

## Preface of the editors

Laurion – the term has fascinated scientists of all kinds as well as interested laypeople for generations. Countless publications in the humanities and natural sciences have repeatedly invoked the cultural and historical significance of the Laurion as well as its exceptional position as one of the major resources of silver, lead and copper in the eastern Mediterranean since the Early Bronze Age.

With his seminal paper “a Dissertation on the Silver-Mines of Laurion” August Boeckh founded economic history as an independent branch of the historical sciences in 1815. In 1840 Karl Gustav Fiedler laid the foundations for the geological and mineralogical exploration of the Laurion. Today, 200 years after Boeckh, the flood of publications on the Laurion is hardly manageable. And while not all of the old questions have been resolved, new ones arise constantly and will keep the scientific disciplines busy for decades.

Despite numerous modern interventions and destructions of this largest and most important industrial area of ancient Greece, the Laurion forms a unique, world-class cultural and industrial-historical ensemble. At this point, we would like to congratulate the responsible authorities and all inhabitants of the Municipality of Lavreotiki on the great success that in May 2023 the Laurion was included in the list of UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Since scientific progress can only be achieved through transdisciplinary cooperation, the Laurion is also a field par excellence for the often difficult dialogue between the humanities and the natural sciences. At the same time, the disciplines involved have to do their homework. The editors can only speak here about the field of ancient studies, which has fallen behind in terms of documenting the material legacies of the Laurion as well as creating a considerable publication backlog. Although numerous sites have been excavated over the past sixty years (see: site catalogue in Nomicos, 2021) and made known in preliminary reports, final publications are in many cases still pending.

Experience has shown that scientific progress usually takes place in small steps – especially in the humanities and cultural sciences.

In this sense, Ari one of the smallest Attic mining districts was explored in an archaeological project funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, PI Hans Lohmann) from 2014–2016 in a synergasia between the Ephorate of East Attica (ΕΦΑΑΝΑΤ), the Ruhr University Bochum, and the German Archaeological Institute at Athens. The editors would like to take the opportunity to warmly thank Andreas Kapetanios, field director of the Ari-Project, for what has been a most fruitful collaboration not only in the field, but also along all steps of the process.

Ari is located in the north of the littoral embayment of Anavysos. In the Classical Period it belonged partly to the ancient deme of Anaphlystos, partly to the deme of

Phrearrhioi, from which its name apparently derived. The project focused on further clarifying the workflow of processing the silver-containing lead ores in transdisciplinary cooperation with natural scientists and processing specialists. Associated with the Ari-Project and pursuing similar goals is the evaluation of the excavations by Evangelos and Olga Kakavogiannis in the area of the Thorikos power station by Frank Hulek, who is most gratefully supported by Olga Kakavogianni. This project is ongoing and the results will be published as a monograph.

The research at Ari, which will be presented in full detail in a further supplement of “Der Anschnitt”, prompted the urgent desire to bring together natural scientists and humanities scholars interested in the Laurion at an international and interdisciplinary conference for an exchange of ideas in order to integrate the knowledge gained at Ari into a wider scientific framework. Thanks to the funding of travel and subsistence expenses by the German Research Foundation (DFG), an international conference on the subject of “Ari and the Laurion from Prehistoric to Modern Times” was realised in Bochum from November 1st to 3rd, 2019. Speakers from five European countries – Belgium, England, France, Germany and Greece – as well as one speaker from Australia presented new scientific findings on Laurion in 21 lectures. Eleven out of these papers are published here, while other papers are especially written for this volume, i.e. the contributions of Roald F. Docter, Sophie Duchène, Andreas Hauptmann, Andreas Kapetanios, Hans Lohmann and Sophia Nomicos. A third group will be published within the second volume devoted to the project at Ari. Numerous other scholars from home and abroad enriched the conference with lively discussions. The editors would like to express their deepest gratitude to all of them for their commitment. They would consider themselves lucky if the conference, in addition to an interim assessment, had provided a new and strong impetus for further research in the Laurion.

The conference started on October 31, 2019 with a tour through the newly re-opened mining archaeological collection of the German Mining Museum (Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum, DBM), which met with great interest from the participants. On November 1st the director of the Museum, Stefan Brüggerhoff, opened the conference with greetings, emphasising not only the close cooperation between the Ruhr University Bochum and the German Mining Museum (Leibniz-Research Museum for Georesources). He also stressed the successful interdisciplinarity of research between the Institute of Archaeological Sciences (RUB) and the research fields of Montan-Archaeology and Archaeometallurgy (DBM).

The conference was organised in English language. Abstracts of all lectures were distributed to the participants

and offered the possibility to download the institute's homepages. Topics addressed at the conference covered the entire range of research activities at Laurion, beginning from geoscience and materials science to history, archaeology and archaeometallurgy. It covered the long history of exploitation and dressing from prehistoric to modern times. The research in the mining area of Ari was thus only one focus of the conference among others.

The volume editors would like to thank all participants of the conference for their contributions and the timely submission of their papers. The board of directors of the Institute for Archaeological Studies at the Ruhr University Bochum kindly provided the institute's premises and the students thankfully supported the conference behind the scenes and during coffee breaks. It is particularly important to the editors to thank our research partner, the Ephorate of East-Attika (ΕΦΑΑΝΑΤ) under the directorship of Eleni Andrikou for their support of the research at Ari and their

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The volume editors Frank Hulek – Hans Lohmann – Sophia Nomicos – Andreas Hauptmann