

CA MAU SHIPWRECK – NEW DISCOVERIES (PART II of II) TRAYS

This research paper summarizes the results of examination and study of eight distinct porcelain tray fragments recovered from the Ca Mau shipwreck (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 - **Ceramics Catalogue Number C-244**). The two publications documenting the Ca Mau shipwreck recoveries, *The Ca Mau Auction Catalogue* and *Tau Co Ca Mau (The Ca Mau Shipwreck)*, only included representations of two and four, respectively, of the eight stand and tray fragments described below, the others were not included. Accordingly, it can now be stated there were significantly more tea sets and related sets included in the original cargo, in terms of variety and quantity, than previously documented and published.

Examination was completed of Ca Mau shipwreck study collection stand and tray fragments (8) from tea sets and related sets consisting of blue and white, Chinese Imari (underglaze blue, with the iron-red and gilt now eroded), polychrome enamel, and monochrome-white pierced examples. Decorative motifs include female figures in a garden setting, floral and leaf sprays, interior scenes, and pierced blossoms. The trays are in a variety of shapes and with various rim treatments. All of the fragments have a flat unglazed base with compact, fine textured and light cream colored body (russet tingeing on fragment No. 7). There is a moderate amount of marine encrustation on the interior of fragment No. 2. On the four blue and white examples (No. 1 to No. 4) there are similarly rendered leaf spray accents on the sides; the sides on the two Chinese Imari examples (No. 5 and No. 6) are plain. Although no trays comparable

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to fragment No. 7 (originally with polychrome enamel floral décor) are published and illustrated, associated cups and saucers and teapots were included in *Tau Co Ca Mau (The Ca Mau Shipwreck)* as referenced below.

Six of the fragments (Nos. 1 to 4, No. 7 and No. 8) represent examples which were not included in the Ca Mau Auction, and with four of the six (No. 2, No. 3, No. 4 and No. 7) also not included in *Tau Co Ca Mau (The Ca Mau Shipwreck)* as detailed in the chart which follows below.

Also indicated in the chart below are the following: the shape and décor of each fragment; corresponding items in the same series of the fragments as illustrated in Sotheby's (Amsterdam), *Catalogue for Made in Imperial China – 76,000 Pieces of Chinese Export Porcelain from the Ca Mau Shipwreck, circa 1725, January 29 - 31, 2007*; and in Nguyen Dinh Chien, *Tau Co Ca Mau (The Ca Mau Shipwreck)*; and the diameter (D) or length (L) in centimeters of each fragment. Also indicated is the name of the décor as referred to in the Sotheby's Auction Catalogue (fragments No. 5 and No. 6).

Qing: Yong Zheng period (1723 to 1735) - circa 1725.

Provenance: Ca Mau shipwreck, Vietnam – all acquired in Saigon.

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CA MAU SHIPWRECK STUDY COLLECTION STANDS & TRAYS C-244 (1 OF 8) TO C-244 (8 OF 8) - Fig. 1 and Fig. 2				
NUMBER	SHAPE & DÉCOR	REFERENCE Sotheby's Auction Catalogue	REFERENCE <i>Tau Co Ca Mau</i>	D/L CM
C-244 (1)	Quatrefoil shape, flattened rim with cross-hatch diaper; floral sprays, with leafy stems.	None	Page 107, N. 24 and page 227, N. 360, "Dish"	D: 15.7
C-244 (2)	Lobed quatrefoil shape, flattened rim with cross-hatch diaper; aristocratic lady at desk in garden setting.	None	None	D: 15.9
C-244 (3)	Lobed shape, flattened rim with cross-hatch diaper; aristocratic lady standing in garden setting; Constellation Orion above.	None	None	L: 14.9
C-244 (4)	"T" shape, narrow flattened plain rim; three floral sprays.	None	Page 107, N. 25, "Dish"	L: 14.2
C-244 (5)	Hexagonal shape, upright rim with floral panel band below, slanted fluted sides; interior pavilion setting (Chinese Imari).	Page 238, lot 1071; pages 240 to 242, lots 1073 to 1094, "Chinese Imari Pavilion," stand	None	L: 8.9
C-244 (6)	Elongated oval shape, upright rim with floral panel band below, slanted fluted sides; interior pavilion setting (Chinese Imari).	Page 238, lot 1071 and pages 240 to 241, lots 1073 to 1086, "Chinese Imari Pavilion," spoon tray	Page 183, N. 243, "Dish"	L: 8.5
C-244 (7)	Lobed quatrefoil shape, flattened rim; traces of original polychrome enamel décor remain visible in reflected light including floral sprays, blossoms and leaves.	None	None - Page 196, N. 277, cup and saucer; page 198, N. 282, teapot (for comparison)	D: 15.9
C-244 (8)	Indeterminate shape, band of pierced circles under upright rim; pierced blossoms on pierced circle ground.	None - Page 187, lot 791, associated "pierced strainer" for comparison (only one in Auction)	None	L: 10.6

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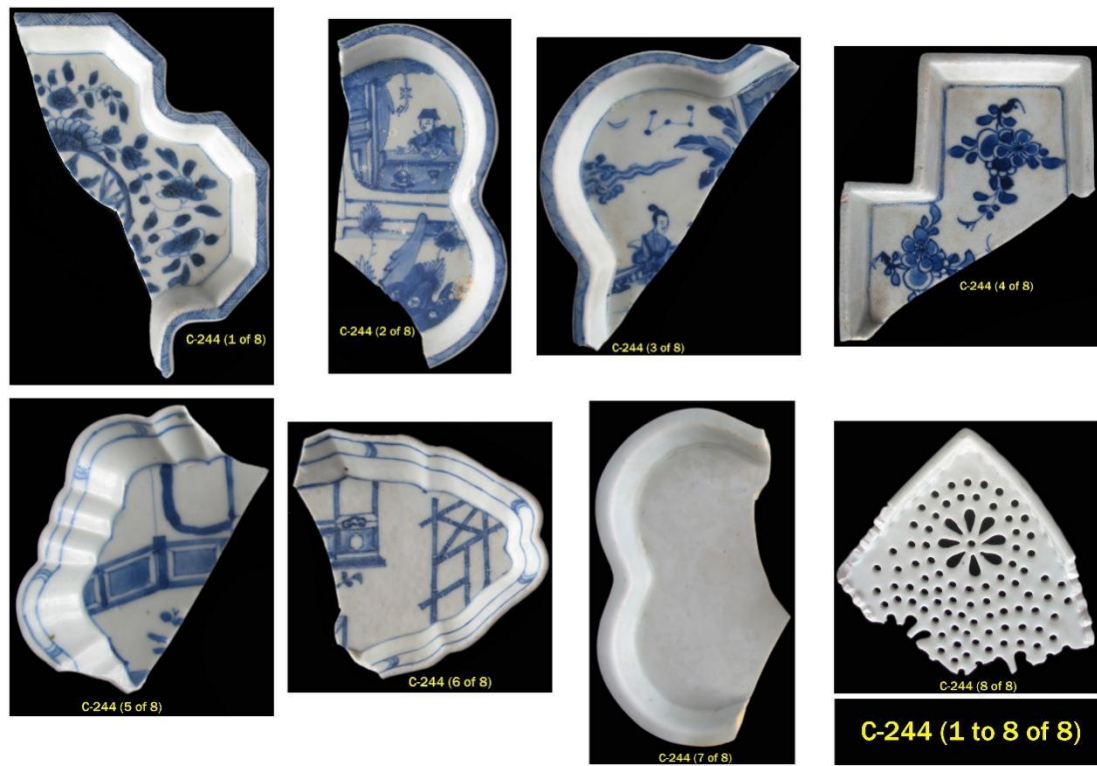


Fig. 1 - Ca Mau Shipwreck porcelain trays – front view only.

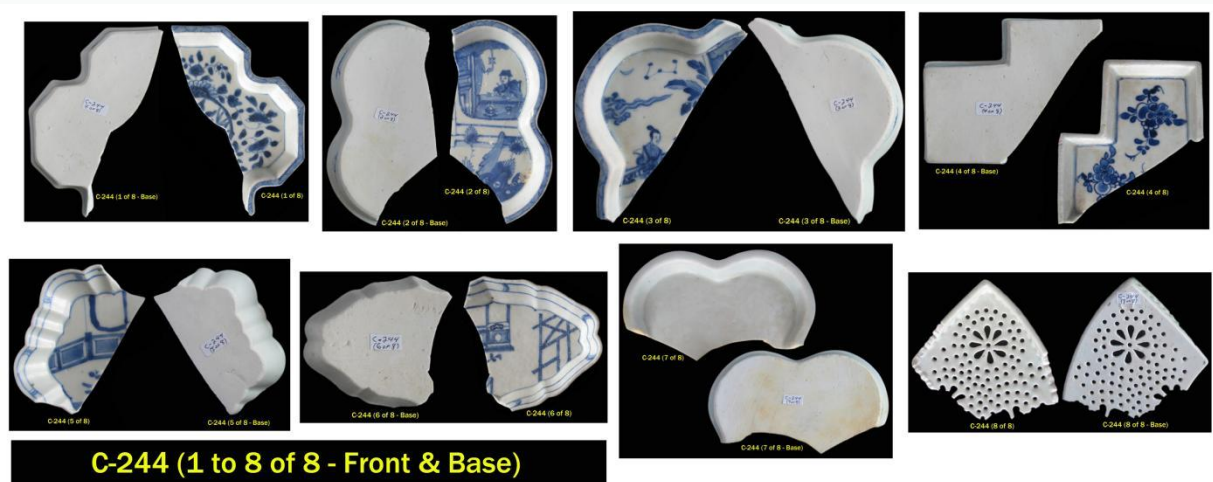


Fig. 2 - Ca Mau Shipwreck porcelain trays – front & base view.

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Constellation Orion

The representation of a stellar body, as in the example of the Constellation Orion, which is clearly depicted on tray fragment No. 3 (Fig. 3), is quite unusual to encounter on Chinese ceramics. Based on preliminary research and review, the extremely few recorded examples identified with constellations appear to be confined almost exclusively to the first half of the 18th century. Further research will likely add to these preliminary findings. Also of note, for example, is that out of the several hundred Chinese ceramics in the Collection of this writer (dating from the Tang dynasty to the Qing dynasty), this is the only one so adorned.

Orion was known as Shen (参宿) - a great hunter or warrior - by ancient Chinese astronomers. According to traditional Chinese astronomy, the sky was divided into four quadrants, with each quadrant representing a season of the year. The constellation Orion extends across two of the quadrants, symbolized by the White Tiger of the West - Xī Fāng Bái Hǔ (西方白虎) and the Vermilion Bird of the South - Nán Fāng Zhū Què (南方朱雀). In modern Chinese the name of the Orion constellation is Liè Hù Zuò (猎户座), which means the hunter constellation.

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Fig. 3 - Ca Mau Shipwreck porcelain tray – Constellation Orion.

Ca Mau Shipwreck

The Ca Mau Shipwreck was discovered by local fishermen in the summer of 1998 near Ca Mau Island about 90 nautical miles south of Cape Ca Mau, southern Vietnam at a depth of 36 meters. The official excavation of the wrecksite was performed from August 8, 1998 to October 16, 1999 by the government owned Vietnam Salvage Corporation (Visal), the National Museum of Vietnamese History, and the Museum of Ca Mau. A total of over 130,000 ceramics along with numerous broken items and shards dated to the Yong Zheng reign (1723 to 1735) of the Qing Dynasty were recovered from the wrecksite. This total includes official recoveries as well as material recovered earlier by fishermen. Sotheby's conducted the sale of 76,000 Chinese ceramics from the Ca Mau shipwreck in January 2007.

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Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter, Volume IX Number 2, October 2015 - January 2016, “Unique Bowl – Ca Mau Shipwreck,” page 3. (See **Research Papers Prepared Section**)

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter, Volume X Number 2, Oct 2016 – Jan 2017, “Ca Mau Shipwreck – New Discoveries (Part I),” page 3. (See **Research Papers Prepared Section**)

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www.ancient-wisdom.com/orion.h

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