

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Underwater archaeological research at Mazotos shipwreck**

#### **2011 field season**

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, announces the completion of the second excavation season of the Mazotos shipwreck (02.05.2011 – 25.06.2011). The fieldwork was conducted by the Archaeological Research Unit of University of Cyprus, under the direction of Dr Stella Demesticha, in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus and the THETIS Foundation.

During this last field season, the team continued the systematic excavation of a trench, first opened in 2010, at the southern part of the assemblage. In the preliminary view of the archaeologists, this would have been the bow area of the ancient ship. Most of the transport amphorae recovered belong to the main type of the cargo and came from the island of Chios in the Aegean. One amphora from the island of Kos was also found outside the main assemblage and it may have been part of the crew's provisions. Moreover, parts of two anchor stocks were also excavated which, added to the one found last year, provide valuable information on the sailing equipment of ancient ships. Of prime importance was the discovery of the keel and part of the wooden hull of the ship, as it proves that a considerable part of the ancient ship is still lying under the main concentration of the amphorae.

The photogrammetric mapping of the site was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Civil Engineering and Geomatics at the Cyprus University of Technology, under the direction of Dr Dimitris Skarlatos. All recovered materials were transported to the special lab for underwater finds, in the Larnaka District Museum, where they will remain for their desalination and conservation by the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus.

Many students from the University of Cyprus took part in the project. Apart from the archaeological excavation, they were also trained in ancient sailing, during a special

seminar that was organised in collaboration with the Kyrenia-Chrysocava Foundation, on the 'Kyrenia-Liberty' ship. The ship sailed from the Naval Base 'Evangelos Florakis' at Mari, where it was moored, to the Mazotos shipwreck area. During the trip, the Kyrenia-Liberty crew and their captain Giorgos Paphitis, taught the basic principles of ancient sailing to the students and guided them in performing several tasks of the procedure themselves. After the ship arrived at the shipwreck site, the members of the excavation team interrupted their work for a while and visited the ship. Thus divers and archaeologists from 16 different countries (Cyprus, Greece, Germany, Austria, France, Spain, United Kingdom, Ireland, Rumania, the Czech Republic, Poland, Denmark, Finland, Ukraine, Australia and USA), enjoyed the unique experience of excavating an ancient ship at the sea bottom and then visiting a similar one on the sea surface!

Apart from the THETIS Foundation, which is the main sponsor of the project, the excavation was supported by the Cyprus Telecommunication Authority, the Bishop of Kykkos Monastery and various private companies: Frederick University, ARCHIRODON Construction (Overseas) Co. S.A, Petrolina (Holdings) Public Ltd, Marangos Bakeries Ltd and Andreas Charalambous Ltd. The support of the Ministry of Defense was also very important. The Navy Command, in particular, offered basic equipment and means for the project whereas the Greek Forces of Cyprus kindly provided their complex of buildings at Agios Theodoros to accommodate the team. Very decisive also was the technical support offered by the members of the Maritime Institute of the Eastern Mediterranean and the divers of the Nautilus Search and Rescue Team.



1. Kyrenia – Liberty visits the Mazotos Shipwreck site (photo: 04.06.2011, Cl. Lozano © University of Cyprus)



2. The excavation trench at the bow area of the ancient ship (photo: 17.06.2011, A. Neophytou © University of Cyprus)