Determination of Oriental Tradeware Ceramics: A proposed system for identifying and documenting pottery in Philippine archaeological sites

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Abstract

There is a need to improve on the practice of analysing oriental tradeware ceramics found in Philippine archaeological sites. The current practices mostly depend on authority and the process of identification is not presented. Oriental tradeware ceramics, in this study, are defined as the porcelain and stoneware that originated from Asia specifically from the current nation states of China, Thailand, Vietnam and Burma. The first part of the paper is a review of oriental tradeware studies done in the Philippines as well as their documentation. Then, this research proposes a determination system for excavated oriental tradeware ceramics composed of two parts: identification and documentation. Reporting the cross referencing of available ceramic data and stating the level of confidence of the identification are some of the new steps added in this oriental tradeware ceramics determination system. Then, the database shall be encoded into a digital form for documentation.

Introduction

The study of ceramics is almost as old as the study of archaeology. Prior to the late 19th century, ceramics and other artefacts were collected by early antiquarians as curios and exotic objects (Daniel 1981; Fagan and

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DeCorse 2005; Renfrew and Bahn 2000; Thomas and Kelly 2006). This ceramic collection culture has been present in the Philippines since the early 20th century (Beyer 1947; Evangelista 1960; Locsin and Locsin 1967; Mijares 1998). With the increasing interest in archaeological techniques and the development of methodological or scientific approaches to archaeology, studies on artefact analysis such as ceramics have progressed and advanced beyond antiquarianism (Gibson and Wood 1990; Rice 1987; Sinopoli 1991).

One of the types of ceramics that particularly interest archaeologists in Southeast Asia is what is known as "oriental tradeware ceramics". Oriental tradeware ceramics have long been valued objects in the interactions of cultures between China and Southeast Asia and also between China and polities farther west (Wang Gungwu 1998). In these areas, ceramics were in great demand. As an artefact of foreign origin to Nanhai polities (Andaya and Andaya 1982) such as Philippines and Indonesian cultures, Legeza (1978) noticed that tradeware ceramics of high-fired, resonant and glazed stonewares and porcelains originally embodied an alien and intrusive facet in the multi-layered indigenous cultures. But these polities were remarkably receptive and acquiescent to this intrusion and adopted the utilisation of these new materials.

Some of the trading partners of the makers of oriental tradeware ceramics were located in the Philippines. Because of this, the Philippine archipelago is well known for archeological sites with cornucopia of oriental tradeware ceramics both on land and shipwrecks (Beyer 1947; Locsin and Locsin 1967; Orillaneda 2008). Due to the dearth of written documents or accounts, the emergence of oriental tradeware ceramics together with indigenous cultural material found in early Filipino burial sites and habitation sites, as well as shipwrecks, serve as guideposts in the reconstruction of the movement, intensification, and development of early Philippine polities.

The analysis of oriental tradeware ceramics in the Philippines is not standardised. Most of the time, the identification is done and accepted without question because of the stature and name of the analyst or the person who identified the ceramics. This paper proposes a system of determination which allows non-specialist**s** to learn how to analyse oriental tradeware ceramics and at the same time shows the basis of the identification of these wares. It will also review how oriental tradeware ceramics are studied and analysed in the Philippines before this proposal was developed.

Oriental Tradeware Ceramics Studies in the Philippines

Collection of oriental tradeware ceramics started even before the birth of Philippine archaeology since the pioneer antiquarians in the Philippines were foreigners who collected artefacts during their explorations and travels around the country (Beyer 1947; Evangelista 1971; Mijares 1998). As Renfrew and Bahn (2000) have explained, most of the earliest archaeologists came from industrialised Western societies whose economic and political dominance were believed to convey an automatic right to investigate wherever they wished. In the Philippines, investigations were initially artefact-collecting expeditions. As outlined in series of reviews, cultural materials were mostly retrieved from surface collections and salvage archaeology work in this early period in Philippine archaeology (Evangelista 1971; Mijares 1998; Ronquillo 1985; Santiago 2001).

In 1881, Alfred Marche (1887) traveled and explored various parts of Luzon, Catanduanes and Marinduque. Some of the ceramics he found were earthenware and stoneware burial jars from Boac, burial jars and urns from Islet Tres Reyes, a yellowish glazed stoneware burial jar from an undisclosed place in Marinduque, small jars and dishes from the Bathala Cave, porcelain and stoneware ceramics and burial urns from Pamintaan Cave, and dragon jars from Gasan (Beyer 1947). Marche brought back to France the artefacts he recovered from all these places he visited. They are now housed at the *Musée de l'Homme* in Paris, France.

Carl E. Guthe (1927) was a trained archaeologist, based at the University of Michigan, who carried out explorations in the Visayan Islands. The project started in 1921 when Dean C. Worcester returned to the United States with his private collections, mainly of porcelain pieces. The range of artefacts he collected included trade ceramics (dating from the 10th to the early 20th centuries), Philippine earthenware, various iron implements, shell, bracelets, glass, semi-precious stone beads and gold ornaments. Guthe's recoveries were from graves and burial sites; some were surface finds and others were purchases. These artefacts as well as his meticulously kept journals now form part of the Asian Collection at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Perhaps, the most prominent name among these pioneers in Philippine archaeology is that of Henry Otley Beyer. Beyer (1947) conducted archaeological surveys, investigations and collecting tours in

Luzon, Palawan, Mindanao and the Visayan Islands and these were reported in his seminal work "Outline Review of Philippine Archaeology by Islands and Provinces". Beyer's collection was divided in several portions; some are in the National Museum of the Philippines and at the Anthropology Museum of the University of the Philippines. A large amount of the collection including his books, pictures, ethnographic materials and others were bought by the National Library of Australia in 1972. A portion of the collection became part of the Roberto Villanueva collections which are presently exhibited at the Ayala Museum (Diem 2002).

Early collectors of tradeware ceramics in the Philippines were Americans, one of whom was Evett D. Hester (Evangelista 1971). Between 1930 and 1940, Hester acquired a large collection of trade ceramics recovered mostly from the Visayas, Palawan, and Sulu. The collection comprised mostly Song, Yuan, early Ming, and Thai ceramics. Roughly half of the Hester collection was donated to the Chicago (now Field) Museum of Natural History and the remainder was in part donated and in part sold to the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology. A few pieces of exceptional artistic merit were placed on loan at the Speed Museum of Art at Louisville, Kentucky.

A considerable amount of oriental tradeware ceramics came from the burial sites in the Calatagan Peninsula, Batangas Province. These excavations were conducted by in 1930 by Janse (1941, 1944-1945, 1947) and Robert B. Fox (1959) in 1958 and 1960 to 1961. The material obtained by Fox is partly in the collections of the Zobel de Ayala Family, partly with the Lopez Memorial Museum and Library (Barretto-Tesoro 2007) and partly in the National Museum of the Philippines. A percentage of the ceramics of the Janse expedition were in the Peabody Museum in Harvard University (Aga-Oglu 1961).

Up to the 1950s, only two persons have worked systematically with the oriental tradeware ceramics in the Philippines. These were Dr. Beyer and Kamer Aga-Oglu (Fox 1959). In 1941, Kamer Aga-Oglu became the curator of the division of Orient of the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology. She was a specialist in Far Eastern art history. She described for the first time a whole new range of East Asian ceramics that until then were unknown even among specialists. She documented the pre-European movement of these ceramics throughout the Pacific, West Asia and East Africa. She had a lot of publications regarding the

collection at the University of Michigan (Aga-Oglu 1946, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1955, 1961). In 1974, she was succeeded as curator by Dr. Karl Hutterer.

The period from the 1960s to 1970s was the heyday of ceramic collecting in the Philippines, as numerous sites were illicitly dug up. Imelda Marcos was among Manila's most prominent collector of this period (Diem 2002). Based on the publication of Tantoco and Tantoco (1976), we know that Marcos' collection consisted largely of beautiful examples of Filipino made earthenware and considerable tradeware ceramics from China, Thailand and Vietnam. The collection also included some superb examples of other oriental pottery antedating the wares traded into the Philippines such as Tang tomb figurines, Han period pottery and Ban Chiang painted pottery. Some of these ceramics were not really found in the Philippines and acquired by Mrs. Marcos abroad.

From 1961 to 1962, Leandro and Cecilia Locsin (1967) carried out controlled excavations at Santa Ana in Manila but not under the supervision of a trained archaeologist. The excavations and the artefacts specifically the trade ceramics were published in their book entitled "Oriental Ceramics Discovered in the Philippines". In this book, they published what they recovered from Santa Ana as well as the other ceramics in their collections from other sites such those that were found in Puerto Galera, Mindoro, Verde Island, Batangas as well as some heirloom pieces that they purchased.

In 1968, Rosa Tenazas published a report on the excavations they conducted in Pila, Laguna from 1967 to 1968. The report discussed the excavation activities as well as the burials and related grave goods such as tradeware ceramics. All this activity in the field of oriental tradeware ceramics prompted Dr. John Pope to organise what became known as the Manila Trade Pottery Seminar which was held in March 1968 (Addis 1969). It was the first time that experts in so many connected studies had met together at a conference. They came from Taiwan, Japan, Indonesia, United States, Sweden, Germany and Philippines. In 1982, a book on the Arturo de Santos collections was published (Peralta 1982). The catalogue contained impressive Philippine earthenware pottery, Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai ceramics.

In the Philippines, ceramic exhibitions sometimes with a corresponding book or catalogue of that exhibition have focused on cataloguing particular products for example celadon or blue and white ceramics. Sometimes they highlight wares from specific kiln complexes

such as Zhangzhou wares and also on describing the forms, decorative features, stylistic influences and the technological processes by which the pieces were produced (Diem 2002). Examples of such ceramic books and catalogues are the following: "Zhangzhou Ware Found in the Philippines: Swatow Export Ceramics from Fujian 16th – 17th century" (Tan 2007), "Chinese and Vietnamese Blue and White Wares Found in the Philippines" (Gotuaco *et al.* 1997); "Guandong Ceramics from Butuan and Other Philippine Sites" (Brown 1989); "Chinese and Southeast Asian Greenware Found in the Philippines" (OCSP 1991); 'Chinese and Southeast Asian Whiteware Found in the Philippines" (OCSP 1993); and "Chinese and Annamese Ceramics Found in the Philippines and Indonesia" (Joseph 1973).

The problem with these exhibitions, books and catalogues is that the social context in which these ceramics were used by the ancient Filipinos is mostly hard to determine. This is because most of the specimens were from private collectors who normally buy from antique shops and illicit diggers or pot hunters. Also, we cannot be sure if some of these ceramics really came from the Philippines. According to Kenson Kwok (1993), over the past decades some Manila antique dealers have acquired part of their stocks from Hong Kong and the collectors themselves sometimes purchase them when they travel abroad. Moreover, they normally feature complete ceramics and sometimes ignore the broken pieces and small sherds which archaeologists normally encounter in Philippine sites.

In addition, Diem (2002) has argued that certain considerations tend to influence the selection of exhibits and specimen such as cost of publishing the illustrated catalogues, the perceived interests of the potential viewing public and catalogue purchasers, and the available space in exhibition galleries. Therefore, the more visually appealing and unusual ceramics tend to be selected rather than the modest or commonly found pieces.

Sometimes, ceramics and other artefacts from a particular site (normally in the case of shipwrecks) are also exhibited (and sometimes with a corresponding book or catalogue). It is good to know that most if not all of these trade ceramics were obtained from formal archaeological excavations. And when these pieces are published, the excavation method, analysis and other archaeological processes and artefacts are discussed. But Diem (2002) thinks that this approach of exhibiting ceramics from a particular site (i.e. from shipwrecks) tends to give a

skewed picture of the range of artefacts found in the site. This means that, once again, sometimes only the beautiful, unique and appealing are featured in the exhibition as well as in the book or catalogue. Examples of such books and catalogues are the following: "Discovery and Archaeological Excavation of a 16th Century Trading Vessel in the Philippines" (Goddio 1988); "The Pearl Road: Tales of Treasure Ships in the Philippines" (Loviny 1996); "Treasures of San Diego" (Desroche *et al.* 1997); "Weisses Gold" (Goddio 1997); and "Lost at Sea: The Strange Route of the Lena Shoal Junk" (Goddio *et al*. 2002).

With the development of archaeology in the Philippines, more sites associated with oriental tradeware ceramics have been found in the country. Thus, the understanding of oriental tradeware ceramics has broadened specially in terms of describing, inferring and explaining the ancient lifeways and culture of the Filipinos. Studies included the use of oriental trade ceramics in inferring political economy (Junker 2000), social status and stratification (Junker 2000), trade and social complexity (Nishimura 1992), trading network and patterns (Orillaneda 2008; Tatel 2002) and many more.

In documenting the oriental tradeware ceramics found in the Philippines, there are already some systems. For example, to compile the archaeological collection of H. Otley Beyer, mainly oriental tradeware ceramics, Natividad Noriega and Israel Cabanilla (n.d.) developed a recording system in which the information regarding particular ceramics was noted. Some of the information included: the locality where the ceramics were collected and the name of the collector, the price of the ceramic if it was purchased and many more. Also, it is applicable generally for complete pieces as it included metric dimensions of the ceramic and sometimes a sketch of the ceramic. This system is a good example of identification of ceramics by an expert or specialist because the provenance and dating of the ceramics were all made by H. Otley Beyer without explanation for the basis of his identification.

Another system of identification and documentation of oriental tradeware ceramics was that developed by the National Museum. The system included a form which seems like an extended version of the Beyer's collection form. Again, the system relies on expert and specialist knowledge and is more applicable for whole pieces of ceramics.

In his masters thesis "Patterns of Eternal Exchange in Porta Vaga: Morphometric analysis of Excavated Tradeware Ceramics at Porta Vaga

Site, Cavite City", Carlos Tatel Jr. (2002) focused on elucidating patterns of external exchange in Cavite Puerto by performing morphometric analysis of tradeware excavated at Porta Vaga in Cavite City. He is part of the team that excavated the site. He also identified the oriental tradeware ceramics found in the site with the aid of Professor Etsuko Miyata-Rodriguez. He cross referenced some of his ceramics but not all. Only few of the artefacts were photographed. He developed a ceramics database of the site using the data management module of the Statistica software. The ceramic attributes as represented by numeric codes are encoded in tabular form. The information is in numeric codes which makes it a bit hard to decipher them because legends are not clearly provided.

Another former student of the University of the Philippines-Archaeological Studies Program who developed a system of identification and documentation of tradeware ceramics was Bobby Orillaneda (2008). In his masters thesis "The Santa Cruz, Zambales Shipwreck Ceramics: Understanding Southeast Asian Ceramics Trade during the Late 15th Century CE", he analysed the ceramic cargo of the Santa Cruz Shipwreck to address questions on long distance ceramic trade during the end of the 15th century. Results of his analyses prove that the Chinese resumed exporting ceramics during the Hongzhi years (1488 – 1505 C.E.) despite the ongoing trade ban and the final destination was the Philippines. He is part of the team that excavated the site. But it was Monique Crick, a ceramic specialist, who identified and classified the oriental tradeware ceramics. It was Orillaneda who cross referenced and matched some of the ceramics from the shipwreck to those found in Calatagan, Batangas. A lot of photographs were taken but he only showed the complete pieces. He developed a ceramics database of the site using Filemaker Pro software. The data are in words that is why it is easy to read the information. But the database is not included in the thesis. He could have provided a CD copy of the database so that other people can check out the ceramic assemblages of Santa Cruz shipwreck.

Determination of Oriental Tradeware Ceramics: The Proposed System

For a system to be useful for non-specialist archaeologists, its components must be clearly explained, which in its sum will be the basis for the level of confidence of any identification. The following is the required information for the system:

Artefact number/s is/are the specimen number/s of the ceramics

that are written on the artefact/s and are recorded in the Archaeological Specimen Inventory Record known as Archaeology Form No. 5 of the National Museum. This is very important because if someone wants to validate your analysis, they can easily do so by simply locating the ceramic piece through its artefact number/s.

Condition of the ceramic refers to whether the artefact is a complete piece or just a sherd or sherds.

Ceramic type is subdivided into two: porcelain and stoneware. Porcelain is divided into blue and white and monochromes such as whiteware while stoneware is divided into celadon, brown ware, black ware, lead glaze ware and other coloured glazed stoneware. This typology was adopted from Orillaneda (2008).

The ***artefact form*** refers to the shape of the ceramics. For this research, the classification was based on Wang Qingzheng's (2002) categorisation and Orillaneda's typology (2008). The artefact form was classified into dish, tray, bowl, cup, incense burner and lamp, jar or jarlet, urn, vase, bottle, ewer, teapot and box.

Part of the ceramic is only applicable if the ceramic is broken into pieces. This is where the part of the vessel the sherd/s belong/s to is identified. It can be the rim, body, base, handle, spout, cover, or leg.

In the ***description***, the unique characteristics of the ceramic or of the sherd/s such as the motif, marks, inscriptions, type of glaze, colour of the glaze, lines, and other designs that can be found in the ceramic or sherd/s are noted. If the ceramic is complete, some of its measurements like diameter, height, and others are noted.

Archaeological Context refers to the context in the archaeological site where the oriental ceramic was unearthed. It can be burial, midden, or just found in the general area or habitation area of the site. Also, it must be noted where in the site the artefact was found.

Provenance refers to the origin or source of the tradeware ceramic, meaning where it was manufactured. It can be China, Thailand, Vietnam or Burma. Sometimes, even the kiln sites or province where the ceramic was manufactured will also be determined and identified.

Dating refers to the associated time or date when the ceramic was manufactured. It will be expressed in *–century CE (current era) form* such as 13th to 14th century CE.

Reference/s refers to books, catalogues, and other bibliographic sources where information on these tradeware ceramics were published. This is where the name of the author, year of publication, and page number (or plate number) of the book where the oriental tradeware ceramics in question were also featured were noted. Moreover, if a ceramicist or ceramic researcher was the source of the dating and provenance of the ceramic, his or her name is included as well as the year when he or she identified the ceramic, sherd or sherds in question.

Level of confidence of the trade ceramics identification is where the researcher notes how much cross referencing was done on a particular sample. It ranges from very low to very high. The confidence level can then guide any reader as to how far an interpretation can be made based on the ceramics analysed.

In ***Remarks,*** the explanation for the level of confidence of identification is given. Sometimes additional information regarding the ceramic is discussed such as most recent works available for dating Chinese and Southeast Asian ceramics. Other similar ceramics but in different contexts and location are also enumerated here with the corresponding artefact number to show that a particular piece can be found elsewhere in the site.

Level of Confidence of the Trade Ceramics Identification

An important part of the system of identification is stating the level of confidence in the researcher's identification of a piece of pottery. It indicates how sure is the author in the correctness of his identification for each ceramic or sherd/s. While common practice in ceramic determination or identification relies on the skill and reputation of the specialist, this research puts forward a system that can be applied by both specialist and non-specialist. For this system, premium is placed with cross- referencing of bibliographic sources such as kiln sites reports, catalogue of exhibitions and other books pertaining to the ceramic type. Also, ceramic specialists were consulted specially when analysing some "problematic" ceramic types. The level of confidence is operationalised as follows:

Very High – if the kiln site was identified and there are four or more publications regarding that ceramic. It will be specified by stating the specific kiln (sometimes just the country) and ceramic type and form and then VH in enclosed in brackets e.g. Longquan celadon dish with twin fish design [VH] or Chinese celadon dish with twin fish design [VH]

because the researcher found at least four sources as recorded in the database.

High - if there are up to three publications regarding a specific ceramic type but the specific kiln site is not yet identified. It will be specified by stating the possible country of origin and ceramic type and form and then H enclosed in brackets e.g. Chinese celadon dish with twin fish design [H].

Moderate – if the ceramic material and style was identified by a ceramic specialist but his/her analysis is not yet widely accepted in the field and there is still no publication about that particular ceramic. In short, if the researcher relied on a ceramic specialist. It will be specified by stating the possible kiln site (or country) and ceramic type and form and then the name of the ceramic specialist and the year and the words "pers. com.", which means "personal communication" in brackets e.g. Guandong celadon dish [Diem, pers. com., 2002].

Low – if only the ceramic material and style was identified e.g. celadon dish

Very Low – if only the ceramic type or material was identified e.g. celadon

This author believes that an acceptable identification should have moderate to very high level of confidence. This is because it means that there is a basis for the identification such as bibliographic source and consultation with a ceramic specialist and not just simply relying on the personal knowledge of the researcher.

Documentation of the Oriental Tradeware Ceramics Identification

After the identification, images must be captured of all the ceramic, sherd, or sherds that were identified with their respective artefact number/s and scale of measurement. Then, they must be placed in a clear plastic bag with a sheet of paper containing all the information stated above.

The database of the oriental tradeware ceramics analysis shall be encoded using Microsoft Excel and Word 2003. The pictures of the ceramic, sherd or sherds should be hyperlinked for each entry and can be viewed by clicking the accession number/s. Afterwards, the database should be stored in a CD so that people can access the database to aid them in their determination of oriental tradeware ceramics from other sites.

Discussion, Summary and Prospects

Central to the process of doing archaeology is the necessity of understanding the chronological sequencing of archaeological entities and past events. For this reason, dating in the past has been one of the most crucial methodological problems facing archaeologists (Michaels 1989; Renfrew and Bahn 2000; Sinopoli 1991; Thomas and Kelly 2006). Oriental tradeware ceramics can be invaluable as a reference tool for dating the site, often providing a useful starting point for defining the historical parameters of a place (Guy 1994). The discovery of a recognised type of plate or jar indicates a maximum age.

Glazed ceramics, being highly valued in Southeast Asian societies for their exotic character and sometimes presumed supernatural attributes, may be expected to have a lengthy life before being discarded through wastage or being committed to a grave site. This may be characterised as the heirloom problem (Guy 1986). The database proposed in this paper is helpful in identifying the sequence and contemporaneity of the dating of the ceramics.

This means the database gives a clear picture of the entire oriental ceramic assemblage. It can show which ceramics are contemporaneous with those others found in the same cultural layer and which ones are heirlooms. It also addresses the common practice in ceramic identification of associating pieces to certain Chinese dynasty which is too broad for useful dating or analysis (see Beyer 1947). For example, instead of saying a particular piece was created during the Ming Dynasty, the proposed system fine tunes the dating to early, mid, or late Ming since it reflects the latest data and discovery in ceramic archaeology and art history. The system will also bring to light in which context the oriental tradeware ceramics were used in the past by the people who occupied the site. It will show what trade ceramics were used as grave goods and which ones were found in other contexts such as in middens, hearths and in the habitation areas of the site.

Traditionally, oriental tradeware ceramic studies are the domain of art historians and antiquarians. There is nothing wrong with this but the demand of archaeology goes beyond the concerns of these researchers. Therefore, the approach proposed in this study can be seen as useful for it nurtures the confluence of art history and archaeology.

However, Diem (2002) noted that indigenous and trade ceramics are too often interpreted and represented through the lens of present-day

ideas about artistic value, quality, and function. Thus, some art historians and archaeologists make inappropriate comparisons between the types of pottery found in pre-colonial sites in the Philippines and fine Chinese ceramics that were manufactured for imperial use in official-sponsored kilns, or else with celebrated wares made at famous ceramic centres in China. From this, perspective, low fired earthenware and the products of Thai, Vietnamese, or "provincial" Chinese kilns are largely viewed as low-quality and as inferior wares. This kind of prejudice affects this research as well.

This present study relies on cross referencing of available published ceramic data. There is a bit of difficulty in looking for sources for stoneware jarlets and broken pieces of ceramics. This is because most of the books that are available normally use whole pieces of ceramics as illustrations. Also, published materials particularly in the Philippines tend to focus on the "beautiful," unique items that are accumulated by antique ceramic collectors which tend to be whole pieces (Brown 1989; Gotuaco *et al.* 1997; OCSP 1993, 1991; Tan 2007). There is a publication on stoneware jars in the Philippines (Valdes *et al.* 1992) but it focuses on the big storage jars and heirloom pieces. Among those books that deal with private collection of individuals most if not all the featured ceramics are complete and are from the celebrated kiln sites (Peralta 1982; Locsin and Locsin 1967; Tantoco and Tantoco 1976).

Few studies have been made and published on Vietnamese and Burmese ceramics that is why the researcher only has a few sources for them. Most of the books that were published that can be found in the UP-ASP and the Oriental Ceramics Society of the Philippines (OCSP) library deal with Chinese and Thai ceramics. But it is also possible that the people who amassed these books and catalogues prefer Chinese and Thai ceramics, that is why they did not collect Vietnamese and Burmese ceramics books.

As a summary, the system of determination is composed of two parts namely: identification and documentation of oriental tradeware ceramics. The identification is written in tabular form wherein in each column information regarding the ceramic is noted. The information needed is the following: artefact number/s, condition of the ceramic, ceramic type, artefact form, part of the ceramic, description of the ceramic or sherd/s, archaeological context of the ceramic, provenance, dating, reference/s, remarks, and the level of confidence of the analysis. The system relies on the cross referencing of available ceramic data. Also, the

level of confidence of the identification for each ceramic or sherd/s will be specified. The data will then be encoded in a database in digital form.

The system of documentation requires an image of all the ceramics and sherds that will be analysed with corresponding identification (accession number) and scale. Then, the image must be hyperlinked with the database. Afterwards, the database should be stored in a CD so that it will be accessible to people who want to access the database to aid them in their determination of oriental tradeware ceramics from other sites.

A recommendation for future researchers of oriental tradeware ceramics is to apply the proposed system in identifying and documenting ceramics from as many sites as possible. In the process it can be improved on and be made more user-friendly for non-specialists. It is the hope of this researcher that it will help them understand better the site that they are studying. It is recommended that the system of documentation may be applied to other artefacts such as shells, stone tools, biological remains, and other archaeological objects.

To test the system, this researcher has a forthcoming article which will apply this proposed method of identifying and documenting oriental tradeware ceramics to a particular assemblage from a specific archaeological site. The tentative title is "Significance of Oriental Tradeware Ceramics from Babo Balukbuk, Porac, Pampanga, Philippines."

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