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ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2015–2016

Introduction & overview

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Following a 'remarkable decade of fieldwork' (Catherine Morgan in *AR* 59 [2012–2013] 1) and the increasing application of technologically advanced methods in archaeological investigations, emphasis appears now to have shifted from excavation to the analysis of the data collected. The present volume aims to strike a balance between articles that discuss exciting new discoveries (as is customary for the Newsround section and the Director's report of the work of the British School at Athens) and features that offer synthetic overviews on methodologies (Jill Hilditch, Jamieson C. Donati and Apostolos Sarris), specific regions (Chryssanthi Papadopoulou, Stavroula Sdrolia) or fields of study (Sylvian Fachard, Holger Baitinger). It will be clear from this description that I intend to continue the thematic organization *Archaeology in Greece* adopted several years ago in this edition, my first as editor.

Reading through the Newsround section and the BSA Director's report on the work of the School, it is evident that intensive survey and geophysical investigations have become key tools for archaeologists working in Greece. The article by Jamie Donati and Apostolos Sarris offers an overview of geophysical survey in Greece, and its varied applications, ranging from Neolithic *magoulas* to individual monuments (such as the theatre of Demetrias or the Kapnikarea church at Athens). After a decade of intensive work during which deliberate irregularities in the placement and metrology of streets and city blocks have been meticulously reported and analysed, a number of patterns emerge that shed light on the variety of responses to urban planning in ancient Greece. It is now clear from case studies at Tanagra, Sikyon, the Hellenistic city of Plataiai, Elis and Mantinea that many alternatives existed to the strict Hippodameian plan, known from Olynthos and elsewhere, as communities chose to take account of the peculiarities of the local terrain. Further, following recent investigations it has become apparent that Arcadia was a region where rational town planning seems to have been widespread. Equally, the geophysical prospection of monuments such as the southern city wall on the Acropolis and theatres and fortifications has allowed a far better understanding of their plans and structures, while continuing work on Neolithic settlements in Thessaly shows considerable promise.

Current research on fortifications is also integrally linked to intensive survey, geophysical investigations and the application of methodologies driven by specific research questions. Sylvian Fachard's overview is timely given the appearance of two major publications on fortifications within the last year: *Ancient Fortifications: A Compendium of Theory and Practice* (Müth *et.al*. 2015) and *Focus on Fortifications: New Research on Fortifications in the Ancient Mediterranean and the Near East* (Frederiksen *et.al.* 2015) both published by Oxbow Books. The wealth and depth of the evidence presented in Fachard's essay showcases how far the study of fortifications has progressed in the last decade. He examines how interdisciplinary studies on the topic offer opportunities to understand the motives behind the decision to construct fortifications alongside factors that affected their layout, construction and appearance. Such studies shed important light on state organization, defence and the security of ancient communities.

The essays on geophysical prospection and fortifications mentioned above, along with David Smith's Newsround section and many of the contributions in *AG* over the past few years, typify a further trend towards an increased emphasis on the study of the infrastructure associated with port facilities and an intensification in underwater archaeology in the Aegean. Highlights include the investigations at Fourni, Delos and Antikythera, and the survey at Lechaion. The project co-organized by the EMA and Mantha Zarmakoupi (National Hellenic Research Foundation/Birmingham) has located six previously unknown shipwrecks in the channel between Delos and Rheneia, as well as port facilities in the district of Skardana. Recent prospection along the western shores of Delos by the EfA and Jean-Charles Moretti (Laboratoire

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IRAA) also brought to light promising new evidence for maritime facilities. These projects will undoubtedly help us to understand the function of auxiliary harbours on the island during the Late Hellenistic period.

The 45 shipwrecks newly discovered by the *Fourni Underwater Survey* range in date from the Late Archaic period to the 19th century AD, and demonstrate the significance of maritime communications for the archipelago. Last but not least, the ongoing investigations on the Antikythera shipwreck have yielded material that suggests the existence of a second ship at the site, and the Greek and international media have reported recently that human skeletal remains have been identified at the site and that these are undergoing investigation by physical anthropologists (https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/sep/19/antikythera-shipwreck-yields-human-bones-bringing-hope-for-dna-secrets-from-the-deep).

The scientific analysis of human remains will be of crucial importance for interpreting two of the most intriguing finds of last year, also widely reported in the press. Firstly, during the investigations of the *Mt. Lykaion Excavation and Survey Project* a human burial was discovered near a man-made stone platform in the middle of the sacrificial altar in the Sanctuary of Zeus (http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/news/newsDetails/new-finds-at-mt.-lykaion; see also the excavation website at http://lykaionexcavation.org). The location of the burial among the sacrificial remains caused a stir, as it brought to mind ancient authors' descriptions of human sacrifice at the site, and detailed study of the bones will prove crucial to determining many biographical details of the individual, including perhaps how he died. Secondly, an intriguing mass burial was unearthed in the southeastern area of the esplanade near the Phaleron Delta (see Newsround). The large number and careful placement of the dead, the discovery of iron shackles on many of the skeletons and the preliminary analysis of the bones seem to confirm the excavator's hypothesis that this was a burial of male captives. Given the dating of the few associated pots to the third quarter of the seventh century BC, Stella Chrysoulaki has tentatively linked the burial to contemporary tumultuous affairs in Athens (for example the Cylonian affair). Analysis of the skeletal remains will undoubtedly offer vital clues to the circumstances of these men's deaths and, more importantly, inform us about life in Archaic Athens. This work is now underway in the recently opened new premises of the Malcolm H. Wiener Laboratory of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, led by Jane Buikstra (Arizona State) in collaboration with Dawnie Steadman (Tennessee), and we hope to follow the progress of these studies in future editions of *AG*.

Excavations in the 2010s are far fewer and more focused than those of the previous decade, but the last 12 months, nevertheless, have offered us important new discoveries, from continuing new evidence on early hominid activity during the Palaeolithic period in the Peloponnese, Epirus and at Stelida on Naxos, to the theatre at Lefkada and the six well-preserved wooden caissons belonging to the Early Byzantine mole at Lechaion (**ID4890**; Newsround).

There is no article in this issue specifically dedicated to a discussion of prehistoric material culture, but both David Smith and John Bennet discuss relevant finds. To name but a few, the survey and excavations conducted by Vangelis Tourloukis in the Mani region and the survey in the Kokytos valley by Nena Galanidou have both yielded rich lithic assemblages of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods, while at Megalo Karvounari rare tool types may lead us to rethink the spread of certain industries in the southern Balkans. Scientific analysis of the artefacts from the Late Neolithic II House 1 at Dikili Tash has produced evidence consistent with the production of wine. At Koutroulou Magoula, interdisciplinary study of the remains allows a far better understanding of intra-site organization and production activities in the settlement, while the analysis of pottery finds helps us to rethink Neolithic chronologies. The survey on southeast Naxos has documented important Early Cycladic II finds and a strong Hellenistic phase; the interdisciplinary analysis of the ceramic finds is briefly presented by Jill Hilditch in this volume.

The BSA's projects at Knossos – the *Knossos Urban Landscape Project*, the *Gypsades Excavation Project* and the *Geophysical Survey of Roman Knossos* – are producing new evidence about the evolution of the settlement that will be discussed in detail in future reports. At Palaikastro, the excavation of Building AM1, a large Neopalatial building, has produced evidence for large-scale production of aromatics, as well as a grinding installation of significant size.

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For the historical periods, excavations at Despotiko continue to unearth sculptural groups and it is now clear that there was a major early sanctuary, similar perhaps in importance to Delos. At Mytilene, the cist grave at the village of Ippeios provides new evidence for occupation and burial in the Iron Age.

Undoubtedly the most discussed discovery of the last year is the so-called '**Griffin warrior**' grave unearthed during the *University of Cincinnati Excavations at the Palace of Nestor at Pylos*. A single male adult inhumation dating to the Early Mycenaean period was found here alongside a very large number of artefacts (reportedly about 1,800). These include bronze weapons (some with elaborate decoration), metal vessels in bronze, gold and silver, personal ornaments (a mirror and ivory combs), large numbers of sealstones and beads, and an impressive gold-chain necklace. According to the excavators, Sharon Stocker and Jack Davis (Cincinnati), the finds betray strong Minoan influence and the burial is exceptional because of the unusual number, intrinsic value and artistic quality of the grave goods, as well as because of the nature of the assemblage – a combination of toilet artefacts, jewellery and weaponry. In advance of full analysis and publication of the finds, a well-illustrated description of the tomb is available online at: http://www.griffinwarrior.org.

John Bennet highlights in this year's report on the work of the BSA the varied activities of the Fitch Laboratory, its international profile and numerous collaborations. Among the various events organized by the School he singles out the *European Meeting on Ancient Ceramics* (held in September 2015), co-organized with NCSR Demokritos, where a wide range of methodological questions was discussed. In this volume, Jill Hilditch offers an overview of current research themes on ancient Greek ceramics, and through a well-selected number of cases studies reveals the potential for further study and analysis.

It has become customary in recent *AG* volumes to include articles that focus on a category of artefacts or a specific site or group of sites. The excavations for the extension of the metro in Athens have led to a far better understanding of the layout, organization and development of Athenian coastal demes, and Chryssanthi Papadopoulou's contribution offers an overview of archaeological work at Glyphada and our current knowledge concerning the ancient deme of Halai Axonidai. She discusses the road systems, houses (with evidence for domestic cult), burial grounds and local ancient agricultural production activities. When compared with other demes, what is distinctive at Halai Axonidai is that quarrying was very limited, perhaps due to the nature of the conglomerate bedrock there. It is also intriguing to note that burials in the vicinity of houses were common, a phenomenon attested in other places but not to the extent witnessed at this particular location.

Holger Baitinger's contribution discusses imported metal votives found at major sanctuaries. His analysis of Italian votives at Olympia, as well as Perachora and Kalapodi/Abai, leads him to conclude that significant numbers of these may have originated in scrap hoards in Italy and been transferred to Olympia and elsewhere much later than has generally been assumed, perhaps even as late as the sixth to fifth century BC.

Over the last decade, the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, very often in conjunction with financial support from the European Union as part of the National Strategic Reference Framework programme (ΕΣΠΑ) 2007–2013, has focused its energy and funds on site conservation and presentation projects. Many resulting projects have either been recently completed or are currently nearing completion and, consequently, the last few years have witnessed the opening of several new archaeological sites and museums. A welcome by-product of this work has been the appearance of numerous publications on sites and monuments that reveal the important research component of such undertakings. Without claiming to be exhaustive, I mention here a sample of 2015 publications, by region:

Epirus, Ioannina region: Giouni, P., Kappa, C. and Phaklari, Y. (2015) *Kastritsa Ioanninon. A Brief Guide of the Archaeological Site* (Ioannina); Pliakou, G. (ed.) (2015) *The Fortified Settlement of Megalo Gardiki on Kastri Hill* (Ioannina)

Epirus, Arta region: Papadopoulou, B.N. (ed.) (2015) *Ambrakia: The City and the Monuments* (Arta)

Epirus, Preveza region: Aggeli, A. (ed.) (2015) *The Archaeological Sites of Nekromanteion and Ephyra* (Preveza); Aggeli, A. (ed.) (2015) *The Roman Aqueduct of Nicopolis* (Preveza); Aggeli, A. (ed.) (2015) *The Archaeological Site of Kassope* (Preveza); Zachos, K.L. (2015) *An Archaeological Guide to*

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Nicopolis. Rambling Through the Historical, Sacred and Civic Landscape (Athens); Zachos, K.L., Stamou, I., Leontaris, L. and Soukantos, I. (2015) *The Odeum of Nikopolis* (Athens); Zachos, K.L. and Karampa, M. (2015) *The Cemeteries of Nikopolis* (Athens); Zachos, K.L., Paulidis, E.A. and Tranoulidis, A. (2015) *The Theater of Nikopolis* (Athens)

Thessaly: Karapanou, S. (2015) *Η ελληνιστική αγροικία στη θέση «Τσερλή» Καλαμακίου, ανατολική Θεσσαλία* (Larisa)

Central Greece, Eurytania: Papakonstantinou, M.-P. (ed.) (2015) *Ο Ναός Μεταμορφώσεως του Σωτήρος, Βράχα Ευρυτανίας* (Lamia)

Euboea: Kalamaras, P. (ed.) (2015) *The City of Chalkis* (Athens)

Peloponnese: Koumousi, A. and Theodoropoulou, M. (2015) *Ζαχλωρίτικα Αιγιαλείας: Συμβολή στην ιστορική τοπογραφία και αρχαιολογία της περιοχής κατά την Πρωτοβυζαντινή περίοδο* (Patra)

Cyclades: Pantou, P. (2015) *Το Αρχαίο Θέατρο στη Μήλο, Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού, Γενική Διεύθυνση Αρχαιοτήτων και Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς, Εφορεία Αρχαιοτήτων Κυκλάδων* (Athens)

The new data arising offer fresh insights into regions or material culture, and often challenge our ideas about their character and development. Stavroula Sdrolia's article in this volume discusses habitation and settlement patterns on Mount Ossa (eastern Thessaly) during Late Antiquity (the Early Byzantine period). The work of the last decade has demonstrated that habitation on its slopes was dense, and that these settlements actively participated in trade networks across the Aegean and enjoyed a complex material culture. Evidence from other sites, including Larisa and Phthiotic Thebes, strongly suggests that Late Antiquity was not a period of decline but one of transformation. We hope that future editions of *AG* will discuss other regions where our knowledge has been revolutionized by recent discoveries.

My own contribution provides a brief overview of new museums and temporary exhibitions, many of them products of the programmes referred to above. The remarkable displays now open are a testimony to the hard work behind their preparation. In some cases this has received international recognition and I report with pleasure that the Archaeological Museum of Tegea (http://www.tegeamuseum.gr/el-gr/αρχική.aspx) received a 'Special Commendation' at the 40th anniversary of the European Museum of the Year Awards in May 2016.

Staying with museums, private initiative has supported various projects and has continued to play an essential role. In addition to the contributions of private foundations to the creation of the Eleutherna Archaeological Museum (Onassis Foundation, Alpha Bank, Grecotel), the garden of the National Archaeological Museum at Athens (JT International Hellas) and the excavations on the Antikythera shipwreck (Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation, OTE Group, Costa Navarino, Hublot), highlights of this past year include the two new museums supported by the Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation. These are the last two in the Thematic Museum Network that focuses on the presentation and promotion of the artisanal and industrial heritage of Greece. As with the other museums in the group, they are the result of a fruitful collaboration with the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports. The first – the Chios Mastic Museum – opened on 15 June 2016 and is located in southern Chios at Rachi (Tepeki) in the region of the Mastichochoria. Its permanent exhibition is dedicated to the presentation of the cultivation, exploitation and marketing of mastic gum, the emblematic product of Chios. The permanent rooms also narrate the history of the gum's production from the Byzantine and Venetian periods to modern times, elucidating its role in the formation of the island's cultural identity. The final museum in the network, the Silversmithing Museum, opened on 24 September 2016, in the Castle of Ioannina (*Its Kale*), situated in the western rampart of the southeastern acropolis. The permanent exhibition presents the technology of silversmithing and describes the relevant tools and techniques as well as tracing the craft's role in the region of Ioannina and Epirus from the 15th century AD onwards, showcasing the economic importance of the industry and its role in the creation of the region's identity and prosperity.

Also important for the promotion of new museums is the latest volume in the series on Greek museums published by the Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and the Eurobank Foundation: *Mycenae* by Alkestis Papademetriou, Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Argolid. As is customary, this is freely available online (http://www.latsis-foundation.org/eng/education-science-culture/culture/the-museums-cycle).

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The editorial team of the EfA and the BSA continues to process the information published in *ADelt* 2007–2009 (six fascicules), *AEMTh* 24 (2010) and other reports. Next year's *AG* will discuss some of the preliminary new results and we anticipate including contributions that survey and synthesize material from the prehistoric and Byzantine periods, thematic features and regional articles on the islands, especially the Cyclades, the Dodecanese and Crete.

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