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ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2014–2015

Introduction & overview

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Does *Archaeology in Greece* have a purpose? Is it more than a convenient way of logging fortuitous finds? From a newcomer's viewpoint, *AG* may look hard to put into focus. Why does new information about landscapes and material culture matter? After all, don't we already know a great deal about the remote past of Greece? Aren't museums already full of attractive and interesting things? Do we need more of the same?

Sometimes it pays to play devil's advocate: to stand back, observe what is going on and to take stock. If we want to have a short answer to the above questions, we need go no further than the **Newsround** section of *AG*. This year, **David Smith** bookends the section with key developments that have at least regional, arguably global significance. At one end, we have new data on the presence of early hominids in the Aegean and, at the other end, the report of a 16th-century Spanish galleon from the era of Philip II and the first evidence of a Minoan shipwreck across the Aegean from Crete itself.

Our understanding of the anatomical development and spread of hominids and the initial dispersal of anatomically modern humans is still limited, in comparison with subsequent periods. Within the last decade, research on hominids has taken a huge leap forward. Theoretical approaches to the evolution of bipedal mobility and speech have been matched by the investigation of new sites and shelters. Greece has provided some key evidence of Middle Pleistocene activity, at a time when the topography of the central Aegean was dominated by a different landmass: 'Cycladia'. Hominid communities are now known to have made flakes and blades from a rich source of chert on Stélida hill, Naxos. The same outcrop was once again exploited during the Early Holocene, when Mesolithic people crossed over the sea that had emerged following the retreat of the ice sheet.

Among other significant Pleistocene finds, there are stone tools from Kokkinopilos, west of the Pindos range, belonging to the Middle, if not Lower Palaeolithic, and the first open-air hominid settlement known to date in mainland Greece, at Marathousa near Megalopolis in the west-central Peloponnese. In the vicinity of Samarina, western Macedonia, a string of sites spanning the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene extends the canvas for the scope of our Palaeolithic ancestors on the Greek peninsula.

If we want to understand just how radical the Neolithic transition was from a mixed protein diet of marine resources and small game, to one of sheep and goat meat, then the latest publication of faunal data from Franchthi Cave, in the Argolid, offers what looks like a very clear pattern. Diet, this time in the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, forms one of the themes of this year's report on the work of the British School at Athens. **Catherine Morgan** draws attention to the deposits of crushed murex (*Hexaplex trunculus*) at Palaikastro, Crete, and at Lefkandi, Euboea, which are thought to reflect the consumption of these marine molluscs, rather than their use in dyeing processes (although the latter function is not entirely ruled out). One of this year's Fitch Laboratory projects has focused on a well-documented Early Mycenaean zooarchaeological assemblage from Thebes, recovered in 2008. It includes both domesticated and wild species, with comparatively elderly sheep and goat samples, suggestive of the procurement of secondary products (wool and hair), rather than meat.

Returning to the Newsround, we discover the wealth of Mycenaean funerary data that has recently emerged from Attica, including several sites in the Mesogaia, as well as the coastal plains (Brauron and Vari). The discovery of a Late Helladic settlement and cemetery at Rema Xydias, near Platamonas, east of Mount Olympus, offers a northern parallel to the Attica finds that will encourage scholars to think again about the ways in which the Aegean area is conceived culturally, socially and historically in the Late Bronze Age.

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When readers browse successive editions of *AG*, trends begin to emerge. These are a reflection not only of development work and exploration within the physical boundaries of the modern Greek state, but also of the intellectual interests and preoccupations of researchers working in Greece. Continuing the thematic trend of last year's volume, the contents of *AG* 61 develop some of the topics from *AG* 60, including a focus on the built environment of the area around the Piraeus harbour. **Chryssanthi Papadopoulou** looks at the relationship between quarrying activity and residential structures, including water cisterns. She brings together the results of development projects and systematic research, to show a distinctive and hitherto poorly understood dimension of Athens' harbour region. Much of the evidence reported dates from the Classical and Hellenistic periods, but it is worth noting that there is now a growing body of evidence for Roman Piraeus, including activities that may be classified as Late Antique. There is evidence of continued use of facilities in and around Kantharos harbour, but also new commercial construction in the Imperial Age.

The relationship between harbours and the commercial activities that took place in their vicinity is the subject of **Mantha Zarmakoupi**'s chapter that explores recent research on the city and *emporion* of Hellenistic and Roman Delos. Students of Delian archaeology are familiar with the structures in and around the principal harbour, through which visitors came to the Sanctuary of Apollo, located immediately north of the port. A series of key research projects, conducted under the auspices of the École française d'Athènes, has, over the last decade, thrown considerable light on several less well-known areas, which were nevertheless crucial to the island's commercial activities, notably the Agora of Theophrastos, just west of the port, the Agora of the Competaliasts, east of the port, as well as workshops in the Lake district, northwest of the Sanctuary of Apollo, and in the direction of Skardhana bay, which, together with the port, occupied the southwestern corner of the island. Zarmakoupi also provides her own data on the very latest underwater research in the Stadion District, where submerged storage and port facilities have been identified. The cumulative data from these different projects show how we might conceive a large-scale *emporion* in operation. There is a physical dimension to the commercial focus of Delos, but it is a distributed one. There is also an abstract dimension, accessible in part from epigraphic documents pertaining to the regulation of commercial exchanges, but manifested also in the kinds of behaviours that can be analysed from finds of storage facilities. Among the distinctive architectural manifestations of commercial traffic are various types of storage structures, including the 'mezzanine' storage loft, but also the combined house and merchant's office, or workshop, a form of accommodation that Zarmakoupi links to central Italian customs.

AG 61 contains only one chapter dedicated to a prehistoric topic, **Matthew Haysom**'s review of recent research into Minoan extra-mural sanctuaries. The publication of finds from several well-known sanctuary sites makes this a particularly timely review. One of the surprising discoveries arising from monographs on Vrysinas and Kophinas is that votives from these locations concentrate so markedly in the Neopalatial period. Whilst it is the Early Iron Age material from Kato Syme Viannou that has taken pride of place in recent publications and analogous material at the Idean Cave that puts this site firmly in the ranks of major Greek sanctuaries of the first millennium BC, the Bronze Age evidence is beginning to acquire greater coherence amongst the island's growing number of cult sites. The number of known Bronze Age sanctuaries on Crete has increased within the central parts of the island, but also to the west of Knossos as well as to the east.

Pride of place this year goes to a series of reports that concentrate on epigraphic finds and what these documents tell us about ancient societies. **Robert Pitt** reports on a string of discoveries that link up with the Archaic and Classical history of Athens, as well as its Hellenistic and Roman past. One particularly intriguing find is the discovery, at 32 Tripodon Street, of an inscription that contains references to *prytaneion* and *prytaneis*. This is all the more intriguing because the same text also refers to the use of dining vessels. In view of the close proximity of the foundations of a large public building and of a cache of dining debris, perhaps from public dining, the case for the Archaic Prytaneion to have been located east of the Classical agora seems better substantiated than ever before. Other intriguing new finds include a list of names engraved on a black-glazed cup from Kiphissia, which includes Aristeides, Arriphron and Perikles, as well as a graffito from Plaka naming 'Mirana' (Murrina?). These items will doubtless stimulate

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discussion amongst historians. Why should Aristeides ('the Just') appear in the same breath as the brothers Arriphron and Perikles – surely the two sons of Xanthippos, the Athenian politician, but at least a generation younger than Aristeides? Choosing from the rich diet that Pitt offers is invidious, but I must refer, however briefly, to the rock inscriptions from rural Attica, which offer drawings and snatches of verse as well as challenges to other shepherds with writing skills.

Fabienne Marchand complements last year's survey of recent research in Boeotia, with a look at recent epigraphic research in Phokis, Lokris and Euboea. There is a crop of inscriptions that illuminates the organization of sanctuaries on Euboea and in Phokis, including those of Apollo at Abai, Apollo Selinaios at Histiaia, Apollo Daphneophoros and Athena at Eretria, Artemis Amarysia at Amarynthos and two sanctuaries to Artemis at Antikyra, and also a unique inscribed monument, crowned with a bust of Hadrian, for the people of Naryka.

Just as Marchand's survey allows readers of *AG* to benefit from a wide number of projects conducted under the auspices of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece, so the multi-authored chapter on the epigraphy of the northern Aegean is the fruit of a creative collaboration between the National Hellenic Research Foundation and the École française d'Athènes. It is a particular pleasure to be able to include in this year's *AG* the work of some of our French colleagues, who collaborate so closely on the archive material for *AGOnline*. The publication of the corpus of 500 inscriptions from Aegean Thrace provides the focus of **Maria-Gabriella Parissaki**'s survey of recent epigraphic research in the region. She reviews recent work on some well-known documents, as well as valuable comments on the population of the area as revealed in funerary monuments and linguistic forms. This study dovetails with **Julien Fournier** and **Patrice Hamon**'s survey of epigraphy on Thasos during the last decade. In the case of an inscription from Abdera that matches a fragment copied on Thasos at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, we can see why such collaboration becomes more than the sum of the parts. The fragment commemorating a woman, Perigenis, has thus been reunited with that for her husband, Samos, honoured in the second fragment. The joint monument was probably erected early in the second century AD.

Fournier's and Hamon's contribution anticipates the publication of the new corpus of inscriptions of Thasos and offers a short introduction to the different topical groups of documents that will be published within it. The new corpus has involved a great deal of new work, as well as a review and rereading of known documents. Three hundred new rupestral inscriptions have been added to the total number of known masons' marks on the circuit walls of Thasos city, which now amounts to 549. One of the most important consequences of the work done in preparation for the new corpus has been a close architectural study of the 'Passage des théores', adjacent to the agora, and of associated civic documents. Monumental lists of Thasian magistrates began to be recorded in the Archaic period, but scholars have found it hard to systematize the multiple lists. We now learn that there were two principal lists of civic archons and *theoroi*, inscribed in the 360s BC, with two more lists compiled in the 320s BC, which received further additions in subsequent centuries. It appears that the Thasians had as many as 50 magistrates by the end of the fourth century BC. The documents that accumulated in and around the civic centre of Thasos and in the cemeteries in its immediate vicinity provide a huge resource about the island's social history, not just in Classical and Hellenistic times, but also in the Imperial age; these will provide scholars with research material for many years to come.

The inscriptions from the northern Aegean region represent an illuminating linguistic as well as a social resource. From Thasos itself there are inscriptions in Parian and Ionian scripts, with onomastic variants that reflect the island's more particular Ionian preferences. From the mainland opposite Thasos comes a small group of inscriptions that seems to reflect adaptation into Greek of non-Greek, local (Thracian) dialects or language(s). These have been identified at Maroneia and at Zone (notably from the Sanctuary of Apollo) and may be connected to analogous material from Samothrace. The growing corpus of initiates into the cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace provides further contextual data for the coming together of groups and individuals who were ethnically or linguistically heterogeneous, but conjoined in cult aspirations. Occasional, more distant visitors certainly did join the crowds of Macedonians, northern Aegean and Hellespontine Greeks and Thracians who were among the regular visitors to the sanctuary. We might

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include the *theoroi* from Stratonikeia and Sardis. Nevertheless, one of the hallmarks of Hellenistic and Roman times was the facility of long-distance travel. This explains the presence of one Apollonios of Babylon at Abdera (referred to by Parissaki) or a man from Arbela, in Syria, buried in the eastern cemetery of Chalcis, on Euboea, not far from someone from Zone, in Thrace (reported in Marchand's chapter).

Samothrace also provides a link to our last, but by no means least, topic of *AG* 61, namely research on ancient sculpture. Maria-Gabriella Parissaki refers in her contribution to the restoration project associated with the statue of Nike from Samothrace in the Louvre Museum. Marianne Hamiaux, who has studied the statue base and the sculptor's signature that is sometimes associated with it, has denied any association between the statue, its base and the fragmentary signature (Hamiaux *et al*. 2015). The block that shows the surviving letters of a Rhodian artist's signature cannot belong to the monument (*SEG* XVI 1015, 1016). As a result, the whole gamut of questions regarding authorship, patronage and historical context has been reopened. The Louvre project has resulted in a series of publications (referred to by Parissaki and Palagia), public events and online resources, illustrating the aims and the mechanics of the restoration (see, for example, http://www.louvre.fr/en/conservation-project-winged-victory-samothrace-and-monumental-staircase; http://musee.louvre.fr/oal/victoiredesamothrace/victoiredesamothrace_acc_en.html).

The Nike of Samothrace provides an appropriate case study for considering the role of sculpture and of creative production in general in the Greek past. Much of what is discovered in excavations is highly fragmentary. Complete statues, where these have been recovered, are extremely rare, and most statues have long ago found their way into collections, whether private or public. Most often, these tantalizing survivals come with no ready associations, no labels, no useful contextual information. Much of what we have learned about sculptures has been the result of patient visual study, laboratory analysis and generic comparison with other works. The Nike was discovered by Charles Champoiseau in a remarkably well-preserved condition, although headless and lacking arms. The wings were restored with plaster during the 19th-century restorations in the Louvre Museum. The recent restoration project has removed the plinth block below the statue, so that the figure now stands directly on the ship's prow.

In her assessment of recent research on sculpture, **Olga Palagia** draws attention to the materials – the Lartian (Rhodian) marble of the base and the Parian marble – of the Nike of Samothrace. She prefers to see a Rhodian artist, or artists, behind this monument, although she, like many other scholars who have explored the possible historical associations of the dedication, allows for a range of possible historical contexts which this prominent and extraordinary monument was intended to commemorate (Palagia 2010).

The difficulties of making any historical association stick convincingly has discouraged some scholars from even attempting to explore the contexts within which statues and artistic monuments were created. Yet, as Palagia shows, new discoveries are providing a broader and more coherent framework for such one-off creations. We may not be in a position to say precisely for whom the Nike was created or who paid for its production, but the scope and tastes displayed in contemporary sculpture within the Aegean region do offer much more than useful classificatory data, as she shows in the cases of the larger than life-sized bronze horseman, retrieved from the sea near Kalymnos, and the trophy from the Athenian Agora, recently published by John Camp. Of special interest is a series of new sculptures from Macedonia, notably the extraordinary series of statue groups from outside a tomb monument at Pydna (Makrygialos). Catherine Morgan refers, in her View from Greece, to the life-sized statue of Silenus from excavations in the heart of Pella. These examples must surely give grounds for optimism about the potential for recovering contextual information that can also inform our understanding of how and why statues were important to their makers and audiences.[1]

[1] Thus Caroline Vout, in a broad review of how we may view ancient sculpture: 'Look around in museums and we are confronted with a mass of material that is yet to be given the recognition it deserves, and which threatens to blow apart everything we think we see when we attempt to put a piece, any piece, back into its ancient context ... there is just too much out there to gain more than a partial picture. To call excavation the art historian's enemy would be absurd. We must embrace the surplus of data it offers, and the inevitable loss of data, and do our best to work with both of them' (Vout 2012: 452).

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Palagia has herself contributed to a reappraisal of Athenian sculpture, particularly in relation to the earliest examples of Attic marble statuary. Her review of exhibitions and catalogues reflects the vibrancy of current research on ancient art, and sculpture in particular, in bronze as well as marble. The re-emergence of the plastic arts as a topic of scholarly interest has been marked by the addition of two new chapters in Sue Alcock and Robin Osborne's survey of Classical archaeology (2012). The recent exhibition in the British Museum, *Defining Beauty: The Body in Ancient Greek Art* (Jenkins 2015), referred to by Palagia, has recontextualized ancient sculpture within the tradition of western plastic art, without losing the ancient roots to which individual pieces were connected.

Palagia's reappraisal of the sculptured monuments of the Amphipolis tomb, referred to in some detail in *AG* 60, will surely arouse interest and controversy. In this case, the archaeological evidence pertaining to the chronology of the monument will prove at least as interesting as the current focus on the stylistic features of individual components. We await responses and further news with great interest.

Finally, I would like to thank enthusiastically all this year's contributors, as well as those from the previous four editions of *AG*, and wish my successor as editor, Maria Stamatopoulou, every success with future editions.

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