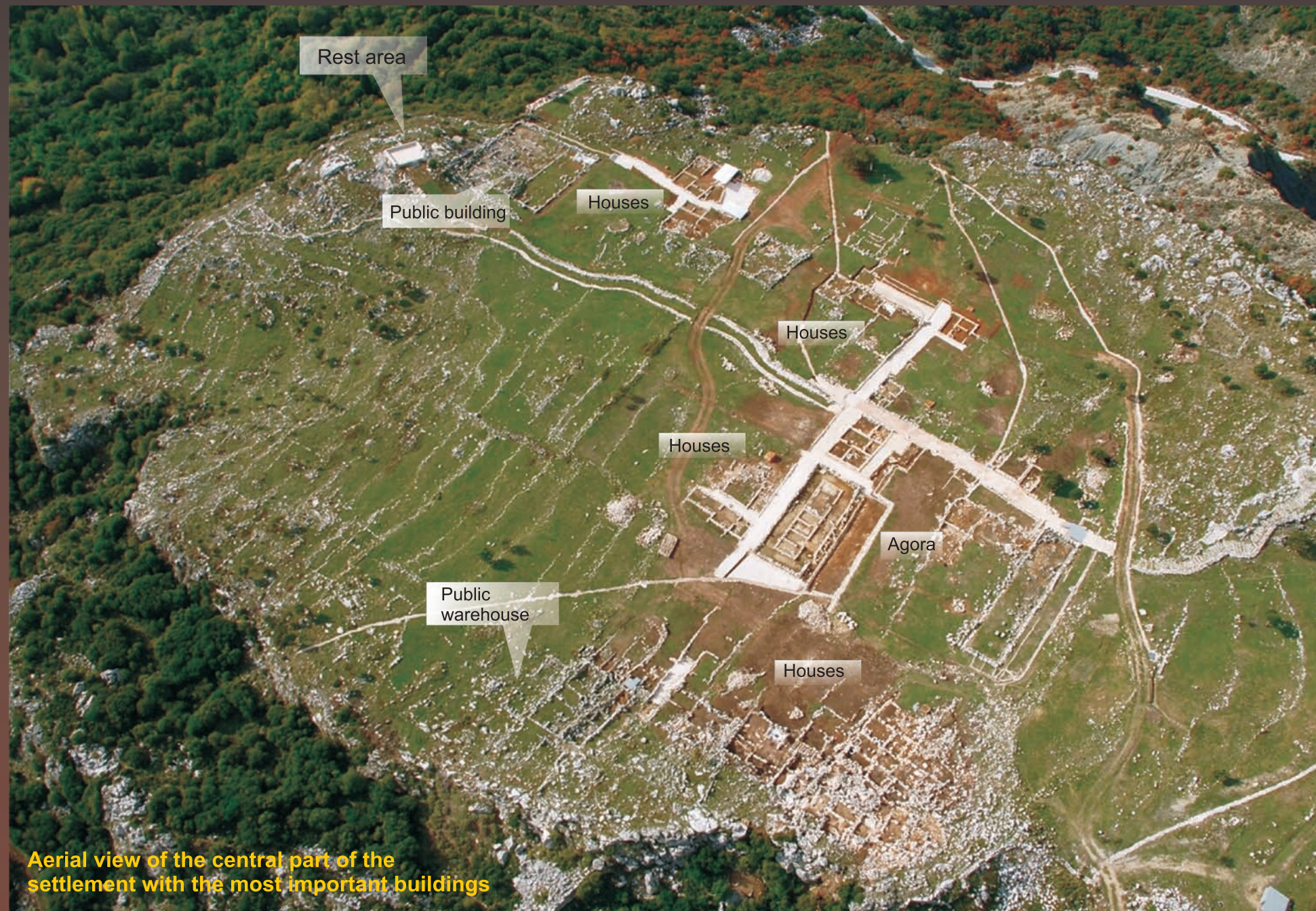


MINISTRY OF CULTURE
32ND EPHORATE OF PREHISTORIC
AND CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES



Thesprotian Elea



Aerial view of the central part of the
settlement with the most important buildings



Die, Ugentarium (Perfume jar), "Ink-pot" vase

Bronze jewelry box



Stamps

Information: 32nd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
Tel.: 26650.29177 – Fax: 26650.25133
E-mail: lbepka@culture.gr

Text: George Riginos, Kassiani Lazari
Graphics: Roxani Vlachopoulou
Translation: Stamatia Salogianni
Photographs: Archive of 32nd Ephorate of Antiquities



PROGRAM SUPPORTED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND





Coin of Elea by Sotiris Dakaris, professor of Archaeology and researcher specialising in the history of Epirus.

Ancient Eleatis, the territory of Elea, was situated in the valley of the river Cocutys. It stretched from the northwest of Paramythia to the mouth of river Acheron, at Ammoudia Bay. Recent studies place the "Eleas Limin", that is, the port of the ancient city according to ancient writers, and the Necromanteion of Acheron, meaning the mythological Oracle of the Dead, at this very bay.



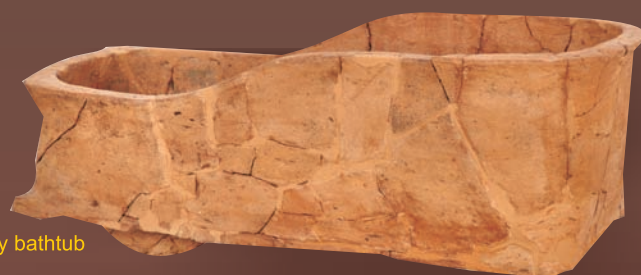
Relief with Persephone



Golden Eros statuette

The settlement was founded a little before the early 4th century BC. The oldest bronze coins discovered, bearing the symbols of the city and of the tribe of Eleates Thesprotians, date back to the same period.

Elea seems to have been the seat of the Thesprotian Koinon for several decades. The city flourished during the Hellenistic period (3rd to 2nd century BC) and was ruined in 167 BC by the Roman legions of Lucius Aemilius Paulus Macedonicus.



Clay bathtub



The Agora of the settlement

There are strong, polygonal defensive walls on all accessible sides of the settlement. These walls have two gates, one on the east and one on the west side. The northeast part of the settlement was very sparsely built. A small temple existed on the west side of this very area but up to this date it is still not known which deity was being worshipped here.

There is one main street in the level part of the settlement, oriented to the northeast. Smaller roads, vertical or parallel to the main road, set the boundaries of private houses and public buildings. The Agora, the heart of all political and commercial activities, is located right in the middle of the settlement. During the Hellenistic period, it was lined by stoas, meaning long and narrow buildings, open at the front. An amphitheatric construction has been discovered on the south of the Agora and up until recently it was thought to have been the city theatre. Today, this site is under excavation and it is rather believed to have been a stepped part of the ancient settlement.



Female statuette

An imposing warehouse with polygonal walls situated on the southwest of the Agora, and the 1000 square metre edifice discovered on the southwest of the settlement are both



Relief skyphos

believed to have been buildings of public use. Private houses occupied the largest part of the ancient city. The ground floor normally measured from 160 up to 250 square metres, and was mostly divided into rooms containing large storage jars. Other ground-floor rooms were used for activities such as weaving, whereas the habitation rooms were usually located on the upper floor.

Works aiming to improve the archaeological site of Elea started in September 2002 and are funded by the Regional Operational Programme of Epirus, a program pertaining to the Community Support Framework III. The works will include: construction of parking area, construction of a guard's station at the entrance of the archaeological site, installation of a lighting and water supply network, installation of a fire extinguishing system and laying out the visitors' route. All works, including the partial restoration of the fortification and of several buildings situated in the Agora area, will be completed by the year 2008.



General view of the settlement



The northeast part of the walls