

## LOWER GÖKSU ARCHAEOLOGICAL SALVAGE SURVEY, THE FIFTH SEASON

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### **Abstract**

*This article presents results from the fifth and final season of the Lower Göksu Archaeological Salvage Survey Project (LGASSP), which was started in 2013 to document the major archaeological sites and monuments in the valley before the construction of the Kayraktepe Dam (Mersin Province, Southern Turkey). This season marked the end of the project in its current form, and the transition to a new project that examines the landscapes of the entire Göksu River Basin in the context of the wider Taşeli Peninsula and the Karaman Plain. Therefore, the season of two weeks did not only focus solely on the Lower Göksu Valley but our team also conducted initial investigations along the Mediterranean coast from Anamur to Silifke and in parts of the Karaman Plain surrounding Karadağ. This article presents a summary of the results of this transitional field season together with a brief presentation of our digital photogrammetry subproject, and a discussion about the regional land routes and settlement patterns. The fifth season of the LGASSP, which is a collaborative project of Bitlis Eren University and the University of Leicester, was once more funded by the British Academy through a Newton Advanced Fellowship.*

### INTRODUCTION

The summer of 2017 saw the fifth and final field season of the Lower Göksu Archaeological Salvage Survey Project (LGASSP), which was started in 2013 as a response to the construction of the Kayraktepe hydroelectric dam in the Göksu Valley (Mersin Province, southern Turkey). The season lasted two weeks and was conducted in September 2017. Over the last four years, our team has investigated the Lower Göksu Valley in detail, allowing us to study the changing settlement systems, routes and communication networks; as well as the wider archaeological landscape, shedding new light on the regional cultural history from the Chalcolithic to the Medieval period (Şerifoğlu et al. 2014; 2015a; 2015b; 2016; 2017; Şerifoğlu 2017). The 2017 field season had a slightly different focus from those of previous years, as it represented the formal end of the LGASSP and the transition to a new regional project that aims to study the whole Göksu River Basin, the Taşeli Peninsula in its entirety, and the Karaman Plain at the southern edge of Central Anatolia (Fig. 1). A part of the season was spent completing the work in the Lower Göksu Valley, continuing and finalising what we started earlier. During the rest of the season, we conducted initial explorations of the larger area, first along the coast from Anamur to Silifke; then in the Gülnar area between the coast and the valley; and finally in the Karaman Plain, mainly around Karadağ.

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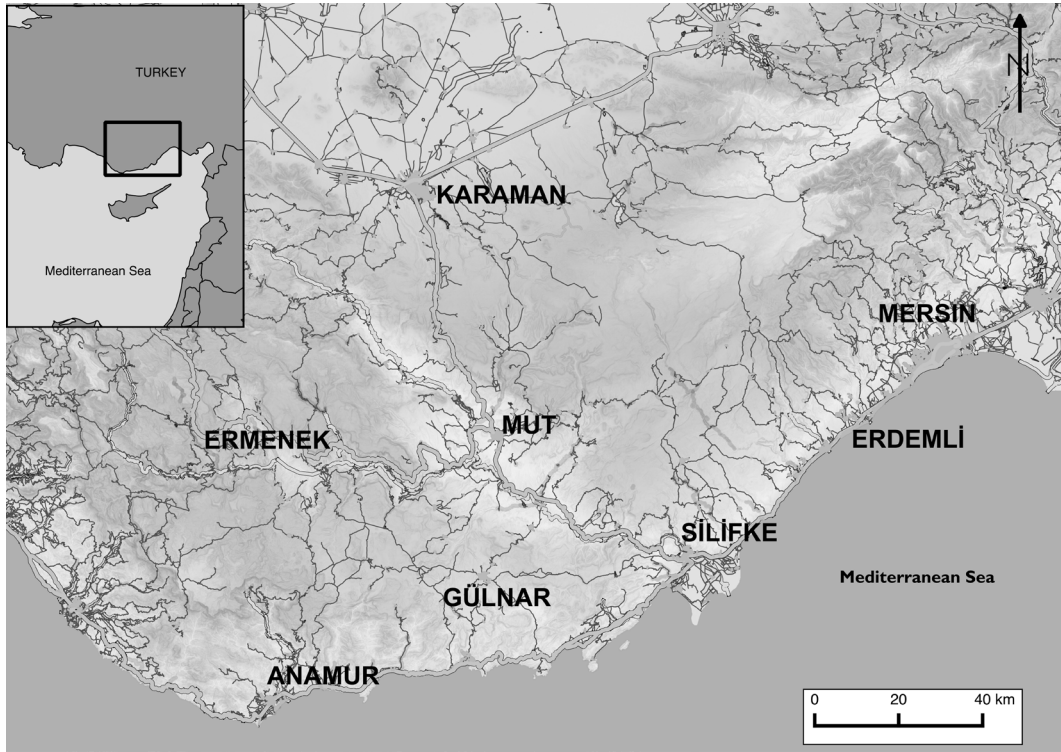


Fig. 1. Map of the Taşeli Peninsula and the Karaman Plain showing the extent and location of the project area (map by S. Eve).

The 2017 field season took place between 5<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 with a small team that included Tefik Emre Şerifoğlu (director), Naoíse Mac Sweeney (co-director), Nazlı Evrim Şerifoğlu (illustrations and photography), Stuart Eve (photogrammetry and database management), Francesco Carrer (landscape studies) and graduate student Nevra Arslan. Halil Görgülü from the Konya Regional Board for the Protection of Cultural Assets was appointed by the General Directorate for Cultural Assets and Museums, which also granted us the permit to conduct the fieldwork, as the representative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey during the 2017 field season of the LGASSP.

#### FINAL WORK IN THE ORIGINAL LGASSP SURVEY AREA

Within our original survey area of the Lower Göksu Valley, we undertook a range of short studies in order to supplement and complete the work of previous seasons. This included: an aerial photography operation at Kilise Tepe and photogrammetric documentation of the damaged eastern slope of Çingentepe (both located in the vicinity of Kışla Village); documentation of three new archaeological sites all located to the south of Mut town centre; and the documentation of two sites on the edges of the valley. The first of these three activities, the aerial photography and photogrammetric work, was undertaken to supplement our work in previous seasons,

will be discussed in the relevant section below. We should also note here that we also conducted geophysical investigations in the flat area to the northwest and west of Kilise Tepe in April 2017 but no details will be provided here about this work as the results are still being evaluated.

Three new sites in the area immediately south of Mut were documented in 2017, improving our understanding of this important agricultural plain at the juncture between the Upper and Lower Göksu valleys. The first of these sites was Örentepi II, located not far from the mound of Örentepi that was documented in 2014 (Şerifoğlu et al. 2015a). This site is represented by a pottery scatter in a field inside the Aşağı Deveciler village, which points to the existence of an earlier settlement at the site of the modern village that was first settled during the Hellenistic period. The other two sites are both located along the Göksu River. Selamlıtepe is a settlement located on top of a natural hill which was first settled during the Byzantine period and represents the earliest foundation of the modern village of Selamlı. However, some sherds found at the site imply that there may have been a short-lived Early Bronze Age settlement here as well. Mucuktepe is the other site in this area, which is also located on top of a natural hill (Fig. 2). The pottery sherds have shown that this settlement was founded sometime during the Middle or the Late Iron Age and was abandoned after the Byzantine period. There is a rectangular depression on top of the hill, which was probably dug here by the inhabitants to collect water for daily use.

In addition to this, we also documented two sites at the western and eastern edges of the valley. The site of Arıkuyusu, which is a settlement that spread to the slope of a hill to the west of Zeyne town centre, was first settled during the Hellenistic period but some pottery sherds found here imply that there was a Middle or Late Iron Age settlement here as well. This large site overlooking the Göksu Valley contains a stone built temple, some wall remains, many rock cut tombs, sarcophagi, and oil presses, and was inhabited until the Byzantine period. The other site, which we named Karakız referring to the name of the hill near the site, is located in the vicinity of the village of Karacaoğlu at the eastern edge of the Kurtşuyu River Valley, at an altitude of 1200 meters above sea level. This settlement was also first founded in the Middle or

Late Iron Age and was inhabited until the Byzantine period, but some pottery sherds point to the existence of a short-lived Early Bronze Age settlement here as well. We have been informed by the Silifke Museum staff that a miniature stone axe was found at this site in the past and they believe this axe to be manufactured at a period earlier than the Bronze Age, which also supports our idea of the existence of an Early Bronze Age settlement here at Karakız.



Fig. 2. View of Mucuktepe with Attepe in the background (photo by T.E. Şerifoğlu).

## PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS IN THE WIDER AREA I: THE COAST

The investigations conducted along the coast from Silifke to Anamur and in the vicinity of Gülnar located between the coast and the Göksu Valley were more of preliminary visits to this part of the study area for future planning, rather than a detailed and systematic work. Archaeological sites including Celenderis and Anemurium that are currently being excavated were visited, in order to get a better idea about their locations and the immediate environment, and to gather

some information from the excavators about the local material culture (Taylor and Alföldi 1969; Russell 1973; Williams 1989; Zoroğlu 1994; 2017). A number of sites along the coast that were studied and recorded in the past were also visited, to see if these contained earlier material, as this part of the coastal area has no sites that has been dated to anytime earlier than the second half of the first millennium BC. In 2017, we specifically focused on Nagidos, which is located on top of a hill by the coast near Bozyazı (Fig. 3; Durugönül 2007), and had the opportunity to observe a number of Middle and Late Iron Age sherds together with later material, which provided information that will be useful when studying the cultural material of the region in more detail in the future. A number of site candidates determined with the help of satellite images and topographical maps were also visited to check whether these had any archaeological material or not, but none of these locations had anything archaeological. This is an important indication that we might need to change our current methodology where the coastal areas are concerned.

Our investigations on Gülnar Plateau was also consisted of visits to site candidates determined with remote sensing. One of the new sites that was recorded by our team was a multi-period mound situated on top of a natural hill and the other was a rock-cut burial chamber, both located in the vicinity of the village of Demirözü. The pottery sherds that spread on top of the multi-period mound of Hortu Maltepe, which has numerous robber pits that destroyed the site, indicate that the site was first settled during the Early Bronze Age and was probably abandoned during the second half of the second millennium BC to be resettled during the Hellenistic period and to be inhabited until the Byzantine period (Fig. 4). On the other hand, the rock cut burial chamber is located on the road between Demirözü village and the Gülnar town center, and dates either to the Hellenistic or to the Roman period (Fig. 5).



Fig. 3. View of Nagidos from the summit of Paşabeleni hill (photo by T.E. Şerifoğlu).





Fig. 4. Hortu Maltepe (photo by N.E. Şerifoğlu).



Fig. 5. A rock-cut burial chamber in the vicinity of Demirözü Village (photo by N.E. Şerifoğlu).

Our team did not conduct any fieldwork east of Silifke except for a short visit to Tekirköy, which is located near the village of Esenbel not very far from Silifke. This mound was first visited and recorded by James Mellaart and then by David French, and this third visit by our team aimed at checking the current situation of this archaeological site and closely study the archaeological material it contains (Mellaart 1954: 181; French 1965: 181). The mound was badly damaged during the process of planting trees on top of it and parts of it was destroyed during the enlargement of the nearby cemetery. Our investigations confirmed that the site was first settled during the Early Bronze Age, and it was inhabited with interruptions until the Byzantine period.

#### PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS IN THE WIDER AREA II: THE KARAMAN PLAIN

The work that was conducted in Karaman in 2017 mainly focused on the area surrounding Mt. Karadağ, which is located to the north of Karaman town centre. Our team also conducted some investigations at Canhasan, a famous prehistoric site that was excavated by David French in the past; and also visited two mounds in the plain to the south of Karadağ, which are close to one of the two routes that lead to the summit of Karadağ (French 1998; 2005; 2010). The concerned mounds are called Sisan Höyük and Dinek Höyük by the locals and were recorded accordingly.

Sisan Höyük, which is actually a set of three multi-period mounds located close to Kılbasan Village, was inhabited from the beginning of the Iron Age until the Medieval period. However, some sherds imply that there may have been an Early and Middle Bronze Age settlement here as well. Dinek Höyük is a smaller mound located inside Dinek Village. A mosque was built on top the mound sometime during the 1960s which damaged the mound summit. The settlement at Dinek Höyük was founded in the Middle or Late Iron Age and it was inhabited until the Byzantine period.

After the investigations at and around these two sites were completed, our team first tried to visit and document the Luwian rock inscriptions at the summit of Karadağ (Mount Mahalaç) and conduct a small scale intensive survey in this area (Fig. 6). The Luwian inscriptions, which were carved on rock later used for the construction of a Byzantine religious complex at this spot, and the architectural remains at Mount Mahalaç were first visited and documented by Gertrude Bell in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sayce 1909; Ramsay and Bell 2008: 505-507) and the inscriptions have since been studied by linguists and specialist epigraphers (Hawkins 2000: plate 241, 6-7). Our team was not allowed to access this site as it is now located inside a military zone and one needs a special permit from the Turkish air force in order to see it, which we did not have at that time. This visit was rescheduled for the 2018 season and our team moved to Kızıldağ from there.

Kızıldağ and Mezelli Höyük are two archaeological sites located in the Karaman plain, just to the northwest of Karadağ (Fig. 7). Kızıldağ was also



Fig. 6. Mahalaç Peak at the summit of Karadağ (photo by N. Mac Sweeney).



Fig. 7. Kızıldağ and Mezelli Höyük (photo by T.E. Şerifoğlu).





Fig. 8. 3D model of King Hartapus' monument at Kızıldağ (image by S. Eve).

visited by Gertrude Bell, who documented the rock monument of King Hartapus that depicts a king seated on a throne, the other Luwian inscriptions at this site, and the fort on top of the natural hill, and these were studied by many other scholars after that point (Börker-Klähn 1977; Gonnet 1983; Bittel 1986; Hawkins 2000: 429-442; Karauğuz et al. 2002; Ramsay and Bell 2008: 504, 507-512). Our team used methods of digital photogrammetry to document the monument and the inscriptions once again and the fort was visited for a preliminary assessment as we hope to conduct more detailed investigations in this area in 2018.

The pottery sherds and the architectural remains that we observed on Kızıldağ indicate that the hill was actively used for various purposes (cultic, military etc.) from the second millennium BC until the Hellenistic and Roman periods. A rock cut burial chamber located just near the Hartapus monument most probably dates to the Hellenistic period, and inscriptions on the monument itself from the Hellenistic period have already been documented (Rojas and Sergueenkova 2014: 143-147). On the other hand, our studies at Mezelli Höyük, which is located just to the south of Kızıldağ, have shown that this mound type settlement closely connected to Kızıldağ and to the fort on top of it was first inhabited during the Middle or the Late Iron Age and was in use until the Byzantine period. Our work on and around Kızıldağ and Karadağ will continue in 2018 to better understand the settlement types and patterns in this area, the ancient land routes that interconnected these sites, and the overall archaeological landscape of this part of the Karaman Plain.



Fig. 9. Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) recording of a Luwian inscription at Kızıldağ (photo by T.E. Şerifoğlu).

#### DIGITAL PHOTOGRAMMETRIC MODELLING AT KIZILDAĞ, KILISETEPE AND ARIKUYUSU

In 2017 our team also conducted a number of drone- and ground-based Structure from Motion (SfM) surveys. SfM is a photogrammetric technique that uses a collection of static images of an object or monument taken from a number of different angles and estimates the underlying 3D structure. It has been used extensively in archaeology providing a result comparable with that of 3D laser scanning without the need for expensive equipment (Howland et al. 2014).

The first of our SfM models was of King Hartapus' rock-cut monument on the slopes of Kızıldağ. Using a total of 95 photos taken from the ledge in front of the monument a detailed model was created of the main pictogram and inscription. As can be seen from Fig. 8, when compared with a simple textured photograph of the inscription, the 3D model reveals many subtle features not immediately obvious to the naked eye, including a new possible inscription near the feet of the figure. As the model itself is interactive it allows the specialists to manipulate the lighting, colour and position of the model to better read and interpret the inscriptions. Two further inscriptions were modelled on Kızıldağ, which are currently under analysis, and a preliminary Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) model was created of the Hartapus monument and the inscriptions (Fig. 9). The initial RTI model revealed similar features to the SfM model, however, a more detailed RTI will be created in the 2018 season that has potential to further refine our picture of the inscription and pictography.

We also created a drone-based SfM model of the summit and slopes of Kilisetepe, completing the drone survey of the immediate hinterland we undertook in 2015. Using a DJI Phantom 2 Vision+ drone, two missions were flown resulting in a model built from 241 camera locations. Fig. 10 displays the results, with the 3D model clearly showing the remains of previous excavations on the summit, as well as the characteristic flattened top of the tepe.



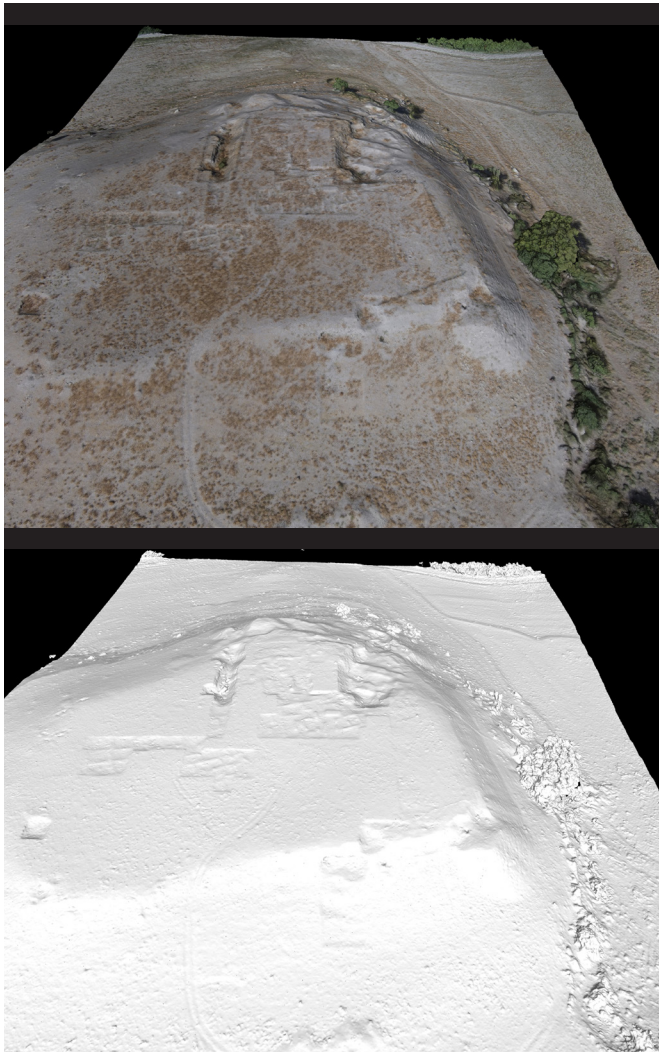


Fig. 10. 3D model of Kilise Tepe (image by S. Eve).

work of wall structures, rock-cut tombs, inscriptions and later agricultural interventions. A further useful product of the SfM survey is an orthorectified aerial photograph of the area, that can be used for initial identification of archaeological features in advance of a more detailed ground-based survey in 2018. A ground-based SfM survey of the temple itself was also attempted, but the presence of vegetation on the walls and the heights of some of the wall tops themselves rendered the attempt unsuccessful. Another attempt will be made in 2018, using a lower-altitude drone flight along with closer survey of the walls.

Our team also started working on creating a ground-based SfM model of the damaged eastern slope of Çingentepe. This slope was completely destroyed in the past with the help of machinery but this illegal work exposed the whole section of this part of the mound, which made it possible for us to observe and study the entire archaeological stratigraphy at this site. A 3D model of the slope will not only allow us to document this very informative section for posterity but also continue working on it with the help of computer software. This work could not be completed in 2017 because of time constraints and the final results will be presented only after the whole slope has been modelled following the work that will be conducted here during the 2018 season.

The final SfM model was created of the temple and surrounding architecture at the settlement of Arıkuyusu (Fig. 11). As can be seen, the temple has impressive standing architecture (in places up to 4m high) along with a wider net-

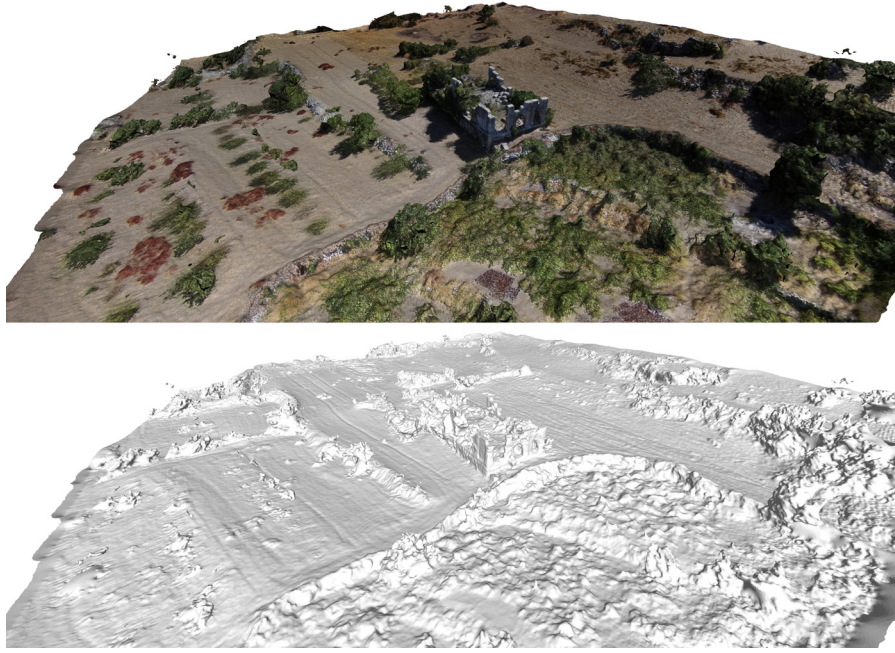


Fig. 11. 3D model of the temple and surrounding architecture at Arıkuyusu (image by S. Eve).

#### SETTLEMENT PATTERNS, AND ROUTES AND COMMUNICATION NETWORKS – SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

This transitional field season has shed new light, as well as raising new questions, about both settlement patterns and wider networks of routes and communications. We are now beginning to understand our original survey area of the Lower Göksu Valley in its wider context, uncovering more about its connections with other neighbouring areas (Fig. 12).

The basic settlement pattern in the Lower Göksu Valley seems to have persisted through many different periods of human history. In general, sites were spaced at fairly regular intervals along the main north-south route between the Mediterranean coast and the Karaman Plain, with clusters in the two main agricultural plains in the valley – the first just south and west of Mut, where the main Göksu stream is joined by the Ermenek; and the second around the modern village of Kışla, where the Göksu is joined by the Kurtsuyu. In these two zones, there appears to have been a complex settlement hierarchy, focusing on a pair of twin mound sites in each case, one on either side of the Göksu and presumably controlling an important river crossing. By undertaking more intensive survey work in these two agricultural plains, we have been able to learn more about the dynamics between sites in different periods, and the uses of land and landscape in the zones between settlement sites. As we begin to process this work and our results, we are gaining a more nuanced understanding of what now appears to be a very complex and dynamic settlement pattern in the Lower Göksu Valley. In the future, it would be interesting to see whether this pattern was unique, and to compare the settlement patterns in the Upper Göksu Valley as well as the Ermenek Basin.

When we first identified this basic settlement pattern in advance of our third field season (Şerifoğlu et al. 2016: 12), this alerted us to the existence and significance of east-west routes, and routes stretching from the floor of the Göksu Valley out on each side into the mountains. Instead of conceiving of the valley as a corridor, facilitating communication and movement in a shuttle-type form between the coast and the plateau, we started to think of the valley at the centre of a more complex web of routes, reaching out in all directions. This has since been confirmed by the discovery and documentation of more sites on the fringes of the valley, often along passes and routes through the mountains. The communication networks and routes of the Lower Göksu Valley can therefore only be fully understood in the context of the wider Taşeli Peninsula, and we look forward to exploring this further in the years to come under the aegis of the new regional landscape project.

In both cases – settlement patterns and communications networks – our work to date has identified significant changes over time. This diachronic variation will also come into sharper relief when we are able to consider it in context of wider regional dynamics. For example, we are now beginning to appreciate that the relative lack of activity in the lower reaches of the valley during the Middle Iron Age may have been offset by an increased level of activity on the coast and in the mountainous uplands between valley and coast. Over the next months as we analyse and interpret our results further, and over the next years as we embark on work in the wider region, we hope to understand more about these changes over time.

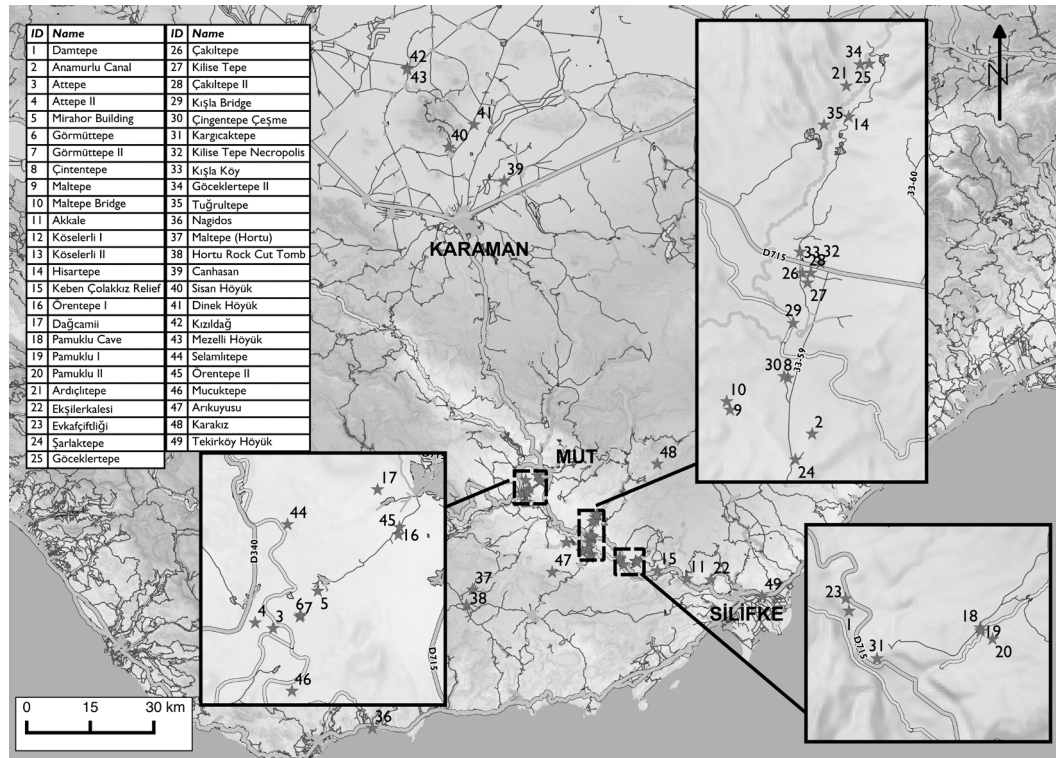


Fig. 12. Map of the project area showing all the recorded sites by the end of the fifth season (map by S. Eve).



## CONCLUSION

With the formal end of the LGASSP field project with the 2017 season, we have now begun the final processing and analysis of the LGASSP data. We aim to have most of this work completed during the course of 2018, and hope to produce a final publication of the project results in 2019 in the form of a book published in the British Institute at Ankara Monographs Series. This book will include a catalogue of all sites and monuments documented by LGASSP, as well as a series of interpretive studies on different chronological periods, as well as extended thematic and methodological discussions. The raw data from the project will also be made available through the websites of the Archaeology Data Service, and the University of Leicester's Research Archive. We hope that by making our results available as quickly and as widely accessible as possible, this information may productively be used by other scholars of both this and neighbouring regions.

The LGASSP began its work as a salvage survey, caught in a race against time to document a unique archaeological landscape before its permanent loss through flooding caused by the construction of a hydroelectric dam. Delays to the original construction schedule have allowed us more time than we had originally anticipated to conduct this work, enabling us to study some sites and zones in more detail, employing a range of intensive survey methodologies and new technologies. As well as documenting the sites under immediate threat of flooding in the expected flood zone, we have also been able to study sites within our permit area that are not expected to be submerged by the dam lake. This has allowed us to gain a more holistic view of settlement patterns in the Lower Göksu Valley as a whole.

With the broadening and expansion of our work, our project aims shifted from salvage survey and emergency documentation to the answering of research questions. Specifically, we have now been able to turn our attention to: change and continuity of settlement patterns in the valley; networks of routes and communications through the valley and linking it to neighbouring areas; and the social construction of landscape in the valley by investing certain locations with significance or sacred meaning.

This work has led, inevitably, to the need to understand the Lower Göksu Valley in its wider regional context to include the Upper Göksu Valley, the Ermenek Basin, and the Karaman Plain to the north; as well as the coastal strip to the south and the mountain uplands immediately surrounding the valley. In 2017, we were fortunate enough to be granted an expanded survey permit by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, enabling us to begin exploring these areas. In the coming years therefore, the core LGASSP team (Tevfik Emre Şerifoğlu, Nazlı Evrim Şerifoğlu, Naoíse Mac Sweeney, Anna Collar, and Stuart Eve) will re-form under the banner of a new regional landscape project, with the aim of exploring this wider region.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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