

# Archaeological Museum of Chania

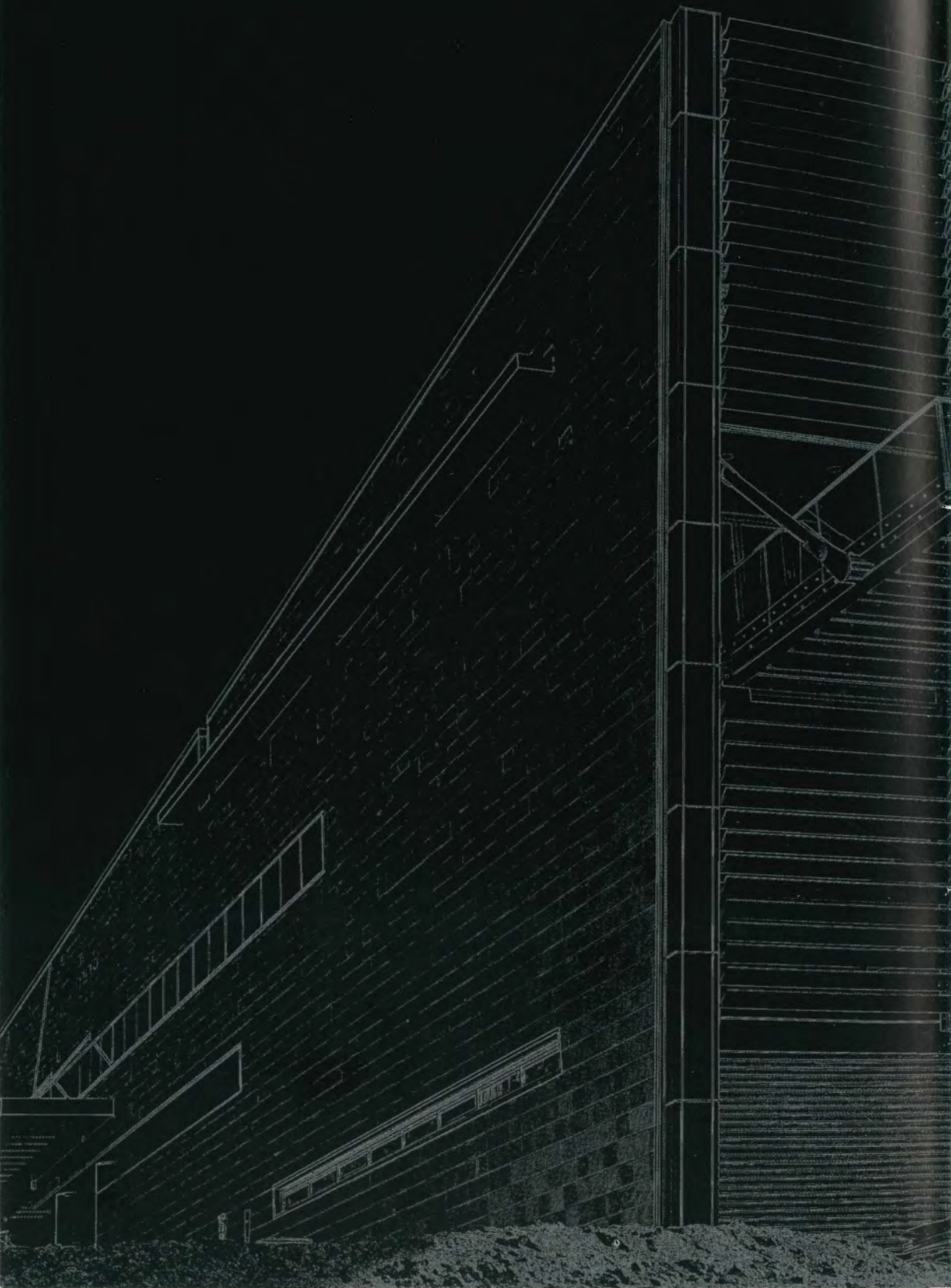
from the 19th to the 21st century

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*“an adventurous journey through space and time”*



13.12.2015 - 15.01.2016



## An adventurous journey through space and time...

The current temporary exhibition is organically connected to the Work "Preparation of the museological and museographic study for the permanent exhibition of the new Archaeological Museum of Chania", which is integrated to the Operational Programme «Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship», NSRF 2007-2013.

Its conception and organization render a significantly difficult and complex attempt, as it had to be presented at the new building of the Archaeological Museum of Chania, which does not operate yet, a holistic, attractive and in the same time without antiquities exhibition.

The aim of the temporary exhibition with subject "The Archaeological Museum of Chania from the 19th to the 21st century: an adventurous journey through space and time" is to present the course of the Museum of Chania since its establishment and until today. This course, which follows the historical aspects of our land, is documented and emerging through the "excavation" of a rich archival and photographic material, as well as the utilization of printed material, extracted mainly from the daily press, in a time span of at least 100 years.

The processing and utilization of this great volume of information was realized under the supervision and responsibility of the colleague Mrs. Katerina Tzanakaki, archaeologist.

We owe special thanks to Mrs. Stella Gerondidi for the concession of the valuable personal archive of her father Mr. Georgios Gerontakis Gerondidis, guard of antiquities at the Museum of Chania between 1941-1969.

We also thank our colleagues at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Herakleion, the Director Dr. Vasiliki Sythiakaki and the Head of the Department Mrs Ioanna Serpetidaki, for the opportunity they gave us to study the archival material relevant to the prefecture of Chania, as well as Mr. Konstantinos Fournarakis, Director of the Historical Archive of Crete and Mrs. Paraskevi Choudalaki, Director of the Municipal Library of Chania, for their collaboration.

We hope that these emerging aspects of the eventful and polysemous life of the Archaeological Museum of Chania will reinforce its diachronic message and will reveal in a drastic way a part of the local historic memory to the benefit not only of our fellow citizens but of the general public that will visit the exhibition.

Dr. Eleni Papadopoulou  
Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania



## The foundation of the Archaeological Museum at Chania

On June 15 1899 the Hegemonic Consul of the Cretan State votes a law regarding the protection of antiquities in Crete, foreseeing the establishment of two public Archaeological Museums at Herakleion and Chania, respectively. The law defined that the antiquities from the regions of Chania, Sfakia and Rethymno will be delivered to the Museum of Chania.

Information on the first years of the establishment of the Museum at Chania are sporadic and few, with almost non-existent photographic and other archival material.

The collection of the archaeological items, which formed the exhibition of the Museum, was established with finds retrieved from excavations, as well as donations, purchases and confiscations. Important to the enrichment of the collection was the contribution of private collectors, many of whom donated at the beginning of the 20th century a good deal of items in their possession.

The core of the exhibition formed the Michael Tsivourakis collection, which was donated to the Museum on May 1900 and is characterized by the large number and variety of the included antiquities. The donator founded at "Kryo Vrysali" in Chania an antiquity shop, aiming to the purchase of all items originated from his homeland, the region of Selino.

When the Archaeological Museum was founded it was housed at the Courthouse, occupying two rooms on the ground floor. Its co-existence with the Administrative Services and the Ministries of the Cretan State exposed the antiquities to every kind of wear, and as an immediate consequence some of them suffered extended damages.

The collection remained at the Courthouse until September 20 1934, when the burst of a fire resulted in many antiquities being destroyed, other cut into pieces (such as the statue of Hadrian from Diktyннаιο and the statue of the "Philosopher" from Elyros), while several of the rest permanently lost their indications of provenance.

Since then, it was put forward the issue of the transport, secure housing and appropriate exhibition of the Museum finds, which were temporarily stored at the basement of the current 1st High School of Chania.



Αρχαιολογικόν Μουσείον Χίου  
1927 Τμήμα Αρχαιοτήτων

## From the looting during the German occupation to the post-war uncertainty

After the fire of 1934 and the transportation of the antiquities to the 1st High School, Sp. Marinatos, Ephor of Antiquities of Crete, together with Ar. Katsoulis, Curator of the Museum, put in order and sealed the fragile and most precious items in restored showcases.

At the building of the 1st High School the collection was hosted for seven years. In 1940, and while the II World War had begun, English soldiers and Italian captives of war successively broke into the storage space of the collection. Afterwards, in 1941, the Germans dictated the building and transferred the antiquities to a space at the Municipal Market of Chania.

A little bit later, under the initiative and care by N. Tomadakis, Director of the Historical Archive of Crete, and the Municipality of Chania, it was guaranteed the transportation of the Archaeological Collection. For this purpose, on November 1 1941 the Küçük Hasan mosque at the Venetian harbor of Chania was dictated. The Museum was "partially put in order" by V. Theofanidis, Ephor of Antiquities in Western Crete and U. Jantzen, archaeologist at the Service for the Protection of Monuments of the German army, whose contribution saved the Museum from further adventures.

The opening of the Archaeological Museum took place in 1942, and it operated throughout the war "systematically and satisfactory everyday" from 8am to 12pm and from 4pm to 6pm.

On February 1945, the Museum was handed to the temporary curator D. Maroulakis, since the Ephor of Antiquities V. Theofanidis was in Athens due to health issues.

The disastrous for the luck of the Museum period of the German occupation was documented through a detailed inspection and recording that was conducted in 1946. From the collection it has been removed the 1/3 of the antiquities and almost the total of the precious items, whose luck is unknown until today.

After the war, the conditions for the exhibition of the Archaeological Collection were unfavorable. In the reports by the Ephors of Antiquities N. Platon and St. Alexiou, the place is constantly considered unsuitable due to the humidity and the proximity to the sea. Despite the transportation of the fragile items and the interventions on the vault of the mosque, problems persisted, thus making acute the need for the transportation of the Museum to a more suitable place.



## The Museum is established

Since the need for finding a secure and sufficient place for hosting the Archaeological Collection was acute, the Ephor N. Platon and the Curator S. Alexiou make every possible effort to ensure a proper building.

For this purpose, in the middle of the 1950s, it is selected the katholikon of the Venetian monastery of San Francisco. However, for the relocation of the Archaeological Museum to start, it was considered necessary the restoration of the church, since, during its long history, it had many and different uses and relevant interventions: as a mosque, cinema, storeroom for military material.

The restoration works begun in 1958 under the supervision of the engineer K. Latsiotakis. The static problems that emerged were many, but it was decided to deal only with the most serious ones, mainly the roof, the exterior surfaces and the surrounding area.

Since 1960, together with the restoration of San Francisco, the items that were to be exhibited are also catalogued, sorted and conserved by the Ephor S. Alexiou and the chief technician Z. Kanakis, respectively.

After the completion of the restoration works on December 1961, it starts the systematic transportation of the archaeological collection from the Küçük Hasan mosque to the church of San Francisco. The Archaeological Museum officially opens its gates to the public on July 14 1962.

The period 1977-1981, and under the supervision of the Ephor of Antiquities Y. Tzedakis, the restoration at the interior of the church was completed. On July 12 1981 it was inaugurated the re-opening of the Archaeological Museum.

The next extended intervention was undertaken in 2000, under the Ephor M. Andreadaki-Vlazaki. It was then restored three smaller rooms in order to house the collection of Konstantinos, Marika and Kyriakos Mitsotakis, which was donated to the Archaeological Museum.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, M. Andreadaki-Vlazaki proposed and paved the way of the request to build a new and bigger Archaeological Museum at Chania. The wealth and the plethora of items, overfilling the current Museum and its storage rooms, could now be revealed in the best possible way.



## Donations and deliveries of antiquities

A significant part of the exhibition of the Archaeological Museum of Chania is formed by antiquities which derived from individual donations and deliveries. Already from the establishment of the Museum, donors offered to its collection Cretan antiquities which they bought in an effort to save them, while many private citizens cared in a responsible way to hand over random findings.

Among the great donators is included P. Valakis, Headmaster and later Curator of Antiquities, who in 1900 donated to the newly established Archaeological Museum a large number of items derived from the region of Selino.

Noteworthy is also the donation by P. Zolindakis, Headmaster and later General Inspector of Kalamon, as well as by Th. Moatsos, descendant of a merchant family, who in 1902-1903 donated to the Museum of Chania plenty of items mainly made of clay and stone. Some of them were purchased as "Greek antiquities from Benghazi".

For more than thirty years donations were limited and isolated. The interest of the citizens in saving the antiquities revived at the end of the 1950s, after the constant efforts by the current Ephors to inform and aware the public.

Since then, citizens fond of antiquities with selflessness and responsibility handed over every type of archaeological objects, sculptures, clay items, reliefs, coins, etc, thus contributing to the enrichment of the Archaeological Museum of Chania.

In 2008, a donation of great importance was conducted when the Company Club Hotel Casino Loutraki acquired for the Archaeological Museum of Chania the collection of Cretan coins by B. Traeger from an auction house in Germany. It is a unique assemblage, which is distinguished for the variety of mints represented, as well as the rare types that are included. The opening of this specific Collection of coins took place on May 2011 and the assemblage was exhibited in a showcase that its construction was funded by the Company itself.



## Two great donations of collections

Two donations by private collectors have significantly contributed to the enrichment of the Collection of the Archaeological Museum of Chania: by Michael Tsvourakis and by Konstantinos, Marika and Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

The Archaeological Collection that started to take shape in 1900 included, besides archaeological findings, “over a thousand items” of the private collection by Michael Tsvourakis, coming from purchases, which largely formed the core of the initial exhibition.

M. Tsvourakis, originating from the village of Kopetoi at Plemeniana, and knowing the practice of travelers-visitors at the region of Selino, who “coming out during the summer months, supposed on vacation...constantly wandering at the nearby ancient Elyros”, as well as of some of his fellow inhabitants, who often offered for sale “randomly found antiquities”, started to buy them in an effort to protect and limit their export.

With the establishment of the Archaeological Museum of Chania, he donated to the Cretan State the largest part of the collection that he had created, as well as the showcases in which he kept the coins. Those items saved by the fire in 1934 and the German occupation, have enriched the thematic sections of the permanent exhibition of the Museum, respectively.

The second donation of private collection to the Archaeological Museum of Chania took place on November 2000 with 1049 items of the collection by Konstantinos, Marika and Kyriakos Mitsotakis. The majority consisted of antiquities originated from Crete, among them, a great deal from the region of Chania.

For their exhibition, three small, continuous halls at the northern aisle of the current Museum of San Francisco were used, which house one third of the collection. These are halls related to the exhibition at the Museum and until then were used as storage rooms for archaeological material. The opening of this specific exhibition took place on December 2 2000 by the Director of the Ephorate at that time, Maria Andreadaki-Vlazaki.



## The exhibits tell their story

### **Sculpture of the goddess Aphrodite (L67)**

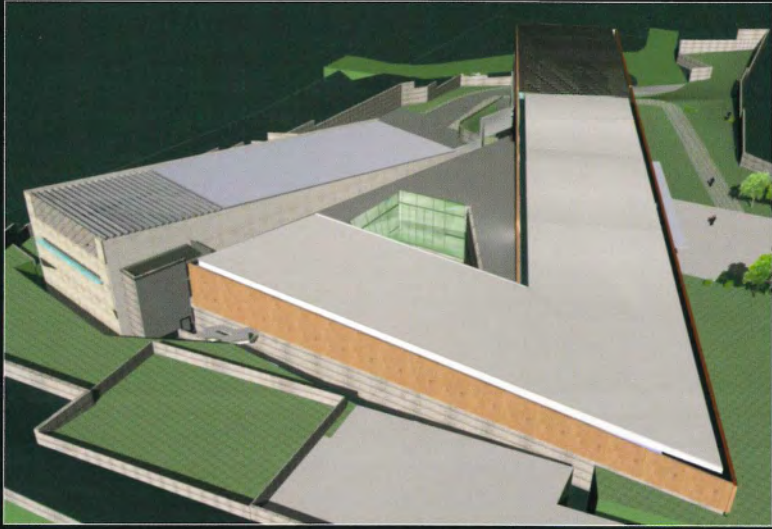
I was born on the 2nd c. B.C. from a rough piece of marble, when a sculptor from a famous sculpture center in Rhodes gave me the form of Aphrodite just before taking her bath. For many years I decorated with my presence an important house of ancient Kydonia. Through the centuries, though, my traces were lost and at the beginning of the 20th century I found myself at the Museum of Chania, without anyone knowing from where I came from. My identity was recently revealed, through an old description by N. Papadakis, who writes that I came to light in 1912, when the “Papadopetrou” mansion was built at the road of the “Promenade”.

### **Sculpture of the emperor Hadrian (L77)**

I was devoted to the temple of Diktynna at the Spatha headland in the 2nd c. B.C., as an expression of gratitude by the citizens for my beneficences. A monk spotted me and I arrived intact in 1913 at the Museum, which at that time was hosted at the CourtHouse. They describe me as a sculpture of fine quality and as a unique creation at the region of Greece, thing for which I do not have the least doubt. My height reached at 2,20m but in 1934, during the great fire at the Courthouse, fate was unfair to me. I was cut into pieces which were lost and now what is only left is my head exhibited alone at the Museum of Chania.

### **Clay model of shield (P296), head of figurine (P307) and Satyr (M56)**

We arrived at Chania together with other antiquities in 1900 as illegally imported merchandises and we were taken away at the Customs. It was the time that it has just started the regular ferryboat connection between Piraeus and Chania. By then Crete was a different territory than Greece and the illicit trafficking of antiquities has found a new route in order to erase the traces of our true origin. Caring hands brought us to our new home, the Museum, and since then we live there with the company of our other beautiful partners.



## The new Archaeological Museum is ‘emerging’

The new Archaeological Museum of Chania is built at the historic area of Chalepa and in specific to the west of Skra Street, in a plot of 11,500 square meters.

During the Cretan State, the Russian Consulate was transported to this area and remained until 1913. It was housed in a pre-existing two-storey building with a large courtyard, dominating on the top of a small hill, to the west of the church of Ag. Magdalini.

Later, and after been remodeled, this specific building hosted the Greek military hospital and after that the Headquarters of the “Chatzidakis” military camp. The large courtyard of the plot hosted the spaces of the camp. In the middle of the 1970 part of the building was destroyed by a fire. Since then it was used by the “Mixed Groups of Machineries for Reorganization” until 1992 when its management came to the State Service for Public Property.

Within the search for finding a larger space for the Archaeological Museum to be transported, the plot was considered as the most appropriate. Its great size and its location at the neighborhood of Chalepa -which had always a special cultural significance in the development of the city- made it proper to welcome the facilities and the activities of the new Museum.

As a center of political and diplomatic brewing from the middle of the 19th and until the beginning of the 20th century, at the suburb of Chalepa were built impressive private mansions, which later housed the Consulates of the four “Protective Forces”, the headquarter of the International troops, international clubs, the palace of the Higher Commissioner and the house of Eleftherios Venizelos. Today, many of these buildings have been renovated and some of them form as head offices of institutions.

In 1996, the plot was given to the Ministry of Culture and in 2005, in a closed contest, the preliminary study by the architect Theofanis Bobotis and associates was chosen for the new building. The overall architectural proposal is completed through the synthesis of two distinguishable linear monolithic volumes surfacing from the ground. It is about the symbolic reference to the elements of the civilization that are beneath the surface and in the same time a bio-climatic choice, adjusting in the best of the ways the building to the intensely sloping plot.

# Exhibition Team

## **General curatorship:**

Dr. Eleni Papadopoulou, Director of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

## **Curatorship-coordination:**

Katerina Tzanakaki, Archaeologist at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

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Katerina Tzanakaki, Archaeologist at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

Loukia Flevari, Archaeologist on fix-termed contract at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

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## **Translations in English:**

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## **Conservation of Antiquities:**

Anna Mylona, Conservator of Antiquities and Artworks at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

Ilias Michalogiannis, Conservator of Antiquities and Artworks at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

## **Design of the exhibition:**

Stamatis Zannos, Decorator

Manolis Tsitsiridis, Chief Technician at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

## **Graphic design of visual material-editing of photographs, printing:**

Elias Eliadis, Photographer

## **Design of the leaflet:**

Athina Ragia, Elias Eliadis

## **Photography:**

Elias Eliadis, Photographer

Loukia Flevari, Archaeologist on fix-termed contract at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

Vasilis Kozonakis, Photographer

## **Financial Management:**

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Stella Voulgaraki, Accountant on fix-termed contract at the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania

## **Technical assistance:**

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