

Textiles and Dress
in Greece and the Roman East:
A Technological and Social Approach



Edited by Iris Tzachili and Eleni Zimi

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*Proceedings of a Conference held at the Department
of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management
of the University of Peloponnese in Kalamata in collaboration
with the Department of History and Archaeology
of the University of Crete on March 18-19, 2011*



Yolie Spantidaki
(1946-2010)

In Memoriam

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PREFACE

The conference “Modern Approaches to the Study of Ancient Textiles: Technical and Social Aspects of Roman Dress” was held in Kalamata on 18-19 March 2011, jointly organized by the Department of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management of the University of Peloponnese, and the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Crete. Both the conference and the present volume, containing most of the presentations, were implemented in the framework of the European “Culture” Programme “Clothing and Identities: New Perspectives on Textiles in the Roman Empire” (abbreviated as DressID). The programme participants include European research institutes (such as the Centre for Textile Research, Copenhagen), museums (Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim, Naturhistorisches Museum, Wien) and universities (Valencia, Crete, Sheffield). The programme brought together scholars working in different fields, institutions and countries under a common aim: the study of clothing and textiles as a means of investigating human historical identity. The parallel study and comparison of different methods and traditions, from different areas of Europe and occasionally different periods, created an extraordinary osmosis, highlighting both the importance of the subject itself and various parallel thematics (radiochronology, conservation techniques, weaving techniques, dyes, experimental archaeology, etc.)

Particularly as regards Greece, this subject is a relatively unknown but dynamic field, with studies on textiles in the Mediterranean and the Aegean flourishing in recent years. A particular focus of study is archaeological textiles, i.e. those derived from excavations. These positive developments are mirrored in the present volume, which includes studies from a variety of fields, such as technical analyses, epigraphical and literary testimonies, discussions of modes of dress, and issues related to weaving tools.

Special thanks are due to the Department of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management of the University of Peloponnese, which hosted the conference, and to its sponsors, the University of Peloponnese, Kalamata Municipality and Victoria G. Karelia, to all whom we are deeply grateful. We also extend our warmest thanks to Victoria G. Karelia for her generous loan of items from her private collection of urban costumes and silk textiles, for the exhibition organized by the Faculty of Humanities and Culture Studies of the University of Peloponnese during the course of the conference, which would not have been possible without the crucial assistance of the Dean of the Faculty, Eurydice Antzoulidou-Retsila.

We also thank the basic collaborators on this volume: Rosemary Tzanaki, who translated many of the texts, Evgenia Stassinaki and Christos Douskos.

The conference is dedicated to the memory of Youlie Spantidaki. With her energetic approach and scientific volition, as well as her talent in presenting her work, she was the prime mover behind the surge in interest in textiles and one of its most consistent expressors.

Iris Tzachili, Eleni Zimi

