

Basic Detail Report



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Title

Barber's bowl from the wreck site of the VERGULDE DRAECK

Date

before 1656

Medium

Brass

Dimensions

Overall: 80 mm, 0.5 kg

Name

Bowl

History

During the 1600s the Dutch United East India Company or Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) was a rapidly expanding merchant organisation. The VOC established a trade network throughout Asia by transporting rare spices, exotic textiles and seeking new markets. Asian goods - especially spices and Chinese ceramics - were highly sought after in Europe, allowing the VOC to establish a profitable enterprise between Europe and the East Indies. A number of Dutch ships are known to have wrecked on the west Australian coast, leaving evidence of their passing in the form of wreckage, coins and pottery. Dutch maps at this time also began to portray the coastline of Australia (New Holland), which would be a great benefit for later explorers. The VOC ship VERGULDE DRAECK (GILT DRAGON) was under the command of Pieter Albertszoon on 28 April 1656, when it hit a reef off the coast of Western Australia, between the present day towns of Seabird and Ledge Point. It was carrying 193 crew and passengers, of whom only 75 survived. The ship was also transporting a cargo of trade goods and silver coins for Batavia (Jakarta) worth 185,000 guilders. After the wreck a crew of seven men set out for Batavia while 68 remained on the Australian mainland. The party arrived safely to Batavia and numerous search expeditions were sent out to find any survivors. These expeditions all encountered difficulties, and eventually in 1658 the possibility of any future searches was ruled out by the VOC.