

*IIHSA Travel Bursary Report*

In March 2010, as one of the 2009–10 travel bursary students of the IIHSA, I spent two weeks in Greece conducting research for my Masters thesis at the UCD School of Classics. My thesis is entitled *Casting Heritage: the Emergence and Evolution of Reproductions of Ancient Sculpture in Modern Greece and Ireland*, and is a comparative study focusing on the use of plaster casts since the early nineteenth century.

Under the auspices of the IIHSA, I was able to conduct interviews with several academics. Firstly, I had a series of meetings with members of staff in the new Acropolis Museum, where copies are being used to replace the originals that are in the British Museum. A senior archaeologist showed me the copies of the Parthenon sculptures exhibited in the Center for the Acropolis Studies, and I was given a tour of the plaster cast laboratory. I was then taken on me a tour of the new Parthenon galleries on the top floor of the museum. Finally, I had the privilege of meeting with Dr Alexandros Mantis, the Director of the 1st Ephorate of Pre-Historic and Classical Antiquities of the Ministry of Culture and member of the Board of Directors of the Acropolis Museum. Dr Mantis has a special interest in the use of plaster casts, and took time out of his busy schedule to discuss the importance of copies in the new museum.

I was also able to visit the workshop of the Archaeological Receipts Fund (TAIIA), which produces the replicas that are sold in Greece's museum shops. Later in the trip, I travelled to Thessaloniki to visit the Aristotle University Cast Museum, and was given a tour by an expert on the casts. Finally, I conducted two useful interviews with staff in the Epigraphical Museum and the National Archaeological Museum.

The hospitality of everyone I met was remarkable, and I am very grateful for their willingness to speak to me. I would like to thank my thesis supervisor in the UCD School of Classics, Dr Christina Haywood, Thomas Loughlin, Assistant Director of the IIHSA, and Eleni Tsiknakou, secretary of the IIHSA office in Athens, for arranging these meetings for me.

I visited other institutions to assess their display and/or storage of plaster casts and copies. In addition to those listed above, I visited the War Museum, the Kerameikos Museum, and the Akropoli metro station, all of which use plaster casts in modern displays.

Relatively little has been published on the subject of copies, so conducting research on this topic from Ireland has been difficult. My visit to Athens afforded me the opportunity to use the libraries of the American School of Classical Studies and the British School, where I had access to a number of publications that I had been unable to find in Ireland. I also attended events hosted by the foreign schools, including the Annual Meeting of the American School and a lecture in the Irish Institute by Dr Angelos Papadopoulos. Finally, I was privileged to be invited to the Irish Ambassador's residence for a wonderful reception on St Patrick's Day.

My trip to Athens helped me to consolidate my ideas for my thesis, and to gather invaluable information through interviews and museum visits. This first-hand research has given me a solid foundation on which to build my thesis, and I am very grateful to the IIHSA for their kind support. Lastly, I would like to reiterate my thanks to everyone I met during my time in Greece for being so helpful.