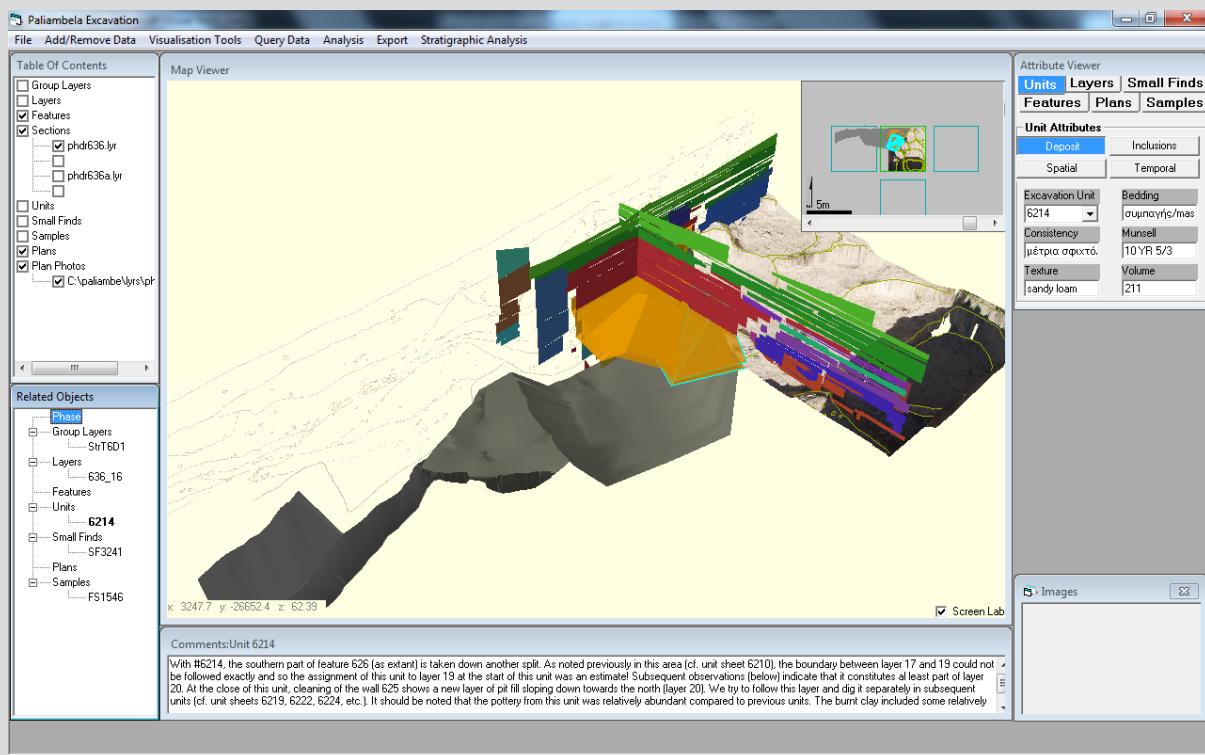




The Persistent Archaeologist: Jack of all trades

Lecture by [Kostas Kotsakis](#) (Professor Emeritus, School of History and Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)



(3D GIS from the Excavation at Paliambela Kolindros; Paliambela Kolindros Excavation Archive)

The lecture will take place on **Wednesday, 4 December 2024, at 7:00 p.m. (EST)** at the Norwegian Institute at Athens, Tsami Karatasou 5, 11742 (the lecture will also be streamed online via Zoom)

Registration is required for both in-person and virtual attendance.

To attend **in-person**, please register at norwinst@uib.no

To attend **via Zoom**, please register via the following link:

<https://uib.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5Uuf-GhrzssE9yKKncVggAF7pm7MXDlIgMx>



Abstract

The lecture is based on an account of my journey with digital archaeology from my early student years. It started in the seventies with the chance encounter in an Athens bookshop with David Clarke's "Analytical Archaeology". That book was a real revelation, a tour de force application of interdisciplinary approaches, combining computer science, geography, cybernetics, and statistics with archaeology.

The lecture starts with an account of the academic resistance I met to these ideas. Despite my failure to establish a dedicated lab, several examples from projects illustrate the extent of the applications of digital technologies in various circumstances, especially the excavation process and the ensuing analysis of space. Examples of statistical analysis of findings are presented, including the first attempts to deal with space with digital tools, computer-aided design (CAD), modelling, and photogrammetry, until GIS incorporated and unified many of the above techniques in a single platform and developed into the ideal and highly versatile analytical tool for excavation data.

The last part of the talk examines the developments in the theoretical perception of space, which recently entered archaeology but has not yet entered GIS. Concepts of archaeological space are not always compatible with GIS, which operates within an Euclidean spatial frame. A mainstream geometric space is probably all right for the practical applications of GIS. Still, it can be problematic when its spatial tools with implicit concepts are extended to archaeological interpretation of social space, like distance or communication. The lecture will also explore the evolution of space concepts in archaeology, from traditional views to contemporary theories influenced by phenomenology and material culture studies. It highlights the limitations of GIS in capturing the social dimensions of space and advocates for a more nuanced understanding. This kind of introspection seems now more necessary than ever.

Biographical Information

Professor Kostas Kotsakis is an Emeritus of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he taught Prehistoric archaeology and theory from 1984 to 2019. He has also taught at Stanford University, was a visiting fellow at Cambridge University, and a visiting senior associate at the Institute of Archaeology in London. He has excavated in Sesklo, Mandalo, Toumba Thessalonikis, Çatalhöyük in Turkey, Paliambela Kolindrou, and recently at Dispilio Kastorias, codirecting the ERC EXPLO project.