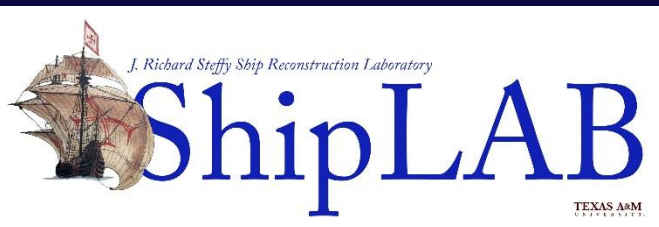


Historia marítima y de la navegación en el Caribe e Iberoamérica III
Especialización en Patrimonio Cultural Sumergido
Cohorte 2019

Shipwrecks of the Empire

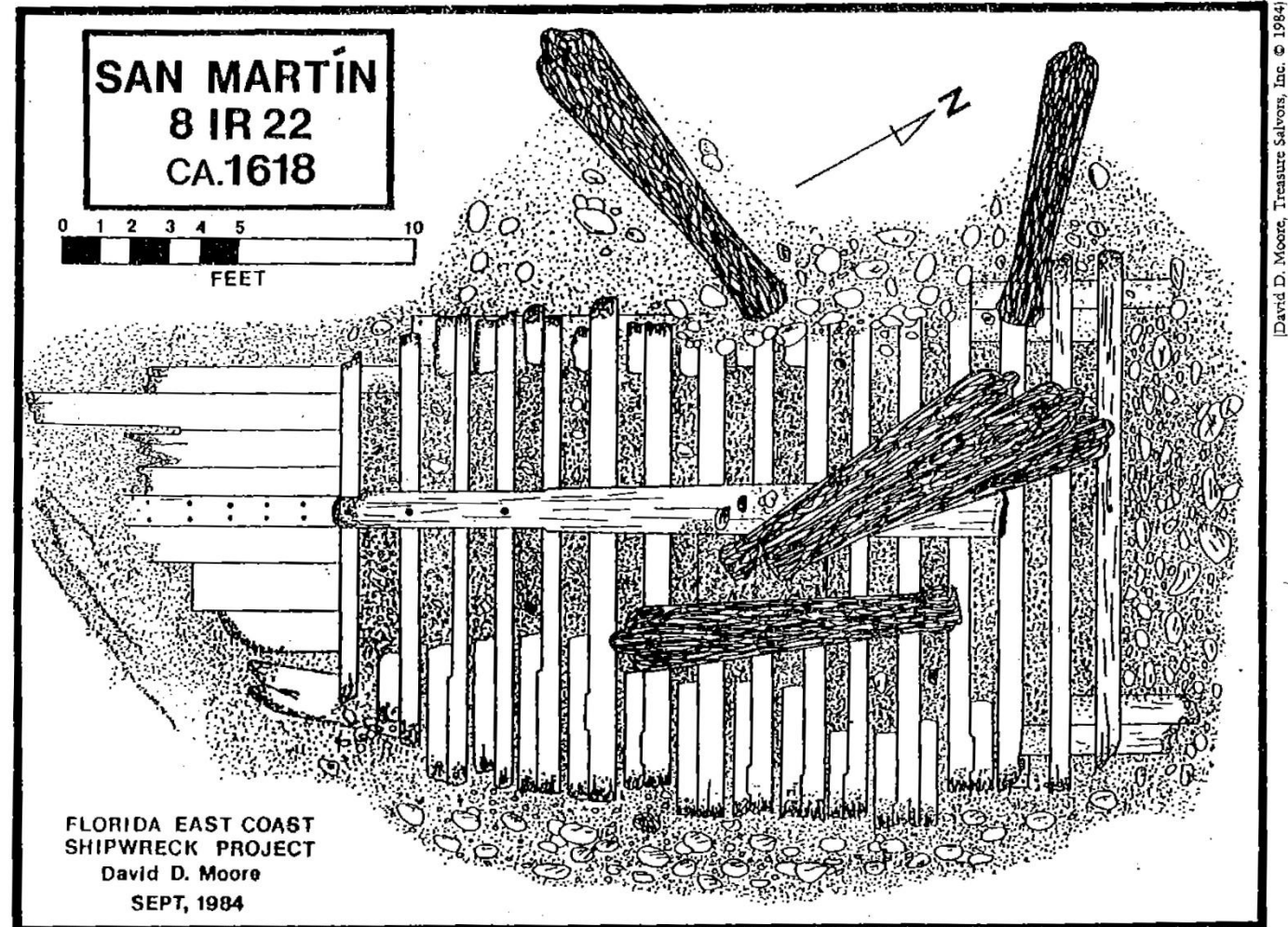
Filipe Castro
Bogotá, April 2019



Part 2

Green Cabin Wreck, 1618

The Green Cabin Wreck was located in the early 1960s by treasure hunter Kip Wagner in Florida and first believed to be one of the 1715 fleet wrecks. Based on the fact that none of the coins found in it dated after 1618 the treasure hunters thought it to be an early 17th century wreck instead.



Eugene Lion later tentatively identified it as the San Martin, a 300 tons ship built in Vizcaya that left Havana to Spain in September 1618 and disappeared soon after, in the coasts of Florida during a storm. To support this hypothesis one of four bronze cannons retrieved from the site bears the date 1594. It was salvaged continuously for decades and its remains published by the archaeologist David Moore.



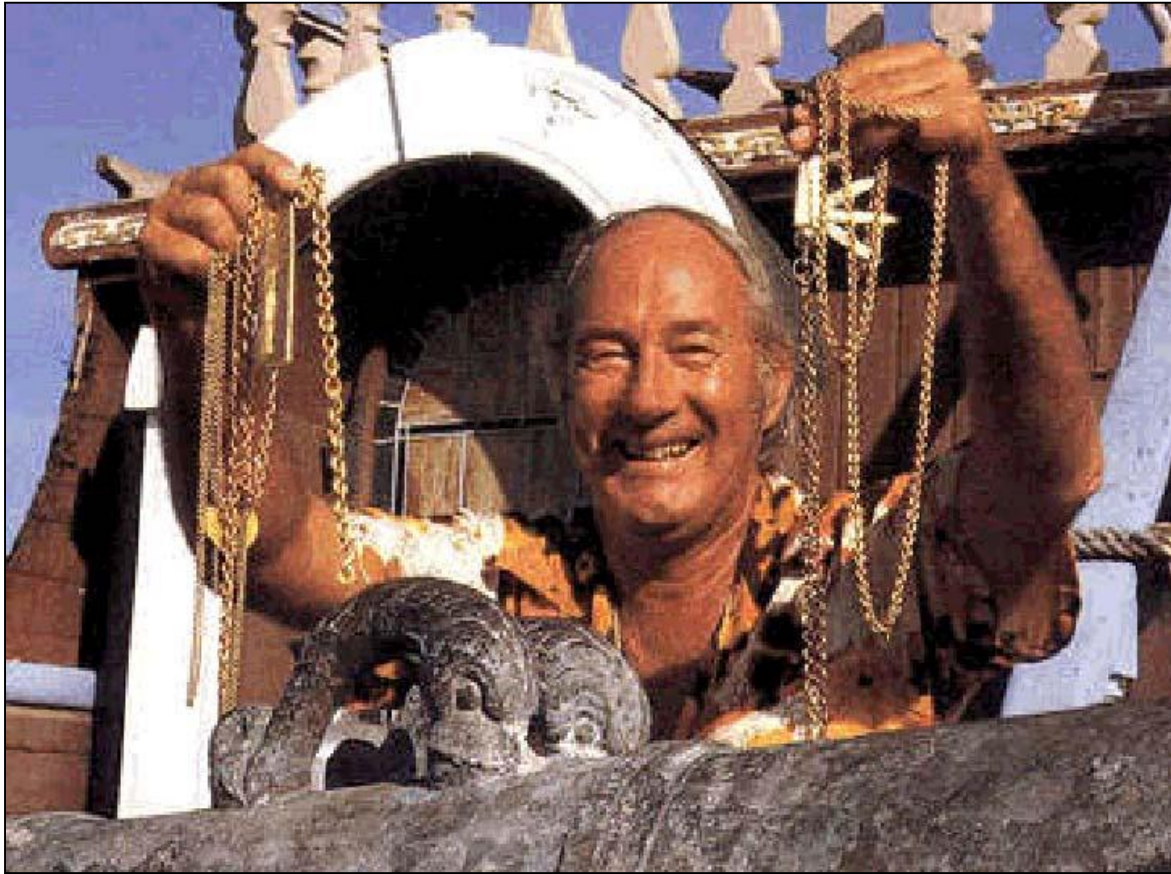
The 1622 fleet

Also sunk by a hurricane were 8 ships of a fleet of 28 vessels that left Havana to Spain 68 years later, on September 4, 1622.

Among the vessels lost was the *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, the vice-flagship (*almiranta*), which has already been referred to in class.

Built in Havana with 550 tons of capacity, it carried 20 bronze guns, a crew of 133 men, 82 soldiers, and 48 passengers.

Shipwrecks of the Empire

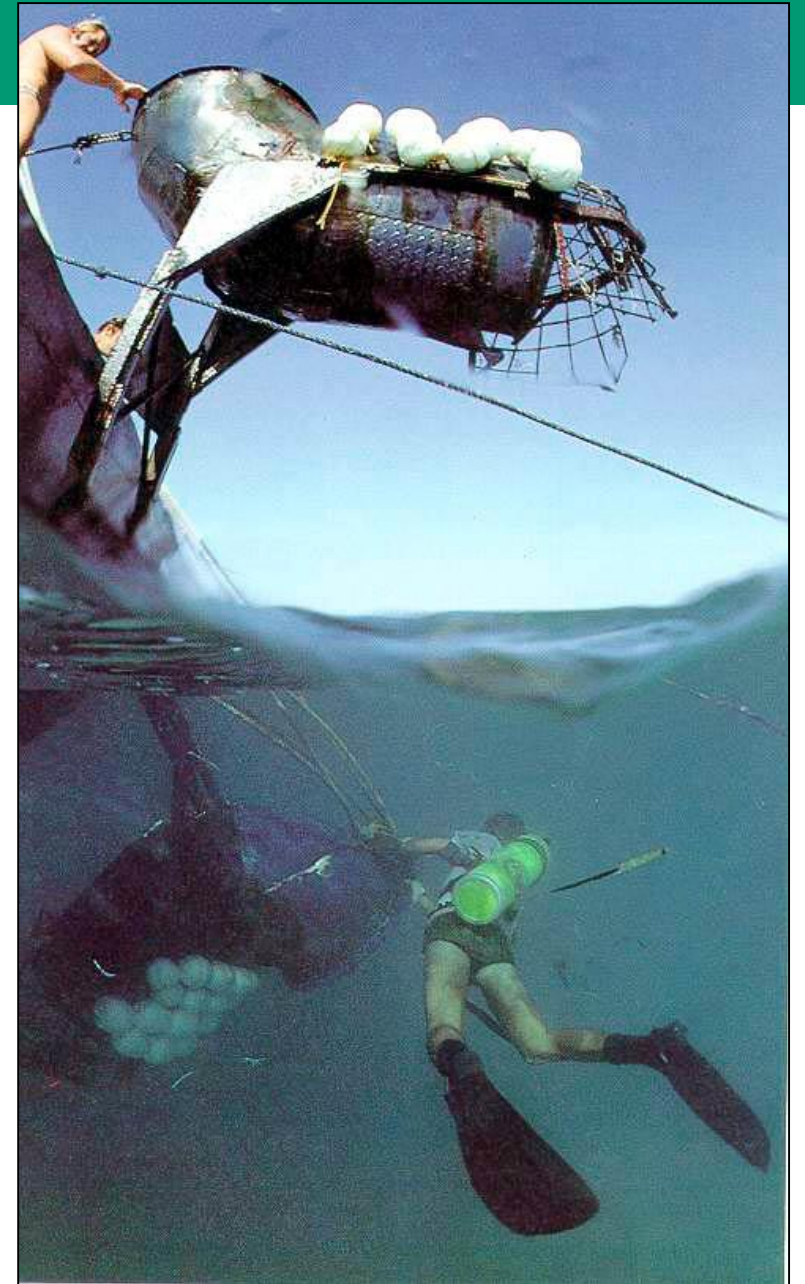


The *Atocha*'s holds were filled with copper and silver, and an enormous cargo of indigo, tobacco, cochineal, and rosewood.

Precious artifacts, gold bars, and jewels were also stored in the passenger's and crew's personal boxes and arcs.

Four astrolabes were found stored together, maybe in the pilot's personal arc.

Since the *Atocha* was found and salvaged by treasure hunters not much is known about its hull, nor the way in which its cargo was stored.



Three other vessels believed to have been part of this fleet have been found:

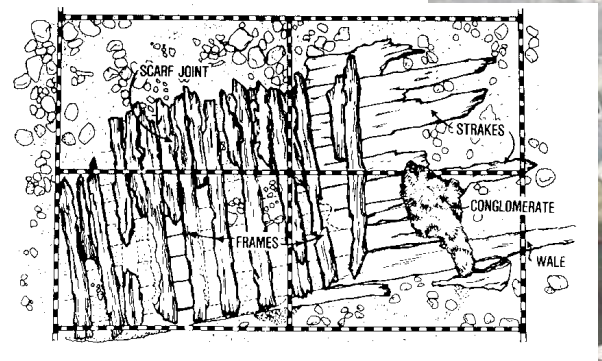
the *Santa Margarita*,
the Dry Tortugas Shipwreck, and
the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*.

Since the first two have been found by treasure hunters not much is known about them.

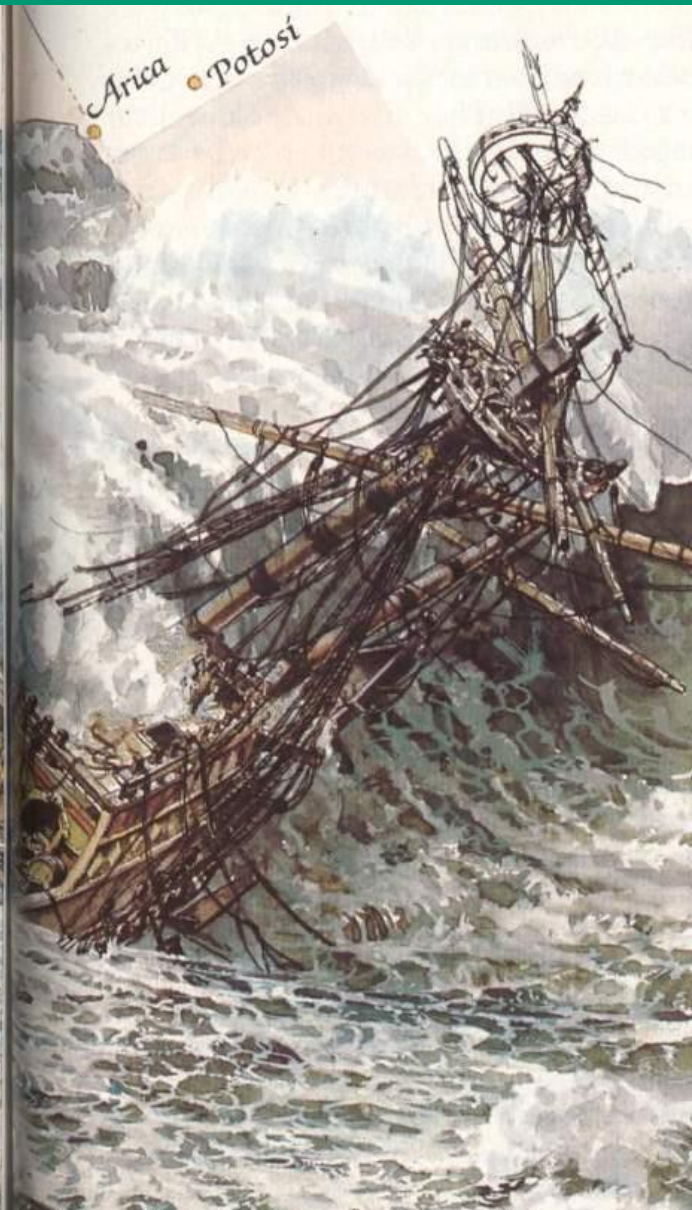
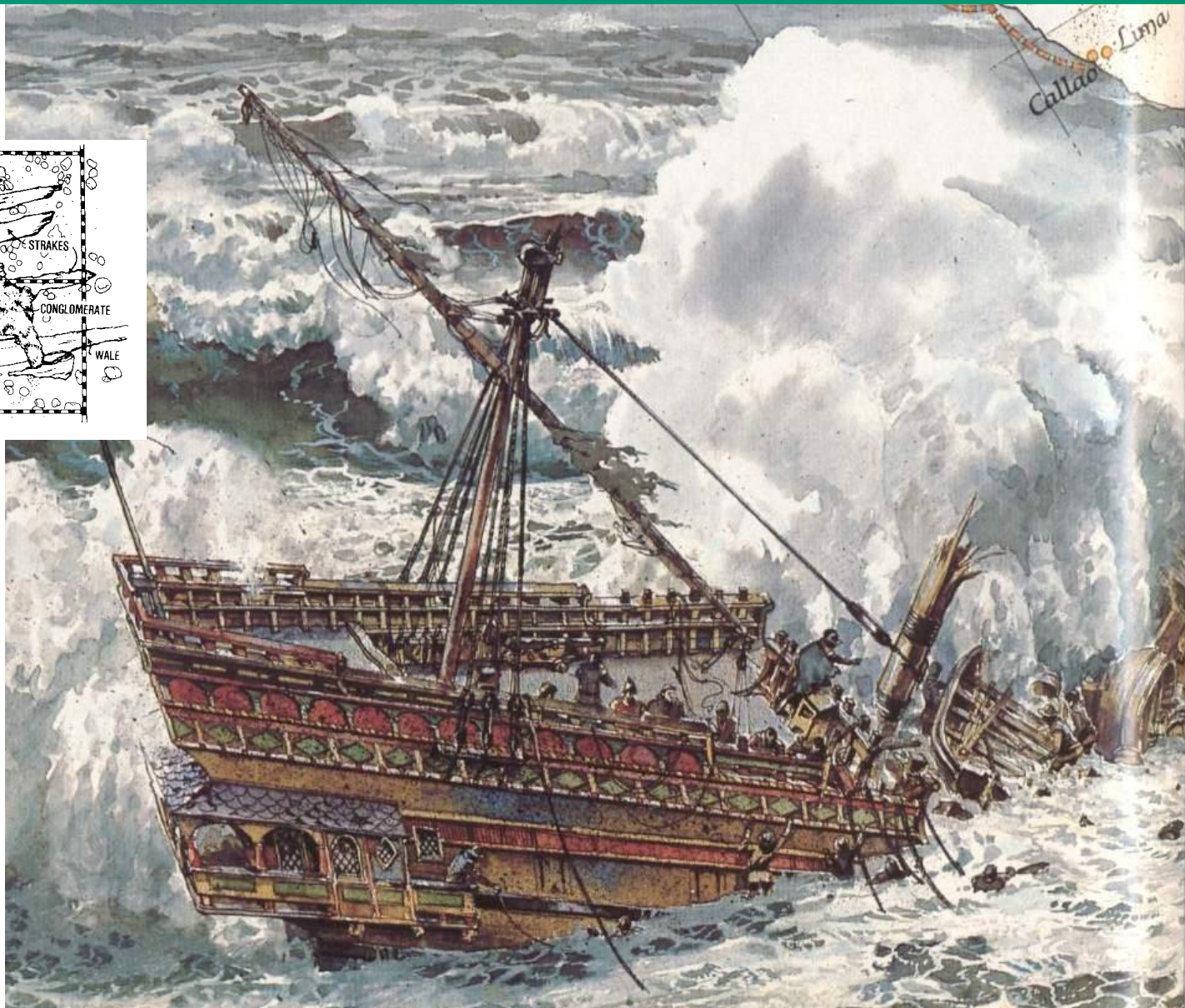
The third wreck site has been surveyed by a team of Florida State University, but not much has been found so far.



Shipwrecks of the Empire



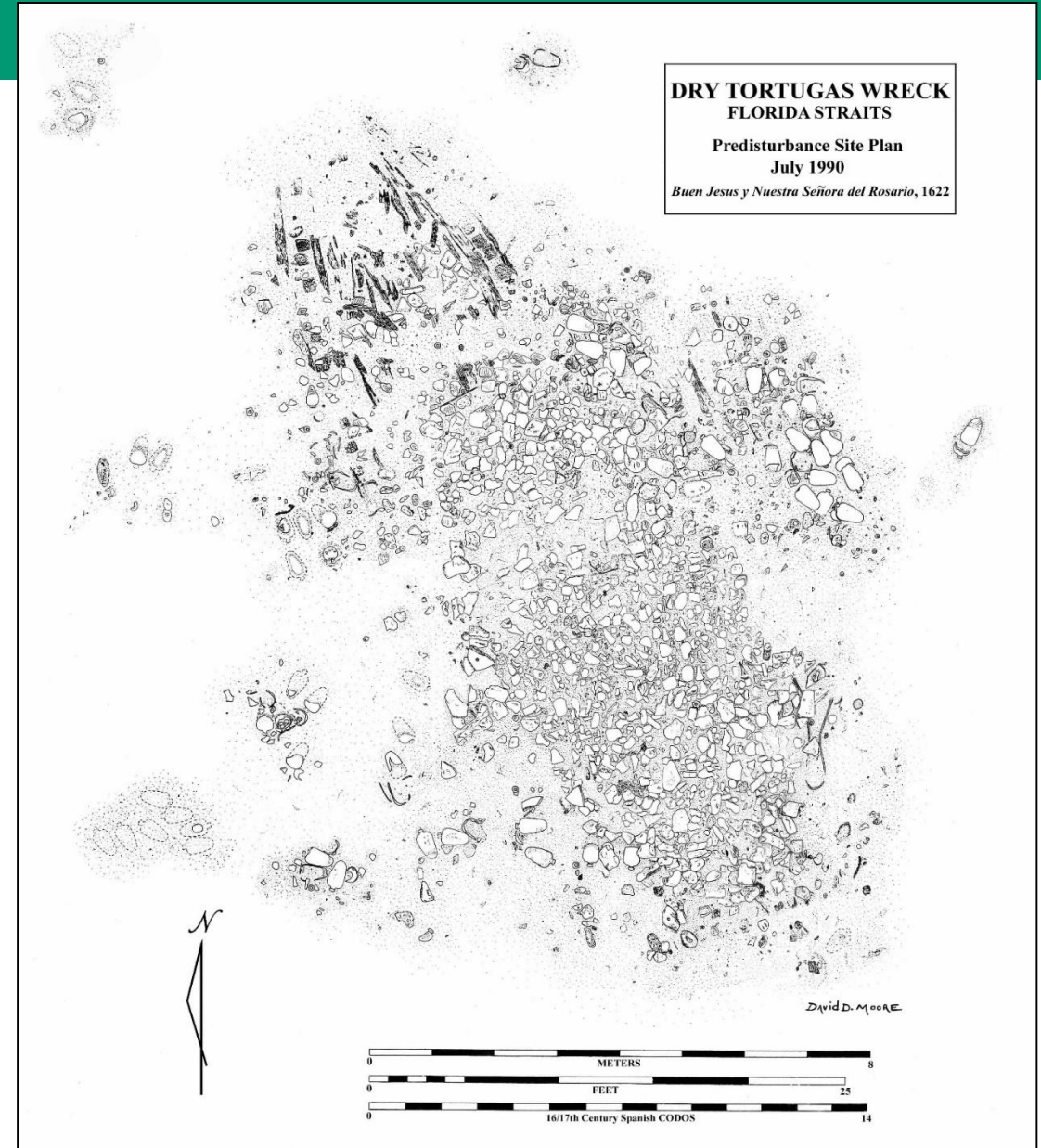
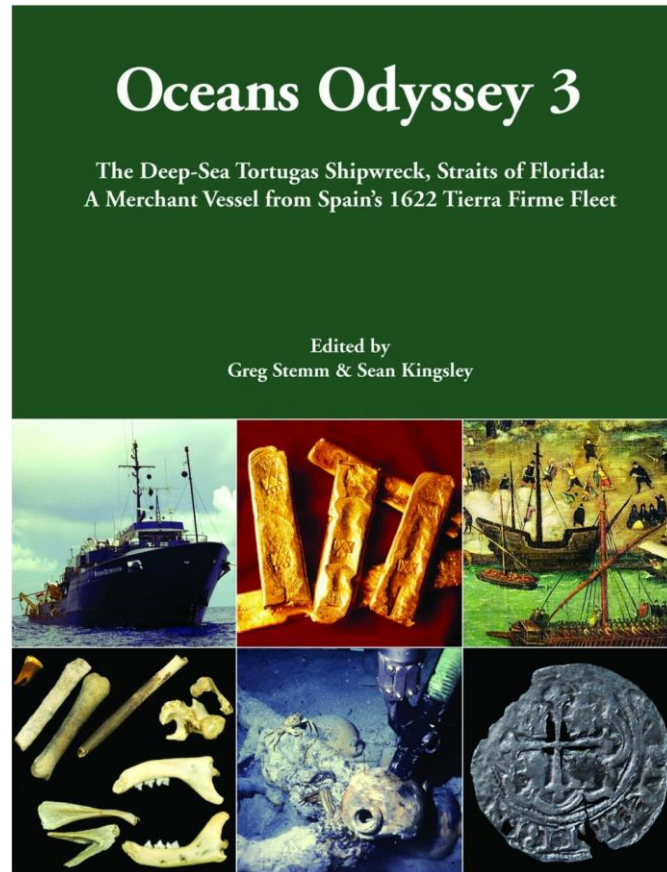
*Santa
Margarita,
1622*



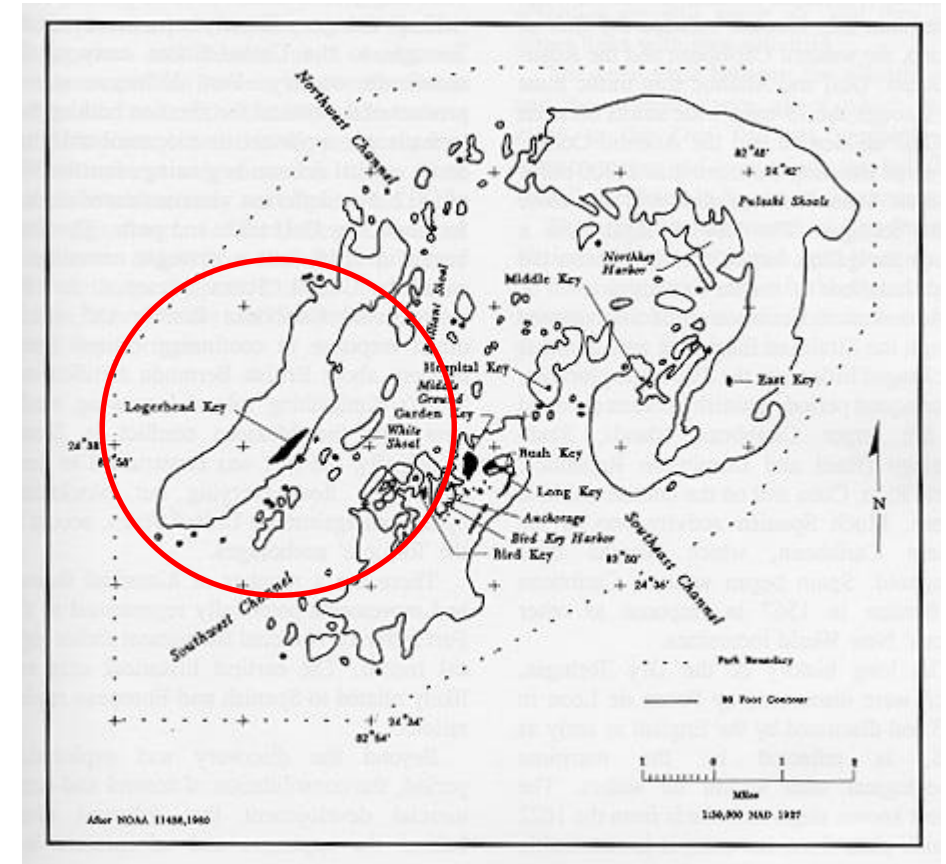
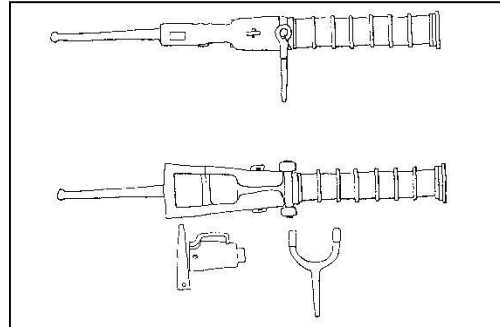
Dry Tortugas, 1622



A book was published about this shipwreck.



Nuestra Señora del Rosario, 1622



Dry Tortugas: FOJE-UW-9 Site, possibly the *N.S. Rosario*.

Nuestra Señora de la Pura y Limpia Concepción, 1641

The *Concepción* was a large galleon built in Spain in 1620. It sailed from Cadiz on April 21, 1640 with the New Spain fleet and arrived safely at Veracruz two months later, June 24. The only incident in the voyage was an attack by pirates which was promptly driven off by the ship's 40 guns.



Already an old ship,
the *Concepción* was
much affected by a
decision to keep it in
the New World for
an entire year.



Before sailing to Havana and Spain the ship was repaired and careened, and then loaded with a large cargo of silver.

The voyage to Havana was a difficult one that lasted 35 days due to contrary winds. Repaired once again, and loaded with new and fresh provisions, the *Concepción* left Havana with the remaining fleet, bound to Spain, on September 20, 1641.



Nine days later the entire fleet was caught by a hurricane. The *Concepción* was greatly damaged and tried to sail to Puerto Rico.

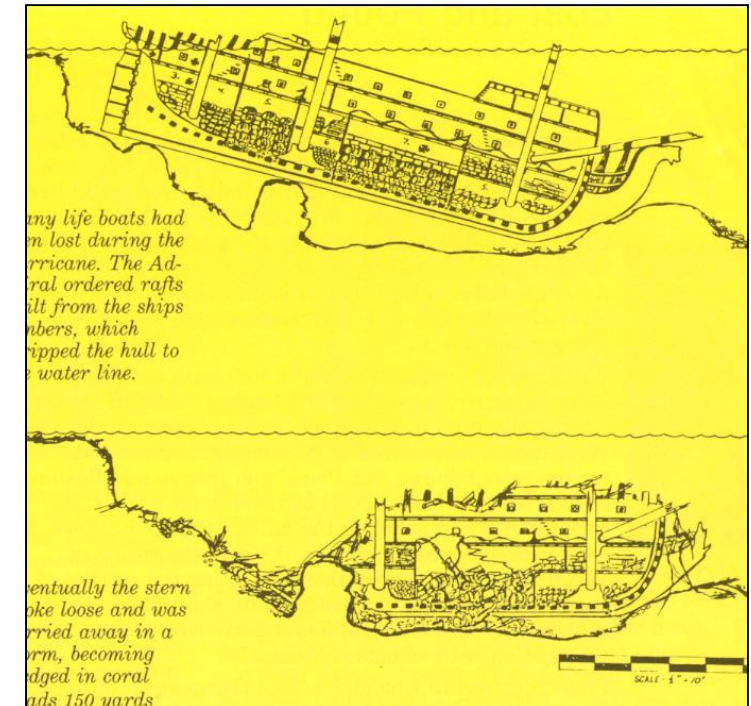
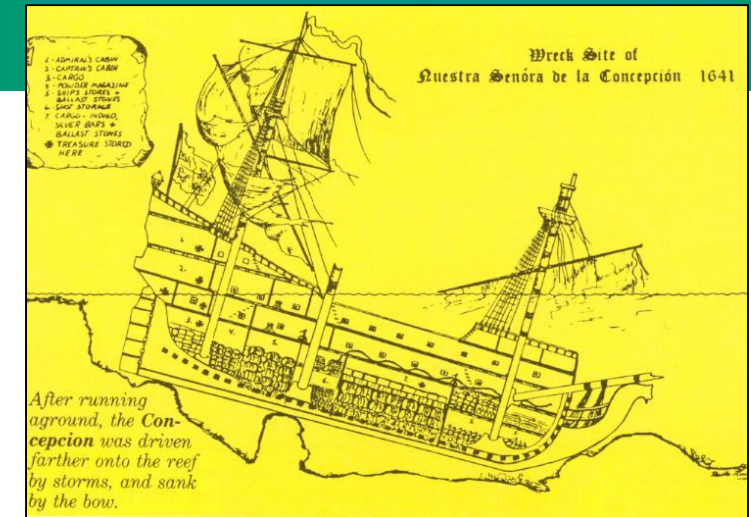
Lost in the ocean, the ship struck an uncharted reef north of Hispaniola on October 31.



The violent sea broke the hull. The crew built a number of rafts and many managed to sail to Hispaniola.

All the attempts to find the wreck and rescue the treasure failed, and the news of the lost galleon spread.

But its treasure would not be found until 45 years later.



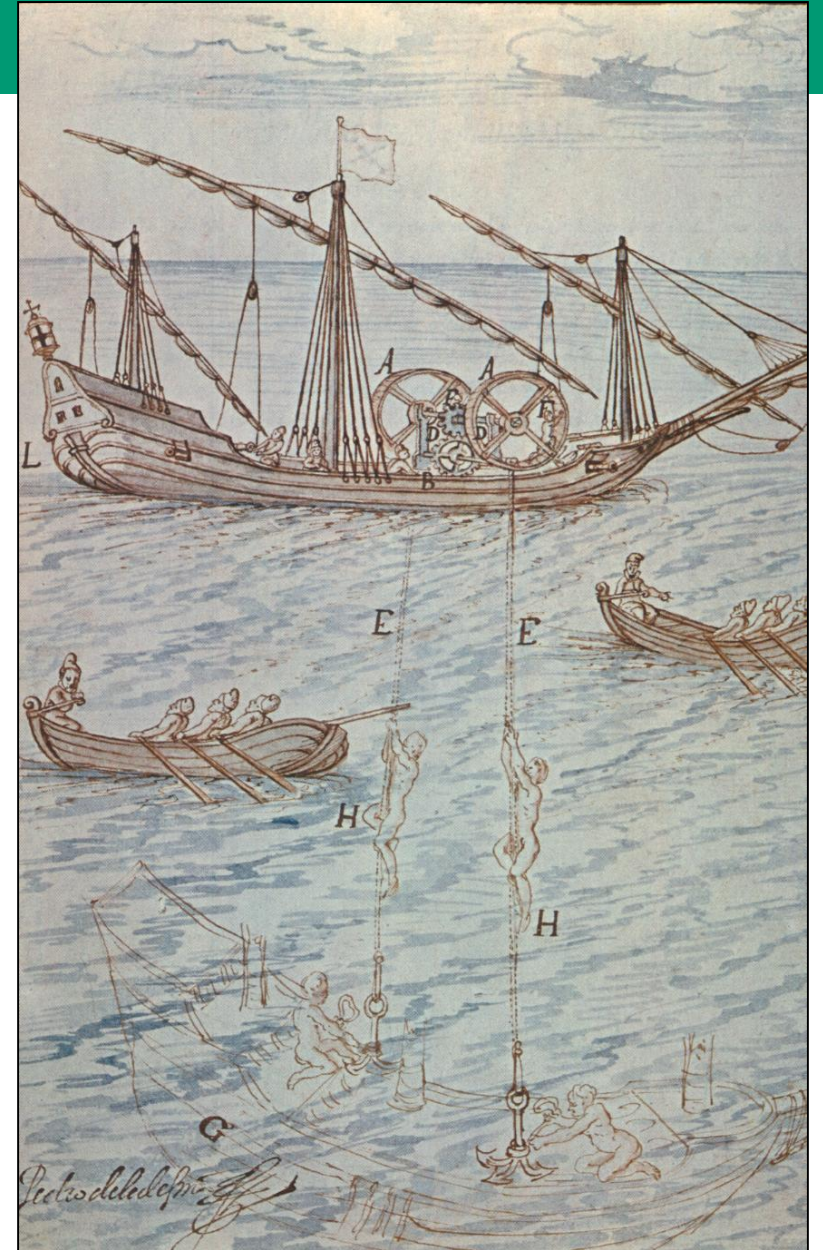
A lumber trader from Massachusetts named William Phips managed to get financial support from the king of England, James II, and in 1687 found the wreck with the help of a Spanish survivor.



With two vessels, the *James and Mary* and the *Henry*, and a crew of native divers he managed to salvage 68,511 pounds of silver and a small quantity of gold – of which 10% reverted to the king – Phips paid his backers and kept a large sum.

Almost immediately he sailed back to salvage more treasure but upon arrival he realized that the site had been extensively salvaged by other parties and gave up after a few days. His partner in this venture, Sir John Narbrough, died on site and was thrown overboard wrapped in an hammock and weighed with some cannon balls.

Phips, now rich and famous Sir William Phips, eventually became the governor of Massachusetts, and military leader of the colony. After failing both these commitments, he went back to treasure hunting in 1695 but never found anything else, dying soon afterwards of a fever, eight years after he found the first silver on the *Concepción*.



The site of the loss of the *Concepción* eventually became known as the Silver Bank, but the story of its treasure was soon forgotten.

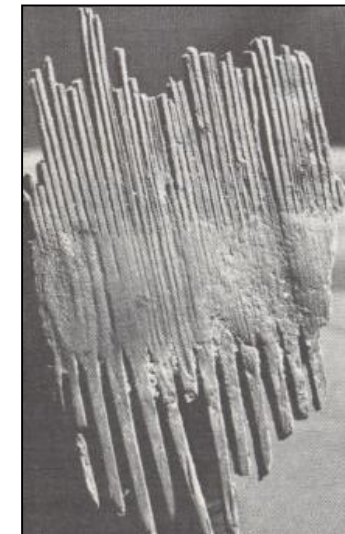
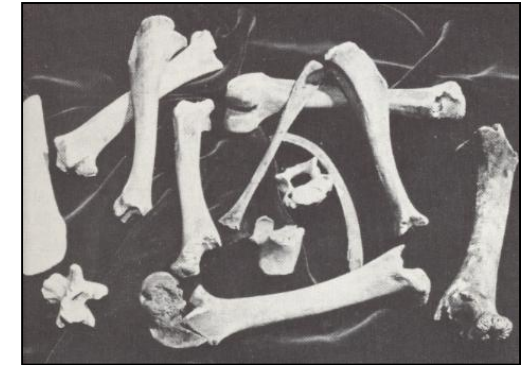
After World War II, however, the development of diving equipment brought new treasure hunters to the reef. In 1952 a men named Alexandre Korganoff failed to find the hull of the *Concepción*. The same fate waited the efforts of Edwin Link in 1955 and Jacques Cousteau in 1968.

Another attempt was made by a treasure hunter named Burt Weber, backed by a group of Chicago bankers. He spent 250,000 dollars and found 13 wrecks, but not the one of the *Concepción*.

A new attempt was made in 1978, this time backed by 30 investors who eventually gathered 2,5 million dollars, and the help of an historian who had found the log of the *Henry*, one of Phips' ships. Burt Weber was successful, finding the remains of the *Concepción* deeply embedded in the coral reef.



Weber found silver in bulk, in coins, and worked into several kinds of artifacts. He also found a few gold chains and Ming porcelain from the Manila Galleons.



After Weber declared the site fully salvaged another treasure hunter, Tracy Bowden, secured a permit and went on salvaging silver coins until recently.

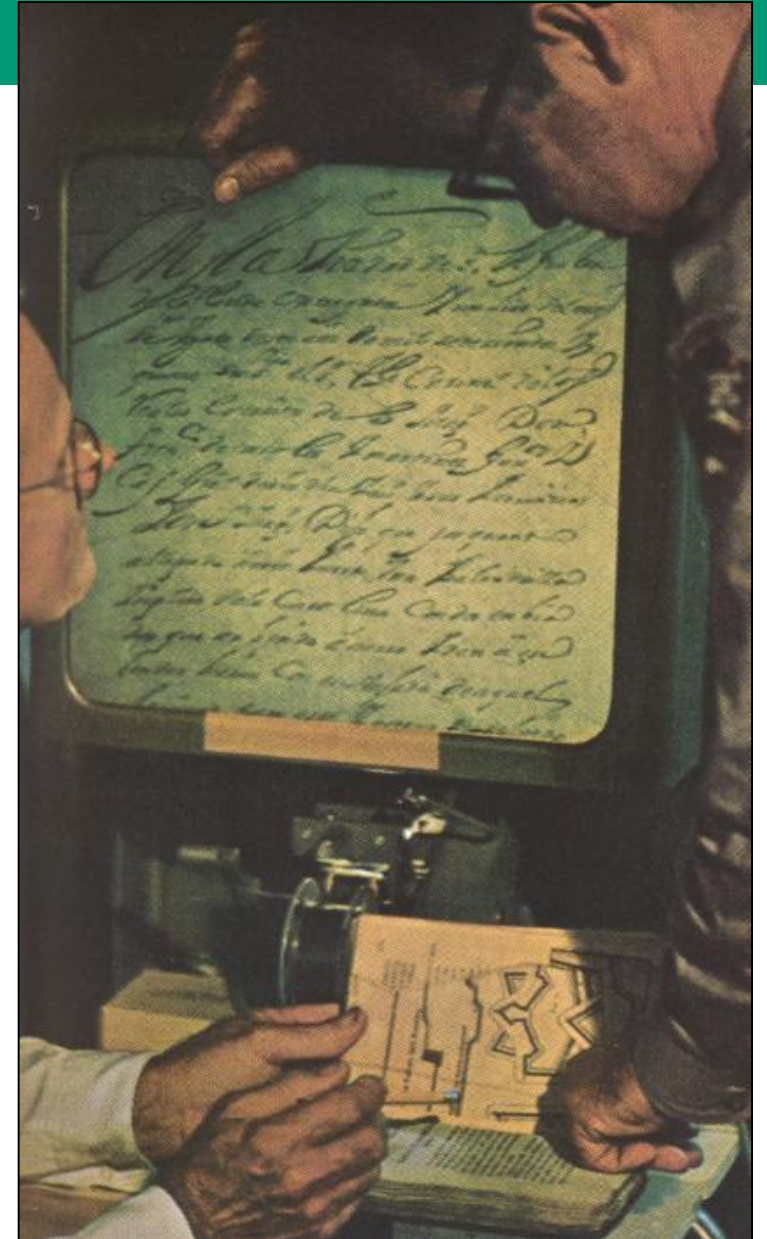


Yet another hurricane is responsible for the loss of almost an entire fleet in the summer of 1715.

Of the 11 ships caught on the Straits of Florida only one made it safely to Europe. The other 10 vessels were lost, 5 from *Nueva España* fleet, under the command of Don Juan Esteban de Ubilla, and 5 from *Tierra Firme* fleet, under the command of Don Antonio de Echeverz y Zubiza.

All of Ubilla's ships sunk off the Florida coast, south of Cape Kennedy: the *capitana*, the *almiranta*, two pataches, and the *Urca de Lima*.

Three of Echeverz' ships were also lost off Cape Kennedy: the *almiranta*, the *Concepción*, and the *Holandesa*. The other two were lost at sea: the *Francesa*, and the *San Miguel*.



The first of these vessels was found by a small contractor named Kip Wagner. He formed a company called *Real Eight Corporation*, and secured the salvage rights of several shipwrecks, nicknamed by the salvors after the closest shore features or the type of cargo found:

Cabin Wreck, in front of a beach cabin,

Gold Wreck, from the amount of gold found in it,

Wedge Wreck, from the shape of some silver ingots,

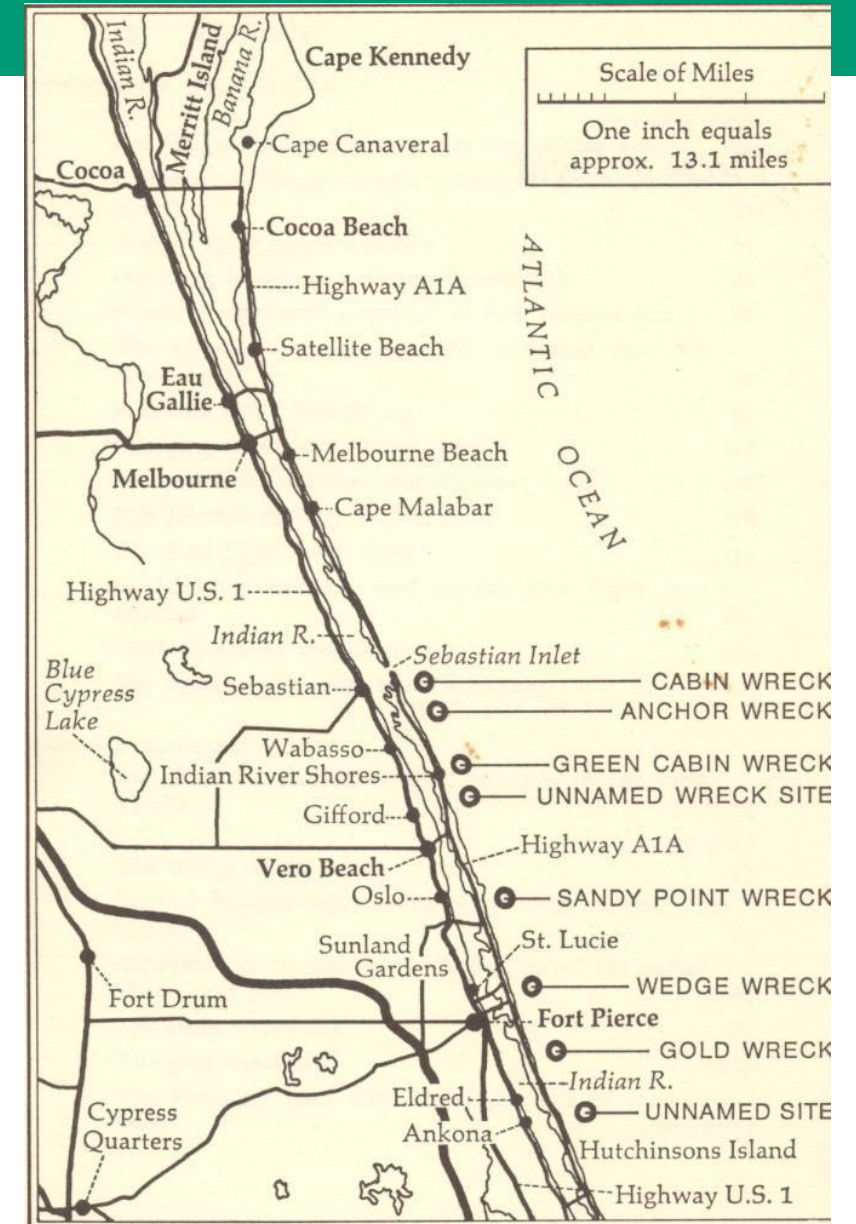
Corrigan's Wreck, and

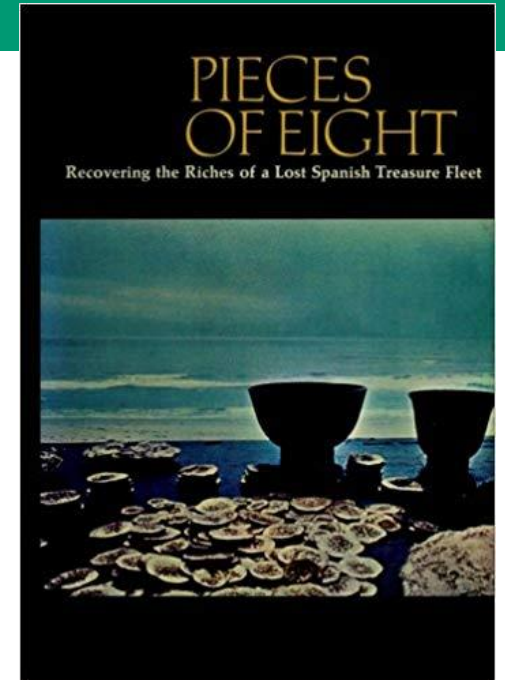
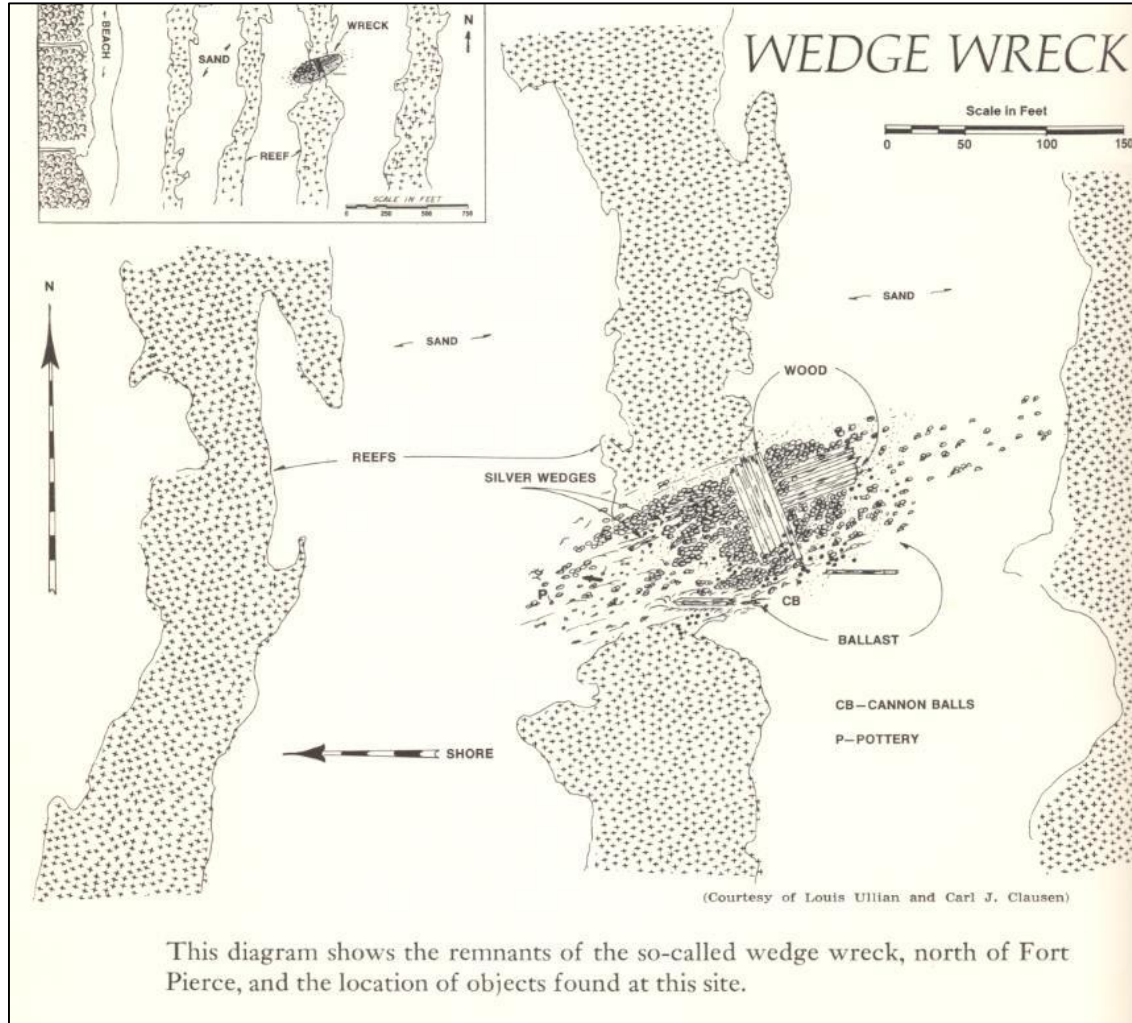
Sandy Point Wreck,



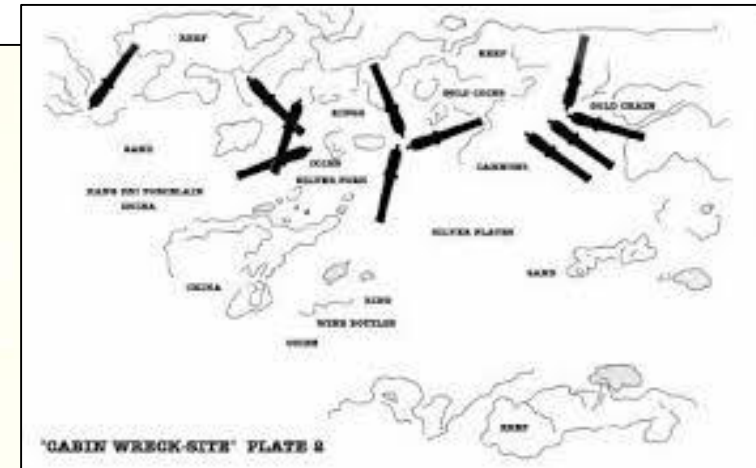
In the 1980s Roger Smith made an assessment of the information available for each of the shipwrecks.

Not a lot is known. Treasure hunters are as destructive as the Daesh fanatics, but they don't film themselves while they are breaking shipwrecks apart.



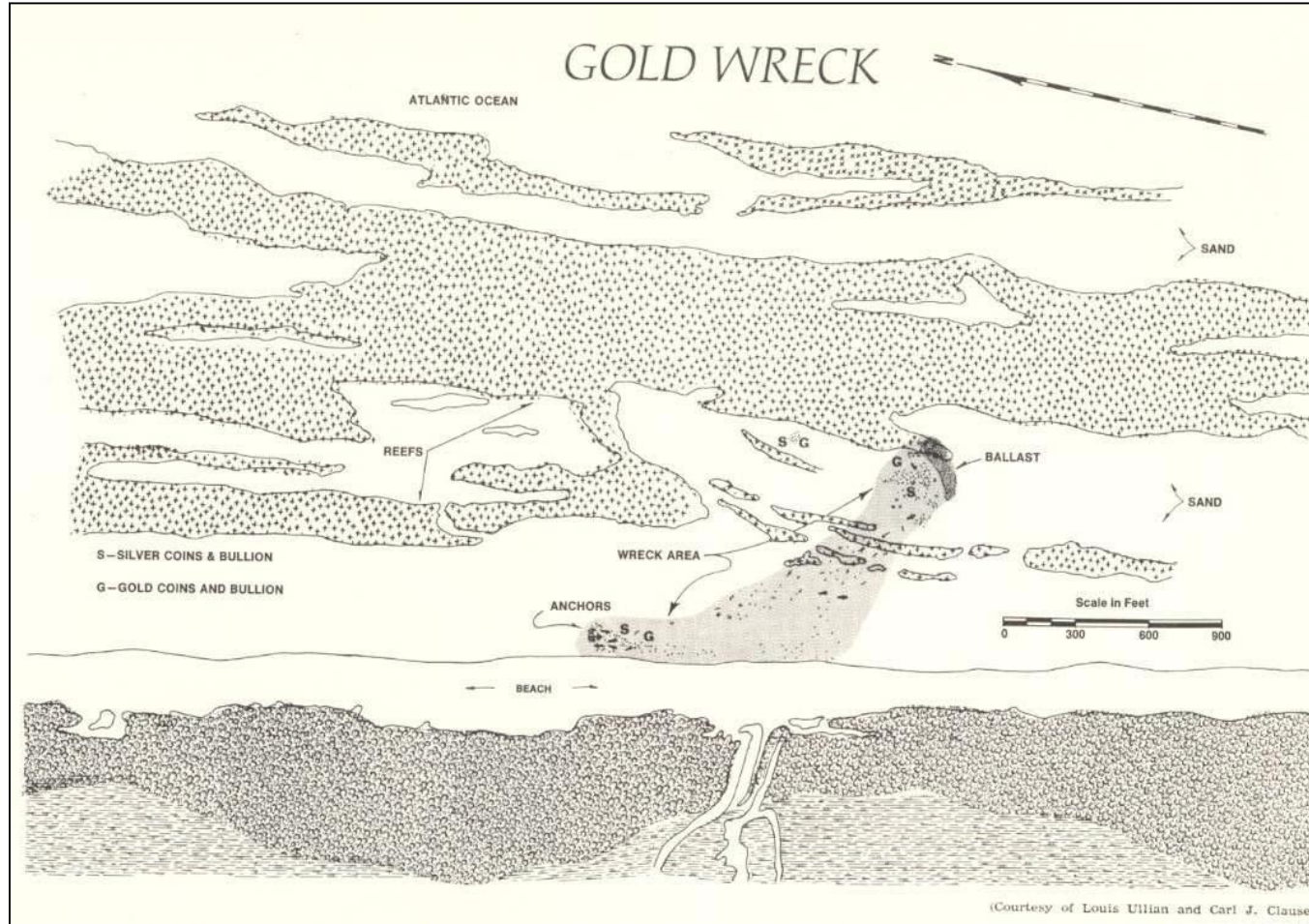


There is a small collection of publications relating the stories of the destructions of many of these shipwrecks.



Most information is anecdotal
and most artifacts degraded
away for lack of
conservation.

Shipwrecks of the Empire

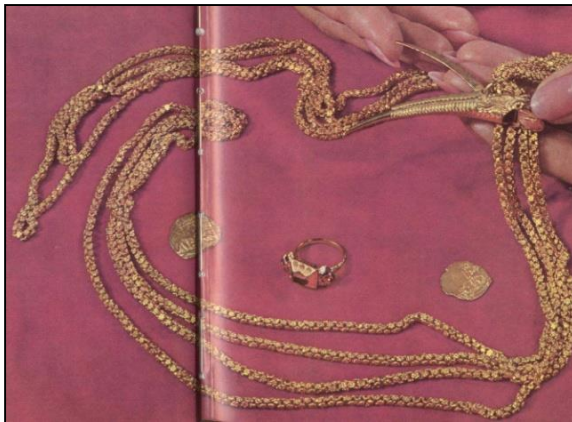


In the end nobody knows which artifacts came from which shipwreck, there are lots of fakes, invented stories, and schemes to swindle money from stupid people, **like the Colombian politicians that believe that Colombia has anything to gain from the salvage of *San José*.**

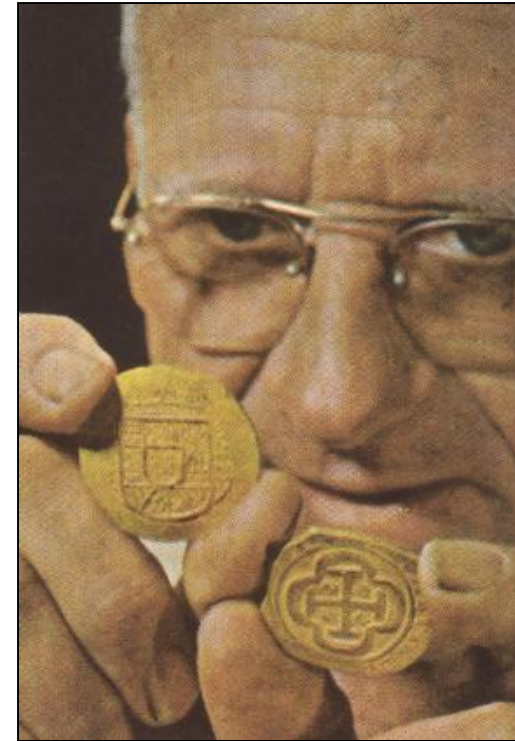
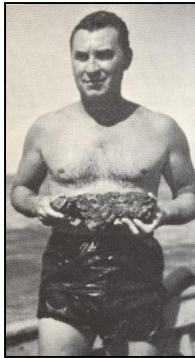
Two of the wreck sites salvaged by the *Real Eight Corporation* proved to be part of other fleets:

Green Cabin Wreck, a 1618 vessel, probably the *San Martin*, the *capitana* of the Honduras Fleet, and

Rio Mar Wreck, presumed to be the *Jesus Maria*, a 1716 salvage vessel that rolled over during the rescue works.



In spite of the enormous interest of these finds, the provenience of the artifacts was not recorded, the treasure was stolen or sold, and very few things remain of the 1715 fleet shipwrecks.



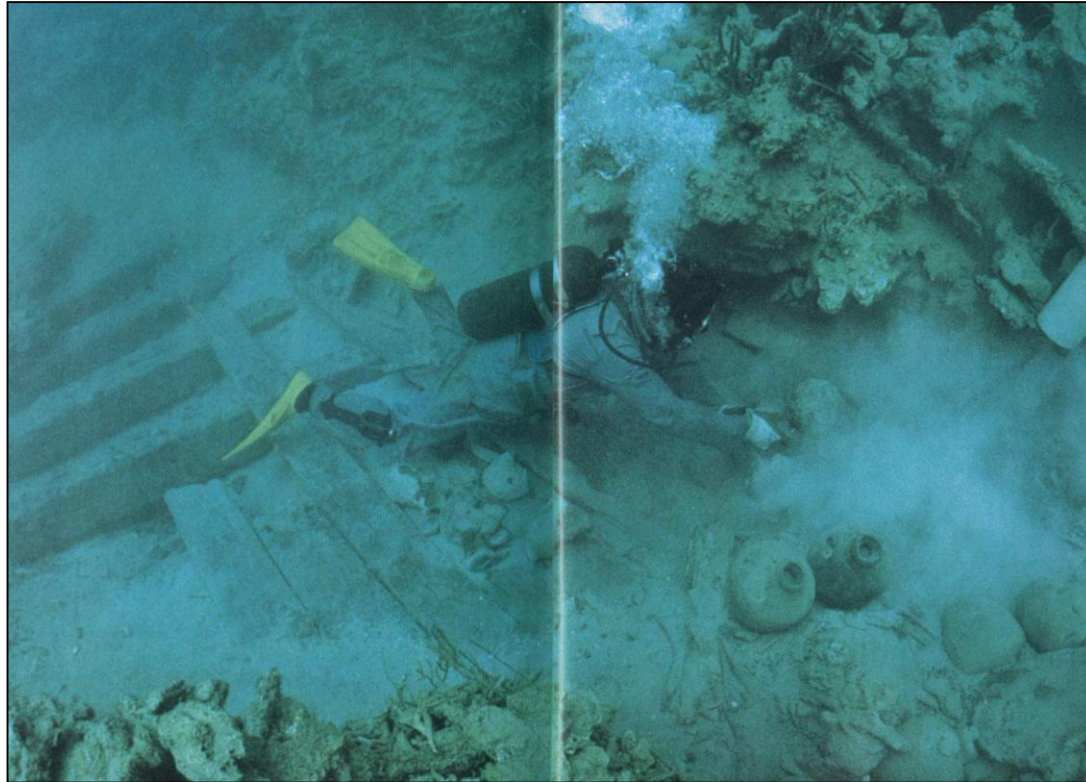
Guadalupe and Tolosa, 1724

The *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* left Cadiz with another ship, the *Conde de Tolosa*, in July 1724 bound to Veracruz, in Mexico, via La Havana. This small fleet transported a cargo of 400 tons of mercury, which was enough for one year's production of silver and gold in the Mexican mines.

On August the 24th the two ships were struck by a hurricane off the northeast coast of Hispaniola, near Samaná Bay.

The *Guadalupe* was driven ashore and most of its crew and passengers survived, 550 people getting alive on the beach soon after the wreck.

However, very few would survive the march and sailing to Santo Domingo that followed.

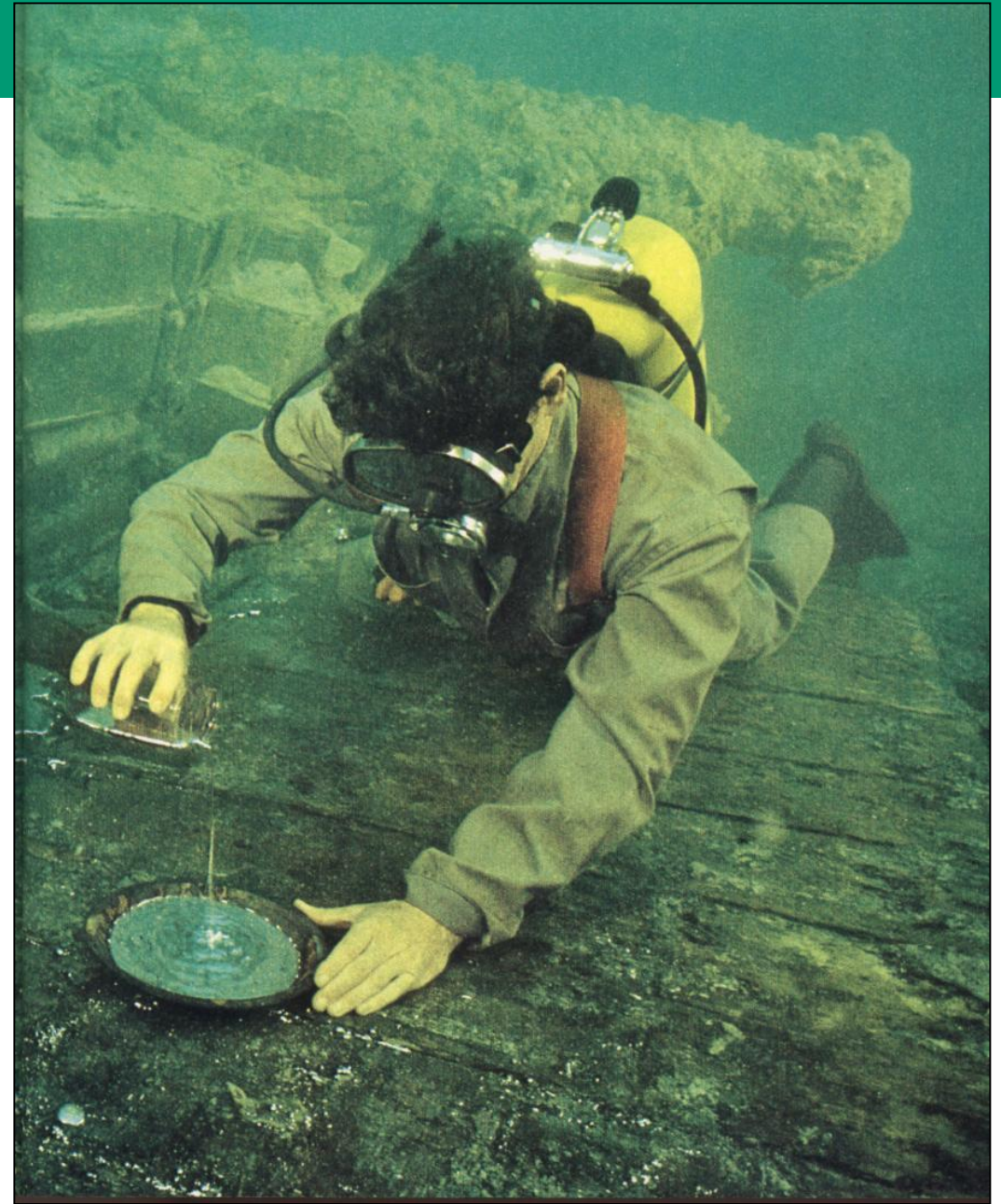


The Spanish attempts to salvage the 250 tons of mercury failed because the ship's structure could not be broken down and allow the divers to reach the holds.



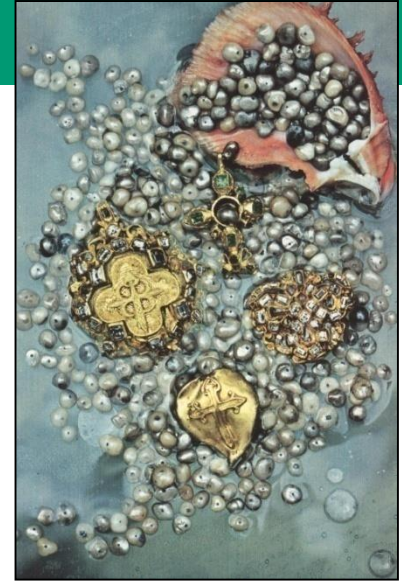
The *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* was found in 1976 by fishermen and the salvage of its cargo committed to the Dominican Republic Navy who contracted a treasure hunter by the name of Tracy Bowden.

The salvage work was performed by Caribe Salvage Company, S.A..



A “prop wash” was used and in a little over one year the salvage works were finished (and olive jars were for sale in the Santo Domingo flea market).

A large amount of artifacts were recovered, including two bronze swivel guns, jewelry, coins, silver and pewter flatware, delftware, glassware, and daily life artifacts such as brass scissors handles, buttons, dice, religious medals, brass lanterns, an English watch mechanism, wine bottles, jugs, and olive jars.



The *Conde de Tolosa* had been bought in 1719 by the Spanish crown and baptized in honor of D. Luis de Borbón, an illegitimate son of Louis XIV. It left Cadiz in July 1724 bound to Veracruz, in Mexico, via Havana, with a cargo of 150 tons of mercury. There is few information on the *Tolosa*'s size, but it has been said that it carried 70 guns and its crew and passengers were estimated in 600 persons.

On August the 24th, sailing with the *Guadalupe* on the way to Havana, it was caught by a hurricane off the northeast coast of Hispaniola, near Samaná Bay.



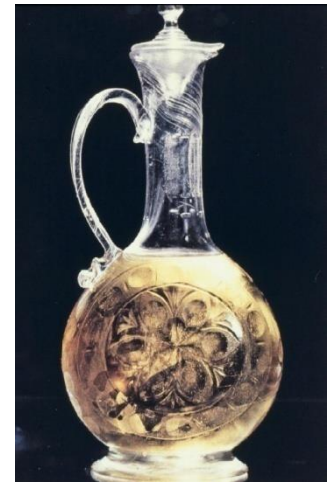
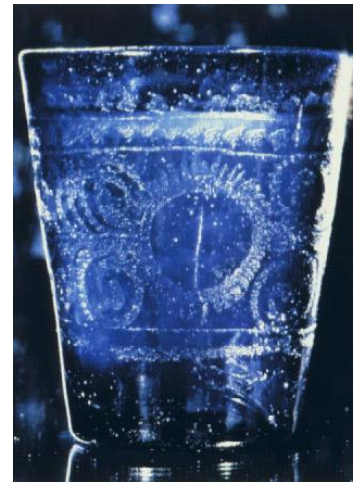
The *Conde de Tolosa* sunk after hitting a reef on the second day under the storm, the 25th of August 1724.

Only 40 people survived, of which six (seven according to another author) hang for 32 days on the top of its rigging before being rescued.

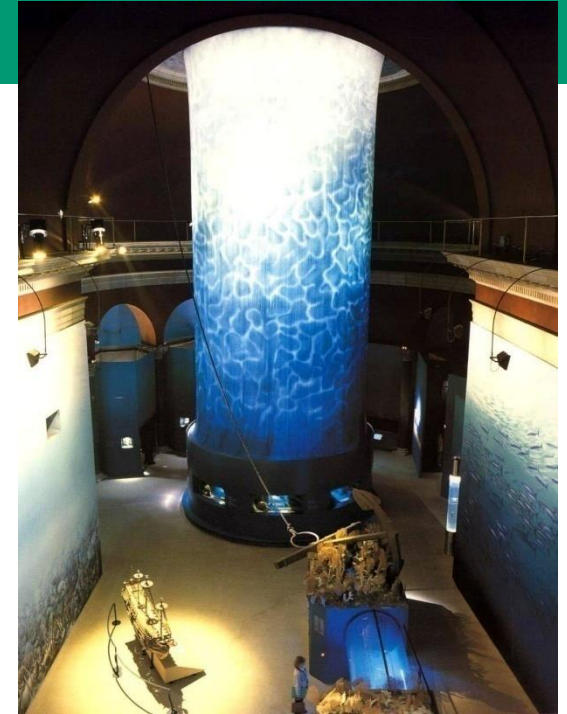
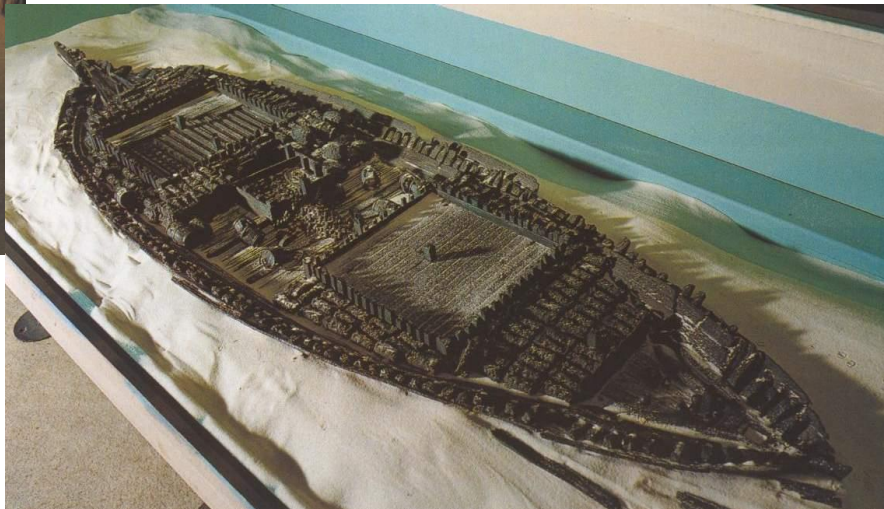
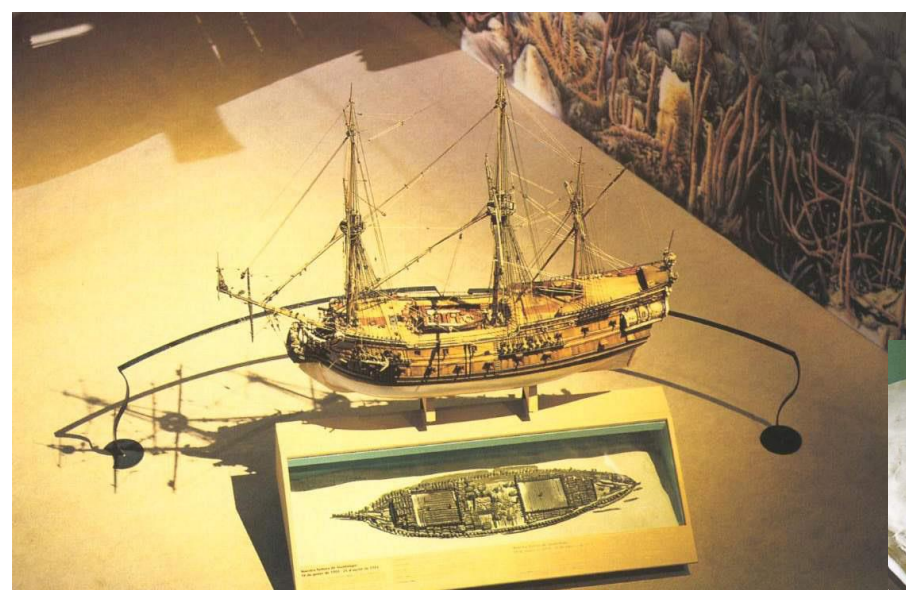
Again, the Spanish attempts to salvage the mercury failed because the ship's structure could not be broken down and allow the divers to reach the holds.



The *Tolosa* was found in June 1977 by the same treasure hunting company that had salvaged the *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* on the previous year. The treasure hunters allegedly retrieved an impressive amount of artifacts, among which were a pewter chamber pot, glass and pottery objects, four pieces of gold jewelry with diamonds, about 1000 pearls, and a silver bracelet that has the name “D^a Antonia Franco” engraved.



Later, a team of archaeologists studied the ships and published two books.



The 1733 fleet

This fleet was composed of 4 warships and 18 merchantmen, and left Havana for Spain on July 13, 1733.

On the second day of its voyage, sensing the approaching of a hurricane, Don Rodrigo de Torres ordered his fleet back to Havana. However, it was not possible to avoid the storm, and many sunk around the Florida Keys.

Extensively salvaged and burned by the Spanish in the years that followed, these wreck sites were heavily pillaged from the 1930s to the 1970s.

In 1977 some of these ships were located and surveyed by archaeologists from the State of Florida:

The *capitana*, *El Rubi Segundo*, had been found and salvaged by Art McKee in the 1940s.

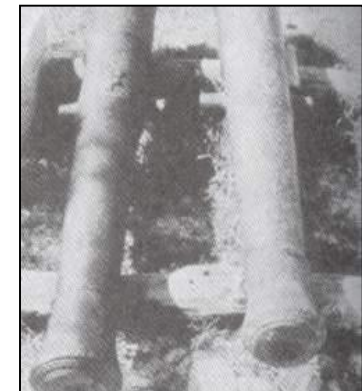
The *Nuestra Señora de Balvaneda*, had been purchased in Genoa in 1724. After the wreck the Spanish divers rescued over 6,000,000 pesos and a large portion of its cargo. Worked uninterruptedly since 1955 by salvors, not much was left to study by the time it was located by archaeologists.

The *San Francisco de Assis* was found in the 1960s and thought to be the *almiranta* of the fleet, *El Gallo Indiana*. Its location suggests that this was in fact the *San Francisco de Assis*, an English built 264 $\frac{2}{3}$ ton merchantmen. However, after being salvaged for almost two decades, not much was left to make a strong case for its identification.



The *Nuestra Señora del Carmen, Santo Antonio de Padua y las Animas* was also known as the *Chaves*, after his owner, and was also salvaged extensively although there was no treasure aboard when it sunk.

Another English-built merchantman known as the *Herrera* after its owner was found and salvaged by treasure hunters. It was known as the *Figurine Wreck* by its salvors, since hundreds of small Mexican statuettes of fish, animals, and humans were found in it.



Yet another wreck has been found and referred to as *El Lerri*, although it has never been identified.

The *San Pedro* was a Dutch-built 287 ¼ tons ship and has yielded thousands of silver coins.

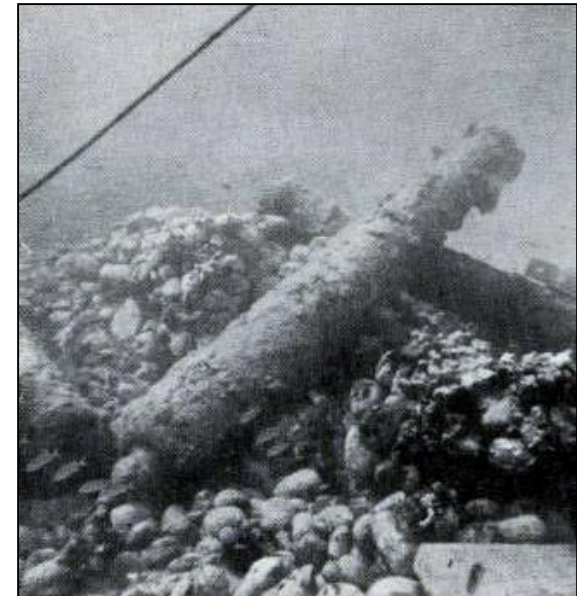
Silver coins have also been found at the site of the presumed *El Sueco de Arizón*.



The ninth vessel located is thought to have been the 212 $\frac{3}{8}$ tons *Nuestra Señora de Belén y San Juan Bautista*. The find of silver ingots has been reported, presumably contraband, since there was no treasure declared aboard.



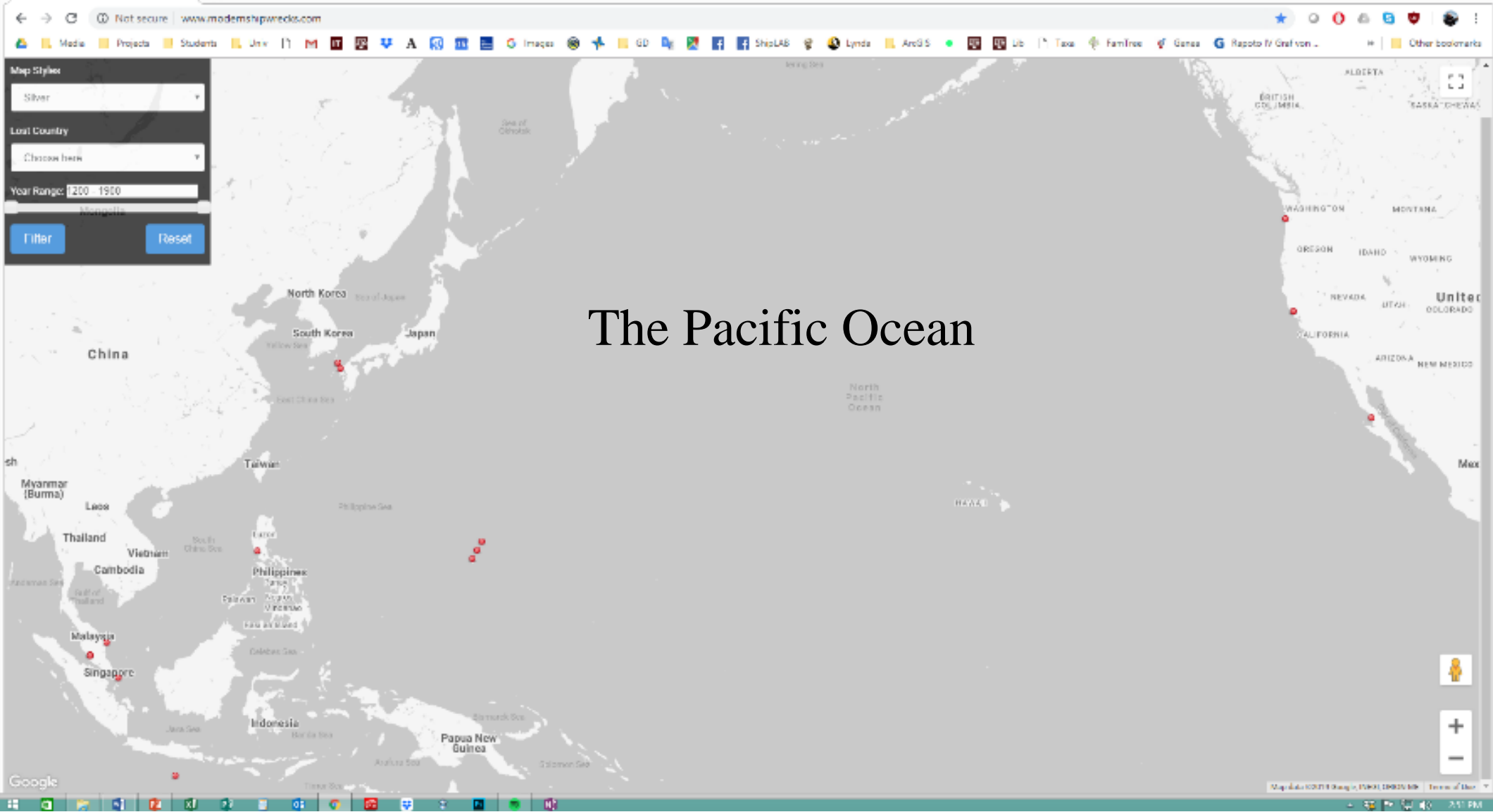
In 1968 the *San José de las Animas* was found by a treasure hunter called Tom Gurr. It was a 326 ½ tons English-built ship and carried a large treasure. In spite of the enormous amount of artifacts, the well-preserved state of the hull, and the presence of archaeologists during the initial salvage operations almost nothing is known about this vessel.



The last of the 1733 fleet vessels was known as *Nuestra Señora de las Angústias y San Rafael*. Was found by a treasure hunter in 1972 and salvaged under the supervision of archaeologists of the State of Florida. Again, not much is known about this vessel, except that there were almost no wooden remains.

RESVMEN DE LO SALVADO EN TODOS LOS NAVIOS DE LA FLOTA DE NUEVA ESPAÑA, DEL CARGO DEL señor Teniente General Don Rodrigo de Torres y Morales, que naufragaron en los Cayos antes de Boca de la Canal de Bahama, el 15. de Julio de 1733. y regulacion del valor de los frutos, para cargarles à fu respecto el correspondiente gallo de buceo, condu- cion, y beneficios, cuyo importe se ha de reintegrar al Registro de Capirana, y Almiranta, por averle hecho de este caudal el fuplemento en el Puerto de la Habana.....	
CAPITANA.	
En Plata acuñada, labrada, en pasta, y algun Oro de cuenta de particulares.....	5.2586035.ps.
En 4145. arrobas, 23. libras de Grana, las 4078. arrobas 23. libras, 5. onzas, mojada avaluada à 25. pesos la arroba, y las 67. arrobas feca à 60. pesos, que toda monta.....	105881.ps.6....
En 995. arrobas 4. libras de Añil, mojado avaluado à 4. pesos, 4. reales arroba.....	48478.ps.1.2.
7178733 ps.12.rs. En Plata acuñada, y barras de cuenta de fu Magel- tad.....
..... En 584. planchas de Cobre, con 190. quintales, 90. libras, idem.....
	5.3688494.ps.7.2.
ALMIRANTA.	
En Plata acuñada, labrada, y Oro, de cuenta de particu- lares.....	4.9988397.ps.6
En 4820. arrobas de Grana, las 4065. arrobas mojada, 242. arrobas mezclada con feca, y las 513. arrobas sin mojar avaluada, las dos pri- meras calidades à 25. pesos, y la vltima à 60. pesos.....	1388455.ps. } 5.1438245.ps.2.2.
En 1420. arrobas 14. libras Añil mojado, avaluado à 4. pesos 4. reales arroba.....	68392.ps.4....
7129895 1.ps.5.rs. En Plata acuñada, labrada, y en pasta de cuenta de S.M.....
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Shipwrecks of the Empire

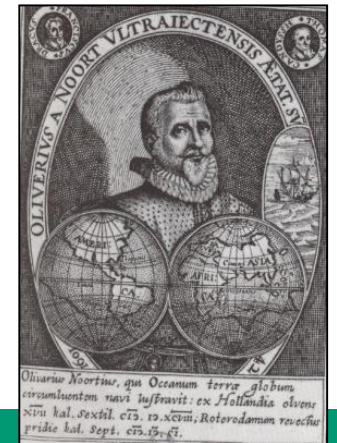


San Diego, 1600



In late December 1600 news that two Dutch vessels were near the Philippines lead the Spanish authorities in Manila to prepare for war.

The Dutch ships were the *Mauritius* and the *Eendracht*, which, under the command of Olivier van Noort (6th world circumnavigation), had left Holland in 1598 and were exploring the Asian seas in search of business routes, and ways to fight their Catholic enemies from Portugal and Spain.



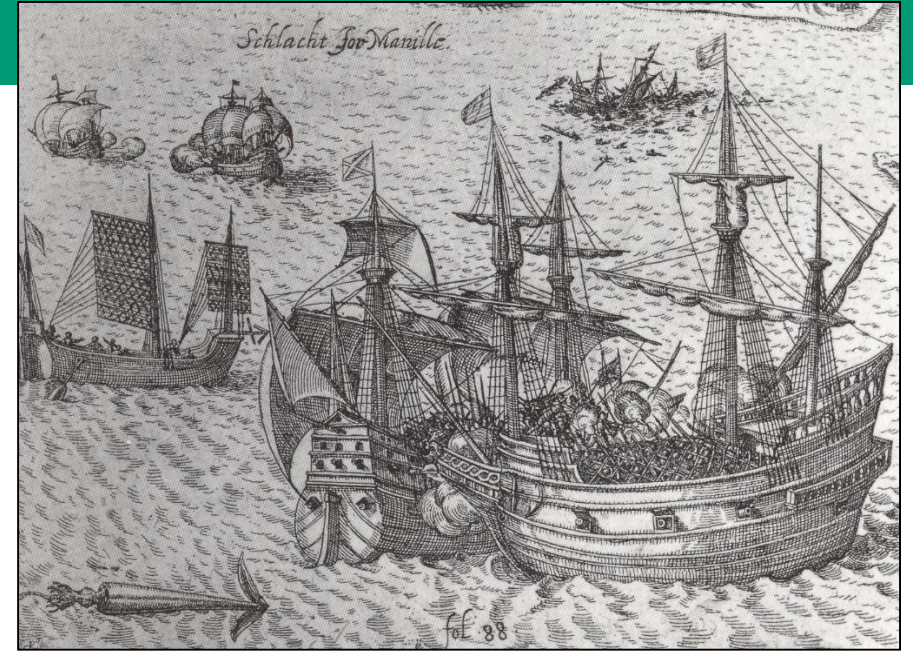
Circumnavigations

1. Fernão de Magalhães (1519-1522) Elcano finished;
2. Andres Urdaneta (1525-1528);
3. Francis Drake (1577-1580);
4. Martin Ignacio de Loyola (1580-1584);
5. Martin Ignacio de Loyola (1585-1589) in the other direction;
6. Olivier van Noort (1598-1601).

One powerful Spanish judge, Antonio de Morga, prepared two ships for war in about 30 days, the *San Diego* and the *San Bartolomé*, and sailed from Manila in search of the intruders with a force of about 500 men, which included a few Japanese mercenaries.

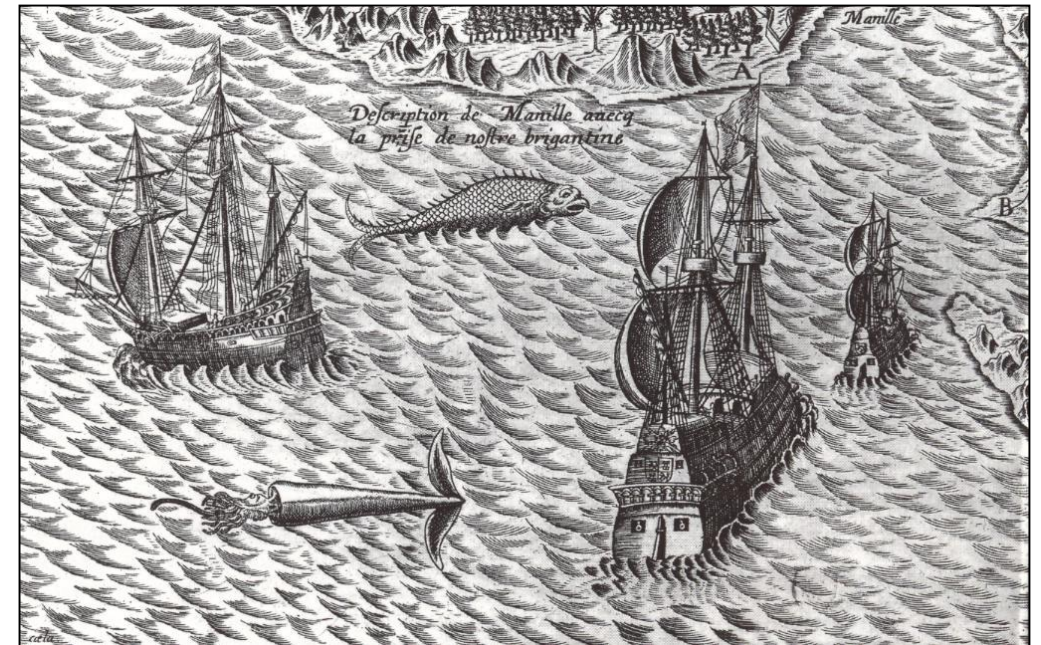
After two years of explorations, Olivier van Noort had lost half of his crew and two of his vessels, and was not prepared for a naval battle.

Anyway, the Spanish engaged his small fleet for several hours and he had no other choice than to fight back, for his life and the lives of his men.



The *San Diego* rammed the *Mauritius*, grappled it with its hooks, and 30 Spanish soldiers boarded the Dutch vessel, stripped the main and mizzen masts of sails and rigging, and told the Dutch to surrender. The Dutch barricaded in the fore and stern castles, and tried to discuss the terms of surrender when word came around that the *San Diego* was sinking.

The *San Bartolomé* had been told that the battle was won, and sent to catch the *Eendracht* which was running away with van Noort's papers.

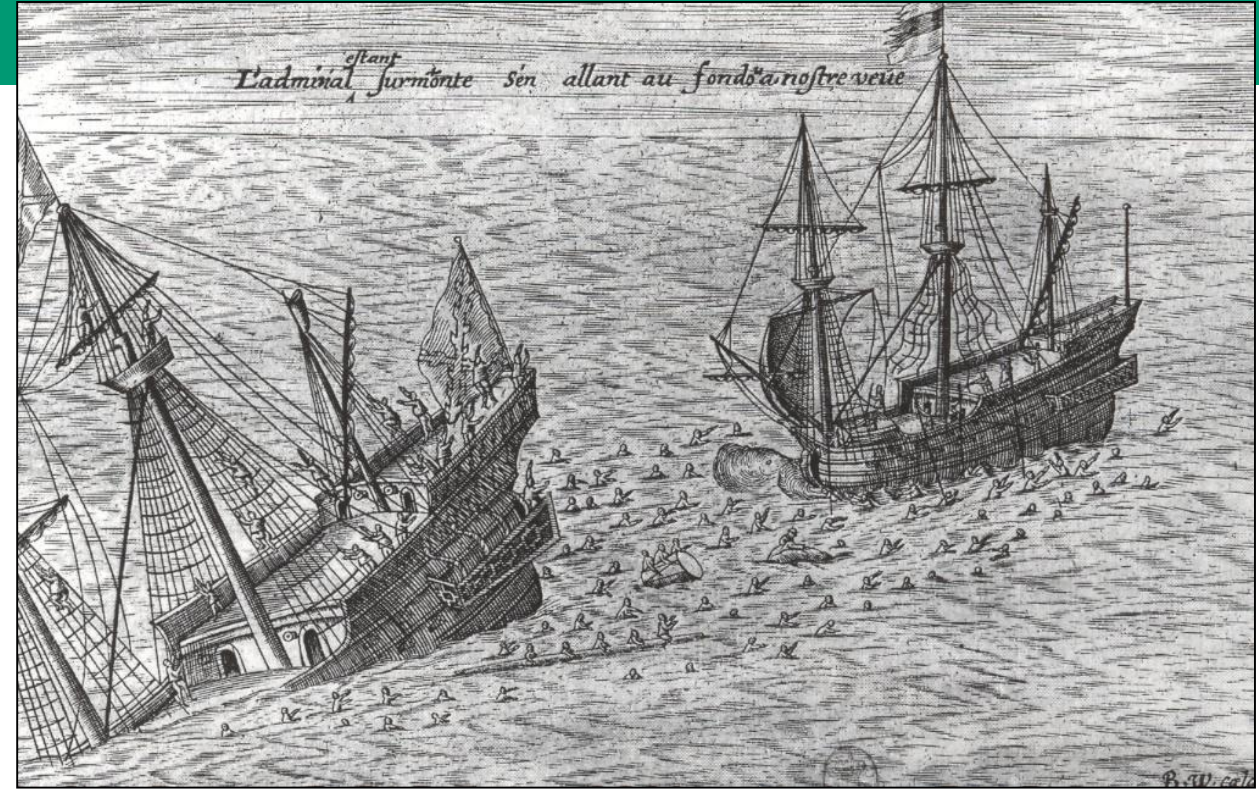


Antonio de Morga was a bureaucrat with no experience of combat and soon it seemed that it had been a bad idea to let him command the attack. First it seems that he had the *San Diego* loaded too heavy and unable to fire its guns.

Then he ordered his crew to hit the *Mauritius* at full speed, springing a leak while grappling the enemy ship.

Finally he is said to have panicked, sitting behind the capstan, incapable of moving or talking, as soon as he discovered that the ship was taking water.

Without any leadership, the Spanish called off the attack and started to prepare to abandon both ships and make it to shore.



Amidst the complete disorder that followed on the Spanish side, the Dutch managed to cut the grapnel cables and drift away, leaving the Spanish busy, trying to save their lives. The *San Diego* sunk and maybe 350 soldiers drowned while trying to swim ashore.

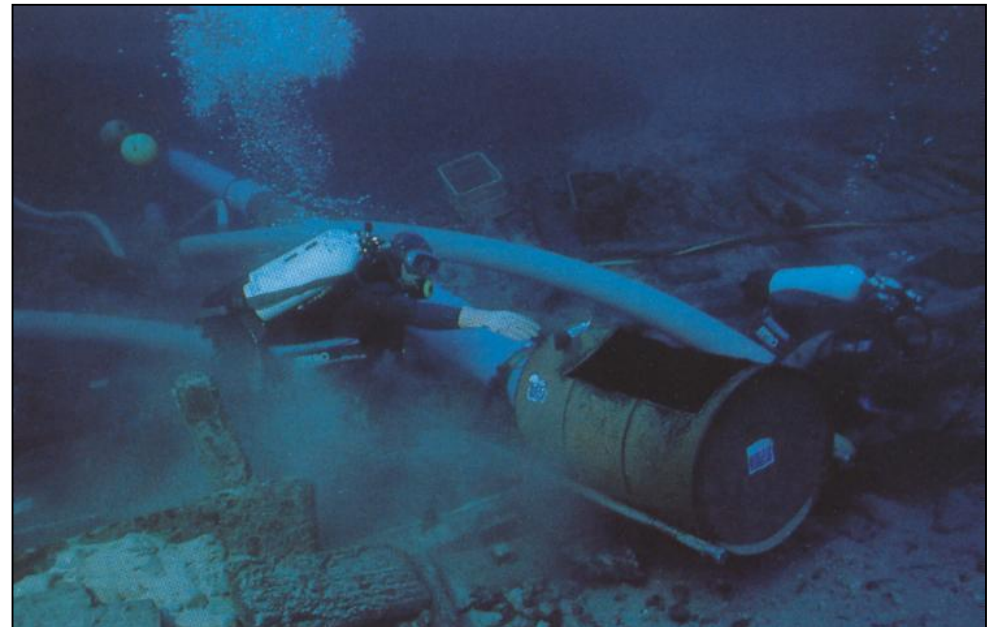
The *San Bartolomé* captured the *Eendracht*, but its captain was later blamed by Morga for the sinking of the *San Diego*.



A French treasure hunter found the *San Diego* in 1991 and salvaged its cargo during 3 months of underwater work, in 1992 and 1993.

An impressive amount of artifacts were recovered from the wreck site.

However, no scholarly publication has ever been published about this wreck.



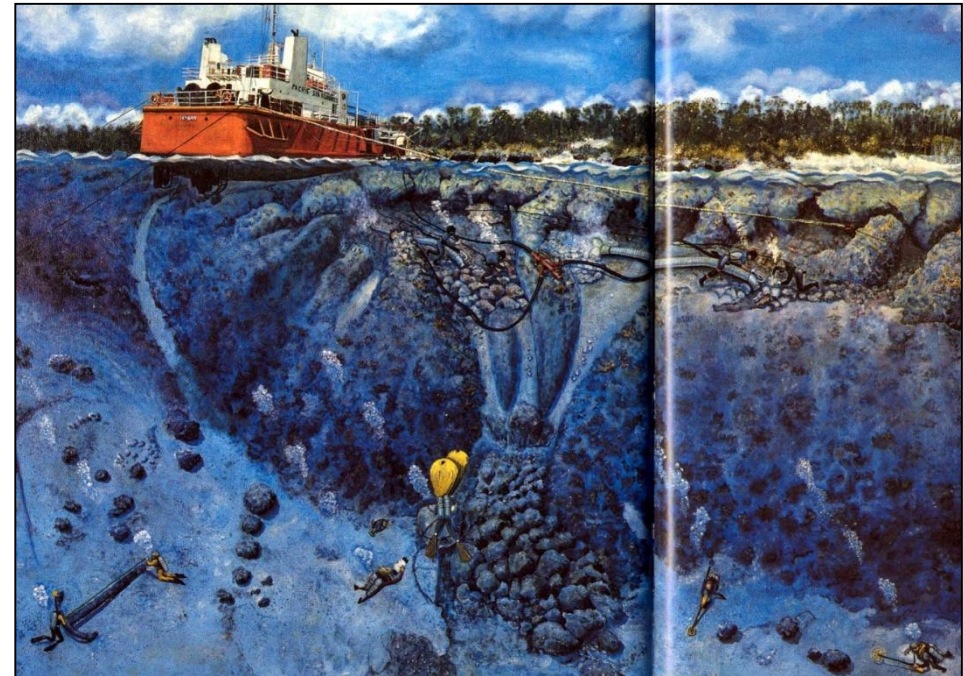
Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, 1638



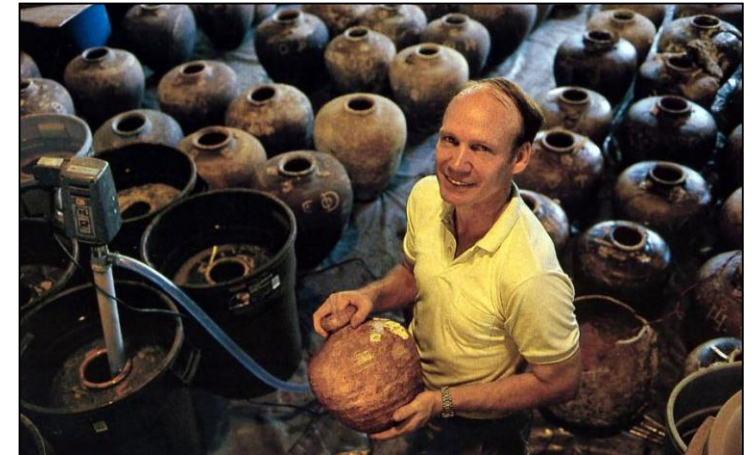
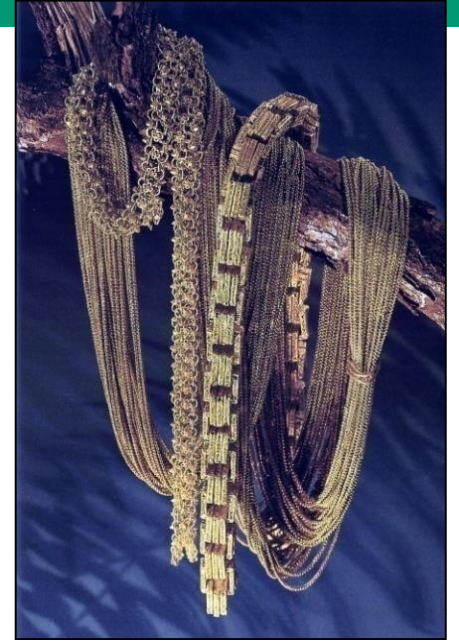
Sailing from Manila to Acapulco under the command of a young and inexperienced captain, the *Concepción* hit a reef off Saipan, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, in the Northern Mariana Islands, and sunk.

Forty-six years later the Spanish recovered 35 of its 36 guns together with 7 or 8 anchors and part of its cargo.

Its treasure was salvaged by William Mathers in 1987 and 1988. Mathers was a treasure hunter that tried to apply the best archaeological standards to his works, and struggled to keep the artifact collection together, publish a detailed report, and prevent the sale of any artifacts.



The artifact collection was purchased by a Japanese developer and will be donated to the government of Guam.



Questions?