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Antiquities as symbolic capital in modern Greek society

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The Great Powers — starting with ancient Imperial Rome and running up to the present — have valued Classical Greek culture as embodying the founding spirit of their own, our own western world. So where does the modern state of Greece stand? It is, more than most nations, encouraged or required to share what might be its particular heritage with a wider world.

Introduction

The use of archaeology and antiquities for political purposes by different interest groups is not a new subject for discussion. As early as 1939, when dramatic social and political developments were taking place in Europe, Grahame Clark in his *Archaeology and society* (1939) dedicated a chapter to this subject with particular emphasis upon the question of antiquity and nationalism. Glyn Daniel's *The idea of prehistory* set out issues such as the Kossina phenomenon in a chapter called 'The idea of prehistory in the study of language and race and in politics'. The New Archaeology with its 'neutral scientificism' and positivism, did not address these matters; it was in the 1980s that the political implications of the discipline regained much interest with the advent of 'post-processual archaeology' (e.g. Shanks & Tilley 1987a: 186–208; 1987b: 46–67; Trigger 1984; Kristiansen 1992; Gathercole & Lowenthal 1990; Bond & Gilliam 1994; Kohl 1993; Fowler 1987; Arnold 1990; Dietler 1994). This movement, reconsidering archaeology's ontological and epistemological principles, declared the loss of its 'political innocence' in the same way as New Archaeology had meant the loss of the discipline's scientific innocence (Kristiansen 1992: 3).

Discussion of the politics of the past in Greece has increased over the last 10 years (e.g. Andreadis 1989; Brown 1994; Friedman 1992; Herzfeld

1991; Kalpaxis 1990; 1993; Karakasidou 1994: 41–4; Kotsakis 1991; Lowenthal 1988; 1990; MacConnel 1989; MacNeal 1991; Skopetea 1984; Politis 1993; Morris 1994) following those theoretical developments within western archaeology and in response to recent social and political conditions. Interest has focused on the uses/abuses of the past in constructing national identity and the 'imagined community' of the nation (Anderson 1991), as a consequence of the new climate of nationalism in Europe and elsewhere. Most of these studies have illustrated a feature common in most societies, the use of the past to legitimize a community's existence (cf. Kristiansen 1992: 19). To recall Grahame Clark again, 'human societies exist in the last resort because their members are aware of belonging to them, and a major factor in this is a consciousness of sharing a common past' (1957: 255).

Other issues need equally thorough investigation: the active role of the past in everyday life, in the negotiation of power among different social groups, in the attempts of authorities to legitimize their existence and in the counter-attempts of ordinary people to resist dominant groups; and the responsibilities of archaeologists and archaeological work in this process. Moreover, the nationalistic uses of the past should be examined in more depth and in all their aspects. For example, the particularities of individual nationalisms should be taken

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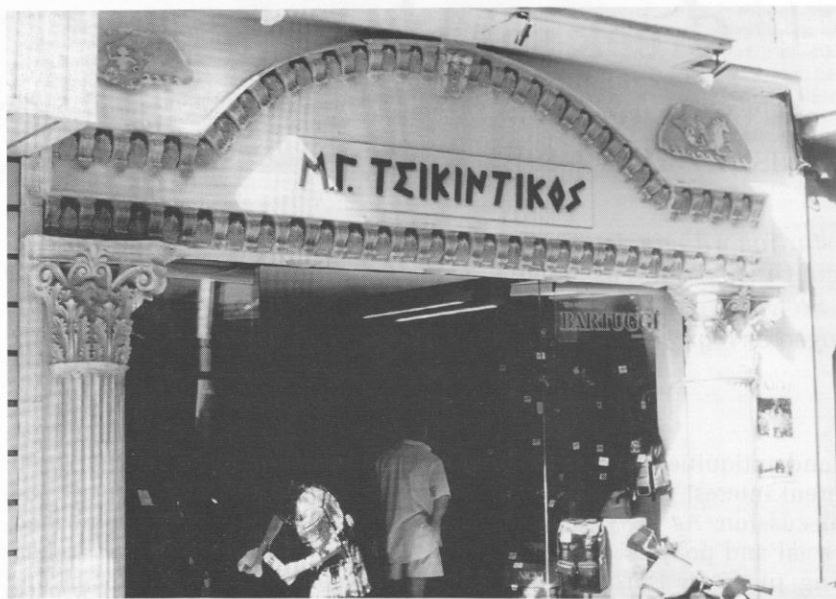


FIGURE 1. A shop-front in Rethymnon, Crete. Its decoration imitates a mixture of ancient Greek styles. Note that even the lettering in the owner's name is written in such a way as to contribute to the imitation of the style. (Photograph by Y. Hamilakis.)



FIGURE 2. A house in the village Petrokephali near the Minoan site of Phaistos in Messara, Crete with double-axes, horns of consecration and imitations of Knossos columns, as restored by Evans. (Photograph by E. Yalouri & Y. Hamilakis.)

into consideration whenever uses of archaeology and the past in general are discussed; Greek nationalism is a telling example (cf. Mouzelis 1993 where Greek nationalism, described as 'reactive nationalism', is seen as distinct from north European nationalism). Furthermore, the specific social conditions and historical framework within which the past is used or abused should be analysed, a procedure which has been adopted only by a few studies.

Archaeology and past in modern Greek society

It is well known that aspects of antiquity dominate Greek daily life. This domination, evident in many facets of material culture, is present both in official concerns and in the domain of ordinary citizens; ancient features in architectural arrangement and decoration very frequently appear both in shop-fronts (FIGURE 1), and in the external decoration of private resi-

dences (FIGURE 2). The fact that these features occur not only in places with obvious commercial character such as shops, but also in the more personal sphere of private houses, makes it obvious that the phenomenon is related to deep ideological constructions.

Our main thesis is that antiquities and the past in general operate as *symbolic capital* (Bourdieu 1977a; Bourdieu 1990) or, to use a similar concept developed by Giddens (1984), as *authoritative resource* in modern Greek society. This symbolic capital is often exchanged for economic capital (although never directly, see below) or for national profit. For example, when in 1911 the Greek Archaeological Service was excavating the Temple of Artemis in Corfu, the Emperor of Germany who visited the island at that time showed his great interest in the excavation and the finds; he asked the government to obtain rights to the excavation project. The government, to the dismay of the Greek excavators, granted the rights to the Kaiser and his team. As Kalpaxis (1993: 56–7; our translation) notes:

It is not a coincidence that only two days after the assignation of the excavation rights to the Kaiser, Greek government officially approached the Great Powers ('Megales Dynameis'), among which was Germany, asking them to intervene and persuade Turkey to stop the blockade to the Greeks who lived within the boundaries of the Turkish dominion.

This is a case where the Greek state exchanged its symbolic capital — the remains of its past with all their ideological connotations — for political and national profit.

The exchange of symbolic capital for economic capital is well depicted on the poster illustrated in FIGURE 3 which calls for financial assistance to Greece during the Second World War. Here, the classical past is brought out to remind us that since the establishment of the modern Greek state, Europe and the rest of the western world are considered mere debtors to Greece by both Greek official bodies and ordinary people (Herzfeld 1982; 1987; Skopetea 1988: 211).

As with all forms of symbolic capital, the purely economic transactions are masked. As Bourdieu notes (1990: 118):

Symbolic capital is this denied capital, recognised as legitimate, that is misrecognised as capital (rec-



FIGURE 3. Second World War poster from the campaign for financial help to Greece.

ognition, acknowledgement in the sense of gratitude aroused by benefits can be one of the foundations of its recognition) which, along with religious capital is perhaps the only possible form of accumulation when economic capital is not recognised.

Antiquities cannot be considered saleable. All antiquities were declared 'National Heritage' and 'State Property' from the very early years of the new State, with the first systematic archaeological law, in 1834 (Petraikos 1982: 19–20). When during the difficult post-war years the sale of some antiquities by the Greek state was suggested, a public uproar arose and Nickos Karouzos, one of the most prominent archaeologists of that time, protested strongly by writing a furious article in a newspaper. The plan was abandoned (Petraikos 1982: 30–35).

Proposals to export Greek antiquities for strictly commercial purposes have always been met with strong opposition from both, archaeologists and public. In 1924 it was suggested

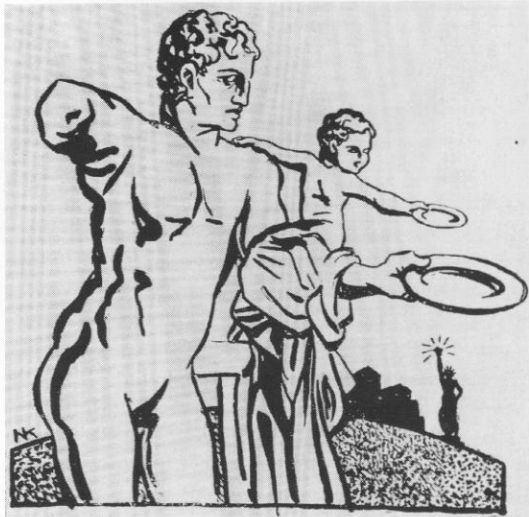


FIGURE 4. A cartoon published in the Athens newspaper *Kathimerini* (11 May 1924) commenting on the proposed travelling exhibition of Praxiteles' *Hermes* to raise funds for the repayment of the Greek 'Refugee Loan'. (As reprinted in *EDAE* 4 (1989).)

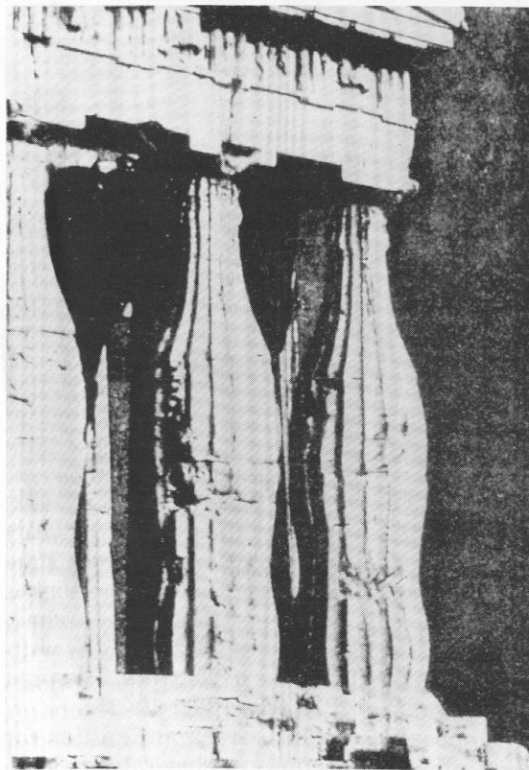


FIGURE 5. The Parthenon as portrayed in an Italian newspaper in August 1992 for a Coca-Cola advertisement. (From the Greek press.)

by Americans that the *Hermes* of Praxiteles should travel on show in American and European cities in order to collect money for the repayment of the 'Refugee Loan' of the Greek State. Again, strong feelings of both archaeologists and public provoked the calling-off of the plan (Petraikos 1982: 80–81, *EDAE* 4[1989]: 24; FIGURE 4). There was a similar hostile reaction to the proposal by the Greek ambassador in USA to display *Hermes* to the International Commercial Exhibition of New York in 1963 (Petraikos 1982: 81–4). Protests and strong reactions did not always prevent the export of antiquities. In 1970, an uproar did not succeed in preventing the export of the *Kore* 670 from Akropolis and its display to the commercial exhibition EXPO'70 in Osaka, Japan (Petraikos 1982: 85).

More recently (1981), N. Schimmel, an American collector of antiquities, proposed to the Greek Ministry of Culture a loan of Greek antiquities to American universities as a direct financial transaction. A similar idea was expressed by the curator of the Greek collection at the Paul Getty Museum, Marion True, in a conference at Rome on 15 June 1991. Both offers were strongly turned down (see *EDAE* 17[1991]: 122–7). Vassilis Petraikos, the Secretary of Archaeological Society writes (*EDAE* 17[1991]: 109):

We keep the ancients here, they are not industrial products for export. Abroad we will send films, books, magazines in order to convince westerners that their occasional friends are themselves still barbarians of the past, and as dangerous as they were in 1453 and 1529.

It is not antiquities as physical objects which are for sale, but their value and their symbolic meaning. The appropriation of Greek symbolic capital by non-Greek organizations and its exchange for economic profit is considered an offense. This was the case when a Coca-Cola advertisement, printed in an Italian newspaper in August 1992 illustrated Coca-Cola bottles replacing the columns of the Parthenon (FIGURE 5). Yet, as a minority of intellectuals pointed out, many Greek companies have repeatedly used the Parthenon and other 'national' symbols in advertisements (see Boulotis 1988). This was not the first time that Coca-Cola had 'stolen' Greece's symbolic capital, in the public perception. In 1990 Athens had lost to Atlanta, the Coca-Cola company's home-base, in

the competition to stage the 1996 Olympic Games, another form of Greek symbolic capital.

Other aspects of antiquities and the past as symbolic capital are equally interesting. Bourdieu (1977a; 1977b; 1990) has noted that symbolic capital incorporates an immense power often used to mask and to transform other forms of power. As an authoritative resource, that is, a non-material resource directly involved in the generation of power (Giddens 1984), antiquities and the past in general are subjected to manipulation by different interest groups within Greek society. They are therefore part of the resources which constitute and reproduce the structures of domination in modern Greek society. As Herzfeld has shown (1991), the negotiation of power through the use of the past is an everyday phenomenon which involves not only state organizations and official bodies, but all people. Different pasts which compete, clash or co-exist are involved. Neither the official rhetoric, however, nor the discourse on the past generated by ordinary people can hide the fact that the debate is all about the present. It has to do with power, domination and resistance; it is all politics.

The rest of this paper focuses on two aspects of the use of antiquities in the of 'negotiation of power': its use as a means to legitimate the authority of a regime or a social group, and its use as tool for resistance.

In the beginning: rich merchants and romantic Kings

Before the founding of the Greek state, actually in the last decades of the 17th century, within the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire a merchant middle-class emerged representing the 'modernizers' in a struggle with the traditional 'autochthonous landowning-cum-merchant class' (Mouzelis 1978: 13; cf. Diamandouros 1972; Moskof 1979: 99–118). The political and economic influence of the Orthodox Church which was mainly ruled by Greek and the use of the Greek language all over the Balkans have been considered the most important factors for the 'Hellenization' of this new social class (Tsoukalas 1977: 39). Already economically connected to the west European bourgeoisie, this group imported, together with goods and economic capital, a form of symbolic capital in the ideology of classicism, much favoured by their European counterparts (see also

Moskof 1979: 85). This merchant middle class, unlike the indigenous traditional élites and the ecclesiastical authority (Tsoukalas 1977: 44; our translation; cf. Diamandouros 1972):

sought a new form of political organisation which would lead not only to the liberation from Ottomans, but would also enable the creation of a 'European style' middle-class which would guarantee political emancipation and primarily economic development.

The ideals of classical antiquity as perceived in Europe at that time — ideals in which the whole concept of European-ness and the ideological foundations of western society were based (cf. Morris 1994) — provided a guiding source for this set of relationships. In this way classical ideals served as a link between Greek and other European middle-class social ideologies. Above all, they legitimized the existence of the middle-class and its political and economic programme (Kremmydas 1992; Tsoukalas 1977; Xifaras 1993: 60).

At that period and in this way the classical past was used by a specific social and economic group to achieve economic, political and ideological domination over the other groups within Hellenic society. Antiquities acquired the status of symbolic capital and authoritative resource in the early years of the modern Greek state, due to the prominent position of classical antiquity in the ideology of the European educated middle classes. In other words, antiquity became authoritative resource in modern Greek society through an externally originated mechanism of valuation (for discussions on valuation see Thompson 1979; Appadurai 1986; for native perceptions about antiquity before and shortly after the Greek War of Independence see Kakridis 1978; Protosaltis 1967).

The European powers had played a large role in shaping the political, ideological and socio-economic framework within which the War of Independence took place (1821–1829); it remained equally major during the first steps of the new-born Greek state. Intellectual attitudes towards the Greek past during that period were characterized by a promotion of classical antiquity and a matching dislike of the more recent Byzantine past — considered a disgraceful era for the Greek nation, an era of foreign occupation (cf. Dimaras 1989). The words of Iakovakis Rizos Neroulos, an intellectual, politician and president of the Archaeological So-

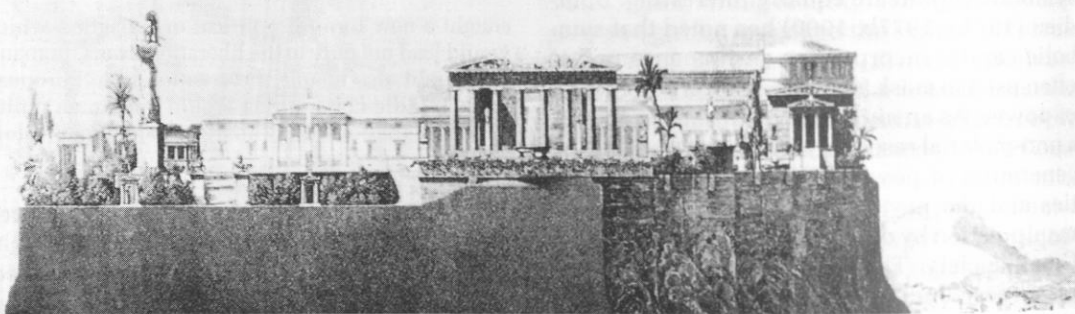


FIGURE 6. The plan for the royal palace on the Acropolis designed by K.F. Schinkel in 1834. (From Tsigakou (1981: 64).)

ciety, at a meeting of the Archaeological Society in 1841, are revealing (cited in Dimaras 1989: 394; our translation):

Byzantine history is a long series of foolish deeds and infamous outrages of the Roman state transferred to Byzantium. It is a disgraceful specimen of the extreme wretchedness and decline of the Greeks.

Classicism as an ideology was popular among the upper and middle classes of the major European powers who were to support Greek national independence and guarantee it a secure life. Moreover, at a time when the Greek state was searching for a model of political organization (see Politis 1993: 66; Toynbee 1981: 215), the classical city-states were closer to the contemporary western ideals of government than the political system of the Byzantine multi-ethnic empire which was also too 'authoritarian and theocratic' (Kremmydas 1992: 42); (for the conflict between Classical and Byzantine past in the early years of the modern Greek state and its implications see Dimaras 1989; Politis 1933: 110–11; Yalouri 1993).

Another interesting feature of the period is the imposition of *monumental time* over *social time* (concepts introduced by Herzfeld 1991). The emphasis on the 'uniqueness' of the Greek case and of the Greek War on Independence ('uniqueness' built on the connection with classical antiquity) legitimized the new nation-state; at the same time it led to its conceptual

isolation from the current developments in the wider geographical area, from its recent historical background and environment (cf. Skopetea 1988: 36, 209–11). At that time the Balkans and southeast Europe were experiencing social movements, to some extent similar to the Greek War of Independence; these were taking place in *social time* whereas the Greeks were living in a *monumental time*. The Greek middle classes secured the collaboration of the European upper and middle classes by presenting the Greek War of Independence as having no resemblance to movements like the *Carbonari*, the secret society active mainly in Italy at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century with aspirations of radical political and social changes; founded in ancient virtue, the Greek War was shown as having no radical social connotations which could threaten the given social structure (Dimaras 1989: 359; Skopetea 1988: 36). What we see here is another feature of antiquities as authoritative resource, its distinctive temporality, its capacity to abolish the social time with obvious consequences for the social groups which command it.

That was the situation which Otho of Bavaria, the King imposed upon the Greeks (1832–1862) by the major European Powers, found when he arrived in Greece. Bavarian Munich was among the most powerful centres of classicism; thus we should not be surprised that Otho adopted symbols borrowed from classi-

cal antiquity. In fact, it is not a coincidence that on Otho's arrival to Nauplion, the first capital of Greece, a triumphal arch was set up with verses from Homer such as, 'He is both sovereign in wealth and powerful in arms' (Αμφότερον βασιλεύς τ' αγαθά κρατερός τ' αιχητής), 'he was taking care of all those that nourish peoples' (οις λαοί τ' επιτετράφαι και τόσα μέμηλε) and under the inscription 'Long live Greece' (Ζήτω η Ελλάς) there were the words 'Achaean achieved a lot and suffered many pains' (πλείστ' έρξαν τ' έπαθλον τε και πλείστ' εμόγησαν Αχαιοί). On the gate of the city there was the verse from a tragic poet 'you rule over people's cities with safety' (συ δ' ασφαλώς κυβερνάς άστυ λαών) (Ross 1976 [1863]: 219). Also revealing is the restoration of a drum of a Parthenon column in a festive atmosphere on the same day as Otho's arrival (Skopetea 1988: 197).

Moreover, a plan had been elaborated of turning the Akropolis into a royal palace. In 1834 Karl Friedrich Schinkel submitted a classicist-romanticist plan of a palace-citadel on the Akropolis and of an over-sized statue of the goddess Athena (Ross 1976 [1863]: 95, 101; Cobet 1987; MacNeal 1991; Tsigakou 1981; Wieler 1995; FIGURE 6). The Akropolis, a monument 2400 years old, provided a sense of continuity, permanence, historicity and authenticity; above all, it was the most striking example of classical Athens and its achievements in democracy, philosophy, sciences and arts. Established on the Akropolis, the royal court would function as the patron of these ideas. Moreover, the combination of a castle-citadel together with the statue of Athena Promachos (= fighting in the first rank), the 'patron goddess' of Athens, would provide the Othonian-Bavarian kingship with another dimension: it would make it appear as the powerful protector of Athens and guarantor of the new-born state's freedom. The grandeur of its setting, on the high rock of the Akropolis that stands visible to the whole city of Athens, would transmit the symbolic message.

In this climate of high praise of the classical past, there are indications that Otho and his circle supported the Byzantine past as well (Skopetea 1988; Kokkou 1977: 112; Papantoniou 1934: 20–24). The law of 1834 proposed by Maurer provided for the protection of Byzantine antiquities (Petraikos 1982), and the con-

tinuous destruction of many Byzantine monuments led in 1837 to another royal decree to protect them. Several Bavarian officials from Otho's circle repeatedly protested against the destruction of Byzantine antiquities (Kokkou 1977; Petraikos 1982). It is an irony, but a revealing one, that it was the classicist and non-orthodox Ludwig of Bavaria who rescued the post-Byzantine Kapnikarea church of Athens (Xyngopoulos 1929 cited in Kokkou 1977: 114).

If the Akropolis could become a potent symbol of Othonian kingship, this was much more the case with Byzantium. While the classical perception of statehood and democracy was closer to the contemporary western European ideal, the authoritarian system of political government in the Byzantine Empire better matched Othonian kingship (Skopetea 1988: 178). Moreover, given that Byzantinism was very much linked with Christianity, Otho had to support the Byzantine regime if he wanted to legitimize his kingship among the ordinary Greek Christians. The Sacred Synod had refused to nominate through sacrament a non-Orthodox king. Otho's Christian faith was different from that of his subjects, and for Greeks the matter of faith was pre-eminent (Seidl 1984: 165–6). Seidl aptly remarks that the only acquaintance of Greeks with monarchy was the Byzantine Empire, where monarchy was intimately linked with theocracy. The blessing of Otho's nomination, Seidl continues, was an important act for the binding of the Bavarian King with the Greek people. Otherwise, Otho would remain, as he did, a King appointed by 'benevolent European Powers', but not by God: he could be, therefore, replaced by anyone else at any time (Seidl 1984: 166).

Above all, that 'flirtation' of Otho with the Byzantine Empire has to be seen within the concept of the *Great Idea* — a-not-very-clear concept introduced by Koletis in 1844, the variable meaning of which concerned either the territorial expansion of Greece, or its cultural renaissance and domination in the Orient, or the State's reconstruction (Skopetea 1988; Politis 1993: 62–3). K. Levidis reports a revealing incident (1863: 1–2): when in 1840 Sultan Mahmud died, Otho wanted to rush to Constantinople. He was expecting that once he arrived there he would be proclaimed Emperor of the Orient.



FIGURE 7. A replica of Parthenon which was built at Makronisos during the late 1940s and '50s, together with other monuments which imitated ancient Greek art. (From ICOMOS (1991).)

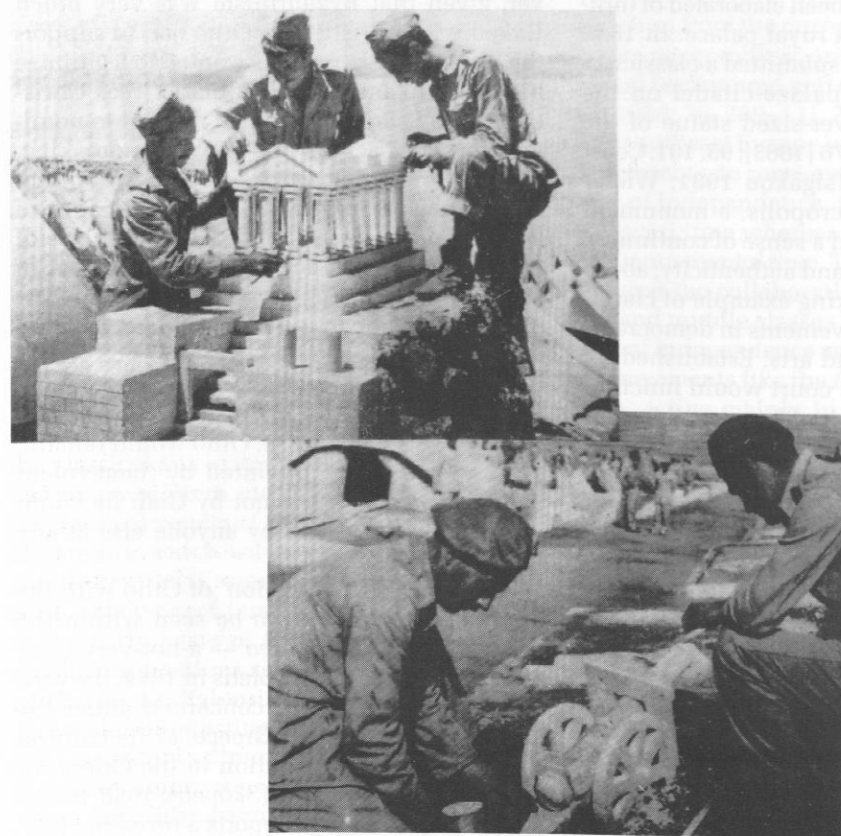


FIGURE 8. Soldiers in exile at Makronisos during the late 1940s and '50s building, together with replicas of guns, small-size replicas of Parthenon. (From Rodocanachi (1949).)

Some recent examples: legitimation and resistance

There are many other cases in modern Greek history where antiquity has been used to le-

gitimize authority and power. An interesting issue is the manipulation of antiquity by military dictatorships or authoritarian regimes. Makronisos, a place of exile and concentration



FIGURE 9. Heraklion, Crete 1979. Barricades built by the protesters against the transport of Minoan artefacts from Herakleion museum for the exhibition to Paris and New York. (From the local press.)

camp for many thousands of democratic citizens and soldiers during the late 1940s, '50s and '60s, was called by the authorities the 'new Parthenon' (Valetas 1975). A replica of the Parthenon (among other monuments such as the church of St Sophia in Constantinople) was built in Makronisos (ICOMOS 1991) (FIGURE 7), and in propaganda posters (Photographic Album of Makronisos 1949) soldiers were illustrated building their own replicas of that 'National Monument' (FIGURE 8). The state during that time was trying to implant the belief that the ancient Greek spirit — which had survived through to the present — was at odds with contemporary 'radical' ideologies; this is another attempt to impose monumental time over social time. The inmates at Makronisos, by building the replicas of ancient monuments — which at that context lived another life and acquired a specific meaning and significance, the one given by the dominant ideology — could be helped to re-approach this spirit (Rodocanachi 1949: 6). Here is what the leaflet, produced for the photographic exhibition organized in Athens on 1949 to present the 'achievements' of Makronisos, said (Photographic Album of Makronisos 1949: 6):

Makronisos is today a national civilising capital which has emerged through the struggle of the violent forces of the Slavocommunist darkness against the forces of freedom which were born from the spirit of ancient Greek philosophy.

In the case of Makronisos, therefore, the state used the authoritative resource of antiquity to legitimize its existence and to consolidate and reproduce its domination. It could do so because, firstly, antiquities had a prominent position in the structure of resources of power in Greece and, secondly, the official rhetoric on the ideological interpretation of the Greek past had deeply penetrated Greek society.

In more detail we present here another event of a different kind. At the beginning of 1979, one of the main issues that occupied the daily papers was the decision of the right-wing government to export some 170 antiquities from several Greek museums for an exhibition about Aegean 'civilization', initially at the Louvre in Paris and afterwards at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. A heated debate arose among intellectuals on the wisdom of that decision, focussed on the risk of damage to the archaeo-

logical objects. Here we are concerned less with export of antiquities for exhibition (see for discussions Andronikos 1977a; 1977b; Zois 1979 [reprinted in Zois 1990]; Petrakos 1982: 79–92; EDAE 17(1991) *passim*; MENTOR 20 [1992]: 18–88; for the specific exhibition see Petrakos 1982: 85–6; *Kathimerini* 7, 8, 9, 10/11, 15, 17/18 December 1978; 9 January 1979; 9, 20 February 1979; 4, 8, 13, 25 March 1979; *Vradini* 11 December 1978; *To Vima* 21 January 1979), more with public reaction to the decision of the government. Among the archaeological objects was a number of Minoan artefacts coming mainly from the Herakleion museum. Prominent Minoan archaeologists objected strongly (Platon 1978). Very soon, cultural and political organizations, such as mayors of Cretan towns and various societies, decided to express both their opposition and their determination to prevent the removal of these antiquities from the Herakleion museum. At the end of February, the government decided to use its authority and transfer the antiquities by force. A large number of armed police were sent to Crete for that purpose. Many thousands of people (c. 30,000 in a city of c. 100,000, according to newspaper reports), most of whom had never visited a museum before, gathered outside the Herakleion Museum and built barricades, determined to confront the governmental forces (FIGURE 9). Eye-witnesses say that even guns were ready for use by the protesters. Some of the slogans heard were 'Antiquities will stay in our place', 'We say NO to the up-rooting', 'Antiquities are Greek', etc. (*Kritiki Epitheorisi*, 28 February 1979). Oral poets (*mantinadologoi*) wrote verses which were printed and distributed among the participants, expressing the feelings and the ideological motivation of the crowd. We cite an example (translation by the authors):

They are Ours

The whole body of Crete is roaring
Minos moans heart rendingly
Talos was shattered and horrified
Daidalos is tearing his wings into pieces

Having been worked for thousands of years
with flowers all around, the people's art
has been sold out and goes abroad,
on the road of Mafia on the road of loss

Grand Cretans, keep your chests straight
and your foreheads up;
hold the sun proudly, high among the crowds
preserve the sacred of the gods.

They all stayed there, day and night, until the Prime Minister backed down from his decision and decided to exclude Minoan artefacts from the proposed exhibition. The 'victory' was celebrated with traditional dances in the main square of Herakleion (*Mesogeios* 28 February 1979; 1, 2 March 1979; *Patris*, 28 February 1979; 1, 2 March 1979; *Vima* 28 February 1979; *Kathimerini* 1, 2 March 1979; *Eleftheri Gnomi* 1, 2 March 1979; *Rethemniotika Nea* 1 March 1979; *Kritiki Epitheorisi* 28 February 1979; 1, 2, 3 March 1979).

One could say that these people were mobilized by the political parties of the opposition. Or that they were motivated by mere self-interest, realizing the economic profitability of antiquities as tourist attraction. There is an element of truth in those explanations, yet the phenomenon is far more complicated. For hundreds of years these people had been subject to official rhetoric about the 'uniqueness' and 'superiority' of the Greek past (cf. Ditsa 1979: 5). But now, they were experiencing the 'hypocrisy' of the state which was perceived as leaving that 'invaluable treasure' unprotected. As was noted above, archaeologists had many criticisms regarding the safety of the antiquities during preparation and transport. During the late 1970s anti-government feelings were running high, especially in Crete. Cretans, who very proudly emphasized their distinctiveness from the rest of Greeks, felt betrayed by the right-wing government of that time. This Cretan attitude of a separate local identity is based, to some extent, on the Minoan past whose distinctive character which separates it from the rest of the Greek prehistory is heard in the local popular verses (*mandinades*) where Minoan antiquities are very often present. This attitude is undoubtedly reinforced by the romanticizing mythologies that Minoan archaeologists, foreign and Greek, have constructed (from Evans' times until recently) where elements such as the 'uniqueness', the 'superiority', the 'peaceful character' and the 'European taste' of the Minoan past feature (cf. Starr 1984; Bintliff 1984).

As Herzfeld (1991: 227) notes, 'once the rhetoric of national heritage has entered the protesters' vocabulary it can be turned to their advantage'. In their protest, these Cretans used the tool that the state had provided — the rhetoric on the uniqueness of Greek antiquities — in order to resist state and government. Yet, their target was not only the government. The antiquities

were to be exhibited in New York; by resisting their transportation, the Cretans were also resisting the strong military presence of the United States on the island. The contemporary newspapers make it clear that the target of opposition was moving progressively from dispute about the ancient artefacts to more general issues of government policy and national independence. It was also a fight against the economic super-powers of the West perceived as attempting to remove from Greece, from Crete, one of the few strong and valuable 'weapons' left — its highly acclaimed, and internationally praised and admired antiquities. The West may have money, political and military superiority and influence; Greece, and in this case Crete, had its invaluable symbolic capital which as authoritative resource organizes and legitimizes its position in time and space (cf. Giddens 1984: 258) and helps to negotiate a more balanced, fairer role in international relations. Furthermore, what is evident through reading the local press reports is that for the protesters, the West represents evil in an almost binary opposition: the West is equated with the Mafia, dishonesty and pollution, while Greece (Crete) has honesty and tradition and is, therefore, pure and humane (cf. Douglas 1966). The local newspaper, *Eleftheri Gnomi* (2 March 1979), explained: 'Dances of satyrs with millions of dollars will be organized around the ancient figurines and the unique ancient vases'.

The fight against the governmental decision (and subsequently against the western super-powers), which, undoubtedly, incorporated chauvinist and nationalistic attitudes, can be viewed as a successful appropriation of Greek symbolic capital by ordinary people (Doris 1981: 301), and a successful use of its symbolic power for resistance to state and supra-state mechanisms.

Conclusions

Antiquity, playing a crucial role in modern Greek society, is constantly used by the state, by different interest groups and by individuals for a variety of purposes. The construction of national identity is one such use. In order to understand both the diversity of uses/abuses of antiquity and their social, political and ideological implications, we have to build a certain theoretical framework within which these roles and functions have to be seen. In this paper we tried to show that the concepts of symbolic capital and authoritative resource provide the basis for

such a framework. The nationalistic use of the past can be better understood and studied as one possible use of antiquity as authoritative resource. Other uses of this authoritative resource in modern Greek society — in legitimizing authority and in resisting the state and dominant structures — are equally interesting and worthy of investigation. Future study of the socio-politics of the Greek past needs to confront a number of problems:

- 1 Is antiquity and the past a plastic resource which can be freely manipulated or are there certain norms that limit this manipulation, as Appadurai (1981) suggests?
- 2 In what ways does the political use of the past affect archaeological research? (see, for example, the implications for the teaching of archaeology in Greek universities — Hamilakis 1993; in press).
- 3 How do archaeological research and material remains shape public perceptions of the past and affect its socio-political use? What is the archaeologist's role in this process?

The answers to these questions will contribute to archaeology's 'critical self-consciousness' (Clarke 1973) and will set the political agenda of archaeologists' work. Otherwise, as Kristian Kristiansen noted (1993: 1), others will do it for us — as they always have.

We can expect the role of antiquities in the contemporary Greek society to alter, for its exchange value in the West has dramatically decreased. The influence of multi-culturalism has seriously undermined classicism as a dominant ideology, and exposure of the use of classical antiquity for the ideological justification of domination and suppression (cf. Bernal 1987; 1991) has diminished its value. Practical reasons — the decline of classical studies, due to the priority on ??of?? or emphasis on?? financially profitable and directly applicable research — (cf. Herzfeld 1994) have the same effect. Are antiquities being de-valued as symbolic capital in Greece today, or will the methods of their 'financial' management be simply adapted to the new situation?

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