

Brač Island Project 2025 Study Season Report (S. James)

May 18-June 7 with eight full-time staff and participants (Sarah James, Vedran Barbarić, Hannah Hungerford, Eden Franz, Phoebe Mock, Julia Bowers, Rae McDowell, and Luke Aloï) and three additional participants who came for shorter lengths of time: Natalie DeGeeter (May 18-June 1), Andrew Rivadeneira (May 20-30), and Alex Wilkinson (June 2-4).

Our goals were to complete the processing of finds from the 2024 excavation season, prepare previously catalogued material for publication, catalogue new finds, finish reading the most important contexts of bone, and create an archaeobotanical catalogue. Alex Wilkinson has our permission to sample teeth and bone from well-dated contexts and more than 20 were chosen and will be shipped to him in Leiden.

For the first week, we washed pottery from the Sept-Oct excavations near the fortification wall and checked the catalogue entries from previous years. We also had many bags (48) of unfloated soil samples from both the summer and fall seasons to put through the water sieve (borrowed from Zadar and still in our possession this season). Reading finds from 2024 that were incomplete was also a focus of this week, along with setting parameters for the archaeobotanical catalogue.

The second week, we took photos for publication and found parallels for many objects catalogued in previous seasons. Work continued on the backlog of pottery reading, water sieve samples, faunal (Eden) and archaeobotanical analysis (Rae), and the publication material.

In the third week, we completed preparing the catalogued material from the 2014 excavations for publication (parallels, catalogue entries, photos, but no drawings). Parallels and catalogue entries from the 2022-2024 seasons were also completed faunal and archaeobotanical analysis continued apace. All catalogued material was photographed with record shots for study purposes only; this material is also currently located in Google Sheets and needs to be synced with the database. All water sieve samples were processed, sorted and their archaeobotanical were recorded. The heavy flots were sorted and thrown away and the recovered materials were catalogued and placed in paper envelopes in a small pink box and labeled. This process significantly decreased the amount of material that we need to store permanently.

Additionally, all pottery from 2024 was initially read and objects selected for cataloguing. Cataloguing of this new material was completed by the end of this season, but no parallels, good photos or drawings were done. It is anticipated that the work completed this season on the coarse gritty wares will be modified and supplemented in the future as part of their further study.

Other tasks undertaken included the creation of and completion of Harris Matrices from 2024, which were incomplete because their finds were not fully read and because of the additional excavations in the fall. Similarly, reports on the gorge trench, the plateau trench, and the terrace trench were created and existing ones were updated by Hannah and Andrew. They were also responsible for lotting the 2023 and 2024 material. All the context pottery is now stored by lot number rather than by year in numerical order. This was done to facilitate future study. A complete lot list and a concordance has been created and can be found inside the excavation database and as a separate excel sheet. Lotting is an important part of the Corinth system and is intended to make it easier to locate important strata for study rather than storing them simply in numerical order.

2022-2024 recording sheet scans and field photos were organized and checked for completeness. Catalogue sheets were proofed for typos and errors involving the metric system. We are nearing the point where we will have a completed archive from which to write up our work.

Note that all of the finds catalogued in 2025 from 2024 were given 2025 numbers. Those catalogued during the initial seasons have numbers related to their year of excavation. This was partly to keep the BAIA material distinct since it was mostly catalogued this season.

Special finds, formerly stored in the pink flip open boxes, that were not lithics were given catalogue numbers and were described and photographed.

Specific materials were also set aside for specialists.

The lithics were numbered by context and placed in a small grey box. An excel file in the data folder provides a list.

Two large light grey bins are full of shell for analysis. All shell has been read into the database by context under other finds, given an estimated number and/or sometimes a weight.

Faunal remains were sorted and stored with the unread and the read separated. Each bin is clearly labeled.

Some final numbers for the 2022-2024 season:

Excavation contexts: 314

Archaeobotanical Remains catalogued with “W” numbers: 191

Finds Excavated: approx. 15000

Finds Saved: approx. 2500

Catalogued Pottery: 1144 (some need parallels)

Notes for Additional Work

Specialists required:

- Shell person
- Lithics person
- Archaeobotanist
- Illustrator for pottery

Drawings: all sherds with diagnostic profiles should be drawn and in some cases decoration

Photography: All catalogued pottery has a record shot, but only the imports from 2014 have a publication quality photo. Additional photos are needed before publication.

Data Archive: Some clean up still needs to happen.

- Label publication quality photos with their catalogue number
- Edit the catalogue and finds databases for typos
- Sync all Google Sheets into the Finds and Catalogue databases
- Final organization of files
- Check for held inaccuracies from all seasons
- Cataloguing from 2022 differs from 23 & 24 in how the artifact_type and description_shape fields are entered. Change 2022 to reflect current practices.