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Yannis Hamilakis and Eleaṇa Yalouri **Sacralising the Past**

Cults of archaeology in modern Greece¹

Abstract

The paper discusses the religious undertones classical Greek heritage is vested with in Greece. Drawing on the argument that nationalism and religion need to be seen as similar cultural systems, we show that classical antiquities have become powerful emotive icons for performances of national memory in the process of imagining the *topos* of the Hellenic nation. This process is open to all social actors and not simply to State bureaucrats and intellectuals. We offer an explanation of this phenomenon by examining the position of antiquity in the construction of the imagined community of the Hellenic nation, as well as the ways by which Orthodoxy and classical antiquity became enmeshed in the formation of Hellenic national identity. We finally explore some of the implications that this phenomenon has for archaeology as a discipline and as social practice.

Keywords

archaeology; modern Greece; nationalism; religion

Introduction

Recently we have experienced the dusk of the era of political innocence in archaeology. More and more people realise that we can no longer ignore the political implications of archaeological work. We cannot underestimate archaeologists' significant contribution to the social construction of the past and its prominent role in the negotiation of identity roles and power relations in modern societies. While the literature on politics and archaeology is becoming more and more voluminous, the problematisation of the subject is still underdeveloped. Many archaeologists still adopt an objectifying position and a positivist approach which views the politics of archaeology and the past simply in terms of abuse of the empirical record and distortion of 'objective' past reality. The recent explosion of books and articles on nationalism and archaeology is a case in point (e.g. Atkinson et al. 1996; Díaz-Andreu and Champion (eds) 1996; Kohl 1998; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell 1998; cf. Hamilakis 1996; Jones 1997, 11–12). While some studies develop a sophisticated argument about nationalist discourses and the past, the majority present a historiographic account of 'abuses' of the archaeological record by states and nationalist intellectuals. In many archaeological writings nationalism is treated as an isolated, fixed political programme and at best as a 'false' ideological structure, rather than as a complex cultural and ideological system (cf. Fox 1990; Kapferer 1989). Such a viewpoint fails to recognise that the nationalist use of the past is a complex phenomenon which is linked to other essentialist ideologies and practices such as imperialism and colonialism (cf. Hamilakis 1998), and involves not only State bureaucrats and intel-

lectuals but all social agents. A plain historiographic account, however useful and necessary, might miss the most interesting aspect of the argument: the appropriation and internalisation of the nationalist discourse by social groups and individuals and its re-deployment in the poetics and politics of everyday life (cf. Comaroff 1995, 250).

Modern Greece is an interesting case in this respect. Only recently has it come under scrutiny and investigation by archaeologists, despite the volume of works by historians and anthropologists. We have argued elsewhere that the case is a rather complicated one and resists any simplistic discourses (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996). We proposed that antiquity in modern Greece operates as 'symbolic capital' (Bourdieu 1977, 1990) and as 'authoritative resource' (Giddens 1984) which is open to various readings and uses by the state, as well as by different interest groups and individuals (cf. Herzfeld 1991). In this paper, we investigate one aspect of this particular argument and some of its implications for Greek archaeological research and for modern Greek society. We offer some ideas for the interpretation of the phenomenon by discussing some ideological characteristics of nationalism in general and of Greek nationalism in particular. In doing so, we touch upon many complex issues concerning the politics of archaeology, the past in the present, 'heritage', as well as archaeological, historical and anthropological issues specific to the Greek context. Here we only attempt to elucidate the aspects most relevant to our argument; a more general critical consideration of the above issues is beyond the scope of this paper.

Antiquities as artefacts of secular religion in modern Greece

The official rhetoric surrounding antiquities in modern Greece is often charged with religious connotations: antiquity is referred to as 'sacred heritage' whereas the common metonymy for the ultimate specimen of Greek classical antiquity, the Athenian Acropolis, is 'the sacred rock'. The same adjective, 'sacred', is often used to describe other important archaeological monuments and sites. All antiquities belong to the State by law, and regulations concerning private collections are strict compared with those of other countries. One of the early public documents of the newly founded Greek State, a directive issued in 1829 by Panagiotis Anagnostopoulos (the Commissioner of Ilis in the Peloponnese), is revealing in underlining the importance of collecting and preserving antiquities:

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These [antiquities] awake the spirit of modern Hellenes. They remind them of ancestral brilliance and glory and motivate them to imitate it. These [antiquities] convey honour to the Nation. These [antiquities], honoured by wise Europe and daily sought after by travellers, reveal their value; and it is as if they are saying to [the Hellenes] 'you should not ignore the heirlooms of your ancestors! They have assisted you and it is your duty to respect them because they are sacred and they belong to you and they offer you honour and dignity' (Petrakos 1982, 112; our translation).

Legal direct financial transactions involving antiquities are unthinkable (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996) and commercialisation of the 'sacred heritage' is often condemned by intellectuals and the press. Georgios Oikonomos, secretary of the Archaeological Society of Athens (1924–1951), director of the State Archaeological Service (1933–1938), and professor of archaeology at the University of Athens (1938–1951) (Petrakos 1987b, 166), declared in 1936, during the preparations for the centennial celebrations of the Archaeological Society in Athens:

[These celebrations] should not simply be an intellectual gathering and a nice journey around this country. They should be a pilgrimage to the idea of high humanism that we especially need in these crucial moments of the world. Because Hellenic archaeology, gentlemen, is not a profession but a sacred mission (cited in Petrakos 1987b: 168; our translation).

More recently, religious terminology can be found in the writings of leading Greek archaeologists, such as Manolis Andronikos (1919–1992), the excavator of Vergina. Andronikos, has acquired the status of the 'national' archaeologist (Hamilakis 1999a) since his excavations in Greek Macedonia (cf. Kotsakis 1998; Silberman 1989, 12–29). He is the first Greek archaeologist who was honoured by being depicted on a stamp. Here follow some citations from some of his several newspaper articles. The first is related to the discussion over the restitution of the Parthenon (or 'Elgin') marbles to Greece (cf. Hamilakis 1999b with bibliography). The second refers to the finds from his excavations at Vergina, Greek Macedonia, where he claimed to have found the tomb of Philip II of Macedonia.

The 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; our translation).

I can assure you all that one day – I want 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 truly pious pilgrimage (Andronikos 1988; our translation).

Similar discourses are reproduced in some of Andronikos' academic writings. In another newspaper article referring to the impressive results of his excavations at Vergina, the excavator acknowledges the fact that the tomb assumed to be of Philip was found on the 8th of November, the day when 'the Orthodox church celebrates archangels Michael and Gabriel, the rulers of the Other world' (Andronikos 1987, 113). The association here (which is also made in his posthumously published autobiography; Andronikos 1997, 115) is quite interesting. What is implied is that the saints, who in the Greek Orthodox tradition are linked with the Underworld, might have intervened and led the archaeologist to discover such an important funerary monument (on the relationship between Orthodoxy and nationalism see below).

Museums and archaeological sites are often reminiscent of sacred locations and some critics have even associated them with churches (cf. Hourmouziadis 1984, 18). They demand formalised behaviour, seek to generate emotional reactions and mystify visitors with the presentation of isolated, fetishised artefacts. Museum guards consider themselves responsible for maintaining and safeguarding the silence of 'worship'. One of us was reminded of this quite recently during a guided tour with a group of archaeology students around the Archaeological Museum of Herakleion in Crete. The large group of students entered the first gallery of the museum loudly, only to be told off by the guard ('Keep quiet please, this is a museum!').

The association of visiting archaeological sites and museums with a pilgrimage has been noted by several researchers. The folklorist D. Loukatos writes about the place for pilgrimage *par excellence*, the Athenian Acropolis:

Visitors to archaeological sites and ruins are, in a sense pilgrimages [sic]; one glance at what happens everyday beneath the entrance to the Acropolis of Athens is adequate confirmation. The people climb toward it in silence; they look up reverently at the lofty height of the columns; then they stop, quite moved, before the sight of the Parthenon. When they reach it, they touch the marble with pious gentleness; they lean against the 'sacred' columns (a good chance for a photo); they meditate; then they descend its stairs, again in silence, to the adjacent museum, where another pilgrimage, to the statues of the well-dressed *Kores* [maidens] and the scenes from the frieze of the Parthenon, detains them. The whole visit is made in a magical and archaic atmosphere. Even people who know nothing of the history or the importance of the Acropolis let themselves be 'sanctified' by the simple fact that they have seen it (Loukatos 1978, 178).²

Moreover, perceptions of purity and pollution, which characterise many religious systems of thought, dominate behaviour towards antiquities and the past in general. Practices or things which violate the social order defined and structured by antiquities are considered impure, out of place, and should be erased (Douglas 1966). Let us illustrate the point with some examples. In 1925, a prominent Greek photographer with the pseudonym Nelly, known for her excellent photographs of archaeological sites took a series of photos the pseudonym of a naked female dancer, Mona Paiva, on the Athenian Acropolis. She did so with another dancer, Nicolska, a few years later (1929) (figure 1). These incidents were considered a grave offence, a sacrilege, and a row arose among archaeologists and journalists (Alexopoulos 1995, 151; Xanthakis 1988). In her recently published autobiography the photographer describes how archaeologists, intellectuals and journalists referred to these incidents as 'sacrilege of a sacred place' (Nelly 1989, 103). The 'frivolous' or even 'polluting' connotations of the naked body were perceived as a threat to the sanctity of the most important national monument.

Many years earlier, between 1836 and 1874, a large scale purification program took place at the Athenian Acropolis. Prior to the Greek war of Independence (1821–1829) apart from the classical period buildings on the site of the Acropolis (and of course, the earlier, less conspicuous remains) there was a plethora of later buildings – private houses, a Muslim mosque,

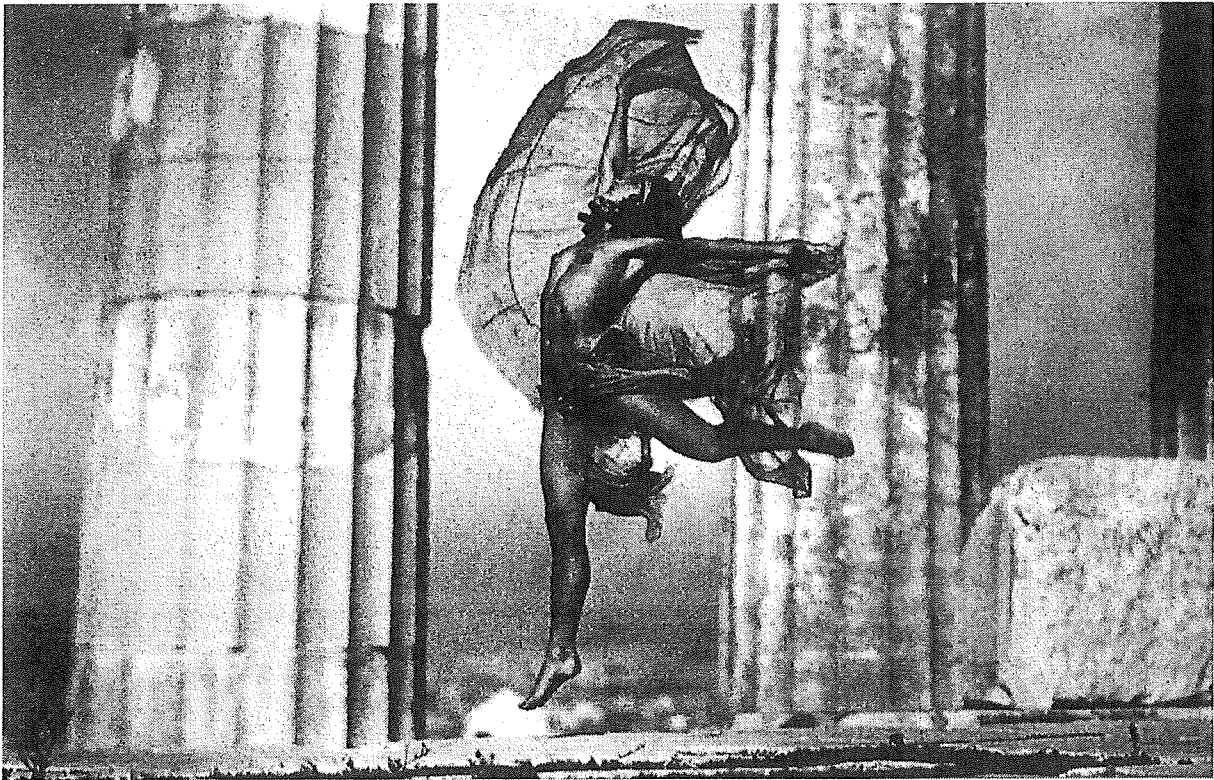


Figure 1. The dancer Nicolsca photographed by Nelly on the Parthenon in 1929 (reproduced from Philippidis 1994, fig. 17).

and a Frankish defensive tower, amongst others (figure 2). A few years after the establishment of the Greek state, one of the first Greek archaeologists, Kyriakos Pittakis, had most of the later buildings demolished without recording them. In 1874, the Archaeological Society of Athens, having the financial support of Schlieman, completed the demolition by pulling down the Frankish tower (MacNeal 1991; Petrakos 1987a, 46; 1987b, 97–98). The incident incited strong reactions in the press from some intellectuals. It is interesting that in their discourse, the supporters of the demolition emphasised the sanctity of the monument and its need to be ‘cleansed’. In 1877, L. Kaftanzoglou, one of the prominent members of the Archaeological Society, responding to a criticism concerning the Society’s action to destroy the Frankish Tower in search of more ancient Greek inscriptions, wrote: ‘in such a sacred place [as the Acropolis] we believe that it is impious and improper to maintain the dark relics of the passing waves of barbarity’ (cited in Petrakos 1987b, 98).

Another ‘purification act’ of a different kind, this time not through official intervention, was carried out during the early days of the Nazi occupation of Greece. On the night of the 31st of May 1941, two young Greeks removed the flag with the swastika from ‘the sacred rock’, the Athenian Acropolis. This event enjoyed wide publicity (figures 3–4) (it was broadcast worldwide), inspired one of Picasso’s drawings (figure 5) and is still acknowledged today. It is also considered as marking the beginning of the resistance struggle against the occupation forces in Greece. The Nazis reacted strongly because, as it is well known, they also drew heavily on imagery and conceptions from classical antiquity and had attached enormous symbolic significance to the monument (the occupation of Athens was officially marked with the hoisting of the swastika on the Acropolis) (Petrakos 1994, 111).

VEDUTA DEL CAST. D'ACROPOLIS DALLA PARTE DI MEZO GIORN^o

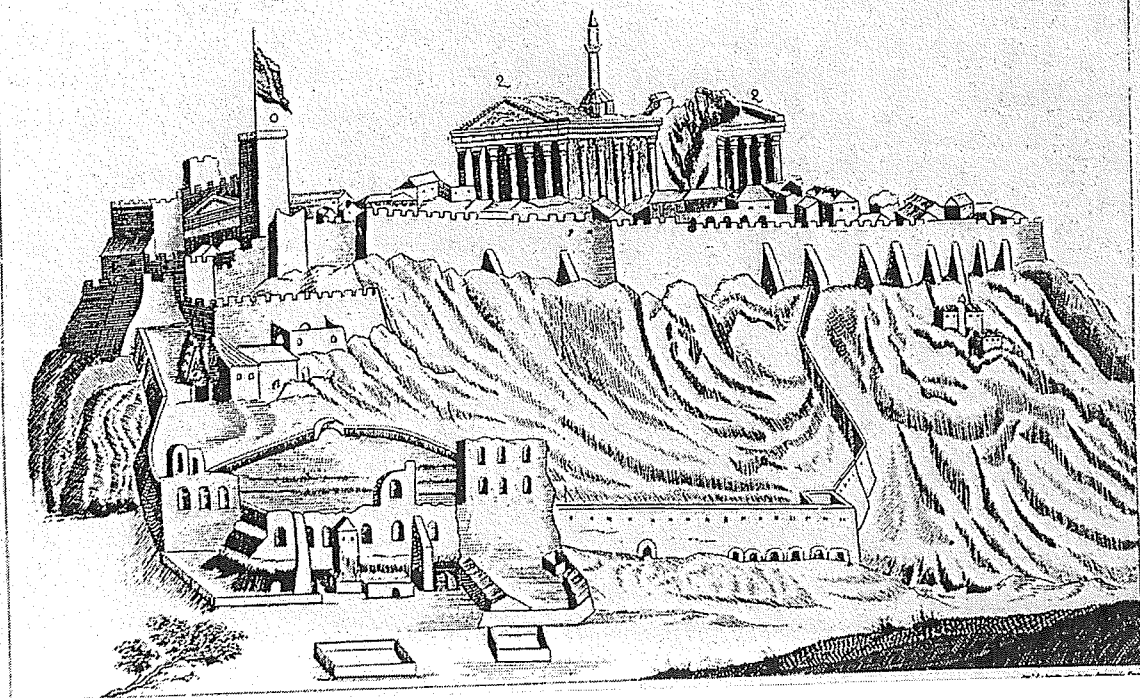


Figure 2. Drawing by the engineer Vereda (1687) showing some of the post-classical monuments of the Acropolis, such as the Frankish tower (with the flag) and the minaret (Cte De Laborde, *Athenes aux XV, XVI et XVII siecles*, v. 11, Paris 1854; reproduced from Petrakos 1987b, 106).



Figure 3. Artwork by Nikos Kastanakis published in the newspaper 'Eleftheria' (Freedom) on 25 March 1945, depicting the removal of the swastika from the Acropolis on 31 May 1941 (reproduced from Petrakos 1994, 31).

Figure 4. The event depicted in figure 3 in another drawing by A. Kontopoulos, painter of the National Museum at Athens (1941) (reproduced from Petrakos 1994, 116).

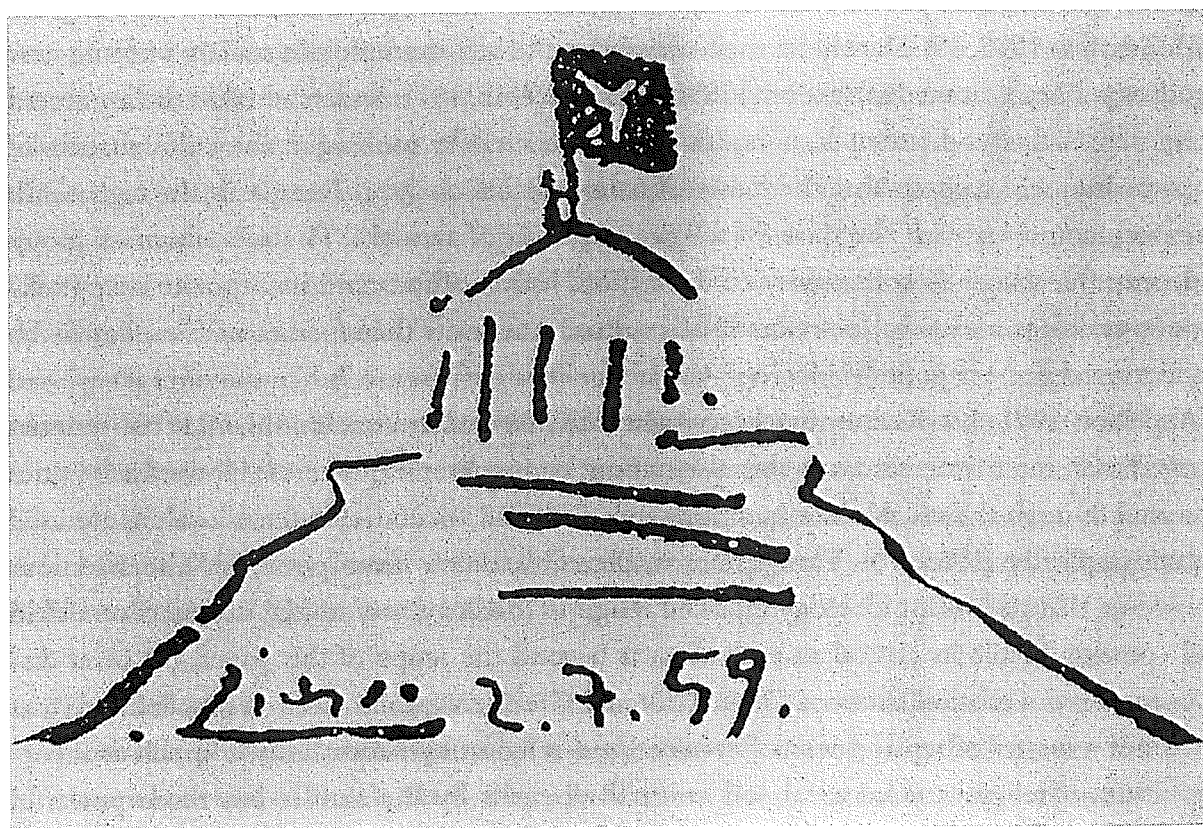
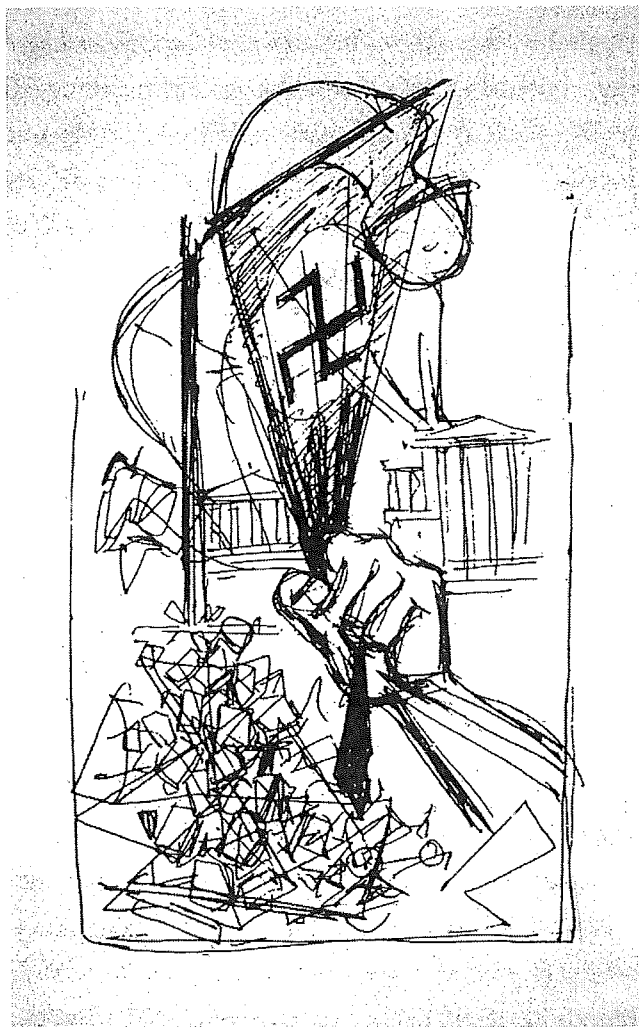


Figure 5. Drawing by P. Picasso (2 July 1959) dedicated to the event depicted in figures 3 and 4; the flag carries a pigeon: Acropolis as a symbol for peace (reproduced from Petrakos 1994, 111).

Arguably, the above discussion is based on highly selective material of diverse nature, ranging chronologically from the establishment of the modern Greek state in the 19th century to the present. It may thus run the risk of being read as contributing to the notion of timelessness in the attitudes towards the Greek past. This is a thesis that this article aims to demolish, as can be seen below. Certain attitudes towards antiquities have changed significantly during the last two centuries; this article, however, focuses on a fundamental phenomenon that seems to have persisted, although as it will be seen, its deployment in the politics of the past has been quite diverse. This arbitrary selection is a necessary abstraction that aims to demonstrate that the sacralisation of ancient monuments is a salient feature of official and non-official discourses on monuments, from the establishment of the Greek nation-state to the present. It will become obvious throughout this article that the sacralised monuments acquire diverse meanings and are entangled in multiple webs of signification, during their eventful lives.

Nationalism as secular religion

We believe that a satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon should be sought in the role of antiquity and the past in the construction of national identity. Many scholars have pointed out that nationalist imagining and consciousness have strong affinities with religious ideology (e.g. Anderson 1991, 10–12; Balakrishnan 1995; Balibar 1990, 348; Gellner 1983, 56; Herzfeld 1992, 34–39; Hobsbawm 1992, 67–68; Kapferer 1988; Llobera 1994a, 134–147; Mosse 1976; Veer and Lehmann 1999). Rousseau has called nationalism a ‘civic religion’ (Hobsbawm 1992, 85). Durkheim maintained that the best example of a society creating new gods was France immediately after 1789 (Llobera 1994b, 137). Anderson takes the argument one step further and attempts to explain this association by looking at the cultural roots of nationalism. He suggests that the dawn of nationalist ideology in Europe in the eighteenth century coincides with the dusk of religious systems of thought. The new form of group identity, the imagined community of the nation, had to absorb and incorporate many religious concepts and ritual practices. Nationalism, Anderson therefore concludes, has to be understood not as a political ideology but as a cultural system much like the ones it replaced (Anderson 1991, 12). Kedourie, who has also reached similar conclusions, adds two important dimensions; first that with this association, nationalism exploits the powerful loyalties created through the much older traditional religions and, second, that these loyalties are used quite implicitly (1966, 76). Their effect is, therefore, much more powerful. The assertion, however, that nationalist ideology replaced religious ideology, may not be necessarily valid in all contexts. While its critical re-evaluation is beyond the scope of this paper, the brief discussion on the relation between Orthodoxy and Greek nationalism below may indicate that it is not a matter of replacement of conventional religion by nationalism so much as incorporation of religious ideological and cultural elements by the similar but more powerful nationalist cultural system.

Nationalism may be connected to specific political (Hobsbawm 1992) and socio-economic (Gellner 1983) conditions as well as technological innovations (Anderson 1991) in

the West during the 18th and 19th centuries. However, as Mosse notes, it managed to attract audiences neither for its economic advantages nor for its political programmes but because of its 'political liturgies', its rituals and ceremonies (Mosse 1976, 40 and *passim*). Nationalism needs to sustain the collective group memory, which has been selectively and carefully constructed. In attempting this, ritual performances are most effective due to their formalised character. Commemorative ceremonies are often employed to make explicit reference to prototypical events and to re-enact the cult of the dominant narrative (Connerton 1989, 60–71). Furthermore, Smart suggests that the nation is a performative construct, a phenomenological notion which acquires the properties of sacredness due to the formalised and highly charged feelings and behaviours which it demands (Smart 1983).

Imagining the nation in modern Greece

Nation-building in Greece has been a matter of considerable discussion and debate which cannot be adequately summarised within the limits of this paper (see for example Diamandouros 1972; Dimaras 1989; Friedman 1992, 1994; Gourgouris 1996; Herzfeld 1982, 1987; Just 1989; Kitromilides 1989; Kremmydas 1992; Moskof 1979; Politis 1993; Skopetea 1988; Tsoukalas 1977). For the purposes of the present argument, and with the risk of oversimplification, we will concentrate on some crucial points.

From the 15th century up until the Greek War of Independence, the people living in the area known today as Greece were under the central administration of the Ottoman Empire. As the Empire's internal organisation was classified into different communities (*millets*) according to their members' religion, these people formed part of the *Millet-i Rum*, the largest millet after the Muslim one and it comprised both Greek and non-Greek speaking Christians. The *millet-i Rum* was under the intellectual and legal authority of the Patriarchate of Constantinople that was itself staffed almost exclusively by Greek-speaking people belonging to the upper strata of Ottoman subjects. This was the first step in the development of the Greek national consciousness (Tsoukalas 1977). It was combined with another important development. From the mid-17th century a new merchant social group emerged based on trade rather than on traditional forms of wealth such as land (e.g. Diamandouros 1972; Moskof 1979, 99–118; Stoianovich 1960). This new social group, multi-ethnic in the beginning, was soon 'Hellenised' due to the political and economic influence of the Orthodox Church and the domination of the Greek language throughout the Balkans and in parts of Asia Minor. Moreover, Greek was established as the language of commerce and signified higher social status (Stoianovich 1960, 310):

The Hellenisation of the upper social strata of the non-Greek Balkan orthodox peoples made possible the emergence of a single relatively united, inter-Balkan merchant class, which was of Greek, Vlach, Macedo-Slav, and Bulgarian ethnic origin, but called itself and was known to others as 'Greek' (Stoianovich 1960, 311).

This new social group absorbed facets of the Western European (especially French) bourgeois mentality and consequently adopted equivalent life styles and modes of behaviour reflecting these mentalities (e.g. Tsoukalas 1977, 39-44). It also came in contact with classicism, one of the dominant ideological movements in Europe at that time, through the many ethnic Greek intellectuals who lived and worked in Western Europe. Influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment as well as by developments such as the French Revolution, they 'rediscovered' their destiny as the successors of the classical past. This past as perceived and constructed by European intellectuals at the time, provided a set of ideals which could legitimise the existence of this new social class, the economic development of which was held back by the old systems of government and administration such as the Ottoman Empire (Diamandouros 1972; Tsoukalas 1977, 44). By adopting classicism and presenting itself as the legitimate successor of classical Greeks, this new social group and its intellectuals did more than simply establish a firm link with the European middle classes. It also worked out a new political programme in direct contrast to the autocratic Ottoman institutions and oligarchic systems of self-rule, common in the Greek peninsula and much favoured by the traditional Greek elites. Those two elements had considerable influence on developments such as the European intervention which guaranteed the success of the Greek War of Independence but also the establishment of the position of power for the new merchant middle class in the internal struggle during the War and the first crucial years of the new Greek State.

The preservation, collection, promotion and study of ancient artefacts (primarily of the classical period) was a priority which went hand in hand with the establishment of the Greek state and the development of its institutions. Moreover, the new State had at the same time an urgent need to construct a strong sense of national consciousness which could unify the ethnically and religiously diverse populations of the newly founded Greek State. So the promotion and study of archaeological material served two interlinked aims: the legitimisation of the political and economic programme of the middle classes, and the construction of national consciousness for the people of the Greek State as a whole.

There are countless examples that illustrate the above phenomenon and demonstrate the crucial role of the classical past and its material manifestations in the construction of the Greek nation. The vocabulary used in this process is revealing. The nation-building process which started with the War of Independence was referred to as *Paliggenesia* (Resurrection, regeneration-renaissance), a term which conveys the notion of the resurrection of the 'past glories' of Classical Greece (Skopetea 1988, 207). Dimaras has noted (1989) how in the beginning of the 19th century personal names of classical antiquity, such as Leonidas, Athena, Perikles or Themistocles, became extremely fashionable among the new elites, in many cases replacing Christian ones. Moreover, the intellectuals who played a key role in this process propagated a new name for the Christian population of the Greek peninsula. *Romioi*, *Christianoi* (Christians), or *Kritikoi* (people from Crete), *Moraites* (people from Peloponnese) etc. were the names used for self-definition before the War. The name *Hellenes*, evoking the Classical Greeks, was adopted soon after the eruption of the War (e.g. Politis 1993, 33-35).³ The War of Independence itself was portrayed as a continuation of the ancient Greek wars against oriental 'barbarians' (we should not forget that this is the time of the construction and consolidation of orientalist stereotypes in the West). Direct references to ancient battles and

personalities are abundant in the speeches and writings of national leaders who were trying to promote the revolutionary spirit (cf. Loukas 1996, 20 and *passim*).

The foundation of the Greek State did not mean that the process of the building of the nation was over; far from it. The classical past and its remnants continued to receive considerable attention and figure prominently in the process of the construction of national identity. The transfer of the capital from Nafplion to the small dusty town of Athens with all its associations with classical Greece and, more importantly, with the visible standing monuments of the Classical era, is an aspect of the same phenomenon. Likewise, the rebuilding of Sparta, which was intended to become the second city of the Kingdom, in its ancient location served the same need (Politis 1993, 76).

An important measure of the significance attributed to classical antiquities, especially in the formative years of the Hellenic nation, is the concern for the protection of monuments of the past. This was considered a priority, despite the urgent social and political problems that the population faced before and after the foundation of the State. Even before the War of Independence there were attempts by intellectuals to preserve ancient monuments and stop their looting which had become endemic. The first document calling for the preservation of antiquities was that by A. Korais (in 1807), the most eminent intellectual of the Modern Greek Enlightenment (e.g. Jeffreys 1985; Kokkou 1977, 27–31). In 1813 a Society called *Philomousos Etaireia* (Society of the Friends of Arts) was founded with two main aims. These were the education of the youth and the discovery and collection of antiquities alongside the foundation of an institution (a museum) for their storage and exhibition (Protopsaltis 1967, 22). The classical temple of Erechtheion on the Acropolis was selected for the site of the first museum, but the building was serving urgent as an armoury (Kokkou 1977, 38). During the War of Independence, and despite other more urgent needs, intellectuals continued their appeals to the fighting Greeks for the preservation of ancient monuments. Moreover, the *Prosorini Dioikisis* (Temporary Government) protested whenever looting was reported and official directives advised public servants to collect and preserve antiquities so that:

In time, every school should have its own museum. This is of the utmost necessity for history, for the recovery of the ancient names of cities and places, for getting to know the abilities of our ancestors; also for the justified respect that they enjoy among the wise nations of Europe which accuse us of giving antiquities away or selling them at low prices to [European] travellers who frequent Greece (*Ephimeris Athinon* 38, 24 June 1825; cited in Kokkou 1977, 41; our translation).

As with many nationalist discourses, ancient monuments in Greece provided the most powerful currency of this specific form of symbolic capital, due to their materiality, visibility (especially in case of prominent architectural monuments), authenticity, age and sense of timelessness (cf. Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996, 19–20). Moreover, they possessed the ability to create a spatiality, to reconcile the timeless, homogeneous, empty space of nation with a sense of concrete place (Appadurai 1995, 213). Physical, authentic monuments which provided a sense of continuity and eternity were crucial elements in the process of ‘dreaming the nation’ (Gourgouris 1996). They were instrumental in constructing a *topos* that was

at the same time within history and outside it (Gourgouris 1993). A *topos* structured by a specific temporality: a 'monumental' time distinct from the 'social' experiential time of everyday life (Herzfeld 1992; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996, 122). If most archaeological remains possess the above properties, classical antiquities had the additional advantage of occupying a central position in western imagination and cosmology.

Thus Classical antiquity was promoted as symbolic capital, generated from raw materials found in the West. On that symbolic and authoritative resource, rights to political self-determination for the Greek population as a whole could be built (cf. Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996). The first president of the Archaeological Society in Athens, I. Rizos-Neroulos, stated during a meeting of the Society held on the Athenian Acropolis in 1838 (cited in Kokkou 1977, 16; our translation): 'Gentlemen, it is to those stones which, due to Praxitelises, Phidiases, Iktinoses, Agorakritoses and Myrones, became more precious than diamonds or agate, it is to a large extent to those stones that we owe our political renaissance.'

Given the role that antiquities played for the construction and reproduction of the idea of the nation of modern Greece (cf. among many others Clogg 1985; Friedman 1992, 1994; Herzfeld 1982, 1987; Kotsakis 1991, 67; Lowenthal 1988; Morris 1994; Petrakos 1988, 99; Politis 1993; Skopetea 1988; Tsigakou 1981) and their subsequent incorporation within the rhetoric and imagination of national consciousness, it is not surprising that they are invested with religious connotations.

Hobsbawm has noted that the link between religion and national consciousness becomes stronger when nationalism, instead of being a minority ideology, becomes a mass force (1992, 67-68). It is possible to trace this gradual transformation in the Greek case. Before the formation of the new nation-state, folk tales show popular perceptions of antiquity were quite different from those that we know from later periods (Kakridis 1979). In the pre-nation-state period, antiquity was perceived as belonging to the legendary sphere. Ancient Greeks, often depicted as giants with supernatural powers, were thought to be quite distinct from the contemporary population. National imagination transformed this perception adopting religious connotations, with the emphasis on direct continuity.

The situation changed dramatically in the following decades. The nation had to establish and consolidate itself, to expand its territorial boundaries and to negotiate its role among the older and more powerful western nations. For the construction and reproduction of its version of social memory it had to rely heavily on its monopoly of ideological mechanisms and institutions, primarily on state education (Kitromilides 1989, 163-164; cf. Gellner 1983, 34). Antiquities, therefore, and mainly classical antiquities, were very often assigned the role of icons in the worship of the secular religion of Hellenism.⁴ As such, antiquities provided the stage and the scenery for ritual performances celebrating the new dogmatic principles such as the continuity and the superiority of the 'Hellenic spirit' through the millennia.

Two recent examples of such ceremonial and ritual performances will help to illustrate the arguments outlined above and will hopefully show that these attitudes are very much alive today. The first took place in the British Museum, in the room with the Parthenon ('Elgin') marbles, on Thursday 10 March 1994, a few days after the death of Melina Merkouri, ex-minister of Culture for Greece, well known for her crusade for the restitution of the Parthenon marbles to Athens. That afternoon a group of around 100 Greek and Greek-

Cypriot students visited the museum bearing flowers and demanded to be allowed to leave the flowers on the marbles, in memory of Melina Merkouri. After negotiations they were allowed in. They were not allowed, however, to leave the flowers on the marbles. The congregation was gathered around the remains of the Parthenon sculptures and someone read a petition of the Society of Greek Students in London reaffirming their promise to continue Merkouri's crusade. Then, they all sang the Greek National Anthem before the eyes of surprised guards and visitors. They managed to leave some flowers on the marbles despite the prohibition, and then they left (Metaxas 1994).

The second incident took place in Toronto in 1990 and is part of a series of conflicts between the Greek-Macedonian and the Slavo-Macedonian community there. As Anderson points out (1994) exile is very often the nursery of nationalist ideology and imagination. In May 1990, the Greek-Macedonian community erected a bust of Alexander the Great in a small square in Toronto despite the protests of other Greek organisations that preferred a bust of Kolokotronis, a hero of the Greek War of Independence. In July of the same year, a Slavomacedonian organisation decided to lay a wreath at the statue celebrating the supposed 2346th anniversary of the birth of Alexander. Their decision caused controversy and anger among the Greek-Macedonian organisations that decided to prevent the whole ceremony:

With their bodies wrapped in blue and white Greek flags the Greek Macedonians formed a human wall around the statue. As the Macedonians approached, a fight broke out that required the intervention of the Toronto police. When the police assured them that the Macedonians would not be allowed to lay their wreath at the statue, the Greek-Macedonians left. According to reports in the Greek press the Greek community of Toronto had successfully prevented 'any dirty hand' from 'defiling' this statue of Alexander the Great, a 'symbol of the unity and the fighting spirit of Hellenism'. The entire event had been 'another golden page in the glorious history of the defence of all that is sacred and holy to the Fatherland' (*Makedhoniki Zoi*, October 1990, 48-49; Danforth 1995, 173-174).

This last example is instructive in many ways. It did not involve an ancient monument but the representation of a central, almost mythical figure in the pantheon of Hellenism, Alexander the Great. It demonstrates that sacralisation involves not only 'authentic' ancient monuments but also ancient figures, concepts and notions and their representations, especially when access to physical material remains of the past is not possible.

Nationalism, Greek Orthodoxy and the secular religion of Hellenism

We hope to have established above that antiquities in modern Greece operate within an ideological framework dominated by religious connotations. We have attempted to explore the phenomenon by looking at nationalist ideologies in general, and at the construction of national identity based on antiquity in modern Greece in particular. Below we will investi-

gate another important aspect of the same phenomenon: the connection between Greek nationalism and Greek Orthodoxy, as well as the interweaving of this relationship with antiquities and archaeological monuments.

Although the issue deserves closer investigation, it is fair to say that the consolidation and the spread of the secular religion of Hellenism based on antiquity, owes some of its success to the power and the specific character of Greek Orthodoxy. The relationship between Greek nationalism and Orthodoxy is an extremely complex one and well beyond the scope of this paper (see Arnakis 1963; Just 1988; Kitromilides 1989; Stewart 1994 for discussions). It is important, however, to make brief reference to the issue and illuminate its links with the phenomenon explored here. As Just (1988), Hart (1992), and Dubisch (1995) among others have shown, Orthodoxy is today an integral part of the national Greek identity to the extent that many local social actors would make no distinction between the two and they would treat Orthodoxy or even Christianity in general as exclusively Greek. Extreme nationalist right-wing governments and dictatorships during the country's recent political history have exploited this close link between Orthodoxy and nationalism. We only need to be reminded of the main slogan of the Colonels' dictatorship (1967-1974) which encapsulated their political philosophy: 'Hellas of the Helleno-Christians' (cf. Just 1988, 21). The relationship operated at several subconscious levels, as can be seen in the metonymic use of symbolic images which can function in both the national and the Orthodox Christian system of thought. For example, the image of the phoenix arising from its ashes, a national symbol in the early years of the Modern Greek State as well as the main logo of the Colonels' dictatorship, can be subconsciously connected with the image of the resurrected Jesus, so familiar from the iconography of Greek Orthodoxy, being the dominant theme of the most important event in the Christian Orthodox calendar as well as in the Greek feast calendar (Just 1988, 21).

The history of the relationship between nationalism and Greek Orthodoxy, however, is extremely complicated and turbulent. Kitromilides (1989) provides an interesting, clear and concise exposition. As we mentioned above, before the War of Independence the Christian population within the Ottoman Empire was socially organised under the *millet-i-Rum*, which included the Greek-speaking people as well as other Christian ethnic groups. With the emergence of Greek nationalism the leading intellectuals called for ethnic identification on the basis of language and the 'common classical heritage'. They thus advocated a break from the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual 'imagined community' of Orthodoxy in favor of the new 'imagined community' of Hellenism. The leadership of the Orthodox Church (based in Constantinople), that enjoyed certain privileges, foresaw the danger. It sensed the threat from the new 'secular religion' and its sources of inspiration such as the ideological, philosophical aspects of the French Revolution. The first years of the Greek War of Independence also marked a struggle between the Church leadership and the nationalist intellectuals and the 'enlightened' clergy, who sided with the 'new religion'. The doctrines of the 'new religion' were dismissed as 'phyletism' aiming to replace a more open, inclusive community, the community of the faithful. In spite of the condemnation of the War of Independence by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Greek nationalism finally won the battle. This victory was marked by the declaration of the autocephaly of the Church of Greece and its independence

from the Patriarchate in 1853. From that point onwards as Kitromilides says 'the Church of Greece spearheaded all nationalist initiatives in the later part of the nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century' (1989, 166).

In the process of construction of the Greek nation, the national ideology had to deal with some severe tensions. One of the most important resulted from the fact that the Christian Orthodox nation was to embrace the ideals of a paganistic past, classical antiquity. This tension mirrors the one between the Classical and the Byzantine past, another serious bone of contention for the nationalist narrative in the first years of the Greek state (cf. Dimaras 1989; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996; Mango 1965; Politis 1993, 110–11; Yalouri 1993). The first tension was successfully resolved with an interesting venture of religious synthesis and syncretism (Stewart 1994). Folklorists, along with archaeologists and historians, were assigned the crucial national mission of demonstrating the continuity of the Hellenic spirit over the millennia (Herzfeld 1982). They managed to find 'survivals' of the ancient Greek religions in the Orthodox tradition, emphasising however, their material aspect – e.g. worshipping locations – rather than their spiritual one which would have led to a direct confrontation with the Church (Stewart 1994, 138). Some even suggested that ancient Greeks were unknowingly Christians (Stewart 1994, 140). One of the most persistent memories from our 'religion' classes at school is the story our teachers would narrate, that St. Paul found ancient Athenians worshipping in addition to their Olympian deities another one, 'The Unknown God': a sub-conscious perpetuation of the same argument which portrays ancient Greeks as proto-Christians.

The second tension, that between Classical and Byzantine past was far more complex. The transition from the open hostility of nationalist intellectuals to the Byzantine past (in favour of the classical past, the main symbolic capital of the Greek Nation-State) to its acceptance involved the copious effort of the national historian, Konstantinos Paparigopoulos, who saw the Byzantine past as the necessary bridge which would secure the continuity between Classical and modern Greek past (cf. Augustinos 1989, among many others). The urgent need to confront Fallmerayer's argument for the hybridic nature of modern Greek society which had lost all its ancient Greek elements (see Skopetea 1997, Stewart 1994; Veloudis 1982 among many others), acted as a catalyst in the intellectuals' efforts to bridge that gap in the national narrative. Given the prominent and central role of Christianity within Byzantine institutions, the incorporation of the Byzantine past within the main body of the national narrative promoted further the fusion between Orthodoxy and Hellenic national identity. At the same time that relationship made the bridging between Classical and Byzantine past less difficult.

Two further ideological parameters that facilitated the fusion between nationalism and Orthodoxy should be mentioned. The first relates to the messianic and teleological nature of both Greek nationalism and Orthodoxy. We should bear in mind that Greek nationalism from its very early stages had internal and external dimensions. The internal had to do with the construction of the nation and the establishment of a homogeneous state. The external dimension has to do with the perception that Hellenism was much broader than the borders of the nation-state as they were defined in the first years of its life (in 1832 the Greek state included only the Peloponnese, the Cyclades, and part of the southern mainland Greece).

National consolidation would be achieved only once all Greek-speaking populations in the area could be included in the national body (Kitromilides 1989, 161). The second important ideological parameter had to do with the ritual character and practice of Orthodoxy, which is quite distinctive from other Christian denominations. A tradition that relies heavily on mysticism, miracles, and the worship of eikons (Herzfeld 1992, 43; Stewart 1989, 77), has provided a fertile ground for the new secular religion.

A very interesting example, which illustrates the relationship between Orthodoxy, antiquities and nationalism was recently discussed by Andreadis (1989, 289-299). This happened during the Greek-Turkish confrontation in Asia Minor (1919-1922) (cf. Clogg 1992 for a brief account). In March 1922, a soldier from one of the Greek regiments that had camped at the village of Ilme-Tcific (near the town of Yegigaze in NW Turkey) asked to see his commander. He reported that on the previous night he dreamt of the Virgin Mary surrounded by ancient Greek soldiers. The Virgin Mary requested that a nearby cave should no longer be used for the stalling of animals because, as she said, it was a shrine devoted to her. The ancient Greek soldiers asked for archaeological excavations to be carried out at a nearby hill since, as they said, it was their graveyard after a battle which took place in antiquity at that spot. In the following days the soldier insisted that he kept having the same dream. The commander, after widespread pressure from the other soldiers, decided to fulfil the requests and ordered an excavation to be carried out. The excavation at that spot, which turned out to be a previously known archaeological site, did indeed reveal gravestones and other ancient Greek artefacts.

The commander in his memoirs published in 1937 reported the above incident and it was discussed in the press at that time as well as by historians of the period. It is an extremely interesting and multi-dimensional case (which reminds us of Gourgouris' assertion that national imagining should be treated as dreaming cf. Gourgouris 1993, 83; 1996). For the purposes of this discussion it will suffice to mention that the experience of theophany, which is quite widespread in the popular imagination in modern Greece (Stewart 1989, 77), provides the means for the appropriation of the distant past in the individual and collective popular memory. In the above-mentioned story the religious experience and the experience of the ancient Greek past become inseparable. For the soldier who was fighting away from home, in a territory which, according to the national narrative, was part of the space of Hellenism and was imbued with meaning not least because of the ancient Greek presence, there was no distinction between reality and dreaming, past and present, the Virgin Mary and Ancient Greek fighters. If the ancient Greek past was sacred, as the educated elite of the nation had been saying for a century, then the uneducated soldier (being more 'pure', a true *folk*) had the ability to communicate with it, not via knowledge but *directly* as he did with God.

Antiquities between domination and resistance

There is, however, a significant difference between religious – in the traditional sense – ideology and the secular religion of nationalism, with serious consequences. As Gellner has noted, while in religious rituals society worships itself through the *camouflaged* medium of religion, in the rituals of nationalism society worships itself *openly* and *overtly* (Gellner 1983,

56; emphasis added; cf. Breuilly 1993, 64). While we would not suggest that religions do not allow popular appropriations of their discourse (see for example studies in James and Johnson 1988; cf. Kenna 1995 for examples from Greek contexts), in nationalist discourses ritual imagination is less restricted. Every individual is potentially a priest and does not depend on others for ritual services (Gellner 1983, 142).

But this phenomenon creates a certain paradox: the nationalist discourse as a hegemonic device attempts to fix meaning on the basis of its dogmatic principles. On the other hand, nationalism as secular religion allows popular appropriation and rephrasing of that meaning, as long as the fundamental dogmatic principles are not challenged. The images of the secular religion of nationalism, through their material expression in archaeological monuments and objects, are invested with what Ricoeur has called 'surplus of meaning' (Ricoeur 1976; cf. Connerton 1989, 56–57). That is why antiquities as symbolic capital and authoritative resource in modern Greece are often used by different groups, sometimes with conflicting interests in the process of negotiation of power, despite the hegemonic and imposing discourse of nationalism. The signifiers of the new secular religion have often been used by the state and dominant groups in order to impose and legitimise their authority. They have also been used by subordinated groups in resistance, or by individuals or groups against the bureaucracy of the state. They can also empower individual social actors, as in the case of the soldier above who became the central figure and was able to 'reverse' the military hierarchy and compel his superiors to carry out excavations. In a previous example above we saw how the removal of the swastika from the Acropolis was an act of resistance. Elsewhere (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996), we described a different example: the soldiers exiled by the Greek totalitarian regime due to their left-wing political affiliations during the late 1940s on the island of Makronisos were forced to build, along with replicas of guns, replicas of the Parthenon as part of their 'rehabilitation programme' (Rodocanachi 1949). The Acropolis in the service of resistance in the first case, the Acropolis in the service of suppression in the second.

Antiquities as signs and icons of the new religion are re-contextualised within the national framework and acquire a multiplicity of social lives. Rituals, Kertzer says, abrogate history and time (1988, 10). They are mostly about images and performances. Nationalist narratives construct social memory using isolated images and themes from the material culture of the past. Incorporated in the dominant narrative of the nation, this material culture is highly charged and acquires immense emotional power, as social agents mobilise powerful symbolic resources in the form of antiquities that have acquired the properties of icons. In doing so, the nationalist discourse may appear subversive, since it empowers alternative, anti-hegemonic political, social and personal agendas, such as the resistance to the hegemony of Nazi occupation in the example above, or to the hegemony of the government, the State and supra-State organisations in the case of strong, public opposition to travelling exhibitions of antiquities, such as the riots and blockades outside the Herakleion Museum in Crete in 1979 (see Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996). But how subversive are these alternative actions, since they work within the cosmological realm of nationalism? We would argue that they reproduce in other forms the same bounded, fixed, essentialist notions on identities. They perpetuate the dominant conceptions of identities as primordial, static attributes, rather than performative, lived, experiential constructs (cf. Handler 1994; Astuti 1995 among others).

Epilogue

The nation thus comes to command the domain of both the sacred and the profane. In occupying and exploiting the mysterious space of the sacred in our contemporary 'secular' world, the nation revitalises the profane. In mobilising a society with the signs of resurrection or eternal life, often to acts of unspeakable violence, the nation lends to the profane a sacred status. Therein lies the sublime force of the nation's seduction. Therein lies also the formidable enactment of its dynastic violence (Gourgouris 1993, 96).

In this essay we have touched upon numerous and complex issues. The issue of nationalism alone is notoriously difficult to define and understand. We attempted to show that since nationalism and religion can be seen as similar cultural systems (Geertz 1993[1973]), the process of 'dreaming' and imagining the nation can result in the sacralisation of national culture (cf. Brow 1990, 3), and the sacralisation of ancient (mostly classical) monuments, sites, and other archaeological material in this specific case. Ancient monuments become an indispensable apparatus for ritual, commemorative ceremonies, and become the stage for and powerful emotive icons in performances of national memory in the continuous process of imagining and dreaming the *topos* of the nation. This process is open to all social actors and not simply to State bureaucrats and intellectuals. It can be reconciled with a diversity of political agendas but it does not undermine the ontological basis of the nationalist ideological and cultural system, the essentialist and static conception of individual and collective selfhood.⁵

The phenomenon described above cannot but have profound implications for archaeology as a discipline and as a social practice, as well as for society in general. It will take a long time and serious effort to explore these implications, but it will be interesting to mention at least some of them here. To start with, we must seriously reconsider the validity of the dichotomy between academic or scholarly interpretations and readings of the past based on a strict logical epistemic framework, and 'fringe' readings and interpretations based on faith, emotions, mystic and psychic properties. As we hope to have shown, academic discourses working within the nationalist genre often produce archaeologies which resemble some of the 'fringe' readings (cf. Andronikos' writings above). Moreover, both academic and non-academic nationalist readings and appropriations of the past deserve much more than mere dismissal as distortions and abuses of objective empirical past reality. Being cultural phenomena with a wide relevance and appeal, they are of immense importance in their own right (cf. Lampeter Archaeology Workshop, 1997). At the same time, their study could illuminate the social conditions and the ontology and epistemology of academic disciplinary discourses and practices, in this case archaeology and history, since very often, as it is evident from the above, the *raison d'être* and the legitimacy of these disciplines are intricately linked with nationalism and the politics of identity (cf. Hamilakis 1996). By way of an example, consider this: in a recent article Silberman (1995) refers to the well-known case of the archaeologist as a hero. In this essay we could recognise another type: the archaeologist as a 'priest' or a 'shaman'. The clearest example discussed here is that of Andronikos. He

mediates between the world of ancients and the world of moderns but he also communicates with the supernatural forces in general, including Christian saints, as in the case of his discovery on the day of Archangels Michael and Gabriel. He is able to communicate directly with the ancients and the personified ancient artefacts. For example, in one of his newspaper articles he talks about the ancient Greek antiquities and statuses which are kept in non-Greek museums and describes their 'feelings' of sadness, and the joy and pride which the ones that were 'repatriated' feel (Andronikos 1985). Indicative of his status and immense authority within Greek society is the fact that he is honoured with a stamp devoted to him, and was honoured with a highly emotional funeral attended by six Ministers and the Prime Minister (Heller 1992).

Of course, as we saw in the case of the soldier in the Asia Minor War, the archaeologist does not have the exclusive rights to ritual communication and control but s/he still commands enormous power. What does this specific case mean for the politics of academia, for the social role of archaeology, and for modern society in general? These and many others are issues that still need to be explored.

Furthermore, the social definition of a monument is seriously affected by what has been imposed as collective social memory venerated and worshipped in the rituals of nationalism. Material remains that are not considered pure are either ignored or demolished, as was the case with the 'barbaric remains' on the Athenian Acropolis. Artefacts that do not have the qualities required for the performances of the commemorative ceremonies have much less chance of being preserved, promoted, and studied. Archaeological interpretations are very often confined to the dominant narrative imposed by the secular religion of nationalism. The communication of archaeological knowledge to the public has to follow certain rules, which do not violate the dogmatic principles. A hands-on approach to archaeological practice for example, cannot easily be accepted: sacred symbols are not for kids to play with. The recent discourse of 'heritage management', therefore, and the principles and strategies that heritage managers adopt and promote, especially in contexts such as Britain where the 'heritage industry' has become the substitute for the declining traditional industries (Walsh 1992; cf. Merriman 1996 on the debate), might not be applicable to contexts such as modern Greece. Indeed, attempts at hyper-commercialisation of Greek antiquities have been met with public and media resistance. As we have shown elsewhere (Hamilakis and Yalouri 1996), following Bourdieu (1977, 1990), antiquities as symbolic capital can be transformed into other forms of capital, but part of their power lies in the fact that they are masked and mis-recognised as such (that is, as capital). Resistance seems to have been greater towards suggestions for heritage theme parks such as the ones found in Britain and the USA. We would not argue that this attitude has to do exclusively with the sacralisation of antiquity. Arguments about the perceived violation of authenticity as well as aesthetic values and standards are often employed to resist suggestions for heritage theme parks. But we do believe that such suggestions are also seen as a sacrilege, a violation of the authentic and eternal icons of the secular religion of nationalism.

Finally, we would like to return to the quotation at the top of this section. As we have hoped to show in this essay, antiquities incorporate immense symbolic power due to their key position within the national-religious system of thought. We have tried to show that this

symbolic power can back seemingly anti-hegemonic discourses and practices (e.g. the 'purification' of the Acropolis by removing the Nazi flag as an act of resistance), leaving at the same time the ontological foundations of the nationalist discourse unchallenged. More often, however, it turns into symbolic dynastic violence, as Gourgouris says, and as we have shown with some examples above. More significantly, in both cases the very act of pilgrimage requires submission, self-depreciation, and sacrifice (cf. Smart 1983, 23). And while, as we have said, this power is in theory accessible to all, the winner is usually the individual, social group or mechanism that can set up the most elaborate ritual performance, which can control most effectively the channels for the dissemination of dogmatic principles and ideology.

Notes

¹ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the First Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (Santiago, Spain, Sept. 1995), at the 28th Annual Chacmool Conference (Calgary, Canada Nov. 1995) and at the Research Seminar of the Department of Archaeology and Prehistory, University of Sheffield (November 1995). We would like to thank the audiences in the above occasions for their comments and encouragement. Thanks are also due to Kathryn Denning who took the paper to Calgary and to Jasmin Habib for reading it. Financial support that enabled one of us (YH) to travel to Santiago was provided by the University of Sheffield. A number of colleagues and friends commented on earlier versions of this text. Among them we would like to thank particularly Keith Brown, Stella Galani, Karoline von Oppen, Mark Pluciennik, Charles Stewart, and Chris Tilley. Thanks are also due to the editors and the anonymous referees of this journal, and the Media Centre of the University of Wales, Lampeter for the reproduction of the illustrations.

² There is no doubt that this passage also echoes the well-known argument that tourism in modern societies (especially in the form of museum visiting and archaeological sightseeing) is a kind of pilgrimage (cf. Horne 1984), an issue which

is beyond the scope of this paper. Also, we would not wish to imply here that Acropolis would evoke the same feelings to all visitors (Greeks and non-Greeks).

³ The term *Romios* was destined to have a complex social biography in more recent years. As Leontis (1991) has shown, one of its derivatives, *Romiosini*, was appropriated by intellectuals who advocated at the turn of the twentieth century the introduction of Demoticism – the change of the official language of the State from *Katharevoussa* (purist) with its archaic elements, to *Demotiki* (the language of the people), the language of *Romiosini*. More recently the term was appropriated by modernist poets and intellectuals (like Seferis and Elytis). In both cases, the discourse associated with it portrayed the 'people' (*o laos*) and its artistic and cultural expressions as the true descendants of ancient Greeks. It was therefore juxtaposed to *Hellenism*, the official version of national discourse (Leontis 1991). The appropriation and use of the term *Romiosini*, especially in more recent years had explicit left-wing political connotations (as it can be shown in the poetry of Ritsos and the music of Theodorakis): the discourse of Hellenism was one of the ideological cornerstones of all right-wing and authoritarian regimes in modern Greece (see below the case

of Makronisos). The left-wing movement, rather than undermining the foundations of Hellenism and its logic, worked within the same national narrative (e.g. by accepting the stereotypes on the superiority of ancient Greece) and attempted (in some cases quite successfully) to appropriate it on behalf of the 'people'.

⁴ By using the term 'icon' here we do not imply that antiquities and monuments have acquired the properties of the two-dimensional visual representations encountered in the Christian

Orthodox tradition and for which we would reserve the term, 'eikon' (cf. Kenna 1985, note 1). We use the term 'icon' in its broader sense as encountered in cultural analysis and semiotics, signifying the fetishised images within a secular cult or 'worship' ritual.

⁵ It would be interesting to compare the Greek case with cases in other contexts where national and religious ideology and imagination are interlinked (e.g. Ireland, Israel, India).