

PRESS RELEASE

Underwater archaeological research at the northeast area of Delos, 2014-15



The Institute of Historical Research (IHR) of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF) continued in May and June 2015 in collaboration with the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities the underwater survey of the northeast area of Delos. The underwater survey is part of the research project of Dr Mantha Zarmakoupi, external research associate in the Section of Greek & Roman Antiquity of the Institute of Historical Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation and lecturer at the University of Birmingham, regarding the city planning of Delos during the Late Hellenistic period and was funded this year by the University of Birmingham and the Roman Society. The first fieldwork season was conducted in October 2014 and was funded by the Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship scheme (FP7-PEOPLE-2012-IEF, n° PIEF-GA-2012-331969), hosted by the National Hellenic Research Foundation.

The underwater fieldwork project focuses on one of the neighbourhoods and port installations that were created at the height of Delos' urbanisation period on the northeast area of the island—the Stadion District, which is partly submerged by the sea. The Cyclades has seen a sea-level rise of about 2 m over the last 2,000 years, engulfing many areas of the heavily urbanised Delos. The Stadion District area was chosen for the project because it is one of the few areas that has not been disturbed by recent developments—as much of the west side of the island and the central harbour has. The submerged structures of the central harbour of Delos have suffered irreversible changes,

as the 19th and 20th century excavations deposited their archaeological rubble on the sea floor and new port installations were constructed over it. The Stadion District is one of the few areas where we can study the seafront of the city in order to understand the integration of the activities of the Delian trade in the urban fabric.

The aim of the first two seasons of the underwater survey was to re-identify and map the submerged remains in the Stadion District. In the past these remains had been identified as port facilities. However during the first underwater investigation, carried in October 2014, it was found out that they are in fact settlement remains that form the eastward limit of the Stadion District towards the sea. Researchers came to this conclusion after finding a partly preserved structure with 16 storage pots at a depth of about 1,5-2 meters and at a distance of 30 meters from the shoreline.

Fieldwork season 2015

During the 2015 fieldwork season the storage pots found in October 2014 were cleaned (Image 1). During the cleaning, two more pots were found and the structure with the 18 storage pots was mapped and photographed (Image 2).

Furthermore a second structure with 15 storage pots embedded in a beachrock formation was located at a depth of about 70 cm and at a distance of 10 meters from the shoreline (Image 3). This second space is part of a building with at least 5 rooms, located along the shoreline, enclosed between two streets. The floor of this building is embedded within a beachrock formation (Image 4). The walls of the building (Image 5) and 9 fallen fragments of columns, which were probably part of its colonnade, were mapped. In addition, remains of large stone plinths that formed the eastern breakwater of the Stadion District were located and documented.

It seems that a second commercial harbour operated in this area, and complemented the activities of the central harbour of Delos in the west part of the island.

Photographs



Image 1.
Cleaning of the storage pots located at the a depth of about 1.5-2 m.



Image 2.
View towards the east of the structure with the 18 storage pots.



Image 3.
Close view of the 15 storage pots that have been embedded in the beachrock formation at a depth of about 70 cm.



Image 4.
Close view of the building's floor that has been embedded in a beachrock formation.



Image 5. View towards the NA of the building that is located along the shoreline.

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[19.11.2014]: http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=59132

Press coverage

<http://www.world-archaeology.com/latest-posts/delos.htm>

<http://www.archaeology.wiki/blog/2015/06/30/new-finds-waters-north-east-delos/>

<http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.gr/2015/06/new-finds-off-north-east-coast-of-delos.html#.VaOFFnjdFg>

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