

239–241

Ewers with relief decoration

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

No. 239: Ht. 22.3 cm, diam. rim 9.4 cm, diam. base 15.1 cm

No. 240: Ht. 22.1 cm, diam. rim 8.1 cm, diam. base 15.0 cm

No. 241: Ht. 18.6 cm, diam. rim 7.5 cm, diam. base 13.1 cm

These ewers have an almost cylindrical body narrowing slightly down to a solid foot with flat base. The short neck flares towards the everted rim. A triple-stranded handle is attached vertically to join shoulder and body, opposite a short octagonal spout. Between them two triple stranded lug handles are fixed on the shoulder. Directly below the vertical handle, the spout and the lug handles, relief medallions are applied on to the body of the ewers. Foliage motifs take up by far the largest part of the decorative repertoire (cf. also appendix III.1 nos 1–13), sometimes composed of birds (no. 239; cf. appendix III.1 nos 16–18, 23–33) or heraldic-looking emblems (no. 241; cf. appendix III.1 nos 19–22). The moulded appliqué under the spout of no. 241 shows a lion posed left facing, seated on a fringed mat in profile (cf. appendix III.1 nos 37–39).

A greenish-tinged glaze covers the whole body of the ewers over a white slip, stopping just above the foot. The interior is partially glazed, but the foot and the flat base are not. Under the glaze three dark-brown patches were washed over the applied medallions (cf. also nos 243, 244).



No. 239 (Sc. 1:4)



No. 241 Medallion under the spout



Nos 239, 240, 241 (left to right)

242

Ovoid ewer with short neck

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 19.7 cm, diam. rim 5.7 cm, diam. base 9.8–10 cm

This slender and elegant ewer, unique to the wreck, has an ovoid body surmounted by a short cylindrical neck that rises to the everted rim. The body tapers slightly towards a wide solid foot with flat base. A single-strap handle, decorated with two vertical incised lines, is attached to the neck opposite a short polygonal spout. The rich green glaze has almost completely vanished. It was applied over a white slip and stopped above the foot of the ewer.

No specimen matching this ewer has been reported from the 1983 excavation in the area of Changsha. The slender ovoid shape makes this vessel, in comparison to the rather squat forms of other pieces, an exceptional example.



No. 242 (Sc. 1:2)



No. 242

243

Ovoid ewer with short neck

Tang dynasty, 9th century

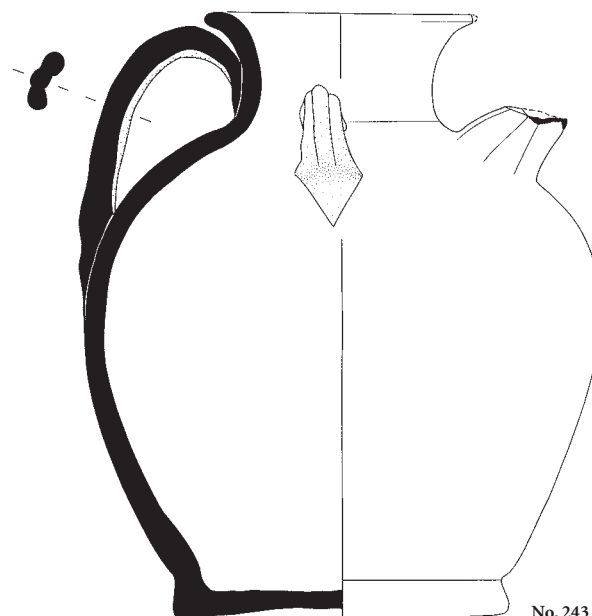
Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 16.1 cm, diam. rim 7.2 cm, diam. base 8.5 cm

This ewer rests on a solid foot with flat base and has a rounded body surmounted by a short concave neck, which flares towards the everted rim. A triple-stranded handle is attached to the neck, opposite a short polygonal spout. Two triple-stranded lug handles are added on the shoulder between the vertical handle and the spout of the ewer. The vessel was originally covered with an off-white slip and a pale greenish glaze, which has largely vanished. The glaze has run also inside the ewer and stops just above the foot. Large oval brown patches were painted on the body, directly below the spout and the lugs. Traces of brown glaze are also seen under the rim. This piece is unique among the ceramics recovered from the shipwreck.

The excavations of Tang tombs in the Changsha area suggest that ewers of similar form have been produced in the Yuezhou kilns before they became popular at the Changsha kilns.¹



No. 243 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ See Zhou Shirong 1982, 515, pl. 23:1.



No. 243

Ewer with tall neck

Tang dynasty, 9th century

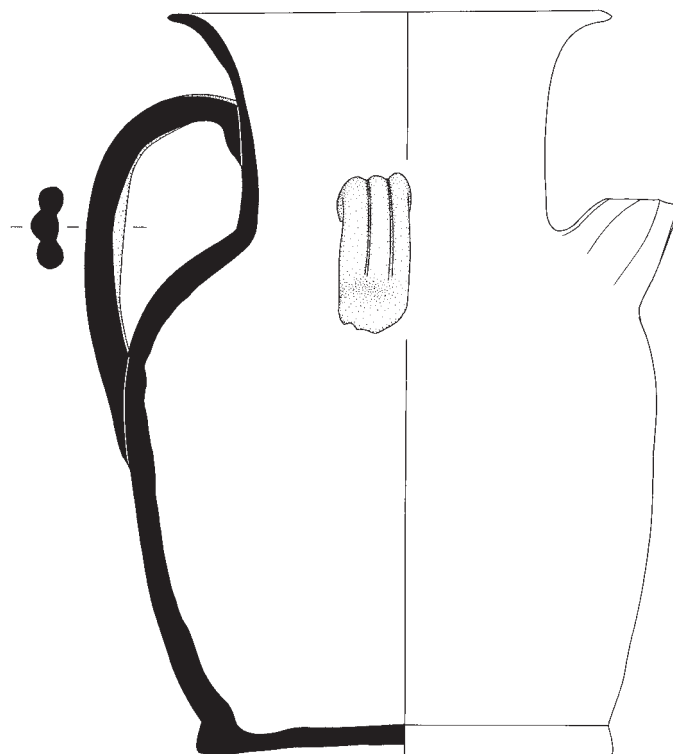
Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 20.0 cm, diam. rim 11.7 cm, diam. base 10.9 cm

This vessel, unique among the ceramics found on the Beilitung wreck, shares many features of a typical spouted ewer with a handle and two lugs as described in the nos 239–241, yet it has a rather squat body tapering towards the solid foot, and a longer neck. The ewer was covered with a greenish glaze, which run also into the interior but left the foot and the flat base free. It is now largely degraded. Under the glaze iron-brown patches were painted under the spout, the lugs and on the rim of the vessel.

The field research carried out in the area of Changsha suggests that during the first half of the ninth century the production of ewers with tall trumpet neck and brown underglaze patches had become prolific.¹ They represent the most popular form of all ewers produced in the Changsha kilns. Among some 1,980 ewers unearthed in the 1983 excavation, 1,675 pieces belonged to this type. Two basic groups were distinct: those resembling the present piece and those without lugs but with lobed body (cf. no. 246). The latter category seemed to be by far the largest group: 972 out of 1,675 excavated pieces belonged to this type.² Changsha ewers resembling the one under discussion were also decorated with relief medallions.



No. 244 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 234–235.

² Ibid., 30–31.



No. 244

245

Ewer with tall neck

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware with underglaze decoration

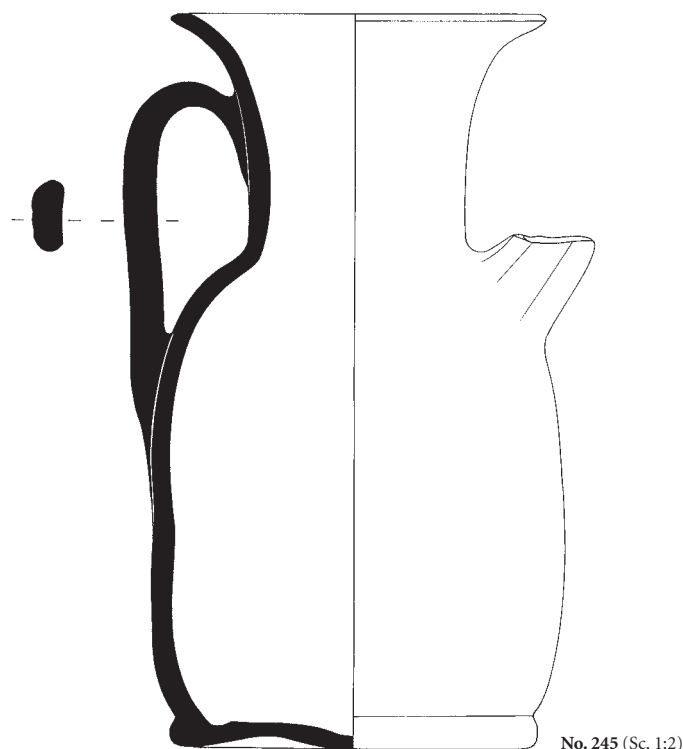
Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 20.3 cm, diam. rim. 9.9 cm, diam. base 9.5 cm

The ewer has an almost cylindrical body and a tall wide neck, which rises to a flared rim. A flat strap handle with two shallow grooves is attached to the neck, opposite an octagonal short spout. The ewer rests on a solid foot with an uneven base. Free expressionistic brushwork is painted on the shoulder in red under a bluish-green glaze, which is largely degraded. The glaze ends in an uneven line just above the foot. Traces of a creamy glaze are still visible under and on the rim of the vessel.

Although only four pieces of this type were recovered from the shipwreck, Chinese archaeologists have reported some 303 examples of this form of ewers excavated at the kiln sites around Changsha in 1983. Most of them were from Lan'anzui, Lanjiapo, and Tanjiapo.¹ They were commonly covered with a white glaze, and were decorated on the shoulder in bold brush strokes with a wide variety of delightfully uninhibited designs in green, brown or red. These designs created an effect resembling Chinese landscape painting in spontaneous style.

The excavations of Tang tombs in the Changsha area revealed that ewers with free expressionistic brushwork in colourful underglaze designs against a milky background began to appear in tombs around the mid-Tang period (780–835) and thereafter.²



¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 30–31.

² See Zhou Shirong 1982, 514, pl. 25:1, 5.



No. 245

246

Ewer with tall neck and lobed body

Tang dynasty, 9th century

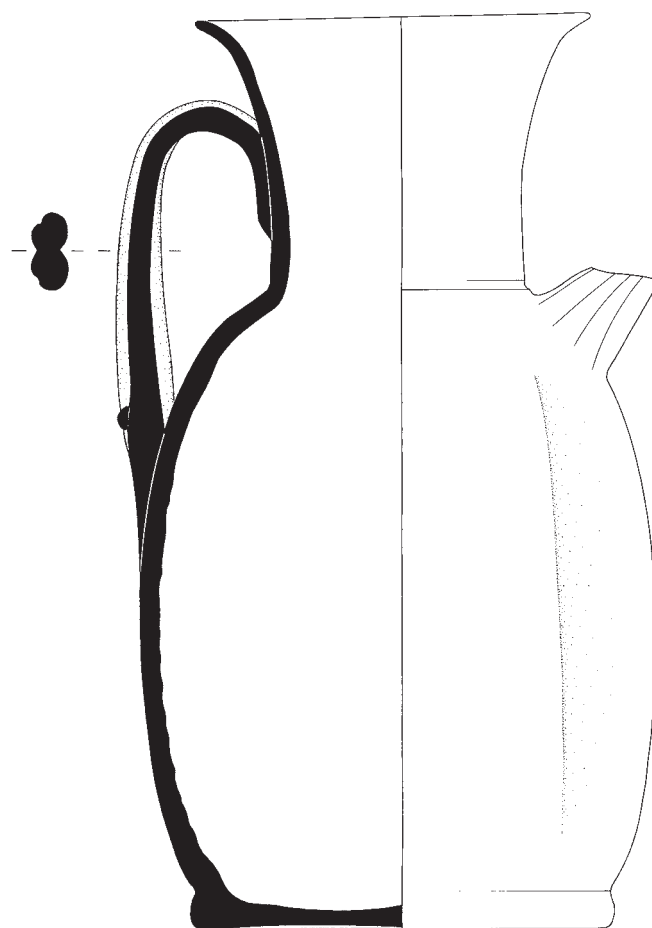
Green-glazed stoneware with underglaze decoration

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 24.4 cm, diam. rim 10.5 cm, diam. base 11.3 cm

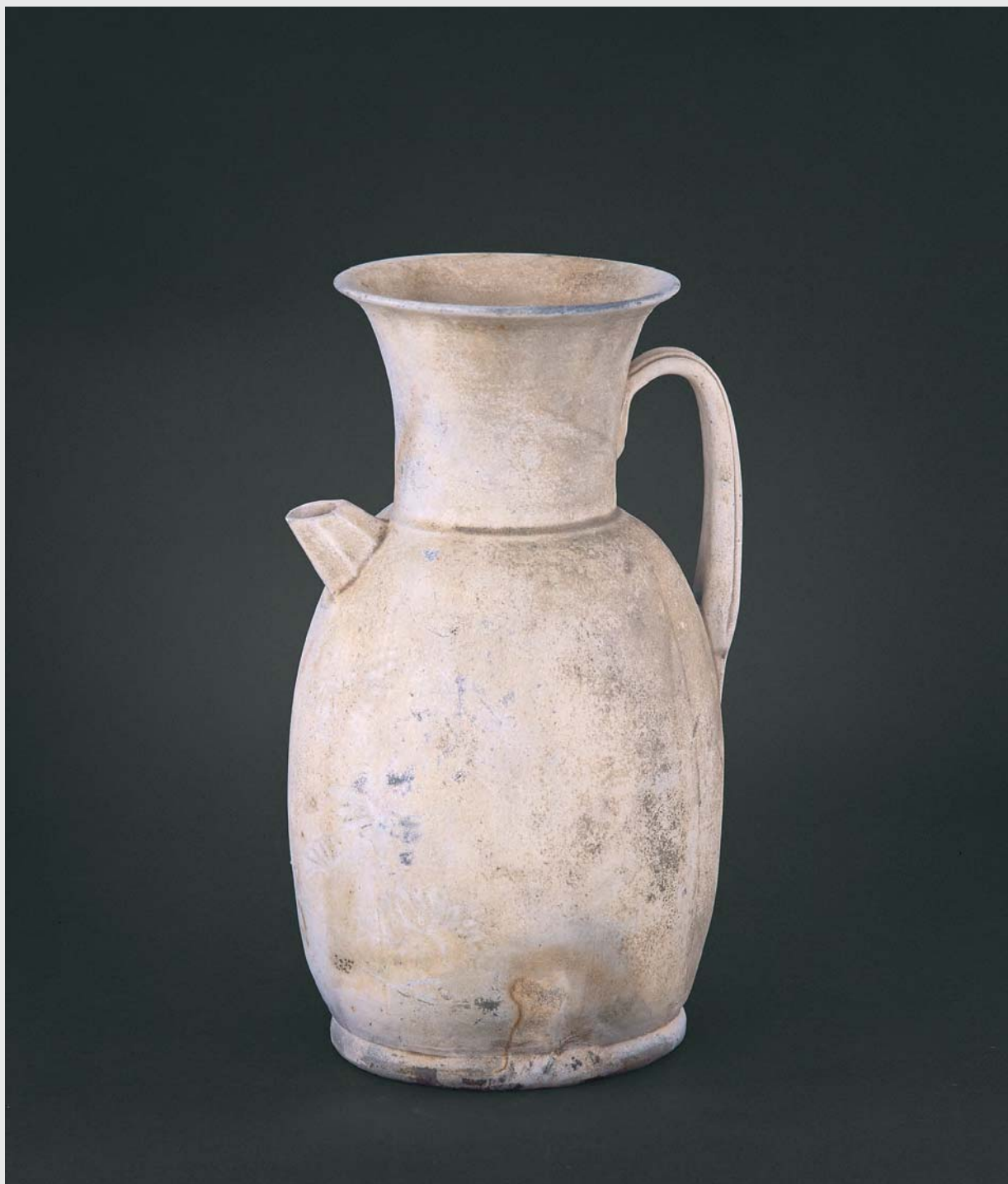
This type of ewer is similar to no. 245, yet its melon-shaped body has four lobes. A double-stranded handle ornamented with incised lines and a nipple on its lower part is attached opposite a short polygonal spout. Traces of a painting with botanical motifs are still visible under the spout. They were originally brushed under a transparent greenish glaze, which has almost completely vanished. Four pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

This specimen is close to a type of ewer that appears to be the most common shape of all Changsha ewers manufactured at the Gucheng or Wazhaping kiln sites (particularly at Lan'anzui). Out of some 1,980 ewers discovered in the 1993 excavation, 972 pieces were of this kind.¹ Those typical of the late Tang have a more rounded body and are in general richly decorated in brown or brownish-green under a thin greenish-tinged glaze. The decorative designs include motifs such as foliage, flowers and birds, vapour or clouds, animals, landscapes (including trees, mountains, clouds, waves), and expressionistic brushworks. They are usually painted under the spout of the vessels. There were also examples decorated with motifs in copper green or red under a milky glaze, or with moulded appliqués and iron-brown designs under a greenish-tinged glaze. Moreover, a great number of this type of ewers were decorated with poems in the five-character form or aphorisms.



No. 246 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 30.



No. 246

Ewer with tall neck

Tang dynasty, 9th century

White-glazed stoneware with underglaze decoration

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 23.3, diam. rim 9.3 cm, diam. base 11.2 cm

This ewer of elegant ovoid shape rises in a fluid line from the broad solid foot to the tall neck, which flares slightly to the everted rim. A short polygonal spout is attached to the sloping shoulder opposite a flat, grooved, strap handle. In comparison with the ewers discussed above (nos 239–246) this piece does not have a neck clearly separated from the body. Splashed expressionistic ornaments in green and red are painted on both sides of the shoulder over a white slip. A creamy glaze covers the whole vessel leaving the foot and the base free. Four pieces of this type were recovered from the Belitung wreck.

The decoration of this piece is characteristic for the Changsha ewers of this type.¹ A comparison of the ewer under discussion with better preserved examples of the same type makes it clear that in its original state the creamy glaze would have created an impressive light-coloured background for the underglaze ornaments in trailed green and red. The glazes are thick, and the rich variation in colour tone is achieved through the diffusing and intermingling of different colourants during the firing. In the case of the Belitung ewer red and green decoration appears together with the creamy glaze. This provides evidence for the assertion that the copper-red effect in the Changsha kilns was probably a deliberate and well-controlled process (cf. above p. 481).

Ewers of this shape appear to be quite rare at the Changsha kilns. In 1978 only two to three pieces were unearthed, out of 271 ewers of various types. They were decorated with abstract motifs in green under a milky glaze.² The 1983 excavation reported eight examples of similar type (out of 1,980 ewers) that were covered with green, black, brown or milky glazes.³



No. 247 (Sc. 1:4)

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 133.

² Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980 76, pl. 2:6.

³ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 31, 37, fig. 21.



No. 247 Detail of the underglaze decoration



No. 247

248, 249

Ewers with tall neck and lobed body

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware with underglaze decoration

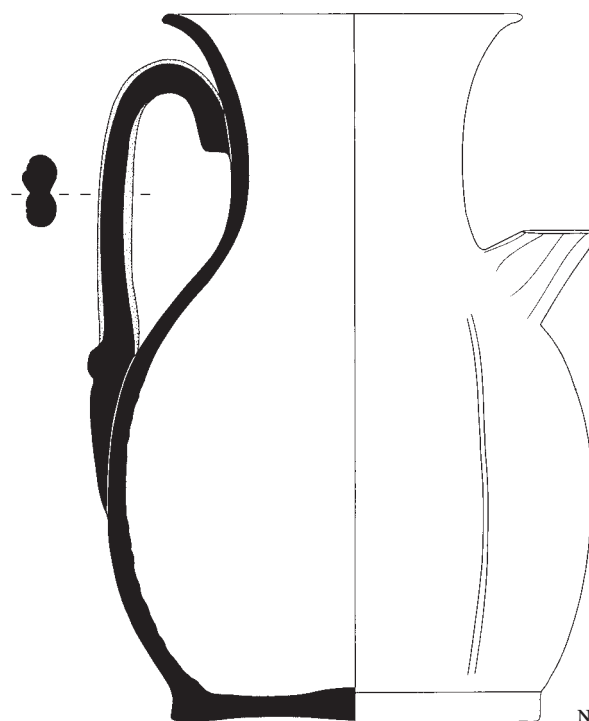
Changsha kilns, Hunan province

No. 248: Ht. 18.9 cm, diam. rim 9.4 cm, diam. base 9.6 cm

No. 249: Ht. 24.1 cm, diam. rim 10.7 cm, diam. base 11.6 cm

These ewers are similar to the previous example (no. 247), but the melon-shaped bodies are in this case lobed. The transparent greenish glaze has almost completely vanished. Traces of a foliage motif painted in underglaze brown are still visible under the spout of no. 249. Four pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

Archaeological excavations of Tang tombs carried out in the Changsha area suggest that ewers with unarticulated shoulder and decoration of flower-and-bird motifs began to appear in tombs of the mid-Tang period (780–835) and thereafter.¹

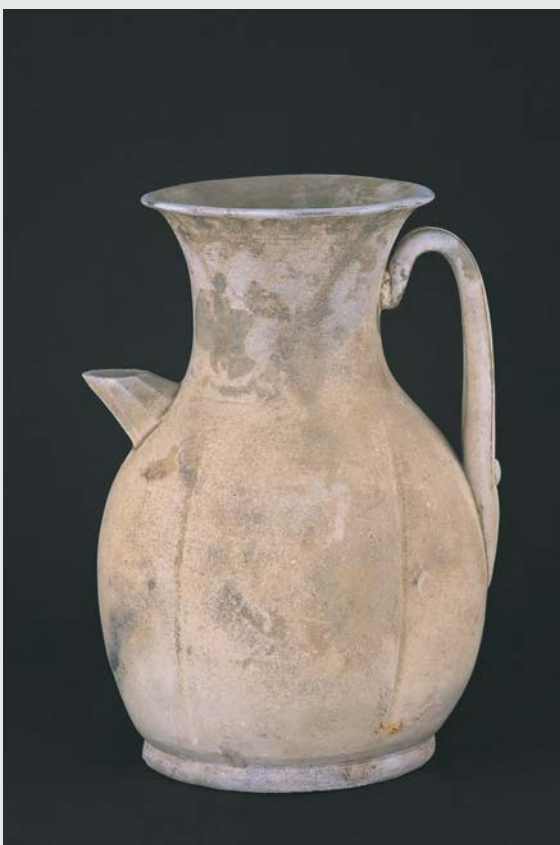


No. 248 (Sc. 1:2)

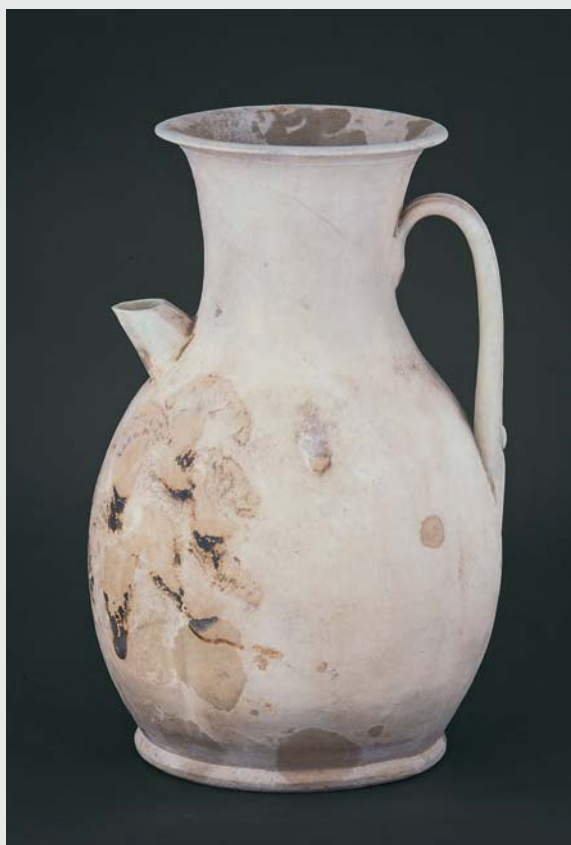
¹ See Zhou Shirong 1982, 514, pl. 25:1 and 5.



No. 249 Detail of the underglaze decoration



No. 248



No. 249

250

Ewer with tall neck

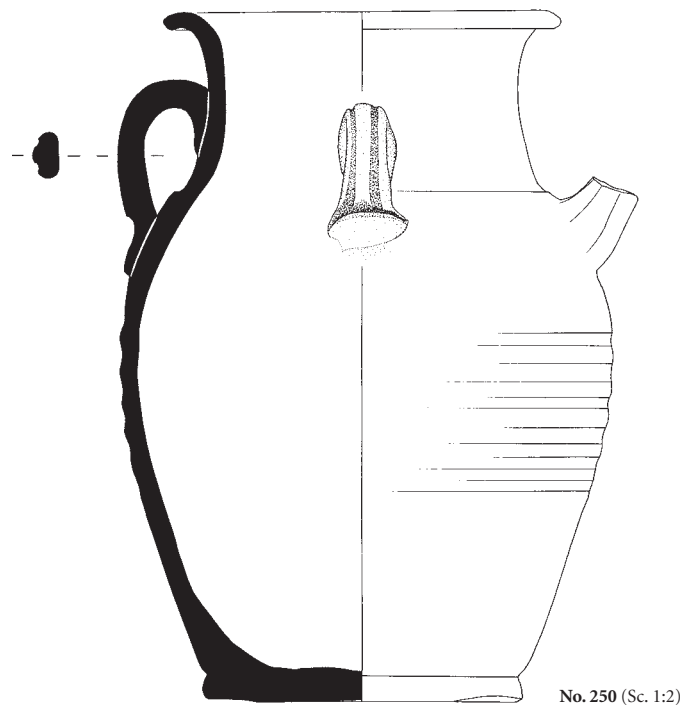
Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 18.4 cm, diam. rim 10.5 cm, diam. base 8.5 cm

The vessel shows an ovoid body with impressed grooves, which is clearly separated from the wide concave neck and rests on a solid foot with flat base. Under the everted rim a loop strap handle with two deeply impressed grooves is attached opposite a short octagonal spout. Between them are two further loop handles with vertical grooves. The body was covered with a layer of slip, upon which a green glaze was originally applied. Both slip and glaze end in an uneven line well above the foot revealing the pinkish-grey stoneware body. Three pieces of this type were recovered from the shipwreck.





No. 250

Ewer with dish-shaped mouth

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 22.8 cm, diam. rim 8.9 cm, diam. base 12.2 cm

The ewer has a short narrow neck that flares towards a dish-shaped mouth with rolled lip. The ovoid body tapers towards a solid foot with flat base. A short octagonal spout is attached to the shoulder opposite a rope handle. Between spout and handle is a pair of delicate ring-shaped lugs on the shoulder, each with a carved vertical line. The green glaze that originally covered the body of the ewer over a white slip ended in a line above the foot; it has almost completely vanished. Traces of brown patches that once embellished the areas under the spout and the handle are still visible. Two pieces of this type were found on the Belitung wreck.

Vessels with dish-shaped mouth emerged towards the middle of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220), but the origin of the form goes back to the jar with a trumpet neck and everted mouth of the Western Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 25). During this period, the potters' tendency to turn the everted mouth into a dish-shaped one is discernible: on some vessels neck and mouth are so sharply separated that they almost show a dish-like feature.¹ In the late Three Kingdoms period (220–265) there first appeared a type of ewer with proper dish-shaped mouth and a chicken-head spout on the shoulder, which became prevalent during the Western Jin (265–316) dynasty and thereafter till the Sui (see fig. 5, p.474). Trapezoidal lugs replaced the early ornamental ring-shaped lugs of the Eastern Han. The typical Tang form of the Changsha ewer with dish-shaped mouth was obviously

developed from these Eastern Han and Eastern Jin types. The archaeological finds prove that the Eastern Han type of jar with dish-shaped mouth was still produced at the Changsha kilns during the eighth century.² A ewer with dish-shaped mouth and a chicken-head spout recovered from an Eastern Jin tomb in Changsha, was believed to have been made locally by potters at the Yuezhou kilns.³

Ewers with dish-shaped mouth excavated in 1983 at the Changsha kiln sites were mostly covered with greenish-tinged glaze, as demonstrated by the example under discussion. They were embellished on the body either with animistic and foliage motifs in underglaze brown, or with dark brown patches. They occurred in two basic types: those with lobed body (54 pieces) and those with ovoid body (30 pieces).⁴ All ewers from the second group had rope handles and rope lugs, which distinguishes them from the examples with dish-shaped mouth from the Belitung wreck showing only a vertical handle in the form of a rope.



No. 251 (Sc. 1:4)

1 See, for instance, Okazaki Takashi 1982, pls 64, 65, 193; The Editorial Committee for Treasures of Chinese Arts 1985–89, vol. 1, pl. 160.

2 Ten jars with cup-shaped mouth, coated with greenish-tinged glaze, were unearthed at Wuchang, Hunan province. They were believed to be manufactured at the Changsha kilns. One of them (ht. 42.0 cm) was excavated from M40, a tomb dated to 781; see Quan Jinyun 1986. Further, some 29 jars with dish-shaped mouth were excavated in 1983, Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 41.

3 Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 236–237.

4 Ibid., 40–41.



No. 251

Ewer with dish-shaped mouth

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 18.2, diam. rim 8.3 cm, diam. base 9.2 cm

In comparison with the previous example (no. 251), the body of this ewer is more rounded and the neck narrower. The handle is missing and the dish-shaped mouth with everted rim has been restored. Glaze and decoration are better preserved. Although no moulded appliqués are seen on the body, three iron-brown patches, apparently dipped, are painted on the yellowish-green glaze, which covers the ewer leaving the foot and the base free. Four brown patches were also painted on the dish-shaped mouth.

A ewer of similar scale (ht. 15.0 cm) but with lobed body and underglaze decoration was unearthed at the Changsha kiln sites and bore an inscription with the date 'ninth year of Dazhong', which is equivalent to 835.¹ Another amber-glazed ewer of the same type (ht. 18.2, diam. rim 7.9 cm and diam. base 10.7 cm) was recovered at the Lan'anzui kiln site in 1983.² The two-character inscription seen on this vessel – *youping* or oil vase – suggests that such ewers may have been used to store cooking oil.

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 164, pl. 88.

² Ibid., 40–41, pl. 89.



No. 252

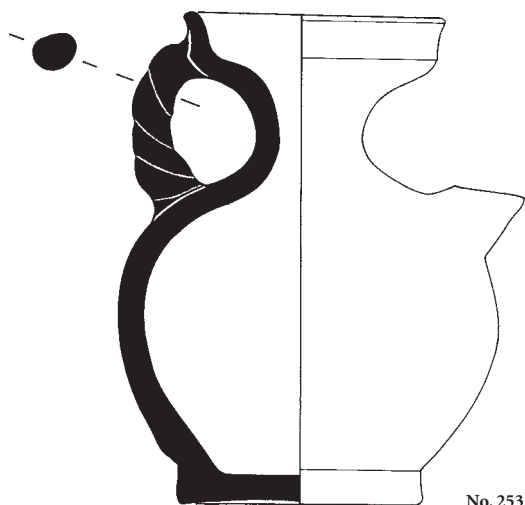
253

Shuizhu water dropper with dish-shaped mouth

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 9.0 cm, diam. rim 4.4 cm, diam. foot 4.1 cm

This *shuizhu* water dropper has a bulbous body, short concave neck and dish-shaped mouth. It rests on a solid, straight-cut foot with flat base. A rope handle connects the shoulder with the dish-shaped mouth, opposite a short tubular spout. Over a white slip a yellowish-green glaze covers the vessel and ends in a line above the foot. Rich green underglaze patches appear on the rim and foliage patterns on the shoulder. Four pieces of this type were recovered from the shipwreck.

Some 201 pieces of *shuizhu* unearthed in 1983 at the Changsha kiln sites fall in four primary categories: (1) spouted vessels with tall trumpet neck, everted rim, unarticulated shoulder and a long handle; they are smaller versions (about 6.0 cm high) of specimens like no. 247; (2) spouted vessels with squat bulbous body, low neck, rolled lip and a handle in the shape of a rooster's tail; (3) spouted vessels with cup-shaped mouth and a long handle, and (4) spouted vessels with a double-gourd body and a long handle.¹



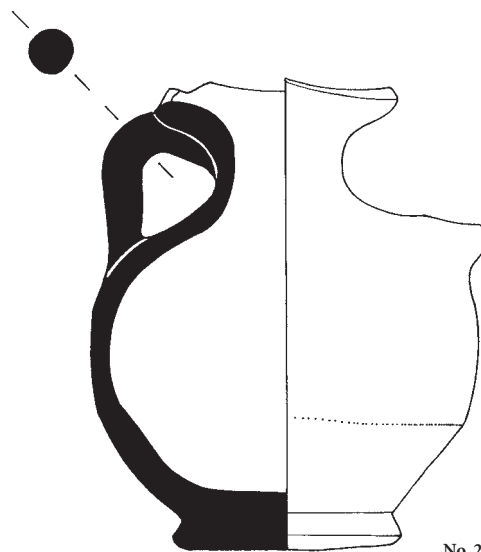
No. 253 (Sc. 3:4)

254

Shuizhu water dropper with notched mouth

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 8.2 cm, diam. rim 4.3 cm, diam. foot 4.0 cm

Bulbous body with short flared neck, short spout and a loop handle, all these features are common to this and the example no. 253. The differences lie in the handle, which is here ring-shaped, and in the mouth, which is almost flat and has three notches. The greenish-tinged glaze, which originally covered the vessel, has vanished completely revealing the white slip underneath. The shoulder and the rim are decorated with foliage motifs in rich green colour. This piece is unique among the ceramics found on the Belitung wreck.



No. 254 (Sc. 3:4)

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 73–75, figs 141–149.



No. 253



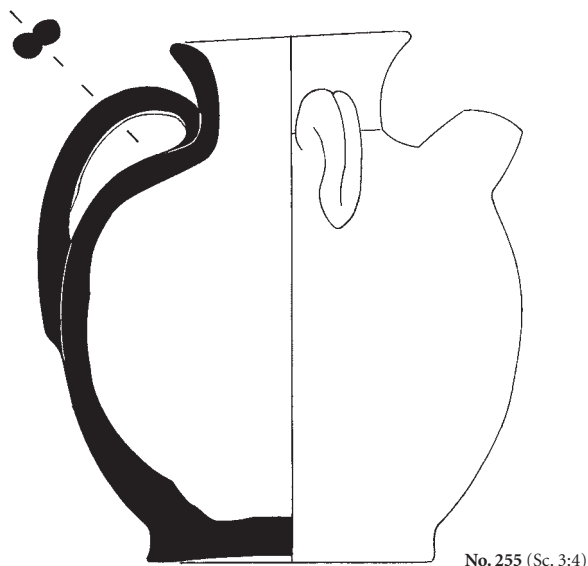
No. 254

255

Shuizhu water dropper

Tang dynasty, 9th century
 Green-glazed stoneware
 Changsha kilns, Hunan province
 Ht. 9.5 cm, diam. rim 4.4 cm, diam. base 4.7 cm

The vessel has a bulbous body that tapers towards a solid foot with flat base, and a short neck flaring to the rim. A short tubular spout is attached to the shoulder opposite a double-strand handle. Between them two ring-shaped lugs with carved vertical lines are added on the shoulder. A thin, pale, yellowish-green glaze, which run also into the interior, covers the whole vessel stopping above the foot. Foliage patterns are painted under the spout and the lugs in underglaze rich green. Fourteen pieces of this type have been recovered from the shipwreck.

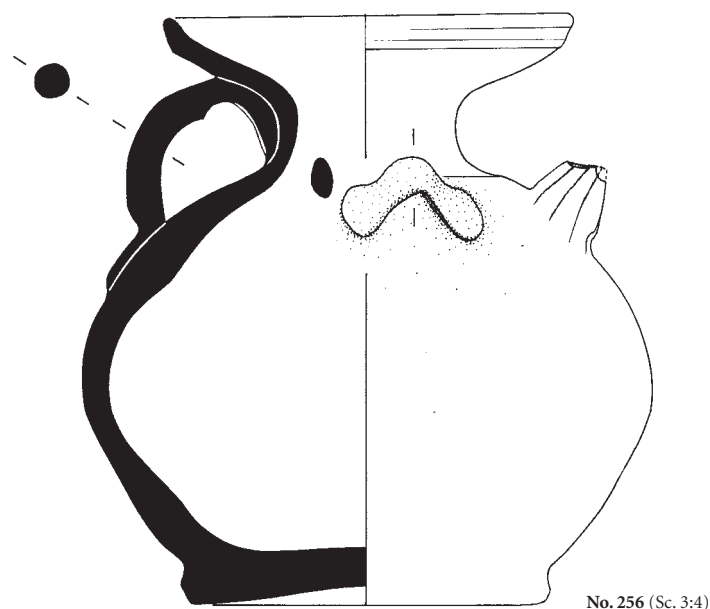


256

Shuizhu water dropper with dish-shaped mouth

Tang dynasty, 9th century
 Green-glazed stoneware
 Changsha kilns, Hunan province
 Ht. 10.6 cm, diam. rim 6.8 cm, diam. foot 6.4 cm

This *shuizhu* water dropper has a squat bulbous body and a short concave neck flaring towards the dish-shaped mouth. On the shoulder a raised horizontal rib separates clearly the neck from the body. A single-stranded handle is attached opposite an octagonal spout, and two horizontal loop handles are added between them. The lower part of the body shows turning marks. A mottled olive-green glaze covers the vessel partly also inside and ends in a line above the foot. It has a stronger green tint where it pooled. Four pieces of this type were recovered from the Belitung wreck.





No. 255



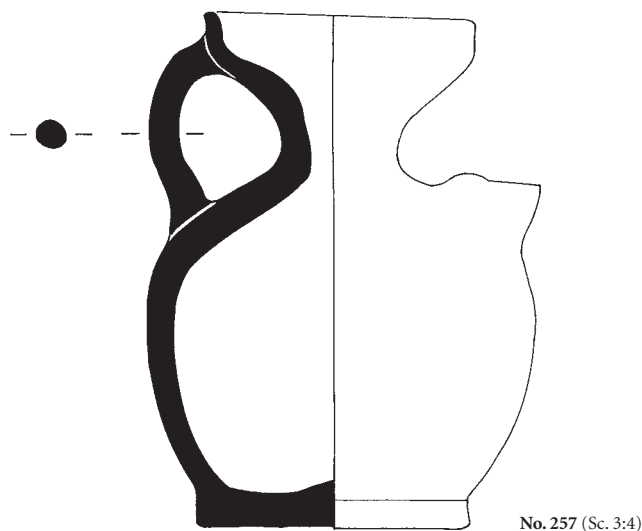
No. 256

257

Shuizhu water dropper with dish-shaped mouth

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Brown-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 10.4 cm, diam. rim 4.9 cm, diam. base 5.2 cm

The vessel shows a squat bulbous body and a straight-cut, solid foot with flat base. The neck is short and flares to the dish-shaped mouth, where a ring-shaped handle is attached opposite a short tubular spout. The body was covered with a layer of slip and a milky glaze, which ends in a line above the foot. The mottled dark brown glaze is applied over the milky glaze covering more than the half of the exterior and partly also the interior of the vessel. Thirty-two pieces of this type have been found on the shipwreck, some of them being green-glazed with underglaze decoration.



No. 257 (Sc. 3:4)

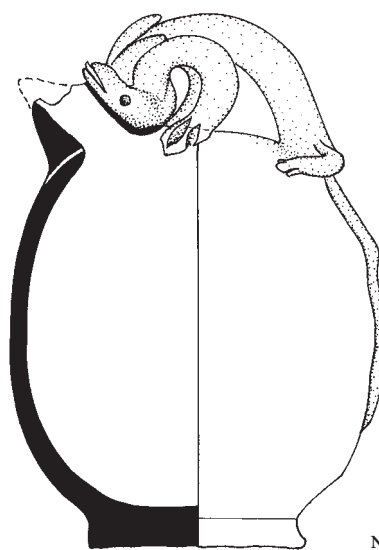
258

Shuizhu water dropper with a dragon-shaped handle

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Brown-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 9.4 cm

The vessel has an ovoid body and a solid foot with flat base. The handle is modelled as a crouching dragon with paws grasping the shoulder; its tail curves sinuously towards the foot. The freely modelled dragon's head with horns and half-opened mouth rests on the short tubular spout, which is partly broken. Over the off-white slip, an iron-brown glaze is applied ending in an uneven line above the foot. Two pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck.

Similar water droppers were also unearthed at the Changsha kiln sites during the 1978 excavation.¹



No. 258 (Sc. 3:4)

¹ Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, pl. 12:11; see also Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 202, fig. 553.



No. 257



No. 258

259, 260

Boxes with cover

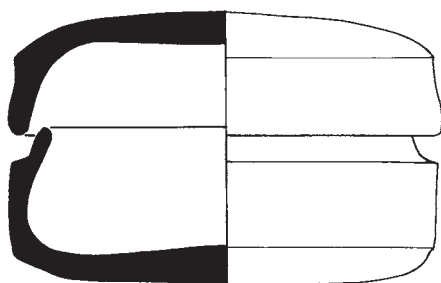
Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
No. 259: Ht. 3.5 cm, diam. 5.5 cm
No. 260: Ht. 3.0 cm, diam. 5.3 cm

These circular boxes have an almost flat base and straight sides. The interior wall turns inwards to prevent spillage of the contents. On the recessed rim fits a shallow, slightly domed cover (*zimukou*-closure). A rich green and bluish-green glaze originally covered the off-white body of the boxes except for the base. Eight pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck. Further, three lids and two boxes without lid belonged also to vessels like these.

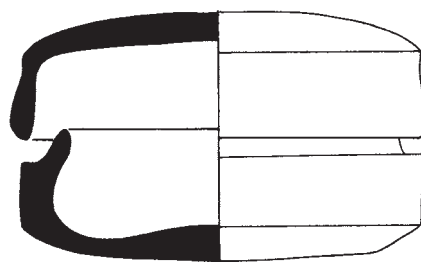
The making of circular boxes in Hunan or historical Chu area can be traced back to the period of the lacquer ware of the Warring States period.¹ They appear to be popular Changsha products during the Tang era and some 472 pieces were unearthed during the 1983 excavation.² The current examples represent one of three major forms, the most popular one

manufactured at the Changsha kilns. The other two forms include those with a recessed rim turning inwards to narrow the opening of the box (cf. no. 263 and the Yue example no. 150) and those with a tall splayed foot ring. Additionally, there were also some specimens in square or in animal form such as a turtle. The majority of the boxes found in Changsha were small in scale, like the pieces under discussion from the Belitung wreck. Only a small number of specimens were larger measuring up to 20 cm in diameter (cf. nos 261, 262).

Boxes like these may have been multifunctional. They could have been used to store herb medicine, tea, a small bronze mirror, ink used for seals, make-up, or tucks.



No. 259



No. 260

¹ National Administration for Cultural Relics 1996, *Volume of Gold, Silver, Jade and Stone Works*, 162, pl. 29.

² Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 86.



No. 259



No. 260

261, 262

Boxes with cover

Tang dynasty, 9th century

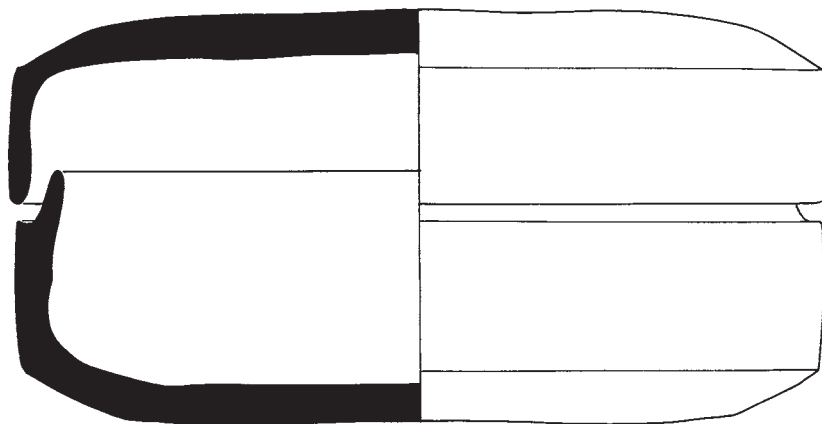
Green-glazed stoneware with underglaze decoration

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

No. 261: Ht. 7.3 cm, diam. 17 cm

No. 262: Ht. 5.3 cm, diam. 10.9 cm

The two boxes exhibit the usual features of a *he* in circular form and are similar to nos 259 and 260, though much larger. What is unusual, apart from their scale, is the underglaze decoration painted on the slightly domed covers. Most of the Changsha boxes of this form were monochrome, coated with a greenish-tinged, a diamond-blue or peacock-green, as well as a brown glaze.¹ On these examples, under the thin greenish-tinged glaze of the cover foliage motifs (no. 262) and a landscape design (no. 261) are painted in green and brown. Eight pieces of this type have been recovered from the Belitung wreck. In addition, seven boxes with missing lids belonged also to such vessels.



No. 262

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 86.



No. 261



No. 262

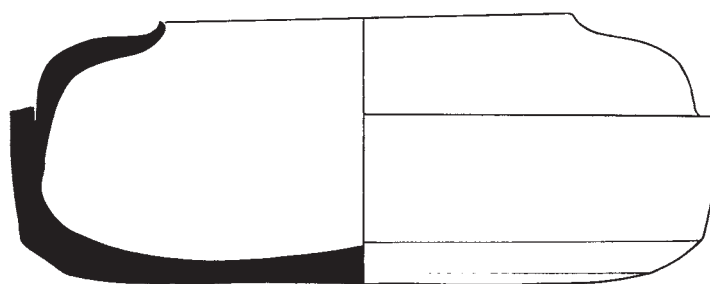
Box with narrow opening

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 3.7 cm, diam. 9.3 cm

This example represents one of the three major types of circular boxes manufactured at the Changsha kilns during the late Tang. Unlike nos 259–262, in this case the recessed rim turns inwards to form a small opening with an upturned lip. The cover is missing. A greenish-tinged glaze covers the box inside and out. Three pieces of this type were found on the shipwreck.

The function of such boxes has long been puzzling. Different archaeological finds, however, shed some light on their use. Two boxes of this type were unearthed in the 1978 excavation each bearing the inscription *youhe* or ‘oil box’ on the domed cover.¹ Another two similar boxes but each with a tall

splayed foot ring, excavated from a Tang site in Yangzhou and from the kiln sites at Changsha in 1983 respectively, bore also the same inscription on their bevelled flat top.² A specimen matching the one under discussion, found in Cirebon, West Java, was also inscribed *youhe*,⁴ as well as eleven circular box covers excavated in 1983 at the Changsha kiln sites.³ These finds suggest that such boxes may have been intended for storing some kind of oil, perhaps hair-conditioning or facial lotion. The narrow opening was meant to prevent spillage of the contents.



No. 263

¹ Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 81, pl. 7:11.

² Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 87, fig. 198.

³ Ibid., 88.

⁴ See *The World's Great Collections* 1977a, fig. 51.



No. 263

264–266

Shuiyu water pots

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

No. 264: Ht. 2.2 cm, diam. rim 1.8 cm, diam. foot 2.2 cm

No. 265: Ht. 2.5 cm, diam. rim 2.0 cm, diam. foot 2.4 cm

No. 266: Ht. 3.6 cm, diam. rim 2.9 cm, diam. foot 3.6 cm

Like the water droppers, a *shuiyu* is usually a very small water pot, designated as a cultural implement for the scholar's desk. It could be used as a brush washer where a scholar dipped his ink loaded brush. Alternatively, it might function as a water dropper during a scholar's preparation of the ink: a tiny amount of water would be scooped out with a small ladle and dropped onto the inkstone during the grinding of the ink.

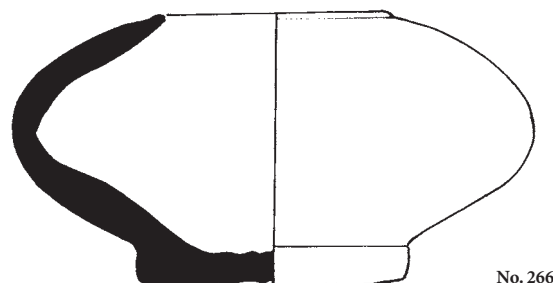
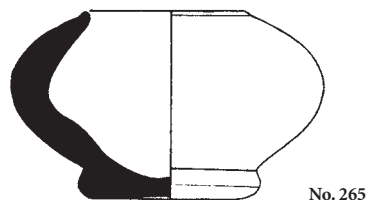
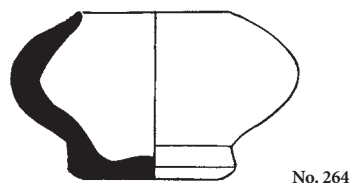
Some 443 pieces of water pots with squat globular body were unearthed at Changsha kiln sites in 1983. They fall in two basic types distinguished by different features of the foot: while many of them were potted with a flat base, others had a slightly splayed foot ring.

The example shown on no. 264 exhibits a squat globular body with a small opening and slightly everted rim. It has an almost solid foot with flat base. The rich bluish-green glaze

covers almost half of the body, revealing on the lower part the pale buff body material. A creamy green glaze is applied on the interior. Ten pieces of this type have been recovered from the shipwreck.

The shape of the water pots nos. 265 and 266 is almost identical to that of no. 264. They differ only in the application of the glaze and in the decoration. On no. 265, unique among the ceramics recovered from the shipwreck, a thin yellowish-green glaze ends in an uneven line just above the foot. Three clusters of foliage were originally painted in rich underglaze green on the vessel's shoulder, but have now partially vanished.

On no. 266, the water pot rests on a straight-cut, solid foot and is decorated with impressionistic designs of florets and leaf sprays painted in copper red on the fine buff body under a transparent greenish-tinged glaze. Some 756 pieces of this type were found on the Belitung wreck.





Nos 264, 265 right to left



No. 266

267–269

Shuiyu water pots

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware with underglaze decoration

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

No. 267: Ht. 4.2 cm, diam. rim 2.6 cm, diam. foot 3.3 cm

No. 268: Ht. 4.4 cm, diam. rim 2.4 cm, diam. foot 3.4 cm

No. 269: Ht. 3.9 cm, diam. rim 2.7 cm, diam. foot 3.4 cm

These three *shuiyu* are very similar in shape to nos 264–266. They are embellished with underglaze floral and abstract patterns, painted in bluish and brown under the greenish-tinged glaze.

The colouring agent used to achieve the blue hue is interesting. The question of whether the blue colourant is cobalt and therefore this type of underglazed painting can be related directly to the Yuan dynasty underglaze cobalt-blue decoration, is still open to discussion.¹ However, the imagination and skill of the Changsha potters, as reflected in the achievement of this range of underglaze colours at such an early date, is truly admirable.

¹ Four Changsha jars in the Cox collection at Yale were decorated with underglaze concentric circles of brown and blue or brown and red dots. A scientific analysis of these jars had suggested that the blue was derived from copper; the presence of tin accounted for the opacity of the colour. See Gardener Neill 1982, 70 and above in this volume p. 481.



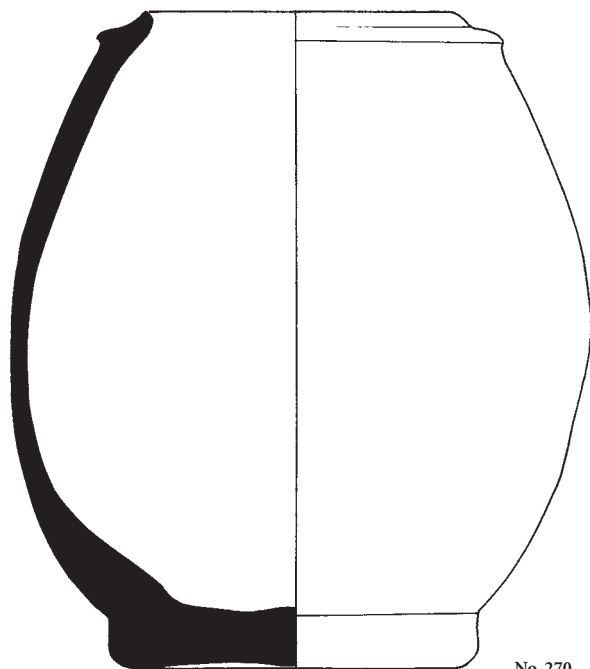
Nos 267, 268, 269 (left to right)

270

Shuiyu water pot

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Brown-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 8.7 cm, diam. rim 5.3 cm, diam. base 4.8 cm

This *shuiyu* water pot, unique among the ceramics found on the Belitung wreck, is potted almost like a mini *tan* jar.¹ It shows an ovoid body and rests on a solid foot with flat base. The body flares slightly to the recessed rim, which may have been designed to receive a cover that is now missing. A brown glaze, partly degraded, covers the body ending in an uneven line well above the foot.



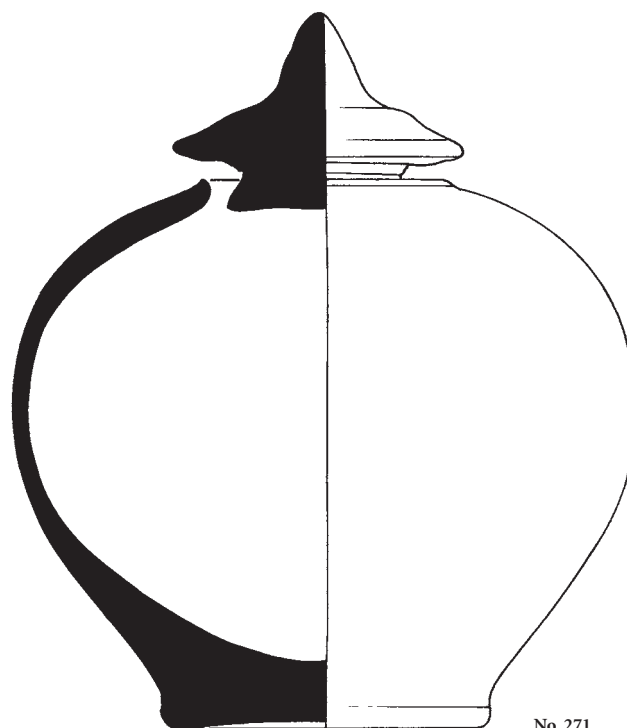
No. 270

271

Small jar with cover

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. (with cover) 9.4 cm, diam. rim 3.0 cm, base 4.4 cm

The small ovoid jar has a well-rounded body with a short rim, and a flat base. The slightly domed cover has an almost flat rim and a pointed knob. The rich green glaze that used to cover the jar over a white slip, except for the base, has mostly vanished; it is still thick in the grooves of the cover where it pooled. It can be seen that the glaze runs into the interior and stops short above the foot-rim. Five pieces of this type were excavated from the shipwreck. Three more jars without cover belonged also to this ceramic type.



No. 271

¹ See a similar example reported in Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996 109, fig. 282.



No. 270



No. 271

272, 273

Double-gourd vases

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

No. 272: Ht. 10.6 cm (with underglaze decoration)

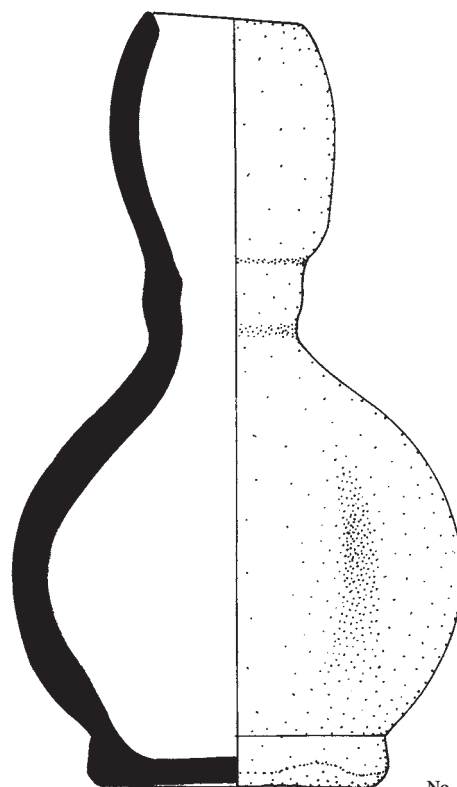
No. 273: Ht. 10.4 cm

The vase no. 272 is well potted as a narrow-waisted double gourd on a solid foot with flat base. It is divided by a ring-shaped collar into a squat bulbous body and an ovoid upper element. The green glaze, which originally covered the whole vessel except for the foot and the base, has completely vanished, revealing the white slip underneath. On the lower bulb traces of three clusters of foliage painted in iron-brown are still visible. Four tiny brown patches are painted on the rim.

The piece no. 273 has an almost cylindrical upper element tapering towards its upper and lower ends, and a four-lobed body. The rich bluish-green glaze ends in a line above the foot forming also some thick drops.

Vases in double-gourd form were a popular product of the Changsha kilns. Of some 322 pieces of ceramics in various forms unearthed in 1983, 137 pieces were double-gourd vases.¹ They were generally resembling the first specimen, embellished with clusters of leaves in brown or rich green under a transparent greenish-tinged glaze. Double-gourd vases with lobed body, however, are rather rare.

The popularity of the double-gourd form ever since the Tang dynasty arises not only from its natural beauty, but also its cultural associations. The word for gourd, *hulu*, forms a pun or an alternative word for *fulu* or 'fortune' and 'richness'. Moreover, in the Daoist tradition the gourd was a significant emblem of immortals, charged with magic Daoist powers.



No. 273

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 41.



No. 272



No. 273

Barrel-shaped jar with moulded lugs

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Brown-glaze stoneware

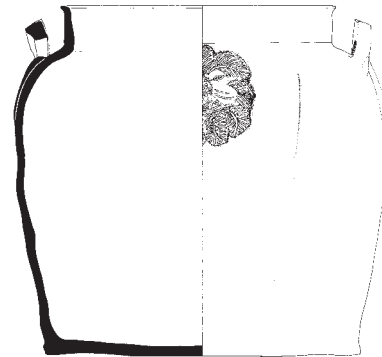
Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 19.5 cm, diam. rim 14.6 cm, diam. base 17 cm

This large jar with short wide neck and slightly everted rim is unique among the ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck. The four-lobed body is almost cylindrical, tapering towards the broad flat base. Two large, moulded, trapezoidal lugs with diamond-shaped pendants rise from the shoulder. Between them two medallions are applied showing a pair of birds facing each other among palm leaves and clusters of fruit. The dark brown glaze is applied over a white slip and ends in a line well above the foot, revealing the pale buff body material. It also runs down inside the neck of the jar.

The moulded trapezoidal lug is not a new idea originated at the Changsha kilns. From the third century in the south-eastern and central provinces of China elegant jar-lugs were made to project sharply with squared edges and perforation. However, the Changsha potters enriched the design by adding embellished diamond- or leaf-shaped pendants hanging down from the perforations (cf. appendix IV nos 1–5). A mould for making trapezoidal lugs with tassel-like ornaments, excavated from a Tongguan kiln site, is dated by inscription to the third year of the Yuanhe reign (808).¹

Archaeological excavations revealed that the jar of this form was among the most popular of all jars during the mid-Tang period. Towards the late Tang, the jars showed a longer neck.² Jars of this shape were sometimes painted with greenish-tinged glaze and decorated with brown patches on their shoulders.³



No. 274 (Sc. 1:4)

¹ Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 88–89, fig. 18; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 187, 194, fig. 521; see also above fig. 25 on p. 501.

² Quan Jinyun 1986, 1131.

³ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 38.



No. 274 Moulded lug with relief pendant



No. 274

275

Ovoid jar with lugs

Tang dynasty, 9th century

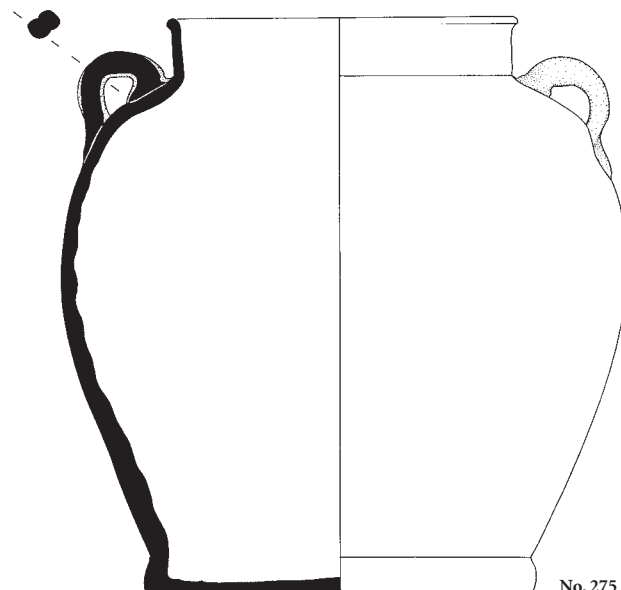
Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 15.4 cm, diam. rim 9.2 cm, diam. foot 10.4 cm

Wide jar of an elegant ovoid shape tapering towards the solid foot with flat base. It has a short cylindrical neck and a slightly everted rolled rim. On the rounded shoulder two double-stranded lugs are placed vertically. A pale, yellowish-green glaze over a slip is still well preserved inside the vessel. On the exterior only some spots and drops of it remain. It ended in an uneven line above the foot of the jar. Five pieces of this type were excavated from the shipwreck.

Although not large in number, jars unearthed at the Changsha kiln sites in 1983 showed a diversity in form. 736 pieces have been divided into 7 types with 20 subgroups.¹ Jars of the same type as the one under discussion were unearthed from the tomb of Wang Qing at Changsha, dating to the sixth year of the Dahe reign (832).² It is a type inherited and regenerated from the earlier Yuezhou ware tradition.



No. 275 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 38–47.

² Zhou Shirong 1982, 510, fig. 1:1–3, pl. 19:3.



No. 275

276

Ovoid jar with lugs

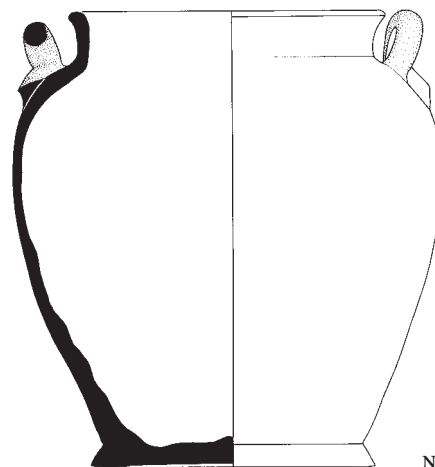
Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

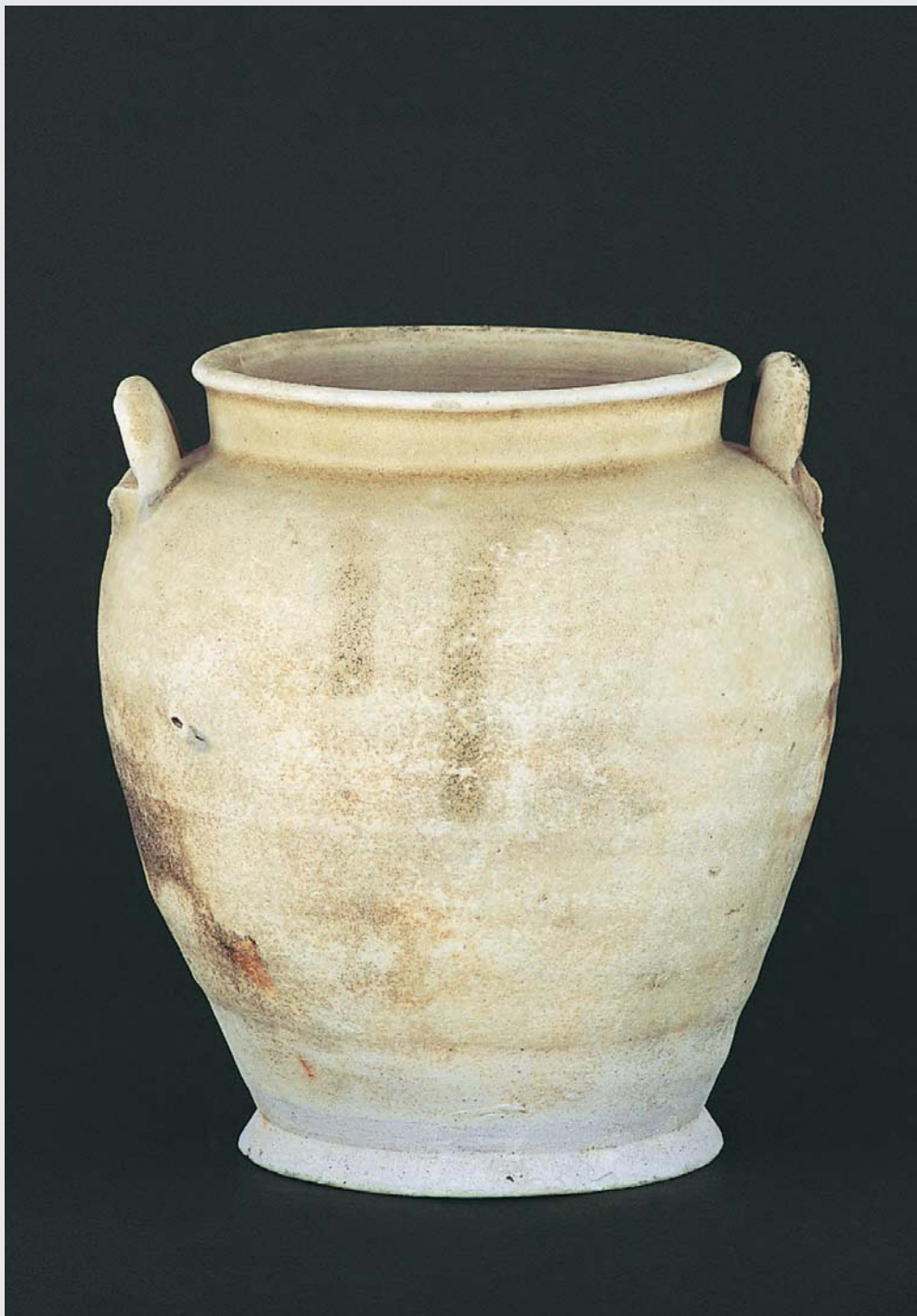
Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 12.2 cm, diam. rim 8.2 cm, diam. base 7.3 cm

This jar shares the basic features described under no. 275. However, the body is less rounded and the solid foot distinctly splayed. Furthermore, it has a pair of ring-shaped, single-stranded lugs placed upright on the shoulder and parallel to the neck. The thin yellowish-green glaze, which once covered the vessel both inside and out, is largely degraded. It ends in a line above the foot revealing the light grey body material. Three pieces of this type have been recovered from the shipwreck.



No. 276 (Sc. 1:2)



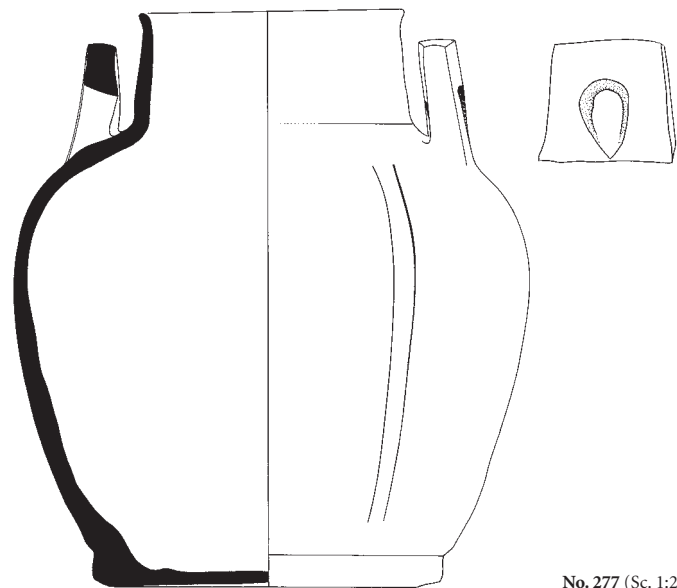
No. 276

277

Ovoid jar with four indentations and two vertical lugs

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 15.2 cm

The jar has a squat ovoid body tapering towards a solid foot with flat base. It is divided into four lobes by vertical indentations created by a narrow wooden or bamboo slip. The short cylindrical neck tapers towards the slightly everted rim. Two high, trapezoidal, moulded lugs are set upright on the shoulder. A rich green glaze runs also inside the jar and ends outside in a line above the foot exposing the light grey stoneware body. It has a bluish tinge where it pools. Two pieces of this type were found on the Belitung wreck.



No. 277 (Sc. 1:2)



No. 277

Globular jar with four indentations and two relief lugs

Tang dynasty, 9th century

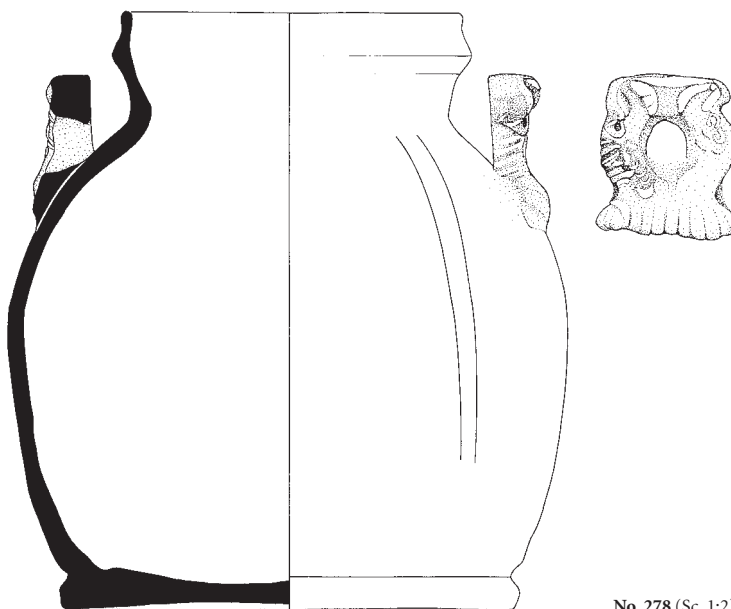
Brown glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 15.9 cm, diam. rim 9.4 cm, diam. base 12.0 cm

The melon-shaped body of this jar with four indentations is separated by a groove from the solid, straight-cut foot with flat base. The vessel has a short wide neck, which flares towards an almost dish-shaped mouth with a faint horizontal groove. Two high trapezoidal lugs sit upright on the shoulder. They are moulded and probably show a pair of fish, or dragons, as it has been suggested in reporting a similar example.¹ The relief is, however, in this case too vague to permit a confident interpretation. The brown glaze survives mainly between shoulder and neck, where it pooled, and in thick drops above the foot. It was applied over a white slip. Three pieces of this type have been recovered from the shipwreck.

In the 1983 excavation at Changsha twenty-one jars with flared neck were found. They had, however, loop lugs and no indentations.² Moulded trapezoidal lugs like these of the jar under discussion are typical of Changsha products. A clay mould for a trapezoidal lug with relief pattern of a pair of fish or dragon-like figures was unearthed at Changsha kiln sites in 1978.³



No. 278 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ Zhou Shirong 2000 13, fig. 2.

² Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 40.

³ Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 88, fig. 4; Zhou Shirong 2000, 13, fig. 2.



No. 278

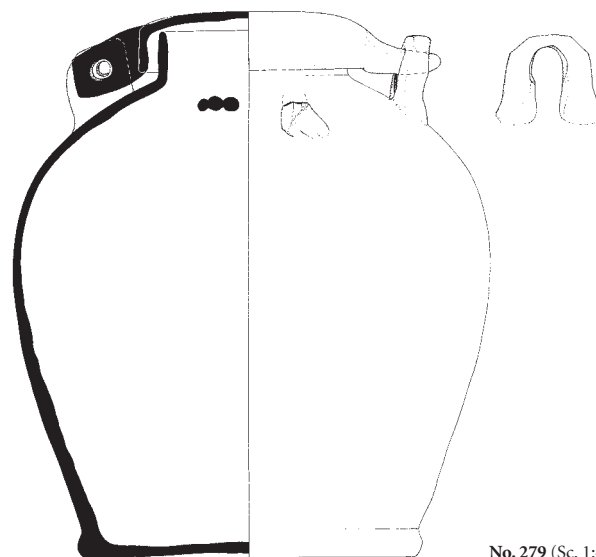
279

Ovoid jar with cover

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 30.0 cm

The jar has a short narrow neck and an ovoid body tapering towards a solid foot with flat base. A pair of vertical placed lugs is attached to the shoulder opposite a U-shaped lug. Between them two triple-stranded loop handle were added, now missing. The shallow flat cover has a trapezoidal pierced lug fitting in between the upright lugs of the body. A cord or a pin passed through the hole to hold the cover fasten on the body. An elongated lug on the opposite side of the cover fits into the U-shaped lug making the cover unmovable. A greenish-tinged glaze covered both body and cover over a white slip and has almost completely vanished. It ended in a line just above the foot of the jar. The vessel is unique among the ceramics found on the Belitung wreck.

Similar specimens were recovered from the kiln sites at Changsha¹ and the Yue kilns in Zhejiang. A comparable, green-glazed jar was unearthed in a Southern Han (907–960) tomb in Fanyu, Guangdong province.²



No. 279 (Sc. 1:4)

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 40, 47, fig. 45.

² Feng Xianming et al. 1998, 133, pl. 106.



No. 279

280, 281

Tuohu spittoons

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

No. 280: Ht. 9.7cm, diam. rim 14.1 cm, diam. base 6.9 cm

No. 281: Ht. 10.4 cm, diam. rim 15.4 cm, diam. base 6.4 cm
(with underglaze decoration)

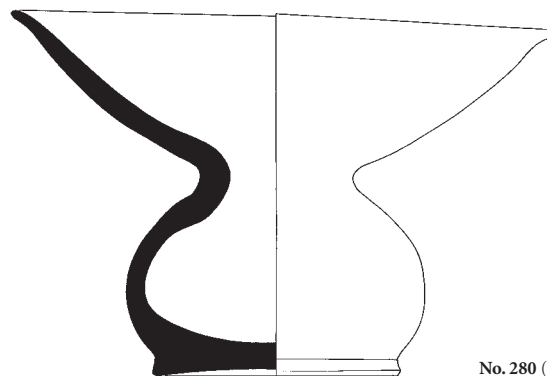
Both vessels have a squat globular body, a wide solid foot with flat base, and a wide, funnel-shaped neck with slightly everted rim. Four pieces of this type have been recovered from the shipwreck.

On the example no. 280 a rich bluish-green glaze covers the body over a white slip, leaving the base free. Archaeological finds prove that such a glaze (or *baoshilü* – ‘diamond green’), was much more often applied on the spittoons than other glazes, such as transparent green, creamy, brown or black.¹

On no. 281, spiral-like ornaments are painted under the bluish-green glaze on the funnel-shaped part of the vessel. The delightfully uninhibited decoration of copper-green and red stoneware glazes is almost an effect that Jun ware achieved later, in the Northern Song dynasty, with freely rendered copper splashes in green or red.

This vessel shape first appeared in the Eastern Han dynasty and was popular during the succeeding periods of the Three Kingdoms and the Jin dynasty, produced primarily at the Yue kilns, Zhejiang province (cf. nos 138, 139). An object close to the spittoon *tuohu* is *zhadou*, a vessel with a larger opening, used as a receptacle for unwanted table scraps, such as bones and gristle. In the Tang dynasty the forms of *tuohu* and *zhadou* remained unchanged, but were enriched by the application of a variety of glazes. Vessels of this shape in small size were also used for tea dregs.

The field surveys carried out in the Changsha area suggest that during the first half of the ninth century the production of the spittoon *tuohu* with rich green or almost turquoise-tinged glaze had become prolific.²



No. 280 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 98.

² Ibid., 234-235.



No. 280



No. 281

Xunlu incense burner

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. with lid 22.5 cm, ht. without lid 14 cm,

diam. rim of the body 14.2 cm, diam. foot 12.0 cm

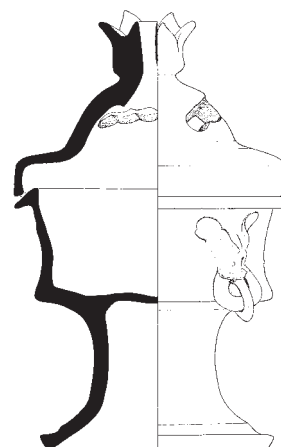
This *xunlu* incense burner is unique among the ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck. The vessel resembles a slightly concave stemcup with a strongly everted rim and a tall hollow stem flaring towards a wide foot. The body of the censer is embellished with four animal masks, each holding a ring in its mouth. These rings are fixed onto the vessel by loops. The masks show large staring eyes and horn-like elements on their heads. The cover, pierced with three triple-lobed openings, has a steep domed form with a knob shaped like a blossom. The vessel was covered with a bluish-green glaze, which is either degraded or – especially on the cover – has completely vanished. The interior of the stem remains unglazed.

Like some other Changsha ceramic forms, here the absorption of art elements of the past and their infusion into a new model are obvious. While the censer's shape is an elaborate form of the archaic *dou* or *pu* stemmed jars¹ and the *dou*-shaped *xunlu* of the Han dynasty,² the 'ring-holder' pattern of ornament is a feature borrowed from the *pushou* mask fixtures popular during the Warring States period to the Han dynasty.³ They were used to hold handles on bronze vessels, stone coffins, or doors of tomb chambers.⁴

When the ceramic censers first appeared during the Han period, they served mostly as incense burners and as *mingqi* burial objects and supplied the needs of funeral corteges and

tombs. A good example was unearthed in 1972 from the tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui, Changsha (mid-second century BC). The censer, very close to the present one in shape, contained plants with a strong aroma when it was found.⁵ After the Han dynasty, *xunlu* censers were used widely to furnish the tables put before ancestral or religious icons in temples or in domestic shrines. They were suited to presenting offerings at altars or before the burial chamber in tombs. During the Tang, in addition to their important role in religious contexts, incense burners and perfumers also enhanced the daily life of the populace. They were produced in a number of materials and styles. Specimens in silver made in late seventh to early eighth centuries and similar to the present example were unearthed in Shaanxi province.⁶ The influence of metal models is clearly to be seen in many of the censers of the late Tang.

An example similar to the one under discussion was unearthed from the Changsha kiln sites in 1978.⁷ Furthermore, a variation derived from this model has been reported: there, the *dou* vessel-like pattern has been modified in to a form resembling a Buddhist double-lotus throne.⁸



No. 282 (Sc. 1:4)

1 See e.g. National Administration for Cultural Relics 1996, *Volume of Bronzes*, 122, pl. 422.

2 See e.g. *ibid.*, *Volume of Ceramics*, 83, pl. 295.

3 See e.g. *ibid.*, *Volume of Bronzes*, 293, pl. 1053.

4 The stone door of Prince Liu Sheng's (? – 113 BC) tomb at Mancheng in Hebei, for instance, had a bronze ring-holder mask in place upon excavation.

5 See *ibid.*, *Volume of Ceramics*, 83, pl. 295.

6 National Administration for Cultural Relics 1996, *Volume of Gold, Silver, Jade and Stone Works*, 130, pls 125, 126.

7 Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 82, pl. 8:10.

8 *Ibid.*, pl. 8:7.



No. 282

Xunlu incense burner

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

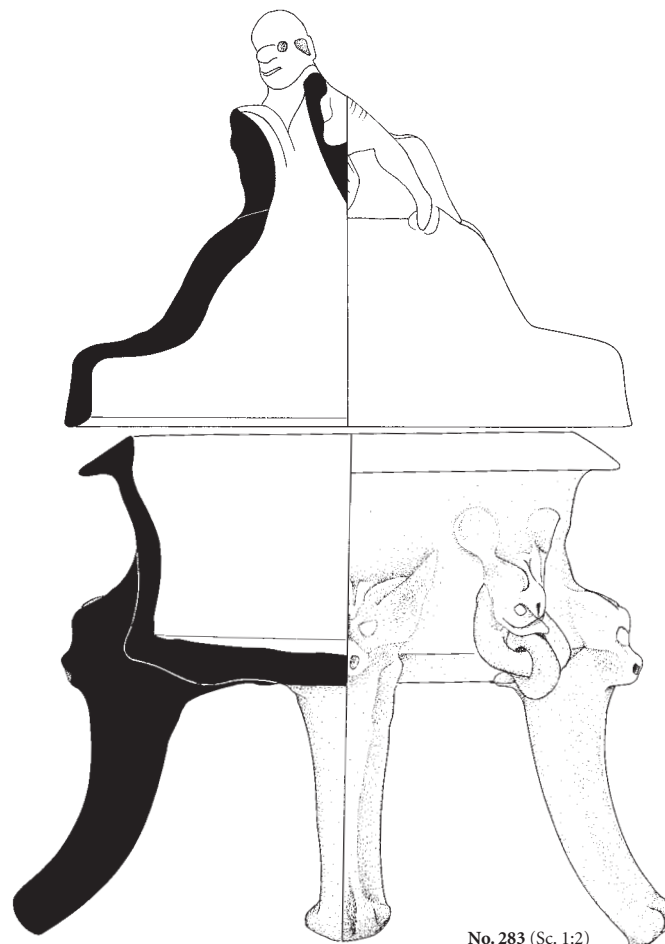
Ht. with lid 23.5 cm, ht. without lid 13.3 cm,

diam. rim of the body 14.3 cm

The censer has a form similar to the previous one but the body is here supported by four animal legs, each decorated at the top with an animal head. Between them four masks in the archaic *pushou* or 'ring-holder' pattern appear. The cover has instead of a knob a humanoid figure mounting a beast. The open mouth of the beast is also the opening of the incense burner. The green glaze which once covered the vessel over a white slip has completely vanished. Interestingly, traces of red glaze are still visible on the cover.

Ceramic censers standing on three or four animal legs became popular during the late Tang period and evidently copied a metal original.¹ The prototype can be traced back to the early bronze vessels of the Shang and Zhou periods.

The field research carried out in the Changsha area proves that this and the example no. 282 represent the two basic types of incense burners produced at the Changsha kilns.²



No. 283 (Sc. 1:2)

¹ See e.g. National Administration for Cultural Relics 1996, *Volume of Gold, Silver, Jade and Stone Works*, 130, pl. 125.

² Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 82, pl. 8:10, 11; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 91.



No. 283 Cover



No. 283 Details of the censer



No. 283

Xunlu incense burner

Tang dynasty, 9th century

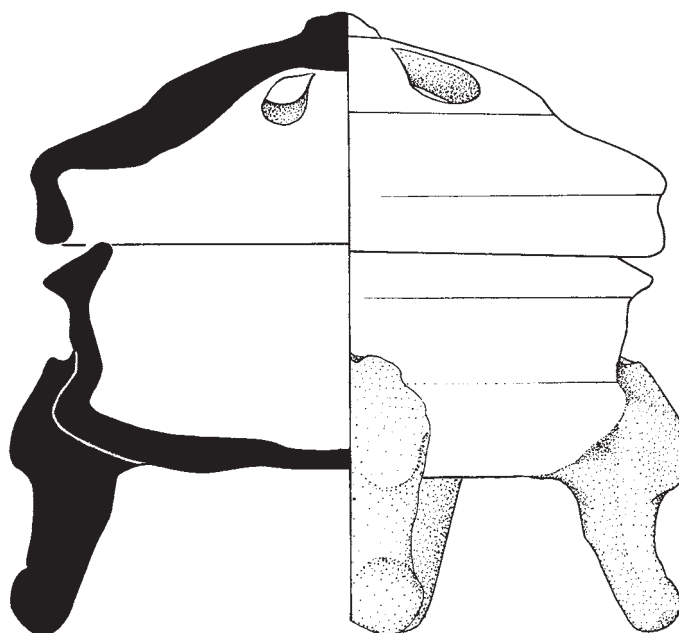
Green- and brown-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. with lid 8.3 cm, ht. without lid 5.2 cm

The censer has a slightly domed lid pierced with a simple design of four petals arranged like the downward perspective of a flower in full bloom around a rather flat knob. The receptacle is similar to no. 283 but shallower, and the sides are slightly convex. There are no relief masks on the top of the supporting animal legs. A greenish-tinged glaze covers the off-white body of the vessel except for the bottom and the interior. The lid was additionally covered on the top with a brown glaze. Fourteen complete pieces of this type were recovered from the Belitung wreck. Further, five covers and four bodies belonged also to this type of censer.

Censers of a similar type were unearthed from Tang tombs at Changsha. They are believed to be prevalent after the mid-Tang (780–835).¹ They were sometimes modelled with three animal or simple legs. In addition to the greenish-tinged glaze, diamond-blue or creamy glazes were also used to cover the censers.



No. 284

¹ Zhou Shirong 1982, 512, pl. 22:2.



No. 284

285

Bowl-shaped lamp

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green- and brown-glazed stoneware

Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 4.5 cm, diam. rim 11.5 cm, diam. foot 3.6 cm

The lamp has the form of a conical bowl with a solid foot and flat base. A short loop handle is attached vertically inside the bowl, just below the rim. A brown glaze covers the interior and stops outside just under the rim, forming a line and some heavy drops. A light greenish-tinged glaze is further applied over the surface of the bowl, stopping well above the foot. The glazes were applied over a white slip. Twenty-four pieces of this type were recovered from the shipwreck, two of them being just green-glazed.

Similar vessels were excavated from the Tang tombs at Changsha,¹ as well as from the kiln sites in the Changsha area.² Of some 134 specimens unearthed during the 1983 excavation, 61 pieces were covered with iron-brown under a light greenish-tinged glaze. In some examples, the loop handles attached on the interior were of a rope-form. On two specific specimens, two loop handles formed a 'T', resembling a tripod.³



No. 285 (Sc. 3:4)

¹ Zhou Shirong 1982, 512, 519, pl. 23:2.

² Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 93–94.

³ Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 42, pl. 7:9; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 93, pl. 274.



No. 285

Cup-shaped oil lamp

Tang dynasty, 9th century

Green-glazed stoneware with underglaze decoration

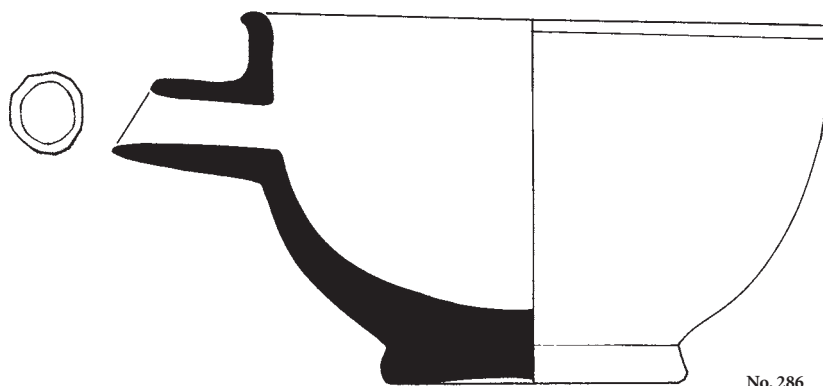
Changsha kilns, Hunan province

Ht. 4.7 cm, diam. rim 6.0 cm

This lamp has a rounded, cup-shaped body with a slightly everted rim and a solid foot. The flat base bears the incised character *yu* that may stand for the potter's name. A short polygonal spout is attached slightly below the rim. The yellowish-green glaze is applied over a white slip and stops just above the foot. The interior was decorated with a sketchy floral spray painted in copper green under the thin greenish glaze. Nineteen pieces of this type were found on the Beilitung wreck.

Cup-shaped oil lamps with a spout were often manufactured at the Changsha kilns. In addition to the greenish-tinged glaze, sometimes brown glaze was also applied on such vessels.¹

Oil lamps in this form with a *liu* or spout were very rare in China before the Tang dynasty. The traditional oil lamps, though varied in shape, were always potted as shallow containers with a central vertical post. On the contrary, in ancient Mediterranean and Western Asian countries an oil lamp with a spout was common from a fairly early time. This led some Chinese scholars to the conclusion that the making of a lamp with a spout must have borne under the influence of the West.²



¹ See Zhou Shirong 1982, 512, pl. 23:3.

² See Sun Ji 1986; Ma Wenkuan 1993.



No. 286



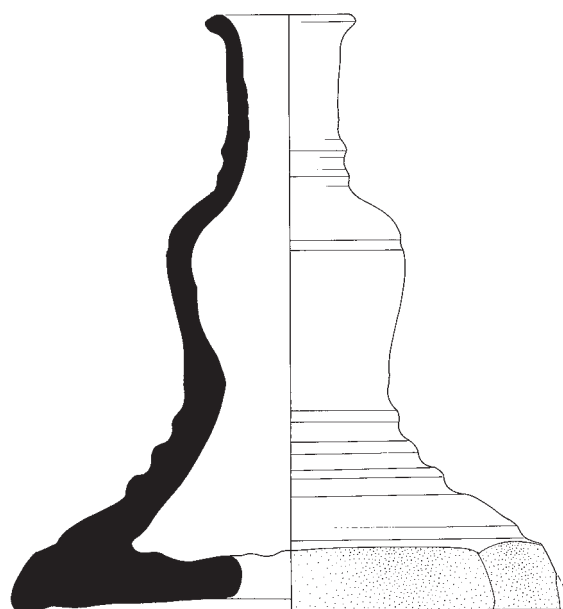
No. 286 Base with incised character *yu* (left) and interior decoration (right)

Candlestick

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 16.0 cm, diam. base 14.0 cm

This candlestick, designed to hold a single candle, has a cylindrical body tapering slightly downwards and then flaring towards the wide octagonal foot. The almost flat base has a small perforation in the centre. The neck is tall and narrow, surmounted by an everted rim. Raised bands decorate the lower part of the neck and the flaring part of the body, and a groove is impressed on the shoulder. The rich green glaze that covered the whole body except for the base has largely vanished, showing the off-white slip. Two pieces of this type have been recovered from the shipwreck.

During the late Tang period, the Changsha kilns produced a variety of candlesticks. Some 43 pieces excavated in 1983 were divided into four primary types with nine subgroups.¹ On some specimens of the same shape as the one under discussion, floral or abstract designs were painted under a greenish-tinged glaze.²



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¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 93–94.

² Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 82, pl. 7:10; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 176, 184, fig. 504.



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Dog-shaped paperweight

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Green-glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 7.8 cm

Apart from utilitarian wares, Changsha kilns also produced a great variety of figures evidently intended as toys and as cultural or scholars' desk appointments. They were small figurines in the form of a bird, turtle, fish, dog, pig, lamb, elephant, lion and lion rider, horseman, bull's head, and so forth. They basically fall into three types: the first and largest group includes figurines with a loop attached to the body, intended to be pendants;¹ the second group includes figurines that are apparently toy-whistles, as they bear a small circular perforation on the body; the last group contains figurines of various forms, some of them standing on a flat plinth and therefore interpreted as paperweights.² In addition, some cultural implements such as water droppers were also modelled in animal forms.

The dog was one of the favourite animals potted by Changsha craftsmen as cultural appointments. It was modelled in various vivid postures: walking, crouching, or – as exemplified by the present unique example from the Belitung wreck – standing. Originally covered with a bluish-green glaze except for the base, the small animal turns its head back and looks up, as if being distracted by something interesting. This posture itself was borrowed from early and contemporary art; animals with their heads turning back can be seen in religious and secular arts ever since the Han dynasty. The use of such figurines as cultural appointments was, however, a local idea.

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Bird-shaped whistle

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Brown glaze stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 4.0 cm, l. 7.0 cm

The category of toys from the Changsha kilns includes a kind of whistle made in the form of a bird or other animals, such as an elephant, lamb, pig, cat, rabbit and turtle. The function of the objects as whistles is assumed by the regular round perforations on their bodies. This figure, unique among the ceramics recovered from the wreck, represents one of the two general categories of whistles in the form of a bird. With its drawn-back neck, the rounded body and the restrained wings, the bird was captured in a posture as if resting on a nest. The iron-brown glaze, which originally covered the figurine has almost completely vanished.

Another type of bird-shaped toy whistle from the Changsha kilns shows a much longer tail and a stretched neck. Such figurines were sometimes covered with a milky monochrome glaze or a greenish-tinged glaze and decorated with ornaments in underglaze brown or green.

¹ 112 out of 180 figurines unearthed in 1983 from the kiln sites belonged to this group; see Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 75.

² Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 84, figs 10:3-4, 13:3; pls 10:2, 9, 10 and 12:8.



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Figure of a fish

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Brown glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 2.4 cm, l. 18.0 cm

This fish, unique among the ceramic finds from the Belitung wreck, is moulded in half, and shows a detailed rendering of the eye, mouth, fins, scales and tail. There is a small perforation on the tail. The reverse convex side is carved with a net pattern. An iron-brown glaze is applied only on the front side, leaving the back free.

Chinese archaeologists considered that the moulded fish might have been used as a mortar. Ceramic pestles in the same scale are also present among the archaeological finds.¹ Such mortars could be used to pulverize a small quantity of items such as medical herbs, spices etc. A different opinion holds that such fish were meant to be hung up during special occasions and festivities, such as the New Year, as a type of 'good luck charm', or to be used as symbolic sacrificial offerings in religious ceremonies.²

¹ One example is illustrated in Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 85, fig. 191 (the pestle's head: l. 7.3 cm, w. 4.4 cm). For another example (l. 16.0 cm, w. 7.5 cm) from the excavation carried out in 1978 in a Changsha kiln site, see Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 82, pl. 9:3.

² Lam 1990, 72.

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Nianlun millstone

Tang dynasty, 9th century
Brown glazed stoneware
Changsha kilns, Hunan province
Ht. 2.2 cm, diam. 11.4 cm, diam. central hole 1.4 cm

This millstone, also unique among the ceramics from the shipwreck, is modelled in a shape resembling a wheel or an archaic jade *bi*-disc. It tapers towards the rim and has a small perforation in the centre for fitting an axle. An iron-brown glaze covers the entire surface (including the interior of the hole), except for the rim and the area around the central perforation. Archaeological finds show that the Changsha mills were very often manufactured without glaze. Only a small number of specimens were covered with a greenish-tinged or iron-brown glaze. Other millstones from the Changsha kilns have a square perforation.¹

A millstone like this would have been used together with a *niancao* or milling block modelled like an oblong box with a V-shaped groove on the top running the length of it. The groove matches the shape of the millstone, which fits vertically into the groove. An axe was put through the hole and used as a handle to roll the stone back and forth in the groove. Two pieces of ceramic milling blocks in the collection of the Henan Provincial Museum are worth mentioning. Both of them bear inscriptions containing dates, which are equivalent to 810 ('fifth year of the Yuanhe reign') and 929 ('fourth year of the Tiancheng reign').² They prove that such tools had enjoyed a thriving manufacture in the Changsha kilns during a long period.

¹ Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 83.

² Ibid., 205.



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