

# RECONSTRUCTING THE PANTANO LONGARINI SHIP

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## ABSTRACT

True contemporaries, the 7<sup>th</sup>-century shipwrecks at Pantano Longarini, Sicily and Yassiada, Turkey are both dated approximately to the late 620s AD, and were also excavated virtually simultaneously. The ships are often compared, highlighting the use of mixed construction techniques, roughly finished framing and similarly-spaced mortise and tenon joints. Peter and Joan Throckmorton advocated the date of the Pantano Longarini vessel based on the only information available to them at the time, the preliminary findings from the 7<sup>th</sup>-century Yassiada ship.

Despite many similarities, these ships are not as comparable as some scholars might suggest. The evidence of many well-published contemporary shipwreck excavations later, new insights and more advanced reconstruction techniques requires a reinvestigation into the nature of the Pantano Longarini vessel. This analysis points not to a seagoing merchantman with a transom as originally reported, but to a coastal lighter. The unusual assembly of timbers at the stern presents an innovative and unique structural solution for a vessel that carried extremely heavy cargo in shallow water. The Pantano Longarini ship demonstrates adaptive strategies for local naval needs as well as broader maritime technological designs utilized in the 7th century Mediterranean.