THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS

LINKS TO THE PAST, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE
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Front cover: Peirene Fountain, Corinth.
Back cover: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, aerial view.
Inside spread: Stoa of Attalos, Athenian Agora.

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For more than a century the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (ASCSA) has been committed to education, archaeological research which includes the conservation and restoration of monuments, and to the general preservation of the Greek cultural heritage. It has also contributed considerably to the dissemination of information about history and archaeology to the Greek public, as well as to the international and Greek scholarly communities. Today the School has found a place for itself in Greece of the European Union.

Both European intellectual life and American culture have benefited greatly from the work of the American School. Several thousand students, professors, and professional archaeologists conduct research in the libraries of the American School each year. Some of them hold prestigious American School fellowships. Excavations sponsored by the School have greatly enriched our knowledge about the Greek past. Publications, lectures, and exhibitions share that knowledge with the broader academic and scholarly community. The presentation and development of archaeological sites excavated by the School, among them Ancient Corinth and the Athenian Agora, are permanent and valuable contributions to the Greek people and to the promotion of tourism in Greece. The construction of other museums and workrooms by the School and by cooperating American universities, all of which were later ceded to the Greek State, is also noteworthy. Most recently, with assistance from the European Community and the Mellon Foundation, staff of the School have implemented digitization and Internet development programs (accessible via http://www.ascsa.edu.gr) that will bring information from its rich libraries and archives into homes and offices on every continent. Finally, we should note that the Gennadius Library, one of the finest research facilities in the world, is available to Greek and international scholars, academics as well as members of the general public.
The American School of Classical Studies at Athens is an academic research and teaching institution established in 1881. Its mission is to promote the study of all aspects of Greek culture, including literature, history, and archaeology, both ancient and modern, and to carry out excavations and research in Greece, under the authority of the Archaeological Service of the Greek Ministry of Culture. The American School is a private institution, unaffiliated with the government of the United States, and is supported through income from its own endowment, grants from foundations, and contributions from its members and supporters. It is today one of the world’s leading research and teaching institutions dedicated to the advanced study of all aspects of Greek culture. At present it provides graduate students and scholars from some 180 affiliated North American colleges and universities with a base for research and study in Greece. It has nearly 85 employees in Greece and its campus occupies 10,000 square meters, most of this area in Kolonaki, the heart of Athens. Facilities are available to all scholars residing in Greece.

History and Development of the American School

In 1879 a group of American scholars, together with leading businessmen, met to express their common interest in the promotion of classical studies in North America. The vision of
these men came to fruition in 1881, when a committee of five members was appointed to pursue the establishment of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. The first statutory meeting of this committee was held in April 1882 to consider the mission of this School, with the collaboration and contribution of affiliated colleges and universities in the United States. In 1884, the Greek Prime Minister Charilaos Trikoupis offered the School land adjacent to a plot that had recently been presented to the British for a projected British School at Athens. Although some leaders of the American School thought that the site was rather “remote” from the center of Athens, all agreed that it “would command a magnificent view” of the Acropolis and its surroundings. In the end, the offer of land was accepted, the American School was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on March 23,
In the years since 1881, both the physical plant and the mission of the School have expanded well beyond the dreams of its founders. Already by the early years of the twentieth century, the original building did not suffice for the needs of its members; in particular, space for the research library of the School was inadequate. Work for the addition of a new wing to the original building began in 1913 and was completed by the summer of 1915.

Soon afterwards, Joannes Gennadius, a prominent Greek diplomat, scholar, and bibliophile, decided to donate his personal library and papers to the American School. For this expressed purpose a stately marble neoclassical building, the Gennadius Library, was built to the north of the original School grounds (across what is now Souidias Street) on the slopes of Mount Lycabettus. The government of Greece again helped the School with this project by expropriating land and donating it to the cause. Funding from the Carnegie Foundation made possible the construction of the new library and that of two adjacent residences, and the Gennadeion was dedicated in 1926 in pious memory of the founder’s father, George Gennadius (1786-1854). It is equally a memorial to Joannes Gennadius himself (1844-1932), and is a fitting symbol of his entire career.

Three years later, in 1929, a dedicated residence hall for students, Loring Hall, was built to the west of the Gennadius Library on land bought from the British School. After World War II the main School building continued to be expanded. In 1959 the Arthur Vining Davis Wing enlarged the Blegen Library and added a drafting room. A second new wing was added.
to the main library in 1991. In 1992, the Wiener Laboratory was established to support research in human osteology, zooarchaeology, geoarchaeology, and environmental archaeology. The original Gennadius Library was renovated in 1999 and additional space added underground. Soon after, an auditorium to serve the entire School community was constructed to the east wing of the Gennadius Library. Dedicated in January 2005, it was named Cotsen Hall after Lloyd E. Cotsen, its donor and President of the Board of Trustees of the School (1996-1999), and Chairman of the Board of the Gennadius Library (2001-2006).

Fig. 4. Construction of the Gennadius Library, ca. 1924.

Fig. 5. Loring Hall, ca. 1929.
The Blegen and Gennadius Libraries serve as important research tools for members of the American School, both students and academic professionals, members of the other foreign schools in Athens, staff of the Greek Archaeological Service, and the academic and scholarly community of Greece in general. Recently, the libraries of the American School established an electronic union catalogue with the library of the British School at Athens, so that their combined resources are easily discovered on the Internet (http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/ambrosia).

The Blegen Library of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens was founded in 1888 with a single reading room. In its greatly expanded facilities, the collection of the Blegen Library currently holds more than 90,000 volumes including nearly 700 periodical titles (current and defunct), forming a major research library on prehistoric and classical archaeology of the Mediterranean region, and classical languages, history, and culture. About 2000 readers of all nationalities use the library annually. The library is non-circulating, and all books must be consulted on the premises. Books in the Blegen Library are classified according to a system developed in 1903 by the director T. W. Heermance.

Joannes Gennadius’s collection, housed in the Gennadius Library, constitutes the richest private library of books about Greece in the world. As a collector of rare books and manuscripts, Gennadius saw Greece as a continuum from antiquity to the present, and the Library...
he founded still adheres to that vision. His intentions are best described in his own words: “to form a library that represents the creative genius of Greece at all periods, the influence of her arts and sciences upon the western world, and the impression created by her natural beauty upon the traveler.” The Gennadius Library is a treasure trove of books, manuscripts, archives, and works of art documenting the heritage of Hellenism since the end of antiquity. The core of the collection consists of Joannes Gennadius’s 26,000-book personal library.

The Gennadius Library is open to the scholarly public free of charge; sponsors public lectures, symposia, and seminars; provides scholarships to students and senior scholars; holds occasional exhibitions of its treasures; and supports scholarly publications. Today the gardens around the Gennadeion provide relief from the suffocating city center. Collections now in-

Fig. 7. Library, ca. 1902.
clude over 115,000 volumes and continue to increase rapidly. New acquisitions are classified according to the original system devised by Joannes Gennadius with some minor changes and additions to the original classification system in order to encompass a large number of new books and more current subject divisions such as the collection of children’s books. Now the Library serves almost 40 to 50 readers per day, and receives about 9,000 visits per year.

**Special Collections and Archives**

The archives of the American School consist of two repositories, separately housed but jointly administered by the Archivist — that of the Gennadius Library and that of the Blegen Library. With the establishment of the Gennadius Library in 1926, the first archival collection acquired was that
of the founder, Joannes Gennadius, and his father, George Gennadius. Ten years later the family of Heinrich Schliemann, the excavator of Troy and Mycenae, deposited his personal papers in the Gennadius Library. Originally on loan, the papers were purchased in 1962 thanks to a generous grant from the Eli Lilly Endowment. It was the first serious commitment of the American School towards the creation of an organized archival repository at the Gennadius Library. A short time later in 1963, the papers of the famous orchestra conductor Dimitris Mitropoulos were donated to the Library by his literary heirs. The archives of the Gennadius Library continued to grow in importance. In 1971 poet and Nobel laureate George Seferis stipulated in his will that all his manuscripts and papers should come to the Gennadius Library, a wish which was honored by his widow Maro Seferi. The Gennadius Library archives now contain many collections (such as the
papers of the Dragoumis Family and Stephanos Skouloudis) that contribute to an understanding of political developments from the 18th to the 20th century in Greece and the Balkans. They also include the papers of important Greek literary figures, including the papers of the Nobel prize-winning poet Odysseas Elytis, novelists Stratis Myrivilis and Angelos Terzakis, poet Kostas Varnalis, author Elias Petropoulos, and the diplomatic correspondence of Ali Pasha, Turkish viceroy of Epirus (1741-1822).

Fig. 11. Archives at the Gennadius Library.

Fig. 12. Score by Dimitris Mitropoulos, 1914.

Fig. 13. Heinrich Schliemann, ca. 1850-1860.
The archives in the Blegen Library comprise administrative records related to the function and mission of the American School, excavation records from American archaeological projects in Greece, and personal papers of American archaeologists and architects working in Greece, scholars such as Carl W. Blegen, Gorham P. Stevens, William B. Dinsmoor, and Homer A. Thompson. There are also extensive holdings of photographs from excavations in Greece during the early years of the American School. These include a rare collection of glass plates that document various ASCSA archaeological expeditions between 1880 and 1940 and record many monuments, objects, and topographical features no longer visible today. A second major photographic resource is the collection of the renowned archaeological photographer, Alison Frantz. Her images range in date from the late 1940’s to the early 1970’s, and focus mainly on Greek archeological sites, archaic and classical sculpture, and ancient architecture. Among many archaeological drawings is an extensive archive of
watercolors produced by Piet de Jong, the famed British illustrator who worked on many School excavations.

The antiquities collection of the American School is another one of its valuable resources. When American archaeologists first started coming to Greece in the 19th century they began gathering pottery sherds and other objects from sites they visited, both surface material and excavation finds offered by the excavators themselves. A large numismatic collection includes coins of all periods, from antiquity until medieval times. By the 1950’s this collecting practice was stopped when the importance of maintaining evidence *in situ* was realized and laws were passed to forbid the exchange and removal of antiquities from the areas in which they were found. By that time, the American School had a large body of artifacts from a plethora of ancient sites in Greece, as well as from Anatolia, Cyprus, and
Egypt. Most of the objects in the collection have secure proveniences. All are registered with the Directorate of Private Collections of the Ministry of Culture.

**Archaeological Excavations and Surveys**

The American School sponsors archaeological excavations at two of the most important sites of the Classical world. Since 1896 the School has been digging at Ancient Corinth, a large urban center in the northern Peloponnese with a long and illustrious history. This site continues to provide a training ground for new generations of archaeologists. Having attracted considerable American interest, a museum was built at Corinth in 1932 with an American donation, and was later presented to the Greek State. Its enlargement in 1950 was funded by the same donor. The School also maintains a research center and residences in Corinth for the benefit of scholars.

![Fig. 19. Small-scale statues of mythological figures from a 4th century A.D. house in the Panayia Field, Corinth.](image)
Fig. 20. Ancient Agora Excavations.

Fig. 21. Stoa of Attalos, ca. 1957.

Fig. 22. Excavations at Mitrou, Locris.

Fig. 23. Pottery from Azorias, Kavousi, Crete.
The excavations in Corinth have brought to light antiquities dating from the Neolithic period to the Ottoman age. In recent years, discovery and study of Hellenistic, Late Antique, Medieval, and Ottoman remains has been a major concern. Moreover, special emphasis has been placed on the study of ancient botanical and anthropological material with a view to reconstructing Corinth’s physical environment and population base over the centuries.

Corinth is among the ten most visited archaeological sites in Greece and together archaeology and cultural tourism are mainstays of the local economy. Recently the School has presented a proposal to enhance the site’s touristic facilities and this project, funded by the European Union, is nearing completion under the supervision of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Exceptional academic resources also make the Corinth Excavations a hub for archaeologists, natural scientists, and geologists who work in the broader region, while local offices of the Greek Archaeological Service also benefit directly from these facilities.

The excavations in the Ancient Agora of Athens represent another of the American School’s most important contributions to Greek archaeology. The greater part of the Ancient Agora has been uncovered with funds donated by the American School and its supporters, mainly the Rockefeller Foundation and the Packard Humanities Institute. The same funds...
helped in the reconstruction of the ancient Stoa of Attalos (1953-1956) and its conversion to the Agora Museum, as well as for the landscaping of the site — a total cost of approximately US $2,000,000 at the time.

Although the Agora excavations deal mainly with classical antiquity, the School recognizes that the history of Athens, along with its culture, continues to the present. Its interest and concern for the monuments of later Athens has been demonstrated in many ways, the most vivid of these being the reconstruction of the church of the Holy Apostles (1956), a little distance to the southwest of the Stoa of Attalos. In parallel with the excavations and restoration work, landscaping of the area was carried out for the establishment of the Agora archaeological park, which plays an important role in the life of modern Athens.

Apart from the excavations conducted at its own expense, the American School also cooperates in sponsoring important affiliated excavations and surface surveys conducted by North American institutions, under the direction of archaeologists associated with its member universities and colleges, and with the authorization of the Greek Archaeological Service. Affiliated projects of this sort include, among many others, excavations at Olynthos, Samothrace, Ayia Irini on Kea, Isthmia, the port of Kenchreai, the Palace of Nestor in Pylos, the Heraion in Argos, Sicyon, Nemea,
Lerna, the Franchthi Cave and Halieis (Porto Cheli), Halai, Eretria, Kommos, and Kastro near Kavousi and Mochlos on Crete, and surveys in northern Kea, in the southern Argolid, in eastern Crete, in the Nemea Valley, in the eastern Corinthia, in southern Epirus, and in the Pylos area. Recent fieldwork has been conducted on the islet of Mitrou in the Northern Euboean Gulf, at Azorias in eastern Crete, at Galatas in central Crete, at Mt. Lykaion in Arkadia, at Koutsongila and Kenchreai in the Corinthia, and at Korphos in the eastern Corinthia. Many of these projects have been jointly organized with Greek colleagues from the Ministry of Culture. The Institute for Aegean Prehistory Study Center for East Crete, which is affiliated with the School, provides services for many of its archaeological projects, as well as those sponsored by the Ministry of Culture.

**Archaeological Science**

Since its inauguration in 1992, the Wiener Laboratory of the School has gained recognition as a leading research facility supporting American and Greek scholars applying a wide variety of analytical techniques drawn from the natural, physical, and biological sciences to archaeology and history. Through fellowships, associate memberships, consultations, lectures, seminars and workshops, the Lab plays an integral role in encouraging scientific work and in enlarging the base of scholarship and scope of research in Greek archaeology.

The Wiener Laboratory houses a growing scientific library that supports the research of Lab Fellows as well as that of other scholars and excavators. The Wiener Laboratory Library contains 26 journals and newsletters and over 1,150 books, dissertations, and monographs in the fields of faunal, human skeletal, and geoarchaeological studies, as well as general reference and introductory texts.
in various areas of archaeology and the natural sciences. The library not only supports research in the Lab, but also serves as a foundation for development of multidisciplinary research projects. In addition, the Laboratory houses a comparative collection of modern animal bones that includes the basic mammal, fish, and bird species common to Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean, in addition to a collection of marine mollusks that are commonly found in Greek archaeological contexts.

Teaching

Teaching has always been an integral part of the School’s activities. As Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908), professor at Harvard University and founding President of the Archaeological Institute of America, pointed out, the intention of the founders was to create a school “where young scholars might carry on the study of Greek thought and life to the best advantage, and where those who were proposing to become teachers of Greek might gain such acquaintance with the land and such knowledge of its ancient monuments, as should give a quality to their teaching unattainable without this experience.”

Top graduate students from all over North America in a year-long program, as well as undergraduates and secondary school teachers in summer sessions, are introduced to the sites and monuments of Greek civilization. The students’ studies and residence in Greece are funded by the students themselves, with fellowships and donations granted by the American
School and by the North American universities and institutions that support the School’s scholarly and educational mission.

In the Autumn term, under supervision of staff of the School, students in the year-long program participate in five intensive fieldtrips, which cover most of Greece, from Samothrace in the north to Kommos on the southern coast of Crete. Later in the year, two annual visiting professors offer seminars. Students participate in a traveling seminar that visits the museums, sites, and monuments of Athens and Attica. And the students have the opportunity to participate in excavations at Corinth, take field trips to Asia Minor and elsewhere, or simply to pursue study and travel on their own.

The great majority of the School’s students return to North America to complete their degrees and they then teach at colleges and universities worldwide, where they

Fig. 30. ASCSA students travelling to Bassae, 1896.

Fig. 31. ASCSA Students.
in turn pass on to their students the knowledge that they acquired at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. There is not a faculty in the universities of North America that does not have at least one alumnus/a of the School in its program. The contribution of the School’s programs to the promotion of Greek studies in North America is immeasurable.

**Publications**

The American School Publications Office produces to high editorial and production standards scholarly monographs, scientific studies, and popular books related to the mission of the School and other important works on Greek studies (http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/publications/). One of its most important roles is in publishing the results of excavations at Corinth and the Athenian Agora. The Publications Office produces a number of short guides to the Athenian Agora, Corinth, Lerna, Kommos, and the Palace of Nestor. Many of the guides to the Agora are available as free downloads from the Internet. The journal *Hesperia* is published quarterly by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Founded in 1932 to present the work of the American School, this journal now welcomes submissions from all scholars working in the fields of Greek archaeology, art, epigraphy, history, materials science, ethnography, and literature, from earliest prehistoric times onward. Issues of the journal and its supplements are available in electronic form via the School’s website. A newsletter, *ákoue*, is distributed twice a year to all alumni/ae and friends of the School. The Gennadius monograph series publishes

![Recent Publications of the ASCSA](image)
studies of particular relevance to the collections of that library.

**Looking to the Future**

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens now looks forward to a bright future within the European Union of the 21st century. We face challenges with optimism. Preparations are underway to improve and expand our facilities. We are confident that the American School will remain one of the premier research institutions in Greece for many years to come and will continue to play the role that it has held since 1881 as a principal mediator in the exchange of knowledge about Greek culture between North America and Greece. One important goal of the School is to share our riches with a broader constituency, in Greece, in the European Union, and throughout the world. Here, the continued development of our Internet-based resources is critical. In this regard, we are proud to announce that, through the support of the European Union and the Information Society program, very significant parts of our collections have already been digitized and are available on-line. These include Joannes Gennadius’s so-called “scrapbooks,” photographic and textual records of his long diplomatic and scholarly career; the papers of politician Ion Dragoumis; the photographic albums of Dorothy Burr Thompson, a distinguished American archaeologist; and excavation records covering the entire duration of the School’s excavations at Corinth. The general public may learn about each of these resources, in addition to the School’s excavations in the Athenian Agora, via on-line educational “portals” that are especially designed to be accessible to students and laypeople (http://www.ascsa.edu.gr). These projects are an important first step in using information technology to make ever greater contributions to Greece and to the development of classical and modern Greek studies in Europe and worldwide.
Sources of Illustrations

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Back Cover: N. Danielidis

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