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Rough Cilicia Archaeological Survey: Report of the 2008 Season

Nicholas Rauh, Purdue University

The 2008 season of the Rough Cilicia Archaeological Survey Project was conducted between July 18 and August 5, 2008. Participants included project director, Nicholas Rauh of Purdue University, graduate students Ali Kaya of the University of Istanbul, Caroline Autret of the University of Paris, Sarah Mitchell of the University of Vancouver, and undergraduate students, Phillip Ramirez, Ellen Vowell, Monya Anderson, Elizabeth Brockman, and Bjay Wylde of Purdue University, Kyera Giannini of the University of Michigan, Kate Geraghty of Boston University, and Ioana Dumitru of Bryn Mawr College. Our service representative was Osman Demir from the Ordu Museum. We wish to thank Ismail Gültekin, the kaymakam of Gazipasha, Cemburak Özgenç, the mayor of Gazipasha, Seher Türkmen, director of the Alanya Archaeological Museum, Konrad and Pauline Gerats, and Lutfi Baysal for helping to make this survey season possible.

The research agenda of the 2008 season consisted of off-site pedestrian survey in the highland canyon of the Biçkici River, more specifically, the terraced agricultural terrain in the village of Karatepe (Gazipasha district; Antalya province; Figure 1). The scattered communities (mahalleler) of Karatepe extend along the lower slopes of the semicircular canyon (approximately 8 km across) that encloses the Biçkici watershed. At Sugozu Yayla the crest of the canyon stands at 1700m above sea level (asl). At the base of canyon lies a long flat alluvial terrace, 500m asl, that is dissected into a peculiar V-shaped landmass by the two branches of the river. Small neighborhoods such as Kaynarca, Akkaya, and Sugozu are nestled in the sloping terrain surrounding this central terrace between 800 and 400m asl. This unusual landscape has been a source of interest to the project since 2000. It was the intention of the project director to investigate some portion of the terrain this season to better understand patterns of land use in this highland basin during antiquity.

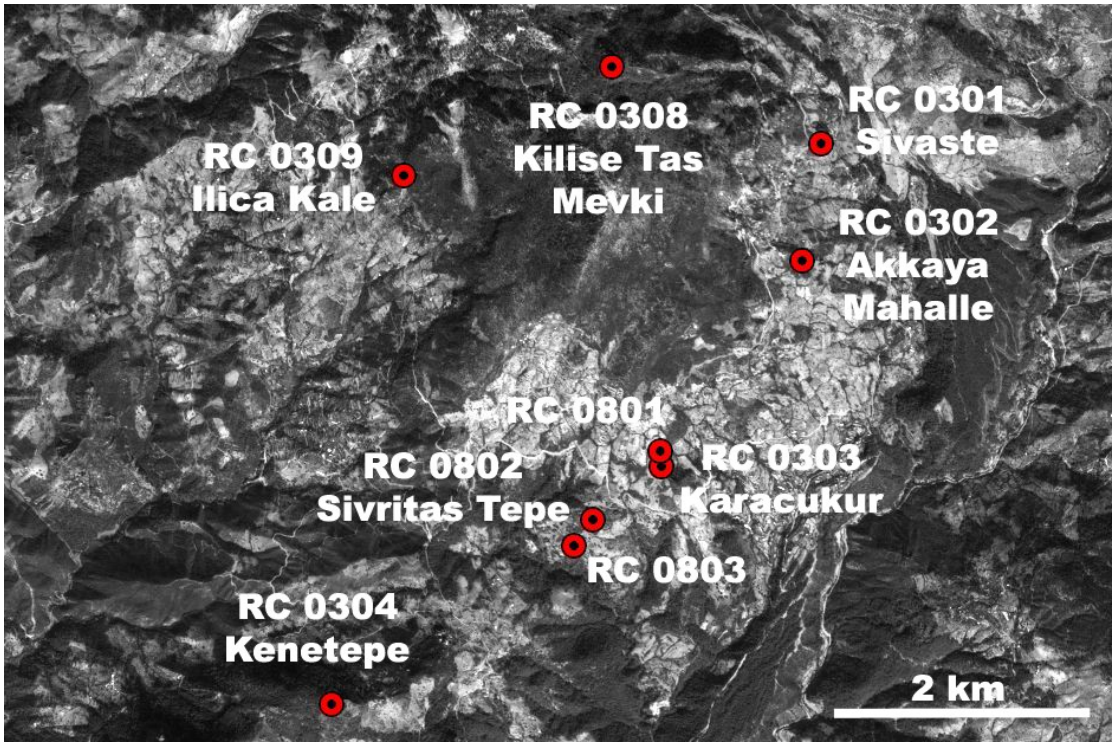


Figure 1: Site Map of the Biçkici Highland

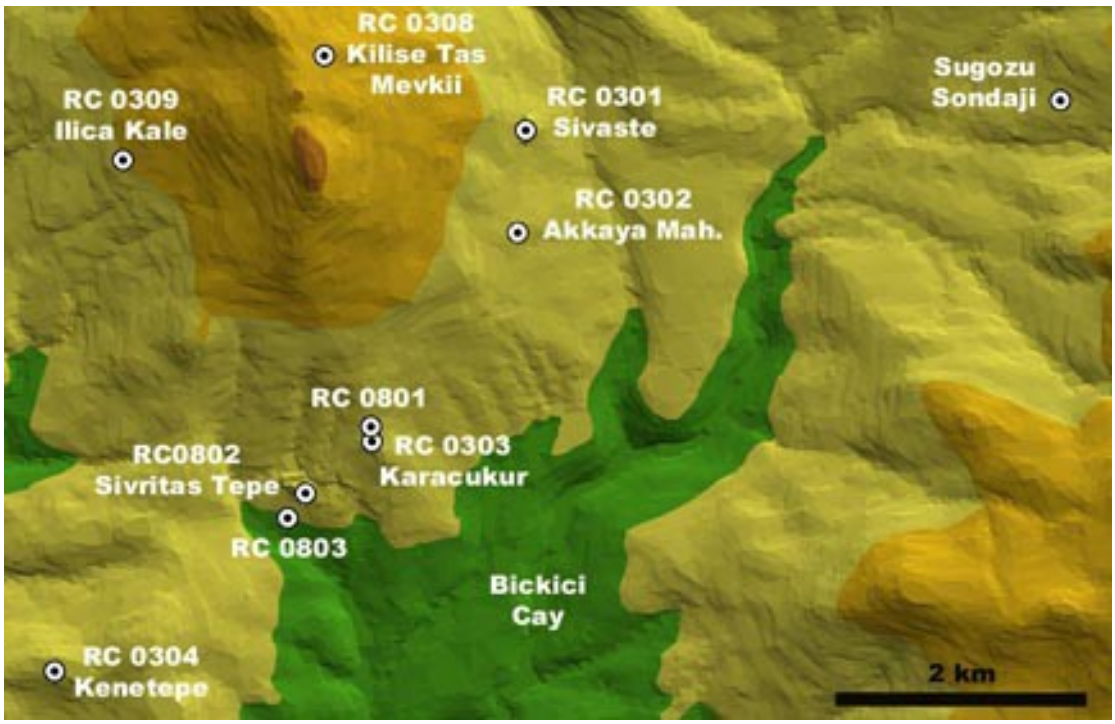


Figure 2: DEM Map of the Bickici Highland

On the western rim of the canyon stands Karatepe Mt. (1558m asl). During the 2003 season the RCSP team was directed to the locations of six significant areas of past human activity along the lower slopes of this mountain

(Figure 2).[1] These sites include RC 0301, Sivaste or Karatepe Kale, a site previously visited by Heberdey and Wilhelm in the 1890s and by Bean and Mitford in the 1960s (see bibliography); RC 0302, Akkaya Mah., where the remains of a rock-cut Roman road were noted in 2003; RC 0303 Karaçukur (referred to on the Turkish 1:25000 military map as Asar Tepe, Figure 3), where the remains of lithic tools and handmade pottery were observed that same year, RC 0304, Kenetepe, where the remains of a large urban settlement complete with necropolis, sculpted reliefs, and unpublished inscriptions were recorded in 2003; RC 0309, Ilica Kale, where the remains of a Late Roman church complex complete with figural mosaic (now looted) were recorded; and RC 0308, a small fortified retreat on a projecting spur of the mountain directly above Sivaste (Map 2 and Rauh and Wandsnider 2005).

The objective in 2008 was to conduct off-site pedestrian survey in the vicinity of several of these sites to determine the wider extent of occupation during antiquity. Given the difficulty of the terrain - which slopes steeply and is heavily obstructed by terraces enclosed by fences and stone walls - not to mention, programmatic time constraints and the imposing size of the canyon, Rauh decided to restrict the survey to the rural areas neighboring the three most significant sites, Kenetepe (RC 0304), Karaçukur (RC 0303), and Sivaste (RC 0301). Somewhat unexpectedly the team encountered substantial new information about prehistoric and pre-Roman habitation in the canyon in proximity to Karaçukur (RC 0303), forcing Rauh to concentrate the team's efforts on this particular region. Three new sites, RC 0801 0802, and 0803, were identified in this vicinity, two of which greatly enhance our understanding of what appears to have been a fairly extensive pre-Roman settlement in this vicinity. New findings include locations exhibiting high concentrations of lithic and handmade, possibly Chalcolithic, ceramic remains as well as the identification of a lithic knapping area at Sivritaş Tepe (RC 0802; Figure 4). This last site lies directly across the modern asphalt road and 600m SW of the lithic deposit that was identified beside the rock outcrop at Karaçukur in 2003. Sivritaş Tepe (RC 0802) presents itself as a natural alluvial bench framed by an irregular wall of vertical rock faces (hence the name, "Nail Stone Hill").

The intensive pedestrian survey conducted in 2008 demonstrated the existence of an extensive lithic-production center at this locale. During the 2008 survey lithic remains were encountered in agricultural terrain extending over a 2km radius north and south of the outcrop at Karaçukur, making it the largest and earliest pre-Classical habitation to be investigated in the Gazipasha district.

[1] It needs to be stressed that the eastern slopes of the canyon remain largely unexplored. In 2003 Rauh was shown photographs of an architecturally significant site on a ridge on the eastern side of the canyon. It was his hope to investigate this site in 2008; however, time constraints prevented this from happening.

Given the importance of these findings, and the fact that they now confirm Karaçukur – Sivritaş Tepe as the earliest and most extensive site recorded in the district, Rauh will devote the remainder of what follows to a description of this settlement.

Figure 3: View of Karaçukur

Figure 4: View of Sivritaş Tepe from Karaçukur

Transect Walking

With an eye toward maximizing the results of the pedestrian survey, Rauh selected open (fallow) agricultural terrain for investigation. An inspection of the satellite photograph of the canyon indicated an abundance of agricultural terraces along the west slope of the Biçkici Canyon due to its high exposure to sunlight. The lower slopes of Karatepe Mt. are largely cleared and organized into a step-like patchwork of narrow terraced fields, orchards, and gardens. Visibility was generally good. In all, the 2008 RCSP pedestrian team walked 16 transects comprising 53 units of 102.6m on average (at 3 to 5m intervals; Figure 5).[2]

The team ranged from a maximum of 11 walkers to a minimum of 5; with 8.1 walkers being the average. According to GPS tracking records the team walked some 172840 m^2 with an average unit area of 3260 m^2. The greatest challenge to the pedestrian survey arose from the need to maneuver across broken, obstructed terrain. Considerable time and energy was required to negotiate high terrace walls and fenced in enclosures prior to walking. Rauh estimates that as much as half the field time was consumed setting up walking units. To minimize this difficulty the team attempted to walk terraces laterally (mostly along a north/south axis) starting high on the slope and sweeping downward along terraces directly below. As noted above Rauh concentrated on walking rural terrain in the vicinity of three sites investigated in 2003 – Kenetepe, Karaçukur, and Sivaste. Ostensibly, Rauh's objective was to calculate off site sherd densities, site limits, patterns of "halo effect," and background horizons. The last mentioned are typically associated with land-use practices such as manuring. This work represents a crucial supplement to the ceramic investigations conducted in 2003. The earlier work was restricted to intensive survey of areas of high sherd concentrations at the centers of these three sites. Ceramic analyses of the 2003 survey enabled the team to determine the chronological extent of occupation at each site, but it did not determine the spatial limits of site occupation, particularly at Sivaste where post-depositional land use appears to have severely altered the archaeological landscape.[3]

[2] Based on recorded GPS field readings (which are subject to error) the team walked an average of 102.6m per survey unit, with an average of 8 walkers at 4.6m interval.

[3] The acropolis of Sivaste today resembles an isolated necropolis, leaving surveyors to question the former location of its associated Roman settlement.

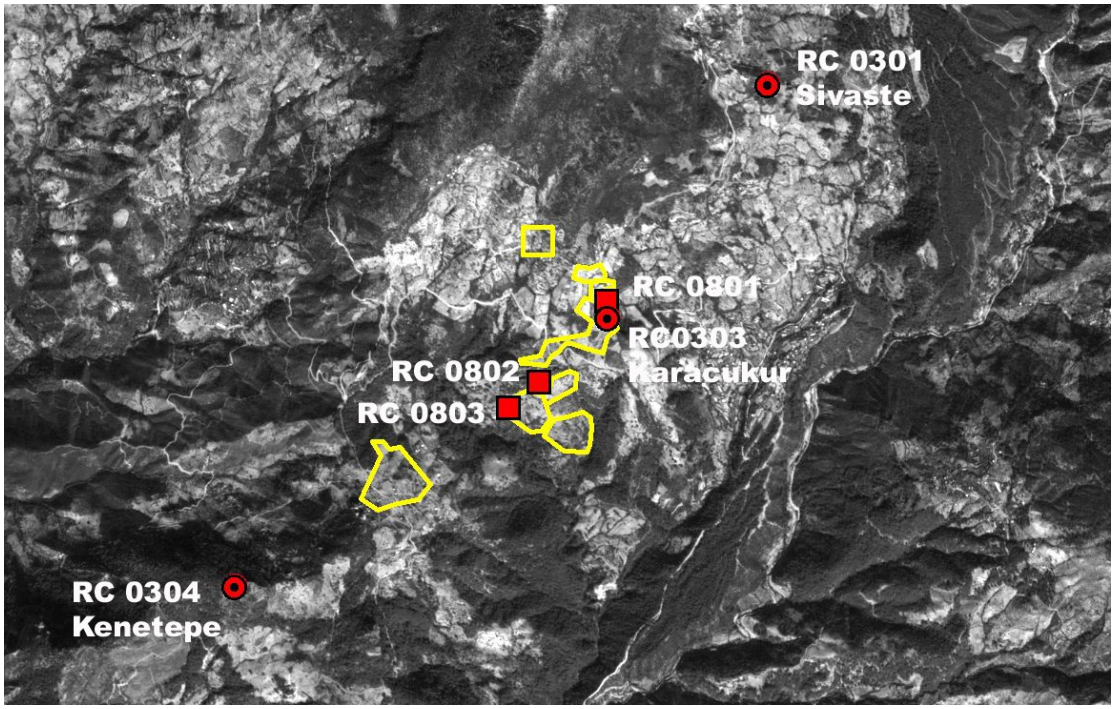


Figure 5: Map of 2008 Pedestrian Transects in Karatepe/Biçkici Canyon

In addition to this objective, Rauh tried to determine diachronic patterns of "off-site" sherd data. The chief objective was to determine the chronological distribution of sherd densities along the same axis but at various distances from the three identified sites. One question concerned whether the concentration of lithic and handmade ceramic remains found at Karaçukur in 2003 was an isolated deposit (such as a necropolis) or whether it represented some wider pattern of pre-Classical human activity in this canyon. The survey began on steeply sloping fields east of the twin peaks of Kenetepe (RC 0304) mentioned above. Three transects were walked in fields below the east flank of these peaks to reveal background densities of extremely worn coarseware sherds. Datable finds of Early Roman ceramic remains indicate that the sherd horizon in these fields were largely contemporary with those of the settlement at the Kenetepe itself. After walking 3 transects in this area Rauh decided to relocate the pedestrian survey to open terraces above the lithic site at Karaçukur (RC 0303). The presence of open terrain at 900m asl enabled the team to sweep down from this vantage point beyond Karaçukur. Walking 10 transects (4-13) the team descended from 900m asl to 400 asl over a distance of 2km (Figure 6).

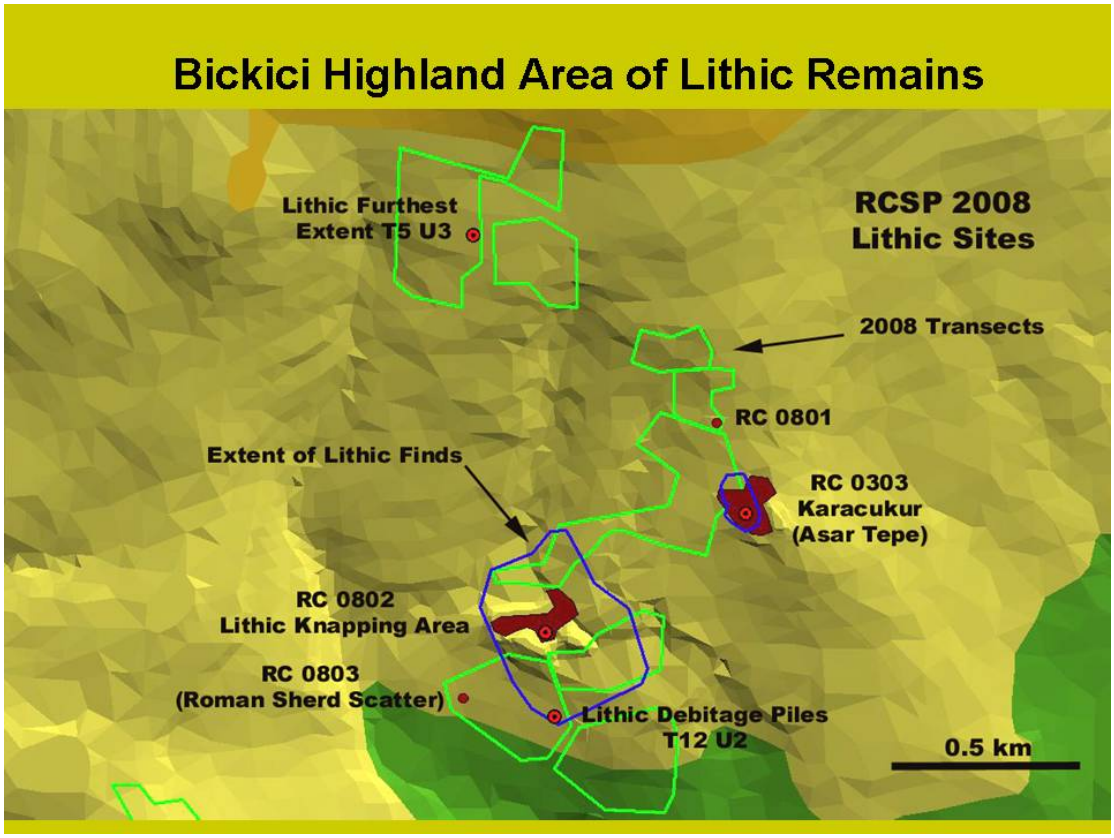


Figure 6: Area of Lithic Finds during the 2008 Pedestrian Survey

The Lithic Settlement at Karaçukur (RC 0303)

Figure 7: Lithic Finds at Karaçukur in 2005

Lithic remains were first observed in small stone-constructed field terraces directly below the west face of the butte at Karaçukur / Asar Tepe in 2003 (Figure 7). Amid the chaff of a harvested wheat field below the outcrop, the survey team found what appears to be an unfinished obsidian blade along with several fragments of hand-turned cooking ware and additional rim fragments of Classical era kylix rims. Team members also recovered numerous fragments of a wheel-turned strainer pot of unique form.[4] Further investigation of the location conducted by Richard Rothaus and Nicholas Rauh in 2005 yielded additional lithic debotage of obsidian, flint (chert), fragments of burnished hand-turned pottery, a black-slipped kylix rim fragment, and two small bone fragments (Figure 7). During a preliminary visit to the same location on July 18, 2008, the team obtained a grab collection of worked fragments of red and gray flint, two pieces of worked obsidian, and two worked pieces of a soft white stone resembling onyx. One worked piece of limestone exhibits a hand-worked bore hole (Figure 2). Several fragments of hand-made cooking ware were identified including two large ledge handles (one exhibiting a unique reddish exterior slip and a blackened interior surface indicating the presence of food residue; Figure 3), one blackened stewpot fragment with upright rim, and another fragment exhibiting a piriform shoulder with an upright rim. Other pre-Roman forms include a Classical kylix rim, a black slipped ring foot to a Classical fineware bowl, two black slipped Hellenistic incurved rim fragments, and a ring foot to a Hellenistic coarseware bowl. Large “Roman era” coarseware fragments and a few fragments of Cypriot Sigillata Early Roman fineware were also recovered at the site. The combined assemblage indicates that human occupation of Karaçukur

[4] See Rauh and Wandsnider 2005. For comparison see Stillwell and Benson 1984, nos. 2203, 2207, 2213.

was sustained from perhaps as early as the Chalcolithic era[5] to Early Roman times.[6]

Despite this consistent pattern of finds recovered over a five-year period, combined results of investigations remained sufficiently ambiguous as to raise doubts about a prehistoric settlement at Karaçukur. For one thing, the location exhibits no recognizable architectural remains to support the conclusion.[7] For another, Rauh and Rothaus were informed in 2005 that as recently as 50 years ago farmers in Gazipasha commonly obtained flint blades from this location for use as teeth in wooden, animal-drawn threshing sleds. An inspection of the teeth of one such threshing sled on display in the Baysal Hotel in Gazipasha revealed the same red and gray flint blades as those recovered by the team at Karaçukur. In other words, despite the presence of hand-turned ceramic remains the production of worked flint stone at Karaçukur offered no certain proof of pre-Classical occupation at this site. Add to this the fact that the spatial distribution of the pre-Classical remains seems narrowly conscribed (essentially concentrated in two small terraces directly below the outcrop) and the possibility arises that the presence of "Chalcolithic remains" represented an anomaly, for example an isolated burial. In short, the remains encountered at RC 0303 Karaçukur raised as many questions as they resolved. The purpose of the pedestrian survey of 2008, therefore, was to investigate the wider radius of prehistoric habitation in this vicinity. Rauh deliberately began the survey at the highest accessible field terraces (900 asl) on the slope above the site with the intention of sweeping down past it as far as open terrain permitted. This strategy proved successful as the team was able to complete some 10 transects over a distance of 2km along the slope (Figure 6). In the process the pedestrian survey of 2008 was able to furnish significant insight about pre-Classical habitation in the vicinity of Karaçukur. Most importantly the central locus of the settlement appears not to have been the field terraces at the foot of the butte of Karaçukur / Asar Tepe but rather a jagged rock formation across the asphalt road at Sivritaş Tepe. Here the team identified a large cave habitation and a lithic knapping area (Figure 8). In addition, the survey revealed a horizon of lithic remains extending from the terraces at Pıladancık 300m above Karaçukur to open field terraces 100m below Sivritaş Tepe. We address each of these observations in turn.

[5] The Chalcolithic date for the handmade cookware was suggested by Söner Ateşoğulları, a prehistorian employed at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara who served as our service representative in 2007.

[6] It may be significant, however, that few if any sherds at Karaçukur exhibit wheel ridging characteristic of the 2nd to 6th centuries AD. Most of the amphora sherds investigated in this area are smooth walled, and have thick, oval, upright handles, a likely indication that the site was occupied through the late Hellenistic or at the latest Early Roman era.

[7] In 2003 the team recorded terrace walls exhibiting large irregular blocks, and in 2005 Rauh climbed to the crest of the outcrop itself to observe similar remains of poorly fashioned walls along its length. However, these and the terrace walls appear to be modern.

The Knapping Area At Sivritaş Tepe

A worked piece of brown flint was identified in Transect 5 Unit 3 at 916m asl in Pıladancık, alerting team members to the presence of lithic remains considerably higher up the slope of Karatepe Mt. than anticipated (Figure 6). While walking Transect 8 on a bench immediately above the lithic site at Karaçukur, the team encountered a looting hole in the midst of a large sherd scatter (RC 0801; Transect 8, Unit 3&4; Figure 8). Tharea of the sherd scatter was enclosed on all sides by stone walls. The ground surface was heavily laden with small stone blocks (literally thousands) resembling wall fall[8]; however, a low exposure of limestone outcrop was clearly visible within the enclosure. A grab collection yielded more than 30 processed sherds. Although most of the sherds represent worn, nondescript coarseware remains and at least one fine rim fragment with drooping rim appeared to be Early Roman. The remains at the site appear to be predominantly pre-Roman. No wheel ridged sherds were visible in the sherd scatter; instead, one possibly Iron Age basket handle attachment was observed along with a Classical fineware handle. One base exhibited a high ring foot characteristic of Hellenistic forms; and another smooth walled body sherd appeared to be imported fabric.

The team continued to encounter pre-Roman ceramic remains as it proceeded down the slope toward the site at Karaçukur, including another Classical fineware handle with visible traces of black slip; the handle attachment of a small fine pitcher; and an oval upright handle of a small Hellenistic era amphora. Avoiding the site at Karaçukur, where a grab collection was completed at the beginning of the season, the team continued to walk transects descending across the road into the rolling fields that confront the rock face of Sivritaş (Transect 9, Unit 3; Figure 9). In the field directly before the outcrop, team members identified a Classical or pre-Classical kylix rim; and a large flat piece of marble resembling a hand axe or a hand scaper (Figure 10).

[8] The area of the enclosure is approximately 100 x 30 m. The blocks were long and flat, the largest measuring 0.60m.

Figure 8: View of Sherd and Stone Scatter at RC 0801

Figure 9: Google Earth View of Sivritaş Outcrop, RC 0802

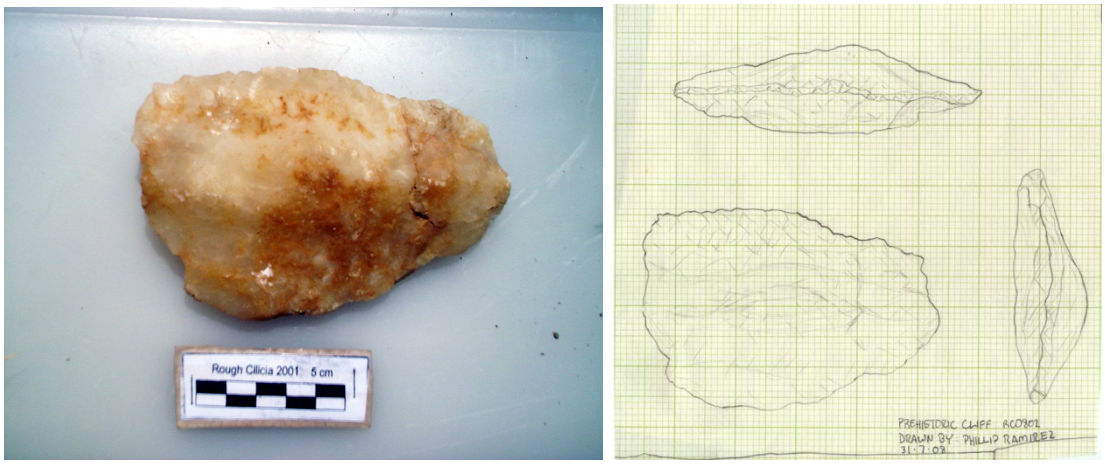


Figure 10: Possible Hand-Axe Found at RC 0802, Sivritaş Tepe

On the basis of these finds Rauh dispatched five team members to conduct an unsystematic investigation of the rock formation itself, while he and the other team members continued to walk transects below the outcrop. The investigation of the rock outcrop of Sivritaş Tepe revealed two significant features: a large cave on the north face of the outcrop and a narrow, flat ravine at the interior of the rock formation. The cave is quite large, nearly 3m tall and 5m wide at its entrance. It exhibits two passage ways with a 2m wide tree growing at a chute-like opening at its interior. Near its entrance team members found ceramic remains and a red flint lithic. Several additional remains of worked lithics were identified in the vicinity. Several pre-Classical forms were likewise identified, including a large storage jar with upright rim and piriform shoulder, a hand-turned stewpot fragment with an upright, visibly rolled rim, and other hand made cookware sherds. As stated above, the exposed outcrop of Sivritaş is extremely jagged and irregular and exhibits several deep fissures along its length, in particular one long (200m) narrow winding ravine near its midsection (Figure 11). Pursuing a narrow path into the ravine team members encountered a small agricultural field approximately 40m N-S x 100m E-W, exhibiting small areas of terracing along its margin. From this 'east ravine' a narrow brushy path leads further along the ravine to a second, smaller opening (20m N-S x 70m E-W) labeled by the team, the "west ravine." Worked lithic remains were identified in both ravines, particularly in the terraced area on the south side of the east ravine, where literally hundreds of fragments of flint debotage identified the place as a knapping area (Figure 11). Team members collected handfuls of debotage, mostly gray flint. Lingering concern about the likely 'modernity' of the knapping area was allayed by the identification of a red flint arrow head 3.9cm long (Figure 12); and a broken red flint sickle blade (Figure 13). A similar concentration of debotage was found in the west ravine. Ceramics recorded in these ravine areas include several coarseware sherds of various periods, and one handmade blackened stewpot fragment with upright rim and sloping shoulder. The team saw little evidence structurally of habitation apart from the dense layer of small (hand-sized) stone blocks on the ground. Striations on the face of the rock ledge near the knapping remains were

possibly hand worked. Labeled site RC 0802, the lithic remains at Sivritaş Tepe surpass those found Karaçukur (RC 0303). The find of an intact arrowhead combined with handmade pottery and literally scores of fragments of lithic debotage clearly marks this as pre-Classical (possibly Chalcolithic) lithic working area and settlement, the first of its kind in the Gazipasha region.

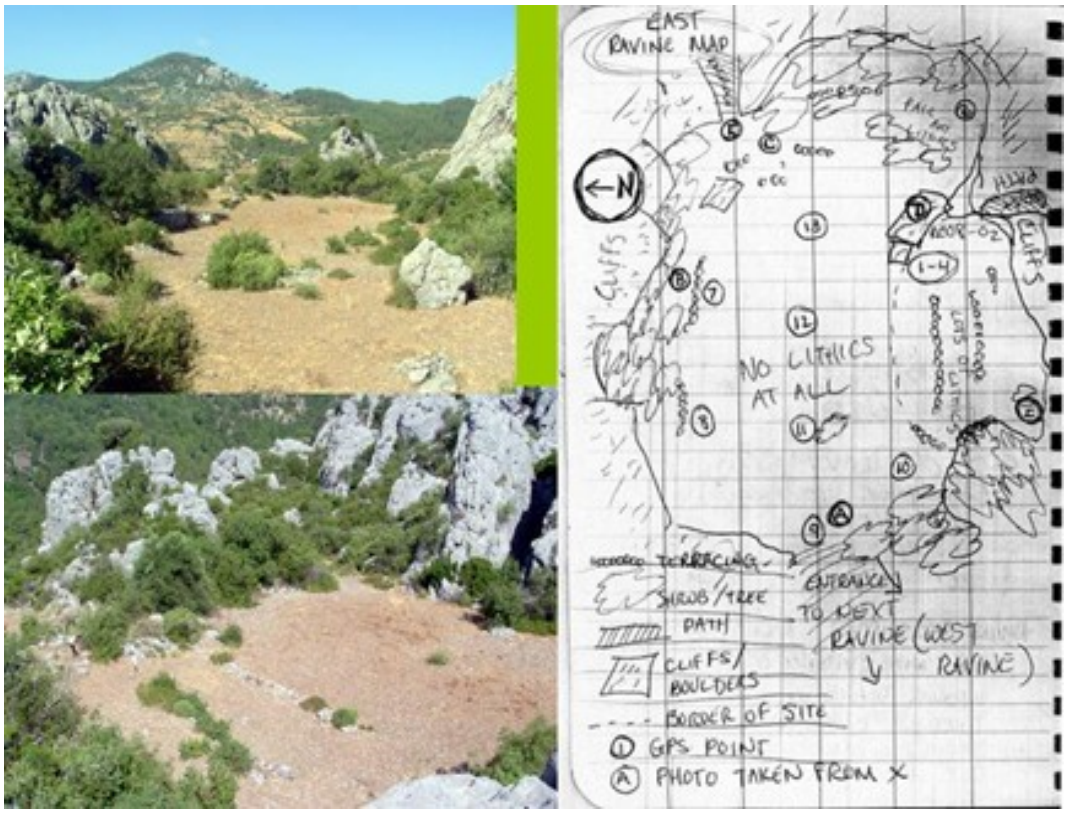


Figure 11: View and Sketch of Knapping Area at Sivritaş Tepe (RC 0802)

Figure 12: Arrowhead found at Sivritaş Tepe, RC 0802

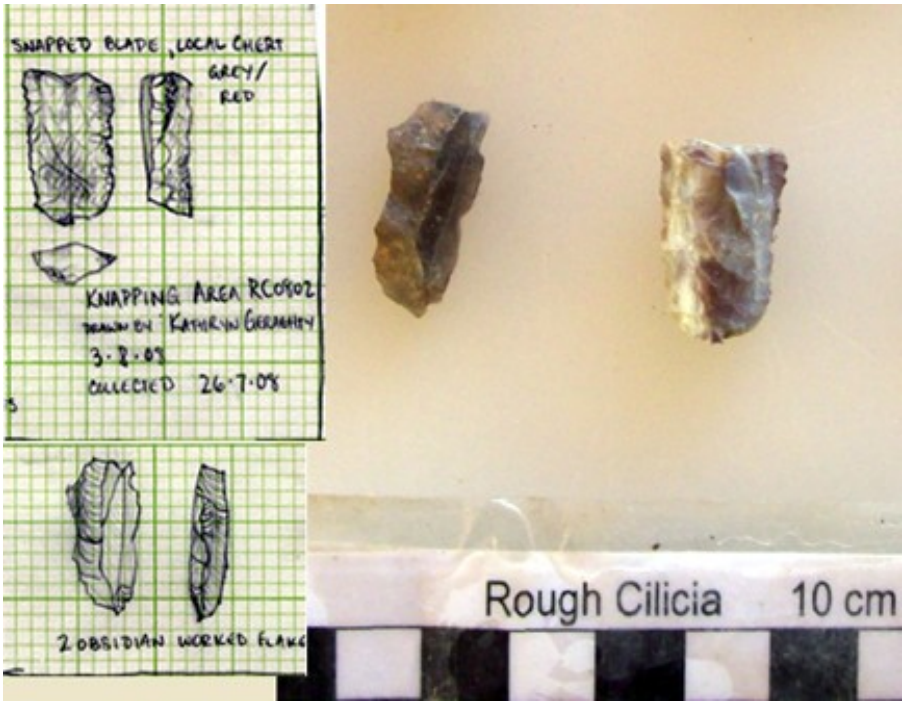
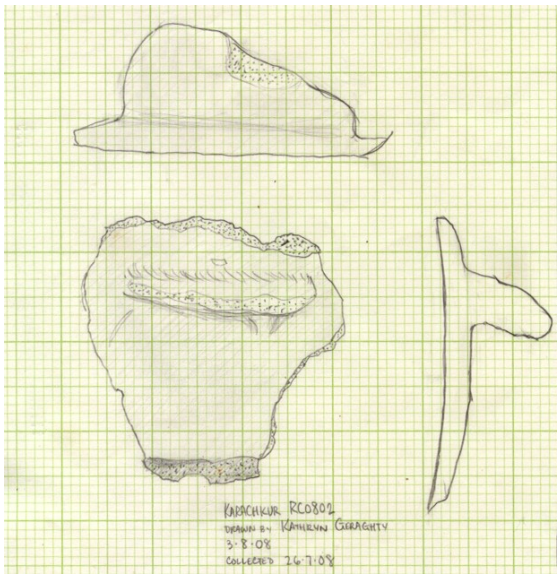


Figure 13: Obsidian Flake and Flint Sickle Blade from Sivritaş Tepe, RC 0802

Transect data obtained from terraced agricultural terrain immediately behind (down slope from) the outcrop demonstrated that the horizon of lithic and handmade ceramic remains extended 200m meters below the outcrop (transects 10 and 12; Figure 6). In steeply sloping fields numerous additional lithic remains (red and gray flint and white onyx (?)) were identified, including several fragments of imported obsidian (Figure 13). Other finds include a large lump of iron ore, and in particular a handmade cookpot or storage basin with ledge handle. The exterior surface of this sherd appears to be slipped or painted bright red (FigureS 14-15). In addition, approximately 150m below (south of) the cliffs, Rauh investigated several large mounds of extremely small-flake gray flint debotage; there were at least three large "slag heaps" easily 1m tall **(**Figure 16). Unquestionably an enormous amount of gray flint was worked in this area, but the debotage fragments were so small as to suggest that they represent the leavings of modern stone knapping, for example, residue piles resulting from the production of flint teeth for the modern plough sleds discussed above. Either way - ancient or modern - these slag heaps offer another telling detail about the stone knapping industry that occurred at the Sivritaş Tepe outcrop. Map (Figure) 17 indicates the extent of lithic and pre-Roman finds in this region (dark colored outlines). The dark colored polygons show the two areas of maximum lithic and handmade pottery concentrations (RC 0303 and RC 0802).

It is interesting to note that the lithic, pre-Roman horizon ends very sharply at the lithic debotage piles below the cliffs at Sivritaş Tepe. Beyond this point while walking the same transects (11 and 12) the team encountered what appeared to be worn coarseware and Roman fineware remains indicating that the extent of the lithic/pre-Roman horizon was sharply delineated at the source of the stone knapping

area. Remains of Roman era coarseware and fineware ceramics were encountered throughout these transects as well, demonstrating the blanketing effect of Roman occupation in this highland. However, within the limits of the pre-Roman area no wheel ridged sherds were encountered. This too may be significant.



Figures 14 and 15: Slipped, Hand-turned Basin Fragment from Transect 10

Figure 16: Debitage Pile in Transect 13

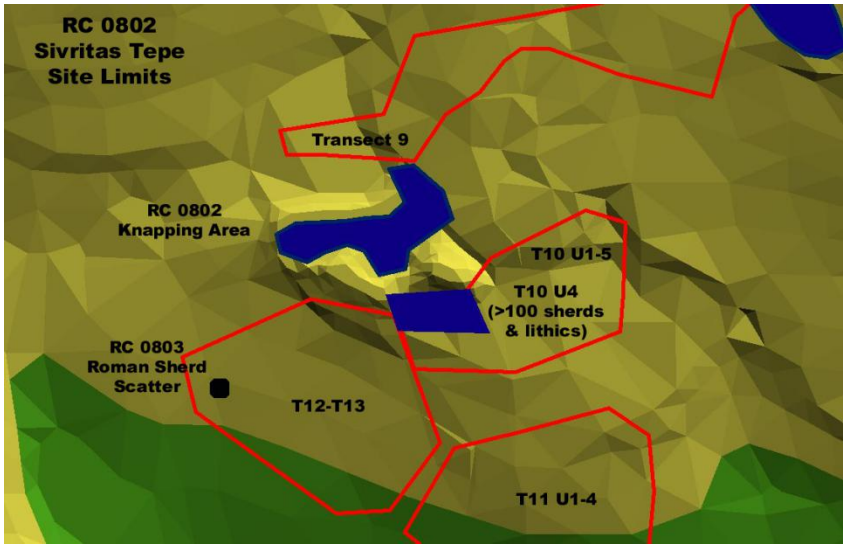


Figure 17: DEM Map of Sivritaş Tepe Site Limits

Results of the off site survey indicate at least 3 conclusions: in general the site limits were relatively narrow, with sherd densities dropping below 10 sherds per unit (3200 m^2) within a few hundred meters of the main concentrations; the site limits of the Roman era sites appear to be significantly larger than those of earlier era occupations with site limits of 500m to perhaps as much as a kilometer. Also during the Roman era there is evidence of small scattered off-site habitation (sherd scatters) similar to that encountered in other regions of the survey. For the earlier eras the horizon of artifacts appears to be far more nucleated. Map (Figure) 5 shows the approximate extent of the pedestrian survey conducted in the Biçkici Canyon during the 2008 season. It is important to recognize that the area walked represents a small percentage not only of the overall area of the canyon, but even of the accessible agricultural terrain. The canyon contains extensive terrain that the survey has minimally investigated. As a result our conclusions must remain tentative. At the very least the survey team attempted to walk transect units at various altitudes (from 900 to 400m asl) and on different landscape faces ranging from steeply sloping forest terrain to narrow agricultural terraces to the flat open fields of the river terrace at the floor of the canyon. Had time been available, more terrain below the level of the river terrace along the river bed itself needed to be walked.

Turning to the evidence of Early and Late Roman occupation, one observes that not only do the sherd densities extend considerably further from the site centers, but land use is identifiable away from the urban settlements (i.e., rural site occupation; Figure 18). A general horizon of Roman era sherd residue is visible in all but 12 of the 53 transect units inspected. In general the off-site sherd densities indicate extensive land use of the canyon resources during the Roman era. One could postulate that pre-Roman occupation along this side of the canyon focused inordinately on the flint sources of Karaçukur and Sivritaş Tepe. The presence of the spring line at 800m elevation needs also to be borne in mind. The Roman era results appear to point to a more diverse economic activity, with the fortified refuge at RC 0308 Kilise Taş

Tepesi indicating intensive activity in the zone of the cedar forest at the very top of the canyon, large urban settlements and a Roman road (RC 0301, 0302, 0304) along the sloping agricultural terrain near the spring line of the canyon, and isolated farm settlements near the river bed below (RC 0803, 0804). Although human occupation of the Biçkici highland may have originated with the need for access to lithic tool manufacture, by the Roman era the full resource capacity of the canyon would appear to have been utilized.

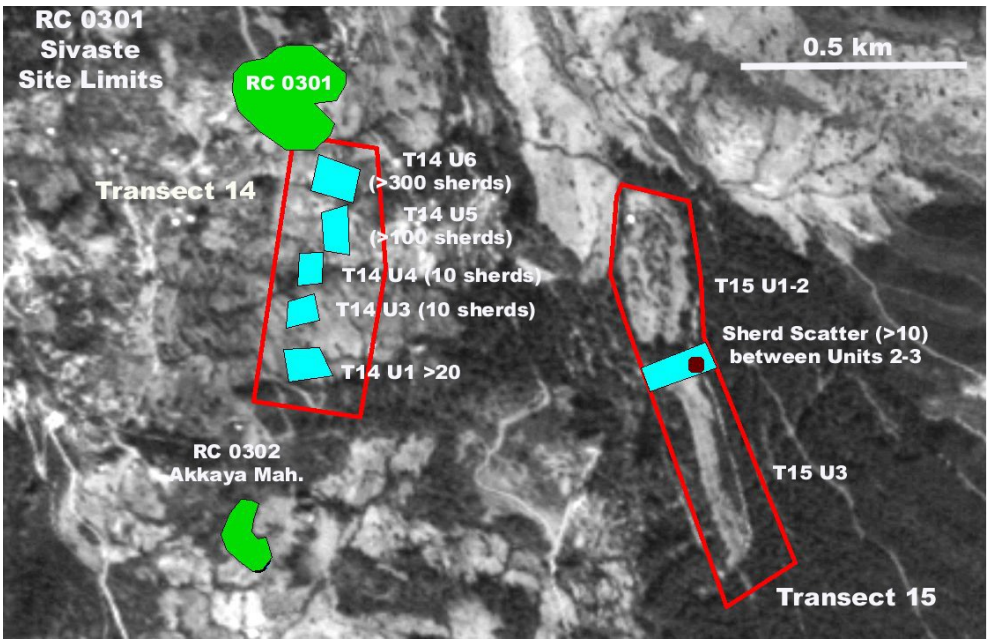


Figure 18: Site Limits of the Roman-era Site RC 0301, Sivaste

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