

SOME PROBLEMS IN MACEDONIAN PREHISTORY

Despite recent developments in the techniques of archaeology and excavation, there has been very little new work on the prehistory of Macedonia. For all that it enjoys a unique position at the crossroads between the Anatolian, Aegean and Balkan worlds, Macedonia has been comparatively neglected and has received from archaeologists less attention than other regions. This situation has now been radically and fundamentally changed for one phase at least of Macedonian prehistory by the work at Nea Nikomedeia (site no. 5 on map fig. 1) which has displayed a technique and a method both in excavation and in publication rarely seen in the Aegean and Near East. All this has been summarized by Dr. Robert J. Rodden in a previous issue of *Balkan Studies*. The kind of work that was done at Nea Nikomedeia for the early prehistoric phases of Northern Greece must be extended into the later phases. It is certain that there are no aspects of Macedonian prehistory to which the aims and techniques of the Nea Nikomedeia excavations cannot be applied.

Apart from the more specialized and scientific objectives, most, if not all, prehistoric sites must be excavated horizontally and vertically. For pottery studies, both the vertical and horizontal contexts must be accurate. If there is then found, in these contexts, pottery which can be demonstrated to be "foreign" or "imported" from another known source, it is immediately possible to discover and evaluate the chronological and cultural relations between the two areas. Dr. Rodden has himself emphasized this particular point.

In this article it is my intention to give some brief results of my work in Macedonia while research student at the University of Thessaloniki.¹ I have illustrated here some unusual pottery from surface collections and have tried to indicate the significance and importance of these sherds and, finally, I have

1. I am most grateful to the Ministry of Education of the Greek Government for the award of a postgraduate scholarship which has enabled me to undertake this work at the University of Thessaloniki. I would like to acknowledge the help and generosity of Professor Emm. Andronikos of the University of Thessaloniki and Mr. Ph. Petsas, then Ephor of Antiquities for Western Macedonia and now Ephor of Central Macedonia and Director of the Thessaloniki Museum. Especially I would like to thank Professor G. Bakalakis, who was my supervisor at the University of Thessaloniki, for much advice and information on the prehistory of Macedonia and for his interest and encouragement at all times. To Bob and Judy Rodden I owe a personal debt for their hospitality and kindness to me in Veroia.

suggested some of the more outstanding problems of the Third and Second Millennia in Macedonia.

Macedonia in the late Neolithic Period (?5000-?3000 B.C.)

Macedonia and Thessaly in the Dhimini period

Professor Vl. Miložčić has recently redefined the Dhimini period into at least four phases (Middle Greek, Arapi, Otzaki, Classic Dhimini) on the basis

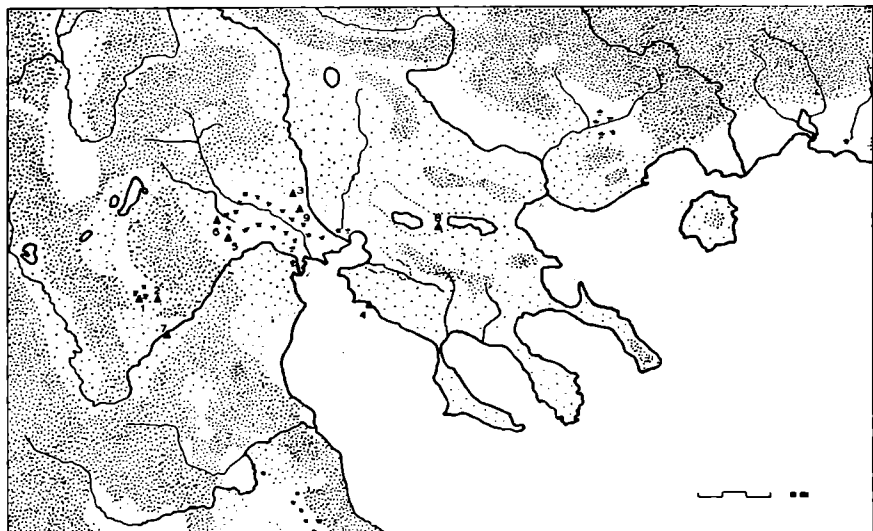


Figure 1 : Map of Macedonia showing sites mentioned in text.

of his excavations at Arapi, Argissa and Otzaki. The absolute dates, however, for the period are not precisely known although the approximate dates for this period are probably 5000-3500 B.C. Furthermore, the origin of the "classic" form of Dhimini pottery itself is greatly disputed. Some archaeologists still look to the North, to the Balkans; a minority looks to Thessaly itself. The evidence from Macedonia is inconclusive. Three sites with Classic Dhimini pottery are now known: Kouphalia² (fig. 2:3), Polyplatanon³ (fig. 2:5, 6) and Valtokhori⁴ (fig. 2:4). A local origin for Classic Dhimini (i. e. developed locally in Thessaly out of the already existing pottery types) is as-

2. Kouphalia A (site no. 3 on map fig. 1) formerly Kouchbali.

3. Polyplatanon (site no. 6 on map fig. 1): see Petsas, *Balkan Studies* 1 (1960) 124 and Rodden, *Balkan Studies* 5 (1964) 122 and pl. 7 a.

4. Valtokhori (site no. 9 on map fig. 1) formerly Saridja.

sumed in this article to be correct. On this basis, the handful of sherds from Central Macedonia would represent a basically Thessalian pottery rather than an intermediate stage between the Balkans and Thessaly. At the very least, they

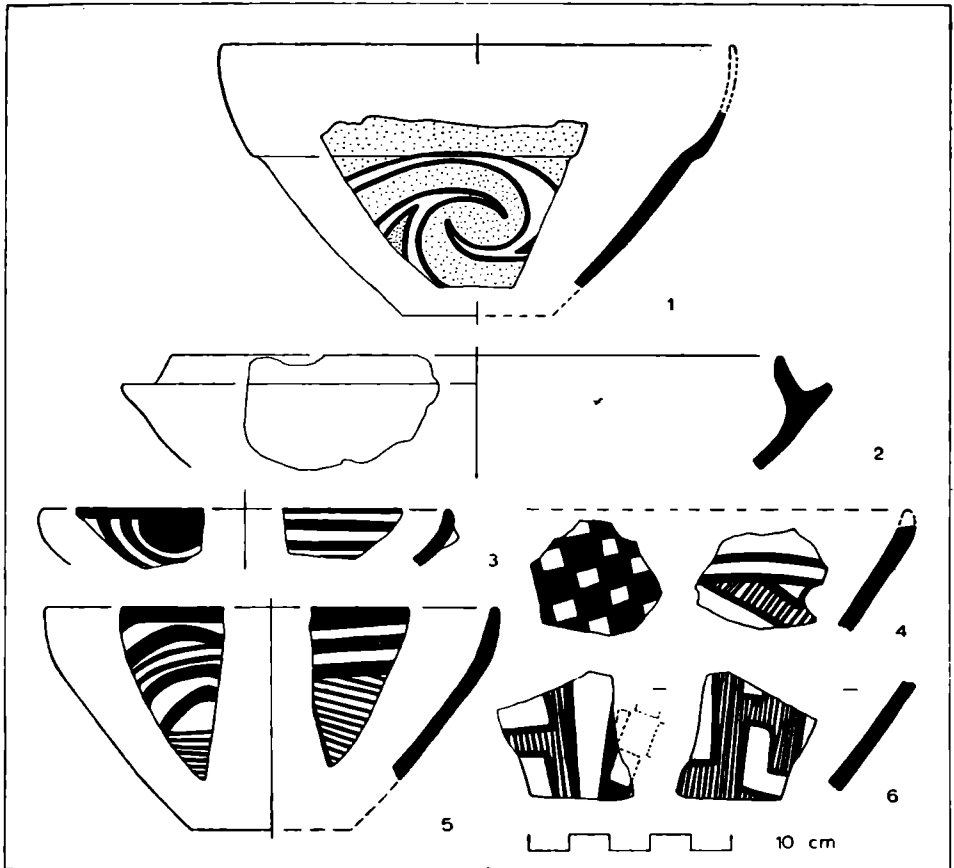


Figure 2 : Surface sherds of the Late Neolithic Period. Scale 1 : 4.

1. Dhrepanon II; black, red and white paint on black ground. 2. Koiladha; grey-black burnished. 3. Kouphalia A; chocolate brown paint of buff ground. 4. Valto-khori; chocolate brown paint on buff ground. 5. Polyplatanon; chocolate brown paint on buff ground. 6. Polyplatanon; chocolate brown paint on cream ground.

would suggest close contact,⁵ possibly even trade, between Thessaly and Macedonia. Excavations at Polyplatanon, for example, would give a vertical time-scale by which the relation of Macedonia to Thessaly could at once be

5. See also the discussion, Rodden, *Balkan Studies* 5(1964) 122f.

demonstrated. Horizontal excavation would throw great light on a phase of Macedonian prehistory which is, but for a few sherds, almost unknown. In addition the local variations in the pottery styles of Late Neolithic Macedonia, e. g. the differences between the pottery of Eastern Macedonia and that of Central Macedonia, would become clearer. These local divisions are very little understood at present.

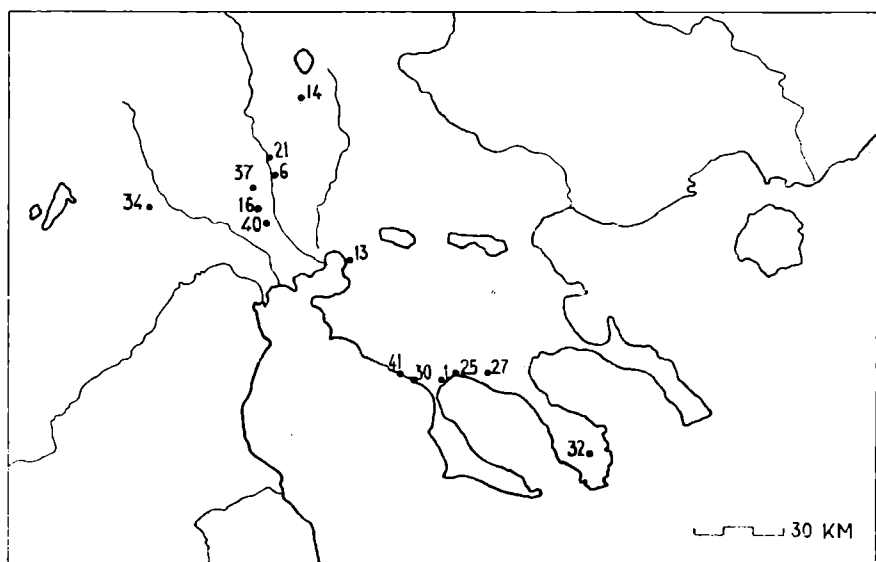


Figure 3: Distribution of Grey Minyan ware.

The sites indicated on the map are : 1. Ag. Mamas. 6. Axioupolis (Vardarophtsa) 13. Kalamaria. 14. Kalindria (Kilindir). 16. Kouphalia A (Kouchbali). 21. Limnotopos (Vardina). 25. Molyvopyrgo. 27. ? Ormylia 2. 30. Phloyita. 32. Sikia. 34. Skidhra. 37. Toumba Livadhi. 40. Valtokhori (Saridja). 41. Veryá.

Balkan and Anatolian Connections

Dr. Rodden illustrated in his article in *Balkan Studies*⁶ a sherd of a pottery type which is also found in the Balkans. This type has been found both from excavation and from surface survey in Thessaly also, where it is called "Theiss" ware. More surface sherds have been found in Macedonia which further show what kind of thing might well be found on excavation. One (fig. 2:1) from Dhrepanon (mound II) (site no. 1 on map fig. 1) is certainly related to the Cucuteni complex of Rumania and adjacent areas. It indicates that con-

6. *Balkan Studies* 5(1964) pl. 5 b.

tacts between Northern Greece and Rumania must certainly have existed in some form; since this contact is suggested in Thessaly also,⁷ here is clear evidence that Macedonia must have been at the crossroads of ancient routes between the Aegean world and the Balkans.

The second sherd (fig. 2:2) from Koiladha (site no. 2 on map fig. 1) is identical to pottery from Troy in North-West Anatolia. It comes from a mound

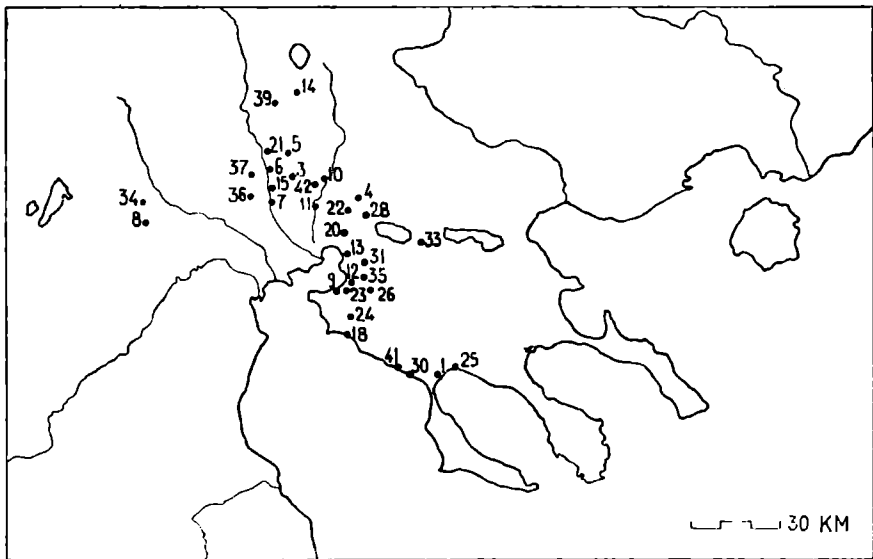


Figure 4 : Distribution of Macedonian Late Bronze Age Painted Pottery.

The sites indicated on the map are : 1. Ag. Mamas. 3. ? Anthophyta (Saribazar). 4. Assiros (Giuvesne). 5. ? Avret Hissar. 6. Axioupolis (Vardarophtsa). 7. Dourmousli. 8. Episkopi. 9. Epivatai (Baktche). 10. Galliko (Salamanli). 11. Ghradhemborion A (Gradobor). 12. Gona. 13. Kalamaria. 14. Kalindria (Kilindir). 15. ? Kastania (Karaoglou). 18. Kritsana. 20. Lembet. 21. Limnotopos (Vardina). 22. Liti II (Aivate). 23. Livadhaki (Tsair). 24. Mesimeriani Toumba. 25. Molyvopyrgo. 26. Nea Raidhestos (Mantzarides). 28. Perivolaki (Saratse). 30. Phloyita. 31. Pilaia (Kapoutzedes). 33. Skholarion (Sarai). 34. ? Skidhra. 35. Thermi (Sedes). 36. Toumba Kouphalia (Kouchbali). 37. Toumba Livadhi. 39. Tsaoutsitza. 41. Veryá. 42. Xilokeratia (Yiatzilar).

which, on the surface at least, has only Black Burnished Late Neolithic pottery. The shape is known only from the earliest phases of the first city of Troy (Troy I a-c archaeologically). If the sherd is accepted as "Anatolian" in type, it could give evidence, particularly if similar sherds were later found by

7. Milojević, *AA* 1959, 46f.

excavation in a stratified deposit, that at least one of the phases of Macedonian Late Neolithic was contemporary with the earliest phases of the first settlement at Troy⁸ and that contact between the two areas was strong.

The Early Bronze Age in Macedonia

The beginnings of the Early Bronze Age (?3000-2000 B. C.) in Macedonia are scarcely known. Most archaeologists have thought that the origins⁹

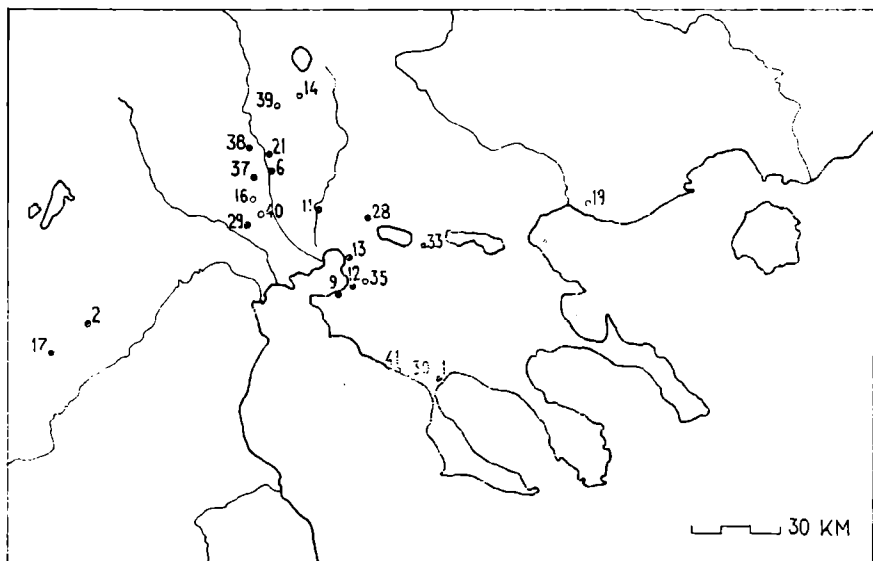


Figure 5 : Distribution of Mycenaean and "Local" Mycenaean Pottery.

The sites indicated on the map are : Mycenaean : 1. Ag. Mamas. 2. Akrini-Mikronisi. 6. Axioupolis (Vardarophitsa). 9. Epivatari (Baktche). 11. Ghradhemborion A (Gradobor). 12. Gona. 13. Kalamaria. 17. Kozani. 21. Limnotopos (Vardina). 28. Perivolaki (Saratse). 29. Phakos. 33. Skholarion (Sarai). 37. Toumba Livadhi. 38. Toumba Paionias.

"Local" Mycenaean : 14. Kalindria (Ki'indir). 16. Kouphalia A (Kouchbali). 19. Lakkovikia. 30. ? Phloyita. 35. Thermi (Sedes). 39. Tsaoutsitza. 40. Valtokhori (Saridja). 41. ? Veryá.

of the Early Bronze Age should be looked for in Western Anatolia. The Early Bronze Age in Thessaly and Southern Greece begins with quite different pot-

8. The beginnings of the Macedonian Early Bronze Age are usually correlated with the later phases (d-j) of Troy I.

9. See n. 8 above.

tery types, and it is supposed that the origin of these pottery types also is Anatolian. If this is so, then Macedonia and Thessaly received different traditions from Anatolia and the two areas do not share common pottery types until the later phases of the Early Bronze Age. Positive contact between Macedonia and Southern Greece is shown by only one sherd,¹⁰ from Kritsana (site no. 4 on map fig. 1) in Khalkidiki; it is of the painted Early Helladic III type. It is therefore of some importance to relate the introduction of the Early Bronze Age in Macedonia to the Neolithic-Early Bronze Age sequence of Thessaly and Southern Greece and then to trace the development of pottery-types in Macedonia during the Early Bronze Age. The sequence of levels at Kritsana shows at least four phases in the development of bowl types, the last three of which are certainly Early Bronze Age. The final or fourth phase, to which the painted Early Helladic III sherd from Kritsana belongs, can be correlated to the final Early Bronze Age phase in Thessaly. During the course of the Early Bronze Age, connections with Anatolia are demonstrable e. g. by the occurrence near Stivos (see map fig. 1 site no. 8) of a "depas amphikypellon."¹¹ These are "Anatolian" and are found at Troy (cities II-V). There is still a great deal to be discovered and investigated. Not the least of these problems is the relationship between Macedonia and the contemporary phases in other regions of the Southern Balkans.

The Middle Macedonian Bronze Age and Grey Minyan ware

Much has been written about the origin of Grey Minyan ware and its introduction into Greece (? ca. 1900 B. C.). Heurtley¹² long ago demonstrated that a Macedonian origin was not possible. Nobody has convincingly shown where in fact Grey Minyan pottery was first made. I would myself suggest that this pottery was developed in Greece itself (probably Southern Greece), although the idea or fashion may possibly have come from NW Anatolia, that it was not of direct foreign introduction, and that the problem of the coming of Greek speaking peoples to Greece should be separated from the problem of the origin of Grey Minyan pottery. Perhaps even, Greek speakers were already inhabiting Greece before 2000 B. C.. Grey Minyan ware, the hallmark of the Middle Bronze Age in Southern Greece, is, in fact, scarce in Macedonia (see map fig. 3). In Macedonia the pottery of the period contemporary

10. Heurtley, *Prehistoric Macedonia*, 126 and fig. 43. The sauceboat fragment from Servia (site no. 7 on map fig. 1) is almost certainly not of "Helladic" fabric. I doubt whether it is even a sauceboat. See Heurtley, *op. cit.*, 190 no. 312.

11. Schachermeyr, *RE*, XXII³, 1411f.

12. Heurtley, *Prehistoric Macedonia*, 123.

with Grey Minyan is quite different from Grey Minyan itself; it was even imported into the Peloponnese, into the Argolid.¹³ Macedonia was, in its pottery types, a distinct and separate area from Southern Greece and Thessaly for the first part of the Second Millennium (i. e. from ca. 1900-1600 B. C.).

The Macedonian Late Bronze Age and the Mycenaean

The pottery of Macedonia in the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600/1500-1100 B. C.) is again different from that of both Thessaly and Southern Greece. It is a distinct type, handmade (Mycenaean pottery was wheelmade) and painted in a dark-red or purple colour with geometric patterns. It has a wide distribution in Macedonia (see map fig. 4) whereas Mycenaean¹⁴ has not (see map fig. 5), although Mycenaean pottery was imitated in Macedonia by local potters. This perhaps confirms the supposition that Mycenaean Greeks did not settle in Macedonia but maintained only a loose contact with it.

Summary

All these factors indicate that during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages Macedonia, though geographically and culturally open and exposed to foreign contact, maintained a vigorous, independent position and pursued a strong local development. Difficulties have been caused by those archaeologists who have tried to interpret the archaeology of Macedonia in terms of Thessaly and Southern Greece. In this way the Black-on-Red wares of Eastern Macedonia have become "Dhimini" and the relatively rare Grey Minyan has been taken to represent the Middle Bronze Age pottery as a whole. Foreign elements or contacts and imported materials (such as the Grey Minyan pottery) are indeed vital but they must be seen in the context of the Macedonian culture as a whole. Only further excavations using the new techniques can give us the full picture of Macedonian prehistory and its "foreign" contacts.

Thessaloniki

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13. An example was found in Grave O of Grave Circle B at Mycenae, Papadimitriou, *PAE* 1953, 237, fig. 21.

14. The distinction on the map (fig. 5) between "Mycenaean" and "Local Mycenaean" is difficult and is, of necessity, subjective. It is based on fabric, colouring and technique, i.e. features resembling those of pottery from Southern Greece and Thessaly. A Mycenaean ware using white slip over a pale red core is known from Thessaly but a similar technique might also have been used in Macedonia. Some of the "local" wavy line Deep Bowls may, in fact, be post-Mycenaean. The earliest Mycenaean pottery known as yet from Macedonia can be assigned to early L.H. IIIA. For the map (fig. 5) I have used only the evidence that I have been able to verify.