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## **IS THIS UNIQUE METAL FIND FROM A SHIPWRECK THE MISSING LINK IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF 17TH CENTURY TOILET SERVICES?**

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During the summer of 2009 a shipwreck was discovered near the Dutch island of Texel, containing a remarkable group of both organic and inorganic finds. More than 50 researchers from different disciplines are (still) involved in its study and since then, it has become evident that the group of finds belonged to a mid-17th century ship, most likely Dutch but still of unknown origin and destination. Especially the pristine condition of the objects, untouched for the last 350 years, offers a unique opportunity to investigate the collection of high-status objects.

This presentation focuses on one interesting object in particular: an oval, gilded and decorated brass box, resembling a powder box. To date, no exact historical parallels have been located. Objects belonging to a toilet service were found in this wreck, made of wood and textile, like a mirror and a comb in a purse. This early 17th century set appears to be incomplete, yet complementary objects made from metal have been found, among which the box that is the subject of this study. Around 1650, toilet services entirely made in (precious) metal became fashion. There must have been a period where both types have coexisted and where hybrid forms were in use. However, these composite sets have never survived the passage of time, especially due to splitting up at inheritances. The unique context of the metal box provides an excellent opportunity to incorporate historical written sources, iconography, museum collections and information from contemporary paintings into the art-technical material research.

### **Keywords**

gilded brass box, 17th century, shipwreck find, toilet service, textile

### **Note/comment**