

Theme 1

Ceramics in Wrecks and Underwater Discoveries

THE KAVALLIANI SHIPWRECK: A NEW CARGO OF BYZANTINE GLAZED TABLEWARE FROM THE SOUTH EUBOEAN GULF, AEGEAN

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Studies on production and trade of glazed ceramic wares of the 12th and 13th century AD have been greatly advanced by the input of specific shipwreck cargoes located and partly investigated in the Aegean. The much pronounced range and quality of intact artifacts is just a side effect of their research. The opportunity those shipwrecks offer to trace the nexuses between production centers, trading routes, commercial strategies and markets reveals another substantial aspect of their value. But if we are to comment on the value of these shipwreck in few words, their most recognized quality is the contextual synchronization they offer towards the circulation of specific wares, decorative motifs and shapes.

The Kavalliani wreck was discovered in 2008, during the South Euboean Gulf Survey project, a joint research programm conducted by the Hellenic Institute of Maritime Archaeology (HIMA) and the Hellenic Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities (EUA). The main cargo consisted of several types of deep bowls attributed to the two main categories of glazed tablaware distributed in the Aegean during the late 12th – early 13th century AD period: Incised Sgraffito- and Slip Painted- Ware. The material revealed a series of previously unknown incised motifs, some of them without any parallel in the hitherto publicated corpus of glazed pottery. Further on, the study of the wrecksite sheds new light towards defining the origin of a major production center of Middle Byzantine Production (MBP).