

Excavations at Politiko-Troullia, 2011

The Ministry of Communications and Works, Department of Antiquities, announces the completion of the 2011 archaeological investigations at the Bronze Age (ca. 2000-1500 B.C.) site of Politiko-Troullia, conducted under the direction of Dr. Steven Falconer and Dr. Patricia Fall of Arizona State University. Politiko-Troullia is situated about 25 km southwest of Nicosia near Ayios Irakleidios Monastery in the copper-bearing foothills of the Troodos Mountains.

The 2011 investigations revealed extensive evidence of the Bronze Age community that was the predecessor of ancient Tamassos, the seat of a centrally important kingdom during the subsequent Iron Age. The excavations brought to light a pair of large communal structures, plus a series of surrounding households. A village courtyard lay adjacent to a lengthy alleyway, which was paved with layer upon layer of broken potshards, animal bones and other debris discarded by Politiko-Troullia's inhabitants. The village courtyard provided the most striking artifact excavated in 2011: a carved stone plank figure standing about 40 cm. This figure is female, as indicated by a pubic triangle. Its highly abstract form is typical of Cypriot plank figurines, which are normally ceramic and much smaller. Other artifacts include large stones for grinding crops, as well as beautifully polished red pottery bowls, some with ornate spouts. The ruins of a collapsed house encased several smashed jars and painted cups on a floor ringed with mudbrick bins, suggestive of agrarian storage and processing.

The archaeological deposits at Politiko-Troullia reach depths of up to four metres below the modern surface, making this one of the most deeply stratified sites on the island of Cyprus. Archaeological survey of the local landscape shows that the hills around Politiko-Troullia have been terraced and managed intensively for centuries, perhaps beginning as early as the Bronze Age. The ancient villagers of Politiko-Troullia cultivated grapes and olives, and herded sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. They also hunted considerable numbers of deer and wild goat. The results from Politiko-Troullia open an archaeological window on the farming and mining communities that provided the foundation for urbanized civilization on Cyprus. Drs. Falconer and Fall are particularly

grateful for the kind support, encouragement and friendship offered to their project by the people of Pera (Orinis) and Politiko, most especially by Community Presidents Costas Miliotis and Andreas Voskaris, and the head of Pera School, Paniyotis Kyrou. The Arizona State excavations at Politiko-*Troullia* hope to illuminate the ancient heritage of Pera, Politiko and their neighboring modern villages.