

The 2009 Excavation

BYLAZORA

Republic of Macedonia



A publication of
The Texas Foundation for Archaeological and Historical Research
September 2009 -- Canyon Lake, Texas

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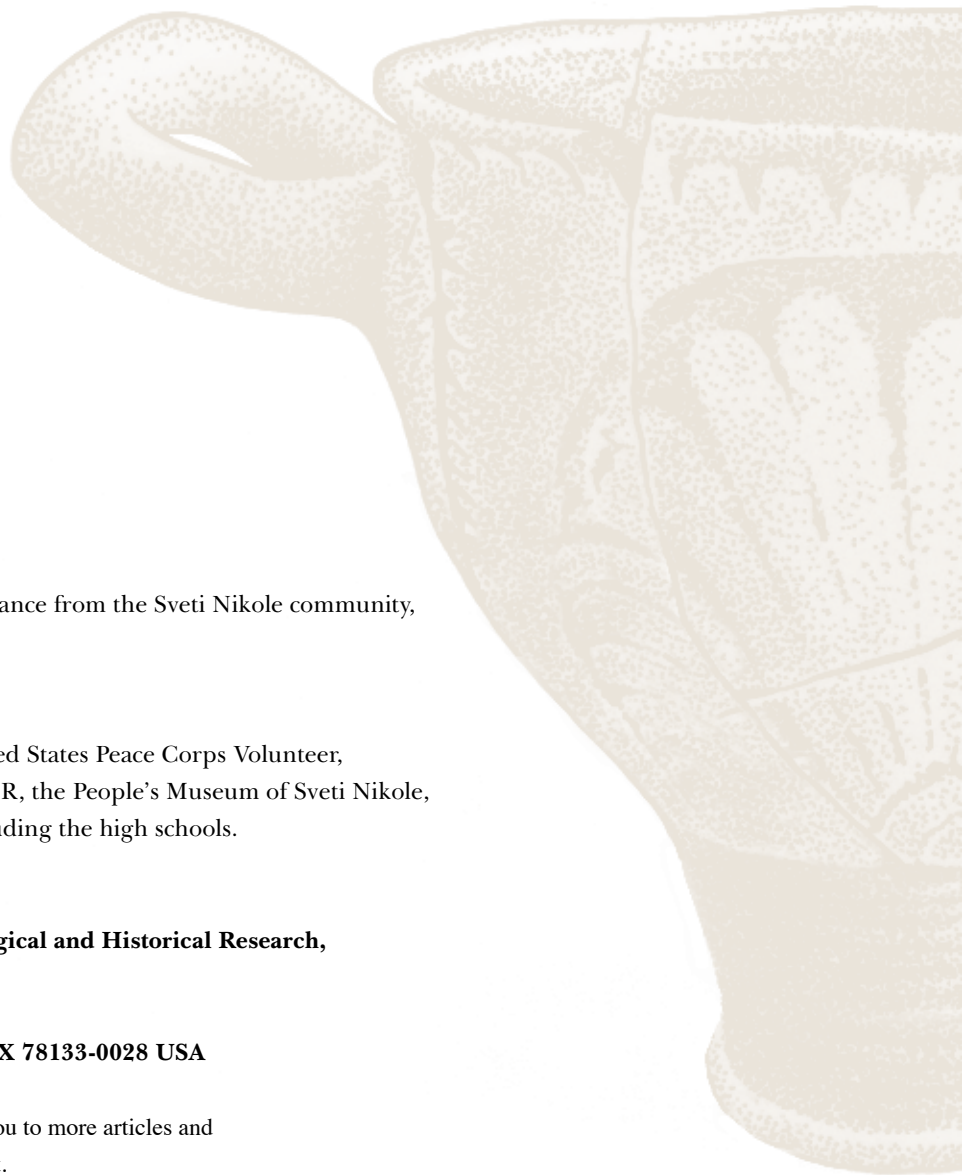
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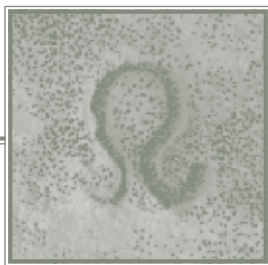
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INTRODUCTION

By Eulah Matthews and William Neidinger

In January of 2008 Mr. Boban Husenovski, an archaeologist with the Museum of Gevgelija, relayed an offer from Mr. Aleksandar Danev, Director of the People's Museum of Sveti Nikole, to Mrs. Eulah Matthews and Dr. William Neidinger of the Texas Foundation for Archaeological and Historical Research (TFAHR) to bring the TFAHR International Field School to Sveti Nikole, Republic of Macedonia. The project was to be a long-term co-operative effort in excavating the site many believe to be the legendary Paionian city of Bylazora.

The Paionians were the inhabitants of the core of ancient Macedonia (the Axios / Vardar River watershed) before the conquest of this region by the Macedonians in the sixth and fifth centuries BC (**Figure 1**). The Macedonians neither exterminated nor expelled the Paionians, but rather absorbed most of them into their kingdom. The Paionians remained a significant ethnic component of the ancient Macedonian realm. The Paionian cavalry, for example, was a formidable fighting force in the army of Philip II and Alexander the Great. Some time after the collapse of the Kingdom of Macedonia following the death of Alexander in 322 BC, the Paionians were eventually able to regain their independence. An independent Paionia existed until the second century BC, when their lands were devastated by the Celts and Dardanians; then conquered by the Macedonians (again), and then the Romans. (For a fuller discussion of Paionian history, see our 2008 publication online at <http://www.tfahr.org/public.html>.)

Ancient Greek and Latin sources mention Bylazora as the largest of the Paionian cities. For many years people associated the fabled Bylazora with the modern city of (Titov) Veles, an association based essentially upon a faulty etymology. In 1976 Dr. Ivan Mikulcic suggested that a large (20 hectares) plateau, some 440 meters above sea level, near Sveti Nikole might be a more likely site for Bylazora. Small soundings were made at the site in the 1980s and 1990s. A large scale excavation ensued with the invitation to TFAHR in 2008. The more that is unearthed, the more this site looks to be the ancient Bylazora.

For the 2008 expedition to Bylazora TFAHR sponsored 33 teachers, students, archaeologists, and volunteers from nine different countries and employed 12 workmen from



Figure 1. Map of the Balkans.

Sveti Nikole and the nearby village of Knezje. In 2009 TFAHR sponsored 25 participants from 11 countries (USA, Norway, Canada, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Spain, Poland, and the Czech Republic), and employed 12 workmen from Sveti Nikole and Knezje. This year TFAHR was also joined by members of the US Peace Corps and students from the local high school in the excavations at Bylazora.

In the 2009 season TFAHR expanded upon its earlier work on the acropolis of Bylazora, both opening new trenches for excavation and digging deeper in 2008's trenches. This enabled us not only to get a clearer picture of the layout of the acropolis, but also to venture upon a tentative chronology for this sector of the site. Our chronology hinges upon the finds from a critical stratum we refer to as the "First Squatter Period." The analysis of these finds and the rationale for dating them as they are so dated is explained in the articles by Jo-Simon Stokke, which follow the general report on the acropolis. In the 2008 report we tentatively had dated this First Squatter Period to *ca.* 400 BC. Mr. Stokke gives compelling reasons to down-date this period to *ca.* 300-275 BC. We find his arguments sufficiently persuasive to alter our initial tentative chronology.

Not only were the 2008 and 2009 TFAHR expeditions to Bylazora great archaeological successes, but they also went far in promoting a feeling of international co-operation and introducing many to the cultural heritage of the Republic of Macedonia and the legacy of ancient Paionia.

THE ACROPOLIS OF BYLAZORA

By Eulah Matthews and William Neidinger

In 2008 TFAHR and our Macedonian colleagues worked in six separate sectors on the site of Bylazora. In 2009 we decided to concentrate on Sector 3, which is a section of the acropolis of the ancient city. The reason for doing so was occasioned by the discoveries of the 2008 season: a large fortification wall, the base of a tower, and a monumental stone ramp leading up from the tower and fortification wall south to the summit of the acropolis. We are now fairly confident in describing the ramp as part of a propylon or monumental gate complex, which gave access to the acropolis from the north.

TFAHR's objectives in the 2009 season were twofold: to gain a clearer picture of the layout of the acropolis of Bylazora and to establish a tentative chronology of events in, at least, this quadrant of the acropolis. Since we have excavated less than 1600 m² of a site that may be more than 200,000 m², we do not feel that the chronology of events which transpired on this section of the acropolis would necessarily hold true for other areas of the ancient city. And although it is tempting to co-relate the evidence we can document in the field with known events chronicled by ancient Greek and Latin authors, to do so with absolute certainty at this point in our excavation would be premature.

As mentioned in the *Introduction*, our tentative chronology is based upon the dating of one particularly critical locus, L13.5-L14.6. (For a full discussion of the TFAHR Locus Number System of recording and excavation methodology, see http://www.tfahr.org/PhotoArch_Present.html.) If the finds from locus L13.5 - L14.6 can be dated to *ca.* 300-275 BC, then we have a rough date upon which we can construct the rest of our chronology.

The tentative chronology worked out by members of the TFAHR International Field School is as follows (**IN-SERT, Figure A**):

Phase 1: Pre-ramp-propylon, First Tower.

Phase 2: Ramp-propylon, Second Tower.

Phase 3: Destruction.

Phase 4: First Squatter Period.

Phase 5: Abandonment.

Phase 6: Second Squatter Period.

Phase 7: Destruction of Bylazora.



Phase 1: Pre-ramp-propylon, First Tower. A consistent feature of the successive phases on the acropolis of Bylazora was the repeated looting of stones from early structures and their re-use in later ones. The ramp-propylon complex itself served as a quarry for stones in the later phases of the history of the acropolis. Such constant quarrying removed all but the lowest courses of stones from the ramp-propylon in most instances. But near the inner threshold of the complex, even the lowest course was removed in the western part of the threshold, exposing the foundation stones of the threshold. Some of those foundation stones show a working and dressing that are unnecessary to a foundation course, suggesting that they are worked stones taken from earlier buildings. The nature and location of such buildings remain unknown at present. But some pre-ramp-propylon structures are extant.

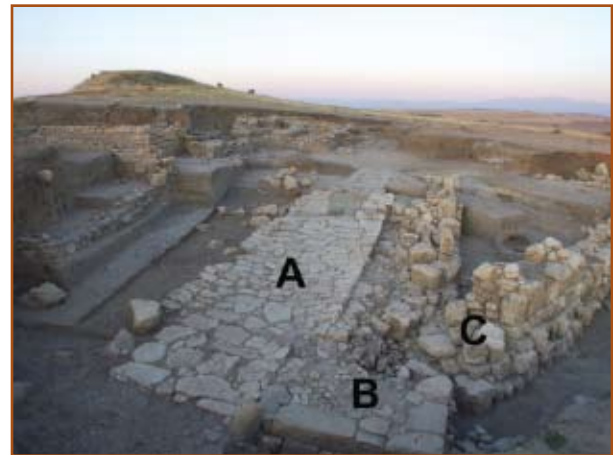


Figure 2. The Propylon; Ramp (A), Second Tower (B), First Tower (C).

The First Tower certainly pre-dates the ramp-propylon (**Figure 2**). The First Tower is a section of the acropolis defensive wall (M11.2), which has a more substantial

foundation than the other stretches of M11.2 so far uncovered, suggesting the existence of a tower at this point in the wall. We partially dismantled the ruins at the intersection of the remains of the First Tower (M11.2) and the Second Tower (N11.16) and discovered that, at the lowest levels, stones similar to those of M11.2 and the First Tower continue beneath the foundations of the Second Tower, which is constructed of smaller stones.

Of this first phase of acropolis construction there are, possibly, two other structures which we have uncovered to date. Since both were discovered in the last days of the 2009 season, we have not yet had the opportunity to excavate beneath them, so their inclusion in Phase 1 is highly speculative at present.

In squares N14 and N15 beneath the walls of a Phase 2 building, we uncovered the walls of an earlier building (**Figure 3**). A beaten earth and pebble floor was associated with this building. The walls of this early building are roughly aligned with those of later structures, hinting that the alignment of the acropolis structures may have begun at this early period.



Figure 3. Walls of Phase 1 building (A); red lines indicate rebuilding of Phase 2 building. Wine press of Phase 6 (B).

We discovered a more enigmatic structure in square I13. It is a large, irregularly shaped, terracotta surface (I13.14), whose full extent is, as yet, undetermined, as later walls (I13.8 and J13.7) are built atop it (**Figure 4 and INSERT, Figure D**). A great quantity of ash and burned material was found on top of and around the surface. Most intriguing was a burn pattern found on



Figure 4. Terracotta surface I13.14 from Phase 1, beneath buttress walls of Phase 2.

I13.14 itself. The burn was in the shape of a giant Omega (Ω). The burn line barely scarred the terracotta and at no point was there any sustained damage to the surface along the burn line. Our first thoughts were that the terracotta surface was a wine press. There are, however, a sufficient number of anomalies about the surface (no raised edges, no sump, no drain point) that render the wine press hypothesis dubious. We later thought that I13.14 might be a threshing floor. Since I13.14 was fully uncovered only on the last day of the excavation season, we were not able to expose its full extent nor excavate beneath it. Work in 2010 might give us the information necessary to identify and date our terracotta surface.

Phase 2: Ramp-propylon, Second Tower. The propylon complex consists of a number of connected elements (**INSERT, Figures B and C**). The most prominent is the approximately 13 x 4 m. stone ramp (M12.7), ascending the slope of the acropolis from northeast to southwest (**Figure 2**). As it enters through the acropolis wall it is flanked on the west by the Second Tower (N11.16), whose building occasioned the demolition of the First Tower. Presumably there was another flanking tower to the east of the ramp, but all but a few of its stones have been looted away. In the foundation of the Second Tower we found a re-used fragment of a triglyph and an ashlar block with a hoisting boss still extant; both stones were from earlier buildings that had been dismantled.



The remnants of a small altar (O12.5) were discovered alongside where the eastern tower would have been (**Figure 5**). Such an altar at an entrance gate is, of course, a regular feature of ancient city life and would explain the enormous amount of ash and animal bones found at the foot of the ramp and tower. A conical socket stone suggests that a gate closed the entrance to the ramp. The quantity of roof tiles found on the stones of the ramp (but not off to either side) may be an indication that the ramp was roofed.



Figure 5. Excavating the remains of a small destroyed altar in front of the propylon.

This covered ramp led to the next element of the propylon, the threshold (**Figure 6**). The threshold stones are higher than the ramp stones and have two interesting features. The first is a square socket hole, probably for bolting a double-door gate. The second is the noticeable signs of wear, indicating wheeled traffic.

The threshold gave entrance to the next element of the propylon complex: a narrow, rectangular room framed on the west by wall L12.10 and on the south by wall L14.10. Presumably an identical set of walls (now quarried away) framed the rectangular room on the east. Within this room the paving stones stop their ascent and are laid flat for the next seven meters, at which point they are not as wide as the ascending ramp, but that may be a matter of later quarrying operations.



Wall L12.10 runs uphill and parallel to the ramp along the ramp's entire western length. There was undoubtedly a similar wall parallel to the ramp on the east, but like the eastern flanking tower, most of its stones were later quarried away, although its existence was noted by a robber trench in one of the balks in trench M14.

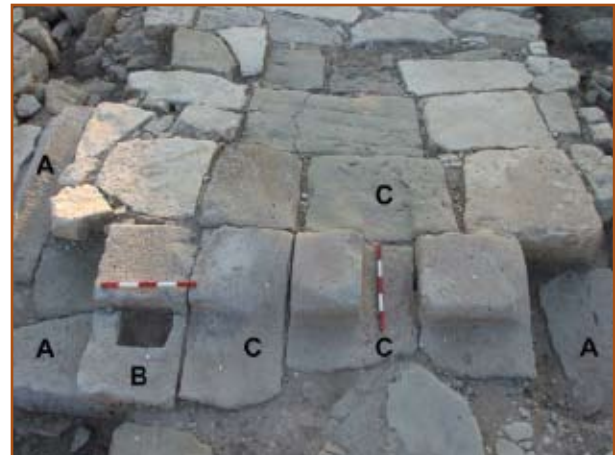


Figure 6. The threshold. Previously worked stones in the foundation (A); stone with socket (B); stones showing signs of vehicular wear (C).

This large propylon complex was certainly not only a major construction project for ancient Bylazora, but it also must have been occasioned by the construction of an even more significant edifice with which it is aligned. The building of the propylon, remember, entailed the demolition of part of the acropolis wall and the First Tower. The ramp of the propylon, moreover, enters the acropolis precinct at an odd angle, roughly 30° to the earlier acropolis wall M11.2. What would have occasioned such an oblique approach other than a wish to align the propylon with an already existing and more important structure, and perhaps one that was being rebuilt at the same time as the propylon? We will return to this point at the end of this report.

At the end of the flat stretch of pavement with the rectangular room of the propylon, the large paving stones end and give way to a long, pebble paved road (L14.8), which resumes the ascent up to the summit of the acropolis (**Figure 7**). The end of this pebble paved road has not yet been reached. At the base of the ramp (in trench O11) is a similar pebble paved road, one that was covered with the ash and animal bones from the small altar.



Figure 7. Uncovering the pebble paved road south of the propylon.

Fronting the propylon complex and higher up the hill are two buildings defined by walls N13.10 + N13.11 and N14.2 + N14.3, with a small paved alley separating them (**Figure 8**). The full extent of neither building has been revealed, but they do seem to be aligned, facing the propylon. Moreover, wall N13.10 served as a terrace wall; the southern building and alley being .50-.70 m. higher than the lower northern building. So, although the propylon ascended the acropolis at an incline, the buildings to the east of it were terraced in levels. Wall N14.2 of the upper, southern building shows signs of repeated re-buildings (**Figure 3**).

We might very cautiously add to Phase 2 a continuation of the acropolis defensive wall (M11.2), which was unearthed in 2008 in squares I12, I13, J12, and J13 (**Figure 4**). This extension of the wall has all the hallmarks of being a later addition or, perhaps, a re-building of the wall. First, it veers southwest from the direction of the earlier section of wall by about 10°. Second, the stones here are smaller than those of the earlier section. Third, whereas the courses of the earlier part of the wall were sunk into the ground, here a thick layer of sand and clay was laid down to level the area, then the stones of the wall laid directly into the sand leveling course. With such a shaky



foundation, substantial buttress walls (I13.8 and J13.7) were constructed to support the poorly built wall. The space between these walls may have served as store-

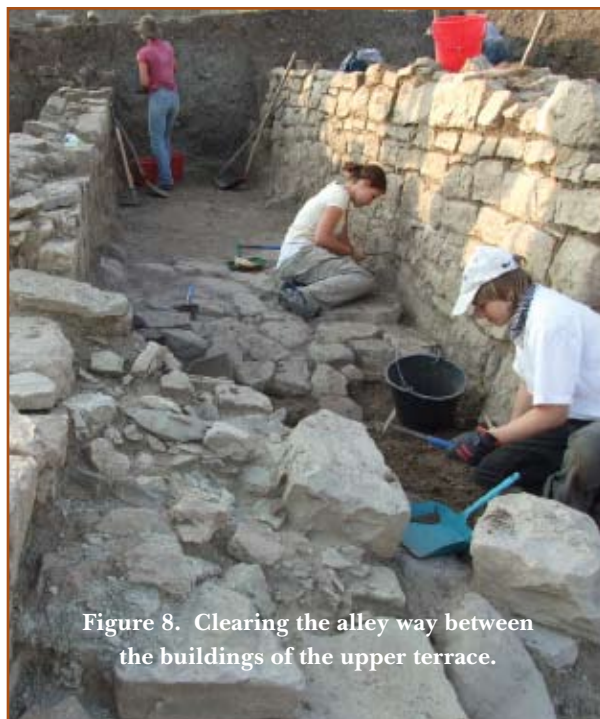


Figure 8. Clearing the alley way between the buildings of the upper terrace.

rooms. How can we date these buttress walls and the extension to the acropolis wall which they support?

The buttress walls were completely covered by the remains of the Phase 6, Second Squatter Period buildings. It was not until we removed the Phase 6 remains that the walls were uncovered. So, if they pre-date Phase 6, then they must belong somewhere between Phase 1 and Phase 5. Phase 5 is eliminated since it is a period of abandonment at the site. Phase 4 is a squatter period in which it is highly unlikely (though not utterly impossible) that squatters built the walls; most of their other structures were very flimsy. Phase 3 is a destruction period. That leaves Phase 2 as the most likely candidate, since a re-building of the acropolis wall would clearly postdate the acropolis wall of Phase 1.

A particular type of pottery associated with these walls may help us date this re-building. Fragments of Rheneia cups were found in a layer of soil above the sand leveling course of the acropolis wall. Rheneia cups are generally dated to the mid to late fifth century BC. So, we cautiously use the late fifth century as the earliest possible date for the re-building of the acropolis and buttress walls; attributing that date to the other buildings of Phase 2 is problematic. We will not be able to so confidently until after further excavation.

Phase 3: Destruction. Sometime (perhaps well) after *ca.* 400 BC the propylon complex of the acropolis of Bylazora was destroyed. Whether this destruction was part of a wider catastrophe or was merely confined to this section of the acropolis is uncertain at present. It is tempting to associate it with Philip II's conquest of Paionia in 359 BC, but there is no evidence yet uncovered to securely link the archaeological evidence with that event. A *terminus ante quem* is, however, provided by Phase 4.

Phase 4: First Squatter Period. The use of the politically incorrect term *squatter* sparked some heated debate amongst the members of the TFAHR International Field School and with our Macedonian colleagues. Despite any pejorative modern connotations, the word perfectly describes the situation on the acropolis after the destruction of Phase 3, *i.e.*, people came to inhabit areas of the city to which they probably had no title. How did we arrive at this conclusion?

A propylon, by anyone's measure, is a public structure. One can assume that in normal times when the propylon was in use, individuals were not permitted by the authorities to build houses upon a public thoroughfare. But should such a public structure fall into ruin, the authorities might not be concerned if any individuals utilized the ruins of the structure for their own purposes. Such was the case with Bylazora's propylon. After it was destroyed, people came along and built a house nestled within the ruins of the rectangular room of the propylon. They utilized propylon wall L12.10, which was still standing, but built another wall, L13.11, which extended over the paving stones of what used to be the public roadway of the propylon (**Figures 9 and 10**). This wall, built of clay, mudbricks, stones, tiles, and wattle and daub, was amazingly well preserved to a height of about 1.50 m. L13.11 divided the squatter structure into rooms, the inhabitants using the paving stones themselves as the floor of their dwelling. A significant amount of utilitarian household artifacts was discovered in this stratum: loom weights, cooking vessels, a stone mortarium, an iron pruning hook, as well as serving and drinking vessels (**Figures 11 and 12**). This is our critical locus L13.5-L14.6, which Mr. Stokke will discuss in the following articles. If the First Squatter level can be dated to *ca.* 300-275 BC, that means that the propylon had to have gone out of public use prior to that date, dating the Phase 3 destruction to sometime between 400 and 300 BC. The proximity of the finds from L13.5-L14.6 to the stones of the propylon suggests a date closer to 300 BC.



Figure 9. Wall L13.11 of the First Squatter Period, as seen in the balk at the beginning of the 2009 season.



Figure 10. Excavating wall L13.11.

The ramp itself also went out of use at about this time. Tiles from the ramp's roof lay just a few centimeters above the paving stones. Although the ramp was covered with debris, its lateral walls (L12.10 and its quarried-away eastern counterpart) remained intact. L12.10 served as one of the walls of a squatter house. Its counterpart caught the considerable debris (pottery, bones, tiles, and other refuse) ejected from squatter dwellings built further uphill. The pottery in this debris dates from the third century BC.

The debris which accumulated around the propylon's eastern lateral wall came from shoddily re-built structures on the upper terrace. In front of and attached to the Phase 2 structure (N14.2 + N14.3) on the upper terrace, a very poorly built set of walls was built, irregular courses of loosely fitting stones just piled atop one another. But within these squatter walls we found

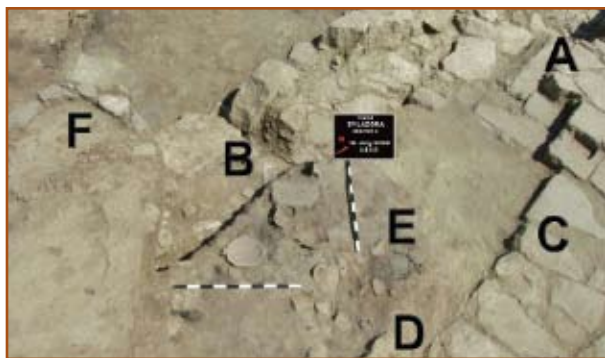


Figure 11. Locus L13.5, discovered in 2008.
A) threshold, B) wall L12.10, associated with the propylon, C) floor of the rectangular room, D) wall L13.11, E) oven of First Squatter Period, F) oven of Second Squatter Period. Approximately .60 meter separate the two ovens.



Figure 12. Locus L14.6, uncovered in 2009, is the southerly extension of Locus L13.5. As in 2008, a great quantity of domestic pottery and other artifacts was found here.



Figure 13. The triglyph and metope block is part of a Phase 4 wall, which adjoins an earlier, better constructed Phase 2 building.

a well sculpted triglyph and metope block (**Figure 13**). It is similar to the fragment found imbedded within the foundation of the Second Tower, therefore pre-dating Phase 2. Coming from the alley way and skirting the new front of this building a small drain was constructed of re-used stones, roof tiles, and rough field stones. It fed out onto what remained of the propylon.

Phase 5: Abandonment. All across this section of the acropolis a sizeable layer of nearly sterile soil accumulated atop the level of the First Squatter Period. Such sterile soil and lack of any construction leads us to believe that this area of Bylazora was abandoned (**Figure 11**).

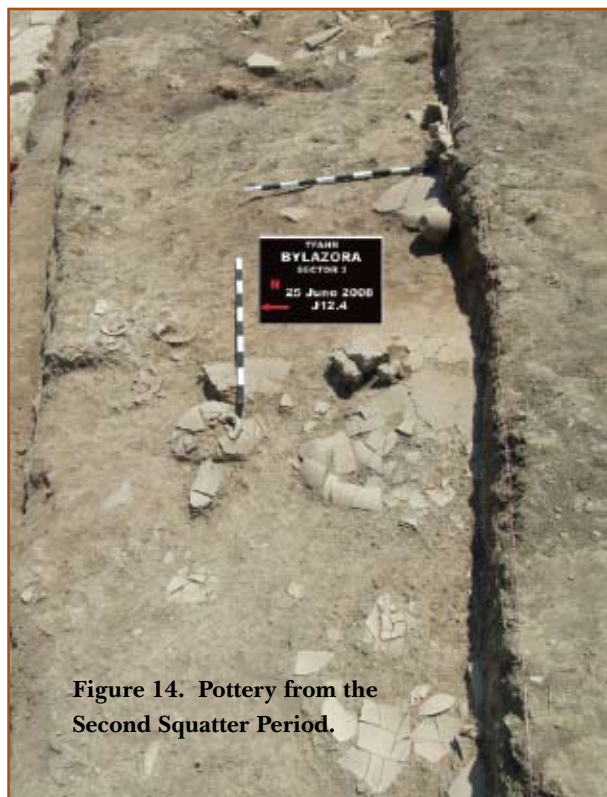


Figure 14. Pottery from the Second Squatter Period.



Figure 15. Uncovering a squatters' hearth.

Phase 6: Second Squatter Period. When people returned to inhabit this part of the acropolis, they laid down a fairly uniform .05-.10 m. thick layer of clay and/or pebbles over the ruins and debris of earlier years, covering completely some walls, like I13.8 and J13.7. But some of the walls from Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings were still standing and they were utilized (**Insert, Figure E**).

The most prominent of the still standing walls was the acropolis defensive wall M11.2. Very flimsy structures



Figure 16. Plaster floor (probably of Phase 2), with holes cut in it in Phase 6.

were built up against it. We found an abundance of roof tiles and scattered burnt mud bricks but no solid, well built walls connected to it. We know people were living here, because in locus J12.4 we discovered pithoi, a terracotta “table,” and a vast array of domestic vessels (**Figure 14**). Additionally, a number of hearths, usually described as “Bedouin ovens” or “squatters’ hearths” or “nomads’ fire pits,” were found at this level (**Figure 15**). They are simple affairs: a bed of smooth pebbles, sometimes laid atop roof tiles, into which the embers are placed; clay, often spread atop the hot stones and embers, hardens into a small cooking surface.

At the narrow, angular intersection of the acropolis wall M11.2 and the propylon wall L12.10, a fairly substantial plaster floor was laid down, probably in Phase 2 (**Figure 16**). The floor continued to be used in the Second



Figure 17. Terracotta treading floor of a wine press.

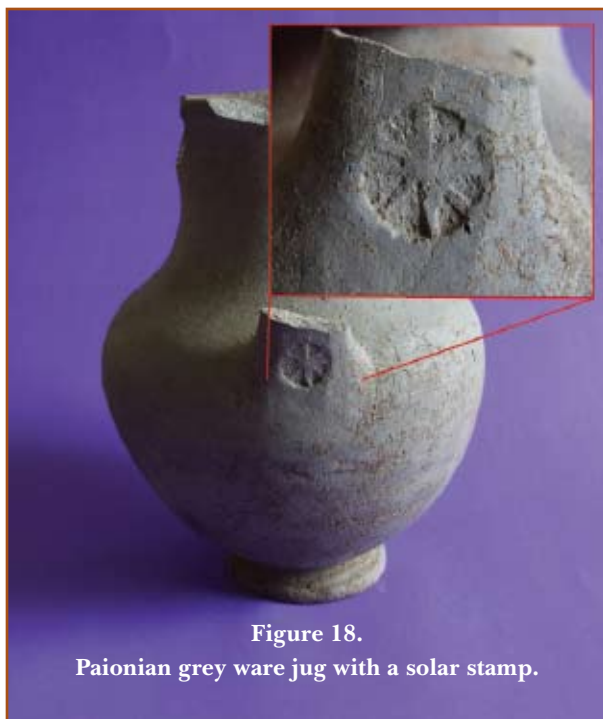


Figure 18.
Paionian grey ware jug with a solar stamp.

Squatter Period. It was, perhaps, at this time that holes were bored through the floor to hold pithoi and amphorae. A few post holes were cut into the floor, again lending credence to the hypothesis that the structures of this period were, indeed, rather insubstantial.

The structure of the upper terrace (N14.2 + N14.3) must still have been at least partially preserved. New, again poorly built walls were added to it and within it a small wine treading floor was constructed (**Figures 3 and 17**). Built of terracotta, it has raised ridges and a “spout” from which the juice could run off. No container was found, however, for the run-off. The pottery associated with the wine press and re-used structures dates to the late fourth-late third century BC, including a jug with three stamps, which appear to be solar symbols or perhaps stars (**Figure 18**).

Towards the end of the excavation season, we uncovered in squares K15, K16, K17, L15, L16, L17, M15, M16, and M17 what appears to be a very large “platform” of the Second Squatter Period (**Figure 19**). Most of the walls are only extant to a height of one course. And although the perimeter walls of the platform are well-defined and better built, the inner walls are poorly built and are not neatly aligned with the outer walls. These later walls are obviously built upon a substantial earlier structure that is aligned with wall L15.9, which skirts the pebble paved road leading up from the propylon. What



Figure 19. Large “platform” of the Second Squatter Period, uncovered in the last days of the excavation.

this earlier structure might be awaits our dismantling of the late Phase 6 walls.

In the trenches we excavated over the ramp (M12 and N12), many deposits of wattle and daub, roof tiles, and burnt clay were encountered. These belonged to Second Squatter Period dwellings that were constructed between the lateral walls of the ramp. They were a considerable height above the paving stones of the ramp, again confirming the idea of a period of abandonment. Oddly, however, although the ramp came to be built over, the pebble paved road (L14.8), which is the ramp’s extension further uphill on the acropolis, remained clear of any construction. Why, is unknown.

Phase 7: Destruction of Bylazora. Most of the pottery of the Second Squatter Period dates to the third-early second century BC. That is close to the date that the ancient authors give as the destruction of Paionian Bylazora. Wars swept over Bylazora at this time. Polybius (V:97) says that King Philip V of Macedonia “occupied” Paionia in 217 BC to defend Macedonia from the Dardaniens, the unruly northern enemies of the Paionians and Macedonians. Livy (XLII:51.5) speaks of a Paionian cavalry unit fighting alongside the Macedonians against the Romans in 171 BC. After that Macedonia and Paionia became parts of the Roman state, their independent polities gone forever and their ethnic identities submerged into a larger world. When Ptolemy writes his *Geography* in the second century AD, he mentions the land of the Paionians and enumerates their cities. Bylazora is not mentioned. It clearly has been abandoned and its ruins forgotten.

THE POTTERY OF BYLAZORA:

A Short Introduction

By Jo-Simon Stokke

The ceramic material from the first season of excavation at Bylazora yielded a good representation of what to expect in terms of different wares, groups, and types. However, due to a lack of undisturbed contexts, little could be said about the material's typology and chronology. With the second season we have gained a greater understanding of this material. What follows is a brief and general introduction to the pottery of Bylazora.

Pottery Groups. In addition to the cooking pots, storage containers, plates, bowls, and other table and coarse ware vessels that one finds on any ancient site with wheel-made pottery, four other groups of pottery from Bylazora are worth discussing in detail.

1. Paionian Grey Ware (Figure 20).

Paionian Grey Ware is by far the largest and most common group of pottery at Bylazora, where it surpasses even coarse ware. The frequency is not unique to the site, though, since the ware is found on most sites (with occupation more recent than prehistoric) from the middle and upper flow of the Vardar to the northern borders of the Republic



Figure 20. Examples of Paionian Grey Ware:
gutus (olive oil pouring vessel); kantharoid cup (drinking cup);
ichthya (fish plate).

of Macedonia, or, in short, all over Paionia. In fact, this pottery is found even farther north, in southern Serbia and Kosovo, which could indicate that it is not an exclusively Paionian ware. Southern Serbia and Kosovo are in territories traditionally Dardanian, the northern and often hostile neighbours of the Paionians (Figure 1). Even so, the pottery forms a distinctive group in terms of clay, technique, shape, and decoration, and is more common in the Paionian heartland, rarer south of Demir Kapija. A systematic, large-scale cross-cultural study of this group has still to be undertaken.

No production centres for Paionian Grey Ware have been identified, though pottery workshops have allegedly been located. All of the vessels belonging to this group are wheel-made. The clay is usually grey or more rarely brown. The surface can often have a smoothed, almost polished finish. Quite often the vessels of especially the Hellenistic period have an added slip in more or less the



Figure 21. Paionian Grey Ware sherd incised with patterns on rim and neck.



Figure 22. A miniature bronze jug with a diagonally cut spout, a shape that was imitated in Paionian Grey Ware.

same colour as the clay, or are occasionally burnished. There is not much in the way of decorative designs, other than basic geometric patterns, such as grooved or incised lines, zigzag patterns, etc. (Figure 21).

Paionian Grey Ware can be divided into two subgroups. The first subgroup continues the traditions and shapes of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Shapes from Bylazora in which this continuation is most evident are bowls with vertical handles, and jugs with diagonally cut spout (Figure 22).

The second subgroup imitates the Greek tradition. As early as the 6th century BC, the Paionians, following the trend of many non-Greek workshops in the central Balkans, adopted Greek shapes. By the late 5th and early 4th centuries, the phase of the ramp-propylon complex, the imitated shapes are restricted to the most common Greek shapes of the time: *kantharoi* of the Classical type, *skyphoi* of the Attic form, *echinoi*, *oinochoai*, and *hydriai*, as well as a range of unspecified table-ware shapes and storage vessels, which is comparable to most sites. The names used by modern scholars for Greek shapes are used for the Paionian Grey Ware imitations as well. What nomenclature the Paionians utilized is unknown. For a fuller discussion of pottery shapes, see http://www.tfahr.org/PhotoArch_Present.html.

One should not, however, be too rigid in separating the Paionian Grey Ware material into one of these two subgroups. Many vessels display a fusion of the two, applying traditional Iron Age decorative elements to Greek



Figure 23. Paionian Grey Ware *oinochoe* with nipple decoration.

shapes. A recurring example of this was the use of nipples, incised geometric designs, rouletting, and other Iron Age style decorative elements, to a trefoil *oinochoe*, a Greek Classical shape (Figure 23).

Paionian Grey Ware is a surprisingly poorly understood pottery group, and it has often been claimed that its shapes display little or no typological development. This is mostly due to a lack of sites with abundant material and proper archaeological contexts. Bylazora, however, provides such premises for a future typological study of Paionian Grey Ware. Additionally, in order to improve the chronology of Paionian Grey Ware, one should compare any typological developments to the better understood Greek typologies. Even if the chronology is not the same, it could be argued that it is possible to use the same principles of development and, more importantly, to observe if Paionian Grey Ware follows the same relative chronology as the Greek. Few, if any, sites present as good an opportunity to undertake such a study as Bylazora.

The shapes adopted by the Paionians were among the most common Greek shapes, some with a minimum of change over time. The question is whether it is viable to use Greek forms as a *terminus ante quem* or *terminus post quem* for Paionian Grey Ware. The very general changes seen in shape and decoration necessitate the study of complete, or close to complete, vessels. In light of this it is paramount to decide the chronology of Greek vessels in Paionian contexts.

2. Imported Fine-Ware.

The great majority of vessels belonging to this category are Attic Black Glaze. The most common shape among Greek imports generally found in other Paionian contexts is the *skyphos*. Next come *lekythoi*, *hydriai*, and *lekainides*. The picture at Bylazora deviates somewhat from this norm, with *kantharoi*, *echinoi*, bolsal cups and lip-cups (such as the Rheneia cup) being the most common (**Figure 24**). There are two main factors at work behind this divergence. First, Bylazora has offered contexts unlike any Paionian site excavated before. Second, there seems to be a strong presence of local and Paionian pottery production at Bylazora, and it is possible that this supplanted certain shapes that were imported at other sites.



Figure 24. Fragments of Rheneia cups.

Looking at the imported pottery assemblage as a whole, it paints a picture of stable trade relations with Athens from the mid-5th to the mid-3rd century. It is, of course, entirely possible that this situation can be altered; further exploration of the site might yield older material, for example.

With regard to chronology: first, finds made in the Athenian agora, with its well-established chronology, have been heavily relied upon for the purpose of dating. This chronology needs to be used with caution at other sites, since it is established for the contexts at the agora of Athens and no two archaeological sites are identical. In other words, the chronology of the material found at Bylazora remains highly susceptible to modification.

Second, one does not have as firm a grasp on the chronology of Greek imports found in Paionia as elsewhere. The lack of contexts to make cross-references to, the limited variety of contexts (most examples come from burials), and our failure to understand the Greek-Paionian relationship in terms other than one of core-to-periphery, all play a part.

Third, this opens the question concerning the lifespan of imported fine-ware, especially. It is a fairly straightforward matter to assess the beginning of the importation of various types simply by comparing occurrences in the archaeological record in both Greece and Paionia. For example, obviously Paionians could not have started importing Attic types before they were in production in Attic workshops. But the Paionians could have used them longer, perhaps decades or generations after the Athenians themselves had stopped making or exporting them. Unfortunately, the lack of dateable contexts makes this end-period blurry. Were the vessels in use longer in Paionia than in Greece? Was the lifespan of the vessel the same as in other non-Greek societies where Greek pottery was utilized? These are questions that need to be solved before the better understood Greek chronology can make its full contribution to the chronologies of Paionian archaeology.

If these questions are to be answered, the shortcomings outlined above must be overcome through a widening of the archaeological search to encompass Paionian settlements, a re-focusing of research to other spheres of society than the funerary, and a new approach to the archaeological evidences of Greek-Paionian relations.

3. Paionian Fine-Ware.

The Paionians attempted to imitate Greek Black Glaze with varying degrees of success. Few examples of this group were found at Bylazora. A stronger tradition among Paionian potters was matt red-painted pottery (**Figure 25**). In the late 6th or early 5th century the production of wheel-thrown buff-ware started. Most common are simple alternating reserved and red-painted bands reminiscent of Ionian Cups, but also waves and zigzag patterns are found. Designs were increasingly applied to Greek shapes. A continuation of this group is seen in fine- and plain-ware vessels of the Hellenistic period, decorated with horizontal bands or panels painted in a diluted dark brown paint (**Figure 26**).



Figure 25. Matt red-painted sherd.



Figure 26. Fine-ware sherd decorated with diluted dark brown paint.

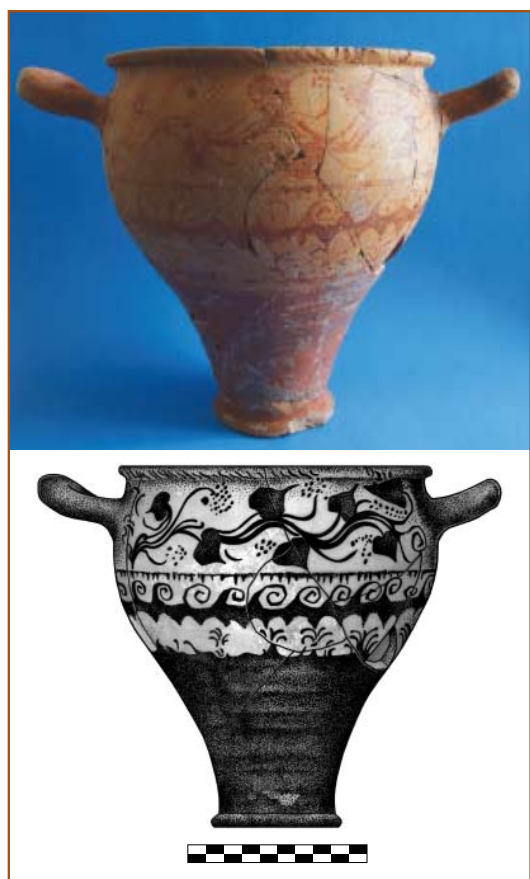


Figure 27. Painted floral *skyphos*.

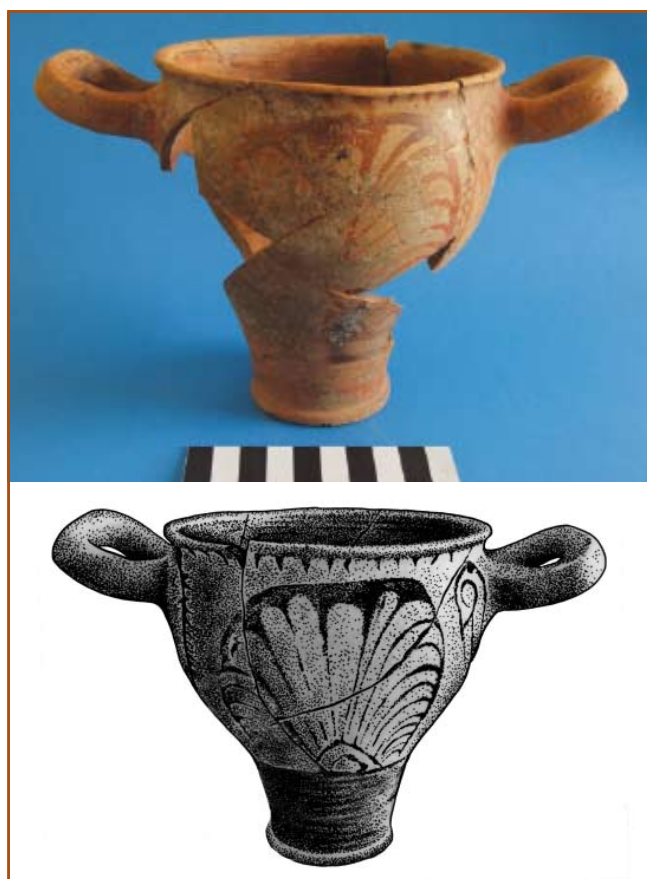


Figure 28. Painted floral *skyphos*.

A rarer type of fine-ware found at Bylazora was the red painted, floral-decorated *skyphos* (Figures 27 and 28). In the next article I shall argue that the Greek influence evident in these vessels can be used for chronologi-

cal purposes. This is not novel idea, as Greek influence on Paionian pottery is attested to again and again by the Paionians adopting Greek shapes after direct contact was established with northern Greece in the 6th century BC.

4. Loom Weights.

Though not strictly a pottery group, loom weights are considered here as part of the ceramic material. Little can be said at this stage concerning the typology and chronology of the loom weights found at Bylazora (**Figure 29**). Nonetheless, a few interesting patterns have started to appear. The ceramic weights display a limited range of forms, the most common being the conical and the pyramidal, and they are all fired grey in colour. Most interesting is perhaps that the pyramidal type quite often bears a stamp.



Figure 29. A small sample of the dozens of loomweights found in 2009.

Many different stamps were noticed, but three recur. One of the simplest stamps bears the Greek letter Kappa (**Figure 30**). What this could signify is hard to tell, although as with most stamps it is probably a potter's stamp, denoting the workshop. Another, more elaborate stamp shows a woman wearing a long dress (a Greek *peplos*?), casually stretching one arm out with the palm of her hand turned up (**Figure 31**). Could this depict the Greek goddess Athena, the patroness of weaving? The last stamp type takes the form of a star, sun, or wheel (**Figure 32**). Well made versions closely resemble the Vergina or Macedonian star. Significantly, the stamp occurs on Paionian Grey Ware vases as well (**Figure 18**). Again, this stamp most likely denotes the workshop that made the vessels, but the stamp is rarer on vessels used for serving, eating and drinking. The occurrence of such a potter's stamp on both an *oinochoe* and loom weights also might mean that these are roughly contemporary; a fact which might eventually aid us in dating those contexts that would otherwise have little dateable material.

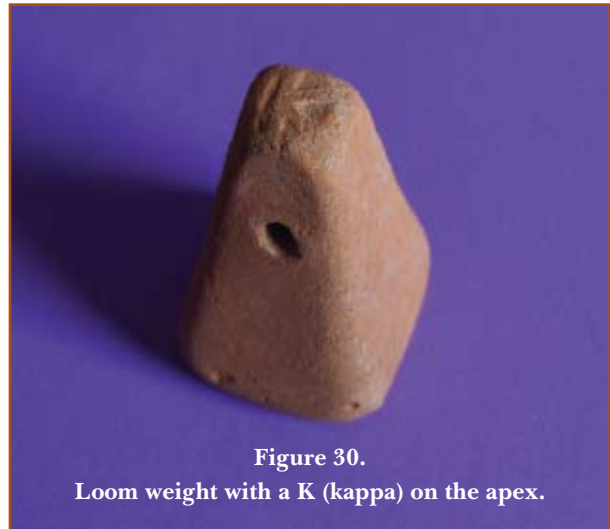


Figure 30.
Loom weight with a K (kappa) on the apex.

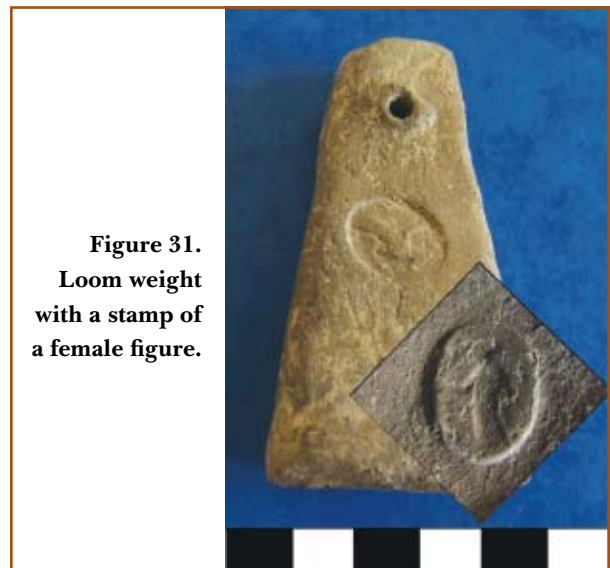


Figure 31.
Loom weight
with a stamp of
a female figure.

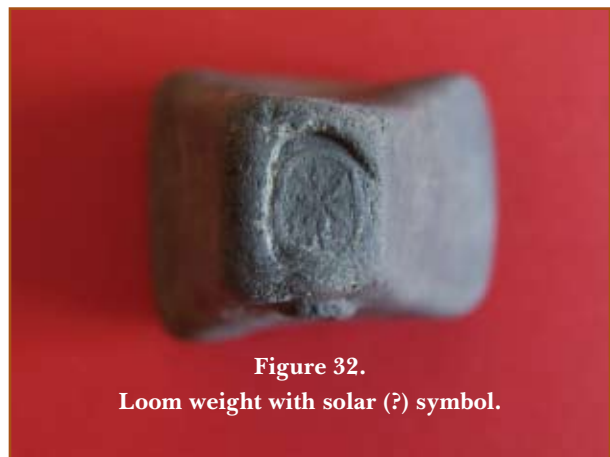
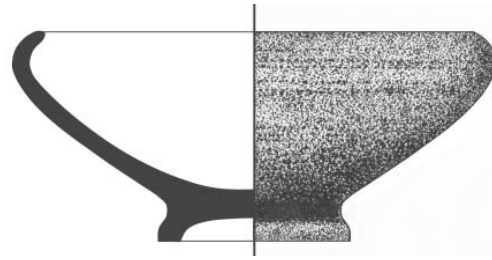


Figure 32.
Loom weight with solar (?) symbol.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF BYLAZORA: The Ceramic Evidence

By Jo-Simon Stokke



The discovery of a large, undisturbed context (loci L13.5 and L14.6) on the propylon pavement has presented us with an invaluable chronological peg to which we can relate other nearby contexts and phases in a relative chronological framework. The context in question consisted of a structure, which was built into a quarried-away part of the propylon pavement, but also covered the still in-place paving stones. The building consisted of a series of wattle and daub and mudbrick walls (one of which was L13.11, **Figures 9 and 10**), dividing the area into several spaces, of which two yielded a massive amount of pottery, including some fine-ware (**Figures 11 and 12**). It is to these fine-ware vessels I will turn in this article in an attempt to date Phase 4, the First Squatter Period.

All of the vessels described in this article (the *skyphoi*, saltcellar, and *echinoi*) are dateable fine-ware, and are selected for that very reason. The floral decorated *skyphoi* are included here, since they represent a unique Paionian, possibly Bylazoran, fine-ware, the best examples of which were found in the context dealt with here. The Attic spool saltcellar belongs to a small group of very precisely dateable shapes. The two *echinoi* are also dateable, though not as narrowly as the spool saltcellars.

The premises for the hypothesis put forward in this article to be acceptable are: that the context was undisturbed, that the deposits on either side of the mudbrick wall (L13.11) are absolutely contemporary, and that the Athenian chronology is applicable to the material from this particular site.

Floral *Skyphoi* (Figure 27).

This rare group of fine-ware vessels has a floral-pattern combined with a running wave-meander design on its body, painted in a thin, but vivid, matt red paint. Though of an even buff colour, the fabric is not quite as fine as those of any Greek *skyphoi*, which might have made them candidates for a Greek production site. The floral de-

sign is reminiscent of the ivy-and-grape decoration used in many Greek styles, including Attic West Slope Ware. The style occurs on cups, *oinochoai*, and bowls, but is best represented by its application on Paionian adaptations of the Attic Type A *Skyphos*.

The group might have its own stylistic development which might be possible to follow, if more examples eventually surface. But more importantly, the shape itself seems to have developed along the same lines as the Attic equivalent. It displays the same diagnostics sensitive to rapid changes as the Attic Type A *Skyphos*: a double curved body; an out-turned lip; triangular handle-loops; and a torus ring base (*Agora* XII: 85). No parallels to this type could be located in any of the literature available from other Paionian sites.

Initially it was thought that the Bylazoran *skyphoi* dated to the late 5th to the early 4th century (Neidinger & Matthews 2008: 18). It is highly unlikely, however, that the Paionians developed the *skyphos* into a shape it would not attain at its centre of production (Athens) until more than fifty years later; when in most other instances the Paionians follow the Greek pottery trends closely. [In support of this, one can observe that Paionian *kantharoi* follow the Greek models closely throughout the 4th and 3rd centuries. Other shapes like the trefoil *oinochoe* and *ichthyai* also develop alongside their Greek originals.]

For the purposes of dating, the Attic *skyphos* presents a problem, since its shape more or less fossilized in the late 4th century, after which point the type does not undergo changes that would make it useful for dating purposes. The Attic original went out of production and use sometime before the middle of the 3rd century (*Agora* XXIX: 94). So, it becomes problematic: how much later could the shape have been produced in Paionian workshops? And, if the development of its shape was retarded then, by how much, and how long was it in use before it was deposited?

Spool Saltcellar (Figure 33).

A relatively rare shape (Rotroff 1984: 351), the spool type saltcellar is a transitional shape between Classical and Hellenistic saltcellars, and stayed in production for only a very short time. It has a broad flaring foot and rim, of which the latter extends in a downward angle. Foot and rim are connected by a wall, concave or vertical. The rim might have grooves incised, though our specimen does not, and the vessels have a nipple underneath. Excavations at Bylazora have so far only yielded plain black glazed versions, but West Slope decorated examples have been found in the Athenian agora. Slight variations in the details of the shape can be seen within the group as a whole; nonetheless, all are contemporaneous.

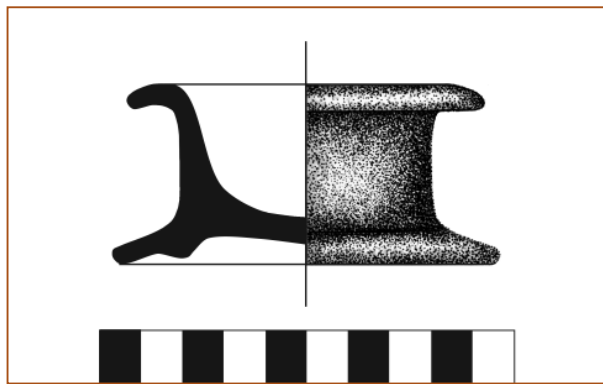


Figure 33. Profile of a spool saltcellar.

Published examples from dateable contexts come most notably from the Athenian agora, Tomb II at Vergina, and the Sciatbi necropolis in Alexandria. All of these are Attic examples, and have been dated to 325-295 (cf. Rotroff 1984: #1 and #2 respectively, *Agora XXIX*: nos. 1067-68, fig. 65).

Examples found in contexts used to date this group, at least in the Athenian agora and Vergina, have shown very little wear (Rotroff 1984: 351). This is not the case with the Bylazora saltcellar, which shows considerable wear on the resting surface. Such wear could suggest that it was kept in use longer before it was deposited.

Echinoi (Figure 34).

Two large, black glazed *echinoi* were found alongside the saltcellar. Both are of the shallow Classical type, with incurved rim, broad ring foot, and nipple underneath. The body profile, including the rim, is not useful for the purpose of dating these vessels. But the decoration, which consists of four unlinked palmettos within concentric circles of rouletting at the bottom inside of the ves-

sels, went out of style before the mid-3rd century (*Agora XXIX*: 162). The ring foot, on the other hand, with a plain resting surface only first appeared around 300 (*Agora XXIX*: 162).

Generally speaking, parallels to our examples are dated in *Agora* from the very end of the 4th century through the first quarter of the 3rd century (cf. *Agora XXIX* cat. 982, but without a grooved resting surface and with groove at the junction of body and foot, as 981). However, judging by the fabric, none of our examples is Attic, which makes our use of the chronology from the Athenian agora all the more problematic.

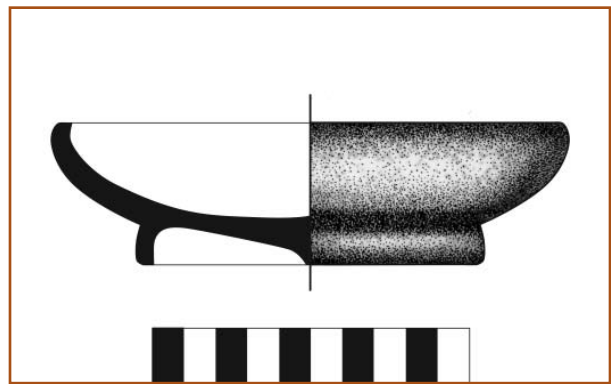


Figure 34. Profile of an *echinos*.

Chronology. To sum up the chronology of the vessels: the floral decorated *skyphoi* can not be dated more closely than to between the late 4th century to ca. 250; the spool saltcellar shape had a comparatively short production span, from between 325 and 295; and finally, the *echinoi* should, on the basis of decorative typology, be dated to ca. 300 – 275.

Thus, the chronology we are left with has at the upper end of its *terminus post quem* a date between ca. 300 (for production of the *echinoi*) and 295 (for production of the saltcellar), i.e., 300 – 295, the time when the two production periods overlap. Since an archaeological context is always dated by the latest dateable artifact within it, the *echinoi* (produced from the end of the 4th century through the first quarter of 3rd century) take precedence. The first quarter of the 3rd century is also within reasonable limits of how long after the spool saltcellar (produced between 325-295) went out of production it could have been kept in use. Within this time frame we can now also place the floral decorated *skyphoi*. This should be taken only to apply to the combination of shape + decoration,

and not just the shape itself, which, it is reasonable to assume, fossilised in much the same way as in Athens.

The structure of the First Squatter Period was abandoned sometime between 300 and 275. The wear on the *echinoi* suggests that the depositing of the pottery, and therefore the abandonment of the structure, should be placed close towards the end of this period. Though to date the context any tighter would be somewhat speculative without further material or additional sources. The fact that the pottery was deposited almost directly on top of the pavement, with little soil accumulating between the pavement and pottery, suggests that the propylon was abandoned very shortly before the First Squatter Period.

In support of this chronology, one can call on the dateable material found in other parts of the excavated area. The typology and chronology for the Classical *kantharos* is well understood in Greek contexts, as it is one of the most numerous fine-ware shapes during the late Classical and Hellenistic periods, and dated on firm ground (*Agora* XXIX: 83). Contexts most likely contemporary to the ramp and propylon have yielded numerous examples of this Attic fine-ware (**Figure 35**), along with two other spool saltcellars and a number of *echinoi* of the small Classical type with broad base. These vessels, which would be the last deposited material on floors and other paved parts of the acropolis, all point to abandonment of the area at the end of the 4th century.

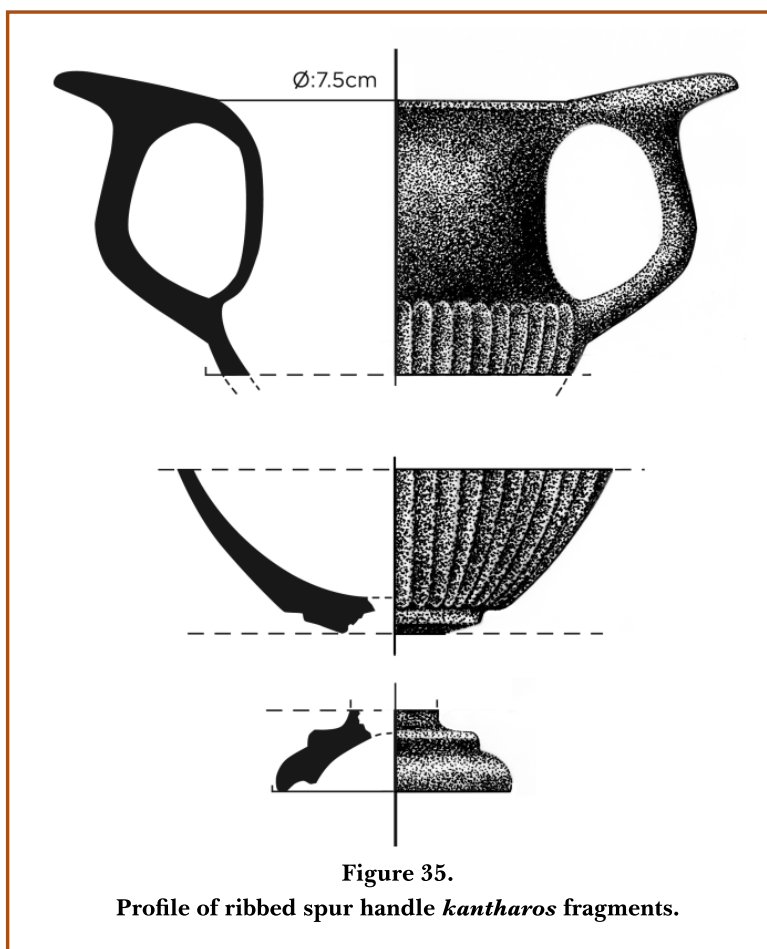


Figure 35.
Profile of ribbed spur handle *kantharos* fragments.

Finally, we can not exclude the possibility that the squatters kept fine-ware vessels as heirlooms or valued treasures, passing them on to later generations, only to re-settle in the ruins of their old city after a longer period of abandonment than we assume. This does not, however, affect the dating of the initial abandonment to the late 4th century-early 3rd century.

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POSTSCRIPT: In Search of the Temple

By William Neidinger and Eulah Matthews

It is hard digging on the acropolis of an ancient city and not to imagine that there is a temple somewhere nearby. The massive propylon complex leading into the acropolis fueled our hopes that it might lead to a temple. The discovery of the paved pebble roadway leading further uphill beyond the propylon only postponed these hopes to another season. The discovery of triglyph and metope fragments added “more fuel to the fire.” Moreover,

across the site we have been finding numerous miniature vessels and small animal figurines (**Figures 22, 36, and 37**). Such miniatures and figurines have traditionally been interpreted as either grave offerings (unlikely here on the acropolis) or children’s toys (possibly) or votive gifts left in a shrine or temple (intriguing). In any case, we shall continue to excavate in a methodical fashion, determined to discover the first Paionian temple.



Figure 36. Miniature terracotta animals.



Figure 37. Miniature *kantharos*.

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