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## SUNKEN WRECKS OF SİNOP AND TOURISM

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### ABSTRACT

When Sinop was founded by the the people Miletos, it became the main colony in the Southern Black Sea. Many wrecks dating from the Antiquity to the present day are present under water around Sinop and a new wreck can be discovered every day. Some of the submerged wrecks can be dived with SCUBA, however, the sheet metal shipwrecks on the shores of Sinop are particularly attractive for those who want to dive deep underwater. The dives in the shallow waters from 40 meters described in this article were made with SCUBA system. Dives that are deeper than 40 meters are carried out with mixed gas trimix equipment. These wrecks are at the ideal depth for diving tourism with technical diving, ie diving with mixed gas trimix equipment and the wrecks are in perfect condition. Diving with trained guide divers will be a protective feature for some of our underwater cultural elements, since it is easy to determine whether there are any losses when compared to the previous day, by the controlled photographed and videos taken each day. The protected area on the Sinop coast and the prohibition of sportive diving practices have caused more destruction than preserving our underwater cultural heritage, since, when well-meaning people and scientists who obey the prohibitions moved away from the prohibited areas in the sea; underwater sites where cultural assets are left to the disposal of malicious people then these cultural assets were looted. Some submerged wrecks, which may be damaged by divers, must immediately be underwater excavations done then exhibiting them in the museum will be accurate and this will add value to Sinop tourism.

**Keywords:** Sunken Wrecks, Diving Tourism, Mixed Gas Trimix Equipment, Underwater Cultural Heritage, Sinop Harbor.

## INTRODUCTION

This study was presented as an oral paper at the 21st Underwater Science and Technology Meeting held in Antalya on 16-17 November 2018. Tourism is one of the most important ways of making economic contribution to the country by presenting the cultural and natural assets of the country to the visitors. In addition to this, the preservation of these cultural assets submits utmost importance. Our ancient cities on land are open to tourism. Some of the submerged wrecks can be gained to tourism just like the ancient cities. Underwater cultural heritage can be better protected than the one above water, on land because underwater cultural heritage is not as easily accessible as the one on land. On land, even animals such as sheep, goats and cows can roam over cultural and natural assets. If a piece of a shipwreck photographed daily by diving into water is lost, it can be detected immediately. All dives aimed at recognizing cultural heritage should be conducted under the supervision of trained guide divers. With Sinop University in Turkey, at universities such as Akdeniz University, Ankara University, Uludag University, Kocaeli University, Düzce University, İstanbul University, Selçuk University, education and/or research activities are carried out in the field of underwater archaeology and underwater archaeologists trained from these institutions can be utilized for the protection of underwater cultural heritage (Erkanal & Öñiz, 2018: 19).

In the vicinity of the Sinop Peninsula, there are many other known wrecks, and more likely to be unearthed in a chronological range from the Antiquity to our recent past because as understood from the epics, Greek sailors, In the 8th century BC, before embarking on a struggle against Phoenician merchants as pirates or merchants across the Mediterranean; they crossed the Marmara Sea and began to achieve efficiency in the Black Sea and in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea in the 9th century BC (Mansel, 1988: 125). Like the Greek settlements Pitane (Çandarlı), Phokaia (Foça), Smyrna (İzmir-Bayraklı Mound), Klazomenai, Miletos and Iasos, the city of Sinop was also founded on a peninsula. The Greeks, who were highly skilled in maritime and maritime trade, the two ports in which the peninsula settlements had the most suitable weather and sea conditions, they were able to use which one was available and thus commercial activities would not be interrupted. In addition, the peninsula provided certain protection against enemy attacks (Akurgal, 2014: 283). By settling in harbor cities such as Sinope, Amisos, Trapezous in the 7th century BC, the colonists of Miletos who developed good relations with the local people formed a dynamic trade network and also penetrated the rich hinterlands of these strategic harbors. In this way, the established trade network covered the entire Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea and has gained an international dimension (Emir, 2013: 7). Pharnakes I, the King of Pontos, conquered the city of Sinop which had sheltered harbors, in 183 BC and made it the new capital of the Pontos Kingdom (Barat, 2014: 216). From ancient sources such as Herodotos, Xenophon and Strabon to medieval writers such as İbn-i Batuta, it is possible to get some information about Ancient Sinop and the later periods of the city (Demirkaya ve Tuluk, 2012: 47). Sinop, an active port city since the 7th century BC, is probably one of the richest sites in the world in terms of its underwater cultural heritage.

## METHOD & PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Steel construction vessels submerged in deep water and other remains may create a huge potential for underwater tourism in Sinop. The dives to these ships are extreme dives other than SCUBA dives, since they can be made with mixed gas, are expensive as a system and are likely to attract much richer tourist potential to Sinop (Figure 5). Since bottom time is too short, decompression times are long; it is not possible to remove any object from the bottom of the sea to up. Furthermore, the idea that our underwater cultural heritage may be destroyed by accidental contacts by novice divers is not the case for deep wrecks of this type. Because only very experienced and trained divers can dive into these depths. Unlike the crowded and uncontrolled groups that can be seen in SCUBA dives, these deep-water divers will be less numerous and making them will be much easier to control. In addition, as the sheet construction ships can cause injury to them and damage to their equipment when physical contact happens, our underwater cultural heritage will not be harmed because divers refrain from contact with wrecks. The sheet construction ships in deep water and other sunken wrecks can be gained to tourism by diving and diving with trained guide divers will be a protective feature for some of our underwater cultural elements, since deep diving characteristics and it is easy to determine whether there are any losses when compared to the previous day, by the controlled photographed and videos taken each day.

To the shipwrecks explained in this paper; a steamship made of metal sheet (Figure 3-4) approximately 5.5 nautical miles away from the Sinop Sarikum Location, at the depth of around 90 meters and a big wooden ship (Figure 6-7-8) approximately 1.5 nautical miles away in southeast from the Sinop Boztepe Cape, at the depth of 75 meters was reached with mixture gas trimix equipment.

To reach wrecks at the depth of 90 and 75 meters: After the coordinates of these shipwrecks and remains, which the fishermen put on their nets and described them as "involved", were obtained from the fishermen, a comprehensive study that we could find the details of the region with Mercator Projection navigational maps was made, then according to the physical information such as the current of the sea and the bottom of the sea we obtained from the map and fishermen, it was waited for the appropriate weather conditions to occur. A preliminary study was performed using side scan sonar and echo sounder. After the exact depth was determined, the time to stay at the bottom was determined, decompression depths and dwell times appropriate for this depth and bottom time were recorded and gas was introduced into the tubes according to these data. The mixture in the tubes was repeatedly checked for several days with helium and oxygen analyzers. Then a guide rope was placed in the middle of the ship with the help of an echo sounder, thereafter dive on the ship was accomplished by following this rope (Figure 5).

The technical diving equipment used for diving to these wrecks, ie the mixture gas tubes used at the bottom of the sea; reduced oxygen, reduced nitrogen, and helium as a complement. During the descent to the bottom of the water in the breathing tube, ie in the transfer tube percentage increased oxygen was used to inhale until achieving to the certain depth. After this depth, gas mixture tubes used at the seabed, ie at the bottom of the sea started to be used. After leaving the bottom of the sea during the dive, the mixture gas tubes used at the

bottom of the sea continued to be inhaled until reaching to the specified depths. When the calculated depth before the dive was reached, the enriched air in the transfer tubes were began to breathe. Then, at the 9 and 6 meters, a higher level of oxygen-enhanced tube was switched to inhale; long-term decompression stops were made, ie oxygen was inhaled to remove nitrogen from the body, which had reached a dangerous level since were gone to deep under water.

These dives to the wrecks at 90 and 75 meters were carried out by a team of three people, who are instructors at Sinop University, who have advanced training and a lot of diving experience. Dives to these wrecks were carried out in the harsh conditions of the Black Sea. As the depth increased during the dive, the darkness of the environment became darker, which significantly limited the vision. Numerous high-lumen diving torches have been used to work in the dark darkness at the seabed. As the currents come from different directions during the dive and are severe, the danger posed by the fishing nets on the wrecks made the studies difficult.

The shipwreck probably from the Roman Period (Figure 1) with the load of stone sarcophaguses at the Boztepe Cape and the Shipwreck dated to the Byzantine Period at the Karakum Location were discovered by Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI, an instructor at Sinop University, during his diving trainings. The discovery of all other wrecks mentioned in this article was the result of purse seine nets attached to the wrecks. The shipwrecks and findings up to a depth of 40 meters (Figure 2), studied and recorded by SCUBA (Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) system, ie compressed dry air divers. The images of the missing ones at the present time and all other underwater cultural heritage images are the images obtained during Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI's works with the permission of the ministry in the 1990s.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

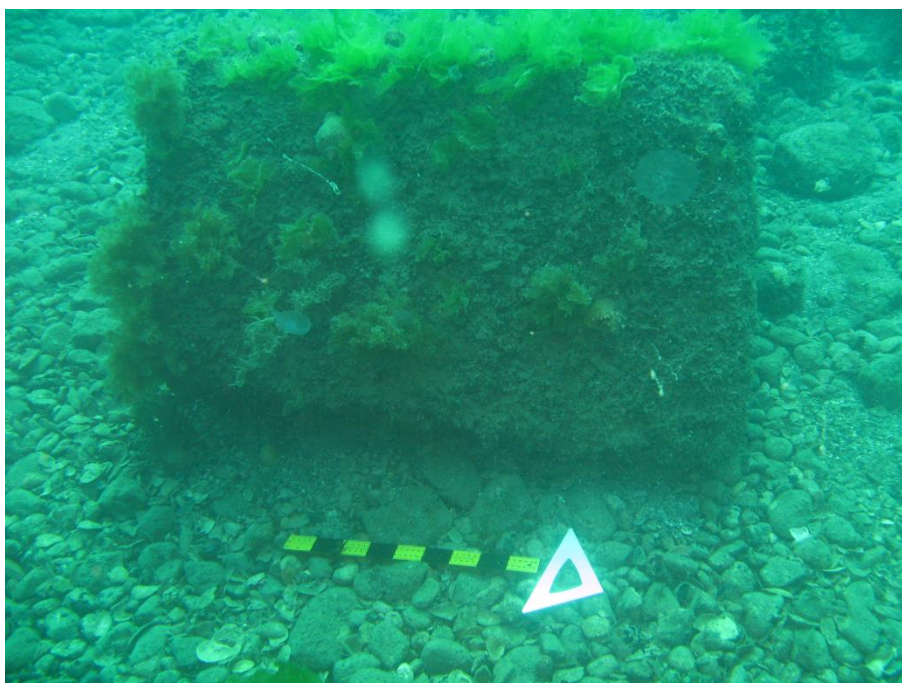
### **Greek-Flagged Dry Cargo Ship**

Since most of the wrecks in the Port of Sinop have already been destroyed to the maximum extent, there are no more materials to be destroyed by tourist dives. For example, eyewitnesses told the process in detail to Sinop University instructor Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI; during the Second World War, a Greek-flagged dry cargo ship was shot and wounded by German fighter planes and it sank at a depth of 14 meters, about 200 meters off the lighthouse of the current Sinop fishing shelter breakwater. This ship, like some other shipwrecks in and around the port of Sinop, was sold to scrap dealers by the state tender in the 1950s and was completely dismantled and destroyed by dynamite at the bottom of the sea. Today only the carina of this exists. Even this remain can be interesting for divers. Since there is no material left on this wreck and on other similar wrecks that divers can destroy, the idea that diving tourism contains a drawback is not acceptable.

### **Remains of the Submerged Ship Dated to Roman Period Located at the Boztepe Cape**

The sunken wrecks that Sinop University instructor Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI brought to the world of science; the first of the two ancient shipwrecks near Sinop City, which has been an active harbor since the 7th century BC, is

located at the Boztepe Cape with the load of stone sarcophaguses probably dated to the Roman Period and the other shipwreck is at the Karakum Location dated to the Byzantine Period (Akarsu, 2017: 40). There is an Ancient shipwreck which can be dated to the Roman Period at Sinop Boztepe Cape Adabaşı Location on the east coast, scattered at the depth of 8-14 meters. In this area, there are the crate parts of sarcophaguses and the covers of sarcophaguses spread over a very wide space (Figure 1). It is unlikely that these sarcophagus parts will be destroyed by sportive dives, because these archaeological objects are made of stone and have a very solid structure. In addition, it is forbidden to touch archaeological objects in tourism dives, and will be dived under the supervision of trained guide divers who operate this prohibition. A drawback is not seen to dive to such remains. Since in the charter of the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) with the title "The Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage", on-site conservation of underwater cultural heritage and supervised underwater tourism in protected areas supported (Şahin, 2018: 72).



**Figure 1:** Remains of the submerged ship dated to Roman Period. Triangle archeological finding, probably cover of a sarcophagus. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

#### **Remains of the Submerged Ship Dated to Byzantine Period in Sinop Karakum Location and the Remains of the Shipwrecks of 30 November 1853 Ottoman-Russian Naval War**

A tile-loaded Byzantine shipwreck in Sinop Karakum Location, about 60 meters away from the shore and at the depth of 8 meters, is open to all kinds of destruction. Removing this shipwreck by underwater excavation and gaining an underwater archeology museum by it in Sinop is an important and essential factor for tourism. In addition, underwater scientific studies should be done to find the remaining objects of the 30 November 1853 Ottoman-Russian Naval War shipwrecks then "November 30 Museum" should be provided (Figure 2). In The 30 November 1853 Ottoman-Russian Naval War; The Corvette of Gül-î Sefid, The Frigate of Kaid-î Zafer, The

Frigate of Dimyat, the paddle steamer called Ereğli, The Corvette of Necm-î Efşan, The Corvette of Fevz-î Mabut, The Frigate of Fazlullah, The Frigate of Nizamiye, The Frigate of Navek-î Bahri, The Frigate of Avnillah II, The Frigate of Nesim-î Zafer Sunk off the coast of Sinop (Tarakçı, 2017: 64, 65). Remains probably belonging to The Frigate of Avnillah II are around the location called "Mobil Beach" in Sinop (Tarakçı, 2014: 62) (Figure 2). Such a museum can contribute to Sinop tourism and will keep the memory of the martyrs fresh in the heart of Sinop people and the Turkish Nation.



**Figure 2:** Two pieces of water tanks remained probably from The Frigate of Avnillah II. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

### **The Steamship Made of Metal Sheets at the Depth of 90 Meters**

One of the shipwrecks in deep water in Sinop and its vicinity is a steamship made of metal sheet at the depth of around 90 meters and approximately 5.5 nautical miles away from the Sinop Sarkum Location. The ship is in a 20-meter pit on a 70-meter deep plateau. It is estimated that this ship served as a passenger and cargo ship, and the date of manufacture is likely to be dated to the second half of the 19th century. The steam sheet construction ship also has 3 masted sailing equipment. The ship, which can attract underwater diving tourism enthusiasts, is in good condition and in one piece underwater. This sunken ship was also presented to the scientific world by Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI, an instructor at Sinop University. In deep waters at the depth of 40 meters and below, decompression diving is performed within the scope of advanced underwater diving techniques and trimix gas mixture is used; the team consisting of Sinop University academics members Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI, Bora EYUBOĞLU and Ömer Salih ASLAN reached the wreck at the depth of 90 meters, is above

dry air diving limits, using advanced underwater diving techniques and recorded the ship (Tarakçı & Çakaloz, 2014: 212-225, 270) (Figure 3-4).



**Figure 3:** The stern rudder of the steamship made of metal sheets at the depth of 90 meters. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

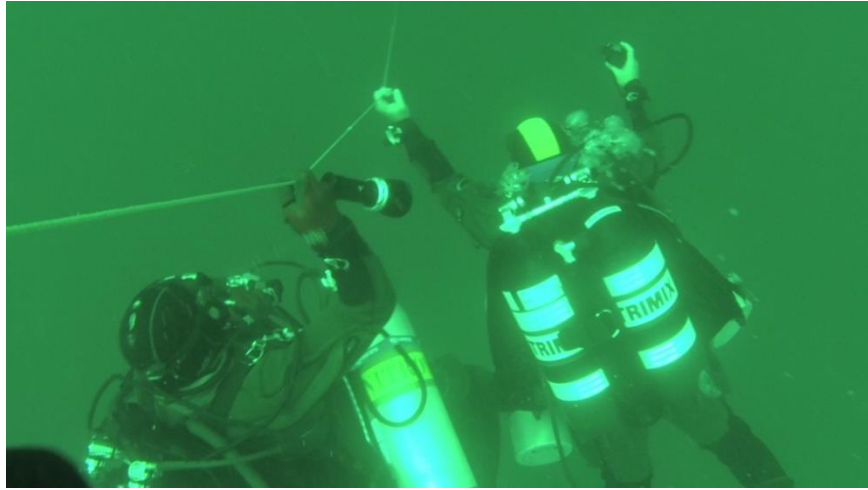


**Figure 4:** The coaming of the steamship made of metal sheets at the depth of 90 meters. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

#### **The Big Wooden Ship at the Depth of 75 Meters**

The other deep water shipwreck; a big wooden ship approximately 1.5 nautical miles away in southeast from the Sinop Boztepe Cape, at the depth of 75 meters and the date of sinking is unknown (Figure 6-7-8). It is in a very good condition compared to a wooden shipwreck, standing as a whole in an undisturbed state. It was found by coincidence, with a large amount of purse seine nets on it. The mast is tipped over to the port. The crane windlass on the deck is still in place and has not collapsed. These dives to the wrecks at 90 and 75 meters

were carried out by a team of three people, who are instructors at Sinop University, who have advanced training and a lot of diving experience. This shipwreck, which was presented to the world of science by Sinop University Instructor Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI again, was recorded by a team comprised Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI, Bora EYUBOĞLU and Ömer Salih ASLAN (Figure 5).

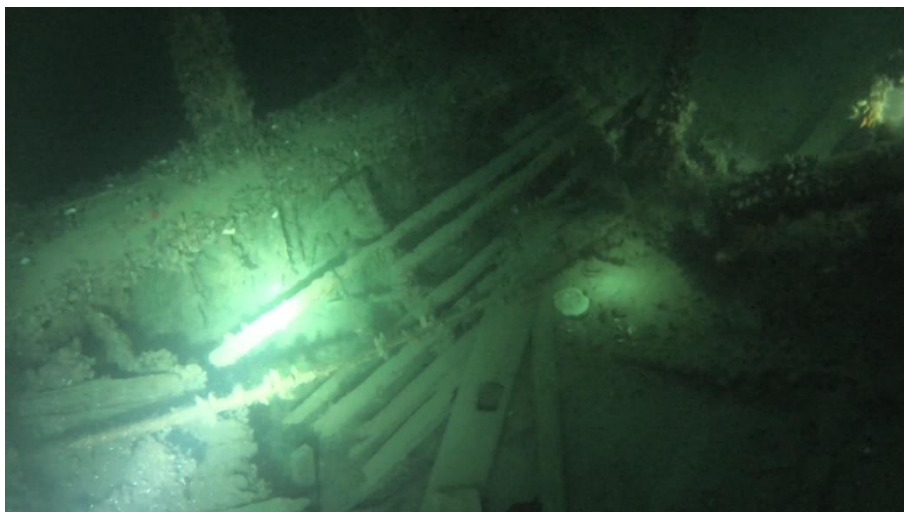


**Figure 5:** While descending to the big wooden ship at the depth of 75 meters by mixed gas trimix equipment. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)



**Figure 6:** A photograph from the deck section of the big wooden ship at the depth of 75 meters. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)





**Figure 7:** A photograph from the inner side of the hull of port from the big wooden ship at the depth of 75 meters. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)



**Figure 8:** The windlass of the forecastle of the big wooden ship at the depth of 75 meters. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

### **Exotic Areas for Diving in and Around Sinop**

Because of being volcanic formation, Sinop Boztepe Cape and its environs offer a depth ranging from 14 meters to 20 meters like a rock wall and it is a unique area for sportive dives in the Black Sea. Due to its location, Boztepe is one of the rare areas where diving is possible in all weather conditions. It is an exotic area giving a pleasant view for divers with large and small cavities formed from rocks underwater. In addition, due to the different weather, plankton and particle density of the Black Sea, the environment that absorbs the light at more shallow gives the divers a different excitement underwater; they immerse themselves in an unlimited sense of depth.

### The Application of the 1st Degree Archaeological Site in Sinop and its Consequences

The locations of the wrecks and the remains on the harbor map of Sinop in Figure 9 were specified by Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI and handed this map to the museum director of the period. [Points marked in red on the map: From the front of the DSİ Beach (As can be seen from the compass rose on the map, the wrecks and the remains shown with red dots starting from the south and heading north and east respectively, then heading west and north); Remains of the frigate of Navek-i Bahri, which was personally blown up by Major İmamoğlu Ali Bey, the commander of the ship in the Ottoman-Russian Naval War on November 30, 1853. A Greek-flagged dry cargo ship wreck off the Sinop fishing shelter breakwater lighthouse. A tile-loaded Byzantine shipwreck in Sinop Karakum Location. The crate parts of sarcophaguses and the covers of sarcophaguses which can be dated to the Roman Period spread over a very wide space in Sinop Boztepe Cape Adabaşı Location on the east coast. The steamship of Kızılırmak at the Üzümlü Dere Location. The remain of pontoon at the Çukurbağı Location. Yörük steamship wreck in the eastern location of İnceburun and two wooden merchant shipwrecks named "Çektirme" in the same location, very close to each other at the depth of 35 meters.]



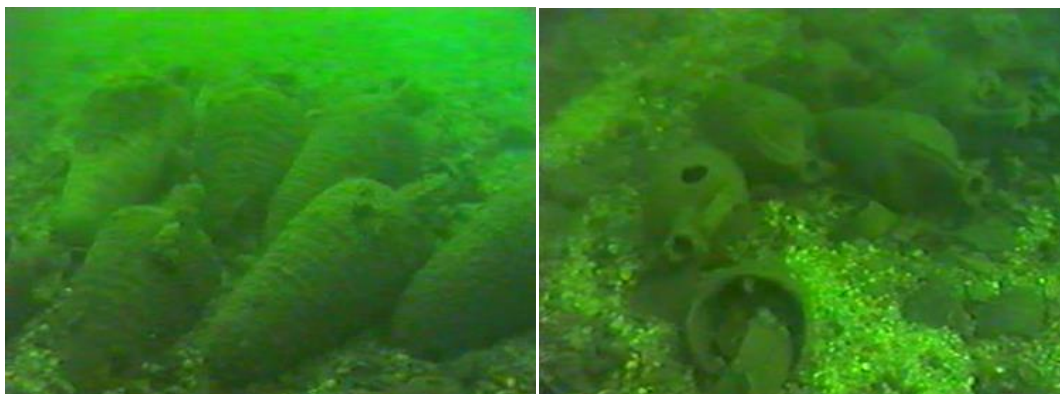
**Figure 9:** The harbor map of Sinop showing the locations of the wrecks and the remains (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

The Sinop museum director of the period took this map (Figure 9) to the Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Trabzon and a large area in the sea whose borders were not defined in coordinates was banned in 1989. Later, this area was extended to Gerze-Köşk Cape.

By the decision of the Council of ministers, prohibited areas for sportive diving within the borders of Sinop province were designated and coordinate lists were published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey in 2001. One of the areas where sportive diving is prohibited is the area from the Lighthouse of Sinop Boztepe Cape to Provincial Private Administration Beach of Karakum. The other is the area extending from the Kayıkbaşı Cape along the Ordu Village Beach. Apart from these coordinates diving had become free. However, with the request of Sinop Museum, the Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Samsun declared the 1st degree archaeological site between the two sportive fields as required by the Directorate of Sinop Museum. In 2016, a large part of this 1st degree archaeological site was removed by the decision of the Council of Ministers.

The area between the two prohibited areas for sportive diving mentioned above is also the anchorage area of the Sinop Harbor. This area was declared 1st degree archaeological site and was banned only for underwater and overwater sports. However, the greatest damage to any cultural and natural existence in this area would have been by the anchorage and fishing made by purse seine nets which were never obstructed, because tons of weight of the lead collar of the net sweeps the bottom of the seabed and the steel rope that shaped the bottom of the net into a pouch scans the seabed and shreds everything that comes in front of it. As a result of these fishing nets attached to shipwrecks, Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI was able to detect these wrecks and ruins during the dives made for rescue purposes. Today we can see the existence of hundreds of square meters of purse seine nets on many steel construction submerged wrecks. These nets are called "ghost nets" and they continue to hunt. Cleaning the nets on these wrecks and bringing these deep-water shipwrecks to tourism will also attract the attention of the underwater communities who are engaged in technical diving (mixed gas) that is spreading rapidly around the world.

The existence of a large number of amphoras in the 1st degree archaeological site was also identified. Amphora, a word which means "double-handled pot", is of Ancient Greek origin and made of terracotta (Öniz, 2009: 58). Amphoras have many different typologies; on the basis of the elements such as production places, production dates, what they carry as a result of sediment analysis, seals and inscriptions on them provide access to important information about the old (Öniz, 2016: 3). For example, in its own unique way, sinop production amphoras have pyroxene, ie black sand, and we can understand Sinop's ancient commercial network from commercial centers where pyroxene-manufactured amphoras have been recovered (Tezgör, 2014: 222). A shipwreck at the depth of 8 meters deep with too many amphoras on its seabed which was 100 meters off on the west direction of the tile-loaded Byzantine shipwreck in Sinop Karakum Location, about 60 meters away from the shore and at the depth of 8 meters, was discovered by Rasim Yasar Tarakci during training dives and reported to the museum directorate then this shipwreck was completely looted with no trace of it (Figure 10-11). While the 1st degree archaeological site was in effect, this looting and the destruction of the scientific data which could be derived from amphoras were happened.

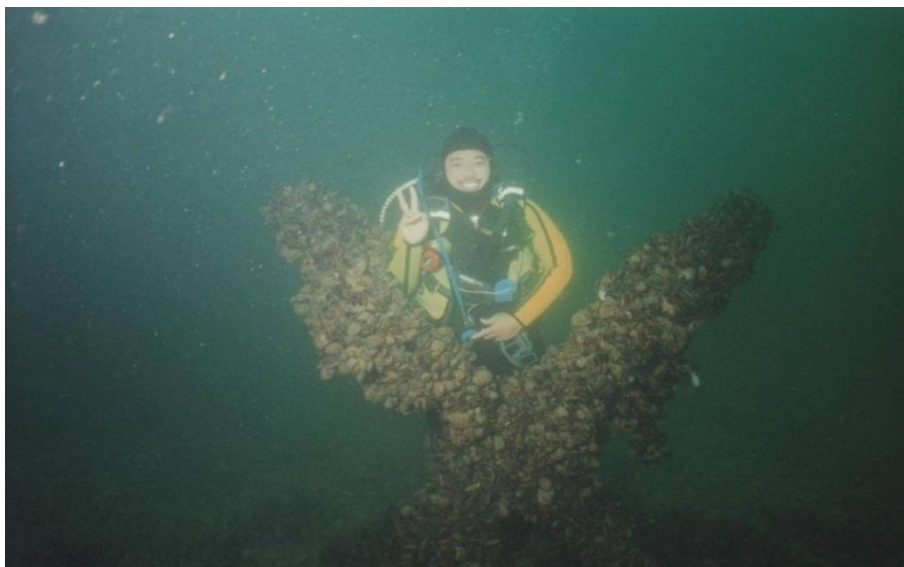


**Figure 10 & Figure 11:** Looted amphoras belonged to the shipwreck in Sinop Karakum Location. Today, there's no trace of this shipwreck. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

A large stone mortar was also unfortunately stolen which was around the Ancient shipwreck that can be dated to the Roman Period at Sinop Boztepe Cape Adabaşı Location on the east coast, scattered at the depth of 8-14 meters (Figure 12). The four meters body lengthed, four nail anchor (named "Lenger") (Figure 13) and a hand millstone, located in the same area mentioned above, were looted while the 1st degree archaeological site was in effect, and there's no trace of these artifacts today.



**Figure 12:** A hand millstone at Sinop Boztepe Cape Adabaşı Location on the east coast. It was stolen and there's no trace of this hand millstone today. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)



**Figure 13:** The four meters body lengthed, four nail anchor (named “Lenger”). It was stolen and there’s no trace of this anchor today. (From Rasim Yaşar TARAKÇI archive)

It may be useful to protect some of the underwater cultural assets by giving responsibility or giving liability for the cultural assets to the people who make the dives, by opening some of the prohibited areas for sportive diving. Such cultural assets, especially amphoras, can be numbered with plastic brands that can be attached to their handles. Then the photos taken daily can be observed by comparing with the ones of the previous day. In this way, those who make this tourism can take part in the underwater protection army as an effective protection element.

Closing an area for sportive diving or declaring an archaeological site cannot provide protection in itself, but it has been seen that allows malicious people to continue and increase their activities in that area. When well-meaning people and scientists who obey the prohibitions move away from the prohibited areas in the sea; underwater sites where cultural assets are presumably left to the disposal of malicious people.

Due to the application of the 1st degree archaeological site in Sinop, it has been seen that the entire tourism sector were affected by the overall negative. Due to the application of the 1st degree archaeological site, hotels and all other tourism facilities on the coastline were unable to develop their businesses; they were unable to build docks, piers, beach facilities and similar units. Sinop, that has the coastline, was removed from the sea. Municipalities could not perform the services they needed to do on the coast. Crooked construction was seen and the city traffic was locked down, since no roads which was necessary constructed. Accommodation facilities that could accommodate tourists coming to see the rich underwater cultural heritage of Sinop could not be realized. After all, a large part of this 1st degree archaeological site was removed by the decision of the Council of Ministers in 2016.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the vicinity of the Sinop Peninsula, which has been an active harbor since the 7th century BC, there are many other known wrecks, and more likely to be unearthed in a chronological range from the Antiquity to our recent past. So far, these wrecks, which could not have any material or moral return to Sinop Province, could not be protected as a result of prohibitions such as the 1st degree archaeological site practices. Protecting our underwater cultural heritage with controlled dives can be a more effective method.

If the shipwrecks around the coasts of Sinop had not been destroyed and remained as they were, they could have been transformed into an underwater national park or museum, the remaining objects of the 30 November 1853 Ottoman-Russian Naval War shipwrecks could have been preserved as war cemetery and opened for visitors. This also could add moral richness to the people. Today, the remaining elements of the shipwrecks of the 30 November 1853 Ottoman-Russian Naval War can be excavated under the light of scientific methods of conservation and restoration and opened to visitors as an underwater archeology museum.

The equipment used in decompression diving with mixed gas in order to reach deep under water differs from the equipment of the sportive divers performing air diving. This dive system is expensive and is of interest to fewer, more experienced but wealthy tourists due to the cost of materials. This will allow divers to dive more controlled by guides who know the depths and what they are hiding. Sinop is also rich in remarkable wrecks at 40 meters and below, which are discovered every day. Therefore, diving in Sinop Province, which cannot be done due to arbitrary bureaucratic obstacles, can increase the diversity of tourism if it can be done and Black Sea will become an important destination of tourism as it is in the southern coasts of Turkey.

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