

## **STUDY REPORT**

**Petras excavations (settlement, palace, cemetery).**

**Study of marine faunal remains.**

**Dr. Tatiana Theodoropoulou**

**Study season: July 2009**

The Petras old and new excavations produced a significant number of marine faunal remains. Their omnipresence in the settlement, the palatial complex as well as in the burial structures implies a diversified and multipurpose use. The aim of the study of marine faunal remains from these three Minoan contexts is then to explore the uses of the marine world in the everyday and ritual activities of this Minoan society.

During this first study season (6 days), a first approach of the shell and fishbone material was aimed. Eight crates of bones/shells from the palace and the settlement have been processed. In a first place, shells and bones were separated and given new ID numbers. This operation was judged necessary in order to facilitate the study procedure. New ID numbers were recorded in the Petras finds database.

More than 230 bags produced 1600 fragments of shells and fishbones, accounting for 2/3 of the processed material from the palace. Shell remains and fishbones have been identified with the help of general manuals for the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea. Identification was in most cases pushed to family, genus and species level. The remains were counted in Numbers of Identified Specimens (NISP). In a second step, the numbers of remains will be treated in Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI), which prove to be more adequate when discussing numbers of animals involved. Pre- and post-depositional signs (weathering, fire, opening with tool, perforations or other working) were also recorded and counted.

Until now, Patellidae (limpets) and Muricidae (purple-dye) families are the more common ones. Twelve more families of molluscs are present. Crabs and lobster claws have also been retrieved. 5 vertebrae and 3 cranial bones from fish (Sparidae) have been identified until now, yet more are expected to come out from the sorting of the water-flotated samples.

This will be one of the goals for the next study season. Completion of the study of the Petras palace and settlement will give an overall idea of the exploitation of marine faunas in this Minoan complex. The study of shell and fish remains from the Petras cemetery will also allow a better understanding of the uses of the marine world in the burial practices and symbolic sphere.