

Ancient Chinese shipwreck auctioned

About 76,000 pieces of 18th century Chinese porcelain, salvaged from a ship that sank 280 years ago during its journey to Europe, were auctioned by Sotheby's for more than 3 million euros (about \$3.9 million).

'We are absolutely delighted with the results of this sale. The buyers appreciated the quality of the porcelain that was produced in Jingdezhen,' said Mark Grol, director of Sotheby's Amsterdam.

'The wonderful opportunity to be the first owner of this 18th century Chinese porcelain had a strong appeal,' he said. 'The story of the shipwreck captured the imagination of thousands of collectors.'

The porcelain pieces, most of them blue and white, believed to be European-market-oriented, attracted nearly 200 collectors and dealers from Europe, the US and Asia.

Vietnamese fishermen discovered the shipwreck in 1998. Some items from the cargo are now on display in Vietnamese museums.

According to researchers, the ship had been bound for the Netherlands via the Dutch trading post of Batavia, which is now the Indonesian capital Jakarta.

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