ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2006–2007

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INTRODUCTION

In previous issues of *Archaeology in Greece* I have tried to draw attention, not so much to individual discoveries, as to trends. I have argued that it is the aggregate picture, more than the unique find, that summaries such as *Archaeology in Greece* are best at drawing attention to. Previous issues have drawn attention to the explosion of MPal finds in Greece, to the slow accumulation of evidence for the colonization of the Cyclades in the Neo and for widespread settlement during the MH; not to mention the significance of the cluster of EIA sites on either side of the Euboic gulf (Oropos, Eretria, Lefkandi and Mitrou). This emphasis on the aggregate picture in no way invalidates individual discoveries. Indeed, sometimes, the finds from a single site can change the terms of some very longstanding debates.

In this issue of *Archaeology in Greece* there are four such sites, whose excavation and subsequent interpretation challenge longstanding views on at least four periods in Gr prehistory and history. In chronological order, these are: the Theopetra cave in Thessaly; the site of Daskalio-Kavos on Keros in the Cyclades; the sanctuary of Kalapodi in anc. Phokis, mod. Phthiotis; and the anc. city of Tegea in Arkadia.

The strata in the Theopetra cave, carefully investigated by Nina Kyparissi-Apostolika, reveal continuity of occupation (perhaps not uninterrupted) from the MPal through to the ENeo. It is one of the few occupation sites in Greece which has a well-defined Mes stratum, a stratum that seems to precede the earliest ENeo. It is in this Mes stratum that some coarse pottery has turned up. Pottery, of course, is usually thought to be a Neo technology, introduced into Greece along with the whole Neo technological and cultural package from the Near East. That 'the Neolithic' was introduced wholesale, as a cultural/technological package, probably as the result of a migration (or 'demic diffusion'), remains the majority (if not quite the orthodox) view. These finds from the Theopetra cave, especially if their date is confirmed by thermoluminescence dating, would point either to the independent invention of this technology, or to a period of acculturation and co-existence between native Mes and immigrant Neo groups.

The 'Special Deposit' from Kavos on Keros, currently being investigated by Colin Renfrew and his team, is also proving controversial. The deposit represents the largest concentration of Cyc marble figurines anywhere. These figurines, highly esteemed by the major art museums of the world, are often interpreted as either burial goods or cult images. The figurines from Kavos were all found carefully broken – the excavator thinks, first, that they were broken in antiquity, and, second, that they were broken elsewhere (and not *in situ*) before being deposited in Kavos. Colin Renfrew believes he can exclude the possibility of their being the product of a looting of a nearby cemetery, and that their breakage and deposition represents an E (and uniquely Cyc) form of EBA cult practice (or 'structured deposition'). It does not follow, however, that Kavos itself was a cult site. To the Cl archaeologist, the analogy that presents itself almost irresistibly is the purification trench on Rheneia, the island next to the sanctuary of Delos. The purification trench, conducted under the supervision of the Athenians in 425 BC (Thuc 1.8.2; 3.104-1-3), and the broken state of the objects (often originally from graves) was not in this case the result of primary ('cult') but secondary ('purificatory') deposition. In any case, Cyc figurines can no longer be viewed as objects whose function was single ('burial' or 'cult') and value primarily aesthetic, but as artefacts with complex biographies and social lives in the EBA Cyclades.

The third site is the sanctuary of Kalapodi, once thought to be that of Artemis Elaphobolos and now re-identified as that of Apollo at Abai. Before the DAI renewed its interest in the site under Wolf Niemeier in 2004, Kalapodi was already well known, through the work of R. Felsch, as being the sanctuary that best demonstrated 'continuity of cult' between the LBA (LH IIIC) through the EIA and into Ar times. It was often remarked, however, that the earliest cult practice demonstrable at the site dated to the LH IIIC period, that is after the destruction of the Myc palaces. Kalapodi therefore represented a new configuration of cult, more characteristic of the later EIA and Ar periods than of the palatial BA. Recent excavation has confounded this comforting view. Kalapodi has strata going back through the 'palatial' LH IIIB and LH IIIA periods and stretching as far back as the MH. These strata contain objects (primarily figurines of one kind or another) that can plausibly be interpreted as cult objects.

The fourth site is anc. Tegea, which, since 1999, has been investigated by the Norwegian Institute under the direction of its outgoing director, Knut Ødegård. Tegea has been subject to two kinds of surface survey: systematic, intensive field-walking with sherd pick-up and geophysical prospection. Combined, these two techniques seem to show that the city of anc. Tegea was founded no earlier than the L6th Ct BC. But, when founded, it was conceived and laid out as a whole, on an early version of the grid plan with space allocated to an agora. This is the kind of pattern we might expect for a colonial foundation such as Megara Hyblaea, but not for what, until recently, has been thought of as a well-established political community that played a fairly important role in the Persian wars. The foundation of the city is also very much later than the foundation of the sanctuary of Athena Alea, where cult goes back to at least the Geo period, and a substantial temple had been built by the end of the 7th Ct BC. In this case, it seems likely that some notion of political community, perhaps based on a common cult site, preceded a major episode of urbanization.

None of these claims is uncontroversial, and none will be accepted without some degree of criticism and some very animated discussion. Here I take the opportunity of my final *Archaeology in Greece* to express some purely personal views. Keros and Kalapodi both raise, in rather acute form, the fundamental theoretical question of how we recognize 'cult' in material terms, and how should we interpret it. While each claim has important historical implications, the tools of 'source criticism' one must use to evaluate each claim are those of the archaeologist and not the historian. Only an archaeologist is competent to judge whether the stratigraphy at Theopetra is sound and the thermoluminescence dates realistic; whether we can rule out looting as the explanation for

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the special deposit on Keros; whether any of the signs of BA cult at Kalapodi are well founded; and whether the surface finds and the geophysics at Tegea really support the picture of L6th Ct urbanization. There is no lack of Neo and BA specialists in British universities, mainly in departments of archaeology, and the Theopetra and Keros finds will be much discussed in the journals. Evaluating the claims of either Kalapodi or Tegea however requires a mix of historical and archaeological knowledge, and here there has been a worrying decline in the 'skills base' within departments of Classics in the UK. There is, for example, one department in one of England's ancient universities which has no archaeologist who specializes in the period 1000–30 BC in the E Mediterranean, and no epigrapher at all (not even a Rom one).

The department in question though has plenty of historians, and no lack of scholars who are happy to call themselves 'Classical art historians'. If so, is this decline in the skills base really so worrying, so long as we have scholars who study 'art'? For is not the study of art one of the principal objects of what used to be called Classical archaeology and Classical studies? This is the traditional view, and it retains considerable appeal within modern Greece. Modern Gr newspapers and modern Gr politicians have been much exercised in recent years about the loss of their art through illicit looting and the trade in antiquities. Last year the discovery of a collection of objects with no clear provenance found in a villa on the island of Schinousa in the Mikres Kyklades (parts of the Cyclades just S of Naxos which also include Keros) occasioned much comment. Recently, the new minister of culture, Mr Voulgarakis, has had some success in recovering Gr art both from Swiss private collections and from American museums, institutions which have always coveted Gr art. Much was made of the recovery of four objects (a Hel gold athlete's wreath from Macedonia; an Ar marble kore from Paros; an incised Cl funerary stele from Thebes; and a marble relief from Thasos) from the Getty Museum, and more recently the Cl marble torso stolen from Gortyn some fifteen years ago and allegedly the work of Praxiteles has been returned. In speeches given at such occasions, the word *klironomia* (inheritance or heritage) is invariably used – these *objects* in themselves represent the heritage of Greece and should not have left the country illegally.

This view of the Gr heritage however – one that focuses primarily on things arty and things Cl – is already somewhat dated. That educated Greeks have a more complex, and nuanced, conception of their own heritage, and of their place in the world, than many in Britain might imagine should be clear from the trouble taken to conserve and restore mosques in N Greece, particularly Thrace, recorded in the *Deltion*. The Bayezit mosque in Didymoteicho, for example, is clearly one of the wonders of EOt architecture, in every way comparable to examples in Bursa or Edirne, and (in a broader sense) to the Perpendicular churches of E Anglia. But still it does not, it seems, count as 'art' in quite the same way as the Parthenon marbles, and does not quite have the same value to politicians.

The trouble is, of course, that before 146 BC, there was no such thing as Gr art. There is no anc. Gr word for 'art' – no word that is that covers the various categories of object that have traditionally been included (statues, temples, vases, gems, mosaics, etc) but also excludes other material things (pins, coarse pots, houses) thought to be merely banausic. Greek art is a Roman invention. It is the product of the very practice of looting and subsequent de-contextualization that scholars now profess to deplore. To quote an authority from Oxford, attempting a definition of that category, the statue:

> [statues] were big lumps of bronze or painted marble, fashioned in human form, wearing real-looking clothes and hairstyles, standing in life-like positions. They were set up on separate inscribed bases that gave their identity and specified the role and occasion they marked. *A statue without its inscribed base became a piece of anonymous art* [emphasis mine]. With its inscription, it was a functioning image in a particular setting (R.R.R. Smith, 'Pindar, athletes and the early Greek statue habit' in S. Hornblower and C. Morgan (eds), *Pindar's Poetry, Patrons and Festivals: From Archaic Greece to the Roman Empire* (Oxford 2007: 84).

If there is no Gr art (or it only exists insofar as it is a product of Rom taste) it follows that there can be no *history* of Gr art. How can one write a history of a set of de-contextualized and looted objects, objects deprived of their setting and their meaning? Collections of 'Gr art' shed very little light on the anc. world, a fact which is evident even to journalists. As Souren Melikian of the *New York Times* says of the new Gr and Rom galleries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York:

> the haziness surrounding the precise character and provenance of much of the art on view is astonishing (*International Herald Tribune* 26 May 2007: 10).

No-one who has followed the activities of the Metropolitan Museum over the past 40 years or so should be astonished by this. Art and haziness about character and provenance are part and parcel of one another. What turns a statue into art is precisely its Rom de-contextualization. It should be no surprise then that the idea of a 'Cl art history' has been promoted most vigorously in recent years by Romanists. It may be a useful subject as a history of Rom taste, but it should play no part in Hellenic studies, properly understood. For this – and for the proper understanding of the vast quantities of new material that come to light every year in Greece – we need more archaeologists.

A word on our sources: as in previous years, not everything is quite up-to-date. The *Deltion* is the second volume for the work covered by the Archaeological Service in 1999 (*ADelt B Chr* 54 [1999]) covering the area from Macedonia through Thrace, the Aegean Islands and Crete; *AEMTH* 19 (2005) covers various activities of both the Archaeological Service and Gr universities during 2005 in the area of Macedonia and Thrace. Only the *Ergon*, the reports from Gr newspapers and reports from Foreign Schools and other individual scholars actually reflect the archaeological work undertaken in Greece between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007. This year has seen some changes to our contributors. While Sophia Germanidou has continued with the Byz, Dusanka Urem-Kotsou and Anastasia Dimoula with Macedonia and Thrace, and Artemis Karnava and Irene Nikolakopoulou have done sterling work with the islands, Don Evely (Knossos Curator) has replaced Eleni Hatzaki in covering Crete. This is for the very good reason that Eleni Hatzaki is leaving the British School at Athens to take up a new position in Cincinnatti, as I will soon be returning to Cardiff. I would like to thank all our loyal contributors from the Foreign Schools, Gr universities and the Greek Archaeological Service, and everyone here at the School who have contributed this year: Helen Clark for her continuing support; Vicki Tzavara for arranging the contributions as they come in electronically; Penny Wilson for compiling the list of publications; Robert Pitt, Heinrich Hall and Jo Caldicott for help in compiling images; and Heinrich Hall for the final 'clean up'. Since this is my last *Archaeology in Greece* I would also like to thank Russell Shone of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies and Gina Coulthard (the production editor) for their patience. Credits for illustrations are given at the end.

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