

Preface

Berit Wells, the director of the small but intensive survey project presented here, passed away suddenly in August 2009. Only six months earlier, she had asked me if I would be willing to co-edit the manuscript of the volume with her. She felt that her obligations to other projects, notably the Kalaureia Research Programme, left her with unacceptably little time for a project near and dear to her. I accepted her offer and am immensely grateful today for those last months of intensive discussions. Berit's introduction to this volume is one of the last texts she wrote. We never had the opportunity to carry out its final editing and, apart from some rearrangements, it is included here essentially as she left it. If the circumstances had been different, I would have expressed one main concern in the editing process. In the text, Berit discusses Swedish commitments in the Berbati Valley but fails to mention her own; to its present and past inhabitants as well as the landscape. Berbati was always a personal matter for Berit, and it was probably the place on earth she loved most, next to her native Skåne in southern Sweden. Towards the end of her life she left the Argolid to direct work in the Sanctuary of Poseidon on the island of Poros, but her mind and heart never left the valley.

I suspect that Berit always felt somehow burdened by the legacy of scholars who worked in the valley before her. She never understood that she measured up. She assumed responsibility for work in Berbati from Åke Åkerström at a time when Classics was no longer considered part and parcel of higher education. Funding in Sweden to carry out fieldwork in the Mediterranean was even more difficult to come by then than it is today. Despite these difficulties Berit managed to conduct several archaeological projects in the valley, and introduced concepts such as landscape and environmen-

tal archaeology; novelties in the 1980s and 1990s. She also recognised early on the benefits of digital documentation with total stations and Geographical Information Systems, nowadays common-place but then almost unheard of. Many Swedish archaeology students participated in her projects and, for me and several others, her inspiration was a decisive factor in our efforts to remain within the discipline. During an archaeological survey, as in life, it is sometimes more important with whom you are walking than where you are going.

Most of the contributions included in this study were written in 2000 and 2001. As perhaps all too familiar in Aegean archaeology, our intentions to carry out the final preparations and publish rapidly were foiled by obligations to other projects and institutions. Although many of the contributions would have appeared differently if written today, they have been updated with results from several relevant studies published after 2001. In this work, the comments by the anonymous reviewer of the manuscript were instrumental.

On behalf of Berit Wells I gratefully acknowledge the permit granted to us by the Greek Ministry of Culture to carry out the 1999 investigation. The 4th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities supported our application and we thank its staff for facilitating our work in the field and in the museum storerooms. Special thanks are due to Eleni Sarri for permission to include samples from the Late Antique kiln in the petrographic analysis. Funding for fieldwork and subsequent study was provided by Humanistisk-Samhällsvetenskapliga Forskningsrådet (The Council for Research into the Humanities and the Social Sciences) and Helge Ax:son Johnsons Stiftelse (The Helge Ax:son Johnson Foundation). We thank them for their generous support.

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