



The defense of the Cretan city-states in the Classical and Hellenistic period

The lecture will present the main results of the speaker's study on Cretan fortifications, published in the volume: Nadia Coutsinas, *Défenses crétoises. Fortifications urbaines et défense du territoire en Crète aux époques classique et hellénistique*, Cahiers archéologiques de Paris I, n°3, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013.

Crete is the largest of Greece's islands. Called *hekatompolis* by Homer, it supported up to nearly 60 city-states in the Classical period, and became renowned for its incessant warfare in the Hellenistic period. Consequently, a study of the defensive nature of both the urban centres and their territories proved to be a highly informative undertaking (involving a survey of city walls, forts and isolated towers). Such archaeological investigations revealed that the idea of the walled city, so common in Classical literature, was not a reality in Crete. It transpired that differences in wall layout and structure were mainly determined by local topography and geology while differences in the way that defence was organised depended on local history.