

# ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2008–2009

## INTRODUCTION

The major story of 2008–2009 was undoubtedly the opening of the New Acropolis Museum, which occupied the headlines on many occasions before the final opening ceremony on 20<sup>th</sup> June. As the culmination of the programme of major museum, site and archive projects reported in 2007–2008, the Acropolis Museum is the most spectacular example of a fundamental and far-reaching change in the range and quality of information now accessible to visitors to Greece, and in the research facilities available to scholars. And it is certainly not the only contribution of such magnitude over the past year. We will return to museums presently, and note among the many sites newly landscaped and presented to the public, anc. Kos, Karthaia on Kea, Phylakopi on Melos and Petres in the prefecture of Florina. The academic impact of many of these restoration and/or conservation projects has been considerable: the new reconstruction of the palace of Philip II at Vergina, achieved after a mere 2 years of intensive study, is perhaps the most striking case. For researchers, the inauguration in December 2008 of the historical archives of the Archaeological Service (the national archive of monuments) in restored neoclassical premises in Thissio promises a significant resource for more contemporary cultural-historical studies: this archive will be available online at <http://nam.culture.gr>.

The archaeological story in 2008–2009 is more mixed – perhaps inevitably so in the present economic climate. There is no doubting the variety and significance of the discoveries which we have to report. In terms of period, our understanding of the EBA is greatly enriched by the detailed documentation of the largest settlement in the Cyclades, on Dhaskalio, where important evidence for early bronzeworking complements the hoard of tools found in the sea off Glyfada Mesi in Thrace. Spectacular individual finds include the public archive of the city of Pella from the 4<sup>th</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> Ct BC, the Vergina gold wreath, the remains of Myc palatial architecture and frescoes in Thebes and the pedimental sculpture (a gigantomachy) from a monumental temple on the hill of Trapeza near Aigion in Achaia. With its stylistic affinities to the first, LAr, pediments of the Temple of Aphaia on Aigina, the Trapeza sculpture strengthens the growing picture of early prosperity around the Corinthian Gulf (further echoed in this year's report of the sanctuary at Mamousia), which in turn challenges long-held assumptions about the dominant artistic role of the NE Peloponnese. Long-distance connections, trade and ports of entry form another important theme, noting, for example, the findings of the Saronic Harbors Archaeological Research Project at Myc Kalamianos, and the work of the Kythera Island Project on shifting patterns of LRom settlement on the island.

Under current economic circumstances, it is hardly surprising to see slightly fewer large-scale excavations than in recent years, other than those funded through major public works. But the cumulative effect of an increasing number of topographical projects, documenting the location of urban centres of all periods and reconstructing changes in their physical form (as, for example, in Triphylia or at Kleonai or Kirrha), is notable both for putting remote regions more firmly on the map and for challenging assumptions about sites and areas thought to be well-understood (Knossos being a case in point). The major gap in this year's account is again rescue archaeology, given the continuing absence of the *Archaiologikon Deltion*. The syntheses of rescue excavations in

Sparta, cited in the Laconia chapter, illustrate the way in which the work of colleagues in the Archaeological Service transforms our understanding especially of the major anc. urban centres. To communicate their work chiefly to local audiences, a number of Ephorias have organized small one- or two-day workshops (in 2009, we note such meetings organized by the 7<sup>th</sup> EPCA on Elis and the 35<sup>th</sup> EPCA on Kephallonia and Ithaca), but these are rarely intended for publication. Our inability at present fully to report the vital rescue work of the Archaeological Service is frustrating – and must be doubly so for those who actually conduct the excavations concerned, often in extremely difficult conditions.

On a more positive note, we include this year extensive reports of fieldwork and research programmes from 2 of the 6 Archaeological Institutes (of Epirotic Studies and of Aegean Studies – the remaining four being the Institutes of Macedonian and Thracian Studies, of Thessalian Studies, of Peloponnesian Studies and of Cretan Studies). These Institutes are separate branches of the Ministry of Culture with the brief to conduct research programmes, publish material from old excavations and organize exhibitions, conferences and cultural events. Several are cultural foundations of long standing and with very varied histories. Thus, for example, the origins of the Archaeological Institute of Aegean Studies lie in the FERT Institute, founded under the Italian occupation in 1927 to support the work of the Italian Archaeological Mission. After the incorporation of the Dodecanese into the Greek State, the Institute operated as a branch of the Archaeological Service for the Dodecanese until 1977, when it was established as a regional unit of the Ministry of Culture and renamed the Archaeological and Historical Foundation of Rhodes. The Institute was refounded in 2002 as the Archaeological Institute of Aegean Studies, with regional coverage of the Aegean, and in recent years has collaborated particularly closely with the 22<sup>nd</sup> EPCA in projects such as the unification of the archaeological areas of the city of Kos, described more fully in our reports below.

Certain major conferences held in Greece over the past year will be of interest to readers of *AR*. For convenience, these are divided into regional conferences, where primary material of relevance to *AR* was presented and will be reported fully when the conference proceedings are published, and archaeological conferences on particular themes or periods.

Regional: *Marathon. The Battle and the Ancient Deme* (Marathon, demos of Marathon, September 2008); *Cyprus and the East Aegean. Intercultural Contacts from 3000–500 BC* (Samos, DAI and AG Leventis Foundation, October 2008); *8<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Trikala Studies* (Trikala, Philos Trikalinos, October/November 2008); *First Pancretan Archaeological Congress: Archaeological Research in Crete* (Rethymnon, University of Crete and 28<sup>th</sup> EBA, November 2008); *3<sup>rd</sup> Archaeological Meeting on Thessaly and Central Greece* (Volos, University of Thessaly and Ministry of Culture, March 2009); *The Corinthia and the Northeast Peloponnese: Topography and History from Prehistoric Times until the End of Antiquity* (Loutraki, 37<sup>th</sup> EPCA, DAI and the General Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, March 2009); *22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting on Archaeological Research in Macedonia and Thrace* (Thessaloniki, Ministry of Culture, Ministry for Macedonia and Thrace, and Aristotelian University, Thessaloniki, April 2009); *Honouring the Dead in the Peloponnese* (Sparta, University of Nottingham Centre for

Peloponnesian Studies, April 2009); *Euboea and Athens: a Colloquium in Memory of Malcolm B. Wallace* (Athens, Canadian Institute, June 2009); *Unknown Treasures of Venetian Chalkis* (Chalkis, 23<sup>rd</sup> EBA and Society for Euboian Studies, January 2009); *Thasos à l'époque classique: frontières, institutions, épigraphie* (Athens, EfA, April 2009).

Thematic: 2<sup>nd</sup> *Symposium on Prehistoric Archaeology* (Volos, Aristotelian University, Thessaloniki, University of Thessaly and 13<sup>th</sup> EPCA, December 2008), 8<sup>th</sup> *Scientific Meeting on Hellenistic Pottery* (Ioannina, Ministry of Culture, 12<sup>th</sup> EPCA and Archaeological Institute of Epirotic Studies, May 2009); *Les arts de la couleur en Grèce ancienne... et ailleurs* (Athens, EfA, April 2009); *IMMORTALITY: the Earthly, the Celestial and the Underworld in the Mediterranean from the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age* (Rhodes, University of Crete, Institute for Cretan Studies and Institute for Aegean Studies, May 2009); *Markets, Festivals and Feasts* (Monemvasia, Monemvasiotikos Homilos, June 2009); *Tout vendre, tout acheter. Structures et équipements des marchés antiques* (Athens, EfA and ASA, June 2009).

2008–2009 saw 2 significant anniversaries. First, the start of the centenary year (2009–2010) of the Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, marked in June 2009 by a conference entitled *Italian Archaeology from a Greek Perspective*. Secondly, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Research Foundation and the 30<sup>th</sup> of its Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity – an extraordinarily dynamic and productive group of scholars who have been exceptional colleagues to all here in the Athenian community. On behalf of the BSA and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, we offer our warmest congratulations to both institutions and every good wish for a successful future.

As ever, a brief note is due here on the production of *AR*. The continuing absence of *Archaiologikon Deltion* has already been noted, and this year too, the proceedings of the previous *AEMTh* were not published (although we are assured that this is a temporary hiatus). The most up-to-date published source is the *Ergon* of the Archaeological Society, and we are particularly grateful to the Society and to its Secretary General, Dr Vasileios Petrakos, for the supply of many of the images used in this year's reports. *DeltChAE* 2008 has also appeared this year. Otherwise, the most up-to-date published sources remain press reports, and these have been cited where they can be independently verified or linked to a Ministry of Culture Press release. These releases are consultable online at <http://www.yppo.gr>, following the link to *deltia typou* where they are listed by date: individual citations thus appear in reports below referenced by date. In such cases, the reports are edited translations of the press release, with related press citations noted. We are also grateful to our many Greek colleagues who have taken time to provide short reports or to verify details of their work as reported in the press. We are, as ever, mostly concerned to present unpublished site reports and work originally published in Greek, and so foreign language reports have been included where they are primary notices of new material. We are grateful to all our contributors for taking time and effort to prepare reports for *AR*.

This edition of *AR* has been translated and compiled by the BSA Director, the Assistant Director (Robert Pitt) and the Knossos Curatorial Fellow (Todd Whitelaw). We would also like to thank Heinrich Hall for German translation and for keen-eyed editorial assistance, John Hayes for final proof-reading and Gina Coulthard, our production editor, for keeping us on course despite our worst endeavours. As ever, the BSA team of Penny Wilson Zarganis, Tania Gerousi, George Brusker and Vicki Tzavara collected and collated material, liaised with

contributors and prepared illustrations. However, a particular tribute is due to the School Secretary, Helen Clark, who took richly deserved retirement in July 2009. Helen has been a stalwart of *AR* (as of all BSA activities) for some 30 years, and I join all of our colleagues and readers of *AR* in expressing our appreciation of her work and offering our very best wishes for the years to come.

We conclude with a look to the future. *Archaeology in Greece* has been published jointly with the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies as part of *Archaeological Reports* since 1954 – and these 55 years are but the latest step in a history of collaborative publication which dates back to the foundation of the British School. This long tradition of disseminating to the scholarly community the results of archaeological fieldwork conducted in Greece is shared by the École française d'Athènes, which since 1920 has devoted a part of the *Bulletin de Correspondance hellénique* to a wide account of archaeological research in Greece, Cyprus and, every second year, the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Building upon this tradition, and enabling future generations of scholars to benefit most effectively from the growing volume of information available, lies at the heart of the academic mission of both Schools, and for some while we have contemplated ways in which we might work together to improve the service which we offer to the scholarly community. An electronic resource, which draws upon the strengths of both of our publications, is an essential means to this end. The British School therefore had no hesitation in accepting the invitation extended by the École française d'Athènes in October last to collaborate in the creation of a wholly new research tool named, in our respective languages, *Chronique des fouilles en ligne* and *Archaeology in Greece Online*. This resource, which will be accessible via our respective websites from late autumn 2009, will enhance but not replace the *Archaeology in Greece* section of *Archaeological Reports*, and will enable a wider scholarly audience worldwide to access our information in the medium best suited to their needs. It is an exciting prospect, and on behalf of the BSA team, I thank my colleague, EfA director Dominique Mulliez, for initiating this collaboration and for his tolerance and good humour throughout the ensuing process.

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## MUSEUMS

As the extensive programme of museum redesign and new construction noted last year continues, a useful handbook has been published listing all archaeological museums and collections in Greece by region, with a brief review of their main holdings. *Αρχαιολογικά Μουσεία και Συλλογές στην Ελλάδα* (Athens, Ministry of Culture 2008) also appears in a pocket edition in English.

Among the new museums inaugurated in 2008–2009, the **Acropolis Museum** attracted the greatest attention worldwide. Having been partially open to the public for over a year, latterly for the temporary exhibition *Nostoi: Repatriated Masterpieces* (September–December 2008), it was formally opened on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Displays in an exhibition space of over 14,000m<sup>2</sup>, some 10 times larger than that of its predecessor, now include finds from the sanctuaries on the Acropolis slopes as well as the major shrines and monuments of the Acropolis itself (notably the Temple of Athena Nike), with a rich collection of Ar–Rom votive material. Further information is presented at <http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr>.