

# CONSTRUCTIONS OF GREEK PAST

Identity and Historical Consciousness  
from Antiquity to the Present



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**Archaeology and the Construction of the Past  
In Nineteenth Century Greece\***

**Introduction**

At first sight modern Greek cultural life appears characterized by an obsession with the past, seen, for instance, in Greece's collective mobilization behind its candidacy for the 1996 or 2004 Olympic Games, or, more importantly, in its passionate defence of the Greekness of Macedonia. There is undoubtedly a strong sense of continuity in Greece and an almost romantic identification with the past. This attitude, however, exists alongside a deeply rooted reaction against tradition, which is seen as running counter to progress and modernization. On the one hand the past is placed on a pedestal, venerated in official patriotic discourse and surrounded by an aura of sanctity. On the other it is ignored and neglected, relegated to dusty museum showcases, or, in the most extreme circumstances, actively destroyed by the looting of ancient sites or the encroaching tourist industry. A sense of continuity, of obsession and identification with the past, thus exists alongside estrangement and alienation. The question is, why is there this ambivalent attitude to the past in modern Greece? Why is the past perceived both as a source of glory and as an obstacle?

These questions are undoubtedly too wide-ranging. They must, however, be asked, if only as a starting point for the more limited enquiry undertaken here. The aim of this paper is to trace changing perceptions of the past in nineteenth century Greece and place them within the process of the formation of the national state and a national identity. The beginnings of archaeology provide a point of entry to the ideological use of the past at its most crucial moment: its construction.

In the first section of this paper, I shall present the historical evolution of attitudes to the past. My discussion will centre on the successive transformations of the Classical Ideal, from its liberal and rationalist inception in western Europe, through its infusion with romantic principles by the Greek Enlightenment, to the stultifying archaism of the free Greek state, and, finally, to its gradual erosion by the romantic scheme of continuity through the ages. My main objective here is to examine the changing articulation between perception of the past and the definition of Greek identity.

In the second section, the beginnings and development of archaeology will be placed within their intellectual and political contexts. The aim here will be to understand the formation of the new discipline and its shifting orientations within the wider framework of changing attitudes to the past.

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## A Attitudes to the past

### 1 Greek Enlightenment

The revival of interest in the Classical past among the Greek-speaking orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire was to a large extent the result of western influences on the emerging mercantile classes of the Greek diaspora. In eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, the Classical Ideal was a medium for reflection on issues such as the relation between man and nature, between the individual and the state or between tradition and progress. While the Hellenic Ideal was perceived as a timeless and universal human experience extending beyond historical contingency, in reality its content changed considerably during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The myth of Classical Antiquity was appropriated in different places (revolutionary France, fragmented Germany, Victorian Britain) for different purposes, whether nationalistic, social or political. The 'Miracle of Greece' thus served both to foster revolutionary change and to combat the forces of disruption as it followed the general trend towards conservative values after the Napoleonic Wars.

The rational and romantic elements of the Hellenic Ideal were transferred and adapted to the specific ideological demands of the Greek context by the proponents of the 'Greek Enlightenment' (Dimaras 1977), i.e. the ideological phenomenon (c. 1750–1820) that disseminated western liberal values and rationalism and promoted education and ethnic awareness among the Greek populations, thus preparing the way for the Greek uprising against the Turks in 1821.

A central part of the Greek Enlightenment was that self-awareness among the Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire was cultivated through reference to the Classical past, a past that was at that time indelibly imbued with liberal ideas, rationalism and belief in human progress. The growing significance of the past was manifested in several ways: there was an upsurge of interest in ancient Greek literature, a growing emphasis on the study of Classics in schools, a rising trend in the use of ancient Greek first names and a growing interest in ancient monuments (Clogg 1983, 10).

Transferred into the Greek context, the Classical vision lost its abstract and universal character. Romanticism and historicism in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Europe brought about the first fissure in the idea of the uniformity of human nature, an idea that was shared by Christianity and Enlightenment alike. Under the influence of Herder, through the Vienna circle and the group around Λόγιος Ερμής, the romantic idea of the *Volksggeist* seeped into the Greek Enlightenment (Kyriakidouh-Nestoros 1978, 29ff.; Politis 1984) and was redefined through the notion of the Γένος,<sup>1</sup> a concept clearly loaded with hope for the resurrection of ancestral glories (Dimaras 1977, 80ff.).

Selecting the past as the main orientation for the present presented a hazard, one that was lucidly pointed out as early as 1761 by Iossipos Moisiodox, the chief representative of the early phases of the Enlightenment: it implied contempt for the

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<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to translate this highly emotive term. It encapsulates the diffuse and vague definition of a cultural (or rather spiritual) entity before the advent of the national state. The word is etymologically connected with descent and ancestors.

present (Dimaras 1977, 16). At that period, however, this danger was only lurking beneath the Enlightenment's optimism and concern for the future, expressed in its desire for liberation and its emphasis on education. Moisioudax' insightful warning was ignored.

There was also a deeper contradiction in this use of the past that went unnoticed: this past had already been defined and idealized in European thought. In contrast to most nations, Greece did not have to construct its own national myth; it had merely to adopt it (Liakos 1994, 176–77). There is an irony here, in that the definition of Greek identity was based on a past conceived within an alien historical and intellectual context. The problem of self-definition was thus at its inception associated with recognition by Europeans; to put it more forcefully, demarcation was equated with integration. What is more, the past provided not only a pedigree and a myth of origin, but also a model, a political ideal for the present (*ibid.*) Consequently, the Greeks' relationship with their own past was coloured by the complex relationship of Greece with Europe. Europe was seen as the realization of the ideal of the liberal state and as the heir of the Classical Ideal; the conclusion that Europe owed its achievement to its Classical past seemed inevitable.<sup>2</sup> In this way, these three different notions, Europe, the liberal state and the Classical past, merged into one ideal vision in the consciousness of the Greek populations. The notion of the Ideal, however, also contains the certitude of distance and the likelihood of failure. Greece perceived its relationship with its own past as discontinuous because this past was mediated through its European reading and dislocated from the Greek present.

It would be wrong, however, to assume a unified perception of the past and a straightforward relationship between self-definition and emphasis on the past. It has to be stressed that the Greek Enlightenment was a complex phenomenon, a multitude of individual opinions rather than a uniform body of ideas. Legitimate though it may be to assert that an emphasis on Classical Antiquity was a central point of the Greek Enlightenment, we must also mention what we could call the 'deviations'. The first of these is, of course, Dhimitris Katartzis'<sup>3</sup> isolated and precocious assertion of Greece's ties with Byzantium (Dimaras 1977, 177ff.). Katartzis' attitude to the past was explicitly stated in his perceptive distinction between descent from and identification with the Classical past (*ibid.*, 218). The second 'deviation' consists of the first collections of folk songs, undertaken under the influence of Romanticism and, in particular, of Herder's ideas (Politis 1984). These divergent ideas were, however, marginal. Katartzis' work remained unpublished and unknown, while the interest in folk songs remained limited and local<sup>4</sup> and was heavily criticized within the Enlightenment (Dimaras 1977, 63).

The various perceptions of the relationship between the past and the present were best exemplified by the range of proposed solutions to the language problem (Dimaras 1977, 64ff.), from Neophytos Doukas' proposal that Ancient Greek should be resurrected, to the first recommendation, by Katartzis, that the spoken language

<sup>2</sup> The notion of Europe's debt to Greece still survives today; see Frangoudaki–Dragona 1997, 158.

<sup>3</sup> Dhimitris Katartzis (1730–1807), Phanariot intellectual.

<sup>4</sup> The early collections of folk songs were in any case made by foreigners such as Fauriel and Haxthausen (Politis 1984).

should be used, and even the abolition of historical spelling proposed by Vilaras and Psalidas. We should, however, note that Katartzis' proposals were generally ignored or strongly criticized; he himself withdrew his ideas (*ibid.*) and the phonetic script never advanced beyond the small circle of the early demoticists (Moschonas 1981, 62).

A further problem we need to consider is the Balkan dimension. We must bear in mind that interest in the Classical past was not an exclusively Greek phenomenon but had a social dimension as well: members of the nobility or of the affluent middle classes, who might be ethnic Albanians, Romanians or Vlachs, spoke Greek and received a Greek education.<sup>5</sup> This process of cultural convergence was aborted by the emergence of ethnic awareness among the various groups inhabiting the Balkans and language clearly played a part in the delineation of these ethnic groups. The nascent differentiation nonetheless remained contained within the wider opposition to the Turks, as can be seen from Rhigas Ferraios' passionate appeal for Balkan unity against the Turks, or in Greek interest in the Serbian revolt of 1804. Again it should be stressed that Greek self-awareness revolved mainly around the double relationship with Europe and the Classical past and was less concerned with differentiation from its immediate neighbours.<sup>6</sup> The Classical past detached the Greek populations from their Balkan background, gave them the illusion of a privileged relationship with Europe and became the cornerstone of what could already be termed 'national' pride.

This increasing self-awareness also has to be placed in its political context, the still more or less amorphous power constellations of the clergy, the Phanariot aristocracy, the *proestoi* (local notables and landowners) and the emerging middle class. We need to examine those other perceptions of the past that were to a certain extent displaced by exclusive reference to the Classical past.

First we need to discuss the Church, whose reaction against Enlightenment ideas and eventual persecution of their disseminators is well documented (Dimaras 1977, 87ff.). The Church's role cannot, however, merely be dismissed as obscurantist. All the proponents of the Enlightenment benefited from the educational institutions of the Orthodox Church and many taught in them; during the earlier phases of the Enlightenment, at least, most were members of the clergy. The development of the Church's attitude from tolerance into reluctance and then into outright persecution was gradual: it intensified after the French Revolution and reached its peak in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. The reaction was directed primarily against the liberal ideas that the Enlightenment carried to the Greek territories. Even if anticlericalism and atheism were never pronounced aspects of the Greek Enlightenment (the work of radical *anonymi* being the obvious exception to this; Dimaras 1977, 42ff.), it was all too obvious that the new ideas were eroding the hold of the Church on the Orthodox populations of the Ottoman Empire.

What interests me here, though, is the attitude of the Church to the Classical past. Orthodoxy did not really have a place for Classical Antiquity. The temporal scheme proposed by the Enlightenment, based on the notions of reason and progress,

<sup>5</sup> Iossipos Moisioudax, who was not an ethnic Greek, is the obvious example.

<sup>6</sup> It is worth mentioning here Puchner's (1985) observations regarding the portrayal of strangers in folk poetry: folk songs do not place any emphasis on ethnic differences.

stood in clear opposition to Orthodox eschatology

and the fusion of past, present and future in religious experience. To the Church, however, the past was most dangerous as an asset of ethnic identity. Until the end of the eighteenth century, the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire were held together by the traditions of Orthodoxy, and religion was the main criterion of identity. The Church sensed the impact of the 'national awakening', of the fragmentation of the ecumenical Orthodox community into separate nationalities defined, as we have said, by their different languages (Kitromilides 1990, 25). The Enlightenment subverted not only Ottoman rule, but also Orthodox unity (*ibid.*, 26).

We should also examine the attitudes of the Phanariot aristocracy towards the Classical past. The new drive towards learning encompassed a classical education and the setting up of collections of ancient statues, coins and inscriptions, as well as of laboratories in which to carry out experiments in physics (Dimaras 1977, 21). The attitudes of the Phanariot aristocracy to the Enlightenment can best be illuminated by discussing the work of Dhimitris Katartzis, whom I have already mentioned above. During the earlier phase of the movement, Katartzis offered the most complete and internally consistent formulation of the Enlightenment's ideas (1784). He proposed the use of the vernacular language as an integral part of his educational reform; he emphasized the connection between language, cultural heritage (including the Classical as well as the Byzantine legacy) and ethnic awareness. His interest in Byzantium should also be connected with his formulation of the Phanariot political philosophy, the theory of Enlightened Despotism. His denunciation of these ideas in 1791, immediately after the outbreak of the French Revolution, marked the limits of the Phanariot encounter with liberal ideas, and the threshold of the adaptive potential of this ambivalent caste. As a collective body, the Phanariots gradually realigned themselves with the forces opposed to the Enlightenment, particularly in the years preceding the Greek uprising.

The next question is, of course, the ancient Greek past as preserved in folk memory. On the one hand, the iconoclastic tradition of Orthodoxy, the aversion to ancient Greece because of its association with paganism and the low levels of education during the Ottoman occupation precluded any direct and conscious interest in the ancient past. On the other hand, legends about the ancient Greeks (Kakridis 1978), the story of Alexander the Great and the dim memories of the Homeric heroes (Dimaras 1977, 129ff.) were paid ample attention. Travellers' accounts offer examples of local neglect and abuse of Classical remains (Constantine 1984, 58) as well as of local reaction against spoliation by foreigners.<sup>7</sup> It is very doubtful, however, whether any elements of 'historical truth' can be discerned behind the romantic or orientalist *topoi* of travellers' accounts (Leontis 1995, 60ff.). The interpretation of place names used to describe ancient remains is again equivocal: a toponym such as Ελληνικά may indicate a vague awareness of the ancient Greek past, but one such as Τουρκοκίβουρα (Turkish cemetery), to give just one example, shows the (obvious) limits of collective memory.

This question cannot easily be separated from its ideological connotations and the need to demonstrate continuity with ancient Greece that gave rise to folklore

<sup>7</sup> Kalogeropoulou-Prouni-Philip 1973, 29, 31, 36ff.; Clogg 1983, 9–10.

studies.<sup>8</sup> It is clearly much more productive to study instances of superstitious reverence of ancient monuments<sup>9</sup> as indications of a different perception of the past, of what we could call the 'unconscious historicization' of the past.<sup>10</sup> An example is the belief that ancient marble statues were petrified souls that would come back to life once the Greek lands were free again (Kalogeropoulou-Prouni-Philip 1973, 37). In this myth the ancient Greek past, present and future, i.e. the long-awaited liberation from the Turks, are fused together by means of a mystic transformation. We see here a temporal scheme that is very different from the linear notion of time in the west. It should be stressed that it is the tangible and visible remains of the past, and primarily the ancient monuments dominating the landscape, that catch the popular imagination; it is around these that people spin stories about giants, treasures and miracles.<sup>11</sup>

It could be concluded that the past existed in different forms in collective memory: in the form of historical knowledge amongst the educated and in the form of superstitions, fairy tales and legends amongst ordinary people (Dimaras 1977, 3). The assumption that this was the basis of a pre-existing ethnic identity, however, requires a dangerous logical leap and should be avoided.

It is time to discuss the middle class's notions of the past. The work of Adamantios Korais<sup>12</sup> provides the ideal point of entry; his eminent position in Greek letters and politics is also an indication of the dynamism of this emerging class. Korais was the principal and most influential representative of the Greek Enlightenment; his work received wide publicity and recognition, but also aroused fierce opposition from several sides. His erudite treatises on the ancient Greek authors, his educational programme, his linguistic propositions and his political philosophy were all part of his passionate devotion to the cause of Greek liberation. Even if it was heavily criticized, gradually distorted and ultimately abandoned (Iliou 1981), Korais' work laid the foundations of the ideological apparatus of the Greek nation.

In any investigation into the importance of the past in Greek consciousness, Korais' contribution deserves special mention. His long life spanned the crucial decades before and after the war of liberation that saw the peak and decline of the Greek Enlightenment. Most importantly, his work shows us the links in the double articulation we noted above between, on the one hand, Greece and the West, and, on the other, the past and the present. Key concepts in his outlook are *μετακένωσις*, the transfer of knowledge and continuity between Greece and Europe, and the notion of *μέση οδός*, a term which can be translated as 'middle way' but implies harmony

<sup>8</sup> Kyriakidou-Nestoros 1978; Herzfeld 1982; Politis 1984.

<sup>9</sup> It is important to emphasize that such notions exist all over the world. It will suffice here to give one example from the Balkans: in 1905 Bulgarian peasant boys described a fortress as having been built by the 'Free Men' (mentioned by Mazower 2000, 51).

<sup>10</sup> I have borrowed this term from Charles Stewart and the title of his talk on 'Treasures and the unconscious historicization of the past', presented at the Modern Greek Seminar in Cambridge.

<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that this is not really the case any more. Recent studies of popular perceptions of ancient monuments have shown that nowadays local people are interested only in sites that are part of local legends and fairy tales (Sutton 1997), or feature in the annual calendar (e.g. are associated with annual feasts and festivals; Volioti 1997). The conspicuous ancient monuments are nowadays simple tourist attractions, perceived as belonging to the state authorities and not to the realm of everyday experience or imagination.

<sup>12</sup> Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), eminent philologist and educationalist.



between the ancient Greek past and the present.

This harmony, however, could only ever be precarious, thanks entirely to Korais' internal consistency. The point is not merely that his emphasis on balance and harmony glossed over the 'reality' of the isolation of the Greek lands or the 'dark' period of the Turkish occupation, nor that his balance was skewed to one side, the Classical past (as is shown, for instance, by his contempt for folk songs, or his aversion to Byzantium; Troianos 1996, 171). Nor should we oversimplify the notion of μέση οδός, which we know mostly through Korais' linguistic programme: this was not simply a practical compromise between two extremes but a liberal and dynamic solution based on firm faith in human progress. Nevertheless, the distortion of Korais' thought during the first decades of the Greek state (to be addressed below) cannot be explained only in connection with changing historical and political circumstances. There is a contradiction in Korais' very attempt to *construct a harmony*. He attempted to transfer not only a specific view of the past, but also and primarily the notion of progress, of harmony between past and present, that is inherent in western European tradition, yet can only be contradictory when transferred into a different cultural formation (Tsoukalas 1983). I would suggest that this contradiction makes Korais' work the pivot between two different modes of reference to the past: the liberal past of the Enlightenment and the archaism of the free Greek state.

## 2 National State

The Greek state, founded in 1830, inherited this contradiction and this desire to bridge the past and the present, Greece and Europe. With the foundation of the Hellenic Kingdom this goal acquired a concrete form: the ideal of the European national, centralized state. The ideas used to activate the Γένος became, however, increasingly irrelevant in the changing context characterized by the tension between Γένος (the Nation) and Κράτος (the State).

In order to explore the ways in which attitudes to the past were transformed during this period, we need to examine the new circumstances created within the Independent Kingdom of Greece. The liberation of Greece meant that opposition to the Turks could no longer be the main definition of identity. The problem now became how to define Greek identity, or more precisely how to transform a diffuse ethnic awareness into a homogeneous national identity (Politis 1993, *passim*). This was not simply a question of defining criteria for Greekness, whether language, religion, customs or participation in the War of Independence. The problem went deeper because the very concepts of Nation and State were alien to the ethnic groups that made up the Balkan mosaic.

What was more, the extent of the nation and that of the state did not coincide. The imposition of artificial boundaries<sup>13</sup> fragmented rather than unified the Greek populations. The controversy of the αυτοχθονες against the ετερόχθονες<sup>14</sup> was

<sup>13</sup> The free State included the Peloponnese, the southern mainland up to Thessaly and the Cyclades, i.e. only a small part of the Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire. As we will see below, these boundaries were artificial but not arbitrary.

<sup>14</sup> The *autochthones* originated from the areas included in the Greek state. Most had fought in the Greek War of Independence and therefore demanded to be included in the administrative



the first concrete expression of a struggle for power within the new state on the pretext of competing priorities (the liberation of further Greek lands and internal organization).

These were not the only problems within the kingdom. Financial hardship and a total lack of infrastructure, as well as internal strife between sectional interests, emerging social groups, political parties and external loyalties, were formidable hurdles in the process of consolidation. In addition, interference by the Great Powers put external relations under strain and led to conflicting dispositions towards Europe. On the one hand, the ideal of the European state was not doubted by any social class or ideological trend (Skopetea 1988, 161ff.);<sup>15</sup> the national state is by definition a European concept. The need for acceptance and recognition by Europe was stronger than ever before. Bavarian neoclassicism gave support to the idea of the Classical origins of European civilization and Europe's debt to Greece. At the same time, however, Greece was becoming gradually and painfully aware that philhellenism was only a short interlude in the European history of ideas. The double contradiction between integration with and distinction from Europe acquired a new poignancy in the emerging international balance.

The Fallmerayer incident<sup>16</sup> dealt a fatal blow to the idea of the 'privileged relationship' with Europe. Fallmerayer's theories pierced the ideological armour of the Greek state at its most vital point, the continuity between the Greek past and the Greek present. By casting doubt on the Greeks' past, Fallmerayer questioned the right of the Greek people to live within a free state and their claims to the Greek lands of the Ottoman empire (Skopetea 1988, 172). His theories sparked off an obsession with the Classical past that had as its main objective the demonstration of its links with the present (ibid., 164ff.).

All these conflicts, pressures and centrifugal tendencies had to be controlled and suppressed. The new state had to demarcate itself and ensure internal homogeneity and cohesion; the central authorities had to establish and legitimate their power. These needs were met with increasing centralization and homogenization at all levels. The main weapon in the creation of a homogeneous national identity was the imposition of a uniform language that levelled out regional dialects. The Enlightenment debates about the form this language should take were abandoned, most notably by the proponents of the Enlightenment themselves (Dimaras 1977, 386ff.). Demoticism disappeared; the only mild criticisms of the increasingly archaistic idiom were voiced by the supporters of Korais' *μέση οδός*.

The emergence of *καθαρεύουσα* (literally 'purifying' language, in fact an archaizing idiom that attempted to imitate ancient Greek) can be seen in the oaths sworn in the National Assemblies between 1823 and 1864. This process ran parallel to an abandonment of the civic values of the Enlightenment: in these same oaths the

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sector, although they were in most cases virtually illiterate. The *heterochthones* came from outside the liberated Greek lands. Most were members of the affluent, educated and cosmopolitan Greek diaspora; the fact that some of them had not fought in the war was, however, held against them.

<sup>15</sup> Though it should be noted that pro-Western ideas were neither uniform nor uncritical (Bastéa 2000, 38ff.).

<sup>16</sup> Jacob Philip Fallmerayer (1790–1860), German historian. In his history of the Peloponnese, published in 1830, he maintained that modern Greeks are descendants of Slavic tribes who invaded or infiltrated the Greek mainland during Byzantine times.

word freedom gradually disappears, rights become duties and allegiance is sworn successively to the country, the nation, the state and finally the king (Skopetea 1988, 31–32). The imposition of centralized administration and bureaucracy, the abolition of the traditional system of autonomous communities, the adoption of law codes reflecting European legal tradition and the subsequent erosion of traditional customs, the abandonment of religious tolerance and the increasing conservatism in theological matters, even the unilateral declaration of the autocephaly of the Greek Church (1833): all these policies had only one goal, and that goal was the imposition of centralized control within the confines of the Helladic<sup>17</sup> state.

Centralization was not, however, achieved by political means alone. The point was not merely to legitimate a process of centralization that was already under way but to build centricity into the spatial and temporal schemes that defined identity. Centralization began with the transformation of space.

On the basis of purely symbolic considerations, Athens was proclaimed the new capital.<sup>18</sup> A new centre was needed to eclipse not only the traditional focus of the Greek populations, Constantinople, but also, to a lesser extent, the urban centres of the Greek diaspora through which the Enlightenment's ideas were disseminated. As Bastéa (2000, xvii) has pointed out, the establishment of Athens as capital was neither accidental nor inevitable but was most carefully orchestrated during the first decades of the nation's existence. Switching the capital from Nafplion to Athens was a move more hotly contested than we tend to believe nowadays,<sup>19</sup> and indeed, the practical problems that had to be surmounted were formidable: in 1834 Athens was effectively a heap of ruins. During the space of a few decades Athens was redesigned and reconstructed in neoclassical style with the palace and the Acropolis at its centre. The reconstruction of Athens after the liberation came to symbolize the country's rebirth and westernization.<sup>20</sup> Town planning and civic architecture were clearly among the tools used by the government to create a centralized and homogeneous national space that counterbalanced the tradition of regional loyalties (Bastéa 2000, 5). To quote Bastéa: in the newly founded state 'where the notions of government, monarchy and parliament were novel and continuously redefined, architecture helped anchor them spatially and physically and allowed the Athenian public to begin forming a concrete image of its governing institutions' (ibid., xix). The urban environment was more than a weapon for centralization: as Athens was being rebuilt in neoclassical style, as the traditional or Ottoman place names gradually fell out of use, as streets, boulevards and squares (Bastéa 2000, *passim*) were named after distinguished figures or episodes from either Classical Antiquity or the War of Liberation, the built environment became the *lieu de mémoire* where collective memory and history were rewritten.

<sup>17</sup> The term 'Helladic' refers to the Greek mainland only, as opposed to 'Hellenic' which refers to Greek populations living outside the confines of the Greek state.

<sup>18</sup> See Yiakovaki (1997; 1999) on the central position of Athens in European perceptions of 'Greece'.

<sup>19</sup> Bastéa 2000 7ff.; Politis 1993, 75–76.

<sup>20</sup> It is worth adding that by the end of the nineteenth century Athens was an elegant capital of around 125,000 people featuring a palace, a parliament, a cathedral, a university, an academy, a national library and a stadium as well as imposing private mansions, tree-lined squares and impressive boulevards (Politis 1993, 87; Bastéa 2000, *passim*). This ambitious building programme did not, however, correspond to real growth and stability, as it was financed by merchants and industrialists of the diaspora.

National identity now had to rest not only on a new spatial template, but also on a different temporal scheme (Tsoukalas 1983). The first decades after liberation witnessed an obsession with the Classical past, Greece's ancient glories being seen as the main justification for the existence of the new state. Along with the choice of Athens as capital, several other instances of direct use of the past can be mentioned: the boundaries of the modern Greek state corresponded more or less to the extent of the Classical citystates, at Otto's coronation one of the Parthenon's columns was symbolically restored, the ancient monuments became the first national symbols, etc.

This obsession with the Classical past can be seen most clearly in the language question. We have already noted the use of an increasingly archaizing and purist linguistic idiom that percolated across the entire population (Politis 1993, 108). The use of *katharevousa* was seen as an indication of education and prestige (*ibid.*, 133); it was a successful strategy for social climbing, but it was also open to ridicule and satire. Serious attempts were made to resurrect ancient Greek and to remove foreign or barbaric borrowings from the language (Ditsa 1988, 55–65). This obsession with linguistic purity extended into all spheres of life. The Hellenization of place names was initiated during this period, though it was implemented mostly in the last decades of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> In addition, during the 1830s, newspapers, journals and periodicals, as well as roads, boats and even industrial products, were given ancient Greek names (Politis 1993, 108).

By surrounding themselves with the vestiges of the Classical past, with monuments, architectural motifs, names and linguistic forms, the Greeks of the first decades after the liberation believed that they could recapture their ancient glory. In most cases, however, this process amounted to slavish imitation of the past rather than the sort of critical engagement we saw during the Enlightenment. The Classical period was no longer the dynamic and liberating vision of the Enlightenment, but was gradually transformed into a sterile and oppressive past. Past and present were no longer linked by the idea of human progress but by that of a mystical regeneration, most aptly rendered in the symbol of the phoenix rising from its ashes. The notion of rebirth and regeneration (*παλιγγενεσία*) became the key to the attempt to find a direct connection with the Classical past. The scheme thus set up had two poles, the Classical past and the present.<sup>22</sup> This left a void in the middle: the medieval period.

Aversion to Byzantium, following the tradition of the European (and to some extent also the Greek) Enlightenment, was the direct consequence of obsession with the Classical past. Byzantium was identified with lack of political freedom, obscurantism, intrigues, decadence and decay. Dissenting views were nonetheless expressed, at first hesitantly during the 1830s and 1840s, but (as we shall see below) with increasing vigour from the 1860s onwards. Interest in Byzantium was to some extent

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<sup>21</sup> Alexandri 2000; 2002. I would like to thank Dr. Alexandra Alexandri for allowing me to read the final report of her research for the *Archives of European Archaeology*.

<sup>22</sup> I should make clear that in the 1830s the Classical past was defined as terminating with the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC. The periods that followed were seen as a dark period of enslavement and decadence under successive occupations by the Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines and Turks.

instigated by Otto's entourage, as this period saw the growth of Byzantine studies in Germany and in Europe in general. It is, for instance, interesting that the decorative vignettes in the 1833 city plan by Kleantes and Schaubert include not only several Classical monuments, but also the small Byzantine church of Panaghia Gorgoepekoos, rescued from destruction after several protests, and, perhaps surprisingly, the Ottoman Fetyhie Mosque. Byzantine elements surfaced in various spheres of life: Byzantine law had a considerable influence on the legislation of the modern Greek state set up by the Bavarian administrators;<sup>23</sup> a Byzantine architectural style was adopted, or rather invented, not only for the Cathedral but also for a public secular building such as the Οφθαλμιατρείον (eye hospital); the Byzantine churches of Athens were restored and were in regular use (Bastéa 2000, 161), and finally, the 1834 antiquities law protected Byzantine monuments. These, however, were the exceptions: the specific article of the antiquities law was never put into practice and Byzantine churches were demolished during the reconstruction of the centre of Athens.<sup>24</sup> The prevailing attitude was anti Byzantium.

In this way the present became detached from the Byzantine tradition and from the medieval and Ottoman past. At the same time, the War of Liberation became separated from its Balkan context, from other liberation movements in Europe and from social conflicts and political interests in general. The official celebration of the War of Liberation from 1838 onwards contributed to the crystallization of the 'Myth of '21' (Skopetea 1988, 205ff., 215), which overemphasized the war's national, or rather its *helladic*, content.

In this way, both the distant and the recent past, both Classical Antiquity and the uprising against the Turks, were mobilized in the cause of centralization. The past was used not simply to legitimate an already constituted centralized power, but to construct centrality in an artificial, inarticulate and conflict-ridden political formation. The Classical past was no longer a medium for reflection and human improvement but a didactic and terminated past, a weapon for homogenization and centralization. This past became the basis for the introverted and vulnerable identity of a nation boasting of its ancient glories and disappointed by its present.

### 3 *Megali Idea* and romantic historiography

Running parallel to this progression towards centralization and internal consolidation during the 1840s and 1850s, we can observe the emergence of forces opposing it in the form of an intensification of apocalyptic beliefs about the liberation of Constantinople, the *Μεγάλη Ιδέα* (Great Idea).<sup>25</sup> The *Megali Idea* was more the expression of a diffuse reaction against ideological centralization into the Helladic Kingdom than a conscious political alternative (Skopetea 1988, 253). In a way, its

<sup>23</sup> A precedent had already been set during the War of Liberation: the first attempts at a rudimentary legislative framework made unambiguous reference to the laws of the 'immemorable Christian Emperors' (Troianos 1996, 167) – a phrase that provoked ironic comment from Korais and other proponents of the Enlightenment (ibid., 171).

<sup>24</sup> Protests against the destruction of Byzantine churches were, however, voiced. The attitude to Byzantine and medieval monuments will be discussed more extensively below, in the section about archaeology.

<sup>25</sup> As Bastéa has noted (2000, *passim*), there was a contradiction between the ambitious building programme for Athens, which endowed it with an aura of permanence, and the expansionist policies of the *Megali Idea*, which regarded Athens as a temporary capital only.

indeterminacy was the main reason behind its enormous impact on Greek cultural life, since its vague outline (Politis 1993, 61ff.) could be infused with any subjective proposition. Indeed, the *Megali Idea* pervaded all classes and became both a collective claim and an official ideology. It was appropriated by the government and manipulated through a nationalistic rhetoric, but was neither given any pragmatic definition nor taken up in practise (Skopetea 1988, 264ff.), since external policies were defined under close inspection by the Great Powers.<sup>26</sup> This ambivalent ideology avowed the priority of the liberation of the *irredenta*, but ultimately fostered contraction back within the Helladic boundaries; the national state acquired in the *Megali Idea* its most important binding element, an all-pervasive ideology. The Idea's powerful commitment to the liberation of the *irredenta* ran in tandem with a bitter awareness of its improbability. The *Megali Idea* became a metaphor for the collective unfulfilled desires of the Greek nation, primarily the desire for unity.

Indeed, unity in space and continuity through time became the nation's main priority during this period. The deeply fragmented ancient world<sup>27</sup> could provide no prototype for unity. At the same time, the bipolar scheme stressing a direct connection between the Classical past and the present left a painful void in the middle: the medieval period. No restoration of the Byzantine tradition in the Greek cultural conscience was possible during the 1830s and 1840s, the period in which the impact of the Enlightenment, even in its distorted archaistic form, sustained an aversion to Byzantium. During the 1850s, however, the Byzantine legacy re-emerged with renewed importance, together with a new religious fervour and an outburst of nationalistic feeling. Historicism, a trend that had had only marginal influence during the heyday of the Greek Enlightenment, took root in romantic historiography. It is possible that the growth of Byzantine studies in Europe, and in Germany in particular, in the second half of the nineteenth century (Reinsch 1996), was an important factor in this renewed interest in Byzantium. In Greece itself, however, this shift was perceived as resistance to the Western obsession with Classical Antiquity and as a reaction against Europe's contempt for Byzantium.

The restoration of Byzantium is associated with Spyridhon Zambelios and in particular with Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, the national historian of Greece.<sup>28</sup> In his *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους* (History of the Hellenic Nation), Paparrigopoulos laid out a scheme of continuity through the ages from the Classical past to Byzantium and the free Greek state. His tripartite scheme encompassed Byzantium within Hellenism without undermining the importance of Classical Antiquity (Skopetea 1988, 182–83), thereby resolving the antinomy between Classical Antiquity and Christian Byzantium. Paparrigopoulos provided the Greek nation with its much longed for project of unity, offering it, first, continuity in time by tracing the immortal Greek spirit from Classical civilization through Byzantine glory to the present, second, unity in space by encompassing the two antithetic foci, Constantinople and Athens, in one account, and finally, cohesion within the state and

<sup>26</sup> It should be stressed that the external situation was very precarious throughout the nineteenth century because of the 'Eastern Question', i.e. the gradual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>27</sup> The fragmentation of the ancient world was perceived as the direct cause of its downfall and subordination to the Macedonians.

<sup>28</sup> Paparrigopoulos' *History of the Greek Nation* first appeared in abbreviated form in 1853 and was then serialized between 1860 and 1874. Zambelios' *Βυζαντινὰ Μελέται* appeared in 1857.

legitimation of the monarchy by reference to its Byzantine antecedents. His account glorified the past, but also the present: the War of Independence became detached from its historical and political context, internal strife and the contribution of the Great Powers were minimized and the final outcome was seen as a triumph of eternal Greek virtues: bravery, love of freedom and resilience. Paparrigopoulos thereby formulated the unfolding narrative on which national identity was to rest, the myth of the origins of the Greek nation, whose existence he projected back into the mists of historical legend. In his account, the Greek nation, personified by the frequent use of 'we' (Liakos 1994, 183), becomes an active agent with a specific purpose and destination. Change, however, is no longer attributed to human progress but to a transcendental force, Divine Providence (Dimaras 1982, 383ff.). Ultimately Paparrigopoulos' notion of *Ελληνισμός* (Hellenism) transfigures the Greek nation into a timeless metaphysical entity. The foundations of the Hellenic-Christian ideology of the modern Greek state had been established.

The 1850s also saw a renewed interest in folk songs, once more under the influence of Herder's notion of folk culture. The difference was that most of the collections made during this period were published by Greek scholars (Politis 1993, 48ff.). The purpose of these collections was very specific: the aim was now to disprove Fallmerayer's theories about the descent of modern Greeks and to demonstrate the continuity of the Greek race and culture. While the ideological use of *λαογραφία* (folklore studies) has been amply studied,<sup>29</sup> it should be stressed that every other field within the historical sciences shared the same purpose.<sup>30</sup>

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, Paparrigopoulos' scheme had gained general acceptance despite the reservations and critique of Athenian intellectuals, especially the last representatives of the Enlightenment (as we shall see below). With the advent of the generation of 1880, intellectual debate left behind the issue of the past as it had been defined during the course of the nineteenth century. There was growing criticism of uncritical veneration of antiquity and indiscriminating adoption of western prototypes. The debate shifted away from the clash between Antiquity and Byzantium and on to the language question. Discussions on Greekness now revolved around folk tradition and its carrier, the ordinary people (*λαός*) (Politis 1993, 94). These debates continued into the early decades of the twentieth century, and were redefined after the dramatic events of 1922 that saw the end of Greek expansionist desires. With the generation of the 1930s, new elements of 'primitive' expression emerged, such as the writings of Makriyiannis, the paintings of Theophilos, the shadow-theatre of Karagiozis, *rembetika*, etc. The entire discussion became increasingly introverted until the recent period during which European unification once more brought tense and complex-ridden comparisons with western Europe to the surface. During this process the continuity of the Greek spirit through the ages became a natural fact, an axiom rather than a thesis requiring proof. The making of the nation and of its myth of origin becomes complete, as the process itself slides into historical oblivion.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Kyriakidhou-Nestoros 1978; Herzfeld 1982; Politis 1984; Politis 1993.

<sup>30</sup> The need to prove continuity pervades not only folklore studies but also ancient history, linguistics, philology and, as we will see below, archaeology (Meraklis 1996, 269; Kakridis 1996, 36).

<sup>31</sup> It is, however, debatable whether Paparrigopoulos' scheme of continuity was fully accepted by

To summarize the discussion so far:

We have followed the transformation of attitudes to the past through the nineteenth century, from the timeless doctrine of Orthodoxy to rational belief in human progress, from the Enlightenment's dynamic vision of the past to its distortion by the sterile archaistic trend, and from obsession with the Classical past to the final and most resilient solution, the continuity of the Greek spirit through the ages. While I have attempted to delineate the general trends, it has, I hope, become obvious that several, often contradictory opinions co-existed alongside each other. It is time to place the beginnings of archaeology within this historical process.

## B The beginnings of Greek archaeology<sup>32</sup>

The Greeks themselves were already demonstrating a sporadic interest in antiquities at the beginning of the eighteenth century,<sup>33</sup> but this interest intensified under the influence of the Enlightenment. To give just a few examples, the first geographies<sup>34</sup> revealed a considerable interest in ancient remains and Rhigas' map of his native Velestino included some rather unspectacular ruins. In 1807, Korais made certain specific suggestions concerning the protection of antiquities and the *Philomousos Hetaireia*,<sup>35</sup> founded in Athens and Vienna in 1813–1814, declared the protection of antiquities to be one of its main goals. The local Greeks showed a lively interest in the archaeological rather than any of the other scientific activities of the *Expédition Scientifique de Morée* (Droulia 1999, 53).

Measures for the preservation of the ancient monuments were already being taken during the War of Liberation (Kokkou 1977, 34ff.). In 1826, after vehement reactions in the press to the spoliation of antiquities by foreigners, all antiquities were declared national property<sup>36</sup> and in the following year their export was forbidden by the Third Assembly at Troezen. In 1829, however, under political pressure from Kapodistrias' government, the presentation of antiquities to the *Expédition Scientifique de Morée* was approved by the Fourth Assembly at Argos.<sup>37</sup> We see here one of the first instances of the close articulation between archaeology, internal politics and external diplomacy.<sup>38</sup> Even then, antiquities had become a resource, a commodity that could be exchanged for political favours.

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the population at large. Politis points to an 'implicit and diffuse attitude' that insisted on a stronger connection with the ancient Greeks than with Byzantium (Politis 1993, 111). A survey carried out recently among teachers reached a similar conclusion (Frangoudaki–Dragona 1997, *passim*).

<sup>32</sup> This brief presentation of the development of Greek archaeology in the nineteenth century is based primarily on secondary sources: the histories of the Archaeological Society compiled by Kastorchis (1879), Kavvadias (1900), Kalogeropoulou–Prouni-Philip (1973), Petrakos (1987), and Kokkou's (1977) monograph on the history of the Greek Museums. Only the chronological development and the main orientations of archaeological research will be discussed here. A wider study of the history of Greek archaeology is an imperative task, but cannot be undertaken here.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Meletios' collection, but also those made by the princes of the Danubian principalities.

<sup>34</sup> Those by Meletios (1782), Fatzeas (1760) and Philippidis and Konstantas (1791).

<sup>35</sup> For the activities of the *Philomousos Hetaireia*, see now Athanassopoulos 2002. This article reached me at the proof-reading stage, and therefore cannot be extensively referred to.

<sup>36</sup> Kalogeropoulou–Prouni-Philip 1973, 54; Kokkou 1977, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Kokkou 1977, 49–50; Kalpaxis 1996, 47–48; Droulia 1999, 53.

<sup>38</sup> As revealed by Kalpaxis in various publications (Kalpaxis 1990; 1993; 1996; 1997).



In 1829, during the term of Kapodistrias' government, the first museum was founded in Aegina (Kokkou 1977, 50ff., 61ff.). Reactions against the appointment of Andreas Moustoxydis, one of Kapodistrias's main supporters who became the museum's first director, indicate that archaeology was involved in internal political conflicts from a very early stage. Attempts to set up collections of antiquities continued, but so did looting and destruction.

In the end, archaeology's administrative framework was set up by the Bavarian administration. Bavarian neoclassicism left its mark on the emerging discipline both directly, by the presence of renowned German or German-trained scholars in Greece, and indirectly, through the influence of German education and scholarship upon the university that was founded in 1837.<sup>39</sup> The Chair of Archaeology was among the first to be created at that university (Dimaras 1982, 348) and Ludwig Ross, a renowned archaeologist and member of Otto's entourage, was its first occupant.

The Bavarian administration took concrete steps in the organization of the archaeological sector. In 1834, the first law for the protection of antiquities was compiled by Georg Ludwig von Maurer. This law was considered very austere and provoked serious protests from European archaeologists because it placed all antiquities under the protection of the state (Kalpaxis 1996, 49). The Archaeological Service was founded in 1837 and entrusted with the protection and preservation of antiquities.

In the same year, in the heyday of the archaistic trend and of Bavarian neoclassicism, private initiative led to the foundation of the Archaeological Society (Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία). The Society was manned by the last representatives of the Enlightenment, the Phanariots I. Rizos Neroulos and A. Rizos Rangavis, and by members of the educated middle class. The Phanariot aristocracy and the middle class, which eventually merged to form the Athenian establishment, were the protagonists of the intellectual trends discussed above. During the first decades of the free Greek State, the Archaeological Society, in particular, was the vehicle for the archaistic tendency. The elitist character of the archaeological profession and its exclusive reference to the Classical past were two mutually reinforcing aspects of the archaistic trend, the intellectual orthodoxy of the 1830s and 1840s.

In a way, the Archaeological Society was a microcosm of the struggle for power taking place within the new state. Amidst the elite of the Archaeological Society, Kyriakos Pittakis, a self-taught Athenian of humble origins who became one of the first Ephors of Antiquities, was regarded as an anomaly. Pittakis' conflict with Ludwig Ross expressed the political and ideological tensions that existed between the Greeks and the Bavarian officials. The even more intense and protracted feud between Pittakis and the cosmopolitan, well-connected and well-educated Phanariot Rangavis can be seen as another instance of the clash between *autochthones* and *heterochthones*.

The paradox here, if indeed it be a paradox, is that the Archaeological Society devoted itself clearly and unambiguously to the service of the helladic state (Dimaras 1982, 348) and to the centralization of power in Athens. We have already seen above how the ambitious building programme carried out in Athens supported the

<sup>39</sup> See Hrysos 1996a; Kakridis 1996, for German influence on the humanities and the *Allertumskunde* in particular. Cf. Krimbas 1999 for similar developments in the natural sciences.

process of centralization. The role of archaeology in elevating Athens to the status of new national centre was as crucial as that of architecture. This point will be demonstrated by concentrating on the research priorities of the new discipline.

### (i) Emphasis on Athens

Archaeology contributed to the process of centralization in that archaeological activities centred exclusively on Athens, and for the most part on the Acropolis, the national symbol *par excellence*.

The archaeological administration operated out of Athens and before the 1870s archaeological investigations outside the capital were limited. The first law establishing Ephors in provincial towns was passed in 1871 (Kokkou 1977, 122). A decree for the foundation of museums in provincial cities was passed in 1834, but the first museum outside Athens, in Sparta, was founded only in 1874; the number of provincial museums multiplied after 1880, while the great majority were founded in the twentieth century.

Until the 1870s, excavation and restoration work took place almost exclusively in Athens (Petraikos 1987, Mallouchou-Tuffano 1998). Nine out of ten publications in the *Archaiologike Ephemeris* (Archaeological Journal, the periodical publication of the Archaeological Society) had to do with material from Athens.<sup>40</sup> This was, of course, understandable. Kastorchis (1879, 60) has stressed the effect of financial problems and the lack of trained archaeologists; the first practitioners were self-taught and in many cases were working as civil servants. The reconstruction of Athens and its demographic increase necessitated the creation of an archaeological zone, which was supposed to remain free of buildings in view of possible future excavations (Bastéa 2000, 113). The new plan of Athens relied on the purist principle that sought to separate the old from the new town,<sup>41</sup> despite attempts to integrate the ancient ruins and the modern buildings in a more organic fashion. Leopold von Klenze's plan for the palace (to be built on the hill of the Nymphs) and that of Schinkel (on the Acropolis) were rejected on the grounds that the antiquities had to be isolated and separated from other spheres of life. In 1834 a foreign archaeologist/architect, Ferdinand von Quast, criticized Kleantes' and Schaubert's plan as one that would isolate the ancient city, transform it into a scientific object, dead ground, and widen the gap between modern Greeks and their famous ancestors (Bastéa 2000, 99). It is indeed true that by protecting, fencing and enclosing their antiquities, necessary as these measures were, the state authorities were separating and disengaging the monuments from patterns of everyday life (*ibid.*, 129).

In addition to symbolic conflicts, the creation of the archaeological zone caused practical problems since it prevented building in the very heart of Athens. The issue of building in the old town area was already attracting a lot of attention and creating considerable protest in the 1830s (Bastéa 2000, 128). A typical example is a letter published in the newspaper *Athena* that ridicules foreign travellers and scholars for being interested only in piles of stones and dead people and wonders whether antiquities are of any use (*ibid.*, 127–28). The notion of the past as a barrier in the way of progress and modernization existed side by side with obsession with ancient

<sup>40</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Voutsaki n.d.

<sup>41</sup> Bastéa 2000, 76; Papageorgiou-Venetas 1996, 283.

glories. In the 1840s, however, protests against the creation of the archaeological zone abated and complaints about the state of the Acropolis began to recur in the daily press.

The obsession with the Classical past was not the prerogative of the educated urban elites alone. When king Otto officially inaugurated the restoration of the Parthenon in 1834, the elaborate ceremony was attended by large crowds (Bastéa 2000, 101ff.). Again, in 1846/1847, when the casts of the Parthenon marbles sent as a gift by the British Museum were exhibited free of charge, they became the object of a sort of pilgrimage. To regard this as merely the result of the imposition of a nationalistic dominant ideology would be to over-simplify the picture; a veneration of ancient Greek remains had its roots before the liberation and should be seen as the result both of the Enlightenment's educational programme and of vague and amorphous beliefs in the magical properties of the monuments.

By raising Athens above the other urban centres of the Greek state and the diaspora, archaeology put itself unambiguously at the service of the archaistic ideology and contributed to the centralization of power in Athens (Dimaras 1977, 348). The alignment of the Phanariot I. Rizos Neroulos, the first president of the Archaeological Society, with the *autochthones* was made more than clear by his designation of Alexander the Great as a foreigner to the Greek people (Dimaras 1982, 542–43); his speech reduced the Classical past to the Helladic present. The process of nation-making rested on surprising alliances between the disparate elements that together imagined the Greek Nation.

## (ii) Emphasis on the Classical past

If this concentration upon Athens can be attributed to (although not justified by) the intense building activity in Athens and its demographic increase, archaeology's other main priority during the first decades of the Greek Kingdom, its exclusive concentration on the Classical monuments, was a blatant manifestation of the archaistic tendency. During the rearrangement of the historical centre of Athens, Ottoman buildings, Frankish monuments and even Byzantine churches were destroyed by the Archaeological Society.<sup>42</sup>

Opinions regarding this differed. The first protests against the destruction of Byzantine monuments came from Otto's entourage<sup>43</sup> and from foreign scholars,<sup>44</sup> but also from within the Society.<sup>45</sup> Critique became stronger after the 1860s, when interest in the medieval period resurged. The demolition of the Frankish Tower of

<sup>42</sup> We should contrast this attitude to the interest in Byzantine, post-Byzantine and of course also Frankish monuments shown by the *Expédition Scientifique de Morée* (Saitas 1999, 115, 118; Yiakovaki 1999, 205). Needless to say, the well-known Classical temples such as the ones at Olympia and Phigaleia received much more attention and coverage in the publications of the *Expédition* than Byzantine monuments (Tournikiotis 1999, 324).

<sup>43</sup> The Bavarian General von Heideck criticized the destruction of medieval monuments (Kokkou 1977, 112).

<sup>44</sup> The small church of Kapnikarea was rescued after protests by foreign Byzantinologists (Kokkou 1977, 114). It is interesting that in Kleantes' and Schaubert's original plan the church was preserved and fenced in (Bastéa 2000, 86). Others involved in the planning and construction of Athens, e.g. Leo von Klenze, were, however, against the preservation of Byzantine monuments (*ibid.*, 86).

<sup>45</sup> E.g. in 1862 Lysandros Kaftanzoglu protested at the destruction of the frescoes of Panaghia Gorgoepokoos (Kokkou 1977, 114).

the Acropolis stirred up serious debate.<sup>46</sup> It should be said, however, that this disagreement arose out of the clash between a purist attitude towards the monuments and a romantic taste for the picturesque; nobody had any special historical interest in the medieval monuments as such. Here we see different opinions and attitudes towards the past and the monuments co-existing as the forces of classicism and romanticism became intertwined and together shaped the cultural profile of modern Greece.

In this conflict, however, the position of the archaeologists was clear.<sup>47</sup> Archaeology's role was to construct the bipolar scheme containing the Classical past and the modern Greek present and to cleanse the physical and imaginary landscape of the vestiges of other periods. As was pointed out above, excavations dealt exclusively with the Classical monuments and a highly purist attitude was adopted in restoration work (Mallouchou-Tuffano 1998). A few Byzantine inscriptions and Christian graffiti were the only items from the medieval period to appear in the *Archaïologike Ephemeris* before the 1870s, amongst thousands of objects from the Classical period. To a certain extent, archaeology also supported opposition to the centrifugal tendencies of the *Megali Idea*. Byzantium was vehemently condemned by the first president of the Archaeological Society, Iakovos Rizos Neroulos, in his speech on the Acropolis in 1841 (Dimaras 1977, 117). Later, Stephanos Koumanoudhis, president of the Archaeological Society between 1858 and 1894, criticized Zambelios and Paparrigopoulos for their restoration of Byzantium, though less vehemently. Times were changing, however: Koumanoudhis himself was a supporter of the *Megali Idea*.

It is worth pausing to examine the work of Stephanos Koumanoudhis, as this will allow us to understand the interweaving of classicist and romantic views that characterizes this period. Koumanoudhis came from a merchant's family in Adrianopoli, Thrace. He studied in Germany and Paris and early on decided to settle in Athens in order to contribute to his country's regeneration. He distinguished himself as a philologist, archaeologist, epigraphist and lexicographer. As president of the Archaeological Society between 1858 and 1894 he was a spokesperson for the archaistic tendency. When examined more closely, however, Koumanoudhis's views emerge as quite complex and multilayered.<sup>48</sup> Koumanoudhis has been described as the last representative of the Enlightenment (Dimaras 1977, 117–19, 397–99). Indeed, throughout his life, i.e. effectively until the very end of the nineteenth century, he retained the optimism, liberalism and anticlericalism that characterized the Enlightenment. Koumanoudhis expressed strong views against Byzantium and yet he promoted the publication of Byzantine texts. His writings on the language problem in particular (he himself wrote in *katharevousa*) reveal a nuanced, if not contradictory, position. He was against the wholesale imitation of ancient Greek, criticized attempts to resurrect ancient Greek and dismissed the increasingly archaizing poetry of his period. At the same time, he was very much interested in vernacular language as well as in local dialects and idioms. Towards the end of the century he expressed disagreement with the excesses of demoticism and took a stance generally

<sup>46</sup> Kokkou 1977, 114; Petrakos 1987, 46–47; Mallouchou-Tuffano 1998, *passim*; Matthaïou 1999, 78–79.

<sup>47</sup> This statement will be qualified below; see the discussion on Stephanos Koumanoudhis.

<sup>48</sup> The discussion that follows is based largely on Matthaïou (1999).

opposed to attempts to dictate the form and development of language. He criticized romanticism, but at the same time had an active interest in proverbs, fairy tales and folk songs, which he considered an important element of modern Greek identity. He was also a supporter of the *Megali Idea*, although his position was characterized by oscillations and inconsistencies; these were, of course, also due to the vagueness of the concept. He stressed unity just as strongly as Paparrigopoulos did and he, too, believed in the divine destiny of the Greek race, but he perceived unity and continuity between the Classical past and the present in a totally different way, seeking inspiration for the present directly in the Classical past. His lexicographic work, in which he collected words created since 1453 that had been derived directly from ancient Greek, provides a good illustration of his interests. For Koumanoudhis, education, the cultivation of a political consciousness and close contact with Classical thought and the ancient monuments were the direct link between the past and the present and the key to his country's regeneration. In a way his ideas illustrate the complexity and also the gradual erosion of the Enlightenment ideas, which had become totally irrelevant by the time of his death at the end of the 19th century.

Our discussion of Koumanoudhis reveals that straightforward contrasts such as that between romanticism and classicism,<sup>49</sup> or, worse, anachronistic distinctions between 'progressive' and 'conservative' elements, are simplistic and misleading. A second point follows: while reference to the past was a central element in the creation of a national identity, archaeology (or any other historical discipline, for that matter) cannot simply be dismissed as the carrier of a dominant nationalistic ideology. Attitudes to the past, as well as the orientation and content of nationalistic beliefs, changed considerably in Greece during this period,<sup>50</sup> but at any one moment different views co-existed and contributed to a particularly fluid and contradictory set of ideas: the ideologies of a nation in the making.

### (iii) Epigraphy

To return to the priorities of archaeology from 1837 to the last decades of the century, a third significant pattern emerges: throughout this period epigraphy claimed almost all the attention of Greek archaeologists. The material presented in the *Archaiologike Ephemeris* consists almost entirely of inscriptions. The first separate collections (which later formed the basis of the National Museum) were inscriptions and coins. This emphasis on epigraphy constitutes a significant divergence from the interest in architecture, sculpture and topography among contemporary European archaeologists.<sup>51</sup> In the light of our previous discussion about the importance of language within the context of the national state, this emphasis becomes intelligible. As we have already seen, during the Enlightenment language became an important asset of imagined identities, and within the free state it was a crucial weapon

<sup>49</sup> A point made also by Ditsa (2001, 32–33, 34).

<sup>50</sup> This important point has gone unnoticed in recent studies of the role of archaeology in the formation of the modern Greek state (see for instance Hamilakis–Yalouri 1996).

<sup>51</sup> Previous studies (Skopetea 1988, 200; Alexandri 1997, 102) have described Greek archaeology as slavishly following developments in European archaeology. While it is true that the influence of the German philological paradigm was pervasive, it is also the case that scientific ideas were adapted to suit the needs of the emergent Greek state. See Voutsaki n.d. for a first attempt at an epistemological analysis of Greek archaeology.

for the creation of a homogeneous national identity. Finally, and most crucially, language provided the longed-for direct link with Classical Antiquity. From 1852 onwards, Kyriakos Pittakis, the editor of *Archaiologike Ephemeris*, published a series of articles entitled 'Υλη ίνα χρησιμεύση προς απόδειξιν ό,τι οι νυν κατοικούντες την Ελλάδα εισίν απόγονοι των αρχαίων Ελλήνων (*Materials to be used as proof of the continuity of the Greek race*) in which he traced elements of the Classical past through Greek folk culture. As we have seen, Koumanoudhis also collected idioms and proverbs.<sup>52</sup> Archaeology did not simply imprint the archaistic scheme onto the physical and imaginary landscapes, then, but also provided an internal link, a direct continuity between the past and the present.

To summarize, in the nineteenth century Greek archaeology concentrated on Athens, the Classical past and epigraphy. Archaeology therefore contributed directly to centralization in Athens and to the contraction of the Hellenic Nation into the Helladic State. Archaeology's task was to impart material reality to the archaistic ideology by imprinting the Classical past on the Greek social imagination. It is perhaps ironic that the setting of the past on a pedestal created an unbridgeable gap between past and present, the effects of which are still with us today.

### **Epilogue The last decades of the nineteenth century**

Things changed gradually during the last decades of the nineteenth century, but archaeological research took a long time to catch up with the changing modes of reference to the past. The Society for Christian Archaeology was founded in 1884; the decree for the foundation of the Byzantine Museum was approved only in 1914, and the protection of Byzantine monuments was organized primarily during the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>53</sup>

It is interesting that gradual acceptance of the scheme of linear continuity through the ages coincided with the beginnings of Greek prehistoric studies, marked by Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenae in 1876. It has to be noted, however, that Lord Elgin, Thiersch and Pittakis had already undertaken small excavations at Mycenae and Tiryns long before Schliemann, but without any significant results. The existence of a past further back in time than the Classical past had thus been suspected throughout the nineteenth century. Schliemann's spectacular findings in 1876 undoubtedly forced this discovery onto the Greek cultural consciousness. By this time, however, erosion of the bipolar scheme containing only the Classical past and the modern Greek present was already well under way, and a prehistoric past could be accommodated. In fact, it could be more than accommodated: by asserting the autochthonous character of the Mycenaean civilization, Chrestos Tsountas, the most eminent of the Greek prehistoric archaeologists, extended Paparrigopoulos' tripartite scheme back into the mythical past of the Homeric epics and beyond. His theories ran counter to the prevailing identifications of the Mycenaean as exotic,

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<sup>52</sup> Their activities should be placed in the context of the growing interest in proverbs seen as 'survivals' from Antiquity. This period saw the publication of dictionaries of modern Greek proverbs by Negrís in 1834 and Venizelos in 1846 (Puchner 1996, 261).

<sup>53</sup> Kokkou 1977, *passim*; Liakos 1994.

barbarian, or originating from the East.<sup>54</sup> It is interesting that in the prologue to his book, published in 1893, Tsountas draws an explicit analogy between the dim memories of Mycenaean achievements in Homer and the importance of the glories of Byzantium to modern Greek culture. Paparrigopoulos' scheme had finally been assimilated into archaeological thought and research.

Another important change during this period was the expansion of archaeological research into the Greek countryside. By the end of the nineteenth century, Athens' position as the political and cultural centre of Greece had been consolidated. At the same time the number of archaeologists working in Greece increased as a new generation of professionally trained archaeologists became active.<sup>55</sup> The number of archaeological investigations taking place outside Athens increased markedly at this time. These developments should be seen in the wider context of the 'Hellenization' of the countryside achieved by planning and constructing cities in neoclassical style<sup>56</sup> and by 'cleansing' foreign (Albanian, Turkish, Slavic) place names and replacing them with ancient Greek ones (Alexandri 2000; 2002). This period also saw increased numbers of local and regional histories being published. These studies emphasized the significance of local monuments as well as the importance of any contribution that local people might have made to the War of Independence or to politics (Mihailaris 1994). This stress upon the contribution made by a particular village, city or region to the nation represents another facet of nation-making.

This period also saw the foundation of most of the Foreign Schools of archaeology, which institutionalized a foreign presence in Greece. As a result of internal politics the first of these to be founded was the French School, in 1843;<sup>57</sup> most of the others were founded from 1870 onwards.<sup>58</sup> There was intense rivalry between the foreign institutes, which were in hot competition with each other for the excavation rights to important Classical sites such as Olympia or Delphi, where prestigious finds could be expected (Kalpaxis 1996, 48ff.). This sort of competition affected the evaluation of finds and hence the research priorities of the new discipline (Alexandri 1997). Large-scale projects were initiated and archaeological journals published as part of the same competition for scientific and cultural prestige (Kalpaxis 1996, 52), but were also partly the results of indirect political influence on Greek affairs. We can thus see that despite the introduction of 'scientific' methods, archaeology remained inextricably linked with politics.

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<sup>54</sup> See Polychronopoulou 1999, Voutsaki forthcoming.

<sup>55</sup> The majority of these younger archaeologists had studied in Germany.

<sup>56</sup> Bastéa 2000, 54; Neolliniki Poli 1984.

<sup>57</sup> The foundation of the French School was the result of Koletis' personal influence and was largely an attempt to limit German cultural influence as well as British political control over Greek affairs (Kalpaxis 1996, 49–50). The close relationship between archaeology and politics remains a feature of archaeological research to the present day.

<sup>58</sup> 1874: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut; 1882: American School of Classical Studies, 1886: British School at Athens, 1898: Austrian Institute, while a few more were founded in the first decades of the twentieth century.



## C Conclusions

In this paper I have attempted to explain why reference to the past assumed so central a position in Greek culture. I have argued that the ideological use of the past, and archaeology in particular, contributed to the transformation of the spatial and temporal schemes that were to hold together the Greek nation. I have also attempted to demonstrate that the relationship between the past and the present was perceived as a conflict precisely because this past was inserted into the Greek consciousness at a moment of rupture with the past, and because the past became articulated with Greece's complex attitude towards Europe it came to be identified with a dominant, urban, Atheno-centric, nationalistic, oppressive discourse, which then gradually grew stale by repetition.

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