

Faculty of Humanities
Amsterdam Archaeological Centre

www.uva.nl/archaeology-zakynthos

Turfdraagsterpad 9
1012 XT AMSTERDAM

T +31 20 525 2565
F +31 20 525 5831

Report Zakynthos Archaeology Project 2013

Gert Jan van Wijngaarden

Introduction

For the Zakynthos Archaeology Project, 2013 was a study season. The work was carried out in two campaigns: one week from 7-13 January and a summer campaign from 23 June until 15 July.¹ In addition, the analytical study of the surface pottery from Zakynthos continued throughout the year.



Figure 1: The January campaign at our Apothiki in Ayia Marina, Zakynthos.

Lithic artefacts

During the January campaign, G. Kourtessi-Phillipakis and her team continued the study of the lithic surface material. In particular, they focused on the lithics that were collected during the surveys of 2006 and 2010 in research area C, at Vasilikos in the south-east of the island. The lithic raw material from research Area C can clearly be distinguished from that from the other two research areas. Whereas the lithics from area A and B, mostly, derive

Title

Summary Report Zakynthos 2013

from nodules that can be found in the Zakynthos mountains, the lithics of research area A are, almost exclusively, from pebble flint, which is available on beaches and on terraces in the hills of Vasilikos. The technological and typological study in 2013 of the finds from Vasilikos enabled more secure functional and chronological assessment of the finds. Moreover, finds that are considered suitable for publication have been drawn. The study of the finds from research area A had been completed in previous years. The study of the finds from research area B, still needs to be finished.

In 2008, Lyn Erisman was leader of the team that surveyed Mouzaki-Brouma, in research area B, where a concentration of lithic artefacts had already been noted during the pilot survey of 2005. Most of the material appears to be of Middle Palaeolithic date. In 2013, Lyn Erisman continued her study of this site, in which she conducts technological and typological study, as well as a spatial analysis of the distribution of different types with the help of GIS. She was able to study many finds again and is aiming to publish the material from this site in a separate article.



Figure 2: several fragments from a prehistoric pithos found in 2006 in research area C (Vasilikos)

Pottery studies

The prehistoric pottery from the surveys is studied by C. Wiersma from Groningen University, who joined the January campaign. The surveys have yielded substantial quantities of pottery labelled as “red-orange fabric with grey-black core”, which could be dated from the Early Bronze Age (or even earlier) to the Iron Age (or even later). In this difficult group of pottery, Corien Wiersma was able to identify several pieces that could be more securely dated to the Early or Middle Bronze Ages. Moreover, while consulting with Stepan Rückl, they identified several pieces of probable Aeginetan origin. Curiously, only very few fragments have been identified that could, with any likelihood, be assigned to the Neolithic. The characteristics of the pottery on Zakynthos from this period are still mostly unknown.

Graduate student Ayla Krijnen spent the January campaign on Zakynthos working on a topic for a tutorial that is part of her training. Her topic was a large number of pot

Title

Summary Report Zakynthos 2013

fragments that we found in 2006 buried in the ground near the beach of Vasilikos (figure 2). The pot was hand-made, with a fabric different from most prehistoric pottery. Nevertheless, the surface treatment suggests a prehistoric date for the vessel. Since the fragments did not have a proper find context and stylistic parallels are not present in the immediate surroundings, the vessel represents something of a mystery. Krijnen has documented the vessel properly and has done an extensive bibliographic investigation in order to be able to assess the chronology and function of the pot better. She aims to publish this research in an article that will be submitted in 2015.

In addition to the prehistoric pottery, Professor Vladimir Stissi continued his study of the pottery dating from Archaic – Hellenistic periods.



Figure 3. Some fragments of decorated Mycenaean pottery from Lithakia-Kamaroti

Mycenaean pottery from Lithakia- Kamaroti

The pottery from the 2012 test trench excavations was studied by Gert Jan van Wijngaarden, with great help and advice from Stepan Rückl and Bart Bogaard. As reported in 2012, part of a house was excavated with two floors, which could roughly be dated to LHIIIA2-LH IIIB and LH IIIB-LH IIIC respectively. Unfortunately, most of the excavation showed only levelling layers that dated back to the Classical-Hellenistic periods, when the landscape was severely reconstructed. In these levelling layers large quantities of decorated Mycenaean pottery were discovered, most probably from additional Mycenaean structures.

The study of the Mycenaean finds during 2013, confirmed the impression that a very large proportion consisted of dinner vessels (drinking, eating, pouring). Moreover a very large percentage of the material consisted of decorated fine wares of high quality (cf. figure 3). Such a large proportion of fine wares points to a special function for this building. The study of the pottery also showed that a full range of pottery is present, ranging from LH I until LH IIIC. Since the proportion of LH I and LH II pottery appears to be too large to be counted as heirlooms, settlement at Kamaroti probably took place all through the Mycenaean period.

The study of the Late Bronze pottery from the excavations, also includes comparisons between the surface finds and the excavation trenches. Moreover, fragments of the excavations have been included in the analytical pottery study.

Title
Summary Report Zakynthos 2013



Figure 4. Sample prepared for thin sectioning; a piece of less than 3x3cm is cut from the sherd: a Late Bronze Age Mycenaean krater fragment from Kamaroti. The line on the smaller piece indicates where the thin section will be taken exactly (the thin sections will be cut at the Fitch Laboratory at the British School at Athens)

Analytical study of the survey ceramics

In the framework of a PhD study by N. Pieters, the survey ceramics found in high density concentrations in areas A, B and C are subject of a detailed typo-morphological and compositional study. The study attempts to assess human interaction on local, micro regional and regional scale, making use of the ceramic data in a spatial setting at a ‘site’, research area and island level. Since the survey ceramics are severely damaged by post-depositional processes, the ceramic analysis leans heavily on the compositional component. Typo-morphological features, whenever present, are of important value in dating and characterizing the finds, while the compositional dataset provides the most elaborate and representative image on the use and source of raw materials, the re-working of the clay and firing technologies. Evidence for various scales of human interaction between single ‘communities’ or between larger (research) areas is sought in the occurrence and distribution of local pottery, the sharing of ideas in term of decoration, shape features and technology, and in the distribution of imports.

Geological studies

In collaboration with Patras University and the TEI Mesolonghi (Professor Nikos Kontopoulos and Dr. Pavlos Avramidis respectively) two mechanical cores were obtained in 2011, each of 20 m. length from the area of the central alluvial plain, which is connecting the three research areas. Analysis of the macro-fossilized remains, coupled with C14 dates has provided insight in the sequences of marine water, lagoon water and fresh water environments in this area, on the basis of which tentative reconstructions of the formation of the central plain could be made. In 2013, TL dating was conducted at the “Demokritos”

Title

Summary Report Zakynthos 2013

laboratory in Athens on some remains in the lower layers of the cores. The results of the analyses show that in Middle Pleistocene times, 60.000-58.000 BP, the area was a fully marine environment, indicating that the island of Vasilikos (research area C) was separated from the rest of Zakynthos. These results are of great interest for the interpretation of the lithic artifacts from the surveys.

Progressing towards publication

In order to prepare for final publication of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project, photographer Anneke Dekkers photographed more than 250 objects and Odysseas Metaxas made drawings of 139 ceramic finds. Moreover, the preparation of density maps showing patterns in spatial distribution of the archaeological remains continued. The aim is to publish the project, hopefully in 2015, in a series of articles, a website with databases and a synthesizing book.

¹. The Zakynthos Archaeology Project is directed by A. Sotiriou from the 35th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (35th EPKA) and Dr G.J. van Wijngaarden from the University of Amsterdam (UvA). V. Sarris of the 35th EPKA helped us in various ways. D. Nikolia (from the 20th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities) also helped us. The study of the Lithics is coordinated by Dr. G. Kourtessi-Phillipakis of the Kapodsitrian University at Athens (KUoA). She was assisted in the study of the lithics by V. Nearchou, and Katerina Psoma. V. Nearchou also did drawings for the lithics. Lyn Erisman (UvA) continued her study of the lithics at Mouzaki-Brouma in research area B. Dr C. Wiersma (Groningen University) studied the prehistoric pottery. Professor V. Stissi (UvA) continued his study of the Archaic-Hellenistic pottery from Zakynthos. S. Rückl and B. Bogaard (both UvA) helped G. van Wijngaarden with the study of the Mycenaean pottery from Kamaroti in research area C. Ayla Krijnen (UvA) carried out a research project on prehistoric pottery for her training as an archaeologist. The analytical study of the pottery from Zakynthos is part of the PhD study of Nienke Pieters, who is coached by Dr J. Hilditch (both UvA). J. Waagen (UvA) was responsible for the GIS and the related databases. Photographer A. Dekker (UvA) made find photographs, whereas O. Metaxas made drawings of pottery for publication. The directors of ZAP13 are grateful to all participants for their expertise, energy and companionship.

The Project would not have been possible without generous grants by the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), The University of Amsterdam, the UTOPA foundation and the Institute for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP).