

§ 1. Claudio Bonifacio is a modern day treasure hunter. For most people, the title 'treasure hunter' more than likely brings to mind images of brave explorers fighting pirates to find a chest (сундук) full of sparkling jewels. But contrary to this stereotype, Bonifacio finds most of his bullion (gold and silver) in libraries full of ancient shipping records rather than with the help of the ancient magical map you might expect. He has spent many years searching the naval archives in Seville, from which he has located the positions of more than 2,500 sunken galleons — the ships the Spaniards used to sail the high seas from the 15th to the 18th centuries.

§ 2. Bonifacio has turned his activities into a very profitable career. Such is his fame as a marine archeologist that he can demand very large fees. He provides the information he gathers out from his research to companies with the resources to raise the bullion from the wrecks. Bonifacio has worked for several Latin American governments, the Spanish government and the Italian national council.

§ 3. However, Bonifacio is unwilling to reveal the names of his private clients, or say how much money they have made from the wrecks. The reason for this is that they wish to remain anonymous due to uncertainty about ownership of the ocean floor (дно). Countries such as Honduras, where Bonifacio has discovered many wrecks, insist on their right to take all the treasures found in their territorial waters.

§ 4. Bonifacio is unsure of exactly how much bullion has been found by others as a result of his years of hard work, but he is sure that it must be many millions of dollars worth. "I hear reports," he says, "but in this type of work there is a great amount of secrecy, not only because of governments **claiming** the entire treasure, but also for tax reasons."

§ 5. Bonifacio's passion has also stimulated the discovery of old Spanish and Portuguese gold mines in South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. "In the 1560s and 1570s, he explains, "most of the gold and silver transported to Europe was stolen from the Incas and the Aztecs; but later, mines provided the main source of bullion. Mining technology in those days, however, was naturally very **basic** and the mines were not worked very efficiently. Most were eventually abandoned because it was believed there was no more gold to be found. Now, though, with modern day techniques, the world's mining companies are of course only too happy to pay me to search the records and find them! They know only too well that there is more than likely still plenty of gold just waiting to be discovered."

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How does Bonifacio make a living?

- 1) People employ him to raise bullion from shipwrecks.
- 2) He sells information about the whereabouts of sunken treasure.
- 3) He usually keeps a share of any bullion found.