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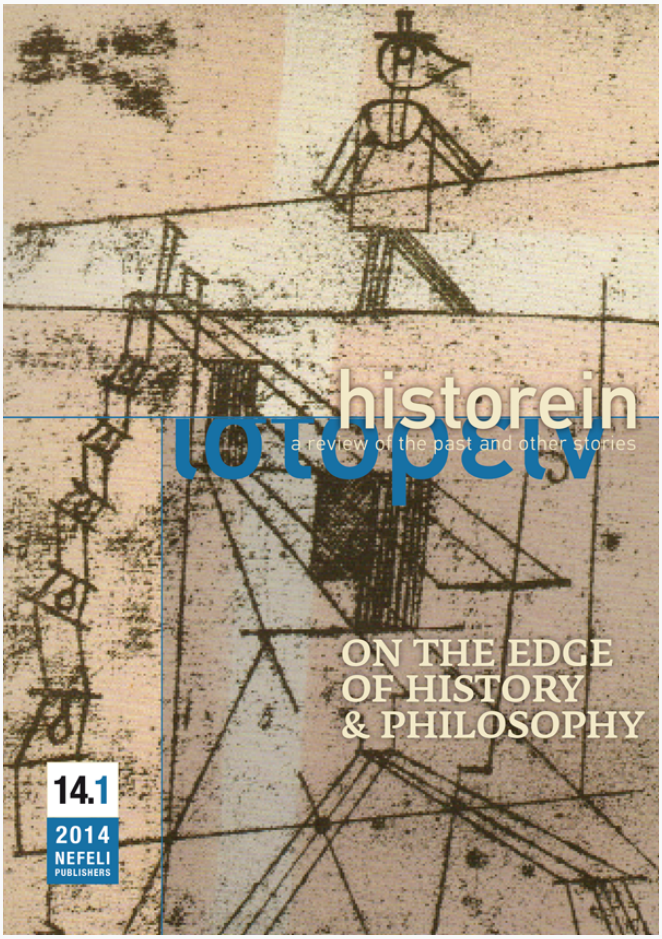

Review of J. L. Davis and N. Vogeikoff-Brogan (eds), Philhellenism, Philanthropy, or Political Convenience? American Archaeology in Greece; Special issue of Hesperia (2013)

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ent future, which would in turn give new dynamics to historical consciousness.

Being part of the scholarship on historical culture, memory studies and historical consciousness, Robinson's book, drawing on contemporary British history, sheds light on the way ideology and politics, past and future, historical consciousness and historical culture interrelate in complex and interdependent ways. It is due to its thorough theoretical base and the clarification offered by the cases analysed that the essay should attract a readership not only among historians and political scientists, but from all well-informed citizens.

Jack L. Davis and Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan (eds)

Philhellenism, Philanthropy, or Political Convenience? American Archaeology in Greece

Special issue of *Hesperia* 82/1 (2013). 227 pp.

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The considerable number of foreign archaeological schools and institutes which have been operating in Greece since the mid-nineteenth century, only a decade or so after the country's independence, have helped construct, to the present day, an all-pervasive discourse on classical past and its uses. Though today mostly celebrated as "multidimensional research institutes and intermediaries between the Greek state and foreign scholars", whose "contribution is invaluable and unquestionable" as "they investigate, promote and preserve a large number of archaeological sites, constantly adding new elements to the huge mosaic of Greek history and Greek civilisation",[1] foreign archaeological schools active in Greece were once treated pretty much as thinly disguised colonial outposts serving their own countries' cultural and political agendas – and most of them were doing precisely that.[2] Recent years, however, have seen a more nuanced approach to such matters, allowing for the multiplicity, contradictions and inevitable inconsistencies inherent in these projects. The volume under review, a collection of articles which "lays foundations for a revisionist history of the American School [of Classical Studies at Athens]", as its editors put it in their introduction (11), admirably transcends the colonialist vs the colonised divide and the black-and-white historical accounts that are bound

to emerge from any oversimplified readings of such complicated phenomena, in order to suggest a radical, productive and innovative way to understand nineteenth-century philhellenism. The result is both revisionist and extrovert, in ways few of us could have anticipated a decade or so ago, bearing in mind that this project was launched by an emblematic academic institution established by the "colonisers" themselves.

The volume contains eight articles, all reworked versions of papers read and discussed at a workshop held at the American School in Athens on 18 May 2010.[3] The eight authors – their number almost equally split between "insiders" and "outsiders" (11), that is representatives of American and Greek (often diasporic) academia respectively – were asked by the editors to make use of the valuable records kept in the American School's archives, in a conscious effort "to embed research about the history of the [school] in larger pictures" (2); even a casual browsing of the volume under review would suffice to suggest that this quite ambitious goal stands a considerable chance of being achieved.

As its title denotes, the book is organised along the themes of philhellenism, philanthropy and politics. As such, one would have welcomed a systematic discussion of those three concepts, which tend to be taken for granted throughout. Out of the three, philhellenism seems to be the most vague, its various, often contradictory, definitions depending on which side of the Greek border one is standing. By the nineteenth century, as Stathis Gourgouris contends, philhellenism had long been constructed as a western European fantasy, one that could be seen to constitute "the desire for civilisation, and particularly for civilisation as the anthropocentric dissolution of myth, which the Enlightenment retroactively discovered to be its historical project".[4] It is due to this kind of retroactive motion that philhellenism became, by the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, conflated with philanthropy – an idea quite imperceptible by their respective recipients, if not those great philhellenes *cum* philanthropists themselves (5–6). Since the materiality of classical Hellas was essential to the construction of western philhellenism and its promotion as philanthropy, archaeology provided both the discourse and the heterotopic technologies through which to achieve this goal. As many scholars have explained – including, besides Gourgouris himself, Artemis Leontis, Michael Herzfeld and Yannis Hamilakis – the colonisation of the Greek past enabled control of the fledgling nation-state's present. At the same time, this swift process supplied the Greek nationalist project with the necessary ideological arsenal.[5] Greece seems to have spent the entire twentieth century constructing a national identity based on the systematic reciting of its archaeological narrative;[6] the volume under review helps us monitor some of the other uses the Hellenic past was put to in more or less the same time.

The first article in the volume, authored by Jack Davis, discusses "the politics of volunteerism" and explains how, even though non-academic pursuits were not considered as part of the American School's agenda, the involvement of its members in activities of the American Red Cross in northern Greece in 1918–19 enabled them to strike personal relationships with important Greek figures of the time, thus turning their involvement into considerable political capital. As Davis argues, it was this development that enabled the school to expand its physical and scholarly horizons, notably with the permit to excavate the site where the Athenian Agora once lay. This was designed as a political project in the first

place, allowing the school to serve the cause of American nationalism, as well as promote what American elites at the time saw as their nation's commitment to democracy.[7] Along the same lines, Bert Hodge Hill, who served as the school's director from 1906 to 1926, is described by Eleftheria Daleziou in her article as an "adjuster and negotiator", whose involvement with relief work in Greece between 1918 and 1928 allowed him to construct an extensive, as well as efficient, social network through which to promote the interests of the school. Although Daleziou maintains that the school's role in Greek public life "involve[d] neither intelligence activities favourable to American interests nor active involvement in Greece's political affairs" – in contrast with the British and French archaeological schools in Athens, that is, "which openly supported espionage to promote their respective countries' political interests in the host country" (64) – it would be worth reminding ourselves, as the editors of the volume promptly do (6), that the school's philanthropic sentiments towards the Greek refugees from Turkey seeking shelter in Greece in the aftermath of the Asia Minor catastrophe, did not prevent its members from exercising any political leverage they could muster, only one or two years after those tragic events, in order to expropriate the very land given to them by the state, so that the Agora excavations could go ahead as planned. Somehow, the deeply rooted archaeolatry of this project, combined with the cynical political intervention that made it possible, seems to have had more readily discernible effects on Greek society to the present day, whatever the efficiency of those British and French double agents may have been. Personal agendas re-emerge in David W. Rupp's paper on the antagonism between Edward Capps and Hill at the time they were fighting for dominance of the school while contributing to the foundation of Athens College in 1925, as a bilingual, private secondary school for boys. Rupp discusses how Capp's ambition to establish a fully-fledged American arts college in Greece was thwarted by the college's board of directors and Hill himself, suggesting that American (or Greek for that matter) definitions of "philhellenism", or "philanthropy" even, in those days could vary quite dramatically.

This unofficial trilogy of papers dedicated to personal antagonisms is followed by two articles on wider projects. Betsey A. Robinson talks of "hydraulic euergetism" in a study focusing on three commercial waterworks ventures, all however deploying an idiosyncratic sort of archaeology in order to achieve their goals: most telling is the case of the Marathon Dam, lined in Pentelic marble by its builder, the American firm Ulen, which also erected a scale model of the Athenian Treasury at Delphi, a temple-like structure in the Doric order commemorating the victory at the battle of Marathon. As the new copy stood in front of the dam's face, itself imitating the stepped front of a Greek theatre, it was meant to celebrate a new victory, "in wresting from nature its life-giving water for the citizens of Athens" (109). This is a spectacular case of neoclassical ideas deployed as mechanisms in order to shape modern sensibilities and the reader is rather puzzled to read Robinson's conclusion that her case studies "underscore the importance of individuals in shaping the landscape, and the impact they may have on populations of modern Greece" (128); it seems that the archaeolatric narrative deployed by Ulen at Marathon in order to promote American corporate interests remains as convincing as it ever was. Natalia Vogeikoff-Brogan's article investigates the school's funding strategies in the 1920s and 1930s. Although the author estimates that, during that period, "American philanthropic foundations moved ... to reforming society

as a whole" (131), she still concludes that the school's successes, as well as its failures, on that front were pretty much due to "the power of successful social networking between people of the same mind" (149), which thus becomes the unofficial, and rather under-theorised, motto of the volume in total.

A final trilogy of articles looks at the matter of cultural diplomacy and national(ist) politics in a broader perspective. Yannis Hamilakis reprises his familiar themes of nationalism, colonialism and modernist archaeologies in a revealing discussion of the Athenian Agora excavations (1924–1931), in order to argue that what we have learnt, after Bruce Trigger, to classify as "national" and "colonial" archaeologies are in fact "hybrid expressions" (153) of western capitalist modernity. Describing this phenomenon as "double colonisation", Hamilakis astutely identifies American nationalism as the driving force behind the neoclassical (or neoclassicist) ideals pursued by the school, in pretty much the same way as Greek nationalism defined the country's archaeological agenda throughout the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Along the same lines, Despina Lalaki studies the involvement of American archaeologists in the activities of the Office of Strategic Services in the country during the second world war. Unlike many official or traditional readings of these developments, Lalaki employs sociological thinking in order to suggest that archaeologists may – and most of them do – act as "agents of culture and cultural change" (179). In the book's final paper, Niki Sakka returns to her familiar site of the Athenian Agora, this time however in order to discuss the conflicting narratives surrounding the reconstruction of the Stoa of Attalos in the 1950s. Her article offers an excellent discussion of "the politics of memory and forgetting" (203), as she puts it, and the role classical monuments – discovered, restored, refitted or even rebuilt by the various projects launched by western modernity – may play as civic as well as political landmarks.

In conclusion, this is a valuable set of papers illustrating the potential of the American School's archives, while at the same time working as an incentive for more historians to make use of its holdings. If one must quibble, then the absence of an index (perhaps inevitably, since this is a special issue of a journal where a standard format must be followed) ought to be mentioned. However, one must congratulate the editors for putting together such a stimulating publication and assure them that, indeed, they have been successful in providing the "rich case study in institutional history" (12) they aspired to.

NOTES

1 Thus Petros Tatoulis, then Greek culture minister, in Elena Korka et al. (eds), *Foreign Archaeological Schools in Greece, 160 Years*, Athens: Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 2005, 5.

2 See, for an overview, S.L. Dyson, *In Pursuit of Ancient Pasts: A History of Classical Archaeology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006, esp. 65–132; see also S.L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, esp. 75–115 for the German involvement in the archaeology of Greece and Turkey in the nineteenth century.

3 The present reviewer would like to add, by way of a disclaimer, that he was one of the eight discussants invited to respond to the papers presented; he is therefore grateful to the editors of the volume under review for their kind invitation, which allowed him to participate in a most stimulating event.

4 Stathis Gourgouris, *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization and the Institution of*

Modern Greece, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, 127.

5 See, principally, Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 19–21.

6 Dimitris Damaskos and Dimitris Plantzos (eds), *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and Hellenic Identity in Twentieth-Century Greece*, Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008.

7 See also Niki Sakka, "The excavation of the Ancient Agora of Athens: the politics of commissioning and managing the project", in Damaskos and Plantzos, *A Singular Antiquity*, 111–124.