

China makes new archaeological find

by UPI

BEIJING - China Wednesday announced the discovery of 13th century pottery and porcelain pieces, offering evidence of its global trade dating back eight centuries.

Chinese archaeologists recovered about 10,000 pieces of pottery and porcelain in an underwater excavation of a shipwreck believed to date back to the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) in the Xisha Islands in the South China Sea, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported Wednesday.

"What we found from the shipwreck on Huaguang Reef No. 1 are pearls of the ancient Silk Road on the sea, and it is the first time we have found such precious antiques in the high seas," Zhang Wei, who led the 55-day excavation in the islands, was quoted as saying. "The fragments serve as a testimony that Chinese people lived and traded around the Xisha Islands during the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasties."

Zhang said the find also shows that foreign trade in those years was prosperous "and that China was one of the earliest nations to discover other parts of the world."

The shipwreck was discovered accidentally by Chinese fishermen in 1996, the report said.

"I guess the ship might have sunk on its way from China to Southeast Asia," said Zhang.

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