



A depiction of a 16th century shipwreck in the Mozambique Channel

LANGENES, Barent.
 Baixos de Iudia.

Amsterdam, Cornelis Claez, 1599, Dutch text edition. 85 x 125mm, with letterpress surtitle and pagination.

£220

A scarce illustration of the Portuguese ship 'Santiago', running aground on Bassas da India (a corruption of this name 'Jewess Shoals'), an atoll between Mozambique and Madagascar, in 1585, en route to the East Indies. In a scene from a horror movie, the crew clambering onto the rocks are attacked by lobsters, one big enough to grab a sailor around the waist in its claw. The reality was no less dangerous: the atoll is submerged for 6 hours every high tide, leaving nowhere to shelter. Only fifty survivors reached Mozambique in the ship's tender. In 1977 the ship was discovered and some of the treasure that was to be used to barter for trade goods was salvaged. The plate engraved by Pieter van den Keere for the 1598 'Caert-Thresoor', with a text by an unknown author. This example is a misprint: the image has been trimmed to the printed border and pasted over a map of Guinea that had been printed in the 'Baixos' text. By 1600 this map was being published in the 'Tabularum Geographicarum' with a text by Petrus Bertius, and in 1616 a new plate was engraved by Jodocus Hondius II, slightly larger and with wider borders with scales of longitude and latitude.



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