

The Cide Archaeological Project 2011

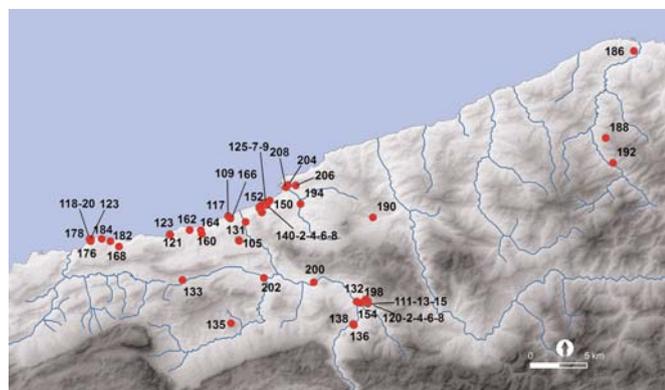
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In 2011, we successfully concluded the fieldwork component of the three-year Cide Archaeological Project (CAP), an intensive and targeted survey on the western Turkish Black Sea coast. We worked for four weeks in the field, followed by a two-week study season. Our main aims for this final season were to expand our knowledge of the region's pre- and proto-history and to gain a more systematic understanding of the already well-represented Roman and Byzantine periods. We also continued our geoarchaeological work on the taphonomy of the Cide and Şenpazar landscapes.

The 2011 fieldwork campaign

As in previous seasons, we applied the dual survey strategy of intensive fieldwalking, which allows us to gain a detailed understanding of the occupation history of particular landscapes, and targeted investigations of locally known sites.

Part of our intensive fieldwalking was aimed at sampling a range of different geographical and topographic zones, which include the coastal areas; the lower hills framing the main coastal plain; the river valleys leading south into the higher mountains; and, finally, higher altitude and gradient landscapes in the interior. In 2011 we focused mainly on the coastal area and the river valleys leading into the interior.



Cide and Şenpazar region: sites investigated in 2011

These landscapes vary enormously in their properties and the archaeological assemblages they yield. All landscapes yielded Roman and Byzantine period assemblages, but overall densities tended to be higher near the coast than in the interior. Preservation of earlier surface sites seems slightly better in inland landscapes, such as at Aybasan, where we recorded a prehistoric chipped stone cluster on the flank of a mountain. A polished axe and flint knife come from what appears to be a modern disturbance of a prehistoric subsurface site in the inland Loç valley. The Okçular valley in the coastal hinterland, which is heavily affected by erosion, yielded a surface cluster of Bronze Age pottery.

Some of our most exciting results come from the targeted survey of sites pointed out to us by locals. In 2011 we were able to add several more castles to our already substantial sample, and understanding the purpose and chronology of these sites are among the more intriguing issues in the archaeology of the Cide region. Rich pre- and proto-historic evidence as well as Byzantine materials come from a series of caves, with Derebağ Köy Mağarası the most impressive newly recorded site in 2011 (see below).

Results

CAP has two main research objectives: the documentation of the region's culture-historical development and the exploration of its cultural connections with inland and the circum-Pontic areas. After three seasons of fieldwork, we have a nearly complete Holocene occupation sequence, and for most periods we have indications for interaction with adjacent regions of one type or another.

Despite a concerted effort during this season to detect the Palaeolithic, it has continued to elude us; probably because both old river terraces and deep cave sediments disturbed by recent activities – where one could expect finds from this period – are absent.

The Early Holocene (10,000–5500 BC) is now fairly well documented, for instance, by the chipped stone surface cluster from Aybasan (Glatz et al. 2011). The most surprising find of 2011 was a polished chisel and an accompanying flint knife. These were found next to a large electricity pole, during whose erection both objects are likely to have been dug up. It is plausible that these artefacts date to the Early Holocene, although similar axes occur up to the Early Bronze Age (Korfmann et al. 1996: Tafel 81). A completely preserved flat retouched arrowhead also dating to this period was found at Okçular and resembles pieces from Okçular and Abdulkadir found in previous seasons. Together with the obsidian from Aybasan, they point to links with the Anatolian plateau in this period.

Although our sample sizes for the Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age I (5500–2600 BC) are more extensive than for the Early Holocene, it remains difficult to build up a more detailed picture of these periods. The inherent difficulty in dating body-sherds on the basis of fabric and surface treatment is part of the problem. The Middle Chalcolithic in particular remains difficult to define. Late Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age I assemblages come from cave sites such as Okçular İni and Kılıçlı Mağarası, to which we added Derebağ Köy Mağarası in 2011. The few distinctive shapes from these sites find parallels at sites in western Turkey and central Anatolia.

The later Early Bronze Age (ca 2600–2000 BC) is best documented at the cave sites of Kılıçlı and Derebağ Köy Mağarası. Together with smaller quantities of pottery from Okçular, we now have a rather substantial collection of diagnostic material for this period and the little understood transitional phase at the turn of the millennium. With regard to cultural connections, the later Early Bronze Age material

from Cide suggests diverse and wide-ranging cultural contacts including with the Marmara region, Thrace and the Balkans, and western and west-central Turkey as well as the central plateau and the Bafra region.

The same two cave sites have also yielded a small number of sherds which can be dated to the early part of the second millennium BC and a cooking pot fragment from Okçular may date to the later part of the Middle Bronze Age (ca 2000–1600 BC). The Late Bronze Age (1600–1200 BC) is traditionally seen as something of a ‘Dark Age’ in northern Turkey, but we now have a fair number of diagnostic pieces from a surface cluster at Okçular that can be confidently dated to the Late Bronze Age. Their distinctively north-central Anatolian character would suggest some form of interaction with the Hittite sphere.

The Iron Age (ca 1200–334 BC) remains ephemeral in the archaeological record of Cide and Şenpazar. Again, it is the cave sites of Kılıklı and Derebağ Köy Mağarası which have yielded the most likely candidates. These are crude, hand-made pieces which date possibly to the Early Iron Age.

The Hellenistic period (334–85 BC) has also been difficult to identify in our material, but we do have some unequivocal examples from the Okçular and Aybasan valleys. Interestingly, several of these pieces are tempered with a distinctive shiny black sand, typical of the Sinop region.

Our knowledge of the Roman period (85 BC to AD 330), especially in and around the town of Cide, has improved greatly as a result of our work in 2011. We recorded several clusters of large and partly ornamented dressed stones, which probably derive from large monumental structures. A series of construction pits in the Cide coastal plain has yielded substantial quantities of Roman period pottery, suggesting a rather sizable Roman town underneath modern Cide. A Kastamonu Museum rescue excavation of two Roman cist graves also provided datable parallels for the robbed tombs we have recorded at İn Arkası and Gökçekale.

Sites dating to the Byzantine period (AD 330–1453) include three, possibly four, new Byzantine castles. In addition to the coastal site of Gideros East, we recorded two impressive inland castles. Koca Kale is a typical Byzantine castle with massive fortifications surrounding a rather narrow rock outcrop and a single small rectangular building at the back end. The best preserved castle recorded during the course of CAP is Aydos Kale (see plan right). The heavily protected site lacks the rectangular internal structure typical of some of the other castles, and may, therefore, have served a different purpose. Akça Kale is another large inland castle, whose dating, however, is unclear.

Evidence recorded in 2011 for the Beyliks/Ottoman period (AD 1453–1920) includes pipe fragments from the Cide coastal area at Kumluca and Irmak, and from the inland location of Aybasan. Ottoman grave stones were recorded in Kumluca, Cide and Gideros East. A single pillar of a stone-built bridge in the Loç valley may also date to this period, as might the kale at Akça.

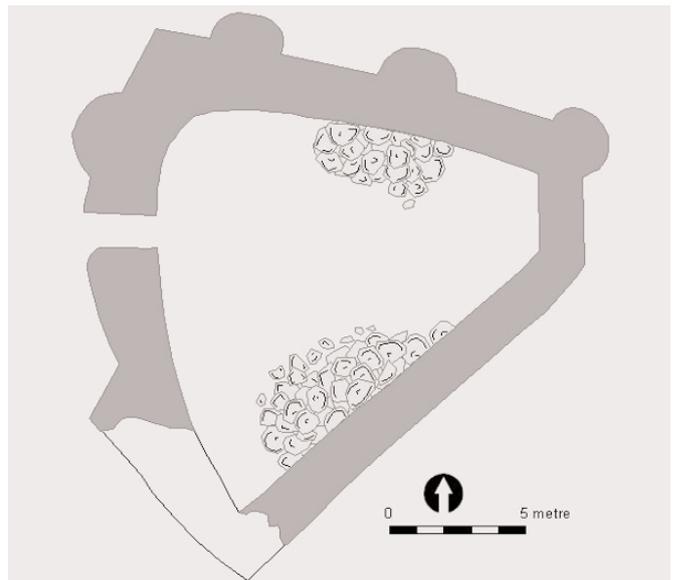
Conclusion, outlook and acknowledgements

The last season of CAP was a great success in many respects. We refined and expanded the application of our systematic survey approach to a range of different landscapes from the coast to the mountains. We were able to fill almost all the remaining gaps in the region’s culture-historical sequence and gather further evidence for the exploration of Cide’s inland and coastal/maritime connections. We were able to deepen our understanding of landscape formation processes and their impact on the region’s archaeology. Although the fieldwork component of CAP has now come to a close, we continue our research in the laboratory. Planned for the coming months are analyses of soil chemistry, pottery and obsidian provenance studies, and radiocarbon dating. An edited volume with our final results is in preparation, and in the meanwhile preliminary reports can be found in *Anatolia Antiqua* (Düring, Glatz 2010; Glatz et al. 2011) and on our project website: www.cidearchaeology.com.

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Plan of Aydos Kale