

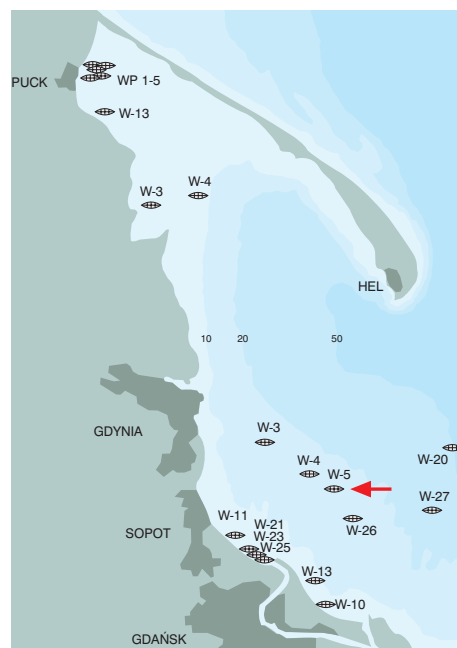
## The W-5 wreck (so-called „Copper ship”)

As from 1969, the Polish Maritime Museum in Gdańsk has been carrying out systematic searches and underwater investigations in the Gulf of Gdańsk. The first phase of the work was to draw up a kind of inventory map of wrecks of museum-historic value. Every wreck discovered is given a cryptonym, e.g. W-1 means wreck number 1 etc. So far nearly 40 wrecks have been located. For each of them documentation has been prepared, containing a general description, sketches, photographs and a preliminary characteristic of the finding.

Wreck W-5 is the remains of a merchant vessel which, it appears, sank shortly after leaving the port of Gdansk. The wreck was lying about 3.5 miles north east of the Vistula estuary at a depth of 15 metres. The Polish Maritime Museum conducted exploration of the wreck from 1970 to 1976. 16 m long and 6 m wide, lying on the sandy bottom, it constituted a block of a solidified mixture of tar, iron ore and sand.

The ship's cargo was lying on a part of her sterboard side, and some of it was stowed exactly as on the day she had set sail.

W-5 is the best-preserved medieval wreck with cargo to be found in Poland. The wreck was dated by C-14 as coming from the 1st half of the 15th century. The dendrochronology however gave more precised data: wood used for the hull construction was cut down not later than in 1399.



① Oak barrels ready for recovery. ② A composition of barrels, copper slabs and an iron bar from the wreck of the “Copper Ship”. ③ Diagram showing the location of the wreck following the removal of the ballast stones.

