

Large Print Guide

ACM

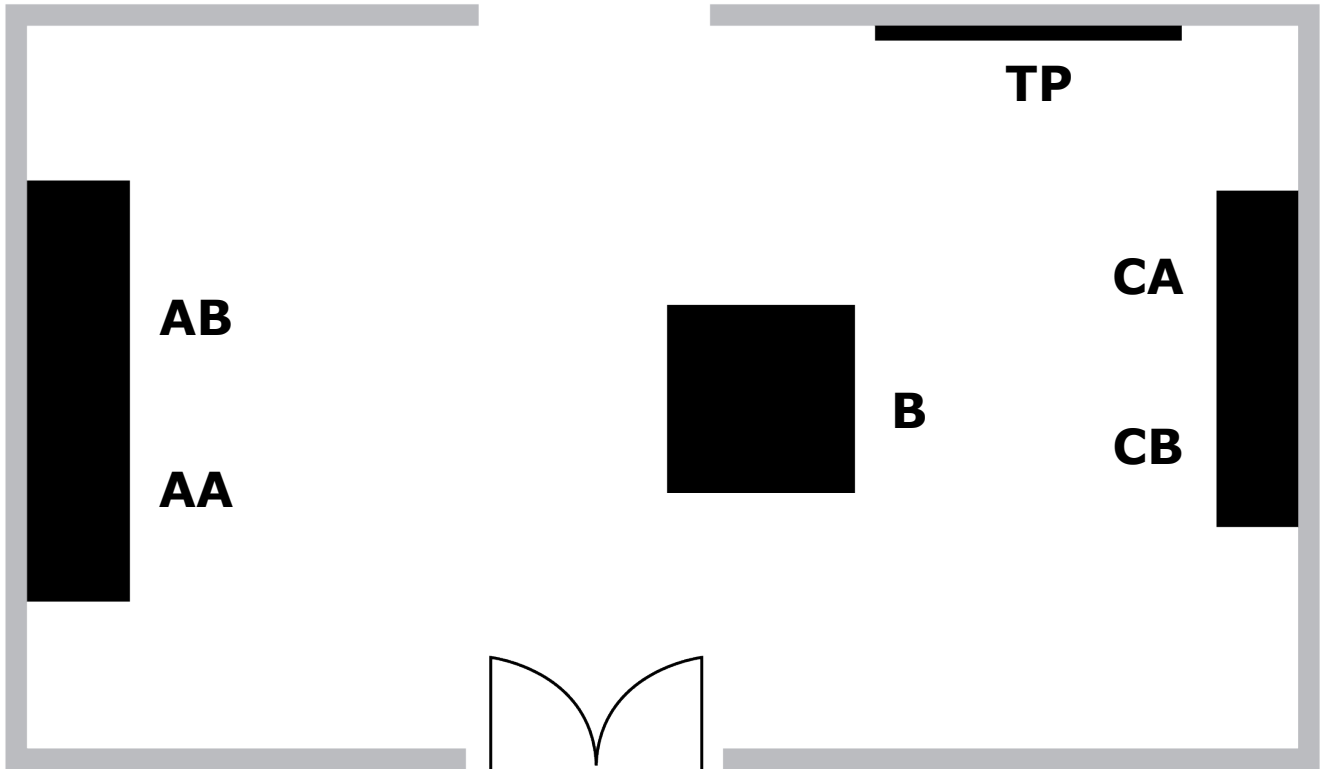
Singapore Archaeology

Level 1

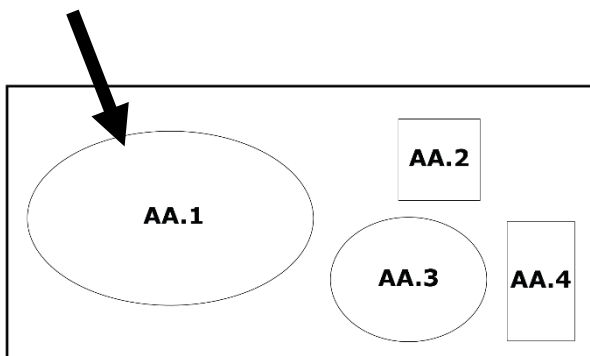
Permanent Galleries

Trade and Maritime Silk Route

Floorplan of Gallery and User Guide



How to read display case and floorplans



**find object label text, match AA.1 to AA.1,
then AA.2 to AA.2 and so on.**

AA.1

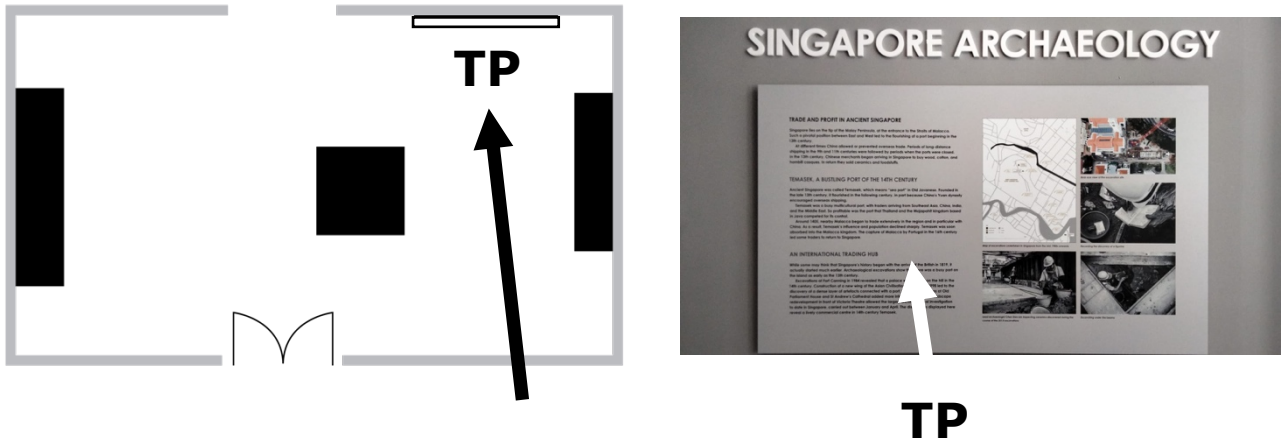
Celadon fragments

China, Longquan kilns, 14th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Stoneware

How to read text panels & floorplans

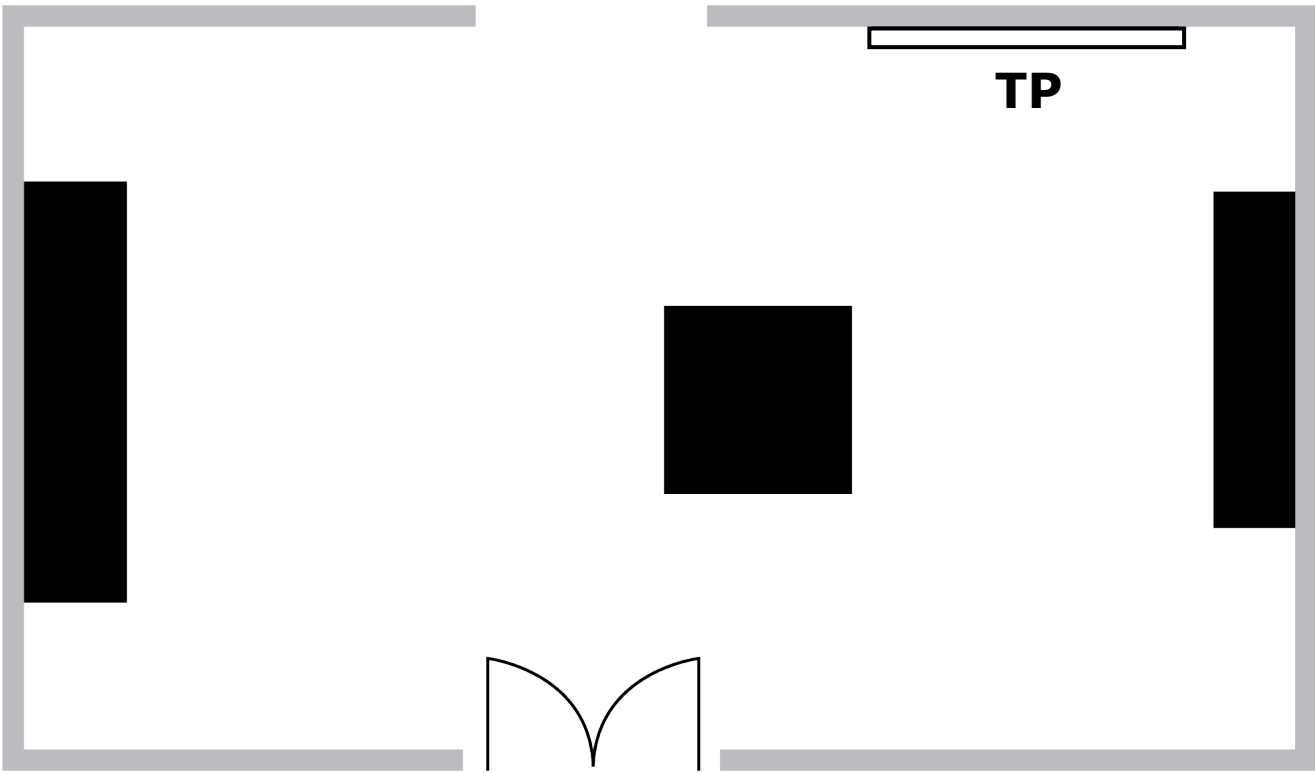


To find text panel, match TP to TP

TP

**Trade and profit in ancient
Singapore**

Singapore lies on the tip of the Malay Peninsula, at the entrance to the Straits of Malacca.



TP

Trade and profit in ancient Singapore

Singapore lies on the tip of the Malay Peninsula, at the entrance to the Straits of Malacca. Such a pivotal position between East and West led to the flourishing of a port beginning in the 13th century.

At different times China allowed or prevented overseas trade. Periods of long-distance shipping in the 9th and 11th centuries were followed by periods when the ports were closed. In the 13th century, Chinese merchants began arriving in Singapore to buy wood, cotton, and hornbill casques. In return they sold ceramics and foodstuffs.

Temasek, a bustling port of the 14th century

Ancient Singapore was called Temasek, which means "sea port" in Old Javanese. Founded in

the late 13th century, it flourished in the following century, in part because China's Yuan dynasty encouraged overseas shipping.

Temasek was a busy multicultural port, with traders arriving from Southeast Asia, China, India, and the Middle East. So profitable was the port that Thailand and the Majapahit kingdom based in Java competed for its control.

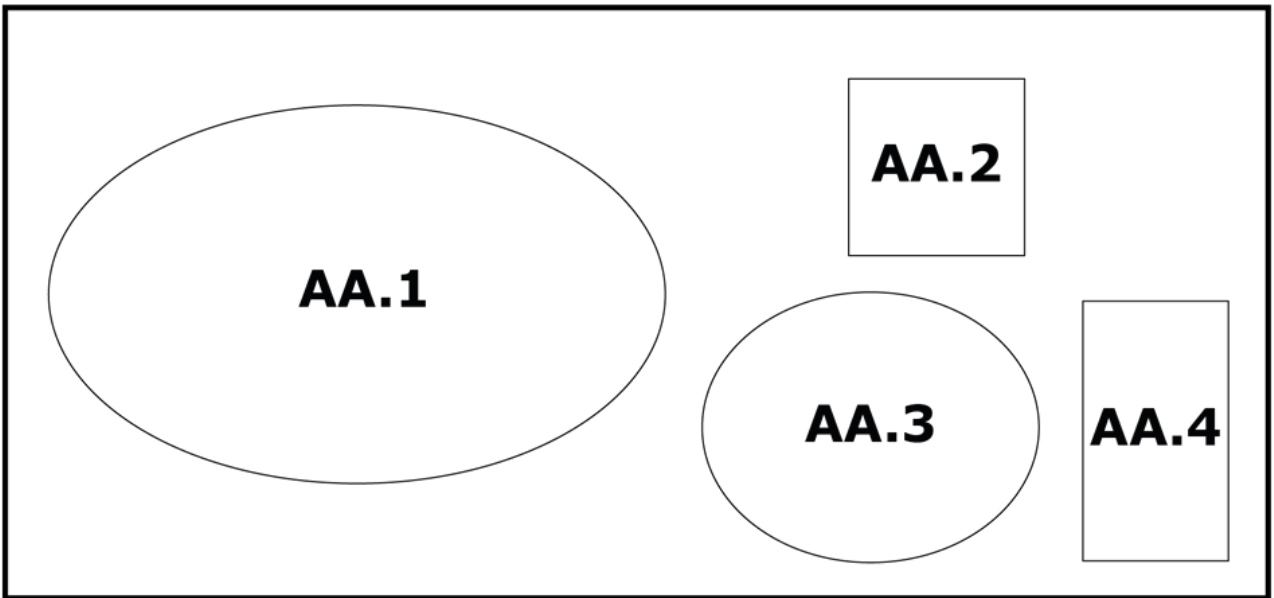
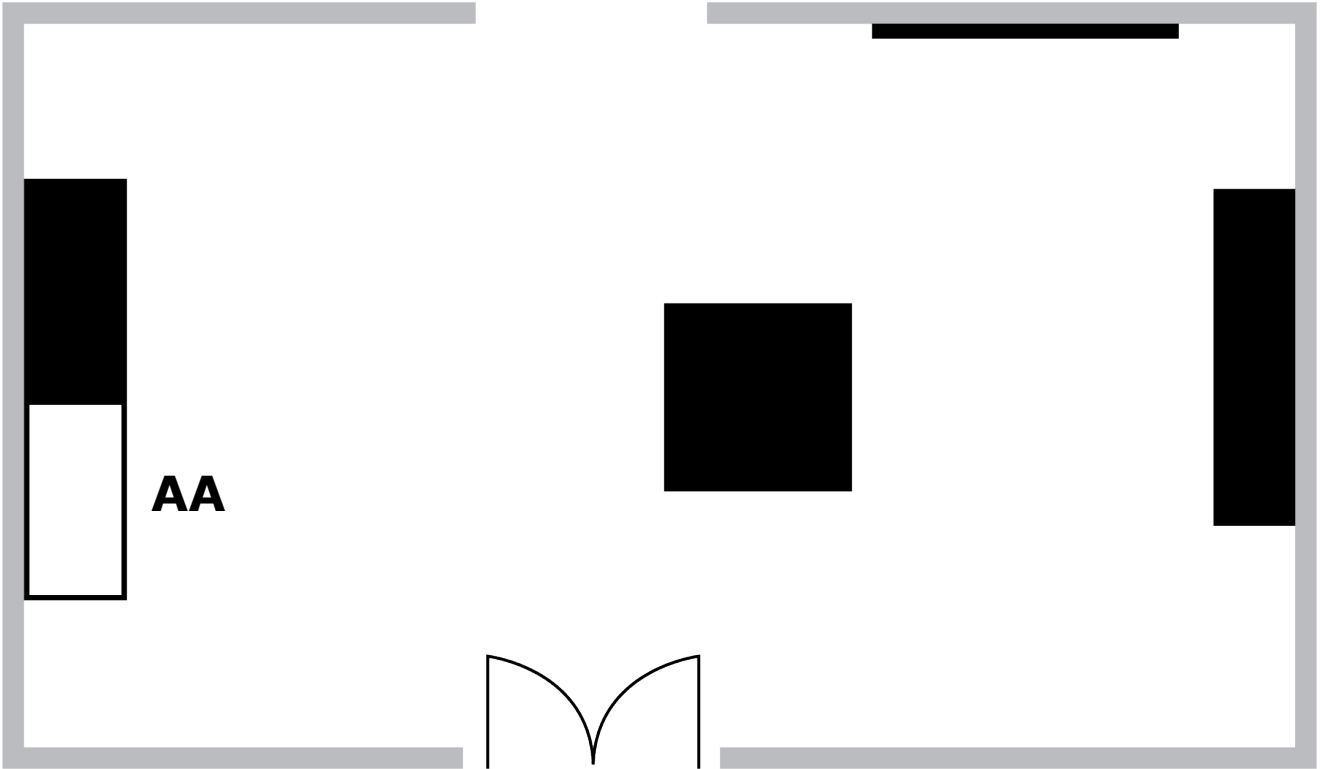
Around 1405, nearby Malacca began to trade extensively in the region and in particular with China. As a result, Temasek's influence and population declined sharply. Temasek was soon absorbed into the Malacca kingdom. The capture of Malacca by Portugal in the 16th century led some traders to return to Singapore.

An international trading hub

While some may think that Singapore's history began with the arrival of the British in 1819, it

actually started much earlier. Archaeological excavations show that there was a busy port on the island as early as the 13th century.

Excavations at Fort Canning in 1984 revealed that a palace was located on the hill in the 14th century. Construction of a new wing of the Asian Civilisations Museum in 1998 led to the discovery of a dense layer of artefacts connected with a port. Further excavations at Old Parliament House and St Andrew's Cathedral added more information. In 2015, landscape redevelopment in front of Victoria Theatre allowed the largest archaeological investigation to date in Singapore, carried out between January and April. The discoveries displayed here reveal a lively commercial centre in 14th century Temasek.



AA

Temasek in the 14th century

Chinese, Javanese, and Vietnamese records from the 14th and 15th centuries all mention a port called Temasek, where Singapore is today. A palace stood on Fort Canning Hill, while trade was conducted on the banks of the Singapore River, where the museum is now located.

Chinese ceramics – celadons, blue-and-white wares, and white vessels from Dehua – have been found in Singapore. These highly desirable commodities were traded for products brought from the Malay Peninsula and the Riau Islands, such as wood and cotton.

AA.1

Celadon fragments

China, Longquan kilns, 14th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Stoneware

AA.2

Majapahit-style horse and rider (replica)

Java, 14th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Metal

This statue, the only one of its kind found in the region, bears stylistic similarities to Javanese art under the Majapahit Empire (1293–1527).

AA.3

Dehua fragments

China, Dehua kilns, 14th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Porcelain

AA.4

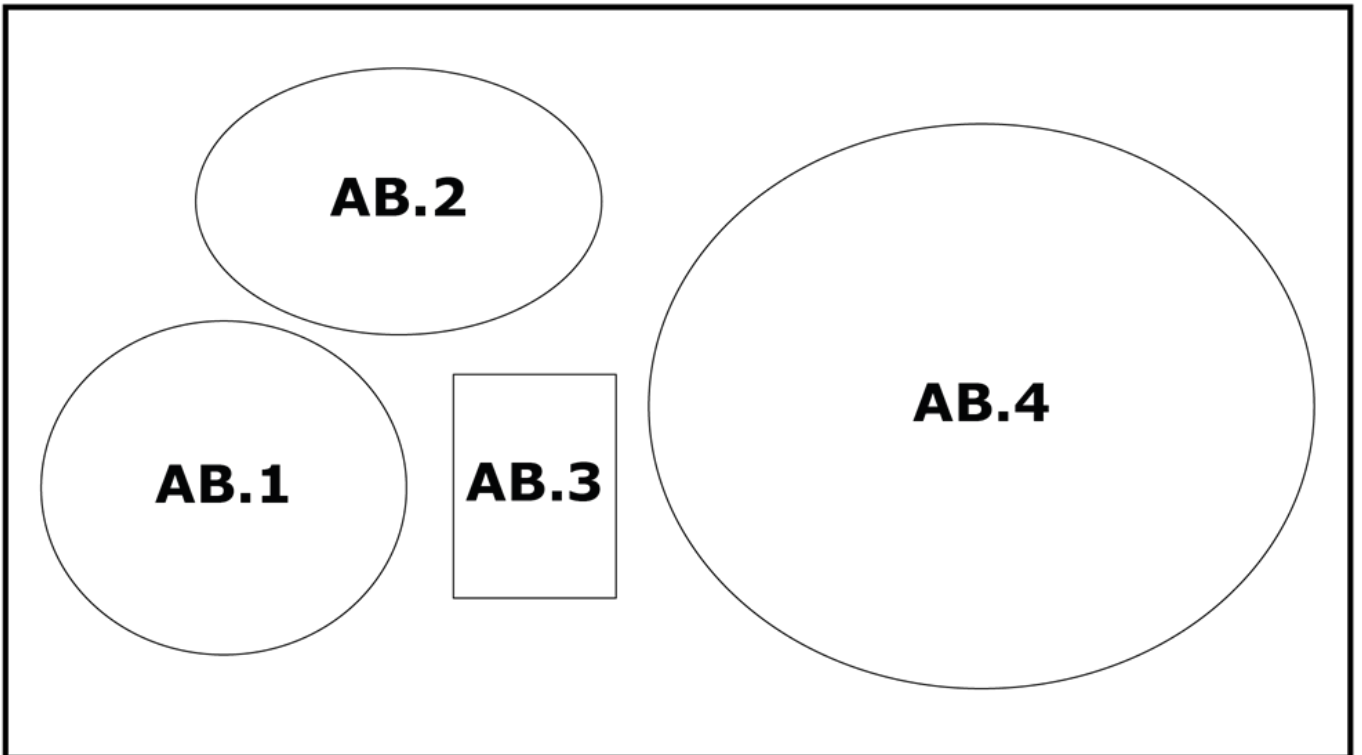
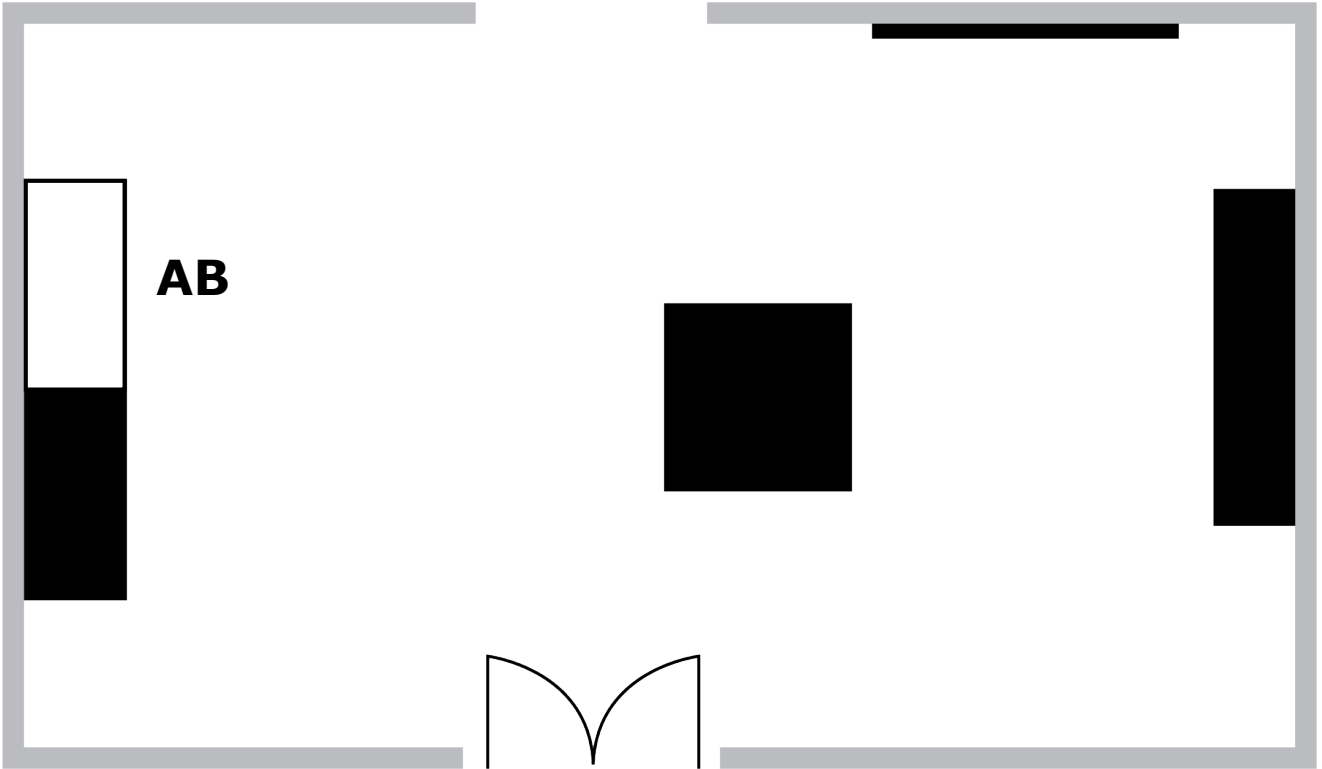
Chinese coins

China, Song dynasty, 11th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Bronze

Chinese coins of the Song dynasty circulated long after they were minted. These examples date from the Zhenzong 真宗 (997–1022) and Yingzong 英宗 (1063–67) reigns.



AB.1

Fragments of blue-and-white ware

China, Jingdezhen kilns, 14th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Porcelain

AB.2

Fragments of Shufu ware 枢府瓷

China, Dehua kilns, 14th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Porcelain

AB.3

Fragment of a mercury jar

China, 14th century

Stoneware

AB.4

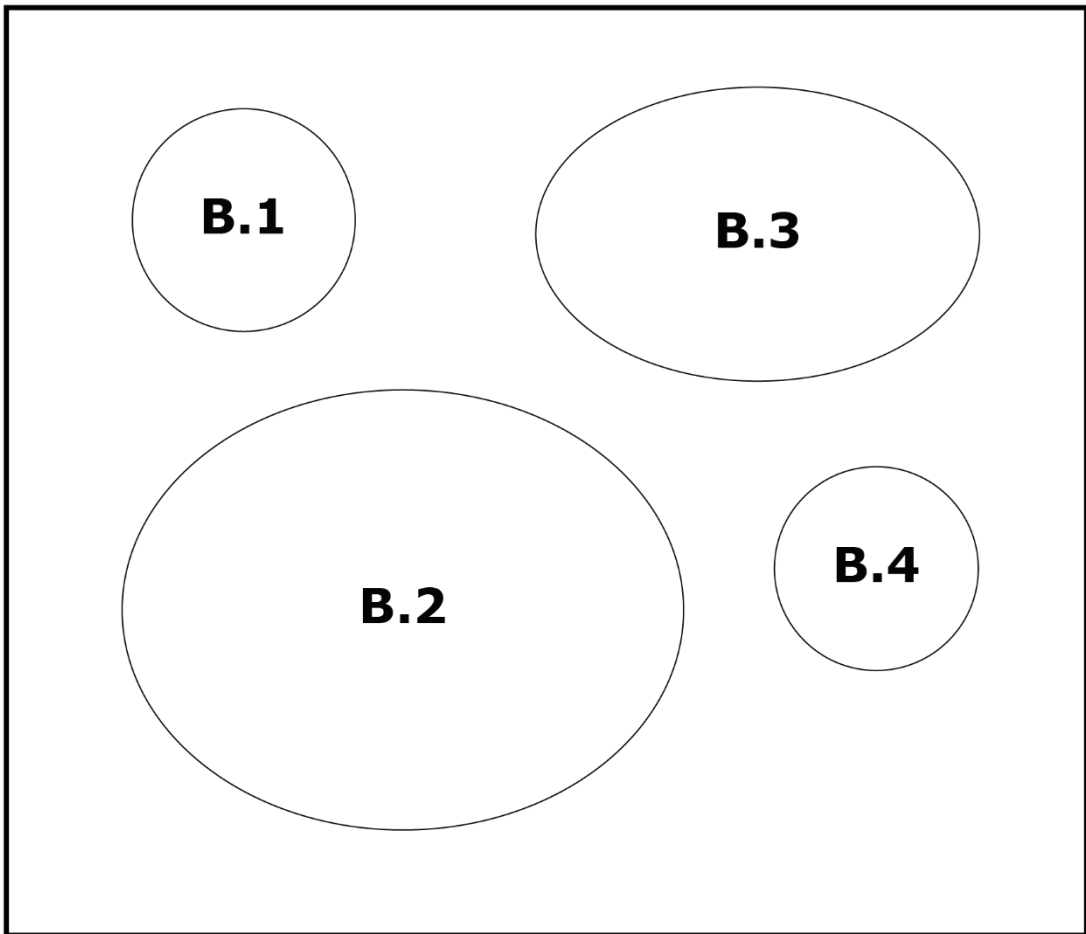
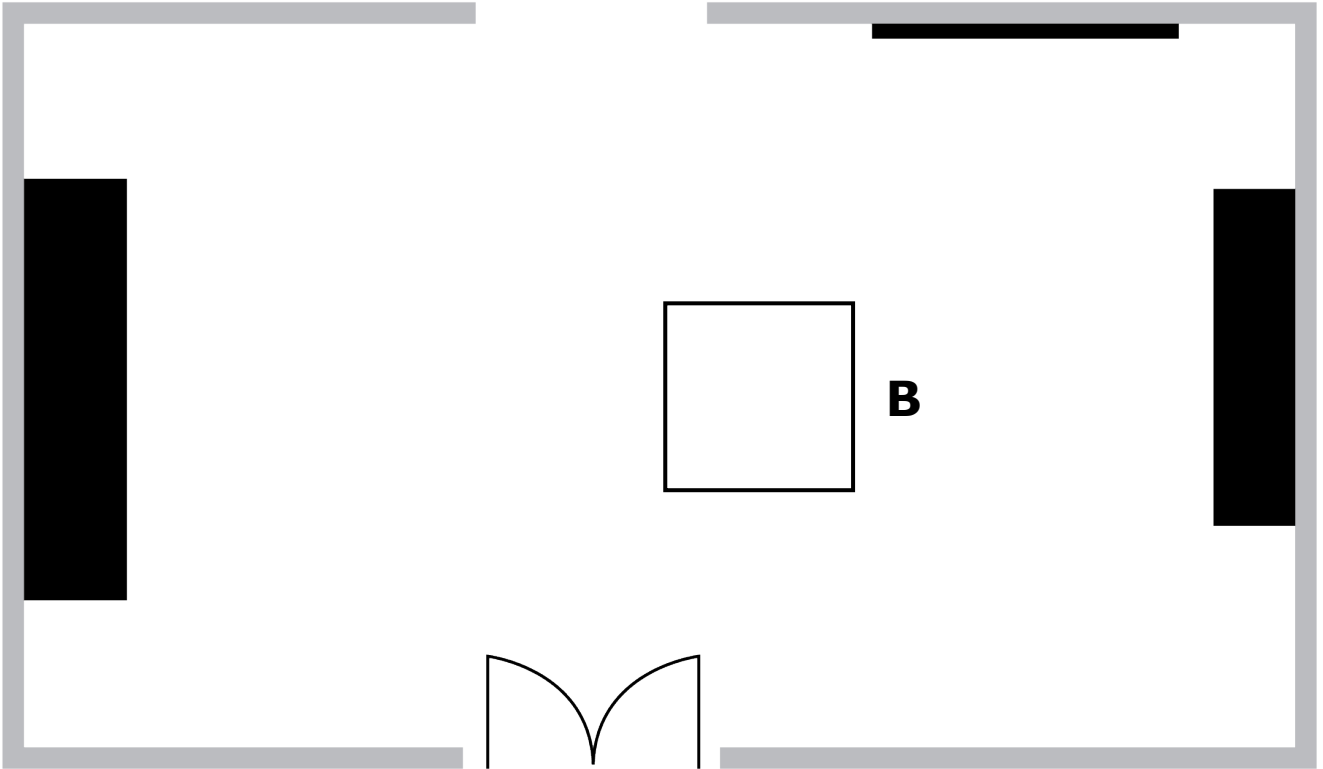
Ceramic fragments and organic material

Southeast Asia, 14th century

Earthenware and bone

These items reflect some aspects of the diet and daily life of the people of 14th-century Temasek.

The earthenware was most likely made on the island or in the region, and would have been used to store food or water.



B

14th-century maritime trade in the Singapore Straits

Remains of a 14th-century shipwreck were discovered at Nipah Island, near the Raffles Lighthouse. Jars found there reportedly contained over 2000 Chinese coins, mainly dating to the Song and Yuan dynasties, but some as old as the Tang dynasty. Chinese coins were used as currency in the region for many centuries.

B.1

Bowl

China, 14th century

Stoneware

B.2

Coins

China, 10th to 14th century

B.3

Celadon plates

China, 14th century

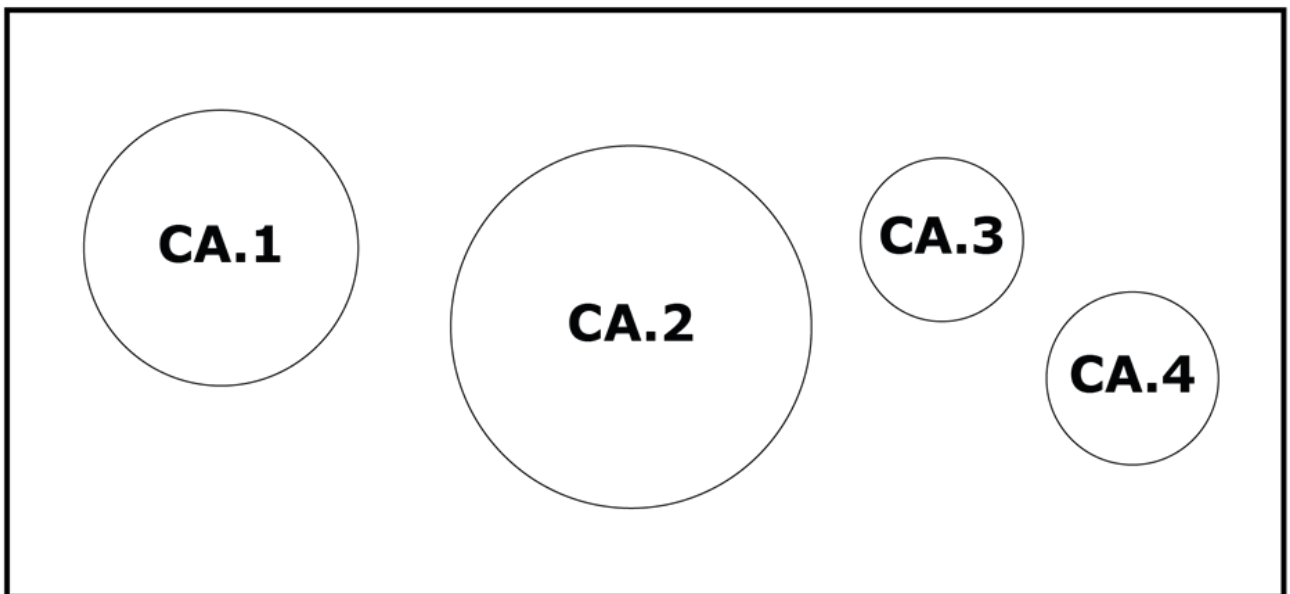
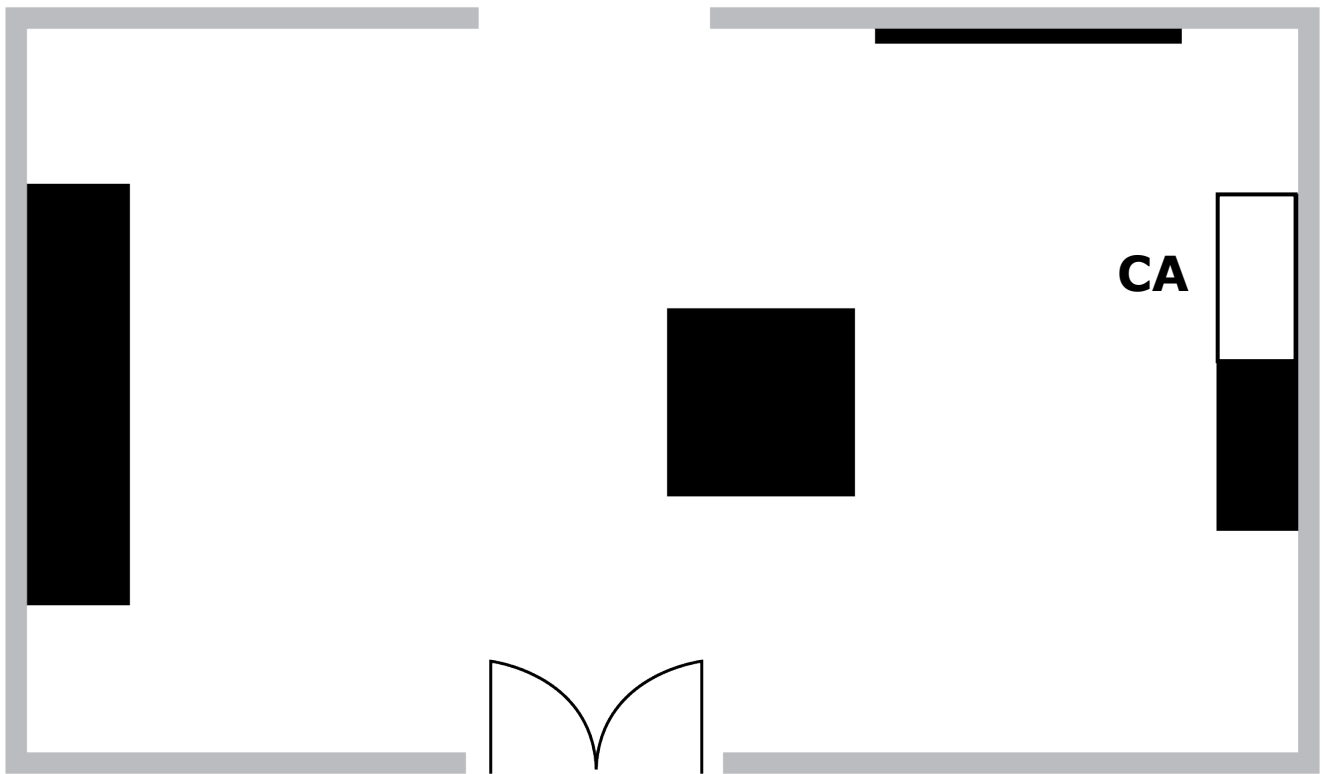
Stoneware

B.4

Jars

China, Guangdong province, 14th century

Stoneware



CA

The bazaar of Temasek

The area around the museum was the centre of commercial activity in the 14th century, as it would be in the 19th and 20th centuries. Just beyond the river wharfs was probably a bazaar or trading square. Simple storage ceramics were found here, along with more expensive ceramics and religious objects.

CA.1

Glazed jar

China, perhaps Fujian province, late 14th or early 15th century

Excavated at Empress Place

Stoneware

CA.2

Celadon dish

China, Longquan kilns, early to mid-14th century

Excavated from Empress Place

Stoneware

Inscribed with a lotus in the centre, this dish was made at the kilns in Longquan. Celadon was popular with elites throughout Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

CA.3

Shard of a censer

China, Longquan kilns, late 14th or early 15th century

Excavated at Empress Place

Stoneware

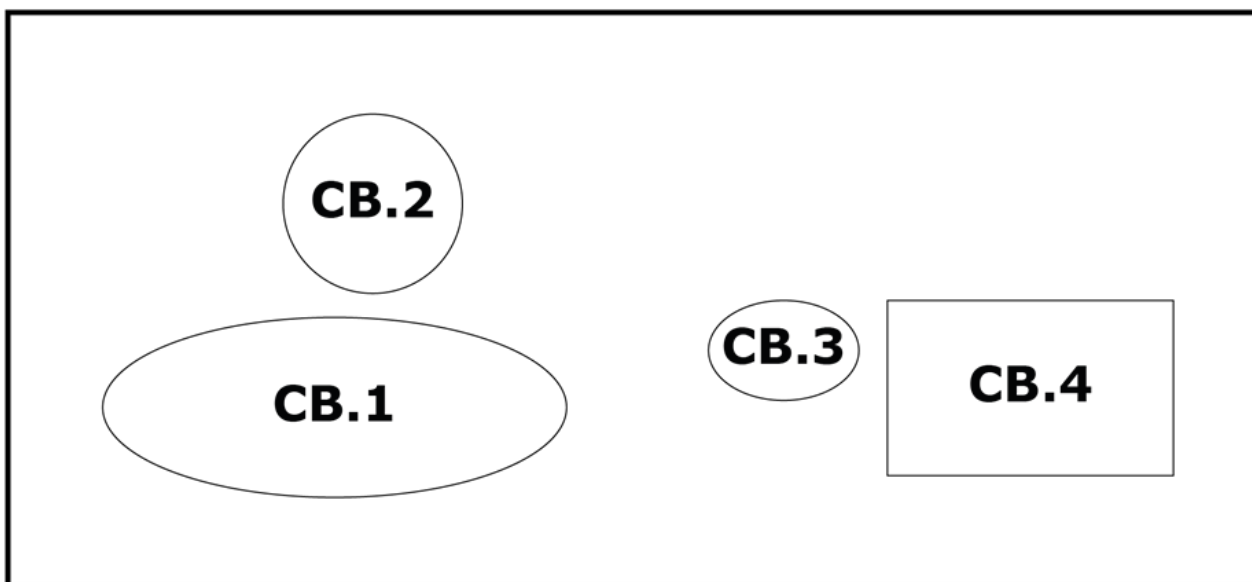
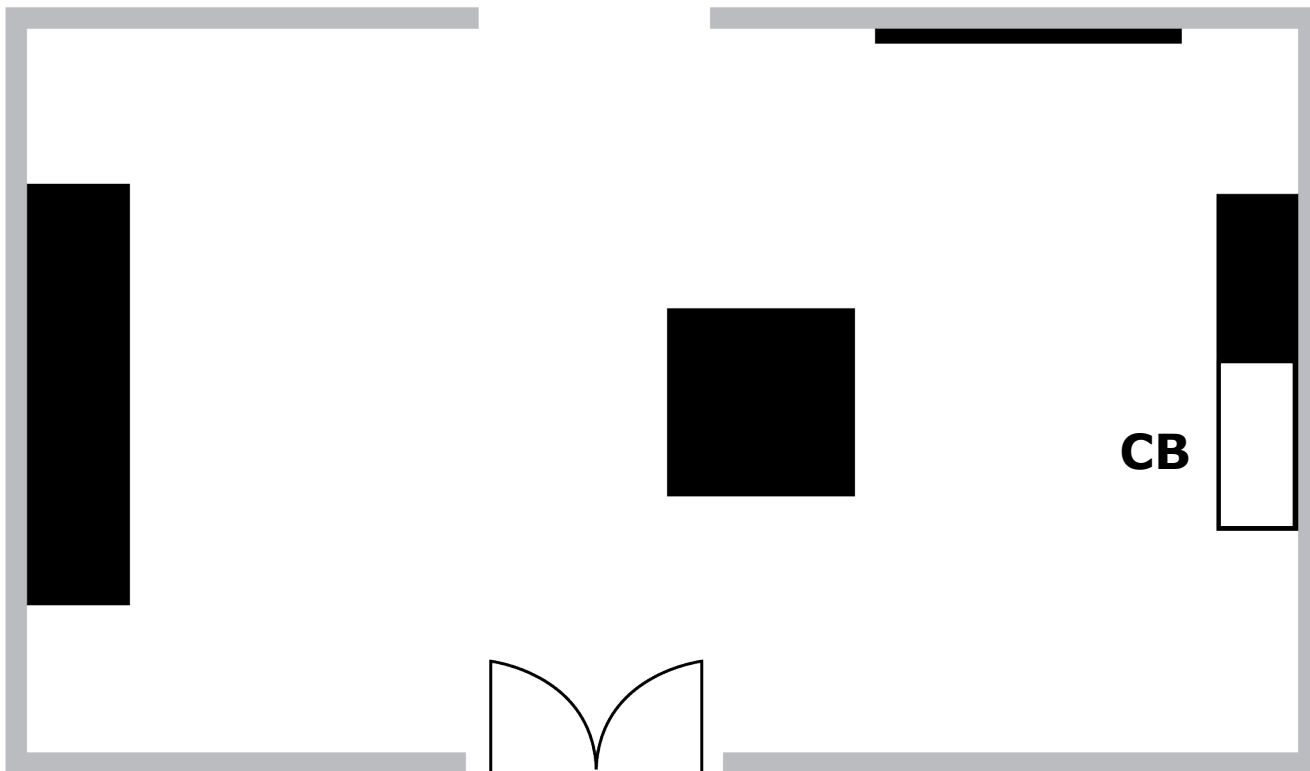
CA.4

Celadon jar

China, Longquan kilns, late 14th or early 15th century

Excavated at Empress Place

Stoneware



CB.1

Two brown-glazed jars

China, perhaps Fujian province, around 14th century

Excavated at Empress Place

Stoneware

CB.2

Bowl

China, Fujian province, around 14th century

Excavated at Empress Place

Stoneware

CB.3

Covered box with erotic couple

China, 14th century

Excavated at Empress Place

Earthenware

CB.4

Five figurines

China, Jingdezhen kilns, around 14th century

Excavated at Empress Place

Porcelain with bluish glaze (qingbai ware 青白瓷)

Figurines such as these usually represent the Buddha, Guanyin, or possibly Sudhana

(an acolyte of the latter) holding a lotus leaf.

They may have been arranged together as part of an altar or grotto.