

HABITAT & SETTLEMENT IN PREHISTORIC, HISTORIC & CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

This strategic research initiative supports research focused on assessing long-term change from prehistory to the present day. Anatolia has one of the best-defined long-term records of settlement during the Holocene period, and its study is central to a range of questions in prehistory, including the changing relationships of humans with the environment, the formation of large-scale settlements and shifts in urban-rural relationships. Developments in the Black Sea coastal region sometimes ran parallel to changes in Turkey, but followed a different course at other periods, creating interesting comparisons, parallels and alternatives. Of particular interest are mankind's attempts to live in as well as adapt to and change conditions set by the environment through time and also the effect of human beings on their natural environment and landscape.

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Excavation of the Satyros monastery, Istanbul, and its pottery

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The Satyros monastery was founded in the second half of the ninth century on the Asian coast of Bithynia, once a rural setting but today the crowded neighbourhood of Istanbul known as Küçükyalı. In pre-modern and modern cartography, the district was called Monastir (the Monastery). It is recorded that between 867 and 877, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Ignatios, son of Emperor Michael I Rangabe, built a monastery at Satyros on the coast opposite the Princes' Islands. His body was interred there in October 877. Excavation of the site, co-directed by the Istanbul Archaeological Museums and Alessandra Ricci (Koç University, Istanbul), represented a rare archaeological project in Istanbul, in that it was initiated for scientific reasons and was not a rescue exercise. During the excavations, the remains of a single-burial funerary chapel with marble revetment on its interior were exposed. The chapel abutted the church's southeastern wall, making it evident that this addition took place after construction of the church. The fact that this was the resting place of a person of status, taken together with textual evidence describing the location of the patriarch's burial and an early tenth-century illustration of the grave of Ignatios, contributes towards identifying the site with the monastery of Satyros.

The excavations produced examples of the architecture and decoration of an ecclesiastical building securely dated to the second half of the ninth century. The architectural sculptures represent a considerable investment of wealth, as well as an indication of innovative artistic creativity that precedes by several decades comparable architectural sculptures in Constantinople. The ceramics from the excavation can be

dated from the fourth to 15th centuries, from well before the foundation of the monastery to some centuries after its peak as a religious centre.

Study of the pottery, with some 3,000+ pieces catalogued so far, has produced some significant results, considerably furthering our knowledge of both the pottery in use in Constantinople and trading contacts throughout the Mediterranean Sea, Sea of Marmara and Black Sea.

There are significant quantities of Late Roman I and Globular amphoras of the seventh to ninth centuries, indicating trade with the Aegean and Italy. The tenth and 11th centuries are represented by large numbers of Günsenin I amphoras, and the 12th to 13th centuries by very large numbers of Günsenin III amphoras from the island of Euboea off the coast of Attica. But the largest quantity of an individual type of amphora is of



Assorted pottery from the excavation of the Satyros monastery.



KY/15 02.09.15
 PLATFORM AREA
 Q: 12 US: 1510
 KITCHENWARE

Late Byzantine cooking pot.

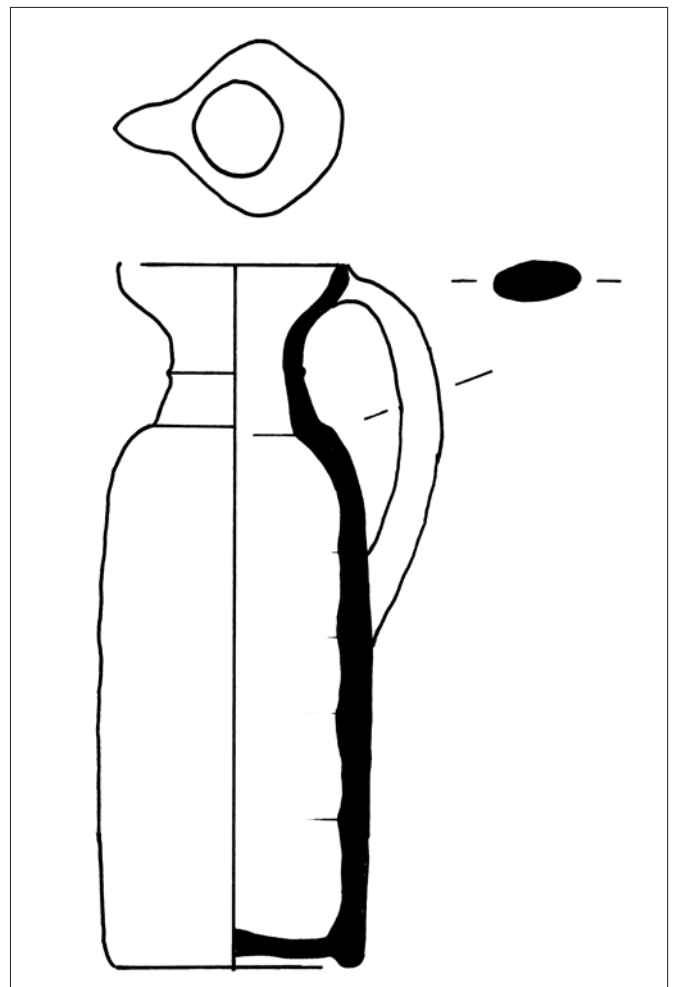
Günsenin IV. Its findspots elsewhere indicate major trade relations with the main cities on the north and west coasts of the Black Sea in the 13th and 14th centuries. There are other types of amphorae of all periods in smaller quantities.

There is an excellent range of the Constantinopolitan-produced glazed table ware known as Glazed White Ware (GGW) IV, produced from the 12th to 14th centuries but not well understood from the small amounts of it found at various sites. The GWW IV from Satyros is particularly significant because it has been found together with contemporary cooking and plain domestic wares.

A previously unknown form of unglazed jug with a distinctive cylindrical body has been identified amongst other new forms. Together with these white bodied wares are considerable numbers of late Byzantine glazed sgraffito wares.

Amphorae and pottery when properly excavated and documented contribute to a fuller understanding of Anthropocene societies. Satyros allows a glimpse into the role monasteries played in trade in the Byzantine world and in provisioning Constantinople.

In association with the excavation came the creation of the Küçükyalı ArkeoPark Project, with its own study centre. The ArkeoPark Project has promoted heritage awareness to the local community and schools. Themes include the question of ‘ownership’ of the past; the vulnerability of contested and conquered heritage, including the Byzantine built environment in contemporary Istanbul, as well as issues of land ownership; the vital relationship between urban archaeology and green spaces; and development in the metropolitan areas of Istanbul.



A late Byzantine unglazed white ware jug.