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DUTCH PLATE, 1723–35

China, Ca Mau shipwreck

Porcelain, D: 29.4 cm

National Museum of Vietnamese History,
Ha Noi, LSB30792

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TANKARD, 1723–35

China, Ca Mau shipwreck, Qing, 1723–35

Porcelain, H: 20.3 cm

National Museum of Vietnamese History,
Ha Noi, LSB30935

The Ca Mau shipwreck, which sank some time during the second or third decade of the eighteenth century, was excavated off the coast of Ca Mau Province in 1998–99, following its discovery by fishermen. The decorative motifs of the objects, as well as shapes such as the tankard included here, indicate that the cargo was bound for Europe, and possibly the Netherlands. The inclusion of *mingchi* indicates a stop was planned, probably at Batavia or Johore, to transfer the goods to a VOC (the Dutch East India Company) ship, which would have then transported the cargo to Europe, and to cities where there were Chinese communities for whom this portion of the cargo was intended. VOC records indi-

cate that pieces were made to order, as a cargo such as this corroborates.

Excavators were able to retrieve approximately 130,000 Chinese blue-and-white and overglaze ceramics. Some include “European” landscapes like the one included here.² The artist applied the underglaze blue in raised dots to indicate crops growing in the fields and the pine cones in the very Chinese-looking tree. Elements of Chinese design are also visible in the cloud pattern and the water buffalo—a beast unknown in the Netherlands—as well as in the dark blue wave pattern that encircles the outer edge of the scalloped plate. To the right, a town rises beside the sails of ships, jutting up from the horizon.

