

PRESS RELEASE

EXCAVATIONS AT ERIMI-LAONIN TOU PORAKOU, 2011

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, announces the completion of the 2011 field season of the Italian Archaeological expedition at Erimi -*Laonin tou Porakou*, which took place from August 1st to September 3rd 2011, under the direction of Dr. Luca Bombardieri (University of Florence). The investigations were conducted by a team of archaeologists, drawers and topographers of the University of Florence, with the joint support of an anthropologist of the University of Florence and a team of five conservators from the Soprintendenza Beni Archeologici.

The site of Erimi-*Laonin tou Porakou* lies on a high *plateau* on the eastern river bank facing southward towards the Kouris Dam, just on the border between Ypsonas and Erimi villages. The settlement sequence evidenced at the site indicates occupation throughout two main phases. The first and most significant phase ranges from the Early Bronze Age to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age period (EC II/III-LC I). The site was then re-occupied in the late-Hellenistic and Roman periods, apparently following a long period of abandonment.

As far as the 2011 field season is concerned, the focus was placed upon the investigation of the top mound area (Area A), the domestic quarter (Area B) and the southern cemetery (Area E).

1) Excavations on the top mound (Area A) confirmed the importance and the extent of the Workshop Complex, which was possibly focused on weaving and textile dyeing activities, as also suggested by the results of the analyses carried out on plant residues collected from the soil from structures and ceramic vessels. Investigations in the area, which measures 20x20 m., have revealed two new Storage Areas (SA II and SA III), which extend parallel to each other to the west of previously investigated Storage Area I. The excavation exposed the complete extension of SA II, which covers a wide surface of 7,20 x 3,50 m., and is subdivided into two rooms (Rooms A and B). The collapse of the walls of the Storage area was possibly caused by a sudden event, since the structure as well as the complete assemblage of ceramic vessels and small finds were found crushed on the rooms' plaster floor.

The entrance to the Storage Area is characterised by a huge limestone squared block measuring 1,50 x 0,50 m., which preserves its socket and locking devices. Hence, Room B can be considered as a small entrance room intended for storing small and medium-size ceramic containers, as also confirmed by the presence of plaster arrangements in the floor. A stone bench with a complete grinding stone installation

lies in the NW corner of Room A, suggesting a different function of the room, where a significant assemblage of storing ceramic vessels were also found.

The stratigraphic deposit within the Storage Area is characterised by a sequence of two phases (Phases A and B). The ceramic assemblage belonging to the two phases clearly hints to a typical production of the South Coast horizon of the Early to Late Bronze Age I period (EC II/III - LC I), with a large percentage of Red-Polished and Drab-Polished wares. Furthermore, in the same area, a collection of stone and metal tools and clay spindle-whorls with incised decoration, as well as a rare comb-shaped picrolite pendant were found.

2) Investigations in the first lower terrace, where the domestic quarter is located (Area B), exposed the foundations of a house. The domestic unit is organized around an open rectangular court (Court 1), with a fire place. Two rooms extends towards the East of Court 1 (Rooms 1 and 2), arranged with stone benches carved directly in the natural limestone bedrock.

3) The South Cemetery area (Area E) extends on a series of terraces sloping towards the South-East of the settlement. A series of seven rock-cut tombs on two terraces (Tombs 228-232; 240-241) with small *dromoi* were excavated during the 2008-2010 fieldwork seasons. Two additional graves were excavated during this year's field season: Tomb 242 (looted in antiquity) and Tomb 243. Tomb 242 is a cave-like single chamber cut into the limestone rock without a *dromos*, as the previously excavated tombs of the terrace. However, Tomb 243, which is partly collapsed, has wider dimensions and has a bench displayed in front of the entrance. The human remains indicate a multiple inhumation of two adults, a male and a female. As far as the offering goods are concerned, an assemblage of 13 ceramic vessels comes from Tomb 243. The repertoire includes small and medium sized bowls, juglets and jars with applied and incised decoration as well as a collection of clay decorated spindle-whorls and stone beads. The typology and decoration patterns point to a typical South Coast Red Polished decorated pottery production, mainly dated back to the end of Middle Bronze Age.



Excavations at Erimi-Laonin tou Porakou, Tomb 243