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COINS FROM THE *ZUYTDORP*

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Seventy six years before Governor Phillip set up his settlement at Sydney Cove, a luckless group of Netherlanders was attempting to live off the land and whatever they could salvage from their ship on the barren and inhospitable cliffs north of present day Kalbarri on the West Australian coast. They were the survivors of the wreck of the Dutch East Indiaman *Zuytdorp*.

When the ship left Holland there were 286 people on board. Judging from the broken clay pipes and empty jars at their campsite on the cliff tops, only a few survived the wreck. Apart from the remains of some barrels which they apparently carried inland in search of water, no further trace of them has been found.

The usual method of escape employed by the survivors of other shipwrecks on the West Australian coast in the 17th and 18th centuries was to build an open boat from the timbers of their ship and then sail up the coast and to Batavia in Java. No such small boat could have survived below the 200 to 300 foot high cliffs which run for hundreds of miles in the area where the *Zuytdorp* went down. The wrecksite today can only be reached on a few days each year because of the huge swells which crash below these cliffs. Some diving expeditions have camped in the area for up to three weeks without being able to get into the water. For this reason only about 9000 coins have been recovered over thirty years. It is estimated that the *Zuytdorp* was carrying two million coins.

As far as the Dutch East India Co. was concerned, the *Zuytdorp* had disappeared

into the void without a trace. The fate of the ship was unknown for about 240 years. Then a boundary rider from a sheep station noticed wreckage on rock ledges below the cliffs while out hunting wild dogs. He climbed down to the site and found some worn silver coins, spars and a carved lion stern post. This wreckage had been thrown up by the waves during a storm.

The numismatic evidence was crucial to the eventual identification of the ship and its origin. In this matter the significant pieces were the Two Stuivers and Schellingen of Zeeland in the Netherlands struck at the Middelburg Mint in 1711.

Research in the Dutch archives by Dr. Phil Playford¹ of the West Australian Mines Department showed that a special minting of two Stuivers and Schellingen (termed Paymenten or small change at the time) was ordered on the 16th February 1711. The coins were struck at the Middelburg Mint by the Mint Master Adolph de Groene before the 20th May 1711. The order, placed by the Zeeland Chamber of the United East India Company (VOC) was for 100,000 Guilders value.

Direction for the coins to be struck were quite detailed. A "Mark" (264.084 grams) of silver was to be made into 50 Schellingen or 150 Double Stuivers, all being of 58.3% silver and the balance to be copper and various traces of zinc, tin and lead. The proportions of the two denominations in the minting is not known, but it is estimated from the study of the 9000 coins so far recovered that the total number of pieces struck would have been about two million.

1. Playford, P. E. "The Wreck of the *Zuytdorp* on the Western Australian Coast", *Journal and Proceedings of the Western Australian Historical Society*, 1959, Vol. 5, Part 5, pp. 5-41. I am much indebted to Dr. Playford for assistance in preparing this paper.

Two ships were to have carried this minting, the *Zuytdorp* and the *Belvliet*. It is known that the *Belvliet* safely reached Batavia with a bullion cargo of only 45,534 Guilders which included silver bullion bars. It is therefore probable that most of the double stuivers and schellingen were on the *Zuytdorp*. The numismatic data was the strongest evidence in the positive identification of the wreck.

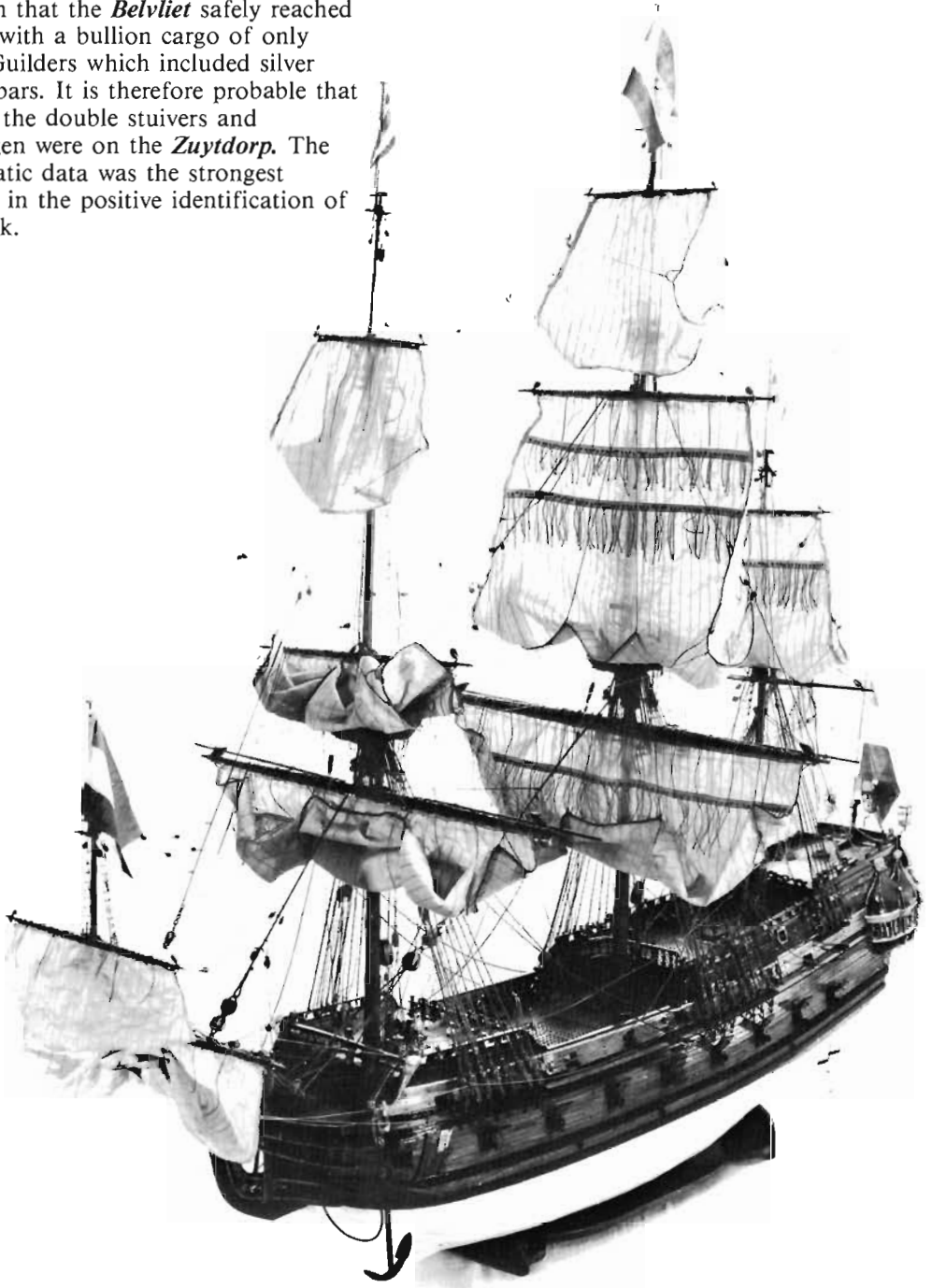


Plate 1
Model of *Zuytdorp*
Photo by P. Baker, W.A.
Museum
(M.A. 1423/7)

THE SHIP

The *Zuytdorp* was one of the largest types of ship built by the Dutch East India Company. She was launched at the end of June 1701. It was approximately 178 feet long with a beam of 44 feet and a depth of 19 feet. Its carrying capacity was 250 Lasten, about 500 tons. Various safety rules later reduced the loading of these ships in a similar way to British regulations in the 18th and 19th centuries which forbade the loading of vessels above the plimsoll line.

Because of the constant sea wars of the period, and the very present danger of pirates in the Indies, all ships of the VOC were heavily armed. The *Zuytdorp* carried 40 cannon made up of 10 twelve pounders, 22 eight pounders and 8 four pounders. A model of this type of ship is shown in plate 1.

THE WRECK

The wreck is thought to have occurred in the first or second week of June 1812. Other vessels which left the Cape of Good Hope at the same time as the *Zuytdorp* arrived in Batavia on July 4th.

The *Zuytdorp* crashed on the rocky shore below 100 to 400 feet cliffs (which now bear her name) north of the mouth of the Murchison River.² Plates 2 and 3 show the location and danger of reefs at the site of the disaster.

THE COINS AND BULLION

Records indicate that the total value of silver carried was 248,886 Guilders of which 100,000 Guilders was in small change (double stuivers and schellingen). Thus, 148,886 Guilders would have been in Rix Dollars, Ducatons and Spanish Pieces of Eight. That is, about 60,000 Rix Dollars or other crowns of the period. The sea still holds the bulk of this material. Table 1 gives a listing of the recovered pieces indicating the quantities, types and condition of the coins recovered and treated to date.

Of particular interest in such a collection of almost an entire production run of an eighteenth century mint, is the information which can be uncovered on the methods of production. Die orientation for instance was found to

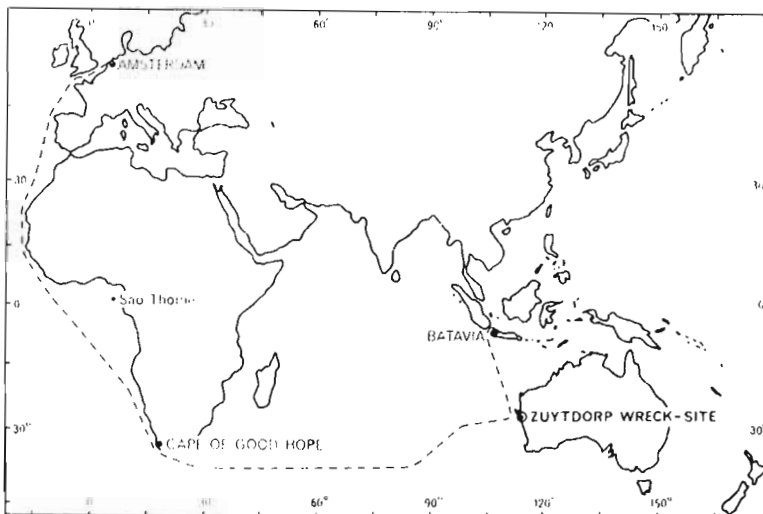


Plate 2
Route taken by ships of Dutch East India Company and *Zuytdorp* wreck site.

2. The exact location is 27° 11' 10" South Latitude and 113° 36' East Longitude.

vary. The majority of the coins recovered to date were struck with the dies in the medal position (as are Australian decimal coins). However, some were struck with the dies oriented at 6 O'clock and a few were at 3 O'clock. In addition it has proven possible to study the deterioration of dies, and to get some idea of how long they remained in use after they cracked. Plate 4 illustrates the progressive deterioration of one die. As more coins are recovered and treated understanding of minting technology of the period should be further enhanced.

The Rix Dollars, Ducatons and Silver Riders which have so far been recovered are all in a poor state of preservation due to being pounded on the rocks over the years. The Pieces of Eight are all of the COB type from the reign of Philip V of Spain. As work progresses it is hoped that better specimens will appear. The thought of the rich numismatic harvest and a million dollars in silver still at the site gives a keen edge to the work.

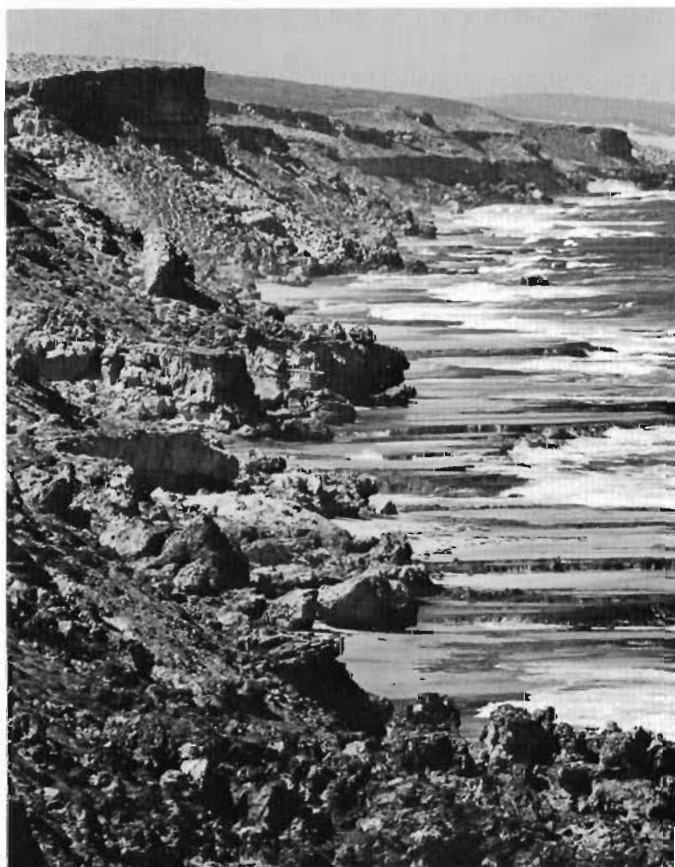


Plate 3
Cliffs where *Zuytdorp* was wrecked
Photo by P. Baker, W.A. Museum
(M.A. 1929/31)

TABLE 1
ZUYTDORP 1712
COINS RECOVERED AND REGISTERED

No.	Coin	Province	Date	Authority	Weight	Cat. No.	Condition
1	RIKSDAALDER	UTRECHT	1613	Estates General	24.11	D4836	Poor (P)
5	HALF DUCATONE	BRABANT	ca1630	PHILIP IV	56.83	D4444	P
1	DUCATONE	BRABANT	1633	"	28.00	D4444	P
10	"	BRABANT	ca1630	"	268.54	D4444	P
1	"	FLANDERS	1662	"	31.13	D4457	P
2	DUCATOONS	GELDERLAND	ca1660	Estates General	53.73	D4923	P
1	"	HOLLAND	1673	"	25.00	D4930	P
1	"	HOLLAND	ca1672	"	19.30	D4930	P
1	"	UTRECHT	ca1660	"	21.13	D4937	P
1	"	ZEELAND	ca1660	"	23.19	D4942	P
1	"	ZWOLLE	1664	"	26.29	D4947	P
5	"	UNKNOWN	ca1660	"	105.23	-	P
7	TWO REALS	MEXICO	ca1708	PHILIP V	33.20	Yriarte 560	P
1	FOUR REALS	MEXICO	ca1660	PHILIP IV	12.02	Yr.535	P
1	"	MEXICO	ca1708	PHILIP V	11.72	Yr.560	P
18	"	MEXICO	ca1708	"	170.09	Yr.560	P
5	EIGHT REALS	MEXICO	ca1652	PHILIP IV	113.62	Yr.528	P
1	"	MEXICO	ca1695	CAROLUS II	25.00	Yr.554	P
45	"	MEXICO	ca1708	PHILIP V	1049.60	Yr.560	P
1	"	MEXICO	1709 (?5)	"	24.18	Yr.561	P
3	TWO STUIVERS	OVERYSSEL	ca1680	Estates General	3.00	-	P
1	"	ZEELAND	1706	"	1.50	De Vries 76	Fine(F)
3	"	ZEELAND	1708	"	4.50	"	F
2	"	ZEELAND	1711	"	3.00	"	F
10	SIX STUIVERS	ZEELAND	1709	Estates General	45.00	De Vries 72	F
3	"	UTRECHT	1710	"	11.00	-	P
2	"	ZEELAND	1711	"	8.00	-	F
41	SIX STUIVERS IN CONCRETIONS	ZEELAND	1711	"	174.50	De Vries 72	P
174		SUB—TOTAL			2.373 kg		

TABLE 2
ZUYTDORP 1712
COINS RECOVERED AND REGISTERED

No.	Coin	Province	Date	Authority	Weight	Axis	Condition
825	Two Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	1106	Parallel	Poor
639	"	"	1711	"	934	"	Fine
300	"	"	1711	"	447	"	V.Fine
753	"	"	1711	"	986	Reverse	Poor
607	"	"	1711	"	894	"	Fine
200	"	"	1711	"	302	"	V.Fine
1150	Six Stuivers	"	1711	"	4818	Parallel	Poor
400	"	"	1711	"	1762	"	Fine
112	"	"	1711	"	450	"	V.Fine
1300	"	"	1711	"	5406	Reverse	Poor
900	"	"	1711	"	3952	"	Fine
225	"	"	1711	"	1015	"	V.Fine
20	"	"	1711	"	86	3 o'clock	Fine
DIE BREAK LIONS STAFF							
3	Six Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	13	Parallel	Fine
DIE BREAK LIBERTY HAT							
2	Six Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	85	Parallel	Fine
DIE BREAK SHIELD RIGHT							
4	Six Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	175	Parallel	Fine
DIE BREAK RIGHT OF LION							
1	Six Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	4	Parallel	Fine
DIE BREAK TO LEFT OF SHIELD							
34	Six Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	145	Reverse	Fine
DIE BREAK BELOW SHIELD LEFT							
* 25	Six Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	106	Reverse	Fine
DIE BREAK LEFT OF LION							
1	Six Stuivers	ZEELAND	1711	Estates General	4	Parallel	Fine
7675	GRAND TOTAL				24.829 kg		

* Illustrated.



Plate 4
Progressional breakup of die at 7
O'clock.

TABLE 3
ZUYTDORP 1712
SUMMARY OF COINS

Composition of Hoard		
Netherlands small silver	7566	98.6%
Netherlands large silver	30	0.4%
Spanish Reals (2R, 4R, 8R)	79	1.0%
.....	7675	100.0%
Condition of Coins		
Poor	4184	54.5%
Fine	2654	34.6%
Very Fine	837	10.9%
.....	7675	100.0%
Collectable (Fine & Very Fine)	3491	45.5%

ZUYTDORP COINS PRIVATELY HELD = 1.08%

17	Two Stuivers	1711	United Netherlands Zeeland	22.58g
39	Six Stuivers	1711	United Netherlands Zeeland	137.03g
2	Half Ducatones	1621-65	Spanish Netherlands Brabant	25.93g
2	Ducatones	1621-65	Spanish Netherlands Brabant	57.42g
1	Ducatoon	1659-76	United Netherlands Gelderland	30.77g
1	Ducatoon	1679	United Netherlands Overijssel	29.41g
1	Ducatoon	1659	United Netherlands Zeeland	32.04g
5	Two Reals	1700-08	Spanish America Mexico	30.85g
2	Four Reals	1700-08	Spanish America Mexico	26.12g
14	Eight Reals	1700-08	Spanish America Mexico	325.16g
1	Eight Reals	1700-08	Spain Seville	26.48g