

End of Academic Year News Letter – Summer 2022

C-19, Site and Museum Updates, two *FANTASTIC Teacher Guest Blogs* and the usual miscellaneous collection of Classics News from around the world!

Greetings!

Should you still be in harness, take succour from this wonderful photo from the steps of a favourite Hotel in Tolo.



Courtesy of Mr Hornshaw, Runnymede School

For those planning Classics Trips in the new Academic Year and concerned about the re imposition of C-19 restrictions, be reassured that the European Council has approved rules allowing the extension to June 2023 of the EU Digital Covid Certificate, serving as proof of vaccination, negative test result or recovery within the past six months.

The Greek Health Minister declared that from Autumn onward, they will proceed with the logic of “coexistence with the coronavirus” . Having lifted the mandate for Whispering Guide Headsets for Guiding during the Summer months, this may be re-introduced in September, but there will be no lockdowns.



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Face masks will still be required on all means of public transport (buses, trolleys, metro, tram and suburban railway trains), in hospitals, health clinics and care facilities for the elderly – so that means also still on coaches. A small imposition. Further, Tourists who get infected with the COVID-19 disease while being in Greece will not be required to go into quarantine.

Italy has yet to declare their position, but over the past nearly three years, Greece *has* been leading the way with Guidelines and Regulations!

Site Entrance Updates remain unchanged in Greece (50% Entrance with Official School Letter, but you may be waved through) but continue to alter in Italy.....

Some Ticket Franchise Contracts in Italy have expired and are currently being renegotiated *although 'the existing entity (CoopCulture) is continuing to offer tickets, but only on a very short-term basis in case another entity is awarded the new contract and takes over the ticket management'*, as reported by Romewise - The Latest News from Rome This July..



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i - There is no longer provision for non-EU schools to prebook a time slot for Pompeii, Oplontis and Herculaneum, so schools simply arrive and queue. However, with Official School Letter Teachers only pay in situ with pupils free of charge.

ii - Currently Whispering Guide Headsets (through which you communicate to your pupils) are mandatory for Colosseo but have been lifted for Pompeii and Naples Archaeological Museum (unless you book an Official Guide). We can only hope other venues such as Oplontis and Boscoreale soon follow suite.

Providing queuing chaos does not ensue and Booking Fee rules reinstated, yes, many schools are due refunds.

iii - still no firm news on Solfatara

iv - Picina Mirabilis now charges, no more voluntary donations

v - Ostia Antiqua on Site café remains closed, but we can always make alternative arrangements if you don't fancy on site vending machines

vi - no longer can one take the interior short cut from Vatican Museums via Sistine Chapel to the Basilica. One must now exit, walk to Piazza San Pietro and again queue to enter at the Basilica.

GUEST BLOGS - We are delighted to offer **two** fascinating and uplifting reads by Teachers very generous of their time!

Mr. P Seaman of Queensmead School writes about introducing Class Civ A' Level into a NW London comprehensive state school 'with a fair degree of trepidation'.

[See Addendum A](#)



Mrs C. Jukes of La Sainte Union School waxes positively lyrical about her (very recent) experience excavating on **Despotico** as part of her MA at Birkbeck.

[See Addendum B](#)



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We hope both you and your pupils enjoy and are inspired by these positively uplifting offerings. Thank you both.

What else is Happening in the Classical World?

The Met Exhibition is causing a big stir with fabulous photographs for use in the Classroom -

i - Excellent Twitter thread by Chapps

"I had the honor to be invited to the reception for 'Chroma' at the #MetMuseum by Dr. Ulrike Koch-Brinkmann, of the @Liebieghaus. She and her husband, Vinzenz, have led the study of ancient #polychromy for decades and are responsible for the Gods in Color Exhibition".

ii - Met Exhibition Brings Back the Color to Ancient Sculptures

iii - The Modern Invention of White Antique Marble (video). The Metropolitan Museum of Art

iv - See the Vibrant, Long-Overlooked Colors of Classical Sculptures. A new exhibition at the Met features brightly hued reconstructions of ancient Greco-Roman artworks.



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On a similarly polychromatic note, following the publication of a newly-discovered Athenian ephebic list in the holdings of the National Museums Scotland on the Attic Inscriptions Online website, we are able to announce news of research into three further Greek inscriptions in the same collection. Together they offer insights into the use of paint on Greek funerary monuments, the use of the Greek language, and interplay of cultures in Egypt during the Hellenistic and Christian eras

For a really bonkers polychromatic fix, this one-of-a-kind chess set which took 10 years to make could be yours for \$1.9 Million. Inspired by the Battle of Issus, it features 14-karat gold *moving* pieces with semiprecious stones!



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GREECE - Addendum C - Dodona, Argos, Diolchos, Evvia, Volos and Herakles' Head from Antikythera wreck



ITALY - Addendum D - Caracalla Thermae Frescos, Appian Way, Montecalvario Etruscan Tombs, Pietravairano, House of Ceres & Maiuri, Alba Fucens.



UK - Addendum E - Clore Learning Centre, Hadrian's Wall, Wales, Epheboi list in Scotland, Peplos Ergastinai inscription in Petworth House, the Newt Roman Villa Experience.



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FRANCE, LUXEMBURG, SWITZERLAND, BULGARIA, TURKEY - [Addendum F](#)



A miscellany of RESOURCES and TEACHING MATERIALS - [Addendum G](#)

Where not to die in Rome, Conflict in Antigone, 'There were no Celts, just sociable sailors', 'The Authoress of the Odyssey', Seneca, Roman copies of Praxitiles, Greek Bronzes, practising Linear B.



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If you've not yet decided upon your **SUMMER HOLIDAY PLANS** perhaps you should consider experimenting with **Roman Cuisine with Working Classicists**.



Eating Rome has lots of exciting menus -

i - Moretum ii - Apicius' Sauce for Lobster Tails iii - Hypotrimma

If you are lucky enough to be in Greece do consider -

i - Diving the Peristera, a huge Greek vessel carrying more than 4,000 wine amphorae, the giant two-handled jugs used to carry the drink, sank off the Sporades island of Alonissos in 425 BC can now be visited, if you've the skills and permits

ii - Taking advantage not only of the Epidavros Festival but also other Cultural Events at Greece's many Archaeological Sites

iii - Nipping down to Olympia to see the replica Chryselaphantine Statue of Zeus on display at the Kotsanas Museum of Ancient Greek Technology until September



Whilst we would simply LOVE to be with author and re-enactor Chris Cameron at the immersive re-enaction of Plataea from 25-31 July 2022 organised the local community, Ephorate of Antiquities and 'Hoplologia' but we are more than likely going to in the Office planning for Autumn Term School Trips!



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Nevertheless, whilst Italy plans a marathon of events to celebrate 50th anniversary of the discovery of the Riace Bronzes, August 16, 1972 – we can at least take comfort in the fact that we celebrate one of them daily at very close quarters!



However you plan to spend the Summer recharging your batteries – ENJOY – and Good Luck with Exam Results!

Very Best Wishes,

Sarah, John and the Hellene Team



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Addendum A

About 7 years ago we introduced Classical Civilisation A Level into our comprehensive state school in North West London. It was with a fair degree of trepidation that we started the course, and with only three students in the first year there was a great fear that this would be a short-lived experiment that would be a passing odd-ball footnote. Now we are undertaking our third trip with Hellene Travel and have fully indoctrinated our GCSE and A Level students in the wonders of the ancient world. We have taken on pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and converted them from the evils of STEM subjects to the true light. We regularly outnumber English Literature in terms of takeup and have sent students to study Ancient History and Classics across the country; a few have even expressed an interest in teaching the subject after finishing at university. This is, I hope, one of many good signs that the subject remains as strong as ever.

Phil Seaman

Head of Year Twelve

Teacher of Classics and History

Queensmead School



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Addendum B

Happiness and Glory: Digging in Despotiko Mrs C. Jukes of La Sainte Union School

A tiny, uninhabited, Cycladic Island called Despotiko, where an archaic Greek Sanctuary to Apollo and Artemis is being painstakingly revealed by a team of Archaeologists and student volunteers from Brazil to Britain was once as renowned in antiquity as Delos and almost as wealthy.



While Byron may have etched his name in the sea god's sanctuary at Sounion, modern Hellenophiles are every bit as keen to make their mark on Despotiko, unpicking the secrets of its past and restoring the sanctuary to its Archaic splendour.

Surrounded by the Aegean, the white marble of the reconstructed porch glinting in the sunlight, the shrine is a sight to rival the Temple of Poseidon.

Historians believe the site, part of the ancient polis of Paros, was sacked by an Athenian force under Miltiades in around 480 BC in revenge for Paros's pro-Persian stance in the wars but perhaps also to cut down to size a polis that was growing too quickly in wealth and power. There are signs of habitation from the Cycladic era, around 3,000 BC, and on and off until it was abandoned in the 17th century because of sustained pirate attacks. The excavation focus is the zenith of the sanctuary's power in the Archaic period when it is believed to have rivalled Delos in scope and wealth.





Pillars from the Temple porch showing ancient and modern marble



Rebuilt Temple porch, ancient Parian marble supplemented with modern Naxian marble as Parian Marble has been exhausted



Brazilian students scrubbing pottery



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Lead Archaeologist Yannis Kourayos, who has devoted more than 20 years to excavating Despotiko, believes the island acted as a staging post, selling water to passing ships as well as a site for votive offerings for a safe journey home. To date 89 pieces of statues have been found, finely carved in the distinctive local Parian marble, and the bases for 35 statues have also been discovered, suggesting the magnitude of the site while pottery fragments attest devotion to Apollo.

Unique features include a semi-circular altar and a complex system of water cisterns which could have contained as much as 220 metric tonnes of water, particularly surprising on an island that has wells but no springs.

Water played a key, but yet to be fully determined role in the religious life of the sanctuary and one of the highlights of my expedition there was clawing clay from a recently discovered marble perirhanterion, a small pillar with a hollowed-out basin at the top, like the holy water stoups inside the doors of Catholic Churches.

The absence of literary or epigraphical references to the Despotiko shrine gives the archaeological evidence an enhanced significance, complementing the mentions of the island itself in Strabo and Pliny under its ancient name of Prepesinthus.

Fortunately, while most excavators count themselves lucky to find anything at all in a day's digging, Despotiko yields constant discoveries: shards of pottery, whole pots in situ or marble pieces of statues and stoups for lustral water. The day after my group left, the second London group found sack loads of pottery, a black-glazed crater, bones, seashells, a nail, and a bronze fishhook.



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Inscription on an altar to Hestia

This was my first experience of Archaeology, something I have waited since age six to try, and I could not have had a more fascinating, exhausting and life-affirming experience. If lockdown has taught us nothing else, it is *carpe diem*- grab every opportunity that comes your way because, as the Ancient Greeks were at pains to emphasise, we do not control what happens next nor can we foresee it.



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Old toothbrushes to clean even older pottery

Without Professor Christy Constantakopoulou as my tutor for my Classics MA, my yen for excavation might never have been satisfied, but as luck would have it – and it is notable how conscious Archaeologists seem to be of the part “luck” has played in their careers - she is a key member of the excavation team and inspires her Birkbeck students with a sense of the “happiness and glory” of the backbreaking, process of delving, quite literally, into the distant past.

Passion is an over-used word, not just in Personal Statements, but the archaeologists here, none of them native English speakers, use it unselfconsciously to describe their own feelings for a subject that enthralms them. Without it, Kourayos cautions, do not go into this field that will not bring wealth or security but only the tantalising possibility of piecing together the past.



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Luigi Lafasciano, Diakron Institute



Lead Archaeologist Yannis Kourayos and Professor Christy Constantakopoulou, Birkbeck

Luigi Lafasciano, another scholar who has fallen under the spell of Archaeology in general, and Despotiko in particular, explained how as a child he read and re-read the Sherlock Holmes stories, first in Italian then later, and indeed now, in English, revelling in the re-composition of puzzles by the master detective he describes as “part Sociopath, part sweetie”. It is a long way from Victorian Dartmoor and the Hound of the Baskervilles to a sun-baked Greek island but this childhood reading shaped his mind and his creative approach to History where material culture and anthropology blend to unpack the past.

“It’s the process that rewards me. Finding a wall or an archaic pot fragment is exciting. It doesn’t have to be a kouros or a pillar. Archaeology is a point of view: exerting yourself physically, with your mind always awake, prepared to change course and interpretation depending on what you find.”

The archaeologists dream of sharing this site with the world and Lafasciano runs NGO The Diakron Institute to promote experiential learning, bridging the gap between research and education; he was responsible for bringing this year’s Brazilian students to dig in the sun, test their resilience and participate in the debates that surround every find.



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Despotiko offers a unique sense of straddling the centuries and that is due in part to the timeless practice of goat-herding by a local farmer, Petros, with whom the site is shared for now. His goats trot and gambol down the hill at 9.15 each morning and, barring the odd escape, are generally separated from the excavations by a fence but when the serious excavation began more than 20 years things were rather different: “it’s easy now, at that time we had the goats inside,” Kourayos says.



*The Goats of Despotiko - photo credit Angela Poulter
(used with permission)*

Petros’s family run a popular restaurant on Antiparos and once he no longer wants to be a goatherd, in 10 years or so, the whole site will be given over to excavation; only its name, Mandra, will be left as a reminder that this sanctuary was once used as an animal pen. Ambitious plans aim to bring boats of visitors from across the Greek Islands, mirroring the steady boat traffic of the past. There will be a visitor centre and ticket office at Aghios Georgios, by the landing stage that takes visitors the 700 metres across to Despotiko and Apollo’s second home in the Cyclades will once again be big business.

To finish reconstructing the Temple, around a million euros will be needed and entrance fees will eventually fund that and pay for security-at the moment this is the only Greek Archaeological site I have visited where there is no charge.



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Like the North wind at harvest-time tossing about the fields a ball of thistles... Odyssey 5, (Odysseus's boat)

Wealth and more tourists lie in Antiparos's future, to supplement the influx of celebrities that includes Ryan Gosling, Matthew McConaughey, and everyone's favourite Tom Hanks. But in the meantime, if you are looking for somewhere that you can imagine Odysseus and his crew landing, where you can see Greek Donkey Thistles that highlight the power of that simile in Book 5 where Odysseus' boat is a plant with, as one of my students described it, an inbuilt defence system, at the mercy of the winds, take yourself off to the Cyclades. Fly to Athens, sail to Paros and Antiparos or take a short hop flight to Paros and the ferry or fly to Mykonos and make your Odyssey from there.

The journey is long and part of the pleasure, a mental preparation for something entirely new yet as old as time or at any rate 3,000 years BC. Aquamarine waters, blistering sun, cool breezes and the luminous marble of the Temple await and, a word of warning, some very hungry mosquitoes. Go before the goats and Pedro are gone, they are a living part of the island's past, a connection to how life was once lived.



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The boat journey back to Despotiko



The Goats of Despotiko - photo credit Angela Poulter (used with permission)

Despotiko Interview: <https://www.greeknewsagenda.gr/interviews/innovative-greece-2/7032-despotiko>

Further reading: Despotiko, a Journey in Time, by Yannis Kourayos

Links <https://www.diakron.org>



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Addendum C - GREECE

Athens and environs

- i - [Akadimia Platonos](#) revamp gets green light
- ii - Many bronze tablets inscribed with [financial transactions between institutions of Argos](#) to be displayed at [Epigraphic Museum](#) Athens. Found in pottery jars/stone cases covered with stone slabs in a private pit, originally housed at Treasury of Temenos of Pallas Athena

Elsewhere

- i - A visit to [Argos](#) & a plethora of nearby Sites - the Pyramid of Elliniko, Mycenae, Heraion, Midea - Dendra, Tiryns, Epidauros.....:
 - ii - Unsolvably Megalithic Mystery of ancient Greek "Dragon Houses" - [Drago Spitiiko of Evvia/Euboea](#) [fabulous area]
 - iii - A tour of [Mycenae](#) - It's All Greek To Me
 - iv - Restored ancient theatre of [Dodona](#) opened to the public
 - v - Scientists announced on Sunday they have discovered what they believe is the marble head of Hercules, human teeth, and a trove of other artifacts related to the [Antikythera shipwreck](#)
 - vi - The [Diolchos](#) is being renovated at long last!
- [How The Ancient Greeks Transported 20 Ton War Ships Over Dry Land](#)
- vii - [Volos Archaeological Museum](#) Displays Ancient Greek Treasures

Addendum D - ITALY

Rome

- i - [Frescoes](#) from the time of Hadrian unveiled at the [Baths of Caracalla](#)
- ii - Rome is to launch the city's first [Virtual Reality Bus](#), an immersive 3D experience which brings to life the central archaeological area of the capital
- iii - A new museum for trafficked ancient artifacts [The Museum of Rescued Art](#) has opened in the Octagonal Hall, Baths of Diocletian.
- iv - What Happened to the Missing Half of the [Roman Colosseum](#)?

Elsewhere

- i - Nina Willburger on Twitter: "For #AncientSiteSunday an impressive site on my bucket list: [Il Teatro Tempio Monte San Nicola](#) - a theatre-temple complex at Pietravairano, 60 km north of Naples. The sanctuary complex was built in the 2nd/1st c. BC
- ii - [Pompeii's House of Ceres and Maiuri](#) house has reopened after restoration of its decorations, mosaic flooring, and garden with its fields of grains of various types connected with the worship of Ceres
- iii - Revisiting the [Etruscan Tomb of Montecalvario](#)
- iv - [ALBA FUCENS](#) - A SMALL COLOSSEUM IN THE ABRUZZI
- v - The [Appian Way](#) is being restored (?) in the hope of creating create a pilgrimage route



Addendum E - UK

- i - Stonehenge's Bluestone Tracks Discovered Beneath Roman Road
- ii - Romans ventured deeper into Wales than thought, road discovery shows | Roman Britain
- iii - Eight books to read to celebrate the 1900th anniversary of Hadrian's Wall
- iv - The extraordinary tale of Hadrian's Wall: ['Men have been deified for trifles compared with this admirable structure'](#)
- vi - How to build a Roman villa in the Somerset countryside
- vi - Epheboi 'graduate school yearbook' discovered on stone
- vii - New Clore Learning Centre at the Roman Baths now taking bookings
- viii - James H on Twitter: "An inscribed decree honouring women who worked on the robe (peplos) for Athena. From Athens, dated to 108-107 BC, now at Petworth House"

Addendum F - FRANCE, LUXEMBURG, SWITZERLAND, BULGARIA, TURKEY

- i - Guide to the Roman Luxembourg: 30 Sites to Visit - Time Travel Rome
- ii - The Incredible Roman Ruins Of Switzerland
- iii - Obelisk of Theodosius
- iv - [Reconstruction of Constantinople](#): From 4th to 13th Century AD
- v - Exhibition Rome, the City and the Empire at Louvre in Lens
- iv - [Euromos](#): Restoration of the Temple of Zeus
- v - Unveiling of Thracian burial mound at Sveshtari, after its renovation



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Addendum G - A miscellany of RESOURCES and TEACHING MATERIALS

- i - What were bad neighborhoods in Ancient Rome like?
- ii - Forms of Conflict in Sophocles' Antigone: Part I & Part II
- iii - Digital Collections. BSR
- iv - New edition of Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania 2021
- v - How to make your own Linear B tablet / πως να φτιάξετε τη δική σας πινακίδα σε Γραμμική Β
- vi - Aegean scripts in the digital age: practising Linear B
- vii - Correcting Nonsense about the Ancient Greco-Roman Past
- viii - A short note on Roman copies from Praxitelean sculptures
- ix - Artistry in Bronze
- x - 'There were no Celts' says Guardian columnist Simon Jenkins in new book, "there were no Celts, just sociable sailors" but it became politically advantageous for the Welsh, Irish and Scots to say that they had a political identity in common
- xi - Why Do We Need New Translations of Ancient Texts? Ines Choi
- xii - Classically Inclined. Liz Gloyn returns! Seneca, Classical Civilization A-level Love & Relationships topic, Mythical Momnsters 'A Colonialist Trick of the Eye: Valerius Maximus' Memorable Deeds and Sayings as a Tool of Imperial Education' for A Handbook of Classics and Postcolonial Theory
- xiii - How was an Ancient posthumous Olympics winner crowned? One of the prerequisites for winning the Olympics is to be alive, but that didn't always happen
- xiii - Homer Beyond Ideology: on Samuel Butler's 'The Authoress of the Odyssey':
"...a diabolically wrought revenge on the very epitome of maleness... all done within the tradition of Western literature, in the most nuanced literary way, with nary a nod to deadening ideology or punitive pieties."

