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AT ATHENS

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Sharon Stocker (University of Cincinnati) with a gold chain from the “Griffin Warrior’s” tomb excavated at Pylos

EXCAVATIONS ISSUE

2 Director's Introduction	3 Athenian Agora	4 Ancient Corinth	6 Pylos
9 Azoria	10 Ancient Methone	11 Ismenion Hill at Ancient Thebes	12 Molyvoti, Thrace
13 Gournia	14 Field projects in brief	16 Map of excavations and surveys	<i>Our 135th Anniversary</i> 1881–2016 



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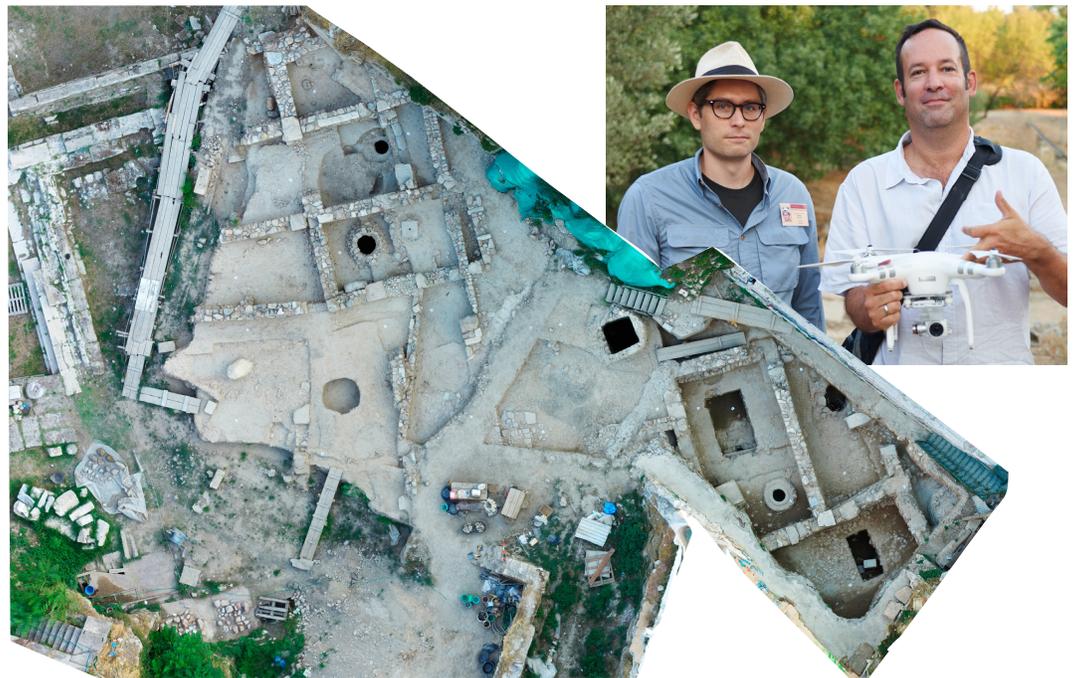
Digging up the past to shape the future

I am pleased to introduce this newsletter showcasing the diverse and important fieldwork conducted in 2015 by the ASCSA's member institutions. With each new season, these excavations, surveys, and studies move archaeology and Hellenic studies forward, whether pushing into the deepest past, examining problems of Classical civilization, or shedding light on poorly understood historical problems. These projects challenge previously held beliefs, train new generations of field researchers, and employ technologically advanced approaches and sound methodologies to uncovering and preserving the past.

By facilitating these endeavors, the School maintains a high profile in field research from Thrace in the north to Crete in the south. The six field permits authorized by the Ministry of Culture are awarded through a peer-review process,

which ensures that innovative and problem-oriented archaeological research is carried out by teams from our participating institutions, many of which collaborate on *synergasia* projects with Greek colleagues from regional Ephorates of Antiquities. In addition to our seven active permits (including the School's excavations at Ancient Corinth and the Agora), there are some 20 others that are in various stages of study or publication. Over the course of its long history, the ASCSA has sponsored more than 80 archaeological field projects in Greece and around the Aegean.

I hope you enjoy hearing about their accomplishments and discoveries, especially those of the University of Cincinnati at Pylos, whose unearthing of the "Griffin Warrior" tomb dominated headlines as one of the top archaeological discoveries of the year.



Technology's impact on archaeological practice: this aerial photograph of an excavation area at the Athenian Agora was taken by a drone camera, piloted by Matt Baumann (at left) and James Herbst.



John McK. Camp II, Director

ATHENIAN AGORA

Finds from all ages in the cradle of democracy

The Athenian Agora, whose hundreds of thousands of annual visitors this year included Secretary of State John Kerry and Nobel Laureate economist and *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist Paul Krugman, had a varied and productive 2015 excavation season that yielded material dating from the 14th century B.C. to the 12th century A.D.

A team of 60–70 volunteers worked under an experienced staff directed by John McK. Camp II in three areas of the site: the Byzantine levels over the Painted Stoa, the Classical Commercial Building, and a section from the old excavations to the southwest. These areas produced important contexts and data for piecing together Athens' storied past. "It's what we do incrementally, and the cumulative evidence that matters," says Camp of the project, which has been running for 85 years.

Discoveries from the 11th century Byzantine settlement comprised mainly walls, floors, *pithoi* (large storage containers), and storage facilities for agricultural produce. Two courses of well-worked limestone blocks built into these Byzantine walls are notable; their measurements identify them as the foundations for the third interior Ionic column from the Painted Stoa (mid-5th century B.C.).

To the north of the Classical Commercial Building, excavators discovered a well of the Early Archaic period containing 7th- and 8th-century cups. To the south, they came across a considerable number of marble chips, but none of the accompanying dust that one would usually expect if the area were a marble-working establishment. Moving inside, trenches produced a deposit of burned pots and bones, the

14th such assemblage found in the building, making it the largest concentration of "pyres" in the Agora. The collection included a red-figured stemless cup, an unusual find for such a context. A Mycenaean tomb also appeared deep below the Classical Commercial Building, in this case a pit grave with no *dromos* (entryway) and only one burial, a 12–15-year-old male.

Camp decided to resume excavations in the southwest of the site, where his team proceeded to uncover pebble mosaic floors, embedded basins, and a stone water channel flowing west toward the Great Drain. Such features indicate that the area probably held small industrial establishments, some of them located within private houses. A pit to the extreme south, whose form and function are not yet clear, contained 4th-century black-glazed vessels including rolled-rim plates with stamped palmettes, *echinos* bowls, and fish plates.

Inside the museum and offices located within the Stoa of Attalos, conservators and archivists were hard at work processing the finds and data gleaned by the excavation team. During the final days of the dig, aerial photographs were taken by a drone camera, yet another example of technology's progressive impact on archaeological practice. The most striking example of this transformation, though (at least at the Agora), belongs to IT specialist Bruce Hartzler, who developed iDig—a digital app that allows archaeologists to record and analyze archaeological data in real-time—which was heavily utilized in the field again this season, its fourth year in operation. (See last issue for a Q&A.)

continued on p. 5



General view of a Mycenaean Tomb, looking west

AGORA AT A GLANCE

Site description: Ancient Athenian marketplace and civic center, birthplace of democracy

Major discoveries to date: Painted Stoa (475–450 B.C.), world's first public art museum; and Royal Stoa (500 B.C.), which held a permanent stone copy of the Athenian constitution and the place where Socrates was indicted

Iconic figures: Socrates, Pericles, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Plato, Demosthenes, Thucydides, Praxiteles, and Themistocles

Sponsoring institution: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens

Years running: 85

Annual visitors: 600,000–700,000

Websites: www.agathe.gr/ and www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/excavationagora/



Guy D. R. Sanders, Director

ANCIENT CORINTH

Restoring “Good Luck” mosaic and rewriting timelines

The School’s excavations at Corinth made important headway this past season in conserving the Late Roman Eutychia mosaic, restoring the Frankish Area, determining important dates and chronologies, planning an archaeological and ecological park in the surrounding area, and developing a primary education outreach program through the museum.

Major conservation efforts on the Eutychia mosaic began in 2014, with funding from the Stockman Family Foundation. Created in the late 2nd century/early 3rd century A.D. and discovered in 1933, this significant work of art owes its name to one of the figures it depicts, a goddess holding a shield inscribed with “eutychia” or good luck. Conservators led by Nicol Anastassatou have completed the delicate work of cleaning the surface, consolidating fragmentary stone and glass tesserae, and detaching the mosaic from its original

position. In June 2015, the excavation team led by Sarah James cleared the area below the mosaic down to bedrock. In the process, they discovered some important finds, including parts of an inscription, fragments of an over life-sized marble wing belonging to a Nike figure, a bronze finger from a life-sized statue, and a ring bezel with a seated Zeus. Most of these finds date to the 1st century A.D. In February 2016, conservators backfilled the trenches to create a level base and laid down a permanent substructure to support the restored mosaic. Next, they will create reinforced frames to support each section of the mosaic. These customized frames were created using templates produced by 3D photogrammetry conducted by architect James Herbst and Colin Wallace.

A discovery that has rewritten Corinthian chronology came in the form of fragments of a specific type of *kantharos* (large pedestalled drinking cup with high handles) and a semiglazed bowl that indicate a date in the 270s B.C. for the construction of the South Stoa. Not only does this place the creation of the roofed colonnade 50–75 years later than suspected originally, but it also provides important information for later phases.

Two other breakthrough finds from the 2015 excavation season were a large number of stratified medieval coins that provide



Fragment of the Eutychia (Good Luck) mosaic

the first sequence for 13th-century coins. Pottery and medieval merchant bankers’ tokens suggest a much later date for the Frankish Area than originally believed.

Four types of medieval coins were excavated in the Frankish Area of the site. Previously, numismatists believed that 13th-century coins circulated simultaneously, but new evidence associated with the finds shows that there was a strict order to their use, with one succeeding the other. Imitative Byzantine coins were demonetized ca. 1225. Coins minted for Geoffrey Villehardouin were then introduced and remained in use until after 1246, when his brother William inherited and minted his own coins. After the Treaty of Viterbo in 1267, imported French Derniers Tournois coins replaced those issued

continued on p. 5

CORINTH AT A GLANCE

Site description: An important trade center for five millennia and one of the most important cities of Greek and medieval antiquity

Iconic monuments: Temple of Apollo, grandiose building visible since antiquity (550 B.C.); and Peirene Fountain (6th century B.C.), a sacred spring and major water source

Iconic figures: Demaratus, Diogenes the Cynic, Lais, Periander, St. Phoebe and the Apostle Paul, William of Moerbeke, Bishop of Corinth and translator of Archimedes, Aristotle, Galen, and Hero

Sponsoring institution: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens

Years running: 120

Annual visitors: 160,000

Website: www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/excavationcorinth

Corinth (continued from p. 4)

by the Villehardouins. Locally minted versions following this French design were introduced slightly later and circulated alongside the imports. Sanders comments on the importance of finally establishing a sequence for the coins and the excitement of where this knowledge could lead next: "It's an important breakthrough because it solves a problem that has been dogging us for decades, helps with chronological issues, and raises several other questions."

A deep latrine pit dating to the mid-13th century contained several cubic meters of green sediment. Bioarchaeologists will be testing samples for phytoliths, which will determine what kinds of plants

made up the Corinthians' diet, and should identify any gut parasites they may have hosted.

Sanders says the biggest surprise of the season came while clearing debris still on the floor of the Church narthex in the Frankish Area: "We turned over a block that was first uncovered 25 years ago to find the underside was painted with the life-sized face of an archangel."

In terms of outreach, the ASCSA and Corinth staff have been collaborating with the Greek Ministry of Culture in actively planning a sustainable 6 km² archaeological and ecological park encompassing



Life-sized face of an archangel uncovered from the church in the Frankish Area

Photo P. Dellatollas

Corinth, Acrocorinth, and the ancient Lechaem harbor, while the Museum staff is developing and implementing a K-12 Outreach Education Program spearheaded by Ioulia Tzonou-Herbst and Steinmetz Family Foundation Museum Fellow Katherine Petrole. "The purpose of the program is to bridge a gap between primary research conducted by archaeologists on site and teaching of the past in the classroom," explains Petrole. "The lesson plans use artifacts representing periods from antiquity to the present as a foundation for learning in a variety of topics."

One lesson plan about the achievements of the Roman Empire includes videos on the conservation of the Eutychia mosaic as a case study. Teachers of all levels in the US and Greece are already using the program with positive outcomes. Petrole reports, "Our early successes have shown the power of objects to tell stories, to inspire curiosity, and to extend learning beyond the classroom and into museums and archaeological sites. This is something new, innovative, and unparalleled for an excavation in Greece." For more information, contact museumkatie@gmail.com.

Agora (continued from p. 3)

A red-figured stemless cup from Pyre J 2: 30 with looping handles (top and bottom views)

Camp naturally looks forward to another summer of work and discovery. He cites the excavation's biggest challenge at this point as logistics: "It's a great big deep hole in the ground and it's hard to get the dirt out in an urban environment." There is also, of course, the challenge of acquiring properties to further the excavation, which Camp conveys is "a long, slow, very expensive and very bureaucratic process."

The Agora excavations are funded entirely through School support and private

donations, something that distinguishes this dig and the ASCSA from all other foreign institutes in Athens, which are agents of their governments. Funding like that of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Packard Humanities Institute, which have provided major support over the past 35 years, not only makes a huge difference in what the excavation is able to accomplish and contribute, but demonstrates the still-strong bond Americans have with the origins of their own democratic ideals.

Sharon Stocker and Jack Davis, Co-Directors

PYLOS

Prehistoric riches, historic discovery

Recently named one of the top archaeological finds of 2015 in *National Geographic*, the “Griffin Warrior” tomb, excavated by husband-and-wife team Jack Davis (former Director of the School) and Sharon Stocker, captured the attention not only of the ASCSA community, but of the world. On this School-affiliated dig, run by the University of Cincinnati, an international team of about 35 archaeologists uncovered one of the most significant displays of prehistoric-era riches found on mainland Greece in the last 65 years.

The Bronze Age burial, some 3,500 years old, was for a single male aged 30–35 years at death. Dubbed the “Griffin Warrior” because of an ivory plaque carved with a griffin found between his legs, he was also surrounded by treasures rarely seen in archaeology today, thanks to the tomb being undisturbed by looters. The approximately 1,800 artifacts found inside the grave comprise bronze weapons, including a bronze sword with a gold-covered hilt; gold, silver, and bronze vessels; a bronze mirror; several delicate ivory combs; 50 sealstones (a comparatively staggering

An international team of archaeologists uncovered one of the most significant displays of prehistoric-era riches found on mainland Greece in the last 65 years.

number, each carved with exquisite detail); more than 1,000 carnelian, amethyst, and agate beads that once probably formed necklaces; and other jewelry including a stunning gold necklace with two clasp finials representing stylized ivy.

The grave is exceptional, as emphasized in this statement from the Greek Ministry of Culture: “This is the only prehistoric grave recently found of this wealth in Greece belonging to only one person.” Not only was there a high concentration of foreign objects, but many of the items found are usually thought to have been buried with females, forcing archaeologists to rethink assumptions about determining gender based on the types of finds placed in graves.

The site of Pylos, the home of King Nestor in Homer’s *Odyssey*, has revealed the best-preserved Bronze Age palace on the Greek mainland. It was excavated by former School Director Carl Blegen between 1939 and 1966, and dates between 1600 and 1200 B.C. The tomb belongs to a time in the Greek Bronze Age when the mainland culture that would flourish under the Mycenaeans was being shaped by that of the Minoans on Crete, the first advanced civilization in Europe and only 100 miles offshore from Pylos.

Amazingly, the top of the grave lies at

about ground level, in a spot walked over many times by archaeologists digging at Pylos. Davis and Stocker discuss the experience of coming across this tomb, excavating it, and now studying the finds in a Q&A with the American School below.

Q: Can you describe the events leading up to the discovery of the warrior tomb and the atmosphere once it was first revealed?

A: Those in the immediate area were very excited. The area was being supervised by Alison Fields, a current ASCSA fellow, and Flint Dibble, a recent ASCSA fellow, under our direction. We had noticed that there were a few stones exposed on the surface of the field that seemed to form a corner. This was on the first day of excavation. Within a day or so, the outline of a small rectangle was defined. Certainly it occurred to us that it might be the top of a grave, but we didn’t dare to hope for that, let alone that any grave would not be looted.

Q: How long did it take to excavate the tomb and what special precautions were taken? What was the biggest challenge in this process?

A: In total, it took more than five months. It was obviously important to finish the job once it was started. The length of time created unforeseen challenges, not least that

PYLOS AT A GLANCE

Site description: One of the major Mycenaean economic and political centers that formed the earliest civilization in Europe

Major discoveries to date: “King Nestor’s Palace,” the best-preserved Bronze Age palace on the Greek mainland; over 1,000 Linear B tablets, the largest archive on the mainland; “Griffin Warrior” tomb, wealthiest collection of prehistoric riches to be found in recent decades

Sponsoring institution: University of Cincinnati

Year of Excavation on Current Permit: 1 of 5

Website: www.griffinwarrior.org

Pylos (continued from p. 6)

almost all of our team was scheduled to depart at the end of June (while we continued until mid-November), including our photographers, data managers, ceramic analysts, etc. Most were scheduled to move on to other projects. At times things were a bit touch-and-go, but our colleagues rallied round to help. Photographers Jennifer and Arthur Stephens delayed their departure, and Jennifer returned in early autumn. Denitsa Nenova and Hüseyin Öztürk, an ASCSA member, arranged between them that one would be on site, so that imagery required for three-dimensional reconstructions could continue to be gathered with the same rigor as it had been earlier in the project. Alison Fields stayed with us until the end of July. And security was always a concern. In this regard, the guards of the Ministry of Culture worked overtime to support us, and additional private guards were insured through contributions from ASCSA trustees Bob McCabe and Jim Ottaway.

Q: If this shaft grave had been discovered and excavated 50 or 100 years ago, how would the procedure have differed? What is archaeology as a field able to do today that it couldn't before?

A: Perhaps our biggest advantage today is the widespread availability of total stations. That made it possible for us to document the locations and elevations of artifacts with an accuracy that would have been extremely difficult by measuring tapes alone — particularly given the bewildering quantities of artifacts found. We should also stress the importance of world-class Greek and Greek-based archaeological scientists today. Takis Karkanas of the ASCSA's Wiener Lab responded to our call for help in understanding micro-stratigraphy. Ioanna

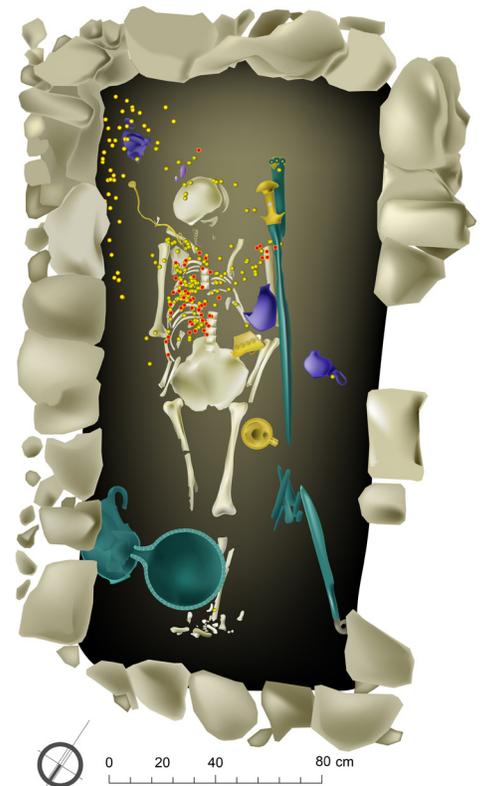
Moutafi, a former fellow of the Wiener Lab, selflessly contributed her expertise on two occasions, advising us as excavation of the skeleton of the Griffin Warrior proceeded. Vassilis Kilikoglou of the National Center for Scientific Research, "*Demokritos*," examined metals in situ by portable XRF. Their contributions were invaluable and enabled us to excavate the grave more intelligently than would otherwise have been possible.

Q: When did local residents learn of the discovery and what was their reaction? Can you describe the relationship the excavation has with the town in general?

A: They have obviously been proud and excited. Residents of the town of Chora (or Old Pylos, since the name of Pylos was attached to the modern town of Pylos only since the Greek Revolution), within the territory of which the Palace of Nestor site lies, are particularly proud of ours and Carl Blegen's finds. Blegen had an especially close relationship with the people of Chora, and we were proud to have been able—several years ago—to recognize, in association with the local cultural society of Chora, the contributions of all those who had worked with Blegen.

Q: Were there any other important developments from the season that were overshadowed by the discovery of the shaft grave?

A: Good question. We also excavated on the acropolis and in the lower town in several locations between the Northeastern Gateway and Tholos IV. In the former instance, we were able to define the Early Mycenaean fortifications of the acropolis more accurately; in the latter, we found evidence for the extension of the Late Helladic III town.



Depiction of the warrior's tomb and how items were arranged around the body.

Illustration D. Nenova

Q: Has there been any new information gleaned from the study of the grave items since the announcement of their discovery?

A: Most of our work since November has been concerned with the gargantuan task of cataloguing finds and seeing to their documentation.

Q: What are the goals and expectations of the excavation for next season?

A: We are planning a very low-key season in 2016. There will be a bit of excavation, but our principal objective will be study of the finds from the grave.

continued on p. 8

See a video of Sharon Stocker explaining the Griffin Warrior shaft grave at <https://youtu.be/4xbgYG6Pho>

Pylos (continued from p. 7)

Q: What would you like to share with the ASCSA community about the experience of making such a remarkable discovery?

A: Finding a wealthy grave, or any grave for that matter, was not meant to be our focus at Pylos in 2015–2019. Our goals were to increase knowledge about the earlier history of settlement at the site and to explore the extent and nature of the town associated with the palace in the 13th century B.C. But, in the words of Blegen himself, “archaeology as a profession is an uncertain and a fickle mistress.” The hand dealt to us in 2015 is an extraordinary one, and we recognize not only the potential of these finds for increasing our knowledge of the Greek Bronze Age, but also the responsibilities that come with such a find. The potential is nearly unlimited, but the monetary costs and cost in time and effort are also high—not only in the area of scientific study, but also in ensuring that our discoveries will be properly preserved for future generations of scholars. We are extremely grateful to all those who have thus far supported our work, in particular the Institute of Aegean Prehistory and the Louise Taft Semple Fund in Cincinnati, yet even with this help our needs remain great. The importance of Pylos for study of the Greek Bronze Age is undeniable. So much remains to be done.

For more information, please visit: www.griffinwarrior.org.

Photos, clockwise from top: one of six ivory combs found within the warrior's tomb; a unique necklace measuring more than 30 inches long and featuring two gold pendants decorated with ivy leaves; seal stone (one of over four dozen) with intricate Minoan design of three bulls; bronze weapons found in situ, including a meter-long slashing sword with an ivory handle covered with gold.

Photos courtesy University of Cincinnati, Pylos Excavations. Jewelry photography by J. Stephens



Donald Haggis and Margaret Mook, Co-Directors

AZORIA

2,700-year-old dining hall is about more than just food

The Cretan site of Azoria has already told us much about how Early Iron Age villages were transformed into nascent city-states during the Archaic period (600–700 B.C.). Excavations quickly revealed this period to be one of dynamic change and urban settlement, instead of a time of abandonment or decline, as previously thought. Agriculture and foodways, primary focuses of the project, played a huge role in how the social and political structures of early city-states like Azoria were formed.

This past season, the excavation team, led by Donald Haggis and Margaret Mook, discovered the full extent of an impressive Communal Dining Building. This complex structure dating to the 7th–5th century B.C. consists of no fewer than 19 rooms extending across four terraces, and covering an area of over 1,200 square meters. The building consists of an altar room for sacrifices; several kitchens and storerooms; and a series of dining rooms, which together may have functioned as an *andreion*, or mess hall, used by various segments of the citizen class of the classical Cretan city. Artifacts found inside the building included serving, drinking, and dining wares (evidently feasting equipment), as well as animal bones and plant remains. “The discovery will allow us to study the function of the building as a social, economic, and political institution,” explains Haggis. Such a complex would certainly have been a significant part of the organizational structure of the urban center as it emerged in the Archaic period.

In other areas of the site, evidence of a predecessor settlement from the end of the Late Bronze Age in the form of a 12th-century B.C. Late Minoan house and a tholos



Portion of the Communal Dining Building showing the lower west slope

tomb were uncovered. The archaeologists of Azoria also came to the unexpected conclusion that parts of buildings and certain rooms were abandoned in the latter half of the 6th century B.C., complicating their understanding of how the Archaic city developed in terms of organization and function.

Haggis, Mook, and their team will continue to work through this conundrum and other challenges in future seasons. Haggis cites the dig’s two main challenges as follows: “First, our research questions require extensive excavation, deep stratigraphic soundings, and intensive sampling, which are physically and logistically difficult even for a large and experienced field staff.” Some 90 field staff, volunteers, and field school students excavate 20 trenches each summer, process about 60,000 sherds, and screen on average 50,000 liters of soil

through dry sieving, plus another 8,000 through flotation, or water-based sieving. “The second challenge,” he continues, “is architectural conservation and site preservation, such as stabilizing ancient walls, a difficult undertaking given Azoria’s harsh environmental conditions, and with excavations concurrently underway.”

AZORIA AT A GLANCE

Site description: Early Iron Age and Archaic (1200–500 B.C.) urban settlement in northeastern Crete

Major discovery to date: Stratified settlement remains that show 6th century B.C. was a period of growth, not decline

Sponsoring institution: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Iowa State University

Year of excavation on current permit: 2 of 5

Website: www.azoria.org

John Papadopoulos, Sarah Morris, Manthos Besios, Athena Athanassiadou, Konstantinos Noulas, Co-Directors

ANCIENT METHONE

Geophysical surveys and basement dirt hold answers

At this industrial harbor in northern Greece, work continued on the West Hill or “acropolis” in an area layered with Archaic and Classical workshops, an Early Iron Age settlement, and Late Bronze Age graves. A rich corpus of small finds documented the intensity and variety of industrial activity—from casting bronze pendants to smithing in hearths.

The major discovery of the 2015 season was a second *hypogeion* (huge underground basement) similar to the Early Iron Age through Archaic (late 8th and early 7th century B.C.) one found before the project became a *synergasia*. Co-Director John Papadopoulos of UCLA hopes that this *hypogeion* will prove as important as the first, which was “a spectacular find because it contained one of the largest corpora of early alphabetic Greek anywhere in the world.”

Archaeologists dug the structure 3.5 m down, and hope to finish excavating the rest next season; the first *hypogeion* was a logistically challenging 11–12 m deep. The contents appear to be that of Methone’s destruction; the fill contained coins dating

to 354 B.C. and pottery sherds that fit together lying meters apart from one another in loose soil and mixed debris. Papadopoulos reports, “The fill is fabulous, with lots of material from the 6th to the 4th century B.C.,” including black-glazed lamps, tablewares, transport amphoras, loom weights, and roof tiles. He believes the basements were used to protect the valuable commodities being produced at Methone like gold, bronze, iron, ivory, and glass. Most importantly, the stratigraphy of the *hypogeion* found in 2015 will complement that of the first, allowing the archaeologists to piece the history and material culture of the site together with tighter chronologies and more definitive conclusions.

A multi-skilled survey team sought to define the overall extent of the habitation area and the ancient shoreline through a variety of integrated methods. Nancy Krah-topoulou and Jonathan Turner directed a geophysical coring project to define the ancient coastline, and have already established an entire Holocene sequence (defining the stratigraphic structure of sedimentary deposits). A geophysical survey led by Brian Damiata produced the most surprising result of the season: a fortification wall in an unexpected location within the site, where there were no signs of it on the surface. The project is also un-



Aerial view of Methone

dertaking the first terrestrial LIDAR (light detection and ranging) prospection survey in Greece, thanks to the expertise of Robert Kayen of the US Geological Survey and UCLA Civil and Environmental Engineering. This method sends and receives laser pulses from a tripod-mounted device to build a cloud of tens of millions of points over 3D coordinates. Having been used in places like Central America to see through the jungle canopy, its ability to process data into a surface model of a site, accurate to the centimeter, is now being appreciated for geoarchaeological studies. The project’s biggest challenge at the moment, Papadopoulos explains, is coordinating the 30-person publication team tasked with publishing everything that has been excavated at the site for the past 12 years and counting, with each member working on various categories of material. He summarizes with a laugh, “All archaeologists wish to publish their discoveries before they die!”

METHONE AT A GLANCE

Site description: Well-protected harbor with rich inland resources and human activity from Late Neolithic to Hellenistic periods (3500–150 B.C.)

Major discoveries to date: Corpus of alphabetic Greek inscriptions, commodities containers like complete Phoenician amphoras

Sponsoring institutions: University of California, Los Angeles, in collaboration with Pieria Ephorate

Year of excavation on current permit: 2 of 3

Website: <https://ifrglobal.org/programs/europe/greece-methone-2016>

Kevin Daly, Stephanie Larson, Alexandra Charami, Nikos Kontogiannis, Co-Directors

ISMENION HILL AT ANCIENT THEBES

Cemetery tells its story with new burials

On this low hill to the southeast of Thebes' Elektra gate, Bronze-Age Thebans buried their dead, Archaic and Classical Thebans worshipped Apollo at a temple, and for a time the Thebans of the Byzantine eras reused the site as a cemetery. The area is perhaps most famous for its role in ritual performance, as recorded by Thebes' own local poet Pindar.

Excavations have revealed much about the Temple of Apollo. In 2015 the team uncovered a smooth bedrock surface that marked the edge of the temple at its southeast. Further bedrock cuttings for the temple appeared in the west, some of which match the projections made by Keramopoulos's important excavations in 1917. Architectural finds include fragments of Corinthian roof tiles, fluted column pieces, a triglyph fragment, and other diagnostic architectural fragments. The team's architect, David Scahill, is recording these pieces in 3D so as to create a digital reconstruction.

Five seasons of work have shown that the temple was almost entirely robbed out by the 5th century A.D.; by that time

even the interior area of the former temple platform was given over to Byzantine burials. Remains of habitation from the Early through the Late Byzantine periods—including walls, burials, funerary vessels, and evidence of distinctive burial practices—have been revealed.

Last summer the team found a number of important rock-cut pit graves from the Middle Byzantine period with multiple inhumations containing whole juglet-type funerary vessels, coins, small bits of jewelry, belt buckles, and lamps. One grave contained many blue glass beads, and another an evil-eye type bead, all soon to be displayed in the Thebes Archaeological Museum. The 2015 season also brought to light the site's first tile-covered inhumations: one oriented east-west as expected of a Christian burial, while the other is situated in an unusual northwest-southeast orientation. The Christian buried in the first tile-covered grave still wore a bronze ring.

Over the course of the excavation the team explored many large *bothroi* (pits dug into bedrock often used for garbage). One *bothros* found in 2015 is the deepest feature discovered on the Ismenion Hill and bears a rare faunal profile that will provide evidence for the consumption habits of the 12th-century residents. A second 12th-century pit on the south side of the hill lies near a number of well-finished walls and contains a remarkable variety of material: cooking wares, a ceramic antefix, and large amounts of shell and fish remains. Other *bothroi* have yielded pieces of interest such as a Günsenin amphora (12th–13th centuries A.D.) and an honorary inscription from the 4th century B.C.



Top: The plaster-lined rectangular feature discovered this season, showing one of two large circular drains; bottom: early 4th-century red-figure askos on display in the new Thebes museum

A tunnel system for water, first discovered at the end of the 2014 season, is of particular interest. One of its main parts consists in a plaster-lined rectangular tank with two large drains, one on the side and one on the bottom. "The fill from within the feature is entirely Late Byzantine, so here we have good evidence for that period's water system on the Ismenion Hill," explains Larson.

ANCIENT THEBES AT A GLANCE

Site description: Mycenaean tombs, Archaic and Classical Sanctuary of Apollo and extensive Byzantine cemetery (5th–14th centuries A.D.)

Major discovery to date: Early 4th-century B.C. red figure Attic *askos* depicting sphinxes fighting Arimasps, from the workshop of the Kleophon painter.

Sponsoring institutions: Bucknell University, in collaboration with Boiotia Ephorates

Year of excavation on current permit: 5 of 5

Website: <http://www.bucknell.edu/x65381.xml>

Nathan Arrington, Domna Terzopoulou, Marina Tasaklaki, Thomas F. Tartaron, Co-Directors

MOLYVOTI, THRACE

Recent finds change character of site

This archaeological project, a *synergasia*, just finished the final field season on its current permit exploring Molyvoti, or “Ancient Stryme,” a port city in northeastern Greece, through various means of survey and excavation. The Co-Directors sought to determine how the port evolved in changing economic and cultural contexts and in relation to the landscape and local populations. Trading ports are often interpreted as static nodes within networks, but this project is after the deeper story as revealed by sustained archaeological attention not often afforded to similar sites.

Excavation in 2015 focused on the Classical House of the Gorgon, and revealed three of the house’s four exterior walls (one was robbed out in antiquity), two antefixes (roof ornaments placed over adjoining tiles) with a Gorgon depicted, and a silver ring with a cicada. The team processed 1,118 finds (including 309 coins), 1,452 kg of pottery, and thousands of tiles, seeds, and bones.

The biggest discovery of the season, though, were the 42 *tumuli* (burial

mounds) identified and mapped in the city’s *chora* (main town outside the ancient city proper). Artifacts were gathered from 27 of them, all dating to the Classical period. Arrington explains their game-changing importance, despite their poor preservation: “They suggest a more intense engagement with the landscape than our notion of ‘trading ports’ allows.”

Archaeologists were also surprised to discover a host of extremely well-preserved artifacts inside a well. Finds included an amphora neck with *dipinto* (sketched or painted inscription), a painted terracotta antefix, and a gold pendant. The team excavated the 1.89 m-wide well to a depth of 8.5 m, at which point water made further digging impossible. The well produced a significant quantity of material, but not in thick deposits. Organic remains included fish scales, sea urchin spines, barley, wheat, and burned bread.

There was new evidence for a possibly violent end to the site at Molyvoti. In and outside of the house, excavations exposed a bullet and three arrowheads dating to the 4th century B.C.

While last year’s survey focused on the peninsula itself, this year’s covered the surrounding mainland, beginning with



The Classical House of the Gorgon

a pedestrian surface survey of the cotton fields. Teams of walkers visually surveyed 1,302 units of 40 × 100 m, nearly 6 km² total, counting and collecting examples of pottery, tiles, and sherds to compare with those gleaned from excavation. They found a notable number of amphoras suggestive of a lively trade (perhaps wine or oil), as well as evidence of grain-based agriculture. Not much prehistoric or Archaic material was encountered, but the ground surface yielded a considerable amount of Classical–Hellenistic items, as well as some Early and Middle Roman (almost none of the latter appeared in excavation). A significant drop-off occurred 500 m outside the city walls. Data revealed an increase in material heading into the Late Roman period, and

continued on p. 13

MOLYVOTI, THRACE AT A GLANCE

Site description: Ancient trading port on Thracian Sea active during Archaic through Roman periods (6th century B.C.–6th century A.D.)

Major discovery to date: The unusual abundance of local amphorae (tall storage jars often used for oil or wine)

Sponsoring institutions: Princeton University, in collaboration with the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki and the Komotini Ephorate

Year of excavation on current permit: 3 of 5

Website: <https://artandarchaeology.princeton.edu/research/fieldwork/-excavations-at-molyvoti-in-northern-greece>

L. Vance Watrous, Director

GOURNIA

Discovery after digging: What site plans reveal

Gournia is best known for the complete picture it provides of what a Late Bronze Age town in Crete looked like: cobblestone streets, domestic houses, a Minoan palace, a central square, a cemetery, agricultural terraces, and a road that led to a harbor where ships could reside in enormous dug-out sheds. First excavated in the early 1900s by Harriet Boyd and intermittently by the Greeks from 1960, current Director Vance Watrous conducted his first survey at Gournia in 1992 and has been working there ever since.

Since completing excavations in 2014, one of the main focuses of the project is producing a site plan based on the one created by Boyd over a century ago. This effort has been led by John McEnroe and Matt Buell to impressive results for such a large-scale undertaking. They used approximately 250,000 GIS points and information from excavated material to produce a complex architectural history and detailed representation of the site, one

that has led to groundbreaking conclusions. “We found out through drawing the plan that there’s an earlier palace and street system, making the town a more sophisticated architectural unit than anyone realized,” explains McEnroe. In this way, drawing becomes an analytical tool, and one that offers the chance to make exciting discoveries even after digging has subsided. McEnroe continues, “Gournia is emerging as a whole new site, one that was one of American archaeology’s earliest digs, and one that is still home for many of us. It has been fulfilling to walk in Harriet’s shoes in this way, throughout the process.” For all practical purposes, the site plan is now complete, and the team is finishing up the 3D photogrammetry.

In addition to developing the site plan, the project is actively engaged in the work that accompanies study seasons: identifying fragments, dating architectural features, sorting samples for archaeobotanical work (477 samples were identi-

GOURNIA AT A GLANCE

Site description: Late Minoan settlement including palace, central court, houses, streets, and cemetery

Major discovery to date: Clay tablet from palace with writing in Linear A, the first stylized writing system in Europe

Sponsoring institutions: Institute for Aegean Prehistory, University of Kansas, Wilfrid Laurier University, University at Buffalo, Brock University, Hamilton College

Website: www.gournia.org

fied in 2015 alone), and preparing various areas of the site and objects for publication, an endeavor in which the team already has a strong start, with several articles recently appearing in major publications, including the ASCSA’s *Hesperia*. Watrous and conservators have also set in place a two-year plan of conservation on site.

Molyvoti (continued from p. 12)

the settlement appears to have contracted or nucleated during the Byzantine era.

Geophysical survey of subsurface archaeological features confirmed that the site flourished during the Classical period. Survey through electrical resistivity also identified a new site, which appears to have been a Late Roman/Early Byzantine villa or estate, at the southwest end of the peninsula. Geomorphological study determined that the narrow strip on the peninsula was a lagoon environment in antiquity—just like the area west of the

peninsula is today—leading archaeologists to consider the possibility that the peninsula was never an island.

Conducting excavations and surveys in the same season can be very challenging logistically and in terms of the overwhelming amount of data the combined components produce. Having spent most of his time at the excavation site, “relying on Tom Tartaron’s incredible survey leadership,” Arrington looks forward to revisiting many of the areas of interest in the *chora* with Tom’s team this summer, while turning

his focus to publication. “In many ways, the results from excavation and survey already ‘speak’ to one another very well. For example, there are periods of activity that are testified outside of the city, but not within it. I look forward to seeing how further dialogue develops.” He continues, “The major challenge now is to keep up our momentum as we head into study and publication. Many people have put a lot of time and resources into this beautiful and fascinating area, and we need to complete the job that we started.”

Field projects in brief

HALAI

Site description: Small ancient seaport with Neolithic (7000–3000 B.C.) activity and fortified acropolis occupied from Classical to Byzantine times (480 B.C.–A.D. 1453)

Major discoveries to date: Neolithic buildings built one above the other; preservation of an unusually elaborate and complex society (for a small seaport) dating from Archaic to Byzantine periods (700 B.C.–A.D. 1453)

Director: John Coleman

Sponsoring institution: Cornell University

Website: <http://halai.arts.cornell.edu/wwwroot/chelp/home.htm>

The Cornell Halai and East Lokris Project (CHELP) was recently granted permission from the Thebes Museum to examine the finds from excavations carried out at Halai by Hetty Goldman and Alice Walker Kosmopoulos from 1911 to 1935. Goldman was the first woman to direct an excavation in mainland Greece, and did so under the auspices of the American School, with ASCSA classmate Walker. Director John Coleman reports, “The biggest surprise last summer was the amazing number and quality of the finds from the old Goldman excavations at Halai.” Coleman and his team hope to continue going through this trove of unpublished material in 2016.

During the 2015 season, specialists continued studying Neolithic pottery and historical items including coins, lamps, metals, and more pottery. They accomplished the daunting task of completing the 3,000-piece database, while collaborators from the Numismatic Museum finished identifying and conserving coins from the site. Conservators finished work on the Late Roman/Palaeochristian lamps that had been found.

Coleman cites the project’s biggest challenge at this point as “conserving the

site for future generations; even if it ends up largely underwater it can still be a valuable resource.” Halai sits directly on (and sometimes under) the eastern shore of the Bay of Atalanti, referred to by Strabo as the Opuntian Gulf.

NEMEA

Site description: Religious sanctuary in northeast Peloponnese where pan-Hellenic games were held from the 6th to the 2nd century B.C. (Nemea); Late Bronze Age cemeteries from 15th to 13th century B.C. (Aidonia)

Major discoveries to date: Temple of Zeus and Hellenistic Stadium (Nemea); tombs comparable to those of Mycenaean elite, including “Aidonia Treasure” of gold jewelry and seal stones (Aidonia)

Director: Kim Shelton, Konstantinos Kissas

Sponsoring institution: University of California at Berkeley, in collaboration with the Corinth Ephorate

Website: nemeacenter.berkeley.edu

While excavation Director Kim Shelton and her team continue maintaining the site of Ancient Nemea, studying ceramic material and associated finds, and restoring the Temple of Zeus (an exhibit for which is in development), a primary focus is also the TAPHOS (Tombs of Aidonia Preservation, Heritage, and Exploration *Synergasia*) project with the Corinthian Ephorate of Antiquities.

The Aidonia tombs, a large Mycenaean cemetery outside Nemea, were partially looted and then excavated in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since that time, they continue to be looted for their rare burial goods. The TAPHOS project aims to secure the site physically for the long term, and to provide educational outreach to the local community and tourists through a visitors center, teaching program, and archaeological park. This past season, archaeologists cleaned the site, excavated two features,

conserved pottery, and prepared legacy material for publication.

Shelton comments, “Aidonia is a great example of the continued threat of looting. This reality has led to more salvage archaeology that has not allowed for the full systematic recovery of all potential data, or for publication as a priority. I hope that, as more projects incorporate outreach to educate about what is lost through looting, it will become less of a problem.” In terms of local support, she reports that it “has been fantastic—from officials and guards to local farmers. They are keeping a better eye on the site and donating land so that the project can move forward. They are very happy that we are investing in it.”

KOMMOS

Site description: Expansive port town with monumental architecture and international connection

Major discoveries to date: Large Minoan civic structures, massive ship-sheds, Greek sanctuary

Directors: Joseph and Maria Shaw

Sponsoring institution: University of Toronto

Website: www.kommosconservancy.org

Located on the shores of south-central Crete and excavated in 1976–1994 by the University of Toronto under the auspices of the School, Kommos has revealed important evidence for Bronze and Iron Age maritime history. The harbor town of the great inland sites Phaistos and Ayia Triada, it features impressive and well-preserved architecture of its own: large prehistoric civic structures, an unusually well-preserved Greek sanctuary used for a thousand years, massive ship-sheds that accommodated Minoan vessels, and a unique Minoan paved slipway for ships. The imported pottery found there confirms its international role in Late Bronze Age trade.

Since the conclusion of excavations, Joseph and Maria Shaw have led a project of site conservation. With the assistance of The Kommos Conservancy, the ASCSA, and the Ephorate of Antiquities at Heraklion, a master plan for conservation that will preserve and present this oldest harbor town in the world for public enjoyment is being undertaken.

SAMOTHRACE

Site description: Sanctuary of the Great Gods was home to a famous mystery cult and some of the most innovative architectural monuments from ancient Greece's Late Classical and Hellenistic periods

Major discoveries to date: Nike, or Victory, of Samothrace, 3D reconstructive modeling of sanctuary

Director: Bonna D. Wescoat

Sponsoring institutions: Emory University, Institute of Fine Arts at New York University

Website: www.samothrace.emory.edu

Director Bonna Wescoat feels “like we’ve got one foot in the 19th century and another in the 21st” by virtue of the different approaches being taken to understand and reimagine the Sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace, a tiny windswept island in the northern Aegean. “We have a very successful collaboration with the Louvre in their restoration of the Victory [excavated at Samothrace in 1863].” Wescoat’s team 3D-scanned fragments of the Victory’s ship on Samothrace that were 3D-printed in Paris; the replicas are now incorporated into the restoration of the statue. The Louvre also showed their animated model of the site at the exhibition.

Wescoat and her colleagues consulted with geologists and geomorphologists, including Wiener Lab Director Takis Karakas, this past season to understand how geologic and anthropogenic forces shaped the sanctuary’s topography, especially the central stream. The entire cult was formed around this stream, which the archaeolo-

gists are now looking at as a monument as opposed to a land feature.

Wescoat says, “We’re seeing a whole new sanctuary in certain key ways, all tied to site management and conservation efforts that address how people can move about the sanctuary and get the best impression of it. It sounds so basic, but we never actually thought about the way a human being physically moved through the space; all these dynamics of the body act as kind of a forensic tool, as a way to understand what’s happening in a place where they were careful to keep their secrets.”

While producing major publications on the site is Wescoat’s main goal right now, the overriding concern is the care and conservation of the site, which has been exposed to the elements for several decades. Preservation of the site is being addressed through the site management plan, which also has the positive effect of improving the visitor experience.

The Sanctuary of the Great Gods will be featured in the centerfold of *National Geographic* in June for an article on mystery religions.

MT. LYKAION

Site description: Mountaintop Sanctuary of Zeus (and his mythological birthplace), which was home to mysterious rituals and Greek athletics

Major discoveries to date: Evidence for Mycenaean cult place (altar with burned bones and offerings) on the mountaintop; only visible hippodrome in Greek world

Directors: David Romano, Mary Voyatzis, Anna Karapanagiotou, Michalis Petropoulos

Sponsoring institutions: University of Arizona, in collaboration with the Tripolis Ephorate

Websites: <http://lykaionexcavation.org/>
<http://parrhasianheritagepark.org>

The team at Mt. Lykaion spent the 2015 season focusing on heritage management and conservation efforts. They also com-

pleted important work in ceramic analysis, photography, and illustration, and made significant headway on their architectural digital documentation project at the Sanctuary of Zeus, where they just erected an information kiosk.

Much of the action happened in the Parrhasian Heritage Park of the Peloponnese, Greece’s first large-scale European cultural heritage park. The park’s creation is a collaborative undertaking initiated by the Mt. Lykaion Excavation and Survey Project that encourages management of the area’s natural, cultural, and scenic resources for both long-term vitality and preservation as an essential part of local livelihoods and traditions.

Twelve students, Greek and US, participated in the two-week Fifth Parrhasian Heritage Park Field School. The students come from different disciplines: archaeology, anthropology, architecture, classical studies, cultural heritage, geology, and engineering. They developed skills in landscape architecture, trail blazing, trail mapping, and sign design, erecting 13 trailhead and directional signs, meeting with village leaders, and drawing a crowd of 35 to a community meeting they organized on the western side of the Park to report on the work underway. Romano is pleased with the project’s impact so far: “The students benefit from learning practical skills in the environment of the Park, and the community benefits by means of a demonstrable plan for the protection of their cultural heritage and a careful plan to encourage responsible tourism in the area of their villages.”

AMERICAN SCHOOL AFFILIATED EXCAVATIONS AND SURVEYS ACROSS GREECE



INCLUDES PAST AND PRESENT SITES. [SITES HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS NEWSLETTER IN RED.]