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Excavations in Amphaxitis Republic of Macedonia

The TFAHR

Photo Archive Project

The Tell Ubivis Project:

Bringing Archaeology into the Classroom

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Introduction

The Texas Foundation for Archaeological and Historical Research (TFAHR) excavated the site of Vardarski Rid (Gevgelija, Republic of Macedonia) in 1995 and 1996 in co-operation with the Museum of Gevgelija and the Museum of Macedonia. The University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius (Skopje, Republic of Macedonia) carried on salvage operations at the site from 1999-2002. In 2006 TFAHR received an invitation from the University to explore the site of Gloska Cuka, some ten kilometers further upstream on the Vardar River (the ancient Axios River). For the 2007 season the decision was made to return to Vardarski Rid and expand previously excavated areas.

Gloska Cuka and Vardarski Rid, as well as several sites in northern Greece, lie in an area known in antiquity as Amphaxitis. We hope that excavation results from these two sites can eventually be compared with results from the Greek excavations to produce a more comprehensive picture of this important region of ancient Macedonia. This will, of course, require several more years of excavation and publication.

A new feature of the 2007 expedition to Vardarski Rid was the TFAHR International Field School, operated in conjunction with the University at Skopje. The purpose of the TFAHR International Field School was to promote a more extensive international participation in the excavation, beyond the usual staff and members of TFAHR, the University, and the Museum of Gevgelija. To this end, TFAHR posted notices on the internet and at various universities across Europe, announcing openings for the project. The result was TFAHR's First International Field School at Vardarski Rid. TFAHR provided funds to accommodate 30 teachers, students, and volunteers from the USA, Canada, France, Macedonia, Australia, Slovakia, Russia, Norway, and the Czech Republic. In addition, thirteen students and teachers from Macedonian institutions participated. TFAHR also provided transportation for the dig participants for two weekend field trips to various archaeological sites in the Republic of Macedonia, where local archaeologists explained and gave tours of the sites. Twice weekly evening lectures by archaeologists from America, the Republic of Macedonia, and Bulgaria rounded out the study program. Dig participants engaged in all aspects of the archaeological project from actual digging, to record keeping, to pottery washing and restoration.

We hope that when we return to Vardarski Rid in 2008 for TFAHR's continued co-operative excavation with the University at Skopje and the Museum of Gevgelija, TFAHR will be able to fund an even larger International Field School.

Excavating the lower eastern terrace at Vardarski Rid.

Ancient Amphaxitis

The two archaeological sites discussed in this publication, Gloska Cuka and Vardarski Rid (Republic of Macedonia), lie in the region known in antiquity as Amphaxitis, an integral part of the ancient Kingdom of Macedonia. Defining what constitutes "Macedonia" presents something of an historical and political problem. "Geographic Macedonia," an awkward, modern academic term used to describe an ethnic-administrative construct of the late Ottoman Empire, is currently divided amongst five nation-states: Albania, Serbia, Greece, the Republic of Macedonia, and Bulgaria. Nationalistic politicians and historians from all five countries repeatedly launch historical, linguistic, ethnic, and religious arguments laying claim to the name, if not the territory of this rather vague and ill-defined concept of "Geographic Macedonia." Consequently, a brief history of the boundaries of and the name "Macedonia" would be in order.

Figure 1. The limits of "Geographic Macedonia."

Herodotus (*History*, I:56) was the first ancient Greek author to mention the Macedonians. The *Makednon ethnos* (Μακεδνον εθνος), the Macedonian people, he said, were a Dorian tribe that lived in the vicinity of Mt. Pindos. Their settlement there dates to pre-1000 BC. Presumably they migrated there from the Danube region with the other Dorian Greek tribes that eventually settled southern Greece.

Isolated from their southern kinsmen, the Macedonians spoke a dialect that remained a very archaic one, even well into historical times. Other Greeks noted their peculiar pronunciations, for example, the "V" sound for the "F" sound ("Vilip" instead of "Philip"). Even Alexander III the Great (*reg*. 336-323 BC) spoke in the Macedonian dialect when he wanted his Macedonian officers, but not his Greek officers, to understand something. Ancient lexicographers, considering Macedonian to be an ancient Greek dialect, often used it to illuminate certain obscure words and passages in Homer. But beginning in the fourth century BC, Macedonian kings made a concerted attempt to introduce Attic (Athenian) Greek into their kingdom. Macedonian Greek, consequently, became something of a rustic patois, Macedonian peasants not being able to understand the Greek of the men at court, and vice versa. By the late fourth century BC, the Macedonian Greek dialect had all but disappeared, being preserved only in certain names, like Philotas or Perdikkas.

In the tenth century BC, the Macedonians began to expand their territory eastwards from Mt. Pindos, eventually establishing a capital at Aigai (Greece). There is little in the way of sure historical data about the Macedonians in this early period. A king Perdikkas I (*reg*. 7th c. BC) holds a prominent place in Macedonian folklore, but beyond a gradual, piecemeal expansion of their territory, little can be said with any certainty.

During the Persian forays into Europe in the late sixth century BC, the Macedonian king Amyntas I (*reg. ca*. 540-498 BC) submitted to the Persian shah. In 496

BC, the Macedonians were admitted to participation in the Olympic Games. The significance of this was that only Greeks could participate in the games, and now the Macedonians were officially recognized as Greeks, despite their half unintelligible dialect and "semi-barbarous" customs.

King Alexander I (*reg.* 495-454 BC) became the first Macedonian ruler to issue coins with his name and image on them. It was probably during this time as a vassal state of the Persians that the Macedonians took the advantage of further expanding their realm. They conquered the region of Amphaxitis, which, in the Macedonian dialect of the times, meant "[on] both [sides of the] Axios [River]."

As allies of the Persians, the Macedonians marched with them against the Greeks in Shah Xerxes' invasion of 480 BC (Herodotus, *History,* VIII:185.2). But sensing the change of the wheel of fortune, after the Persian defeats of 480 and 479 BC, the Macedonians allied themselves with the Greeks, and were again able to expand their realm. Alexander I added an elite infantry corps to the already formidable cavalry corps of the Macedonian army.

During the Peloponnesian War between Athens and her allies and Sparta and her allies (431-404 BC), Macedonia found herself invaded by an Athenian ally, the Thracian warlord Sitalkes, in 429 BC. Thucydides' account of the invasion (*History of the Peloponnesian War,* II:100) states that Sitalkes marched down the Vardar / Axios River, and attacked the towns of Eidomene, Gortynia, Atalanta, and Europos. Although there has been ongoing debate about the location of some of these sites, Vardarski Rid has a reasonable claim to being the town of Gortynia. Gloska Cuka may have been a small fortified lookout post between Eidomene and Gortynia.

Archelaos I (*reg.* 412-399) moved the capital from Aigai to Pella (Greece) and invited Euripides the playwright and Zeuxis the painter to the new court. Upon Archelaos' death, Macedonia slid into chaos due to civil war and dynastic intrigues. The chaos ended only when Philip II (*reg.* 360-336) ascended to the throne.

Figure 2. Philip's Macedonia.

Philip II not only stabilized the internal situation of Macedonia, but he also, having modernized the Macedonian army along Theban lines, expanded the kingdom and subjugated Greece by means of diplomacy and warfare. The Macedonian kingdom now included many non-Macedonian peoples: Illyrians, Thracians, Paeonians, Epirotes, Thessalians, Molossians, Pelagonians, and even Greek colonists from the south, who had settled in the northern Aegean. The Greek city-states reluctantly (after their defeat in 338 BC at the Battle of Chaeronea) recognized Macedonian hegemony and Philip's role as commander of Macedonian and Greek forces. Die-hards like Demosthenes of Athens, however, still harped on the Macedonians' non-Greek, semi-barbaric demeanor. Philip II is thought to have announced plans for a campaign against Persia. Whether he did or not is still disputed, but the scope of the projected campaign was probably vague to his contemporaries, as it is to us. In any case, Philip II was assassinated in 336 BC, before he could launch the enterprise.

The first task of Philip's son, Alexander III the Great (*reg*. 336-323), was to subjugate those non-Macedonians who sought to escape from the Macedonian Empire after Philip's death. After quick and vicious campaigns in the west and south, the non-Macedonians were sufficiently cowed, and Alexander was free to pursue his (his father's?) dream of a campaign against Persia. He assembled his Illyrian and Macedonian troops in Amphaxitis. The backbone of the army would be Macedonian and the Greeks would serve as support forces. Constant reinforcements would periodically be sent from Macedonia, Greece, and the subject peoples; recently conquered peoples also joined Alexander's army. But the separation of Macedonian from Greek was maintained in Alexander's army. Arrian (*fl*. 2nd c. AD), our main extant source regarding Alexander's campaigns and one who relied heavily on the account written by Alexander's Macedonian general, Ptolemy, retains Ptolemy's phraseology of "...the Macedonians and the Greeks…" when he refers to military maneuvers in which the Greeks assisted the Macedonian forces. During Alexander's absence, Macedonia was left under the regency of Antipater, one of Philip's most trusted generals.

In the aftermath of Alexander's death in Babylon in 323 BC, the Macedonian generals (and their descendants) and their armies fought interminable battles for the control of the remnants of Alexander's empire. Macedonia itself became a small player on the world stage, warring against various of the Greek city-states and less-civilized neighbors it had once ruled. The great city of Thessalonike was founded by Cassander (*reg*. 301-297) during this time. But Macedonia's interests soon came to clash with those of Rome in this area of the world. After two decisive defeats by Rome (in 197 and 168 BC), the Romans divided what was left of the old kingdom of Macedonia into four *merides* (divisions).

Figure 3. The four Roman merides.

The Macedonians were allowed limited self-rule but were forbidden economic, marital, and political contact with one another across the four *merides*. Rome intended to use the Macedonians as frontier forces against the barbarians to the north. The Macedonians found this situation to be unacceptable and rebelled in 148 BC, a rebellion brutally crushed by Rome. Macedonia was now reduced to a province ruled by a governor appointed in Rome.

After the Celtic invasions of the second and first centuries BC and the Roman civil wars of the first century BC, Macedonia, like most of the Empire, came to enjoy the benefits of the Pax Romana. The Romans constructed new towns, and the Via Egnatia was built across Macedonia, connecting Durrachium (Durres, Albania) to Lake Ohrid (Republic of Macedonia), Thessalonike (Greece), and eventually to Byzantium (Istanbul, Turkey). Christianity came early to Macedonia, with Paul in the first century AD. Both Latin and Greek speakers came to inhabit Macedonia, which lay along the great linguistic divide in the Roman Empire between the Latin speaking West and the Greek speaking East.

Figure 4. The Via Egnatia in Macedonia.

In the late fourth century AD the Balkans were subject to increasingly frequent and more devastating raids by Germanic tribes; the raids eventually morphed into full scale invasions by primarily the Visigoths and then the Ostrogoths. Macedonia, like all the Balkans, was laid waste and came to be a temporary halting ground for the Germanic peoples in their migrations. Contemporaries referred to the Balkans as "Germania." A mid-fifth century invasion by the Huns further devastated, depopulated, and de-urbanized the region.

A desolate Balkans (it would be safe to say that few "Macedonians" any longer inhabited the ancestral homeland) was left open to Slavic invasions that started in the fifth century AD. The Slavs, an Indo-European people originating in east-central Europe, often invaded the Empire in conjunction with or under the subjugation of Turkic peoples, like the Avars or Bulgars. Both of the latter groups eventually were thoroughly Slavonicized, losing their native language, religion, and customs as they intermarried with their Slavic subjects. The Slavic settlement of the Balkans was so thorough that Greek speakers could only be found in the coastal towns of the Aegean, and even these communities came to have very large Slavic minorities. Eventually Constantinople would send out missionaries to convert the various Slavic peoples, hoping to make them more amenable to the Empire. One important center of Christian missionary activity was established by Sts. Clement and Naum on the shores of Lake Ohrid (Republic of Macedonia).

Figure 5. Samuil's castle at Lake Ohrid.

The term "Macedonia" was still used, but only as a loose geographical expression to refer to the region around Thessalonike, the valley of the Vardar / Axios River (Amphaxitis), and their hinterland. Eventually a *theme* (province) of Macedonia would be established by Constantinople, but it lay far to the east of Philip's kingdom, in the region of Thrace. The old region of Philip II's Macedonia came under the control of the Bulgarians; by the ninth century the Bulgarians had become a thoroughly Slavic people, the old Bulgar aristocracy (of Turkic origins) only a dim memory. So, when speaking of the "Bulgarians" at this time, we are, in fact, speaking of a number of Slavic tribes that came under the leadership of a certain Boris (*reg.* 852-889), then Simeon (*reg.* 893-927), and then Samuil (*reg.* 976-1014). These rulers had dreams of an empire that would one day supplant Byzantium and be ruled from Constantinople. In reality,

they forged a kingdom that stretched, at one time, from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, and from the Danube almost to the Aegean. Samuil's kingdom was centered at Lake Ohrid (Republic of Macedonia), Lake Prespa, and Little Lake Prespa (Greece and the Republic of Macedonia). But these imperial dreams were dashed when the Byzantine emperor, Basil II, decisively defeated Samuil's army in 1014, a feat for which he became known as "Bulgaroctonos," that is, "the Bulgar-slayer."

After 1014 the region of Geographic Macedonia was again annexed to the Byzantine Empire, but only until the thirteenth century. Macedonia would again come under the control of the Bulgarians, Byzantines, Latin Crusaders, Serbs, who made Skopje (Republic of Macedonia) their capital, and, finally, the Ottoman Turks in the late fourteenth century. Under the Ottomans all of Geographic Macedonia was brought under one rule, as were all its inhabitants: Albanians, Slavs (mainly Serbs and Bulgarians), Greeks, Jews, Vlachs, Roma (Gypsies), Armenians, Romanians, and, of course, the Turks. Geographic Macedonia was administered by the Ottomans not as a "Province of Macedonia," but as three separate *vilayets* (the Turkish word for a major administrative unit): the Vilayet of Kosovo (Serbia), the Vilayet of Salonika (Greece), and the Vilayet of Monastir (Republic of Macedonia).

As nationalistic feelings began to surface across the Balkans in the nineteenth century, the peoples of Macedonia instigated a series of uprisings against Ottoman rule. The desire was for each people to have its own nation-state. That meant, consequently, that the various ethnic groups fought not only against the Ottomans but also against one another. The result of the uprisings, wars of independence, two Balkan Wars, and World War I was the division of Geographic Macedonia between Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. Each country undertook an ethnic cleansing of those "Macedonians" not suitable to its particular nation-state.

The Serbs, the dominant element in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, had the most difficult task in "Serbianizing" the Macedonians (whom they referred to as South Serbians) under its control. During World War II, Josef Tito offered the Macedonians autonomy in his new political creation, a federation of Yugoslavian republics, the Macedonians now finding themselves enrolled in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Greece was not amused by the hijacking of a name that it considered to be part of its historical heritage, and Bulgaria was equally unamused by Tito's short-lived attempts to gather all residents of former Geographic Macedonia under his wing.

As Yugoslavia began to break up in the late 1980s, a resurgent Macedonian nationalism began to grow in Yugoslavian Macedonia and an equally virulent anti-Slavophone Macedonianism sprouted up in Greece. In 1991, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia proclaimed its independence. In 1993 it was admitted into the United Nations under the temporary name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Although the United States has recognized the country as the Republic of Macedonia, and most people refer to the country simply as Macedonia, the Greek government, though not necessarily all its people, still remains intransigent over the name issue.

The Amphaxitis sites where TFAHR has excavated with the University at Skopje and the Museum of Gevgelija - Gloska Cuka and Vardarski Rid - are in the Republic of Macedonia.

The 2006 Excavation at Gloska Cuka

Gloska Cuka is a small saddle-shaped hill (See Figure 6), some 120 meters above sea level, on the banks of the Vardar River, about 10 kilometers upstream from Vardarski Rid (Gevgelija, Republic of Macedonia). Archaeologists from TFAHR and the University at Skopje visited the site in 1994, with the intention of assessing it for possible excavation. At the time, the logistics were such that work at the site proved impossible, due to its remote location. Between 1994 and 2006, roads were constructed to the nearby village of Grciste and paths were cut to operate the irrigation works for the fields near the site. This made Gloska Cuka more accessible to archaeologists, and grave robbers. Villagers reported the activity of grave robbers to the authorities, who urged that work begin at the site quickly.

Figure 6. Gloska Cuka.

In 2006 a small group from TFAHR and the University at Skopje arrived to begin excavation of the site. One group from the University began excavations at the foot of Gloska Cuka and another group joined TFAHR at the acropolis; TFAHR excavated at the southwestern edge of the acropolis and our Macedonian colleagues, the northeastern edge (See Figure 7). This article discusses TFAHR's excavations; the work of our colleagues will appear in later publications.

Figure 7. Working on the southwestern edge of the acropolis at Gloska Cuka, 2006.

The first task, preliminary to any actual digging, was to clear brush and cut steps into the steep eastern hillside, so we could carry our equipment up every morning. In working our way up to the acropolis, we noticed projecting through the topsoil numerous walls, some of which were quite thick. These walls may have been a series of defensive ring walls around the settlement at Gloska Cuka.

Our first view of the acropolis confirmed our worst suspicions; the site had, indeed, been badly damaged by grave robbers. In one of the clearings on the acropolis, grave robbers had dug large pits in an area of about 30 square meters. Since the grave robbers left many of the walls they hit intact and dug around them, TFAHR chose this area to excavate, to see what could be salvaged from the clandestine digging activities.

It became clear rather quickly how the grave robbers operated. They would dig a large hole at one point down to a depth at which digging became difficult, due to walls, heavy debris, etc. Then they would begin a pit adjacent

to the first, throwing dirt from the second pit into the first. This process continued for five pits. Conveniently for us, the grave robbers smoked furiously while they worked, so we were always able to tell when we were in disturbed soil by the abundance of cigarette butts mixed in with ancient material.

In the section excavated by TFAHR, four distinct building phases were discerned (See Figure 8). The earliest phase was dated by pottery finds to the late fourth century BC. (It should be noted, however, that we did not reach bedrock in this area, so earlier phases may well lie below.) Due to extensive grave robber damage and the building of later walls, little can be said about wall A8.14.

In the second phase, tentatively dated to the third century BC, two long walls were built roughly following the curvature of the hilltop. The walls are thin, less than one meter thick, so they probably were not the outer walls of the acropolis fortifications; they may be some sort of inner casemate walls.

Phase III (second century BC) appears to be a reinforcement of the basic structures of Phase II, or perhaps additional rooms added on to the Phase II buildings. A thick layer of deliberate fill material found in squares A8 and B8, separating Phase II from Phase III walls, suggests a partial destruction of Phase II structures before those of Phase III were built. Unfortunately, the grave robbers dug through the various floor levels that would have given us a better idea of the relationship of the Phase II and III walls.

The Phase IV walls (second half of the second centu-

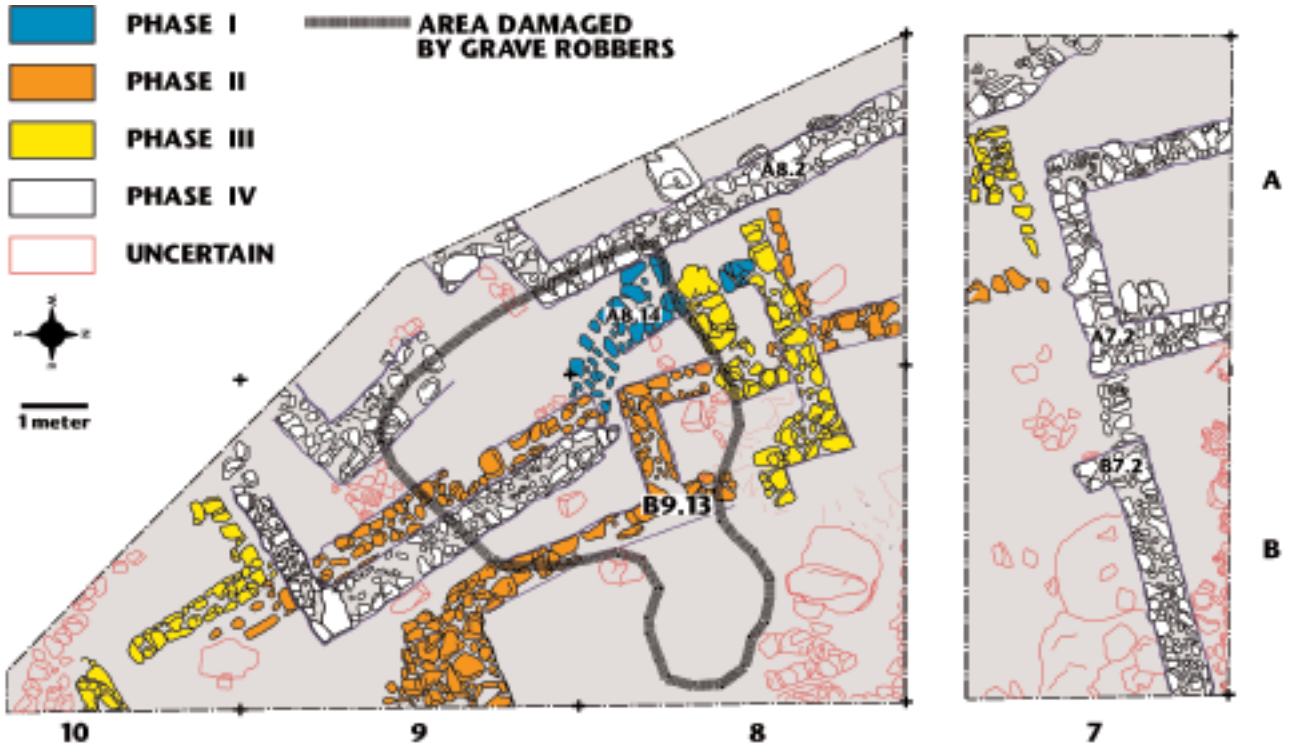


Figure 8. Excavations on the acropolis of Gloska Cuka.

ry BC) were added after an obvious destruction of the Phase III buildings. Although still following the basic curvature of the hilltop, as did the Phase II and III buildings, the Phase IV walls were built atop those of Phase III and did not incorporate the Phase III walls into their structure, as Phase III had incorporated those of Phase II (See Figure 9).

Figure 9. Wall B9.2 (Phase IV) resting atop wall B9.18 (Phase III).

An extensive fill extending across squares B8, B9 and B10, and abutting wall B9.2, suggests a deliberate raising of the habitation level on this side of the acropolis. A threshold between A7.2 and B7.2 is the only certain entrance into a defined building, but the present limited extent of the excavations prevents us from establishing the exact layout and function of the various rooms.

Tentatively, we are calling the settlement at Gloska Cuka a mid-sized military outpost between Eidomene and Gortynia and overlooking the Vardar / Axios River. Not only was the river itself an important avenue of communication and transportation, but, at least beginning in the last few centuries BC, a land route followed the river upstream. An outpost between two large towns that guarded both the river and land channels of communication and transportation would make eminent sense. It is, of course, at the present stage of excavations, impossible to say whether the settlement served this purpose from classical to Roman times.

The small finds, coins, and pottery all point to a late second - early first century BC date for Phase IV of the settlement (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Roman denarius of L. Axsius L. F. Naso. Minted in Rome, 71 BC. Obverse: Mars. Reverse: Diana in chariot drawn by stags.

From this latest stratum we also uncovered a guttus (Figure 11), an ichthya or fish plate (Figure 12), several sherds of mold-made pottery (Figure 13), some two dozen loomweights, various terracotta appliqué pieces (Figure 14), and a number of terracotta heads of gods and goddesses (Figures 15-20). Several items looked amazingly similar to items discovered at Vardarski Rid in 1995 and 1996 (Figure 21). A number of metal objects were discovered: a pair of tweezers (Figure 22), spear heads (Figure 23), spurs (Figure 24), an animal knuckle wrapped in a thin band of bronze (Figure 25), and a ring. Of particular interest was a small (0.15 m.) terracotta "plaque" with five appendages, which looked like an animal's paw; a small circular depression is set in the center of one side (Figure 26). The function of this piece remains unknown.

Figure 11. A guttus, a vessel used to pour olive oil into an oil lamp.

Figure 15. Veiled female figurine.

Figure 12. An ichthya (fish plate).

Figure 16. Goddess with a floral crown.

Figure 17. Female figure with veiled headpiece.

Figure 13. Mold-made pottery sherd with image of soldiers.

Figure 14. Terracotta applique of a helmeted Athena with her shield.

Figure 18. Female with polos hat and veil.

Figure 19. Attis with a Phrygian cap.

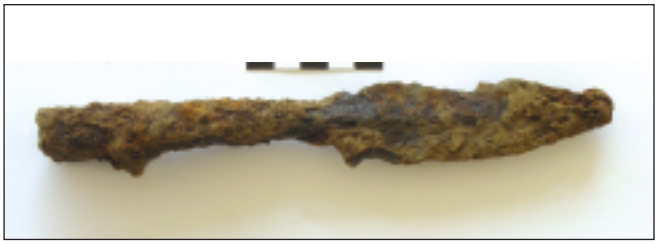


Figure 23. Iron spear point.

Figure 24. Bronze spur.

Figure 20. Unveiled young girl.

Figure 25. Animal knuckle wrapped in bronze band.

Figure 21. Terracotta lion paw (Gloska Cuka) and bronze lion paw (Vardarski Rid).

Figure 22. Bronze tweezers.

Figure 26.
Unidentified terracotta piece.

The 2007 Excavation at Vardarski Rid

In June and July of 2007 members of TFAHR, the University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, and the Museum of Gevgelija resumed archaeological excavations on the eastern terrace of Vardarski Rid. This terrace was first explored in 1999 when salvage operations were conducted as a new highway was built connecting Greece and the Republic of Macedonia (See Figure 27).

Figure 27. The new highway running alongside the eastern terrace of Vardarski Rid.

Although a good section of the salvage excavations was sacrificed to the new highway, enough ruins remained to form a respectable area for eventual restoration. It was decided to expand excavations to uncover more remains of the Hellenistic town for restoration. The immediate chore at hand was to hire a bulldozer to remove several large concrete slabs and driveways that were the remains of an old campground built there in the 1960s (See Figure 28).

Once the slabs were removed, work was, at first, concentrated on the lower eastern terrace, on buildings immediately beneath the slabs and surrounding a small open square, discovered in past excavations. A number of second century BC houses and a large walled drain running downhill between two houses were discovered (See Figure 29). Our Macedonian colleagues and some members of the TFAHR International Field School worked the lower eastern terrace; the results of their excavations will appear in a later publication. The majority of the TFAHR group moved uphill to the upper eastern terrace.

Figure 28. Removing the modern concrete slabs over the ancient houses.

Figure 29. Walled drain running between two houses.

The first excavations on the upper eastern terrace were two soundings (ETS 1 and ETS 2, about 3 x 35 m. each). They were made in the semi-circular hollow of the hillside, a hollow which many had believed looked like the remains of an overgrown theater. This, however, was not the case. No evidence of seating or even evidence of the substructure for seating was unearthed. Neither did we discover any cuttings in the bedrock that might have sufficed for a primitive seating arrangement. In trench ETS 1, parts of five large pits cut into the bedrock were unearthed, as well as a number of postholes also cut into the bedrock (See Figure 30). Due to the narrowness of ETS 1, it was impossible to ascertain the significance and relationship of the postholes and the pits. But in ETS 1.5, some mudbrick, two horse jaws, pottery fragments, some wattle and daub, and part of a Kybele figurine were found. The nature of the pit, again, is not clear.

Figure 30.
Eastern Terrace
Sounding 1.

In the second sounding, ETS 2, more interesting results were forthcoming. Two well constructed walls, two discernable floor surfaces, and a number of whole but fractured vessels on the floors were uncovered (See Figure 31).

Figure 31. Sounding ETS 2.

A large area relatively clear of trees and skirting what remained of the old campground's concrete slabs gave us the opportunity to (almost) connect the excavations of the lower eastern terrace and the two soundings of the upper eastern terrace. By the end of the excavation season, an area of 250 square meters was cleared. The main feature of the area cleared was a large house, which, due to the large number of pithoi (storage vessels) contained therein, we began to informally refer to as "The House of the Pithoi." (See plan, pp.16-17). As our digging progressed, it became clear that at least one of the floors and one of the walls in ETS 2 were parts of the House of the Pithoi. We are fairly sure that, even by the end of the season, we had not uncovered the full extent of the House of the Pithoi. We assigned letters to the various rooms of the House of the Pithoi in their order of discovery.

The only certain exterior wall of the House of the Pithoi is HI 6.8, which closes Rooms F, D, and G; it is not certain, however, that Room G is a part of the house. If Room G is a part of the House of the Pithoi, then wall HI 6.8 may connect further up hill with wall ETS 2.5, making the house a very large house, indeed. The large open space to the west of wall HI 6.8 is most certainly a street (See Figure 32), with possibly a walled drain on the western side; limestone slabs similar to the drain D7D8.12 on the lower eastern terrace were found on the last day of excavation along wall HI 5.8.

Figure 32. Room D to left of wall HI 6.8 and a rooftile fall into street, to the right of the wall.

Room D (See Figure 33) has the remains of two stone bases for pillars that undoubtedly helped support a tiled roof. In addition, the remains of a terracotta pipe were discovered beneath the beaten earth floor of the room. The pipe ran under wall HI 6.8 and presumably ran the water off into the street. But all this awaits confirmation with future excavation.

Figure 33. Room D; pipe exposed after excavating through floor level.

The eponymous Room A, the first room uncovered, contains the remains of six pithoi and amphorai (See Figure 34).

Figure 34. Excavating the pithoi in Room A.

One pithos rests in the remains of a small pottery kiln, propped between the kiln's core and back wall. This Room A was probably a partially open-air section of the house; several postholes cut into the bedrock mark the spots where poles for a light roofing (thatch?) covered the area. Few terracotta rooftiles were found in the debris of Room A. The existence of the kiln means that prior to being a storage area for pithoi, Room A was probably an open-air ceramics work station. When the kiln went out of use, its remains served as a pithos prop, and then other large pithoi were dug down into the ground beside it (See Figure 35).

Figure 35. Room A; note pithos resting in ruined kiln, lower right.

The relationship of the walls in square H8 to Room A is uncertain. In Room B additional pithoi and amphora fragments, as well as an iron key, were discovered. Likewise a key and nails were found in Room E (See Figure 36).

Figure 36. Uncovering a key and nails, Room E.

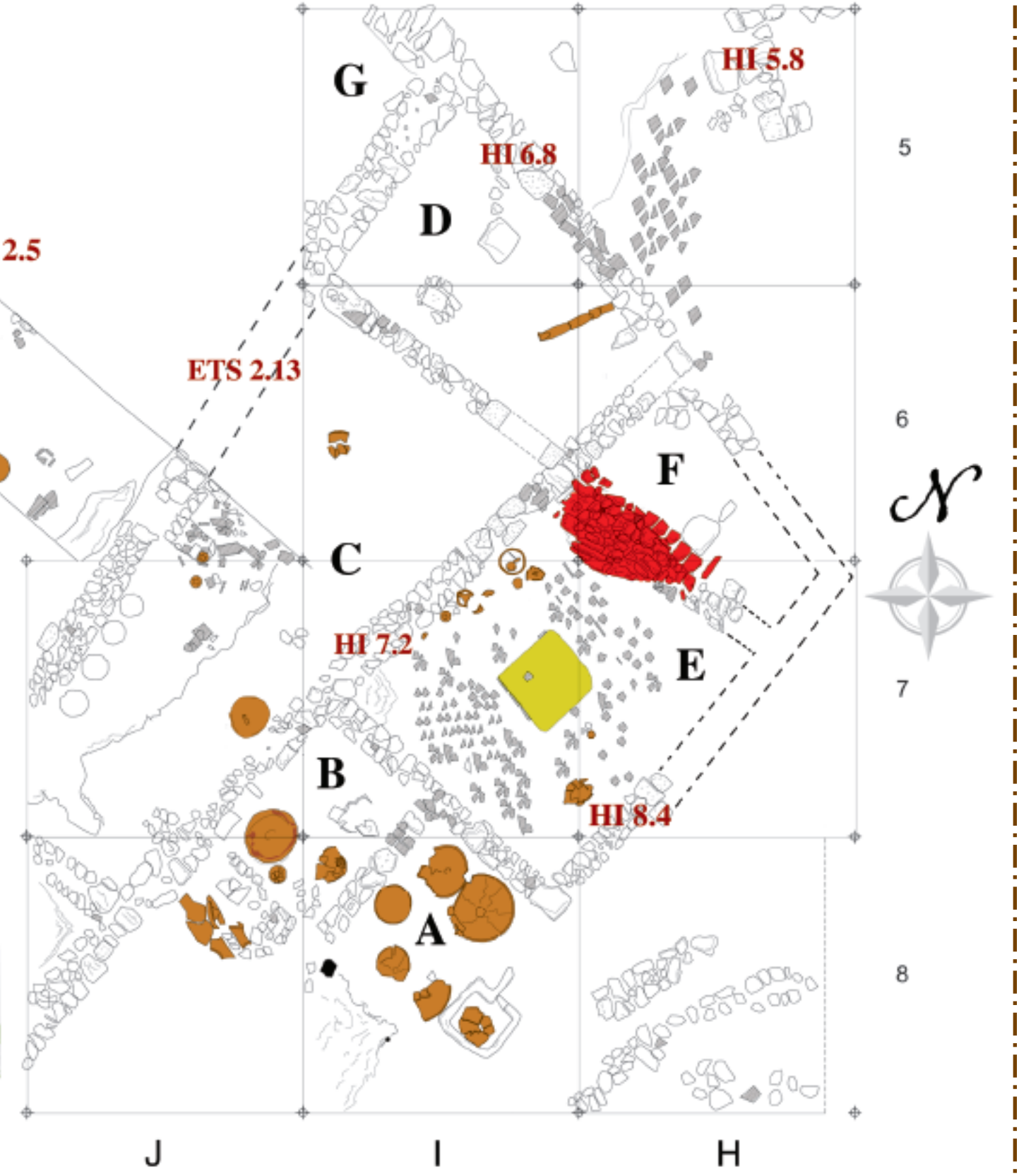
Upper Eastern Terrace

Pit
Posthole
Rooftiles
Pottery and terracotta
Raised earth platform
Mud bricks

0 5 m.

ETS 1

Square letter designations have been changed to Latin characters for the benefit of our English speaking readers.


G
HI 5.8
HI 6.8
D
2.5
ETS 2.13
F
C
HI 7.2
E
B
HI 8.4
A
5
6
7
8
J
I
H
N

The nature of Room C is uncertain. It is bounded by two long walls, HI 7.2 and ETS 2.13, but due to the fact that both walls rest on bedrock, which is very close to the surface, the remains of internal dividing walls (if any) are sparse. Four circular cuts into the bedrock mark spots where more mid-sized pithoi rested (See Figure 37). A large flat terracotta basin and a cache of 47 loom-weights were also found in Room C.

Figure 37. Circular depressions in bedrock.

Room E seems to have been hypaethral. Roughly in the center is a raised earthen platform (partially bounded on two sides by fragments of upright rooftiles) upon which almost no rooftiles were found; a thick rooftile fall surrounded the platform on three sides (See Figure 38).

Figure 38. Room E; amphora to left, tile fall surrounding raised earth platform in center.

What was the purpose of this raised earth platform? There are three possibilities that suggest themselves. First, the platform was a hearth and the hypaethral section of the room served as a primitive atrium. Militating against this theory, however, is the fact that absolutely no signs of burning appeared on the platform. Second, the platform was part of an impluvium structure to capture rainwater from the roof. But a small cross section dug through the platform revealed that bedrock lay almost immediately beneath the platform, and that there were no water channeling or saving devices. Third, the platform, which lay open to the sky, served as a base for some sort of shrine or even statue of a deity that required exposure to the heavens. But no remains of a shrine or statue were discovered. The function of the central platform remains elusive.

Beneath the heavy tile fall in Room E a great many partially damaged vessels were found. Close to the northwest corner of the room a small portable terracotta oven was discovered (See Figure 39). Within the oven we found a small pot and a large circular metal hoop with a spike. The metal object is thought to be part of the frame of a torch.

Figure 39. Terracotta oven with jug and a circular iron object thought to be a torch brace.

Atop the wall separating Rooms E and F was a mass of well fired mudbricks that appears to have collapsed in a most peculiar fashion. At first it seemed that the mudbricks formed the separating wall between the rooms. But upon closer inspection, it became obvious that the actual wall lay beneath and to the east of the mass of mudbricks (See Figure 40).

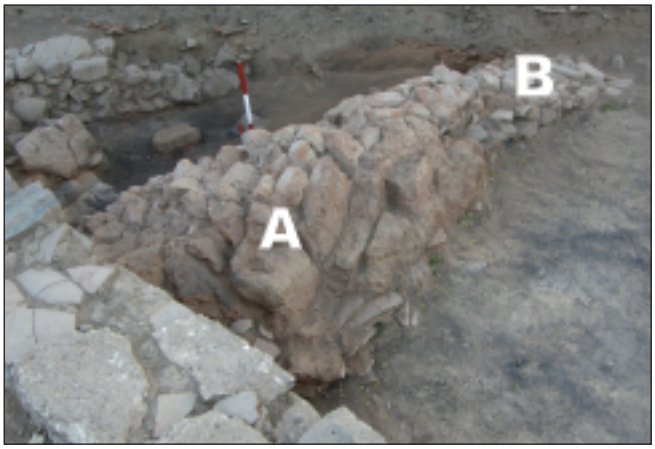


Figure 40. Collapsed pile of mudbrick (A) resting over remains of wall (B).

We postulate the following scenario for the peculiar nature of the collapse. The well fired mudbricks were neatly stacked up and leaning against the wall that separated the two rooms. This separating wall was probably made of poor quality, poorly fired (or perhaps not even fired) mudbrick, like most of the walls of the houses in the town. When the House of the Pithoi was destroyed, the separating wall disintegrated and the mass of well fired mudbrick fell over the remains of the wall against which it had been leaning. Beneath the mass of mudbrick and walls of Room F a thick layer of burnt material and the sparse remains of a small kiln were discovered. No dateable material was found in this stratum (See Figure 41).

Figure 41. Ash layer beneath pile of mudbricks.

The coins and pottery found in the last destruction stratum of the House of the Pithoi date the building's final phase to the second century BC. Especially relevant to the dating is an Italian amphora handle with a stamp (HARM…), examples of which have been found before at Vardarski Rid. The amphora is dated to *ca.* 100 BC. This section may have been destroyed during the barbarian invasions or the battles of the Roman civil wars of the second century BC.

Small Finds from Vardarski Rid

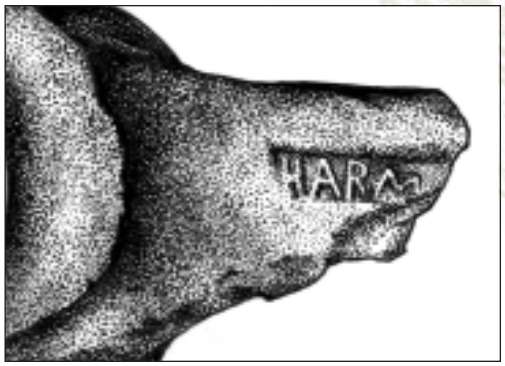


Figure 42. Amphora handle.

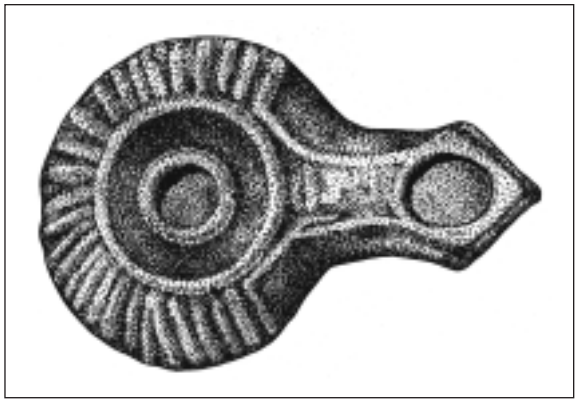


Figure 43. Ephesus style oil lamp.

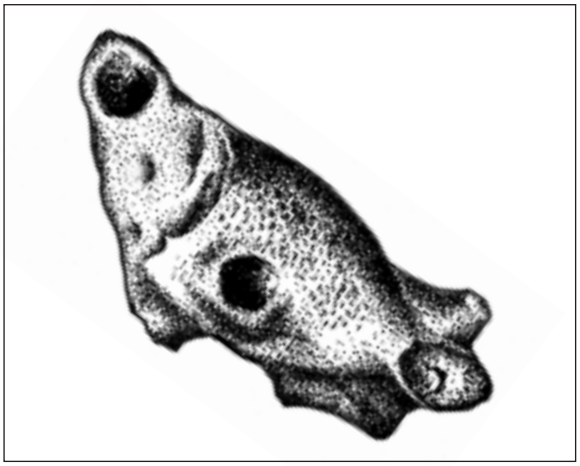


Figure 44. Oil lamp in the shape of a fish.

Figure 45. Terracotta applique of two women.

Small Finds from Vardarski Rid

Figure 46. Kantharos fragment with painted decoration.

Figure 47. Lifting a largely intact vessel from Room E.

Figure 48. Loomweights.

Figure 49. Coin of Cassander (*reg.* 301-297 BC). Obverse: head of Heracles with lion skin. Reverse: cavalryman moving to the right.

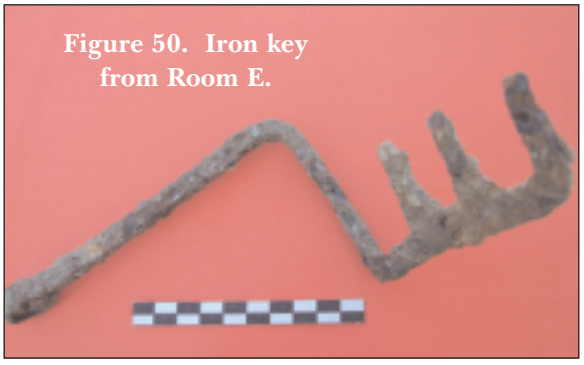


Figure 50. Iron key from Room E.

Figure 51. Vessel from Room E.

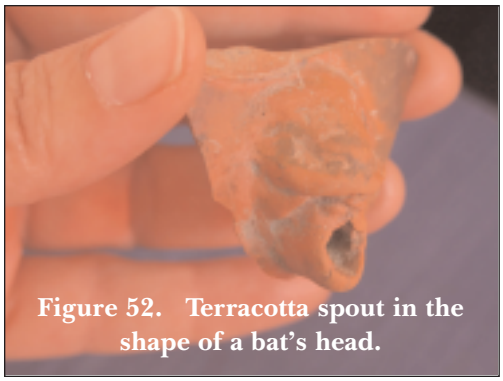


Figure 52. Terracotta spout in the shape of a bat's head.

Figure 53. Dog's pawprint on a roof tile.

Figure 54. Iron key from Room B.

The TFAHR *Photo Archive* Project

Since 1999 people associated with TFAHR have been assembling a collection of high resolution images of important archaeological sites, famous cities and buildings, and significant artifacts and paintings pertinent to the teaching of various aspects of Western Civilization. For example, when approaching a historically significant structure (like Hagia Sophia, Istanbul), the photographer is urged to take pictures of that structure that could be used in the study of architecture or religion or history. In our file on Hagia Sophia, we have collected close to 400 images of architectural details, mosaics, historically important trophies and memorabilia, as well as general interior and exterior shots, and we have similar files for numerous other landmarks.

In addition to the photographs, TFAHR volunteers are producing clear and legible maps illustrating important historical events, charts outlining different epochs and movements, architectural groundplans and elevations, and site plans of different archaeological sites. At present there are over 55,800 images in the TFAHR Photo Archive. TFAHR's eventual objective is to make the Photo Archive available online for teachers and students.

TFAHR is also amassing a Video Archive. The Video Archive contains video footage taken at many of the cities and archaeological sites documented in our Photo Archive. Additionally, the Video Archive contains programs documenting such activities as pottery making, glassblowing, archaeological field work, and stone working. These latter videos will be used in the classroom in our Tell Ubivis Project (see following article).

Presently twenty individuals have contributed images to the TFAHR Photo Archive Project. More images are added each month from volunteers, and several large slide collections have been donated to TFAHR to be scanned into the Archive. The following are some of the contributions.

Figure 55. Monemvasia, Greece
Eulah Matthews and William Neidinger

Figure 56. The Great Mosque, Cordoba, Spain
Jerry O'Neal and Harriet Isgren

Figure 57. The cathedral of Bourges, France
Gail Gant and Bea Long

Figure 60. Bayeux Tapestry
Roy Stiegler

Figure 58. Washington, DC
William Martin

61. Golem Grad, Macedonia
Silvana Blazevska

Figure 59. Roman necropolis, Antioch, Turkey
Paul Sirota

Figure 62. St. Anthony's Monastery, Egypt
David Warden

Figure 63.
Catholic and Protestant Europe,
Robert Neidinger

Figure 66.
Death of Jan Huss, Prague
David Seikel

Figure 67. Drawing of the ruins of the Septizonium, Rome
Dorothy Caggiano

Figure 64. Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem
Autry Ross

Figure 68. Statue of Zeus, Athens
Jordan Neidinger

Figure 65. Medieval walls, Durres, Albania
John Taylor

Figure 69. Bran Castle, Romania
Francis Malec

The Tell Ubivis Project

TFAHR's Tell Ubivis Project is a set of activities designed to bring archaeology into the classroom. Working with school teachers, we have prepared a series of presentations with artifacts (both modern and ancient), and a number of videos on various aspects of antiquity and archaeology. The highlight of the program, however, is the "mock dig" we create for students to dig up, document and analyze.

Our target age group for the Tell Ubivis Project is fifth through eighth grades. TFAHR first launched the Tell Ubivis Project in Houston, at Annunciation Greek Orthodox School in 1996 and 1997, in cooperation with teachers who had worked on TFAHR excavations abroad. A similar project was started in 2005 at Mountain Valley School in Sattler, Texas.

Figure 70. Teachers on a TFAHR excavation at Lake Prespa, Macedonia.

And in 2007 a Tell Ubivis Project will begin at Startzville Elementary School, Startzville, Texas. In each instance, the teachers responsible for the project have had actual excavation experience on TFAHR digs. This experience is critical, so TFAHR volunteers do not have to teach the teachers and the students simultaneously about how an excavation operates.

The first step is to create a set of ruins. TFAHR volunteers and the teachers design a set of ruined buildings to be excavated by the students; precise planning ensures that all students in all squares will discover something – and not dig dry holes, as can happen on a real excavation! We build walls of stones or bricks which are mortared together, to make it easier for the students to excavate.

Figure 71. Teacher and student volunteers building the "ruins."

Artifacts are then planted amidst the ruins. Many artifacts are donated by students' families: broken pottery, bits of metal, bones, shells, burnt wood and ashes (for destruction levels), etc. Some artifacts are designed and created by TFAHR volunteers: tools, clay tablets, figurines, etc.

Figure 72. Creating artifacts from bones.

We attempt to keep all artifacts culturally and religiously neutral, that is, nothing should point to a specific time, place or faith; for example, we would avoid pottery with "Hecho in Mexico" stamped on it or immediately recognizable modern tools.

The ruins are then covered with soil. Depending on time allotted for the project and financial resources available, one or two strata of ruins can be built. The latter is preferable, as it allows us to teach about chronological and spatial relationships between archaeological strata.

In the classroom, in the meantime, teachers train students in the various skills required for the excavation: knowledge of the metric system, the art of measurement and survey, and the skills needed for restoring and drawing pottery and artifacts.

Figure 73. TFAHR video on pottery making and restoration.

Figure 74. TFAHR video on glass making.

Thus, the classroom teacher is teaching more than archaeology: she uses the opportunities presented by the excavation to teach math skills, writing skills, scientific concepts, and analysis tools appropriate to her grade level.

To enrich the teacher's classroom activities, TFAHR has prepared videos depicting various aspects of antiquity and archaeology, using the resources of our Archives. The first program investigates how buildings are destroyed and get covered up by earth; from experience, we have learned that one of the most difficult concepts for students to comprehend is how ruins come to be underground. The next video discusses the actual archaeological process, from figuring out where to dig, to how to dig, to how to restore and analyze artifacts. Additional videos introduce students to ancient arts and means of construction: pottery making, glassblowing, lime and cement manufacturing, and how stones are quarried and shaped.

Thus prepared, students begin the actual excavation. They are responsible for the digging, the mapping of the site, photography and drawing, the cleaning and restoration of pottery and artifacts, and a final analysis of their work.

Figure 75. Students excavating the site.

In past Tell Ubivis Projects students have prepared their own publications of their work, or written short stories about the people they imagine may have lived in such buildings and the fate of those people. Another group has planned for the students to design and create their own "museum exhibit" of their finds, to display at school. In one project, veteran students of one year's dig helped recreate the ruins and artifacts for the students of the upcoming year's dig.

In all of the Tell Ubivis Projects TFAHR has benefited from very generous donations of time, labor, and artifacts from students' parents and volunteers. Their participation has always been greatly appreciated. Friends in the construction industry have also generously donated stones, bricks, cement and dirt - all of which are essential to creating the "ruins". It still is necessary, of course, to purchase the tools for digging and documenting the site.

The name "Tell Ubivis" is a hybrid term TFAHR invented for the project. "Tell" is an Arabic word that archaeologists use to refer to a mound of ruins. "Ubivis" is a Latin word meaning "wherever you want [it];" signifying, essentially, that TFAHR can build the ruins wherever you want them.

Figure 76. Videotaping excavation techniques during an overseas dig.

Figure 78. Cementing the ruins into place.

Figure 77. Planning the location of the ruins.

Figure 79. Artifacts placed into the ruins.

Figure 80. Covering the ruins with soil.

Figure 81. Teaching students about stratigraphy.

TFAHR would like to thank the following for their contributions to the

Tell Ubivis Project Mountain Valley School at Sattler, 2005 - 2006

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