

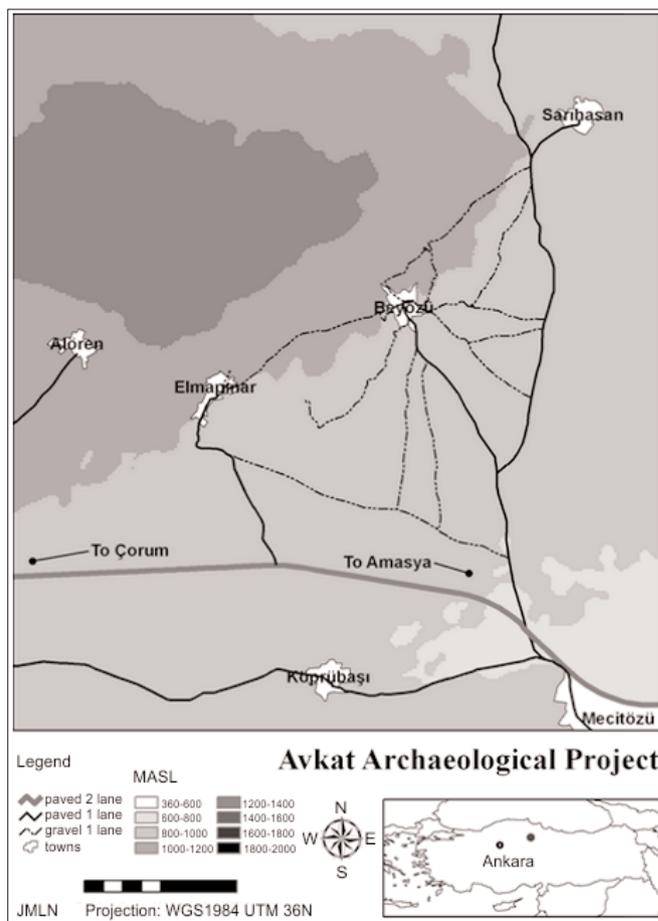
The Avkat Archaeological Project 2011

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The Avkat Archaeological Project (AAP) is a diachronic survey of the region surrounding the modern village of Beyözü (also known as Avkat and identified as ancient Euchaita) and seeks to understand the long-term changes in landscape use and socio-economic structures found in a rural Anatolian hinterland. Its goals for the first phase were to confirm the attribution of ancient Euchaita (known as a bishopric in the late Roman and Byzantine periods) to the modern village of Beyözü, to establish a broad chronology for the pre-modern occupation of the site and of adjacent pre-modern settlements, to improve upon current practices in intensive survey and to place Euchaita in its regional perspective.

As reported last year, Phase I of the Avkat Archaeological Project, the field survey, was concluded in the course of the summer of 2010 (see figure right for location). The main conclusion from the survey, and the analysis of historical texts and documentary material, is that there took place a distinct change in the material record of the village of Beyözü in the sixth century AD as a result of the changes brought about by Anastasius' granting of civic status; but that while the late Roman period (fourth to seventh century) was the best represented period in terms of architectural fragments and epigraphy, the greater density of ceramics from the following two to three centuries may be indicative of a change in the function of the settlement, with a further shift in circumstances from the middle or later ninth century onwards. On the basis of comparison with other central Anatolian settlements of the period from the sixth to the 11th century AD, it is possible that the installations on the kale tepe above the late Roman town and modern village represent at least two phases: a preliminary phase of fortification and construction, possibly of the period ca 650–680, reflecting the security needs of the local population, but with no explicit military functions and no permanent occupation; and a later phase, perhaps dating from the second half of the ninth century, reflecting a more permanent defended settlement and possibly an élite residence or farm of some sort. Until we can excavate and establish a more precise chronology, however, this remains hypothetical (for further discussion of these issues, see now Haldon, Brubaker 2011: 531–62).

While we investigate a possible excavation, the project conducted a number of activities in the summer of 2011. A two-day workshop was held at the Research Centre for Anatolian Civilisations, Koç University, Istanbul, on Friday 22nd July to Saturday 23rd July. The aim of the meeting was to present the results of the AAP work so far, and to promote discussion of the issues it has raised in respect of both the archaeology of late Roman and Byzantine Anatolia, as well as broader issues of field survey and excavation in Asia Minor.



Location of Avkat/Euchaita

The programme was organised around a number of key themes introduced by speakers whose work reflects some of the issues raised by the AAP, in particular in respect of the archaeology of late Roman and Byzantine Anatolia. Time for discussion was maximised, and participants enjoyed two extremely fruitful days of intensive discussion. The speakers and topics were as follows: John Haldon: 'Introduction – The AAP – aims and achievements'; Hugh Elton: 'The AAP – archaeology, history and survey'; Joanita Vroom: 'The Avkat ceramics – problems and perspectives'; Sharon Steadman, Gregory McMahon: 'Çadır Höyük'; Owen Doonan: 'The Sinop regional archaeological project'; Ergün Laflı: 'Early Byzantine Hadrianoupolis (Paphlagonia)'; Jim Newhard: 'Approaches to field survey: the case of the AAP'; Peter Bikoulis: 'Case-study: super-intensive survey at Avkat'; Eva Kaptijn: 'Sagalassos'; Sabine Ladstätter: 'Ephesos'; Eric Ivison: 'Interpreting Amorium (sixth to 11th century): urban development and some comparisons'; Warren Eastwood, Hakan Yiğitbaşıoğlu: 'Palaeo-environmental and related issues – prospects and possibilities'. The AAP team is extremely grateful to the Research Centre for Anatolian Civilisations, Koç University, and its Director, Dr Scott Redford, for their generous support and the excellent facilities placed at our disposal.

Although the results of the meeting will not be published, the informal discussions contributed greatly to our understanding of the situation and history of late Roman and medieval Euchaita and its territory, and will be apparent in the forthcoming volume currently in preparation, to be published by Cambridge University Press under the title *Euchaita: A Late Roman and Byzantine City in Anatolia*. One preliminary result of discussions, in the light of the evidence from comparable or other contemporaneous urban or semi-urban sites in Anatolia, seems to be that Euchaita represents a type of settlement barely recognised in the traditional settlement hierarchy of Asia Minor, and that a substantial revision of our ideas about site function and form needs to take place before we can recognise the diversity, range and functional variety of settlements in the Roman and especially the Byzantine and medieval periods.

In addition to the workshop, team members Warren Eastwood and Hakan Yiğitbaşıoğlu undertook a preliminary sounding of lake Gölünyazı (known locally as Soğuk Su), north of Çorum and in the immediate region of Avkat, in order to test its suitability for coring with a view to extracting palynological data. The results of the preliminary analysis will be known later in the year 2011–2012.

The processing and analysis of the Avkat ceramics, under the direction of Joanita Vroom, continued: the material is now being drawn and prepared for publication at Trent University (Ontario); and the development of the integrated database and GIS continues at College of Charleston, SC.

We continued also to investigate an interesting grouping of late antique column capitals. Churches in the fifth and sixth centuries in Anatolia were typically decorated with Corinthian capitals, though there were a number of other types. Our survey work recovered no Corinthian capitals from Avkat, nor were any seen in the surrounding villages. We did find



Column capital (AAP: F1465)

numerous examples of leaf capitals. These differ from the well-known Pergamene/Blattkelch type which has an upper zone of leaves and a lower zone of acanthus leaves. However, visits in 2009 and 2011 to museums at Çorum and Amasya revealed both Corinthian and leaf capitals, and the 19th century accounts of both Hamilton and Anderson record Corinthian capitals at Avkat. Travel this year to regional museums, library work in Ankara and a presentation at the Istanbul workshop were designed to test the hypothesis that these leaf capitals represented an inner Anatolian grouping from late antiquity.

As usual we are indebted to the local authorities with whom we work in Çorum province, to the staff and Director of the British Institute at Ankara, and to the staff and Director of the Research Centre for Anatolian Civilisations, Koç University, Istanbul

Bibliography

Haldon, J.F., Brubaker, L. 2011: *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, 680–850. A History*. Cambridge



Lake Gölünyazı