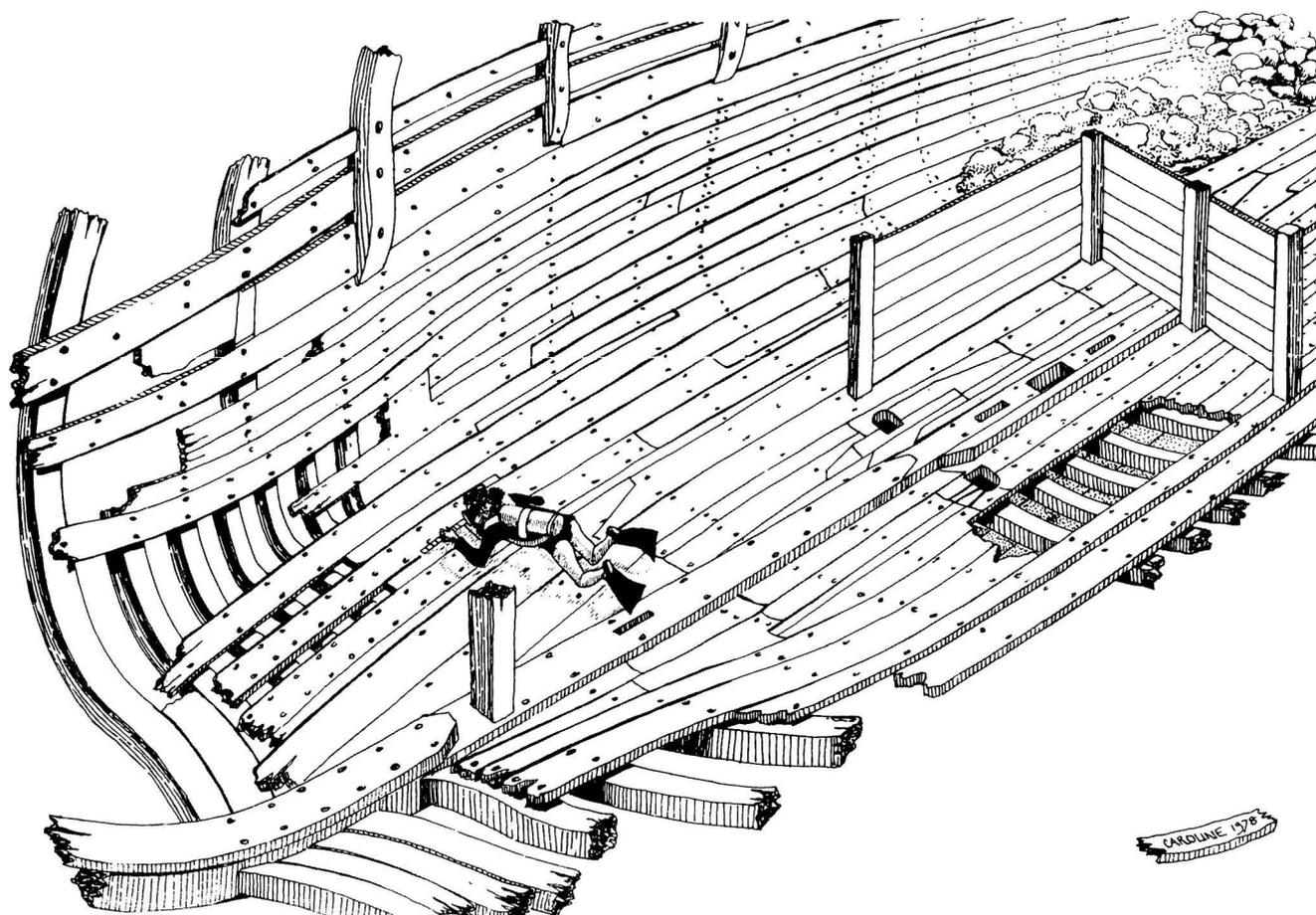




THE 1978 SEASON AT MOMBASA

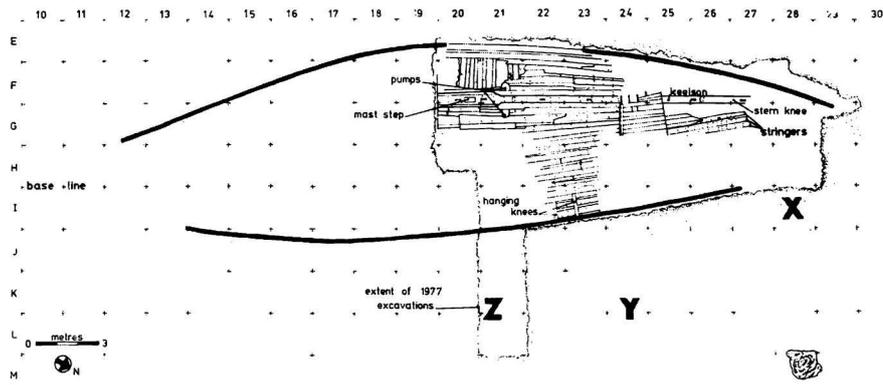
By Robin C. M. Piercy



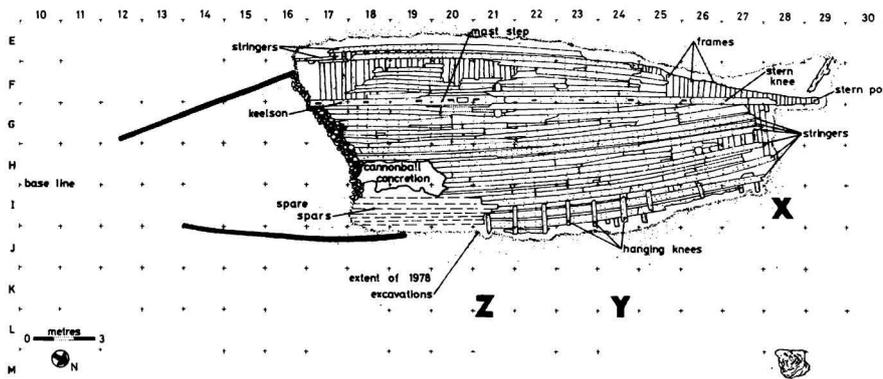
Work during the 1978 season on the 17th century shipwreck in Mombasa harbor, believed to be that of the Santo Antonio de Tanna, progressed to such a degree that artist Caroline Sassoon was able to draw this impression of hull remains un-

covered to date. To the left is the stern post, at the right, a wooden partition forming part of the pump or rose box, which held ballast away from the mainmast and bilge pumps. The major effort during 1978 was to reveal details of the

ship's stern. Equally important conservation efforts took place on land. Students received training in all aspects of field work. These are shown in the following pages.



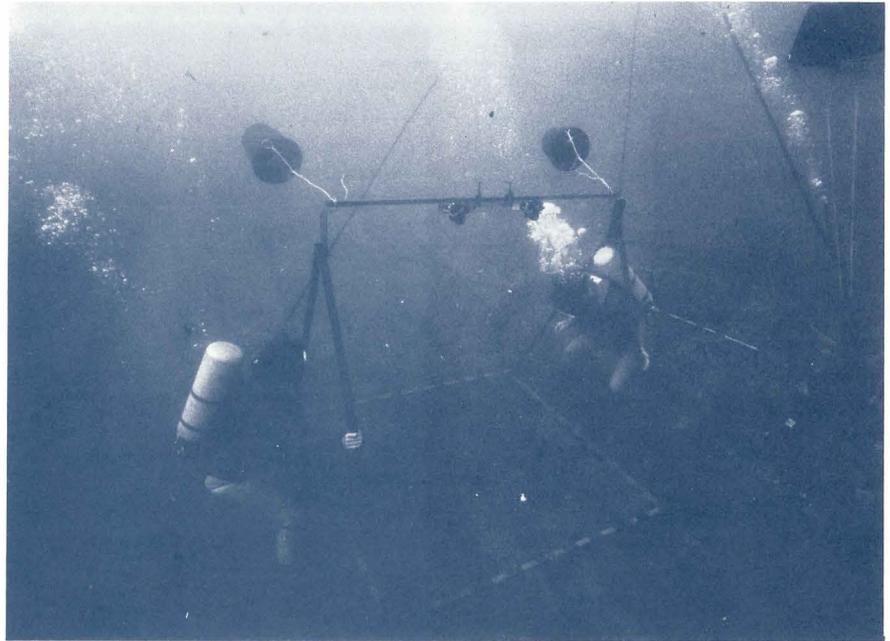
A comparison of areas excavated in 1977 and 1978 shows progress made in the later season, and detailed features of the hull.



On the sea bed, the author records details of the mast step. The port side and forward part of the pump box can be seen below his fin and behind him. It was this area that produced many well-preserved objects.

Details of the hull were recorded by means of a profiler developed by Jeremy Green (left), Curator of the Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Museum. With him is TAMU student Sheila Matthews. Measurements in the stern were hampered by power and telephone cables crossing the site.



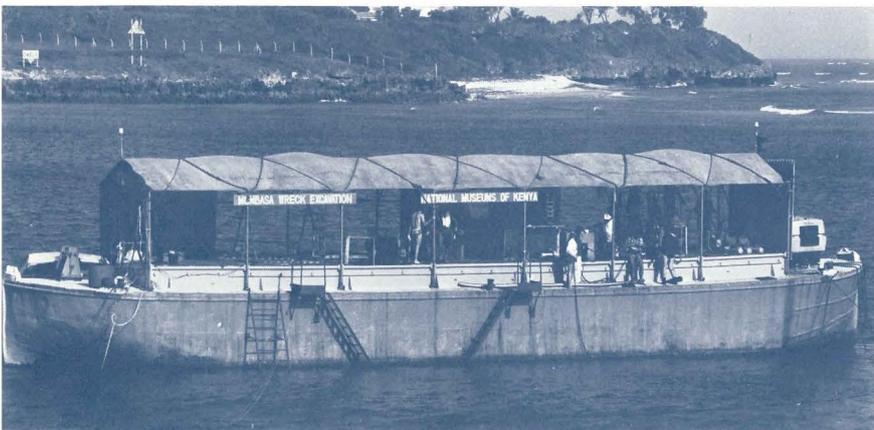


Other hull features were recorded by a stereo-photogrammetry tower. By moving the tower down the length of the ship at one-meter stages, the hull structure was recorded in detail.

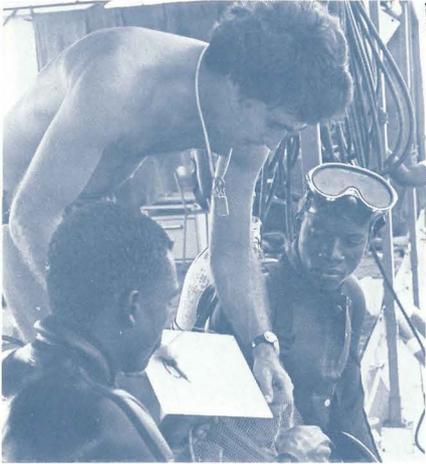


A Portuguese glazed ware plate emerges from the mud in the stern locker area (section 24 H). Matting, small casks, caulking and caulking hammers, a box of tools, half an hour glass, and compasses suggest this area may have been a bosun's store. Also found were decayed remains of a sail.

Preliminary conservation of artifacts and wood was undertaken on the lighter. Jonas Otis (left) and Ken Pott break open canonball concretions, recovered from the midships area. After cleaning, the canonballs were sent ashore to the laboratory to undergo conservation.



On the surface, a converted ammunition lighter served as base of diving operations. At the right or stern of the vessel is a compressor providing air for four divers and four air lifts. Nearby are racks for air hoses. The diving supervisor holds forth near to the rack. At the center is an enclosed cabin where records are kept and meetings can be held in relative quiet. The open deck area toward the bow was set aside for equipment repair and preliminary artifact registration and conservation.



Divers Julius Omonia (right) and Francis Odinga of the Kenya Navy receive a last-minute briefing and a drawing slate from Diving Officer Nigel White of the Joint Services Sub-Aqua Diving team.



Jeremy Green (left) and Samuel Mbau begin treatment of a compass box. The first stage, seen here, is the separation of crushed fragments. After being laid out on the deck and photographed in exploded form, the parts are wrapped in wet foam rubber and sent ashore to the conservation lab.



A wooden figure of an angel carved in relief, one meter in length, was recovered by Tim Caldecott from the stern of the wreck; here Allan Smith (right) and Jeremy Green hand it to the surface. Adjoining fragments, including the proper right sleeve, right torso and foot, and left arm holding a horn were also retrieved. Two wooden wings were found nearby, but appear to have belonged to another figure or to a panel decorating the ship's stern.

Picture Credits

Page 1. Caroline Sassoon, Page 2, Jeremy Green and Robin Piercy. Page 3, Jeremy Green, Robin Piercy, Katterina Ingel-Sundeberg. Page 4, MWE 1977 Team, Robin Piercy, MWE 1978 Team. Page 5, Robin Piercy, Gay Piercy, Hamo Sassoon, Jeremy Green.

Excavated objects are kept wet in plastic basins as they are brought to the surface. TAMU student Lisa Shuey maintains the object record.

