

diminishing supplies of calambac and required European traders to be taxed, either for the first time or at an increased amount compared to the moderate taxes they had previously paid.⁶¹

One feature of Hoi An's link to earlier trade was revealed following the recent discovery of a shipwreck off Cham Island—a wreck heavily laden with a ceramic cargo that was largely intact. Excavations carried out between 1997 and 1999 recovered 300,000 artifacts.⁶² The majority were ceramics made at kilns in the Red River delta province of Hai Duong (cat. no. 86). This find was the first recovery of a full cargo of Hai Duong ceramics on the first stage of its journey from the site of manufacture. It revealed the diversity of forms and decoration, and the range of qualities that comprised a single shipment. Small quantities of Chinese, Thai, and Cham ceramics were also recovered. The Chinese ceramics date from the Interregnum period (1436–64) and this, together with other comparative data, indicates a date for the site sometime from the mid-fifteenth century to several decades beyond.⁶³ Analysis of plant residue has revealed that the ship's cargo had included late-summer fruits, longan, thorny chestnuts, and *gac* (a vine fruit used for food coloring), all common in the northern provinces of Hai Duong, Hung Yen, and Bac Giang. This supports the deduction that the ship had recently come from this region, and the fact that the fruits were late-summer varieties indicates a departure toward the end of the trading season. On the basis of present evidence, the hypothesis is that this was a foreign trading ship laden with a full cargo of ceramics on its homeward journey from Dai Viet. Sailing at the end of the trading season, it may have sought provisions and/or shelter in or near Hoi An, but in doing so, foundered off Cham Island.

Viet Nam's entry into the ceramic export market was governed by internal and external factors, but the most compelling catalyst was always consequent on the state of the Chinese export market. An early opportunity came in the wake of restrictions on foreign trade out of China imposed in 1371 by the first Ming emperor, Hongwu (reigned 1368–1398). Although Thang Long was raided by Champa during the 1370s and occupied for six months in 1383, the situation in Hai Duong Province, where most of Viet Nam's export ceramics were made, was secure, and, in fact, the region was a place of retreat from the turmoil in Thang Long.⁶⁴ Thus, this export opportunity may well have come at a critical time in the life of the Tran dynasty. It also coincided with the time that the kingdom of Majapahit (1293–1527) in Java was at the peak of its power, when local and foreign traders thronged to Bubad, its cosmopolitan market city.⁶⁵ The Majapahit site has yielded broken fragments of Vietnamese blue-and-white and iron-brown painted tiles in association with large quantities of terra-cotta material. This pattern of finds suggests that these Vietnamese ceramics had been incorporated into the architectural features of the palace complex. Many other recovered Vietnamese ceramics, including inlaid wares, make it clear that Majapahit was an early patron of Viet Nam's exports.

Ceramics with a brown inlay applied to incised and carved design (inlaid wares) first appeared in the Ly dynasty and developed fully in the subsequent Tran dynasty. Although some inlaid wares have been recovered from Majapahit, the largest quantities are recovered inside Viet Nam from controlled excavations, and, also significant, in chance finds (cat. nos. 76–78). The most recent finds come from the important 2003 excavations at the Ba Dinh site in Ha Noi.⁶⁶ This huge site has opened up an area of ancient Thang Long, revealing successive layers of history dating from the seventh to nineteenth centuries.