

2017

(Site Director: Luca Bombardieri)

The Department of Antiquities, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works announces the completion of the 2017 fieldwork season undertaken by the Italian Archaeological Mission at Erimi (Università degli Studi di Torino) at the site of Erimi-*Laonin tou Porakou* under the direction of Dr. Luca Bombardieri. This year's fieldwork was carried out between the dates August 2nd to August 25th 2017.

As observed during the previous seasons, the site of Erimi-*Laonini tou Porakou*, located on a high plateau on the eastern Kouris river bank, was intensively occupied during the whole of the Middle Bronze Age, with two distinct major phases (Phases A and B). The area seems to have then been scantily used during the late Hellenistic and Roman periods, following a long period of abandonment.

The focus of the 2017 season was to investigate four areas, which differ in their use and function: the workshop complex (Area A); the domestic area, located on the lower terrace (Area T2); the large circuit wall (Area T1) and the southern cemetery (Area E).

The investigation of the workshop complex at the top of the hill confirmed the relevance of this industrial area, mainly devoted to the production of dyed textiles. A series of three new units were located by extending the investigation area to the western wing of the complex, where an additional large, rectangular roofed unit has been fully excavated (SA IV; 10.20×5.40 m). The access to the Unit from the West is characterized by a large monolithic stepped threshold, while two floors have been detected, pertaining to the main occupational phases mentioned above. A series of large ceramic storage containers and smaller pouring vessels were found on the upper floor, as they possibly were deliberately left within the building room (Fig. 1). The peculiarities of deposit and context suggest that this was part of a ritual of abandonment of the complex, towards the end of the Middle Bronze Age.

The excavation of the residential quarter, located at the major lower terrace of the settlement, revealed the extension of a large rectangular domestic unit in Area T2 (Unit 1; 8.30×5 m). The access to the Unit to the North is marked by a large stone threshold and a stair that directly connects this domestic unit with the top of the hill, where the production complex is located. A series of small-scale work installations (mortars, pots emplacements) and a large deep pit cut into the bedrock below the Unit floor were found. The installations, along with the residual artefacts assemblage suggest a domestic use for this area.

The excavation of the area where the large settlement wall is (Area T1) confirmed the relevance of this massive wall structure that appears to limit the

settlement to the West, following the natural edge of the terrace. The current extension of the wall is 31.5 m. The structure's width is 1.60/1.70 m, where a cut within the bedrock of 0.60/0.70 m deep was carved to create the foundation of the structure, filled with rubble stones and large stone blocks with plaster mortar. Such foundation would be able to support a wall in dry-stone masonry up to 1.80/2.00 m in elevation. This impressive wall structure appears as a sort of circuit wall of the settlement and can be presumably ascribed to the most recent phase of occupation of the settlement (Phase A), during the end of Middle Bronze Age.

The southern cemetery area (Area E) extends on a series of terraces sloping towards the South-East of the settlement, just outside the large circuit wall, mentioned above. The funerary cluster is characterized by a series of rock-cut pit and chamber tombs, dated back to the same chronological horizon of the settlement. Two interesting additional tombs have been excavated during this season, of a special interest as to the funerary architecture and mortuary treatment.

Tomb 464 is a large multi-chambered tomb with a rectangular vertical *dromos* (190×1.70 m). The *dromos* allows access to four funerary chambers (T464 - chambers A–D). Two of the chambers were found partially looted, while the other two were found sealed with large vertical stone blocks, originally used to close the entrance. An additional tomb (Tomb 465) was found on the same terrace, similarly characterized by a large irregular vertical *dromos*, allowing access to two funerary chambers, and a separate external area for the display of a set of vessels, presumably used during funerary ceremonies.

The 2017 fieldwork season involved a team of archaeologists of the University of Torino, with the joint support of an anthropologist from the University of Sheffield, an archaeobotanist of the Cyprus Institute and a team of three restorers from the University of Torino (Centro di Restauro della Venaria Reale).



Fig. 1