



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

**ANCIENT SHIPWRECKS IN CYPRUS:  
ITINERARIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY  
WORLD**

**ANNA DEMETRIOU**

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## **ABSTRACT [IN ENGLISH]**

From the first moments of its appearance in 1960, shipwreck archaeology has been concerned with presenting ancient shipwrecks to the public. Discussions focused on the technical and practical issues of their presentation. In recent years, emphasis has also been given on the need to raise public awareness, awaken appreciation, and communicate the need for their protection. As such, presentation methods aspire to inform the public about the inherent value of the sites and the need for their protection. However, influence of post-modern thought, especially in the form of post-processualism, has brought to the fore the political and social dimensions of archaeological practice. Likewise, it has been supported that non-professionals participate in a constantly renegotiated relationship with the material remains of their past, based on which they create their own associations. In this course, the inherent value of archaeology has been disputed; it is now believed that its value derives simultaneously from the sites, the researchers, and the public.

Following this line of thought, the study seeks to define the particularities of ancient shipwrecks as places of interaction and engagements in contemporary society. At the core of this work are the three sites that have been or are being excavated: the Keryneia, the Mazotos, and the Nissia shipwrecks. The study examined the socio-political context of archaeological practice in Cyprus and the narratives produced around ancient shipwrecks, as a means to identify their official position within contemporary society. At the same time, an ethnographic survey was undertaken around the distinct social groups interacting with the shipwrecks following their discovery: local communities, as well as fishing and diving communities active in the area of their location. Through un-folding the biography of the shipwrecks following their discovery, this thesis identifies the multiple meanings and negotiations developed around them by non-professional communities.

The results of the ethnographic survey undertaken, interwoven with an analysis of the impact of official archaeological practice on the island, provide a multi-layered understanding of ancient shipwrecks, which goes beyond the established professionalised conceptions. I contend that rather than being static objects with an inherent value, ancient shipwrecks gather around them multiple and constantly changeable meanings and negotiations based on the distinct relationships developed around them by the non-professional communities. As such, ancient shipwrecks set the ground for negotiating

distinct personal, local, professional, and economic identities. The multiplicity of subjects examined in this thesis ultimately point to one direction: the need for a *maritime turn* in the approach of the distinct community groups associated with ancient shipwrecks. As the sea is the medium through which ancient shipwrecks are perceived, a shift to the current human-sea relationship opens up new experiential and interpretative dimensions of the sites within contemporary society.