

41. Lousoi: Geo wall beneath the Hel peripteral temple.

In the sounding in the W sekos hall, excavation underneath the sterile clay packing supporting the Hel temple revealed a curved stone setting built of broken-up local flysch and a few pebbles (**Fig. 41**). Based on its elevation, building technique and stratigraphic context, this wall can be associated with stone settings recognized in the E sekos hall during the 2007 campaign: in combination they can be reconstructed as an apsidal structure 4.5m *w.* x at least 7m *l.* This will have to be further verified in future excavations. The deposit of earth within the suggested apse contained fragments of a jug with typical Geo band decoration. Based on the information currently available, the structure dates to the Geo period and is associated with the deep primary deposits under the N peristasis.

Although excavations in the area of the Hel urban centre of Lousoi revealed only occasional evidence for earlier activities, this area also appears to have been in use during the Geo period. Finds so far indicate occasional activities, including eating and drinking (feasting), perhaps with a cult background and probably associated with some simple architecture. These preliminary results suggest that at the bottom of the Soudena plain lay a further Geo settlement or cult place, complementing the Sanctuary of Artemis about 1km to the NE, which can also be traced back to the 8th Ct BC. It is further striking that in both cases there is evidence for elaborate rebuilding of the cult structures in the Hel period.

LACONIA
(5th EPCA: 5th EBA)

W. Cavanagh, C. Gallou and M. Georgiadis (eds), *Sparta and Laconia from Prehistory to Premodern* (London, BSA 2009) offers an invaluable overview of the region. Specific articles are noted below only when they present new data or significantly expand previous site reports.

Anc. Quarries in Laconia. G. Kokkorou-Alevras (Athens), A. Chatziconstantinou (Athens), A. Efsathopoulos (Athens), E. Zavvou (Epigraphical Museum, formerly 5th EPCA), A. Themos (Epigraphical Museum, formerly 5th EPCA), K. Kopanias (Athens) and E. Poupaki (Athens) present an overview of ongoing research into the main quarry locations in Laconia (*Sparta and Laconia*, 169–79). Quarry sites briefly noted are: Gynaika, Platyvouni (Sochas), Vresthena, Chrysafa, Viglafia (Rom–ECh), Daimonia, Ag. Marina, Zarakas and Tainaro. Fuller discussion is offered of **Oitylo** (including Rom–ECh cuttings) and especially **Plytra (anc. Asopos)**, where 3 sandstone quarry sites (probably LHel–ECh) are identified and details of the quarry cuttings and evidence for Rom cult and Rom–ECh burials in the quarry areas presented.

Anc. Sparta
E. Zavvou and A. Themos (Epigraphical Museum, formerly 5th EPCA) present (*Sparta and Laconia*, 105–22) a synthesis of the results of rescue excavations conducted in the mod. city from 1994–2005, analysing their impact on our understanding of urban development from EH–ECh times. Significant changes to the existing picture are provided, for example by the presence of EH activity on the SW edge of the city, and the extent of PGeo and Geo activity especially in the area of Limnai, S of the acropolis, and at the W edge of the city.

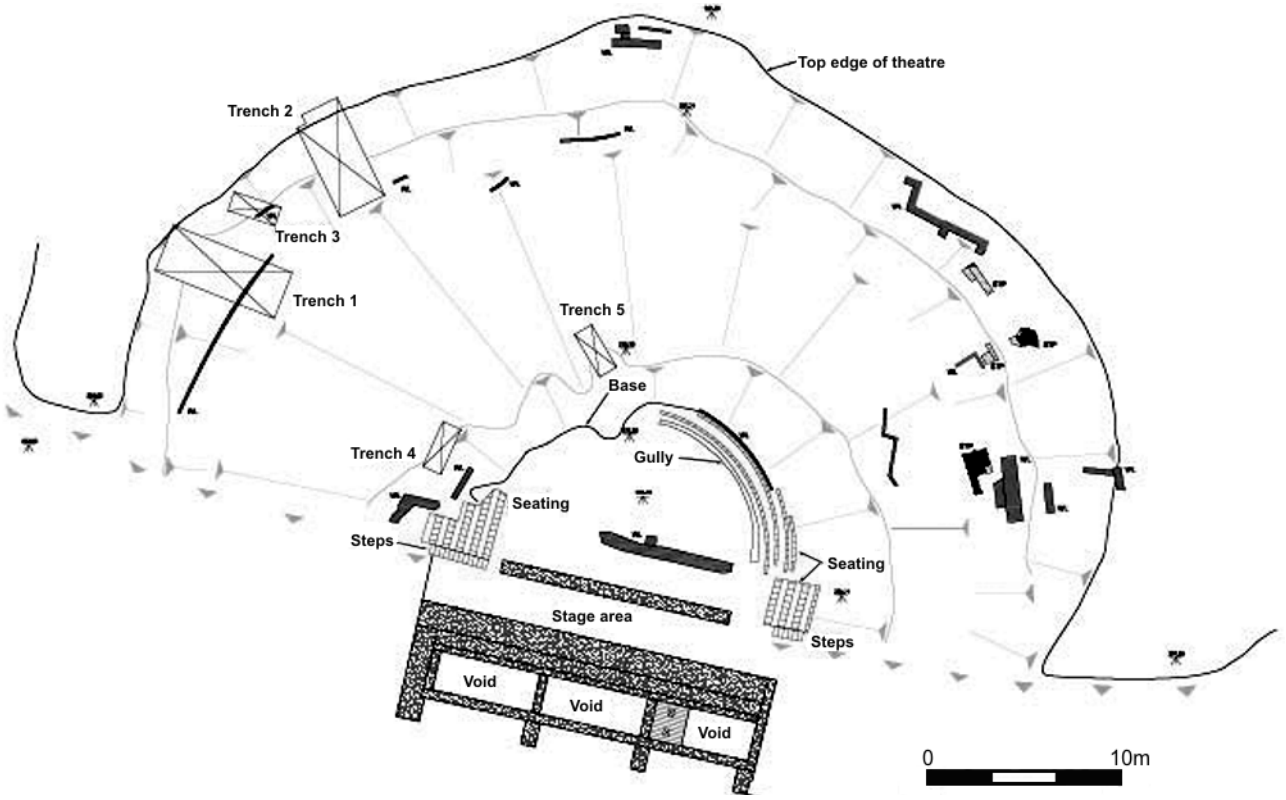
Sparta Theatre. C. Morgan (Director, BSA), A. Vasilogamvrou (Director, 5th EPCA) and K. Diamanti (Director, 5th EBA) report on the first season of excavation in the anc. theatre, focusing on investigation of the extent and nature of LRom and Byz use of the space, and combining new excavation with reappraisal of BSA work in the 1920s.

Excavation was conducted in the W part of the middle and upper cavea in order to locate the SW edge of the LAntique settlement on the acropolis and to establish the N limits of the housing on the W side of the orchestra, partially excavated in the 1990s (**Fig. 42**).

Attention focused on Byz landscaping between the main settlement areas. S of the lower retaining wall of the cavea, a substantial MByz (12th Ct) terrace wall prevented erosion of the upper slope and hill-wash onto structures downslope. This contains a quantity of architectural spolia from the theatre. In the easternmost of the upper cavea trenches, abutting the cavea retaining wall, one of the radial paths which linked the 2 settlement areas was revealed, containing MByz pottery.

In the westernmost of the upper trenches, an anomaly revealed in the 2007 resistivity survey was found to be a mass grave of the MByz period (**Fig. 43**). A large pit cut into the clay fill of the theatre housed a 2.5m x 2m structure of uncoursed cobbles, with walls, containing architectural spolia, which were well faced and plastered only on the interior. A composite lotus and acanthus capital reused within the lower wall probably originated in the upper part of the theatre (**Fig. 44**). To the N and W, the construction pit was backfilled with domestic refuse, including EByz–MByz cooking and table wares, and a quantity of severely burnt roof tile of Rom type, debris of a major fire nearby. It remains unclear whether the structure was entered from the side or from the top, and there is no evidence to show how it was covered. The chamber contained the remains of more than 22 individuals; preliminary analysis suggests both male and female, mostly adults of a wide age range, but with a few sub-adults and at least one child of 8–10 years. These remains were deposited in 4 episodes featuring very different practices. The lowest level contained an ossuary-like arrangement of crania against the N wall with long bones together to the S (**Fig. 45**). Subsequently, a low interior wall or bench was added on the W side of the chamber and a quantity of human bone was packed behind it. Over this was an inhumation which had been heavily truncated. And finally, a large deposit of mixed semi-articulated bone with badly broken bone overlaid it.

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42. Sparta theatre: 2008 excavation plan.



43. Sparta theatre: EByz tomb structure.



44. Sparta theatre: lotus and acanthus capital reused in EByz tomb structure.



45 Sparta theatre: EByz multiple burial, phase 1.

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Over the entire grave interior lay a mixed deposit of pottery and animal bone. It seems that the structure was initially intended as an ossuary but was rapidly reused as a tomb. All 4 episodes took place within the 12th–E13th Ct and were probably mostly reburials of remains originally deposited on the acropolis. There is as yet no evidence for a religious building in this area, but these unusual circumstances have a possible parallel in a multiple burial excavated in 1926 S of the theatre.

Debris from the LRom and (mostly) Byz settlement on the acropolis was encountered in all the upper trenches; a little LRom pottery (3rd–6th Ct), tile and brick, EByz cookware (ca. 9th–E10th Ct) and MByz (mostly 12th Ct) amphorae and tableware confirm the chronology of the main settlement phases. A distinctive group of EByz cookpots was isolated, the earliest of which, manufactured on a slow wheel and hand finished, is tentatively dated in the L8th or 9th Ct. All trenches produced pottery and votives washed down from the Sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos on the acropolis. Of particular interest are 2 fragments of an Ar terracotta antefix and a partially preserved stone jumping weight of the L6th–E5th Ct BC with an unusually long inscription (**Fig. 46**). The name of the Spartan who dedicated the weight is not preserved, and was probably on a second halter, but a victory at the Olympic Games can be restored, the athlete offering up his sporting equipment to the goddess on his return home.



46. Sparta theatre: L6th–E5th Ct BC halter recording an Olympic victory.

Sparta, SW cemetery. A. Themos, A. Maltezou, G. Pantou, G. Tsiangouris and C. Phlouris (5th EPCA) report (*Sparta and Laconia*, 261–69) on the results of rescue excavations between 1994 and 2005 (especially on the Katsaris-Mavridis and the Dimitrakopoulos-Zachariadis plots) which have revealed more than 700 burials of LHel–5th Ct AD date. Preliminary discussion of tomb types, burials customs and offerings is presented.

MByz remains in the city area are presented (*Sparta and Laconia*, 301–11) by A. Bakourou (formerly Director, 5th EBA), focusing on 2 adjacent building plots, O.T. 126 and 127, where a funerary chapel, a church, a bath and an olive press were discovered. The triconch funerary chapel was discovered on the Theodosopoulou-Karydi property in O.T. 126. This is a simple, one-roomed structure, 12.4m total *l.* x 6.1m *w* (narthex 9m *w.*). The structure included building material in secondary use (large orthogonal limestone blocks with smaller stone filling between them, plastered in), a technique mostly used in the 10th–11th Ct, although there is no evidence for earlier structures on the site. The interior was decorated with wall-paintings; one fragment depicts an inscribed scroll. Evidence combines to indicate a date of the 2nd half of the 10th Ct AD. Inside the main chapel were 3 cist tombs (one in the S apse and 2 in the W aisle), with a further 6 in the narthex, below the floor and the marble threshold. This indicates that the chapel was funerary in its original conception, but burial continued after its destruction, from the 12th to the first half of the 13th Ct. Small rectangular enclosures were built to the W of it in this later period, probably to organize the large cemetery which then developed inside and around the building (26 cist tombs have been recovered, containing multiple burials, and 25 pit graves mostly of children). Grave goods included bracelets, rings, earrings, and many MByz buckles. From the fill across the area come examples of glazed pottery of the 12th and 13th Cts, with restorable vessels from funerary feasts within the cemetery. Thirty eight coins were found, 3 of the 10th Ct, most of the 11th to the first half of the 13th Ct, and 3 Fr coins of the Corinth mint of ca. 1250.

On the property of E. Rigos, just to the W in O.T. 127, are the foundations of a Byz church (preserved to 1m *h.*), resting on the remains of a Rom structure. The building, which has an almost square plan, has 3 aisles with apses at the E end and a narthex at the W (the main entrance is in the W side of the narthex). There are traces of wall-painting in the central apse (and loose fragments found scattered elsewhere), as well as of marble cladding and a marble floor. The altar table was *in situ.* On the basis of the building itself, its sculpted decoration and the coins found (especially 2 anonymous folles), an 11th Ct construction date is indicated; there followed 3 or 4 building phases, and it is likely that the building continued in use into late Comninan times and that it was destroyed by an earthquake.

A further rescue excavation on the property of S. and P. Androutsou, in addition to allowing complete exploration of the whole of the church, revealed MByz cist and pit graves along the entire E side of the building. A small distance to the E of the church lay the remains of a bath, preserving the apodyterion, caldarium and frigidarium. The central room had apses around, one of which served as a cistern. Remains of 2 water tanks were discovered outside the building. The hypocaust is poorly preserved, although the floors of the W niche and the 3rd room survive. The bath was a public rather than a private building, and is dated by the architecture to ca. 1100–1260.

The olive press was discovered NE of the bath, on the Philippopoulou plot. The large collection basin was well preserved, with a large rotating *trapetum*, with the slot for the central wooden axle pole which, together with a horizontal beam, supported 2 millstones turned by animal power. A further press was found just to the N. This is the first well-preserved workshop of this period found in Sparta, although partial traces of others (for example, on the Katsou property in O.T. 125) are preserved within the mod. city and on the acropolis.

Magoula. E. Kourinou (National Museum) and Y. Pikoulas (Thessaly) publish (*Sparta and Laconia*, 181–86) the remains of an anc. bridge over the Skatias river, on the WSW slopes of Magoula, which probably dates to the LCl or Hel period (L4th–3rd Ct BC).

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Mistras. G. Marinou reports (*AAA* 39 [2006], 211–28) on new evidence for the architecture and form of the Laskaris house in the lower town, revealed in the course of cleaning and restoration work from 2002 onwards. Three building phases can be identified, and are described in detail. The original, possibly 13th Ct AD, building is a rectangular structure perpendicular to the contours of the hill, with a small vaulted triclinium on the 1st floor (only traces of its 2nd storey are preserved), a ground floor space and a stoa to the N. The building was extended in the first half of the 14th Ct (possibly by Alexios Laskaris Metochitis, governor of the Peloponnese), with the addition of a large triclinium supported on a 2-storeyed vaulted extension to the E and N of the original house. This extension occupied the site of earlier buildings. Removal of Ot additions (a cross-wall in the triclinium, masonry sealing its N windows etc.) revealed the triclinium floor, the original form of the windows and of the seat by their sills, and the form of the tympanum of the Byz arch on the E façade beneath the triclinium (2 openings with semicircular arches, separated by a pillar). The N portico is also seen to be a 2-storeyed arcade on the E façade. The 3rd phase saw the addition of a special room with pointed door and window openings at the S of the triclinium. On the E façade, the 2 large arches at the level beneath it were replaced by a wall with smaller pointed windows. The large arch on the ground floor beneath was also replaced. Parapets with corbels were installed on the balconies. A date of the 2nd half of the 14th Ct is proposed for this final phase, and the author suggests that the changes reflect the new taste for private rooms and westernizing features at the court of the Despot Manuel Kantakouzenos and his wife Isabelle de Lusignan.

Publication: S. Sinos (ed.), *Τα Μνημεία του Μυστρά. Το Έργο της Επιτροπής Αναστήλωσης Μνημείων Μυστρά* (Athens, TAPA 2009).

Menelaion
Publication: H.W. Catling, *Sparta: Menelaion* I. *The Bronze Age* (London, BSA 2009).

Agios Stephanos
Publication: †W.D. Taylour and R. Janko, *Ayios Stephanos. Excavations at a Bronze Age and Medieval Settlement in Southern Laconia* (London, BSA 2008).

Alepotrypa Cave (Diros). A. Papathanasiou publishes (*Sparta and Laconia*, 21–28) the human bone remains from the site.

Anthochori. E. Zavvou (Epigraphical Museum) publishes (*Sparta and Laconia*, 29–42) finds from the excavations conducted by the former Director of the 5th EPCA, C. Christou, in the early 1960s, together with the results of fieldwork conducted by the author (then of the 5th EPCA) in 2004. The old excavation finds include much EHII and MH pottery, along with LHIIA–LHIIIC. A Myc burial discovered in 1970 on the property of V. Bourazelis in the area of Anthochori includes 2 LHIIA squat jugs. Sherds of Laconian PGeo skyphoi and closed vessels are also noted. Ar and Cl pottery and votives relate to the known sanctuary: fragments of 4 stamped tiles of the 3rd Ct BC preserve the stamp Μεσσαπέος/Δαμόσιοι. Survey in 2004 showed that archaeological finds concentrate over a large area around the Church of the Metamorphosis, with material of the historical period (bg sherds, pithoi and black-painted tiles) especially to the S, and that of PH periods (EH saucers, Myc kylikes, handmade wares) to the E. Ca. 100m W of the church, on the property of P. Fraghis, an underground circular chamber (1.7m *h.* and 2.38m *di.*), with rectangular niches to the N and S of the chamber and a short dromos, was probably a storeroom rather than a tomb: no dating evidence was found. Rescue excavation on the property of D. Katsoulakos, just to the N of the church, revealed EH architectural remains over an area of 183m^2. In a lower layer, remains of successive building phases were revealed, with rectilinear houses showing successive additions and alterations. Construction was in stone in the herringbone technique, with a mud-brick superstructure and probably roofing in schist slabs. A large building was exposed in the NW sector of the excavation. Pottery from this lower layer dates early in EHII. Especially in the E sector of the excavation, the poor preservation of walls made it impossible to retrieve individual building plans. The pottery was mostly coarse or semi-coarse, with saucers, deep rounded bowls, basins, pithoi and open jars being the most popular shapes in coarser fabrics; finer wares sometimes have an (often high) polish and/or a red slip, and most finewares or semi-coarsewares have incised or impressed decoration. Stone finds (querns, a mortar, a palette and stone tools) are noted.

MESSENIA
(38th EPCA: 26th EBA)

Messene. P. Themelis (ASA) reports (*Ergon* [2008], 46–60) on continuing excavation in the theatre, the Sanctuary of Isis and Sarapis, in the basilica, in the N stoa in the agora and at the sanctuaries on Ithome.

In the theatre area, excavation continued in the EByz cemetery reported in 2007, moving towards the Hel retaining wall of the E parodos. Seventeen cist graves were excavated, divided into 4 groups; these were built from the worked stones of the theatre, terracotta and stone slabs. The first group, of 5 tombs, included 4 found empty and one with the skeleton of a young woman without grave goods. Of the other groups, one had 3 tombs, the 2nd 7 and the 3rd 2 (**Fig. 47**). All were similar, contemporary constructions and contained bodies accompanied by pottery oinochoai, and dated to a later, EByz period. Particularly characteristic of these cemeteries is the peribolos which encloses them in an ordered arrangement, their separation into unitary groups with the use of common partition walls in each row to economise on space and cost, and the fact that each group was likely used for a family. The overall appearance of the burials confirms that they were contemporary constructions.



47. Messene: groups of EByz cist tombs in the theatre area.

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