

Roxanna Brown, "Preliminary report on the Koh Khram sunken ship", *Oriental Art* (Winter 1975), pp. 356-69 with 11 half-tone plates, 42 line drawings of Thai ceramic profiles, and an outline chart of the ceramic finds.

Miss Brown's scholarly article, modestly called a "preliminary report", is an in-depth account of the ceramic finds from a Thai ship that sank in the Gulf of Siam in the latter part of the 15th century. The vessel was carrying a cargo of Thai and other export wares, and was probably destined for the Philippine or Indonesian archipelagoes, then the great markets for Thai as well as Chinese and Annamese ceramic wares.

The vessel with its cargoes remained on the sea bottom on top of a submerged sandbar until a group of Thai fishermen dived to the seabed to untangle their nets in September 1974. When the divers surfaced they brought up several pieces of pottery and later recovered some 82 additional samples. They reportedly sold the lot of their underwater finds to a Bangkok businessman for the tidy sum of 30,000 *baht*, or about 650 Pounds sterling.

When news of the discoveries became known, great crowds of treasure-seekers flocked to the site, some 12 nautical miles southwest of the tiny island of Kòh Khram, itself some 170 kilometres south of Bangkok and near the Royal Thai Naval Base of Sattahip, and Pattaya, the recently developed seaside resort a short way to the north of the naval base.

In September 1974, however, the Thai Government's Department of Fine Arts investigated the finds and verified that the ceramic pieces were 500 to 600 years old. At the same time, the Department of Fine Arts took steps to prevent the wholesale looting of this important archaeological site, and borrowed 20 "frogmen" from the Royal Thai Navy to begin a systematic search of the underwater area.

Some 3,000 fragments of ceramic wares were subsequently collected, along with some fine whole specimens of the Thai Sukhōthai and Sawankhalōk wares of Thai 14th to 15th century kilns. All those items were carefully sorted and catalogued. Personnel of the

Department of Fine Arts have also been endeavoring to reassemble as many as possible of the vast numbers of ceramic fragments recovered at the Kòh Khram site.

Of special interest is the fact that the great bulk of the ceramics are of Thai provenance, coming from the 14th to 15th century Thai kilns in north-central Siam. The Sukhōthai pieces were principally painted-ware plates and bowls, many with the famous fish design painted on their centres so highly prized today by collectors of these wares. Also recovered was a large number of Sawankhalōk celadon glazed plates and bowls, many having incised underglazed floral decorations. Other types recovered were celadon and brown glazed globular jars with ring handles, along with a considerable number of those enormous Sawankhalōk water storage jars, some of which had become heavily encrusted with marine growth.

Two rather curious pieces were also found at the Kòh Khram site which deserve special mention here. One was a simple, bag-shaped earthenware rice-cooking pot similar to the present day earthenware *mòh khao*, which today can be found in almost every Thai household kitchen or be purchased for a few *baht* at any of Bangkok's numerous earthenware shops. Another curious piece was a small dish, some 16.2 centimetres in diameter, believed to be of Cham provenance. Although its Cham origin has not been fully established, it is interesting to note that the piece has what appears from a photograph accompanying Miss Brown's article to have a number of spur marks on its inner surface, like those found on most pieces of Sukhōthai painted ware. In that case, bowls and plates were fired in tall stacks within the kiln, each piece separated by a circular disc of fire clay having a number of projecting legs. The stands used at the Sukhōthai kilns all had five projecting legs, and hence left five spur marks on the inner surface of each plate or bowl, a kind of hallmark which proclaims the authenticity of those wares. Some Annamese pieces also show the spur marks made by such discs. The Annamese discs, however, had six legs. Such methods of firing in tall stacks were obviously meant to conserve fuel. They were also employed in China and Japan, the number of legs used on each disc varying.

Miss Brown believes that the unusual Cham piece most likely came from the recently discovered ancient Cham kilns in the southern part of Viet Nam. What is believed to be a piece of Vietnamese ware was also discovered at the Kòh Kham underwater site. It probably also came from the village of Go Sanh, some ten kilometres west of Qui Nho'n on the road to Pleiku.

The Kòh Kham finds open a new vista in the study of Thai and other Southeast Asian wares. They also demonstrate that Thai shipping played an extensive role in exporting Thai and other wares to the Philippines, Indonesia, and possibly other countries. In that connexion, the reviewer would like to cite an article he wrote entitled "Siam and the pottery trade of Asia", which was published in *The Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. XLIV Part 2, August 1956, where among the half-tone plates the reviewer presented an illustration of a Thai ship in Nagasaki Harbour from a 16th century Japanese painting entitled "Shamu Sen" (Thai Ship), which the reviewer discovered some years ago in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

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Robert P. Griffing Jr., "Dating Annamese blue and white", in *Orientalia*, Vol. 7 No. 5, May 1976 (Hong Kong), pp. 32-48, with 18 colourplate reproductions of Annamese wares.

Mr. Griffing of the Honolulu Academy of Arts deserves high praise for his scholarly article on Annamese blue and white wares. It is a valuable addition to the very limited bibliography of works on the subject. His presentation is embellished with no less than 18 invaluable illustrations, all in colour. The article is further indicative of the growing interest on the part of scholars and collectors in this all too little-known body of Southeast Asian ceramics. The reviewer wishes very much that he had had access to Mr. Griffing's scholarly work prior to completion of his attempt to compose his own recent article, "A

reassessment of the Annamese wares", which appeared in the *Journal of the Siam Society*, Vol. 64 Part 1, January 1976, with 26 half-tone plates.

Mr. Griffings' unusual study is primarily an attempt to establish some kind of reliable dating of the Annamese blue and white wares about which so little has been written. In the matter of accurate and systematic dating, Mr. Griffing has provided students and collectors of these wares a most valuable service. Most of these attractive blue and white wares belong, according to Mr. Griffings' painstaking research, to the 14th century, particularly at that point when the Annamese potters began to move away from their dependence on Chinese tradition and began to experiment on their own. The happy result was a great flowering of the Annamese blue and whites, and a new spectrum to Far Eastern ceramics. Consequently, it is not surprising that there was a considerable export of that newly developed ware to the Philippines and Indonesia, where even today considerable quantities are to be found.

The great flowering of the Annamese wares tradition continued to the middle of the 15th century, when many of them were also exported to Siam where they exerted a considerable, if not determinate, influence on the Thai potters at the Sukhōthai kilns in central Siam. In fact, many of the Sukhōthai painted-ware plates and bowls exported to Indonesia can hardly be distinguished from similar types of Annamese painted-ware pieces of this period. In my above-cited article, I had expressed the belief that the Tzu-chou style of painted-ware decoration, so evident in the work of the Sukhōthai potters, may well have come from Annam, rather than through the Sukōthai Kingdom's rather erratic and intermittent diplomatic relations with the Yuan court of China, a view widely if erroneously held heretofore by students of Thai history.

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