

Girne Shipwreck

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Photos by Keith and Ruth Andrews



Keith and I visited North Cyprus in April. Girne (Kyrenia) Castle contains a preserved ship which apparently sank in rough seas around 300BC a mile from the anchorage at Girne. It had a cargo of 400 wine amphorae made in Rhodes, and 10 made in Samos. Interestingly, 29 millstones were packed into the keel in 3 rows and were acting as ballast as well as cargo. They probably came from Kos and were clearly new and unused.

There seemed to be two types of stones: a flat rectangular base piece with a carefully shaped stone on top with a central slot and a possible spout at both ends. They are about 18in x 12in. I saw a worn top stone outside the museum, but no clues as to how these stones operated.

I have never encountered anything like them before and have been unable to find any information on the internet. I wondered if anyone reading this knows how they worked and what they milled.



My guess is that a cylindrical runner stone revolved in the top depression but there were none in the wreck.