

Liu Yang



Changsha Ceramics

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<sup>1</sup> The name Shizhu, as well as ceramic-manufacturing scenes were mentioned and described in a poem entitled 'Shizhu' by Li Qunyu (active mid-ninth century) from Fengzhou, Hunan province; see Zhou Shirong 2000, 14.

The excavation of the Belitung shipwreck is remarkably important in the study of Chinese ceramic history; not only for the fact that this is the sole ship from the Indian Ocean so far archaeologically documented in Southeast Asia, but also for the great expansion of our knowledge of a specific type of ceramics, the Changsha ware manufactured at the kilns in the Changsha area during the late Tang period. The quantity and sheer quality of the recovered works are truly stunning. Nearly ninety-five per cent of the surviving ceramics were made in Changsha kilns (some 57,500 pieces). While Changsha bowls were predominant in the ceramic cargo (some 55,000 pieces), there were also many other Changsha ceramics in various forms (some 2,500 pieces). The majority of the bowls is decorated in a wide range of freely painted motifs in colourful underglaze, including clouds, flowers, birds, landscapes, Buddhist motifs, poems and phrases, as well as foreign figures (cf. nos 171–222 and appendix I.1), while ceramics in other shapes such as ewers and jars were embellished with moulded appliqués in various designs, including animals, flowers and foliage, architectural elements, and dancers (cf. nos 239–241 and appendix III.1).

Indeed, these works not only shed light on the manufacture and technology of Changsha ceramics, they also provide invaluable new data relevant to the art and literary history, religious beliefs and customs of the times.

## Unveiling the Changsha kilns

Until field surveys were carried out in the twentieth century, Yuezhou, at the northeast corner of the Dongting Lake, was considered the main centre of ceramic production in Hunan in the Tang dynasty, as mentioned by a contemporary connoisseur, Lu Yu, in his *Chajing* or *Classic of Tea* in c. 760–780. This may have been true in the eighth century, but in the early ninth century the Yuezhou kilns in fact began to decline, while kilns in the Changsha area on the southern side of the Dongting Lake were developing fast and superseding the former as the most advanced and prolific in the area.

The sites of ceramic production in Changsha have been well investigated since the 1950s. Here, major centres of manufacture were at Tongguan, Gucheng (or Wazhaping, in other words Plains of Pottery Debris) and Shizhu, three sites located between 25 and 30 km north of Changsha, on the east bank of the Xiang River that links the Dongting Lake and the Yangzi River on the north.<sup>1</sup> Archaeological excavations revealed that there must have been a long period of activity and a large amount of production in the area. Amongst the kiln sites, Lan'anzui at Shizhu is likely to have been one of the most prolific of the time. Here the thickest ceramic heap in the dilapidated ruins of the kilns was 3.5 m deep. Over eighty per cent of the finds with coloured

underglaze decoration from the 1986 excavation were from this site.<sup>2</sup>

This productive field research permitted more precise dating and definition of the typological development, and also allowed archaeologists to construct a careful and convincing outline of the ceramic manufacture there. They created a four-part periodization for the history of the Changsha kilns, from their early development to their heyday, dating from the High Tang to the Five Dynasties period.<sup>3</sup> This periodization is derived primarily from the typological examination of ceramic artefacts found within strata of kiln sites, supported by stratigraphic analysis and inscriptions found on the excavated ceramic works. The first period is described as late High Tang to mid-Tang, dating from the 760s to the 780s. Monochrome green-glazed wares dominated this period. Underglaze coloured decoration and use of moulded appliqués on works such as ewers were occasionally to be found, though not prevalent. White wares with green decoration were not found. The second period is equivalent to late mid-Tang and early late Tang, corresponding to the first half of the ninth century. The characteristic Changsha products with coloured underglaze decoration soon became prolific. Large numbers of ewers with a spout and handle, decorated with moulded appliqués on dark-brown patches appeared. The third period is equated with late Tang, in the second half of the

ninth century. This period marked the height of Changsha's productive prosperity and prestige, when wares with coloured underglaze decoration predominated. In addition, many works marked with inscriptions were found from this period. The fourth period is contemporary with the very end of the Tang and the Five Dynasties period (907–960). Coloured underglaze decoration was still the main stream. Manufacture continued to thrive, but there were signs that quality in body, glaze and decoration had slipped.<sup>4</sup> This may be taken as a sign that wares from the Changsha kilns had begun to decline.

## Flourishing and decline of the Changsha ceramic industry

This periodization shows a continuity of development at the Changsha kilns during a period of approximately two hundred years. Field research and the typological analysis of ceramics also supported the view that Changsha ware developed in certain respects from Yuezhou ware. The kilns in the Changsha area began production by imitating the Yuezhou green-glazed ware. Yuezhou had been well known for such wares from long before the Tang dynasty. Its products, however, could not vie with those of the Yue ware made in Zhejiang province during the Tang era. Yue

<sup>2</sup> For the excavation of the Changsha kiln sites see Hunan Provincial Museum 1960; Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980; Zhou Shirong 1984 and 2000; Cheng Te-K'un 1984; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996.

<sup>3</sup> The Tang dynasty is traditionally divided into four periods: Early Tang (618–741), High Tang (742–779), Mid-Tang (780–835), and Late Tang (836–907); see *Tangshi pinhui*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 234–235.

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<sup>5</sup> Lu Yu, *Chajing*. The paragraph was translated in Watson 1984, 35. On the Yue wares see also in this volume pp. 352ff.

<sup>6</sup> See Lin Shimin 1987.

bowls for tea-drinking, for instance, were held in higher esteem than the Yuezhou products. Lu Yu commented, 'The wares of Yue are green and so increase the greenness of the tea', and therefore they set the standard for other wares.<sup>5</sup> At kilns in Hunan, new enterprise in manufacture, designed to meet competition from the eastern and northern kilns, was most timely.

Before Changsha ceramic production reached its zenith in the ninth century, Yue green-glazed ware and Xing white-glazed ware represented the main stream of stoneware products, while the *sancai* (lit. Three Colour Ware), the regular term for the contemporary tricolour lead-glazed pottery, represented the dominant trend in earthenware. The *sancai* ware was developed in the northern metropolitan areas in Chang'an and in Luoyang, and was valued for its marvellous colours, thought to reflect the strength and splendour of a golden era. It is a widely held view that Changsha ware was strongly influenced by *sancai* techniques, and many of the Changsha glaze and decorative methods are thought to be derived from this ware and other northern traditions. The colour of the glazes, for instance, which derived from metallic oxides – iron supplying tones of yellow and brown, copper giving a strong green – was a technique commonly used in the *sancai* wares.

A combination of circumstances helped the Changsha kilns to assimilate northern techniques.

In 755, An Lushan, Governor of the border region in the northwest, rose in rebellion and led his army toward the capital Chang'an. The resulting civil war (755–763) devastated northern China. Many northerners, including the emperor himself, fled to the South, and possibly brought with them northern ceramic techniques of manufacture and decoration. It was not a coincidence that Changsha ware blossomed after the country recovered from the civil war devastation. It owed its success to the assimilation of elements of *sancai* production techniques while adopting many other northern decorative techniques found in textile, gold and silver wares.

Changsha kilns flourished also at a time when Chinese actively traded overseas via the sea route – the Silk Route traffic was disrupted by rebel activity and by the invasion of Tibet that continued until the mid-ninth century. The kilns mushroomed in the Changsha area largely in response to the demands of foreign markets. The archaeological excavations carried out nationwide in China show that the great majority of Changsha wares found in tombs were made in commercial centres and the port-cities of the time, such as Yangzhou in Jiangsu and Ningbo in Zhejiang.<sup>6</sup> It is no surprise that Yangzhou stood number one in terms of finds of Changsha ceramics, since it was the major distributing centre of export wares at the time. On the contrary, few Changsha ceramics were found at the city of Changsha itself. Of some five hundred Tang

tombs excavated there since 1976, only three per cent yielded Changsha ceramics – some twenty pieces in total. In the major cities alongside the Yangzi River towards the east coast, however, the situation is quite different. In Wuchang – one of the hubs of the Yangzi River traffic – amongst a group of thirty-one mid-Tang tombs twenty-two yielded Changsha ceramics, and thirteen out of fourteen late Tang tombs contained also Changsha products.<sup>7</sup>

This evidence proves that Changsha wares for the most part were made for export. During the mid- and particularly the late Tang period, huge quantities of Changsha wares made in Tongguan, Gucheng (or Wazhaping) and Shizhu, were shipped, via Xiang River and the Dongting Lake, down the Yangzi River to Yangzhou. They were then distributed to the ports such as Ningbo, the city with the next largest archaeological ceramic finds from Changsha. From the ports Changsha wares were exported to countries as widely spread as Korea, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi-Arabia, Arman, East Africa and Egypt.<sup>8</sup> Works on the Belitung wreck were possibly distributed from Yangzhou – a bronze mirror, that appeared to be a personal item, bore an inscription identifying it as cast at Yangzhou in 758 (no. 299).

Changsha ware, together with Yue ware and Ding white-glazed ware, formed one of the three major export ceramics in late Tang and in the

succeeding Five Dynasties period. It is arguable that, in solidity of body and in delicacy of decoration and form, the Changsha ware did not equal the Yue green-glazed ware and the Xing white ware, in addition to the colourful *sancai* ware. Yet Changsha ware benefited from its cheaper price.<sup>9</sup> The demand from overseas markets encouraged potters in Changsha to break away from conventional methods of representation, and to adopt decorative motifs from foreign cultures, which helped lead decorative trends eventually towards abstraction.

The development and spread of the Changsha kilns spelled the decline of Yuezhou as the leading centre for superior wares in the area. It is puzzle then that, except for one or two local writers, there was no mention made of the activities at the Changsha kilns and their products in the Tang records. Furthermore, there was little immediate influence from Changsha techniques on the development of mainstream ceramics. In all likelihood these products were regarded as provincial in taste, and therefore ignored by contemporary writers.<sup>10</sup>

After nearly two centuries of prosperity, the Changsha kilns began to wane in the early Song era (mid-tenth century). The causes behind the decline in manufacture lay in economic and marketing conditions rather than purely in a shift of taste. Overseas trade was still active, yet the main centre of production for export wares

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Zhou Shirong 1982; Quan Jinyun 1986; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 226–230.

<sup>8</sup> For the export of Changsha ware and the excavations of Changsha ceramics overseas, cf. Li Zhiyan 1982; Mikami Tsugio 1988; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, chap. 5, 210–218; Ho Chuimei 1996, 240–249.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Zhou Shirong 2000, 98.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Wood 1992, 13.

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<sup>11</sup> Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 29; Zhou Shirong 2000, 15.

was shifted from inland to the coastal areas, in order to reduce labour costs and the risk of damage during shipping. Kilns mushroomed in Guangdong and Fujian but rapidly decreased in Changsha. Yue ware, together with the newly developed Longquan green-glazed ware and the Jingdezhen *qingbai* (bluish reduction glaze) ware, now played the major role in supplying foreign markets. Changsha ware and Ding white ware disappeared from the arena of export trading. While Ding ware continued to develop after readjusting its market focus to the domestic scene, the Changsha kilns died out.

## Forms of Changsha ceramics from the Belitung wreck

Changsha products varied greatly in form. On the basis of some seven thousand ceramic pieces excavated at kiln sites in Changsha in 1983, Chinese archaeologists have distinguished some seventy different product forms. They can be divided into ten core groups, including ewers and vases (2,514 pieces); bowls and saucers (1596 pieces); jars (939 pieces); basins and washers (580 pieces); boxes (474 pieces); lamps (188 pieces); tools such as millstones and milling blocks (81 pieces); objects for the scholar's

desk (63 pieces); pillows (48 pieces) and others.<sup>11</sup> Many of these forms were found in the Belitung wreck (cf. appendix VI, 'Changsha ware'). There were basically three types of Changsha ceramics: utensil wares, cultural implements (such as those for the scholars' desks) and entertaining pieces such as toys. The majority of the works recovered from the cargo belonged to the first category, which included bowls (cf. nos 171, 172, 175, 176, 178–184, 187–199, 202–224), ewers (cf. nos 239–252), jars (cf. nos 274–279), cups (cf. nos 173, 177, 186, 200, 231–237), a cup stand (no. 233), a basin (no. 238), circular boxes (cf. nos 259–263), candlesticks (cf. no. 287), spittoons (cf. nos 280, 281), lamps (cf. nos 285, 286), incense burners (cf. nos 282–284) and a millstone (no. 291). Although potters of Changsha kilns had produced a delightful array of cultural implements and entertaining pieces, such works were evidently not favoured by the exporters. Only a limited number of ceramics in these categories were found on the Belitung wreck, including *shuizhu* water droppers (cf. nos 253–258), *shuiyu* water pots (cf. nos 264–270) and toys in the form of a dog and bird (nos 288, 289).

### a. Bowls

Bowls with underglaze decoration (figs 1–4) are doubtless one of the most elaborately represented

categories of all Changsha wares. They form the largest group of Changsha ceramics recovered from the Belitung wreck (cf. nos 171, 172, 175, 176, 178–184, 187–199, 202–224 and appendix I.1). This fact reflects the predominant status of this type of utensil ware in Changsha ceramic production during the Tang period. The field research carried out in 1983 in the Changsha area

proved that the bowls made up by far the largest part of the repertoire of ceramic types.

On the basis of some 1,383 pieces of intact or fragmentary bowls found during the 1983 excavation, Changsha bowls can be categorized into three major forms: bowls of a common round shape, bowls with a four-, five-, or six-lobed



**Fig. 1** Changsha bowls of standard shape from the Belitung wreck; in standard size (diam. c. 15 cm) (*left*) and small size (diam. 13–14 cm) (*right*) (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).



**Fig. 2** Changsha bowls of standard shape from the Belitung wreck; in large size (diam. c. 20 cm) (*right*) and very large size (diam. 25–26 cm) (*left*) (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

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rim, and bowls with a four-lobed rim in a semi-square shape, or in the shape of the Chinese character *ya*, as archaeologists have termed it. All three types of bowls are seen in the finds of the Belitung wreck. The majority of bowls belong to the first category and each have simple rounded sides, everted mouth with rolled rim and slightly splayed, narrow foot ring (figs 1, 2; see also no. 204, drawing). There are only a few bowls in almost conical shape (cf. nos 175, 181) and a

few dishes where the sides are everted to a multi-lobed or foliated rim (cf. nos 174, 176, 201). In addition there is a single wide dish with a sloping wall (no. 185), as well as some one hundred deep, straight-sided cups (cf. nos 173, 177, 186, 200 and appendix II).

The foot rings of the Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck generally fall into three types: a low, wide and flat foot; a thin, slightly splayed



Fig. 3 Deep Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck; in large size (diam. 17–18 cm) (left) and small size (diam. 14–15 cm) (right) (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

foot, and a high flared foot. The first is the so-called foot of jade *bi*-disc shape (see also above p. 358). It is associated with some of the larger Changsha bowls, which are 20–25 cm in diameter and 6.5–8.5 cm in height (cf. fig. 2 *right* and fig. 4 *above*). The majority of the bowls with underglaze decoration, however, have a thin, slightly splayed foot. They have a standard size of c. 15 cm in diameter and 5–5.5 cm in height, but there are some three hundred pieces from the shipwreck that are only 13–14 cm in diameter (fig. 1). Some six hundred bowls are deeper and show flaring rims and higher flared feet. They are either 14–15 cm in diameter and 6–7 cm in height, or 17–18 cm in diameter and 7–8 cm in height (fig. 3; see also appendix VI p. 726).

The workmanship of the foot rings varies; some are neatly cut, while others are quite crudely made. There are obvious traces of reshaping using a knife-like tool.

The majority of the bowls are decorated on the interior with copper green and iron brown painting under a transparent greenish-tinged glaze. Light or dark brown underglaze patches are further brushed on the rims, constituting a square frame decorating the interior. Sometimes, particularly on the dishes with four-lobed sides, dots are used instead of patches.

It is apparent that the same Changsha kiln could produce bowls of different sizes. The fact



Fig. 4 Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck bearing the signature *zong* and ranging from 20.4 cm (*above*) to a 15.7 cm in diameter (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

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that bowls from the Belitung wreck were of differing sizes, yet bore the same inscription, supports such a conjecture. For instance, the character *da* (see appendix I.2 no. 153) appeared on several large bowls of *c.* 22 cm in diameter, as well as on a few standard and small bowls. The size of bowls bearing the signature *zong* also varies, ranging from 20.4 cm to 15.7 cm in diameter (fig. 4). Another example can be drawn from bowls inscribed with the character *pang* (see appendix I.2 no. 155). Their diameters vary from 20.5 cm to 15 cm.

## b. Ewers

The second largest group of Changsha ceramics found on the Belitung wreck included ewers with spout, handle and lugs (or without lugs) in various forms (some 1,600 pieces). This is significantly in proportion to what Chinese archaeologists had reported. The excavations carried out in 1978 and 1983 in the Changsha area proved the ewer to be one of the predominant products of the Changsha kilns during the late Tang. There were 271 pieces of ewers from the



**Fig. 5** Green-glazed stoneware ewer with chicken-head spout. Eastern Jin. Excavated in 1975 in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province. Ht. 22.2 cm, diam. 9.0 cm. Collection of the Shaoxing Municipal Administration for Cultural Relics (after The Editorial Committee for Treasures of Chinese Arts 1985-89, vol. 1, pl. 205).

first field survey, out of 864 pieces of utilitarian vessels (compared with 117 pieces of bowls – the second largest group of Changsha ceramics unearthed in that operation).<sup>12</sup> During the second major archaeological excavation carried out in 1983, some 1,980 ewers were discovered, out of 3,038 vessels of a brand including ewers, jars and vases (comparing with 1,383 pieces of bowls).<sup>13</sup> Ewers were produced in all kilns around Changsha during the late Tang, and Lan'anzui was evidently the centre for manufacturing this type of vessel. While they have been found most frequently in the area of Changsha and other areas in China, numerous ewers have also been found across Asia and even as far as Africa. The finds of the Belitung wreck firmly established that the ewer was among the most exported Changsha wares.

The quality of ewers found on the shipwreck confirms that the ewer was also one of the most elaborately represented categories of all Changsha ware. Changsha kilns not only produced large quantity of ewers, but also a variety of forms. On the basis of 1,980 pieces of ewers unearthed in the 1983 excavation, Chinese archaeologists had distinguished eight categories with twenty-one sub-patterns.<sup>14</sup> The following five major types are most noticeable: (a) those with low neck, small mouth, almost cylindrical body and larger in volume, all decorated with applied medallions; (b) those with tall necks and ovoid, mostly lobed,

body; (c) those with concave necks, sloping shoulder and ovoid body; (d) those with small mouth and squat bulbous body, and (e) those with dish-shaped mouth. Except the third one, all other types of ewers were found on the Belitung wreck. In addition, a few rare ewers were also collected from the cargo, including a specimen with slender and elongated proportions (no. 242). Although only 48 out of 1,980 ewers unearthed in the 1983 excavation were identified as belonging to the first category, the majority of the ewers recovered from the Belitung wreck were close to this type (cf. nos 239–241). Each of them has a solid foot with flat base, an almost cylindrical body with high shoulder, a short neck and an everted rim. Indeed, when decorations are at their best (cf. appendix III.1), these ewers are among the noblest products from the Changsha kilns.

The prototype of the ewer with short spout, lugs and handle can be traced back to the ceramic jar with concave neck and loop-handles of the Han dynasty, but antecedents may be traced as far back as the prehistoric times, to the earthenware jar of the Neolithic period. In the late Three Kingdoms period (220–265), a type of vessel with dish-shaped mouth and a small chicken's (or other animal's) head attached to the shoulder came into existence (fig. 5), and later such patterns reached full popularity during the succeeding Jin dynasty (265–420) to the Sui period

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<sup>12</sup> Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 75–79.

<sup>13</sup> Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 29–30.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 30–38.

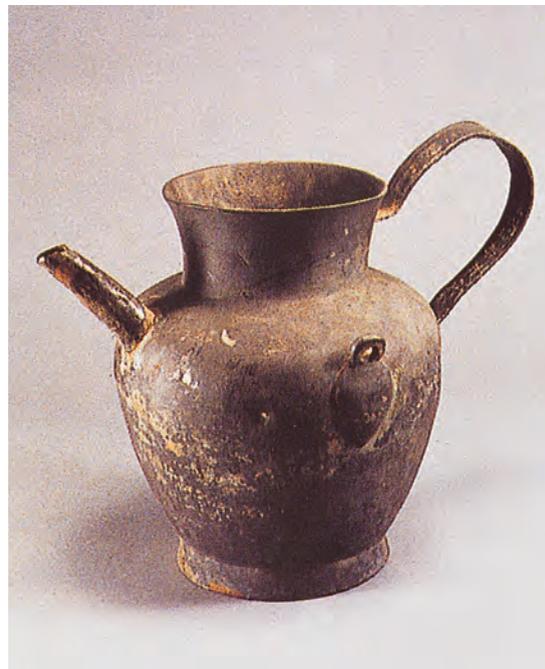
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<sup>15</sup> The *ying* is a vessel possibly similar to the ewer with dish-shaped mouth and chicken-head spout. A ewer with dish-shaped mouth and chicken-head spout unearthed from an Eastern Jin (317–420) tomb at Nanjing in 1972 bore an inscription that named the vessel as *ying*.

(581–618). Such vessels were mainly produced at the Yue and Ou kilns in Zhejiang province.

During the Tang era, a new type of ewer with short spout, handle and lugs appeared. The field survey suggests that the typical Tang form of this type of Changsha ewer may have emerged toward the later part of the eighth century, and became prolific during the ninth century. This assertion is also supported by the literary accounts. The common name for ewer, *hu*, originates in the Ming dynasty. During the Tang dynasty, it had different names. The Tang text *Zixiaji* (*A book for*

*leisurely enjoyment*) by Li Kuangyi states, 'During the early years of Yuanhe reign (806–820), *zun* vessel and *shao* ladle were still used to store and pour wine. The Prime Minister Lord Gao was a well-known host who used the *zun* and *shao* in his entertaining party. While hosting dozens of people, [his servants] used a *zun* and a *shao* as the implements to pour wine. The wine would be distributed exactly and no drops had been wasted. Shortly after this, the *zhu* began to be used, which was in the form of a *ying* with lid, spout and *bing* (handle).<sup>15</sup> After the ninth year of Dazhong (835), some *zhongguiren* or eunuchs



**Fig. 6** Silver *jiuzhu* or wine ewer. Tang dynasty, dated 872. Excavated in 1979 from a tomb in Xi'an. Ht. 25.8, diam. rim 14.0 cm, diam. foot ring 14.1 cm. Collection of Shaanxi Provincial Museum (after National Administration for Cultural Relics 1996, *Volume of Gold, Silver, Jade and Stone Works*, 229, pl. 178).

detested the name because in pronunciation it resembled 'zhengzhu', and therefore they modified its form by replacing *bing* handle with *ji* lugs, and made it resembling *mingping* or tea vessel with slight differences. They called it *pianti* ...<sup>16</sup> Examples of the *zhuzi* from the Yuanhe reign have so far not been identified, yet the features of such a vessel may be observed in an extant example in silver with a slightly later date, unearthed in 1979 from a Tang tomb in Xi'an (fig. 6). According to its inscription, the vessel, named *jiuzhu* or wine ewer, was cast in 872 for the court. The interaction between the metal model and the ceramic is clearly seen here. From this example and the passage cited above, one learnt that the vessels *ying*, *zhuzi*, *mingping* or *pianti*, were all similar in shape.<sup>17</sup> They share the basic feature of a ewer with spout and handle or lugs. They were utilitarian vessels used for wine or tea brewing, and enjoyed wide practical use during the early ninth century. As the custom of wine and tea drinking grew, so did the variety and refinement of the ewer. The typical Tang form of Changsha ewer was indeed a developed form based on early prototypes, while assimilating elements of other ceramic forms and adopting many of the decorative techniques found in gold and silver wares.

Although apparently produced in smaller numbers than in the Tang dynasty, ewers continued to be made in Changsha into the tenth century.<sup>18</sup> The archaeological finds demonstrate that the

ewer with relief decoration is one of a few Changsha wares that enjoyed a long period of thriving manufacture, ranging from High Tang to Five Dynasties period (mid-eighth to mid-tenth centuries).<sup>19</sup>

### Jars and others

*Guan* or jars belong to a small category among the Changsha ceramics found on the Belitung wreck (cf. nos 274–279). Although limited in number, they are among the most striking Changsha ceramics found so far. They normally have a straight-sided neck and their body can be globular, ovoid, barrel-shaped, and sometimes lobed. They all have two to four lugs on the shoulder, placed mostly vertically and ranging from simple loops to trapezoid moulded studs. In the cases where they have a foot, this is solid and has a flat base. On the type of jars with low neck, almost cylindrical lobed body and trapezoid lugs, moulded medallions are applied on the sharply angled shoulders (cf. no. 274).

Changsha potters manufactured not only utensil wares for daily use like the covered boxes (cf. nos 259–263), but also cultural implements, including pieces for the scholars' desks such as *shuizhu* water droppers (cf. nos 253–258), *shuiyu* water pots (cf. nos 264–270) and paperweights (cf. no. 288). *Shuizhu* water droppers were used for the preparation of ink. During the process

<sup>16</sup> The term *zhengzhu* might have been associated with a certain ranking official's name. It was a tough 'family taboo' (*jiahui*) in traditional China for men to directly relate to their parents' names by words in both naming and writing.

<sup>17</sup> There were two ewers excavated in Anhui and North Korea, which had inscriptions reading 'Kajia xiaokou tianxia youming (Ka family's *xiaokou* are world famous)' and 'Zhengjia xiaokou tianxia diyi (Zheng family's *xiaokou* are the number ones in the world)' respectively. The name *xiaokou*, standing for the ewer, may have only been used locally or at the specific kilns, since no contemporary texts mentioned it.

<sup>18</sup> Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 89–90; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 234–35.

<sup>19</sup> Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 234–235.

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<sup>20</sup> See *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Zhou Shirong 2000, 10.

of grinding ink using inkslabs, tiny amount of water would be dropped from *shuizhu* onto the inkstone. Although some of them show features of ewers with dish-shaped mouth, they in general are much smaller. As demonstrated by the works from the Belitung wreck, it was among the *shuizhu* that the most exquisite and imaginative designs were found on Changsha ceramics (cf. nos 253–258).

In addition, the Changsha kilns also produced a delightful array of entertaining pieces such as toys in the forms of dog, pig, human figure, rider, lion and lion rider, horseman, bull's head, bird, and so forth. Only two pieces of this type of ceramics were found on the shipwreck (nos 288, 289).

## Manufacture of Changsha ware

### a. Workmanship

Like all other southern-most ceramics, the Changsha ceramics from the Belitung wreck were made of siliceous stoneware, and were rich in fine quartz. Their bodies were slightly coarse, grey or greyish-white, or slightly reddish-white, and contained sand particles. To reduce excessive crazing, and to improve the adhesion of the glaze, as well as to brighten its colour, slip was applied

to the body of the vessels before any decoration and glaze were applied, and this went for almost all shapes and types of ceramics with various glazes and coloured underglaze decorations. The slip used in this instance is white or off-white.

These Changsha ceramics were wood-fired, using the southern style of *longyao* or dragon kiln. The field research shows that one such kiln at Tanjiapuo in Wazhaping had a chamber measuring 41 m in length, and 3.5–2.8 m in width. It sloped upwards from the furnace at an angle between 9° and 23°. <sup>20</sup> Like most southern wares, the Changsha wares were fired in a temperature range of 1,150–1,200°C in an oxidizing-reducing-oxidizing atmosphere. It was lower than the firing temperature for the contemporary Yue ware (1,240°C) from Zhejiang, the Yaozhou ware (1,230°C) and the Ding ware (1,300°C) from northern China. During the process of firing, saggars were used. A pat was used if a sagger contained more than one piece. No marks were left after the firing. The few finds of spurred stands and filler rings at the sites of the ceramic production suggest that they were rarely used in Changsha kilns. <sup>21</sup>

Technically, the Changsha potters developed a number of important processes in the ninth century, including the use of iron-manganese rocks as high-temperature glaze colourants, the underglaze decoration in oxide-rich pigments and

glazes, and the apparent discovery and first use in China of copper-red high-fired glazes. The use of moulded ornaments as a decorative device is a development of the *sancai* technique. The relief motifs applied to the sides of spouted ewers were a new idea at the time. A striking new technique involved four dark brown patches applied upon the background greenish-yellow glaze to embellish the moulded appliqués.

#### **b. Glazing technique**

Examinations of ceramic finds in the Changsha area allow us to make a distinction between three types of glazing techniques in the Changsha ware: (a) coloured underglaze decoration. In this method, the biscuit of the ceramic was slipped before the application of the glaze. A colourful decorative element was then added using copper-green and manganese iron-purple-brown stoneware glazes. Finally a transparent green-tinged glaze was applied to the paste. According to archaeological research, two thirds of the Changsha products belonged to this category; (b) in-glaze or overglaze decoration: a thick milky glaze was applied to the plain body before the addition of a coloured glaze decoration and then a transparent outer glaze. The coloured decoration dissolved into the background glaze and the outer glaze during the firing, resulting in colourful effects in the furnace transmutation, and (c) coloured glaze decoration (primarily in

brownish glaze) on a plain slip-covered surface; no outer glaze was applied.<sup>22</sup> The coloured glaze was exclusively applied by dipping, pouring, or brushing, under or over lighter stoneware glazes stained with small amounts of iron oxide.<sup>23</sup>

The majority of the Changsha ceramics from the Belitung wreck fit into the first category. The outer glaze is generally in a kind of transparent green-tinged colour, often of a yellowish tone. This is because of the use of small percentages of iron oxide exposed to a neutral firing, and the use of copper-green and manganese-brown glaze colourants that give the glazes warmish tones.

Indeed, the use of copper-green and manganese iron-purple-brown stoneware glazes was one of the important techniques developed by Changsha potters. Apart from the colourful glazes, the Tang potteries from the north are usually not richly decorated. It was Changsha potters who first introduced underglaze painting, launching perhaps the most creative ornamental device in Chinese ceramics. These wares marked a significant break with the long tradition of monochrome glazes. All Changsha bowls were decorated with light or dark brown underglaze patches on the rims, which constituted a square frame decorating the interior, a major characteristic of the décor of these vessels. The underglaze decorations are comprised of a variety of patterns painted in alternating thin or bold and broad

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Zhou Shirong 1990, 554, and 2000, 76–79.

<sup>23</sup> See Wood 1992, 12; Zhang Fukang 1985 and 1987; Research Team for Changsha Kilns 1996, 29; Zhou Shirong 2000, 76.

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24 Cf. Satō Masahiko 1981, 26, fig. 30; Wood 1992, 12.

brush strokes in brown and green (see appendix I.1). Motifs were always linear or spontaneously applied with the brush. In the examples of floral and cloud motifs (cf. nos 173–175, 181–194 and appendix I.1 nos 1–19, 36–51, 96–102, 110–118, 135–141, 144), the fluent lines are shown in continuous rhythmic movement like the brushwork of Chinese calligraphy, turning and sweeping, gathering momentum and slowing down, growing and diminishing, strongly reminiscent of impressionistic drawing.

The colour tonality of the strokes also varies from dark to pale, wet to dry, opaque to smoky. These effects remind viewers of the Chinese brush-painting techniques, which allow controlled suffusions of darker ink within a still-wet lighter area, where the brush is loaded on one side for shaded strokes. But here the illusion of the ink-painting effects was achieved by

the use of copper-green and manganese iron-brown glaze colourants, controlled by the level of oxygen in the firing, which determines the final colour of the pigment in the glaze, by the overlapping of green, brown or red colours, and by the diffusing and intermingling of the glazes during the firing.

In the Changsha kilns, the unpredictability of the final colour produced by copper glazes when fired, with its tendency to turn red when the supply of oxygen is reduced, was exploited by the potters during the ninth century. The use of copper oxide as a colourant is not a new technique – early in the late Warring States period (475–221 BC) Chinese potters had exploited the dissolved cupric oxide to produce green in low-fired lead glazes.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, Changsha was among a few stoneware kilns in the late Tang period where potters began to use oxides of copper as green



Fig. 7 Changsha bowl of standard shape and size from the Belitung wreck showing underglaze green and blue/green decoration (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).



Fig. 8 Changsha bowl of standard shape and size from the Belitung wreck showing underglaze red and red/green decoration (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

and blue-green colouring agents in high-fired glazes (fig. 7; cf. also nos 184, 187, 267–269).<sup>25</sup> More significantly, it was at the Changsha kilns that potters seem to have created the first Chinese copper-red effects.<sup>26</sup> Bowls from the Belitung wreck provide tangible evidence of this.

Judging from the archaeological remains of the Changsha ceramics, three types of copper-red ware are distinguishable: (a) red decorations with semi-transparent glazes; (b) red and green decoration together with transparent glazes, and (c) a true copper-red monochrome.<sup>27</sup> Though no copper-red monochrome was found, there were ample examples from the Belitung wreck showing underglaze red and red/green occurring together. The fact that decorations on some bowls were alternately green and red indicates that the red colour was intentional rather than accidental (fig. 8; cf. also nos 173, 232, 245, 247, 266). These works add further evidence that the Changsha copper red could be a deliberate and a well-controlled process.

Although it is still not clear to what extent the copper-red effects had been consciously controlled by the Changsha potters, Chinese and Western scholars have investigated how the copper-red colour was achieved. The transmutation of the coloured glazes and the underglaze pigments was brought about by variations in the firing atmosphere and by the proportion

of iron/copper atoms contained in the glazes. The natural effects of red alternating with green does not reflect the differences in the pigments themselves, but is the result of the same copper pigments turning green in an oxidizing kiln and red in a reduction oven.<sup>28</sup> Scientific analysis suggests that the copper colourants were associated with lesser amounts of tin oxide. This may have helped to produce the copper-red effects when they occurred in reduction-fired, copper-containing glazes.<sup>29</sup>

## Decoration of Changsha ceramics from the Belitung wreck

### a. Bowls

The underglaze decoration of Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck comprised a variety of patterns painted in alternating thin or bold and broad brush strokes mostly in brown and green. The decorative motifs can be divided into different categories, including vapour or cloud scrollings, foliage, floral patterns, landscapes, animistic ornaments, and poems. Some bowls were decorated with designs which are unusual and rare. Such designs included a flower-and-bird composition (no. 216), a Buddhist imagery (no. 217) and a foreign figure (no. 222).

<sup>25</sup> The colouring agents used to achieve the blue hue are also interesting. The question of whether the blue colourant is cobalt and therefore this type of underglazed painting is related directly to the Yuan dynasty underglaze cobalt-blue decoration, is still open to discussion. A scientific analysis of four Changsha jars in the Cox collection at Yale that were decorated underglaze with concentric circles of brown and blue or brown and red dots, has suggested that the blue was derived from copper. The presence of tin accounted for the opacity of the colour. See Gardner Neill 1982, 70. Nigel Wood suggested that a combination of high phosphorus levels and low alumina contents in the copper glaze have produced bluish-green tones that were once believed to have been caused by cobalt. See Wood 1999, 42.

<sup>26</sup> For discussions of the use of early copper red in China, see Zhang Fukang 1985 and 1987; Zhou Shirong 1985; Chen Xianqiu et al. 1989; Wood 1992, 11–35.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Zhou Shirong 1985; Wood 1992, 15 and 1999, 169.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 24–26; Wood 1992, 14–16.

<sup>29</sup> See Wood 1999, 167.

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<sup>30</sup> See in detail Liu Yang (forthcoming).

## – Vapour or cloud scrolling motif

The motif of vapour or cloud scrolling is a ubiquitous motif in the decoration of Changsha bowls, suffused with poetic overtones. The motif is striking for its unconventional form, and for its evocative rhythm and movement. The fluently painted motif changes form constantly: at times it appears like steam rising from the valley and at other times it looks like a fleecy cloud floating by (cf. appendix I.1 nos 1–20, 92, 96–102, 135–138, 140, 141; cf. also the cup no. 173 and the dish no. 174).<sup>30</sup>

Whatever the variations, all are organic and living forms charged with animistic energy, which are reminiscent of the pervasive *yunqi* or vapour motif seen on such pieces as the lacquer vessels of the late Warring States period and the early

Han dynasty (fourth–first century BC) (fig. 9). The essential form of the *yunqi* motif is a rhythmic curvilinear pattern accentuated with cloud-like scroll forms, which represents a fascinating imaginary world of the unknown, and forms one of the most distinctive characteristics of Chu art of the early period. Indeed, many of the elements in their traditional expression, which determined their unique character, have influenced later generations. After an interval of some one thousand years, the vapour or cloud scroll motif on the Changsha bowls seems to be echoed in the innovative shape of the early *yunqi* motif.

Apart from the *yunqi*, the Changsha potters also adopted other pre-existing elements in the design of the cloud pattern, including the spiral. The spiral is indeed one of the most enduring motifs in Chinese decorative art, which can be



**Fig. 9** Lacquer dish decorated with the *yunqi* or vapour motif. Western Han dynasty (3rd–2nd century BC). Excavated in 1972 from tomb no. 1 in Dafentou, Yunmeng, Hubei province. Ht. 3.6 cm, diam. 13.1 cm. Collection of the Hubei Provincial Museum (after *A Mysterious World of Ancient Designs* 1998, pl. 81).

traced back to as early as the Neolithic period (10,000–c. 2,100 BC), seen frequently on painted ceramics. It is also a common motif on the decoration of the Chu lacquer ware (fig. 10). It is no surprise to see the same motif being employed in decorative arts over and over again, since the interaction with the past is one of the distinctive modes of intellectual and imaginative endeavour in traditional Chinese culture.

Although representations of vapour are not new in the tradition of Chu culture, the brushing of this motif on Changsha bowls is striking because of its unique appearance. Several characteristics are observable: an emphasis on spontaneity, an interest in extreme formal simplicity, a concern for the expressive potential of paint, a sense of immediacy in execution, and the harmony and integration of one element with another.

In executing these pictures, one can immediately visualize the rapid arm and brush movements of the artisan. The fluent lines dance in the air in a rich variety of movements. The speed of execution certainly relies on the individual artisan's skill and personality, but in this case the fluency was also inspired by the motifs, and was probably influenced by the contemporary calligraphy, especially by the so-called *kuangcao* or wild-cursive script.

During the Tang dynasty, poetry and calligraphy flourished as never before. The most exciting calligraphic development of these times was the introduction of the 'wild cursive' script. The irregular lines and the flow between the words as expressed in the wild-cursive style allowed the calligrapher considerable compositional freedom. Very often a calligrapher wrote



**Fig. 10** Lacquer bowl decorated with spirals and other abstract motifs. Western Han dynasty (3rd–2nd century BC). Excavated in 1975 from tomb no. 47 in Shuihudi, Yunmeng, Hubei province. Ht. 18.2 cm, diam. 21.2 cm. Collection of the Hubei Provincial Museum (after *A Mysterious World of Ancient Designs* 1998, pl. 76).

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a whole column of a script without lifting his brush, producing a kind of visual continuity from top to bottom, without attention to the structure of the characters, using instead a high degree of distortion and exaggeration as a form of emotional expression. This technique gives the impression that the entire composition was executed in one breathless sweep. The description of Chinese calligraphy as ‘a dance on paper’ refers especially to the cursive style.

Among the masters who had an impact on later calligraphers, Huaisu (737–after 798), known as the ‘Wild Monk’, was one of the most famous. His brushwork, composed under the influence of

wine, is spontaneous, constituting a break from former methods. When compared with other contemporary masters in this style such as that of Huaisu’s teacher Zhang Xu (c. 700–750), known as ‘Crazy Zhang’, Huaisu’s brushworks show a particular rhythmic beauty (fig. 11).

The abstracted depictions of the vapour or cloud scrolling motif on Changsha bowls were undoubtedly underpinned by a strong calligraphic tradition derived from Huaisu, dictated by the mind rather than matter. This assertion is borne out not only by the spontaneity and rhythm that these calligraphic works possess, but also by the fact that Changsha was home to this monk cal-

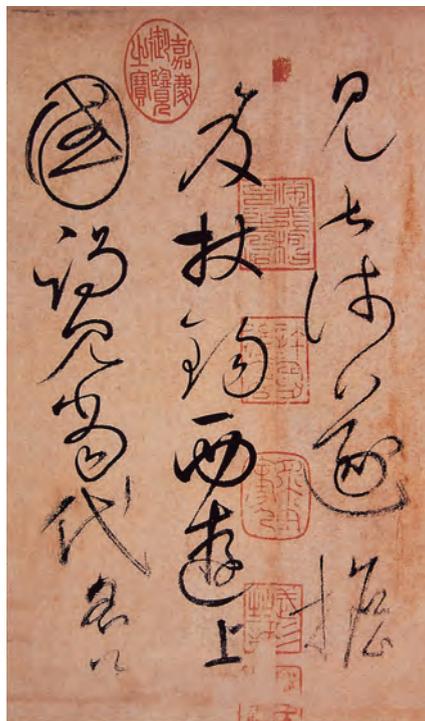


Fig. 11 Calligraphy in running script by Huaisu. Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing (after *An Autobiography* 777, p. 5).



Fig. 12 Calligraphy on a Changsha bowl of standard size (diam. 15.0 cm) from the Belitung wreck (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

ligrapher and his style was popular in the region. Calligraphy on a rediscovered Changsha bowl shares the same style and spirit as Huaisu's wild cursive script (fig. 12).

A combination of circumstances helped to lead the decoration of the Changsha ware towards abstract art. As we mentioned earlier, the Changsha kilns flourished during the late Tang mainly in response to the demands of foreign markets. This situation encouraged the potters to free themselves from conventional methods of representation that were tradition bound. Indeed, some abstract decorations were so rendered that some Chinese scholars have mistakenly interpreted them as Arabic inscriptions.<sup>31</sup>

In general, decorative styles in the applied arts have been intended to please the eye rather than to be informing or provoking. Nevertheless, this is not the case here. The brushwork of the vapour or cloud scrolling on the Changsha bowls is aesthetically pleasing as well as striking and provocative. The pervasiveness and resonance of the vapour and cloud motif arise not only from its natural quality, but also its cultural associations. From at least the third century BC, the region was a destination for political exiles – losers in factional struggles or those guilty of *lese-majeste* – sent from the court as a punishment.<sup>32</sup> During the Tang, poets often spoke of the region as a place of melancholy, where the pervasive vapour appeared dense and poisonous. In this way the

vapour became a metaphor for the miserable future of displaced men and spoke of the feeling of loss and rejection.

#### – The Foliage Motif

Botanical motifs on Chinese ceramics proved to be most adaptable, and they were used in figurative settings as well as for purely decorative panels and borders. On Changsha bowls, although representations of birds, fish and landscapes, as well as calligraphy, are often seen, botanical motifs, particularly the foliage and floral designs, make up by far the largest part of the decorative repertoire.

A closer look at the decoration of the Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck reveals that in some examples the craftsmen still retained their commitment to the form of subject matter, whilst on others they took the liberty of working to a greater level of abstraction. The distillation of natural forms into abstract expression is particularly reflected in the specific foliage motif (cf. appendix I.1 nos 21–35, 93, 94, 102–109, 142, 143).

Although there appear many variations ranging from simple patterns to more complex designs, the repertoire of compositional elements is not large. Freely arranging compositions within the available range of limited elements, the Changsha craftsmen created a fantastic visual world of

<sup>31</sup> See Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, captions of pls 87, 172.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Murck 2000.

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<sup>33</sup> See in detail Liu Yang (forthcoming).

botanical beauty. The basic motif is a cluster of foliage resembling radiating beams. These could well be stylized illustrations of shrubs or trees. In some cases, however, the tips of the middle plants curl to form a hook-like feature, resembling the crozier of a young fern (cf. appendix I.1 nos 25, 26, 93, 103, 104, 106, 142). The motif therefore looked more like the foliage of herbaceous plants.

A vapour-like design is sometimes depicted as if hovering on top of this cluster of foliage, while several freely scribbled strokes appear underneath the principle motif suggesting the earth. These vapour designs, together with spirals on the sides, provide the foliage motif with a vivid, vibrant setting (cf. appendix I.1 nos 22–25, 141; see also the dish no. 176 and the cup no. 177; ).

Complex groupings consisting of three or more clusters of foliage developed out of the original simple design (cf. nos 178, 179 and appendix I.1 nos 32–35, 109).<sup>33</sup> Irrespective of variations in composition though, a lively rhythmic design conformed to the rule of proportion, harmony, and balance. The artisans reconciled two conflicting elements of design, chaotic force and the desire for order, within a single unity of field.

There is no doubt that the Changsha craftsmen derived their designs from actual plants (cf. no. 202). They drew on various types of shrubs and

trees in the decoration, as is evident in the extant examples from the Belitung wreck. Even if one assumes that the representations are not imaginary but based on real plant forms, most of the designs of the foliage motif are stylized in such a way that they have been converted into fictitious foliage. The motifs are essentially organic, but are executed with free brushwork, unconcerned with imitating nature.

Again, the influence of contemporary calligraphy of the Tang era is felt when one looks at these designs. The conflict between wild spontaneous expression and the need to impose some overall sense of order in abstract art is neutralized by principles of calligraphic expression. The foliage was painted with quick decisive touches of a well-soaked brush, varying in tones of colour. The fluidity of the brushwork reached a high standard only rivalled by the cursive style of the contemporary calligraphers.

It is generally recognized that whether a work is ornamental or representational, its essential value lies in its expressive quality. This quality does not depend on subject matter or motif. Despite being highly stylized, the rendering of the foliage motifs on Changsha bowls is vivid and expressive. Such depictions bear little resemblance to the more conventional rendering of botanic motifs in Tang decorative art elsewhere. The originality of inspiration was in striking contrast

to the uniformity of pattern in the contemporary decorative art.

During the Tang era, the growing aesthetic dimension of people's attitudes toward religion, and a widespread interest in naturalism contributed to a new taste for decorative art. Subsequently, the interest in plants as a source of artistic inspiration grew. Many botanical motifs therefore acquired a poetic allusion and a religious symbolism. The theme of trees and rocks, for instance, became a popular subject in painting. Like bamboo and other plants, this theme had deep symbolic association (cf. nos 202, 203).

– Floral patterns

On the Changsha bowls a few designs are naturalistic depictions of real flowers. The majority of the floral patterns, however, are highly stylized recalling the decorative patterns prevailing for thousands of years in China. The most common stylized floral design is a discoidal form with four, five, six or more petals arranged like the downward perspective of a flower in full bloom (cf. appendix I.1 nos 36, 37, 95, 110, 144). The pointed petals appear in various designs, ranging from simple outline to multiple-stroked depictions suggesting veins, multiple petals, or purely decorative configurations. Stamens are generally depicted in each pattern round a central dot like

radiating beams. Variation includes a cloud-like form (cf. appendix I.1 no. 41) or a pair of cloud-like design arranged symmetrically (cf. appendix I.1 no. 39).

The craftsmen manufacturing the Changsha bowls seemed to start with the simple pattern of four petals, but soon they fancifully added more petals and further embellished the whole design with all sorts of adornments (cf. appendix I.1 nos 38–44, 111–114). Starting with the simple rosette, more complicated designs were derived from the grouping of more petals (cf. nos 182, 183 and appendix I.1 no. 44).

Although exhibiting all sorts of variations, these floral patterns in general consist of a basic form which is repeated, emphasizing symmetry and rhythm.<sup>34</sup> The different parts are always arranged in harmony within the limitation of the space defined by the four brownish patches on the bowl's rim. A characteristic geometric quality dominates these compositions. It prevails in every aspect of the floral pattern, in the depiction of the petals as well as in their arrangement. This stylized pattern aims exclusively at ornament and intends to please the eye, as distinct from informing or provoking it. It is decorative rather than expressive. It appears as another facet of metropolitan fashion more than any other motifs on Changsha bowls.

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<sup>34</sup> See in detail *ibid.*

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<sup>35</sup> See pp. 516–519 in this volume.

There is, however, another floral pattern in the repertory of the decoration on Changsha bowls, which obviously derived from the stylized floral form but became highly abstract. Although the movement of lines and the arrangement of the elements are still reminiscent of the treatment accorded originally to the organic motif, they have lost every visible connection with a vegetal form. Here abstract and geometric characteristics play the major part.

This pattern of rosettes appears also in a wide variety of forms. A common type shows spirals in a circle surrounding the normal radiating beam-like stamen (cf. fig. 7 and appendix I.1 no. 51, 116). Sometimes the stamens are represented by spirals or the cloud design (cf. fig. 8 and appendix I.1 nos 49, 50), the spirals round a stamen are replaced by foliage, cloud-like forms or by an alternative arrangement of all these three elements (cf. no. 186, the cup no. 187 and appendix I.1 nos 46–48, 115).

The abstract floral pattern seems to recall a composite form of plants, clouds and geometric elements. The imagination can have free rein to play with highly abstract forms: they could be taken just as geometric designs, or – because they are composed in the proportions of a floral rosette with repeated units around a fixed point – as floral patterns. The spirals or other units arranged around a stamen in this way serve as petals, turning such an abstract form into a floral rosette.

Although the stylized floral rosette was one of the most popular patterns in Tang decorative art, a form that has its origin at least in the Warring States period (475–221 BC), the abstracted floral rosettes are unique. They appear to have been first introduced by the artisans of the Changsha bowls.

Many of the floral motifs in the Chinese decorative repertory are symbolic. Often they are suffused with poetic overtones or imbued with social, religious and political allusions. In discussing the symbolic meaning of floral motifs on the Changsha bowls, however, one is confronted with the problem of identification, especially since the depiction of many natural objects was stylized or abstracted to such a degree that they became purely decorative elements. Even in barely recognisable examples the original symbolic intent gave way to decoration.

Although many of the symbolic meanings of floral motifs are lost in the stylized patterns, there are some motifs, which do retain allusions that draw the viewer's attention. The lotus and the *lingzhi* or fungus, for instance, are motifs that carry an explicit symbolism.<sup>35</sup>

## – The Landscape motif

By the eighth century, the interest of artists in China had begun to shift from man to nature. In an earlier period before the Tang, people comprised the main subject matter for art, and the

landscape constituted no more than incidental background. Now it began to be depicted for its own sake. Technically, landscape painting had also attained a new level of sophistication.<sup>36</sup> The flourishing of landscape painting as a special genre during the Tang was reflected in the decoration of Changsha bowls.

The taste for mountain landscape in the region was partly due to fashion, but also to local geography. In addition to the rivers and lakes, high mountains were an important part of the general Hunan landscape. The great Mount Hengshan is situated in the middle of the province, with Yuelu Peak opposite the city of Changsha marking its northern end. This mountain range, with seventy-two steep peaks, was designated the southern most of the Five Sacred Mountains of imperial China. Further south, Mount Jiuyishan, with eight smaller peaks,

flanked the central mountain. In the west of the province, Zhangjiajie exhibited a fantastic thousand peaks and myriad ravines – in the modern era it has become a National Park. These features of the landscape were adapted by Changsha craftsmen into a vivid pictorial world of fantasy.

Like the rendering of motifs in the other design categories, the styles of landscape compositions on Changsha bowls vary. Some are comparatively faithful to nature and still preserve elements of the archaic (cf. nos 195–197 and appendix I.1 no. 119). The mountains are sometimes painted like separate clods of earth set up straight one beside another, and bring to mind the schematized versions of landscape that could be traced back to the early landscape representations of the fourth century (fig. 13). Other compositions are free configurations of natural forms, or purely fanciful creations. In reviewing these depictions

<sup>36</sup> See Sullivan 1980; Cahill 1995.



**Fig. 13** Details from *The Nymph of the Luo River*. Song dynasty copy of a handscroll attributed to Gu Kaizhi (c. 345–406). Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing (after The Editorial Committee for Treasures of Chinese Arts, 1985–89, *Painting*. Vol. 1, pl. 95).

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37 See in detail Liu Yang (forthcoming).

of mountains, one cannot help being highly impressed by their abstract forms, which constitute by far the largest part of the landscape repertoire on the Changsha bowls (cf. appendix I.1 nos 52–70, 120–128, 145).<sup>37</sup>

The Changsha artisans were not the first to be inspired by the mountain motif, but they seemed to be more interested in abstract mountains than their predecessors. In these stylized landscape compositions, the mountain contours were brushed in quick decisive touches. The artisans worked only in outline: no texture strokes and graded ink washes, no recessions into depth were

depicted. The principle pattern was a mountain range rising and falling in the distance featuring a central towering peak flanked by smaller ones. Vapour or cloud gathered round the mountain peaks, half camouflaged below by mists in the form of stylized scrolls (cf. appendix I.1 nos 52, 53, 60, 64–66, 69, 120, 122, 145). Such imagery is not only a reflection of natural phenomena, but also an echo of earlier traditions: Chinese painters have always looked on the mountains as the visible embodiment of mysterious natural forces. One of the most important powers attributed to the great mountains in China was their ability to produce mystery clouds, in the way mist would

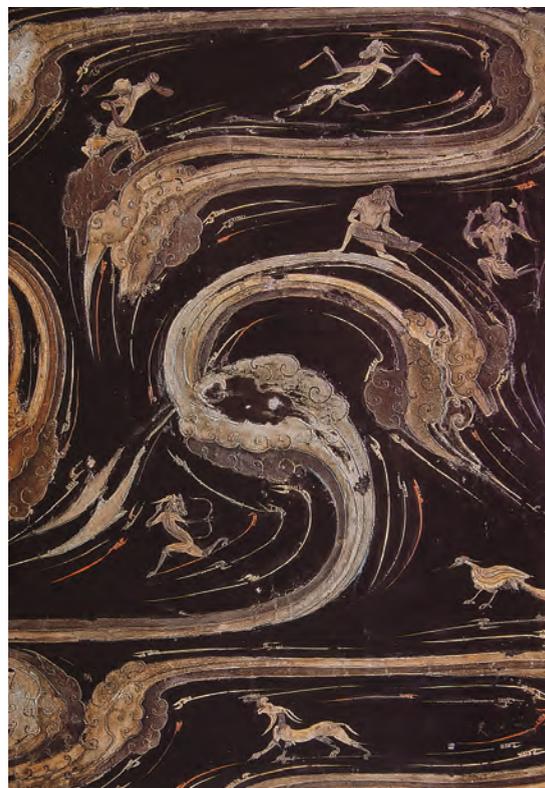


Fig. 14 Details of the *yunqi* pattern on a lacquer coffin excavated from tomb no. 1 at Mawangdui in Changsha in 1972 (after The Editorial Committee for Treasures of Chinese Arts, 1985–89, *Painting*, Vol. 1, pl. 59).

arise above the marshes and lakes. From a very early time, the people of Chu were favourably inclined towards a particular pattern of mountain imagery that combined the *yunqi* or clouds. In the *Zhao yinshi* (*The summons to the hermits*), a folk song of the Chu from the Warring States period, the hermits are recalled from the mountains. The mountains were known to be dangerous and ominous, somewhere where one should not linger; the mountain vapour was described as dense and harmful. It is no wonder that in the contemporary Chu art of the Warring States to that of the Han times, the combination of the *yunqi* motif with that of the mountain represents the mountain itself. The *yunqi* element, with its rhythmic movement, often served as a mountain setting for animals in full motion (fig. 14). The rhythmic movement of the *yunqi* motif interacted with the movements of the animals, creating a powerful image that emits mysterious energy.

– Animistic ornaments

A rare group of Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck is of great significance because of the use of a certain fish motif. During the Tang, the fish was one of the most pervasive motifs in decorative art. This was especially true in the area where Changsha bowls were manufactured. Modern archaeological excavations revealed that the Changsha kilns of the Tang era were all located alongside the bank of the Xiang River within the Changsha area. The river, after travel-

ling a short distance north, flowed into a world of lakes and marshes. Fishing was no doubt an important source of livelihood for many local communities. Nevertheless the predominance of the fish motif in the region, which has long been identified with Chu culture, had special significance. It relates to a popular festival, the Dragon Boat Festival on the fifth day of the fifth month. The festival is believed to have been instituted in memory of Qu Yuan (c. 340–c. 286 BC), a courtier of the King of Chu and a great poet who drowned himself in the Miluohe River (a branch of the Xiang River) because his political talents went unnoticed and he languished far from the court. The local people, who loved him for his virtue and fidelity, sent out boats in search of his body. They prepared a special kind of rice-cake wrapped in leaves, which they threw into the river to feed the fish, in the hope that the fish in turn would not harm Qu Yuan's body.

Some strange features of the fish on the Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck, however, indicate that these are not an ordinary species of fish. Their grotesque heads with large glaring eyes, wide-opened mouths and sharp teeth, their upturned snouts and horns or fleshy feelers, which extend back from the end of their snout, are all features supporting an identification of the specie as *makara*, a motif introduced from India and often used in Tang decorative art (figs. 15, 16; cf. nos 204–206 and appendix I.1 nos 72, 73, 129, 130).

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Fig. 15 Gilt-silver plate decorated with a pair of *makara*. Tang dynasty. Excavated in 1976 in Inner Mongolia. Ht. 2.0 cm, diam. 47.8 cm. Collection of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (after National Administration for Cultural Relics 1996, *Volume of Gold, Silver, Jade and Stone Works*, 113, pl. 79).



Fig. 16 Oblong four-lobed bowl decorated with a *makara* in the centre. Tang dynasty. Excavated in 1983 at Xi'an, Shaanxi province. Ht. 3.5 cm, l. 13.0 cm, w. 7.1 cm. Collection of the Shaanxi Provincial Museum (after National Administration for Cultural Relics 1996, *Volume of Gold, Silver, Jade and Stone Works*, 109, pl. 67).



Fig. 17 Silver bowl decorated with a *makara* and a sea beast. Second half of the 5th century. Ht. 4.5 cm, l. 14.5 cm, w. 23.8 cm. Collection of the Datong Municipal Museum (Photograph: Liu Yang).

The earliest extant example of the *makara* used as a decorative motif found in China can be traced back to the late fifth century. It appears on an oblong silver polylobed bowl, excavated in 1970 in a hoard from the Northern Wei ruins near Datong in Shanxi province (fig. 17).<sup>38</sup> A *makara* together with a sea beast were depicted in shallow relief on the centre of the bowl in what appears to be a fighting scene. The shape of the bowl is typical of the Sassanian art of Persia. It was discovered along with several other silver and bronze vessels that show obvious foreign origin in their décor. It is therefore unclear whether the bowl was made locally or was brought in by foreign merchants. A later example of *makara* is from the Sui dynasty (581–618) and appears on the relief of a sarcophagus dating to 582.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, it was during the Tang dynasty that the *makara* became a popular decorative motif. This is understandable, as the Tang dynasty was a period when foreign artistic elements intermingled freely with the native traditions. The artisans were ready to make use of any elements, old or new, native or foreign, which happened to suit their fancy.

It is still unclear what the function was of such a ferocious and grotesque creature that entitled it to feature in the decorative repertoire of the period. Despite its exotic flavour, perhaps the popularity of the *makara* motif was due to its grotesqueness, signifying a supernatural force with talismanic qualities. Another plausible explanation may lie

in its apparently brutal nature. It recalls the *taotie* zoomorphic mask – the most popular decorative motif on ritual objects of Bronze Age China. The depiction of these demons on ritual vessels, according to an early tradition, allowed people to familiarize themselves with their appearance and to forewarn them, should they encounter these spirits abroad. The theory behind this belief was that a danger confronted through a visual image gave protection against it.<sup>40</sup>

After the Tang dynasty, however, the *makara* gradually died out from the decorative repertoire for secular utensils. This appears to uphold the belief that the motif had never been taken as an auspicious motif and was therefore inappropriate for everyday use.<sup>41</sup>

Among the animistic motifs on the Changsha bowls, the bird occupies a predominant position. According to Chinese archaeologists, the majority of 176 ceramics unearthed in 1983 that bore motifs of birds, were from Lan'an-zui and a small number was from Tanjiapo, both in Wazhaping.<sup>42</sup> Although shown in a variety of postures, the majority of the birds painted on the bowls from the Belitung wreck are seen flying (cf. nos 207–212 and appendix I.1 nos 76–91, 131–134). In some bowls bird motifs were painted solely (cf. appendix I.1 nos 74, 75), but usually the patterns of cloud, spiral and foliage were added as background, suggesting that the birds were in mid air.

<sup>38</sup> The excavation was reported in *Wenwu* 1972: 1, 83–84. See also Team for Exhibiting 1972, pl. 149, 150–152. Brief discussions of these objects are seen in Bush 1984, 63–66; Han Wei and Deydier 2001, 106–109.

<sup>39</sup> See Shaanxi sheng wenwu 1966, 37, fig. 4; Karetzky 1986, figs 6–7.

<sup>40</sup> See Liu Yang and Capon 2000b, 41–42; Liu Yang 2002, 2–16.

<sup>41</sup> For a brief discussion of the *makara* motif in the Chinese decorative art see also Rawson 1984, 114–117.

<sup>42</sup> Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 117.

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43 Cf. Schafer 1967.

44 The earliest surviving Changsha ceramic decorated with aphorisms or phrases in calligraphy is an amber-glazed bowl in the Kyoto National Museum's collection. It is dated to the third year of Kaicheng reign (823) by the inscription. See *The World's Great Collections* 1982, Monochrome Pl. 42.

45 Xu Jun 1998, 67.

46 Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 141.

It is interesting that some unskilled pictures were painted playfully by amateur potters at the height of their enthusiasm (cf. appendix I.1 no. 131).

The identity of these birds remains unclear. Their forms are so stylized an active imagination could connect them with a number of different species of birds. To further exacerbate the problem of identification, the image of the bird carries a great many cultural and emotional connotations, which are not limited to Buddhist and Daoist associations. The magpie, for instance, was regarded as a bird of good omen. Its name in Chinese means literally bird of joy. It was believed that if a magpie built its nest near one's house, it would bring good luck to all the neighbours. The chattering of magpies in front of a house was said to be a premonition of the imminent arrival of a guest. Eagles stood for strength, dignity and power, and its name expressed in Chinese characters depicts one bird swooping down upon another. Swallows symbolize marital happiness in China because they often fly in pairs. Also, the Chinese words for swallow (*yan*) and wild goose (*yan*) are homophones, though they are written differently, and the wild goose is a well-known symbol of marital fidelity because it takes only one mate (cf. also no. 215). For the same reason, mandarin ducks are said to represent lovers. In the Tang dynasty, white-throated partridges called *zhegu* were plentiful in the Yangzi basin and even more common in southern China. The bird in literature and art represents a noble spirit anguished with the sorrows of parting. It was a

token of human feelings: the displaced men who heard its sad voice felt that it spoke for them and wept for their lost homes; generals and soldiers found in the bird a sympathetic image for their own sense of estrangement after a prolonged tour of military duty.<sup>43</sup> The sorrow of departing was also expressed in poems written on Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck (nos 218, 219).

- The poems

The Tang dynasty marked the Golden Age of Chinese poetry. During this time poetry became more than a literary form, loved not only for its intrinsic enchantment, but also because it was a path to wealth and success – because of the established civil service examination system, the ability to compose verse was now an absolute requirement for high office. Literary records show that there was an official collection of nine hundred volumes of poetry. The flourishing of poetry inspired Changsha craftsmen to turn poetry into a decorative medium.<sup>44</sup> Museums in Changsha have collected some three thousands Changsha wares during the past decades, 72 out the group bearing either poems or aphorisms.<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that the excavation carried out in the Changsha area in 1983 yielded some 248 pieces, either intact or fragmentary, that bore inscriptions. 193 of them were inscribed with poems.<sup>46</sup> On the contrary, it is very rare to find works bearing such inscriptions excavated in the cities that were major ports during

the Tang era. In Yangzhou on the east coast, for instance, only 0.5 per cent of unearthed Changsha ceramics had inscribed poems. Furthermore, no inscribed Changsha ceramics were reported to be found in Western and Central Asia.<sup>47</sup> This fact may suggest that such wares were mainly produced for the domestic market.

The most common form of poetry found on Changsha bowls was the five-character form. This corresponds to the fashion of the time. In the Tang, the regulated five- or seven-word poem that demanded tonal rhythm and parallel construction of imagery and allusions, reached a height of skill. The majority of poems seen on Changsha wares seems to be folk songs, and for only a limited number can origins be traced to the *Quan Tangshi* (*Complete poems of the Tang*), a comprehensive collection of the Tang poems edited under imperial auspices in 1706,<sup>48</sup> or to works by renowned poets in the past.

Chinese archaeologists have reported that almost all poems were found on ewers, except two on pillows and two others on saucers.<sup>49</sup> It is significant that four Changsha bowls from the Belitung wreck bear poems (nos 218–221). From the history of literature we learn that many poets of the Tang dynasty were not only good at composing poems, but also excelled in calligraphy and painting. Interestingly, these three arts later on formed the *sanjue* or the ‘Three Perfections’. On some of the Changsha bowls the poems were beautifully rendered in calligraphy which

enhanced the poetic content. They herald the so-called ‘Three Perfections’ that attained the apogee of its development in the following century.

#### b. Ewers

Although during the late Tang period Yue and Ou kilns in modern Zhejiang province also manufactured spouted ewers (figs. 18, 19), the application of moulded reliefs on the body of the ewer was a new idea created first at the Changsha kilns. A striking new technique also involved dark brown patches applied upon the background greenish-yellow glaze to embellish the moulded reliefs.

The medallion was first pressed out from the mould using a sheet of clay, and was then applied to the designated area on a vessel before it dried. After that the vessel could be glazed and fired. The technique of applying moulded appliques on ceramics first appeared in the Han dynasty, became popular during the Jin (265–420), and reached its apogee during the Tang dynasty, as demonstrated by the lead-glazed northern *sancai* ware and by Changsha ceramics. The archaeological excavations carried out in Changsha area make it clear that the Changsha ceramics with moulded relief decoration began to appear in tombs during the mid-Tang period (780–835) and thereafter.

The motifs used by Changsha potters in designing moulded medallions are plentiful (cf. ap-

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>48</sup> *Quan Tangshi* 1706, by Peng Dingqiu (1645–1719) et al.

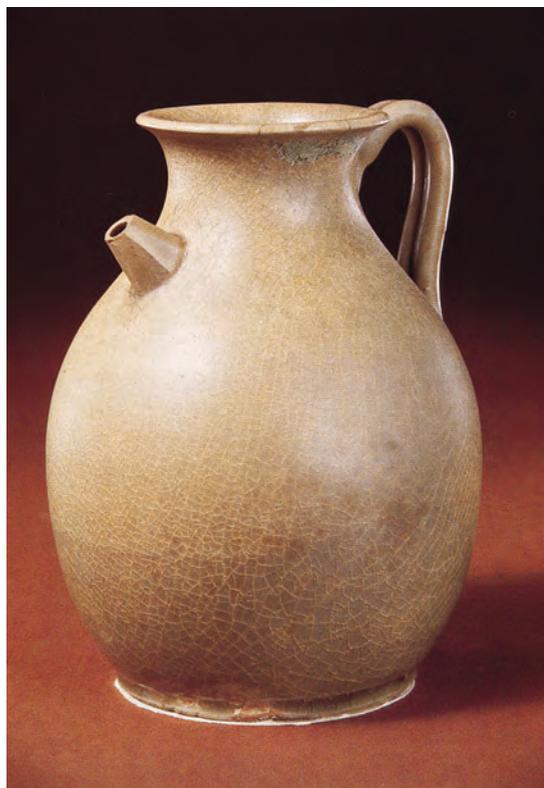
<sup>49</sup> Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 141.

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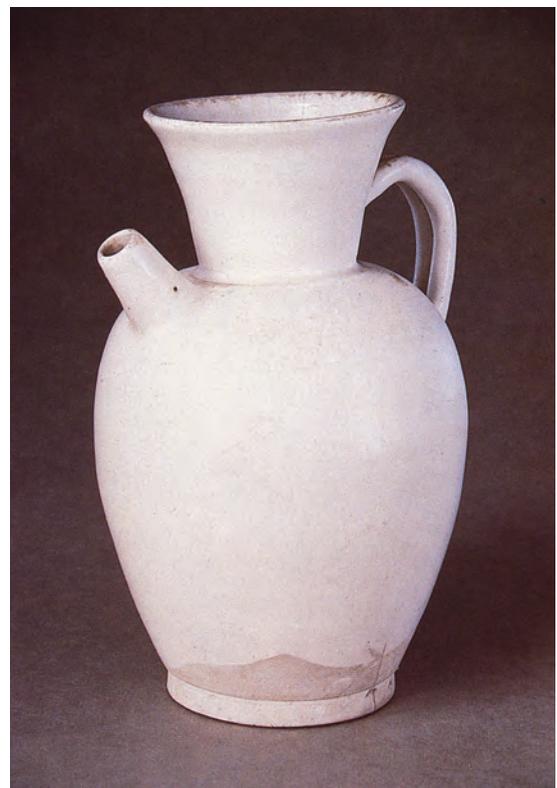
pendix III.1). They can be classified into three primary groups, which include foliage, animals and human figures.

The foliage motifs take up by far the largest part of the decorative repertoire. They are often composed together with birds, heraldic-looking emblems and architectural frameworks to form charming images. The following groups are most noticeable:

1. A pair of bowknot-like forms is arranged in the shape of a cross atop a central leaf with two tassels hanging down encircling it. The motif is surrounded by a cluster of leaves on the sides and below, and accompanied by a pair of birds facing each other, arranged symmetrically on the left and right edges (fig. 20; cf. also no. 239 and appendix III.1 nos 15–18). In some cases the central leaf is replaced by a heraldic-looking emblem (cf. no. 241 and appendix III.1 nos 19–22). Varia-



**Fig. 18** Yellowish-green-glazed Yue ware ewer from a Tang tomb dated 810. Ht. 14.3 cm. Collection of the Palace Museum, Beijing (after The Editorial Committee for Treasures of Chinese Arts 1985–89, vol. 2, pl. 63).



**Fig. 19** White-glazed Xing ware ewer. Ht. 17.6 cm. Palace Museum, Beijing (after The Editorial Committee for Treasures of Chinese Arts 1985–89, vol. 2, pl. 41).

tions of the design show that a pineapple-like motif replaced the bowknot-like form on the top (cf. appendix III.1 no. 23–27), or that a cluster of grape-like or pineapple-like fruits replaced tassel pendants encircling the central leaf (cf. appendix III.1 nos 23, 24, 26). Complex groupings consist of more clusters of leaves developed out of the comparatively simpler design (cf. appendix III.1 nos 28–33). Although exhibiting all sorts

of variations, these designs in general consist of a basic form which is repeated, emphasizing symmetry and rhythm. The archaeological finds from the kiln sites at Changsha prove that this type of medallion was the most frequently represented pattern on Changsha ceramics; 33 out of 53 examples unearthed in 1983 belonged to this pattern.<sup>50</sup> The ewers recovered from the Belitung wreck also support such an assertion.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 134–135.



**Fig. 20** Medallion under the spout of an ewer from the Belitung wreck showing foliage and a pair of birds (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

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50 *Ibid.*, 134–135.

2. A single cluster of grape-like fruits with leaves arranged symmetrically on two sides (fig. 21; cf. also no. 240 and appendix III.1 nos 1–5). Chinese archaeologists assumed that the fruits were those of the date palm. In some cases two birds facing each other are arranged symmetrically on the edges (cf. appendix III.1 no. 14), or a single bird is added only to one side breaking the symmetry of the composition (cf. appendix III.1 nos 7–13).

3. A large date palm or pineapple tree with large upturned leaves enclosed by a railing fence. The scene is animated by a pair of birds facing each other perching on both sides of the tree just above the fence (cf. appendix III.1 nos 34, 35).

Obviously, the predominance of the date palm or other tropical plants is an important feature of Changsha ceramic decoration, which reflects the local response to the foreign market.



**Fig. 21** Medallion under the spout of a ewer from the Belitung wreck showing grape-like fruits with leaves (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

4. The front view of what appears to be the main gate to the compound of a temple or other grand building. A flight of stairs ornamented with flowers leads one's eyes to the closed studded doors. Behind the schematic roof towering trees emerge (fig. 22).

The most frequently represented animistic motif in moulded appliques on ewers shows a lion, generally posed left facing, seated on a fringed mat in profile. It wears a collar with a bell-like

pendant, and has a heavy mane and two medallion-like ornaments on the body. Its large tail swells upward like a sail in the wind (cf. appendix III.1 no. 36–38).<sup>51</sup> In some examples, the seated lion contains the character *he* that may stand for the name of the kiln's owner (fig. 23). The same character was also found on medallions on ewers unearthed in 1978 at Changsha kiln sites.<sup>52</sup> Chinese archaeologists have reported one other character, *zhang*, found on the medallions in lion, fish or foliage design.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> The only example of a Changsha ewer known to the author that shows the lion in an aggressive pose with one forepaw stretched forward, mane upward, and eyes and mouth wide-open, is seen on a ewer in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See *The World's Great Collections* 1977b, fig. 73.

<sup>52</sup> Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 92.

<sup>53</sup> Hunan Provincial Museum 1960, 68; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 199, pl. 61.



Fig. 22 Medallion under the spout of a ewer from the Belitung wreck showing an architectural composition (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).



Fig. 23 Medallion under the spout of a ewer from the Belitung wreck showing a seated lion with the character 'he' (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

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Representations of the human figure seen on moulded medallions from the Belitung wreck ewers show a man wearing an elaborate crown and a robe with long sleeves, who dances on an exquisitely decorated mat in either round or square shapes (fig. 24; cf. also appendix III.1 no. 39).

Although depictions of dancing scenes are commonly seen during the Tang, as the Central Asian

music and dance were extremely popular and the Buddhist elements had played an important role in the daily life of the populace, the figurative formula of the dancers here seem to have more to do with the Chinese indigenous culture than the exotic inspiration. They are more likely the representations of entertainers seen in the local theatre, which was becoming a very common scene during the Tang because of the imperial encouragement. The earliest dated example of



**Fig. 24** Medallion under the spout of a ewer from the Belitung wreck showing a man dancing on a mat (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

a ewer with dancing figures on the medallion is from a tomb of 812, unearthed in Zhentoucun near Shijiazhuang, Shandong province.<sup>54</sup>

### c. Jars

In Changsha kilns, moulded appliqués were not only applied on ewers but also vessels of other forms. They are seen, for instance, on the type of bulk jars with short vertical neck and a pair of trapezoidal lugs (cf. no. 274). The designs are basically the simplified version of those seen on ewers. On no. 274, the medallion shows a pineapple-like motif accompanied by a pair of birds

facing each other among palm leaves. On this type of jar, the trapezoidal lugs were frequently turned into parts of the medallions. The most common design shows a pendant in the form of a diamond or a leaf hanging down from the perforation of the trapezoidal lug. The pendant is further embellished in relief with motifs such as fruit, foliage or geometric patterns (cf. no. 274 and appendix IV nos 1–5). The earliest dated example of such a work is a clay mould for pressing out a jar lug with leaf-shaped pendant that bears an inscription dating it to the third year of the Yuanhe reign (808) (fig. 25).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Shijiazhuang 1984, 283.

<sup>55</sup> Changsha Cultural Bureau 1980, 88–89, fig. 18; Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 187, 194, fig. 521.

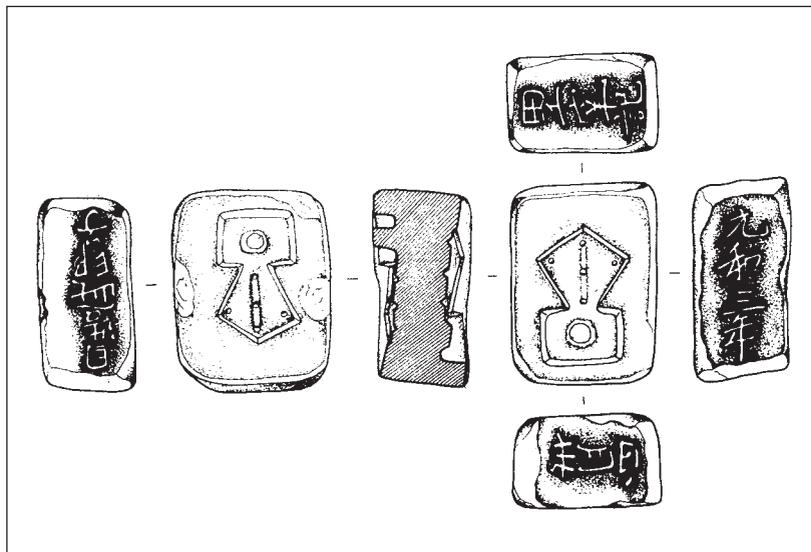


Fig. 25 Drawing of a clay mould for pressing out a relief jar lug with leaf-shaped pendant, dated 808 by inscription (after Research Team of Changsha Kilns 1996, 194, fig. 521).

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## Inscriptions on Changsha ceramics

Apart from testifying to significant technical innovations, the Changsha ceramics from the Belitung wreck also provide some interesting information regarding the workshops in Changsha kilns. Some four hundred bowls bore inscriptions mostly brushed in black ink on the bare bodies, either inside or outside the foot ring. In some cases the characters were partially hidden from view by accidental spreading of the glaze (cf. appendix I.2 no. 182). Short phrases written in underglaze green, brown, or red were also found on the interior (cf. appendix I.2 nos 190–202) or exterior (cf. appendix I.2 nos 183–189)

of the bowls; occasionally the inscriptions were incised (cf. no. 171 and appendix I.2 no. 203).

The function of these inscriptions varies. Some might have been intended as a counting aid (cf. appendix I.2 nos 180, 181), or for signage purposes. A group of nearly twenty bowls with the character *xu*, for instance, were all accompanied each by an ink dot (fig. 26). Most of the inscriptions brushed in black ink on the bare bases of some ewers appeared to be also signatures (cf. appendix III.2).

Poetic phrases were sometimes seen, though very rarely. A bowl bore, for instance, an inscription on the outside in underglaze red that meant ‘a solitary boat’ – *guzhou* (fig. 27). It is evident



Fig. 26 Changsha bowls of standard shape and size from the Belitung wreck with the character *xu* and an ink dot (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

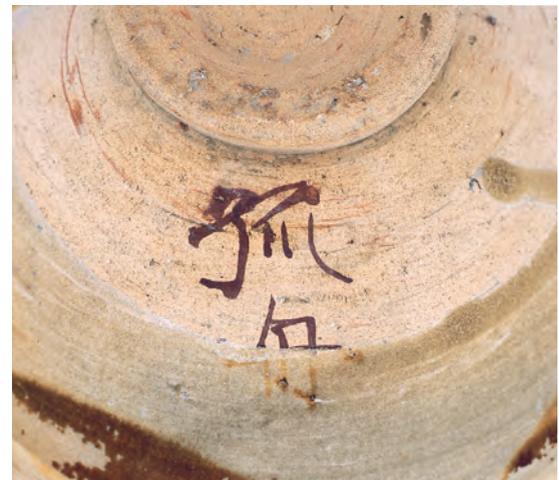


Fig. 27 Detail of a Changsha bowl of standard shape and size from the Belitung wreck with an inscription in underglaze red reading *guzhou*, ‘a solitary boat’ (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).

that many characters or phrases with ambiguous meanings were just playful. The words in another bowl, for instance, mean ‘present a petition’ (*qingyuan*) (appendix I.2 no. 190). In an effort to demonstrate better or clearer writing, one of the characters in this example was written twice. On another bowl the inscription might have had a monetary function, since the characters *lingqian* stand for the meaning ‘receiving cash’ or ‘salary’ (fig. 28).

Although some inscriptions may be meaningless, many in this group such as ‘Yuan Qing’, ‘Yuan’ or ‘Zhao Yuan’ (cf. appendix I.2 nos 146, 147) apparently stand for names. There is some evidence that these names may refer to the kiln’s owner, rather than the potters themselves. In a

group of bowls with ‘Qiu Wen’ signature, for instance, the characters were written in different ways and styles, and the bodies and foot rings of the bowls also show various features (fig. 29).

Without a doubt, as our understanding of the manufacture and technology of Changsha ceramics of the Tang dynasty is growing, the importance especially of the bowls from the Belitung wreck will come to be seen as invaluable, significant as they are for their quantity and excellent quality.



Fig. 28 Changsha bowl of standard shape and size from the Belitung wreck with an underglaze inscription containing the characters *lingqian* (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).



Fig. 29 Changsha bowls of standard shape and size from the Belitung wreck with the signature ‘Qiu Wen’ (Photograph courtesy of Seabed Explorations).