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Edited by *Erik Hallager* and *Sine Riisager*



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Cover illustration: Reconstruction of the city of Kalydon
Graphics by: Mikkel Mayerhofer

Kalydon and Pausanias

Søren Dietz

How does Pausanias' description of the events (7.18.8) correspond to the Kalydon we know from archaeology?¹ We usually do not expect to get a detailed answer to this kind of questions or a firm confirmation of the written evidences – questions and answers are necessarily different when history is approached by a more or less contemporary writer and when a much later researcher dependent on the actually preserved material remains attempt to construct the past. But we do expect – dependent on a more personal view of the value of historical sources for archaeology – to be confirmed in some major “facts” which seem to be well established. As for Kalydon we would for instance consider it to be a “fact” that the inhabitants of the city and other towns in the Aitolian coastland were re-settled by Octavian to Nikopolis (and/or Amphissa) after the battle of Actium around 30 BC (to give a little space for +/-).

In order to test the relation between the two kind of historical sources, Kalydon might be a good choice since we have no reason to doubt that the site we consider to be Kalydon is actually the town mentioned in ancient written sources, from Homer onwards, and because rather extensive field work has been carried out during two periods – 1926 to 1935 and more recently between 2001 to 2005.

The primary aim of the campaigns during the first half of the 20th century was to examine the temple of Artemis Laphria known primarily from Pausanias and – in addition – the building which later on became known as the Heroon – both situated outside the fortification walls of the city. During the campaigns in the 1920s and 30s very few resources were in fact used in the town as such – inside the walls.²

The sanctuary of Artemis is situated approxi-

mately 400 m west of the West Gate of the town (Fig. 1). In the first campaign in 1926, the excavation clearly confirmed that the sanctuary of Artemis Laphria was important in Archaic times, and a series of information were produced which underlined the importance of Kalydon for the development of the early Greek temple. In the first decades of the 4th century BC the Doric stone temple was erected and the impressing temple terrace was constructed. This temple probably stood until the famous chryselephantine sculpture of the hunting Artemis produced by Menaichmos and Soidas from Naupaktos before 450 BC and a sculpture of Dionysos were moved to Patras to be included in the new sanctuaries seen by Pausanias during his visit to the town. The remaining sculptures were – according to Pausanias – mostly taken to Nikopolis (7.18). Already in the first preliminary report from 1927 it was noted that a considerable amount of lamps and coins substantiated the continuation of the Artemis cult on the temple hill even after the removal of the famous rendering of Artemis – until 300 AD.³ This statement gave support to the more problematic view that the city had been re-established in the 2nd century AD.

The idea of a re-surrection of the town in Roman times was first of all related to an interpretation, in the first preliminary report, of the so called Heroon towards south, outside but closer than the

¹ For a presentation and discussion of Pausanias' references to the resettling of the inhabitants of Kalydon, see the preceding article *Destruction or depopulation of cities in Pausanias. Nikopolis Aetolia, and Epirus* by Jacob Isager in this volume.

² Poulsen & Rhomaïos 1927; Dyggve, Poulsen & Rhomaïos 1934; Dyggve 1948.

³ Poulsen & Rhomaïos 1927, 42–3. Substantiated in Dyggve 1948, 302.

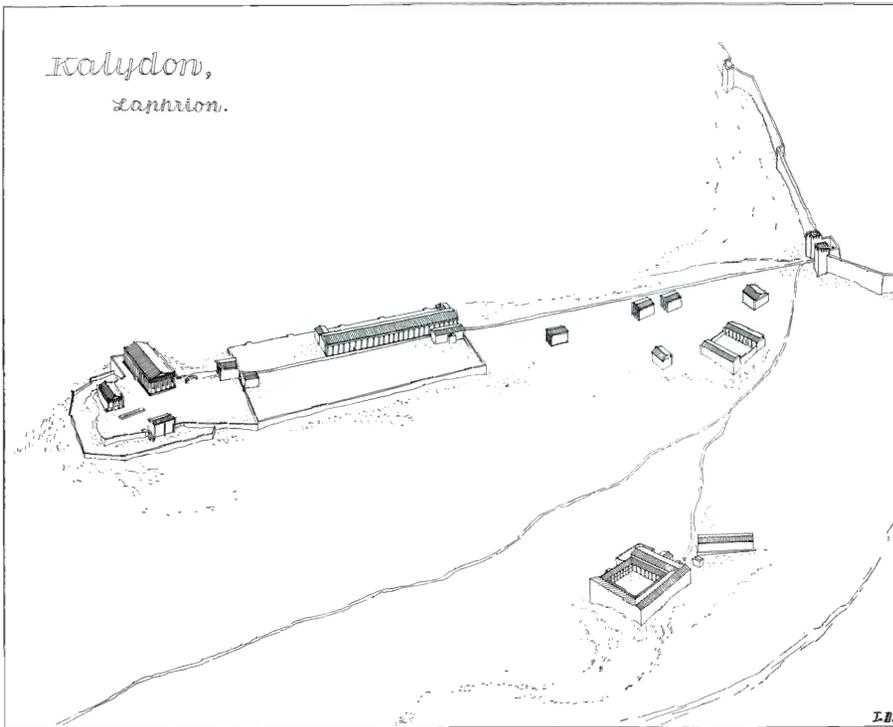


Fig. 1. The Western part of the city of Kalydon, the Artemis sanctuary and the Heroon (from Dyggve 1948, Plate XXXVIII).

Artemis temple to the West Gate. The sculpture and architecture of the building was thought to be produced under Hadrian in the 2nd century AD—built on top of a grave of Leon from the 2nd century BC.⁴ The idea, however, was abandoned in the final publication of the Heroon where it was stated that sculpture and architecture were results of Hellenistic 2nd century activities.⁵ The view that the sculpture of the Heroon is Hellenistic 2nd century BC has been confirmed more recently by the German scholar P.C. Bol (1988).

The city itself, situated on the southern foothills of the low Arakynthos mountains, was surrounded by a 2.35 km long curtain, 3 m wide and approximately 6 m high encircling the two dominating mounds of the city (Fig. 2). The traffic in and out of the town took place through four gates of which the three were rather substantial. The oldest from around 400 BC was a narrow gate of overlap type

⁴ Poulsen & Rhomaïos 1927, 83.

⁵ Dyggve *et al.* 1934, 109.

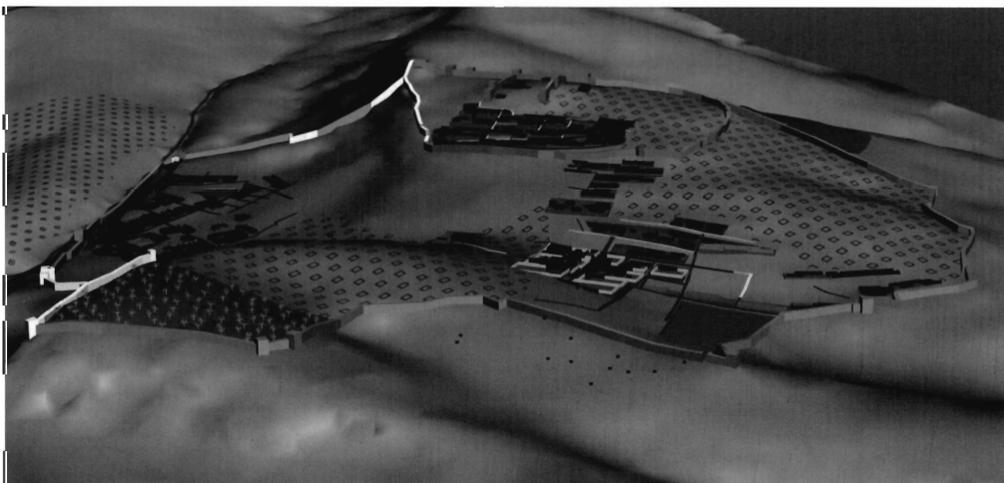


Fig. 2. Reconstructed picture of the city of Kalydon. West Gate to the left, East Gate to the right with the Agora. In the front the south hill without habitation, in the background the Acropolis (Mikkel Mayerhofer). See also plan of the site on Fig. 1, p. 162 in this volume.



Fig. 3. Results of survey in part of the city. Classical/Hellenistic habitation compared with Roman (Constantinos Methenitis).

which connected the town towards east with the fields, the Evinos river and the harbour at Kryoneri where the huge massif of mount Varassova joins the sea. The gate was provided with one huge tower (probably 12 m high). A monumental gate with two square towers and a courtyard in the middle connected the town towards west with the “holy road” to the sanctuary and the temple of Artemis itself, some 400 m from the gate.

Inside the West Gate the narrow main streets went through the Lower Town, radially upwards to the Acropolis, with buildings placed on terraces on the hilly ground. Some 50 m inside the gate bordering the main street, a substantial peristyle building was placed which shall be dealt with further down, but the main occupation in the Lower Town seems to have been various kinds of craftsmanship and minor industry. A long street connected the Lower Town with the habitation quarter in the centre of the town with houses placed in insulae in a hippodamian system and with the commercial Agora towards the fortification walls and the East Gate. The commercial Agora measures slightly less than 5,000 m² and probably had two stoas along the northern side.

The Acropolis on the North hill covers some 10% of the entire space inside the curtains and was divided into three parts. The lower Acropolis, surrounded by a considerable wall, served as a place of refuge under siege of the town but was also, probably, in daily use while the upper, central Acropolis was a further fortified plateau which formerly – in Archaic times – was a place where some of the deities of the city were worshipped – but which in Hellenistic times, in early 2nd century BC was totally rebuilt with a huge courtyard building and barracks(?) situated along the northern enceinte.

Let us consider this brief description to be the picture of Kalydon before the battle of Actium—a smaller town of around 35 ha and with some 5,000 inhabitants. Fig. 3 shows the results of the surveys in some important parts of the city in Classical/Hellenistic times compared with habitation in Roman times. It should be emphasized that the Classical/Hellenistic map covers several hundreds of years while the Roman map covers a much shorter period. The main difference is that the Roman occupation, well represented in the Lower Town and on the Acropolis—if by far as dense as in Classical/Hellenistic times – is almost absent on the South

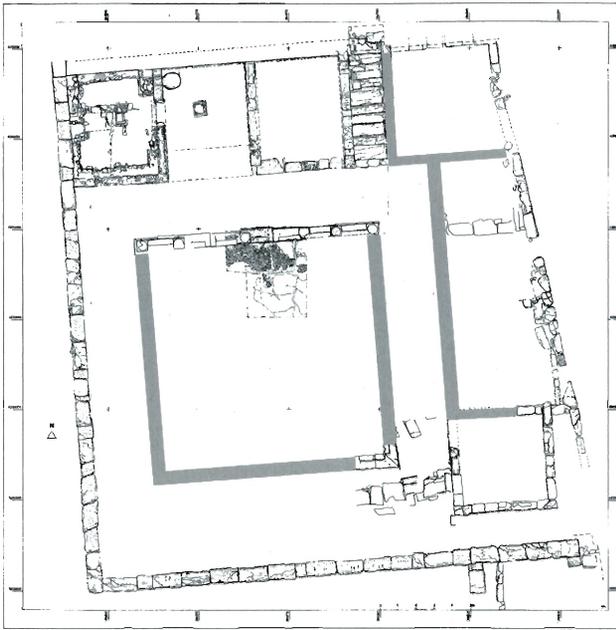


Fig. 4. The peristyle building in the Lower City. See also plan Fig. 3, p. 164 in this volume.

hill. As seen on Figs. 2–3 a large part of the south hill was established as pasture providing fields during all periods, but in Roman times the whole area was mostly abandoned.

In the Lower Town a peristyle building was partly excavated which gave us a superlative opportunity to look in more details into the situation around the battle of Actium – and thus into the credibility of Pausanias’ statements (Fig. 4). In the north-west room of the building a cult room was established in the later years of the 3rd century BC, when the Aitolian league was at its strongest. In the room was found a considerable amount of sculpture, two hermae, thymiateria, lamps *etc.*, all safely certifying that the room was used for religious, ritual activities – and probably in honour of the Anatolian Goddess, Kybele. While cult statues and other permanent installations were mainly dated in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, the lamps, thymiateria and pottery were primarily of later date reflecting the actual use of the cult room, which continued until around 50 AD, when the roof broke down and the building was abandoned.⁶

But this event at 50 AD was not unique for the situation in the cult room of the Peristyle building – even if the stratigraphical situation was the

more ideal here than elsewhere. In other parts of the Peristyle building the same chronological composition of material, especially pottery groups, tells the same story and the same again on the Acropolis where the habitation is likewise given up – without any traces of destruction – at 50 AD.

What we can conclude is that the command of Augustus had no immediate impact on the habitation in Kalydon as suggested by Pausanias. The archaeological evidences do not even support a “partial” loss of population⁷. The inhabitants evidently continued their life in the town even if the more precious inventory from sanctuary and town was moved to Nikopolis or Patras – whenever that might have been? At least it is reasonable to believe that the cult statues of Artemis and Dionysos, which Pausanias saw in Patras, must have been there in the 2nd century AD.

It is difficult to say why the town was abandoned around 50 AD, when Augustus’ decree was probably consigned to oblivion, but it is in general significant that only few traces of Roman occupation are at hand in the Aitolian coastland. One reason might be the general tendency in Roman times to concentrate habitation in Urban centres at the expense of the countryside – that the activities, as often seen, return to the landscape during Late Roman times is at any rate not documented in the Aitolian coastland.⁸ What is, however, evident is that the old sanctuary of Artemis Laphria was still visited by worshippers as late as 300 AD.⁹

Byzantine cooking pits were installed on the Acropolis in the 11th and 12th century AD, Byzantine tombs established in the old sanctuary of Artemis Laphria after the abandonment in Antiquity and coins lost by (especially) Venetian visitors far into the Osmanli period certifies that the city of Kalydon was not forgotten – but this is another story!

⁶ Dietz & Stavropoulou-Gatsi, forthcoming.

⁷ Cf. the interpretation of the word ἐρημωθείσης by Jacob Isager above.

⁸ Alcock 1993, 48.

⁹ Poulsen & Rhomaïos 1927, 42–3. Substantiated in Dyggve 1948, 302.

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