

PRESS RELEASE

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON THE MAZOTOS SHIPWRECK: 2012 FIELD SEASON

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, announces that the third full excavation season of the Mazotos shipwreck, off the south coast of Cyprus, was completed successfully during the summer of 2012 (01.05.2012 – 15.06.2012). The fieldwork was conducted by the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus, under the direction of Dr Stella Demesticha, in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and the THETIS Foundation.

During this last field season, the team opened two new excavation trenches at the northern part of the assemblage, which is most likely the stern area of the ancient ship. One of the main objectives of this field season was to investigate the size of the ancient ship's hull that is still preserved under the ceramic cargo: this year's results, in combination with the findings of previous field seasons, indicate that the keel and a considerable part of the ship's planking is preserved to a length of at least 15 meters. This is of prime importance, as it places this wreck among the very few in the Mediterranean that can provide information on shipbuilding during the Classical period.

Moreover, during the 2012 field season, we were able to shed some new light on trade in antiquity, another important domain of maritime archaeology. Together with the Chian wine amphorae, the ship's main cargo, a secondary type was also transported on the Mazotos ship: wine jugs, which were stowed among the amphorae found in the aft part of the hold. Furthermore, small fine ware pottery was recovered from the stern cabin, which was also partly excavated. These vessels must have

belonged to the crew or the passengers of the ship; one of them bears two inscribed letters, most probably the initials of someone's name.

The photogrammetric mapping of the site was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics at the Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, under the direction of Dr Dimitris Skarlatos. All materials recovered were transported to the dedicated lab for underwater finds in the Archaeological Museum of Larnaca, where they will remain for desalination and conservation, both undertaken by the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus.

Fifteen graduate and postgraduate students from the University of Cyprus took part in the project, together with 45 maritime archaeologists and divers from Cyprus and 11 other countries: Greece, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Spain, Poland, Croatia, Finland, Australia and USA.

Apart from the main sponsors of the project, the University of Cyprus and the THETIS Foundation, the excavation was supported by the Cyprus Telecommunication Authority, Petrolina (Holdings) Public Ltd and Andreas Charalambous Ltd. The support of the 'Vassiliko Cement Works' company, which allowed the research vessel to anchor in its harbour, was also crucial for the success of the project. The Greek Forces of Cyprus kindly provided their complex of buildings at Agios Theodoros to accommodate the team. Very decisive also was the technical support offered by the members of the Maritime Institute of the Eastern Mediterranean and the divers of the Nautilus Search and Rescue Team.



1. Mazotos shipwreck, 2012



2. Mazotos shipwreck, 2012



3. Mazotos shipwreck, 2012