

# Kythera archaeologist: Ancient secrets of Kythera revealed

Archaeologist Aris Tsaravopoulos presents findings on interstate tour



In June Aris Tsaravopoulos visited Australia to give a series of presentations. Aris has spent two decades investigating the archaeology of Kythera and Antikythera, under the auspices of 26th Ephorate of Classical and Prehistoric Antiquities, Ministry of

Culture and Tourism, Greece.

Mr Tsaravopoulos' lecture tour reveals his ground-breaking work at the ancient fortified city on Antikythera and recent finds at the Kastro site, as well as presenting the latest interpretations on the Laconian (Spartan) influence on Kythera, as evidenced by new discoveries of deities' sanctuaries on the islands.

Aris arrived in Australia on the 27th May, in time to attend the 93rd Annual Kytherian Debutante Ball. Aris was amazed at the size and the level of cohesion of the Kytherian-Australians in Sydney, as well as the manner in which they had maintained the Kytherian traditions and culture.

Sponsored by the Kytherian Association of Australia, and the Nicholas Anthony Aroney Trust, Aris Australian odyssey began in Brisbane on Wednesday 3rd June, where he presented the results of his research at the Greek Club in Edmonstone Street. The lecture was attended by 50 people, who were also treated to a lecture on Kytherian genealogy by Kalie Zervos and Amalia Samios on the night. Melina Mallos' new children's book *Catch that Cat*, was also offered for sale for the first time in Australia, during the course of the evening. (See the advertisement for the book in this Newsletter).

On Thursday 4th June Professor Alastair Blanchard, professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Queensland, and James Donaldson, Senior Museum Officer at the RD Milns Antiquities Museum, at the University of Queensland, hosted Aris and George Poulos



to a luncheon, and a preview of the upcoming Cyprus Exhibition in the Antiquities Museum. This superb exhibition is a 'must see', for Greek-Australians in Brisbane, and surrounding areas.

From there Aris and George drove to the northern NSW Greek cultural outpost of Bingara to visit the Roxy 'complex' and the award-winning Roxy Museum. (See details about the Roxy's Museums Australia award, in this Newsletter). Aris presented a lecture on 'A Persian naval base, a pirates' lair, the "Antikythera shipwreck" and its treasures', in the Conference Room of the 'Roxy complex'. Aris also enjoyed a visit to the significant cattle property 'Gunnee', and to the Myall Creek Massacre Memorial site, near Delungra. Both were a revelation to him.

On June 7 the Tsaravopoulos show rolled on to Dubbo, where Aris presented in the Church Hall of Panayia Myrtidiotissa, in Gipps Street, during a luncheon attended by about 40 people. Peter Skordalis (Chairman of the Greek Community) prepared an extremely tasty 'arni sti





souvla' to serve with the main course. Other Committee members, Kerryann George, and Ourania Panaretos, also helped with organising the event, and the Panaretos family accommodated Aris and George during their stay. Many thanks also to the RSL Club of Dubbo, who provided a projector and screen, for the event, free of charge. A days outing to Dubbo Zoo on June 8th was another highlight of Aris' tour.

On the way home from Dubbo, the sojourners stopped at Bathurst to lunch with Professor George Kanarakis, in Bathurst, and visited the 'Three Sisters', and the 'Paragon Café', at Katoomba.

On June 15, the Aegean Room at the Hellenic Club in Canberra was the venue for Aris presentation - 'Antikythera - Aegila: A Persian naval base and pirates' lair, the Antikythera shipwreck in the vortex of the Roman-Cretan



war'. The event was sponsored by the Australian National University (ANU), Friends of the Australian Archaeological Institute of Athens, and Kytherian Brotherhood of Canberra & District. Professor Elizabeth Minchin, Professor of Classics at the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences proved to be a superb host. The Aegean Room was packed, with a very attentive and interested audience. ANU kindly accommodated Aris and George on campus.

Mr Tsaravopoulos' events in Victoria - taking in the same subject matter - were presented on June 18: the first at the Archaeology Department of La Trobe University (3.00 pm), followed by a 5.00 pm presentation at the Australian Institute of Archaeology in MacLeod. Professor David Frankel chaperoned, the visitors throughout the visit, and Professor Susan Lawrence kindly hosted a luncheon attended by a number of the academic staff.

Speaking to Neos Kosmos, Jennifer Webb, adjunct professor at La Trobe, said Mr Tsaravopoulos' presence in Australia

offered a unique opportunity to understand more about the history and archaeology of ancient Greece in the Hellenistic and Roman periods through major discoveries on Kythera and Antikythera.

"Aris Tsaravopoulos has worked for the Archaeological Service of the Greek Ministry of Culture for over 30 years and on the island of Kythera for the last 20 years and is best known for his important excavations at Kastro on Antikythera," said Dr Webb.

"La Trobe University and the Australia Institute of Archaeology were delighted to be hosting such a distinguished archaeologist."

On Saturday 20th June, Ari presented a lecture at Kythera House Rockdale. The title was 'Kythera & Antikythera: A historical perspective of the two islands uncovering many millennia of continuous habitation. An archaeologist's



viewpoint'. A packed audience was fascinated by the lecture, maintaining their interest for more than 2 hours. Much of the material presented was 'new knowledge' to most of the attendees.

On Monday 22nd June, the Archaeological Institute of Athens, Level 1, Madsen Building, at the University of Sydney, Camperdown, hosted the final presentation of the series. Aris returned to the topic of 'Antikythera - Aegilia: A Persian naval base and a pirates' lair; The 'Antikythera shipwreck' in the vortex of the Roman-Cretan war'. Aris spoke to another packed audience. Associate Professor Lesley Beaumont, provided a very moving 'thank you' speech at the end of the lecture, explaining that she had worked as a Ph.D student with Aris on the island of Chios, and had been encouraged by him to continue her studies on Chios. She acknowledged Aris' enthusiasm and generosity and his willingness to share his academic knowledge.

On the evening of Wednesday 24th June, the Kytherian Association of Australia Committee hosted a 'Farewell Dinner' for Ari at the "Nissaki Greek Taverna" restaurant, corner of Carr & Arden Streets, Coogee.

Very reluctantly, Aris Tsaravopoulos left Australia on Thursday 25th June. He has promised to return to renew acquaintances with his fellow Kytherians, and to impart additional archaeological knowledge to them, in the near future.