

PRESS RELEASE

EXCAVATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH UNIT (DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS AT THE MAZOTOS SHIPWRECK, 2010

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, announces the completion of the first excavation season at the shipwreck of Mazotos, which was conducted within the framework of the research of the Archaeological Research Unit (Department of History and Archaeology) of the University of Cyprus in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, under the direction of Dr. Stella Demesticha and Professor Demetrios Michaelides, Director of the Archaeological Research Unit.

The research on the Mazotos shipwreck signals the birth of Cypriot underwater archaeology since it is the first underwater archaeological project which is conducted solely by Cypriot organizations. In addition, the excavation sheds light on very important issues such as seafaring in Cyprus in antiquity, commerce between the Aegean and Cyprus, the types and sizes of the period's cargo ships etc.

The Mazotos ship was a late classical period (mid 4th century B.C) merchant ship that was located in the sea of the modern village of Mazotos, at a depth of 45 m. The ship was carrying wine amphorae mainly from Chios but also from other north Aegean islands. Previous research at the site, which began in November 2007, focused on the photographic and drawing documentation of the shipwreck. During 2009, in collaboration with the research group of the Laboratory of Marine Geology and Physical Oceanography of the University of Patras, geophysical prospecting was undertaken with the use of a proton magnetometer and a sub-bottom profiler, in order to investigate the extent of the shipwreck's non visible sections.

This year's investigations (1st May-15th June 2010), focused on excavating an area to the south of the site, a spot that was indicated by the geophysical results. Indeed, apart from the cargo's amphorae, two lead rods with remains of wood were found. These used to belong to the tow of one of the ship's anchors. This especially

rare find enhances the importance of the shipwreck and strengthens the possibilities of finding preserved wood from the ship's keel. An interesting piece of evidence that gives us information on the conditions under which the sailors of antiquity lived, are the large numbers of olive pips that were found during excavation, since these pips must have been part of the crew's food supply.

All the excavation finds were transferred to the District Museum of Larnaka where they will be conserved by the Department of Antiquities. Photogrammetry was employed in collaboration with the Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics of the Cyprus University of Technology (Dr. Demetris Skarlatos) for drawing the shipwreck and the finds.

The main sponsor of the project is the THETIS Foundation. The Ministry of Defense also supported the Project and especially the Naval Administration, which provided the project with equipment and other means for conducting the excavation. The Hellenic Force in Cyprus (ELDYK) also supported the project by offering the complex of the Recreation Center for ELDYK Officer's Families at Agios Theodoros. Finally, of major importance for the successful outcome of the research was the sponsorship of the Cyprus Tourism Organization, Nautilus Trading and Linde Hadjikyriakos, Christos Mouskis and Aldiana hotel, the Mazotos Local Council, the Cyprus Lifesaving Federation and the Ippokambos Club in Larnaka. A large number of volunteer archaeologists and divers from Cyprus and abroad also took part in the project.



Mazotos shipwreck: 2010 excavations