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REVIEW ARTICLE

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4 Archaeological fieldwork and research in Euboea: 2014–2024

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The last decade has been a fruitful period for the archaeology of Euboea. New and ongoing work includes research projects, survey, rescue, and systematic excavations, led by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture (henceforth EAE) and the foreign schools active on the island. In the northern part of the island, protection and restoration of monuments and collections has been the focus of work in various towns (Oreoi, Histiaea, Limni, Aedipsos), and a few sites have been explored (Kerinthos, Cape Artemision). In central Euboea, construction works have allowed for further insights on ancient settlements (Aliveri, Chalkida, Manika, Psachna–Kastella), while systematic excavation projects have explored sites and cultic activities from the Bronze Age to the Archaic time (Amarynthos, Lefkandi–Xeropolis), as well as athletic institutions of the Classical to Roman periods (Eretria). The ancient map of the southern part of Euboea has been enriched (Kapsouri Kaphirea and in the Bouros-Kastri, Kampos, and Katsaronio plains) during multiple survey explorations, leading to further systematic excavations (Gourimadi, Plakari), while extensive research has also now begun in the ancient quarries and the drakospita. *New publications on previously investigated sites (Gkisouri, Zarakes, Karystos) and on underwater explorations completes the picture.*

Introduction

Euboea, the second largest island of Greece, provides a rich and varied landscape from high mountains to vast plains. This article highlights fieldwork and research published in the last 10 years (Map 4.1), covering the prehistoric period up to the Roman period but not intending to be exhaustive – much of the ongoing work is yet to be published. The goal is to give an overview of the recent explorations for a reader to look up the references and full details provided by the publications. The paper is organized starting from the northern through to the southern part of the island.

Northern Euboea

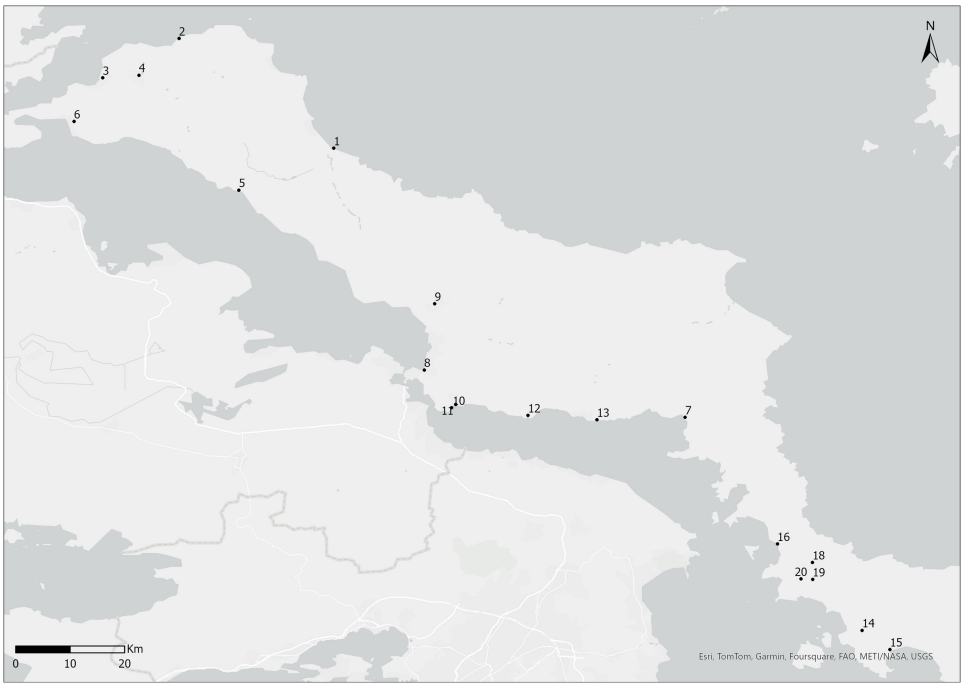
In recent years, the EAE has focused on the research of known archaeological sites, the protection and restoration of monuments, and on the upgrading of archaeological museums and ancient collections in different parts of northern Euboea.

Kerinthos

Kerinthos is an ancient settlement built on a hill plateau, located on the northern coast of Euboea. It faces the Aegean Sea and was occupied between the Late Bronze Age and the Hellenistic period. Between 2006 and 2014 an exploration programme was launched

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Map 4.1. 1. Kerinthos; 2. Cape Artemision; 3. Oreoi; 4. Histiaea; 5. Limni; 6. Aedipsos; 7. Aliveri; 8. Chalcis; 9. Psachna-Kastella; 10. Lefkandi-Xeropolis; 11. Manika; 12. Eretria; 13. Amarynthos; 14. Gourimadi; 15. Plakari; 16. Gkisouri; 17. Kapsouri Kaphirea; 18. Palli Lakka (drakospito); 19. Ilkizès (drakospito); 20. Kapsala (drakospito).

under the direction of Angelos Ritsonis, which carried out extensive excavations: the results have recently been published as a monograph dedicated to the site (Ritsonis 2018). The settlement is surrounded by a fortification with more than 20 rectangular towers constructed since the Classical period, with a first phase probably dating to the Archaic period (Ritsonis 2018: figs 20–22). It is divided into two parts by a central partition wall. On the northern part, spacious houses were built as well as some public buildings. At the highest point of the Western Plateau, a square enclosure with a 30m side has been identified as either an agora or a sanctuary (Ritsonis 2018: pls 3A, 12A-B–13; Mazarakis Ainian 2023: 73, figs 5–6 and 75). A large section of water piping built with a vault and hydraulic mortar and dating to the third century was also brought to light (Ritsonis 2018: pls 29A-Γ–38). Among the finds, a limestone head of an Archaic statue was discovered, terracotta figurines, and some inscribed stelae. One inscription dating to the mid-fourth century was discovered in 2009 close to the village of Krya Vrysi (west of the site) and attests that the settlement was probably under the control of **Chalcis** during the Classical period and, possibly, Hellenistic period (Kalliontzis 2019: 307–8). Kerinthos, along with other Euboean coastal sites, played an important role in Aegean maritime trade during the Early Iron Age period (Mazarakis Ainian 2023, with a short synthesis of the explorations and review of the finds). In September 2021, an agreement was signed between the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Mantoudi to further explore and protect the site (Simosi 2023: fig. 03). Extensive cleaning and mapping of the site were conducted in order to clarify the limits of the ancient settlement and to prepare new excavations.

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The Cape Artemision and the sanctuary of Artemis Proseoas

The majority of the area around **Cape Artemision** has not been excavated, therefore most of the information from this area comes from surface finds only. At the church of Agios Georgios in Pefki, excavations conducted in 2021 and 2022 in search of the sanctuary of Artemis Proseoas revealed an extensive settlement of the Early Christian period, with ancient architectural blocks embedded into it. In the area, black-glaze pottery was also discovered on the surface. A possible location for the temple of Artemis Proseoas is underneath the church of Agios Georgios, or in its southern vicinity (Schäfer 2020).

Between 2018 and 2022, the EAE conducted some works around Cape Artemision, on the northern coast of Euboea between the modern villages of Pefki and Gouves (Simosi 2023: fig. 04). Cape Artemision is famous as the site of the naval battle that took place here in 480 BC between the Greeks and the Persians. It is also off the coast of Cape Artemision that the famous Early Classical bronze statue of a Zeus or Poseidon (NAM 15161) was discovered in the 1920s, as well as a Hellenistic bronze statue of a young boy riding a horse (NAM 15177): the shipwreck that was transporting these statues has not been fully explored.

Oreoi, Histiaea, and Limni

In **Oreoi**, the archaeological collection has been enriched and improved over the last 10 years (Kalamara *et al.* 2016/2022: 768–69; Simosi 2023: fig. 5). The marble statue of a bull found in Oreoi was given a new protective roof that makes it now fully visible on all sides. In Kamaria, south of **Histiaea**, the neoclassical building 'Vlachothanassis', built in 1900 and now listed as cultural heritage by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, has been renovated and will allow the exhibition of finds from the area (Kalamara 2020). The archaeological collection in **Limni** was also renewed. It hosts finds dating from the Bronze Age to the Early Christian period that come from a wider area. Recent construction works for the installation of wastewater pipes in Oreoi and Histiaea have brought to light ancient remains, which will be detailed in future reports. These will greatly increase the number of discoveries made in the region, from which to date there is only a small Hellenistic three-room structure discovered in 2005, northeast to the modern city of Oreoi. Found within this building, and contained inside an *olpe* (high-handled winejug), was a hoard of 155 silver coins, most of them tetraobols minted in the ancient polis of Histiaea (ID5477; Ritsonis 2020).

Aedipsos

In January 2022 a new building programme was approved for the conversion of the old hydrotherapy centre 'Agioi Anargyroi' of Loutra **Aedipsos** into a larger museum for northern Euboea (Simosi 2023). The rescue excavations connected to this project were conducted by the EAE and led to the discovery of new Roman buildings and water pipes, as well as funerary *pithamphorae* (Archaic type of amphora), among which was one *enchytrismos* (pot-burial) (ID18519; Kalamara *et al.* 2014/2020: 1199–200).

Central Euboea

Aliveri

The coastal town of **Aliveri** is located 52km southeast of Chalcis, the island's capital. Construction of power stations in the early 1950s and in the 2010s exposed ancient remains here, and this has led to several rescue excavations carried out in the area by archaeologists under the supervision of the EAE (ID18496, ID18497, ID18498). Two preliminary studies have recently been published of the site's Classical–Hellenistic

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necropolis (most of the burials date to the fourth century) and provide an overview of the material (Katsarelia 2018; 2020). The 37 adults and children inhumations were placed mostly in pits, tiles, or stone sarcophagi together with pottery and metal finds, as well as figurines and *astragals* (knucklebones used as dice or a game) for children; one pyre was also discovered. Among the discovered stelae, three are published (Katsarelia 2020). Two of them bear inscribed names (Phanokrite and Hippokydes) that are well established in the onomastic landscape of central Euboea, and one the name of a presumed foreigner (Bryas).

Chalcis

One of the biggest achievements of the last decade for archaeological outreach in Euboea has been the opening in 2016 of a new museum in Chalcis; called Arethousa and housed within a renovated old industrial building, this museum hosts exhibits from archaeological sites across the whole island (Kalamara *et al.* 2016/2022: 780–82; Simosi 2022).

The EAE was also kept busy with the start of construction works for the new General Hospital of Chalcis in 2012 (ID18514). Located in the area north of the mountain range of Vathrovouni and to the east of the city, the rescue excavations led to the discovery of segments of the ancient city wall (Kosma and Chairetakis 2017). The wall had already been partially visible before the excavations even started, as it had been identified in the 1980s during surface surveys. It continues outside the limits of the hospital construction site, both to the north and south. Two chronological phases are attested. The first is to be placed in the fifth century BC, contemporary with the cemetery located right outside the walls. It is possible that this segment was constructed under the supervision of the Athenians who had variously occupied the area during this period, but this hypothesis remains uncertain, as knowledge (from literary sources) of the ancient town of Chalcis in fifth century BC is quite limited. The second construction phase can be placed between the second half of the fourth century BC and the beginning of the second quarter of the third century BC. Four square towers with sides of length 7m have been preserved, as well as evidence showing that the wall was rebuilt and widened. A possible foundation deposit has also been excavated at the level of the wall foundations (Kosma and Chairetakis 2017: 361). Traces of destruction are visible on the wall, as well as in some rescue excavations in the city; they might be related to the Chremonidean War and the capture of the city by Antigonus II Gonatas (268/7–261 BC) (Chairetakis 2020).

Psachna–Kastella

North of Chalcis, rescue excavations conducted since 2015 during construction works for sewage systems in the region of **Psachna** and **Kastella** brought to light many ancient remains dating between the Classical period and Turkish occupation (Kalamara *et al.* 2015/2019: 467; Kalamara *et al.* 2016/2022: 761–68). Walls and capitals were discovered close to the central church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, of which one is still in the church's wall. Two tombs with grave offerings of the Classical period were discovered in Kastella, among which were a black-glaze *lekythos* (oil/perfume jug), one *oinochoe* (wine jug), and one *lekanis* (shallow bowl) (Kalamara *et al.* 2016/2022: 761, fig. 64). A house probably dating to the Hellenistic period was discovered, as well as clay pipes in several places, and a cistern 3.15m long and dating to the Late Roman period.

Manika

South of Chalcis, at **Manika**, the site of a known large settlement of the Bronze Age, new discoveries were made in 2015 during the rescue excavation of the EAE (Christodoulou 2015: 459–63, figs 24–26). Two parallel 10m long walls of a building dating to the Early

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Helladic II were unearthed, between which at least three floor levels made of mud and gravel were preserved. In addition, discoveries were made of pottery, human bones, animal bones in a hearth, loom weights, spindle whorls, and obsidian blades.

Lefkandi–Xeropolis

The most recent phase of the **Lefkandi–Xeropolis** project led by Irene Lemos (Oxford) has seen the successful completion of various study seasons, undertaken in preparation for publications that are bringing many important results from the site to light (ID5572; Morgan 2014: 27–28; 2015: 38–39; Lemos 2015/2019; 2019). In Region I, eight phases dating between the Late Helladic IIIC Middle to the Early Protogeometric have been assigned to Building M (previously called the 'megaron'), while two small buildings represent the Sub-Geometric and Late Geometric phases. In Region II, an important result of the study seasons has been the decipherment of the stratigraphical sequences. This region is called the 'Ritual Zone' because of the finds and structures brought to light. Pottery includes remarkably large craters and cooking devices. Figurines were the main finds unearthed, together with bone fragments found within structures and characterized as non-domestic, industrial, or funerary. The area yielded a huge quantity of bone fragments, of which 2,466 were studied, showing evidence for consumption, and representing species that have been found in other areas of the site as well: sheep, pig, or cattle, and more rarely deer, dog, and lion. Cataloguing of the small finds and pottery continued, as well as projects on the clay analysis of various potteries, undertaken in collaboration with Ian Whitbread (Leicester) and the ESAG. Recent publications include the pottery of Lefkandi phases I and IV–VI (Dickinson 2020; French and Dickinson 2023). Coastline and marine fauna were also studied as part of the project's explorations. Several cores were drilled at Lefkandi, **Eretria**, and Aliveri aiming to investigate the evolution of the central Euboean coastline. The large marine fauna collection studied by Tatiana Theodoropoulou (Côte d'Azur) reveals an intensive and coherent exploitation of the shores.

In parallel, rescue excavations conducted by the EAE at Lefkandi led to the discovery of a large number of finds. On the road along the seashore, pottery dated between 1050 and 900 BC came to light, among which was a complete Protogeometric cup (Lemos 2015/2019: 463–67, figs 27–34). An unlooted Protogeometric pit grave came to light, too, which had inside it a black-glaze spheric *aryballos*, two *kalathoi*, a bird shaped vase, and an *oinochoe*. Close by, two tombs with tiled covers dating to the Late Roman period were discovered in a hitherto-archaeologically-unknown area of Lefkandi (Karatzas 2019). These tombs are part of a possible larger necropolis, which could presuppose the existence of a yet unknown settlement.

Eretria and Amarynthos

Over recent years, many rescue excavations have been conducted in Eretria by the EAE, and are still ongoing, much of this work a result of the construction of the new water network. The valuable new data that will come to light will surely improve our understanding of the ancient town and its layout. Recent discoveries include a complex of at least four Classical–Hellenistic buildings. These buildings, located southeast of the ancient city, had up to four construction phases and 17 rooms in total; they were excavated on a surface of 27 × 28m and aligned with a nearby road. The houses were built in a similar technique to that of the houses in the West Quarter (ID18505; Kalamara *et al.* 2014/2020: 1177–86). A new round bath installation was also located northeast of the ancient agora, discovered with small terracotta foot bathtubs for 20 people arranged circularly around a central open space and decorated by a white and blue pebble mosaic rosette: this construction dates between the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth century BC

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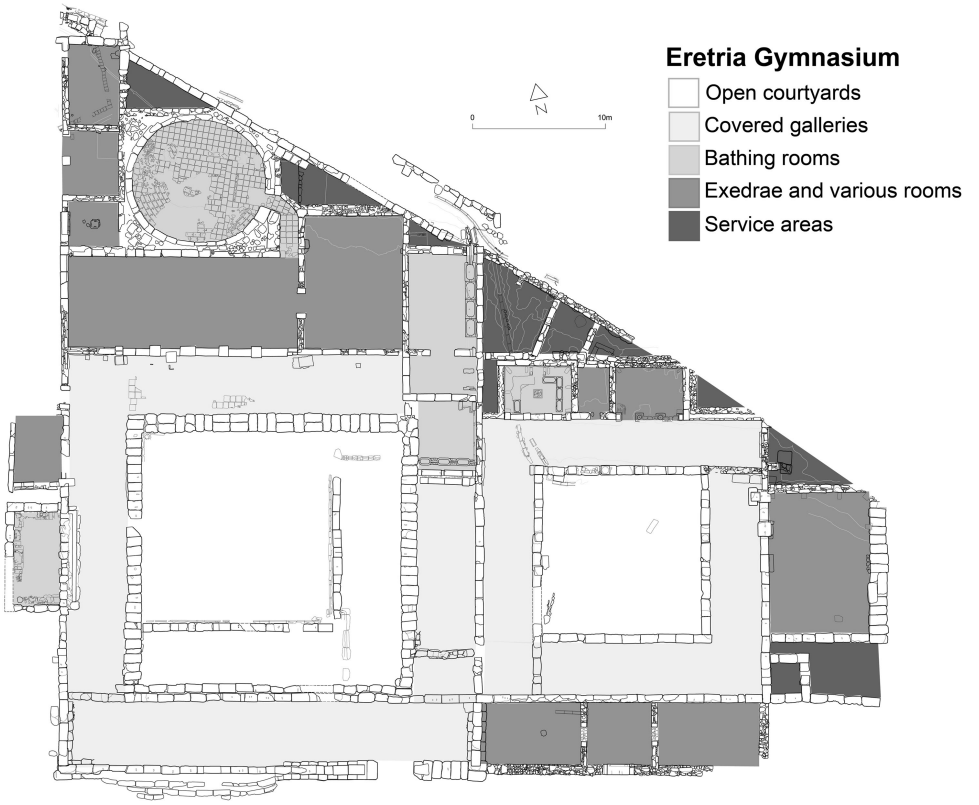


Fig. 4.1. Eretria: plan of the gymnasium. © ESAG.

(Kalamara *et al.* 2014/2020: 1181–83, fig. 44). Further north and immediately east to the temple of Apollo, there is another pebble mosaic floor dating to the fourth century, one that decorates the square room of an *andron* (men's quarters; side of 3.50m), and which was unearthed in spring 2024 during water pipeline works by the EAE. It represents two satyrs dancing and one playing the double flute (https://www.culture.gov.gr/el/Information/SitePages/view.aspx?nID=5051&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1eA3MTF5FduUeln3FSqYvQ8OD0tdES5ySUh-W_Lqv3lh9nB-LEkEqNlYs_aem_tXADst3TaT-M3AzkD0smYA).

Recent systematic excavations in Eretria by the ESAG have focused in particular on the athletic institutions. Between 2015 and 2017, new explorations were conducted at the north gymnasium (Fig. 4.1; ID5445, ID6175, ID6789; Ackermann *et al.* 2018; Ackermann and Reber 2019: with plan 173 pl. I). The gymnasium is divided into two peristyle courtyards: a large courtyard to the west, whose construction dates back to 330/20 BC, and a smaller courtyard to the east, built during the second quarter of the third century BC. The arms of a monumental marble statue probably identified as L. Mummius Achaicus is among the important findings that come from this area (Ackermann and Pop 2020). A rather intriguing discovery was made of a well filled with different materials, including human bones (among which there were remains of around 100 foetuses and infants, some children and several adults) as well as the remains of numerous animals of various species, and bronze artefacts, including three fragments of a statue of a young man (Ackermann and Liston 2020) and a bronze statuette of Artemis Ephesia (Ackermann 2022). The best explanation for the statuette's presence alongside the bones of infants (who had died in the perinatal period) is that it was a propitiatory offering made by midwives, hoping to

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place their activities under the auspices of Artemis, who is invoked here as a protective divinity for newborns, dead or alive.

As in other Greek cities, running tracks (*dromoi*) were situated close to the gymnasium, thus forming an athletic complex. In 2019, two running tracks were identified through geomagnetic survey and trial trenching, one track of which was to the west along with a probable *xystus* (portico) and one to the south of the gymnasium (ID12993; Ackermann and André 2020).

In the southeast of the ancient town, a *palaestra* (wrestling ground) known since the beginning of the twentieth century was also explored during the ESAG excavation campaign in 2018 (ID9079; Luisoni and Ackermann 2019). Its construction dates back to the second half of the fifth century BC and contains a cult space dedicated to Eileithyia dating from the third century BC.

Another project conducted on the Eretrian acropolis in 2014, under the direction of Sandrine Huber (Lille), aimed to continue the exploration of the sanctuary of Athena, and to better understand the defence system (ID5060; Huber and Fachard 2015). Rich material from the seventh to the beginning of the fifth century and also from the beginning of the third century was recovered, among which many terracotta figurines and some relief architectural terracotta elements were found (Huber and Maillard 2015). The material from the excavation is currently under study for publication, but these discoveries confirm the importance of the sanctuary dedicated to Athena on the acropolis. They also attest to a gap in use at the beginning of the fifth century (perhaps due to the Persian wars) and have brought to light a new segment of the sixth-century fortification or terracing wall.

The Greek–Swiss systematic excavations of the Artemision in **Amarynthos**, located 10.8km east of Eretria, have been underway for more than 10 years. The project was instigated by Denis Knoepfler and is currently directed by Sylvian Fachard (ESAG) and Aggeliki Simosi (EAE); before 2021 the project was directed by Karl Reber (ESAG) and Amalia Karapaschalidou (EAE). Many buildings have come to light, mainly in the eastern half of the site (ID5062, ID5446, ID6176, ID6790, ID12997, ID12998, ID18029, ID18254, ID18579, ID18587; Figs 4.2 and 4.3; Reber *et al.* 2018; Verdan *et al.* 2020b; Fachard *et al.* 2023; 2024; https://www.esag.swiss/amarynthos/). The identification of the sanctuary was secured in 2017 with the discovery of inscriptions stating the name of Artemis, while her temple was identified in 2020. The earliest remains from the site date back to the twelfth century BC, and are located in the eastern part of the sanctuary and in the temple sector; the last period of use is probably to place in the third century AD. On our current understanding, the first temple was built at the end of the eighth century BC (Building 14), over the top of an older building. The Archaic period (seventh–sixth century) witnessed the monumentalization of the sanctuary with the construction of a portico on the northern edge (Building 5) and a large double entrance gate to the east (Building 3). This was replaced in the second half of the fourth century BC by an important pi-shaped portico (Building 1). Small oikoi were erected along the northern and the southern edges of the shrine (Buildings 7–8, 12–13). A Roman well (Building 10), built in the first century BC, was the latest antique structure that survived until the site's abandonment in the third century AD. One of the most impressive discoveries is of an important Late Archaic (525–500 BC) offering deposit of *ca.* 700 objects, placed within the temple's foundations: vases, figurines, jewellery, fabrics, amulets, and weaponry were all positioned in a careful way just before the construction of a new temple around 500 BC. The Geometric and Archaic phases of the temple are currently under study for publication. Since 2021 the excavation has been supplemented by a survey project (*Eretria-Amarynthos Survey Project* – EASP) exploring the plain between Eretria and Amarynthos, directed by Sylvian Fachard (ESAG) and Aggeliki Simosi (EAE) in collaboration with Chloé Chezeaux. The project aims to investigate the relationship between the sanctuary and the surrounding demes, the communication network and the rural economy of the region (ID18257, ID18580; Fachard *et al.* 2023; 2024).

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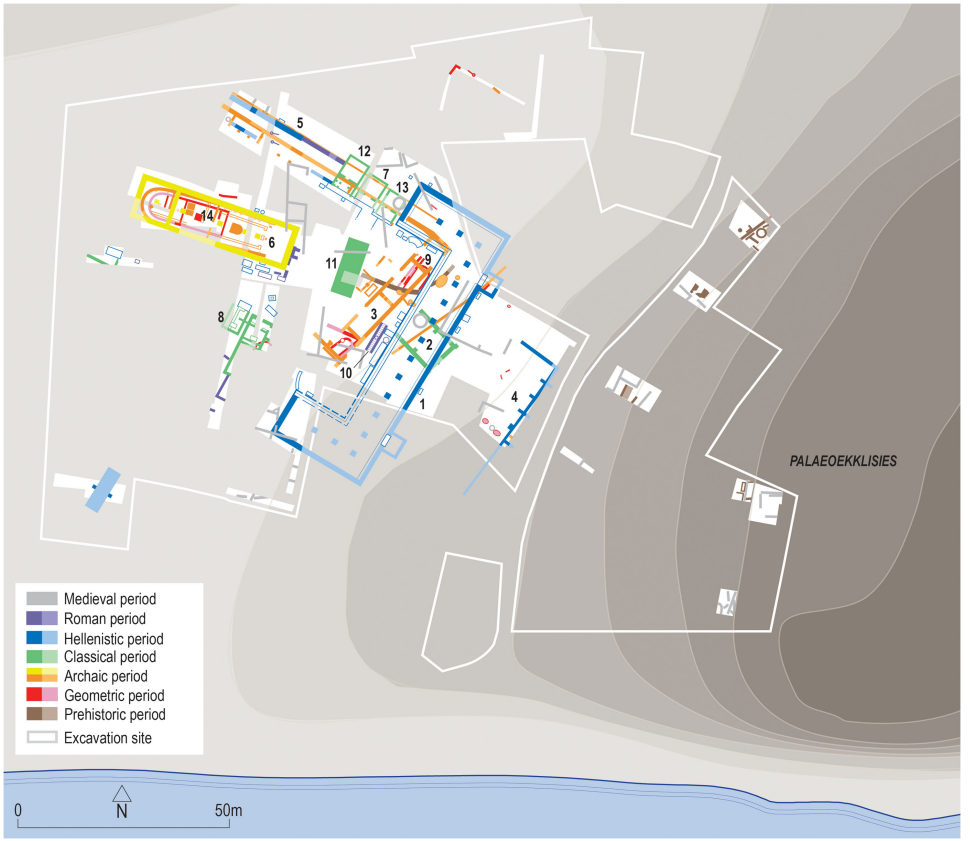


Fig. 4.2. Amarynthos: plan of the Artemision. © ESAG.



Fig. 4.3. Amarynthos: drone view of the Artemision. © ESAG.

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Rescue excavations have been conducted by the EAE in several places. In Gymnou, ancient walls, tombs, and pits dating to the Classical/Hellenistic period have been discovered, as well as pottery from the Middle and Late Helladic periods (Kalamara *et al.* 2015/2019: 468–70). In Koukaki Ano Vathia, a large destruction layer with material dating between the Hellenistic and Roman period was brought to light during construction works.

The last decade has been rather productive in terms of publications, and only a selection is presented here.

Excavated between 2009 and 2014, the 'Sandoz' plot yielded remains of houses dated to the Classical and Hellenistic periods (ID5061; Ackermann, Tettamanti and Zurbriggen 2015) and a Roman bath installation in use between the second and the third century AD. These structures were fully published recently in the Eretria series (no XXV, Theurillat *et al.* 2020). From the same site, these structures were preceded by a *tholos* (circular building) bath dated to the first century BC, discovered in the northern limit of the excavation at the end of the last campaign (2014). As a result of its rather recent discovery, the remains of this structure have not yet been fully explored.

The Eretria series has also seen in recent years the publication of volume XXIII by Kristine Gex with the contributions of various authors (Gex 2019) on excavations from the 'Bouratza' plot northeast of the ancient agora; volume XXIV by Guy Ackermann on the Hellenistic pottery and its chronology (Ackermann 2020); and volume XXVI by Tamara Saggini on the pottery from contexts dating to the sixth and the early fifth century (Saggini 2024). Additionally, a synopsis of the recent work and research on Eretria and Amarynthos has been published (Fachard 2022).

Since 2014, a diachronic archaeometric project has been underway, under the direction of Sylvie Müller Celka (ESAG) and Evangelia Kiriatzi (BSA), focusing on pottery production and supply in Eretria from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman period. The project has used a range of samples from Lefkandi and Chalcis. The final results are currently in preparation for publication, but preliminary reports are already available (Charalambidou *et al.* 2018). The main source of clay is the Lelantine plain. One of the most striking results for Eretria is that two fabrics are used throughout the Bronze Age until the Hellenistic period: one for the fine ware and one for the coarse.

Other categories of material have received attention, such as a gold hoard discovered in Eretria and dated to the eighth century BC (Verdan and Heymans 2020), as well as melting plates. The hoard comprises 398 objects, among which there were ingots, nuggets, or wires connected to the manufacture of ornamental objects; these finds weighed 513g in total and were placed inside a complete *skyphos* (drinking cup). Used as a form of money for exchange and payment, the origin of the materials is probably from the Thermaic gulf (Heymans and Verdan 2023).

Archaic Eretria and Chalcis have been the subject of a recent article in the prestigious *Oxford History of the Archaic Greek World* published in 2024 (Fachard and Verdan 2024). The authors reviewed all available historical and archaeological evidence to produce a long-awaited critical synopsis on two of the most important Euboean cities in Antiquity, including perspectives drawn from geology to political institutions, material culture, settlement patterns, and tribal organization.

Geoarchaeology

Recent research on the palaeoenvironment of central Euboea has been conducted as a collaboration between the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), the BSA, the ESAG, Harokopio University of Athens, and the EAE, in a project attempting to reconstruct the evolution of the Holocene coastal landscape in the vicinity of major archaeological sites and to interpret their history of human occupation (ID4886; Ghilardi *et al.* 2016; 2018).

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Within the scope of this project, 26 boreholes in total have been drilled in the coastal plains of Lefkani, Eretria, Amarynthos, and the Lilas delta: samples have permitted the identification of molluscs and ostracods, granulometric analyses of the sediments, and the sequencing of 71 radiocarbon dates to provide a robust chronostratigraphic framework. Additionally, a pollen sequence from Amarynthos has been studied to reconstruct the area's vegetation history. Results show that the maximum extension of the sea during the Holocene is synchronously dated at all sites to around 4500–4000 BC. At the beginning of the third millennium BC, the first phase of deltaic progradation is recorded, and a second at the beginning of the first millennium BC continuing into modern times. The first phase was caused by natural phenomena combined with the anthropogenic factors caused by the human occupation of the land; the second phase can probably be explained by anthropogenic factors alone (for example, on water management strategies undertaken in Eretria between the Late Bronze Age and the Archaic period; see Verdan *et al.* 2020a). Another project further explored the fluvial history of the Lilas river from the Mycenaean to the Ottoman period (Ghilardi *et al.* 2022). A *ca.* 2.5m thick stratigraphic profile was investigated in terms of granulometry and magnetic parameters, in combination with the OSL (optically stimulated luminescence) sediment chronology. The analysis highlights regional reduction in forest vegetation, a phenomenon that was due to a pronounced use of the land for cereal cultivation that resulted in the intensification of floods.

Southern Euboea: the Karystia

Survey explorations

Southern Euboea has a long history of archaeological surveys (Figs 4.4 and 4.5) and several scholars have paved the way to these explorations, such as H. Sackett, D. Theocharis, and A. Sampson (Theocharis 1959; Sackett *et al.* 1966; Sampson 1981).

The Bouros-Kastri Peninsula, located east of the bay of Karystos, is the region of focus for an older fieldwork project called the *Southern Euboea Exploration Project* (SEEP) that took place in 1989, 1990, and 1993, but which has been the subject of an extensive publication in 2018 (Wickens *et al.* 2018). In all, 58 sites were identified, dating from the Neolithic to the Roman period. No material has been recorded from the Early Bronze Age IIB until 500 BC. A few sites, such as the sanctuary at Elliniko, in the Platanistos valley, and Geraistos, situated southeast of Platanistos, are dated to the end of the sixth century BC. The Classical and Early Hellenistic periods represent the first substantial occupation phases on the peninsula since the Early Bronze Age. Between the third century BC until the fourth century AD, only seven sites or findspots are recorded.

The Kampos plain extends to 260ha and is located north of the Paximadi Peninsula and west of the bay of Karystos (Tankosić and Chidiroglou 2010). Fieldwork was conducted here between 2006 and 2008 in the frame of the SEEP and recorded 36 previously unknown archaeological findspots ranging from the end of the Neolithic to the Late Byzantine. The goal was to fill gaps in our knowledge of the ancient Karystia and supplement the data already gathered, as well as to help map and protect sites in an area under rapid development. The numerous new findspots fulfilled these goals and showed that the plain was well occupied both in prehistoric and historic periods.

Between 2012 and 2016 another survey project, the *Norwegian Archaeological Survey* (NASK), was conducted in the Katsaronio plain, located 5km northwest of Karystos, between the villages of Marmari and Katsaroni and led by the Norwegian Institute at Athens (Tankosić *et al.* 2021a: 4, fig. 1). The goals were to conduct a systematic archaeological project in a region hitherto unexplored, look for diachronic occupied areas, and record evidence of the earliest human presence in the Karystia. An area of 20km^2 was surveyed, yielding 99 new findspots ranging from the Final Neolithic to the Early Modern;

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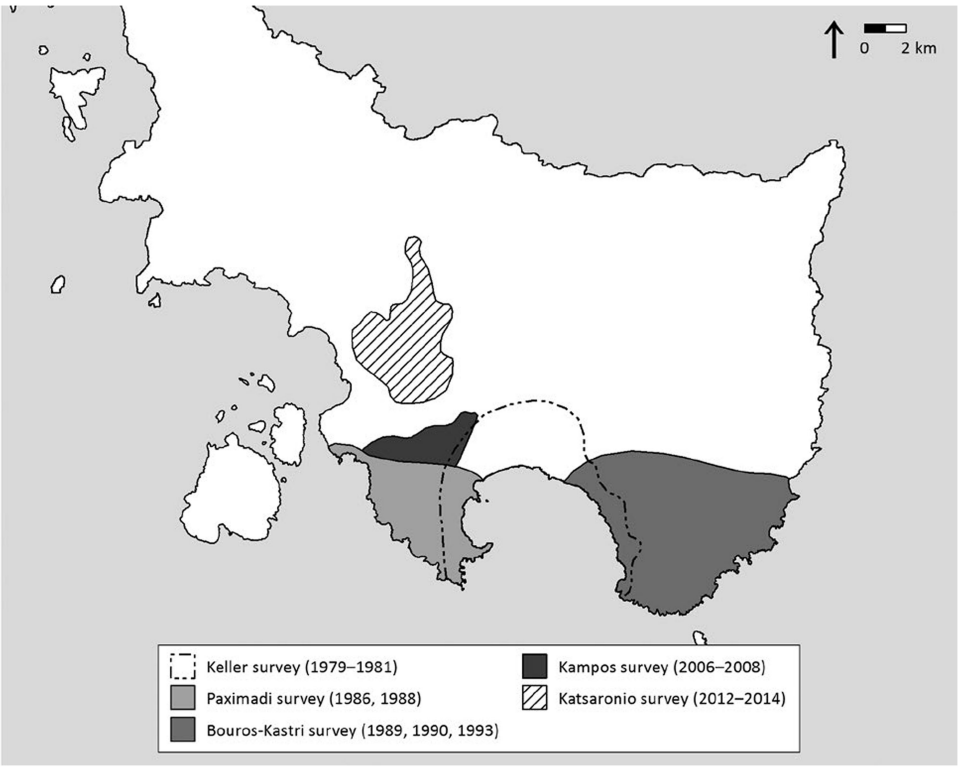


Fig. 4.4. Southern Euboea: map showing all the survey projects. © R. M. Seifried.

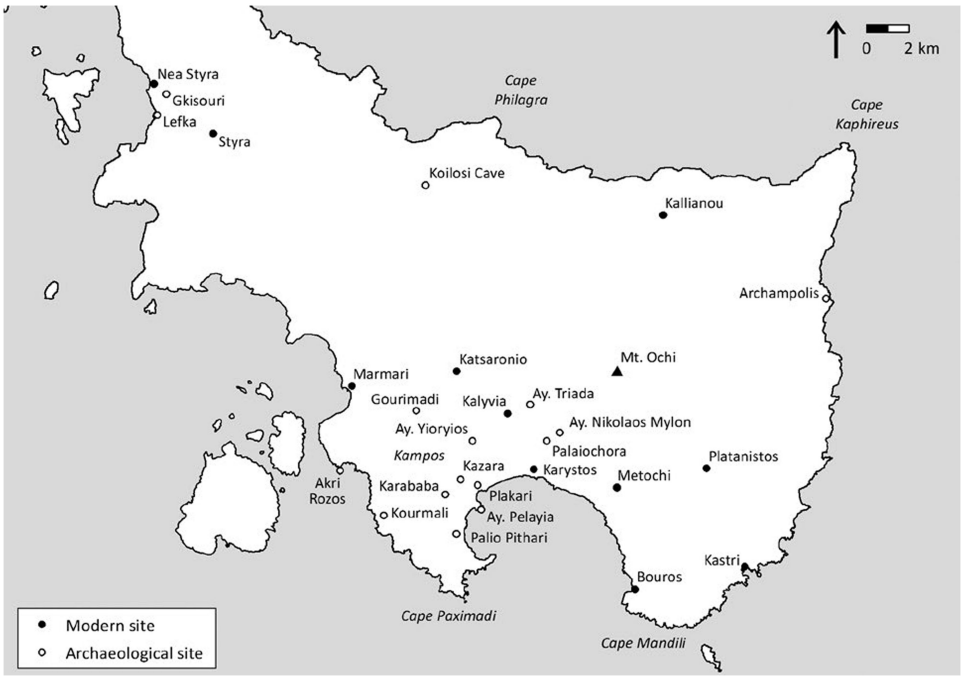


Fig. 4.5. Southern Euboea: map showing the Paximadi and the Bouros-Kastri peninsulae, and major sites. © R.M. Seifried.

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there was a hiatus in the dating of the sites between the end of the Early Bronze Age and the Geometric periods. Evidence showed communities connected micro-regionally as well as wider in the Aegean, diachronic occupation in the Katsaroni plain and population fluctuations depending on available natural resources. Targeted excavations will be investigating these results further in the near future.

The Gourimadi Archaeological Project

The *Gourimadi Archaeological Project* started in 2018 under the aegis of the Norwegian Institute at Athens; the project is still ongoing (ID8512, ID17976, ID17977, ID18177, ID18589; Tankosić *et al.* 2021a: 24–26; 2021b). The project is co-directed by Žarko Tankosić, Fanis Mavridis, and Paschalis Zafeiriadis. The site of **Gourimadi** is located on a hilltop in the southeastern part of the Katsaronio plain, west from Karystos, and offers an excellent visibility of the Cyclades and Attica. The excavation confirmed the existence of an important prehistoric site previously identified during the NASK survey. The settlement of Gourimadi was occupied from the Late Neolithic until the Early Bronze Age. Preliminary reports describe architectural remains consisting of mud-brick structures, stone-built curved and straight walls. Finds from the site comprise arrowheads, Melian obsidian, metallurgical remains (such as slags and a copper axe), ground-stone tools, terracotta anthropomorphic figurines, spindle whorls, faunal remains, and pottery with various types of decoration, including relief, incised, and plastic decoration, pattern-burnished, and white-on-dark wares.

The Plakari Archaeological Project

The multidisciplinary *Plakari Archaeological Project* was conducted between 2010 and 2015 under the co-direction of the Vrije University of Amsterdam (VU), represented in Greece by the NIA and the EAE. The project was directed by Jan Paul Crielaard (VU) and Maria Kosma (EAE) until her sudden death in 2015 (see *In memoriam* in Crielaard *et al.* 2017: 69), after which Kostas Boukaras took over (Crielaard *et al.* 2017 with earlier references; Crielaard 2017; 2020). The project was supplemented by a geoarchaeological exploration of the region (for a preliminary report, see Crielaard *et al.* 2017: 84–86; Crielaard 2017: 128–30).

Plakari is a settlement located on the coast, 2.5km west of modern Karystos and on a low hill, of which the summit probably served as an acropolis (Fig. 4.6; Chidiroglou 2003–2004; Crielaard 2017: 127, note 3). Excavations conducted between 2011 and 2013 focused on the Early Iron Age to Late Classical site, including the investigation of the site's sanctuary. The explorations conducted between 2014 and 2015 were centred on the Final Neolithic area of the site (Fig. 4.7; Crielaard *et al.* 2017: 70–84, plan fig. 1). The Final Neolithic remains (*ca.* 4300–3300 BC) brought to light on the northeastern flank of the hill were identified as possible domestic structures. Pottery such as incised ware, burnished ware, and cheese pots was discovered (Crielaard *et al.* 2017: fig. 10 for a sample) together with flint, pebble tools, and obsidian. An Early Iron Age wall was built on the earlier remains, corresponding to what is found in the western part of the hill.

On the western side of the hilltop, investigations were conducted on two human-made terraces sheltering a sanctuary whose cult could perhaps be associated with Artemis and Apollo (Crielaard 2017: 134–35). The earliest structures date back to the Early Iron Age. Among the structures of the highest terrace, Terrace 2, a semi-circular stone altar was in use during the Archaic period. The abundant pottery found here is suggestive of communal feasting that could have taken place until the fourth century BC (Chidiroglou 2014; Charalambidou 2017), with a peak in the Middle Geometric II and Late Geometric periods; zooarchaeological findings from this area support this interpretation (Crielaard

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Fig. 4.6. Plakari: aerial view of the site. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea (photograph by J.P. Crielaard and D. Batsis).



Fig. 4.7. Plakari: plan of the site on the hill top. © J.P. Crielaard.

et al. 2017: 88). Fibulae, pins, rings, diadems, knives, an iron *obelos* (skewer), and a weighing beam were all discovered here (Crielaard 2017: 135–37). In the late fifth or early fourth century BC, the terrace was restructured and Building A – which served as pantry and storage for cult material – was constructed.

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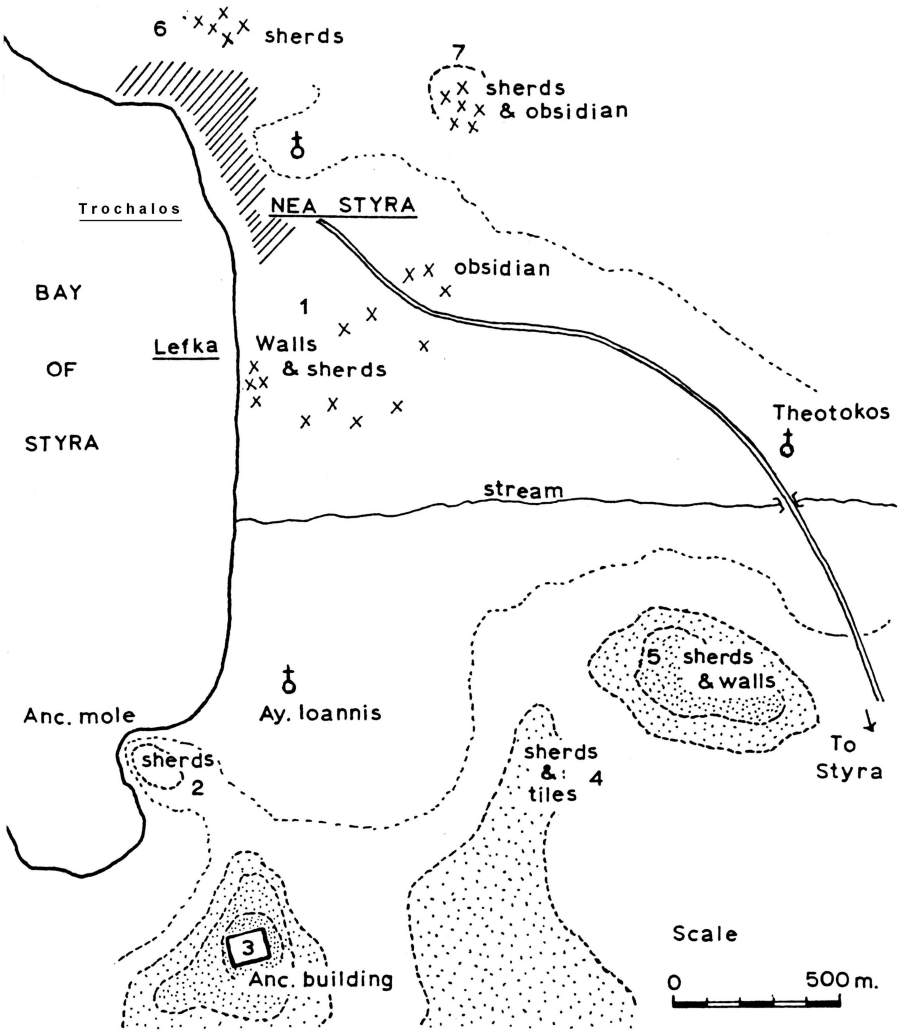


Fig. 4.8. Styra region: map showing the main sites. © M. Kosma.

On the lower terrace (Terrace 1), a first levelling phase was dated to the Late Archaic/Early Classical periods. During the Classical period, the lower terrace was reachable thanks to a ramp, which led with a curving path to a large entrance. In the Late Classical period, Building B, a possible wine storage, was constructed. The sanctuary fell out of use at the end of the fourth century.

Gkisouri at Nea Styra

In 2014 the wider area of Nea Styra was declared an archaeological site. On the low hill at a short distance from the sea and to the east of the modern settlement Nea Styra, the site of **Gkisouri** is located (Fig. 4.8). It has been known since the end of the nineteenth century when a discovery was made here of three marble Cycladic sculptures. Since then, surface investigations in the wider area of Nea Styra have been conducted and have located

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Fig. 4.9a. Gkisouri, northwest. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea (photographs by M. Kosma).

architectural remains, abundant pottery, and obsidian. These discoveries have allowed for the identification of a coastal settlement of the Early Bronze Age at Lefka. The excavations conducted in 2009 and 2013 brought to light three graves from the Early Bronze Age period, recently published more extensively (Figs 4.9a and 4.9b; Kosma 2020). The coastal settlement of Nea Styra, to which the cemetery of the Early Helladic II period belongs, is part of the chain of sites that are distributed along the western coastline of Euboea, forming pairs with corresponding sites that date to approximately the same periods as one another along the eastern coast of the mainland in Attica, Boeotia, and Phthiotis. Together, these sites build not only a local but also an inter-regional network of maritime communication in the Aegean of the Early Bronze Age.

Kapsouri Kaphirea

In the northwestern part of Euboea, between the Ochi Mount and the Aegean sea, a new site, **Kapsouri Kaphirea**, was discovered during works on a wind farm, and rescue excavations were conducted in the second part of 2018 (ID8150; https://www.themata-archaiologias.gr/καψούρι-καφηρέα-τα-αποτελέσματα-της/). It occupies a naturally fortified position on three human-made terraces and was in use between the seventh and the third century BC. Two apsidal stone-built buildings were brought to light here, surrounded by cavities. An iron blade, lamps, stone tools, and terracotta balls were discovered. Among the pottery found at the site, an unusual amount of relief pithoi pieces were found, with decoration depicting battles scenes of horsemen, and mythological scenes with winged horses. These finds help to date the foundation of the settlement to the seventh century BC and, together with the location, are an argument for the use of the site as a place of worship maybe dedicated to Poseidon (Parikh 2019: 39–40).

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Fig. 4.9b. Gkisouri, northeast, with views of one of the Early Helladic II tombs. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea (photographs by M. Kosma).

Recent research and publications

During recent years, the numerous fieldwork campaigns conducted have provided abundant new evidence for the prehistoric and historic occupation of sites in southern Euboea (Plakari, Agia Triada, Agios Giorgios, Agia Pelagia, or Gkisouri), highlighting the strategic geographical position of the island for taking advantage of maritime trade (Mavridis and Tankosić 2016; Cullen *et al.* 2017; Talalay, Cullen and Keller 2017; a chronological overview of the Karystia is provided in chap. 3. of Wickens *et al.* 2018: 17–23 [prehistory], 23–34 [historical period]; Prevedorou, Mavridis and Tankosić 2019; Crielaard 2020; Knodell 2021).

During the surveys that have been conducted, a high number of tower structures has been mapped on the two peninsulas that flank ancient Karystos, along with a dispersed settlement pattern of single farmsteads (Chatzidimitriou and Chidiroglou 2014; Gardner and Seifried 2016). Most of the towers date to the Classical period (probably second half of the fifth century BC), though others date from between the Archaic until Ottoman periods. They were used as connection structures across the Karystos bay, serving as lighthouses or resource storehouses (agricultural or mining); their defensive character has also variously been discussed (*pro* Chatzidimitriou and Chidiroglou 2014: 320–24; *contra* Gardner and Seifried 2016).

A synthesis on the Archaic to Roman cemeteries of Karystos excavated between 1994 and 2005 was published in 2019 by Maria Chidiroglou (Chidiroglou 2019a, with previous references; 2019b). Six cemeteries were discovered north, west, and east of the modern city, comprising 110 graves with a few funerary goods, including vases, figurines, and jewellery. While in its early phase of development, Karystos probably comprised small,

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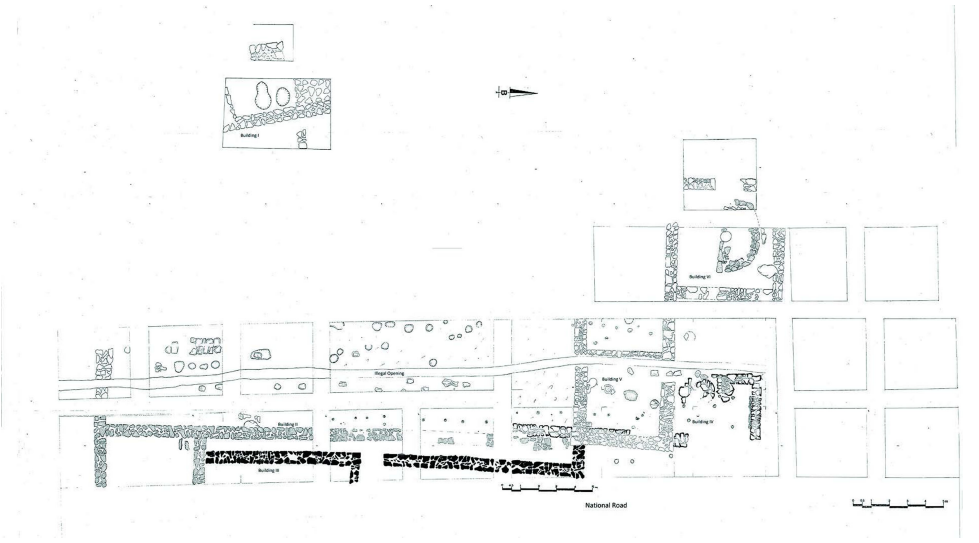


Fig. 4.10. Zarakes: general view of the excavated site. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture: Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea (photograph by A. Chatzidimitriou).

dispersed settlements (Chatzidimitriou and Chidiroglou 2014: 311; Chiridoglou 2015: 325), from the Early Classical to the Roman period a main civic centre was probably located in modern Kokkaloi and Palaiochora, north of the modern town and south of the Medieval Castello Rosso.

The site of Zarakes, brought to light during rescue excavation work completed in 1997, was the subject of an extensive publication by Athina Chatzidimitriou in 2020 (Figs 4.10 and 4.11; Chatzidimitriou 2020, with previous references). The ancient site is located 3km south of the modern settlement of Zarakes. Architectural remains and material dating from the Late Geometric to the Early Byzantine period were discovered during the excavations. A Late Geometric apsidal building (Building Nr. II) was identified as a temple thanks to the material recovered, among which were a fragment of relief pithos dated to the second half of the seventh century BC and decorated with centaurs and bearing the inscription ἱερός (sacred). The continuity of the cult is attested until the fourth century BC, during which time the shrine was dedicated to Delian Apollo, as attested by an inscribed dedication on a bronze weight.

Southern Euboea – *drakospita*

The *drakospita* – literally 'houses of the dragons' – are stone constructions, mainly found near Styra, in southern Euboea (Reber *et al.* 2021, with full research history; ID18259, ID18588). Their name is linked to ancient local traditions that suggest the structures were built by anthropomorphic giants. A Greek–Swiss team, led by Karl Reber (ESAG), Aggeliki Simosi, and Maria Chidiroglou (EAE) has recently started new explorations to gain a better understanding of these structures. So far, eight *drakospita* are known: Kroi-Phtocht, **Palli Lakka**, Loumithel-Mariza, Limiko/**Kapsala**, **Ilkizes**, Makkou, Mount Ochi, and Dardhza. Built of monumental slabs of marble or limestone, they have a distinctive corbelled roof and a paved floor. The various structures do not all date from the same period (the oldest date back to the Classical period) and they appear to have had different functions over time.

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Fig. 4.11. Zarakes: plan of the excavation. © A. Chatzidimitriou.

At all sites, architectural plans and elevations have been documented, 3D models have been produced, and extensive surveys of the surrounding landscape have been undertaken. Excavations were carried out at two of the sites: Palli Lakka and Ilkizes. With its three buildings, Palli Lakka is the biggest of the sites. Its first occupation is dated between the Classical and Hellenistic periods; occupation then continued in the Roman period, and the site was reused during Medieval times. The proximity of the cipollino marble quarries to the site suggests that the buildings could have been used as dwellings for stone workers. The building located in Ilkizes dates back to the end of the fourth/beginning of the third century BC. Its function was probably devoted to agricultural activities. The only structure devoted to cultic activities seems to be the *drakospito* at the top of the Mount Ochi, that was identified as a small temple, according to the material found in earlier excavations (Reber *et al.* 2021: 169; 2023: 82). Final publication including C^{14} bone analysis will yield new information and will shed light on these special structures (https://www.esag.swiss/fr/regional-studies-surveys/drakospita/).

Ancient quarries

Ancient quarries in Euboea have attracted more attention in recent years. Southern Euboea represents, without doubt, the main stone supplier of the island, and the cipollino light grey to green veined marble is indisputably the most famous due to its wide use trough the Mediterranean (Bruno and Vitti 2012). The Hellenic Ministry of Culture discovered three quarries in 2019 during the construction of wind farms close to Karystos (https://www.tornosnews.gr/en/greek-news/culture/34271-three-ancient-quarries-discovered-in-karystos-south-evia-during-installation-of-wind-parks.html). Additionally, the Greek–Swiss research project on the *drakospita* in southern Euboea gave the opportunity to conduct an extensive exploration of the region and its quarries. Publications in preparation by Chloé Chezeaux (ESAG), Jérôme André (ESAG), and Tommy Vettor include

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petrographic and chemical analysis of the quarries located close to Palli Lakka. As Maria Chidiroglou has shown in her recent synthesis, cities were exploiting quarries of different types of stones, which were the nearest at hand and most practical (Chidiroglou 2015). This implies that stone resources were extracted in multiple locations. The ongoing Amarynthos project includes an exploration of quarries and extraction techniques in the Eretria-Amarynthos plain. In the frame of this research on ancient building technology, Jérôme André in collaboration with Marilou de Vals (Sorbonne University) will perform petrographic and chemical analyses on building material present in both sites and compare them with quarries samples. As a case study, Chloé Chezeaux mapped the quarries situated in the territory of Eretria and addressed several issues related to their exploitations, such as location, extraction traces, communication routes, and distribution (Chezeaux 2022).

Underwater investigations

Between 2006 and 2016 a large underwater survey, the *Southern Euboean Gulf Project*, was conducted under the direction of the EUA and the Hellenic Institute of the Maritime Archaeology (Koutsouflakis 2017; 2018a; https://ienae.gr/ερευνα-νοτίου-ευβοϊκού-κόλπου/). The goal was to explore the coastline in the area extending between Sounion, Kavalliani Island, and Karystos in search of shipwrecks and traces of ancient navigation. Twenty-eight shipwrecks dating from Late Archaic to Late Byzantine period were discovered, and 300 isolated finds were also located, mainly amphoras and anchors. Twenty-three of the vessels were carrying amphoras of the same or mixed type, three of which were also transporting tiles and stones, and two had tableware on board. Among the identifiable wares, for six ships the provenance of the pottery included pieces from Sicily, the Adriatic region, and north Africa. Many anchors were discovered, most of them stone, as well as lead cores or wooden anchors, covering a wide chronological range from the prehistoric until the Late Byzantine period; few of these anchors could be connected to any specific wreck-sites, though (Koutsouflakis 2018b, many details on the anchors are provided in this article).

Concluding thoughts

The archaeology of Euboea has truly flourished over the last 10 years and this brief review cannot give full justice to all the work that has been done; it merely highlights some of the investigations, although unfortunately leaving many other aspects aside.

It is thanks to the successful completion of these different types of explorations that our understanding of the human occupation of Euboea has expanded so much during the past years. Extensive excavation undertaken during construction works has expanded the map of ancient remains, while systematic digging in the frame of academic projects has improved insights on ancient societies and their traditions. Moreover, intensive and extensive surveys have revealed new sites and occupation patterns, and the publication of results has made new data more available. In addition, international teams have been at work on many projects in association with the Ephorate of the Antiquities of Euboea, showing the importance of collaborations in the scientific community. Naturally, imbalances are still noticeable. If our knowledge in some regions of Euboea – notably the southern part of the island – has grown exponentially, our colleagues are paving the way in expanding research in other areas, such as in the north or in underwater explorations. Undertaking multiple types of investigations with international teams will be key in developing future projects, as well as in preserving and enhancing ancient sites.

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