

The Plakari Archaeological Project

Preliminary report on the fifth field season (2014)

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Abstract

The 2014 fieldwork campaign at Karystos-Plakari in southern Euboia included excavations on Terrace 1, where during the 4th century BC a large open space was created with the help of enormous deposits of stones, probably as part of a major reorganisation of the sanctuary and probably to accommodate relatively large groups of people. Excavations on the north-east side of the hill brought to light part of a Final Neolithic (FN) structure sitting on a terrace that was retained by a large wall. Associated finds include a variety of ground and chipped stone tools and FN ceramics, including a large, nearly complete coarse ware jar found standing upside down in the earth. Sedimentological and palaeoecological fieldwork in the Riggins estuary provided further insights into landscape changes and landscape formation processes in the dynamic coastal area close to Plakari. Analysis of archaeobotanical macro-remains and charcoal samples collected between 2011 and 2014 from Early Iron Age to Classical contexts at Plakari, suggest that during the 1st millennium BC land use around the settlement was characterised by the typical Mediterranean polyculture system as well as by oak forests that must have existed in the close vicinity. The conservation and restoration of bronze finds, finally, brought to light a figuratively decorated Boeotian fibula and an 'Argive' shield band that had previously gone unnoticed.

Keywords

Karystos-Plakari – Early Iron Age to Classical sanctuary – Final Neolithic settlement – palaeoenvironmental and archaeobotanical research

Introduction

In 2009, a collaboration was initiated between Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, and since then five field seasons have taken place at the archaeological site of Karystos-Plakari (southern Euboia) and in its immediate surroundings. In the first of our preliminary reports

published in *Pharos*, the aims and methods of the Plakari Archaeological Project were presented, along with the results of a topographical survey that we carried out at the site in 2010.¹ During the 2011 to 2013 campaigns, we excavated the remains of a sanctuary with evidence of cultic activities spanning the 11th or 10th century BC to the last quarter of the 4th century BC.² The cult activities included burnt sacrifices,³ group eating and drinking, and the dedication of a wide range of votive objects. During much of the sanctuary's earlier history, cult took place in the open air, on an artificial terrace near the hill top (Terrace 2). Ca 400 BC a small building (Building A) was constructed that probably functioned as a pantry and storage space for cult equipment and valuable goods, but also contained a hearth and a small oven.⁴ Its destruction by fire ca 325/320 BC marked the end of the sanctuary.

In 2011, a trial trench excavated to the north-east of the cult site, in the northern part of the lower lying Terrace 1, brought to light two rooms of a Late Classical building (Building B). The part of the building that was brought to light apparently had a storage function, as the two rooms that were excavated contained almost 5,500 amphora fragments, probably attributable to the second half of the 4th century BC.

The 2014 excavations

The present preliminary report concerns the fifth field season, which lasted from 9 July to 9 August 2014. Fieldwork activities were concentrated in three trenches (Figure 1: red areas), of which Trench 6 was located in the centre of Terrace 1, while Trenches 11 and 12 were laid out on a small terrace on the north-eastern flanks of the Plakari hill top.⁵

¹ Crielaard et al. 2011-2012, esp. 95-100.

² Crielaard 2012; Crielaard et al. 2013; 2014.

³ Groot 2014.

⁴ Chidiroglou 2014 presents a first report on the late Classical pottery and lamps.

⁵ Dr Jan Paul Crielaard acted as project coordinator and, together with Maria Kosma, as field director. The trench supervisors were Ruben Brugge (Trench 6 South), Revekka Korokida and Alline Sinke (Trench 6 North), Iris de Fuijk (Trench 11) and Stefan Kooi (Trench 12). Stefan Kooi and Ruben Brugge also acted as assistant site supervisors, and were responsible for the 3D photogrammetry and air photographs employing a drone. Jaap Fokkema was in charge of the survey work and the mapping and drawing of the architectural remains. The work in the museum was coordinated by Filiz Songu, who was also responsible for recording the finds and studying pottery and small finds. Dr Xenia Charalambidou (Fitch Laboratory, British School at Athens) coordinated and conducted the research project on the Early Iron Age pottery; Dr Maria Chidiroglou (National Archaeological Museum, Athens) studied the Classical pottery from Terrace 2. Bert Brouwenstijn was responsible for drawing and photographing the archaeological finds. Ed de Vries drew a large selection of FN and EIA finds. A team of 12 students from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and two from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne assisted in the field and the museum. Tamar Davidowitz (MA PdRes) supervised

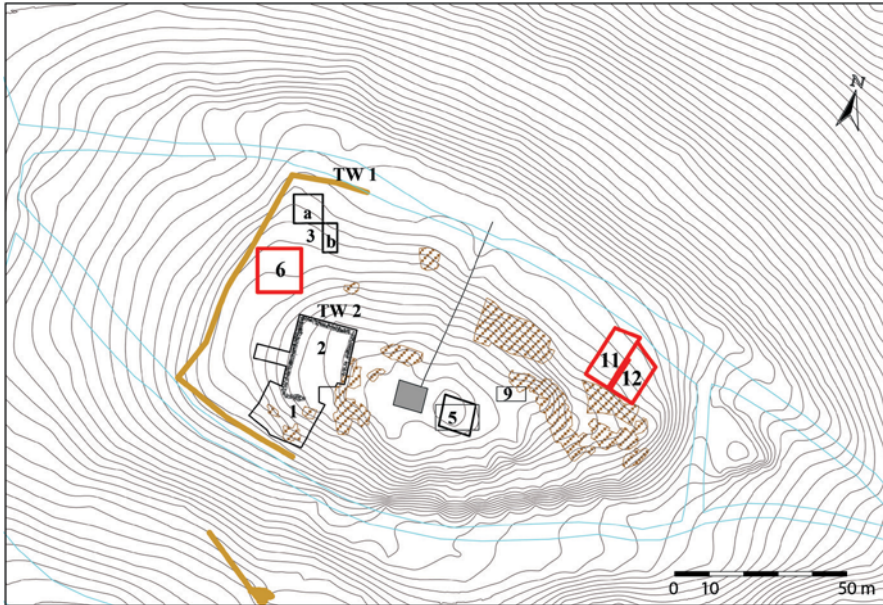


Figure 1. Plan of Plakari hilltop showing the location of the 2014 trenches (red areas).

Trench 6

Trench 6 measured 7.5×7.5 m and was situated some 7.5 m south of the 2011 Trench 3.⁶ The aim of our excavations in this area was to establish whether Building B extended to the south and, on a more general level, to see how this area related to the layout and development of the Archaic and Classical sanctuary.

In the northern part of Trench 6, just below the topsoil, two corners of walls (un. 467 and un. 455) made of well-worked schist blocks came to light. Only a small part of these walls was exposed as they disappeared into the trench's northern and eastern baulks, respectively (see Figures 2-3). These walls are more or less parallel, but it was not clear whether and, if so, how they are related to each other. It seems that they formed an entrance or passage, suggesting that the walls could have been part of a gate building. Wall 467 was standing on a foundation wall whose lowest courses formed an integrated part of a large stone fill (together

the conservation and restoration of metal and terracotta objects carried out by a team of three post-graduate trainee students of the Conservation and Restoration Department of the University of Amsterdam.

⁶ Trench 6 was divided into a northern and a southern half and excavated by two teams, but here the results are presented together.

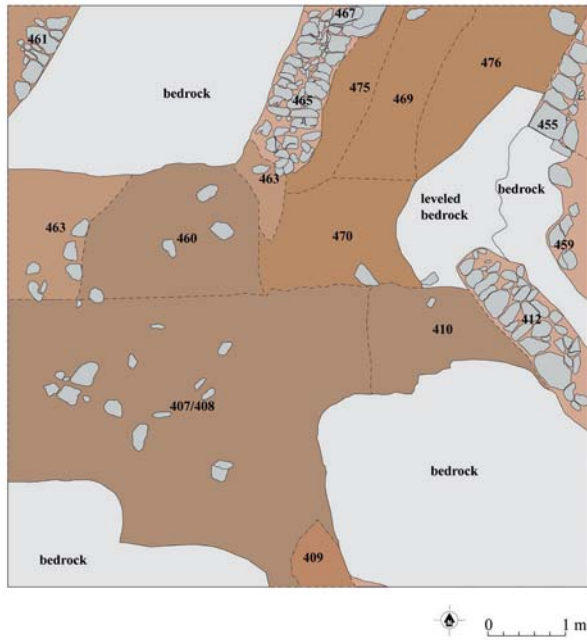


Figure 2. General plan of Trench 6.



Figure 3. Photogrammetric image of Trench 6 (from S).

un. 465; see Figure 3). In the area between the two corners of Walls 467 and 455, a possible surface was identified (un. 456); associated with this in the northern part of the trench was surface unit 405/406. At a lower level, we found a huge fill composed of massive stone blocks (un. 458; see Figure 4), likely to be building debris that was dumped here. Most of the rest of the area of Trench 6 also contained stone fills. Different fills were identifiable on the basis of the size of the stone blocks. In at least one case, the earlier mentioned Foundation Wall 465 also helped to retain or delineate filling material (un. 463). Ceramics suggest that these fills and the structures and floors associated with them date to the 4th century BC. Traces of an earlier phase of building activities were found in the north-east corner of Trench 6. Here, the bedrock appeared to have been worked in such a manner that it formed a sort of pedestal on which Wall 455 was standing. However,



Figure 4. NE corner of Trench 6 showing wall un. 455 (left) and, to its right, un. 458, fill of massive stones blocks (from N).

it seems to have been created not for Wall 455 but for its predecessor. Connected to this socle was a surface (un. 460 and un. 470), located at a lower level than the foundations of Walls 455 and 467 (see Figure 3). The southern part of the surface (un. 470) lay directly on the bedrock, which in this area had been levelled. On the basis of an almost intact drinking vessel (Figure 5: a) and other finds, this earlier phase can be provisionally dated to the 6th century BC. On the whole, the quantity of finds was limited. In the lowest strata some objects were found that can be typically connected to cult, including fragments of terracotta votive statuettes (e.g. Figure 5: b-c).

Our findings from Trench 6 show that during the Archaic period the sanctuary was not limited to Terrace 2. In this period (if not earlier), Terrace Wall 1 probably functioned as an outer temenos wall. Its inner face was exposed in the north-west corner of Trench 6 (Fig. 3: un. 461). It was found standing on bedrock and predates the above stone fills. The 2014 findings support our earlier conclusion that during the 4th century a major reorganisation of the sanctuary had taken place. Not only were a roofed building (Building A) and forecourt constructed on Terrace 2, but on the lower lying terrace (Terrace 1) to its north a large open space was created with the help of enormous deposits of stones. Perhaps this open space served to contain relatively large groups of people – in contrast to Terrace 2, which could accommodate a much more limited number of cult attendants. Access to Terrace 1 was possibly provided by a gate building, although future excavations will have to establish whether this assumption is correct.

Trenches 11 and 12

Trenches 11 and 12 are located on a terrace to the north-east of the summit, directly beneath the outcrop with the rock-cut niches.⁷ This is a relatively flat area, where in some places the natural rock comes to the surface (Figure 6). It is delineated to the south by the steep northern face of the summit and to the north by the A1 road. The scarp of this road already revealed the presence of ancient wall remains and several metres of a thick stratum containing prehistoric pottery, flint and obsidian. The two main aims of our excavations in this area were to find out more about the nature and date of these wall remains and to explore the possibility that this terrace contains intact layers from the Final Neolithic period (FN, ca 4300-3300 BC).

After removing the topsoil and wash layers in both trenches, it became clear that a broad strip of bedrock runs through the centre of the trenches, dividing both into a higher southern zone and a lower northern zone (Figures 7-8). In the

⁷ Crielaard et al. 2011-2012, esp. 91, 93 (with fig. 11), 100.

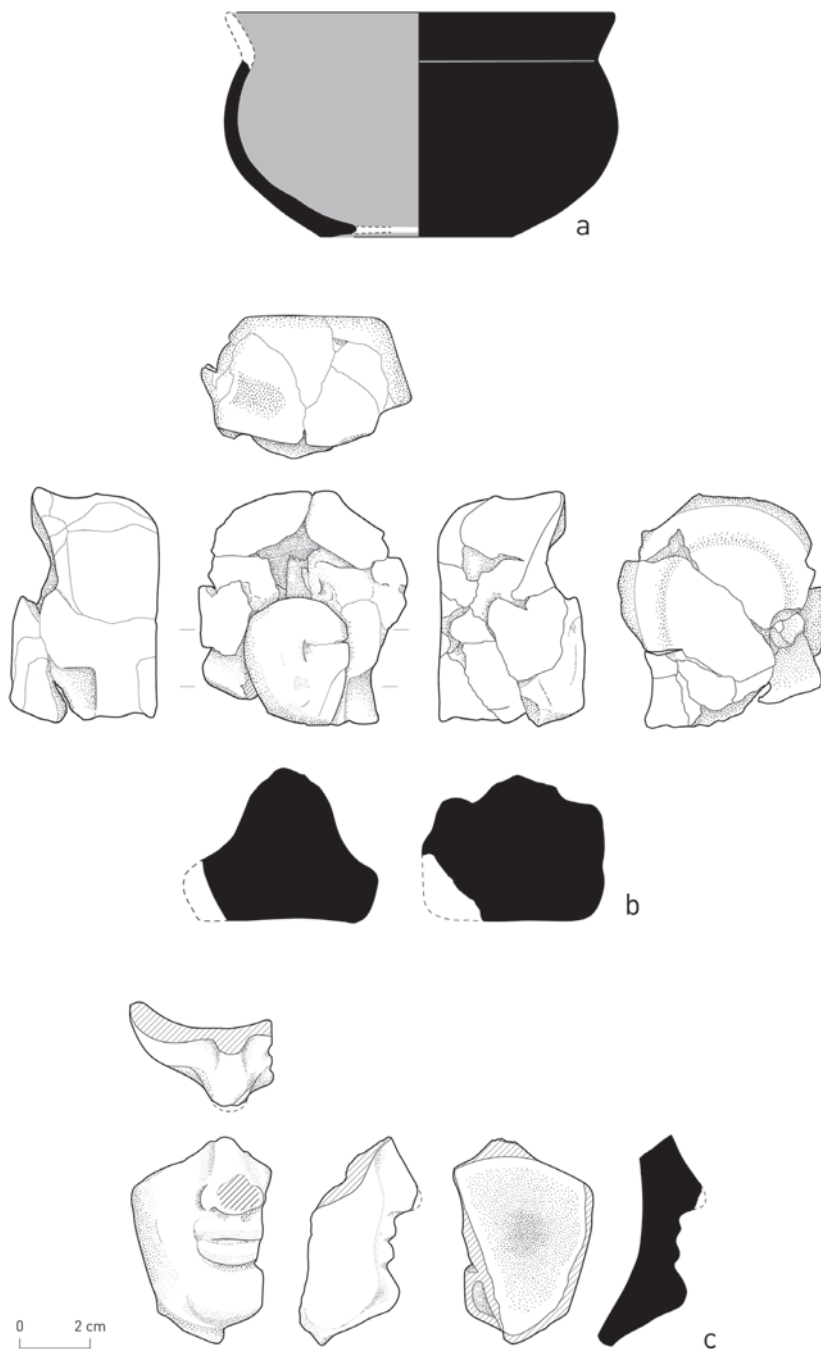


Figure 5. Finds from Trench 6: a. one-handed cup (un. 462 #161 SF55);
 b. terracotta female figurine (un. 411 #39 SF4);
 c. terracotta male figurine (un. 408 #16 SF3).



Figure 6. Drone image of Final Neolithic terrace (greyish area in centre of photo; from NE).



Figure 7. Drone photo of Trenches 11 and 12 (N is top of photo).

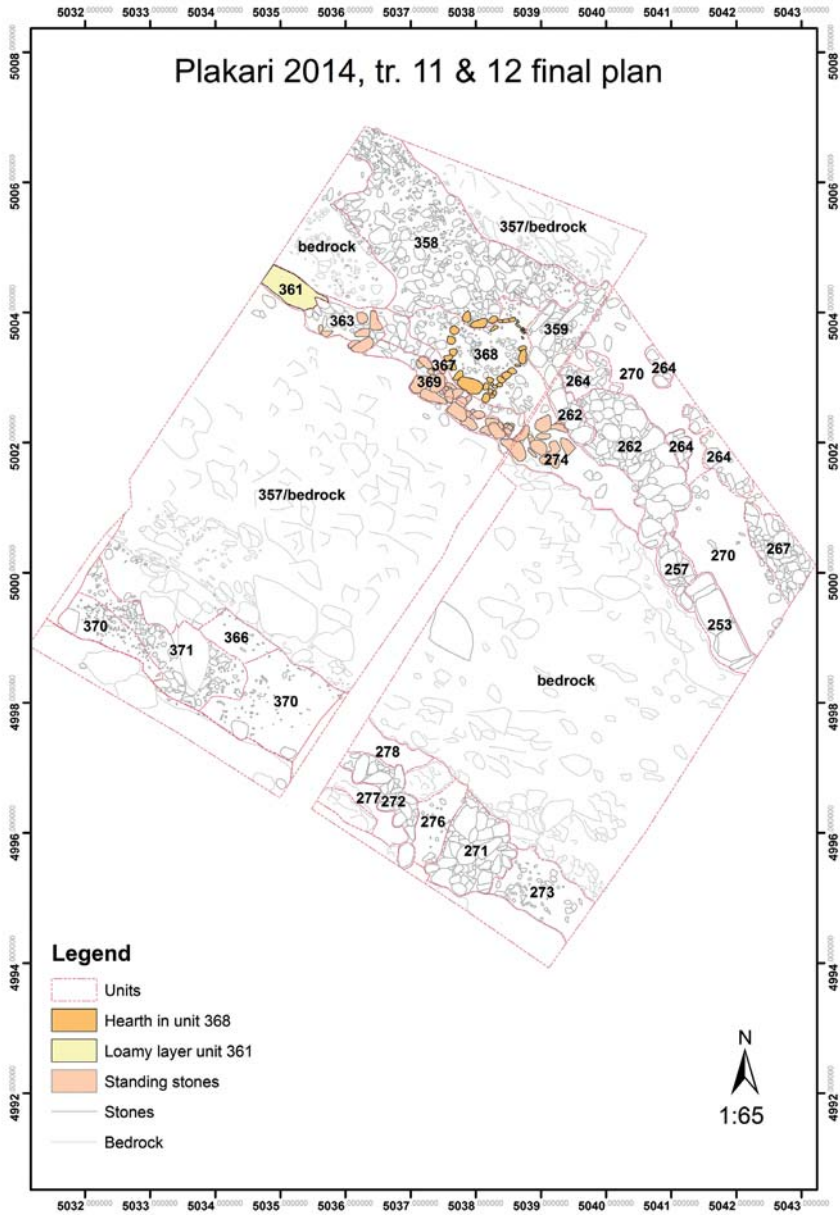


Figure 8. General plan of Trenches 11 and 12.

southern zones of Trenches 11 and 12 (i.e. south of the strip of bedrock running through the centre of the trenches), we removed layers of wash until we reached a relatively smooth surface containing sherds lying in a horizontal position (Figure 9). A preliminary examination of this much eroded material dates it to the Classical period. This assemblage was interpreted as a road, delineated by several large stones set on their sides. Perhaps this road led to the part of the hilltop where the Early Iron Age (EIA) to Classical sanctuary was situated. When we continued our excavations in the northern area of Trench 12, we first encountered wash layers and layers containing both prehistoric and later material, and then the remains of two stone structures (un. 271 and un. 272) that had been set in a cavity in the bedrock. Unit 272 is a curvilinear line of stones, disappearing into the baulk between the two trenches. To its north we found unit 275, containing Archaic/Classical pottery fragments, and below this, in a shallow depression, an ashy deposit with a high concentration of burnt or calcinated animal bone fragments (un. 278). A little to the east, unit 271 represents another stone structure, positioned in between two vertical outcrops of bedrock forming the northern and southern edges of a cavity (see Figure 10). The stones of this structure are larger than those of unit 272 and lie in a more orderly fashion. Both structures were built using the relief of the bedrock. Their exact function is unclear, but they may tentatively be interpreted as refuse pits or 'annexes' built for special purposes. If Structure 272 had something to do with the nearby presence of burnt animal bones, it may have accommodated pyrotechnical activities. All of the units associated with these features contained material that was either late (Archaic and/or Classical) or mixed (i.e. also included prehistoric sherds), suggesting that these cannot be associated with the FN remains in the north part of Trenches 11 and 12.

In the lower northern zone in Trench 12, the remains of a substantial wall (un. 253; see Figure 8) came to light with a curving stone structure (un. 262) to its west; the exact nature of the latter is unclear (perhaps an extension of un. 253 or a small platform?). Between the two there is a gap of about 1 m filled with debris or erosive material (un. 257). The layers under these structures (uns 266, 270, 274) contained a fragment of an EIA skyphos which provides a *terminus post quem* or, rather, a *terminus ad quem*, given that no other EIA material was found in this area, so that this fragment may be linked to the actual construction phase of this wall. Further excavation showed that these EIA structures were standing on an earlier terrace that was kept in place by a retaining wall (un. 267) that is also visible in the road scarp (Figure 11) and that can be dated to the FN period. In fact, the scarp shows two layers of stones, separated by rubble, small stones and pottery fragments, which could indicate that Wall 267 had two phases. At the end of the 2014 season, we had reached the top of a possible surface that is contemporary with what would be the latest phase of retaining Wall 267.



Figure 9. Possible road surface (un. 355) and road markers in S part of Trench II (from W).



Figure 10. Stone structure (un. 271) within cavity in S part of Trench 12 (from SW).



Figure 11. Final Neolithic retaining wall (un. 267) visible on both sides of N baulk of Trench 12; north face damaged by bulldozing of A1 road (from NW).



Figure 12. Stone lining of possible hearth in Trench 11 (from NE).

On this FN terrace a roughly rectangular activity area could be defined. The largest part of this was retrieved in Trench 11. Its southern limit seems to have been demarcated by a lining of stones set upright (un. 369), following the edge of the bedrock zone (see Fig. 8). In the area where Trench 11 borders Trench 12, this line of stones seems to turn towards the north-east where it disappears under the above EIA feature, unit 262. In line with these stones is a rectangular feature containing a whitish loamy material (un. 361). An opening in the line of stones (between un. 363 and un. 369), marked by other stones making more or less a right angle, may be provisionally interpreted as an entrance to the structure. Immediately to the east of the entrance was found a circle of stones (Figure 12), probably the stone lining of a hearth. On the other side of the entrance, a large, nearly complete coarse ware jar was found standing upside down in the earth.

A large number of ground and chipped stone tools were found in the prehistoric layers that are part of the FN terrace, including units belonging to the activity area. Among these tools were hand stones, hammer stones and axes (Figure 13), as well as obsidian blade and flake tools; a large number of these were splintered pieces (Figure 14). On-site knapping is testified by the presence of cores, technical pieces, debitage and debris products. There are also a small number of flint tools. The rarity of flint at prehistoric sites in southern Euboea may suggest that these were imports. The pottery contained a variety of closed and open shapes (Figure 15), including fragments of a jar with grooved decoration and an elephant lug (Figure 15: c), and cheese pots (Figure 17: e). Two spindle whorls were also found (Figure 15: d).⁸ Although examples of red-slipped and burnished ware were found, the bulk of the pottery was coarse and undecorated. Very few pattern-burnished fragments were encountered, in stark contrast to earlier excavations on the southern part of the Plakari hill.⁹

To conclude, the excavations in Trenches 11 and 12 have brought to light part of an FN structure sitting on a terrace that was retained by a large wall. Spindle whorls indicate that animal husbandry was part of the inhabitants' subsistence. Pottery and the occurrence of obsidian and flint can help us to reconstruct external networks in which the FN population at Plakari participated; these may have included both nearby places (eastern Attica, northern Cyclades) and more far-off regions (Melos).

To somewhat contextualise the finds from Trenches 11 and 12, FN material has been recorded scattered over a large area of the Plakari hilltop. Dr Donald Keller identified several find concentrations in his 1979 surface surveys of the area.¹⁰

⁸ Cf. Cullen et al. 2013, 133, fig. 24, V3.

⁹ Cf. Cullen et al. 2013, 29.

¹⁰ Cullen et al. 2013, 20-23, fig. 4a.



Figure 13. Stone tools from Trenches 11 and 12: a. handstone (Tr. 12 un. 268 #54 SF20); b. axe (Tr. 11 un. 367 #190 SF69); c. quern (Tr. 11 surface find #138 SF71); d. handstone (Tr. 11 un. 358 #173 SF43); e. hammerstone (Tr. 12 un.268 #54 SF23); f. axe (Tr. 11 un. 358 #180 SF59); g. handstone (Tr. 12 un. 273 #72 SF34); h. fr. of axe (Tr. 11 un. 358 #180 SF61); i. fr. of axe (Tr. 11 un. 358 #176 SF56).

While digging test trenches on the hill's southern flank in the same year, Keller found pottery and other material *in situ*.¹¹ In addition to this, prehistoric chance finds have come to light in our excavations of the lowest strata of the EIA to Archaic open-air sacrificial refuse area (Trench 1) in the southern part of Terrace 2. These include obsidian, FN pottery fragments, stone celts and a figurine made of bone or antler (see Figure 16: a-b). Salvage excavations carried out in the bend of the A3 road in 2009 by Maria Kosma on behalf of the 11th Ephorate yielded part of a large wall, probably of FN date. During our first field season in 2010, remains of the same wall were traced and mapped over a considerable

¹¹ Cullen et al. 2013, 21-42.



Figure 14. Blade and flake tools of obsidian and flint from Trenches 11 and 12:
 a. flint tool (Tr. 11 un. 354 #139 SF26); b. middle part of flint tool (Tr. 11 un. 353 #114 SF4);
 c. obsidian blade fr. (Tr. 12 un. 260 #62 SF25/ MK1846); d. obsidian flake (Tr. 12 un. 252 #8 SF4);
 e. obsidian flake (Tr. 11 un. 354 #118 SF7); f. obsidian blade (Tr. 11 un. 358 #173 SF51/ MK1885);
 g. obsidian blade fr. (Tr. 11 un. 356 #179 SF62/ MK1887); h. obsidian blade fr.
 (Tr. 12 un. 260 #27 SF8); i. flint blade (Tr. 12 un. 261 #60 SF51/ MK1845).

distance in the scarp of the A3 road up to the point where Keller's test trenches were located.¹² This wall and the one that was unearthed in Trenches 11 and 12 both retained large terraces for domestic and other activities. Although they probably did not form one continuous wall, they may have also served defensive purposes. Another point in common is that in both places an EIA wall was set on top of the FN terrace.¹³ Taking all this evidence together, we may hypothesise that these find spots (including the one excavated in 2014) represent a number of habitation nuclei. If this is correct, we may picture a considerable settlement consisting of small habitation clusters dispersed over the hilltop, protected in some places by a large terrace or defence wall.

¹² Crielaard et al. 2013, 100, with 85 fig. 2 (TW3), 92 fig. 10.

¹³ Cullen et al. 2013, 23-26.



Figure 15. Final Neolithic pottery fragments and spindle whorl from Trenches 11 and 12: a. base fr. of pedestalled vase (Tr. 11 un. 358 #165 SF35); b. body fr. of probably closed vessel (Tr. 11 un. 358 #161 SF32); c. body and rim frs with vertical pierced handle (Tr. 11 un. 363 #169 SF37); d. spindle whorl (Tr. 12 un. 260 #43 SF15); e. rim and body frs of cheese pot (Tr. 11 un. 358 #176 SF54); f. pierced fr. and fr. with pierced vertical lug (Tr. 11 un. 358 #176).



Figure 16. Final Neolithic finds from Trench 1: a. stone celts; b. figurine made of bone or antler.

Geo-archaeological research in the Rigias estuary

The Plakari Archaeological Project is multidisciplinary in scope: in addition to systematic excavations, the project embraces geoarchaeological, palaeoecological, archaeobotanical and zooarchaeological research. The aim is to understand how communities living at Plakari in different periods functioned within local and regional contexts and how they related to the landscape and environment. Thus, an important element of the project is to study landscape changes and landscape formation processes in the dynamic coastal area close to Plakari, and to reconstruct the palaeoecology, land use and agricultural practices in this area.

Previous geoarchaeological investigations in 2011-2012 have shown that over a long period of time the coastal landscape was highly dynamic due to complex interactions of erosion activity, stream discharge, sea level fluctuations and sea incursions.¹⁴ The Rigias river, which runs to the east of Plakari, was responsible for discharging alluvial material and creating marshy areas and lagoons in the western part of the coastal zone. On the basis of this information, it can be assumed that in antiquity the coastline lay more inland. In May 2014, Janneke Smeets and Colin Straathof – two Master's students in the Earth Sciences, Earth & Climate cluster at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam – carried out sedimentological

¹⁴ Crielaard et al. 2013, 49-53; also Barbetsea, E. & M.R. Groenhuijzen 2013. Evolution of the coastal valley of Livadhaki. Reconstructing the geomorphology and micropalaeontology of the valley next to the Plakari archaeological site, Karystos, Greece (internal paper, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam); available on <http://www.plakariproject.com> > Results > 2011 season.

and palaeoecological fieldwork in the Riggins estuary, under the supervision of Drs Sjoerd Kluiving, Simon Troelstra and Sjoerd Bohncke (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam). Their research addressed the following questions: How did the landscape and vegetation in the area develop over a long-term period? What information can the microfauna (chiefly foraminifera and ostracods) provide about the marine or terrestrial environment? What can pollen tell us about the ecology and subsistence economy? And how can the observed changes in the ecology be related to the available geomorphological and geoarchaeological data?

A total of 26 cores were taken in different locations (see Figure 17) in order to investigate the subsoil stratigraphy and to take soil samples for micropalaeontological, palynological, grain-size and thermogravimetric (TGA) analysis. Laboratory analysis in July-October 2014 in Amsterdam focused on pollen, macroremains and microfauna. Laboratory analysis of grain size and TGA will be carried out in the spring of 2015. This will result in a complementary report on the stratigraphy tied to sedimentological data of the 2014 fieldwork.

Preliminary results indicate that the longest core (14-17) contains a lower interval with common plant remains (seeds, roots, *Chara* sporangia) in association with



Figure 17. Locations where cores were taken for geo-archaeological research in the Riggins estuary NE of Plakari.

ostracods, freshwater gastropods and fish remains, indicative of a fresh to slightly brackish environment. The sequence terminates with a humic peat. Overlying this sequence are sediments with little or no microfauna/flora. The top of the core shows intervals containing *Chara* and ostracods, pointing to periodical freshwater (pool) conditions. Other cores contain sections with common benthic foraminifera (*Elphidium* sp., *Ammonia beccarii*, *Haynesina* sp.), which characterise marginal marine conditions or the proximity thereof. Pollen preservation in the 2014 cores is generally poor, which precludes a detailed pollen diagram. However, an attempt will be made to mark the presence/absence distribution of significant pollen types. The cores contain sufficient material for ¹⁴C AMS dating.

Archaeobotanical research

Between 2011 and 2014, a total of 213 soil and charcoal samples were collected. In the summer of 2014, Dr Daphne Lentjes (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) studied the soil samples for the presence of archaeobotanical macro-remains. Of these, 86 samples were selected for further analysis, using a stereoscope; in 38 of these, carbonised seeds and fruits appeared to be present. A relatively large variety of species were retrieved from the EIA lots. These originated in Trench 1a-c, which is in the open-air sacrificial refuse area, and were part of unit 2, which also contained large quantities of PG and G pottery fragments, animal bones, and small finds of metal, terracotta and stone. The macro-remains from this unit included grape pips (*Vitis vinifera*), pulses (Fabaceae), cereals (wheat, oat and rye) and grass seeds (Poaceae). Units dating to the Classical period yielded the remains of grapes (un. 69 and un. 125¹⁵), an olive stone (*Olea europaea*; un. 113) and cereals (un. 162, un. 163). The presence of grapes, olives, pulses and cereals in the soil samples from Plakari suggests that land use around the settlement was characterised by the typical Mediterranean polyculture system. The agricultural products may have been consumed at Plakari as part of sacrificial feasts. Besides, as we know from ancient Greek literary sources, grain (especially barley) performed a role in animal sacrifices.¹⁶

In the autumn of 2014, Dr Lentjes examined the charcoal samples in the Malcolm H. Wiener Laboratory of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens

¹⁵ Note that un. 125 is the lowest of the two layers found inside one of the bin-like features in Trench 2b. This trench covers the outside area belonging to the Late Classical Building A. In total, three of these features made of cist slabs were found in Trench 2b (see Crielaard et al. 2014, 10–11; 2015, 127). Their function remains unclear due to the fact that no artifacts could be associated with them. The bin-like feature containing un. 125 is located E of stone bench un. 108 (Crielaard et al. 2014, 5, fig. 2).

¹⁶ Before the killing of the sacrificial animal, barley was scattered on the altar, over the animal and over people participating in the ritual; see Van Straten 1995, 22, 33, 38–39.

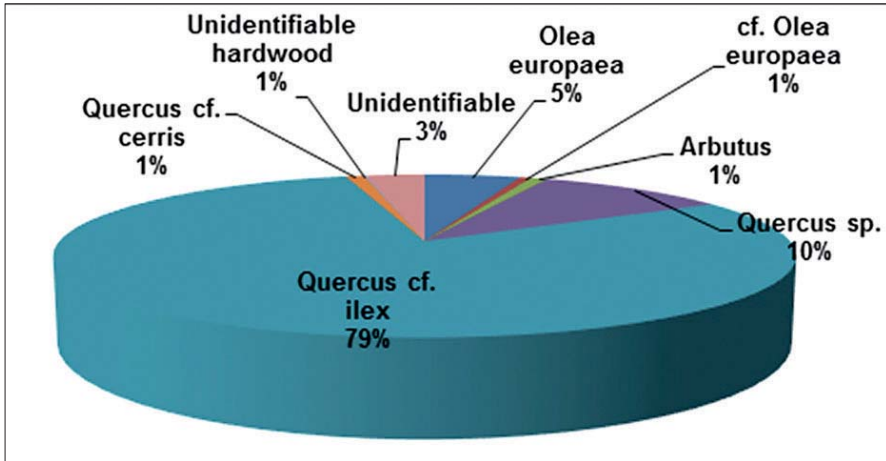


Figure 18. Pie chart visualising percentages of tree and shrub species represented in the charcoal assemblage from Plakari ($N = 1,046$).

(ASCSA).¹⁷ In the case of 1,046 fragments of carbonised wood, the species could be identified. These samples clearly show that the site's surroundings did not consist solely of agricultural fields. The charcoal assemblage included strawberry tree (*Arbutus*, a typical Mediterranean shrub land-type tree) and olive wood (*Olea europaea*), but the large majority (about 90%) of the charcoal fragments are of oak wood, both evergreen and deciduous species (Figure 18). The charcoal assemblage is unusually uniform, especially considering the large number of samples and the diversity in sample contexts. Oak trees were apparently so common that they could be used for almost anything, ranging from firewood to construction wood and wood for making objects. This, in its turn, could suggest that – in stark contrast to the situation today – oak forests must have existed in the close vicinity, probably within walking distance of the settlement.

EIA Pottery Project – Karystos Museum

Trench 1, which was excavated between 2011 and 2013, has yielded a sizeable dataset of ca 32,300 sherds. The ceramic assemblage from this open-air sacrificial refuse

¹⁷ The analysis of the Plakari charcoal samples took place within the context of the umbrella project 'Charcoal analysis from three Greek archaeological sites: Geraki, Plakari and Titane', funded by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA), the Netherlands Institute at Athens (NIA), and the Catherine van Tussenbroek Foundation. Meanwhile a preliminary report has appeared in Lentjes 2015.

deposit consists of both fine and coarse wares. The pieces date mostly to the EIA and the Archaic period, with a peak in deposition during the Middle Geometric (MG) and Late Geometric (LG) periods.

Xenia Charalambidou's study combines macroscopic, typological examination and quantitative analysis, which in the near future will be applied together with petrographic and chemical analyses, to identify and characterise local Karystian pottery production in comparison to central Euboian ceramics as well as other categories of imported wares that might indicate interactions between the community of Karystos and other regions. Apart from Euboian ceramics, Attic pottery seems to form the largest category of EIA imports. Other information that is mainly derived from the macroscopic research is the range and the chronological time span of ritual activities and the consumption patterns that emerge from the pottery study analysis in combination with information from other material evidence from the site. Quantification to understand the different parameters of the *chaîne opératoire* in the Karystos assemblage, based on a minimum number of individuals (NMI) quantification analysis, is another element of the research that has been initiated.

The ongoing study of the ceramics from the Trench 1 sacrificial refuse area shows that it contains a large number of painted fine wares, most of them falling within the category of drinking vessels especially from the EIA-Early Archaic periods, indicating that the material was used in/for ritual feasting. In Trench 1, coarse wares – including cooking pots – are well represented. The existence of cooking pots, whose percentage in the whole ceramic assemblage is another element that will be established through quantitative analysis, offers significant information concerning food preparation, ritual dining (drinking and eating) and sacrificial meals, all of which are facets of the cultic activities performed at the site.

Conservation and restoration of metal finds

The conservation of pottery, terracotta objects and, especially, bronze and iron finds, which was started in 2012, will be given high priority in the coming years. During the 2014 campaign, Tamar Davidowitz and her team managed to stabilise, clean and reconstruct 78 archaeological objects, mostly from previous excavation campaigns; of these, 17 belong to the EIA and 61 to the Archaic, Classical or later periods.¹⁸ In this process a number of interesting and important 'discoveries' were made, including that of a figurative representation of a ship and two fish

¹⁸ A detailed report was produced, documenting the treatment of the objects before, during and after treatment, and describing the methods used and a protocol for the storage, packing and handling of both treated and untreated objects. Part of this will be published on the project's website.

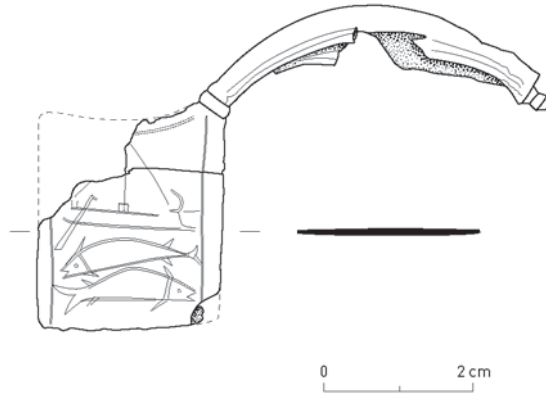


Figure 19. 'Boeotian' fibula of the Late Geometric period, showing a ship and two fishes (from Trench ib, un. 2 #47 SF228/MK2760).

decorating a so-called Boeotian fibula of the LG period (see Figure 19), and two mythological scenes on a bronze strap, one showing a confrontation between Zeus and Typhon, the other an abduction scene, possibly Menelaos taking away Helen. The decorated bronze strap can be identified as an 'Argive' shield band dating to the earlier 6th century BC (Figure 20).¹⁹

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¹⁹ The scenes have exact parallels in examples in Olympia, see Kunze 1950, 20 nos 25-27 (B987, B1912, B1803), 82ff., pls 41, 43. The decorations from Plakari and Olympia must come from the same matrix – Kunze's no. XV, which he dates to the first quarter of the 6th century BC (*ibid.* 242).

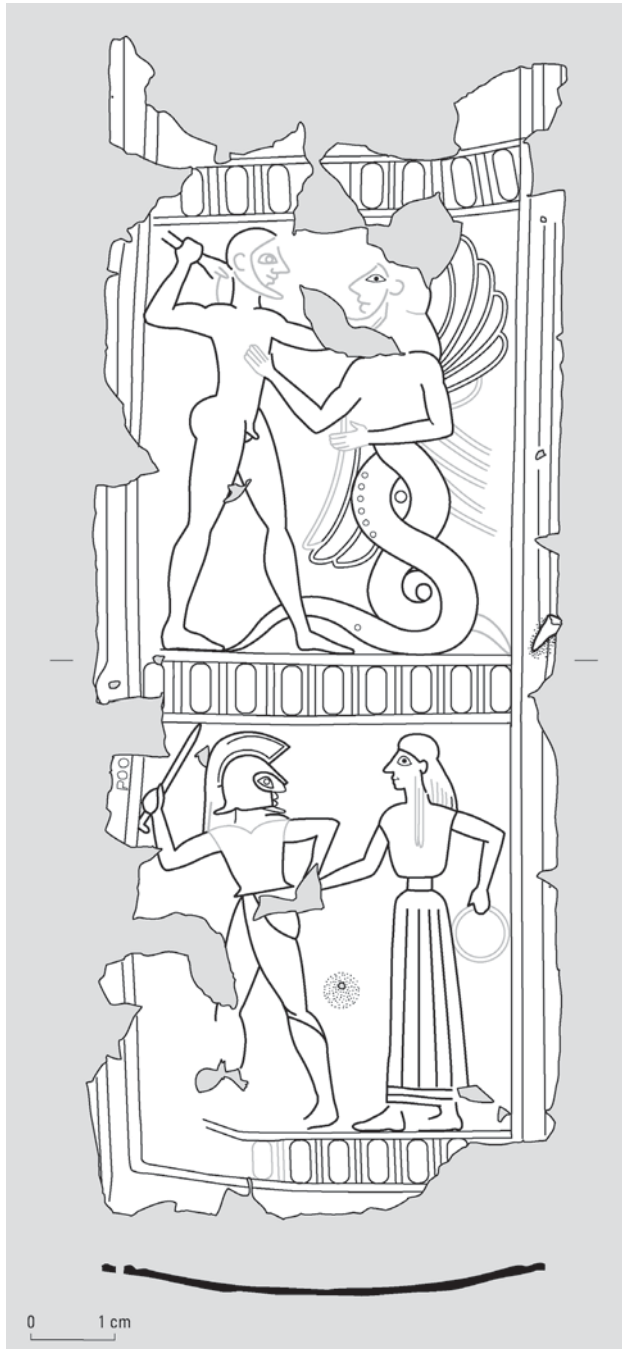


Figure 20. Bronze Argive shield band found in Trench 2d
(un. 82 #204 SF509/MK2996).

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