Past and current treatments can cause relevant surface information on archaeological gilded metal to get lost. However, it is not easy to preserve this information. Therefore, we aim to establish a practical and optimised research and conservation strategy for marine precious metal.

Multiple gilded artefacts are studied

A 17th century shipwreck, found near Texel (the Netherlands) and known as BZN17, is well-known for its rich textile collection, but also contains a large number of precious metal objects. For this project, several objects are selected, based on their information value, uniqueness and comparability to historical parallels. A selection is shown in Fig 1.

Different analytical techniques are used

Complementary techniques allow the extraction of different types of information. Ideally, no conservation treatment should be applied beforehand. Depending on the research questions, certain techniques can be useful. An overview of expected results for marine silver is given below.

Next: results into strategy

Currently in progress, detailed results per technique and per object are expected. This will be translated into a flowchart and workshops for all stakeholders to aid decision making in the process after excavation of precious metal.