

Lower Göksu Archaeological Salvage Survey Project

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The landscape of Rough Cilicia is dominated by the jagged spine of the Taurus mountains, a natural barrier between the Anatolian plateau and the Mediterranean coast. The Göksu river valley is the easiest route between the coast and the plateau; it snakes its way inland from Silifke (ancient Seleucia ad Calycadnum), past Mut (ancient Claudiopolis) and up onto the plateau. The banks of the Göksu are also the only large area of easily-cultivable arable land in the region of Rough Cilicia, which is otherwise largely mountainous. The river valley is therefore of twofold significance: as a channel of communication and as the breadbasket of the immediate region. The importance of the valley through history is reflected in the richness of its archaeological record, from the spectacular ruins of the early Byzantine monastery of Alahan to the Hittite-style rock relief at Kebe.

Plans to build a hydroelectric dam at Kayraktepe (approximately 10km northwest of Silifke) placed much of this unique archaeological landscape at risk, as they involved flooding the lower part of the Göksu valley. The Lower Göksu Archaeological Salvage Survey Project (LGASSP) was established in 2013 in response to this threat, with the aim of documenting archaeological heritage in the flood zone. To date, we have undertaken three field seasons, with the generous support of the British Institute at Ankara, Bitlis Eren University and, more recently, the British Academy through the Newton International Fund.

In this article, we will primarily present the findings of the 2014 and 2015 field seasons. Please see *Heritage Turkey* 3 (2013) for the results of the 2013 season, as well as our other interim publications (Şerifoğlu et al. 2013; 2014; forthcoming). Our 2014 season was conducted between 28 October and 10 November 2014, while our 2015 season was undertaken between 29 June and 16 July 2015.

The project has twin aims. First, we hope to record as many sites as possible within the flood zone, necessitating extensive survey work. Second, we plan to learn as much as possible about two key study areas within the flood zone to gain a deeper understanding of landscape use and settlement hierarchy, necessitating intensive survey work.

Due to the large size of the flood zone and the harsh nature of much of the terrain, our extensive work has mostly involved the identification of likely sites using remote sensing methods and then visiting these locations on the ground. Prior to the 2014 season, we identified more than 50 potential sites, focusing particularly on likely locations near to perennial water sources and on caves. Unfortunately, amongst these potential sites (mostly visited during the 2014 field season), only five yielded archaeological remains (Pamuklu cave, Pamuklu 1, Pamuklu 2, Ekşilerkalesi and

Evkaçiftliği). An additional three new archaeological sites were identified during the field season through discussions with inhabitants of nearby villages (Dağcamii, Ardiçlıtepe and Göcekleritepe). In addition, further recording and evaluation was undertaken at one multi-period mound discovered by David French in 1963 (Örentepe; French 1965: 180) and another discovered by T.E. Şerifoğlu in 2006 (Şarlaktepe; Şerifoğlu 2007). Given the poor rates of discovery for new sites through remote sensing, it was decided that the primary focus for the 2015 season would be intensive work in our two key study areas.

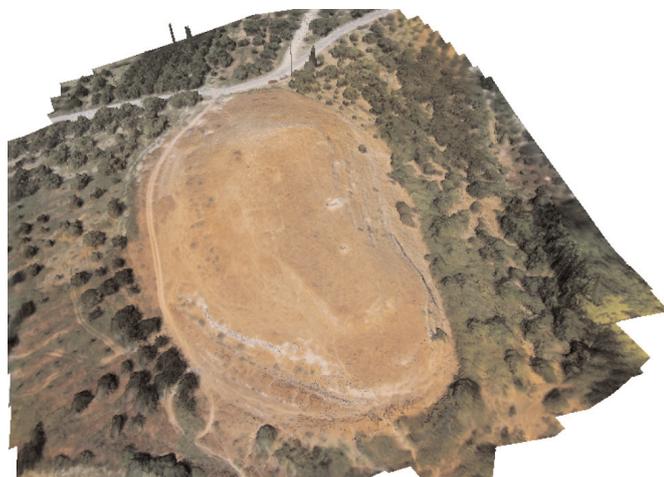
The two key study areas for intensive survey are located in two relatively flat and broad parts of the valley, which would have been the largest cultivable areas in the Lower Göksu. The more northerly of these key zones lies southwest of the modern town of Mut, while the second lies roughly halfway between Mut and Silifke, in the vicinity of the modern village of Kışla. In each of these two zones, there is a twinned pair of multi-period höyük mounds, one on each side of the river, which are all located on top of natural ridges. In the more northerly zone these are Attepe (French 1965: 180; Şerifoğlu et al. 2014: 75–76) and Görmüttepe (Mellaart 1963: 209; French 1965: 181; Şerifoğlu et al. 2014: 77), while in the more southerly zone these are Kilisetepe (Postgate, Thomas 2007) and Çingentepe (French 1965: 180; Şerifoğlu et al. 2014: 76). Of these, Attepe (located at the western side of the Göksu where the Ermenek river joins it) and Kilisetepe (located at the eastern side of the Göksu where the Kurtsuyu river joins it) appear to be the larger and more important of the mounds. In 2014, we undertook geophysical surveys (resistivity) on the western slopes of both Attepe and Çingentepe, hoping to gain some sense of structures beneath the surface. We did not conduct geophysical surveys on the other two main mounds in the key zones as magnetic and resistivity surveys have already been done on Kilisetepe as part of an earlier project (Jackson 2012; Jackson et al. 2013: 9, 16) and because Görmüttepe has undergone major agricultural terracing and so interpreting geophysical results would be highly problematic. We continued this resistivity work in 2015 at a field just near the western slope of Çingentepe, investigating a broader area around the mound. We are still in the process of combining and analysing the resistivity images from the two seasons of work, but initial results indicate the presence of rectangular structures under the surface on both mounds. We hope to combine these geophysical results with information gained in 2013 from gridded surface collection conducted at the western slope of Çingentepe.

In 2015, we also undertook intensive fieldwalking in the more southerly key zone, covering the area between Kilisetepe and Çingentepe. Although we are still processing the ceramic information we gathered from this work, we are hopeful that we will be able to identify the edges of the occupation areas around these two mounds, as well as the ‘empty’ or less densely occupied zone between them.

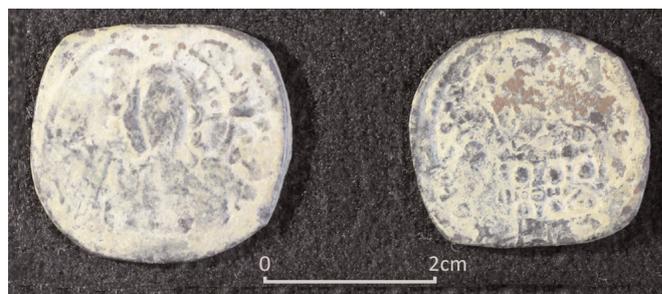
This work has led to a greatly improved understanding of the occupation history of both sites. Notably, we identified an area of Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age occupation at the eastern edge of Kilisetepe, an area of Byzantine occupation (where a coin was also found) at the western edge of a hill to the north of Kilisetepe (Çakıltepe), the remains of a late Roman fountain to the northwest of Çingentepe and a strong Hittite presence at Çingentepe was indicated by the discovery of a libation arm. Once more, we are working to combine this new information from the 2015 field season with that of previous seasons. In particular, in 2014 we undertook a detailed study of several newly-opened illegal robber trenches at Çingentepe. These included one large shaft sunk into the top of the mound and a substantial section bulldozed from its western edge. We were fortunately able to discern some potentially helpful information from the sections of these illegal excavations. We also conducted intensive surveys at and around Attepe in 2015 and this yielded further traces of Chalcolithic or Early Bronze Age occupation at this site in the form of finely-worked lithics.

Another activity undertaken in the 2015 season in the two key zones was aerial photography with the use of a photographic drone. Three-dimensional models of Çingentepe, Çakıltepe and Maltepe (a Byzantine to medieval settlement recorded in 2013) were created using the photographs taken by the drone, allowing us to gain a better understanding of the topography and the potential for landscape use (see the model of Çingentepe below).

Much work remains to be done. Towards the end of the 2015 season, we were informed by the local authorities that the construction of Kayraktepe dam may be halted because of the potential environmental damage, and that the Lower Göksu may no longer be in imminent danger of being submerged by its flood waters. The long-term prospects of the dam project remain unclear however, and so we plan to continue our work documenting the valley's archaeological heritage. We hope to make progress pursuing both of our project aims in the 2016 season, documenting more new sites



Three-dimensional model of the mound of Çingentepe



Byzantine coin, found on the lower slopes of Kilisetepe

and learning more about our key study zones. In the meantime, we are analysing and processing the information we have already gathered. We are currently building an online searchable database and project website, with interactive maps and site models.

We would like to thank the British Institute at Ankara, Bitlis Eren University and the Newton International Fund for their generous support, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism for granting us a permit and the director and staff of the Silifke Museum for all their kind help and hospitality.

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