Excavating in the Aegean
Despotiko Field School (Paros, Antiparos)

Dr. Alexandra Alexandridou

26 June – 22 July 2023

CYA summer course ARCX 321 Excavating in the Aegean: The Despotiko Field School (Paros, Antiparos) aims at introducing students to archaeological fieldwork theory and methods through active participation in the systematic excavation of one of the most important sites in the Cyclades at the centre of the Aegean.

Despotiko is today an uninhabited islet, west of Antiparos and east of Siphnos. A shallow, naturally protected bay is formed between Despotiko and Antiparos, bordered by the islet of Tsimintiri from the north. Since 2001, the systematic excavation at the site of “Mandra”, occupying the islet’s largest and most fertile peninsula, revealed an extended establishment. More than 22 buildings have come to light so far with a temenos dedicated to Apollo forming the site’s core.
The course will provide students the opportunity to uncover more part of the site’s long history extending from the Early Iron Age (9th c. BC) to the end of the Classical period (4th c. BC).

The excavation season of 2023 will focus on different parts of the site where architectural remains have been already uncovered. These include the area of a large cistern a few meters south of the sacred precinct, and the area of the East complex, where a complex of buildings operated during the 6th and 5th centuries BC. Moreover, at least a week will be dedicated to the exploration of the remains on the islet of Tsimintiri, where it seems that buildings of public character were founded in the 7th c. BC.

The first three weeks, the students will work at the site on Despotiko, where they will familiarize themselves with the entire excavation procedure. They will be taught the basic methods of stratigraphical excavation, the onsite documentation, and processing of the finds. The work at the site will be combined with several activities in the afternoon, including the detailed recording of the activities at the site, the preparation of architectural plans and more importantly of the excavation diary.

The last week of the course will be spent on the island of Paros and the town of, where the Archaeological Museum of Paros. At the museum’s storage rooms, the students will be trained at the detailed processing of the objects discovered during the previous weeks at the site. They will learn how
to clean, sort, catalogue, draw and photograph the material. They will therefore become acquainted with the process, which enables the detailed study, interpretation and publication of the excavated material.

Morning work at the museum will be combined with afternoon classes, focusing on the nature of the various objects coming from the site with a special focus on the clay vases, clay figurines and other clay or metal finds. Students will be provided with supplementary information on the examined material with our discussions adapted to the nature of the finds processed at the museum.

During these four weeks, students will have the opportunity to meet and discuss with experts from all over the world, who are members of the excavation’s research team, including archaeologists, architects, photographers, geologists, conservators.

Moreover, a series of lectures will be given on issues concerning archaeological theory and methods, the various types of archaeological evidence, focusing on the material from Despotiko, ancient religious practices and rituals, the birth and development of Greek sanctuaries, in particularly those in the Cyclades. These lectures aim at enabling students to fully comprehend the purposes of a systematic excavation and to place the site and its material culture into its theoretical context.

The final exam, scheduled for the last day, aims at testing the knowledge gained by students throughout the experience on Despotiko and Paros, as well as from the bibliography studied during the same period of time.
REQUIREMENTS

Antiparos-Despotiko

Participation at the excavation (50%)
The disciplined, enthusiastic participation in the excavation is a basic parameter for the successful completion of the course. The everyday on-time attendance and the respect of the schedule rules set by the director of the excavation are required. Each student will serve as a trench-master for a number of days, being responsible for the excavation diary and the everyday recording of the finds. The careful reading of the assignments and the afternoon classes will provide the basis for this responsibility.

Class participation (25%) The attendance of the afternoon classes is compulsory. The study of the suggested bibliography and the active participation of the students will contribute substantially toward the final grade.

Final Exam (25%) A two-hour written exam is based on the three-week excavation experience at the site of Despotiko, the study week at the museum of Paros and the material provided during the course.
COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

26 June – 2 July 2023

Introduction to Archaeological Methods

M. June 26
13.30 Students’ arrival at the port of Antiparos
15.00 Transfer to the hotel
18.30 Orientation
20.00 Welcome Dinner

T. June 27
07.30-14.30 On-site Excavation
15.00 Lunch
19.00 Lecture: Discovering Despotiko
   Introduction to documentation of the excavation

W. June 28
07.30-14.30 On-site Excavation
15.00 Lunch
19.00 Lecture: Theoretical approaches to Classical Archaeology
   [Renfrew & Bahn: Introduction & Chapter 1; Haggis & Antonaccio 2015]
   Preparation of the Excavation Diary

T. June 29
07.30-14.30 On-site Excavation
15.00 Lunch
19.00 Lecture: Archaeological Project Development & Excavation Methods
   [Renfrew & Bahn: Chapter 3]
   Preparation of the Excavation Diary

F. June 30
07.30-14.30 On-site Excavation
15.00 Lunch
19.00 Lecture: Processing, Classification and Recording, Artefact Categories
   [Renfrew & Bahn: Chapter 2]
   Preparation of the Excavation Diary

S. July 1
Free Day
Optional study trip to the sanctuaries on the island of Naxos
## WEEK 2
3 – 9 July 2023

**Greek Sanctuaries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. July 3</td>
<td>07.30-14.30</td>
<td>On-site Excavation</td>
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<td>15.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> <em>Chronology and Periodization</em></td>
<td><em>[Renfrew &amp; Bahn: Chapter 4]</em></td>
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<td>Preparation of the Excavation Diary</td>
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<td>07.30-14.30</td>
<td>On-site Excavation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> <em>Introduction to Greek Sanctuaries</em></td>
<td><em>[Pedley Chapters IV-VI]</em></td>
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<td>Preparation of the Excavation Diary</td>
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<td>07.30-14.30</td>
<td>On-site Excavation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> <em>Birth of Greek Sanctuaries &amp; Ritual Dining</em></td>
<td><em>[Pedley Chapter VII]</em></td>
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<td>Preparation of the Excavation Diary</td>
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<td>07.30-14.30</td>
<td>On-site Excavation</td>
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<td>15.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> <em>Ritual Practices &amp; Sacrifice</em></td>
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<td>F. July 7</td>
<td>07.30-14.30</td>
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<td>15.00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture:</strong> <em>Votive Dedications</em></td>
<td><em>[Pedley Chapter VII]</em></td>
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<td>S. July 8</td>
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<td>Optional study trip to the island of Delos</td>
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WEEK 3

10 – 16 July 2023

The Sanctuaries of the Cyclades

M. July 10  07.30-14.30  On-site Excavation
            15.00          Lunch
            19.00         **Lecture: The Geology of Despotiko, Antiparos & Paros**
                            (Professor Erich Draganits)
            Preparation of the Excavation Diary

T. July 11  07.30-14.30  On-site Excavation
            15.00          Lunch
            19.00         **Lecture: The Sanctuaries of the Cyclades: Paros**
                            Preparation of the Excavation Diary

W. July 12  07.30-14.30  On-site Excavation
            15.00          Lunch
            19.00         **Lecture: The Sanctuaries of the Cyclades: Naxos**
                            Preparation of the Excavation Diary

T. July 13  07.30-14.30  On-site Excavation
            15.00          Lunch
            19.00         **Lecture: The Sanctuaries of the Cyclades: Delos**
                            Preparation of the Excavation Diary

F. July 14  07.30-14.30  On-site Excavation
            15.00          Lunch
            19.00         **Lecture: The Sanctuaries of the Cyclades: Siphnos, Kythnos**

S. July 15  Free Day

S. July 16  09.00-10.00  Check out from Zombos Hotel
                            Transfer to the Port of Antiparos – Ferry to Paros –
                            Bus to Paroikia
            14:00         Check in Hotel Aegean Village Paros
## WEEK 4

### 17 – 22 July 2023

*Archaeological Museum of Paros*

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<td>M. July 17</td>
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<td>14.45</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture: Introduction to Cycladic ceramics</strong></td>
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<td>T. July 18</td>
<td>08.30-14.30</td>
<td>Material Processing</td>
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<td>14.45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture: Shapes &amp; Uses, Typologies &amp; Utilities</strong></td>
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<td>W. July 19</td>
<td>08.30-14.30</td>
<td>Material Processing</td>
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<td>14.45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture: Pots &amp; Images</strong></td>
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<td>T. July 20</td>
<td>08.30-14.30</td>
<td>Material Processing</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>19.00</td>
<td><strong>Lecture: Clay Figurines &amp; various Clay Objects</strong></td>
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<td>F. July 21</td>
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<td>18.00</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam</strong></td>
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S. July 22

END OF PROGRAM
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Despotiko


Archaeology & Methods


Sanctuaries

Sanctuaries & Cults in the Cyclades: http://cs.ha.uth.gr

Greek Pottery

MAPS

1. The Mediterranean (after Lemos & Kotsonas 2020, Map 1)
2. The Cyclades (after Lemos & Kotsonas 2020, Map 13)

Basic Greek Chronology

- Geometric
- Archaic
- Classical

Time periods:
- 900 BC
- 800 BC
- 700 BC
- 600 BC
- 500 BC
- 400 BC
- 300 BC

Stylistic periods:
- Proto-Corinthian
- Ripe Corinthian
- Proto-Attic
- Black-figure
- Red-figure

Important dates:
- 480 BC
- 323 BC