

Why were so many ships of the Spanish Armada wrecked off the west coast of Ireland?

Prior knowledge

From previous lessons, pupils will be familiar with the types of ships involved; the number and nature of the Armada fleet; the reasons why the Armada was sent by the Spanish; Sir Francis Drake; Calais; and the reasons for the Armada's failure generally.

Resources

- A. Modern map of Ireland
- B. Sixteenth century map of Ireland
- C. Sixteen century map of Britain, Ireland and Europe
- D. List of Spanish wrecks off Ireland
- E. Music: 'The Spanish Armada' sung by Rita Connolly

Task 1

On map A, plot the Irish Armada wrecks, using, where possible, source D, listing the ship name and date against the wreck site.

Discussion

1. Reasons for the numerous wrecks - weather, etc.
2. Pattern of wrecks, geographical features, etc.

Extension task

Choose a county (wrecksite) and write a *short* account of what happened in that area, including name of ship, casualties, etc.

Teacher to provide example and/or vocabulary

Task 2

Using the lyrics and music of 'The Spanish Armada' (source E), explore why there were so many Spanish ships wrecked off the west coast of Ireland - e.g., was it just weather or was it geography or lack of knowledge or even bad sailors?

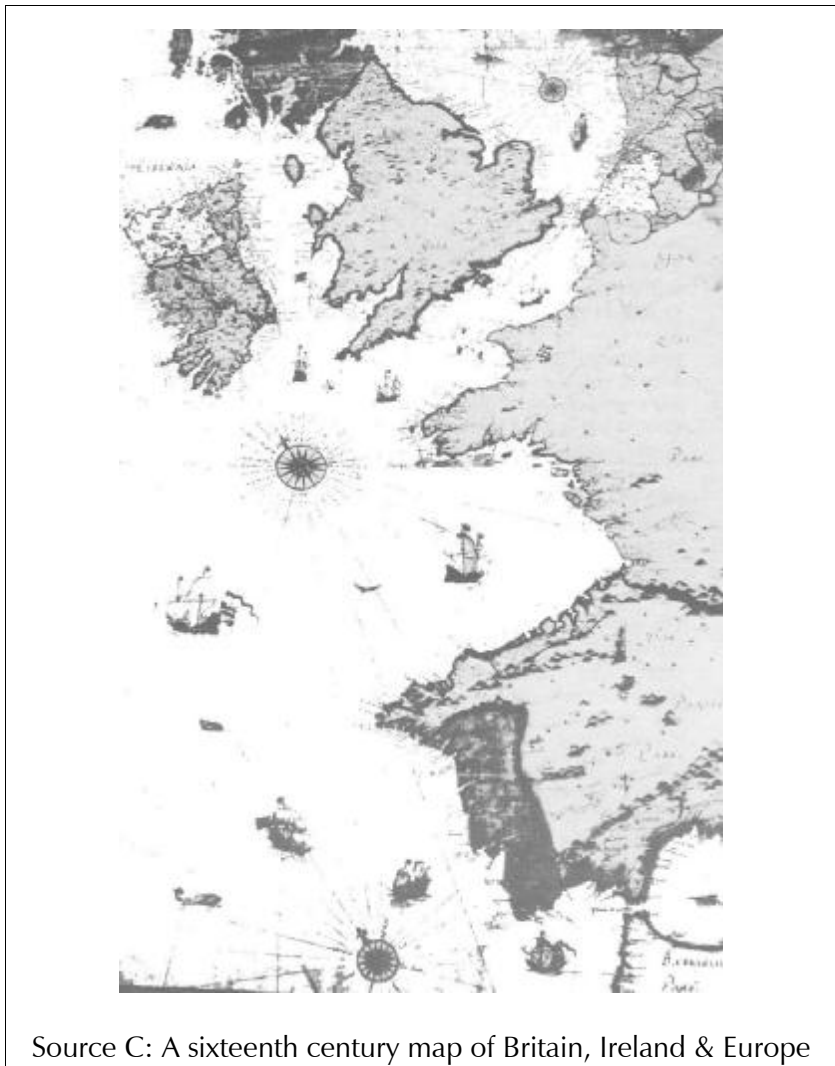




Source A: Ireland as it is in reality



Source B: A sixteenth century map of Ireland similar to the maps used by the Spanish



Source C: A sixteenth century map of Britain, Ireland & Europe

Ship	Ton	Soldiers	Sailors	Rowers	Guns	Wrecksite	Date
San Marcos	790	292	117	0	33	Clare	Sep 20
La Lavia	728	203	71	0	25	Sligo	Sep 25
La Rata Encoronada	820	335	84	0	35	Mayo	Sep 21
La Trinidad Valencera	1100	281	79	0	42	Donegal	Sep 16
La Anunciada	703	196	79	0	24	Clare	Sep 20
San Nicolas Prodaneli	834	274	81	0	26	Mayo	Sep 16
Juliana	860	325	70	0	32	Donegal	?
Santa Maria De Vision	666	236	71	0	18	Sligo	Sep 25
San Juan	530	163	113	0	24	Sligo	Sep 25
La Trinidad	872	180	122	0	24	Kerry	Sep 15
San Juan Bautista	652	192	93	0	24	Kerry	Sep 24
Girona	700	169	120	300	50	Antrim	Oct 28
El Gran Grin	1160	256	73	0	28	Clare	Sep 22
Urca Duquesa Santa Ana	900	280	77	0	23	Donegal	Sep 26
Santa Maria De La Rosa	945	225	64	0	0	Kerry	Sep 21
San Esteban	936	196	68	0	26	Clare	Sep 20
Falcon Blanco Mediano	300	76	27	0	16	Galway	Sep 25
Ciervo Volante	400	200	22	0	18	Mayo	Sep 22
Santiago	600	56	30	0	19	Mayo	Sep 21

Source D: Spanish Armada wrecks off the coast of Ireland

see overleaf for source E

The Spanish Armada
Was blown off its course
Far to the north west of Rockall

Medina Sidonia
He knew what would befall
Those who closed with a lee shore

Wounded in Calais
And pounded at Gravelines
Laid over in the Atlantic

Raised upon mountains
And sunken in valleys
Spanish galleons run for shelter

What say your pilots
On their high and lofty castles
Cast among uncharted soundings

The sea bed rises
Throws foam up to heaven
And cables they break asunder

There is no handhold
In thundering water
Nor any means of rescue

Now Spanish gold
Slips down through the fathoms
So deep to lie forever

And silk and treasure
Roll in a sandstorm
Into the shallows and bays of Mayo

A drowned Spanish army
Invades unhappy Connaught
And Fitzwilliam cries for reinforcements

The English horsemen
They ride in the distance
And the Irish pick for the salvage

I wish I had never
Been a witness
To such savage scenes amidst the spoils

They cut down flowers
That could have been planted
And blossomed on less barren soil

Source E: 'The Spanish Armada'
Granaile, Tara Music Company Ltd, 1985, Tara CD 3071; Rita Connolly sings; composed by Shaun Davey