AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE GOURNIA LANDSCAPE

A Regional History of the Mirabello Bay, Crete, in Antiquity
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A Regional History of the Mirabello Bay, Crete, in Antiquity

by
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This project was conceived in 1991 by L.V. Watrous. At that time, the Mirabello Bay area had been the focus of excavation at various sites—e.g., Vasiliki, Mochlos, Kavousi, and Pseira—for a number of years. Moreover, two surveys had just been completed in the Istron and Kavousi areas. All of this work left the central part of the Mirabello Bay area, the Isthmus of Ierapetra, and the palatial site of Gournia untouched. For this reason, Watrous approached Costis Davaras, Ephor of East Crete, with the idea of undertaking a regional survey around Gournia to be followed by excavation at Gournia itself. Davaras agreed, and the three-year project began in 1992 with the general goal of providing a regional context for the site of Gournia. The area included the northern coast of Crete in the Gournia Valley and the northern half of the Isthmus of Ierapetra, ending in the valley of Episkopi (Map 1, middle area).

Archaeological survey work has been carried out in Crete for over fifty years (Gkiasta 2008). Surveys record archaeological data horizontally, that is, across the present land surface. For this reason, regional survey evidence differs fundamentally from excavation data. Excavations proceed vertically and produce immense amounts of material from one location over time. Excavation data, therefore, is particularly suited to answer questions about the subsistence, technology, exchange, social organization, and ideology of households within a single settlement, both synchronically and diachronically. Survey evidence, on the other hand, has a broader focus, and is particularly informative on the environment, population(s), and social organization of an entire region. In most cases, previous surveys have been content to document their pattern of settlement and limit their interpretation to questions answerable by survey data alone. As a consequence, the interpretations of settlement
patterns and their development remained, in these studies, rather abstract and attributed on a tenuous basis.

This study will combine both sets of evidence. Hence, this volume differs from other survey publications in two main ways. First, as this survey was the last and most central of three surveys (Hayden 2004a; Betancourt, Davaras, and Hope Simpson 2005; Haggis 2005) conducted in the Mirabello region, it will attempt to tie together the data from all three of these surveys. Second, it goes beyond the survey data to consider, at some length, the evidence from local excavations, so as to provide an in-depth and integrated picture of the regional socio-economic development. This is particularly important because previous publications of excavations and surveys have concentrated on their limited areas, and also because settlement patterns by themselves, based as they are on the broad sweep of a ceramic sequence, inevitably can mask specific events and developments within a region. This volume, therefore, is meant as a regional archaeological study of the Mirabello Bay area during antiquity.

Harriet Blitzer will publish the post-antique finds from this project.
This project was carried out with a permit from the Greek Ministry of Culture under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in cooperation with the 24th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, Hagios Nikolaos, Crete. Especially important was the support of Costis Davaras, the Ephor of East Crete, who co-directed the project during 1992. Throughout our work Metaxia Tsipopoulou and Vili Apostolakou of the 24th Ephorate gave us their official support. We would also like to thank Philip Betancourt, Barbara Hayden, and Tom Brogan for their advice and collegial help. Watrous first learned about the Minoan pottery from the region from Gerald Cadogan, the excavator at Myrtos Pyrgos near Ierapetra. Haggis also worked with the Myrtos Pyrgos material as well as with the excavation finds from Kavousi and Vronda. Kellee Barnard and Eva Sikla discussed their deposits from Mochlos with us. John Hayes helped us identify and date the Roman and later pottery from the survey. Taylor Dabney took the object photographs and Roxanne Doxan drew many of the ceramic profiles and excellent maps. We would like to thank Georgos Koinakis for the many trips to look at archaeological monuments around Pacheia Ammos and for information about the archaeological history of the region. We would also like to thank Emmanuel Koinakis for his unfailing philoxenia and support during our stay in Pacheia Ammos. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the copy-editors, Kapua Iao, Carol Leyba, and Barbara Hayden, who carefully helped in putting this manuscript together, and the anonymous reviewer for the constructive comments.

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All prehistoric dates (calibrated $^{14}$C) are based on Coleman 1992, Manning 1999, and Tomkins 2007.

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List of Abbreviations

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