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The Archaeologist as Shaman: the Sensory National Archaeology of Manolis Andronikos

... going into beyond, returning from the beyond ... To narrate means to speak here and now with an authority that derives from having been (literally or metaphorically) there and then. In participation of the world of the living and of the dead, in the sphere of the visible and the invisible, we have already recognized a distinctive trait of the human species

Carlo Ginzburg (1991: 307).

The story of this chapter starts exactly where that of the last chapter finished: at the ashes of Smyrna, in Asia Minor in 1922. Among the thousands who left was a 3-year-old with his parents, who eventually settled in Thessaloniki. My own point of entry in this story, however, will be in a Thessaloniki church, Agia Sophia, 70 years later.

1 April 1992. A funeral. But not any funeral. A funeral for which the prime minister of the country, along with four senior ministers, flew in from Athens. A funeral for which the national flags were raised at half-mast all over Thessaloniki. A funeral for which thousands of people have been flocking to the church since 11 o'clock in the morning. The honoured dead is not a prominent statesman, a famous literary author, or poet. This is the funeral of Manolis Andronikos, the archaeologist. Newspapers announced the event under the title 'The Macedonian soil receives today its most passionate lover'. Dozens of motions were adopted in his honour, the city council decided to name a street and a cultural centre after him, banks and other organizations decided to institute prizes in his memory. A local MP, away in a visit to Washington, DC, telegraphed the

government minister for Macedonia and Thrace and suggested that 'since Manolis Andronikos has been identified with Macedonia, its history, its glory, and its defence against attackers', today, the day of his funeral, should be declared a day of public mourning for the whole of northern Greece. The Association of Archaeologists employed in the State Archaeological Service declared that:

[they] submit to the coffin of the teacher Manolis Andronikos [their] limitless respect and gratitude, the least they could do to honour him for his feat of enormous importance, a contribution that goes beyond the narrow boundaries of a scientific discovery, and gains social and national weight... The world of archaeology but also all Greek people, become poorer after the loss of Manolis Andronikos. His work was transmitted to our people and has awoken the historical memory. His democratic ideas, his deep knowledge of the Greek language, and his sensitivity to everything that comes from the people, but also his constant interaction with them, brought about the public appreciation and absorption of this work which is now common ownership of all Greeks, especially at this very moment, when our national issues are in such a critical stage, due to the attempted distortion of our history. The loss of Manolis Andronikos is unbearable for Culture and for Hellenism. Today that the Macedonian soil receives its worthy child, let it become clear in the consciousness of all those who are in doubt, that this soil will always offer its un-falsifiable testaments of its continuity; let Andronikos's work be the shining example to all

from Eleftherotypia, 1 April 1992

Public funerals have always been dramatic and important events in Greek history, public performances of high emotion, rituals of collective grief, reassertions of the national community, political demonstrations, liturgies of resistance. It is, however, rare for such a ceremony to be the funeral of an archaeologist, despite their relatively high status in Greek society. Yet, Andronikos was/is not like any other archaeologist. In the pantheon of archaeologists in Greece he is up there at the top, far higher than any other. He became the national archaeologist *par excellence*, the only Greek archaeologist to have received so many honours, to have been featured on a postage stamp, to have had several statues commemorating his legacy in public places (Fig. 4.1),¹ to have received such wide publicity in the

¹ A statue of Andronikos can be seen in the room (named after him) at the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki (see Fig. 4.1); in 1994, a city council in the periphery of Thessaloniki decided to erect a monument to him comprising motifs



Fig. 4.1 A bronze statue of Manolis Andronikos at the Museum of Thessaloniki, dedicated by the Rotary Club of the city.

media and official and unofficial recognition, including the highest state honour, the Great Cross of the Phoenix, in 1992: in the official declaration of this prize, the state expressed 'the admiration, recognition, and the gratitude of the Nation for the work of tremendous historic and national importance, carried out by Professor Manolis Andronikos'² (Figs 4.1–4.4).

from Vergina (*Ta Nea*, 26 January 1994); finally, in 1997, exactly 5 years after his death, another monument was inaugurated in the park opposite the museum, and at the end of the street bearing his name (*Ta Nea*, 31 March 1997).

² Cf. the magazine *Tahydromos* (1 April 1992, 128–131).



Fig. 4.2 A caricature of Manolis Andronikos by the cartoonist Spyros Ornerakis, published in the Greek newspaper, *Ta Nea*. Note the 'Vergina star or sun' on the tie, and the medal, which depicts a figure of Alexander the Great.

The extraordinary reactions after his death, however, were as much to do with its timing as with Andronikos's persona and work: the early 1990s in Greece witnessed the climax of the dispute between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) over the name of the latter, after it became an independent state following the break-up of Yugoslavia. The Greek state was, since the post-war years, quite nervous about the small country on its northern borders calling itself the Republic of Macedonia (an echo of the long-standing 'Macedonian issue', involving several south-east



Fig. 4.3 A postage stamp issued by the Greek state postal service in 1992, depicting Manolis Andronikos among finds from the Vergina tomb; note the 'Vergina star or sun' at the top left corner of the stamp.

European countries; cf. Danforth (1995), Mackridge and Yannakakis (1997), Roudometof (1998b), and Cowan (2000) for recent discussions). The Macedonian Republic was not seen as an immediate threat before the break-up of Yugoslavia, especially since, in the international arena, it was the Federation rather than the Republic that was represented. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, however, the Greek state felt that the international recognition of a bordering state bearing the name of Macedonia constituted a serious threat, especially to its Greek province with the same name. The presence of an, as yet unrecognized by Greece, ethnic minority which identified itself as Macedonian within its borders, was seen as potential trigger for an expansionist campaign by FYROM. So the dispute revolved around the name of Macedonia, and by implication, the ethnic national character of the area, its history, and identity (cf. Silberman 1989: 12–29). The Greek national narrative would insist that Macedonia had always been Greek, and thus the naming of the Yugoslav state



Fig. 4.4 Illustration depicting Manolis Andronikos and published in the left-wing magazine, *Andi*, in 1992, immediately after his death. The figure is seated next to a depiction of the chest that contained the bones Andronikos believed to be those of Philip II, and holds a book that contains representations of the ivory heads that Andronikos identified as those of Philip and Alexander; these ivory heads were crucial in supporting his argument on the identification of the dead from the 'royal tombs'.

after it constitutes a theft of national 'property', heritage, and identity. And here is where Andronikos comes in: according to the Greek national narrative, it is the archaeological finds, the 'un-falsifiable testaments that come out of the Macedonian soil', as the statement above put it, that offer the strongest proof for the Hellenicity of the area. Andronikos was the man who brought all these testaments to light, with his excavations at the village of Vergina, 40 miles south-west of Thessaloniki. The project is perhaps the most widely

publicized excavation since the major digs of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Mycenae and Knossos. In 1977, Andronikos announced to the Greek public and to the world at large that at Vergina [which he considers to be Aegae, the sacred capital of ancient Macedonia, but see Faklaris (1994) and below], he unearthed a royal tomb, which he believed to be the tomb of Philip II of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great. His impressive finds of human skeletons and stunningly preserved golden objects found themselves at the centre of one of the most sensational archaeological stories ever told. It was these finds that became the national icons that would be reproduced endlessly.

One specific feature was destined to be the most crucial and the most controversial. The sixteen-ray 'sun or star of Vergina', a well-known decorative motif in the art of the period, found on the golden chest in the tomb that Andronikos called the 'tomb of Philip' (the chest that, he believed, contained his cremated bones), was unknown until then beyond the circle of archaeologists and other specialists. From the late 1970s onwards, and as the dispute over Macedonia intensified, this motif became extremely popular, almost to the point of becoming an unofficial national crest and symbol, in both Greece and the Yugoslav Republic. Countless commercial adverts, logos, shopfronts, T-shirts, pins, medals, and posters, were carrying it, along with its official endorsement in a 100-drachma Greek coin with the head of Alexander on one face and the 'sun' on the other, on postage stamps, and on official campaign posters distributed throughout Greece and abroad. The 'sun' also featured in unofficial flags (cf. Fig. 4.5), most prominently paraded in demonstrations attended by many thousands of people in Greece, in FYROM, and particularly in centres of the Greek and Macedonian diasporas, such as Toronto and Melbourne (cf. Danforth 1995, 2003). The only difference was that Greek demonstrations featured a flag with the 'sun' on a blue background, whereas the Macedonian ones featured the same symbol on a red background. In August 1992 this was adopted as the official national flag of FYROM, resulting in the intensification of the dispute, and the adoption on the part of Greece of an economic embargo which was devastating for FYROM.

This is the moment at which Andronikos's funeral took place, that is a few months before that last escalation of the dispute. According



Fig. 4.5 A Greek flag (far left) decorated with the 'Vergina star or sun', along with another one featuring only the star in a blue background; the flags were being sold at a Vergina tourist shop, close to the 'royal tombs'.

to statements by politicians and organizations, Andronikos was the person who provided 'ammunition' for a counterattack against the threat from the north, the state which was distorting history, stealing the soul of Greece ('our name is our soul', was a popular slogan at the time), appropriating its national symbols. Andronikos and his finds that came out of the Macedonian soil, the national narrative goes, proved that Macedonia was Greek, that the area is linked with the rest of the Hellenic territory, and is at the centre of Hellenism. The national narrative, therefore, has come a long way since the rejection of Philip and of the Macedonian heritage by national intellectuals such as Rangavis, who saw Philip as the conqueror of Greece and one of its worst enemies (the first in the long list of invaders), whose greatest crime was to father Alexander the Great (see Chapter 3). Now, both Philip and Alexander are at the centre of the national imagination. Of course their initial rehabilitation had already happened at the end of the nineteenth century as part of the invention of indigenous Hellenism and Paparrigopoulos's synthesis. In 1913 northern Greece became part of the national territory, and its

Macedonian classical heritage part of the heritage of the area (as a signifier of local identity) and of the country as a whole. But it was after Andronikos's discoveries that this heritage began to occupy centre stage in the national discourse and imagination.

These political contingencies alone, however, cannot adequately explain Andronikos's appeal and role in Greek society. A closer look at his life and work will not only contribute to the understanding of a key figure in the archaeological and, more broadly, public arena, but more importantly, it will provide a lens through which we can revisit the workings of the national imagination and its links with archaeological practice and discourse. Moreover, this exploration will help rethink the entanglement of Andronikos's archaeological work with the national disputes outlined above. Andronikos was not a 'typical' archaeologist, nor is there an intention here to present him acting as a representative of archaeologists in Greece. Nor does this chapter subscribe to the 'history as-the-life-of-great-men' idea. The decision to focus on his life and work has to do with the realization that he was the embodiment of national archaeology, a figure through which a portrait of a national-archaeological imagination can be produced (cf. Herzfeld 1997). As I will try to show, Andronikos was instrumental in bringing about a further modification of the national-archaeological narrative, perhaps the most important since the invention of indigenous Hellenism in the mid to late nineteenth century: the *material* incorporation of northern Greece into the imaginary *topos* of Hellenism. But his case does not simply elucidate the links between archaeology and national imagination, be it in Greece or elsewhere; more importantly, it helps us rethink the relationship between archaeology and modernity, and perhaps reconsider the current assumption that archaeology has been a primarily modernist enterprise. As I already intimated in Chapter 3, and as I will show further in this chapter, while this is partly correct, archaeology, especially when linked closely to the national project, shares many of the features of pre-modern thinking and practice. In this chapter I am not interested in examining the validity and the epistemological status of the various archaeological controversies that have emerged after Andronikos's discoveries, such as, for example, whether the tomb he discovered is that of Philip II or not. These controversies will be discussed only to the extent that they constitute

important aspects of the main focus, and to the extent that they illuminate the intersection between scholarly and social phenomena.

THE JOURNEY FROM THE 'OTHER SHORE'

Manolis Andronikos was born in 1919 at Prousa (Bursa) in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), his father was from the island of Samos and his mother from Imvros. He was 3 years old when he followed the thousands of others who left Smyrna behind them in flames; his family settled in Thessaloniki. His attachment to the place, which the national imagination considered (until 1922) part of the territory of Hellenism, is evident in its frequent invocations in his writings; he would often call it, citing Giorgos Seferis, 'the other shore' (*I alli akrogialia*; cf. Andronikos 1974a,b). Imvros, his mother's homeland, another 'unredeemed' fatherland for some national accounts, would be the subject of his first academic publication at the age of 19 (Andronikos 1938); the topic, a study of folk songs from the island.

In Thessaloniki, his first neighbourhood was the city centre, opposite the university and very close to such important landmarks and monuments as the Rotonda, a Roman and later Christian and Muslim monument, and Kamara, the fourth-century AD Arch of Galerius. He attended the school of humanities in Thessaloniki's Aristotelian University, following its broad curriculum from ancient and modern Greek to Latin, folklore studies, and archaeology. He soon became an acolyte of Konstantinos Romaïos, the Professor of Archaeology who had already started excavating at the site of Vergina. He went to Vergina for the first time in 1937, when the dictator Ioannis Metaxas was in power (see Chapter 5). After graduating in 1941 he was posted in Thrace to teach in a secondary school, a posting of his choosing, since he had planned to escape occupied Greece from the Evros border, through Turkey. He joined the Greek resistance forces operating from the Middle East, and returned to post-war (and soon civil-war) Greece; after a short spell as a teacher in secondary education he successfully sat the exams for the archaeological service in 1947, and was appointed as curator of antiquities at Veroia, the area of which Vergina was archaeologically part. He first attempted to investigate the large human-made mound called

'Megali Toumba' in 1952, but was forced to abandon it as the search yielded no significant results. That first attempt, however, was crucial in implanting in him what he called 'the secret of Megali Toumba'; he noted much later: 'I was dreaming of it since the moment I did the first test in 1952' (Andronikos 1997: 7). Meanwhile, he had already submitted his doctoral dissertation on Platonic ideas on art (Andronikos 1952), and, along with his continuing excavation at Vergina (in the Iron Age cemetery and the Hellenistic 'palace'), he spent 2 years in Oxford, studying with J. Beazley. In 1958 he was elected assistant professor and in 1961 full professor at the University of Thessaloniki. He returned to 'Megali Toumba' in 1962 and 1963, but with no further success, and for the next 10 years he was involved primarily in writing a number of works, including chapters on ancient Greek art for the *History of the Greek Nation*, the monumental multi-volume work of the Academy of Athens, aimed at providing an up-to-date version of the national narrative; he also completed a large volume on Greek archaeological museums. In the first year after the fall of the Colonels' dictatorship (1967–74) he was involved in a number of state committees aimed at restructuring and democratizing the state institutions. Finally, in 1976, he returned to 'Megali Toumba', where in 1977 he made his dramatic discovery of the two tombs (and a further one in 1978), one of which was the unrobbed tomb that he would call the tomb of Philip II. The discovery was widely reported internationally and Andronikos, a well-known archaeologist by any means, became from that point onwards a major celebrity and the national archaeologist of Greece. His excavation received unprecedented funding, thanks to the intervention of the then Prime Minister, Konstantinos Karamanlis, a native of Greek Macedonia himself.

Andronikos was much more than an archaeologist, however. Even before his discoveries, he was a public intellectual who had participated in the production and reproduction of the national self in a number of different ways. He was a regular columnist in one of the most respected high-circulation newspapers (*To Vima*), writing on a variety of issues, not simply archaeological; he was also publishing regularly in various popular magazines.³ He sat on a number of

³ Cf. Andronikos (1976a, 1982a, 1993, 1994), for collections of his newspaper and magazine articles.

committees of cultural institutions, and he was regularly invited to comment and speak on matters such as language and its role, art and literature, and education. Through his writings and his work, he linked himself to national history and national destiny in diverse ways. Although primarily a classical archaeologist, he had studied and written on all periods of Greek history, from prehistory to the present. His second publication, following the one on the folk songs from Imvros mentioned above, was on an inscription from a Byzantine church (1940). His engagement with *laographia* dates from the days of his apprenticeship under Konstantinos Romaios (Andronikos 1997: 32), for whom it was a major preoccupation; in so doing, he was also following the nineteenth-century tradition that sees archaeology and *laographia* as closely linked in their patriotic duty to prove national continuity through the study of monuments, be it monuments of the word or material monuments (cf. Herzfeld 1982a; Chapter 3). At the same time, Andronikos's deep respect for and reconciliation with Byzantium (as discussed in Chapter 3, a contentious period for much of the nineteenth century, and one that few classical archaeologists would consider as worthy of study) is evident in his writings. During his visit to Istanbul for the 10th International Congress of Classical Archaeology, he visited the church of Agia Sophia, the iconic monument of Byzantine heritage:

When I entered for the first time and stood underneath the dome, a thunderbolt struck me, shattering me into a thousand pieces; no; it was not the Parthenon and Saint Peter, and the gothic cathedrals and whatever else I had seen or dreamt of in my life. It is the miracle that you do not see but once in your life, the unspoken that only those who can see it, can live its mystic transformation. Beyond that, there is silence. I only know that now Byzantium has been rehabilitated for good inside me; and I dare not try any comparison or interpretation.

Andronikos wrote these lines in the newspaper *To Vima* in January 1974 (Andronikos 1974b). For him Hellenism, past and present, prehistoric, classical, and Byzantine, the folk songs and the ancient artefacts, mainland Greece, Greek Anatolia, and Cyprus are one; the continuity of the Hellenic spirit is beyond dispute. His place of birth and his upbringing, his participation in key historical moments of the Hellenic nation, from the Asia Minor adventure (which links him

with the nineteenth century and the Great Idea), to the Second World War and the resistance, and the support of democracy during and after the Colonels' coup,⁴ his broad education in all aspects of Hellenic culture, his engagement with all its different periods, his ability to investigate such sacred themes for the national imagination as folk songs, classical monuments, Byzantine monuments, but also modern poetry and art, his ability to be both a scholar (and a charismatic teacher) and a public communicator and intellectual, they all made him the indisputable advocate of indigenous Hellenism. He was the person chosen, it seemed to him and to many others, by destiny to embody Hellenism in all its facets. Andronikos was seen as the obvious person to deliver speeches such as the 1977 official speech in the ceremonies by the University of Thessaloniki to celebrate the Greek War of Independence. In that speech, entitled *History and Poetry* (Andronikos 1982a), he attempted a synthetic account of the national destiny from the Persian wars to the invasion of Cyprus by the Turkish army in 1974, by addressing the links between poetry and national history. He invoked the notion of national unity, which he saw expressed for the first time after the victory in the battle of Salamis. And he continued:

The centuries passed heavy through the history of the Hellenes, who reached once the depths of Persia and spread their language and their seeds as far as India. Greek kingdoms ruled the whole of the East. And again human destiny brought about the loss of their freedom and their subjugation under the Romans... [Following the Byzantium years] again the Asiatic steppes sent towards the Mediterranean coasts new ethnic groups. One of them conquered the state of Byzantium and subjugated all people under a disgraceful and tyrannical rule; [he continued with the War of Independence, the Second World War, and Cyprus].

Andronikos (1982a: 19–20)

⁴ Andronikos, unlike many other university professors who were fired or resigned from the university during the military dictatorship of 1967–74, kept his post. But in some of his texts, we can detect covert critique and resistance to the regime. For example, in an article published in *To Vima* on 26 April 1973 (that is, a few days after the anniversary of the colonels' coup (21 April)), he deals with the Christian theme of crucifixion and resurrection, invoking covertly the 'resurrection' of the Greek people after their 'crucifixion' by the regime (Andronikos 1973).

This role of the spokesperson that embodied indigenous Hellenism became much more prominent after the 1977 discovery, and acquired new characteristics. Even at other, less obvious occasions, Andronikos was again the main speaker. In May 1941 two resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied Athens, Manolis Glezos and Lakis Sandas, removed the swastika from the Athenian Acropolis in a highly symbolic act of ritual purification of the most sacred specimen of the Hellenic national imagination (cf. Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999). That event, which attracted wide publicity internationally and was seen as marking the start of active resistance against the occupation forces, was commemorated in the 1990s with the instalment of a plaque on the Acropolis by resistance organizations. The main speaker in the event was Manolis Andronikos, the archaeologist who embodied the association of archaeological monuments with the nation and national history from antiquity to the present, and with resistance, be it the resistance against the Nazi occupation in the 1940s or the resistance against the perceived threat from the northern Yugoslav state. He noted in his speech:

These hard and at the same time tender stones have kept countless memories; from the mythical Erechtheus, to Makrygiannis and Gouras, feet of brave and free men stepped upon them, as did feet of despots and conquerors...⁵

This passage, or better, Andronikos's pronouncement of this passage on the Acropolis, in front of the commemorative plaque, the national flag, and the surviving resistance fighters, situates the commemorated event in the narrative of the nation, and makes it yet another episode in the long history of conquest and resistance; but it does more than that: evoking recent phenomenological approaches to place, memory, and materiality (e.g. Seremetakis 1994a; Casey 1996; Feld and Basso 1996; Hamilakis 1998), it speaks of the mnemonic qualities of ancient stones, of their power to preserve the memories of people that touched them. As I will discuss later, the sensory reception of the past was one of main themes in Andronikos's life and work; the other key themes that form his national-archaeological nexus are dreaming, sacredness, and death and war. It is to those themes that I will now turn.

⁵ The speech was published in the magazine *Andistasi* (13, 1990, p. 1).

THE DREAM

Recall that the 'secret of Megali Toumba' was something that Andronikos dreamed of for more than 20 years. The notion of dreaming seemed to have been central in his life, work, and imagination. In his posthumously published memoir of his discovery, Andronikos revealed that he had dreamt of finding something unique, something 'rich in objects as well as information' (1997: 83). After his discovery of the unrobbed tomb, he noted: 'For me, the great dream of my life, the dream for 25 years, to find the tomb of 'Megali Toumba' intact, was becoming reality' (1997: 111). But this was not just a figure of speech, a metaphor. Dreaming as an actual process occupies a key position in his memoirs; after the discovery of the first robbed tomb in 'Megali Toumba' he could not contain his disappointment that, despite the impressive painting that the tomb contained, due to the robbing he could not prove that he had found a royal tomb:

... as I remember, I used to dream very little then, unlike my collaborators who would dream daily of royal tombs, full of unbelievable rich objects and ornaments. The landlord and foreman of the excavation woke up one night, took pen and paper and drew the tomb which he had dreamed; it was, he said, very big, it had a main chamber and an ante-chamber, and in front of its façade, something like a built road; as for its contents, it was impossible to put it on paper; it was something from a fairy tale. And it was not just my collaborators whose expectations had been transformed into hopeful dreams; the workmen of the excavation would often narrate to me similar dreams, even the other villagers had been infected by the same disease, if we could call disease everybody's desire to find something that I was daydreaming for many years. I, however, did not see such a beautiful dream myself. It seemed that I was waiting to see it in daylight

Andronikos (1997: 96)

After he had discovered the tomb and while still in the field, he received a letter from a woman in the USA, unknown to him. This letter, he says, was a tremendous surprise to him. It read:

Dear Professor,

the night of 17th to 18th of November, between 12 and 3 in the morning, I saw a dream. A man told me: 'In northern Greece, the tomb of Philip, King of

Macedonia and father of Alexander the Great was found; and what treasures!' When I woke up in the morning, I took the local paper and there I read a short telegram from Athens, which read 'In northern Greece a tomb was found which is probably that of the King of Macedonia, Philip'. Between my dream and the telegram, there were two differences. In the telegram it said probably, whereas in my dream, the man was categorically certain...

Ps: Although not part of my dream, I have the sense that in the complex of the same tomb, there is a second, smaller skeleton of a baby or woman. This is an intuition, not part of my dream

Andronikos (1997: 185–6).

Andronikos makes much of this, devoting two pages in his chronicle to it. He is particularly surprised that the letter was sent before he made his official announcements, and before he entered the antechamber where the second skeleton was found. But more important for him seemed to be the categorical confirmation (in the correspondent's dream) that the tomb is that of Philip (an issue that, when Andronikos was writing these lines, was highly contested among archaeologists). If the woman from America had the ability to foresee the recovery of the second skeleton, then perhaps, she had the abilities to confirm the identity of the dead too? Andronikos was quick to add that he did not 'believe in superstitions and all that', but he could not explain the letter and the issues it raised (1997: 186).

Andronikos says that he did not use to see any dreams, yet he describes a nightmare in the first agonizing days of this 1977 season at 'Megali Toumba':

In the evenings, when I was lying in the small room where I was staying, I used to shut my eyes trying to catch some sleep. Sometimes, half-awake half-asleep, a nightmare used to come and fill me with agony: when I was extending my arm towards the wall, I was seeing myself in the bottom of the trench with its wall against me and ready to fall on me. I would wake up upset. When again I was extending my arm in the opposite direction, the reverse image would fill me with horror: I was imagining being at the brink of the trench which was lying in front of me scaringly wide open and ready to suck me up

Andronikos (1997: 70)

Dreams of treasure, a common theme in Greek popular culture (cf. Stewart 2003), due partly perhaps to the widespread publicity reserved for impressive archaeological finds especially involving

golden artefacts, can be seen, as Stewart (2003) has suggested, as forms of unconscious historicization: as attempts to relate to the past and produce thus personal and collective identities, to visualize and conjure up into consciousness material history (cf. also Chapter 3). Through dreaming, or rather the narrating of dreaming, autobiographical time is linked with historical time, personal experience becomes part of collective national experience. The dreamers of archaeological national treasures do not simply situate themselves within the body of national history, they do not simply relate their personal lives and experiences to that of the nation, collapsing thus time, and minimizing the distance of millennia: more importantly, they become active agents in the production of national history by revealing the spots that hide the treasures, knowledge that was revealed to them during their dreaming. Andronikos's nightmare of falling or being sucked in by his archaeological trench speaks perhaps of his anxiety and his self-rhetoric of himself faced by the tragic moment of destiny, but his narration of the workmen and other collaborators' dreams are of equal or more interest. These dreams may fit the pattern of dreaming of treasures as unconscious historicization, the dreamers' strategy of relating to the archaeological past that was revealed before their eyes daily, their efforts to establish links with it and contribute to its unearthing. Andronikos interprets these dreams as the local people's desire for these treasures to be unearthed; a desire not perhaps just of the workmen and local people, but also, it seemed to some, a desire of the finds, artefacts, and treasures themselves to be brought to light, to be resurrected; here is what a local author wrote (in a book chapter first appearing in a local paper) about this very same site, largely unexcavated besides some of the tombs and the 'palace' (Martos 1993: 139): [the city of Aegae] 'for decades now, tries painfully to break the earthly membrane that surrounds it and be reborn'.

This is the desire that Andronikos will satisfy with his discovery, fulfilling thus his destiny and his obligations to both history and the people. As the narration of the dream of the American woman indicates, however, Andronikos also believed in the ability of 'simple' people to know the truth, to communicate with the dead more directly, and it seemed to him perhaps that dreaming was one way by which that truth was revealed to them. That belief of the

authenticity of the 'pure folk' will surface again later, when he will become tormented with the identification of the dead of 'Megali Toumba'.

'THE CHEST WITH THE HOLY RELICS'

In the last chapter I showed that once antiquities came to occupy such a central position in the national imagination from the nineteenth century onwards, they became invested with sacred qualities. The notion of sacredness seems to be an important element in Andronikos's thinking and work. A key theme in his accounts of the opening of the undisturbed tomb was that it took place (as it turned out, by planning on his behalf; see note 7) on 8 November, the day that the Greek Orthodox Church celebrates Saints Michael and Gabriel, the gatekeepers of the underworld.⁶

Today, 8th of November, the Orthodox Church honours the archangels Michael and Gabriel, the lords of the underworld. This was meant to be the day, ten years ago, that we opened an undisturbed tomb at Vergina, the tomb that it is now certain that it belongs to Philip II, the world famous king of Macedonia...

Andronikos (1987)

This statement is repeated not only in popular accounts such as the above, but also in semi-scholarly publications, such as the only synthetic book on the 'Royal tombs' written by Andronikos.⁷ The implications here are obvious. The staging of the opening to coincide with that date, and its repeated invocation in popular and semi-scholarly accounts, speaks of the deliberate attempt to link the find with the Christian calendar and beliefs: Andronikos's 'journey' to the underworld merged the national and the religious narratives: the classical past provides plentiful stories of descents to the world of the dead, with the most famous perhaps being the one attempted by

⁶ See, for example, Andronikos (1978).

⁷ 'The opening of the tomb was planned for 8 November, the day that the Orthodox church celebrates the memory of Archangels Michael and Gabriel' (Andronikos 1984: 69). As indicated by this passage (see also Andronikos 1997: 115), the day was not accidental: the opening was deliberately planned to coincide with that date.

Odysseus, and narrated by Homer in the *Odyssey* (Book XI). The sacralization of the past with the merging of Christianity and antiquity, a project that started in the nineteenth century, is re-staged and reproduced here, in the arena of Vergina.⁸

But these invocations of sacredness extend to many other occasions, and are not always linked explicitly to Christianity; on the restitution of the Parthenon marbles Andronikos wrote:

[T]he request for the restitution of the Parthenon sculptures is based upon a simple and undisputed argument: these sculptures belong to the most sacred monument of this country, the temple of Athena, which expresses the essence of the Greek spirit and incorporates the deepest nature of the Athenian democracy

Andronikos (1983)

He expressed emotions of religious respect and piety towards his own finds at Vergina. Here is how he describes the moment of opening the golden chest found in the unrobbed tomb and thought by him to contain the cremated bones of Philip II:

Full of religious piety and respect we are standing in front of that sacred relic, as a Christian would stand in front of the relics of a saint

Andronikos (1997: 142)

At the occasion of the visit of a group of archaeologists from the University of Thessaloniki, he describes how, upon seeing the chest with the bones, one of them:

... was, spontaneously, ready to cross himself, and only at the last minute he held himself back. This was what we all felt; we had the impression that we are in front of a chest with holy relics

Andronikos (1997: 146)

And responding to a commentator who criticized his 'disturbance of the dead':

⁸ Many years earlier, on 15 December 1940, Andronikos's mentor, K. A. Romaios sent a letter to the prominent American Aegean prehistorian Carl Blegen. In the middle of the Greek-Italian war, after Italy's invasion in October that year, Romaios narrated the fierce resistance of the Greek army on the Albanian front, and concluded: 'Dreams have become reality [*pragmata ta oneira*]. The ancient heroes, the defenders of freedom were resurrected, but today they are called Virgin Mary and Saint Dimitrios. That is why our people win and will stay winners until the end' (University of Cincinnati Archives, Carl W. Blegen Papers, Folder 121, Box 1).

I can assure you all that one day – I would like to believe not a very distant one – Philip's skeleton will be placed in a case worthy of him, in front of or in his tomb if possible, for a truly pious pilgrimage

Andronikos (1988a)⁹

'Grave sites, ancestors, and nation-state formation are interconnected', Katherine Verdery (1999) noted with reference to the study of the 'dead-body politic' in former Yugoslavia, an observation that resonates with various examples discussed in this book. In the passages above, the dead body found in that tomb of Vergina, a body that was identified with certainty as that of Philip II of Macedonia, inspires piety and religious respect; in fact, it becomes elevated to the status of the holy relics of a new saint, a national, not strictly religious saint.¹⁰ To the critic who, evoking an argument well known from the recent debates on the ethics of the treatment of dead bodies by archaeologists and anthropologists (especially in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, and, increasingly, Europe), Andronikos responds with a disarming argument: the dead person has not been disturbed by a 'cold' scientist in the pursuit of scientific truth; he has been reconnected with his national family, and will be from now on venerated and worshiped appropriately. From the moment of its discovery, this body will start its new political life.

THE ENDLESS WAR AND THE IMMORTAL DEATH

Andronikos spent most of his archaeological career dealing with death, investigating burials and writing about them. His major,

⁹ For Andronikos, these religious sentiments towards antiquities were shared by the workmen who were employed in the excavations: 'Genuinely moved, and with admiration and satisfaction, they recover with extreme caution, I would say with religious piety and fear, the antiquities hidden in their land' (Andronikos 1982b). 'We regard Vergina as a holy place', the deputy mayor of the village said to *The Guardian* newspaper (12 August 1993), in justifying his opposition to the planned visit by the deposed King of Greece, and continued: 'How can a man like [King] Constantine, who doesn't even recognize our constitution, possibly pay homage to this place?'

¹⁰ Recall the practice of digging for saints' relics in the Middle Ages, a phenomenon that has already been connected to the prehistory of modernist archaeology (Schnapp 1996).

internationally known work before his discovery at Vergina was a book on the burial customs during the Iron Age, linking the Homeric epics with the archaeological finds (Andronikos 1968), and of course his great moment involved the recovery of a burial. But along with death, war and warfare featured prominently too: after all, it was due to the Asia Minor War that Andronikos, when only 3 years old, had to become a refugee and emigrate to Greek Macedonia. Some of his formative years were spent during the Second World War and, like most people of his generation, he lived through the traumatic Civil War years (1946–49).

Philip II and especially Alexander the Great are associated primarily in the modern imagination with wars. Some of his impressive finds from 'the tomb of Philip' and some of the most well known and widely reproduced are objects that evoke (or are related to) warfare: an iron helmet, swords and other weapons, a cuirass and greaves. But the most prominent connotation of warfare is an indirect one: Andronikos, according to the national narrative, provided the 'weapons' for the defence of Greek Macedonia against the threats by those who question its Greek identity, as the passage at the beginning of this chapter indicates: in the words of the Thessaloniki MP, Andronikos and his finds are inextricably linked to the 'defence of Macedonia against its attackers'.¹¹ In the grand, international travelling exhibitions that followed the discovery,¹² such as 'The Search for Alexander' in the early 1980s (cf. Yalouris *et al.* 1980), 'Macedonia: from the Mycenaean times to the death of Alexander the Great' in the late 1980s, and the 'Greek Civilization, Macedonia, the Kingdom of Alexander the Great' in the early 1990s (Vokotopoulou 1993), the Vergina finds held a prominent position, and led a cultural offensive, a counter-attack against the perceived attacks on the Hellenicity of Macedonia. That

¹¹ It is worth noting that Andronikos, in a text published a few months before his great discoveries, treated with irony the attempt to send antiquities abroad as 'cultural ambassadors' of the nation (1977a,b,c).

¹² A legal act introduced in 1977 (Petrakos 1982: 85) made travelling exhibitions of antiquities (outside Greece) much easier to organize than before, despite the serious opposition. The need to show the Vergina finds internationally had, for obvious reasons, a significant impact in changing the legal framework. Green (1989: 155) suggests that this was due to the personal lobbying by the then Prime Minister, K. Karamanlis.

last exhibition's success was announced in the Greek press with the title, 'Alexander the Great, Conqueror of Canada too'.¹³

THE MAN WHO COULD SEE WITH HIS TOUCH

Andronikos was a professional archaeologist who followed the career of many archaeologists of this generation from the State Archaeological Service to a university position. He also often appealed to criteria of objectivity and professional standards. Yet, even before his discovery he advocated a different archaeological canon, a canon that emphasized the experiential reception of the past, the sensory and somatic perception of its materiality (cf. Seremetakis 1994b). Examples of this philosophical position are scattered throughout his popular *and* scholarly writings:

The time of the archaeological research is the 'inhabited' time, that time that is not recorded with astronomic precision, but with cultural completion... The tactile and visible image of historical time is composed of countless relics of human creation... In other words, the archaeologist sees and touches the content of history; this means that he perceives in a sensory manner the metaphysical truth of historical time...

Andronikos (1972)

The understanding of works of art requires more than the knowledge gained from the literature, it demands the long and intimate familiarization with these works, together with what the Germans call 'Einfühlung' and the Anglosaxons 'Empathy'

Andronikos (1980b: 359)

The archaeologist does not approach the ancient world with the mind, or rather only with the mind. She/he has a connection, I would say, bodily...

Andronikos (1982b)

[we archaeologists] touch, almost always, with our own fingers the trace, not the unknown or non-existent King of Asine,¹⁴ but the real human

¹³ *To Vima*, 23 May 1993.

¹⁴ The reference is to the well-known eponymous poem by the Nobel Laureate Giorgos Seferis (see Keeley and Sherrard 1981: 109–111).

being, with its joys and sorrows, its hopes and pains... We believe that we are obliged to stay cold and rational arbitrators of the scientific truth that we serve, devoid of sentimental – and therefore non-professional – procrastination.

If, however, at some moment, we could rid ourselves from these – scholarly? – obligations and approach in a humane way, I would say poetically, some monuments of the past, if, instead of framing them within the cold schemata of our conceptual constructions, we see or read them as images and voices of a human being who sees and talks to us from the depths of time, we could perhaps gain much more, and thus help the present-day people, ourselves, so that we would not feel lonely and lost in the chaos of centuries and the non-stopping flow of countless human beings

Andronikos (1988c)

This embodied relationship that Andronikos had with the material past is evoked in many of the texts and speeches that celebrated his memory. For example, a university archaeology professor and student of Andronikos, in a symposium organized by the university to celebrate his memory, entitled her talk 'The man who spoke with history',¹⁵ while a well-known author and public commentator devoted his essay (in a special issue of a literary magazine devoted to Andronikos) to his hands, which signified his tactile communication with the material past.¹⁶

Empathy, emotional attachment, and a somatic connection with the people of the past and their material culture, were for Andronikos important in the process of an archaeology that has clear purpose and meaning in the present, an archaeology that saves present-day people from their alienating feelings, establishing a collective embodied identity in a chaotic world. For Andronikos, the embodied, emotional relationship with the past, much more important than the intellectual engagement with it, made archaeology relevant for present-day people, not only because it presented in front of them a living, animated, and therefore intimate and emotive past, but more importantly, because it provided them (including the archaeologist) with a sense of a direct, embodied intimate link with the ancestors, a sense of

¹⁵ Speech by A. Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou at a symposium in May 1993; the event was reported in *To Vima* (23 May 1993) under the same title.

¹⁶ K. Georgosopoulos (1995) in a text with the revealing title: 'The touch that could see'.

personal and collective identity, in this case an embodied national identity; it provided a rescue from loneliness, a sense of meaningful existence, a sense of *destiny* in a chaotic, timeless universe. As was noted already, archaeology is much more important to the nation than, say, history, because of its ability to create, through materiality, bodily and sensory engagements with the past. Andronikos is perhaps the first important Greek archaeological figure to not only have fully realized this potential, but to have made it a key aspect of his archaeological work, a work that was primarily addressed to a public and popular audience and less to the archaeological community.

And it was a work that has been received enthusiastically by its intended audience, as the countless expressions of public veneration towards him indicate. On 22 November 1993, I attended in Athens one of the commemorative ceremonies devoted to Andronikos, organized by a private school. The ceremony, entitled 'Macedonia-Andronikos' started with the Byzantine hymn '*Ti Ypermaho*' (a hymn that has acquired national and mostly military connotations in Greece) and continued with speeches on Andronikos and his finds by archaeologists and others: a key element in this hagiography was the notion that Andronikos 'animated in front of our eyes the deeds of the kings' and that 'you had the feeling that you were seeing alive' in front of you the actions of the people.¹⁷

THE MOMENT OF DESTINY

The moment of destiny for Andronikos was 8 November 1977. It was a moment which, he admitted, he had been dreaming about for 25 years. In one of his daydreams, he says, he was thinking of the most impressive Macedonian finds and 'was hoping that ours will be a bit more rich, a bit more beautiful' (Andronikos 1997: 116). It was a moment that he was determined to live. The finding of a very

¹⁷ The event was organized by students and alumni of the Kalpaka School at Athens, and was hosted at the building of the Greek American Union. The main speaker was the archaeologist Mary Siganidou, the Ephor responsible for the area of Vergina during Andronikos's discoveries, and excavator of another very important Macedonian site, Pella.

important archaeological monument, of an undisturbed, unique tomb extremely rich in finds, a hugely important archaeological event, was no doubt the culmination of a life-long dedication to the site of Vergina, and especially the 'Megali Toumba', a site that he knew intimately and had experienced in a fully sensory and embodied way. At the same time, that moment of destiny was something that he himself had choreographed and staged, from the day of the opening of the tomb (so that it could fall on the day of the saints of the underworld) to the 'ceremonial' procedure that the opening followed (cf. Andronikos 1997: 120) and the public announcement of the finds, a few days later.

Despite his earlier doubts, in 1976 Andronikos (while he was excavating at 'Megali Toumba') adopted Hammond's (1972) position that the capital of ancient Macedonia, Aegae, was at Vergina and not in Edessa as was previously thought (Andronikos 1997: 60–65). From that point onwards Andronikos expected to find royal tombs under the 'Megali Toumba' (110 m in diameter and 12 m in height). He announced his hypothesis in his newspaper column (as well as in a scholarly journal), raising public expectations by suggesting that 'now our expectations from the excavation can be exceptional. Even the unbelievable hope that the huge mound hides tombs of Macedonian kings, now finds its theoretical foundation' (Andronikos 1976b). From that point onwards a huge public performance was set up: the whole nation was watching Andronikos, and he knew it. The 1977 season had not started well, and he was about to give up, as he was not finding what he was looking for. He was finding, however, broken marble tombstones which he soon linked to the Gallic army (mercenaries of King Pyrrhus of Epirus) which looted the Macedonian royal tombs in 272 bc. But nothing more. Some colleagues started mocking him ('Manoli, when you find the tomb, let us know', one said to him; Andronikos 1997: 72), but he persisted, until he discovered the first tomb, robbed but with an impressive wall painting, depicting the abduction of Persephone by the god of the underworld, Hades. Andronikos was disappointed: 'the wall paintings showed that it was not an ordinary tomb, but there was no proof that it was royal' (Andronikos 1997: 95). But things then started changing. Next to the first tomb he uncovered a 'heroon', a structure which he linked to the worship of the dead, which made

him think that the people buried in a tomb nearby must be important enough to be worshiped as gods. Then, and while the whole village was dreaming tombs full of treasures, the discovery of a second tomb with an impressive wall painting on its façade portraying a hunt scene, raised expectations further, especially when Andronikos suggested that the central figure in the painting must be Alexander the Great. Based on that, and on dating from other evidence, he concluded that he was finding royal tombs of the era of Alexander, and of Philip II, his father, and the most famous Macedonian after him. But Alexander was buried in Alexandria, Egypt, and within that timeframe, only Philip II and Philip III Arrhidaios, an unheroic and ignored successor, had died. When it was revealed that the tomb was undisturbed, Andronikos 'was deeply happy' (Andronikos 1997: 112). The most important thing for him at that moment was the fact that the tomb was undisturbed, that he would be able to touch and feel the dead as they were left on the day of burial, to sense history with his own body:

That moment, I was not interested in anything else, nor on whether the tomb was royal... I was content with the fact that I had found a Macedonian tomb in which, once opened, we were going to find the dead untouched, together with the burial offerings, as they were left in the day of the burial. A Macedonian tomb ten meters in length! It was unbelievable, yet it was true

Andronikos (1997: 113)

The opening was planned for 8 November; a whole range of dignitaries were invited: the leader of the county council, the vice chancellor of the university, Andronikos's colleagues from his department, the head of the archaeological service in the area, the police, and many visitors (Andronikos 1997: 115–116). After a sleepless night, Andronikos (deploying an old trick used by grave robbers) ordered the removal of a stone from the roof, and then, in a moment that cited Howard Carter and his discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, in a moment with clear cinematic connotations, Andronikos, deeply shaken, shone from the opening his torch light into the tomb; after the initial disappointment as part of the tomb was empty, he shed his light on to a plethora of golden, silver, and other finds, weapons, a marble sarcophagus, and many more. Then he stood up

and gave the torch to a whole series of people in a strict hierarchical order, starting with his assistants (Andronikos 1997: 119). He afterwards went down into the tomb for a first inspection, and after its photographic recording, he returned with his assistants to start the removal of the finds. Another highly emotive moment came when he opened the sarcophagus to find a golden chest: in it the burnt cremated bones of the dead were finally revealed: Andronikos was overcome with religious piety and emotion, standing in front of the chest, 'like a Christian, in front of the holy relics of a saint' (Andronikos 1997: 142). In the following days he used to stay up all night to look at some small ivory heads from the tomb; he was convinced from the start that two of them depicted Philip II and his son Alexander. The first time he saw them in the tomb he 'lost it; I put them down. I held myself with my two hands and looked at them again; I am not a kid anymore to start screaming, but inside me I could hear trumpets...' (1997: 151). One night, while he was awake looking at them, his landlord and his wife woke up. They made coffee:

When Kostas saw the head of 'Philip', without any hesitation told me 'This is Philip, right?' When I asked him how did he know, he told me that he had seen him in an encyclopaedia... For me, this recognition, from a simple man with a clear mind and without any preconception, was the best confirmation that my identification was right

Andronikos (1997: 158)

As noted earlier, Andronikos would often appeal to the judgement and wisdom of the 'simple' people, who were communicating with the ancestors in an uncomplicated, and thus more 'authentic', way than the educated scholars. But his landlord had a different recollection of this episode, as he narrated it, almost 20 years afterwards. In an interview with a newspaper, he would say:

We went to bed that night. He was very unsettled, and did not catch any sleep at all. At 2.30 in the morning, he woke me up. 'Wake up Kosta, I want to show you something,' he said... We went in the kitchen. On the table he had some finds laid out. He showed them to me, and he said, with some hesitation, that the tomb must be Philip's tomb. He was sure about it, studying the finds for 5–6 days.¹⁸

¹⁸ Interview with K.P. in the newspaper *Eleftherotipia*, 6 June 1996, with the title 'Thirty years with Andronikos'.

A few days later, on 17 November, only 3 days before the national elections for the new parliament, the Ministry of Culture released a short press report on the finds, exciting public imagination; rumours were already circulating widely, that Andronikos had found the tomb of Philip of Macedonia. Andronikos, now convinced of this identification, cancelled a newspaper interview: he had decided to address the whole nation directly, and not show a preference to the newspaper in which he was a columnist. That announcement to the nation came on 24 November, at Thessaloniki, in a press conference organized by the university. That morning, he spoke to the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, telling them what he was planning to say; both of them encouraged him to make the announcement, and despite his reservations, to suggest that the tomb was Philip's (Andronikos 1997: 172–3). The sensational discovery captivated audiences instantly, and the news travelled the world over. Newspapers and magazines reported the finds extensively and the whole world heard for the first time about Vergina, about modern Greek Macedonia, about Macedonian tombs. Invitations to speak and publish, and interviews followed. The following year, now with a huge financial support thanks to the intervention by the Prime Minister, Andronikos found another smaller tomb; a destroyed one followed in 1980 (Andronikos 1984: 83). In 1982, the finding of a theatre was proclaimed by Andronikos to be the theatre in which 'Philip was murdered, and in which Alexander was proclaimed King of Macedonians, to lead Hellenism to the utmost ends of the Orient' (Andronikos 1991).

Andronikos had realized his dream, he had fleshed out the dry bones of ancient past, as known from the classical authors; finally, he had offered to the people of northern Greece and to Greeks as a whole, their own dream, a dream that, as was to become obvious a few years later, they badly needed. Finding the richest tomb ever found in Greece was not enough. Finding the bones of an historical figure was not enough. Naming the dead was crucial. In Greece names matter. In Macedonia names matter even more. To name is to know. To name is to recognize as familiar. To name is to accept the named person in the national family. That is what Andronikos was doing. Despite his reservations and worries, despite his scholarly instincts which made him emphasize that it is the dating of the

tomb that is more important than the identification of the dead, he always maintained that the dead was identified, the dead was named, the dead was Philip II. Naming is resurrecting.

In welcoming the named dead into the national family, Andronikos continued a long tradition of personal naming as resurrection, studied extensively by ethnographers.¹⁹ Sutton (1997; 1998) discusses how the naming of offspring after their grandparents (or after a beloved deceased sibling) in Kalymnos becomes a device through which a somatic continuity with the past is maintained. The sound of the familiar name provides another auditory, sensory connection. Moreover, the entanglement of the naming of offspring with land inheritance (whereby grandchildren inherit the land of the grandparent they are named after) roots that sense of continuity and history to the land, the earth, and the territory. The links with the national-archaeological process, and with this case in particular, are obvious. The land where the now named dead was found, one who bore a Greek name like the vast majority of the present-day inhabitants of the area, was the inheritance that the named dead left to his national family.

THE MONUMENTALIZATION OF THE DREAM

I visited Vergina for the first time on 29 September 2002. First the 'palace', a few hundred metres outside the modern village, and then the 'royal tombs'. The contrast was phenomenal. The 'palace' had one or two relatively simple panels of information and a guard's kiosk. 'Megali Toumba' welcomes visitors with an impressive sign proclaiming it a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of only a handful in Greece (this applies to the whole site, not just to the 'royal tombs', yet this is the only place where I saw it exhibited) (cf. Pantzou, forthcoming, for further analysis). As you enter the huge iron gate, you face a large courtyard with a guard's kiosk on the left, and opposite, the impressive shelter-museum (Fig. 4.6). Of course

¹⁹ Cf., for example, the work of Sutton (1997, 1998) and the earlier work by Kenna (1976), Herzfeld (1982b), and Vernier (1984, 1991).



Fig. 4.6 Overall view of the crypt-museum at Vergina.

this is not the museum that the Vergionioti were fighting for. In 1984, they started taking a much more dynamic stance. The workmen went on strike and with banners confronted Andronikos and demanded a museum where all the impressive finds, still in the Thessaloniki Museum, would be housed (Andronikos 1997: 226). In August 1988, they occupied the site and stopped Andronikos's work. A few days afterwards, the Central Archaeological Council (KAS) decided to establish a museum in Vergina, although its nature and the quantity of finds that were to be housed there were not clear. The locals were adamant. Their demand was for a large museum, to house *all* the finds from Vergina.²⁰ The local community demanded its due from the share of international publicity and furore that the 1977 discovery brought. Now that the name Vergina is world renowned, it is only fair, the villagers said, that the local community should benefit from it. In the end, the present shelter-museum

²⁰ See an article with the title 'The denouncement of Professor Andronikos' in *Ethnos* (12 September 1988) and also Doris (1988). An interesting reaction is that of D. Martos (1993), a local intellectual, who compared the transfer of the Vergina antiquities to Thessaloniki Museum to the removal of the Elgin marbles (see Chapter 7), calling the finds 'Vergineia' (he described them as 'symbols for the emancipation of a local society') thus making a clear linguistic link with the marbles, often called in Greek *Elgineia*. According to Martos, who condemned Andronikos for being too 'soft' on the earlier colonial archaeology (e.g. the excavations by the Frenchman L. Heuzey in the mid-nineteenth century), the Vergina story is another form of internal imperialism. Martos, however, develops a further argument: he claims that the local people of the area, the inhabitants of the villages of Koutles and Barbes, knew of the existence of several of those antiquities, they were part of their daily lives, and had an almost worshipping relationship with them. The immigrants from Asia Minor who settled in the area after 1922, he continues, had no deep connections with the land and its antiquities. But it was the archaeologists who disrupted the direct relationship of people with antiquities, making them instead meaningless stones or commercial products.



Fig. 4.7 The entrance of the crypt-museum at Vergina.

opened in 1997; it is not what the locals were fighting for, yet it seems to have prevented any further protests on their part.

The shelter is built in the style of a crypt (cf. Dimakopoulos 1997), and certainly the impression it gives to the visitor is that of entering an underground tomb or catacomb (Fig. 4.7). To the people who have visited many archaeological sites in Greece there is clearly no site like this. As you approach the cement, mound-like shelter covered in grass, you see the entrance and the exit, with their sloping floor, all covered in dressed poros stone, and atmospherically lit. The guard at the entrance in a formal suit, more like the concierge of an expensive hotel, accentuates the otherness of the site within the archaeological sites in Greece. At the entrance a plaque commemorates the inauguration of the works at the shelter by the then Prime Minister K. Mitsotakis. The guard, very proud to be there, says that around 300,000 people visit the site every year (in fact, according to data from the Ministry of Culture the number is much lower than that). During the winter, according to him, there are many Greek people, and mostly schools who come on organized visits. So 'What about the museum?', I asked. 'Do you really believe that there will

ever be a museum in Vergina? That all the finds will be returned here?', was his answer. He then reminisced about Andronikos as he remembered him, when he himself used to work at the excavations: how he had very good relationships with the village, but that during the excavation he was very strict and imposing, and that there was not much place for disagreements.

In the interior, four hexagonal rooms house some of the finds, including the cremated bones thought to be those of Philip. The visitor can proceed through two staircases down to the 'tomb of Philip' itself, and the 'tomb of the Prince', found in 1978. The whole space is dark ('too dark', some visitors complain). According to one of the archaeologists responsible for the exhibition, this is 'Museum-Mausoleum, dedicated to the memory of certain people' (Kottaridi 2003: 47). It seems that its creators want to elicit one main reaction from the visitors, and that is religious piety and respectful fear (*déos*), along with national emotive sentiments. It seems that these were the emotions that at least some of the visitors left the shelter with, as indicated by the visitors' book:

Shaken up with excitement, religious fear (*déos*); the spirit of Philip met the spirit of Andronikos, and this museum of unique conception was born [S.T.K., 28/9/02]

Shaken up with excitement, religious fear, in this place, at the tombs of Macedonia and of Philip II. [D.K.]

These are the feats of Hellenes. [27/9/02]

History makes us proud, that God blessed us to be the true descendants of the Hellenes. [P., 27/09/02]

Light, Civilization, Hellenicity.

Nice idea but it will turn bad. Too dark, a bit more light would have helped the visitors.

Kottaridi (2000), cites some other visitors' comments that are indicative of the reception of these finds by some audiences:

Thank God for the lovers of dreams. For us, the new generations, the presence of Manolis Andronikos is the hope for our own historic future. [female schoolchild, no date]

I felt that I have visited the tombs of relatives; I left no flowers, only fragments of myself. [30/6/98]

What if life is short, in here I found immortality. [23/8/00]

If there is death, in here it was defeated. [16/8/00]

Not only is the notion of dreaming not lost in visitors' reception of the site, but they also embrace the experiential encounter with the dead that Andronikos advocated, the feeling that biographical, historical, and national time had become one: the dead of the 'Megali Toumba' are not people who died thousands of years ago, they are relatives in the national family, they have names and faces, their bones are there to be touched, adorned, venerated. The visitors, together with the honoured ancient (Philip) and recent dead (Andronikos), feel that they are all participants in the eternal life of the nation.

The figure of Andronikos is omnipresent in the crypt-museum. Not only in the large portrait flanked by texts from his books near the entrance, but throughout. Many finds are accompanied by some of his most evocative passages, instead of interpretative text, referring to that moment of destiny, the moment of discovery. In a separate space, a 24-minute video called 'Due to Memory' is shown; it deals with the death and the funeral of the king, with afterlife, memory, and the pain of separation (cf. Kottaridi 2002: 527–538). As with everything else in this exhibition, it is moving and evocative, yet it contains almost nothing on the society of the time, nothing on the historical background. And of course, the story in the information panels, and in the guides and leaflets, is that the visitors experience the 'royal tomb' of Philip II.

Thus the dream that started half a century ago was monumentalized. It has become not simply a concrete material reality but a national monument which merged the memory and legacy of Andronikos, the national commemoration of Philip II and of Alexander, and the need for national self-reaffirmation of a region (Greek Macedonia, northern Greece), and of the Hellenic imagined community overall. To complete the process of monumentalization, a bronze statue of Philip II was erected in one of the most central locations at Thessaloniki (Fig. 4.8), despite the fact that he had no link with the city, which was founded by one of his successors (cf. Faklaris 2000). A new national hero, Philip, was now canonized, to the extent that when in autumn 2002 a scholar suggested at an academic conference that Philip may have been killed by one of his male lovers, the 'sacrilege' was reported in the press and caused an



Fig. 4.8 A bronze statue of Philip II, erected at Thessaloniki, near the White Tower, on the seafront.

angry reaction by a small crowd who stormed into the lecture room to protest.²¹ Monumentalization requires a sanitized, heavily remade version of the past.²²

²¹ Information from the website <http://www.q.co.za/2001/2002/10/18-alexander.html> (accessed 22 October 2002). See *Kathimerini*, 10 October 2002; see also the article by M. Tiverios in *To Vima* (27 October 2002) and Kokkinidou (2005: 45–47).

²² For an academic makeover of Philip, see Loukopoulou and Hatzopoulos (1980).

Not that there were no attempts to resist that monumentalization;²³ even from the first moment of the announcement of Andronikos's finds in November 1977, there were doubts by prominent archaeologists in the region about some of the assertions, especially in relation to the identification of the dead (cf. Andronikos 1997: 178). At the same time, in international journals several specialists expressed serious reservations about the dating of the tombs and the identification of the dead (cf. Faklaris 1994 for references). Andronikos responded to some of these objections (1980a,b, 1984), but the problem has not been settled. That early debate remained largely an academic one, as Andronikos himself, the majority of the Greek archaeological community, many other archaeologists worldwide, the Greek state, and most of the Greek public, seemed to have been convinced. A final detailed publication of the finds of 'Megali Toumba' is still lacking. More recently, however, the debate has been ignited again, and this time it is Greek archaeologists who are raising objections and doubts. A detailed and final publication of finds from a similar tomb (Themelis and Touratsoglou 1997) dated them later than Andronikos had dated his, and by implication the tomb cannot be that of 'Philip', but of a successor.²⁴ Furthermore, a study of the wall painting from the façade of that tomb by an Athens University professor (Palagia 2000) reached similar conclusions: the author suggested that the theme of the painting (the hunt scene) is an eastern influence introduced to Macedonia after the Alexandrian invasions, and thus after the death of Philip. She further raises the issue that the iconography in the tomb was more likely to have operated as political propaganda, by portraying and thus evoking the glory of ancestors such as Philip and Alexander. The author of the article gave an interview in the Sunday paper *To Vima* to explain her position, thus causing a furore from the current excavators of

²³ A different criticism, on grounds of theory and epistemology, came from A. Zois, who coined the term, 'Vergina syndrome', to describe the emphasis on the impressive find at the expense of archaeological and historical interpretation (see Zois 1987); that critique had little impact, as it was first published in a university handbook and then in a small, left-wing political and cultural magazine (*To Andri*).

²⁴ The book, reviewed in *To Vima* by M. Tiverios (1998), a professor at Thessaloniki University, discussed the importance of the finds in relation to Vergina, but fell short of exploring their further implications.

Vergina and guardians of Andronikos's legacy, who rejected the suggestions and claimed that, despite what the newspaper said, the public can still 'keep its dream'.²⁵ A more dramatic challenge, however, came from 'within': P. Faklaris, a member of the Vergina team and one of Andronikos's assistants, claimed in an academic article in 1994 that Aegae, the sacred capital of ancient Macedonia, was not at Vergina but in a location more than 20 km north-west of it. The article, which was reported in the Greek press,²⁶ shook the Vergina team, but it seems only temporarily:

the importance of the archaeological site of Vergina appeared for a moment to have been weakened from inside, when its identification with the old capital of the Macedonian kingdom was disputed. Nevertheless, the impressive finds offered by the many years-long archaeological research and primarily the intense royal presence in the area, as revealed by the cemetery and the agora of the ancient city, attain their historical meaning only through the acceptance of its identification with Aegae... It is thus necessary to return, after our strengthened, expanded knowledge of the area, especially after the severe criticism that Faklaris's view had received, and reconsider the dating of the impressive building...

Saatsoglou-Paliadeli (2001: 547)

The debate over the location of the ancient capital of Macedonia and the identity of the dead of 'Megali Toumba' is on-going,²⁷ but it seems that these academic challenges have not managed to stop the work of monumentalization at Vergina, let alone change the public's perception of it. More serious than the location of the capital or the identification of the dead, of course, is the ethnic identity of the

²⁵ See the interview of O. Palagia by H. Kiose in *To Vima* (12 July 1998), and responses: Saatsoglou-Paliadeli (1998); letter by the director of Vergina excavations, S. Drougou in *To Vima* (26 July 1998); and in support of Palagia, Faklaris (1998). Saatsoglou-Paliadeli published an extensive account of the painting where she responds to the various scholars who placed the originally suggested dating and theme of the painting into doubt (Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 2004).

²⁶ See, for example, *Eleftherotypia* (15 April 1995); for reactions in academic journals see, for example, Hammond (1997) and Hatzopoulos (1996); cf. Saatsoglou-Paliadeli (1996).

²⁷ For example, in early 2005, P. Faklaris delivered at the Athens Archaeological Society a well-attended, high-profile, and much-publicized speech on the location of the capital of ancient Macedonia, repeating his main argument; the speech triggered a spate of counter lectures and responses by Andronikos's followers and stewards of his legacy (J. Papadopoulos, pers. comm.).

people who lived in Macedonia in classical times (broadly defined), that is their own self-perception of identity, *vis-à-vis* the people in the south. This issue, much less debated than the identity of the dead following the discovery, became more crucial in the following years, and especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the dispute with Yugoslav Macedonia intensified and reached its peak. During that dispute, Andronikos and Vergina played a key role. He, along with the vast majority of archaeologists, took it for granted that Macedonians were Greek, based on inscriptions at Vergina that mentioned Greek names. For them, therefore, shared writing and (by implication) language meant shared self-identification and ethnic identity, despite the plentiful literary evidence that points to the opposite.²⁸ Vergina will again become the focus and Andronikos will play a key role in this battle. It was a major ritual and cultural battle, with episodes such as the one in Australia in 1988, when Slavic Macedonians demanded that the texts in the travelling exhibition 'Macedonia: from the Mycenaean times to the death of Alexander the Great' should be written in the Macedonian language too (Doris 1988).²⁹ Andronikos responded by writing in his newspaper column (1988b):

After they baptized their state Macedonia and its inhabitants Macedonians, they thought it very simple and expedient to appropriate the history of this people who lived in northern Greece 2500 years ago, when the Slavic people they themselves originate from, were still in the remotest Asian steppes

This is the moment when the so-called 'star or sun of Vergina', the six-ray symbol that was found on the golden chest, a well-known, widely used motif in ancient Greek art, became known as the crest of the Macedonian royal dynasty, the bone of contention and the unofficial national crest of Greece (and the official one for FYROM).³⁰ This is also

²⁸ See, for example, Badian (1982), Green (1989), and Borza (1996).

²⁹ According to Doris (1988), this episode prompted the Greek government to change the name of the Ministry of Northern Greece to the Ministry of Macedonia-Thrace.

³⁰ A couple of years later, in 1995, Greece claimed an international patent for the 'Vergina star' (*Eleftherotypia*, 30 July 1995) and in the same year the Greek government refused to send representatives to commemorate the Holocaust at Auschwitz because at the ceremony there was going to be a FYROM delegation with their national flag, featuring that same star (article by N. Kotaridis, entitled 'The nationalism of Vergina', in the left-wing newspaper, *I Epohi*, 29 January 1995); see Brown (1994), on the politics of identity in relation to this specific symbol.

the moment when Andronikos, Vergina, and the Hellenicity of Macedonia merged in the public consciousness, and many media reports on the dispute with FYROM featured a photograph of Andronikos along with some of the Vergina finds. A special booklet on Macedonia (with a portrait of Philip on the cover and the Vergina finds prominently illustrated) was produced in 1992 and was distributed to every school and every pupil in the country,³¹ and in the same year the official postage stamp depicting Andronikos among the Vergina finds was issued (see Fig. 4.3). A year before, the University of Thessaloniki organized a conference on the Macedonian tombs with Andronikos as keynote speaker. The vice-chancellor of the university, announcing the conference to the newspapers, invited school teachers to attend so that they 'can see history re-emerging from the guts of the earth.'³² That conference was announced in the papers with titles such as 'The earth... responds to the forgers',³³ making a link with the dispute about the name.

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST AS SHAMAN

Mircea Eliade (1972: 51 and *passim*) has noted that in shamanism travel to the underworld is a key initiation ritual. Shamans possess abilities that allow them to mediate between different worlds, to participate in realms inaccessible to most people. If antiquity in Greece operates as a secular national religion, then Andronikos can be seen as a great shaman of that religion. He went down to the underworld the day that Orthodoxy celebrated the saints of the underworld. He entered the tomb in a ceremonial, stage-managed way, in an act that referenced not only the travel to the underworld (with its various mythological and epic connotations, from Persephone to Odysseus)

³¹ See *Eleftherotypia* (21 April 1992).

³² *Rizospastis* (the daily of the Communist Party of Greece; 1 June 1991). The title of the article is 'Of course it is Greek: new find by M. Andronikos proves the Hellenicity of Macedonia'.

³³ *Eleftheros Typos* (1 June 1991). Three years earlier, *To Vima* (11 December 1988) had a similar title 'The scholars agree: the spade of archaeologists proves the Hellenicity of Macedonia'.

but also Howard Carter and his discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamun. His was a journey of initiation and elevation to the status of a great shaman for the nation. Andronikos was the most appropriate person for that role, as he embodied modern Greek history and its charter myths: from the venerated classical past, to Byzantium (and Christianity) and the 'Great Idea' (and the associated wars, fights, and national sacrifices), to the tragic defeat and 'uprooting' from Asia Minor, and the new roots in northern Greece. A real shaman who could not only possess a direct, physical, intimate, embodied, and personal link with the ancestors, who could 'see with his touch' but also someone who, after returning to the above world, could communicate that intimate knowledge he acquired to the whole nation, his real audience, and not simply to archaeologists or scholars.

Andronikos was 'uprooted' but in his new homeland in Greek Macedonia, the homeland that he shared with many of the 'uprooted' from Asia Minor, he was determined to plant new roots, not only for him but for all his fellow Asia Minor immigrants too. That was what he was doing: he went down that tomb not to find roots, but to plant them. 'The village had no history', he said of Vergina (1997: 21), erasing thus with these five words the presence (and past) of people who inhabited the hamlets of Koutles and Barbes, and who, judging from the names of these hamlets, may have spoken their own non-Greek language;³⁴ these toponyms had already been erased from the map by the local bishop, who renamed them Vergina³⁵ in 1922, when the immigrants from Anatolia, Andronikos among them, arrived. He had to produce history not only for the village but also for the region of northern Greece as a whole, annexed to the state of Greece only in 1913. And he did. Enough of the dominance of Athens, of the south, of the fifth century. Enough of the gold of Mycenae, the whiteness of the Parthenon, the fame of Olympia and Delphi: northern Greece could now boast the richest tomb ever to have been excavated in Greece, a world-famous site and

³⁴ On the state-sponsored suppression of Slavic languages in Greek Macedonia during the first half of the twentieth century (and in some cases, up to the present day), see Kostopoulos (2002) and Carabott (2005); on the 'Hellenization' of 'foreign' toponyms in Greek Macedonia see Kostopoulos (2002: 139–143).

³⁵ The name Vergina originates from a local legendary queen, who, according to local tradition, drowned herself in a river rather than surrender to the Ottomans.

discovery, a much more impressive iconographic illustration of the ancient authors than the south could produce. To the south, he juxtaposed the north; to Athens, he juxtaposed Thessaloniki; to the Acropolis, Vergina; to the fifth century, the fourth century, the era of the Macedonian kings. Northern Greece could not be ignored any longer. Until then, and despite the emphasis placed on it by regimes such as the Metaxas dictatorship in the late 1930s (see Chapter 5), the ancient Macedonia of Philip and Alexander could not compete with classical Athens, the Parthenon and the fifth century in the national discourse and imagination. Thanks to him, and to the historical contingencies that were to follow, Macedonia was transformed from otherness to national self-hood, from a peripheral role it came to occupy centrality.³⁶ Thanks to him, northern Greece will enjoy, for years to come, an unprecedented archaeological renaissance (Kotsakis 1998).³⁷ Andronikos was a historical constructionist (cf. Faubion 1993). He dreamed of a new past for the region and for the country, and he materialized it. He single-handedly wrote the script, produced, stage-managed, and played a protagonistic role in the drama that would re-enact the symbolic, *material* incorporation of Macedonia and northern Greece into the national imagination and psyche. At the same time he rewrote the script of the national narrative; national imagination through him was not simply reproduced, but was produced anew. Indigenous Hellenism is now re-enacted in a new, twentieth and twenty-first century version. And most will be immensely thankful, not simply the expedient

³⁶ On the otherness of Macedonia in the archaeological imagination, especially with reference to prehistory, see Andreou *et al.* (1996).

³⁷ The funding, and in general the government support, for this unprecedented wave of archaeological activity following the Vergina discoveries was obviously directly linked to their deployment in the cultural and national 'wars' that were taking place with other Balkan countries, and mainly FYROM. The first conference (part of an annual series) on archaeological activity in Macedonia and Thrace was opened by the Minister for Macedonia and Thrace (and well known for his extreme nationalist views) S. Papatthemelis, who remarked in his speech that the archaeological finds, beyond their aesthetic and cultural value, were important as the 'most valid interpreter of the substance and uniqueness of Hellenic history... We need this historical function of art more than ever, so that we can respond to all this, internationally orchestrated, attempted falsification of our history' (*To Arhaiologiko Ergo sti Makedonia kai ti Thraki*, 1, 1987, p. xvi).

politicians but the vast majority of people (Andronikos 1997). And the state, other archaeologists, the media, and many others made sure that his dream became a monument for present and future veneration. The social and political contingencies, especially in relation to the Macedonian conflict, contributed further to the monumentalization of that dream and its continuing veneration.

As for the ironies, these were largely unnoticed and undiscussed, at least in the broader public arena: the radical transformation of ancient Macedonians from the enemies of Hellenism to heroes and grand icons; the veneration of kings and royals in a heritage that prides itself in having invented democracy; the appreciation and conspicuous display of hugely ostentatious artefacts and material culture by an ideology which prioritizes the spiritual and the ideal; the possibility that this wealth could be (if the scholars who date the main tomb after the Alexandrian conquests are correct) the loot from the 'barbaric orient', that is, the oppositional entity that ancient Hellenism was constructed against. Finally, the possibility that (if the latter hypothesis on the date is correct) much of the decoration and iconography of the tomb could be political propaganda, or to put it more appropriately, the construction of a politically expedient, collective memory and ancestry by the descendants of Philip II: a phenomenon not unlike the present-day production of national memory based on these artefacts. Irony and national imagination do not seem to be good bedfellows.

This story is not simply a key moment in the remaking of the Hellenic national myth in the twentieth century. Its lessons go far beyond the Greek context. After all, this is a case of the production of the national-archaeological record, not simply its recovery; it is a parable on the key role of the archaeologist in this process of production, in the materialization and objectification of the national discourse. This process was not a matter of the state deliberately distorting the past, nor of the archaeologist calculatedly serving a certain agenda. Andronikos was encouraged by the political leadership to overcome his reservations and declare the tomb as belonging to Philip II (and his excavations were amply rewarded financially by the state), but he deeply believed in his sacred mission and his destiny as the shaman of the nation. His project embodied the dreams of thousands of people, in fact of the vast majority of the nation. It was

through him that the Hellenic national myth, in its remoulded form, was expressed, in him all facets of national history converged and found a voice; it was through him that the national dream was embodied and materialized, simultaneously from above and from below.

Yet, there is another key aspect that this case helps illuminate: that is, the role of archaeology as a key device of western modernity (cf. Thomas 2004a). While recent discussions have been instrumental in elucidating this important genealogical link, the story of Andronikos (in common with many of the case studies in this book) shows that the statement that archaeology is a project thoroughly situated within western modernity needs some qualification. The archaeologist in this case participates in a set of discourses and practices that can be seen as more pre-modern than modern: the sacralization of the past, shamanism, the process of dreaming as a way of relating to history, the abolition of temporal distance, the embodied encounters with the dead. As argued in the previous chapter, national imagination incorporates and reworks pre-modern world views and ideas; likewise, national archaeology seems to participate in both the modern and the pre-modern realms, fusing notions of objectivity, evidence, bounded ethnic communities, and linearity, with cyclical notions of time, religious feelings, and multi-sensory bodily encounters with the past. While recent discussions on the embodied reception of the past and the mnemonic role of materiality are informed by recent phenomenological writings (sometimes classed as part of the post-modern turn in theory), Andronikos reached these insights through another route, a route that relates to the past in a more personal, physical way, a route that abolishes temporal distance and constructs direct genealogical links with the ancients; in other words, a route that relates more to the way people perceived the past before the advent of modernity, with its notions of linearity and objectivism. Interestingly, Seremetakis (1994b) has compared Andronikos's work at Vergina to the practices of secondary burial in present-day Mani, where the tactile contact with the bones of the dead relatives and the accompanying embodied rituals of mourning, purification, and re-assemblage, establish a somatic link with the personal and short-term historical past. Andronikos was, in a sense, performing an exhumation for a secondary burial, a burial that was announced by him (when he responded to the criticism that he disturbed the dead)

and was carried out by his successors in the shelter that operates more like a burial crypt than a museum. Both secondary burials, the ones by the women at Mani and the one by Andronikos at Vergina, constitute embodied and sensory *ceremonies of authentication* (Seremetakis 1994b: 143; emphasis in the original), the first of the biographical-familial links, and the second of familial links of the national imagination.

This is not to say that Andronikos or other archaeologists in Greece lived in another time, outside modernity, for this would have not only been factually incorrect (as noted before, Andronikos followed many of the modernist conventions in his work), but also ethically and politically suspect, a well-known strategy of the colonial imagination (cf. Fabian 1983). It simply means that the genealogy of the archaeological is more complicated than we thought. The writings on the history of western modernity need to come to terms with the multiplicity of ways in which the modern, both at the centre and the peripheries, has been interwoven with pre-modern and even post-modern phenomena.