

CELADON PLATE, 15TH CENTURY

Thailand, Hon Dam shipwreck,
Sawankhalok
Stoneware, H: 9.6 cm × D: 29.1 cm.
National Museum of Vietnamese History,
Ha Noi, LSb 23048

In 1991, approximately ten thousand objects, predominantly Thai, were collected off the coast of Kien Giang Province from the Hon Dam shipwreck. The objects are dated to the fifteenth century. The fourteenth through sixteenth centuries marked the period of greatest export from the kilns of Si Satchanalai and Sukhothai in Thailand. Green glazed wares had been among the earliest Chinese ceramics to make their way to Southeast Asia, where they were coveted because of the belief that they had magical properties — such as the ability to reveal poisonous food. In the fifteenth century, the Sawankhalok kilns produced and exported large quantities of celadon.

During the period of heaviest production (in the fifteenth and sixteenth

centuries) the kilns that lined the Menam Yom did not specialize in particular glazes, as they had during the fourteenth century, so it is not possible to identify the exact kiln site where this deep plate was produced. Although they never achieved the thick, unctuous glaze of the Chinese *longquan* ceramics, they created appealing works through their reliance on incised decoration and the elaboration of the rim of chargers and deep platters such as this one. Incised and wavy lines comprise the decoration in the cavetto of this plate, while long, narrow “lotus petals” rise from the exterior base over the ridged body to the heavy, scalloped lip. On the base, evidence of a circular support marks the typical reddish buff clay.

