

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE YASSIADA SHIPWRECK EXCAVATION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF LIFE ABOARD ANCIENT SHIPS

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ABSTRACT

The quantity of finds and information recovered during the excavation of the Yassiada Byzantine wreck is the consequence of the high quality both of the documentation and of the spatial analysis of the archaeological evidence. The data from the stern area allowed the excavators to propose the reconstruction of both the galley and its hearth. This interpretation has conditioned the way we think today about the inner parts of an ancient ship.

Here we analyze every category of finds discovered at the site - not related to the cargo but to life aboard - in order to make a comparison with the evidence known from other wrecks dated to the Roman Age. Some categories of objects, such as arms, are absent, while others are still attested and represent a constant presence on ships from the Republican period till the 7th century and sometimes longer. Some of the finds from this vessel are very rare in more ancient vessels, and other finds, such as the caulking tool, appear for the very first time among the ship tools. Presences, absences and new evidence will be evaluated in terms of the environmental conditions of the site, which could have affected the preservation of some objects in the ship's equipment.