



Platter depicting a map of the New World

Date
date unknown

Medium
Ceramic with glaze

Description
In the the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, China's maritime enterprise expanded through technological advances, such as the invention of the magnetic compass, and the efforts of admirals and diplomats such as Zheng He (c. 1371–1433). A Chinese Muslim whose father had made the hajj to Mecca, Zheng He commanded seven naval expeditions, the first of which lasted from 1405 to 1407. His voyages reached Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Persian Gulf, Arabia, Egypt, and the east coast of Africa. Such explorations were integral to the broadening

of China's commercial networks. This plate features a foliate rim and molded designs that may have been based on, or intended to imitate, more expensive dishes made of silver. The interior bears an early representation of the outlines of North and South America and Antarctica. The depiction of the continents is similar to that on a number of European and Chinese maps of the fifteenth through the eighteenth century. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017)

Dimensions
Overall: 14 9/16 x 14 9/16 in. x 1 in. (37 x 37 x 2.5 cm)