

## **A Tang-Dynasty Shipwreck and Marine Archaeology**

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Belitung Island, Indonesia. Site of the Tang-dynasty shipwreck that was salvaged in 1998 and 1999 by Tilmann Walterfang, a German treasure hunter, and his company, Seabed Explorations Inc.

Tang dynasty (618–907)

Tang emperor Jingzong (r. 824–827)

Tang emperor Wenzong (r. 827–840)

An Lushan Rebellion (755–763)

Chang'an, Tang Western capital (modern-day Xi'an)

Yangzhou, major Tang trading port and manufacturing center, at the lower Yangzi River

Guangzhou (Canton), major Tang trading port in southern China

Guangzhou prefects known for their corruption:

- Wang E 王鏐 (d. 816), 795–801
- Zheng Quan 鄭權 (d. 824), 823
- Hu Zheng 胡證 (d. 828), 826–828
- Wang Maoyuan 王茂元 833–835

Upright Guangzhou prefects:

- Xu Shen 徐申 802–806
- Lu Jun 盧鈞 836–843

Tang ceramic wares recovered from the shipwreck:

- Changsha ware (from Changsha, Hunan province), 57,500
- Yue ware (from Zhejiang province), 220+
- Gongxian ware (from Gongxian, Henan province), 450+
- Xing ware (from the Xing kilns in Hebei province), 120+
- Guangdong ware (from Guangdong province), 1600

Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258); capital in Samarra (Iraq) from 836–892

Srivijaya, dominant kingdom of medieval Indonesia (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.), capital at Palembang on Sumatra

Sailendra, ruling dynasty in Java in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries

Phanom Surin shipwreck. Remains of a late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup>-century Arab dhow discovered in Thailand in 2013. Much of the hull survives but little cargo.

Large Tang gold and silver finds:

- Pinglu hoard, Shanxi. Mid 8<sup>th</sup> c.
- Hejiacun hoard, Xi'an, Shaanxi. Mid 8<sup>th</sup> c.
- Famensi, Shaanxi. Pagoda deposit. 874.

### **Suggested Readings and Video**

Chong, Alan, and Stephen A. Murphy eds. *The Tang Shipwreck: Art and Exchange in the 9th Century*. Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2017.

Krahl, Regina, John Guy, J. Keith Wilson, and Julian Raby eds. *Shipwrecked: Tang Treasures and Monsoon Winds*. Washington, DC: Sackler Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 2010. Online at <https://www.asia.si.edu/Shipwrecked/catalogue.asp>

*Secrets of the Tang Treasure Ship*. Singapore: Infocus Asia, 2009. A documentary first broadcast on National Geographic Asia channel. Online, for example, at [www.dailymotion.com/video/x1il3ue](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1il3ue)

*Jewel of Muscat*. Website documenting the reconstruction of a dhow based on the Belitung wreck. The ship sailed from Oman to Singapore in 2010. <http://jewelofmuscat.tv>

Li Zhiyan. "Ceramics of the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties," in Li, Zhiyan, Virginia Bower, and Li He, eds. *Chinese Ceramics from the Paleolithic Period through the Qing Dynasty*, pp. 196-263. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010.

Flecker, Michael. "The Ethics, Politics and Realities of Maritime Archaeology in Southeast Asia". *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 1(2002): 12–24. <http://www.maritime-explorations.com/Ethics%20IJNA.pdf>

Lu, Caixia. "The Belitung Shipwreck Controversy," in *IIAS Newsletter* 58 (Autumn/Winter 2011), pp. 41–42. [https://ias.asia/sites/default/files/IIAS\\_NL58\\_404142.pdf](https://ias.asia/sites/default/files/IIAS_NL58_404142.pdf)