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Rough Cilicia Archaeological Survey Project: Report of the 1997 Season

Nicholas K. Rauh, Purdue University

Note: This report was presented at AIA Panel: Ports and Pirates of the Eastern Mediterranean, Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, Chicago, 1997¹

During the 1997 season the architectural specialists of the Rough Cilicia Regional Survey Team, Rhys Townsend and Michael Hoff, completed analysis of two urban sites -- Selinus and the upper city of Antioch on the Kragos as well as a plan of the "village" Site 28-c-2-a-1 near Kestros (see Figs. 1-2).²

Figures 1 and 2: "Village" Site 28-C-2-a-1; plan of site by Townsend and Hoff

In addition, the walking team directed by Professor Richard Blanton, completed a sweep of approximately 100 sq. km. to complement the 1996 total of c. 50 sq. km. in the northern vicinity of Gazipasha, Turkey. We have currently surveyed the entire southern coastal portion of our intended survey zone. Briefly, this year's work occurred within a 3-5 km. strip of coastal terrain extending from Selinus in the north, past Kestros and Nephelion to Antioch in the south (see figure 3).

1 For a more detailed assessment of this question, see Rauh et al. 2000.

2 This report was transformed from an html format into a PDF by Stanislav Pejša, the data curator at PURR on . The article was lightly edited in order to accommodate the different presentation format. Typos and minor character encoding issues were corrected.

Figure 3: RCSP 1997 Survey Zone

Perhaps most important, we had the good fortune to recruit the services of pottery specialists Kathleen Slane and Richard Rothaus to process this season's pottery as well as the pottery we collected in 1996. Owing to their tireless efforts the team processed some 3500 sherds, now organized into a data base at Richard Rothaus' archaeological laboratory at St. Cloud State University. I need to express my sincere gratitude to all the team members of the Rough Cilicia Survey Project, but perhaps most of all to Professors Slane and Rothaus for assisting us at this juncture. Their work advanced our understanding of the region's archaeology to an important new level.

In a panel specifically designated to the discussion of "pirates and ports," it seems incumbent on me to address this issue with respect to the Cilician Pirates, the description of whose archaeological remains is one of the principal objectives of this project.

Would that this were possible. Unfortunately, the information we have gathered thus far presents an fragmentary, uncertain picture of Cilician pirate culture, underlining the warning delivered to me in private correspondence by Professor James Russell, "what a wisp of a will" it is we seek. Despite the limited character of the information

we have obtained for the Cilician Pirates at present, the information we have gleaned for the Roman and Late Roman settlement of western Rough Cilicia remains increasingly enlightening and valuable to warrant the efforts we are making. This information forms an interesting picture of an otherwise little known region of the eastern Mediterranean world.

Before discussing either the pirates or Roman Cilicia, I need to say a few words about the survey methods employed last season. As usual, the scale of our task exceeded the available work force and resources, forcing improvisations to our intended methodology. During the first half of the season we conducted large-scale mapping, planning, and pottery collections at two urban sites, Selinus and Antioch. As my colleague Rhys Townsend will discuss the architectural work elsewhere, I will focus more on the pottery analysis and its likely historical significance.

Once site limits were determined, pottery collection at all urban and large rural sites occurred within designated "collection areas" (hereafter, CA) of approximately 100 m. square, paced off and recorded on 1:5000 ratio topographical maps and with GPS readings by the field director, Richard Blanton. Here, for example, is the field map of the Collection Areas of Antioch (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4: Survey Map showing Antioch Collection Areas (note CA 4)

Because of new restrictions imposed by Turkish authorities on survey pottery work, the collections of individual team members in a given CA were assembled and "triaged" by myself to reduce them to a "representative sample" for that CA. Pottery was then taken to the laboratory in our hotel in Gazipasha, where every sherd was cleaned and coded (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Jason DeBlock coding pots

Professors Rothaus and Slane then processed the sherd collections and entered them into the data base (see Figs. 6-7).

Figures 6 and 7: Richard Rothaus entering pottery data of 1997 Season; the data table for CA 4 at Antioch showing the chronological breakdown of the collection in an area soon to be discussed by Rhys Townsend.

The data we have produced is accordingly severely reduced from a quantifiable perspective, but, as you can see, it presents a highly accurate chronological analysis of the pottery recovered in a narrowly delineated area. The large urban sites such as Selinus and Antioch generally required as many as 14 or 15 CAs to complete.

One further word about the rural survey is necessary. During the second half of our two-month field season, the impetus to complete the pottery work forced the team to restrict its work in the field further still. Generally working with a skeleton team Richard Blanton explored the rural tracts of the survey zone by ranging along a consistent walking course. The general scarcity of remains outside localized settlement areas probably made this feasible, but it is to be noted that apart from the village site noted above, the architectural remains of these numerous rural sites await investigation.

Now let me turn to the results. First, as I noted, our attempts thus far to isolate the remains of the Cilician pirates proves disappointing. For example, I can report with a good degree of certitude that the kinds of amphora remains necessary to confirm the "wine-for-slaves" thesis of Andre Tchernia with respect to commercial exchanges between the Cilician pirates and the Italian slave traders at Delos are simply non-existent in the survey zone.³ In other words, we have yet to encounter a single sherd of Greco-Italic, Dressel 1, Lamboglia 2, or Brundisian Ovoid jars from Roman Republican Italy. I should add that we have encountered little Hellenistic amphora remains of any kind -- perhaps three to four Rhodian sherds, no Koan, no Knidian, nor Chian amphora remains.

At Antioch, where I personally expected to encounter pirate remains, these findings prove perplexing. The pottery of the site is predominantly Roman, Late Roman and Byzantine. Most disappointing to me were our collections at what everyone on the team affectionately refers to as the "pirate cove" of the lower city (see Figs. 8-9).

3 A. Tchernia, 1986, 68-74, who goes so far as to describe the Roman wine trade as the engine of the slave trade at Delos.

Figures 8 and 9: Views of "the Kragos" and the "Pirates' Cove" at Antioch

Here, we recovered one lone Hellenistic sherd, little Roman, somewhat more late Roman, but predominantly Byzantine ceramics of the 10th - 12th centuries AD (Figs. 10-11). While there is adequate evidence to demonstrate habitation in the upper city before the founding of Antioch by the King of Commagene in 51 AD, there is practically none for the so-called "pirate's cove" itself.

Figures 10-11: Byzantine Green-White Painted Ware and Sgraffito Ware from the Lower Castle at Antioch

Findings like these might appear to challenge the effectiveness of our collection methods, were it not for the fact that we did accomplish a consistent retrieval of Hellenistic fine wares, such as this fish plate from Laertes, at every urban site except Kestros, an exception that possibly confirms the norm (see Fig. 12).

Figure 12: Hellenistic fish plate from Laertes.

The presence of Hellenistic fine ware with little amphora remains of course suggests that the patterns of ceramic distribution for the western Rough Cilicia region are more complicated than the simplistic thesis of Tchernia demands. We will have to await further results before attempting a definitive statement.

Architecturally, from a Hellenistic standpoint the results thus far are equally disappointing. At Antioch, for example, where I truly expected to find undisturbed pirate remains, all that has surfaced is a meager wall extending along the eastern ridge above the site (Figs. 13-14). The masonry, shown here, appears pre-Roman, and its length and location perhaps indicate a likely function as a circuit wall. However, its width is so pitiful that one may legitimately question its effectiveness.

Figures 13-14: Views of a Possible Fortification Wall on the Ridge above Antioch

I hesitate to draw any further conclusions about the pre-Roman settlement of the region while the data remains imperfect. At Antioch, for example, we have discovered pre-Roman pottery "oozing" from the edges of large terrace works along the cliff's edge near the town center.

Pre-Roman remains, such as the possible Late Bronze Age cookpot sherd shown here, appear to lie below as much as 3 meters of early Roman fill (see Fig. 15). That there was pre-Roman habitation at this site is undeniable; whether we will ever possess sufficient data to characterize it remains to be seen.

Figure 15: Possible Late Bronze Age Stewpot Rim with Handle Attachment from the Area of "Pirates' Cove" at Antioch.

Figure 16: View of Selinus from northeast.

Selinus, the other site to be discussed in detail by Rhys Townsend, presents a clearer picture. Architectural remains, such as the courses of ashlar masonry at the base of the Byzantine castle on the acropolis, similar in construction to the Hellenistic stretches of wall at the Alanya castle, confirm the existence of a pre-Roman settlement (Figs. 17-18).

Figures 17-18: View of the Selinus castle; Courses of ashlar masonry in the walls of Selinus castle

This is supported as well by a consistent and unbroken sequence of ceramic remains that begins with the Classical Greek Era and extends through the Late Roman. Our discovery, for example, of what appears to be the rim of a "Persian era" Phoenician amphora (see Fig. 19), conforms well with the accounts of Herodotus (I.28) and the Babylonian Chronicle that Selinus, referred to as Salleme, formed part of the contested border territories of the Lydian and Persian empires in the sixth century BC.⁴

4 See Brandt 1992: 25.

Figure 19: Rim sherd of Phoenician amphora from Selinus

As I noted, the existence of Hellenistic remains at every urban site in the survey zone except Kestros demonstrates the existence of a consistent, albeit highly restricted pattern of settlement at the time of the Cilicia pirates. Thus far, the evidence for Hellenistic settlement in rural zones remains extremely limited. Despite a minimum of evidence to confirm the existence of pirate bases at sites such as Antioch and Iotape (Figs. 20-22), where any pre-Roman evidence seems important in view of their supposed founding in the mid first century AD, the presence of several small but viable Hellenistic cities in the region, cities whose Roman era inscriptions record the existence of "boule kai demos" -- supports the contention of my British colleague, Philip de Souza, that what Roman sources refer to as Cilician pirates may need to be reinterpreted as the militarily aggressive elements of the autochthonous Cilician aristocracies and their supporters.

Figure 20: Iotape, domestic quarter

Figures 21-22: View of rough fashioned wall in the domestic quarter at Iotape; similar construction on a cliff above the modern highway. For plan and discussion of Iotape, see the 1996 report.

For the Roman era we can report with more confidence that the development of our region surpasses expectations. As the survey map (see Fig. 2) indicates, settlement expanded from urban centers to neighboring hilltop villages and hamlets. Terracing combined with the omnipresent remains of locally produced Zemer 41 transport amphoras, and olive and wine pressing installations, such as the one seen here at Laertes (Fig. 23), confirm the development of this emerging population around the exportation of locally produced agricultural goods.

Figure 23: In-situ Press Elements at Laertes

Although I reported in 1996 the discovery of Roman era kiln sites, owing to our failure to locate surface remains of a confirmed kiln structure, the verdict is still out. Several of these sites, such as this at the Delice Çay (see Fig. 24), could instead be maritime depots, the fire destruction of which formed the clumps of baked earth we consistently encounter. What I can confirm, however, is the existence of a local production now of three types of amphora.

Figure 24: Team members making grab collections at the Delice Çay Kiln Site.

The one "kiln" site everyone agrees about is the Biçkici Kiln Site, or as the sign on the main highway here indicates (Figs. 25-27), the site of the "Red Pirates' Love Cave."

Figure 25: Road Sign for the Selinus Castle and Red Pirates' Love Cave (Yacht Harbor and Beach)

Figures 26-27: View of Bickici Cave Promontory from south; Roman Era Tower adjoining the Kiln Site

Figure 28: View of entrance to one of the Bişkici caves containing potable water; the water system still services the residents of the T.C. Forestry Service community at the site.

The cave itself contains subterranean streams of potable water and clay beds (Fig. 28). Although we are yet unable to locate a kiln structure, the field beside this cave is laden with sherds, all of the same visible fabric, of a Zemer 41 jar, and a Koan-style jar (previously confused by team members with actual Koan jars). Thanks to the careful eye of Kathleen Slane, handles, rims, and toes of the "Pamphylian amphora" have emerged at this as well as at the Syedra Kiln Site and appear to be of local fabric as well (see Figs. 29-30).

Figures 29-30: Pamphylian amphora handle and toe recovered at Syedra Kiln Site.

As members of the audience may recall, Virginia Grace (1973) drew a direct connection between the presence of Pamphylian amphoras at Delos and the Mithradatic and Cilician pirate assault on the island in 88 and 69 BC. Pamphylian amphora remains have also shown up at Antioch. However, the use-chronology of the locally produced form (third-fourth centuries AD) prohibits us at present from attempting any further hypotheses. The presence of these sherds in the region offers yet another example of how complicated and unexpected our emerging picture of Roman and Late Roman Era Rough Cilicia may ultimately prove.

Apart from this I hasten to add that for the Roman and Late Roman eras our remains are extensive and suggest that western Rough Cilicia was far more thoroughly integrated into the Mediterranean exchange of material goods than previously recognized. Our amphora remains originate from throughout the Mediterranean basin, including Dressel 6 from Italy, Dressel 20 from Spain, Tripolitanian amphoras from North Africa (Figs. 31-32), and two well known types of Aegean Transport amphoras of the Late Roman era (Athenian Agora K-113 and K-115; Figs. 33-34). Our fine wares were imported primarily from Cyprus--as the superabundance of Cypriote Sigillata (nine different forms so far; for the Form P-11 with rolled rim, see Fig. 35), and Late Roman Cypriote Red Slip (seven different forms so far (forms 1-2, 7-11; confirm (for Form 7, see Fig. 36).

Figures 31-32: Tripolitanian Amphora Rims

Figures 33-34: Fragments of Agora K-113 and K-115

Figures 35 and 36: CS P-11 Bowl from Kestros; CRS Form 7 from Antioch.

However, our collections have reaped fragments of practically every major circulating type of Roman fine ware. Since the bulk of this data dates to the first two centuries AD, one is inclined, with George Bean and Timothy Mitford, to identify the rapid urban expansion of this region with the growing regional influence of Roman provincial administration. In fact, the high visibility of the Flavian and Antonine emperors in the region -- witness the possible cenotaph to Trajan at Selinus, the Temples-cum-Hero Cult to the Flavian and Antonine emperors at Kestros (Fig. 37) -- suggest that the region's export capacity was stimulated by its relatively close maritime proximity to Roman military efforts further east. Tombs of Roman veterans, such as this one honoring an ex-centurion, C. Julius Celer at Selinus, possibly corroborate this development (see Figs. 38-39).⁵

⁵ See Bean and Mitford 1962, for the tomb of Herennius Maximus at Syedra and one other in the region.

Figure 37: Temple bearing Dedication to Roman Emperoro Antoninus Pius at Kestros

Figures 38 and 39: Inscribed Tomb of C. Julius Celer at Selinus, CIL III.225

In any event, the cities of Rough Cilicia tended to enjoy their prosperity long into the Late Roman Era. With luck and further effort our understanding of growth and development in the settlement patterns of western Rough Cilicia will improve as we continue our work in the coming season.

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