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INTRODUCTION OVERVIEW

ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2024–2025

1 Introduction and overview

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This introduction presents the structure and contents of the current issue of Archaeological Reports. *It also offers an overview (not meant to be exhaustive) of archaeological activity in Greece over the past 12 months, focusing on major exhibitions and other cultural events as well as important recent publications.*

The period 2024–25 has proved both exciting and eventful for archaeological work in Greece. It saw new excavations and survey projects, as well as new museum exhibitions and restoration projects at ancient sites. A survey on the work of the Ephorates of Antiquities in 2023, prepared and released by the Hellenic Statistical Authority in October 2024, emphasizes the dynamic nature of archaeological work in Greece (https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/c82d51bd-2b55-d83a-a4f0-8441c13ab2ca). The Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports declared six new archaeological sites in 2023, while 1,681 archaeological researches brought to light more than 55,000 registered antiquities. It is worth mentioning that 4,538 antiquities were handed over to the authorities, which also made 160 confiscations of illicit material.

At the same time, the demands of modern development and a booming tourism industry pose significant challenges for the future of Greek archaeology and Greece's cultural heritage. A key example is the rescue excavation on Papoura Hill near Kastelli (ID 19649) on Crete, which has sparked significant debate due to concerns among archaeologists over the preservation of archaeological heritage amid the development of modern infrastructure. The construction of a new airport in the area has been a focal point of tension, as the airport's managing company intends to install the radio navigation facilities in direct proximity to the ancient structure, which threatens to disrupt or destroy key archaeological sites on the hill. While the need for a new airport to accommodate increased tourism and improve infrastructure is recognized by all, this could come at the cost of irreparable damage to Crete's historical legacy. The situation highlights the ongoing challenge of integrating modern development into areas rich in archaeological value.

This year was also marked by a new editorial team for *AR*, as Tulsi Parikh (BSA/College Year in Athens) and Michael Loy (Durham University) stepped down, and Rachel Phillips (BSA) and Flavia Vanni (Newcastle University) have now joined the BSA Assistant Director as co-editors.

Amid these developments, this volume of *AR* presents a selection of this work, with thematic articles that spotlight key areas of archaeological research as well as methodological innovations. As is customary, the volume begins with a report on the work of the BSA by its Director, Professor Rebecca Sweetman.

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The Director reports on a particularly rich programme for the BSA this past year, with new fieldwork and research projects – such as the *Transforming Access to Mediterranean Cultural Heritage Science Collections* project, funded by UKRI's RICHeS programme – academic events, outreach work, and collaborations. Undoubtedly, a peak was the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Marc and Ismene Fitch Laboratory. Events in Greece and London brought together much of the Fitch academic community, both new and long-standing supporters. These events highlight innovation, outreach, and collaboration as the heart of the School's mission. Sweetman also reports on current excavation and survey projects run under the auspices of the BSA. These projects include work at Toumba Serron in northern Greece, the *Emborio Hinterland Project* on Chios, the *West Area of Samos Project* on Samos, the *Kato Choria Excavation Project* on Naxos, and study seasons at Palaikastro on Crete and by the *Olynthus Project* in Chalcidice.

The volume continues with the Newsround by Hannah Gwyther, PhD student at the University of Bristol and Sinclair Hood Archive Project Assistant at the BSA. Gwyther reports discoveries made in 2024–25 by archaeologists working in Greece. These projects vary: from surveys (e.g. *Abdera Urban Plan Project*) to larger-scale excavations (e.g. *KOCECOLA Project*), and from short, rescue excavations (such as the one in Phillipi conducted by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Kavala-Thasos) to longer term undertakings, such as the five-year research project on the Antikythera shipwreck. The projects covered in this paper showcase the value of modern technologies and methods for the understanding of archaeological sites and ancient cultures. For example, in Samos, the integration of geophysical methods has proven especially effective in detecting buried structures and environmental features, without invasive excavation. Overall, the large number of synergasias and projects led by Ephoreias and/or by Greek and foreign archaeologists showcases the strength of the collaborations between Greek and foreign institutions.

In the first regional review for this issue, Fotini Kondyli (The University of Virginia) and Georgios Makris (University of British Columbia) report on the state of research since 2015 for the archaeology of Byzantine Thrace. This includes sites in modern day Greece, Türkiye, and Bulgaria, and research projects ranging from systematic excavations and regional surveys to wider, interdisciplinary projects. One key theme of this paper is the interdependence of urban and rural landscapes, with a focus on human–environment interactions over time. Work in ancient Ainos, for example, has provided new information about environmental adaptation. There, the silting of northern harbour areas led to the continued use of the Taşaltı lagoon, where a large church was constructed nearby. This sustained activity showcases how environmental shifts, which are often understood as disruptive, might have also created new opportunities for urban adaptation.

The second thematic paper this year is authored by Vassilis Evangelidis (Research and Innovation Centre Athena). It concerns work conducted in Macedonia in the last decade, focusing on the Roman period. Work there has provided a wealth of new information that has cast new light upon the long history of the region. Large development projects, such as the *Thessaloniki Metro* and the *Trans Adriatic Pipeline* have revealed previously unknown information about the urban and rural landscapes of the area. In addition, new research projects and rescue excavations have brought to light dense settlement patterns and economic networks, and emphasized cultural continuity in the region, contributing to a better understanding of the multi-temporality of sites. For example, in Dion, evidence has revealed occupation phases from the Hellenistic through to the Late Antique periods.

Next, Evi Margaritis (The Cyprus Institute) reports on the past decade of archaeobotanical research in Greece, between 2015 and 2025. The review discusses the expanded scope and methods of archaeobotanical research over this period, since A. Livarda's discussion of the topic in *AR* 60. Research has expanded to address new areas and time periods, as well as new interdisciplinary questions about ancient rituals and practices that involved plants. On Minoan Crete, for example, staple crops in everyday diets were

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also used in connection with ancestor veneration, a discovery that emphasizes the intersection between the sacred and the domestic spheres. Work on the historical periods has also revealed new information about agricultural specialization, crop cultivation, and the ceremonial use of plants in the first millennium BC. The past decade has also seen important methodological innovations, such as the increased use of experimental approaches and isotopic analysis.

Giorgios Pallis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) presents an overview of research on Byzantine sculpture in Greece, the first for *AR*. The study of Byzantine sculpture has seen renewed academic interest in recent decades: the review details new discoveries (such as the finds from Larissa Castle in the Peloponnese) and new publications (books, PhD theses, and articles). The Hellenic Ministry of Culture has also devoted more attention to the curation and display of Byzantine sculptures in Greek museums over the past 25 years. Several museums dedicated to Byzantine sculpture have been opened, such as the Arta Sculpture Collection in Epirus and the Karambambas Castle in Chalkida. Once dismissed, displayed in open-air courtyards, or kept in storage, Byzantine sculpture now forms a key part of museum displays in Greece.

The fifth thematic paper of the volume concerns survey and landscape archaeology in Greece from the start of the twenty-first century. Alex Knodell (Carleton College) reports on over 180 recent archaeological surveys in Greece, with particular attention paid to methodological innovations. In recent decades, intensive and specialized site surveys have become more common than landscape-scale surveys. The site survey at the Mycenaean palace of Ayios Vasileios, for example, has identified the size of the palatial site and its transformation over time. These intensive projects offer valuable data for particular sites and time periods, but Knodell notes, in his conclusion to the review, that the field must not lose sight of regional-scale approaches. Techniques such as LIDAR can be used to address broader questions on increased geographical scales.

Our final thematic paper, by Fanis Mavridis and Ioanna Efstathiou from the Ephoreia of Palaeoanthropology and Speleology, reports on the study of cave sites in Greece. Caves are complex and multivalent sites, which present both methodological and epistemological difficulties for archaeologists. Mavridis and Efstathiou present a much-needed overview of recent research in the area, with a focus on caves in southern Greece. They emphasize the integration of various scientific and archaeological approaches, such as the use of DNA analysis and radiocarbon dating and the contextualization of cave sites via regional survey methods. The *Maleas Peninsula Project*, for example, has uncovered several cave sites with evidence of use from the prehistoric to the modern periods. The project has also examined the palaeoenvironmental conditions of the area. Cave sites represent an excellent arena for the application of interdisciplinary approaches, thanks to their archaeological richness and their relationship with the wider human past.

We also take the opportunity here to briefly report on recent museum openings, temporary exhibitions, and site enhancement projects. After 22 years, Line 1 of the Thessaloniki Metro system opened in autumn 2024. The construction of the 9.6km line unearthed several ancient sites (such as Roman roads, Late Classical and Hellenistic settlements, and Hellenistic–Roman cemeteries) and over 300,000 artefacts. Key finds are now on display at the 13 metro stations opened in 2024, billed as a new underground museum. In Athens, the museum for the permanent display of the shackled skeletons discovered in 2016 at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center is expected to open in Faliro in January 2026. The skeletons – part of a mass burial dated to the seventh century BC – will be displayed *in situ* in the new museum. Renovations are also underway at the Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum. The project aims to make the museum (which houses 6,500 artefacts) a more accessible space that emphasizes the broader societal importance of its collections.

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2024–25 also saw several notable exhibitions hosted in Greek museums. The exhibition *Princes of Pylos: Bronze Age Treasures of Messenia* was hosted at the Archaeological Museum of Messenia in Kalamata from 15 February to 26 April 2025. The exhibition featured artefacts from the Grave of the Griffin Warrior at Pylos (a rich Mycenaean tomb excavated by the University of Cincinnati in 2015) and from *tholos* tombs in the nearby area. It is currently on display at the Getty Villa, Malibu, before it returns to Greece in 2026, to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens.

In December 2024 the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Heraklion opened the exhibition *EKATOMPOLIS* (in reference to Homer's description of Crete as the island of 100 cities). The exhibition focused on Archaic Crete, to emphasize an era of Cretan history that remains mostly unknown compared to the island's Minoan past. Also in December 2024, the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens opened the exhibition *Kykladitisses: Untold Stories of Women in the Cyclades*. The exhibition examines the history of Cycladic women from the Neolithic to the Early Modern periods. It displays, for the first time, the famous Kore of Thera, now protected by a new anti-seismic base. The exhibition is currently on display at the Archaeological Museum of Thera on Santorini.

Other notable exhibitions include: *The Ancient Civilizations of Basilicata: Treasures Brought to Light* at the Acropolis Museum in Athens; an exhibition on the ancient city of Europos, titled *The City of Europeans*, at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens; and on Samos, an exhibition that showcases 100 years of research on the island by the DAI, hosted at the Pythagorion Arts Space.

This year has also seen an increased focus on the accessible and immersive presentation of ancient sites in Greece. In May 2025, Culture Minister Lina Mendoni referenced over 150 ongoing restoration projects in Greece, as part of a broader effort to make the country's archaeological sites safer and more visitor friendly (https://www.ekathimerini.com/culture/1270379/govt-considers-second-larger-elevator-at-acropolis/). In Athens, the Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with the Ephorate of Antiquities, has embarked on the restoration of the Ancient Agora and the Kerameikos. The project (funded by the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Facility) aims to improve pathways and infrastructure at the sites, in the interests of increased accessibility and inclusion. The Odeon of Herodes Atticus is also due to close for at least three years for restoration and conservation works.

These projects form part of an extensive series of restorations across Greece, led by the Ministry of Culture. Examples include Basilica B at the ancient city of Philippi in northern Greece, which has been partially restored and is now open to the public. The Ministry has also launched the final phase of the restoration project of the Kasta tomb in Amphipolis, which involves the restoration of the tomb's perimeter wall, the creation of an external walkway, and the protection of the site. The marble double doors of the tomb are also due for restoration, to reflect the historical appearance of one of Greece's most famous Hellenistic monuments. Elsewhere, restoration projects are underway at the ancient city of Gortyn on Crete, the Mycenaean site of Peristeria in Messenia, the Palace of the Grand Master on Rhodes, and the Sanctuary of Dodoni.

These restoration projects work in tandem with the increased need to protect ancient sites in Greece. New fire protection systems have been installed at several sites and museums, such as the Kerameikos and the Daphni Monastery in Athens. As mentioned above, sites are also threatened by the spectre of overtourism: after an incident of vandalism at the ancient Temple of Apollo on Naxos, the site is now surrounded by protective barriers, soon to be made permanent. In September 2025, the Ministry of Culture also declared the island of Polyaigos (the largest uninhabited island in the Cyclades) an archaeological site, to combat the threat of unchecked development and tourism in the area. On Crete, UNESCO has recently added six Minoan sites to its World Heritage list: Knossos, Phaistos, Malia, Zakros, Zominthos, and Kydonia (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1733/). The

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inscription recognizes the unique monumental architecture of these sites, and their role as a source of inspiration for ancient Greek culture as well as modern art, music, and literature.

The period covered by this year's *AR* has proved busy for museums and restoration work, but also for publication and research. A non-exhaustive list of publications that have appeared since the last volume of *AR* follows:

Allen, S.E., Schon, R. and Smith, R.A.K. (eds) (2025) *Power and Place in the Prehistoric Aegean and Beyond: Studies in Honour of James C. Wright* (Philadelphia)

Alexandropoulou, A. (2024) *Η κεραμική από το νεκροταφείο του Φαλήρου* (Athens)

Arrington, N.T., Terzopoulou, D., Tasaklaki, M., and Tartaron, T.F. (eds) (2025) *The Molyvoti, Thrace, Archaeological Project 1: Landscape, Architecture, and Material Culture* (Hesperia Supplement 54) (Princeton)

Avramidou, A. (2025) *The Sanctuary of Parthenos at Ancient Neapolis (Kavala): Volume I: Incised and Painted Ceramic Inscriptions from the Sanctuary and in Aegean Thrace* (Turnhout)

Barber, R.L.N. (2024) *Phylakopi, Melos, 1896–99: The Finds in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens* (2 volumes) (London)

Bergemann, J. and Portale, E.C. (eds) (2024) *Antike Heiligtümer in Griechenland, Magna Graecia und Sizilien: Entstehung, Funktionen, Riten und Monumentalisierung als religiöse und interkulturelle Phänomene* (Rahden)

Betancourt, P.P. and Kanta, A. (2024) *The Shrine of Eileithyia: The Minoan Goddess of Childbirth and Motherhood at the Inatos Cave in Southern Crete: Volume II: The Pottery and the Figurines* (Philadelphia)

Bur, T. (2025) *Technologies of the Marvellous in Ancient Greek Religion* (Cambridge)

Cavanagh, W., Mee, C. and Renard, J. (2025) *Kouphovouno: A Neolithic and Bronze Age Site in Laconia: Excavations 2001–2006* (London)

Croissant, F., Balitsari, A., Baeriswyl, P. and Touchais, G. (2025) *Argos. Les fouilles de l'Aphrodision: Le site et les fouilles. Les niveaux antérieurs au sanctuaire* (Athens)

Dalachanis, A. and Volait, M. (2024) *Monde rêvé, monde collectionné: la Méditerranée orientale d'Antonis Benakis, 1900–1931* (Athens)

Del Freo, M. and Zurbach, J. (2025) *Recueil des inscriptions en linéaire A: Supplément 1* (RILA-S1) (Athens)

Diamanti, H. (2024) *Late Antique Stamped Amphorae as Evidence for Imperial Policy: The Halasarna Workshop, Cos Island* (Oxford)

Duplouy, A. and Arvanitis, N. (2024) *Athens and Attica from the Late Bronze Age to the End of the Archaic Period: The Spatial Roots of Politics and Society* (Athens)

Ginalis, A. (2025) *Harbours of the Aegean in Late Antiquity and the Medieval Period: Thessaly, Maritime Connectivity, and the Eastern Mediterranean Seascape* (Bicester)

Given, M., Mavromatis, C. and Smadar Gabrieli, R. (eds) (2024) *City and Cemetery: Excavations at Kourion's Amathous Gate Cemetery, Cyprus: The Excavations of Danielle A. Parks* (Alexandria)

Hallof, K., Kalliontzis, Y. and Charami, A. (eds) *Inscriptiones Graecae Megaridis, Oropiae et Boeotiae. Voluminis VII: Editio altera. Pars III: Tanagra et ager Tanagraeus* (Berlin)

Holton, D. and Manolessou, I. (eds) (2025) *The Greek Language After Antiquity: Advances and Challenges in Historical Linguistics* (Abingdon/New York)

Jones, B.R. (2024) *Minoan Wall Painting of Pseira, Crete: A Goddess Worshipped in the Shrine* (Philadelphia)

Kaoura, I. (2024) *Das Telesterion von Eleusis im Wandel: erste Versuche zur Eroberung des überdachten Theaterraums* (Rahden)

Kaplanoglou, M., Katsadoros, G., Olsen, B. and Zafiropoulos, C. (eds) (2024) *From Homer to Hatzi-Yavrouda: Aspects of Oral Narration in the Greek Tradition* (Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens 26) (Oxford)

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Katsonopoulou, D. (ed.) (2024) *Helike V: Ancient Helike and Aigialeia: Helike after 373 BCE: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Athens)

Knapp, B. (2024), *Cyprus and Ugarit: Connecting Material and Mercantile Worlds* (Leiden)

Knoepfler, D. (2024) *Amarynthos: Fouilles et recherches: Décret du Peuple d'Érétrie pour des magistrats militaires exposé dans l'Artémision: Enquête sur le développement des honneurs civiques et sur l'histoire de l'Eubée au temps des Diadoques (323–278 av. J.-C.)* (Lausanne-Gollion)

Kosmas, P. (2025) *Ελληνιστική Μήλος: ιστορικά και αρχαιολογικά τεκμήρια* (Athens)

Kountouri, E.C. (2024) *The Archaeological Museum* (Athens)

Lindblom, M. (2025) *Lerna X: The Shaft Graves and Other Late Helladic I and II Remains* (Princeton)

Livadiotti, M., Di Vita, M.A.R. and Filimonos-Tsopotou, M. (eds) (2024) *Ialiso II. Athanaiai dekatan. Il Santuario di Athana Polias a Ialysos (Rodi) – Tomo II* (Athens)

Makres, A. and Rhodes, P.J. (2024) *Γράμματα αρχαία: Studies in Memory of David M. Lewis (1928–1994)* (Athens)

Martens, B. (2025) *Athenian Agora XXXIX: Marble Statuettes of the Roman Period* (Princeton)

Mavridis, F. and Nanoglou, S. (2024) *Figurine-Making in the Neolithic Aegean* (Leiden)

Melfi, M. and Stamatopoulou, M. (eds) (2024) *Redefining Ancient Epirus* (Turnhout)

Mercouri, C. (ed.) (2024) *Εφορεία αρχαιοτήτων Δυτικής Αττικής: έρευνα, έργα, δράσεις (2018–2023)* (Athens)

Mitsi, E. and Despotopoulou, A. (2025) *Victorians and Modern Greece: Literary and Cultural Encounters* (Abingdon/New York)

Mylona, D., Brogan, T.M., Eaby, M. and Iacovou, M. (eds) (2025) *Porphyra: The Materiality of Purple Dye Production and Use in Cyprus and the Aegean from Prehistory to the Late Roman Period* (Louvain-la-Neuve)

Neils, J. (ed.) (2025) *54 Souidias: A History of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* (Princeton)

Nowicki, K. (2025) *Settlement in Crete During the Bronze to Iron Age Transition: The Crisis, Collapse and Reconstruction, ca. 1230–900 BC* (Berlin)

Ornaghi, M. (ed.) (2025) *Chronology and History of the Attic Theatre: Origins, Fifth Century, Fourth Century (and Later) Reception* (Berlin)

Petsalis-Diomidis, A. (ed.) (2025) *Travel and Classical Antiquities in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Greece: Exploring Marginalised Perspectives* (London/New York)

Renfrew, C., Sotirakopoulou, P. and Boyd, M.J. (2024) *Monumentality, Diversity and Fragmentation in Early Cycladic Sculpture: The Finds From the Special Deposit North at Kavos on Keros* (Cambridge)

Saggini, T. (2024) *Céramique en contextes: Érétrie au tournant des époques archaïque et Classique* (Lausanne-Gollion)

Shakeshaft, H. (2025) *Beauty and the Gods: A History from Homer to Plato* (Princeton)

Siori, I. (2025) *Θολωτοί τάφοι ανά την Αιτωλοακαρνανία* (Athens)

Spencer, L.C. (2024) *Lerna IX: The Middle Helladic Pottery* (Princeton)

Sporn, K., Farnoux, A. and Laufer, E. (2024) *Ancient Phokis: New Approaches to its History, Archaeology and Topography: International Conference, DAI Athens, 30 March–1 April 2017* (Études méditerranéennes 4) (Wiesbaden)

Stocker, S.R., Lyons, C.L., Davis, J.L. and Militsi-Kechagia, E. (eds) (2025) *The Kingdom of Pylos: Warrior-Princes of Mycenaean Greece* (Los Angeles)

Stühler, J. (2025) *Modulares Bauen in Mykene? Zu den ägäischen Korridorhäusern der Spätbronzezeit* (Bonn)

Vasileva, Z. (2025) *Jewellery Production in Thrace and the Aegean During the Third Millennium BC* (Sofia)

Vasiliki, M. (2024) *Λισός: το Ιερό του Ασκληπιού. Τα γλυπτά και οι βάσεις του* (Athens)

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Vlachopoulos, A. and Gadolou, A. (eds) (2024) *Restoration, Conservation, and Enhancement of Archaeological Sites and Monuments in Greece in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals: Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, Chicago, IL, January 4–7, 2024* (Athens)

Wallensten, J. and Ekroth, G. (eds) (2024) *'The pen fell from my hand when I was in my eighty-sixth year': Revisiting the Work of Martin P. Nilsson* (Stockholm)

Wilson, D.E. (2025) *Ayia Irini: Periods I–III: The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Settlements* (Columbus)

Zografou, E., Koukouvou, A., Palli, O. and Papadopoulou, E. (eds) (2024) *Το ειδώλιο στον βορειοελλαδικό χώρο από την προϊστορία έως τους ρωμαϊκούς χρόνους* (Thessaloniki)

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Competing interests. Rachel Phillips co-authored this introduction while A.G. Leventis Fellow in Hellenic Studies at the British School at Athens. Georgios Mouratidis co-authored this introduction while Assistant Director at the British School at Athens.

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