

## Μουσείο Μπενάκη

A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece



**University of Athens and archaeological studies:  
the contribution of archaeology to the creation of a  
national past (1911-1932)**

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### Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

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## University of Athens and archaeological studies: the contribution of archaeology to the creation of a national past (1911-1932)

IT WAS NOT ONLY the poet George Seferis who was at a loss as to where to lay down 'this marble head'; the Greek state too has struggled throughout its history to come to terms with a heritage which, though precious, was also hard to bear, something like a boundary it would seem unable to cross. In this ambivalent relationship, the angst was principally related to the connection with ancient Greece, as seen through the eyes of the foreigners. In the early years of the Greek kingdom Jacob Phillip Fallmeyer's theories dealt some severe blows to this imagined genealogy, and triggered numerous responses over many years. But this was not all. Managing the heritage and studying the material representations of the past had to become the primary task of an academic discipline that followed in the footsteps of the nation-state.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, archaeology, the effort to locate and bring to light all remnants of a glorious past, the excavation and study of ancestral traces, acquired great importance from the outset for all stakeholders: state institutions, academic associations and learned societies, as well as individuals. One of the first and most important associations of scholars in Greece was in the field of archaeology. This was the Archaeological Society at Athens, founded in 1837,<sup>2</sup> which in the course of time organized and ran, in collaboration with the state and its Archaeological Service, all excavation work on Greek soil. And the University of Athens, the only university in the Greek state until 1926 when the University of Thessaloniki was established, made a decisive contribution to this work.

The University's contribution was multifaceted. On the one hand, it provided the means to educate young archae-

'I woke up with this marble head in my hands;  
it exhausts my elbows and I don't know where to put it down'.  
G. Seferis, *Mythistorema* (1935).

ologists and was an active agent in the excavation work. On the other, through the work of its academic staff, it played an active part in determining the ideological framework within which Greek archaeology developed. To a large extent institutions such as universities impose structures and operating procedures on the various subjects they offer. They are also instrumental in shaping their governing principles, their methods of awarding status and in determining the internal balance of power, as well as relations with political power and society at large. This was all the more so in the case of the University of Athens, which enjoyed exceptional prestige and authority in Greek society at the time owing to its place in public life. It was connected from the outset with the 'Great Idea', that is to say it contributed greatly to forming and articulating the newly-established state's aspirations with regard to the territory of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. At the same time, as the oldest University in the country, it was, at least until the inter-war period, the main agent for the construction and diffusion of academic discourse. It was also proactive in defining and organizing its disciplines, and in establishing their independent academic status. The University of Athens performed these functions either independently or in collaboration with other agents and institutions, such as (in the case of archaeology) the Archaeological Society and the Archaeological Service.

My paper focuses on the inclusion of archaeology in the curriculum of the School of Philosophy at the University of Athens in the early twentieth century, and the School's contribution to forming a past of shared values, a national ancestral heritage. The period mentioned is bounded in

institutional terms by two significant legislative measures of great importance for the University and its archaeological studies. In 1911, about 80 years after the University's foundation, its statutes were amended and the first chair of Byzantine Archaeology and Art was established. In 1932 the Department of Archaeology and History was founded in the School of Philosophy under a new university regulation. These were two important developments related to broader changes introduced by Eleftherios Venizelos – one of the most prominent Greek political figures of the twentieth century – in the framework of a reform plan which defined the direction the Greek state was to take. In those twenty years or so, the profile of archaeological studies at the University changed significantly with the establishment of Byzantium as a legitimate 'Hellenic' field of study, alongside the already firmly established ancient Greek master-paradigm.<sup>3</sup>

The changes in the curriculum and the nature of the courses it offered were related to developments in the political field. At the same time, however, they were also connected to a number of other factors relating to the overall role of the University, European models, the teaching staff, the curriculum of studies, the university community and its profile. They were inextricably entwined with the everyday operation and historical background of the institution. To make sense of them we must look back at earlier developments. In this context, I will make some general observations about the presence of archaeology in the curriculum from the establishment of the University in 1837 up until 1932, based on statistical analysis of the overall course titles in the School of Philosophy's Philology Department during the same period.<sup>4</sup>

From the outset and up until 1932 archaeology had been one of the main disciplines in the curriculum of the Faculty of Philology, accounting for approximately 1/6 (16.56%) of all courses. Philology led the field with an impressive 45.81%, archaeology was second with 16.56% and then came philosophy (14.85%) and history (13.95%). The other subjects taught accounted for much smaller percentages.<sup>5</sup> The amount of archaeology in the curriculum fluctuated, but on the whole the numbers of teachers, courses offered and teaching hours tended to increase. This tendency reflected the broadening of the university programme as a result of the overall growth of the University. In this respect, it is worth noting a small decrease in archaeology courses after 1911 in the after-

math of political developments to be discussed below.

In 1909, archaeology was taught at the University of Athens by three professors and two readers.<sup>6</sup> The success of the so-called 'Goudi coup' – a rebellion mounted by disaffected army officers seeking to modernize the country – upset former balances and led the provisional government of Stefanos Dragoumis to make the most severe cuts in university staff to date. Downsizing cost archaeology one of its three most dynamic and eminent professors, Panayiotis Kavadias (1850-1928), Secretary General of the Archaeological Society. The other two professors, Christos Tsountas (1857-1934), professor of Ancient Greek Art, and Nikolaos Politis (1852-1921), professor of Archaeology and Mythology, remained. However, the hardest blow to the teaching of archaeology was the abolition of the institution of readers, since until 1911 a large number of archaeology courses, double the corresponding average in the Faculty of Philology, had been taught by junior staff. Even though the post of reader carried no salary, it had been very important up to then, not only because of a shortage of teaching staff but because it gave young archaeologists the additional qualifications they needed in order to advance their career in the Archaeological Service and the Archaeological Society.

The advent of the Eleftherios Venizelos government in 1911 brought a new charter of statutes and regulations to the University.<sup>7</sup> The following year another professor of Byzantine Archaeology and Art, Adamantios Adamantiou (1875-1937), joined the teaching staff, while Panayiotis Kavadias was soon reinstated. In the twenties after N. Politis' death, and P. Kavadias' and Ch. Tsountas' retirement, two new professors of classical archaeology were elected: Apostolos Arvanitopoulos (1874-1942) in 1925 and Georgios Oikonomos (1883-1951) in 1928. Students could also attend courses in numismatics taught by Ioannis Svoronos (1862-1922), an archaeologist and P. Kavadias' rival in the Archaeological Society, who had managed with the help of the Eleftherios Venizelos government to be appointed professor in 1918, though only for a very short time. They could also benefit from the archaeological information in the lectures of the archaeologist Antonios Keramopoulos (1870-1960), who held the chair in *The Life of the Ancient Greeks*.

The teaching by professors at the University of Athens was based around lectures and tutorials. From the outset archaeology had a more practical orientation than other

fields: it involved displays of pictures, study of replicas and visits to archaeological sites. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the introduction of tutorials and workshops into the university curriculum also influenced archaeology. In 1884 practical exercises in archaeology were incorporated into the curriculum of the Philological Tutorial, the first and only tutorial until then at the University of Athens: this involved interpretation and evaluation of ancient monuments through fieldwork, as well as looking at them as works of art.<sup>8</sup> Site visits included locations associated with the glories of the ancient Greek past (e.g. Marathon, Salamis, Olympia), as well as areas related to the 1821 Greek Revolution. Overall up to 1932, archaeology had the highest proportion of tutorials (34.3%) of all the disciplines taught, with philology coming next (27.2%). Philosophy had the lowest share (17.2%), while tutorial teaching was widely used in the subjects introduced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g. linguistics, numismatics, pedagogy, folklore).<sup>9</sup>

Tutorials also included classes in museums (mainly the National Archaeological Museum). In the late nineteenth century archaeological field trips were initiated, which were eventually established officially by royal decree in 1906. Field trips, conducted at least three times a year, were meant for those who participated in history tutorials as well as the rest of the School of Philosophy apart from first-year students. Professors of Ancient Art History, Ancient History and Greek Archaeology participated in drafting the itinerary and the content of the trip.<sup>10</sup> A typical instance is the itinerary for the School of Philosophy's field trip (22-24 February 1907) which included lectures by professors Spyridon Lambros, P. Kavadias, Ch. Tsountas, N.G. Politis and Pavlos Karolidis, and study visits to the archaeological sites of Tiryns, Argos, Mycenae and Nafplion. Lecture topics included aspects of ancient Greek history, as well as more recent events such as the National Assembly in Argos and the battle at Dervenakia from the Greek War of Independence.<sup>11</sup> A few months later (13-17 May 1907) a new field trip to Olympia included study visits to the archaeological site and the Museum, as well as lectures by Lambros, Politis, Kavadias and Tsountas. The introduction of field trips to the School's curriculum was meant to ensure on-site instruction and hands-on training, especially since all expenses, apart from food, were paid by the University.<sup>12</sup>

With the exception of Adamantios Adamantiou, ar-

chaeology professors focused their teaching on ancient Greece. According to all archival evidence, there were no visits to Byzantine monuments at least until the founding of Adamantiou's chair. The only monument mentioned by name is the Acropolis, and most visits involved, as might be expected, the National Archaeological Museum, the first museum in the country. Archaeology shared the dedication to the ancient Graeco-Roman heritage which marked the entire programme of studies of the Faculty of Philology with only slight deviations in the curricula of the Schools of Philosophy and above all History. The latter had included the medieval/Byzantine and modern periods in its curriculum since the 1850s in the interest of providing a continuous narrative for the national past. Since 1911, through the establishment of a special chair in Byzantine Archaeology – the first autonomous chair in the School of Philosophy at the time – Byzantine topics had been an important part of the overall archaeology courses. Adamantiou taught Byzantine archaeology and art either according to a linear timeline (based on emperors) or based on a classification according to area (Mistra, Thessaloniki, Constantinople, Athos). In the context of his tutorials, Adamantiou conducted study visits to Byzantine monuments (Dafni, Mistra etc.). However, there is no evidence of any teaching on monuments from the post-Byzantine era.

Even though history and archaeology constituted autonomous subjects, they were seen as intrinsically related, and university staff lacked strict specialization, in today's sense of the term, in either history or archaeology. Nevertheless, as far as the School was concerned, the fields were kept apart when it came to establishing new chairs or drafting individual curricula. This distinction, which played a crucial role in the School's staffing, echoed traditions and developments in European universities. It could be argued that, in a sense, the history of the University of Athens was inextricably linked with that of the subjects it offered and their gradual establishment as distinct disciplines.

And this connectedness characterized both the disciplines and the academic staff. For history and archaeology, in particular, two fundamental disciplines in the Faculty of Philology and the basic building blocks in the construction of the nation's past, this was certainly the case: their portrayal as personifications on the frieze in the Propylaea of the University of Athens is typical. In



Fig. 1. Detail from the painted frieze of the Propylaea of the University of Athens (source: *Εκατονταετηρίδα του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών 1837-1937. Επίσημος εορτασμός των 100 χρόνων λειτουργίας του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών* [Athens 1937]).

the mural painted by Karl Rahl, an Austrian painter of the 1860s, Otto, first king of Modern Greece, is depicted seated on his throne flanked by the sciences now reborn in Greece (fig. 1). Among them is Archaeology, standing next to History. These are the only two to be shown in physical contact: Archaeology, holding a pot in her left hand, leans her right arm on the shoulder of History, who is writing on her tablets.<sup>13</sup>

This association was originally reflected in the teaching staff, especially in the nineteenth century when professors could move between chairs of different disciplines involving the ancient world and particularly between History and Archaeology. Until 1882 professors had been appointed by the government. Even after that period, when professors were elected by their peers according to certain criteria of which the most important was the candidate's publication record, the individual fields remained interconnected in the minds of their exponents. It is worth noting that in this period Nikolaos Politis, who introduced folklore studies to Greece, held the chair of Archaeology, while Georgios Sotiriadis (1852-1941), a well-known archaeologist, was appointed to the chair of Medieval and Modern History. Such discrepancies suggest that, over and above academic criteria, the selection process was often subject to personal preferences, assessments or

goals, while at times it came under pressure from outside institutions, as for example in the case of archaeology in the twenties, the Society for Byzantine Studies or the Archaeological Society.<sup>14</sup>

But what about the various disciplines? Let us look at a typical case, the course entitled 'Encyclopaedia of Philological Studies' or 'The Life of the Greeks and the Romans', with its later spin-off 'The Life of the Byzantines'. In the nineteenth century this was taught by a large number of readers and professors who held or came under the aegis of different chairs within the university: Konstantinos Schinas, Ludwig Ross, Konstantinos Assopios, Stefanos Koumanoudis, Eftychios Kastorchis etc. It was based on a course on the life of the Greeks and the Romans taught in the University of Berlin, first introduced in the early nineteenth century by August Boeckh.<sup>15</sup> It was offered at times under different disciplines (archaeology, philology, history) but retained its original content. Its objective was to reorganize the information available on the ancient world, inherited from a time when philology was understood in a broader sense, a legacy of early nineteenth-century German scholarship and more particularly of August Boeckh. This picture would change over time since, in an effort to establish a national narrative for the past, focusing exclusively on Greek history, 'The Life of

the Romans' would be dispensed with. On the other hand, in the same period, similar courses on 'The Life of the Ancient Greeks' and 'The Life of the Byzantines', taught by Antonios Keramopoulos and Phaedon Koukoules respectively, were redesigned to make them more closely connected to archaeology and folklore studies than to philology. In this respect, the main objective of these courses, especially the one on Byzantium, was to highlight and promote those cultural traits which were considered to be particularly 'Greek' in every period, thus manifesting the survival of the Greek national identity through the millennia. Koukoules' insistence on focusing on the private and not the public life of the Byzantines was justified on grounds of national expediency: public life in Byzantium was deemed to be associated with the institutions of the Roman Empire, whereas private life was seen as a continuation of the ancient Greek world. Therefore it was of great interest to the young Greek nation as 'scientific' evidence of its antiquity and continuity.<sup>16</sup>

The Athens School of Philosophy was a powerful guardian of classical antiquity in university education.<sup>17</sup> The Faculty of Philology confined its curriculum to ancient Greece.<sup>18</sup> Its main subjects besides philosophy, namely Greek and Latin philology and archaeology, remained focused on Graeco-Roman antiquity throughout almost the whole of the nineteenth century. Except in philosophy which was connected from the outset to ancient Greek and modern Western thought, the ancient Greek and Roman heritage remained dominant. Such an antiquity-centred orientation was in broad agreement with the curricula of the European universities and also satisfied modern Greeks' need to connect with the ancient Greeks. Even though individual courses were designed based on the European university tradition, reflecting the professors' own experiences, the ancestral connection was highlighted by focusing on policy documents such as guides to studies or inaugural addresses. Classical antiquity was recognized as a constituent in the identity of the new state and one that elevated it over other states.

Archaeology, which focused more than other disciplines on Greek antiquity, offered the most significant and 'glorious' elements for talking up the ancestral heritage: the history of ancient arts and crafts – sculpture, pottery and architecture – was the backbone of Greek archaeology as an academic subject in that period (and still is). Archaeology offered 'the eye-catching ruins', the material remains

on which the ideology of the glorious Greek ancestors was to be based. Greek archaeologists, many of whom, such as Kavadias and Tsountas, were well known abroad thanks to their excavation work and their publications, exchanged ideas with the international community and vaunted their privileged relationship with Greek antiquity. They contributed to the formation of a picture of the ancient Greek past through a number of concurrent activities – lectures, public classes, publications – in addition to their university teaching. It should also be noted that both Tsountas and Sotiriadis played decisive roles in forming the curriculum of the University of Thessaloniki in the twenties.<sup>19</sup>

Philology naturally remained attached to ancient Greek, while the language issue forged a rather inflexible framework in Greece; archaeology also contributed to maintaining the ancient Greek canon in the School of Philosophy. It should be pointed out that in the University of Thessaloniki, which was a more liberal university (also in linguistic matters) emphasizing the Byzantine and Modern periods, Greek antiquity retained its predominance despite the creation of a chair of Byzantine Art. Throughout the nineteenth century archaeologists at the University of Athens were strong advocates of antiquity,<sup>20</sup> vehemently opposing any interest in Byzantium and Paparrigopoulos' threefold scheme<sup>21</sup> regarding the continuity of the Greek nation. The idea of enlisting archaeology in this scheme of continuity goes back to the late nineteenth century, but it was never at the expense of classical antiquity. On the contrary, thanks to Paparrigopoulos and Spyridon Lambros,<sup>22</sup> two of the most important Greek historians of the nineteenth century and both professors at the university, history had begun to focus on the Byzantine and Modern periods from the mid-nineteenth century, actually turning away from ancient history. The diachronic study of Greek history meant that the once autonomous study of ancient history was swallowed up in the overall programme of study with serious consequences for the orientation and development of classical studies: Greek historians concerned themselves above all with the quest for continuity, and foreign scholars were assessed according to their position on the issue of the survival and uninterrupted evolution of the Greek nation. This resulted in a disjuncture between research activity and teaching practice.

As historians in the faculty tended to disregard ancient

Greece, in both their teaching and their research, students were not encouraged to study antiquity, a need met by archaeology. Important work in ancient history was conducted in the tutorials of archaeologists such as Georgios Oikonomos and Antonios Keramopoulos. On the whole, in that period, the archaeology of ancient Greece flourished to a greater extent than its history, both in terms of teaching and research. This development was also related to another factor: to a great extent, archaeology was given the task of supporting national claims especially in areas where history was failing in that respect. Macedonia is a typical case. Lack of written sources made it hard to maintain a Greek identity for Macedonia before the fourth century BC. This led to extensive excavation work, such as Sotiriadis' excavation in Dion and Keramopoulos' excavation in Siatista, in a period of intense territorial disputes in the Balkans. Greek archaeologists applied Western methodology and techniques, with the foreign archaeological schools acting as a catalyst in that respect, while at the same time they were willing to collaborate with the Greek government, despite the latter's constant changes of priorities, leading to important academic results.<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that in this same period the history of neighbouring nations was introduced into the curricula of the Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki but with the focus on the Byzantine and Modern periods.

Although archaeology appears to be the most 'conservative' of the disciplines which concentrated on the ancient Greek period, it was the first to establish a chair in a post-classical subject, with the chair of Byzantine Archaeology and Art in 1911. The next Byzantine chairs at the University of Athens were those of Byzantine History in 1924 (Konstantinos Amantos), Middle (i.e. Medieval) and Modern Philology in 1925 (Nikos Veis) and The Life of the Byzantines in 1931 (Phaedon Koukoules). In a period of intense interest in the medieval world, especially the Byzantine world, the School of Philosophy in Athens devoted a large part of its curriculum to related studies. This development was the culmination of processes that had been underway in Greece and abroad since the late nineteenth century and which achieved pre-eminence in the inter-war period. In 1906 the first post was created for a curator of Byzantine antiquities in the Archaeological Service. In 1909, the short-lived Society of Byzantinists was established and published the first Greek journal exclusively devoted to the Byzantine era, *Byzantis*, which

also published articles on archaeology. In 1918, the Archaeological Society, which until then had focused its activities on antiquity, broadened its interests to include monuments from the Byzantine period and up to the 1821 War of Independence on the basis of an amended charter.<sup>24</sup> In the same year the Society for Byzantine Studies was established with Koukoules playing a leading role in its foundation and operation. In 1921, the first decrees were issued proclaiming Byzantine churches and fortresses all over Greece as archaeological monuments.<sup>25</sup> State interest in Byzantium was manifest in various ways, such as the foundation of the Byzantine Museum (1914), the contribution to the foundation of the Benaki Museum (1930), the funding of the programme for the restoration of Byzantine monuments under the archaeologist Anastasios Orlandos, and the large-scale excavations at Byzantine archaeological sites.<sup>26</sup> Moreover specialized journals were published: the German *Byzantisch - Neugriechische Jahrbücher* edited by N. Veis, the *Register of the Society for Byzantine Studies* (*Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών*: 1918) published by the Society for Byzantine Studies and the six-monthly *Archive of the Byzantine Monuments in Greece* (*Αρχεῖον των Βυζαντινών Μνημείων της Ελλάδος*: 1935). Byzantium thus became the focus of scholarly interest, literature and public opinion.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that the first Byzantine chair was in archaeology and art (rather than, say, history or literature) is best understood through the study of documents related to the reform of 1911. The report of the parliamentary committee on education proposed the creation of a permanent chair in Middle and Modern Greek Philology, as well as an extraordinary chair in Byzantine Civilization. In a related memorandum the School of Philosophy proposed instead a chair in Byzantine Art, and one in Middle and Modern Greek Language and Literature. History as such was absent from both proposals, since Byzantine history was considered to be an integral part of national history, and the classes of Pavlos Karolidis, professor of History of the Hellenic Nation, and the tutorials of Spyridon Lambros covered the subject extensively. Interest in language, particularly as regards its continuity from antiquity to the present, was crucial for forging and promoting a national narrative (the use of *middle* rather than *Byzantine* to denote the medieval period is indicative in view of its suggestion of continuity and its tacit reference to the diglossy of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods). Bringing

medieval and modern philology into the same department ensured their association and underlined the unity and coherence of the Greek language, which was to be taught in its entirety, with an emphasis on continuity rather than on any individual period. Nevertheless, the chair was never founded because the debate on the language issue was fierce and young Byzantinists, most of them students of Karl Krumbacher,<sup>28</sup> espoused demoticism. For the professors of the School of Philosophy, enthusiastically promoting a strain of radical archaeolatry, demoticism was like a 'red rag to a bull'.<sup>29</sup>

The chair of Byzantine Art and Archaeology offered the School of Philosophy a subject which until then had been taught only in the School of Theology (by Georgios Lambakis, Reader in Christian Archaeology) in a framework that emphasized the links with Christianity rather than the national narrative.<sup>30</sup> Adamantios Adamantiou was preferred over Lambakis for the new chair.<sup>31</sup> As Evgenios Matthiopoulos has observed, this chair was established to support the notion of indivisible continuity and above all to emphasize the great contribution made by the Greek nation to global civilization, focusing as it did on those aspects which highlight Byzantium's cultural role: monuments, artefacts, icons and frescoes.<sup>32</sup> Art history included the most important achievements of the Byzantine civilization in Greek history, extending the line from ancient Greece. This approach was close to that of Paparrigopoulos, who defended medieval Greece by giving particular emphasis to its role as guardian of the ancient ancestral culture and defender of Christianity, while regarding its cultural achievements with some scepticism, in the spirit of the Enlightenment tradition. In the early decades of the twentieth century and following a series of important international developments in Byzantine Studies, a number of sister disciplines – history of art, archaeology, philology, history, and folklore (in the guise of courses such as 'The Life of the Byzantines') – highlighted the significant achievements of the Byzantine period, linking them to Modern Greece, because of the need to reinforce the 'Hellenic' identity of the Byzantine Empire.

In the framework constructed by Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos' threefold scheme of a continuous and uniform national history, the study of the Byzantine Empire was in fact the outcome of political choices which coincided with international developments on the academic front. The ideas governing the work of Georgios Lambakis

and the Christian Archaeological Society were rejected by younger scholars, who stressed the Hellenic, national dimension of Byzantine monuments as well as the need for their scientific study. As Adamantiou reported in a memorandum on the creation of the first Byzantine museum in Macedonia:

'The Byzantine museum will rapidly and easily become the first of its kind in East or West. And it will primarily be a shrine to the art and history of medieval Greece. [...] For it was Greek thought that was depicted in the art of the monuments to be presented in the Byzantine Museum, in the murals, in wood, and in marble, the very soul of medieval Greece, transmitted over the ages as the ever vigilant light of the artistic and historical tradition emanating from a singular and unmediated national life'.<sup>33</sup>

Written in September 1913, shortly after the incorporation into the Greek state of the territories gained in the Balkan wars, the document proposed Thessaloniki as the site of the first Byzantine museum in Greece. Emphasizing the Byzantine character of the city was a way of promoting its Greek past, at the expense of all rival Balkan nationalisms at this crucial juncture. In this context, Adamantiou<sup>34</sup> became the director of the first Byzantine Museum, eventually established in Athens, and a few years later the collection of the Christian Archaeological Society was incorporated into the museum's collections. Once again, archaeology professors assumed a wider remit in public life.

The Byzantine Empire became a bone of contention among the Balkan peoples, inasmuch as its heritage underlay their contemporary nationalist aspirations. Greek mistrust of other Balkan countries was related to their common claim to Byzantium as their political and cultural ancestor, a claim closely related to territorial ambitions and recognition by the international community.<sup>35</sup> The rivalry over organizing international Byzantine conferences is typical. The first conference was held in Bucharest (1924) at the suggestion of Nikolai Yorga, a Romanian historian; the second was in Belgrade (1927); the third in Athens (1930); the fourth in Sofia (1934); the fifth in Rome (1936); further conferences were planned for Beirut and Budapest, but they were cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II.<sup>36</sup> At a meeting convened to discuss the participation of the School of Philosophy in

the second Byzantine Conference, Adamantiou stressed that Byzantium had become disputed territory between the Russians and other Balkan peoples.<sup>37</sup> He expressed his regret at first the Romanians and then the Serbs gaining a march on Greece and staging the earliest conferences. It was necessary, he said, to hold the next conference in Athens after consultation with the government. The School agreed with his suggestion and aspired to the widest possible representation of the University on a delegation led by its staff. Eventually, since university studies were always connected to politics, the royalist and anti-Venizelist Adamantiou was excluded from the delegation. The Venizelos government decided that only seven of the twenty-two people proposed by the Senate would participate and Dimitrios Papoulias, Law professor and Venizelos' associate, would head the delegation.

It was not just the government or the university which subscribed to the belief in the national importance of the Greekness of Byzantium and its perceived political application; all Greek scholars did. The first act of the Society for Byzantine Studies – whose members included archaeologists and historians – was to protest against Bulgarian vandalism in Eastern Macedonia. This resulted in a handover of relics from the area in 1922 to Georgios Sotiriou (1880-1965), later professor of Archaeology at the University of Athens.<sup>38</sup>

To conclude: archaeology, a fundamental discipline of the Faculty of Philology from the outset, was devoted to the promotion of Greek antiquity, which was perceived as the most glorious stage in the nation's history. Archaeology by definition expresses the materiality of the past; it was therefore associated from the very beginning of its career in Greece with objectivist/empiricist research methods and practices, as well a positivist spirit in its assessment of the written sources. Gradually, through the construction of independent sub-disciplines (prehistoric, Byzantine and so on), there emerged a particular scholarly *ethos* and a professional identity. Taking membership of

the Archaeological Society as an example, we note that whereas in the nineteenth century it consisted primarily of scholars from various disciplines for whom archaeology was merely another facet of their multifarious activities, in the period under discussion it comprised professional archaeologists with an active excavation record. Identifying archaeology with Greek antiquity opened the way to a dialogue with the international community which ensured it a place in the wider academic arena. As history faculties moved towards the Byzantine and Modern periods, archaeology established its role as keeper of the ancient Greek past inasmuch as archaeologists were given the task of defending the national cause with their spades. In inter-war Greece, the shift towards Byzantium aimed at fully integrating archaeology into Paparrigopoulos' scheme of continuity while at the same time defending national rights through a scholarly process which was also acutely political. In a School which took a conservative stance on the language issue and resisted political reform, archaeology (sometimes making common cause with history and other disciplines and sometimes not) was to support ideologies about the Greek nation, its past and above all to translate these ideas to the present and into the future. Did this make archaeologists within the University conservatives? This is a question which remains to be explored. Similarly the extent to which these developments contributed to the formation of a collective view of the ancient past and archaeology's role in this process have yet to be determined. How did we get from the teaching of Tsountas and Kavadias to Nelly's photographs? How does Seferis' 'The King of Asine' relate to the less sophisticated (if better known) posters of the Greek National Tourism Organisation? And to what extent have these posters been more effective in defining our view of the ancient past?

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University of Athens and archaeological studies: the contribution of archaeology to the creation of a national past (1911-1932)

## NOTES

1. On Fallmerayer, see Skopetea 1997. On reactions of the Greek scholars of the time, see Veloudis 1982 and Herzfeld 1986, 75-96.
2. Petrakos 1987.
3. See also Karamanolakis 2007.
4. 3,918 course titles corresponding to around 500 courses. Cf. Karamanolakis 2006, 373-88.
5. Karamanolakis 2006, 374-75.
6. Readers were not remunerated for teaching; posts were conferred by the university bodies provided that the candidate held an academic degree. See Lappas 2004, 134-40.
7. Mesoloras 1916. See also Vrychea & Gavroglou 1982, 20-27.
8. Vambas 1885, 108-15.
9. Karamanolakis 2006, 379-80.
10. See the royal decree of 22 February 1906 'Περί εκδόρων των φοιτητών του ιστορικού φροντιστηρίου κλπ προς επίσκεψιν αρχαίων μνημείων και ιστορικών τόπων', in: Chatzidakis 1906, 78-79.
11. Philosophy School 1907.
12. Philosophy School 1907, 1.
13. Rahl was commissioned to design the mural by Symeon Sinas, a wealthy merchant of Greek descent. Eventually, the mural was realized in 1888 after Rahl's death by painter Eduard Lebieski, at the expense of Stergios Doumbas of Greek descent from Vienna. See University Museum 1987, 47, 126-27.
14. There is a claim that the first chair of Byzantine History at the University of Athens in 1924 was founded upon pressure from the Society for Byzantine Studies. See Kiousopoulou 1993, 270.
15. For Boeckh's influence on philological studies see indicatively Gooch 1913, 30-35; Marchand 1996, 40-44.
16. Tomadakis 1953.
17. Karamanolakis 2006; Chatzistefanidou 1997.
18. On the whole, ancient Greece and classicism were a point of reference for education in the Modern Greek kingdom. On the period 1834-1882, see Koulouri 1991, 301-52.
19. Tiverios 2000, 111; 114.
20. Cf. the case of Stefanos Koumanoudis, the most typical archaeologist-epigraphist in the 19th c. who however taught Latin literature at the University. See Matthaïou 2004.
21. For K.D. Paparrigopoulos see Dimaras 1986. For his threefold scheme and its influence on the Greek historiography, see Liakos 1994.
22. For Lambros and his contribution to the establishment of history as a discipline, see also Gazi 2000.
23. See Sakka 2002.
24. Sakka 2002, 92.
25. Kokkou 1977, 139.
26. Kokkou 1977, 95-96.
27. On the influence of Byzantine clothing, housing and furniture on modern fashion, see Kiousopoulou 2006, 32.
28. Krumbacher was professor of the first ever Byzantine chair to be founded at a university (Munich).
29. See Kiousopoulou 1993, 269-70.
30. In 1888, Lambakis was a leader in founding the Christian Archaeological Society. The Society aimed at collecting and preserving the remains of Christian antiquity found in Greece or elsewhere, 'whose study and maintenance contribute to an enlightenment on our [Greek] ancestral history and art'; see Article 2 in Christian Archaeological Society 1892, 6. The Christian Archaeological Society remained oriented towards the religious profile and Christian wealth of the period by establishing a relevant museum.
31. Candidates for the post were A. Adamantiou, G. Lambakis and N. Veis (who later became professor in Middle and Modern Greek Philology). A basic disadvantage for Lambakis was that he addressed issues more in the light of religion than history, and that he expressed views incompatible with historic criticism. See *Παράρτημα της Εφημερίδος της Κυβερνήσεως του Βασιλείου της Ελλάδος*, volume B', issue 10 (21 January 1912) 36.
32. Matthiopoulos 2003.
33. Quoted and discussed in Gratziou 1987, 65.
34. For the Byzantine and Christian Museum, G. Lambakis and A. Adamantiou, see Gratziou 1987 and Gratziou 2006.
35. See Sakka 2002, 100-8.
36. Tomadakis 1965, 193-95.
37. See the transcripts of the relevant meeting, *Πρακτικά Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής*, 15 November 1926.
38. See also Sakka 2002, 100-8.

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