

## NSRF 2014-2020

The project "Preservation, restoration and promotion of the southwestern area of the acropolis of Leivithra" was implemented by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Pieria, under the framework of NSRF 2014-2020. It included the restoration of the central tower and the partly existed curtains on either side of it in the western section of the fortification, approximately 31 m long, as well as the residential remains near the tower (Building 1). The main objective of the interventions was the structural reinforcement and restoration of the geometry of the monument. Furthermore, in the context of the promotion and landscaping of the acropolis, the greenery of the hill was improved and the wooden fencing at its perimeter was renewed. The main access to the citadel was now formed on the west slope of the hill, northern of the surviving part of the wall. Directional and information signs with QR code for further data were placed at the archaeological site. Further information can be also obtained through individual audio guides and the website ([leivithra.culture.gr](http://leivithra.culture.gr)).



View of the acropolis of Leivithra. The hill of Platamonas castle in the background, where the ancient Heraklion is located



Restoration of the SW part of the fortification wall and the residential remains

## THE MYTH

The archaeological site of Leivithra, closely intertwined with the Orphic myth, is located at the SE foothills of Mount Olympus, in southern Pieria, Central Macedonia. According to the myth, Orpheus, son of the muse Calliope, was born in a cave on Mount Olympus between Leivithra and Pimpleia. By the end of the 6th century BC he was already renowned and from the 5th century BC until the end of antiquity he was often referred to as a theologian, prophet, seer and priest. In addition to being an inventor of music and poetry, he was also known as an inspired philosopher who bequeathed knowledge and wisdom to mankind. He died a violent death by women of Pieria in the territory of Dion. Many causes of the killing are mentioned, the most likely being the mystical rites he introduced, in which women were forbidden to participate. Orpheus was buried at Leivithra. His tomb, originally a simple heroon, later developed into a sanctuary, where he worshipped as god with sacrifices.



Orpheus on a red-figure krater of the 5th c. B.C. Metropolitan Museum of New York



Orpheus' murder on a red-figure pitcher of the 5th c. B.C. Louvre Museum





## THE ACROPOLIS

The ancient place name "Leivithra ", like the Latin toponym "Kanalia", means the watercourses that flow from the mountainous folds at the convergence of Upper and Lower Olympus. The acropolis is a fortified hill, delimited by torrents that contribute to the wide bed of Ziliana river. It has a triangular ground plan and steep, almost vertical slopes, except for the northern side which is smoother. The city is located to the N and NE of the acropolis. The archaeological research has confirmed a long period of habitation on the hill from the middle of the 2nd millennium to the early 1st century B.C., when the site was destroyed and then abandoned. The earliest settlement is dated to the Late Bronze Age, as suggested by an apsidal building with handmade, polished pottery. During the Archaic period it was also used for infant burials. The destruction may have been caused by an earthquake, but the collapse of the slopes could also denote a violent post-seismic phenomenon related to the shifting of the



Aerial view of the acropolis of Leivithra

## THE FORTIFICATION

The fortification wall runs around the acropolis hill, following the elevation curves of the ground. The wall on the northern, relatively smooth side of the citadel follows a straight course and in its western part it is reinforced by a rectangular tower. The western wall, dating to the early Hellenistic period, is reinforced by three towers at corresponding intervals of 44 m. The tower and the outer face of the curtains are constructed with well-assembled limestone blocks of Olympus in a simplified trapezoidal building system, while the inner face is formed of slow and roughly cut stones. The inner filling of the wall consists of small stones, rubble and earth, with intermittent interspersed stones connecting the outer and inner walls. The tower, which is interlocked with the curtains, has a rectangular plan measuring 6,20 x 5,40 m. and a solid base of loose stones and earth, divided by a cross-shaped wall into four unequal compartments. The superstructure was made of raw bricks and covered with a tiled roof.



The SW part of the acropolis of Leivithra after the restoration project

## THE RESIDENTIAL AREA

The buildings on the surface of the hill were developed with a free urban planning and in close proximity to the fortification enclosure due to the narrowness of the space. The most fully excavated building 1, is situated just 0.50 m from the central tower of the western fortification wall. The ground plan of the early phase is illegible, due to the deconstruction and the reuse of the building material. During the reign of Philip V it was significantly altered and enlarged with an excavated surface of 154 m<sup>2</sup>. It forms the main entrance on the south as well as a square courtyard of about 35 m<sup>2</sup>, immediately adjacent to the street. To the north and west it is defined by a covered corridor connected with the respective wings of rooms. A similar arrangement is presumed on the eastern unexcavated side. After the Roman conquest in the middle of the 2nd century BC, the building remained in use with some modifications. The abundance of clay loom weights in its area suggests that the occupants were emphatically engaged in weaving, which probably constituted an artisanal production of textiles and/or



Aerial view of the Hellenistic building 1, next to the central tower of the SW fortification wall



Findings from the acropolis  
a. Doorway iron keys and bronze nail bosses  
b. Clay loom weights, spindle whorls and spools



Findings from the acropolis  
a. Silver coin hoard "Leivithra/1995"  
b. Hellenistic iron ring with a Mycenaean seal as ring stone  
c. Stone bead from Tibet, maybe having been brought by a veteran of