

Identification of export porcelains from early 17th Century VOC shipwrecks and the linkage to their cultural identification¹

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Abstract

Ceramics recovered from sunken vessels have drawn much attention in recent years. They are significant historical and aesthetic items but only a few reports have been made for scholarly purposes; many have been salvaged for commercial gain. Porcelain shards from underwater sites can be used as identification material for cultural heritage: porcelain was an important trade commodity of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and had an enormous impact on the cultural heritage of the Netherlands and Europe. The VOC trade routes included inter-Asian markets and the transport of porcelain to these ports also had an influence on the local cultural heritage. This paper will give an insight on the distribution routes by VOC ships with porcelain cargoes and the shards from some VOC shipwrecks as identification material of such porcelain.

During a recent symposium in Hong Kong, it was evident that researchers in China and Taiwan consider the porcelain trade of export wares for the western market as part of their cultural heritage. For example, a certain type of export porcelain known as kraak ware has been found in several tombs in China. There was a discussion on the value and usage of this porcelain: was it used as a 'gift' for the deceased? Or was it a show of being well-to-do? Other topics such as the influence of orders of porcelain for the western market on the inland markets and economy were also discussed. Another discussion was the value of ceramics discovered at underwater sites. Chinese researchers have done enormous work at sites on the maritime trade routes. Only token shards were salvaged for study purposes and shards have no value on the collectors market.

Another issue discussed concerned the salvage of historic shipwrecks, a continuing debate between archaeologists, who value wrecks largely for their historical value, and profit-motivated salvage companies, who care only about their market value. We discussed how can we preserve shipwreck materials and documentation for future research in an ethical manner. The author suggested the following: In the past years there have been numerous archaeological researches, on land as well as from shipwrecks. The best way to preserve this knowledge is to put together all the results into one global Internet platform which would give the opportunity to leave and discuss drafts, ongoing research and reports. It could also host an agenda of events and links to useful websites. In this way researchers can keep in touch and keep each other updated. The Civilisation Centre of the City University of Hong Kong has agreed to cooperate and others will surely follow.

Introduction

The study of the cargoes of the ships and shipwrecks of the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) are an important asset to the history of maritime trade between Asia and Europe and within Asia itself. However, it is just as important to study archaeological excavations because these are also a time capsule. In the past ten years many young archaeologists have been able to undertake excavations in different countries in East and South East Asia. Conferences have been held where the results have been presented.³

¹ This paper is part of the research for the PhD. Thesis at Leiden University.

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³ See papers given at conferences Singapore, March 2007, Hong Kong, June, 2007 and Taipei, November 2007.

In order to achieve a view of the porcelain trade network it is therefore necessary to link together the research done by international maritime and land-archaeologists with historical data from documents.

This paper will give an insight on the early years of the VOC trade in porcelain based on ceramics from three VOC shipwrecks, supported by archives of the VOC with information on the ships' movements, their cargoes, and destinations.

As the Portuguese were the first Europeans to import products from Asia to Europe, Dutch merchants were dependant on the commodities of spices, silks and porcelain brought to Lisbon. After 1581 Portugal and Spain were at war with Holland and these became difficult to obtain (for details see Boxer 1965: chapters 1 and 2).

From 1595, Dutch traders set up their own private trading companies which were incorporated into one single official company, in 1602, the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* -VOC).

The main ambition of the VOC was to take over the monopoly of the Portuguese trade by taking over their trade routes and trade posts.

At the start of the 17th century, porcelain was a scarce trade commodity but became very much in demand. In order to understand the growth of this trade commodity, (which has sadly been neglected in literature) the question rises: what were these porcelains? The lists on ships' invoices give amounts and indicate sorts such as plates, dishes, cups, bowls etc. but this does not give us a tangible identity. The finds from shipwrecks and land sites are essential to analyse the types, their usage and consumers. Therefore the following aspects are studied:

1. Identification of the shipwreck and its cargo: how much porcelain was part of the cargo (from VOC ships' invoices and salvage information).
2. Identification of the production area: where was this particular type of porcelain produced? (from archaeological finds at kiln sites)
3. Identification of the trade route: which transport routes were used to bring porcelain to the buyers? Where were the overhaul posts? What were the destinations? (VOC documents and site finds)
4. Identification of the consumer: who were the consumers? What did they use porcelain for? What are the cultural links? (Inventories /tomb finds in China)

identification of the shipwrecks and its porcelain cargo

As ceramics, especially porcelain is a material which can endure hundreds of years of sea water, these finds are often the only available tangible items remaining at a shipwreck site. In the case of these early 17th century VOC shipwrecks, the porcelains have given a great amount of information about the date of production, the variety in types (coarse or fine), and the consumers' demand.

Three early 17th century shipwrecks containing ceramics and porcelain have been analyzed: the *Mauritius*, sunk in 1609, the *Witte Leeuw*, sunk in 1613 and the *Banda*, sunk in 1615⁴ (see Table 1).

⁴ Other shipwrecks with kraak porcelain such as the so-called Wan-li shipwreck and the Hatcher cargo (1643-46?) have not been dated accurately as the salvage has not been documented correctly and are therefore unusable.

Table 1. porcelain from VOC shipwrecks

Types	Mauritius: 1609	WitteLeeuw 1613	Banda+Geuinieëerde Provinciëen:1615
Plates with flat rim			
- 50 cms diam	20:unglazed base	30;unglazed base	none
- 30-38 cms	-	40	none
- 20-21 cms	5	50	none
- 14 cms	29	6-10	
Dishes without rim-20cms. Diam.	38,of which 29x14cmsD.	55-70	several
Klapmuts:			
- 17 cms. dia	17	50	many
- 14cms diam	70	5-10	
Crowcups	15	30	
Bottles		4-6	yes
Kendi		10	
Betelboxes		2-3	
Other types:			
- teacups	Yes,same as WL. Also with stem	20-30	
- winecups		50	
- rice bowls		30	
Plates with special design	15x20cms.D.		
Zhangzhou	?	yes	?
martavaans		yes	
other		Various size Chinese bowls	
Grey pots		5-10 pieces	

The *Mauritius*, sunk in 1609 in the Gulf of Guinée was excavated by Michel L'Hour in 1985 (L'Hour 1993). The ship contained various commodities from the East and only a small supply of porcelain, probably a private purchase or a private order. Of the about 215 pieces about 165 pieces are of the *kraak*-ware type. There are only 7 pieces of Zhangzhou ware and some typical Chinese type stem cups.

The first salvaged shipwreck of the VOC with a substantial amount of porcelain is the *Witte Leeuw*, one of four ships that formed the return fleet from Bantam to Holland in 1613. During a stopover at Saint Helena Island to take in fresh water and goods, the fleet encountered several Portuguese ships. In the fight that followed, one of the cannons on the *Witte Leeuw* exploded and the ship sank. The Belgian marine archaeologist, Robert Sténuît discovered the wreck in 1976⁵.

The 200 – 300 kilos of shards, apart from the 290 complete pieces, as well as specific quantities of identical types and shapes, clearly point to a bulk cargo. There is however, no list of any porcelains on the invoice of the *Witte Leeuw*. This is rather a mystery as the records of the VOC are usually very accurate. However, on the invoice of the *Vlissingen*, another ship of the fleet of which the *Witte Leeuw* was also part, the amount of 38,641 pieces is listed, and it may very well have been possible that part of its cargo was transferred onto the *Witte Leeuw* before leaving Bantam.

⁵ A complete account of the salvage and the finds is published in Van der Pijl-Ketel (ed) 1982.






The shapes mentioned on that list coincide with the shapes salvaged from the *Witte Leeuw*. There was clearly a mixture of Chinese (minyao) wares and *kraak* wares.

The third case is that of the *Banda*, which was part of the fleet that left Bantam bound for Holland together with the *Delft*, the *Geünieerde Provincieën* and the *Gelderland*. The fleet arrived at the island of Mauritius beginning of March 1615 where an enormous hurricane shipwrecked the *Banda*. Documents show that the cargo contained cloves, nutmeg and a certain number of Chinese porcelains. These were sets of plates and dishes, and small shallow bowls, a 'set' of tiny wine cups and a wine bottle, all identical to those from the *Witte Leeuw*. As one of the passengers was Governor Both, who was returning home, these porcelains were most probably his personal possession⁶.



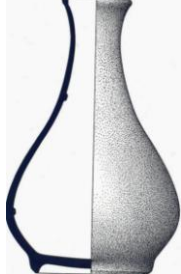




Types of porcelains

From the finds of these three shipwrecks, it is possible to get an idea of what kinds of porcelains were available for sale at the trade post of Bantam around 1610-1615, a period when the V.O.C merchants did not yet place orders with the merchants on mainland China. The varieties in the types of porcelain also show what was produced and transported by the Chinese merchants to be sold to the western merchants at that time. (See Table 2)

Table 2. Types of Porcelain from the Witte Leeuw

Types of kraak ware	Types of Chinese ware (minyao)
<p>Serving dishes: Large dishes/basins with a flattened rim (<i>lampetschotel</i>) (type.1.1.1 Witte Leeuw)</p> 	<p>Bowls: large or full-sized, small, half-sized, third and quarter-sized (<i>groote/heel commen, cleijne commen, halve commen, drieling commen,</i>) (for example, types 3.2-3.6 and 3.9 and 3.10, Witte Leeuw) .</p> 
<p>Plates (<i>schootels</i>): plates with a flattened rim, (type 1.1.2-1.1.4 Witte Leeuw)</p> 	<p>Bowls with lids, (Type 3.8 of the Witte Leeuw)</p> 
<p>dishes (<i>saucieren</i>): dishes without a flattened rim and moulded round medallions (type 1.2, Witte Leeuw)</p> 	<p>cups and cups for drinking brandy (<i>pimpelkens</i>). (Witte Leeuw, type 2.0)</p> 

⁶ the *Gelderland* and the *Geunieerde Provincieën* were also shipwrecked. The numerous porcelain shards washed on the shores of Mauritius clearly came from these ships.

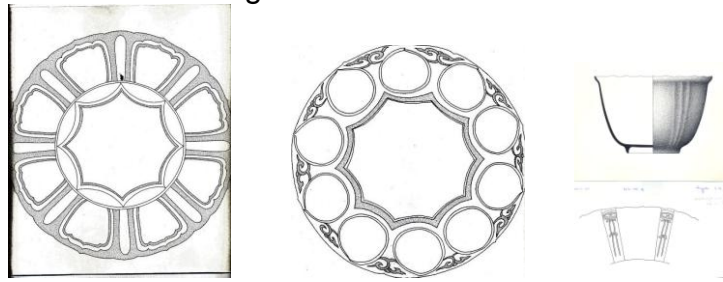
<p>Klapmuts (<i>Clapmuts</i>): (Type 1.3, Witte Leeuw)</p> 	<p>Wine pots (<i>kannekens</i>): small sized with covers (Witte Leeuw, type 3.11)</p> 
	<p>Pots with lids: (<i>potgens</i>)</p>  <p>(Witte Leeuw, type 3.12)</p>
<p>Crow-cups: (<i>kameelscop</i>):</p> 	<p>Small jugs with spouts: (<i>olie- en azijn kannetjes, / tuytpottekens</i>) for oil and vinegar (Witte Leeuw, type 3.17)</p> 
<p>Kendi's (kan, kannekens) Bottles for brandy: (<i>Persiaensche fleeschen</i>) (type 1.7.1 and 1.7.2 from the Witte Leeuw).</p>	<p>Flatware: small saucers</p> 

- a. *minyao*: typical Chinese wares. Such porcelain items have been and are still used daily in China and other parts of Asia. They include : rice bowls, soup bowls, bowls with lids as well as small saucers (for pickles), small cups for wine/wine pots, small cups of various sizes, teapots, covered pots (for ginger or pickles).
- b. . western shapes especially made for the European market: *kraak* ware (figure 1). The term *kraak* ware has become a regular term to be applied to a specific type of export porcelain made in Jingdezhen kilns for the western market.⁷ These include: plates, dishes, shallow bowls, bowls and bottles, all with a specific panel design. During the compilation of the catalogue of The Ceramic Load of the *Witte Leeuw*, it was decided to make a clearer definition of what should be depicted as *kraak* porcelain. There are still continuing discussions on this definition but most

⁷ the word was not applied to porcelain by the VOC but only to the Portuguese ships, whilst the Portuguese only used the word *nao* for their ships, not *carracas*.

researchers now use the typology made at the Rijksmuseum in 1982 (Van der Pijl-Ketel 1982).

Figure 1. Kraak Ware

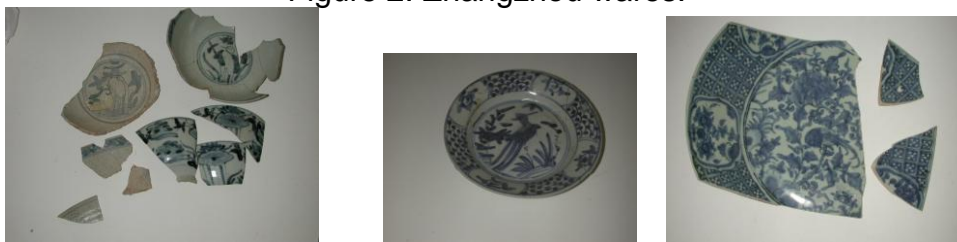


c. Zhangzhou wares (figure 2):

A variety of provincial types of wares were found the above mentioned VOC shipwrecks, an indication that not only fine export quality was included in their cargoes. Still, the relatively few pieces from the *Witte Leeuw* indicate that the pieces were probably either owned by crewmembers or used in the ship's galley (This ware being of a thicker type of porcelain, it would withstand a galley's daily usage.)

Most originate from the kilns around *Pinghe*, Fujian province, and are now known as Zhangzhou wares (Tan 2007). This type of ware was not produced for the European market but was constantly in demand for the South East Asian and Japanese markets.

Figure 2. Zhangzhou wares.



d. Stone ware jars (martavans/martaban⁸) have regularly been found amongst western shipwreck finds⁹. The majority of these types originate from kilns of Southern China; most are covered with a dark brown glaze, some having a stamped square mark with a Chinese character. Stoneware jars from Thai kilns are also known as martabans. These jars were used for fresh water, wine or preserving food on the long voyages. VOC documents regularly list them filled with ginger or pickled goods or even opium.¹⁰

Figure 3. Stone ware jars.

⁸ this term can be misleading as it has been associated with jars made in the vicinity of Martaban, which was an export port on the coast of what is now called Myanmar (Gulf of Siam, Burma). In the VOC archives there are numerous references to this port. However, stoneware jars were not produced there but were transported from Thai kilns overland to this port.

⁹ Nossa Senhora dos Martires (1600) and the Spanish trader, the San Diego (1600); the *Witte Leeuw* had several sizes and sorts.

¹⁰ Several documents mention martavan pots filled with opium (1610, invoice of the *Griffoen* from Bantan)



Identification of production sites from porcelain finds

As the production of Chinese porcelain has a long written history, it should not be difficult to identify the types of porcelains found in and around shipwreck sites. However, in the case of early VOC wrecks, the porcelains found were not always easy to analyse; in the 1980's not much archaeological research had been carried out in China. Kiln sites producing porcelain dating from early dynasties had the main attention of Chinese archaeologists at that time; plain *minyao* ceramics were not interesting. At the time of writing the catalogue of the *Witte Leeuw*, in 1980-82, several museums in China were asked whether they had any of this kraak type in their collections: their answer was that this was not Chinese porcelain as it had never been seen in China.

Gradually some pieces came to light during the research at tombs and excavations at the porcelain production areas of Jingdezhen city and Chinese researchers, stimulated by the finds from the *Witte Leeuw*, became interested. From 1999 there have been several discoveries in and around Jingdezhen of this typical export porcelain (Cao Jianwen and Luo Yifei 2006:16-24). Even this year, in May, several papers were given on the subject of kraak ware.¹¹

Identification of the trade routes

which transport routes were taken to bring porcelain to the buyers? Where were the overhaul posts? What were the destinations?

In order to understand the flow of trade commodities, in this case export porcelains, it is important to know where the VOC set up their trade posts and which shipping routes were used. These can be divided according to specific regions.¹²

The major aim of the VOC was to purchase pepper and spices for the home market, but there were also a limited amount of luxury items such as silk, precious stones and porcelains bought. It was also necessary for the VOC to partake in intra-Asian trade in order to fund the operations in Asian and to purchase the return cargoes. Consequently ships had to sail inter regionally to trade and collect the requested cargoes but also trade commodities not meant for the European market.¹³

¹¹ International conference. May 28-30, 2011.

¹² The Eastern quarters: - between Batavia and the Indonesian Archipel;- from 1632-1658 Taiwan-Japan-Batavia and back to Holland;- Siam(Thailand)/Vietnam
The NW region: *westerkwartieren*:-West coast of India: Goa/Surat :as entrepot serving Persia and Arabia

The NE region: Gulf of Bengal/East coast of India: Coromandel area/Ceylon (Galle: overhaul station 1640-1650's) (Parthesius 2010)

¹³ Another trade route was along Patani and Siam towards Japan. From 1610 trade contacts with Quinam and Tonckin (in present day Vietnam) were held for inter-Asian trading purposes. From about

The Director was responsible for dividing the cargoes between the ships of the specific VOC Chambers and ensure that they had the correct ratio for the internal distribution.¹⁴ Furthermore, the return fleets had to depart on time to avoid storms and to arrive at favourable auction times in Holland.

During the first years of trade, there were as yet no specific orders for porcelain from Holland and invoices of the return ships show hap hazard amounts. (see Table 3). The VOC depended on what the Chinese junks brought to be sold to foreign merchants at Bantam or Patani and from 1612, Batavia, and what they could capture: as they were granted the right of booty the Dutch realised that a lucrative way to acquire Chinese merchandise was in fact to capture the vessels, sailing for the Spanish and Portuguese, carrying these goods.¹⁵ In this way, large profits were made from cargoes captured from the Chinese junks.

Table 3. Invoices of Early VOC Ships

Name of ship	Invoice date	Amount of porcelains
<i>Gouda</i>	1608	1 barrel with 8 large dishes
<i>Bantam</i>	1608	278 large porcelain dishes, two broken
<i>Mauritius(sank 1609)</i>		
<i>Roode Leeuw met Pijlen</i>	1610	9227 pieces
<i>Wapen van Amsterdam</i>	1612	5 barrels, each with 5 dishes
<i>Vlissingen</i>	1612	38,641 pieces*
<i>Witte Leeuw(sank 1613)</i>	1612	Same fleet as above
<i>Zwarte Leeuw+ter Veere</i>	1614	4277 corgees (each=20 pieces)
<i>Gelderland</i>	1614	69,057
<i>Banda(sank in 1615)</i>	1614	
<i>Geunieëerde Provinciën</i>	1614	Together with the Banda shipwrecked at island of Mauritius
<i>Rotterdam</i>	1616	8014 + 27,997
<i>Mauritius</i>	1616	23,023
<i>Dolphyn</i>	1616	7679
<i>Hart</i>	1616	3730
<i>Gouda.</i>	1622	17,500
<i>Leeuwinne van Jacarta</i>	1622	6361
<i>Mauritius</i>	1623	62,931 pieces
<i>Walcheren</i>	1623	10,845 pieces

Inter-insular trade

As porcelain was not a primary commodity for inter-insular shipping, the VOC took sporadic amounts of porcelain just to fill their ships and make a sale whenever possible; these were mainly Zhangzhou wares. There were, however, some demands for specific 'fine porcleians'.¹⁶ In 1637, a total of 161,419 pieces were shipped to various destinations in the archipelago, including gifts, "Sent to the regent of Tegal by the Company: 3 large dishes as gift" (Volker 1957:196).

1620, the VOC was able to establish trade posts at Suratte and Persia (Gamron) and Mocha. From Batavia, porcelain was also transported to these posts.

¹⁴ Porcelain was packed in bundles (of straw)/tubs (wooden barrels)/packages of 20 pieces (corgees) and often packed 'lose in the pepper'.

¹⁵ Hugo de Groot wrote a special law for 'the right to booty': De Jure Praedae.

¹⁶ in 1636: King of Acheen orders: coarse porcelains: receives a total of 120,400 pieces!

1636:;each month porcelain, mainly coarse ware is sent from Batavia to Java/Bali/Sumatra/Borneo and Jambi

Formosa

The turning point in the porcelain trade started from 1624, when the Dutch started a steady trade from Formosa, where the trade post Fort Zeelandia was built. It took another ten years before a regular flow of porcelain took place: from the kilns of Jingdezhen to the merchants at the seaports of Fuzhou, Quanzhou and Guangzhou and from there by the junk trade to Formosa. The VOC needed extra vessels to transport goods to and from the trade post to the larger ships at the Pescadore islands as the roadstead at Zeelandia was too shallow to dock at and often had dangerous weather conditions. 'Captured' Chinese junks were used for this and other transports. Many invoices with porcelains state ...'bought at the River of Chincheuw' or 'captured', again proof of the VOC's rigorous continuation of pirateering.¹⁷ Most of the shipments went to Batavia where it was transshipped onto homeward bounders. Other shipments went to Japan and, from 1638, directly to the Coromandel coast and Surat. The shipments to Japan had to coincide with the strict dates set by the Japanese authorities and the monsoon period. From Japan the shipments had to arrive on time at Batavia for the return fleets at Easter and Christmas.

Japan The VOC established its first trade post in Japan at Hirado in 1609, ;from 1640, the Dutch were forced to trade from an enclosed island of Deshima in the bay of Nagasaki. Most export porcelain found in this area are Japanese copies of kraak ware but several original kraak pieces from China also have been found , including Zhangzhou ware (Kawaguchi 2007), but these were shipped to Japan by the Chinese junk trade as indicated by several VOC documents.¹⁸

IDENTIFICATION OF THE CONSUMER: links between the products and the consumers

Holland

VOC records show that between 1604-1657, VOC ships transported about 3 million pieces of porcelain to Holland. This would indicate a large offset market there. However, porcelain was considered a scarce, luxury good in the first half of the 17th century and was certainly not possessed by the majority of the population, but limited to the upper classes. This is proven by archaeological finds from rubbish pits and inventories of nobility and VOC merchants who bought porcelain as private 'trade'. As Mark Staniforth (1996:13-18) mentions porcelain had, "...an important role not only for utilitarian purposes but also as a means to display socio-economic-status (or class) to demonstrate good taste and allow people to negotiate and construct their place in society".

The usage is a following puzzle. The names which are written in early 17th c. Dutch on invoices with amounts and types are often difficult to link to the actual shapes, considering that there are numerous ways of indicating a plate(



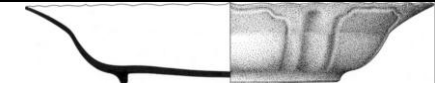





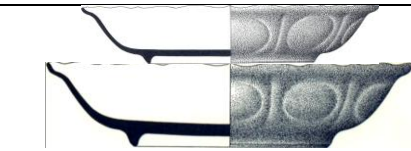

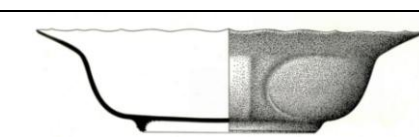

¹⁷ examples: in 1626: the **Shiedam** has 12,814 porcelains 'bought at the River of Chincheuw' (Quangzhou). Another list shows 75 corgees with porcelain dishes from a captured Portuguese ship the *Nossa Sig.na d'Assencon*. In 1627, it is noted that the **Hollandia** and the **Frederich Hendrick** have: '16 tubs of captured porcelain' and the '**Wapen van Delft**' has '9440 various porcelains partly captured, partly bought at the River Chincheuw'.

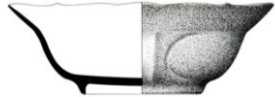





¹⁸ 1642: Chinese junks to Nagasaki from Fu Chou : 130 teapots; 1643: Chinese junks to Nagasaki: 11 barrels of porc. + from Fu Chou teapots; 1644: -Chinese junks from Fu Chou: teapots+porcelain+coarse porc.; 13 junks with 802 teapots, etc.

schootels, saucieren), bowl (*kop, kameelscop*), shallow bowl (*klapmuts*). Only by comparing the shipwreck shards to the nomenclature, is it possible to decipher what is meant by a name. Due to typology made from the large amount of shards from the *Witte Leeuw*, it was possible to attempt an interpretation.

Early 17th century Dutch and Flemish still life paintings depict porcelain pieces with butter, cheese, fruit, lobsters (see Table 4). So not only do these paintings give the aesthetic value but they also show in some way what the pieces were used for.

Table 4. Consumption: Shapes linked to paintings.

Types	diameter	shapes	
<i>hele schotel</i> : dish with a flattened rim.	50 cms.		
<i>halve schotel</i> : dish with a flattened rim.	29- 36 cms.		
<i>een-derde</i> (one third): dish with a flattened rim.	21-23 cms.		
<i>Boterschootel</i> (butter dish): saucer dish with moulded round medallions instead of straight panels.	10- 12 cms.		
<i>Saucier</i> : saucer dishes (singel and double)	14 -16 cms. 20-22 cms.		
<i>Klapmuts</i> clapmuts: <i>Hele klapmuts</i> : (whole)	20 – 24 cms.		

<i>Halve klapmuts:</i> (half)	12- 14 cms.		
<i>Cop, commekens:</i> Bowls <i>Hele</i> (whole)	14-16 cms.		
<i>Halve</i> (half-sized)	12-14 cms.		

Japan

Excavations at the Hirado trade post site have revealed Chinese *minyao* types such as bowls and cups, as well as western kraak type porcelain,¹⁹ an indication that the export of kraak ware to Japan was a fact during this period. When the Chinese kilns stopped their production around 1650, the Japanese took over and used the kraak style for porcelain ordered by the VOC merchants.

Since the 1970's around 1000 sites have been excavated in present day Tokyo, revealing a limited amount of Western artefacts(Beardman jars, glass and parts of clay pipes), as well as Chinese export porcelain. These were possibly gifts from VOC merchants to Japanese dignitaries but could also have been private trade goods (Horiuchi 2007). Besides requests for Chinese porcelain from the Japanese dignitaries, there were also demands for Dutch ceramics!²⁰ So this is a clear case of cultural links where the Japanese came to appreciate the daily ceramic ware used by the Dutch as well as using Chinese porcelain for producing their own kraak type of porcelain.

China

The increase in demand from western merchants resulted in higher production and output at the Jingdezhen kilns. Because of the closure of the imperial kilns after riots in 1608, many skilled workers went to the 'common' workshops. This resulted in a mixture of very finely potted and finely painted pieces with a coarser type with sketchily drawn designs. Gradually kraak type became a mass-production with many pieces of lower quality.²¹

The establishment of the Formosa trade post also effected the production as can be seen from the increase in amounts on VOC invoices and stocks at Fort Zeelandia.²² The numerous finds of kraak porcelain found in tombs in Jiangxi province led researchers in China to question the usage of these pieces (Bao Ping

¹⁹ Hirado Archaeology Department

²⁰ for example, in 1640, the Daimyo of Kaga requests pottery from Holland.(Volker 1954:122)/ Daimyo Arima orders 10-12 dishes of Dutch earthenware and fine Dutch white clay .

²¹ the so-called "Wan li" shipwreck and the 'Hatcher cargo' has examples.

²² stocks at Zeelandia: 1636:212,144 pieces/1638:890,328 pieces/1645:163,716 pieces.

2011). Most were misfired pieces but were discovered in tombs from commoners to provincial commissioners. One interpretation given

....they were probably sold, along the route of transporting from Jingdezhen to coastal ports for exporting, to local people for mere funeral purposes, at a much reduced price. This view is supported by a burial custom popular in Ming-Qing period Jiangxi, whereby porcelain plates may be placed under the head of the deceased as pillows, which are called shoupan or "longevity (i.e. afterlife or funeral) plates (Bao Ping, *et al.* 1993:3)

The interest in the link of a western type of porcelain being used as a funerary object was discussed by several researchers at the Hong Kong symposium.

Conclusion

The change in the value of Chinese export porcelain.

From the start of the 20th century, travels to the Far East were made and because China was struggling economically, uninterested in their cultural past, it was easy to buy and bring back all kinds of porcelains, from the early dynasties to the last, for next to nothing.

During the period of about 1900-1950, porcelain collectors were able to buy precious porcelains from the country whose museums now have to buy them back at exorbitant prices at auctions. 17th century blue and white export ware, including *kraak* ware was labelled 'provincial ware' by art historians and collectors looked down on these types.

Art historians and collectors gradually became aware that porcelains from a dated shipwreck is the only guarantee for an end date as they are sealed in time capsules, and fairly precisely datable. As Richard Kilburn (Sheaf and Kilburn 1988:76) stated, "It is often difficult to be sure in which century ceramic wares were made, so that being able to associate specific pieces with a datable event such as a shipwreck is a valuable start towards establishing a chronology for them".

This was first done with the porcelain finds from the VOC ship the *Witte Leeuw*. The 200 kilos of shards were valueless and luckily the Rijksmuseum's department of history was willing to take them over for research purposes. A group was formed and the pieces were sorted out; for the first time a typology was made which resulted in the catalogue *The Ceramic Load of the Witte Leeuw*. This is still being used world wide for research purposes.

However, shipwrecks also increased their value. The massive auctions at Christie's in 1984 and 1986 of undocumented and unethically salvaged Chinese porcelain caused a 'hype' in collecting shipwreck porcelain.²³ Even common export wares became unaffordable for research purposes. At the time of the auctions, China had begun to develop their maritime archaeology and just started in shipwreck salvages and salvaged items, because it is part of their cultural heritage. As a Chinese maritime archaeologist noted : ' we were given 3000\$ to buy some pieces but were unable to cope with the bidders at these auctions, and so returned empty-handed'.

²³ As these salvages were not properly documented, there was protest from historians and a symposium was organised: Pillage or Enrichment of maritime history? There was much discussion on whether items which had been salvaged in an unethical way should be taken up in national museums as gifts(paying off?); how we can keep national heritage without pillage, and much more.

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EPILOGUE: HOW TO PRESERVE RESEARCH RESULTS.

In the past years there have been numerous archaeological researches, on land as well as from shipwrecks. The best way to preserve this knowledge is to put together all the results into one global database. By forming a working group with participants from all countries taking part in this type of research, results can be kept. Each participant will be able to log into the website to place his research results and keep them updated. In this way we can keep in touch and keep each other updated.

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