WHAT CAN A 4,700-YEAR-OLD SHIPWRECK TELL US ABOUT ANCIENT TRADE?

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Underwater archaeologists working near Kekova Island on Turkey's Mediterranean coast have found the remains of a trading vessel that may be the oldest known shipwreck in the world. The ship probably sank between 4,400 and 4,700 years ago, around the time when Egypt's first pyramids were being built. The wooden hull has disappeared, but more than 30 large ceramic jars and three stone anchors survived on the seabed. Some jars still contain traces of the liquids they once carried. Researchers think the ship may have transported olive oil or wine from the Jordan Valley towards places such as Troy or Crete. One unusual jar may even have been used to make butter or cheese during the journey. The discovery is important because it provides evidence that people in the Early Bronze Age travelled and traded across much larger distances than we sometimes imagine.

WHY IS THIS INTERESTING?

The wreck turns a simple group of broken jars into evidence of a connected Mediterranean world. Long before modern countries existed, sailors carried food and other goods between different regions. The discovery suggests that trade, travel and cultural exchange were already important thousands of years ago.

THINK LIKE A HISTORIAN

"How does this wreck change what we know about Bronze Age sailors?"

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/a-new-contender-for-the-worlds-oldest-shipwreck-has-been-discovered-off-the-coast-of-turkey-its-ancient-cargo-is-a-