

The prehistoric settlement of southern Euboea

Lauren E. TALALAY

Tracey CULLEN

Donald R. KELLER

Περίληψη

Αν και η κεντρική και βόρεια Εύβοια κατοικούνταν τουλάχιστον από το 6000 π.Χ., σχεδόν δύο χιλιετίες νωρίτερα αποικίστηκε το νότιο άκρο του νησιού. Σε αυτό το άρθρο συνοψίζονται τα στοιχεία που είναι τώρα γνωστά σχετικά με τον πρώιμο οικισμό στη νότια Εύβοια και τις σχέσεις του με την ευρύτερη περιοχή του Αιγαίου. Η πρωιμότερη θέση που έχει τεκμηριωθεί με ακρίβεια στην περιοχή είναι το σπήλαιο της Αγίας Τριάδας στους πρόποδες του βουνού Όχη, όπου βρέθηκαν κατάλοιπα της Ύστερης Νεολιθικής Εποχής. Κατά τη διάρκεια της Τελικής Νεολιθικής περιόδου και στις αρχές της πρώιμης Εποχής του Χαλκού ο οικισμός απλωνόταν στα απόκρημνα ακρωτήρια που πλαισίωναν τον κόλπο της Καρύστου. Σε αυτές τις περιοχές είχαν ιδρυθεί μικρές αγροτικές και κτηνοτροφικές θέσεις και κάποια πιθανά παρατηρητήρια-παρακτίες τοποθεσίες σε άλλες θέσεις δείχνουν θαλάσσιες δραστηριότητες. Το προφίλ του οικισμού στις δύο μεγάλες καλλιεργήσιμες πεδιάδες είναι αρκετά διαφορετικό. Στον Κάμπο κυριαρχεί ένας μεμονωμένος οικισμός της πρώιμης εποχής του Χαλκού ΙΙ με κτίσματα πολλαπλών δωματίων και βόθρους· σε παρακείμενες θέσεις βρέθηκαν ασυνήθιστα μεγάλα δείγματα οψιανού. Η πεδιάδα Κατσαρωνίου η οποία είναι πιο μακριά από τη θάλασσα απέδωσε επίσης άφθονο οψιανό καθώς επίσης και μια μεγάλη θέση της τελικής Νεολιθικής περιόδου και 7 πιθανούς κιβωτιόσχημους τάφους. Οι τάφοι που παρατάσσονται κατά μήκος της νότιας άκρης της πεδιάδας είναι άδειοι και δεν έχουν χρονολογηθεί άλλα ομοιάζουν με δείγματα της Πρωτοελλαδικής ΙΙ περιόδου που βρέθηκαν σε άλλα σημεία της περιοχής. Στη θέση Γκισούρι των Νέων Στύρων αποκαλύφθηκαν στη σειρά τάφοι από σχιστόλιθο Πρωτοελλαδικών ΙΙ χρόνων στην είσοδο των οποίων οδηγούσε βαθμιδωτή κλίμακα ενώ στρώματα Πρωτοελλαδικών ΙΙ χρόνων στο σπήλαιο της Αγίας Τριάδας απέδωσαν υλικό που οδηγεί στις Κυκλάδες γεγονός που υποδηλώνει εντατικές θαλάσσιες επαφές. Στην περιοχή δεν υπάρχουν κατάλοιπα των Πρωτοελλαδικών ΙΙΒ ή Πρωτοελλαδικών ΙΙΙ χρόνων, μόνο δύο μεσοελλαδικές θέσεις και λίγα διάσπαρτα μυκηναϊκά ευρήματα είναι γνωστά. Σε αυτό το άρθρο οι εισηγητές αναζητούν μια εξήγηση για την ταλάντευση της πυκνότητας και την φύση της κατοίκησης λαμβάνοντας υπ' όψιν τους ζητήματα περιθωριοποίησης, απομόνωσης και συνεκτικότητας.

*Introduction*¹

Over the last few decades we have learned a considerable amount about the earliest settlement of southern Euboea and its relationship with Greece and the wider Aegean. Unlike the central and

1. Our thanks to the organizers of the conference 'An Island between Two Worlds' for inviting us to participate and to contribute an article to the proceedings. SEEP, a long-term, multidisciplinary research effort begun by Donald R. Keller and the late Malcolm Wallace in 1984, is conducted under the auspices of the Canadian Institute in Greece, with permits overseen by the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in Chalkis. We gratefully acknowledge the support of both institutions. We would also like to thank Karl Longstreth for his help in obtaining the base image for Figure 1.

northern reaches of Euboea, which were sparsely populated by at least 6000 BC, the drier, more rugged southern portion of the island does not seem to have been inhabited until nearly two millennia later, in the later part of the Neolithic.² In this article we consider when and why the southern region was first colonized, what kinds of sites were established, how long the sites continued to be viable, and how these settlements fit into the broader perspective of life in the Aegean. The data we summarize are drawn from 35 years of work conducted by the Southern Euboea Exploration Project (SEEP) and from other recent investigations. We begin with an overview of work in the region, followed by a discussion of concepts relating to the variable density of habitation—marginality, insularity and connectivity—in an effort to better understand current evidence.

Since 1986, SEEP has undertaken a series of surface surveys that cover three separate but roughly contiguous areas: 1) the Paximadi Peninsula, which forms the western arm of the Karystos Bay; 2) a large alluvial plain (the Kampos) north of Paximadi; and 3) the territory to the east of the bay, known as the Bouros-Kastri Peninsula (Figs. 1, 2).³ A brief salvage excavation was also carried out in 1979 at Plakari, a Final Neolithic (FN) site on the Paximadi Peninsula.⁴ More recently, Plakari has been the focus of systematic excavations jointly sponsored by VU University Amsterdam and the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities.⁵ A survey initiated by the Norwegian Institute at Athens in 2012 continues to explore the upland Katsaronio Plain north-west of Karystos.⁶ The cave at Agia Triada, situated in the foothills above Karystos, was excavated from 2007 to 2010 under the auspices of the Ephorate for Palaeoanthropology and Speleology of Southern Greece, in collaboration with SEEP.⁷ Finally, excavation sponsored by the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities has taken place at Gkisouri, an Early Bronze (EB) II site near Nea Styra, which marks the northern boundary of southern Euboea.⁸ As a final report has appeared for only the prehistoric remains from the Paximadi Peninsula, the findings discussed below are necessarily preliminary.

The various parts of the investigation have taken place in different environmental zones, resulting in a good sampling of the region. Southern Euboea, and especially the Karystia, angles away from the Greek mainland, extending east into the Aegean and south toward the Cyclades. In terms of geology, topography and climate, the region is aligned with the northern Cyclades and southern Attica rather than the well-watered, fertile plains of central Euboea or the more forested northern reaches. Barren, rugged highlands and *phrygana* vegetation dominate the south, although the two large arable plains—the Kampos and the Katsaronio—are noteworthy. To the north, the imposing mountain ranges of Mount Ochi (c.1400 masl) act as an overland barrier. The Euboean Gulf, however, would have provided an attractive way to circumvent the Mount Ochi ridge system. Surrounded on three sides by water and a mountain range to the north, southern Euboea may well have functioned in prehistory as an ‘island within an island.’⁹ The insular nature of the region and its physical orientation, located at a juncture of major maritime routes, undoubtedly shaped its history.

Investigations carried out since the early 1980s indicate that prehistoric occupation in southern Euboea was sporadic, supporting a series of small settlements, beginning with a Late Neolithic (LN)

2. For possible Middle Palaeolithic and Mesolithic remains on Euboea, see Sampson 2006, 20–22, figs. 6, 7; Sarantea-Micha 1996. Early Neolithic remains have been tentatively identified at Koilos Cave (Sampson 1981, 70), but no details have been given.

3. For Paximadi, see Cullen et al. 2013; for the Kampos, see Tankosić and Chidiroglou 2010. A monograph on the survey of the Bouros-Kastri Peninsula is in the final stages of revision: Wickens et al., In prep.

4. Keller 1982.

5. Crielaard et al. 2011–2012; 2013; 2014; 2016; Forthcoming.

6. Tankosić and Psoma 2016.

7. Mavridis and Tankosić 2009; 2016. See also Katsianis et al., this volume.

8. Kosma 2010; 2012.

9. Cullen et al. 2002; see also Tankosić, this volume.

cave and rock shelters at Agia Triada. The ensuing two millennia, however, are characterized by a marked increase in occupation; surveys of the region have revealed a substantial number of sites and findspots, most ranging in date from the FN to EB II (c.4200 to 2200 BC). The Paximadi Peninsula produced 20 FN-EB II sites and findspots, the Kampos at least 10 that were clearly prehistoric or had a prehistoric component, the Bouros-Kastri region another 12 prehistoric findspots, and the Katsaronio Plain yielded 23 findspots with prehistoric material, all tentatively dated within the FN-EB II range.¹⁰ In addition, two Middle Helladic sites are known from the area, Lefka, located near Nea Styra at the northern boundary of the study area, and Agios Nikolaos, 2 km north-east of modern Karystos (Fig. 2).¹¹ Evidence for the Late Bronze Age continues to be scanty, a surprise in view of the legendary importance of the region in the Homeric epics and the appearance of the name 'Karystos' (*ka-ru-to*) on an inscribed Linear B nodule from Thebes.¹² In the following pages, we describe a few of the more informative sites in the region, and then consider the changing pattern of settlement over time.

Rugged hills and coastal bays

The Paximadi Peninsula and the Bouros-Kastri area embrace the Karystos Bay and share several features: a rugged landscape, a number of easily accessible, small coastal bays, and peaks and ridges that offer excellent inter-site vistas and panoramic views of the sea and nearby islands. Although both areas are likely to have been agriculturally marginal, the uplands probably provided good pasturage, and the sea would have afforded fish to supplement the local diet.

Plakari, which was subject in 1979 to a few days of salvage excavation, has provided tantalizing remains of a predominantly FN settlement on Paximadi.¹³ The excavated pottery includes fine pattern burnished vessels (Fig. 3a), red slipped and burnished ware, and cheese-pots (Fig. 3b), which find parallels with material from excavated FN sites in Attica and on Kea, Aegina and as far away as Crete.¹⁴ The lithics consist largely of discarded debitage and splintered flakes. The primary material is obsidian, presumably imported from Melos as raw nodules and decorticated on site. One such nodule is illustrated here, along with a bifacial arrowhead of honey flint, which is likely to have been imported from western Greece or the region of modern Albania (Fig. 4). A large, unmodified lump of copper and iron minerals, perhaps of FN date, was recovered in a road scarp prior to excavation. Lead isotope analysis of the sample suggests that its source may have been a mine at Kallianou, several hours' walk from Plakari.¹⁵

From 2010 on, Plakari has been the focus of renewed fieldwork. Although primarily concerned with historical levels at the site, the project has also enhanced our understanding of the FN occupation of the ridge,¹⁶ which was more extensive than originally posited, extending over at least 1 ha, and possibly as much as 2 ha.¹⁷ Remains of several stone foundations were unearthed on the slope north-east of the summit. The most extensive set of walls appears to represent a rectangular, domestic structure that

10. For references, see notes 3 and 6, above.

11. For Lefka, see Sackett et al. 1966, 78-80; for Agios Nikolaos, see Tankosić and Mathioudaki 2009; 2011.

12. Hom. *Il.* 2.536-2.545; *Od.* 3.174-3.179. For the Theban nodule, see Piteros et al. 1990, 153-154.

13. Cullen et al. 2013, 21-42, fig. 4; Keller 1982. Plakari and other sites on the Paximadi Peninsula also produced possible examples of EB I ceramics, but the evidence is ambiguous (Cullen et al. 2013, 71-74).

14. For discussion of FN ceramic parallels, see Cullen et al. 2013, 68-71; Nazou, this volume; 2014, esp. 297-303. The ceramics recently published from Kontra Gliate (Kiapha Thiti) and Mine 3 at Thorikos in Attica (Nazou 2014, 88-260) exhibit a number of similarities to the pottery from Plakari.

15. Cullen et al. 2013, 40-41.

16. See especially Crielaard et al., Forthcoming.

17. Crielaard, pers. comm. An earlier estimate of 0.6 ha (Cullen et al. 2013, 42) was based on the distribution of FN finds in the area of the 1979 trenches.

contained a hearth near the entrance and a possible foundation deposit. Probably contemporary with that building are two small annexes, one of which may be associated with a concentration of burned or calcinated animal bones suggesting the roasting and burning of meat. Stretches of large terrace or defensive walls were discovered nearby and may also date to the FN. Preliminary analysis of the finds from the new excavations demonstrates that they are generally comparable to those found in 1979, and consist of obsidian and flint tools, hammer stones and axes, spindle whorls and ceramic wares with parallels primarily with Attica and the Cyclades.

Roughly 800 m west of Plakari lies Kazara, an FN site of approximately 0.3 ha in size, situated on a windy ridgetop.¹⁸ Surveyors recorded stone rubble walls and daub, along with a small collection of pottery, mostly limited to coarse utilitarian wares (Fig. 3c). No examples of the fine pattern burnished ware typical of Plakari were found. The steep and exposed setting of the site suggests that Kazara was not occupied year-round. If Plakari and Kazara were contemporary, the inhabitants of Plakari may have used the high ridge for the summer grazing of herds or, given its expansive views of surrounding territory, as a lookout for defensive or other purposes.

Just south of Plakari and within view of Kazara is Agia Pelagia, located along the shore of a rocky promontory.¹⁹ Survey of the site has revealed extensive architectural remains, an empty cist grave and abundant pottery. With surface material covering 1.4 ha, it appears to have been markedly larger than Kazara, and on a scale with Plakari. The northernmost building consists of several small rectangular rooms bordered by narrow corridors, reminiscent of the small corridor houses at EH II Zygouries and Lithares.²⁰ The ceramic assemblage is confined to FN-EB II examples, with most dating to EB II (Fig. 3d). Of particular interest are a number of finely made sauceboat fragments, and a classic piece of yellow mottled ware, probably imported from the mainland. Although the structure with corridors may indicate that Agia Pelagia served as a public gathering place, the sauceboat fragments suggest the possibility that those assemblies were reserved for drinking among the elite. Agia Pelagia seems to have functioned as a coastal settlement that maintained contacts with neighbouring regions and helped shape emerging social asymmetries in the region.

Also deserving of mention is Akri Rozos, an extensive FN-EBA site of 1.5 ha that occupies a headland jutting into the Euboean Gulf. Surveyors traced sections of a perimeter wall, punctuated along the north-eastern rim by built drains and semicircular bastions.²¹ Comparable configurations are known from FN Strophilas (Andros), EC III Kastri near Chalandriani (Syros), and EH III levels at Kolonna (Aegina).²² The purposes of such enclosures are not known, but a reasonable possibility is protection from pirates or raiders, at the same time serving as a visible statement of power or as a territorial claim. The material remains from Akri Rozos point to far-ranging Aegean contacts and emerging social complexity. The pottery spans FN-EH II (Fig. 3e) and is broadly similar to ceramics from the Cyclades and southern and central Greece, but also includes some idiosyncratic pieces. Celts and handstones, one fashioned from non-local volcanic lava, were also collected, along with spindle whorls, two small bronze or copper bits, abundant obsidian and a lump of unworked ore.

Unlike the Paximadi Peninsula, which was the target of intensive survey, the Bouros-Kastri Peninsula, on the other side of the bay, was extensively surveyed by teams using pre-modern land routes as survey transects. In general, the two peninsulas appear to have had comparable histories. Of the 12 findspots located on Bouros-Kastri, most are on or near the coast; all can be dated to the FN or early phases of the EBA. As on Paximadi, no remains date definitively to EB IIB (Lefkandi I culture) or III

18. Cullen et al. 2013, 49-51, fig. 13.

19. Cullen et al. 2013, 51-57, fig. 18. Agia Pelagia was excavated briefly in 2000 by the Greek Archaeological Service, and is now covered by a sewage treatment plant.

20. Zygouries: Blegen 1928, 25, fig. 21; Pullen 1986; Lithares: Tzavella-Evjen 1985, 7, fig. 5.

21. Cullen et al. 2013, 57-62, fig. 25.

22. Strophilas: Televantou 2006, 186-187, figs. 174, 176; Kastri: Bossert 1967, 57; Kolonna: Felten 1986, 26, figs. 12, 13.

and there is no evidence for Middle (MBA) or Late Bronze Age (LBA) occupation. The settlement pattern is also dispersed and sites are generally small, well below half a hectare. None of the findspots indicates a scale comparable to either Agia Pelagia or Akri Rozos, suggesting that the more rugged eastern side of the bay sustained only small farmsteads (and possible lookouts), not places built for larger collectives. The chipped stone assemblages indicate mostly local working of obsidian, although one site, Agioi, provided evidence for non-local production, perhaps by specialized knappers.²³ The pottery from Agioi is also notable for its parallels with pottery from EB II mainland Greece (see, e.g., Fig. 3f for a flat-topped bowl with a *kerbschnitt* pattern on the lip).

In four locations—Spilia, Agioi, Kalamos and Bouletza—there were traces of architecture, but without excavation the dates of these features cannot be securely assigned. Higher elevations with good viewsheds were sometimes selected. Spilia, a rocky crag at 298 masl, for example, has a panoramic view of the Paximadi Peninsula, and a 360° vista of the area; pottery included large vessels with taenia bands, datable to FN (Fig. 3g). The coastal site of Kalamos included the remains of a possible cist grave, reminiscent of the example from Agia Pelagia and similar structures at the edge of the Katsaronio Plain (see below). Also from Kalamos came a sauceboat with traces of dark Urfirnis paint (Fig. 3h), which provides a secure EB II date for the site. At FN Bouletza, located on an upland rocky plateau, surveyors recorded rubble walls, coarse ware and a pattern burnished bowl sherd (Fig. 3i).

Two important prehistoric sites were found in the rugged areas north of the bay: the Agia Triada Cave, located at the foot of Mount Ochi, and Agios Nikolaos, an MBA settlement close to modern Karystos. The cave attests to the earliest occupation in the area, with ceramic links to the so-called Saliagos culture, dated to the end of the LN. Excavators uncovered a series of hearths, one of which was associated with a structure and attached platform, and apparent offerings, including a large LN clay vessel and an anthropomorphic protome resembling a figurine from Kephala, on Kea.²⁴ In addition, the cave produced abundant remains of FN pottery and, unusual for a subterranean context, several EBA human burials associated with well-preserved food remains, metal finds and grave goods that exhibit affinities with the central Cyclades.²⁵ The overall impression is that Agia Triada was used over time for ritual rather than domestic purposes. Moreover, recurring similarities with Cycladic material culture suggest regular maritime connections with the Cyclades, both its northern reaches and the central islands. Rock shelters below the entrance to Agia Triada and a small cave above the site also produced LN and FN remains.²⁶

Agios Nikolaos, one of only two MBA sites currently known in southern Euboea, is of particular interest since it marks a shift in settlement patterns and offers evidence for local metal production. Located inland atop a rocky ridge, it has possible circuit walls, traces of apsidal structures, and surface remains covering c.0.4 ha. Approximately 9% of the ceramic assemblage is said to comprise imported wares of Cycladic origin; other finds, which suggest metalworking, include a swage stone possibly used to shape tools, a fragment of a bronze ingot, tweezers, a modest amount of slag, and clay crucible fragments.²⁷ The existence of a single modest and well-defended inland site in the Karystia points to either nucleation of the local MBA population or a notable decrease in the number of people who inhabited the region.²⁸ A few kylix stems may indicate a Mycenaean visit to the site, but, as elsewhere in southern Euboea, there is no solid evidence for LBA habitation.²⁹

23. C. Perlès, pers. comm.

24. Mavridis and Tankosić 2009, 49, 51-52, fig. 2, nos. 3, 4; cf. Coleman 1977, 68, no. 128, pls. 26, 73.

25. Mavridis and Tankosić 2016.

26. Keller 1985, 125-127.

27. Tankosić and Mathioudaki 2011.

28. Nucleation of sites during the MBA elsewhere in the Aegean has also been argued: see, e.g., Broodbank 2000, 347-349; Cherry 1979, 43-46; Renfrew and Wagstaff 1982, esp. chapters 4, 11, 19.

29. Sackett et al. (1966, 104-105) commented on the surprising absence of Mycenaean sites, noting only one dubious candidate at Philagra and one possible LH IIIC sherd from the Styra area.

The other MBA settlement in southern Euboea is found farther north at Lefka, near Nea Styra. It was reported in the 1960s as a substantial EBA-MBA site worthy of excavation, but few details are available.³⁰ Excavations directed by the late Maria Kosma at Gkisouri, located just north-east of Lefka, have provided vital information that has increased our understanding of southern Euboea during the EBA, particularly the interconnections of the area with the Cyclades. Gkisouri is the probable findspot of three Early Cycladic (EC) figurines found at the end of the 19th century, and recent work at the site has uncovered three large graves with stepped *dromoi* and sides lined with schist slabs.³¹ The discovery of additional fragments of EC II figurines and pieces of marble vessels of typical Cycladic shape prompted the excavator to compare Gkisouri to the cemetery at Tsepi, across the Euboean Gulf on the plain of Marathon.³² It seems likely that Gkisouri was the cemetery associated with Lefka, a settlement positioned strategically to take advantage of maritime traffic, much like Akri Rozos to the south and Manika to the north.

Fertile plains

The FN and EBA remains from the two large arable areas in the Karystia—the Kampos and the Katsaronio Plain—provide intriguing contrasts to the settlement of the Paximadi and Bouros-Kastri Peninsulas, and raise questions about the dynamics of life in the overall region. The Kampos, located near the Karystos Bay, is dominated by a single large EB II site (1.5-2 ha in size), Agios Georgios. Excavation by the Greek Archaeological Service in 1992 revealed wall foundations for multi-roomed, rectangular structures, some of which were large enough to support a second storey, and pits or *bothroi*.³³ Survey subsequently identified additional findspots in the Kampos, some close to the large site and all seemingly of EBA or FN-EBA date.³⁴ These findspots consist almost exclusively of obsidian scatters, with very little pottery and no architectural remains. One findspot, 07N35, is located just west of Agios Georgios, and produced several thousand pieces of obsidian from an area 100 x 150 m. The tools represent specific types, suggesting an area dedicated to special production. Two other sites, 07S28 and 06N16, also contained relatively high numbers of obsidian; the entire lithic reduction sequence is represented in the former, while the latter has been interpreted as an area for blade and flake production. No comparable concentration of lithics appears on either the Paximadi or Bouros-Kastri Peninsula, underscoring how different the activities conducted in the Kampos were from those in the hills and along the coastal bays of the region.³⁵

By contrast, the other fertile plain in the region, the Katsaronio, occupies a large, well-watered upland area some distance from the sea and closer to the deep bay at Marmari than to the Karystos Bay. Survey work has only recently been completed in this area, and findings have not yet been published. It is likely that the focus of activities on the two plains differed: the Kampos oriented to sites near modern Karystos, and the Katsaronio looking westwards towards Marmari and environs. We assume that the plains were used for agricultural production, but the abundant obsidian in both the Katsaronio and the Kampos also points to overseas contacts and the possible existence of emporia. Survey of the Katsaro-

30. Sackett et al. 1966, 78-80.

31. Wolters 1891; Kosma 2012, fig. 3.

32. Kosma 2010, 34-35.

33. Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1992, 178, fig. 4.

34. Tankosić and Chidioglou 2010.

35. Cape Mnima, one of the nearest landfalls on Paximadi for traffic from the south (see Fig. 2), yielded 31 obsidian pieces, including raw nodules, but almost no pottery. It is tempting to view Cape Mnima as an intermediate working station for processing raw nodules, or even as a landing site for vessels bringing the raw material from Melos to southern Euboea, but if so the scale of operation would seem to have been much smaller than at the Kampos sites.

nio Plain in 2012-2014, followed by revisitation of sites in 2015, documented 23 prehistoric findspots, 18 of which are characterized by scatters of lithics, predominantly obsidian, and little or no pottery. The half-dozen sites with both pottery and lithics occur on the fringes of the agricultural plain or on high areas within it, whereas the lithic scatters are confined to the plain itself, a pattern also seen in the Kampos.³⁶ Tankosić reasonably proposes that this pattern is the result of the prehistoric inhabitants of the region wishing to maximize the area devoted to agriculture, and consequently situating larger settlements on the edges of the area.³⁷

Of particular interest on the Katsaronio Plain was the discovery of a major FN site on a schist outcrop, Gourimadi, which has yielded a large number of obsidian arrowheads, iron-rich slag and a well-preserved bronze axe or chisel.³⁸ We eagerly await more details from Gourimadi, including evidence for its relationship with other FN sites in the Karystia. Also notable are seven structures built of flat schist slabs along the ridge defining the southern edge of the plain.³⁹ The structures are difficult to date, but could be EBA cist graves, similar to those documented elsewhere in the region. The pottery collected in the survey zone was neither plentiful nor well preserved, and remains to be studied.

As on the Paximadi and Bouros-Kastri Peninsulas, neither the Kampos nor the Katsaronio Plain yielded any recognizable EB IIB-III material, which suggests a hiatus at the end of the EBA. It is also curious that no LN, MBA or LBA finds have yet been identified in either of the plains, reflecting considerable gaps in the prehistoric record for these areas. Despite extensive survey throughout the region, the Agia Triada Cave provides our only indication of an LN presence.

Marginality, insularity and connectivity

Although the remains from survey in southern Euboea are often scrappy and excavations have been limited in extent, we are nevertheless able to offer a general outline of habitation in the region from the LN to the LBA. In this last section we offer a short synopsis of settlement trends, followed by thoughts on how best to interpret the evidence.

As described above, southern Euboea seems to have been first visited (possibly for ritual purposes) or briefly occupied only towards the end of the LN. Where these individuals came from and how often they frequented the region are not known. Judging from the pottery, these initial inhabitants had ties to the Saliagos culture, and their short-term occupation coincides roughly with an expansion into agriculturally marginal areas of the Aegean. During the ensuing FN, the landscape of southern Euboea begins to fill with scattered small farmsteads, lookouts and a few sites with stone-built architecture. The material remains point to ongoing contacts within the region as well as to a wider web of communication, particularly with Attica and the northern Cyclades.

Although it is difficult to distinguish locations settled only in the FN from those newly founded in the EBA, sites that seem to be predominantly EBA suggest the ushering in of new social alignments. Four substantial communities are now documented (Agios Georgios with an abundance of obsidian and *bothroi*, Agia Pelagia containing a structure with corridors and fine wares perhaps used for elite gatherings, Akri Rozos characterized by towers and walls, and Lefka, associated with a cemetery of schist-lined graves). If contemporary, these sites may each have controlled strategic locations: Agios Georgios might have overseen the Kampos (and possibly the importation and processing of obsidian), Agia Pelagia the maritime traffic into the Karystos Bay, and Akri Rozos and Lefka the Euboean Gulf.

36. Tankosić and Psoma 2016.

37. Tankosić, Forthcoming.

38. Tankosić and Psoma 2016.

39. Tankosić and Psoma 2016.

The appearance of several possible EB II cist graves extending from Paximadi and the Bouros-Kastri region to the northern boundaries of southern Euboea may imply that organized burial of the dead, often used to mark ancestral control of surrounding territory, was becoming an important social and economic strategy. The apparent absence of EB IIB-III material indicates a possible hiatus, but the area was (re)occupied in the following period. The two known MBA sites, Agios Nikolaos and Lefka, may suggest a trend towards settlement nucleation. Finally, the area appears to have been virtually abandoned by the LBA, with no evidence of further habitation until the Protogeometric period.

Although these generalizations about oscillating densities and settlement patterns establish a baseline, many questions remain. Some scholars have suggested that the initial movement into more marginal lands during the 5th and 4th millennia can best be explained parsimoniously.⁴⁰ Broodbank, for example, speculates that with the population rising on the mainland—and much of the best land probably being ancestrally held—communities periodically splintered and spilled into other regions, and island life became a ‘second-best’ but ‘tolerable’ alternative.⁴¹ Agriculturally marginal areas such as the Paximadi and Bouros-Kastri Peninsulas may also have been considered tolerable, if not ideal, options. Others have argued that the primary move to colonize marginal areas toward the end of the Neolithic, particularly upland regions on the Greek mainland, was driven by a rise in pastoralism, which itself may have been partially set in motion by the onset of drier environmental conditions.⁴² While not discounting the importance of pastoralism, climatic forces or population pressure, Halstead and Tomkins have recently focused on social motivations to explain movement into marginal lands. Halstead, for example, suggests that the desire for the increasing autonomy of individual households encouraged groups to break away from larger communities while still maintaining networks of exchange and interdependence among newly formed, dispersed settlements.⁴³ Tomkins’ proposal is similar: newly scattered communities and trade set the stage for the socio-economic diversification of the Bronze Age.⁴⁴

In some ways southern Euboea can accommodate all of these models. The uplands were presumably well suited for herding and pastoral activities, and the rocky, previously uninhabited slopes south of Mount Ochi afforded limited agrarian potential for a tolerable existence in a new area. The notion of an increasing drive for household autonomy is also within the realm of possibility, given the small size and dispersed nature of FN sites, good inter-site visibility, and evidence for both local interaction and limited exchange with more distant regions. While these features provided a safety net in a risk-prone environment, the small, scattered nature of the sites argues for an interest in maintaining discrete domestic units rather than communal areas and shared resources. Although some combination of these paradigms may help explain the early occupation of southern Euboea, the area’s mosaic of topographic zones complicates the issue of marginality: the fertile plains provide some of the best arable land in the greater region. One might think that these plains should have been an enticement for settlement in the FN (if not before), but we cannot assume that the plains were farmed during that long period. It may well be, instead, that the FN settlements dispersed throughout the region were sustained for generations by household-based horticulture, herding in the uplands and limited fishing. The plains, with their heavier alluvial soils, may not have been agriculturally exploited until the EBA, when ox-driven ploughs were adopted, and the plains were viewed as an important commodity, and as sources of power and valuable agricultural surplus that might be traded. As noted above, the Kampos and Katsaronio

40. See, e.g., Broodbank 1999, 33-34; 2000, 131-135; 2013, 215; Cherry 1981, 58-61, for the widespread movement at the end of the Neolithic onto peninsulas and islands throughout the Mediterranean. In this scenario, southern Euboea would have served as a jumping-off zone for the colonization of the northern Cyclades.

41. Broodbank 2013, 215.

42. Broodbank 2008, 284-285; Cherry 1981; Halstead 1996; Roberts et al. 2011.

43. Halstead 2000, 111-115; 2008, 248.

44. Tomkins 2008; 2010.

Plain may have been deliberately settled sparsely in order to maximize agricultural yields.⁴⁵ The fluid relationship between the plains and the agriculturally more marginal peninsulas and uplands surely played an important role in the settlement of the region, but the precise dynamics are as yet unclear.

We are on firmer footing when we explore the applicability of notions such as insularity and connectivity to the prehistory of southern Euboea. Although the extensive literature on insularity is often confined to the study of islands, it has long been recognized that the concept does not apply simply to land masses surrounded by water. Rather, the concept should be conceived metaphorically, with insular regions, water-bound or not, defined by cultural and physical isolation, a sense of special identity or uniqueness, and a conscious idea of boundedness.⁴⁶ True insularity is rare: even ostensibly isolated and insulated cultures usually participate to some degree in contact, trade or communication outside their own small spheres. Insularity and connectivity are in some senses, then, two sides of the same coin.

Certain physical features may have helped maintain a real or perceived notion of distance from other areas. Bordered on the north by the towering ridge system of Mount Ochi (Fig. 5) and surrounded by water on its other sides, the Karystia projects a feeling of insularity. Indeed, in climate and topography, southern Euboea is virtually indistinguishable from the nearby northern Cyclades. Shared identity, which surely helped encourage a sense of boundedness, is suggested by the relative homogeneity of pottery, architecture and burial practices during both the FN and EBA. Close intraregional connections would have been useful for various reasons: to find mates nearby, to cross-breed flocks with neighbouring herds, to aid one another in harsh economic times and perhaps to rely upon shared specialists for long-distance trade.⁴⁷ All of these links could have been cemented with periodic ceremonial feasts at regional gatherings, facilitated by the proximity of sites, many only a few hours' walk from one another.

We can plausibly view Mount Ochi and the nearby mountain chains as impeding interaction farther north, thus promoting the island-like feel of the region, but it would be a mistake to view the waters surrounding southern Euboea as an equal hindrance to external contacts. The consistent and ongoing choice of site locations either near the coast or with wide-ranging views of the sea implies a maritime orientation. Moreover, as noted above, similarities in ceramic production and style can be traced with northern Kea, eastern Attica and even Crete throughout the FN. During the EBA, the region participated in the wider *koine* of the time. Imports other than obsidian, though hardly abundant, include the honey-flint arrowhead from Plakari, yellow mottled ware and sauceboats from Agia Pelagia, the handstone of non-local lava from Akri Rozos, and a small piece of possible talc ware from Agia Paraskevi, at the southern tip of Paximadi.⁴⁸ Although such items may have served utilitarian purposes, they also silently transmitted the prestige of those who acquired them, making powerful political or social statements about access to distant communities, non-local materials and foreign knowledge.⁴⁹ These exotic goods further substantiate an underlying web of interrelated communities across the Aegean, with the inhabitants of southern Euboea taking part actively in seafaring and trade or receiving others from around the Aegean.

The southern shores of prehistoric Euboea were strategically situated to take advantage of maritime traffic in the Aegean, whether as a stopping point for a longer journey between north and south or through the Euboean Gulf, as a final destination, or as a temporary safe harbour during storms.⁵⁰ It is possible that the largest sites in the area—Agios Georgios (and 07N35) on the Kampos, Akri Rozos on

45. Tankosić, Forthcoming.

46. For a discussion of prehistoric Karystian identity, see Tankosić, this volume.

47. Broodbank 2013, 226.

48. Cullen et al. 2013, 39, 55, 62, 64.

49. cf. Fitzpatrick 2008, 8.

50. For a discussion of the Euboean Gulf as a maritime entity and conduit that shaped nodes of interaction in the LBA and Early Iron Age, see Knodell, this volume.

the gulf, and Agia Pelagia on the Karystos Bay—served as EB II centres for the reception and transport of Melian obsidian. We have yet to determine whether some sites received the raw or modified material for their own use or whether they functioned as emporia, moving obsidian farther north into Euboea or west onto the mainland. As gateways for both obsidian and other valued commodities, these sites may have served different catchment areas. Lefka, too, may have been part of this network; finds from the nearby EB II cemetery at Gkisouri are evidence of clear connections with the Cyclades.

In sum, the balance of insularity and connectivity in southern Euboea shifted over time. In the LN, the barely occupied region may have appeared insular although its inhabitants established ties with the Cyclades and the mainland. From the FN to the EBA, the outwardly connecting webs emanating from southern Euboea grew stronger, participating in a Mediterranean that was, in Broodbank's words, 'slowly promoted from being simply something crossable to becoming the focus of newly emergent social constellations'.⁵¹ After an apparent hiatus in southern Euboea in EB IIB-III, the dispersed settlement pattern characteristic of several millennia was replaced in the MBA by a nucleated pattern: at least one of the two sites known, Agios Nikolaos, exhibits evidence of outside contact and possibly limited metal production. In the LBA, however, for reasons unknown, the area is once again virtually uninhabited, and no longer a player in the robust activities that occurred in and around the Aegean.

51. Broodbank 2013, 217.

Bibliography

- Blegen, C. W. (1928) *Zygyouries: A Prehistoric Settlement in the Valley of Cleonae*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bossert, E.-M. (1967) 'Kastri auf Syros: Vorbericht über eine Untersuchung der prähistorische Siedlung'. *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 22(Μελέται Α1), 53-76.
- Broodbank, C. (1999) 'Colonization and Configuration in the Insular Neolithic of the Aegean'. In Vol. 2 of *Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology [Neolithic Society in Greece]*, edited by P. Halstead, 15-41. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Broodbank, C. (2000) *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Broodbank, C. (2008) 'Long after Hippos, Well before Palaces: A Commentary on the Cultures and Contexts of Neolithic Crete'. In Vol. 8 of *Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology [Escaping the Labyrinth: The Cretan Neolithic in Context]*, edited by V. Isaakidou and P. Tomkins, 273-290. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Broodbank, C. (2013) *The Making of the Middle Sea: A History of the Mediterranean from the Beginning to the Emergence of the Classical World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cherry, J. F. (1979) 'Four Problems in Cycladic Prehistory'. In *Papers in Cycladic Prehistory*, edited by J. L. Davis and J. F. Cherry, 22-47. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Cherry, J. F. (1981) 'Pattern and Process in the Earliest Colonisation of the Mediterranean Islands'. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 47, 41-68.
- Coleman, J. E. (1977) 'Kephala: A Late Neolithic Settlement and Cemetery'. Vol. I of *Keos*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Crielaard, J. P., E. Barbetsea, X. Charalambidou, M. Chidiroglou, M. Groenhuijzen, M. Kosma and F. Songu. (2013) 'The Plakari Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report on the Second Field Season (2011)'. *Pharos* 19(2), 35-56.
- Crielaard, J. P., X. Charalambidou, M. Chidiroglou, M. Kosma, D. Lentjes and F. Songu, Forthcoming. 'The Plakari Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report on the Fifth Field Season (2014)'. *Pharos* 22(2), 2016.
- Crielaard, J. P., X. Charalambidou, M. Chidiroglou, M. Kosma and F. Songu (2014) 'The Plakari Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report on the Third Field Season (2012)'. *Pharos* 20(2), 1-24.
- Crielaard, J. P., X. Charalambidou, M. Chidiroglou, M. Kosma and F. Songu (2016) 'The Plakari Archaeological Project: Preliminary Report on the Fourth Field Season (2013)'. *Pharos* 21(2), 117-133.
- Crielaard, J. P., F. Songu, M. Chidiroglou and M. Kosma. (2011-2012) 'The Plakari Archaeological Project: Project Outline and Preliminary Report on the First Field Season (2010)'. *Pharos* 18(2), 83-106.
- Cullen, T., L. E. Talalay and D. R. Keller (2002) 'An Island within an Island? Earliest Settlement of Southern Euboea, Greece'. Presented at the conference 'Settlers and Settlements in Greece, 9000-1000 B.C.', University of the Aegean, Rhodes, Greece, 8 October, 2002.
- Cullen, T., L. E. Talalay, D. R. Keller, L. Karimali and W. R. Farrand (2013) *The Prehistory of the Paximadi Peninsula, Euboea*. Vol. 40 of *Prehistory Monographs*. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press.
- Felten, F. (1986) 'Early Urban History and Architecture of Ancient Aigina'. In Vol. 76 of *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology [Early Helladic Architecture and Urbanization. Proceedings of a Seminar Held at the Swedish Institute in Athens, June 8, 1985]*, edited by R. Hägg and D. Konsola, 21-28. Gothenburg: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Fitzpatrick, S. M. (2008) 'Synthesizing Island Archaeology'. In *Voyages of Discovery: The Archaeology of Islands*, edited by S. M. Fitzpatrick, 1-17. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Halstead, P. (1996) 'Pastoralism or Household Herding? Problems of Scale and Specialization in Early Greek Animal Husbandry'. *World Archaeology* 28, 20-42.
- Halstead, P. (2000) 'Land Use in Postglacial Greece: Cultural Causes and Environmental Effects'. In Vol. 3 of *Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology [Landscape and Land Use in Postglacial Greece]*, edited by P. Halstead and C. Frederick, 110-128. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Halstead, P. (2008) 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Coping with Marginal Colonisation in the Later Neolithic and Early Bronze Age of Crete and the Aegean'. In Vol. 8 of *Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology [Escaping*

- the Labyrinth: The Cretan Neolithic in Context*], edited by V. Isaakidou and P. Tomkins, 229-257. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Keller, D. R. (1982) 'Final Neolithic Pottery from Plakari, Karystos'. In Vol. 5 of *Miscellanea Graeca: Studies in South Attica I*, edited by P. Spitaels, 47-67. Ghent: Comité des Fouilles Belges en Grèce.
- Keller, D. R. (1985) 'Archaeological Survey in Southern Euboea, Greece: A Reconstruction of Human Activity from Neolithic Times through the Byzantine Period'. PhD thesis. Indiana University, USA.
- Kosma, M. (2010) 'New Early Cycladic Figurine at Nea Styra'. *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 10(3), 29-36.
- Kosma, M. (2012) 'ΙΑ' Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων, Στερεά Ελλάδα (2), Στύρα'. In *2000-2010: Από το Ανασκαφικό Έργο των Εφορειών Αρχαιοτήτων*, ed. M. Vlasaki, Athens, 55.
- Mavridis, F. and Ž. Tankosić (2009) 'The Ayia Triadha Cave, Southern Euboea: Finds and Implications of the Earliest Human Habitation in the Area (A Preliminary Report)'. *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 9(2), 47-59.
- Mavridis, F. and Ž. Tankosić (2016) 'Early Bronze Age Burial Deposits at the Ayia Triada Cave at Karystos, Euboea: Tentative Interpretations'. *Hesperia* 85(2), 207-242.
- Nazou, M. (2014) 'Defining the Regional Characteristics of Final Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Pottery in Attica'. PhD thesis. Institute of Archaeology, University College London, UK.
- Piteros, C., J-P. Olivier and J. L. Melena (1990) 'Les inscriptions en linéaire B des nodules de Thèbes (1982): La fouille, les documents, les possibilités d'interprétation'. *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 114, 103-184.
- Pullen, D. J. (1986) 'A "House of Tiles" at Zygouries? The Function of Monumental Early Helladic Architecture'. In Vol. 76 of *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology [Early Helladic Architecture and Urbanization. Proceedings of a Seminar Held at the Swedish Institute in Athens, June 8, 1985]*, edited by R. Hägg and D. Konsola, 79-84. Gothenburg: P. Åströms Förlag.
- Renfrew, C. and J. M. Wagstaff, eds. (1982) *An Island Polity: The Archaeology of Exploitation in Melos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roberts, N., D. Brayshaw, C. Kuzucuoğlu, R. Perez and L. Sadori (2011) 'The Mid-Holocene Climatic Transition in the Mediterranean: Causes and Consequences'. *The Holocene* 21(3), 3-13.
- Sackett, L. H., V. Hankey, R. J. Howell, T. W. Jacobsen and M. R. Popham (1966) 'Prehistoric Euboea: Contributions toward a Survey'. *Annual of the British School at Athens* 61, 33-112.
- Sampson, A. (1981) *Η νεολιθική και η πρωτοελλαδική Ι στην Εύβοια. Αρχείον Ευβοϊκών Μελετών*, Supplement 24.
- Sampson, A. (2006) *Η προϊστορία του Αιγαίου: Παλαιολιθική-Μεσολιθική-Νεολιθική*. Athens: Atrapos.
- Sapouna-Sakellarakis, E. (1992) 'Οικόπεδο Δ.Ε.Η. εκτός σχεδίου πόλεως στη θέση Άγιος Γεώργιος Κάμπου'. *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον* 47(Χρονικά Β1), 177-178.
- Sarantea-Micha, E. (1996) 'Παλαιολιθικά λατομεία-εργαστήρια κατασκευής εργαλείων: Φανερωμένη και Βολέρι Νέας Αρτάκης Ευβοίας'. *Αρχαιολογία και τέχνες* 60, 43-50.
- Tankosić, Ž. (Forthcoming) 'Land Management in the Final Neolithic/Early Bronze Age Aegean? Some Tantalizing Indications from Southern Euboea'. In *Proceedings of a Conference 'Communities in Transition: Circum-Aegean Later Neolithic Stages'*, edited by S. Dietz, F. Mavridis, Z. Tankosić and T. Takaoglu. Oxford: Oxbow.
- Tankosić, Ž. and M. Chidioglou (2010) 'The Karystian Kampos Survey Project: Methods and Preliminary Results'. *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 10(3), 11-17.
- Tankosić, Ž. and I. Mathioudaki (2009) 'Άγιος Νικόλαος Μυλων: Some Speculations on the Bronze Age of Southern Euboea'. In Vol. 2(II) of *Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Θεσσαλίας και Στερεάς Ελλάδας: 2006. Πρακτικά επιστημονικής συνάντησης, Βόλος, 16.3-19.3.2006 [Στερεά Ελλάδα]*, edited by A. Mazarakis-Ainian, 941-949. Volos: Εργαστήριο Αρχαιολογίας Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας; Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού.
- Tankosić, Ž. and I. Mathioudaki (2011) 'The Finds from the Prehistoric Site of Άγιος Νικόλαος Μυλων, Southern Euboea, Greece'. *Annual of the British School at Athens* 106, 99-140.
- Tankosić, Ž. and A. Psoma (2016) 'Prehistoric Finds from the Survey of the Katsaronio Plain, Southern Euboea, Greece: A Preliminary Assessment'. Presented at the 117th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, San Francisco, 8 January, 2016.

- Televantou, C. A. (2006) 'Ο οικισμός του Στρόφιλα στην Άνδρο'. In *Η προϊστορία του Αιγαίου: Παλαιολιθική-Μεσολιθική-Νεολιθική*, edited by A. Sampson, 185-194. Athens: Atrapos.
- Tomkins, P. (2008) 'Time, Space, and the Reinvention of the Cretan Neolithic'. In Vol. 8 of *Sheffield Studies in Aegean Archaeology [Escaping the Labyrinth: The Cretan Neolithic in Context]*, edited by V. Isaakidou and P. Tomkins, 21-48. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Tomkins, P. (2010) 'Neolithic Antecedents'. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Bronze Age Aegean (ca. 3000-1000 B.C.)*, edited by E. H. Cline, 31-49. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tzavella-Evjen, H. (1985) *Lithares, an Early Bronze Age Settlement in Boeotia*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press.
- Wickens, J. M., S. I. Rotroff, T. Cullen, L. E. Talalay, C. Perlès and F. W. McCoy (In prep.) *Settlement and Land Use on the Periphery: The Bouros-Kastri Peninsula, Southern Euboea*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Wolters, P. (1891) 'Marmorkopf aus Amorgos'. *Athenische Mitteilungen* 16, 54-55.

Figures

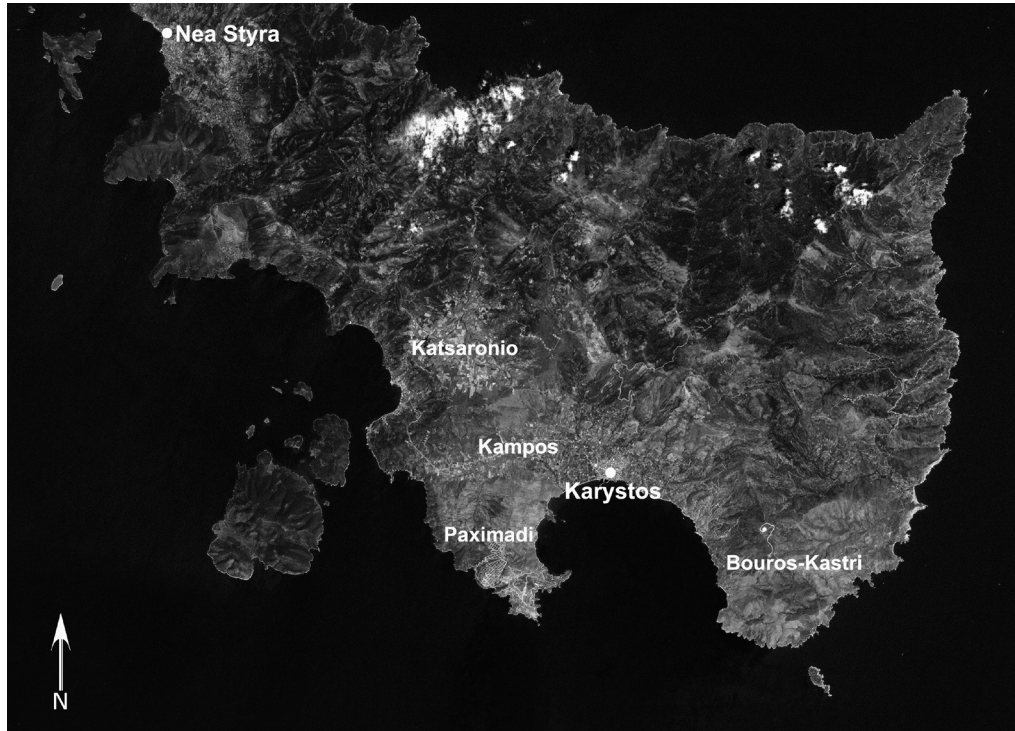


Figure 1: Aerial view of southern Euboea. Photo courtesy ESRI World Imagery.

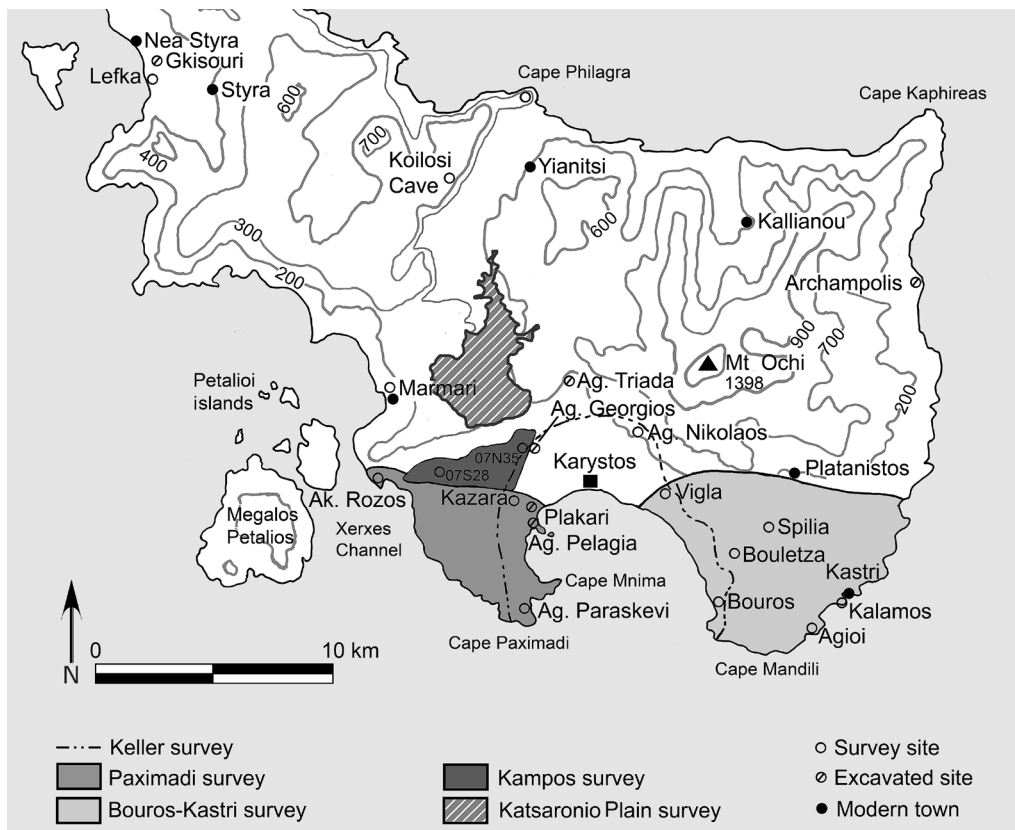


Figure 2: Map of southern Euboea, showing research areas and distribution of sites. Drawing: Todd E. Gerring.

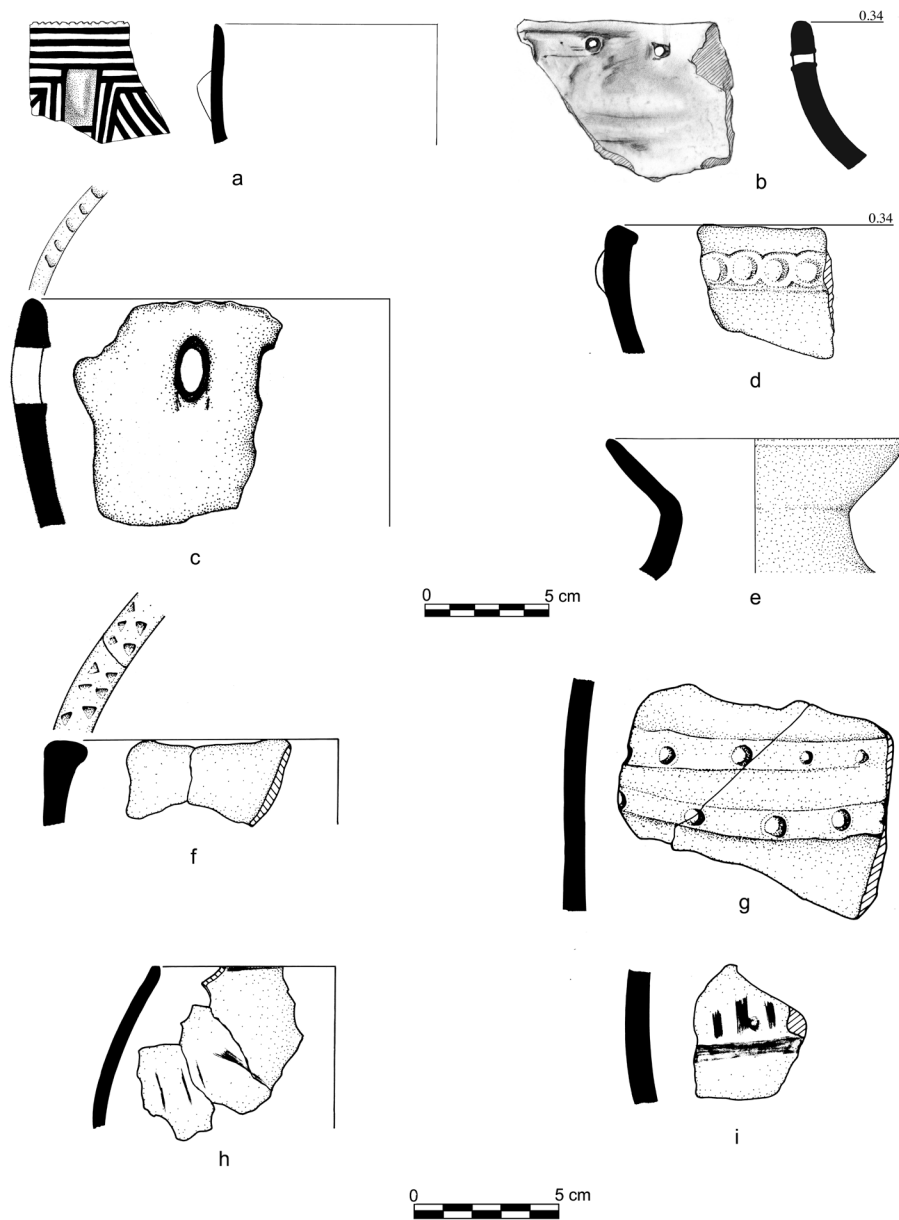


Figure 3: Pottery profiles from Paximadi (a-e) and the Bouros-Kastri Peninsula (f-i): (a) Plakari: pattern burnished bowl; (b) Plakari: cheese pot; (c) Kazara: bowl with scalloped tab; (d) Agia Pelagia: bowl with taenia band; (e) Akri Rozos: jar with flaring collar; (f) Agioi: bowl with *kerbschnitt* impressions; (g) Spilia: jar with taenia bands; (h) Kalamos: sauceboat with Urfirnis pattern; (i) Bouletza: open vessel with pattern burnishing. Drawing: Lauren E. Talalay.



Figure 4: Plakari: obsidian core and triangular honey-flint arrowhead. Photo SEEP Archives.



Figure 5: View of Mount Ochi above Karystos. Photo courtesy Hans R. Goette.