

Faculty of Humanities
Amsterdam Centre for Ancient Studies and Archaeology

Turfdraagsterpad 9
1012 XT AMSTERDAM

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

Report Zakynthos Archaeology Project 2017

Gert Jan van Wijngaarden

Introduction

The 2017 study season at Zakynthos was devoted to the study of the materials found during the surface survey in the summer of 2015, which was done in the area of Skoulikado-Kallimachou. Since Skoulikado does not lie in one of the three research areas of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project as such, it seems sensible to publish the material from this area in a separate article in a scholarly journal. The study campaign covered a period of two weeks, from 24 April to 6 May and consisted of a small team of four people.¹

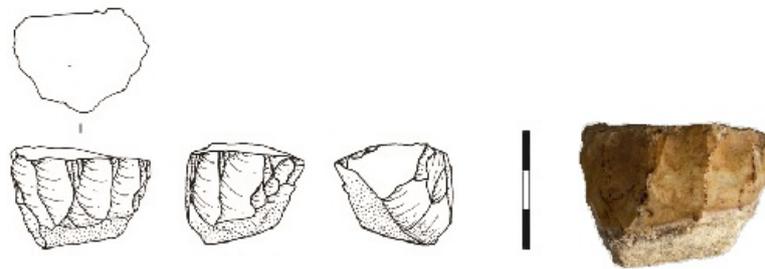


Figure 1. Lithic core 1169.10. Drawing by O. Metaxas; Photograph by A. Dekker

Lithic studies

During the 2015 surface survey, a total of 310 lithic artefacts have been collected. These were fairly evenly distributed in the research area, without marked concentrations. This distribution pattern and the fact that less than half of the artefacts are intact, suggest that the objects have been secondarily deposited, most probably by erosion and/or agriculture. A small concentration of lithic artefacts has been found in tracts 1232-1234, where a total of 29 lithic artefacts were collected (A in Figure 2). In these same tracts, several fragments of prehistoric pottery have also been found. Probably, these concentrations are evidence of a prehistoric site in or near these fields.

The Middle Palaeolithic period is represented in the corpus of lithics from Skoulikado-Kallimachou by several Levallois technotypes artefacts. Another set of artefacts testify to human activity during the Upper Palaeolithic and especially to an early phase of this period. In addition, a sizable proportion of the material can be assigned to post-Palaeolithic periods, as is visible by the techno-morphological features of these artefacts and their fresh condition. The period of manufacture and use of these objects cannot be said with certainty,

but it is logical to assume a correlation to the ceramic record of the area. On that basis, we would suggest a Bronze Age, or later use of these artifacts.

In general, the stone artefacts of Skoulikadou-Kallimachou compare well with regards to chronology, technology and typology to the material found in the other research areas of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project. It may be noteworthy that the post-Palaeolithic component among the 2015 material is larger than in research area B, the nearest of the three research areas.

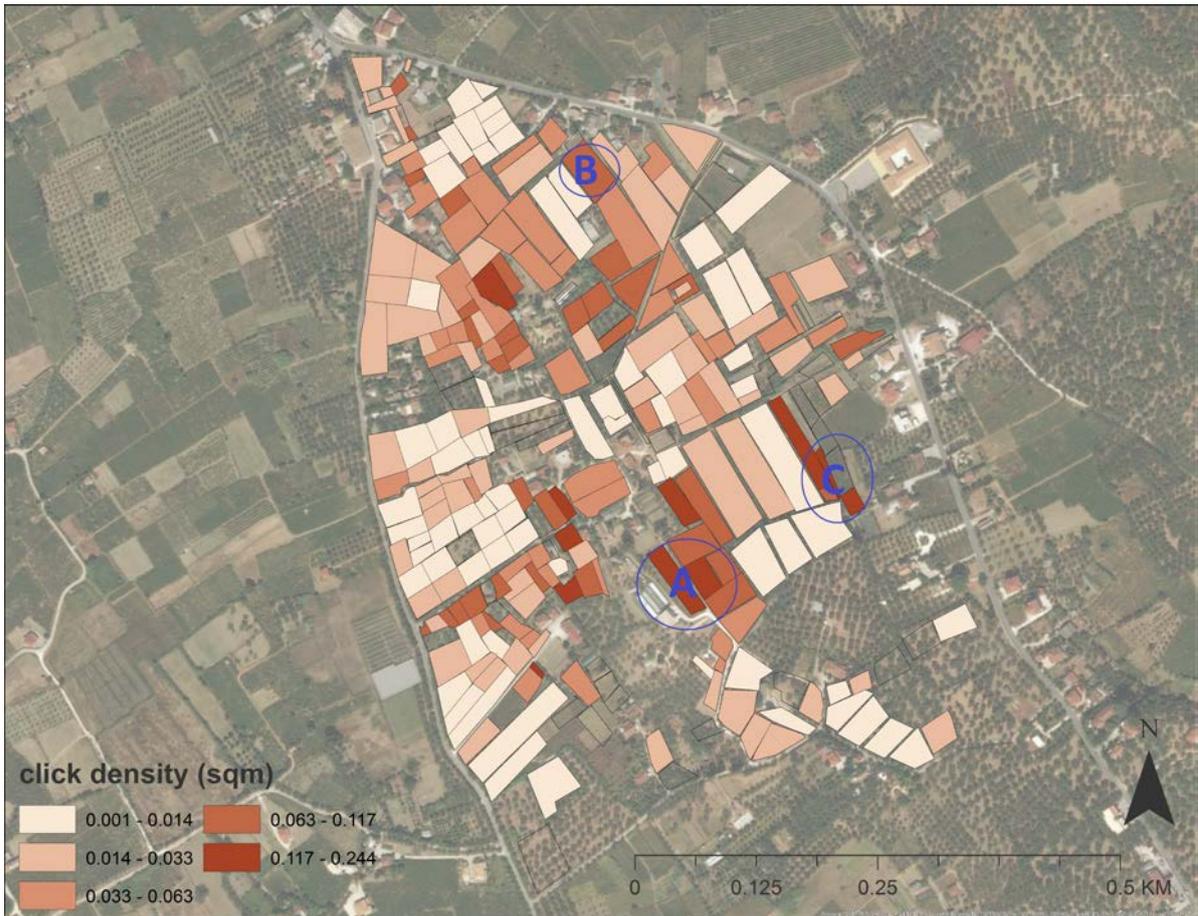


Figure 2. Spatial distribution of all ancient materials in the area of Skoulikado-Kallimachou

Ceramic Studies

The pottery collected during the 2015 surface survey in Skoulikado-Kallimachou is extremely fragmented, most probably due to intensive agriculture. As a result, the majority by far of the pottery is undiagnostic and impossible to assign to any specific period. There is a body of ca. 850 fragments (ca. 20% of the total of collected ceramics) with enough diagnostic features to warrant a classification as “probably ancient”. With one notable exception, in tracts 1212-1215, there are no clear concentrations in the distribution of this pottery (Figure 2).

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The 2015 survey was inspired by the fact that an inhabitant of this area submitted Mycenaean pottery to the local archaeological Ephorate. Therefore, the distribution of Mycenaean materials was of particular interest to us. Only very little pottery dating to this period was found during the survey: a total of 31 fragments, among which was a sizable fragment of a kylix stem (Figure 3). One third of these (10 fragments), were found in a field (tract 1165) in the north of the research area (Figure 2: B). This field and the tracts surrounding it, also yielded some other prehistoric pottery. Perhaps these finds, albeit not very numerous are indicative of a small Mycenaean site in the area.



Figure 3. Fragment of Mycenaean kylix 1169.14. Drawing by Loes Opgenhaffen; photograph by Anneke Dekker

Pottery that can generically be classified as prehistoric mostly consists of very small fragments of coarse wares, often not very hard-baked and with a dark-grey core. This material has been found in several tracts, of which the tracts 1232-1234 (Figure 2: A) are notable, because of the presence of a concentration of lithic artefacts in the area, as was discussed above.



Figure 4: Three small fragments of Hellenistic-Roman pottery from tract 1212. Photograph by G. vanWijngaarden

Large quantities of pottery were found in the southern part of tract 1212 and in the adjacent tracts 1213 and 1215, in a location referred to as Mavroyenia (Figure 3: C). Although very fragmented, the presence of many pieces of ancient tile and small fragments of black-gloss pottery, as well as fine hard wheel-made wares make a date in the Hellenistic-Roman period most likely (Figure 4). Perhaps a farmstead was present in this area during this period.



Figure 5. Ms A. Versloot making a squeeze of an inscription at Alikanas

Epigraphic Studies

The presence of a concentration of Hellenistic-Roman material in the general area of Kallimachou-Mavroyenia may be related to a report of an inscription in this area by Ludwig Salvator, a traveler, who visited Zakynthos around 1900. Earlier descriptions of the same inscription suggest that it was found in the area around the middle of the 19th century. Salvator depicts a stele with an unclear inscription, perhaps a boundary stone (IG IX 1, 1745). Since this particular stone has been lost for quite some time, we spent time consulting the inhabitants of the area about its whereabouts. Unfortunately, these interviews did not yield any results.

Our search for an inscription did remind V. Sarris of the Ephorate of Antiquities on Zakynthos of another inscribed stone that was recently discovered in a church in the village of Alykanas, some 10 kms north of Skoulikado. Despite the fact that we have not been able to find the inscription from Kallimachou, we were able to document the Alykanas inscription, which, as turned out later, was hitherto unknown. This inscription is now being studied and will be published separately.

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Concluding remarks

The surface survey at Skoulikado-Kallimachou was inspired by the Mycenaean pottery from the area that was brought in by inhabitants of the area. The results suggest that a Mycenaean site may have been present, but it is not clear exactly where. A combination of lithic and ceramic prehistoric materials has also been attested. Finally, a concentration of Hellenistic-Roman pottery could be associated with an inscription that has been recorded in the 19th century.

The results of the 2015 survey and the 2017 study campaign will be published in a separate article in *Pharos*, the Journal of the Netherlands Institute at Athens. The results of these campaigns can be compared to those of the wider research at Zakynthos, of which the publication is progressing slowly but surely.

¹. The Zakynthos Archaeology Project 2017 is directed by Ch. Mercouri from the Ephorate of Antiquities of Zakynthos and by Dr G.J. van Wijngaarden from the University of Amsterdam (UvA). V. Sarris of the Ephorate helped us in various ways. Dr S. Ligkovanlis conducted research on the lithic artefacts found during the 2015 surface survey. Odysseas Metaxas made drawings of lithic artefacts and pottery. The ceramic studies were carried out by Dr. G.J. van Wijngaarden, assisted by Mrs Anne Versloot (UvA). Ms Versloot also did the research concerning ancient inscriptions in the area and the island as a whole. Jitte Waagen has been continuing the GIS work of the project. The directors of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project thank all participants for their expertise and their enthusiasm.

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