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NOTHING TO SEE HERE!

The Challenges of Public Archaeology at Palaeolithic Stélida, Naxos

Tristan Carter

ABSTRACT

In our desire to develop public archaeologies at the early prehistoric site of Stélida (Naxos, Greece), we face three major challenges. Firstly, there are a number of stakeholder communities involved with conflicting interests. Moreover, the 'local' population is distinct, being heterogeneous in composition, fluid in its residence, including individuals with significantly more socioeconomic and political power than the archaeologists. Secondly, due to issues of landowners' wish for privacy and the Ministry of Culture's financial limitations, Stélida itself is unlikely to become a focus of public engagement; instead, off-site digital media, exhibitions and teaching packs likely represent the best means of disseminating information to larger audiences. Finally, early prehistoric archaeology is a culturally and temporally alien world of 'bones and stones,' which requires imaginative means of engaging the public imagination.

KEYWORDS: heritage, stakeholder communities, engagement, presentation, Palaeolithic, Naxos, Greece

Introduction: From Communication to Engagement—Modes of Public Engagement

That archaeologists have a responsibility to engage with the public is a well-established disciplinary position (see Jameson Jr. 2003; Merriman 2004; Atalay 2012; Richardson and Almanda-Sánchez 2015, among others). For those of us based in North American institutions, this stance is iterated clearly by the ethical guidelines and mission statements of our primary professional associations, the American Anthropological Association,¹ the Archaeological Institute of America,² and the Society for American Archaeology.³ This responsibility is typically perceived to be an *ethical* obligation (Wylie 2005), as outlined in the SAA's 'Principle No. 4: Public Education and Outreach,' which we quote here in full:

Archaeologists should reach out to, and participate in cooperative efforts with others interested in the archaeological record with the aim of improving the preservation, protection, and interpretation of the record. In particular, archaeologists should undertake to: (1) enlist public support for the stewardship of the archaeological record; (2) explain and promote the use of archaeological methods and techniques in understanding human behavior and culture; and (3) communicate archaeological interpretations of the past. *Many publics* exist for archaeology including students

and teachers; Native Americans and other ethnic, religious, and cultural groups who find in the archaeological record important aspects of their cultural heritage; lawmakers and government officials; reporters, journalists, and others involved in the media; and the general public. Archaeologists who are unable to undertake public education and outreach directly should encourage and support the efforts of others in these activities. (SAA Principles 1996, emphasis added)

If our professional societies' proclamations provide an insufficient impetus for us to engage with 'the public' (the associations have little control over our work), then we have the more pressing influence of the major funding agencies, such as the USA's National Science Foundation⁴ and Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.5 Moreover, in some instances, these agencies' emphasis on knowledge mobilization is starting to shift from an ethical to a legal obligation: for example, as with the intersection of Canadian laws concerning the use of government funding (Access to Information Act 1985) and the disbursement of funds to academic researchers by SSHRC (SSHRC Policies 2016). For more of a carrot-rather-than-stick approach, we have the Wenner-Gren Foundation introducing its 'Innovations in Public Awareness of Anthropology' grants in 2016, offering ten awards of up to \$20,000 (IPAA 2016). As part of the same 75th-anniversary initiatives, the agency also launched the Sapiens website,6 'with a mission to bring anthropology—the study of being human—to the public, to make a difference in how people see themselves and the people around them.'

The call to public engagement can be viewed as embodying two quite distinct practices. The first involves the archaeologist being encouraged to communicate, which is usually interpreted in the form of disseminating the products of their research to as wide an audience as possible (no. 3 in the above SAA quote). While this has recently involved funding agencies and universities pushing us to make our work publicly accessible through open-access data-repositories (e.g., McMaster University Institutional Repository 2017), and open-access journals (see NSF Public Access 2016), such venues arguably provide little benefit to non-academic audiences. The work available through these outlets was written with our disciplinary peers in mind, therefore not particularly user-friendly in style. Arguably, the much older tradition of public speaking and popular 'science' writing provides a far better means of engaging with 'the public,' be that via such 100+ year-old institutions as the UK's Workers' Educational Association, or North America's Archaeological Institute of America. The latter is particularly well-served through their local chapter lecture series and Archaeology magazine, while National Geographic continues to be a perennial supplier of engaging archaeology stories, and today comprises a multimedia platform that reaches an audience of millions. Alongside the lecture tours, institutionally hosted courses, print and digital media, there are the talks, slideshows, and site tours given to the 'host' communities of our research sites. These interactions are initiated by archaeologists and local individuals/organizations alike, and have a more targeted and personalized format, linking academic discoveries with familiar places, people, and memories, rather than emphasizing supra-regional academic debates.

This first communicative mode of engagement comprises a relatively 'safe-space' mode of interaction for the archaeologist, a primarily one-way phenomenon that lacks significant interaction with the public (or challenges to their authority), bar the short Q&A sessions or magazine's letters page feedback. Moreover, it has long been appreciated that while our public outreach via lecture hall, popular journal, or museum exhibition may impact many, this is far from an inclusive or diverse community. Firstly, the consumption of archaeology remains a steadfastly white and middle-class phenomenon (see Merriman 1989; Cannon and Cannon 1996; McDavid 2007; Mullins 2007, among others). Secondly, representations of our work—as articulated by major print and film media—can be problematic in content, form, and politics (see Gero and Root 1996; Ascherson 2004).

A second and arguably more contentious form of engagement is implied more loosely in the above SAA statement on Principles of Archaeological Ethics, namely a more dialogical relationship between archaeologists and stakeholders (the 'many publics' mentioned in the SAA Principles, above). At a minimum, this invokes a shared responsibility for 'preserving, protecting and interpreting' cultural heritage. For others, however,

the acceptance that there are many groups that have an interest, or stake in what we deem to be a 'site,' ultimately leads to a decentering of academic/professional archaeological authority. Such a position, developed through reference to postmodern/postcolonial thought, advocates for a more inclusive, multivocal, dialogical, and consensually based set of practices, from research questions, to project methodologies, to final interpretation(s) (Hodder 1998, 2002, 2004, 2008; Marshall 2002; Moser et al. 2002; Meskell 2005; Atalay 2012, among others).

In this article, we aim to discuss the various challenges faced by the Stélida Naxos Archaeological Project (hereafter SNAP) in navigating the various public archaeologies outlined above. The specific nature and location of our work provide some particular, if not unique issues concerning the 'local' community and the site that we need to grapple

with to undertake an ethically underpinned, culturally sensitive, publicly engaging, and sustainable project.

Background to the Project

The 152 m tall hill and chert source of Stélida is located on what today is the coast of northwest Naxos, the largest of the Cycladic islands, an archipelago of the southern Aegean (Figs. 1-2). The raw material outcrops and their associated stone-tool production debris were reported first by Séfériadès (1983), the site having been located in the first and only season of what had been intended to be a large-scale survey of Naxos by the École Française d'Athènes. The dating of Stélida was uncertain, with tentative claims for its long-term exploitation from perhaps as early as the Epi-Palaeolithic or earlier



FIG. 1 Map showing the location of Stélida, Naxos. (Prepared by K. Campeau on ESRI basemap.)



The double-peaked hill, chert source and archaeological site of Stélida, northwest Naxos (Greece); from east, with Paros in the background. (Photo by D. Depnering.)

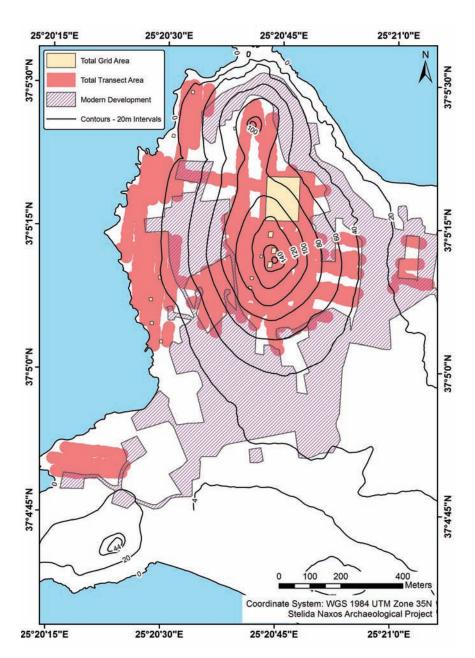
Neolithic. These were not unproblematic dates given that the small islands of the Mediterranean were not believed to have been colonized until the later Neolithic, some millennia later (Cherry 1981). Stélida thus remained something of a chronological enigma until the early 2000s when archaeologists of the Greek Ministry of Culture (Cycladic Ephorate of Antiquities) undertook a series of small-scale rescue excavations in the context of private construction work on the hill. Preliminary reports made important claims for the archaeologists having found artifacts diagnostic of Mesolithic, Upper, and Middle Palaeolithic dates (Legaki 2012, 2014).

In 2013, we initiated SNAP to undertake a detailed geoarchaeological characterization of the chert source and its associated material culture. During the project's initial iteration (2013–2014), our work comprised a pedestrian survey and geological sampling of raw materials (for the latter, see Skarpelis et al. in press). Over two seasons we surveyed approximately 40 ha of the undeveloped hillside and surrounding coastline (Fig. 3) and collected 17,910 artifacts, including material clearly datable to the Lower-Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods (Carter et al. 2014, 2016).

Our work at Stélida was partly motivated by recent claims for Middle Pleistocene-Early Holocene activity elsewhere in the Aegean islands (Runnels 2014; Sampson 2014). It was also initiated because the hill continues to be disturbed by modern construction, with the archaeological record being lost at an alarming rate.

Heterogeneous, Fluid, Transitory, Distributed: The Stakeholder Communities of Stélida

From an anthropological point of view, one of the most fascinating aspects of working at Stélida concerns the nature of those communities who might claim to have a stake in the 'site.' In considering our project's desire to engage publicly with our work, it is necessary first to briefly outline these stakeholders' characters and claims on Stélida, and the power relations that coalesce at this locus (for critical considerations of such relations elsewhere in the Aegean see papers in Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009b, plus Kyriakidis and Anagnostopoulos 2015, amongst others). Of particular interest is Stélida's highly distinctive 'local' population,



Area surveyed in 2013-2014 by the Stélida Naxos Archaeological Project. (Map by Y. Pitt.)

a term that simply does not do justice to the nature of those who (sometimes) inhabit the area; it is this 'proximate' community that we shall begin with.

Hearsay, documentary records, and archaeological evidence make it clear that the modern inhabitation of Stélida is very recent, dating to the latter part of the twentieth century CE. Before that, the hill, surrounding coastline, and southern promontory were relatively marginal, owned by the parish of Agios Arsenios, whose church and

village lays almost 5 km to the southwest (Fig. 4). Various people informed us that the land was considered poor quality, with potatoes grown on the promontory until at least WW II, and cereals cultivated on the flanks until the late 1960s-early 1970s. A local hotelier showed us a now overgrown aloni (threshing floor) on the western coastal strip that had been built by his grandfather, as had a mandra (sheep-fold) atop the hill's northern prominence (Fig. 5, top). The same grandfather was also said



FIG. 4 Map of northeast Naxos showing location of Stélida and other place names mentioned in the text. (Prepared by K. Campeau on ESRI basemap.)

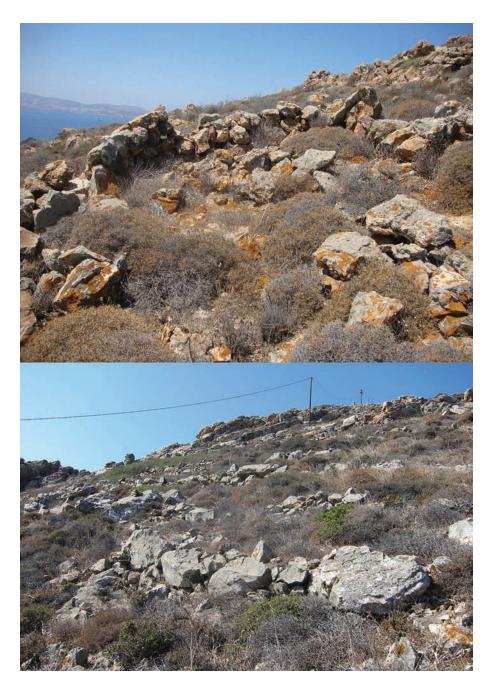
to have maintained some of the agricultural terraces that wrapped their way around the hill (Fig. 5, bottom), though he had not built them. Indeed no one knew these walls' age, an all-too-familiar problem for those working on the antiquity of the Greek agricultural landscape (cf. Frederick and Krahtopoulou 2000). Clay from pits on the northern saddle was exploited for roofing materials until the 1970s by close-by inhabitants (transported off-hill by basket-carrying donkeys), while a small spring provided fresh water on the eastern slopes.

The beginnings of major change on Stélida may be traced to the late 1960s when a US-based academic of European (non-Greek) descent purchased a significant swathe of land from a Naxian from Agios Arsenios. The intention of Alain St.-C.7 was to make Stélida a place where like-minded thinkers and artists could gather for intellectual stimulation and productivity, an idea that seems to have developed in parallel to his establishing an 'alternative university' facility in central Europe. That the nearby beach of Prokopios was a well-established haunt

of alternative/hippy-type travelers during the summer months around this time may not be coincidental. The only other buildings around the hill at this date seem to have been one or two seasonal huts for shepherds (metochia). With Alain St.-C. failing to attract other sympathetic characters to the island, he eventually began to sell off plots to other non-Naxians (Fig. 6). An adjacent plot was sold to a central European geologist (who had just produced a Ph.D. on the geology of Stélida), while Christos M., a non-local Greek, and like-minded thinker, constructed a small building just below the hill's main peak.

This tiny community was augmented in the 1970s by a further two geologists with Ph.D.s (one another central European), while an ex-Naxian mayor built a house here, a development that seems to have precipitated electricity and tarmac roads introduced to Stélida. This small population was ultimately surrounded and somewhat overwhelmed by the construction of holiday homes, high-end rental villas, and hotels during a tourist boom from the 1980s onwards. These developments were undertaken primarily by residents of other Naxian villages, with Stélida today comprising some of the most highly desired (and expensive) land on the island (Fig. 7). Alas, much of this development is said to have been of quasi-legal status (permit-wise), while a quarry blemishes Stélida's northeastern corner, the stone having been extracted to construct the nearby airport in the late 1980s (see Fig. 2). Development continues today, further encroaching on the archaeological site, and gradually reducing the natural vegetation and hillside (see Fig. 7).

The proximate community can thus be characterized as heterogeneous. Today there remains a small group of well-established foreigners and non-local Greek landowners at Stélida's. These include Alain St.-C.'s artist widow (who is mainly resident in southeast Europe), Christos M. who shares his time between mainland Greece, Scandinavia, and ashrams in southeast Asia, plus one of the central-European geologists who also runs rent-rooms nearby. The children of the other geologist (one a professor of mathematics), and their families, holiday at their coastal house throughout the summer. These are well-educated individuals with long-term personal and economic investment in Stélida; their residence is also transitory—coming and going from spring



Historic twentieth-century agricultural constructions on Stélida. Top: sheepfold (mandra); bottom: terrace walls. (Photos by N. Faught.)

to autumn-their permanent homes mainly located abroad. Then there is the fluid tourist population, a mixture of well-heeled luxury villa renters (prices up to 1,500 euros a night!) and upscale package-holiday hotel dwellers, few of whom would spend more than a couple of weeks on Stélida. Finally, there are the summer homes, and seasonal residences of Athenians, other non-Naxians,

and those who run the hotels and rent rooms but winter elsewhere on the island. Indeed, between November and March Stélida is nigh deserted, the houses locked, shuttered and battened-down for spring (Fig. 8).

We can also talk of the non-resident, institutional stakeholders of Stélida. These include the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Culture and Sports, which took



Western coastal strip at base of Stélida from 2015 excavation area; from left to right, the three white buildings are a small 1980s hotel, plus the two earliest private residences from the late 1960s-early 1970s. (Photo by R. Srivastava.)

on a monitoring role—articulated through Athens- and Naxos museum-based staff of the Cycladic Ephorate of Antiquities—once the site was discovered and registered in 1981. Their overseeing of the site ultimately led to the formal definition of Alpha- and Beta-zones on the hill, that is, land protected from development to greater and lesser degrees (Fig. 9). Planning applications submitted for invasive development in the Beta zone (roads, buildings, pipelines, etc.) will lead to a formal archaeological investigation and Ministry presence, examples of which over the past 20 years have resulted in both small-scale reconnaissance, excavation, and associated publications (Legaki 2012, 2014). The uppermost part of the hill is designated 'Alpha zone,' i.e., completely protected from any construction or invasive agriculture. The only building in this area, the house of Christos M., was constructed

before the creation of the Alpha zone selling this structure today would be highly problematic as no new features would be permitted, not least plumbing which it lacks. This upper area of Stélida also falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry Service, and by extent their regulations concerning development. The southern peak also has claims upon it by the telecommunications companies who have erected radio towers there (Fig. 10), and the Greek Army that established a concrete trigonometry point at that site (our 1000/1000 grid marker). Just south of the hill is a public power company electrical station (nearby is another army geomarker), while members of the Naxian Wildlife Group have recently shown concern over the ecological integrity of the salt flats that lay between Stélida and the Agios Prokopios beach to the southwest (see map Fig. 4).



Modern developments on the eastern flanks of Stélida: 1980s-1990s hotels and rent rooms in foreground, and private villas under construction in 2013–2015 in mid-slope. The area between was then developed in 2015. (Photo by T. Carter.)

Then we come to our stake in Stélida, the SNAP team comprising a multinational group of academics and students, the geoarchaeological investigation and its results underpinning both student theses (Ph.D. to B.A.), and institutional expectations (research profile, grant-raising, training of highly qualified personnel, etc.). The Canadian Institute in Greece (CIG)—the cultural institution that represents our applications to the Greek Ministry of Culture—also has an investment in Stélida, their first Cycladic project. For the 2013-2014 survey seasons we were an independent 'Canadian' project in the Ministry's eyes, but since the start of excavations in 2015 SNAP was reconfigured as a formal collaboration (synergasia) between CIG and the Cycladic Ephorate of Antiquities, now co-led by Carter and Dr. D. Athanasoulis,

the Ephorate's director. The Ministry's stake in Stélida has thus increased.

The (re)establishment of an archaeological project at Stélida has, in turn, served to initiate new stakeholder claims on the site. The presence of a high-profile international archaeological team has engaged the interest of the Cultural Association of Naxos and the Minor Cyclades, and in turn, their superior, the mayor of Naxos (Fig. 11). They are all vested in raising the profile of Stélida and SNAP in the cultural imagination of Naxians, Greeks more generally, and ultimately globally. One might thus envision a situation where—if our discoveries are deemed significant enough—a vast array of people/groups might claim an interest in Stélida. It is to the nature of these stakeholder-community interactions,



Deserted and shuttered rent rooms, villas, and private residences on the western slopes of Stélida, February 2015. (Photo by T. Carter.)

power relations, claims, and desires that we now turn, thinking through how a publicly engaged archaeology can emerge, and what form it needs to take when considering these groups' conflicting desires.

Avoidance, Chance-Meetings, and Formal Engagements: SNAP's Relations with the Other Stakeholder Communities of Stélida

When we began the survey in 2013, our project was a modest affair, with funds restricting us to a three-week season and a team of 12 individuals (Canadian, American, British, Greek, and Serbian). We started the field-walking transects from the southern peak, gradually extending downslope, but mainly focused on the hill and its immediate flanks. As such, we initially had little contact with the more populated flatter slopes and western coastal strip (see Figs. 3, 6). The fact that we established our 'base camp' amongst a series of unfinished villas on the upper eastern side (see Fig. 7) further accentuated our removal from the hoteliers, holiday-makers and seasonal residents. We encountered almost no one, aside from a

neighbor who occasionally shouted out that we needed to keep off her plot and that we were all crazy. Even though this isolationism was unplanned, it suited us. While this partly stemmed from not wanting our work schedule disrupted, it was also because we knew that archaeologists in Greece are often unpopular characters in contexts where construction and other forms of landscapealtering development represent means of socioeconomic progress (see Gratsia 2010: 83). Archaeologists—rarely related to these communities beyond their government agency placement—are often put in a situation where they are legally required to delay, if not completely stop development of the proposed activity. Such actions can, unsurprisingly, lead to resentment of the archaeological record and those with a duty to safeguard it. As a consequence, people may choose to bypass the formal planning application system, whereby construction goes ahead illegally; the latter situation is something we were led to believe had occurred on more than one occasion in Stélida.

If during the 2013 season we did encounter someone—usually hardy tourist hill-runners—we tended to describe ourselves as geologists. Given that a

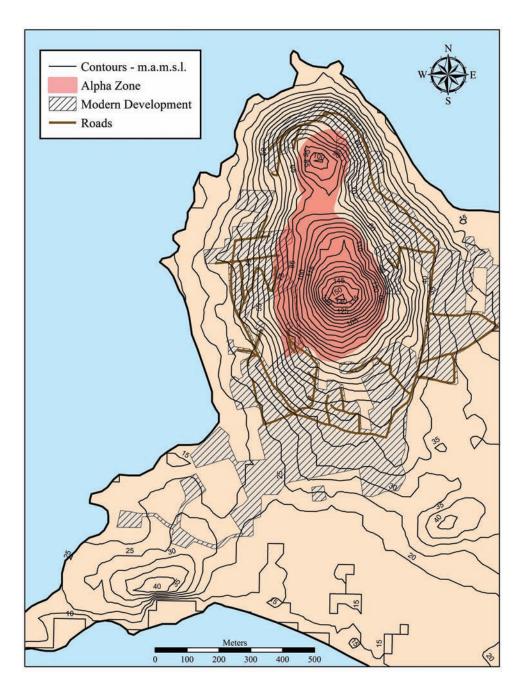


FIG. 9 Map showing the Alpha zone defined on Stélida by the Ministry of Culture. (Prepared by K. Campeau and S. Doyle.)

fundamental component of our research goals was the geoarchaeological characterization of Stélida, this was hardly a falsehood. At the same time, we were deliberately suppressing the archaeological nature of our work, as (a) this tends to be perceived by 'the public' as more interesting (cf. Holtorf 2007) and thus more likely to generate a time-consuming Q&A session, and (b) because we wanted to avoid any confrontations with angry landowners. We appreciate that this lack of disciplinary disclosure was ethically problematic, with team members uneasy about taking such a position. While we had the necessary research permits from the Ministry of Culture and the Greek Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration, it remains that we should have introduced ourselves and



FIG. 10 SNAP team standing on the highest southern peak of Stélida (May 2017), a locus with multiple stakeholder claims, including the Greek Army, Ministry of Culture, Forestry Commission, telecommunication companies, and ourselves. (Photo by J. Lau.)



FIG. 11 Official visit of the mayor of Naxos M. Margaritis to Stélida, June 2015, to his right SNAP team-members T. Moutsiou and T. Carter. (Photo by R. Srivastava.)

our work to the 'locals.' That said, contradictions and tensions can arise between the position of disciplinary ethical obligations on the one hand and the more situated concerns of Stélida stakeholders on the other. We revisit these issues below.

Perhaps invariably, our attempt to fly under the radar backfired spectacularly in the 2014 season when our field-walking took us further into the populated parts

of Stélida. The first incident began with a man and his younger companion striding purposefully toward us one morning as we were surveying next to what turned out to be his hotel. The man engaged us in conversation with some intensity and concern, wanting to know who we were and what we were doing. Without being entirely mollified by our explanations and permit references, he rapidly began to point away from where we were working, stating "Oh there's nothing to see here! You need to go and look in X's land," an all-too-familiar statement for anyone who has worked on Greek surveys, a classic diversionary tactic to rid the landowner of unwanted archaeological attention. A day or so later, working on the other side of the hill, a shouting individual angrily approached some of our team, ripping our transect flags out of the ground, one of which he then broke in two in front of the somewhat concerned and non-Greek speaking student field-walkers. One of our Greek team members quickly joined the group to address the situation. Dimitri P., who turned out to be another hotelier, was upset that we were surveying on his (undeveloped) property and that no one had forewarned him of our presence: "If you found someone trespassing on your land wouldn't you be worried?" he proclaimed, not unreasonably. He calmed down

once we respectfully relayed our project aims to him, though the next day when he saw us working in what was his neighbor's land he again approached our group to express his unhappiness with the situation. At the end of the work day, as the team drove past Dimitri's hotel his father shouted after us "What are you doing with these damn stones? Do you want to destroy us? There's nothing here!"—an expression of anger and frustration that neatly encapsulates the concerns that many local stakeholders have with archaeologists, not just on Stélida.

The very next day we gave our first public presentation on the work of SNAP, having been invited to give the lecture by the president of the Cultural Association (Fig. 12). The lecture was relatively well attended and was structured in 3–5 minute segments in English by the director, which were then translated by one of the Greek team members (Fig. 13). Amongst the audience were a handful of Stélida residents that we had invited to hear the talk, including the two aforementioned hoteliers. Our Ministry of Culture representative quietly informed us that Dimitri P. and his father were 'ready for a fight,' but by the end of the talk they seemed quite happy with everything, to the extent that we were invited to breakfast at their hotel the next day.

By the end of the 2014 survey season, we had established good relations with a few of the well-established members of Stélida's proximate community (including the recently widowed wife of Alain St.-C.). We took the time to explain our aims, listen to their concerns, and hear personal insights to how the local settlement had developed since the late 1960s. Publication of short articles in Greek summarizing our public lecture in both print and online formats further served to raise our profile at the Naxian and Cycladic level. One of these pieces, published in May 2015 (in the context of national media coverage on the new collaborative excavation program) introduced us to other tensions at play. The specter of quasi-nationalist claims to the site was embodied in the article's title: 'Xenomania even for Neanderthal Naxos' (Lianos 2015). Here the author took issue with what he perceived to be a situation where Stélida only gained recognition when foreigners became engaged with the site, despite Greek archaeologists having worked there intermittently for the best part of 20 years (the latter fact being something we have always stressed in our public/press interaction). There is, of course, a context for this negative article. Greece was at that momentand still is at the time of writing—in a deep economic crisis that involved significant 'austerity measures' being imposed by foreign powers through the guise of the European Commission, International Monetary Fund, and European Central Bank (the so-called Troika). These external interventions have led to a rise in political extremism and anti-foreigner sentiment, both on the left and the right (Theodossopoulos 2014).

The 2015 season, our first involving excavation, involved charting, and developing the stakeholder relationships, albeit this time in a more formal structure, mediated through new team members, specifically Greek-speaking scholars/students with formal training in ethnography, cultural heritage studies, and sociology. We return to these developments below.

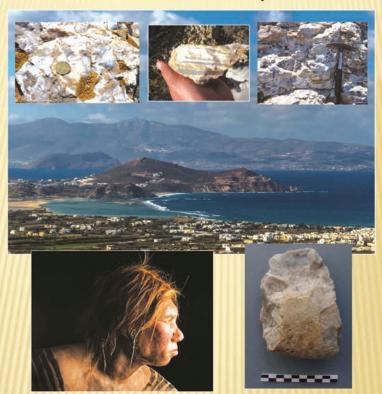
Negotiating Power Relations, Desires, and Concerns

My wish to facilitate public archaeologies at Stélida stems from my long-held punk rock/egalitarian sensibilities (Carter 2015), and an appreciation that much of our work is funded by the public via government agencies such as SSHRC. My experience in this realm has included site tours for interested groups, school visits, and public speaking. The latter involved teaching entire archaeology courses for the UK's Workers' Educational Association, lectures for regional chapters of the Archaeological Institute of America, and term-long classes for the Continuing Studies program at Stanford University.8 While I undertook this work in the name of particular core personal and disciplinary beliefs, it also admittedly helps to pay the bills. Intellectually, however, it has been through my long-term membership of the Çatalhöyük Research Project, and association with Ian Hodder and Stanford's Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology (as-was) that I came to appreciate more fully the larger ethical, political and theoretical issues at play concerning stakeholder engagement. Indeed, the approach of the Çatalhöyük team in its many guises

Το ΝΟ.Π.Π.Α.Π.Π.Α παρουσιάζει:

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The Stélida Naxos Archaeological Project: Early Humans in the Aegean Αρχαιολογικό πρόγραμμα Στελίδας Νάξου: Πρώιμοι άνθρωποι στο Αιγαίο



25/08/2014, 20:30 Χώρα Νάξου (Chora, Naxos) Μουσείο Ιάκωβος Καμπανέλλης Iakovos Kampanelis Museum FIG. 12
Flyer advertising public talk
on the work of SNAP, hosted
by the Cultural Association of
Naxos and the Minor Cyclades
in Chora, Naxos, August 2014.
(Courtesy of T. Carter.)



Public talk on the work of SNAP, hosted by the Cultural Association of Naxos and the Minor Cyclades in Chora, Naxos, August 2014; T. Carter to left, team-members and translators T. Moutsiou and V. Mastrogiannopoulou, to right. (Photo by K. Campeau.)

is fundamental to how SNAP is aiming to conduct its archaeological practices.

Our dual ethical responsibility to engage with stakeholders, and to disseminate the results of our work beyond the academy, requires careful negotiation skills. We wish to enter into dialogue and share our results with the landowners who allow (or put up with) our presence (Fig. 14 a, b, and c), Naxians more generally, and a public audience both national and global. Tensions and contradictions do arise however in taking on such a position. Power is, of course, the primary lens through which to examine these relationships and their outcomes. The nature of power relations between archaeologists and

stakeholder communities has received great attention over the past two decades. Such studies recurrently highlight the sociopolitical and economic imbalance between the non-local/Western/Westerntrained archaeologists, and the local and/or indigenous populations (Hodder 2002; Mapunda and Lane 2004; Parker Pearson and Ramilsonina 2004; Watkins 2005; among others). Indeed, in most of the case studies advocating 'community-based' (Moser et al. 2002; Atalay 2012), 'multivocal' (Hodder 2004, 2008), or 'public archaeology' (Parker Pearson and Ramilsonina 2004), the communities under consideration are poster children for the binary construct of archaeology = colonial =







Interactions between SNAP team-members and local landowners and hoteliers, August 2015. (Photos by K. Campeau and Mrs. Kalogeitonas.)

urban = socioeconomically advantaged vs. locals = colonized = rural = socioeconomically disadvantaged. This is categorically not the case at Stélida. While we would be naïve to deny our power given our education, place(s) of origin, financial backing etc., it remains that many of the stakeholders within the proximate community are well-informed, transitory, globalized, and also wield significant socioeconomic power.

To begin with, the entire hill of Stélida comprises private property. As such, while the directors of the Cycladic Ephorate of Antiquities have long graciously supported our research agenda (now in concert), it was made clear to us from the outset that they were incapable of providing us with permission to excavate, except in cases where development precipitated rescue archaeology. The longterm modus operandi in Greece for foreign archaeologists who want to dig on private land has been to raise funds to purchase the plot, the holdings then given to the Greek state at the end of the project. Buying the land was never an option for us given Stélida's sky-high prices. Thus our shift from survey to excavation could only be achieved through gaining the trust and permission of local landowners. It remains the case, however, that these landowners have the right—as indeed does the Ministry—to revoke our rights of access or excavation at any moment, whereby from the outset one can appreciate a distinct power dynamic between the archaeologists and locals. Moreover, as outlined above, the various seasonal residents of Stélida tend to be well-educated, economically secure (if not affluent), and politically connected. For example, hearsay in 2015 suggested that one of the plots, owned by a foreigner (a central European businessperson), was to be bought by an individual high up in Cycladic governance, whose aim was to build a villa or hotel.

That our first permission to excavate on private land came from one of the foreign university-educated landowners is perhaps not so surprising. The individual was already cognizant of debates surrounding Neanderthal-Sapiens relations and thus sympathetic to our research aims, albeit under certain conditions (privacy, backfilling trenches). The local hoteliers were initially less sympathetic to our presence. In no small part, this is due to the restrictions that were placed, unfairly in their minds, on developing their land by Ministry archaeologists in 2000.

One hotelier furiously informed us how Stélida's protection part came about through an archaeologist misinterpreting terrace walls as a Hellenistic fortification, perhaps a somewhat fanciful recollection given the site's long-documented prehistoric activity. That said, one of the hotel owners quite quickly took us under his wing, appreciating our interest in his family's relationship with Stélida and the more recent agricultural and settlement history of the hill. He also wondered out loud as to the potential benefits to his business that may lead from our discoveries (not a unique wish, see Kyriakidis and Anagnostopoulos 2015: 251–52), ideally a tourist upswing ('Hotel Neanderthal' anyone?), together with academic gatherings at Stélida (our idea). He also allowed us to store equipment at his hotel and defended us to some of the other local residents in the context of the backfilling of a nearby (illegal) access route at the demand of the court-backed Ministry archaeologists. His distinction between the archaeological communities engaged at Stélida likely stemmed from a mix of positive and negative interpersonal relations, together with future hopes of benefitting from SNAP. While we established nascent trust and good will with the various 'locals', it is something we would never take for granted and one can easily envisage a rapid change in attitudes towards our work.

The backfilled road is a good example of how power relations between proximate community members, legal authorities, and government institutions have played out at Stélida, intersections and consequences that need to be carefully appreciated and navigated by SNAP as we develop 'public' engagements. The road had allegedly been bulldozed a few years ago by Greek (Naxian) residents of Stélida through two plots of land owned by foreigners; that the construction took place in winter when the landowners were abroad was probably deliberate. While such infractions also occur on Naxos between Greeks (V. Mastrogiannopoulou, pers. comm.), one wonders if such a brazen act was partly enabled by a belief that the authorities might favor locals should the matter come to court. To trial the issue did indeed proceed, and after a significant amount of time (during which one set of foreign plaintiffs gave up), the road was finally deemed illegal, with a court order to backfill. At this point, the Ministry archaeologists became involved as the land fell

within the Beta zone. This provided them with the right to investigate the area of the road prior to it being covered up, that is, their power of action—in this particular cultural and legal space—transcended that of both plaintiff(s), and those responsible for the track in the first place. Initially, our team was offered the opportunity to be involved in the excavation of the road, given that this work was to occur in the middle of our field season, but ultimately the Ephorate representative decided against it. Their concern was that insults (or worse) would be thrown at us by the disgruntled Greek residents as they drove past us during the final use of their defeated access-way. It was this latter group that we, as foreign archaeologists, were being defended against by the aforementioned hotelier, their fellow Naxian and neighbor.

While the legal power of the Ministry of Culture should theoretically constitute the main structuring force for action on Stélida, the 'grey-area' and downright illegal development within the protected areas (Beta zone in particular), shows that authority can be challenged successfully (see Lekakis 2013: 82). That some of these constructions were built, clearly attests to the fact that some people are prepared to take risks at Stélida, albeit calculated risks, given certain factors in play. Firstly, for the Ministry to protect this or any other protected land requires the physical presence of personnel to monitor them. Over the past three decades, there simply has not been enough money available to the Ministry for this to be realized. With the recent economic crisis, things have only got worse. With forced retirements, pay cuts for existing staff and precious few new hires, there is a significant drop in the workforce, with insufficient staff to guard established sites and museums, let alone carry out the crucial task of monitoring protected sites in rural hinterlands (Howery 2013; Koutsoumba 2013). This situation encourages some landowners to bypass the formal planning application system and to take matters into their hands, with limited chances of being caught by Ministry archaeologists if timed carefully. Moreover, once the archaeology is erased it cannot be replaced, and the fines can be small compared to the amount of money a newly built property might be worth in such a location. In turn, any potential court case might take years to come to fruition, and would only further tax the Ministry's workload

(though our Ephorate representative spends significant amounts of time in court doing just that).

While the Ministry of Culture's designation and protection of archaeological sites has long caused local consternation, the idea that archaeology blocks much needed economic development is also being espoused in some governmental quarters, with new developer-friendly legislation undermining site preservation (Koutsoumba 2013: 246-47). It is in these challenging contexts that our Ephorate archaeologist has to engage with Stélida's various stakeholders, attempting a careful balance between ethical and legal guidelines on the one hand, and local concerns and economic needs on the other. Thus while in theory there should be a clear hierarchical structure concerning the claims over Stélida, the power to act is situated, complex, and often fluid. The one point that one can perhaps make at this juncture is that SNAP categorically does not set the agenda. We admittedly have access to more research funds than our Greek colleagues, and our disciplinary engagement and university associations no doubt accord us cultural capital, but it remains that even with our official permit, the success of our work can be determined by the influence and choices of various other stakeholder groups.

The Possible Nature of Public Archaeologies for Stélida

From the preceding sections, it should be clear that we need negotiation skills to fulfill our dual ethical responsibility to engage with stakeholders, and to disseminate the results of our work beyond the academy. From the outset we have made the decision to celebrate the archaeology and significance of Stélida at a distance, that is, we are not aiming to attract a significant number of people to the site itself. This choice is based on two major concerns. Firstly, as it currently stands, this is all private land, whereby we simply do not have the right to invite members of the public to see the excavations, so we are taking a stance that acknowledges one of the primary concerns of many proximate community members. The point of departure for many of the (mainly foreign) individuals buying land here in the first place was a desire

to 'get away from it all' (Rojek and Urry 1997; Wickens 2002: 841-43), with late 1960s-early 1970s Stélida uninhabited and unspoiled. Thus, for us to develop a mode of non-academic outreach that forefronts a direct public experience of the site ignores these landowners' desire for privacy. Christos M.'s house high on the slopes perfectly embodies the owner's wish to experience the beauty of the location and vista while being left to his own devices. We spent six weeks in 2015 excavating the adjacent plot, and I made it quite clear to the team that his privacy was to be respected, that we should be neighborly, and not encourage visitors. Luckily our location on a ledge beneath the hilltop made us nigh invisible from ground level. When the local press came to cover the mayor's visit to the excavation (Fig. 11), we also made sure that the accompanying article did not specify as to where on the hill we were digging. Our Ministry archaeologist Stella D. appreciated this deliberate vagueness. The second reason as to why the mobilization of knowledge about our project is not site-based relates to concerns of the Ministry and the Cycladic Ephorate. Due to the economic hardships suffered by this government agency, there simply is not enough money for the excavation area to be presented in a manner keeping with Ministry standards, that is, security in the form of fences, locked gate, guard, information panels, and signage to the site. In the future, this situation could change. If discoveries at Stélida were deemed to be of significance to the international archaeological community, popular press and/or the Ministry itself, then the site's status might be revisited. This could take the form of compulsory land purchase from the private owners, and the designation of Stélida as the type of site requiring public presentation and conservation, comparable to that witnessed elsewhere on Naxos with the Kouroi of Melanes or Temple of Dionysus at Iria (Gratsia 2010: 83). As to whether our work would necessarily precipitate such changes is unsure, for Palaeolithic open-air sites are notoriously difficult to present to the public (see below). Nonetheless, we need to bear these issues in mind as SNAP develops, and consider our future positions at the intersection of these various stakeholder communities' desires, value regimes, and concerns.

It is thus our current aim to share our work with larger non-academic audiences through off-site mechanisms, including lectures, web-hosted media, exhibitions, popular science writing, and educational packs for schools. Our talk for the Cultural Association lecture in Chora, the island's main (port) town, was one such example (Figs. 12 and 13), with the presentation covered by local and Cycladic-wide print and digital media (SNAP News 2014). Here too we have to navigate the claims and concerns of other stakeholder groups, not least the fact that any archaeological project working in Greece can only share information with the press after the Ministry of Culture permits it. Thus while we were happy to receive the invitation to talk in Chora, this was not a decision we could make alone. We first had to gain permission from our Ephorate representative, who was also able to attend (monitor) the talk. While a structural impediment to the rapid dissemination of our results, these are far from insurmountable barriers. Such restrictions were eminently understandable, as any profile-raising of Stélida will only serve to make protecting the site—from looters, and other unwarranted forms of attention—that much harder for Stella D. and her Ephorate colleagues. In a slightly different vein, our 2014 National Geographic Society Waitt Grant came with certain restrictions on the public dissemination of project-related discoveries. Here we needed to navigate pragmatic fieldwork concerns (without the award there would have been no SNAP 2014), with ethically underpinned desires to maximize the public impact of our results as quickly as possible.

A well-illustrated and accessible lecture given in person by SNAP team members is undoubtedly one of the most effective means of engaging with proximate and wider Naxian communities, with future talks planned for other Cycladic and Greek public venues. That said, such interactions can be restricted in their impact; if we wish to engage with significantly larger audiences, then webbased content seems the most obvious long-term means of achieving these aims (McDavid 2004; see also Law and Morgan 2014). To that end, we launched the SNAP website in 20139, but at the time of writing it is at least a year out of date, with no mention of the 2015-2016 excavations. This brings into sharp focus the issue of sustainability, which in this case involves maintaining these digital platforms and having the time and the skill to do

so. Grant monies have been raised from SSHRC, a component of which is dedicated to public engagement. As such, we should soon be able to pay a student research assistant to work on our media content, although as to what happens in five years when the award is completed (let alone 10 or 15 years' time) has yet to be planned. Hopefully, a 'final statement' and accompanying digital archive could still be hosted by the McMaster University server (for related issues, see Law and Morgan 2014). The more immediate aim is to make the site bilingual, as the contents are thus far only in English, not Greek.

As for exhibitions, the mayor of Naxos has already offered us space for such an endeavor, but this opportunity requires dedicated energies from individuals betterversed in cultural heritage presentations than our team currently possesses (cf. Moser 2010; see also Atalay et al. 2010: 13-15). Similarly, the development of K-12 teaching packs requires a significant intellectual investment, perhaps the focus of a graduate degree that engages with current pedagogical debates and curricula requirements in Greece (see Galanidou 2012). We do however have plans for having a science illustrator join us in 2016 (one of our Çatalhöyük colleagues) to produce reconstructions and other images to represent our work for non-specialist audiences, something that will in itself comprise a significant contribution to the interpretative process (Swogger 2000).

A further challenge that we face in representing SNAP to non-academic audiences is the problematic nature of Stélida's archaeology. The site comprises a Palaeolithic-Mesolithic stone tool workshop, an early prehistoric world of 'bones and stones' with precious little else to grab the public imagination, our second iteration of 'nothing to see here!' Thus our desire to engage 'the public' through web-hosted video, blogs, podcasts, etc., will amount to little if we cannot find an imaginative means of representing the temporally and culturally alien world of early humans. While the problem of (re)presenting early prehistoric sites to the public is acknowledged (see papers in Hodder and Doughty 2007), there has been relatively little discussion of the specific issues facing such old sites as Stélida (for critiques of related early human representations see Moser 1992, 1998; Galanidou 2007, 2008).

Conclusions

Stélida provides a fascinating challenge for developing 'public' archaeology. SNAP occupies a different space to many of those other case-studies in the literature, one where 'the local' is heterogeneous in composition, fluid in its residence, and includes individuals with significantly more power than the archaeologists, and whose attitude toward our work varies and embodies conflicting interests. Our attempt at creating an engaged archaeology thus comprises a novel and important case in 'studying up' (Nader 1972).

The groundwork has been laid to develop relationships with the diverse group of landowners who allow (or put up with) our presence, Naxians more generally, and a public audience both national and global, yet many tensions and contradictions remain. Ultimately, our presence at Stélida is permitted by the Greek Ministry of Culture and its local representatives, whose guidelines on archaeological practice and public data-sharing regulations/restrictions need to be respected. In turn, any desire to open up excavations to public viewing is tempered by our need to acknowledge the wishes of the landowners whose private property we work upon, while profile-raising Stélida may feed some of the proximate community's fears concerning their ability to develop their land. Equally, the public celebration of Stélida may lead to an escalation of offseason/illegal building and by extent the destruction of the archaeological record.

In truth, while I have recurrently invoked the notion of an 'engaged' archaeology, most of what has been presented here pertains to opening channels of communication. This relatively informal process has involved our listening to peoples' concerns, reading agency requirements, and trying to chart a course based on best practice. Our next step is to develop these relationships within a more formal dialogical framework, working with our Naxian cultural heritage specialist Dr. Stelios Lekakis, who brings professional training in ethnography and has experience of creating space for the kinds of engaged archaeologies that we aim for (Lekakis 2012, 2013; see also Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009a; Gratsia 2010). Limits will remain, as the Ministry of Culture guidelines would not encourage us to create a space where the stakeholder

communities were perceived to have a decision-making role in archaeological methods and practices, although we can hopefully include research questions raised by nonteam members. Then we just have to work out how to breathe life into all those "damn stones."

Notes

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- 3. www.saa.org.
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