



Wooden Ship Building and the Interpretation of Shipwrecks (Ed Rachal Foundation Nautical Archaeology Series)

J. Richard Steffy

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This book is a guide to the study of the most marvelous structures ever built by humankind—wooden ships and boats. It is intended for nautical archaeologists and for anyone charged with documenting and interpreting the remains of wrecked or abandoned vessels. It will also be of value to historians, authors, model builders, and others interested in the design and construction of wooden watercraft of the past. The text is divided into three parts. The first introduces the discipline and presents enough basic information to permit the untrained reader to understand the analysis of ship and boat construction that follows. Part II is broken into three chapters that investigate ancient, medieval, and post-medieval shipwrecks and supporting documentation. Not all of the world's ship and boat excavations can be included in this single volume; nautical archaeology has progressed too far for that. Instead, these three chapters have been assembled to represent a cross section of shipbuilding technology as seen through the interpretation of a select group of finds. Part III addresses the techniques of recording hull remains, assembling archival information, reconstructing vessels, and converting data into plans and publication. It is by no means a "how-to" section. Sites, logistics, and the wrecks themselves vary so much that, like wooden shipbuilding, this discipline can never become an exact science. Rather, the third part of the book discusses work done on previous projects and suggests additional methods that might prove helpful to readers in their own endeavors. The book contains an illustrated glossary, specifically designed for archaeological use. There is also a select bibliography, annotated where titles do not indicate content and arranged in historical groups to provide sources for most areas of research.

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