





IN THE WAKE OF CHINESE JUNKS (Fim 5)

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In March 2000 Franck Goddio arrived on the island of Palawan in the Philippines for his sixth underwater excavation of a Chinese junk. Near the village of Espagnola, two miles off the coast and at a depth of 30m, the local fisherman discovered a mysterious shipload of earthenware jars. In order to protect the site against looting, Franck Goddio and his team of divers and scientists immediately decided to launch an archaeological excavation in order to safeguard the treasure.
This joint operation with the National Museum of the Philippines would last for two months and made it possible to date the wreck very precisely to the end of the 15th century. The discovery of a Portuguese canon on the seabed puzzled them, however, because - at this point in time - none of the great European seafarers had reached this part of the world. Why would a Chinese merchant junk, with a canon on board, have sunk 500 years ago off a fishing village?
The junks used to do barter throughout the trading posts in the Philippines which were brimming with wealth. To discover the mythical riches of the maritime trade - the pride of the Middle Kingdom - Franck Goddio set out on his catamaran Kaimiloa exploring the trading posts and their famous wares. What is left in modern-day Philippines of hundreds of years of trade established by China?

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