



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ	HELLENIC REPUBLIC
<b>Α.ΔΙ.Π.</b>	<b>Η.Ο.Α.Α.</b>
ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ	HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY
ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ	FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

November 2010

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **The External Evaluation Committee**

#### ***Introduction***

THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION PROCEDURE

THE INTERNAL EVALUATION PROCEDURE

#### ***A. Curriculum***

APPROACH

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

IMPROVEMENT

#### ***B. Teaching***

#### ***C. Research***

IMPLEMENTATION

RESULTS AND IMPROVEMENT

#### ***D. All Other Services***

#### ***E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors***

INHIBITING FACTORS

SHORT-, MEDIUM-, AND LONG-TERM GOALS

PLAN AND ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT

LONG-TERM ACTIONS PROPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT

#### ***F. Final Conclusions***

### **External Evaluation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of History and Archaeology of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Professor Karl Reber (president)  
University of Lausanne, Switzerland
2. Professor Angelos Chaniotis  
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton N.J., U.S.A.
3. Professor emeritus John Iatrides  
South Connecticut State University, U.S.A.
4. Professor Paul Magdalino  
Koc University, Turkey
5. Professor Diamantis Panagiotopoulos  
University of Heidelberg, Germany

## **Introduction**

### **THE INTERNAL EVALUATION PROCEDURE**

The present report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Law 3374/2005 and the instructions and guidelines provided by the HAQAA.

- **Dates and brief account of the site visit.** The External Evaluation committee (EEC) visited the Department of Archaeology and History, University of Athens, from 1 to 3 November 2010. The visit was completed in accordance with a detailed plan, prepared in advance by the Head of Department. The EEC expresses its appreciation for the excellent organization of the procedure the Department and the open and positive spirit with which its members were received.
- **Whom did the Committee meet?** The EEC met the Rector and Vice Rector of the University of Athens, the Head of Department, the members of the Internal Evaluation Committee, most of the members of the administrative staff as well as students at graduate, postgraduate and doctoral levels.
- **List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.** The EEC's work is based on the Internal Evaluation Report as well as on a series of documents given to it during its visit. It is also based on such evidence that the EEC has been able to collect and which demonstrates the quality and quantity of the work in the Department.
- **Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed.** The EEC interviewed separately the following groups: (a) staff members of all departmental Sections; (b) groups of the undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students; and (c) members of the administration staff.
- **Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.** The EEC visited those facilities that are within the Department and those within the Faculty that are related to the work of the Department. Particularly, we inspected some classrooms, some professors' offices, meeting rooms, the offices of the administration staff, several laboratories, the Department's Museum, the Archaeological Park, the libraries and reading rooms, and the Students' Dining Facility.
- **Appropriateness of sources and documentation used.** The EEC considers the sources and documentation used – statistical as well as qualitative – as appropriate. The EEC's work was greatly facilitated by the Department's Internal Evaluation Report which was clear, thorough, transparent and highly informative. On the basis of this report, there can be no doubt that the objectives of the internal evaluation process have been met by the Department.

## **A. Curriculum**

### APPROACH

The Department offers a four year degree program covering a wide thematic spectrum in History and Archaeology. The main objective of the current curriculum is the education of graduates who will either be employed as teachers at secondary level or follow a career as professional historians and archaeologists at academic institutions, museums and the Archeological Service. The Department offers also a two year postgraduate program in one of the participating disciplines. Both curricula follow all appropriate international standards and are consistent with the objectives of the programs. Furthermore, the Department offers in cooperation with other Departments and Universities two interdisciplinary postgraduate programs in 'Museum Studies' and 'Cultural Management'.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

The curriculum in the first four semesters is relatively broad, including a series of introductory courses not only in History and Archaeology but also in the disciplines of Greek and Latin Philology, Psychology and Education. The prominent role of these disciplines in the first two years of the undergraduate program is imposed by the necessity of offering the students the basics of a general education which will qualify them to teach as philologists at secondary level. The main disadvantage of this system is the fact that the related courses occupy a substantial part of the program not only increasing the work load of the students but also hampering a closer acquaintance with historical and archaeological disciplines at the early stage of their studies. The basic knowledge in History and Archaeology is transmitted in a series of courses that are obligatory for students of either direction. The exceedingly high number of students attending these courses makes any attempt at an effective implementation of the program's objectives extremely difficult.

Students are complaining about the bad conditions of teaching (see below, Section B). Staff members face an extremely heavy work load which in courses with several hundreds of students is unbearable. According to the unanimous opinion of students and staff members only seminars attended by a limited number of students provide the possibility of successful teaching and learning. An increase in the number of seminars and a parallel decrease in the number of lecture courses would be advisable, even if such a proposal seems for the time being, due to problems of time schedule, space, and human capacities, rather unrealistic. The overall work load of the curriculum for the students is undoubtedly high, given the fact that the number of courses is considerably higher than in peer institutions in European and North American universities. This is, however, a structural problem which is induced by the twofold objective of the program to simultaneously educate philologists for secondary schools and professional historians/archaeologists. The EEC would encourage the Department to consider the introduction of separate undergraduate training programs for prospective school teachers and historians/archaeologists/art historians respectively. The Department is rather reluctant to support this proposal given the justified fear of a massive decline in student numbers. The planned reduction of the courses' hours from four to three will greatly contribute to quality of education.

The program as a whole provides an impressive thematic and chronological coverage in each discipline. The main principles of teaching in all the Department's sections are a strong emphasis on periodic division and the systematic effort to provide a comprehensive overview in selected fields of History and Archaeology. Generally, the course contents are structurally coordinated, in the sense that the subsequent courses build on previously taught subjects. There is limited or no overlap amongst courses.

The discipline of **Prehistoric Archaeology** is one of the Department's strongest sections. The members of the academic staff with their several specializations cover virtually all major periods, regional cultures and aspects of Aegean and Cypriot Prehistory. This astonishing

variety of scientific interests results in a versatile program of undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Despite the clear focus on Cycladic, Minoan and Mycenaean culture, which reflects the traditional understanding of the discipline in Greek universities, the Department has shaped a distinctive profile of Prehistoric Archaeology by creating a limited number of faculty positions in subjects that are still underrepresented or even absent in other Greek Departments of History and Archaeology. These positions focus either on cultural regions beyond the Aegean (i.e. Cyprus and the Near East) or modern fields of archaeological inquiry (i.e. Environmental Archaeology). The recent establishment of a new position in Archaeological Theory clearly demonstrates this intention to expand the horizons of the discipline beyond traditional borders. The program of studies at undergraduate and postgraduate level strives to provide a comprehensive overview of Aegean and Cypriot Prehistory which is in its breadth and depth impressive. There is a clear emphasis on the systematic and detailed treatment of primary sources. Issues of archaeological method and theory have been an integrated, yet rather underrepresented part of the curriculum. The new position in Archaeological Theory will certainly fill this gap and contribute to a more diversified and balanced study program.

The undergraduate program includes: a) a series of introductory courses covering the most important fields of Aegean and Cypriot Prehistory and b) seminars that are focusing on more detailed issues giving the students the opportunity to get acquainted with the main issues and methods of the discipline. The postgraduate program, which consists exclusively of seminars, provides a solid basis for in-depth knowledge. The subjects of the seminars relate not only to traditional but also very original issues of Prehistoric Archaeology, thus offering the students a very clear overview of the present state of research. A great emphasis is given on practical training either through courses offered at the Department's Museum, where the students have the opportunity to come in direct contact with archaeological finds and methods of archaeological documentation, or through their participation in several archaeological field projects conducted by staff members.

The curriculum of the discipline of **Classical Archaeology** is also characterized by a remarkable breadth covering the period from the Early Iron Age (11<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) to the end of the Roman period (4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD). In combination with the neighboring disciplines of Prehistoric Archaeology and Byzantine Archaeology, this results in an impressive coverage of Greek archaeology from the emergence of the first cultures in the Aegean to the Post-Byzantine Period. The fact that every single major period of *Greek Classical Archaeology* is taught by a different member of the staff is a unique phenomenon in European and non-European universities. Admittedly, subjects that are traditionally represented in Departments of Classical Archaeology in most European Universities (e.g. Etruscan Art, Roman Provincial Archaeology, the Archaeology of the City of Rome) are absent. Nevertheless, the strong specialization promotes a detailed treatment of every single epoch in teaching and offers to the students the unique opportunity to carry out their postgraduate studies in a specific period supervised by a specialist.

The curriculum is organized in a manner that allows the student to qualify themselves for future professional occupations. The undergraduate program includes a series of introductory courses covering: a) all important periods of ancient Greek culture, from Geometric to Roman, b) most of the major thematic fields of the discipline (architecture, sculpture, metallurgy, pottery, painting), and last but not least c) aspects of methodology. Through their participations in seminars which are offered in the National Archaeological Museum or on several archaeological sites, the students have the possibility to get better acquainted with ancient monuments and works of art. In a second step, the program offers courses and seminars with specialization in different topics. This broad teaching is indispensable for both future directions leading to an occupation as professional archaeologist or as a teacher at secondary level.

The postgraduate program of study leading to a master's degree includes seminars with a broad thematic range in Classical Archaeology as well as more intense teaching and training in small classes on specific subjects that are closely related to future professional work, i.e. Management of Monuments, Archaeometry, Geology, Museum Studies and New Technologies. On a second level of postgraduate studies, a few places are available for those

students who wish to pursue an academic career by writing a PhD dissertation under the supervision of members of the academic staff.

The discipline of **Ancient History** traditionally covers the history of Greece and Rome. Consequently, it encompasses a large historical period – from the first written documentary sources (ca. 14th cent. BC) to Late Antiquity (early 6th cent. AD) –, a vast geographical space (Greece, Italy, the areas of Greek colonization in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and the areas occupied by the empire of Alexander and his Successors, the Roman Empire), and a large variety of subjects (political, social, legal, economic, cultural, religious history). The history of Antiquity is even broader, including also the history of states in the Near and Middle East within the same chronological period (especially the Achaemenid Empire, ancient Israel, and the Parthian Empire, with the exception of the history of Egypt, the Hittites and Assyria, which is studied by Egyptology, Hittitology, and Assyriology respectively). The study of Ancient History is primarily based on the study of written sources; more specialized disciplines exist for the study of the documentary sources: Papyrology for the papyri and epigraphy for inscriptions; numismatics is dedicated to the study of coins. Finally, the discipline of historical geography, within Ancient History and in co-operation with Archaeology, studies the continually changing relation between man and environment and the organization of space. Because of the enormous thematic diversity, there is hardly any university (perhaps with the exception of Oxford), in which the entire field of Ancient History is covered in all its different facets (including, e.g., economic history and the history of law). The aim of good teaching programs is to provide undergraduate students with a general overview of historical developments and to familiarize them with the source material, methods, and questions; the latter task can only be done on the basis of case studies. No undergraduate or graduate program can ever comprehensively cover the entire field. The undergraduate and graduate program in Ancient History at the University of Athens is evaluated against this background. At the University of Athens, the faculty of Ancient History consists of scholars who represent a wide range of specialties: the history of early and Classical Greece, the Hellenistic World, the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, the cultural history of Late Antiquity, Greek epigraphy, and Greek numismatics. This allows the Department to cover Greek history from Homer to Justinian in an excellent manner, both in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. Very good training is offered also in Greek epigraphy, often using the resources that exist in Athens (Epigraphical Museum) and in co-operation with the Center for Greek and Roman Antiquity of the National Hellenic Research Foundation (KERA); the latter co-operation also allows for sufficient coverage (in the graduate level) of Latin epigraphy. Through the participation of the discipline in research programs (e.g., Pythagoras) graduate students occasionally have the possibility to participate in research activities (e.g. in the compilation of a collection of translated and commented inscriptions). In recent years, excellent training is also offered in numismatics. As regards Roman history, traditionally an extremely weak, and often entirely absent, field in Greek universities, an adequate overview of the history of Rome and its Empire can be offered at the undergraduate level. At both undergraduate and postgraduate level, the history of the Roman East is covered in a very good manner, but in the postgraduate level the Roman history proper (the Republic, the Roman Empire) hardly plays any part. With its current staff, the Department cannot offer any teaching at all in the broader history of the Ancient World (Achaemenids, Parthians, Israel). There is a clear emphasis on Greek history. This is fully justified given the fact that in the undergraduate level the discipline primarily trains students, who will become school-teachers. It is also justified in view of the available resources (library) and the linguistic skills of the students (good knowledge of Ancient Greek, limited knowledge of Latin). However, the Department itself has recognized in recent years the necessity to give more emphasis to the history of the Roman Empire. But with the faculty positions available, a stronger representation of Roman history in teaching is not possible. The curriculum corresponds to high international standards, and the seminars in particular offer the students excellent training and the possibility to work with original source material (literary sources, inscriptions, coins). The postgraduate seminars correspond to the standards of the internationally leading graduate programs. International co-operations are well chosen and very successful. With the current number of faculty positions the Department offers the maximum. Internal and international co-operations (e.g. in Papyrology in Athens, in Epigraphy with European Universities) offer some possibilities for an enlargement of the curriculum, but it is very regrettable that the legislation on higher

education does not allow co-operation and co-ordination of activities among Greek universities –although there is co-operation with the Faculty of Law at the University of Athens. Ideally, parts of the field, which are not – or not adequately – represented at the University of Athens, should be represented in other Universities; departments should complement each other up to a certain extent. This should be taken into consideration for the creation of new positions.

In the undergraduate curriculum of **Byzantine and Medieval History**, the department employs four permanent teaching staff who specialize in Byzantine history, a rare concentration of expertise that deserves to be encouraged and maintained. Between them they offer extensive and intensive coverage of the subject area in two core courses, one mandatory course for History majors, and four elective seminar classes. Although the emphasis appears to be on the middle period, there are no glaring chronological gaps, and there are some welcome areas of concentration, such as late Byzantine sources, Byzantine social history, Byzantium and the crusades, and Procopius' *Buildings*. The last two topics, in particular, provide useful 'bridges' with other subject areas taught by the Department, namely western medieval history and Byzantine archaeology. The Department also employs two medievalists who offer courses on the medieval history of Western Europe, one at core level, and two elective seminars. This coverage of the Middle Ages beyond Byzantium is a very welcome development that could fruitfully be extended to the medieval history of the Islamic world. At postgraduate level, the Department offers four mandatory courses in Byzantine history, in addition to the electives that can be taken inside or outside the department. The mandatory courses are specialized in content and reflect the research interests of the teaching staff; they presuppose substantial background knowledge of Byzantine history, and therefore an undergraduate degree that includes the subject.

In the discipline of **Byzantine Archaeology**, the six permanent teaching staff offer extensive and intensive coverage of Byzantine archaeology and art, from Early Christian beginnings to the Post-Byzantine period. There are two core courses, two mandatory courses for majors in Archaeology and Art History, and three elective seminar classes. The chronological spread seems to be comprehensive and even, although thematically, architecture is more extensively represented than painting and figural art. If there is a particular emphasis, it appears to be on Byzantine artistic relations with the West, which makes a welcome parallel to the History track. However, there are no courses on western medieval art, which is perhaps a gap that the Section and the Department could aim to fill in future appointments. At postgraduate level, the four mandatory courses in Byzantine Archaeology offered in 2010-2011 are perhaps broader in scope than their History equivalents, but they are also clearly aimed at building on the knowledge that students will have gained from the undergraduate curriculum. The emphasis on painting as opposed to architecture is even more marked than at the undergraduate level. Indeed, at both levels the approach to the subject appears to be more art historical than archaeological - at least in comparison with the Prehistoric and Classical areas of the section, where field archaeology is an essential component of the curriculum.

In **Early Modern, Modern and Contemporary History**, the goals and objectives are consistent with the universally recognized purpose of History as an academic discipline: to provide the student with an informed and critical understanding of the past in the human experience as a valuable tool for the rational understanding of the present. Specifically and within the context of the goals of the Department of History, this section seeks to inform the student about major developments (political, social, economic, ideological, cultural) since the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Greece, Western Europe and world-wide. Integrated in this comprehensive program are courses and seminars that touch upon some major current issues of historical sciences, including urban, environmental, health, family and world history, as well as on historical theory and the history of historiography. This is accomplished initially through introductory courses chronologically defined, but especially through seminars (undergraduate and postgraduate). The focus and depth of sophistication of instruction increases at the postgraduate level and culminates at the level of the doctoral dissertation. The section also provides instruction in methodological research and historical writing so that the student may continue the independent study and recording of history. A significant



number of graduates of the Department are destined to become the country's future teachers of history at secondary level. In that capacity they may be presumed to play a significant role in the formation of public attitudes toward the country and the world. Accordingly the teaching of history satisfies important needs of society. As in most universities the curriculum as well as its periodic revision is decided by the section in accordance with procedures established by the Department. To the extent possible, and on the initiative of the faculty, the interests and needs of students are taken into consideration in deciding the time when specific courses are offered. By any traditional standards the section is entirely successful in implementing its curriculum as presently conceived. It should be noted, however, that the higher education legislation concerning faculty teaching loads results in very few courses being offered each semester. The problem is compounded by the small number of the section's regular faculty. There can be no question that the components of the section's subjects matter (Greece, Europe, World) receive unequal attention. In the section of Early Modern History, the interest to cover areas outside Greece is more pronounced, with several members specializing in Venetian, early modern European and Ottoman history. In the current curriculum of Modern and Contemporary History, the focus is clearly on Greece, with Western Europe receiving significantly less attention. The attempt to cover the rest of the world at the time when global issues increasingly overshadow national aspirations is rudimentary at best. As presently structured the section's curriculum does not serve well the student's educational needs. Critically important regions such as Asia, the Americas, and Africa are virtually ignored, whereas Eastern Europe and the Middle East receive insufficient attention. In addition, the chronological focus of current course offerings is also inadequately distributed with the emphasis mostly on the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and too little on the 21<sup>st</sup>. As a result, the student has little preparation for understanding contemporaneous issues and trends. Ideally, such deficiencies in the curriculum could be remedied by the addition of new faculty positions to cover the regions currently neglected. Since the prospects of such a solution are at present virtually non-existent, better utilization of the faculty should be considered. The section's very able and dynamic faculty might be encouraged to expand and diversify their course offerings in areas now neglected. Their members have already developed extensive national and international synergies which can compensate for these gaps. These include joint courses with other departments, such as the Department of Political Science and History of Panteion University, a special postgraduate program on the Mediterranean in collaboration with the University of Malta and the organization of postgraduate conferences on the Mediterranean, together with the University of Minnesota. Educational leave as an inducement for preparing to teach in new academic areas could also be a step in the right direction. Visiting specialists might also augment course offerings.

Finally, the section of **Art History** employs currently only three permanent members of teaching staff. Despite their limited number, there is an attempt to cover some major issues of the discipline in the fields of European and Greek history of art, covering a period from the age of Renaissance to modern times.

As mentioned above, the Department is also participating in two interdepartmental postgraduate programs. The EEC could not comprehensively survey these two programs because they are carried out by other Departments. Thus, it is unable to express an informed opinion on their objectives and efficacy. We would like though to make the following brief comments. The postgraduate program 'Cultural Management' seems to fill a substantial gap in academic education and can be regarded as a sensible response both to modern trends and to specific needs of the Greek state and society. The fact that this program is running with virtually no financial support and infrastructure is admirable though lamentable. As in the case of the main program of postgraduate studies, its existence and success is the result of the devotion of all participating staff members. The postgraduate program 'Museum Studies' could be also regarded as a welcome addition to the traditional spectrum of the Department's disciplines. However, the prominent role of a Department of Geology in a program of 'Museum Studies' is – at least – paradoxical. In this case, a radical restructuring of the program with the participation of truly relevant disciplines or a different title and objectives would be not only advisable but indeed urgently needed.

### **IMPROVEMENT**

There is a series of structural problems that inhibit the Department's ability to implement the current curriculum effectively:

- a) extremely high numbers of enrolled students and the increasing percentage of transferred students from other Greek universities;
- b) a great number of students who are enrolled in the Department not because they have chosen their area of studies, but because they have been assigned to them;
- c) increasing number of students with disappointingly low educational background;
- d) students being poorly prepared or apathetic;
- e) the dramatic difference in the quality and intensity of teaching between: a) introductory courses with excessively large classes and b) seminars in which the student numbers are limited;
- f) the disruptive influence of political activism on campus.

Most of these structural problems (see below Section E) are imposed by governmental policies and can be solved only by a radical reform of the Greek educational system. Only a substantial reduction in the number of incoming students and the percentage of transferred students could contribute to a successful implementation of the study program. As for the Department, the EEC is convinced that even a slight increase in the number of obligatory seminars would substantially improve the conditions and quality of teaching. According to the unanimous opinion of the EEC, team taught seminars offered by members of different departmental sections that provide an interdisciplinary approach to major issues of History and Archaeology could also contribute to a better scientific qualification of undergraduate and postgraduate students. Such team taught seminars, the teaching of which should count as full teaching load, have been taking part sporadically in the last years. They should be offered on a regular basis.

### **B. Teaching**

The Department's defined pedagogic policy is the effective teaching and learning of the curriculum. Its freedom to shape that policy is, however, to a large extent limited by two externally imposed constraints:

- The fact that 30% of the undergraduate curriculum (the 12 Base classes) has to be taught by other departments, and that the Department has to provide equivalent Base classes for other departments.
- The huge number of enrolled undergraduates (almost 4000 in 2009-2010), which creates classes of up to 1300 at Base and Core level and a ratio between teachers and taught of 1: 200-400, not only in Base and Core classes but also in the mandatory courses for History majors.

These factors, and especially the second, make it inevitable that much of the Department's teaching has to be done by lecturing in large amphitheatres to student audiences that may number several hundred and can only fit in the auditorium because many enrolled students fail to turn up. This dilutes both the teaching and the learning experience, and reduces the examination process to a minimal level of intellectual challenge, in which both assessed and assessors fail to perform with adequate concentration. Both the Department in its internal evaluation and the undergraduates in their conversations with the EEC stressed that in these conditions it is impossible for learning to progress beyond the level of secondary education. Both teachers and students equally stressed the great improvement that occurs with the transition, in the elective courses taken towards the end of the degree cycle, to seminar classes of smaller groups in which two-way interaction is encouraged and students are assessed by independently researched essays. The seminar format is also, naturally, implemented in the postgraduate classes, where the only serious inhibiting factor (identified by both teachers and students) is the economic need for students to work to support themselves. This necessarily has an impact on the timing of classes and the time it takes the

students to complete the program.

Despite these impediments, the Department has made considerable efforts to move with the times, and to bring its teaching procedures in line with the best practice implemented in institutions of higher education throughout Europe and North America. Indeed, its situation is not unlike the transition that the EEC members have experienced in their home institutions, where the old school of aloof, perfunctory pedagogues has given way to a new 'customer-friendly' generation. The teaching staff of the Department regularly use powerpoint, for which the classrooms are fully equipped, and a significant number have instituted e-classes for communication of class arrangements and course materials. We saw evidence that individual teachers take care to bring their course material up to date, and that the Department as a whole is deeply dedicated to providing and maintaining the maximum resources that its budget allows:

- the teaching museum, and the attached restoration/conservation laboratory
- the study units (σπουδαστήρια) of the Archaeology and History sections
- the two computer workshops
- the 'practicals' or 'internships' by which course teachers try to involve their students in relevant experience of museums, archives, and archaeological fieldwork.

This is only one of the ways in which the Department attempts to instill a research culture among its undergraduates - not unsuccessfully, to judge from the reaction of one student who enthused about the research demands of elective seminars in the Department, which she compared favorably with her experience during her year at a university in the UK. As her example shows, the Department encourages student mobility within the EU; its internal evaluation lists an impressive number of European universities with which it maintains agreements, apparently despite the lack of administrative backup from the university.

In a process of transition and adaptation, it is inevitable that some teachers prove more effective than others, and that there is still much resistance to the practice of seeking student feedback through questionnaires. It is conceivable, though we found no direct evidence, that the high failure rate in some courses is due to the low quality of the teaching and assessment. But it is surely indicative that the pass rate is consistently high in the elective courses. It is also difficult for a review body from outside Greece to avoid the conclusion that the high degree of wastage in the system is due precisely to those features that are peculiar to the Greek higher education system. On the one hand, there is extraordinary permissiveness, which

- facilitates the entry of students on criteria other than their exam grades (by transfer, or on account of social disability)
- allows students to remain on the books long after four years
- permits the politicization of the student body to the detriment of other forms of organization and representation more directly beneficial to their studies
- fails to prevent the chaotic disruption of university life by sit-ins

The impact on the efficacy of the teaching process and on student morale does not need to be spelled out.

On the other hand, the system imposes an extraordinarily high course load on students compared with the norm in other countries. Moreover, its apparently unquestioned priority to serve the needs of secondary education means that 30% of the curriculum is geared towards producing secondary education teachers. This may not correspond either to students' interests or to society's needs. No one wants to see the traditional disciplinary virtues of the system, which provides the best students with an excellent basis for research in the humanities, diluted by the lowering of standards and demands, which has been the downside of progressive educational reform in European and North American universities. However, the virtues of the system are not currently well served by the environment in which it operates, or by the format of teaching in the Base and Core undergraduate courses. They are best cultivated in the seminar format of smaller classes. The Department and the University together need to find ways of implementing this format, as far as possible, at all undergraduate levels. Student intake, the number of courses, and the introduction of tutorials are all factors that should be considered.

Finally, the work load for teaching staff is unreasonably increased not only by increased numbers of exams (unlimited repetition of failed exams) but also by the requirement that three faculty members participate in M.A.-theses committees and seven in PhD theses respectively. The EEC strongly recommends reduction of these numbers to two and five respectively.

We should also note that it was often pointed out in the discussions of the EEC with teaching staff that obligatory class attendance might improve the results of the learning process and the exams.

## **C. Research**

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Regarding the breadth of the different disciplines in the Department it does not surprise that there is no general strategy for research programs, either within the Department or within one of the sections (for detailed information see [www.arch.uoa.gr](http://www.arch.uoa.gr)). The choice of research subjects is the responsibility of each member of the Department. Partially, the research projects are conducted within the framework of some of the European Research Programs. Collaborations with other research groups in national and international programs are frequent (for detailed information see the Internal Evaluation Report 5.6.1 p. 97-99). The output of scientific publications (books, articles, etc.) shows clearly that research activities are in general on a high level according to international standards. In addition to the journal "Archaiognosia", which is published for more than two decades, including eight supplementary volumes up to now, the Department edited in 2009 the first volume of a new series called "Historimata" in which the results of a one-day colloquium organized by the Department are published. Some of the sections publish their own series (see below). The EEC would also like to praise the admirable initiative of the postgraduate students in publishing their own periodical ("Diachronia"). Scientific articles appear in national and international peer-reviewed periodicals. All these activities show that there is on the one hand a great variety of research topics, and on the other peer control. For a more detailed study it seems helpful to look first at each section before considering general results and improvement possibilities.

### **ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF ART**

Each staff member is actively involved in at least one field project – the majority of them in more than one. Nevertheless, a geographic main area of the research activity focusing on the Aegean islands (included the island of Crete) can be observed. Beside this main area, there are also activities on the Peloponnese, in Mainland Greece and in Macedonia. These activities include archaeological excavations and surveys, studies on the conservation of monuments, museum studies, publication of material and thematic studies. A positive aspect of the lack of a general research program is that the diversity in research activities enriches the teaching program on offer.

As a second positive point it is to be noted that the results of these research activities are regularly presented in colloquia ("Excavation and Research: The research work of the Department of Archaeology and History of Art") which are organized by the Department. These give not only to the faculty but also to some of the postgraduate students the opportunity to present their current scientific work. Meanwhile, the colloquia are well known in the academic world and therefore also attended by researchers who do not belong to the University of Athens.

The established network of intense scientific cooperation with the Greek Archaeological Service in several regions of the country and even with foreign Archaeological Services on Cyprus and soon even in Iran (!) is impressive. This wide range of scientific synergies is

supplemented by a research campaign to Mt. Sinai, conducted yearly since 1998 by colleagues of the Byzantine Archaeology section. Most of the members of the academic staff have published substantial monographs and articles in Greek and international periodicals. These contributions are either dedicated to the publication of excavation projects or engage with recent archaeological debates (see the Internal Evaluation Report p. 94 pin. XIV). Indeed, it must be pointed out that these publications sometimes do not receive adequate attention from the international scientific community, especially when published in modern Greek which is not widely read by foreign academics.

The research activities are very well embedded into teaching at every level of the study programs. Students at all levels are offered the opportunity to participate in excavations. Unfortunately, a great number of students willing to participate in such field projects are unable to do so, given the absence of financial support, which results from the general underfunding of research in this university. In some cases the students have the opportunity to receive training in the documentation and study of archaeological finds such as pottery. Quite frequently, the topics of dissertations are directly related to finished or on-going field projects.

The Department's efforts for a stronger engagement in research are hampered mainly by problems of inadequate or non-existing financial support. Despite this fact, members of the Department have initiated or actively participated in costly projects aiming at the restoration or presentation of important archaeological sites on Keos and Naxos. Their work has been awarded with an international prize and still attracts incessantly strong public attention.

#### **ANCIENT HISTORY**

Research in Ancient History at the University of Athens corresponds to very high international standards. The Faculty members are internationally renowned scholars, with a large number of publications in Greek, English, German, and French. Their presence in international conferences and international research activities is noticeable, and their contributions (e.g. in Hellenistic history, epigraphy, numismatics, Late Antiquity) are at the cutting-edge of current international research. Also the recent PhD theses are of excellent quality, and most of them have been acknowledged as important contributions to the field.

It is desirable that in the future the Department be given the possibility to continue its policy to place more emphasis on the fields of research that are currently internationally advancing through new finds and theoretical models (e.g. the study of Late Antiquity).

#### **BYZANTINE AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY**

As in other subject areas of the Department, the teaching staff in Byzantine History and Byzantine Archaeology has mainly pursued their individual research interests as opposed to participating in joint projects. However, they have also promoted initiatives which reflect or impact on the interests of the group. Apart from the one-day colloquia they have organized, like other groups within the Department, they have been responsible for producing the following:

- A scholarly journal on East-West relations (*Ἐψ̄α καὶ Ἐσπέρια*)
- A Laboratory for the Digital Recording of the Public and Private Life of the Byzantines (4th-15th centuries)
- A memorial volume for Nicolas Oikonomides, published by the same laboratory
- The project to digitalize the archive of Spyridon P. Lampros
- The scientific catalogue of the Byzantine ceramic collection in the University Museum of Archaeology and Art History.

At an individual level, the Byzantinists and Medievalists have contributed substantially to the Department's impressive publication record, and to its representation in international conferences and publications.

### **EARLY MODERN, MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, 15-20 CENTURIES (GREECE, EUROPE, WORLD)**

Research in the field of history is undertaken by individual faculty on their own initiative and according to their scholarly interests, resources and opportunities. Collaboration is almost always a matter of individual choice rather than departmental action. While the Department – and the Section – encourages and expects faculty research, and welcomes scholarly publications, there is no set policy to be followed. The Department's criteria in assessing research and its results are those of the entire scholarly community. Needless to say, the quality of research, especially if it results in main publications (books, articles, etc.), serves as a key factor in deciding questions of faculty tenure, promotion, academic leave etc.

The report of the Internal Evaluation Committee (Annex 5) distributed to the EEC shows clearly that the Section's more senior faculty have an impressive record of publications, academic presentations and other scholarly activities. They are internationally known and highly respected. There is every reason to believe that the Section's newer members are following in the footsteps of their colleagues. The Section deserves high praise for its record of research and publications. Transmission of the current research inside the Department is granted by the newly introduced "Meetings for History", a scientific day with the goal to discuss about the individual research programs. Furthermore, the Section's members are engaged in European research programs, such as Pythagoras II, and actively participate in other international networks.

It needs to be emphasized that in history, research is undertaken without financial support from the University and, of course, from the Department. Faculty must often rely on their own resources, especially in times such as the present, when the availability of grants from other sources has declined precipitously. Given today's relatively modest salaries, lack of financial support of the University or the State must be considered as serious inhibition of faculty research and participation in international conferences.

### **RESULTS AND IMPROVEMENTS**

From the above mentioned approaches and implementations concerning the different sections in the Department it becomes clear that the implementation of the research objectives is, generally, very successful, and the research projects follow internationally high standards. Individual research collaborations with different parts of Europe and the wider world are common practice. Members of the Department are well integrated into the national and international academic and scientific community. Publications of the faculty are internationally recognized.

The main obstacle is the lack of financial support by the University and the State, support that is needed to ensure the continuity of good research quality. The researchers are left to a great extent on their own resources without receiving adequate administrative or financial support. Generally, the search for funding turns out to be very difficult, in particular for the very expensive archaeological excavation projects. The research projects are often partially funded by the researchers themselves. This imposes severe limits on the realization of research. Also the participation of the researchers in national or international congresses is difficult because of the lack of financial support. A strong national research support, as it exists in other European countries, could help to fill this gap.

### **D. All Other Services**

The Department appears to be well organized and functioning efficiently, given the realities of the present situation. Administrative procedures and internal coordination appear to be rational and effective. Electronic procedures for administrative staff, faculty and students are in place and their use is on the rise. Nevertheless, the Department is not satisfied with the administrative services at its disposal and its complaints appear to be legitimate and serious.

The Department's secretarial services, especially the Secretariat of the Sections, are not adequate to satisfy the needs of faculty and students. The University's decision to have the Department secretary serve also the Nursing Department has reduced by half the time she can devote to the Department of History. Student complaints about the secretary's office heard by the EEC can probably be attributed at least in part to the lack of adequate, fully competent and courteous personnel. The Department's requests for more staff have been unsuccessful. The EEC has noticed that the University is not distributing the available secretarial staff according to the real needs of the Departments. For instance, it is scandalous that in the postgraduate program 'Museum Studies' ca. 50 students are served by almost as many secretaries as the entire Department with approximately 4000 students.

The Department's libraries and laboratories appear to be well run and adequately utilized by students. The use of electronic equipment is much in evidence. However subscriptions to printed journals have not been paid since 2006 and the electronic link to bibliographic data bases (JStore) has been discontinued as of the beginning of the current calendar year because the University has delayed payment of the annual subscription. A letter on this problem addressed to the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor in November 2009 received an unsatisfactory response. WiFi has not yet been installed in the building of the Philosophical Faculty. There are not enough terminals in the reading rooms. PhD students who have exceeded five years of attendance of the postgraduate program, because they have to work, are automatically excluded from use of electronic resources. These are problems that can be solved immediately and with only minimal expenditure. It should be noted that the graduate students pointed to the absurdity that the state subsidizes the purchase of laptops in elementary schools but not in universities. The impending relocation of the Department's two reading rooms (*spoudastiria*) to the new library building should help in improving the operation of these facilities and in extending the hours of their daily use.

Other than through its curriculum, reading rooms and laboratory facilities, it would be unreasonable to expect the Department to increase student presence on campus. Problems of campus security, of public transportation to and from the campus and the fact that many students must work to support themselves make it unlikely that, at least in the foreseeable future, the campus will attract more students for academic activities after 6 pm as well as for extra-curricular cultural activities.

Undergraduate students have complained about the lack of systematic orientation regarding their first year at the University or the Department.

The EEC cannot comment on the University's basic student services which in any event are outside the Department's jurisdiction. Nevertheless two brief observations may be in order: food at the student cafeteria is remarkably good, while the building of the School of Philosophy is surprisingly unattractive, plastered with activist propaganda flyers and its basic maintenance needs to be improved.

### ***E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors***

#### **INHIBITING FACTORS**

The Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Athens operates within the framework of the current Greek legislation for higher education and within the realities of Greek society. As compared with similar departments in other Greek universities, it has some clear advantages: the existence of very good libraries in Athens, which compensates for the gaps of the departmental libraries; the proximity to research institutions (e.g. National Greek Research Foundation); the proximity to museums, collections, and archives (including a worldwide unique epigraphic collection); the proximity to archaeological sites. These advantages are indeed known and used by the Department. However, the inhibiting factors do not allow the Department to fully exploit its potential and its advantages. None of the inhibiting factors is departmental; they are state, institutional, and social factors.

- The Department does not have the possibility to recruit its students, which is bad enough, it also does not have any influence whatsoever on student numbers. In theory, there is a certain number of new students admitted every year, and this number is the basis for the Department's budget. However, this number is more than doubled a few months later, when students from provincial universities, usually with far worse academic qualifications, are transferred to Athens taking advantage of the current legislation.
- The current legislation does not allow the Department to co-operate with analogous Departments in other Greek universities in undergraduate and graduate teaching and to co-ordinate the development of complementary profiles in teaching and research. Given the extremely limited resources and the limited employment possibilities, it is a waste of investment to have duplications of some very specialized subjects, instead of promoting the co-operation between departments. Paradoxically, it is easier for a student of the University of Athens to spend one semester in another European university than in another Greek university.
- Although most of the Department's graduates aim to become teachers in secondary education, according to the current legislation, there are no specialized history teachers in secondary education. For this reason, the curriculum of all students, regardless of their specialization, is loaded with disciplines (e.g. philosophy) of little relevance for historical studies.
- The quality of the teaching of history in secondary education is very low, affecting the quality of the students admitted.
- The political parties which dominate the university, have extinguished genuine student representation. For their requests in academic matters the undergraduate students do not have any possibility to present requests or discuss problems through elected representatives. Only the graduate students have an independent representation. The undergraduate students made explicit accusations against the political parties for not allowing them to take classes, for disturbing classes, for occupying urgently needed space for their offices, and even for taking over functions that should exclusively be in the hands of the administration (e.g. giving to students the student ID/*passo* which allows them to have discount in public transportation). There were also explicit accusations to the EEC that representatives of political parties receive preferential treatment in exams by some faculty members (most likely belonging to neighboring departments). The funds provided do not take into consideration the increased number of students (through transfer from other universities) and the increased load in teaching and examination, which is caused by the fact that students have the right to repeat an exam as often as they wish.
- The Department is underfunded in comparison to similar departments in other universities. There is no money for research; the libraries do not satisfy the needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Specifically, in Archaeology, the Ministry of Culture does not have a regular and



transparent recruitment policy for archaeologists. Despite the fact that the Archaeological Service is understaffed, exams for the recruitment of archaeologists do not take place on a regular basis.

- The state does not distribute funds among Universities on the basis of a rational and transparent system, based on an evaluation of the output of the Universities.

This list of inhibiting factors is far from complete; we do not mention factors, which emerged during the discussion with students and faculty (lack of meritocracy, preferential treatment of certain subjects on the basis of personal relations, etc.). None of them can be addressed by the Department directly; but all of them have to be taken into consideration by the Department in its planning, often making a strategic planning which would correspond to international standards impossible. The solutions are beyond the Department's influence:

- a radical reform of primary, secondary, and university education, which would allow the Department to have complete control over the number and qualification of students and would give it the right to expel students who do not fulfill the necessary requirements (e.g., passing exams);
- the introduction of the specialty of the teacher of history (*istorikos*) in secondary education and the improvement of the quality of history teaching in secondary education;
- the introduction of a flexible budget, which would allow the Department to allocate funds according to needs and to transfer funds to the next budget year, without the fear of 'punishment' because the money was not spent within a certain budget year.

#### **SHORT-, MEDIUM-, AND LONG-TERM GOALS**

Taking into consideration the aforementioned factors and the employment possibilities of its graduates, the Department has determined its goals accordingly. It should be noted that the lack of autonomy of Greek universities and the uncertainties in budget make the determination of any long-term goals or even of a five-year plan absolutely impossible.

A short- and medium-term goal of the Department, as became clear in the discussions – but is not explicitly stated in the Department's internal report – is the comprehensive representation, as far as this is possible, of all the facets, aspects, fields, and specialized subjects of history, archaeology, and art history in the curriculum, in order primarily to train 'generalists', who will be in a position to teach history in secondary education but at the same time would be in a position to prepare themselves for a graduate program. This goal becomes obvious especially in the creation of new positions in a continually expanding number of specialized fields (e.g., Museum Studies, Numismatics, Topography, etc.). Although there has been a substantial increase in faculty positions, which deal with the history, art history, and archaeology of areas beyond Greece and Asia Minor (e.g., Roman art, history of the Balkans, Ottoman history, etc.), the Department still is Hellenocentric. Whole fields, such as Etruscan Archaeology, Egyptology, and areas of contemporary history are entirely absent, and others (e.g. Roman history) are under-represented.

Any expansion to further disciplines, such as the above, would require the creation of infrastructure (especially library resources) and needs to take into consideration other factors, e.g. the existence of resources in the city of Athens, such as museums, departments in other Athenian universities, the employment perspectives, and the possibilities to recruit good faculty. Thus it is reasonable that the Department does not expand in areas, in which the employment perspectives are limited or non-existent. But the EEC recommends that for future planning the Department take into consideration the representation of small specialized subjects in other Greek universities, in order to avoid unnecessary duplications. It also strongly recommends a reform in the legislation of higher education which would allow and indeed encourage Greek universities to closely co-operate in the development of their profiles and in their strategic planning.

A great worry of the Department and the EEC is the quality of the students and their active participation in classes. Although the Department has taken initiatives for the improvement of the curriculum, they cannot be effective as long as the current system of student

recruitment (*Panelladikes*) remains in place and as long as the University functions as an arena for the conflicts of political parties which continually disturb teaching. In the Internal Evaluation Report the Department is asked to explain the measures it takes in order to attract high quality students (7.8). The EEC does not have the impression that students come to this Department, or any department for that matter, on the basis of any knowledge whatsoever about the quality of education in this Department or the University, but exclusively on the basis of other factors (the attractiveness of the city of Athens, parental support, the selection procedure of students, etc.). As long as the current recruitment system remains in place, many students will continue studying in this Department because of coincidence, not because of choice – and in the case of transferred students not because of quality.

#### **PLAN AND ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT**

In the report of the internal evaluation, the Department makes a very good, reasonable, and accurate description of the problems, refers to measures already taken (e.g. e-class) and makes suggestions, which the EEC regards as very justified. The Department rightly places a lot of emphasis on the use of new technologies, international co-operations, the replacement of the 4-hour classes with 3-hour classes, etc. The introduction of new subjects appears desirable, but for reasons explained above, this can only take place under consideration of the profiles of other Universities and of the additional resources needed (libraries, etc.).

#### **LONG-TERM ACTIONS PROPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT**

The Department's request that its budget take into consideration its real needs (i.e. real and not imaginary student numbers) and that the research budget is approved on the basis of the quality of research, output, and evaluations are justified. More flexibility in the administration of funds is needed. Research applications need administrative support.

The EEC also supports a rational distribution of space in the Philosophical Faculty. It is not acceptable that the offices of political parties occupy a whole floor, whereas postgraduate students lack any analogous space. The conditions of lawlessness (occupation of space by anarchists) should not be tolerated.

The EEC explicitly and very strongly supports the Department's request for better protection of the Departmental space, especially of the extremely valuable collections of archaeological artifacts, works of art, other objects, and archives.

The Department's suggestions (see pp. 122-126) correspond to the urgent needs of the Department and to the observations independently made by the EEC. Some of them (e.g. a more effective use of endowments, better information) can be easily implemented; some suggestions require more general substantial reforms (introduction of special teachers of history in secondary schools; new system for the recruitment of students; exams for the recruitment of archaeologists); some suggestions require investment and a co-operation with state and city authorities (improvement of the building, which is in a deplorable condition, with the exception of some newly furnished and restored rooms, transportation to and from the campus); other suggestions are inexpensive but imply a high political risk (e.g., the expulsion of students who fail their exams); nevertheless, they are fully justified and of high priority.

Realizing that under the current conditions additional investment in research is hardly possible, the EEC has to remark that research is under-funded in the Department. In a sense, it is waste of human resources to have high quality, original and innovative scholars in this Department and not provide them with the necessary means for their research. Unlike academic departments in other European countries, which can apply for research funding to national research institutions, such possibilities are very limited in Greece.

The EEC notes that the Department does not have a policy as regards an important issue, for

which pro-active planning instead of reaction to proposals by the Ministry seems urgently needed: the Bologna agreement. The Bologna agreement, which has resulted in this evaluation, has not been fully implemented in Greece, and the current Rector, with whom the problem was discussed, did not express any views on this matter. Although the Bologna agreement will be revised by the European Union, it will unavoidably be addressed by Greek universities, which will otherwise face the problem that their degrees will not be regarded as equivalent with the degrees of other European universities. Dealing with the Bologna agreement raises important issues, for which preliminary thoughts may exist, but neither consensus nor any clear departmental policy. Such questions include the duration of BA-studies (3 or 4 years), the movement from BA to MA (with an additional year?), the special needs of certain disciplines for a longer duration of BA studies (e.g. with a propaedeutical year?), separate curricula for prospective school teachers (the vast majority of the students) and students, who aspire to graduate studies, etc.

### ***F. Final Conclusions***

As compared with other universities, internationally the Department has a large number of staff members of high quality. It is regrettable that the deficiencies that have been observed by the Department in its internal evaluation and have been confirmed by the EEC do not allow it to become one of the leading international centers of education and research in the fields that it covers. We hope that the observations and recommendations of our committee will be taken into consideration by the Greek legislators in the current process of educational reform.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname

Signature

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