
Cutting a Long Story Short?: Underwater and Maritime Archaeology in Cyprus

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CUTTING A LONG STORY SHORT?

Stella Demesticha

Underwater and Maritime Archaeology in Cyprus

ABSTRACT

Since the 1960s, underwater archaeological work in Cyprus has been conducted by non-Cypriot teams, although the local archaeological community always acknowledged the importance of the sea in the history of the island. During the last decade, the field has been incorporated in the local academic activity and several underwater projects have been conducted by the University of Cyprus. Moreover, the Department of Antiquities has created conservation facilities and has made significant changes in the Antiquities Law in order to ensure the protection of underwater antiquities. This paper discusses the different aspects of maritime archaeology that have been developed in Cyprus through the years, as well as the local social and political contexts that have impacted them. The discussion touches on similar patterns attested in the history of the discipline in other Mediterranean countries.

KEYWORDS: underwater archaeology, maritime archaeology, Cypriot archaeology, maritime cultural heritage management

Term-Sensitive Realities: Maritime, Nautical, and Underwater Archaeology

The scope of maritime archaeology has not always been clear or straightforward. It is still broadening as the discipline grows and it has recently been argued that it should encompass “the study of the remains of past human activities on the seas, interconnected waterways and adjacent locales” (Adams 2013: 2). Until the late 1970s there was not even a generally established name for the domain; the term “maritime archaeology” was coined by Muckelroy (1978: 6) to define “the scientific study of the material remains of man and its activities on the sea”; the emphasis in this definition should be put on the part “man and its activities” instead of on “the sea,” which was stressed by the until-then commonly used term “marine archaeology,” now almost completely abandoned. Muckelroy (1978: 7–9) also discussed two “allied topics” of the then new sub-discipline, “underwater archaeology” and the archaeology of ships or “nautical archaeology.” These two subject-specific terms are still in use in modern scholarship and in many respects predominate in the conception that the public or the archaeological community has about maritime archaeology. This also reflects a reality of the discipline’s history: it developed when and where both academic traditions of nautical history studies and the practice of underwater archaeology were equally fostered.

Nautical archaeology studies concern shipbuilding and seafaring, ships and shipwrecks, found on land and under the sea (Muckelroy 1978: 4). Unlike harbors or submerged settlements, the study of ships presupposed specific technical knowledge, along with the analysis of historical and archaeological contexts; a comment by Honor Frost (1963: xi) is characteristic of this distinction: “stone anchors are relatively easy to interpret, harbours are more difficult, while the problems of wreck excavation in the deep have to come last because they can be apprehended only after a considerable experience of submarine conditions.” The development of nautical studies predated that of underwater archaeology (for the case of France, see Pomey 2002), which was introduced in the mid-twentieth century more as a technical skill than an academic endeavor, as very clearly stated by J.-Y. Cousteau in the forward of J. du Plat Taylor’s book, *Marine Archaeology* (1965). And this did not seem to be the approach only of a navy commander, i.e., a non-archaeologist; skills and equipment had also been described as a major concern for any underwater work in Frost’s seminal book *Under the Mediterranean* (1963). Frost (1963: xi) seemed convinced that it was “impossible to be a professional archaeologist and a professional diver at the same time.”

These ideas only underscore the point that underwater excavations have been instrumental in setting the foundations of maritime archaeology, at least in the countries that had significant capital in marine technology and human resources in the nautical professions. During the early days of scuba diving technology, i.e., the late 1950s and early 1960s, the impact of key archaeological sites, excavated during high profile projects, was decisive and created a momentum for the development of underwater archaeology. Such projects, mostly at shipwreck sites, were often controversial, because they were not conducted by archaeologists (Adams 2013: 3–7), but played a key role in the development of innovative techniques and the creation of specialized governmental bodies or research institutes, especially in France (e.g., Département des Recherches Archéologiques Subaquatiques et Sous-Marines [DRASSM]) and Italy (Centro Sperimentale di Archeologia Subacquea). The early history of maritime archaeology in both countries

provides very instructive examples of how significant the non-archaeological marine infrastructures, in governmental and private sectors, were during these early days: F. Benoit with J.-Y. Cousteau organized the excavation at Grand Congloue, Marseilles, in 1952 (Benoit 1961; Long 1987), followed by Claude Santamaria and Philippe Taillez, who excavated Drammont A (Santamaria 1975) and the Titan shipwrecks (Benoit 1958), respectively, all with support of the French Navy. In Italy, the excavation of the largest known Roman shipwreck at Albenga, off the Ligurian coast, directed by Nino Lamboglia from 1957–1970, became possible only with the help of a large Italian salvage company, SOTIMA, which used “Artiglio,” an already famous salvage ship and its crew (Lamboglia 1952: 134–36).

In the 1970s, parallel to fieldwork accomplishments, underwater, nautical, or eventually maritime archaeology appeared as an academic discipline (Bass 2011: 7–8). Apart from the *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration*, which was first published in 1972, major research institutions generated scholarly traditions and human resources that have contributed significantly to the development of the discipline in the Mediterranean: the *American Institute of Nautical Archaeology* was founded in 1972 at Texas A&M University and established its headquarters in Bodrum, Turkey (Bass 2005); and the Centre Camille Juillan at the University Aix-Marseille was created in 1978 and incorporated all previous underwater archaeological work carried out in southern France (Pomey 2002; Boetto and Pomey 2014). Both these institutes have been instrumental in creating research and education platforms for maritime archaeology, with national and international impact. In the eastern Mediterranean, however, archaeological research institutes have always focused on fieldwork in their respective countries, not outside of them. For instance, the Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies, one of the first of its kind that did not concentrate only on ship but also on maritime archaeology in a very modern sense, was established at the University of Haifa in 1972 (Galili, Raban, and Shavit 2002: 927).

The introduction of governmental agencies specialized in underwater antiquities is an important step of the archaeological practice but depends on local political and

administrative conditions that vary considerably from country to country. For example, DRASSM was created in 1966, soon after the first shipwreck excavations in France (Pomey 2002: 893–96). The Albenga wreck triggered the creation of the Centro Sperimentale di Archeologia Subacquea (Istituto Internazionale di Studi Liguri) (Calcagno 1997), but, unlike France, no specialized governmental body for underwater antiquities was created then in Italy (Beltrame 2002: 973), so the momentum was lost. The first Italian Soprintendenza specializing in antiquities in the sea was created as recently as 2004 in Sicily. In the eastern Mediterranean, the Marine Inspection Unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority was created in 1978, only a few years after the Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies was founded (Galili, Raban, and Shavit 2002: 927). In a similar way, the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities in Greece was created in 1976, three years after the Hellenic Institute of Marine Archaeology was founded in 1973, and after numerous underwater expeditions had been conducted in the country by foreign missions (listed with bibliography in Agouridis 1997; Tsouhlos and Agouridis 2002; Theodoulou 2011). In Egypt, the Department of Underwater Archaeology of the Supreme Council of Antiquities was created in 1996, years after the work of the French mission at the ancient harbor of Alexandria (Darwish 2002). In Turkey and Cyprus research institutions for maritime studies were only recently created, whereas in Syria and Lebanon they are still seen simply as having “a rich potential” (Frost 2002).

Cypriot Archaeology and the Sea: A Long or a Short Story?

A pioneering work conducted by Joan du Plat Taylor at the city and harbor of Agios Philon, ancient Karpasia, in the 1930s but published only decades later (du Plat Taylor 1980), is characteristic of the significant, albeit sporadic record of underwater and maritime archaeological projects in Cyprus, from the earliest days of the discipline (see also Harpster 2008: 4; Leonard 2008). The making of maritime archaeology coincided with the first years after the island's independence, in 1960, when, thanks to an archaeological policy open to foreign missions,

adopted by Dr. Vassos Karageorghis (2007: 77), then the director of the Department of Antiquities, several underwater projects were fostered. They were surveys aiming to locate antiquities in the completely unexplored waters of the island. Most of them were carried out at harbors and anchorages, which was the obvious choice for small teams that could only carry very basic equipment with them. Nonetheless, they had a maritime character in modern terms since they were the first archaeological explorations of the island's coastscape. Nea Paphos harbor and Lara Bay, Akamas, were first investigated in 1959 and 1961 by the British Joint Services Aqua Club, a team of British military divers, during a project called Operation Aphrodite (Frost 1970: 22; Leonard and Hohlfelder 1993: 371; Hohlfelder 1995: 196; Leonard 2008: 131; Harpster 2008: 5). A proper archaeological team, directed by Witold Daszewski in 1965 (Daszewski 1981) returned to Nea Paphos harbor shortly after. In addition, Elisha Linder with Avner Raban, from the University of Haifa, visited several harbor sites of the island, such as Salamis, Marion (Latchi), Kyrenia, Lapethos, and Nea Paphos in 1971 (Raban 1995: 163, 165–68); the following year, Nicholas Flemming surveyed the harbor of Salamis, updating the unpublished survey completed by Linder and Raban in 1971 (Flemming 1974: 163). A joint team from the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania and the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, Oxford, came to Cyprus to survey for shipwrecks in 1967 (Katzev 1974; Bass and Katzev 1968). The Oxford team continued immediately after with a very important coastal survey at Cape Andreas, Karpasia (Green 1970, 1973). In 1972, another underwater survey was conducted by Swedish teams at Cape Kiti, Larnaca, aiming to find the harbor of the nearby Late Bronze Age site at Hala Sultan Tekke (Åström 1986); the project was under the general direction of Paul Åström, in collaboration with Catharina Ingelman-Sundberg, from the National Museum in Stockholm, with the help of the British Sub Aqua Club (Engvig and Åström 1975). At the same time, more maritime projects were fostered on land; Honor Frost was invited to study the stone anchors from Kition (Frost 1970, 1985), whereas fish tanks were recorded at Lapithos as part of a Department of Antiquities survey (Nikolaou and Flinder 1976).

With all the above in mind, it becomes obvious that Cypriot archaeology had never actually turned its back to the sea, or, as Harpster (2008: 6) put it: “By the end of 1973, Cyprus was fast becoming a centre of maritime archaeological work in the Mediterranean.” It was under these very favorable conditions that a shipwreck was discovered off the Kyrenia coast and was excavated during the years 1968 and 1969 (Katzev 1974: 177; Swiny and Katzev 1973). The wooden hull of the ship was preserved to an exceptional degree, which was the reason that this shipwreck is still a milestone in the history of nautical archaeology (Steffy 1985, 1994: 42–59). The Kyrenia shipwreck excavation, however, also left a very distinctive imprint on Cypriot archaeology, and not just because of its intrinsic archaeological value. It attracted unprecedented publicity and was the only archaeological excavation visited by President Makarios (Fig. 1) (Karageorghis 2007: 98–99; Karageorghis personal communication, June 2017). Moreover, it was the first underwater project that gained enough publicity to introduce the then nascent discipline to the archaeological community and the general public of the island (Harpster 2015).

Unlike what happened in other countries however, neither the Kyrenia shipwreck excavation nor the rest of the underwater projects carried out in Cypriot waters signaled the creation of a research institute of maritime archaeology on the island, although such plans did exist: the then newly founded Institute of Nautical Archaeology was ready to establish a research center on Cyprus, but the plans were voided by the Turkish military invasion of 1974 (Bass 2005: 19–22; Steffy 2012: 99). In the aftermath of the war, the main priority on the local authorities’ agenda was economic growth so that the country could recover from the war. To this end, tourism was gradually developed as the main industry in the island and archaeology became closely associated with it (Karageorghis personal communication, June 2017). The Department of Antiquities, parallel to its own large-scale excavation projects, e.g., at Kourion (Christou 2013) or Maa-Palaeokastro (Karageorghis and Demas 1988), was very busy with rescue excavations all along the coast, as a result of the boost in construction of infrastructures for tourism (see, e.g., Hadjisavvas 1997, 2012). In parallel, it continued the previous policy of welcoming foreign



FIG. 1
Archbishop Makarios, then the President of Cyprus, during his visit at the Kyrenia excavation site in 1968. On his left, kneeling, is the project director, Michael Katzev. Also in the picture: the American Ambassador at the time, Toby Belcher, on far right, and Alfred Kahn, excavation member, on far left. (Courtesy of the Kyrenia Ship Excavation.)

archaeological missions to excavate important sites on the coast, such as Kition-Bamboula (Yon 1984) and Amathous (Hermayr 1993).

The Kyrenia ship and the finds from the excavation remained in the castle of Kyrenia (Harpster 2015) but could no longer have a decisive role in the island’s archaeological practice. Underwater archaeological activity did not cease, however, and foreign missions have been documenting the maritime cultural heritage of Cyprus for more than 40 years since then. The surveys along Cape Kiti by the Swedish teams continued in the years 1977 (McCaslin 1978) and 1980 (Engvig and

Beichmann 1984), although without accomplishing their initial goal to locate the harbor of the Bronze Age city, excavated at the nearby site of Hala Sultan Tekke. A team from the University of London under Cathy Giangrande located several anchorages during a survey along 13 km of coastline in the western part of the island, from Maa to Lara peninsula (Fig. 2) (Giangrande et al. 1987). Bob Hohlfelder, University of Colorado, organized a systematic investigation of the ancient harbor of Paphos (Hohlfelder 1992, 1995; Leonard, Dunn, and Hohlfelder 1998) and the French school at Athens, under Jean-Yves Empereur, excavated the harbor of Amathous (Empereur and Verlinden 1986, 1987; Empereur 1995), which was the first and the only full harbor excavation on the island thus far.

On land, the excavations of the university of Lyon/CNRS at Kition-Bamboula brought to light a very well preserved complex of shipsheds, dated to the classical period (Callot 1997; Yon 2000) and geomorphological work for the harbors of Larnaca bay (Gifford 1978) had set the basis for a systematic study of the coastal changes in the area (the geomorphological mapping of the Larnaca Salt Lakes, based in coring data, was recently published by Devillers, Brown, and Morhange [2015]). In addition, scholarly attention also shifted to ship iconography; Westerberg's (1983) work on clay ship models and the publication of the ship graffiti from the temples of Kition (Basch and Artzy 1985) have contributed to the better understanding of maritime activity in Cyprus (for a recent overview of the medieval and post-medieval



FIG. 2

The team from the University of London at Keratidi Bay, Paphos, preparing to survey (1983). (Courtesy of C. Giangrande.)

nautical graffiti on the island, see Demesticha et al. 2017). John Leonard's extensive survey of the island's Roman harbors and their hinterlands (Leonard 1995b, 1997, 2005) put a lot of the previous underwater projects in context and was a decisive step towards the study of Cyprus's maritime landscape, although it was not described as such; the term was introduced in Cypriot archaeology by Knapp (1997), with a focus on the Late Bronze Age (see also Knapp 2014). Characteristic examples for the increasing interest in the coastal zone, on land and underwater, are two projects that incorporated underwater surveys in their activities: the team from the University of Aarhus, Denmark, who surveyed Ancient Akamas also investigated the Roman anchorage of Kioni (Leonard 1995a), and the "Tsaroukkas, Myceneans and Trade" project, University of Reading, surveyed a Late Bronze Age anchorage in the immediate vicinity of the Maroni-Tsaroukkas site, on the south coast (Manning, Sewell, and Herscher 2002).

The impressive results of the Uluburun shipwreck excavation (Pulak 1998, 2008) profoundly affected the attitude of archaeologists working in the eastern Mediterranean towards ships and seaborne trade of the Bronze Age. The fact that an important part of the ship's cargo was from Cyprus (Hirschfeld 2011) may have revived the attention of Cypriot archaeologists to the role of the sea in the island's history. This shift of focus did not generate more underwater fieldwork but possibly inspired several initiatives by local archaeological bodies. The Leventis Foundation supported the Iria excavation in Greece, which carried in part a Cypriot cargo (Phelps, Lolos, and Vichos 1999), and the Government of Cyprus organized an exhibition in Seville, on "Cyprus, Copper and the Sea" (Marangou and Psillides 1992). Also, two international conferences were organized in Cyprus. One, in 1993, was organized by the then newly established Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus Ports Authority, entitled "Cyprus and the Sea" (Karageorghis and Michaelides 1995). The second one, entitled "Res Maritimae: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean from Prehistory to Late Antiquity" (Swiny, Hohlfelder, and Wylde Swiny 1997), was organized by the Cyprus American Archaeological Institute (CAARI) one year later, in 1994, and was dedicated to

maritime matters in the eastern Mediterranean from the early Holocene through the Roman period.

These attempts of the Cypriot archaeological community to acknowledge maritime archaeology could well have prepared the grounds for the developments that took place during the 2000s, but no progress was made towards its actual involvement in the field. The reason may lie in the fact that all underwater archaeological activity on the island, prolific as it may seem, was carried out by foreign teams and hardly any Cypriot archaeologist had ever participated in these projects, before or after the war in 1974. They were all of course under the supervision of the responsible governmental body, the Department of Antiquities, as provided by Cypriot Archaeological Law, but in reality the Department did not and could not have a decisive role in any of them, since there was no diver among its staff. It may be that underwater archaeology was not among the Department of Antiquities' priorities after the war of 1974, possibly because it demanded dedicated human resources, funding, and infrastructure for marine investigations. Despite the fact that the diving industry has thrived on the island since the 1990s, no Cypriot archaeologists were trained in underwater archaeology. Funds were also difficult to find as resources were mainly funneled to urgent land projects mentioned above. And, given that the Cypriot Navy had very limited means, it was hard to obtain or outsource equipment and technical staff who specialized in working underwater. As a result, Cypriot archaeology seemed rather reluctant to endorse dynamically underwater archaeology, although it conspicuously appreciated the importance of maritimism in the island's history.

Rocking the Boat: THETIS Foundation and the Mazotos Shipwreck

Since 2004, this reality has been changed by a development that was not connected with official policy decisions: the establishment of the THETIS Foundation by Adonis Papadopoulos, a Cypriot businessman, who had the means and the enthusiasm to help kick-start underwater archaeology. The Foundation itself did not conduct research; its general aim was to document and

promote the island's maritime cultural heritage mainly by financially supporting archaeological investigations in Cypriot waters. To this end, Justin Leidwanger, then a master's student at Texas A&M, and Duncan Howitt-Marshall, a research student at the University of Cambridge, were given support to conduct extensive surveys around the southern part of the island (Leidwanger 2005; Leidwanger and Howitt-Marshall 2006; Leidwanger 2007; Howitt-Marshall 2012). Most importantly, in 2007, the THETIS Foundation with the active involvement of its then director, Dr. Sophocles Hadjisavvas, funded a Chair of Maritime Archaeology in the Department of History and Archaeology, University of Cyprus. This was the first intrinsic step towards a proactive approach to the establishment of maritime archaeology on the island, since its intention was to enhance the capacity building of local archaeologists.

The discovery of the Mazotos shipwreck, which was reported to the authorities by amateur divers in 2006, was also decisive for the practice of maritime archaeology in Cyprus. Dated to the classical period, it is a good example of a well-preserved wreck site (Demesticha 2011; Demesticha, Skarlatos, and Neophytou 2014) (Fig. 3). Its discovery was followed by a lot of publicity and eventually the Department of Antiquities gave permission to the University of Cyprus to conduct a pre-disturbance survey, in collaboration with the THETIS Foundation, in November 2007. This permit was given after several months' negotiations, because the authorities were reluctant to assign a demanding underwater project to an institution that had just employed only one maritime archaeologist on the island, on a temporary basis and with only external funding. Moreover, this permit would mark a rather dramatic change in the practice common up to that point, according to which only foreign missions had the expertise and the funds to conduct underwater archaeological work. It soon became obvious, however, that this was a unique opportunity for a kick-off for maritime archaeology on the island, since the THETIS Foundation secured funding and the University of Cyprus could guarantee that the team of investigators would be reinforced with specialists from abroad (Fig. 4). Thus, the first Cypriot underwater archaeological project was organized at Mazotos, in November 2007.

Since then, progress in establishing maritime archaeology has been rapid. The excavation at the Mazotos shipwreck is still ongoing and another investigation began in 2014, at a shipwreck dated to the Ottoman period, at Nissia, Paralimni (Fig. 5), both run by a Cypriot core team with many participants from abroad. These projects have a significant impact on public awareness, with articles in the press (Fig. 6), interviews in radio and television channels, as well as public lectures and events. Cypriot society embraced these ventures warmly, the legacy of the Kyrenia shipwreck having helped decisively towards this direction (Harpster 2015). The Cypriot archaeological community was also well prepared to incorporate maritime archaeology, which was nothing new to the island after all. The Department of Antiquities has not yet created a special division for maritime archaeology but has taken meaningful steps in this direction. First of all, it created a Conservation Laboratory for waterlogged artefacts in 2010, initially to accommodate the treatment of the Mazotos finds. Despite its original reactive character, this significant investment in infrastructure was of key importance towards a proactive approach to underwater archaeology. It was a change of attitude that led to even more remarkable changes: in 2016 the Archaeological Law of Cyprus was modified, based on the Rules of the 2001 UNESCO Convention Annex (the Official Cyprus Government Gazette, issue 4956, Law no 218, pages 1609–15). According to the new practices, prior to any sort of construction works in the sea, an archaeological assessment is necessary; this service is for the moment outsourced but supervised and controlled by the Department of Antiquities.

The Department of History and Archaeology, University of Cyprus, has also made significant progress towards a sustainable development of maritime archaeology on the island. Since 2012, all underwater fieldwork of the Archaeological Research Unit has been carried out by the team and with the equipment of the Maritime Archaeological Research Laboratory (MARELab), specifically created for this purpose. Apart from fieldwork, emphasis has been given to education and training. Courses of maritime archaeology were included in the curriculum of the undergraduate studies, so that students are introduced to the subject, regardless of any specialty they might follow in the future. Research students



FIG. 3
The Mazotos shipwreck as it was discovered, before any excavation began. (Photomosaic by B. Hartzler; courtesy of University of Cyprus, WARELab.)

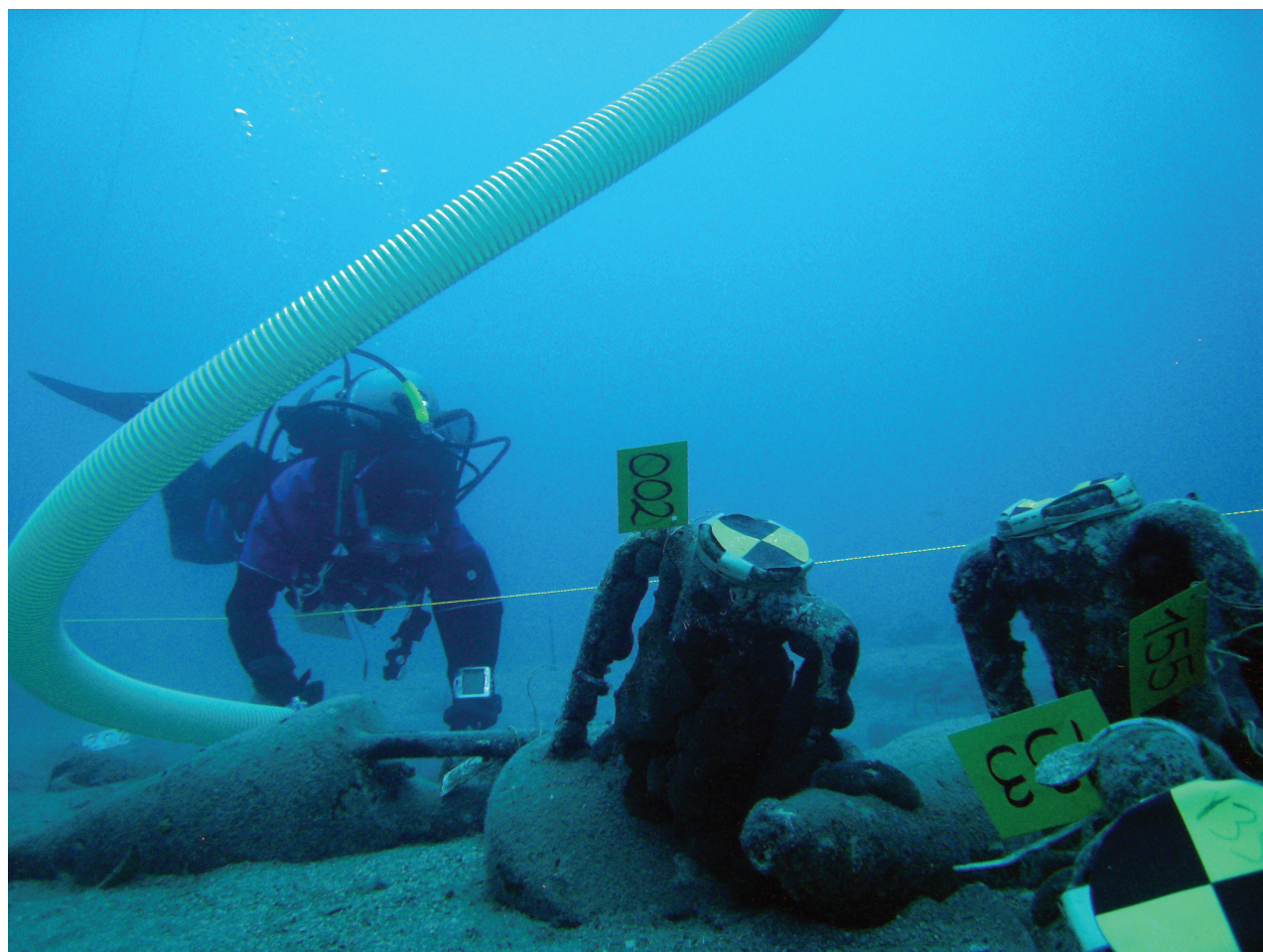


FIG 4

Excavating at the Mazotos shipwreck site required advanced diving skills (May 27, 2011). (Photo by G. Richardson; courtesy of the University of Cyprus, MARELab.)

write their thesis on maritime subjects (Dimitriou 2016; Karyda 2016), thus adding to previous work on maritime matters in the department (Theodoulou 2007, 2012). Moreover, a master's program of "Field Archaeology on Land and under the Sea" was introduced in 2014, with an increasing number of students that choose to specialize in maritime archaeology. Since 2007, a total of six targeted field schools has been organized in order to enhance capacity building in underwater archaeology. The first three were funded by the THETIS Foundation: one, in 2007, at Dreamer's Bay, Akrotiri (for the site see Leonard and Demesticha 2004; Leidwanger 2005) and two, in 2008 and 2009, at Cape Kiti (Demesticha 2015). Three additional field schools were funded by the Honor Frost Foundation, UK, and were organized in collaboration

with the Nautical Archaeological Society, UK: in 2015, at Xylophagou anchorage, Larnaca; in 2016 (Fig. 7), at the Mazotos shipwreck, and, in 2017, at the Nissia shipwreck (Fig. 8). A total of 48 Cypriots (43 archaeology students and 5 divers) have been trained in these six field schools, along with 18 participants from other countries.

Establishing Maritime Archaeology: Fieldwork, Management, and Academic Research

Maritime archaeology, as in "the study of the remains of past human activities on the seas," has been introduced to Cyprus since the early days of the discipline, as attested



FIG. 5

Excavating the wooden remains of the hull at the Nissia shipwreck site (July 7, 2017). (Photo by Y. Hadjittofis; courtesy of the University of Cyprus, MARELab.)

by many underwater projects and scholarly papers. What is very recent is the involvement of local authorities and institutions in it. Although there is no manual for how to establish a new sub-discipline in the archaeological practice of a country, the UNESCO Convention (Maarleveld, Guerin, and Egger 2013) has certainly provided the framework of good practices to this end. Regarding fieldwork, for instance, the directives are clear: well-trained and educated archaeologists should staff governmental agencies and established research bodies, which in turn should conduct extensive surveys in order to map underwater antiquities before prioritizing invasive processes like excavations. This describes a proactive rather than a reactive practice, which however has not yet had many successful applications. The

THETIS Foundation initiative was certainly in accordance with the current perception of archaeological practices, but it is hard to know if its early activities, i.e., the coastal surveys and the Chair of Maritime Archaeology at the University of Cyprus, would have the same impact without the Mazotos shipwreck, or any major find for that matter. In the same respect, it seems intriguing to wonder what the history of maritime archaeology in Cyprus would have been like if, during one of the ten different surveys carried out on the island after 1974, another well-preserved, coherent shipwreck site had been discovered.

It is also worth wondering, however, if an impressive shipwreck is indeed all it takes to change the priorities of an entire administrative and educational system.

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EXPEDITION: This is a distant view of the archaeological platform currently investigating the Mazotos wreck



TREASURE: The photomosaic of the wreck assembled by Bruce Hartzler of the University of Cyprus (Wiley Online Library, accompanying an article by Stella Demesticha)

Big plans for ancient wreck

MAZOTOS DETERMINED TO ENSURE VESSEL REMAINS WITH COMMUNITY

By **Philippos Stylianou**

The village of Mazotos on the southern coast of Cyprus is waiting for its ship to come home – after 2,350 years.

Marine archaeologists have started work to determine if an ancient Greek wreck sitting all this time 45m deep on the sandy seabed about 2 ½ km away with a full cargo of amphorae can be salvaged.

If it can, then the local community

of Mazotos will not let it 'sail away' but want it anchored with them for ever.

"We are not asking for it, we are demanding it," community chairman Marios Demetriou told *The Cyprus Weekly*, announcing that they are going to build a museum specially to house the wreck and its finds.

Only recently the local council decided to include the museum project in the community Master Plan and they are sending a letter to the minister responsible for the antiquities informing him of their plans.

"We have been told that the archaeologists will know in 20 days if the old hulk can be brought up," Demetriou said and added: "If we can have the whole ship, then we will need a bigger museum and we are looking for the right site in the Petunta area by the sea, but if it is just the amphorae we already have a plot in the centre of the village earmarked for it."

The wreck was accidentally discovered in 2006 by a local diver, Andreas Troullides, and it is estimated to be twice as large as the famous 50 foot Kyrenia wreck.

While the latter carried a cargo of only 385 amphorae, about 500 have so far been found lying on the sea bed with the Mazotos boat.

It is believed that many more are buried under the sand, but the exciting thing will be if the wooden hull of the wreck has also survived.

"If the wooden hull is there, it would be a very important discovery since very few wooden shipwrecks of the classical period were



ANCIENT: A section of the jars tagged by the archaeologists (Wiley Online Library, accompanying an article by Stella Demesticha)

found not only in Cyprus but in the whole of the Mediterranean," visiting lecturer of Marine Archaeology Stella Demesticha said in a previous interview with Demetra Molyva of *The Cyprus Weekly*.

Demesticha leads the underwater expedition by the University of Cyprus Archaeological Unit in what is the first marine investigation to be undertaken locally. Currently 'lost at sea,' she was not available for comment, but it is understood that the condition of the hull will determine if it is worthwhile to salvage the ship along with the cargo.

Two lead rods with wooden remains found during the preliminary investigation provided encouraging signs that the keel of the ship might be in a restorable state.

The ceramic jars, Demesticha had said in her early interview, were characteristic of the Greek island of Chios, which was very famous for its

wine in the 4th century B.C., and the ship might have been heading for Cyprus' big ports of Kition and Salamis. A large number of olive pips also discovered indicate that this commodity was part of the sailors' staple diet.

The team of archaeologists work from a boat and barges anchored over the wreck and for the time being they use a land base on the Ayios Theodoros coast.

However, soon they will need to move elsewhere and they are counting on the Mazotos authorities to provide facilities.

The local chairman said they were looking into it, but the village lacked suitable quarters and other avenues should perhaps be explored.

The Thetis Foundation, promoting marine archaeology on the island, is a major sponsor of the research into the shipwreck, while the project is also supported by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation.



LOCAL CHAIRMAN: "We are not asking for the wreck, we are demanding it!"

FIG. 6

Article about the Mazotos shipwreck, published in the Cypriot newspaper *Cyprus Weekly* (June 10, 2011).

The Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, which is the official governmental body responsible for the protection and management of antiquities on the island, has conspicuously remained on the sidelines of underwater

archaeological activity carried out in Cypriot waters since the 1960s. The war of 1974 took a serious toll on its priorities and was certainly one of the main reasons why the momentum that the Kyrenia shipwreck excavation

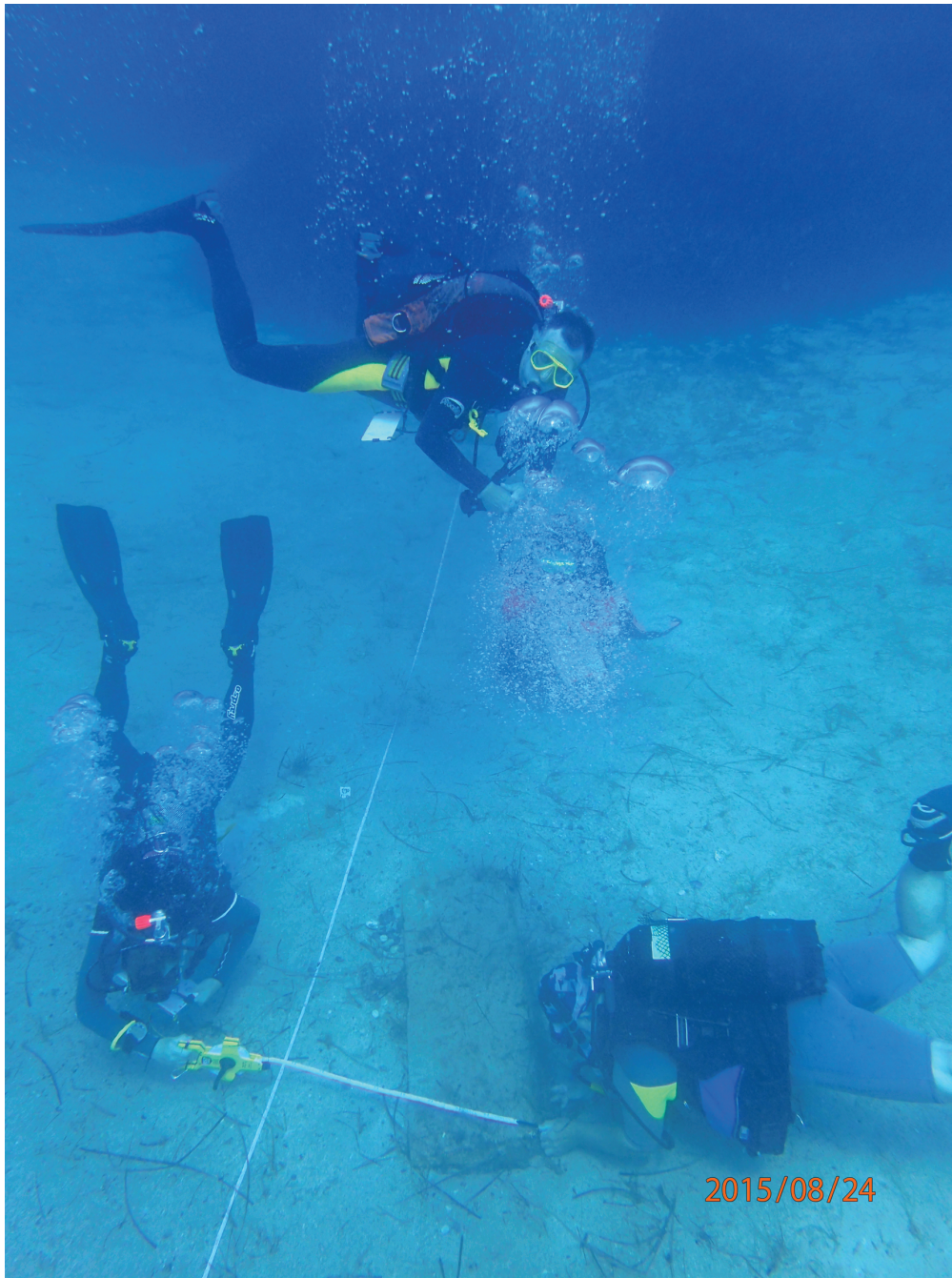


FIG. 7
Students were trained during a field school of underwater archaeology, the first of three arranged during the project “Training the Next Generation,” jointly organized by the University of Cyprus and the Nautical Archaeological Society (UK), in 2015. (Photo by M. Beattie-Edwards; courtesy of the University of Cyprus.)

created did not lead to the development of maritime archaeological practice in Cyprus—in striking contrast to the significant impact it had as a symbol on the island’s society (Harpster 2015). But it is still remarkable how the country’s reconstruction after the war was not turned into an opportunity to incorporate underwater archaeology

in the activities of the Department, since most land development was carried out along the coast, on land and under the sea. Moreover, the presence of foreign missions, albeit sporadic, could have offered an opportunity for training and practice. This paradox might not seem so surprising if seen in the context of the history of

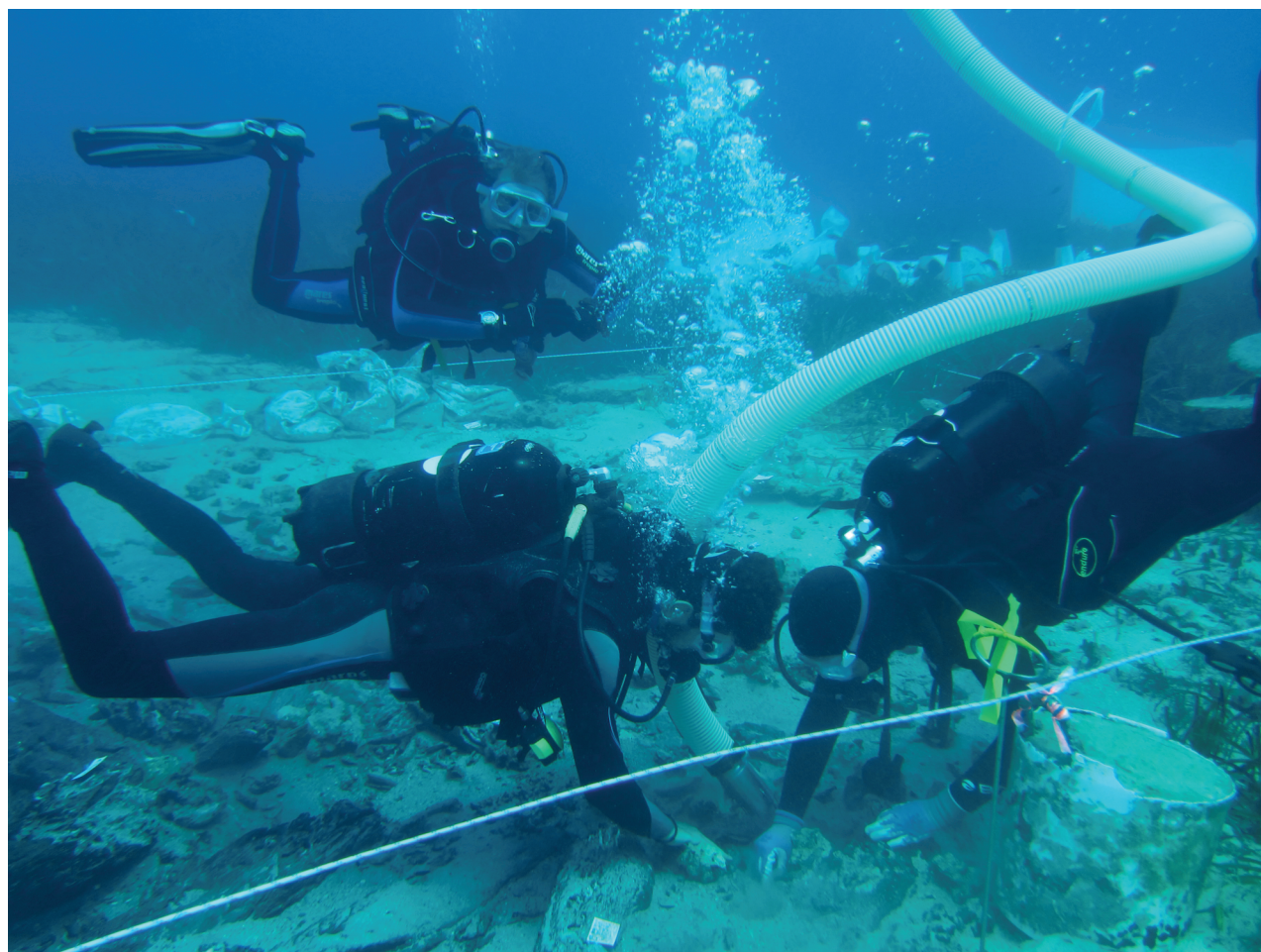


FIG. 8

Students of the University of Cyprus excavating at the Nissia Shipwreck site during the fieldschool that the University of Cyprus organized in collaboration with the Nautical Archaeological Society (July 2017). (Photo by Y. Hadjittofis; courtesy of the University of Cyprus, ARU.)

maritime archaeology in other Mediterranean countries. There is no parallel in the eastern Mediterranean, to the author's knowledge, of a governmental agency that has developed an underwater archaeological division prior to the creation of a research institution of any kind in the same country. Such a body didn't exist on the island until 1993, when the Archaeological Research Unit was created at the University of Cyprus. But when the University of Cyprus started an underwater project, it only took the Department of Antiquities three years to get over its almost "thalassophobic" former attitude and make some decisive changes in infrastructure and legislation.

Underwater and maritime archaeological practices have followed parallel and often random trajectories in

Cyprus, by different agents, over quite a long period of time. During the last decade, opportunities have been created for a more sustainable model, which, however, is too recent to be assessed by its results. Nonetheless, the example of Cyprus can provide instructive insights as far as the practice of underwater archaeology is concerned. Although sustainable steps have been taken toward the establishment of the field, they seem to follow a rather old pattern that has been seen in many Mediterranean countries in the past: governmental bodies, discouraged by the elaborate techniques and costly procedures of underwater archaeology, have usually endorsed underwater archaeology not as a proactive move to incorporate antiquities under the sea in their services, but mostly

as a reaction to the activities of independent research teams. Most importantly, it is obvious that the scope of maritime archaeology remains incomplete, unless scholarly traditions or academic centers provide education and training in nautical and maritime studies. The most effective period of the history of maritime archaeology in Cyprus is the last decade, possibly because the discipline was incorporated in local academic activity. Any positive or negative results remain uncertain, since this is still a process in the making. But it is important to stress that this is the first chance Cypriot archaeology ever had to develop its own strategies, good practices, or new ideas in maritime archaeology, not only having turned its face to the sea but also having dared to explore it.

Note

The last decade of maritime archaeological activity on Cyprus has been successful only thanks to the excellent collaboration with many people and numerous institutions, as well as the financial support of generous sponsors. I am deeply indebted to all of them but space allows me to mention only a few. The Department of Antiquities of Cyprus provided all necessary permits for our research projects, but most importantly it joint forces with the University of Cyprus in a fruitful and successful cooperation, on many levels. The THETIS Foundation and, in particular, Adonis Papadopoulos, provided generous support but also inspiration, without which very little would have happened. Professor Dimitrios Michaelidis, the then director of the Archaeological Research Unit and my co-director during the first three years of the Mazotos shipwreck project, endorsed enthusiastically the creation of the Chair of Maritime Archaeology at the University of Cyprus. The Rectors of the University of Cyprus and all my colleagues in the Department of History and Archaeology welcomed enthusiastically the new discipline. Dimitrios Skarlatos,

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