

## PRESS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE (UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI FIRENZE)

EXCAVATIONS AT ERIMI-LAONIN *TOU PORAKOU*, 2009

The Ministry of Communications and Works (Department of Antiquities) announces the completion of the 2009 excavation season of the University of Florence (Dipartimento di Scienze dell' 'Antichità' "G. Pasquali") at Erimi-*Laonin tou Porakou*. The field work, which was carried out from August 17<sup>th</sup> to September 8<sup>th</sup> and was directed by Dr. Luca Bombardieri, involved a team of archaeologists, draftsmen and topographers of the Universities of Florence, Turin and Chieti with the support of two conservators from the Soprintendenza Beni Archeologici.

The site was first identified in 2007 during a complete survey of the Kouris Valley area which aimed to outline the general patterns of the landscape's use and the sequence of the ancient occupation in the valley area. The survey project carried out in 2007-2008, linked the study of the surface material with an analysis of the cartography and the Satellite and aerial photographs on disposal within a Multilayers GIS-System. Thus, 14 sites were identified dating from the Early-Middle Bronze Age to the Byzantine and Medieval periods. The final chronological sequence of the identified sites within the surveyed area witnesses a relevant continuity in the occupational sequence and an interesting development of the relation patterns of the valley's various sites (settlements, cemeteries, river control points and/or the inner valley road network).

In 2008 a more thorough investigation of one of the identified sites occurred. The site, named Erimi-*Laonin tou Porakou*, is located on the eastern slope of the river valley, lying on a high *plateau* facing southward, towards the modern Kouris Dam, between Ypsonas and Erimi villages. Its position allows a good view of the river as well as the sea coast, suggesting its use as a control point of the road network system within the valley. The investigation of the site which was carried out during 2008 evidenced a double circuit wall system surrounding the settlement and a series of ramps and entrances were also documented. The settlement sequence within the site area suggests occupation throughout two main phases. The first and most relevant phase dates from the Middle Bronze Age to the Late Bronze Age I period; a second

phase, apparently following a long-time *hiatus*, is related to a possible re-building of the outer circuit wall during the late-Hellenistic and Roman period.

The 2009 season focused on the investigation of three areas: Area A, B and E.

**1) The top mound (Area A)** had been extensively occupied by a complex workshop, linked with a storage area. The natural limestone bedrock has been carefully worked creating a proper work place. This area (12,5 x 15 m) has revealed an interesting workshop with a series of deep rock-cut basins all interconnected by a system of channels. To the south of the workshop a large (27m<sup>2</sup>) storage area was discovered, divided into two rooms and extending beyond the limits of the current excavation area. It has been possible to identify two phases of use of this area (Phases A and B). In the storage area's main room, a large number of vessels were found under the collapsed stone and mudbrick debris. During Phase A, the room had contained four large *pithoi* fixed in the floor and surrounded by a series of stones; next to the *pithoi* a collection of smaller bowls, spouted juglets and medium sized jars were also discovered, all of which were found collapsed on the floor. The bowls and the other small vessels were probably used to extract or to add substances into the large *pithoi* (as suggested by the broken spouted juglet found inside one of the *pithoi*). Beneath the floor of the storage area's main room, another level of burnt debris was discovered, indicating an earlier phase (Phase B); from this level a large amount of pottery related to collapsed vases was collected. The ceramic assemblage of the storage area clearly indicates a Middle Bronze Age Red Polished ware production.

**2) The first lower terrace area (Area B)** was possibly a domestic quarter. An area of 19m<sup>2</sup> was investigated and the stone foundations of a building were uncovered. On the building's floor a fire place was identified; within the rubble a large amount of Red Polished ware types were found, which differ typologically from the material found in Area A. Here the assemblage shows a clear prevalence of small types used for food consumption (mainly bowls and small jars), strengthening the suggestion that this was a domestic area. A jug sherd from within a wall was found with an incision, possibly a written sign of the Cypro-Minoan Script.

3) A small cemetery area (Area E) was also identified outside the external circuit wall. In 2008 three rock-cut tombs with small *dromoi* were excavated. Two unlooted tombs were discovered this season, located along a lower limestone terrace south of the modern road. The tombs do not have a *dromos*, but a cave-like chamber cut directly into the limestone. In one of the tombs an adult inhumation was uncovered whereas the smaller tomb may have been the grave of an infant. 12 almost complete vessels were found in the largest tomb, which show a standard repertoire of the Red Polished decorated pottery production. Furthermore, a series of 7 clay spindle-whorls with incised decoration as well as two picrolite incised disks were among the grave offerings. A similar ceramic repertoire was found in the smaller tomb, in which however, no spindle-whorls or picrolite disks were found.



Erimi-Laonin tou Porakou: Area A-storage area