

# Old Panama: a World Heritage Site

## The Archaeological Site of Panamá Viejo

Marcela Díaz Cabal  
marceladiazcabal@hotmail.com

**Panamá la Vieja o Panamá Viejo** is the name of the archaeological site where the former capital of Castilla del Oro was founded in 1521 by the conquistador Pedrarias Dávila. It was the oldest permanent European settlement on the Pacific Ocean. In 1523 the settlement was promoted to the status of city by a royal decree by Charles I of Spain. It was given a coat of arms and the motto of "Muy Noble y Muy Leal Ciudad de Panamá".

In January, 28 th of 1671, the Welsh pirate Henry Morgan attacked the city with 1,400 men, marching from the Caribbean coast across the jungle, defeated the city's militia and proceeded to sack Panamá forcing the governor of Panamá, Juan Pérez de Guzmán, to mandate the explosion of the gunpowder magazines in order not to leave the city in Morgan's hands. The resulting fire destroyed the city and was never rebuilt again. The new capital was relocated a few kilometers to the west on a new site.

The archaeological remains of the original settlement are an outstanding testimony of a colonial town that not only became a starting point for various expeditions to conquer Perú but it was a vital base of the commercial routes where gold and silver were sent to Spain.

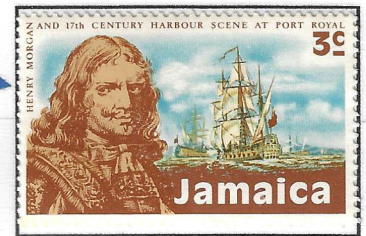


Charles I of Spain



During his reign, the city of Santa María de la Asunción (Panamá) was founded; to which he later gave it a coat of arms and a motto.

In 1671, Henry Morgan destroyed it.



THE CATHEDRAL TOWER

Part of the archaeological site from top to bottom and right to left

- La Concepción convent
- Puente del Rey (King's bridge)
- Sto. Domingo convent
- Compañía de Jesús



The stamps have tiny pieces of real stone from the old ruins attached to them.

