

Balboura Survey

Balboura is a small city in Northern Lycia that was particularly active under the Roman Empire; visited and partially surveyed by travellers in the nineteenth century, it had never been studied in depth. A survey was proposed, and in 1985 a two-week preliminary investigation was made during the first half of September. A preliminary plan of the entire city was created, which included areas and details not previously recorded. The site and its surrounding territory was deemed to be an excellent candidate for a full survey and epigraphic work in the future.

Based on these positive results, a full season of work was undertaken in 1986, with J.J. Coulton directing a six-member team. One of the main aims of the project was to understand Balboura's relationship to the surrounding territory in terms of its urban development. In 1986, they focused on the city and its immediate surroundings, conducting a topographical survey on the lower city and necropolis area. Some exploration of the city's water supply was undertaken, and surveys of the two pipelines discovered were made. Many previously published inscriptions were found within the city, as well as 20 new texts, which in some instances lent insight into the site's architecture. The small temple of Nemesis and its exedra, the arched agora gate, aqueduct, mausoleum, and bath building were also studied. Sherds were gathered and analysed, providing evidence for occupation periods in and around the city.

The second full season of work occurred between 13 July and 22 August 1987. Two teams of surveyors were successful in mapping the site's physical features and major archaeological features. Surface pottery was systematically collected and was subsequently analysed to understand the different types of pottery used at the site, as well as to see how the frequency of sherds from different periods changed across the settlement area. Six new inscriptions were discovered, bringing the total number found to 58; where possible, squeezes were made. Approximately 100 sarcophagi were recorded and tile graves were also discovered. Some rock reliefs depicting the Dioscuri were found. Outlying sites were investigated, with a settlement site and the ruins of a church and fortification discovered in the process. Six crates of collected material were taken to the Fethiye Museum for future study.

Work resumed the following year from 1 August 1988 until 3 September. The focus fell on village territories near the Balboura city site, namely: Karaculhayaylası and Karahasantaşı, Çaltılar, Çobanisa, Bekçiler, and Doğanlar. About forty sites were found (primarily by asking locals), representing many different periods. Pottery sherds dating back to the fifth or fourth millennium BC were collected at a prehistoric tumulus near Çaltılar, as well as at Karahasantaşı Hüyükü. The Roman and Late Roman periods are represented best, however, by fourteen sites in the region. Five new inscriptions and nineteen votive reliefs were recorded.

In the season lasting from 9 July to 3 August 1990 they focused on systematically collecting pottery from the upper city at Balboura and at Büyük Karlığaç Kayası. They made some additions and corrections to the city plan, verifying locations of marked monuments. The upper theatre was planned in detail and plans of three of the churches in the city were created. New rock reliefs and inscriptions were also discovered. A study season was undertaken between 17 September and 6 October, at Fethiye Museum, on the pottery from earlier seasons at Balboura.

Survey work continued between 4 August and 14 September 1991. Work was focused on the region west of Balboura, in Muğla. Two strips in the Çaltılar-Çobanisa basin were demarcated and then the surface sherds were collected and counted to get a sense of the site density. The first strip, near Alacam dağı, revealed two Roman settlements with some stone press weights, but very little other

occupation. In the second strip, near Çaylaktepe, a late Hellenistic/Roman settlement was found, as well as some Early Iron Age pottery and some stone tumuli. The team also explored in the southwest part of Balboursa's surrounding regions, in particular the boundary with Oenoanda. A house, a tumulus, some more reliefs depicting the Dioscuri, and some tanks evidently used for grape-pressing were discovered and recorded.

In 1992 some new projects were introduced at Balboursa, in a season lasting between 6 July and 8 August. A palaeobotanical study was introduced, in which sediment from the lakes (Yazır göl and Gölhisar gölü in Burdur) was used to study climate history and vegetation in the region. At the same time, a study was begun of pre-industrialised agricultural practices around Balboursa (specifically in the villages of Çobanisa, Çaltılar and Karaculha yaylası), in the hopes that it would allow for a better understanding of agriculture during Roman and early Byzantine occupation. It was found that dry farming (wheat and barley, specifically) was the dominant method in all, and figures were collected for the seasonal crop yields. Meanwhile, survey work was continued both west and south of Balboursa, specifically around Gökben village, Gölcük village, Seki bucağı, and Gökben. Settlements, tumuli, and sarcophagi were discovered, and all collected surface sherds sent to Fethiye Museum.

The last season at Balboursa was conducted between 9 August and 17 September 1993. The fieldwork aimed at answering certain questions about the region's ancient settlement patterns. To this end they employed a method similar to the one used in 1991, selecting two strips to be intensively surveyed. The first, located 1km east of the city, yielded some Roman settlements, with pottery sherds also pointing to a primarily Roman occupation. In the second strip, located southeast of Kızıl Tepe, they found two small settlements and some ruins that indicated at least some amount of Roman activity. Also investigated was the area just above Gökben Yaylası, where a chamber tomb had previously been discovered. At Balboursa itself, some team members created a plan of an ancient wall along the gorge. All collected pottery was taken to Fethiye Museum for future study.