

## Introduction

The idea of organizing one conference to honour two professors may seem unusual, but it merely reflects the esteem they jointly enjoy in the hearts of their students. Further, given their long cooperation in numerous research projects, undergraduate and postgraduate seminars, and postgraduate and doctoral theses, the resolution is actually quite logical and appropriate.

Their collaboration started when they first met at the University of Athens as assistants to Professor N. Drandakis and joined his research in the Mani during the late 1970s. Later in the early 1980s, the pair started their own joint research program in Epidauros Limira. However their partnership blossomed fully when they collaborated as co-directors in the excavation of the settlement of Early Christian Halasarna (modern Kardamaina) in Kos, that began in 1985 (Fig. I.1). This was followed by another similar project, the survey and excavations being undertaken by the Hellenic Mission in South Sinai since 1998 (Fig. I.2). In the framework of these projects they gave numerous of their students the chance to participate and acquire formative research experiences and memories.

Moreover, they organized together educational excursions (Fig. I.3) and undergraduate and postgraduate seminars.



**Figure I.1. Sophia Kalopissi-Verti and Maria Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, Kardamaina, Kos.**

Numerous indeed are the students who have participated in their research projects, excavations, seminars and outings, benefitting from their generous and sharing spirits and minds.

Because of the enormous number of students they have taught in the almost forty years of their careers, we were compelled to invite to the scheduled conference only those



**Figure I.2. Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, Maria Panayotidi-Kesisoglou, Nikolas Fyssas, Dionysis Mourelatos, Sinai.**



**Figure I.3. Educational excursion, Ag.Achileios, Prespes.**

who had had at least one of them as their supervisors, although mostly it turned out they had studied with both.

The conference was entitled *“Perceptions of Byzantium: Tradition and Ruptures”*. With almost 40 lectures given,

it attracted hundreds of attendees in January 2014 at the central building of the University of Athens. A great success (Figs. I.4 & I.5), it was a fitting celebration and display of esteem.



**Figure I.4. University of Athens, reception of the conference in honour of Sophia Kalopissi-Verti and Maria Panayotidi-Kesisoglou.**



Figure I.5. University of Athens, reception of the conference in honour of Sophia Kalopissi-Verti and Maria Panayotidi-Kesisoglou.

This volume — the majority of its papers were presented at this conference — is another and more permanent way to demonstrate our respect and to acknowledge our professors' stimulating academic input.

It is dedicated to them both from all their students.

The organizing committee

Smaragdi Arvaniti

Charikleia Diamanti

Nikolaos Fyssas

Theodora Konstantellou

Dionysios Mourelatos

Anna Takoumi

Kyriaki Tassoyannopoulou