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ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2012–2013

ZOSIA ARCHIBALD
University of Liverpool
Z.Archibald@liverpool.ac.uk

INTRODUCTION

Catherine Morgan
British School at Athens

This edition of *Archaeology in Greece* is dedicated to the memory of Hector Catling, Director of the British School at Athens from 1971 until his retirement in 1989. Many tributes have been paid to Dr Catling's distinguished career of academic and personal service. *Archaeology in Greece*, however, owes a particular debt to him as one of its outstanding editors. Not only did Hector Catling compile the supplement almost single-handedly throughout his directorship of the School, but his research also contributed richly to it, notably via his major excavations at Knossos (for example in the North Cemetery) and in Lakonia at the Menelaion and the Sanctuary of Zeus Messapeus at Tsakona. *Archaeology in Greece* remains one of his lasting contributions to the scholarly community.

In June 2013 we also mourned the passing of two close colleagues, Spyridon Iakovides, Academician and distinguished excavator of Mycenae (where he remained active to the very end of his life), and Elisavet Stasinopoulou, formerly Keeper of Vases and Minor Arts at the National Museum in Athens. In July 2013 we were saddened by the untimely death of Polyxeni Bouyia, expert on central Greece and, as Keeper of the Bronze Collection at the National Museum, a key collaborator in the outstandingly successful *Antikythera* exhibition. And as we went to press, we received news of the death of George Hourmouziadis, Professor Emeritus of prehistoric archaeology in the Aristotle University, Thessaloniki.

As Zosia Archibald emphasizes in her overview, this year we continue to see the fruits of a remarkable decade of fieldwork. The publication of seven fascicules of *ADelt* 56–59 (2001–2004), complemented by major regional conferences on Crete, Macedonia and Thrace, and central Greece, provides a huge wealth of information, with more yet to come. The first international conference on *Archaeological Work in the Peloponnese* (*AEPEL*) in November 2012 saw a full five days of papers, with the 168 communications programmed covering everything from early hominids to museology. The aim is to create a regional forum analogous to that provided by the *AEThSE* meetings, the most recent of which is fully reported in this year's *AG* by Maria Stamatopoulou. Undoubtedly it will take us several years yet to assimilate these data, understand trends and assess new research directions.

However, presentations at these conferences were not confined to analyses of data from the 'remarkable decade'. While the current crisis has had a huge impact on the careers and working conditions of colleagues in the Archaeological Service, research and rescue excavation continues to produce results of major importance. Consider, for example, the discovery of a Geometric temple under the Archaic structure on the Trapeza hill (**ID3564**: references to online data are signalled by the prefix ID and a number which can be used as a direct search criterion within *AGOnline*) – further evidence of the rich architectural development of Achaia during the eighth century – or the monumental funerary tumulus now revealed at Amphipolis (**ID3073**), the identity and even date of which await further research, and the excavation by the Universities of Ioannina and of Western Greece of the first Christian funerary monument (of the second half of the fourth century AD) at Paravela just outside Argos Orestikon (ancient Diocletianoupolis) (**ID3080**).

The continuing stream of discoveries may seem surprising in the present climate, but major public works projects continue (in some cases being restarted after several years' hiatus). Discoveries made during rescue excavation prior to the creation of the Ilarion dam on the borders of Kozani and Grevena in Macedonia included the Neolithic to Hellenistic settlement at Longa Elatis (**ID2577**), now submerged as the dam is put into operation. Major transport projects such as the Corinth–Patras motorway have led to important discoveries which now require hard decisions about preservation and access: the painted Roman tomb found in the Corinthia (**ID2910**) is a case in point, and major finds in the Keryneia area, on which we will report in future years, have led to reconsideration of the course of the motorway. The fate of an exceptionally well-preserved street intersection and surrounding quarter of Byzantine Thessaloniki unearthed during the construction of the Venizelou Street metro station (**ID3065**) has become a *cause célèbre* (**Fig. 1**). With antiquities to be found on all sides, there is no possibility of a minor adjustment, and the current alternatives of major rerouting of the metro to keep the remains *in situ* in the cityscape or their removal to an archaeo-



1. Thessaloniki, Venizelos Street Station: street intersection and tetrapylon. © Ministry of Culture and Sport: 9th EBA.

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logical park (probably on the site of the former Pavlos Melas barracks) remain matters of debate. Overall, however, the rich discoveries made during the metro project will be celebrated in joint exhibitions in the city's Archaeological Museum and Museum of Byzantine Culture, recalling the landmark exhibition of the Athens metro excavations, *The City Beneath the City*, held at the Museum of Cycladic Art, which changed our appreciation of Athens. In the longer term, there is a plan to create a display area on the fourth floor of the Agia Sophia station. Thessaloniki will remain in the archaeological spotlight for some while yet, as commemorations of the city's role during the troubled years surrounding liberation, the Balkan Wars and the First World War begin in earnest. An exhibition in the Archaeological Museum entitled *Archaeology behind Battle Lines: Thessaloniki in the Turbulent Years 1912–1922* will run to the end of 2013.

A second factor behind continuing investment in cultural projects is tourism and regional development. The significant rise in visitor numbers in 2013 (estimates suggest a 162% increase in some areas) is both welcome evidence of international appreciation of Greece and Greek culture and a major economic gain. But how to meet visitors' expectations? We have in previous years reported a number of restoration programmes, especially of theatres, and this year the theatre at Messene can be added to a distinguished list. Yet larger works on the greatest of Greek sites can also be reported. At Olympia, for example, the Central Archaeological Council has recently approved a new programme of work which promises to double the area of the gymnasium exposed, as well as continuing excavation of the Sanctuary of Demeter Chamyne (**ID1516**). Museums also continue to benefit. The underwater heritage of Greece is at last now taking centre stage, with the outstandingly successful exhibition of the Antikythera wreck in the National Museum, a new exhibition, *Sunken Voyages, Human Explorations: Meaningful Traces in the Peloponnesian Sea*, staged by the EMA in Pylos and steady progress towards the country's first permanent museum of underwater archaeology in the former SILO building in Piraeus. It is rightly emphasized that this museum will be an important destination for cruise passengers who may not otherwise spend significant time in Athens and Attica. The same thinking perhaps applies to developments in other major Greek ports: in Patras, for example, for some years now the home of a superb modern museum (regrettably with no advertisement in the port), approval has now been given for the display of the Roman stadium, opening up an important area of the Roman city bordering the odeion. And in Herakleion, the phased reopening of the Archaeological Museum, noting in particular a superb new display of Minoan frescos, has already been rewarded by a doubling of visitor numbers.

Yet these developments must not be seen purely through the lens of tourism. The creation of a new museum – as for example those at Larisa and Tegea, both now well advanced – is increasingly conceived as an exercise in public engagement, using the internet and social media to spread interest in the process of design, conservation and the telling of local histories. And new public spaces, as the park surrounding the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens, with another to follow on Rigillis Street for the Lyceum, add a vital quality to cities suffering in the current crisis. Public engagement in, and understanding of, the work of the Archaeological Service has been strongly supported by the Ministry of Culture and Sport. 21 October 2012 saw the celebration across Greece of the work of the Service, with ephoreias opening their doors and staging a variety of public events as a welcome addition to the increasingly full calendar of open activities now established. The ever important connection between archaeology, the citizen, and local and regional development is echoed in the very large investment made under the EU National Strategic Reference Framework (ESPA) 2007–2013: one press report in January 2013 cited 572 works supported at a cost of €860 million. Outstanding programmes achieved with this and other funding have attracted international awards; the Acropolis conservation programme, for example, was this year honoured with Europa Nostra awards both for the programme overall and for work on the Propylaia. Recognition of the vital work of conservators in these programmes is particularly appropriate, not only at the level of major architectural restoration, but on a day-to-day level in museums and laboratories across the country (as even a brief glance at the material illustrated in *AG* and *AGOnline* confirms).

Private foundations continue to play an essential role, despite grave financial obstacles. Highlights of the year included the exhibition *Princesses of the Mediterranean at the Dawn of History* in the Museum of Cycladic Art (December 2012 to April 2013), which featured the tenth-century rich lady from the Toumba building among 24 tenth- to fifth-century 'princesses' spanning Attica to Macedonia and Cyprus to Italy, and the publication in December 2012 of a further volume in the series on Greek museums published by the Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and the Eurobank Foundation. *Samos: The Archaeological Museums* by the Director Emeritus of the 21st EPCA, Konstantinos Tsakos, and the acting Director, Maria Viglaki-Sophianou, is freely available online in English and Greek versions (http://www.latsis-foundation.org/megazine/publish/ebook.php?book=73&preloader=1). Support for fieldwork has also been generous. Excavation in advance of the construction of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre, funded by the Foundation, has revealed a large section of the ancient cemetery of Phaleron, including a widely-reported group of Archaic burials of bound individuals who had suffered violent deaths (http://www.archaiologia.gr/en/blog/2013/07/01/violent-death-and-injuries-in-the-archaic-faliron/). We will report more fully on the progress of the post-excavation study, including forensic analysis, next year.

I conclude by noting three significant anniversaries in 2012–2013. Fifty years of excavation at Thorikos by the Belgian School at Athens, 100 years of German excavation in the Kerameikos of Athens and the 175th anniversary of the *Archaiologiki Ephimeris* are powerful reminders of the continuing depth of commitment to archaeological research in Greece so richly illustrated in *AG*.

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