

Press Release**09.07.2025**

Technical feat off Antikythera: a part of the ancient ship brought to the surface

The 2025 excavation campaign on the Antikythera shipwreck, conducted from May 23 to June 20th, led to the recovery of several still-connected fragments of the ship's hull. These elements will help answer key questions about ancient shipbuilding and offer unprecedented insights into navigation in the ancient Mediterranean.

DELICATE RECOVERY OF WOODEN FRAGMENTS

Special attention was given to retrieving three outer planks still joined to an internal frame, a rare set of articulated hull fragments that was discovered in 2024. This find, recovered intact in 2025 thanks to a specially designed support structure, represents an important technical achievement and provides valuable insight into ancient naval techniques. The assemblage confirms the use of the "shell-first" construction method, typical of the Mediterranean between the 4th and 1st centuries BCE, in which the outer shell is built before the internal structures.

Initial analysis indicates the wood is elm and oak, possibly dating to around 235 BCE. The fragment measures approximately 0.40 m wide and 0.70 m long. The planks, thinner than those discovered by Jacques-Yves Cousteau in 1976 (less than 5 cm), raise several questions: do they belong to the upper section of the ship, a repair, or a smaller accompanying vessel? A detailed study is underway to determine their nature. Other wooden fragments were also identified in situ, associated with both inorganic (lead, copper) and organic (tar) materials, near the area previously explored by Cousteau.

SCULPTURE FRAGMENTS

During the extraction of a rock, small fragments of a nude male statue standing in the contrapposto pose were discovered and documented in situ. Only a marble base, preserving the lower part of the statue's left leg, could be clearly identified. More fragments remain trapped in hard marine concretions and could not be extracted at this stage.

VARIETY IN THE AMPHORA CARGO

The discovery of Chian amphorae, spread across two distinct zones of the wreck, indicates greater typological diversity than what previous campaigns had suggested. A spouted terracotta mortar, used for crushing and/or mixing food, was also found, offering rare insight into culinary practices aboard.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTATION

As in 2024, the use of closed-circuit rebreathers with gas mixes optimized dive safety and duration. Operations were monitored in real time with underwater drones provided by Hublot Xplorations. A field lab was reinstalled on the island of Antikythera to allow for preliminary on-site analysis. The excavation was systematically documented via 3D photogrammetry, with data—drawings, photographs, surveys—integrated into a geographic information system (GIS). Enriched by data from previous campaigns, this body of material now serves as an essential basis for future research.

AN INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION

The 2021–2025 research program is led by the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece (ESAG), under the supervision of the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities of the Greek Ministry of Culture Field excavations are co-directed by Professor Lorenz Baumer (University of Geneva) and Dr Angeliki Simosi, Honorary Director of Antiquities, with participation from a team of diver-archaeologists and members of the Hellenic Coast Guard's Underwater Missions Unit.



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Sites web officiel

<https://esag.swiss>
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