

Welcome and Introduction to the workshop

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*From Antikythera to the Square Kilometre Array: Lessons from the Ancients,
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It is extremely gratifying and also humbling to see so many of my friends and colleagues here today for the third astronomy workshop in Kerastari. It was almost exactly 10 years ago that the first Kerastari workshop was held and none would have been possible without the overwhelmingly enthusiastic and continuing support I have received. This support ranges from my family and friends, to my compatriots in the village, the local government institutions, my work colleagues and collaborators, and the astronomy institutes where we work. This workshop has also gratefully received direct sponsorship from many of these institutions as detailed in the workshop pages [1].

The astronomy workshops in Kerastari started in 2002 with the workshop on “GPS and CSS radio sources” [2] and this was followed in 2007 by the workshop on the “Dynamic radio sky” [3]. These are topics in which I have been directly involved during some of my research work. When selecting a theme for this workshop discussion ranged widely, and one of the suggestions was to compare what we do in modern radio astronomy research with the “Antikythera mechanism” from ancient Greece.

Few radio astronomers are directly involved with or even aware of the Antikythera mechanism but many are very quickly converted to admirers or even enthusiasts. My introduction to the mechanism was by Professor Ron Ekers, my long-time mentor and ex-director of my institute, and I was quickly hooked. Ron is rather unique in his breadth of research interests and his quest to explore and establish inter-disciplinary links between different fields. Initially our discussions were about including the Antikythera mechanism as part of a workshop but quickly evolved into making the mechanism the central part of the theme of the workshop. So the inspiration and organisation of this workshop comes largely from Ron, with enthusiastic support from the SOC co-chair, Professor Steven Tingay.

I have also been fortunate to have as long time friend and associate one of the key members of the Antikythera mechanism research team, Professor John Seiradakis. John has been on the scientific organising committees and has attended all three astronomy workshops in Kerastari. He was very enthusiastic about a cross-discipline workshop between radio astronomy and the Antikythera mechanism and was instrumental in establishing the links with the Antikythera mechanism research community.

So today we have present some of the key experts in deciphering the Antikythera mechanism. From radio astronomy we have some of the pioneers and experts in techniques past and present and also for future instruments such as the Square Kilometre Array (SKA). It is fascinating to see such diverse communities come together and I am sure we will have vigorous discussions and exchange of ideas. I certainly look forward to it.

And as a special treat at the end of the workshop we will have a day excursion to the National Archaeological Museum in Athens where the Antikythera mechanism is exhibited. We

are fortunate that at this time the Museum has a special exhibition on all the treasures from the Antikythera wreck, and the Museum has generously offered to host our visit.

This workshop is also held in a different venue than previous workshops. For the first time we will be using the rebuilt and restored village school which is not only imbued by history and dear to the hearts of all villagers, but also offers panoramic views of the village and this beautiful area in the mountains of the Peloponnese. I am very grateful to my fellow villagers and the local government for their efforts in making this happen, and in particular the president of the village my neighbour Aris Bezos for his unstinting efforts to prepare the old school for this occasion.

I am confident that this will be a very successful and also very enjoyable workshop.

References:

- [1] “*From Antikythera to the Square Kilometre Array: Lessons from the Ancients*” workshop at <http://www.atnf.csiro.au/people/Tasso.Tzioumis/Antikythera2012/>
- [2] The 2002 astronomy workshop in Kerastari (http://www.atnf.csiro.au/people/Tasso.Tzioumis/gps_css/) and published proceedings at <http://www.publish.csiro.au/issue/699.htm>
- [3] The 2007 astronomy workshop in Kerastari (<http://www.atnf.csiro.au/people/Tasso.Tzioumis/Dynamic2007/>) and published proceedings at <http://pos.sissa.it/cgi-bin/reader/conf.cgi?confid=56>