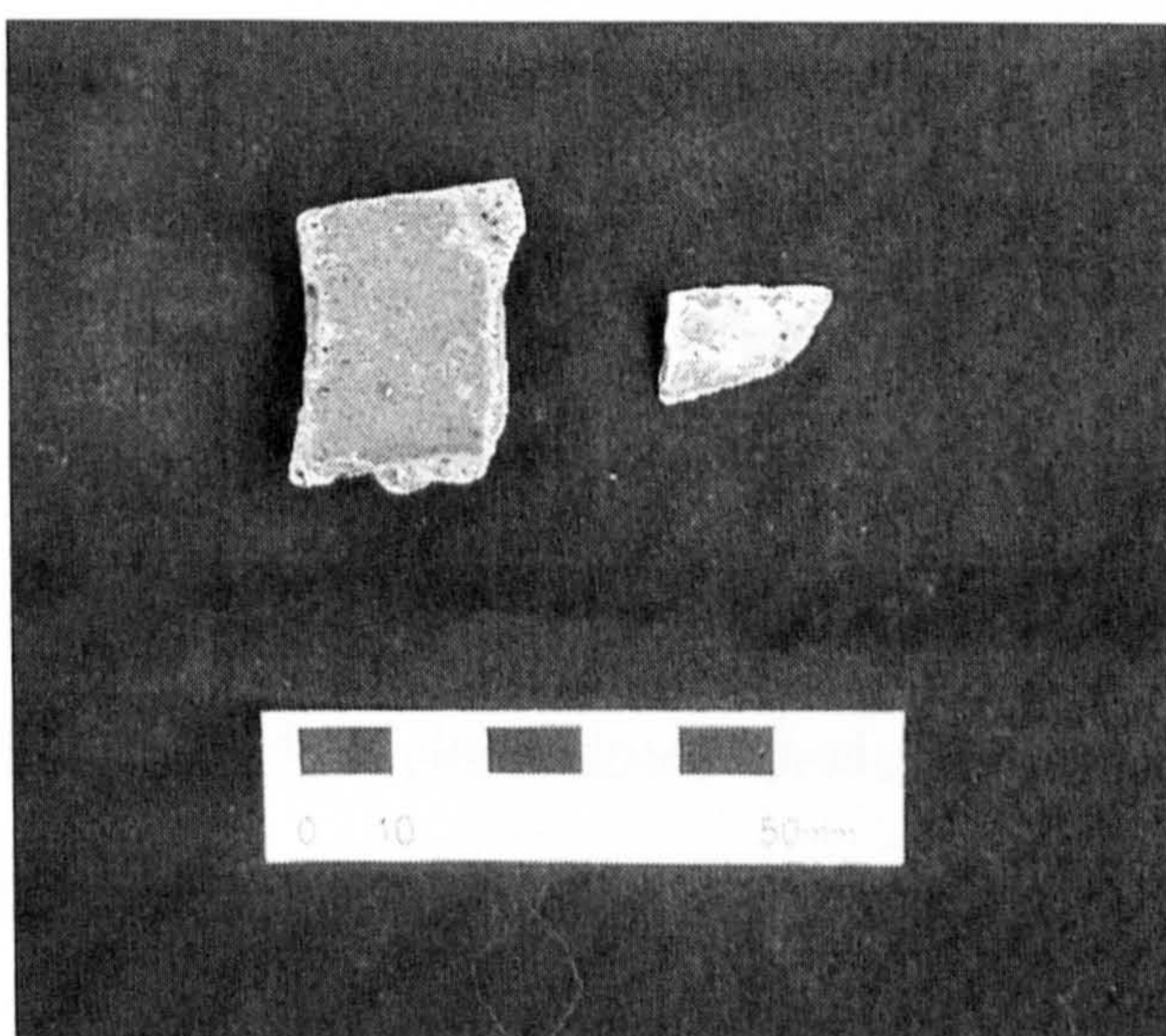


Fig. 4.22: Grey 1-type, body sherds with glazed inner surfaces; Old Parliament House site.

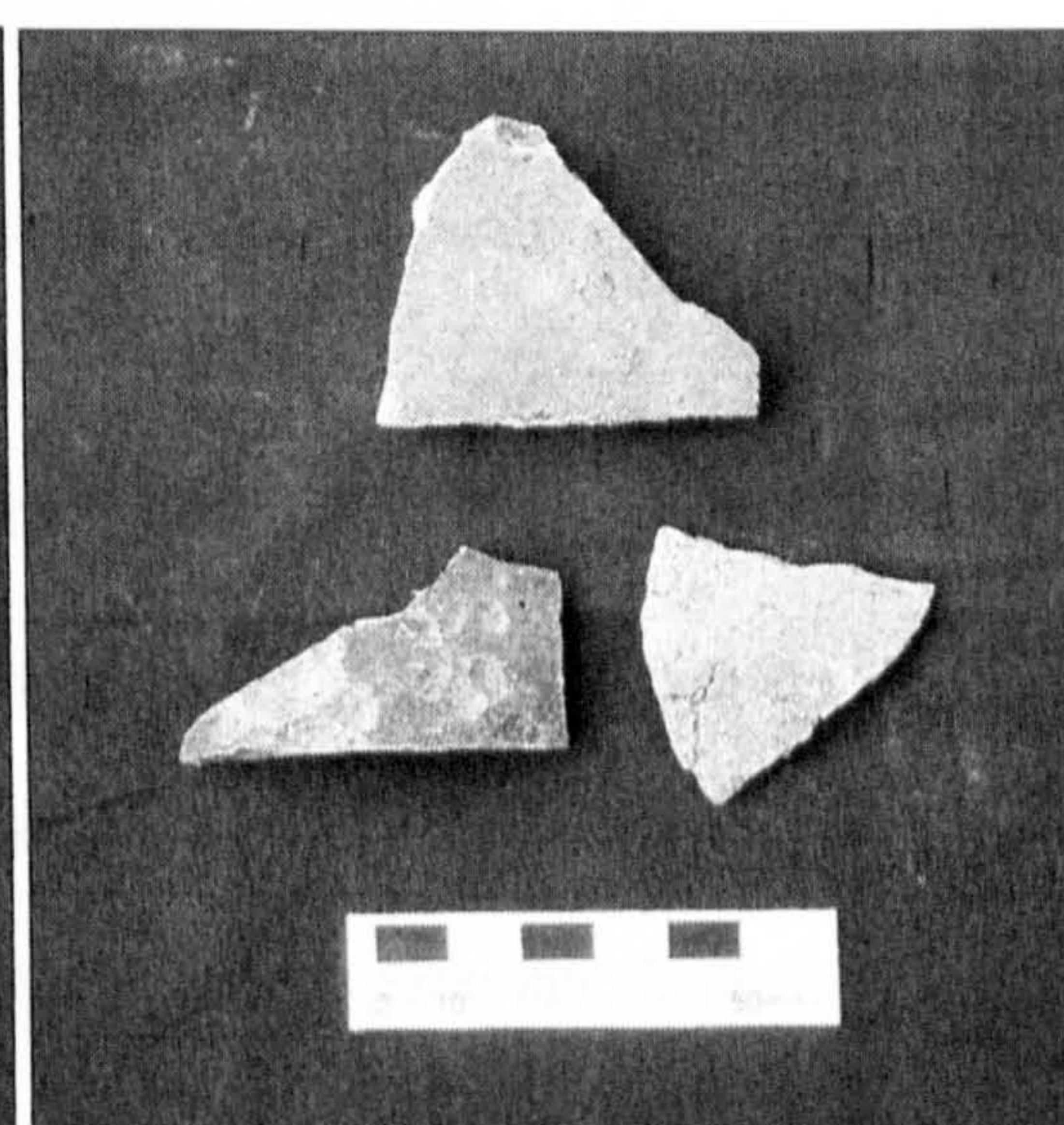


Fig. 4.23 Grey 1-type, body sherds with glazed outer surfaces; Old Parliament House site.

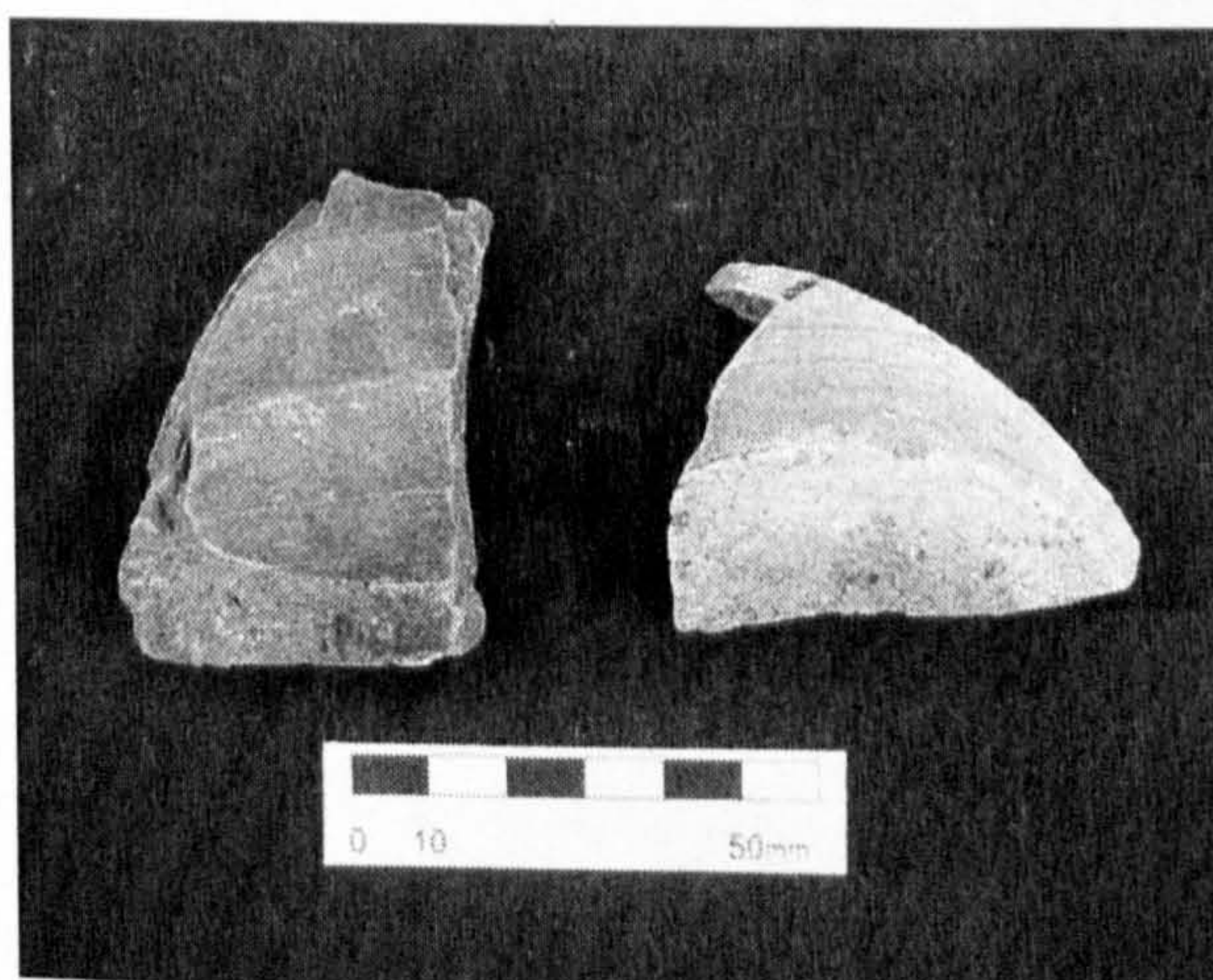


Fig. 4.24: Grey 1-type, base sherds; Old Parliament House site.



Fig. 4.25: Grey 1-type, rim sherds with lugs attached; Old Parliament House site.

¹⁰¹ See Fig. 4.23.

¹⁰² See Fig. 4.24.

b) Grey 2

The total weight of these sherds is the smallest not only amongst the dark body sherds, but amongst the fifteen subgroups, accounting for 0.5%¹⁰³ and 1.2%¹⁰⁴ of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively. This suggests that the import of this type of ware was consistent but limited. This type of ware was probably produced in Fujian, possibly in the Juzhou district. The exact kiln area or district of production, however, has not so far been identified.

The grey 2 type sherds have a fine uniform clay body, which is dark grey-purple, occasionally containing small black inclusions. The sherds are very hard, the wares having been fired at a very high temperature. The outer surface of the body sherds is often covered by a very faintly iridescent brown slip-like layer. With the exception of three small rim sherds, this type of ware is only represented by body sherds, with no base examples recovered. The curvature of the body sherds suggests that the vessels had a narrow cylindrical profile.



Fig. 4.26: Grey 2-type, cross-sectional view of a body sherd; Old Parliament House site.



Fig. 4.27: Grey 2-type, body sherds with iridescent brown slip-like layer; Old Parliament House site.

¹⁰³ See Table 4.5.

¹⁰⁴ See Table 4.6.

c) Grey 3

The grey 3 type forms the largest group of dark body sherds in the assemblage, accounting for 6.4%¹⁰⁵ and 3.8%¹⁰⁶ of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively. The sherds exhibit a non-uniform clay body of coarse texture that is of grey-black color. The clay body is slightly powdery, indicating that the vessels were not fired to a very high temperature. An iridescent brown-black glaze covers both the inner and outer surfaces¹⁰⁷. From the gritty glazed surface, it is evident that the outer surface was not covered by a layer of slip before the vessels were glazed. Vessels and sherds of this type are recognizable from the iridescent glaze, the body material and the jar rim, which is small and has a flat, angular profile¹⁰⁸.

These sherds have been identified as those of one of the wares produced by the Yixing kilns of Jiangsu province, the most common vessel type being a tall narrow storage jar¹⁰⁹. These jars have been recovered during archaeological excavations conducted on wells in Yixing and Jingdezhen. It is probable that these jars were produced for the storage and transportation of liquids, and were then recycled as water storage jars after their contents had been emptied from them.

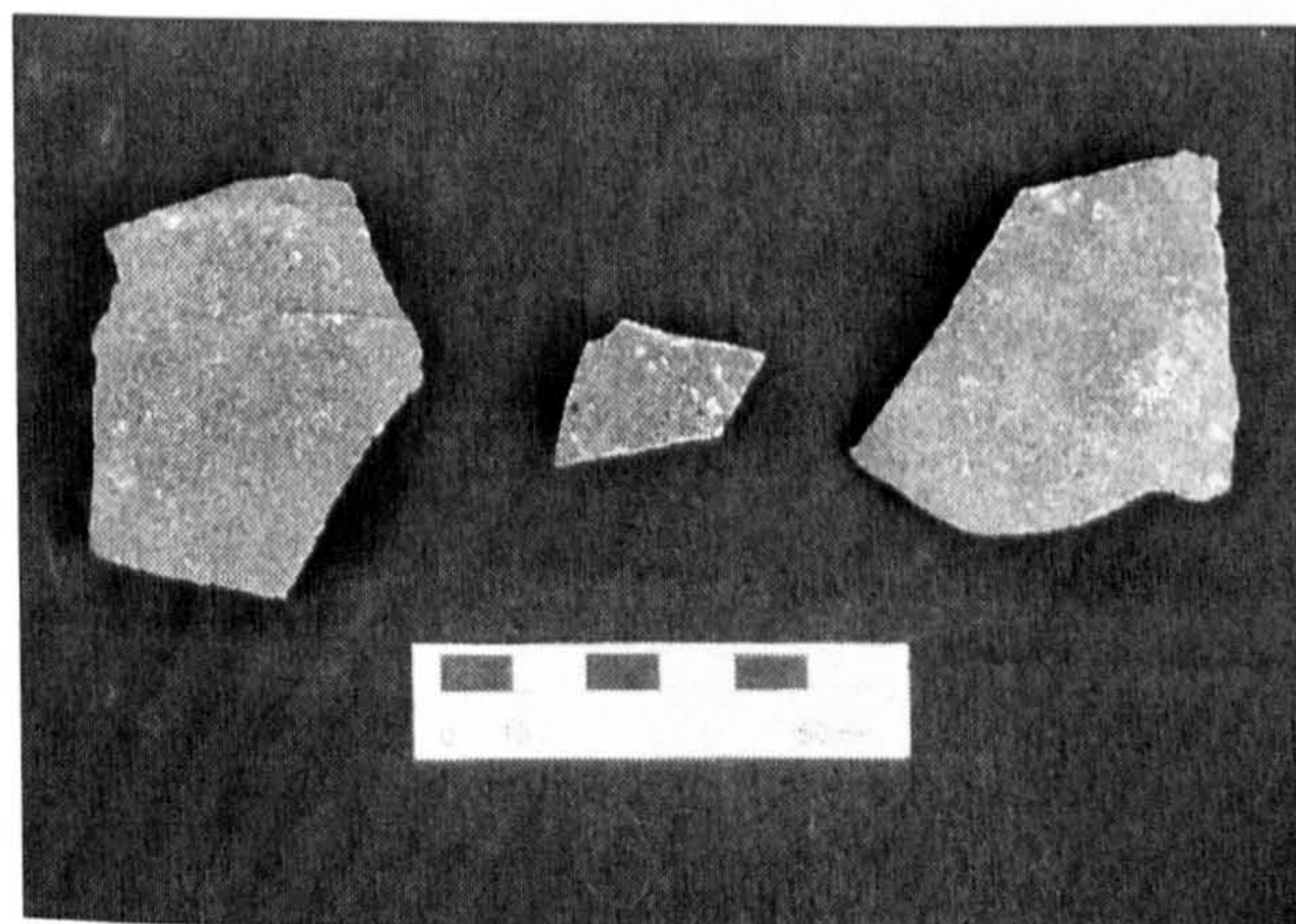


Fig. 4.28: Grey 3-type, body sherds with brown outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.

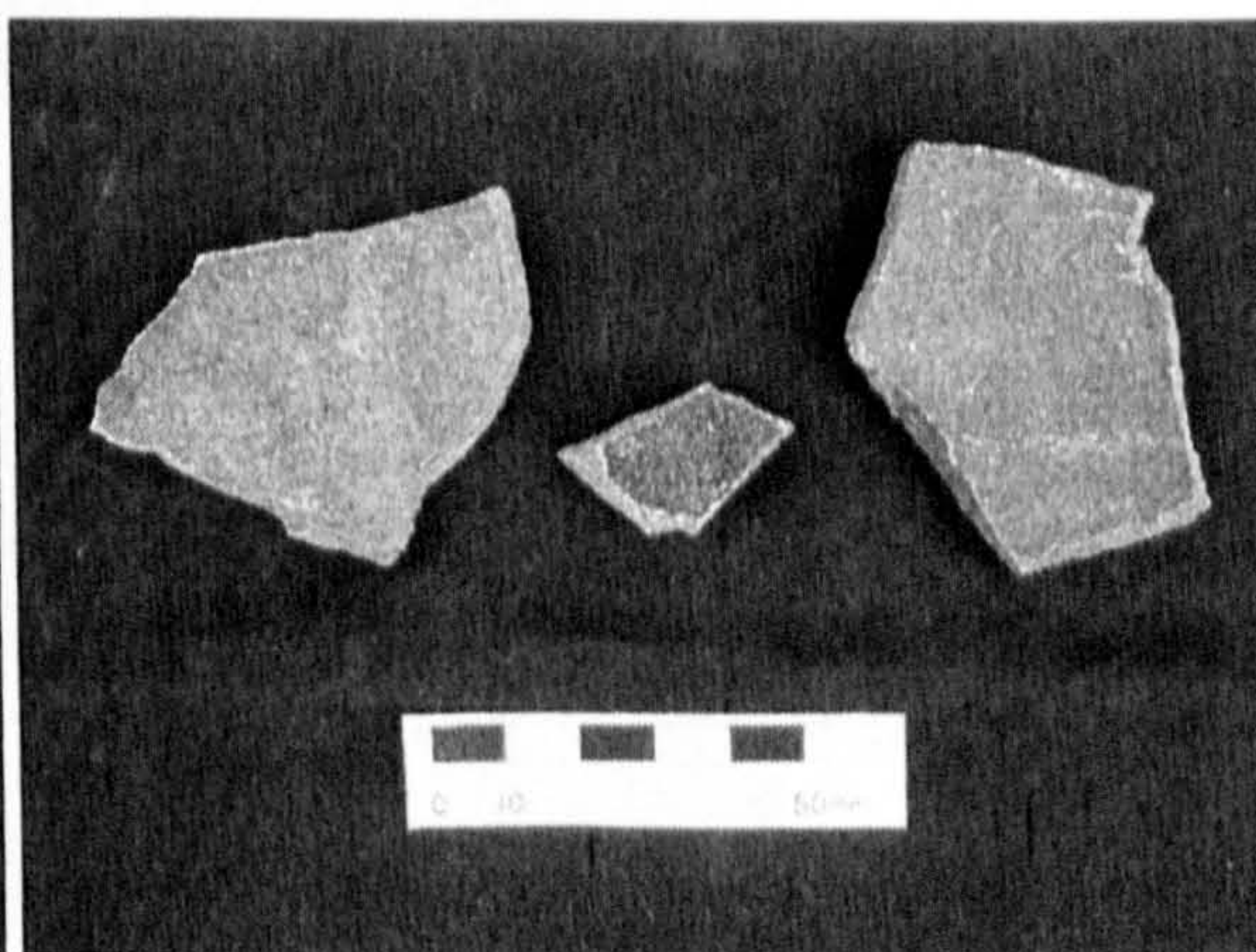


Fig. 4.29: Grey 3-type, body sherds with brown inner glaze; Old Parliament House site.

¹⁰⁵ See Table 4.5.

¹⁰⁶ See Table 4.6.

¹⁰⁷ See Fig. 4.28 & Fig. 4.29.

¹⁰⁸ See Fig. 4.31.

¹⁰⁹ Wuxishi bowuguan (1983) & Jingdezhen taoci lishi bowuguan (1980).

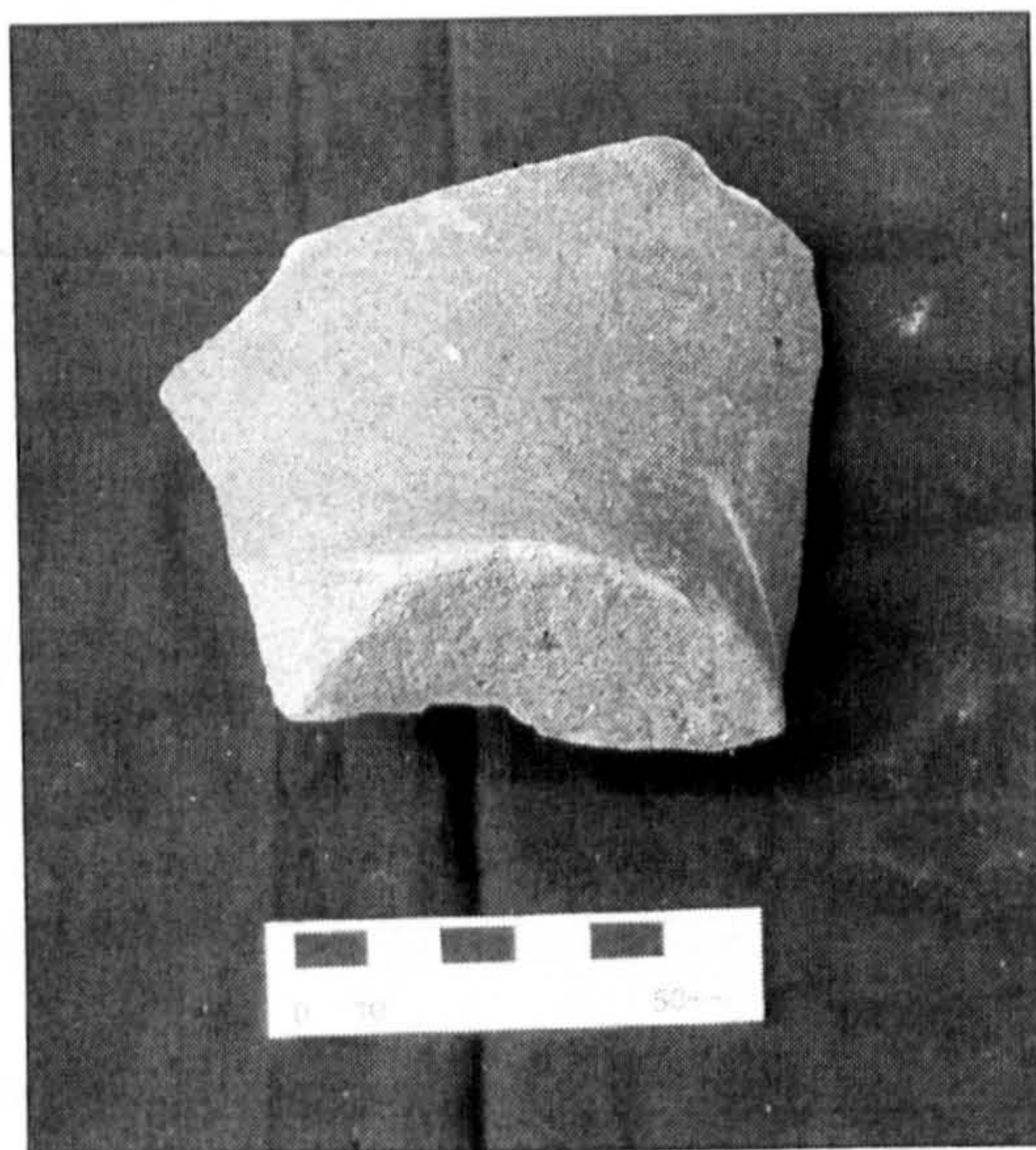


Fig. 4.30: Grey 3-type, base sherd; Old Parliament House site.

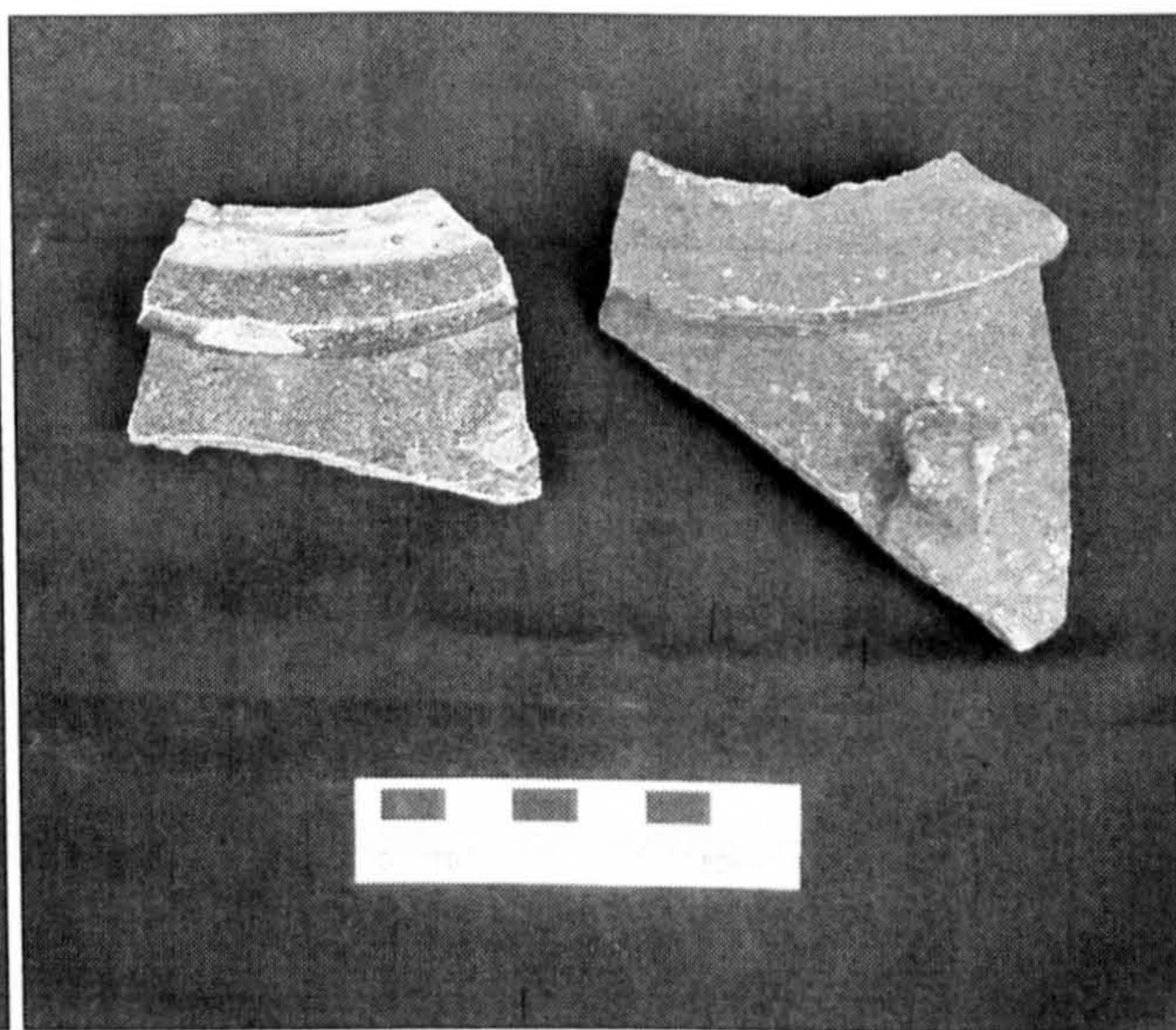


Fig. 4.31: Grey 3-type, rim sherds with lug attached; Old Parliament House site.

d) Grey 4

The grey 4 type sherds form the third smallest type of the fifteen types of coarse stoneware sherds, accounting for only 1.5% and 2.9%¹¹⁰ of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively. The red-grey clay body is of slightly coarse texture, without any inclusions or grit. The body may contain fine white grit, and may display a faint iridescent brown slip-like layer on the outer surface, indicating that these thinly potted vessels were originally glazed. The curvature of the body sherds, which is uniform in all examples from the sample, is wider than those of small-mouthed bottle sherds and those of the grey 1 and grey 2 types, indicating that the diameter of the grey 4-type vessels is generally larger. This suggests that one general form of vessel of this body type was shipped to Temasik, similar in uniformity of size and form to the smaller small-mouthed bottles exported to the region. It is likely that this type of vessel was a standard container for certain Chinese liquid products that were intended for Temasik.

¹¹⁰ See Table 4.5 & Table 4.6.

The uniform nature of the clay body of the sherds in the assemblage strongly suggests that the vessels were produced in the same locality. However, the presence of fine white grit in a portion of the sherds may be indicative of production by different kiln factories. Unfortunately, the area of production of these wares is currently not known.

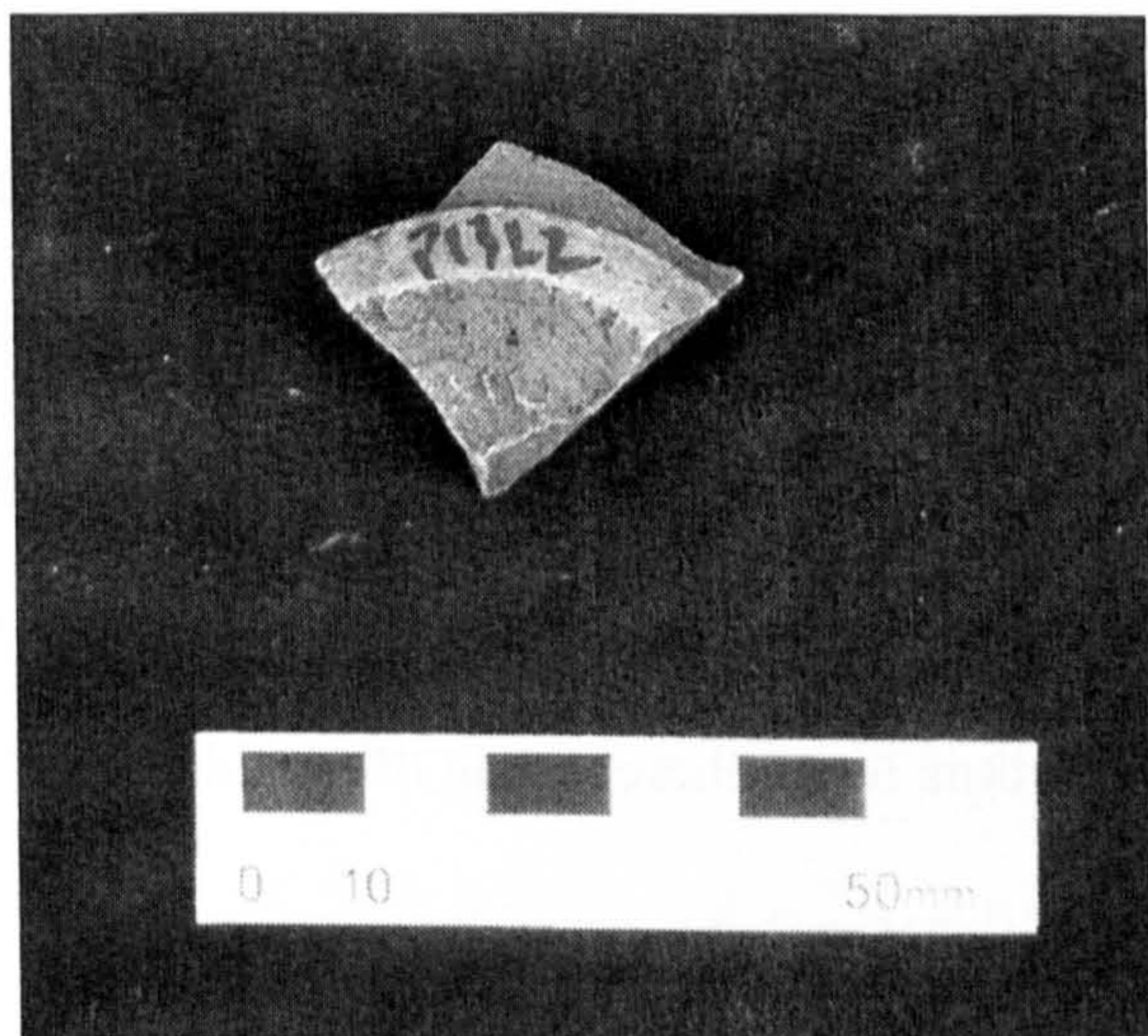


Fig. 4.32: Grey 4-type, foot ring sherd; Old Parliament House site.

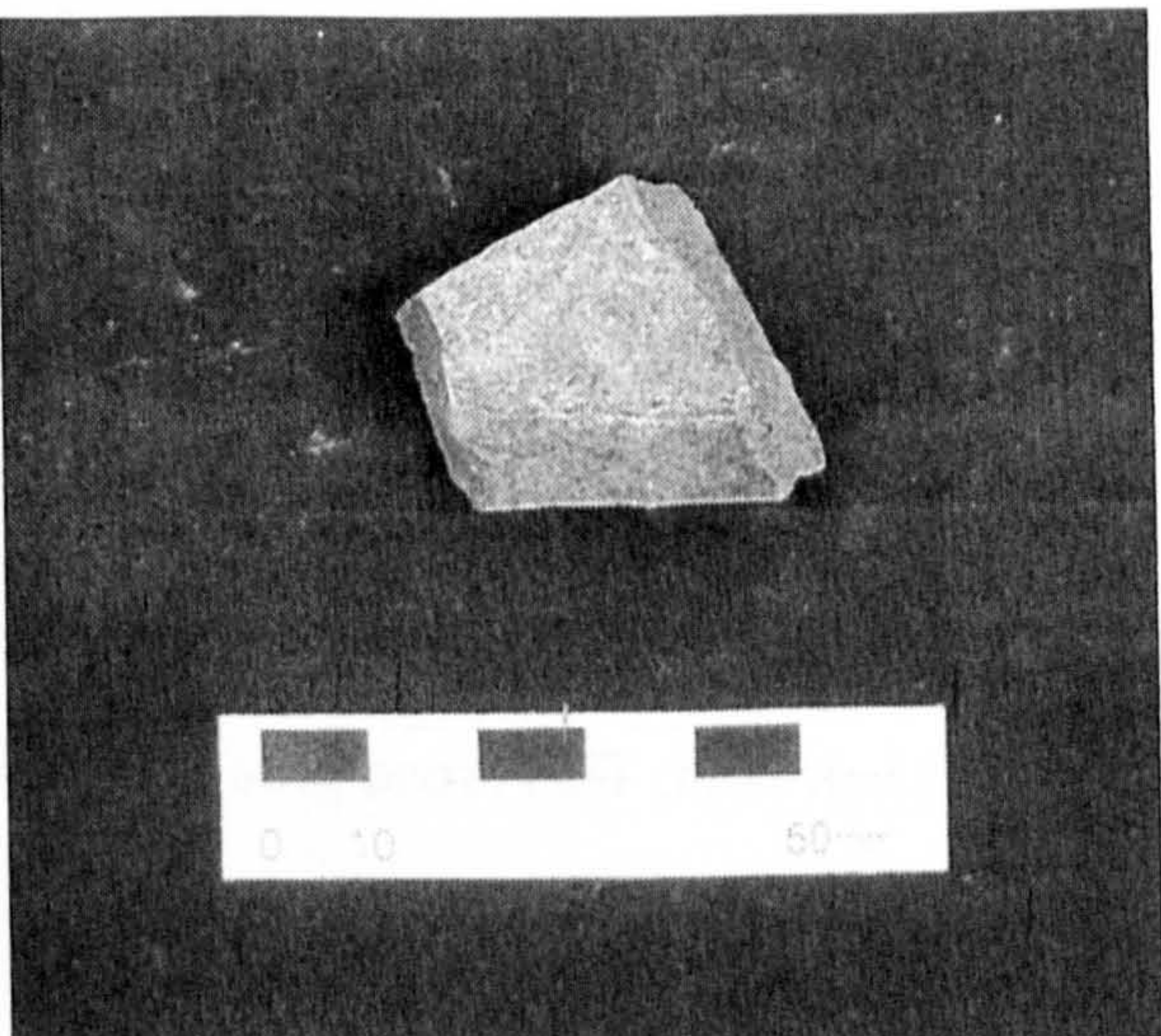


Fig. 4.33: Grey 4-type, body sherd with wiped interior; Old Parliament House site.

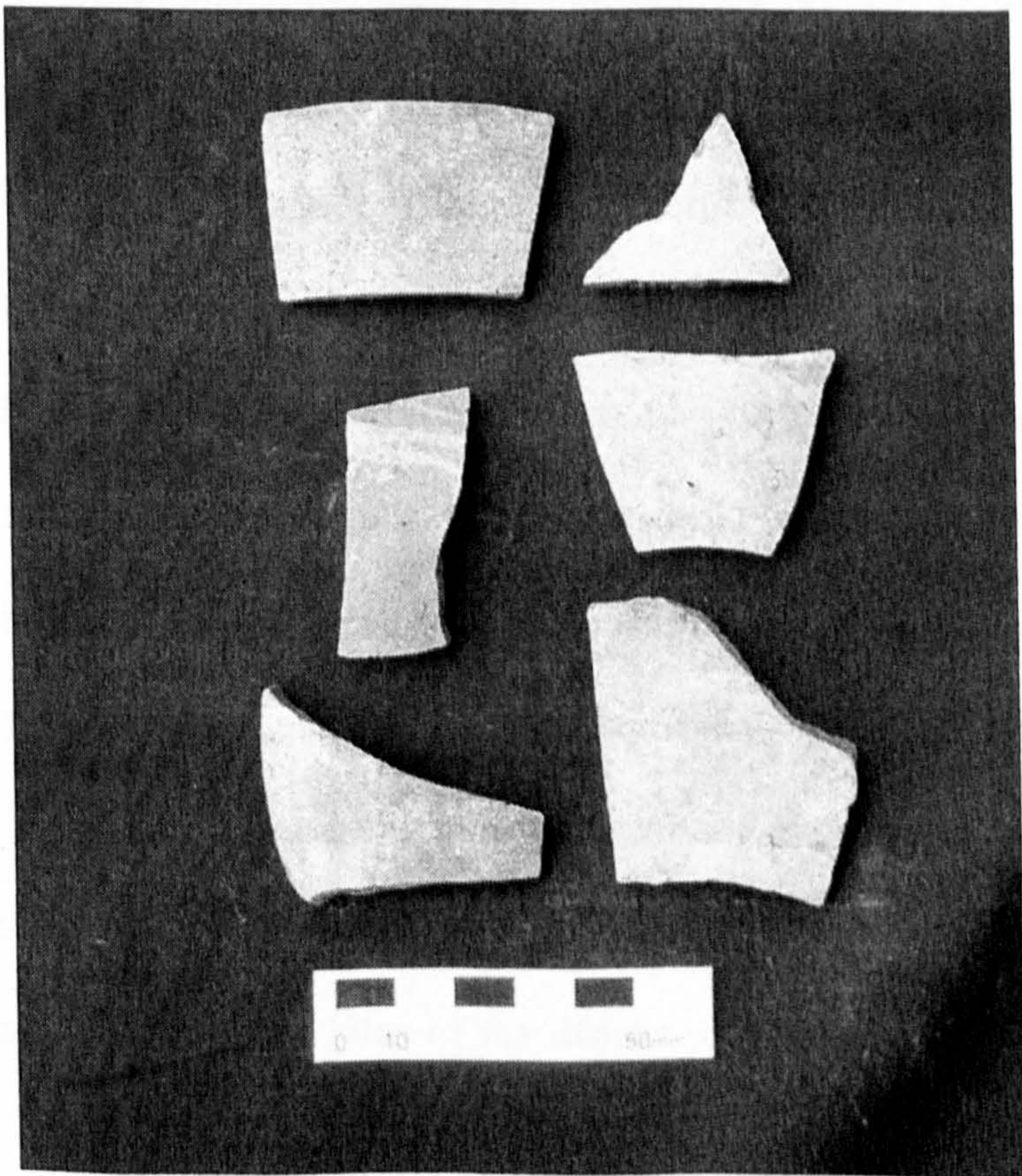


Fig. 4.34: Grey 4-type, body sherds with faint iridescent brown slip-like outer layer; Old Parliament House site.

3) Brittle-Type

This group of coarse stoneware sherds is the second largest of the three broad groups of sherds identified in this classification study, accounting for 21%¹¹¹ and 16.7%¹¹² of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively. This group of sherds is the most difficult to identify and classify. Although there are many groups of sherds that have been tentatively placed in this group, only five of them appear in sufficient quantities to be confidently identified as separate sub-types. The potting techniques, as well as the use of slip layers, and the glazes used, vary greatly from sub-type to sub-type. The common characteristic is that the clay bodies contain either small grit or small black inclusions, or both. This broad group of sherds is thus less coherent than others identified at the sites.

The areas of production of the five identifiable sub-types of this category are largely unknown, with the exception of the small-mouthed bottle type wares, which were probably produced by the Cizao kilns of Quanzhou prefecture (Fujian). It is possible that most of the rest were also produced in kiln areas in the immediate hinterland of Quanzhou port. However, present knowledge of the coarse stoneware ceramics produced by kilns in that area is fairly limited. Study of products of these kilns has largely been confined to complete vessels and their decorations. Less is known of the clay material used by the various kiln areas in the production of such wares, a fundamental aspect of the classification process of the two assemblages. The assigning of exact provenance to the brittle-type sherds can thus only be carried out as and when such information becomes available.

¹¹¹ See Table 4.5.

¹¹² See Table 4.6.

a) Small-mouthed bottle type

Small-mouthed bottle type sherds constitute the largest portion of the brittle-type group in the assemblage, accounting for 6.2% and 7.1%¹¹³ of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples. The sherds, which have a buff grey paste clay body of coarse texture, have been classified into three sub-groups—those containing fine grit; those containing fine black inclusions; and those containing both. Most sherds appear to have been glazed on the outer surface, although with the exception of those with intact black glaze, most of the glaze on the sherds is severely degraded. All three sub-groups contain both sherds that were high-fired and those that were low-fired.

The predominant form of the small-mouthed bottle-type ceramics is the storage jar. However, the thin potting that characterizes almost all the body sherds suggests that, unlike the Guangdong-type jars, the small-mouthed bottle-type jars were small in size. The uniform thinness of the sherds, and the absence of paddle marks, indicate that the wares were either thrown or finished on a potter's wheel. There does not appear to have been a great variation in the size of the vessels of this sub-type that were imported by Temasik.

The small-mouthed bottle type sherds have been so named because the clay body of the sherds is the same as or very similar to those of vessels, sometimes also called “mercury jars”, excavated in Singapore and other Maritime Southeast Asian sites. The type of small-mouthed bottles that have been excavated at sites in Maritime Southeast Asia, including Singapore, have so far been found only at the Zhengongshan kilns of the Cizao District (Quanzhou prefecture, Fujian)¹¹⁴. Although the Zhengongshan kilns themselves produced only small-mouthed bottles, other kilns of the district produced a diverse range of vessels,

¹¹³ See Table 4.5 & Table 4.6.

¹¹⁴ Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987: 23).

including storage jars, basins, platters, bowls and dishes¹¹⁵. Sherds, the body clay characteristics of which are identical or highly similar to those of the small-mouthed bottle sherds, are very likely to have come from wares produced in the Cizao kiln district as well. The production of small-mouthed bottle type wares within a single district, but by separate kilns, would account for such differences in clay body characteristics as the presence of grit or black inclusions and the difference in body densities.

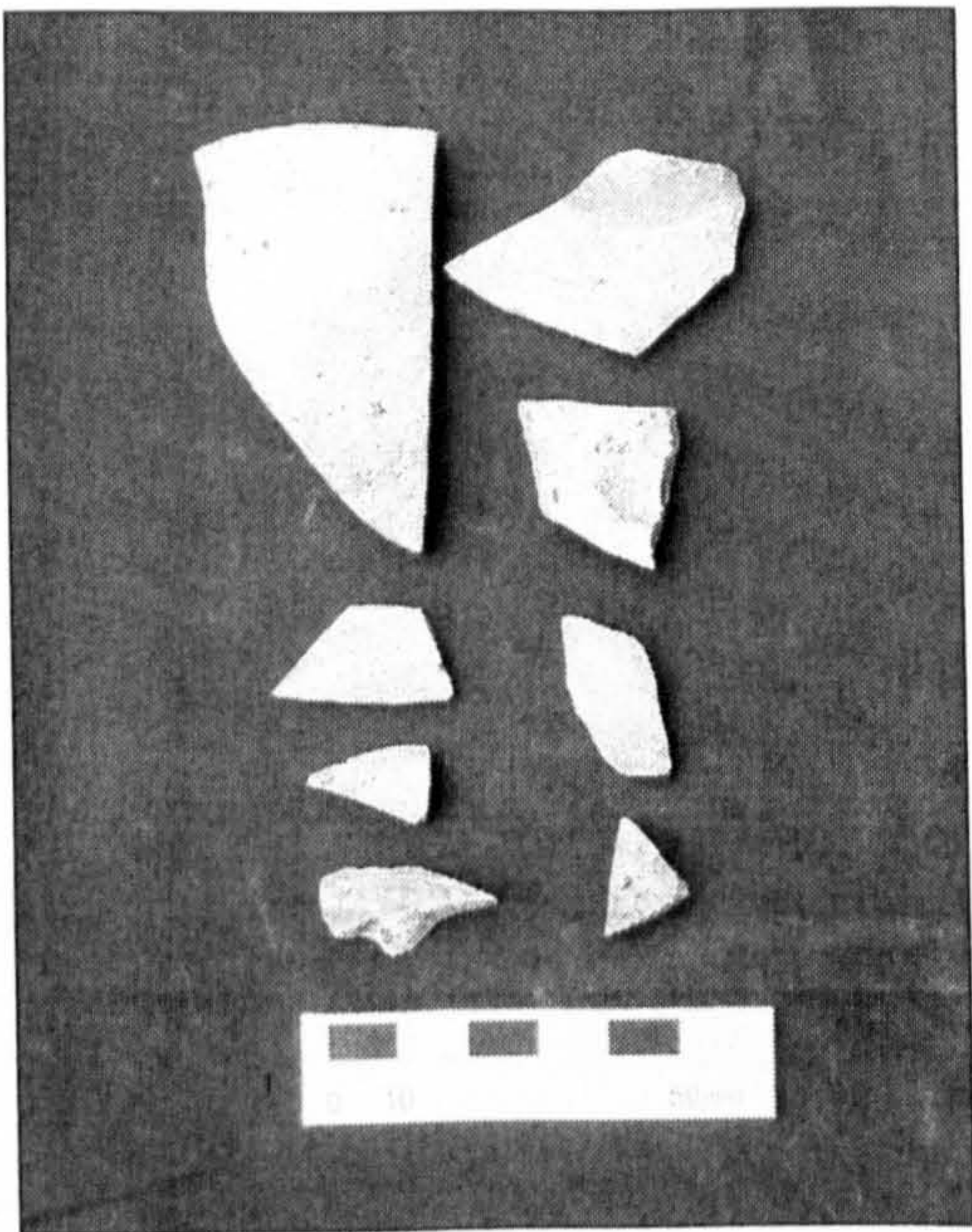


Fig. 4.35: Small mouth-type, storage jar sherds containing grit & black inclusions; Old Parliament House site.

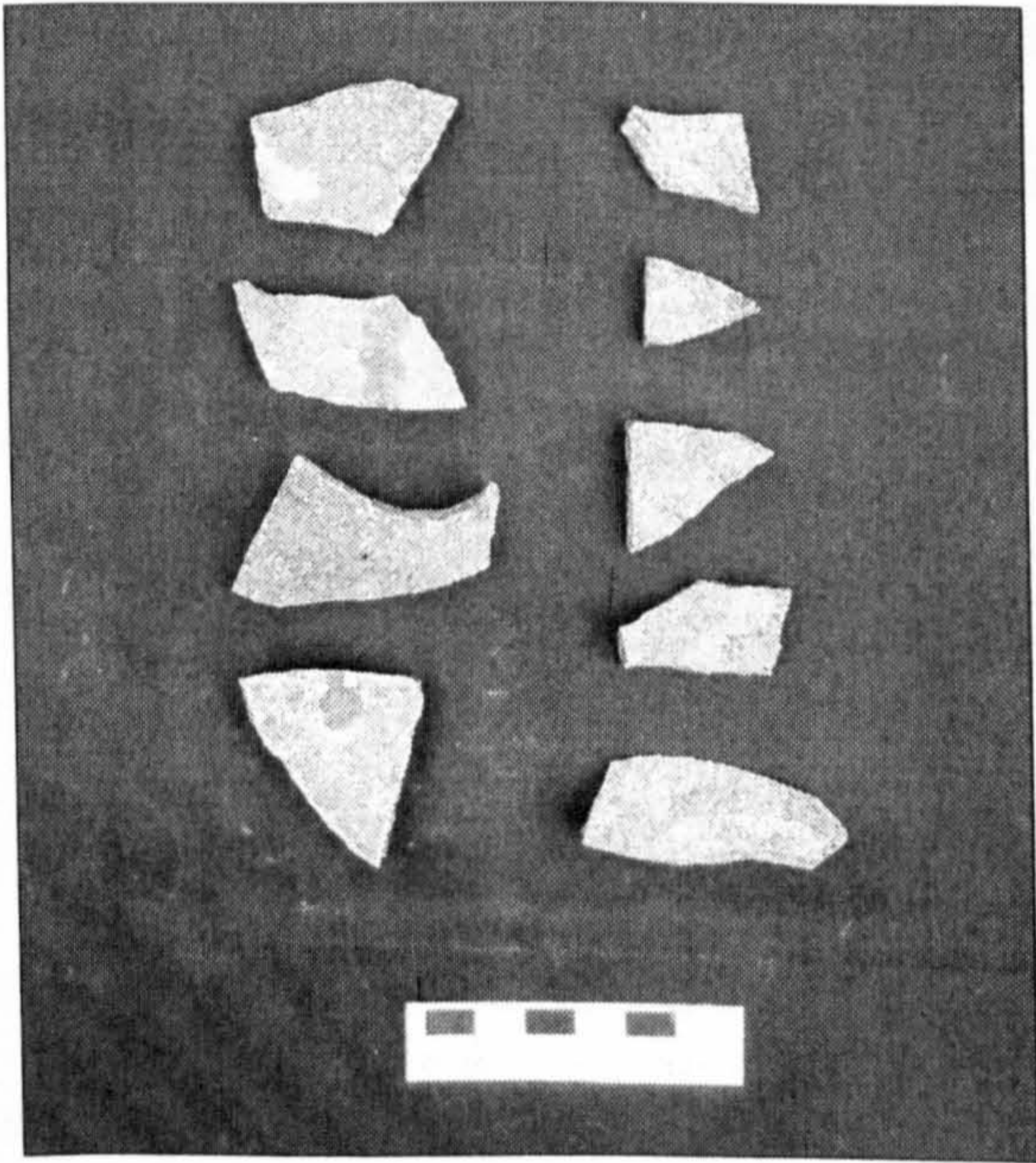


Fig. 4.36: Small mouth-type, storage jar sherds containing only black inclusions; Old Parliament House site.



Fig. 4.37: Small mouth-type, rim sherd containing grit & black inclusions, Old Parliament House site.

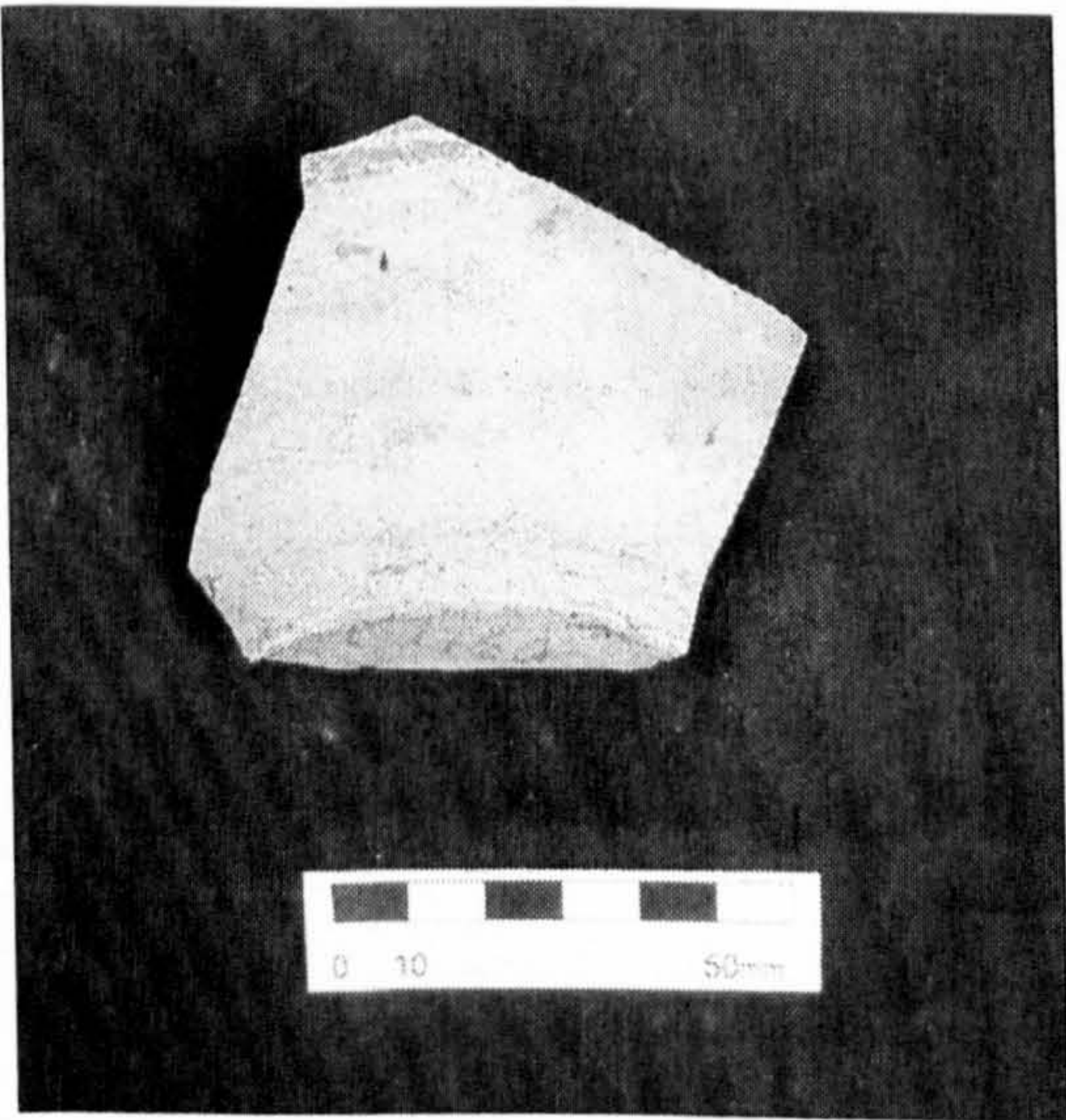


Fig. 4.38: Small mouth-type, storage jar base sherd containing grit & black inclusions; Old Parliament House site.

¹¹⁵ Jinjiangxian wenguanhui bowuguan (1987: 23).

b) Brittle

Brittle sherds account for 4.2%¹¹⁶ and 2.3%¹¹⁷ respectively of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples. They are coarse textured, the clay body containing grit of various sizes. The buff-grey clay body is generally not high fired, and it breaks fairly easily. The surface of the sherds is covered with small fissures, which probably occurred during firing due to the poor quality of the clay body. The outer surface of the wares appears to have been glazed, although the glaze of most of the sherds is no longer intact.

The walls of the body sherds range from thin to thick, indicating that the size of this type of ware varied greatly, although the overwhelming presence of thick base sherds suggests that most of the vessels were fairly large. The rims indicate that apart from storage jars, basins of this ware were also imported by Temasik¹¹⁸.

The clay bodies of sherds of this sub-type share certain similarities with those of the small-mouthed bottle-type sherds, such as the buff-grey color and the presence of both grit and black inclusions. The provenance of this sub-type is not known. It is highly likely, however, that the place of production lay within the immediate hinterland area of Quanzhou.

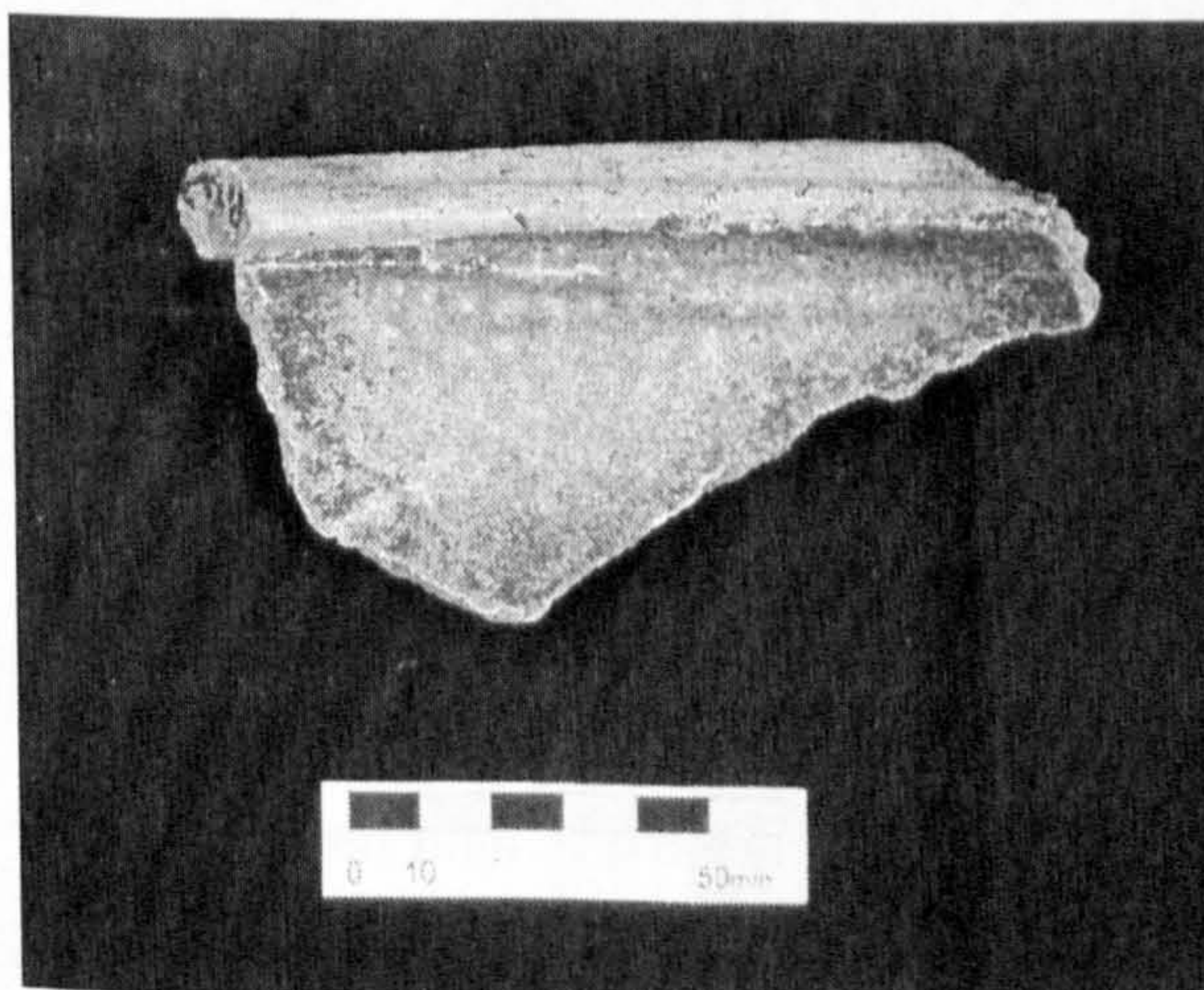


Fig. 4.39: Brittle, rim sherd exhibiting inner glaze; Old Parliament House site.



Fig. 4.40: Brittle, rim sherd with no outer glaze; Empress Place site.

¹¹⁶ See Table 4.5.

¹¹⁷ See Table 4.6.

¹¹⁸ See Fig. 4.39 & Fig. 4.40.

c) Grey-Slipped Interior

The grey-slipped interior type of coarse stoneware is so named because the inner surface of the sherds exhibits a layer of grey slip. These sherds account for 6.4% and 4.1% of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively¹¹⁹. The sherds are divided into two types, according to the body clay, which is coarse textured and contains grit or both grit and black inclusions. The outer surfaces of the sherds appear to have been glazed. A white slip layer was sometimes applied, covered by a brown-ochre glaze. An appearance similar to the Guangdong-type wares may have been intended.

Some of the wares were apparently formed using the coil and paddle technique, evident from the paddle marks on the inner surface of a number of sherds. Others exhibit a smooth uniform grey inner surface, suggesting that while the form was constructed using the coiling method, the wares were finished on the potter's wheel. The inner surface of a number of the wares may have also been smoothed by the use of a cloth while the wares were being finished on the wheel.



Fig. 4.41: Grey-slipped interior-type, body sherds exhibiting inner grey slip layer; Old Parliament House site.

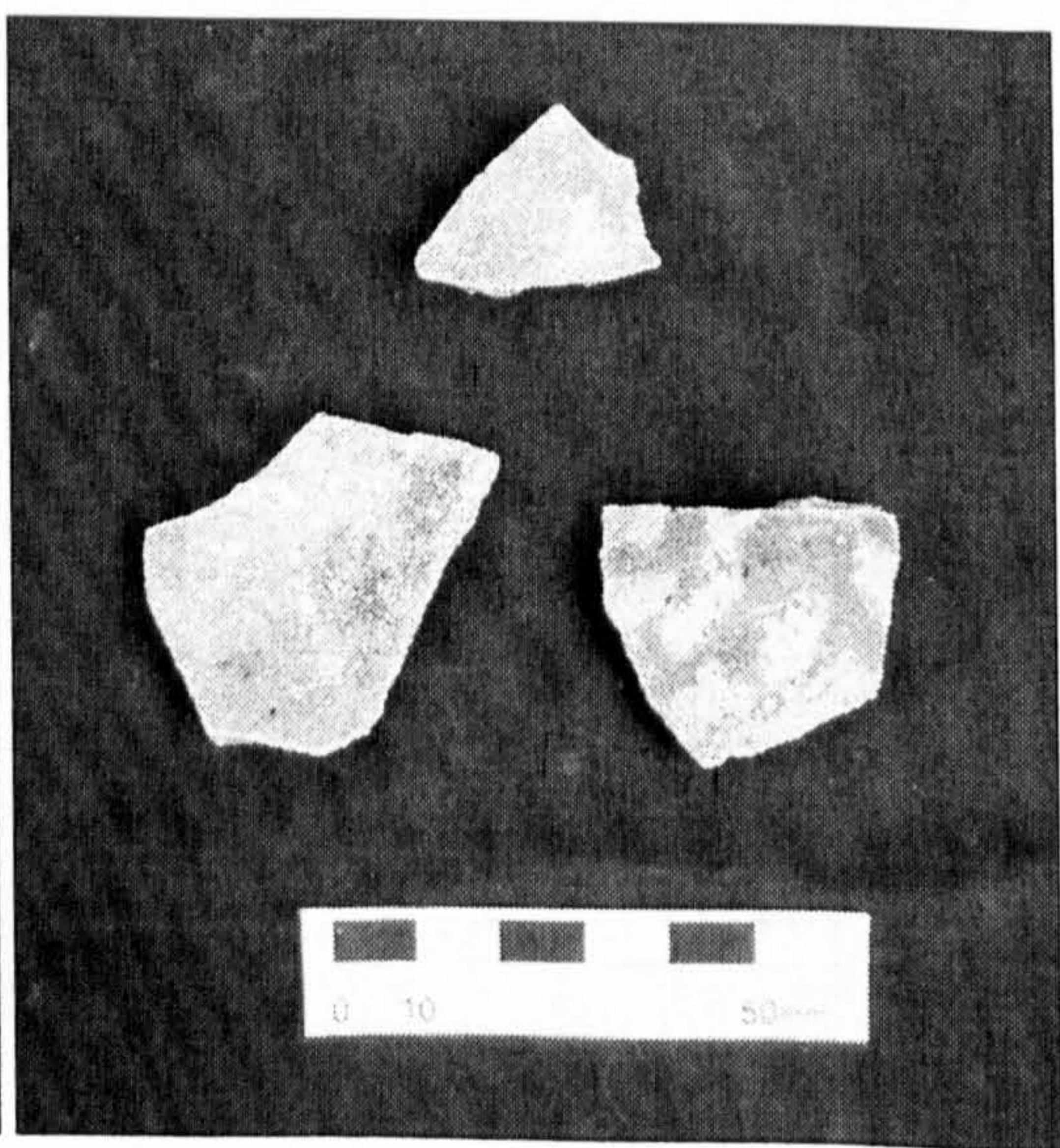


Fig. 4.42: Grey-slipped interior type, body sherds exhibiting degraded outer glaze; Old Parliament House site.

¹¹⁹ See Table 4.5 & Table 4.6.

The body sherds in the current sample are much thinner than those of the Guangdong-type, suggesting that the sizes of the vessels were, like those of the small-mouthed bottle type, not as large as those of the Guangdong-type. In this respect, this type is similar to the small-mouthed bottle type. However, the potting techniques employed and the differences in clay body characteristics make these two types fairly easily distinguishable. The provenance of the sherds is not known.

d) Sugary Texture

The sugary-texture sub-type of coarse stoneware sherds account for 1.8% and 1.2%¹²⁰ of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively. These sherds have light blue-grey clay bodies, due to firing in a reducing atmosphere, and contain grit and black inclusions. The cross-section of the sherds exhibits a layered characteristic of the clay body. Their high degree of hardness is probably due to firing at a high temperature, and the broken edges of the sherds have a sharp grainy feel to them. The outer surfaces were not covered with a slip layer; a highly vitrified clear green or brown glaze was instead applied directly to the outer surface of the vessels.

The body sherds are similar in thickness to those of the small-mouthed bottle type and grey-slip interior type sherds, indicating that the vessels were generally not large. The small storage jar was the predominant form taken by this type of coarse stoneware. There appears, however, to have been exceptions, as indicated by the presence of a very small number of fairly large-sized lugs in the assemblages.

¹²⁰ See Table 4.5 & Table 4.6.

Although the clay body characteristics are somewhat akin to those of the small-mouthed bottle-type sherds, the two are easily distinguishable. The provenance of the vessels is not known, although it is possible that the wares were produced somewhere in Fujian province.

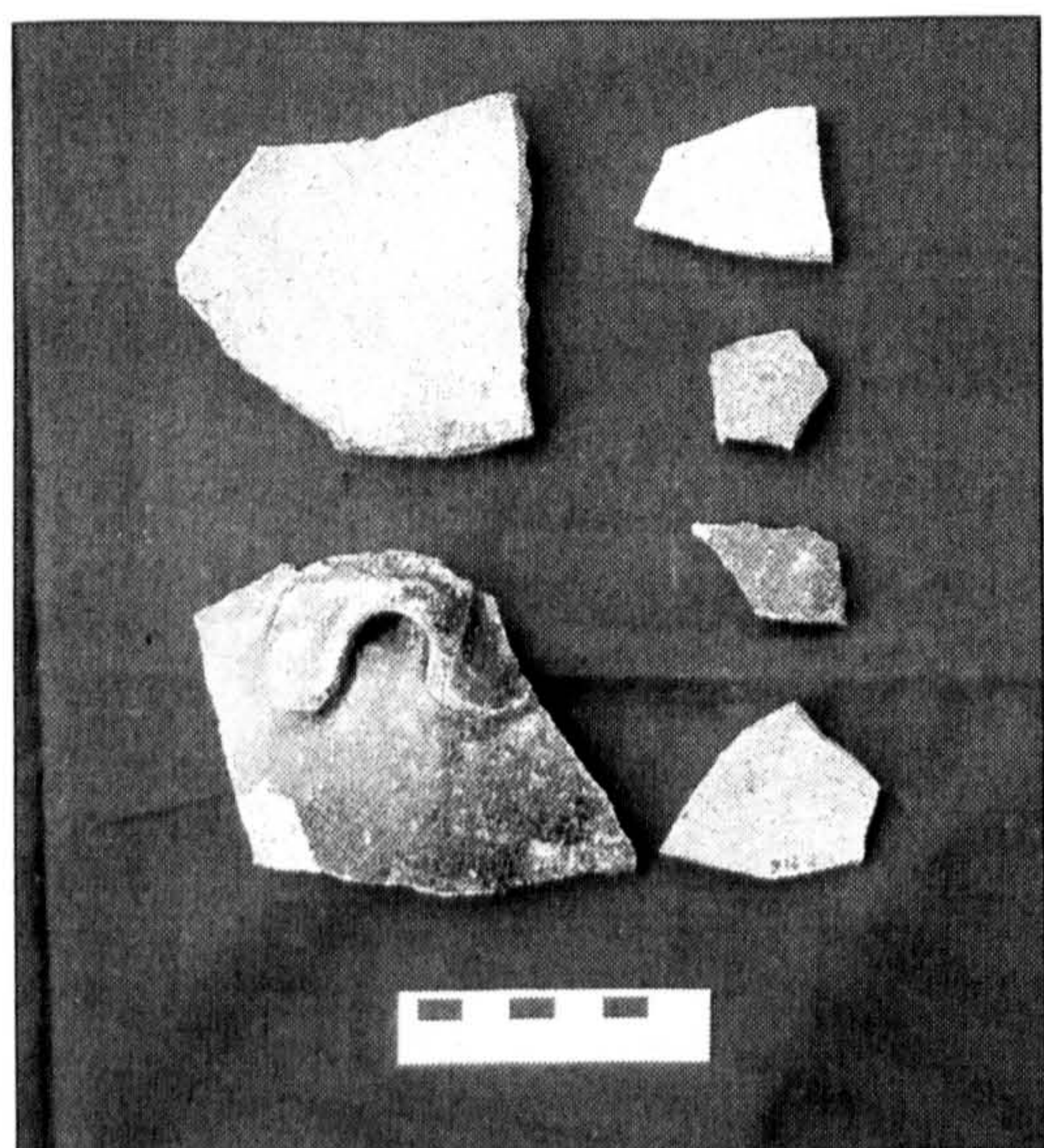


Fig. 4.43: Sugary texture-type, body sherds with lug attached; Old Parliament House site.

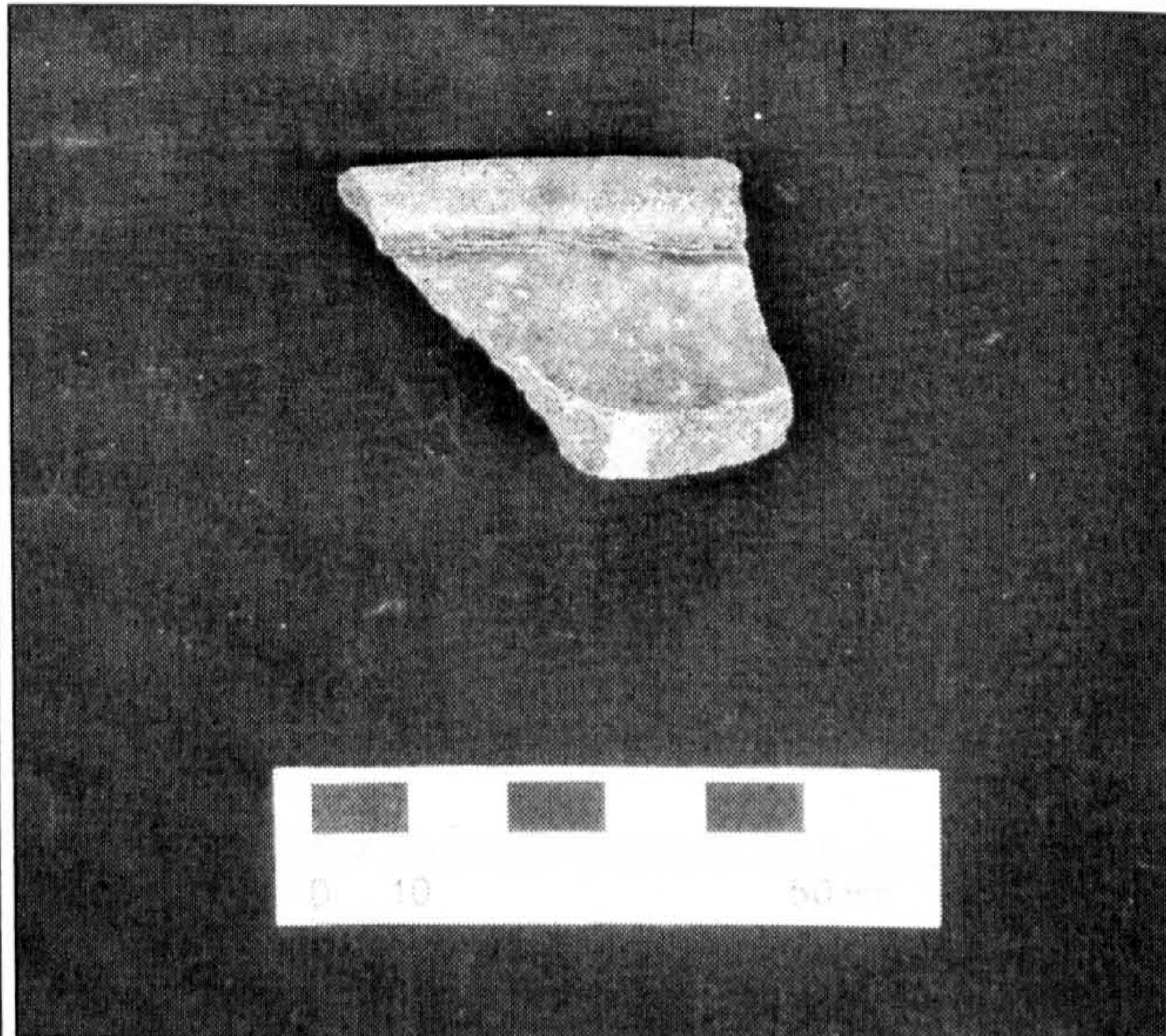


Fig. 4.44: Sugary texture-type, rim sherd; Old Parliament House site.

e) Red-Hue

Red-hue sherds account for 2.4% and 2%¹²¹ of the Empress Place site and Old Parliament House site samples respectively. These sherds have been so named because of the reddish hue on the outer surface of the body sherds, in particular those that form the lower part of the vessel bodies. The core of the clay body is buff-grey, containing an even distribution of fine grit, and has a coarse grainy texture. The outer surface has not been smoothed or coated with a slip layer, and the even distribution of fine grit is evident on the outer surface¹²².

Finds of lugs, and the fact that all recovered rims belonged to jars¹²³, suggest that the large storage jar was the form taken by this ware. The thickness of the body sherds indicates that

¹²¹ See Table 4.5 & Table 4.6.

¹²² See Fig. 4.48.

¹²³ See Fig. 4.45.

these jars were as large as the larger Guangdong-type jars. The provenance of this type is not known.



Fig. 4.45: Red hue-type, rim sherd; Old Parliament House site.

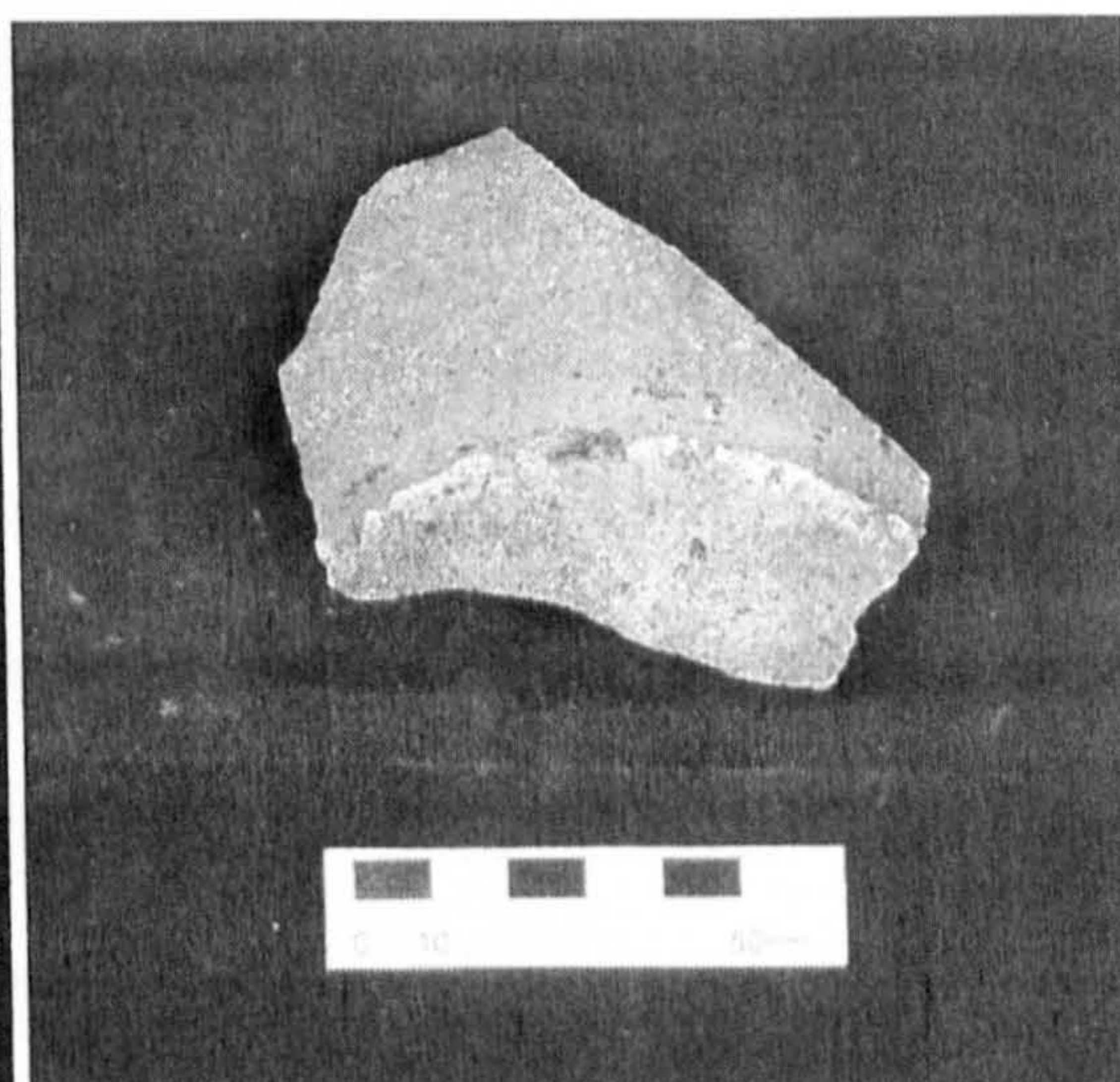


Fig. 4.46: Red hue-type, base sherd exhibiting unglazed outer surface; Old Parliament House site.

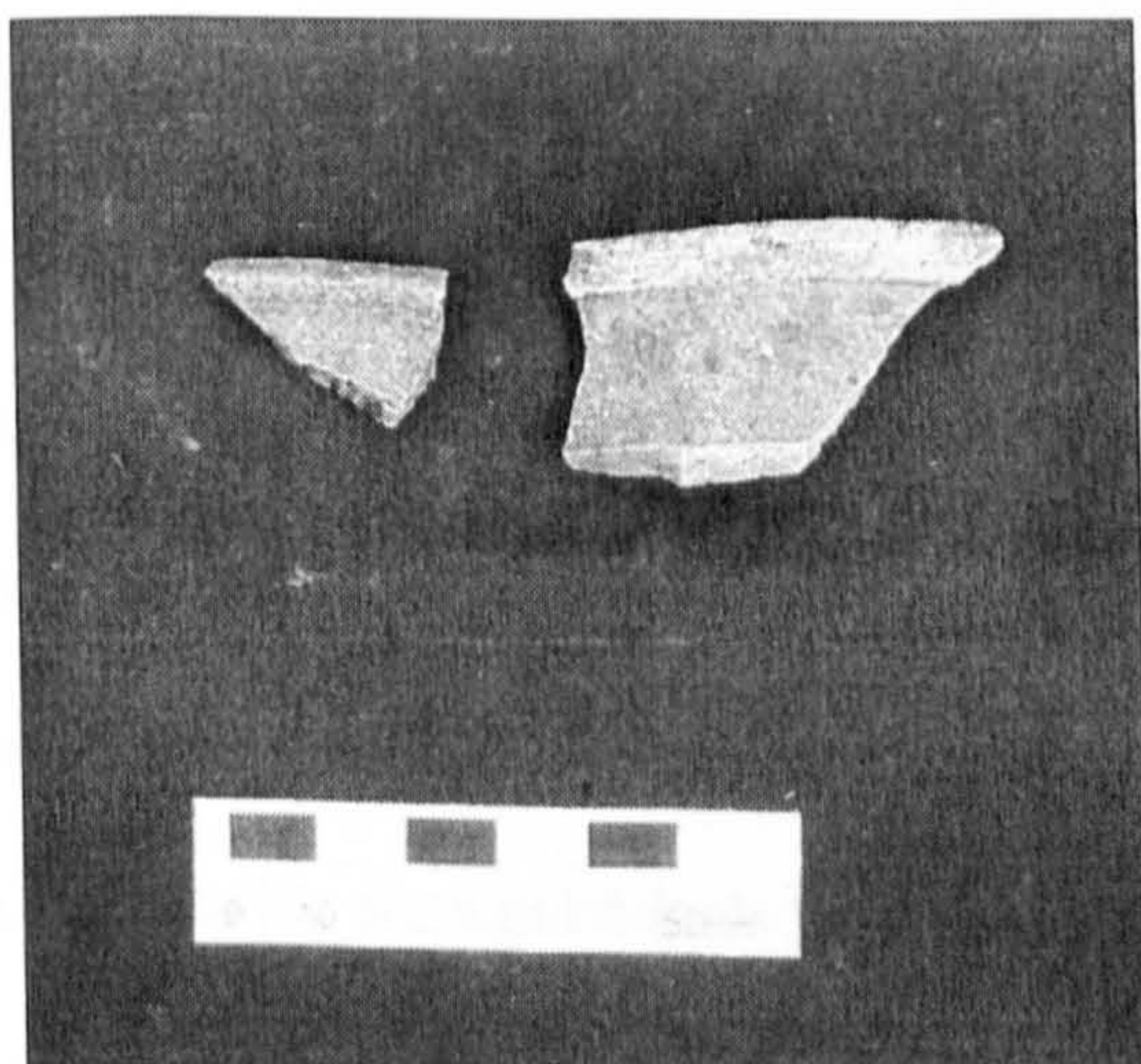


Fig. 4.47: Red hue-type, rim sherds; Old Parliament House site.

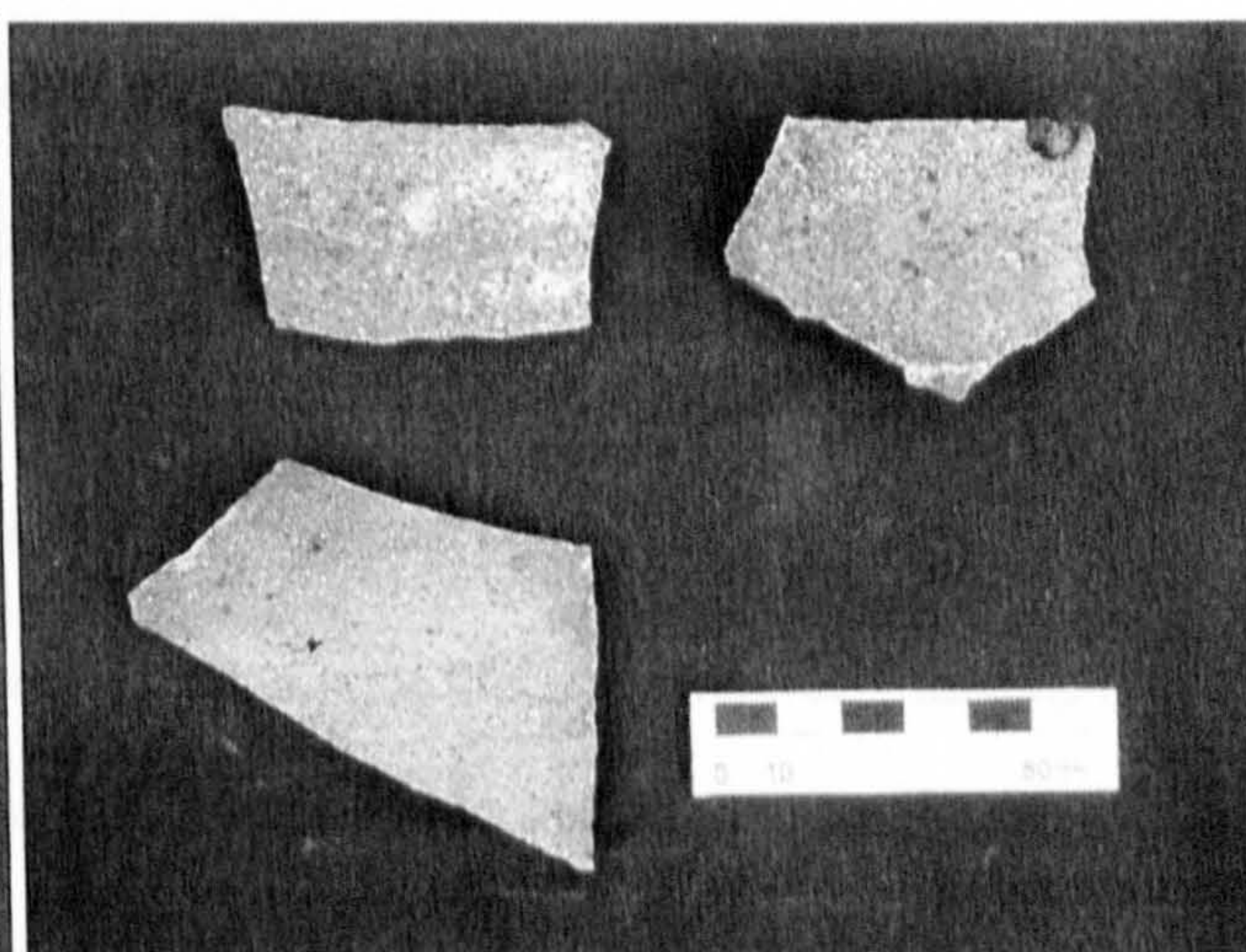


Fig. 4.48: Red hue-type, body sherds; Old Parliament House site.

Coarse Stoneware Ceramics in Historical Context

The majority of coarse stoneware sherds recovered from the Temasik sites belong to Guangdong and South Fujian wares. Such vessels as storage jars of various sizes, basins and

mortars appear to have originated from Guangdong, most probably produced in the Foshan and Nanhai districts, although North Vietnam may also have been another possible source. Of the South Fujian wares, the majority originated from the Quanzhou area, sherds from vessels produced in this region being characterized by the presence of black inclusions in the buff clay body. The Cizao kiln district in Jinjiang, a major source of these wares, also produced storage jars of various sizes, including small-mouthed jars, which were probably used for the storage of wine¹²⁴. Other sources of a small proportion of the coarse stoneware include the Yixing kilns, Jiangsu, from which the grey 3.type ceramics originated. The coarse stoneware assemblages of the Empress Place and Old Parliament House sites suggest that Temasik's trade links with China brought in coarse stoneware ceramics from a number of South Chinese provinces, although those from Guangdong and South Fujian clearly dominated this trade.

The volume of sherds, although much greater than that of the fine stoneware sherds, do not necessarily indicate that more numbers of coarse stoneware vessels than fine stoneware ceramics, were imported by Temasik. Guangdong-type jars of thirty to forty-five centimeters in height, for example, could easily weigh between five to ten kilograms. Thus, while Guangdong-type jar sherds form the largest proportion of the coarse stoneware from the Temasik site ceramic assemblages, the actual number of vessels that the assemblages represent may not have been very large. This is apparent from data from such shipwrecks as the Java Sea wreck and the Turiang wreck. In both wrecks, the coarse stoneware vessels were greatly outnumbered by the fine stoneware ceramics¹²⁵. The sheer size of these storage jars would have limited the number that could have been profitably carried by a single mercantile vessel.

¹²⁴ Moore (1970: 8).

¹²⁵ See chapter 3.3.3 & 3.3.5.

These vessels were unlikely to have been exported from China empty. While large jars were used to carry the trade in small items such as small ceramic pieces or wet-type solid foodstuffs such as pickled vegetables or shrimp paste, smaller ones would have been used to carry liquids.

Foodstuffs appear to have been the most important type of products carried by the Guangdong and South Fujian storage jars, as indicated by the data from the Intan and Turiang wrecks¹²⁶. The predominance of sherds from these jars in the Temasik assemblages suggests that much of the Chinese foodstuffs imported by Temasik came from these two provinces. Considering the diverse range of foodstuffs produced in Guangdong and South Fujian during the Song and Yuan periods, the range of such products made available to Temasik must have been fairly wide.

The sherds in the Temasik assemblages provide some idea of the foodstuffs the wares may have carried. Whereas the sherds from South Fujian are generally those of small and thinly potted vessels, those of the Guangdong-type are from larger and thickly potted vessels. The products contained and transported in the South Fujian vessels were therefore most likely to have been different from those shipped in the Guangdong vessels.

Temasik's import trade in Chinese foodstuffs was not confined to these two South Chinese provinces. The consistent occurrence of significant quantities of grey 3 ceramic sherds in the ceramic assemblages, which originated from the Yixing kilns, suggests that Temasik did maintain a demand for a specific foodstuff that was produced in Jiangsu province. However, with only one type of coarse stoneware having been identified as having originated from outside of Guangdong and South Fujian, Temasik's demand for such regional products was clearly limited.

¹²⁶ See chapter 3.3.1 & 3.3.5.

The coarse ceramic sherds recovered from the Temasik-period sites may reflect the geographical extent to which the rural economies of Guangdong and South Fujian, as well as provinces further afield such as Jiangsu, were indirectly linked to Temasik through the foodstuffs and coarse stoneware ceramics trade. While the precise volume of Temasik's trade with Quanzhou and Guangzhou is not known, the quantitative data relating to the coarse stoneware assemblages may provide an impression of the comparative trade that Temasik maintained with these two ports.

From the data available, Guangdong appears to have been the more important of the two South Chinese regions in terms of the trade in foodstuffs and coarse stoneware ceramics. The quantitative data suggests that Guangzhou exported larger quantities of these products to Temasik than Quanzhou. Nonetheless, South Fujian also accounted for a substantial portion of Temasik's imports. This is reflected by the large quantity of small-mouthed jar sherds and small-mouthed jar type sherds in the Empress Place and Old Parliament House site ceramics assemblages.

Finally, the trade in Chinese foodstuffs was dictated to a large extent by demand in Temasik. The port-polity was not a mere passive recipient of products that were incidentally traded by passing traders. The consistency of the proportions of the fifteen types of coarse stoneware sherds from the Old Parliament House and Empress Place site assemblages suggest that the demand Temasik maintained for coarse stoneware ceramics and foodstuffs from South China remained well-established and largely unchanged throughout the span of its existence.

4.5.2 Fine Stoneware Ceramics in the Temasik-period Sites: An overview

Fine stoneware ceramics form the second largest group of finds recovered from the Temasik-period sites in Singapore. In the case of the Fort Canning Hill excavation (1984), these sherds in fact form the largest group of finds recovered. With the exception of a few sherds of Thai origin, these are sherds of wares exported from China. Three groups of sherds form the fine stoneware assemblage—green ware, white ware, and blue and white ware. The predominant forms of the vessels for all three groups of ceramics were bowls and dishes. Specialty vessel forms were also imported for each of these three types of fine stoneware ceramic. Green ware imports took the form mainly of bowls, dishes and jarlets. Dehua-type ware imports comprised mainly dishes, bowls and covered boxes. In the case of Shufu type wares, bowls, dishes and stem cups were the main imported items.

Green ware, which includes celadon-glazed ceramics, forms the largest group of the fine stoneware assemblages from the various Temasik-period sites. These sherds constitute 72.1% (39 kg)¹²⁷, 65.3% (76.4 kg)¹²⁸ and 66.9 % (5.862 kg)¹²⁹ by weight of the fine stoneware assemblages of the Old Parliament House, Empress Place and Fort Canning Hill (1988) excavations respectively. In the case of the Fort Canning Hill excavation (1984), 153 out of a total of 244 fine stoneware sherds (62.7%) were green ware¹³⁰. The majority of these green sherds are of Longquan celadon ceramics. Longquan-type sherds account for 75.9% by weight (58 kg) of the total quantity of green ware sherds recovered from the Empress Place site¹³¹. Preliminary survey of the green ware sherds recovered from the Old Parliament House site also reveals that Longquan-type sherds form the major proportion of these sherds. The high proportion of Longquan sherds thus appears to be consistent for all the ceramic assemblages of the Temasik-period sites. The remainder are largely Fujian wares.

¹²⁷ Refer to Table 4.4.

¹²⁸ Refer to Table 4.3.

¹²⁹ Miksic (1988: 39).

¹³⁰ Miksic (1985: 88).

¹³¹ Refer to Table 4.3.

White ware forms the next largest group of sherds. The proportions are significantly smaller than those of green ware, constituting 25% (13.3 kg)¹³², 34.2% (40 kg)¹³³, and 20.2% (1.772 kg)¹³⁴ by weight of the fine stoneware assemblages of the Old Parliament House, Empress Place and Fort Canning Hill (1988) excavations respectively. In the case of the Fort Canning Hill excavation (1984), white ware sherds accounted for 74 of the 244 pieces of fine stoneware sherds recovered¹³⁵. Two types of ceramics form substantial portions of the white ware assemblages. These are Dehua and Shufu-type ceramics. Shufu-type sherds are more common than those of Dehua ware. This larger proportion could be overwhelming or marginal. In the case of the Old Parliament House assemblage, Shufu-type sherds form 71.4% by weight (9.5 kg), while Dehua-type sherds form 22.6% by weight (3 kg) of the white ware sherds recovered¹³⁶. By contrast, in the Empress Place assemblage, Shufu-type and Dehua-type sherds are present in almost the same quantities, weighing a total of 6.032 kg and 5.283 kg respectively¹³⁷. Qingbai-type sherds, and sherds which are unclassifiable due to the severe erosion of the glaze, form the remainder of the white wares recovered.

Yuan period blue and white ware forms the smallest group of fine stoneware in the assemblages of the Temasik-period sites. The proportions of this group of ceramics within the fine stoneware assemblages vary according to the location of the sites. For the plain-area sites, the quantity of blue and white sherds recovered is extremely small, constituting 0.9% (0.562 kg)¹³⁸ and 1.7% (0.9 kg)¹³⁹ by weight of the fine stonewares found at the Empress Place and Old Parliament House sites respectively. The proportion of blue and white sherds recovered from sites on Fort Canning Hill is higher. In the case of the 1984 excavation, 17

¹³² Refer to Table 4.4.

¹³³ Refer to Table 4.3.

¹³⁴ Miksic (1988: 39).

¹³⁵ Miksic (1985: 88).

¹³⁶ Refer to Table 4.4.

¹³⁷ Refer to Table 4.3.

¹³⁸ Refer to Table 4.3.

¹³⁹ Refer to Table 4.4.

(7%) of the 244 fine stoneware sherds recovered were of Yuan period blue and white ceramic type, while in the case of the Fort Canning Hill excavation (1988), blue and white sherds accounted for 12.8% (1.122 kg) by weight of the fine stoneware recovered¹⁴⁰.

The fine stoneware ceramics imported by the Temasik settlement at the north bank of the Singapore River were almost exclusively from China, indicating that this ceramics trade was an important part of China's trade with Temasik. This is the same as the pattern indicated by the archaeological data from wrecks and settlement sites in Maritime Southeast Asia dated to the tenth to fourteenth centuries, whereby the fine stoneware ceramics recovered were almost exclusively of Chinese origin.

The similarities of Temasik's import pattern of fine stoneware ceramics to that of other settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region, such as in Kedah and at Kota Cina, include the predominance of green ware in the assemblages recovered from these sites. This conforms to the general pattern of the ceramics industry in Guangdong and South Fujian in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, whereby white ware, the predominant fine stoneware ceramics produced and exported from South China to Island Southeast Asia between the tenth and twelfth centuries, was eclipsed by green ware by the thirteenth century.

The second common characteristic of the Temasik fine stoneware assemblages with those from settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region is that higher value ceramics, including Longquan celadon, shufu, Dehua white and blue and white wares, form the majority of these assemblages. The green ware sherds from the assemblages comprise mainly of Longquan celadon sherds. This is in spite of the fact that by the thirteenth century, the ceramic industry in South Fujian was at its peak¹⁴¹, with all the South Fujian kilns, with the exception of the

¹⁴⁰ Miksic (1988: 39).

¹⁴¹ So (1994: 14).

Dehua kilns, producing green ware ceramics by the thirteenth century¹⁴². The high proportion of Longquan-type sherds is also counter to the trend in the export trade of fine Chinese stoneware to Island Southeast Asia that had developed by the late thirteenth century, reflected by the ceramics cargo of such shipwrecks as the Java Sea wreck, whereby the green ware cargo comprised mostly South Fujian ceramics. Thus, despite South Fujian kilns having been orientated towards meeting the ceramics demand of the Southeast Asian market during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Temasik chose to import the bulk of its green ware from a more distant source.

Longquan celadon ware from Zhejiang, which form the majority of the green ware sherds recovered from the Temasik sites, would have cost more to acquire than those from South Fujian or Guangdong because of the additional costs that would have been incurred in transporting these wares to the ports that had maritime links with Island Southeast Asia, namely Quanzhou, and Guangzhou. In addition, the quality of Longquan ceramics was generally higher than wares from South Fujian and Guangdong. Thus, the unit value of Longquan ware, taking into consideration both the quality of the wares and the higher transport costs, would have been significantly higher than those produced in South Fujian or Guangdong. This suggests that the population of Temasik maintained a taste and strong demand for such higher value Chinese ceramics.

This demand for higher value ceramics is also evident in the white ware imported by Temasik. Shufu-type sherds, which form the largest group or majority of white ware assemblages from the plain area Temasik sites, were produced exclusively by the Jingdezhen kilns of Jiangsu province. Similarly, white-glazed ceramics from Dehua, which were not produced anywhere else in China, were demanded by Temasik in significant quantities. It would appear that the uniqueness of a particular type of ceramics, or the quality of craftsmanship of a kiln district whose product was of a type widely produced in

¹⁴² So (1994: Table 2).

South China, were the key factors determining the type of ceramics Temasik's eventually demanded and imported from China.

It is evident from the data on the ceramics assemblage that Temasik did import substantial quantities of low unit value ceramics that were produced by the kilns of South Fujian and Guangdong. The smaller proportion of these ceramics present in the assemblages only indicates that they were not completely intended for the settlement on the north bank of the Singapore River. Temasik may have imported substantial quantities of low unit value South Fujian and Guangdong ceramics to be re-exported into its economic network in the immediate region. Celadon, white wares and utilitarian stoneware ceramics similar to those excavated in Singapore, albeit with simpler decorative styles and techniques, have also been found in the nearby Riau Islands¹⁴³. It is highly likely that the larger proportion of the Fujian and Guangdong ceramics imported by Temasik were intended for this peripheral market of the Temasik polity. This was due to the lower level of affluence of the inhabitants of this peripheral market.

The data on the fine stoneware sherds recovered from the Temasik-period sites suggests that in terms of the ceramics trade between this port-polity and China, Quanzhou may have been more important than Guangzhou. The large proportion of high value ceramics from Longquan, Jingdezhen Dehua in the Temasik assemblages suggests that Quanzhou, which was closer to these kiln districts than Guangzhou, was the main gateway through which South Chinese ceramics were exported to Temasik.

4.5.3 Other Small Finds

¹⁴³ Miksic (1994: 231) & Heng (1999: 119 & 120).

Small finds recovered from Temasik-period sites include Chinese copper cash¹⁴⁴ and iron slag. Copper prills and wire, and fragments of gold were recovered from the Parliament House site (1995)¹⁴⁵. Glass artifacts include vessel fragments, droplets and beads from the Fort Canning Hill sites¹⁴⁶. A bronze spear point, and a fourteenth-century Javanese figurine of a rider on horseback were recovered from the Empress Place site (1998)¹⁴⁷. With the exception of the glass finds and copper cash, these finds have not so far been studied in detail.

A total of 127 Chinese copper cash have been recovered from the various excavation sites. Of these, 120 are of the Northern Song period. No Yuan or Ming period coins have been recovered. The distribution of these coins according to the reign marks (tongbao) is very similar to those of hoards found in Java and China¹⁴⁸. It is not known whether Chinese copper cash were used as a form of currency within Temasik. However, the number of coins recovered is small when compared to quantities recovered from earlier Malay region sites, such as Kota Cina, an eleventh to thirteenth century settlement from which over 2000 Chinese coins have been recovered, or sites in Java, where large numbers of coins have been recovered. It thus appears that the use of Chinese coins for commercial transactions in Temasik's internal and external economy was probably on a much smaller scale than had been the norm in parts of Maritime Southeast Asia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. This difference probably reflects the decline in the production of coins in China after the end of the Northern Song period.

Iron nodules are the only iron finds recovered from the Temasik-period sites. No manufactured ironware has so far been found. Iron nodules accounted for only 2.4% (by

¹⁴⁴ Borell (1996).

¹⁴⁵ *The Straits Times* (15 May 2003: 3).

¹⁴⁶ Miksic (1989 & 1995).

¹⁴⁷ *The Straits Times* (15 May 2003: 3).

¹⁴⁸ Borell (1996: table 2) and Van Aelst (1995: 374 & 5).

weight) of all the finds recovered during the Fort Canning Hill excavation (1988)¹⁴⁹, and no iron was recovered from the intact Temasik-period layers of squares 5 and 6 of the Fort Canning excavation (1984). These nodules are probably natural iron concretions that occur at the sterile clay layer beneath the Temasik-period layer, and not iron slag indicative of some form of iron-working activity on the hill.

For the plain-area sites, information on iron finds is only available from the Old Parliament House site excavation (2002). Iron nodules accounted for 1.3% (in weight) of all the finds recovered from this site¹⁵⁰. As the sterile layer beneath the Temasik-period layer is composed entirely of beach sand containing no natural iron concretions, these nodules are most likely iron slag, indicating that some form of iron-working took place in the plain-area.

Textual evidence for an iron-working industry at Temasik occurs in the DYZL, which notes that Temasik imported iron bars and woks¹⁵¹, the former for use in the production of implements. While the DYZL does not indicate the volume of ironware imported by Temasik, the quantity of iron finds recovered from the Old Parliament House site suggests that ironwork activity may not have taken place on any significant scale. The iron imported by Temasik was also probably for consumption of its own population, rather than as a product to be re-exported to the neighboring region.

Some working of other metals is also evident from the copper remains that have been recovered. Copper prills, hooks and wire, the quantities of which are minute, were recovered from the Parliament House site (1995). This suggests that small-scale copper-working activity took place at that area. The DYZL does not record copper as an export to Temasik, and China did not export copper at the time, but copper was available from Southeast Asian

¹⁴⁹ Miksic (1989: 39).

¹⁵⁰ Personal communication, Ng Ching Hwei (October 2003).

¹⁵¹ Su (1981: 196 & 213).

sources. As no analysis of the chemical composition of the copper finds has been conducted so far, the source of Temasik's supply of copper remains unknown.

The distribution of the iron and copper finds in the plain-area sites suggests that Temasik's metal working activities were located close to the river bank. The metal goods produced by the artisans in this area of the settlement were apparently not only intended for the general population, but for the social elite of the settlement as well. This is evident from the broad range of values of the metals that were worked by these artisans, including iron, which was of low value, copper, which was significantly more valuable, and even gold, several fragments of which had been recovered from the Parliament House site (1995).

Chapter 5: Chinese Maritime Trade during the Song and Yuan Periods

5.1 Introduction

As the major economy in East Asia, China exerted enormous influence over the nature and development of maritime trade in Asian waters. Structural changes in the ways China conducted its maritime trade had immediate and profound effects on the conduct of maritime trade throughout the region. The closer trading partners were to China, and the more important their economic ties with China were to them, the more profound were the effects of China's structural changes.

Since the imperial court determined the manner in which China's maritime trade was conducted during the Song and Yuan periods, policies issued by the court, which were filtered down to the Chinese ports and translated into regulations governing the conduct of trade, had significant impact on the development of the maritime trade conducted both by the Chinese and by their foreign trading partners.

As Chinese maritime trade evolved through the course of the Song and Yuan periods, commercial practices were adjusted in an attempt to maximize profits. Intra-regional trade, in particular within Southeast Asia, came to be viewed as a viable secondary commercial activity by Chinese maritime traders, and was participated in at various levels as regulations permitted. Other practices, such as product quality grading and regional and product specialization, developed as a response to the changing manner in which maritime trade was conducted by the Chinese.

5.2 The Development of Chinese Maritime Trade Administration during the Song and Yuan Periods

5.2.1 The Northern Song Period

The early Song court's stance concerning the administration of maritime trade was at first essentially a continuation of the policies of the late Tang period. Although tribute missions began to arrive at the Song court as early as 960, bringing foreign products to exchange for Chinese ones, China's maritime trade effectively took off only after 971, when Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies were established at Guangzhou and later at Hangzhou and Mingzhou. China's key maritime trading partners, such as the Dashi Arabs, Kollam in India, Java, Champa, Borneo, Mait in the Philippines and Srivijaya in the Malacca Straits region began to establish regular trade relations with her¹.

The Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies were established purely to facilitate the maritime trade carried by China's foreign trading partners to its shores. The Song court did not initially look favorably upon the participation of private Chinese traders in overseas trading voyages. Indeed, in 976, overseas trading voyages were actually prohibited, and severe penalties were meted out to those who contravened the ban². The ban was reiterated in 994, and the penalties for the offence made harsher³.

The Song court also instituted a total monopoly over the domestic trade in foreign products. The fiscal regime governing maritime trade reflected this monopoly. Commercial transactions between private Chinese citizens and foreign traders within China were prohibited in 976⁴. Although some foreign products were permitted to be traded amongst Chinese citizens in 982, the Song court's grip on the domestic trade was nonetheless very tight. Between 984 and 987, the customs duty was levied at 10% of a ship's cargo, and then

¹ SHY ZG 44:1a; WXTK 20:200,3; SS 186:23a.

² SHY ZG 44:1b.

³ SHY ZG 44:1b.

⁴ SHY ZG 44:1b & SS 186:24a.

the whole of the net cargo was purchased by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency⁵. The foreign products were then sold to the Chinese domestic market through official markets.

China at this time conducted its trade solely at the state level. The chief means of conducting trade was through ritualized state-level trade exchanges, often noted in the Song texts as tribute missions. Foreign missions from China's trading partners arrived in China, and presented tribute of products that were either obtained from their respective spheres of influence, or were transshipped through one of their trading ports. In return, Chinese products, as well as status gifts such as ceremonial attire and headdresses that denoted official rank, were given to the mission envoys. The reliance upon tribute missions as the chief source of foreign products is reflected in the high frequency of tribute missions from China's trading partners from the advent of Song rule until the second decade of the eleventh century. This period witnessed the largest number of state-level exchanges between China and its foreign partners in the entire Song period. The Song court actively encouraged maritime commercial exchanges via this channel. The role of private enterprise in this import trade was severely curtailed, with the Song court monopolizing the domestic trade in imports.

However, toward the end of the tenth century, the Song court's attitude towards maritime trade began to change. The Song court became increasingly less hostile towards the participation of Chinese private traders in the domestic trade of foreign products. As early as 982, the Song court modified its total monopoly over this domestic trade by permitting 37 types of aromatics to be freely traded amongst Chinese citizens⁶. This change appears to have been triggered by the complaints of Chinese citizens concerning lack of access to sought-after foreign products. The official markets, which were the sole sources of foreign

⁵ SS 186:23b. See Fig. 5.1.

⁶ SHY ZG 44:2a & b.

products available to Chinese citizens, were apparently not able to meet this domestic demand.

The impact of this change was limited, since the official markets remained in control of all foreign products as they entered China. The Song court continued to acquire all incoming foreign products through the levying of customs duties and official purchases. Only after purchasing goods at official markets could Chinese traders sell them on to other customers. In addition, eight high-value products, all of which had significant status value, were declared to be state monopoly items⁷. Nonetheless, this represented a break from the court's previous insistence upon total state control over the domestic trade of foreign products.

From 991 onwards, the Song court progressively scaled back its level of participation in the domestic trade of foreign products. In 991, the customs duty rate was doubled to 20%, but the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies were given the right to purchase only half of the better quality products of a ship's net cargo after import duties had been levied⁸. This reduced the Song court's market share of foreign products (through tax and compulsory purchase) to no more than 60%. This proportion was further reduced during the reign of the emperor Renzong (1023-1065), and handled through compulsory purchases of 30% of all products regardless of their quality or value⁹. Since the customs duties remained at 20%, the Song court's market share was reduced to 44%. Thus, within less than a century following 982, the domestic trade in foreign products shifted from being a total monopoly of the Song court to the point where a marginal majority of the trade was in the hands of Chinese private trading concerns¹⁰.

⁷ SHY ZG 44:2a & b.

⁸ WXTK 20:200,3. See Fig. 5.1 & Fig. 5.2.

⁹ WXTK 20:201,1.

¹⁰ See Fig. 5.3 - 5.5.

These changes were part of a larger movement in the Song court's stance away from ritualized state-level exchanges carried out at the imperial court, to a more mundane trade conducted at the ports. Towards the end of the tenth century, China's foreign trading partners were increasingly encouraged to establish commercial presences and operations at Chinese international ports. The establishment of local agents of China's trading partners at these ports, who could relay orders for specific foreign products back to those trading partners, led to a shift in trade from that channeled through tribute missions to that received at the port by the foreign states' own representatives.

These measures culminated during the 1030s in the encouragement of foreign traders to establish a more permanent presence in the Chinese international ports. Tribute missions continued to be regarded as important by the Song court as diplomatic exchanges conducted for the purpose of re-affirming the economic links with China's foreign trading partners. Tribute missions as state-level trade exchanges, however, were in decline. Between 1020 and 1050, the Song court received a total of fourteen missions from the states of Jiaozhi (Tongkin), Champa, Srivijaya, India, Chola and the Dashi Arabs, its key foreign trading partners. In contrast, a total of thirty-five had been received during the first two decades of the eleventh century, and seventy-one between 960 and 999¹¹.

The Song court was encouraging the growth of maritime trade outside of the official framework that had been in place since the advent of their rule. These efforts were given a further boost by developments that were taking place in Central Asia in the early eleventh century, over which the transcontinental overland trading route that linked the Middle East and the Mediterranean to China traversed. By the 1020s, this route, which was traditionally an important one to the Middle-Eastern-China trade, had become so unsafe to be used that the Song court had to advise the Dashi Arab envoys in 1023 to no longer dispatch tribute missions to China via this overland route, but to use the maritime route through Southeast

¹¹ See Wong (1979).

Asia instead¹². This advisory no doubt gave maritime shipping and trade flowing between the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia and China a significant boost, both in terms of the volume of shipping as well as the value of trade.

These changes led to a boom in China's maritime trade during the eleventh century. According to the SS, the annual value of foreign products imported by China between 1049 and 1054 was 530000 strings of cash¹³. By 1064, this annual figure had risen by another 100000 strings of cash¹⁴. These figures refer only to the import of products through Guangzhou, which was the only South Chinese port officially handling foreign trade and products before 1087. They do not include the trade in foreign products conducted at unauthorized ports such as Quanzhou¹⁵. By lowering the proportion of the domestic trade it controlled and breaking away from the reliance on tribute missions as the key means of importing foreign products, the Song court stimulated a sustained growth in China's trade in foreign products from the third decade of the eleventh century onwards.

Even though the role of tribute missions declined in importance during the eleventh century, China continued to rely largely upon its foreign trading partners to act as the main carriers of China's maritime trade. Chinese traders were, however, eager to participate, and the initial ban on private Chinese shipping had not put a stop to its occurrence. The Song court appears to have acknowledged this fact, and in 989 private mercantile shipping was accorded official recognition. A memorial issued in 995 indicates that many traders based at Guangzhou were engaged in the maritime shipping trade¹⁶, presumably with Southeast Asian and the Indian Ocean littoral ports. Guangzhou-based traders were not the only ones involved in overseas trading ventures. A poem written by the Chinese official Xian Li,

¹² WXTK 339:2664,1.

¹³ SS 186:24a.

¹⁴ SS 186:24a.

¹⁵ Clark (1991b: 387); Wheatley (1959: 24).

¹⁶ SHY ZG 44:3a-3b.

stationed at Quanzhou in the mid-eleventh century, refers to the annual departure of ships from Quanzhou to foreign lands for trade¹⁷.

However, the regulations of 989 required all Chinese traders going on overseas voyages to first register themselves at the Liangzhe Mercantile Shipping Superintendency¹⁸. This policy was subsequently broadened during the reign of Renzong (1023-1065) to include Guangzhou as a designated port of departure for southbound Chinese shipping¹⁹. The Song court stipulated that upon their return, these ships had to clear customs at the ports with which they had registered prior to departure. The need to report to one of these two designated ports both prior to a ship's departure and upon its return added up to a year of travel time for those traders on vessels that were not based at these two ports. This inconvenience had financial implications for Chinese traders, and the restrictive regulations appear to have severely curtailed the growth of Chinese shipping. Thus, foreign shipping continued to be the chief means through which China's import of foreign products was sustained, even though Chinese shipping gradually increased through the course of the eleventh century.

The process of maritime trade liberalization by the Northern Song court reached its peak towards the end of the eleventh century. The fiscal regime governing maritime trade was eased significantly during the Shenzong Xining era (1067–1085). The Wang Anshi reforms, which began in 1069, were instituted in order to encourage the expansion and monetization of economic activities in China. The reforms relating to maritime trade, instituted as part of the restructuring of the Trade and Barter Regulations implemented in 1072²⁰, were part of the Song court's efforts to raise the level of economic exchange between China and its trading partners, and to expand trade activities within China itself, for the overall benefit of

¹⁷ Wolters (1986: 36).

¹⁸ SHY ZG 44:2b.

¹⁹ PZKT 2:1a.

²⁰ Williamson (1935).

the Song state and to increase state revenue. The reforms provided the conditions for the development of China's maritime trade in the late eleventh century.

The reforms affected China's maritime trade in three ways. Firstly, all commercial exchanges with foreign traders were to be handled at the port level. Prior to the Shenzong Xining era, although the Song court had decreased its reliance on tribute missions for the import of foreign products, there had been an ambivalence in its attitude towards such missions. However, during the Shenzong Xining era, all purely trade exchanges were received and dealt with at the port of arrival. None was received at the imperial court, regardless of the status of the trading partner involved, nor were ceremonial reciprocal gifts conferred on the representatives of these trading missions. Only diplomatic missions were received at the imperial court in Kaifeng.

The second effect of the reforms related to the monetization of China's maritime trade economy. In 1074, the embargo on the export of copper cash from China, which had been instituted at the advent of Song rule in 960, was lifted so as to encourage an increase in foreign trade, as copper cash was a Chinese item in high demand amongst China's trading partners²¹. China's maritime trade at all levels was, after this time, conducted within a monetized system.

The move towards a monetized system of foreign trade had already been taking place progressively through the course of the eleventh century. In the Taizong Chunhua era (990-995), although China's maritime trade had been on the increase and compulsory acquisition had been reduced to 50% of a ship's net cargo after customs tax, cash disbursements from the imperial coffers to facilitate the conduct of official maritime trade had remained insignificant. However, by the mid-eleventh century, trade at the Chinese ports had already made an important move away from a barter system towards one that would eventually be

²¹ Van Aelst (1995: 361-2) & Wisseman Christie (1996: 268-271).

currency-based. During the Renzong Huangyou era (1049-1054), a valuation in copper cash terms was conducted for the first time of the maritime trade at China's ports²². Similar valuations were conducted again during the Yingzong Zhiping era (1064-1068)²³ and in 1086²⁴. China's shift to evaluating its maritime trade in currency terms during the reign of Renzong (1023 – 1063)²⁵, at a time when compulsory purchases of 30% of net cargoes were levied by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency, implies that maritime trade products were valued in cash terms as part of the normal fiscal administration of maritime trade²⁶. This introduced a new factor into China's maritime trade. Hitherto, the only fiscal measure imposed on maritime trade had been import duties levied in kind, based on a stipulated quantitative portion of the incoming cargo. Further purchases by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency had been conducted through barter, since maritime trade exchanges between China and its foreign trading partners, which had taken place mainly in the form of tribute exchanges up until the second decade of the eleventh century, had consisted of reciprocal exchanges of goods rather than currency. The introduction of compulsory purchases under Renzong, although based on a stipulated percentage of the quantity of the cargo, suggests that the valuation of the incoming cargo was conducted in monetary terms, so as to determine the correct value that was to be paid to maritime traders. These developments were accompanied by an increase in the production of copper cash during the Renzong Baoyuan era (1038-39)²⁷.

Nonetheless, the impact of this process prior to the time of the Wang Anshi reforms had been felt only in the domestic sector of China's maritime trade. Prior to the 1074 lifting of the export embargo on copper, although silver and gold were already exported by China, the Song court vigilantly guarded against the outflow of Chinese copper cash, because of its

²² WXTK 20:201,1 & SS 186:24a.

²³ SS 186:24a.

²⁴ WXTK 20:201,1.

²⁵ WXTK 20:201,1.

²⁶ Shiba (1983: 92).

²⁷ Van Aelst (1995: 374); Borell (1996: table II).

vital role in the functioning of the Chinese economy. The copper cash that had previously been used in the conduct of maritime trade had been disbursed by the Song court with the intention that the cash would be used to purchase Chinese commodities at the coastal ports before the foreign traders returned home.

The 1074 lifting of the embargo on the export of copper from China, however, effectively extended the monetized system to include the international sector of trade. Chinese copper cash of this period are the most commonly found Chinese coinage at sites in Southeast Asia, such as those in Java and the Malacca Straits region²⁸. Increases in the production of copper cash were officially sanctioned to facilitate the smooth implementation of fiscal reforms. The annual production of copper cash thus increased from 1.3 million strings annually in the early eleventh century to almost six million by 1078²⁹. This outward extension of the Song monetized economy is apparent from the shift in reciprocal gifts presented to diplomatic tribute missions that arrived between 1072 and 1086. During the fifteen-year Wang Anshi reform period, no prestige article, with the exception of imperial letters, are recorded as having been presented to the foreign missions that made presentations of tribute to the Song court. The Song court reciprocated solely with copper cash and silver bullion to the value of the tribute presented. The recipients of such cash disbursements included the Cham missions of 1072 and 1086, the Dashi Arab mission of 1073 and the Chola mission of 1077³⁰. The Malacca Straits region was also a recipient of such currency payments. The 1078 Srivijayan mission received sixty-four thousand strings of copper cash and 10500 taels of silver in return for its tribute of white gold, camphor, frankincense and other foreign products³¹.

The third effect of the Wang Anshi reforms was the further scaling back of the level of state participation in trade, and a corresponding increase in the level of participation in the

²⁸ Van Aelst (1995), Borrell (1996: 7) & McKinnon (1984: 106-112).

²⁹ Hartwell (1967: 284); Chen (1968: 619).

³⁰ Wong (1979: 10, 16 & 18).

³¹ SS 489:14090 & WXTK 332:2610,2.

domestic trade of foreign products by the private sector. A change in customs duties during the Shenzong Xining era saw the import tax lowered from 20% to 6 2/3%. The compulsory purchase rate remained unchanged³². The proportion of the domestic trade in foreign products that the Song court had its hand in was thus no more than 34 2/3%, with the proportion in private hands increased proportionally from 54% to 65 1/3%³³.

This proportion of the domestic trade in private hands was the highest at any point during the Song period. Market share in the domestic trade, an issue consistently pursued by Chinese private trading concerns, was apparently the most satisfactory when it was at around 65%. Subsequent memorials submitted by Song Mercantile Shipping Superintendency officials always referred to the customs duties and compulsory purchase rates of the Shenzong Xining era as the most equitable for the trade in high and low value foreign products by Chinese private traders³⁴. This proportion encouraged the development of maritime trade by Chinese private traders, while the Song court's level of participation played a stabilizing role in China's maritime trade economy.

The structural changes accompanying the Wang Anshi reforms were fundamental to Song China's maritime trade economy, and their impact on the value and volume of the trade was immediate. The value of China's maritime import trade in the nine years following the end of the Shenzong Xining era in 1085 amounted to approximately one million strings of cash annually³⁵, almost double the average annual value noted for the period between 1049 and 1064. This suggests that structural changes were successful in achieving the aims of the reforms.

³² SHY ZG 44:27. See Fig. 5.1 & Fig. 5.2.

³³ See Fig. 5.3 – 5.5.

³⁴ SHY ZG 44:11a-11b & 44:27a – 28a.

³⁵ WXTK 20:200,3.

The changes also provided the necessary framework within which China's maritime trade made the next quantum leap when the right impetus appeared. This impetus came in the form of further liberalization of Chinese mercantile shipping in 1090. In that year, it was decreed that instead of having to register at designated ports of departure, ships were to be permitted to depart on overseas voyages from any prefecture, so long as their departure was officially registered and a permit for the trip had been issued. The authority to issue departure permits was no longer limited to the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies. Any prefectural administration willing to take on the administrative responsibilities of allowing ships to depart from their respective prefectures were permitted to maintain documentary records for the issue of departure permits³⁶. This liberalization had been preceded, in 1087, by the establishment of a Mercantile Shipping Superintendency at Quanzhou, and another at Banqiao in 1088, enabling Chinese shipping based at those port-cities to participate directly in the shipping trade, instead of having to register at Guangzhou or Liangzhe before proceeding abroad³⁷.

The 1090 liberalization of restrictions on maritime voyages was a major departure from previous Song policy. The additional financial and operational burdens of having to report to one of a small number of designated ports of departure were no longer a factor, and Chinese private maritime shipping was no longer under the burden of the state administrative procedures and regulations it had experienced through the course of the eleventh century. The localization of the authority to issue sailing permits thus had a fundamental impact on Chinese maritime trade.

The effects were two-fold. The volume of international shipping increased significantly as a result of the 1090 liberalization. For foreign shipping, the Chinese climate of trade

³⁶ SHY ZG 44:8a-8b.

³⁷ SHY ZG 44:8a; SS 186:26a; WXTK 62:563,1. For a discussion of the establishment of the Quanzhou Mercantile Shipping Superintendency and its impact on Chinese maritime trade, see Clark (1991a: 127-135; & 1991b).

remained essentially unchanged from the Shenzong Xining era (1067-1085) until the fall of the Northern Song capital in 1126. Although the Wang Anshi reformist faction fell from favor under the new emperor in 1085, the reforms that had an impact on maritime trade were not rescinded, although most of the other Wang Anshi reforms were³⁸. There was no change in the conditions under which foreign traders operated in their maritime trade with China. Although foreign traders may have continued to respond to liberal conditions, the increase in shipping during the last decades of the Northern Song period was clearly fuelled to a large extent by the expansion of Chinese maritime shipping following the 1090 liberalization. This was private Chinese shipping, since the Song court did not officially participate in or sponsor any trading voyages.

The other effect of the 1090 liberalization was on the range and nature of Chinese imports. Until the 1090s, China had largely remained a recipient of the shipping trade that was carried chiefly by foreign shipping. Although Chinese demand for specific foreign products would no doubt have been noted by foreign traders who arrived in the Chinese ports on a regular basis, as well as by the trade representatives of China's key trading partners who were based in the Chinese international ports, the Chinese market would not have been able to project its consumption patterns into its maritime trade to the fullest extent, given the absence of Chinese official participation in maritime shipping trade, and the limited Chinese private shipping trade during the late tenth and eleventh centuries. The nature of the domestic trade in foreign products as it developed in China during this period was still largely determined by the products that China's foreign trading partners brought into its ports. The 1090 liberalization meant that the Chinese market was no longer dependent on foreign shipping to meet its demands or determine its consumption patterns. China could now shop abroad.

³⁸ Williamson (1935).

The expansion of Chinese shipping, and the growing presence of Chinese traders in foreign ports, in turn, led to the increasing importance of the trade in low value products from the late eleventh century onwards. This is evident from the lists of products imported by China, in which low value products increasingly gained in significance through the course of the twelfth century. The relatively low unit-value of these products necessitated a high turnover volume for reasonable profits to be generated. A significant increase in the volume of shipping was therefore a critical precondition for the development of China's import trade in low value foreign products.

The increasing significance of the trade in low value imports is reflected in the change in the Chinese fiscal regime governing the import of foreign products. Up until the end of the eleventh century, only one customs duty and compulsory purchase rate was instituted. While there must have been different prevailing market and official prices for different products, the Song court apparently regarded all of them as belonging to a single value band. China's maritime import trade was, until the end of the eleventh century, essentially one based on high value products. Although there were already low value products in China's import trade, such as sandalwood incense, sapanwood and ebony, all of which were listed as coarse category or low value products later in the twelfth century³⁹; the shipment of these to China had apparently been in such limited quantities that a specific customs duty and compulsory purchase rate had not been instituted.

However, by the beginning of the twelfth century, this situation had clearly changed. Different rates for low and high value foreign products were instituted for the first time in China⁴⁰. A customs duty of 30% was levied on low value imports, while 10% was levied on high value imports, during the reign of Weizong (1102 and 1125)⁴¹. The setting of a separate

³⁹ See Fig. 7.4.

⁴⁰ For a detailed discussion on high and low value products imported by China during the Song period, see chapter 7.2.

⁴¹ PZKT 2:1b & SHY ZG 44:27. See Fig. 5.1 & Fig. 5.2.

rate for low value products reflected an increase in volume and in the range and quantities of such imports to sufficiently high levels for them to be administered separately from high value products. The low unit-value of these products, and the variety imported by the beginning of the twelfth century, in the context of a high turnover in shipping volume, had clearly necessitated a change in the Chinese administrative approach to reflect the different nature of this trade.

The liberation of Chinese shipping introduced a new element into the pattern of trade between China and its trading partners—the consumption preferences of the broader Chinese market. New products were added to those already traded, and the expansion in trade encouraged the large-scale presence of Chinese traders and shipping in a number of foreign ports. As Chinese commercial presence in foreign ports increased, Chinese knowledge of the availability of indigenous and entrepot trade products in specific regions and ports, and the consumption patterns and demands of the settlements in these places, deepened. This led to a significant expansion of the range of products, particularly of low value products, in both China's import and export trade.

At first, the geographical extent of China's projection of its maritime shipping activities and of its domestic consumption demand was fairly limited. In an attempt to exercise control over the proliferation of Chinese private shipping that resulted from the liberalization, the Song court imposed a restriction on the length of time that Chinese vessels could remain abroad. According to an 1164 memorial recorded in the SHY, the length of time that Chinese ships could remain abroad was limited to one monsoon cycle, or approximately eight to nine months. The restriction, which was referred to as an old regulation in an 1164 memorial, had thus already been in place for some time⁴². Since the regulations concerning Chinese shipping abroad did not change at any time during the

⁴² SHY ZG 44:27a-28a.

twelfth century, it is likely that this restriction had been imposed at the same time as the 1090 liberalization came into effect.

The limiting of a vessel's length of stay abroad to one monsoon cycle effectively limited the geographical scope of operation of southbound Chinese ships to areas to the east of the Malacca Straits. This caused Chinese maritime traders to concentrate on Southeast Asia as the key market that they could access directly on a large scale from the late eleventh century onwards. Knowledge of Southeast Asian ports, even amongst Chinese who did not personally travel to Southeast Asia but who were engaged in China's maritime trade within China, increased from the late eleventh century onwards.

Thus, by the end of the Northern Song period in 1126, China's maritime trade had evolved from a rigid system of ritualized state-level exchanges in the court during the tenth and early eleventh centuries to a trade that was conducted wholly at the international maritime ports by the late eleventh century. Tribute missions lost their economic function, and were viewed as manifestations of the Song dynastic rule's imperial virtue and treated as affirmations of a foreign state's status in the eyes of the Song court.

Maritime trade, which through much of the tenth and eleventh centuries had been dominated by foreign shipping, began to witness an increase in Chinese participation from the end of the eleventh century onwards. Within China, the domestic trade in foreign products shifted from being a state monopoly to being dominated by Chinese private traders. As a result, the domestic and external sectors of China's maritime trade, which had hitherto functioned and been governed separately, were integrated from the late eleventh century onwards.

The Song court continued to maintain a reduced but nonetheless significant level of participation in the domestic sector of the maritime trade, although it refrained from

participating in the international carrying trade even after the 1090 liberalization of Chinese mercantile shipping. This state position accorded the domestic market a measure of stability, while at the same time left sufficient space to private traders so that the development of China's maritime trade economy could be driven by the private sector.

5.2.2 The Southern Song Period

In 1126, the Song capital at Kaifeng was overrun by the Jurchens of the north, marking the end of the Northern Song period. The Song court moved southwards, and in 1127, established its capital at the coastal port-city of Hangzhou in Jiangxi⁴³. The loss of the territories north of the Huai River to the Jurchens was a severe blow to the Song court, both in terms of the legitimacy of its rule and in terms of its finances⁴⁴. The Song court not only lost its northern agricultural and commercial hinterland, but also such important economic resources as the northern copper mines⁴⁵.

In the face of such dire economic stresses, the Song court in 1127 attempted to impose some measure of financial austerity by instituting an almost total ban on the import of high value foreign products. That year, the newly enthroned emperor Gaozong decreed that the import of foreign products, in particular luxury items such as jewelry and aromatics, depleted state coffers and had to be stopped. Only ivory used for producing audience tablets and rhinoceros horns used for producing officials' belts were permitted to be imported under strictly imposed quotas. The Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies of Liangzhe, Fujian and Guangnan circuits were disbanded, and their responsibilities taken over by the respective circuits' Tax Transport Bureaus. Chinese shipping trade was prohibited⁴⁶.

⁴³ Fitzgerald (1978: 392).

⁴⁴ Fitzgerald (1978: 392-394).

⁴⁵ Wisseman Christie (1996: 269).

⁴⁶ SHY ZG 44:11b-12a & WXTK 20:201,3.

This austere position against foreign trade did not, however, last long. With the economic limitations that it faced, the Song court was forced to look southwards for its sources of state revenue. The external economy, in particular international maritime trade, very quickly became viewed by the Song court as an important source of state revenue.

The Song court's recognition of the importance of maritime trade to the Chinese economy led it to permit maritime trade once again. By 1130, Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies were re-established at Liangzhe, Fujian (Quanzhou) and Guangzhou⁴⁷. In 1133, the court re-instituted compulsory purchases of luxury products and of aromatics that were in high demand in the Chinese market, purchasing a large proportion of these products that were being shipped to China⁴⁸. The Southern Song court thus resumed the position that the Northern Song court had adopted during the late tenth century, the state becoming once more the chief participant of the Chinese sector of China's maritime trade economy. This was a drastic change from the official position that had developed by the end of the eleventh century.

However, the increasing importance of the maritime trade economy to the Song court compelled it to rethink their position, and through the course of the 1130s to 1160s, administrative changes were implemented by the court to reflect shifts in its economic orientation. The changes that were effected were manifested in three ways—active state encouragement of maritime trade, the restructuring of the administration of that trade, and changes to the Song court's foreign policies.

Official encouragement of maritime trade was two-pronged. An 1136 decree indicated that official ranks were to be conferred upon traders who had managed to import foreign

⁴⁷ SHY ZG 44:12a-12b & WXTK 62:563,1.

⁴⁸ SHY ZG 44:17a.

products to China to the value of fifty thousand strings of cash⁴⁹. This was open to both foreign and Chinese traders. In addition, Chinese officials who had collected more than one million strings of cash in revenue from the frankincense trade were to be promoted by one rank⁵⁰. The Song court was thus trying to encourage both large-scale private trade and the initiative of officials of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies in increasing the level of trade.

The Song court also encouraged foreign traders to carry out commercial activities in China by welcoming their presence at the Chinese ports annually. In 1144, Quanzhou was allocated an annual budget with which to organize a celebratory feast in honor of the foreign traders at the port before their departure for home, similar to that which had already been organized at Guangzhou on an annual basis for several years, as a sign of the Chinese administration's appreciation of these traders⁵¹.

The restructuring of the administration of trade occurred by stages. In 1133, a number of foreign products, of both high and low value, were permitted by the Song court to be freely traded by Chinese merchants at the point of entry into China, after the customs duties and compulsory purchases had been levied, although the Song court retained the control over the domestic trade of a number of high value products through the official markets⁵². Then in 1141 the domestic trade in all foreign products was opened to Chinese merchants⁵³. The increase in the proportion of private participation in the domestic trade in foreign products between 1136 and 1141 was accompanied by a decrease in the court's taxation of China's maritime trade. In 1136, the customs duties on high and low value products were reduced to 10% and 6 2/3% respectively⁵⁴. The compulsory purchase rate for both categories of

⁴⁹ SS 185:32a; SHY ZG 44:19b.

⁵⁰ WXTK 20:201,3 & SS 185:32a.

⁵¹ SHY ZG 44:24a-24b.

⁵² SHY ZG 44:17b-19b.

⁵³ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

⁵⁴ SHY ZG 44:19b-20b. See Fig. 5.1.

products appears to have remained unchanged at 30%⁵⁵. This brought the court's control of the domestic trade in high value products down to 37%, and in low value products to 34 2/3%, thereby re-establishing the proportions of the domestic trade held by the state and by private traders at the levels of the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries⁵⁶. The Southern Song court was attempting to restore China's maritime trade to the level it had reached in the last decades of the Northern Song period.

Several other changes were implemented in the administration of maritime trade that were intended to facilitate the development of a high level of private participation. In 1141, a classification of all foreign products into high and low value categories for the purpose of standardizing customs duties and compulsory purchase was carried out and published by the Song court⁵⁷. The reorganization of the administration of maritime trade culminated in a decree passed in 1159, ordering that all of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies of the three circuits of Guangnan, Fujian and Liangzhe be abolished and re-established, with the administrative practices and regulations written and standardized, and that a rationalized approach be formulated to the movement of Chinese citizens in and out of China for trading purposes⁵⁸. Throughout the course of this restructuring process, decrees were issued to tackle the problem of the wastage of operating funds through inconsistent adherence to the mercantile shipping regulations, as well as cases of official corruption and fraud⁵⁹.

These changes represented a concerted effort on the Song court's part to reshape the governance of maritime trade into a coherent administrative system. By the 1160s, the process of rationalizing the administration of maritime trade, which had lasted for about thirty years, was largely complete. The entire process of streamlining the governance of maritime trade was intended to accord greater administrative control to the court, and this in

⁵⁵ See Fig. 5.2.

⁵⁶ See Fig. 5.3 – 5.5.

⁵⁷ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

⁵⁸ SHY ZG 44:25b-26b.

⁵⁹ SHY ZG 44:19b20b, ZG 44:20b-21a & ZG 44:26b-27a.

turn reflected the importance that the court had come to attach to the maritime trade economy very early in the Southern Song period. The Song court had come full circle to the position that it had adopted at the end of the eleventh century, which was essentially the acceptance of a maritime trade economy that was driven by private trading concerns, while the state maintained a level of participation in the domestic trade sufficient to act as a stabilizing factor, and to reap the benefits of the growth in trade through taxation.

The impact of Chinese shipping activity in Southeast Asia, which had begun on a large scale in 1090, continued through the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This is evident from such Chinese texts as the PZKT (1116), LWDD (1178), YLMC (1206) and ZFZ (1225). Chinese mercantile knowledge of and economic interaction with Southeast Asia, and in particular Maritime Southeast Asia and the minor ports of this region, became increasingly intense.

Chinese maritime shipping activities in the Southern Seas were confined to Southeast Asia during the Southern Song period. The 1164 memorial on Chinese shipping activities indicates that the restriction on travel abroad by Chinese ships to one full monsoon cycle continued during the twelfth century⁶⁰. The absence of any textual record in the remaining Song period indicating that this restriction had been lifted suggests that it remained in force until the end of Southern Song rule in 1278.

Expansion of Chinese private participation in the trade of some high and low value Southeast Asian products were precipitated inadvertently in 1164. That year, changes were made in the customs duties and compulsory purchase rates that were levied on certain luxury products that had been declared to be state monopoly products in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Customs duties on rhinoceros horns and pearls were set at 20% and 10%

⁶⁰ SHY ZG 44:27a-28a.

respectively⁶¹. At the same time, the compulsory purchase rates were increased significantly. In the case of rhinoceros horns and pearls, they were set at 40% and 60% respectively⁶². As a result, the Song court controlled 52% and 64% respectively of the domestic trade in rhinoceros horns and pearls. Although the SHY mentions only these two products in relation to the 1164 fiscal changes, it is likely that other former state monopoly products, such as tortoise shells, elephant tusks, turtle skins, coral, agate, lac and frankincense⁶³, were similarly affected. The new compulsory purchase and customs duties rates closely mirrored the 60% level of state control on foreign products other than state monopoly products instituted in 991, which were established after the domestic trade in 37 foreign products had been partially opened to private trade⁶⁴.

For foreign traders, the overall profitability of the trade in these luxury products to China was determined by the proportion of the cargo that could be sold to the official markets after customs duties had been levied. The 1164 increases in customs duties were regarded as unreasonably high, and affected the profitability of the foreign shipment trade in these products. Foreign traders appealed for the rate to be reduced to 10%⁶⁵. Domestic market access was of minor concern to them, since, with the exception of locally born foreigners resident in China, most foreign traders did not have access to the domestic market outside of the port or prefecture in which they were based or at which they had arrived.

The reaction of Chinese traders was even more marked. In addition to the impact on them of higher customs duties, which would have been similar to that experienced by foreign traders, they were also severely affected by any increase in the compulsory purchase rates. These traders had commercial networks extending into the Chinese domestic market beyond the port area. Private domestic trade in foreign products thus constituted an important aspect

⁶¹ SHY ZG 44: 27a-28a; WXTK 20:201:3.

⁶² SHY ZG 44: 27a-28a; WXTK 20:201:3.

⁶³ SHY ZG 44:2a.

⁶⁴ See Fig. 5.5.

⁶⁵ SHY ZG 44:27a-28a; WXTK 20:201:3.

of their commercial activities. Any loss of access to the domestic market would have adversely affected this group of traders. The SHY notes that Chinese shippers complained of losses in the trade of these products as a result of the rate changes⁶⁶.

The immediate impact on the trade in these luxury products was apparently severe. The SHY notes that Chinese shippers ceased importing these products almost immediately, replacing this trade with that in low value or coarse quality products⁶⁷. The LWDD (1178) does not record any luxury products in its long list of foreign products brought into China⁶⁸. Shipment of these products to China by foreign traders thus appears to have ceased for a time as well. By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the shipment of former state monopoly products to China appears to have recovered, but it was exclusively carried by China's foreign trading partners. Such foreign trading partners as the Arabs, Srivijaya, Kampar, Mala, Jialing and Xintiao, were noted in the YLMC (1206) to have resumed the shipment of luxury products to China⁶⁹.

Chinese traders, on the other hand, appear to have withdrawn completely from the trade in these products. Their trading activities in high value products were confined to non-luxury products. Chinese participation in the shipment trade in luxury products is not mentioned in the YLMC, and was most likely minimal. On the other hand, the customs duties and compulsory purchase rates for non-luxury high value products set in 1147 remained unchanged, and trade in these products expanded.

The 1164 rate changes also led to a marked expansion of Chinese private participation in the trade in low value foreign products. Since the fiscal regime applied to low value products imported into China had remained unchanged after 1136, Chinese traders shifted

⁶⁶ SS 186:32a.

⁶⁷ SHY ZG 44:27a-28a.

⁶⁸ Tu (1996: 141-210).

⁶⁹ So (1998: 303).

from participation in the luxury products trade to trade in low value products⁷⁰. The Song court's lesser participation in the domestic trade in low value foreign products and the low customs duties rate allowed for a sufficient level of profitability for Chinese maritime traders. The maintenance of a favorable tax regime for both high and low value products (though not for luxury goods) in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries contributed to a sustained development and expansion of China's import trade in these products. Information in the ZFZ reflects the dominance of the low value products trade over the high value products trade by the early thirteenth century. Southeast Asia, and in particular the Malacca Straits region, became the most important source of low value products shipped to China by this time.

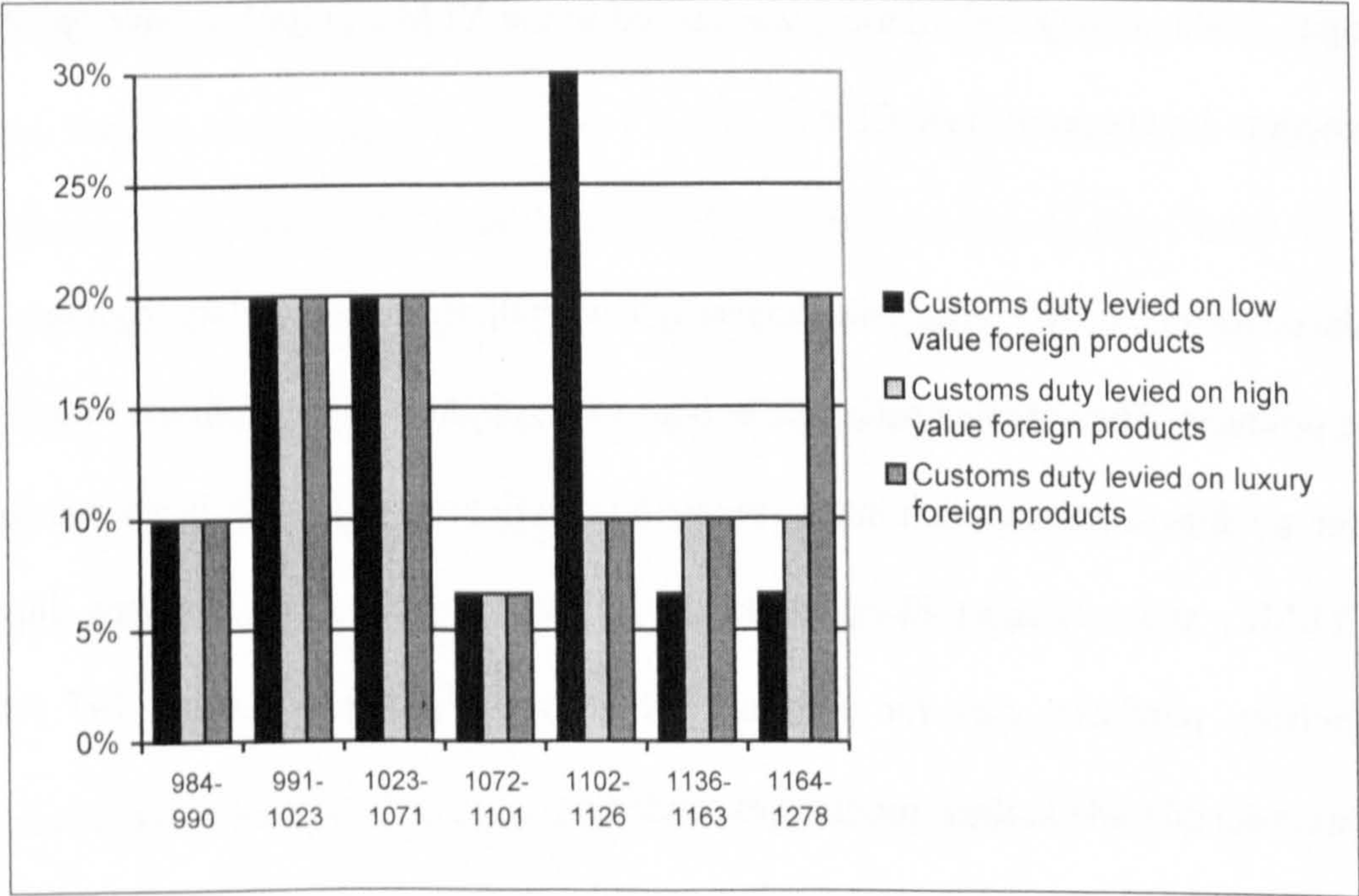


Fig. 5.1: Percentage of incoming maritime cargo that was levied by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies as customs duties (960-1278).

⁷⁰ SHY ZG 44:27a-28a.

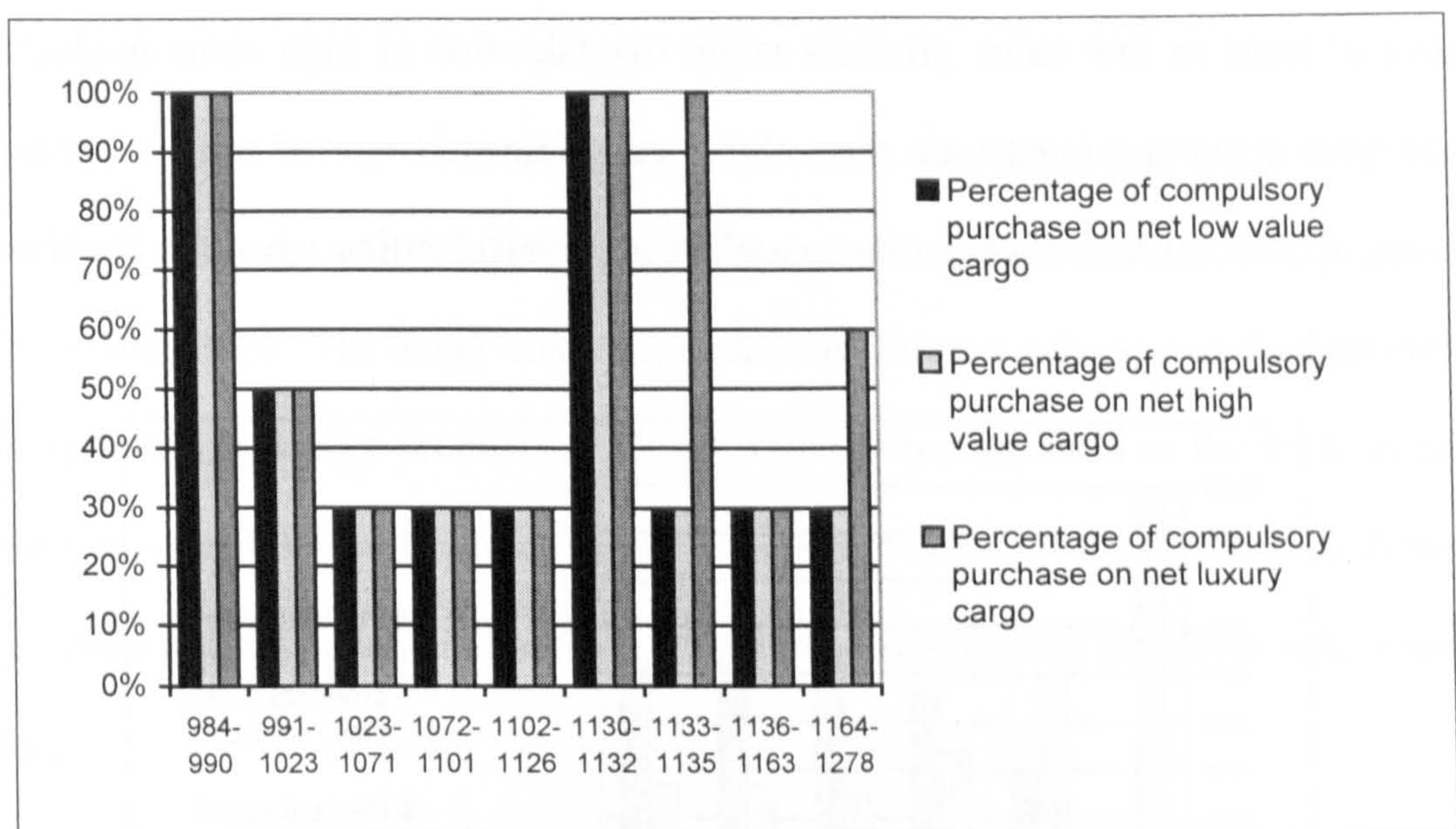


Fig. 5.2: Percentage of net cargo (after levying of customs duties) compulsorily purchased by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies during the Song period (960-1278).

The connection of private trading networks in the domestic Chinese economy to international maritime shipping trade appears to have been the key to the commercial viability of private participation in maritime trade during the Southern Song period. The permission accorded by the Song court to Chinese private traders to exploit their domestic trade networks, and to distribute at least 60% of their foreign imports directly into the Chinese market, rather than having to depend on the bureaucracy to absorb their imports, provided the impetus for the growth of China’s maritime trade during the Southern Song period.

From the reign of Renzong (1023-1065) onwards, the proportion of the domestic trade in both high and low value products held by the Song court had remained fairly constant at 30% to 40% of the total quantity of products imported into China. This stability of the domestic market with regards to trade in foreign products was apparently intended by the Song court to provide an environment conducive to maritime trade, and one in which the domestic trade in foreign products could develop unimpeded. It is also clear that the court’s stance towards both low and high value products was essentially the same, the only differentiation being made between the values of these products. The possibility that the

volume of trade in low value products might overtake that of high value products, and would have a marked impact on the volume of shipments, rate of turnover and profit margins, appear not to have been factors taken into consideration when the fiscal regime was devised.

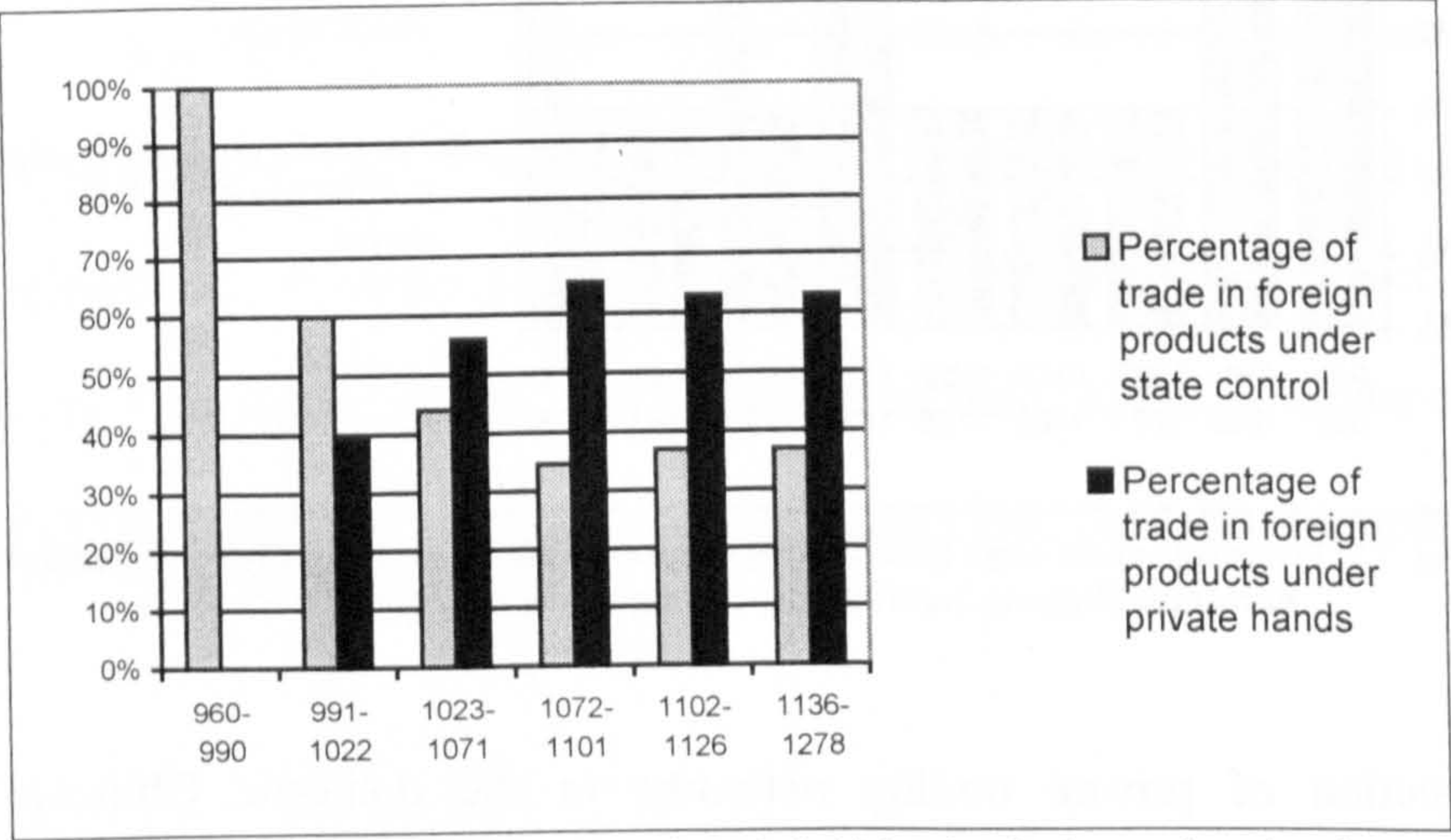


Fig. 5.3: Proportion of the Chinese domestic trade in high value foreign products in private and state hands during the Song period (960-1278).

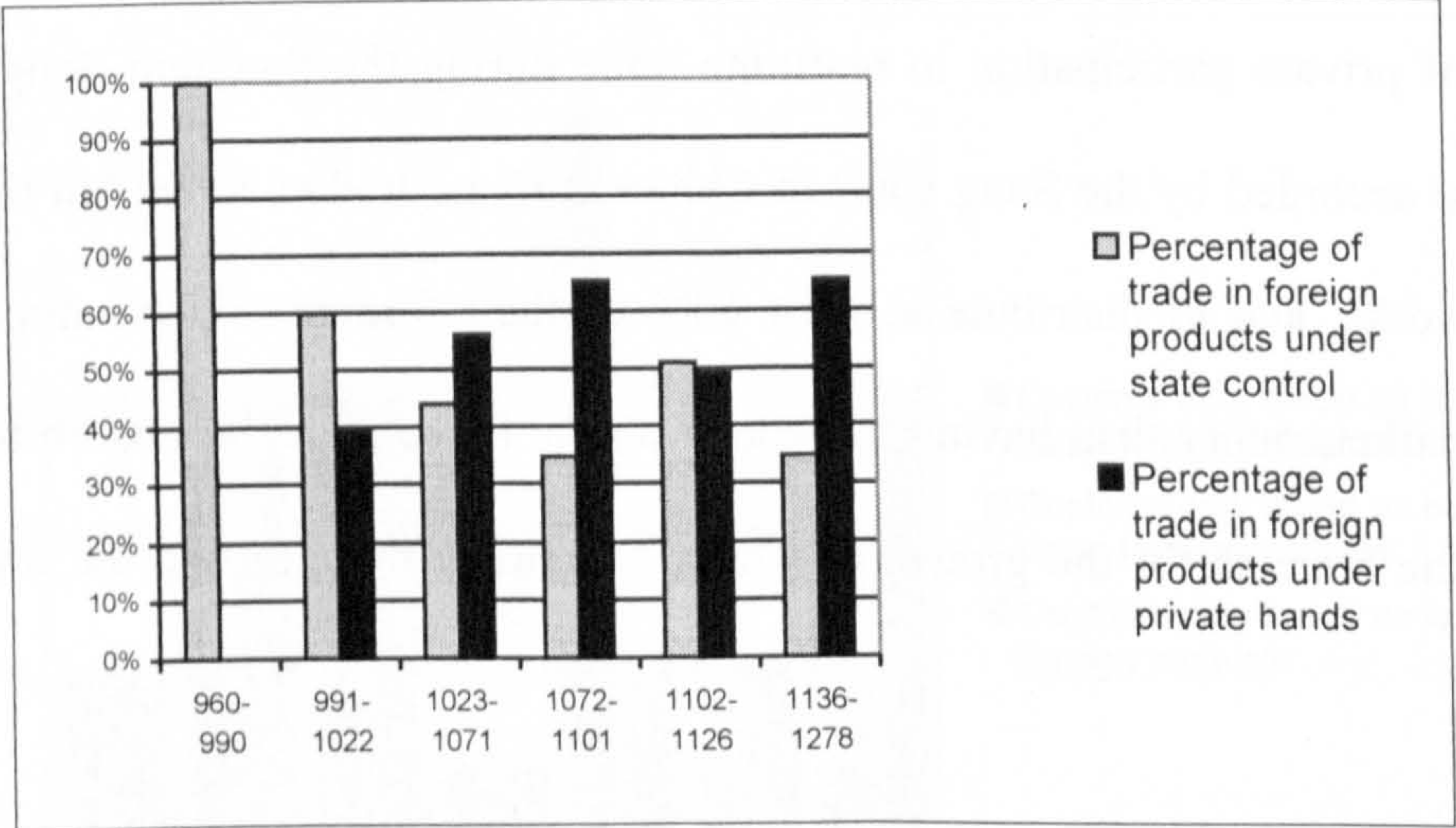


Fig. 5.4: Proportion of the Chinese domestic trade in low value foreign products in private and state hands during the Song period (960-1278).

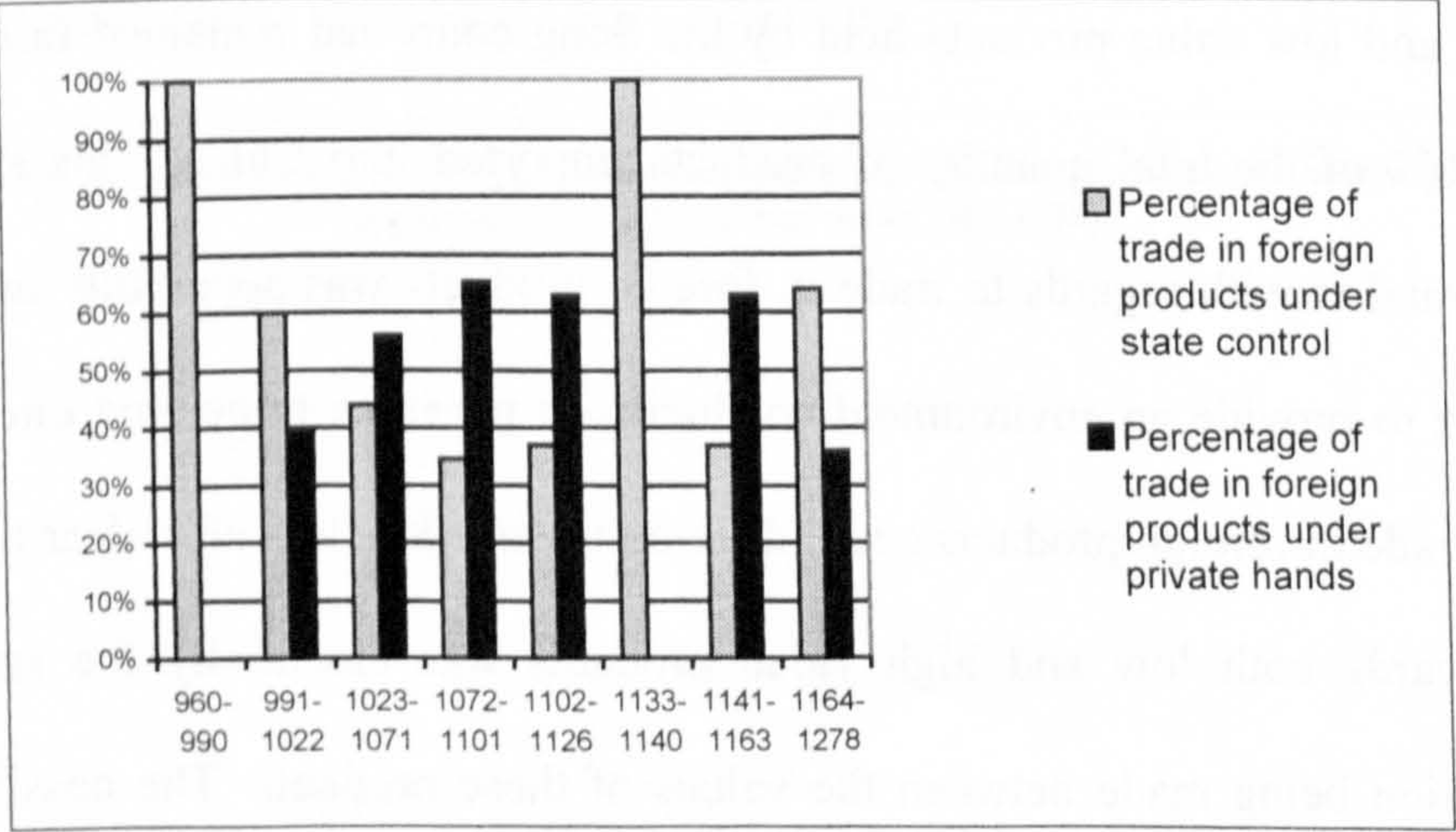


Fig. 5.5: Proportion of the Chinese domestic trade in luxury foreign products in private and state hands during the Song period (960-1278).

Apart from the 1127 to 1133 maritime trade bans, the Song court did not place any restrictions on foreign maritime shipping. No restructuring was enforced on Chinese private shipping after 1090. The Song court depended on Chinese private and foreign maritime shipping to bring foreign products to China. Official participation in the trade in foreign products was confined to the trade in these imports within China. At no time during the Song period was it evident that the Song court intended to control maritime trade beyond its borders.

The Song court's passive stance on external trade, coupled with its substantial stake in the domestic trade in foreign products, reflected the administrative attitude towards maritime trade that the court had adopted from the reign of Renzong onwards, which was one of economic stewardship. The court provided an environment conducive to the private development of external trade, while maintaining a strong overall control over the domestic market.

The level of control exerted by the court over the domestic trade in foreign products, which was substantial even though it represented a minor portion of that trade, enabled the Song court to maintain a significant measure of stability in this liberalized sector of the Chinese economy. The Song court's stance recognized the role that maritime trade played in China. Trade was a vital source of state revenue, in particular during the Southern Song period. The court's stewardship of the maritime trade economy reflected its administrative coming to terms with the economic realities of the southern coastal provinces during the Southern Song period.

5.2.3 The Yuan Period

The first six years following the establishment of Yuan rule over South China in 1278 saw little change in the administration of China's maritime trade. The stance on private maritime trade and the level of customs duties rates remained unchanged. However, restrictions on the length of time of a ship's voyage outside of China are distinctly absent from Yuan period texts. As a result, the geographical reach of Chinese maritime shipping appears to have been substantially increased, to include the Indian Ocean by the fourteenth century according to the DYZL. This development is substantiated by the accounts of such travelers as Marco Polo (1292-95) and Ibn Battuta (1325-54), who noted that travel between India, Southeast Asia and China was by that time often carried out on Chinese ships. This continued to be the case throughout the Yuan period.

In 1284, however, a major change occurred in the role of the Chinese state in maritime trade. The position adopted by the Yuan court departed fundamentally from that which had been adopted by the Song court throughout most of the Song period. That year, the Yuan court decided to take control of China's maritime trade, and ban private Chinese shipping trade. Thus, after almost three centuries during which private maritime trade had flourished, a ban on this commercial activity was instituted, with harsh punishments meted out for any violations⁷¹. This ban was subsequently revoked in 1294⁷², but in 1314, was reinstated⁷³. In 1320, following the official admission that clandestine trade activities were taking place, the ban was again lifted⁷⁴. However, in 1322 the ban was reinstated once more⁷⁵. The ban was revoked for the last time in 1323⁷⁶, and after that private Chinese trade was permitted up until the end of the Yuan period. However, the forty years of intermittent bans and continuing uncertainty badly affected private trade.

⁷¹ YS 94:25a

⁷² YS 94:26a.

⁷³ YS 94:26b.

⁷⁴ YS 94:26b.

⁷⁵ YS 94:26b.

⁷⁶ YS 94:26b.

The Yuan court's attempts to monopolize the shipping trade were administratively supported by the establishment of Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies at designated Chinese international ports, through which official participation in maritime trade was conducted. In 1284, the Chief Mercantile Shipping and Transportation Bureau was established at Quanzhou, whereupon it became responsible for providing capital and ships, and for appointing traders to venture overseas to trade on behalf of the Yuan government⁷⁷. Subsequent periods of official monopoly over China's maritime shipping were similarly marked by the establishment of superintendencies for the conduct of the shipping trade.

The Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies of the Yuan period were different from those of the Song period. Whereas, during the Song period, they were administrative departments dealing with the regulation of maritime trade, during the Yuan period, they were responsible for actually conducting maritime trade, by organizing and dispatching overseas trading voyages. Customs duties inspections were no longer the sole responsibility of the Superintendencies. These were taken over by the provincial administrations during the periods of time when the Superintendencies were abolished⁷⁸. The establishment and abolition of the Superintendencies thus coincided with the banning and permitting of private Chinese shipping trade.

Official participation in Chinese shipping trade appears to have been devolved by the Yuan court to provincial level initiatives. The provincial-level trade initiatives came under the control of the Ortaq clique. This clique was a group of Central Asian traders favored by the Yuan court, who had access to large amounts of capital supplied by the court for the conduct of trade in the regions under Yuan rule. Initially monopolizing the trade between and within Mongol-ruled North China and Central Asia from 1206 onwards, their maritime trade interests were established when the Bureau of Ortaq Affairs was set up in 1281. In 1285, the

⁷⁷ YS 94:25a.

⁷⁸ YS 94:25a-26b.

Bureau of Ortaq Affairs assumed responsibility for the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies⁷⁹. This placed in their hands the administrative arm through which official participation in maritime trade was conducted. In 1287, their position in coastal South China was further strengthened when a Provincial Bureau of Ortaq Affairs was established at Quanzhou⁸⁰, which was the officially designated center of Chinese maritime trade and trade administration during the Yuan period. Ortaq maritime commercial interests and their control over China's shipping trade were thereby secured at the provincial level, under the patronage of the Yuan court.

The Ortaq clique's ability to use the Superintendencies in its efforts to exploit and monopolize Chinese shipping trade was further enhanced by the appointment to important administrative positions in the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies of local residents of the Chinese port-cities drawn from Middle Eastern and Persian Muslim maritime merchant families, such as Pu Shougeng in South Fujian⁸¹. Many locally-born members of these families gained access into the Chinese domestic economy from the early twelfth century onwards. The Ortaq clique needed these China-based foreign traders as collaborators, since, as new entrants to the maritime trade, they lacked the necessary experience and networks for operating in this sector of China's economy.

Although the Ortaq clique's participation in maritime trade clearly occurred with the court's approval as well as its financial and administrative support, it is not apparent that the commercial gains made by the Ortaq clique ultimately filtered back to the Yuan court. The Yuan court appears to have benefited only from the tax regime it instituted at the Chinese ports. Even then, the low customs duties and additional tax rates instituted during the Yuan period benefited those who were importing foreign products into China. At the beginning of Yuan rule the rates for both coarse and fine category products remained the same as those of

⁷⁹ Schurmann (1967: 224).

⁸⁰ Schurmann (1967: 224).

⁸¹ So (2000: 107-117). Also refer to Chen (1954).

the late Song period⁸², at 6 2/3% and 10% respectively. These rates remained in place for the whole of the Yuan period, despite the dramatic shifts in state involvement in maritime trade between 1284 and 1323. This fiscal stability was reiterated in 1293, when the review of the maritime regulations, which resulted in the issuing of twenty-four maritime trade stipulations, left the customs duties rates unchanged⁸³.

The additional tax levied on international maritime trade entering China, which began to be imposed in 1280⁸⁴, was also kept very low, and would have benefited those participating in the maritime trade. In 1292, the rates were set at 4% and 3 1/3% for fine and coarse category products respectively. Foreign products, which were subjected to this tax, were exempted from the local trade tax⁸⁵. In 1293, following a review of maritime regulations, this additional tax was set at 3 1/3% for all products regardless of their value or quality⁸⁶.

The tax regime of the Yuan period was thus more favorable for those engaged in China's import trade of foreign products than the regime imposed during the Song period. This benefited both Chinese and foreign traders involved in China's import trade. It is therefore apparent that the fiscal environment created by the Yuan court was very conducive to international trade whenever the ban on private trade was not imposed. At times when the ban was in place, the tax regime would have benefited those who were officially sanctioned to conduct trade, since they would technically have had a monopoly over the Chinese sector of the import trade of foreign products into China. The profits gained under such circumstances would have been significant. However, they were not available to all.

⁸² YS 94:24a.

⁸³ YDZ 22:71a-79b.

⁸⁴ YS 94:24b.

⁸⁵ Schurmann (1967: 225).

⁸⁶ YDZ 22:71a-79b.

The economic policy of the Yuan court was set to a large extent by its favoring of the Ortaq clique in commercial affairs, which farmed out licenses for trade and tax collecting⁸⁷. For Chinese maritime trade, the Yuan official position and the manner in which it evolved by 1323 was determined by the nature of operations that had been established by the commercial interests of the Ortaq clique and their foreign collaborators resident in the Chinese port-cities during the first two decades of the Yuan period. However, the economic influence and control that the Ortaq clique and foreign collaborators had over import and export trade appears to have been confined mainly to the ports and seas beyond. The domestic trading networks of foreign traders based in China were not as pervasive or wide as those of Chinese traders.

Official participation in maritime trade, which had, during the Song period, been limited to a substantial court participation in the domestic trade in foreign products, thus shifted during the Yuan period to that of monopolizing the Chinese sector of the import-export trade by means of officially sponsored trading voyages and bans on private Chinese maritime shipping. The position of the state thus shifted from economic stewardship during the Song period, to active participation in the shipping trade during parts of the Yuan period. The state during the Yuan period intermittently acted in direct competition to the private sector of Chinese maritime shipping trade, relying heavily on its administrative muscle to establish and maintain a distinct advantage for itself.

The collaboration between the Ortaq clique and the Middle Eastern traders resident in the South Chinese ports lasted for only thirteen years, and ended when the Provincial Bureau of Ortaq Affairs was abolished in 1297. That year, the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies were brought under the direct authority of the Imperial Secretariat⁸⁸. This reorganization appears to have been initiated by a faction in the Yuan court that was keen to replace the

⁸⁷ Yu (1994: 91).

⁸⁸ YS 94:26b.

Ortaq clique in the official participation in maritime trade. After 1297, the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies became the administrative tool of this court faction in its attempt to monopolize the Chinese sector of the shipping trade. The subsequent contest between the court faction and the Ortaq clique for control over the official participation in the shipping trade is reflected in the oscillation between the abolition and re-establishment of the Provincial Bureau of Ortaq Affairs and the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies between 1297 and 1323. The Yuan court faction eventually emerged triumphant in this prolonged contest, marked by the final reestablishment of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies in 1323⁸⁹, and the empowering of the provincial governments in 1324 with the sole right to levy customs duties and the second tax⁹⁰. The Ortaq clique was left with no further influence or power over the administration of China's maritime trade at the provincial level after 1323.

The periodic bans on private maritime voyages were aimed solely at Chinese traders and ship owners. Foreign traders and foreign mercantile shipping were apparently not subjected to the restrictions imposed by the Yuan administration, reflecting the administration's awareness of the continued importance of foreign traders in China's maritime trade. The ban on private trade was targeted both at Chinese traders who had substantial capital backing and Chinese petty traders who initially were not in alliance with the Ortaq clique, and later not operating under the court's purview.

The Yuan court did not, however, make any effort to control the domestic trade in foreign products. Official attempts to break into the domestic trade were confined to the exemption of traders from payment of market tax if the foreign products had been purchased from the official markets. Such official participation in the domestic trade in foreign products appears to have been confined to the port-cities. Unlike in the Song period, no structural institutions

⁸⁹ YS 94:26b.

⁹⁰ YS 94:26b.

appear to have been developed during the early Yuan period for official participation in domestic trade. Foreign traders resident at the port-cities had been under severe restrictions during the Song period with regards to traveling and trading within China. They had only been permitted to trade in the prefecture or port city in which they were based. Limited access to the domestic economy had been accorded only in 1104 to locally born foreigners. So the foreign collaborators of the Ortaq clique had few networks that extended beyond the port areas.

In addition, the Ortaq clique was a newcomer in the trade in foreign products in South China, having begun participating in maritime trade only with the advent of Yuan rule in 1279. Thus, the proponents of official participation in maritime trade during the early Yuan period did not possess the domestic trading networks within China to fully exploit the domestic trade in foreign products. In light of this reality, official participation in maritime trade, which was first carried out by the Ortaq clique and their foreign collaborators, could only exploit the external shipping trade.

5.3 Commercial Responses to Administrative Changes

The changes, during the Song period, in state policy governing the conduct of maritime trade within China, and in particular the lowering of the level of state participation and the liberalization of Chinese shipping from the late eleventh century onwards, led to an increase in private participation in China's maritime trade between the late eleventh to thirteenth centuries. By the end of the Song period in 1278, private participation in China's maritime trade economy had become so pervasive that, despite the oscillation between state monopoly and the permitting of private Chinese participation in the shipping trade during the first five decades following the advent of Yuan rule in South China in 1279, the private

sector was still able to continue its activities in the periods when it was officially permitted to do so.

5.3.1 Small-Scale Private Shipping and Chinese participation in Intra-Regional Trade in Southeast Asia

One of the key developments that took place as a result of changing Song policies was the development of small-scale trade. The liberalization of Chinese maritime shipping and the progressive lowering of the level of state interference in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries resulted not only in an increase in China's highly capitalized shipping trade, but also in the international peddling trade by small-scale Chinese private traders⁹¹. By the late eleventh century, petty traders were already participating in China's foreign trade. The PZKT notes that small spaces in the ship's hull were rented out by the foot run to such traders, who packed large quantities of Chinese products, mainly obtained on credit, to be bartered at foreign ports for products in demand in China⁹². These petty traders appear to have worked for their own commercial concerns. Such commercial activities could only develop in the context of an economic sector that was fairly free from bureaucratic restrictions.

Textual data do not reveal much concerning the manner in which the small-scale maritime traders operated. However, by the thirteenth century, small-scale trading had apparently developed a structured mode of operation. Amongst the ninety-six tags recovered from the Quanzhou Wreck, although most are connected with highly capitalized trade by Song imperial clan families, seventeen have the characters "kan shui ji" written on them, and one has the characters "kan ji" written on it. The character "kan" denotes some form of

⁹¹ For a more detailed discussion of small-scale maritime trade, see So (2000: 210-220).

⁹² PZKT 2:3a.

managerial or administrative position or role, while the character “ji” denotes some form of business concern. Another four tags with only the characters “shui ji” written on them, the two preceding characters being missing, were also recovered, and probably have similar denotation⁹³. These tags, which are different in shape as well as in the characters written on them from those that belonged to the Song imperial clan families⁹⁴, appear to have belonged to various private business concerns. These businesses either engaged traders for trading voyages or the business owners personally took part in these voyages. While these traders would no doubt have carried out their own trading activities using their personal capital, the character “kan” implies that they may also have acted as agents, accepting funds at the port-cities as investments in the maritime trade voyages in which they were participating⁹⁵.

One spur to the development of small-scale shipping trade was the flexibility of the length of time that petty traders could remain abroad. Although Chinese traders were normally expected to stay with the ship in which they had rented cargo space, and thus return with the ship to China within one full monsoon cycle, by the late eleventh century, some Chinese traders were known to have sojourned abroad for as long as ten years⁹⁶. No limit seems to have been imposed by the Song court on the length of stay of individual traders abroad. The Song court’s failure to regulate such immigration matters is highlighted in an 1159 memorial, which noted that the bureaucracy was unable to account for the number, status and purpose of its citizens abroad⁹⁷.

Neither was a trader constrained by his debt obligation, since the system of credit in the private sector had developed by the late eleventh century to allow interest that was to be repaid by traders for the credit obtained prior to departure to remain unchanged regardless of

⁹³ Quanzhouwan Songdai Haichuan Fajue Baogao Bianxiezhu (1975: 11).

⁹⁴ Fu (1989: 77-83).

⁹⁵ So (2000: 217).

⁹⁶ PZKT 2:4a.

⁹⁷ SHY ZG 44:25b-26b.

the length of time the trader was away⁹⁸. This apparent acceptance by creditors that trading voyages by small-scale traders might take longer than one monsoon cycle, suggests that this was frequently the case.

The apparently prolonged sojourn of at least some Chinese traders abroad, coupled with the restrictions imposed on Chinese maritime shipping during the Song period, suggests that Chinese commercial activities were involved in two different networks. The first was that of the direct China-Southeast Asia trade. This was dependent on the annual passage of ships plying between China and Southeast Asia, and involved direct commercial exchanges between the two regions. While ships may have called at ports en route from the port of origin to the final port of call to obtain provisions and exchange certain products in the process, the bulk of the cargo on board these ships was intended for the market that was serviced by the intended final port of call. This pattern of trade is evident from such Chinese wrecks as the Java Sea wreck⁹⁹.

The second trade network was the intra-regional one, in which Chinese traders conducted their activities from one Southeast Asian port to another. Such traders do not appear to have been large-scale traders. Since the Song court restricted the length of time that Chinese ships could spend abroad to one cycle of the northeast and southwest monsoon, it would not have been possible for large-scale traders who operated trading vessels to participate in such trade. Instead, such conditions would have favored small-scale traders, who were not hampered by governmental restrictions, issues of vessel ownership or the cost of renting a ship, and were thus free to participate in regional trade networks. In some cases, they may have acted as local agents for large-scale traders whose movements were more restricted.

⁹⁸ PZKT 2:4a.

⁹⁹ See chapter 3.3.3.

Small-scale traders need not have been tied to a particular trading vessel, since they only rented a small space in a ship's hull to store their trade goods. They were also apparently not obligated to rent space onboard a ship for an entire round trip. By the late eleventh century, Chinese traders were already venturing as far west as the Middle East¹⁰⁰, even though the geographical reach of Chinese shipping was restricted to Maritime Southeast Asia. Some small-scale traders thus appear to have sought short passages from port to port along the international trade routes, thereby making their trading voyages segmented and as a result, prolonged. The prolonged stay of Chinese traders in a region would have made intra-regional trade a logical and important complementary commercial activity to their main China-Southeast Asia trade during the period of sojourn abroad. Intra-regional trade would have enabled Chinese traders to ensure that a complete trading voyage out from and back to China was ultimately profitable, despite the debt that they had taken on before embarking on a trading voyage abroad.

While the extent of Chinese participation in this intra-regional trade in the Song period is not known, information recorded in Chinese texts such as the ZFZ and the DDNHZ, suggests that intra-regional trade, which clearly took place as early as the late eleventh century, had developed into an important aspect of small-scale Chinese shipping activity by the thirteenth century. With the advent of Yuan rule in 1279, the restriction of the length of stay abroad imposed on Chinese shipping during the Song period appears to have been revoked. Under such conditions, Chinese participation in Southeast Asia's intra-regional trade appears to have expanded to include Chinese ships, since they could now remain outside of China for extended periods of time. At the same time, Yuan attempts in the first decades of their rule to choke off private trade may have encouraged some private traders who were already abroad to settle overseas.

¹⁰⁰ PZKT 2:5b.

The Turiang wreck¹⁰¹ reflects the intra-regional trade in Southeast Asia conducted by Chinese traders at the end of the fourteenth century, at the time of the early Ming ban on maritime trade. The apparent ease with which Chinese traders were able, at this time, to overcome the restrictions imposed by the Ming court, through relocating abroad and increasing their level of participation in the Southeast Asian intra-regional trade, was probably due to the networks of overseas Chinese who had begun to settle in the region during the Yuan period. These networks must, in turn, have been underpinned by private Chinese participation in intra-regional trade that developed during the later Song period.

The perishable nature of many of the goods carried in the intra-regional trade outside of China, and the dearth of detailed information from textual sources, makes it difficult to form a precise picture of this aspect of Chinese maritime trade. Only sporadic information is available concerning Chinese participation in the intra-regional trade between Mainland and Island Southeast Asia. Although it is possible that Chinese traders may occasionally have taken part in the trade in other regions, the fact that the increase in the volume of Chinese shipping was confined to the China-Southeast Asia leg of the international maritime route during the Song period, suggests that participation in intra-regional trade was largely restricted to Southeast Asia. Despite the expansion of the geographical scope of Chinese shipping during the Yuan period, the geographical extent of Chinese participation in intra-regional trade appears to have remained largely unchanged. Chinese shipping never achieved a dominant position in the Indian Ocean trade. Distances were too great, and competition was too fierce to make such extended trading voyages either profitable or necessary.

5.3.2 Product Quality Grading

¹⁰¹ See chapter 3.3.5.

Product quality grading was a trade practice developed by Chinese maritime traders during the Song and Yuan periods and applied to foreign products imported into China. This was needed as a tool to differentiate between a range of qualities of a given product, which in turn reflected the value of a given cargo or shipment of that specific product. Such a system could have been generally accepted only when certain operating conditions existed in China's maritime trade. In China, the conditions necessary for standardized quality grading to be adopted—large volumes of product shipments, direct participation in the shipping trade by Chinese traders and the possession of knowledge of the gradations of the products in question—emerged from the end of the eleventh century onwards. Before that time, while the importing of foreign products into China remained in the hands of China's foreign trading partners, Chinese consumers lacked the sophistication that prompted product quality grading. Chinese traders also lacked the knowledge needed to develop such a system.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the first Chinese textual reference to quality grading occurs in 1133¹⁰². Product quality grading must already have been practiced by Chinese maritime traders for some time prior to 1133. However, the official recognition of quality grades for certain products in 1133 indicates that the practice had become prevalent only by the 1130s. The timing suggests that this practice was initiated by Chinese private traders, rather than foreign traders or the Song court. If the system was devised by private traders, it was soon adopted by the Song bureaucracy, since standardizing grading of products had important tax implications. The 1141 classification of all foreign products imported by China as high or low value products for the purpose of levying customs duties and compulsory purchases by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies¹⁰³ relied on quality grading as one of the key factors in determining the differing values of products. Certain products were imported in a range of qualities that spanned both categories, so quality grading had a direct bearing on the value of a specific product, and therefore on the customs

¹⁰² SHY ZG 44:17b-19b.

¹⁰³ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

duties and compulsory purchase regime to which it was subjected. Three quality grades were used by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies in the twelfth century. In 1133, the Song court recognized the use of two quality differentiations, indicated by the terms “top” and “middle”¹⁰⁴. By 1141, the Song court also recognized another quality grade, indicated by the term “low”¹⁰⁵.

By the early thirteenth century, the practice of quality grading appears to have extended beyond taxation of imports at the ports. In the case of frankincense, within the domestic market thirteen different grades were applied to the product¹⁰⁶, even though it was regarded by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency at the Chinese ports as a product with no quality grade¹⁰⁷. This suggests that the practice of quality grading, which was initially adopted by participants of the shipping trade, had spread to the domestic trade in foreign products.

The practice of quality grading in the twelfth century had initially been confined to aromatic products, differentiating between those of high and low value. In 1141, the grading was applied primarily to varieties of gharuwood incense¹⁰⁸. Since aromatics that were not imported in substantial quantities were not subjected to quality grading, the adoption of a comprehensive system for the grading of gharuwood incense reflects the wide range in market value of, as well as the high demand for, gharuwood incense by the Chinese market.

It is important to note that Southeast Asian products were the only ones that were subjected to quality grading by Chinese shippers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This appears to have been due to the increased commercial contact that Chinese traders had with Southeast Asia from 1090 onwards. This reflects a sophisticated domestic trade in Southeast

¹⁰⁴ SHY ZG 44:17b-19b.

¹⁰⁵ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

¹⁰⁶ So (1998: 303).

¹⁰⁷ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

¹⁰⁸ See Fig. 7.3 & Fig. 7.4.

Asian aromatics, which in turn suggests that consumption of these products by all levels of Chinese society was widespread by this time.

The large-scale consumption of Southeast Asian products by the Chinese market led, by the early thirteenth century, to an extension of quality grading to non-aromatic products. From information in such early thirteenth century texts as the YLMC and the ZFZ, non-aromatic products, including beeswax and coconut mats, were also subjected to quality grading¹⁰⁹. These products were clearly imported into China in bulk, since they were of relatively low value, and would have required a large turnover for the trade in them to be profitable.

The grading system adopted for these low value products was different from that which had been adopted in the twelfth century for aromatic products. For this system, the foreign source of the best grade of a particular product was noted. Otherwise, no grading system was used during procurement, at the point of import at the Chinese ports or in the domestic trade of these products. This system of grading did not affect the import fiscal regime that was applied to it by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency. It appears that while a detailed quality grading was applied to products that had a sufficiently broad quality band to accommodate a wide range of values, the simplified system was applied to bulky products that were of relatively low value, for which it would have been unprofitable to import anything but the best grades available. Competition with domestic sources of beeswax, matting etc. would have squeezed out all but the higher quality bulk imports.

These two grading systems continued to be used side by side by Chinese traders during the Yuan period, and by the fourteenth century they were adopted by Chinese traders in their procurement of other products. Information in the DYZL suggests that Wang Dayuan subjected eleven products to quality grading. These were “chen” and “su” gharuwood,

¹⁰⁹ See Fig. 7.5 & Fig. 7.6.

lakawood incense, *jiangzhen*, tin, bird feathers, crane's crests, cotton, pepper, betel nuts and beeswax. A detailed grading system, similar to that applied to high value aromatic products during the Southern Song period, and employing the characters "coarse", "middle", "top", "superior to all" or "superior to the various foreign [ports]", to indicate the product quality, was applied to "chen" and "su" gharuwood, lakawood incense and *jiangzhen*¹¹⁰.

The scope of products subjected to comprehensive grading also widened by the fourteenth century. During the Song period, the type of products subjected to detailed grading had been confined to aromatics. By the fourteenth century, *jiangzhen*, which was probably not an aromatic product, was also subjected to detailed grading¹¹¹. The extent of the inclusion of non-aromatic products in detailed grading by Chinese traders during the fourteenth century is unfortunately unclear due to the dearth of textual data. Nor is it clear from the DYZL whether the geographical source of the products subjected to comprehensive grading was extended in the fourteenth century beyond Southeast Asia.

The simple quality grading system practiced by Chinese traders in the fourteenth century, similar to the simplified system employed by the early thirteenth century, involved the labeling of a product available from a particular port as being "superior to the various foreign places", leaving the quality of the same product from other ports unspecified. The key difference, however, was that the Yuan period system was applied to products of differing values. This is evident from information in the DYZL, in which the products so graded included kingfisher feathers and crane's crests, both high value products, as well as tin, raw cotton, pepper, betel nuts and beeswax, which were of lower value¹¹². The key determinant as to whether a product was graded in detail or in the simplified system appears to have been its price range in the Chinese market. There is no textual evidence that there was a wide range of prices for crane's crests or kingfisher feathers in China, which were

¹¹⁰ See Fig. 7.8 & Fig. 7.9.

¹¹¹ See Heng (2001: 142-147) & Appendix A, *Jiangzhen*.

¹¹² See Fig. 7.8 & Fig. 7.9.

classified as "precious products" in the DDNHZ¹¹³. Similarly, tin, cotton, pepper, betel nuts and beeswax, all of which were low value products, were not apparently available in a wide price range in the Chinese market. Thus, this simplified system was a further development of the grading system that had been employed by Chinese maritime traders by the early thirteenth century.

The simplified system allowed Chinese traders, in utilizing their knowledge of the quality of the products available in the region in which they operated, to decide on the source from which the best quality of specific products was available. For most products, individual Chinese traders noted one port as the source of the best quality of a certain product. However, for important products, more than one source of the best quality product was noted. In the case of crane's crests and pepper, Wang noted that the best quality of these were available from two sources each¹¹⁴. There was also a differentiation of quality between the two sources, with one supplying the specific product of top quality, and the other supplying the product whose quality was superior to any other foreign ports. It is probable that as far as possible, Chinese traders would travel to the source from which the best quality of a specific product was available.

5.3.3 Region and Product Specialization

During the Song period, restrictions placed on the length of time Chinese ships could stay abroad to one full monsoon cycle limited Chinese mercantile shipping activities to Mainland Southeast Asia, Java, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula on the western trunk route, and the Philippines and Northern Borneo on the eastern trunk route. Such limitations led Chinese traders to concentrate their trading activities in specific regions of Southeast Asia. The need

¹¹³ DDNHZ 7:17b.

¹¹⁴ Su (1981: 58, 70, 89 & 118).

for Chinese ships to register their intended destinations with the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies prior to the commencement of a voyage also contributed to the development of regional specialization. This suggests that Chinese traders may have begun to specialize in specific regions by 1090, when Chinese shipping was liberalized.

While Song textual sources are silent on the matter, data from the Quanzhou wreck¹¹⁵ indicate that such a practice was well established by the end of the Song period. The wreck's cargo, consisting predominantly of Maritime Southeast Asian aromatic woods, indicates that the trading activities of the merchants onboard the ship was confined to that region. The amounts of pepper and betel nuts found on the wreck, along with small quantities of Middle Eastern products, suggest that the ship had called at a Malacca Straits region entrepôt port where products from more distant economic regions were available.

Geographical specialization continued during the Yuan period. By the early fourteenth century, the regions of specialization were already well defined. This is evident in the Chinese vision of the maritime world, as encapsulated in the DDNHZ. According to this text, the Indian Ocean littoral and Maritime Southeast Asia were divided into four regions—the Large Western Ocean, the Small Western Ocean, the Large Eastern Ocean and the Small Eastern Ocean. Each of these was in turn divided into sub-regions based on regional political entities, real or imagined, which reflected the general demarcation of geo-political sub-regions¹¹⁶. The “Small Western Ocean” encompassed the Malay region (with two regional political entities, Srivijaya and Tambralingga, representing the geographical extent of the Malacca Straits region, but under which was also included Sri Lanka), and the Gulf of Siam (which included the northeastern tracts of the Malay Peninsula and present-day South Thailand)¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁵ See chapter 3.3.4.

¹¹⁶ DDNHZ 7:19a-20b. For a translation of the list of port and polities in the four maritime regions recorded in the DDNHZ, refer to chapter 2, pp. 46 – 51.

¹¹⁷ DDNHZ 7:19a-b.

The regional polities listed in the DDNHZ were not necessarily still in existence in the early fourteenth century. In the case of Srivijaya (Sanfoji), its role as a regional polity had ended with the sacking of the capital Jambi by Singhasari in 1275. Official texts of the Yuan period do not note any foreign state by the name of "Sanfoji". Nonetheless, in Yuan period texts written by or based on information provided by Song period Chinese maritime traders, the term "Sanfoji" continued to be used to refer to Jambi, as in the case of the DYZL, as well as to denote the Malaccan Straits region in general, as in the case of the DDNHZ. The same appears to have been the case for Tambralingga, which by the fourteenth century had declined into a minor port-polity. The use of such polity names remained in the consciousness of Chinese traders in the fourteenth century, even after these polities had declined or disappeared.

The geographical framework encapsulated in the DDNHZ was probably based on information supplied by traders based at Guangzhou at the end of the fourteenth century, and reflects the geographical knowledge of the maritime world of these traders based on the regional specialization of their maritime commercial activities. It is clear from the DDNHZ that the three regions in which Chinese traders concentrated their operations were the Malay region and the Bay of Bengal, the Java Sea region, and the Sulu Zone and North Borneo. The rise of Quanzhou port from the late eleventh century led to the development of the eastern route to Southeast Asia via Taiwan Island and Northern Philippines by the fourteenth century¹¹⁸.

This expansion of the regions in which fourteenth century Chinese maritime traders operated was the result of the removal of restrictions on the length of time that Chinese ships could spend abroad. The boundaries of the respective regions had extended as a result.

¹¹⁸ See Dupoizat (1995), Brown (1989), Valdes, Long & Barbosa (1992).

In the case of the Malay region, this area, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, was extended westwards to include Sri Lanka.

The increase in the knowledge of ports and products within a given region, and the expansion of the boundaries of commercial operations, is evident in the DYZL. The ports from which all the products were subjected to detailed or simplified quality grading by Wang Dayuan, with the exception of Khmer Cambodia, were located to the west—along the Malay Peninsula, the east coast of Sumatra, and the eastern and southwestern coasts of the Indian subcontinent, including Sri Lanka. It is therefore evident that although Wang's commercial activities were centered primarily in the Malay region, he had connections in the Bay of Bengal. It seems likely that he specialized in the eleven products that he subjected to quality grading, which was a small proportion of the range of products that were available from the ports in the Malay region and the Bay of Bengal.

Regional specialization, and the accompanying increase in knowledge of the ports and products of a given region, appears to have led to the practice of product specialization. Quality grading of foreign products at the place of procurement, evidently practiced by Chinese traders by the twelfth century, would have necessitated some degree of product specialization, since the degree of knowledge that individual traders had to possess of the products needed to be sufficiently high for the grading to be properly carried out. The fact that specialization probably limited the range of products that Chinese traders were willing to buy at a given port may have had the perverse effect of restricting the range of goods offered at those ports.

The number of products that Wang Dayuan specialized in may have been higher than the norm during the late Song period. Of the eight types of products recovered from the Quanzhou wreck, four, which constituted the overwhelming proportion of the cargo recovered, were Malay region products. Given the number of diverse business concerns

owning portions of the cargo, as indicated by the range of wooden tags recovered, it appears that Chinese traders in the thirteenth century may already have tended to concentrate on importing a very limited range of foreign products. Such specialization during the late Song period was another characteristic of the increasingly sophisticated business practices of Chinese maritime traders, and the increasing tempo of trade between China and the foreign economic regions, in particular the Malay region.

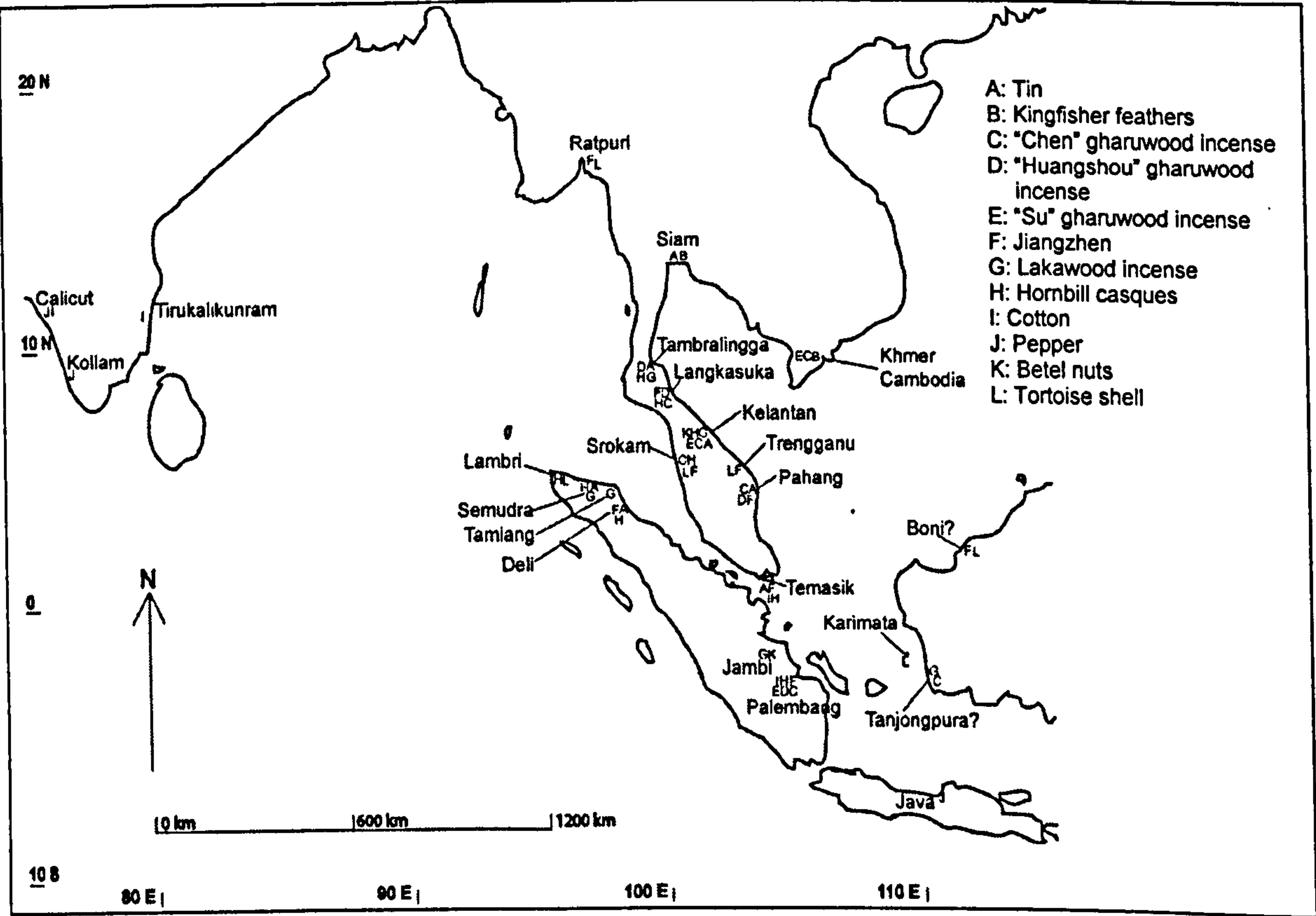


Fig. 5.6: Geographical distribution of the twelve products graded by Wang Dayuan.

Chapter 6: The Malacca Straits Region's Maritime Trade with China

6.1 Introduction

Sources for the study of contact between the Malacca Straits and China during the Song and Yuan periods are fairly limited. Almost all the information available comes from Chinese textual sources, particularly the official histories of the two dynasties. Other sources, such as archaeological and epigraphic data, are more sparse. Thus, the study of the nature of the Malacca Straits region's trade with China is necessarily unbalanced. Due to the nature of the textual data, state-sponsored economic exchanges are those about which most information survives. Since such exchanges were often imbued with diplomatic overtones, China's court policies towards foreign relations and maritime trade clearly had an impact on them. As the Song and Yuan courts' perspectives on foreign relations changed, so did the rationale for the conduct of state-level exchanges. It is in this framework that the diplomatic and state-level trade exchanges initiated by the Malacca Straits region polities must be viewed.

6.2 Tribute Missions and their Role in Diplomatic and Commercial Interactions during the Song Period

During the Song period (960-1279), interaction at the state-level between China and the countries of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral took place by means of tributary relations. Envoys from these countries were dispatched to China, carrying gifts that were to be presented to the Song court. Presentations were made either directly to the emperor at the imperial court, or indirectly via the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies. The Chinese court chroniclers recorded these gifts as tribute, under the character "gong" (貢), and the

Song court reciprocated by presenting to the visiting envoys gifts of metal bullion and such manufactured items as metal goods, ceramic wares and silks, and by granting them official titles and items of official stature.

In 987, soon after re-establishing internal order, the Northern Song court dispatched its sole diplomatic mission to the various foreign states. The exploratory nature of this mission is indicated by the fact that its members carried, along with gold and silks, blank imperial documents, the names of the states they visited to be filled in upon arrival. According to the SHY, the purpose of the mission was to express the court's desire for foreign states to dispatch presentations of tribute to China, as well as to purchase important trade products such as aromatics and medicines, rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks, pearls and camphor from these states¹. Two points may be noted from this statement. Firstly, the Northern Song court's interest in tribute missions from distant foreign states in the tenth century was economic rather than political. Secondly, the statement strongly suggests that the Northern Song court regarded tribute missions as a key means by which foreign trade, and therefore foreign products, were to arrive in China.

It was in this context that a number of states dispatched missions to present tribute to the Chinese court during the Northern Song period. Most of these states were substantial political and economic entities within their respective regional spheres of influence. More importantly, these were also key participants of the international maritime trade, and therefore important trading partners of China. Aside from the mission of 987, the Northern Song court was not active in its conduct of, or attitude towards, its relations with these states. Unlike the preceding and succeeding dynastic periods, when diplomatic missions were sent from China to enquire about specific countries², the Northern Song period was characterized by an apparent complacency concerning relations with states beyond China's

¹ ZG 44:2b & SS 186:23b.

² See Wang (1998) & Wheatley (1973: chapters 1-5).

borders, with two exceptions—Tonkin, which had been a Chinese province until the end of the Tang period, and Dashi (the Arabs), at that time the powerful Abassid Caliphate. Apart from these two exceptions, commercial considerations alone appear to have formed the basis upon which the Northern Song court conducted its diplomatic relations with the states of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral.

Tribute missions thus formed not only the major channel through which these states promoted and maintained their diplomatic status in the eyes of the Northern Song court, but also the chief means by which they advanced their economic relationships with China. The Northern Song court remained by and large the passive recipient of the overtures of its foreign counterparts. Its perception of the wealth and political authority of these states was therefore shaped to a great extent by the missions dispatched by these states, and the nature of the tribute that accompanied these missions.

The Northern Song court's perception of the role of tribute missions, and the foreign states' reliance on them as the chief means both of conducting diplomatic overtures and of dispatching trade products to China, affected the way in which these missions were received by the Chinese administration upon their arrival in China. Although all tribute was technically intended for the imperial court, tribute missions were, in fact, divided into two classes—diplomatic missions, and trade missions. Diplomatic missions were received by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency at the port of arrival and escorted to the imperial court, where they presented tribute to the emperor in person. Trade missions, on the other hand, presented their tribute to the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency of the port of call, where the tribute items were registered and processed under prevailing mercantile trade regulations.

This categorization of tribute missions as diplomatic overtures or commercial exchanges also led to differentiations in the gifts that China made in exchange for the tribute presented.

Diplomatic missions that appeared before the imperial court tended to receive in return gifts of a ceremonial nature, comprising items of great value and ceremonial trappings. Trade missions, on the other hand, had the tribute items assessed according to the prevailing market values, and received in return gifts of bullion or products of equivalent value. While the reciprocal gifts given to trade missions also included ceremonial trappings, these were generally not as significant as those that were presented to diplomatic missions at the imperial court.

Inevitably, the distinction the Chinese made between diplomatic missions and trade missions, and the generally passive stance adopted by the Northern Song court towards tributary relations with foreign states, led to the development of different strategies by which these foreign states exploited China's perception and reception of tribute missions in order to advance their own objectives. States that were primarily interested in developing their trade with China tended to focus their efforts on their preferred Chinese port of call, and their efforts appear to have been reciprocated by the respective ports. Diplomatic efforts focused upon the Northern Song court were undertaken by these states in order to initiate or preserve this primary relationship. Other states, for which direct trade with China was not the primary preoccupation, tended to regard tribute missions as a diplomatic channel for maintaining political contact.

China's approach to trade and tribute changed during the Southern Song period (1127 – 1279). The political defeat of the Song court shortly before 1127 led the Southern Song court to take a more pro-active role in its interaction with foreign states, in a bid to demonstrate that the dynasty continued to receive the mandate of Heaven. Changes in the administration of maritime trade and the reorganization of the departments responsible for foreign affairs contributed significantly to the reshaping of China's foreign policy. The role that tribute missions had previously played in shaping the court's impression of, and attitude towards, each of these states became less important. Although tribute missions continued to

arrive in China, the Southern Song court chose to regard these as the manifestation of its own imperial virtue rather than as demonstrations of the importance of the states presenting tribute. This had a marked impact on the relationships that had been built up with various states through the course of the Northern Song period. States whose primary preoccupation in diplomatic relations with China was trade, or whose diplomatic standings had been determined largely by their commercial prowess and the nature of the tribute that they dispatched to China, suffered significant setbacks in their diplomatic relationship with the Southern Song court.

It is within this changing framework that it is necessary to examine the tribute relationship that Srivijaya, the pre-eminent port-state of the Malacca Straits region, had with Song China. The unique nature of the thalassocracy of Srivijaya necessarily dictated that its prosperity, and even its survival, depended upon maintaining its role as the region's major entrepôt for international maritime trade, providing the Chinese market with the products of Southeast Asian, Indian and Middle Eastern origins, and Indian Ocean states with Chinese and Southeast Asian goods in return. Srivijaya's conduct of its tribute relations with Song China was shaped by this need to ensure its economic, and hence its political, survival. Political initiatives were intended to sustain and enlarge this all-important trade relationship.

6.2.1 Patterns of Diplomatic and Economic Contact between Srivijaya and China in the Tenth Century

During the first thirty years of the Northern Song period (960 - 990), Srivijaya dispatched a total of fourteen tribute missions to China. These missions occurred in three series. The first series, consisting of four missions, was dispatched by the Srivijayan ruler Silihu Daxialitan

and his successor Shili Wuya³ in 960⁴, 961 (twice)⁵ and 962⁶. The second series, consisting of four missions, was dispatched in 971⁷, 972⁸, 974⁹ and 975 by an un-named king¹⁰. The third series, consisting of six missions, was dispatched by King Xiachi in 980¹¹, 983¹², 985¹³, 987¹⁴, 988¹⁵ and 990¹⁶. After 990, Srivijaya did not dispatch any recorded tribute mission until 1003.

Apart from Tonkin and Champa, Srivijaya was the only foreign country that dispatched tribute missions to China at such a frequency during these three decades. Of the other states

³ The Chinese historical texts are currently the only known sources to contain references to the names of the Srivijayan kings of the tenth to twelfth centuries. The only exception pertains to a temple inscription found in Nagapattinam, which mentions the names of two Srivijayan kings who reigned during the beginning of the eleventh century. Refer to chapter 6, footnote 40 & 41.

⁴ SS 489:14088 & SHY FY 7:1a. The location of the reception of tribute, the tribute items and the reciprocal gifts were not recorded.

⁵ SS 489:14088, SHY FY 7:2a, WXTK 332:2610,2. The location of the reception of tribute, the tribute items and the reciprocal gifts were not recorded for either occasion.

⁶ WXTK 332:2610, 2 & SS 489:14088. The location of the reception of tribute and the tribute items were not recorded. However, it was noted the envoys were awarded two sets of harnesses, as well as white yak's tails, white stoneware, lacquer ware, and silks.

⁷ WXTK 332:2610,2 & SS 489:14088. Crystals and a petroleum product were presented as tribute. The location of the reception of tribute, and the reciprocal gifts, were not noted.

⁸ WXTK 332:2610,2 & SS 489:14089. No details of the tribute mission have been recorded.

⁹ WXTK 332:2610,2 & SS 489:14089. Tribute of elephant tusks, frankincense, rose water, dates, white granulated sugar, crystals, glass bottles and branches of coral were presented. The location of the reception of tribute, and the reciprocal gifts, were not noted.

¹⁰ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2. Tribute of produce of the land was presented. The location of the reception of tribute was not noted. The mission envoy was rewarded with a splendid headdress, gold and silver ware and copper cash.

¹¹ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2. The mission presented aromatic products, rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks. The place of reception and the reciprocal gifts were not noted.

¹² SS 489:14089. The tribute included Arabian brocade, Yuelue cloth, rhinoceros horns, glass bottles, elephant tusks, aromatics and a crystal Buddha. The place of reception and the reciprocal gifts were not noted.

¹³ WXTK 332:2610,2 & SS 489:14089. The envoy, a ship captain named Jin Huayi, arrived with tribute consisting of produce of the land. The place of reception and the reciprocal gifts were not recorded.

¹⁴ SS 489:14089. No details concerning the mission were recorded.

¹⁵ SHY FY 7:12b, SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2. The tribute consisted of a Buddhist sutra in a green wooden box; amber, red, green and white crystals; one red and one black wooden rosary in an inlaid box; 5 deer-skin baskets; a swing of red silk with bronze and iron studs; incise-decorated cups and various drinking wares; boxes inlaid with gold; boxes covered with deer fur; an inlaid scroll table; gold and copper water vessels; iron swords; twenty bat's wings; a pair of inlaid comb boxes, one of which contained 270 wooden combs and the other a dragon-bone comb; several singular pieces of white cloth with coins (attached?); a pair of camphor screens; an inlaid saddle and 700 *jin* (kati; unit of weight; 1 *jin* = 16 *liang* (tael) = 500gm) of sulphur. The mission was headed by four persons. Each bore a document, one of which listed the items and quantities of the tribute, and another being a memorial from the Srivijayan king. The place of reception and the reciprocal gifts were not recorded.

¹⁶ WXTK 332:2610,2. No information on the mission has been recorded.

in Maritime Southeast Asia, Borneo dispatched only one tribute mission in 977¹⁷, and Java dispatched missions in 971 and 992¹⁸. The frequency with which Srivijaya dispatched its tribute missions to China at the beginning of the Song period clearly reflected Srivijaya's need to promote itself as the premiere maritime player in the Southeast Asia-China leg of international trade. Its reliability in shipping products from Southeast Asia and from the Indian Ocean to South China on a regular basis would have been demonstrated.

Srivijaya's display of its shipping capabilities was complemented by the types of products it was clearly advertising itself as being capable of delivering. Of the recorded items dispatched as tribute from 960 to 990, many were from the Middle East and India. The earlier missions of this period presented high value products that were in great demand in China, in particular frankincense, ivory, rhinoceros horns, rose water, coral, foreign textiles and various aromatics, all of which, apart from foreign textiles and ivory, were declared to be Chinese state monopoly products in 982¹⁹. Thus, Srivijaya from the outset showed itself to be fully capable of supplying these highly desired and valued Middle Eastern and Indian products to China by acting as a transshipment hub. By 988, however, the range of items it presented in the tribute missions had expanded to include intricate handicrafts, furniture, grooming instruments such as combs and Buddhist scriptures. The 988 mission was an impressive response to China's 987 mission to the foreign states encouraging the dispatch of tribute to China. The presentation of such a broad range of items one year after the Chinese mission was dispatched appears to have been a calculated effort to highlight to the Chinese trade administrators and the Song court Srivijaya's familiarity with the Middle East and India, and the reliability and flexibility of its trade relations with these two regions, as well as its keen awareness of, and responsiveness to, the needs of the Chinese market.

¹⁷ Wong (1979: 13).

¹⁸ WXTK 332:2606,2-3 & SHY FY 4:97a-98a.

¹⁹ SHY ZG 44:2a-b.

The importance that Srivijaya placed on being recognized by the Song court as China's major trading partner in Maritime Southeast Asia caused Srivijaya to be highly sensitive to any administrative or political changes within China. Srivijaya carefully followed the events that were taking place in China, and its rulers appear to have kept themselves updated on the political changes in China. The first presentation of tribute took place in the ninth month of 960, the year the Song Dynasty was founded. This was the first tribute to be offered by a foreign state²⁰. The 960 mission was followed by a rapid burst of missions, two in 961, and one in 962. This flurry of tribute missions stands in marked contrast to the absence of any immediate missions from the other Maritime Southeast Asian states. The first mission from Java, which did not arrive until 971, more than a decade later, was regarded by the Chinese court as a trade mission, not a diplomatic one. Java's first diplomatic mission to China arrived only in 992. Borneo's first diplomatic mission arrived in 977. The time lag between the founding of the Song dynasty and the missions from Java and Borneo, the other two major Maritime Southeast Asian trading states apart from Srivijaya, may have reflected local conditions²¹.

	960-969	970-979	980-989	990-999
Jiaozhi (Tonkin)	0	3	5	4
Champa	6	8	5	5
Srivijaya	4	4	6	0
Borneo	0	1	0	0
Java	0	1	0	1
Tianzhu (India)	0	0	2	3
Dashi (Arabs)	1	6	1	5
Total	11	23	19	18

Table 6.1: Frequency of tribute missions from seven major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states in the tenth century.

²⁰ Champa's mission was the second to arrive in China, three months after Srivijaya's, while the Arab's inaugural mission arrived in 968. Wong (1979: 6, 13 & 17).
²¹ Very few royal inscriptions have survived in Java from the period between 950 and 992, suggesting that Java was experiencing intermittent political turmoil during that period, and so was not in a position to send a proper diplomatic mission until 992. Boni (possibly Santubong, Sarawak) appears not to have had control of the gold trade until the late tenth century. (Personal communication, Jan W. Christie).

Srivijaya was also highly attuned to the requests of the Song court in matters pertaining to trade. Hence, when the Chinese envoys were sent abroad in 987 to encourage the dispatch of tribute by the states of Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean to Song China, Srivijaya responded with a tribute mission in the following year, bearing a quantity and range of products that the Chinese court considered significant enough to record.

Srivijaya's representatives in China were apparently encouraged to act on their own initiative. Srivijaya's presentation of tribute immediately after the Song dynasty was founded, and its occurrence during the ninth month, instead of during the fifth and sixth months when ships from the South traditionally arrived in China, suggests that this initial mission may not have been dispatched from Sumatra. It is more likely that representatives of the Srivijayan court, who were resident in Guangzhou, the only port at that time to service the trade from Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral and receive tribute from the states of these regions, had dispatched tribute on the Srivijayan court's behalf. The presence of important Srivijayan representatives may have been the result of the 904 Srivijayan tribute mission to the Tang court, during which the Srivijayan envoy was appointed as foreign headman, presumably of the port of Guangzhou²². Srivijayan representatives appear to have remained in the Chinese port to maintain Srivijaya's interests in China from that time onwards. The 960 mission was presumably their response to the dynastic change in China, carried out on behalf of the Srivijayan king.

Srivijaya's connections in Guangzhou were to be an important factor in its tribute relations with China through the course of the Song period. The 960 mission was the only one dispatched by Srivijaya during the tenth century that was clearly stated to have been presented at the Song court, although the memorial submitted by the administration of Guangzhou in 992 to the imperial court referred to the 990 Srivijayan mission leader as an envoy to the court, providing indirect evidence that this tribute was also presented directly

²² WXTK 332:2610,2.

to the Song court²³. The place of presentation of the tribute of all the other missions was not recorded. In contrast, four of the eight missions dispatched by the Arabs before 990 were clearly stated to have been received by the Song court. Between 990 and 1000, the Song court received another two out of the six missions dispatched by the Arabs²⁴.

The absence of references to the place of Srivijaya's tribute presentation may be an indication that these tribute missions were received in Guangzhou. This suggests that Srivijaya's missions were regarded as trade missions rather than as diplomatic missions. According to the WXTK, following an incident in 971 in which the Guangzhou Superintendent of Mercantile Shipping named Li Yu refused to receive tribute items sent by the Arabs, Champa and Java and dispatched the envoys of these missions to the Song court²⁵, a decree was issued in the same year stating that missions such as these were no longer to be regarded as tribute²⁶. The Song court's attitude to these three missions stands in contrast to its attitude to the Arab mission that had arrived earlier in the same year: That particular mission had been received by the court, and the envoy had been awarded an honorary official title with due ceremony²⁷. The 971 decree was apparently making a clear distinction between the tribute presentations of diplomatic missions, and trade missions that involved the delivery of goods. The Chinese administration was able to differentiate between the two types of missions. This would have been possible only if the heads of the missions made the purpose of their missions clear to the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency upon their arrival at Guangzhou. Diplomatic missions would then have been escorted to the court, while trade missions would have been handled at the port.

Apart from the first tribute mission in 960 and the one in 990, all of the Srivijayan tribute missions in the late tenth century were probably dispatched as a means of carrying out trade

²³ WXTK 332:2610,2.

²⁴ Refer to Table 6.1.

²⁵ WXTK 339:2663,3.

²⁶ WXTK 339:2663,3.

²⁷ WXTK 339:2663,3.

exchanges with China. This is apparent from the items that were given by the Chinese to the missions in return for the tribute submitted. Harnesses, white yak's tails, white stoneware, lacquer ware and silks were given to the 962 mission. Headdresses, gold and silver ware and copper cash were given to the 975 mission. With the exception of the headdresses and gold and silver wares, the items given to these missions were normal trade products, given in accordance to the stipulations recorded in the SHY²⁸. This is in contrast to the list of reciprocal gifts awarded to the Arab diplomatic mission of 993, consisting of a printed gown, a purple brocaded turban, stamped gold and silver, a pair of phoenix jars and twenty bolts of silks²⁹, which was drawn up in accordance with the regulations dealing with diplomatic missions³⁰. The list of reciprocal gifts awarded to the Srivijayan missions of 962 and 975 suggests that for missions that were not strictly regarded as diplomatic, the list of reciprocal gifts was to comprise two sections—Chinese trade products, and accompanying ceremonial gifts. The harnesses and headdress awarded to the envoys of the 962 and 975 Srivijayan missions were not normal trade products. It is most likely that these were included in the list of items given to the missions in recognition of the official status of these missions, while still regarding them as trade missions.

Srivijaya's efforts to promote its entrepôt trade and shipping capabilities to China, as well as its conduct of trade through tribute missions, were handled almost exclusively by its home-based political elite. All of the tribute missions it dispatched between 961 and 990, except for that of 985 in which tribute was submitted by a Srivijayan ship owner, were headed by royal emissaries even though they were probably trade missions. The presentation of tribute by all these missions took place either in the third or fourth month, or in the eleventh or twelfth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, coinciding with the sailing seasons³¹. The presentations of tribute during the third and fourth months were most likely

²⁸ SHY ZG 44:1a-b.

²⁹ Wong (1979: 17); WXTK 339:2663,3.

³⁰ SS 489:14089.

³¹ PZKT 2:2a – 2b

made immediately upon the arrival in China of the emissaries from Srivijaya, while tribute presented during the eleventh and twelfth months would indicate that the emissaries executed their official responsibilities before leaving China for Srivijaya with the northeast monsoon. This indicates that these missions originated from Sumatra, rather than from Srivijaya's local representatives at Guangzhou. Since they accompanied shipments of trade goods, this is not unexpected.

After 990, no official tribute missions from Srivijaya were received by China for another thirteen years. In 992, according to a memorial submitted by the administration of Guangzhou to the imperial court, the Srivijayan envoy of the 990 mission had returned to the Chinese port. Having initially stayed for a year at Nanhai district in Guangzhou because of reports of Java's attack on Srivijaya, he had then tried to return home the following year. However, after sailing down to Champa and there receiving negative news concerning the conflict, he had decided to return to Guangzhou³². The Srivijayan envoy's inability to return to Srivijaya suggests that the maritime approach to Srivijaya may have been severely disrupted by the on-going conflict. This may have damaged Srivijaya's position as a trade entrepôt, thus temporarily undermining its trade with China. During the period between 991 and 1002, six Arab missions and three Indian missions arrived in China to present tribute³³. The absence of any mention of the arrival of these missions via the overland route suggests that ships were still able to sail from the Indian Ocean to China despite the on-going conflict in the Straits of Malacca. The Sunda Straits may have been used by ships traveling between the Indian Ocean and China during this period. The absence of any record of Srivijayan tribute missions having been received by China during this period suggests that this conflict, or the consequences it inflicted on Srivijaya's internal politics and external trade, may have lasted for around twelve years.

³² WXTK 332:2610,2 & SS 489:14089.

³³ Wong (1979: 16-17).

Rivalry between Srivijaya and Java, in fact, may have begun before the conflict in 991, and was possibly exacerbated by the Song mission of 987. During the tenth century, Srivijaya's tribute to China comprised only Middle Eastern and Indian products. It did not include important Javanese and eastern Indonesian Archipelago products such as sandalwood incense, cloves and pepper, the supplies of which were apparently under Javanese control. Java may have refused to supply Srivijaya with products from its sphere of influence. Srivijaya, having attempted to make up for its inability to supply key Southeast Asian spices to China by including artisan crafts of high value from India, may have tried to gain access to Java's trade sphere by force, thus precipitating a power struggle between the two maritime powers.

In 992, Java dispatched an impressive tribute mission to China³⁴. The mission was a diplomatic one, and was received by the Song court. It was an obvious portrayal by Java of its wealth in trade products and resources, many of which could only be sourced from its sphere of influence and were in high demand in the Chinese market. Absent from the list of tribute items were some of the standard Middle Eastern and Indian products. While there were Southeast Asian sources for products such as rhinoceros horns and elephant tusks, other products such as dates, rose water and frankincense, offered by Srivijaya, but not by Java, had to be obtained from Middle Eastern and Indian sources. It therefore does not appear to have been Java's intention to promote itself as an alternative entrepôt to Srivijaya for the transshipment of products from these regions to China. Java was instead advertising to China its position as an important trade partner, with a regional authority that surpassed that of Srivijaya, able to supply the Chinese market with products from its sphere of influence.

Java's naval ascendancy in 991, and the diplomatic overture towards China in 992, did not go unchallenged by Srivijaya. The memorial from the Guangzhou administration concerning

³⁴ SHY FY 4:97a-98a & WXTK 332:2606,2-3.

the plight of the Srivijayan envoy was submitted to the Song court in 992, conveying the envoy's request for the court to intervene on Srivijaya's behalf by ordering Java to cease the conflict. The timing of the memorial, which was sent sometime during the winter of that year, suggests that the Srivijayan envoy's appeal was a response to the Javanese diplomatic mission, which had been received just a few months earlier. Although the appeal succeeded in getting the Song court to advise Java to cease its military campaign against Srivijaya, China did not receive another tribute mission from Srivijaya for over a decade, suggesting either that the conflict or its consequences were not immediately resolved, or that Srivijaya's trade with China may have been at a low ebb for other reasons at the end of the tenth century. However, the effectiveness of Srivijaya's representatives at Guangzhou in maintaining its economic interests and presence in China were eventually to bear fruit in the eleventh century.

6.2.2 Changing Patterns of Diplomatic and Economic Contact in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth centuries

Srivijaya's tribute relations with China resumed in 1003, after a lull of twelve years. Fourteen state-level exchanges were noted to have been dispatched by Srivijaya during the eleventh century. Three discernible groups of tribute missions were dispatched. The first series³⁵ was dispatched in 1003³⁶, 1008³⁷, 1017³⁸ and 1028³⁹. The missions of 1003 and 1008

³⁵ According to an annotated footnote in the SHY quoting the *Shantangkao* (a Song period text dated to the end of the eleventh century), in 1018, Srivijaya presented tribute consisting of one lump of ambergris, 36 *jin* of pearls, 113 *liang* (tael; 1 tael = 0.0625 *jin* = 31.25gm) of coral in single branches, 8 rhinoceros horns weighing 240 *liang*, 3 plum blossom camphor boards, 200 *liang* of plum blossom camphor, 39 glass items, 39 pressed intaglio gold pieces, 13 assorted cat's eyes, blue agate and large pearl rings, 28 *liang* civet, 26 bolts of foreign textiles, Arab sugar in 4 glass bottles, Arab dates in 16 glass bottles, 168 *jin* of rose water, 9 long steel swords, 81680 *jin* of frankincense, 87 whole pieces of elephant tusks with a total weight of 4065 *jin*, 278 *jin* of liquid storax, 117 *jin* of patchouli, 30 *jin* of cloves, 158 *jin* of dragon's blood, 127 *jin* of asafoetida, 2674 *jin* of nutmeg, 10750 *jin* of pepper, 19935 *jin* of sandalwood incense and 364 *jin* of jian gharuwood incense (SHY FY 7:21a & b). The commodities list and the respective quantities are very similar to the main entry of the SHY on the Srivijayan mission of 1156. This information, however, does not appear in the *Shantangkao* itself. Hence, it is assumed that the compiler of the SHY had made a mistake, crediting a 1018 mission, if it

were apparently both dispatched by the ruler Silizhiluo Wunifo Maluohua⁴⁰. The 1017 mission was dispatched by his successor Baxisuwu Chapumi⁴¹, presumably in part to bring the change of leadership to Chinese attention. The 1028 mission, dispatched by Shili Diehua, appears to have marked yet another succession to the Srivijayan throne. The second series of missions was dispatched following a gap of nearly fifty years. A burst of five missions occurred in 1077⁴², 1078⁴³, 1082⁴⁴, 1083⁴⁵ and 1088⁴⁶, all apparently sent by the same ruler Dihua Jialuo and his daughter. The third series of missions was dispatched in

occurred, with far more tribute than it actually carried. Given Java's internal problems in 1018, it is, however, possible that a Srivijayan mission in 1018 could have carried such products as cloves, normally under Javanese control.

³⁶ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2. Details of the tribute presented, the location of the presentation and the reciprocal gifts are not recorded. The envoys' request for a cast bell and a name for the temple that was being built in Srivijaya in honor of the Chinese emperor was acceded to.

³⁷ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2. Details of the tribute presented and the location of the presentation were not recorded. The mission received in return gifts that were of great value, and the envoys were permitted to go and make obeisance at the audience altar of the dynasty at Mount Taishan.

³⁸ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2. The mission presented a plaque bearing gold characters, and a tribute of pearls, elephant tusks, Sanskrit sutras and Kunlun slaves. The envoys were permitted to tour the palace grounds, and the mission received presents and an imperial document.

³⁹ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2. Tribute of products of the land was presented. The mission was set apart by the Chinese from the normal missions, and was deemed a special occasion. The envoy was rewarded with a belt of pure gold instead of one of partial gold and silver appliqué as stipulated by the regulations in regard to normal tribute missions.

⁴⁰ A temple inscription at Nagapattinam, South India, records the Sanskrit equivalent of the name "Silizhiluo Wunifo Maluohua" as "Sri Culamaniwarman". Coedes (1918: 7).

⁴¹ The same South Indian temple inscription is the one referred to in footnote 40 also records the Sanskrit equivalent of the name "Baxisuwu Chapumi" as "Sri Marawijayottungawarman". Coedes (1918: 7).

⁴² SS 489:14090 & WXTK 332:2610,2. The tribute presented, and the reciprocal gifts, have not been recorded. However, the Srivijayan king received the title of Great General Who Ensures Obedience and Admires Culture, and it was ordered that the envoy be indulged.

⁴³ SS 489:14090 & WXTK 332:2610,2. The mission presented tribute of white gold, pearls, dragon camphor and frankincense. Guangzhou received the tribute list, submitted a report to the court, and provided protection for the mission to travel to the capital. The emperor, noting that the journey from Guangzhou to the capital was arduous, ordered the mission to return to the port, and that every act of affection be rewarded. The next year, a reciprocal gift of 64000 strings of copper cash and 10500 *liang* of silver was made, and the envoys were made officials and had conferred upon them the titles of Distant General of the Peace and Commandant Who Supports Obedience. The envoys requested permission to buy gold belts, wares and items of white gold, and purple monk's robes and certificates, and these items were given to them instead.

⁴⁴ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090. The mission was given an imperial audience and permitted to scatter chempaka flowers filled with pearls and dragon camphor before the throne. The chief envoy was made an official and given the title of General of Distant Affection, while the two assistant envoys received the title of Commandant. The tribute presented, and the reciprocal gifts awarded, have not been recorded.

⁴⁵ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090. No details concerning the mission have been recorded, except that the chief envoy received the title of General, while the assistant envoys received the title of Commandant.

⁴⁶ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090. The mission requested permission, and was permitted, to scatter fifteen *liang* of chempaka flowers, five *liang* of pearls and ten *liang* of dragon camphor at the palace. No other detail concerning the mission has been recorded.

1090⁴⁷, 1091⁴⁸, 1094⁴⁹ and 1095⁵⁰, apparently sent by a succeeding ruler. After 1095, Srivijaya did not send any recorded missions to China until 1137.

The 1003 mission, which marked the commencement of Srivijaya's tribute relations with China after a twelve-year lull, presented itself in a manner that differed from those of the previous century. During the mission, the Song court was informed that a Buddhist monastery was being built in Srivijaya dedicated to the Song emperor, presumably in the capital, at that time still apparently located at Palembang⁵¹. Although Srivijaya had, up until 990, made tremendous efforts to foster a commercial patron-client relationship with China, the missions that were sent do not appear to have gone beyond state-level commercial exchanges. The building of a monastery would have sent a strong signal to the Song court of Srivijaya's intention to deepen this patron-client relationship beyond mere commodity exchanges. The 1003 mission marked the beginning of a diplomatic courtship of China that was to last for the next twenty-five years over three reigns, and was to witness the establishment of a more intimate diplomatic relationship between the two states that lasted until the end of the eleventh century.

The conflict between Srivijaya and Java late in the tenth century may have been a major factor in this diplomatic courtship on the part of Srivijaya. Srivijaya appears to have realized that a reciprocal relationship with China beyond mere commercial exchanges was necessary to protect and advance its political and commercial interests. The 1003 mission marked a shift from mere commercial exchange to diplomatic outreach intended to elicit a favorable response from the Song court. This was carried out by the Srivijayan envoys through requests for Chinese imperial patronage and approval during the presentation of tribute.

⁴⁷ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090. No detail concerning the mission has been recorded.

⁴⁸ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090.

⁴⁹ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090.

⁵⁰ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090.

⁵¹ The remains on Bukit Seguntang in Palembang may be those of the monastery built or added to at that time. Personal communication, Jan W. Christie (October 2002).

By the beginning of the eleventh century, the Chinese administration had also begun to make a clear distinction between trade missions and diplomatic missions. In the case of Srivijaya, the distinctive feature of its diplomatic missions was the ceremonial approach that it adopted in the presentation of the tribute, which included the requests for gifts and rewards that highlighted Srivijaya's reverential attitude, visitations to places of political importance in China by Srivijayan emissaries, presentation of plaques with gold characters, visits by eminent Srivijayan dignitaries, and the scattering of tribute offerings at the imperial court. The 1003, 1008 and 1017 missions were clearly diplomatic missions dispatched to foster and reinforce the patron-client relationship between Srivijaya and China.

The 1003 mission met with immediate success. The request for a name for the Buddhist temple and a cast bell were approved. The Song court also regarded the mission as a diplomatic one, as attested to by the conferring of the honorary titles General Who Admires Virtue and General Who Cherishes Culture upon the mission envoys⁵². This was the first time that Srivijayan envoys were accorded such ceremonial honors, indicating that Srivijaya's status had risen in the eyes of the Song court.

This diplomatic coup was followed by another in 1008. Once again, the strategy of eliciting a response from the Song court to a flattering request for patronage had succeeded. The Srivijayan envoys were permitted, under escort, to visit Mount Taishan and to make obeisance to the Song dynastic altar⁵³. Apart from the Arab envoy who presented tribute three months after the tribute presentation by the Srivijayan envoys in 1008, no other envoy from any other country was accorded the same privilege at any other time during the Song period. By 1016, Srivijaya, along with Java, the Arabs, and Chola South India, was accorded

⁵² SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2.

⁵³ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2.

the status of first class trading state⁵⁴. This placed Srivijaya, at least from the economic point of view, on an equal footing with the other three major trading partners of China in the southern seas. This suggests that similar treatment was by 1016 accorded to the envoys of Srivijaya and the Arabs.

This favorable relationship was reinforced in 1017, when Srivijaya's envoys were given a tour of the imperial palace, again probably at the request of the envoys. The mission was subsequently rewarded with presents and an imperial document. It is evident that by the second decade of the eleventh century, Srivijaya had successfully secured a reciprocal relationship with China, whereby the tribute missions that the former dispatched went beyond commercial exchanges. In 1028, a Srivijayan trade mission was dispatched to China, presumably in response to Chinese efforts to increase trade at its ports. It was distinguished from other state-level trade exchanges, regarded as an act of affection on Srivijaya's part, and a special reward was given.

Srivijaya's successful fostering of a reciprocal relationship between China and itself was thus accompanied by a significant increase in the proportion of diplomatic missions it dispatched to the Song court. While only three out of the fourteen missions dispatched in the tenth century had possibly been diplomatic, this proportion increased dramatically to three out of the four missions between 1003 and 1028. This marked change indicates that Srivijaya had, with the resumption of its tribute relations with China, come to regard tribute missions as a vital channel for diplomatic interaction with China, and as the key means of championing its status in the Song court's eyes.

Srivijaya's political and economic interests had apparently been advanced by its representatives who were resident in China between 990 and 1003, during the lull in tribute missions from Srivijaya. The immediate and marked success of Srivijaya's diplomatic

⁵⁴ Wolters (1958: 605).

overtures when tribute relations resumed in 1003 and 1008, and the mutually affectionate relationship that existed during the first three decades of the eleventh century, suggest that such championing of Srivijaya's interests by these representatives met with great success. The effects of Srivijaya's successful new diplomatic strategy were felt particularly in matters of commerce.

These efforts at eliciting a non-commercial response from the Song court appear to have been part of Srivijaya's overall strategy for gaining the favor of the rulers of the states with which it had important commercial links. In the context of its transshipment trade of high value Middle Eastern, Indian, and from the eleventh century onwards, Southeast Asian products to China, and vice versa, Srivijaya was simultaneously making diplomatic overtures towards the Cholas, who by the eleventh century controlled the coastline of South India as well as the island of Sri Lanka and the important South Indian port of Nagapattinam. Srivijaya's diplomatic overtures in 1003, 1008 and 1017 towards China were matched by its overtures towards the Chola court in the early years of the eleventh century, reflected in an inscription dated 1005, indicating that Srivijaya had built a *vihara* (Buddhist monastery) at Nagapattinam. The move was viewed favorably by the Chola ruler Rajaraja I, who set aside a village to provide for the maintenance of the temple⁵⁵. This was followed by three donations made during the reign of the Chola king Rajendra I. According to an inscription from the wall of the Karonasvamin Temple at Nagapattinam, dated to the reign of the Chola King Rajendra I, a gift of several lamps was made by Nimalan-Agattisvaran, the agent of the Srivijayan king. In another inscription of 1014-15, Rajendra I records the gift of a jewel set with precious stones to the deity of Nagaiyalagar, which was commissioned by a Srivijayan agent. Finally, a third inscription, dated to 1018-19, records the gifts of Chinese gold to the deity Tirukkaronam-udaiyar and the feeding of the Brahman priests by Sri Kuruttan Kesuvan, the agent of the Srivijayan king⁵⁶. Srivijaya was clearly

⁵⁵ Coedès (1918: 5).

⁵⁶ Chandra (1957: 15).

wooing its two major trading partners, China and South India, with the objective of securing its own position as the fulcrum of the trade that flowed between the two. Such was Srivijaya's prosperity that it provoked a Chola raid in 1025, the effects of which appear to have been minimal⁵⁷

In contrast to diplomatic missions, only one trade mission, dispatched in 1028, presented tribute during the first three decades of the eleventh century. The near absence of trade missions dispatched by Srivijaya during these three decades suggests that by the beginning of the eleventh century, it was no longer as heavily reliant on diplomatic tribute missions as a means of conducting its transshipment trade with China as it had been the previous century. This was probably due to changes that occurred, towards the end of the tenth century, in China's maritime trade structure. The 982 liberalization of the domestic trade in thirty-seven key foreign products⁵⁸, and the reduction of the domestic trade in foreign products in the Song court's hands to a minor proportion, left the domestic sector of China's import-export trade largely in the hands of private Chinese merchants⁵⁹. These changes would have enabled Srivijaya to establish agencies to receive and sell the products shipped by Srivijaya to China, and even allowed traders on the ships to dispose of the products themselves, without having to rely on the Song administrative apparatus.

The Song court's interest in international maritime trade as a source of state revenue appears to have grown significantly after 990. In 1023, the maritime trade route had become important as a means of by-passing the overland trade routes through increasingly unstable Central Asia, and countries beyond Central Asia were requested by the Song court to dispatch their tribute missions via the maritime trade route⁶⁰. The decree passed in 1028, noting that few ships had arrived at Guangzhou in the preceding years, indicates Chinese

⁵⁷ Wisseman Christie (1998: 254).

⁵⁸ SHY ZG 44:2a-b. See chapter 5.2.1.

⁵⁹ SHY ZG 44:2b-3b.

⁶⁰ WXTK 339:2664,1.

interest in strengthening maritime trade ties. The Mercantile Shipping Superintendency and the Department for Transportation of Guangzhou were ordered by the decree to attract and secure the residence of foreign traders⁶¹. Clearly, by the early decades of the eleventh century, the Song court was already closely monitoring the Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean trade centered at Guangzhou, and reacting to changing circumstances. Srivijaya was by this time regarded by the Song court as a key player in the shipping trade, and therefore of substantial importance to the prosperity of China's international maritime trade. The court's proactive stance on trade by the late tenth century thus played to Srivijaya's advantage.

After 1028, there was a fifty-year gap before Srivijaya dispatched its next diplomatic mission to the Song court. These five decades saw a significant decline in the number of tribute missions from China's major trading partners arriving in China. A total of fourteen missions from states in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia were recorded as having been received by the Song court between 1030 and 1050. This is in contrast to a total of 71 between 960 and 999, 35 during the first two decades of the eleventh century, and 47 during the last five decades of the century. Recorded diplomatic missions hit their lowest point by the fourth decade of the eleventh century. While the dispatch of tribute missions by the Mainland Southeast Asian states of Champa and Tonkin picked up again by 1042, tribute missions from the Arabs only resumed in 1055, and those from the states of the Indian Ocean littoral and Maritime Southeast Asia did not pick up until 1072.

	1000-1010	1011-1020	1021-1027	1028-1030	1031-1040	1041-1050	1051-1060	1061-1070	1071-1080	1081-1090	1091-1100
Jiaozhi (Tonkin)	6	4	2	1	0	1	3	5	3	4	0
Champa	5	4	0	2	0	2	1	3	4	1	1
Srivijaya	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
Borneo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
India	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Chola	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Dashi (Arabs)	5	5	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	4	1
Total	19	17	5	4	2	3	7	9	14	12	5

Table 6.2: Frequency of tribute missions from six major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states in the eleventh century.

⁶¹ SHY ZG 44:4b-5a.

Despite the lull in tribute missions, maritime trade at the Chinese ports does not appear to have declined. In fact the value of the import trade at Guangzhou increased progressively between 1049 and 1064. The general lull in tribute missions was probably due to the Song court's shift in its conduct of maritime trade away from ritualized state-level exchanges at the imperial court to the administration of general maritime trade at the Chinese ports through the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies, and the liberalization of the domestic trade in foreign products in China to allow private participation. There was no compelling reason for China's trade partners to maintain state-level contact with the Song court on a frequent basis.

Srivijayan shipping appears to have been active throughout the lull in state-level exchanges. The Canton inscription of 1079 sheds light on the frequency with which Srivijayan ships arrived at Guangzhou between 1064 and 1077, prior to the start of the next series of missions from Srivijaya. The inscription states that sometime between 1064 and 1066, ships of the Srivijayan king Dihua Jialuo had arrived in Guangzhou, led by one of his relatives named Zhi Luoluo. Zhi Luoluo returned to Srivijaya the next year and reported to the Srivijayan king about a Taoist temple at Guangzhou that had been lying in ruins. In 1067, a representative named Sili Shawen was dispatched to Guangzhou to commence the restoration of the Taoist temple's main gate. Sili Shawen sailed back to Srivijaya in 1068, but returned in 1069 to complete the restoration work. He returned to Srivijaya the same year, and in 1070 another representative was sent to China with various gifts to arrange for the appointment of an administrator of the restored temple, and to purchase fields for its upkeep⁶².

Hence, between 1064 and 1070, four return trips were made from Srivijaya to China to handle the restoration work of the Taoist temple. While a statement from "The Older

⁶² Tan (1964: 17-25).

History of Guangzhou”, quoted in the *Document concerning the Treatment of Illnesses of the Districts and Countries under Heaven* by Yan Jianwu, states that the Srivijayan king dispatched Zhi Luoluo as an envoy to present tribute to the Song court sometime before 1064⁶³, it is clear from the absence of mention of this mission in the SS that the Song court considered this a trade mission, rather than a diplomatic one. Similar shipments of foreign products, carried by Srivijayan vessels, probably arrived at Guangzhou on an annual basis between 1028 and 1077, when tribute relations eventually resumed.

The restoration of the Taoist temple in the 1060s and 1070s had a clear impact on Srivijaya’s diplomatic and commercial relations with China, culminating in the resumption of its diplomatic relations with the Song court in 1077, when an envoy of the Srivijayan king was dispatched to present tribute to the Song court to seek the court’s permission to present a substantial cash donation for the construction of two buildings within the temple compound, and to request that a bell be cast and a bell tower be erected⁶⁴. Possibly occurring just after the shift of the Srivijayan capital from Palembang to Jambi, the temple restoration and the subsequent mission may have been calculated moves on the Srivijayan ruler’s part to obtain recognition of the new port-capital of Srivijaya⁶⁵. The Srivijayan ruler was also attempting to obtain recognition at the state level for his patronage and donations in Guangzhou, for which the requests for permission to carry out the restoration works and purchases of arable land had hitherto been made at the prefectural level. Furthermore, in making these requests to the Song court, Srivijaya was once again, as in the first two decades of the eleventh century, putting the strategy of eliciting a favorable response from the Song court into play. The conferring of a title upon the Srivijayan ruler following the above request, a privilege that no other Maritime Southeast Asian ruler enjoyed, indicates that this protracted overture was highly successful. Presumably, the rise in Srivijaya’s status

⁶³ Tan (1964: 23).

⁶⁴ Tan (1964: 17-25).

⁶⁵ Tu (1996 : 42).

in 1077 was accompanied by the conferring of the title of “Favoured Vassal” that was alluded to later in an 1168 memorial⁶⁶.

This elevation in status also resulted in substantial benefits for Srivijaya’s trade with China. Even though the trade missions of 1078 and of 1083 were not, in the end, received by the imperial court, they were nonetheless accorded due ceremony, and the envoys of both missions were granted honorary titles. The Guangzhou Mercantile Shipping Superintendency was apparently aware of the elevation of Srivijaya’s status in the eyes of the Song court. Preferential treatment was not confined to the trade missions dispatched by the Srivijayan king. All other presentations of foreign products, including those dispatched by other members of Srivijaya’s political elite, were handled with great care and diffidence. Hence, when a shipment of camphor and textiles was dispatched by a Srivijayan princess to Guangzhou in 1082, the cautiousness with which the Guangzhou Superintendent of Mercantile Shipping initially handled this shipment, by delaying its reception until instructions from the capital were received to handle it as an ordinary shipment of products, is a clear indication of the high status that Srivijaya had by this time enjoyed, both at the port and state levels.

At the port level, Srivijaya benefited greatly from its donations to Guangzhou. Srivijaya’s temple restoration process represented a sustained effort to court the Guangzhou administration, whose commercial favours it was seeking to gain or retain. This sustained pursuit of patronage mirrors Srivijaya’s earlier efforts in the building of the religious centres at Nagapattinam in Chola South India in the first two decades of the eleventh century, an effort that lasted for several years and spanned the reigns of several Srivijayan kings⁶⁷. While Srivijaya secured preferential treatment for its commercial interests at the Chinese ports as a result of the success of its overtures to the imperial court, its overtures in

⁶⁶ WXTK 332:2610,3.

⁶⁷ Coedès (1918).

Guangzhou, which included long-term commitments that lasted well beyond the completion of the restoration projects to include the financial support for the religious institutions, would have enabled it to establish a significant presence at the port city. Social links both with the port administrators and the Chinese merchants established at Guangzhou, would have been secured and reinforced, and through this Srivijaya's commercial interests, its ultimate concern, would have been furthered.

Srivijaya's presence in Guangzhou was given a further boost in 1079, when the assistant envoys of the 1078 Srivijayan trade mission were appointed as Commandants, a title that was conferred on the ruling chiefs of minority ethnic groups resident within China's borders. In the context of China's port cities, this title was normally accompanied by the appointment of the title recipient as Foreign Headman⁶⁸. The conferring of the titles of Commandant upon the Srivijayan envoys was apparently a move made by the Song court in recognition of the increasing importance of maritime trade as a source of state revenue. More importantly, the court recognized the increasing volume of trade that was taking place between China, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral from the 1070s onwards. This can be seen from the resumption of tribute missions to the Song court by states such as Srivijaya, Chola South India and Tianzhu (north India) from 1072 onwards. Prior to 1079, there appears to have been only one Foreign Headman at the port city. The post was held by an Arab, and the title of Commandant was conferred on this person only sometime between 1054 and 1063. The 1079 appointment appears to have been the first time that more than one Foreign Headman was maintained by the Superintendency of Guangzhou, suggesting that the size and ethnic diversity of the foreign population, at least at Guangzhou, had grown substantially in the late eleventh century. Srivijaya and other Malay-speaking merchants would have constituted one group, with the Arabs continuing to head another.

⁶⁸ Hucker (1985: 301).

Hence, by 1079, Srivijaya had gained a foothold in the administration of Guangzhou. This foothold was reaffirmed in 1082 and again in 1083 by the grant of the title of Commandant to four more Srivijayan tribute mission officials⁶⁹. The impact that the acquisition of the post of Foreign Headman and the title of Commandant had on Srivijaya's commercial interests in Guangzhou must have been significant, and the Srivijayan king appears to have supplemented his officials' links to the port administration with his own appointment of a ship captain as his charge-d'affaires at Guangzhou to handle matters pertaining to his state⁷⁰. This post, mentioned in the Chinese texts in reference to the 1082 submission of tribute items by a Srivijayan princess, must already have been in existence for some time prior to 1082. Together, the two positions provided Srivijaya with lines of communication between the Srivijayan ruler, his representatives stationed in Guangzhou and the Chinese administration, which would have been used to facilitate Srivijaya's commercial activities.

In the last decade of the eleventh century, however, there was a perceptible change in the overall pattern of tribute missions dispatched by Srivijaya. By this time, there was a move away from the pattern established in the early decades of the eleventh century of predominantly diplomatic missions that were dispatched at intervals of several years, and a return to the pattern established in the tenth century, in which trade missions, forming a larger portion of the total missions, were dispatched in rapid succession. This, and the lack of details concerning the tribute and the absence of any ceremonial treatment accorded to the mission envoys, suggests that the missions in the 1090s were commercial in nature. This change in pattern may have followed the succession of a new Srivijayan king, or was possibly a response to increased competition from other states such as Chola South India. It is also possible that Srivijaya was advertising itself as the preferred port of call to Chinese traders who were by this time beginning to arrive in Southeast Asia in increasing numbers following the 1090 liberalization of Chinese shipping.

⁶⁹ SS 489:14090.

⁷⁰ SHY ZG 44:6b & SS 489:14090.

After 1095, no Srivijayan tribute mission was received by China until 1137. The forty-two year lull in Srivijayan tribute missions took place within the context of two periods of lulls involving all the foreign trading partners that had hitherto dispatched tribute missions to China on a regular basis. The first lull, which occurred between 1096 and 1104, was a general phenomenon involving all of China's trading partners who had sent missions to China on a regular basis from the 1070s, namely Tonkin, Champa, the Arabs, and Srivijaya. The absence of any indication of political turmoil or economic oppression at the Chinese ports suggests that these states were probably enjoying favourable trading conditions at these ports. Rather, there appears to have been a consensus amongst China's trading partners that there was no need to continue frequent dispatches of tribute missions to the Song court as long as favourable conditions prevailed both within and outside of China. The 1090 liberalization of Chinese shipping, which led to the establishment of direct commercial dealings by Chinese traders with Southeast Asian ports, must have had an immediate impact on China's trade with Southeast Asia. In 1105, a further decree was issued, which enhanced the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies' management of foreign ships that were calling at China's coastal ports⁷¹, suggesting that the number of foreign ships arriving at the Chinese ports annually had increased sufficiently to warrant the administrative changes. The foreign population at key Chinese ports that serviced the trade from Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral was clearly not on the ebb. In particular, the prosperity of the foreign population of Guangzhou in the early years of the twelfth century is attested to by the PZKT⁷². All these indicate that foreign maritime trade activities in China did not decline during the lull in diplomatic missions around the turn of the twelfth century.

Srivijaya continued to hold the position of Foreign Headman in Guangzhou during the twelfth century. According to the PZKT, a Chinese member of the officialdom organized a

⁷¹ SHY ZG 44:9a.

⁷² PZKT 2:4b-5a.

religious gathering at Guangzhou during this time. The invitation of a Srivijayan Buddhist ascetic by the Foreign Headman of Guangzhou for the event suggests that this Foreign Headman was a Srivijayan representative⁷³. This also suggests that Srivijayans still remained one of the key groups of foreign traders at Guangzhou in the early twelfth century.

These favourable conditions at the Chinese ports enabled Srivijaya to become, by the beginning of the twelfth century, Guangzhou's most highly regarded trading partner, in particular as a key supplier of camphor, sandalwood incense and frankincense⁷⁴, and as the main entrepôt at which merchant ships and products from the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East met those from China and Southeast Asia⁷⁵. Although Srivijaya's diplomatic relationship with China appears to have reached a plateau by the 1080s, its favourable position in Guangzhou was maintained and later further enhanced during the twelfth century.

The short lull in tribute missions at the turn of the twelfth century was eventually overtaken by a general lull in tribute missions from 1117 onwards, following a resumption of tribute missions from Champa, Tonkin, Java and the Arabs, in 1104, 1107, 1109 and 1116, respectively⁷⁶. Unlike previous lulls, this decline in tribute relations appears to have had a serious effect on the Northern Song court, resulting in the issuing of a decree in 1123 ordering foreign states to dispatch tribute to the court⁷⁷. Although the decree was addressed to the Southeast Asian states and those of the Middle East and Indian Ocean littoral, it appears that the Northern Song court did not dispatch any missions beyond its borders to convey this decree to the states in question, unlike in 987. Presumably, the decree was made known to the representatives of these states who were resident at the Chinese ports. These representatives in turn would have transmitted the decree to their respective states.

⁷³ PZKT 2:6b-7a.

⁷⁴ PZKT 2:5a-2.5b.

⁷⁵ PZKT 2:5a-2.5b.

⁷⁶ Wong (1979: 3, 10, 15 & 19).

⁷⁷ SHY ZG 44:11a-11b.

It is interesting to note that the decree of 1123 contained no mention of any drastic decline in shipping activities in the Chinese ports accompanying the lull in tribute missions, unlike the decree that had been issued a century earlier in 1028, which had clearly been a response to a stagnation in trade⁷⁸. In fact, the foreign population, which had been growing in size and ethnic diversity during the late eleventh century, had by the early twelfth century, apparently increased its presence in the Chinese port cities through prolonged sojourns. This is indicated by the decree passed in 1114, declaring that the assets of any foreign household established in China for more than four generations at the time when they were left without any successors would be absorbed and administered by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency⁷⁹. The substantial size of the foreign population in the Chinese port cities in the early twelfth century suggests that there was no dramatic decline in foreign mercantile shipping activities or trade in foreign products at the Chinese ports.

	1101- 1110	1111- 1120	1121- 1126
Jiaozhi (Tonkin)	1	0	0
Champa	3	0	0
Khmer Cambodia	0	2	0
Srivijaya	0	0	0
Java	1	0	0
Dashi (Arabs)	0	1	0
Total	5	3	0

Table 6.3: Frequency of tribute missions from six major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states in the early twelfth century.

The 1123 decree appears to have addressed the absence of diplomatic exchanges, rather than trade missions. This sudden concern with diplomatic missions was probably the result of the political pressures within China itself, in response to military problems experienced by China from the Jurchens in the north. The financial pressures of the conflict with the Jurchens had already led, in 1106, to a return to the former regulation naming Guangzhou as the only place from which ships could set sail beyond China, so as to stem the loss of

⁷⁸ SHY ZG 44:4b-5a & ZG 44:11a-11b.

⁷⁹ SHY ZG 44:9b-10a.

revenue as a result of corruption at the coastal ports⁸⁰. The fact that foreign tribute missions had continued to arrive for another ten years after 1106 indicates that diplomatic exchanges between China and its trading partners, in particular, Java, Champa, Tonkin and the Arabs, continued to take place. The issuance of the 1123 decree appears to have been an attempt on the part of the Northern Song court to bolster its political legitimacy as the rightful ruling dynasty in China through the concept of virtue (de; 德), whereby the virtue of the Son of Heaven's rule would naturally attract the vassalage of border and foreign states to himself, thereby serving as a manifestation of the spiritual legitimacy of the dynasty. The dispatch of tribute missions to the Northern Song court by foreign states would have served to highlight the point that the court still retained this authority.

The decree was apparently ignored by China's trading partners and their representatives at the Chinese ports⁸¹. This suggests that these local representatives, who were constantly attuned to the political and administrative changes that were taking place in China, kept the rulers of their states updated on the events in China, and that by 1117 a wait-and-see attitude had been adopted in their diplomatic relations with the Northern Song court. The ineffectiveness of the 1123 decree suggests that the court was too overwhelmed by its political problems for these states to desire to continue diplomatic exchanges with that court. It was not until 1137, a decade after the establishment of the Southern Song court at Hangzhou, that Srivijayan tribute missions to the Chinese court resumed.

6.2.3 Patterns of Diplomatic and Economic Contact during the Southern Song Period

⁸⁰ SHY ZG 44:9a.

⁸¹ SHY ZG 44:11a-11b.

The Southern Song court, when it was established at Hangzhou in 1127, initially discouraged foreign trade. However, the new Song court's swift recognition of the importance of maritime trade to China led to the re-establishment in 1128 of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies of Liangzhe and Fujian (Quanzhou)⁸². Guangzhou's Superintendency was re-established in 1130⁸³. This marked the beginning of a continuous policy of reorganizing the administration of maritime trade, which lasted for about forty years. By the 1160s, the reorganization of mercantile shipping regulations was largely completed, and China's maritime trade climate and administration remained largely the same from then until the end of the Southern Song period in 1278. The restructuring sparked a sustained increase in maritime trade activities at the Chinese ports that continued through the course of the twelfth century, reflected in the growth in revenue collected by the Song administration from maritime trade.

Srivijaya was a key contributor to this sustained growth in trade during the twelfth century. Srivijayan tribute missions to China resumed in 1137, after a forty-two year lull. Three missions were dispatched during the Southern Song period, in 1137⁸⁴, 1156⁸⁵ and 1178⁸⁶.

⁸² SHY ZG 44:12a-12b.

⁸³ WXTK 62:563,1.

⁸⁴ WXTK 332:2610,3. The tribute presented comprised pearls, elephant tusks, ambergris, coral and aromatics. The reciprocal gifts consisted of a saddled horse, ceremonial clothes, a belt, and silverware vase. The Srivijayan king was also granted an honorary title. The place where the tribute was presented has not been recorded.

⁸⁵ SS 489:14090 & SHY FY 7:28a. The tribute presented comprised one piece of ambergris weighing thirty-six *jin*, 113 *liang* of pearls, one coral tree weighing 240 *liang*, eight rhinoceros horns, three plum blossom camphor, 200 *liang* of plum-blossom camphor planks, 39 pieces of glassware, 39 diamond, cat's eye and green agate rings, 13 large pearls, civet, 28 bolts of foreign textiles, sugar in four Arabian glass bottles, 168 *jin* of rose water, nine long jeweled steel swords, six short steel swords, 81680 *jin* of frankincense, 87 elephant tusks weighing 4065 *jin*, liquid storax, 278 *jin* of patchouli, 117 *jin* of cloves, 30 *jin* of dragon's blood, 58 *jin* of asafoetida, 127 *jin* of nutmeg, 2674 *jin* of pepper, 10750 *jin* of sandalwood incense and 19935 *jin* of 'jian' gharuwood incense. The mission was received by the Song court. The title of Commandant Who Instructs Loyalty was conferred upon the chief envoy, while the two assistant envoys were also granted the title of Commandant. A cash payment equivalent to the value of the tribute presented was also paid to the mission envoys.

⁸⁶ SHY FY 7:55b-56a & WXTK 332:2610,3. The tribute presented comprised 81.7 *liang* of pearls, four plum-blossom camphor planks weighing 14 *jin*, 23 *liang* of ambergris, one box containing 40 *liang* of coral, 189 pieces of glassware, 10 Guanyin bottles, 4 green glass bottles, 6 green-lipped glass bottles, 5 glass bottles with narrow and wide lips, 2 round glass bottles, 2 glass mouth bottles, 4 clear glass bottles, 42 glass bottles, 8 shallow trays, 3 square trays, 38 round trays, 1 long tray, 2 dishes, 2 clear glass bottles with gold inlay, one set of lidded wine cups with gold inlay, 1 water bottle with gold inlay, 3 wine vessels, 2 small wine vessels, 1 incense burner, 22 small and large jars,

All three missions carried tribute consisting of high value items, indicating that they were trade missions, and not diplomatic ones. The 1156 and 1178 missions, which brought with them large quantities of goods, were similar to the trade missions that had been dispatched during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The 1156 mission was rewarded with cash of the exact value of the products presented, indicating that China recognized Srivijaya's intention and reciprocated accordingly. These missions would not have been the only shipments of products dispatched by Srivijaya to China during the twelfth century. Srivijayan ships probably plied the maritime route from the Malaccan Straits to South China on an annual basis, as they had been doing for the previous century or so. In addition, Srivijaya's request in 1146, via the Guangzhou Mercantile Shipping Superintendency, that the import duty on frankincense and a number of Maritime Southeast Asian products be reduced from 40% to 10%, indicates that it was still actively transshipping high value foreign products to China in the 1140s.

Ironically, it is against the backdrop of increasing coherence on the part of the administration of maritime trade from the 1130s onwards that a decline in Srivijaya's diplomatic stature in the eyes of the Southern Song court appears to have occurred. The request from the Srivijayan king in 1137 that his envoys be accorded the same ceremonial treatment as that which the Southern Song court had accorded the Arab envoys, by using the same type of paper to record the list of reciprocal gifts⁸⁷, reveals several features of the diplomatic relationship between Srivijaya and the Southern Song court that had developed by 1137. Firstly, this was the first time that such a request had been made by a Srivijayan king, suggesting that prior to this, the issue of ceremony had either not been considered to

33 small and large pots, 4 small and large dishes, 2 small and large sunflower dishes, foreign sugar, foreign dates in 3 glass bottles weighing 8 *jin*, gardenia flowers, 4 glass bottles weighing 180 *liang*, 60 elephant tusks weighing 2109 *jin*, 1550 *jin* of pepper, 85 *jin* of a mixture of "jian" and "su" gharuwood incense, 3009 *jin* of rose water, 80 *jin* of nutmeg, 230 *jin* of asafoetida, 280 *jin* of myrrh, 210 *jin* of benzoin, 150 *jin* of turtle shells, 85 *jin* of putchuck, 1570 *jin* of sandalwood incense, 11 cat's eyes and 15 foreign swords. The mission was received at Quanzhou. The reciprocal gift was not recorded.

⁸⁷ WXTK 332:2610,3.

be as important as it clearly was in 1137, or that Srivijayan envoys were no longer the recipients of ceremonial accord similar to that received by the Arab envoys, as they had been in the past. From the detailed records of the reception and rewards bestowed upon Srivijayan envoys through the course of the eleventh century, the latter appears to be the more plausible reason.

The privileged treatment of Srivijaya's missions during the eleventh century had taken place during a period when the Song court lacked non-commercial incentives for state-level interaction with the states of Southeast Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean littoral. Thus, trade had been, by default, the basis upon which diplomatic intercourse was conducted. This had already been evident in 1016, when the Song court ranked states according to their commercial potential and contributions to China's import-export economy. Srivijaya's rationale for conducting tribute relations with China, both as a means of trade and as a means of promoting its commercial functions, had been aligned with Chinese interests. Srivijaya had thus benefited greatly from the dispatch of tribute missions to China.

However, with the internal political situation of China looking increasingly desperate for the Northern Song court at the beginning of the twelfth century, tribute missions had taken on a new importance to the court as a means of establishing recognition of its imperial virtue. This new rationale remained in place with the establishment of the Southern Song court at Hangzhou in 1127. The establishment of diplomatic commandaries in 1130 by the new Song court as a permanent means of conducting its diplomatic relations with first-tier foreign states changed the way in which the court conducted its foreign affairs. During the Southern Song period, tribute missions remained a means of diplomatic exchange, but only for second-tier states that were exhibiting their admiration for the Song court's imperial

virtue⁸⁸. The Southern Song court's reorganization of its foreign policy and means of conducting diplomatic exchanges was part of a larger effort to separate its diplomatic and commercial relations with foreign states.

It was in this changed diplomatic context that Srivijaya's first tribute mission to the Southern Song court arrived in 1137. The absence of any evidence indicating that Srivijaya had been suffering from an internal or regional conflict prior to 1137 suggests that the mission was dispatched in response to the 1133 partial lifting of the ban on the trade of foreign products imposed in 1127. This mirrors the dispatch by Srivijaya of tribute missions in 987 and 1028, both of which were also in response to decrees that indicated the Song court's renewal of interest in maritime trade. Srivijaya's rationale for conducting tributary relations with China at the beginning of the Southern Song period was still completely governed by trade, and there was no fundamental shift in its policy towards China from that which it had adopted in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

There was some ambivalence on the part of the Southern Song court towards the 1137 mission. The tribute, which was eventually presented to the imperial court by the State Councilor for foreign affairs, instead of the envoys themselves, was probably received at Guangzhou. The Mercantile Shipping Superintendency appears to have regarded this occasion as a trade mission, and not a diplomatic one. Nonetheless, the nature of the gifts that the Southern Song court made in return indicates that, in the end, the mission was still treated with significant regard, revealing that the court was eager at this time to re-establish diplomatic relations with Srivijaya. However, the treatment of Srivijaya's missions by the Southern Song court was already downgraded to a degree, indicating that the renewed relations would not be on the elevated footing that Srivijaya had enjoyed in the late eleventh century. The fact that a diplomatic commandary was not established for Srivijaya in 1130 suggests that it was no longer considered to be one of the top-level states with which the

⁸⁸ SS 489:18a.

Song court felt that it needed to maintain permanent diplomatic relations. The Srivijayan ruler appears to have felt this reduction in status acutely⁸⁹.

In 1156, when Srivijaya dispatched a rich tribute mission carrying large quantities of trade products, the Southern Song court again departed from the Northern Song court's practice of treating diplomatic and commercial relationships as essentially one and the same. The Southern Song emperor's response to the mission was that only the admiration of the imperial culture by foreign states was to be praised, and therefore rewarded and encouraged, while the dispatch of foreign products to the court was not⁹⁰. State-level overtures, as far as the emperor was concerned, were to be purely diplomatic in purpose, and not to include any commercial implications, or functions.

States such as Srivijaya and Champa, which had used their diplomatic relations with China for commercial ends, declined on the diplomatic front in this altered diplomatic climate. By the 1160s, Srivijaya had still not regained the title of favored vassal that it had enjoyed prior to the Southern Song period. In 1168, possibly at Srivijaya's instigation, an imperial advisor requested that the court confer the title of "Favored Vassal" upon Srivijaya again. Although this request was eventually granted, the conferment ceremony and the accompanying presentation of ceremonial gifts were not carried out at the capital in Hangzhou⁹¹, suggesting that it was not a diplomatically important issue for the Southern Song court. The event did not reflect a rise in Srivijaya's status in the court. Diplomatically, Srivijaya was no longer as important an entity to China as it had been in the late eleventh century.

In 1178, Srivijaya's mission, which brought with it large quantities of high-value trade products, was stopped from proceeding to the capital and redirected to Quanzhou, even

⁸⁹ WXTK 332:2610,3.

⁹⁰ SS, 489:18a "The emperor said, 'Distant people regard [our] culture with admiration, only this is to be praised, [and] not the benefit of attracting produce of the land.'"

⁹¹ WXTK 332:2610,3.

though it had already embarked on its journey from the port of Guangzhou to the capital. The manner in which the mission was subsequently dealt with at Quanzhou, which was in accordance to instructions issued by the imperial court, was entirely in accordance to the mercantile shipping regulations, with no ceremonial treatment whatsoever accorded.

This may explain why the 1178 mission was the last diplomatic tribute mission dispatched by Srivijaya to China during the Southern Song period. Since diplomatic overtures had ceased to be necessary for commercial success in the changed political and commercial climate of the Southern Song period, Srivijaya no longer felt tribute missions to be necessary. The missions it sent were mainly commercial in nature. This was particularly so since its trade at the port of Guangzhou was already facilitated by the strong representation at the port that it had developed painstakingly from the second half of the eleventh century.

	1127- 1130	1131- 1140	1141- 1150	1151- 1160	1161- 1170	1171- 1180	1181- 1190	1191- 1200
Jiaozhi (Tonkin)	1	1	2	5	2	6	1	1
Srivijaya	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Champa	1	1	0	1	3	1	0	0
Khmer Cambodia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Java	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dashi (Arabs)	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	4	7	2	7	6	8	1	1

Table 6.4: Frequency of tribute missions from six major Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean states between the founding of the Southern Song court and the end of the twelfth century.

Although Srivijaya's diplomatic standing declined in the twelfth century, the increase in its status and influence at the port level continued during this period. This was most evident at Guangzhou, where, in 1156, the Srivijayan Foreign headman was appointed Foreign Official⁹². This position was the highest official position at a Chinese port attainable by a foreigner. The 1156 appointment, which included the transfer of five officials to assist the newly appointed Srivijayan Foreign Official, suggests that greater administrative responsibilities were at this point given to the Srivijayan official to facilitate the flow of

⁹² SHY FY 7:48b.

international trade at Guangzhou, which came largely from Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral.

Srivijaya's commercial influence extended beyond the administration of port activities, to affect the shaping of mercantile shipping regulations. In matters pertaining to trade, it had access to the State Councilor in charge of China's foreign affairs, who relayed the administrative dealings with Srivijaya and the requests made by it to the Southern Song court. Srivijaya's enjoyment of this special access was unique amongst China's trade partners. Presumably, Srivijaya's trade with China was predominantly conducted under the auspices of its ruler⁹³, and in this respect, its conduct of trade was different from that of China's other major trading partners, such as the Arabs, Java, Japan and Korea, which was dependent on individuals and private commercial organizations, with little or no direct involvement of the political center. Thus, commercial dealings with Srivijaya were still regarded by the Southern Song court as intercourse between states, and appropriate attention and official access was made available accordingly. This state of affairs is evident by the 1140s. In 1144, when the duty on fine quality products was raised to 40%, the foreign traders complained to the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency, to no apparent avail⁹⁴. However, in 1146, when Srivijaya voiced concern over its losses in the frankincense trade as a result of the raised duty rate, an enquiry was immediately set up to investigate the matter, and the rate was reduced the following year to 10%⁹⁵. No other trading partner of China is recorded as having been as effective as Srivijaya in affecting the mercantile shipping regulations at the Chinese ports. This reflected Srivijaya's continued status as a very important trading partner of China.

Srivijaya's importance as a key player in China's maritime trade is attested to by the nature of the tribute dispatched to the Southern Song court in 1156 and 1178. Almost all of the

⁹³ PZKT 2:5a-5b.

⁹⁴ WXTK 20:201,3.

⁹⁵ SHY ZG 44:24b-25a.

products presented as tribute were fine category, or high value, goods from the Middle East, India and Southeast Asia. The exceptions were pepper, sandalwood incense and foreign textiles, which were classified by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency as low value products for customs taxation purposes⁹⁶. All the products were presented in large quantities. It thus appears that, during the twelfth century, Srivijaya continued to have full access to all types of products from all the regions that were participants in international maritime trade. In particular, its role as a major supplier to China of frankincense, the most important incense for the court in terms of revenue generation, continued well into the twelfth century. In addition, Srivijaya had by this time become a major supplier of pepper, camphor and sandalwood incense to China, products which had become staples in China's maritime trade and were absorbed by the Chinese market in great quantities. This is affirmed by Zhou Qufei, who noted in the LWDD that Srivijaya possessed the commodity wealth of the other trading regions because of its naval prowess along the Malacca Straits and its success in forcing almost all trading ships that used the Malacca Straits to call at its chief port (by this time at Muara Jambi), thus effectively making this port the entrepôt of the international maritime trade⁹⁷. Its rank amongst the states in the Indian Ocean littoral and Southeast Asia, based on its access to trade products, even though it produced few products of its own, was regarded by the Chinese administration at that time as third, after the Arabs and Java⁹⁸.

Chinese textual information pertaining to Srivijaya's trade with China is confined to the tenth to twelfth centuries. While Srivijaya was still rated as the third most prosperous trading partner of China in the Indian Ocean littoral and Southeast Asian region in 1178⁹⁹, the increase in the import of Southeast Asian products through Chinese maritime shipping

⁹⁶ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

⁹⁷ Tu (1996: 42 & 69).

⁹⁸ Tu (1996: 69).

⁹⁹ Tu (1996: 70).

from the end of the eleventh century onwards had begun to challenge Srivijaya's role in the China-Malacca Straits region trade.

Increasing trade in low value products from the Malacca Straits region is evident by as early as the twelfth century. In 1136, an edict was issued announcing that official titles would be conferred upon individual traders, both Chinese and foreign, who managed to import goods valued at fifty thousand strings of cash¹⁰⁰. This move appears to have been intended for foreign traders who conducted their trade with China in private or individual capacities. However, the record notes only one Arab trader and a Chinese trader¹⁰¹ as having received such rewards. The absence of any mention of Southeast Asian traders as beneficiaries of this policy suggests that apart from state-sponsored trade, the participation of private traders from Southeast Asia in China's maritime trade, including those from the Malacca Straits region, was not dominated by those with very large commercial operations. The trade coming from the Malacca Straits region presumably continued to be largely state-sponsored, conducted largely by Srivijaya.

By the early thirteenth century, however, Srivijaya's grip on the Malacca Straits region was loosening. Such minor Malay region ports as Ganpei (Kompei), Pengfeng (Pahang) and Foluo'an (Kuala Beranang) had apparently already established direct trading relations with Quanzhou¹⁰². These small port-polities of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula could not replace Srivijaya as a transshipper of Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern goods, but they did export such low value products as putchuck¹⁰³.

¹⁰⁰ SS 185:32a.

¹⁰¹ The Arab trader Luoxing, who appears to have traded in China in an individual capacity, and the Chinese trader Cai Jingfang, are noted in the SS as two persons who received official rank for their contributions to China's import trade. SS 185:32a.

¹⁰² YLMC 5:88. See Fig. 1.2.

¹⁰³ YLMC 5:88. For information on this product, refer to Chapter 2, footnote 67.

There is no evidence that the contact established by these port-states was initiated and maintained solely at the state-level. The absence of any textual record of tribute missions dispatched by these polities to the Chinese court during the Southern Song period suggests that state-level involvement in the trade that they developed with China was probably minimal. Foreign participation in China's maritime trade was thus no longer confined to a few important trading partners, but included an increasing number of minor partners as well, reflecting the broad-based nature of the trade between China and Southeast Asia that had developed by the early thirteenth century. This development was to continue into the fourteenth century, culminating in a trade characterized by the participation of numerous small ports, almost in complete replacement of key regional ports.

6.2.4 Diplomatic Relations between the Malacca Straits Region and China during the Yuan period

In 1275, the sack of Jambi (at the Muara Jambi site), the Srivijayan capital, by Singhasari in East Java appears to have precipitated the final break-up of the thalassocracy of Srivijaya, leading to the rise of autonomous port-polities in the Malacca Straits region, and thus to a change in the context of maritime trade in the region. In 1280, a year after the Yuan dynasty had consolidated its control over Southern China, diplomatic relations between the Malacca Straits region and China were resumed. In that year, the Yuan envoy who was sent to demand the dispatch of an envoy from Kollam on the west coast of India, stopped at Samudra in northeast Sumatra on his outward journey. The ruler of Samudra seized the occasion to accept vassal status under the Yuan, and dispatched envoys to the court as a sign of this acceptance. The envoys arrived in China in 1282, and were received by the Yuan court¹⁰⁴. Details of the tribute and the reciprocal gifts are not recorded. In 1284, in response to the command of the Governor of Fujian, envoys from the Sumatran port-states of Lambri,

¹⁰⁴ YS 12:8a-9b.

Perlak, Lilun and Deli brought letters from their rulers and articles of tribute¹⁰⁵. Details of the tribute and the reciprocal gifts are not recorded. In 1286, at the order of the Yuan official Yaitingbi, the states of Lambri, Tamiang, Samudra, Lailai and Jilanyidai dispatched envoys to present tribute of “produce of the land”¹⁰⁶. Finally, in 1292, one of the generals leading the Mongol naval expedition against Java dispatched two officers on a diplomatic mission to Lambri, Samudra, Budubudu and Balala in the Malacca Straits while the fleet was still off the coast of Champa. In response to this mission, all four places sent tribute missions to the Yuan court that same year¹⁰⁷.

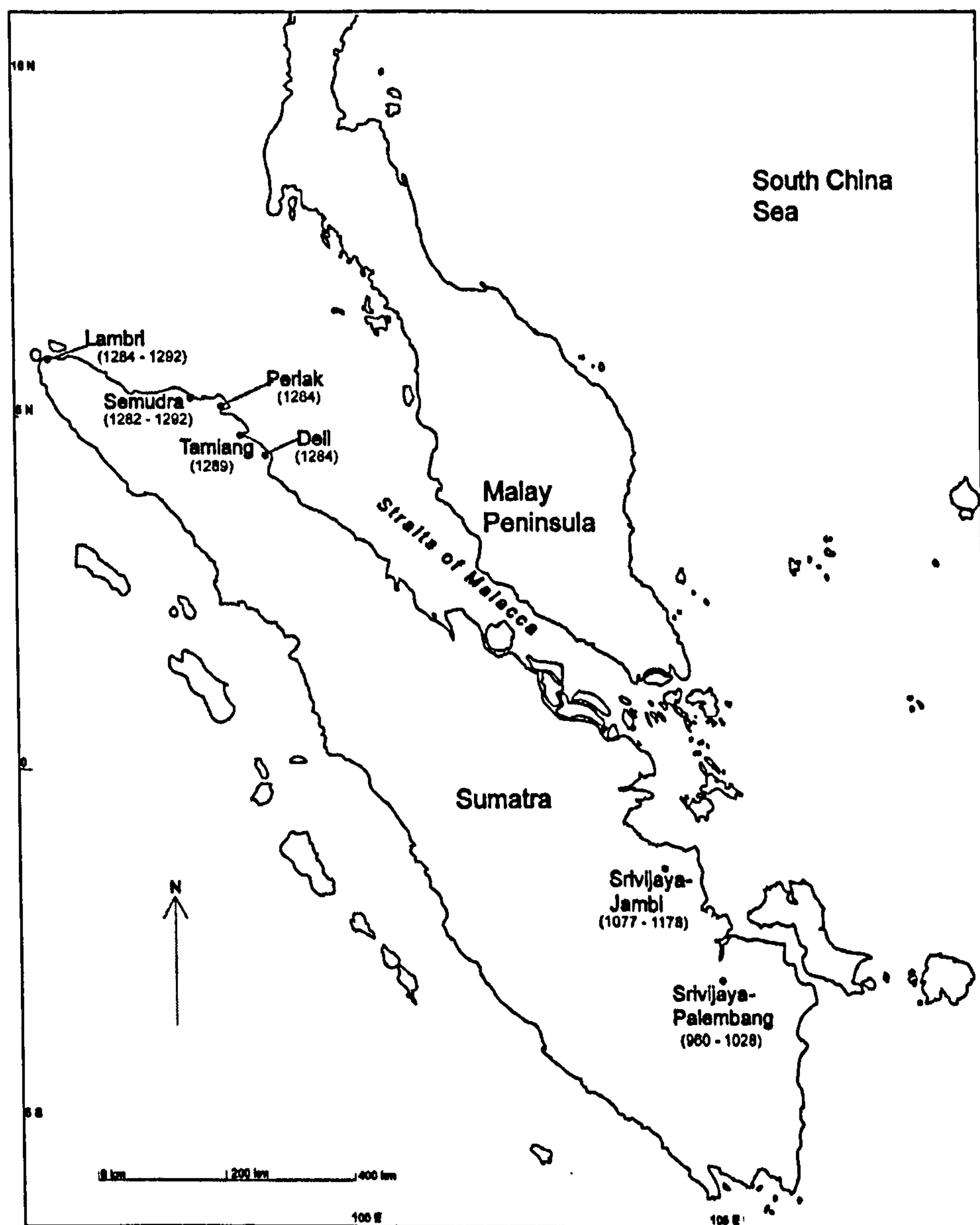


Fig. 6.1: Port-polities in the Malacca Straits region that maintained diplomatic relations with China during the Song and Yuan periods.

¹⁰⁵ YS 13:10a.

¹⁰⁶ YS 210:4670.

¹⁰⁷ YS 131:20b.

The Yuan period witnessed the continued decline in the diplomatic importance of the Malacca Straits region to China, a decline that had begun early in the Southern Song period. Unlike the Malabar coast of India and Java, which dispatched diplomatic missions shortly after the Yuan dynastic rule was established in South China, the Malacca Straits region states' missions were not forthcoming until 1282. The 1278 declaration by Yuan officials at the coastal ports that Yuan China was open for maritime trade was responded to by Java and Kollam at the state level. This did not appear to have been the case of the Malacca Straits region port-states that had succeeded Srivijaya, even though their traders and representatives would have been present in the Chinese ports at this time as well. This stands in contrast to the Srivijayan mission that had been dispatched to the Northern Song court in the first year of its inauguration in 960. The small competing Malacca Straits region polities of the late thirteenth century appear to have lacked both strategy and leadership in their conduct of diplomatic relations with Yuan China. Local infighting may also have led to instability in the Straits region for some time following the fall of Srivijaya.

The lack of a prompt state-level response from the port-states in the Malacca Straits appears to have been due in part to the encroachment of the Javanese and Siamese in the region. The 1275 sacking of Jambi resulted in a lack of coordinated regional response to the change of dynastic order in China in 1278, unlike in 960, when Srivijaya was entering its political prime. Samudra was apparently the only polity in the Malacca Straits in a position to respond to the Yuan court, when a diplomatic response was desired, by accepting feudatory status under the Yuan court in 1280. Samudra, at the northern end of Sumatra, was well placed to try to replace Srivijaya's capital as the main entrepôt handling trade between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.

Aside from Samudra's tentative overtures, there is no evidence of a pro-active diplomatic policy on the part of the Malacca Straits region port-polities towards Yuan China. Apart from Samudra's mission to China in 1282, only three sets of missions were sent from the

Straits to China during the Yuan period: once in 1284, when letters and articles of tribute were sent to the Yuan court¹⁰⁸, again in 1286, when royal personages were sent with letters by the rulers of the region to the Yuan emperor¹⁰⁹, and finally in 1292 in response to the request of an official from the Yuan invasion fleet to Java that tribute be presented to the Yuan court¹¹⁰. These three spates of missions, which were dispatched together by the Malacca Straits polities, were in response to the demands of Yuan officials, and not to the polities' initiative.

The 1284 missions were sent in response to the order of the Governor of Fujian that tribute was to be dispatched to the Yuan court. It is apparent that Lambri, Perlak, Lilun and Deli were economically linked to the maritime trade based in Fujian and that their traders conducted business at Quanzhou port. The Fujian Governor's order was probably made locally in Fujian, and the consequent presentation of letters and tribute by the four polities, which took place in the same year, was probably made by their respective representatives resident in Quanzhou. This incident suggests that the maintenance of diplomatic relations at the provincial level by polities that desired to continue their trade relations with the coastal ports of China was viewed by the Yuan provincial administrations as important.

This economic focus of the diplomatic relations is emphasized by the dispatch of missions to the Yuan court in 1286 by Lambri, Tamiang, Samudra, Lailai and Jilanyidai in response to the 1285 Yuan mission to Malabar, which stopped at these ports en-route to its final destination. The substantial sum of money carried by the Yuan mission for the purpose of trade and special purchases must have attracted the attention of these port-polities, thereby prompting a swift response to the request that tribute missions be dispatched to China¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁸ YS 13:10a.

¹⁰⁹ YS 13:20b-14:1a.

¹¹⁰ YS 131:20b.

¹¹¹ YS 13:10a, 13:18a.

The missions that were sent by the Malacca Straits port-polities were not regarded by the Yuan court as being of the same level as those from Java, or from Malabar and Kollam on the west coast of India. The lack of ceremony on the part of the envoys of Samudra in 1282 was noted by the Yuan court, which commented that the envoys did not present any memorial to the emperor¹¹². The 1284, 1286 and 1292 missions appear to have been better received because of the presentation of letters, which were deemed important by the Yuan court when receiving diplomatic missions. Tribute missions and diplomatic intercourse were not viewed by the Yuan court as a means of furthering commercial exchanges, but solely as a means of bolstering the political legitimacy of the dynastic rule. It is thus clear that from the outset, the Yuan court's policy towards Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral was a continuation of the foreign policy of the Southern Song court.

This policy is reflected in the Yuan court's keen desire to establish sovereign-vassal relations with Kollam, Malabar and Java, the three most important polities of Maritime Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral at that time. To that end, a number of Yuan envoys were sent to Kollam, Malabar and Java during the first thirty years of the Yuan period. Between 1280 and 1344, four missions were dispatched by the Yuan court to Kollam, four to Malabar and five to Java¹¹³. In response, Malabar dispatched a total of ten missions to China between 1279 and 1314, initiating the series of diplomatic exchanges that lasted for approximately thirty-five years¹¹⁴. Java dispatched a total of eleven missions to the Yuan court between 1280 and 1332, also initiating the diplomatic interaction between itself and the Yuan court¹¹⁵. Kollam dispatched only two missions, one in 1282 and another in 1287¹¹⁶.

¹¹² YS 12:8a-9b.

¹¹³ Rockhill (1914: 428-447).

¹¹⁴ Rockhill (1914: 428-444).

¹¹⁵ Rockhill (1914: 444-447).

¹¹⁶ YS 12:8a-9b & YS 14:13b.

There were, however, exceptions to this late thirteenth century pattern of missions. In 1281, 1299 and 1301 Jambi, the erstwhile capital of Srivijaya, dispatched diplomatic missions to the Yuan court on its own initiative, a mission also having been dispatched in 1293 at the demand of the Yuan court. It is apparent that Jambi, drawing on the Srivijayan tradition of maintaining tributary relations with China for purposes of political and economic benefit, regarded the change in the dynastic rule in China as an opportunity to renew political and economic ties with China. This move may have been of importance for its survival as a regional power in the Malacca Straits following the sacking of its capital by Singhasari in 1275¹¹⁷, and the dispatch of successive missions in 1299 and 1301 may be an indication of this urgency. The lack of response from the Yuan court towards Jambi's overtures indicates that the port was not successful in achieving its goal of being recognized as the representative of the Malacca Straits region. Nonetheless, it was still regarded by the Chinese port officials as the main port-polity of this region. This was particularly the case in Guangzhou, which had been the commercial stronghold of the Malay traders since the beginning of the tenth century.

It is clear that unlike the Northern Song court, the Yuan court did not regard tribute missions as channels of trade. The Yuan court favored direct and active trade with Maritime Southeast Asia over passive reception of Southeast Asian and other foreign traders. This preference can be inferred from the policies implemented, and the participation of the Ortaq clique in maritime trade, during the first fifty years of Yuan rule in South China. Diplomatic exchanges were predominantly politically motivated, with economic motives taking secondary place.

With the decline of Srivijaya's hold over the Malacca Straits, the geographical scope of operation of Chinese private traders expanded into the Indian Ocean. Chinese private traders appear to have taken over much of the role of shipping products from the ports of south and

¹¹⁷ Wolters (1970: 45).

east India to China, and vice versa, a role that the state of Srivijaya in the Malacca Straits region had previously played. This process is apparent when one considers the difference in information in the YLMC (1206), ZFZ (1226) and DYZL (circa 1349). The first two texts, reflecting the maritime trade in the early thirteenth century, note that Srivijaya continued to be the key port through which China's supply of frankincense was obtained, as it had since the advent of the Song period¹¹⁸. The third text, however, suggests that by the first half of the fourteenth century, frankincense was no longer one of the products carried to China from the Sumatran ports of Jambi or Palembang¹¹⁹. This is despite the fact that frankincense continued to be imported into Guangzhou during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries¹²⁰.

Since Java and Malabar were regarded by the Yuan court as first-tier states, acceptance of some form of feudatory status by these states bolstered the status and legitimacy of the Yuan dynastic rule. The last Yuan mission to Malabar was dispatched in 1296, and the last mission to Java was dispatched in 1308. Malabar dispatched its last mission to the Yuan court in 1314, while Java dispatched its last mission in 1332. It would appear that by the 1330s, the Yuan court no longer held the same political sway in Southeast Asia and the Bay of Bengal as it had at the end of the thirteenth century. China's political presence in these regions, and in the Malacca Straits in particular, was replaced by a Chinese commercial presence that linked the Straits region and the Southern coastal ports of Guangdong, Fujian, and to a lesser degree Jiangsu and Zhejiang, through an active trade network.

6.3 Malacca Straits Traders in South China

¹¹⁸ So (1998: 303); Chen, Chen and Qian (2000: 46-47, 319).

¹¹⁹ Su (1981: 141, 187).

¹²⁰ DDNHZ 7:18a.

The commercial presence of foreigners in South China started well before the tenth century, following the establishment of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency at Guangzhou during the late Tang period¹²¹, and building on the trade that consequently developed at this port. Following the advent of Song rule in 960, foreign commercial presence quickly extended beyond Guangzhou. By the end of the tenth century, foreign traders had extended their commercial operations northwards along the Chinese coast. With the establishment of a Superintendency at Mingzhou some time between 990 and 994, a number of foreign traders, including those from such Maritime Southeast Asia polities as Java, appear to have begun to establish commercial links with Liangzhe province as well¹²².

Prior to 991, foreign traders had to conduct their trade with China through the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies. Song mercantile shipping regulations permitted foreign ships to call only at designated international ports. This limited foreign commercial activities, up until 1087, to the ports of Guangzhou and Dinghai. Access to the domestic Chinese market was thus virtually non-existent.

Nonetheless, from the outset, foreign traders had been keen to gain access to the domestic market, and to connect with the Chinese economy outside of the purview of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies. As early as the third decade of the eleventh century, small numbers of Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean littoral traders had been calling regularly at prefectures along the South Chinese coastline and trading directly with the local Chinese population and officials there. The coastal prefectures of Fujian, due to their location between the international ports of Guangzhou and Dinghai, were particularly active in this clandestine trade. Ports designated for domestic maritime trade, such as Zhongmen Harbor and Fuzhou, were used as illegal access points to these localized markets, with the foreign

¹²¹ SHY ZG 44:1a & b.

¹²² SHY ZG 44:1a & b.

merchant ships arriving at these harbors on an annual basis¹²³. The trade apparently involved both high and low value foreign products, since both relatively low value Chinese products such as silks and ceramics, and such high value items as gold, were used in these commercial exchanges¹²⁴. Coastal trade and access to at least the coastal economy of Fujian province had thus been established by foreign traders by the early eleventh century.

This illegal trade with coastal Fujian, which continued through the course of the eleventh century, apparently involved Maritime Southeast Asian traders. By the Shenzong Xining era (1068 – 1077), Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean littoral traders, including Srivijayan traders, were regularly arriving at the coastal prefectures of Fujian circuit, without first arriving at an international port to go through customs procedures¹²⁵. Contemporary accounts abound of Quanzhou harbor being visited by a fair number of foreign ships annually, of the ready availability of foreign products at the port-city of Quanzhou, and of the frequent participation of the port-city's officials in this illicit maritime trade¹²⁶.

While tax evasion may have been a likely motivating factor for this practice, an additional reason appears to have been the desire for access to the domestic market beyond the international ports. These traders were clearly not operating under the auspices of their polity's state-sponsored trade. In the case of traders from the Malacca Straits, those operating under the auspices of Srivijaya would have no need to proceed to any other location than Guangzhou, where Srivijaya's commercial presence was strong. While the domestic trade in foreign products had been gradually liberalized to encourage participation by private traders, foreign access to the Chinese domestic economy was confined to commercial operations within the port cities of Guangzhou and Mingzhou. The trade at these places would have been dominated by the state-sponsored trade of China's foreign

¹²³ SHY ZG 44:4a-4b.

¹²⁴ SHY ZG 44:4a-4b.

¹²⁵ SHY ZG 44:5b-6a.

¹²⁶ Clark (1991b: 378 – 381).

trading partners. As more foreign traders participated in trade with China, and as the Northern Song court shifted away from regarding foreign trade as the preserve of state-level relations, the pressure for greater access to the Chinese domestic market must have gradually increased as well.

In an attempt to reach a compromise with the foreign traders over access to the domestic market, the Northern Song court extended the market access that foreign traders had hitherto enjoyed, in the late eleventh century, from the boundaries of the port cities to the boundaries of the prefectures in which these ports were located¹²⁷. By so doing, the court hoped to reduce the level of clandestine trade taking place along the South Chinese coast. Thus, by the end of the eleventh century, access to the Chinese domestic trade had become an important commercial issue that concerned the foreign traders who were engaged in China's maritime trade. This included the Srivijayans, who after 1028 had begun to rely much less on state-level trade missions, and increasingly on trade conducted at the port level.

The need for local representation at the Chinese ports, and the continued commercial contact between China and foreign traders operating in both state-sponsored and private capacities, led to the development of a foreign community based at the port cities. Foreign quarters were established in the port cities to accommodate foreigners whose chief purpose for residing in China was to participate in or facilitate maritime trade. It is evident from the PZKT that by the end of the eleventh century, a significant foreign population had developed in Guangzhou. Several key foreign groups were present at the port city, and these were governed by their respective foreign headmen, who were appointed by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies.

The Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies were ultimately responsible for all the foreign residents at the port-cities. Their responsibilities included seeing to the non-material needs

¹²⁷ SHY ZG 44:5b-6a.

of the foreign population. Although the foreign population was accorded a large degree of autonomy in matters of religion within the confines of the port-cities, the provision of adequate facilities for the religious needs of the resident foreign community was facilitated by the Superintendencies. Parcels of land were allotted or sold to the various foreign ethnic groups so that cemeteries and places of worship could be established in the vicinity of the port-cities. Places of worship included mosques and both Buddhist and Hindu temples¹²⁸. These mosques and temples became increasingly important as the size of the foreign population increased, the period of sojourn in China lengthened, and the number of locally born foreigners grew.

The fact that the foreign population was not isolated from the Chinese population is evident from the presence and participation of the Chinese literati at a Buddhist event apparently organized by the Srivijayan Foreign Headman¹²⁹. Although a distinction between people of Chinese and non-Chinese stock was made by the Song court, by the early twelfth century, locally-born foreign residents were allowed greater freedom of movement and commercial access to the Chinese domestic market than temporary sojourners. In 1104, following appeals by foreign traders, the Song court allowed locally born foreign traders to trade beyond the prefectural boundaries of the international ports, subject to first obtaining an official permit from the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency. Market access was granted even to the markets at the Song capital of Kaifeng¹³⁰. The success of this petition indicates that foreign residents by this time had greater influence at the port-cities than before.

In addition to their commercial influence, the increasing number of locally born foreigners had a significant impact on the Chinese social elite by the late eleventh century. The issue of marriages between such foreigners and members of the Song imperial clan arose during the

¹²⁸ Chen (1991), Chen & Lombard (1987).

¹²⁹ PZKT 2:6b.

¹³⁰ SHY ZG 44:8b-9a; SS 186:26a.

Zhezong Yuanxiao era (1086 – 1094). The case, highlighted by the PZKT, involved families of affluent background on both sides. It involved a female member of the Song imperial clan, and the dispute concerned the estate of the deceased husband, who was a foreigner¹³¹. This reflects the extent of the social and business alliances built between foreign traders and the social elite of Song China, and the social and economic standing that foreign residents could attain at the Chinese port-cities by the early twelfth century.

The case led the Song court to prohibit inter-marriage between foreign residents and members of the imperial clan, unless the foreign family had been resident in China for at least three generations and had had a family member receive an official appointment within one of the three generations¹³². The restriction would have prevented foreign groups that were newly arrived or recently resident in China in the early twelfth century from advancing their interests through marriage alliances with the Song social elite. The policy favored long-established foreign groups, thereby according them the opportunity for further advancing their already well-established interests.

In 1114, an edict was passed, ordering that the estate of foreigners whose families had resided in China for upwards of five generations be absorbed and administered by the local Mercantile Shipping Superintendency if there was no business partner to inherit the estate or the estate was not bequeathed to any kin upon death¹³³. While this was an extension of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency's earlier practice of taking charge of the cargo and property of any foreigner trader who was critically ill or dead upon arrival at a Chinese port, selling off the cargo in the official markets on behalf of the trader, and safekeeping the sale proceeds until such time as a claim was made¹³⁴, the 1114 edict was an official recognition of the growing presence of foreign communities that had settled in China for a long period

¹³¹ PZKT 2:10a.

¹³² PZKT 2:10a.

¹³³ SHY ZG 44:9b-10a.

¹³⁴ SHY ZG 44:8b.

of time, and were thus subjected to the same administrative procedures as Chinese households. However, the use of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies as the civil governmental arm in implementing this procedure suggests that the Northern Song court still associated these locally born foreign residents with China's maritime trade, and that they were not naturalized as citizens of China.

Foreign involvement in China's international maritime trade at the port level led to the establishment of some form of permanent residency of foreigners at the port-cities. The residence of Srivijayans in China is noted to have begun as early as the late Tang period, culminating in the appointment of a Srivijayan as foreign official at Guangzhou in 905. For states whose relationship with Song China was ultimately based on trade, establishing their influence at the port-cities through the presence of long-term residents was an essential course of action. Srivijayan agents were installed to facilitate the trade that was arriving from the Malacca Straits region. Similar agents were installed at the Chola port of Nagapattinam by the beginning of the eleventh century¹³⁵, and their functions included the championing of the commercial interests of the Srivijayan ruler and traders, maintaining and improving Srivijaya's influence amongst the officials of the port-cities' administration, and furthering Srivijaya's status at the respective foreign courts. In this respect, the Srivijayan community at Guangzhou in the early eleventh century was a continuation of the representative community established by the late Tang period.

Such residency was not confined to traders operating under the common auspices of a ruler, but also extended to a larger network of individual traders, often from the same region, and over time extended through marriage alliances with certain groups of Chinese at these port cities. As the Malacca Straits region's trade with China had begun to shift from largely the transshipment of high value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products to one that also included increasingly large quantities of both low and high value Maritime

¹³⁵ Chandra (1957: 15).

Southeast Asian products by the first half of the twelfth century, and as the Wang Anshi reforms resulted in international maritime trade being conducted solely at the port level, it became necessary for a permanent presence of commercial contacts at the Chinese ports for the facilitation of the trade conducted not just by Srivijaya, but by large scale Malay and Indonesian traders or collectives of smaller scale trading concerns that operated outside of Srivijaya's state-sponsored trade.

The presence and effectiveness of this community is evident from Srivijaya's continuous state-level overtures towards the Song court from the inception of its dynastic rule in 960, and its concerted efforts at building up its influence at the port of Guangzhou during the eleventh century, through such undertakings as the restoration of the Taoist temple at Guangzhou between 1064 and 1070 and the subsequent maintenance of the temple, carried out at great expense¹³⁶. These reaped for Srivijaya favorable regard both in the Song court and amongst the Guangzhou administration during the eleventh century.

It is apparent that by the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Srivijayans formed one of the most prominent groups of foreigners resident in Guangzhou. This is reflected in the PZKT's record of a conference organized by a foreign headman of Guangzhou for the foreign population, for which a Srivijayan religious expert was invited to recite a Buddhist canon¹³⁷. Srivijaya had been known during the first millennium AD as a center of Buddhist studies and an important stop for pilgrims along the China-India maritime pilgrimage route¹³⁸. This was still the case in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and Buddhist scholars such as Dharmakirti as well as the famous Tibetan Buddhist leader Atisa were amongst those who visited and studied Buddhist scriptures in the monasteries of Srivijaya¹³⁹. Although Islam was apparently beginning to make its incursion into the

¹³⁶ Tan (1964).

¹³⁷ PZKT 2:6b-7a.

¹³⁸ Takakusu (1982).

¹³⁹ Das (1893: 50); Coedès (1968: 141).

Malacca Straits region, Buddhism still remained the official religion of Srivijaya as well as its tributary states. The successful invitation of a Srivijayan expert for the event reflects not only the foreign headman's high standing in Guangzhou, but also the usefulness of Buddhism as a link between the Srivijayan and Chinese residents of the port.

While the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies allotted land to the foreign community to meet their non-commercial needs, the building of such facilities was left ultimately to the initiative of members of the foreign population. According to the *Zhuozhai Wenji* by Lin Zhiqi (1160s), a cemetery for Quanzhou's foreign residents was built by a Srivijayan merchant called Shi Nowei, who was based at that port¹⁴⁰, presumably at his own expense. The *Zhuozhai wenji* also notes that this was not Shi Nowei's only act of philanthropy towards the needs of the foreign community at Quanzhou¹⁴¹. Srivijaya's influence in Chinese port cities clearly extended beyond Guangzhou by the mid-twelfth century.

As the Northern Song court's policies governing foreign residents were amended in favor of locally born foreigners at the beginning of the twelfth century, Srivijayan residents apparently benefited. The 1104 edict allowing locally born foreigners complete access to the Chinese domestic market would have particularly benefited foreign traders who had commercial concerns that had already been established in the Chinese port cities for a long time, and thus had locally-born representatives. While the SHY mentions the Arabs as a key group in this petitioning process, other groups, in particular those from the Malacca Straits region such as the Srivijayans, certainly benefited from this change as well.

The restrictions placed upon marriages between foreigners and members of the Song imperial clan at the end of the eleventh century also played to the advantage of the Srivijayan residents in China. The requirement that foreign families intending to enter into a

¹⁴⁰ So (1998: 305).

¹⁴¹ So (1998: 305).

marriage alliance with an imperial clan family have an official appointment in the Chinese bureaucracy effectively limited such marriages with foreigners from the southern seas to the Srivijayans, Javanese and Arabs, who were the only foreign groups at the port cities that had individuals with official appointments of Foreign Headman or Foreign Official, as well as honorary official titles conferred while conducting state-level exchanges by the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. As a result, the commercial and social clout of these groups was enhanced.

The influence that the Srivijayan residents wielded at Guangzhou in the twelfth century does not appear to have been necessarily due to numerical superiority alone, but more importantly to their economic influence and importance at the port. This is evident from the 1156 appointment of a Srivijayan who had been resident in Guangzhou for some time, as the foreign official, the highest appointment attainable by a foreigner at the chief international port of Song China. This suggests that the importance of Srivijaya's economic role at Guangzhou superceded those of the other foreign groups at this port. This economic influence is evident from Srivijaya's ability to affect Song maritime trade policies, as in its appeal against the 1144 customs duty increase. Srivijaya's importance as a chief source of China's growing import trade in Southeast Asian products, such as sandalwood incense, and the continuing importance of Srivijaya's transshipment trade in high value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products such as frankincense, bolstered Srivijaya's position in Guangzhou during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Although the different foreign groups did not limit themselves exclusively to a specific port, they tended to concentrate their efforts at one key port, while establishing and maintaining an interest at the others. Thus, while the Srivijayans were dominant at Guangzhou during the twelfth century, the Arabs and South Indians were dominant at

Quanzhou at the same time¹⁴². This state of affairs is confirmed by the limited number of Song period tombstones of Arab residents in Guangzhou, compared to the large numbers in the vicinity of Quanzhou¹⁴³. Nonetheless, at the height of Srivijaya's influence in Guangzhou during the mid-twelfth century, there were also wealthy Srivijayan merchants residing at Quanzhou, a number of whom probably acted as Srivijaya's agents. The *Zhuozhai wenji* notes that there were scores of rich Srivijayan merchants at Quanzhou who were first or subsequent generation residents¹⁴⁴. The presence of locally born Srivijayans at Quanzhou indicates that Srivijaya must have established a presence here some time before the mid-twelfth century, possibly when a Mercantile Shipping Superintendency was established at this port in 1087. The building of a foreigners' cemetery by the prominent Srivijayan merchant Shi Nowei suggests that a significant number of Srivijayans had taken up long term residency at Quanzhou by the mid-twelfth century.

The Srivijayan contributions to the conduct of public works at Guangzhou are recorded as official overtures instigated and sustained by the political elite of Srivijaya. It is not recorded in any texts that the contributions made by Srivijayans at Quanzhou occurred at the instigation of, or with the financial support of, the Srivijayan ruler himself. This suggests that Srivijaya concentrated its official efforts on Guangzhou, and that official overtures at Quanzhou were not at the same level of intensity. The activities of Srivijayans at Quanzhou thus may have been those of private traders from Srivijaya or the Malacca Straits region.

Foreign traders and residents at the South Chinese ports who conducted commercial activities outside of the purview of state-sponsored trade continued to increase in numbers and importance through the course of the twelfth century. The advent of Southern Song rule saw a dramatic shift in the court's handling of its trade and diplomatic relations. The court's conduct of its foreign relations largely on the basis of its imperial virtue led the conduct of

¹⁴² See Chen and Lombard (1987); Chang (1998).

¹⁴³ Chen (1991: 165).

¹⁴⁴ So (1998: 305).

its trade to be based purely on a commercial basis. In this context, traders operating outside of the purview of state-sponsored trade began to rise in importance in China's maritime trade economy. The annual farewell feast provided by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies to send foreign traders off at the start of the northeast monsoon, which had begun at Guangzhou as a prefecture-level initiative, was clearly intended for the general assembly of foreign traders from Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral. This was not a state level event, and thus not primarily intended for traders operating under the purview of state-sponsored trade.

By the thirteenth century, foreign traders born and resident in China had made significant economic progress. They had moved beyond the extension of their commercial activities into the Chinese domestic market to the use of China as the base for their maritime trade activities. Foreign access to the Chinese domestic economy worked in both directions. Not only did foreign traders sell foreign products directly in the Chinese market, but they also exported Chinese products that were in demand abroad. A tag recovered from the Quanzhou Wreck, with the characters "ya li" written on¹⁴⁵, denoting a Muslim name, suggests that Muslim traders were basing their maritime trade operations in China by the second half of the thirteenth century. Nonetheless, the presence of only one such tag at the Quanzhou wreck site suggests that this development was still in its infancy at this time.

The importance of foreign traders basing their trading operations in China gained great significance between 1284 and 1323, during which time Yuan maritime policy oscillated between favoring official or private Chinese overseas trade ventures. The prohibitions imposed on private Chinese maritime trade would have extended to include foreign traders who were resident in the Chinese port cities as well. All wealthy households, not just Chinese ones, were forbidden from sponsoring or participating in overseas trading ventures

¹⁴⁵ Fu (1989: 79-80).

whenever these prohibitions were in force¹⁴⁶. Only those China-based foreign traders who were able to collaborate with the Ortaq clique were unaffected by these prohibitions.

It would appear that this was a calculated policy to make China's maritime trade the preserve of a select group of China-based foreign traders. China-based foreign commercial interests were in competition with local interests in China's maritime trade. Such conditions would have had the effect of limiting the establishing of advantageous alliances to a select group of foreign traders who were already well-established in China and were probably economically powerful as well. The key collaborators with the Ortaq clique were the predominantly Muslim Middle-Eastern and Persian traders based mainly at Quanzhou. It is clear that by the fourteenth century, they were emerging as the clear winners in this prolonged competition between the different groups of locally born foreigners present in China. The growing influence of Islam as the religion of the favored foreigners in China, as well as its spread amongst the trading communities of the Indian Ocean, clearly had an impact upon the trading communities of the Malacca Straits region.

This period of oscillation in Yuan maritime trade policy had an impact on the China-based foreign participation in maritime trade, evident from the smuggling that took place during the times when the official monopoly was in force. Foreign trade arriving annually at China was, however, apparently not affected. There is no textual evidence to suggest that the oscillation in governmental policies during the Yuan period had a negative impact on overseas-based traders and shipping. The absence of compulsory purchases and the customs duties rates instituted by 1293, which were lower than those imposed during the Song period, made the tax regime for the annual shipping of foreign products to China more favorable than during the Song period. The imposition of the additional tax of 3 1/3% on the trade of foreign products outside of the official markets run by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies, which only provided the Superintendencies with a marginal advantage,

¹⁴⁶ YS 94:25a.

suggests that foreign traders continued to have access to China's domestic market. All these would have attracted foreign traders to trade with China on a regular basis, and may even have prompted some Chinese traders with overseas networks to relocate abroad.

The absence of textual reference to Malacca Straits region's involvement in these developments in China suggests that the region's traders were unable to capitalize on the changes in China. Malacca Straits traders were apparently bypassed. The emergence of Middle Eastern traders as the beneficiaries of the change in China's maritime trade context in the Yuan period contributed to the establishment of Muslim traders as a powerful commercial force in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean from the late thirteenth century onwards. At the same time, the active participation of Chinese shipping in Southeast Asia after 1090 made the Malacca Straits traders' role in bringing foreign products to China less vital. These factors probably led to the decline of Malacca Straits shipping between China and Maritime Southeast Asia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This in turn led to the decrease in the need for and importance of Malacca Straits region representatives in the South Chinese ports during this time. It also encouraged a shift in religion amongst Malacca Straits traders from Buddhism to Islam, in an attempt to retain their place in the changing trade of the period.

Chapter 7: China's Trade in Malacca Straits Products

7.1 Introduction

A study of the nature of the economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region cannot be complete without a detailed study of the products traded between the two economic regions. Just as patterns of trade were affected by the changes in the political and economic circumstances of the two regions, so were the types of products traded.

The study of the Chinese imports from the Malacca Straits region during the Song and Yuan periods is almost entirely reliant on Chinese textual data¹. These texts do not reveal much of the Malacca Straits role in this trade. In addition, direct textual references to Malacca Straits products occur fairly late, the first appearing in the LWDD in 1178. Thus, China's trade in these products prior to the late twelfth century remains speculative. The only non-textual source of data is, at present, the remains found in the Quanzhou wreck, which is currently the only archaeological source available that sheds some light on the nature of the trade conducted by Chinese traders, via Chinese shipping, at the end of the Southern Song period.

7.2 China's Trade in Malacca Straits Products during the Song Period

China had, during the Tang period, already begun importing products from the Malacca Straits region. This trade resumed soon after the establishment of the Song dynasty. Foreign products began to arrive in China via tribute missions as early as 960, and the re-

¹ Studies on China's trade in Southeast Asian products include Wheatley (1959 & 1973), Guan (1963 & 1994), Lin (1959), Ptak (1990, 1991 & 1993), and Heng (2001).

establishment of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies at Guangzhou and Mingzhou by the Song court allowed the import trade to fully resume by 976². China's import trade of Malacca Straits region products at this time was very much a continuation of the trade that had been established by the late Tang period.

The first Song period textual reference to imports apparently from the Malacca Straits occurs in the SHY. According to a 976 memorial, following the establishment of Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies at Guangzhou and Mingzhou, a number of foreign states were trading with China³. Of the goods listed, coral, pearls, turtle carapaces, tortoise shells⁴, foreign cloth, ebony and sapanwood were products that could have been sourced from the Malacca Straits region. Sapanwood, ebony and textiles were low value products, while coral, pearls, turtle carapaces and tortoise shells were high value products. No new products were introduced at this stage. This was a continuation of the maritime trade that had developed by the late Tang period, by which time a number of Southeast Asian products were regularly shipped to China by foreign traders:

Over the next six years, China's maritime trade appears to have expanded. In 982, the Song court published a list of state monopoly items and another list of 37 foreign products that were henceforth permitted to be freely traded amongst the Chinese so that the domestic demand for these would be adequately met⁵. This list of products reflects the development of Chinese demand for foreign products over just six years following the resumption of maritime trade, which led to an increase in the number of types of products imported by China. Fifteen products that could have been sourced from the Malacca Straits region were now made available to the Chinese market. Of these, the state monopoly products included tortoise shells, turtle carapaces, coral and lac. The deregulated imports included such

² SHY ZG 44:1a-b.

³ SHY ZG 44:1a-b.

⁴ For a more detailed study on China's trade in tortoise shells, refer to Ptak (1991).

⁵ SHY ZG 44:2a-b.

aromatic products as camphor, “chen” gharuwood incense, “huangshou” gharuwood incense, fragrant aloes and lakawood incense; and medicinal products such as betel nuts and cardamoms. Other products included sapanwood, ebony, sea carapaces and possibly textiles.

Luxury Items	Aromatics	Medicinal products	Animal Products
Coral (state monopoly)	Camphor	Betel nuts	Sea carapaces & skins
	“Chen” gharuwood	Cloves	Turtle carapaces (state monopoly)
	“Huangshou” gharuwood	Pepper	Tortoise shells (state monopoly)
	Sandalwood incense	Cubeb	
	Myrobalans	Nutmeg	
	Fragrant aloes	White cardamoms	
	Lakawood incense		

Table 7.1: Malacca Straits region products listed in the 982 list of products declared as state monopolies or to be freely traded by Chinese citizens (SHY ZG 44:2a).

After 982, there was a gap of approximately one hundred and fifty years before another list of products imported by China was recorded. This gap in information is, however, partially filled by the lists of tribute items presented by the missions of foreign states to the Song court during the Northern Song period, recorded in such texts as the SHY, SS and WXTK. These provide an impression of the trade in high value Southeast Asian products from the Malacca Straits region during the late tenth and eleventh centuries. Between 961 and 1011, camphor featured as a regular tribute item presented by Champa to the Song court⁶. The Cham missions also presented “jian” gharuwood incense in 966, 986, 992, 995, 1011, 1015, 1018 and 1053, while “su” gharuwood incense was consistently presented between 986 and 1053. Betel nuts, the only low value product presented as a tribute item, were brought to China in 966, 992, 1015 and 1018. Tortoise shells were presented between 992, 999, 1011, 1014, 1015, 1018, 1029, 1030 and 1053. These items were available in the Malacca Straits region, and Champa was not the only state that presented products that could have been obtained from the Malacca Straits region. Tianzhu (Coromandel Coast) in 1077 presented camphor amongst other items as tribute to the Song court⁷. The Dashi Arabs also presented camphor in 984, 995, 1070, 1072 and 1073⁸. Camphor, during this period, may have come

⁶ Wong (1979: 6-8).
⁷ Wong (1979: 16).
⁸ Wong (1979: 17-19).

from the Malay Peninsula or Borneo, that from the northwest coast of Sumatra being considered to be of superior quality.

It would appear that Malacca Straits region products were making significant headway in China in the early decades of the Song period. By 982, the list of imports included five aromatic and two medicinal products that had not been noted six years earlier. Of particular importance were the re-introduction of such aromatics as gharuwood, and the new introduction of lakawood incense⁹, which became key imports during the Song and Yuan periods. This tribute trade was almost entirely confined to high value products, with the Malacca Straits products riding on the transshipment trade in Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products conducted by Middle Eastern, Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian traders.

It is difficult to be certain that all of these products came from the Malacca Straits region. The 976 and 982 entries in the SHY do not mention the sources of these products, nor are the states that shipped these products to China noted. In fact, all fifteen products were not exclusively from the Malacca Straits region, but were available from Mainland Southeast Asian sources as well. Sapanwood, which was a forest product, was also exported by such Mainland Southeast Asian states as Khmer Cambodia and Champa, as well as Hainan Island. Betel nuts were widely available from Southeast Asia, India and Hainan Island¹⁰, while “huangshou” gharuwood incense was also found in Mainland Southeast Asia and the northern tracts of the Malay Peninsula¹¹. “Chen” gharuwood incense was available both from Mainland Southeast Asia and the Malacca Straits region, although that obtained from Khmer Cambodia and Champa was regarded as the highest quality by the Chinese during the late twelfth century¹². Textiles exported by the Malacca Straits region, on the other hand, may have been largely re-exports from Java and India. Even lakawood incense was also

⁹ For a more detailed study of the trade of lakawood incense, see Heng (2000) & Appendix A, Lakawood Incense.

¹⁰ Wheatley (1959: 67).

¹¹ Chen & Qian (2000: 354).

¹² Tu (1996: 141).

available from the northern tracts of the Malay Peninsula¹³. This area fell under the influence of Mainland Southeast Asian states such as Tambralingga and Langkasuka, and may have been the source of the lakawood incense that found its way to China by 982.

A portion of these products, however, almost certainly came from the Malacca Straits region. Mercantile shipping between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea was mediated by Srivijaya in the Malacca Straits, and Southeast Asian products were clearly added to transshipped goods. Traders from the Middle East and from Kollam in India¹⁴ would have had to pass through the Straits of Malacca in order to reach China, and may have picked up Malacca Straits region products en-route to China. Some of these products, such as camphor, were not unknown to Arab and Indian Ocean littoral traders. Following the 1023 advice by the Song court to the Arab envoys against using the Central Asian overland route for safety reasons, the mercantile traffic plying the Straits of Malacca would have increased substantially¹⁵, and the trade in Malacca Straits region products to China must have been boosted.

Intra-regional Southeast Asian trade could have acted as a second channel via which products from the Malacca Straits region reached the Chinese market. By 976, such Southeast Asian states as Java, Champa, Srivijaya, Borneo and Ligor had begun to trade with China¹⁶. The existence of intra-regional trade networks within Southeast Asia is evident from the presentation of Island Southeast Asian products by Cham and Javanese missions as tribute to the Song court. This trade appears to have been particularly active during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, during which time Champa presented products from Javanese dependencies such as pepper and cloves¹⁷, as well as products that could have originated from the Malacca Straits region such as camphor, tortoise shells,

¹³ Chen & Qian (2000: 368).

¹⁴ SHY ZG 44:1a-b.

¹⁵ WXTK 339:2664,1.

¹⁶ SHY ZG 44:1a-b.

¹⁷ For a more detailed study of China's trade in cloves, refer to Ptak (1993).

“jian” and “su” gharuwood incense as tribute to the Song court. This suggests that regional trade in maritime Southeast Asian products existed, with China as an important end market.

Tributary-trade promotion of Malacca Straits region products during the tenth and eleventh centuries was not undertaken by the region itself, but by China’s other trading partners. Srivijaya focused largely on the transshipment trade in Indian Ocean and Middle Eastern products to China, leaving out Malacca Straits region products in the process. Neither was China actively seeking new products from the Malacca Straits region. While China remained a passive recipient of trade that was dominated by products from the Middle East and Indian Ocean littoral, potential exports from the Malacca Straits region remained largely unexplored.

It was only in 1078 that for the first time the Malacca Straits region, under the auspices of Srivijaya, actively sought to promote a Malacca Straits region product in the Chinese market. That year, a Srivijayan mission presented camphor to the Song court. The camphor was part of a larger tribute presentation that consisted wholly of luxury goods, such as frankincense, white gold and pearls¹⁸. The reciprocal gift of a large amount of silver and copper cash presented by the Song court to the Srivijayan envoys suggests that the quantity of the items presented, including the camphor, must have been fairly substantial.

The promotion of camphor as a product available through Srivijaya continued for the next ten years. The 1082 and 1088 Srivijayan missions presented it to the Song court¹⁹. Although the quantity of camphor presented in both occasions—fifteen jin—was merely a token, the intention appears to have been the reinforcement of commercial signals sent out by the 1078 mission that it was to be regarded as an important supplier of camphor. In 1082, a Srivijayan princess presented a shipment of camphor, along with textiles, to the Guangzhou Mercantile

¹⁸ SS 489:14090 & WXTK 332:2610,2.

¹⁹ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090.

Shipping Superintendency through a Srivijayan representative stationed at Guangzhou²⁰. The Song court's confining of commercial exchanges to the ports did not stop Srivijaya from promoting its camphor at both the port and court levels.

This concerted effort was also complemented by Srivijaya's attempts to introduce other camphor products into China. The WXTK notes, for example, that between 1078 and 1086, Srivijaya presented camphor oil as a tribute item to Song China²¹. Srivijaya was the only one amongst China's major trading partners to promote itself as a supplier of camphor so intensely during the late eleventh century. However, its efforts only came in the wake of renewed presentations of camphor as a tribute item to the Song court by the Dashi Arabs (1070 and 1072), Champa (1072) and Kollam in India (1077), following a gap of sixty years²². This gap in presentation of camphor suggests either changing tastes in the Song court, or political problems in the Barus region of northwest Sumatra, from which the best quality camphor was obtained.

China's import trade in Malacca Straits products was, through the tenth and eleventh centuries, conducted mainly in the context of state-sponsored trade carried out by China's trading partners. This trade saw the development of mainly high value products. The lack of direct contact between foreign traders and the Chinese market tended to restrict the range of products imported to those already known to be in demand. The increase in the range of products imported from the Malacca Straits therefore took place at a fairly slow rate during this period.

This changed with the liberalization of Chinese mercantile shipping in 1090, which led to an increase in the commercial activities of Chinese traders in Southeast Asia. The Chinese market was no longer solely dependent on foreign shipping to bring in foreign products.

²⁰ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090.

²¹ WXTK 332:2610,1.

²² Wong (1979).

This change introduced a new element into the trade between China and Southeast Asia—the consumption patterns of the Chinese market. As more capital was invested in Chinese shipping trade, the nature of China's trade with Southeast Asia began to alter.

The 1090 liberalization of Chinese shipping opened Southeast Asia to the Chinese market as a source for new products. The increased direct contact of Chinese traders with Southeast Asian ports, which inevitably led to an increase in the knowledge of the products that were available from these ports, was apparently an important factor in the introduction of new products to the Chinese market. The impact of the increasing Chinese commercial presence in Southeast Asia apparently began with an expansion in the categories of products already imported by China, in particular in the category of aromatics. By 1141, such high value products as civet and dammar incense, and such low value products as clove bark, “zan” and “zheng” gharuwood incense, were imported by China²³.

The increase in Chinese knowledge of products available from the Malacca Straits region also led to the import of a wider range of types and grades of key products by the mid-twelfth century. In 1133, a memorial containing a list of more than one hundred maritime trade products permitted to be freely traded within China was published and recorded in the SHY²⁴. At least sixteen of these products probably originated from the Malacca Straits region. These included such high value aromatics and medicines as several varieties of camphor, camphor oil, “jian”, “chen” and “su” gharuwood incense, cardamoms and lac, and such low value aromatics as “huangshou” gharuwood incense, lakawood incense and musk wood. Other products included rattan, timber coated with camphor paste, coconut mats, sapanwood, sea carapaces and beeswax. Textile products such as blankets and woven cloth mats may also have been obtained from Malacca Straits region sources.

²³ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

²⁴ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

Aromatics	Precious Products	Medicinal Products	Foodstuffs	Handicrafts	Construction Materials	Natural Products
Sandalwood incense	Pearls	Cardamom	Fish bladder	Blankets	Yellow rattan	Bees' Wax
Lakawood incense		Dragon's blood	Galingale	Woven cloth mats		Sapanwood
Jian gharuwood: top & middle quality		Nutmeg	Bananas	Coconut mats		Sea turtle carapace
Su gharuwood: Matured		Myrobalan				Sea carapaces
Chen gharuwood		Cubeb				Black buffalo horn
Huangshou gharuwood: 1) top quality; 2) mixed; 3) concocted and pressed		Cloves				Shark leather
Sheng gharuwood: top quality		Lac				
Gharuwood: 1) middle quality; 2) fine; 3) ungraded; 4) matured; 5) non-matured						
Zan gharuwood						
Camphor: 1) oil; 2) grain camphor; 3) lusu; 4) red; 5) green; 6) timber with camphor paste; 7) bundled						

Table 7.2: Malacca Straits Region products listed in the 1133 list of foreign products permitted to be sold directly by traders at the Chinese ports (SHY ZG 44:18a-19b)

By 1141, the range of products had expanded even further. An 1141 memorial recorded in the SHY contained approximately 340 maritime trade products grouped into fine and coarse, or high and low value, categories²⁵. The purpose of the lists was to standardize customs duties and compulsory purchases of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies. This is the first and only record of the categorization of maritime trade products imported by China according to their import tax rates, reflecting their relative value in the Chinese market as fine category (high value) or coarse category (low value) products. About twenty-five products on this new list may have come from the Malacca Straits region. Of the fine category or high value products, ten types were noted. These included “jian”, “su” and “chen” gharuwood incense, tortoise shells, lac, turtle skins, coral, aloes, dammar products (dammar bark, dammar incense and black dammar) and nine varieties of camphor—ripened camphor, plum-flower camphor, grain camphor, pale white camphor, oily camphor, pale red camphor, camphor paste, “lusu” camphor and “mula” camphor²⁶. Of the coarse category or low value products, fourteen were noted. These include compressed “jian”, “huangshou”,

²⁵ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

²⁶ See Table 7.3.

“sheng” and “zan” gharuwood incense, lakawood incense, betel nuts, camphor oil, musk wood, sapanwood, beeswax, coconut mats, three varieties of rattan, turtle carapaces and various types of cotton textile products²⁷.

Aromatics	Medicinal products	Natural Products
Top, middle and low grade “jian” gharuwood	Lac	Tortoise shells
Middle and unspecified quality matured “su” gharuwood	Cubeb	Turtle carapaces
“chen” gharuwood	Dragon’s blood	
Black dammar, dammar bark, dammar incense	Cardamoms	
Ripened camphor, plum-blossom camphor, grain camphor, place white camphor, oily camphor, pale red camphor, <i>lusu</i> camphor, camphor paste, and bundled camphor wood.		

Table 7.3: Fine category (high value) Malacca Straits Region products listed in the 1141 customs duties list recorded in the SHY (SHY ZG 44:21a-21b).

Aromatics	Medicinal Products	Foodstuffs	Handicraft Manufactures	Construction materials	Natural Products
Sandalwood incense & Sandalwood incense bark	Pepper	Coconuts	Cotton cloth	White rattan	Bees' Wax
Lakawood incense	Nutmeg	Galingale	Textiles	Patterned rattan	Sapanwood
Compressed “jian” gharuwood	Betel nuts	Bananas	Mats	“Xu” rattan	Sea turtle carapace
“Huangshou” gharuwood	Clove bark		Coconut mats		
Matured “sheng” gharuwood					
Muskwood					
“Zan” gharuwood					
“Zhang” camphor & camphor oil					

Table 7.4: Coarse category (low value) Malacca Straits Region products listed in the 1141 customs duties list recorded in the SHY (SHY ZG 44:21b-23a).

The knowledge that Chinese traders and the Chinese Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies possessed of products from the Malacca Straits region, and their involvement in the trade in these products, evidently increased between the late eleventh and the mid-twelfth century. While trade in seven types of camphor and camphor products was noted in 1133, this number increased to nine by 1141. This increased level of knowledge is reflected in the detailed listing of the different types of final products derived from certain raw products, as in the case of camphor, rather than lumping them under one generic name, as was the practice during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

²⁷ See Table 7.4.

This increased level of knowledge led to the instituting of another important Chinese maritime trade practice—product quality grading. Hence, by 1141, three qualities of “jian” gharuwood incense, as well as varying qualities of “chen” and “su” gharuwood incense, were recognized by Chinese traders and the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies²⁸. All the quality graded imports were high value products, suggesting that at least as far as the Superintendencies were concerned, detailed information and quality grading were needed only for products with high commercial, and by extension, taxable value. The increasing volume of trade in these products made quality grading necessary and possible.

Despite this increase in the trade in Maritime Southeast Asian products, the Chinese records provide little detail concerning the sources of products imported in the mid-twelfth century. The volume and value of the trade in Malacca Straits region products is also not known. However, the range of products imported provides a rough indication of the relative significance of this trade to China’s overall maritime import trade. Ten out of sixty-four fine category products listed in 1141 could have come from the Malacca Straits region. Together with other fine category products that probably came from Southeast Asia as a whole, these accounted for twenty-four out of the sixty-four fine category products imported by China by 1141. The remainder comprised Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products. However, only one of the ten probable Malacca Straits region products was exclusive to that region. Thus, the increase in trade in high value products may still have been largely dependent on Chinese demand for products from the Middle East and Indian Ocean littoral. Although the Malacca Straits region was beginning to become a significant source of high value products, there was no fundamental change in the nature of China’s import trade in high value products, despite the dramatic structural changes to China’s maritime shipping and trade in the first four decades of the twelfth century.

²⁸ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

Despite this, high value Southeast Asian products grew in importance in the mid twelfth century. This can be seen in 1147, when a reduced customs duty of 10% was specifically applied to camphor, cloves, cardamoms and “chen” gharuwood incense following the 1144 increase in the customs duties levied on fine category products²⁹. This administrative action suggests that the volume of trade in these four products had become significant enough for traders to complain about the 1144 rate increase³⁰. The importance of the trade in these products is reflected in the tribute offered by such Southeast Asian states as Champa and Srivijaya in the 1150s, which included large quantities of high value Malacca Straits region products, such as “jian”, “chen” and “su” gharuwood incense and camphor³¹.

The trade in high value Malacca Straits region products was further boosted in the second half of the twelfth century by the dramatic increases in 1164 to the rate of compulsory purchases levied on luxury products³². The resulting unprofitability of the trade in these products effectively excluded Chinese traders from the trade in them. Chinese traders consequently concentrated on the trade in other high value products, mainly from Southeast Asia. The lack of mention of well-established high value foreign products in the LWDD, with the exception of “chen”, “su” and “jian” gharuwood incense, suggests that Chinese traders had by the 1170s concentrated on the trade in high value Southeast Asian products, rather than the traditional high value products from the Middle-East and the Indian Ocean.

The 1090 liberalization of Chinese shipping also boosted China’s import trade in low value products from Southeast Asia, which expanded from the late eleventh century onwards. The low value of these products meant that larger volumes needed to be imported for sufficient profits to be generated. A significant increase in the volume of shipping along the Southeast Asia-China route was therefore a precondition for the growth in China’s import trade in low

²⁹ SHY ZG 44:24b-25a.

³⁰ SHY ZG 44:24b-25a.

³¹ Wong (1979: 8-10 & 14).

³² SHY ZG 44:27a-28a.

value Southeast Asian products. The dramatic increase in the importance of low value imports from 1090 onwards thus suggests that the volume of shipping increased significantly during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The constraints on profitability in the trade of low value products meant that foreign traders did not attempt to introduce new products of this type unless they were confident that the products would be accepted by the Chinese market. Thus, it was only with the knowledge possessed by Chinese traders of their home market, coupled with an increase in Chinese shipping in Southeast Asian waters, that the trade in low value products from the Malacca Straits region began to develop into a significant aspect of the region's maritime trade with China. Chinese traders with connections in China's domestic market would have been able to exploit the demands of that market, and introduce low value Southeast Asian products to it.

Products from Southeast Asia that could serve as superior substitutes for items from domestic Chinese sources began to be imported. Foreign products consumed by China had previously been confined largely to precious items, aromatics, medicinal products and a small range of miscellaneous products, such as sapanwood and textiles. However, by 1133, this trade had expanded to include furniture-making materials, a category of products not previously imported by China, as well as a significant number of previously unknown low value products.

This development is evident from the 1133 list of foreign products permitted to be freely traded at the Chinese ports³³. The publishing of the list, which followed the abolition in the same year of the ban on international maritime trade imposed by the Southern Song court in 1127, was presumably drawn up based on knowledge that had been accrued by the Chinese Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies through the administration of maritime trade up

³³ SHY ZG 44:17b-19b.

until the imposition of the ban in 1127. The list therefore probably reflected China's maritime import trade in the last decades of the Northern Song period and the first few years following the advent of Southern Song rule, a period of boom in China's international maritime trade. Six new low value products that could be sourced from the Malacca Straits region were imported by this time. These included muskwood, rattan and camphor-coated timber, all of which were furniture-making materials. Other low value consumables included beeswax, coconut mats and sea carapaces. All these products were apparently substitutes for products that had previously been supplied by domestic sources in China. This development continued into the early 1140s. Rattan, in particular, became an important trade product, culminating in the demand for three types of rattan by 1141³⁴.

The trade in low value Southeast Asian products was further boosted in the second half of the twelfth century by the dramatic increases in 1164 to the rate of compulsory purchases levied on luxury products. The resulting unprofitability of the trade in these products led Chinese traders to redirect their attention on the low value products trade³⁵. Such circumstances enabled the low value products trade to develop substantially, leading to a significant broadening of the range of products involved in this trade in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

The change that resulted from the shift in the focus of Chinese traders from luxury products to both high and low value products from Southeast Asia continued into the 1170s. This change in China's trading pattern with Southeast Asia resulted in China's trading partners, such as Srivijaya, having to redefine their role in China's maritime trade. Srivijaya's 1156 mission reflected a fundamental shift in the Malacca Straits region's state-level trade with China in two respects. Firstly, there was a shift in Srivijaya's transshipment trade from one confined largely to Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products to one in

³⁴ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

³⁵ SHY ZG 44:27a-28a.

which Southeast Asian products now featured as an important element. Secondly, this shift in emphasis towards Southeast Asia products only included Maritime Southeast Asian products of high value³⁶. No low value products from Maritime Southeast Asia appear in the list of tribute items presented to the Song court in 1156, in spite of the fact that Srivijaya had evidently managed to obtain access to the sources of pepper and sandalwood incense from Java and its dependencies by the mid-twelfth century.

Within the next two decades, the Malacca Straits region had to again redefine its role in China's maritime trade, this time with respect to the low value products trade. Information on the 1178 Srivijayan tribute mission to China indicates that low value products formed the bulk of the tribute items brought to China by this time, with Southeast Asian products forming a significant part of the shipments. Other low value products, such as glassware from the Middle East, were also included as part of the shipment³⁷. The shipment was clearly different from those presented by Srivijayan missions of the eleventh century and 1156. Instead, the tribute resembled those that were presented by Srivijaya during the late tenth century, when it was still working hard to establish itself as an important transshipment hub for Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products. Srivijaya was apparently attempting to redefine its position and role in China's maritime trade context of the 1170s, away from that which it had painstakingly developed by the late eleventh century. The incoherent list of tribute items brought to China by the 1178 tribute mission, compared to the seemingly purposeful list of products presented by the 1156 mission, suggests that Srivijaya's economic relationship with China in the 1170s was in a state of flux, and less stable than it had been only two decades earlier.

It would appear that by the 1170s, the Malacca Straits region, under the auspices of Srivijaya, may have been shifting from transshipping only high value products, to

³⁶ SS 489:14090 & SHY FY 7:28a.

³⁷ SHY FY 7:55b-56a & WXTK 332:2610,3.

establishing the transshipment trade in low value products from the Middle East and the Indian Ocean region, as well as spices and aromatics from Java's trade sphere. Low value Malacca Straits region products were still, however, absent from the tribute presented by the Srivijayan missions in 1156 and 1178. Srivijaya clearly sidelined products from the Malacca Straits region in its bid to redefine itself in China's maritime trade context. The display of its ability to supply China with products obtained from Java's sphere of influence, such as pepper and sandalwood incense, may have been the result of Srivijaya's attempt to adapt to the circumstance of an ascendant Java, which had become increasingly important to China diplomatically and economically from 1130 onwards.

It is clear that at the state-level, the Malacca Straits region, under the auspices of Srivijaya, was still the major entrepôt for goods imported from the Indian Ocean region. This situation is reflected in the LWDD (1178), which notes that the only product imported by China to originate from the Malacca Straits region was "chen" gharuwood incense of the lowest quality. Furthermore, in the entry on Srivijaya, the polity was not listed as the producer of any local product. Srivijaya's position as the third most prosperous foreign trading partner of China, as noted by the LWDD, thus continued to be based upon its lucrative transshipment trade in products from regions beyond the Malacca Straits region.

According to the YLMC (1206), during the late twelfth century, Srivijaya and Kompei were exporting a number of Malacca Straits region products to Quanzhou. These included pearls, camphor, "jian" and other unnamed varieties of gharuwood incense, coral, tortoise shells and turtle carapaces. All of these were high value products. More importantly, these were products the trade in which had already been established by the late tenth century. The impression given by the LWDD and YLMC is that there was no real change in Srivijaya's trade in its local products between the tenth and the late twelfth centuries³⁸.

³⁸ See Table 7.5.

	Commodity Name	Srivijaya (Jambi)	Xintiao (Sunda?)	Kompei	Tambralingga	Borneo	Folo'an (Kuala Berang)
Luxury Items	Pearls	•	•	•			
	Ivory	•	•	•			
	Coral	•	•	•			
	Tortoise shells	•	•	•			
	Turtle carapace	•	•	•			
	Rhinoceros horns	•	•	•			
Aromatics	Camphor	•	•	•		•	
	"Jian" gharuwood	•	•	•			
	Gharuwood incense	•	•	•			
	Benzoin				•		
	Putchuck						•

Table 7.5: List of Malacca Straits Region products shipped to Quanzhou by ports in Maritime Southeast Asia in the early thirteenth century (YLMC 5.88).

However, the trade of other Malacca Straits region ports developed significantly during the second half of the twelfth century. The ZFZ provides a detailed impression of China's trade with the Malacca Straits region in the early thirteenth century. Malacca Straits region ports that maintained direct trade relations with China by this time included not only Srivijaya, but also Barus, Kompei and Lambri at the northern end of Sumatra. The products of the region that were exported by these ports were also noted. Barus exported camphor, while Kompei exported tin and pearls. Lambri exported sapanwood and white rattan. Srivijaya, which continued to be an important collection center in the Malacca Straits region and a major trading partner to China, had also begun to make indigenous products available to foreign traders, such as tortoise shells, camphor, "chen", "su", "chan", mature and green gharuwood incense, lakawood incense, imitation dragon's blood and the best quality beeswax and coconut mats. Apart from camphor, pearls, "chen" and "su" gharuwood incense, which remained the high value products exported by the region to China, the rest were low value products. Imitation dragon's blood³⁹, a new product, was available only from Srivijaya⁴⁰.

³⁹ See Appendix A, Imitation Dragon's blood.

⁴⁰ See Table 7.6.

	Malay Products	Barus	Srivijaya	Kompei	Lambri	Langkasuka	Kuala Beranang
Luxury Items	Tortoise shells		•				
	Ivory			•	•	•	•
	Rhinoceros horns					•	
	Pearls			•			
Aromatics	Camphor	•	•			•	
	"Jian" gharuwood						
	"Chen" gharuwood		Low grade				
	"Su" gharuwood		•			•	•
	"Chan" gharuwood		•				
	"Shou" gharuwood		•				
	"Shen" gharuwood		•			•	
	Lakawood incense		Top grade				•
	Sandalwood incense		•				•
Medicinal products	Cloves		•				
	Cardamoms		•				
	Aniseed						
	Pepper						
	Safflower						
	Cubeb						
Miscellaneous products	Red kino gum						
	Bee's wax		Top grade				
Metals	Tin			•			
Wood and construction material	ebony						
	Sapanwood				•		
	White rattan				•		
Manufactured products	Swords						
	Coconut mats		Top grade				
Animals	White parrots						

Table 7.6: Indigenous products exported by key ports in the Malacca Straits Region, recorded in the ZFZ.

Ports at the north end of Sumatra had begun to specialize in making one or two high quality products available, the equivalent of which could not be obtained elsewhere. Lambri, for example, was the only port listed by the ZFZ as a source of rattan imported by Quanzhou⁴¹, while Kompei was the only port listed where tin was available for export⁴². The exception was Srivijaya, which continued to be a regional entrepôt and the premier collection center of the Malacca Straits region. It collected products available from its

⁴¹ Chen & Qian (2000: 80).

⁴² Chen & Qian (2000: 78). This was certainly a re-export of tin from sources on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula.

dependencies, exporting not only goods from beyond the Malacca Straits, but also the best quality beeswax, coconut mats and lakawood incense⁴³.

The focus of the ports at the northern end of Sumatra, which appear to have begun to pull away from Srivijaya's control, was on the low value products trade. This practice of the Malacca Straits region ports in specializing in the export of a few products in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries marked the beginning of the product specialization that was to characterize the trade of Southeast Asia and in particular the Malacca Straits region by the mid-fourteenth century.

The Malacca Straits region stood out as a significant source of low value products by the early thirteenth century. A total of twenty-two products from the region were noted in the ZFZ to have been exported to China⁴⁴. Apart from such high value products as tortoise shells, camphor, "jian", "chen" and "su" gharuwood incense, trade in which had been established by the mid-eleventh century at the latest, the other products were of low value. The range of these products had clearly expanded beyond those listed in 1133 and 1141. Several of these products thus appear to have been added to the export list in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.

While high value products continued to be important in China's maritime import trade, as can be noted from the profiles of such products in the individual entries in the ZFZ, the trade in low value products that were imported through Quanzhou had become sufficiently important by the early thirteenth century for the Mercantile Shipping Superintendent of that time, Zhao Ruguo, to note information on this trade in entries on ports that maintained trade relations with Quanzhou as well. It is clear from the ZFZ that by the early thirteenth century, while the Malacca Straits region continued to ship high value Middle Eastern, Indian Ocean

⁴³ Chen and Qian (2000: 46-47).

⁴⁴ See Table 7.6.

and Southeast Asian products to China, indigenous low value products had become an important aspect of the region's overall trade with China.

By the end of the Southern Song period, indigenous low value products loomed large in the records of trade between the Malacca Straits region and China. Archaeological remains tell the same story. The bulk of the cargo of the Quanzhou wreck, which sank in the 1270s, comprised low value products from Maritime Southeast Asia: gharuwood incense, sandalwood incense and lakawood incense, substantial amounts of peppercorns, and over fifty betel nuts⁴⁵.

The trade in Maritime Southeast Asian aromatics continued to be the most important feature of the Malacca Straits region-China trade, followed closely by low-value medicinal products. This emphasis of China's import trade on aromatic and medicinal products had not essentially changed since the late tenth century, although the emphasis had now shifted from Middle Eastern, Indian Ocean and Mainland Southeast Asian products to largely Maritime Southeast Asian products. The traditional transshipment trade in high value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products, for which the Malacca Straits region had been so well known from the tenth century onwards, had been eclipsed by the trade in Maritime Southeast Asian low value products. This development, the culmination of a process lasting almost two hundred years, had transformed the China-Malacca Straits region trade by the end of the Song period.

The nature of the cargo of the Quanzhou wreck indicates that at least some Chinese traders were deeply involved in the trade in low value Southeast Asian products by the 1270s. The change in the pattern of Malacca Straits region-China trade that began in the late eleventh century, with Chinese traders and maritime shipping increasingly competing with Southeast

⁴⁵ Merwin (1977: 18 & Table 1).

Asian traders and shipping in sourcing and transporting foreign products to China, appears to have come to a head by the 1270s.

Participation in the trade in low value products was not confined to traders with lower operating capital. The wooden tags recovered from the Quanzhou wreck, the majority of which indicate ownership of the cargo by imperial clansmen and important imperial clan families resident in the Quanzhou area⁴⁶, reflects a significant level of participation by important and wealthy Chinese investors in the low-value products trade with the Malacca Straits region. The wreck data suggest that, at that time, a group of Song imperial clansmen based at Quanzhou were specializing in the trade in aromatic woods and stimulants from the Java Sea and Malacca Straits region, as well as spices from Java and its dependencies. This practice of product specialization may have been necessary for profit maximization in bulk trade. The cargo of this wreck suggests that the Song imperial clansmen were investing in trade in aromatic woods and spices that were in particularly high demand in China.

These developments were clearly not one-sided. While an increase in Chinese commercial operations and shipping is evident through the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, ports in Southeast Asia were reacting to the changing commercial environment and repositioning themselves to remain relevant to China's maritime trade. The new trading patterns favored minor port polities in the Malacca Straits region, which in turn undermined the economy and authority of Srivijaya. While the YLMC reflects the continued importance of Malacca Straits region shipping in China's import trade even as late as the early thirteenth century, by the late 1270s it is apparent that the Chinese had become important shippers in the China-Southeast Asia trade. The Javanese sack of Srivijaya's capital, Jambi, in 1275, finalized the break-up of the old economic and political order in the Malacca Straits. Each port state was now on its own.

⁴⁶ Fu (1989: 77-83).

The impact of the 1090 liberalization of Chinese mercantile shipping on the China-Southeast Asia trade had thus culminated, by the thirteenth century, in a fundamental shift in the orientation of this trade relationship. From being essentially determined by the commercial initiatives of Southeast Asian states during the tenth to twelfth centuries, Chinese trade was increasingly dictated by Chinese market demand, mercantile shipping and commercial practices. This in turn established the pattern of trade that was to characterize the China-Southeast Asian trade of the Yuan period.

7.3 China's Trade in Malacca Straits Products during the Yuan Period

The Southern Song dynasty finally collapsed under Mongol pressure, and Yuan administration was established over the southern coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong by 1279. Maritime trade between China and her traditional trade partners recommenced. However, between 1284 and 1323, the Yuan administration periodically attempted to monopolize Chinese mercantile activities outside of China by forbidding Chinese private traders from going abroad to conduct trade, while providing funds for officially appointed traders and sponsored ships to travel and trade abroad⁴⁷. Chinese private maritime shipping, which had flourished between the late eleventh and thirteenth centuries under the Song court, suffered a serious, if temporary, setback due to the restrictions put in place by the Yuan court. Since the foreigners favored in China during the early decades of Yuan rule were Middle Eastern and Persian, the Malacca Straits region's traders also suffered a setback. In addition, at the beginning of the Yuan period⁴⁸, Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies had been re-established only at Quanzhou, Qingyuan (Ningbo), Shanghai and Kanfu. Of these, only Quanzhou was suitably located to service the trade arriving from the South. However, in 1293, Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies were re-established at

⁴⁷ Schurmann (1967: 225).

⁴⁸ Schurmann (1967: 223).

Shanghai, Wenzhou, Guangdong and Hangzhou as well⁴⁹. This led to a resumption of regular trade between China and its maritime trade partners in Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East. By the third decade of the fourteenth century, maritime trade had stabilized, with private shipping permitted to operate by 1323.

The Chinese import trade in low value Southeast Asian products continued to develop in the early fourteenth century. The earliest Yuan period reference to China's trade in Malacca Straits region products, centered at Guangzhou, occurs in the DDNHZ (1304). The text provides the first categorization of the foreign products imported by China into product types. Six key types of Malacca Straits region products were imported at the beginning of the fourteenth century. These were luxury items, aromatics, textiles, medicinal products, timber products and miscellaneous products. Luxury items included hornbill casques, pearls, coral, turtle carapaces and tortoise shells. Aromatics included "chen", "su" and "huangshou" gharuwood incense, dammar incense and lakawood incense. Textiles included white foreign cloth and decorated foreign cloth. Medicinal products included camphor, cubeb and cardamoms. Timber products included sapanwood, gharuwood timber, ebony and a red-purple timber⁵⁰. Miscellaneous products include beeswax, purple rattan, and rattan rods and staffs⁵¹. Several newly introduced products may be noted, such as hornbill casques, gharuwood timber, and red-purple timber. On the whole, however, the range of types of Malacca Straits region products imported by China through Guangzhou appears to have decreased by the early fourteenth century, with the same number of types of low value and high value Malacca Straits region products now imported via that port⁵². It is not known whether the value of the trade in low value products had by this time exceeded that of the listed high value products. However, given the bulk nature of the trade, the volume of low value products imported undoubtedly exceeded that of high value products.

⁴⁹ Schurmann (1967: 224).

⁵⁰ See Table 7.7.

⁵¹ DDNHZ 7:17a – 18b.

⁵² DDNHZ 7:17a-18b.

Precious products	Aromatics	Textiles	Medicinal products	Timber	Miscellaneous products
Crane's crests	"Chen" gharuwood	White foreign cloth	Pepper	Sapanwood	Bee's wax
Pearls	"Su" gharuwood	Decorated foreign cloth	Camphor	Gharuwood timber	Purple rattan
Coral	"Huangshou" gharuwood		Cloves	Ebony	Cowrie shells
Turtle Carapaces	Dammar incense		Nutmeg & Nutmeg flowers	Red-purple (timber)	Rattan rods & staffs
Tortoise shells	Muskwood		Cubeb		
	Lakawood incense		Cardamoms		
	Sandalwood incense		Dragon's blood		

Table 7.7: Malacca Straits Region produced imported by China through Guangzhou at the beginning of the 14th century (DDNHZ 7:17b-18b).

Malacca Straits products formed the largest portion of Guangzhou's import trade by the early fourteenth century. Of the sixty-nine products listed in the DDNHZ, twenty-two were probably imported from that region, and others were imported via the Straits. Thus, the Malacca Straits region had become Guangzhou's most important trading partner, in a context in which Southeast Asia as a whole had become the key region with which South China conducted trade. Forty of the sixty-nine products noted in the DDNHZ as being imported by Guangzhou were from Southeast Asia. This trading pattern continued to develop into the Ming period, when Chinese maritime trade and shipping were largely centered on Southeast Asia.

It appears that, during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the only new Southeast Asian products to be introduced to the Chinese market were those from the Malacca Straits region. This suggests that the China-Southeast Asia sea trade was experiencing a period of stagnation, particularly when compared with the boom during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, during which time large numbers of Southeast Asian products were introduced to the Chinese market. This decline appears to have been the result of the fluctuations in trade regulations and the frequent oscillation of Chinese participation in maritime trade between official monopoly and private trade between 1284 and 1324. The trade of this period was characterized by a relative increase in the low value

Southeast Asian products trade and a reduction in the high value Southeast Asian products trade⁵³. The shift towards trade in low value Southeast Asian products accompanied a decline in China's trade with the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East. The list of Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products noted in the DDNHZ is discernibly shorter than those contained in Song period texts.

Despite the relative stagnation in China's sea trade early in the Yuan period, there were developments in the trade in low value Malacca Straits region products by the beginning of the fourteenth century. A number of new furniture-making materials, grouped under the categories of timber and miscellaneous products were introduced into the Chinese market during this time. These included gharuwood timber, red-purple timber, and purple rattan, none of which was recorded in Song period texts. These products must have been used for the construction of furniture, as they were later in the Ming and early Qing periods⁵⁴.

The dominance of Southeast Asia's low value products in China's maritime trade continued into the mid- fourteenth century. Although the level of knowledge of Southeast Asian products amongst Chinese traders was very high by this time, their marketing strategies remained fairly conservative. China's imports of Maritime Southeast Asian products were still largely confined to low value products on which the Chinese market had already become dependent, such as beeswax, lakawood incense, betel nuts and gharuwood incense.

Chinese traders plying the China-Malacca Straits region route did not undertake to be involved in the import trade of all the region's products in a broad, general manner. Instead, they tended to specialize in a few products. This practice, evident by the late Song period

⁵³ The only exception was the introduction of hornbill casques as a new luxury trade product, which, from the quick adoption of a quality grading system for this product by the mid fourteenth century by Chinese traders, appears to have been eagerly accepted by the Chinese market by the early fourteenth century. See Table 7.8 & Table 7.9.

⁵⁴ See Appendix A, Jiangzhen.

from the cargo of the Quanzhou wreck, continued in the Yuan period. It was not confined to large-scale traders. The trader Wang Dayuan, for example, appears to have specialized in “chen” and “su” gharuwood incense and hornbill casques⁵⁵. This product specialization is also apparent in Wang’s trade in low value products. He traded in only seven of such products from the Malacca Straits region, namely beeswax, betel nuts, cotton, lakawood incense, “jiangzhen”, “huangshou” gharuwood incense and tin⁵⁶. The difference that may be noted in the DYZL (circa. 1349) between these and other products of the Malacca Straits region, of which Wang’s knowledge of the sources was also detailed, was his awareness, for the products in which he specialized, of the quality of the products offered by each port.

	Products	Srokam	Pahang	Kelantan	Trengganu	Langkasuka
Metal	Tin		Patterned	Patterned		
	White tin					
High value luxury items	Tortoise shells	•			•	
	Turtle carapaces			•		
	Ivory					
	Rhinoceros horns					
	Crane’s crests	•		•		•
	Kingfisher tails					
	Kingfisher feathers					
Medicinal products	Cardamoms					
	Pepper					
	Betel nuts			•		
Aromatics	“Chen” gharuwood	•	•	Top grade		Superior
	“Su” gharuwood			Top grade		
	Grain camphor					
	Camphor		•		•	
	Camphor planks	•				
	Lakawood incense			Coarse grade		
	“Huangshou” gharuwood		•			•
	Dabai incense		•			
	Luozhen incense					
Miscellaneous products	Bee’s wax			•	•	
	<i>Jiangzhen</i>	Top grade	Coarse grade		•	•
	Sapanwood					
	Honey					•

Table 7.8: Indigenous products made available for export by Malay Peninsula ports in the mid-fourteenth century (source: DYZL).

⁵⁵ See Table 7.8 & Table 7.9.

⁵⁶ See Table 7.8 & Table 7.9.

	Products	Tamiang	Lambri	Deli	Jambi	Palembang	Banza (Temasik, Fort Canning Hill)	Longyamen (Temasik, Keppel Strait)	Semudra
Metal	Tin							•	•
High value luxury items	Tortoise shells		•						
	Turtle carapaces		•						
	Crane's crests		•			Uniquely top grade	Top grade		•
Medicinal products	Betel nuts				•				
Aromatics	Chen gharuwood					Middle grade			
	Su gharuwood					Middle grade			
	Camphor								•
	Camphor planks				Plum blossom				
	Coarse incense								
	Lakawood incense	•	Superior		Middle grade				Coarse grade
	Huangshou gharuwood					•			
Miscella- neous products	<i>Jiangzhen</i>					Coarse grade	Middle grade	Coarse grade	
	Coconuts								
	Goats								
	Benzoin					•			
	Bee's wax					•			

Table 7.9: Malacca Straits region products made available for export ports in the Riau-Lingga Archipelago and Malacca Strait Region (source: DYZL).

The knowledge possessed by Chinese traders, as evidenced by the DYZL, and the grading system used for products in which they specialized, were much more detailed and specific than those evident in the ZFZ in the early thirteenth century. The Chinese market's high degree of familiarity of Malacca Straits region products was not solely the result of Chinese trade activities in the region, but also due to the active promotion by Malacca Straits ports of the products that they could offer for export. Although trade with the Indian Ocean littoral and Middle East was important to the Malacca Straits ports during the fourteenth century, the efforts of these ports appear to have been focused largely on the Chinese market. These efforts were reciprocated. The large numbers of Chinese sherds found at the sites of ports in the Malacca Straits region that were active in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries attest to this reciprocal commercial relationship between China and the Malacca Straits region⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 8.5.

The knowledge that Chinese traders possessed of Malacca Straits region products in the mid-fourteenth century went beyond those that were in demand in the Chinese market. Until the beginning of the fourteenth century, knowledge had been gathered based on the demands of the Chinese market. By the mid-fourteenth century, however, Chinese mercantile knowledge had come to include a second perspective—that of Southeast Asian market demands. There is no reference in the DDNHZ and the DYZL to suggest that “dabai” incense from Pahang or “luozhen” incense from Luozhen was shipped by Chinese traders to China⁵⁸. They appear to have been traded regionally. This reflects a fundamental change in the way in which Chinese traders were operating in Southeast Asian waters. There appears to have been an increase in the participation of these traders in the intra-regional trade of Southeast Asia. Chinese traders whose commercial trips to and from Southeast Asia were extended, seem to have engaged in the Southeast Asian intra-regional trade in order to accumulate profits during trading voyages, some of which lasted for a number of years. Thus, it would appear that by the mid-fourteenth century, Chinese traders were carrying products that they obtained in the Malacca Straits region to more than one market—China and the various regions of Southeast Asia. Chinese-carried trade between Southeast Asian ports was particularly confined to private commercial concerns, since state-sponsored Chinese traders would have been expected to serve the Chinese market alone.

There is no textual record of the volume of Malacca Straits region products shipped to China during the Yuan period. Nonetheless, the context of the China-Southeast Asia trade during this period may allow us to make some tentative conclusions concerning this issue. First, there appears to have been a proliferation of small-scale traders such as Wang Dayuan. State-sponsored commercial trips do not appear to have continued after the early 1320s,

⁵⁸ Su (1981: 96 & 114).

when the power of the Ortaq clique had begun to decline. The participation in Southeast Asian intra-regional trade by Chinese traders appears to have increased substantially, possibly because at least some South Chinese traders relocated abroad during the early decades of Yuan rule. This prolonged commercial engagement in Southeast Asia was also aided by the removal of restrictions on the length of time that Chinese mercantile vessels could remain outside of China. The turnaround rate of Chinese mercantile vessels was thus possibly much lower than that experienced during the Song period, when the length of time such vessels could remain abroad was limited to approximately nine months, or one monsoon cycle.

Thus, while the DDNHZ and the DYZL appear to portray a continuation of the level of maritime trade that China experienced during the late Song period into the Yuan period, the scope and value of this trade, in reality, appears to have suffered a relative decline during the fourteenth century. The decline in the sea trade in high value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products during the fourteenth century strongly suggests that the value, if not the volume, of China's maritime trade were reduced by this time. Much of the trade with India and the Middle East appears to have switched to the overland silk route. The rise in importance of the export of low value products from the Malacca Straits region to China appears to have been, in part, a response to the loss of the transshipment trade from the Indian Ocean. This export trade appears to have focused upon a wide range of goods that had been incorporated into the regular consumption patterns of the Chinese market and to have been driven by a combination of Southeast Asian export promotion and the interests of private Chinese maritime traders.

Chapter 8: Chinese Products Imported by the Malacca Straits Region

8.1 Introduction

The development of the export trade in Chinese products to the Malacca Straits region was dependent on three key factors: changes in regulations pertaining to maritime trade and fiscal policies in China, changes in the way maritime trade was conducted, and changes in sub-regional patterns of demand in Maritime Southeast Asia. Such changes occurred in two phases during the Song and Yuan periods.

The first phase, which began in 960 with the advent of the Song dynasty and lasted until the end of the eleventh century, was characterized by exchanges that were normally carried out in Chinese coastal ports, with traders from the Malacca Straits region taking the active role in shipping foreign products to China. At both the state and private levels of exchange, the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency was the initial purchaser of imported goods at the Chinese ports. The implications of this state of affairs were two-fold. Firstly, the mode of payment for the goods that arrived in China was largely dependent upon the mercantile shipping regulations and fiscal policies that were in place at the time of exchange. Changes in the regulations, as well as the fiscal policies implemented by the Song government, therefore had a profound impact on the nature of these reciprocal exchanges. Secondly, payment for the products arriving at the ports was made both in Chinese currency and bullion, as well as in Chinese products. The use of the former was fairly straight forward and largely dependent upon the prevailing mercantile shipping and fiscal regulations, and the calculated value of products imported. In reciprocating tribute presented in kind, however, specific items, and their respective qualities, were used by the Song court to reflect not only the value of the products brought to China but also the status accorded to the foreign missions. Goods used for this purpose included silk and items of silver and gold.

The types of items that foreign envoys received were thus not necessarily those in demand back home. Bullion and currency, which often formed part of the reciprocal payment for tribute items presented, were then used at the Chinese ports to pay for products saleable in the home and other intended markets.

The second phase of the export of Chinese products to the Malacca Straits region was initiated by the permission given, in the eleventh century, to Chinese traders to travel abroad to trade, followed in 1090 by the liberalization of Chinese mercantile shipping. As a result of the subsequent increase in the volume of shipping between China and Maritime Southeast Asia, maritime trade moved from being exclusive to more common-place, and a greater range of such products as ceramics, metals and textiles was made available to foreign states.

Five key categories of products were exported to the Malacca Straits region during the Song and Yuan periods. These were metals, currency, textiles, foodstuffs and ceramics¹. These remained the main categories in China's export trade to the Malacca Straits region throughout the Song and Yuan periods, although, as patterns of trade changed between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, the relative importance of specific products also changed.

8.2 China's Export of Metals to the Malacca Straits Region

China's use of metals, both as workable materials and finished articles, in its conduct of international maritime trade had become well-established by the late Tang period. This practice continued through the Song and Yuan periods. Following the establishment of the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies in the first decades of Song rule, such metals as gold, silver, lead, tin and iron were used by the Chinese to barter for foreign products². The

¹ SHY ZG 44:1a-b & SS 186:23a.

² SHY ZG 44:1a.

range of value of these metals allowed the Chinese to meet the changing nature of trade, in particular with Maritime Southeast Asia, as it developed from a select trade based predominantly on the import of luxury products, to one that was dominated by lower value Maritime Southeast Asian products.

Certain metal objects also played a role in diplomatic exchanges between China and her foreign trading partners. Use of these precious objects was thus confined to high level ceremonial exchanges, while other utilitarian items were used in the general maritime trade.

8.2.1 Precious Metal Articles and Bullion

China's use of gold and silver in its conduct of international maritime trade, both in article and bullion form, had become well-established as early as the late Tang period. The uses of both these forms developed differently through the course of the Song and Yuan periods, in both state level exchanges and general maritime trade.

Articles made of precious metal featured amongst the important categories of Chinese gifts in the state-level exchanges during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. It is evident that the Song court regarded the use of such items as an indication of the status of a foreign state, and their use was confined to the court's dealings with important state-level trade missions.

The use of precious metal bullion, on the other hand, was linked to China's general maritime trade. As early as 971, with the establishment of Mercantile Shipping Superintendency at Guangzhou, gold and silver were used to barter for foreign products

brought to the port³. Precious metals were presumably used to barter for high value foreign products, such as rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks, pearls, camphor and frankincense. The association of precious metals with high value products is evident from the record of the Song mission of 987 to China's major foreign trading partners, which used gold to purchase high value aromatics and precious products⁴. Bullion provided an important means of conducting high value trade without contravening Song regulations concerning the ceremonial use of gold and silver articles.

The Malacca Straits region was a recipient of both forms of precious metals. Srivijaya, the chief port of the region, received precious metal articles in return for the tribute it presented to the Song court in 975⁵. Within Maritime Southeast Asia, Srivijaya and Java were the only two polities to receive such items during this period, attesting to the status of Srivijaya as the dominant port in the Malacca Straits region, paralleling that of Java within Island Southeast Asia. The region also received precious metal bullion through its trade with China during the tenth century. Ninety-four silver ingots of Chinese origin have been recovered from the Intan wreck site. These ingots were probably re-exports on their way from Srivijaya-Palembang to Java, where silver was used in the minting of local coinage.

A substantial portion of the Chinese precious metals received by Srivijaya in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries does not appear to have been used locally. Although gold was highly prized, and had a ceremonial function in the region's religious practices⁶, the region's gold bullion needs were met locally, since Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula were major exporters of gold⁷. There is little evidence to suggest that silver bullion was ever used in the Straits region in the same quantities as in Java. Chinese gold and silver articles, on the other hand, were obtained and used by Srivijaya to advertise to trading partners in the Indian

³ SHY ZG 44:1a-b & SS 186:23a.

⁴ SHY ZG 44:2b.

⁵ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610:2.

⁶ Schottenhammer (2001: 105); Wicks (1992: 303).

⁷ Wheatley (1973: xxi).

Ocean its ability to provide valuable goods from China. To this end, two gifts of Chinese gold, most likely in manufactured form, were made to the Karonasvamin temple at Nagapattinam by a Srivijayan agent stationed at that Indian port city early in the eleventh century⁸.

The use of precious metal bullion in maritime trade increased through the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In 1015, the Song court blamed the outflow of silver through Southeast Asian, Indian Ocean Littoral and Middle Eastern traders for the rise in the price of silver in China. The use of precious metal bullion also spread beyond the officially sanctioned international ports by 1025. A memorial submitted to the Song court that year noted that the officials of Zhongmen Harbor in Fuzhou, which was not a designated international maritime port, had been ordering the local citizens to barter for high value Middle Eastern, Indian and Southeast Asian products with precious metals⁹.

While precious metal articles and bullion were used during the tenth century in state and non-state level trade respectively, by the mid-eleventh century, their use had begun to overlap. After 1030, apart from three instances, precious metal articles ceased to be listed in state-level diplomatic and trade exchanges between China and her trading partners. Instead, precious metal bullion was used. This apparent shift may have been a by-product of the increasing monetization of China's maritime trade that had begun during the reign of Renzong (1023 – 1063).

This practice continued into the 1070s. The reforms of the Trade and Barter Regulations implemented in 1072 led to the use of precious metal bullion instead of articles in the high value transactions of state-level exchanges, and during the fifteen-year period of the Wang Anshi reforms, no precious metal articles were given to any tribute missions. The Malacca

⁸ Chandra (1957: 15).

⁹ SHY ZG 44:4a-4b.

Straits region was a recipient of such currency payments. The 1078 Srivijayan mission, for example, received 10500 taels of silver as part payment for its tribute of white gold, camphor, frankincense and other products¹⁰.

Although the use of gold and silver articles declined in state-level exchanges, the Malacca Straits region, in particular Srivijaya, was still keen to import these items, possibly for re-export, but also as prestige items, for use by its own ruling elite. Thus, the Srivijayan envoy of the 1078 mission requested permission to purchase a gold belt and silverware with the silver bullion and copper cash that the Song court had given in return for the tribute presented¹¹. The export of precious metal items to the Malacca Straits region apparently continued to be limited to state-level trade exchanges. The absence of Chinese precious metal articles in the known shipwrecks of the period suggests that these did not feature as part of the general trade that took place between China and the region.

The use of precious metal articles in state-level trade exchanges was revived for a short time in the late decades of the Northern Song period. However, the rationalization of the Song court's foreign policy perspective from the 1130s onwards led to a decline in the use of silver articles. The last time that a Srivijayan tribute mission was rewarded by the Song court with silverware was in 1137¹². After this, only silver bullion was used as payment in state-level trade exchanges. The value of the silver bullion awarded by the Song court to its major trading partners, such as Srivijaya, Champa and the Arabs, was carefully calculated to match the value of the tribute presented¹³.

¹⁰ SS 489:14090 & WXTK 332: 2610, 2.

¹¹ Wong (1979: 14).

¹² Wong (1979: 3 & 14).

¹³ SHY ZG 44:12a-12b. Wong (1979: 19).

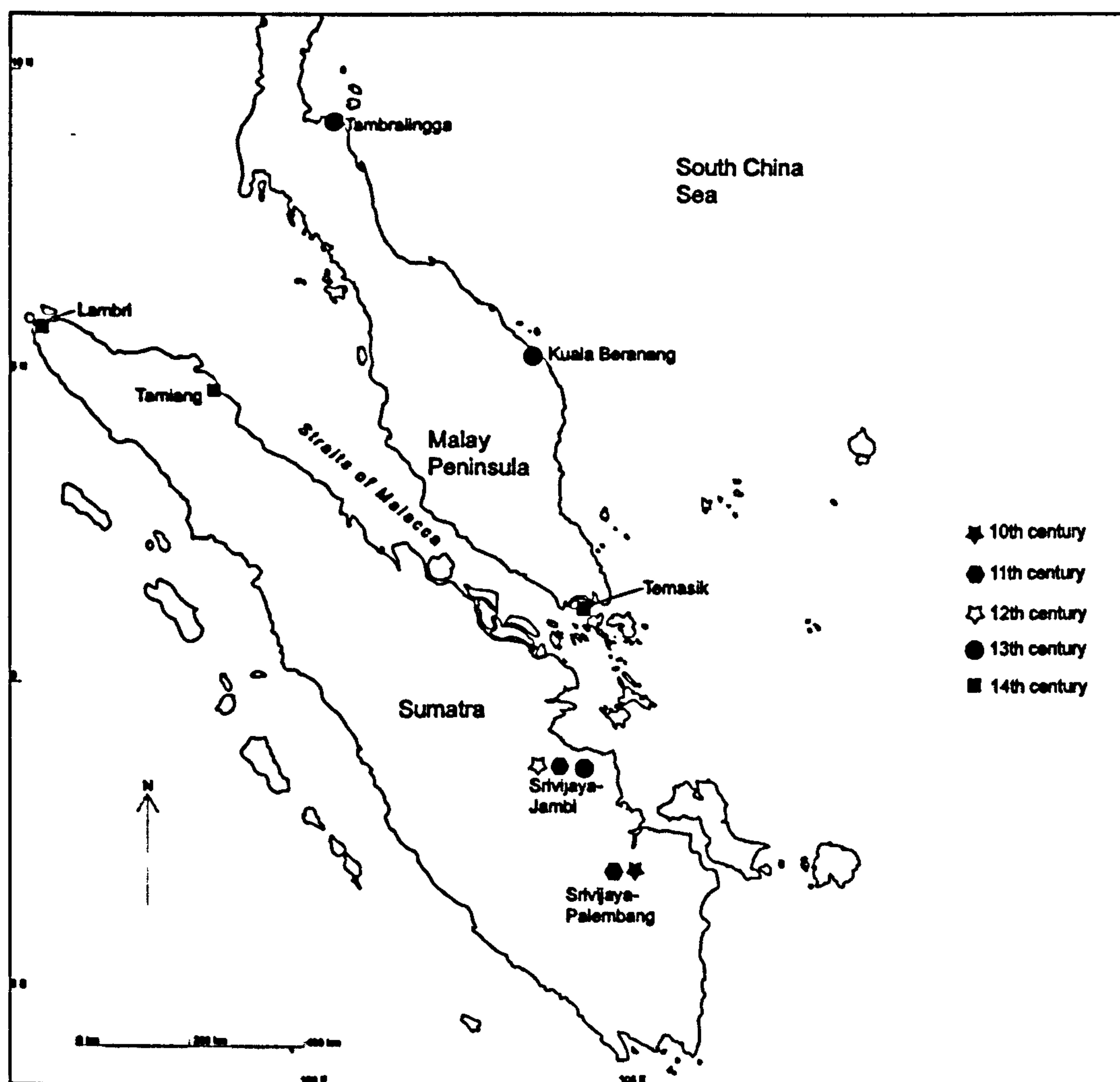


Fig. 8.1: Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese gold and silver bullion and articles in the 10th and 14th centuries.

In the latter half of the twelfth century, China's position on the export of precious metals started to change. In 1175, a memorial was issued lamenting the severe outflow of valuable metals via international trade¹⁴. While copper was the main concern of the memorial, the continued use of gold and silver was also questioned¹⁵. As a result, all subsequent tribute presented to China was reciprocated with such manufactured products as silk and ceramics.

By 1219, this prohibition was extended to the use of precious metal bullion in all of China's maritime trade transactions. A memorial submitted in that year strongly discouraged Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies from using silver and gold in the purchase of high-

¹⁴ SS 186:33a.

¹⁵ SS 186:33a.

value foreign products, in particular frankincense¹⁶. The export of gold and silver did not cease completely. In fact, the ZFZ notes that the major ports in Maritime Southeast Asia, including Srivijaya-Jambi in the Malacca Straits region and Tambralingga and Kuala Beranang on the Malay Peninsula, were importing both silver and gold from China during the early thirteenth century.

	Tambralingga	Sivijaya-Jambi	Kuala Beranang	Java	Borneo
Silver					
Trade silver					•
Silver platters	•				
Silver wares		•	•	•	
Gold		•	•	•	
Trade gold					•
Gold platters	•				

Table 8.1: Chinese gold and silver items imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the early thirteenth century (source: ZFZ).

However, the decline in the role of tribute exchanges as a channel of trade and diplomatic intercourse in the Southern Song period resulted in the decline in export of precious metals to the Malacca Straits region by the thirteenth century. In addition, China’s import of high value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products, which were the most expensive foreign products, had begun to decline by the late twelfth century. These were replaced by Southeast Asian products, many of which were of lower value. The need for precious metal bullion as a barter item to match the value of the foreign products brought to China was thus not as great as before, and the volume of the trade in gold and silver articles from China must have declined proportionally.

Following the advent of Yuan rule in China, edicts were issued in 1283, 1294 and 1322 prohibiting the use of gold, silver and copper in maritime trade¹⁷. It is apparent from these edicts that precious metals continued to be exported from China during the Yuan period. According to the DYZL, Malacca Straits demand for precious metals was limited to workable forms. Tamiang and Temasik imported silver and pure gold, while Lambri

¹⁶ SS 185:32b.
¹⁷ YS 94:25a.

imported ungraded silver and gold¹⁸. While Sumatran and Malay Peninsular sources no doubt catered for the demand for gold, it is unclear where the main exporters of silver were located, although it is possible that Chinese silver was imported by these ports.

	Gold	Red gold	Silver
Borneo		•	•
Tanjongpura			Decorated
Java	•		•
Lambri	•		•
Tamias		•	•
Longyamen (Temasik, Keppel Strait)		•	•
Banzu (Temasik, Fort Canning Hill)		•	•

Table 8.2: Chinese gold and silver items imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century (source: DYZL).

In terms of the import of Chinese precious metals, precious metal articles enjoyed a higher level of demand in the Malacca Straits region than did bullion. Since access to Chinese precious metal articles was restricted to participants in tribute exchanges, as the role of such exchanges diminished and eventually ceased, the export of precious metals in bullion form to the Malacca Straits region also declined. Thus, while Chinese precious metals were apparently exported to the Malacca Straits during the tenth to twelfth centuries, little appears to have been sent to the Malacca Straits during the later Song or Yuan periods.

8.2.2 Copper

The intrinsic value of copper made it a measure of value in China throughout the Song and Yuan periods¹⁹. This is evident from the increasing disparity in the value of iron and copper coins during the Song period²⁰. Given the high price of copper in China, it is unsurprising that little has been recorded concerning the international trade in Chinese copper other than as copper cash.

¹⁸ See Table 8.2.
¹⁹ Schottenhammer (2001: 144).
²⁰ Pen Xinwei (1988: 382) & Williamson (1935: 243).

For the Malacca Straits region, the availability of cheaper sources of copper ore located within Southeast Asia, such as West Sumatra, Timor, Thailand, the Philippines and Burma²¹, provided little incentive for any unworked Chinese copper to be imported. The reliance of the Malacca Straits region on Southeast Asian and possibly Indian Ocean sources for workable copper during the Song period is reflected in data from the Intan and Pulau Buaya wrecks. Large quantities of bronze scrap, which are not of Chinese origin, have been recovered from the Intan wreck, while a significant number of copper ingots of non-Chinese origin have been recovered from the Pulau Buaya wreck. No workable copper from China was recovered.

There was, however, apparently some trade in selected Chinese copper and bronze items during the tenth century and later. Ninety-five fragments of Chinese bronze mirrors were recovered from the Intan wreck²². These mirrors, however, constituted only a small fraction of the total number of copper articles retrieved from the wreck site. Most of these were Southeast Asian items, which outnumbered the Chinese bronze articles in both product range and volume. The Malacca Straits region's import of Chinese copper and copper-alloy articles, however, was based on the superior quality and workmanship of the Chinese products over those from Southeast Asia. This is apparent from the Chinese mirrors recovered from the Intan wreck, which were of much higher quality, both in workmanship and in material, than the Southeast Asian equivalents.

Attempts to restrict the outflow of copper from China during the Song period are well-documented. Prior to 1041, those caught exporting more than 2000 coins were to be banished; they were to be executed if the amount was more than 3000 coins. After 1041, the regulations became more stringent, and anyone caught exporting more than 1000 coins was

²¹ Bronson (1997).

²² Flecker (2001: 135-141).

to be executed²³. These stringent regulations were applied to the export of copper ingots and copper wares as well. Under these conditions, the export of Chinese copper ingots and copper articles was generally limited. Chinese copper coins were so much in demand in Southeast Asia, however, that smuggling was rife.

In 1074, the ban on the export of copper was lifted as part of the Wang Anshi reforms. As a result, copper coins were exported abroad in such numbers that it provoked complaint from within the Chinese hierarchy²⁴. This practice continued until the end of the Northern Song period in 1126. The Southern Song court subsequently issued edicts prohibiting the export of copper in 1133, 1163, 1175, 1182, 1216 and 1234²⁵. These, however, apparently failed to stem the outflow of copper coins. Much of the copper was apparently smuggled. However, the Srivijayan ruler purchased a large quantity of copper in China in 1172 and requested permission from the Song court to cast the copper into thirty thousand roof tiles, to be exported along with a number of artisans, for their installation on a temple in Srivijaya²⁶. The request must have been submitted despite the Srivijayan agents in China being fully aware of the ban on copper exports. The eventual granting of the request indicates the value that the Song court placed upon its relationship with Srivijaya.

Malacca Straits region's import of Chinese copper items appears to have declined in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. At Malacca Straits region settlement sites of the period, such as Temasik, no Chinese copper-based artifact has been recovered. Nor have any Chinese copper items been recovered from the Turiang wreck. This state of affairs is also reflected in the ZFZ, whereby Chinese copper items were not noted to have been imported by any Maritime Southeast Asian port. The DYZL notes that Pahang, Jambi and Palembang were importing copper cauldrons, woks and cauldrons respectively during the fourteenth

²³ Williamson (1935: 246-7).

²⁴ SS 133:2 & 4. Williamson (1935: 246), Wheatley (1959: 37).

²⁵ Hirth & Rockhill (1966: 81-82).

²⁶ WXTK 332:2,566 & WXTK 332:2610,3. Salmon (2002: 70).

century²⁷. These copper articles were probably obtained from Southeast Asian sources, however, rather than from China.

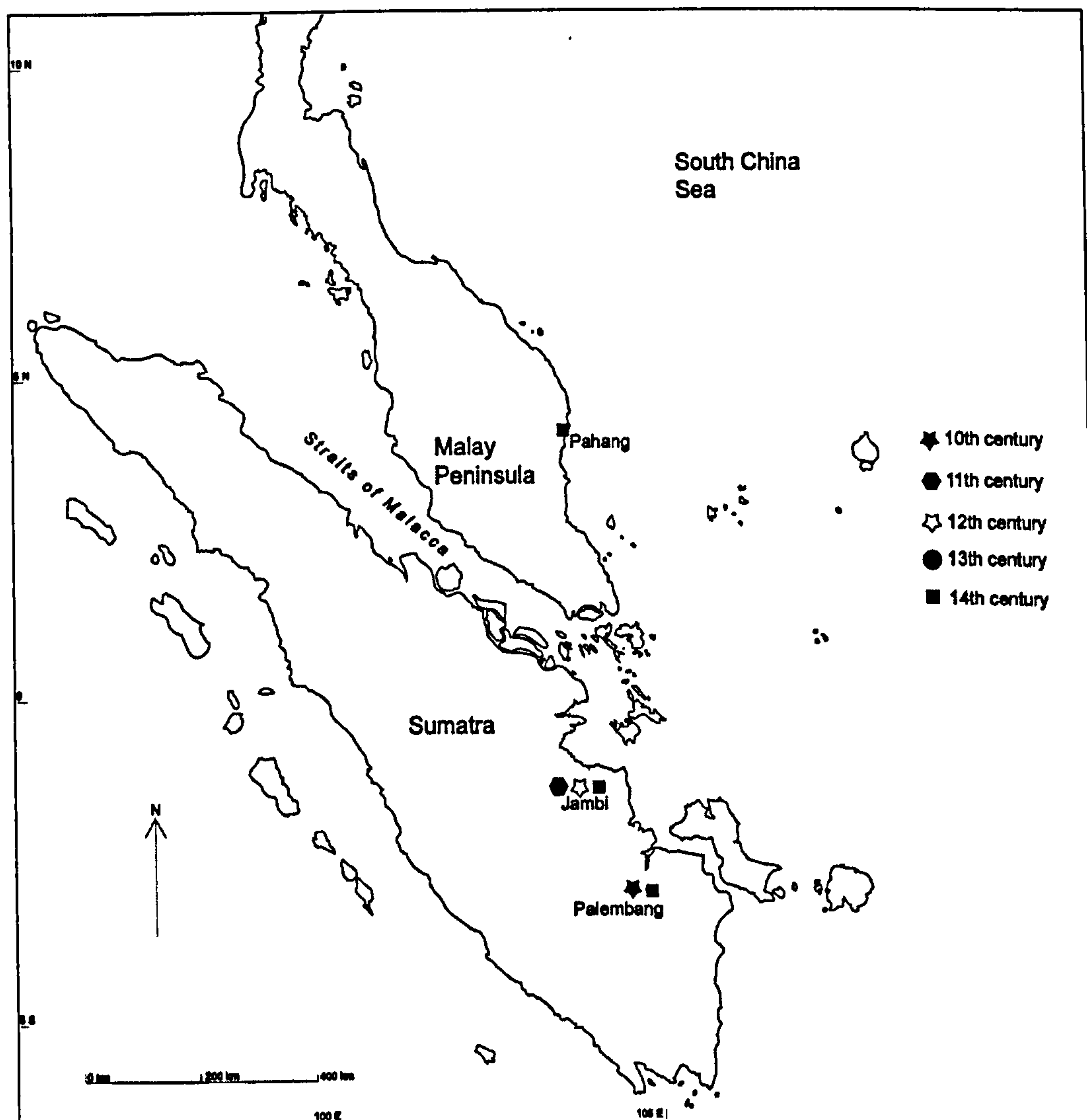


Fig. 8.2: Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese copper and copper articles between the 10th and 14th centuries.

Throughout the Song and Yuan periods, the Malacca Straits' consistently low level of import of Chinese copper and bronze items, aside from coins, was offset by the large-scale import of copper and copper-alloy articles from Southeast Asian sources. The import of Chinese copper articles was confined to items such as gongs, religious building material and mirrors.

²⁷ Su (1981: 96, 141 & 187).

8.2.3 Iron

The Malacca Straits region's demand for Chinese iron products, which were of relatively low value, developed from the mid-tenth century, when they formed a minor part of the region's trade in Chinese products, to the point, in the thirteenth century, when they were imported in bulk by Java, and perhaps other parts of the maritime region.

Sources of iron ore were numerous in Maritime Southeast Asia. Only Java and Bali were so deficient in iron that they needed to rely on imported sources. Indeed, the quality of Southeast Asian low- carbon iron and ironware, like the iron from the Indian subcontinent, was higher than that of iron from China. However, the chief advantage enjoyed by the Chinese iron industry was economies of scale, particularly in the production of cast iron. Throughout the Song and Yuan periods, China exported cast iron objects, such as woks and cauldrons, and wrought iron ingots 'fined' from cast iron. Chinese ingot iron was high in sulfur, and therefore low in quality. It must therefore have been sold very cheaply in order to compete successfully in the Maritime Southeast Asian market²⁸.

The export of Chinese iron to the Malacca Straits region early in the Song period is noted in textual records. Iron was one of the key items used in China's trade for foreign products from 971 onwards. This early export of iron to the Malacca Straits is also reflected in archaeological data from the region. Cylindrical bars and iron pieces in the form of long blades have been recovered from the Intan wreck. Chemical analysis has revealed a high sulphur content in these, indicating a Chinese origin²⁹. The presence of only these two types of iron products, apart from three iron woks and a few composite implements, suggests that the range of iron products imported by the Malacca Straits region, to be re-exported to Java,

²⁸ Bronson (1997: 101-2).

²⁹ Flecker (2001: 208).

was confined to partially worked iron. In addition, the modest quantity of iron products, in a very mixed cargo recovered from the wreck site, suggests that the volume of trade in Chinese iron was fairly modest during the tenth century.

The export of Chinese iron to the Malacca Straits region appears to have increased significantly by the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Archaeological information from the Malacca Straits region shed light on this matter. Several concretions at the Pulau Buaya wreck site have been identified as piles of iron woks, suggesting that the market for iron cooking vessels had expanded, many of them probably re-exported to Java. Partially worked wrought iron continued to be an important form of iron imported, as reflected by the presence of a bundle of iron pieces in the form of long blades at the wreck site.

By the twelfth century, iron appears to have become an important Chinese export. The 1141 lists of high and low value products involved in China's maritime trade include workable iron, iron articles and such cookware as cauldrons. An 1175 memorial lamenting the outflow of metals via China's maritime trade mentions iron as one of the metals³⁰. Iron exports were of sufficiently high volumes by the second-half of the twelfth century to be mentioned by Song officials, along with gold, silver and copper, in relation to China's maritime export trade.

Explicit textual references to the export of Chinese iron to the Malacca Straits region do not occur until the early thirteenth century. According to the ZFZ, Srivijaya-Jambi was the only port in the Straits region, aside from Kuala Berenang³¹, noted to have imported Chinese iron³². According to the ZFZ, Java was the only other direct importer of Chinese iron, aside from the Philippines, in Island Southeast Asia³³. While Srivijaya-Jambi probably remained a

³⁰ SS 186:33a.

³¹ Chen & Qian (2000: 73).

³² Chen & Qian (2000: 46-47).

³³ Chen & Qian (2000: 89 & 273).

source through which some Chinese iron products were re-exported to Java, Chinese iron products were also being shipped in bulk directly to Java.

There was a progressive increase in the volume of Maritime Southeast Asia's trade in iron ware from China through the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Chinese iron was becoming the most important product exported from China to Maritime Southeast Asia by the second half of the thirteenth century, surpassing even ceramics in terms of volume and value of trade. Direct trade with China was carried not just by Chinese traders, as indicated by the ZFZ, but by Southeast Asian traders as well. This is evident from the Java Sea wreck, which was a Southeast Asian vessel. The quantity of iron products identified at the Java Sea wreck site totals some 190 tons, with Java as the probable destination. Substantial quantities of workable circular and trapezoidal iron bars were being shipped by the Java Sea vessel, suggesting that partially processed iron remained an important product imported by the region. The presence of stacks of iron woks at the wreck site, however, indicates that the large-scale export of manufactured iron ware to Maritime Southeast Asia was already taking place by the thirteenth century, a significant development from the iron trade that characterized the tenth and eleventh centuries. While the product range had not expanded dramatically through the course of the Song period, workable and usable iron products had become equally important in China's export trade by this time.

The increase in China's export of iron products to the Malacca Straits region in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries appears to have occurred in response to the key developments in the China-Maritime Southeast Asian trade during that time. The rising importance of Maritime Southeast Asian low value products from the late eleventh century onwards was a key factor in the rise in the volume of the reciprocal trade in Chinese iron products to the Malacca Straits region. The peak of China's export of iron products to the region appears to have coincided with the rise in the low value product trade from the region to China in the early thirteenth century. The shift in the Malacca Straits region's trade with China, from high

value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products to low value Southeast Asian products, was balanced by Chinese exports of larger volumes of lower value goods.

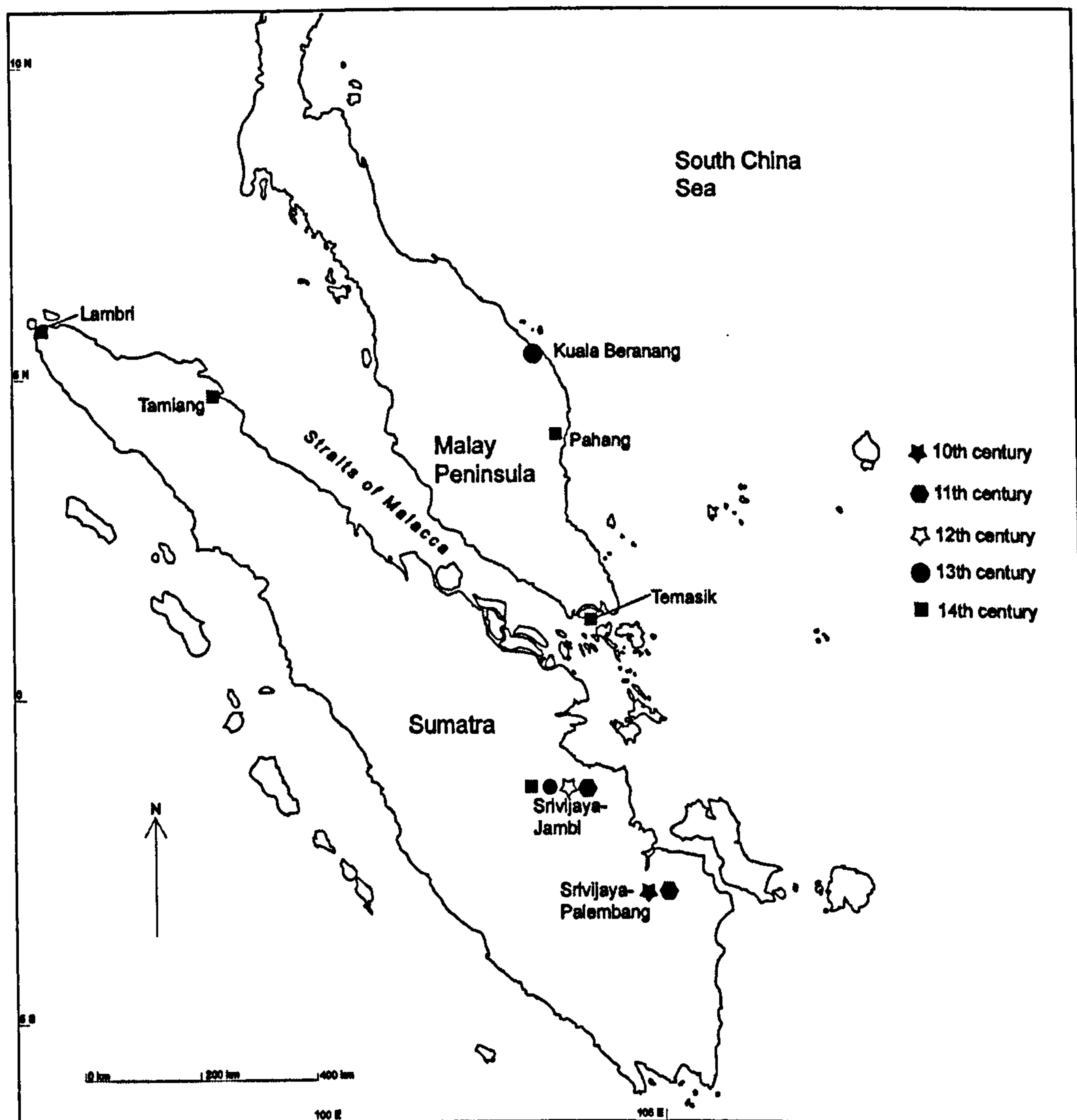


Fig. 8.3: Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese iron and iron articles between the 10th and 14th centuries.

With the advent of Yuan rule in 1279, iron remained the only metal officially permitted to be used as an item of exchange in China's trade with Maritime Southeast Asia³⁴. By 1323, trade in iron was also prohibited³⁵. However, the ban does not appear to have affected the export of iron to Maritime Southeast Asia. Information in the DYZL indicates that Chinese iron products were being exported to a significant number of ports of the region in the fourteenth century. The export of iron products to these ports appears to have been less a

³⁴ YS 94:25a.

³⁵ YS 94:26a.

reflection of the region’s demand for Chinese iron products, than of the changing nature of fourteenth-century China-Maritime Southeast Asia trade, which had become highly diffused by this time.

	Iron cauldrons	Iron wares	Iron woks	Iron rods
Malilu	•			
Pahang		•		
Borneo		•		
Java		•		
Lambri		•		
Tamiang		•		
Jambi			•	
Longyamen (Temasik, Keppel Strait)	•			
Banzu (Temasik, Fort Canning Hill)	•			•

Table 8.3: Chinese iron products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century (source: DYZL).

As the China-Maritime Southeast Asia trade ebbed somewhat during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the volume of the iron trade to the Malacca Straits region declined correspondingly.

8.3 Currency: Copper Coins

The export of copper cash was a matter of concern to the imperial court from the beginning of the Song period, given its vital role in the functioning of the Chinese economy. Nonetheless, it played an important role in the transactions between China and her foreign trading partners. The export of copper cash occurred at all levels of China’s maritime trade. Its low value in comparison to silver or gold bullion, made it a suitable medium of exchange in the trade in both low and high value products.

Copper cash was paid at the Chinese ports to foreign traders with the intention that the cash would be used to purchase Chinese products at the ports before the traders left China. It was not intended to be an export item. The disbursements of copper cash from the imperial

coffers to facilitate the conduct of maritime trade during the tenth century were not apparently great. This apparently low level of outflow of copper cash to Maritime Southeast Asia during the tenth century is reflected in the Intan wreck data. While 137 Chinese lead coins have been recovered, no copper cash seems to have been present on the vessel³⁶.

The situation changed in the eleventh century. As China's maritime trade economy became increasingly monetized through the course of that century, and trade was increasingly valued, conducted and administrated in currency terms, the export of copper cash became a worry. A ban was imposed by the Song court on the export of copper from China, including copper cash, and severe punishments were imposed on smugglers who were caught and convicted³⁷. The court later reversed its position, and reforms of the Trade and Barter Regulations implemented in 1072 led to the lifting of the ban on the export of copper and copper cash from China in 1074. In the face of its failure to stem the smuggling of copper cash, the Song court acknowledged copper cash as a Chinese item in high demand amongst China's trading partners. The court decided to meet this foreign demand by increasing the production of copper cash so as to facilitate the successful achievement of the objectives of the fiscal reforms. The annual production of copper cash increased from 1.3 million strings annually in the early eleventh century to almost six million by 1078³⁸. These measures led to the large-scale export of Chinese copper cash in the late eleventh century, a significant portion of which was shipped to Maritime Southeast Asia.

Copper cash was used at all levels of trade, including state-level trade exchanges. All recorded state-level exchanges that took place between 1072 and 1086 were paid for by the Song court solely with copper cash and silver bullion to the value of the import items presented. The Malacca Straits region was a recipient of such currency payments. Srivijaya

³⁶ Flecker (2001: 148-151).

³⁷ Williamson (1935: 246-7).

³⁸ Hartwell (1967: 284), Chen (1968: 619), & Van Aelst (1995: 361).

received sixty-four thousand strings of copper cash as part payment for the tribute of white gold, camphor, frankincense and foreign products it presented in 1078 alone³⁹.

Copper cash was also exported to the Malacca Straits region via the region's general trade with China. However, most of the copper cash imported by the Malacca Straits region was not retained for local use. Trade in Srivijaya was apparently conducted via the medium of pieces of gold and silver⁴⁰, and indigenous tin-based coinage was developed and used in the region by the fourteenth century. Barter trade also remained a major mode of commercial exchange throughout the region until the nineteenth century. No mention is made of the use of Chinese copper cash. Nor does copper cash appear to have been imported into the Malacca Straits region to be melted down for its copper content. The importance of copper cash to the Malacca Straits region thus lay elsewhere.

From Javanese epigraphy, it is now clear that by the late eleventh century, Java had begun a process of adopting Chinese copper cash as the currency to be used in low-value commercial transactions. This is substantiated archaeologically by the vast quantities of Chinese copper cash and Javanese-made copies recovered from Javanese sites dated to between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries⁴¹. The window of time during which copper cash was permitted to be exported from China—1074 to 1126—coincided with the period during which Java began to restructure its lower denomination currency through the large-scale adoption of Chinese copper cash. It seems clear that the large scale export trade in Chinese copper cash between 1074 and 1126 provided Java with a suitable form of coinage to replace the awkwardly small low-denomination silver alloy coinage that had hitherto been used. Direct trade links between Java and China undoubtedly provided one source of copper cash to fuel this currency development. The Malacca Straits region, which imported large

³⁹ SS 489:14090 & WXTK 332:2610,2.

⁴⁰ Chen & Qian (2000: 46 & 47).

⁴¹ See Wisseman Christie (1996), Mckinnon (1984) and Borell (1996), Van Aelst (1995).

quantities of Chinese copper cash through Srivijaya's trade with China, would have been another important source of these coins.

The legal export of copper cash to Maritime Southeast Asia was short-lived. Following the advent of Southern Song rule in 1127, the export of copper cash was once again banned. While copper cash continued to be used as payment for the foreign products brought to China via tribute missions and the general trade, these were now expected to be used in China for the purchase of Chinese products before the foreign traders and envoys departed⁴². This did not, however, stem the illegal outflow of cash, even though the ban on the export of copper cash was stringently enforced. In 1175, a memorial was submitted, specifically singling out copper cash as the key cause of the outflow of copper that China experienced in the twelfth century⁴³. The ZFZ notes, however, that in the early thirteenth century, Java was still managing to import copper cash by subterfuge⁴⁴.

Since the Yuan minted few copper coins, by the late thirteenth century Java could not longer rely on China as a source of copper cash for its economy. Local *picis*, imitation copper cash based on the major Northern Song issues, were minted in Java by this time⁴⁵. These *picis*, which were about half the size of Chinese cash, were created by melting down cash and recasting them, thus doubling the supply. Later, when Chinese coins again became available, Java resumed imports⁴⁶.

While the recorded, legal export of copper cash as a trade item to the Malacca Straits region took place only in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, these coins were present in the region's settlement sites throughout the Song and Yuan periods. The amount

⁴² SHY ZG 44:12a-12b & Wong (1979: 19).

⁴³ SS 186:33a.

⁴⁴ Chen & Qian (2000: 88 & 101)

⁴⁵ Van Aelst (1995: 376-89) & Wisseman Christie (1996: 270).

⁴⁶ Van Aelst (1995: 388).

of copper cash recovered ranges from very small number at such sites as Kompei⁴⁷, Sungai Mas and Pengkalan Bujang, to significant numbers at such sites as Kota Cina⁴⁸ and Temasik⁴⁹. The relative profusion of copper coins was apparently linked to the extent to which these port settlements maintained trade links with states whose monetized economies relied on such coinage. In the tenth to fourteenth centuries, these were China, Java and its trading sphere in Central and Eastern Indonesia, and Vietnam.

Ports such as Kota Cina and Temasik apparently maintained more direct economic links with China than did South Kedah⁵⁰. This is not unexpected, as Kota Cina may have had a Chinese population⁵¹, while Temasik, located at the southern end of the Malacca Straits, was economically orientated towards the South China Sea. The distribution of dates on copper cash found in Malacca Straits region settlement sites mirrors the relative proportions of Chinese copper cash minted during the reigns of the Northern and Southern Song emperors. The proportions of Northern and Southern Song coins at Kota Cina and Temasik are similar to those in the Song period hoard recovered in China⁵² and the Quanzhou wreck⁵³. The near absence of Yuan copper cash is due, in large part, to the use of paper currency in China by this time. This characteristic is consistent at these sites.

These coins appear to have been in use in certain Straits region ports, such as Kota Cina and Temasik, during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, in the trade between Chinese and local traders. The copper cash cache of 504 coins recovered from the Quanzhou wreck, which have a similar composition as the caches recovered from the Straits region ports and the Chinese coin hoard, suggests that these were not taken out of China as export items, but

⁴⁷ McKinnon & Sinar (1981: 47-72).

⁴⁸ McKinnon (1984: 106-112).

⁴⁹ Borell (1996: 7).

⁵⁰ Leong (1973: 244).

⁵¹ McKinnon (1984: 362 & 363).

⁵² Van Aelst (1995: 374-5).

⁵³ Merwin (1977: table 4).

more likely used for trade in Maritime Southeast Asia as money, with the remainder brought back to China.

8.4 Textiles

Silk was a key Chinese export during the Song and Yuan periods. At the outset, the value of Chinese silk used in maritime trade was fairly high, given its important role in state-level trade exchanges. The earliest record of its use in Song China's international trade dates to 966, when silk garments, along with cash and wares, were given as reciprocal gifts to the envoys of Champa who had presented ivory and aromatic products⁵⁴. The 987 mission dispatched by the Song court to Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral carried with them silk as one of the two types of products to be used both as courtly gifts and as items of barter for high value foreign products at the ports of call⁵⁵. By the late tenth century, silk was used as a barter item and traded for high value foreign goods brought by state-level trade missions⁵⁶, and by the beginning of the eleventh century, refined silk was recognized by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies as one of the five categories of goods used in China's international maritime trade⁵⁷. Despite the limited textual record of silk as a trade product, it is clear from the reciprocal gifts made by China to state-level trade and diplomatic missions from foreign states that refined silk was highly valued. Recipients of silk in state-level exchanges included Champa, the Dashi Arabs, India and Java during the tenth and early eleventh centuries. While there is no direct reference to the use of silks as reciprocal gifts in state-level exchanges with Srivijaya during this period, the very rich gifts that were given to the mission of 1008⁵⁸ almost certainly included silk.

⁵⁴ Wong (1979: 6).

⁵⁵ SHY ZG 44:2b.

⁵⁶ For a detailed study of the types of Chinese and Southeast Asian textiles traded during the Song to Ming period, see Lee (1994). On textiles in medieval Java, See Wisseman Christie (1993).

⁵⁷ SHY ZG 44:1a-b & SS 186:23a.

⁵⁸ SS 489:14089 & WXTK 332:2610,2.

Despite its importance in state-level trade exchanges, the only reference to the use of silks in China's exchanges with the Malacca Straits region dates to 1082, when a daughter of the king of Srivijaya submitted tribute consisting of camphor and textiles, along with a memorial, to the Mercantile Shipping Superintendency of Guangzhou⁵⁹. It is interesting to note that although the products presented were sold prior to the presentation of the reciprocal gift, cash or bullion was not given to the dignitary in return, which was the normal practice of the Song court in its state-level exchanges during the 1070s and 1080s. Instead, the proceeds of the sale were used to purchase silks, which were in turn used as the reciprocal gift⁶⁰. Presumably, the need to present gifts that were sufficiently prestigious was an important issue that could not be overlooked, even though the Song court did not appear to recognize the tribute as having been submitted by a proper state mission from Srivijaya. Since articles of gold and silver could not be used in this context, high value silks, the status of which was below that of articles of precious metals, were presented.

By the late eleventh century, following the Song court's liberalization of Chinese maritime shipping, lower value silk had become a key product carried by Chinese private traders to Maritime Southeast Asia. The PZKT notes that Chinese traders would amass ceramics and silks on credit before embarking on a trading trip to Maritime Southeast Asia. It is apparent from the description that the value of the Chinese products carried by individual traders was not normally very high. Thus, by the twelfth century, a range of types of silk was exported to Maritime Southeast Asia. Although small-scale traders were by this time carrying silks abroad, probably in small batches per individual trader, the overall volume was probably larger than in previous centuries.

⁵⁹ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090.

⁶⁰ WXTK 332:2610,3 & SS 489:14090.

The late eleventh and twelfth century developments of the China-Maritime Southeast Asia trade led, by the early thirteenth century, to a tremendous increase in the range of silk products exported to the latter region. In the 1219 memorial recommending the cessation of the use of metals in China’s maritime trade, it was suggested that silk be used to barter for the foreign products coming into the Chinese ports. The three types of silk mentioned were silk cloths, presumably plain dyed, silks with decorative patterns applied through dye methods, and silks with printed decorative patterns⁶¹. The recommendation of the use of different types of silk cloth in 1219 is an indication of the Song administration’s awareness of the breadth of the market tastes that had developed amongst China’s trading partners.

The range of silk products exported to Maritime Southeast Asia was, in fact, much wider than the three types listed in the 1219 memorial. According to the ZFZ, Srivijaya-Jambi imported silk brocade, damask and tie-dyed cloths; Tambralingga, Langkasuka and Java imported tie-dyed silk cloths; and Borneo imported brocades⁶². In addition, silk umbrellas were imported by Tambralingga. It is clear from the ZFZ that while lower value silk products were generally imported by some ports in the Malay region, higher value silks continued to be key products in the trade of the wealthier Maritime Southeast Asian ports.

	Langkasuka	Tambralingga	Sivijaya-Jambi	Java	Borneo
Silk & cotton umbrellas		•			
Black silk				•	
Rouge silk				•	
Multi-coloured woven silk				•	
Tough woven silk	•	•			
Silk brocades			•		•
Multi-coloured silk brocades				•	
Jianyang silk brocades					•
Multi-coloured downy textiles				•	

Table 8.4: Chinese textile products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the early thirteenth century (source: ZFZ).

The introduction of new Chinese textiles to the Malacca Straits region and the Malay Peninsula continued into the fourteenth century. By this time, the tastes of specific ports

⁶¹ SS 185:32b.
⁶² See Table 8.4.

were catered for by Chinese traders operating in the region. According to the DYZL, Kelantan imported checkered handkerchiefs; Langkasuka and Banzu (the settlement of Temasik on the north bank of the Singapore River) imported Chinese printed cloth; Linggabodhi imported cloth with printed blue and white decorative patterns; and Semudra and Longyamen (the Temasik settlement at Keppel Straits, Singapore) imported multi-colored and blue satins respectively⁶³. The DYZL also notes that Tambralingga and Srivijaya-Jambi continued to import silk cloth, plain-dyed and decorated with patterns respectively; while Malilu, Pahang, Trengganu, Langkasuka, Deli, Palembang, Longyamen and Semudra were noted to be importers of dyed silks or silk decorated with patterns⁶⁴. By the mid-fourteenth century, Chinese silk was in demand in every port in the Malay region.

	Checkered handkerchiefs	Woven silk cloth	Patterned cloth	Printed cloth	Blue & white patterned printed cloth	Multi-coloured cloth	Red cloth	Blue cloth	Blue satin	Coloured satin
Tambralingga							•			
Malilu								•		
Pahang		Dyed								
Kelantan	•									
Trengganu		Red								
Langkasuka				•						
Borneo										•
Tanjongpura									•	
Java		Dyed							•	
Deli			•			•				
Jambi			•							
Palembang						•				
Semudra								•		•
Longyamen (Temasik, Keppel Strait)			•						•	
Banzu (Temasik, Fort Canning Hill)				•						

Table 8.5: Chinese textile products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century (source: DYZL).

Two distinct sub-regional preferences are evident. The ports of the Malay region as a whole imported either Chinese cloth with decorative patterns or plain-dyed Chinese cloth, but within the region the ports along the Malacca Straits preferred blue and multi-colored

⁶³ See Table 8.5. The DYZL does not specify the type of material that the handkerchiefs and printed cloths were made from, so it is possible that the cloths were not silk but cotton, which was, by the mid-Song period, grown and woven in Hainan and parts of South China. Lee (1994: 30).

⁶⁴ See Table 8.5.

cloths to other dye colors, as well as patterned and printed cloths, while the ports on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula preferred plain-dyed Chinese textiles. The somewhat limited interest in Chinese textiles with decorative patterns may be accounted for by the Malay Peninsular ports' demand for textiles produced in Java, Champa, and Calicut⁶⁵, which were predominantly decorated with patterns through resist-dye, wood-block printing and tie-dye methods. This intra-regional trade in Southeast Asian and Indian decorated textiles would have been evident to Chinese traders trading in the Malacca Straits region and the Malay Peninsula. The detailed knowledge of the preferences of specific ports embodied in the DYZL suggests that Chinese traders participated in this intra-regional textile trade, and that they adjusted their offerings with cloths from competing sources in mind.

	Javanese cloth	Calicut cloth	Champa cloth	Western Ocean Silk Cloth	Badula (?) cloth
Tambralingga		•			
Pahang	•				
Kelantan			•		
Trengganu			•		
Langkasuka				•	
Semudra					•

Table 8.6: Southeast Asian and Indian Ocean textiles imported by ports in the Malacca Straits region and on the Malay Peninsula during the fourteenth century (source: DYZL).

Given that Indian, Southeast Asian and Chinese sources of textiles would have been available to ports of both the Malacca Straits region and the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula, the sub-regional preferences reflected by the patterns of the textile import trade was clearly the result of different market demand dictate and tastes, rather than merely a reaction to different degrees of accessibility to textile sources in Asia.

⁶⁵ See Fig. 8.2.

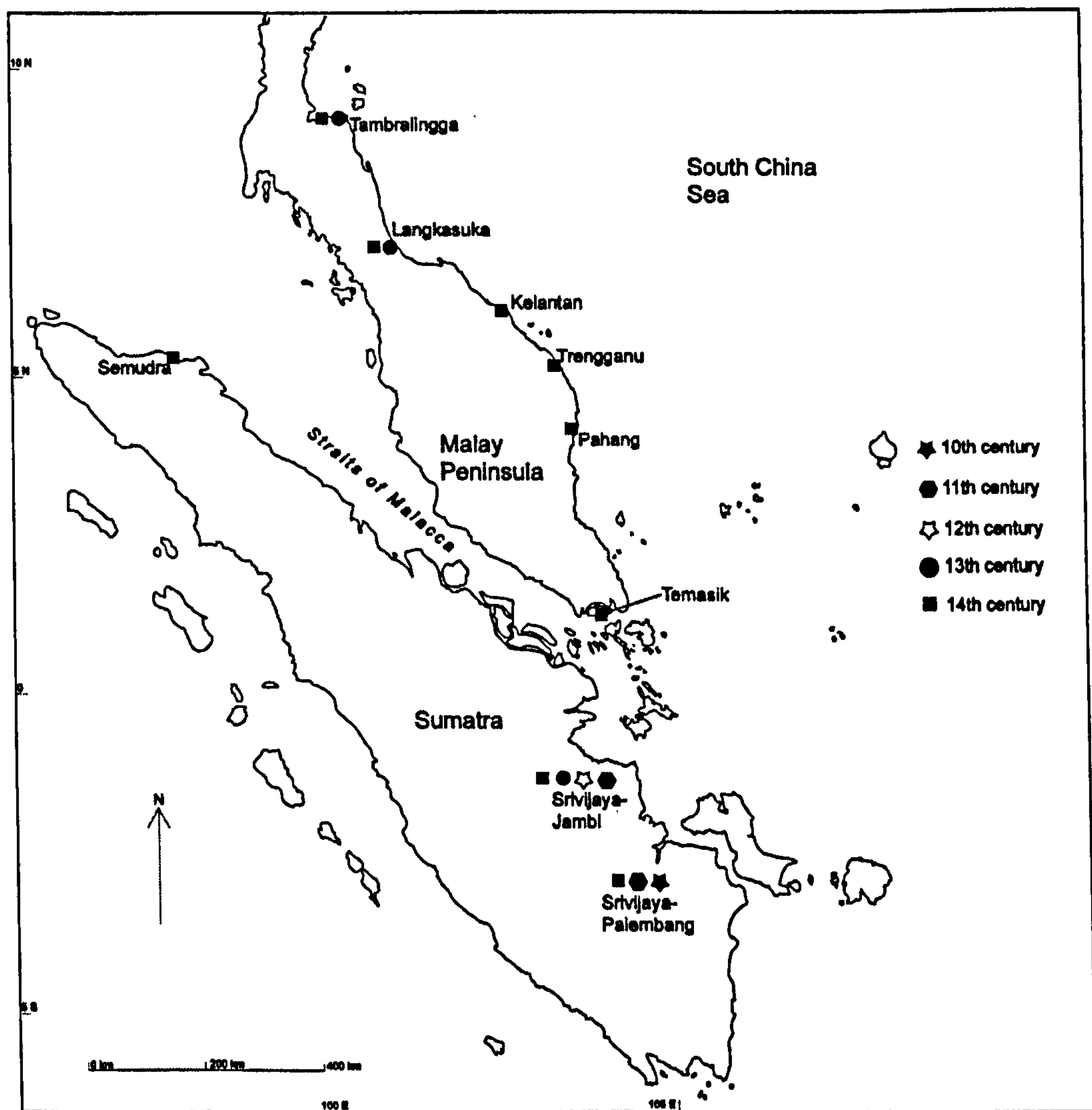


Fig. 8.4: Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese textiles between the 10th and 14th centuries.

Chinese textiles remained, throughout the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries, a product that was demanded chiefly by the ports of the east coast of the Malay Peninsula and the Southeastern coast of Sumatra⁶⁶. While a certain proportion of the textiles imported into the region would have been redistributed to the other ports in the Malacca Straits region, ports in the northern parts of the Malacca Straits region must have maintained a more vibrant import trade in textiles with markets in the Indian Ocean littoral than with China.

8.5 Ceramics

⁶⁶ See Fig 8.4.

Ceramics loomed large in the China-Malacca Straits region trade. Archaeological data from Maritime Southeast Asia indicates that by the late Tang period, there was already a considerable trade in Chinese ceramics. A large proportion of the late Tang ceramics found at the Ko Kho Khao and Laem Pho sites off the Isthmus of Kra, in what must have been Tambralingga's territory, was from the Guangdong region⁶⁷. In the Malacca Straits region, Changsha under-glaze painted dishes also constituted an important type of Chinese ceramic that was traded there. Thus, production in the South Chinese kilns may be linked to the trade in ceramics with the Malacca Straits region prior to the Song period.

Malacca Straits region demand for Chinese ceramics increased with the advent of the Song period. This is evident from the consistent mention of ceramics as a key Chinese export that can be found throughout the Song texts that contain information on China's trade with the Malacca Straits region. However, specific textual information on this aspect of Song China's foreign trade is fragmentary. Only one reference to the region's demand for ceramics occurs in Chinese tribute mission records. This information refers to 962, when white stoneware ceramics were listed amongst the items that the Song court gave in return for tribute presented by Srivijaya⁶⁸. Apart from this, ceramics were not recorded amongst the reciprocal gifts used by China in its tribute exchanges with Srivijaya or any Maritime Southeast Asian polity.

Nonetheless, ceramics grew increasingly important to the China-Malacca Straits region trade. According to the SHY and SS, ceramics were amongst China's most important maritime exports at the turn of the eleventh century⁶⁹. However, the paucity of textual references to the export of ceramics to Maritime Southeast Asia remains a significant problem. Apart from the mention in the PZKT (1116) of ceramics being shipped by Chinese traders from Guangzhou to Maritime Southeast Asia, the only textual references to the

⁶⁷ Bronson (1996: 185).

⁶⁸ SS 489:14088, SHY FY 7:2a & WXTK 332:2610:2.

⁶⁹ SHY ZG 44:1a-b & SS 186:23a.

ceramics trade come from the ZFZ (1225) and the DYZL (1349-). According to the ZFZ, Chinese stoneware ceramics were exported to the key ports of the Malay region—Langkasuka, Tambralingga, Srivijaya-Jambi and Kedah—from whence they would no doubt have been re-distributed to the Malay ports within their respective economic spheres. The specific ceramic wares imported by the Malay region ports are not noted in the ZFZ, although the treatise notes that qingbai wares were imported by Java⁷⁰, while Srivijaya-Jambi imported platters and earthenware bowls⁷¹. The DYZL, on the other hand, indicates that green and blue-and-white wares were the predominant types of ceramics imported by Malay Peninsular ports, while green and qingbai wares were imported by Malacca Straits region ports. Palembang, the Temasik site at Keppel Straits and Malilu were also stated to have imported ceramics from Chuzhou (South Fujian)⁷².

	Langkasuka	Tambralingga	Sivijaya-Jambi	Kuala Beranang	Java	Borneo
Green glazed stoneware ceramics						•
Qingbai stoneware ceramics					•	
Stoneware platters			•			
Stoneware ceramics	•	•		•		

Table 8.7: Chinese ceramic products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the early thirteenth century (source: ZFZ).

	Coarse bowls	Stone-ware ceramics	Chuzhou stoneware ceramics	Decorated ceramics	Green glazed ceramics	Qingbai bowls	Blue & white ceramics	Earthen water ewers (kendis)
Tambralingga							Bowls	
Malilu			•		Platters			•
Pahang		•						
Kelantan				Bowls	Platters			
Trengganu							•	
Langkasuka							•	
Tanjongpura							Bowls	
Java							Bowls	
Lambri						•		
Tamiang	•							
Deli	•				•			
Palembang			•					
Longya-men (Temasik)			•					
Banzu (Temasik)		•						

Table 8.8: Chinese ceramic products imported by Maritime Southeast Asian ports during the mid-fourteenth century (source: DYZL).

⁷⁰ Chen & Qian (2000: 88).

⁷¹ Chen & Qian (2000: 46).

⁷² See Table 8.8.

The information in the ZFZ and the DYZL on the ceramics trade is clearly incomplete. Archaeological data obtained from such sites as Sungai Mas and Pengkalan Bujang in Kedah, Kota Cina in northeast Sumatra and Temasik in Singapore, and such navigational points as Tioman Island, indicate that a wide range of ceramics was imported by the region during the Song and Yuan periods. These included blue-and-white, green, qingbai and white wares, as well as utilitarian coarse stoneware ceramics. Archaeological data thus provide a more comprehensive picture of the trade in Chinese ceramics than do the Chinese texts.

8.5.1 Fine Stoneware Ceramics Trade

The Malacca Straits region's trade in Chinese ceramics in the tenth to fourteenth centuries reflected two general developments in South China during this time. The first was the development of the ceramics industry in South China. At the beginning of the northern Song period, the South Chinese ceramics industry produced predominantly white, Yue-type and qingbai-type wares. However, by the late twelfth century, green ware had overtaken white and qingbai wares as the main type of ceramics produced in South China. These included products of the South Fujian ceramics industry, as well as those of Longquan in Zhejiang province. While green ware continued to be the main type of ceramics produced in South China up until the fourteenth century, other important types of ceramics were beginning to be produced. These included blue and white ware produced at Jingdezhen in Jiangxi during the fourteenth century, and dehua ware produced at Dehua in South Fujian by the late Southern Song period. These developments inevitably affected the types of ceramics that were exported to the Malacca Straits region.

The second development was the shift of the center of the China-Maritime Southeast Asia trade from Guangzhou to Quanzhou. Prior to the establishment of the Mercantile Shipping

Superintendency at Quanzhou in 1087, Guangzhou and Dinghai in Liangzhe province were the only two ports designated by the Song court as international ports. While traders from Maritime Southeast Asia occasionally called at the port at Dinghai, Guangzhou was the chief port of call because it was located furthest south along the Chinese coast, and was thus most accessible to traders coming from or via Southeast Asia. During this time, most of China's export trade to Southeast Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean littoral was catered for by Guangdong.

The designation of Quanzhou as an international port in 1087, which led to its rise in importance as one of China's key centers of trade with Southeast Asia, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean littoral, caused Quanzhou's economic hinterland, South Fujian, to gear a significant part of its economic production to cater for the demands of Quanzhou's export trade⁷³. This growing importance, however, did not lead immediately to Quanzhou overtaking Guangzhou as the center of China's trade with Maritime Southeast Asia. It was only during the Yuan period, after 1278, when the Yuan court designated Quanzhou as the chief maritime port, that Quanzhou surpassed Guangzhou as the center of China's trade with Maritime Southeast Asia. However, Guangzhou continued to be an important center of this trade during the Yuan period, despite the growing importance of Quanzhou during this time.

These two developments determined to a large extent the types of wares exported by China to the Malacca Straits region between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. In the late Tang and early Song periods, Yue-type ware, along with white and qingbai wares, were the key types of ceramics produced by the kilns in South China. Yue-type ware was produced mainly in Zhejiang province, while white and qingbai wares were produced by kilns in Jingdezhen as well as in Guangdong. That these were exported to Maritime Southeast Asia is indicated both by finds at early port-cities within the region and by the ceramic cargo of the Intan wreck, which comprised substantial quantities of white, qingbai and Yue-type fine

⁷³ See Ho (2001) & So (1994).

ceramics, as well as brown and green-glazed coarse ceramics⁷⁴. The Intan wreck, which was apparently transporting goods from Srivijaya to Java in the mid tenth century, indicates that Chinese ceramics were re-exported by Srivijaya, at that time centered on the entrepot port of Palembang. This suggests that the Malacca Straits region's ceramics import trade mirrored the general production of the South Chinese ceramics industry. Export ceramics from other regions were funneled through Guangzhou during the tenth and most of the eleventh centuries.

The importance of Guangdong, and the predominance of white ware production in South China, are also reflected in the ceramics recovered from settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region that correspond to the Northern Song period. At the Sungai Mas sites in Kedah, the main types of ceramics recovered are white ware ceramics, followed by Yaozhou-type green ware. These may be attributed to Guangdong kilns. Guangdong-type ware sherds were also the only Chinese coarse stoneware ceramics recovered from the sites⁷⁵.

The period of mass export of qingbai-type wares appears to lie chronologically between that of the profusion of Yue-type wares characteristic of the tenth century, as is evident in the cargo of the Intan wreck, and the subsequent dominance of green wares, evident in the cargo of the Java Sea wreck, which has been dated to the thirteenth century. This also reflects the history of ceramic production in South China. Yue-type wares were the main type of ceramics produced by the South Chinese kilns for much of the second-half of the first millennium AD. These were overtaken by the production of qingbai and green-type wares during the Northern Song period, with the green and celadon traditions then dominating the kilns' production during the Southern Song period⁷⁶.

⁷⁴ See chapter 3.3.1.

⁷⁵ See chapter 4.2.1.

⁷⁶ Liu (1991: 168).

The shift in emphasis from white ware to green ware in the ceramics export trade to Maritime Southeast Asia is also evident from the difference in the cargos of the Intan, Pulau Buaya and Java Sea wrecks. Unlike the tenth-century Intan wreck, which carried only Guangdong wares, the late eleventh-early twelfth century Pulau Buaya wreck carried a cargo of ceramics of more mixed origin. The green ware recovered from the wreck site appears to have been of South Fujian origin, while a number of the white ware ceramics may be products of the Zhangpu kilns in South Fujian and Jingdezhen in Jiangxi. The storage jars were from Guangdong⁷⁷.

By the thirteenth century, green ware had become the main type of ceramic produced in South China. At the same time, the importance of Quanzhou, as a rising center of China's trade with Maritime Southeast Asia, had an impact on the types of ceramics exported to the region. While celadon-glazed ceramics, most of which were from Longquan, were exported to the region by the thirteenth century, the majority of the green ware recovered from settlement sites as well as ship wreck sites of this period remained South Fujian products. Guangzhou continued to be an important gateway of the ceramics export trade, although the gradual shift of the center of this trade from Guangzhou to Quanzhou during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries clearly led to a corresponding northward shift in the catchment area of the ceramics exported to Maritime Southeast Asia. This shift is evident from the cargo of the Java Sea wreck, which comprised largely South Fujian green ware and a small quantity of South Fujian white ware. A significant portion of the coarse stoneware ceramics recovered from the site is of South Fujian origin as well⁷⁸.

The impact of these twelfth and thirteenth century developments on the ceramics trade specifically to the Malacca Straits region is evident from the ceramics assemblage recovered from Pengkalan Bujang in Kedah. While the ceramics in the assemblage are of both

⁷⁷ See chapter 3.3.2.

⁷⁸ See chapter 3.3.3.

Guangdong and South Fujian origin, South Fujian wares form the bulk of the ceramic assemblage from this settlement site. Green ware from both South Fujian and Zhejiang kilns form the majority of the sherds in the assemblage, including green ware of the Tong'an type, and lead-glazed ware from the Cizao kilns at Jinjiang district. White ware sherds from the site are very small in quantity⁷⁹. The coarse stoneware ceramics recovered from Pengkalan Bujang were from both Guangdong and South Fujian kilns, in contrast to those from the earlier Sungai Mas sites, which were solely from Guangdong.

A similar pattern is observed in the ceramic finds of Kota Cina, which was active from the twelfth to early fourteenth centuries. The green ware sherds, most of which were from ceramics of South Fujian and Longquan origin, represent the largest group of ceramics imported by the settlement. A significant number of white and qingbai ware sherds, many of which may have originated from South Fujian, have also been recovered⁸⁰. The increasing importance of Quanzhou as the export point from which Chinese ceramics were shipped to the Malacca Straits region by the thirteenth century is reflected in the ceramics recovered at this settlement site. However, Guangzhou also continued to be an export gateway of China's ceramics trade, as is evident from some of the white and qingbai sherds that may be attributed to Guangdong kilns, and the Guangdong coarse stoneware ceramics that have also been recovered. Nonetheless, the quantity of Guangdong sherds is far lower than that of South Fujian sherds.

After Quanzhou was designated as the chief international port of Yuan China at the end of the thirteenth century, China's ceramics trade with the Malacca Straits region was almost entirely centered at that port. South Fujian and its neighboring provinces to the north, such as Jiangxi, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, became established as the region of ceramics industry catering for the demands of the Malacca Straits region. The proliferation of kiln areas in

⁷⁹ See chapter 4.2.2.

⁸⁰ See chapter 4.4.

Zhejiang, the consolidation of the South Fujian ceramics industry centered at Dehua, Anxi and Jinjiang, and the rising importance of both Dehua and Jingdezhen as national centers of ceramics production, meant that the main ceramic wares exported to the Malacca Straits region during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were green, dehua, shufu, qingbai and blue and white wares.

This is evident from the ceramics recovered from the fourteenth century Temasik sites. Green ware forms the majority, followed by dehua and shufu wares, and lastly by qingbai and blue and white wares⁸¹. The importance of Quanzhou as the gateway of South China's ceramics export trade is evident from the presence of South Fujian green ware, Longquan celadon ware, and shufu, qingbai and blue and white ware from Jingdezhen, which together form the bulk of the fine stoneware assemblages⁸².

Two levels of trade networks were clearly in operation in South China's export trade in ceramics to the Malacca Straits region. The lower level involved the kilns in the immediate hinterlands of Guangzhou and Quanzhou—Guangdong and South Fujian respectively. Most of these kiln districts had easy waterway access to the two ports, and their production was largely in response to the demands and needs of the export trade centered at these ports. As a general rule, fine stoneware ceramic sherds that can be identified as originating from these kilns are of lower quality and reflect a much lower level of craftsmanship than ceramics originating from such well-known national kiln centers as Longquan and Jingdezhen. The unit value of the port-area ceramics was generally low when compared to the products of national kiln centers.

The higher level of the ceramics trade involved national kiln centers, generally located outside of Guangdong and South Fujian, the exception being the Dehua kilns in South

⁸¹ See chapter 4.5.2.

⁸² See Chapter 4, Table 4.3 & Table 4.4.

Fujian. Ceramic products from kilns of this level would most likely have been traded into Quanzhou and Guangzhou through the domestic market before being exported to Maritime Southeast Asia. Higher quality ceramics were sourced from national kiln centers in the wider South China region renowned for specific types of wares. In the Song and Yuan periods, these included qingbai, shufu and blue-and-white wares from Jingdezhen in Jiangxi, brown or black glazed ware from Jizhou in Jiangxi, and celadon ware from Longquan in Zhejiang. Because of their quality, the need to transport these ceramics to the international ports and the number of hands they needed to pass through in China before eventually being exported abroad, the unit values of the ceramics obtained from kilns of this level were generally higher than those of ceramics obtained from the ports' immediate hinterlands.

Data from Malacca Straits region sites reflect a changing pattern in the trade in ceramics sourced from the national kiln centers between the tenth and twelfth centuries. The ceramics recovered from the tenth to twelfth century sites of Sungai Mas in Kedah were predominantly from Guangdong. The fact that ceramic trade links appear not to have extended beyond Guangdong was probably due to the absence of any international ports along the South Chinese coast between Guangzhou and Liangzhe province prior to 1087.

During the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, however, the trade was different. At Pengkalan Bujang, Kota Cina and Temasik, a substantial demand for ceramics from the higher level of trade is evident from the presence of sherds of vessels from national kilns. At Kota Cina, the higher value ceramics account for almost half of the fine stoneware ceramics by quantity recovered during excavations conducted in the 1970s⁸³. This is characteristic of the ceramics assemblages of settlement sites of the fourteenth century as well. Data from the Temasik-period Empress Place site in Singapore indicates that such sherds account for almost 40% of the fine stoneware ceramics assemblage⁸⁴. The ceramics trade maintained by the Malacca

⁸³ McKinnon (1984: 196–280).

⁸⁴ See Chapter 4, Table 4.3.

Straits region settlements was thus not predominantly of low unit value, as one would expect from available contemporaneous shipwreck data, but one in which higher unit value ceramics were almost as common as low value ceramics.

It is possible, however, that high-quality Chinese fine stoneware ceramics were over-represented at certain sites. The data available from Pengkalan Bujang, Kota Cina and Temasik reflect the ceramic consumption patterns of key port settlements of the Malacca Straits region. These settlement sites were the chief ports of their respective economic spheres of influence in South Kedah, northeast Sumatra and Johor-Riau respectively, and functioned as sub-regional collection centers and gateways to the regional and international maritime economies. A large portion of the low value ceramics coming into these ports would have been re-distributed to the peripheral settlements in their respective economic spheres⁸⁵.

This distribution pattern is already evident at the tenth to twelfth century sites of Sungai Mas in Kedah. The ceramics assemblage from Sungai Mas site 31 at Kampong Sireh, located approximately six kilometers upriver from the main port settlement at Kampong Sungai Mas, has yielded only a fraction of the range of wares represented in the assemblage from Kampong Sungai Mas⁸⁶. A portion of the imported ceramics was apparently sent upstream to this satellite settlement by the port settlement at Kampong Sungai Mas. These ceramics were largely of low value, being products of Guangdong kilns. In contrast, the Kampong Sungai Mas settlement kept for itself the more valuable ceramics, such as Zhejiang ceramics, and the Yaozhou-type green ware from the Xicun kilns.

This uneven distribution of fine ceramics is also evident in the fourteenth century Temasik-period sites in Singapore and Riau. Temasik imported large quantities of low value ceramics

⁸⁵ For a detailed discussion of collection centers in the Malacca Straits region, see Leong (1990).

⁸⁶ See chapter 4.2.1.

to be re-distributed to its economic dependencies. Green and white wares, as well as utilitarian stoneware ceramics, similar to those excavated in Singapore, albeit with simpler decorative styles and techniques, have been found in the nearby Riau Islands⁸⁷. These were peripheral settlements dependent on the port of Temasik.

The level of affluence of the settlements at the periphery would have been lower than that of the main port settlement. This hierarchical difference also existed between settlements on Singapore Island, as evidenced by the data on blue and white ceramics recovered from Temasik-period sites. Larger proportions of blue and white ceramics have been recovered from the Fort Canning Hill sites than from the plain area sites. These account for 17 out of the 244 (7%) fine stoneware sherds excavated in the Fort Canning Hill Excavation (1985), and 12.8% by weight of the fine stoneware assemblage from the 1988 Fort Canning Hill excavation⁸⁸. For the plain area sites, the proportion is much smaller. These sherds account for 1.7% and 0.9% by weight of the fine stoneware assemblages recovered from the Old Parliament House and Empress Place sites respectively⁸⁹. Thus, even within a port settlement, there were clear disparities in the ceramics that the residents could afford. In the case of Temasik, it would appear that the residents on Fort Canning Hill were the most affluent, followed by those who occupied the plain area, and lastly those of the Riau Islands.

The different status of the ports in the region, and the roles they played, determined the ceramic consumption pattern that their settlements developed. Ports that were not collection centers had noticeably different ceramic import patterns from those that were. Pulau Tioman, for example, which functioned solely as a navigational marker and a stopping point where ships' crews could obtain water and fresh supplies along the China-Maritime Southeast Asia route, imported insignificant quantities of ceramics sourced from the higher

⁸⁷ Miksic (1994: 231) & Heng (1999: 119-120).

⁸⁸ Miksic (1989: 39).

⁸⁹ See Chapter 4, Table 4.3 & Table 4.4.

level of trade. The proportion of high and low value ceramics recovered is similar to those reflected by data from the shipwrecks.

The import pattern at stopping-off places was entirely dependent on external factors. In the case of Pulau Tioman, the ceramic finds indicate that the settlement's ceramic imports were determined purely by developments in the pattern of shipping between South China and Maritime Southeast Asia, the shift in the center of the China-Maritime Southeast Asia trade in South China, and developments in the South Chinese ceramics industry. This is reflected in the changes in the volume and type of ceramics imported through the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries. Guangdong sherds of the tenth to twelfth centuries form the bulk of the ceramics assemblage. The best quality Guangdong wares, such as the Yaozhou-type ceramics from Xicun and the high quality qingbai-glazed wares from Chao'an, are absent. This suggests that the general quality of the Guangdong wares imported was low. By the mid-twelfth century, Tioman Island's import of Chinese ceramics had declined significantly. Among ceramics of the Song and Yuan periods, South Fujian and Longquan celadon sherds each account for three percent of the total ceramics assemblage, while the Yixing ware sherd is statistically negligible⁹⁰.

The lack of a discernible pattern in Tioman Island's import trade in ceramics from South China, apart from the fact that the forms were the most common ones produced by the respective kiln districts, strongly suggests that Tioman Island relied exclusively on the incidental calling of trading vessels at the island, and was not able to exert any influence over the types of ceramics that it received. One possible reason for this pattern may have been the role that Tioman Island played in the China-Southeast Asia maritime trade. Prior to the thirteenth century, apart from Tioman Island, there do not appear to have been any ports of interest to Chinese shippers along the east coast of the Lower Malay Peninsula. However,

⁹⁰ Southeast Asian Ceramics Society (1985: 147).

by the early thirteenth century, Pahang was noted by the Chinese as a trading port⁹¹. By the fourteenth century, following the disintegration of Srivijaya, other minor ports along the east coast, such as Kelantan and Trengganu, had emerged and begun to serve as stopping points for ships heading for Island Southeast Asia or the Indian Ocean littoral⁹². In addition to supplies of food and water, these ports also made available a small range of products for export. Tioman Island, however, does not appear to have been able to offer any products for export. Thus, from the early thirteenth century onwards, increasing competition from ports with more to offer appears to have led to the dramatic decline in the number of ships calling at Tioman Island.

While the average unit value of the fine stoneware ceramics imported by major collection centers in the Malacca Straits region was relatively high, the real value of this trade was modest. At Kota Cina, fine stoneware sherds account for only 13% of the total ceramics assemblage⁹³, and sherds of ceramics from national kiln centers in China account for less than 6% of the total ceramics assemblage. At Temasik, fine stoneware sherds account for between 13% and 14% of the total ceramics assemblage, with sherds of ceramics originating from national kiln centers accounting for less than 6% of the total assemblage⁹⁴. The numbers of Chinese fine stoneware ceramics imported by Malacca Straits region port settlements was therefore relatively small.

8.5.2 Coarse Stoneware Ceramics Trade

Although the numbers and types of fine stoneware ceramics imported by collection centers in the Malacca Straits region appear to have been similar, the overall ceramics trade that

⁹¹ YLMC 5:88.

⁹² Su (1981: 96, 99 & 102).

⁹³ McKinnon (1984: 189).

⁹⁴ See Chapter 4, Table 4.4.

they each maintained differed. The difference lay in the numbers and origin of coarse stoneware ceramics imported. At the settlement sites in the northern Malacca Straits region, Chinese ceramic sherds constitute a minor proportion of the total quantity of ceramic sherds recovered. At Kota Cina, Chinese ceramic sherds account for only 35% by weight of the total ceramics assemblage⁹⁵, with coarse stoneware ceramics from China accounting for only 22% of the total ceramics assemblage⁹⁶. Similarly, between 20% to 30% of the ceramic sherds recovered from the Pengkalan Bujang sites comprised Chinese stoneware⁹⁷. The small proportion of Chinese coarse stoneware ceramics was balanced by the large quantities of earthenware ceramics in the assemblages of these settlements, some of which may have been imported from India.

The opposite pattern holds true for southern Malacca Straits region settlements, which imported large quantities of Chinese coarse stoneware ceramics. At Temasik, these sherds account for slightly more than 70% of the total ceramics assemblage recovered from sites along the Singapore River bank⁹⁸, and slightly more than half of the total ceramic assemblage from the Fort Canning Hill sites⁹⁹.

China was the main source of fine stoneware ceramics between the tenth to fourteenth centuries, although Middle Eastern industries also exported attractive, though lower-fired, glazed wares. Thus, regardless of the geographical orientation of the Malacca Straits settlements' external economies, Chinese fine stoneware ceramics were in demand. On the other hand, utilitarian ceramics such as storage jars, bottles and basins, were produced all over Asia, the main difference being that between earthenware and coarse stoneware. The import of utilitarian ceramics was determined by such factors as price, which was affected

⁹⁵ McKinnon (1984: 185).

⁹⁶ McKinnon (1984: 189).

⁹⁷ Leong (1973: 109).

⁹⁸ See Chapter 4, Table 4.3 & Table 4.4.

⁹⁹ Miksic (1989: 39).

by the proximity of the ceramic sources, and other factors such as the trade in the products that were carried in the storage ceramics.

The geographical location of the port settlements determined the import pattern of the utilitarian ceramics. Northern Malacca Straits region settlements obtained their utilitarian ceramics from regional and Indian sources. The importance of the Indian Ocean littoral trade links to these northern settlements is evident from the proliferation of fragments of glassware and scrafiatto ceramic wares of Middle Eastern origin, and of what appears to be Indian utilitarian pottery¹⁰⁰, a characteristic not reflected in the assemblages of southern Malacca Straits region settlements. Southern settlements were, instead, orientated towards the South China Sea, and obtained most of their utilitarian ceramics from South China and Mainland Southeast Asia. This is evident from the cargo of the Pulau Buaya wreck, which was carrying ceramics from both these sources, apparently to a port on the southeastern coast of Sumatra. It is also evident from the ceramics recovered at Temasik.

The range of Chinese coarse stoneware forms imported by the settlements of the Malacca Straits region, although limited, did expand somewhat over time. At the Sungai Mas settlement, only storage jar sherds were present, suggesting that this was the main form imported by South Kedah in the tenth and eleventh centuries. However, by the twelfth century, other forms, such as bottles, basins, and mortars, were also imported by the region, as is evident from the presence of sherds of these vessels in the Pengkalan Bujang ceramics assemblage¹⁰¹. This expansion in the range of forms is apparent at Kota Cina as well, where sherds of storage jars, basins, mortars and bottles have also been recovered. This range did not change during the fourteenth century. The forms imported by Temasik were the same as those imported by the port settlements at Pengkalan Bujang and Kota Cina, although they were imported in greater numbers. Thus, apart from storage items and basins, the coarse

¹⁰⁰ Shuhaimi & Yatim (1990: 78 & 80); McKinnon (1984: 116-8).

¹⁰¹ Leong (1973: 132-185).

Chinese stoneware ceramics imported by the Malacca Straits region's settlements were mortars, for which a high degree of hardness in the fired clay body was an asset.

The trade in Chinese utilitarian ceramics was confined almost entirely to the products of Guangdong and South Fujian. This is evident from the ceramics recovered from settlement sites in the Malacca Straits region, and is consistent throughout the tenth to fourteenth centuries. At Sungai Mas, Guangdong-type coarse stoneware sherds have been recovered from sites 31 and 32. At Pengkalan Bujang, Guangdong and South Fujian coarse stoneware sherds have been recovered, the latter coming predominantly from the immediate vicinity of Quanzhou. At the Old Parliament House site in Singapore, approximately 30% of the total ceramics assemblage recovered comprises Guangdong coarse stoneware sherds. Approximately 28% of the total ceramics assemblage, including small-mouth jar sherds, are South Fujian coarse stoneware sherds, the bulk of which came from kilns in the Quanzhou area¹⁰². The main sources of these coarse stoneware ceramics were Xicun, Foshan and Qishi kilns near Guangzhou, and the Jinjiang and Cizao kilns near Quanzhou. These ceramics were obtained from sources that were most accessible to these two ports, since cost was a very important factor.

Only one type of coarse ceramic found in the Temasik sites in Singapore—Grey 3 ware—has been identified as originating from outside of the immediate Guangzhou or Quanzhou catchment region. These were storage bottles produced by the Yixing kilns of Jiangsu province. Sherds of this ware have been recovered at Pulau Tioman¹⁰³, and at the Old Parliament House site at Temasik account for 3.8% of the coarse stoneware assemblage, or less than 2% of the total ceramics assemblage¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰² See Chapter 4, Table 4.4.

¹⁰³ Southeast Asian Ceramics Society (1985: 76 & 119).

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 4, Table 4.5 & Table 4.6.

While the trade in coarse stoneware ceramics was an important aspect of China's export trade to the Malacca Straits region in its own right, these space-consuming items, in particular the storage jars and bottles, were unlikely to have been exported from China empty. Data from the Intan and Turiang wrecks indicate that foodstuffs were an important group of products carried in these jars¹⁰⁵. Finds in the Turiang wreck suggest that large storage jars were used to transport such wet-type solid foodstuffs as pickled vegetables, preserved fish or shrimp paste. Large jars were also used to carry such small items as ceramics. Smaller jars and bottles were used to carry liquids, such as wines and sauces. Use was made of storage jars in the foodstuffs trade both between China and Southeast Asia and within Southeast Asia itself.

The predominance of Guangdong and South Fujian storage jar sherds at Malacca Straits region sites suggests that most of the Chinese foodstuffs imported by the region came from these two areas. Whereas the sherds from South Fujian jars are those of small and thinly potted vessels, those of Guangdong wares are from larger and thickly potted vessels. The types of products transported in the South Fujian jars were therefore most likely to have been different from those shipped in Guangdong jars.

In the tenth to early twelfth centuries, Guangzhou was the main supplier of Chinese foodstuffs to the Malacca Straits region. Sungai Mas appears to have *only imported Chinese foodstuffs from Guangzhou*, since only Guangdong-type storage jar sherds have been recovered from the sites in that region. Foodstuffs from the hinterland of Guangzhou were most likely the contents of the imported jars. However, by the latter half of the twelfth century, the Chinese foodstuffs imported by the region's settlements had clearly expanded to include those from South Fujian. At Pengkalan Bujang and Kota Cina, sherds have been found from both Guangdong and South Fujian jars, as well as from South Fujian bottles.

¹⁰⁵ See chapter 4.3.1 & 4.3.5.

By the fourteenth century, the southern Malacca Straits' import trade in Chinese foodstuffs from South Fujian and Guangdong appears to have become fairly broad-based. The number of types of coarse stoneware sherds represented in the Empress Place and Old Parliament House assemblages is much greater than those represented in the assemblages from the slightly earlier sites of Kota Cina and Pengkalan Bujang, which also lie further to the north. This suggests that a wider range of foodstuffs was being shipped to the Temasik's port by this time. The port's import of foodstuffs was also not confined, by this time, to products from Guangdong and South Fujian. The consistent occurrence of significant quantities of Grey 3-type sherds in the assemblages suggests that Temasik maintained a consistent demand for a specific foodstuff product from Yixing in Jiangsu.

Despite Quanzhou's rising importance after the end of the eleventh century, and its eventual replacement of Guangzhou as the most important port in South China by the late thirteenth century, Guangzhou appears to have remained the more important export gateway for Chinese foodstuffs to the Malacca Straits region throughout the tenth and fourteenth centuries. This was probably due to Guangdong's superior agricultural base, which in turn fuelled its foodstuffs manufacturing industry. South Fujian's landscape was less conducive to agricultural production, which limited the range of foodstuffs that could be produced. Guangzhou was thus in a better position to cater for the diversity of demands of the Malacca Straits region settlements than Quanzhou. However, while Guangzhou's foodstuffs trade appears to have encompassed a greater range of products—as is reflected in the wide range of sizes of storage jars evident from the sherds recovered from Malacca Straits region settlement sites—the assemblages of the region also suggest that Quanzhou did conduct a specialized foodstuffs trade with the Malacca Straits.

One of these is the small-mouth bottle. Large quantities of sherds from these bottles have been recovered from Temasik sites. These bottles have been identified by Chinese

archaeologists as wine bottles¹⁰⁶. This type of clay body¹⁰⁷ has been attributed to the Cizao kilns in Quanzhou. South Fujian was known, during the Song and Yuan periods, as a major producer of glutinous rice, which was used to produce rice wine. This rice wine was undoubtedly bottled in locally-produced ceramic containers. The substantial quantities of small-mouth bottle sherds recovered from sites in the Malacca Straits region dated to between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries suggest that the demand for South Fujian rice wine was consistently high during the Southern Song and Yuan periods. The widespread distribution of these bottles suggests that this wine was consumed by almost all levels of society within Malay port polities. At Temasik, this is evident from the presence of small-mouthed bottle sherds at Fort Canning Hill, the riverbank sites, and at sites in the Riau Archipelago. All levels of the Temasik polity's social hierarchy consumed this particular beverage.

The Malacca Straits region settlements were apparently not mere passive recipients of foodstuffs and consumables brought incidentally by trading vessels. At Temasik, the consistency of the proportions of fifteen identifiable types of coarse stoneware sherds in the Old Parliament House and Empress Place assemblages suggests that Temasik, throughout the span of its existence, maintained a consistent demand for certain foodstuff products from Guangdong and South Fujian, and for a much more limited range of products sourced from areas further afield, and exported via the ports of Guangzhou and Quanzhou.

8.5.3 The Overall Importance of Ceramics in China's Export Trade to the Malacca Straits region

¹⁰⁶ Xu (1983: 112-114).

¹⁰⁷ Moore (1970: 8).

In general, Maritime Southeast Asia imported large quantities of Chinese ceramics throughout the tenth to fourteenth centuries. As early as the tenth century, ceramics appear to have constituted the largest group of non-perishable products exported by China to Maritime Southeast Asia. This is suggested by the ceramics cargo carried by the Intan wreck, and by the number of Chinese ceramics found at sites in Maritime Southeast Asia. Despite the relatively low unit value of ceramics, the value of the ceramics trade was already valuable.

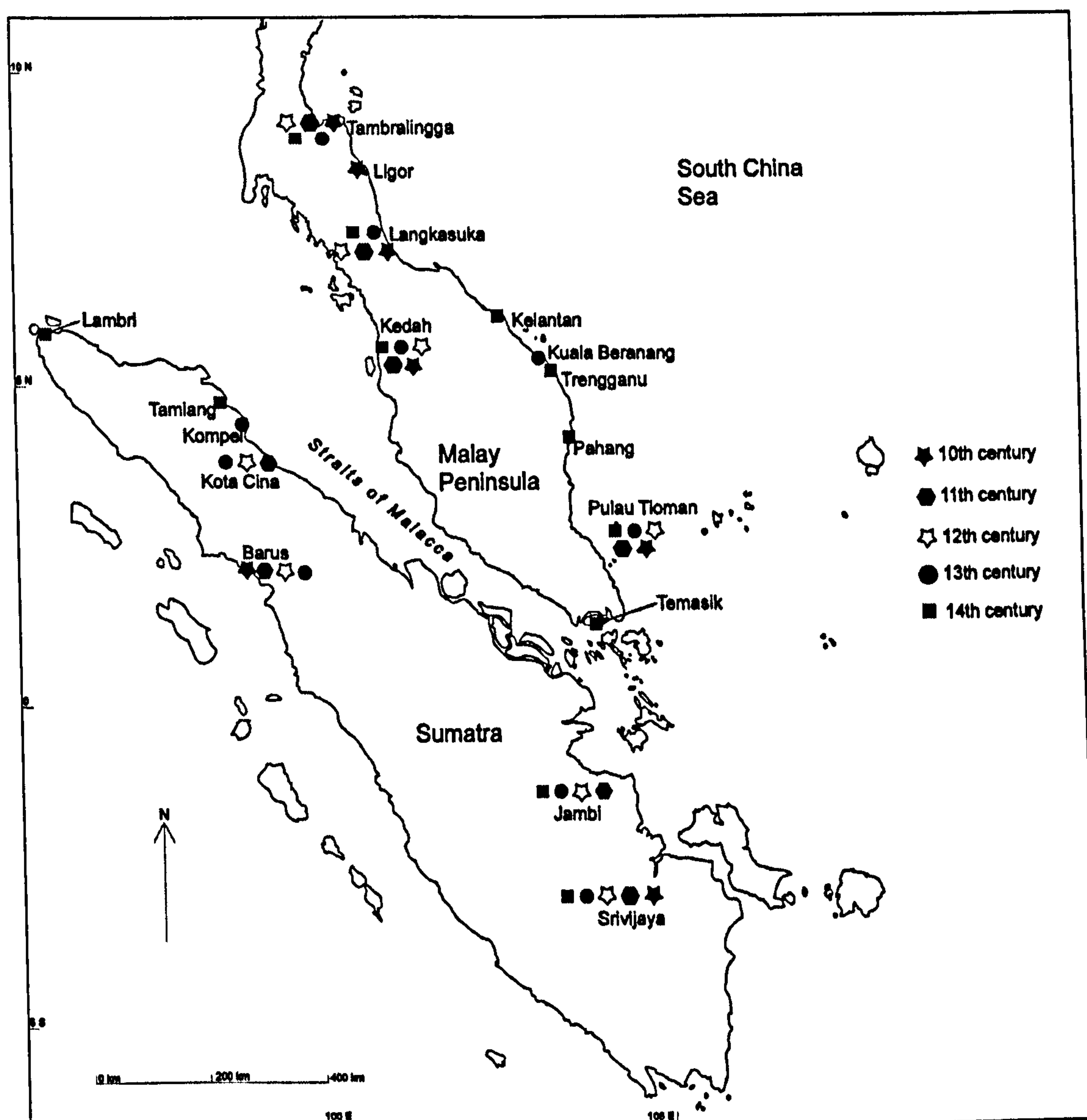


Fig. 8.5: Malacca Straits region ports that imported Chinese ceramics between the 10th and 14th centuries.

By the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, ceramics had clearly become the dominant product exported by China to the Malacca Straits region in terms of the volume of trade. Ceramics accounted for the largest group of Chinese products recovered from the Pulau

Buaya wreck, far exceeding the proportion represented in the Intan wreck cargo. In terms of value, the ceramics trade continued to represent the largest component of China's export trade, even though low-value ceramics continued to account for almost all of the ceramics imported by the region.

Larger volumes of Chinese ceramics appear to have been shipped to the Malacca Straits region than to anywhere in Island Southeast Asia aside from Java. The Malacca Straits region was an indirect source of Chinese products for such further regions as the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East, as well as Island Southeast Asia. Shipments of Chinese ceramics to the Malacca Straits, which had to cater for the region's own demand as well as those of other regions, would thus have been much higher than shipments to some other parts of the region, with the possible exception of Java. The Straits region even supplied some of Java's ceramic imports. This is reflected in the ceramics cargo of the Intan and Pulau Buaya wrecks. While the Pulau Buaya wreck was heading for a port along the southeastern coast of Sumatra, its mix of cargo suggests that its final port of call was to be in Java. The Intan ship was clearly leaving Sumatra and heading for Java. Both were transshipping Chinese ceramics and adding them to cargoes destined for Java.

The late eleventh and early twelfth centuries appear to have been a period of high activity in the ceramics trade. This is confirmed by information from the PZKT, which states that the cargo holds of the trading vessels leaving Guangzhou were mainly loaded with large and small ceramics of matching sets prior to their departure to Southeast Asia during this period¹⁰⁸. This surge in ceramics exports thus clearly began even before a ban was placed on the export of copper cash by the Song court in China in 1175, an act that has been cited as the major impetus for the boom in the export trade in Chinese ceramics during the Song period¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ PZKT 2:3a.

¹⁰⁹ Long (1992: 30).

The ban on the export of Chinese copper cash in 1175, along with the 1219 ban on the use of gold and silver in official trade transactions, provided a further boost to the ceramics export trade. The 1219 ban listed stoneware ceramics as one of the export products to be used in place of gold and silver¹¹⁰. The resulting need for larger volumes of products permitted to be exported in order to make up for the high unit-value and low volume of gold and silver must have led to a corresponding increase in the volume of the ceramics trade in the thirteenth century.

China remained consistent as the chief source of stoneware ceramics imported by Maritime Southeast Asia during the tenth to fourteenth centuries. However, towards the end of the fourteenth century, the region's source of stoneware ceramics shifted from South China to Mainland Southeast Asia as Chinese maritime trade was severely curtailed following the advent of Ming rule in 1368. The result was a temporary but dramatic decline in the volume of the ceramics trade from China that had lasting effects. Chinese ceramics accounted for only one-third of the stoneware ceramics recovered from the Turiang wreck. The remainder of the ceramics cargo was made up of Mainland Southeast Asian stoneware ceramics from Thai kilns. The value of the Chinese ceramics trade had also declined significantly. Almost all of the Chinese ceramics recovered from the wreck were from Guangdong. No higher value ceramics were recovered. This apparent early 'Ming gap' in Chinese ceramics has been noted at a number of sites in Maritime Southeast Asia¹¹¹. The volume and value of Chinese stoneware ceramics trade, which had been so important in China's export trade to Maritime Southeast Asia from the tenth to the mid-fourteenth centuries, was considerably diminished by Ming policy in the late fourteenth century.

¹¹⁰ SS 185:32b.

¹¹¹ See Brown (2004).

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Sources for the Study of China-Malacca Straits Region Economic Interaction in the Tenth to Fourteenth Century Period

The present study has been conducted using both historical texts and archaeological information. Each set of data presents a different challenge to scholars, and each illuminates a different aspect of the present topic. Historical texts remain the key source of information on the structures, at both the regional, sub-regional, state and port levels that governed the economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region. Thus, texts remain important in providing scholars with an understanding of the context within which trade was conducted. The archaeological sites, on the other hand, provide a growing body of data concerning the shifting loci and evolving patterns of trade.

The number of texts available for research on this topic has remained static, the SHY being the only text to have been added to the repertoire known to scholars by the beginning of the twentieth century. While more may be elucidated through detailed readings of historical texts, and better understanding of their contents, the information that historical texts offer on the trade itself is fairly limited. There is very little textual data on the products involved in the trade. Often, only general groups of products are noted. In addition, these texts lack quantitative data on the various aspects of trade, with the exception of the periodic valuations of trade that have been recorded. Trade itself, therefore, cannot be comprehensively understood solely through reliance on textual data.

Archaeological information helps to fill this gap by providing quantitative data on certain products that were included in trade. With sufficient sites whose dates are distributed fairly evenly over the period in question, archaeological data can reveal changes in the relative

volume and value of trade in specific groups of products represented by archaeological remains. Archaeological data can also reveal connections both between regions and within them. This is an important characteristic of trade that historical texts do not always reveal. Nonetheless, there are limitations to the use of this source of information. Archaeological data provide information largely on the trade in non-perishable products. Thus, this source of information cannot reflect the complete nature of the trade that took place.

On-going archaeological research in Maritime Southeast Asia and China continues to provide new information pertaining to the trade between China and the Malacca Straits region. As more shipwrecks, settlement sites and manufacturing sites such as kiln areas are surveyed and excavated, more data will become available. The body of information from archaeological sources can therefore only expand. It is thus clear that archaeology will become increasingly important in providing new information, thereby pushing the boundaries of our understanding of the economic interaction between the two regions during the tenth to fourteenth centuries.

When integrated with textual information, archaeological data reveal the effects that the contexts and structures governing economic interaction between two regions had on the actual exchange of goods. The integration of textual and archaeological sources of information in the study of the economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region also provides important information concerning both the macro and micro-level aspects of economic interaction between the two regions. In this respect, neither source of information overshadows the other in importance. For the present study, the balance achieved would not have been possible if only one source of information had been relied upon.

Change Over Time: Trade between China and the Malacca Straits Region During the Song and Yuan Periods

The present study has shown that, far from being static, the economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region underwent tremendous changes through the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries. The political imperatives that China faced determined the policies that were instituted by the Song and Yuan courts in the administration of maritime trade. However, the effects of changes in the administration of maritime trade continued to unfold so long as those changes remained implemented. Throughout the period between the middle of the tenth and the middle of the fourteenth century, China was an important trading partner of the Malacca Straits region. Since China depended upon the coastal polities of the Straits region as one of the key economies that determined their economic well-being and political stability, changes in the manner in which China conducted trade had important knock-on effects in the Malacca Straits region.

The shift in trade from the court to port level, and the liberalization of private participation in maritime trade by the Song court through the course of the late tenth to late eleventh centuries, shaped the China-Malacca Straits region trade into a two-way commercial exchange of products that grew increasingly diffused. Changes in the economic interaction between the Malacca Straits region and China occurred in four areas. The manner in which trade was conducted changed as a result of changes in the administration of China's maritime trade. This evolved from a trade conducted during the tenth century predominantly through state-level trade exchanges at the court-level and within China's borders, to a situation in the late eleventh century in which both Malacca Straits region state-sponsored trade and Chinese private trade were conducted at the port-level, with the commercial activities of the two groups of traders taking place both in China and in the Straits region.

The changes in the administrative structures governing trade in China determined the approach that the Malacca Straits region adopted in its trade with China. Thus, the Straits region's trade with China shifted over time from a trade that was essentially that of a regional power, to one that was scattered amongst individual port-polities. The regional approach had to be initiated and maintained by a Straits region polity that was sufficiently powerful economically and politically to act as the entrepôt for its sphere of influence. During the tenth to early thirteenth centuries, Srivijaya managed to assume this regional role. From the thirteenth century onwards, however, trade with China was increasingly undertaken directly by a number of the Straits region's individual port-polities.

The role of Malacca Straits region representation in the Chinese international ports shifted according to changing needs. This representative community acted, during the later tenth and early eleventh centuries, as a source of information for the Srivijayan court in the Straits region and as facilitators of state-level tribute exchanges. From the later eleventh century onwards, this community served as a commercial interface between the Straits region and Chinese traders in China. By the thirteenth century, this community had split into sub-communities, acting as agencies for the individual port-polities in the Straits region that had established direct commercial links with the South Chinese ports of Guangzhou and Quanzhou.

As the trade shifted from court to port level, and evolved from being essentially initiated by the Malacca Straits region to a two-way exchange initiated by Chinese and Malacca Straits region traders, the products imported by China and the Straits region expanded in both range and volume, from comprising a limited number of products that were mainly of high value or of ceremonial significance, to a wide range of products that were not ceremonial in nature, and mainly of lower value.

Economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region following the advent of Song rule in 960 was essentially a continuation of trade conducted during the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods. Maritime trade—both the shipping trade and the domestic trade in foreign products—was regarded by the early Song court as a state monopoly. Commercial exchanges between Chinese private traders and foreign traders were not permitted. Under such conditions, trade between China and the Malacca Straits region was conducted mainly through tribute missions, and took place predominantly at the court level. The Malacca Straits region's approach to the conduct of trade with China was at the regional level, with state-level trade exchanges initiated and maintained under the auspices of Srivijaya.

The restrictive and high level at which trade took place led to a fairly limited range of predominantly high value products being shipped by the Malacca Straits region to China. The list of products shipped to China by Srivijaya in the early years of the Song period was limited to a select range of high value items, most of which originated from the Middle East and Indian Ocean littoral, with only a few products sourced from Maritime Southeast Asia. The conduct of trade mainly through tribute exchanges at the court level led to items with ceremonial significance, such as precious metal articles and ceremonial textiles, being exported to the Straits region. The Straits region community resident in the Chinese international port of Guangzhou existed mainly to assist in the state-level trade exchanges that took place, providing information to the Srivijayan court to facilitate the dispatch of tribute missions to China. The Chinese market's demand for foreign products was conveyed to the Straits region indirectly through the Song court, while Chinese products were presented to the Srivijayan tribute envoys or sourced by the representatives at Guangzhou. Because of the presence of Straits region representatives in Guangzhou, the range of goods exported from China was less restricted than that of goods imported. By the beginning of the Song period, many of the major types of Chinese export products—precious and base metals, ceramics and textiles—were already known and exported from China to the Malacca

Straits region. There appears to have been relatively large-scale export of more mundane products, such as ceramics and iron items.

This restrictive state of affairs did not last long. By the 990s, the Song court began to relegate the conduct of maritime trade to the port level, to be administrated by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies. Trade from Srivijaya, which had hitherto been conducted predominantly through state-level trade exchanges, began to be conducted at port level. This shift to port-level trade enabled Srivijaya in the early eleventh century, following the conflict it had with Java in the 990s, to turn from conducting its state-level exchanges with China purely as trading missions, to initiating these exchanges as diplomatic overtures towards the Song court. Thus, while the number of tribute missions in the early eleventh century was drastically lower than that of the latter half of the tenth century, the eleventh century missions were occasions of diplomatic overtures and triumphs for Srivijaya, resulting in its elevation in the Song court's eyes to the status of first-tier trading state by 1016, almost an equal of the Dashi Arabs in terms of ceremonial reception that the mission envoys received from the Song court.

By the third decade of the eleventh century, Srivijaya's objective in conducting diplomatic exchanges with the Song court, which was to establish a viable economic relationship with China, was secured. State-level diplomatic overtures were replaced with port-level overtures to secure its position at the port of Guangzhou, which had, by the eleventh century, become the chief conduit of the China trade for Srivijaya. These overtures included an extended campaign to cultivate the Guangzhou administration, involving the restoration of a Taoist monastery and the purchase of lands, once restoration work was completed, for the upkeep of the monastery. By the 1070s, with the restoration work coming to completion, Srivijaya had achieved a conspicuous presence at Guangzhou, which worked in its favor in promoting its trade activities in that port city.

While Guangzhou was the primary port of call for Straits region shipping, clandestine trade was also conducted at other Chinese domestic ports further north, especially in Fujian. This led the Song court, by 1087, to designate additional ports, including Quanzhou, as international ports, thereby extending the geographical scope of Srivijaya's trading activities in China northwards into Fujian by the late eleventh century.

The shift from state to port level trade was accompanied, from the 990s onwards, by a gradual process of liberalization of the domestic trade in foreign products in China, moving control out of the hands of the Song administration and into the hands of Chinese private traders. By 1074, the major proportion of domestic trade was in the hands of private traders. This growth of private sector trade spurred the development of domestic trade networks in China, from the late tenth century onwards, that were operated by Chinese private traders. These traders acquired a high degree of familiarity with Chinese market demand for foreign products.

The trade liberalization in the eleventh century was accompanied by a process of monetization of China's maritime trade. Up until 1074, the Song court used Chinese currency in the domestic areas of China's maritime trade, initially to carry out its compulsory purchases of foreign products arriving at the Chinese ports, but by the mid-eleventh century to assess the value of its maritime trade as well. In 1074, the use of Chinese currency was extended, following the legalization of the export of Chinese copper cash, to the external sector of China's maritime trade. This process affected all levels and channels of trade, leading to a complete monetization of the maritime trade between China and the Malacca Straits region.

These developments led to an expansion of Chinese trade with the Malacca Straits region, which necessitated the presence of a larger Srivijayan community in the Chinese ports to handle the trade arriving from the region. This community now acted as an interface

between the Straits region and Chinese private traders, and collected Chinese products that were suitable for export back to the Straits region, both for consumption within the region and for re-export. By the late eleventh to early twelfth centuries, the Srivijayan community at Guangzhou had become one of the most important foreign communities in the port city. Srivijaya was beginning to establish a prominent presence at Quanzhou during this time as well.

As trade between the Malacca Straits region and China increased through the course of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, and as the Straits region began to establish linkages with the Chinese market through Chinese private traders, the range of Maritime Southeast Asian products shipped to China began to widen. Until the late eleventh century, however, because the linkages between the two regions continued to be maintained indirectly, the expansion in product range remained fairly limited, as the Straits region was unable effectively to match its indigenous products to the potential demand by the Chinese market.

In 1090, the process of liberalization of Chinese private trade came to a peak with the liberalization of private mercantile shipping. From 991 until 1090, Chinese private shipping had only been allowed to depart for overseas markets from Guangzhou and Liangzhe, leading to significantly higher costs for traders based at ports other than these two designated international ports. The 1090 liberalization permitted Chinese shipping to depart from any Chinese port, so long as their departure was recorded by the local prefectural administration. This paved the way for the development of a fully-fledged two-way trade between the Malacca Straits region and China, characterized by a steady and significant growth in the volume of Chinese shipping abroad. The full-scale involvement of Chinese shipping in the Straits region-China trade boosted China's imports from the Straits region. Chinese shipping trade was now connected to the private domestic trading networks in foreign products within China that had been developing since the 990s. The geographical extent of Chinese shipping activities was limited to Maritime Southeast Asia, as the length

of time that Chinese vessels could remain abroad was still confined to one full monsoon cycle. As a result, Chinese traders concentrated on Maritime Southeast Asia as a source of foreign products that they could exploit directly. This led to the import of a wider range of Maritime Southeast Asian products by China from the late eleventh century onwards. Chinese traders were now able to search out products in Maritime Southeast Asia that would be readily accepted and consumed by the Chinese market, instead of relying solely on the Srivijayan community resident at the Chinese port cities as the source of foreign products coming into China.

The direct sourcing of foreign products in the Straits region by Chinese traders led China to develop a more broadly based import trade, encompassing an increasingly diverse range of products, and characterized by larger shipment volumes. From the twelfth century onwards, this trade moved away from the import trade of predominantly high value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products that had characterized the tenth and eleventh centuries. While the initial reaction of the Chinese market and traders was to continue with the existing pattern of import trade by concentrating on high value aromatics from Southeast Asia, there was, at the same time, a significant increase in the import of low value products. This resulted in the establishment of separate import duty rates for high and low value products at the beginning of the twelfth century.

The import of Chinese products by the Malacca Straits region evolved in tandem with the developments in the region's export trade. A wider range of products was imported by the Straits region during this period than in the tenth century. Metal products, both in workable and finished forms, were imported in significant quantities, as were ceramics. The products were sourced mainly from the immediate catchment areas around the Chinese ports that maintained trade links with the Malacca Straits region. While Guangzhou was the key Chinese center of the trade with the Straits region throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, the opening of new international ports along the Chinese coast in the late eleventh

century extended the catchment areas from which Chinese products could be sourced and shipped to the Straits region. This is particularly evident from the ceramics recovered from settlement and shipwreck sites in the Straits region. While the majority of the ceramics exported to the Straits region during the late tenth and eleventh centuries originated from Guangdong, by the twelfth century, a significant proportion of the ceramics comprised South Fujian wares. This development was likely to have been repeated in the export of other groups of products, such as metal items, foodstuffs and textiles.

By the end of the northern Song period in 1126, the economic interaction between the Malacca Straits region and China had shifted from being confined largely to ritualized state-level exchanges under the monopoly of the Song court in the tenth century, to being a fully liberalized two-way exchange conducted entirely at the port-level. While the diplomatic standing, in the Northern Song court's eyes, of foreign states in Maritime Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral, continued to be determined largely by the importance of their economic relations with China, China's conduct of trade and diplomatic relations with its foreign trading partners had, by the end of the Northern Song period, become separate from each other. This established the framework that subsequently enabled the court to administer its trade and diplomatic relations with foreign states separately during the Southern Song period, when political pressures that the Southern Song court faced in north China prompted it to initiate such changes.

China was beset by political and territorial uncertainties along its northern borders throughout the Southern Song period (1127 – 1278). While its maritime trade faced a brief disruption immediately following the establishment of Southern Song rule in 1127, by the 1130s, trade reverted to the manner in which it had operated during the late Northern Song period. However, the threat from the north to its political legitimacy led the Southern Song court to take a pro-active role in setting the agenda for its diplomatic relations with foreign states. The basis for the ranking of foreign states was changed in the 1130s, with first tier

states being identified by the Song court based on their political and economic supremacy in their respective regions, instead of solely on the importance of their economic links with China. Srivijaya, whose supremacy was limited to the Malacca Straits region, a sub-region in Maritime Southeast Asia, and whose reason for conducting diplomatic relations with the Song court was chiefly the advancement of its trade with China, thus decreased in diplomatic importance in the Song court's eyes.

However, China's separation of its economic and diplomatic interaction with foreign states by the end of the Northern Song period enabled Srivijaya, in spite of the decline in its diplomatic stature, to continue to maintain and develop its trade with China through the course of the twelfth century. While Srivijaya's diplomatic contact with the Song court declined, its economic status and administrative clout at the port level in China, and the Song court's recognition of its economic importance, continued to increase.

Chinese private mercantile shipping continued to be permitted throughout the Southern Song period. Chinese traders initially continued with the existing pattern of the import trade by introducing mainly high value Maritime Southeast Asian aromatics into the Chinese market. However, the 1164 fiscal changes, which saw the Song court increase its control of the domestic trade in luxury products from the Indian Ocean and Middle East to a majority proportion, led to a severe decrease in the profitability of the trade in luxury products for Chinese traders. The effort by Chinese traders to establish a new niche in China's maritime trade to replace the trade in luxury products led to a concentration on the import of low value products. By the early thirteenth century, the Malacca Straits region had become an important source of low value products that were suitable substitutes for Chinese products that were being consumed by the Chinese market. These products included furniture construction material, medicinal products, aromatics and other miscellaneous products.

The increase in the volume of Maritime Southeast Asian products imported by China led to the adoption of a comprehensive quality grading system by the mid-twelfth century. Initially, only key Maritime Southeast Asian aromatics were imported in large enough quantities and in a wide enough range of quality to be graded by Chinese traders and by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies at the Chinese ports. However, as Chinese trade in low value Maritime Southeast Asian products increased after 1164, a second quality grading system, one that highlighted the source of the best quality of a specific product available in the region, was developed as well. This not only reflected the increase in the volume of Maritime Southeast Asian products being shipped to China, but also the increase in the sourcing of these products directly by Chinese traders in Maritime Southeast Asia.

While Chinese traders were the main carriers of low value products to China in the twelfth century, by the early thirteenth century, the Straits region had begun to ship low value products to South China as well. Even as Srivijaya continued to transship luxury products from the Indian Ocean littoral and the Middle East to China, a number of minor port-polities in the Straits region had begun to establish direct economic relations with the South Chinese ports, shipping indigenous products to China.

The establishment of direct shipping trade with China by the Malacca Straits region's minor port-polities was part of a larger development whereby the Straits region's trade with China was, by the early thirteenth century, becoming diffused. This was occurring both at the Chinese ports as well as in the Malacca Straits region. The minor port-polities were not only participating in the carrying trade to China, but were also engaging Chinese traders in commercial activities in the Straits region itself. A number of these ports were already making one or two indigenous products, mainly of low value, available to foreign traders, even as Srivijaya continued to function as the regional entrepôt, making a wide range of indigenous products, probably sourced from its dependencies in the Straits region, available to foreign traders calling at its chief port at Jambi.

The developments of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had a tremendous impact on the nature of the export of Chinese products to the Malacca Straits region. The shifts from a focused to a diffused approach to the China-Malacca Straits region trade, in both directions, and from a predominantly high value to low value products trade, led to a corresponding shift in the types of products exported to the Straits region. While Chinese products were exported to the regional entrepôt of Srivijaya during the tenth to twelfth centuries, by the late twelfth century, these were exported directly to the Straits region's various ports as well. Although such high value products as silver, gold and copper were exported to the Straits region in the tenth to twelfth centuries, by the late twelfth century, it was mainly low value products such as ceramics, iron ware and foodstuffs, that were exported. The only notable exception was the shipment of 30000 copper tiles in 1172, which was orchestrated by the Srivijayan ruler.

By the end of the Southern Song period in 1279, the Malacca Straits region's trade with China had shifted from a focused regional approach to one that was diffused, with several port polities maintaining economic relations with China at the port-level. At the same time, Chinese private participation in the domestic and shipping trade continued to develop through the course of the Southern Song period. The resulting developments appear to have weakened the basis for Srivijaya's political stability, culminating, in 1275, in the sacking of its capital at Jambi by Java. The subsequent disintegration of regional hegemony that followed the fall of Srivijaya created a political vacuum in the Straits region that was filled by minor, competing port-polities, a number of which had already begun to assert some measure of autonomy in maritime trade by the beginning of the thirteenth century. These characteristics established the context within which the China-Malacca Straits region trade was to take place during the Yuan period.

The Yuan period (1279 – 1368) saw the Malacca Straits region in a fragmentary state, with power divided amongst numerous contending port-polities, none of which was powerful enough to represent the region and to renew state-level relations with the Yuan court. The Straits region's place in diplomatic terms was replaced by Java and Siam, whose spheres of influence had encroached on the region by the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. State level missions from the Straits region's polities were never regarded by the Yuan court as equal to those from Java, Siam or the states of the Indian sub-continent, and they were received only at the port level by the provincial administration.

At the same time, the first four decades of Yuan rule, between 1284 and 1232, witnessed a series of disruptions to China's maritime trade. During this time, the Yuan court attempted to monopolize China's shipping trade. Until 1297 this was carried out under the purview of the Ortaq clique, and after that by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies, under the authority of the Yuan court, until 1323. The monopolization of shipping did not take place continuously, but oscillated between the prohibiting and permitting of Chinese private shipping throughout these four decades. This instability severely disrupted China's private shipping trade, possibly leading some Chinese traders to shift their base of operations to foreign ports, including those in the Malacca Straits region.

While the Yuan court attempted to monopolize the shipping trade, the domestic trade in foreign products was largely left unaffected. Thus, the distribution of foreign products in China remained in the hands of Chinese private traders, and this enabled them to resume trading activities, whenever the prohibition on private shipping trade was lifted. Trade between China and the Straits region thus continued to take place in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By the early fourteenth century, products that could be sourced from the Straits region accounted for the largest proportion of the foreign products that were imported by China via Guangzhou. The increasing emphasis upon the import of lower value products, already evident by the end of the Song period, continued to form the basis of

China's trade with the Malacca Straits region during the Yuan period. While Chinese traders, who continued to be active in Maritime Southeast Asia during the Yuan period, carried this import trade, the Straits region's ports, a number of which continued to maintain commercial links with China's ports, most likely participated in this import trade as well.

Chinese commercial knowledge concerning the tastes and demands of the various Straits region ports continued to increase during this time. Demand for specific products was catered for. This included ceramics, textiles, foodstuffs and metal products. Variations in the types of these different groups of Chinese products exported to the Straits region's ports are evident, from textual and archaeological data, at both the port and sub-regional levels.

While the diffused, two-way trade between the Malacca Straits region and China became fully developed in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the level of trade between the two regions appears to have declined somewhat during this period, as compared to that experienced during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Although high value products from the Middle East and the Indian Ocean littoral continued to be imported by China, this trade was only a fraction of that witnessed during the Song period. The Straits region's trade with China was no longer dominated by the transshipment of high value products from the Middle East, Indian Ocean littoral and Island Southeast Asia. The Pax Tartarica, a consequence of the establishment of Mongol rule over Continental Asia, led to the re-opening of the overland trade route across Central Asia. This caused a corresponding decline in the role of the Malacca Straits region in the transshipment of products from the Middle East and India to China. Thus, Straits region ports that were formerly known to have made such products available, such as Jambi, were no longer noted by Chinese traders as carrying them.

The Malacca Straits region's trade with China now comprised mainly indigenous low value products. The volume of China's import of low value products from the Malacca

Straits region had become higher than that of high value products. As a result, the value of trade between the Straits region and China was likely to have been lower than that of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Under such circumstances, Malacca Straits region representation in China was confined solely to the port-level, with each port-polity maintaining its own representatives at the Chinese ports. No regional representation existed during this period, and diplomatic interaction at the court-level did not take place.

Song and Yuan Period Trade in the History of China-Maritime Southeast Asian Economic Relations

The changing nature of the economic interaction between China and the Malacca Straits region constitutes an important aspect of the history of the Straits region during the tenth to fourteenth centuries. In particular, it is a key to understanding one of the most important bases upon which the formation of coastal polities in the region took place during this period. The Straits region's trade with substantial Asian states, such as China, Java and the states of the Indian sub-continent, played a major role in the rise and decline of the Straits region's port polities, and of the larger and smaller hierarchical organizations of those polities. The types and sources of trade goods offered by Straits polities, and the manner in which their trade was organized, changed in response to the evolving demands of major Asian markets. Ultimately, the formation and organization of the port-polities occurred in response to changes in the international maritime trade context.

The present study indicates that the relationship between Maritime Southeast Asia and China was complex, and underwent significant changes through the course of the tenth to fourteenth centuries. China's interaction with the various sub-regions within Maritime Southeast Asia was not homogenous, despite the fact that China's policies governing trade and foreign relations were fairly standardized and equitably implemented throughout the

Song and Yuan periods. The actual impact of these policies, and the varying responses that they elicited from China's foreign trading partners in Maritime Southeast Asia, caused China's economic and political relations to differ significantly from sub-region to sub-region. A greater understanding of the complexity and levels of the economic relationship between China and Maritime Southeast Asia would thus be attained if scholars addressed this relationship primarily at the sub-regional level.

The present study seeks to further our understanding, as a whole, of the cycle of China's economic relationship with Southeast Asia, through the examination of China's trade with a portion of the Southeast Asian region, over a period of four centuries. The period immediately following the Yuan, from the fifteenth century onwards, was characterized by the flourishing of Chinese maritime trade activities whose base and scope of operations lay outside of China, mainly in Southeast Asia. This trade was dominated by Maritime Southeast Asian products, most of which were of low value. These characteristics were the result of several linked developments in Chinese maritime trade that occurred during the Song and Yuan periods: 1) the growth of Chinese private maritime trade and shipping between China and Maritime Southeast Asia; 2) the increasing knowledge of Southeast Asian ports and products on the part of Chinese traders; 3) the expansion of trade in low value products of Maritime Southeast Asian origin; and 4) the increasing involvement of Chinese traders in Southeast Asian intra-regional trade. Although tributary trade relations characterized the state-level exchanges between China and the polities of Maritime Southeast Asia from the fifteenth century onwards, and the Ming court disallowed private maritime trade from the fifteenth century onwards, the diffused trade that had developed between Chinese and Maritime Southeast Asian traders by the fourteenth century continued at the lower levels. By this time Chinese traders were operating from outside of China, and participating in the trade between the various ports of Mainland and Island Southeast Asia to make up for the loss of the China-Southeast Asia trade. Chinese maritime trade in Southeast

Asia during the Ming period was an outgrowth of the trade developed during the Song and Yuan periods.

As China rises in economic and political importance to assume its historical position as the dominant state of East Asia, the present study is important in fostering an understanding of the role that China has historically played, providing a better idea, from the long cycle of its relationship with Southeast Asia, of the possible trajectory of present-day developments. The early Ming period, with particular reference to the Ming voyages initiated by the emperor Yongle, has traditionally been viewed as the historical period to which the present developments of China-Southeast Asia relations may be compared. As long as China lacks the ability or desire to project any form of naval, and therefore military, supremacy into Maritime Southeast Asia, the comparison is somewhat awkward. However, the permitting of private enterprise, coupled with a significant yet diminishing level of involvement on the part of the Chinese government in the economic sectors of manufacturing and trade, has very strong parallels with the Song and Yuan periods. As China's economy, and the administrative structures that govern economic activities, particularly in the sectors of trade and manufacturing, evolve, history may provide lessons in assessing the manner in which Maritime Southeast Asian states will react and adapt to the changes in China in order to remain relevant and viable in the twenty-first century.

Appendix A: Individual Studies on Malacca Straits Products

A detailed understanding of the development of China's trade in Malacca Straits region products during the Song and Yuan periods may be ascertained from the study of the trade of specific products during the four centuries. Such studies illustrate how the structural changes to the China-Southeast Asia maritime trade affected the trade in individual products from the Malacca Straits region. In addition, the characteristics of the commercial relationship between China and its Southeast Asian trading partners, and the changes in that relationship over a course of four centuries, is reflected in the trade in individual products. The trade of three products from the Malacca Straits region, of both low and high value will be explored in the following sections.

Lakawood Incense

Of the many products available for export from the trading ports of the Malay Peninsula, lakawood, the scented heartwood and root wood of a thick liana the *Dalbergia parviflora*¹, stands out as being one of the consistently sought-after aromatics of this region during the Song and Yuan periods. Lakawood incense, which was available solely from the Malacca Straits region, may have been introduced to China at the beginning of the tenth century, when Srivijaya first established trade and diplomatic ties with Tang China in 904². It was first noted during the Song period in 982 as one of the thirty-seven foreign products in common use permitted to be freely traded by the Chinese citizens³. It is obvious from this early mention of lakawood incense that the Chinese market had a fairly high degree of

¹ Lakawood is still used as incense today in the Malacca Straits region. For details on the description, habitat and distribution of the *Dalbergia parviflora*, refer to Ridley (1922: 589).

² WXTK 332:2610,2.

³ SHY ZG 44:2a-b.

familiarity with this product by the advent of the Song period. However, lakawood incense was never a product exported to China via state-level exchange as it was not recorded as a product presented by any Srivijayan tribute mission to the Song court. The export of lakawood incense to China was thus carried out on a private basis.

From the outset, lakawood incense was consistently regarded as a low value product. It was still being classified as a “coarse” category product in the 1141 exercise carried out by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies of Guangdong, Fujian and Liangzhe provinces to standardize the classification of foreign products for customs purposes⁴. This was true even in the early thirteenth century. The ZFZ notes that this product was used by both the rich and poor to counter bad odors as its price was very cheap⁵.

The rapid acceptance in the tenth century of lakawood incense by the Chinese market appears to have stemmed from its similarities with a native product both in terms of aroma and appearance. In the *Nanfan chaomuzhuang*, a text on flora in south China written in 304 by Ji Han, the plant named *ziteng* (purple rattan) is mentioned, which was used as an incense to summon spirits. Ziteng (purple vine) incense was initially obtained from Guangdong and Guangxi during the fourth century⁶. Ji Han does not mention Southeast Asia as a source of the product. Nonetheless, according to the ZFZ, lakawood incense was similar in appearance and aroma to “purple vine incense”⁷. Lakawood incense was thus regarded as a suitable substitute for the Chinese product. Even the Song period name for lakawood incense—*jiangzhenxiang* or truth bearing incense—indicates that the product was not named after its appearance, as all foreign aromatics were, but rather after its functional

⁴ SHY ZG 44:21a-23a.

⁵ Chen & Qian (2000: 368).

⁶ Li (1979: 103).

⁷ Chen & Qian (2000: 368).

purpose⁸, most likely the result of its role as a substitute product very early on in its introduction into the Chinese market.

While lakawood incense was readily accepted by the Chinese market as a substitute product for ziteng incense, the two products were, up until the twelfth century, clearly distinguished from each other. The 1141 lists of foreign products, for example, mention lakawood incense and ziteng incense as separate products. This official position would have reflected the treatment of this product by both the traders and consumers of the Chinese market in the mid-twelfth century.

However, the use of lakawood incense as a substitute for ziteng incense from Guangdong and Guangxi reached a high point in the early thirteenth century. By this time, the names “*jiangzhenxiang*” and “*zitengxiang*” were used interchangeably, as is noted in the ZFZ⁹. These two products were thus regarded by the Mercantile Shipping Superintendencies as essentially the same product. While complete substitution had not yet occurred by 1141, by the early thirteenth century, this had already clearly taken place.

As long as Srivijaya continued to be China’s key trading partner in the Malacca Straits region, Sumatra was the source of the best quality of this substitute product¹⁰. As more Malacca Straits region ports began participating directly in the China trade through the course of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and as the commercial activities of Chinese maritime traders in the Malacca Straits region increased through the course of the late eleventh to thirteenth century, the level of knowledge that the Chinese possessed of lakawood incense increased in tandem as well. Thus, by the early thirteenth century, five

⁸ For a more detailed discussion of the product name, see Heng (2001: 133 – 150).

⁹ Chen & Qian (2000: 368).

¹⁰ Chen & Qian (2000: 368).

sources of this product were listed in the ZFZ --Shepo (Java), Srivijaya-Jambi, Borneo, Folo'an (Kuala Beranang) and Tambralingga¹¹.

Knowledge of the sources of lakawood incense was still confined to China's key trading partners, most of which were regional polities. This suggests that the key players in the lakawood incense trade in the early thirteenth century were still China's trading partners and their traders, rather than the Chinese traders themselves. Nonetheless, the Malacca Straits region was recognized, by this time, as the chief source of China's supply of lakawood incense, even as the region became a key source of the low value products imported by China from Island Southeast Asia.

While Malacca Straits region traders continued to be an integral part of China's import trade, in the early thirteenth century, shipping indigenous products from the region to the Chinese market, towards the end of the Song period, the Chinese traders played a critical role in the trade in this product, most likely overtaking the Malacca Straits region traders in this respect. This can be seen from the large quantity of lakawood incense recovered from the Quanzhou wreck, indicating that Chinese traders, of both large and small scale, were heavily involved in the lakawood incense trade by the 1270s¹².

This development led, by the fourteenth century, to Chinese knowledge of the sources of lakawood incense in Island Southeast Asia to be at the port-level, rather than in terms of polities or trading partners in the region, as had been the case in the early thirteenth century. The DYZL records eight ports as the sources of lakawood incense by this time—Tambralingga, Kelantan, Srivijaya-Jambi, Tamiang, Samudra, Lambri, Tanjongpura and Malilu¹³. This indicates that lakawood incense had, by this time, become a product

¹¹ See Table 7.6.

¹² For a discussion of the lakawood incense cargo recovered from the Quanzhou wreck, refer to Nanjing Yaoxueyuan et al. (1983).

¹³ See Table 7.8 & Table 7.9.

predominantly procured by Chinese traders directly from Malacca Straits region sources. This is reflective of a general shift in the pattern of trade between China and the Malacca Straits region in the fourteenth century from that of the early thirteenth century, whereby Chinese traders and mercantile shipping became the key players in China's trade with Island Southeast Asia.

This change in trading pattern, which was accompanied by an increase in the level of knowledge of products that could be acquired from Island Southeast Asia, is further reflected by the change in information on the sources of lakawood incense. While the ZFZ notes that Srivijaya was the source of the best lakawood incense in the early thirteenth century, the DYZL notes that Lambri was the exporter of the best lakawood incense during the fourteenth century, while Jambi, the former capital of Srivijaya, exported only lakawood incense of middle quality¹⁴. Presumably, Srivijaya had obtained top grade lakawood incense from Lambri through an intra-regional trade system established with its dependencies in the Malacca Straits region, one of which was Lambri, and shipped this product to China. However, by the fourteenth century, ports in the region began offering their own specialty products for export directly to foreign traders. This change in the trading pattern was possible only because Chinese traders were increasingly procuring Malacca Straits region products themselves directly from their sources, and because the capital of Srivijaya--Jambi--was sacked by Java in 1275, leaving in its wake a vacuum in the political and regional economic structures in the Malacca Straits region that allowed the port-polities of the region to assert their economic independence and access the international trade directly until China's structural pattern of trade once again changed with the advent of the Ming dynasty in 1368.

The status of lakawood incense underwent significant change through the course of the Yuan period. By the early Ming period, the status of lakawood incense had been elevated to

¹⁴ Su (1981: 141).

that of a tribute item. According to the *Yingya shenglan*, a 1433 record of the voyages of the Ming admiral Zhenghe conducted in the first three decades of the fifteenth century, ports along the northeastern coast of Sumatra as well as Siam were dispatching lakawood incense as tribute to the Ming court¹⁵. This suggests that lakawood incense was regarded as a high value product by the early fifteenth century. This change in status must have taken place during the Yuan period, when a number of “coarse” category products were reclassified as “fine” category products. It is unclear if this fiscal action caused lakawood incense to become more sought-after by the Chinese market as a high value product, although it is more likely that it had become sufficiently prized by the Chinese market, by the Yuan period, to justify a reclassification of its value and thus its import duty rate. Whatever the reason, the rise in status of lakawood incense from a “coarse” category product to a tribute item within the space of four centuries is undeniable.

Imitation Dragon's Blood

China's trade in dragon's blood, an aromatic resin of Middle Eastern origin (*Dracaena schizantha* and *D. cinnabari*¹⁶), was very select, with the first Song textual reference to this product appearing in the 1133 memorial recorded in the SHY¹⁷. By the mid-twelfth century, only one type of dragon's blood is recorded to have been imported by China, noted in the 1141 customs duties lists in the SHY. Thus, up until the twelfth century, the dragon's blood made available to the Chinese market was the true dragon's blood from the Middle East. This product was most likely shipped to China by both Middle Eastern traders, as well as those from such key entrepôts in Island Southeast Asia as Srivijaya, whose trade with China comprised almost entirely the transshipment trade in Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean products up until the middle of the twelfth century.

¹⁵ Mills (1970: 122 & 124).

¹⁶ Wheatley (1959: 109).

¹⁷ SHY ZG 44:17b-19b.

By the early thirteenth century, the ZFZ notes that a new product--imitation dragon's blood--was being made available to the Chinese market. This was an aromatic product that had a similar appearance to that of Middle Eastern dragon's blood, and was available at Quanzhou by the early thirteenth century¹⁸. According to the ZFZ, imitation dragon's blood was a product that could only be sourced from Srivijaya-Jambi¹⁹. Thus, this product was purely a Malacca Straits region product. The ZFZ notes that imitation dragon's blood contained an admixture of aromatic woods and of lakawood sap²⁰. However, it is also possible that the resin of Island Southeast Asian palms of the genus *Daemonorhops*²¹, which is presently known as dragon's blood, was the product in question. The geographical distribution of palms of the *Daemonorhops* genus in Island Southeast Asia includes Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and Borneo²². Thus, imitation dragon's blood was a low value product. It is possible that this product may have been collected from a wide area in the Malay Peninsula and brought to Srivijaya-Jambi, from whence it was exported to China.

It is apparent that the polities in the Malacca Straits region, the key region in Southeast Asia through which Middle Eastern products were transshipped to China, were aware of the Chinese market's demand for Middle Eastern dragon's blood in China by the mid-twelfth century. It is thus likely that Srivijaya, which was the chief entrepot of the region, was attempting to offer a substitute product that could be sourced from its dependencies for the high value Middle Eastern product. This commercial venture was not characteristic of Srivijaya, which was more used to riding on recently established demands of the Chinese market for specific foreign products, such as in the case of camphor and "jian" gharuwood incense. In attempting to introduce a low value substitute product, Srivijaya was trying to

¹⁸ Chen & Qian (2000: 325).

¹⁹ Chen & Qian (2000: 46).

²⁰ Chen & Qian (2000: 325).

²¹ Wheatley (1959: 111).

²² *D. draco*, *D. didymophyllus* and *D. ruber* in Sumatra, *D. motleyi*, *D. draconellus* and *D. mattanensis* in Borneo, and *D. didymophyllus*, *D. propinquus* and *D. micracanthus* on the Malay peninsula. Wheatley (1959: 111).

break into the low value products sector of the Chinese market, an effort that was also reflected by the tribute items brought by its 1178 state-level trade mission to China.

This attempt to introduce a substitute product into the Chinese market also went against the general pattern of China's twelfth and thirteenth-century import trade with Island Southeast Asia in that it did not involve Chinese traders. Unlike most other substitute products sourced from the Malacca Straits region during this time, the production of imitation dragon's blood required a manufacturing process instead of merely the harvesting of the product from the forest hinterland. Thus, the attempt was not so much the adoption of a pre-existing product to meet the Chinese market's demand for dragon's blood, but rather Srivijaya's proactive efforts at creating a niche in the market for this product. The knowledge of the Chinese market that only Chinese traders possessed, which was a crucial factor in the successful adoption of other low value products from the Malacca Straits region as substitute products for those that were already being consumed and demanded by China, was never part of this commercial venture.

By all accounts, the trade in imitation dragon's blood was short-lived, and thus a failure. The ZFZ is the only text containing reference to this product. By the early fourteenth century, although the DDNHZ notes that dragon's blood continued to be imported into China²³, it would appear that the product referred to was from the Middle East. The failure of this product in the Chinese market is reflected by the absence of this product as an export item in all of the ports recorded in the DYZL, including Jambi. Srivijaya was thus not successful in encouraging the Chinese market to accept this product. More importantly, this failed attempt is reflective of a larger failure of the ports of the Malacca Straits region to influence the import trade that China conducted with them in the Song and Yuan periods. The region's shipment trade to China was thus largely one of reacting to China's changing

²³ DDNHZ 7:18a.

market demands, while it was only the Chinese traders who, with their domestic trade networks and market knowledge, were able to steer China's import trade with great success.

Jiangzhen

In Song texts, lakawood incense was designated as "*jiangzhenxiang*". While the term continued to be used during the late Yuan period in the DYZL, a new product name containing only the characters "*jiangzhen*" without the noun suffix "*xiang*" was by this time being used as a trade term as well²⁴. According to this text, all ports of the Malay Peninsula, other than Tambralingga and Kelantan, as well as Borneo and Palembang, exported "*jiangzhen*" of various qualities by the fourteenth century²⁵.

A new Malacca Straits region product named *jiangzhen* thus appears to have been introduced into the China-Malacca Straits region trade during the Yuan period. From its wide availability from almost all ports in the Malacca Straits region, it is apparent that demand for *jiangzhen* in China was high enough for these ports to want to be involved in its trade. The widespread involvement of Malacca Straits region ports in *jiangzhen* may also reflect its easy and widespread availability throughout the Malacca Straits region. The use of a detailed quality grading system in the DYZL for this product suggests that the level of knowledge that Chinese traders possessed of *jiangzhen* and its sources was high and detailed, and that the value of this product in relation to its value was also fairly well established in China.

²⁴ Apart from the ZFZ and the DYZL, the term "*jiangzhen*" is not recorded in any other Song or Yuan period text. There is no indication as to what type of product it was in these two texts. The tendency has therefore been to regard this as a textual error, and to equate *jiangzhen* to *jiangzhenxiang*, or lakawood incense. Wheatley (1959: 257). For a detailed discussion on "*jiangzhen*", refer to Heng (2001).

²⁵ See Table 7.8 & Table 7.9.

It is not clear which product “*jiangzhen*” was used to refer to. This product name only occurs in the DYZL. Apart from this text, the term also occurs in the *Maokun* map of the *Wubeizhi*, a treatise on military preparation written during the early seventeenth century (1620). In the section featuring the eastern coastline of the Malay Peninsula, the area north of the Kelantan River was noted to produce *jiangxiang*, while the area between the Telubin and Patani Rivers produced *jiangzhen*²⁶. This distinction is consistent with that noted in the DYZL, where Langkasuka and Kelantan exported *jiangzhen* and *jiangzhenxiang* respectively²⁷. The distinction in the terms used was most likely intentional, indicating two different products being exported from the ports situated at these river estuaries. This distinction would reflect the sources of information upon which the construction of the map was based. The preface of the *Wubeizhi* indicates that the geographical and navigational details of the *Maokun* map were based on the *Yingya shenglan* and the *Xingcha shenglan*, and by extension the DYZL, upon which the two early Ming texts depended heavily for information on the Malay Peninsula. It thus seems probable that this early seventeenth century chart reflected Chinese knowledge of the Malacca Straits region during the first-half of the fifteenth century, and of the fifteenth century trade between China and the Malay Peninsula.

“*Jiangzhen*” was thus used during the Yuan period as a product name to denote a product separate from lakawood incense. Nonetheless, this usage suggests that the two products may have shared similar characteristics. One possibility is the physical appearance of the two products. Javanese texts make mention of the usage of a material known as “*laka*”. Javanese inscriptions dating from the tenth century onwards contain the word “*manglaka*”, which means “processor of laka-wood dye”. The word “*laka*” occurs regularly in Old Javanese literature as a term for a red dyestuff in the textile industry. This shade of red in the Javanese textile pallet was of significant importance during the late first and early second

²⁶Mills (1970: 276 & 277). For further discussions on the place-names contained in the *Maokun* map, refer to Zhu (1988), & Li & Zhu (1991).

²⁷Su (1981: 99 & 181).

millennia AD. The use of the term as a shade of dye color was confined largely to the Javanese context. The tree from which this dye was derived, also known as the laka, is the *Emblica officinalis*, which is different from the *Dalbergia parviflora* from which lakawood incense was derived²⁸. It is possible that the Chinese traders were aware of this dye-stuff which was used by the Javanese. The consistency amongst both the Chinese traders and Javanese textile dyers in using the term “*jiangzhen*” and “*laka*” respectively as an indicative adjective of any product derived from any laka-type plant may not just be a coincidence. In the Chinese trade context, where there was no proper name given for the laka tree, the term “*jiangzhen*” would most likely have been used in this capacity. The use of the term “*jiangzhen*” would then have been logical, since the suffix “*xiang*” would have been dropped, while the plant itself, now a dye-stuff product possibly in the form of wood chips or chunks, would still have been indicated by the term “*jiangzhen*”, which would have been indicative of the physical appearance, even though the two plants—*Emblica officinalis* and *Dalbergia parviflora*—would have had distinctly different scents.

However, it is more likely that “*jiangzhen*” was used to refer to a type of construction timber. According to the *Suma Oriental*, a sixteenth century record by Tomé Pires, a Portuguese who arrived with the early settlers of Malacca after its capture by Alfonso d’Albuquerque in 1511, Singapore Island was noted as a rich source of black wood timber that was highly demanded by China in the sixteenth century, of which great quantities were transshipped annually to Malacca before being purchased by Chinese traders and shipped to China²⁹.

This sixteenth century trade in the black wood was possibly a continuation of the economic context of the fourteenth century. According to the DYZL, apart from Srokam, which exported top grade “*jiangzhen*”, only Banzu (settlement on the north bank of the Singapore

²⁸ Christie (1993: 206-207).

²⁹ Cortesao (1944: 123).

River, Singapore Island) was known to have exported middle grade “*jiangzhen*”³⁰. It is thus possible that the black wood exported from Singapore Island, as noted in the *Suma Oriental*, was the product “*jiangzhen*”. The Chinese traders’ demand for this product appears to have been consistent through the fifteenth and into the early sixteenth century, with the demand clearly focused on Singapore Island as the source of the product.

Tomé Pires’ use of the term “black wood”, a term used by early European traders in Asia to indicate tropical hardwoods from South and Southeast Asia that belonged to the category of rosewoods, indicate that the Singapore Island product ranged from dark reddish brown to dark purplish brown in color. Hardwood timber of this color was highly demanded in China for furniture construction³¹. This market demand was so apparent that even European traders, who had just arrived on the scene of this international trade context in the sixteenth century, periodically shipped quantities of black wood to the Chinese ports as barter goods whenever they could get hold of them.

The term “*jiangzhen*” may have been used to indicate this type of timber because of its rosewood-like appearance, which would have been similar to that of lakawood incense. It is possible that the black wood exported by Banzu had an odiferous scent as well, since the common rosewood was used in the Malacca Straits region as a substitute for lakawood as incense³². Fourteenth century Chinese traders may have been aware of the similar characteristics of the black wood from Singapore Island with lakawood incense, and thus named the product “*jiangzhen*” to indicate the affinity between these two products.

The introduction of black wood type timber into the Chinese market during the fourteenth century is substantiated by the DDNHZ, which notes that one of the timber products imported through Guangzhou was one simply known as “red-purple”. A name was not given

³⁰ Su (1981: 123 & 196).

³¹ See Wang (1990) & Hinckley (1960).

³² Schafer (1957: 134-5).

to this product, suggesting that the Chinese import trade in it was still in its infancy. Nonetheless, it would appear that individual Chinese traders plying the Malacca Straits region circuit and shipping this product to China had developed their own name for it. A possible explanation for Chinese traders not using a completely different product name for “*jiangzhen*” may lie in the Chinese trade practice of labeling products according to their physical characteristics, such as lakawood incense (truth-descending incense) and the varieties of gharuwood incense (sinking incense; mature yellow incense). It would appear that in the case of “*jiangzhen*”, when it was newly introduced into the Chinese market, the same adjective term that was used to denote lakawood incense, which it shared certain similar physical characteristics with, was used by Chinese traders to denote it. The use of the term “*jiangzhen*”, which in terms of Chinese texts dated to between the fourteenth and seventeenth century is confined to the DYZL and the *Maokun* map, strongly suggests that it was a term used solely by Wang Dayuan to denote this product. Other product names, such as red-purple timber, may have been used by other maritime traders to denote that product.

This immediate success of the introduction of “*jiangzhen*” into the Chinese market reflects a development in the pattern of trade between China and Island Southeast Asia, whereby the introduction of low value products from places such as the Malacca Straits region was no longer solely for the purpose of product substitution, but also included the establishing of new niche areas in China’s demand for foreign products. Nonetheless, the success of introducing such new products in the fourteenth century was still dependent on the ability of traders to match the existing consumption patterns of the Chinese market. In the case of “*jiangzhen*”, it was China’s construction and furniture makers’ demand for hard wood timber that led to the immediate acceptance of this Malacca Straits region product.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

<i>BEFEO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, Paris.</i>
<i>FMJ</i>	<i>Federated Museums Journal, Kuala Lumpur.</i>
<i>HJSYJ</i>	<i>Haijiaoshi yanjiue 海交史研究, Quanzhou.</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society, New Haven.</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Brussels.</i>
<i>JMBRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Kuala Lumpur.</i>
<i>JSEAH</i>	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian History, Singapore.</i>
<i>JSEAS</i>	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.</i>
<i>JSSS</i>	<i>Journal of the South Seas Society, Singapore.</i>
<i>MIH</i>	<i>Malaya in History, Kuala Lumpur.</i>
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