

Conical bowl with *bi*-disc foot

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

White-glazed stoneware

Xing kilns, Hebei province

Ht. 3.6 cm, diam. rim 14.9 cm, diam. foot 7.1 cm

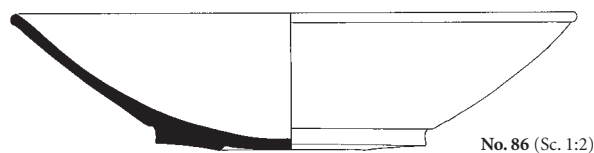
The shallow conical bowl has a thick turned-over rim with a sharp edge, and rests on a solid foot in the form of an archaic jade disc (*bi*), with a shallow recessed glazed centre. The piece is undecorated. Twenty-six pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

White bowls of this characteristic Tang form were made by many kilns both in northern and southern China. The finest examples, similar to the present piece, have been recovered from various Xing ware kiln sites at Lincheng, Hebei province.¹ The sherds from the kiln site can be compared to related bowls and bowl fragments excavated in China and in Kyoto, Japan.² A fragmentary bowl and a base fragment from the Qicun kilnsite at Lincheng have been published together with a complete Xing ware bowl of this type in the Shanghai Museum collection.³

A conical bowl of white stoneware with *bi*-disc foot has been recovered together with a rounded bowl, a cup and a stand from the tomb of Wu Jun at Chaohu city, Anhui province, who was buried in 842.⁴

These Xing ware examples all have a base with glazed centre. Zhou Lili⁵ also compares a Xing base fragment with a Ding ware sherd, the latter with an unglazed base, which is considered to be characteristic of the bowls with *bi*-disc foot from the Ding kilns. A related bowl of somewhat coarser type, also with an unglazed base and attributed to the Ding kilns, has been excavated in the eastern suburbs of Xi'an.⁶ White bowls of this form, with *bi*-disc foot, were also made by the Gongxian kilns in Henan, although none are found among the Gongxian wares from this wreck. A white bowl of similar form from another manufactory probably in Henan, was however recovered, of coarser body material, covered with a white slip and a more yellowish glaze, and fired at a lower temperature (no. 98).

White bowl fragments with this 'Samarra-type foot' have been excavated at Samarra.⁷



¹ See, for example, Yang Wenshan and Lin Yushan 1981, 41, figs 4 and 5, and p. 47; see above p. 305, fig. 2.

² Ibid.

³ In Zhou Lili 1982, 279, fig. 1, and 282, figs 19 and 22; cf. also above p. 305, fig. 3.

⁴ See Zhang Hongming 1988, 524, fig. 3.

⁵ In Zhou Lili 1982, 279, fig. 1, and 282, figs 19 and 22.

⁶ Included in the exhibition *Gifts of the Tang Emperors* 1999, cat. no. 82.

⁷ See Sarre 1925, pl. xxiv, fig. 2, and pl. xxv, figs 1 and 3; Lindberg 1953, pls 1b and 2a.



No. 86

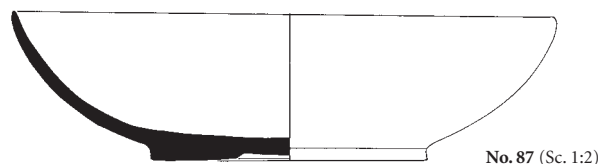
87

Rounded bowl with *bi*-disc foot

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
White-glazed stoneware
Xing kilns, Hebei province
Ht. 4.0 cm, diam. rim 14.3 cm, diam. foot 7.3 cm

Of shallow rounded form, the bowl has a low solid foot with slightly recessed centre, shaped like an archaic jade *bi*. The pure white body is covered with a thin blue-tinged glaze which also covers the base, but leaves the foot ring exposed in the biscuit. The bowl is completely plain. Fifteen pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

Bowls of this shape, with *bi*-disc foot, but with rounded sides and without turned-over rim, are rather unusual, but examples have been recovered from two tombs, one at Chaohu city, Anhui province, datable to 842,¹ the other at Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province, datable to 848.²



¹ Zhang Hongming 1988, 524.

² Zhenjiang bowuguan 1985, 134, fig. 5:4.

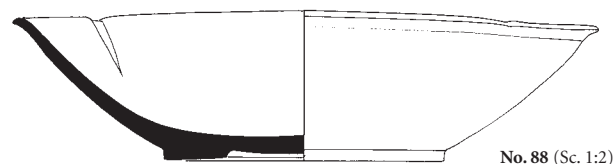
88

Bowl with *bi*-disc foot and four indentations

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
White-glazed stoneware
Xing kilns, Hebei province
Ht. 4.0 cm, diam. rim 15.4 cm, diam. foot 7.4 cm

The shallow bowl has a flared rim with a distinct edge with four indentations, which continue in four sharp raised ribs inside, and rests on a low solid foot with a shallow recessed centre, shaped like a *bi*-disc. It has a fine white body and a very smooth glossy glaze with a faint bluish tinge, which also covers the centre of the base but leaves the foot ring free. The piece has a light sound when struck. Three pieces of this type were found on the shipwreck

A very similar bowl was excavated near Yangzhou in Jiangsu province, at Leitangcun, Huaisixiang, Hanjiang county and is now in the Yangzhou Museum;¹ another is in the Guangdong Provincial Museum, Guangzhou.² A related bowl with a thicker rim flange and a wider, probably unglazed base, recovered from the site of the Western Priests' Dormitory at Yakushi-ji, Nara, which was destroyed by fire in 973, is still preserved at the Temple.³ Fragments of bowls of similar type, with *bi*-disc foot and raised ribs, have also been discovered in the Indus River valley at Brahminabad in modern Pakistan.⁴



¹ Yangzhou bowuguan 1996, pl. 75.

² Song Liangbi 1992, pl. 36.

³ See Hasebe Gakuji and Imai Atsushi 1995, pl. 13, and p. 101, fig. 17.

⁴ See Hobson 1928–30, pl. IX, figs 3 and 4.



No. 87



No. 88

89

Cup stand with four indentations

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
White-glazed stoneware
Xing kilns, Hebei province
Ht. 3.2 cm, diam. rim 14.4 cm, diam. foot 6.8 cm

The piece has steep sides and a wide everted rim, with a sharp edge between. The rim has four indentations in the form of cut-out triangular notches and four corresponding raised ribs, applied in slip and neatly shaped. The outside is plain, the straight foot is fairly thick, and finely and sharply cut. The base is glazed, the foot ring unglazed. The glaze has a faintly bluish tinge. Twenty-five pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

A similar cup stand, also attributed to the Xing kilns, has been discovered at the site of the Tang city of Yangzhou in Jiangsu province.¹ Another was found at the reputed site of the poet Bo Juyi's (772–846) house in Luoyang, Henan province.² A cup stand of related form has been excavated at the Ding kiln site at Jiancun, Hebei province;³ another piece from a Ding kiln site,⁴ and one found at Wenzhou in Zhejiang⁵ have also been published.

A similar cup stand is in the British Museum;⁶ another, matched with a bowl not unlike the no. 88, was exhibited in 1988 at the Nezu Institute of Fine Arts, Tokyo.⁷



No. 89 (Sc. 1:2)

90

Cup stand with four indentations

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
White-glazed stoneware
Xing kilns, Hebei province
Ht. 3.0 cm, diam. rim 14.8 cm, diam. foot 7.0 cm

Similarly shaped and made as no. 89, this piece is unique among the ceramics recovered from the wreck. It has three sharp raised ribs fanning out from each of the notches in the rim, the centre is slightly recessed, the glaze slightly bluish. Fine white grit adheres to the glazed base. The unglazed part of the foot ring has partly fired a yellowish tone.



No. 90 (Sc. 1:2)

1 See Wang Qinjin 1994, pl. 417, fig. 4(8).

2 See Mino Yutaka 1998, 102, fig. 43.

3 Illustrated in a line drawing in Wirgin 1970, fig. 33:4.

4 Illustrated in a line drawing in Li Zhiyan 1998, fig. 38:15.

5 Illustrated in a line drawing in Watson 1984, 119, fig. 6q.

6 Illustrated in *Oriental Ceramics* 1980–82, vol. 5, no. 42.

7 See the exhibition catalogue Hasebe Gakuji et al. 1988, cat. no. 24.



No. 89



No. 90

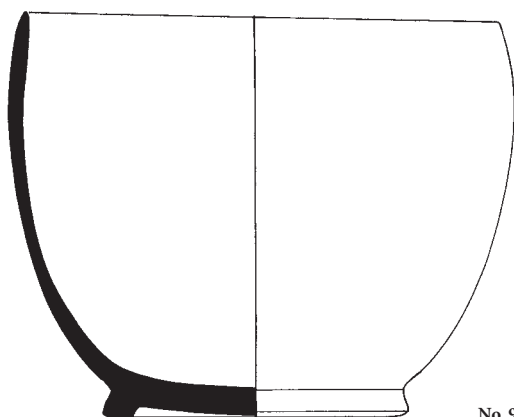
91

Rounded cup

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
White-glazed stoneware
Xing kilns, Hebei province
Ht. 7.2 cm, diam. rim 8.3 cm, diam. foot 5.3 cm

The cup is of deep rounded shape with a slightly in-curved rim, resting on a wide, straight-cut foot which is fairly thick and slightly splayed both inside and out. The piece is made of fine white clay, with fine bubbles in the thin glaze. The base is glazed, the foot ring unglazed. Forty-two pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

Related cup fragments have been recovered from Xing kiln sites at Lincheng in Hebei province.¹ A related cup, described as having an ivory-coloured glaze, was discovered together with a flower-shaped cup stand with curled-up rim in a Tang tomb at Chaohu, Anhui province, whose owner was buried in 842.²



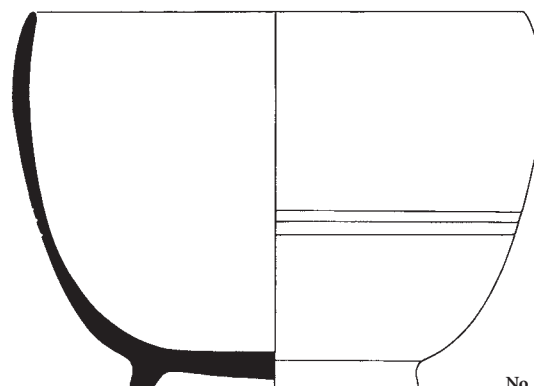
No. 91 (Sc. 3:4)

92

Rounded cup with incised lines

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
White-glazed stoneware
Xing kilns, Hebei province
Ht. 6.6 cm, diam. rim 8.6 cm, diam. foot 5.0 cm

The cup is similar to no. 91, but with three incised horizontal lines halfway down the outer sides. Three pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck (see also above pp. 129–130).



No. 92 (Sc. 3:4)

¹ See Yang Wenshan and Lin Yushan 1981, 41, fig. 6, and 42, fig. 14.

² See Zhang Hongming 1988, 524, fig. 3(9) and fig. 4(4 and 5).



No. 91



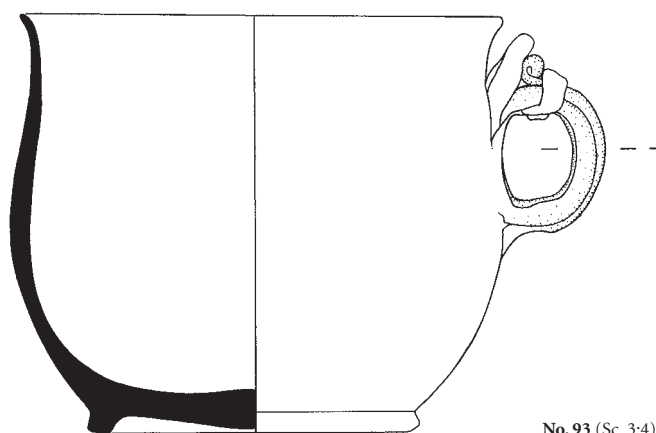
No. 92

93

Rounded cup with handle

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
 White-glazed stoneware
 Xing kilns, Hebei province
 Ht. 7.3 cm, diam. rim 8.4 cm, diam. foot 5.8 cm

The rounded body has a flared rim and rests on a very slightly splayed, straight-cut foot. The handle is formed from three thin strands of clay, two of them ring-shaped, the third attached on top, terminating in a loop near a small pointed tab and held in place with a horizontal band. The very thin blue-tinged glaze covers the whole piece except for the foot ring, but is partly degraded. Two pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.



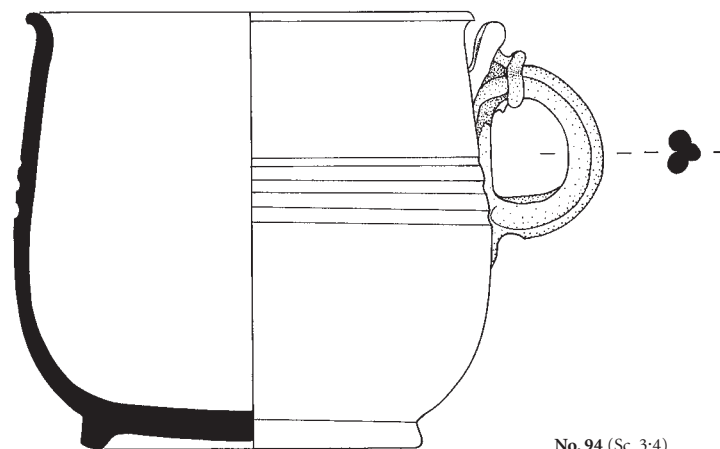
No. 93 (Sc. 3:4)

94

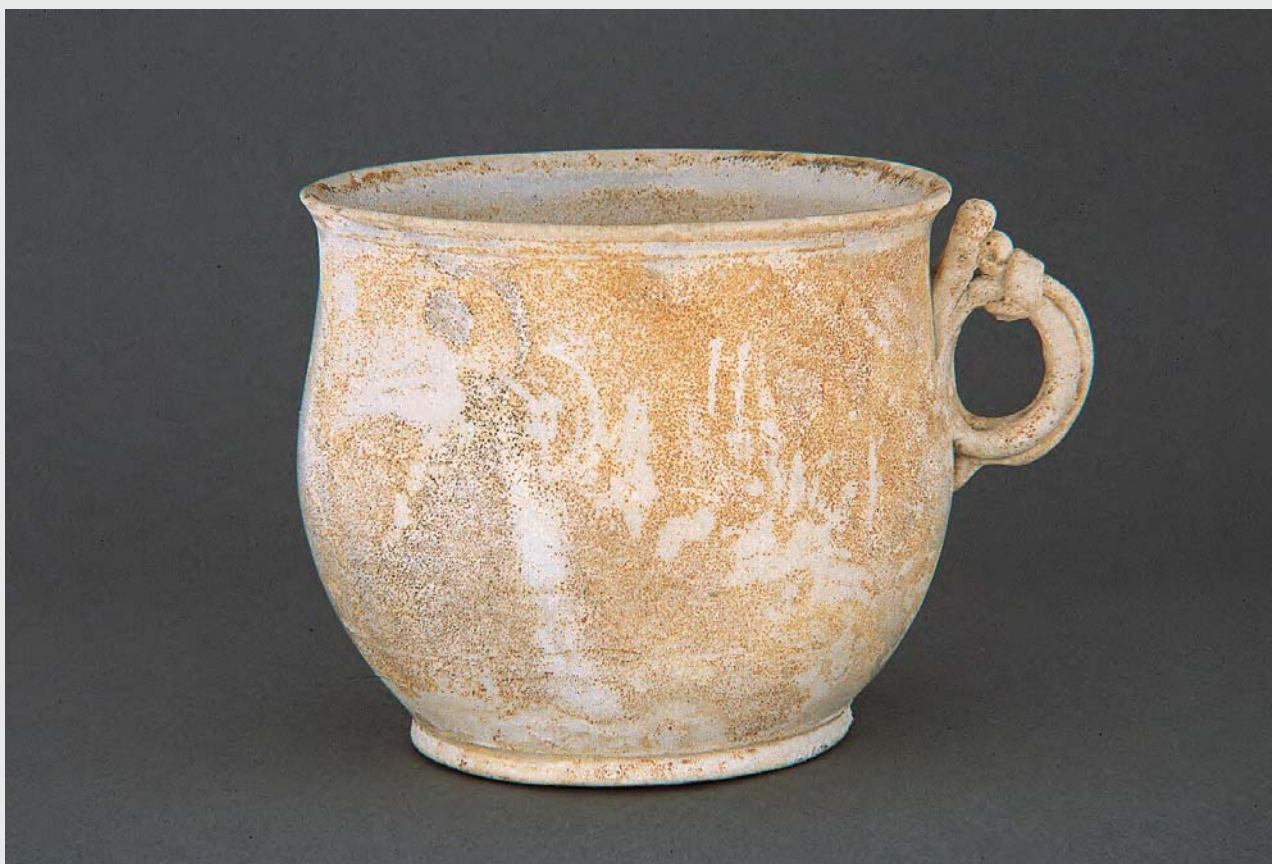
Rounded cup with handle and incised lines

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
 White-glazed stoneware
 Xing kilns, Hebei province
 Ht. 7.7 cm, diam. rim 7.8 cm, diam. foot 6.0 cm

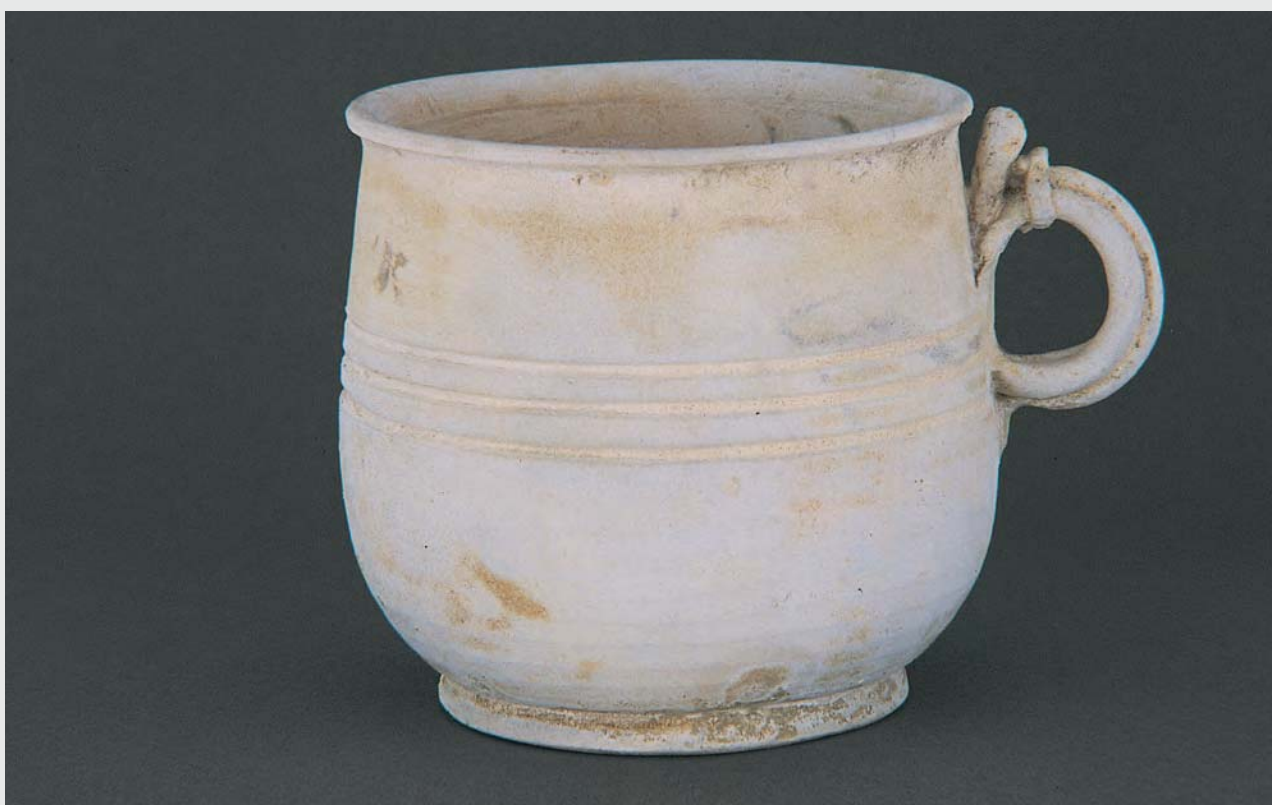
The cup is similar to no. 93, but has three deeply incised grooves on the outside. The glaze is largely missing. Two pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.



No. 94 (Sc. 3:4)



No. 93



No. 94

95

Flared cup with handle and incised lines

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

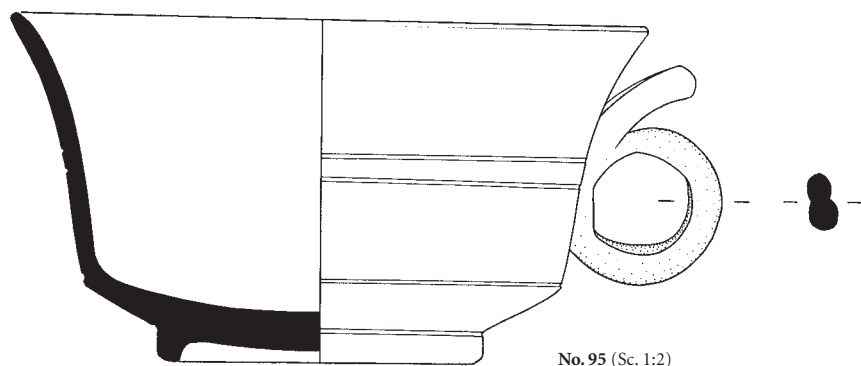
White-glazed stoneware

Xing kilns, Hebei province

Ht. 6.1 cm, diam. rim 11.2 cm, diam. foot 5.7 cm

The cup is of metal shape, the waisted sides flaring towards a wide rim and narrowing sharply down to the straight-cut foot, with a distinct angle. A double strand of clay is attached in the shape of a figure '6', forming a ring-shaped handle with a tab on top. The sides are accentuated with two incised grooves around the middle and another further down. The thin glaze is partly lost but still shows a distinct blue tinge in many places. Three pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

Compare a piece of more developed shape and somewhat later date from the collection of H.W. Siegel, inscribed with the characters *xin guan* ('new official').¹



¹ Watson 1984, pl. 103.



No. 95

Ewer with flat base

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

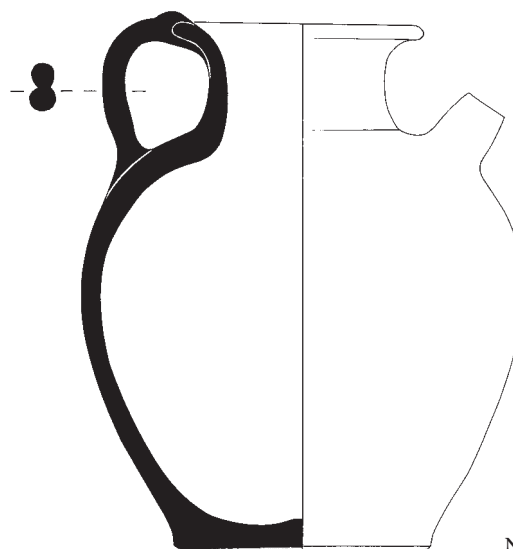
White-glazed stoneware

Hebei province

Ht. 14.3 cm, diam. rim 6.6 cm, diam. base 6.7 cm

The ewer is unique among the ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck. It has an ovoid body with a flat base without foot, a flared neck, short, slightly tapering spout, and a double-stranded handle attached at the top with two small knobs of clay. The white stoneware body shows traces of a transparent glaze.

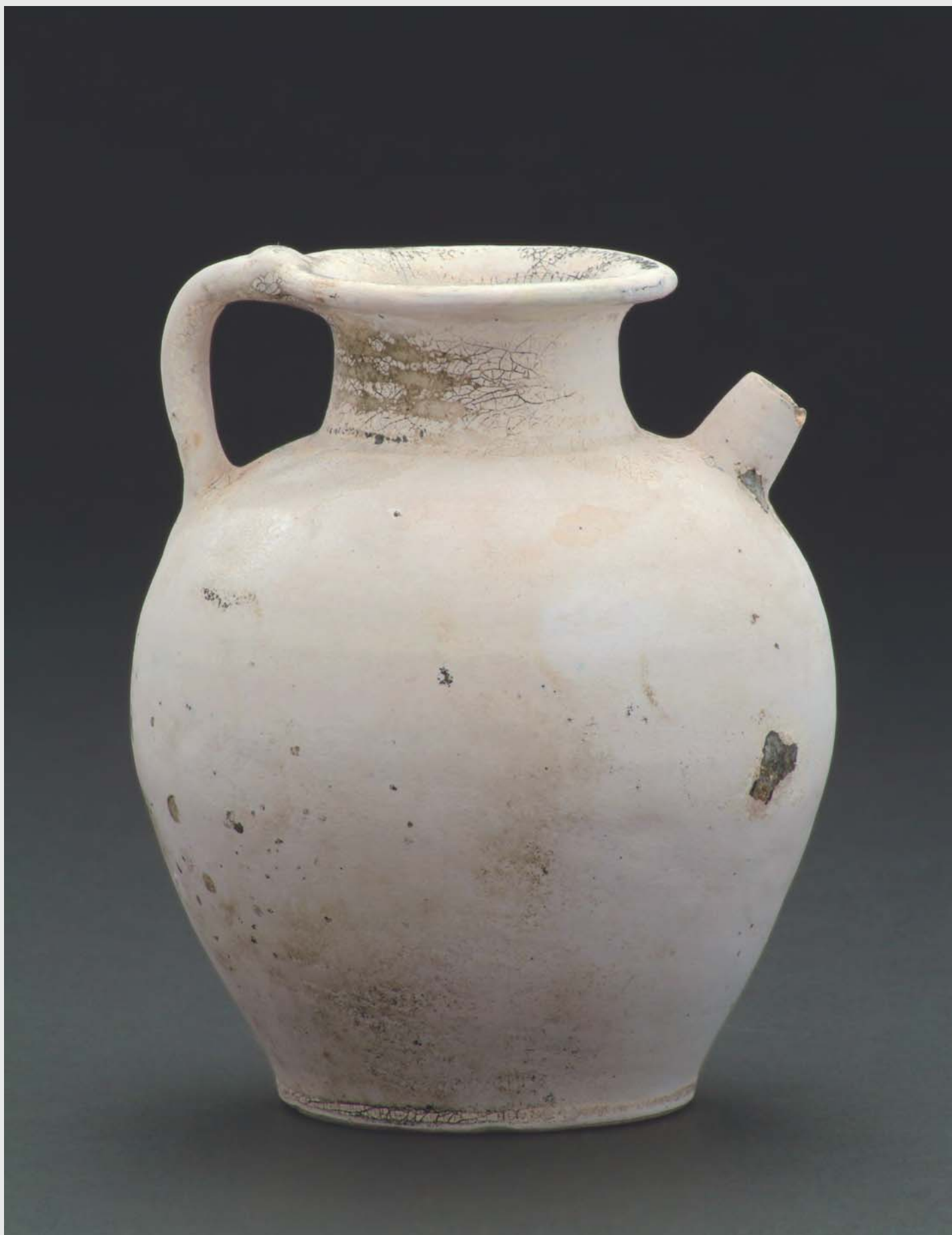
Ewers of this type were used in the preparation of tea, as is confirmed by an inscription on one such piece from a tomb at Xi'an, dated to the year 808.¹ A similar, even smaller ewer, excavated at Tieluqu, Shanxian in Henan province, is now in the Museum of Chinese History, Beijing.² For the kiln attribution of this piece see no. 97.



No. 96 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ See Li Zhiyan 1972, 36, and table 3:11.

² Illustrated in Yang Keyang 1991, pl. 49.



No. 96

Ewer with solid foot

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

White-glazed stoneware

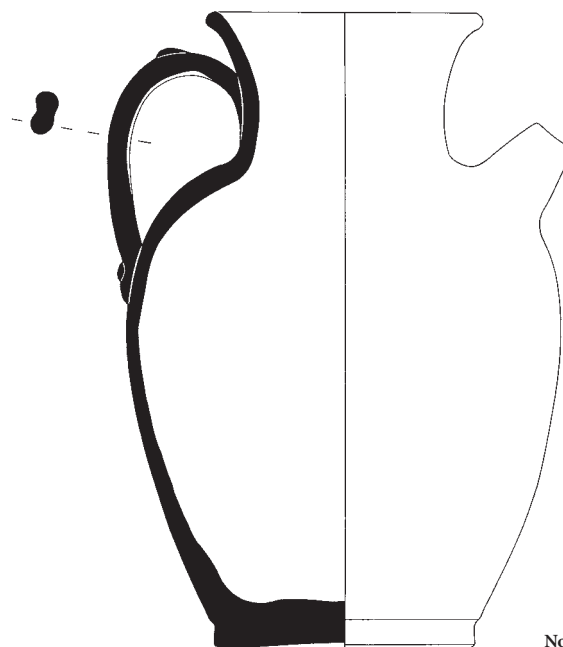
Hebei province

Ht. 16.8 cm, diam. rim 7.3 cm, diam. foot 6.9 cm

The ewer, also unique among the ceramics recovered from the wreck, is similar to no. 96, but slightly different in proportions, and has a solid foot with a flat base. The fine, double-stranded handle bears a knob of clay at the top and another at the lower end. The white glaze has a bluish tinge and is very fine where preserved.

This ewer and the previous example are more difficult to attribute to a specific kiln centre than the white wares above (nos 86–95). The body material is fine and does not seem to be covered with a slip, but not enough of the glaze remains to judge its quality. The shapes are somewhat less precisely finished than Xing wares in general, but more finely potted than one would expect from a Henan piece. These ewers could have been made either by the Xing or the Ding kilns of Hebei province.

A similar Xingyao ewer discovered at the East Wind Brick-and-Tile Factory (Dongfeng Zhuanwachang), Yangzhou city, Jiangsu province is now in the Yangzhou Museum.¹ A fragment has been recovered from a Xing ware kiln site at Lincheng in Hebei province.² A related ewer has also been discovered among some miniature Xingyao tea wares, together with a figure of the tea connoisseur Lu Yu.³

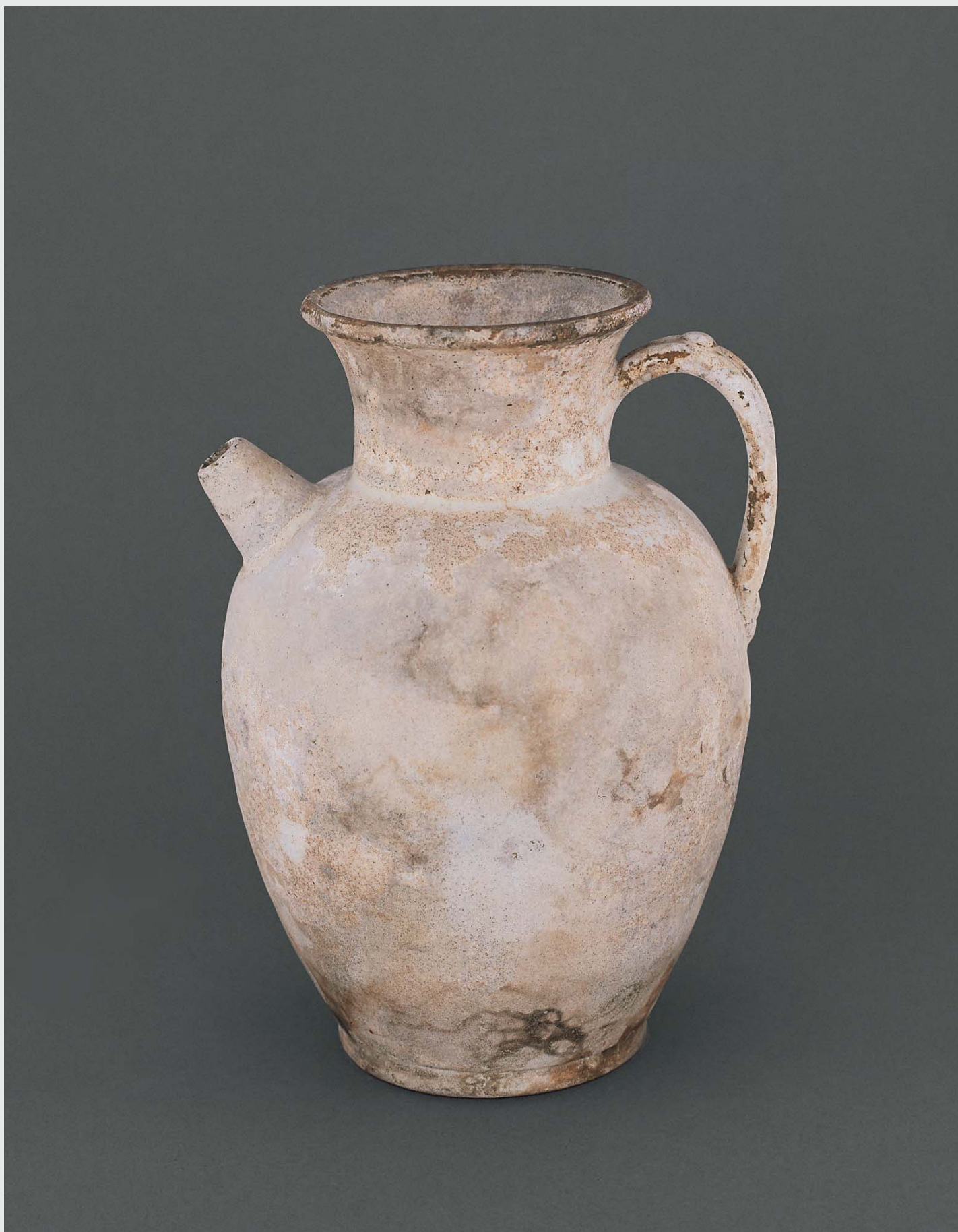


No. 97 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ Yangzhou bowuguan 1996, pl. 74.

² See Yang Wenshan and Lin Yushan 1981, 41, fig. 7.

³ See Sun Ji and Liu Jialin 1990, 38, fig. 4.



No. 97

Bowl with *bi*-disc foot

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

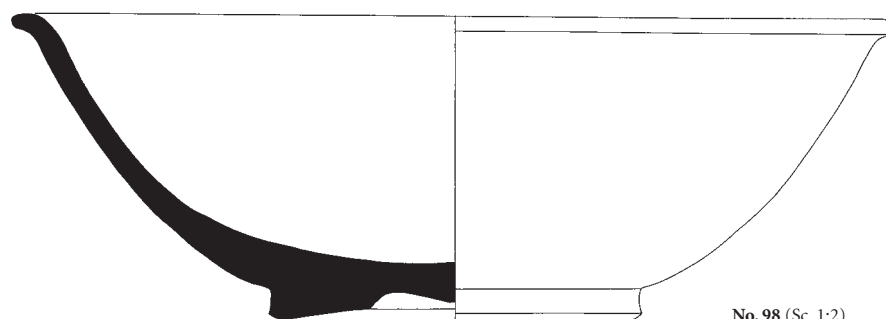
White-glazed stoneware

Henan province

Ht. 8.0 cm, diam. rim 23.4 cm, diam. foot 9.9 cm

The very heavily potted bowl is unique among the ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck. It has rounded conical sides and a flared rim, and rests on a foot in the form of a *bi*-disc, with a recessed base with pointed centre. The light buff body is covered with a white slip which ends shortly above the foot and bears a somewhat hazy transparent glaze. The inside shows three triangular spur marks, with three corresponding marks on the base. The body is fairly hard and fine-grained but contains darker specks. The glaze shows faint blue hues where it is thicker.

In material this bowl is similar to no. 99. Its body material is finer than that used at Gongxian, but its workmanship cruder. It would seem to have been made by another Henan kiln, perhaps Hebiji at Hebi.



No. 98 (Sc. 1:2)



No. 98

99

Cup with flared rim

Tang dynasty, 9th century

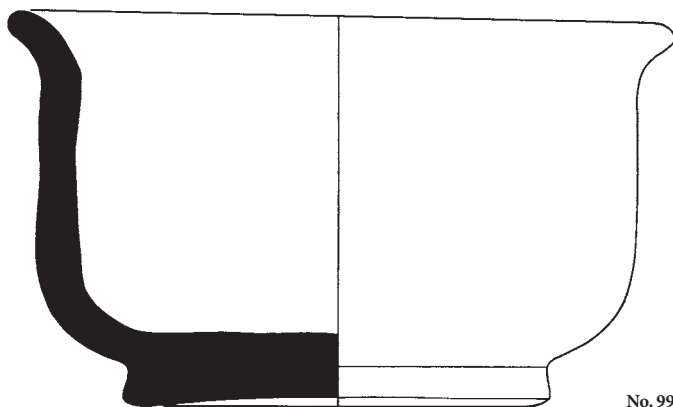
White-glazed stoneware

Henan province

Ht. 5.2 cm, diam. rim 8.8 cm, diam. foot 5.6 cm

The thickly potted cup, unique to the wreck, has deep straight sides, a flared rim, and a straight solid foot with flat base. The fine-grained, light buff body has been covered with a white slip which ends above the foot, and with a transparent glaze with a faint bluish tinge and an accidental brown iron spot on the inside.

This cup is similar in material and workmanship to the bowl no. 98.





No. 99

100

Large ovoid jar and cover

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

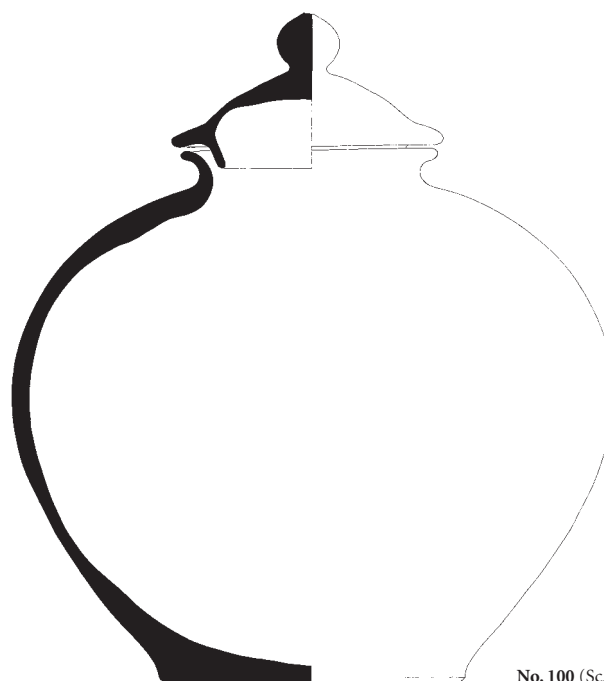
White-glazed stoneware

Gongxian kilns, Henan province

Ht. with cover 35.3 cm, ht. without cover 28.0 cm

The very large ovoid jar has a well-rounded body, a flat base without a foot, and a short everted rim. The domed cover has an everted rim and a globular knob. Two pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

This piece has the classic jar shape of the Tang dynasty, which at Gongxian was produced both in plain white stoneware and in monochrome or polychrome lead-glazed earthenware. A similar Gongxian white jar and cover have been recovered from the tomb of Li Cun at Xingyuan, Yanshi county, north-east of Luoyang in Henan province, which is datable to 845;¹ another, of more elongated proportions, has been recovered from a tomb of 851 at Beiyaowan, Gongyi city, in Henan province.²



No. 100 (Sc. 1:4)

¹ See *Treasures from a Swallow Garden* 1992, cat. no. 136.

² Illustrated in *Ceramic Finds from Henan* 1997, cat. no. 16.



No. 100

101

Large ovoid jar and cover

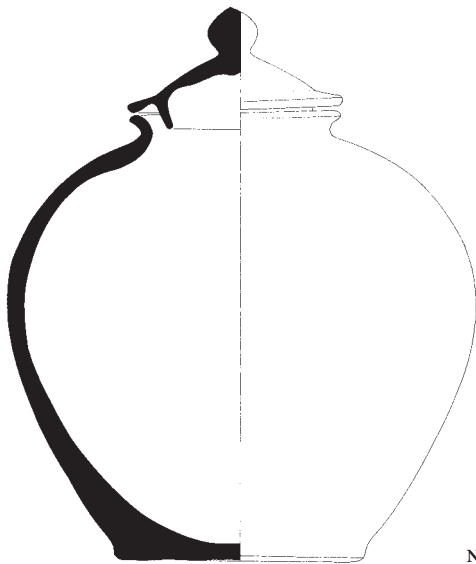
Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

White-glazed stoneware

Gongxian kilns, Henan province

Ht. with cover 29.0 cm, ht. without cover 23.8 cm

The piece is similar to no. 100, but smaller. The body is of a coarse-grained, light grey stoneware containing tiny black specks, which required a thick coating of white slip under the transparent yellow-tinged glaze. On the jar the glaze is crazed and largely lost; on the cover, where it is perfectly preserved, it has a smooth tactile quality and a soft ivory tone. The jar is fully slipped and glazed except for the base. It is unique among the ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck.



No. 101 (Sc. 1:4)



No. 101

102

Large ovoid jar with spout

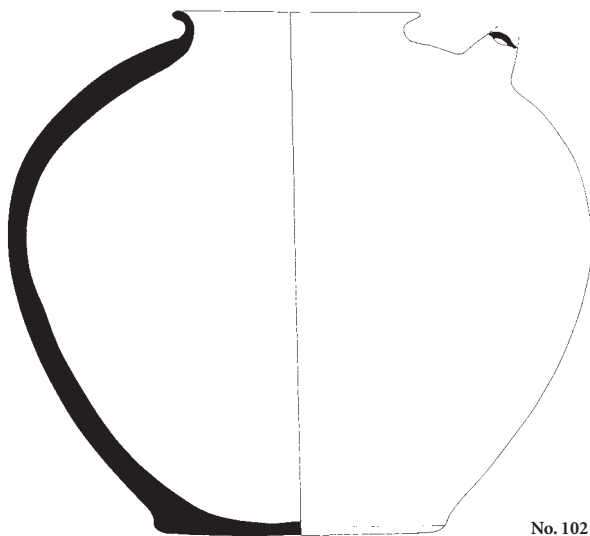
Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

White-glazed stoneware

Gongxian kilns, Henan province

Ht. 27.7 cm

The jar is similar in shape to nos 100 and 101, but has a short (now incomplete) tapering spout at the shoulder. It is very heavily potted, rests on a flat unglazed base, and has a thin flared rim. The sides show turning marks. Much of the glaze is now missing, exposing the thick white slip. The piece is unique among the ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck.



No. 102 (Sc. 1:4)



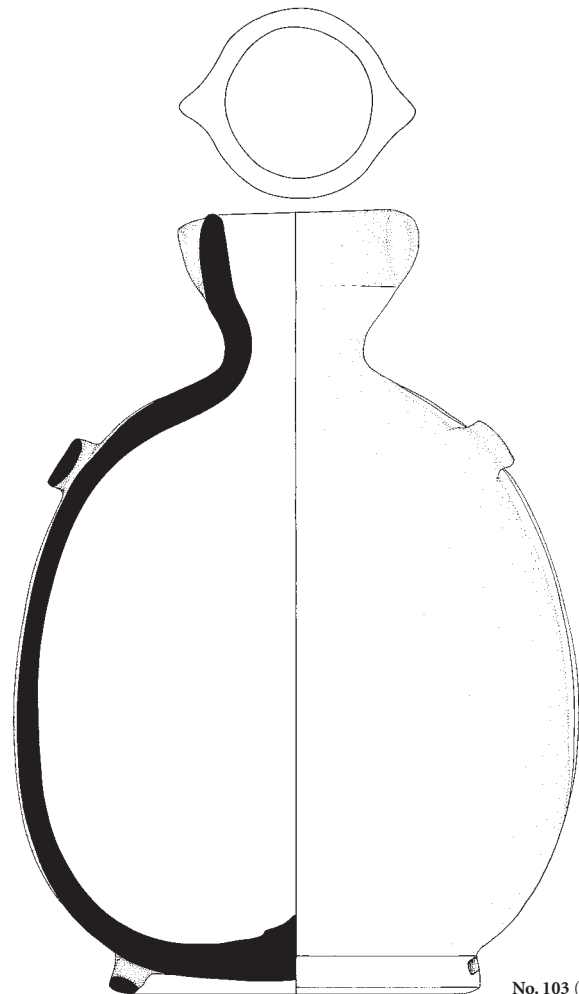
No. 102

103

Ovoid bottle

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
White-glazed stoneware
Gongxian kilns, Henan province
Ht. 20.7 cm

The bottle has an ovoid body of circular section with twin raised ribs on either side, bridged by two flat horizontal lugs at the shoulder, and with corresponding holes pierced in the broad splayed foot for holding a cord. The narrow neck widens into a cylindrical mouth with pointed ear-like protrusions on either side, above the lugs, probably for fastening a cover or stopper. The near-white chalky body is thickly covered with slip, applied in several layers, but except for some patches has lost all its transparent glaze. Five pieces of this type have been recovered from the wreck.





No. 103

104

Ovoid bottle with quatrefoil mouth

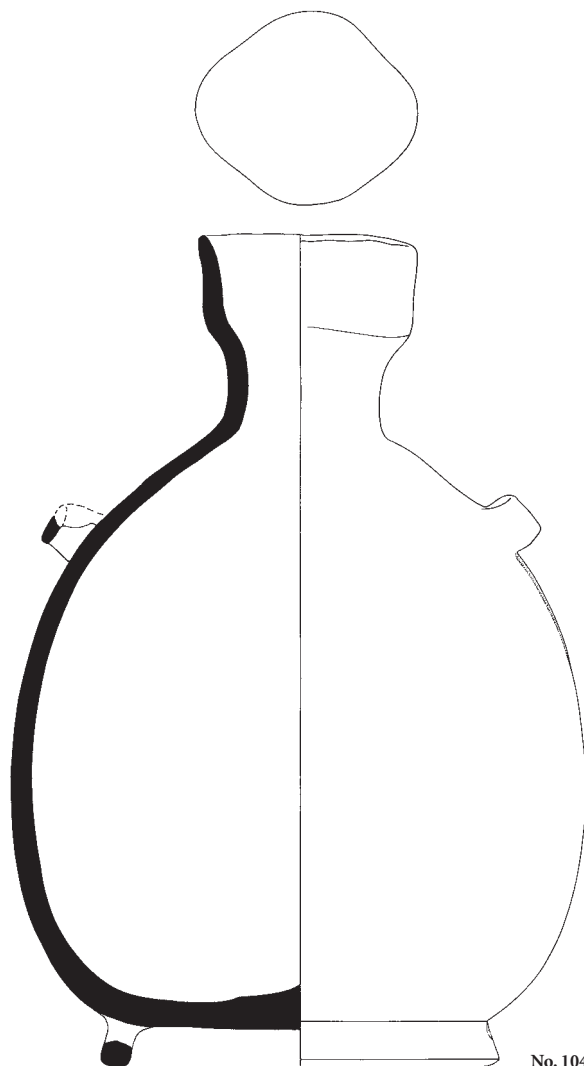
Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

White-glazed stoneware

Gongxian kilns, Henan province

Ht. 22.0 cm

This bottle is very similar to no. 103, but the mouth has been pinched into a quatrefoil shape. Foot ring and base are largely free of slip and glaze and show the coarse grey body, which contains numerous tiny black specks. The rest of the body is thickly covered with white slip and a crazed transparent glaze; this turned a clear light blue where it adhered in a thicker layer, especially in the groove between body and foot. Two pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.



No. 104 (Sc. 1:2)



No. 104

105

Fragment of a slop bowl (?)

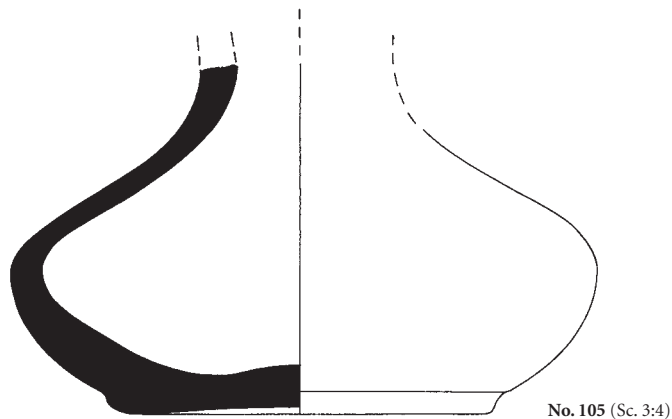
Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

White-glazed stoneware

Gongxian kilns, Henan province

Ht. (preserved) 6.0 cm, diam. base 6.8 cm

The small fragment has a depressed globular body, but is missing its neck, which may have been in the shape of a funnel. It rests on a slightly protruding, flat solid base. The thickly potted body is made of relatively coarse-grained off-white material containing small dark specks, covered with white slip and with a crazed yellow-tinged transparent glaze. The base is unglazed. The form is unique among the ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck.





No. 105

106

Bowl with four indentations

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

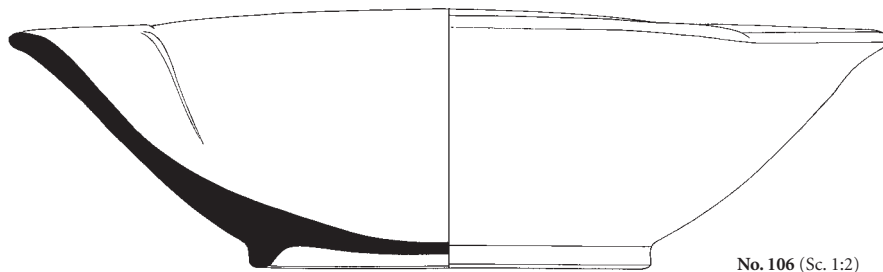
White-glazed stoneware

Gongxian kilns, Henan province

Ht. 6.8 cm, diam. rim 23.4 cm, diam. foot 10.6 cm

The large bowl is very heavily potted, with an everted rim and a thick straight-cut foot, and shows four raised ribs on the inside, corresponding to faint indentations on the outside. 233 pieces of this type have been recovered from the wreck.

A bowl of this otherwise rare type exists in Japan.¹



¹ Illustrated in Satō Masahiko and Hasebe Gakuji 1976, pl. 159, and probably again in Satō Masahiko 1981, 80, fig. 128.



No. 106

Dish with double lozenge and foliate motifs

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century

Blue-and-white stoneware

Gongxian kilns, Henan province

Ht. 3.5 cm, diam. rim 23.7 cm, diam. foot 10.7 cm

The large dish has everted sides with a flared rim, with four radiating raised ribs inside and an angle on the outside. It is very heavily potted, and rests on a heavy straight-cut foot which slants towards the base (cf. drawing of no. 108). The body is made of coarse-grained, yellowish-beige stoneware, containing dark specks, and has been covered with a thick white slip. The inside is painted under the glaze in cobalt-blue with an overlapping double lozenge enclosing two florets, surrounded by eight fronds of a feathery foliage design, and with four small foliate sprigs near the rim; the outside is plain. The cobalt is of clear blue tone, somewhat speckled, and the whole piece is covered with a crazed, transparent yel-

low-tinged glaze, which has partly vanished. The microscope reveals that the cobalt has completely merged with the glaze, colouring it blue. Where the glaze has flaked off, it has taken the blue design with it, leaving only a light blue ghost on the white slip surface.

A fragment with a similar lozenge motif in the centre is among the blue-and-white fragments of Gongxian ware, which have been discovered at the site of the Tang city of Yangzhou in Jiangsu province, although that fragment shows a *bi*-disc foot.¹

¹ Yangzhou bowuguan 1996; Wood 1999, 97f.; see above p. 311, fig. 7 *left* (top and bottom).



No. 107

108

Dish with lozenge and foliate motifs

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
Blue-and-white stoneware
Gongxian kilns, Henan province
Ht. 4.4 cm, diam. rim 22.7 cm, diam. foot 10.2 cm

The dish is similar to no. 107, but the inside is painted with a single lozenge enclosing a floret and surrounded by eight fronds of a feathery foliage design, with four small foliate sprigs near the rim.

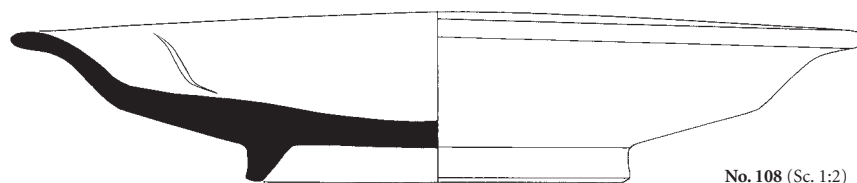
109

Dish with lozenge and floral motifs

Tang dynasty, early to mid-9th century
Blue-and-white stoneware
Gongxian kilns, Henan province
Ht. 3.3 cm, diam. rim 17.2 cm, diam. foot 8.3 cm

The small dish, also unique among the ceramics recovered from the wreck, has rounded sides and a flared rim. The inside has four radiating raised ribs, the square-cut foot is straight on the outside and slants towards the base. The inside is painted under the glaze in cobalt-blue with a lozenge enclosing a floret and surrounded by four fronds of a feathery foliage design, with four smaller foliate sprigs distributed around the sides. The outside is plain.

Related feathery flower motifs can be seen on a fragment of blue-and-white Gongxian ware discovered at the site of the Tang city of Yangzhou in Jiangsu province.¹



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¹ Yangzhou bowuguan 1996; see above p. 311, fig. 7 top right.



No. 108



No. 109