

WHAT A HISTORIAN WOULD LIKE TO LEARN FROM NAUTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Everything we learn from nautical archaeology is precious for the historian, and what we have learned recently is transforming our knowledge and understanding of ancient and medieval shipping and commerce in the Mediterranean. Instead of using this report to recapitulate old and recent data, or to organize it into some new synthesis, I will take this opportunity and very special audience to inventory areas where we could find some new data and insights. Questions about information arise concerning what we know and what we do not know about ancient ships and cargoes from the nautical archaeological evidence, about updating and digitizing a comprehensive database of shipwrecks based on Parker's foundational work, about survey projects, the potential of simplified ship typologies, capacity, dendrodata, GIS applications. Questions about historical processes involve the development and transmission of technologies of ship design and operation, the changing intensity of activities on particular routes and/or particular types of cargoes and how that might correlate with the changing configurations of major home ports and destinations over time.