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The Protection of the  
Underwater Cultural Heritage

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## CYPRUS

### National Report on Underwater Cultural Heritage

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The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, Cyprus, has during the past years taken important measures that aim towards the protection of Cyprus' underwater cultural heritage.

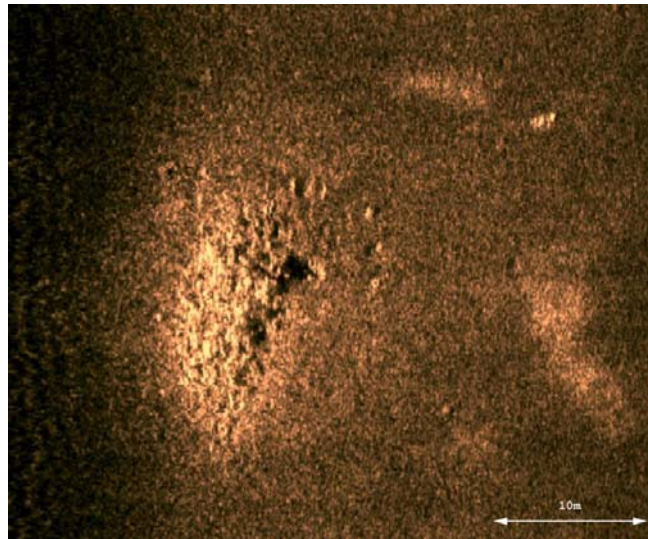
In June 2010 the first excavation session at the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. shipwreck of Mazotos was completed. The excavation, which lasted 6 weeks, was conducted under the direction of Dr. Stella Demesticha and Professor Demetrios Michaelides (University of Cyprus, Department of History and Archaeology), within the framework of the research of the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus. The research on the Mazotos shipwreck signals the birth of Cypriot underwater archaeology since it is the first underwater archaeological project conducted solely by Cypriot organizations. In addition, the excavation sheds light on very important issues such as seafaring in ancient Cyprus, commerce between the Aegean and Cyprus, the types and sizes of the period's cargo ships etc. Previous research at the site, which began in November 2007, focused on the photographic documentation of the shipwreck, and its depiction in drawings. 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. Photogrammetry was employed in collaboration with the Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics of the Cyprus University of Technology for drawing the shipwreck and the finds.



The excavation finds from the shipwreck were mainly amphorae but two lead rods with remains of wood were also found; these used to belong to the tow of one of the ship's anchors and will be conserved by the Department of Antiquities. For this purpose, the Department has recently set up temporary laboratory facilities in Larnaka. According to the needs that will arise from these excavations but also from future underwater finds, it is the intention that a permanent and comprehensively equipped laboratory will be set up in the imminent future.

Additional measures taken in order to ensure the greater protection of the Mazotos shipwreck include the listing of the shipwreck as an Ancient Monument. In addition, the Department of Antiquities has requested from the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research the creation of a protection zone of at least 200 meters around the shipwreck, which will enforce limitations to fishing and any other underwater activity around the underwater archaeological site.

The Department of Antiquities' long term aim is to establish an Underwater Antiquities' Ephorate, to which specialized scientists (archaeologists, conservators, and technicians) will be appointed. The Department also aims towards establishing permanent Laboratories for the conservation of antiquities found underwater and also permanent exhibition centers where these antiquities could be exhibited within their associated context.



*Sonograph image showing a shipwreck*

With regards the Scientific Research and Professional Development of staff, the Department of Antiquities' conservator in charge of the conservation of antiquities recovered from underwater sites has participated in a number of seminars and workshops on Underwater Heritage. These include: a) the Regional Seminar on Underwater Heritage, October 2009, Zadar, Croatia, b) the 1<sup>st</sup> (STACHEM) Regional Workshop on Infrastructures for Underwater Archaeology, December 2009, Athens, Greece and c) the 2<sup>nd</sup> (STACHEM) Regional Workshop on Infrastructures for Underwater Archaeology, February 2010, Haifa, Egypt.

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