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Report Zakynthos Archaeology Project 2018

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Figure 1. The apothiki of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project, with all the material properly stored.

The 2018 study season at Zakynthos was the final season of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project. The two-week period (2-13 May) was used to prepare the final publication of the project. Some remaining finds, especially from the Mycenaean period were studied and photographed and databases and specialist reports were finalized. In addition visits to sites identified during the survey campaigns were done.¹

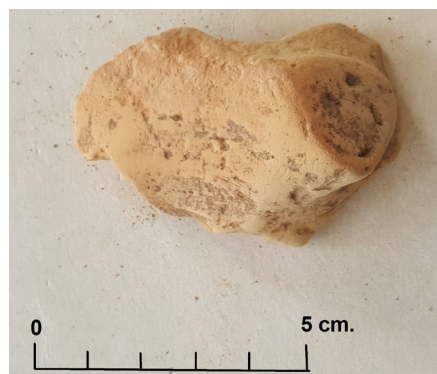


Figure 2. Handle fragment of a Mycenaean bowl from the vicinity of Palaiokastro (research area B)

Title
Summary Report Zakynthos 2018

Material Studies

The visit to Zakynthos in May 2018 was used to finalize the study of the Mycenaean pottery. In particular, off-site material from the surface surveys (2006-2010) was laid out from tracts where at the time preliminary remarks about prehistoric pottery had been made. In most of these cases, probable prehistoric sherds were indeed present. However, due to the very fragmented nature of the material, specific dates could usually not be assigned. Fortunately, a few diagnostic Mycenaean finds have also been identified (fig 2).

With the knowledge of the off-site finds, a synthesis of the development of the Mycenaean landscape of Zakynthos can now be done. It is clear that Mycenaean finds from all periods are present on the island, from LH I to LHIIIC and indeed, into sub-Mycenaean times. However, the different periods are not equally represented on the island. LH I-LH II finds, for example, are limited to the south. The results of these studies have been presented in more detail at the conference *Η περιφέρεια του Μυκεναϊκού κόσμου*, which was held from 18-21 May in Lamia. They will be part of the proceedings of this symposium.



Figure 3: The new dirt road passing through probable prehistoric walls at Lithakia-Kamaroti

Site visits

As in other seasons, during the study campaign we visited various sites that have been identified during the surveys. These visits are used to confirm the presence of surface material in different seasons and to generally inspect the condition of sites. We have been noting for several years now that touristic development near the coasts of Zakynthos is particularly intense and several tracts that have yielded concentrations of finds can no longer be retrieved. For example, the area of *Vasilikos-Banana beach*, where we encountered several concentrations of prehistoric material in 2006 and 2010 is now occupied by two beach clubs that have rearranged the landscape completely.

Even more disturbing was the visit to Lithakia-Kamaroti, where we did excavations in 2012. The greatest quantities of prehistoric and Mycenaean finds have been found near the top of the hill of *Kokkala*, where stretches of ancient walls are still visible on the surface. In 2012,

Title

Summary Report Zakynthos 2018

we were not allowed to excavate at the top of the hill, but we discovered the remains of a Mycenaean building on a lower terrace during the test excavations. On our visit in 2018, we noticed a new dirt road leading to the top of the hill, probably to allow access for agricultural machines. For the construction of the dirt road, several of the ancient walls of the structure have been severely damaged and removed. Naturally, we have notified the local archaeological Ephorate of these disturbances.



Figure 4. Zakynthian drachme, ca. 500-456 BC. Obverse: volute krater, I-A; reverse: tripod in incuse square. Silver, 14 mm, 12 h, 3.95 g. Coin collection Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Bode-Museum).

Research for publication

Meanwhile the research for the final publication of the project is being finalized. The definitive publication of the 2015 survey near Skoulikado has been submitted to the journal *Pharos*, to be published in 2019. This article, has served as a try-out for the final publication of the 2006-2012 surveys, especially with regards to format and layout of GIS maps to be included.

Important research for the introduction to the Zakynthos book is the mapping of Zakynthian coins in the wider Aegean area. Several museums in Europe have collections of coins, which include specimens from Zakynthos. These Greek and Roman Imperial coins - silver and bronze - include drachms, staters, trihemiobols and hemiobols. From the late 5th to the 2nd centuries BC, the silver Greek coinage is dominated by the types of Apollo and his tripod. The find spots of such coins could yield information about the economic connections of the island in antiquity. Unfortunately, the great majority of the Zakynthian coins in museum collections do not have a provenance. The iconography and chronology of the coins, however, give important clues about the cultural representation of the island from ca. 500 BC onwards.

The book publication of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project is slowly but surely progressing. Publication is expected in 2020.

Title
Summary Report Zakynthos 2018



Figure 5. Would this really be the last sherd of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project that was studied and then stored?

¹. The Zakynthos Archaeology Project 2018 is directed by E. Papastavrou 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. The ceramic studies and site visits were carried out by Gert Jan van Wijngaarden. Mrs Anne Versloot (UvA) did research concerning ancient inscriptions about the island and studied Zakynthian coins in museum collections in London, Berlin and Vienna. Jitte Waagen has been continuing the GIS work of the project. Mrs Nienke Pieters (UvA) is continuing her PhD research on the petrography of ceramics from the Zakynthos Archaeology Project. The directors of the Zakynthos Archaeology Project thank all participants for their expertise and their enthusiasm.

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