

## Zagora Archaeological Project: 2019 Season

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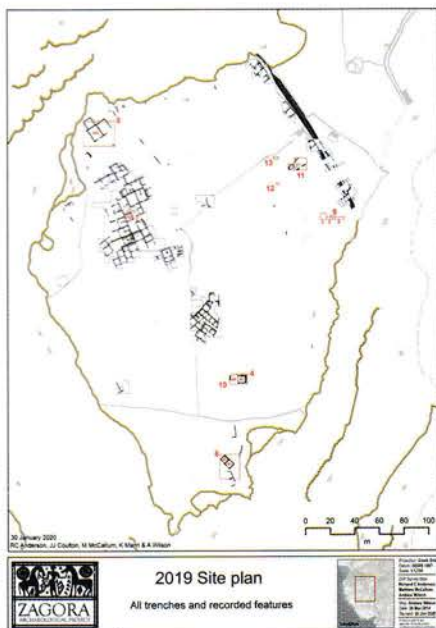


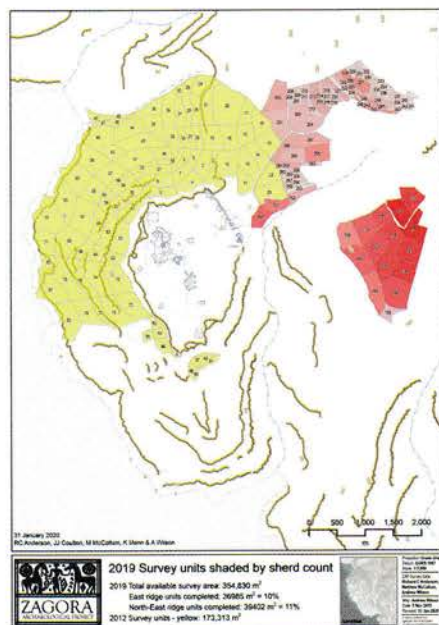
Fig. 1: 2019 site plan of Zagora showing excavation areas.

In July 2019 the Zagora Archaeological Project (ZAP) team headed eagerly back into the field. Having taken a five year break since our last fieldwork seasons of 2012, 2013 and 2014 in order to focus on studying, analysing and publishing our findings, we were very excited to be back on Andros again to resume our investigations at the site.

Thanks to the award of funds made by the Nicholas Anthony Aroney Research Fund and also a generous donation by the late Professor Alexander Cambitoglou, we were able to undertake three intensive weeks of work at the site. This was the first time that the ZAP team had worked in the height of Greek summer, previously having conducted its field seasons from late September onwards, and our first week at Zagora unfortunately coincided with a heatwave when daily temperatures reached 37 degrees Celsius in the shade! Our team of 22 people showed extraordinary energy, fortitude and commitment in achieving so much under such challenging conditions, and we are deeply appreciative of their superhuman efforts.

This year the joint AAIA and University of Sydney team was delighted to welcome Jodi Cameron who represented our valued industry partner GML Heritage Pty Ltd. GML most ably took on responsibility for the re-design of ZAP's public website, following which Jodi created live blog posts from the field: these can be viewed at <http://zagoraarchaeologicalproject.org/blog/> As always, we were most grateful for the permission granted us to conduct our fieldwork by the Cycladic Antiquities Ephorate of the Greek Archaeological Service, and were touched by the warm welcome and daily support we received from the community of Batsi, the seaside village on Andros that we call home during our fieldwork seasons, as well as by the staff of the Archaeological Museum at Chora.

Fig. 2: 2019 site plan of Zagora showing survey areas.



Our 2019 field research focused on excavation (Figure 1), archaeological surface survey and infra-red remote sensing (Figure 2), and was designed to build on and further extend the work we had already undertaken in our previous fieldwork seasons at Zagora. In 2019 we were particularly interested in exploring evidence for any supra-household level 'industrial' activities within the settlement boundaries of this Early Iron Age community of the 9th and 8th centuries BC. Outside the fortified settlement zone we aimed to determine the existence of any extra-mural evidence of occupation and activities as well as any indications of where the occupants of Zagora buried their dead.

The archaeological surface survey that we conducted in the site's hinterland beyond the fortification wall complemented the coverage and results of the original survey we conducted in 2012. This highlighted the fiercely nucleated character of the Zagora settlement by confirming the almost total

lack of occupation beyond the fortified zone. One area that was subjected to infra-red remote sensing by Dr Hugh Thomas implicated itself as a location in need of further investigation as a possible necropolis associated with the Zagora settlement: indeed the discovery of two Protogeometric/Subprotogeometric burials, probably in this area, by farmers in 1899 and reports of later chance finds associated with burials increases the likelihood that the sub-surface thermal signatures detected by infra-red imaging belong to graves. Thermal imaging captures the differential heat retention/heat loss of the ground once the sun goes down: as sub-surface features retain heat longer than simple soil deposits, potential buried archaeological deposits can therefore be identified for 'ground-truthing' or further investigation. Given the remote location of Zagora, it was decided that it would be safest to camp at the site in order to conduct this post-sunset thermal imaging work. On two occasions, a small team of the hardest team members therefore joined Dr Thomas in camping out at Zagora, enjoying stunning sunsets, the call of Scops owls, and the evocative peace of the abandoned Geometric settlement.



Fig. 3: Trench 11 under excavation from the air. Photograph: Hugh Thomas

Three excavation trenches were opened in the central east part of the settlement, some 10m inside the fortification wall, where our previous 2014 fieldwork had located a section of what appeared to be an 'industrial' processing facility, and where geophysical testing in 2012 had detected a large sub-surface magnetic anomaly. One of our 2019 trenches, Trench 11 (Figure 3), continued our earlier excavations in this area to reveal the whole ground plan of the processing installation. This was equipped with two clay-lined schist installations, between which lay a thick layer of ash. Samples were taken for now ongoing soil chemistry analysis that is aimed at clarifying what material was being processed. Trench 13 meanwhile investigated the previously identified magnetic anomaly, revealing a built structure inside which metal smithing had been conducted. Trench 12 was placed close by, over an area where previously Dr Hugh Thomas had, via infrared remote sensing, detected the presence of another, possibly industrial, feature. While further work is still required to reconcile the infrared signature with the excavated remains, the huge quantity of animal bone dumped in this trench suggests nearby processing of faunal material at a supra-household level. Also significant here was the Middle Geometric chronology of the material excavated, which pre-dates the far more commonly occurring Late Geometric material excavated elsewhere on the site and offers data for the settlement's earlier history. Given the character of this trench, a very unexpected find here was that of a faceted rock crystal pendant (Figure 4).

In sum, the 2019 fieldwork provided us with a completely new perspective on Zagora by identifying an area of the site devoted to processing or 'industrial' activities. Given the location of this area close to the fortification wall and its position on, and adjacent to, what appears to be a wide thoroughfare partially excavated in 2014, it would seem that manufacturing/processing occupied a prominent place in the life of the eighth century settlement, thereby inviting reconsideration of the economic complexity and socio-political organisation of this Early Iron Age community.

Fig. 4: Faceted rock crystal pendant from Trench 12. Inv. 19-017, scale 1:1

