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Excavation on Despotiko and Tsimintiri

ARCX-321

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Starting on 21 May 2024, our group of 16 CYA students began excavations on the site of Despotiko. Under the direction of Alexandra Alexandridou and director Yannis Kourayos, we worked on excavating multiple buildings and trenches on the Mandra Site and continued previous years' excavation work. After one week on Despotiko, we moved to work on Tsimintiri and continued the work that had been done there as well.

The island of Despotiko is a Cycladic island in the Aegean Sea in Greece. It lies between the islands of Antiparos and Siphnos and the Mandra Site is located on the NE side of the island. Despotiko is uninhabited, and apart from the archaeological sites, there is only an animal pen on the island. There is also a Sanctuary of Apollo, an altar facing the temple, and 22 other excavated buildings on the island, with activity dating back to the Early Iron Age on Despotiko.

On the first day, we began by clearing the vegetation that had grown over the site since the previous year. For the remainder of the week, we split into groups and worked in different buildings. The majority of the CYA group worked in Building MN to excavate and clear the walls of the building and the surrounding areas. Other groups, including myself, opened new trenches on either side of the semi-circular structure that faces the temple or worked on other buildings with another group of graduate students over the week.

During our second and third week of excavation, we moved to the smaller island of Tsimintiri, which is situated between Antiparos and Despotiko. It is believed that Tsimintiri, Despotiko, and Antiparos were all connected by an isthmus until the 3rd century BC. There have been graves found on this island from previous excavations, in addition to multiple other buildings excavated on the site.

The excavations at Tsimintiri started similarly to our excavation at Despotiko. We began by clearing all of the vegetation from multiple areas around the site on the first day and then moved into excavating specific buildings at the site. While many of us were not expecting to work for multiple weeks on Tsimintiri, our work there was valuable. Because of various reasons, there has been minimal excavation work on this island, and therefore less information about the site. All of our work, including finds, sketches, photos, and journals will be immensely helpful to inform archaeologists, researchers, and the general public about the island.