ANNUAL REPORT: ANCIENT METHONE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT 2014 FIELD SCHOOL

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Staff, workmen, and IFR students

The goals of the 2014 season at Methone were to continue excavation of the West Hill area and its built remains (Archaic Greek workshops and industrial debris, above Early Iron Age pits and postholes from a settlement, finally Bronze Age tombs below cut into bedrock) but also conduct an urban and extra-urban survey of the Greek settlement and probe the natural contours of the site (ancient shoreline and possible harbor remains). Our methods included excavation, survey, subsurface research (geomorphology and geophysics) and terrestrial LIDAR prospection. Two photocopters on site provided low-altitude aerial photography and photogrammetry. Equally important was continued analysis of finds and contexts from past excavations by the 27th Ephorate of Antiquities (Greek Ministry of Culture) and the processing of ongoing finds (pottery and small finds of metal, bone, ivory, clay, glass, etc.). Ceramic quantification, material analysis, conservation on site and in labs, and photography and drawing were active from the first day and proved successful in processing nearly all of our inventoried finds and context pottery.

Over the six-week season, three trenches (5 x 5m) were laid out, two of them (Trenches 1 and 2) adjacent to each other and separated by a .50m baulk, just south of an older trench that reached Late Bronze Age pit graves cut into bedrock. Both trenches uncovered industrial

features (a kiln, charcoal hearth, shell pit, much iron slag and ceramic wasters), exterior working surfaces, among pottery and other materials dating largely to the Archaic periods. A large pit in Trench 2 was filled with material of the early 4th century, probably a deposit related to the siege of Methone by Philip II (354 BC). Trench 3 was laid out as a narrow (1 x 5m) test trench at the northern extent of the plot under excavation, later expanded to the east with a new square (Trench 4). This test trench exposed an E-W wall that aligns with the workshop foundations to the S, and below much stone and mudbrick tumble from this structure, probably dating to the Archaic period (6th c BC), reached Early Iron Age levels. Its expansion (Trench 4) uncovered a kiln and related refuse dumps. Notable finds in all trenches included fine decorated pottery from East and Southern Greece, inscribed sherds, and workshop debris, along with heavy quantities of decomposed mudbrick, fragments of clay basins, and much marine shell; re-deposited prehistoric sherds (Bronze Age and some Neolithic) indicate an older settlement at the site.

Conservators and IFR student consolidating a mud brick for removal from Trench 3

Surface survey took place over the first 4 weeks of excavation and covered an area of 80 hectares (of which 55 were subject to surface collection), followed by analysis of the materials (cataloguing and mapping periods, densities, and locations of material collected). Preliminary results reveal scattered occupation from the Neolithic through Medieval-Ottoman periods, with Early Iron Age through Classical materials concentrated, as expected, on and near the site of Methone, and heavy Hellenistic and Roman on and around the site of “Macedonian” Methone

(a settlement established by Philip II after the destruction of Classical Methone). Surface finds included evidence for manufacturing pottery, metals and figurines, as commonly found on site.

Methone 2014: staff and IFR students on West Hill, during excavation and survey

Finally, briefer field seasons were devoted to subsurface survey on and around the site. Our geomorphology team (Aug 20-30) extracted a series of 18 percussion cores (both open and sealed) that reached a depth of 7.5 m along the putative ancient shoreline below the site and will be analyzed over the winter in Dublin. In geophysical work (Aug 20-Sept 4), both electro-magnetometry and ground-penetrating radar were tested on selected areas of the settlement and the area below it, with the analysis of these currently in progress in Athens and LA. In addition, an initial LIDAR (Terrestrial Laser Scanning) campaign captured comprehensive data on and around the site, to be coordinated with Total Station measurements for a digital model of the site and its environment. We plan to expand all of these field activities next year, by adding electrical resistivity to our geophysical techniques, exploring survey areas that were off limits due to the timing of agricultural crops, completing the geomorphological coring process at 4 additional transects, and collecting enhanced TLS data for a globally referenced site model.

IFR field school student Lena Jaurequi at work on LIDAR TLS project at Methone

Students were trained in excavation techniques (pick and trowel use, dry sieving of all soil, collection of artifacts, labeling units and artifacts) as well as surface survey (counting artifacts and collecting diagnostic pottery and other objects), and learned how to work with a Total Station as well as take elevations with a dumpy level. Those keen on drawing were enlisted in recording features and sections in various trenches, while others chose to learn coring and prospecting techniques as members of the geomorphological and geophysical campaigns. Team specialists in bioarchaeology, paleoethnobotany, marine malacology, zooarchaeology and radiocarbon analysis made brief visits to the project and introduced some of the students to techniques of collection and analysis. Professor Robert Kayen gave an evening presentation on LIDAR techniques and the potential of TLS (Terrestial Laser Scanning) for shaping an overall model and analysis of an ancient site. All students were involved in documentation of finds--recording soil samples and flotation, counting and weighing pottery, or drawing and cleaning finds. As far as possible, we tried to rotate all students through all of these activities, although it was difficult to give each student an identical experience with only 8 enrolled, and unexpected daily changes in field processes. All students contributed to washing and sorting pottery and floating soil samples as daily afternoon tasks, and some sorted heavy fraction residues from soil samples or learned how to clean and document artifacts under the supervision of conservators.

Conservation staff and students at work on artifacts from Methone in conservation lab

Since the field season ended September 12, project members are still processing photographs, plans and drawings, and preparing a formal report to the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the Greek Ministry of Culture, a synopsis of which will be published in the British School at Athens' Archaeological Reports, the *Bulletin de Correspondance Héllènique* of the Ecole Française d'Athènes, and the Greek *Arkhaiologikon Delton*. The same report will be posted at our website (in development) and developed into a longer article for the archaeological periodical, *Hesperia (*published by ASCSA), most likely after our second season. The survey directors (2 UCLA grad students) will present their results as a poster session at the Archaeological Institute of America in January 2015, and have submitted a paper abstract for the Society for American Archaeology in April 2015. The project directors will be presenting results of the 2014 season as a paper at the Archaeological Institute of America in January 2015. We also plan to give public presentations on campus at UCLA, and will include this year's field school students in as many of these public appearances as possible (they have expressed interest in ongoing analysis of the season and results from Methone in the future).