

Yingqing Spotted Wares

Underglaze iron-brown spotted wares are characterized by a patterned or random distribution of mottled blackish brown irregularly shaped iron spots as the primary and exclusive decorative device. This spotted technique was earlier seen, for example, to a limited extent among products of the Tang Changsha kilns and in Song Xicun wares. In the Song dynasty it was also used occasionally in detailing on yingqing wares, e. g. accenting eyes on figurines, for decorative studs on jarlets (example at Ceramics Catalogue Number Y-014), and also for other features.

However, in the Yuan dynasty its use was perfected and amplified, and it became one of the principal decorative devices on a limited variety of yingqing and celadon wares. The yingqing wares included jarlets (represented by Y-022 and Y-157 – 1 & 2 of 2), ewers (example at Y-001), figurines, vases, and incense burners (example at Y-153 – No. 3 of 7) manufactured for the export market. The shape of some of the yingqing spotted jarlets, as in the examples at Y-147, resembles that of the carambola or starfruit, which is widely cultivated in Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines and Indonesia. Jarlets in this series are not found in China; they were made specifically for export to the Philippines and Indonesia. In the Philippines, where they are encountered on occasion, they are known as *balimbing* (the Tagalog word for carambola or starfruit) jarlets. Nevertheless, despite this export production, Locsin (reference cited) indicates that only a very limited number of yingqing spotted wares have been recovered in the Philippines “... among 12,723 sherds, only three fragments of this type (spotted yingqing) were

encountered in Santa Ana” (the Santa Ana grave site excavations). The celadon spotted wares, which were produced in lesser quantity and variety, are represented by the jarlet (fragment) at Y-156.

In Vietnam a very limited quantity of contemporaneous and later wares were decorated in this technique. The celadon cover box with underglaze iron-brown spotted décor at V-188 is representative of these wares. With respect to Japan this decorative technique, specifically as applied to celadons, was known as *tobi seiji* (flying celadon). The asymmetrical, sparse, and spontaneous characteristics which it incorporated appealed greatly to contemporary Japanese esthetics and were highly prized.

Use of the underglaze iron-brown spotted technique was rather short lived though and subsequent to the Yuan dynasty, in the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was very rarely employed.

NOTES:

1) The Ceramics Catalogue entries referenced above (Y-014 to Y-157 and V-188) may be referred to for further information in the corresponding **Ceramics Catalogue Section** (Yuan or Viet). As an illustration, the entry for Ceramics Catalogue Number Y-147 is reproduced below.

2) The accompanying **Photos Folder** includes additional photos of the Yingqing and other spotted wares referenced in this Paper.



Y-147

Yingqing iron-brown spotted jarlets (2 - pair) with faceted sides divided into eight lobed sections. Two small loop handles are positioned just below the slightly constricted brief neck, and the upright mouthrim with medium sized aperture is rounded at the edge. The lustrous light bluish tinged glaze has a patterned distribution of mottled blackish brown irregularly shaped iron spots. The glaze ends at or just above the slightly concave unglazed base without footrim. There are slight traces of apricot tingeing above the base at the juncture of glaze and body (more prominent on jarlet No. 1). The nominally sugary textured biscuit is compact and cream colored with a very few random darker inclusions. The jarlets are unglazed in the interior, and the horizontal join where the two sections of these mold constructed vessels are luted together is clearly discernable.

H: 2 1/2 in. (6.4 cm.) – No. 1 and No. 2.

Yuan (1271 to 1368): early 14th century.

Provenance: Quang Ngai (Binh Chau) - Yuan shipwreck, Vietnam - acquired in Saigon (November 2014).

The shape of these jarlets resembles that of the carambola or starfruit, which is widely cultivated in Southeast Asia, especially in the Philippines and Indonesia. Jarlets in this series are not found in China; they were made specifically for export to the Philippines and Indonesia. In the Philippines, where they are encountered on

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Y-147 (Continued)

occasion, they are known as *balimbing* (the Tagalog word for carambola or starfruit) jarlets.

Similar *balimbing* spotted jarlets are illustrated in the following: Monique Crick, *Chinese Trade Ceramics for South-East Asia from the 1st to the 17th Century: Collection of Ambassador and Mrs. Charles Muller*, page 191, second from left - No. 93; Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, *South-East Asian and Chinese Trade Pottery - Exhibition Catalogue*, page 89, No. 63; L. and C. Locsin, *Oriental Ceramics Discovered in the Philippines*, page 95, Pl. 77 - second from left; John Guy, *Oriental Trade Ceramics in Southeast Asia*, page 42, No. 39; Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, *Jingdezhen Wares - The Yuan Evolution*, page 116, No. 72, page 117, No. 74 and No. 75 (the latter also reproduced in color on page 60); and Larry Gotuaco, Rita C. Tan and Allison Diem, *Chinese and Vietnamese Blue and White Wares Found in the Philippines*, page 74, Pl. Y 37 b - center. For another pair of jarlets from the same shipwreck see Y-152 (yingqing *balimbing* jarlets).

For the other yingqing iron-brown spotted wares in the Ceramics Catalogue refer to the ewer with cover at Y-001; rice measure with iron-brown studs at Y-014; kuan shaped jarlet at Y-022; large beaker shape deep bowl with yingqing type glaze at Y-150; ewer, censer, and jarlet shards (7) at Y-153; and the globular jarlets (2), one with loop handles and one miniature sized, at Y-157.

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Y-147 (Continued)

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Tan, Rita C., et al, 1993. *Chinese and South-East Asian White Ware Found in the Philippines*. Oxford University Press and Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines.

- Y-001 - spotted yingqing ewer with cover (in Collection of writer).
- Y-014 - yingqing rice measure with brown studs (Collection of writer).
- Y-022 - spotted yingqing kuan shaped jarlet (in Collection of writer).
- Y-147 - spotted yingqing *balimbing* Jarlets (2) (in Collection of writer).
- Y-150 - spotted large beaker shape deep bowl with yingqing type glaze (in Collection of writer).
- Y-153 - yingqing spotted ware shards (7) with the forms consisting of ewer, censer, and jarlet from the Trowulan excavations in East Java, Indonesia (in Collection of writer).
- Y-156 - spotted celadon kuan shaped jarlet fragment - Musi River, Palembang, Sumatra excavations (in Collection of writer).
- Y-157 - spotted yingqing globular jarlets (2), one with loop handles and one miniature sized (in Collection of writer).
- V-188 - spotted celadon cover box, Vietnamese (Collection of writer).

