



MYCENAEAN FOUNDATION INC. (est. 1967)
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12.07.2015

Press Release
on the discovery of the throne of the palace at Mycenae

It is with surprise that I was informed today of the press release from the Ministry of Culture regarding our discovery of the stone throne of the Mycenaean palace at Mycenae during the excavations of Mycenae, under the auspices of the Athens Archaeological Society, in June 2014.

It is puzzling that the Ministry, though officially notified of the discovery with my report of 07.27.2015, decided to publicize the arbitrary and unfounded statement of the Archaeological Society that rejects, inexplicably and prematurely, the interpretation of the find as part of the throne.

What is even more puzzling is the attempt of the Archaeological Society and their Secretary General, Mr. B. Petrakos, to disdain such an important discovery by biasing the scientific publication of the find, with complete disregard for professional ethics. In my absence (as excavator and researcher) and without my knowledge, Mr. Petrakos formed a committee to “thoroughly examine” (within two hours) the very find that we have been studying for a whole year. The committee discredited our interpretation, without having any access to our study data, and determined impromptu that the find is merely a stone “basin.” Mr. Petrakos and his committee are hereby reminded that no “thorough” examination can be conducted within hours and without data.

In my letter to Mr. Petrakos (5.12.2015), I strongly protested that I was not notified about the committee, I was never invited to participate in it or present the find to the Board of the Society. I only learned about the ‘report’ of the committee when it was released to the press(!), although I have been researching and excavating under the auspices of the Athens Archaeological Society for fifteen years now. In fact, I had personally invited Mr. Petrakos (as well as other officials from the Ephorate and the Ministry) to Mycenae in August 2015 to present the find. The only response of Mr. Petrakos to my report and invitation was that “according to the by-laws of the Society, the first announcement of the finds of the Society’s excavations is made by himself during the annual public meeting of the Society every May,” which I accepted without reservation, in full compliance with professional ethics.

I must confess that, in my twenty years of academic experience, I know of no other case of a committee formed in the absence of the excavators and without their knowledge in



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order to evaluate their finds before their full professional publication. It is scandalous, in my opinion, that two colleagues accepted to participate, without my knowledge and in my absence, in a committee that clearly violates the study/publication rights of the excavator. The committee of the Society may view the throne as a “basin,” a bathtub, or a sink, or whatever else, if they so desire, but they must do this after our full publication of the find, in a professional manner with scientific arguments, and not *via* press releases.

The importance of an archaeological find is assessed by the international academic community on the basis of its scientific publication and in due time. No external committee may ever substitute the excavator/researcher, may preapprove or reject *a priori* the archaeological interpretation of a find before it is properly published, or may prevent its publication by disdaining the find in advance (practices that recall memories of a remote past). Petrakos’ letter does not “undermine Maggidis,” but every excavator/researcher who excavates with his team, discovers, studies and publishes methodically. Petrakos’ letter embarrass only himself and the participants in this parody.

I, therefore, call upon all the organizations involved to display self-control, professionalism and collegiality, to respect the code of professional ethics, and await patiently our full publication without making public statements prematurely and arbitrarily that may embarrass them irrevocably later on.

Finally, in the light of the recent unilateral actions of the Athens Archaeological Society at my expense, one can contextualize the unfounded, defamatory and derogatory statements of Mrs. A. Papadimitriou, Ephor of the Argolida Ephorate, against me. Although I have never given any interview or made any announcement about our discovery, even after it was publicized without my knowledge, Mrs Papadimitriou accused me in the press, in my absence, for allegedly “leaking” to the Greek press my formal report of the discovery, which had been previously addressed to five different administrative offices (27.7.2015). These defamatory accusations, for which she is now liable to criminal prosecution, target my moral character and professional status, and thus offend me personally and professionally. It appears that these defamatory accusations were only the prelude to the concerted attack that I now face: indeed, Mr. Petrakos adopts in his letter the same unfounded and defamatory accusation against me for “leaking” my own report to the press.



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As a college professor abroad who has educated and trained hundreds of young new scientists, as an archaeologist with a thirty-year-long field experience, as an academic with many publications, lectures, and papers worldwide, and as a recipient of honorary awards, distinctions and research grants, I feel that my abilities, professionalism, and ethics have already been assessed by colleagues of high esteem and experience.

We, my team and I, have been exploring, excavating, studying, and publishing in the citadel and Lower Town of Mycenae, as well as in the citadel of Glas, in the last fifteen years. All these years, we have been receiving external research funding of millions of dollars only from abroad, without any financial support whatsoever from the Greek State or the Athens Archaeological Society.

All these years I have been representing my homeland abroad with dignity and pride. Given my on-going professional projects and goals, I find that it is a waste of time and energy to argue for the self-evident or defend against pettiness that degrade such an important discovery to a “quarrel” between archaeologists.

In present times that Greece is plagued by a terrible and long financial, socio-political, and cultural crisis, the Greeks at home and abroad are inspired by the advancement of Greek civilization, arts and sciences.

The basic question, therefore, remains: why now, why this war at the expense of such an important find for Greece? Is this, perhaps, planned and intentional?

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