

Göksu Archaeological Project

The Göksu archaeological project was established in 2002 in an effort to examine the area between Mut and Karaman that would be flooded upon the completion of the Mut dam. Beyond the flooding area, the surrounding regions were also surveyed in order to provide a more general picture of the settlement patterns in this region where little systematic study had been carried out, despite much localised work in the region (for instance, Michael Gough's projects at Alahan, Aloda, and Dağpazarı). A three-week autumn season focused on constructing an archaeological map, collecting sherds, and using a GIA to integrate the GPS data. Three areas were focused on: the village of Kıravga; the area of Çukurbahçe and the rock-cut olive oil processing facility; and the area between Alahan and Aloda, which yielded over 70 tombs and a complex of rock-cut buildings. Outside the survey area, Uzuncaburç, Karakabaklı, and Işıkkale were visited, as well as the Karaman and Silifke Museums, for comparative information.

Work continued in September 2003 as both intensive and extensive survey was carried out between Mut and Karaman. In Kıravga intensive fieldwalking was undertaken, wherein they collected surface artefacts and recorded information about settlement patterns in the area. The area of the Göksü valley between Derinçay and Köprübaşı was also studied. Survey work revealed three small hilltop sites, an Islamic bridge, and a castle (Kariyaman Kale), among other interesting archaeological features. Within the triangle of Alahan-Aloda-Gözenek, the Alahan cemetery was mapped, and 100 of the 150 tombs were planned. Outlying tombs brought the total number of known tombs within 2km of Alahan to near 175. Alahan village was also investigated and found to be the site of a Classical city. At Gözenek much of the main block was planned, with much of the pottery dated to the 13th to 14th century AD; it was tentatively interpreted as a monastic complex built upon a late Roman site. The valley's communication networks were investigated and found to be partially reconstructable thanks to discoveries in the field and within Ottoman tax records. Dağpazarı and Sinapiç, the sites of a castle and a city defence system respectively, were investigated and mapped. Scouting for future work was also a priority, and Cilician sites outside the area (Akkale, Kanlıdivane, Karakabaklı, Aya Tekle, and Cennet ve Cehennem) were visited.

Two seasons were conducted in 2004, the first between May and June and the second in September. The survey work was focused on better understanding settlement patterns and communications and economic strategies. The spring season saw intensive fieldwalking conducted on the areas of Kıravga and Köprübaşı; most of the finds appeared to belong to the Early Bronze Ages. Some cave sites in the mountains above the valley were also surveyed. During the autumn season, ancient inscriptions and tombs from Alahan village were recorded, and the fortification wall was located and investigated. Monuments from Dağpazarı were recorded in detail, and topographic and magnetometric work was carried out. Communication studies continued with the discovery of a caravanserai (tr. han) and a stone bridge near Gençali. Some preliminary research on the valley's geomorphology and geology took place with the help of GPS and GIS technology. Analysis work on the previous seasons' pottery indicated very few imports; material from the Alahan cemetery and the oil press at Hacı Hasan Taşı was almost exclusively early or late Roman. Outside areas continued to be surveyed on weekends.

The 2005 season followed a similar schedule, with a May-June then a September season. Fieldwalking was undertaken in Köprübaşı, around Çömlek Tepesi and Kıravga, and in Alahan. Erosion and environmental change at an Early Bronze Age site at Çömlek Tepesi were studied, and samples were collected in the region for thermoluminescence and petrographic analyses. A similarly detailed investigation was undertaken at the Early Bronze Age site at Kıran Kayası. Alahan was fieldwalked, and a number of new features – including some sections of stone water pipe and

decorated architectural fragments – were found and conserved. The rock-cut cemetery was investigated further, and the recording of all tombs (about 180 in total) was finished this season. Nearby rural settlements were also surveyed, and 35 wine presses, four olive presses, evidence of an ancient Roman road between Karacağaç and Geçimli, and many tombs were found. An enclosure was found at Höbek Başı, dating perhaps to Hellenistic or Late Roman times. Some mosques at Mut and Dağ Camisi were visited, as was Mavga Kalesi.

In the last season in 2006, the same places were focused on: Köprübaşı, around Çömlek Tepesi, and the area near Alahan. Fieldwalkers surveyed some 207ha total, collecting surface finds and recording information as they went. One team surveyed the area north of Çömlek Tepesi, discovering three more hilltop settlements, whilst another worked on the Göksu bank between Köprübaşı and Isıklar. A cave with painted plaster that dated to Roman or Byzantine times was found at Göktepe, and some bronze pottery was discovered at Topkaya. More survey work was undertaken outside the survey area, at Sertavul, the Dağpazarı plateau, Mucuk, and other places. Geomorphological elements of the upper Göksü valley were investigated, with a focus on quaternary sediments along the river.