

Archaeology and Museums in the Nation Building Process in Greece

Anastasia Sakellariadi

MPhil/PhD student, Institute of Archaeology, UCL

a.sakellariadi@ucl.ac.uk

This paper considers Greek archaeology as a product of the development of the nation state and investigates the way this relationship has determined the discipline and its museums. A critical presentation of the foundation of the Greek state sheds light on the conditions from which the relationship between archaeology and the State originated. The changes in archaeological legislation and administration demonstrate the way this relationship developed. Greek museums constitute the main agents of representation, interpretation and communication of archaeological heritage and as such they are considered. Classical Greek antiquity as the fount of the European spirit contributed immensely to the materialization of modern Greece. This ideological premise set constraints on the displays and narratives presented in archaeological museums and on the development of the entire discipline. Almost two centuries after the foundation of the State Archaeological Service and the National Archaeological Museum few things seem to have changed.

Introduction

The theoretical framework for the discourse about the nation and nationalism has been recently reshaped by eminent social theorists. Nations have been studied in the context of the modern world and the major phenomena that have marked it (Hobsbawm 1990). Furthermore, relations with existing ethnic communities -*ethnies*- (Smith 2001) and mechanisms of representation and narration have been identified; archaeology among them (Anderson 1991, 182).

The discussion about the relationship of archaeology with the socio-political context within which it is being practiced (Trigger and Glover 1981, Trigger 1984, Ucko 1987) has opened the way to more specific investigations that have proliferated in the past decade. Cases from all over the world have now enriched our knowledge on the ways archaeology and authority have interacted with one another (Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996, Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990, Kohl and Fawcett 1995, Meskell 1998).

Each case that comes to light reinforces the significance of historical conditions in the shaping of the relationship between the discipline and the strings of power. Archaeological research has particularly benefited from the birth of the nation state; as is the case with Greek archaeology. Related legislation and the administrative structure of archaeological resource management from the early days of the State's foundation are considered as immediate expressions of any state's values and aims.

Greek archaeological museums have increasingly become the focus of research in the past 15 years (Gazi 1993, Hourmouziadi 2006, Mouliou 1997, Skaltsa 2001, Voudouri 2003). Although funds have been recently allocated on their renovation, it seems that their new exhibitions have not been particularly influenced by the museological discourse, national and international (Hourmouziadi 2006, 341–346).

The questions this research attempts to answer are the following: what has the role of archaeology and archaeological museums been in the foundation of the Greek state? How is this role reflected in legislative measures and the administrative structure of the State Archaeological Service? How has this relationship evolved throughout the 19th and 20th century?

Nationalism and Archaeology: An Overview

In the 19th century, archaeology was established as an institutionalized discipline. At the same time, nationalist movements emerged throughout Europe. A quite complex relationship of influence between the two seems to have developed especially during the last three decades of the century (Kohl and Fawcett 1995, 10). In the context of nationalism, archaeology is called to legitimize the existence and the right of a nation to constitute an independent state by providing supportive evidence for its national history (Diaz-Andreu 1995, 54). Archaeology provides the reference points, the objects and the monuments, the visualization of the imagined nation. It also provides the nation with a sense of being timeless and therefore natural and adds to its cohesion and legitimacy. At the same time, nationalism attributes to past entities the traits and identity of the present nation in literal and abstract terms (Sorensen 1996, 28–29).

The influence of nationalism on archaeological research can be both positive and negative. In general terms, nationalism determines the kind of questions asked or not, the categories of data to be collected and the amount of evidence regarded as sufficient to support an approach. More specifically, nationalism orientated archaeological research towards the quest for local cultural variations and ethnicity, which were ignored until its emergence by linear evolutionists or colonial archaeologists. Thus, archaeology concentrated on interpreting the archaeological record as the history of specific peoples, that is, on culture-historical

approaches of the material remains of the past. Archaeological remains were identified as prehistoric manifestations of historically known peoples (Trigger 1995, 269).

The lack of written sources constitutes the ethnical identification of the archaeological finds extremely arbitrary and conjectural. Furthermore, the intentional misreading of data for the service of political purposes has often led to the misapprehension of important aspects of humanity (Trigger 1995, 269, 272). Being in general suspicious of such approaches is not an answer to potential problems. Silberman is right in noting that not all culture-historical approaches of archaeology are nationalistic and there are cases in which reasonably well-grounded archaeological interpretation can be shown to foster legitimate national pride, ethnic awareness, or communal solidarity (1995, 251).

Within the above context, the examination of the historical conditions within which the Greek State emerged will contribute to the understanding of the reasons and the ways the past was used to support the political claim for independence and the shaping of the perceptions of the past by the Modern Greeks.

The Seeds of the Emerging Greek Nation State

The relationship modern Greeks developed with the past and with archaeology was formulated in the 18th century under the influence of two interdependent factors; the socio-political changes taking place in the Greek peninsula and the European cultural and political developments of the time; mainly Hellenism and the balance between the Great Powers. One needs therefore to investigate the 18th century, known in Greek national historiography as the century of ‘national awareness’ (Svoronos, 1994, 51, regarding the theoretical implications of the term, see Kitromilides 2003, 55–71) and of the ‘Neohellenic enlightenment’ (Dimaras 1977).

The relatively stable conditions in the declining Ottoman Empire in the 18th century allowed for the flourishing activity of Greek commerce in connection with markets of central Europe, where colonies were soon established by the Greek merchant class; Amsterdam, Vienna, Odessa, Marseille and elsewhere. The socio-economic conditions of the orthodox communities improved, new urban centers developed and Greek became the *lingua franca* of the Balkan Peninsula (Svoronos 1994, 51–53).

This emerging merchant class supported the educational revival of Greek-speaking orthodox communities by funding schools, libraries and publishing houses and by disseminating the European Enlightenment and French Revolution ideas, the writings of Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot, contributing to an intellectual revitalization, known as the ‘Neohellenic enlightenment’ (1774–1821) (Dimaras 1977, 1–6). Antiquity as a model of free thought and individual dignity, opposed to the ‘dark era’ of the Ottoman occupation, ensured the return to the classics and the appreciation of the classical past through the eyes of the ‘enlightened Europe’ and Hellenism.

Adamantios Korais (1748–1833) was one of the most eminent figures of the ‘Neohellenic enlightenment’ and his work superseded its boundaries. He edited the *Helliniki Vivliothiki* (Greek Library), a series aiming at acquainting the people with classical writers, and a preface in each of its volume dedicated to issues of education and culture in contemporary Greece. His extensive preoccupation with the Greek revival led him to 13 suggestions on ways and measures for the safeguarding of manuscripts and monuments under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate; the first articulate proposition for the protection of heritage in the soon to be founded state (Kokkou 1977, 27–31).

Hellenism and Philhellenism

At the same time and in the spirit of the developing years of archaeology, somewhere between the interest in classical art and architecture and the race for collections, the work of J. J. Winckelmann (1717–1768), the ‘father of archaeology’, emerged and constituted the basis for the idea of Hellenism. In his *History of Art in Antiquity* (*Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*, 1764) he associated the stylistic phases of classical Greek art with stages in the spiritual, cultural and political development of ancient Greece. It was this idea of the relationship between political liberty and artistic excellence that led to the idealization of the golden classical age and to Hellenism (for a recent review of Winckelmann’s work see Potts 2000). The notion that the fount of the European spirit is located in ancient Greece as idealized by current scholarship developed in the context of the quest of ‘what is European’ and prevailed in the 18th century (Morris 1994, 11). This notion determined in a reflective way the identity, the perceptions of the past and the political future of the inhabitants of what was defined since antiquity as Greek land (for a further consideration of Hellenism see Hamilakis 2007, 57–123).

The consequent increasing demand for information about Greece and its classical past was satisfied by visits to the monuments. When traveling conditions in the region improved, Greece was included in the Grand Tour of the English aristocracy. The notes and sketches from the travels of Jacques Carrey (1674), Jacob Spon (1675–1676), James Stuart and Nicholas Revett (1751–1753) and others, remain invaluable sources for the condition of Greek monuments in the 17th and 18th centuries. The influence of their work on their contemporaries was considerable. Scholars, antiquarians and travelers were looking to Greece for examples of that Hellenic ideal that Winckelmann had championed (Tsigakou 1981, 21–61).

Poetry, literature, art and folk studies became means of communicating news to the rest of Europe about the heroic resistance of the Greeks (e.g. Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier’s *Voyage pittoresque de la Grece*, (1782–1812), Lord Byron’s *Childe Harold*, J. F. C. Hoelderlin’s *Hyperion or the Hermit in Greece* (1797–1799), Eugene Delacroix *The Massacre of Chios*, Claude Fauriel’s *Chants populaires de la Grece Moderne*). Shelley’s famous proclamation ‘we are all Greeks’ illustrates most eloquently this spirit (Tsigakou 1981, 21–61).

From these influences stemmed the philhellenic movement, a multi-dimensional expression of Hellenism. Individuals from different cultural and political ideologies became Philhellenes and they provided ethical, material and political support for the Greek War of Independence by lobbying in political and diplomatic circles through their committees in Berne, Zurich, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich, Paris and other cities. The notion prevailed that this war was different from any other revolutionary movement because it was aiming at the restitution of the glorious classical civilization (Vakalopoulos 1979, 168–169, 172, 175).

At the same time, the foundation of national museums in European capitals, their American counterparts and their competitive relationships accelerated the race for classical antiquities’ collections. Foreign missions arrived in Greece in order to collect. Sculptures from Aegina and Bassae enriched the new *Glyptothek* in Munich and the British Museum respectively. The latter soon acquired sculptures from the Athens’ Parthenon temple, from Xanthus, Asia Minor, and part of the Mausoleum of Alicarnassus, again in Asia Minor (Shanks 1996, 44).

Antiquities before Independence

The formation of a national movement for independence from the declining Ottoman Empire led to war in 1821. The struggle against the Ottoman occupation, the philhellenic movement, the ‘Neohellenic enlightenment’ and the, *sine-qua-non*, condescending policy of the European

Forces were all factors that favored the foundation of the Greek State. The First National Assembly proclaimed the country's independence in the First Constitution of Greece in 1822. Conflicts against the armed forces of the Ottoman Empire lasted for approximately 10 years. In the meantime, three civil wars took place and a series of Temporary Governments and Revolutionary Constitutions were activated to regulate and represent the belligerents (Clogg 1992, 7–45).

A series of measures for the protection of antiquities, nominal or substantial, were enacted during the War of Independence (1821–1829). The Temporary Administration of Eastern Greece placed the protection of antiquities under the responsibilities of the Ephor¹ of Politics. The General Secretary of the Administration protested in writing against the looting of antiquities from the island of Melos by the Dutch colonel Roitiers in 1825 (Kokkou 1977, 34, 38–41). In 1825 the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Central Administration assigned to the Ephor of Education the collection of scattered antiquities of every region in schools, so that every school had a museum. Curatorial duties were assigned to teachers (Gazi 1993, 64).

The National Assembly in Troezen in 1827 adopted the Second Constitution and elected the first President of the country, Ioannis Kapodistrias (Clogg 1992, 41–45). This Constitution prohibited the export of antiquities and encouraged people to surrender their finds to the local authorities. The same article was included in the 1829 revision (Kokkou 1977, 34, 38–41). A Director and Ephor of the National Museum was appointed in 1829. The National Museum consisted of piles of scattered ancient remains hosted in the Orphanage of Aegina, the first capital of the state (see plates 1–3). No archaeological service existed. The Presidential Decree no 953 (1830) constituted the first archaeological legislative document (Kokkou 1977, 50–54).

Figures. 1–3. The premises of the first Archaeological Museum are under reconstruction to host a diachronic museum of Aegina (A. Sakellariadi 2006).



1 The word 'ephor' literally means 'the one who overlooks' and originates from the political system of ancient Sparta. It is still used as a title for the Directors of the peripheral services of the Archaeological Service. The peripheral services are called 'Ephorates'.



At the same time, however, Greek governments had been using the granting of research permits to foreign missions under special terms and conditions to put forward political claims. The Constitution of Troezen (1827) made special provision for the export of antiquities for educational and research purposes to serve the French Scientific Mission of Moreas (1829) (Kokkou 1977, 49–50). Kapodistrias himself suggested that the Greek government should allow the export of antiquities if a significant advantage for the country was at stake and the ceding of antiquities in exchange for “*things valuable and unavoidably necessary for the public education, such as books, astronomy instruments, geological instruments, machine models etc.*” He also proposed the exchange of antiquities for weapons. However, these suggestions were perceived as violating the Constitution and contributed to shortening the period of Kapodistrias’ office² (Kalpaxis 1990, 18–22, Protopsaltis 1967, κλ-λη).

Hereditary sovereignty for the monarchical and independent state of Greece was officially recognized by the Great Powers in the Convention of London signed in 1832 between Britain, France and Russia. The King chosen was Otto of Wittelsbach, son of King Ludwig I of Bavaria. The new King and his Regency were called to create the basic infrastructure of a state, where none had previously existed and a shared sense of Greek identity (Clogg 1992, 43, 46–49).

State Patronage: the Archaeological Legislation (1834–2002)

The first regulatory texts, adopted by the Revolutionary National Assemblies, constituted the basis for the laws of the new state. The most influential legal documents that are going to be discussed are the laws of 1834, 1899, 1932, 2002 and the current Constitution of Greece (1975, revised in 2001).

The beginning of state legislation and antiquities in the Greek state was made in 1834 (“*About scientific and technological collections, about the discovery and conservation of antiquities and their uses*”, 10/22 May 1834). This piece of legislation was drafted by Georg Ludwig von Maurer, an eminent law scholar and historian and A. Weissenburg, an architect who was appointed General Ephor of Antiquities, and has defined the grounds for archaeology ever since (Petrakos 1987, 55–56).

The law stated that “all antiquities inside Greece, because they are works of the ancestors of the Greek people, are regarded as national possession of all the Greeks in general” (article 61). The foundation for an all-state property right was set. “All ruins remaining on or underneath national land, on the bottom of the sea, rivers or public streams, lakes or swamps, or other archaeological artifacts, of any name, are property of the State” (article 62). The legislation was flexible on the issue of property rights acknowledging private ownership of antiquities on private land. “Private property is all private collections or antiquities remaining in private property, all ruins on private land or underneath...” (article 63). However the possibility for the state to exercise further rights from then on was ensured. “Those on private land or underneath, in walls or under ruins or lying in any other way, discovered after the existence of this law, half belong to the state...” (article 64). The export of antiquities without government permit was prohibited (article 76) and nobody is allowed to attempt to excavate private or other property without permit (article 100) (Petrakos 1982, 123–135).

The Archaeological Service was set up under this law. Soon afterwards two of the leading organizations in archaeology emerged; in 1836, the Archaeological Committee

2 Such political uses of archaeology continued after the foundation of the Greek State and mainly involved the establishment and activities of the foreign schools of archaeology in Athens. To encourage the establishment of foreign schools, Prime Minister Trikoupi, for instance, donated land to the British (1884) and the Americans (1887) (Morris 1994, 34). Land was also donated for the foundation of the Russian Archaeological School (Petrakos 1982, 193). For other cases see Davis 2002, Sakka 2002, Kalpaxis 1990.

(*Archaeologiki Epitropi*), effectively the predecessor of the Central Archaeological Council (*Kentriko Archaeologiko Symvoulío*) to support the poorly staffed Service; and in 1837 the Archaeological Society (*Archaeologiki Etaireia*), a club of highly influential patrons, including ministers and even the King himself, with complementary and formative role, especially in those early days of state archaeological management (Petrakos 1987, 57–58).

In the spirit of Hellenism, Maurer believed that “the Greek antiquities...have above all for the Kingdom of Greece huge political importance...because the idea of ancient Greece was that inspired the entire Europe in this so big interest about the fight of the heroes of Modern Greece” (Voudouri 2003, 18–19). It was modeled on the Vatican State law about antiquities (Petrakos 1987, 55–56). The premise of this legislative document is extremely reminiscent of the public debate taking place at the time about the regime that would suit the nation’s needs. Napoleon’s dictum ‘everything for the people, nothing by the people’ was a popular one (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002, 11–46). The dictum’s second part was to be fulfilled by the next archaeological law.

The failure to recognize and act within the law across the country has been frequently reported in the archaeological journals of the time (for a list of references from the *Praktika tis Archaeologikis Etaireias*, see Gazi 1993, 53). A new one (24 July 1899, 2646/1899) was promulgated to remedy the situation. The law no 2646/1899 determined the protection of antiquities for more than a century; in 1932 its basic premises were included in a codification of laws and decrees issued in the meantime (no 5351/1932, Petrakos 1982, 21). It remained in use until 2002.

This law introduced the absolute right of the state to the possession of all antiquities; a condition which remains in force and is considered the cornerstone for the protection of antiquities and *raison d’être* of the Archaeological Service itself. “*All antiquities in Greece, no matter where they lie, in public or private property, movable or non movable, from the most ancient time and onwards, are state property*” (article 1). The right of compensation to land owners was also established. The encyclical that succeeded the law in 1899 is characterized by a spirit of excessive admiration for the classical culture and the hatred against antiquities smugglers (Petrakos 1982, 21–22, 141–151). This law of 1899 has been regarded as the ‘*enlightened foundation*’ of the Archaeological Service by eminent Greek archaeologists (Carouzos, mentioned in Petrakos 1982, 34).

The law of 1932 was insufficient and contradictory. Despite its weaknesses and taking into consideration the tremendous social and economic changes from 1950s onwards, the results of its implementation were regarded quite satisfactory. It is noteworthy that some of its articles were not even compatible with the 1975 Constitution. In addition, many efforts had been made to limit its effect over the last forty years because of the obstacles it posed to construction and industrial development (Petrakos 1982, 26–28). For 70 years there had not been any concise laws redefining the archaeological agenda in Greece. A series of decrees and Supreme Court decisions were issued to confront problems that rose from changing conditions or that were not taken into consideration in the first place.

As a result the 3028/2002 law was passed. This remains loyal to what has been the spirit of archaeological legislation for almost two centuries now, mainly prioritizing public interest over individual property rights (Government’s Gazette, no 153, 28 June 2002).

Finally, the Constitution adopted in Greece in 1975 declared that the protection of the natural and cultural environment constitutes a duty of the State. “*The State is bound to adopt special preventive or repressive measures for the preservation of the environment. Monuments and historic areas and elements are under the protection of the State*” (article 24, par. 1 and 6).

State Patronage: Administration of Archaeology

The Archaeological Service has an administrative structure dating back to 1834. The most important change that has occurred since then was the removal of the Service from the authority of the Ministry of Education in the 1960s. The responsible Ministry became the Ministry of the Presidency, where it constituted an independent service under the title “Service of Antiquities and Anastylis”. This move aimed at its release from the numerous educational and ecclesiastical problems that undermined its importance in the Ministry of Education (Petrakos 1982, 60).

In 1971 the Service was placed under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and Sciences, set up by the Military Junta (1968–1974), where it has remained ever since. The structure of the Ministry of Culture reflects the State’s priorities in cultural policy. One realizes that cultural heritage, that is, archaeological heritage and mainly classical antiquities, comes first. In the field of contemporary cultural creation, the State has only supervisory role (Voudouri 2003, 260, 262–263).

Considerable criticism has focused on the dual role of the Service, which is both administrative and scientific at the expense of both (Voudouri 2003, 257, no. 8). The chronological division of the services is fundamental (e.g. Ephorates of Prehistoric and Classical and Ephorates of Byzantine and post-Byzantine antiquities); it sustains for two centuries now the tripartite division of Greek history established by the national historiographer Constantinos Paparrigopoulos (1815–1893) in his seminal work *History of the Hellenic Nation* (1853). However, it limits general strategic planning, diachronic and interdisciplinary approaches (Voudouri 2003, 264–271).

In addition, as in all levels of archaeological research and practice, object-oriented approaches dominate in the Service. This kind of approaches ensures the visual authentication of the ancient heritage while the social, economic and communicative dimensions of archaeology are neglected (Voudouri 2003, 274–275).

The Development of Archaeological Museums

During the 19th century Greek archaeology struggled to protect antiquities from war, removal and looting. Therefore the 1834 law specified that museums should be founded in the capitals of every prefecture for “*the preservation in situ of all objects having local value*” (articles 2, 8) (Gazi 1993, 51–52, Petrakos 1982, 124–125). In reality, the first provincial museum was founded in 1874 in Sparta (Gazi 1993, 340). The lack of human and financial resources forced the State to entrust the local authorities with the protection of antiquities; local collections constituted the first nuclei of provincial museums and were considered an effective medium for the protection of antiquities at the time (Gazi 1993, 56–66).

Legislation in 1885 envisaged a public and educational role for archaeological museums; “the teaching and study of archaeology, the general diffusion of archaeological knowledge and the generation of love for the fine arts” (Royal Decree, On the Organisation of Athenian Museums, 25/11/1885). In practice, this translated in extended opening hours and catalogues for public use almost exclusively in Athenian museums (Gazi 1993, 315).

The presentation in museums was linear and classificatory; typical of 19th c. ‘show-case’ museums. Interpretation was lacking partly because of the early development of the discipline but mainly because of its ideological implications. As Kotsakis argued, the powerful and self-sufficient ethnocentric ideological construct has legitimised the absence of theoretical orientation in Greek archaeology (2002, 15–17). The symbolic nature of the antiquities as national emblems was regarded as self-evident and therefore no interpretation was required. Art-historical approaches to archaeology had prevailed (Gazi 1993, 327).

In general, there was no overall State policy for museums in the 19th century. The idealised view of the classical past was evident in all displays, even when the vision of the nation

included Medieval Hellenism towards the end of the century. The displays evoked more feelings of reverence rather than appreciation. The affinity with the past was curtailed rather than enhanced in the eyes of the public and therefore created distance rather than understanding (Gazi 1993, 332).

In the 20th century, the study of prehistoric cultures entered the archaeological discourse. In the First Meeting of the Association of Greek Archaeologists (1967) D. Theocharis mentioned a public approach to archaeological activity through museums for the first time and referred to the presentation of other aspects of life apart from art works. The first exhibition of artefacts intended for the presentation of the Neolithic culture was not set up until 1976 (Hourmouziadi 2006, 74, 81–82).

The post-war period saw the proliferation of rescue excavations because of both public and private construction and resulted in an ‘archaeology of building plots’ (Hourmouziadi 2006, 52, n. 128). More archaeological museums were built as depositories for these finds, according to where the need for storage was more pressing. Archaeologists first realised the ‘distancing’ of the public from museums and the lack of a theory behind their exhibitions (Hourmouziadi 2006, 76).

At the same time increased numbers of tourists were arriving in the country with the emergence of mass tourism (Hourmouziadi 2006, 77). Still the visitor needs were not considered until the 1980s in Greece. Until 1977, the law defined museums in relation to their role of safeguarding collections. The 2002 law (article 45, par. 1) has shifted the focus to the social role of the museum and its aims mainly to exhibit and project collections to the public for their study, learning and entertainment (Hourmouziadi 2006, 111–112). Up to the present, visitor numbers of the Greek archaeological museums show dependence on tourism and school visits (General Secretariat of National Statistical Service of Greece). Despite extensive refurbishment, Greeks still do not visit them (Ministry of Culture 1998, ‘Greeks and museums, relationship at a distance’, Kathimerini, 2/3/2008).

In the 1970s the political role of the museum was occasionally referred to. The foundation of museums was seen as a political act and a State obligation. Since then exhibitions of classical antiquities have remained entrenched in aesthetic principles of history of art. If there is any experimentation taking place, it is restricted to the prehistoric exhibitions. The lack of central planning and spasmodic action, irrelevant to the museum discourse, continue to drive museums’ development. Thirty-five new museums have been founded since 1980 certainly not to meet visitor demand (Hourmouziadi 2006, 83, 122, 110).

Museums’ funding and development has also been affected by their relative significance. The National Archaeological Museum and the Acropolis Museum, for instance, have always been granted all the attention and resources necessary for organisation and maintenance (Gazi 1993, 322). One only needs to take into account reports on the cost of the New Acropolis Museum to realise that this situation has remained unchanged. Museums have never acquired autonomy; their variety is only due to the lack of an overall state policy. At the same time the Greek museological discourse continues to neglect the visitor (Hourmouziadi 2006, 346).

Conclusions

Having examined the development of archaeology, it is clear that its institutionalization at the same time as the emergence of the nation state and nationalism in Europe is more than mere coincidence. Furthermore, the tight connections with the State’s ideology have influenced the development of the discipline and its museums up to the present. The idea of Hellenism, the idealization of the classical past and its identification with the fount of the European civilization, has rendered Greece unique (Lowenthal 1988, Morris 1994). Hellenism placed antiquity in the service of the creation of the Greek state and constituted an unparalleled foundation for the formation of the State and the national identity.

Since the foundation of the Greek state and up to the present day, one can identify numerous examples of the ways Greek governments have used the past in the service of the national cause. Most noteworthy are the attitudes of two of the most important leaders of the state in the 19th century, Ioannis Kapodistrias and Harilaos Trikoupi. In their politics, one can discern a liberal attitude towards what constituted the cultural capital of the country. Both approached the antiquities in a very realistic, practical and functional perspective. They perceived material remains of the past as the means and not the end of their aspirations, taking into consideration the immediate needs of the nation. The same observation applies with the first law of the Bavarian Regency. These attitudes demonstrate that in the 19th century a valuation system was applicable to antiquities, just as to any other commodity; this situation changed on the eve of the 20th century.

With the law of 1899 and political and intellectual influences since then, antiquities have been elevated to a supranational sphere, regarded as sacred. This evolving process of glorification may be explained by the continuous struggle of the state to acquire its final physical form and finally appropriate the values Westerners had envisaged for the true heirs of the classical golden age. One cannot ignore that Greece struggled through many political and military obstructions on her way to become that state. Further research is necessary to associate these changes with specific socio-political developments and the role of individuals.

However the conditions that made this mechanism necessary and contributed to its building up are no longer in tune with reality. Morris believes that the devaluation of Hellenism as an academic discourse that started in the 1950s has left the field of classics and Greek archaeology without an intellectual framework. A reevaluation of what and for who the archaeology of Greece is practiced, is due (Morris 1994, 8–9). Further work is necessary to redefine new research directions and goals for the discipline. Kotsakis suggests the re-orientation of contemporary archaeology towards the search for ethnic identities in the every day experience of people, not included in the formal historical narrative but traceable in the archaeological record (Kotsakis 1998, 58).

The immense State effort to take over archaeology in the name of the public interest and benefit has ironically resulted in a state archaeology practiced in a ‘private’ manner; entrenched exclusively inside the limits of the Archaeological Service, alienated from the Greek people. Hamilakis regards a distancing from the 19th century national myth of classical Greece necessary for the rapprochement of archaeology and the public (Hamilakis 2000, 179–180). It is possible that the opening up of archaeology to the influence of larger social groups could lead to a broader change in the views about antiquity as a sacred world irrelevant to anyone but archaeologists.

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List of Illustrations

Figure 1, 2 and 3. The premises of the Orphanage in Aegina where the first National Archaeological Museum was located are being renovated to host a museum (A. Sakellariadi, 2006).