OVERVIEW – THE IDEA OF PLACE

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The purpose of the new paper format of *Archaeology in Greece* (*AG*) is to enable readers to have a clear summary and preliminary analysis of the new content of the online data. It is now much easier to cull information about individual sites and projects from the BSA and EfA's online resource, *Archaeology in Greece Online*, where primary information is clearly set out (according to the year in which the fieldwork took place or, failing that, in which information was first released),[1] the chronological scope of the work described, and plans, images and bibliographic references made available. This facility makes it possible to provide a far more comprehensive picture of the changing nature of archaeological research in the field than any previously published reports.

The online resource cannot, however, provide a survey of the constantly accumulating flow of information. Scholars and researchers need to understand how the overall picture of archaeological research is changing and what kinds of data to look for online. The printed version of *AG* is intended to fill this gap. It will provide the first reference point for archaeological field research in Greece. It also provides an opportunity to review current trends, to explore research objectives and to suggest new enquiries that deserve to be followed up in the light of current research.

That said, a survey is not a panacea, but a snapshot. New publications and news reports of discoveries continue to be received. For the purposes of this survey, the contributors have used material that has been made available until the end of June 2011 and have focused their evaluations mainly, though by no means exclusively, upon the previous 12 months. In future editions of *AG* we hope to provide a measure of depth as well as immediacy. It is often hard to give credit to important new finds, and to put these into a coherent context, when information is still of a preliminary kind. The content of former *AG* reports has been limited by the publication schedules of the major Greek journals and this will continue to be one of the organizational factors that shape the content of reports here. *AR* 56 (2009–2010) was an exceptionally full report, and the current year is hardly more limited (see Introduction for further discussion). Furthermore, the range of primary field data and summaries is balanced this year by a range of publications, covering different chronological periods, which present in-depth studies of material data, allowing contributors to take stock of new information in the light of these systematic studies. Sites listed in *AGOnline* appear in **bold** in the texts below, while search codes are shown with the prefix ID-.

[1] Field reports should be searched for by their activity date, which determines the volume of *Archaiologikon Deltion* (the primary source for field information in Greece) in which they are registered. Volumes often appear with some delay in relation to the year of activity. The first part of *ADelt* 56–59 (2001–2004) appeared in 2011, covering Athens and Attica. Reports in other publications may appear earlier than their registration in *ADelt*. Press releases may well be the first form of information released to the public and as such appear in the relevant year of activity.

The new design for *AG* makes it possible to include perspectives on Greek archaeology that could not be included in the old format. Future editions will explore the results of recent research on palaeobotanical evidence and of other relevant scientific techniques (Bill Cavanagh reports below on the results of recent analyses of ancient DNA, or aDNA). There will be more opportunities to explore the value of emerging new techniques, such as the digital technology applied at **Pavlopetri**, in the southern Peloponnese, to record underwater features spatially. More space will be allocated to presenting new displays in museums and more emphasis will be given to the variety of information that can be derived from artefacts.

The new *AG* is not an anonymized text. Different researchers bring different skills and different ways of appreciating the new information that is emerging from fieldwork. The contributors to the new format therefore present the data in terms of their own experience and knowledge. We hope that this will help readers to understand how given interpretations have emerged (indeed, to understand why interpretations may, on occasion, differ). In this issue, Bill Cavanagh, who was co-director of the Laconia Survey and is currently co-directing fieldwork at **Kouphovouno**, arguably the best candidate site to have acted as a precursor to ancient Sparta, reflects on recent investigations of early prehistoric activities in Greece and on how scientific techniques can best be applied and integrated with traditional forms of investigation. John Bennet, whose research on Bronze Age Greece, and Crete in particular, will be well known to readers of *AG*, surveys Crete. The Assistant Director of the BSA, Robert Pitt, is more familiar with the latest developments in and around the city of Athens than most visiting archaeologists and has compiled the new online datasets for Athens and Attica. He therefore provides readers of *AG* with an eye-witness view (as well as a scholarly perspective) on what might otherwise appear a confusing mass of urban keyhole surgery. Having a close interest in the inter-relationship between historical and archaeological data, Dan Stewart, field director of the **Sikyon Survey Project**, whose research has focused particularly on the Roman Peloponnese, is well placed to analyse current trends in the Peloponnese between the Archaic period and the end of the Roman Empire. Maria Stamatopoulou has worked extensively in Thessaly and provides an up-to-the-minute report on the latest developments in and around the Gulf of Pagasai, including an account of the Linear B tablet retrieved from **Palaia Volou**. I have worked in and published on Macedonia and Thrace for a good number of years and it is a pleasure to present the area at a time when there is a stock of impressive results to consider. Archie Dunn, who specializes in Byzantine and post-Byzantine history in the Balkan region, provides a round-up of recent research on the later periods, which shows how subsequent histories both map onto and differ from what we know of the same locations in antiquity. I would also like to pay tribute to Robin Osborne, who has assisted in the preparation of copy and provided valuable advice at various stages of the project, activities that are not directly visible to readers of *AG*.

Diachronic perspectives are like a game of four-dimensional chess. If we want to follow spatial dynamics, we may miss something vital in terms of contextual specifics, and vice versa. The division of data

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derived from the online archive into two sections, the 'chronological overviews' and the regional reports, is intended to provide some means of getting around this problem. The current format follows a broadly chronological scheme in both the 'overview' and regional sections, whilst allowing themes to emerge where they seem most appropriate. This arrangement partly reflects the speed with which the contributors have been obliged to work for this copy of the report. In future we hope to diversify this structure in ways that better reflect the nature of current research. The tight timetable and the novelty of the process have prevented us from including all the material that we would have liked. It has not been possible to prepare maps alongside the narratives. We plan to rectify this gap next year and to apply what we have learned from the experience of working with the online data.

In this issue we look at both ends of the chronological spectrum, with overviews of the Greek mainland in the prehistoric period on the one hand and Byzantine Greece on the other. Early periods of prehistory are well represented in the regional accounts for Crete, Athens and Macedonia, as well as in Bill Cavanagh's review. The expansion of research on Medieval and early modern Greece, sponsored by a wide range of cultural groups as well as research organizations, ensures that later periods will play an increasing role within *AG*. The regional surveys focus on those areas for which there are substantive primary publications in 2010–2011: Attica, the Peloponnese, Crete, Thessaly and Macedonia. We cannot do full justice to the activities continuing in central Greece, the Ionian and Cycladic islands, the Dodecanese, the northern Aegean and Epirus. Detailed reports are planned for future editions of *AG*. Meanwhile, published data that are available online will be referred to selectively in this overview. What follows below is intended to stimulate exploration of the online archive.

Bill Cavanagh opens our reflections on the changing face of ancient material remains in Greece. Reconstruction of the earliest human settlement of southern Europe and the Aegean islands requires imaginative concepts as well as the accumulation of datasets. When were the islands and peninsular regions of Greece repopulated after the withdrawal of glacial conditions in the early Holocene? The answer to the question '*when*' is closely connected to the issue of *how* the process took place. Was it a single process or a series of inter-related processes? With little more than a handful of Mesolithic sites on which to base an evaluation, there is still a good deal of room for interpretation. Any one addition to the list can make a big difference to the way we think about the phenomenon as a whole. One thing that is becoming more apparent, and is exposed in more detail in the two reports that focus on prehistoric remains (*The Greek mainland in the prehistoric period* and *Crete*), is the evidence that seacraft and maritime connections in the Mesolithic, long suspected from the presence of Melian obsidian in the Franchthi cave, must be seen as fundamental developments of this period (fully reflected in the practice of tuna fishing, which requires greater social coordination and planning than opportunistic family ventures).

There is more to the question of how these processes evolved than meets the eye. In thinking about *place* – places that acquired a semi-permanent fixity in the memory and consciousness of resident groups – we are forced to consider what 'place' means in a cultural setting. Places were from the beginning imagined landscapes, loci of association. The association of places and ideas is picked up in Dan Stewart's report on **Kanakia**, on **Salamis** and **Troizen**, where Bronze Age constructions were re-used in the first millennium BC, but in very different ways – on the one hand to reinforce associations with a remote past (in terms of what may be a shrine to Ajax); and on the other simply as a pragmatic resource that could be put to new use.

The notion of *place* is critical to archaeological interpretation. Artefacts and structures are impoverished without contextual associations. Yet we are prone to detach conversations about culture, particularly about Greek and Roman culture, from specific settings, despite the fact that cultural expressions are defined by rootedness, by chosen contexts. The separability of ancient texts from their originating situations has made a virtue of the process of translation (linguistic, temporal and spatial), thereby reducing the urgency of comprehending the contexts in which they arose. The contexts of cultural production are worth studying in their own right, because they enable us to recapture a nuanced understanding of the past. Writing these words in Edinburgh, where the annual International Festival brings to the 'Athens of the north' in 2011 an extraordinary, indeed unprecedented, array of actors, dancers, writers and musicians, whose roots are in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea and Vietnam, as well as festival-goers from all over the globe, the lesson of context is not lost. The biographies of the contributors reflect just how individual the journeys have been to this programme of shared genres and languages. The mentors and teachers of each artist, and the artists themselves, have highly specific backgrounds, reflecting the specialized nature of their crafts. Students travel to the place where not just any teacher, but that particular teacher is to be found. These private journeys are less apparent in the created product, but remain immanent in the landscape of creation, to be exploited in other ways.

In a contemporary context, the immanence of past human encounters is often commemorated in narratives, real or imagined. Thus, in Edinburgh, the notorious body-snatchers Burke and Hare or the thief Deacon Brodie jostle in the imagination of visitors with great men and women – Alexander Graham Bell, David Hume, David Lister, John Napier, Eduardo Paolozzi, Mary Queen of Scots, Mary Somerville and Muriel Spark (and, most recently, J.K. Rowling, commemorated in the Elephant Café where her fiction began to emerge). Reputations are connected with places in modern cities through various media. Colourful characters have public houses named after them. Sober blue plaques and street names herald others.

Street signs are not an appropriate way of thinking about people and places in the remote past. The language of street signage is a modern phenomenon and is still largely absent in many international towns and cities. Although topographic features, such as rivers, trees and roads are referred to in the context of ancient land disputes, we are largely ignorant of the ways in which places were recognized in the remote past. Satellite mapping may be speeding up the process of reproducing terrain in other materials; but reliance on satellite maps is apparently reducing the individual's capacity to under-

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stand topography. This seems to imply that historic communities had a greater awareness of more subtle topographic characteristics. There are various ways in which scholars can explore the idea of topographic recognition in past societies and a range of theories and methods that might be applied. Which of these are best suited to understanding the topography and people of ancient Greece? Different approaches tend to amplify different preoccupations. We can acknowledge this methodological handicap, whether or not we choose to develop a more in-depth, theoretically informed approach to how people used to think about their environment (on which see, for example, Barrett and Ilhong [2009]). Landscape and memory have been explored most intensively, in the context of the ancient Aegean, in connection either with literature and commemorative monuments (particularly during the Second Sophistic) or with the reuse of architectural components, although the range of scholarly approaches to landscape and memory is very wide indeed. I will mention only a few recent titles by way of illustration: Alcock (2002); Athanassopoulos and Wandsnider (2004); Caraher *et al.* (2008); D'Agata and Van de Moortel (2009); Davies and Davis (2007); Elsner and Rutherford (2005); Forbes (2007); Gkiasta (2008); Harris and Holmes (2008); Hutton (2005); Wallace (2010). The ways in which authors have combined historical and archaeological resources display not just variety of choices (about resources and about subject matter), but different ideas about what kinds of observations are relevant.

Since we live in environments that have very long human histories, the juxtaposition of old and new does not often strike us as particularly remarkable. The past is a resource; it is there to be used. Sometimes we choose to acknowledge the presence of the past, by selecting features to conserve and display using conservation techniques to consolidate the chosen features; at other times the past is concealed, walled off or filled with concrete or hollowed out. Edinburgh Castle stands on a prominent rock above the city, much like the Acropolis in Athens. (The unfinished facsimile of the Parthenon is on Calton Hill, not on the Castle Mound.) The contrast between the uses of the past at these two locations could not be greater. The one is still in many ways a fortress, with a barracks and military music school and museum. The other is simply a museum, shorn of any contamination from the past 500 years.

Readers unfamiliar with *AG*, or those who have not studied much of its specialist content in recent decades, may be dimly aware of the overall changes that have taken place in the practice of Greek archaeology. It is worth enlarging on the substance of these changes; on the ways that they alter the kind of evidence at the disposal of scholars; and how this new configuration is likely to affect future research in and on ancient Greece.

For much of the last century, the investigation of complex sites has been concerned with establishing the origins of various constructions, their architectural character and their chronology. Such formal concerns have largely been replaced by more holistic and diachronic strategies, and by technologies that allow a broader appreciation of landscapes as well as dynamic processes. In this issue of *AG*, the clearest illustration of such strategies is in the Peloponnese, where a variety of innovative techniques has been applied at sites where archaeological investigations already have a long tradition. These include Olympia, Nemea and Sparta, where remote sensing has produced datasets that include a variety of spatial and diachronic information, a resource that can be drawn on for many years to come. In his summary of recent trends in the Peloponnese, Daniel Stewart refers to the ways in which current work provides 'more organic readings of urban plans'. This applies partly to urban street networks that do not necessarily follow a rigid conception and may well depart in various ways from the kinds of assumptions that we make about how space was used within the urban layout (*cf.* Donati [2010]). It also applies to a greater appreciation of the 3D value of particular forms, which necessarily attracted other structures and monuments, in much the same way that features tend to congregate in contemporary town plans.

These more open-ended approaches to the investigation of landscape have evolved from academic research, but the evidence that rescue work reveals shows some interesting parallels with planned research aims. The most dramatic examples in this issue of *AG* result from the works carried out prior to the Athens Olympics of 2004, which have now been published in preliminary form. The site of the New Olympic Hippodrome at Merenda (the location of the ancient deme of Myrrinous) has revealed a hitherto unknown settlement on a small hilltop dating from the mid fifth millennium BC, as well as a number of possible cult buildings, of different periods between the Early Iron Age and the Roman Empire, and at least five different cemetery nuclei, again with material dateable between the Late Bronze Age (with earlier activity of uncertain function), the Archaic and the Classical periods. Associated with these concentrations of human investment are roads and trackways, which are now coming into prominence in many parts of the Aegean. The Olympic Rowing Facility also produced prehistoric remains, this time of EHII date, a farm complex comprising at least 16 rooms, of Classical date, and two kilns used for tiles and perhaps pithoi. Development work in advance of the Athens metro extension (Line 3) has revealed sections of the Sacred Way, wayside shrines and cemeteries, as well as workshops and wells connected with groundwater from the Eridanos river. Other rescue work in and around the city has produced more evidence of the radiating road network (see *Athens and Attica*).

Besides the more varied physical forms that have come to light, there are other aspects of the notion of place that deserve consideration. One concerns the connections that societies make between the physical and metaphysical worlds. We might begin by considering the Late Neolithic site at **Kleitos**, in Macedonia, where a number of constructions, which were originally decorated with geometric patterns, were apparently deliberately fired (see *Macedonia and Thrace*). This seems to have been an act designed to put the structure out of use, but also a kind of finality that transformed or transmuted the building into something else. The same kinds of procedures may have taken place at **Avgi** in Macedonia and have also been identified at **Koutroulou Magoula**, Thessaly. Bill Cavanagh suggests that these practices may be connected with the transmission of property rights. We are certainly faced with phenomena that

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imprint abstract concepts on the physical environment in a very deliberate way. At the same time, these acts imply attitudes to physical property that are profoundly different from more recent ones. The recent attacks on property in England during the second week of August 2011, including the destruction of real estate by burning, reminded us that the destruction of buildings is among the most socially reprehensible acts in modern societies. It touches on deeply held views about the social as well as the economic value of the built environment. To destroy property seems an illogical and retrograde gesture. In the Neolithic societies of the Balkans, the burning of buildings had a different meaning, perhaps connected with the periodicity of new construction. Recent events are a salutary reminder that societies do not have homogeneous attitudes to the built environment. A new study of the varying religious responses to ancient monuments in early modern England provides the sort of canvas that contributes to such considerations of place (Walsham [2011]).

We can extend the abstract signification of place still further. John Bennet refers, in his survey of Crete, to the gold sheets or lamellae that have recently been published by Yannis Tzifopoulos. These items were discovered in burials at Eleutherna and Sfakaki, near Rethymnon and provide a wider contextual basis for understanding this particular mortuary phenomenon (Tzifopoulos [2010]; see *Macedonia and Thrace* for further discussion of some of the Macedonian burials). In a separate account, Tzifopoulos looks at a range of similar items from recently excavated sites in Macedonia as well as Crete (Tzifopoulos [2011]). His analysis provides a very welcome examination of artefacts in situations where we can begin to make sense of the concepts underlying mortuary procedures. This paper is published alongside a number of others that look at the writings associated with 'Orphic' beliefs, so that readers can assess descriptions of the 'Orphic' afterlife (which refer to landscapes that the deceased can identify) with the manner in which 'Orphic' burials were made. The relationship between communities that curated the kinds of writings examined here and the burials identified as having 'Orphic' associations deserves to be reconsidered in the light of these latest discoveries.

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