

Cargo of shipwreck near Belitung, Indonesia

(Arabian ship going back to Persian Gulf from China, approximate date of wreck 830CE)

This wreck is a kind of sailing ship known as a *baitl qarib*. Ships like this are still found in Oman.

The ship is almost 60 feet long. It is built of wood from Africa and India and fitted with a square sail. The planks and beams were not nailed or riveted, but instead were literally sewn together, probably with a coconut-husk fiber from southern Arabia. The ship was probably headed to the port of Mantai, on the island of Sri Lanka south of India. This island had storage buildings that had large quantities of a kind of Chinese pottery that was a large part of the cargo of the wrecked ship. These storage buildings also had many products from the Islamic regions in Arabia, North Africa, and Persia, as well as nuggets of amber from northern Europe, where the Vikings lived.

Dusun storage jars (named after a region of Borneo, the large round island in Indonesia)

Changsha bowls, made in Hunan

Green-glazed Yue dishes from Zhejiang

White Xing dishes, made in Ding Xian, near modern Beijing

Interestingly, some of the dishes in the ship had cobalt glaze from Iran; these three kinds of ceramics have been found in archaeological sites in the old ports of Banbhore, near Karachi (Pakistan) and Siraf (on the Persian Gulf between Arabia and Persia).

Spices and resins (mostly from several small islands near the equator in Indonesia)

Miscellaneous items

Ewers to carry water for washing

Silver boxes, often with gold designs – the gold may originally have come from West Africa

Ink wells and brushes, of the kind used to write Chinese characters

Design influences

Tang Dynasty gold cup from China

Buddhist lotus symbols from Southeast Asia

Art from central Asia, north and east of the Caspian Sea

Small statues from Persia, south of the Caspian Sea

Koranic inscriptions from Arabia

Bowls made in Persia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belitung_shipwreck

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/06/tang-shipwreck/worral-text/3>