

The treasure from the shipwreck, *Reijgersdaal* (1747)

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Introduction

The wreck of the Dutch East Indiaman, the *Reijgersdaal* was discovered by private divers, Tubby Gericke and Brian Clark, near the Cape west coast resort, Silwerstroomstrand, in March 1979. The main work, in the shape of the bullion recovery, was begun a few months later by another private team of two salvors, Jimmy Rawe and Arthur Ridge. Subsequently various other amateur divers have been active on the site. According to some of the divers a fair amount still remains under the water and it is possible that further work on the wreck will be done in the future.¹

Since the introduction of the National Monuments Amendment Act, No. 13 of 1981, the working of such historic wrecks, as defined in the legislation, is prohibited by law, except under permit obtained from the National Monuments Council.² A result of the system has been to introduce a few, extremely basic, archaeological methods into private salvaging which is still officially being permitted.

The chief object in this article is to document the coins so far recovered in the context of Dutch bullion practices of the time. The study has relied primarily on what may be considered a limited but fairly representative sample, that of the collection of one of the two main salvors. Some 292 of the coins were examined, together with a list of another 3 108 coins = 3 400 coins or, as will be seen later, 11,72% of the calculated total of coins aboard the ship. The Museum itself possesses a negligible number of the coins. Though this is obviously not an adequate body of data to permit positive conclusions being drawn, the sample is certainly large enough to warrant recording. The information does nevertheless make a necessary contribution to the body of historical knowledge concerning shipwrecks, which is being built up internationally. The deficiencies in this report will, it is hoped, highlight the need in South Africa for government interest and planned research (methods of marine archaeology, conservation, etc.) into historical shipwrecks which constitute a very tangible, and in many cases irreplaceable, part

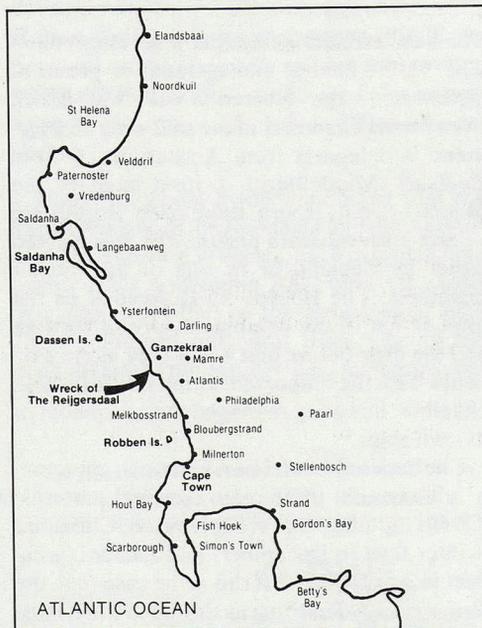
of South African and world history, which has been disappearing rapidly through neglect and 'plunder'.

Of the roughly twenty three Dutch East Indiamen wrecks investigated so far around the world, six have been found around the Cape.³ This alone should indicate how potentially great a contribution South African marine archaeologists could make in this field.

Evidence of a generally economic nature accrues naturally from these VOC (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie — Dutch East India Company) merchant ships, being as they were, cogs in the great wheel of Dutch-Asiatic (and hence international) trade.⁴

The wrecking of the *Reijgersdaal*

The *Reijgersdaal* was built in 1738 in the Amsterdam shipping yard for the Amsterdam



Present day map showing the area between Dassen and Robben Islands where the *Reijgersdaal* was wrecked in 1747. The approximate position of the old Ganzekraal is indicated.

chamber. She had a volume of 850 tons and measured 145 feet in length.⁵ She must have been a similarly built ship to the *Hollandia* (sank 1743 off the Isles of Scilly) and the *Amsterdam* (sank 1749 off Hastings) (both 150 foot class).⁶

She set sail for the East on 31st May 1747 from Texel all by herself on her third and last voyage.⁷ About four months later, on Friday 27th October 1747, the Cape Governor, Hendrik Swellengrebel, received news from the official stationed at the government post Ganzecraal,⁸ that two days previously, on the 25th October, the outward-bound ship the *Reijgersdaal* had hit the rocks and been smashed to pieces at a spot near Ganzecraal, between Robben and Dassen Islands (see map). The Governor immediately sent out from the Castle the ensign Hendrik Storm, with men, and on the following day the equipage master Jacobus Möller. Their main task was to salvage what they could of the money chests.⁹

As apparent in the survivors' evidence to the Cape Council of Policy¹⁰ and confirmed by the Governor himself,¹¹ the weak condition of the crew — [of the original crew of 297¹²] 125 had died and 83 were ill — had been the chief cause of the wrecking, a situation that was only worsened by some of the wildest Cape south easterly gales ever experienced.¹³

The VOC's traditional system of sending bullion

The VOC's central management or group of directors — the 'Heeren XVII', was drawn from the six chambers in the following arrangement: 8 delegates from Amsterdam, 4 from Zeeland (Middelburg), 1 from each of the others — Delft, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Rotterdam — and a seventeenth person who was elected either by Zeeland or by one of the smaller chambers. The Heeren XVII decided on the total extent of the equipment for the voyages and the distribution and it was they alone who could sell the imported commodities; each chamber, however, managed the equipment of its own ships.¹⁴

The outward-bound East Indiamen apparently left home in three main seasonal patterns: Kermis (autumn fleet in September), Christmas (winter fleet in December) and Easter (spring fleet in April/May).¹⁵ If this is the case then the *Reijgersdaal*, departing as she did in May, must have formed part of the 1747 spring fleet. Sixteen ships including the *Reijgersdaal* left the Netherlands for the East between March and August that year. Hence this number

may conceivably be the full complement of spring outward-bound ships. Of these five sailed for the Amsterdam chamber, four for Zeeland and two each for the Delft, Hoorn, Enkhuizen and Rotterdam chambers.¹⁶

During the early 18th century the autumn (August/September) meeting of the Heeren XVII was customarily regarded as the first meeting of the year. The directors met to discuss, amongst other things, the bullion amounts being demanded by the Company's headquarters in the East at Batavia (modern Djakarta in Java), which were necessary for the successful conduct of their trade, how far these demands should be met, how the bullion should be distributed amongst the Chambers and the number of ships which should be sent with the first consignments.¹⁷

In line with this on the 26th August 1746 the Heeren XVII met and resolved to send the required amount of bullion to the value of f2 600 000 to the East Indies ("de geheele geld Eijsch ten bedragen van 26 tonnen Zwaargeld"). Only f50 000 was intended for Ceylon, the rest was for Batavia.¹⁸

In February/March of the following year the Heeren XVII normally decided on the issue of supplementary bullion being demanded by Batavia, the extent to which the various Chambers had fulfilled their initial obligations and if they had not, whether and how to rectify the shortfall.¹⁹

Hence on the 10th March 1747 the situation was such that a considerable part of the required specie had not been forwarded and Zeeland was largely in default. The state of affairs regarding the bullion is summarized in the table shown on the opposite page.

To compensate for Zeeland's shortfall Amsterdam on the 13th March stated her intent of sending f150 000, whilst Rotterdam promised f100 000. On the 30th March the Amsterdam chamber, having received a written request for financial help from Zeeland, resolved to send the promised f150 000 to Batavia in Mexicanen (silver 8 reales coins minted in Mexico City) and to place it in two equal quantities on the *Reijgersdaal* and 't *casteel van Tilburgh*.²⁰

Hence the mission of the ill-fated Amsterdam chamber's ship, the *Reijgersdaal*, was an attempt to make good the bullion shortfall of Zeeland.

The table can also be used to calculate the proportions in which each Chamber contributed to the bullion consignments that year — viz: Amsterdam $\frac{1}{2}$, Zeeland $\frac{1}{4}$, and Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn, Enkhuizen $\frac{1}{16}$ th each. This

reflects the traditional ratio of distribution that existed amongst the Chambers. Amsterdam, the most prosperous and influential town, as in most economic aspects, equalled the combined weight of all the other Chambers. It was Amsterdam too who usually fulfilled her monetary obligations²¹ and, in line with this, was the only one in March 1747 to have done so and to be in a position to help the defaulting Chambers.

The treasure on the *Reijgersdaal*.

It is now an appropriate point to consider the actual bullion cargo of the *Reijgersdaal* in the light of the coins which have survived.

For purposes of the ship's expenses during the voyage, on the 30th April 1747, the captain of the *Reijgersdaal*, Johannes Bant, was issued with 200 mexicanen, weighing 22 mark²² @ f23:11:— per mark courant, totalling a value of f518:2:—. ("Scheepsgelt getelt aen Johannes Bant, schipper op het schip rijgersdaal 200 mexicanen, wegen 22 marck @ f23:11:— 't marck courant tot betalinge van nodige scheeps ongelden en verversingen om daer van aenden gouverneur generaal of sijne gecommiteerde tot batavia verantwoordinge te doen. No. 1665 f518/2/—.")²³

The amount of 200 mexicanen is identical to that counted to the captain of the *Amsterdam* about a year later and 100 mexicanen less than the captain of the *Hollandia* had received earlier in 1743.²⁴

The bullion cargo she carried for Zeeland we learn amounted to 3 200 'marken mexicanen' packed in eight chests. ("De Kamer van Zeelandt getelt aen Johannes Bant schipper op het schip Reijgersdaal voor reeck. vande Kamer van Zeelandt 3 200 marken mexicanen in 8 kisten omme deselve over te leveren aenden gouverneur generaal of sijne gecommiteerde tot Batavia no. 1741 f75 146/5/—.")²⁵

If one takes the value of each mexicanen to be f2.59²⁶, then the approximate number of

mexicanen on board would have been 29 014²⁷ plus 200 for the ship's expenses. Therefore each of the eight chests contained approximately 3 626 coins, assuming for the moment that the coins were indeed all identical, viz. full 8 reales. However we know from the evidence of the salvaged coins that a small proportion were subdivisions of 8 reales and that therefore there must have been extra coins per chest. The number 29 014 roughly accords with the information contained in Governor Swellengrebel's diary of the 30th March 1747, in which he reports the contents of a letter sent by Jacobus Möller at the scene of the shipwreck. Möller relates what had been found thus far. Besides barrels of pork and beer and one broken, empty money chest no. 3, he notes that one broken money chest containing four money bags, of which one was damaged, had been washed up.²⁸ These salvaged coins were later described in the Governor's outgoing correspondence as 3 610 mexicanen in four bags which, on recovery, were washed in fresh water, dried and placed in a small chest to be sent on to Batavia.²⁹

Both the number of coins per chest and packing procedure accords with the evidence presented by the *Hollandia* and the *Amsterdam*:³⁰ ±3 655 coins per chest on the *Hollandia* and approximately 3 626 coins per chest on the *Reijgersdaal*; a packing procedure of 400 marks per chest on the *Hollandia* and the *Amsterdam*, which the *Reijgersdaal* would, logically, appear to show too, viz. $3\ 200 \div 8 = 400$ marks per chest.

However, whilst it was concluded that the ducats on both the *Hollandia* and the *Amsterdam* were carried in chests, each of which held twenty bags containing 200 coins,³¹ it seems from the above that on the *Reijgersdaal* each chest contained only four bags. One of the main divers on the *Reijgersdaal* maintains that

f = gulden = coin and unit of account

	required to send	already sent	over	shortfall
Amsterdam	f1 300 000:—:—	1 300 000:—:—	—	—
Zeeland	650 000:—:—	54 577:14:8	—	595 422: 5:8
Delft	162 500:—:—	149 982: 7:—	—	12 517:13:—
Rotterdam	162 500:—:—	150 000:—:—	—	12 500:—:—
Hoorn	162 500:—:—	—	—	162 500:—:—
Enkhuizen	162 500:—:—	81 486: 6:8	—	81 013:13:8
	f2 600 000:—:—	1 737 046: 8:—	—	863 953:12:—

the coins were found in stacks of approximately ten to thirty.³²

Mexicanen

The coins being carried on the *Reijgersdaal* were, as we have seen, all recorded as "mexicanen", i.e. silver 8 reales from the Mexico City mint. The majority of the coins examined and listed were indeed from the Mexico City mint and were 8 reales but there was also a small number of smaller silver subdivisions of the 8 reales. Most of the mexicanen were neatly milled (machine-made) pillar dollars but some were of the earlier crude 'cob' type (further explanation later). In addition there was a small number of coins from mints other

than Mexico, mainly of the cob variety but also including a few well-struck pieces from Spain itself — from the mints of Madrid and Seville, etc.

As indicated earlier the Museum was shown 292 coins, including pillar dollars and cobs, and given a list of a further 3 108 pillar dollars, making a grand total of 3 400 or 11,72% of the total aboard the ship. A summary of the coins appears in *tables 1* and *2*. These coins were in the possession of one of the main salvors³³ and he had evidently salvaged between 4 000—5 000 pieces and his partner about the same number. Approximately another 5 000 coins have been salvaged by various other divers.³⁴ This brings a rough total of 15 000 coins salvaged thus far,

TABLE 1 Spanish South American cobs showing assayer mark where visible

MINT	Felipe III (1598 – 1621) or Felipe IV (1621 – 1665)	Carlos II (1665 – 1700)		Felipe V (1700 – 1746)			TOTAL
	8 reales	4 reales	8 reales	2 reales	4 reales	8 reales	
Potosí	Felipe III or IV probably Potosí. date? assayer mark? x 1	1688. VR x 1				1732. YA x 1 1733. YA x 1 1735. E x 1 1743. C x 1 1744. C x 1 Total 5	= 7
Lima						1722? M? x 1 1740? V or N x 1 Total 2	= 2
Madrid*					1706. Y x 1 Total 1		= 1
Guatemala				Some with assayer mark J visible. 2 reales? date? x 3	Some with assayer mark J visible. date? x 28 1734 x 1 1736 x 2 1737 (6 date unsure) x 32 1738 x 4 1739 (7 date unsure) x 24 173— x 6 1740 x 2 174— x 4	Some with assayer mark J visible. date? x 9 1733 x 1 1735 x 3 1736 x 1 1737 x 1 1738 x 4 1739 x 3 173— x 1 1740 x 1 1742 (1 date unsure) x 6 1743 x 1 174— x 1	Total 3 Total 103 Total 32 = 138
Mexico City	Felipe III? not dated? F. x 1 Felipe III? 1609. A x 1		Carlos II? date? assayer mark? x 1	date? assayer mark? x 1	date? assayer mark? x 3 date? 1731/? F x 1 1731. F x 1 1733. MF 'square cut' x 1 1734. MF 'square cut' x 1	date? assayer mark? x 10 1730. G x 1 1730. G x 1 1732. F x 1 1733. MF 'square cut' x 6 1734. MF 'square cut' x 1	Total 2 Total 1 Total 1 Total 7 Total 20 = 31
						TOTAL	= 179

*Although a Spanish mainland coin, it is crudely produced and therefore included here for convenience.

TABLE 2 Milled coinage showing assayer mark where visible. The list of 3108 coins provided by the diver did not indicate assayer mark (in most cases these would have been MF).

MINT	Felipe IV (1621 – 1665)	Carlos II (1665 – 1700)	Felipe V (1700 – 1746)				TOTAL
	8 reales	4 reales	1 real	2 reales	4 reales	8 reales	
Madrid				1724. A x 1	1732. JF x 2 1737. JF x 1 1738. JF x 2 1740. JF x 1	1711. J x 1 1729. JJ x 2 1734. JF x 2	= 12
Segovia	1633. R x 1 Total 1	1684 (1683)? BR x 1 Total 1		1727. F x 1 Total 1			= 3
Madrid					1729. P x 1 Total 1	1730 (type without assayer mark) x 3 1731. PA x 1 1732. PA x 1 1735. PA x 1 Total 6	= 7
Mexico City			1737. MF x 1 Total 1	1739. MF x 1 1740. MF x 1* 1742. M x 4 1743. M x 3 a bit. date? MF x 1 Total 10	1732 (type without assayer mark) x 1 1734. MF x 4 1735. MF x 4 1736. x 4 1737. x 3 1738. MF x 5 (3*) 1739. MF x 1 1740. MF x 1 1741. MF x 2 1742. MF x 5 1743. x 1 Total 31	1732. F x 2 1733. MF x 3 1733. F (mint- mark MX) x 1 1734. x 55 (2*) 1735. x 60 1736. x 102 (1*) 1737. x 109 1738. x 188 (10*) 1739. x 423 (6*) 1740. x 317 (19*) 1741. x 372 (3*) 1742. x 464 (83*) 1743. x 864 (97*) 1744. x 197 (9*) Total 3157	= 3199
						TOTAL	= 3221

*Overdated

i.e. 51,7% of the treasure aboard ship. The diver is convinced that the coins in his possession were a representative sample and states that the proportion of cobs to milled coinage was echoed in his partner's collection. Certainly the odd coin from the *Reijgersdaal*, which occasionally arrives at the Museum for identification, is of the Mexican milled pillar dollar variety.

Conclusions from the information contained in the above tables are as follows: –

The *cobs* (fig. 1–3) form 5,26% of the entire sample. Of the cobs the majority are 4 reales of Guatemala mint, 57,54%. However, if all the Guatemala cobs are taken together, they form 77,09% of the cobs. The most common date of the 4 reales is 1737.

Out of the total of 3 221 milled (machine-made) coins (fig. 4–11), 3 199 or 99,32% derive from the Mexico mint. The 22 remaining milled coins are from the metropolitan mints of Spain

= 0,68%. In fact Mexican milled silver coinage forms 94,09% of the entire sample. The milled subdivisions of the Mexican 8 reales form only 1,31% of the milled Mexican coins and all the subdivisions form 1,62% of the entire milled coinage, i.e. including the metropolitan mint divisions.

The most common date of the milled Mexican dollar is 1743 (864 coins), followed by 1742 (464 coins) and 1739 (423 coins).

Overdates

Also to be noted from the table is the phenomenon of overdates on the milled pillar dollar series of Mexico, most particularly on the 8 reales – some 234 coins or 7,26% of the total of the milled coinage (fig. 9).

Coins with overdates are the result of re-engraved dies. Such a coin on close inspection of the date reveals the shadowy traces of an earlier date. The coins dated 1742 and 1743 in

our sample include the largest numbers of over-dates.

The phenomenon is found elsewhere in Spanish colonial coinages but is especially common in the Mexican 18th and 19th century coin series.³⁵

The reasons for re-engraving the dies were probably to avoid wastage of still good, usable dies as well as the commitment to produce coins dated with the actual year in which they were struck. Another factor may well have been the need to use all available dies because of the huge production demands on the mint.³⁶

2 reales

1740/30 (1)

4 reales

1738/37 (3)

8 reales

1734/33 (2)

1736/32(5) (1)

1738/28 (1)

1738/37 (9)

1739/3— (3)

1739/36 (2)

1739/38 (1)

1740/30 (16)

1740/39 (3)

1741/31 (3)

1742/32 (2)

1742/41 (81)

1743/42 (97)

1744/34 (4)

1744/43 (5)

Rare dates of the milled coinage

The wreck also yielded some of the rarest dates in the Mexican milled pillar dollar series, the earliest of the new milled coinage, viz. those dated 1732 and 1733 (*fig. 10–11*). 2 8 reales in the sample were dated 1732 (assayer's mark F) as was 1 4 reales (no assayer's mark); 3 8 reales dated 1733 (assayers' mark MF) and 1 8 reales dated 1733 (assayer's mark F and unusual mint-mark MX).³⁷

Square-cut coins

These Mexican coins were struck with neat, circular dies on squarish-cut flans and are dated 1733 and 1734 (*fig. 12*). They are regarded as a series transitional between the old, irregular crude cobs with the Mexican cross reverse and the new, neat, milled coinage with the pillar design first introduced in 1732, which took over as sole coinage only after 1734.³⁸ In the

sample under discussion 6 square-cut 8 reales dated 1733 and 1 square-cut 4 reales of the same date were found, as well as 1 square-cut 8 reales of 1734 and 1 square-cut 4 reales of the same date.

Background to the Mexico City mint

Mexico City, capital of the viceroyalty of New Spain, was the first mint set up by the Spanish rulers in South America, on land conquered from the Aztec peoples.

Authorized as such during the reign of Carlos and Juana (1516–1556) in 1535, Mexico City began coinage very soon thereafter. The coinage of 8 reales cobs commenced during the reign of Felipe II (1556–1598). Mexico grew into the most prolific mint of Spanish South America, supplying Europe with bullion coin, particularly popular in the Asiatic trade, where it formed part of the staple pool of international trading bullion.

Cobs were made by slicing planchets from the end of crudely cast plates of refined bullion, after which the planchets were clipped to the required weight, heated and hand-hammered between crudely engraved dies.³⁹ The most important part of the coin was the assayer's mark which guaranteed the fineness of the silver. The design of the cobs remained basically unchanged till the introduction in 1700 of the Bourbon escutcheon into the Spanish royal coat-of-arms.

During the reign of Felipe V (1700–1746), founder of the Bourbon dynasty, milled coinage was introduced. 'Milled', as mentioned earlier, means, numismatically, machine-produced, and is a term applied to coins produced by the screw press, which superceded the practice of hand-striking the coin dies with a hammer.

With Mexico's introduction in 1732 of the first milled Spanish American coinage, the 8 reales received a new reverse design. The old type with the unique Mexican bar and ball-tipped cross was replaced with the 'pillar' or 'two worlds' design. This shows two spheres or globes, crowned, set between two pillars, on a wavy sea. The two spheres symbolize Spain's expanse of power stretching from the Spanish metropolis ('Old World') on the one hand, across to the South American colonies ('New World'), on the other hand. The pillars ('Pillars of Hercules') represent the Straits of Gibraltar, the passage between the two worlds and the meeting of the Atlantic and Mediterranean. The motto on the pillars "PLUS ULTRA" (More beyond) seeks to identify Spanish

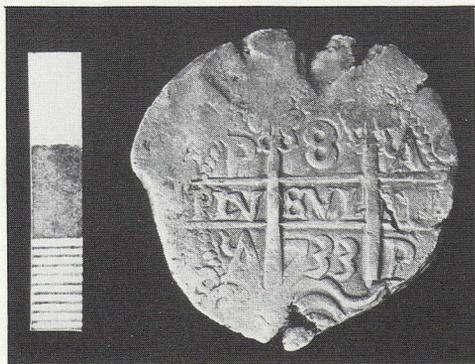


Fig. 1 Silver cob, 8 reales, Potosí mint, Felipe V, 1733, assayer mark YA. Obverse and reverse. *



Fig 2 Silver cob, 4 reales, Guatemala mint, Felipe V, 1734, [assayer mark J]. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 3 Silver cob, 8 reales, Guatemala mint, Felipe V, 1742, assayer mark J. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 4. Silver, milled, 2 reales, Madrid mint, Felipe V, 1724, assayer mark A. Obverse and reverse.

* Magnification in all figures = approx. 1,25X.



Fig. 5 Silver, milled, 4 reales, Segovia mint, Carlos II, 1684, assayer mark BR. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 6 Silver, milled, 8 reales, Segovia mint, Felipe IV, 1633, assayer mark R. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 7 Silver, milled, 8 reales, Seville mint, Felipe V, 1735, assayer mark PA. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 8 Silver, milled, 2 reales, Mexico City mint, Felipe V, 1742, assayer mark M. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 9 Silver, milled, 8 reales, Mexico City mint, Felipe V, 1742/1 (overdate), assayer mark MF. Reverse.



Fig. 10 Silver, milled, 4 reales, Mexico City mint, Felipe V, 1732, no assayer mark. Rare date. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 11 Silver, milled, 8 reales, Mexico City mint, Felipe V, 1733, assayer mark MF. Rare date. Obverse and reverse.



Fig. 12 Silver, square-cut transitional type, 8 reales, Mexico City mint, Felipe V, 1733, assayer mark MF. Obverse and reverse.

influence and power even further and beyond.⁴⁰ The legend "UTRAQUE UNUM" (Both in one) postulates the oneness of the metropolis and the colonies.⁴¹

However, despite the introduction of the new milled coinage in 1732, it was only in 1734 that the minting of the old type with the cross design was finally stopped. The old type of hand-struck cobs, with a cross reverse on irregular flans, continued till 1733, whilst in the years 1733 and 1734 a transitional type was struck, i.e. the old cross reverse on squarish-cut flans but struck with neat, circular dies, and it seems by machine.

The development of the Guatemala mint

Although Christopher Columbus had arrived in Guatemala as early as 1502 and Guatemala was likewise soon afterwards conquered by the Spanish from the Aztec peoples, it was not till 1731 that an official mint was authorized there.

Coinage began in 1733 with Mexican equipment thrown out in the latter's change-over from hand-struck to machine-struck coinage. The design shows a simplified version of the 'two worlds' or 'pillar' design, one peculiar to Guatemala. Only in 1754 was the old hand-struck type replaced by the new type, viz., ordinary milled pillar dollars.⁴²

A comparison of the bullion on other wrecks of the period

Nearest in time to the wreck of the *Reijgersdaal* were the *Hollandia* (sank 1743) and the *Amsterdam* (sank 1749). The bullion on these two ships some years ago formed the basis of an article in which the author, P. Marsden, highlighted the need for detailed studies of such treasure as an important source for bullion studies of the period.⁴³

Whereas the bullion cargo of the *Amsterdam*, comprising of silver ingots in twenty four chests and 16 000 Netherlands silver ducats in four chests, was different to that aboard the *Reijgersdaal*, the bullion of the *Hollandia* was essentially

ly similar, except for the presence on the *Hollandia* of 8 000 ducats from the United and (Spanish) Southern Netherlands.⁴⁴

The *Hollandia* carried in twelve chests 4 000 mark mexicanen plus 8 000 ducats, compared to the *Reijgersdaal's* 3 200 mark mexicanen in eight chests. As indicated earlier, on both ships the packing procedure was 400 marks per chest. Marsden calculated that the *Hollandia* was carrying a total of \pm 36 557 Mexican coins of 8 reales value and that she carried \pm 3 655 coins per chest. This compares very favourably with the calculated \pm 29 014 on the *Reijgersdaal* and its \pm 3 626 coins per chest.

Like the *Reijgersdaal*, the majority of the coins on the *Hollandia* were Mexican milled pillar dollars. Both on the *Reijgersdaal* and the *Hollandia*, the percentage of catalogued cobs was small — *Reijgersdaal*, 5,26% and *Hollandia*, 2%. However the cobs on the *Reijgersdaal* were predominantly from the Guatemala mint, whilst those on the *Hollandia* derived from Mexico City and to a lesser extent Guatemala. The percentage of catalogued divisions of the milled pillar dollars on the *Reijgersdaal* amounts, as we have seen, to 1,62% and on the *Hollandia* it appears to be in the region of 6,8%.⁴⁵

However, as was pointed out in the beginning of this article, any conclusion drawn from the partial evidence provided by the *Reijgersdaal* has limited validity.

In fact any conclusion based on evidence of a single ship has great limitations. Information gathered by Marsden regarding the bullion on the group and fleet of ships, of which the *Hollandia* and the *Amsterdam*, respectively, formed a part, resulted in quite a different picture of the bullion shipments.

As regards the *Hollandia's* group of ships the bullion information is summarized by Marsden in the table below.

Hence ducats were the largest single constituent on the bullion of the group and not mexicanen, which the *Hollandia* chiefly carried.

As regards the bullion on the *Amsterdam*

	Hollandia	Overnes	Den Heuvel	Total	%
Ducats	f 25,200	f114,030		f139,230	40,3
Ingots			f103,245	f103,245	29,9
Mexicans	f 96,512			f 96,512	28
Duits		f 6,033		f 6,033	1,7
Total	f121,712	f120,063	f103,245	f345,020	

and accompanying ships in the fleet, Marsden states:

Silver bars	f1 925 000	60,1%
Mexicans	f 900 000	28,1%
Ducaton	f 300 000	9,4%
Payment	f 50 000	1,6%
Duits	f 25 000	0,8%
Total	f3 200 000	

Therefore though ingots formed the main constituent of the bullion both in the fleet and on the *Amsterdam*, mexicanen, whilst forming an important constituent in the fleet, were not being carried on the *Amsterdam*. Instead she carried ducaton as subsidiary bullion.

Likewise, the bullion being carried on the *Reijgersdaal* itself, when compared to that being carried by all the ships for the year 1746/7, presents two quite different pictures.

Total bullion 1746/7		
Mexicanen	f 800 000:—:—	=30,77%
Staven [ingots]	1 600 000:—:—	=61,54%
Paijement	100 000:—:—	= 3,85%
Duijten	100 000:—:—	= 3,85%
	f2 600 000:—:—	

(The "Paijement" will be sent for a third part in "scheepjes schellingen" and for the rest in "dubbelde stuivers". Amsterdam may reduce the f645 000:—:— in "Staven" with f140 000:—:—. It has forwarded this amount already in silver to Bengal, via Persia.)⁴⁶

Hence the 1746/7 ships' major bullion constituent was ingots, with mexicanen, the basic form of money on the *Reijgersdaal*, forming less than 1/3.

The trade background to the VOC's need for bullion in Asia

Pepper, followed by spices, were the most important commodities obtained from the East during most of the 17th century. However, by the end of the century textiles (cotton, silk, etc.) had overtaken the former group in relative significance. By the mid-18th century textiles, closely followed by two new commodities, tea and coffee, and then by spices, had attained a position of greatest relative importance.⁴⁷

The Dutch obtained pepper from Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Malaya and the Malabar coast; cotton products were bought in Bengal and Coromandel; silk — during the 18th century — mainly in Bengal; coffee from Mocha and later Java and tea from China.⁴⁸

To purchase these commodities bullion had

to be sent from the Netherlands to Asia as there were few European commodities desired by the Eastern areas in exchange. Precious metals, particularly silver, both in coined and uncoined form, was highly desired in the East and played an increasingly pivotal role in the trade. In the matter of obtaining precious metals, the Company could for a long time profit from Amsterdam's position as the world's leading bullion market.

This need for silver was compounded by Asia's capacity to absorb a great deal of the metal. However, it was during the 18th century that the VOC began, increasingly, to experience a cash shortage. The author, A. Attman, has calculated that the ratio of cash to returns before 1700 stood at 1 : 2, which rose after this date to 5 : 7.⁴⁹ The reason for the cash shortage has been attributed to several factors. K. Glamann has highlighted the displacement in the Company's trade within the bullion-consuming areas. Silver-consuming Bengal rose to prominence as the Company's most important trading partner, creating new and increased demands for silver, which were no longer able to be supplemented by sources within Asia.⁵⁰

F.S. Gaastra has pointed to the changes brought about as a result of the increasing demand for new commodities in the Dutch-Asiatic trade such as tea, for which China also demanded silver in exchange.⁵¹ He has also pointed out the growing financial drain of the Company's Eastern office.⁵²

Conclusion

Bullion was sent by the Chambers, where possible, in the form required by Batavia for the individual areas with which trade was conducted.⁵³ Hence it was that 8 reales, though widely popular in the East, went primarily to the pepper areas, like Bantam in Java and Palembang in Sumatra; Dutch silver ducaton coins and silver bars to Bengal and Coromandel, where they were remitted into rupees and gold to the Coromandel area.⁵⁴

In view of this it may well be that the mexicanen on board the *Reijgersdaal* were destined mainly for use in the pepper areas of Indonesia and, to some extent, in the Chinese tea trade. Unlike the *Amsterdam*, the *Hollandia* and other 18th century shipwrecks, the *Reijgersdaal* carried no ducaton, the presence of which, together with bar silver, would typify, more essentially, the 18th century conjuncture, in which ducaton and bar-using Bengal had emerged of central economic importance.

Despite the lack of ducats, the bullion cargo on the *Reijgersdaal* still presents a picture of an important aspect of the shipment of specie from the Netherlands, vital for the continuance of the Dutch-Asiatic trade. Her cargo, comprising mainly of 8 reales milled pillar dollars, depicts, in clear terms, the continuing popularity of the Spanish South American coinage in the Asiatic trade. The presence and preponderance of the milled coins dated between 1732 and 1744, reflects the use to which the new machine-made coinage was quickly put in this trade.

It is hoped that this report, though concentrating only on the bullion, will highlight the wealth of historical evidence which can be drawn from shipwreck material such as that of the *Reijgersdaal* and, perhaps, further hasten the way to proper scientific care of South African shipwrecks.

Notes:

¹ Information supplied by the various divers involved in the salvage. For an account of the use of dynamite in the private salvage work, see J. Fensham, Silver galore, *Fathoms*, May/June 1984, vol. 5, no. 5.

² In section 12 sub-section 2B of the Act it is stated that "No person shall destroy, damage, alter or export from the Republic:— . . . any object or collection or group of objects made of gold, silver, copper, brass, bronze, iron, glass, wood or china in respect of which it is known or generally accepted that it has been in the Republic, including the territorial waters of the Republic as defined in section 2 of the Territorial Waters Act 1963 (Act No. 87 of 1963), for longer than 100 years." More recently a provisional proclamation, dated 23 March 1984, has been gazetted, in terms of which the *Reijgersdaal*, with twenty two other wrecks, have been declared historic shipwrecks. This offers added legal protection to these specific wrecks.

³ Listing of the non-South African shipwrecks conveyed, in correspondence by Jeremy Green, Head of the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Maritime Museum, Fremantle. The South African wrecks investigated so far are:— *'t huis te Craijensteijn* (1698), *Meresteijn* (1702), *de Visch* (1740), *Reijgersdaal* (1747) and a wreck which has tentatively been identified as the *Nieuw Rhoon* (1776).

⁴ K. Muckelroy, *Maritime Archaeology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 106.

⁵ *Dutch-Asiatic shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries*; edited by J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gastra, I. Schoffer, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979, p. 510. Further information provided in correspondence with the archivist at the Algemeen Rijksarchief, Eerste Afdeling, 's-Gravenhage, Nederland.

⁶ P. Marsden, A reconstruction of the treasure of the *Amsterdam* and the *Hollandia*, and their significance, *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, vol. 7, no. 2, May 1978, p. 144.

⁷ *Dutch-Asiatic shipping*, p. 510. Information from the Algemeen Rijksarchief.

⁸ 'posthouder' — official at outlying government post. Ganzekraal is confirmed by Dr C. de Wet, Chief Archivist of the Cape Archives, as one of the official government posts of the time. For references to the historical buildings at Ganzekraal, see E. Vertue, *Travels with Eric Vertue*, Cape Town: E. Vertue, 1976, p. 77f. and H. Fransen and M.A. Cook, *The Old Buildings of the Cape*, Cape Town: Balkema, 1980, p. 260f.

⁹ Verbatim copy, *Politieke Raad, Dag Register*, 1744—1750, Cape Archives, VC26.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Politieke Raad, Uitgaande Brieven*, 1746—1749, p. 638, Cape Archives, ZK 1/189.

¹² *Dutch-Asiatic shipping*, p. 510.

¹³ *Politieke Raad, Uitgaande Brieven*, 1746-1749, p. 630, Cape Archives, ZK 1/189.

¹⁴ K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade 1620—1740*, Copenhagen: Danish Science Press, 1958, p. 3—5.

¹⁵ C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*, London: Hutchinson, 1965, p. 197.

¹⁶ Information from the Algemeen Rijksarchief.

¹⁷ K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade*, p. 287. Glamann mentions this as practice during the first third of the 18th century and it seems it was still the case around 1747.

¹⁸ Information from the Algemeen Rijksarchief.

¹⁹ K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade*, p. 287.

²⁰ Information from the Algemeen Rijksarchief.

²¹ K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade*, p. 288.

²² 1 mark = 0,24608 kg.; see W.C.H. Staring, *De binnen-en buitelandse maten, gewichten en munten van vroeger en tegenwoordig*, Reprint 4th revised edition, Arnhem: Gypers and Van Loon, 1980.

²³ Information from the Algemeen Rijksarchief. (*Journal van de opperboekhouder der kamer Amsterdam 16 Mei 1744—31 Mei 1748*, p. 831).

²⁴ P. Marsden, A reconstruction of the treasure of the *Amsterdam* and *Hollandia*, p. 141, 144.

²⁵ Information from the Algemeen Rijksarchief. (*Journal van de opperboekhouder*, p. 834).

²⁶ A value derived from the information regarding the scheepsgelt, $f518:2:— + 200 = f2,59$.

²⁷ $f75\ 146:5:— + 2,59 = 29\ 014$.

²⁸ Verbatim copy, *Politieke Raad, Dag Register* 1744—1750, Cape Archives, VC26.

²⁹ *Politieke Raad, Uitgaande Brieven*, 1746—1749, p. 762, Cape Archives, ZK 1/189.

³⁰ P. Marsden, A reconstruction of the treasure of the *Amsterdam* and *Hollandia*, p. 141—2, 146—7. See also K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade*, p. 51.

³¹ P. Marsden, A reconstruction of the treasure of the *Amsterdam* and *Hollandia*, p. 142, 146—7.

³² J. Rawe, one of the main divers on this and other

Cape wreck sites has indicated that the coins from the *de Visch* were found in similar stacks.

³³ J. Rawe.

³⁴ Information obtained from the divers.

³⁵ G. Calbeto de Grau, *Compendio de las piezas de ocho reales*, Puerto Rico: Ediciones Juan Ponce de Leon, 1970, vol. 1 and 2; F.W. Grove, *Coins of Mexico*, Massachusetts: Quarterman Publications, Inc., 1981.

³⁶ R.G. Doty, *Encyclopedic dictionary of numismatics*, London: Robert Hale, 1982, p. 240f. Especially valuable information regarding this was received from Professor T.V. Buttrey of Cambridge, England.

³⁷ F. Calicó, X. Calicó and J. Trigo, *Monedas Españolas desde Felipe III a Isabel II*, 4th edition, Spain: F. Calicó, X. Calicó and J. Trigo, 1981.

³⁸ For this and the following information on the Mexico mint the following numismatic works were consulted: H.F. Burzio, *Diccionario de la moneda Hispanoamericana*, Santiago de Chile: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina, 1958, vol. 2, p. 46f (esp. p. 62); G. Calbeto de Grau, *Compendio de las piezas de ocho reales*, vol. 1, p. 202f; F.W. Grove, *Coins of Mexico*; F. Calicó, X. Calicó and J. Trigo, *Monedas Españolas*; A.F. Pradeau, *Numismatic History of Mexico*, New York: Sanford J. Durst, 1978; C.R. Bruce II and Dr G.W. Vogt, *Standard catalogue of Mexican coins, paper money, stocks, bonds, medals*, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, (n.d.); J. de Yriarte Oliva, *Catalogo de los reales de a ocho españoles*, Madrid: Editorial Iber-Amer, S.A., 1965, p. 93f.

³⁹ R.G. Doty, *Encyclopedic dictionary of numismatics*, p. 57–58.

⁴⁰ H.F. Burzio, *Diccionario de la moneda Hispanoamericana*, vol. 1, p. 80f.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 413.

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 240f; G. Calbeto de Grau, *Compendio de las piezas de ocho reales*, vol. 1, p. 108.

⁴³ P. Marsden, A reconstruction of the treasure on the *Amsterdam* and *Hollandia*, p. 140.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141f for this and all following information regarding the bullion on the *Amsterdam* and *Hollandia*.

⁴⁵ This writer's calculations based on information given by P. Marsden, A reconstruction of the treasure on the *Amsterdam* and *Hollandia*, p. 145.

⁴⁶ Information from the Algemeen Rijksarchief.

⁴⁷ K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade*, p. 13f, 73f; De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw: de groei van een bedrijf. Geld tegen goederen. Een structurele verandering in het Nederlands-Aziatisch handelsverkeer in *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, deel 91, 1976, p. 254f; A. Attman, *The bullion flow between Europe and the East*, Goteborg: Kungl. Vetenskaps- och Vitterhets-Samhället, 1981, p. 37–43.

⁴⁸ A. Attman, *The bullion flow between Europe and the East*, p. 39–41.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42f (Based on figures given by F.S. Gaastra in *Bijdragen en mededelingen*, p. 256).

⁵⁰ K. Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade*, p. 62–9, 263–5.

⁵¹ F.S. Gaastra in *Bijdragen en mededelingen*, p. 262–5.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 270–2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 252–3.

⁵⁴ Information conveyed in correspondence by Arent Pol, Koninklijk Kabinet van Munten, Penningen en Gesneden Munten, 's-Gravenhage, Nederland.

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF THE CAPE GOVERNOR, HENDRIK SWELLEN-GREBEL, CONCERNING THE WRECKING OF THE REIJGERSDAAL

"Take this with you in case you manage to save yourselves"

Fri. 27th Oct. 1747. On the other side of the bay a small south easterly wind, but here in the valley quite still.

In the afternoon we were informed by the Company's official stationed at the post, Ganzecraal, of the sad news that two days ago the outward-bound *Reijgersdaal* had hit the rocks and had soon afterwards been smashed to pieces in the area between Robben and Dassen Islands, near the above-mentioned

Ganzecraal. As soon as the Governor was informed of the news, he sent out from the Castle to salvage the goods that still might be washed up on shore, and to go and inspect the site in case of any eventuality, the ensign Hendrik Storm with forty soldiers and their petty-officers, as well as clerks, to keep accurate notes of everything they might find.

Sat. 28th Oct. 1747. The wind low and variable, making it fine weather for the equipage master, Jacobus Möller, on instructions from the Governor, to begin his journey to the place where the *Reijgersdaal* was wrecked, in order

to establish if there was anything else that could be done for the benefit of the Company and, above all, to see if there was any possibility of at least salvaging the money chests.

Sun. 29th Oct. 1747. A soft sea-wind and partly cloudy; a sermon each by Franciscus Lesuer and Ricardus Cloppenburg.

Also, the following account of the wrecking of the *Reijgersdaal* was given by the under-merchant Johan Christiaan Clockhoff, as well as the gunner's mate and a quartermaster who, with another seventeen, were saved; and of whom fourteen yesterday arrived at the Cape.

Appearing before me, Josephus de Grandpreez, Councillor and Secretary of the Council of Policy here at the Cape, the aforementioned witnesses, viz.; the undermerchant Johan Christiaan Clockhoff, the gunner's mate Willem Hend and the quartermaster Coenraad Bennik, all of whom served on the wrecked *Reijgersdaal*, and, by order of Hendrik Swellengrebel, Councillor Extra Ordinarius of the Netherlands Indies and Governor of the Cape and the Council of Policy, declare to tell the truth.

That, after a journey of four and a half months, on the 14th of this month [October], having caught sight of Dassen Island and, having tried unsuccessfully, because of contending winds, to anchor, they lowered the small boat to obtain fresh food from the island — a few rabbits, wild geese and some fish.

That, during the following days they tried their best to either anchor at Dassen Island or reach Table Bay but were prevented equally from doing either because of the contrary winds. With the result, that it was not until the 24th October that they were able, by manoeuvring this way and that way, to bring the ship to the north side of Robben Island where, at evening, because of a strong south easterly wind and because of their weak condition — [out of an original crew of 297] 125 men dead, including the second mate Michiel Bussouw, and 83 indisposed, including the captain Jan Bandt and the first mate Jan Schamp — they anchored and stayed till the following day. That, because they were anchored poorly, they resolved to lift anchor and await a favourable wind, in order to find a more secure anchorage in the front of Dassen Island or in Saldanha Bay. That, whilst raising the anchor that morning at 6 o'clock, the rope suddenly snapped when the sails which had been folded the whole night were hauled up. They headed for the above-mentioned places and the south easterly wind was still blowing strongly.

That, after about an estimated hour's sailing big breakers were seen out front at which point the watch, the second mate, Lourens Pietersz? who together with the third mate, Roelof Wykman, were the only men up and about and able to take responsibility, went to the captain's cabin. The captain was immediately taken to the half-deck and seated on a chair. He also saw the breakers ahead and the danger and ordered the sails on the starboard side to be close-hauled, but, because of the weak condition of the crew, nothing was able to be done speedily enough to save the ship. The ship hit a rock; during the course of this the also sick first mate, Jan Schamp, appeared on the half-deck.

That, the rudder of the ship with the third knock, was smashed. The small boat was lowered and about 10 a.m. the main mast and foremast one after another, was knocked off, falling overboard. At this point the appearing men with another thirteen and, in possession of a sounding line, threw themselves into the small boat to attempt to reach the shore through the high and heavy seas and then to do something about saving the rest of the crew with the aid of the line.

That, after three quarters of an hour rowing, every minute in danger of sinking, they at last reached the shore and there saw that the ship had been smashed to pieces. This being the position and there being nothing left to do to save the ship, they resolved to leave the barren, uninhabited place and to trek inland. This they in fact did after a short delay, as a result of leaving behind the quartermaster and a soldier who, because they were ill, were unable to follow. After spending a night in the bush they arrived at a farming post near de Bracke Fonteijn, where they recovered and subsequently on the 28th arrived at the Cape, having heard along the way that another four men had been able to reach the shore in the bigger boat, but were badly injured. The third mate, Roelof Wykman, it was learnt, had thrown the ship's log to them as they left the ship, with the words, "Take this with you in case you manage to save yourselves". Thus related, recorded and signed, The Castle, Cape, 29th Oct. 1747, in the presence of the Bookkeeper Olaf Martini Bergh and assistant Jeremias Auret as witnesses, signed by Johannes Christiaan Clockhoff, Willem Hend and an X by Coenraad Bennik, signed by Js. de Grandpreez, Councillor and Secretary.

Mon. 30th Oct. 1747. Still somewhat cloudy

but little wind. We received a letter from the equipage master, Jacobus Möller, relating that in one washed up, broken money chest four bags of money, one damaged, had been found, also a broken but empty money chest no. 3, and several barrels containing pork and beer (nothing else of importance) had been washed up. Chests, logs, parts of the ship's equipment, all in broken pieces, were seen drifting in the water. That, the place where the *Reijgersdaal* had hit the rocks consisted of a reef about a quarter of a mile long, roughly an elongated

hook, where the seas even in calm weather are so high and rough that a person would risk great danger by going in a boat in search of the remaining money chests. That, nothing else of interest was forthcoming.

(Verbatim copy, Politieke Raad, Dag Register 1744–1750, Cape Archives, VC26)

Translation help from Mrs L. Szapiro, Dr C. Pama, Dr C. de Wet.