

Suggested Citation: Stein, Carol A. "DU Team 1 Final Report, 1999." Ancient Corinth: The Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey, 1999.

DU Team 1 Final Report, 1999

Eastern Korinthia Archaeological Survey

Carol A. Stein

July 31, 1999

I. Data

Team 1 recorded a total of 123 discovery units, 10 of which were unsurveyed. The locations of these units are plotted on a series of six aerial photographs:

Photo Number	Scale	Discovery Units
1	1:5000	2–11
2	1:5000	12–53
3	1:5000	54–101
4	1:5000	1, 102–106
5	1:2500	107–113
6	1:5000	114–123

All of the units have been digitized, although not all of their dimensions verified, and there are a few outstanding problems with the locations of the early DUs on the slopes of Mt. Oneion (DUs 2–15). These problems will be fixed when the geomorphic units in this area have been finalized. All of the DU forms have been entered, and those up to DU 85 have been proofed against the original. I have requested a Microsoft Access report from Richard that will contain the following information: DU number, toponym, type of unit, land cover, total sherds/tiles/lithics/other, and (if room) a list of features.

Only two possible LOCAs were identified. Both are concentrations of Greek and Roman material, one in DU 86, the other in DU 123. In each case, for the time being, the boundaries of the LOCA conform to the boundaries of the DU. More detailed information about these LOCAs and artifact patterning throughout the survey area may be found below and in each of my weekly reports.

II. Narrative: Week 4 (7/26/99 to 7/29/99): DUs 101–123

Archaeological survey concluded this week on Thursday, June 29th, with both survey teams using Friday, June 30th, for data entry and report writing. An additional 23 units were walked, covering roughly xx sq km. On Monday afternoon, Team 1 completed work on the transect E of Xylokeriza, reaching the top of Rachi Boska and meeting up with the training DUs walked on 6/28/99 (DU 1, 500, and 1000). We then shifted to the NE edge of Boska, to explore a series of terraces on the N slope of the ridge. These terraces lie below a dense LOCA (Middle Neolithic–Late Roman) that was being investigated by Team 2. Near week's end, both teams descended to the floodplain N of Rachi Boska to explore the region known as Perdikaria.

DU 101–106 Crest of Rachi Boska (completion of Xylokeriza transect)

Six additional units were walked at the crest of Rachi Boska to complete the transect E of Xylokeriza. All of these units were walked within either olive or almond groves where we encountered variable visibility. Low to moderate artifact densities were recorded, with counts increasing slightly as we approached the north edge of Rachi Boska (N end of DU 102; DU 104). The finds are primarily Greek and (Late) Roman in date, although we did note an increase in lithic fragments (obsidian flakes) as we approached the northern edge of the ridge. There was a surprising lack of prehistoric pottery in this area, given the substantial prehistoric remains on the eastern side of the ridge, but some of this may be due to walker inexperience in recognizing the material. At the moment, it appears that the western side of the ridge was less heavily utilized (in all periods), but the area has not been plowed as deeply or as recently as the eastern side and this may be distorting our impression.

DU 107–113 Terraces along northern slopes of Rachi Boska

Upon completion of the Xylokeriza transect, Team 1 moved to the northern slopes of Rachi Boska, immediately north of the LOCA at its eastern end. We explored this area in a series of seven units, starting from the edge of the crest (DU 107) and working our way downslope. There are a series of terraces along this slope, most of them manmade, although the uppermost was partially formed by geomorphic processes. We suspected that a road leading to the crest of ridge ran along this uppermost terrace, and thus it was separated out from the others for investigation (DU 108 and 109). The remainder of the terraces were grouped together and walked as three units—DU 111 (olive rows cut into marl, on the eastern side of the slope), DU 112 (terraces with scattered olives, in the center of the slope), and DU 110 (a young olive grove occupying a wide terrace whose upslope edge is supported by an intact stretch of Cyclopean wall). Finally, DU 113 was walked in a mature olive grove along the western side of the slope, where the terraces are more widely spaced.

The finds from the northern slope appear to be quite similar to those encountered in the LOCA above: a range of prehistoric material from MN to LH, with Greek (Classical/Hellenistic?) and Roman components as well. Numerous cut blocks were noted throughout the area, most likely fallen from above, and a large number of grinding stone fragments were found as well. Large numbers of Corinthian pan tiles were recorded, and Tim has suggested that there were burials covering much of this northern slope, some of which appear to have been looted fairly recently. The uppermost terrace had a slightly higher density of artifacts, particularly prehistoric, which may confirm its use as a roadway.

DU 114–123 Perdikaria

After exploring the slopes of Rachi Boska, Team 1 moved north, across a paved E–W road, to begin investigating the region known as Perdikaria. Our goal was to sample as much of this area as possible before the end of the season, and thus priority was given to N–S trending fields and fields with good visibility. DUs 114–118 and 121 are located in an E–W trending floodplain that lies between Rachi Boska and the western edges of the Ayios Dimitrios ridge. DUs 119, 120,

122, and 123 are located on a series of terraces that ascend the Ayios Dimitrios ridge, most of which are supported by built walls. The lowest of these terraces comprises a long, linear feature that runs NW–SE, along the southern edge of DUs 119 and 120. The wall supporting this terrace is difficult to trace in my area, but sections of the wall further to the east (in Team 2’s area) are made of large stones and are rather well preserved. It is possible that this terrace supports a road, similar to that explored in the Marougka area further to the south.

Artifact densities in the floodplain were quite low, although we noted a slight increase in the number of finds as we approached the first terrace (linear feature). The finds are almost exclusively historical in date, Classical to Late Roman, although one possible EH body sherd was found in DU 116. DUs 119 and 120, located atop the first terrace, contained modest amounts of primarily Roman material, as did DU 122, on the next terrace above. In the last unit of the season, DU 123, an olive grove located atop yet a third terrace, we recorded a concentration of Greek and Roman material potentially high enough to be considered a possible LOCA. A higher concentration of tile was noted in the southern (and downslope) portion of the field, but the density of artifacts was consistent throughout the remainder of the unit. Unfortunately, with no data from the surrounding fields, it is difficult to know whether the concentration of material in DU 123 is a localized anomaly or part of a more widespread and intensive pattern of land use on the Ayios Dimitrios ridge. The finds include Greek and Roman fine wares (Archaic to Late Roman), amphorae, cookware, pithos fragments, a lamp fragment, and a loomweight.

3. Assessment

Methods: In general, our flagging system worked well, in fact, better than I’d thought it would, but I have reservations about the comparability of data between the two teams despite our efforts to standardize the instructions given to the walkers. Clearly, given the moniker that Daniel has given my team (“The Handle Team”), there are differences in the kinds of things that are being flagged. I suspect there may be unintended biases in the SUIR forms that will only become apparent after further analysis of the data. Several incidents of flags being pulled overnight were frustrating to say the least, and, if at all possible, in future seasons every effort should be made to complete the processing of finds the same day a unit is walked. Obviously, more flags are essential, and some system needs to be devised to help walkers keep track of the number of flags they plant.

Staffing and Scheduling: Having prior survey experience was certainly a plus, but other skills turned out to be more useful, i.e., a knowledge of ceramics, computer experience, the ability to speak modern Greek. Our morning work schedule (ca. 7:00 am to 1:00 pm) seemed fine, although energy levels were low indeed from 12:00 to 1:00 pm. More problematic was the afternoon work session, which was fine for entering data (provided enough computers were available) but too short for getting any serious work done in the field. This is more a transportation/logistical issue, but one that needs to be fixed for future seasons.

Documentation and Forms: The DU form was time consuming to be sure, but its length obviated to a great extent the need to write in the notebooks (see below). Clearer instructions need to be given about how to fill in the Modern Sweep portion of the form and it would be useful to have

Lita actually fill out a few of the forms in the field to see what kinds of observations she thinks are important. The section on ceramic functional types also needs to be given more thought: What do we intend to do with this information? Should we try to reconcile the check boxes on the DU form with the data on the SUIR forms? Should there be a minimum density of artifacts in a field before these boxes are even checked? As the DU forms for my team now stand, almost every unit has the same four boxes (FW, LU, HU, AR) checked. The visibility section of the form became clear only midway through the season, despite Rob's best efforts to explain it earlier; this shouldn't be a problem in future seasons. Some confusion still remains on the land cover section—especially about when to note secondary types of cover (weeds, grasses, etc.). Finally, I was unclear on when to fill out an “unwalked” DU form, but I suppose this is something that can always be done retroactively.

Notebooks: Despite best efforts, I fell behind in writing in my notebook. As mentioned previously, the length of the DU form removes the need for much writing in the notebook, but I still believe certain kinds of information need to be recorded there: a list of DUs walked that day; any staffing changes or interruptions in the daily schedule; also, perhaps, a narrative of the geomorphic issues that arose on a given day and how they were addressed.

DUs/GUs: The system of laying out DUs worked fairly well, although usually when we had larger blocks of time rather than during the short afternoon work sessions. A laser range finder is essential for this task and one should be standard equipment for each team. I also think it would be helpful if team leaders were briefed on upcoming geomorphological features/issues prior to beginning work in a particular area (perhaps with one joint meeting a week between the team leaders and the geomorphs). In addition, and if possible, GU and DU digitizing should be compared and reconciled on a weekly basis.

Communication: There were various difficulties with communication this season, not all of which were technological in nature. I suspect that many of the problems with the walkie-talkies early in the season were attributable to operator error, and that, in general, they worked surprisingly well. I was able to contact *somebody* almost all of the time, even if it wasn't exactly the person I wanted to reach. I don't know how expensive mobile phones are, nor how reliable the cell phone system is, but it may be worth thinking about in the future. At various points in the season, I would need to leave my team to show the processing team the location of earlier units; perhaps this is something the geomorphologist or Field Director could do. Or perhaps this will not be necessary if the processing team(s) follows more closely on the heels of the survey crews. More problematic was the communication between the Field Director, the geomorphs, and myself; at times I received either piecemeal or conflicting instructions that were only clarified when I was able to speak with Tom and Naomi/Greg simultaneously. If team leaders were included in the initial discussions of an area, or at least present at one of the later joint discussions, it might alleviate the need for this kind of “down-the-line” communication and the attendant miscommunications that can result.

Consistency: Once the final DU form had been settled on, and once we understood how to assess a field's visibility, I believe our team's observations became quite consistent. My lingering queries about land cover assessment and the modern sweep were mentioned above. The true test of our consistency will come when someone tries to utilize the data on the forms.